

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)**

### **Why was the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) established?**

The Council of Europe, in Article 2 of the 1985 Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, known as the Granada Convention, states that '*for the purpose of precise identification of the monuments, groups of buildings and sites to be protected, each Party undertakes to maintain inventories of that architectural heritage*'. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established in 1990 to fulfil Ireland's obligations under the Granada Convention through the establishment and maintenance of a central record documenting and evaluating the architectural heritage of the country.

### **Under what legislation does the NIAH carry out its surveys?**

The NIAH was established on a statutory basis by the enactment of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999.

### **What type of structures are included in the NIAH?**

The NIAH includes in its surveys a broad range of structures and sites covering the period from 1700 to the present day. These include structures of simple design and function, such as post boxes and waterpumps, to grand architectural statements including cathedrals and country houses.

### **Why was my property selected for inclusion in the NIAH?**

The NIAH uses a range of base layers to assist in the selection of sites of architectural heritage value including the relevant planning authority's existing Record of Protected Structures (RPS); the first edition Ordnance Survey maps; and selected published sources. These are supplemented by on-site identification where the NIAH Architectural Heritage Officers visit the area and select sites based on such factors as apparent architectural merit; age; rarity; and the survival of original fabric. The Appraisal in each record summarises why a site is considered to be of architectural heritage value.

### **Is my property a Protected Structure by being included in the NIAH?**

No. Structures are protected by being included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) which each planning authority is required to maintain as part of its Development Plan. The Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs may recommend structures for inclusion on the RPS. Structures rated of Regional, National or International value by the NIAH are included in such recommendations. However, the final decision on inclusion on the RPS is a reserved function of the elected local councillors.

If a planning authority proposes to add a structure onto its RPS it must inform the owner/occupier of the proposal and notify them again on the final decision of the elected local councillors. The full procedure for making an addition to or deletion from the RPS is set out in Section 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000. Alternatively, a structure may be added to the RPS during a review of the Development Plan, in which case the procedures in Section 12 are used.

**A structure has not been included in the NIAH. Does this mean that it is not of architectural value?**

NIAH surveys are not comprehensive and there are sites of importance that may have been missed. Please contact us if there is a site you think should be included in the NIAH.

**How do I find out if my property is a Protected Structure?**

Most planning authorities now publish their Development Plans and RPS online. However, if in doubt your local Architectural Conservation Officer or Planning Officer should be able to give further advice. Contact details for Architectural Conservation Officers are available on the Find Out More page of this website.

**Who can I contact for advice on Protected Structures?**

Many local authorities employ an Architectural Conservation Officer, a professional with a background and experience in dealing with Protected Structures. Contact details for Architectural Conservation Officers are available on the Find Out More page of this website. A Planning Officer should be able to advise in areas where there is no Architectural Conservation Officer.

**Are there grants available for works to Protected Structures?**

In 2011 the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht introduced a new scheme entitled the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF). The Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme (BHJLS) was introduced in 2014. The SRF was reintroduced in 2015. Applications to the SRF are made in the first instance to the local authority which prioritises them and forwards no more than two applications to the Department for final decision. Information on the SRF scheme is available from the local authorities or on the Department's website [[www.ahrrga.gov.ie](http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie)] under Heritage>Built Heritage & Architectural Policy>Financial Assistance for Architectural Heritage.

Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997, as amended, provides tax relief for the owner/occupier of an approved building or an approved garden existing independently in respect of expenditure incurred on the maintenance, repair or restoration of the approved building or garden. Information on the Section 482 scheme is available on the Department's website [[www.ahrrga.gov.ie](http://www.ahrrga.gov.ie)] under Heritage>Built Heritage & Architectural Policy>Financial Assistance for Architectural Heritage>S.482 Tax Relief.

**Are sites protected by being included in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes?**

The Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes has no statutory function. Its primary function is to highlight Ireland's rich garden heritage.

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