

NEW ROSS TOWN WALLS Conservation Plan



Prepared for
**New Ross Town Council
and The Heritage Council**

Alastair Coey Architects

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	Page 1
Terms of Reference.....	1
The Steering Group.....	1
The Consultancy Team.....	1
Legal Status.....	1
Objectives of the Conservation Plan.....	2
Methodology.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	2
HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN WALLS.....	Page 3
A VISION FOR THE WALLS.....	Page 6
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOWN WALLS.....	Page 7
Statement of Significance.....	7
Threats to Significance.....	7
GAZETTEER.....	Page 9
Layout of the Walls.....	9
Zone 1.....	10
Zone 2.....	10
Zone 3.....	11
Zone 4.....	11
Zone 5.....	12
Zone 6.....	12
Zone 7.....	13
CONSERVATION POLICIES.....	Page 14
Explanation.....	14
Basis of Approach.....	15
Relationship between Assessed Level of Significance and Policy.....	15
Management.....	16
Continuity of Conservation Advice.....	17
Review of Policies.....	17
Maintenance , Repair, Remedial Works and Associated Health and Safety Issues.....	17
Archaeology.....	17
Planning.....	17
Stabilisation.....	19
Access.....	19
Interpretation.....	20

Interventions and Enhancements.....	21
Ecology.....	21
Work to the Walls.....	21

BIBLIOGRAPHY	Page 23
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INTRODUCTION

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Conservation Plan for the Town Walls of New Ross was commissioned by New Ross Town Council, working in partnership with the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN). The plan has been prepared by Alastair Coey Architects, which was appointed in September 2007. The Plan provides the background to a Management Plan, which was commissioned at the same time, and which will take into account the policies outlined in this document.

THE STEERING GROUP

The Conservation Plan was evolved in consultation with a Steering Group consisting of the following people:

- Gerard Mackey, Town Clerk, New Ross Town Council
- Cllr. Ingrid O'Brien, Cathaoirleach, New Ross Town Council
- Jim Sutton, New Ross Historical Society
- Andrew Minihan, New Ross Historical Society
- Fiona Fenlon, Assistant Planner, Wexford County Council
- Keith O'Brien, Wexford Borough Council
- Alastair Coey, Alastair Coey Architects

THE CONSULTANCY TEAM

The team leader was Alastair Coey. Expert opinion was provided by the following people:

- ARCHAEOLOGY - Claire Walsh
- ECOLOGY - Paul Murphy
- HISTORICAL CONTEXT - Katey Gregan

LEGAL STATUS

The upstanding remains of New Ross Town Walls are designated as a Protected Structure, and as such are awarded statutory protection under the terms of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The Act establishes a framework for the protection of the structure from loss or damage and confers a duty of care on owners. All works to the structure, including those normally considered exempt, are subject to development controls except where a Declaration of Exempted Development has been requested under Section 57 of the Act. Unauthorised removal or demolition of any part of the structure may be viewed as a criminal offence.

The remains of New Ross Town Walls are contained within a Zone of Archaeological Potential, which is a national designation included in the Record of Monuments and Places, conferring protection under the terms of the National Monuments Acts 1930-1994 and the Planning and

Development Act 2000. An Archaeological Impact Assessment Report may be required to accompany planning applications within or adjacent to the Z.O.A.P.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN

The purpose of the Conservation Plan is to identify the significance of New Ross Town Walls, the threats to significance, and to propose policies for the future protection and management of the Walls.

METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was adopted in the preparation of the plan.

Each expert was briefed as to the required input in the context of the Conservation Plan and visited New Ross prior to preparation of their focussed reports.

A photographic record was prepared.

A public meeting was held on 18th October 2007. Members of the public were invited to attend this meeting, through a newspaper advertisement and other media publicity. Elected representatives and other key people were invited by letter.

Approximately twenty people attended the meeting, including representatives from the local community. A list of attendees was retained.

Steering Group meetings were held on 8 November 2007 and 7 February 2008 at which the team leader reported on progress and issues emerging from the research were debated and discussed in detail.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The lead consultant wishes to thank all who contributed to the preparation of this Conservation Plan. The members of the Steering Group gave freely of their time.

We are grateful to the expert members of our team who provided important and pertinent input to the study on a wide range of issues.

We would also acknowledge the contribution of members of the public who attended the public meeting or contacted us to impart their memories of, and opinions about, the Town Walls and their views as to where their future might lie.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN WALLS

The Norman town of *Ros Mhic Triuin* was one of the first Irish towns to be developed by the Normans. It is traditionally believed to have been founded by the Earl of Pembroke, William Marshall, his wife Isabella de Clare, daughter of Strongbow and Eva MacMurrough, between 1192 and 1207. The town was developed in a strategic location near the manorial centre at Old Ross and was intended to serve as a port for the Marshall lands of the Barrow, Nore and Suir valleys. By 1210 William Marshall had built so fine a bridge that the new town became known as *Ros ponte* and subsequently *New Ross*. By the first half of the thirteenth century New Ross had established itself as a successful port due to its key location. By the end of the century custom returns showed that it was the busiest port in Ireland.



Figure 1: OS Map, 1841

The town itself was without defences until the late thirteenth century when the *'frequent inroads and predatory excursions of the neighbouring Chieftains'* and a feud between the Fitzmaurices and the De Burghs in 1264 convinced the inhabitants of the necessity to construct a defensive wall. A Norman poem of 1265, preserved in the British Museum, gives a remarkable contemporary account of the erection of the fortifications of New Ross. It was written in the French tongue by Friar Michael "Bernardi", of Kyldare and provides many illuminating details: *'They made a resolution thus: that a wall of stone and mortar they would build around the town, for that war was causing them concern. At Candlemas [2 February] they began; to mark out the fosse they went, how the wall was to go, the chief citizens went to mark it out...they summoned labourers directly...but the hired men got little done. They sat in Council and discussed the plan as never was [put into effect] in England or France...on Monday to begin with the vintners would go to the fosse...from daybreak till the stroke of three...on Sunday the ladies go...to heave the stone and carry it out of the fosse...declaring that they will built a gate...the fosse is 20 feet [6m] deep and extends for a full league [c.4.5km]. When it is complete there will be no need to have a watch; they can sleep soundly – no on should blame them for wanting to enclose their town; when the town is securely closed and the wall encircles it, completely, not an Irishman in Ireland will be so bold as to dare attack it.* (BM Harl, MS Sheilds 1975-6, 28-32)

With the construction of the town defences in 1265 the town began to take on a new meaning and a distinction between those living "within the walls" and those "without the walls" began to appear in documents. In 1279 the burgesses had holdings 'inside and outside the wall'(Colfer 2002 173). It was at this time that Irishtown to the north developed as a distinct suburb. In 1282 one of the town gates was known as Earl's Gate and by 1320 murage tax was being levied. The charter granted to New Ross in 1283 gave specific permission for the extension of burgages by the reclamation of land from the river. It also stipulated that the burgage plots should be 20 feet wide, many of which were still evident in the first edition ordnance survey map.

The potential earning power of such a successful port was reflected in a bitter dispute which persisted between the port of New Ross and the King's port of Waterford. Trade restrictions introduced to limit the success of New Ross, combined with political unrest, saw a slow decline in the prosperity of New Ross from the fourteenth century onwards.

The town was burned by Art McMurrough in 1394, as an opening shot in his war against Richard II. It was besieged by the Earl of Ormond on behalf of Charles II, as part of the long complex war that followed the uprising of Confederate Catholics in 1641. While Ormond failed to take the town it had little choice but to surrender to Cromwell six years later. In 1798 much of the town was destroyed in a bloody battle and over 2,000 people were killed in little more than 24 hours.

In 1537 the town is described as *'good haven and well walled but desolate of inhabitants'* (Thomas). In 1577 *'the walls stand to this day, a few streets and houses in the town, no small part thereof is turned to orchards. The greater part of the town is steep and streaming upwards.'* (Thomas). A description of 1684 by Robert Thomas Leigh, Esq. of Rosegarland confirms that the town had not recovered by this date: *"New Ross is surrounded with a strong wall, built of lime and stone, seated upon a rock, which is cut on the outside of the wall in the nature of a ditch and adds much to the strength of it. It is in circumference above a mile, and is fortified by the*

waterside by a citadel and fort, and has twelve strong towers or castles, and four gates to the land side, besides some slips to the waterside. The town so much remains thereof built, being about 150 stone houses, slated, and as many thatched ones, lies on the side of a steep hill or rock, shelving down to the river which lies to the west of it and is navigable for ships of great burden....”

The earliest known plan of New Ross dates from 1649 and was reproduced by Hore in his *History of the Town and County of Wexford Old and New Ross*, 1900. It was drawn to facilitate a planned assault on New Ross by the Ormondite forces following the capture of the town by the Commonwealth troops. The plan shows the D-shaped enclosure of the walls with a grid pattern of streets. The map shows three water gates on the quay with the block house at the southern end and a parallel tower to the north, five gates and five towers are illustrated.



Figure 2: Sketch map c.1649, after Hore

In 1873 Lewis in his *Topographical Dictionary* records that two of the five town gates survived at this date, “*Bishops to the north retains proof of its magnificence - portcullis and roof of archway delicately groined ; Priory or South Gate lately removed...*”(Thomas).

Notes from the Royal Society of Antiquaries in 1896 explain that the Bishop's Gate was rebuilt in the early part of the fifteenth century by Richard Barrett, Lord Chancellor of Ireland and Bishop of Ferns, who resided at Mountgarrett Castle, near New Ross, and was in the habit of passing through this gate to officiate in St. Mary's Church. “*Of the walls traces can be found in many places, and one of the towers that guarded the town wall is in excellent preservation*”. (Notes on the Visit of the Royal Society of Antiquaries to the Co. Wexford. “Journal,” July 1896, pp. 196-4)

In 1885 Bassett described the town wall as “*Beginning at John's Gate, near the site of the Abbey of St John, the old town wall may be traced through the grounds of Airmount, within view of the handsomely-situated residence of Mr William Stephens. From that point it runs to the top of Goat Hill, where the original fosse affords sweet pasture for the useful animals who have given an undisputed name to the locality*”. (Bassett 1885)

Despite the intact nature of the walled circuit at the end of the nineteenth century, a number of housing developments and new infrastructure in the town in the twentieth century resulted in the loss of much of the town wall. Today, only fragments of the town wall survive at intervals along the former circuit.

A VISION FOR THE TOWN WALLS

The remains of the Town Walls of New Ross will be preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors and will be maintained to the highest possible conservation standards. Where feasible, access to the remains of the town walls will be promoted.

The vision has been evolved by the Steering Group after consideration of the issues highlighted during the course of the consultation process.

In order for this Conservation Plan to become an effective tool in the delivery of this vision a number of actions need to be prioritised. Most important is establishing a clear and strong executive management structure for the future care of the walls. Closely associated with this will be acceptance and implementation of the guidelines contained in the Management Plan which has been prepared in parallel with the Conservation Plan. Thirdly the method of resourcing the implications of both documents will need to be resolved.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOWN WALLS

The general approach to assessing the nature of the significance of the Town Walls of New Ross is adapted from that set out in The Conservation Plan by James Semple Kerr. It relies on an understanding of the physical attributes, uses, relationships and associations of the place up to and including the present.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Sections of the Town Walls are identified as Protected Structures in the New Ross Town Development Plan 2004-2010.
2. New Ross' walls are an important survival and reminder of the first town to be built and fortified by the Anglo-Normans in Ireland.
3. The Town Walls of New Ross are significant in that the date of their construction is known from the unique surviving source of a medieval poem, and confirmed by other documentary evidence.
4. The area enclosed by the town walls of New Ross is one of the largest in Ireland. This reflects the strength of the new town during the thirteenth century and the optimism for its future expansion and growth. New Ross remains one of Ireland's leading ports today and is the most inland port in Ireland.
5. The core of the modern town preserves the layout of the medieval settlement with its main street running parallel to the quay.
6. The upstanding wall, and below ground archaeology adjacent to it, provides evidence not only for building techniques, but also for many aspects of social life in Irish history.
7. The existence of town walls was, and still is, an important psychological factor in appreciating the nature of New Ross and its subsequent history. Returning them to public consciousness as a valued and prominent feature of the town would be a stimulant to civic pride in an ancient community and give opportunities for the informed and sympathetic creation of new spaces and ideas in the developing modern town and strengthens the cultural heritage appeal of the town.

THREATS TO SIGNIFICANCE

The principal threats to the contextual significance of the Town Walls are:

1. Lack of knowledge and failure to appreciate the asset.
2. Incremental degradation of the remaining historic fabric as a result of

natural weathering and erosion and mechanical damage caused by traffic and other uses.

3. Neglect or inappropriate management and maintenance regimes.
4. Inappropriate development which may have adverse visual and other impacts upon its setting.
5. Loss of potentially important open space adjacent to the walls.
6. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour resulting in physical damage and under-use.
7. Inappropriate modern interventions such as street furniture including seating, signage and railings.
8. Health and safety measures which might compromise authenticity.

GAZETTEER

LAYOUT OF THE WALLS

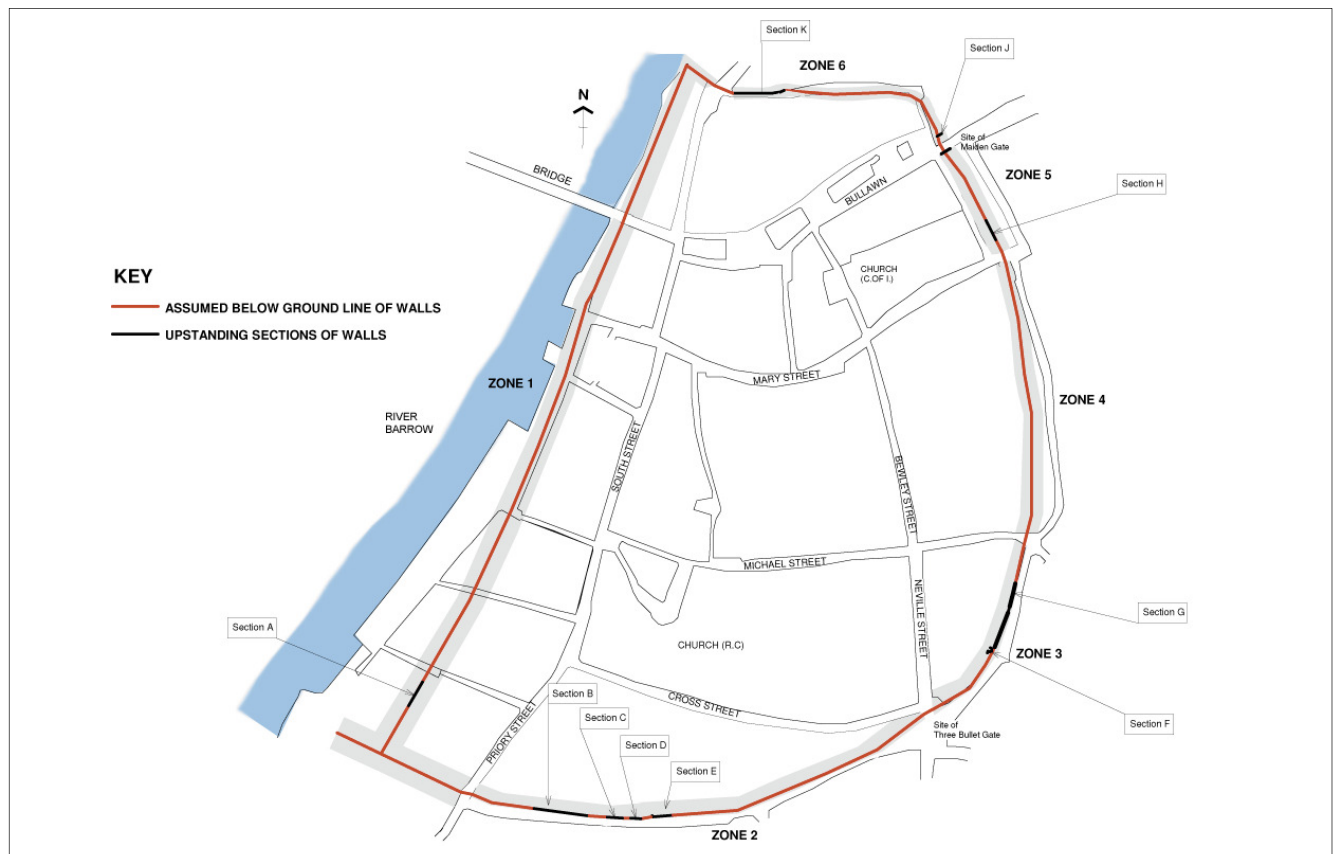


Figure 3: Layout of Walls

The town wall circuit adopts a 'D' shape enclosing an area of approximately 39 hectares with a perimeter of 1,575 metres to the curved section and 750 metres along the straight river frontage. Within the circuit the medieval street pattern survives. The primary south/north line of Priory Street/South Street/North Street/John Street/College Road extends from the site of South Gate to the site of North Gate almost parallel to the Barrow riverfront to the west. From this main spine Cross Street, Michael Street, Mary Street and High Hill branch off to the east climbing the steep hill to meet or intersect with the secondary south/north line of Neville Street/Bewley Street/Church Street. The south/north curved circuit of the walls is followed by Lower William Street/Upper William Street/Town Wall/Nunnery Street/Abbey View/Folly House Avenue/Goat Hill.



Lower William Street, view west

For clarity and ease of reference the line of the original walls has been sub-divided into seven discrete zones as follows:

- Zone One - College Road to Henry Street
- Zone Two - Priory Street/Henry Street to Cross Lane
- Zone Three - Cross Lane site of Three Bullet Gate at the intersection of Upper William Street, Old Charleton Hill, Wexford Street, Town Wall and Neville Street

- Zone Four - Three Bullet Gate to intersection of Town Wall, Nunnery Lane and Windmill Lane
- Zone Five - Intersection of Town Wall, Nunnery Lane and Windmill Lane to Mary Street Upper
- Zone Six - Mary Street Upper to Fair Gate
- Zone Seven - Fair Gate to College Road

Within each zone, the upstanding remains of the town walls have been identified as Sections A - K on the location plan (Figure 3) with larger sub-sections prefixed either 'I' or 'E' to indicate either 'internal' or 'external' face. This numbering system is applied consistently throughout the Management Plan and should be used in referencing all future work in connection with the Monument.

For the purposes of this Gazetteer, the circuit commences at College Road and is conducted in a counter-clockwise direction to the intersection of Henry Street and Lower William Street in the south.

The Gazetteer describes the Monument as it existed in October 2007.

ZONE ONE

The line of the walls in Zone One begins at College Road to the north of the town and continues southwards in an approximately straight line to the south side of the Lidl car park in the south where it turns through a right angle to travel to Lower William Street. Very little, if any, physical evidence of the wall has been found in this zone. Upstanding Section A consists of a section of masonry walling which has recently been uncovered by demolition of industrial premises to the south of the Lidl store. This appears to sit on the line of the town wall but this has not been confirmed by archaeological investigation.



Possible town wall to south of Lidl viewed from south east

ZONE TWO

The line of Zone Two commences at the site of South Gate, at the junction of Priory Street and Henry Street and travels up the steep incline of Lower William Street to Cross Lane. An abandoned quarry to the south, behind 6, 7 and 8 Lower William Street, was the probable source of material for this length of the wall. Four fragments, Sections B, C, D and E, survive forming the boundary between residential property and the road.



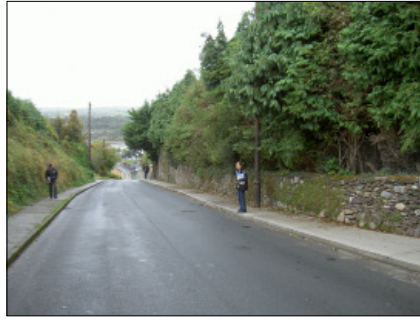
Section B from west



Detail of Section B showing distinctive bonding patterns and various stages of construction



Section D, the tallest surviving portion of the town walls, from west



Section D and E, from west



Carved stone detail built into wall at Section D

ZONE THREE

The line of Zone Three commences at Cross Lane and continues uphill north-eastwards to the road intersection at the site of Three Bullet Gate. Here, evidence of the town wall may be contained in the front walls of 1 - 20 Upper William Street, otherwise nothing can be seen.



Houses on Upper William Street



Junction at Three Bullet Gate



Extra mural tower on Town Wall from south

ZONE FOUR

Zone Four extends northwards, along the appropriately named 'Town Wall', to the intersection of Windmill Lane, Nunnery Lane and John Street. A semi-circular extra-mural tower (Section F), while heavily 'restored', represents the only surviving mural tower on the circuit. The tower has horizontal shale walling and a number of square openings around the upper stage, each of which has a timber lintel over the splayed reveals of the internal opening. There is an indication, on the internal face of the wall, of the location of the first floor. At ground floor level, there are a number of recesses, each with rough stone lintels. Evidence of the town wall, in the form of battered piers, can be seen on the south-west and north-east sides of the tower. A grassed area surrounds the base of the tower and its south-eastern extremity touches the back line of the concrete pavement. To the north-west and north-east, a twentieth century coursed rubble limestone wall, capped by large granite crenels with a stone paved path at its base bounds the tower.

North of this (Section G), a pronounced depression in the land between detached houses and the road suggests the presence of a fosse (Hunter, p. 177). There is no other evidence of the wall at this section.



Heavily restored top of tower from interior



Depression possibly suggesting presence of fosse

ZONE FIVE

The line of the wall in Zone Five extends northwards on level ground between the rear boundaries of residential properties facing onto Nunnery Lane, to the east, and Harvey Place, to the west. There is no evidence of any upstanding remains. An abandoned quarry to the rear (south) of a residential property facing onto Mary Street Upper was the probable source of material for this length of the wall.



View south along Nunnery Lane



Abandoned Quarry at Mary Street

ZONE SIX

Zone Six extends northwards from Mary Street Upper to Fair Gate. One short section (Section H) on the north-east side of a yard to the south of 12 Abbey View, represents an interesting but inaccessible section.



South approach to Abbey View; roughcast wall to right may be town wall



View north along Abbey View



Ad hoc repairs to town wall in yard to south of 12 Abbey View

The remains of Maiden Gate (Section J), at the northern end, are of particular interest, although heavily overgrown and inappropriately restored, as it represents the largest single remains and the only surviving evidence of a gate. On the north archway side, fragments of the springing of the ribs and arches of the vaulting, that originally formed the arch, survive. At ground level, a paved 'amenity' area has been created on the south side with what appears to be a mock crenellated parapet, to the west. On the road side, the macadamed carriageway touches the crudely rendered base of the arch pier.



Maiden Gate from west



Surviving carved limestone arch and rib vault springing



Paved amenity area from east

ZONE SEVEN

Zone Seven extends from Fair Gate (Section K) north-westwards before turning west to drop steeply down Goat Hill. The line of the east-west leg is possibly retained in the boundary wall to the school and two panels of exposed rubble stonework, peering from an otherwise roughcast wall topped by a concrete coping and galvanised metal railing, may indicate the original structure.

In Section M, the wall descends steeply on the north side of a series of in-situ concrete steps on the inner face. An abandoned quarry to the south of the west end of Goat Hill was the probable source of material for this length of the wall.



Descent westwards down Goat Hill



Rubble stone panels in school boundary wall



Steps at west end of Goat Hill, abandoned quarry to right



View west along Goat Hill, town wall on right

CONSERVATION POLICIES

EXPLANATION

The purpose of the conservation policies is to provide a guide for the future development and management of New Ross' Town Walls, taking into account practical requirements for use as well as the retention of significance.

The policies are framed to:

- be flexible enough to facilitate the continued use of the Monument, with particular regard to public access;
- retain or complement the character and quality of the existing structures when planning repairs, adaptations or development;
- identify existing or future patterns of development which might adversely affect the Monument and which might be in need of modification;
- inform the future development outside the existing boundaries (both material and non-material) of the Town Walls which could affect its continued significance;
- emphasise the need to include conservation advice within the decision-making process of future developments.

The recommended policies are colour highlighted. They are preceded by the information on which the policies are based and, where thought appropriate, are followed by examples of treatment or options following from the policies. Policies should be read in conjunction with the accompanying text.

The first section covers policies with a general application. The sequence of following sections is not in a particular order of importance.

The following definitions are taken from the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (a copy of 'the Burra Charter' is included in the Management Plan):

Fabric means all physical material of the place.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to its circumstance, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.

Restoration means returning the existing fabric of a site to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the addition of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or

old) into the fabric. This is not to be confused with either re-creation or conjectural reconstruction, which are outside the scope of the Charter.

Adaptation means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.

Compatible use means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact.

BASIS OF APPROACH

The current legislative position underpins every policy contained in this Conservation Plan. In addition, the Burra Charter is a useful general guide to the conservation of places such as New Ross' Town Walls. It provides a philosophical framework that can be flexible and recognises the need for the continued development that is associated with continuing occupation of a site. Application of policies 01 to 04 will help achieve consistency and continuity of approach.

Policy 01	The future conservation and development of the Monument will be guided by relevant legislation and the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) as revised 1999.
Policy 02	The Statement of Significance and the assessments of individual items contained in more detail in this section will be accepted as the basis for future planning and work.
Policy 03	The policies recommended and options discussed throughout this document will be a guide to planning of future work on the Monument.
Policy 04	A note stating the existence of the Conservation Plan should be appended to the New Ross Town Development Plan 2004-2010 and any future plans for the area.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AND POLICY

In general, the greater the level of significance of a part of the Monument, the more care is needed in planning its future treatment. Specific significance grading of each section is beyond the scope of this conservation plan. It is likely that significance will change with time as alterations are made, original fabric is lost, and new information is unearthed. However, it is important that the significance of the entire circuit of the walls as a single entity should also be appreciated. The intention should always be to retain and, where appropriate, reinforce significance - including character, quality and ability to reveal past history.

In New Ross the most significant surviving features of the Town Walls are:
 Goat Hill
 Maiden Gate
 South William Street
 The location of Three Bullet Gate

- Policy 05 The more significant a fabric, relationship, space or vista, the more care should be taken in planning work which may affect it, so that the work will not reduce, and may reinforce, its significance.
- Policy 06 Where some reduction of significance is necessary to achieve overall conservation objectives, alternatives should be tested using a risk impact assessment methodology to reveal the least damaging approach and mitigate adverse impacts. In general, the alternative involving least alteration of the fabric is preferable.

MANAGEMENT

Without pro-active monitoring, the Conservation Plan will be ineffective. A properly functioning Management Group will therefore be essential to ensure the co-ordinated management of the Monument and to encourage wider participation of stakeholders in future developments. Implementation of the policies contained in the Conservation Plan can only be successfully achieved if progress is monitored on an ongoing basis by such a group of individuals familiar with the policies and committed to their implementation. Where relevant, the Group should also be responsible for setting out timescales for delivery of policies. The Group should be convened under the aegis of New Ross Town Council. A formal structure and terms of reference for the Management Group would be determined by a focus group representing the key stakeholders.

In addition to New Ross Town Council, the Management Group should include in its membership representatives of the Department of Heritage and Local Government, The Office of Public Works and the local historical society. The Management Group may appoint representatives of other groups and organisations as might seem appropriate. Needless to say, it is important that the Management Group be afforded sufficient authority, otherwise, its comments and reports will not be acted upon. As part of its remit, the Group should ensure periodic consultation with the wider group of stakeholders.

The impact of proposals which fall outside the development control framework, for example alterations to traffic routes, hard surfacing, open spaces and buildings within the immediate vicinity of the Monument should be subjected to scrutiny by the Management Group.

- Policy 07 A Management Group shall be established and shall meet periodically to review and update the Conservation Plan and the Management Plan.

There is at present no written policy for holistic management and upkeep of the Monument. A management plan was commissioned concurrently with the Conservation Plan. Its purpose is to set out procedures which will ensure that policies contained in the Conservation Plan are implemented in an appropriate and consistent manner.

- Policy 08 A Management Plan shall be prepared to provide guidance for such matters as the ongoing maintenance, conservation, repair and possible 'restoration' of the Monument and for the organisation of events.

CONTINUITY OF CONSERVATION ADVICE

Irreparable damage can be caused to historic monuments by inexperienced or inadequate professional advice. Implementation of the recommendations contained within this Conservation Plan can only be successfully achieved if progress is monitored on an ongoing basis by a range of individuals familiar with the policies and committed to their implementation.

- Policy 09 Appropriately qualified and experienced conservation advisers should be engaged in the consideration and execution of any proposals.

REVIEW OF POLICIES

The policies contained in this Conservation Plan will need adjustment to meet unforeseen circumstances and in response to developing needs.

- Policy 10 This Plan, and the policies in it, should be reviewed as the need arises, but not later than five years after their initial acceptance by the Steering Group. Procedures for review mechanisms should be established by the bodies responsible for the implementation of the Plan. New Ross Town Council will reconvene a meeting of the Steering Group for this purpose.

MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, REMEDIAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Systematic, regular maintenance and prompt minor remedial works will ensure that the Monument will continue to stand for the foreseeable future. The Management Plan sets out clear guidance for maintenance and repair procedures.

- Policy 11 The value of preventive maintenance should be promoted and best practice in repair should be demonstrated in all work to the Monument through rigorous implementation of the Management Plan.

ARCHAEOLOGY

A detailed archaeological appraisal is included in the associated Management Plan.

- Policy 12 Any ground work taking place within the immediate vicinity of the Monument must comply with all statutory requirements.
- Policy 13 All extant archaeological records shall be collated and archived in a suitably located dedicated Monument archive.

PLANNING

The planning authority will undoubtedly fulfil a key role in ensuring the successful implementation of this Conservation Plan.

The following documents provide the relevant statutory framework within

which all planning decisions which might have a bearing on the Monument are made:

- New Ross Town & Environs Development Plan 2004
- South East Regional Authority Planning Guidelines 2004
- National Monuments Acts 1930-2004
- Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006

Policy 14 The contents of this Conservation Plan should be taken into account in the preparation of a new Architectural Conservation Area guidance document.

The impact of development on the Monument is not restricted to the streets and spaces in its immediate vicinity. The fact that there are, in some locations, views from the walls to the surrounding streetscape and, in others, views towards the Monument, such as Brogue Maker's Tower, means that these also need to be taken into account. Important views, aspects and vistas will need to be identified and then cherished and preserved.

Policy 15 Views to and from the surviving remnants of the town walls should be enhanced to reinforce the role of the town walls in the development of the town.

In certain areas buildings have been constructed on or adjacent to the town walls. Where these buildings have an intrinsic quality and are important in their own right they should be retained.

Policy 16 No further demolition of nineteenth-century, or earlier, property built against, overlooking, or opening onto the Monument should be permitted unless a compelling case is presented to demonstrate that the outcome will be to the ultimate benefit of the Monument.

At first acquaintance with New Ross the presence of the upstanding remains of the town walls is not obvious. This is because much of the circuit has been removed and the remaining walls are incorporated into property boundaries or are visible from private property. In certain areas identifying features survive such as Maiden Gate, the ruins of Brogue Maker's Tower and a stretch of wall along Goat Hill and South William Street. While the academic interest of the walls is not diminished as a result, the intrinsic purpose and character cannot be readily appreciated by a more general audience. Preliminary investigation suggests that these features should be preserved and presented in an improved way to the public by such means as:

- providing improved access
- providing an improved context for each feature
- through the provision of signage and interpretation.

Policy 17 A strategy for the improvement of the setting of the significant surviving features of the town wall needs to be devised and information and interpretation made available .

While remnants of one of the original town gates survives all others have been removed in the past and virtually no documentary or physical evidence remains as to their appearance. The role of the town gates is however considered to be of such importance that some means of indicating the location of their former existence should be devised. This could either be through the use of signage, interpretation panels, or physical marking of the approximate locations.

Policy 18 Means shall be devised to indicate the original location of the town wall gates.

In recent years, development has taken place apparently without reference to its potential impact upon the line of town walls removed or the upstanding remains of the town walls. As a result, the surviving physical fabric of the walls has been damaged, often irretrievably. All future planning decisions should be taken in the context of affording maximum protection to all upstanding remains and interpretation of the below-ground line of the walls.

STABILISATION

The existing condition of the walls as identified in the preliminary inspection carried out during the preparation of the Conservation Plan is poor. In particular, problems relating to vegetation growth and deterioration of mortar joints are leading to widespread deterioration of the structural fabric, which, in course of time, will lead to progressive disintegration and collapse of the walls. In a number of locations along Goat Hill, sections of the walls are structurally unstable and if temporary or permanent intervention is not carried out within the foreseeable future, structural collapse will result.

Policy 19 Vegetation should cut back from relevant sections of the walls during winter months to enable detailed photogrammetric and measured surveys to be carried out.

Policy 20 Structurally unstable sections of the walls, as identified in the Management Plan, should be assessed and detailed proposals for stabilisation should be developed and implemented.

Policy 21 Where the Management Group has agreed that conjectural restoration is necessary in order to improve clarity, the work should be carried out in such a way as to clearly indicate the difference between original fabric and new insertions.

Policy 22 A programme of restoration as outlined in the Management Plan should be instigated, preferably on a phased basis, as this will allow lessons to be learned and applied in subsequent phases.

Policy 23 No further breaches in or taking down of town walls will be permitted under any circumstances.

ACCESS

Almost by definition, appreciation of the Monument is a three-dimensional experience - from without, within, and above. Each experience is entirely different and affords radically distinctive perspectives which should be available, in as far as is practicable, to all.

The steep nature of the streets of New Ross leading from the quays to the top of the town may be problematic for people with restricted mobility. Intellectual access and interpretation needs to be made available at a suitable location within the town.

- Policy 24 An inclusive approach to access to the Monument shall be adopted which will permit enjoyment of it by those with disability.
- Policy 25 Clear directional guidance to the Monument from designated car parks shall be implemented. Guidance should include information regarding the level of difficulty of the route.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is central to how the visitor experiences an attraction. Good interpretation will leave the visitor with a feeling of attachment, stimulation and inspiration. Therefore, for the attraction to be a success, the Monument must be represented in a way that the visitor can relate to and enjoy. Interpretation should be designed to be readily understood while being historically balanced and without bias. Physical interpretation is by no means the only method of interpreting the walls. The use of good quality printed material, audio devices and internet information should also be developed. These have the added advantage of providing a facility to communicate effectively with non-English speaking and visually impaired visitors. Specially prepared material designed to appeal to children should also be available.

- Policy 26 The Monument should not be interpreted in isolation, rather, all interpretation should strive to place historical events pertinent to the town in the wider context of the county, Irish, British and European history.
- Policy 27 A range of interpretation media should be designed to be relevant to a wide range of age and ability.
- Policy 28 All written and audio interpretation should, where feasible, be in multiple language format.

Interpretation panels are subject to weathering, vandalism and inadvertent mechanical damage. Therefore they need to be of robust construction while being visually appealing, readily cleaned, easily read and appropriate to their setting. It should also be possible to replace damaged or out-dated panels with the minimum of inconvenience. Generally, fixing of panels directly to the historic fabric of the Monument should be avoided. All fixings should be of corrosion-resistant materials.

None of the foregoing should overrule the basic requirement for high standards of design to be achieved in the design of interpretation materials and the need for design proposals to be subject to rigorous external assessment.

- Policy 29 Interpretation panels, and other displays, should be designed to high standards which should be subjected to appropriate expert assessment of design and content before approval is given to installation. All interpretation panels and displays should be freestanding unless otherwise approved by the Management Group.

INTERVENTIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS

Incremental changes, often of an apparently minor nature and well-intentioned, inevitably accumulate and ultimately effectively result in the loss of original significance. A Public Realm Plan for New Ross has recently been completed.

- Policy 30 All proposed enhancements and interventions to the Monument should be submitted to the Management Group before issuing approval unless conforming to a previously agreed format outlined in the Management Plan.
- Policy 31 All interventions should be designed to be fully reversible in accordance with best conservation practice.
- Policy 32 All interventions should be designed to a high standard utilising good quality and durable materials.
- Policy 33 A palette of natural paving materials should be selected for use, where appropriate, on and around the Monument.
- Policy 34 A programme for installation of high quality street furniture should be prepared for use around the Monument.
- Policy 35 A signage strategy should be devised within the context of the Public Realm Plan .

Artificial lighting should be used to enhance the Monument and to improve security at night in particular at Brogue Maker's Tower and Goat Hill. As a general rule, new light fittings should be installed at a distance from the Monument, either mounted on buildings or in appropriately-designed ground locations.

- Policy 36 A lighting strategy should be devised which will involve minimal physical impact on the Monument while providing levels of illumination which will engender a sense of safety.

ECOLOGY

The biological interests associated with the Monument are currently limited. The masonry walls do however offer the potential to support a diverse but typical wall plant community which is of benefit for wildlife and attractive to visitors.

In a number of locations rampant weed growth is causing physical damage to the masonry walls.

A detailed ecological appraisal is included in the associated Management Plan.

- Policy 37 Guidance should be included in the Management Plan that will ensure existing botanical and wildlife interests are identified, managed and protected in an appropriate manner.

WORK TO THE WALLS

Historic fabric once lost cannot be replaced. Sadly, ill-informed restoration

in the past has led to the loss of some significance in the Monument. It is important that, in its future management, a scrupulous approach is taken to all conservation work. This should include measures such as researching the composition of original mortar mixes. Likewise, sources for replacement stone should be carefully researched. Written justification for the approach to be adopted should be prepared for all future work to the Monument. Recording of the relevant section of the Monument, prior to any work being carried out, should be conducted in line with accepted best practice and in accordance with the procedures for the recording of monuments set out by the DoEHLG and the Office of Public Works. Original records should be kept in a safe place.

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| Policy 38 | Relevant sections of the Monument must be recorded before alteration or major intervention. |
| Policy 39 | All work likely to affect the appearance of the Monument should be submitted to the Management Group for consideration and approval. |
| Policy 40 | All work likely to impinge upon the Monument should be subjected to full archaeological assessment and shall comply fully with current regulations and best practice. |
| Policy 41 | Only appropriately qualified professionals and tradespersons should be permitted to work on the Monument. |
| Policy 42 | All work to the Monument shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice. |
| Policy 43 | All work to the Monument should be recorded in a suitable and consistent format and records should be deposited for safe keeping in an appropriate archive. |

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