

AN INTRODUCTION  
TO THE ARCHITECTURAL  
HERITAGE *of*

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COUNTY  
MAYO



***An Roinn  
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta***  
***Department of  
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht***



# Preface

County Mayo has been settled since Neolithic times with each succeeding generation leaving its imprint on the landscape. The archaeological legacy of the region has long been valued but the post-1700 architectural heritage has, by comparison, been perhaps less so. The reports of the Irish Tourist Association Survey (1942-5), for instance, include extensive descriptions of the appearance and history of the abbey and castle ruins that dot the landscape but similar accounts of Georgian, Victorian and contemporary architecture are often lacking.

Although not a comprehensive catalogue, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) undertook, from 2008 to 2013, the largest ever survey of the post-1700 architectural heritage of County Mayo, some highlights of which are explored in this *Introduction*. It is hoped that the survey and *Introduction* will foster a greater awareness of

and appreciation for the post-1700 architectural heritage of County Mayo. As custodians of this valuable resource, it is the responsibility of the present generation to ensure that it survives as a sustainable legacy for the generations to come.

For the purposes of this *Introduction* the spelling for all placenames is as set out in the *Index to the Townlands, and Towns, and Parishes and Baronies of Ireland* (1851). Irish translations were sourced from Bunachar Logainmneacha na hÉireann.

The NIAH Mayo County Survey can be accessed online at: [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie)

# Introduction

County Mayo is a maritime county located in the north-west corner of the Province of Connacht, bounded to the west and north by the Atlantic Ocean and to the east and south by Counties Sligo, Roscommon and Galway. Topographically, the county has a diverse landscape, which cannot fail to impress the observer. Craggy cliffs defining the northern coastline give way to the gently undulating terrain of An Muirthead [Mullet Peninsula] on the north-west. Achill Island, Ireland's largest populated island, dominates the coastline to the west while countless smaller islands and islets mark the entrance to Clew Bay. Vast tracts of raised bog in the north are encircled by picturesque mountain chains while the lofty peaks of Croagh Patrick and Nephin have long drawn artists and builders attracted by Romantic scenery. The Lake District in the south, on the border with County Galway, includes Loughs Mask and Corrib and has fostered the construction of fishing lodges since the early nineteenth century. The River Moy, at one time the boundary with County Sligo, has supported a salmon fishing industry since the earliest of times while comparatively minor rivers and streams, the Deel, the Erriff, the Owenmore and the Robe, are crossed by bridges and viaducts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century origin.

Carboniferous Limestone abounds and, extracted from innumerable quarries, the stone is a ubiquitous presence in the built heritage of the county, featuring extensively at Saint Muredach's Catholic Cathedral, Ballina, and Belleek Manor and Westport House. Smaller

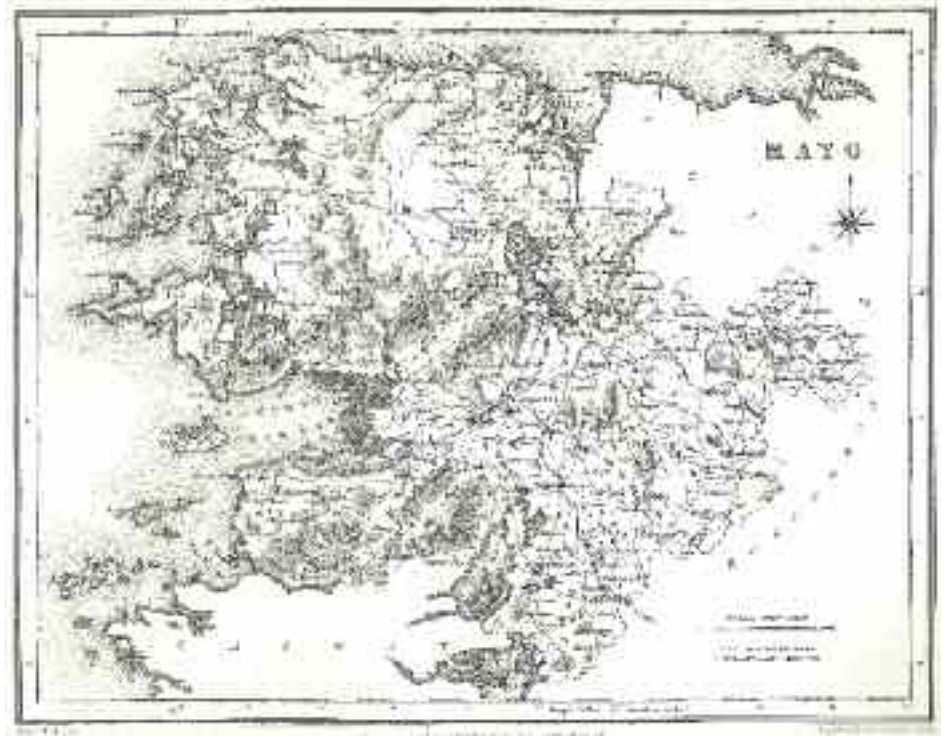
deposits of a ruby-red sandstone have given Glennanean Bridge and Oldhead Quay their distinctive palette while a glimmering red granite cleaved from the Reverend Sir William Palmer's (1803-85) Altmore Quarries, at An Fál Mór [Fallmore], was selected for the construction of Blacksod Point Lighthouse.

A common thread running through the architectural history of County Mayo, from the earliest of times up to and including the early twentieth century, is the struggle for land and political and religious freedom. Abbeys, churches and ecclesiastical complexes attest to early monastic communities, their ivy-enveloped ruins remembering confiscation and suppression. Castles and tower houses bear witness to a feudal society constantly under the threat of attack and include the sixteenth-century Rockfleet Castle, the restored home of Grace "Granuaile" O'Malley (c.1530-1603), standing watch overlooking Rockfleet Bay.

The various Acts of Settlement introduced following the Irish Rebellion of 1641 saw much land confiscated and granted to "planters", mainly Protestant supporters of initially the Parliament and subsequently the Crown. Powerful families emerged who would shape the architectural heritage of County Mayo for centuries to come including the Binghamms of Castlebar, the Brownes of Westport, the Cuffs of Ballinrobe, the Knoxes of Ballina and the O'Donels of Newport. Large country houses and estates were developed in the eighteenth century, their predominance in the landscape emphasising the rising fortunes of these families, their ruins illustrating their demise.

## MAYO

A map drawn by Robert Creighton for Samuel Lewis' *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837) highlighting the topographical features that define County Mayo and the principal towns and villages. The Local Government Act of 1898 brought about a significant change in the county boundary: the Ardnaree side of the River Moy, up to then part of County Sligo, was brought into County Mayo while Ballaghaderreen and its environs were transferred to neighbouring County Roscommon.



As members of the Grand Jury the landed gentry were responsible for the erection of numerous bridges, harbours and public buildings and, in the case of the Brownes, entire new towns. The protection of Crown interests fostered the construction of coastguard stations and signal towers in the early nineteenth century. Barracks bear witness to the level of political unrest in the nineteenth century, the workhouse a stark reminder of the plight of the peasant class during the Great Famine (1845-9).

Churches, rural and urban, express in brick and stone the emerging confidence of Catholicism following Emancipation (1829). Ruined Board of First Fruit churches stand as

evidence of the later diminution of the Church of Ireland population. The burnt-out remains of Royal Irish Constabulary barracks and country houses signal the often violent transition of power in the early twentieth century while a modest post box, its royal cipher overpainted with a green gloss finish, shows how colonialism could be wiped from the collective memory with a mere brushstroke.

The eighteenth century is the starting point for the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The following spread shows the dialogue that occasionally exists between the post-1700 architectural heritage and its archaeological ancestry.

## Pre 1700



**MAYO ABBEY**  
Mayo Parks, Mayo

County Mayo takes its name from the small village of Mayo, due south of Balla, where, according to Samuel Lewis (1837), 'Saint Colman, having resigned the Benedictine cell of Lindisfarne...and returned to Ireland, AD 665, founded an abbey in which he placed some English monks who accompanied him, from whom it was called *Magio-na-Sasson*, or "Mayo of the English or Saxons"'. Destroyed in 778, subsequently

burnt on three separate occasions, and plundered in 1204, only the ivy-enveloped West Front survives. A revival of ecclesiastical activity came about, however, with the erection of Saint Coleman's Catholic Church (1845) under the aegis of Reverend John Jennings PP (d. 1858), its simple form and restrained architectural detailing reflecting the period of construction during the Great Famine (1845-9).

**SAINT PATRICK'S  
CATHEDRAL**  
Church Street, Killala

The bayside village of Killala enjoys a long-standing ecclesiastical legacy and, according to tradition, Saint Patrick, on his return to Ireland, founded the Episcopal See of Killala between 434 and 441, installing his disciple Saint Muredach as inaugural bishop. The present Church of Ireland cathedral, standing in the shadow of a twelfth-century round tower, dates largely from the latter half of the seventeenth century when a

reconstruction of a ruined church was organised by Reverend Thomas Otway (1616-93), Bishop of Killala and Achonry (*fl.* 1670-80): a pronounced base batter and the "East Window" are clearly relics of an earlier age. Later improvements (1817-20), attributed to James Pain (*c.*1779-1877) of Limerick, included a spire-topped tower in a contemporary Georgian Gothic style.







### **BALLINTOBER ABBEY**

Ballintober

Arguably the finest of the ecclesiastical antiquities in County Mayo, Ballintober Abbey traces its ancestry back to 1216 and the foundation of an abbey for the Canons Regular of the order of Saint Augustine by Cathal O'Connor (1153-1224), King of Connaught. A preeminent example of Hiberno Romanesque architecture, the church was burnt in 1265, the ensuing repairs reflecting the emerging Gothic taste

and producing an interesting "duality of styles". Suppressed during the Reformation, forfeited to the Crown in 1542, and destroyed by Cromwellian forces in 1653, the abbey fell into ruins although, according to local tradition, Mass continued to be celebrated within its walls throughout the years of the Penal Laws.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*





NIAH

### BALLINTOBER ABBEY

Ballintober

An ambitious attempt (1846-7) at the reconstruction of Ballintober Abbey fell victim to the outbreak of the Great Famine and only the slender lancet openings survive as an enduring legacy of that effort. A later restoration (1889-90), concentrating on only a portion of the ruins,

transepts and chancel reroofed to a design by George Coppinger Ashlin (1837-1921) of Dublin. The full restoration of Ballintober Abbey was completed (1964-6) under the supervision of Percy le Clerc (1914-2002) of the Office of Public Works.



**BALLYHAUNIS ABBEY**

Abbey Street,  
Ballyhaunis

The origins of the abbey church at Ballyhaunis date back to the early fifteenth century when, according to Lewis, 'a monastery was founded...for friars of the order of Saint Augustine, and largely endowed by the family of Nangle, who afterwards took the

name of Costello'. Suppressed in 1608, reconstructed in 1641, the abbey church was attacked and destroyed by Cromwellian forces in 1649 and an engraving in Francis Grose's *Antiquities of Ireland* (1791) showcases the ruins.



**BALLYHAUNIS ABBEY**  
Abbey Street,  
Ballyhaunis

An early restoration saw a portion of the ruins repurposed as a "chapel" in 1826-7, however, the present church began to take shape in the early twentieth century with the reconstruction of the nave (1908-10) under the aegis of Reverend Edward A. Foran OSA (1866-1938). The later reconstruction of a wing (1937-8) completed the transformation producing, in the process, a distinctive "double nave" plan. Evidence of the archaeological provenance of the church persists to this day in the form of a richly decorated fifteenth-century doorcase recalling contemporary doorcases at Ardnaree Abbey and Ballintober Abbey.



#### PARTRY

Cloonlagheen

A dower house erected for the widowed Lady Ellis Lynch (*née* French), Partry is believed to date from the later seventeenth century but recent renovation works have uncovered evidence of a still earlier structure described by Lorraine Grimes (2007) as

including 'slit windows [of] an old defensive wall...joisting constructed out of ship timbers carved with Roman numerals of the thirteenth or fourteenth century... [and] the remains of a curtain wall [running] through the centre of the house'.

The symmetrical façade, centring on a restrained Classical doorcase, suggests that the dower house was "Georgianised" by the succeeding generations of the Lynchs.





**LOUGH MASK  
CASTLE**  
Knocknamucklagh

In some instances early defensive structures stand shoulder-to-shoulder with later "gentlemen's residences". Such is the case with the medieval Lough Mask Castle, an ivy-covered tower house overshadowing the nineteenth-century

farmhouse erected for land agents for the Crichtons, Earls of Erne. Its most notorious occupant, Charles Cunningham Boycott (1832-97), was famously ostracised in a campaign organised by the Land League to promote the so-called "Three Fs": Fair

Rent, Free Sale and Fixity of Tenure. The campaign reached an international audience through reports in *The Graphic*, *The Times* and *Vanity Fair* and Boycott's surname subsequently entered the lexicon of the English language.

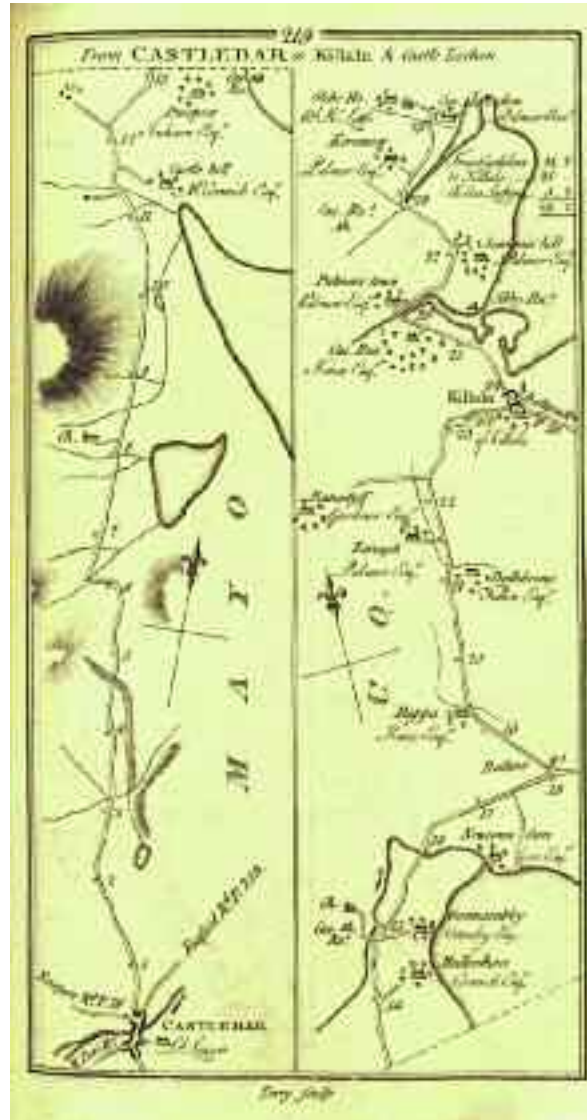
## The Eighteenth Century

Contemporary accounts of eighteenth-century towns and villages are scarce. Publications including *The Post-Chaise Companion* (1786) were keen to mention important seats along each route but with bare references to the intermediary urban centres. Typically, the road between Killala and Castlebar is thus described:

*'A mile and a half beyond Killala, on the L. is Castle Rea, the fine seat of Mr. Knox; and near it, Palmer's-Town, that of Mr. Palmer... About half a mile further, is Summer-Hill, the seat of Thomas Palmer, Esq.... At Castle Laghan is the seat of Sir R. Palmer, Bart., and near it, on the L. is the glebe house of the Rev. Mr. Little'.*

A similar methodology was adopted in pictorial form in Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* (1778) which, alongside notes on country houses and their proprietors, includes mere outline sketches of existing urban street patterns (*fig. 1*). It is therefore from the retrospective point of view of early nineteenth-century writers that we trace the growth of County Mayo's towns.

Although the ruins of the medieval Ardnaree Abbey (1427) demonstrate that the east bank of the River Moy has been settled since at least the fifteenth century, the origins of the modern Ballina are said to date back to 1729 when Field Marshal James O'Hara (1682-1774), Lord Tyrawley, established a cotton factory on the opposite side of the river. A small town quickly flourished which was later described by Samuel Lewis (1837) as '[consisting] of several streets, and [containing]



(fig. 1)  
From CASTLEBAR to  
Killala & Castle  
Lachen

A plate from Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* (1778) showing the road from Castlebar to Killala via Crossmolina and highlighting the important seats along the route, many of which survive to the present day, including Castle hill [Castlehill], Prospect [Enniscoe], Gortnarabby [Gortnaraby], Ballybrany [Ballybroony], Palmers town [Palmerstown], Summer hill [Summerhill], Keromore [Carrowmore] and Cas. Lachen [Castlelakan].



**PALMERSTOWN  
BRIDGE**  
Doonamona/Castlereagh

An eighteenth-century bridge, shown in the Taylor and Skinner map between *Palmerstown* and *Cas. Rea* [Castlereagh], makes a pleasing visual statement in a sylvan setting crossing the Palmerstown River.





(fig. 2)

**BALLINA MILITARY BARRACKS**  
Ballina  
(1740)

The façade of a military barracks remembering the development of Ballina as a garrison town in the mid eighteenth century. In a rare contemporary reference to the town the barracks is described in *The Post-Chaise Companion* (1786) as 'a spacious edifice of 132 feet in front, with two large and noble squares of offices in the rear, the residence of the Right Hon. Henry King [1733-1821]'.

**BALLINROBE MARKET HOUSE**  
Main Street, Ballinrobe  
(1752)

A typical mid eighteenth-century market house featuring an arcade at street level with an assembly room overhead. The market house, particularly its *cupola*-topped pediment, bears a striking resemblance to the later Westport Market House.



about 1,200 houses, most of which are regular and well built'. As elsewhere, much of the eighteenth-century architectural heritage has been replaced or subsumed into later buildings and the façade of a mid-century military barracks (1740), originally forming part of a larger quadrangle, is therefore an important survival (fig. 2).

Castlebar, which was granted a patent to hold a market in 1609 followed by a Charter of Incorporation in 1613, shows seventeenth-century street patterns but little, if any upstanding evidence of an architectural legacy from that period. Successively improved, refaced and remodelled, the eighteenth-

century built heritage can also be difficult to decipher, high pitched roofs with stout chimney stacks often the only immediate evidence of an early date. The linen industry, supported by flax cultivation in the hinterlands and spinning by farm women, was, without question, a lynchpin in the local economy in the period and, alongside Castlebar, Ballina, Foxford, Newport and Westport developed as thriving linen market towns. A Classical linen hall was erected (1790) by Charles Bingham (1735-99), proprietor of Castlebar, as a clearing house for flax and linen (*fig. 3*). The industrial

revolution across Great Britain, and the technological advances it brought in its wake, rendered the cottage industry of County Mayo outmoded and redundant. Its decline is recorded by Lewis who noted that 'the linen manufacture, which was formerly much more extensive, is still carried on [in Castlebar]; and a considerable quantity of linen and linen yarn is sold in the linen-hall, a neat building at the entrance of the town from Ballina... The general trade of the town, with the exception only of the linen trade, is gradually improving'.



(*fig. 3*)  
**THE LINEN HALL**  
 Linenhall Street,  
 Castlebar  
 (1790)

A linen hall remembers the importance of flax cultivation and processing in the economy of Castlebar at the turn of the nineteenth century. A gradual decline in the linen industry was evident in the 1830s and, when visited by Thomas Lacy (1863), the linen hall was described as '[having] a very neglected appearance'. An interesting inversion of the standard market house type, the linen hall features an "arcade" above street level lighting the assembly room where, according to a commemorative plaque, General Humbert held a victory ball in 1798.



**COURTHOUSE  
STREET**  
Killala

Killala, for centuries a thriving port, saw its commercial prosperity decline during the early nineteenth century. The channelling of the River Moy, and improved access to Ballina, saw Killala largely bypassed, Lewis remarking that 'what formerly came into this port for the supply of [Ballina] is conveyed thither direct'. The downward cycle continued and in 1943, when visiting the town for the Irish Tourist Association, Conor O'Brien noted that 'from those days of romance and prosperity, little remains to tell of Killala's early importance, excepting huge warehouses, derelict and forlorn'.



#### HIGHWOOD MILL

Ardkill  
(1787)

A small number of windmill towers, concentrated in the southern half of County Mayo, stand testament to a long-lost rural industry. A truncated tower at Carraholly, near Westport, was already in ruins in the late 1830s while a tower at Ballyshingadaun, outside Neale, had likewise decayed by

the turn of the twentieth century. A tapering tower north of Kilmaine occupies an outcrop overlooking gently rolling fields. An inscribed slab in a nearby grain store records that Highwood Mill was 'Built by Denis Browne 1787'.





(fig. 4)  
**CASTLEBAR  
METHODIST CHAPEL**  
The Mall, Castlebar  
(1785)

As a result of the reconstruction of churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries County Mayo boasts a modest eighteenth-century ecclesiastical architectural legacy. The picturesque Castlebar Methodist Chapel (1785), 'built...Under the Patronage of Charles [Bingham] LORD LUCAN [sic]', is arguably the most important surviving building of the period (figs. 4-5). In line with the prevailing Penal Laws, however, the chapel presents an unassuming quality with only the "pointed" profile of the openings suggesting its ecclesiastical purpose.

Occupying a corner of a tree-lined square in the centre of the town, Castlebar Methodist Chapel is distinguished by an elongated rectilinear plan form accommodating a nave and adjoining manse under one roof. The Georgian Gothicism of the chapel juxtaposed with the subdued Classicism of the manse is also a defining characteristic of this familiar landmark.



(fig. 5)  
**CASTLEBAR  
METHODIST CHAPEL**  
The Mall, Castlebar

A prominent date stone confirms that the Reverend John Wesley AM (1703-91), father of the Methodist movement and a regular visitor to Castlebar, was present at the laying of the foundation stone in 1785.



The first in a small number of planned towns was announced in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* (17th March 1767) with a notice to contractors and workmen *'[informing] them, that a New Town is immediately to be built near the Old Town of Westport...according to Plans and Elevations, &c. already fixed upon, consisting of a large and elegant Market house, situated in the Center of an Octagonal Area of 200 Feet, and to be enclosed with Twelve large well finished slated Houses, together with three Avenues for Streets of thirty slated Houses, and several very large Streets for great Numbers of thatched Houses and Cabbins, to be built separately in such Streets where Houses or Cabbins are to be admitted in'*. Interested

parties were directed to send their credentials to Peter Browne (1731-80), afterwards second Earl of Altamont, or William Leeson (d. c.1805), architect.

The 'New Town' initially featured the aforementioned Octagon with its market house centrepiece (*fig. 6*) and three radiating avenues. The Westport Estate Papers confirm that new houses in The Octagon were contemplated or occupied as early as 1787, James' Street in 1787, Shop Street in 1780 and Peter Street in 1786. Bridge Street, High Street and Mill Street followed with early leases dated 1789, 1791 and 1794 respectively.

***Town of Westport and Clew Bay, County Mayo***  
(1825)

A painting by James Arthur O'Connor (1792-1841) illustrating the estate and 'New Town' of Westport on the edge of Clew Bay with Croagh Patrick and Clare Island in the distance.

*Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum*



Later developments by successive generations of the Brownes included the ambitious channelling of the Westport or Carrowbeg River as a tree-lined promenade spanned at intervals by Classically-detailed bridges. North Mall boasts at its westernmost point an hotel which, according to Jonathan Binns (1837), 'the noble Marquis [of Sligo] very handsomely presented to Mr. Robinson...with six acres of excellent ground, all rent free. He also furnished the house, and was preparing to fit it up still more extensively and sumptuously, when he left the country [for Jamaica]' (*fig. 7*). Elsewhere in North Mall and South Mall the rise of the merchant middle class was marked by the erection of substantial townhouses (*figs. 8-9*).

(*fig. 6*)  
**WESTPORT MARKET HOUSE**  
 The Octagon,  
 Westport

A postcard depicting a late nineteenth-century view of The Octagon with its 'large and elegant Market house' centrepiece. The symmetrical façade features an arcade at street level, an assembly room overhead, and a *cupola*-topped central pediment with Diocletian window

framing a cast-iron clock face. Relinquishing its status as the focal point of The Octagon in the mid nineteenth century, it is interesting to note the view is labelled *Glendinning Monument, Westport* with no reference to the market house.

*Courtesy of Mayo County Library*



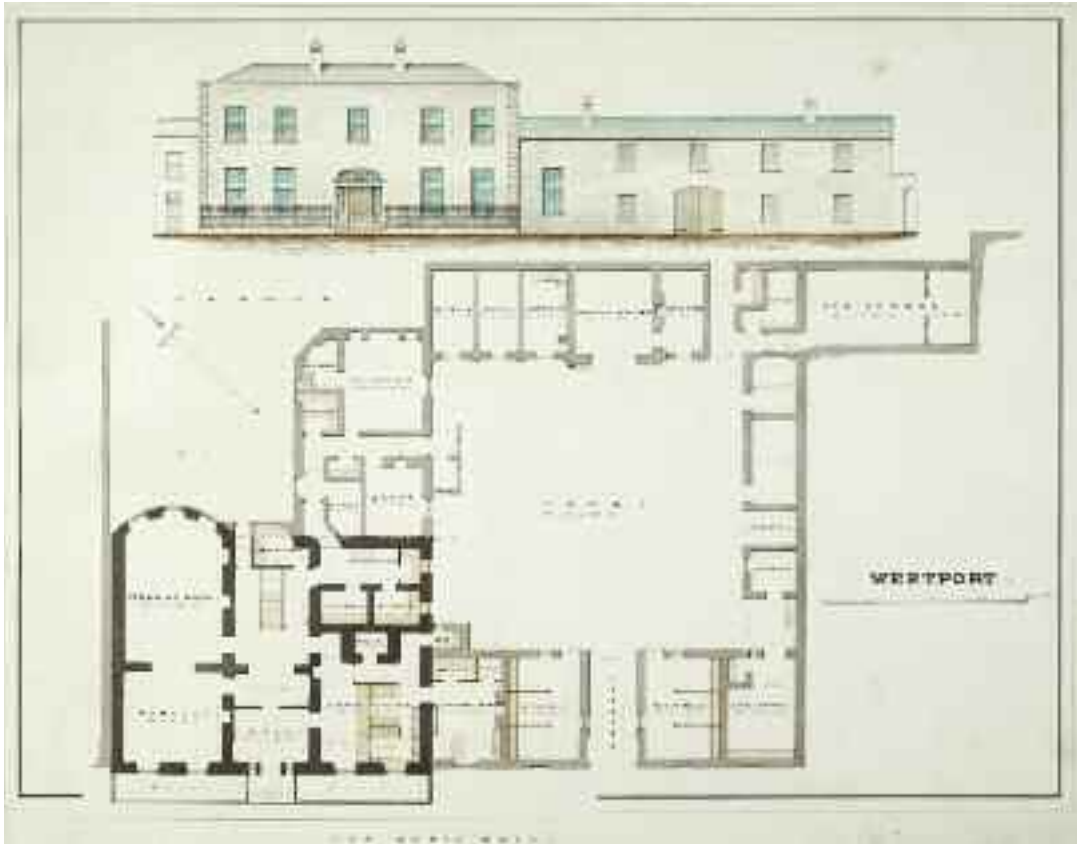


(fig. 7)  
**NORTH MALL**  
Westport

A view of the hotel described by Mr. and Mrs. Hall (1843) as 'large, and abundantly furnished, containing five sitting rooms and twenty-four bedrooms [and] built...with the sole view of benefiting the town, by affording accommodation to all who are drawn

thither by business or pleasure'. An interesting example of neo-Palladian planning, the hotel features a townhouse-like central block with pillared portico and arcaded wings for coaches and traps.

*Courtesy of Mayo County Library*



(fig. 8)  
**NORTH MALL**  
Westport

An undated drawing showing the elevation and plan of a townhouse leased by the Bank of Ireland in 1851. Describing Westport in 1918, George Moore (1852-1933) of Moore Hall noticed the 'river, spanned in the principal street by

stone bridges...with seats between the trees for the vagrant, and some beautiful houses for his regalement. The bank was once the house to which the Dowager Lady Sligo was wont to retire on the marriage of her son, and to this day

it is known as the Dower House... It is sad that the beautiful house, with a noble sweep of staircase as any in Merrion Square, should have been turned into a prosaic bank'.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*



(fig. 9)  
**SOUTH MALL**  
Westport

A photograph from the Lawrence Collection (1865-1914) showing the townhouses erected by the merchant middle class in South Mall. The Westport Estate Papers include leases granted (1805) to John Armstrong, Isaac Farrell, George Lawrence and a "Mrs. Glendenning" but two plots bordering Fair

Green were only developed in the early twentieth century. The diminutive Westport Methodist Church (1875) makes an eye-catching impression in a predominantly Georgian street scene.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*



(fig. 10)

**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport  
(1731-4)

A view of Westport House showing the two distinct stages in its development with a faint masonry break marking the junction of the entrance front by Richard Castle (d. 1751) and the adjoining south front whose architect has recently been called

into question. Disputing the long-held attribution to Thomas Ivory (c.1732-86) reducing the scope of his proposal of 1773, and citing the conservative pedimented tripartite frontispiece, a new theory has emerged crediting William

Leeson (d. c.1805) with the enlargement of the house. The oval ceiling behind the fanlit central opening, similar to Leeson's Clonbrock House (1780-5) in County Galway, further supports this new proposition.

(fig. 11)

### WESTPORT HOUSE

Westport Demesne,  
Westport

A robust Classical doorcase has elicited comparisons to Castle's Hazelwood House (1731) in County Sligo. The later coat-of-arms has been attributed to John Browne (1709-76), marking his elevation to the Earldom of Altamont. That the coronet is that of a Marquess suggests the centrepiece was in fact installed by his grandson John Denis Browne (1756-1809), first Marquess of Sligo.



Today it is a tree-lined avenue off Westport Quay, skirting the shore of an artificial lake, which brings the visitor to Westport House (1731-4), a mansion whose scale and ambition easily equal the architectural achievement of the new town (*figs. 10-18*). Erected for John Browne (1709-76), first Earl of Altamont, and retaining fabric believed to date back to the medieval *Cahernamart*, home of Grace O'Malley, the first phase of the house was substantial in size, but not excessive. Many houses throughout Ireland lay claim to Richard Castle (d. 1751), the celebrated neo-Palladian architect, as designer. Occasionally this is without basis but, visiting Browne in 1752, Bishop Richard Pococke (1704-65) described the then-new Westport House as 'an exceedingly good house and well finished, the design and execution by Mr. Castels [sic]'. Constructed of a chiselled deep grey limestone quarried on the estate, the entrance front shows a robust tripartite doorcase, *tondi* or roundel niches overhead, and a voluted attic modelled "after"

the Villa Foscari (1558-60) near Venice, all of which are considered hallmarks of Castle.

Bolstered by his marriage to Elizabeth Kelly (d. 1765), a sugar plantation heiress, Peter Browne contemplated the complete transformation of Westport House with a design (1773) attributed to Thomas Ivory (c.1732-86) proposing a quadrangle centring on a spacious courtyard and a new entrance front. For reasons now unknown, the proposal was dramatically scaled back. The enlarged house, featuring a smaller courtyard and retaining Castle's entrance front, introduced, in its new garden front, Venetian and Diocletian window openings whose conservative quality have prompted an attribution to Leeson as architect. Successive generations of the Brownes continued to adapt and improve Westport House into the nineteenth century, engaging celebrated architects of the day including James Wyatt (1746-1813) and his son Benjamin Deane Wyatt (1775-1855).





(fig. 12)  
**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

A view of the symmetrical garden front framed by Venetian windows on the principal floor and Diocletian windows on the uppermost floor. The latter, evocative of the nearby market house, have also given credence to the theory that it is Leeson, and not Ivory, who was responsible for the enlargement of Westport House.



(fig. 13)  
**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

The arcaded entrance hall which, despite later alterations, is widely cited as Castle's most important surviving domestic interior. Its artistic highlight, the richly decorated barrel-vaulted ceiling, compares favourably with Castle's work at Russborough House (1742) in County Wicklow. Beyond the

tripartite arcade is the top-lit staircase hall constructed (1857-9) to a design by George Wilkinson (1814-90) featuring at its half-landing point *The Angel of Welcome* (1865) by Charles Francis Fuller (1830-75).

*Courtesy of Westport House*



(fig. 14)

**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

The library boasts one of the Castle-designed chimneypieces singled out for attention by Bishop Richard Pococke (1704-65) who remarked (1752): 'In the house are handsom [sic] chimney pieces of the Castlebar marble, which are a good black without any white in them like the Touchstone, which the Italians call Paragonè and value very much'.

(fig. 15)

**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

One of a set of drawings signed (1781) by James Wyatt (1746-1813) of London showing proposals for the decoration of the new dining room with a unifying *Guilloche* motif embellishing the central chimneypiece, the friezes over the

doors and the cornice. Wyatt is understood to have visited Ireland on only one occasion and it is likely that the decoration at Westport House was supervised by his agent Thomas Penrose (1740-92) of Cork and Dublin.







(fig. 16)

**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

James Wyatt was succeeded at Westport House by his son, Benjamin Deane Wyatt (1775-1855), and the drawing room he created (1826) by opening together Castle's north staircase and breakfast room boasts an exquisite

chimneypiece attributed to John Flaxman (1755-1826) of London. The hardwood parquet floor and *trompe l'oeil* ceiling are also particularly noteworthy.

*Courtesy of Westport House*



(fig. 17)

**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

It is believed that the long gallery once boasted neo-Classical plasterwork similar to the elder Wyatt's dining room. A pencil note on a drawing in the dining room, however, records that 'Benjamin ruined the Gallery by removing his father's

Classical work... He would have substituted Gothic for it, but it & the rest of the House was saved by [the] wife of [the] 2nd Marquess of Sligo who got rid of him, & who prevailed upon her husband not to employ him again'.



(fig. 18)  
**WESTPORT HOUSE**  
Westport Demesne,  
Westport

Increased trade with the Far East, and the *objets d'art* brought back by returning merchants, spurred an interest in the Orient and the taste for *Chinoiserie*. The Chinese Room, one of

the most significant domestic interiors in County Mayo, boasts hand painted wallpaper showing scenes evocative of the South China landscape. Interestingly, although

chiefly exported from Canton by the East India Company, the wallpaper was described in the eighteenth century as "India Paper".



**CLAREMOUNT HOUSE**  
Claremount, Claremorris

The seat of Denis "The Rope" Browne MP (1763-1828), second son of the second Earl of Altamont, the neo-Palladian Claremount House shows motifs reminiscent of the family home at Westport including a symmetrical frontage centring on a tripartite doorcase, openings diminishing in scale on each floor, and a pediment on fluted volute consoles recalling Castle's doorcase.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*

County Mayo boasts an array of country houses illustrating the development and diversity of the Classical style over the course of the eighteenth century. Ballybroony House, near Killala, exemplifies the "classic" house of the middle size and displays, on its principal façade, a centrally-placed door with streamlined doorcase and robust, but not exuberant dressings around the window openings (*fig. 19*).

(*fig. 19*)

**BALLYBROONY HOUSE**  
Ballybroony

The eighteenth-century Ballybroony House whose symmetrical façade centring on a restrained Gibbsian doorcase, pleasing proportions, rough-cut stone work set in a long-and-short pattern reminiscent of Flemish bond brick work, and Palladian-esque quadrant "sweeps", all speak of an amateur architect or professional builder aware of contemporary architectural trends.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*





**BARLEYHILL HOUSE**  
Barleyhill, Bohola  
(1748)

An interesting aspect of the eighteenth-century domestic architectural heritage of County Mayo is the quality and variety of fine doorcases, each one a testimony to the artistry and skill of the now-

anonymous stone mason. Robustly-detailed Classical doorcases also enliven the otherwise sober façades of Ballinamore House, near Kiltimagh, and Gortnaraby House on the outskirts of Crossmolina.

**MILCUM HOUSE**  
Teevmore, Newport  
(1754)

The mid eighteenth-century Milcum House shows a subdued approach to neo-Palladian planning with screen walls concluding in pyramid-roofed diagonally-set "pavilions". The pedimented Gibbsian doorcase embellishing the polygonal breakfront has been singled out

as a prime example of provincial Classicism omitting, as it does, the intermediary entablature and frieze and framing a sliver-like fanlight in its tympanum.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*





(fig. 20)  
**ENNISCOE HOUSE**  
Prospect  
(1790-8 with 1750)

Occupying a scenic position in the shadow of the lofty Nephin, and commanding panoramic vistas overlooking Lough Conn, it is perhaps no surprise that the mid eighteenth-century farmhouse built by George Jackson (1717-89) was called *Prospect*. Subsequently enveloped on the three sides by George Jackson MP (1761-1805), the enlarged Enniscoe House had only been completed when it was damaged during the 1798 Rebellion.



Enniscoe House (1790-8), near Crossmolina, can trace its modern ancestry back to a conservative gable-ended farmhouse erected (1750) for George Jackson (1717-89), colloquially "George One". On succeeding to the estate Colonel George Jackson MP (1761-1805), colloquially "George Two", enlarged and enveloped the farmhouse on three sides, in the process creating an elegant country house overlooking Lough Conn with its undulating mountainous backdrop; the features of the original farmhouse, opening off a top-lit central staircase hall, can still be seen to this day (*figs. 20-21*).



(fig. 21)  
**ENNISCOE HOUSE**  
Prospect

A view of the top-lit staircase hall where the late eighteenth-century Enniscoe House gives way, beyond an elegant arch, to its mid-century predecessor.

The decline of some estates in the twentieth century has resulted in a number of eye-catching ruins in the landscape. The shell of Summerhill House, the ancestral seat of the Palmers, stands on a slight elevation overlooking the ruins of the medieval Rathfrán Abbey (1274) on the Palmerstown River estuary and shows Classically-inspired detailing in its central breakfront including a lugged doorcase, a Venetian window overhead, and a pedimented roofline (*fig. 22*). Clogher House

(1770) now stands in a denuded estate, its densely wooded parkland a distant memory. The seat of the Lynches, later the Crean-Lynches, the interior once boasted decorative plasterwork in the Adamesque style. Passed by inheritance to the FitzGerald-Kenney family, the house lay idle following the death of James FitzGerald-Kenney TD (1878-1956), one-time Minister for Justice, and was destroyed by fire in 1970.

(*fig. 22*)

**SUMMERHILL HOUSE**  
Rathfrán, Mullaghnacross

Occasionally the pretensions to "gentrified" architecture were offset by provincial, almost vernacular detailing and while the pedimented breakfront gives Summerhill House a strong Classical spirit, the high pitched roof originally displayed a slab-like Lackan Stone finish, a local sandstone sometimes known as "Mayo Slate".



(fig. 23)

**MOORE HALL**

Muckloon or  
Moorehall  
(1792-5)

George Moore (1729-99), on his return to Ireland following a profitable career in Spain, found himself drawn to the scenery around Lough Mask and consequently purchased a sizeable estate in south County Mayo. A photograph from the Wynne Collection (1880) shows the noble Moore Hall which, according to Joseph Hone (1882-1959) in his biography of the Moores, 'took four years to build [as] in common with most country houses of the eighteenth century it had to be self-supporting [and] a bakery, a laundry, a blacksmith shop, greenhouse and extensive quarters for masses of servants had to be constructed'.

*Courtesy of the  
National Library of  
Ireland*



The design sources for Ballybroony, Enniscoe, Summerhill and Clogher have been lost in the midst of time and it is likely that a talented builder, rather than a professional architect was responsible for each house. Moore Hall (1792-5), commanding scenic vistas overlooking Lough Carra, has been attributed to John Roberts (1712-96) of Waterford on the strength of its similarities to Tyrone House (1779) in County Galway, however, Joseph Hone (1882-1959) in his biography of the Moores makes no allusion to Roberts when lauding the house as

'[embodying] a fine gesture on the part of its unknown architect' (figs. 23-25). A substantial, square Palladian house erected for George Moore (1729-99), a retired wine merchant, Moore Hall shows a certain panache in the handling of the central breakfront with its pillared portico approached by a broad flight of steps, Venetian window overhead, robustly-detailed tripartite window lighting the uppermost floor, and inscribed panel carrying the Moore family motto and the date of construction.





(fig. 24)

**MOORE HALL**  
Muckloon or  
Moorehall

A photograph showing the ruins of Moore Hall following its destruction during the Civil War (1922-3). Writing not long thereafter, Hone gave account of its lost interior including 'a hall with a pretty Adam ceiling... A long corridor traversed the ground floor for its entire length [and] from this corridor doors opened into a series of apartments designed for hospitality to guests. At the front, on either side of the hall, were the dining- and drawing-room'.



(fig. 25)

**MOORE HALL**  
Muckloon or  
Moorehall

Colonel Maurice Moore (1854-1939) proposed the partial reconstruction of Moore Hall, explaining 'Its complete restoration is far beyond our means and would serve no useful purpose. If however a flat roof were put on it...a quite good

one-storied house would be the result; the top two stories would be cut off and the windows blocked with painted wood'. Insufficient funds defeated the proposal but an inscribed panel perpetuates the memory of the Moores of Moore Hall.

(fig. 26)  
**RAHEENS HOUSE**  
 Raheens  
 (1784)

A ruined outbuilding, its symmetrical plan centring on a robust Classical carriageway, conveys an impression of the eighteenth-century Raheens House replaced (1847-8) by John Henry Browne (1800-68). A chiselled keystone carries the initials of its builder Dodwell Browne (d. 1796).



Occasionally, following the demolition or deterioration of the house, it is the surviving outbuildings, walled gardens, gate lodges and gates that record the presence of a once-fine country estate. A ruined outbuilding (1784) survives outside Castlebar as interesting evidence of the eighteenth-century origins of the Raheens House estate (*fig. 26*): the original house was replaced at the height of the Great Famine and, abandoned in 1941, also stands as a gaunt roofless shell.

Country houses were often the centrepiece of a planned landscape, the grounds manipulated, the lawns manicured and eye-catching follies erected to enhance the visual quality of the surrounding scenery. Arguably the finest collection of follies in County Mayo

survives at Neale, remembering Neale House (1737; demolished 1939), the seat of the Brownes, Lords Kilmaine. The earliest, a stepped pyramid erected (1750) as a memorial to George Browne MP (d. 1737), *de jure* fourth Baronet Browne, certainly grabs the attention of the passer-by (*fig. 27*). Less imposing, but no less interesting, are the architectural fragments that make up the so-called "Gods of The Neale" (1757) (*fig. 28*). A lengthy inscription has for over two centuries confounded the visitor with its tales of 'CON YE SON OF HEBER' and 'LOO LAVEADDA who FOUNDED the DRUIDS [and] is thought to have drawn ALL his knowledge from the sun'.

(fig. 27)

**NEALE HOUSE**  
Nealepark, Neale  
(1750)

An eye-catching stepped pyramid, its Egyptian spirit incongruous in the setting of the south County Mayo landscape, has been attributed to James Caulfield (1728-99), Lord Charlemont, and carries on its fourth tier a panel inscribed in Latin dedicated to the memory of George Browne MP (d. 1737), *de jure* fourth Baronet Browne of The Neale.



(fig. 28)

**NEALE HOUSE**  
Nealepark, Neale  
(1753)

A view of the bewildering "Gods of The Neale", an assemblage of architectural fragments including a lengthy inscription that has long perplexed the observer. Conor O'Brien concluded that 'the entire object is merely the product of the peculiar humour of some former Lord Kilmaine'.





(fig. 29)  
**CROSS WEST**  
Cross

An archetypal thatched farmhouse on the outskirts of the village of Cross shows the familiar rectilinear direct entry plan form, limewashed battered walls, and a high pitched roof with lattice work along the ridge.



(fig. 30)  
**CASTLENAGEEHA**

A farmhouse north of Killala illustrates the fragile nature of the vernacular heritage of County Mayo, its limewashed finish beginning to fail and its thatched roof overgrown by grass. Nevertheless, the farmhouse and its adjacent "tin roofed" outbuildings continue to make a pretty visual impression in the rural landscape.



(fig. 31)  
**GARRACLOON  
 LODGE**  
 Dowagh East, Cross  
 (1728)

A substantial farmhouse demonstrating that thatched roofed homes were not solely the preserve of the small farmer. Vernacular houses sometimes evolved, or were partially altered as the fortunes of their owners rose over time and a return showing a "permanent" slate finish illustrates the continued development of Garracloon Lodge at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Although once widespread throughout County Mayo, few of the thatched houses of the eighteenth-century rural population remain. Termed "vernacular architecture", they did not subscribe to formal architectural rules but instead developed organically over time. A distinctive pattern emerged comprising a simple rectilinear plan form, frequently including a bed outshot, stout walls with small openings keeping the household warm in winter and cool in summer, and a high pitched roof sometimes showing a crow stepped gable silhouette. A simple farmhouse outside Cross is a rare survivor (*fig. 29*). Fragile structures

built of rubble stone and locally sourced cereal or reed thatch, they are prone to rapid deterioration when abandoned or neglected (*fig. 30*). Other houses, particularly in the south of the county, were built on a scale befitting a gentleman farmer. Garracloon Lodge (1728), also outside Cross, is reasonably large and incorporates sophisticated "architectural" elements recalling contemporary Classical tastes including a bowed porch with Gibbsian doorcase; the interior, similarly gentrified, features restrained chimneypieces and decorative stucco work dating to the later eighteenth century (*fig. 31*).

(fig. 32)

**CHRIST CHURCH**  
(Castlebar or AGLISH)  
Church Street,  
Castlebar  
(ob. 1798)

A memorial paying tribute to members of the Fraser Highlanders killed during the so-called "Races of Castlebar" is dedicated:  
'ERECTED/To/The MEMORY of/James Beaty/Angus McDonald/George Munro/Donald Urquhart/William Ross/and/Dougald Cameron/Privates of the FRASER HIGH-LANDERS who were killed in/the action at CASTLEBAR/with the FRENCH Invaders/on the 27th Augt. 1798 as a small/Tribute to their Gallant Conduct/and Honourable DEATH/By/COLONEL SIMON FRASER/OF/LOVAT/Who Commanded the Detachment'.







(fig. 33)  
**SAINT PATRICK'S  
 CATHEDRAL**  
 Church Street, Killala  
 (ob. 1798)

A headstone in the graveyard of Saint Patrick's Cathedral is dedicated: 'Here Lyeth the Body of/John Fallon of Killalla [sic] he was/A faithful military protestant/yeoman on the 26th of Septem[ber]/1798 he was Shot aged 22 yrs'.

*Courtesy of Christina Golden*

The comparative political calm of the eighteenth century was thrown into turmoil by the 1798 Rebellion. Early outbreaks of unrest, concentrated largely in the north-east and south-east of the country, were quickly suppressed but the unexpected landing of a party of French at Kilcummin Head on the 22nd of August, led by General Jean Joseph Amable Humbert (1767-1823), saw an eruption of activity in County Mayo. Meeting little resistance at Killala, the troops quickly captured Ballina and carried on to Castlebar where a successful battle with Crown forces would later be known as "The Races of Castlebar". The short-lived Republic of Connacht was declared with John Moore (1767-99) of Moore Hall installed as its inaugural President but the rebels were ultimately overwhelmed and

retreated to Killala where they were defeated on the 23rd of September.

The impact of the Rebellion on the architectural heritage of County Mayo was limited. Weathered headstones in Castlebar and Killala record the names of soldiers, principally on the Crown side, who lost their lives during and immediately after the conflict (*figs. 32-33*). According to local tradition the doorcase of the Linen Hall shows damage from a shoot-out between Crown and French forces. The gentry saw their homes targeted and while Enniscoe House, occupied by the French, suffered negligible damage an attack on Palmerstown House near Killala was devastating. The old mansion was consequently pulled down and its stable block repurposed for Henry Augustus Knox (1807-87).

## The Nineteenth Century

(fig. 34)

### GLASH SIGNAL TOWER

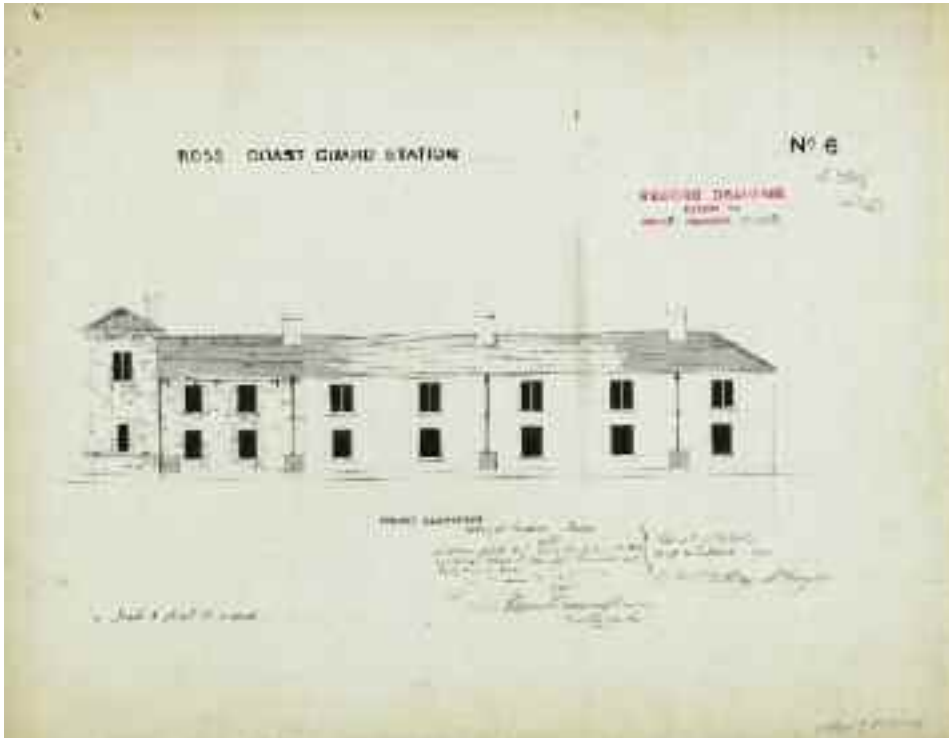
Tóin na hOlltaí [Nakil or Surgeview]  
(1804)

One of a chain of signal towers erected to a standardised design stretching along the entire west coast from County Donegal to County Cork, Glash Signal tower occupies an elevated position on the tip of An Muirthead [Mullet Peninsula], its square footprint, base batter, and bartizaned roofline giving in silhouette the false impression of a medieval tower house.



The nineteenth century was marked by political and social upheaval. The Act of Union (1800), Catholic Emancipation (1829), and the Irish Church Disestablishment Act (1869), all had lasting consequences. The ravages of poverty and famine were relentless and various land reforms, including the Land Acts, resulted in the break-up and demise of the great estates. All these events had an effect on the county's architectural heritage.

The Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) dominated European politics in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. A number of signal towers were constructed on strategic elevated positions overlooking the Atlantic. As the misty climate of the west coast impeded the signal system, however, the towers were quickly abandoned and had begun to deteriorate by the 1830s. Glash Signal Tower continues to dominate the tip of An Muirthead [Mullet Peninsula] (fig. 34).



(fig. 35)  
ROSS COASTGUARD  
STATION  
Ross  
(1863-4)

An extract from the "Contract Copies" signed (1864) by Anthony McLaughlin, builder. The coastguard station was designed to accommodate '1 Chief Boatman's house; 5 Men's Cottages [and] 1 Watch-house & Store'.

*Courtesy of the  
National Archives of  
Ireland*

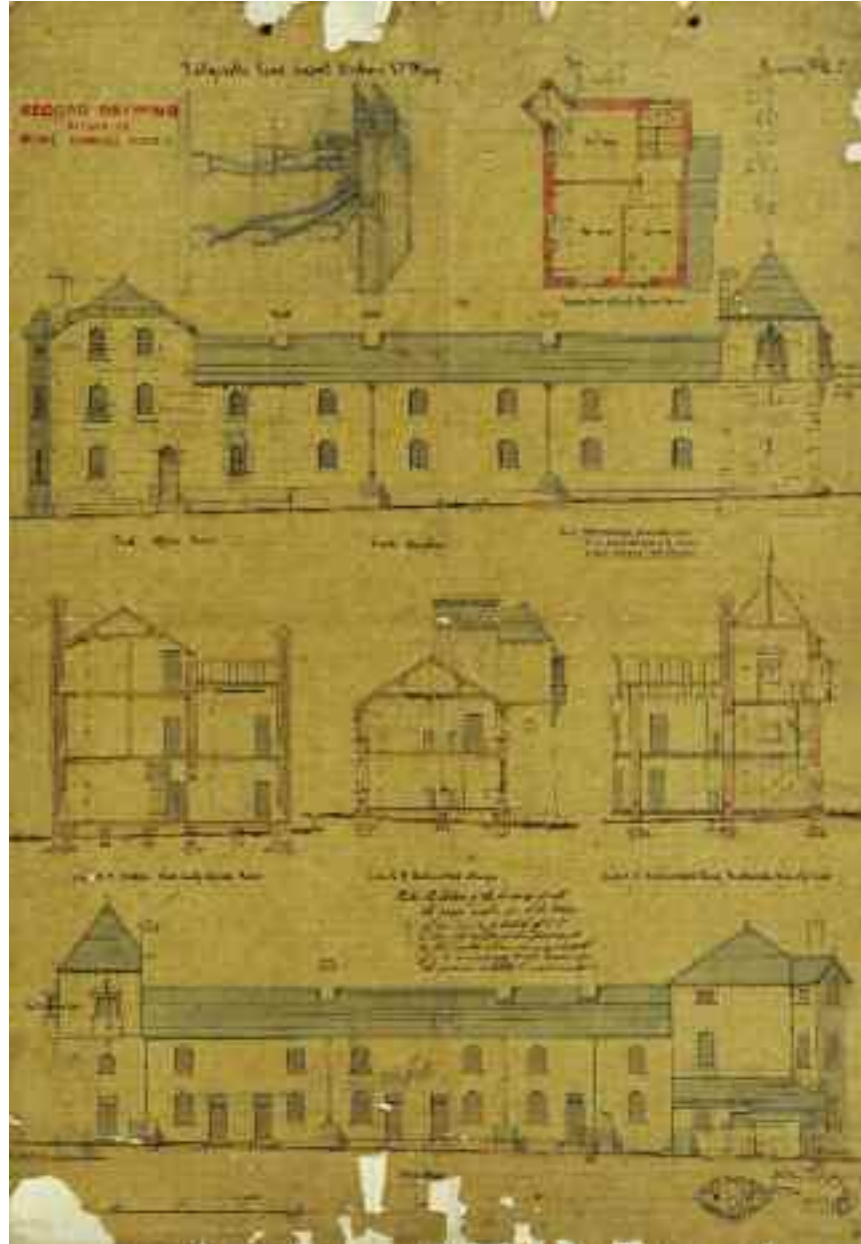
The formation of the Irish Coast Guard in 1822 allowed for the construction of a network of coastguard stations around Ireland, intended to defend the coastline and to protect revenue collection by curtailing smuggling. A cottage-like range north of Killala survives as a relic of the early nineteenth-century Ross Coastguard Station. A flurry of illegal activity in the mid nineteenth century fostered a spate of reconstruction in the 1860s and 1870s and a number of standard prototypes emerged, designed by Enoch Trevor Owen (c.1833-81),

Assistant Architect to the Board of Works. The dissolution of the Irish Coast Guard by the Irish Free State led to the closure of the coastguard stations, many of which were subsequently demolished. Happily, at least three fine examples are still to be seen in County Mayo including the "new" Ross Coastguard Station (1863-4) (*fig. 35*), Ballycastle Coastguard Station (1871-2) (*fig. 36*), and Rosmoney Coastguard Station (1875-6), the latter watching over the entrance to Westport Harbour.

(fig. 36)  
**BALLYCASTLE  
COASTGUARD  
STATION**  
Killerduff  
(1871-2)

A selection of the drawings signed (1871) by Enoch Trevor Owen (c.1833-81), Assistant Architect to the Board of Works. The coastguard station was designed to accommodate '1 Inspecting Chief Officer; 5 Men [and] Watch Tower', the bedrooms on the "Chamber Floor" interconnecting to allow access to the watch room.

*Courtesy of the  
National Archives of  
Ireland*





(fig. 37)  
**INISHGORT  
 LIGHTHOUSE**  
 Inishgort Island  
 (1827-8)

A lighthouse erected  
 by George Halpin  
 Senior (1776-1854)  
 working to a  
 standardised design  
 seen earlier at

Kilcredaun (1824) in  
 County Clare.

*Denis Byrne courtesy of  
 the Commissioners of  
 Irish Lights*

Safe entry to official harbours and ports was essential for the economy of the county and the Corporation for Preserving and Improving the Port of Dublin, established in 1786 and also known as the Ballast Board, was responsible for the construction of lighthouses around the coastline. The earliest lighthouse, on Clare Island, was first exhibited in 1806 but, following a fire, was replaced in 1818. Much like the Napoleonic signal towers, the light was frequently obscured by fog or low cloud, leading to its eventual closure in 1965. Later lighthouses, attributed to George Halpin Senior (1776-1854), Inspector of Works and Lighthouses, were erected on Inishgort Island (1827-8) (*fig. 37*) and on Oileán sa Tuaidh [Eagle Island] (1836) (*fig. 38*): each is defined as a tapering tower with a lantern encircled by serpentine railings on a corbelled walkway. The establishment of a lighthouse on Black Rock was not without its obstacles and petitions by the Irish Coast Guard in 1830 and 1841 were rejected by the Ballast Board on the advice of its Inspector of Works. Halpin was succeeded in his role by his son, also George (1804-69), who, when a lighthouse was eventually sanctioned in 1857, furnished a design that largely adhered to the pattern developed by his father.





(fig. 38)  
**EAGLE ISLAND  
LIGHTHOUSE**  
Oileán sa Tuaidh  
[Eagle Island]  
(1836)

Remarking on the topography of the remote outcrop off the north-west coast of County Mayo, Lewis described Oileán sa Tuaidh [Eagle Island] as 'a sharp rocky height comprising about 15 acres [on which] the Ballast Corporation of Dublin...have erected two lighthouses, at an expense of £30,000, both displaying bright and steady lights visible at a great distance. The stone of which they are built was partly brought from Kingstown [Dún Laoghaire] and partly quarried on the island'. The second mentioned lighthouse, irreparably damaged by a storm in 1894, survives as a slate hung shell.

*Denis Byrne courtesy of the Commissioners of Irish Lights*

**BLACKSOD POINT  
LIGHTHOUSE**

An Fál Mór [Fallmore]  
(1864-5)

A lighthouse designed by John Swan Sloane (c.1823?-96), Superintendent of Foremen and Works for the Ballast Board, and a familiar landmark on the southern extremity of An Mhuirthead [Mullet Peninsula]. Unusually it features a battered square tower as its centrepiece: a corresponding square lantern was modified at the insistence of the Board of Trade. As a navigational aid the lighthouse facilitated safe entry to a treacherous harbour that had seen *La Rata Santa Maria Encoronada*, a ship of the Spanish Armada, run aground in 1588. As a weather station the lighthouse also proved invaluable and a plaque unveiled in 2004 records the 'D-Day Weather Forecast/sent [by Edward "Ted" Sweeney (1906-2001)] from/Blacksod 4th June 1944'.

*John Kelly courtesy of  
the Commissioners of  
Irish Lights*





(fig. 39)  
**OLDHEAD QUAY**  
 Oldhead  
 (1822-9)

Approved by the Mansion House Relief Committee in 1822, and allocated £461 in capital, Nimmo's waywardness with expenditure became apparent early on at Oldhead with the cost of the red sandstone blamed for the project coming to a premature halt. Unfinished in 1825, additional funding released by the Commissioners of Irish Fisheries matched by a contribution from Howe Peter Browne (1788-1845), second Marquess of Sligo, allowed work on the pier to resume. Having inspected the site, James Donnell (*fl.* 1825-30), Nimmo's successor as Engineer to the Commissioners of Irish Fisheries, reported back to the House of Commons that 'this pier is completed, and continues in a perfect state'.

Work on improving harbour facilities was dominated in the early nineteenth century by the Scottish-born Alexander Nimmo (1783-1832), Engineer to the Commissioners of Irish Fisheries. Beyond its civil engineering importance, Oldhead Quay (1822-9), between Louisburgh and Westport, survives as a satisfying piece of architecture with finely dressed sandstone walls, battered on the harbour side, supporting tapering cut-limestone mooring posts (*fig. 39*). Other surviving piers by Nimmo can be seen at An Geata Mór [Binghamstown] (1822-30) and on Inishturk (1823-7).

Evidence of an early road system survives in the form of eighteenth-century bridges at

Burrishoole, Moyhenna, Palmerstown and Scarrownageeragh. Yet vast tracts of County Mayo remained largely inaccessible at the turn of the nineteenth century. A coordinated programme of road building, spurred in part as a relief measure assisting the destitute during the so-called "mini famine" of 1822, saw new or improved routes linking Broadhaven Bay and Killala Bay on the north coast, Béal an Mhuirthead [Belmullet] and Castlebar via Bangor, Ballina and Castlebar via Pontoon, Achill Island and Newport on the west coast, and Westport and Killary Harbour on the border with County Galway. Appointed Engineer to the Western District in 1822, Nimmo was responsible for overseeing the

**BÉAL AN  
MHUIRHEAD  
[BELMULLET]**  
Béal an Mhuirthead  
[Belmullet]  
(1826)

The period of construction, the rose-tinted stone work, and such minor details as the tapering mooring posts, all elicit comparisons with Oldhead Quay and yet Nimmo's unconditional support for a pier at Béal an Mhuirthead [Belmullet] is in doubt. Rather it was James Donnell who prepared the specifications and reported on the progress and completion of the pier. Commenting on the success of the venture the *Fourteenth Annual Report from the Board of Public Works in Ireland* (1847) remarked that 'a small pier was erected...at the joint expense of the late Fishery Board and [William Henry Carter (1783-1859) of Castlemartin, County Kildare]... Thus where, in 1827, there was not a single corn store, and scarcely a house, there are now nine large corn stores and a thriving town'.



design and construction of the new road system and, maintaining his position with the Commissioners of Irish Fisheries, attempted to ensure that the new roads serviced his ongoing harbours and piers. A prodigious talent, Nimmo nevertheless faced late-career criticism of absenteeism and reckless expenditure. A report (1830) entitled "A RETURN of all the Public Money expended under the Direction of Mr. *Nimmo*, on PUBLIC WORKS in *Ireland*" dispels the notion that Public Accounts Committees are a modern invention and, although never formally dismissed from his position, Nimmo was replaced as District Engineer in 1831.





**GLENNANEAN  
BRIDGE**

Coill an Locháin  
[Cuillaloughaun]  
(1829-30)

The "picturesque" Glennanean Bridge, on the new road between Achill Island and Newport, is a simplified version of Alexander Nimmo's celebrated Poulaphuca Bridge (1823) in

County Wicklow. The lofty pointed arch not only spans a deep ravine over a minor river, but also appears to echo the rugged landscape in the background.



(fig. 40)  
**BELLACORICK BRIDGE**  
 Bellacorick  
 (1820-1)

A particularly fine bridge whose sequence of elliptical arches makes an elegant visual statement at a crossing over the Owenmore River.



NIAH

It is unsurprising that Nimmo was assisted in his duties by a team of engineers including his fellow Scotsman, William Bald (c.1789-1857), who had come to Mayo on the recommendation of the Ordnance Survey to prepare the first accurate map of the county. Begun in 1809, completed in 1816, and engraved in Paris in the 1820s, the twenty five-sheet map is today regarded as an artistic and

cartographic masterpiece. Yet Bald is arguably best remembered for his "Musical Bridge" (1820) at Bellacorick which, when a smooth stone is tapped along the parapet wall, resonates a musical scale (figs. 40-41). A date stone records that the bridge was built 'by order of The Grand Jury/Right Hon. Denis Browne Foreman'.

The Grand Jury, the precursor to the present



(fig. 41)  
**BELLACORICK BRIDGE**  
 Bellacorick

A date stone not only records for posterity the name of its architect, William Bald (c.1789-1857), but also assures the legacy of Denis "The Rope" Browne as Foreman of the Grand Jury.

(fig. 42)

**SWINFORD  
COURTHOUSE**

Davitt Place/Chapel  
Street, Swinford  
(1838-9)

An austere detailed "sessions-house", conveying through architecture the gravitas of the judicial system, Swinford Courthouse bears comparison to the contemporary Westport Courthouse which can also be attributed to Henry Brett (d. 1882), County Surveyor for County Mayo.



local authority, was a committee formed of leading landowners whose role it was to raise money for public works by means of a local "cess" or tax.

The definitive form of most towns and villages was confirmed in this period and economic decline in the twentieth century assured that most remained largely unchanged until recent years. A distinctive template emerged, including a range of public buildings of varying prominence. Describing Swinford, a typical town of the period, *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* (1846) states:

*The town is in an improving state; and it possesses a church, a parsonage, a Roman Catholic chapel, a market-house, a sessions-house, a poor-law workhouse, a dispensary, a constabulary barrack, several good shops, and an inn and posting establishment... In 1815, building leases were granted in the town by its proprietor, Sir William Brabazon; and, previous to that period,*

*the place was a miserable village.*

The administration of justice and the enforcement of law and order encouraged the construction of courthouses and, as a rule, the Classical style was adopted to convey the authority of the judicial system. Swinford Courthouse (1838-9) is a fine example (fig. 42). Designed by Henry Brett (d. 1882), County Surveyor for County Mayo, the courthouse follows a template associated with William Francis Caldbeck (c.1824-72) with a double-height courtroom flanked on either side by vestibules and judge and jury chambers. Castlebar, as the administrative centre of the county, boasted an array of important public buildings. The County Gaol (1829-34), a Gothic Revival fortress on the outskirts of the town, has long since been demolished although the County Courthouse (1858-60) continues to dominate The Green (figs. 43-44).

(fig. 43)

**CASTLEBAR  
COURTHOUSE**

The Mall, Castlebar  
(1858-60 with 1822)

The origins of Castlebar Courthouse date back to the early nineteenth century and a design attributed to George Papworth (1781-1855) of Dublin. Visiting the town in 1822, Thomas Reid (1823) remarked that 'a most elegant and convenient courthouse is in progress of building; it is constructed on a most judicious plan'.

A near-total reconstruction (1858-60) to a design by George Wilkinson saw the courthouse transformed in the Italianate style with a boldly rusticated finish at street level, Venetian windows overhead, and a pedimented roofline, all centring on a handsome Greek Doric portico.



(fig. 44)

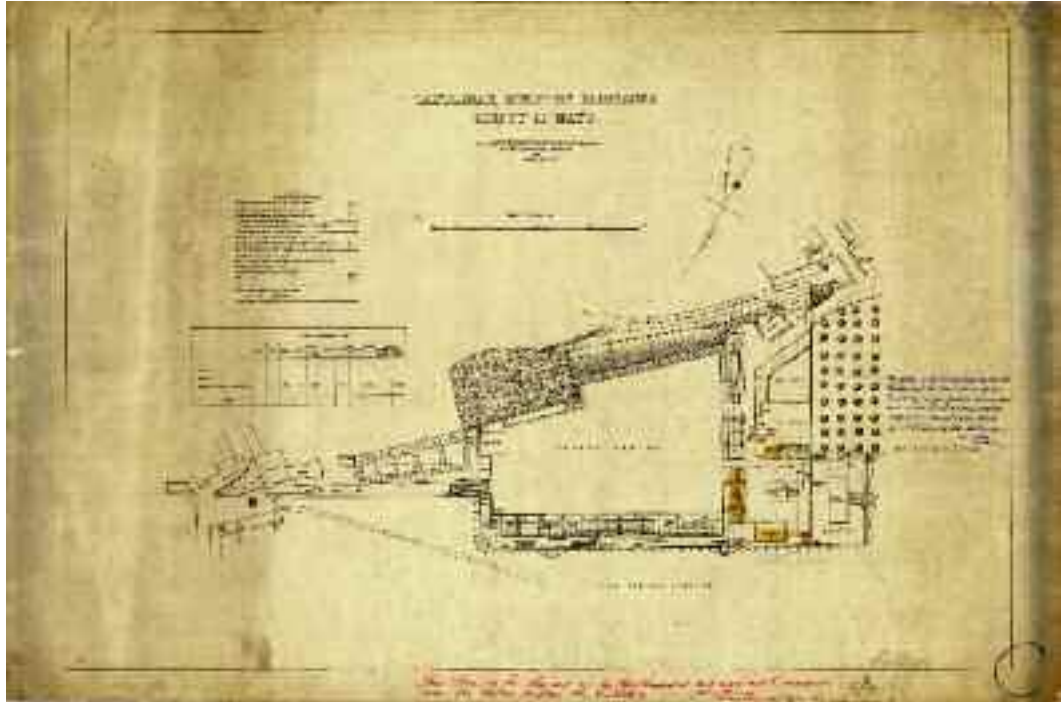
**CASTLEBAR  
COURTHOUSE**

The Mall, Castlebar

A detail of the Greek Doric portico, an important example of early structural cast-iron work.

(fig. 45)  
**CASTLEBAR**  
**INFANTRY BARRACKS**  
 Gorteendrunagh,  
 Castlebar

Castlebar takes its name from *Caisleán an Bharraigh*, or "Barry's Castle", a stronghold established by the de Barrie family in the early thirteenth century. The castle was destroyed by fire in 1412 and, although mentioned in annals of 1576 and 1572 and later still by Pococke, all upstanding vestiges were lost when the War Office, recognising the site's potential for defence, ordered (1828) the redevelopment of the site as the new Castlebar Infantry Barracks.



Courtesy of the  
 Military Archives

A gatehouse stands watch over the entrance to the Castlebar Infantry Barracks which, according to returns published in *Estimates and Accounts relating to The Army; Navy; Ordnance; &c.* (1831), was undergoing reconstruction in 1831 (figs. 45-47). Sporadic outbreaks of civil unrest, culminating in the Fenian Rising of 1867, gave impetus to the construction of constabulary barracks across the county and two remarkably similar buildings were erected at Kilmovee (1873-4) and Kinnewry (1873-4) (fig. 48).



(fig. 46)  
**CASTLEBAR**  
**INFANTRY BARRACKS**  
 Gorteendrunagh,  
 Castlebar

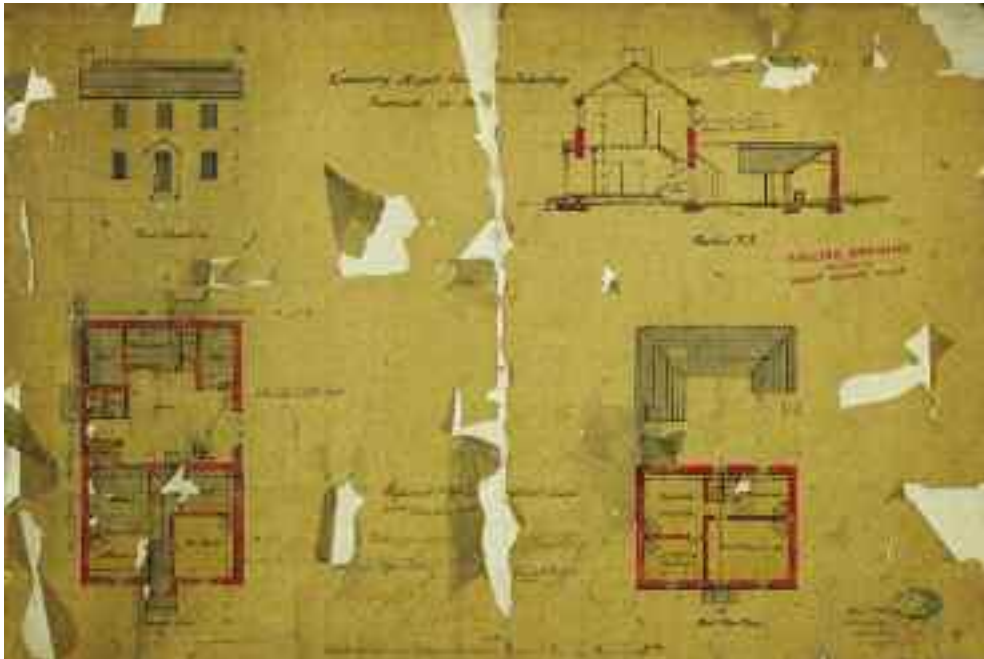
A gatehouse marks the entrance to the compound and housed an Orderly's Room at first floor level with a Prison and Guard House in the flanking wings.

(fig. 47)

**CASTLEBAR  
INFANTRY BARRACKS**  
Gorteendrunagh,  
Castlebar

A photograph from the Lawrence Collection showing the accommodation blocks with each block displaying a symmetrical plan form centring on a restrained Classical doorcase, uniform proportions on each floor, and minimal architectural "relief".

*Courtesy of the  
National Library of  
Ireland*



(fig. 48)

**KINNEWRY  
CONSTABULARY  
BARRACK**  
Kinnewry  
(1873-4)

A drawing signed (1873) by Enoch Trevor Owen showing the proposal for a barrack which could easily be mistaken for a farmhouse: only the Ground Plan, with a room labelled "Cell", betrays its civic purpose.

*Courtesy of the  
National Archives of  
Ireland*





(fig. 49)  
**FOXFORD CHURCH**  
(Toomore)  
Market Square,  
Foxford  
(1801 and 1826)

A classic church of the Board of First Fruits (*fl.* 1711-1833) described by Lewis as 'a plain modern building...erected in 1801 by parochial assessment, at an expense of about £400; a tower and gallery [being] added to it in 1826, by aid of a loan of £300 from the late Board of First Fruits'.

Churches and religious houses were perhaps the most accessible "fine architecture" in early nineteenth-century County Mayo. They stood at the heart of existing towns and emerging urban centres, or else in open countryside, providing a focus for an otherwise scattered community. The nineteenth century saw an unparalleled growth in the number of churches of various denominations, their varied styles reflecting not only different belief systems but also the ever-changing architectural tastes of the era.



(fig. 50)  
**FOXFORD CHURCH**  
(Toomore)  
Market Square,  
Foxford

A stained glass "East Window" supplied by Franz Mayer and Company (established 1847) of Munich and London depicts *Faith, Charity and Hope* and carries the dedication: 'Erected by the 5th Lord Clanmorris to the Glory of God and in loving memory of his Father & Mother AD 1908'.



SAINT MARY'S  
CHURCH  
(Crossmolina)  
Crossmolina  
(1818-9)

*The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* records that 'the church was built, in 1818, by means raised by parochial assessment' and, in a backhanded compliment, further elaborates that 'the church and the parsonage-house have a character which, for so secluded and remote a region, might almost be called pretending'.



SAINT MARY'S  
CHURCH  
(Crossmolina)  
Crossmolina

Its proximity to Enniscoe House has seen Saint Mary's Church (Crossmolina) embellished with memorials to the Jackson family. A monument signed by Coates of Dublin commemorates the military achievements of General Sir James Jackson MP (1790-1871) including his positions as Colonel of the King's Dragoon Guards and Lieutenant Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa.

The building programme sponsored by the Board of First Fruits (*fl.* 1711-1833), a body established to assist the reconstruction or repair of Church of Ireland churches and glebe houses, tentative at the end of the eighteenth century, accelerated considerably and each parish was provided with a "repaired" or entirely new church by the mid nineteenth century. It is probably no coincidence that this acceleration coincided with the gradual dismantling of the Penal Laws, which had limited religious activity outside the Established Church. A distinct pattern emerged and, with some exceptions, most Board of First Fruits churches of the period are characterised by a hall-with-entrance tower plan form, built of inexpensive materials, with simple Gothic detailing including a battlemented or pinnacled parapet. Often the tower was a later addition, as at Foxford Church (Toomore) where the nave was completed in 1801 and the tower in 1826 (*figs. 49-50*). The "pointed" profile of the openings, modelled after medieval architecture, is perhaps an attempt to convey a long-standing ecclesiastical legacy, a link between the Anglican faith and pre-Reformation Christianity, but, lacking true archaeological conviction, the style of architecture is today defined as Georgian Gothic or "Gothick".



(fig. 51)

**CHURCH OF SAINT CHARLES THE MARTYR**

(Kilcommon)  
Hollymount Demesne,  
Hollymount  
(1816)

The shell of a church erected with financial support from the Board of First Fruits and on a plot of ground originally forming part of the Hollymount House estate.

Deconsecrated in 1959, dismantled in 1963, the church saw its fittings and furnishings dispersed: the doorcase, removed from Ballintober Abbey, was reinstated in its place of origin during the final restoration of the abbey in 1964-6. Happily, the early cast-iron spire, mentioned by Lewis, survives intact, its perforated polygonal silhouette recalling a monument in Garbally Demesne in County Galway which, according to tradition, originated as the spire of Saint John's Church (Kilcloony) in Ballinasloe.

The Board of First Fruits distributed its funding via "gifts" and loans. On occasion additional money was raised by contribution from members of the congregation and the site donated by a local landlord, either in proximity to or on the family estate. Such was the case with the Church of Saint Charles the

Martyr (Kilcommon), Hollymount, a cruciform church in the grounds of Hollymount House where a date stone records that 'This Church was rebuilt/AD 1816 by a grant from the/Board of First Fruits and/Voluntary Subscriptions' (fig. 51).



**CHRIST CHURCH**  
(Castlebar or Aglish)  
Church Street,  
Castlebar  
(1825-8)

A view of the "new" parish church erected not only as the successor to, but allegedly retaining the footings of an early eighteenth-century church (1739) described by Pococke as 'a handsome building of Mr. Castles design; it is the Greek Cross with three galleries: The windows and Cornish [sic] are of hewen lime stone which is the finest black marble'. According to local lore the church was substantially damaged during the "The Races of Castlebar" but the demoralised congregation could not muster up the enthusiasm to contemplate its immediate reconstruction.



**CHRIST CHURCH**  
(Castlebar or Aglish)  
Church Street,  
Castlebar

A displaced date stone records the early eighteenth-century origins of Christ Church (Castlebar or Aglish) and reads: 'Built in the year/of our Lord 1739/Sir John Bingham Barnt. [and] John Edmondson Gent. Churchwardens/Revd. Mr. Thomas Ellison Minister/Mr. Richard Castles [sic] Architect/T. Dickson fecit'.



(fig. 52)  
**BALLYSAKEERY**  
**GLEBE HOUSE**  
 Mullafarry  
 (1820)

An unsigned drawing, endorsed as approved (1815) by Reverend James Verschoyle (1750-1834), Bishop of Killala and Achonry (fl. 1810-34), showing the front elevation of the glebe house intended for the incumbent of Ballysakeery parish. Accompanying drawings outline the principal floor plan and the adjacent

coach house and stables which feature, at eaves level, pigeonholes arranged in a diamond pattern. Long disused like the nearby parish church, the glebe house was the birthplace of Dr. Kathleen Florence Lynn (1874-1955), Chief Medical Officer in the City Hall Garrison during the 1916 Easter Rising.

© Representative  
 Church Body Library

The Board of First Fruits was also responsible for financially supporting the glebe houses and rectories that accompanied each church and, by mid century, most parishes were provided with a suitable residence. While the Gothic style dominated church architecture, a subdued Classicism came to define the contemporary glebe houses. Bunavaunish House (1819), a glebe house north of Neale, survives as a good example of the type and shows an elegantly-proportioned façade devoid of superfluous ornamentation. A glebe house erected (1820) for the incumbent of Ballysakeery, near Killala, shows window openings in round-headed recesses recalling the work of Sir Richard Morrison (1767-1849), tripartite openings lighting the principal reception rooms, and monolithic stone work embellishing the roofline (fig. 52).

The reorganisation of the Board of First Fruits as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1833 coincided in County Mayo with the establishment of a Church of Ireland Mission at Doogort by Reverend Edward Nangle (1799-1883) (fig. 53). An outbreak of cholera in 1831 saw Nangle first visit the county on a relief expedition and, while visiting Achill Island, he was disturbed to witness the economic and spiritual devastation of its people. Securing a plot of ground from Sir Richard Annesley O'Donel (1808-78) of Newport House, Nangle brought his family to the island in 1834 and oversaw the erection of a terrace of houses, a school, a dispensary and infirmary, a mill, an hotel, and a printing office producing a





**BELMULLET CHURCH  
(Kilcommon-Erris)**

Sráid na hEaglaise  
[Church Street], Béal  
an Mhuirthead  
[Belmullet]  
(1843)

A small but architecturally satisfying church marking the transition from the Georgian Gothicism of the Board of First Fruits type to a medieval authenticity informed by the writings of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-52) amongst others. Belmullet Church (Kilcommon-Erris) displays a simple "barn" plan form, russet-coloured stone work offset by "sparrow pecked" deep grey limestone dressings, slender lancet windows with the chancel lit by an elegant "Trinity Window", and a simple bellcote embellishing the roofline.



(fig. 53)  
**REVEREND EDWARD  
 NANGLE (1799-1883)**

An aquatint portrait of Reverend Edward Nangle (1799-1883) who, having visited Achill Island in 1831, spearheaded the Church of Ireland Mission at Doogort to alleviate the economic and spiritual devastation of its people.



(fig. 54)  
**"THE COLONY"**  
 Doogort, Achill

A postcard showing "The Colony" in its picturesque setting in the foothills of the lofty Slievemore. Although the postcard is unmarked it is more than likely that the glory days of the Achill Mission, in slow decline since the 1850s, were a distant memory when it was produced based on a photograph from the Lawrence Collection.

*Courtesy of Mayo  
 County Library*

monthly newspaper called *The Achill Missionary Herald and Western Witness*, a paper intended to 'expose the doctrinal and practical abominations of Popery' (figs. 54-56). Despite Nangle's best intentions, the Achill Mission was not universally welcomed and Mr. and Mrs. Hall (1843) remarked that "by one party it has been "cried down" as a bundle of fire-brands; and by another it has been "cried up" as a sanctuary for the oppressed... In fact, very contradictory statements of its advantages, or its mischiefs, have been for a long time in circulation, and it has, consequently, attracted no small degree of public attention'. Accusations of "souperism", alleging the favouring of Protestants when assisting the poor or attempting to coax Catholics to abandon their faith in return for food, mired "The Colony" in controversy. Nangle left Achill for Sligo in 1852 and his mission, after years of decline in the absence of its figurehead, closed in the 1880s.



(fig. 55)  
**SAINT THOMAS'S  
 CHURCH (Doogort)**  
 Doogort East,  
 Doogort, Achill Island  
 (1852)

The laying of the foundation stone of Saint Thomas's Church (Doogort), for which a design was produced (1851) by Joseph Welland (1798-1860) of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, was the cause of much celebration as evidenced by an effusive retelling of the occasion in *The Friendly Visitor* (1852) which reported that 'another crowd gathered together; and many a tear glistened in the eyes

of the poor converts as they listened to Reverend Charles Seymour [and] Reverend E. Nangle addressing then, the latter in their native tongue... It is now a cause for thanksgiving, that it is now nothing new...to lay foundation-stones of churches, for converts from Popery to offer up the spiritual sacrifices acceptable through Jesus Christ'.



(fig. 56)  
**SAINT THOMAS'S  
 CHURCH (Doogort)**  
 Doogort East,  
 Doogort, Achill Island

A view of the interior showcasing the wealth of monuments commemorating members of the Church of Ireland congregation including, on the left, a Classical monument 'To The Memory Of/THE REVd. EDWARD NANGLE/The Founder Of The Achill Mission' and a nearby tablet 'To The Memory Of/ELIZA [d. 1850]/The Beloved Wife Of The/REVd. EDWARD NANGLE/And His Fellow Helper In The Establishment/Of The Achill Mission'.

**CHRIST CHURCH  
(Ballyovey)**

An Cheapaigh Dhuibh  
Thoir [Cappaghduff  
East], Tuar Mhic  
Éadaigh  
[Toormakeady]  
(1852-3)

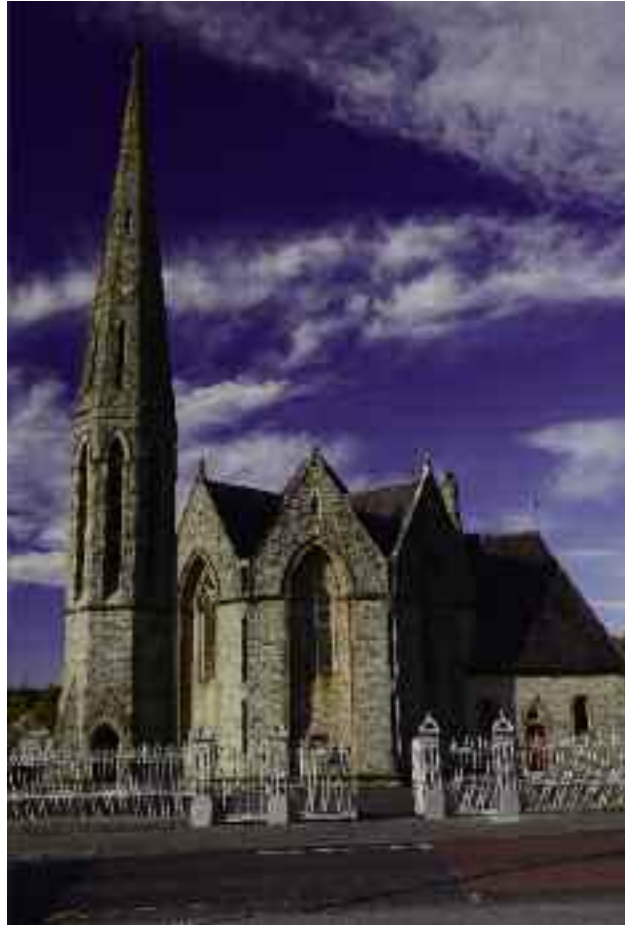
A ruined church survives as the enduring architectural legacy of the Irish Church Mission in Tuar Mhic Éadaigh [Toormakeady]. Remarking on the initial success of the mission a writer in 1860, using the pseudonym "Lex", noted that 'About nine years ago...there were about twenty Protestants in [Ballyovey]; consisting chiefly of the domestic servants and other *employés* of Lord Plunket. At present there are about 200 Protestants residing in the parish...about seventy [of them] converts, or "Jumpers", as they are popularly called'. An imposing Celtic High Cross marks the grave of the above named 'Lord Plunket', the Reverend Thomas Span Plunket (1792-1866), Lord Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry (*fl.* 1839-66).



**ROONAH  
Bunlahinch**

An unexpected architectural legacy of the Irish Church Mission, a "clapper bridge" spanning a shallow stretch of the Bunleemshough River is said to have been constructed to allow ease of access from a row of cottages to the nearby Bunlahinch Church (Bunlahinch). Adhering to an ancient, and somewhat crude construction technique, the footbridge has sometimes been mistaken for a medieval site.





(fig. 57)

**HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH**  
(Oughaval)  
Newport Street,  
Westport  
(1869-71)

Reporting on the consecration of the church, *The Ballinrobe Chronicle* (5th October 1872) mentioned 'The style is Gothic, partaking of some of the features usually seen in French work... The chief beauty of the building is the unusual height of the southern gables over the apse, a feature very often found in continental Churches. The spire is very graceful [and] through the greatest part of its length is perforated with longitudinal openings. This may also be observed in many French Churches'.

A final flourish of activity in the later nineteenth century witnessed the construction of two churches which, while sharing a dedication, could hardly be more different in terms of scale and architectural ambition. Holy Trinity Church (Oughaval) (1869-71), erected as

the successor to an eighteenth-century parish church in the grounds of Westport House, cannot fail to impress and is perhaps the finest church designed by Sir Thomas Newenham Deane (1827-99) of Cork and Dublin (*figs. 57-60*).





(fig. 58)

**HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH (Oughaval)**  
Newport Street,  
Westport

A detail of the intricately-carved creamy sandstone dressings executed, according to *The Mayo Examiner* (30th September 1872), by a Mr. William Ridge.

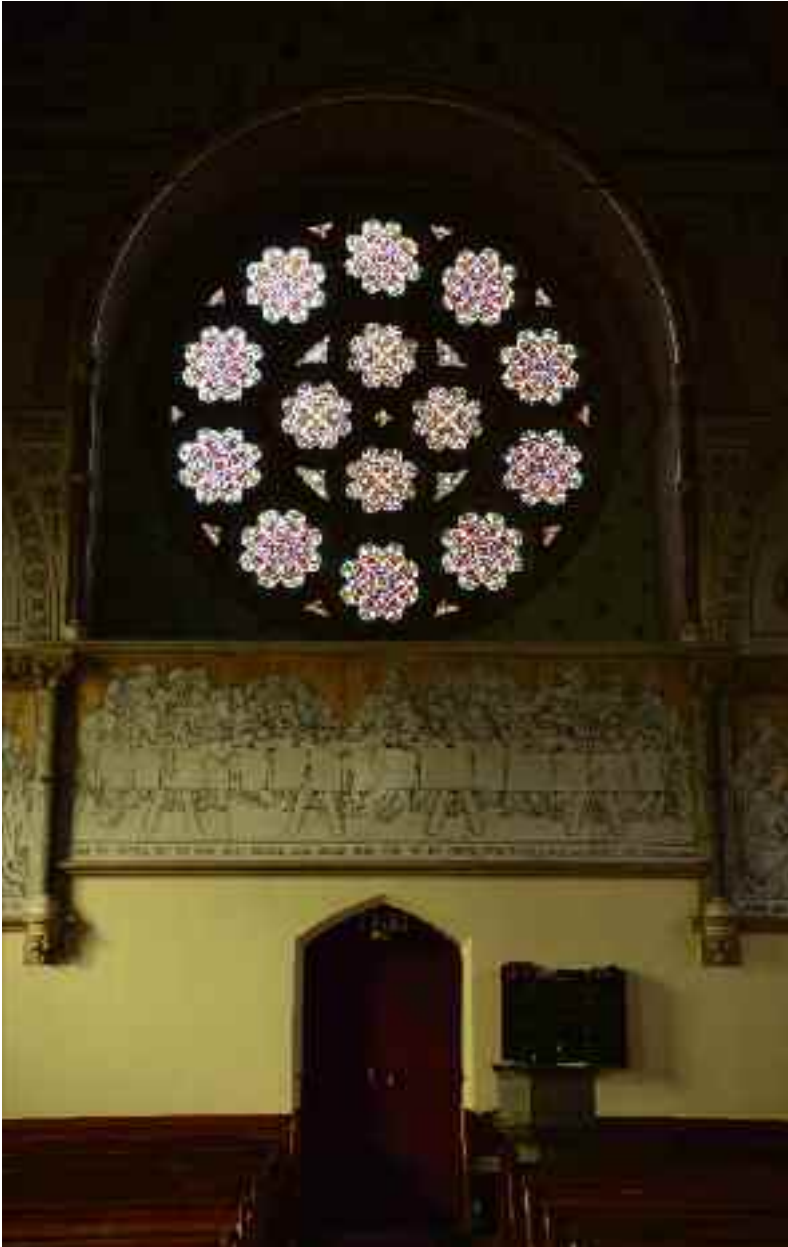


(fig. 59)

**HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH (Oughaval)**  
Newport Street,  
Westport

Having bequeathed the site, and donated £1,200 towards the cost of construction, George John Browne (1820-96), third Marquess of Sligo, was also responsible for much of the decoration of the church, the result

being one of the finest interiors in County Mayo. The hammerbeam roof compares favourably with Deane's unexecuted proposal (1866) for the central hall of the Law Courts in London.



(fig. 60)

**HOLY TRINITY  
CHURCH (Oughaval)**  
Newport Street,  
Westport

Among the artistic highlights of the church is the series of inscribed white marble murals showing scenes from the Old and New Testaments.

Commissioned by the Marquess of Sligo, and supplied by Samuel Poole of M.T. Bayne and Company of Westminster. The original series (1878) lined the north and south walls of the nave. Later murals (1889-90) included a copy of *The Last Supper* (1495-8) by Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519).

Its namesake on Inis Bigil [Inishbiggle], designed by John Gervais Skipton (1861-1929) in 1893 and consecrated in 1896, is not only the smallest church in County Mayo, but distinguishes its setting as the only island off Ireland with only a Church of Ireland church.

The gradual dismantling of the Penal Laws at the turn of the nineteenth century allowed for the building of churches not only by Catholics, but also by the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations. Their imposed status as a "chapel", however, and the prohibition of conspicuous embellishment such as towers confirmed them as secondary to the Established Church. Occupying a pastoral setting between Ballysakeery Church and its glebe house stands the early nineteenth-century Mullafarry Presbyterian Church, begun in 1824 under the aegis of Reverend David Rogers (d. 1859) and described in contemporary reports (1826) as 'in a state of forwardness, but unfinished for the want of a lease' (*figs. 61-62*). A single-cell "barn" type, the unassuming church shows two hallmarks of the Georgian Gothic fashion, namely Churchwarden tracery in the nave windows and coupled lancets lighting the sanctuary.

The shell of a "chapel" outside Ballinrobe is an important survivor of the period and, dating from 1819, presents a long, low "T"-shaped plan form and characteristic "pointed" Georgian Gothic openings (*fig. 63*). The eye-catching tower topped with slender pinnacles, prohibited under the Penal Laws, is undoubtedly a later "improvement". Abandoned in favour of the new Saint Mary's Catholic Church in the heart of the town, the chapel was subsequently dismantled, its high pitched roof repurposed at the nearby Christian Brothers National School.



(*fig. 61*)  
MULLAFARRY  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
Mullafarry  
(1824-6)

A rural church displaying an understated ecclesiastical theme with Churchwarden glazing patterns redolent of the Georgian Gothic style. An adjacent graveyard includes the burial plots of Robert Massey (d. 1902) of Courthill House and James Hunter Massey (d. 1906) of Carn House and is a quiet reminder of the part that the Presbyterian community has long played in the complex social fabric of County Mayo.

(*fig. 62*)  
MULLAFARRY  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH  
Mullafarry

A view of the interior which, like the exterior, is the epitome of elegant restraint. A wall monument pays tribute to members of the congregation 'who fought and fell during the Great War 1914-1919'.





(fig. 63)  
**BALLINROBE  
CATHOLIC CHAPEL**  
Castlebar Road,  
Ballinrobe  
(1815-9)

The roofless shell of a chapel where the traditional "T"-shaped plan form, the Georgian Gothic openings, and the minimum of superfluous ornamentation, all confirm a period of construction coinciding with the dismantling of the Penal Laws. While no masonry breaks have yet been uncovered, the remarkably slender tower, a familiar eye-catcher in the landscape, is undoubtedly a later addition.



(fig. 64)  
SAINT MUREDACH'S  
CATHOLIC  
CATHEDRAL  
Cathedral Road,  
Ballina  
(1827-37)

A photograph showing the nineteenth-century cathedral and its proximity to the fifteenth-century Ardnaree Abbey (1427) with the symbiotic union of the old and the new a happy accident rather than a concerted attempt to reclaim an important ecclesiastical site suppressed in the 1570s: the Cathedral Committee had intended to build on a hilltop overlooking Ballina but were offered a less conspicuous site rent free on the bank of the River Moy.

*Courtesy of the  
National Library of  
Ireland*

A far more ambitious project was realised in Ballina with the erection of a cathedral for the Diocese of Killala (figs. 64-66). First contemplated by Reverend Peter Waldron (1751-1834), Bishop of Killala, little progress was made until the appointment of Reverend John MacHale (1791-1881) as Coadjutor Bishop in 1825. Dominick Madden (d. 1837) was appointed architect, most likely on the strength of his ongoing Catholic Cathedral of the Assumption (1827-34) in Tuam. Both works share many features in common including a cruciform plan form, pinnacle-topped stepped buttresses, battlemented parapets, and an elaborate "East Window". Although the foundation stone was laid in 1827, it was not until 1831 that the first Mass was celebrated.

Yet the cathedral was clearly unfinished, it windows unglazed, its walls unplastered, the congregation standing on a compacted mud floor, and the West Front still awaiting its tower. It has been suggested that, were the cathedral to have been built entirely to Madden's design, a square tower identical to Tuam would have been realised. Ultimately, a broach spire was completed in 1854. An article on Ballina in *The Dublin Builder* (1st August 1860) later mentioned that 'a beautiful tower and spire about 185 feet high was built a few years since by Mr. Canning, a local builder, after designs by [James Joseph McCarthy (1817-82)], architect, [and the cathedral] may be regarded as the only public building with any architectural pretensions'.





(fig. 65)  
**SAINT MUREDACH'S  
CATHOLIC  
CATHEDRAL**  
Cathedral Road,  
Ballina

A resplendent interior eliciting strong comparisons to the "Sister Cathedral" in Tuam with both works showing lofty arcades resting on polygonal pillars. Although substantially reordered (1970) to accommodate the liturgical reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), the focal point of the sanctuary remains the Italian marble altar commissioned by Reverend John MacHale (1791-1881), Coadjutor Bishop of Killala (*fl.* 1825-34), during a visit to Rome in 1831-2.

(fig. 66)  
**SAINT MUREDACH'S  
CATHOLIC  
CATHEDRAL**  
Cathedral Road,  
Ballina

A detail of the vaulted ceiling decorated for Reverend Thomas Feeny (1790-1873), Bishop of Killala (*fl.* 1848-73), to a design by Mark Murray (d. 1846) allegedly modelled "after" the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome.





(fig. 67)  
**ALL SAINTS'  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Listernan, Killasser  
(1832 and 1863)

A rural church with humble roots, the original chapel was described by Lewis as 'well built [and] roofed with slate'. Later reconstruction saw the church adopt its distinctive arrow-shaped footprint although, close neither to river nor sea, it is referred to locally as "The Anchor Church".

(fig. 68)  
**ALL SAINTS'  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Listernan, Killasser

A scratch-like inscription on the doorcase confirms that work on the restructured church continued on following the death of Reverend John Finn in 1872.

Justifying his ambitions for a cathedral, Reverend MacHale wrote 'I applied myself first of all to rear a cathedral that might contribute to the majesty and splendour of religion in the town in which I reside; and that should also serve as a model and incite the clergy to undertake the building of like edifices in their respective parishes'. Yet, while Emancipation under the Roman Catholic Relief Act, 1829, encouraged building across the county, limited financial resources available to the congregations meant that the resulting churches were invariably modest in size and architectural ambition. Most have

since been reconstructed or replaced. All Saints' Catholic Church, Killasser, can trace its origins back to a single-cell "chapel" erected in 1832; a second nave intended for the segregation of the congregation into female and male worshippers was mentioned in the field notes (1838) by John O'Donovan (1806-61) of the Ordnance Survey. The church achieved its unique arrow-shaped footprint following "improvements" carried out under the auspices of Reverend John Finn PP (d. 1872) although a discreet scratch-like engraving on the doorcase confirms that work continued on into the mid 1870s (figs. 67-68).





**SAINT JAMES'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Chapel Street,  
Charlestown  
(1855-8)

Charlestown, the last significant "new town" in County Mayo, was founded by Charles Strickland (1818-92), Land Agent for Lord Dillon. For a brief period known as Newtown-Dillon, but quickly adopting the name of its progenitor, the town

was visited (1860) by a correspondent for *The Dublin Builder* who commented that 'a new church has sprung up with a new town, entitled Charlestown, in a wild part of the county of Mayo...and recently passing through this locality we were not

a little astonished to find an edifice of such correct ecclesiastical character in so remote a district'. Erected to a design by Matthew Ellison Hadfield (1812-85) and George Goldie (1828-87) of Sheffield and Westminster, the

church shows the influence of Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, the celebrated proponent of the Gothic Revival.

(fig. 69)

**ERREW MONASTERY**

Errew  
(1840-2)

One of the finest of the nineteenth-century religious houses in County Mayo, Errew Monastery shows a lengthy symmetrical footprint and elegant bipartite and tripartite glazing patterns diminishing in scale on each floor. Rising above the rooftop, a battlemented tower links to a chapel in an arrangement curiously bringing to mind a Board of First Fruits church.



The establishment of a Franciscan community at Errew, near Ballyhean, resulted in one of the finest religious houses in County Mayo (*figs. 69-70*). Occupying a site donated by James Hardiman (1782-1855) of Galway, and 'intended for the dissemination of a sound religious instruction among the poor children', news of the revival of a monastic order in the region was far reaching, *The Bengal Catholic Herald* (1st July 1843) lauding it as 'a precedent well deserving to be followed by the larger Roman Catholic proprietors of the island'. A later monastery on Acaill [Achill Island] was erected in direct response to the continuing proselytisation of the region by The Irish Society which saw new Church of Ireland churches appear at Aasleagh, Ballycroy,

Bunlahinch, Knappagh, Poll an tSómais [Pollatomish], Tuar Mhic Éadaigh [Toormakeady] and Achill Sound. A power struggle is apparent in an article in *The Friendly Visitor* (1852) which recalled 'The new parish church of Achill was consecrated, and 165 individuals, chiefly converts, were confirmed. Amongst others in Achill at the time was Archbishop McHale [sic]...and while the consecration of the church and the confirmation were going on, he was laying the foundation of, I believe, a nunnery, with the intention, doubtless, of attracting the Roman Catholics, and preventing them from listening to the Gospel which was faithfully preached in the parish church'.





(fig. 70)

**ERREW MONASTERY**  
Errew

In an intriguing hybrid the central Classical doorcase includes Georgian Gothic detailing as if to radiate an "ecclesiastical" overtone. The overpanel is inscribed in copperplate lettering: 'AMDG/Under the especial patronage of His Grace the Most/Illustrious Lord John MacHale Archbishop of Tuam/The first Stone of this Monastery was laid by James Hardiman Esqr. on the 21st day/OF JULY 1840'.



Large private houses continued to be built in the early nineteenth century, many others enlarged or reconstructed. The restrained Classicism of the later eighteenth century initially held sway. Ballinafad House, near Balla, was erected in 1827 by Maurice Blake (d. 1852) succeeding an earlier house which, according to Lewis, was taken possession of by a party of French during the 1798 Rebellion. A symmetrical frontage boasts, as its centrepiece, a Classically-detailed porch approached by a *perron*, a double flight of steps, but the house is distinguished by its single elongated chimney stack spanning almost the entire length of the roof (*figs. 71-72*).

The taste for the Gothic Revival and its sister style, the Tudor Revival, became more pronounced in the second quarter of the century and was first manifested on a grand scale in County Mayo at Belleek Manor (1825-31), outside Ballina, the seat of Sir Francis Arthur Knox-Gore (1803-73) (*figs. 73-74*). An impressive country house constructed in the ubiquitous deep grey Mayo limestone, the entrance front shows a symmetrical façade distinguished by battlemented and gabled parapets and a plethora of slender octagonal pinnacles: the effect recalls Frederick Darley's (1798-1872) contemporary Coolbawn House (1823-39) in County Wexford although Belleek Manor has been attributed to John Benjamin Keane (d. 1859) of Dublin. Its "medieval" pretensions are underscored by the fact that, according to Lewis, it was originally intended to call the house *Belleek Abbey*.



(fig. 71)  
BALLINAFAD HOUSE  
Ballinafad  
(1827)

A late Georgian country seat exuding an air of dignity rather than ostentation with its symmetrical frontage, finely chiselled limestone ashlar construction, clean lines and pleasing proportions. The comparatively showy porch is believed to be a later improvement. The elongated chimney stack was singled out for attention by Maurice Craig (1976) as 'perhaps the most extreme example [of] one very massive stack serving every hearth in the house'.

(fig. 72)  
BALLINAFAD HOUSE  
Ballinafad

A detail of the decorative plasterwork contributing to the artistic significance of Ballinafad House.





(fig. 73)

**BELLEEK MANOR**  
Garrankeel, Ballina  
(1825-31)

A Tudor Revival country house described in effusive terms by Lewis as 'a noble mansion in the later English style of architecture... beautifully situated on the banks of the Moy, in a fine demesne tastefully laid out and richly planted'. And yet, even in the glow of the mid-Autumn sunshine, the house fails to shake off the impression of an institution, an effect that would serve it well when it was adapted as a Tuberculosis Sanatorium in the 1950s.



(fig. 74)

**BELLEEK MANOR**  
Garrankeel, Ballina

A view of the entrance hall where an imposing neo-Jacobean chimneypiece, the flanking battlemented doorcases, and the Tudor Revival vaulted ceiling, all enhance the "medieval" pretensions of the house.



(fig. 75)

**DELPHI**  
Tawnyinlough  
(1815-20)

A view of the fishing lodge erected for Howe Peter Browne in the shadow of the rugged peaks of Ben Creggan and Ben Gorm. The Westport Estate Papers are an invaluable source of information on Delphi and, in addition to leases to fellow members of the landed gentry, the archive

includes accounts for glazing (1820) by Thomas Kelly and an early description of the fishing lodge as 'a single storey building with outhouses extending to the road'. Later papers record a turbulent period when Delphi was damaged (1922) by Free State troops.

Wealthy landowners occasionally developed satellite pockets of their estates and a new addition to the built heritage of County Mayo emerged in the form of the sporting lodge, often in prime fishing or hunting grounds in remote mountainous regions. Delphi, a fishing lodge occupying a picturesque position in the shadow of Ben Creggan and Ben Gorm, was under construction in 1820 for Howe Peter Browne (1788-1845), second Marquess of Sligo, and was so named because of the perceived similarity of the landscape to the home of the Delphic oracle in Greece, which Browne had visited on a Grand Tour in the company of Lord Byron (fig. 75). Sporting lodges could

(fig. 76)

**DRIMBAWN HOUSE**

An Cheapaigh Dhuibh Thoir [Cappaghduff East], Tuar Mhic Éadaigh [Toormakeady] (1858)

Occasionally the recreational nature of a sporting lodge might lend itself to an informal, almost playful architectural expression and Toormakeady Lodge, since altered, once exemplified the *cottage orné* style with its high pitched thatch roof. The neighbouring Drimbawn House, on the other hand, subscribed to a formal Classicism with a symmetrical footprint centring on a pedimented breakfront, ruby-coloured sandstone walls offset by deep grey limestone dressings, and monolithic stone work embellishing the roofline.



also generate an important income for the estate and the Westport Estate Papers include leases to fellow members of the landed gentry including Thomas Spencer Lindsey (1790-1867) of Hollymount House and Captain Stepney St. George (1791-1847) of Headford Castle in County Galway.

The later, and perhaps more architecturally satisfying Drimbawn House (1858) was erected in the outskirts of Tuar Mhic Éadaigh [Toormakeady] for the Honourable Catherine Plunket (1803-68) and presents itself as a ruby-red miniature temple overlooking Loch Measca

[Lough Mask] with its mountainous backdrop in the far distance (fig. 76). Unlike the standard country house, where a disproportionate amount of space might be set aside for the dining room, drawing room, morning room, library, and sundry reception rooms necessary to entertain and impress guests, the internal arrangement of Drimbawn House typifies the sporting lodge. Here the front contains a suite of modest apartments with a lengthy return housing the kitchens, tackle rooms and numerous bedrooms necessary for visiting fishing parties.





(fig. 77)

LISBAUN WEST

A nineteenth-century farmhouse shows a direct entry plan form with opposing doors, limewashed battered walls, and a high pitched roof regularly replenished with a fresh layer of locally-sourced rye straw thatch.



(fig. 78)

CASTLETOWN

A thatched farmhouse forming part of a neat self-contained group alongside a thatched outbuilding.



**HOLLYMOUNT MODEL  
AGRICULTURAL  
SCHOOL**  
Kilrush  
(1835-6)

The Mansion House Relief Committee (established 1822) solicited subscriptions from Ireland and abroad to alleviate the distress of the poor in Ireland during the outbreak of blight in 1821 and 1822. Surplus funds were later invested in education resulting, in Hollymount, in the establishment of 'a *Provincial* model school, for instructing a limited number of boys in improved agriculture, and girls in the *proper* management of dairy'. A failed enterprise, the school was criticised by Jonathan Binns (1837) as 'of more costly description than is necessary...an ostentatious but useless building'. The school was subsequently inspected (1839) by George Wilkinson to evaluate its potential as a workhouse but the cost of adaptation was deemed prohibitive.



NIAH

In contrast to wealthy landowners, who had a generous income at their disposal to experiment with the latest architectural trends, the homes of the majority continued to develop on long-established patterns. A modest farmhouse at Lisbaun West, near Knock, is typical of the region and features a rectilinear direct entry plan form with opposing doors, limewashed battered walls, and a high pitched thatched roof (*fig. 77*). A farmhouse in Castletown, in the extreme south of the county, features a similar arrangement with the addition of a windbreak porch. It is likely that the reed covering the roof was traditionally sourced from the shoreline of the nearby Lough Corrib (*fig. 78*).

The economic gulf between the rich and the poor was tragically highlighted by the Great Famine. Ireland had known periods of potato crop failure dating back to the early eighteenth century and the new century was marked by a widespread failure in 1800. An outbreak of potato blight in 1821 and 1822 affected the entire Provinces of Connacht and Munster while a later crop failure in 1830 and 1831 was concentrated in Counties Donegal, Mayo and Galway. These were relatively minor compared to the Great Famine that devastated the country from 1845 to 1849.

Under the Poor Law Relief Act, 1838, County Mayo was divided into five Poor Law Unions, each with its own union workhouse:

(fig. 79)  
**BALLINROBE UNION  
 WORKHOUSE**  
 Knockfereen,  
 Ballinrobe  
 (1840-2)

Assigned responsibility for designing and supervising the construction of one hundred and thirty Union Workhouses across Ireland, George Wilkinson's brief stated: 'The style of building is intended to be of the cheapest description compatible with durability...all mere decoration being studiously excluded'. An extract from a set of drawings for the proposed Ballinrobe Union Workhouse includes the "Main Building" destroyed (1922) by Irregulars during The Civil War (1922-3) and the "Entrance Front" once containing administration offices with a meeting room for the Board of Guardians overhead.

*Courtesy of the Irish  
 Architectural Archive*



Ballina (1840-2; demolished); Ballinrobe (1840-2; partly extant) (*fig. 79*); Castlebar (1840-2; demolished); Swinford (1840-2; partly extant) (*fig. 80*); and Westport (1840-2; demolished). The architect appointed to oversee the construction of one hundred and thirty workhouses nationwide was George Wilkinson (1814-90) and, faced with a monumental task, it is not surprising that a number of standard patterns emerged for complexes accommodating from 700 to 1,200 inmates. Ballinrobe, designed to accommodate 800 inmates, epitomised the standard workhouse arrangement comprising an

"Entrance Front", a "Main Building" with segregated dormitories for female and male inmates, a central chapel and dining hall, and an infirmary. Damaged during the Civil War (1922-3), today only the "Entrance Front" survives intact.

Each workhouse was administered by an elected Board of Guardians whose work was supported, in part, by a local tax. Difficulties collecting taxes resulted, on occasions, in workhouses, declared fit for the admission of paupers, standing empty for lengthy periods. Attempts by the first Board of Guardians for the Westport Poor Law Union to raise taxes failed



(fig. 80)  
**SWINFORD UNION  
 WORKHOUSE**  
 Bridge Street,  
 Swinford  
 (1840-2)

A view of the surviving "Entrance Front" shows all of Wilkinson's hallmarks including symmetry of form, minimal decoration restricted to the occasional hood moulding over door and windows, and a multi-gabled roofline. As at Westport there was a lengthy delay between the declaration of the workhouse as fit for the admission of paupers on the 30th of November 1842 and the admission of its first inmates on the 14th of April 1846.

and led to their resignation *en masse*. A second Board of Guardians successfully opened the workhouse almost three years to the day after it was declared fit for purpose but continuing economic uncertainty nearly forced its closure just two years later. A reorganisation of the Irish Poor Law Unions between 1848 and 1850 saw the formation of four additional Poor Law Unions in County Mayo: Béal an Mhuirthead [Belmullet] (1850; demolished); Claremorris (1850-2; partly extant); Killala (1850-2; demolished); and Newport (1850-2; partly extant).

Conditions in the workhouse were specifically designed to discourage entry and admission was often the last resort for the

destitute. In an effort to alleviate the suffering of the poor, and to foster self-sufficiency, a series of famine relief works was organised by Government supported by Acts of Parliament. The Drainage (Ireland) Act, 1846, endeavoured to improve the quality of arable land, preventing water logging and further crop failure, and its implementation had a considerable impact on the architectural heritage of south County Mayo.

The economic benefits of a canal opening communications between Castlebar and Galway via Loughs Mask and Corrib were recognised early on by William Bald and Alexander Nimmo. A feasibility study (1846) by John McMahon (d. 1852), Engineer to the



(fig. 81)  
**CARROWNAGOWER  
BRIDGE**  
Killimor/Caherloughlin  
/Barna

Much work had been completed when the ill-fated Cong Canal was abandoned in 1858 including bridges at Cregaree (1852) and Drumsheel Upper (1853). Yet, there were still a number of projects outstanding and, describing 'the excavation and partial formation of a Canal from Lough Corrib to Lough Mask', a report (1859) by the Commissioners of Public Works mentioned 'the removal of the old and the erection of a Temporary Timber Bridge at Carrownagower, to admit the construction of a new Bridge by the County of Mayo'.



**SPRINGVALE BRIDGE**

Creagh  
Demesne/Rathkelly/  
Gorteenlynagh  
(1849-50)

In a similar vein to the Poor Law Unions County Mayo was, for the purposes of the Drainage (Ireland) Act, 1846, organised into a number of districts, each with its appointed District Engineer. Frederick Barry CE (1821-85), in his annual reports for the "Lough Mask and River Robe District", describes the progress of the canalisation of the Robe River which, at its westernmost extremity, involved the construction of a new bridge succeeding the eighteenth-century Creagh Bridge. The tree-lined canal is today a popular amenity.



Drainage Department of the Board of Works, saw the Cong Canal prioritised and its progress, or lack thereof, is recorded in the detailed annual reports prepared by Samuel Ussher Roberts (1821-1900), District Engineer. Work was partly suspended in 1854 and was stopped outright in 1858. A number of theories have been proposed as to why the canal was left unfinished. One mentioned by Sir William Wilde (1815-76) of Moytura House, suggested that the limestone through which the canal was cut was porous and refused to hold water. However, a more likely explanation is found in a contemporary report (1855) for the Commissioners of Special Inquiry, which mentions that 'Railways have been constructed to a great extent in Ireland and it is most probable that many of the places intended to be benefited by the Navigation Works will within a brief period be included within the Railway System in Ireland'. They

recommended that 'the Canal between Lough Corrib and Lough Mask [being] far from complete...we are of the opinion that no further expenditure should be incurred in respect of it'. Whatever the cause for its abandonment, Cong Canal boasts an architectural legacy in the form of bridges, cuttings, embankments, locks and sluice gates (*fig. 81*).

As elsewhere in Ireland, the arrival of the railway had a dramatic effect on the physical landscape and social outlook of County Mayo. The Mayo Branch of the Midland Great Western Railway line, opened as far as Castlebar in 1862, involved the building of bridges, embankments, level crossings and station complexes. The line reached Westport by 1866 and a branch from Manulla Junction reached Foxford in 1868 and, finally, Ballina in 1873. Improvements to meet the requirements of the modern passenger mean that no station



(fig. 82)  
KILLLALA RAILWAY  
STATION  
Townplots East, Killlala  
(1893)

Following the closure of the line in 1937, the station house at Killlala was adapted to residential use without compromising the historic integrity of the composition. Several original features have been retained including the canopy supported on cast-iron Corinthian colonettes. The nearby goods store, engine shed and water tower also survive intact.



survives in unaltered form. Later extensions saw stations open in Killlala (1893) in the north of the county (*fig. 82*), and Newport (1894) (*fig. 83*), Mallaranny (1894) (*fig. 84*) and Achill Sound (1895) in the far west. A mooted branch to Béal an Mhuirthead [Belmullet], first mentioned in *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* and for which an impressive terminus was later illustrated in *The Building News* (13th October 1915), was never realised. The Light Railway Act, promoted by Arthur James Balfour MP (1848-1930) and passed by Parliament in 1889, attempted to improve the transport of

agricultural produce to domestic and international markets and was directly responsible for the construction of the Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway line, the so-called "Burma Road", which included stations at Kiltimagh (1895) and Swinford (1895). Local lines linking previously remote regions, including the Claremorris and Ballinrobe Branch of the Midland Great Western Railway line and the awkwardly-titled Athenry and Tuam Extension to Claremorris Light Railway, have all left a lasting architectural legacy on the landscape of the county.



(fig. 83)  
**NEWPORT/CARROWBAUN**  
 Newport  
 (1892-4)

Plans for a railway line between Achill Island and Westport were well timed to provide much needed employment in an area affected by a potato crop failure in the winter of 1890. Statistics compiled for Parliament indicate that almost 1,500 men were employed on the project in the spring of 1891 and contemporary photographs show a team at work on the impressive viaduct spanning the Owennadarrydivva or Newport River. A central date stone is embossed "1892" although the line did not open until the 1st of February 1894.

(fig. 84)  
**MALLARANNY RAILWAY HOTEL**  
 Mallaranny  
 (1895-7)

An hotel erected by the Midland Great Western Railway Company and promoted in its guide books as 'a first-class modern [establishment], standing about 100 feet above the sea, and commanding a lovely prospect of Clew Bay. From the first it has been recognised as a much-needed acquisition, providing visitors with the most comfortable quarters, with capital fishing, golfing, and other

means of holiday enjoyment'. The closure of the railway line saw visitor numbers dwindle. Shut down in 1991, the hotel was subsequently rescued from near dereliction and its distinctive curvilinear "Dutch" gables continue to dominate the skyline overlooking Trawoughter Strand.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*





(fig. 85)  
**THE IMPERIAL HOTEL**  
 The Mall, Castlebar

In addition to its importance as a prominent architectural landmark, The Imperial Hotel is equally renowned, perhaps more so, as the venue for the foundation (1879) of

the National Land League by Michael Davitt (1846-1906), a political organisation founded to abolish landlordism and enable tenant farmers to own the land they worked on.

The influx of commercial travellers spurred the construction or improvement of hotels and inns. The Imperial Hotel, Castlebar, which is said to have begun trading in the eighteenth century, was entirely restructured. Remarking on the work then underway, *The Western People* (20th February 1892) noted 'The front has been raised considerably, a new roof has been put on, and ancient windows have given place to ones of modern design, which will admit more light than architects of a past period apparently considered necessary for bodily comfort or health... The several apartments have been decorated and furnished with great taste and may vie with those of any provincial hotel



(fig. 86)  
**PEARSE STREET**  
 Ballina

A photograph of Pearse Street showing a terrace of houses characterised by elegant arcades at street level which, along with a contemporary terrace in Kevin Barry Street, likely number among the 'many new houses' described by Lewis as 'built by merchants and others engaged in trade and commerce'.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*

in completeness [sic] and commodiousness' (fig. 85).

The growth of trade and commerce had positive consequences on the towns and villages of the county and photographs from the Lawrence Collection (1865-1914) show streets of Classically-detailed shopfronts (fig. 86). Happily, a small number of early examples survive recording the artistry and skill of the traditional Irish shopfront. McMorrow's in Crossmolina shows typically understated decoration (fig. 87) while Thomas Moran in Westport follows a restrained Classical theme with panelled pilasters framing the central door and flanking display windows (fig. 88).

(fig. 87)  
**McMORROW'S**  
Mullenmore Street,  
Crossmolina

A Classically-detailed shopfront retaining most of the original fabric including glazed sliding screens behind the display window.



(fig. 88)  
**THOMAS MORAN**  
Bridge Street,  
Westport

One of a pair of townhouses featuring commercial space at street level with residential accommodation overhead defined by Wyatt-style tripartite glazing patterns. A Classically-composed shopfront shows a traditional woodgrained finish, an effect popularised at the turn of the twentieth century to simulate expensive hardwoods.







MORAN AND  
COMPANY  
Bridge Street,  
Westport

A traditional Irish shopfront based on a simplification of the Classical formula of pilasters supporting an entablature, frieze and cornice.



J. McGING  
High Street, Westport

A brightly-coloured shopfront retaining the slender glazing bars often missing from neighbouring display windows.

The economic recovery was also marked by the construction of purpose-built banks. An early example, the Hibernian Bank in Main Street, Swinford, despite later modifications, presents itself as a Venetian *palazzo*, as if to link the building to the Italian origins of banking (*fig. 89*). Indeed, with a few notable exceptions, the Classical or Italianate style was to dominate bank building in the later nineteenth century and it was not unusual,

when a resident architect was engaged, for standardised prototypes to emerge creating an early example of corporate identity. Sandham Symes (1807-94), appointed Architect to the Bank of Ireland in 1854, produced a design for Ballina (1875) that is a near facsimile of the contemporary branch in Waterford City. In a similar vein, the Bank of Ireland (1877) in Main Street, Ballinrobe, is clearly a reduction of the Ballina design (*fig. 90*).



(fig. 89)  
**BANK OF IRELAND**  
Main Street, Swinford

A photograph from the Wynne Collection showing the *palazzo*-like Hibernian Bank, its Venetian urbanity not only linking the building back to the Italian origins of banking, but also attempting to communicate through sophisticated architecture a sense of permanence and security to its customers.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*



(fig. 90)  
**BANK OF IRELAND**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe  
(1877)

A drawing signed (1877) by Sandham Symes (1807-94) outlines the plan and elevation of the Bank of Ireland in Ballinrobe, a bank which resembles the Ballina branch with the exception of the omission of the uppermost floor. Symes was succeeded as Architect to the Bank of Ireland by Richard Chaytor Millar (1844-1915) and William John Symes (1846-92) who were responsible for the reconstruction of the roof, omitting the parapet, in 1892.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*

The effects of the Great Famine and its aftermath were not felt solely by the poor. Members of the landed gentry, many of whom had spent considerable amounts on improvements to their estates only to face diminished rents and returns, entered into insolvency. A number of estates were ceded whole or in part under the Encumbered Estates Acts (1848-9) including Carn House (sold 1853) near Béal an Mhuirthead [Belmullet]; Claremount House (sold 1858), Claremorris; Cloongee House (sold 1851), near Foxford; Glenmore (sold 1853), near Crossmolina; and Houndswood House (sold 1852) in the south of the county.

Those who could afford to continued to develop their estates in the second half of the nineteenth century but Classicism had lost its dominant position as the favoured style. The preference for engaging the services of a professional architect, as opposed to a talented local builder, re-emerged and Charles Lionel FitzGerald (1833-1902), contemplating a new house at Turlough, commissioned a design from Sir Thomas Newenham Deane. Turlough Park (1863-7), unique in the context of County Mayo, shows banded limestone walls, trefoil-headed openings lighting the central hall, and miniature gablets embellishing a high pitched *Châteauesque* roofline, all indicating the influence of the renowned architectural theorist John Ruskin (1819-1900) (*fig. 91-94*).



(*fig. 91*)  
**TURLOUGH PARK**  
Gortnafolla, Turlough  
(1863-7)

Sir Thomas Newenham Deane, in his design for Turlough Park, revived numerous motifs devised by his late partner, Benjamin Woodward (1815-61), including a canopy-like porch recalling Brownsbarn House (1857-64) in County Kilkenny, a Venetian Gothic tripartite window reminiscent of Glandore (1858) in Dún Laoghaire, County Dublin, and a steeply pitched roof with miniature gablets resembling Saint Ann's Schools (1857-8; demolished 1978) in Molesworth Street, Dublin.



(*fig. 92*)  
**TURLOUGH PARK**  
Gortnafolla, Turlough

Even the smallest of details was seized as an opportunity to showcase good design. A finely-wrought doorbell exemplifies the Ruskinian Gothic style in miniature.



(fig. 93)  
**TURLOUGH PARK**  
Gortnafolla, Turlough

A view of the hall where, in a theatrical *tour de force*, a cantilevered Portland stone staircase rises majestically around all four walls passing, at half-landing level, the Venetian Gothic stained glass window centring on the FitzGerald coat-of-arms with its motto: *Honor Probataque Virtus* ["Honour and Proven Virtue"].



(fig. 94)  
**TURLOUGH PARK**  
Gortnafolla, Turlough

A view of the drawing room which commands scenic vistas overlooking terraced grounds with the ninth-century Turlough Round Tower as an eye-catcher in the near distance.





(fig. 95)  
**MOUNT FALCON**  
 Drumrevagh  
 (1871-80)

A drawing signed by James Franklin Fuller (1835-1924) of Dublin showing the proposed entrance front of Mount Falcon including some details altered on execution or subsequently lost over time: a battlemented parapet surmounts the porch while no evidence survives of the polychromatic bands of green slate on the roof. Interestingly, red line work suggests that a ruby-coloured stone was originally considered rather than the deep grey limestone ultimately used in its construction.

*Courtesy of David Hicks*



(fig. 96)  
**MOUNT FALCON**  
 Drumrevagh

A detail of the intricately carved Knox coat-of-arms embellishing the tower.



(fig. 97)  
**MOUNT FALCON**  
 Drumrevagh

A chimneypiece not only contributes to the artistic significance of Mount Falcon, but also perpetuates the memory of its builder, Utrud Augustus Knox (1825-1913).

James Franklin Fuller (1835-1924) of Dublin was responsible for two remarkably similar houses for members of the same family. Mount Falcon (1871-80), situated equidistant from Ballina and Foxford, adheres to no easily definable style of architecture and has been described variously as Hard Gothic, Victorian Gothic and an early instance of the Scottish Baronial taste (*figs. 95-97*). Erected for Utrud Augustus Knox (1825-1913), and emblazoned with his monogram at various points, Mount Falcon abandons the staid symmetry of the earlier Belleek Manor and depends largely on a

multi-faceted plan form and an irregular massing of the individual components for "effect". The robust rock faced surface finish may delight the eye but, offset by white limestone dressings, contributes to a sober two-tone palette that has led to the house being unjustly derided as dull and ponderous. Fuller was also responsible for the contemporary Errew House (1872-7), occupying a windswept peninsula jutting into Lough Conn (*fig. 98*). Highlighting the uncertain economic climate of the time, its builder, Granville Henry Knox (1840-94), overextending his resources, was



(fig. 98)  
**ERREW HOUSE**  
 Errew  
 (1872-7)

A photograph from the Lawrence Collection shows the compact but multi-faceted plan form, the sober two-tone palette, the rock faced surface finish, the bay windows, and the complex roof structure all shared in common with Mount Falcon but with the imposing tower topped off in this instance in the *Châteauesque* style. The bankruptcy of

Granville Henry Knox (1840-94) appears to have prevented the landscaping of the grounds and the house, destroyed by fire in 1949 but subsequently rebuilt, continues to make a startling impression on a windswept promontory jutting into Lough Conn.

*Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland*



(fig. 99)  
**CREAGH HOUSE**  
 Creagh Demesne  
 (1874-6)

A postcard showing the ivy-cloaked Creagh House whose cost of construction and upkeep became a burden to its builder, Captain Charles Howe Cuff Knox (1841-1921), as evidenced by a sales notice in *The Irish Times* (11th March 1921) where the house was

described as 'a magnificent MODERN MANSION HOUSE containing large hall, six sittingrooms, 21 bedrooms, servants' accommodation, Farm Buildings, Stables [and] Steward's House'.

*Courtesy of Mayo County Library*

declared bankrupt and was forced to emigrate with his family to Nova Scotia in 1881; the house quickly earned the nickname "Knox's Folly" as a consequence.

A late resurgence of interest in Classicism and its variants appeared in County Mayo in the elaborate and imposing Creagh House (1874-5), outside Ballinrobe (*fig. 99*). Superseding a 'nicely laid out cottage residence', the house was erected to a design by Samuel Ussher Roberts employing an exuberant Italianate theme with a symmetrical entrance front giving way to an asymmetrical garden front dominated by a central tower. The house knew only one permanent resident, however, its builder Captain Charles Howe Cuff Knox (1841-1921). Unable to meet the financial burden of its upkeep, it was sold by his son to the Mayo County Board of Health.

**CASTLEMAGGARRETT**  
Castlemaggarretpark  
New  
(1902-9)

Although dating from the early twentieth century, the rambling Castlemaggarrett can be interpreted as the culmination of a long drawn out effort by the Brownes, Lords Oranmore and Browne, to find an appropriate replacement for the late seventeenth-century family seat (1694) destroyed by fire in 1811. As a temporary measure the adjacent stables (1738) were repurposed for domestic use but an ambitious reconstruction, for which designs were furnished by Sir Richard Morrison (1767-1849), failed to materialise. An illustration from *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (23rd January 1909) showcases 'the seat of Lord Oranmore and Browne, which has recently been rebuilt', the architect named as Richard Francis Caulfield Orpen (1863-1938) of Dublin.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*



**CASTLEMAGGARRETT**  
Castlemaggarretpark  
New

An extravagant mansion enclosing a courtyard, showing obvious pretensions to an English manor house, the scattered "Norman" panels, the slender battlemented turrets, and the jettied polygonal chimneys, all shrouded in a dull cement finish, do little to convey the spirit of an authentic "castle".



NIAH

(fig. 100)

**RAHEENS HOUSE**  
Raheens  
(1809)

An obelisk which, according to local legend, was erected on the site where a team of horses mysteriously shied while carrying the ailing Maria O'Donel Browne (d. 1809) to Dublin for treatment. A monument to love, the obelisk displays decorative panels on two faces and a *Cló Gaelach* dedication on the plinth with a translation reading: 'This Cenotaph was built in memorial of Maria/Browne O Donel 2nd Daughter of Sir Neal O Donel'.



(fig. 101)

**RAHEENS HOUSE**  
Raheens

A detail of the cameo of Maria O'Donel Browne and the French dedication: 'À Maria/Et à l'Amour/Par son cher epoux/Dodwell/1809' [To Maria/And to Love/By her dear husband/Dodwell/1809].

An underappreciated aspect of the architectural heritage of the county is its wealth of monuments commemorating events and individuals, both private and public. A progression from memorials harking back to Classical antiquity to those showing the emerging nationalist sentiment can be traced over the course of the nineteenth century. An early monument stands in the grounds of the Raheens House estate outside Castlebar and was

erected by Dodwell Browne (d. 1819) as a testimony to his wife Maria (*née* O'Donel) (d. 1809) (*figs. 100-101*). Colloquially known as "The Raheens Cenotaph", the monument takes the form of an urn-topped obelisk on a square pedestal and carvings include a cameo of Maria with a dedication in French, an elegy in Irish, and a panel inscribed "To Gaiety/and/Innocence".



The Glendenning Monument, arguably the finest memorial in the county, emerged over the rooftops of Westport in 1845, superseding the market house as the centrepiece of The Octagon. Bringing to mind a scaled-down version of Dublin's Nelson's Pillar, the monument appears as a fluted Doric column on a panelled pedestal supporting a life-size figure, originally George Glendenning (1770-1843), one-time Agent for the Bank of Ireland and the Westport Estate. The monument was lauded by Thomas Lacy (1863) as a 'finely-wrought memorial [speaking] largely and unmistakably for the liberality, the intelligence, and good sense of the people who erected it, who, rising above petty local jealousies, were enabled to recognise in an enterprising gentleman, a person worthy of their homage and respect'. Nevertheless, it was the subject of controversy from the outset and suffered a beheading at the hands of Free State troops billeted in the adjacent town hall in 1923-4 and the complete removal of the statuary and dedications in 1943. A figure of Saint Patrick has crowned the column since 1991, yet it is still to this day known as The Glendenning Monument.

Sheltered in a dense forest on a bank of the River Moy, the eye-catching Knox-Gore Monument is a familiar landmark to visitors who walk through the popular Belleek Wood (*fig. 102*). The monument has generated a number of local legends, some of which may have an element of truth at their core. What is beyond dispute is that it was erected as a memorial to Sir Francis Arthur Knox-Gore of Belleek Manor and was almost certainly designed by James Franklin Fuller. The site is marked as an embankment on the first edition



(*fig. 102*)  
BELLEEK MANOR  
Garrankeel, Ballina

A view of the wondrous Knox-Gore Monument, a Gothic Revival fantasy standing on an artificial knoll in a densely wooded setting.





NIAMH

*(fig. 103)***CASTLELACKAN**Castlelackan Demesne  
(1794)

An obelisk-topped eye-catcher occupying an elevated position overlooking Killala Bay. Erected for Sir Roger Palmer (d. 1819), second Baronet, and colloquially titled "The Gazebo", the folly dates to the twilight of the eighteenth century and, following the deterioration of the nearby country house, today stands as the most satisfying architectural legacy of the once important Castlelackan estate.

**VAUGHAN JACKSON MONUMENT**  
Bury Street/Teeling Street, Ballina

For what it lacks in stature this monument, colloquially known as "The Font", compensates with a pleasing polychromatic palette, its ball-topped Corinthian pillar composed of highly

polished sections of salmon pink and deep grey granite. Erected by public subscription as a memorial to George James Vaughan Jackson (1860-98) of Carrowmore House, killed by a fall from a horse, the monument shows a remarkable gesture of goodwill by doubling as a trough.



of the Ordnance Survey (published 1839), which may account for the presence of a mound surrounded by a waterless moat, but the theory persists that the heap was necessary to accommodate the burial of a favourite horse. Allegedly modelled after the Crown Spire of

Saint Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, the Knox-Gore Monument can also be seen as an elaboration of the earlier "Gazebo" (1794) standing proud on a gorse-covered outcrop overlooking the Castlelackan estate near Killala (*fig. 103*).



(fig. 104)

**FRENCH HILL  
MONUMENT**

Lugaphuill  
(1876)

An obelisk marks the site where, according to local folklore, four French soldiers were killed by avenging Crown forces following "The Races of Castlebar". Organised by a '98 Committee whose members included Patrick William Nally (1856-91), later the subject of his own

monument, the obelisk includes a cut-limestone panel carrying the dedication: 'In Grateful Remembrance Of/The Gallant French Soldiers/Who Died/Fighting For The Freedom Of Ireland/On The 27th August 1798/They Shall Be Remembered For Ever'.

As the century drew to a close, the 1798 Rebellion was commemorated with the erection of monuments across the county. The earliest, the French Hill Monument (1876), south of Castlebar, once again presents an obelisk surmounted by a cross, originally flat iron and in a simple Celtic style (fig. 104). The Humbert Memorial Monument (1898), one of the finest monuments in the county, was installed in Ballina 'by the/voluntary subscriptions of/the priests and people/of Mayo and Sligo' to commemorate General Humbert 'and the other gallant patriots/who sacrificed their lives/for the freedom of their

(fig. 105)  
**HUMBERT MEMORIAL MONUMENT**  
 Humbert Street,  
 Ballina  
 (1898)

A postcard showing the monument unveiled (1898) by Maud Gonne MacBride (1866-1953) in its original setting at the top of Knox Street [Pearse Street]. In essence a Classical monument embellished with Celtic Revival strapwork motifs, its crowning glory is known as "The Virgin Erin", a symbolic fusion of the Blessed Virgin Mary and "Erin" conveying the shared interest of the Catholic Church and the Nationalist movement in an independent Ireland.



Courtesy of Mayo  
 County Library

country/after the landing of the French/at Killala'. Unveiled by Maud Gonne MacBride (1866-1953), the monument is signed by Thomas Hammond Dennany (d. 1910) of Glasnevin and presents the symbolic figure of "The Virgin Erin" (fig. 105). "Erin", with an Irish Wolfhound and harp at her sides,

dominates the Celtic High Cross erected (1899) in Balla as a memorial to Patrick William Nally (1856-91) of Rockstown, imprisoned for his alleged role as a leader of the so-called "Crossmolina Conspiracy" (1881) 'and done to death in/Mountjoy Prison on the eve of his liberty' (fig. 106).



(fig. 106)  
**NALLY MONUMENT**  
 Market Square, Balla  
 (1899)

A monument erected to commemorate Patrick William Nally of Rockstown features "Erin" in the shadow of a strapwork-embellished Celtic High Cross. A later plaque attributes damage to the face, harp and pedestal to 'the British Military in/1921'.

## The Twentieth Century



(fig. 107)  
**ISLANDEADY  
CONSTABULARY  
BARRACK**  
Drumminahaha,  
Islandeady

The ruins of a barrack torched during the War of Independence (1919-21). Attacks on the Royal Irish Constabulary were not universally welcomed and a correspondent for the *Weekly Irish Times* (10th April 1920) reported that 'the disused police barrack at Deergrove, Islandeady, Co. Mayo, was burned down on Saturday night, and the occurrence was strongly condemned by Father McLaughlin, PP, at Mass in Islandeady on Sunday'.

The twentieth century opened with an air of calm but simmering political tensions, both domestic and international, brought about periods of conflict, all of which had an impact on the architectural heritage of County Mayo.

The political unrest of the War of Independence (1919-21) and the ensuing Civil War (1922-3) resulted in the destruction of buildings, both private and public, across the county. The constabulary barrack, a potent symbol of the Crown, was frequently targeted and the level of activity is underscored by an article in the *Weekly Irish Times* (10th April

1920) headlined "Easter Week Outrages All Over Ireland: 218 Police Barracks Destroyed; Nine Damaged". Among the barracks listed is Islandeady Constabulary Barrack, which today survives as a ruined shell (fig. 107). The creation of a new civic guard under the Garda Síochána (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1923, spurred the reconstruction of burnt-out constabulary barracks by the Office of Public Works including Ballyglass Garda Síochána Station (1933) in south County Mayo; its adjoining courthouse was not rebuilt.





(fig. 108)  
CLAGGARNAGH EAST  
(1940)

A Celtic High Cross-style monument commemorates the Volunteers Tomás Ó Máille and Tomás Ó Maolalaidh who were killed during the Islandeady Ambush (6th May 1921).

Isolated attacks on detachments of the Royal Irish Constabulary included the Toormakeady Ambush (3rd May 1921), the Islandeady Ambush (6th May 1921), and the Kilmeena Ambush (19th May 1921). On each occasion the attackers met with strong resistance and Celtic High Cross-style monuments, inscribed with *Cló Gaelach* dedications, remember the casualties who fell at Claggarnagh East, Clooneen and Knockmoyle (fig. 108).

(fig. 109)  
**DELPHI BRIDGE**  
 Tonatleva/Tawnyinlough

A weathered cut-limestone date stone featuring a *Guilloche* frame reads: 'This Bridge Was Designed/And Built By/William Bald/Civil Engineer 1823'.



(fig. 110)  
**DELPHI BRIDGE**  
 Tonatleva/Tawnyinlough

A report in the *Weekly Irish Times* (5th August 1922), describing the conditions of County Mayo following the retreat of The Irregulars, remarked: 'The usual irregular tactics of blocking roads, blowing up bridges and cutting railway lines are to be observed everywhere and...it is impossible to get around the country in any degree of comfort'. A concrete date stone confirms that Delphi Bridge was so attacked and is inscribed: 'Mayo County Council/Delphi Bridge/Restored June 1924/E.K. [Edward Keville] Dixon I.N.S.T.C.E./County Surveyor'.

Roads and bridges were targeted to disrupt the movement of Government troops to political hotspots. Their repair was prioritised by the Irish Free State and records show that Edward Keville Dixon (1860-1942), County Surveyor for County Mayo South Riding, was responsible for the reconstruction of seventy-one bridges in his remit (figs. 109-110).

In anticipation of the conflict a number of Anglo-Irish families had left for England, usually leaving their properties watched over

by a housekeeper. Some prominent "Big Houses" were destroyed. Already burdened with financially unviable estates, few landlords elected to rebuild and once-glorious houses such as Castle Gore (1789-92; burnt 1922), near Ballina, now survive as gaunt ruins (figs. 111-112). Others, including Colonel Maurice Moore (1854-1939) of Moore Hall, saw their attempts at reconstruction thwarted by insufficient reparation under the Damages to Property (Compensation) Act, 1923.

(fig. 111)  
**CASTLE GORE**  
 Deelcastle  
 (1789-92)

A report in *The Irish Times* (5th September 1922), headlined "BALLINA CASTLE BURNED", mentions: 'Castle Ballina [sic], the Mayo seat of the Earl of Arran, was burned to the ground on Sunday morning by a band of masked and armed men... Some of the men saturated the place with petrol and paraffin oil. In a few moments the whole building was in flames, and before daybreak was a mass of ruins'.



(fig. 112)  
**CASTLE GORE**  
 Deelcastle

Because of fears for its stability an attempt was made to dynamite the ruin. Yet the shell proved resistant and only a corner of the house was successfully demolished. Remarkably, the fire and a near-century of exposure to the elements notwithstanding, sections of the decorative plasterwork survive in the entrance hall and show a sinuous vine motif.



**SS CRETEBOOM**  
Garrankeel, Ballina  
(1919)

Stranded in the centre of the River Moy, the hull of the *SS Creteboom* stands as an adopted relic of the First World War (1914-8). Designed by Guy Anson Maunsell (1884-1961) as one of a flotilla of twelve tugboats intended to work the shipping lanes between Great Britain and Spain, the shortage of available steel prompted an unusual construction technique employing

reinforced concrete. Only one hull had been perfected by the end of the war yet shipbuilding continued apace. The *SS Creteboom*, launched in 1919 but obsolete by 1935, was purchased by the Ballina Harbour Commissioners for use as a sandstop and has continued to beguile the observer ever since its appearance in the landscape in 1937.



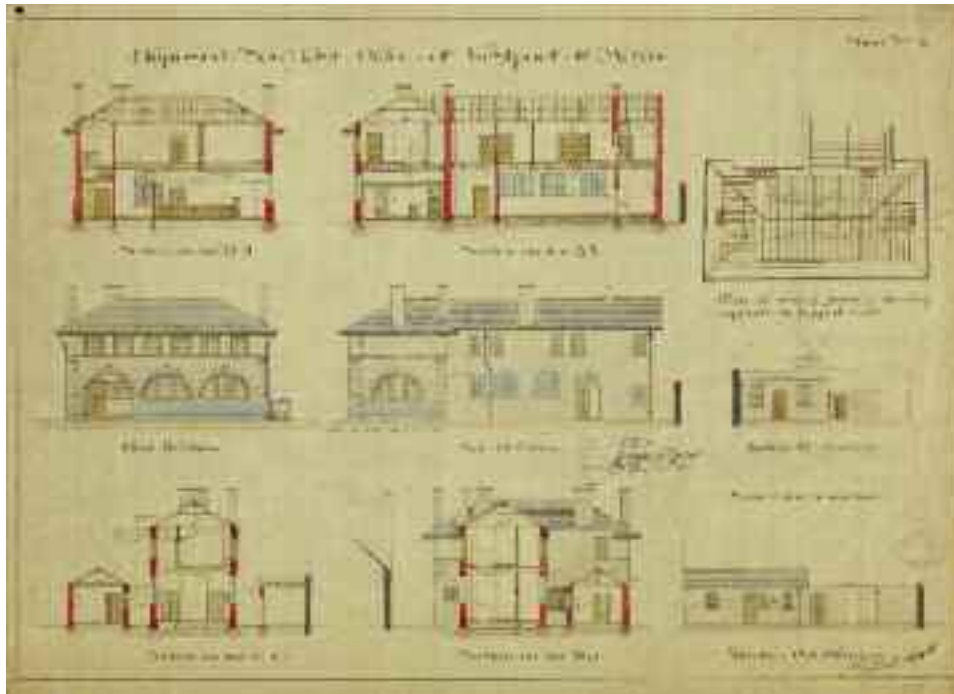


"LOP 64"

Knockaun

Lookout posts dotted along the coastline at strategic points mark the efforts of the Irish Government to protect its neutrality during "The Emergency" (1939-46). Manned by the newly formed Coast Watching Service, each "LOP" was erected to a standard design devised by Howard Cooke (1881-

1977) of the Office of Public Works and was assigned a unique identifying number, starting with "LOP 1" in County Louth and finishing with "LOP 82" in County Donegal. The lookout post overlooking the sea stack at Downpatrick Head was assigned the number "LOP 64".



(fig. 113)  
**WESTPORT POST OFFICE**  
 North Mall, Westport  
 (1899-1901)

A drawing by John Howard Pentland (1855-1919), Principal Surveyor to the Board of Works, showing the elevations and sections of the Proposed New Post Office at Westport Co Mayo. An exuberantly-detailed and visually striking building, its market house-like arcade and overhanging roof nevertheless blend well with the predominantly Georgian streetscape.

*Courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland*

Elsewhere, the land reforms of the later nineteenth century continued to impact on landowners and saw the break-up and sale of large estates to the Irish Land Commission. Among the houses so lost were Bloomfield House (1769; sold 1924) and Towerhill House (1790; sold 1949) where, according to a plaque unveiled in 2010, County Mayo's Colours, "The Green Above The Red", were first worn in 1887.

In general, however, the changeover of rule had little consequences for architecture. The accelerated building campaign of the previous

century continued and much of the built heritage of the early twentieth century can be interpreted as an attempt to put the finishing touches to outstanding projects. A spate of post office building included branch offices in Castlebar (1902-4) and Westport (1899-1901) (fig. 113), both to designs by John Howard Pentland (1855-1919), Principal Surveyor to the Board of Works. Contemporary post boxes abound, their insignias marking Ireland's progress from colonialism to Independence (figs. 114-117).

(fig. 114)

**TONE STREET**  
Ballina  
(between 1899-1901)

A "pillar box" post box in Ballina shows the royal cipher of Queen Victoria (1819-1901; r. 1837-1901). The base is embossed with the stamp of A. [Andrew] Handyside and Company (*fl.* 1853-1933) of Derby and London, a firm later known as the Derby Casting Company.



(fig. 115)

**CASTLEREAGH**  
(between 1901-10)

A "wall box" post box supplied by W.T. Allen and Company (*fl.* 1881-1955) of London not only displays the royal cipher of King Edward VII (1841-1910; r. 1901-10), but also, in a curious juxtaposition, the Saorstát Éireann emblem introduced by the Irish Free State in 1928.

(fig. 116)

**CURRY (Kirwan)**  
(between 1910-22)

A "lamp box" post box, intended for installation in remote villages requiring minimal postal service, displays the royal cipher of King George V (1865-1936; r. 1910-36).



(fig. 117)

**BALLINTOBER**  
(between 1939-84)

A later "lamp box" post box, set in the boundary wall of Ballintober Abbey, shows the *Cló Gaelach* monogram first introduced in 1939 to signify the Department of Posts and Telegraphs (*fl.* 1924-84).



(fig. 118)  
O'HARA'S  
Market Street, Swinford

A Classically-composed shopfront where colour not only grabs the attention of the passer-by, thereby attracting custom, but also contributes to a unique sense of place, particularly in large urban areas where a bland corporate identity too easily and too often takes hold.

Commercial premises continued to follow by now traditional lines with residential space over the shop. O'Hara's in Market Street, Swinford, survives as an excellent example of the period and shows a Classically-composed shopfront with Art Nouveau-like stained glass and applied lettering (fig. 118). Harrison's in Tone Street, Ballina, may date from the turn of



(fig. 119)  
HARRISON'S  
Tone Street, Ballina

A symmetrically-composed shopfront retaining all of the original fabric including glazed sliding screens behind the display windows and applied lettering on the fascia.

the century and once again shows symmetry of form and restrained Classical detailing (fig. 119) while The Hazel, a neighbouring property, is clearly of the mid twentieth century and is one of only a handful of surviving Vitrolite shopfronts in the county (fig. 120).





(fig. 120)  
**THE HAZEL**  
Tone Street, Ballina

A Vitrolite shopfront where the symmetry is in keeping with the arrangement of the openings overhead, thereby producing a balanced and harmonious composition.



**THE SOCIAL BAR**  
Abbey Street, Ballina

An urban vernacular shopfront whose stylised lettering evokes the spirit of a Jazz Age "speakeasy".



**WALSH'S**  
Abbey Street,  
Ballinrobe

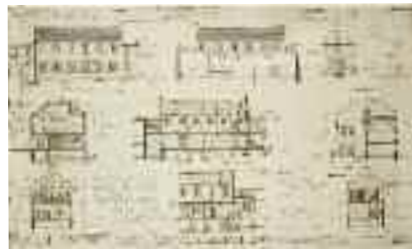
A Classically-detailed rendered shopfront making a pleasing contribution to the streetscape.



(fig. 121)  
**FOXFORD WOOLLEN MILLS**  
Lower Main Street,  
Foxford  
(established 1892)

A woollen manufactory where form and function collide, the mass-produced corrugated-iron finish evoking the spirit of the industrial process carried out within. The corrugated-iron may also have allowed for a speedy reconstruction of the complex following a fire in 1908.

A late and localised revival of the textile industry was brought about in Foxford by the endeavours of Mother Mary Arsenius Morrogh-Bernard (1842-1932) of the Sisters of Charity. According to tradition Mother Bernard, standing on Foxford Bridge, noticed the unharnessed power of the River Moy and determined to develop an industry that would ameliorate the poverty of the region. Supported by the Congested Districts Board for Ireland (established 1891) and Sir James Talbot Power (1851-1916), and guided by John Charles Smith of the Caledon Woollen Mills in County Tyrone, a factory was completed and opened in 1892. A devastating fire in 1908 destroyed much of the complex and spurred a lengthy programme of reconstruction (*fig. 121*).



**SAINT MARY'S ORATORY AND SOCIAL CENTRE and SAINT MARY'S MUSIC SCHOOL**  
Lower Main Street/Providence Road,  
Foxford  
(1945 and 1923)

In addition to providing much needed employment, the Sisters of Charity endeavoured to improve the cultural and social outlook of Foxford. A drawing by W.H. Byrne and Son shows the proposal for an oratory and social centre adjoining an earlier music school.

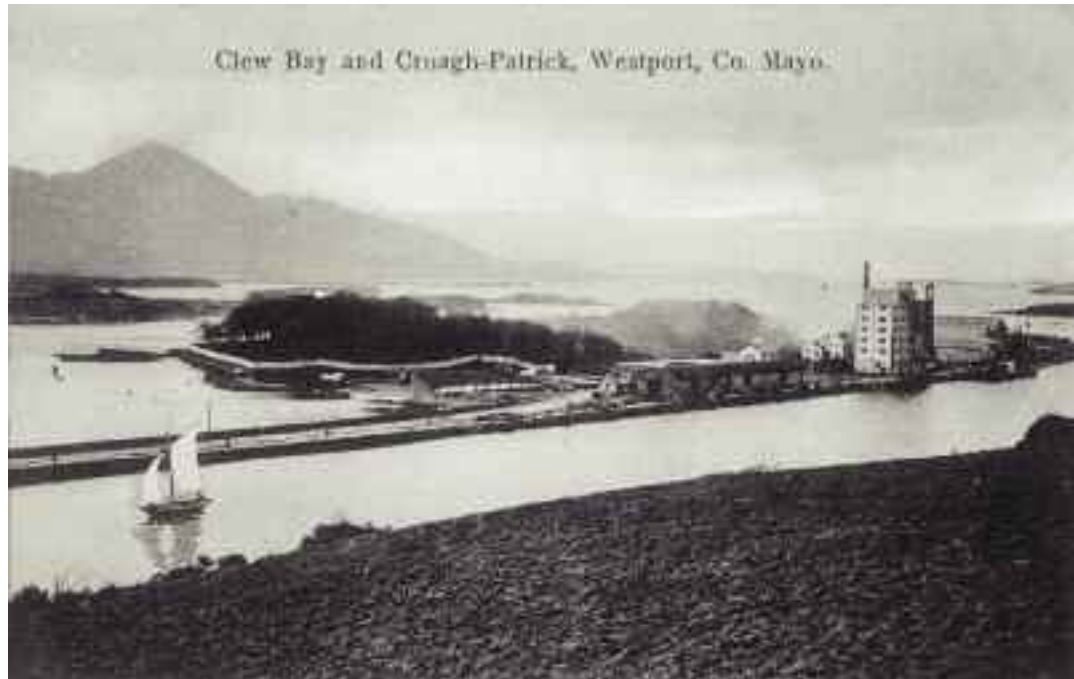
*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*

(fig. 122)

**ROMAN ISLAND**  
Westport Quay  
(1908)

A postcard (1913) showing the starkly Modernist "shipping store" or warehouse erected to a design by William Friel (1873-1970) of Waterford which, in its construction, followed the reinforced concrete system pioneered by François Hennebique (1842-1921) of France. The massive silos inside show evidence of the timber formworks into which the concrete was poured.

*Courtesy of Mayo  
County Library*



The ongoing importance of Mayo's maritime tradition was reflected in the continued development of the harbours and ports around its coastline. A "shipping store" or warehouse (1908) at Westport was designed by the engineer William Friel (1873-1970) of Waterford and can be interpreted as a scaled-down version of the granaries he built (1905) in his home city and Sligo (*fig. 122*). A monolith constructed of reinforced concrete, the warehouse was a radical departure from the eighteenth-century stone-built stores that had previously defined Westport Quay.



(fig. 123)  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH OF  
 OUR LADY OF THE  
 HOLY ROSARY**  
 Upper Chapel Street,  
 Castlebar  
 (1897-1901)

A perspective view which, according to *The Dublin Builder* (1st June 1892), 'was the sole example of ecclesiastical architecture on the walls of the Royal Hibernian Academy this year. The design was selected in a limited competition [in] November 1890'. A number of alterations were made to the design prior to construction and not only was the church built facing onto Upper Chapel Street, but the tower was also placed on the opposite corner of the entrance front. A storm (1898) brought down a portion of the unfinished church and the cost of its reconstruction has been blamed for the lack of funds available to complete the spire.

*Courtesy of the Irish  
 Architectural Archive*

Where nineteenth-century economic upheavals had prevented improvement or reconstruction, existing chapels, no longer fit for purpose, were replaced with new churches of suitable size and architectural ambition. Proposals for a new church at Castlebar had been made as early as 1872 when the foundation stone for the so-called "MacHale Church" was laid. Work progressed slowly but was abandoned when funds ran out; the outline of the church, still a shell, is marked on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1898. A reattempt at a new church caused a rift in the parish with those seeking the

completion of the "MacHale Church" on the one side, and those favouring an entirely new church on the other. The latter party prevailed and work on the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary commenced in 1897 to a limited competition-winning design by Walter Glynn Doolin (1850-1902) of Dublin (*figs. 123-124*). Deficiencies in funding did not always allow for the original aspirations of church designs to be realised and, despite a fundraising effort in the United States of America, the spire envisaged by the architect was never completed. Similar shortfalls had previously impeded the completion of Saint



(fig. 124)  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH OF  
 OUR LADY OF THE  
 HOLY ROSARY**  
 Upper Chapel Street,  
 Castlebar

A view of the arcaded interior including the polychromatic pulpit (1908) acclaimed in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (19th September 1908) as 'costly and elaborate in character [and] somewhat unusual in form, being four-sided and rectangular... Irish materials have, as far as possible, been utilised, and the whole marble work, including some excellent sculpture, has been done in Ireland. The entire pulpit is the work of Messrs. Patrick Tomlin and Son, sculptors, of Grantham Street, Dublin, the sculptured groups being by Mr. Patrick Tomlin'.



Patrick's Catholic Church (1856-61), Louisburgh. Later, the *Irish American Advocate* reported on 'a grand ball and entertainment...held at Prospect Hall, Brooklyn [with] the proceeds devoted towards the erection of the New Catholic Church [in] Claremorris, County Mayo'. Yet, Saint Colman's Catholic Church (1903-11) comes to an abrupt halt where the proposed tower and spire was abandoned, lending the composition a truncated effect.

Rudolph Maximilian Butler (1872-1943), previously a junior partner of Doolin's, carried on the practice on his elder's death and secured

contracts for some of the most ambitious churches in County Mayo in the first quarter of the twentieth century (*fig. 125*). Deviating from the Gothic Revival style that had so far dominated the field, Butler's masterwork, Saint Patrick's Catholic Church (1914-8), stands on high ground overlooking the town of Newport and was described by Maurice Craig (1976) as 'a very fine essay in the Hiberno Romanesque', a revival of an indigenous style of architecture dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries (*figs. 126-127*).



(fig. 125)  
SAINT CRONAN'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Balla  
(1912-3)

As editor of *The Irish Builder and Engineer* Rudolph Maximilian Butler (1872-1943) was well placed to showcase his latest work to potential clients. An artist's impression accompanied an article on a project underway in Balla where the new parish church, at the time to be dedicated to Saint Patrick, was described favourably as '[consisting] of nave, aisles...chancel, and

two side chapels... There is no clerestory, the nave arcade going up the full height of the nave'. Unusually, no mention is made of the defining needle spire which, apart from the medieval Gothic theme, distinguishes the church from Butler's subsequent work in Newport .

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*



(fig. 126)  
SAINT PATRICK'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Newport  
(1914-8)

An Hiberno Romanesque church whose boldly modelled form, conspicuous tower, and commanding position on a hilltop overlooking the town have earned it the nickname "Newport Cathedral".



(fig. 127)  
SAINT PATRICK'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH  
Newport  
(1914-8)

The celebrated *Last Judgment* commissioned (1926) by Canon Michael McDonald PP (1866-1940) on Butler's recommendation and paid for with his life insurance policy. A

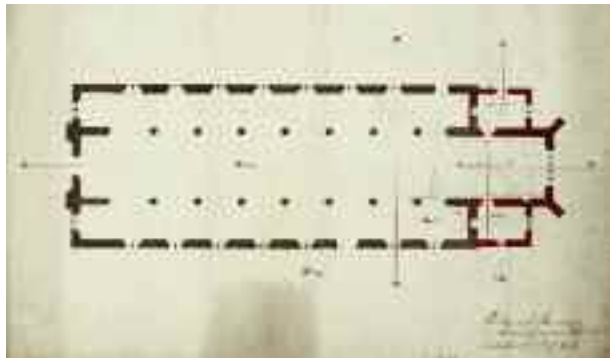
final masterpiece by Harry Clarke (1889-1931), the window includes in the right-hand pane a self-portrait of the artist as an upturned green-skinned figure damned to hell.

(fig. 128)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
 CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
 Main Street,  
 Ballinrobe  
 (1849-63)

A notice in *The Dublin Builder* (1st June 1859) announced: 'The Roman Catholic church at Ballinrobe, for some time in an incomplete state, is to be finished. It is in the Gothic style, and was designed by the late Mr. Pierce, of Wexford, architect'. Richard Pierce (1801-54) is best remembered as the clerk-of-works to Augustus Welby

Northmore Pugin. A photograph from the Wynne Collection shows the influence of Pugin on the new church in Ballinrobe, the nave without clerestorey, the pointed relieving arch on the west front, and the bellcote embellishing the roofline, all recalling his Catholic Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1844-51), Barntown, County Wexford.

*Courtesy of the  
 National Library of  
 Ireland*



(fig. 129)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
 CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
 Main Street,  
 Ballinrobe

Shortage of funds in the aftermath of the Great Famine saw progress of the new church stall. The first in a series of improvements to the church coincided with the resumption of

work in 1859 and among a collection of drawings signed by William George Murray (1822-71) of Dublin are proposals for an enlarged chancel flanked by a Roving Room on the

north and a Sacristy on the south.

*Courtesy of the Irish  
 Architectural Archive*

Elsewhere, existing churches were improved or restructured and Butler was responsible for the last of a series of enhancements to Saint Mary's Catholic Church, Ballinrobe, which saw it transformed from reasonably humble origins to a parish church of considerable architectural interest (figs. 128-131). Butler's openings,

similar in profile to his work at Saint Cronan's Catholic Church (1912-13), Balla, today boast the so-called "D'Alton Windows", an outstanding collection of jewel-like stained glass designed by the celebrated Harry Clarke (1889-1931) of Dublin (figs. 132-135).

(fig. 130)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

Later additions included transepts erected (1888) under the aegis of the Reverend James Ronayne PP (1831-1903) and the polygonal spire-topped tower for which a bell was consecrated by Archbishop John McEvilly (1818-1902) in 1894.

*Courtesy of the  
National Library of  
Ireland*



(fig. 131)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

A flourishing congregation demanded additional accommodations and *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (19th May 1923) announced: 'The parish church [in Ballinrobe] is to be enlarged, from the designs of Mr. R.M. Butler, architect, Dublin. It is intended adding new side aisles, etc.'.



(fig. 132)

**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

Although eight openings were available to fill with stained glass, the Right Reverend Edward A. D'Alton PP (1865-1941) initially commissioned just two windows from Harry Clarke in 1924. One window depicts *Ecce Homo* and *The Apparition of Christ*.



(fig. 133)

**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

Encouraged by the positive reception of the congregation to the first two windows, D'Alton commissioned another pair from Clarke in 1925 including one depicting *The Assumption* and *The Coronation*.





(fig. 134)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

A final set of four windows, commissioned in 1925 for the north aisle, took as its theme "The Early Irish Saints". The original cartoon for the window depicting *Saint Gormgail* and *Saint Kieran* shows that the figures switched places on execution. The misspelling as *Saint Keiran* [sic] is also noteworthy.

(fig. 135)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Main Street,  
Ballinrobe

A jewel-like window depicting *Saint Enda* and *Saint Jarlath*. Having insisted Clarke personally design and execute all eight windows, D'Alton subsequently expressed concerns about the impact they had on the church as evidenced by a letter from the artist who wrote 'the glass looked to me extremely fine and although you may think it's darkened the church, I think you'll agree it's enriched it, with its deep colouring'.

(fig. 136)  
**SAINT JOSEPH'S  
CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Bun an Churraigh  
[Bunnacurry], Acaill  
[Achill Island]  
(1941-2)

A neo-Romanesque church whose progress was impeded during "The Emergency" by the Emergency Powers (Control of Timber) Order, 1941, prompting Patrick Brown TD (1888-1970) to call on Seán Lemass TD (1899-1971), Minister for Supplies, to intervene. Its clean lines, battered silhouette, and high pitched roofline make a bold impression against a mountainous backdrop in the distance.



Buildings of such magnitude became increasingly unviable as the century progressed and an early church illustrating a dramatic reduction in both scale and costly architectural detailing can be seen at the Catholic Church of the Holy Souls (1916), Keenagh, where a restrained neo-Romanesque is suggested by the rectilinear plan form with base batter, the profile of the openings, simple corbelling, and a curvilinear bellcote. A simplified Romanesque is also seen at the later Saint Joseph's Catholic Church (1941), Bun an Churraigh [Bunnacurry], designed by Ralph Henry Byrne (1877-1946) of Dublin but recalling Butler's earlier Saint Joseph's Catholic Church (1923-4) in Letterfrack, County Galway (fig. 136).

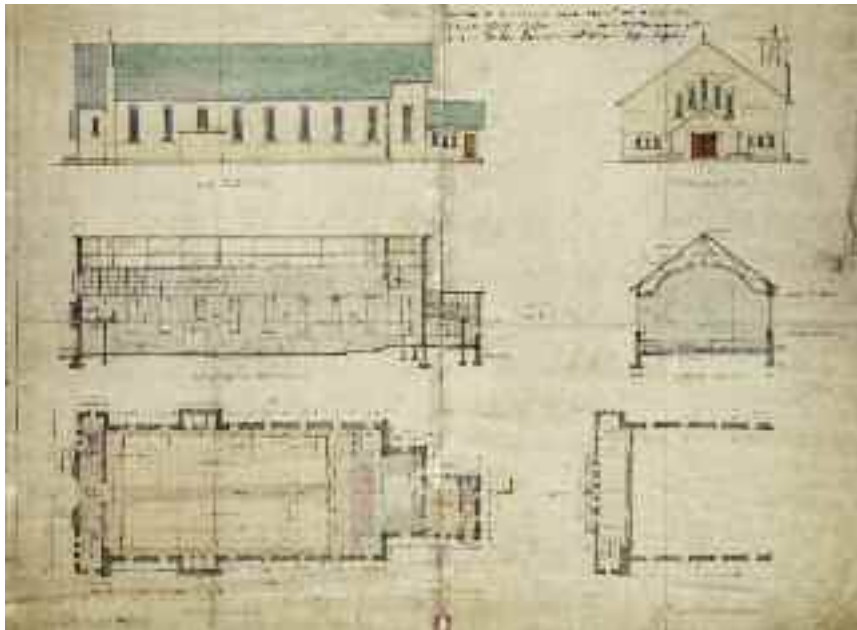
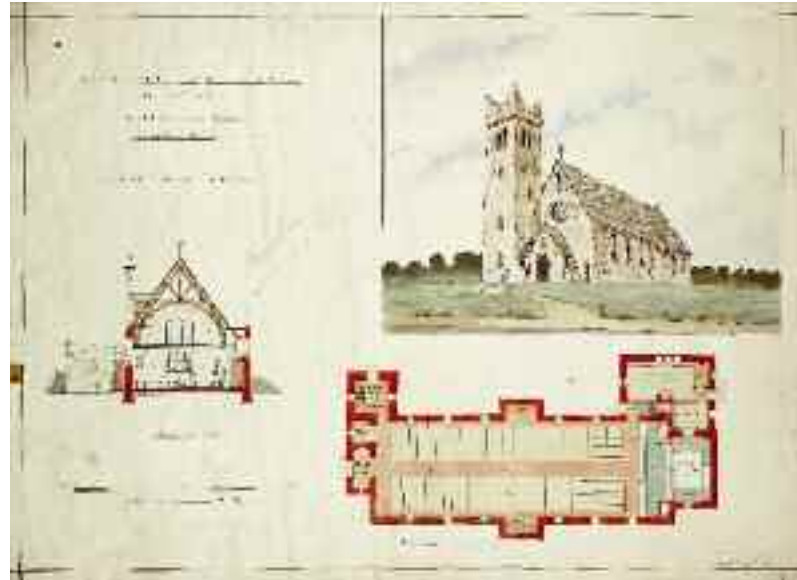
Architectural Modernism is in short supply in County Mayo, limited to the occasional mid-century cinema such as *The Savoy* (1944) in Main Street, Kiltimagh, which nevertheless shows stylised Tudor-esque plasterwork dressings. A cinema-like quality permeates the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption (1951-5), near Ballina, with its broad open interior devoid of pillars that might interrupt sightlines to the sanctuary and its Art Deco-like stepped "West Window" (figs. 137-138). That a new church was first contemplated in 1940, and a second proposal was obtained from William Henry Byrne and Son (formed 1902) of Dublin, would suggest, however, that the simplicity of form and detailing was for reasons of economy rather than an attempt to stay abreast of emerging architectural fashions.

(fig. 137)  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH  
 OF OUR LADY OF  
 THE ASSUMPTION**  
 Brackloonagh

An unexecuted proposal (1940) by Ralph Henry Byrne (1877-1946) for a new church in the eleventh-century Hiberno Romanesque style. Its stone work, eye-catching tower house-like belfry, and

open timber roof construction must have proven financially unviable and the sketch is annotated as 'Cancelled'.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*



(fig. 138)  
**CATHOLIC CHURCH  
 OF OUR LADY OF  
 THE ASSUMPTION**  
 Brackloonagh  
 (1954-5)

A later scheme by Simon Aloysius Leonard (1903-76) retained the basic footprint of the unexecuted church, a broad nave with confessional outshots opening into a stepped chancel, but proposed cost-effective concrete

block for the construction, reinforced concrete over the openings, a roughcast surface finish, and a light steel roof expressed in the interior as a barrel-vaulted ceiling.

*Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive*



## Conclusion



(fig. 139)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
 CHURCH (Ballinrobe)**  
 Church Lane,  
 Ballinrobe  
 (1815-8)

A classic Board of First Fruits church which had fallen into disrepair at the end of the twentieth century. A campaign spearheaded by Dorothy Hearne (1912-2002), and a restoration by Mayo County Council, saw new life breathed into the church which today functions as a branch library.

County Mayo's architectural heritage makes a significant contribution to its unique character and sense of place. It embodies in brick and stone the artistic and social aspirations of its builders and the skill and talent of its architects and craftsmen. With the appropriate care and maintenance, much of it will continue to serve its original purpose, but for some buildings new uses will be necessary to ensure their survival.

The contraction of the Church of Ireland population over the course of the twentieth century resulted in the closure of many churches. Some including Aghagower (1825-7) and Ballysakeery (1806-10) stand as picturesque ruins in the landscape. Saint Mary's Church (Ballinrobe), which retains fabric dating back to at least the seventeenth century, faced an uncertain future (figs. 139-140). Obtained from the Representative Church Body, and

restored in 1996 by Mayo County Council, the church now serves the local community as a branch library.

The closure of the Achill-Westport section of the Midland Great Western Railway line in 1937 saw its bridges, cuttings and embankments become neglected and overgrown. An ambitious project, completed in 2011, saw the opening of the very successful Great Western Greenway, a dedicated cycle and pedestrian trail following the entire course of the line. Beyond its immediate health benefits of encouraging cycling and walking, the project has revitalised tourism in the region.

2013 saw the completion of a sensitive restoration of the old Provincial Bank of Ireland (1881-2) in Pearse Street, Ballina, as a repository for the vast collection of Irish historical documents amassed by Jackie Clarke (1927-2000) (figs. 141-142).



(fig. 140)  
**SAINT MARY'S  
 CHURCH (Ballinrobe)**  
 Church Lane,  
 Ballinrobe

The battered profile of the church suggests a much earlier building within the deep wall masses and evidence of its mediaeval origins was uncovered during its restoration including a blocked-up niche or *piscina* near the altar. A memorial tablet dates to the mid seventeenth century and is dedicated to Katharine Holcroft (d. 1668) 'of Cloonigashel [Cloonagashel]'.





*(fig. 141)*  
**THE JACKIE CLARKE  
 COLLECTION**  
 Pearse Street/Walsh  
 Street, Ballina  
 (1881-2)

A bank erected to a design by Thomas Newenham Deane and Son (formed 1878) of Dublin enjoys a strong streetscape presence on account of its polychromatic blend of red brick and limestone and its exuberantly-detailed Renaissance Revival porch.



*(fig. 142)*  
**THE JACKIE CLARKE  
 COLLECTION**  
 Pearse Street/Walsh  
 Street, Ballina

A detail of the intricately carved limestone whose finesse is a testament to the skill of the now-anonymous craftsman.



(fig. 143)  
**CÉIDE FIELDS  
VISITOR CENTRE**  
Glenulra  
(1993)

A pyramid emerging out of the bog, the Céide Fields Visitor Centre forms an almost natural extension of the landscape in a particularly sensitive environment. The Office of Public Works design won the RIAI Triennial Gold Medal for Architecture 1992-4

*Courtesy of the  
Photographic Unit,  
Department of  
Arts, Heritage and  
the Gaeltacht*

New requirements often necessitate new buildings. A visitor centre was opened at Céide Fields to present the internationally significant Neolithic field system rediscovered in the 1930s and excavated by Professor Seamus Caulfield (*fig. 143*). Mayo County Council, recognising the potential for heritage tourism, purchased Turlough Park in 1996. A sensitive restoration by the Office of Public Works, including the

construction of a purpose-built stone-clad exhibition centre, saw Turlough Park open as one of the four museums that comprise the National Museum of Ireland (*fig. 144*). These new additions to the landscape will no doubt be our legacy to the architectural heritage of the future.

But the protection of our architectural heritage is not just a matter of protecting individual buildings. Often



(fig. 144)  
NATIONAL  
MUSEUM OF  
IRELAND –  
COUNTRY LIFE  
Turlough Park,  
Gortnafolla,  
Turlough  
(2001)

A view of the exhibition centre which appears to emerge organically from the nineteenth-century terraced gardens. Awarded an RIAI Irish Architecture Regional Award in 2001 the judge's citation commended the 'bold and dramatic modern building which enhances the existing house and site and creates a wonderful public facility'.

*Courtesy of the  
National Museum of  
Ireland – Country  
Life*

it is the pattern of building or development that is significant rather than the individual buildings themselves.

County Mayo can boast a rich legacy of historic towns and villages. Their unique character is a valuable, but underused, asset proving the potential for them to once again become vibrant places to live, work and visit. To that end the Heritage Towns Initiative is proposed with Westport one of the three trial towns. The aim will be to conserve, protect

and find new uses for the architectural heritage of participating towns whilst also maximising the value of heritage tourism. Such heritage-led urban regeneration has been successful throughout Europe.

Our architectural heritage is a vital part of both our local and national identity. Once lost it cannot be recreated. Its future survival will be the result of collaboration between owners and public authorities.

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# Registration Numbers

The sites mentioned in this Introduction are listed below according to page number. Additional information on each site may be found by accessing the survey on the Internet at [www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie). Please note that the majority of sites included in this Introduction are privately owned and are therefore not open to the public. However, sites marked with an asterisk (\*) are normally accessible.

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| <p>115 "Shipping Store" or Warehouse<br/>Roman Island, Westport Quay<br/>31308726</p> <p>116-117 Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary *<br/>Upper Chapel Street, Castlebar<br/>31209041</p> <p>117 Saint Patrick's Catholic Church *<br/>Long Street, Louisburgh<br/>31308607</p> <p>117 Saint Colman's Catholic Church *<br/>D'Alton Street, Claremorris<br/>31214007</p> <p>117-118 Saint Cronan's Catholic Church *<br/>Balla, Balla<br/>31309022</p> <p>117-119 Saint Patrick's Catholic Church *<br/>Newport, Newport<br/>31208021</p> <p>120-123 Saint Mary's Catholic Church *<br/>Main Street, Ballinrobe<br/>31215035</p> <p>124 Catholic Church of the Holy Souls<br/>Keenagh Beg, Keenagh<br/>31303702</p> <p>124 Saint Joseph's Catholic Church<br/>Bun an Churraigh [Bunnacurry], Acaill [Achill Island]<br/>31305501</p> <p>124 Savoy Cinema<br/>Main Street/Thomas Street, Kiltimagh<br/>31210004</p> <p>124-125 Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Assumption<br/>Brackloonagh<br/>31303005</p> <p>126 Saint Patrick's Church (Aghagower)<br/>Tobberrooan, Mace<br/>31308811</p> | <p>126 Ballysakeery Church (Ballysakeery)<br/>Lisglennon<br/>31302204</p> <p>126 Saint Mary's Church (Ballinrobe) *<br/>Church Lane, Ballinrobe<br/>31215049</p> <p>126-127 Jackie Clarke Collection *<br/>Pearse Street/Walsh Street, Ballina<br/>31204061</p> <p>135 "Lighthouse" at Ballycurrin House<br/>Ballycurrin Demesne<br/>31312317</p> |
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**BALLYCURRIN HOUSE**  
Ballycurrin Demesne

A lakeshore "lighthouse" widely cited as the only example of its type in Ireland. In close proximity to Ballycurrin House, thereby doubling as a picturesque eye-catcher, its date of construction has been disputed and a nearby panel inscribed 'Erected by Henery [sic] Lynch Esq. AD 1772' most likely pertains to the adjacent boathouse: the "lighthouse" does not appear on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1840.



# Acknowledgements

## **Built Heritage and Architectural Policy**

Principal Advisor                    Martin Coleavay

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*Senior Architectural Advisor*       William Cumming

*Architectural Heritage Officer*     Damian Murphy

*GIS Technicians*                     Deborah Lawlor and

Cian O'Connor

*NIAH Staff*                             Mildred Dunne,

Barry O'Reilly, TJ O'Meara  
and Jane Wales

*Administrative Support*             John Knightly,

Joan Maher and  
Suzanne Nally

*The NIAH gratefully acknowledges the following in the preparation of the Mayo County Survey and Introduction:*

## **Survey Fieldwork**

Cora Coleman, John Beattie, Mary-Liz McCarthy and Rosarie Davy for Carrig Conservation; Rebecca McKeon and Sarah Newell for the National Building Agency; Edel Barry, Robert Hanbridge, Sinead Madigan, Brian McDomhnaill, Jennifer O'Leary and Danny Yates for Headland Archaeology.

## **Introduction**

*Writer*                                     Damian Murphy

*Editor*                                      William Cumming

*Photography*                             James Fraher assisted by  
Connie Scanlon

*Design*                                     2b Creative

*Print*                                         Hudson Killeen

The NIAH wishes to thank all of those who allowed access to their property for the purpose of the Mayo County Survey and Introduction.

The NIAH wishes to thank the following for their generous assistance and support:

Paul Cleary; Deborah Murphy; Richard Butler; Christina Golden; David Hicks; Paul Maguire; Averil Staunton; Barry Phelan, Commissioners of Irish Lights; the Dublin Civic Trust; the staff

of the Irish Architectural Archive; Deirdre Cunningham and Siobhán Sexton, Mayo County Council; the staff of Mayo County Library; the Military Archives; the National Archives of Ireland; the National Library of Ireland; Dr. Raymond Refaussé, Representative Church Body Library; Simon Wall, Westport Town Council.

## **Sources of Illustrations**

All original photography by James Fraher assisted by Connie Scanlon. The illustrations listed below are identified by their figure or page number:

pp. 8, 32 (top), 33 (bottom) and figs. 9, 23, 47, 64, 84, 86, 89, 98, 128 and 130 courtesy of the National Library of Ireland; pp. 16 (bottom), 87, 101 (right), 113 (bottom) and figs. 24, 25, 91, 102, 108, 121, 131, 139, 140, 141 by Damian Murphy; p. 21 courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum; figs. 6, 7, 54, 99, 105 and 122 courtesy of Mayo County Library; pp. 98 (top), 114 (bottom) and figs. 8, 19, 79, 90, 123, 125, 129, 137 and 138 courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive; figs. 13 and 16 courtesy of Westport House; fig. 33 courtesy of Christina Golden; figs. 35, 36, 48 and 113 courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland; p. 49 and figs 37, 38 courtesy of the Commissioners of Irish Lights; fig. 45 courtesy of the Military Archives; fig. 52 © Representative Church Body Library; fig. 95 courtesy of David Hicks; fig. 143 courtesy of the Photographic Unit, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; fig. 144 courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland – Country Life. Additional photography taken from the Mayo County Survey fieldwork.

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ISBN: 978-1-4064-2622-9

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