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THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND

This comment was submitted by the AHSS Highlands & Islands Cases Panel via an online planning portal

Council: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Application reference: 20/00311/LBC
Address: Creed Lodge, Lochs Road, Isle Of Lewis
Date AHSS comment submitted: 29th September 2020

Thank you for your consultation on this proposal, which has been examined by members of the AHSS Forth & Borders Case Panel (which presently considers cases in Eilean Siar). With regret, we object to significant elements of this proposal.

The present roof is both visually and practically unsatisfactory, and the proposals suggest continuing this state of affairs indefinitely, instead of restoring something more appropriate for the grander of the two western lodges. Like-for-like replacement with a more permanent version of what is present would be a further degradation of the architectural interest of this listed building, as the existing solution is clearly non-permanent in nature.

The roof is visually unsatisfactory, as it obscures the crenelations (if they remain underneath the harling), and gives a weighty appearance to the roof. The slight pitch to the gable ends are reminiscent of 1970s housing, and the whole gives the impression of, perhaps, a water tower. Practically a near-flat roof treated like this will always leak eventually, and the harling of the upper walls is likely to trap water within it, causing ongoing damage to the fabric of the building. We note that the roof has required complete replacement twice thus far, on a twenty year cycle, and this is likely to continue as long as the basic form of the roof remains unchanged. We are concerned about further interference with the original structure to support an unsatisfactory and temporary intervention (we regard twenty years as temporary in the lifespan of this building).

The opportunity should be taken to reconsider the approach. Restoration of the original parapets would permit a pitched roof, with a significantly longer lifespan, to be installed behind them. Modern understanding of lime render and mortar, removal of any cement render to prevent damage, and appropriate use of leadwork as damp proofing around crenelations and elsewhere, should resolve the damp problems evident both now and in the past. Repeating the mistakes of the past, and using contemporary techniques on a building that works very differently, will not create a lasting solution here.

It should be noted that the supplied design statements and condition reports appear very thoroughly researched, but lack a conservation-led approach to consider the problems and solutions in a wider context, and we strongly encourage consultation with a conservation architect as part of the development of more sympathetic proposals to resolve the present unsatisfactory state of affairs.

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