

HIGHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL



FIELD MONUMENTS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

1 SITE CODE									
H	NM	9	6	S	E	0	0	3	
2 NGR		3 QUAL							
N	M	9	9	5	4	6	3	8	3
6 SITE NAME									
A	R	D	G	O	U	R	H	O	U
									*

4 DISTRICT LOCHABER				5 PARISH ARDGOUR							
7 AREA STATUS		8 SITE STATUS		9 REGIONAL STATUS							
11 CONCORDANCE OSNM 96 SE(M1) NMR		12 FORM STANDING STRUCTURE		13 DIMENSIONS 15.6m x 10.0m OVERALL							
16 RELATIONSHIP OF ELEMENTS RECONSTRUCTED IN 1825				17 CONDITION (1973) FUNCTIONAL							
10 GENERIC TYPE HOUSE, DWELLING								14 PERIOD/DATE MO/ 1765		15 DATING METHOD DOC.	
18 SHAPE								19 THREAT AND DATE			

20 LAND USE OPEN WOODLAND = LAND BUILT UPON				21 GEOLOGY							
22 SOILS				23 VEGETATION							
24 HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE				25 RELIEF LEVEL GROUND				26 ASPECT SW		27 ALTITUDE 20 = 30m O.D.	

28 EXCAVATION (EXCAVATOR: DATE: EXTENT: QUALITY)											
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

29 BIBLIOGRAPHY (AUTHOR: DATE: TITLE: JOURNAL OR PUBLISHER: VOLUME: DETAIL)											
1. RCAHMS: 1980: ARGYLL INVENTORY: HMSO: VOL. 3: pp227-8, No. 349 ILLUSTR.											
2. : 1855: ORIGINES PAROCHIALES SCOTIA: VOL. 2: PT1: p186											
3. ORDNANCE SURVEY: 1975: 1/10,000 MAP											

30 GROUND PLAN NO.						31 GROUND PHOTO NO.					
32 SLIDES NO.						33 HR. AP. NO.					
34 NMR. AP. NO.						35 OTHER AP. NO. SOURCE					
36 ARCHIVE AND LOCATION											
37 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY						38 SAMPLES					
39 PALYNOLOGY						40 NUMERICAL DATES: RANGE: LAB NO.					
41 SMALL FINDS								42 MUSEUM/LOCATION			
43 OTHER											

44 NAME & ADDRESS OF OWNER								45 ATTITUDE OF OWNER			
----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	----------------------	--	--	--

46 NAME & ADDRESS OF TENANT								47 ATTITUDE OF TENANT			
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	-----------------------	--	--	--

48 ACCESS & RESTRICTIONS											
--------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

49 NAME & ADDRESS OF FINDER/RECORDER: DATE						50 RECORDER: DATE SM: 3.9.1986			51 CHECK: DATE SM: 8.9.1986		
--	--	--	--	--	--	-----------------------------------	--	--	--------------------------------	--	--

52 TEXT "NM 9954 6383, Roofed Building, Ardgour House" (3) "See continuation card for text (1)"											
---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

6. " * Known until 18th c. as 'Cuil' or 'Cull'."

349. **Ardgour House.** This small mansion (Pl. 77B) occupies the site of an earlier residence, established as the principal messuage of the barony of Ardgour by a royal charter of 1542 and commonly known until the 18th century as Cùil or Coull.¹ The present house was built by Hugh MacLean, 12th of Ardgour, in 1765 and reconstructed by his son, Alexander MacLean, after being gutted by fire in 1825.

(1)

The Georgian house comprises a three-storeyed main block measuring 15.6 m by 10 m over all and having a square stair-tower placed centrally at the rear. The S-facing principal elevation is of five bays with rusticated freestone quoins and a moulded eaves-course, the remaining masonry being harled. Whereas all these features correspond with the original building-contract of 1765, the existing central fan-lighted doorway flanked by twin columns (Pl. 77C) evidently dates from the 1820s. At the same period symmetrical two-storeyed wings were added to both gable-walls, having a single window with Tudor drip-mould at each storey of the S elevation. These wings, as well as the main block, are hip-roofed. The original roof appears to have been of gabled form, and a central blocking-feature at the wall-head is also a 19th-century addition.

The interior was so severely damaged by the fire of 1825 that only the geometrical stone stair housed in the rear projection survives from the original building. Even this required renovation, for the existing metal balustrade with timber handrail is of 19th-century date. The principal apartments are the dining-room, at ground-floor level E of the entrance-hall, and the drawing-room which occupies the centre and W part of the first floor. The fittings of these rooms are typical of the 1820s with panelled doors and window-shutters of pine, moulded plaster cornices and simple chimney-pieces of polished sandstone. Although the internal plan was altered during rebuilding in the 1820s to provide corridors communicating with the wings added at that period, it is probable that the drawing-room has always occupied its present position. The 1765 building-contract shows that the first-floor rooms were to be loftier than those on the ground-floor.

The replacement of an earlier house, shown on Roy's Map of about 1750, was under consideration in 1763, when Hugh MacLean of Ardgour obtained estimates for quarrying sandstone near Kinlochaline, perhaps at Inninmore Bay (No. 383).² A contract for building the new house, at a price of £611 8s., was agreed in June 1765 with John Menclaws 'of Kirkmichael in Nether Coull' and David Girdwood, a Glasgow wright who had already been employed in alterations at Williamwood, Renfrewshire, another house belonging to Hugh MacLean.³ It was specified that freestone from the quarries at Inchinnan, Renfrewshire, was to be employed for the dressings. A work-force including four masons from Cowal, four from Glasgow and three from Edinburgh completed the shell of the house within six months, although the owner recommended that the principal timbers, floated down the River Lochy and Loch Linnhe from Achnacarry, should be allowed to stand for a year before the joists and roof were inserted.⁴

A serious fire in September 1825, which left the house gutted except for the principal stair, was followed by a complete remodelling of the interior and the addition of the flanking wings. The craftsmen employed were Alexander Squair, a builder-architect who apparently supplied the plans, and John Pender, a wright. Although the damaged house was repaired quickly enough for a plasterer, James Duffas from Forres, to be employed there during 1826, the construction of the wings prolonged the rebuilding to July 1830, when it was completed at a cost of £4124.⁵ The external appearance of the house, as shown in two anonymous pencil drawings dated 1850,⁶ survives unchanged, although minor alterations were made to the interior, especially to the wings, towards the end of the 19th century. The house remains the property of the family for whom it was built.⁷

995638

NM 96 SE

June 1973



¹ *Origines Parochiales*, ii, part i, 486.

² MacLean of Ardgour Papers, Ardgour House, estimate by John Thomson, 23 June 1763.

³ *Ibid.*, contract dated 10 June 1765. Menclaws described himself as 'mason in Greenock' when he contracted to build Balliveolan, Lorn, in 1768 (*Inventory of Argyll*, ii, No. 312). He may have been previously employed or resident at Kirkmichael, now known as Knockdow, in Cowal.

⁴ MacLean of Ardgour Papers, letters and accounts dated 7 August, 9 October, 9 November, 31 December 1765, 8 March 1766.

⁵ *Ibid.*, letters dated 3 September 1825, 26 January, 9 December 1826; 'Account of Ardgour House 1827' (covers period 1825-30).

⁶ Originals in Sandeman Library, Perth, 'Sketches, vol. 1'; copies in NMRS.

⁷ Cf. *Burke's Landed Gentry* (18th ed., 1865-72), iii, 285-6.