



ROSS & CROMARTY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Craft House, Plockton

Building Survey



National Grid Reference

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The National Trust for Scotland

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Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was carried out by David Anderson and Lynn Fraser. We wish to thank the National Trust for Scotland for commissioning the work. All mapping, unless otherwise stated, is reproduced by permission of ProMap license LIG1044. Aerial imagery is reproduced under ESRI licensing and provided by the World Imagery layer. This is an unpublished report.

1.0 Summary

This report presents the results of a photographic and measured building survey carried out on behalf of the National Trust for Scotland on 11th July 2013 at Craft House, Cooper Street, Plockton to provide a baseline record in advance of the sale of the property.

2.0 Introduction

Craft House, Cooper Street, Plockton is owned by the National Trust for Scotland and has been empty for over three years pending an assessment of options for its future use. Its sale has been approved by the Trust's Board and a condition of the approval is that a record of the building and its significance should be undertaken in order to inform the drawing up of a Conservation Agreement¹. Photographic and measured surveys were therefore carried out on 11th July 2013 by *Ross and Cromarty Archaeological Services*.

3.0 Location and background

3.1 Site location

Craft House is located on Cooper Street in the village of Plockton on the west coast of Scotland, approximately 6 miles northeast of Kyle of Lochalsh (NGR NG 80630 33777; Figures 1 and 2). Plockton, a planned village with most of the houses dating to the 18th and 19th centuries, is situated on a sheltered bay on the shores of Loch Carron and is a conservation village within the National Trust for Scotland's Balmacara Estate.

3.2 Background

Craft House is a small 1.5 storey stone-built house with a corrugated iron roof and four corrugated plastic skylights. It consists of two principal rooms on the ground floor with a small rear pantry area and toilet. A timber staircase in the front hall leads to the upper floor where there are two rooms and two walk-in cupboards. The house has not been extended or altered in any significant way. It retains some interesting internal features, although of limited heritage significance.

Although documents were not sought to establish when the house was first built, it is depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, which is based on a survey carried out in 1875². It is, therefore, over 130 years old and has had a varied use history. Local knowledge indicates that the house was used to house destitute families in the 1930s³. From the 1950s it was used for craft workshops, hence the name Craft House, weaving, a silversmith's studio, the public library, an artist's studio and, most recently, a craft workshop and gallery.

4.0 Aims

The aim of the photographic and measured surveys was to provide an archaeological baseline record of the house in advance of its sale and the drawing up of a Conservation Agreement.

¹ NTS 2013 (see Appendix 2)

² NLS 2013; 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map Ross and Cromarty Ross-shire Sheet CXVII.5

³ Kennedy, pers. comm.

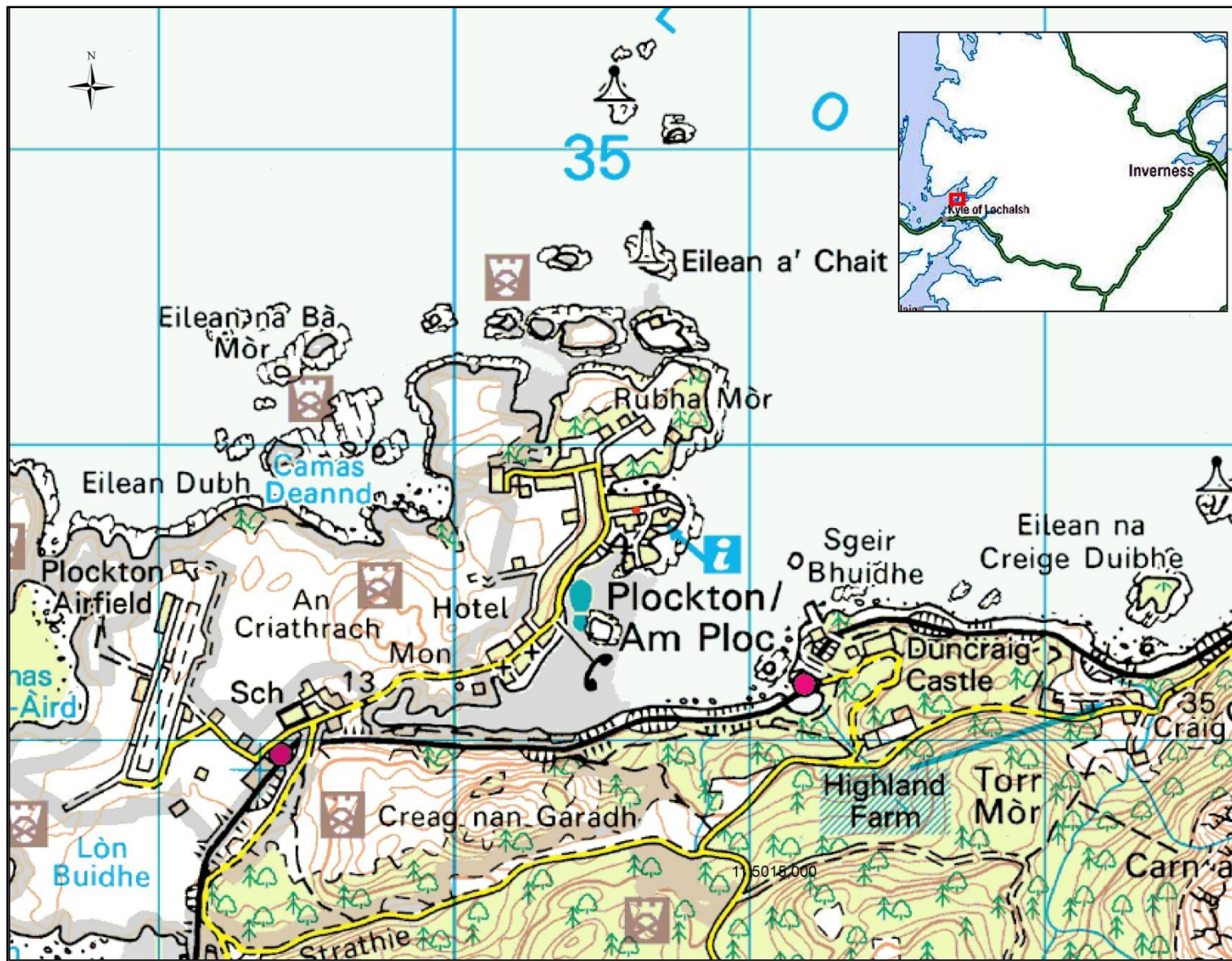


Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Aerial image of Craft House's location

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Photographic survey

A detailed photographic survey of the interior of the building was undertaken. Photographs, using a Nikon D3100 SLR, were taken of the elevations in each room and any significant features. Photographs were also taken of the exterior of the building. (See Appendix 1 for a full list of the photographs taken; all the photographs are supplied separately on a disc).

5.2 Measured survey

The measured survey of the rooms within the house was conducted using hand-tapes and the measurements noted on plans provided by the National Trust for Scotland and in a notebook. This was done for the whole house with the exception of the attic, which was not accessible due to the storage of craft materials and documents within the roof space. A cursory inspection from the hatch was made and observations noted. The measurements of the external walls of the house were taken to wall-head height only due to health and safety considerations.

In addition, to place the house in its context within the village a brief observational survey of the surrounding buildings was carried out.

The work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of a *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS)* survey. All fieldwork was conducted in accordance with *Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct*⁴.

6.0 Results

6.1 Ground Floor

The ground floor consists of an entrance hall and staircase, two public rooms and a small rear pantry and toilet. Reference should be made to the ground floor plan (Figure 3) for orientation purposes. The floor throughout consists of poured concrete, which probably replaces an earlier wooden or beaten earth floor of which no trace remains. The floor to ceiling height is 2.1m.

Room 1

This room measures 4.17m (N-S) x 3.6m. There is one window in the southern wall, which looks out onto Cooper Street and a fireplace on the west (gable) wall (Plate 1). The walls and ceiling are clad in tongue and groove panelling with the exception of the west wall to the south of the fireplace. This was planked suggesting a repair prior to the fitting of the current skirting, possibly relating to water damage to the tongue and groove panelling here. A wooden cornice runs around the room and there is a dado rail at a height of 1.82m (to the top of the rail), both white in common with the rest of the room. The doorway into the room is set in the east (partition) wall, but the door itself has been removed. There is evidence of a second doorway in the northern end of the partition wall, which has been blocked off with tongue and groove panelling (Plate 2), perhaps at the time the panelling was affixed to the whole room. This would suggest that the panelling does not date to the original construction of the house. The panelling was certainly done before the skirting was attached to the walls as this is continuous around the room. The fireplace with mantelpiece is also blocked off with tongue and groove panelling, but this is a different size suggesting it was done at a different, perhaps later, time. Two rings are set into the

⁴ IfA 2010

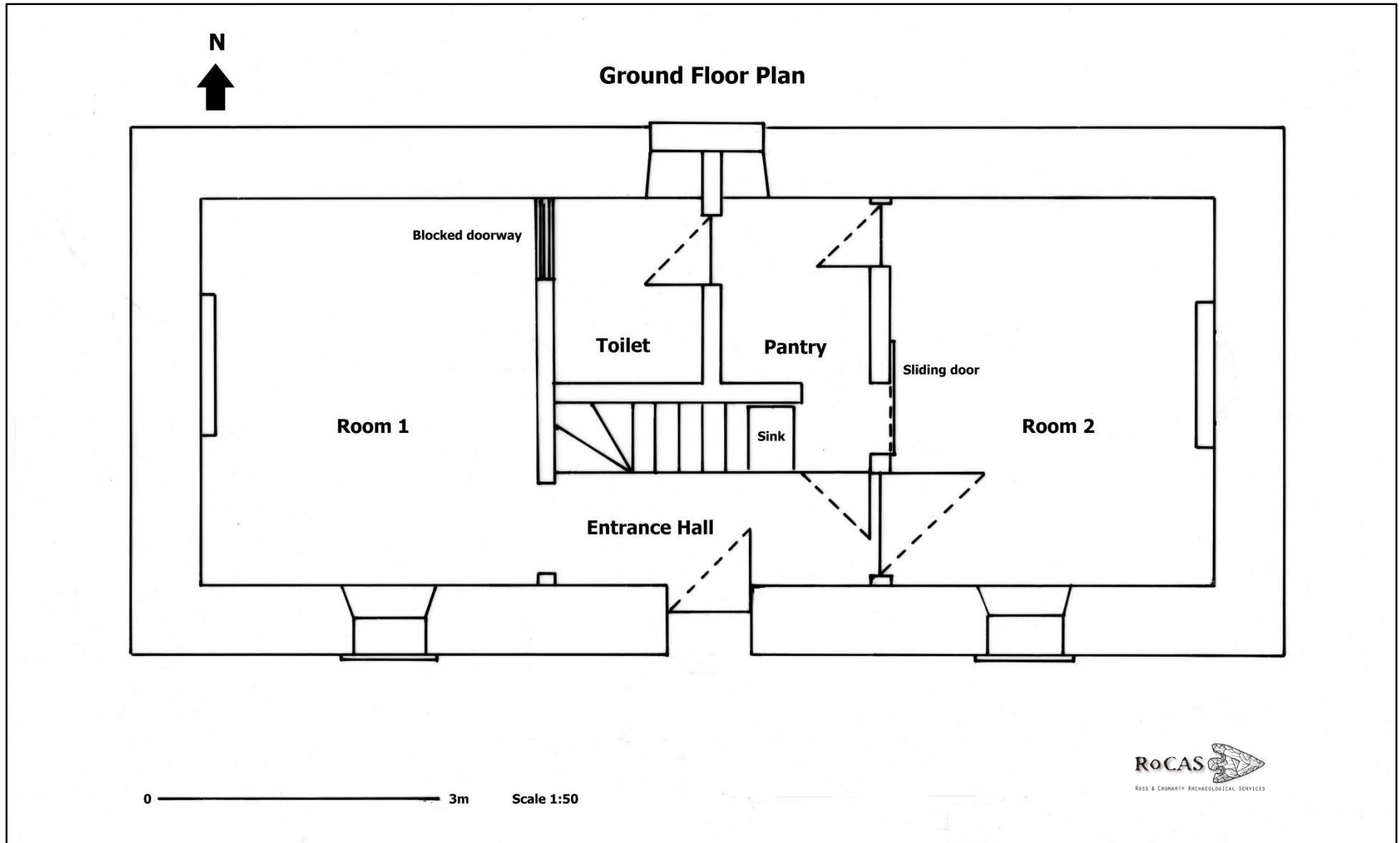


Figure 3: Ground floor plan



Plate 1: Room 1 with blocked fireplace in west wall.

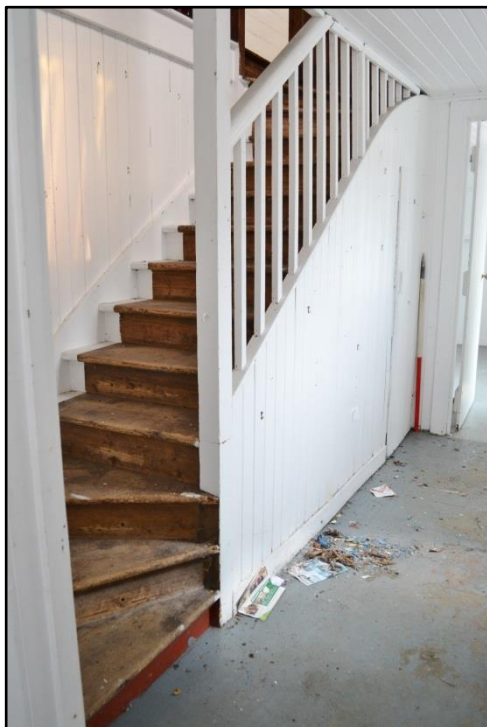


Plate 2: Room 1 with blocked doorway in east wall.

ceiling 0.63m from the gable wall in front of the fireplace. The window recess has splayed walls decreasing in size from 1.0m at the wall to 0.76m at the window. The window timber is sash and case with sash weights still present. The room has numerous picture hooks and nails in the walls attesting to its use as a gallery and, perhaps, accounts for the removal of the door.

Entrance Hall

The only entrance to the building leads directly from the street into the entrance hall. This area measures 3.3m (E-W) x 1.24m and gives access to rooms 1 and 2, the sink under the stairs and the staircase to the upper floor. It is clad in tongue and groove panelling with a dado rail, all of which has been painted white. The top of the panelling below the staircase spindles has been cut to a curved profile (Plate 3). The door under the stairs leading to the sink post-dates the panelling as the cut panelling has been used to fashion it; there is evidence of various handles on the door. An original feature of the house, the bottom three steps of the staircase curve clockwise 90 degrees followed by seven horizontal steps and then a further three steps, which curve anti-



Plates 3, 4 and 5: (clockwise) these pictures show the staircase with curved panelling, the curved and re-curved skirting at the bottom of the stairs.

clockwise 90 degrees to the landing. The inner skirting at the bottom of the staircase has been cut with a curve and re-curve design around the 90 degree turn (Plates 4 and 5).

Room 2

This room measures 4.17m (N-S) x 3.47m. There is one window in the southern wall, which looks out onto Cooper Street and a fireplace on the east (gable) wall. The walls and ceiling are clad in tongue and groove panelling, which has been painted white; a wooden cornice runs around the room and there is a dado rail at a height of 1.82m (to the top of the rail), both white. Skirting runs round the whole room. There are three doors set in the west (partition) wall: one into the entrance hall, which has its original brass handle and lock along with a modern Yale (Plate 6). It is impossible to determine whether it dates to the original construction of the house. There is also a door into the pantry with a lock on the pantry side, and a later sliding door leading to the sink under the stairs. The fireplace with mantelpiece is open, but the chimney has been blocked with paper and plastic. It is decorated with broken pebbles and painted white and appears to have been the location of a small kiln (Plate 7). The window recess has splayed walls decreasing in size from 0.97m at the wall to 0.81m at the window. The window timber is sash and case with sash weights still present.



Plate 6: Room 2 showing two of the doors on W wall



Plate 7: Fireplace in Room 2

Sink Area

A Belfast sink has been located under the stairs in a wooden frame. The plumbing is by way of upvc piping and lighting is provided by an exterior style safety lamp. Tongue and groove panelling is on the right of and behind the sink, again painted white. On the left is the rear of the panelling in the entrance hall.

Pantry

The pantry is a small room at the rear of the building, which measures 1.97m (N-S) x 1.55m. It is accessed from Room 2 or the sink area; although the door here has been removed, there are hinge mounts visible in the frame. A further door in the west wall leads to a toilet. A modern double-door base unit has been fitted against the west wall (Plate 8). Above this are three shelves: two are made from ply and are fixed to the south wall, a third, made from slats, runs at a right angle on the west wall. A window is set into the north wall, which, unusually, is shared by the pantry and the adjoining toilet suggesting that the current aperture has been remodelled. This window and that in the adjoining toilet are modern replacements (Plate 9). A plank with brass coat hooks has been fixed to the east wall.



Plate 8: Base unit in the pantry



Plate 9: The window aperture shared with the toilet

Toilet

This room adjoins the pantry at the rear of the building. It measures 1.98m (N-S) x 1.59m and shares the window aperture with the pantry. The door has a brass handle on both sides and an upside-down keyhole; the original lock is present. There is a fairly modern wash-hand basin and toilet bowl and a bath that has been inserted under the sink as a later addition (Plate 10). The partition wall shared with Room 1 has the reverse side of the blocked doorway (Plate 11). In common with the remainder of the ground floor, the toilet is clad in white painted tongue and groove panelling.



Plate 10: The bath inserted under the sink.



Plate 11: The blocked doorway leading through to Room 1.

6.2 First Floor

The first floor consists of a split landing, two public rooms and two walk-in cupboards. Reference should be made to the first floor plan (Figure 4) for orientation purposes. The flooring throughout most of the first floor is dark brown, close-grained wood, which changes outside Room 3 to much more open-grained, paler boarding suggesting it is a later replacement.

Landing

On ascending the stairs, there is a landing to the south under the eaves and a landing to the north, which forms the first floor corridor. The landing to the south measures 3.49m (E-W) x 1.26m. The walls and ceiling are lined with unpainted tongue and groove panelling. A corrugated plastic skylight window is centrally located in the coomb ceiling, which probably replaces the original or previous cast-iron frame. A bannister, which is a later addition, has been constructed out of four square, green stained posts and a plain brown handrail (Plate 12). The corridor to the north measures 3.54m (E-W) x 0.97m and has an unpainted bannister running along its length. The newel is topped by an acorn finial.

There are two cupboards under the eaves on the north side of the corridor (Plate 13). Cupboard 1 measures 1.7m (E-W) x 1.11m and houses a water tank and fuse box. Cupboard 2 measures 1.68m (E-W) x 1.11m and has a corrugated plastic skylight window. A lead weight (Plate 14), apparently cast in a foil dish, was found in this cupboard and is possibly connected with the weaving activities that took place in the house.

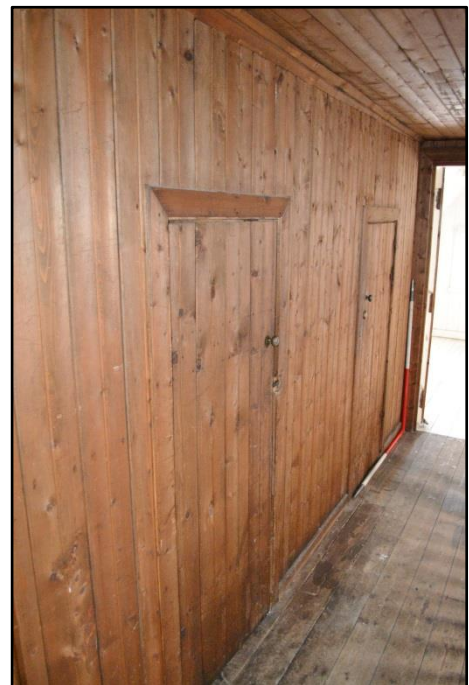


Plate 12: (above left) Landing area on both sides of the staircase.

Plate 13: (above) Cupboards on the north side of the corridor.

Plate 14: (left) Lead weight.

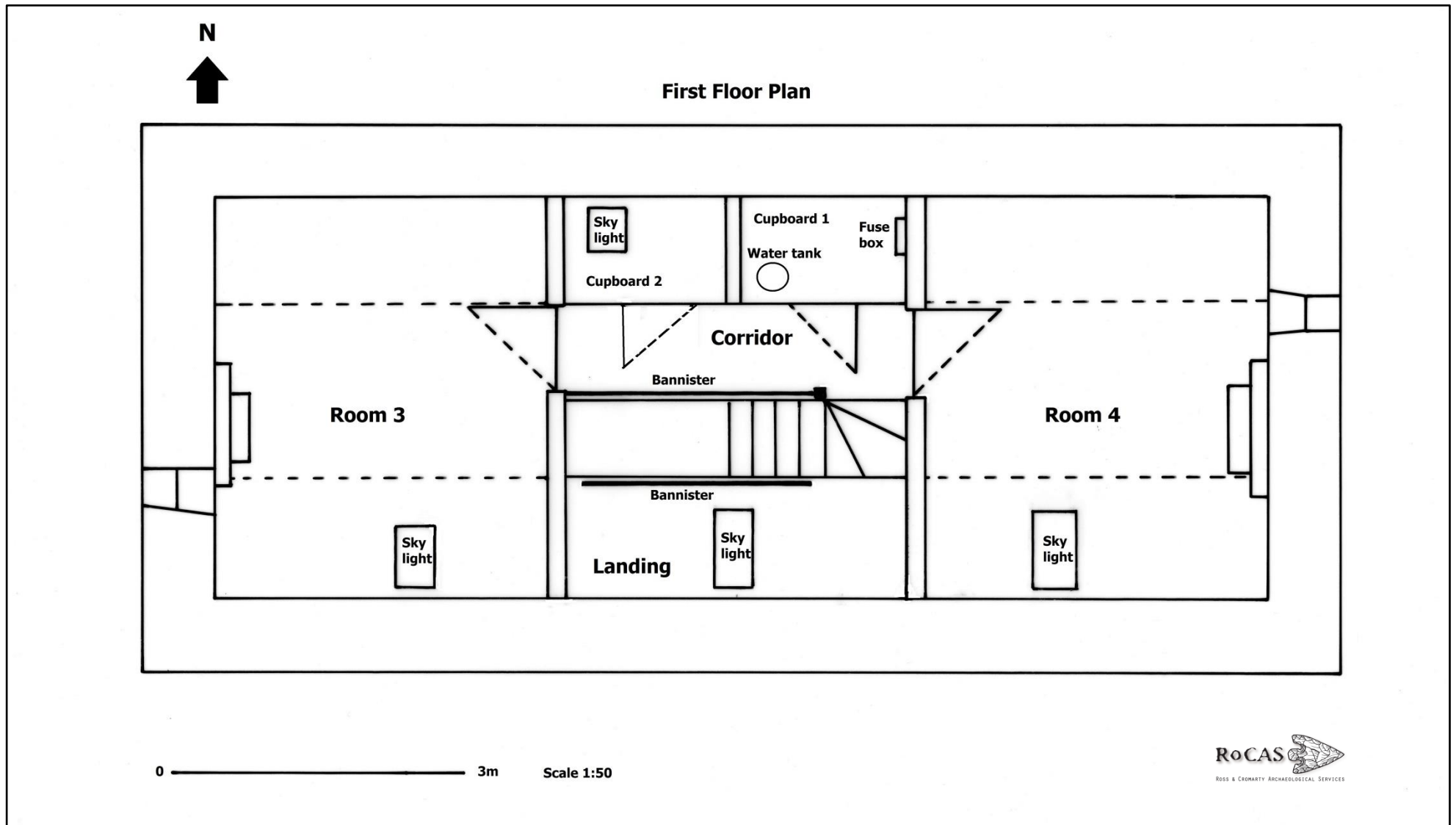


Figure 4: First floor plan

Room 3

This room has a coombed ceiling and measures 4.12m (N-S) x 3.42m at floor level. The floor to ceiling height is 2.1m. The walls rise vertically 0.84m and 0.86m respectively on the south and north walls from the floor to the base of the coomb. There is a small window and fireplace in the west (gable) wall and a corrugated plastic skylight window in the south coomb, which is offset to the east. The door is set in the east (partition) wall. The east wall and north wall and coomb are lined with tongue and grooved panelling and this continues along the north section of the west wall to the window on the south side of the fireplace. From here the west wall is plank lined, as is the south wall and the ceiling. Skirting is present on the east and west walls only. The use of planking on the walls and the replacement softwood floor suggests repair, possibly following water damage, as in Room 1. The fireplace is set within a wooden setting with a stone hearth. The form of the fireplace is unknown as it is blocked with wood. The fireplace setting partly obscures the window aperture suggesting it is a later addition (Plate 15). The window consists of a piece of modern perspex glued onto a soft wood frame. The north wall of the recess is at a right-angle to the gable whereas the south side is slightly splayed. The whole room, including the floor is painted white.

Room 4

This room has a coombed ceiling and measures 4.12m (N-S) x 3.53m at floor level. The floor to ceiling height is 2.1m. The walls rise vertically 0.85m from the floor to the base of the coomb. There is a small window and fireplace in the east (gable) wall (Plate 16) and a corrugated plastic skylight window in the south coomb, which is offset to the west. The door is set in the west (partition) wall. The room is lined with tongue and groove panelling and skirting round the whole room. The fireplace has a wooden mantelpiece and a stone hearth. It has been blocked with a piece of hardboard. To the right of the fireplace is an apparent bookshelf made from plywood and painted white. The west wall shows evidence of further shelving having been present previously.



Plate 15: Fireplace and window in Room 3.



Plate 16: Window, fireplace and shelving in Room 4 with a fluorescent strip light visible top right

6.3 Attic

The attic was not surveyed in detail. The ceiling joists were largely obscured by insulating material and it was not apparent whether the material was mineral wool or older, potentially hazardous, insulation. As the surveyors had not been made aware of the presence of the material, the necessary specialised protective clothing was not available and inspection was limited to a brief assessment from

the hatch only. In addition, a large amount of craft material and other items stored in the attic would have made safe access difficult. It was noted that the roof is corrugated iron sitting on wooden roof joists, which appeared to be modern treated timber. There did not appear to be any evidence of earlier roof material. The roof space is very small. Duplicate books, invoices and correspondence from the 1950s were found amongst the stored material and appeared to relate to the period when the house was used for craft workshops.

6.4 Exterior

The building presents as a basic rectangular stone-built house. Visible at the base of all the walls is protruding stonework, which is masked by the harling covering the building. It is likely that this stonework is the foundation layer for the building. The windows in the ground floor are very regular in size and have concrete sills and it may well be that they have been remodelled at some stage in the building's history. There was no visible evidence for any previous doorways or other structural changes. The roof is covered in corrugated iron panels, but it was difficult to determine whether these date to the original construction of the house. Based on the fact that the roof trusses and joists present as relatively modern and anecdotal evidence from a neighbour who advised that he can recall the house being re-roofed on two occasions, it is unlikely. The corrugated roof panels could not be measured internally due to the loft access restrictions or externally due to health and safety requirements regarding working at heights

6.5 Context

Within Cooper Street, Craft House is unique; there are no other buildings that are similar in shape or construction with a corrugated iron roof. An exhaustive search of Plockton was not made, but in Harbour Street, which runs perpendicular to Cooper Street some comparative buildings were found. The most similar building is that at 23 Harbour Street (Plate 17), which is also a 1.5 storey, rectangular building with a corrugated iron roof; it is, however, attached to a neighbouring building. Similarly, 37 Harbour Street (Plate 18) is a rectangular one storey house attached to a neighbouring property. It does not have a corrugated iron roof.



Plate 17: 23 Harbour Street



Plate 18: 37 Harbour Street

7.0 Conclusion

Craft House presents as a basic cottage, which has not been structurally altered since its construction prior to 1875, although it would appear to have been re-roofed, and, as such, retains its original character. Internally, the staircase is a striking original feature. Throughout the house there have been changes made, which are mostly cosmetic. Tongue and groove panelling is present throughout the house. It is the same size throughout, which suggests that the house was lined in a single event. It is impossible to date this event, but it is possible it took place during a remodelling of the cottage in the 1930s or thereabouts. Anecdotal evidence from the Plockton History Society's Chairperson suggests that the cottage was used to house homeless families in the 1930s until it fell too far into disrepair. It was thereafter renovated by people from Glasgow and this episode may be when the panelling was installed. The size of the skirting is consistent throughout the cottage and was installed as a single event, possibly at the time of panelling the walls. A door was cut into the panelling below the stairs, which would have taken place at the time of panelling or later. A sliding door between Room 2 and the sink below the stairs is a later addition. Ingress of water through the western gable has resulted in repairs to the panelling and floor in Room 3 and the panelling in Room 1.

Within Cooper Street it is unique; there are no other buildings of its shape and size with a corrugated iron roof. In nearby Harbour Street there are two houses which are similar to Craft House, only one of which has a corrugated iron roof, but both of these examples are attached to neighbouring properties whereas Craft House is a detached building.

8.0 References

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) 2010. *By-laws of the Institute for Archaeologists: Code of Conduct*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists.

Kennedy, B. 2013. Conversation with Bob Kennedy, Chair of Plockton Historical Society, on 11th July 2013.

National Library of Scotland 2013. Accessed at <http://maps.nls.uk/>

National Trust for Scotland 2013. *Craft House, Plockton, Balmacara Estate: Project Outline for Historic Building Survey*

RCAHMS, 2004. *Corporate Plan 2004-9, Annex: Survey and Recording Policy*. Edinburgh: RCAHMS

Appendix 1: Index of Photographs

No.	Direction Facing	Location	Notes	Taken By	Date
1	NW	Room1	General view of room 1	DA	11/07/2013
2	S	Room1	Facing the window - note picture hooks and nails in the wall from previous use as a gallery	DA	11/07/2013
3	W	Room1	Facing the fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
4	W	Room1	Facing the fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
5	N	Room1	North wall	DA	11/07/2013
6	E	Room1	Internal partition with blocked off doorway	DA	11/07/2013
7	E	Room1	Internal partition with blocked off doorway	DA	11/07/2013
8	NE	Entrance hall	View of entrance hall from the doorway of room 1	DA	11/07/2013
9	SSE	Entrance hall	View of entrance hall from the doorway of room 1	DA	11/07/2013
10	SW	Entrance hall	Internal view of the front door	DA	11/07/2013
11	NNE	Entrance hall	Showing curving base to the bannister and doorway through to sink area	DA	11/07/2013
12	E	Entrance hall	Back of door to sink area with room 2 behind	DA	11/07/2013
13	N	Entrance hall	Detail of position of previous handles on the door to sink area	DA	11/07/2013
14	NW	Entrance hall	Bottom step of staircase with curved skirting	DA	11/07/2013
15	NE	Entrance hall	Showing the recurved skirting on staircase	DA	11/07/2013
16	E	Staircase	Looking up the stairs	DA	11/07/2013
17	W	Staircase	Looking down the stairs	DA	11/07/2013
18	NE	Room 2	General view of room 2 from the doorway	DA	11/07/2013
19	W	Room 2	Doorway, corridor and beyond	DA	11/07/2013
20	W	Room 2	Shows doorway into room 2 (closed) and sliding doorway into the sink area (open)	DA	11/07/2013
21	W	Room 2	Shows part of the sliding doorway and door (closed) into pantry	DA	11/07/2013
22	E	Room 2	Detail of sign on the fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
23	N	Room 2	North wall	DA	11/07/2013
24	E	Room 2	East wall with fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
25	E	Room 2	East wall with fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
26	S	Room 2	South wall with window	DA	11/07/2013
27	W	Sink area	Looking towards sink situated under the stairs	DA	11/07/2013
28	NW	Pantry	Looking towards north wall with windows	DA	11/07/2013
29	SW	Pantry	Base unit and shelving in the pantry	DA	11/07/2013
30	ESE	Pantry	Doorway into room 2	DA	11/07/2013
31	W	Toilet	Looking into toilet from pantry - note the blocked doorway behind the bath	DA	11/07/2013

CHP13: Building Survey of Craft House, Plockton

No.	Direction Facing	Location	Notes	Taken By	Date
32	SW	Toilet	Sink with bath pushed under it	DA	11/07/2013
33	SSE	Toilet	Toilet	DA	11/07/2013
34	NNW	Pantry	Windows in the north wall	DA	11/07/2013
35	-	-	Lead weight found in cupboard 2	DA	11/07/2013
36	-	-	Lead weight found in cupboard 2	DA	11/07/2013
37	-	-	Lead weight found in cupboard 2	DA	11/07/2013
38	-	-	Lead weight found in cupboard 2	DA	11/07/2013
39	-	-	Goldfish bowl found in cupboard 1	DA	11/07/2013
40	WSW	Landing	Upstairs landing showing skylight window and room 3 beyond	DA	11/07/2013
41	NE	Cupboard 1	Interior of cupboard 1 with fuse box	DA	11/07/2013
42	WNW	Cupboard 1	Interior of cupboard 1 with water tank	DA	11/07/2013
43	NW	Cupboard 2	Interior of cupboard 2 showing skylight	DA	11/07/2013
44	NE	Landing	Cupboard 2 in the foreground; cupboard 1 and room 4 beyond	DA	11/07/2013
45	E	Landing	Upstairs landing with room 4 beyond	DA	11/07/2013
46	W	Room 3	West wall showing window and fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
47	W	Room 3	Fireplace uncovered showing materials blocking it	DA	11/07/2013
48	W	Room 3	West wall showing window and fireplace	DA	11/07/2013
49	N	Room 3	North wall with door open	DA	11/07/2013
50	NE	Room 3	Corner of north wall and internal partition wall with door closed	DA	11/07/2013
51	E	Room 3	Internal partition wall with door closed	DA	11/07/2013
52	S	Room 3	South wall with window	DA	11/07/2013
53	SE	Room 3	Corner of south wall and internal partition	DA	11/07/2013
54	E	Room 3	Looking along corridor with change in flooring in centre	DA	11/07/2013
55	E	Room 4	East wall with fireplace and shelf	DA	11/07/2013
56	E	Room 4	East wall with fireplace and window	DA	11/07/2013
57	SE	Room 4	East wall	DA	11/07/2013
58	S	Room 4	South wall with window	DA	11/07/2013
59	N	Room 4	North wall	DA	11/07/2013
60	W	Room 4	Internal partition wall with door closed	DA	11/07/2013
61	WNW	Room 4	Internal partition wall with door closed	DA	11/07/2013
62	NW	Room 4	Internal partition wall with door open	DA	11/07/2013
63	-	-	Documents from attic	LF	11/07/2013
64	-	-	Documents from attic	LF	11/07/2013
65	-	-	Documents from attic	LF	11/07/2013
66	S	-	East end of external north wall	DA	11/07/2013
67	S	-	West end of external north wall	DA	11/07/2013
68	W	-	East elevation (minus chimney)	DA	11/07/2013
69	WNW	-	East elevation	DA	11/07/2013

CHP13: Building Survey of Craft House, Plockton

No.	Direction Facing	Location	Notes	Taken By	Date
70	N	-	West end of external south wall	DA	11/07/2013
71	N	-	East end of external south wall	DA	11/07/2013
72	NE	-	West elevation	DA	11/07/2013
73	NNW	-	Shop with corrugated iron roof - 21? Harbour Street	LF	11/07/2013
74	N	-	23 Harbour Street - similar features to Craft House	LF	11/07/2013
75	SW	-	37 Harbour Street - similar features to Craft House	LF	11/07/2013
76	NW	-	8 & 9 Harbour Street	LF	11/07/2013
77	NE	-	Craft House	LF	11/07/2013

Appendix 2: NTS Project Outline for Historic Building Survey



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**Craft House, Plockton, Balmacara Estate
Project Outline for Historic Building Survey**



1 Introduction

Craft Cottage is situated in the village of Plockton and is within the National Trust for Scotland's Balmacara Estate. The Trust's Board has approved the sale of this building and a condition of the sale is that a record of the building and its significance should be undertaken in order to inform the drawing up of a Conservation Agreement.

The Craft House is owned by The National Trust for Scotland and is situated in the village of Plockton. Plockton Village sits in the heart of Plockton Crofting Township and although most of the village's properties are privately owned, the grassed areas mostly form common grazings albeit there is an agreement with the crofters that they will not be actively grazed at present.

Plockton is a picturesque settlement on the shores of Loch Carron. It faces east, away from the prevailing winds, which together with the North Atlantic Drift gives it a mild climate allowing the Cordyline australis palm or cabbage tree to prosper.

Most of the houses date from the 18th and 19th centuries. It was a planned community based on fishing in an attempt to stem the tide of emigration from the Highlands. The Church of Scotland in the village (also used by the Free Church of Scotland) was designed by Thomas Telford.

The village is a popular tourist resort, especially because the TV series Hamish Macbeth, starring Robert Carlyle, was filmed there, substituting for the fictional Lochdubh. Plockton was also used for various scenes in the film The Wicker Man and the Inspector Alleyn Mysteries TV series.

The village boasts a small general store with a cafe; a takeaway; the Plockton Shores restaurant; newsagent and craft shop; three hotels with pubs; numerous B&Bs; library with free internet access and a village hall, which holds community events and art exhibitions. It is served by Plockton railway station, on the Kyle of Lochalsh Line. In 2003, the Plockton Hotel and Plockton Inn managed to respectively win AA Pub of the Year and AA Seafood Pub of Year. Calum's seal and dolphin trips are the longest established boat trips in the area with a 4 star visitor attraction grading. Plockton High School serves the village and a wide surrounding area" Wikipidea

Balmacara Estate is situated in the Lochalsh parish within Highland Council region. The Estate extends to 2,550 hectares and forms part of the Countryside and Islands North Group.



Image showing location of Craft House in Cooper Street.

The Cottage comprises a 1½ storey house situated on Cooper Street in Plockton. The property consists of two principal rooms downstairs with a small rear kitchen area with toilet off. From the front hall there is an original

CHP13: Building Survey of Craft House, Plockton

timber stair leading to a landing off which there are two rooms. The building is of stone construction with a corrugated iron roof with three corrugated plastic skylights. There is no evidence of insulation in the roof. The building is basically wind and watertight but the interior structure is in poor condition. The condition of the building is described in some detail in the attached valuation report under the Defects section. The last tenant undertook various works without consent, including some minimal rewiring and the installation of a bath in the rear toilet. It is unlikely that the works were carried out by a qualified contractor and there is no certification available. The upper floor is springy which may indicate some structural concerns regarding the floor joists. The whole property was treated for woodworm several years ago.

The property was most recently leased as a craft workshop and gallery. Prior to that tenancy it had been let as an artist's studio prior to that, the public library, a silversmith's studio and previously a community group used it for craft workshops etc., hence the name the Craft House. The property has been empty for over three years pending an assessment of the alternative options for future use.



Detail of interior showing tongue'n'groove wood panelling

The building itself is not listed but it does lie within the Plockton Conservation Area. The building also retains some interesting internal features but these are in poor condition and of limited heritage significance. The property has never been extended or altered in any significant manner. Its overall conservation status is not particularly high but it is considered to be important that any redevelopment of the property, should ideally, attempt to maintain the general style and amenity of the area.



2 Tendering process

Given the short notice of this survey it is anticipated that the work will be commissioned by a single tender from a locally available archaeological contractor.

3 Previous Research

There had been no previous historical building recording or analyses carried out on the Cottage.

4 Objectives of the standing building recording and analysis

The overall objective of the programme of standing building recording and analysis is to take the opportunity to develop further understanding of Cottage ahead of its sale by the Trust and to inform any Conservation Agreement. This will augment and develop current understanding of the Trust's property and offer wider interpretation of the development and cultural significance of the area as a whole.

The project aims are as follows:

- a) to achieve a more refined understanding of the structural development and chronology of the Cottage;
- b) to develop a comprehensive drawn, written and photographic record of the structure, its construction and its relationship to the surrounding village.

5 Methodology

The project methodology should conform to the appropriate Standards and Guidelines of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Desk-based and other background research

The contractor will not be responsible for undertaking a desk-based assessment prior to survey. They will however, be responsible for familiarising themselves with the relevant background material presented within this Project Outline. Familiarity with the area's historical and archaeological background is deemed necessary in interpreting data generated in the course of the Project.

Field recording (standing remains)

All principal vertical surfaces of the structure will be measured and drawn at a suitable scale. The survey will record salient features and analytical detail but need not extend to a full stone-by-stone survey. All features of note will require a written pro forma description, and will be identifiable by a system of unique context numbers. Descriptions will, as appropriate, include details of dimensions, location, fabric, form, matrix, geology, mouldings, markings, presumed dating (where applicable), and stratigraphic information. The position of all described features will be recorded on at least one plan or elevation.

7 Products

The contractor will produce, as a minimum, the following:

- a) A digital photographic record (conforming to current RCAHMS standards and guidelines) will be required of all elevations.
- b) Phased elevation drawings of all faces of the structure, showing details of former openings, scars, surface treatments and other features.
- c) Detailed scale drawings and/or photographs of architectural details of significance.
- d) Scaled plan of the building's footprint, to which all other photographs and illustrations will be related.
- e) Analytical report. This report will be prepared in line with the appropriate Institute for Archaeologists Standards. Following the introductory sections (including a narrative summary in layman's terms of the main findings, an indication of the constraints and limitations of the report, and an indication of how the report has been set out), the report will provide an analysis of the development of the Cottage, focusing on information gleaned during the project. This will be followed by narrative descriptions (ordered by phase) of the elements of the structure and other features of archaeological and architectural interest germane to the objectives of the project outlined above. In particular the date and significance of features should be noted where possible. The roof timbers should be examined and an assessment made of any roofing materials sealed beneath the corrugated iron, if possible.

If it is possible to provide an interpretation of the social and domestic workings of the Cottage and its relationship to surrounding landscape features, this and any other appropriate interpretation should follow the descriptive section. The report will be fully referenced.

Copies of this Project Outline (excluding enclosures), the successful Tender Document (excluding financial details) and any written variations will be reproduced within an appendix.

The report will be illustrated by plans, elevations, details, sketches and photographs as appropriate.

- f) Summary report for submission to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland and enter the project data into OASIS: Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS (<http://www.oasis.ac.uk/scotland/>).

8 Logistics

The standing building recording and analysis project will be managed by the NTS Archaeologist, Derek Alexander, to whom all queries of a technical nature should be addressed.

The contractor will inform the Local Authority Archaeological Service of his or her activities **before** site work commences.

Access

Access to the Cottage is available to the contractor upon request. The dates of which will be arranged with the NTS Archaeologist.

Personnel and standards

Contractors will provide the name of a single person who will be the archaeological Project Manager. The building recording work will be undertaken under the close supervision of either a suitably qualified and experienced buildings archaeologist, or an experienced buildings historian with a proven track record in the systematic recording and analysis of historic buildings, and in the production of analytical reports. It is expected that the successful contractor will work in compliance with the Institute for Archaeologists Standard for buildings recording and other appropriate guidelines.

Short CVs should be included in the Tender Document for the principal participants in the project.

Volunteers or trainee students may be used on the project, provided that they receive adequate supervision and training, and that volunteers gain no financial remuneration other than the repayment of bona fide expenses. The use of volunteers and students must be approved in advance by the NTS.

Health and safety

The contractor will be responsible for implementing all appropriate health and safety requirements and any other current legislation which is applicable, and for ensuring that all sub-contractors appointed by him or her also implement all appropriate health and safety requirements and any other current legislation which is applicable

The contractor will be expected to carry suitable insurance (the minimum requirement is professional indemnity insurance cover of £1 million) and will carry out and supply the NTS Archaeologist with a Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Method Statement prior to the commencement of works. A Health and Safety Policy Document must also be submitted and approved by the NTS. The Tender Document should include details of proposed health and safety provision.

Publicity

The project and its results may be publicised through the local or national media. Any publicity must be handled by or through the NTS.

Finances

The Tender Document will contain an estimate of the cost of the project as described in this Project Outline, and should set out the following details:

- Wages (stating number and level of staff, daily rate per member of staff per day, and which staff will be used for each element of the work);
- Specialist costs;
- Travel and accommodation expenses;
- Hire costs;
- Equipment and consumables;
- Post-fieldwork costs;
- Report and archive production costs;
- Overheads and other costs;
- Any costs in-kind, not to be charged for.

A contingency sum may be included as a percentage of the overall costs. The contingency sum will only be applicable where unforeseen circumstances prevail, and its use will have to be justified. Written notification should be given as soon as practicable of any proposed variation over and above the basic estimate. Variations in expenditure, including the use of the contingency, will require prior written approval from the NTS. The detailed costings should be shown excluding VAT, but the overall costings should also be shown including VAT.

The NTS operates a system of staged payments, with the final instalment tendered on receipt of the approved final report. Contractors should note that if significant delays occur at one or more stages of the project, excepting those reasonably outwith the contractor's control, the percentage of the total fee held back until payment as the final instalment is likely to increase.

9 Reporting Procedures

Reporting timetable

Two copies of a draft report (which should include all illustrative material) should be provided within **two weeks** of completion of the field element. The NTS will attempt to provide comments on this first draft within a week weeks; at that stage, a timetable for the submission of a revised draft (two copies) will be agreed, dependent upon the level of revision required. The final report will be submitted within **two weeks** of comments upon and approval of the revised draft by the NTS.

Report production and distribution

The NTS will require **four bound copies** of the final report each accompanied by a disk containing a digital version of the final report, all images produced during the project, any information databases which may have been compiled as well as digital survey information as AutoCAD LT 2004 and DXF/DWG files suitable for use on a PC running Windows XP. In addition, **the contractor should submit one bound copy to the local authority SMR and one to the NMRS.** Copyright of the reports and all other information (including electronic information) will rest with the NTS, but the contractor will have the right to use the reports and the survey results free of charge in relation to non-commercial activities or to promote the work of the contractor.

10 The archive

The primary archive will be deposited with the NMRS, and will include all original field records (both hard copy and digital) and notebooks, alongside a full set of catalogued photographs. The archive will be prepared to standards agreed with the NMRS and will be deposited with them within **six months** of submission of the final report.

11 Further Guidance

The contractor should liaise with the NTS Archaeologist, Derek Alexander (07713 786 282; dalexander@nts.org.uk).