

# SUSTAINING OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING IN IRELAND

**IC**  **MOS Ireland**

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
COISTE IDIRNÁISIÚNTA NA SEADCHOMHARTHAÍ IS NA LÁITHREACHA



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## REVIEW OF THE STATE OF CONSERVATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN IRELAND

In 1994 ICOMOS Ireland adopted a report on the state of conservation education and training in Ireland, identifying four categories in which skills training was necessary. In the intervening years considerable advances and developments have taken place. A re-assessment was considered timely and the serving Sub-committee on Education and Training was asked to undertake a review of the current situation. I would like to thank the convenor of this sub-committee, Paul McMahon, and his team who carried out this study. This document will prove to be an essential tool in providing future direction for sustaining our built environment. The original 1994 report is contained in an appendix.



Grellan D. Rourke  
President, ICOMOS Ireland  
November 2009

## ICOMOS Ireland

This report has been prepared by the ICOMOS Ireland Sub-committee on Education and Training:

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With thanks to Susan Corr, Secretary General of E.C.C.O. and co-ordinator of the EQF/professional competences working group

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## Introduction

by Professor Loughlin Kealy,  
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, UCD

THIS REPORT IS A SUCCINCT OVERVIEW of the state of conservation education and training in Ireland and follows on from a precursor issued in 1994. In the years since the issuing of the first report the protection of architectural heritage has experienced a shifting environment. New legislation, increased prominence of the issue of conservation in building procurement, new measures to upgrade expertise within certain professions, the emergence of conservation officers as a new profession, the increased range of NGO engagement and enhanced public interest have created a milieu different from that which prevailed in 1994. The report sets out the major elements of this changing environment.



Yet the dominant message of this new report is that much still remains to be done. More seriously, much of what remains to be done touches, at a fundamental level, the practice and potential of conservation here. Informed opinion would recognise that,

while research into historical and theoretical dimensions of material heritage conservation has progressed among a range of academic disciplines, equivalent development in technical studies has yet to appear. The potential for the development of research into decay processes and repair across a wide spectrum in the area of materials conservation has still not been exploited, and adequate institutional supports required for such research to be undertaken in this country have yet to emerge.

While the range of educational provision has increased, it is, I think, widely felt that the availability throughout the

country of an adequate range and level of construction crafts skills remains uncertain. While representatives of the construction industry have expressed satisfaction with availability of craft skills, practitioners encounter a different reality. Short-comings in knowledge of traditional materials, techniques and methods of repair are still experienced on a regular basis – it is often the case that standards are maintained by a judicious mixture of nationally-based craftsmen and imported expertise. And, again at the level of basic provision, the only training programme specifically devoted to training in building recording has ceased to operate.

The report calls for a review, sponsored by the State, of the provisions already in place, as a precursor to the development of a comprehensive education and training policy. Policy formulation in any sphere needs to be based on evidence. The core requirement as spelled out in this report is that sound evidence is essential on a range of issues. Well-informed as opinions may be, hard information is a prerequisite for considered action.

Paradoxically, it may be that the achievements of the past fifteen years themselves obscure the importance of resolving the issues that are outstanding. Perhaps the advances made have created the impression that effective provision for material heritage conservation has been largely put in place. The report indicates that substantive problems remain to be addressed and that focused examination of the field of education and training is required.

Comprehensive frameworks are not easily established, but a comprehensive framework for education and training is required if the necessary cooperation and collaboration between agencies and institutions is to occur. Development of such a framework needs to be led by the state.

In the interim, organisations such as ICOMOS (which incorporates expertise from many disciplines and from the public and private sectors) can contribute further to this endeavour. A first step might be to focus on contributing to the terms of reference for the enquiry that lies at the core of the recommendations of this report.



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## PRESENT SITUATION – GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Considerable developments and advances have taken place since 1994 in Ireland and elsewhere.

Internationally, relevant advances include:

- The ICOMOS INTERNATIONAL Education and Training Profiles, developed by the late Bernard Fielden in 1993, can now provide a useful basis for the consideration of conservation education and training issues.
- In 1994 COTAC (Conference On Training in Architectural Conservation) commenced developing UK based National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for building conservation.
- BS 7913:1998 ‘Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings’ was published in 1998.
- Historic Scotland has worked closely with the UK building professionals on a *Framework Strategy for Conservation Accreditation*, and the final *Framework Strategy* was launched by the Edinburgh Group in November 2003.
- The UNESCO – UIA Charter for Architectural Education (version 2005) acknowledged the global responsibility “for the improvement of the education and training of future architects to enable them to to meet the expectations of the XXIst Century societies worldwide for sustainable human settlements in every cultural heritage...”

In Ireland, official developments include the following:

- The National Monuments Act was revised in 1994 to give a level of protection to over 100,000 recorded monuments. For the first time the government was charged with establishing and maintaining a record of monuments and places. The National Monuments Act was further revised in 2004 and is currently under a

comprehensive review, with a wider scope envisaged than heretofore, for example in the area of protection of cultural landscapes.

- The 1996 report, *Strengthening the Protection of the Architectural Heritage*, submitted to the Ministers of the former Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht and the former Department of Environment and Local Government, specifically refers to the work of the ICOMOS committee and contains a number of relevant recommendations.



- Arising out of the 1996 report, in 1999 the first Irish legislation to effectively protect the architectural heritage, the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1999 was commenced, followed by the consolidated Planning and Development Act 2000. Arising out of this, statutory guidance *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* was published in 2004 by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG). The importance of employing qualified and experienced conservation professionals and site personnel is emphasised throughout this document.



- Also arising out of the 1996 report was the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Act 1999, which set the identification, recording and recommendation of structures for protection on a statutory footing.

- In 1999, two archaeological policy documents were published by the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands: *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* and *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavations*.
- *Strengthening the Protection of the Architectural Heritage* was published jointly with *Developing a Government Policy on Architecture: a proposed framework and discussion of ideas*. This discussion document led to a policy document on the future of architecture in Ireland, *Action on Architecture 2002 – 2005*, published by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands with inter-department involvement.
- The 1996 documents, the 2002 architectural policy, the National Heritage Plan (published in 2002), and a review of the construction industry (*Ireland: Building our future together - Strategic Review of the Construction Industry*, [Construction Industry Council and Department of the Environment and Local Government, 1996]) all refer to the need to develop sectoral heritage skills to meet the expanding workload in this area.

It is now recognised that the maintenance of Ireland’s building stock represents a more stable and permanent demand on expertise and skills in comparison to the often cyclical nature of other construction activities. Arising out of the 1999 Act, local authorities are encouraged and part-funded to employ architectural conservation officers and are eligible for DEHLG grant aid for repairs to protected structures in private and civic ownership. The Heritage Council, which was put on a statutory footing in 1995, also provides grant funding for private conservation projects. Such monitored grant funding promotes better conservation practice.

HETAC and FETAC, two national education accreditation bodies, were established in 2001. Their input to the development of accredited heritage courses has yet to be clarified.

The sub-committee welcomes the DEHLG decision to revisit the 2002 architectural policy. The newly published *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015*, contains actions that support the development of conservation expertise and quality standards in Ireland.

The role that a positive and creative approach to the use and reuse of the historic building stock can play in promoting a sustainable agenda for the built environment should form an integral part of all heritage education and training initiatives.

## LEVEL OF INVESTIGATION CARRIED OUT FOR THE PRESENT REVIEW

The first section of the 1994 report contains an identification of formal and informal education and training activity at the time.

Due to the considerable increase in conservation-related activity since then and the absence of an accessible database, the sub-committee was unable to provide a reliable record of current activity. This exercise should be undertaken as an integral part of the comprehensive investigation proposed in 1994.

The information provided in this review was supplied to the sub-committee by ICOMOS members on foot of a request for an update of available data. A broad-based focus group meeting was convened to address the issues raised. Recommendations accompanied a number of the submissions received.

The four categories in which skills training was considered necessary in the 1994 report were:

- materials conservation
- crafts in the building industry
- education and building professionals
- ancillary occupations

These categories are used again here. The sub-committee received proposals for the inclusion of a number of other categories and topics in the current review.

### Materials conservation



E.C.C.O. (European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations) has recently completed the Professional Competences for the Conservator-Restorer. These Competences describe the knowledge, skills and competences that are required for access to the profession and have been calibrated to Level 7 on the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which is equivalent to Masters degree.



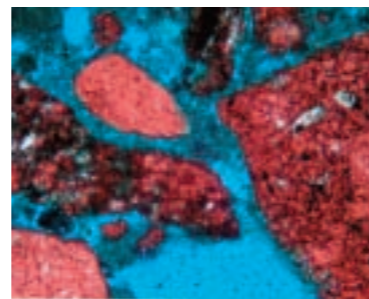
The Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland (ICHAWI) is the national accrediting body for the profession of conservator – restorer. ICHAWI organises a number of conservation-related workshops throughout the year with support from the Heritage Council.

There are no courses in materials conservation in Ireland at present other than at Letterfrack which is to BSc level (see below). There is a general consensus internationally that training should be in the field of conservation for a full five years to level 7 EQF or Masters degree. This presents course providers and potential students with a considerable challenge.



The Masters degree in architectural conservation (MUBC) in UCD and the BSc in Furniture Conservation and Restoration at Galway-Mayo IT, Letterfrack have been referred to the sub-committee as potential providers. At present neither are five-year courses and the MUBC does not include hands-on materials conservation.

The TCD Diploma Course in Applied Conservation and Building Repair includes the study of the physical properties, decay and production technology of building materials as well as their conservation methods. This course has been accredited by EI (Engineers Ireland) and RIAI (Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland).



The State Laboratory has established a heritage-based material analysis unit. The Geological Survey of Ireland can provide a stone sourcing service. Both agencies play a considerable and supportive role in developing expertise in their respective scientific fields.

### Recommendation:

- Resources should be provided to establish a training and recruitment programme to a professional level equating to Level 7 EQF, which would meet the State's core materials conservation needs.

### Crafts in the building industry

Following the recommendations in the 1996 Department report and construction industry review the Register of Heritage Building Contractors was introduced by the CIF (Construction Industry Federation) in 2001 in accordance with the European CEN standards of accreditation.

Parallel CIF initiatives include the SMETS (Site Managers Education and Training Scheme) modules in Heritage Contracting.



The Irish Georgian Society has produced a register of Traditional and Building Skills practitioners.

FÁS, the State training agency, in association with OPW, DIT Bolton Street, Limerick IT and The Heritage Council has developed apprenticeship and traineeship modules in stone masonry, stone cutting and thatching. DIT Bolton Street has a long established record in providing instruction in traditional joinery methods.

In 2008 a skills needs analysis of the built heritage sector in Ireland, *Traditional Building Craft Skills: Assessing the Need, Meeting the Challenge*, was undertaken by the (British) National Heritage Training Group (NHTG). The report from the Group, published February 2009, provides hard evidence on the current state of demand, supply and training provision within the built heritage sector across the whole of Ireland and also provides an overarching strategy and Skills Action Plans for both countries, to exploit and enlarge the pockets of existing provision.





### Recommendations:

- *Advanced craft modules should be developed in a number of relevant traditional skills areas.*
- *Provision should be made for on-site craft skills training on heritage-related projects.*
- *The relevant authorities should use the findings of the NHTG skills needs analysis report to respond to current and future demand.*

but most are in the early stages of discussion. Irish members of the British-based Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors may also gain accreditation in conservation through the RICS accreditation scheme.

It is, however, important to stress that the delivery and maintenance of conservation standards rely on ongoing monitoring and assessment of each professional's individual expertise and practical experience.

The Building Control Act 2007 provides for the mutual recognition of qualifications throughout the EU member states. It is important that the Irish conservation sector establishes a clear training and educational policy on this development.

Training in project management and cost control procedures on conservation projects was considered critical by the sub-committee and should be considered as an integral part of the education and training process.



### Education and building professionals

Developments, as reported since 1994, are limited. Possibly the major advance has been the RIAI Conservation Accreditation System. As part of this system the Conservation Induction Module was introduced in 2001. The sub-committee acknowledges the potential impact which this scheme can have on raising standards in heritage-related development.

Conservation accreditation schemes are also being considered by the professional institutes representing surveyors, engineers, urban planners and archaeologists,

### Education and training initiatives since 1994

The sub-committee acknowledges the contribution which the long established Masters Degree in Urban and Building Conservation (MUBC) course in UCD continues to make.

The Dept. of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering, TCD, launched a post-graduate Diploma in Applied Building Repair and Conservation in 2004. The UCD School of Archaeology is introducing a Masters in archaeological practise and CPD courses for professionals.

The University of Ulster piloted a post-graduate course in architectural conservation, which is now run by the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA).

The Office of Public Works (OPW) provides conservation-related work experience opportunities for architectural students and graduates.

In general, building-related professional and technical courses now appear to incorporate conservation related modules, however, these modules are not subject to specific review by any national inspection body. (NGO/private training initiatives are discussed below.)



### Recommendations:

- *An expert assessment of these courses, modules, accreditation and related developments should be sought as an integral part of the proposed detailed review.*
- *The providers of both CPD and postgraduate training should consider tailoring elements of their courses more explicitly to conservation accreditation needs.*
- *Conservation education and training centres of excellence should be identified and developed throughout Ireland.*
- *The role of the Department of Education and the relevant accreditation bodies in addressing the needs of the heritage conservation sector should be clarified.*
- *All relevant professional bodies should be encouraged to set up conservation accreditation schemes.*

## Heritage-related courses and activities (ancillary occupations)

Effective management and protection of the historic environment requires the continuous input of a broad range of expertise with management, interpretive and curatorial skills. A number of heritage management courses are available in institutes of technology and universities. ICAHM – The ICOMOS International Scientific Committee for Archaeological Heritage Management provides a forum for the interchange of ideas in this area.

Built heritage sites provide opportunities to enhance education and learning for schools and families and generally raise awareness of the need to protect the built heritage. Heritage Week activities (co-ordinated by the Heritage Council with participation by OPW, local authorities and others) highlight the benefit of community outreach activities.

### Recommendations:

- *Role profiles and training needs should be established for heritage managers and interpretive material designers.*
- *Heritage conservation awareness should form an integral part of curriculum development at primary and secondary levels.*
- *Education officer posts should be established at national and local level to promote awareness of the built heritage.*



## Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

The sub-committee acknowledges the contribution of NGOs, individuals and companies to conservation-related courses. It would recommend ongoing support for the Dublin Civic Trust, the Irish Georgian Society, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, the Mourne Heritage Trust, the Building Limes Forum Ireland, the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland, An Taisce, ICOMOS and other organisations committed to the raising of public awareness and the development of quality CPD courseware. The termination of the short-lived Post-Graduate Diploma in Architectural Inventory and Recording, a joint project of the Historic Heart of Dublin and DIT Bolton Street (Historic Heart of Dublin was a joint venture of Dublin Civic Trust and Dublin City Council set up in 1997 and terminated in 2001) is regretted by the sub-committee.



The role played by the increasing publication of books, journals and research on conservation-related matters – often assisted by Heritage Council or other grant funding – should also be commended as vital in raising awareness of the built heritage and contributing to a broader knowledge of conservation on the part of the public, professionals and building craft workers.

The role that volunteers and community groups can play as custodians of their heritage resources should be acknowledged and developed.



### Scholarships, bursaries and research grants

The sub-committee acknowledges the positive role that assistance of this nature can play in supporting students and institutions involved in conservation-related studies. We would recommend that every effort should be made to ensure that resources are allocated in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.

### Recommendations:

- *Priority research areas should be identified and collaboration should be fostered between the building industry, private heritage practitioners, the relevant public agencies and the educational sector.*
- *A network of key players should be formally established and resourced to facilitate the process.*
- *A website should be established, or link to dedicated web pages on suitable websites, to facilitate communication within this network and to disseminate data throughout the educational and training sector.*
- *The relevant funding agencies should make adequate provision for national participation in relevant international activities, including attendance at conferences, specialist courses and works experience programmes.*

## Recognition of the broad base of expertise required

Generally, skills within the building industry are covered by a range of well defined professional or craft disciplines. However, conservation is one of an increasing number of new specialisms which spans most disciplines and in which all should have an interest (as noted in the ICOMOS profiles and BS7913).

Conservation skills should fit into a framework recognised by the industry as a whole, with the agreement of the appropriate professions and crafts. There is a need for a common philosophical basis and for practitioners to operate within common protocols/practices.



Some new conservation skills demand new roles which do not fit into currently recognised disciplines. The impact of the Planning Acts, the sustainability agenda, health and safety practices, and other construction-related legislation on the protection of the built heritage will require additional educational resources at all levels. The interdisciplinary nature of conservation is shown by the mixed skill-sets of local authority architectural conservation officers.

The role and duties of the architectural conservation officer have been set out by DEHLG and are currently under review. The Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC, a British organisation with Irish membership) supports the development of a standard (UK) conservation officer role through the NVQ system.

Heritage Officers, championed by the Heritage Council, have been appointed in many local authorities. While these officers are not required to have specific built-heritage qualifications, they play an important role in raising awareness, preparing heritage plans and commissioning studies into conservation-related matters.

The ICOMOS concept of a cultural landscape, which has evolved through the interaction between nature and human interventions, now requires the implementation of a multidisciplinary conservation-orientated approach. It is hoped that this will be reflected in the proposed revised National Monuments Act.

Heritage recording and documentation is rapidly developing into a specialised profession in many other countries and the rationalisation of existing structures and practise in Ireland

should be considered and the skills needs of this sector should be identified and addressed.

Expertise in dealing with the conservation of the modern built heritage will also need to be developed. The sub-committee noted the role that DOCOMOMO, the international organisation for the protection of 20th-century architecture, can play in promoting this sector.



#### Recommendations:

- *National role profiles and training needs of architectural conservation and heritage officers need to be defined and developed.*
- *The multidisciplinary nature of conservation, as identified in the ICOMOS profiles, needs to be reviewed and methods developed of incorporating the concept into related educational and training programmes.*
- *The roles of the architectural technologist, historian and ecologist should be acknowledged and accredited.*
- *The educational and training needs for the development of expertise in the conservation of vernacular, industrial, garden and landscape heritage should be addressed.*

#### Training trainers and curriculum development

Educational and training providers need to develop, establish and maintain relevant standards of tutor expertise and quality curricular material for the delivery of conservation-related modules.

The Archaeology and Development Guidelines for Good Practise produced by ICOMOS Ireland and the Heritage Council in 2000 provides useful courseware material. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Environment and Heritage Service Northern Ireland (now the Northern Ireland Environment Agency) have also published quality-standard advisory publications on a number of conservation related topics,

most recently the DEHLG's Advice Series for owners (maintenance, windows, brick and ironwork have been published and others are in preparation). The Building Limes Forum Ireland is currently preparing a publication on the use of lime in Ireland.



#### Recommendations:

- *Additional approved technical and owners' guidelines and related courseware material should be produced to increase the conservation knowledge of tutors and to assist students.*
- *Skills shortages and training needs should be assessed and addressed in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.*
- *Flexible learning methods should be developed to facilitate access to career development opportunities for practitioners.*

#### CONCLUSION

The aim of ICOMOS IRELAND in publishing this document is to stimulate debate around the many issues raised in the review. It is hoped that the contents will provide a stimulus to those in authority who are charged with the protection of our historic built environment.

Despite the advances outlined above, however, the 1994 sub-committee's main recommendation still stands.

#### Principal Recommendation:

- *The "comprehensive investigation required to assess existing structures in the light of foreseeable needs", identified as a priority primary action in the 1994 report has yet to be undertaken. This task must be initiated and funded by the State, and carried through by a competent agency.*





## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

### Principal Recommendation:

- The “comprehensive investigation required to assess existing structures in the light of foreseeable needs”, identified as a priority primary action in the 1994 report has yet to be undertaken. This task must be initiated and funded by the State, and carried through by a competent agency.

### Materials conservation:

- Resources should be provided to establish a training and recruitment programme to a professional level equating to Level 7 EQF, which would meet the State’s core materials conservation needs.

### Crafts in the building industry:

- Advanced craft modules should be developed in a number of relevant traditional skills areas.
- Provision should be made for on-site craft skills training on heritage related projects.
- The relevant authorities should use the findings of the NHTG skills needs analysis report to respond to current and future demand.



### Education and building professionals:

- An expert assessment of these courses, modules, accreditation and related developments should be sought as an integral part of the proposed detailed review.
- The providers of both CPD and postgraduate training should consider tailoring elements of their courses more explicitly to conservation accreditation needs.
- Conservation education and training centres of excellence should be identified and developed throughout Ireland.
- The role of the Department of Education and the relevant accreditation bodies in addressing the needs of the heritage conservation sector should be clarified.
- All relevant professional bodies should be encouraged to set up conservation accreditation schemes.



### Heritage related courses and activities (ancillary occupations):

- Role profiles and training needs should be established for heritage managers and interpretive material designers.
- Heritage conservation awareness should form an integral part of curriculum development at primary and secondary levels.
- Education officer posts should be established at national and local level to promote awareness of the built heritage.

### Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs):

- Priority research areas should be identified and collaboration should be fostered between the building industry, private heritage practitioners, the relevant public agencies and the educational sector.
- A network of key players should be formally established and resourced to facilitate the process.
- A website should be established, or link to dedicated web pages on suitable websites, to facilitate communication within this network and to disseminate data throughout the educational and training sector.
- The relevant funding agencies should make adequate provision for national participation in relevant international activities, including attendance at conferences, specialist courses and work experience programmes.

### Recognition of the broad base of expertise required:

- National Role Profiles and training needs of architectural conservation and heritage officers need to be defined and developed.
- The multidisciplinary nature of conservation, as identified in the ICOMOS profiles, needs to be reviewed and methods of incorporating the concept into related Educational and Training programmes developed.
- The roles of the architectural technologist, historian and ecologist should be acknowledged and accredited.
- The educational and training needs for the development of expertise in the conservation of vernacular, industrial, garden and landscape heritage should be addressed.

### Training trainers and curriculum development:

- Additional approved technical and owners’ guidelines and related courseware material should be produced to increase the conservation knowledge of tutors and to assist students.
- Skills shortages and training needs should be assessed and addressed in a co-ordinated and sustainable manner.
- Flexible learning methods should be developed to facilitate access to career development opportunities for practitioners.

# APPENDIX

ICOMOS INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
Committee for Ireland

## REPORT

ON THE CURRENT STATE OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR CONSERVATION IN IRELAND

### SUMMARY

#### EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR CONSERVATION

THE COMMITTEE FOR IRELAND states that the question of education and training for conservation in Ireland requires the most urgent attention. As a first step, a comprehensive investigation is required to assess existing structures in the light of foreseeable needs. This task must be initiated and funded by the State, and carried through by a competent agency.

On the conclusion of its own preliminary investigation, the Committee identifies four categories in which skills training is necessary:

- 1 materials conservation
- 2 crafts in the building industry
- 3 education of building professionals
- 4 ancillary occupations

With regard to the area of materials conservation, the Committee recommends that, as a matter of urgency, courses of study in the science of decay should be established immediately. It is essential that two areas be addressed: the first being the need to provide a framework for those who wish to pursue careers devoted to the care of historic artefacts, and the second aimed at the requirements of building professionals. We would envisage that these would be attached to Universities with established centres of conservation expertise in these areas.

With regard to the training for crafts in the building industry, the Committee recommends that training centres be established in this country, linked to existing European networks. It is recognised that the Office of Public Works and the Construction Industry Federation have major roles to play in this regard. It is further recognised that such centres will require the resources of existing educational institutions as well as the training facilities of FAS.

Building and urban conservation are essentially interdisciplinary in nature, and require the collaboration of trained professionals in the fields of architecture, engineering, town planning and surveying. The Committee recommends that new provisions, equivalent to those now available for architecture, be made in the other professional areas. It looks to the professional Institutes, the Office of Public Works and the educational institutions, in conjunction with Construction Industry Federation, to establish the necessary financial framework.

With regard to ancillary occupations such as those in the presentation of heritage buildings and sites to the public, the Committee recommends that special consideration be given to the question as to how local communities can be helped develop their own resources in this respect.

March 1994

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	Crafts in the Building Industry
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#### ICOMOS Committee for Ireland

E. Cassidy, J.F. Greene, S. Greene, M. Gowen, E. Grogan, A. Halpin, D. Hyde, L. Kealy, J. Kelly, Dr.B.P. Kennedy, Professor J.O.Lewis, A. Lindsay, M. McGrath, P. McMahon, M. McParland, C.Manning, Dr.W. O'Brien, C. Murphy, T.O'Connor, M. O'Doherty, T. O'Muire, R. Oram, A. O'Shaughnessy, I. Roberts, N. Roche, Dr.S. Rothery, G. Rourke, M. Shaffrey, J. Sheehan, D. Slattery, D. Sweetman.

### SECTION 1: PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR CONSERVATION IN IRELAND

#### Introduction

The ICOMOS Committee for Ireland has been concerned with the level of conservation skills available in this country, and exercised in heritage projects. To progress its own thinking on this matter, it established in 1993, a Sub-committee on Education and Training to examine this issue and to report to the Committee.

The Sub-committee set itself the task of drawing up a preliminary overview of conservation training as it exists in this country, as a first step towards establishing priorities in this area. This document presents the results of this work, as amended and adopted by the Committee in February 1994.

The conclusion reached is that existing provision for training in the field of conservation is inadequate for current needs. With regard to the key area of materials conservation, training is, to all intents and purposes in this island, non-existent. Recent years has seen a growth in the number of courses about conservation. The Committee welcomes the development of awareness of the field which will flow from this development. The development does not, however begin to address critical areas of need experienced at this time.

#### The Report is in two main Sections:

The first Section presents the findings of the preliminary investigation conducted by the Sub-committee on Education and Training. It is in four sections, corresponding to the principal components of the enquiry, namely:

- the identification of formal courses in conservation
- the identification of informal training activities in conservation
- the identification of the training received by conservation practitioners
- the identification of the principal courses attended by Irish conservators

The second Section presents the observations of the Irish Committee.

### Sub-committee on Education and Training

Loughlin Kealy, Paul McMahon, Mairéad McParland, Conor Murphy, Grellan Rourke and Maura Shaffrey

## REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING

This Section presents the findings of the preliminary investigation conducted by the Sub-committee on Education and Training. It is in four parts, corresponding to the principal components of the enquiry, namely:

- the identification of formal courses in conservation
- the identification of informal training activities in conservation
- the identification of the training received by conservation practitioners
- the identification of the principal courses attended by Irish conservators

### 1 Formal Courses in Conservation

Third level institutions were written to, setting out the nature of the enquiry, and follow-up telephone calls were made. The purpose of the enquiry was to determine what courses in conservation or related to it are on offer in the universities and Regional Technical Colleges, to acquire the syllabi of any courses offered, to identify the relevant directors. Replies were received from most, but not all, university colleges, and follow-up calls were not always successful. With regard to RTC's, information was sought from those colleges which offered courses in "Construction Studies". Despite the gaps, it is felt that an adequate overview of the current position has been achieved. This position can be summarised as follows:

- a. There is, at present, one course offered at university level which specifically addresses conservation. This is given at University College Dublin and is directed towards professionals in the fields of architecture, planning and engineering. It is a postgraduate programme at Masters' level, leading to the

degree of Master of Urban and Building Conservation. The programme has a strong orientation towards methods of investigation, recording and analysis. The degree is awarded on the basis of a research-based written thesis. While the course work covers a wide range of conservation methods related to buildings, it does not set out to provide training in the conservation of materials or in skills required for the direct application of techniques.

- b. A number of universities offer courses and degrees in fields germane to conservation. University College Cork, University College Dublin, University College Galway and Queen's University Belfast give degrees in Archaeology. These institutions also carry out archaeological excavations, either in their own right or as commissions to other parties. Some on-site training in archaeological excavation methods is therefore available to some students during their Summer vacation. Trinity College Dublin incorporates the study of archaeology within the Classics Department. Some archaeological work is carried out abroad. The situation as regards conservation techniques in this field is, however very different.

Although there are archaeological conservators associated with three University Departments of Archaeology, training of conservators is not part of the remit of these bodies. There are lectures about conservation in UCD, and it may be that the other colleges treat of the subject also under another heading. As a general comment, it must be pointed out that the range of materials to be conserved in this field is very wide, and it would be difficult for satisfactory levels of training to be provided by these institutions for any but a small percentage of the materials likely to be encountered.

- c. Turning to related subjects at university level, it may be noted that TCD and UCD confer degrees in the History of Art. In these institutions the place of architecture is fully acknowledged, and this interest is well represented in postgraduate work. There is now a pool of well-informed graduates, some at advanced level, with a good knowledge of historical artefacts of artistic and architectural importance. Techniques of restoration are not taught *per se*, and although it appears that some lectures do deal with this subject in their treatment of historic techniques of

painting, training of conservators is not within the present remit of these bodies.

We note also that UCC conducts a programme in heritage management at Diploma level.

- d. Planned developments in the universities may bring about some improvement in this picture in the foreseeable future. TCD plans to introduce formal study of the mechanisms of stone decay in 1994. At undergraduate level, the course of study will be geared towards engineering students through their departmental structure of Civil, Structural and Environmental Engineering. At postgraduate Diploma level, places will be available to non-engineers. TCD is conscious also of the need for craft training in this area.

UCD is embarking on a development of its building laboratory and will host short training courses aimed at building professionals, which will concentrate on a limited range of materials.

- e. With regard to the Regional Technical Colleges, our review suggests that, apart from introductory lectures/courses at certain colleges, training in skills relating to the conservation of monuments and sites are not included in the curriculum. Generally speaking, training for apprentices in the building industry is provided in Vocational Schools, in the School of Construction Trades at Dublin Institute of Technology, Bolton Street and in the RTC's. FAS, the Industrial Training Authority, offers specific short-term courses geared towards the needs of the building industry.

The institutions provide courses ranging in their application from apprentice to management levels in the building industry, and in terms of education and training from operative training to professional education at university-level degree. These provide opportunities for transfer from apprentice to management. In effect they mean that the channel for advancement is through a movement out of the area of skilled craft to other occupations at supervisory, design or management levels. Further advancement within the craft itself, as "master craftsman" is not specifically provided. It appears

that there has been little or no demand for the continuance of this tradition. In practice, those achieving advanced skills generally do so by virtue of their experience or through a personal career choice. It is not seen as a goal or natural progression to be reached through further study within the field in question or through a specialised course.

We note that the Irish Georgian Society Newsletter (Autumn/Winter 1993/4) has carried notice of a course being offered at RTC Tallaght, entitled "Foundation Studies in Building Restoration and Conservation".

### 2 Informal Training Activities

It was recognised that historically a number of institutions have trained members of their own staffs to meet some of their conservation needs. While the Sub-committee did not attempt to review the situation as a whole under this heading, a summary review of the training activities of the Office of Public Work has been undertaken. It is known that, while such activity is ongoing in the OPW, other institutions have largely discontinued this practice in favour of training through institutions abroad.

#### Specialist Training in the Office of Public Works

The National Monuments Service of the Office of Public Works has been involved for many years in the specialist training of craftspeople. The number of apprentices engaged in such training varies from time to time. The training conducted reflects the demand generated by the ongoing work of the Service, and is not the product of a comprehensive programme. Thus there is no structured system in place to monitor the progress of apprentices, or to make sure that they will have covered the full range of aspects of the specialist craft in question by the end of their period of training.

Nevertheless, the structure of the National Monuments Service, with its six workshop centres located around the country, each with a resident clerk-of-works, is well suited to establishing an effective programme of specialist training. This is especially true in the light of the range of conservation and restoration work undertaken by the Service.

Table 1 below sets out the distribution and nature of skills training being conducted in the current year, 1993.

Table 1

	Stonecutter	Mason	Carpenter
Athenry	1	1	1
Kilkenny	1	2	-
Killarney	1	1	-
Mallow	1	1	-
Sligo	1	1	-
Trim	-	2	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

It is clear from the above that the current preoccupation is with stone-based craft skills, and that there is need to develop in other areas.

One of the most important issues to be resolved in developing a comprehensive programme is that of supervision. The current workload of the clerks-of-works is such that they could not be expected to deal with an expanded apprenticeship scheme. We are of the opinion that at least one full-time position will need to be created for the structuring and administration of a comprehensive training programme, capable of being adequately staffed and monitored.

### 3 The Training of Practising Conservators

In order to generate an overview of the training experience of conservators practising in Ireland, a preliminary exercise has been carried out covering those listed in the Conservation Directory. The fields covered are as follows:

Archaeological Conservation; Architectural Conservation; Archival Material; Drawings and Watercolours; Books and Illuminated Manuscripts; Ceramics; Furniture/Gilding; Horology; Museum

Material; Musical Instruments; Oil Painting; Photography; Plasterwork and Textiles.

In compiling the data, it was recognised that training experience might be acquired either through participation in formal training programmes or through apprenticeship. The data given below in Table 2 does not distinguish between these routes, although we recognise that it would be of considerable interest to have more refined data to hand.

Eighty-six (86) conservators were covered and data was available for fifty-four (54). Those surveyed practised in fifteen (15) fields of conservation.

Table 2

Conservation Fields	Conservators	Training/ Apprenticeship	Uncertain/ No data*
Archaeological	6	4	2
Books/ Illuminated Mss	3	1	2
Architectural	14	8	6
Ceramics	9	3	6
Furniture/Gilding	15	6	9
Horology	2	1	1
Museum Material	4	2	2
Musical Instruments	3	3	0
Oil Painting	12	10	2
Archival/ Drawings, etc.	11	11	0
Photography	2	1	1
Plasterwork	1	1	0
Textiles	2	2	0
Stained Glass	2	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>32</b>

Although the information received was far from complete, analysis of the data indicates that:

- 1 many practising conservators have entered the field having acquired third level primary degrees, though not necessarily in the areas in which they practice
- 2 a high proportion of these have studied conservation abroad (see Section 4)
- 3 there is, in certain areas, a strong "on the job" training profile

- 4 as a general pattern, the more senior conservators are more likely to have acquired their knowledge and skill through apprenticeship, while those more recently on the scene are likely to have experienced formal training.

In addition, it is evident that the range of fields in which expertise is available in this country is considerable in itself. However, in order to have a complete picture of how the skills available relate to demand, it would be necessary to have information on the extent to which expertise was called in from other countries and for what conservation fields. This task should precede the drawing of any firm conclusions in this area.



#### 4 Conservation Courses attended by Irish Conservators

A brief study was carried out to determine the principal institutions attended by Irish student conservators. This study took the form of a "straw poll" of known practitioners. We think that this forms a

useful supplement to the information gleaned through our enquiry concerning training experience. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3

City	Course/Institution	Description
Bruges, Belgium	College d'Europe	Full-time postgraduate course in architectural conservation
Fulda, Germany		Council of Europe funded, full range of craft training, residential
Leuven, Belgium	Centre for Conservation of Historic Towns and Buildings	1 year full-time, architectural
London, UK	Architectural Association	2 year part-time, architectural short courses of wide-ranging interest.
	S.P.A.B.	William Morris Scholarship
	University of London, Institute of Archaeology	Diploma in Archaeological Conservation, Wall Paintings
	Hampton Court Palace	Conservation of textiles
	Courtauld Institute	Conservation of Paintings
Mainz, Germany		Course in Moulding, Casting and Reproduction
Rome, Italy	I.C.C.R.O.M.	Wide range of interests, 1 year, 6 months and short courses
	Istituto Centrale del Restauro Istituto di Patologia del Libro	Conservation of Paintings, etc. Conservation of books
Venice, Italy	San Servolo	Council of Europe funded, wide range of craft courses, residential
West Dean, UK		Comprehensive range of courses, full-time and Summer school
York, UK	Institute of Advanced Studies Architectural Studies	M.A. level courses in Conservation Studies and Architectural Gardens Conservation, short courses on a wide range, architectural interest

Incomplete as it is, the Table gives an overview of the range of courses to which Irish conservators have had recourse. We are aware that recent years have seen the establishment of a variety of courses in a range of institutions in the United Kingdom which do

not appear on our list, and that Irish students do attend these courses. We note also that San Servolo has introduced a special course intended to acquaint building professionals with the area of conservation crafts.

#### SECTION 2: OBSERVATIONS

It is the opinion of the National Committee that the question of education and training for conservation in Ireland requires the most urgent attention. As a first step, existing and foreseeable needs must be assessed through a comprehensive investigation. This task must be initiated and funded by the State, and carried through by a competent agency. While such an investigation is beyond the resources of the Irish Committee, we will be pleased to assist any investigation which is adequately structured and supported.

For its part, on the conclusion of its own preliminary investigation, the Committee

- welcomes the increase in the number of courses devoted to generating awareness of the value of the built heritage and of the artefacts of the past
- points to the need to create training programmes which inculcate skills required to conserve and restore such objects of value
- emphasises that decisions as to what provision should be made for training in this country need to take account of the international context. The goal must be to create a situation in which Irish conservators can achieve excellence in their field. This will be achieved through training and supervised experience. An effective combination of courses and placement will require both new provisions in this country and improved access to specialist training elsewhere.
- identifies four categories in which skills training is necessary:
  - 1 materials conservation
  - 2 crafts in the building industry
  - 3 education of building professionals
  - 4 ancillary occupations

Drawing upon the collective experience of its membership, the Committee wishes to make a number of observations under these four headings.

#### 1 Materials Conservations

It has long been recognised that there is a need for a basic course in materials conservation, aimed at those who have completed a primary degree level course and wish to become practising conservators. Such a course would concentrate on imparting an understanding of the science of decay in relation to a range of materials. It must be recognised that completion of such a course would be the first of three essential steps on the way to becoming a materials conservator. The second step would be the completion of a course of specialist study carried at an appropriate institution abroad. The third step is a period of apprenticeship under a recognised practitioner<sup>1</sup>.

Earlier in this document, reference was made to the fact that virtually no training in conservation is provided in the archaeological courses currently being delivered in third level institutions in this country. We pointed out that the range of materials the conservator will encounter is so wide that it is difficult to envisage a comprehensive training programme being established here in the foreseeable future. However, we would recommend for further examination the concept of the basic course as outlined above.

At present, we envisage that studies in the science of decay would take place in two contexts: one aimed at materials conservators, and the other aimed at building professionals. We would envisage that the first might be located at the University of Limerick and the second at University College Dublin.

#### 2 Crafts in the Building Industry

The situation with regard to specialist training in crafts related to building conservation is most unsatisfactory. There is a demand for heritage-related development and for the rehabilitation of old buildings, and with this demand comes the requirement for additional numbers of skilled workers in the construction sector. Action to meet this demand would improve employment opportunity also for semi-skilled and unskilled labour.

<sup>1</sup> We note that such is the policy of the Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in Ireland.

The Committee believes that there is sound economic basis for the creation, in this country, of a programme for specialised conservation skills training in the construction sector.

It should be pointed out that, in the very near future, the impact of emerging practice at European level, will be to ensure that contracts on major heritage projects will be confined to firms that can demonstrate the presence on their staff of the necessary specialised skills and experience. In such circumstances, as matters stand here at present, not only would most Irish contractors be unable to compete on the European stage, they might well find themselves precluded on competence grounds from projects in this country.

Accordingly, we recommend that the terms of reference of the major review sought in this report include an examination of the future supply of craftsmen, and of its adequacy for the needs of both large and small firms. We recommend the establishment of training centers in this country, linked with existing international networks. It is recognised that the development of satisfactory arrangements for training will require the co-operation of existing educational institutions such as the School of Trades at the Dublin Institute of Technology and the Regional Technical Colleges, as well as the training facilities of FAS. Key organisations in bringing about this development are the Office of Public Works and the Construction Industry Federation.

### 3 Education of Building Professionals

While in terms of formal training in conservation, progress has been made at the professional level in architecture, there is little evidence of equivalent developments in the fields of town planning, civil, mechanical and electrical engineering and surveying. It is the opinion of the Committee that the particular requirements of old buildings should be the focus of study at undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education levels.

In the case of architecture, undergraduate programmes have long incorporated design projects involving intervention into existing

buildings. More recently, courses have been established which examine the issues of conservation of buildings and urban areas. Postgraduate and continuing professional development courses are a more recent development. The Committee welcomes these developments, acknowledges the need for continued advancement in the skills required in this area, and recognises that opportunities for supervised practical experience in the field are still restricted.

The Committee recommends that equivalent provisions be made in the other professional areas, town planning, engineering and surveying. It looks to the professional Institutes, the Office of Public Works and the educational institutions, in conjunction with Construction Industry Federation, to establish the necessary financial framework.

The National Committee of ICOMOS has a role in creating a forum in which the essential inter-disciplinary nature of building and urban conservation can be expressed.

### 4 Ancillary Occupations

There is an emerging need for advanced skills training for those engaged in the interpretation and presentation of heritage to the public. The Committee acknowledges the contribution made by third level institutions in establishing heritage-related courses, such as those in arts administration and heritage management.

At the same time, we wish to point out that one of the most important characteristics of the heritage of this country is that it has not been unduly affected, as yet, by over-professionalised and packaged presentation. There is a danger that, with tourism being targetted as a major generator of jobs, that the direct cultural connections that still exist will be replaced by standardised approaches. Accordingly, we would recommend that consideration be given to the question as to how local communities can be helped develop their own resources in this respect.

Dublin. March 1994

