



**Laois County Council  
Comhairle Chontae Laoise**

**Appendix 2:  
Architectural Conservation Areas**

*Laois County Development Plan  
2017-2023*

*Adopted 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017*

*In effect from  
24<sup>th</sup> July 2017*

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## INTRODUCTION

The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) arose from recognition of the need to protect groups of historic buildings and street patterns, as well as individual buildings. ACAs are designated to protect the special character of an area through positive management of change.

It is Council policy to:

Consider favorably development proposals within an ACA that would either preserve or enhance the special character or appearance of the ACA. In considering applications for changes of use, the Council will be concerned with maintaining the character of that area;

Manage change within Architectural Conservation Areas by preserving what makes the ACA special, allowing for alterations and extensions where appropriate, enhancing the quality of the ACA by identifying opportunity sites for refurbishment or redevelopment.

Additional objectives and policies relating to ACAs are contained in Volume I



## ABBEYLEIX ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

### Setting and General Morphology

Abbeyleix is located in south County Laois within the plain of the Nore River which lies about 2.5km to the west of the town. The Gloreen Stream runs to the north of the town. Abbeyleix is located in a flat rural landscape with gently undulating hills located to the east and north-east. The surrounding fields are demarcated by hedgerows and are used for dairying and tillage purposes.



The present town of Abbeyleix, which is eighteenth century in date, was planned on a linear axis with the convergence of the main thoroughfares at a cross roads in the centre. A market place was established immediately to the north of the principal crossroads which today still acts as the pivotal centre of the town. The main commercial area is centred on Main Street and Market Square with residential areas concentrated on the southern portion of Main Street, Stucker Hill to the north, New Row/Balladine Row to the west and Ballinakill Road to the east.



### History

The origins of Abbeyleix can be traced back to the early medieval period, a church was founded in the area during the seventh century. The lands formed part of the territory of O'Mores, who retained their lands during the Anglo-Norman Invasion. The early medieval church was re-founded as a Cistercian Abbey by Conor O' More in 1183.

The place name Abbeyleix derives from an anglicisation of the Gaelic name for the abbey (*Mainistir Laoighise*). O' More granted the

abbey the lands that now correspond to the Parish of Abbeyleix. The establishment of such abbeys provided the impetus for the development of many Irish villages during the medieval period. The abbeys often controlled vast swathes of lands that required large numbers of farm labourers and their families who began to converge in nucleated settlements. The Cistercian abbey at Abbeyleix developed into one of the most important foundations in the Diocese of Leighlin during the medieval period. A sixteenth century land survey records that the abbey had holdings of 1237 acres when it was dissolved in 1552. The abbey and much of its lands subsequently came into the possession of the Earls of Ormond. It was in use as one of their residences in 1580 when the buildings were burnt down by the Earls of Desmond and there are now no visible surviving remains.

The riverside village that had developed around the abbey continued in existence until the area came into the possession of the Viscount de Vesci in 1750. The residence of the de Vesci family, Abbeyleix House built in 1773 is reputedly built on the site of the abbey. The setting of the village on the marshy river bank had led to persistent problems with flooding and, in the closing decades of the eighteenth century, the de Vesci's decided to level the old settlement and to found a new town at its present location.

The new town was initially named 'New Rathmoyle', then 'New Abbeyleix' and eventually simply 'Abbeyleix'. The creation of the new town of Abbeyleix in the eighteenth century was an early example of a wider movement whereby estate towns and villages were founded in the estates of the newly secure landlord classes. As they were often designed on a clean slate many of these new settlements were formally planned with

architecturally unified streetscapes. A wide linear main street, with a central market and planted lime trees, formed the spine of the new town of Abbeyleix and the original houses were of one-storey construction with thatched roofs and half-acre back gardens. The economic benefits of a successful market town within their demesnes were recognized by the landlords and the development of commercial activities such as markets, milling and textile manufacturing were actively pursued by the de Vesci family. Abbeyleix's prosperity in the nineteenth century was founded on the construction of a centrally placed market-house in 1836 and a flourishing textile industry based on wool and yarn manufacturing Abbeyleix also benefited from the diversion of the route of the Dublin to Cashel mail road through the town. By the 1830s the town also contained 140 houses, a number of schools, a police station, jail, and Church of Ireland and Catholic churches.

While Abbeyleix had prospered in the early nineteenth century the need for the establishment of a workhouse, a fever hospital and an almshouse by the de Vesci's in the early 1840s suggests that many families in the parish were living in destitute conditions even in the years prior to The Great Famine. The traumas of the 1840s resulted in amendments to the physical layout of the town as a number of works were carried out as part of famine relief schemes. The recovery of Abbeyleix in the second half of the nineteenth century was in part due to the increase in the trading capability of the town resulting from the arrival of the railway network in 1867. The town's textile industry continued to thrive until the early decades of the twentieth century and the most of the thatched roofs of the houses were replaced with slate at the start of that century.

The detail on the Ordnance Survey maps from the 1840s onwards indicates that the basic

layout of the town's streetscape has remained relatively unchanged up to the present day. The fortunes of the town as an industrial centre declined during the twentieth century with the closure of many of the textile industries and the railway station. However, the retention of the essential character of the original estate settlement has resulted in Abbeyleix being recognised as an important heritage town.

### **Architectural Interest**

The formal design of the town and the sustained involvement of the de Vesci family over a period of almost 250 years, has resulted in a large proportion of the buildings being of high architectural quality. A range of distinct building styles are represented in the town. Good examples of late eighteenth to early nineteenth century Georgian architecture are to be seen throughout the town with notable examples being Preston House, the former courthouse and the Abbey Gate Hotel.

Also of note from this period is the modest Methodist chapel and meeting hall on Main Street which was built c.1826. The Market House, whose ground floor colonnades lend it a somewhat Italianate air, was built in c.1836, extensively reconstructed in c.1906 and refurbished in 2009 by De Blacam and Meagher Architects on behalf of Laois County Council.

As the nineteenth century progressed it is likely that some of the older housing stock was upgraded and replaced as well as being added to as the town expanded outwards from its core. Much of the housing stock within the town dates from the 1830s onwards. The continued desire of the de Vesci's to improve the settlement led to the construction of stylistically unified terraces which continue to be readily identifiable

today although some incremental loss of fabric and unifying elements has occurred. Excellent examples of buildings in the Tudor revival style, which was particularly popular in the 1830s and 1840s, are to be seen at Pembroke Terrace. More modest Tudor/Gothic revival structures flank the entrance to Temperance Street.

The terraces on the east and west sides of main street, to the south of the Market Square and incorporating Morrissey's pub and Bramley's date to the second half of the nineteenth century. While they are modest in scale they display considerable attention to detail as evidenced by the moulded eaves brackets, elegant proportions and the many fine Victorian shopfronts which still adorn them.

The Church of Ireland Church on Ballycolla Road was built c.1865 and incorporates parts of an earlier nineteenth century church. Both the 1860s church and its predecessor were designed in the Gothic revival style, the earlier building by architect John Semple and the later by T.H. Wyatt.

Also dating to the later nineteenth century is the Catholic Church of the Holy Rosary which dominates the town from its elevated site to the east of the Main Street. The building is a Victorian interpretation of the Hiberno-Romanesque style and was built in the early 1890s to a design by William Hague.

There are fewer examples of notable buildings as we move into the twentieth century. The Edwardian Bank of Ireland building on the east side of Main Street is an exception. It is an eclectic mix of styles and is influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement. It was designed by J.P. Wren in 1909.

Abbeyleix has been fortunate in retaining much of its historic fabric and today stands as

an excellent example of a planned estate town.

Building Features which contribute to the Special Character of the Town

### **Roof, chimneystacks and rainwater goods**

Within the town centre, and on all approach roads, the morphology of the town is composed of terraces of buildings in small groupings separated by laneways. This has resulted in there being a range of different roof heights along the streetscape.

The majority of roofs in the proposed Abbeyleix Architectural Conservation Area are pitched. Roof pitches vary but tend to give a uniform appearance along the streetscape even though building heights are changeable. Slate covering appears to be dominant on older buildings but where it has been replaced, or where buildings have been rebuilt, roof covering tends to be artificial slate, fibre cement tiles or clay tiles.

Detached buildings which are also feature buildings tend to have hipped roofs such as the central Market House, A.I.B bank and Abbeygate Hotel or later infill buildings, including the post office terrace, and terraces on Stucker Hill. The central cross road is defined on three sides by buildings which are L-shaped and have hipped roofs following the line of the road. Few buildings deviate from the pitched or hipped roof form but there are exceptions. Examples include the Bank of Ireland where the architectural composition includes a copper dome, parapet and projecting gable fronted bay with pediment. The tudor-inspired gabled projection with heavy finial at roof level is a feature repeated

along Pembroke Terrace and the remaining buildings of Temperance Row.

Newly constructed buildings tend to be higher, or out of scale and are therefore not in keeping with the streetscape. They include features such as dormer windows and off centre chimneystacks, found in recent infill development in upper Main Street.

The majority of chimneystacks are simple in design and are either rendered or brick stacks. Chimneystacks are placed both centrally and gable ended. Where placed at gabled ends they create a strong gable and where centrally placed they indicate shared gable walls to terraces. There are a number of tall chimneystacks and stepped chimneystacks present along the main street which are an unusual characteristic. The carved limestone chimneystacks in Pembroke Terrace are highly ornate reflecting the overall appearance of the terrace. The stacks to RPS 74 (inventory no. 76) have been replaced in a sensitive manner showing high quality craftsmanship and good conservation practice.

Decorative timber barge boards are confined to the school buildings within the town. Terracotta ridge cresting is found on numerous buildings adding to the decorative quality of their appearance. Rainwater goods are generally cast-iron or cast-aluminium and are painted. Replacement rainwater goods and those on infill newer buildings are generally uPVC. Such replacements detract from the streetscape and the overall character and appearance of the area.

Where present supporting eaves brackets are ornate and contribute to the aesthetic appearance of the building. Good examples include the A.I.B, the terraced buildings on Main Street including Bramley's which display finely carved brackets tucked in under over

hanging eaves. Such features created a repetitive feature along the streetscape. Similar ornate eaves courses are evident in decorative rendering to the Leix Bar and adjoining building on Main Street. The mirroring of such detailing links the architectural character of the area adding a sense of place.

### **Render (plasterwork) and external finishes**

Renderers commonly used in Abbeyleix include (a) roughcast or harling and (b) smooth lime or cement render. Buildings using smooth render are painted with some having a ruled-and lined decoration. Most buildings have a smooth rendered plinth and some have channelled quoins which emphasise the buildings edge while adding visual appeal to the structure. Moulded render detailing is also used in window and door surrounds and as string and eaves courses highlighting the division of storeys and giving vertical emphasis to buildings.

The removal of render to expose rubblestone walls such as at Market Square should not be encouraged. The carrying out of such works can have a long term detrimental effect on the condition of the building as exposing the stone to the elements can result in the onset of dampness. This is further amplified by the removal of lime mortar and repointing with cement strap pointing. Such work detracts from the appearance of the individual building and the streetscape as it breaks the building line and therefore has a negative effect on the character of the area as a whole.

Deliberately exposed stone construction is evident in the R. C church and Pembroke Terrace which display the use of high quality limestone. The uniform use of dressed stone construction and fine cut stone finish to Pembroke Terrace creates an aesthetically pleasing group of structures with a strong

building line. External cut stone is also evident on the market house where it contributes to the overall architectural expression of the building and its importance to the architectural character of the town.

### **Windows and Doors**

Despite a high degree of loss, there are a variety of traditional window types found within the proposed ACA. Original windows were usually of timber sash construction with the glazing bars providing vertical emphasis. In Abbeyleix there are varying window openings from traditional square-headed, camber headed and feature oriel openings. Like many Irish towns Abbeyleix has witnessed the replacement of timber sash windows with uPVC casement windows. Such replacements are not in keeping with traditional design and detract from the appearance of the building therefore having a negative effect on the overall character of the area.

The sealing effect created by uPVC windows on historic buildings can lead to the build up of condensation and result in the onset of damp. Replacement timber sash windows have been inserted into Bramley's, Main Street with the removal of an oriel window. This has been carried out in a sympathetic manner as part of the successful conservation of the building. In doing so the appearance and character of the building has been retained and the building contributes positively to the streetscape. Window surrounds add decoration and define the opening and in many cases are simply rendered or moulded render, some with cornices. This mirrored detailing creates harmony along the streets appearance adding to the character of the area. In some cases this detailing has been replaced with poor alternatives with flat two dimensional surrounds.

More affluent buildings such as the court house and those of Pembroke Terrace have carved stone window and door openings displaying work of skilled masons and adding considerably to the appearance of the buildings. The presence of oriel windows is also found owing to the Tudor revival design of the terrace. The presence of oriel windows is unusual but it occurs in a few buildings along the streetscape such as the Leix Bar, the Abbeygate hotel, Costcutter's and originally Bramleys, thus providing a repetitive architectural link to the streetscape. It is likely that in some cases the oriels were a later nineteenth century modification.

Window sills in general were constructed of tooled limestone but in many cases have been replaced with concrete sills, often coinciding with the replacement of windows. Doors follow the same form and design as windows usually having a vertical emphasis and originally being of timber construction.

There are a variety of door openings in Abbeyleix ranging from traditional square-headed openings, round-headed openings and larger more ornate segmental-headed doorcases. Side doors giving access to upper storeys of buildings along Main Street appear to be simple and square or round-headed in design. Those functioning as the main entrances are more elaborate in nature and are either round-headed or segmental-headed often with fanlights and flanking sidelights.

Door surrounds to Pembroke Terrace and Temperance Street are of high quality architectural design with Tudor revival pointed arched openings which give a repetitive pattern to the terrace. At 'Church View' terrace, although the actual doors have been replaced, door canopies are an unusual

feature which breaks the monotony of an otherwise austere terrace.

Replacement doors are often half glazed to allow for additional light where overlights or fanlights are not present on more vernacular designed buildings. uPVC replacement doors are also common.

### **Shopfronts and Advertisement**

The established retail centre of the town centres on the market square. Shopfronts are an integral part of the fabric and texture of the town and contribute enormously to the historic architectural character of the ACA. The surviving traditional shopfronts are predominately of timber construction with ornate detailing to the fascia, framing pilasters and console brackets. Slender pilasters and consoles are a typical feature of many of the nineteenth century shopfronts in the town.

Good examples of traditional shopfronts include Leinster House and Mossissey's, Main Street, and Mooneys, and the Ireland Own Antiques, Market Square. The scale and finish to earlier shopfronts blend with the street architecture lending it a historic patina. Such features are an integral part of the character of the area creating a link to the past and establishing a unique sense of place. Traditional shopfronts are constantly under threat from modern replacements, enlargements of display windows or pastiche insertions, which can lead to inappropriate alteration of the streetscape. New development should be sensitive to the overall character of the area.

Consideration must also be given to signage as it can easily detract from the overall appearance of a building and its contribution to the streetscape. On the most part signage within Abbeyleix is neat and is painted directly onto the building or fascia. Brash neon or

oversized signage can have a detrimental effect and be offensive.

### **Carriage Arches**

Carriage arches provided access to backlands behind the main streetscape. They are intermittently located along the street creating groups of small terraces and strong gable ends. Most are integral segmental headed arches, which maximise the use of space by providing a living space overhead thus balancing the appearance of the building and providing punctuated openings along the street.

### **Street furniture**

Sometimes heritage items in the public realm are the easiest to preserve and yet the most vulnerable to carelessness. Abbeyleix retains a number of items of historical street furniture which add to its character. A pillar box located at the southern end of Main Street is Edwardian in date and shows high-quality cast-iron detailing which gives this item of street furniture artistic and technical interest. The adjacent water trough is a reminder of the former use of horse and cart for transport before high car dependency. A wheel guard remains just east of the cross roads on the Ballinakill road. Four finely-crafted commemorative water fountains located at strategic points within the town create focal points within the public realm.

### **Railings and Boundary Walls**

Most properties in the town core front directly onto the street and therefore lack boundary treatments. In contrast to this some architecturally designed structures are purposely set back from the street with strong boundary treatments. These include Pembroke Terrace, Preston House, Epworth Hall, the Court House and the Bank of Ireland, the use of cast-iron railing on a low plinth wall

creates deliberate separation while simultaneously allowing the building to be viewed and appreciated. The entrance to the Roman Catholic Church from the Ballinakill road also displays finely executed cast—iron railings and gates creating an impressive entry to the church grounds.

Residential properties on approach roads such as those on the northern end of main street, De Vesci Terrace and properties along the Ballinakill Road are set back from the street with a variety of boundary treatments including rubblestone walls, render walls, hedging and plinth walls with cast and wrought-iron railings atop. Every effort should be made to retain these boundary treatments. Traditional stone wall boundary treatment such as those behind Pembroke Terrace, Ballacolla Road and to the north-east of the church are constructed with locally quarried stone and are of rubble construction. They form a definite strong line and help delineate the original boundaries of the town and therefore the ACA.

### **ACA Boundaries**

When assessing Abbeyleix for ACA designation the boundary was drawn up using the architectural heritage guidelines to ensure a legible and meaningful boundary was created to protect the unique character of the town. Those areas excluded from the ACA were viewed as being too recent in nature or did not contribute to the special character of the area.

### **Summary Character Statement**

Constructed in the late eighteenth century as a formally planned town, Abbeyleix did not evolve over a long period of time like most Irish towns and villages. The town was planned on a linear axis with the convergence of the main thoroughfares at a cross roads in the centre. The location of the market place

immediately to the north of the principal crossroads creates the pivotal centre of the town.

The high quality of architecture is particularly evident in the buildings lining the main square and along the main street. The designed layout is comprised of two storey structures grouped together in small terraces with intermittent laneways, integral carriage arches and long narrow burgage plots to the rear of the buildings. A relatively large number of traditional shop fronts survive, the majority of which display a high level of craftsmanship in their design and finish. This creates an aesthetically appealing appearance which contributes to the overall visual perception of the town and in turn the character of the ACA.

The buildings in close proximity to the market square form the basis for the town's commercial and financial centre. They include individual structures such as the market house, court house and banks. These buildings are of high architectural value and have been designed and finished to a high quality. Repeated features such as the use of stone finishes for window sills, steps, eaves and string courses create a linked appearance and a sense of harmony to the town centre. There are numerous detached civic buildings of architectural significance dispersed throughout the town. At the northern limit of the ACA boundary, for example, is the landmark former North National School, now the heritage centre. This building has been extended over time and sensitively renovated to remain an important building within the town. The Roman Catholic Church located on an elevated site creates a prominent feature in the centre of the town.

A grouping of buildings including the Church of Ireland church, South National School, Sexton's House and the former railway station

are located on the south-west fringe of the town and all are listed on the record of protected structures. These structures contribute to the architectural quality and character of Abbeyleix.

In addition to these significant buildings there are designed terraces which share repetitive patterns of roof pitches, chimneystacks, door and window openings giving the streetscape a sense of harmony and scale. Most notable are 'Pembroke Terrace' and 'Temperance Street' (partially demolished). Such fine terraces are of both national and regional importance and create a pleasing focal point as the town is entered from the south. The same repetitive pattern is mirrored on New Row but in a more vernacular design in 'Church View' terrace whose door canopies created a symmetrical rhythm along the streetscape.

The urban pattern and morphology of the town is defined by residential terraces of houses located on the approach roads which are more traditional in design and finish. In turn as one moves closer to the town's centre the buildings change and take on the dual function of commercial and residential. The town centre is defined by the presence of the market square and number civic buildings which give a firm definition of urban place. Apart from the central market house there are a number of prominent buildings of high architectural quality on the main street such as the Bank of Ireland and Allied Irish Bank which create focal points along the streetscape.

The full appraisal has identified 109 structures within the ACA boundary which add to the character of the town.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

Within an ACA, there are restrictions on certain works to exteriors of structures. In

addition to the usual requirements of planning law, the designation means that works that would materially affect the special character of the ACA will need planning permission. In practice, this would mean that the removal of historic building fabric and its replacement with modern materials will require planning permission.

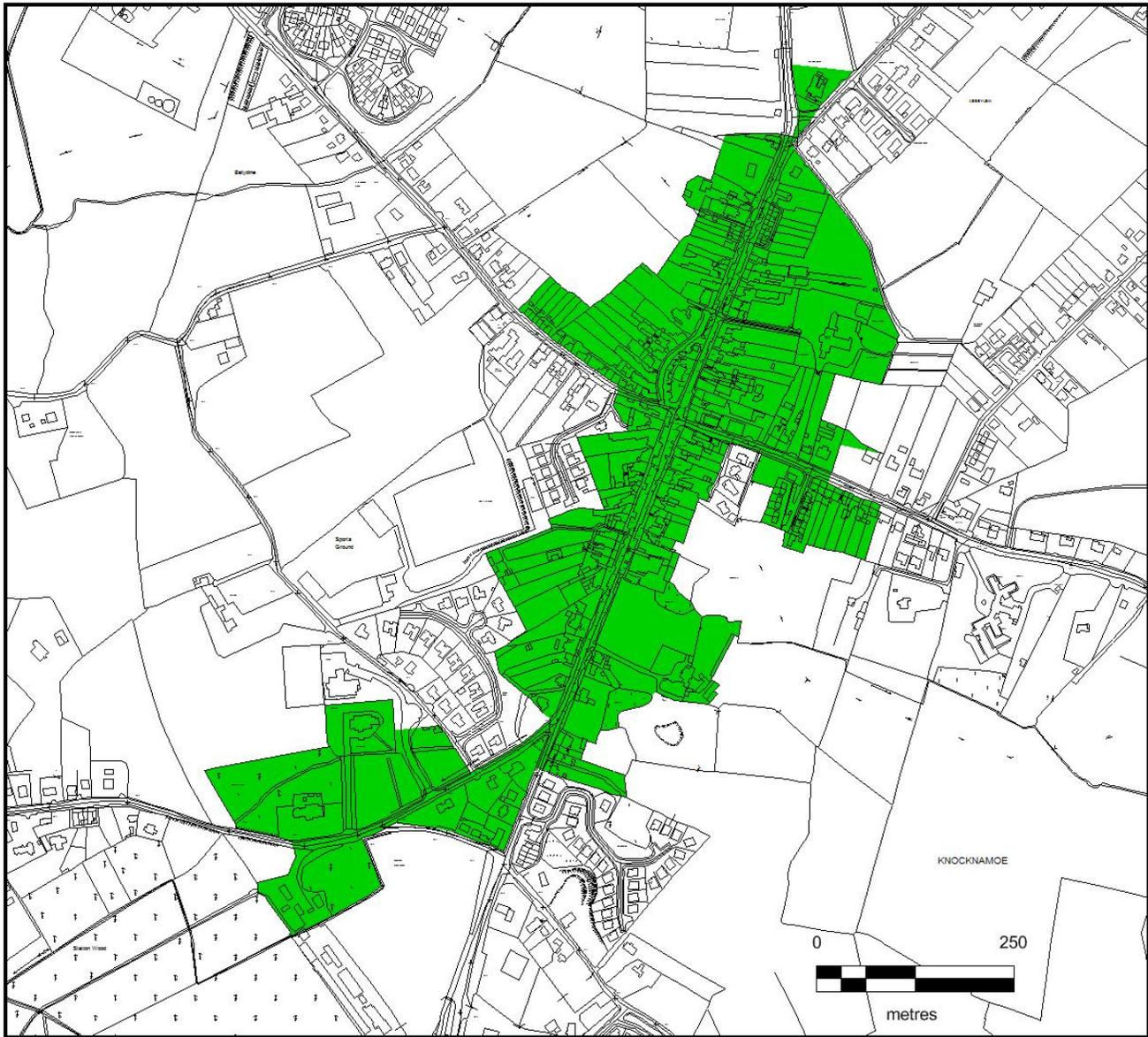
For example the removal of sliding sash windows and their replacement with uPVC windows will require planning permission. If uPVC windows are already in place, their replacement will not require planning permission.

- Other works that would require permission include:
- the stripping of render from a building to expose stonework
- the cladding of a building with stone or timber
- the removal of cast iron rainwater goods, the removal of a natural slate roof covering
- the removal of chimney stacks or changes to the roof profile
- the removal of limestone sills
- changes to the window proportions
- the addition of porches
- other extensions that would impact on the front elevation of the buildings
- the removal of historic shopfronts or elements thereof
- the installation of roller shutter blinds
- the removal of historic boundary walls or railings.

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and repairs, as long as original materials are retained where they exist and where replacement is necessary (for example due to rot) that it is on a like-for-like basis.

The intention behind the designation is not to stop change, but to manage the nature of the change in order to respect and enhance the features and characteristics that make a particular area special. The demolition or insensitive alteration of structures that make a positive contribution to the ACA will not be permitted. Some structures within the boundaries may be of little architectural interest and are included within an ACA boundary only because of their location within the streetscape. Buildings of little architectural merit may be subject to wholesale redevelopment as part of a planning permission. However, any replacement building should be designed with due regard to the special characteristics of the ACA. Suitably designed infill or bankland development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.





**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**  
 Architectural Conservation Area

**ABBEYLEIX  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

Drawn: Dermot Dunne	Checked: Donal Kiely	Approved: Angela McEvoy
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## BALLINAKILL ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA



### History

Ballinakill is located in south County Laois. The name Ballinakill is thought to derive from “Baile na Coillte” meaning the town of the wood. The hinterland around Ballinakill remains well-wooded.

The town dates to the seventeenth century. In 1606 the right to hold a market and fair at Ballinakill was granted. Originally part of the Cosby Estate, lands were granted to Thomas Ridgeway in 1611 and an English colony was established there soon after. Ridgeway is said to have spent £10,000 in the creation of the town. In 1613 the town was incorporated by charter. The economic development of the town was underpinned by its proximity to ironworks located to the southeast of the town on the Ironmills River, a tributary to the Owenbeg River where the Ironmills Bridge spans the River.



In 1631, the town was said to contain a large castle, one hundred dwelling houses, a fulling mill (a step in woollen cloth making), two water mills, the iron mill referred to above, three fairs and two markets. In 1642, the town is described as: *seated among woods in a place so watered with springs as afforded the Earl convenience to make many fish ponds near the castle he built there; which he likewise fortified with a strong wall and that with turrets and flankers; besides that, the town since it had been planted was well inhabited*



The castle referred to above was built between 1605 and 1613 and destroyed in the mid-seventeenth century. This Castle was initially used to defend territory against the Confederates (Irish Catholic Confederation who governed parts of the country independently following the 1641 rebellion) with settlers flocking there for refuge when the rebellion broke out. The Castle withstood initial attacks but ceded to the Confederates when it came under attack by heavy artillery.

All of Laois came under confederate control by 1643 and the Castle was used as a garrison in 1646. The Castle was surrendered to Cromwellian forces in 1650 and seemingly destroyed. The Castle was a substantial structure with a water-filled moat, gatehouse and clock tower. The ruinous remains of what is known locally as Ballinakill Castle was built in 1680 by the Dunnes, of roughly coursed pink shaly stone with dressed limestone quoins. The structure was originally five storeys in height; the extant structure is three storeys in height and retains features such as ground and first floor gun loops and a second floor window.

By 1659 the town was the third most populous in Laois and the population was one quarter English. By the eighteenth century, it was one of the most important fair towns in the County. In 1801 it was a major tanning and brewing centre and also featured a small woollen business. The corporation and borough of Ballinakill were dissolved with the Act of Union in 1800.



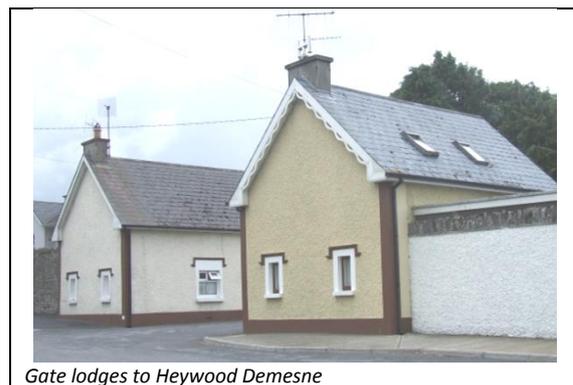
*Seventeenth century plan form*



*Eighteenth century streetscape and plan form*

## Plan form

In the seventeenth century the street plan of Ballinakill was laid out along the long access formed by Graveyard Street and Stanhope Street with Chapel Lane and Castle Lane running perpendicular to the east. The current large rectangular urban space known as The Square and the related Church Street to the north and Bridge Street to the west are an eighteenth century addition. The more sinuous seventeenth century is quite distinct from the more geometric eighteenth century addition on aerial photographs of the town. A well-defined burgage plot pattern is discernible on the east side of Stanhope Street and the Square. Parts of the building fabric in this area may be seventeenth century in date, the area is within the Ballinakill zone of archaeological potential.



*Gate lodges to Heywood Demesne*

## Influence of Heywood Demesne

Ballinakill is closely associated with the Heywood Demesne. The Demesne dates back to the eighteenth century. The house and gardens were designed by the owner and amateur architect MF Trench, who adorned the sites with follies salvaged from medieval sites. In the nineteenth century the house was significantly altered and was eventually destroyed in the 1960s. In the 1920s Edwin Lutyens designed the landscape around the house. It survives and comprises a sunken garden, ornamental pond and fountain within elliptical flowerbeds and terraces. Gertrude Jekyll devised the planting scheme.

Most of the laneways on the 1841 Ordnance Survey map linking the town with the

Heywood Demesne remain. However, a laneway to the east of the Square, the north of Chapel Lane and the Mass Lough no longer directly connects these spaces. A direct route from the Mass Lough to The Square has now partially disappeared and is now a short laneway to the rear of commercial and residential properties.

on the Square appear neglected and would benefit from more active uses. Features to townhouses on the Square include rusticated ground floors, semi-circular fanlights to front doors and faux plaster quoins.



*Fine Georgian House*



*Backland view of ruinous towerhouse, Roman Catholic Church and Church of Ireland spire*

### Architectural Interest

Much of the extant building stock of architectural interest in Ballinakill is eighteenth century in date. High order buildings overlook the square and more modest buildings are located to the south and east. Fine individual structures include the gatehouses to the Heywood Demesne along Church Street to the back of the Heywood Demesne, the Georgian Gothic Church of Ireland (1821) and the Gothic Revival Roman Catholic Church (1835) and two detached late nineteenth century schools also on Church Street. Some of the late Georgian structures and mid to late nineteenth century structures



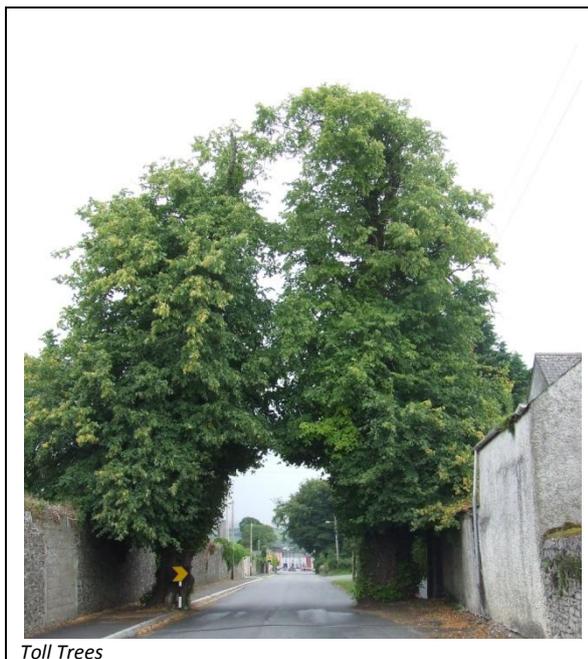
*Building features: chamfered, faux quoins; raised plasterwork window surround with keystone detail and wrought iron railings to front; natural slate roof and cast iron hopper*



*Traditional shopfront with stained glass lantern, with living quarters to the side and above*



*Market House and Market Square*



Toll Trees

Although the Square retains a strong and cohesive character with the Market House to centre, many of the sliding sash windows and also the natural slate materials have been replaced with unsympathetic modern materials. The Square would benefit from more sympathetic treatment, it is currently finished with concrete slabs, tarmacadam and red brick. The toll trees at Church Street frame the approach into Ballinacill and contribute to its special character. The setting of the village against the wooded Heywood Demesne, encompassing the Mass Lough and related esker are an essential part of the village's character.

### **Boundaries**

The ACA boundary is focused on the seventeenth and eighteenth century village centre. While many buildings within the ACA are of architectural merit, some buildings of little or no architectural merit may be included within the boundaries because of their location within the historic streetscape.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

Within an ACA, there are restrictions on certain works to exteriors of structures. In addition to the usual requirements of planning law, the designation means that

works that would materially affect the special character of the ACA will need planning permission. In practice, this would mean that the removal of historic building fabric and its replacement with modern materials will require planning permission. For example, the removal of sliding sash windows and their replacement with uPVC windows will require planning permission. If uPVC windows are already in place, their replacement will not require planning permission.

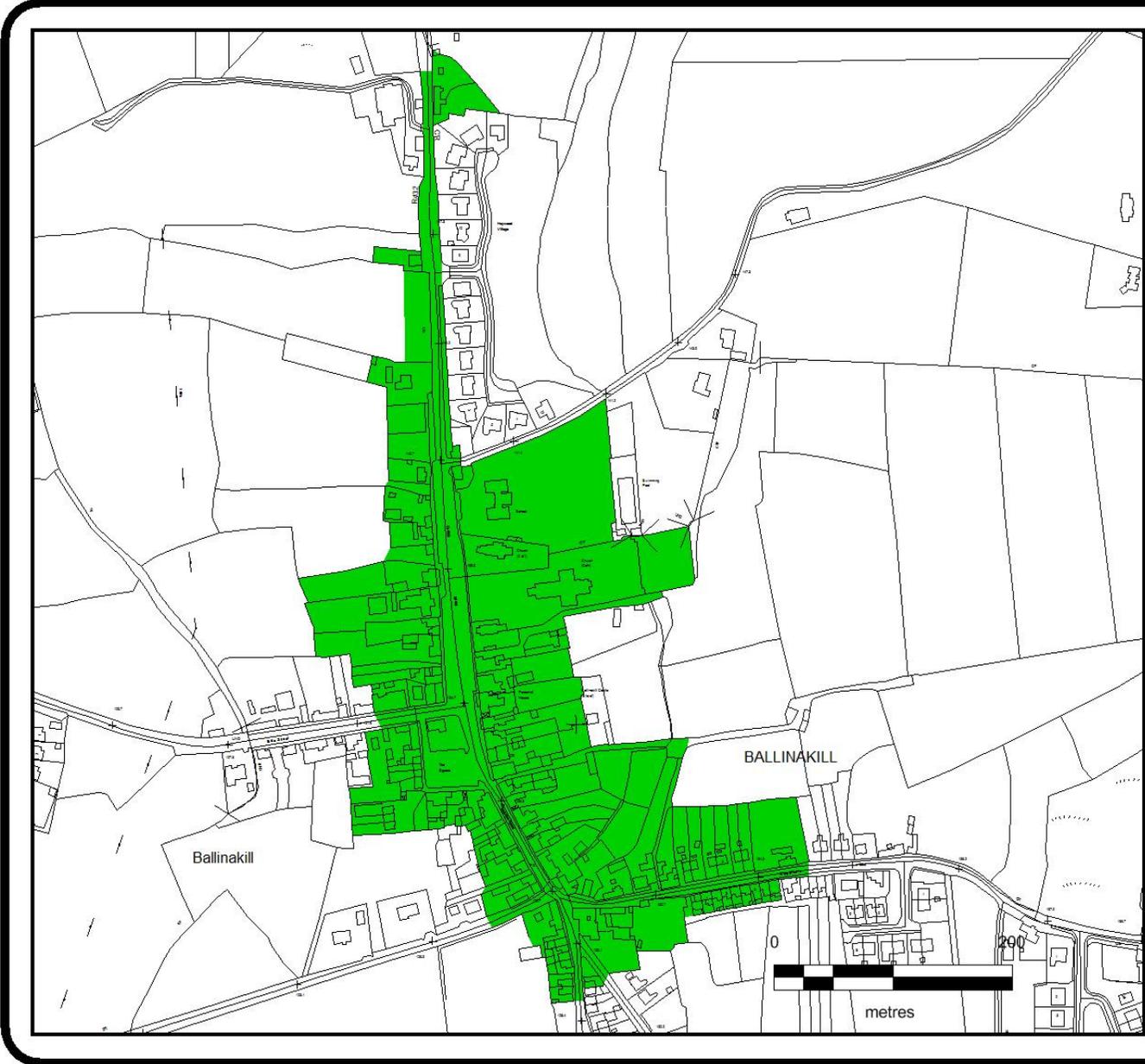
Other works that would require permission include:

- the stripping of render from a building to expose stonework
- the cladding of a building with stone or timber
- the removal of cast iron rainwater goods, the removal of a natural slate roof covering
- the removal of chimney stacks or changes to the roof profile
- the removal of limestone sills
- changes to the window proportions
- the addition of porches
- other extensions that would impact on the front elevation of the buildings
- the removal of historic shopfronts or elements thereof
- the installation of roller shutter blinds
- the removal of historic boundary walls or railings.

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and repairs, as long as original materials are retained where they exist and where replacement is necessary (for example due to rot) that it is on a like-for-like basis.

The intention behind the designation is not to stop change, but to manage the nature of the change in order to respect and enhance the features and characteristics that make a particular area special. The demolition or insensitive alteration of structures that make a positive contribution to the ACA will not be permitted. Some structures within the boundaries may be of little architectural interest and are included within an ACA

boundary only because of their location within the streetscape. Buildings of little architectural merit may be subject to wholesale redevelopment as part of a planning permission. However, any replacement building should be designed with due regard to the special characteristics of the ACA. Suitably designed infill or bank land development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**  
 Architectural Conservation Area

**BALLINAKILL  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

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## CASTLETOWN ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA



### History

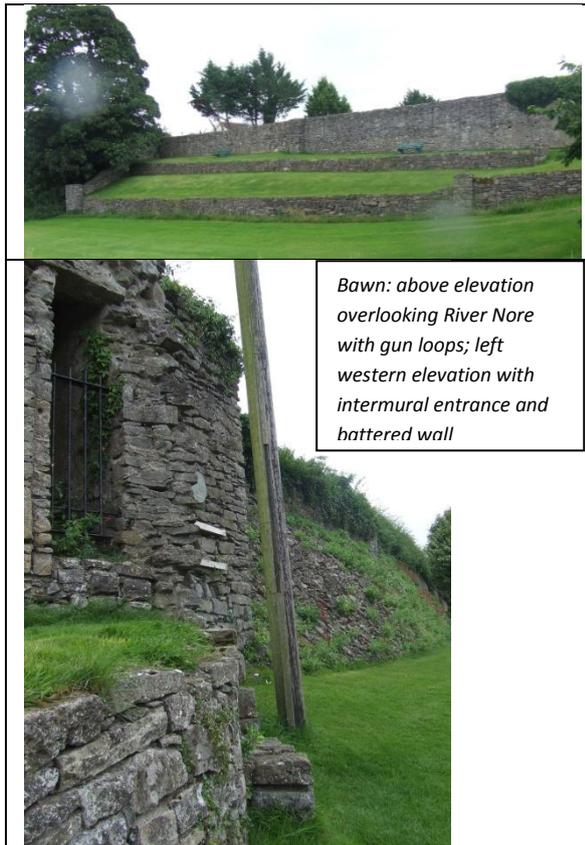
Castletown reportedly takes its names from a Norman twelfth century castle of which only fragments remain. The development of the village is associated with the MacGiollapadraigs.

In the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, the MacGiollapadraigs (Fitzpatricks) were displaced from lands to the south and made a common cause with the Delaney's seizing the Norman castles at Castletown, Aghaboe and Borris in Ossory. The MacGiollapadriags were one of the seven tribes of the Laoighis, claimed descendance from the Milesians (Celts) and are attributed in the rebuilding of the fourteenth century monastery at Aghaboe. In the early fourteenth century, the remnant foreign settlers within the MacGiollapadrig's territory were expelled.

There is little documentation and study related to the plantation of the Upper Ossory the barony in which Castletown is located or the origins of the Castletown settlement. Castletown and the surrounding area were reportedly burned in 1600 to prevent royal forces taking succour. The crown made a largely spurious claim to this territory and proceeded with its plantation following an inquisition in 1621. Large-scale land seizures from the dominant family the MacGiollapadraig's were made in 1626 and this included the Castletown estate. The MacGiollapadriag's disputed the seizures, arguing that Elizabeth I had previously assured them that the Castletown estate would remain in their possession. The MacGiollapadrig's ceded territorial supremacy to the Duke of Buckingham in 1627. A reportedly apocalyptic preacher Olmstead received more than 500 acres of former MacGiollapadriaig land in and around Castletown. Evidence suggests the MacGiollapadraigs became increasingly

impoverished as a result of their loss of territory.

During the 1641 revolt, the MacGiollapadriagns and other families rejected the plantation siding with the Conferderates and were central to the siege of Birmingham's castle in Borris in Ossory. In 1642 the MacGiollapadraig's laid siege, but had little success because of a lack of artillery.



A bawn is located above the south side of the river. The elevation overlooking the river comprises roughly coursed cut stone wall with gun loops and square pillars and two terraces with similar pillars. An intermural entrance with associated steps is located to the northwest corner. The western elevation is of similarly roughly coursed but has a curved batter of random rubble and rounded stone. This bawn appears defensive in nature and is strategically sited overlooking a navigable watercourse which would have functioned as an importance trading corridor. It may be associated with the MacGiollapadraig's and the late medieval period. Further survey and study of this monument is needed.

This history of Castletown in Upper Ossory is sometimes confused with Castletown near Killabban in the east of the county which was an important settlement in Norman times and is associated with Hugh de Lacy.

### Architecture – Description of Special Character

Castletown, is described in the Topographical Dictionary of Ireland of 1837 as a *village pleasantly situated on the River Nore and on the road from Dublin to Limerick, taking its names from an ancient castle containing 59 houses, many of which are good residences and the whole has an appearance of neatness and respectability.* Based on urban morphology typologies, the village's layout around a central triangular green is seventeenth century in date.

The land falls from south to north afforded panoramic views of the wider landscape and the Slieve Blooms from the green.



Castletown Green retains a strong Georgian character. Buildings of a high architectural order, with good survival of original architectural features such as windows and rainwater goods, overlook the triangular central green with its mature horse chestnut trees.

Early Georgian buildings are of particular interest, some have pitched-gables and others hipped-gable pitches, the larger properties tend to have integrated carriageway entrances and double pitches. Some later

structures dating to the 1830s at the Green are more modest.



Notable nineteenth century additions include the rendered De La Salle Monastery (1870) (below) with red clay crested ridge tiles, yellowbrick chimneystacks and profiled cast iron rainwater goods. The Monastery dominates the green because of its large scale and the topography of the Green.



The Corn Mill (1840) (above) of coursed limestone rubble, dressed in brick with limestone quoins, slate roof, red ridge tiles and cast iron rainwater goods is a landmark building. As suggested by its location adjacent to the River, it was water-powered and the mill race, weir and steps along the southern side of the river bank are extant. The bridge spanning the river is sizable and can be appreciated from the banks, it is ornamented by cast iron lanterns. The mill structure is now vacant.

Twentieth century structures include the two school buildings from the first half of the twentieth century and a social housing estate.



The double row of trees and the six-arch limestone bridge (1750) with rubble stone parapets provides a fitting entrance to the village and can be appreciated from the grassed river banks below. The village has a tidy and well-maintained feel.

The village retains a strong geographic relationship to the river, though with the exception of the mill and the bawn, the buildings do not address the River.

Castletown would have benefited from its location close to a navigable river which would have been used to transport agricultural produce from the hinterland and other bulky goods.

The current commercial uses are located in the adjacent street giving The Green a tranquil atmosphere comprising residential and institutional uses.

The ACA boundaries are focused on the Green and the river.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

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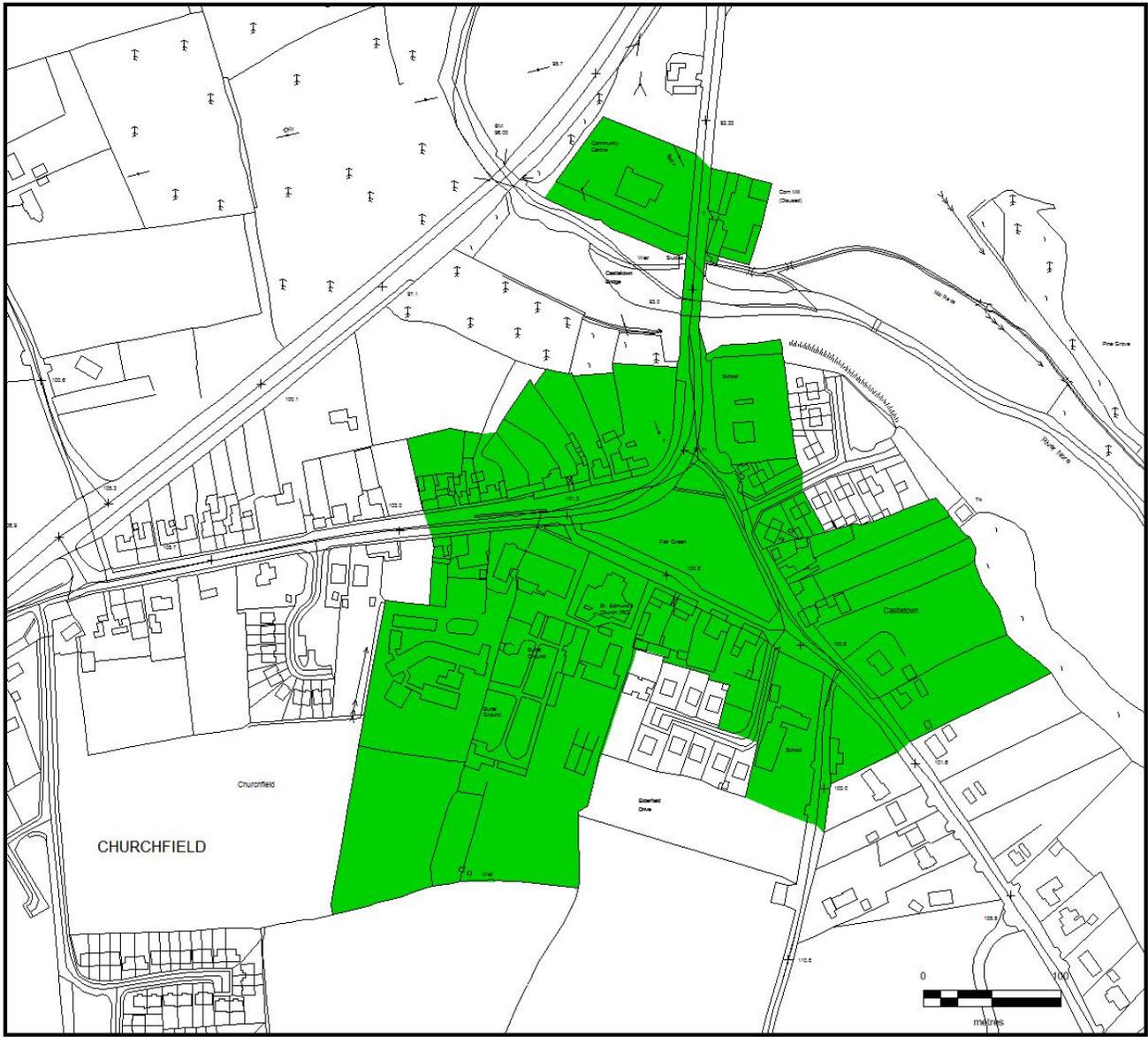
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- the removal of limestone sills
- changes to the window proportions
- the addition of porches
- other extensions that would impact on the front elevation of the buildings
- the removal of historic shopfronts or elements thereof
- the installation of roller shutter blinds
- the removal of historic boundary walls or railings.

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and repairs, as long as original materials are retained where they exist and where replacement is necessary (for example due to rot) that it is on a like-for-like basis.

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development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**  
 Architectural Conservation Area

**CASTLETOWN  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

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## CLONASLEE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

### History

Clonaslee originated as an Anglo-Norman settlement, though detail of its development during the late medieval period is scant. Its name is thought to derive from Cluain na Slighe, roadwise meadow or Cluain na Sleibhe, mountain meadow.

The development of the estate village of Clonaslee is associated with the Dunne family (of Irish descent) and the Brittas Estate. During the Williamite wars, soldiers from James I's army are said to have been based at Clonaslee in 1691, as the Dunne family were supporters of James Ist.

The Dunne's country house was built in 1869 to designs by John McCurdy, then extended and altered by Millar and Symes in 1879 and comprised three-storey over basement tower. The house was built by General Dunne then a Member of Parliament. The building is now derelict as a result of a fire in 1940s with no roof to the main structure. The appearance of the flag tower remains striking, being of sandstone ashlar masonry with defensive features including buttresses, corbelled, castellated parapet and a castellated turret and ornamented windows dressed in sandstone. A detached gatehouse and detached outbuildings forms part of the estate. The sandstone gate piers to the estate are sited within the village, tangibly indicating the close relationship between the demesne and the village.





*Gates to Brittas Demesne*

As with many estate villages, it is arranged around a wide boulevard. The plan form is thought to be eighteenth century in date. The former Church of Ireland (1814) is constructed in a Georgian Gothic style and is given central importance within the streetscape: the vista created by the strong building line of the boulevard terminates with the Church and is punctuated by the square tower and tall spire above. The church was erected under General Dunne, aided by a grant from the Board of First Fruits which was set up by Queen Anne to improve churches and glebe (rectory) houses.



The Roman Catholic Church, Saint Manman's (1813) is located on the Tullamore Road and is set back from the road and is simpler in design. It is located on the site of an earlier

thatched chapel built around 1771 by Francis Dunne who became a Catholic.



The village grew quickly between 1800 and 1830. This growth was due to making of The Cut through uplands to create a new road between Mountmellick and Birr. This period saw the arrival of services such as a Post Office and Police Station. The current urban form of the centre of Clonaslee very much resembles its appearance in the first ordnance survey map in 1841. Clonaslee suffered severe population decline during the famine. The settlement has expanded eastwards and now functions as a large village.

*Main Street Clonaslee*



*The Green, Clonaslee*



*Tullamore Road Clonaslee*



*Clodiagh River*



The topography of the village is flat and is set in a landscape dominated by gentle uplands and mature woodlands. The Clodiagh River runs along the Tullamore Road enclosed by a stone wall and under the Main Street towards Brittas Lake and contributes to the special character of the village. The streetscape of Main Street is cohesive, incorporating a strong building line defining the edge of the street, the buildings are mostly two-storey, with wide frontages, gable-pitched roofs, large chimney stacks and vertical emphasis windows, are orientated towards and open directly onto the Main Street.



*Cast iron hopper*

*Painted timber shopfront*

Gaps between the buildings provide shared access to backlands though a few integral carriageways exist also. Most of the buildings have no elevational decoration, some are decorated with painted raised plasterwork to the doorways and faux quoins to the edges. Elevational finishes include roughcast, lime render and cement renders. Much of the original building fabric such as doors, sliding sash windows, roof tiles and rainwater goods have been replaced. Chimney stacks and pots generally survive. A small number of shopfronts of architectural quality survive.

The roof heights and pitches vary along the Main Street within a small range. More generally the streetscape comprises a linear form, designed vistas and views and some fine individual buildings including the Church of Ireland which now functions as a Heritage Centre, the Lodge and Hickey's Public House with their decorative timber fascia boards, the defunct Courthouse overlooking the Green. The Swan Public House, though not of architectural interest, is a prominent building by reason of its siting.



*Typical elevation*

*Typical elevation*

*Shared access*

*Stone outbuilding*





Open spaces make an important contribution to the character of the village and comprise the Green and the open space to the front of Hickey's Public House known as the Square.

Buildings along the western side Tullamore Road are more informally arranged becoming single-storey cottages from the village and are generally of a lower architectural order. The cottages along this road contribute to the special character of the ACA. The buildings and open spaces of the village are generally well-maintained.

### **Boundaries**

The ACA is focused on the historic core of Clonaslee which comprises the Main Street, the Green and the Tullamore Road. While many buildings within the ACA are of architectural merit, some buildings of little or no architectural merit may be included within the boundaries because of their location within the historic streetscape or setting of the village.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

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**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**  
 Architectural Conservation Area

**CLONASLEE  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

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## DURROW ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

### Location and General Morphology

Durrow is located in south County Laois in a rural landscape of gently undulating hills, the River Erkina skirts the northern boundary of the village and the former main road to Dublin bisects the village diagonally. The village of Durrow centres around the pattern created by the convergence of two roads; the main (N8) route running from Dublin on the north east to Urlingford and Cork beyond on the south west, and the road to Kilkenny (N77) in the south east. These three main approaches create the basis for the triangular arrangement of Old Chapel Street, Mary Street and Castle Street and this coupled with the open 'Square' in front of the entrance to the settlement's principal *raison d'être*, Durrow Castle, give Durrow the well defined layout of a planned estate village.

### History

The place name Durrow is an anglicisation of *Dar Magh* ('the plain of the oaks') and the earliest reference to the area is in the fifth century. There are also references to a monastery founded in *Dervagh* during the sixth century. There are no remains of this monastery but the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) records an ecclesiastical site (LA029-042000) on the south side of the Erkina river and on the western outskirts of the present day town. The association of St Fintan with Durrow is commemorated by a holy well (LA029-043001) dedicated to him on the north bank of the river. A number of derivations of the place name Durrow can be seen in other historical references to the area. A grant issued in 1245 to Geoffry de Turville, Bishop of Ossory, to hold a weekly market and an annual fair at the manor of *Derevald*. In 1350 the Manor of *Deraugh* was listed as the most valuable of the temporalities of the See of Ossory. The manor remained in the possession of the bishops until the Reformation and their influence is reflected in

local place names, such as 'Bishop's Meadows', 'Bishop's Roads' and Bishop's Woods'. The Earl of Ormond was granted possession of the manor following the Reformation. Durrow was officially removed from the jurisdiction of Queen's County and transferred into Kilkenny during the 1680s.

The estate was rented by the Viscount of Ashbrook, Sir William Flower in the same decade, and was then released to the Flower family in 1708. The estate of Castledurrow remained in the ownership of his descendants until the early twentieth century. The construction of Castledurrow was completed in the 1730s and by the end of the eighteenth century the earlier settlement of Durrow had been replaced with a planned estate village of 218 houses.

The new village was centred on a large square located to the east of the grounds of Castledurrow and they were connected by a tree-lined avenue that ran along the north end of the walled estate gardens. A number of three storey buildings to the north of the square were constructed by Flowers for his Welsh and English estate managers. The leases for the village plots made available to settlers prescribed the exact location and dimensions of the houses to be built and the timescale for the completion of construction. A number of leases were also granted for the milling operation at the Course on the Erkina during the eighteenth century and milling continued at this site until 1929.

A stone bridge was constructed to the north of the square in 1788 to replace an existing wooden bridge reputedly located c.500m up river and was itself replaced in 1958. The new estate town at Durrow benefited from its location on the Cork to Dublin mail road and the 'The Red Lion' hotel, which was constructed in the 1790s, functioned as a halting station for the Bianconi coaches.

In his 1837 description of Durrow, Samuel Lewis records that the town's population at that time was 298 inhabitants and that many of its 236 houses were well-built and roofed in slate. There were weekly markets held at the

market-house and the town also contained a number of schools, a courthouse, a boulting mill, a police station, dispensary, a Church of Ireland church and a newly built Catholic church.

The detail on the first edition OS map of 1841 demonstrates that the present day street layout on the south side of the river was in place by that time and shows the regular garden plots to the rear of the street front buildings. The Church of Ireland Church is shown on the west side of The Square and the Catholic chapel on the east end of the town.

In 1846 the Ordnance Survey Commissioners finally returned Durrow to Queen's County. The population of the town began to decline during the 1840s and had dropped to 559 by the early twentieth century. The detail on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition OS map of 1890 and the 25-inch map of 1908 indicates that the layout of the core of the town remained unchanged during the remainder of the nineteenth century. The functions of a number of buildings are indicated on the 1908 map, including a hotel market house, constabulary and pump on The Square. This map also shows the presence of outbuildings in many of the garden plots behind the street front buildings. The market house in The Square continued to function until 1968 when the building was incorporated into Alley's Drapery. The layout of the eighteenth century estate town street plan, and indeed its fabric, have survived.

### **Description and Character Appraisal**

The village developed on the south bank of the Erkina River beside the bridge which, although now defunct, replaced a previous timber crossing on this site and an earlier medieval stone bridge a short distance upstream. Its buildings are one, two and three storeys and they generally retain their long, narrow rear plots. They are arranged along both sides of the southern approaches to Durrow, around a triangular block created by a linking street between the main square and a smaller green area, and fronting onto the north, east and southern sides of the wide square that dominates the village.



*View of houses on north side of square*

The north western portion of Durrow was reserved for the Castle and its demesne along with the Church of Ireland and National Schools. These distinctive estate structures along with the ordered plan-form of the village, most buildings within which are eighteenth and nineteenth century in date, provide its individual architectural character. The village has a notably defined and relatively unaltered central core and this is separated from the more modern, suburban-type development of recent years by principal buildings on the three approach roads to Durrow. On the southwestern approach, the prominent national school building marks the original boundary of the village here, the stone arched bridge and the impressive former Bianconi Hotel demarcate the northern boundary to the village and on the southeastern approach, the Catholic Church and former infants' school provide effective bookends to the village centre. Within the village, notable structures include the Church of Ireland, Dun Naoise House on the north side of the Square and the former courthouse building which now houses the library on Oldchapel Road.

The large square contributes to the identity of the village and is a focal point for both Durrow and its surrounding landscape. The high quality and relatively unaltered nature of architecture, particularly along the Square's northern and western sides adds to its gravitas and provides a centre-piece to the village. The southern and eastern sides of the Square contain the majority of commercial activity within the village and this continues with shops, public and business premises along Mary Street, returning north on Oldchapel Street and east on Castle Street to form a triangular core to the centre of Durrow. The increasing scale and impact of

architecture towards the Square is visible on the terraces which line the southern approach routes, and channel the visitor towards the village centre along Patrick Street and Carrigan Street. With only a small number of modern infill buildings to the subject part of Durrow and larger modern developments well defined outside the limits of the original village centre, its general intactness contributes considerably to its architectural interest. This lack of disturbance applies even to rear plots of terraced street-fronting properties – a feature which is often eroded in larger towns as pressure of traffic management, parking or large commercial premises can see rear yards amalgamated and boundaries obliterated.

Views of Durrow from outside are limited with relatively dense belts of forest within one kilometre on all sides and no particularly elevated land in the surrounding area. Within the village the effect of road morphology and planned design of buildings constructed along the two southern approaches has been carried out with the aim of gradually unfurling views of different parts of the village to the visitor. With subtle bends in the roads, the visitor is guided through modest dwelling terraces to the commercial centre of the village and only when one arrives in the main square can it be fully appreciated and viewed. With no significant residential development, either modern or historic on the northern route into the village, one arrives directly at the corner of the Square with a very short approach from the edge of the village.



*Former Red Lion Hotel*

Despite road realignment the former Bianconi Hotel and those buildings on the northeastern

corner of the Square still frame the view of the Square ensuring its visual impact from all sides. There are no views of the river except for those from the bridges themselves however there is pedestrian access along the river. As in many Irish towns or villages the river in Durrow is largely ignored rather than exploited for its contribution to the character of the place. This may have been due to the historic association of rivers with heavy industry such as milling or with the use of rivers until recent decades as dumping grounds for waste generated by urban settlements. As legislation and practice is resulting in the improvement of river environments, their recognition as integral parts of village character is renewing interest in the contribution of rivers to the fabric of Irish towns and villages. In the case of Durrow, development of an amenity which interprets and commemorates the milling heritage of the area is providing this renewal of interest in the river as part of the village's character.

The overall area of Durrow village can be considered as three distinct but interlocking parts:

- Carrigan Street and Patrick Street
- Oldchapel Street, Mary Street and Castle Street
- The Square

### **Architectural Character**

The village's architectural character is based on the distinctive plan form and on a mix of large residences displaying formal design elements, such as Georgian door-cases, and smaller scale buildings in a vernacular style.

The buildings on the square were consciously arranged with the residential element set back from the main thoroughfare which runs diagonally across the square and the more commercial element located to the south and east sides of the square. Although individual buildings differ in design this arrangement purposely creates a homogenous appearance

which contributes to the overall setting and character of the village.

The village reverts to a more informal, traditional appearance as one moves from the main square towards the outskirts of the village. Here the buildings are more vernacular in design and construction and front directly onto street. The repetitive use of pitched slate roofs, strong chimneystacks and render wall finishes adds symmetry to the streetscape while the lack of standardised facade treatments lends visual interest. Along these side streets, buildings were designed to have a dual purpose with a commercial function on the ground floor and residential accommodation to the upper floors. Buildings are frequently grouped in small terraces with intermittent laneways and integral carriage arches providing access to long narrow rear back plots.

During the early nineteenth century the historical urban townscape continued to develop with the construction of prominent civic structures dispersed throughout the village. The Church of Ireland church creates a focal point on the western side of the square, the Court House forms a prominent feature to the south of the village and the Roman Catholic Church located on an elevated site closes the south eastern perimeter of the village.

### **Building Features which contribute to the Special Character of the Town**

#### **Roof form, chimneystacks and rainwater goods**

The majority of roofs in Durrow are pitched with slate cladding. Within both the village core and on approach roads to the village there is a range of differing roof heights. The roof heights along Carrigan Street, Patrick Street and the east side of the square are stepped to follow the natural slope of the ground. Roof pitches vary only slightly and tend to give a uniform appearance along the streetscape even though building heights vary. Detached or more recent infill buildings tend to have hipped roofs, such as the court

house, Ashfield Lodge (former Red Lion Hotel) and the semi-detached council cottages on Mary Street. Newly constructed buildings tend to be higher, or out of scale mono-pitched and are sometimes not in keeping with the streetscape.

The majority of chimneystacks are simple in design and rendered, with the exception of some brick stacks along the upper end of Carrigan Street. Chimneystacks are placed both centrally and on gable tops, indicating shared gable walls to terraces. Traditional rainwater goods are generally cast-iron or cast-aluminium and are painted.



View of Mary Street (formerly Queen Street), c.1900. At least two buildings in the photograph have thatched roofs. (Source: O'Doherty)



Stepped roofline following natural slope along Carrigan Street.

#### **Render (plasterwork) and external finishes**

Renderers are the external coatings applied to buildings. Renders commonly used in Durrow include (a) roughcast (b) smooth lime or cement render. Buildings using smooth render are painted with some having a ruled and lined decoration. Most buildings have a smooth rendered plinth and some have channelled quoins which emphasise the building's edge while adding visual appeal to the structure.

Exposed stone construction is evident along Patrick Street and Carrigan Street and displays the use of high quality stone in a more vernacular and traditional manner. Recent alterations have resulted in some of these residential units being rendered or bricked over, which conceals the natural stone finish, thus breaking the strong building line and visual appeal of these terraces. The carrying out of such works can have a long term detrimental effect on the condition of the building preventing it from breathing resulting in dampness.

Pebbledash is also present in Durrow but it is not widely used and is frequently confined to use on the upper storeys of buildings. Examples of this are generally confined to the side streets with the buildings facing the square being smooth or rough cast rendered.



Locally-produced brick from Attanagh was used in the finish of buildings along residential terraces on Carrigan Street and Patrick Street indicating the later expansion of the village along the village periphery.

### **Window and Door Openings**

Within Durrow the majority of buildings have been designed with window and door openings giving a symmetrical appearance to the buildings and the streetscape. More affluent building with classical proportions such as those to the north side of the square and the former Red Lion have diminishing window sizes with larger windows to the ground floor and small windows to the upper floor. Original windows were usually of timber sash construction with the glazing bars providing vertical emphasis.

Like many Irish villages Durrow has witnessed the replacement of timber sash windows with uPVC casement windows. Such replacements detract from the appearance of the building and have a negative effect on the overall character of the area. This is evident on both Carrigan Street and Patrick's Street. Sash windows are retained along the north square where buildings are of a higher design quality and more affluent in appearance.

Replacement timber sash windows have been inserted into Ashfield Lodge (Red Lion Hotel) in a sympathetic manner as part of the successful conservation of the building. In doing so the appearance and character of the building has been retained and the building contributes positively to the streetscape and acts as a landmark as one enters the village from the north.

Moulded render detailing is often used in window and door surrounds to decorate and define the openings. This mimics the craftsmanship evident in the high quality cut stone surrounds visible in buildings on the north side of the square. A good example of render detailing to window and door opens is evident on Castle Street. More affluent buildings located along North square have carved stone window and door openings displaying work of skilled masons and adding considerably to the appearance of the buildings.



*Entrance doorway to Dun Naoise House*

Residential terraces along Carrigan and Patrick Streets have brick window surrounds. This repeated detailing creates harmony in the street's appearance adding to the character of the area. In some case this detailing has been replaced with poor alternatives such as stone cladding or has been hidden completely in cases where the building has been rendered over.

Window sills in general were constructed of tooled limestone but in many cases these have been replaced with concrete sills, often coinciding with the replacement of windows. Doors follow the same form and design as windows, usually having a vertical emphasis, and originally being of timber construction.

Replacement doors are often half glazed to allow for additional light where overlights or fanlights are not present on more vernacular designed buildings. uPVC replacement doors are also common reflecting the attempt to reduced noise levels created by passing traffic. Door surrounds to the more affluent north square are round-headed and of high quality architectural design and constructed of cut limestone with decorative fanlights.

### **Carriage Arches**

Carriage arches provided access to backlands behind the main streetscape. They are intermittently located along the street creating groups of small terraces and strong gable ends. Most are integral segmental

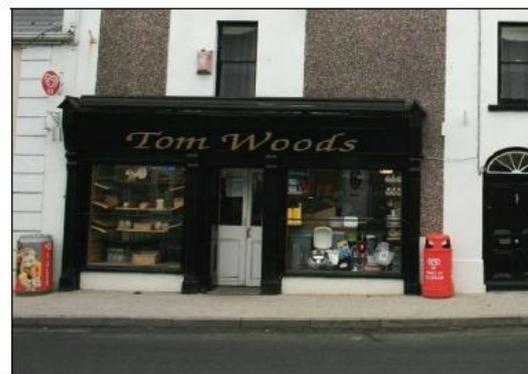
headed arches, however some openings have been altered to create square-headed arches. Such alterations change the appearance of the streetscape and result in the slow erosion of the character of the area.



*The alteration of openings and the insertion of modern doors results in slow erosion of the characteristic features of an area.*

### **Shopfronts and Advertisements**

The established retail centre of the village is concentrated to the south of the square and along Mary Street. This has resulted in a variety of shopfront styles and finishes. Traditional shopfronts that remain are of timber construction, with ornate detailing. Examples include Tom Woods on Carrigan Street and the Medical Centre and Post Office on Old Chapel Street. Such features are an integral part of the character of the area creating a link to the past and establishing a unique sense of place.



*Traditional shopfront, Carrigan Street*

Traditional shopfronts are constantly under threat from modern replacements or pastiche insertions, which can lead to inappropriate alteration of the streetscape. New development can reflect modern design, while simultaneously being sensitive to the overall character of the area.

Consideration must also be given to signage as it can easily detract from the overall appearance of a building and its contribution to the streetscape. On the most part signage within Durrow is neat and is painted directly onto the building or fascia. Brash neon or oversized signage can have a detrimental effect on the streetscape.

### Street furniture

Durrow retains a number of items of historical street furniture which add to its character. At the northern corner of the square there is a wheel guard indicating the line of the road as it passed over the old bridge. The “Top pump”, Located at Tea Lane is an important feature and is a reminder of social water schemes of the late nineteenth century. The village also retains at least three cast iron hydrants of later nineteenth century date.



Hydrant

### Railings and boundary walls

The main boundary wall in Durrow marks the edge of the Castledurrow estate and is constructed with rubblestone or roughly dressed limestone with crenellated coping. Most properties in the village core front directly onto the street and therefore lack boundary treatments. Properties on the north

side of the square, however, feature the use of railings atop low cut limestone plinth walls. These cast-iron railings are of high quality and every effort should be made to retain these boundary details.



Castle Durrow demesne wall on approach road to south west of village square.

### ACA Boundaries

The proposed ACA boundary has been delineated to encompass the historic core of the village and the associated backlands which are part of its original layout.

### Summary Character Statement

This village as at present is significant due to its planned eighteenth century origin, much of the character of which has been retained by good maintenance and the absence of significant inappropriate development within the historic core.

Durrow retains most of its built heritage due to its original, well-planned layout which placed appropriate building types in the right areas. This arrangement continues to be relevant and has prevented the need for major remodelling of significant parts of the village core and the loss of historic material and character which can often result. The replacement of windows in Durrow with uPVC frames or frames with different glazing arrangements is resulting in a gradual degradation of heritage character of the village and could relatively easily be prevented by use of more appropriate materials and designs. Such gradual erosion of historic character usually results from loss of historic material and features outlined in the

sections above, over a period of several decades and it may only begin to be noticed when it is irretrievable.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

Within an ACA, there are restrictions on certain works to exteriors of structures. In addition to the usual requirements of planning law, the designation means that works that would materially affect the special character of the ACA will need planning permission. In practice, this would mean that the removal of historic building fabric and its replacement with modern materials will require planning permission.

For example the removal of sliding sash windows and their replacement with uPVC windows will require planning permission. If uPVC windows are already in place, their replacement will not require planning permission.

- Other works that would require permission include:
- the stripping of render from a building to expose stonework
- the cladding of a building with stone or timber
- the removal of cast iron rainwater goods, the removal of a natural slate roof covering
- the removal of chimney stacks or changes to the roof profile
- the removal of limestone sills
- changes to the window proportions
- the addition of porches
- other extensions that would impact on the front elevation of the buildings
- the removal of historic shopfronts or elements thereof
- the installation of roller shutter blinds
- the removal of historic boundary walls or railings.

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and repairs, as long as original materials are retained where they exist and where replacement is necessary (for example due to rot) that it is on a like-for-like basis.

The intention behind the designation is not to stop change, but to manage the nature of the change in order to respect and enhance the features and characteristics that make a particular area special. The demolition or insensitive alteration of structures that make a positive contribution to the ACA will not be permitted. Some structures within the boundaries may be of little architectural interest and are included within an ACA boundary only because of their location within the streetscape. Buildings of little architectural merit may be subject to wholesale redevelopment as part of a planning permission. However, any replacement building should be designed with due regard to the special characteristics of the ACA. Suitably designed infill or bankland development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**

Architectural Conservation Area

**DURROW  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

Drawn: Dermot Dunne	Checked: Donal Kiely	Approved: Angela McEvoy
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## PORTLAOISE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA



### Setting

Portlaoise is set in quite a flat landscape, with natural features such as the Triogue River, an esker along the Ridge Road and man-made features such as a railway embankment and the busy JFL Avenue influencing the character of the town. The historic core of the town is centred around the Main Street, the town slopes downwards from west to east towards the Triogue.

### History

The town dates to the sixteenth century and is the oldest town in the County. Its origins were as an early garrison town and are linked to the Laois/Offaly plantation. The concept of planting this area with settlers was first mooted around 1550, following a long and ravaging campaign to subdue the local lords and secure the Pale territory against attacks.

A crown fort known as the Fort Protector or Fort of Leys was erected in 1548 on rising ground to the southeast of the Triogue with the esker to the east forming a natural boundary. The town was planted with gentry from the Pale and soldiers involved in the campaign. The town's early history was fraught with instability as local leaders reacted aggressively. Attempts were made to displace the O'More and O'Connor-Faly clans and the leaders of the O'Mores were eventually massacred. The plantation did not become rooted until the late sixteenth century and even then problems persisted. The town was plundered in 1580, burned in 1597 and attacked the following year. The hinterland around the town was difficult to penetrate and dangerous to Crown forces.

The fort was rebuilt in 1563 and comprised a rectangular enclosure with a projecting circular tower in the northeast corner and a rectangular tower in the southwest corner. The rectangular tower became known as the Castle of Maryborough. The settlement was

renamed Maryborough in 1556 after Queen Mary and became Portlaoise (a derivation of Fort Protector) in 1920. The town was granted a market in 1567, attained Borough status in 1569, and had a parish church by around 1556 (Old St Peter's). A high number of property grants between 1559 and 1571 indicate a brief period of prosperity. A schematic map dating to 1565 shows a small walled town around the Fort, with fourteen houses.

### **Influence of Sixteenth Century Town on the Current Plan Form and Building Stock**

The street, indicated on the 1565 schematic map, to the south of the Fort aligns broadly with Main Street and Bridge Street, while the street to the north of the Fort aligns with Church Street. A map dating to 1766 shows the contemporary street pattern of Main Street, Church Lane, Church Street, Chapel Lane and Church Avenue (culverted).

The medieval market was most likely located where the Main Street widens adjacent to the junction with Chapel Lane, this area was still being used as a market place up to the early twentieth century. The kink in building line and street at Chapel Lane is thought to follow the line of a water-filled ditch along the southern wall of the fort in 1565.

No remains of the town wall have been uncovered. There have been suggestions that the laneways to the south of the Main Street (in particular Pepper's Lane and Lyster Lane) may indicate entrances into the medieval town.

The north, east and south walls of the Fort from 1563 survive along with short sections of the northern end of the western wall, along with the circular tower to the north east. The square tower did not survive. The circular tower is the most distinctive element of the modern-day streetscape, this robust structure has an internal diameter of 8.2m with walls measuring 1.5m in thickness, ledges to the interior indicate the structure was originally three storeys high. Another distinctive

element is an external batter along the east wall.

*Circular Tower to Fort Protector shown on 1565 map of Portlaoise*



*Circular Tower shown on 1565 map of Portlaoise now incorporated into Presentation Convent*



*Tower to old Saint Peter's Church dating to sixteenth century*

There is little documentary evidence of the development of Portlaoise in the seventeenth century, though it is known that the town and the Fort suffered severe damage during the Cromwellian Wars of 1652-3.

A building called the Stone House is identified on the 1565 map directly east of the Fort and may have been a mill. A tower on the southern gable of the Stone House has been incorporated into the adjacent Presentation Convent and survives. The Presentation Sisters took residence in the Stone House in 1824; the structure was incorporated into the convent building by way of an extension in 1872. A conservation report on the convent recommends the removal of later extensions to expose the sixteenth century structure. A subterranean tunnel connecting the fort with the Stone House is said to exist and possibly a wider subterranean network.

Of the sixteenth century Old Saint Peter's Church, the west tower and north wall of the nave survive within its own burial grounds. The church fell into disuse in the early nineteenth century. The square church tower is a focal point in the skyline of Church Street.

A significant element of the special interest of Portlaoise ACA resides in the late medieval street plan (Main Street, Bridge Street, Church Avenue, Church Lane, Church Street, Chapel Lane, Pepper's Land and Lyster Lane) and late medieval building stock. These elements are of special historical, archaeological and architectural interest. Its plan form indicates a strong association between the late medieval town and the present day town centre. The Fort is the earliest historic structure in the town and the historic centre of Portlaoise from which the town grew. The development within and around the Fort show the evolution of the town and it forms an integral part of the character of Portlaoise Town. The Fort is a recorded monument, protected structure and is located within an area of archaeological potential and is of immense importance, especially as the fort of similar

date built in Daingean, County Offaly does not survive.

The extant structures of Old Saint Peter's Church and in particular the Fort Protector are of national importance, being physical reminders of the Laois/Offaly plantation. The plantation of Laois/Offaly, though initially of limited success was a vanguard for more extensive plantations of other regions of Ireland, which transformed the economic, social and political order of the Country. The defensive nature of the extant Fort Protector is indicative of contemporary military architecture and the serious nature of local resistance to crown forces.

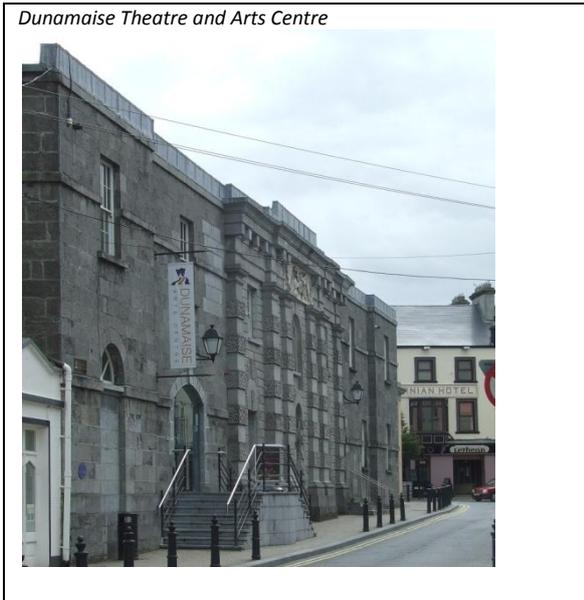
A significant proportion of the Fort was formerly part of a Mill and is now used as a depot by the Council, two schools and a number of dwelling units are now located within the Fort. Old Saint Peter's is now derelict and its grounds overgrown. The Presentation Convent is also in a poor state of repair. The condition of these structures belies their immense importance and these structures would benefit from a detailed Conservation Management Plan and subsequent conservation works. Plans for the re-use of the fort as a County Museum and Library are under examination and if works are carried out sensitively, these could benefit the structure. Archaeological excavation of the fort could contribute to our understanding and the location of a County Museum could enhance appreciation of the importance of the structure and its history as well as the historic appeal of the town.

### **Influence of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries**

A manuscript map of 1766 indicates the modern-day sweep of Main Street and Bridge Street, the eastern half of Market Square, Railway Street as well as the earlier Church Avenue and Church Street. This manuscript also shows Old St Peter's Church and a two-storey Courthouse with a central clock tower on the site of the present-day courthouse.

A number of fine Georgian residences were constructed along Church Street in the eighteenth century, as well as the sombre stone-clad gaol in 1789, designed by Richard Harman which now functions as the Dunamais Theatre and Arts Centre. Other surviving fine Georgian residences include Portleix House and the IBS building on the Dublin Road.

*Dunamais Theatre and Arts Centre*



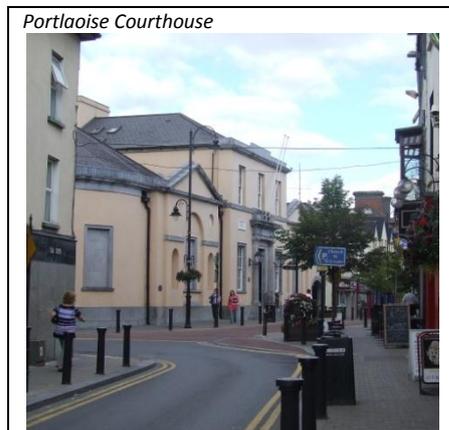
The greatest thrust of development in Portlaoise occurred in the nineteenth century, producing most of Portlaoise's prominent public buildings and current streetscape comprised of archetypal pattern-book designs and vernacular terraced residences. The Main Street is punctuated by laneways leading to Lyster Square and integral carriageway entrances which survive. Doorways to living quarters above the shop are often integral to the design of the façade and shopfront and a number survive. The buildings become more modest along Bridge Street and have a finer grain with smaller shop units. Few retain a retail use.

The town's expansion was shaped by the nature of new roads projecting out from the core. The new Saint Peter's Church built in 1803-4 was the first building located to the west of the diamond at the junction of the newly laid out Grattan Street and Cotee Street. Its strong form and obelisk steeple

(attributed to Gandon) is a strong focal point in the Market Square. The diamond became the setting for a new public square, the Market Square for the town. A free standing Market House was rebuilt in the second half of the nineteenth century as the Town Hall (destroyed in 1945 by fire).

In 1805, the Courthouse was rebuilt and is ascribed to Richard Morrison. This structure continues to function as a district and circuit court and is a landmark building in the Main Street. It was linked by a curved wall to the gaol on Church Street.

*Portlaoise Courthouse*



The gaol was moved to a more substantial County Gaol and House of Correction in 1830, built in a Gothic Revival style on the Dublin Road. St Fintan's Asylum erected in 1832 is another fine public building, its plan form is distinctive to nineteenth-century asylum design, intended to provide good natural light.

Fine institutional buildings shown on the first ordnance survey map of 1839 include: a cut stone barracks now functioning as the Garda Barracks, schools on the Stradbally Road, on the north side of Church Street and formerly attached to the Catholic Chapel on Church Avenue (built 1837-8 in Gothic style, demolished in 1960s) and the Presentation Convent (1830).

*Presentation Convent*



As mentioned above, the Presentation Convent has fallen into disrepair and the reuse of this structure to secure its longevity is now necessary. Fine and substantial residences from this period include Portrain House, Annebrook House and Annefield House.

The early to mid-nineteenth century townhouses along Grattan Street are modest, well-proportioned and arranged around a wide street and like Main Street, many have integral carriageway entrances. The straight building line, gable-pitched roofs and vertical emphasis windows along this approach road to Market Square give these townhouses a cohesive character. Coote Street is dominated by high traffic levels and heterogenous in terms of architectural order and roofscapes.

*Late Georgian Terrace, Coote Street*



*Elements of Maltings complex*

A terrace of three late Georgian houses make a positive contribution to this approach towards Market Square. The Maltings complex is late nineteenth century in date and an important element of the industrial heritage of the town but is also a landmark complex within the streetscape, capable of making a significant contribution if brought back into active use.

The arrival of the railway in Portlaoise resulted in the construction of the iconic railway station of location limestone attributed to engineer Sancton Wood, as well as the layout of Railway Street and resulting development along it including the Methodist Church built in Gothic Revival style. By the end of the nineteenth century, industrial development in Portlaoise included the Odlum's Mill complex (close to the location of the late medieval mill on the 1565 schematic plan), an Old Tannery to the south of Main Street, a Textile factory in Tea Lane, and an extensive Maltings off Coote Street, served by a spur off the new railway line.

Fine early twentieth structures include the elaborately decorated O'Loughlins Hotel and Pharmacy and the redbrick Kingfisher Restaurant formerly a bank building. The wholly modernist Midland Regional Hospital (1933-36) by Michael Scott is one of the finest structures of its type in the Country. The symmetrical façade of the former cinema (1940) is decorated with circular opes, four pilasters and horizontal emphasis projecting

blockwork below first floor windows and to the parapet and is representative of its period and typology and its historic function is of social importance. The main thrust of speculative and social housing dates to the 1950s. James Fintan Lawlor Avenue was laid out in the 1970s and changed the character of the town substantially. The County Hall was constructed in 1982.



The Main Street continues to operate as the commercial core of the town and benefits from recent public realm improvement works limiting vehicular transport through the street. However the core extended westwards into Lyster Square during the twentieth century and major convenience retail establishments are located west of JFL Avenue.

Although the survival rate of many building features along the Main Street such as timber sliding sash windows, doors, natural slate roofing and shopfronts is low, some do survive. Importantly the eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings themselves survive, some features such as elevational plasterwork, cast iron rainwater goods and profiled chimney stacks along with most of the upper storey window openings are intact. More attention to the historic architectural scale, materials and elevational details is needed as well as more considered new and infill development; the designation of this ACA will facilitate this. Some well-designed contemporary shopfronts contribute to the character of the streetscape.



The form of the Market Square changed with the diversion of the Abbeyleix Road in the nineteenth century to align with Coote Street, fragmenting the southern terrace overlooking the Square. Although the Market Square features a number of fine buildings, it is dominated by traffic and parking and would benefit from carriageway realignment and public realm improvement works to give pedestrians more priority, in particular as the N80 bypass is complete. A number of fine nineteenth century properties around or approaching Market Square, some with carriageway arches, are under-used or vacant and an improvement in the quality of Market Square and a reduction in vehicular throughput may improve the attractiveness of these structures as residences.

The special architectural character of the Portlaoise ACA also resides in the grouping of some eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century buildings along Main Street, Coote

Street, Grattan Street and Bridge Street; the heterogenous heights, grain, roof pitches, architectural order and elevational features of buildings along Main Street, Bridge Street and Cootie Street, the urban spaces at Market Square and adjacent to the Fort Protector and individual fine landmark buildings such as the Kingfisher Restaurant and O’Loughlin’s Hotel or fine terraces such as along Church Street or Cootie Street. The layering of structures of different dates and orders tangibly show the origin and evolution of the town.

### **Boundaries**

Some structures of special interest are excluded from the ACA, but are protected by way of inclusion within the RPS. The boundaries of this ACA are tightly drawn around the town centre and historic core in order to give the ACA a strong focus.

### **Conclusion**

The history of the town is embedded in individual historic or special buildings, groups of buildings, building features, open spaces and the street pattern. Collectively the tangible layering of these structures can deepen the understanding among town residents of the cultural heritage of their home place. If well-presented and maintained, ACAs can foster civic pride amongst residents and admiration from visitors.

*Heterogenous building grain, heights and elevational treatments*



The urban centre of Portlaoise is more than the sum of its parts, it cannot be conserved effectively simply by adding its significant buildings to the Record of Protected Structures. An ACA would define a wider entity, also embracing the open spaces of the town.

The incremental loss of features of the historic environment erodes this value and depreciates the character of a town, and this leads to a feeling of decline and low self image.

In particular the Fort Protector is a rare built element of the first significant English Plantations in Ireland and as such a heritage site of enormous significance and potential. It is currently subdivided into multiple titles and its importance cannot be appreciated. It is essential that this site should not be regarded as a backlands area of the town and its key historical significance as the genesis of the settlement of Portlaoise actively recognised. Great care should be taken to prevent irreversible development which would damage this enormous asset to the identity of Portlaoise. If the Fort Protector were to be restored to a high conservation standard, this unique structure could become a cultural and economic resource of benefit to the town. It is noted that currently there are no significant cultural attractions nationally that treat the plantation of Ireland in detail and that historic accounts of the plantation of Laois/Offaly are detailed and colourful.

Conservation of the adjacent former St. Peter’s Church and graveyard, and of the hugely significant former Presentation Convent, which faces the Fort wall, would create an historic precinct of great heritage value and interest, with the capacity to greatly raise the profile of the town.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

Within an ACA, there are restrictions on certain works to exteriors of structures. In addition to the usual requirements of planning law, the designation means that works that would materially affect the special

character of the ACA will need planning permission. In practice, this would mean that the removal of historic building fabric and its replacement with modern materials will require planning permission.

For example the removal of sliding sash windows and their replacement with uPVC windows will require planning permission. If uPVC windows are already in place, their replacement will not require planning permission. Other works that would require permission include:

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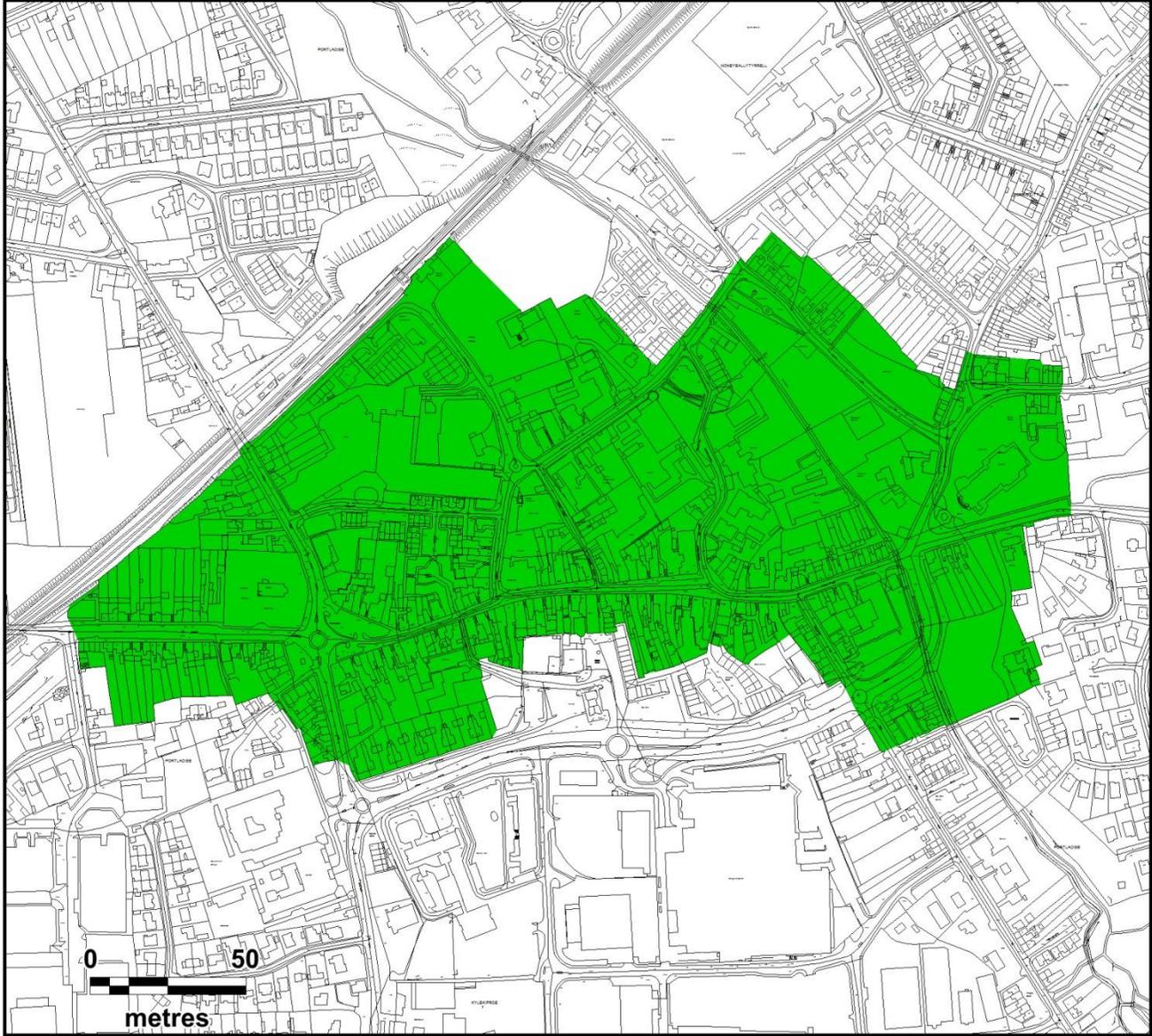
boundary only because of their location within the streetscape. Buildings of little architectural merit may be subject to wholesale redevelopment as part of a planning permission. However, any replacement building should be designed with due regard to the special characteristics of the ACA. Suitably designed infill or bankland development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.

Current threats to the special character of Portlaoise ACA include:

Threats to that character include:

- stripping of render from elevations, demolition of chimney stacks
- removal of carriageway entrances
- removal of doorways to the upper storeys of buildings along the main street
- replacement of natural slates with artificial materials,
- replacement of cast iron rainwater goods with uPVC,
- replacement of timber sliding sash windows with uPVC,
- loss of historic shopfronts and related advertisements
- insensitive infill development
- wholesale demolition of historic buildings.
- the most serious threats to the special character of Portlaoise ACA include underuse, vacancy and dereliction

A number of landmark structures within the ACA including the Presentation Convent, the Maltings Complex, Old St Peter's Church and the Fort Protector need active uses to secure their longevity.



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023**



**Legend:**  
 Architectural Conservation Area

**PORTLAOISE  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



**LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION**

Drawn: Demot Dunne	Checked: Donal Kiely	Approved: Angela McEvoy
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## TIMAHOE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA (ACA) - Candidate

### History

The development of the village is linked with the Timahoe monastic site which is likely to have been a medieval proto-urban settlement. The monastery is said to have been founded by Saint Mochua who died in 657 suggesting the settlement was founded in the seventh century.



The monastery was considered prosperous by the nineteenth century and was plundered and burnt in 919 and again in 1142. Monastic buildings from the early medieval period are generally of wood and it was not until the eleventh or twelfth century that stone became a predominant building material. It is therefore not surprising that no monuments from the early medieval period are extant.

In late medieval times the monastery was refounded by the O'Mores suggesting it had become defunct, and was regranted to Richard Cosby in 1609. A monastic community functioned here as late as 1650. Based on urban morphology typologies the arrangement of buildings around a triangular green indicates

the village was laid out in the seventeenth century.

### Architecture

The village contains a former Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks which has been subdivided into two dwellings and a number of traditional shopfronts.



*Traditional Shopfronts*



Eighteenth and nineteenth structures retain few original features, although individually these structures are not of special interest, collectively they make a positive contribution to the ACA. Opportunities for infill development around the Green remain.



*Opportunities for refurbishment*



The village also contains a large Roman Catholic Church built between 1830 and 1835 finished with roughcast render with the gables, church tower, windows and eaves dressed with ashlar masonry of limestone.



The former Church of Ireland building now functions as the village library. It is a more modest structure built in a gothic revival style in 1840 with a projecting porch, chancel and

vestry and lancet windows with leaded lights. The elevations are finished with snecked limestone with ashlar plinth, quoins, corbels and windows dressings.

The library is located within the grounds of the medieval settlement which comprises a fine twelfth century round tower with a base that may be older, a ruinous sixteenth century tower house and remnants of a fifteenth century church.

The round tower measures 29.26m high and is roofed with a conical cap, no internal floors survive. The tower is a striking feature within the ACA. A Romanesque doorway to the first floor of the tower is decorated with human heads with intertwined hair and has four receding orders, a window in a similar style is visible at second floor, slit and square headed and pointed windows are located on other floors. During medieval times a Round Tower functioned primarily as a status symbol indicating prestige and wealth.

The ruinous tower house is located to the southeast of the round tower and may be associated with the Cosby's. The tower house was reported to feature a Sheela na Gig, but this is no longer visible. The remnants of the fifteenth century church, possibly consisting of the chancel arch are incorporated into the eastern wall of the tower house. The east wall and short sections of the north and south walls of the tower house are extant.



The monastic campus retains a strong relationship with the village because of its proximity to the green and the siting of the library within its grounds. The round tower and the Goose Green are the most prominent and distinctive elements of the ACA. The arrangement of modest single and two storey buildings with simple elevations around the

green and orientated towards it is an essential element of the village's character. Mature oak, sycamore and horse chestnut trees within the grounds of the round tower and a small pedestrian bridge over the Timahoe River running through the village reinforce the link between the monastic site and the village green.

The topography of the town is flat but it is set against Fossey Mountain to the south. Public realm features such as a timber band stand and cast iron pump with wrought iron railings around are prominent given the flat topography. A dual line of sycamore trees on the approach road from Portlaoise contribute to the sense of place.

### **Summary of Special Interest**

The special interest of Timahoe resides in the arrangement of modest two-storey buildings with little ornamentation dating mostly to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a number in commercial use orientated towards a large central green known as the Goose Green and the continuing function of Timahoe as a working village serving its rural hinterland. The special interest also resides in the relationship between the village and the monastic site to the west of the Timahoe River and the monuments and protected structures associated with Timahoe's origin and development.

### **Implications of ACA designation**

Within an ACA, there are restrictions on certain works to exteriors of structures. In addition to the usual requirements of planning law, the designation means that works that would materially affect the special character of the ACA will need planning permission. In practice, this would mean that the removal of historic

building fabric and its replacement with modern materials will require planning permission.

For example the removal of sliding sash windows and their replacement with uPVC windows will require planning permission. If uPVC windows are already in place, their replacement will not require planning permission.

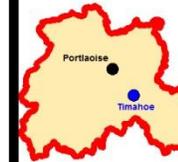
- Other works that would require permission include:
- the stripping of render from a building to expose stonework
- the cladding of a building with stone or timber
- the removal of cast iron rainwater goods, the removal of a natural slate roof covering
- the removal of chimney stacks or changes to the roof profile
- the removal of limestone sills
- changes to the window proportions
- the addition of porches
- other extensions that would impact on the front elevation of the buildings
- the removal of historic shopfronts or elements thereof
- the installation of roller shutter blinds
- the removal of historic boundary walls or railings.

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and repairs, as long as original materials are retained where they exist and where replacement is necessary (for example due to rot) that it is on a like-for-like basis.

The intention behind the designation is not to stop change, but to manage the nature of the change in order to respect and enhance the features and characteristics that make a particular area special. The demolition or

insensitive alteration of structures that make a positive contribution to the ACA will not be permitted. Some structures within the boundaries may be of little architectural interest and are included within an ACA boundary only because of their location within the streetscape. Buildings of little architectural merit may be subject to wholesale redevelopment as part of a planning permission. However, any replacement building should be designed with due regard to the special characteristics of the ACA. Suitably designed infill or bankland development that contributes to the special character of the ACA will also be encouraged. Works to the public realm within ACAs e.g. footpaths, street furniture, parking schemes will be required to respect the special character of the area also.

LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
2017-2023



**Legend:**

 Architectural Conservation Area

**TIMAHOE  
ARCHITECTURAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



LAOIS COUNTY COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLANNING SECTION

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