

# CARRICK on SUIR TOWN WALLS WORKS 2014

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COMPLETION REPORT 2014



November 2014



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## 1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

During 2013 funding was acquired to prepare a Town Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan for the town wall at Carrick on Suir and the upstanding remains at the Park were identified as suitable for conservation work. Funding was applied for from the IWTN and granted in early 2014. Ministerial consent was applied for and granted for the works proposed.

There were two major trees in the grounds of the adjoining tennis club that were deemed to be a threat to the long term security of this section of the town wall, agreement was achieved between all parties and this was the first procedure to carry out - the trees were successfully removed under the supervision of Carrig Conservation.

The main work to this section of the town wall was to remove very heavy biological growth and then to survey the wall and carry out necessary repairs and secure the integrity of the masonry. The heavy growth was cut back and the remainder treated with a biocidal kill product, allowed to dwell for a number of days and then the remaining biological growth removed.

It was at this stage the extent of damage to this section of wall was fully revealed, Carrig Conservation, the engineer and contractor met to discuss the situation and a different course of action was required - Carrig Conservation contacted the Heritage Council and the Department of Arts Heritage & Gaeltacht to seek advice on the procedure to alter the existing Ministerial Consent and to ensure the funding allocated by the Heritage Council would stand with the proposed changes. Permissions were granted and the engineer designed a system of retention in its present precarious condition as the funding or time would not allow a full repair strategy.

## 2 PROGRAMME

The application for Ministerial Consent was made on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2014, the application was processed quickly and efficiently and received on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2014. The element of work in this phase was tendered to a number of contractors and an appointment made by mid-September.

Prior to work commencing on site two number mature lime trees were removed by a qualified tree surgeon, this took place over the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

Harras fencing was supplied and erected by the appointed contractor on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September to the roadside of the chosen section of wall and a closed panel fencing erected to the Tennis Club side due to health & safety reasons. A suitable scaffold was also erected to both sides of the wall

Work commenced on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2014.

The archaeological dig was carried out by operatives from Tipperary County Council under the supervision of Claire Walsh on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2014 with an additional visit to site on the 9<sup>th</sup> of October 2014.

Following the careful removal of all biological matter the wall, particularly the upper sections were in a seriously worse condition than ever imagined. The contractor contacted Carrig and visits were organised by Carrig, the Engineer and the Archaeologist - all agreed that much of the wall would have to be fully recorded and taken down before being rebuilt. Costs in relation to this proposal were worked up by all parties and a discussion with Tipperary County Council took place.

The decision was that there was not the money available to do this level of work this year, there was also serious concern that the level of work would run over the winter and well into early next

year. The only alternative was to carry out a temporary holding situation by erecting a temporary support system to hold the wall in place and to negate any serious health and safety risks.

An alteration to the Ministerial Consent was sought and received and it was confirmed in discussions with the Heritage Council that the money allocated from the Irish Wall Towns Network could be spent in this way.

The work was completed on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> of December 2014 and signed off.

### **3 FINDINGS OF NOTE**

The most interesting finding is that there are many, perhaps later opes, now filled in which suggests much intervention over the centuries and the possibility that a structure (18c) may have abutted this section wall at some stage (no longer there). The condition of the wall, as stated above is very poor with a serious amount of damage to the structural integrity of the wall. A large amount of stone has been lost to the wall-walk with much of it now at a 45° degree angle. The remainder of the wall at this location which is also completely covered in heavy biological growth is most likely in a similar condition.

The features of the Bartizan and the steps leading up to it are very interesting and offer a glimpse of the original fabric of the wall as it looked out over the River Suir to the East

All works have been completed in compliance with Ministerial Consent. The following document details the conservation approach, progress and outcome of works.

### **4 CONSTRAINTS**

The budget has been exceeded in this the first year of the Carrick walls programme due to the unforeseen instability of the wall. Basic works were done to stabilise the wall however, the temporary propping of the wall has added greatly to the budget spend. The situation now is that there is a section of wall exposed to the elements, and although safely propped, there is a very significant change in plan for the future. This was an unknown condition which was not included in the original estimate and the extent of this problem could not have been foreseen by the contractor or consultants.

The fact that the Tennis Club is directly adjoining the south facing wall has a health and safety risk as the club caters for many children's events all year round and they walk and play in close proximity to the wall that is in a serious condition. As a safety measure there is agreement with the club to leave Haras fencing fixed in place until such time that the rebuilding can happen to reduce the safety risk.

### **5 METHODOLOGY**

The concept of the project was to conserve the structure as a ruin by adopting a sound technical approach to the repair of the historic fabric based on best practice conservation principles as established by the Venice and Burra Charters. The specification was drawn up using best practice principles as outlined in the charters above; to be carried out using traditional repair techniques where possible and with minimum intervention. However this was overtaken by the fact the wall is in such a precarious condition.

### 5.1 Heritage Compliance & Signing off on Work

Work to remove the vegetation to the wall and to erect the temporary propping of the wall was carried in accordance with the approved specification and the alteration to the work in compliance with Ministerial Consent C653 (See Appendix 4).

### 5.2 Specification

The Specification and Methodology was based on a comprehensive condition assessment based on a clear understanding of the decay mechanisms and condition of the historic fabric.

### 5.3 Record

A comprehensive photographic record was taken following the removal of vegetation. This photographic documentation preserves important historic information and serves as a lasting record of the monument.

### 5.4 Set-up

The contractor set up within the road to the private houses, this is a cul-de-sac and permission was discussed with the local residents, this gave access to the north elevation. A section to be cordoned off within the grounds of the Tennis Club was also negotiated and this gave safe access to the south elevation and wall-walk.

## 6 DESCRIPTION AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF WORKS

The following images show the removal of the trees, the wall prior to during and after the completion of works.

### 6.1 Before Photographs



Fig. 1) The north section of wall treated in 2014.

Fig. 2) A view of the south elevation from the Tennis Clubhouse

## 6.2 Tree Removal



Fig. 3) An early start was made in removing the larger tree.



Fig. 4) Small hand held chain saws were used



Fig. 5) Large branches were taken off one by one and processed on the ground.



Fig. 6) Working with a qualified and full health & safety compliant company.



Fig. 7) The trunk after removal of all branches.



Fig. 8) A view from the boson's chair of the section of the wall treated in 2014.

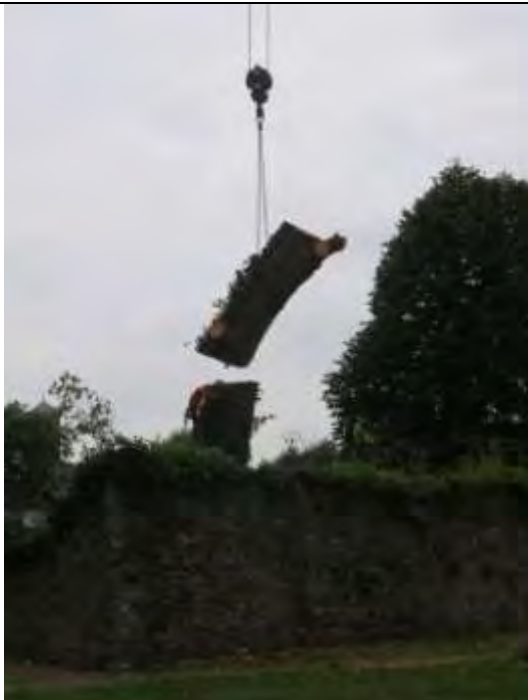




Fig. 9) The first part of the trunk being removed.

Fig. 10) This root and small trunk is left.

### 6.3 Following removal of the overgrowth



Fig. 11) A view of the south face of the wall following removal of the overgrowth.



Fig. 12) The section directly over the tennis clubhouse



Fig. 13) A view of the remainder of the wall-walk.



Fig. 14) Precarious masonry just resting there.



Fig. 15) A section of a previous ope now blocked up.



Fig. 16) The south face of the wall and wall-walk is really now a dry stone wall

#### 6.4 Temporary Propping



Fig. 17) The temporary shoring erected to the north elevation.



Fig. 18) The metal beams wrap over the wall to give support to the south elevation



Fig. 19) With the timber rails which then will be wedged to the wall.



Fig. 20) The precast concrete base to support the metal work.



Fig. 21) A view of the north facing elevation.



Fig. 22) When all timbers and brackets were in place the main steel stanchion was grouted up.



Fig. 23) The timber bracing was made to measure.



Fig. 24) The top of the wall was covered with an open plastic netting to catch any falling stones and to allow the wall air movement - this picture also shows the wedges in place.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

The fact that the first section of Carrick-on-Suir town wall was found to be in such poor physical condition the only recommendation can be to target a significant amount of work for next year. This wall cannot be left in its present condition for long due to the fact that it faces on to a public road with families using it and the added factor that the south elevation is within the Tennis Club which has daily activity all year round and that it has a high youth membership.

The priority will be the stability of the section that has been propped and the next section of the Carrick-on-Suir town wall to the west. The primary concern will be to stabilise these sections to ensure that they will not collapse.

Funding should be sought for the following work

- A full stone accurate survey of the section cleared of overgrowth should be taken.
- A plan to take down the upper section of this part of the wall, record it, number all stones taken down and rebuild the section as it must be a priority
- The removal of the overgrowth from the next section to the west is now also essential to understand the condition of this section of the wall. It has to be considered that it may be in as bad a condition as the section dealt with in 2014.
- If necessary the temporary shoring in place at present can be used to support the next section of the wall west when the overgrowth has been removed.
- Priority funding must be given to dealing with this now exposed section of wall.

### 6.5 Historic Wall Maintenance

A considerable sum has been spent removing the plant-life from this section of wall in 2014 it is futile to spend this money and not have in place a biannual maintenance regime to remove plantlife to maintain the present condition of the Wall and not allow it deteriorate any further.



## APPENDIX 1 - INVOICES

## APPENDIX 2: ARCHAEOLOGIST'S REPORT



Report on the excavation of two trial trenches on the line of the town wall at Castleparcs, Carrick- on Suir, September 2014

Consent: C000653  
E004562, R000366

Claire Walsh

December 2014

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- Figure 5. Location of trial trenches on modern OS.
- Figure 6. Plan and section of trench 1 and 2.

## Plates

## Introduction

A Conservation, Management and Interpretation Plan of the town walls of Carrick-on-Suir was prepared by Carrig Conservation on behalf of Tipperary County Council. As part of the interpretation, it was agreed to excavate three trial trenches along the projected line of the town wall between the standing north-east corner and Ormond Castle, in Castlepark. The purpose of the trenches is to provide information both on the historical line of the wall, the condition of the sub-surface monument, and the future potential of exposing the sub-surface stretch of walling. Two of the proposed three trenches only could be excavated, as contractors were carrying out extensive works in the garden area in front of Ormond Castle.

The town walls are a Recorded Monument (TS085-004032), and the works were undertaken under Ministerial Consent C000653, E004562.

The County Council provided a mechanical excavator and driver.

The excavation was directed by Claire Walsh, with assistance and surveying by Conor McHale, who prepared the finished drawings.

The work was carried out on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2014. An additional site visit was carried out on 9<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, when stone for the steps to the wall walk was sorted, and additional notes taken on the structure.

Archaeological and historical background to the site

The circuit of the town walls of Carrick-on-Suir is discussed in detail by Thomas (1992, 43-46). A stone town wall can be dated by murage and other documents to the early 14<sup>th</sup> century by the latest. The general outline, as depicted by Thomas, is of a regular rectangle with the best surviving portion at the north-east corner, where work in 2014 has been concentrated.

## Cartography

Carrick-on-Suir is indicated as a walled town in the 1657 Down Survey map (Figure 1). Three towers are indicated on the northern side, and the walls appear to enclose the castle, extending at a slant from the north-east corner to the river at the south of the castle. The detail of the town in this map however is limited.

A more detailed map by John Taylor, dating to 1699, from the 'Map of the town of Carrickbeg, Co. Waterford belonging to James, Duke of Ormond', (viewed from north to south, but reversed in Figure 2) shows a birds-eye view of the castle. The town plots extending southwards to the river are detailed. A walled area to the north, where the town wall is still extant, is depicted, however this turns sharply westwards. The line south is continued off the walled alignment, suggesting that it is not walled as such, but may be an earthen enclosure. The courtyard in front (to the north) of the castle is depicted much as it is today, with the area to the north depicted as tree-dotted parkland. The larger enclosed area to the north-east is annotated 'Ash Park', and is known today as Castlepark.

The date of demolition of the town wall south of the north-east stretch is uncertain- the wall line is not shown on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey. However, the building whose features remain in the north-east corner of the site is not shown in either the 1699 map nor on the Ordnance Survey first edition. An aquatint by Thomas Sautelle Roberts, of 1796, of the east side of the castle, shows the parkland as undulating and naturalistic, with no evidence for a wall. The Earl's gardens appear to have been laid out in the 1580s, when 'earl Thomas annexed a garden and tenement ...to his great house at Carrickmacgriffin' (Fenlon 2008, 36).

Taylor's map of 1699 shows an eastern projection of the wall north of the castle, in an area later occupied by a building on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey, annotated Castle Lodge. Jane Fenlon remarks on this building that lodges, usually tall structures, often built on the edge of parks, were a notable feature of late Elizabethan living, often used both as a viewing point for overlooking the park and as a banqueting house where light meals were served.

There may have been an east gate in the walls, although there is no survival of a placename in the records relating to CarrickonSuir.

The 25 inch Ordnance Survey map annotates 'tanks' in the castle park. A mound planted with trees in the park is apparent in du Noyer's drawings of the castle from 1837 (reproduced by Jane Fenlon).

No trace of either ramparts or a fosse have been uncovered in previous excavations close to the line of the town walls of Carrick-on-Suir.

## The excavation

Two trenches were located on green parkland north of Ormond Castle. The uppermost deposit of grass and sod was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a grading bucket. It was noted that the sod was laid down in recent years, and ring pulls, tinfoil, and other debris was observed in the sub-stratum. The lower soils were scanned by a metal detector, however no metal artefacts were recovered.

Trench 1, located closest to Ormond Castle, measured 11m in length by 1.80m in width. The west end of the trench was excavated to a depth of 2.50m below present ground level. Initially, a dip or potentially the edge of a cut had been perceived along the east end of the site. Excavation revealed much stratified levels of sand and gravel, with very occasional fragments of red brick evident at depth, along with lenses of mortar and small stone.

The east end of the trench was cut through by two pits, filled with topsoil and stone. The pits were 800mm in diameter, with a depth of 1200mm.

Grass, sod and fine gravel on which the latter was bedded, averaged 200mm in depth. A gaming counter of transfer patterned ceramic, 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, was recovered from the lower level of the sod and grass.

Trench 2 measured 10.30m in length, with a width of 1.90m. A penny of 1971 was recovered from the fine gravel beneath the sod, along with other debris of recent years.

A pit filled with dark soil was identified in the east end, extending into the northern section. This measured 1,500mm in width with a depth of 1,100mm, and was notably squared, with straight edges. Fragments of flower pot, a clay pipe stem and butchered animal bone were recovered from the pit fill.

The pit was cut into loose coarse gravel and sandstone. Subsoil was a layer of very compact yellow brown gravel and silt.

At the east end of the trench, a cut filled with brown loam held a service pipe, which was a 3inch diameter cast iron water pipe. This is probably leading to one of the tanks, annotated on the Ordnance Survey 25 inch map.

There was no evidence in either trench for the town wall. The pits and areas of disturbance appear to relate to either agricultural activity, evidenced by flower pot fragments, rubbish disposal, including butchered animal bone, and services, such as the cast iron water pipe.

No evidence for medieval or early post-medieval activity was recovered from either trench. However, the presence of several large sandstone blocks, which could have originated from masonry, was noted in the disturbed soils, roughly along the projected line of the town wall.

## The town wall at the north-east corner (description from south to north to west).

The section of the town wall to be conserved in 2014 had been cleaned of vegetation, and scaffolding partly erected when first visited. National Monuments records, compiled by Jean Farrelly on the basis of a 1993 visit, states that the wall extends south from the north-east corner for 17.25m. However, it can be seen clearly on the external face that the original wall, composed of large rough sandstone and limestone blocks, has been extended to the south by a 4,300mm length of walling of smaller stones, laid to courses. This break and change in masonry is mirrored on the internal face, where the steps to the wall walk originate.

Four steps remain, the lower ones have collapsed. The rise is 350mm, and the masonry here has been invaded by tree roots. Removal of the debris off the lower level exposed a further step, which appears to be a replacement, being very well dressed. This stone is 150mm thick, 700mm in width, and 260mm broad. The wall walk is well constructed, of closely fitted flat stones at the upper level. Several similar stones were located in the rubble piles to the rear of the tennis club.

The steps at the upper level are either thin sandstone or limestone flags, and the rise is generally of rounded conglomerate boulders. There is scant evidence for mortar, and the stones have rooted humic soil between them. A single large limestone flag, uncovered in the humus at the base of the steps, has lime mortar on the underside, and appears to have been displaced from the steps. This stone, which measures 800mm in length, 130mm in width, and 420mm in breadth, will be reused in the reinstatement of the steps.

Two bush-dressed stones, one 180mm thick, with well-dressed edges, appear to be replacement steps, however now out of position.

The line of the original wall, south of the steps, has a series of putlog holes, possibly for scaffolding for rebuilding of the wall here, or for a building which is not represented on the historic map series.

### The wall walk

Along the east side of the wall walk, the low wall to the inside is partly of handmade red brick, and is collapsing (wall width 300mm, partly pointed with cement). The roughly paved surface of the wall walk (800mm wide) retains possible steps to the bartizan.

The top of the wall walk inside the northern line of the wall was not accessible, and some of the thin facing stones at the base of the parapet had collapsed due to heavy rain showers. Vertical joints were evident in the parapet kerb. Still further small masonry elements had collapsed recently, and were propped by scaffolding boards.



## Opes in the wall

A series of opes are apparent in the north line of the wall, indicating the remains of a building which does not feature on the historic map series.

The lower ope, a doorway, has a round headed stone arch of roughly dressed sandstone. The soffit is 1940mm below the top of the wall. The doorway is 1220mm wide, and the quoins are lime mortared sandstone. Clearance of the recent soil at the base of the wall here uncovered a dressed sandstone slab. The wall here, and the masonry fill of the door, is abutted by a barrel-topped buttress. A tall window, with dressed sandstone quoins, is located at the top of the arch. It is 1,800mm high, 940mm in width, and the reveals are not splayed. The fill is roughly coursed mortared stone.

## Conclusions

The test trenches over the projected line of the wall to the south-east show that a masonry structure, if it stood here, has been completely removed. Trench 1 showed some evidence for a possible robber trench/ construction trench to the wall, where several large masonry type blocks remained in a cut into subsoil.

There was scant evidence for such in trench 2.

There is evidence for a considerable amount of intervention in the structure at the north-east corner. The original town wall has been extended south from the stairs to the wall walk, and this secondary build has a number of putlog holes, either from the construction of the wall, or from an unmapped structure which once abutted the wall.

Infilled opes to a building of possible 18<sup>th</sup> century date puncture the northern line of the wall.

The external wall walk parapet is not bonded to the lower wall, and has been propped.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that a stone-accurate survey of the wall is undertaken as soon as feasible.

### Sources

Fenlon, Jane 2008. Ormond Castle Visitor's Guide. OPW.

Thomas, A. 1992. The Walled Towns of Ireland. Irish Academic Press, 2 vols.

### Websites

Archaeology.ie

OSI.ie



Figure 1. Carrick on Suir depicted on Down Survey map, 1654-6.



Figure 2. Taylor's map of 1699, with location of 2014 trenches marked.

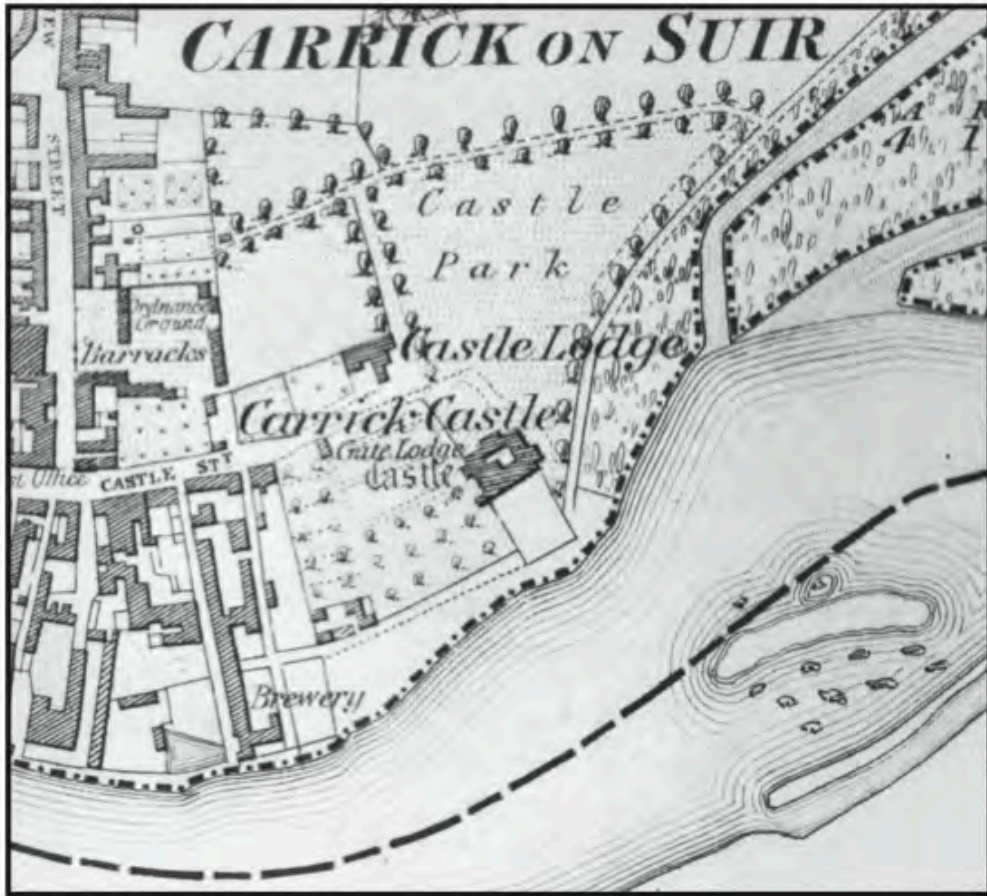


Figure 3. Castlepark as depicted on the Ordnance Survey first edition.



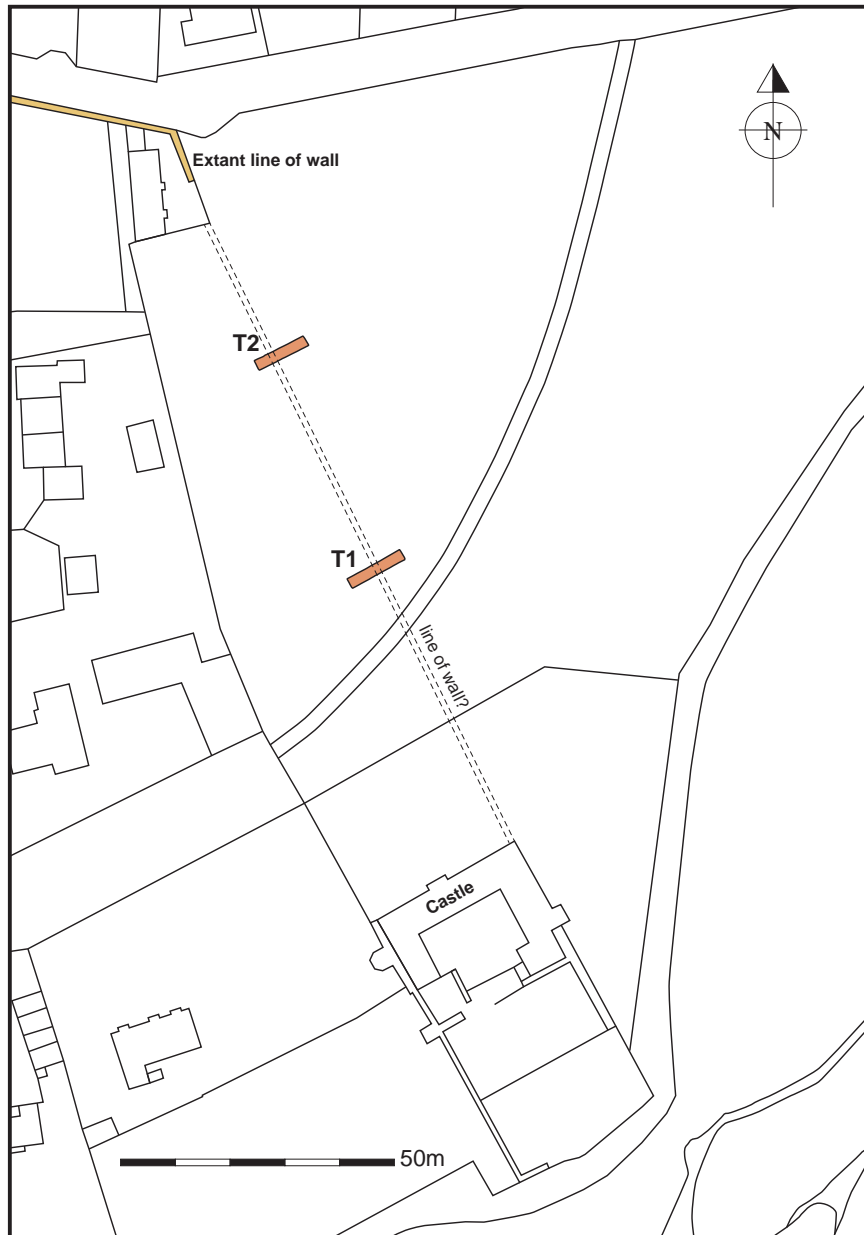


Figure 5. Location of trial trenches on modern OS. The town wall does not extend to the southern limit of the tennis grounds.

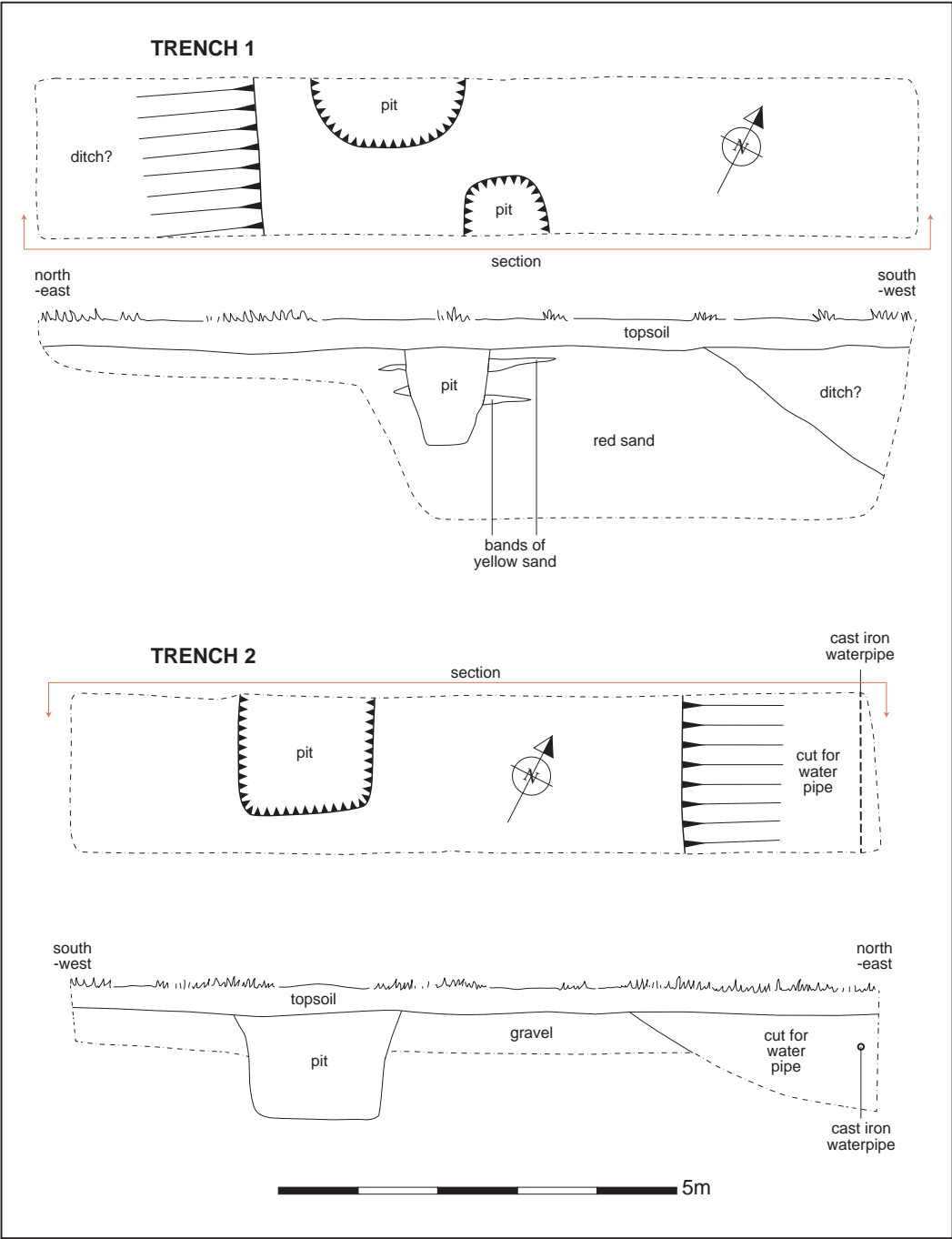


Figure 6. Plan and section of trench 1 and 2.



Plate 1. Possible robber trench, T1. Plate 2. Pit with flowerpot, on projected line of town wall, trench 2.



Plate 3. Trench with waterpipe, trench 2



Plate 4. Wall walk with lowest step uncovered.





Plate 5. Step, detail.



Plate 6. External view of town wall, showing original wall to right.



Plate 7. Blocked window ope.



Plate 8. Blocked door ope.



Plate 9. Projecting masonry, north wall.



Plate 10. Wall walk, step to bartizan.



Plate 11. Wall walk inside, north wall.



Plate 12. View to Ormonde Castle from Wall walk.



Plate 13. Bartizan, infilled opes of building.



Plate 14. External view of propped bartizan.



Plate 15. North wall, external, blocked opes.



Plate 16. Horizontal breach along walkway parapet, external, north wall.

## APPENDIX 3 - ENGINEERS REPORT

**Carrick-On-Suir Castle Park Walls**

**Structural Report**

**08<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

## Document Control

Document Number D001

Revision	Date	Prepared	Checked	Approved
R0 (1 <sup>st</sup> issue)	08.10.2013	gneville		

Signed

Gerard Neville

Date: 10-October 2013

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- 1.1 Location Map
- 1.2 Wall Cross Section
- 2.0 Wall 'A' Report
- 2.1 Turret Report
- 3.0 Wall 'B' Report
- 4.0 Photographs

## 1.0 Introduction

PUNCH Consulting Engineers carried out a structural inspection of stone walls in Carrick-on-Suir Castle Park for CARRIG. PUNCH carried out the inspections on the 07<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and inspected the following elements:

- Wall A north side facing.
- Wall A South side facing.
- Wall B east side facing
- Wall B west side facing

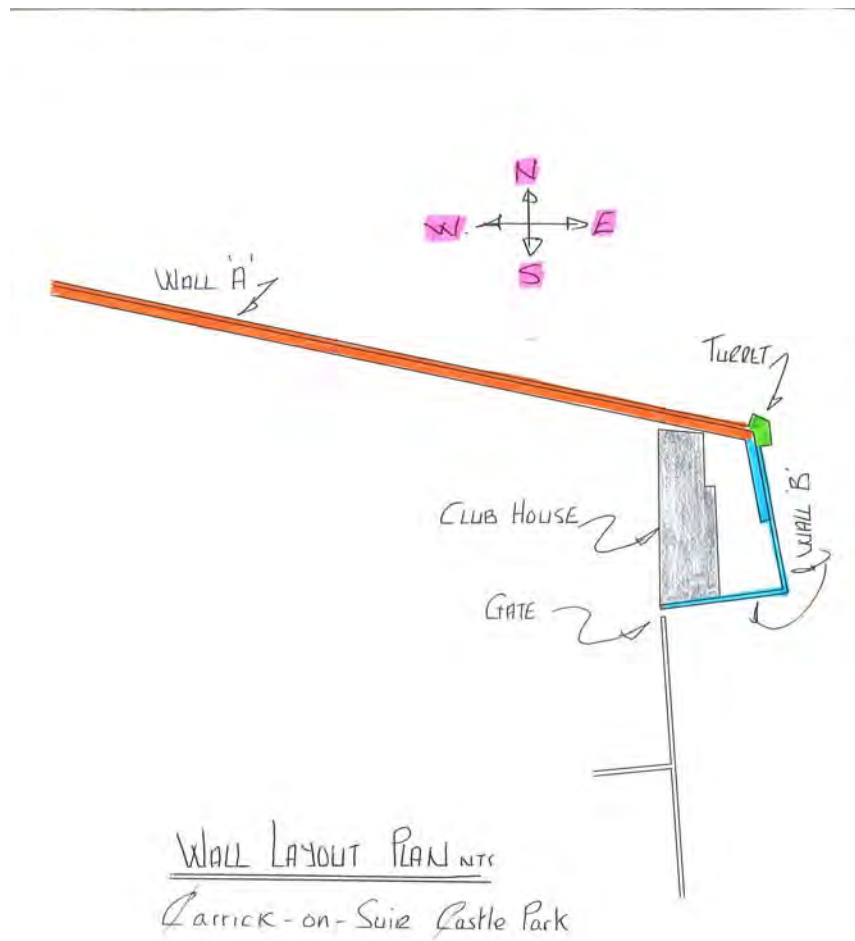


Figure 1 Wall Layout Plan



## 1.1 Location Map

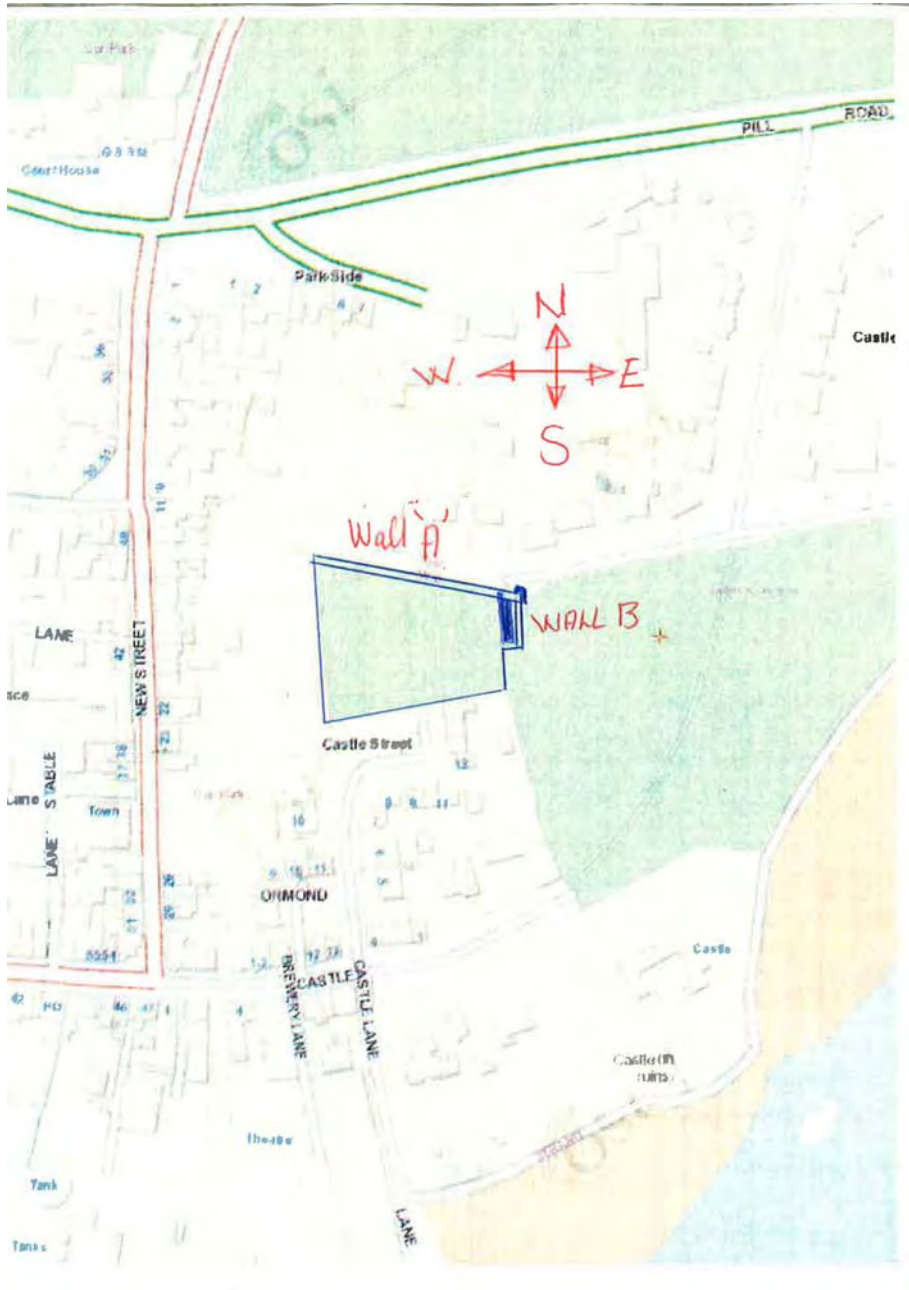


Figure 2: Location Map

### 1.2 WALL 'A' CROSS SECTION

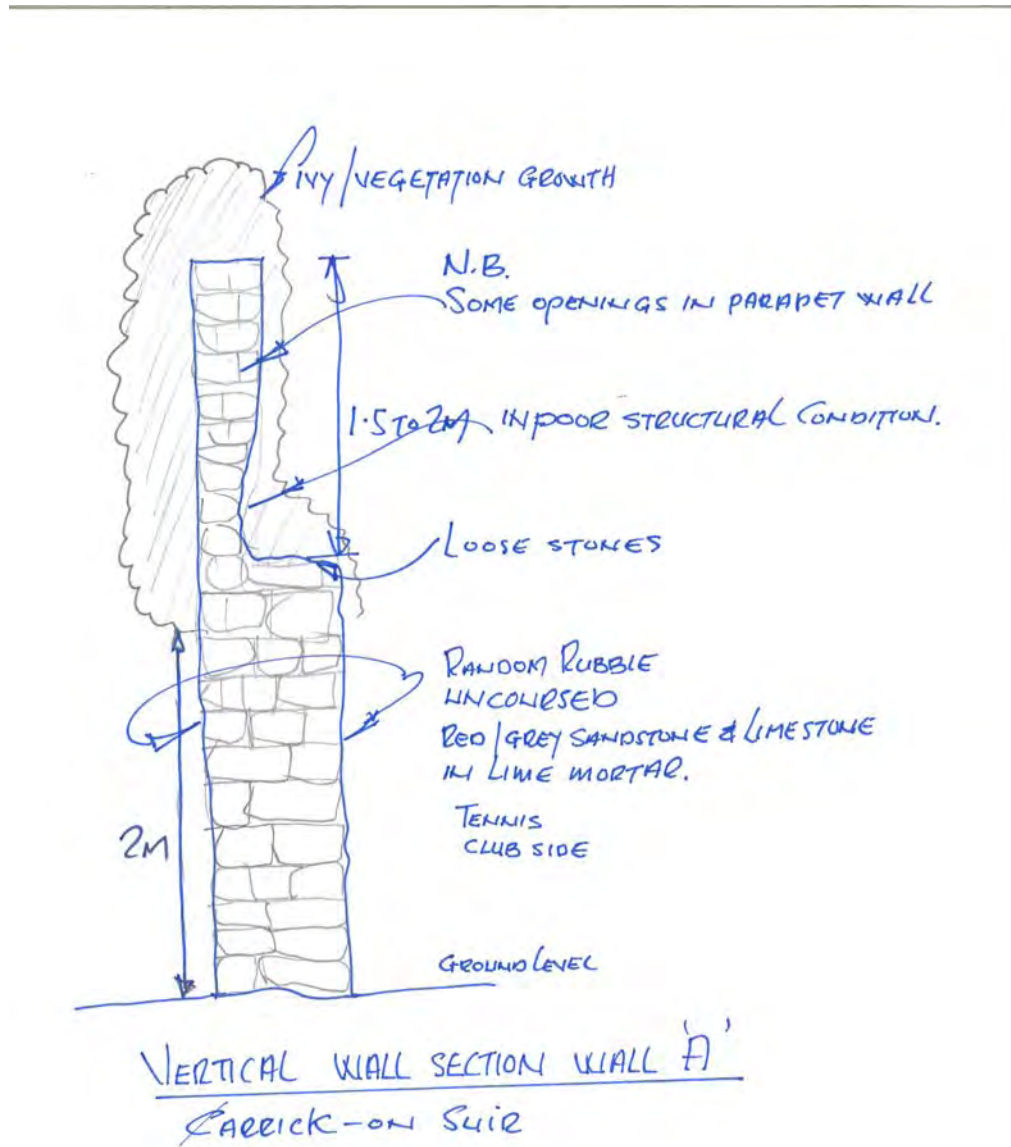


Figure 3: Wall 'A' Vertical Section

## 2.0 Wall 'A'

*The inspection is based only on the elements of the wall where the vegetation growth has been removed.*

*The wall section above in figure 3 shows the large step / ledge at about 2m from the tennis club ground level.*

*The narrow wall above this ledge seems from the exposed elements to be generally unstable and in locations has voids that penetrate through the full thickness of the parapet wall, which is about 200-250mm approximately in thickness and even less in places. The vegetation growth (ivy) is causing structural damage. We believe consideration should be given to removing some parts of the top 1.5m high parapet wall together with the vegetation growth. Rebuilding these elements of the parapet wall will require a structural solution to keep it in place.*

*There seems to have been openings in the parapet element of this wall in the past, this will become clearer when the vegetation growth is removed.*

*The wall is constructed with red / grey sand stone and lime stone all bedded in a lime mortar.*

*There are loose stones on the ledge of the wall within the tennis court area. Flaunching in lime mortar of this ledge will be required together with removing vegetation growth.*

*Repointing and stabilizing existing loose stones should be carried out.*

## 2.1 North East Turret Wall 'A'

*The wall below the turret has had cracks repaired in the past. The turret itself is missing its own back arm dead weight which in turn puts the wall directly below under some pressure. The turret being on a corner helps the structure somewhat but these old cracks maybe a sign of some overturning due to the turret cantilever having little back-arm.*

## 3.0 Wall 'B'

*This wall is generally in good condition but does require vegetation growth to be removed with some deep embedded elder, ash and sycamore tree roots on the tennis club side. The top of the wall should be lime mortar flanchued to help protect water ingress and vegetation growth.*

## 4.0 Photographs



Picture 1 Open Masonry Joints High Level Wall A



Picture 2 Old Opening Wall A



Picture 3 Piece of Ashlar/ Dressed Stone in Wall A



Picture 4 Elevation of Wall 'A' (with 2m of ivy removed)



Picture 5 Solid Corner of Wall 'B'



Picture 6 Void in Wall A (top 1.5m unstable)



Picture 7 Opening in Wall A Parapet?



Picture 8 Opening in Wall A Parapet?



Picture 9 Tennis Court Side Loose Random Rubble on Ledge



Picture 10 Tennis Court Side Open Concrete Repair Wall A





Picture 11 Tennis Court Side Showing Ledge of Wall and Opening



Picture 12 Rear of Turret with Club House to the Left

## APPENDIX 4 - MINISTERIAL CONSENT