



Historic Graves Management Plan - Template

Management Plan for _____ Historic Graveyard

‘A little bit every year’

The historic graveyard plays an important role in the cultural life of Irish people and represents the focal point in the historical life of a parish.

The character of a graveyard results from a mixture of both the built heritage and natural heritage which when combined makes up the character of a graveyard that is unique to every graveyard.

Any work undertaken within a graveyard should not destroy or have a negative impact on this character but rather should enhance the character and setting of the graveyard.

Site Name	
Townland	
NGR	
Ownership	
RMP	
NIAH Reg #	
RPS #	
Local Community Group Name	

Site Location, Parking and Access

Site Description

(boundary and entrance, ironwork, memorials, wildlife, interior, pathways, masonry structures)

(describe the main features starting in the north and working clockwise around the site. Use compass points)

Site history

Cartographic sources

Best practice for the care and conservation of cultural places

The conservation principles most suitable for a historic graveyard are outlined in a document known as the *The Burra Charter: The Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Charter for Places of Cultural Significance 1999*.

The Charter outlines the principles behind conserving and maintaining a place of cultural significance without inadvertently destroying its cultural significance.

These principles formulate the thinking behind the *best practice* for the care and conservation of historic graveyards. A list of works which should and should not be carried out at historic graveyards was formulated by the National Monuments service in its booklet on the care and Conservation of graveyards and are list in *Appendix 1*. The National Monuments Act 1930-2004 is the primary legislation that provides legal protection to recorded monuments that are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (see Appendix 2)

Graveyard Elements and Maintenance Actions

Graveyard boundary and entrance

During the 18th and 19th century the majority of historic graveyards were enclosed by a stone wall built with lime mortar and local rubble stone. The new wall often enclosed an area smaller than the original graveyard resulting in some burials lying outside the graveyard wall. No ground disturbance therefore should be undertaken immediately surrounding the graveyard wall.

Repairs to walls and entrances should be undertaken with care and the general principal of repair like with like should be applied.

Features within the graveyard wall such as coffin stands and stiles should be retained.

Condition

Action

Ironwork

Original railings and iron entrance gateways contribute greatly to the historic character of a graveyard and should be maintained. Memorials and memorial surrounds are also often mad from wrought or cast iron. It is particularly important that ironwork remains painted.

Condition

Action

Memorials

The position of a memorial along with its design and inscription often reflected the social status of the deceased. Memorials should never be moved from their original position within the graveyard and leaning memorials should only ever be reset where there is an urgent health and safety issue and only then after monitoring and receiving professional advice.

Memorials should never be aggressively cleaned as this can lead to loss of character and increased weathering and deterioration. Weathering of the stone memorials is inevitable therefore it is important that proper memorial recording be undertaken.

Condition

Action

Wildlife

Historic graveyards should be seen as an oasis of nature a place where flora and fauna should be encouraged by undertaking a maintenance regime that welcomes nature into the graveyard.

Condition

Action

(as per page 24 and 25 guidelines for the care and conservation)

Interior

The undulating surface or the 'humps and bumps' of a historic graveyard should be maintained as this feature is part of the character of an historic graveyard.

Condition

Action

(Sheep grazing for short period ideal, strimmers with caution, weed killer bad idea p 28)

Pathways

Old pathways should be maintained and kept clear of vegetation. Mown grass pathways are ideal where new paths are deemed necessary. The use of tarmac and concrete as a material for pathways should be avoided.

Condition

Action

Masonry structures

Ivy clad church ruins within a graveyard should be maintained as ivy clad ruins unless there are sufficient funds and expertise available to carry out a full conservation plan and to implement the plan under the supervision of a conservation architect. Trees and other deep rooting plants that are located near gravestones and other masonry structures can undermine the stability of these monuments. Control of existing growth should be undertaken by pruning and by removal of saplings from the vicinity of structures before they become established.

Condition

Action

A quinquennial (5 year) inspection of the graveyard , the boundary wall and other masonry structures should be undertaken to identify and remove sycamore saplings

Any young plants with deep roots should be removed immediately they appear and before damage can be caused by their root system.

Summary of Management Plan Actions

1

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