

AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE ARCHITECTURAL
HERITAGE *of*

COUNTY CARLOW

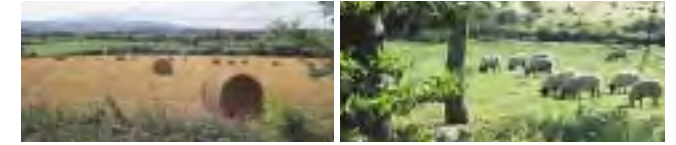


**An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,
Gaeltachta agus Oileán**
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Dúchas
The Heritage Service



Foreword



Carlow is a county steeped in a wealth of architectural heritage that spans many centuries. This heritage reflects the life, times and culture of its people from the earliest times to the present. It is an important illustration of the economic and social history of the county.

Across Ireland, in towns and countryside, a range of building types is readily accepted as architecturally significant. Such buildings include churches, courthouses, large country houses and prominent commercial buildings such as nineteenth-century bank buildings. Supplementing this stock however are more modest buildings that may not command the attention of the passer-by but which, were they to be lost, would be to the detriment of the distinctive local character.

The wealth of Carlow's agricultural production encouraged not only a range of substantial farms and larger country houses but also a rich legacy of agriculture related buildings. These range from farm and stable buildings to a range of impressively scaled mills and warehouses. More modest artefacts such as lime kilns and culm crushers are also distributed across the county.

Carlow's transport heritage is also an important contributing factor to its particular character. The county boasts a range of late eighteenth-century canal structures along the Barrow Navigation. Nineteenth-century railway architecture is also significant.

Domestic architecture, large and small, is closest to the people and reflects most especially the history of Carlow over the centuries. The large country houses of the landlord classes, the substantial houses of the prosperous merchant and farming class, and the small estate houses and thatched cottages, all bear witness to the complexity of the county's social structures and its changing patterns over the years.

The purpose of this *Introduction*, together with the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage County Survey, is to identify and highlight a representative selection of the extant architectural heritage of Carlow. It is sad that much fine architecture has already been lost or altered beyond recognition. But it is hoped that through raising awareness of the built heritage of the county that a better appreciation will materialise, together with a drive to protect the county's very significant heritage.

Carlow Town has not been included in the County Survey, having been compiled as a Pilot Study by the Office of Public Works in 1991. Nevertheless, some artefacts of special interest in Carlow have been alluded to in the following text.



Introduction



TAYLOR AND SKINNER MAP (1777 & 1783)

An eighteenth-century map outlining the appearance and landmarks of the primary route from Carlow Town to Tullow at that time. Such archival sources give insight to the evolution of the built landscape by revealing those properties, estates, churches, and sundry features that have since disappeared or which were yet to be built.

Carlow, the second smallest county in Ireland, is located in the south-east of the country in the province of Leinster. Its name is derived from the Irish, Ceatharlach, meaning '(the) four lakes' a term believed to refer to the coalescence of the Rivers Barrow and Burren to the west of Carlow Town. Although land locked, Carlow is traversed by important rivers, notably the Barrow and the Slaney, that have acted as important influences on settlement and prosperity; Carlow, Leighlinbridge and Muine Bheag are sited along the banks of the Barrow, while Tullow is located picturesquely on the Slaney. The efficient drainage of these places has been supported by rich soil and a belt of limestone running to the west of the Barrow. This limestone has also been a popular building material over the centuries in Carlow's other urban settlements, including Borris, Clonegall, Fenagh, Myshall, Rathvilly and Saint Mullin's. The Wicklow and Blackstairs Mountains which encircle the county are composed primarily of granite, distinguished by its silvery-grey appearance; they have been much quarried and the stone used in many buildings throughout the county.

Town Settlements

(fig. 1)
LEIGHLINBRIDGE
(Print from Grose's
*Antiquities of
Ireland* Vol. 2)

A historic print of the medieval town of Leighlinbridge, situated to west of the county flanking the River Barrow. To the left of the image is the current Leighlin Bridge (c. 1650 and 1789); a bridge has been existence on this point of the river since the fourteenth century.

To the right of the image is the Black Castle, built in the sixteenth century, incorporating an earlier keep of the twelfth century; it has been in ruins since the nineteenth century.

Courtesy National Library of Ireland.

Although some settlements of medieval foundation have survived, many have not. Reasons for their disappearance range from adverse political and economic conditions to abandonment in favour of larger centres of population. Carlow Town, for example, dates from the thirteenth century and Old Leighlin grew from the original seventh-century monastic foundation. Saint Laserian's Cathedral in Old Leighlin was built at the beginning of the thirteenth century by Bishop Donatus of Leighlin, and was once the administrative centre of the Diocese of Leighlin.

Nearby Leighlinbridge (fig. 1) was strategically located on the Barrow, an important transport route. The so-called 'Black Castle' was founded by Hugh de Lacy in 1181 and constituted one of the earliest Norman defensive structures in the region. This earlier structure was incorporated in a later castle (now ruinous) built by Sir Edward Bellingham in 1547.



The bridge at Leighlinbridge (fig. 2) confirmed the settlements strategic significance. A crossing at this point is believed to have been important since the tenth century. Around 1320 a stone bridge was built by Maurice Jakis. Although redundant by the mid-seventeenth century, it was rebuilt and much

of the structure from this period remains in the present seven-arch structure (modified in 1789). Leighlinbridge is a prime example of an evolving town: a settlement that has changed and grown over the centuries, in response to the demands of its inhabitants.

The apparently random distribution of the street pattern in the historic core centre is a key characteristic of such towns. At Leighlinbridge this almost resembles the spokes of a wheel radiating from the central hub of the bridge. This informality is in stark contrast to the typical planned estate village that is identified by a regular and controlled street system.

(fig. 2)
LEIGHLIN BRIDGE,
Leighlinbridge
(c.1650 and 1789)

A similar view, taken in 2002, reveals that much of the ancient fabric of this historic town remains intact, although the Black Castle shows signs of further deterioration.





BAGENALSTOWN,
(c. 1900)
Lawrence collection

A view of Bagenalstown reveals innumerable early shopfronts that have now been replaced with unsympathetic modern, sometimes misguided, 'traditional' fronts. D.J. Nolan, Draper's shopfront is of a vintage contemporary with this image.

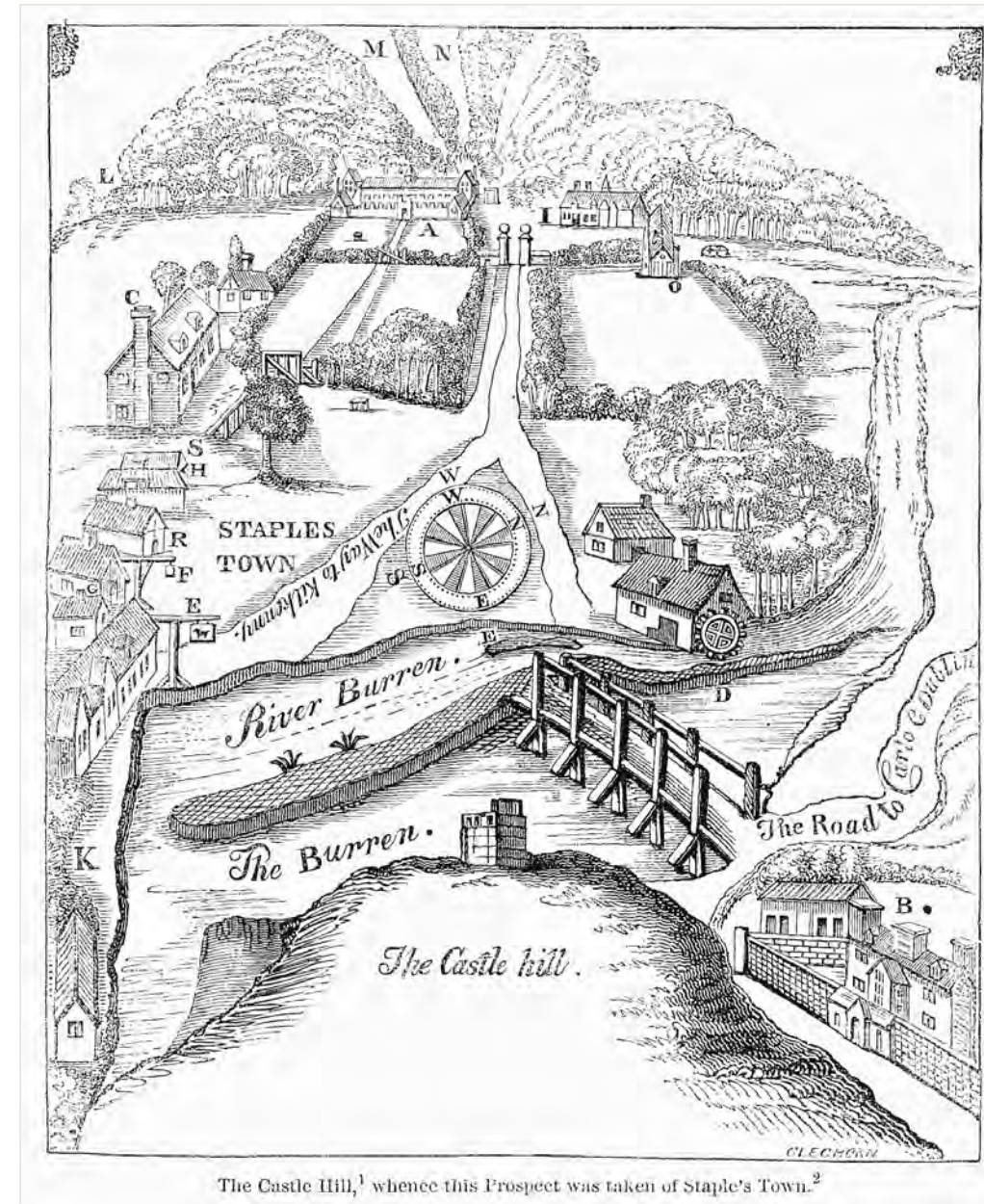
Courtesy National Library of Ireland

The consistent line of Main Street, Leighlinbridge, suggests some intervention in the nineteenth century, by which date most of the county's towns and villages were being formally laid out. In the post-Cromwellian period a further wave of settlement replaced many small medieval centres while older parish churches and towerhouses became ruinous. Staplestown was laid out around a triangular village green (fig. 3) which focused on the 'Turrets', the home of Sir William Temple (1628-99), MP for Carlow in the first post-restoration parliament. Both house and setting afforded a favourable impression to a later traveller, who in 1746 noted its:

sweet situation where nature has worked already to assist it...—They have a garden—when the last hand has finished all that is intended—might serve an Italian Prince...—The proprietor tends to multiply the dwellings that it may, with better face bear the name of a town.

Dineley, source to be checked.

Bagenalstown (now Muine Bheag) typifies a formal concept of town development. Situated on the Barrow, it was established initially by Henry Rudkin who, having leased a small plot of land from Dudley Bagenal, established a mill and invited potential employees to the area around 1680. At a later date, Walter Bagenal laid out the village with avenues and boulevards and made plans for dignified public architecture. The name proposed for the village, Versailles, is indicative of these aspirations. The regular layout of Barret and Regent Streets, and High Street/Church Road is testimony to Bagenal's formal scheme.



(fig. 3)
STAPLESTOWN
(1681)

A topographical depiction, dated 1681, of Staplestown Village, which was planned around a triangular green in the seventeenth century by Sir William Temple with his seat, The Turrets, as a focal point. Little but ruins survive of The Turrets to the present day.

Courtesy National Library of Ireland

Archival image of Staplestown village by Thomas Dineley from Dineley, Thomas, *Observations on a voyage through the Kingdom of Ireland (in the year 1681)*, Dublin 1870, pp.42-43

(fig. 4)
CARLOW COURTHOUSE,
Carlow
(1828–1834)

William Vitruvius Morrison's (1794–1838) commanding scheme is regarded as one of the finest courthouses in the country. A Neo-classical edifice, it is built of Carlow granite and fronted by a portico of eight Ionic columns approached by a broad flight of steps.



The Courthouse

Once a settlement was established, it was governed by the captain of the castle and this system prevailed well into the late-seventeenth century, at which date the present-day county system was imposed. Each such county was presided over by a Grand Jury, a committee of powerful land owners, selected by the High Sheriff and given the responsibility to supervise the construction of utilities such as roads and bridges and, in due course, the maintenance of publicly funded institutions such as asylums and workhouses. The administrative focal point of each urban area was often the courthouse, built by the Grand Jury, which acted as the administrative centre for the imposition of local control. A county courthouse was complemented by a series of smaller petty session houses, located in other towns. In terms of architecture, the Classical idiom was the prevailing taste of the period in which such courthouses were built. But the particularly severe styles employed also suggested a degree of seriousness appropriate to the presumed gravity and significance of the institution.

The imposing granite County Courthouse (1828–34), Carlow (fig. 4), was designed by William Vitruvius Morrison (1794–1838). Two storeys over a raised basement, it is dominated by a looming pedimented Ionic portico approached by a flight of wide steps. Large wall masses—which appear to be pierced with pedimented windows—add to the sense of solemn formality, a quality that is echoed in the interior symmetrical plan. A comparable, if less severe neo-Classicism characterises the former courthouse in Muine Bheag. Designed (c. 1835) by the Scottish-born Daniel Robertson (c. 1775–1848), for Walter, Lord Bagenal, the courthouse, despite its small scale, provides an important insight into the aspirations for estate village planning in these years. Unusually, its Ionic portico faces away from the main street and instead rises above the surrounding properties and overlooks the River Barrow (fig. 5), a characteristic evoking associations with the Erechtheion (421–406 BC) on the Acropolis, Athens. The courthouse also bears comparison with contemporary work executed by Robertson in nearby County Wexford, such as the gate lodge at Castleboro Demesne.



(fig. 5)
BAGENALSTOWN
COURTHOUSE,
Muine Bheag
(c. 1835)

A small-scale temple-style building by Daniel Robertson (c. 1775–1848), it is dominated by a pedimented Ionic portico that unusually faces away from the town. The courthouse was originally intended to be the centrepiece of Walter, Lord Bagenal's new 'Versailles'.

The Barracks

Closely associated with courthouses, socially if not architecturally, the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) were a feature of most urban communities from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Many were adapted for use by the Garda Síochána, following the establishment of the Irish Free State (1922).

The Station (c. 1835), Ballon, is a regular two-storey block on an L-shaped plan. Its contrasting ground floor of rubble stone, with roughcast on the first, almost suggests a cottage ornée. To the left of a fine cut-stone door case stands a commanding granite-built three-storey circular corner tower. A comparable plan

characterises the former barracks (c. 1845) at Ballinree (*fig. 6*), which was fronted with motifs associated with the Tudor Revival. The Tudor Revival theme is more pronounced at Borris Garda Station (c. 1850), especially in the stone window surrounds and cut-stone gablets to the dormer attic windows. The gable-fronted entrance bay is decorated with devices such as buttresses and a striking ogee-headed door opening. In contrast, the former barracks (c. 1870) at Blacklion is a simple two-storey granite-built block, with a projecting porch, and chamfered reveals to the openings.

(*fig. 6*)
BALLINREE RIC
BARRACKS,
Ballinree
(c. 1845)

A two-storey building dominated by a corner stair tower, it is now in residential use.



The Schoolhouse



Side by side with the administration and enforcement of the law went a concern with education. This became especially marked from the early-nineteenth century onwards, both as a means of social control, and as a genuine reflection for the improved welfare of others. The National Board of Education (1806) and, subsequently, the National Schools Committee (1831) encouraged the erection of schoolhouses, many of which are still extant. Wealthy landowners endowed some schools privately while others were supported by Grand Juries. In due course religious orders would open further schools.

The D'Israeli Endowed School (c. 1826), Bough, was designed by Joseph Welland (n. d.) with the legacy of Classical architecture in mind (*fig. 7*). It employs a double-height central block with flanking pedimented classrooms, and recalls the planning arrangement common in any number of eighteenth-century country houses, especially those inspired by the Late Renaissance villas of Andrea Palladio (1508–80). Windows are set in round-headed recesses and a clock tower animates the roof line.

(*fig. 7*)
D'ISRAËLI
ENDOWED SCHOOL,
Bough
(c. 1826)

A privately-financed school, the building was sponsored by Benjamin D'Israeli and is the work of Joseph Welland. The quasi-Palladian plan was suited to the Georgian and Victorian practice of segregating the sexes into male and female classroom blocks.



(fig. 8)
KILGRANEY SCHOOL,
Kilgraney
(c. 1835)

Composed on an H-shaped plan in the Tudor Revival style, Kilgraney draws parallels with the schools at Borris and Tullow. The building is now in residential use.



(fig. 9)
KILLEDMOND
NATIONAL SCHOOL,
Killedmond
(c. 1850)

A long, low 'barn-style' range, this school lacks the complexity of form appearance of the D'Israeli Endowed School. It is now disused.



(fig. 10)
THE VEC SCHOOL,
Muine Bheag
(1963)

An exercise in the International Modern style, the school is composed of a series of alternating red brick and rendered panels and is topped by a tapered flat roof.

More usually, standardised designs were employed. The arrangement at Kilgraney (fig. 8) was most common and compositionally, at least, recalls some of the qualities of the D'Israeli School. A two-storey central block, the teacher's residence is flanked by a pair of double-height gabled projecting classroom blocks—one for male and one for female pupils. Of rubble granite, the school utilises motifs typical of the Tudor Revival such as distinctive arched door openings and hood mouldings over the windows. The Church of Ireland School (c. 1840), Tullow, is almost identical in plan and elevation.

The 'barn-style' school appears to have been the most popular model consisting of a long single-storey stone-built range. That at Killedmond (c. 1850, now disused) has little embellishment other than attractive mullioned timber casement windows (fig. 9). The simple,

almost frugal, layout remained the preferred option well into the mid-twentieth century, allowing for changes of scale, services, and decorative treatment. Following that period of conservative planning, architects charged with designing new school buildings concentrated on the International Modern style and the Vocational Education Committee (VEC) School (1963), Muine Bheag, is a product of this phase (fig. 10). Built as a two-storey block, symmetrical in plan, each bay or vertical division is articulated as a full-height panel composed either of alternating red brick or render. The graduated flat roof is a subtle and effective decorative device and in profile resembles the wings of an aeroplane.

Commercial Buildings



(fig. 11)
JOHN BYRNE,
Tullow
(c. 1875)

A fine example of an early simple timber shopfront that has been retained in a largely unaltered composition.



(fig. 12)
MCDONALD,
Tullow
(c. 1820)

One of the very rare surviving examples of early timber panelled external shutters to a timber shopfront of c. 1910. Such shutters were primarily intended to deter thieves, but also to protect the glass behind from assault by stray cattle on market fair days.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Carlow witnessed an expansion in its commercial and economic interests partly in response to agricultural output. While market houses were common across the country, this was not the case in Carlow where street markets were the norm. This is reflected in place names such as the Fair Green in Leighlinbridge and Market Square, Muine Bheag.

Following the Great Famine (1845–8), economic and social recovery was made evident in the streetscapes of the towns and villages. Houses previously utilised solely for residential purposes were increasingly dedicated to commercial use, with the family living in the upper storeys. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, shopfronts provide evidence of this change of use, and fine early examples survive

in Tullow and Borris. That of John Byrne (c. 1875), Bridge Street, Tullow (fig. 11) typifies simple Classical-influenced design with its wide display window and adjacent entrance. Simple pilaster-type strips support a timber fascia with moulded terminating brackets, the whole surmounted by a cornice. This combination of elements recalls, in a vernacular-like idiom, the elements of more formal Classical architecture. The regular symmetrical composition of the McDonald shopfront (c. 1910), Tullow, enhances an earlier property (c. 1820) and similarly uses a system derived from the Classical idiom (fig. 12). The front also retains early timber panelled shutters intended to deter thieves at night and to protect the glazing behind from the assaults of stray cattle on fair days.

In Borris, the premises of D. J. Nolan, Draper (c. 1890), has two shopfronts, one used for display and entry, and one dedicated solely to display (fig. 13–14). The shop interior is almost entirely intact. It is dominated by a timber panelled counter, behind which the timber shelving appears to have been erected in a random fashion, as needs dictated. The wooden floor survives, as does a quasi-compartmentalised ceiling of diagonally set tongue-and-groove timber panelling. Early weighing scales and an old cash-till are further historic elements.



(fig. 13–14)
D.J. NOLAN DRAPER,
Borris
(c. 1845)

The early timber shopfront of c. 1890 can be read as a simple exercise in the Classical tradition combining pilasters, fascia (frieze), and entablature in an almost symmetrical arrangement.

An early commercial interior, untroubled by modern intervention; features of note are the panelled counter, the irregular quality of the shelving and a contrasting compartmentalised ceiling.





(fig. 15)
J. DALTON,
Borris
(c. 1925)

Another example of a Classically-inspired shopfront, the fascia contains 'marbled' painted lettering, a traditional technique that aimed to convey prominence and a sense of local identity.

(fig. 16)
HALLIGAN BROTHERS,
Rathvilly (c. 1930)

A simple, if tentative, exercise in the Modern movement, which was initially not embraced with much enthusiasm in rural Ireland. The garage seen here is distinguished by clean, geometric lines that appear to draw influence from the Art Deco period.



The classically inspired shopfront of J. Dalton (c. 1925), Main Street, Borris (fig. 15), employs another traditional motif in the form of marbled lettering on the fascia board. Such prominently displayed family names were an important factor in the local identity of a family business.

In the nineteenth century, banking institutions initiated a building campaign that resulted in distinctive premises in most major towns across the country. Many, from the second half of the century, conformed to a scheme designed by William Caldbeck when architect to the National Bank.



Caldbeck's designs, as with many banks around Europe, alluded to the style of the Italian Renaissance, a reference to the historical foundations of modern banking as well as suggesting the affluence of the host institution. The former Provincial Bank of Ireland (1900–01), Carlow Town, adheres closely to Caldbeck's formula. A two-storey limestone façade is articulated with Classical motifs, including columns and Baroque-like pediments to the first-floor windows which retain their original glazing. A pediment incorporating a decoratively framed circular window tops the whole composition.

Post offices too emerged as an architectural type in the nineteenth century. The Post Office (c. 1850) Leighlinbridge, is a three-storey stone building that was originally built solely for residential use but was later part given over to commercial use. The simple timber shopfront—again employing Classical references—was inserted around 1860. On the other hand, the Post Office (1922) Muine Bheag, a terraced double-height gable-fronted block, was purpose built and designed by the Board of Works. Classical motifs abound, such as simple pilasters that frame the openings, a decorative rendered architrave to the central window and the modillioned broken pediment with which the gable is treated.

Purpose-built entertainment buildings are comparatively rare in Carlow, with the exception of early twentieth-century cinemas. The Astor Cinema (c. 1955), Muine Bheag, has a simple rendered façade with rendered strips to the corners and a parapet wall that rises in the centre to conceal the projection booth. The plain-cantilevered concrete canopy over the door is simplicity itself, as is the unadorned uppercase lettering used in the nameplate. The Astor retains many original features, including its lettering and the steel-framed casement window that allowed light to enter a first floor café gallery. The same taste, if even more severe but no less elegant, can be found at a number of surviving early garages, another twentieth-century architectural type. Halligan Brothers Garage (c. 1930), Rathvilly (fig. 16), while not unlike the Astor, reveals a more functional role with its roughcast exterior. Significantly, in both instances the façade fronted otherwise simple gable-fronted barn-style buildings.

The Urban Residence



By the early-to-mid-nineteenth century an increasingly prosperous professional and merchant class emerged. In towns and villages its rise was marked by an increase in the number of middle-sized residences. The formal architectural style employed was initially influenced by Classical architecture.

Main Street, (c. 1815), Borris, is a two-storey symmetrically-planned block, built of stone but faced with render that has been ruled and lined to give the impression of ashlar stonework. While the basic structure compares with any number of contemporary houses, it was given its own distinctiveness through a particular use of Classical motifs. In this instance, the façade is enlivened with a fashionable fanlight doorway flanked by tripartite sash windows, which are synonymous with the architect James Wyatt (1746–1813). A characteristic feature of such houses was the incorporation of an arched carriageway providing access to service buildings to the rear of the property.

Estate cottages, built by improving landlords, were sometimes arranged in terraces, as at Fenagh, or in clusters or pairs, often similar in style to many of the contemporary railway cottages associated with the growth of the railways.

An attractive roadside pair (c. 1870) at Lisnavagh (*fig. 17*) comprises a granite single-storey double unit with prominently projecting porches. Gable windows allow light into the attic roof space and the windows are framed with 'dressed' stone. Phelan Street (c. 1903), Rathvilly (*fig. 18*), exemplifies a style of terraced housing that became common in the nineteenth century and evokes schemes found in larger urban settings. It consists of thirteen two-storey granite houses, arranged into three terraces.

Such small-scale housing, with adequate if cramped accommodation, built on a small parcel of land, set a precedent for larger social housing schemes, especially from the 1930s onwards. Although incorporating different plans it could be suggested that more recent housing estates, public and private, continue the same tradition. While small-scale houses, provided by landlords or otherwise, improved the general level of accommodation they inevitably prompted the demise of the traditional thatched cottage many of which had also existed in urban areas.



(*fig. 17*)
ESTATE LODGES,
Lisnavagh Demesne,
Lisnavagh
(c. 1870)

Lodges such as the semi-detached pair evident here were often built by landlords keen to improve conditions for tenants on their estates.



(*fig. 18*)
PHELAN STREET,
Rathvilly
(c. 1903)

This granite-built house (one of thirteen) is a fine example of early terraced housing that was developed—to the detriment of thatched cottages—in the nineteenth century as a new means of providing high density urban housing. Such early terraces can be seen as a precursor to the modern housing estate.

Country Houses



(figs. 19–20)
RUTLAND HOUSE,
Urglin
(c. 1830)

A standard Georgian house of two storeys over a raised basement; the door opening is decorated with a corbelled granite doorcase with a refined decorative fanlight.

The formal arrangement of outbuildings at Urglin is quite unusual, with long two-storey parallel ranges facing each other across a landscaped central courtyard. The main house closes off the complex at the north, forming a compact and self-contained residential and utilitarian whole.

The importance of Carlow as an agricultural county is reflected in its many substantial farmhouses. While the majority of these buildings are not of a scale that could be classed as 'country house', they are sufficiently large to reflect favourably on their owners. As a rule, they were conceived along simple lines and would have parallels with what became the norm for well-to-do town houses. Where the builder of large country houses tended to explore a fashionable array of styles, as evident in the use of Classical, Gothic, Tudor, and so on, the substantial farmer took a more utilitarian approach. A planning formula emerged and, apart from matters of detail and scale, remained largely unchanged well into the twentieth century. Ballinabrannagh House (c. 1910) adheres to this simple two-storey arrangement popular since the early-eighteenth century.

Busherstown House (c. 1725) exemplifies an early instance of the genre. It is a two-storey

over basement composition; the basement is not visible from the front of the property. As part of a later renovation (c. 1830) the door opening was remodelled to accommodate a simple granite doorcase and the lean-to bay was added to the right. Gable windows allowed light into the roof space. The nearby Rutland House (c. 1830), Urglin (figs. 19–20), is composed of two storeys but in this instance the basement is partly exposed. It is also more ambitious stylistically. The round-headed doorway retains a corbelled granite doorcase and the original decorative fanlight. On the rear elevation the gable-topped central bay is advanced slightly. Such farm residences were often little more than another component in a complete farming complex. At Rutland House the farmyard is to the rear, with outbuildings arranged in an unusually formal courtyard-like manner. Parallel two-storey rubble outbuildings are placed perpendicular to the house across a spacious farmyard.



(fig. 21)
STAPLESTOWN
FARMYARD,
Staplestown
(c. 1800)

An unusually fine design for what was effectively a utilitarian building. The gabled central bay retains a red brick-lined lunette window to the attic storey although the remainder of the openings appear to have been remodelled subsequently. The outbuilding is now disused.



(fig. 22)
ERINDALE HOUSE,
Mortarstown Upper
(c. 1810)

A house of the middle size executed in the Georgian Gothic style. This style combined Georgian proportions with Gothic-style motifs, such as the pointed arch windows evident here, and was a predecessor of the more historically grounded Gothic Revival style of the mid-nineteenth century.

Elsewhere, farm buildings were often built about a separate yard, some distance from the residential block, as at Staplestown House. The now little-used yard (c. 1800) (fig. 21) retains a significant two-storey stone-built block, the central gable of which incorporates a diminutive lunette window.

Other houses display a greater awareness of fashionable trends, suggesting that they were less dependant on farming as an occupation. The red brick Erindale House (c. 1810), Mortarstown Upper (fig. 22), is distinguished



(fig. 23)
BROOMVILLE HOUSE,
Clonachona
(c. 1815)

Originally a three-bay house with full-height bows to the front, flat-roofed end entrance bays were added c.1850, fronted by cut-granite diastyle in antis porticoes.

by Georgian Gothic-style motifs in the form of pointed-arch window openings to the full-height projecting bows that flank the central entrance bay. Broomville House, Clonachona (fig. 23) of c.1815 is designed with similar bowed bays flanking a central entrance, but dressed in a classical style.



(figs. 24–25)
HARDYMOUNT HOUSE,
Castlemore
(c. 1820)

Typical of houses built during the Regency period, it is characterised by the use of Georgian proportions with decorative features such as full-height pilasters, bowed sections and an overhanging roof.

The gateway at Hardymount House is an example of the uncomplicated designs that are no less attractive than their more ostentatious counterparts. Here a simple ball finial is used as a concession for decoration.

The slightly later Hardymount House (c. 1820) was fashioned according to the styles typical of the Regency period (figs. 24–25). Its two-storey composition is not dissimilar to the more utilitarian farm buildings but it supports stylish details such as a segmental-headed door opening, full-height pilaster strips to the façade, full-height bowed ends and overhanging eaves to the roof.

As elsewhere in Ireland, the medieval period witnessed the construction of many tower houses in Carlow of which few survive intact. Ballynalour and Ballytarsna are typical rubble stone-built structures built on a relatively standard square plan. Of those not demolished, some have been incorporated into the fabric of later buildings.

Reflecting the turbulence of the period, a number of seventeenth-century houses combined elements of medieval-like fortifications with elements that would become more commonplace in a later period of political calm. Although now largely ruinous, Staplestown Turrets (c. 1660), Staplestown (fig. 26), built for Sir William Temple (1628–99) combined elements in this manner.



(fig. 26)
THE TURRETS,
Staplestown
(c. 1660)

Built for Sir William Temple (1628–99), and once the focal point of the village he planned in the seventeenth century, the house was in ruins at the turn of the twentieth century and little remains today but a few stone-built fragments incorporating a series of round-headed openings.



(figs. 27–28)
HUNTINGTON
CASTLE,
Clonegal
(c. 1880)

An elaborate Victorian Gothic pile built for Alexander Durdin conceals a medieval Esmonde tower house of c. 1625 within.

Farmyard ranges such as this one frequently embellished a demesne and supported the economic viability of the estate.



(fig. 29)
PHILIPSTOWN MANOR,
Kinagh
(c. 1745)

A fine example of mid-eighteenth-century country house architecture, the façade is somewhat stark in appearance, an effect augmented by the large but simple pediment. The attractive cut-stone architrave to the door opening is a solitary decorative accent.

(fig. 30)
SHERWOOD PARK,
Ballon
(c. 1750)

An attractive house, built of limestone, using Palladian principles that favoured correct proportions over unnecessary detailing.

Huntington Castle (c. 1600–1650) Clonegal, erected for the Esmonde family, is one of the few surviving early-Plantation houses and retains its original tower house component amidst later additions and extensive remodeling (figs. 27–28).

Philipstown Manor (c. 1745), Kinagh (fig. 29) and Sherwood Park (c. 1750), Ballon (fig. 30), are typical of mid-eighteenth century houses. Sherwood Park is of relatively modest size and in the Classical style. It suggests the influence of Palladio (1508–80), whose architecture was characterised by proportional harmony with chaste detailing.



(fig. 31)
BROWNE'S
HILL HOUSE,
Chapelstown
(c.1763)

A fine example of the Classical style house with little unnecessary exterior ornament to detract from the overall austere effect. The portico was added c. 1842 by Thomas Cobden (fl. 1815–40).



The more robust Browne's Hill House, Chapelstown (1763), by an architect named Peters, illustrates the evolving nature of architectural Classicism (figs. 31–32). It is comparatively stark and suggests a powerful architectural statement with little exterior embellishment to detract from the overall austerity; the interior contains fine decorative plasterwork.

In around 1813 Richard Morrison (1767–1844) and William Vitruvius Morrison, father and son, embellished Borris House (fig. 33) with an array of Tudor-Revival motifs. The largely eighteenth-century house, dating from 1731, already incorporated the fabric of a medieval castle. In addition to an extensive remodelling of the interior, the Morrisons added an arcaded porch and hood mouldings

to the eighteenth-century sash windows and the entire composition was capped with a crenellated panelled parapet. Around 1825 Daniel Robertson encased Castletown House in a more developed Tudor Revival idiom, retaining the original Tudor tower (c. 1550) as a centrepiece entrance bay, albeit with more regular mullioned windows and the addition of an entrance porch and battlements. A slender castellated corner turret was added to the right of an eighteenth-century range, together with dormer windows and hood mouldings that enhance the Tudor-like character of the entrance façade.



(fig. 32)
STABLE COMPLEX,
Browne's Hill House,
Chapelstown
(c. 1842)

A granite-built Classical-style range, the complex is located, in the traditional way, some distance away from the main house so as to avoid unattractive noises or smells disturbing the residents.

(fig. 33)
BORRIS HOUSE,
Borris
(1731 & c. 1820)

An image of the house shortly after the completion of renovations to the designs of the Morrisons. The existing building of 1731 was augmented with Tudor Gothic embellishments including the distinctive battlemented roof parapet.

Courtesy of IAA.



(figs. 34–35)
DUNLECKNEY MANOR,
Dunleckney
(c. 1845)

Designed for Walter Newton by Robertson, the house was the architect's largest commission in County Carlow and features his trademark, the slender polygonal corner turret.

Daniel Robertson (c. 1775–1848) executed the entrance bay with characteristic vigour, furnishing the doorway with an ornate Gothic-style frontispiece and mullioned windows; the first floor is dominated by a castellated oriel window. The entrance is approached by a formal tree-lined avenue.



Robertson had more scope for inventiveness in his designs for Dunleckney Manor (c. 1845). The house represents, arguably, Robertson's most complete exploration of the Tudor Revival style (figs. 34–36). Only his work at Carriglass Manor (1837–40), County Longford, is of similar ambition and scale. Dunleckney retains the influence of Classical balance but is given an overlay of picturesque irregularity through the asymmetrical disposition of gables and windows, including oriel windows. The locally sourced limestone was used to provide stonework of a particularly fine quality. In addition to the ashlar work there are inventive decorative relief panels on the corner turret and the large oriel window above the main entrance.



(figs. 36)
DUNLECKNEY MANOR,
Dunleckney
(c. 1845)

The massing of this Tudor Revival pile was Robertson's most successful scheme in this style, rivalled perhaps only by his work at Carriglass Manor, County Longford.



WYKENHAM HOUSE,
Dunleckney
(c. 1840)

Built as the Dower House of Dunleckney Manor, Wykenham was designed by the same architect, Daniel Robertson (c. 1775–1848) and reveals a more restrained treatment of the Tudor Revival style.





(figs. 37–39)
DUCKETT'S GROVE,
Tullow
(c. 1745 & c. 1825)

The ruins of the castle, distinguished by its many towers and turrets, are a familiar landmark from the roadside into Tullow.

This image from the Lawrence Collection of about c. 1890 reveals the profusion of ornament that followed Thomas Cobden's (fl. 1815–40) renovations. The basic proportions of the earlier Georgian pile are still recognisable in the entrance front.

Courtesy of IAA.

Destroyed by fire in 1933, much of the nineteenth-century statuary is now lost, although gradual decay has contributed towards a more legitimate 'medieval' effect.



(figs. 40)
DUCKETT'S GROVE,
Tullow
(c. 1745 & c. 1825)

The orchestration of turrets, castellated parapets and tall chimney pots contributes to a romantic atmosphere, adding incident and variety to the skyline.

Tudor Revival was but one of many revival styles popular throughout the nineteenth century and Gothic Revival was perhaps the most prevalent, accommodating as it did the taste for picturesque compositions, while evoking great antiquity. The now ruinous Ducketts Grove (c. 1825) was designed by Thomas A. Cobden (fl. 1815–40) for John Dawson Ducket (figs. 37–40). It incorporated a mid-eighteenth century house, traces of which can be discerned in the symmetry of the entrance block. But such symmetry was subsumed in an orchestration of towers and battlements, all combining to create a picturesque fantasy-like evocation of a medieval world. Destroyed by fire in 1933, this romantic ruinous pile suggests a more convincing antiquity than the completed house ever possessed.



(fig. 41)
OAK PARK HOUSE,
Oak Park Demesne
(c. 1760 & c. 1832)

The garden front reveals the intervention of William Vitruvius Morrison (1794–1838) c. 1832. Invited to extend an earlier building of c. 1760, Morrison designed the lateral wings to left and right, and added single-storey bows to the central block. A slightly off-centre pedimented Ionic portico was added to the entrance front.

The Classical style continued to be favoured, if in a nineteenth-century guise. W. V. Morrison redesigned Oak Park House in 1832 for Henry Bruen (figs. 41–43). The existing house (c. 1760) was retained as the central component, to which Morrison added a two-storey pedimented Ionic portico (slightly off-centre) and substantial two-storey flanking wings. Single-storey bowed projections were applied to the garden front. Upton House (c. 1840), near Fenagh, was designed by Robertson. It is dominated by a massive granite Ionic porte cochère and the overall composition constitutes a scaled-down version of his designs for contemporary projects in County Wexford, such as Ballinkeele House, near Enniscorthy. A comparably impressive porch was added, (c. 1842) to Browne's Hill by Thomas Cobden.

Landlords often embellished their estates with ancillary structures that served either a utilitarian or a decorative purpose. Stables and farmyards helped sustain the viability of the estate. The granite-built farmyard buildings at Lisnavagh were designed (c. 1870) by John McCurdy (1823–85), on a quadrangular plan. In addition to accommodation for a farm manager, the yard contained cottages for general farm labourers and housing for cattle and horses, together with ancillary workshops, dairy and storage. The remains of a nineteenth-century red brick wall at Myshall were originally part of a kitchen garden, providing protection for the vegetables and orchard fruits grown within.



(fig. 42)
OAK PARK HOUSE,
Oak Park Demesne
(c. 1760 & c. 1832)

The entrance hall remodelled by Morrison c. 1832 includes an Ionic columnar screen, richly decorated plasterwork cornices and a geometrically compartmentalised plaster ceiling. The floor is of inlaid marble and the door architraves are topped with shallow pediments on brackets.

Courtesy of IAA.



(fig. 43)
OAK PARK HOUSE,
Oak Park Demesne
(c. 1760 & c. 1832)

Designed by Morrison c. 1832, the Classically inspired interior displays a riot of delicate decorative plasterwork, the work of the stuccodore, John Smith.

Courtesy of IAA.



(fig. 44)
OAK PARK
MAUSOLEUM,
Oak Park Demesne
(begun c. 1841)

A temple-style edifice designed in the Greek Revival style by J.B. Keane (d. 1859) for Col. Henry Bruen, the solid granite wall masses are relieved simply by four corner pilasters and an architraved door opening. The project was never completed, possibly due to circumstances involving the Great Famine (1845–8), and the mausoleum is now in ruins.

Gate lodges usually followed a standard single-storey design, such as that found at Newtown House (c. 1825). At Saint Austin's Abbey, Tullow, the surviving gatelodge (1859) is all that remains of the estate of the Doyne family. The architect, Benjamin Woodward (1816–61), explored his interest in the 'chateau' style and a steeply hipped roof, with an asymmetrically placed dormer window and tall chimneystack, dominates the resulting granite lodge. Conventionally, the gateway conveyed to the visitor the grandeur of the house beyond and, frequently, the aspirations of the family. A variety of designs have been employed over the centuries, ranging from simple piers and iron double gates to more architecturally ambitious schemes, spectacularly so at Duckett's Grove, designed (c. 1845) by J. McDuff Derick (1810–61). Follies and garden buildings, subsidiary structures only occasionally fulfilling a practical purpose, were also a feature of great estates, adding visual incident to the landscape.

The folly at Currane (c. 1810) is a two-storey tower on a square plan that was probably intended as an 'eye-catcher' on the landscape; it is currently disused and overgrown with a dense covering of ivy. Although conceived with a practical purpose in mind, the unfinished Mausoleum at Oak Park (begun c. 1841), a looming Greek inspired temple of granite, designed by J. B. Keane (d. 1859), has something of the character of a folly (fig. 44).

The Vernacular



In stark contrast to the opulence of the grand country mansion, Carlow was once densely populated with more modest vernacular houses. The term 'vernacular' describes buildings that fall into the category of unplanned architecture. Such buildings were enlarged or adapted in response to the demands of its occupant, and built using available skill and readily available local materials. The most common vernacular house had a rectangular plan that might be as little as one room deep, lit by small windows. Available material determined the building fabric. Some were composed of mud walls, whilst the more durable house was built of rubble stone with an external treatment of lime render. Internal partition walls might be composed of the lighter materials of wattle and daub, while floors consisted of compacted mud with stone flags lining the hearth of the fireplace. Thatch was the most readily employed roofing material. A 1986 survey of thatched houses indicated a mere six examples surviving in Carlow. A surviving nineteenth-century example (c. 1855) at Mortarstown Upper is a single-storey range of characteristic mud-wall construction, finished with a layer of roughcast render. It was re-roofed in 1998 with oaten thatch.

Unfortunately the early sash windows may also have been replaced at this time. In contrast, Watchorn's, Old Town Bridge (*fig. 45*), retains its sash windows, which may be contemporary with the house (c. 1870). The house was re-roofed (c. 1985) with corrugated iron, itself now considered a vernacular material.

The vernacular heritage of Carlow is further represented in the county's stock of sundry structures and artefacts, some particular to the county. The handball alley (c. 1930) Tinryland incorporates the fabric of an earlier house (c. 1850) and is a type of twentieth-century vernacular structure, built wholly or partly of mass concrete, indigenous to Ireland. Once commonplace, these are becoming increasingly rare. Carlow fencing, used to indicate boundaries, is a feature unique to the county; it made use of the readily available granite with large sections laid horizontally over squat granite posts (*fig. 46*). A fine example (c. 1870) survives at Pollacton House, Pollerton Big.

GATE AT CASTLETOWN
(C. 1870)

The various gateways in Carlow range in styles from ornate examples such as at Duckett's Grove, Tullow, to simple but effective cast-iron compositions as seen here.



(*fig. 45*)
WATCHORNS'S,
Old Town Bridge
(c. 1870)

A long single-storey cottage, probably originally thatched, but which, with its corrugated-iron roof, is still of vernacular heritage interest.

(*fig. 46*)
CARLOW FENCING

Carlow Fencing, a method of forming a boundary wall using granite sections, quarried locally, laid horizontally over vertical posts, is a feature particular to the region and is a striking example of vernacular heritage.



Ecclesiastical Heritage

While the courthouse was often the administrative centre of the urban settlement, it was the church that became the focal point of the community; very many date from the nineteenth century, their spires punctuating the skyline of Carlow's towns and villages (*fig. 47*). The politically turbulent sixteenth and seventeenth centuries largely curtailed the erection of new places of worship. The Penal Laws in the eighteenth century placed restrictions on Catholic worship, although the application of the laws was gradually relaxed; few Catholic churches of this period survive in Ireland. On the other hand, the Church of Ireland reutilised some Medieval sites as at Old Leighlin, promoting thereby a combined sense of legitimacy and continuity.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Church of Ireland witnessed a greatly accelerated building campaign, erecting purpose-built churches that were united in an almost uniform architectural form. Of simple, occasionally austere, lines with slender spires these churches are a familiar feature across the county. They were mostly financed by the Board of first Fruits (active c. 1711–1833), the official regulating body with responsibility for building for what was then the Established Church.

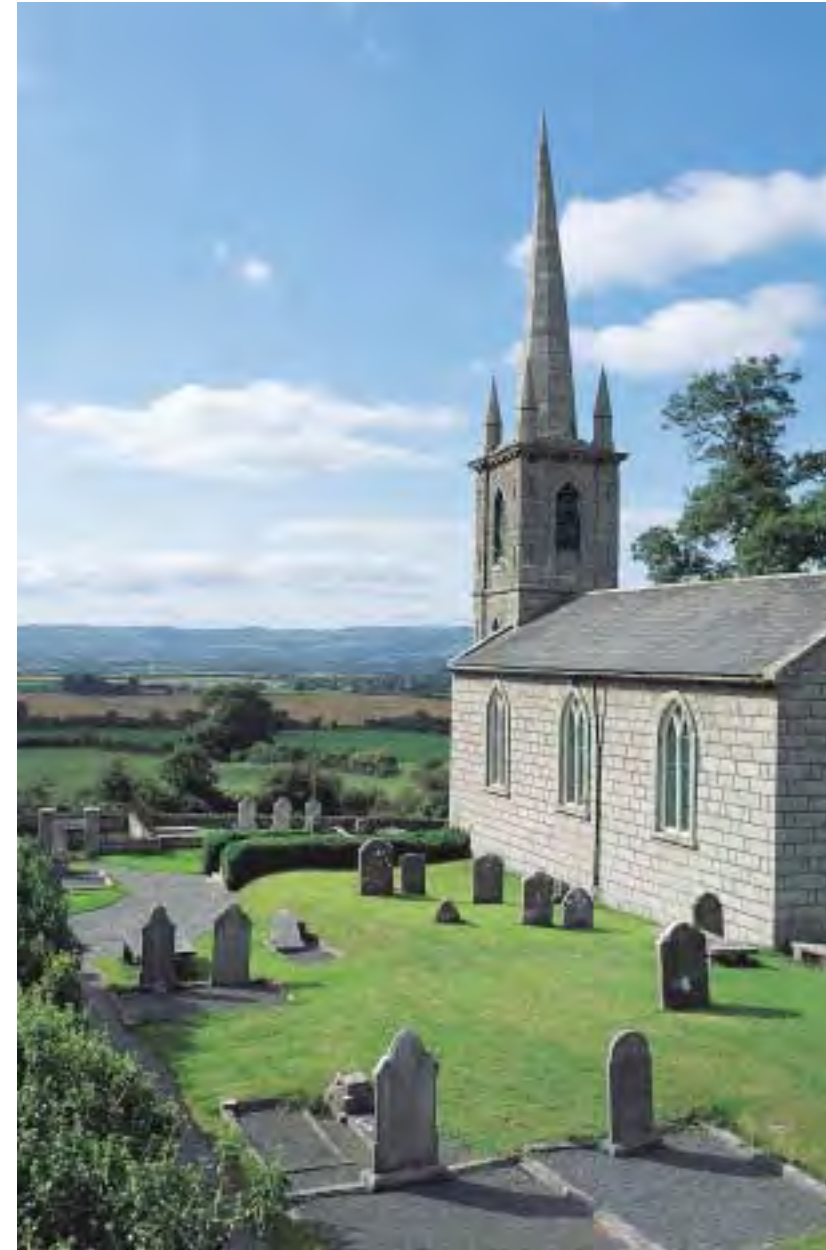
Saint John's Church (c. 1803), Clogrennan, exemplifies the Board of first Fruits type church (*fig. 48*). Its design evolved from the 'barnstyle' single-cell churches, without towers, erected in the late-eighteenth century. The overall design at Clogrennan is simple and unassuming. A three-stage tower surmounted by corner pin-

nacles provides entrance to a double-height single-cell nave with paired windows. This was renovated and extended eastwards c. 1870, when a lower chancel and vestry were constructed. The late-eighteenth century Saint John the Baptist's Church, Hacketstown, is not dissimilar. Its entrance tower, supporting a limestone ashlar spire, was also funded by the Board of first Fruits.

In contrast to the comparative austerity of these early churches, the Church of Christ the Redeemer (the Adelaide Memorial Church), Myshall, is a riot of inventive pinnacles and multi-textured materials (*figs. 49–58*). Built of Stradbally limestone, it was erected (c. 1903) on a cruciform plan to the designs of the Dublin based George Coppinger Ashlin (1837–1921), and is a late instance of the influence of a particularly ornate style of Gothic Revival idiom. It not only indicates the wealth of its patron but also reflects the liturgical changes in the Anglican Church in the course of the nineteenth century. The exterior boasts a profusion of richly carved detail, including a frieze, a balustraded parapet to the tower and decorative corner pinnacles. The equally ornate interior, with mosaic tiled floors and a rib-vaulted stone ceiling, retains a memorial statue of 1888 salvaged from an earlier church on the site, together with a marble statue, *Innocence*, by the sculptor Sir Thomas Farrell (1827–1900).

(*fig. 47*)
SAINT JOHN'S
CHURCH OF IRELAND,
Nurney
(c. 1790)

It is arguable that the setting of the church is almost of equal importance as its architectural quality. Here a three-bay block overlooks the surrounding landscape; the soaring tower is clearly visible from afar. The building is set in a burial ground dispersed with a wide variety of cutstone grave markers.



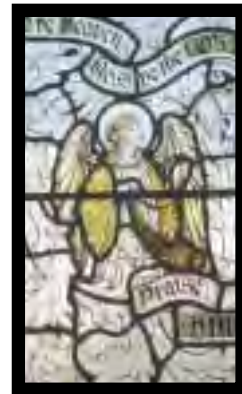
(*fig. 48*)
SAINT JOHN'S
CHURCH OF IRELAND,
Clogrennan
(c. 1803)

Saint John's Church conforms to the traditional plan associated with the Board of first Fruits churches and is identified by a characteristic tall, slender, entrance tower with corner pinnacles that adds incident to the skyline. The building is approached by a winding avenue lined with iron railings.



(figs. 49–58)
ADELAIDE
MEMORIAL CHURCH,
Myshall
(c. 1903)

Now known as the Church of Christ the Redeemer, the profusion of ornament in George Coppinger Ashlin's (1837–1921) design—the stepped buttresses, decorative pinnacles, and so on—is in stark contrast to the simplicity of the Board of first Fruits churches throughout the remainder of County Carlow.



The interior of this church is uncharacteristically ornate for a Church of Ireland church, which perhaps reflects the fact that it was built as a private memorial. Features within include a delicately stained glass window.

Apparently no surface in the building was left unadorned, as evident in the elaborately intertwin- ing iron hinges to the diagonally-set tongue- and-groove timber- panelled doors.



The church also contains a range of attractive iron and stone work, as evident here in a decorative gate, intricate grate and elaborate floral mosaic of limestone and marble.



Detail of the carved stone decoration to the primary entrance that includes foliated capitals on slender colonettes.



Detail of the reredos with a fresco depicting The Last Supper. The painting accentuates the medieval Gothic tone that permeates the entire composition.





View of the chancel and altar, the interior space is dominated by soaring lancet chancel arches supported on clustered colonettes. The chapel is lit by traceried stained glass windows, below which the altar and reredos appear slightly out of proportion.



Detail of the intricate foliate carving evident throughout the interior space.

An example of the delicate carving that distinguishes the church.

Detailed drawing of a proposed iron chancel screen by the architect of the church, George Coppinger Ashlin, it was apparently never executed.

Courtesy of IAA



An example of the delicate carving that distinguishes the church.



Ancillary structures such as the rectory, or glebe house, used a range of architectural styles. The former Rectory (c. 1815), Barrack Street, Tullow, employed the simple lines and composition typical of late-Georgian architecture. In contrast, the more substantially scaled granite-built former Rectory (c. 1864), Borris Road, Kilgraney, employs the Tudor Revival style. A granite built Sexton's House (c. 1835), Tullow, now mostly ruinous, once housed the caretaker of the local church.

Throughout the eighteenth century, and in the absence of formal accommodation for worship, the Catholic community continued to place special attention on traditional devotional sites such as Holy Wells. With the relaxation of the Penal Laws, coupled with an increase in population and status within the community, many significant Catholic churches were erected. Early nineteenth-century churches were unassuming in plan and execution but distinguished by a comparatively large scale. Simple barn-style or T-shaped plans were favoured. Clonmore (Old) Catholic Church (c. 1805), Oldtown, is an example of the latter. The otherwise unassuming exterior is embellished only on the granite-fronted entrance bay which is surmounted by a tall gabled bellcote. Saint Bridget's (c. 1815) Ballinabranagh (*fig. 59*), is not untypical of the more common barn-style church. It consists of a double-height single-cell 'barn-style' space lit by round-headed windows. Squat columnar granite pinnacles adorn the gables while a fanlit entrance doorway, set within a granite architrave, echoes the contemporary taste in domestic architecture.

Increasing stature and influence was inevitably reflected in more adventurous buildings, both in terms of planning and ornamentation.

Work commenced on Carlow Cathedral (*fig. 60*) in 1829—the same year that the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed. The granite church, now much altered, was erected to the designs of Thomas Cobden, a late replacement for the previous architect, Joseph Lynch (n.d.). It is a relatively early example of the taste for Neo-Gothic, especially on this scale, and, in contrast to the diminutive buildings at Oldtown and Ballinabranagh, proclaims its presence through a tall octagonal entrance tower recalling such towers in Belgium as at the Cloth Hall (1260–1304), Ypres.

Some early churches were built in a style where the Neo-Gothic element was confined to the pointed arches of the windows. They can be more correctly described as 'Gothick' and many retain elements of Classical taste generally more widespread at the time. Saint Bridget's (1810–40), Hacketstown retains a Tuscan-columned reredos with a later severe Neo-Gothic entrance porch. Such a combination of Classical and Gothic motifs is also a feature at Saint Laserian's Church (1793), Ballinkillin (Ballinkillen), which retains a carved Ionic reredos.

Catholic Emancipation encouraged, if not immediately, an accelerated church building campaign. This trend was more pronounced in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and, consequently, the churches erected reflect the dominance of Neo-Gothic tastes found across the United Kingdom and much of continental Europe in these years. The increasingly elaborate planning, detailing and execution, as found in Saint Patrick's (1885), Rathvilly, bears witness to the increased confidence of the church and its congregations. Although altered in 1988 (Campbell, Conroy, Hickey Architects),

(*fig. 60*)
CARLOW CATHEDRAL,
Carlow
(begun 1829)

Begun in the year that the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, the cathedral was financed through public subscription. Thomas Cobden's (fl. 1815–40) decorative entrance tower is in contrast to the relative simplicity of the interior.



(*fig. 59*)
SAINT BRIDGET'S
CATHOLIC CHURCH,
Ballinabranagh
(c. 1815)

A fine example of an early-nineteenth century Catholic church, Saint Bridget's displays little of the superfluous ornament that characterised the Diocesan Cathedral begun just over a decade later. Of the 'barn-style' group of churches the building is characterised by a single-volume, full-height internal space.



(fig. 61)
GARDEN OF SLEEP,
Ballybrommell
(c. 1908)

A reminder of Carlow's Quaker community, this burial ground is identified on the roadside by an inscribed gabled pedestrian gateway.

Saint Patrick's retains an impressively-scaled interior, with arcading of local granite and a sanctuary supporting an array of imported Italian marbles; the brass tabernacle doors suggest the influence of the Celtic Revival. The incomplete bell tower at Saint Patrick's is far from unique in Ireland and bears witness to the lack of funds available to keep pace with the architectural intentions. Later changes in styles, including Neo-Romanesque and Neo-classicism, reflected not only shifting taste but also a strong Italianate bias within the church at this period. This is sometimes best expressed in the Italianate-inspired altars and statuary found in church interiors such as the elaborate altar (c. 1917) found in the Church of the Most Holy Rosary, Tullow (1875). The Church of the Immaculate Conception in Ardattin (1954) continued the Italianate tradition. On the other hand, the O'Meara Monument (1874), Saint Mary's Church, Bennekerry was executed in what can be called a Hiberno-Romanesque style. Such variations continued until the advent of Modernism in Irish ecclesiastical design during the late 1950s, which was further encouraged by the radical liturgical changes following the Second Vatican Council (1962–5). The Liturgy Institute at Carlow, its oratory designed (1980) by Richard Hurley, has had an influence on the reordering of sanctuaries across the county.

Presbyteries are conventionally located in close proximity to each parish church and historically many emulated the tastes of the substantial well-to-do domestic dwelling, affording status to the occupant and reflecting favourably on the community that housed it. Leighlinbridge Presbytery (c. 1830) is an early example of this genre and retains a Classical

sense of balance and scale associated with much eighteenth-century architecture. The Presbytery (c. 1850), Borris, stands on the main street, slightly set back and fronted by a garden with decorated wrought iron railings. It has a comparably balanced composition but is in this instance enlivened with an ogee-headed doorway, cut-stone doorcase and rusticated yellow granite quoins.

The setting of many Carlow churches within a graveyard, occasionally with evocative planting and memorial tombs, adds greatly to their architectural interest. A burial ground for the Society of Friends, at Ballybrommell, dates from around 1908 and is a reminder of the once thriving Quaker community in Carlow. A low concave screen-like wall along the roadside supports an arched pedestrian gateway above which an inscription, 'God's Acre—The Garden Of Sleep', indicates the solemn purpose beyond (fig. 61).

Although no longer in use, surviving Methodist churches bear testimony to the existence of the community across Carlow in previous centuries. Their churches were typically simple; that at Hacketstown (c. 1834) is a single-storey, single-cell granite structure. Simple lancet windows, with splayed stone surrounds, are the only concession to visual incident. The contemporaneous church in Clonegal is similar in appearance and retains early diamond-leaded timber windows. Of rubble stone construction, it has been rendered, ruled and lined to suggest ashlar stone. The granite-built church (c. 1850, now a museum), Tullow, is comparatively ornate. It is built over a raised basement and is embellished with a cut-stone doorcase, approached by a flight of steps, raised quoins and brick dressings around windows.

Buildings of Transport and Industry



(figs. 62–63)
THE BARROW
NAVIGATION
(c. 1790)

While most of the lock gates, such as the examples seen here, were replaced c. 1990, the keeper's houses have met varying fates since the closure of the line in 1959; this example now lies ruinous although further examples have been converted to private residential use.

A view of one of the many locks that are located along the course of the River Barrow. Adjacent to the canal bank, a former lock keeper's house has been maintained in private residential use.

Complementing its success as an agricultural county, Carlow has an unusually rich industrial heritage, much of it related to agricultural production. Already an important route to the agricultural heartland, the Barrow was enhanced with the initiation of the Barrow Navigation (fig. 62–63) in the 1750s. In the absence of a developed road system, this provided a comparatively swift transport route by which the agricultural produce of the region might be transferred to large urban centres. Improvements to the navigability of the river involved excavating the riverbed to a minimum depth of five feet in the centre, formalising and straightening routes and the development of lateral canals. The ambitious project encouraged the construction of retaining walls, the laying of towpaths, and building of bridges and locks. Locks at Carriglead,

Cournellian and Ballykeenan, dating from around 1761, are among the earliest on the river. Most of the canal-related elements date to the 1790s, in which period an extension of the canal was begun to complete the navigability of the River Barrow to Waterford Harbour. Numerous canal locks with granite ashlar retaining walls are located from Bestfield or Duganstown, terminating at Saint Mullin's. Locks typically have hinged timber gates which, when closed, form a footbridge across the canal leading to the towpaths on either side.



(fig. 64)
SAINT
MULLIN'S LOCK,
Saint Mullin's
(c. 1761)

The lock keeper's house in this instance is an unusual example deviating, as it does, from the standards established later c. 1790. The building is gable-fronted, the gable being treated as a pediment, and the whole is infused with a Classical theme.

Lock keeper's houses are synonymous with canal projects. Constructed by a single authority, it is not surprising that most follow a standard plan: generally a single-storey stone-built cottage style, as found at Ballyellin and Borris Demesne. Many survive in varying states of repair and have been converted to private use since the closing of the canal to commercial transport route in 1959. The lock keeper's house at Saint Mullin's (fig. 64) is a two-storey gable-fronted Classical-style building (c. 1761). Its gable is treated as a Classical pediment and many of the original features are intact. A small stone-built, cell-like structure (c. 1835) at Bridge Street, Tullow, is known locally as the Water Bailiff's Hut. Although its original use is uncertain, it retains some attractive features but unfortunately is disused and partly ruinous.



Windmills were never a common feature in Carlow, although evidence suggests one existed formerly at Lisnavagh Demesne; instead, the extensive network of rivers is reflected in the number of water-powered mills that were erected across the county. A report compiled by Sir Richard Griffith in 1852 indicated almost sixty mills in the county. Although disused and dilapidated, the rubble stone-built corn mill (c. 1850) at Clashganna is typical of smaller mills. It retains its brick-lined segmental-headed windows and a hipped slate roof. The corn mill (c. 1830) at Kilcarrig, retains its cast-iron waterwheel and a nearby woollen mill (c. 1865) retains its original iron and timber waterwheel; both were powered by a mill race culverted from the Barrow Navigation. River- and canal-

side warehouses were used for storing agricultural produce such as cereals. The Minch Norton and Company Maltings (c. 1868) at Muine Bheag remains almost completely intact and is particularly impressive (*figs. 65–66*). The complex is still in use and consists of a closely related cluster of large-scale four- and five-storey warehouses on a U-shaped plan. The rubble-stone masonry, with brick dressing around windows, is of high quality. The timber floors of the interior are supported on cast-iron pillars.

(*fig. 65*)
MINCH NORTON
AND COMPANY,
Muine Bheag
(c. 1868)

A collection of four- and five-storey buildings on a U-shaped plan, the complex is testament to Carlow's industrial tradition.



(*fig. 66*)
MINCH NORTON
AND COMPANY,
Muine Bheag
(c. 1868)

Picturesquely located on the banks of the Barrow Navigation, which facilitated the transport of goods to and from the maltings, the complex is composed of locally-sourced stone.



(fig. 67)
BALLYNOE FORGE,
Ballynoe
(c. 1825)

Built of locally-sourced granite, the building has been designed in a restrained Gothic Revival style, as evident in the use of pointed door openings and blind fielded panels.



(fig. 68)
LISNAVAGH HOUSE,
Lisnavagh
(c. 1847)

Built for William McClintock—Bunbury by Daniel Robertson (c. 1775–1848)—the design has also been attributed to John McCurdy (1823–85)—the house is one of a collection of fine Tudor Revival mansions in County Carlow. This sketch depicting the newly-completed building is of historic importance, revealing the extent of the entire composition prior to truncation, c. 1955.

Courtesy of IAA.

Forges provided an essential service for the operation of all agricultural and early industrial services in the county. Although erected in diverse styles, the forges at Ballynoe (1825) and Castlemore (c. 1870) were constructed of the finest materials, with granite walls and natural slate roofs. The forge at Ballynoe (fig. 67) reveals the influence of the Gothic Revival; the single-storey composition is articulated by a series of blind panels and pointed-arch openings. At Castlemore the forge is less stylistically adventurous but relies on a segmental-headed entrance and crow-stepped gable ends for visual incident.

Additional items of industrial heritage, frequently overlooked, but providing an insight into past traditions and practice, are often of interest. A freestanding cast-iron water tank (1907), on iron stilts and powered by a wind-

mill, provided fresh water to Lisnavagh House (fig. 68). Limekilns, burning quarried limestone for the production of lime, were once commonplace. A surviving, but disused, roadside kiln (1816) at Clogrennane (fig. 69), comprises a freestanding squared limestone façade into which are set five round-headed brick lined furnaces, possibly intended for communal use. Originally a lean-to roof would have protected the kilns. Culm, a raw material extracted from anthracite, once crushed under the weight of the heavy circular crushing stone, was formerly a cheap domestic fuel. Such culm crushers survive at Ballinacarrig and Closutton (both c. 1855).

The establishment of a railway network, beginning in 1845, redefined the landscape of Carlow. Appropriately, the celebrated railway engineer William Dargan (1799–1867) was



(fig. 69)
LIME KILN,
Clogrennane
(c. 1816)

A particularly large structure with five brick-lined ovens. The kilns were used to burn limestone which was then used to produce traditional lime render, limewash, and agricultural fertiliser.



(fig. 70)
MUINE BHEAG
RAILWAY STATION,
Muine Bheag
(c. 1850)

Attributable to W. D. Butler (d. 1857) the composition of the limestone- and granite-built building recalls a Palladian 'Economic Villa' arrangement of central block, linking arcades and terminating end bays. The station remains relatively unaltered.

a native of Carlow town. By the completion of the network in 1886, three routes controlled by the GSWR (Great Southern and Western Railway) traversed the county, with a total of eight railway stations and numerous attendant structures. Significantly, the station at Glynn, opened in 1874, was apparently unable to sustain commercial or passenger interest and closed within a year. Following the closure of lines in 1931 and 1963, only Carlow and Muine Bheag stations are still operational. Railway stations across Ireland are of interest, and those in Carlow reveal a wide variety of styles ranging from the simple to the ornate. The station (1845) in Carlow town was designed by Sir John McNeill (c.1793–1880) and is not only one of the earliest stations in the region but amongst the most important instances of the Jacobean Revival in the county.

The contemporary station at Muine Bheag (then Bagenalstown) is attributed to William Deane Butler (d. 1857). Constructed of limestone and granite, it evokes an Italianate villa, with a Palladian-like composition of a central block, with pedimented breakfront, linking arcades and projecting terminal bays (fig. 70). This arrangement is mirrored along the station platforms with the addition of a lean-to open shelter resting on paired granite ashlar piers. Other railway stations were less architecturally ambitious. The granite-built station in Borris (1858) employed an understated Tudor Revival idiom in keeping with the popularity of the style locally, both at Borris House and for much of the domestic architecture in the town. The same style was employed for the station master's house (in private use since 1965).



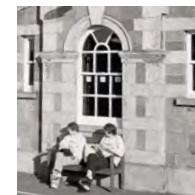
(fig. 71)
BORRIS VIADUCT,
Borris
(c. 1860)

An outstanding feat of railway engineering, William Le Fanu's (1816–1894) limestone bridge once carried the railway line fifty feet above road level along its sixteen arches. Closed in 1963, it was later re-opened as a pedestrian footbridge as part of a planned nature trail.



(fig. 72)
FOOTBRIDGE,
Muine Bheag
railway station
(c. 1880)

The cast-iron spans and delicate wrought iron lattice work are a fine example of the juxtaposition of technical engineering achievements and aesthetically pleasing design.



The engineering components of railway construction in Ireland, such as embankments and cuttings, are always of considerable interest. The sixteen-arch viaduct (1862) at Borris (fig. 71), with arches supported by soaring limestone piers, is a dramatic instance of monumental-style railway engineering. It was designed by the engineer William Le Fanu (1816–1894), and built by John Bagnall. Closed to rail traffic in 1963 it has subsequently been re-opened for pedestrian use as part of a planned nature walk.

Subsidiary structures at all stations often possess engineering and architectural sophistication in their own right. Goods sheds, such as the granite-built block at Borris, are of interest. Signal boxes, such as the surviving, if ruinous, example at Rathvilly, conformed to a standard planning formula found throughout the country. Out of use since 1947, the Rathvilly signal box is a freestanding single-storey glazed compartment over a raised granite base. The elliptical cast-iron footbridge at Muine Bheag (fig. 72) incorporates attractive iron latticework and reflects the successful union between industrial production and innovative design in railway engineering.

The enhancement of waterway transport and railways was also accompanied by improvements to general road transport. Bridges were an important factor in facilitating ease of movement around the county,

especially one crossed by so many important rivers and tributaries. Various styles and materials were employed and the majority are single-arch structures, as at the segmental arched Staplestown Bridge (c. 1845) which is of granite ashlar. The somewhat earlier cast-iron bridge (c. 1835) at Oak Park was designed by George Papworth (1781–1855) and is as much an elaborate garden adornment as a utilitarian road structure.

Smaller multiple-arch bridges include Bunnahown Bridge (c. 1765) at Borris Demesne, a three-arch structure with rock-faced treatment to the stone construction, ashlar voussoirs and triangular cutwaters. Similarly, the Acaun Bridge (c. 1800), Tobinstown, is a five-arch granite-built structure. Built on a slightly skewed plan, the round arches are all lined using ashlar voussoirs, with the exception of the central arch that was rebuilt (c. 1925) using a reinforced concrete flat span, surmounted by a cast-concrete balustrade. The juxtaposition of round- and flat-arches in the one composition makes this a picturesque feature.

Lifting Bridges over the Barrow Navigation at Milford and Muine Bheag (both c. 1870) consist of a protruding granite ashlar plinth, over which is suspended the cast-iron mechanism by which the bridge (probably originally timber) could be raised.

Street Furniture

Carlow has a wealth of street furniture of artistic and architectural interest such as post boxes, milestones, and water pumps, that can be easily overlooked. With an increased emphasis on change, many such artefacts are under threat. Their loss would be to the detriment of the county's heritage. Some wall-mounted cast-iron letterboxes survive from the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901) including examples at Drumfea, Borris and Tullow (all c. 1880–90). Manufactured by W. T. Allen and Company, London, such boxes incorporate the characteristic royal monogram and the words 'Post Office'. A later example (c. 1910) at the forge, Castlemore, is comparably designed, with the addition of a distinctive monogram for the reign of King Edward VII (1901–10).

Milestones were once commonplace. An inscribed double-faced granite milestone (c. 1800) survives, set onto the boundary wall, at All Saints Church, Fennagh. It indicates distances to Myshall and Newtownbarry (now Bunclody, County Wexford) on one face, and to Bagenalstown (now Muine Bheag) and Royal Oak on the other. Surviving water pumps are not only of architectural design interest but also reflect past social practices. Examples in

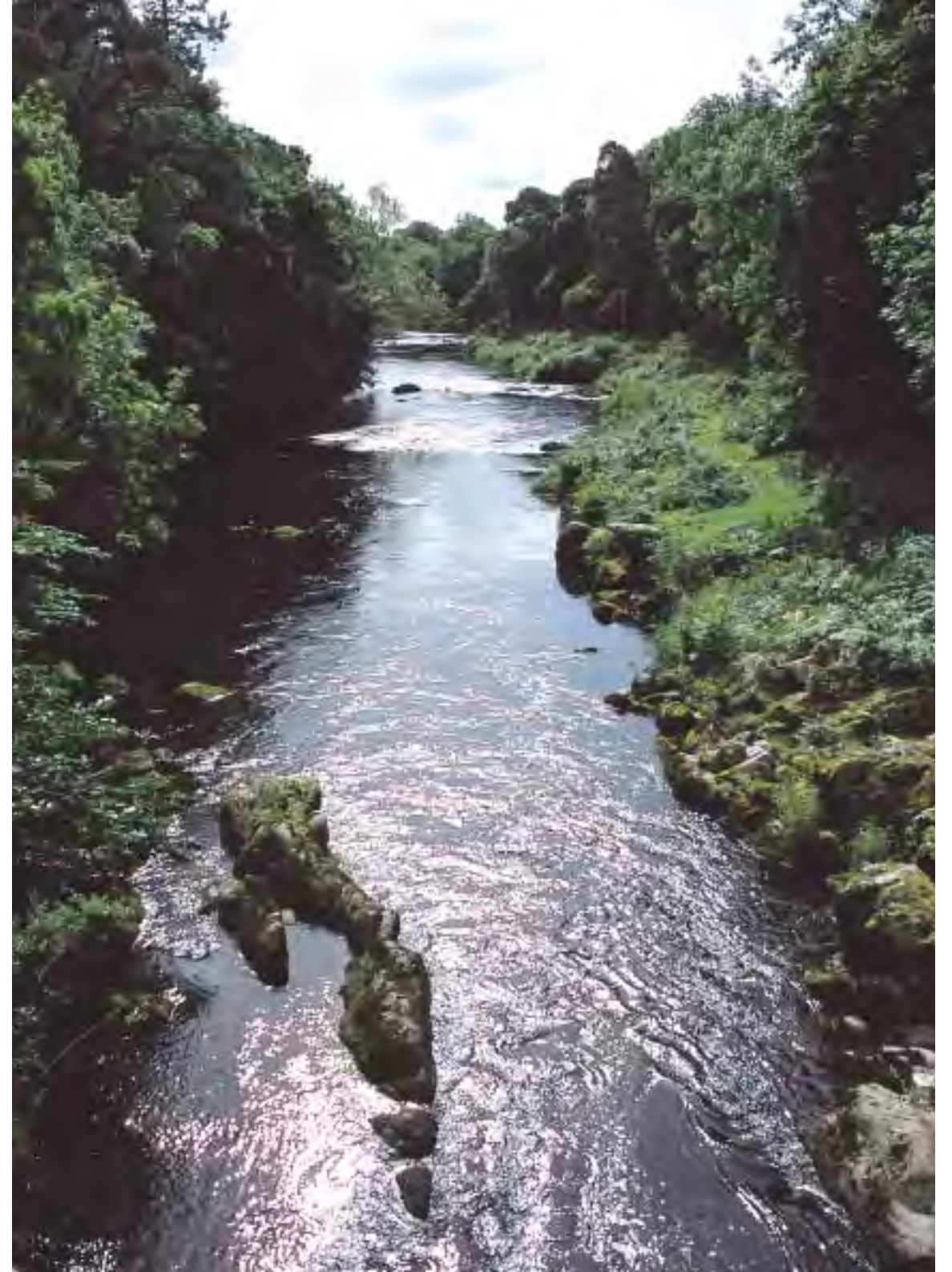
Borris and the Palatine Village are typical. The former, an early surviving example from 1829, is a tapered cast-iron shaft on a square plan, decorated with panelled motifs. The handle and spout are now missing, but a shallow limestone overflow basin survives. The example (c. 1870) at Palatine Village is of a more conventional, once widespread, type consisting of a cast-iron cylindrical shaft set upon a tapered stone podium with a slender, curved pumping arm close by the spout.

The Kavanagh Memorial Fountain (c. 1890) Borris, is dedicated to A. M. Kavanagh, a Member of Parliament who died in 1889. It is given a distinctive presence in the streetscape, being raised on a stepped platform and surrounded by railings. The overall composition is characteristic of late nineteenth-century civic monuments of this type. The fountain proper is a limestone shaft on a square base, decorated with Hiberno-Romanesque-style arches into which are set carved marble plaques. The whole is topped with a drum and conical cap rising to a finial.



SHABEG,
Borris,
(c. 1835)

The gateway in this instance reveals an almost vernacular quality as granite piers are fashioned to include crude razor tooth mouldings the tops and mushroom capping. The gate of mass produced wrought iron retains its original latch with curvilinear handle.





Conclusion

SPRINGFIELD HOUSE,
Bennekerry
(c. 1815)

The design of the house is enlivened by the use of Wyatt-style (tripartite) windows and a projecting porch of delicate lattice work. The semi-circular front garden framed by simple iron railings provides an attractive setting.



THE STEP HOUSE,
Borris
(c. 1835)

A typical early-nineteenth-century urban residence for the professional class that drew inspiration from the Classical style. Normally of three bays and two storeys, a range of accents might be introduced to afford individuality to such buildings like the doorcase in this instance, together with the flight of steps that give the house its title.

The range of artefacts, buildings and structures described constitute but a small portion of the architectural heritage of County Carlow. The NIAH County Interim Survey has identified a wide range of structures of importance, from public buildings such as churches and courthouses, to private projects such as houses and farm buildings.

The survival of buildings from the periods covered by the survey (post 1700) is testament to the durability of construction and design with which they were conceived.

Rapid economic and social change in the late-twentieth century has encouraged the destruction and loss of much that could still be useful and of benefit, especially in urban areas. However, there is hope for the survival of the remaining historic fabric as an awareness of protection and conservation becomes more prevalent. This is already evident in the conversion of defunct schoolhouses to residential, recreational and/or commercial use.

Similarly, many small mills and warehouses have been successfully converted into residential developments and occasionally retained as working examples of historic mills.

The architectural fabric of previous centuries is among the most tangible evidence providing insight into the history of a county. As history is continuously being written it will be necessary to examine and re-assess the architectural legacy of the twentieth century, as the buildings of that period will, in turn, represent the architectural heritage for future generations. The architecture of the past is a legacy to the present. So too the architecture of the present will represent a legacy to the future of the culture and ideals of the people of County Carlow.



TINNAHINCH ESTATE COTTAGE, Tinnahinch (c. 1835)

A modest house in an attractive setting that highlights the suitability of the Tudor Revival style for use in buildings of this scale. Decorative devices such as hood mouldings, treated gables and tall chimneystacks complement rather than overwhelm the composition.

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