



**Method Statement for Archaeological Monitoring of Conservation of Upper Lighthouse  
Terrace Wall, Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry**

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The Upper Lighthouse station on Skellig was built on a terrace blasted out of the rock in the 1820s. The outer side of the terrace is defined and supported by a high lime-mortar bonded local stone wall capped by a parapet wall that rises above the finished level of the terrace. The terrace wall supports the ground on which many of the buildings in the complex stand and so is the most vital element of the structure of the station. The wall has clearly moved in places and parts of its parapet have collapsed and so its repair is required to ensure the survival of the complex.

Scaffolding will have to be erected to allow for the initial examination and recording of the wall. The scaffolding will be anchored to bedrock below the wall and after its construction, the wall will be examined and photographically surveyed by the archaeologist in company with the OPW.

The photographic record will record any areas which require work and identify the type of repair required, for example- tightening of existing stone, insertion of new stone, or underpinning etc.

The conservation of the wall will be undertaken by the OPW masons and crew following the usual method used on the lighthouse walls on Skellig. Local stone, matching that in the wall in size and character will be used for repairs. Lime mortar will be used as bonding, as in the original work, but the face of the wall will not be pointed and gaps and small chambers will be left to allow birds utilise them for nesting. The finished level of the parapet wall is clear from the surviving sections and from scars on buildings which abutted the wall. The parapet wall will be capped with Valentia slate slabs, as again previously used on the lighthouse roadway walls on Skellig.

Given its location it is highly unlikely that any of the stone in the wall will come from an earlier cultural context. To date no earlier cultural material has been found in the lighthouse walls as they were built from the stone blasted from the rock at the start of the lighthouse construction process.

After the completion of works the archaeologist will rephotograph the wall identifying the areas repaired and will submit a report, containing the two sets of photographs.

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