

CARE guidance for engineers when assessing heritage assets that are proposed to be demolished or partially demolished in the United Kingdom and Ireland

Context.

The historic environment forms part of our cultural heritage and informs our sense of identity. It is an irreplaceable, finite resource which should be sustained for the benefit of present and future generations. Heritage assets are afforded either legal protection or require consideration, under planning policy. This note is intended to provide clear guidance for Engineers being requested to inspect and report on heritage assets which may on cursory inspection appear in poor condition.

Heritage assets include buildings and structures which are: Listed (UK) or Protected (Ireland); Monuments (Scheduled in Great Britain, Historic in Northern Ireland or National in Ireland); non - designated heritage assets (as determined by the Local Planning Authority); or situated in a Conservation Area. The terminology used subsequently applies in Great Britain; in other jurisdictions this may vary but the principles of how to treat / care for heritage assets are likely to be similar. Wherever in the world an Engineer is working they should comply with the local and appropriate jurisdiction.

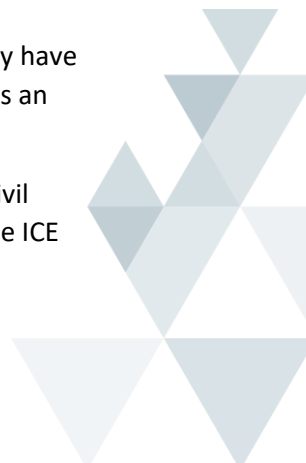
If an Engineer is approached to provide a report on a heritage asset where a client or owner is pursuing partial, or full demolition then the Engineer needs to give very careful consideration to whether such demolition is justified. This is because a report produced by a Chartered Engineer may be relied on by the owner to demonstrate: demolition is urgently necessary; it is not practicable to secure safety or preservation by other means (e.g. repair or temporary support or shelter); and that the extent of demolition outlined in the Engineer's report is the minimum immediately necessary. Demonstration of the preceding points provides a defence to unauthorised works to heritage assets, provided notice in writing justifying in detail the works is given to the Local Planning Authority (or government department) as soon as reasonably practicable. If this defence is later discredited, prosecution can be successfully brought by the responsible authority against someone who causes works to be executed for example the Engineer whose report led to the demolition - as well as an owner or contractor.

Competency

In line with the ICE's and IStructE Professional Codes of Conduct Engineers should '**Undertake only those tasks and accept only those appointments for which they are competent**'. In addition, they must act with integrity and fairness, have regard to the public interest, as well as due regard for the environment and for the sustainable management of natural resources; the latter includes the embodied carbon of existing buildings and structures.

An Engineer requested to report in the above circumstances on a heritage asset should ensure they have appropriate experience and may find it helpful to explain to their client that they will need to act as an advocate for the building.

The Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers (CARE), administered by the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) and the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE), the register is published on the ICE



website [<https://www.ice.org.uk/download-centre/conservation-accreditation-register-of-engineers>].

Accreditation demonstrates advanced attributes in conservation that exceed those required for professional membership. This approach is endorsed by The UK Government Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

If not conservation accredited the Engineer would be expected to demonstrate competence with recent, relevant experience advising on comparable heritage assets including those in poor condition. An Engineer without appropriate conservation competence should decline the commission.

Assessment

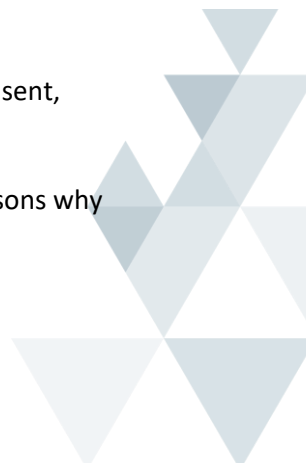
The following steps outline aspects that would be undertaken in a competent assessment:

- A) Establish the designation of the asset to understand if it has legal protection. For example by accessing online resources, or by contacting the conservation officer in the Local Planning Authority.
- B) Assess the significance of the asset, more information on this is given in Historic England's Good Practice Guide 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment [<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/gpa2-managing-significance-in-decision-taking/>] or contact the relevant national amenity society.
- C) Review historic information such as previous planning applications and photographs etc
- D) Request and review all relevant information from the Client/owner such as previous reports, drawings, information on risks, etc.
- E) A detailed site inspection to confirm, or otherwise the overall and elemental condition of the asset. Including whether movement noted is historic or progressive and, whether it can be arrested without the need to resort to demolition. Any inspection and assessment can be significantly enhanced by appropriate physical access such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), or visual access via drones, and additional surveys such as verticality, timber decay etc.
- F) The Engineer will need to undertake dynamic risk assessments as they proceed in order to determine whether the building is safe to enter or how alternative options can be used to inspect the structure safely. Health and Safety for such assessments must always take priority.
- G) The assessment of a heritage asset must always start from the presumption that the asset should be retained unless there is an imminent, specific risk of collapse or that third parties are put at risk.
- H) Temporary works may be required to provide support to allow a full assessment to be made.

Application

Any Engineer's report supporting a Listed Building Consent Application, Scheduled Monument Consent, Planning Application or similar for demolition should clearly set out:

- A) The brief provided by the client and, if demolition or partial demolition is proposed, the reasons why this is considered necessary.



- B) An indication of the experience of the Engineer in assessing heritage assets including those in poor condition, as well as the Engineer’s qualifications.
- C) A clear statement on the status of the building in relation to statutory protection, including a statement of heritage significance.
- D) A clear statement of the areas of the asset that has been structurally assessed and reasons why any areas have been omitted.
- E) A statement of the current vertical and horizontal load transfer through the building
- F) A clear description of the issues arising out of the assessment with records of measurements taken, sketches and photographs to record defects referenced (where appropriate) to structural plans and sections, including areas in sound condition.
- G) Conclusions providing an overall assessment of condition, including identifying the major issues, and options for temporary or remedial works if necessary.
- H) If either partial or full demolition is deemed necessary, the extent must be clear with drawings, sketches or marked-up photographs to indicate the areas affected and those parts of the building/structure can be retained / stabilised. Additionally, clear and concise justification setting out the reasons why demolition is required, together with alternative options and or temporary works which have been considered and in this instance discredited.
- I) It should include a non-technical summary to allow non-specialists to clearly understand the conclusions and recommendations.

In addition to the above, an application including demolition of any part of a heritage asset will require the Engineer, or another conservation professional to prepare a Heritage Statement .

The Engineer is strongly recommended to contact the conservation (or relevant officer) at the Local Planning Authority (or government department) at the earliest stage to discuss the asset and to receive their advice. If the guidance steps set out above are not followed the Local Planning Authority is likely to refuse any applications. It should be noted Local Planning Authorities are increasingly requiring heritage assets to have been inspected and reported on by a CARE registered Engineer.

ENDORSEMENTS:

This guidance note has been prepared by the Institution of Structural Engineers, The Institution of Civil Engineers and Engineers Ireland.

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