

# Planning and Urban Form SPC

## 24 November 2020

Monitoring and Conservation of the City Wall at Wood Quay Venue  
Dr Ruth Johnson, City Archaeologist



Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

# Introduction



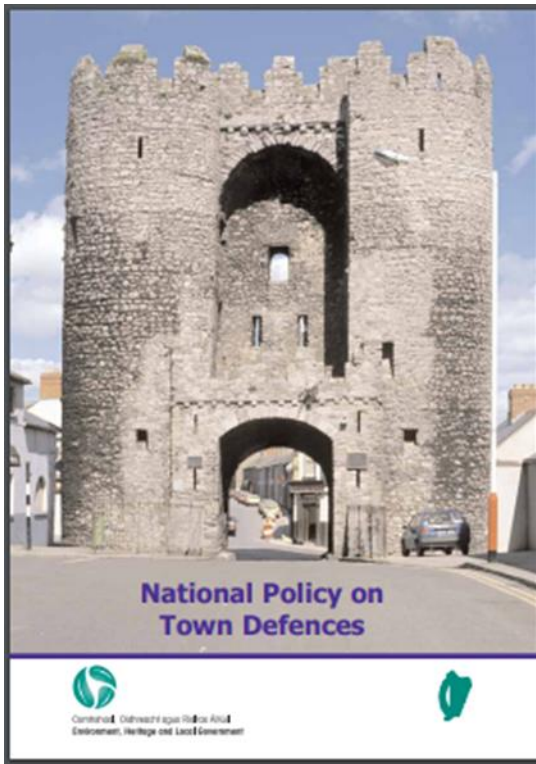
- The aim of the presentation is to provide the SPC with both the policy context and the conservation rationale behind conservation works proposed to the city wall at the Wood Quay Venue.
- The presentation is underpinned by technical reports, which are available for detailed review.

# Background



- The stone walls of Dublin were first constructed around the town in the late Viking Age, c.1100AD. The early town wall circuit became buried over time under the expanding Georgian City in the mid-18th century.
- A long stretch of the early town wall was uncovered by the archaeologists during the excavations at Wood Quay in the 1970s. The newly unearthed wall was initially underpinned for preservation in situ.
- In 1980, a decision was made to remove a large section (80m) to make way for construction. This section of wall was numbered and dismantled and the stones were placed into storage.
- An upstanding continuous 24.5m length of the early limestone wall survived untouched and this stretch of wall is housed in the basement of the civic offices within the Wood Quay Conferencing Venue, extending into an adjacent external courtyard.

# Policy Context: National Policy



The National Policy on Town Walls and Defences 2008 sets out national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of historic urban defences in Ireland.

## Policy Declaration

- The known and expected circuits of the defences (both upstanding and buried, whether of stone or embankment construction) and associated features of all town defences are to be considered a single national monument and treated as a unit for policy and management purposes. There should be a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and preservation of their character, setting and amenity.

# Policy Context: Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22



It is the Policy of Dublin City Council:

- CHC9: To protect and preserve National Monuments.
- CHC10: To continue to preserve, and enhance the surviving sections of the City Wall and city defences – a National Monument, according to the recommendations of the City Walls Conservation Plan 2005 – with reference to the National Policy on Town Defences, adopted by the Department of the Environment in 2008.

# Policy Context:

## Dublin City Development Plan 2016-22

It is an Objective of Dublin City Council:

CHCO10:

- 1. To implement the archaeological actions of the Dublin City Heritage Plan 2002–2006 in light of the Dublin City Heritage Plan Review 2012.
- 2. To prepare and implement conservation plans for National Monuments and Monuments in DCC care (**City Walls**, St Luke's Church, St James's Graveyard, St Thomas's Abbey, St Canice's Graveyard etc).
- 5. To develop a long-term management plan to promote the conservation, management and interpretation of archaeological sites and monuments and to identify areas for strategic research.
- 7. To promote awareness of, and access to, the city's archaeological inheritance and foster high-quality public archaeology.

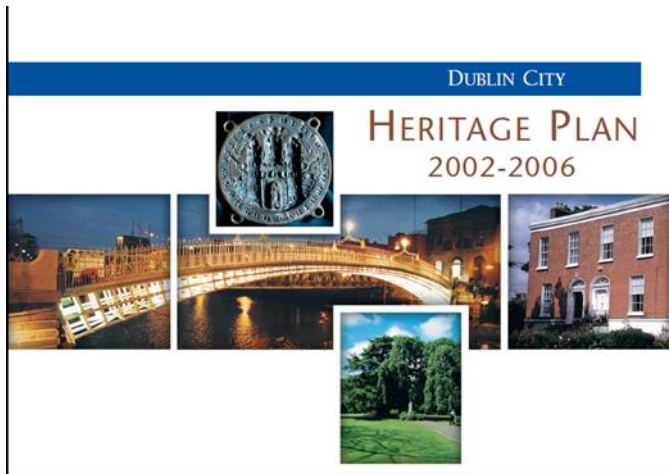
It is an Objective of Dublin City Council:

CHCO12: To implement the signage strategy for the city walls.

CHCO13: To undertake specific priority conservation works projects and to seek to identify additional national grant mechanisms to aid in the implementation of such projects.



# Policy Context: Dublin City Heritage Plan 2002-6



## Objective 5:

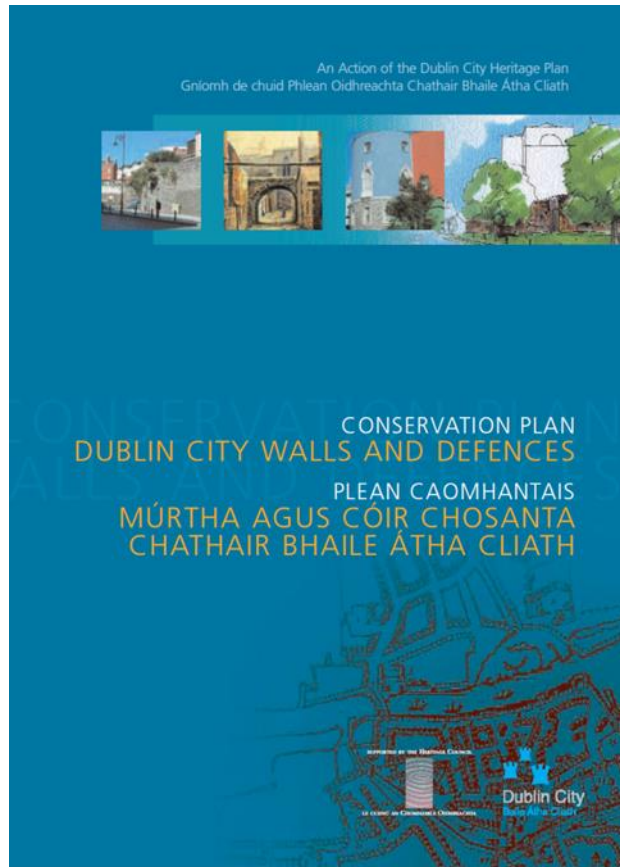
*“To enhance the presentation of the archaeological fabric of Dublin.”*

## Target

*“To identify and undertake flagship projects to enhance and present archaeological monuments.”*



# Policy Context: Dublin City Walls and Defences Conservation Plan 2004



- The Conservation Plan for the Dublin City Walls and Defences was an action of the Dublin City Heritage Plan 2002-6.
- The Plan addresses a range of concerns in respect of the preservation, conservation and presentation of both above ground and below ground remains of the city's most important, but poorly preserved and presented, historic civic monuments.
- The Conservation Plan noted that the city wall under the Civic Offices was inaccessible to the public, that it could provide an ideal display space for the remains and the space could serve a useful function of benefit to the City Council's executive or civic functions.
- It noted that the development of the double-height space around the wall would greatly enhance the view of the wall from outside the building and an appreciation of the wall within the space.



# Conservation Survey 2007 & Works 2008



A condition survey of the wall at Wood Quay in 2007 was followed by a programme of conservation works undertaken in 2008 under Ministerial Consent. The objectives of the 2008 works programme was twofold:

1. to categorise and re-house approximately 130m<sup>3</sup> of loose stone, salvaged from the deconstructed eastern section of the city wall.
2. to conserve the 24.5m section of the upstanding monument through a considered programme of essential maintenance and repair. Works included the re-seating of a limited number of loose stones, the stabilisation of the open core and the raking and re-pointing of the external 6.5m section of wall only (no repointing was carried out to the internal section of wall at this time).

# Wood Quay Venue



- As part of implementation of the City Walls and Defences Conservation Plan a feasibility study was commissioned to investigate options for presentation of the city wall under the civic offices.
- The enclosed basement space was refurbished to designs by McCullough Mulvin Architects, providing a conferencing facility known as the 'Wood Quay Venue'.

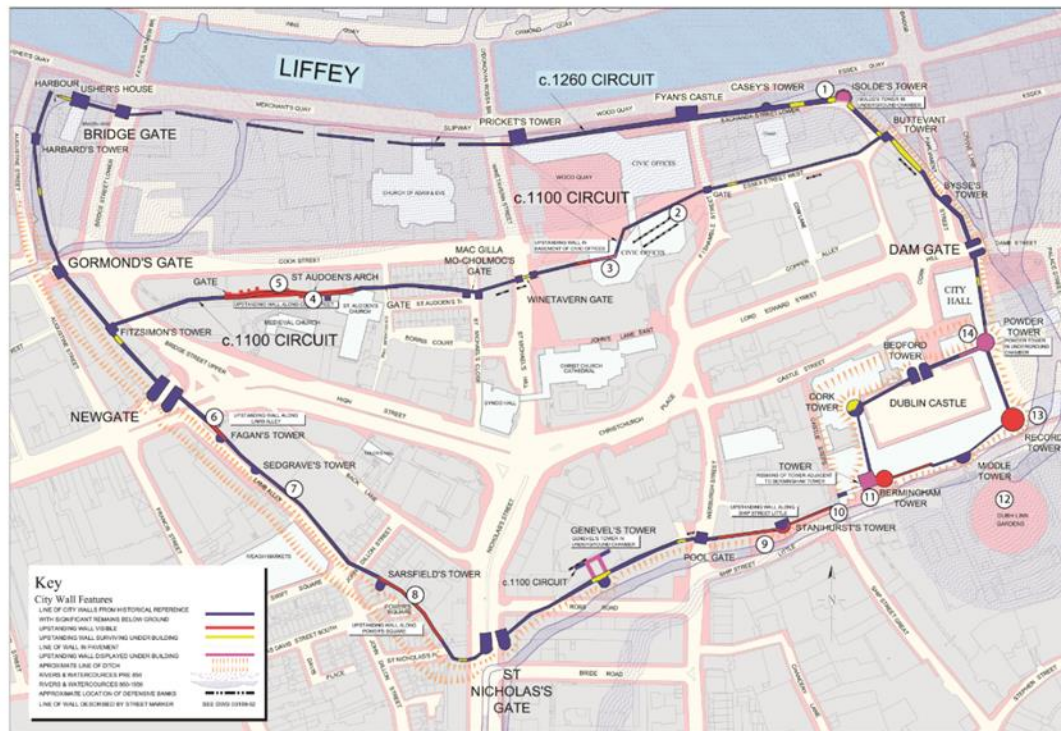
# Dublin City Heritage Plan Review 2012

## City Walls Conservation Plan

“The policies in the plan remain relevant today. Achievable and appropriate policies should be implemented in the course of the new heritage plan, by the archaeology office and/or by other stakeholders in DCC and outside. Decision-making, project design, funding etc., should continue to be done in a collegiate fashion to ensure best practice. The appropriate mechanism for this is through a steering group of the DCC heritage professionals and other key stakeholders.”

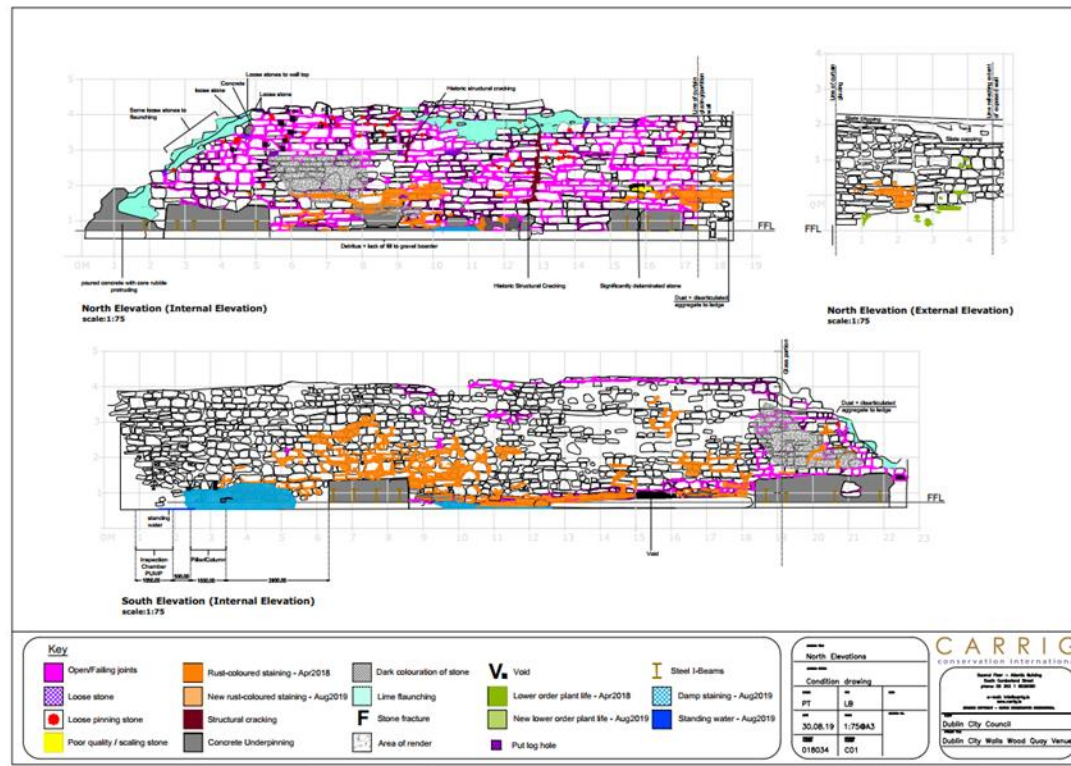
## Recommendations

- Support the continuation of the Wood Quay Venue as a conference facility.
- Monitoring of the condition of the city wall in the basement.
- Support initiative to animate the approach to the Wood Quay Venue.
- Signage required to explain the remains of and context of the city wall in this location.





# Wood Quay Venue City Wall Condition Survey 2018



- A new survey undertaken to provide an updated condition assessment of the wall and expert advice on recommendations for essential repair and maintenance.
- 16 no. thermohydrograph data loggers installed within the Venue to monitor the temperature (T) & relative humidity (RH) of the space.
- A detailed laser scan of the wall, providing an up to date and hi-resolution record of the wall in its current setting.
- 5 no. mortar samples taken from the internal section of the City Wall.
- Petrographic analysis to determine the type, composition and proportions of aggregate/binder contained within each sample. N.b. The historic mortar is lime-based and includes a coarse aggregate, most likely derived from the terraces of the River Liffey

# Condition Survey 2018

The principal findings of the 2018 condition survey were as follows:

- Open joints are recorded to 90% of the northern face of the internal section of wall, compared with approximately 50% as indicated by the 2007 survey drawings.
- A small number of medium sized stones and smaller pinning stones, to the northern face of the internal section of wall, were found to be poorly seated and at risk of detaching.
- A number of voids recorded to the northern face of the internal section of wall.
- Significant damp ingress recorded to the immediate rear/south of the internal section of wall.
- The surviving harling/render to the south elevation appears in good condition with little evident further erosion of material.

Recommendations of the 2018 conservation report were as follows:

- Localised raking and repointing of the internal north elevation to prevent further erosion of the core bedding material and potential future displacement of stone.
- A small number of loose stones require re-seating.
- Voids to be repaired to consolidate the structure and prevent the loss of further material – note that putlog holes must remain discernible.
- Stone salvaged from the deconstructed section of the wall to be used as a suitable replacement material.
- Relative humidity levels in the space shall be monitored prior to, and following works.
- The principal survey recommendations were guided by the *Dublin City Walls & Defences Conservation Plan 2004*.

# Ministerial Consent 2019

## Consent

- A Consent application was made in January 2019 for essential maintenance and repair of the monument.
- Consent was granted in February 2019 under references C000923 and W000367
- The NMS recommend that the repair works to the monument be postponed until the summer of 2020 to allow for the analysis of the information from the monitoring.

*In accordance with Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended, where a national monument (such as town defences), of which the Minister or a local authority are the owners or guardians, or that have been the subject of a preservation order, Ministerial Consent is required in order:*

*‘a. To demolish or remove it wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with it, or b. to excavate, dig, plough or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in proximity to, or c. **to renovate or restore it**, or d. to sell it or any part of it for exportation or to export it or any part of it.’*

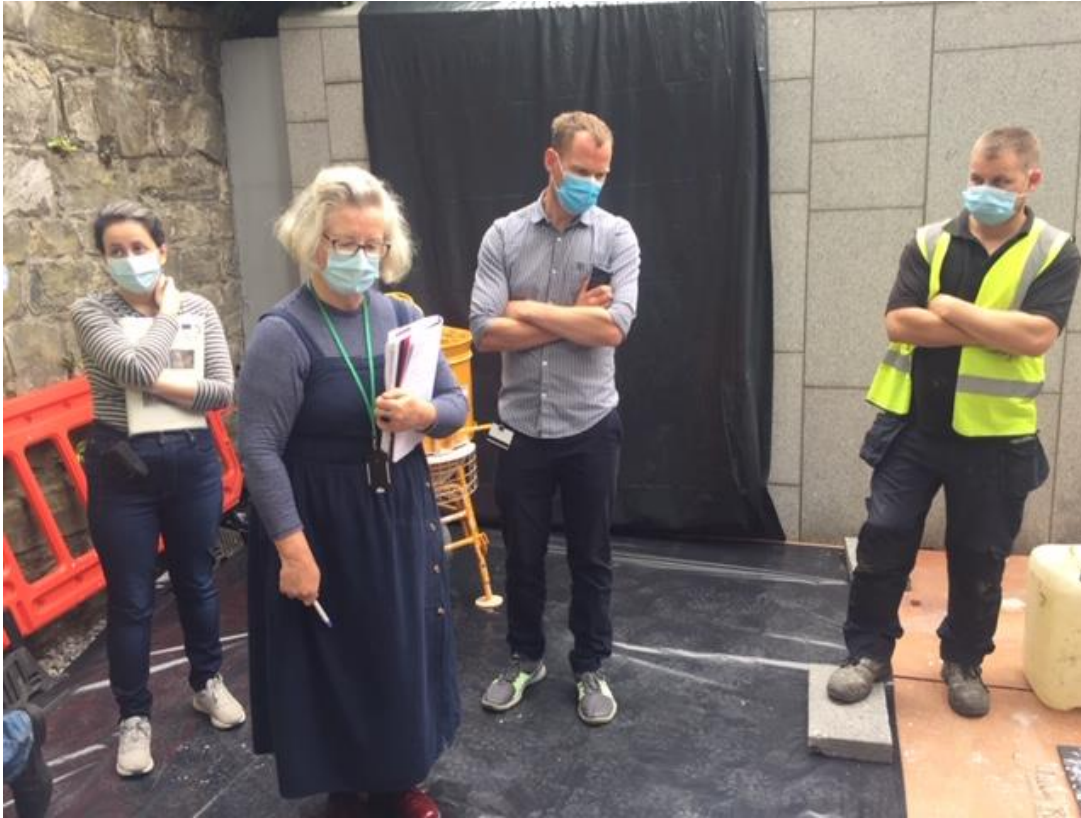


# Wood Quay Venue Exhibit - 2019



A new permanent exhibition in the Venue is composed of photographs, maps, drawings and words, and a floor model showing the medieval walled circuit. The aim of the exhibition is to contextualise the first town wall, part of which is conserved in the Wood Quay Venue, and to raise awareness of the exceptional archaeology discovered at Wood Quay in the 1970s.

# Project Steering Group & Consultants



## Project Steering Group

- Dr Ruth Johnson, City Archaeologist (Chair/PM)
- Tom Hogan, Facilities Management DCC
- Wood Quay Venue Team DCC
- Páraic Fallon, Head of Archaeology, Heritage and Conservation DCC
- Mary MacDonald, Architectural Conservation Officer (Grade 1) DCC
- Lenzie O'Sullivan, Senior Conservation Architect (Grade 1) DCC
- John Beattie, Conservation Section DCC
- Dr Niall Colfer, Assistant City Archaeologist DCC

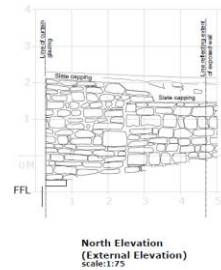
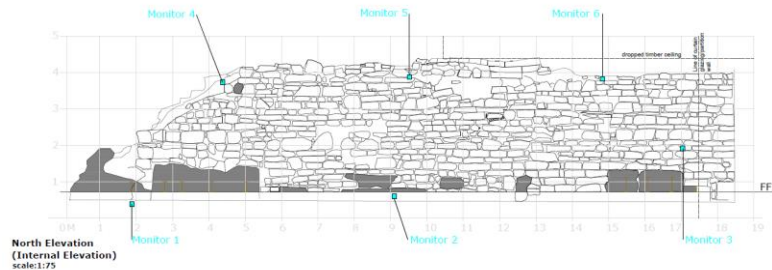
## Project Consultants

- Carrig Ltd lead by Peter Cox - Conservation Consultants and Project Supervisor for the Design Process (Health and Safety).
- Summit Ltd lead by Brian Cunningham

# Environmental Monitoring 2018-21



- The environmental conditions surrounding the Dublin City Wall at Wood Quay Venue, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8 have been continuously monitored since November 2018.
- The monitoring will continue into 2021 to record any changes in the environmental conditions of the venue such as any water ingress, heating, use variation etc.
- The average values for relative humidity and temperature of each monitor show no significant difference between 2019 and 2020
- This means that overall the average environmental conditions have not significantly changed.

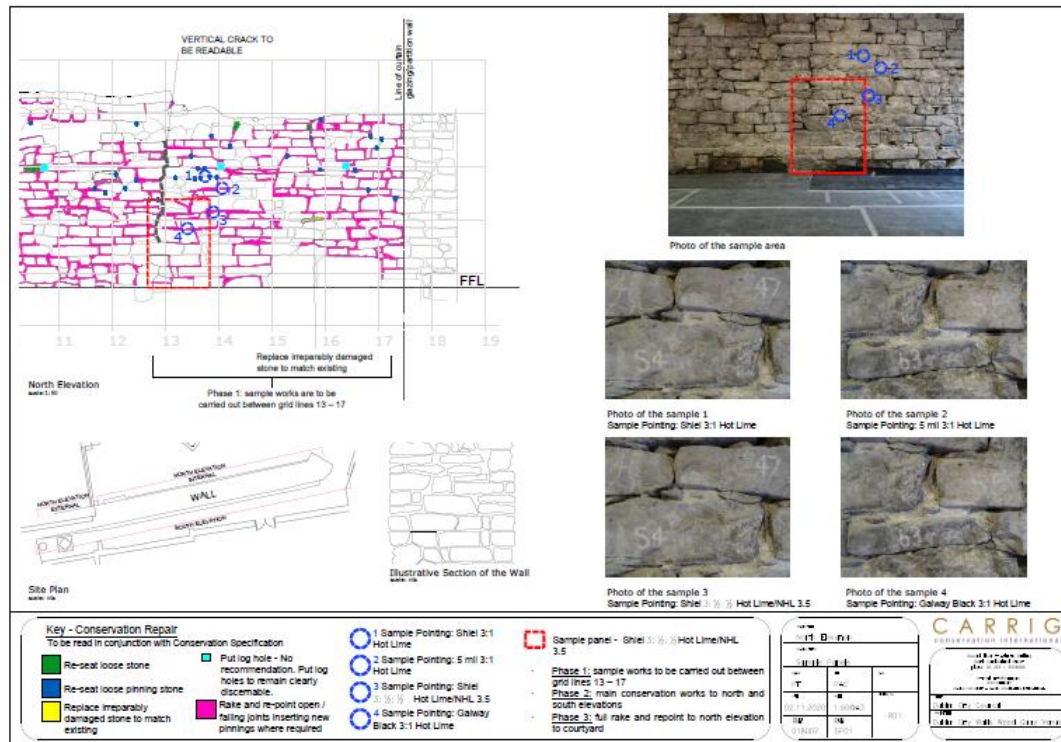


# Phase 1 (Samples) - July-August 2019

The works in phase 1 comprised conservation trials to the north elevation of the wall.

These works included:

- Sample raking out of failed existing mortar joints in agreed locations
- Retaining the raked out material for reuse in the pointing samples
- The repointing of these joints with sample mortar mixes and pinning stones (4 samples)
- Pinning stones were retrieved from original fabric stored in Stanley Street Depot.
- After considering 5 sample mortar mixes the steering group and design team agreed localised small sample pointing to the wall using 4 of the different mortar mixes to achieve and agree the required mix, colour, and finish.
- It was further agreed at a Design Team Site Meeting that 1 bigger sample area be pointed using the preferred sample #3 (a hybrid mix composition - Shiel sand 3: ½: ½ Hot Lime/NHL 3.5).
- The workability of the mixing was a significant factor in the decision but also the reasonable match of colour and finish with areas of sound historic pointing. The sample pointing will be kept in place until Phase 2/3 for reference.





# Consultation Period



The reason for the gap between phase 1 and work phases 2/3 is to allow for a process of stakeholder engagement and public relations. This is necessary because repointing the wall will alter the appearance of the monument.

- Stakeholder Consultation: September-December 2020
- National Monuments Service
- National Museum of Ireland
- Planning & Urban Form SPC 24 November
- Stakeholder Webinar 2 December

# Phase 2 & 3: January to March 2021

## Phase 2 - internal

- Main conservation works to north and south elevations. Conservation works carried out as described in the Conservation Specification and on the Conservation Repair drawing. Works to include re-seating loose stones, rebuilding voids to match existing, re-seating loose pinning stones, and raking and repointing open/failing joints inserting new pinning stones where required. The mortar mix and finish shall be as agreed in Phase 1.

## Phase 3 – external

Full rake and repoint of north elevation to external courtyard; the raking and repointing of the entire face of the external 6.5m length of the north face of the wall, which continues into the external courtyard to the west of Wood Quay Venue, to the same mix and finish agreed in the sample panels carried out in Phase 1 of the works in order to ensure a consistency of finish across the entire portion of the wall within the Wood Quay Venue area.

n.b. This portion of the wall to the external courtyard was repointed in lime mortar in 2008



# Thank you

## Questions



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