



Chartered property,
land and construction
surveyors

Check.  They're Chartered.

Clear Guide to Services Provided by Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors

Client Guide





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‘Our architectural heritage is a unique resource, an irreplaceable expression of the richness and diversity of our past. Structures and places can, over time, acquire character and special interest through their intrinsic quality, continued existence and familiarity. The built heritage consists not only of great artistic achievements but also of the everyday works of craftsmen. ... As we enjoy this inheritance, we should ensure it is conserved in order to pass it on to our successors.’

Department of Arts, Heritage and
the Gaeltacht Architectural Heritage
Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities
(2011)

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This guide outlines the competencies of Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors. This guide is an aid to clients in their selection of a heritage conservation professional or expert for renovation or conservation projects involving older buildings or protected structures. Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors are professionals who possess expertise in traditional materials and skills, in architectural analysis, in building pathology, and in conservation philosophy, ensuring alignment with international standards. With their holistic approach, they diagnose the issues comprehensively while considering the building’s historical significance and environmental factors. By engaging a surveyor, clients can ensure effective project outcomes. The SCSi and RICS Building Conservation Accreditation is recognised as being equivalent to the RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Architect through the Edinburgh Group’s Terms of Reference November 2023. Trust your project with professionals who understand your building’s pathology.



Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors

Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors are highly valued professional Chartered Surveyors who offer a variety of specialist conservation services across the whole of the built environment. The knowledge base of a Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor is broad but is based on a solid technical understanding of how older buildings work both technically and functionally. Their role generally touches on all aspects of the construction and property sectors, allowing a holistic approach to their work. The full range of competencies of Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors is too long to cover here, but some key highlights include:



Conservation Philosophy

- The Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor will apply recognised charters, standards, guidelines and regulations to safeguard the importance of monuments, buildings, and sites along with their settings. Architectural and historic fabric analysis and appraisal are fundamental skills within this philosophy.
- An over-arching professional skill identified by the ICOMOS Guidelines on Education and Training is the ability to 'read' a monument or building. Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors have the competency to understand the history and development of historic buildings and sites and to identify their significance.



Building Pathology

- The early identification and accurate diagnosis of a building defect, or failure, plays a crucial role in minimising the potential damage, mitigating the cost of remedial work, and helping to preserve the historic character and features of older buildings and protected structures.
- Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors identify the materials and techniques used in the original construction, those perhaps introduced through later alteration/intervention, and report on the condition.
- During the diagnosis of defects, surveyors meticulously identify issues, utilising both destructive and non-destructive methods to assess their impact. Surveyors analyse the building defect/failure to gain an understanding of the circumstances which resulted in it having occurred.
- This thorough approach allows Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors to develop a practical and effective course of required remedial action while adhering to internationally accepted charters and codes of conservation practice and philosophy. Through an understanding of the building's behaviour, Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors are well-placed to advise on appropriate methods of repair, conservation and maintenance.
- This ensures the implementation of long-term solutions while safeguarding the integrity and the significance of the structure.



Energy Efficiency of Traditional Buildings

- Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors are suited to provide in-depth consultancy on retrofitting of traditional buildings, including protected structures, while having an understanding of appropriate materials and technologies. Experienced surveyors have an understanding of applied building physics relevant to traditional buildings.



Advice and Building Surveys

- When purchasing a property, particularly an older building or a protected structure, it is vital that a survey of the building is carried out to accurately identify its condition and any potential construction, planning or legal issues. Surveys need to be holistic in nature and should not look solely at isolated issues or symptoms but rather consider the interconnections and broader context of the building's condition, historical significance and environmental factors.
- There are three different levels of surveys available from basic building surveys (level one), which provides an overview of the property's condition and highlights significant issues, to full building surveys (level three), which provides a comprehensive assessment of the structure and condition of the property and will list defects and provide advice on repairs and maintenance. For more information on the levels of building surveys, please click [here](#) to view the information on the different levels of surveys on the SCSi website.



Planning & Statutory Compliance Consultancy

- At the planning stage, the Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor fulfils the role of the 'Conservation Professional / Expert' and employs their skills to prepare requisite documents, such as an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment or Conservation Plan. They can prepare applications for planning permission, Section 57 and Section 5 declarations.
- Reports, inventories, method statements, impact assessments, compliance submissions prepared by Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors can be used in applications for heritage and conservation grants or funding.
- Surveyors can provide in-depth advice on other statutory compliance elements of a conservation project: Opinions on Compliance, Multi-Unit Development (MUD) Act, housing standards, and *Tailte Éireann* (formerly PRAI) mapping, as well as requirements regarding Safety Health and Welfare at Work Acts and Regulations including the construction regulations.
- Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors that are also Registered Building Surveyors are recognised under Building Control Legislation to certify the design and completion of building projects. They can prepare Fire Safety Certificates (FSCs) and Disability Access Certificates (DACs). They can act as Design and Assigned Certifiers signing off on Building Regulations and provide professional advice and support in relation to the implementation of the Building Control (Amendment) Regulations 2014, generally known as BCAR. Please click [here](#) to view a guide to BCAR 2014.



Design

- Whether looking to alter or extend an existing traditional building, it is vital that the finished product meets both the practical and technical requirements of the building's intended use and client requirements. Building Conservation Accredited Surveyors can develop a project from initial conception through to the final design stage whether commercial or residential.



Contract Administration

- An essential element of any building project is the administration of the contract.
- Surveyors can provide a comprehensive professional service from inception to completion, including but not limited to procurement choice, design and specification of a project, tendering strategy, contract choice, preparation of tender documents, contractor selection, the inspection and oversight of on-site work and certification.



Project Management

- Many conservation projects involve a variety of specialist contractors, consultants and stakeholders. In this respect, it is important to engage a competent Project Manager with the skills and experience to effectively coordinate and control a historic building project.
- Surveyors are well equipped to perform the role of Project Manager, acting on behalf of the client to ensure the project is completed on time, and within budget whilst satisfying both the required quality/standard and the overall requirements of the project brief.



Other SCSi client guides:

The SCSi has a range of free guides available for downloading. Click [here](#) to see the list.



Find a Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor:

If you'd like to find a Building Conservation Accredited Surveyor or know how the SCSi can help, please click [here](#) or [contact us](#).



SCSI

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Dating back to 1895, the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland is the independent professional body for Chartered Surveyors working and practicing in Ireland.

Working in partnership with RICS, the pre-eminent Chartered professional body for the construction, land and property sectors around the world, the Society and RICS act in the public interest: setting and maintaining the highest standards of competence and integrity among the profession; and providing impartial, authoritative advice on key issues for business, society and governments worldwide.

Advancing standards in construction, land and property, the Chartered Surveyor professional qualification is the world's leading qualification when it comes to professional standards. In a world where more and more people, governments, banks and commercial organisations demand greater certainty of professional standards and ethics, attaining the Chartered Surveyor qualification is the recognised mark of property professionalism.

Members of the profession are typically employed in the construction, land and property markets through private practice, in central and local government, in state agencies, in academic institutions, in business organisations and in non-governmental organisations.

Members' services are diverse and can include offering strategic advice on the economics, valuation, law, technology, finance and management in all aspects of the construction, land and property industry.

All aspects of the profession, from education through to qualification and the continuing maintenance of the highest professional standards are regulated and overseen through the partnership of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and RICS, in the public interest.

This valuable partnership with RICS enables access to a worldwide network of research, experience and advice.

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