

Listing Buildings of Special  
Architectural or Historic Interest

# A Thematic Survey of Historic Water Pumps

Historic  
Environment  
Division



Department for  
**Communities**

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Communities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

The Department for Communities (DfC), Historic Environment Division (HED) is the government department you should contact if you have any queries about listed buildings or any aspect of the historic environment in Northern Ireland. DfC has created this short guide following a thematic survey of historic water pumps.

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# 1

## Introduction

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Listing marks and celebrates a building's special architectural and historic interest, allowing us to highlight what is significant about it.

**The term 'buildings' also encompasses listed structures such as telephone kiosks, pumps, bridges, railway signals, boundary markers and post boxes etc.**

In Northern Ireland, the Department for Communities ('the Department') has a statutory duty to protect buildings through listing (there are currently around 8,900 listed buildings in NI): "Listed Buildings" are those man-made objects and structures designated as

being of '**special architectural or historic interest**' under Section 80(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. It states that: 'The Department:

- a) shall compile a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and
- b) may amend any list so compiled'

### **The Criteria for Listing**

The criteria that the Department applies when assessing whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest are set out in the ***Criteria for the Scheduling of Historic Monuments and the Listing of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest*** – this is explained in more detail in Section 5.

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## 2

# Thematic Surveys

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A thematic study is an effective way of isolating and recording the best examples of a particular building type. The links and influences common to all are examined and the associated research increases the understanding of the type's special interest.

In 1994 the (then) Historic Buildings Branch of the DoE, (now Historic Environment Division, DfC) commissioned a survey of water pumps throughout

Northern Ireland. A complete field survey was not practical at the time so a public appeal was made through the media and a total of 39 new pumps were notified to the Department. Following evaluation of these, a further 28 pumps were added to 'the list'. These pumps were visited again in 2006 through the Second Survey<sup>1</sup> of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

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<sup>1</sup> Statutory listing of buildings began in Northern Ireland in 1974 - this was called the 'First Survey'. The Second Survey commenced in 1997 and approximately 70% of Northern Ireland has currently been Second Surveyed.

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/information-guide-2nd-survey-historic-buildings-listed-historic-buildings-northern-ireland](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/information-guide-2nd-survey-historic-buildings-listed-historic-buildings-northern-ireland)

# 3

## Water Pumps

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At the beginning of the twentieth century it is likely that every town and village would have had at least one water pump, often situated at the side of a road or in the village square. These tended to disappear more quickly from the larger built up areas and it appears that there are no remaining public pumps in Belfast. They were also common on farms where they were often sited close to the dwelling on top of an earlier water well and would have provided drinking water to both the farmer's family and his livestock. Sometimes the family were suspicious of the pump and maintained a second well in order to have a 'purer' water supply.

The best way to identify where public water pumps would have been, and may still be, is to study the large scale OS maps (1:2500 and larger) of the first decades of the twentieth century.



Typical private water pump, Castledawson (HB08/10/005C, Grade B1)

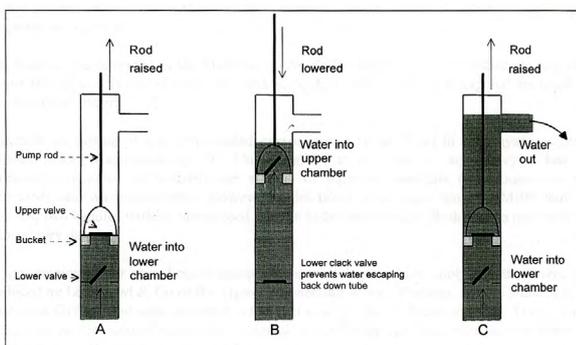
# 4

## Two Types

Although we usually refer simply to ‘water pumps’ there are two distinct types – pumps and fountains. Pumps raise water from an underground well by a suction action and fountains issue water under pressure from a pressurised water system by turning a knob.

### Pumps

Pumps suck water up from the level of a well to the level of the discharge spout by means of a manually operated handle. This is then linked to an eccentric shaft attached to the top end of a plunger. The pump is operated by moving the handle up and down. Often pumps needed to be ‘primed’ before they would operate and the farmer would have kept a half-filled bucket beside the pump. He would have removed the lid and poured the water into the top of the pump. This dampened the leather seals and allowed a better suction to be obtained, thus enabling water to be drawn up the shaft.



Pump operation diagram (Lee, Howl & Co. Ltd catalogue):

Pumps either have the more usual long handle, or two large wheels either side of a column. Both of these types, handle and rotary, have the same internal pumping mechanisms that require considerable effort to raise water. Most of the lever-type pumps were installed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth century. It should be noted that even if a pump is shown on an OS map from c1910, if there is still a pump in this location it may not be the original one. Pumps were replaced as the technology improved or the old one wore out.

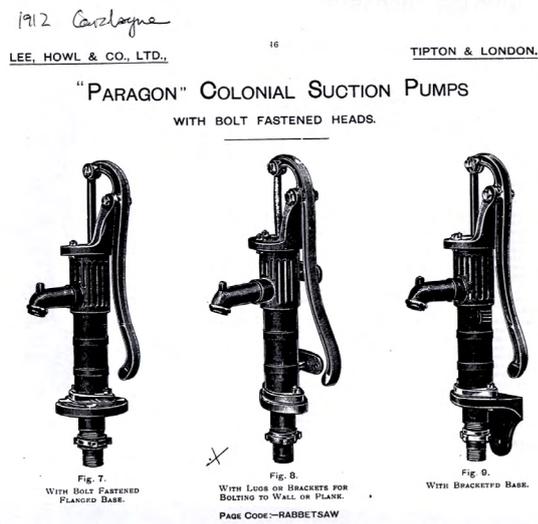
The most recognisable pump is the cow-tailed type with a column incised with a spiral pattern, named because its shape is reminiscent of a cow’s tail. Usually the removable top is fluted and shaped like a dome not dissimilar to the dome of a classical cathedral, but on a tiny scale. These often carry the plumber’s name cast into the head but not the manufacturer’s name. This is the type most commonly seen dotted around the countryside and it is unclear whether they were mass produced locally or in Britain.

Often a village pump had walling and/or railings erected around it. This was both decorative and practical in that it marked the pump with added significance and protected it from damage. Where this walling is original it is usually protected through listing along with the pump.



Top left image: Public pump at Edenderry (near Belfast) with protective curved walling and railings (HB19/23/049, Grade B2)

Top right image: The name of the plumber who installed this pump is cast into its head



Bottom left image: Extract from the Lee, Howl & Co. Ltd 1912 catalogue

Bottom right image: Some of the smaller, more utilitarian pumps have a small flag in the casting, this denotes the maker as Lee, Howl and Co. These types are less robustly made and were designed to be attached to a wall for support; this example is attached to a curved supporting wall near Gilford, Co Down (HB17/01/049, Grade B2)

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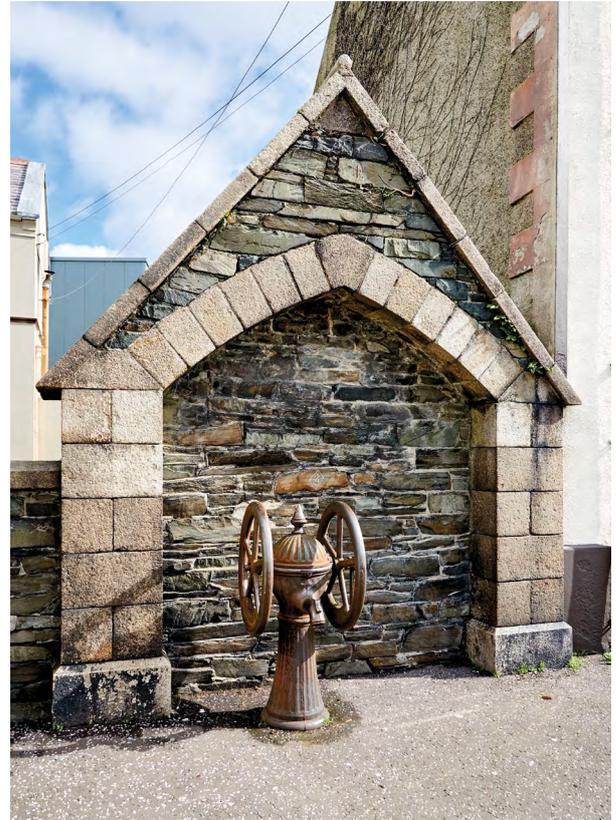
Rotary pumps are of a broadly similar design but with splayed columns, bulbous tops with removable caps and a wheel on either side. They are even more elaborately decorated than the slender pump-type. The wheels are in effect flywheels and have counterweights on the rim opposite a turning handle.



This type is more robust and is to be seen in the heart of villages, serving the whole community. A number of rotary pumps have been recorded and a number of these have the manufacturer's name on the casting; three were manufactured in Belfast by Winnington and Co, who were manufacturing from 1877.



The manufacturer's name was cast into this pump that supplied water to a terrace of workers' housing at Drumaness, Co Down (HB18/16/025P, Grade B1)



Cast iron water pump of perhaps c.1880, with 'wheels' instead of pumping handle, next to St Joseph's RC Church, Downpatrick Street, Crossgar, Co Down (HB18/04/001B, Grade B1).

This pump in Crossgar has a splayed, fluted base and a fluted domed cap with pointed finial. It was worked by wheels to either side (N and S) and there is a short spout to the front (W). It sits in front of a recess of fieldstone rubble within a granite arch. The arched wall looks as though it was once an entrance to the grounds of St Joseph's church beyond. If this entrance was formed when the present church was opened in 1876, this could suggest that the pump (sitting as it does in front of the 'entrance') is later,

and was therefore likely installed in the latter decades of the 19th century.

In terms of social history, these pumps were vital to local communities at the beginning of the twentieth century; people had to make regular journeys from their houses to and from the village pump in order to have water to drink and wash with. Pump locations also established regular meeting places where the local news and gossip was distributed.

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## Fountains

In contrast, fountains are connected to a mains water supply which gives the water sufficient pressure to rise up through the apparatus unaided, and they are usually found along the main streets of towns and villages. A knob at the side is connected to an on/off valve inside and a counterweight ensures that the flow is stopped once the knob is released.



This fountain in Beragh has lost its special interest as its top is missing, but the knob to the right and the simple internal mechanism are still visible (HB11/07/034, Record Only - Not Listed):

Fountains relied for their water on the introduction of water mains, and could only have been installed after the construction of water reservoirs by local authorities. It is likely that they therefore date from after 1920. The manufacturer in most cases is Glenfield and Kennedy of Kilmarnock, and variations of this name are cast into most of the surviving fountains.

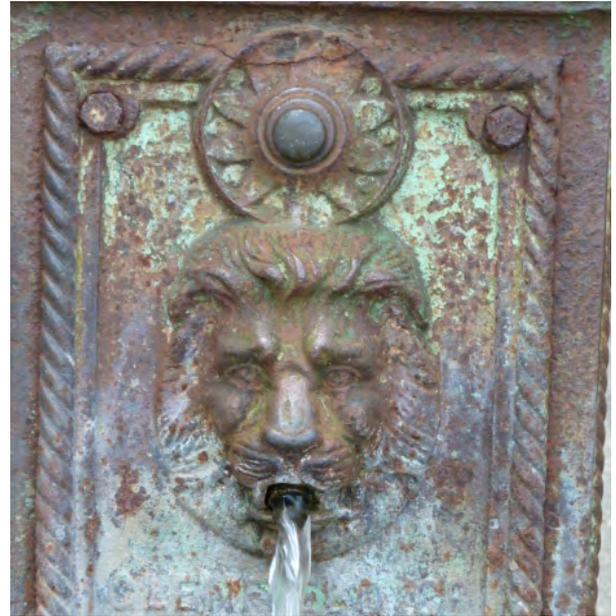


This fine example (image above) has been well maintained and is one of series of fountains that still exists in Sixmilecross and nearby Beragh, Co Tyrone. There is a lion's head casting where the water issues and the manufacturer's name is beneath. At the bottom is a projecting bracket to hold a bucket steady when filling it (HB11/20/018, Grade B2)



The maker's name is visible on this example in Beragh (image above) (HB11/07/033, Grade B2)

Some pumps were designed to be more than simply practical; they were also intended to decorate and be a focal point where they were installed.



This cast iron water fountain, built c.1870 on Lower Captain Street, Coleraine is significant from a social perspective as it provided a supply fresh water to local residents, many of whom would not have had this facility within their own homes, and as such it became an informal gathering point. This rare surviving example of its type in Northern Ireland was designed by engineering firm Glenfield Company Limited and the distinctive lion-head surround to the water spout is typical of that used on water fountains at this time in the late Victorian era. It is thought that a bore hole drew spring water from 80ft below (HB03/16/019, Grade B+)

**NOTE:** This thematic survey did not record large scale ornamental fountains such as the one at Lurgan Park.

# 5

## Special Interest & Significance

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In 1999 Planning Policy Strategy 6 (PPS6): ‘Planning, Archaeology and The Built Heritage’ was published. As part of this review of conservation policy, specific criteria for listing were introduced for listed buildings within Annex C: Criteria for Listing, to isolate characteristics which should be considered.

These criteria were reviewed again in 2011 (Revised Annex C), the Department having studied information gathered during the course of the Second Survey - and three further criteria were added; R-Age, S-Authenticity and T-Historic Importance. The Criteria was reviewed again in 2019 when it became the ***Criteria for the Scheduling of Historic Monuments and the Listing of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, with associated procedures.***

The theme in all of these documents however is a simple one; value should not be reduced to a consideration of age or appearance – though both are important - but widened to consider all pertinent factors while staying true to the legislation.

With regard to the legislation, water pumps are protected in two ways; they can be regarded as individual ‘buildings’ and protected as important objects in their own right or they may be protected because they are attached to or within the curtilage<sup>2</sup> of a listed building since before 1 October 1973.

Departmental list descriptions make clear why a structure is considered of special interest. They give the listing grade, and descriptions and evaluations relative to the listing criteria. For most listed buildings, including pumps and fountains, not all criteria are applicable, only those with a significant influence on the listing decision are noted on the record.

The criteria that the Department applies when assessing whether a building is of special architectural or historic interest are set out in the ***Criteria for the Scheduling of Historic Monuments and the Listing of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, with associated procedures*** published 03 June 2019: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/criteria-scheduling-historic-monuments-and-listing-buildings-special-architectural-or-historic>.

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Curtilage’: The law provides that buildings and other structures that pre-date 1st October 1973 and are within the curtilage of a listed building are to be treated as part of the listed building. It is therefore important to assess the extent of the curtilage of a listed building prior to carrying out any works including alteration.

The key criteria for listing are, therefore, architectural interest or historic interest. A building can be listed for either criteria but in most cases it will have both. The overall test is that this interest must be considered 'special'.

**Architectural Interest** is understood to encompass a broad spectrum which ranges from style, character and ornamentation to internal plan form and functionality. Also important are examples of particular building types and techniques used in their construction. Where buildings have been changed over time (as many have) it is the consideration of its current architectural interest that is important, rather than what it may have been like in the past.

**Historic Interest** is understood to encompass a broad spectrum which ranges from age and rarity, through the amount of historic material left in a building, to its importance as a historic structure, and to the stories, historical events and people associated with the building. It is important that associations are linked in a clear and direct way to the fabric of the building if they are to be regarded as major grounds for listing. Aspects of social, economic and cultural history revealed by the building may also be considered important.

#### **Architectural Interest Criteria:**

Criterion A	Style
Criterion B	Proportion
Criterion C	Ornamentation
Criterion D	Plan form
Criterion E	Spatial organisation
Criterion F	Structural system
Criterion G	Innovatory qualities
Criterion H+ & H-	Alterations
Criterion I	Quality and survival of interiors
Criterion J	Setting
Criterion K	Group Value

#### **Historic Interest Criteria:**

Criterion R	Age
Criterion Z	Rarity
Criterion S	Authenticity
Criterion T	Historic Importance
Criterion V	Authorship
Criterion Y	Social, cultural or economic importance
Criterion U	Historic Associations

#### **Architectural and Historic Interest Criteria:**

Criterion W	Northern Ireland / International interest
Criterion X	Local interest

Some pumps exhibit more of the listing criteria than others; some are perhaps more ornamental, some retain more surviving historic fabric or are older than the others and may be considered to be of high architectural or historic value. Some are also important as rare surviving examples because they form part of an important group of pumps in a town or village eg. such as those in Sixmilecross and Beragh.

Buildings listed by the Department are divided into four grades; A, B+, B1 and B2. Many buildings currently still carry a general grade B listed status. These are buildings that have yet to be re-surveyed and once this is completed and the building evaluated, the grade will be amended to a more specific category. However, the statutory controls apply equally to all listed buildings, irrespective of grade. The grades reflect the level of significance/special interest attributed to the building. Buildings that have been fully surveyed and do not meet the Criteria for Listing are referred to as 'Record Only - not listed'.

Anyone can search the NI Buildings Database for 'pumps' or 'fountains' under Keyword to read the individual records:  
<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/services/buildings-database>.

## Useful links:

**Historic Environment Toolkit** (A-Z of useful advice, guidance etc)

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/historic-environment-toolkit>

## The listing process

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/listing-process-historic-buildings>

## Nominating a building

<https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/articles/nominating-building-listing-northern-ireland>

## Listed Buildings – Common Myths and Queries

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/listed-buildings-common-myths-and-queries](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/listed-buildings-common-myths-and-queries)



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Back cover image: This example of a large open-head pump was manufactured in Dublin and is located in a yard in Fermanagh (HB12/03/001C, Grade B1).