

Caisteal Inbhir Nis / Inverness castle

A preliminary historical account

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Frontispiece: undated drawing, published probably when the 1830s courthouse was being celebrated and new, and the 1840s prison yet to be built. The kilted piper indicates the new castle was to be considered in the setting of Romantic-age Highlands. The accuracy of the drawing of the old castle is difficult to judge, but that it is described as blown up by 'the rebels' – ie, 'bad guys' – also matches the ideology of the time, when efforts to build a commemorative centenary memorial at Culloden Battlefield (1846) could not be funded, a sense of collective awkwardness still in circulation over the role of the Highlands in having challenged the status quo by armed insurrection.

Inverness Castle : preliminary historical account

Summary

Inverness Castle comprises two 19th century castellated buildings – an 1830s courthouse and an 1840s prison – built on the site of the predecessor castle and Hanoverian barracks which were blown up by Jacobites in 1746. It occupies a prominent height above the River Ness, in the heart of the city, and is easily Inverness's most dominant structure. It is listed category A, meaning it is of national or more than national importance.

The site

Inverness developed in the standard way of many old Scots burghs, having an early mediaeval religious centre (here, the parish kirk), a seat of corresponding secular authority (the castle) and a settlement. The cross-roads of modern day Church Street (which connects castle and kirk) and Bridge Street / High Street (leading to the river crossing) developed from that early layout.¹

The site of Inverness Castle has been claimed to have been that of an early medieval royal centre. Such sites were sometimes characterised by a prominent hill on which the royal settlement was placed, rising from surrounding flat land. Similar sites include, say, Edinburgh (which developed into a city), or Dunadd in onetime Dalriada (which by contrast became abandoned, and returned to agriculture). In the 19th century, Inverness was claimed as MacBeth's Castle, and as the residence before then of Brude, the Pictish king whom St Columba met. It featured prominently over centuries in both politics and warfare, including the Wars of Independence. Local placenames such as 'The Crown' (sometimes claimed as the 'original' castle site), 'Kingsmills', and possibly 'Barnhill', may also relate to the earlier existence of the Castle.

Inverness had been a royal castle since the 12th century, and in the early modern period it came to be a residence of the Dukes of Gordon. It had a big and lavish 5-storey residential tower, and interiors (it possibly had a top-floor north-facing gallery) painted by Italian artists which were destroyed in 1688-9. This was when James VII / II was replaced on the throne by William and Mary, sparking civil war, the castle then occupied by government / anti-Jacobite soldiers. It was probably then too that the castle was abandoned permanently as a domestic lordly residence and its function changed to that of a fort – balancing that at Fort William at the opposite terminal of the Great Glen.

In the British period, it was captured by MacKenzies in the Rising of 1715. It probably had by then angular renaissance-style fortifications, for by 1719 some existed and were in a poor state, suggesting either a lengthy period of disuse and neglect or deliberate assault. These fortifications were probably enhanced, and around 1730 (according to the National Library's catalogue) it was fortified massively as an anti-Jacobite / pro-union military base and barracks, and re-named Fort George, maybe at the same time, in honour of the king. In 1746 it was blown up by Jacobites, one of

¹ For an archaeological overview of Inverness see David Perry, 'Inverness: an historical and archaeological review', in *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 128 (1998), pp. 831-857; the architecture is described in John Gifford, *The Buildings of Scotland: Highland and Islands* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1992), pp. 182-208.

their last military actions in the warfare of 1745-46. The site was thereafter neglected, used as an illicit free-stone quarry, and eventually tidied up after the old castle's tower collapsed in 1790; for the castle's function had been replaced by the present Fort George at nearby Ardersier (identified as early as 1746 as the preferred successor site). Thus the Inverness castle site was militarily obsolete (it was overlooked from the Crown, and so vulnerable always to artillery); it was prestigious, unused, and therefore a clear development opportunity by the early 19th century.

The project drivers and the architects

The idea of a new courthouse and jail was being discussed by at least 1812, but the prime initiative for the executed project came from advocate William Fraser Tytler (1777-1853). He was sheriff depute and convenor of Inverness-shire, son of the laird of Woodhouselee and of Anne Fraser of the Jacobite Balnain family, and brother of the famous historian Patrick Fraser Tytler. Thus Tytler had local connections, and in 1831, as Mandatory of the Gaol and Court House Committee, he urged the Town Council to support the idea; this would be the 'Castle of Inverness', and he argued the project's worth 'even from a consideration of the distinguished Ornament which it promises to add to the Capital of the Highlands'. Tytler had already secured from the late Duke of Gordon's Trustees the promise of the site which, he added, was 'considered by Mr [William] Burn Architect of Edinburgh and other competent judges as a most eligible site, ...[while]... a drawing of these buildings had been prepared...[and]...a Bill was intended to be brought into Parliament to authorise' the project.²

Tytler pointed to a need for both a new courthouse and prison facility to serve the enormous county of Inverness. This was the Age of Improvement, the old tolbooths were being superseded by purpose-built courthouses and prisons as seats of justice, and civic Inverness was still asserting its recovered status in the wake of the 1745-46 war – for example, with a new High Church (1769-72), academy (1788-92), new town steeple (1789-92) and so on, and prestigious architects sometimes called in to produce appropriately sophisticated architecture. In like vein, a second Ness Bridge had been built at Merkinch, and when it was deemed unsafe in 1823 the Provost was tasked with consulting Thomas Telford (1757-1834) – by then 'the unchallenged head'³ of the engineering profession – on the option of a fashionable, innovative and showpiece new iron bridge as its replacement, to be designed by the 'signature' name of the day.⁴

So it was with the Courthouse and Jail – for the initial intention was to have both functions, perhaps within a single building. But no agreement on expenditure was reached between Town Council and shire resulting in the court house alone being built – the jail delayed for a decade.

² Highland Archive Centre, Inverness Town Council Minutes, B1/1/1/15, pp. 445-531.

³ The quote is from Howard Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* 4th ed. (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2008) p. 1032.

⁴ The bridge at Merkinch was of timber, and described still as 'new' in 1823. So the fact it had not lasted well maybe helped inspire the idea of exploring an iron option. The Town Council Minutes record that 'This gentleman [ie, Telford] recommended a Stone Bridge, with five cast-iron arches, and he was to have furnished a plan and estimate of the Expense which was not done...' (Highland Archive Centre, Inverness Town Council Minutes, B1/1/1/15, pp. 700-701).

A new courthouse was not just for the sheriff court but it housed the circuit Court of Justiciary which visited twice a year – a visit full of ceremonial reflecting the standing of the town and county – judge, lawyers, town and county, went in procession from the town to the courthouse.

The architects

The architect of the new courthouse, William Burn (1789-1870), was the son of Edinburgh mason and architect Robert Burn (1752-1815) whose most conspicuous design was the Nelson Monument on Edinburgh's Calton Hill (1807-14). At age 18, William began a 2- / 3-year apprenticeship in London with (later Sir) Robert Smirke (1780-1867), designer of the British Museum (1823-46) and, nearer to home for Invernessians, Perth County Buildings and Courthouse (1815-19) and Kinfauns Castle (1820-22). William Burn became one of the most prestigious architects of his time in Britain, particularly concerning Greek Revival public buildings (such as Edinburgh Academy, 1823) and, from the late 1820s, country houses on both sides of Tweed. He was noted both at the time and by historians thereafter as an innovative house planner, while he had too a key role in both the introduction to Scotland of a neo-Tudor style (at Carstairs, 1822-24, following William Wilkins' prototype at Dalmeny [1814-17]) and in developing the style now known as Scotch Baronial (the style of Ness Walk / Ardross Terrace, across the River, for example), discussed below.

The prison (North Block / County Buildings / District Court) dates from 1846 and was executed by Edinburgh architect Thomas Brown ('Thomas Brown II', 1806-72), who was from 1837 architect to the Prison Board of Scotland. Brown's architecture was influenced by that of Burn, frequently neo-Tudor or (as at, say, Kilberry House, or Dornoch Jail) Baronial in style, and his specialism in prison design at a time when these were becoming a necessity found him employment throughout the country.

Architectural style – castellation

It could be argued that Scotland's love of castles never really ended, and when Inveraray Castle was new-built for the Duke of Argyll after 1743, its being a castle signalled that an important long-established family was its owner. The so-called 'castle revival' was thereafter forefronted by Robert Adam (1728-1792) with a generic castellated formula. But when Sir Walter Scott built his Abbotsford from the 1810s, a new style was already on the way, characterised by specific direct references to old Scottish castles. This as we saw became known as the Scotch Baronial style, and as we also saw, Burn was one of its chief devisers. Classicism, which had for so long been the only suitable style for important buildings and buildings of authority, was now giving way throughout the country to castellation. Both the Inverness Castle buildings belong to that intermediary phase where castles were still more generic in design (each references medieval English models celebrated by contemporary revivalists both sides of the border), and predate the full-blown Scotch Baronial that was to come, and which is seen at the courthouses of Dumfries (1863) and Selkirk (1868), for example.

Inverness, though, was a trail-blazer. For either it is the first, or it is an early, example of a purpose-built Scottish courthouse to be designed in a castellated style. Other broadly contemporary courthouses – such as Perth (as we saw, also by Smirke, and neo-Grecian in style), Dundee (1833) or Lanark (1834-6) – were

classical; the point being that classicism denoted a legitimacy and authority derived from what society then regarded the most acclaimed precedents. It may have been the coalescence of changing fashion – which was moving towards an enjoyment of new castles – and the wish expressed by Tytler (owner of a Romantic castle at nearby Aldourie) to have a castle once again on this site, that inspired this break from tradition. And after all, the by then established fashion for castellated mansions (and prisons) already meant that castellation signified secular authority within society. So maybe building castle-like courthouses was a logical next step.

The buildings

Inverness Shire appears to have approved the project (ie, courthouse and prison) by 1831, but Inverness Town Council agreed then to pay only for a courthouse, meaning the prison element was delayed till the next decade when the new building by Thomas Brown was constructed.⁵ Burn had perhaps to redesign his original scheme following the decision to proceed with the courthouse alone. The existing drawings are dated 1833, and include a County Committee Room – the bay-windowed room overlooking the Ness (suggesting the Town Council, burgh court, and other civic functions, met still in the tolbooth at the foot of the hill, below).

The need for a prison was soon, evidently, becoming stronger and Burn produced a design in 1843 entitled ‘Inverness Prisons’ (ie, with male and female wings). It was splay-planned and centre-turreted rather like Stirling’s Military Prison of 1845-7 by Thomas Brown Junior – the same architect who displaced him at Inverness prison. The formula, devised by Jeremy Bentham in 18th century England, was known as ‘Panopticon’ (meaning the entire building could be surveyed inside from one viewpoint).

Burn’s scheme was, though, unexecuted. (Was it his scheme of c.1830 re-presented?) His design was for the same site as that used, and was to have its own high perimeter wall. He explained that in his design:

the South wall...is intended to be 20 foot to the north of the County Buildings [as he then called the Courthouse, reflecting its other use] and the centre line of the one building to be as nearly possible the centre of the other.⁶

The prison block’s final design, though engaged with the River and views from the west, rather more than with the site’s and courthouse’s geometry (as had been the classically-trained Burn’s instinct and intention), giving it a stronger presence and heightened picturesqueness in important views, the contrast with the adjoining courthouse manufacturing a sense of agglomerative layered history and drama as seen at big castles such as Edinburgh or Windsor.

The courthouse has four corner towers with intermediary turrets on the flanks and an almost domestic-scaled 2-storeyed front – one tower square, one round, rather like Kinfauns, by – as we saw – Smirke, Burn’s old master. (Kinfauns was Smirke’s only asymmetric castle; and Telford and Smirke’s Carlisle Citadel and County Courts which Burn would know from his apprenticeship days seems another likely reference

⁵ I have yet to consult the County Council minutes in the archives to see that side of the story.

⁶ RCAHMS, Ground floor plan of [intended] prison, C33458.

for Inverness.) The circular tower at the SW corner, intended at first to have two concealed roofslopes draining to a centre gutter, was instructed in 1835 to be made flat and leaded (the other towers have concealed pitched roofs) to ensure people could enjoy the view from there. Building work was far advanced by the time this modification was made. Dr Nicol, after conferring with some committee members, passed the instruction to Edinburgh for Burn:

I visited the Round Tower in the Castle...and must pronounce the view the grandest thing in Britain. You may [] judge my horror on discovering Raglets [= raggles] in the wall showing the intention of sclating in place of covering with lead & permitting strangers or the lieges to see the finest Panorama any where to be seen.⁷

It would, argued Nicol, be wasteful not to use the space for enjoyment and Burn's own reputation would be diminished were the change not made. Thus the building was now given the added function of viewing platform, which, prior to the 1840s block being added, was a full 360-degree panorama.

The interior was altered in the postwar period, but – in terms of its structure – superficially. At the heart of the building is a handsome and unaltered main staircase, lit from above and enriched by a bust of Tytler which is set prominently and centrally, facing directly towards the main entrance area. An east-west corridor, accessing the spaces front and back, divides the building laterally and extends as far as a door at either end. Behind the stairhall, and clasped by corridors and storage spaces, is the main courtroom ('Court 1'). It is curve-ended / D-shaped and galleried, and has been refurbished; so although the space, and ceiling, are original, the furnishings are not, save for the re-used curved bench ends and the Gothic canopy above the judge's bench. The Judge's room is in the northwest tower, convenient for the bench. Some record storage spaces (several were provided in to the tower upper levels) were from the outset fireproofed, with stone-vaulted ceilings and iron doors. The original entrance hall, as wide as the stairhall from which it was separated originally by an open screen, has been enclosed to create a second courtroom. Its original ceiling and other ornament, which is now concealed by modern fascias, is likely to be intact or largely so. The original Sheriff Clerk's Office which filled the identical space above has also been sub-divided.⁸

If Inverness's castellation contrasted with the classicism of its contemporaries, its interior was far more in accord with them. The ceilings of the courtroom and stairhall, for example, are (like Perth Courthouse) Greek revival in style, while twinned classical pilasters rather than castellated gothic details ornament the entrance hall screen.

The North Block or former prison has a much more dynamic and asymmetric profile than the courthouse and is taller, with square and polygonal thick and thin turrets reaching above one another – several of these again flat-roofed, and intended for enjoying the view. Linking it to the Courthouse on the west, and originally unwindowed to the riverside, is a drum tower (neo-medieval but also rather like a

⁷ National Records of Scotland, GD128/37/15

⁸ No photographs of the Courthouse interior are included below due to security policies. Plans by Burn are held in the National Records of Scotland, RHP 46277-46282; also RCAHMS, IND 5/1-12.

Martello Tower or blockhouse, and currently used as offices). It, and its linking screen wall (also unwindowed originally) emphasises the idea of the whole being one multi-phase castle.

The main prison block's design as viewed from across the Ness is very picturesque on its west face. However, its other elevations were originally less prominent, intended to have been concealed behind high prison walls; so they are less architecturally distinguished in such views, having ornament emphasised only at the upper levels. (Its south façade is symmetrical and end-towered, not unlike Perth prison where again Brown was involved.)

How did this more Picturesque, or more Romantic, solution come about? The answer was provided by William Fraser Tytler who clarified that the design was not simply that of Brown. First, he explained the problem:

we had three...plans by distinguished architects under our consideration – two by Mr Brown, the architect of the General Board of Prisons of Scotland, and one by Mr William Burn, whose works have established for him a name second to none in the kingdom. Had we, however, adopted either of these three, the effect would have been very different to the eye of taste, from that... which the Castle of Inverness now presents; for the rules of modern prison architecture demanded...that the main building should be entirely surrounded by the boundary wall: hence, in all the three plans, the prison stood in the centre of the *plateau*, while a wall of fifteen feet surrounded the entire crest of the hill. The effect of this will be readily conceived; the angle at which the building is viewed from the opposite bank of the river being such that only the upper storey would have been visible over the boundary wall. This would have been a sad prostitution of the noble site which nature had furnished to us; but how to overcome the difficulty, without diminishing the necessary security of the prison, was a problem of no easy solution.

The wish to use an elevated site for a prison had been introduced to Scotland with Robert Adam's 1790s (but demolished) Edinburgh Bridewell Prison on Calton Hill (and is seen too at Stirling, 1845-47). Such prominence given to a prison was a clear warning of the might and authority of the penal justice system. But how could Inverness provide herself with a picturesque solution where function seemed to dictate views would be of a lumpen wall? The critical, if simple, idea was to push some of the buildings – not the cells; but the governor's and matron's apartments, for example – to the site's edge. Again, Calton Hill was a possible reference point where the likewise castellated 1815 Governor's House was similarly located – though there, on a cliff-edge – to achieve the same purpose and visual impact.

Tytler continued, outlining the solution:

A fourth design was furnished by a member of the County Board, Mr [Thomas] Ogilvy of Corriemony.... Adopting...Mr Brown's second plan...Mr Ogilvy furnished the design of a building which was finally sanctioned by the Prison Board, and which now so happily overhangs, and is reflected in, our beautiful river; - with no other deviation from his original sketches than the

addition of a low angle at the bottom of the principal tower, suggested by the late Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.⁹

Ogilvy was not an architect, but seemingly a businessman. Acting as client, he re-designed one of Brown's designs meaning much of the credit usually assigned Brown for the final outcome goes in fact to Ogilvy. Change to this building was, though, to follow. The prison yard / perimeter walls are now much-reduced in height, the gate lodge demolished (it was set between the prison and courthouse, on the site's eastern edge), and the prison building itself has been altered extensively, inside and out, presumably at the same time that the successor prison became operational.

This main prison block is orientated approximately east-west. It extended eastwards from the governor's / matron's accommodation on the west side, which enjoyed the views across the Ness. Comprising essentially a 3-storey castellated rectangle, the building's eastern end is treated like an individual towerhouse with a parapeted concealed roof. Most of the windows, on the long south wall in particular, were identical, segmental-arched and shallow-depth, with prison bars; for there were cells on all three floors, and a full-length spinal corridor on each floor which was evidently top-lit, as some glass floor tiles survive whose purpose was to cast light downwards through the corridor floors. The differing plan-depths on the northern side of the spinal corridors confirm that functions on the corridors' north and south sides were not identical. Space would have been allocated on the north side, for example for the kitchen(s), and maybe a laundry.

To-day, the cells (except at basement level) are all removed save for some elements of cross-walls, and there is but one original cell window – on the ground floor of the south wall's east end. It was retained because it lights only a space beneath what now is the main staircase, which was installed to access what now is a courtroom. Most other cell windows have simply had their sills dropped several masonry courses to be made 'normal' size, and plugged holes on the external window ingoes (3 on the rybats each side) evidence where bars had once been.

The decision to create a courtroom to fill the NE area's upper floor (at the head of the staircase) also necessitated major structural change. To make it high-ceilinged meant removing the upper floor, meaning it became 2-storeyed; while to give it the requisite size the west wall of the 'towerhouse' had to be removed at this level (above the courtroom the wall is now carried on an inserted steel beam within the loft void). All the big round-arched courtroom windows were also inserted then. They cut through detailing and original prison windows which had to be sacrificed for the changes. (Some of these original windows were paired and round-arched, similar to windows seen elsewhere on the building.)

But when was this work done? There was a re-arrangement of rooms somewhere within Inverness Castle in 1868 (costing £2,000 – of which £800 was for the cabinetmaker).¹⁰ More probably, though, and as already indicated, the majority of the works discussed here must comprise the alterations documented in 1904, re-

⁹ Inverness Courier 5 July 1849; letter dated 22 June from Tytler in his capacity as Chairman of the Inverness-shire Prison Board.

¹⁰ Inverness Courier 9 July 1868.

arranging the Jail buildings to become County Offices;¹¹ for the present, successor prison in Duffy Drive known as Porterfield was built 1903 on the lands of Porterfield (the name seemingly another reference to the ancient castle?). That 1904 phase of work was to the designs of the prolific local architectural practice of Ross and Macbeth (Dr Alexander Ross was a prominent figure locally, officer in the Highland Artillery Volunteers, and Provost of Inverness 1889-95).¹² Other work was done in 1911 by R J Macbeth.

There are secure and prison cell spaces in the **basement**, beneath the building's east end where some cell doors and other features also survive. Much of the stonework there is droved (=horizontally-tooled) ashlar and in the character of contemporary prison architecture (Stirling, for example). But other areas seem to survive from earlier construction on the site – in particular, a west-facing blocked round-arched doorway which is unlike anything else in the building and thus likely to be of a different date from the 1840s work. This doorway is at the basement's eastern extremity, set in a wall which (on present survey evidence) appears not to extend upwards to above ground level (ie, it is not part of the prison structure). This could therefore be part of the old castle's outbuildings, or maybe a fragment of the southern of the two government barracks blocks, or part of an earlier castle on the site – proper analysis needs done to engage with that puzzle.

Enclosing perimeter walls, particularly on the east side, were built in 1839 by the engineer Joseph Mitchell,¹³ successor as government Chief Inspector of Highland Roads and Bridges to Thomas Telford and builder of nearby Viewhill – a villa whose overdoor inscription references Shakespeare's MacBeth and the Castle. At their northwest end, probably as designed by Brown, the walls take the form of intersecting V-pointed ravelins reaching one above another, and they appear there to rest on footings of the early 18th century fortifications. Two of these ravelins have dummy sentinel boxes which also recall 'real' military architecture, notably the northern ravelin of Edinburgh Castle. Possibly the smooth landscaping above the Ness was done then, for the Hanoverian structure was at least partly terraced on that side with fortifications – all now gone – extending to the riverbank.

In the postwar period, and as noted, **high prison walling and turrets at the North** were reduced in height, while a **gatehouse and gateway** between the two buildings, on their east side and securing the prison, were demolished, all probably in order to accommodate car parking. The Castle **well** was lost sight of until rediscovered in 1909 and enframed in ashlar, while in front of the castle is the famous **statue** by Andrew Davidson (made 1896-9) of the Jacobite heroine Flora MacDonald, gazing in the direction her Bonnie Prince landed and left from, he having left the castle behind her, as well as the Jacobite cause, in tatters. And a castellated **lodge** at the site's southern end, designed possibly by Burn, is also long-demolished, probably a road-widening casualty. Stumps of polygonal **gatepiers** alone survive near there.

¹¹ http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=200636

¹² For Ross, see http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=100284; also *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University press: Oxford, 2004), vol. 47, pp. 799-800. He was a fellow officer in the Inverness Artillery Volunteers with Kenneth MacDonald, mentioned below – who was Town Clerk when Ross was Provost.

¹³ Inverness Courier 16 January 1839.

The courts in history

The Inverness courts and prison featured prominently during the Crofters' Wars of the 1870s-early 80s which were the people's challenge to Highland Clearance. It was in this courthouse that Sheriff William Ivory, for example, secured his name in history for his role in opposing crofters' agitation. It was here too that Kenneth MacDonald, lawyer and Inverness Town Clerk, fought for land reform and crofters' rights, and here in 1882 he defended the crofters arrested following the 'Battle of the Braes'.¹⁴

The Castle was esteemed as a piece of civic property. For example, military triumph in the Crimean War was celebrated there by placing beside it captured Russian cannon (two were placed, formerly, facing down the esplanade), while the iron cleats formerly on the flagstaff for holding the ropes were 'taken from the flagstaff of the Tower at Malakoff during the siege of Sevastopol'.¹⁵ There were other guns – one captured in 1915 at Loos; some were scrapped in 1941. One cannon survives, now lying neglected in a northwest ravelin.

The Castlehill as a rallying point

Being an open area of common property, the Castlehill was at least once used as a venue for crowd assembly – the function once served by Parliament Close in Edinburgh and served still by George Square in Glasgow.

For example, in August 1839, it was used for an open-air meeting or rally by Chartists (who were campaigners for what we would regard a more just society):

The Chartists seem to be travelling northwards. every town (even in *canny* Scotland) there are some idle fellows capable of spouting out a given []antity of trashy declamation, and whose chief []ult with the Government is, that they are at the bottom of society instead of being at the top.

Mr Mackenzie, to the surprise of our townsmen, appeared in Inverness on Friday evening, and addressed a number of persons – chiefly young men and women of the humblest class of inhabitants – on the Castle Hill. He appears to be a very young man, raw[?], and uneducated. His speech was delivered in a sing-song manner, and consisted of the usual Chartist topics; it made little or no impression here, and no attempt was made at a collection.¹⁶

¹⁴ The five accused were imprisoned in Inverness and their trial opened in Inverness courthouse 11 May 1882. See Alexander MacKenzie, *History of the Highland Clearances* (1883 ed. reprinted Mercat Press: Edinburgh, 1997 ed.), pp. 435-489. The sense of an unjust, pro-landlord legal system was highlighted by MacDonald at the outset, in a letter of 1 May 1882 to the Lord Advocate in London: MacDonald referred to the trials of 'nearly ninety years ago when [Thomas] Muir and his fellow reformers were convicted of sedition', and claimed 'The belief of the prisoners is that the object of your order [summary trial in Inverness] is to secure their conviction at all hazards irrespective of their guilt or innocence, and this belief is shared by a growing number of the outside public. It is for you to dispel this misapprehension if it is one' (ibid, pp. 441-442).

¹⁵ National Records of Scotland, GD128/37/15.

¹⁶ Inverness Courier 7 August 1839. Chartism was a working-class-driven movement which argued every man [sic] should have a secret vote for their parliamentary representation. The movement horrified many amongst the landowning classes, was repugnant to Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and parliament dismissed the Chartists' arguments at that time.

Conclusion

The grouping of buildings that constitute Inverness Castle is architecturally very distinguished and crucial to determining the character of the city as the capital of the Highlands. The historical significance of the site is also great – its past as well as its present contribution to the standing of the city as the Highlands capital, and its documented past as for example a British Hanoverian garrison that was blown up as an act of war; as well as for the fact that the present buildings were witness to some of the big events in the history of the Highland Clearances and thus of a modernisation process with an international resonance which for many remains a live issue to-day.

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INVERNESS CASTLE

PLATE 1: MAIN BLOCK: VIEW FROM SOUTH, FLORA MACDONALD STATUE IN FOREGROUND



PLATE 2: VIEW FROM WEST, ACROSS THE RIVER NESS: 1840s BLOCK ON THE LEFT; MAIN COURTHOUSE ON THE RIGHT



PLATE 3: HISTORIC AERIAL VIEW SHOWING RIVER NESS (LEFT), AND (CENTRAL) THE 2 DISTINCT BLOCKS THAT CONSTITUTE INVERNESS CASTLE

Here the esplanade is landscaped, the prison perimeter walls are high with tall turrets and there is a gatehouse between the two buildings securing the prison. The long-gone Castle Street buildings are also shown, as is the former lodge at the picture's bottom left hand corner.



PLATE 4: HISTORIC VIEW FROM THE NW.

All buildings seen here save the castle have since gone. At the Castle's north end (its left hand side) is seen the originally high prison perimeter walling, while the centre drum and screen wall to its right are both unwindowed (compare with plate 2). The stair and walkway beneath the castle's left hand (north) side may originate from the Hanoverian period reconstructions, possibly the northwest-most bastion.



PLATE 5: ORIGINAL GROUND FLOOR PLAN OF COURTHOUSE BY WILLIAM BURN (DATED 17 JULY 1833)

The main courtroom space is seen clearly, clasped by the building's flanks, its proportions and perimeter corridor as seen to-day. Central on the south front (bottom in this view) is the Entrance Hall (now a courtroom), full width of the staircase from which an open screen separates it. Above the Hall, and supported on two concealed iron beams, is the Sheriff Clerk's Office. The Sheriff's Room is in the round tower at the southwest corner, the Sheriff Clerk's Room above it; the bay-windowed room on the left, overlooking the River Ness, is the County Committee Room; and in the northwest square tower (top left in this view) is the Judge's Room.

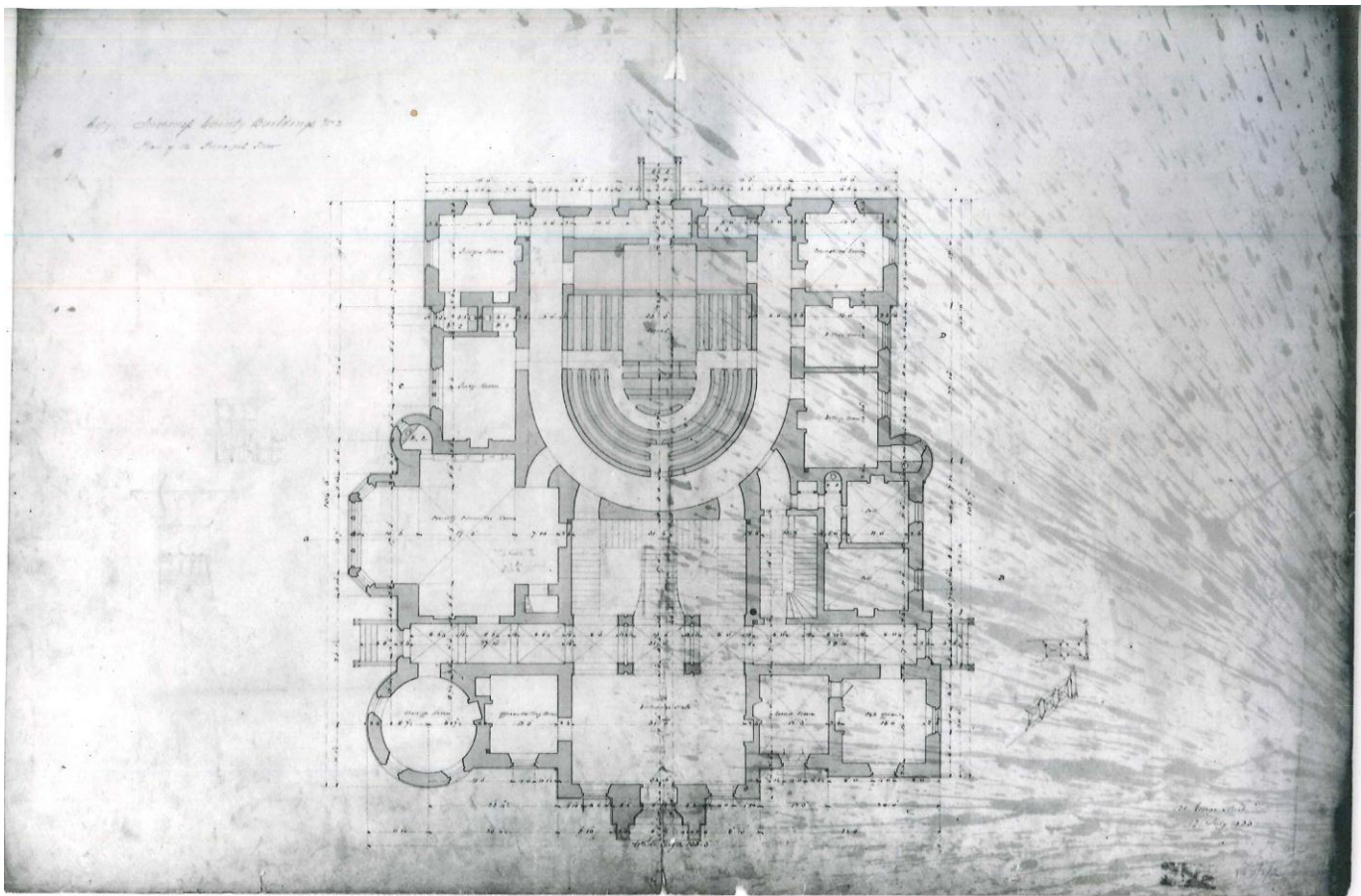


PLATE 6: UNEXECUTED DESIGN BY WILLIAM BURN FOR PROPOSED INVERNESS PRISONS (DATED 21 FEBRUARY 1843).

The site proposed was that on which the new prison was ultimately built, ie north of the Courthouse. Burn's design followed the Panopticon model whereby from one central axial viewpoint the building's corridors could all be viewed. The male prison was to the left, women's to the right, and exercise corridors and enclosed yards to their north on either side. A high perimeter wall was intended, with towers and dummy towers (that to left / west was to be a coal shed) and pointed outsets, thus extending the existing castellated picturesqueness of the site while ensuring no external walling was incapable of being seen from inside the prison walls.

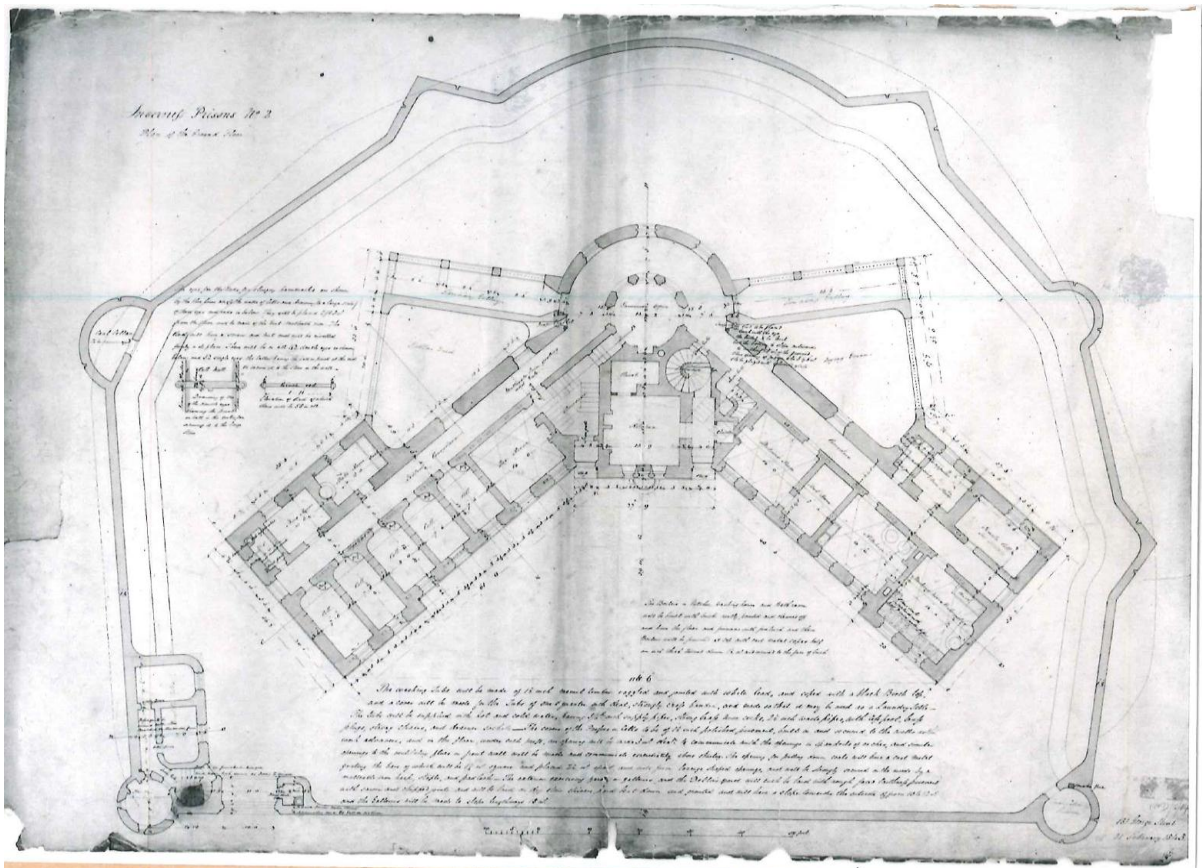


PLATE 7: NORTH TOWER, VIEW FROM SW

This view of the 1840s prison was made intentionally more picturesque by the intervention of Thomas Ogilvie of Corriemony. The architect's intention (compare preceding plate) had been the more predictable option of simply placing the prison central on the allotted site. Ogilvie suggested drawing the staff quarters and other functions to the site's western edge, above the steep slope down towards the river, for by doing so the site's visual potential and castle-like effect could be maximised. Some of the pointed ravelins may relate to the pre-existing fortifications, while the high wall between the main block and round tower (the other prison perimeter walling has been reduced in height) demonstrates the security required of the open area behind.



PLATE 8: NORTH TOWER, SOUTH FAÇADE.

This block was built to contain prison cells and thereafter altered significantly, probably around 1904 when the successor prison became operational and this building was given new uses. Most of the segment-arch windows seen here were originally shallow-depth iron-barred prison cell windows. Only one such window on this facade – seen bottom right in this view – now survives intact, complete with iron bars and iron-framed small-paned glazing. It survives only because its new role in the context of the alterations was to light a storage space underneath the stair which was installed to access the new courtroom. The other segment-arched windows have all had their sills dropped several masonry courses to make them ‘normal’ sized. Patches still seen on the ingoes show where the iron bars were originally and help confirm the interpretation of the building argued for here.



NORTH TOWER 9: VIEW FROM NORTHEAST.

In this view of the North Tower, the part nearest the viewer is intended to resemble a castellated towerhouse, while the more distant elements are part of the staff accommodation, composed more asymmetrically to create the picturesque view the castle has when viewed from across the River Ness. The windows on the far left and far right, together with the shorn stepped string course seen central, all suggest that the building was 3-storeyed originally. The high, single round-arched windows were installed probably around 1904 to light the new courtroom whose double-height ceiling meant this part of the building had to become 2-storeyed instead of 3. The low wall on the extreme right of this view, part of the old prison wall, used to reach originally as high as where the adjoining turret steps inwards (ie, above ground floor level).



PLATE 10: NORTH TOWER: PROBABLE PRISON CELL DOOR.

This narrow space opening southwards off the main centre corridor seems likely to have been a prison cell doorway originally; for frequently, cell doors were intentionally made particularly narrow for added security.



PLATE 11: NORTH TOWER: WINDOW INGOES ON SOUTH WALL.

The unusually-wide window arches and stub walling may mean this space was originally constructed as prison cells, each cell with a vaulted individual ceiling.



PLATE 12: NORTH TOWER: BLOCKED ROUND-ARCHED DOORWAY IN BASEMENT.

The basement spaces beneath the North Tower are on its western side and accessed from below the western turret. This doorway and wall closes the most distant, most easterly part of these spaces. It faces west.

The doorway's architecture conflicts with that of the North Tower in that it is round-arched and its dressed stones are red ashlar (ie, from a different quarry) with either three or four dressed faces as against the pinker stone of the main building whose ashlar has consistently four dressed faces. This is clearly therefore part of a predecessor structure incorporated in the 1840s work, and the scale of its ashlars indicates a high status structure; but further analysis is required before any confident suggestions of its origin can be made.



PLATE 13: 1950s AERIAL VIEW OF INVERNESS TAKEN FROM RAF AIRCRAFT



PLATE 14: KENNETH MACDONALD / COINNEACH DOMHNULLACH (1850-1921), CROFTERS' LAWYER, AND TOWN CLERK OF INVERNESS

Inverness courthouse and prison featured in the struggle for land reform in the Highlands, and in the 'Crofter's Wars' of 1882-83. Many of the crofters – such as those of Skibo, and those arrested following the 'Battle of the Braes' – were represented and defended by Kenneth MacDonald, both in the courtroom of Inverness and elsewhere. His contribution was recognised at the time, for to his pro-crofter friend Alexander MacKenzie, historian of the Clearances, MacDonald was 'an able advocate of the rights of the Highland people', and MacDonald featured affectionately as Coinneach Beag (= Wee Kenneth) in her song '*A' Chlach' agus Màiri* (= 'The Stone' [Clachnacuddin] and Mairi) by Màiri Mhòr nan Oran / Mary MacPherson, today famous for her pro-crofter political songs and activities.

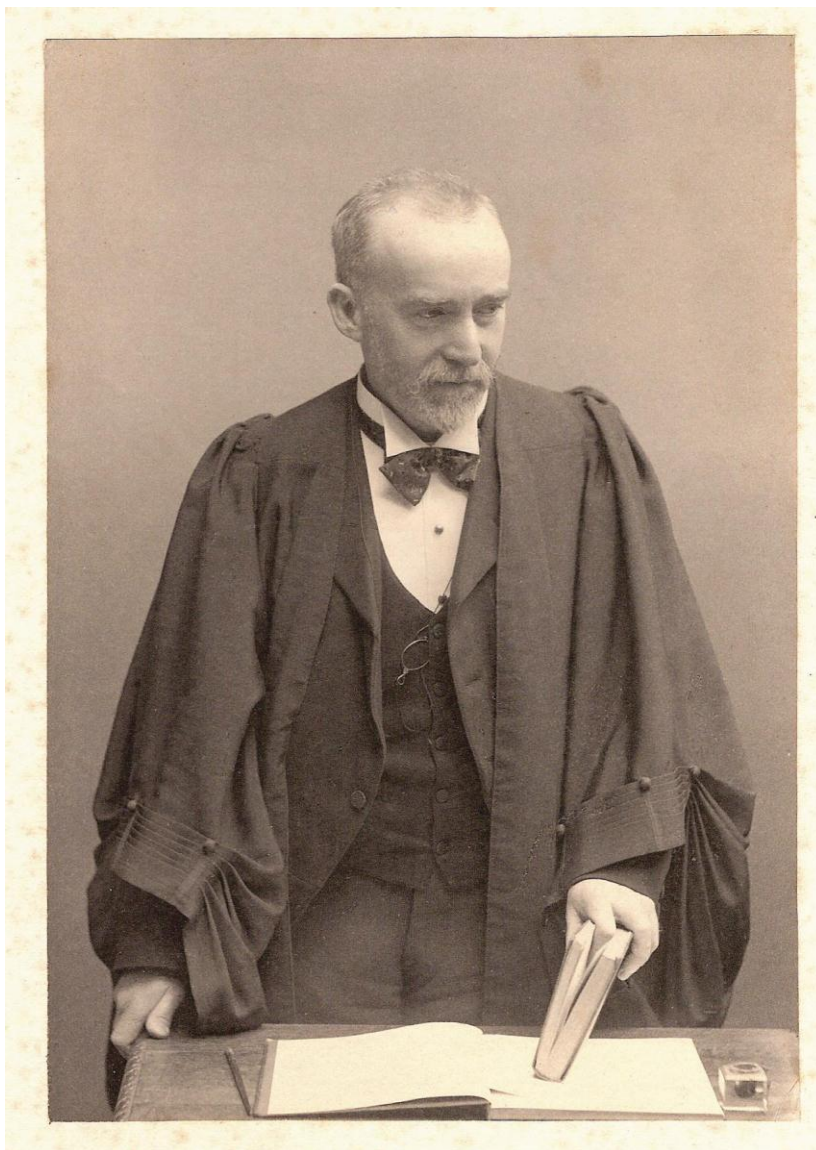


PLATE 15: INVERNESS CASTLE: SURVEY OF 1719 BY MILITARY ARCHITECT ANDREWS JELFE

Here the castle (its relationship to the town shown by the inset on the left) has angular renaissance-type fortifications, especially to its north (left hand side in this view), likely to date from the 16th or more probably 17th century. The construction date of the main tower is not known, but it was an unusually massive structure, unusual too in having a twin-pitched / M-shaped roof, the centre scale and platt stair possibly a 17th century intervention. The rank of north-facing top floor openings (top right in this view) were either the gunholes seen on the following image [see PLATE 10], showing that the castle had ceased its function as a residential tower and become military architecture; or, they were windows, suggesting a gallery (like that at Craigston) had once existed there. The oblique wing is difficult to comment on, but appears on some other views of the castle.

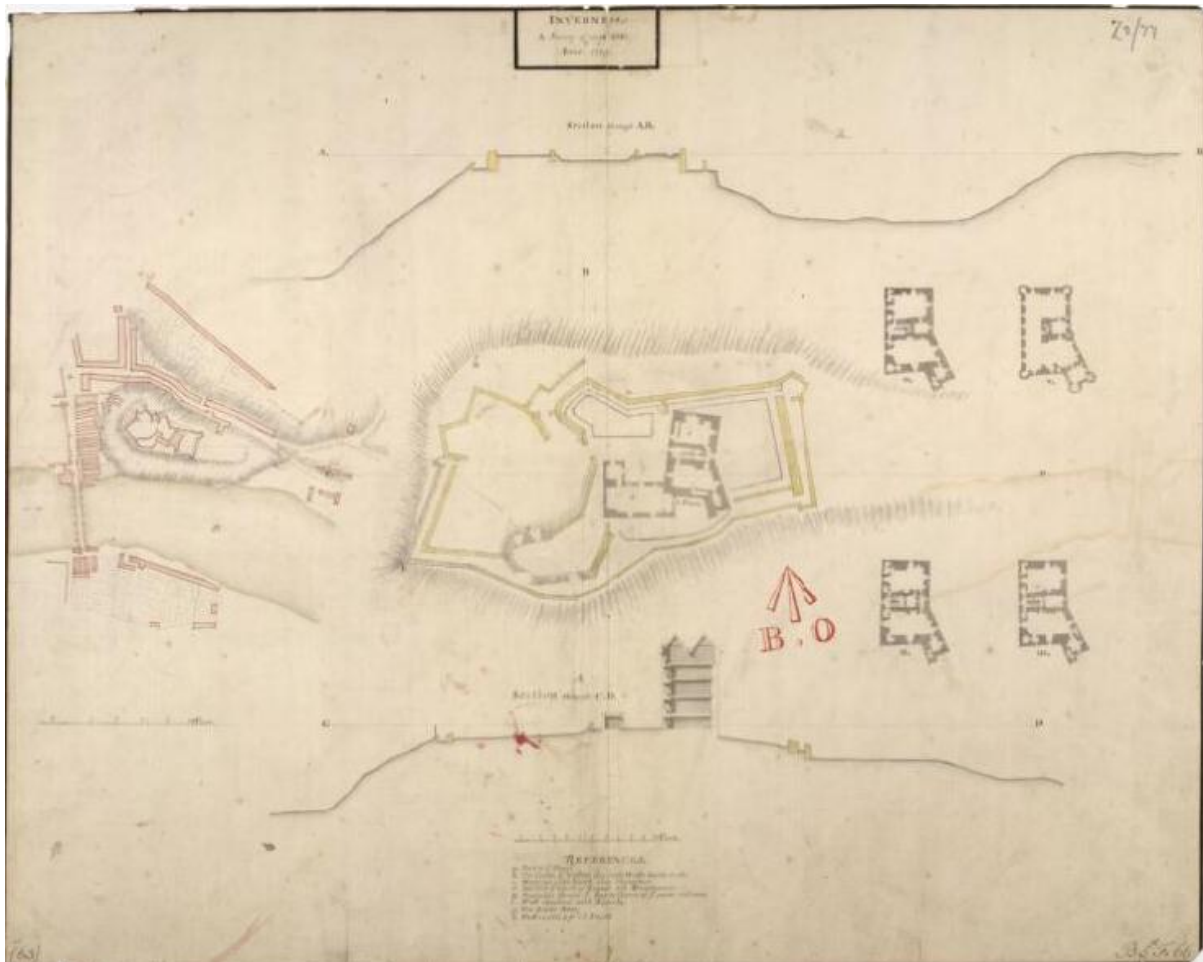


PLATE 16: INVERNESS CASTLE / 'FORT GEORGE'

At some point since the preceding drawing was made in 1719, the castle was re-named 'Fort George'.

This is an ambitious plan for modernising the castle's military capacity (undated; suggested to date from c.1730 by National Library of Scotland). The 'old Castle' was to be 'fitted up for the Officers', twinned barracks blocks for four companies, etc., were to be added.

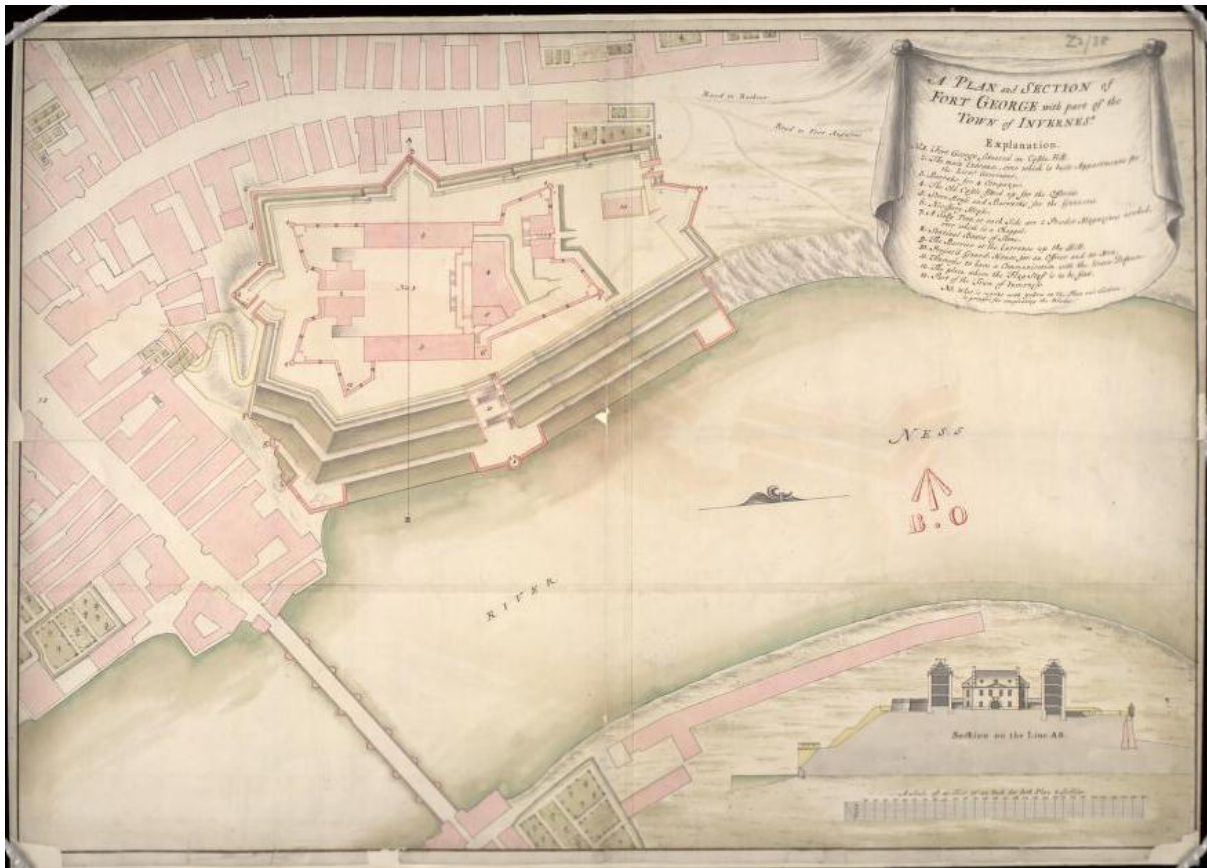


PLATE 17: INVERNESS CASTLE / 'FORT GEORGE'

1750 drawing by engineer William Skinner and draughtsman Charles Tarrant entitled 'Plan of Fort George at Inverness, Shewing its present Condition'.

This shows the devastation caused by the Jacobite assault of 1746. It confirms too that much of the intention shown on the preceding image was executed, including terracing (albeit, rudimentary-looking) above the River Ness and a stone bastion by the riverside.



PLATE 18: INVERNESS CASTLE / 'FORT GEORGE'

1750 drawing by engineer William Skinner and draughtsman Charles Tarrant entitled 'Fort George at Inverness'. This view also shows the devastation caused by the Jacobite assault of 1745. It shows the tower was left standing, but gutted, and the western (on this view, bottom right hand) barracks block largely gone. The regular window-bay spacing on the tower front, like the arrangement of superimposed identical spaces, indicates that the building had ceased to be a residential tower. The absence of gables, and an unusual rank of gunholes in the tower's parapets, suggest a flat roof had been created as a shooting gallery. This was the tower in its final iteration prior to its collapse in 1790 and removal.

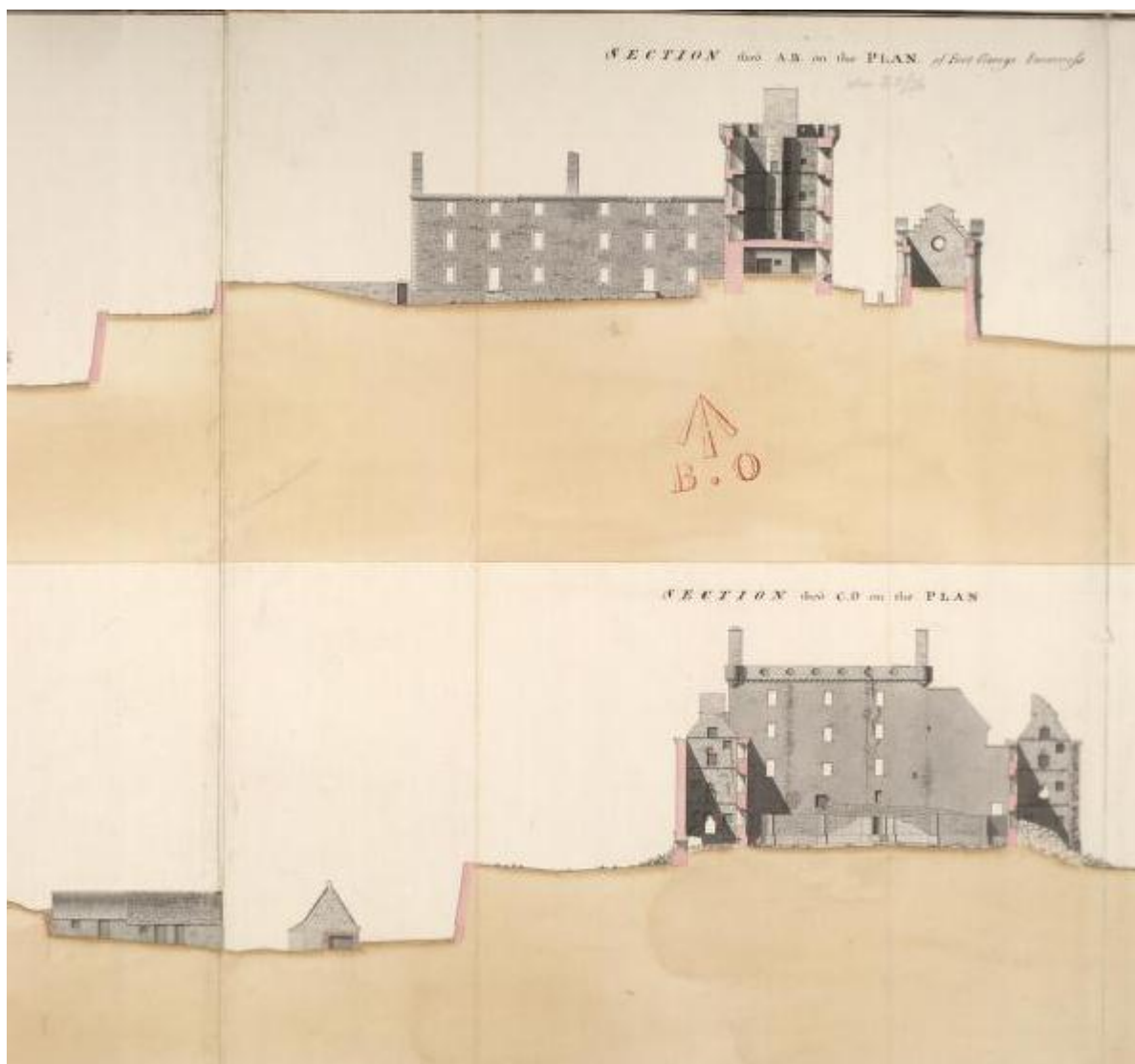


PLATE 19: INVERNESS CASTLE / 'FORT GEORGE'

Drawing of Inverness Old Castle by Jean Henri Bastide (undated; National Library of Scotland catalogue says c.1725). The military fortifications shown are slight in comparison with what ultimately was built. This predates the twin-gabled roof's removal, and shows a lofty turret set presumably above the stairs.

