VALENTIA SLATE YARD, KNIGHTSTOWN CO. KERRY

Conservation Masterplan – Initial Study Report

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CARRIG CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL LTD

Atlantis Building, South Cumberland Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
T: +353 15529080 **E**: info@carrig.ie **W:** www.carrig.ie

Carrig UK, 70Cowcross Street, London, EC1M6EL, England

QUALITY CONTROL

Report prepared on behalf of Valentia Slate Company Ltd. and prepared by:

PREPARED FOR:	PREPARED BY:	CHECKED BY:
Valentia Slate Company Ltd. Knightstown Valentia Island Co. Kerry	Caitríona O' Connor Senior Conservation Architect Carrig Conservation International Ltd caitriona@carrig.ie	Sinéad Hughes Head of Conservation Carrig Conservation International Ltd. sinead@carrig.ie

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Cover Image is a view of the Slate Yard from Knightstown Pier with island residents in the foreground, taken between 1870 and 1880. [Source: Lawrence Collection in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin].

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned by the Valentia Slate Company Ltd. The owners of Valentia Slate Company are operating the slate quarry at Dohilla, which is historically linked to the Slate Yard Operations at Knightstown on Valentia Island. They have requested that Carrig Conservation undertake an appraisal of the conservation needs of the Valentia Slate sites within the wider cultural and industrial heritage context of the Island and the recent World Heritage tentative list nomination for the *'Transatlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia - Heart's Content'*. The Carrig team comprises heritage experts from various disciplines including archaeology, architecture and engineering. For this project, Dr. Cathy Daly, Peter Cox and Caitríona O'Connor will bring their extensive experience working within the context of UNESCO World Heritage sites both in Ireland and internationally. Carrig Conservation visited the Slate Yard and quarry site in July 2022 and have undertaken a review of reports and proposals relating to the Slate Yard commissioned as part of or in the context of the ongoing nomination process for the Transatlantic cable sites, namely;

- The Trans-Atlantic Cable as World Heritage - Part I by Prof. Alexander Gillespie (2014)
- Industrial Heritage Survey of The Slate Yard, Knightstown, Valentia Island Co. Kerry by Fred Hamond (2019)
- Knightstown Slate Yard: Historical and Archaeological Evaluation by Govannon Consultancy (2019)
- JCA Architects, Architectural Strategy for the First Message Building (presentation dated January 2022)

To meet the conditions of Integrity, i.e. the measure of wholeness and intactness of a site and its attributes, which is required for World Heritage Sites and their constituent elements, it is important that sites are considered and conserved as a whole. Standalone re-development projects which do not demonstrate their consideration of the wider context may compromise the integrity, legibility and as such the authenticity of the proposed World Heritage ensemble.

The Valentia slate and flagstone quarry, the Slate Yard and First Message building are intrinsically linked to each other and to the emergence of the trans-Atlantic cable project and the later 1868 Cable Station. Works to conserve or redevelop any part of this associated group of sites should be undertaken as part of a holistic strategy and only following a full documentation of any above and below-ground remains of their linked industrial heritage.

The objective of this report is to review, collate and build upon the various conservation recommendations put forward in previous studies of the Slate Yard and present them in the context of a plan for managing the site as a whole. It is our opinion and the stated opinion of Fred Hamond, that a Conservation and Management Plan is required for the Slate Yard site. To proceed without this plan may compromise the integrity and legibility of the First Message Building. Carrig Conservation have been appointed to undertake this conservation-led 'masterplan' for the site, assuming that all property interests relating to the site are clear and uncontroversial. To initiate the master planning exercise we propose the following next steps:

- Clearance of the site, safely removing vegetation, trees and machinery / scrap items which are posing a risk to the standing structures and preventing a full survey being undertaken.
- Undertake complete architectural record survey of the site, structures and ground surfaces [flagstones].
- Establish what material evidence of the trans-Atlantic cable remains in the site, in particular in the vicinity of the First Message Building [ref: Gwyn, 2019 p.41].
- Identify locations for archaeological trenches in boiler and engine house to establish machinery configuration [ref: Hamond, 2019 p.26]
- Contribute to the completion of the industrial heritage survey following clearance and excavations.
- Undertake Public and Key Stakeholder consultation to inform a whole-site conservation, management and development approach which reflects both the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders and considering its prominent location in Knightstown and the potential impact on the local community.
- Use this consultation process to communicate the conservation needs of the built heritage remains and to explain the process to stakeholders.
- Establish conservation priorities and agree on a set of conservation principles for the treatment of the standing structures and spaces in between which is in line with international best practice (ICOMOS, ICCROM and UNESCO conventions).
- Completion of Conservation Masterplan which includes sections on site and risk management, makes informed proposals for the phasing of conservation works, proposes re-development options and appropriate uses for the remaining structures and describes interim maintenance requirements.

Carrig have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

1 HISTORY

1.1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Valentia Slate is the oldest exposed part of the *Old Red Sandstone* which extensively crops out in Southern Ireland. The slate was first quarried for commercial use in 1816 when the Knight of Kerry, the landlord of Valentia Island, opened the quarry on the eastern side of Geokaun Mountain at Dohilla. Under the direction of the Knight, operations begun with support of Welsh experts brought in to instruct slate-working techniques. In 1825 the Irish Mining Company took over operations for 6 years after which point it returned to the Knight until 1839 when Messrs. Blackburn operated the mine trading as the Valentia Flag Company all through the famine years, employing up to 400 people at its peak[1], and investing significantly in the Slate Yard [RPS ref: 079-026] operations at Knightstown.

In parallel to these events, Alexander Nimmo was working in Valentia and was well acquainted with the then Knight, the first Maurice Fitzgerald [1772-1849]. Between 1822 and 1825 he completed works to develop the pier and together they had plans to further develop a trans-Atlantic steamer port at the island. With this in mind, the village of Knightstown was placed in 1825 with lands purchased and set aside for a hotel and coal yard. In 1827 Nimmo produced his chart *'The Harbour of Valentia'* which clearly demarked the slate yard in relation to the pier and in the early 1830's he was commissioned to develop a layout for the town by the Knight[2]. While the trans-Atlantic steamer port project did not succeed, the Knight continued to invest in slate mining operations in the 1830s and the pier was further extended in 1833 serving both the significant local fisheries industry and the slate and flagstone industry.[3]

There was a light tramway to transport excavated blocks out of the mine to the squaring house and from here the shaped blocks initially made their way to Knightstown by horse-drawn wagons. In later years a steam wagon known as the 'Puffing Billy' carried the loads to the Slate Yard for further processing and transfer to the waiting steam ships for export. While there were plans in the mid-19th century to develop a rail link from Valentia to Wexford or Dublin, linked to a previous proposal for a Valentia–Halifax mailboat service, these did not come to pass during the height of the Slate Yard's operations. It was only in 1893 that a railway from Caherciveen to Farranfore was completed. [4]

By 1851 the Slate Yard at Valentia claimed to have the largest slate saws in the world, and it is even speculated that the 'squaring house' [now demolished, except for part of the chimney] at the quarry site may have been the first place where slate saws were steam powered. Gillespie notes that further research is required to confirm this, and Gwyn's 2019 report includes an 1838 account which appears to support this claim[5]. In any case, during the 1850s and 1860s the Slate Yard was the site of great advancements in the mechanical working of slate flags and housed an array of world class machinery. Upon arrival to Knightstown by boat, the slate yard chimney would have been a prominent feature of the welcoming vista along with the yard walls and pitched roof structures. The first Geological Survey of Ireland was being carried out when the mine was in full operation and as part of this, G.H. Kinahan provided a detailed account in 1861 of the quarry's joints and cleavage planes.[6]

Valentia's harbour was known to be of high quality and an easily navigable westernmost outpost to Europe. It is therefore not a surprise that it was proposed and selected in 1857 to be the site of another revolutionary endeavour – namely the Atlantic Telegraph Company's proposal to establish a submarine telegraph cable linking the Americas to Europe. The approximate location of the first cable landing in August 1857 at Ballycarbery, is visible from Knightstown pier but it is the site of the 'First Message Building' in the Slate Yard which is noted by Gillespie as the most important of all the sites in the trans-Atlantic ensemble at Valentia.[7] The Brine map of 1859 clearly shows that the first 1857 cable landing point was already linked to the Slate Yard, where a store had been made available by its proprietors. On the 6th August 1858, when the second [and first successful] cable came through directly to the Slate Yard location, the first messages were sent across the Atlantic, land-to-land, from this First Message Building [RPS

[1] D.D.C Pochin Mould, *"Valentia Portrait of an Island"* (Dublin, Ireland: Blackwater Press, 1978), p.77.
[2] Kerry County Council, *"Draft Development Plan 2022-2028, Vol III"* (Kerry, Ireland: Planning Policy Unit, 2022), p.116.
[3] Alexander Gillespie, *"The Trans-Atlantic Cable as World Heritage. Part I: Authenticity, Integrity and Associated Considerations for the Ensemble of Sites at Valentia Island, County Kerry, Ireland."* (New York, USA: The American Irish Historical Society, 2014), p.21.
[4] D.D.C Pochin Mould, (1978), p.103 – 104.
[5] David Gwyn, *"Knightstown Slate Yard: Historical and Archaeological Evaluation."* Govannon Consultancy, 2019), p.6.
[6] D.D.C Pochin Mould, (1978), p.78.
[7] Alexander Gillespie. (2014), p.45.

ref: 079-120]. For 19 days over 400 messages were sent between Valentia and the north American terminal at Hearts Content, Newfoundland, before the connection was lost due to excessive voltage degrading the cable insulation.

Fig.1: Map of north-eastern section of Valentia Island showing key sites.

William Thompson's [later Lord Kelvin] mirror galvanometer was an instrument developed to detect and display the weak signals that emerged from undersea cables - this device was used at First Message Building to detect and receive the signals from Newfoundland and an improved device was patented by Thompson in 1858. The mirror galvanometer went on to become the standard instrument for receiving telegraph messages globally.[8] The trans-Atlantic cable attempts continued over the next decade and a purpose-built cable station was eventually developed outside Knightstown in 1868 following the enduring cable link established in 1866.

The quarry and yard changed ownership several times between 1854 and 1873, by which time the Valentia Slate operations were in decline due to the availability of cheaper Welsh slate. A photo from the Lawrence Collection dating from the 1890s shows fish-curing taking place and the crane removed [Fig.2][9] and the 1895-96 OS map cites the yard as disused.

Fig. 2: View of the Slate Yard in the 1890s. Source: The Lawrence Collection, National Library of Ireland.

[8] White & Barr. *"Thomson's Mirror Galvanometer, 1858." [Co32961]*. Science Museum, Information Age Gallery: Cable. Available at: https://jstor.org/stable/community.26428600
[9] David Gwyn, (2019) p.17.

The quarry closed in 1884 but was reopened by the Knight around 1900 as a means of relieving the poverty of locals at the time. In 1911 a large rockfall at the mouth of the newer western opening forced the mine to close permanently under the tenure of the Knights of Kerry. The Slate Yard at Knightstown has been sub-divided in ownership over the course of the 20th Century with various alterations carried out to buildings, in particular the chimney was lowered in the 1950s for safety reasons.[10] The First Message Building is noted by Gwyn to have been a dwelling at one point in the 20th C and the boiler house an animal pen. Today the Slate Yard buildings are mostly roofless, derelict, overgrown with vegetation and the surrounding area is being used as a storage yard. The main quarry site was re-opened by three enterprising local businessmen locals in 1999 and after a change in ownership is today operating as Valentia Slate Company Ltd producing commercial slate products for the national and international market.

1.2 Cartographic Analysis

Detailed cartographic analysis of the Slate Yard and its development have been undertaken by Gillespie (2014) and Gwyn (2019) and historical maps are included at Appendix 2 to this report.

1.3 Construction Chronology: Summary Timeline of Major Construction

For ease of understanding the phases of construction, please see a summary timeline below:

DATE	CONSTRUCTION DESCRIPTION	ARCHITECT/ DESIGNER
1816	Commercial activity begins at the Quarry site at Dohilla.	Works commissioned by the Knight of Kerry.
1822-25	Pier at 'The Foot', [now Knightstown] completed.	Alexander Nimmo
1831	Layout for an octagonal Slate Yard and 'Slate Agent' building included in Nimmo's 1927 chart 'The Harbour of Valentia', published in *The Admiralty* 1831. The town was planned by Nimmo under the patronage of the Knight of Kerry in the early 1830s.	Alexander Nimmo
1842	6" OS Map depicts arrangement of rectangular buildings at the Slate Yard including a reservoir. By 1851, National Archive Valuation books record 19 buildings under the ownership of the Blackburns.	Works commissioned by Messrs. Blackburn.
1857-58	The Brine Map of 1859 shows that during the previous two years the trans-Atlantic cables were connected directly into the first message building located on the east of the site facing the harbour. Cable appears to enter via the eastern elevation. Building would have been vacated by November 1858.	Cable works commissioned by the Atlantic Telegraph Company.
1890's	Lawrence Collections photographs from this period show that the gantry crane has been dismantled along with some of the timber structures to the north of the boiler and engine rooms.	Unknown
1950s	Upper stages of the chimney demolished.	Unknown

2 Architectural Record

[See accompanying photographs in Appendix 3]

[10] Alexander Gillespie, (2014) p.28.

2.1 External Inventory

There are visible standing remains of up to 16 of the 26 structures / features identified by Fred Hamond in his 2019 Industrial Heritage survey of the site. For the most part these comprise roofless boundary walls of former slate yard buildings constructed of local stone bedded in lime mortar with some signs of external render remaining. Some openings have been constructed using brick masonry and modern cementitious render has been applied to some areas both internally and externally. Ground flagstones are visible in some locations where now-demolished buildings were likely located.

A detailed external inventory of the remaining standing structures has not yet been undertaken but is planned for the next phase of this current work.

2.2 Internal Inventory

A detailed internal inventory of the remaining standing structures has not yet been undertaken but is planned for the next phase of this current work.

3 Statement of Significance

The subject of this statement of significance is the Slate Yard at Knightstown, Co. Kerry. This statement has been adapted from that provided in Section 10 of the 2019 Govannon Consultancy/ Gwyn report and only altered to reflect the recent successful addition of the *'Transatlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia - Heart's Content'* to Ireland's World Heritage Tentative list in June 2022.

On the basis of National criteria established by Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011):*

The Slate Yard is of heritage merit in terms of historical and cultural attributes.

In a regional context it was of economic importance to Valentia Island, having been established by the local land-owner to generate industrial wealth and create employment over a period of almost 50 years.

In a national context, the Slate Yard is a unique example of 19th century mechanised slate slab production as evidenced by the many buildings which still survive, albeit in various states of repair and completeness.

The First Message Building is also of international significance in its own right as Europe's first trans-Atlantic transmission and receiving telegraph station (albeit only for a matter of weeks).

In the context of Ireland's tentative lift for UNESCO World Heritage nomination:

The Slate Yard contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of global communications history and the birth of globalisation as a Component Part of the transnational series site 'Transatlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia-Heart's Content'.

The site comprises the shore-end termini of the world's first permanent trans-oceanic submarine electric telegraph: Eastern Terminus, Valentia Island, County Kerry (Ireland, two component parts – Valentia Cable Station and the precursor First Message Building) and Western Terminus, Heart's Content, Newfoundland.

3.1 Statutory Protection

The following sites within and associated to the development area are designated protected structures:

- The Slate Yard and Slate Works (RPS ref: 079-026)
- First Message Building in The Slate Yard (RPS ref: 079-120)
- Single Storey Building, The Cable Field / 1856 Relay Station (RPS ref: 079-121)
- Former Staff Cottages, at the Valentia Slate quarry at Dohilla (RPS ref: 078-001)

- Valentia Cable Station (RPS ref: 079-014)
- Old Cable Terrace (RPS ref: 079-11 / 079-013B)
- New Cable Terrace (RPS ref: 079-001-010)
- Knightstown piers (RPS ref: 079-029)

A number of buildings in the Knightstown townscape, including the First Message Building and area directly east of it, are proposed to be included as part of a designated Architectural Conservation Area [ACA][11]. This designation will require that external alterations to the buildings which affect the character of the ACA may require planning permission and must consider the characteristics for which the townscape has been deemed of value.

In June 2022 the site 'Transatlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia-Heart's Content' was included on Ireland's World Heritage tentative list and as such its constituent parts, which include the First Message Building, should be managed in line with the Operational Guidelines (Rev. 2021) to the UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the international standards established by UNESCO's Advisory Bodies.

To meet the conditions of Integrity, i.e. the measure of wholeness and intactness of a site and its attributes, which are required for the adequate conservation and protection of World Heritage Sites and their constituent elements, it is important that sites are considered and managed as a whole. Standalone re-development projects which do not demonstrate their consideration of the wider context may compromise the integrity, legibility and as such the authenticity of the proposed World Heritage ensemble.

4 External Condition

[See representative photographs in Appendix 3]

A detailed external inventory of the remaining standing structures has not yet been undertaken but is planned for the next phase of this current work and will include an appraisal of their external condition.

5 Conservation and Repair Strategy

The conservation strategy will conserve and restore the special character of the buildings to reflect their place in Ireland's industrial and social history. As much of the surviving historic fabric should be preserved, and where significant changes are proposed, clear and robust justification must be balanced and well considered. The character of the buildings and their setting should be protected and enhanced by clearing the vegetation and debris which is currently obscuring the group value of the Slate Yard buildings and the views towards them from the pier.

Historic fabric is to be repaired using best practice methodologies and compatible materials by competent professionals with experience in working with historic structures. Where historic features have been lost and can be justifiably and faithfully restored, it is proposed to do so based on evidence (Images, drawings, surviving examples) and on a like for like basis where replacement of elements is required. Conjecture of design should be avoided. Where evidence is not available, contemporary honest intervention is recommended while paying respect to the original design, proportions, and materials. Natural and compatible materials should be prioritised.

Existing modern interventions which have been identified to have a negative impact on the historic character or physical properties of the building should be carefully removed and made good to restore the original design intention where practical and to improve performance.

Water is a primary agent of decay in building fabric. Dampness compromises the building fabric and its thermal performance as well as affecting occupant health; measures to resolve water ingress and reinstate the ability of the

[11] Kerry County Council, *"Draft Development Plan 2022-2028, Vol III"* (Kerry, Ireland: Planning Policy Unit, 2022).

building fabric to 'breathe' are paramount to is sustainability. Removal of cement pointing and renders must be prioritised to improve the resilience of the building fabric and to prevent any further damage and deterioration due to trapped moisture in the construction.

It is highly important to conserve and integrate historic features into future re-development proposals to enhance the original character of the site for the purposes of maintaining the memory of its significance. The accumulation surviving historic features, even when small greatly add to the sense of place and support the sustainable approach of reuse and recycle. The future uses of buildings should not obscure their industrial character, nor should the area in between the buildings be 'sanitised' to the extent that its previous use as a working slate yard is not apparent.

5.1 Recommendations from Previous Studies

A drawing has been prepared which identifies the previous recommendations as well as proposing additional next steps for conservation actions [See Appendix 4].

5.2 Phasing of Conservation Repairs

Due to the scale of the project, it may be necessary to phase the works. The conservation repair work should be logically phased in conjunction with the wider conservation and design strategy, and items may be broken down further to localised areas to be carried out in a practical and economical manner. However, it is advised that key urgent and high priorities are addressed in the early phases.

The suggested prioritisation of conservation works are as follows:

URGENT/ESSENTIAL: *Repairs necessary to omit water ingress in order to protect and preserve the historic building fabric and prevent further deterioration for the ongoing and long-term use of the properties.*

RECOMMENDED*: Repairs recommended for the improved performance and longevity of the structures.*

DESIRABLE: *Repairs that would improve the aesthetics and historical character of the properties and/or would be beneficial to the ongoing performance and protection of the materials in the long term.*

5.3 Urgent/Essential Works Repairs:

i. Careful removal of all vegetation to walls, remaining roof elements and elevations and light cleaning of stone by hand to remove biological growth.
ii. Clear the areas surrounding the standing structures of trees, roots, vegetation, scrap metal and machinery to expose the ground surface condition.
iii. Carefully remove any items which may be bearing on walls under the supervision of a structural engineer if the machinery is deemed to be affecting the stability of the wall.

5.4 Recommended Surveys & Assessments

Additional surveys are recommended to provide a comprehensive understanding of the site in order to present the most appropriate remedies:

5.4.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

An industrial archaeologist should be employed to survey the site and determine suitable locations to investigate for remains of the original trans-Atlantic cable.

They should oversee excavations at the Boiler House and the Engine house in line with the recommendations of Fred Hamond (2019) and Govannon Consultancy / Dr. David Gwyn (2019) reports. Excavation data should inform a revision of the initial interpretation of the buildings and plant and machinery layout.

Any archaeological excavations should follow a risk mitigation plan which considers the structural stability of the standing remains following site clearance.

5.4.2 MEASURED SURVEY OF STANDING STRUCTURES AND REMAINS

Following the removal of trees, vegetation and debris, a detailed measured survey of the standing structures should be undertaken to record their architectural features and condition and to inform a repair and maintenance schedule. Hamond (2019) also recommends that exposed surfaced should be laser scanned to record features of interest and to supplement the existing digital files.

5.4.3 STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENTS

A structural engineer should be appointed to assess the structural condition of any structures which are identified as at risk following the initial risk assessment, or during the site clearing works. The chimney stack should be assessed for restoration potential.

5.4.4 ROOF TIMBER SURVEY

It is recommended that a detailed survey of any remaining roof timbers be carried out by an appropriately qualified timber specialist to determine the condition of the roof structure elements.

5.5 DESIRABLE WORKS

5.5.1 CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

When the buildings have been cleared, surveyed and stabilised, archaeological investigations undertaken and findings documented, a conservation and restoration strategy should be developed. This should establish a set of principles for conserving and restoring standing structures in a way which is appropriate in terms of maintaining integrity, authenticity, and legibility. This is important to ensure a continuity of character and quality of repair works and to maintain the group value of the site.

Any proposed reconstructions, such as the chimney, must be agreed from the outset so that works undertaken at any stage consider such proposed works, and respect key views and relationships between building elements.

5.5.2 EXPANDED ARCHITECURAL INVENTORY

Further research is required to document and assess the value of elements linked to the Slate Yard site. This study should determine how to consider them either within the defined curtilage of the Slate Yard or within an agreed buffer zone. While this is not an exhaustive list, some buildings and features to consider are:

- The quarry manager's house [Wellington Place], listed as the dwelling of Bewick Blackburne in the Griffith valuation survey. Bewick was a central figure in the history of the quarry and Slate Yard and this building may have been the birthplace of his daughter Helen Blackburn, a leading women's rights campaigner and suffragette[12]. It should be confirmed if this is the 'Slate Agent' building shown adjacent to the octagonal Slate Yard on Nimmo's 1827 plan.
- The reservoir footprint should be mapped, and its location considered when planning future development.
- The store buildings [No.s 22 and 23 on Hamond's building key]. It should be assessed to what extent these buildings have been incorporated to the current visible structures. It is noted on Brine's map that the Knight of Kerry held a banquet for the Lord Lieutenant here on the 4th of August 1857.

[12] Patrick Comerford, *"Valentia Island, Home of the Knights of Kerry and Transatlantic Cables"*, Patrick Comerford: an online journal on Anglicanism, theology, spirituality, history, architecture, travel, poetry, beach walks ... and more, July 2018, Available at: http://www.patrickcomerford.com/2018/07/valentia-island-home-of-knights-of.html

6 Conservation Management Planning – Recommendations

The conservation of the site and its features should be undertaken as part of a site-wide conservation management planning exercise which considers the various factors which influence the conservation process beyond just the condition of the physical remains. This process should put forward an effective and sustainable management system which is developed in a participatory manner reflecting the diverse needs of heritage sites. In the following sections we will discuss some key aspects of the planning process.

6.1 Needs Assessment and Prioritisation

A needs and risk assessment should form the basis of a conservation management plan – what is the conservation need and what benefit will be gained from undertaking works in a particular manner. By assessing the need and weighing up the benefit or harm of various strategies and approaches, in line with international best practice and standards, conservation and development priorities can be established.

6.2 Consultation

Community and stakeholder consultation is an important aspect of conservation management planning and a mandatory step in the statutory planning process. All heritage bearers and stakeholders should have the opportunity to be involved. This will ensure that a participatory process is maintained, and sustainability is achieved. In addition to targeted consultation activities, the process will include a community-based, inclusive, all-day consultation event where interested parties are invited to meet the project team and discuss options for the future of the site in an informal, social setting.

6.3 Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA), Mitigation

Impacts are defined as the physical or visual effect that proposed works may reasonably be predicted to have on the character and heritage values of a site. Any design proposals must be assessed at the initial design stage for negative impact on the identified heritage values of the site as whole. At the Slate Yard, those attributes which contribute to the OUV of the World Heritage ensemble, the designated values of the protected structures and the ACA must be protected and any negative impact of re-development works must be prevented or mitigated against. Heritage Impact Assessments should form part of all Statutory applications for works approvals to protected structures and sites.

6.4 Re-use Options & User Behaviour

The masterplan will make proposals for redevelopment strategies and suitable uses for refurbished structures. These proposed uses will be informed by the condition and needs assessment and supported by the consultation and HIA process. The masterplan will function as a tool to inform future building users on how their use impacts the heritage values, energy consumption and internal environment of the buildings. Building occupants should be supplied with an easy-to-follow user manual that describes how to manage maintenance, moisture and energy use in the most sustainable manner.

6.5 Site Management & Maintenance

The current site management should be understood and documented, and site management objectives established. It is our recommendation that one entity coordinates the conservation planning process in agreement with all the stakeholder groups which bear management responsibility for the various components of the site.

Once a conservation management plan is in place, and following any conservation or redevelopment work, a Maintenance Plan detailing the annual, quinquennial, decennial etc. projected repairs and maintenance should be commissioned, prepared, and issued prior to handover to the designated site management entity. A regular maintenance regime should be adopted going forward with inspections at least annually.

Depending on the future use of buildings, consideration should be given to the development of a facility management file so that none of the interventions are interfered with or mistakenly changed in the short, medium or long term.

6.6 Climate Risks and Adaption Planning

UNESCO have acknowledged that Climate Change is now a major risk to World Heritage sites and our shared built and natural heritage generally. Under new guidelines, it will be required that all World Heritage site management plans consider climate change related risks. As Valentia is an island on the west coast of Ireland and potentially vulnerable to such environmental changes, a Climate Risk Assessment will be required for any proposals. This exercise will inform final designs for the site and contribute to long-term climate change adaption planning. We recommend that this is undertaken after an Outline Design for the site and buildings has been agreed [RIAI Work Stage 3 approximately].

6.7 Carbon Emissions

As all nations come to realize that carbon is now a major contributor to climate change, any proposed development at the Slate Yard should not only consider the embodied carbon in the existing structures and landscape but should also be cognizant of the carbon footprint associated with the design of new structures, additions, and alterations. Carbon auditing and low carbon solutions should be an important part of any future brief.

7 Conclusion

The Slate Yard at Knightstown and the First Message building form key parts of Valentia Island's role in global communications history though the trans-Atlantic cable project. Through the First Message Building, the site contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the 'Transatlantic Cable Ensemble: Valentia-Heart's Content' which is on Ireland's tentative World Heritage list. Works to conserve or redevelop any part of this associated group of sites should be undertaken as part of a holistic conservation and management strategy.

The conservation master planning process described in this report is informed by a thorough understanding of the site, its existing condition, heritage values and the conservation and regeneration needs. It will be a participatory process which is informed by meaningful stakeholder consultation. Proposed uses will conserve and enhance the heritage values of the existing buildings and the special character of this former industrial site.

Building on the work already undertaken by previous experts and by Carrig Conservation in July and August 2022, we will proceed with the next stages of survey and consultation work outlined in this report with a view to preparing a Conservation Masterplan for the Slate Yard site.

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCE LIST

Gillespie, Alexander. "The Trans-Atlantic Cable as World Heritage. Part I: Authenticity, Integrity and Associated Considerations for the Ensemble of Sites at Valentia Island, County Kerry, Ireland." New York, USA: The American Irish Historical Society, 2014

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White & Barr. "*Thomson's Mirror Galvanometer, 1858*." *[Co32961]*. Science Museum, Information Age Gallery: Cable. Available at: https://jstor.org/stable/community.26428600 (Accessed August 2022)

APPENDIX 2:HISTORICAL MAPS

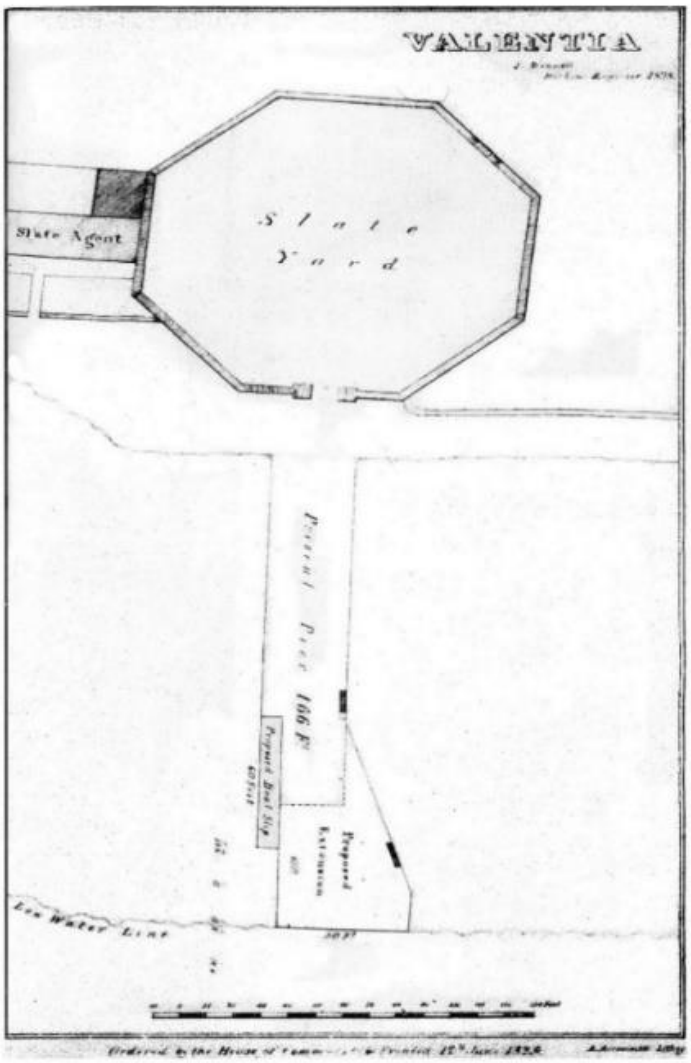

Fig.1: Plate 36 from the *Tenth report of the Commissioners for Irish Fisheries*, 1829

Fig.2: Extract from Alexander Nimmo's 1827 hydrographic chart *'The Harbour of Valentia'* showing an octagonal slate yard enclosure (Published in 1831).

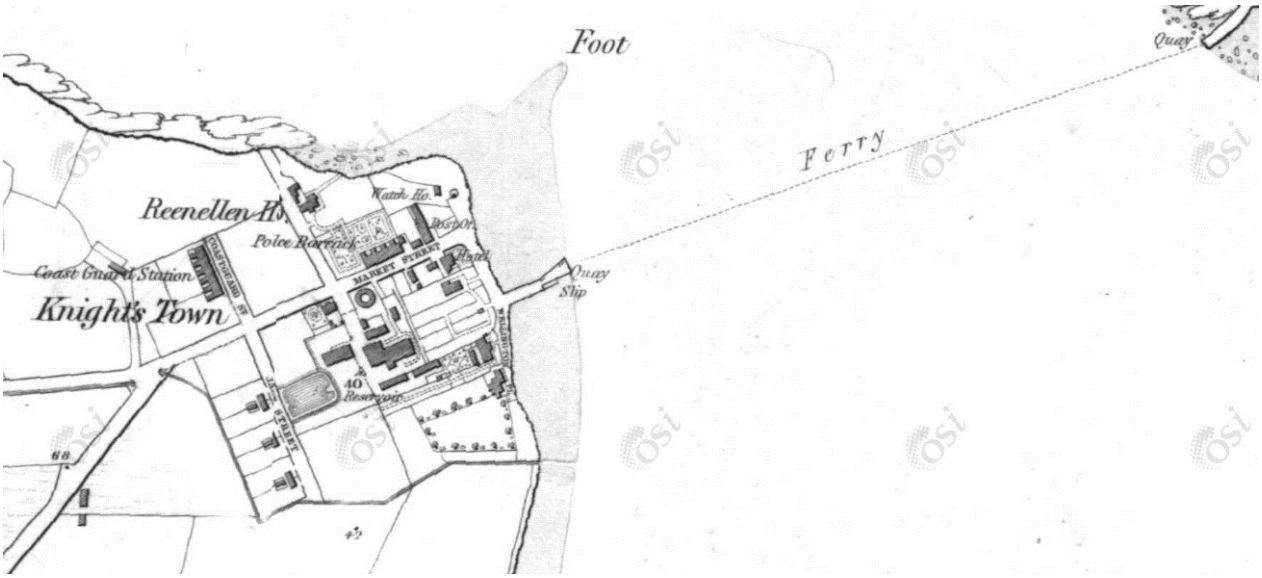

Fig. 3: 1842 Ordnance Survey (1st Edition Sheet 9 for Kerry)

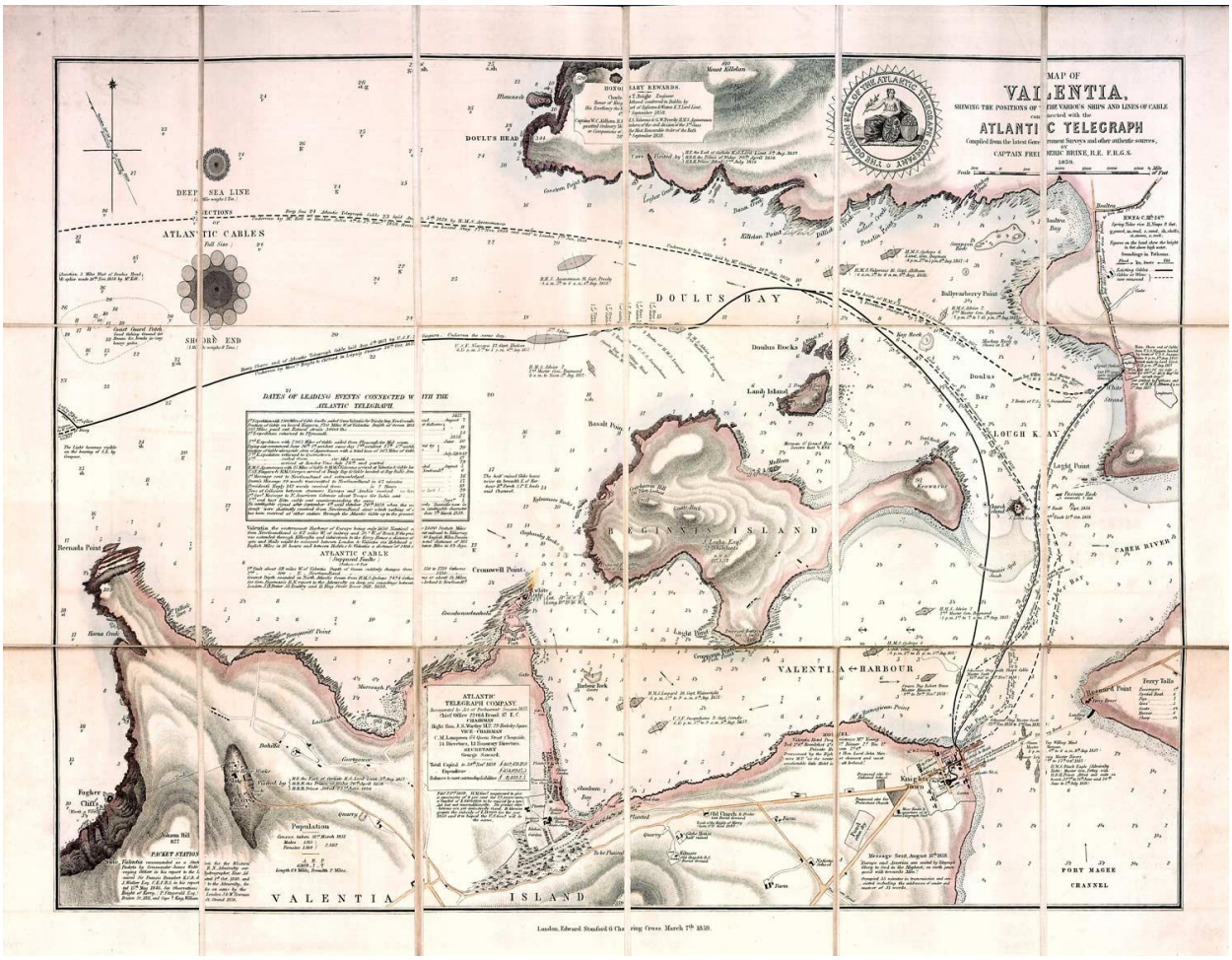

Fig. 4: Captain Brines map, 1869 *(Map of Valentia: shewing the positions of the various ships and lines of cable connected with the Atlantic telegraph).*

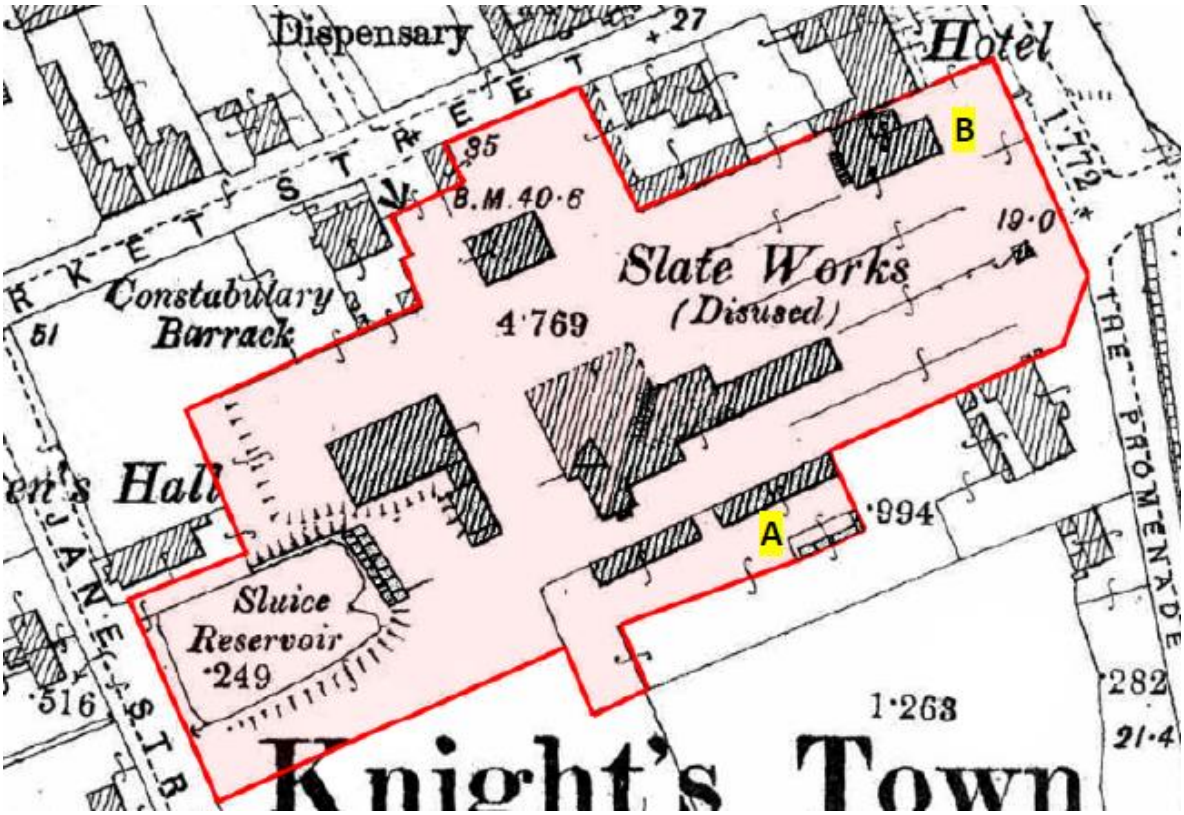

Fig. 5: 1895-96 OS Map with graphics showing the approximate extent of the Slate Yard in red, extracted from Fred Hamond's 2019 report.

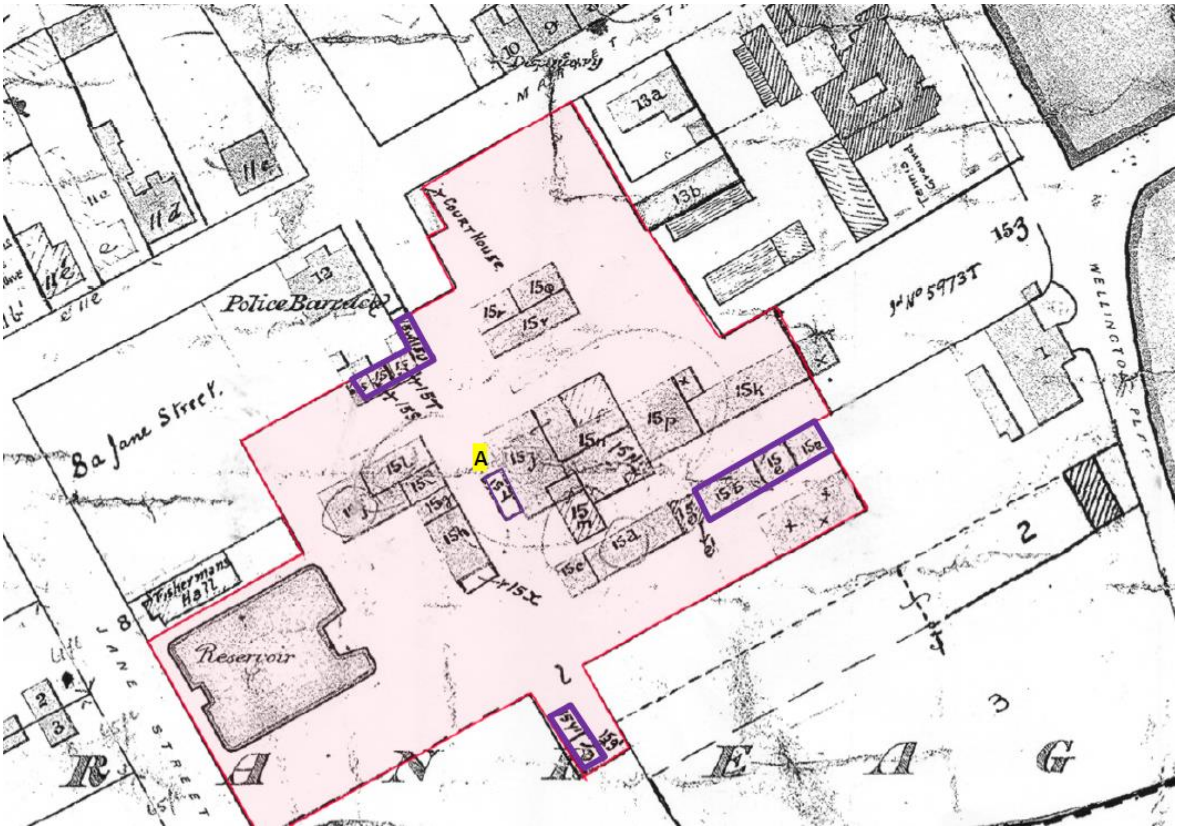

Fig. 6: 1929 valuation town plan with graphics indicating approximate extent of the Slate Yard in red and new buildings constructed in purple, extracted from Fred Hamond's 2019 report.

APPENDIX 3: CONDITION PHOTOGRAPHS

Fig. 1: View internally in Building 11, Boiler house looking towards the chimney.

Fig. 2: View looking south out of opening on the south elevation of building 14, Engine House showing barrel arch opening detail.

Fig. 3: View of openings on north elevation of building 21, Stables and house showing use of slate blocks to form opening surrounds and possible later alterations.

Fig. 4: View across the site looking east showing the extent of cover vegetation (photo taken in July).

Fig. 5: View looking south towards the footprint of buildings 15/16 showing the current use a scrapyard/ storage.

Fig. 6: View looking east between building 21, Stables and house, and building 20, First Message Building showing vegetation and trees.

APPENDIX 4: CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS SITE PLAN

SLATE YARD GROUND FEATURES

CONSERVATION ACTION:

1. Remove debris from ground to reveal flagged florring and evidence of former buildings, boyed lines and machinery emplacements.
2. Laser scan the exposed surfaces and features of interest.

[Ref: HAMOND, 2019]

BUILDING STRUCTURES NOT SURVEYED INTERNALLY

CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

1. Access and, survey, record condition of buildings 1, 2, 4, 6, 21 not previously entered

[Ref: HAMOND, 2019]

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF HISTORIC SLATE YARD SITE

[Ref: GWYN, 2019]

THE KNIGHTSTOWN PIER

Alexander Nimmo, 1822 - 25

The pier links a important visual corridor between the 1857 and 1858 cable sites.

[Ref: GILLESPIE, 2014]

THE CHIMNEY [9]

To be assessed for restoration potential

CONSERVATION ACTION:

1. Clean vegetation.
2. Undertake structural assessment.
3. Prepare conservation/ restoration strategy.

KEY VIEW TOWARDS THE FIRST MESSAGE BUILDING

This significant view towards the Slate Yard from the pier should be protected for its historical value. It was previously obscured and has reappeared since a building was demolished in 1990s.

[Ref: GILLESPIE, 2014]

FIRST MESSAGE BUILDING

Developed between 1842 and 1851 and key components or trans-Atlantic cable ensemble sites.

CONSERVATION ACTION:

1. Clear vegetation and trees and stabilise any loose sections or walls.
2. Detailed survey of this building is required to document its significance and to uncover any evidence that adds to the physical evidence of the final resting point of the cable. Eg: trench of the wire and entry points.
3. Undertake excavations as required to base of the eastern gable and SE corner.

[Ref: HAMOND, 2019]

CLEARING THE SITE

CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

1. Careful removal of vegetation and ground cover in all areas covered by green hatch.
2. Prepare specification for vegetation cleaning from standing structures.
4. Cut down all trees and woody shrubs growing inside the buildings and on the walls,adress tree roots so that they can be removed at some future date with minimal disturbance to the building fabric. [Hamond, 2019]
5. Rescan / survey exposed walls.
6. Record openings and any features uncovered.
7. Complete architectural inventory and condition assessment.

BUILDING KEY

BASED ON FRED HAMOND REPORT, 2019 NUMBERING SYSTEM

1. Store Machinery Room
2. Accounting and cash office
3. Workshop - Smith, Carpenter etc
4. Paint store
5. Sand screen house
6. Cart sheds
7. Modern house
8. Flag squaring house
9. Stone masonry chimney
10. Brick chimney
11. Boiler house
12. Gantry crane
13. Flag sawing house
14. Engine house
15. Flag sawing house
16. Flag sawing house return
17. Lean-to
18. Slate workshop, squaring house
19. Slate workshop, squaring house
20. Workshop / First Message building
21. Stables and house
22. Store return
23. Store
24. Gate office
25. Main entrance
26. Resevoir

BOILER HOUSE [11] ENGINE HOUSE [14]

CONSERVATION ACTIONS:

1. Test trenches to estabilish the configuration of the boiler(s).
2. Excavate the interior of the Engine house.
3. Identify location of machinery to inform proposals for possible re-instatement to reflect the industrial heritage.

[Ref: HAMOND, 2019]

LORD KELVIN'S MIRROR GALVANOMETER

Used in the First Message Building to send the first trans-Atlantic telegraphs and patented in 1858.

Key aspect of the building's technological and industrial heritage and should be reflected in the presentation of the building's history.

N

10 50m

0 20

PROJECT: VALENTIA SLATE YARD CONSERVATION MASTERPLAN
TITLE: CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS PLAN
REFERENCE: 22036-xxx
DATE: 23/08/22 **STATUS:** DRAFT
DRAWN BY: PT **CHECKED BY:** CO

CARRIG CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL
Atlantis Building, South Cumberland Street, Dublin 2, Ireland
T: +353 15529080 E: info@carrig.ie W: www.carrig.ie