Survey of Thatch Buildings, County Offaly 2018

Project Brief

1. Introduction
The Heritage Office of Offaly County Council, with the support of the Heritage Council, wishes to contract a suitably qualified professional/s to carry out a field survey of thatched structures in the county to update the survey of 2002 by Barry O’Reilly.¹

2. Objectives
To update the inventory of all thatched buildings noting fixtures and fittings and their curtilage in Offaly.
To record architectural, conservation and social information regarding these buildings.
To use this information to analyse issues and compile statistics on the changing situation for thatch buildings in Offaly.

3. Aims of the project
• To re-survey the 2002 Thatch in County Offaly study by Barry O’Reilly and any other thatched buildings which may come to light during the course of the survey. To note any changes in architectural and social information relating to each building surveyed, its immediate grounds (yard, outbuildings, boundaries and gateways) in map and photographic form (note Bing/Google satellite maps are available since 2002 and should be added).
• To interview owners of thatched buildings, to record their views and needs in relation to future use of thatch in the county.
• To analyse data collected, to make recommendations on conservation issues and priorities, including possible future research or survey work.
• During the course of the work, where feasible any original (or notable) fixtures and fittings should be documented, along with their provenance. This includes built-in original or early vernacular furniture and furnishings, e.g. dressers, presses, wooden or brass beds, settles or press beds, chairs, freestanding or wall-mounted tables, and fireplace fittings such as fixed hob seats, iron cranes, keeping holes or stillions, ‘jamb walls’, clevies, fire surrounds or mantelpieces, internal shelving or recessed cupboards, patterned ceilings, ceiling-mounted brackets (for shelves), hooks or ledges attached to beams/ joists, ladders or stairs, or indeed any of the aforementioned that are freestanding or stored in outhouses. Areas including any of these items should be photographed.
• To make all information collected available for future research, through a detailed survey report, photographs, annotated maps and raw data (including field notes and maps) as appendices.

¹ Subject to confirmation of Heritage Council funding for 2018.
4. **Context**

The number of thatched buildings recorded in Offaly in 2002 was 75 with some already ruinous. One further building was noted after the survey. The successful consultant will be expected to use a standard recording form as used in 2002 with modifications as appropriate.
5. Methodology
The consultant will provide a project outline in response to the brief. The survey should comprise the following elements:

5.1 Physical Survey

- The 75 sites recorded in 2002 should be re-visited, including those which have become ruinous. Assessment for each building, noting any changes to structure (floor plan, render, windows, etc), roofing material and occupancy since 2002. Changes to floor plans should be sketched. (please see 2002 survey form - appendix 1).
- Comparative photographs of each building and site should be taken from a similar angle in addition to photographs of all structures including general context photo, rear and front elevations and details of house features, including fixtures and fittings where possible.
- Description of any changes to the curtilage or associated buildings or features (e.g. gates, gate posts, pumps, outbuildings)
- The assessments made by Barry O’Reilly in 2002 should be updated with comparisons.

5.2 Analysis of Data and Conservation Recommendations
The data collected should be analysed and the key issues that emerge should be assessed in a local and national context. Specific issues might include:

- The number still thatched as per 2002
- The number with different thatching materials and styles
- The number re-roofed with a different material
- Changes to windows, doors, render.
- Thatchers’ names
- The number of thatched houses lived in currently
- The number of thatched houses that are habitable / otherwise used.

5.3 Social Issues
Names and addresses of all owners should be recorded where possible. Discussions should be undertaken with owners of each building to ascertain:

- Owner profile (age, family structure).
- Owners’ idea of future use of building, including their views on thatch, whether they plan to retain or replace it, awareness of grants, via County Council, Dept of Environment, Heritage Council; views on extensions / limits of thatched properties.
- Other issues or relevant additional information as may emerge through interviews.

6. Proposals
Proposals in response to this brief should set out in detail how the study will be approached, method of working, and any other relevant matters. The project design should set out how the consultants will respond to the brief. Tenders should include:

- A method statement with a detailed timetable, proposals for data storage, and proposals for the carrying out of the analysis
- A resource plan showing the breakdown of person hours between professions and stages
• Breakdown of the estimated cost of carrying out all elements of the study

7. **Required Skills and Experience**

Proposals should contain clear details of the skills and experience of the project team, including the range of relevant professional skills which would be brought to bear, and the names and CVs of all proposed team members. Substitution of team members after the contract has been awarded will not be acceptable without prior consultation with the Heritage Office. Details should also be given of the relevant experience of the personnel proposed, including the project leader, with examples of previous relevant architectural field survey work.

*Essential*

• Proven professional experience of architectural survey work, with an understanding of the issues relating to vernacular or thatched structures.

• Proven ability and experience in liaising with owners and the public in relation to heritage issues. It will be a requirement of the study that time is spent sourcing and talking to the owners of the properties and the consultant must show a capability to be sensitive and approachable.

• Experience of writing clear, concise reports for a general audience and working to tight deadlines.

*Desirable*

• Experience, knowledge and understanding of the vernacular architecture of Ireland and County Offaly.

8. **Budget & Financial Issues**

An indicative sum for this project is €9,000 (including all expenses and VAT as applicable). Please submit quotation for survey and note assessment criteria in section 14. A detailed breakdown of costs associated with all elements of the project should be submitted. A current tax clearance certificate will be required. Withholding tax may be deducted by Offaly County Council as appropriate. This contract will be awarded on the basis of a fixed price contract, and as such, all costs must be quoted (and clearly indicated) as a fixed price in Euro. No other amount over and above the negotiated contract amount will be paid. Payment will be by electronic transfer, on a phased basis, to be agreed on award of the contract. A penalty of 25% of the total value of the contract will apply if all final outputs are not delivered on time.

9. **Required outputs**

The following outputs are required:

• The report should be in two parts – Part One (summary and statistics and overall conclusions), and Part Two (a descriptive gazetteer for the thatched properties surveyed). This is to facilitate web publication of Part One, whereas Part 2 will be for internal Offaly County Council use.

• Five bound colour copies of Part One and Part Two. An electronic copy of the report (in Microsoft Word compatible format and as a PDF), with all photographs, sketch plans, figures.

• Final set of annotated maps on Map Collector showing location of all buildings surveyed. This will be facilitated by Offaly County Council to work from a computer or smart phone.

• Fully labelled set of all raw data including maps and field recording forms.
• Representative photographs should be taken of all buildings, fixtures and fittings surveyed. Digital labelled copy of all photographs should be supplied, copyrighted to Offaly County Council via ShareFile or hard drive (minimum 300 dpi resolution) and linked to each survey.

• Two presentations on the key findings of the study will be required, at dates to be agreed as part of the overall fee agreement – one to the Offaly Heritage Forum and one to the Annual Offaly Heritage Seminar in November.

**Report Content & Format**


10. **Timescale**

The aim is to make the appointment by the end of March 2018, and consultants appointed must be available to commence work as soon as possible upon appointment. A final report will be due in September 2018.

11. **Project Management**

A steering group comprising representatives of the Heritage Officer and Senior Executive Architect will guide the development of this project. Day to day contact will be with the Heritage Officer. All meetings will take place in Tullamore. An initial briefing meeting will be required with 2-3 update meetings during the project.

12. **Contract Conditions**

• The consultant will be required to enter into a formal contract with Offaly County Council before any work commences.

• Evidence of appropriate insurance will be required before work commences.

• Evidence of up-to-date tax compliance will be required before commencement.

• All work activities must be carried out in accordance with Health and Safety Guidelines and Acts.

• Offaly County Council will not be liable for any other expenses incurred by the consultant.

• Offaly County Council undertake to use their best endeavours to protect confidential and commercially sensitive information provided by you in this tender subject to its obligations under Law and including the Freedom of Information Act, 2014. Should you wish that any of the information supplied by you should not be disclosed because of its sensitivity, you should, when providing the information, identify same and specify reasons for its sensitivity. If your tender is successful the price will, as a matter of course, be available to the public outside of the scope of F.O.I. legislation. Offaly County Council will consult you about the release of confidential and commercially sensitive information before making decisions on any F.O.I. request received. If, having considered your views, Offaly County Council is of the opinion that the information should be released in the public interest, you will have the option of appealing the decision to the Information Commissioner. Please note that in the event that no information is identified by you as sensitive, with supporting reasons, then it is likely to be released in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Acts.
13. Communication
To ensure equality between applicants, Offaly County Council will issue any clarifications sought to all those who have expressed an interest in submitting a tender.

14. Evaluation of Proposals
Evaluation of proposals will be based on the ability of the consultant to deliver the skills and outputs detailed above and on the value for money of the proposed work. Short listing may apply and interviews may be held with selected candidates prior to the final evaluation. Offaly County Council does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender, and no person making a submission will be remunerated for any trouble or expense incurred in preparing a submission.

This is a competitive process and your proposal will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Experience in carrying out vernacular field surveys and knowledge of the subject area (25%)
- Time proposed in the field / researching / analysis and report writing (25%)
- Budget (25%)
- Ability to communicate with owners and audiences (25%)

15. Submissions
Deadline for receipt of proposals is 12 Noon on Friday 9 March 2018. All proposals should be clearly marked “Offaly Thatch Survey” and sent (hard copy only; e-mailed proposals cannot be accepted) to Heritage Office, Áras an Chontae, Charleville Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Three copies of all relevant documentation should be submitted.

This is a project of Offaly County Council under the Offaly Heritage Plan 2017-21, with funding from the Heritage Council.
Appendix 1

2002 THATCH SURVEY OF COUNTY OFFALY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Map information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building name:</td>
<td>Map type:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street name:</td>
<td>Map sheet:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town:</td>
<td>Map plan:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townland:</td>
<td>Site number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National grid:</td>
<td>Discovery map:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context:</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
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<tr>
<td>Condition:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional use:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories of special interest:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary description:

Appraisal:

Inspected by: Date(s) of inspection:

Photograph numbers: Provisional number:

Sources

On 1990 Offaly Co. Co. map: Other source type:

Source details:

Thatch data

Owner: Occupant:

Thatch condition: Orig. roof structure?

Thatching materials: Thatching method:

Date of last thatching: Thatcher:

Owner’s comments:

Vulnerability of thatch: To include in RPS ?:

Comments/other data: