TALBOT'S TOWER

Kilkenny

Conservation Report

Completion of 2010 Works

Prepared by

CONSARC CONSERVATION

1-3 Westmoreland Street
Dublin 2

November 2010

1. Introduction

This report addresses the conservation works carried out to Talbot's Tower in September-November 2010.

Talbot's Tower, also known as Talbot's Castle, is the only surviving complete defensive tower of Kilkenny City Walls. The building is part of a Recorded Monument (Kilkenny City) and forms part of the city wall circuit, which is contained within the Zone of Archaeological Potential RMP KK19:26 *Historic Town* and is included in the Urban Archaeological Survey. The site is therefore protected under the National Monuments Act 1930-2004.
The tower is listed in the Development Plan for Kilkenny City and Environs 2002 as a Protected Structure and is within the Patrick's Street Designated Architectural Conservation Area.
All works were carried out in accordance with: Ministerial Consent No C240 and Part 8 Permission, received 14/04/2009.

The team consisted of the following:

Client:	Kilkenny Borough Council, City Hall, Kilkenny
Dept of E/H/LG:	Maeve O'Callaghan, Con Manning, Gov. Offices, The Glen, Waterford
Conservation Architect:	Consarc Conservation, 1-3 Westmorland Street, Dublin 2
Conservation Engineer:	Ivor McElveen, Corrageen, Rathnure, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
Building Archaeologist:	Ben Murtagh, Primrose Hill, Threecastles, Co. Kilkenny
Main Contractor:	Noreside Construction, Unit 43, Hebron Industrial Estate, Kilkenny

2. Conservation works September – November 2010

In September – November 2010 conservation works have been carried out to the elevation of the Tower facing the adjoining properties. The works commenced on 5th October and completed on 19th November 2010.

The works included phase two of repair and conservation works to the tower. Phase one was carried out in 2008. Works in this phase included removal of an earthen mound and repair of the roof; repair of the parapet; repair and repointing of the facade (north quadrant);

Principles of good heritage practice in building conservation have been adhered to throughout the project.

2.1 Works to the Roof

Figure 1

Figure 1

The roof covered by an earthen mound. This is thought to have been from the Victorian era, when a roof garden was established. It was decided to remove this mound as it was causing a major problem with water ingress into the tower below.

Figure 2

Figure 2

The roof was originally clad in flagstones. Excavations revealed that less than one quarter of the flagstones remained in-situ. A large hole in the centre of the roof was a cause of serious water ingress into the tower below. A detailed survey of the roof was carried out by the building archaeologist.

Figure 3

Figure 3

A suitable flagstone was sourced locally in Kilenaule quarry in Co. Tipperary. This was assessed by our in house geologist and deemed to be a suitable match.

Figure 4

The roof had a series of saddle stones that directed water to the perimeter chutes. It also had three steps, creating a fall to the perimeter. Existing flagstones remained in-situ and new stones were set on a lime base, with existing steps maintained.

Figure 4

2.2 Works to the Parapet

Figure 5

The parapet from chute 30 to 42 was unstable, with one section having collapsed into the roof. This section was taken down and rebuilt. A stone accurate survey was carried out before the section of wall was taken down.

Figure 5

Figure 6

Here the parapet wall was taken down, New flagstones were inserted and the chutes were rebuilt.

Figure 6

Figure 7

This is a view of the external parapet wall, showing the rebuilt section and new flagstone chute.

Figure 7

Figure 8

This is a view of the internal parapet wall, showing the rebuilding underway. Some flagstone chutes were extant and these were kept in-situ untouched.

Figure 8

Figure 9

The parapet wall was capped to prevent water penetrating into the wall, causing further deterioration to the wall. Some of the capping carried out in a previous phase was damaged by the severe winter last year. Prolonged saturation, followed by a long severe period of below zero temperatures caused the lime capping to crack. This was repaired while the scaffolding was still in place.

Figure 9

2.3 Works to the Elevation

Figure 10

Figure 10

The wall was prepared for repointing. Here pinning stones were inserted before pointing commenced.

Figure 11

Figure 11

A sample of pointing was prepared for inspection beforehand. Two different types of mortar were used, to differentiate between the Anglo-Norman period and the later medieval period.

Specification was 1 part NHL3.5 : 2.5 sand. Sand was a mix of 8mm, 6mm and 2mm. Grey colour was achieved using limestone dust.

Figure 12

All original and stable mortar was retained. Repointing was only carried out to areas of the facade where mortar had washed out.

Figure 12

Figure 13

The external arch over the entrance door was rebuilt, having been robbed out in the past

Figure 13

2.4 Works to the north curtain wall

Figure 14

It was agreed to postpone this element of work until the adjacent intra mural stairs is being rebuilt. The wall has been fully recorded.

Figure 14

3. Conservation Principles

This report has been approached with regard to the protected status of the building. The overall policy is to retain, restore and enhance the integrity and significance of the building in line with international charters and best practice.

Knowledge, Skills and Techniques

The conservation works has employed all available knowledge, skills and disciplines. The site has been thoroughly researched and all of the area of work has been excavated by a licensed archaeologist and findings fully reported.

Repair

The policy has been to repair rather than replace. The policy of repair is to use matching traditional materials, details and methods. This applies to work to all fabric, as outlined in the schedule of works, including works to the roof and walls. Where conservation work necessitated the replacement of part or whole of any element of the building fabric, this was recorded and surveyed by a building archaeologist, and rebuilt to exactly match historic materials and detailing. Most of the stone was reused on site, except where this was not possible and a suitable match was found.

Minimum Intervention

In considering the proposed works to the buildings, interventions have been kept to the least possible to ensure the impact upon the building's significance is kept to a minimum.

Compatibility

The selection of materials to date has been compatible with the interior and exterior of the building. The proposed uses involve minimal impact on the significance and integrity of the building.

Sensitivity and Cautious Approach

Conservation works and alterations respect the existing fabric, use, associations and meanings. Only as much work as is necessary, but as little as possible, has been proposed. The aim has been to respect, retain or enhance evidence of the building's history and its significance.

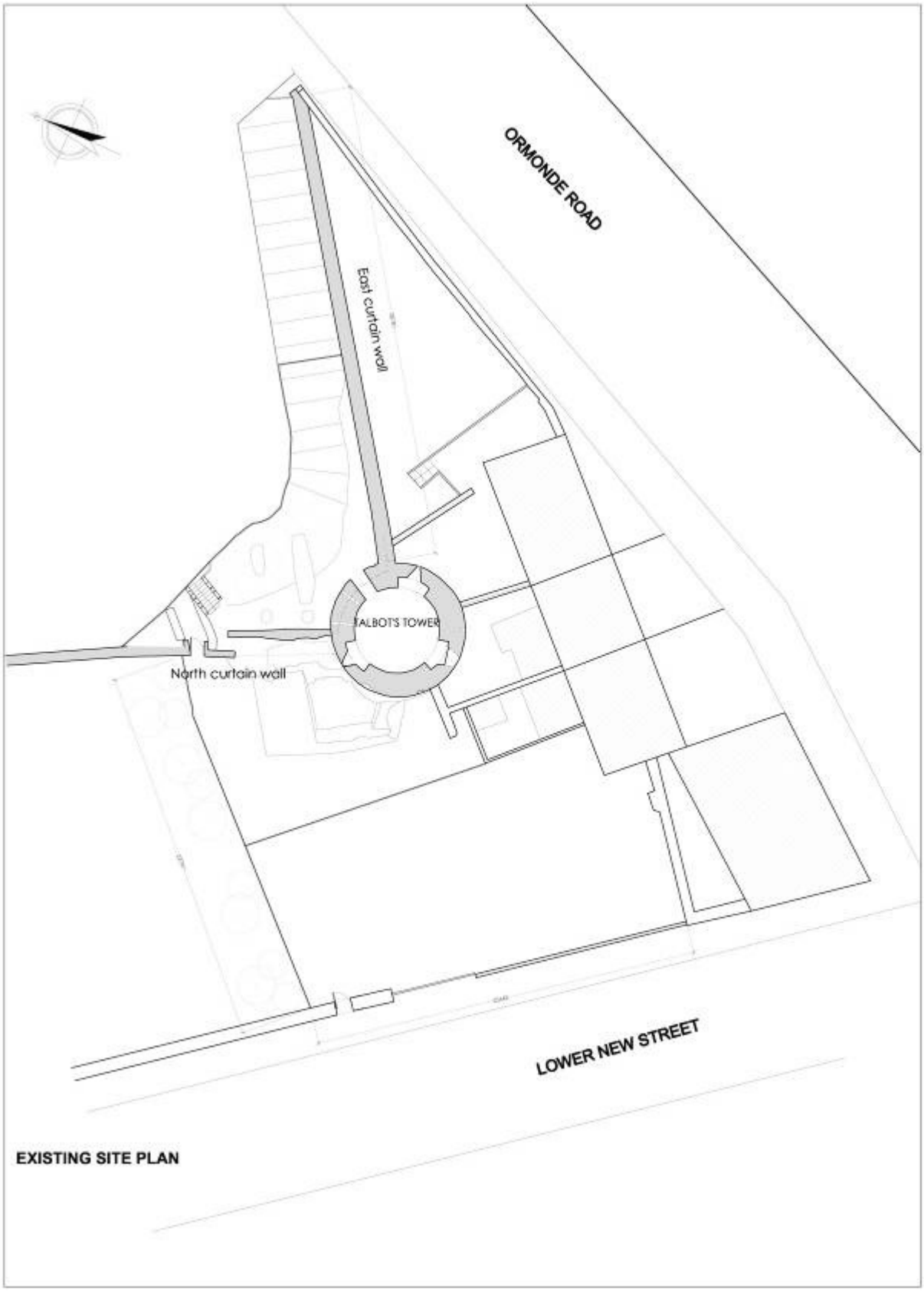
New Work

New work should not diminish, but maintain or enhance the architectural significance of the structures. New work should be readily identifiable as such, without detracting from the integrity of the whole.

Direction and Supervision of Works

The principles established here have been taken on board and fully implemented on site through the competent direction of people on site with an appropriate level of knowledge and skill. Consultants and contractors working on site have expertise in conservation.

APPENDIX A – DRAWINGS


ORMONDE ROAD
East curtain wall
TALBOT'S TOWER
North curtain wall
LOWER NEW STREET
EXISTING SITE PLAN