

Planning and Property Development Strategic Policy Committee April 2018

Protected Structures

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Dublin City comprises nearly 8,700 structures. This compares with circa 1,110 structures on the RPS for Cork City, and about 1,960 structures on the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council RPS (the largest number of protected structures after Dublin City). The three Dublin County Councils have a combined total of circa 3,290 structures.

At present in Dublin City there is a backlog of more than 300 candidate additions to the RPS (proposed by Elected Representatives and members of the public) to be assessed.

There are also 490 structures recommended for addition to the RPS by the Minister in June 2014, which have yet to be assessed, and another 521 net additions to the RPS recommended by the Minister in August 2017. These Ministerial recommendations arise as a result of advice from the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), based on their ongoing comprehensive survey of Dublin's city centre and inner suburbs.

In total there are 1,311 candidate additions to the RPS awaiting assessment by the Conservation Section in Dublin City.

The remaining phases of Ministerial Recommendations that are due later this year and in early 2019 could potentially include up to 500 structures for addition.

The Archaeology, Conservation and Heritage Section is part of the Planning and Property Development Department, and comprises a multi-disciplinary team headed by a Senior Planner, with structured administrative support. The Conservation Unit within the team is made up of a Conservation Officer (acting), an Assistant Conservation Officer, two Conservation Research Officers, a Senior Executive Planner (acting) and an Executive Planner, who share administrative support with the wider Section. The core service of the Conservation Unit includes the following:

- Providing conservation reports on planning applications and attending pre-application consultations;
- Maintaining and reviewing the Record of Protected Structures;

- Preparing Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in accordance with the strategy provided in the Development Plan;
- Advising the Elected Members and the public on conservation issues and regarding works and repairs to Protected Structures and within ACAs;
- Promotion of architectural heritage protection in Dublin City;
- Assisting and supporting the Living City Initiative;
- Management, supervision and implementation of the annual grant schemes under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and Structures-at-Risk Fund.

The resources available to the Conservation Unit for additions to (and deletions from) the RPS, comprise the two Conservation Research Officers (one of whom works part time).

The principal duties of these two Officers involve Section 5 and Section 57 Declarations (assessment of exempted development relating to protected structures), providing general conservation advice to the public and the management, supervision and implementation of the annual grant schemes. The assessment of additions to and deletions from the RPS are undertaken in the time remaining or are undertaken by conservation consultants in a number of instances, under the supervision of the Conservation Research Officers.

Over the four years from 2014 and 2017, the total number of new additions to the RPS brought to the City Council was 49, of which 19 were recommended by the Minister. During the same period 111 deletion reports were dealt with, as well as the 10 'deletion' ACA's mandated under the previous Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017.

One way to address the outstanding backlog of candidate RPS additions and Ministerial Recommendations would be to select and assess a significant number in batches and bring them forward in the next City Development Plan. These could be proposed for addition on an area basis (postal code and Area Committee) under the review of the existing Development Plan, which will commence in 2020.

Another option would be to consider the outsourcing of large numbers of assessment reports to one or more consultancy practices. However, this option is likely to be constrained by the small size and operational capacities of architectural conservation consultancy firms, as well as budgetary considerations and the requirement for considerable professional supervision and quality control by the Conservation Unit of the outsourced work.

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