

Before you get Started Fact Sheet No.3 CONSERVATION - 10 Tips

1. Minimal Intervention

The key to restoration is minimal intervention with the principle goal being to bring the building back to its former glory.

This effectively means not to over restore the building to what you think it should like rather than what it actually did once be.

“The principle of promoting minimum intervention in a protected structure is best summed up by the maxim ‘do as much as necessary and as little as possible’. Dramatic interventions in a protected structure are rarely appropriate. The best work in conservation terms is often that which is low key, involves the least work and can be inexpensive.”

2. Research

The key to a successful restoration is linked to how much research you can make on the project. By researching and obtaining drawings, photographs, paintings etc... you are able to make informed decisions over how the restoration should proceed.

3. Obtain expert advice

Obtain an architect with conservation experience and qualifications and someone who will care about your building. All members of the project team should understand the goals of restoration. You may also need to obtain specialist advice from archaeologists and craftsmen also.

4. No Conjecture

You are not trying to guess what the building should look like; an exception to this rule is where a pitched roof was replaced with a flat version for example - it would be acceptable in this case to reinstate the original roof.

5. Replicate Carefully

You may have to replace an item with a new version; in this instance ensure you use the same size, scale, profile, material and colour of the original and upon closer inspection should be easily identified as ‘new’ and not confused with any original work.

MARK D. STEPHENS

Architects

6. Don't restore back to a specific date

It's very tempting to strip back everything and then restore back to a specific date; doing this forgets that any alteration during the building's lifetime will, in their turn, become part of the structure's history.

7. Repair rather than Replace

In line with the minimal intervention approach; where possible you should always endeavour to repair an item rather than simply replace it.

Replacing original or earlier elements of a building with modern replicas confuses the historical authenticity of the building.

8. Use appropriate Materials and Techniques

At all stages you should use the most appropriate material and technique for the job; the use of cement based plaster on stone walls for example will allow water to penetrate without escape and actually accelerate the decay of the building fabric.

9. Avoid Architectural Salvage

The use of an ‘older’ architecturally salvaged item confuses the building's understanding and authenticity. It is actually better to use a new item rather than an older salvaged one as this encourages the craftsmanship inherent in their production.

4. Further Help

Download the Guidance Notes and Publications The Department of the Environment produces on architectural heritage (www.environ.ie)

Mark Stephens Architects

Rooskey

Foxford

County Mayo

Tel: 094 92 57621

Mob: 085 159 4084

Email: info@markstephensarchitects.com

Web: <http://markstephensarchitects.com>