

An Eaglais Mhor

The Eaglais Mhor, or Big Church, has this name given to it for two reasons; it is a large building in itself and it is large in comparison to the Church it displaced. It is 63 feet long, 40 feet broad and the walls above the level of the doorstep are 24 feet high. They are stone walls built in courses and grouted in with liquid lime. Nothing will ever remove them but an aerial bomb, dynamite or earthquake, so strong and rocklike are they. The walls are spanned with giant principal rafters laid at three-quarter pitch, cut and sawn in the native forest. At present, it is open roof lined over the smaller rafters up to the top ties, constituting the Church one of the biggest sounding boxes in the Highlands.

The front wall is cut up with four windows 15 feet high by 5 feet 6 inches broad, having a Gothic top. These openings are filled in with wooden small-paned windows with tracery tops which will continue, as long as they will last, to have the admiration of all carpenters who will have the privilege of examining them. The east gable has two windows and was at first pierced besides with two doors entering one on each side of the pulpit. The pulpit was high, rising from the platform on which stood the precentor's desk and having a stair on each side. There was a steep sloping gallery on each side and across the west end, to which was access by nicely wrought stairways, the first steps of which were laid on the offside of each door. The ceiling at first was plaster laid on filling in joists level with the wall head.

Up to the present (1938) there were three main repairs and alterations given to the building. The first was given to it by Mr William Sutherland and his men, when the doors on the east gable were closed and a door opened on the back, near the west corner. It was then the first floor was laid throughout, after about two feet of soil was dug out from between the walls. The flooring before this was planking placed under the seats for the feet to rest on. A partition of framing and lining was placed under the outer rim of the gallery across the west end. Seating was removed and this open space was divided off into two halls, one becoming a Session House and the other a hall for use during the winter months to contain the congregation.

The next repairs were given under Messrs Ross & MacBeath, Architects, Inverness, by Mr John Finlayson, when concrete skews, roofing repairs and other alterations were done inside. These repairs were done during Rev Dr Haggart's time.

Other and more ample repairs and alterations were carried out during the Rev Mr Mackenzie's time. These alterations were done by Mr John Mackenzie & Co. The old plaster ceiling was dropped down and replaced on the upper ties by wood lining and down between purlins to wall head, and stained to look like the principal couples, purlins and lower ties. The galleries were completely removed. A lower gallery was placed over the halls. The old pulpit, preacher's desk and platform were removed and replaced by the present panelling, pulpit, communion table, seating and lining of cypress wood in memory of Dr Haggart. All the seating was removed for re-spacing and back all as of old. The door at the back was closed and a window put in its place. A door and window were opened on the west gable and the belfry was re-built and all the mason work was finished by Mr Kenneth Stewart. The small porch over the door was built at this time.

The situation of the building is by the roadside, a mile to the east of the Lochcarron Hotel on the road to Strathcarron Station. The site is a lovely one in the middle of a plain surrounded by green hills and the sea not far away. The building is laid on a gravel bank known of old as Croit-Cruaidh. In laying the foundation course, the wall tracks were dug down to a depth of six feet when it was found that the lower they went the solum became softer. At depth of six feet they laid the first course with broad flat stones over which was built thirty feet of solid thirty inch wall.

This building was for a long time without a wall or a fence surrounding it. It was open to all the air. Now it is surrounded with an iron fence enclosing the sepulchres of many of the Lochcarron folks. The old man of today walking around and about the graves can only see faces and forms of those who were his friends and acquaintances. There are no ancient graves here and there are but few strangers' graves. It was during the lifetime of the Rev John Haggart, DD, that this churchyard was enclosed and used for a burying ground.

The Presbytery of Lochcarron at their meeting at Broadford in the Isle of Skye on 17th July 1834, by the connivance and help of Thomas Mackenzie, Esquire of Applecross and James MacLeod, Esquire of Attadale, authorised that this building should go on and to be of a size large enough to contain 700 sitting and that Mr Mackenzie of Applecross would undertake to get contractors and to see that the work would go on according to the plan and the specification provided by the Heritors and authorised by the Presbytery.

On 20th July 1836, Mackenzie of Applecross petitioned the Presbytery to inspect the finished building and take it off the hands of the contractors. On 17th August following, the Presbytery met and appointed, after swearing them in to fidelity and truth, Mr Roderick Finlayson, carpenter and Mr Lachlan Forbes, mason, to inspect the building, and who reported to the Presbytery as follows: "Lochcarron Church 17th August 1836; we, being appointed to inspect the new Church built by Mr James Smith of Inverness, have carefully measured the building and compared it with the plan and specification and find it in every respect to conform thereto and the material and workmanship to be of the best description. Signed R Finlayson, Lachlan Forbes." This report being read, the Presbytery find that the said Church of Lochcarron is completely executed in terms of the plan and specification, and they accordingly took it off the contractor's hands.

TITLE NUMBER

ROSD

Scale

Survey

1:2500

Officer's ID / Date
3952
7/9/2006

LAND REGISTER
OF SCOTLAND

ORDNANCE SURVEY
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE

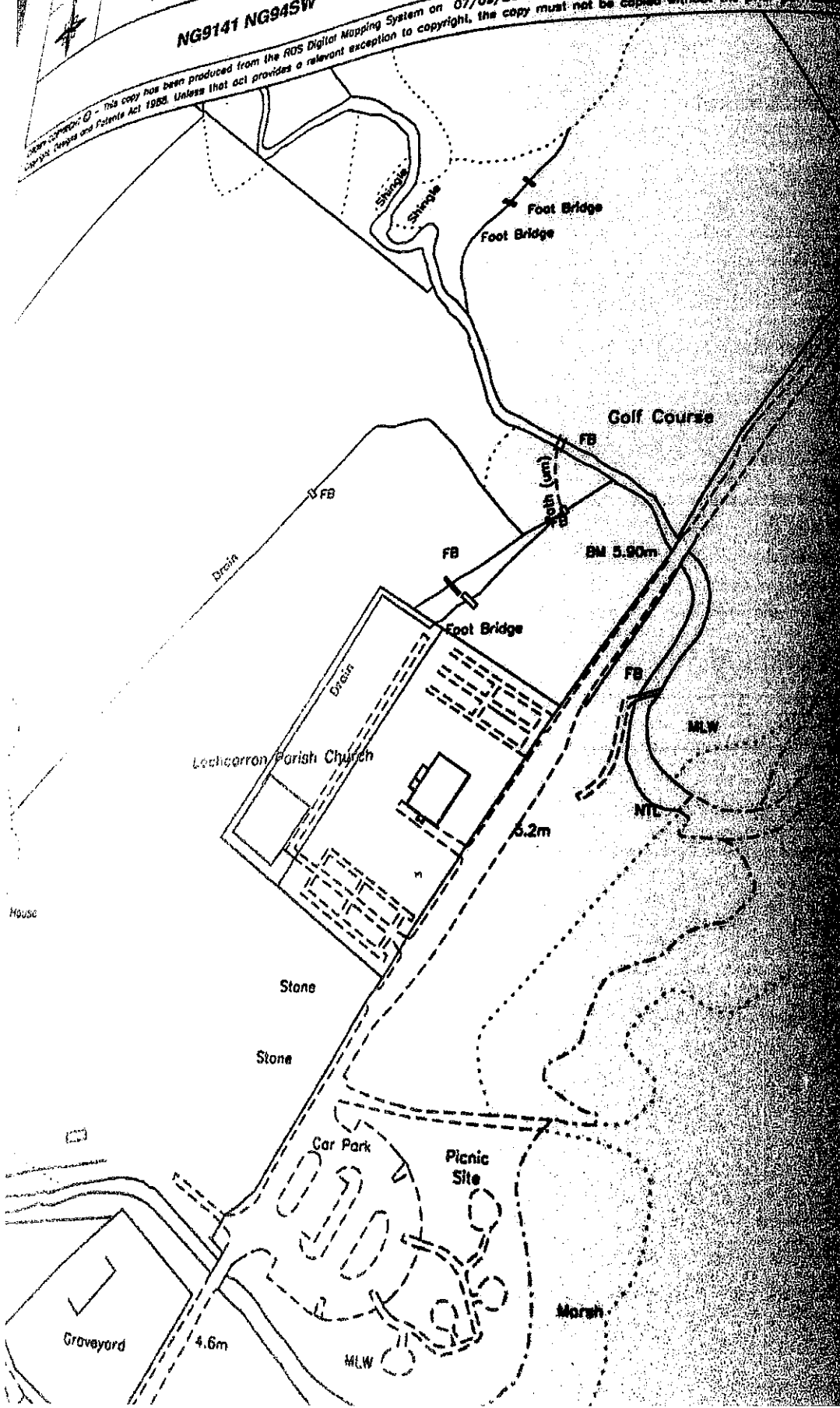
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TITLE NUMBER ROS6185

B 1

B. PROPRIETORSHIP SECTION

PROPRIETOR

DATE OF
REGISTRATION
22 JUN 2006

CONSIDERATION
£5000

DATE OF ENTRY
29 MAR 2006

- Note: 1 There are in respect of the subjects in this Title no subsisting occupancy rights, in terms of the Matrimonial Homes (Family Protection) (Scotland) Act 1981, of spouses of persons who were formerly entitled to the said subjects.
- Note: 2 There are in respect of the subjects in this Title no subsisting occupancy rights, in terms of the Civil Partnership Act 2004, of partners of persons who were formerly entitled to the said subjects.



LAND REGISTER OF SCOTLAND



TITLE NUMBER ROS6185

A 1

A. PROPERTY SECTION

DATE OF FIRST REGISTRATION

2 JUN 2006

DATE TITLE SHEET UPDATED TO

22 JUN 2006

DATE LAND CERTIFICATE UPDATED TO

22 JUN 2006

**PREST
PRIOR**

MAP REFERENCE

NG9141

DESCRIPTION

Subjects being the former EAST CHURCH, LOHCARRON, STRATHCARRON edged
on the Title Plan.