

# Carbisdale Castle

Ardgay, Sutherland



Click to play video



---

# One of the Highland's Most Iconic Castles, occupying the most prominent position of any building in Scotland

---

Carbisdale Castle, Ardgay, Sutherland, IV24 3DW

Ardgay 5 miles, Dornoch 20 miles, Inverness 42 miles, Inverness Airport 49 miles

## *Features:*

Built for the Duchess of Sutherland

Sheltered the Norwegian's King during the Second World War

Category B listed for its architectural importance and the last castle to be built in Scotland to medieval specifications in the early twentieth century, built in Scottish baronial style with a magnificent clifftop setting and outstanding views

Over 41,000 square feet of internal accommodation laid out over two principal floors but with six floors in total including clock tower with functional bell and clocks

Approved consent includes the development of a basement level and clifftop spa and swimming pool facility

Mature grounds and wooded policies

A natural loch with peaceful wooded setting providing additional amenity and leisure opportunities

About 29 acres in total

Guide price: £5,000,000

---







*View looking east from Carbisdale Castle*



### *Situation*

Situated atop a natural escarpment overlooking the confluence of the Rivers Oykel and Shin, Carbisdale Castle occupies one of the most dramatic positions of any building in Scotland. Lying on the southern edge of the county of Sutherland, the site was deliberately chosen for its prominence by the estranged Duchess of Sutherland who commissioned construction of the castle commencing in 1905 as part of her divorce settlement from her husband, the 3rd Duke of Sutherland.

Though situated amongst the generally wooded slopes of the upper Kyle of Sutherland, the elevation of the setting affords panoramic views from throughout the castle with the easterly outlook over the Kyle of Sutherland to the Dornoch Firth and the westerly views up Strathoykel being particularly impressive.

Access by car is via a single track road with passing places which leads for about 5 miles from the village of Ardgay, which includes a shop providing basic provisions and a café.

With the site of the castle specifically chosen for the convenience of the nearby Far North Highland railway line which connects Inverness with Thurso and Wick in Caithness, this line remains in service with scheduled daily services to Inverness (or Thurso and Wick) accessible from the small station of Culrain lying close to the entrance to the castle drive. From Inverness, a sleeper service operates to London Euston, which facilitates traditional and

comfortable travel between the UK's capital and the north Highlands.

Inverness is the capital of the Scottish Highlands and a growing centre of commerce, together with being one of the most aspirational cities in which to live in the UK according to recent research. With wide ranging retail, banking, professional services, sports and leisure facilities, as well as a renowned theatre (the Eden Court Theatre), Inverness lies within an hour's drive of Carbisdale with its international airport lying a further 10 minutes (7 miles) to the east of the city.

Lying closer to hand are the towns of Dornoch (20 miles), Tain (20 miles), Dingwall (32 miles) and Strathpeffer (36) miles. Each has its own attractions in terms of recreation or practicality with Royal Dornoch golf course, the Carnegie Club at Skibo Castle (near Dornoch) and the Glenmorangie Whisky distillery and visitor centre at Tain being particular attractions.

Sutherland and the adjoining county of Wester Ross has been a world famous destination for enthusiasts of field sports since the 19th century. The Kyle of Sutherland rivers which enter tidal waters below Carbisdale Castle and include the renowned rivers Oykel, Cassley, Shin and Carron are amongst the most consistently productive salmon fisheries in Scotland. Carbisdale Castle is ideally located to benefit from this wealth of choice with fishing available to rent on both a daily and weekly basis on each of these rivers. Another local attraction is the Shin

Falls where leaping Atlantic salmon are a routine and spellbinding sight.

Sutherland is also world renowned for its trout fishing with the region allegedly having more hill lochs filled with wild brown trout than it has permanent human inhabitants.

The region is also famous for red deer stalking with a number of local estates offering sport to let on both a daily and weekly basis.

For golfers, there are local courses to test all levels of ability including the renowned Championship course at Royal Dornoch; the Carnegie Links at Skibo Castle, Golspie Golf and an enjoyable 9-hole parkland course at nearby Bonar Bridge.

For walkers, mountaineers and cyclists, there are various opportunities locally from 'Munros' such as Ben More Assynt, Ben Armine and Ben Wyvis to footpaths and woodland trails and an almost limitless network of forest tracks.

The wildlife and natural history of the area is also renowned with sightings of golden and sea eagles, ospreys, otters, pine martens and red squirrels being far from unusual at Carbisdale.

A popular feature of the North Highlands has been the development of the North Coast 500 tourist route which takes in some of the most spectacular landscape and coastline of Highland Scotland. Carbisdale Castle's proximity to this increasingly popular route may offer a commercial opportunity for purchasers, subject to the appropriate consents.



### Historical Note

Carbisdale Castle was built between 1905 and 1917 for Mary Caroline, Duchess of Sutherland, the second wife of George Sutherland-Leveson-Gower, 3rd Duke of Sutherland, whom she married in 1889. She is better known as “Duchess Blair” because of her first marriage to Captain Arthur Kindersely Blair of the 71st Highland Light Infantry, who died in a hunting accident in 1883 near Pitlochry. The marriage was not well liked in the Sutherland family and when the Duke died in 1892 his will, in favour of the Duchess, was contested by his son, the 4th Duke. In a court process that followed, the Duchess was found guilty of destroying documents in attempt of securing the inheritance and was imprisoned for six weeks in Holloway Prison, London.

Eventually, the Sutherland family came to an agreement giving Duchess Blair a substantial financial settlement. Furthermore, the family agreed to build a castle for the Duchess, as long as it was outside of the Sutherland Estate.

Selecting the most prominent and closest possible site that lay outside the Sutherland Estate, the Duchess employed a firm of Ayrshire builders and work started in 1906. It was located on a hillside to be visible to a large part of Sutherland, especially the main road and rail line which the Sutherland family would have to use to travel south. It was widely considered that the Duchess located the castle at Carbisdale to spite her husband’s family and the settlement agreement. This suggestion is further supported by the fact that the castle’s tower only

has clocks on three of its four faces - the side facing Sutherland is blank - allegedly because the Duchess did not wish to ‘give the time of day’ to her late husband’s family.

Colonel Theodore Salvesen, a wealthy Scottish businessman of Norwegian extraction, bought the castle in 1933. He provided the castle as a safe refuge for King Haakon VII of Norway and Crown Prince Olav, who would become King Olav V, during the Nazi occupation of Norway in World War II. During that time, the castle was also used to hold important strategic meetings. King Haakon VII made an agreement at the Carbisdale Conference on 22 June 1941 that the Russian forces, should they enter Norwegian territory, would not stay there after the war. Three years later, on 25 October 1944, the Red Army entered Norway and captured 30 towns, but later withdrew according to the terms of the agreement. After the Colonel died his son, Captain Harold Salvesen, inherited the castle and gave its contents and estate to the Scottish Youth Hostels Association (SYHA). Carbisdale Castle Youth Hostel opened to members on 2 June 1945.

The castle remained in the ownership of the SYHA until the costs of owning and maintaining the buildings and its contents became untenable and the castle was offered for sale.

It was purchased in 2016 by the current owner who has since embarked on an exciting and ambitious vision to return the castle from institutional and quasi-



commercial use as youth hostel and function venue to a private home of exceptional quality.

Listed Building Consent together with an extensive range of mechanical and engineering works have taken place but the project is currently on hold enabling the purchaser to complete it in accordance with their own specifications and intended future use of the property.

### The Property

Carbisdale Castle is an impressive and imposing large mansion house built in the Scottish baronial style on a precipitous site above the inner Kyle of Sutherland with outstanding views in all directions.

Grade B-listed by Historic Environment Scotland, the listing notes on the Historic Environment.

Scotland website describe the construction and architecture of the castle as follows:

*Large baronial mansion, roughly L-plan; 2-storey and attic. Bullfaced coursed grey rubble, contrasting polished sandstone dressings. Large entrance court enclosed by a retaining wall to the north and entrance to the west. The principal entrance is via the northern facade under a porte cochere and there is a further entrance in re-entrant angle with corniced door-piece in faceted angle tower rising as*

*crenellated octagon single stage above wallhead. High square clock tower at NW angle, with clock faces, corbelled upper stage with louvred tripartites, corbelled angle stair turret and small angle turrets to crenellated wallhead of N range Terraced south front with 3 wide canted bay windows rising full height, with corniced and parapetted wallheads and gabled dormers above; skews with kneelers, 1 further recessed gabled bay with 2 storey semi-circular bay. Most windows mullioned and transomed, some with 8-pane glazing, shaped gables with decorative detailing and finials; all original rhones and down-pipes; rainheads serving south elevation decorated with winged figures.*



*Corniced stacks; slate roofs. Round bullfaced diminutive turrets with crenellated parapet flank entrance to court; pair ornate wrought-iron carriage gates; small flanking wrought-iron pedestrian gate. Interior; large entrance hall with ornate Baroque chimneypiece decorated with figures and foliage. Wide staircase with Tudor balustrade with heavy carved detailing. Rich Jacobean plaster ceiling in library, with carved wood chimneypiece in similar style and original break-front bookcases. Adamesque 1st floor drawing room. Fine panelled doors, moulded doorcases, plaster ceilings.*

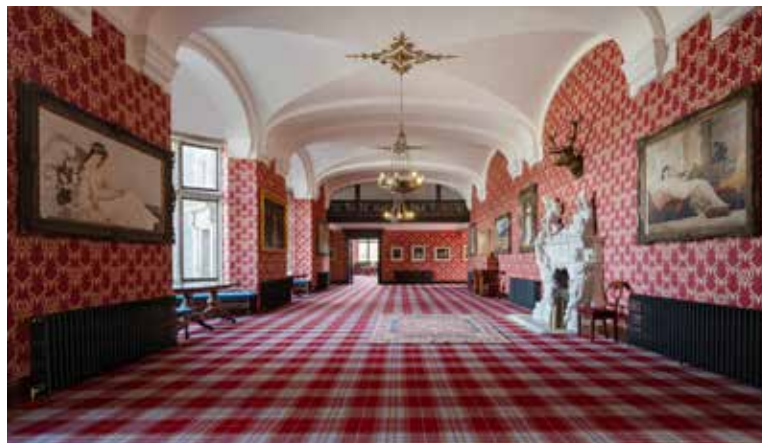


#### **Renovation Works**

The current owner has undertaken a vast restoration of key parts of the castle to turn it back into the historic castle that it once was. The intention of the project was to combine all of the decorative features and grandeur of the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland's original creation with services, systems, fixtures, fittings and layout of the highest contemporary quality together with reorganisation of the existing accommodation to suit 21st Century living and the potential development of a spa and swimming pool as complementary features.



The current position is that significant work has been carried out, and the castle will be offered with the remaining few bedrooms finished, together with the Wellness Suite to be completed by the existing owner, subject to contract with the full purchase price paid.

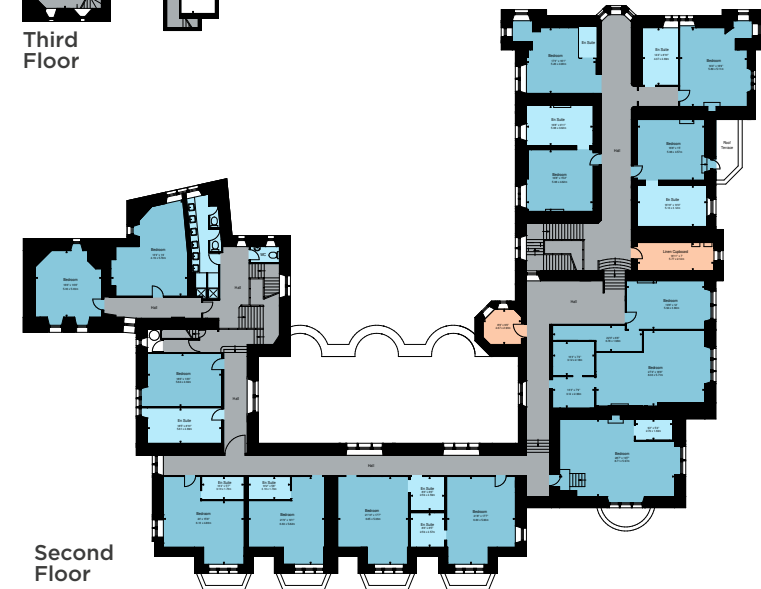
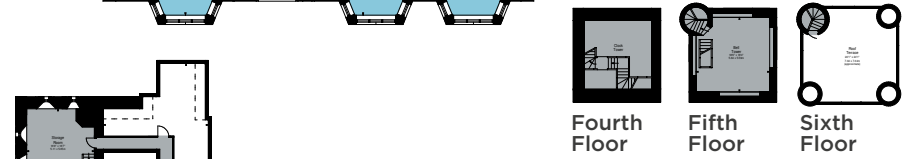
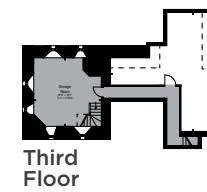
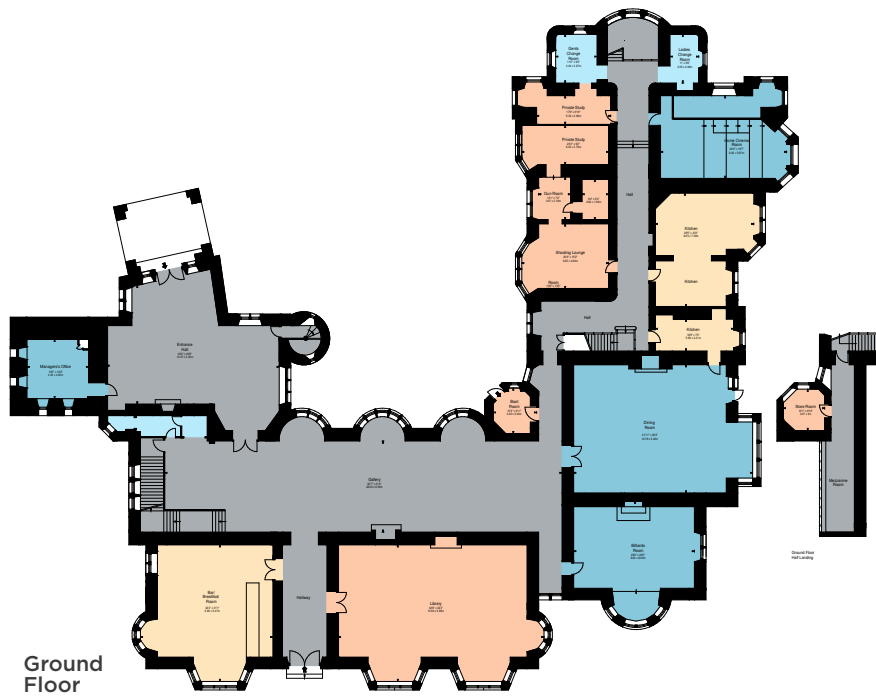
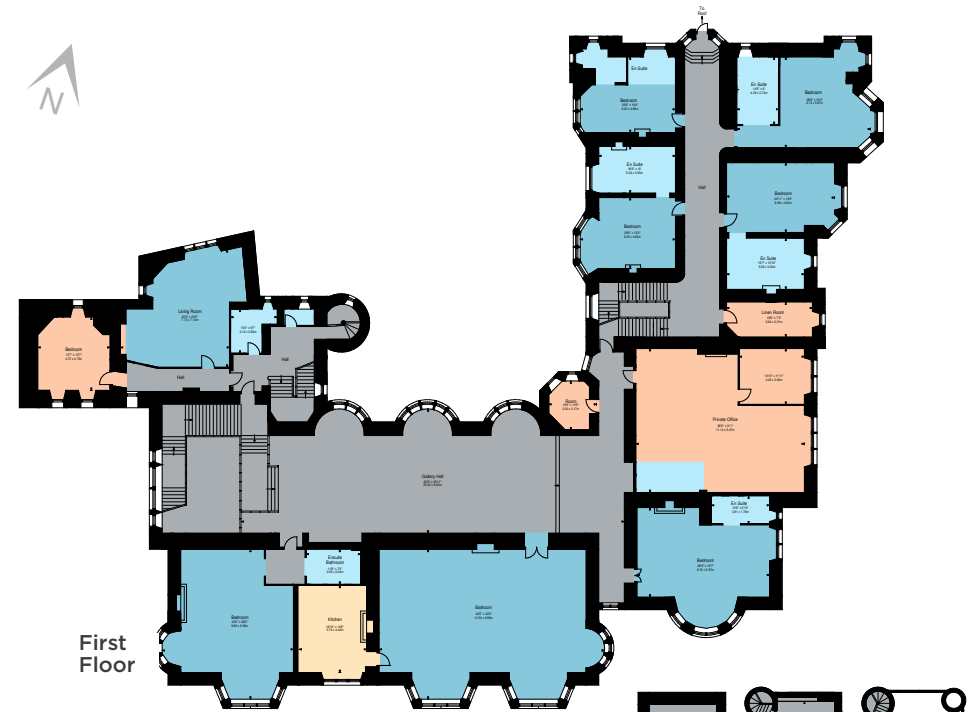
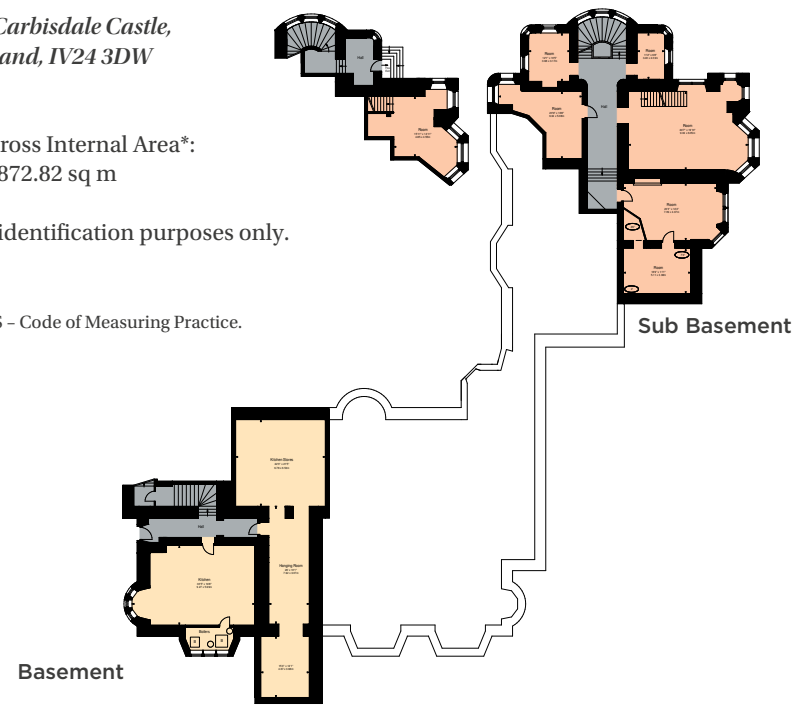


*Floorplans for Carbisdale Castle,  
Ardgay, Sutherland, IV24 3DW*

Approximate Gross Internal Area\*:  
41,688 sq ft / 3,872.82 sq m

Illustration for identification purposes only.  
Not to scale.

\*As defined by RICS - Code of Measuring Practice.





### *Grounds and Loch*

The total extent of land within the legal Title to Carbisdale Castle extends to about 29 acres and is shown on the Title plan included within these particulars of sale. The approach to the castle is via impressive entrance gates flanked by circular stone pillars with a drive which leads for about 800 metres to terminate at the enclosed gravel carriage sweep in front of the castle. A particular feature of the property is a natural loch which lies about 1km to the west of the castle accessible by a vehicular track over which the owner has a right of

access. Extending to about 6 acres in size with ownership including the belt of land and woodland which surrounds the loch, this is a notably picturesque and peaceful place to quietly contemplate life or cast a fly for the wild brown trout that occupy it. The former owner had a vision (but no formal plans) to erect a cabin, boathouse and jetty for picnics, barbecues and overnight 'glamping'.

There is currently a planning application for 12 one-bedroom lodges around the loch area.





**General Remarks and Other Information**

**Local Authority:**

The Highland Council  
Glenurquhart Road  
Inverness  
IV3 5NX  
Website: www.highland.gov.uk

**Council Tax:** Band C

**Historic Listings and Environmental Designations:**

Carbisdale Castle and its entrance gates are category B-listed by Historic Environment Scotland.

There are no Environmental Designations affecting the subjects of sale.

**Services:** The property is served by mains electricity and water, private drainage to septic tank and private gas-fired central heating system (to include five recently installed submerged tanks). We understand that the private drainage at this property may not comply with the relevant regulations. Further information is being sought.

**Note:** The services have not been checked by the selling agents.

**Fixtures and Fittings:** The sale includes the original Castle art collection and historic paintings, and especially designed and fitted Axminster Grade I Tartan carpets and extra thick stag and thistle wallpapering throughout the Castle, 17 fireplaces, some carved marble, are the best of anywhere in Scotland.

**Viewing:** Strictly by appointment with Strutt & Parker - telephone 0131 226 2500 or 01463 719171.

**Guide Price:** £5,000,000

**Solicitors:**

Gail Watt, Legal Director for Morton Fraser MacRoberts LLP, Quartermile Two, 2 Lister Square, Simpson Loan, Edinburgh, EH3 9GL  
Email: gail.watt@mfmac.com  
T: 0131 247 3178 | M: 07789 174 900

**Rights of Access and Title:**

A summary of the rights of access and other servitude rights affecting the property is available on request from the selling agents.

**Offers:** Offers should be submitted in Scottish legal form to the selling agents. Prospective purchasers are advised to register their interest in writing with the selling agents following inspection.

**Closing Date:** A closing date for offers may be fixed. The seller reserves the right to conclude a bargain for the sale of the property ahead of a notified closing date and will not be obliged to accept the highest or any offer for any part of the subjects of sale.

**Financial Guarantee/Anti Money Laundering (AML):**

All offers (regardless of the country of residence of the offering party) must be accompanied by a guarantee or appropriate form of reference from a bank which gives the seller the satisfaction that the purchaser(s) has access to the funds required to complete the purchase at the offered price.

In addition, the offerer must supply certified copies of his/her passport and confirmation of their residence in terms acceptable under AML legislation.

**Entry and Possession:** The date of entry is to be agreed by mutual agreement between the purchaser(s) and the seller.

**Health and Safety:** Given the potential hazards of inspecting a property which represents an active development project, we ask you to be as vigilant as possible when making your inspection for your own personal safety.

**Note:** if you require this publication in an alternative format please contact Strutt & Parker on 0131 226 2500.

**Special Conditions of Sale**

1. The purchaser of the property shall within five working days of conclusion of missives make payment as a guarantee for due performance of a sum equal to ten percent of the purchase price on which sum no interest will be allowed. Timeous payment of said sum shall be a material condition of the contract. In the event that such payment is not made timeously, the seller reserves the right to resile without further notice. The balance of the purchase price will be paid by Bankers Draft at the date of entry and interest at five percent above the Bank of Scotland base rate current from time to time will be charged thereon from the term of entry until payment. Consignation shall not avoid payment of the foregoing rate of interest. In the event of the purchaser failing to make payment of the balance of the said price at the date of entry, payment of the balance of the purchase price on the due date being of the essence of the contract, the seller shall be entitled to resile from the contract. The seller, in that

event, reserves the right to resell or deal otherwise with the subjects of sale as he thinks fit. Furthermore, he shall be entitled to retain in his hands the initial payment of ten percent herein before referred to which shall be set off to account for any loss and expense occasioned to him by the purchaser's failure and in the event of the loss and expenses being less than the amount of the said deposit the seller shall account to the purchaser for any balance thereof remaining in his hand.

2. The property will be sold subject to all rights of way, rights of access, wayleaves, servitudes, water rights, drainage and sewage rights, restrictions and burdens of whatever kind at present existing and whether contained in the Title

Deeds or otherwise, and whether formally constituted or not affecting the subjects of sale.

3. The seller shall be responsible for any rates, taxes and other burdens for the possession and for collection of income prior to the said date of entry.

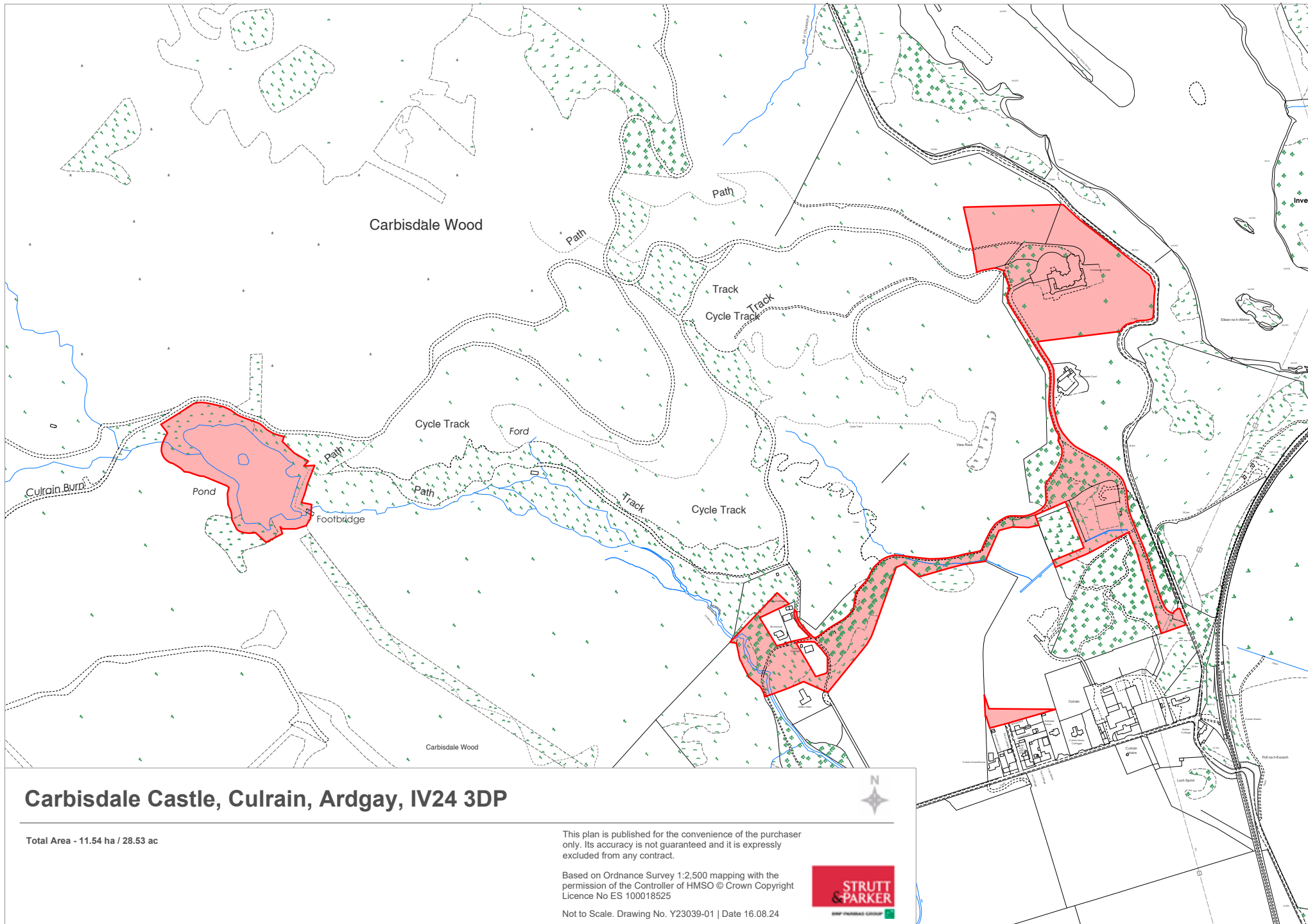
**Plans, Areas and Schedules**

These are based on the Ordnance Survey and Title Deeds and are for reference only. They have been carefully checked and computed by the selling agents and the vendor's solicitor and the purchaser shall be deemed to have satisfied himself as to the description of the property and any error or mis-statement shall not annul the sale nor entitle either party to compensation in respect thereof.



*Westerly view from the Clock Tower*





## Carbisdale Castle, Culrain, Ardgay, IV24 3DP

Total Area - 11.54 ha / 28.53 ac

This plan is published for the convenience of the purchaser only. Its accuracy is not guaranteed and it is expressly excluded from any contract.

Based on Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 mapping with the permission of the Controller of HMSO © Crown Copyright Licence No ES 100018525

Not to Scale. Drawing No. Y23039-01 | Date 16.08.24





---

**Strutt & Parker London**  
43 Cadogan Street, London, SW3 2PR

+44 (0)20 7591 2213  
london@struttandparker.com  
struttandparker.com

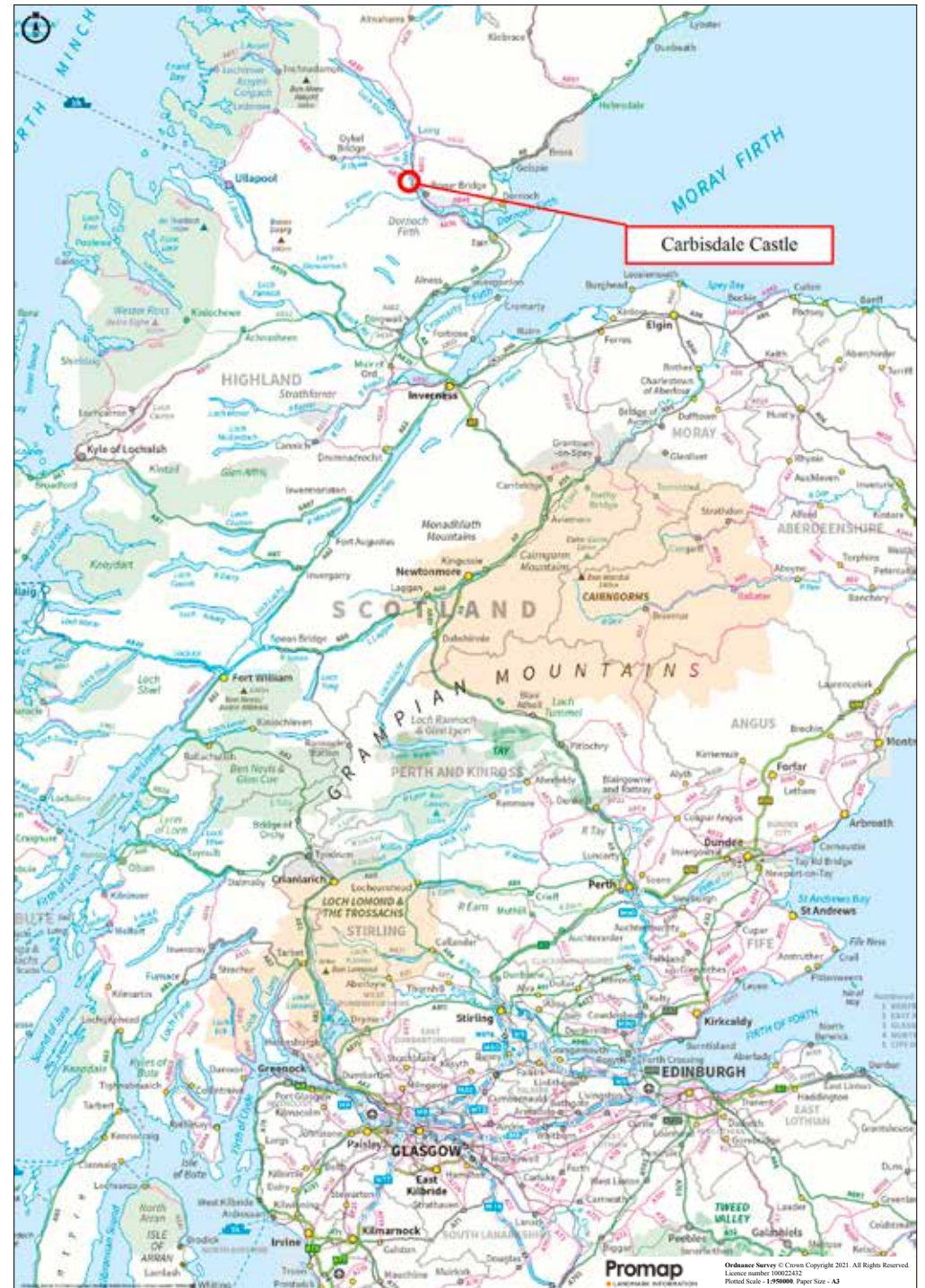
**Strutt & Parker Edinburgh**  
76 George Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3BU

+44 (0)131 226 2500  
edinburgh@struttandparker.com  
struttandparker.com

Over 50 offices across England and Scotland,  
including Prime Central London

---

IMPORTANT NOTICE Strutt & Parker gives notice that: 1. These particulars do not constitute an offer or contract or part thereof. 2. All descriptions, photographs and plans are for guidance only and should not be relied upon as statements or representations of fact. All measurements are approximate and not necessarily to scale. Any prospective purchaser must satisfy themselves of the correctness of the information within the particulars by inspection or otherwise. 3. Strutt & Parker does not have any authority to give any representations or warranties whatsoever in relation to this property (including but not limited to planning/building regulations), nor can it enter into any contract on behalf of the Vendor. 4. Strutt & Parker does not accept responsibility for any expenses incurred by prospective purchasers in inspecting properties which have been sold, let or withdrawn. 5. We are able to refer you to SPF Private Clients Limited ("SPF") for mortgage broking services, and to Alexander James Interiors ("AJI"), an interior design service. Should you decide to use the services of SPF, we will receive a referral fee from them of 25% of the aggregate of the fee paid to them by you for the arrangement of a mortgage and any fee received by them from the product provider. Should you decide to use the services of AJI, we will receive a referral fee of 10% of the net income received by AJI for the services they provide to you. 6. If there is anything of particular importance to you, please contact this office and Strutt & Parker will try to have the information checked for you. Photographs taken August 2024. Particulars prepared August 2024. Strutt & Parker is a trading style of BNP Paribas Real Estate Advisory & Property Management UK Limited.







For the finer things in property.



BNP PARIBAS GROUP 