



A Guide to Protected Structures



WHY PROTECT OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS?

The lands and coast of Fingal has attracted human settlement for millennia and these people have left behind a legacy in the buildings they constructed as places to live, work, worship, learn or used for leisure and recreation. The historic buildings that have survived to the present day (be they churches, castles, thatched cottages, farm houses & farm outbuilding complexes, large country estates, harbours, bridges, schools, libraries, historic terraces and townhouses) help create the special and unique character of a place. They contribute to the attractiveness or charm of a street, town, village or rural area, and often are key landmark buildings. There is a sense of history to them that they have stood for so long with some having specific associations with significant events or personalities of the past.

Many of the traditional materials and craft skills used to build them are no longer common practice and so they give us an insight into construction methods of the past that used locally sourced materials such as thatch, mud, lime, stone, and timber that still survive and function centuries after. The elaborate decoration of some show true artistry in the sculpting of stone, carving of timber, mounding of decorative plasterwork, or creation of stained glass windows that is rarely seen nowadays in modern construction.

They can demonstrate the evolution of technical or innovative advances in construction methods. They can also be a rare or unique example of their structure type and so their loss or inappropriate alteration can have far-reaching implications. Their retention and re-use embodies the principles of sustainable development of not discarding or wasting resources. The protection of our historic buildings by designating Protected Structures is to ensure that we safeguarded our architectural heritage into the future for the next and subsequent generations.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A PROTECTED STRUCTURE?

A protected structure is a building or structure that has been identified as being of special

- Architectural Interest
- Historical Interest
- Archaeological Interest
- Artistic Interest
- Cultural Interest
- Scientific Interest
- Social Interest
- Technical Interest

A Protected Structures does not necessarily have to be attractive to look at to merit protection but could be of interest as an example of a rare or declining building type in the county, or may be a simple structure that has an association with a significant historical person or event or has a very special meaning to the local community, or it can be an example of innovative construction methods for its time.

The protected designation covers all parts of the structure that contribute to its character and special interest and so (unless otherwise specifically stated in the description in the Record of Protected Structures) includes the exterior, interior, fixture and fittings, the land within the curtilage (boundary), and any ancillary buildings within the curtilage.

HOW IS A BUILDING ADDED TO THE RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES?

Every local authority is legally obliged to have a Record of Protected Structures. Additions to the Record of Protected Structures can be made during the review of the Fingal Development Plan or outside of this time by using Section 55 of the Planning and Development Acts. The first step is to visit and assess the structure. A judgement is then made whether the structure is of sufficient special interest to continue with the process to add it to the Record. If it is decided to proceed to



propose an addition to the Record an official notice is served on the owners and occupiers to inform them of this and a time period is stated in which they can make submissions or objections. Once this time has passed a report is presented to the local councillors at a full council meeting, setting out the reason for the proposed addition and also details of any submissions made. A decision is then made by the local councillors whether to add the structure or not. Another notice is then issued to the owners and occupiers to inform them of the final decision.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR AN OWNER OR OCCUPIER?

Protected Structure status does not stop the development or alteration of a property. However, if works are to be carried out on a protected structure they shouldn't damage or remove the elements that make it of special interest or contribute to its character and so consultation should take place with Fingal County Council, either through

- Discussions with the Conservation Officer on the proposed works
- Planning application process where planning permission is required
- Section 5 Declaration - where the local authority is asked to determine if specific works require planning permission
- Section 57 Declaration - where a list is provided by the Conservation Officer after an inspection of the property of the general types of works that can be carried out without materially affecting the character of the Protected Structure

Some works that are normally considered exempted development may require planning permission when taking place to a protected structure. The types of works where planning permission would generally be required are:

- New build or extension to a Protected Structure (irrespective of size)
- Demolition works to, or within the grounds of, a Protected Structure
- Changes to the internal layout of a Protected Structure (such as sub-division of rooms or breaking through new openings)
- Changes to or removal of the historic materials of the Protected Structure (such as roof covering, windows and doors, wall finishes, plasterwork, internal joinery, plasterwork and other decorative features)

Owners and occupiers must also make sure that the protected structure is not endangered (i.e. not harmed, damaged or allowed decay) through neglect or through deliberate actions and works.

IS THERE ANY ASSISTANCE FOR OWNERS AND OCCUPIERS?

FUNDING - Monies have been available over the years through various schemes operated by Fingal County Council or by other agencies to assist owners with the costs of repairs and conservation works to the original fabric of Protected Structures. The Conservation Officer should be contacted to check what schemes are available in a given year. Please note that many schemes have a closing date for applications in the first months of the year.

CONSERVATION ADVICE & PUBLICATONS - The Conservation Officer is available to answer owners and occupiers queries on appropriate repairs, acceptable interventions or works to Protected Structures and to attend pre-planning consultation meetings. The Conservation Office will produce a Section 57 Declaration where requested or help identify funding opportunities. The Department of Arts,

Heritage and the Gaeltacht have also produced an advice series to guide works and repairs to historic buildings which can be downloaded for free from the Built Heritage Publications section of the Department's website.

RELAXATION OF RURAL HOUSING POLICY- A number of Protected Structures within the Fingal area have outbuildings and farm structures associated with the main house. Due to changing farm methods, some of these buildings no longer have an economic function within the rural economy. Within the Fingal Development Plan under the policies on Rural Living the sensitive conversion of these Protected Structures from agricultural to residential use can be considered without the applicant having to meet the requirements of Fingal's Rural Housing Policy.

If you have further queries please contact:

Helena Bergin,

Architectural Conservation Officer,

Architects Department,

Fingal County Council,

County Hall,

Main Street,

Swords

Co. Dublin

Tel. 01-890 6790

Email: helena.bergin@fingal.ie

Website: www.fingal.ie/planning-and-buildings/architectural-conservation/

