

# Non-habitable Protected Structures

## CHAPTER 14





*Many structures make impressive ruins. In some cases restoration may be the preferred option where the ruins character can be retained. Other ruinous structures may be more appropriate for consolidation as ruins where restoration would require loss of historic fabric and largely conjectural reconstruction. Care should be taken when considering the most appropriate approach concerning ruins which stand as landmarks of the past – religious, industrial, social or political icons*

Non-habitable protected structures may pose different conservation problems to other structures because of the nature of their construction or use. Some frequently encountered types are dealt with in this section. Where proposed works under consideration concern the repair of structures, the appropriate methods are described elsewhere in these guidance notes.

#### 14.1 Ruinous Buildings

14.1.1 There are many ruinous structures throughout the country including a variety of building types such as castles, houses, churches and cottages. Proposals concerning works to such structures are likely to fall into one of three types:

- a) proposals to demolish the structure;
- b) proposals to consolidate the ruin, or
- c) proposals to restore the ruin and bring it back into use.

14.1.2 In the case of ruins which are recorded monuments in addition to being protected structures, it should be noted that there are separate additional procedures under the National Monuments Acts for notification to the statutory authority to be followed.

#### Demolition

14.1.3 There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of all protected structures and demolition may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Some structures may have been added to the Record of Protected Structures as ruins; other protected structures may, through major accident, have become ruinous.

14.1.4 A proposal to demolish a ruin, where the demolition would adversely affect the character of an adjacent protected structure or of an ACA should be carefully considered. For example, a ruin may be part of a streetscape or may be a folly building, or eye-

catcher; designed to be viewed from a distance as part of a designed landscape or it may be a local landmark.

- 14.1.5 An applicant may be able to produce a convincing case for demolition following major accidental damage to the ruin, perhaps through storm or fire damage, which has destroyed its character and causes it to pose a danger to the public. But any such proposals should be carefully scrutinised by the planning authority and expert advice may be required with regard to structural stability. Where an application is made to demolish or dismantle (whether in whole or in part) a protected structure that is a ruin, based on reasons of structural instability, the onus should be on the applicant to prove that the proposals are valid and all relevant matters have been properly addressed. A record should also be kept of that structure if permission is granted for demolition or dismantlement.

#### Consolidation of ruinous buildings

- 14.1.6 There are cases where a structure of definite architectural, artistic or historical interest, such as a ruinous towerhouse, country mansion or church, cannot be restored and brought back into use without compromising its special interest or character. This will often be the case with structures which have stood for a considerable time as ruins. In order to prevent further deterioration of the protected structure, it may be proposed to consolidate the fabric as it stands and to preserve the structure as a ruin.
- 14.1.7 It should be a condition of permission for works to consolidate a ruinous structure that the methods used would not cause unacceptable damage to the character of the protected structure or an undue loss of historic fabric. The methods and detailed specification should be approved by the planning authority before any works commence. In some cases, even the removal of ivy or other vegetation from a ruinous building may have consequences for its structural stability and proposed methods of work should be carefully scrutinised.
- 14.1.8 Where a masonry wall has lost its facing or the core of a wall needs to be consolidated, proposals may be made to grout the rubble-core filling. The use of inappropriate materials such as strong cement-based grouts or poor work methods will damage the protected structure, often irreparably and, in extreme cases, may lead to the collapse of the structure. The applicant should be able to show that the proposed method of grouting will not endanger the structural stability of the wall.



*In this instance, a ruined markethouse marks the centre of a planned village. Despite its ruined state it forms a local landmark which, if lost, would remove the focus of the historic townscape*



*Ivy has been removed from this mediaeval mural tower after an detailed record was made of the fabric to ensure that potential loss or damage to the stonework could accurately be remedied, reusing the historic fabric without resort to conjecture*



*Care should be taken to match repairs to the existing in terms of materials and workmanship. This mediaeval doorway was rebuilt using an inappropriate cement mortar. The stones above the point of the arch have been set in a random pattern and finished with wide joints quite unlike the surrounding stonework*

14.1.9 Proposals may be made to take down and re-erect all or part of the walls of a ruinous structure where the walls are failing. Such proposals should generally only be permitted where it can be shown that the structure is in danger of collapse and no other option is available. It should be a condition of permission that the structure be fully recorded before dismantling is allowed to commence and be rebuilt using a maximum amount of the original material. In cases where there is good quality masonry, the stones should be individually numbered before being carefully dismantled to be re-erected in the same location.

14.1.10 In the consolidation of ruinous structures, attention needs to be paid to wall tops and openings as these areas are most vulnerable to water penetration and frost attack. However, works should not damage the fabric and appearance of the protected structure. The use of hard cement-based mortars may trap water against the surface of the wall or within the core of the wall and so promote decay. Where it is proposed to provide added protection to exposed parts of the ruin in the form of copings, flashings or mortar, these should not damage the fabric or appearance of the structure. Similar consideration should be given to proposed flashings which turn down over mouldings, cornices or the like and may unacceptably distort the proportions of the moulded work.

#### Restoration of ruins

14.1.11 Works involved in rebuilding or restoring a ruin have the potential to alter materially the character of a structure but are always preferable to demolition. Each case will have to be judged on its merits. It will rarely be possible to bring a building that has stood for a long time as a ruin back into use without the replacement of certain amounts of the original fabric. Proposals to restore a ruinous structure should not involve an unacceptable amount of alteration or loss of important historic fabric.

14.1.12 Where permission is granted, it should include conditions to repair and retain as much of the historic fabric as possible. The methods of rebuilding, and the materials used should not cause damage to surviving earlier work that contributes to the character of the protected structure. The applicant should be required to use expert advice in identifying original or early fabric. There may be traces of paint, plaster or render coatings to internal or external walls, which should be recorded and/or preserved.



*Exposed wall heads are generally the most vulnerable parts of a ruined structure. The method proposed to cap exposed wall heads should not result in water being trapped inside the core of the wall and should be visually acceptable. In some cases, the ruinous structure may need to be monitored over a period of time before a decision can be made as to what work might be appropriate*



*Some ruins may require careful dismantling and re-erection of parts of walls that have become unstable. In this case, apart from the repair work required to the gable (containing pigeon nesting boxes), it is intended to re-roof the building. Where it is appropriate to re-roof a ruinous structure, the aim should be to retain the maximum amount of original fabric*

14.1.13 The location of new floors and partitions, even where no remnants of the original remain, should not conflict with existing openings or other original fabric. Where ruinous buildings are to be restored or reconstructed, proper survey records and drawings should be included as part of the planning application, distinguishing existing fabric from proposed new work, to enable the planning authority to assess the potential impact of the interventions. In each case the planning authority will have to assess the appropriateness of the approach, be it in contrasting (modern) or replicating (historical) style. A decision will be needed as to whether or not such interventions ought to be physically distinguished from the old work or recorded by documentation. Modern materials, such as steel structural elements, may be used where they are not visually disturbing, would not damage the historic fabric, nor adversely affect the character and special interest of the protected structure.

14.1.14 Restoration may require alterations in order to allow the building to function properly. Such proposals may include the application of external render on stone-walled structures such as towerhouses. Where such proposals are made, the onus should be on the applicant to prove the appropriateness of the proposals. For example, there may be evidence that the building was originally rendered or, even where such evidence has not been found, it may be shown that the application of an appropriate external render is necessary adequately to weatherproof the building.

## 14.2 Bridges

### IDENTIFICATION OF FEATURES FOR PROTECTION

14.2.1 There is a rich heritage of bridges throughout the country that requires careful consideration when any repair or alteration work is proposed. With the closure of some railway lines, many associated bridges and viaducts became redundant but nonetheless stand as important landmarks throughout the countryside and are of importance to the country's civil engineering heritage. On the other hand, proposals to upgrade other railway lines and roads may bring about proposals for changes to historic bridges.

14.2.2 Bridges which are protected structures may include road, rail and canal bridges, aqueducts, viaducts and footbridges. They may incorporate features of special interest including abutments, parapets, cut-waters, refuges, balustrades, string courses, railings, lamp standards, plaques and paving. Where such features exist they should be identified and conserved.



*Bridges are primarily functional structures, however many of them are also aesthetically pleasing. On a finely detailed masonry-arched bridge, features of special interest may include abutments, parapets, cut-waters, string courses and paving*



*Ireland has a strong civil engineering heritage of railway bridges constructed of masonry, metal or a combination of both. Iron and steel bridges often contain decoratively finished elements, makers' stamps and other features that add to their special interest. Many masonry bridges incorporate datestones sometimes including details of their designers*

14.2.3 Many early bridges are constructed of stone, either rubble stonework, ashlar or a combination of both. Iron and early steel bridges are less common and are usually associated with railway construction. Often a combination of iron and stone was used in the building of a bridge or viaduct. Early concrete bridges are relatively rare and should be carefully conserved. Timber bridges are also rare though timber components may be incorporated (in features such as handrails) in bridges built primarily of other materials.

### CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS REGARDING BRIDGES

14.2.4 Proposals to reinforce, widen or infill sections of a bridge which is a protected structure, resulting in the concealment of any part of it, should be treated with caution. Where reinforcement is proven to be unavoidable, efforts should be made to ensure that the least possible structural and visual damage is caused to the bridge.

- 4.2.5 Proposals to reinforce, widen or infill sections of a protected bridge will require alterations to the character and quality of the structure. Where the impacts are likely to be substantial and would damage the character and integrity of the protected structure to an unacceptable extent, alternative solutions should be explored.

### 14.3 Harbours, Canals and Associated Features

#### IDENTIFICATION OF FEATURES FOR PROTECTION

- 14.3.1 The structures and features of interest associated with harbours and canals which should be protected could include quay walls, slipways, docks, dry docks, lifting bridges, locks, piers, jetties, breakwaters and associated buildings such as warehouses and boathouses.

- 14.3.2 Protection could also extend to features such as cranes, other machinery, bollards, lamp standards, chains, harbour lights, navigational structures or buoys and other items which may or may not be original to the construction of the harbour or canal but which contribute to the appreciation of the protected structure and should be retained.

#### CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

- 14.3.3 Where it is necessary to infill a harbour, dock, canal or lock the works should as far as practicable be reversible; for example, the use of loose fill would allow for later reinstatement of the protected structure. Any other proposed works should have the minimum possible impact on the protected structure. Expert advice may be necessary to evaluate such proposals.

### 14.4 Street Furniture and Paving

#### IDENTIFICATION OF STREET FURNITURE OR PAVING FOR PROTECTION

- 14.4.1 An item of street furniture may be protected by being included in the RPS in its own right where it is special or rare; as part of the curtilage of a protected structure; or as part of an ACA. Such items could include lamp standards, seats and benches, bollards, railings, street signs, iron signposts, free-standing or wall-mounted post boxes, telephone kiosks, horse troughs, water-pumps, drinking fountains, jostle stones, milestones, paving, kerbstones, cobbles and setts, pavement lights, coal-hole covers, weighbridges, statues and other monuments.



*The removal of parapet walls to provide cantilevered walkways should be carefully examined because of the potential impact on the fabric and appearance of important historic bridges. If bridges were altered in this manner in the past, the opportunity might be taken to restore parapets previously removed, where this can be accomplished and without resort to conjecture*



*The construction of safe harbours necessitated great engineering skills, which were matched by the stone-cutting and laying skills of the masons who quarried and cut the stones for massive harbour and quay walls and piers. Lighthouses, boathouses, lifting bridges and breakwaters are often integral parts of harbours and quays and add to their special interest*



*The machinery associated with canals, harbours and ports is often now redundant and liable to being removed or damaged. However many such items add to the special interest of a historic industrial area even where the site is no longer in industrial use*



Many items of street furniture were fabricated locally in long-vanished small factories or workshops using locally-available materials, which gives them a social and historical interest in addition to creating regional design differences, as is evident in this Carlow granite fence



Damage caused to historic paving stones by repeated lifting can lead to breakage of individual stones. The replacement of areas of lost stone with concrete should be avoided as it significantly degrades the appearance of a historic pavement



Where new paving is required, the opportunity may arise to have a pavement designed especially to suit the character of the area. This paving outlines the site of excavated Viking housing and is interspersed with inset bronze plaques depicting finds made during archaeological excavations in the area

### CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

- 14.4.2 Proposals to remove or relocate items of street furniture or other features should not be granted permission without consideration of all the implications. Statues or monuments may close a vista. Other items of street furniture, such as jostle stones or weighbridges, may have close historical associations with an adjacent building.
- 14.4.3 Proposals to replace historic or rare items of street furniture such as telephone kiosks, post boxes or lamp standards should be resisted by the planning authority. Traditional paving elements are important to their locality and should generally be retained where found and not moved to alternative locations which are perceived as more prestigious or as having more character.
- 14.4.4 Historic street furniture and paving should be protected from accidental damage. Where planning permission is granted on a site adjacent to protected items of street furniture or paving, these elements should be sheltered from damage for the duration of the site works.
- 14.4.5 Regular or repeated lifting of historic paving for the installation and maintenance of public utilities is likely to cause damage and should only be carried out with due care and, if necessary, expertise. Where new utilities are to be installed, these should generally be located away from areas of historic paving whenever possible. If appropriate, the installation of bollards or other deterrents may be considered to prevent damage to important paving or street finishes.
- 14.4.6 Where it is proposed to pedestrianise a street in an ACA, or one that contributes to the character of a protected structure, it may be preferable that it should simply become a street without traffic rather than be converted into a new landscaped area which could adversely affect the character of protected structures or the character of an ACA. All original surfaces and finishes should be retained and protected. New paving materials should preferably be of natural materials, sourced locally and appropriate in scale and colour to the street.
- 14.4.7 New items of street furniture, which will impact on the character of a protected structure or of an ACA, should be appropriately and sensitively designed. The design of these objects need not imitate historical styles or detailing in order to be considered acceptable. The design and location of any proposed traffic-calming measures such as ramps, bollards or traffic islands should be carefully considered.



*New street furnishings do not have to be 'traditional' in style or material to be considered appropriate. The use of modern designs and materials may provide a satisfying visual counterpoint to the historic setting*



*Whether small urban squares or airy expanses of open ground, parks add considerably to the character of an area and contribute much to the social life of the place. The features that are integral to the park or which have been added over time will usually be significant to its special interest, as will be important layouts or planting*

**14.5 Parks**

- 14.5.1 Buildings or structures within a public park may be protected individually. A park may be an important element within an ACA.
- 14.5.2 Features of a park which should be identified and protected could include gates and gateways, pavilions, bandstands, shelters, greenhouses, statues, fountains, pools, bridges, terraces, steps, seating, and paving. Where these features are of quality and interest and are original or early additions to the park, permission should not usually be given for their removal or replacement. Where an original or an important layout or planting substantially remains, it should be conserved. Care should be taken not to allow the obliteration of evidence of historic landscaping when new works are being carried out.

**14.6 Burial Grounds**

- 14.6.1 A historic burial ground, or features within it, may be protected in its own right, as part of the curtilage or attendant grounds to a protected structure such as a church or mausoleum or as an ACA. Additionally, where a graveyard comes under the category of a protected site under the National Monuments Acts, the requirements of those Acts must also be complied with where any works are proposed.
- 14.6.2 There may be many features associated with the burial ground which should be respected and retained, including boundary walls, gateways, lych gates, mausolea, memorials, box tombs, architectural iron or stone burial enclosures, gravestones, steps and paving. There may be associated buildings or the ruins of such buildings, for example, gate-lodges or mortuary chapels, which should also be protected.
- 14.6.3 Where extensive works are proposed, a comprehensive survey of the burial ground and its features may need to be carried out in advance of any works commencing. In any case, the layout of the burial ground should be respected and existing pathways retained wherever possible. Proposals to 'tidy up' protected burial grounds that involve moving or reconstructing box tombs, gravestones or memorials, levelling the ground, or altering the boundary walls should not be generally permitted. The use of mechanical diggers within a historic burial ground should not be permitted where they could damage any features of interest above or below ground.



*Many graveyards include important funerary monuments, such as this impressive eighteenth-century pyramidal mausoleum. They may also include gravestones with finely carved inscriptions, all of which have architectural as well as social and historical significance*



*While there is generally a respect in communities for burial grounds, the wish to maintain them should not lead to over-enthusiastic or misguided 'tidying-up' works or the uninformed reconstruction of damaged memorials. Where repairs are planned to damaged memorials, all fragments should be identified and reset using an appropriate mortar, and any poorly executed previous repairs rectified, if this can be achieved without further damage. Specialist advice will usually be required*

- 14.6.4 Gravestones and memorials in old burial grounds are of immense historical, social and artistic interest and can be important sources of information to local historians and others. They should be treated with great respect, carefully maintained and re-erected where they have fallen. They should not be moved unnecessarily in order to facilitate activities such as grass cutting. The use of broken or dislocated headstones as paving should not be permitted. Where dislocated headstones or flat stones have been used historically as paving and where inscriptions or carvings survive, consideration should be given to preserving these either by removing them to a safe location or by re-routing paths to avoid future erosion by foot-traffic.

