

Press Release
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MAJOR RESTORATION SIGNALS POSITIVE FUTURE FOR FORT AUGUST HOTEL

A famous Highland hotel where railway travellers used to come to gaze at the majesty of Loch Ness has been restored to its former glory with a refurbishment worth in excess of £3/4 million.

The fortunes of the 29-bedroom hotel, Lovat Arms, which is situated where the old railway line to Fort Augustus ended, are set to be transformed by Caroline Gregory, whose father David and mother Geraldine have previously successfully developed the Kinlochbervie Hotel in Sutherland, and The Torridon in Wester Ross.

Caroline, 27, said: "We can really see the potential in the Lovat. It used to be the biggest hotel in the area 15 years ago before its reputation waned, but we believe we can revive its fortunes. It can again be the hub of the village it once was."

The hotel has been fully rewired, windows replaced and all the bedrooms and bathrooms have been completely refurbished. A significant major improvement is the new heating system. A £32,000 fully automated wood chip burner uses renewable energy while the latest computerised technology controls the temperature in the bedrooms and public areas, saving on unnecessary heat loss throughout the day.

Caroline added: "We are part of exciting times in Fort Augustus, with the Glendoe Hydro scheme going on nearby and the on-going re-development of the Abbey into luxury apartments.

"We want to attract tourists who are travelling through the Highland and who want that little bit of extra quality at a good price. We think people will use the hotel as a base for a few days while they tour the area.

"Our next move will be to make the hotel look more attractive externally and make the grounds look better too, improving the car park, signage and undertaking additional landscaping. We have the old Fort wall in the grounds and may highlight that more."

The refurbishment has seen the hotel's traditional Victorian surroundings complemented by natural décor and modern bedrooms equipped with the latest technology.

The hotel restaurant has been awarded an AA rosette and is on the cusp of being awarded two. It has been awarded three accommodation stars by the AA and will hopefully get the more prestigious three red stars.

Caroline added: "We plan to open all year round. We are in a service industry and I think people expect us to be open in the winter as well as in the summer. We are also fully equipped to cater for business clients, from small meetings to larger scale conferences. We have already hosted several very successful conferences and have secured other bookings in the coming months.

David and Geraldine Gregory's other daughter, Rohaise, runs The Torridon with her husband, Daniel Rose-Bristow.

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- Further details on the hotel at www.lovatarms-hotel.com
- Further information and photographs from Caroline Keith at the **Keith** consultancy on 01463 811000 or 07734 543 923 or at caroline@thekeithconsultancy.co.uk