

Lews Castle and Museum, Stornoway

Evoking the past with a modern twist

£8.5m

/ Project value

August 2013

/ The build commenced

January 2015

/ The duration

Hailed as the “embodiment of heritage and modernity coming together”, Lews Castle is a RICS award-winning (Building Conservation) £8.5million redevelopment project of a Victorian Grade A listed visitor attraction. Situated on the remote Isle of Stornoway, an intensive 76-week build programme brought the mid-nineteenth century Castle dramatically back to life through the repair and restoration of the historic, and intricate, interior supplemented by the construction of a new build museum, archive facility, shop and ancillary accommodation.

The Brief

Centred on revitalising a dormant piece of history, the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, and its relevant funding partners, envisaged the repair and restoration of the Castle, complemented by the construction of new facilities, as a catalyst for regeneration, and prosperity, of the building, its expansive landscape and the wider community.



“I would have no hesitation in endorsing their capability and suitability to undertake similar projects involving historic buildings of significant scale”

Ian MacLeod
Economic Development Officer,
Special Projects Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

“GRAHAM has demonstrated a wide range of specialist skills and trades and has completed the main works contract to a high standard. They have met the challenges presented by the project through a collaborative and solution focused approach”

Ian MacLeod
Economic Development Officer, Special Projects Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

The Challenges

In a state of decay, the refurbishment of Lews Castle necessitated wholesale restoration - but with a delicate touch. Preventing damage to the neglected, existing finishes of the ground floor was imperative. As such the exposed ornate sections of the internal building fabric were protected by solid hoardings prior to the commencement of alteration works. Soft overshoes, and cotton gloves, were also worn by site personnel to preserve the historic flooring and wall finishes. This simple, but effective, approach helped reduce visible painting defects by 85%.

GRAHAM's added value solution

Evoking the spirit of its past but with a modern twist, the restoration of Lews Castle has returned this Stornoway centrepiece to its period splendour. Unoccupied for 40 years, the reawakened Castle, with its refreshed reception rooms and repaired high-quality bedrooms, essentially mimics its original use – that of a grand social venue. Despite the intricacy of our conservation programme, including the implementation of traditional paint techniques to restore the Victorian era decorative schemes, the project was completed within a 76-week timeframe. With a new glazed roof over the inner courtyard, works also included the construction of an escape stair, lift lobby and roof corrections. Complementing the Castle, and its picturesque landscape, we also constructed a new build museum, archive facility, shop and ancillary accommodation. The demolition of the childcare centre, extensive external works, landscaping and the formation of a car park were further elements of the award-winning development.

Outputs & Benefits

- / **Award Winning:** RICS 2016 winner in the 'Building Conservation' category
- / **Heritage and Conservation:** Specialist sub-contractors were utilised to undertake internal restoration including plasterwork
- / **Robust Planning:** Remote site location on the Isle of Stornoway demanded rigorous planning and procurement procedures
- / **Understanding the Environment:** Contractors wearing cotton gloves reduced visible painting defects by around 85%
- / **Considerate Constructors:** The project was registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme
- / **Local Engagement:** 62% of colleagues inducted on-site were local
- / **Innovative Solution To Complex Challenge:** A sustainable use for an unused building, considered an unsolvable problem for 40 years



For more information on how we're delivering lasting impact:

+44 (0) 28 9268 9500 info@graham.co.uk graham.co.uk

GRAHAM