CASTLEDERMOT TOWN WALLS

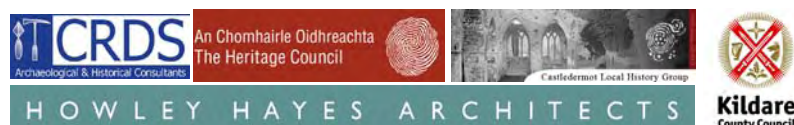

CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT & INTERPRETATION PLAN

**FINAL DRAFT
JANUARY 2013**

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Place

The town of Castledermot is located in the Barrow Valley on the main road between Carlow and Kilcullen and in relatively low-lying ground (approximately 80m above datum) at the edge of the western foothills of the Wicklow mountains. It is the southernmost town in Co. Kildare, and has long been of strategic importance, attested by 1,300 years of almost continuous occupation of the site. The River Lerr, a tributary of the Barrow, is no wider than a stream and skirts the south-eastern and eastern sides of the town. Another stream is found to the west side of the town, and like the Lerr, was diverted over time to form part of the town defences. The three main phases of occupation; early Christian, Anglo-Norman and early modern are represented in the three placenames. The earliest settlement was known as *Díseart Diarmada*, being a monastic enclosure founded in the seventh century in the location of St. James' Churchyard in the south eastern corner of the village. The market town of *Thristledermot* was established on the site by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth century, and was walled by the end of the thirteenth century. Two other religious houses were founded along the external face of the wall circuit; to the north west corner of the town was the hospital and priory of St. John, and to the south west was the Franciscan friary. Bradely estimates that the town was subdivided into approximately 180 burgage plots, and there are descriptions of four gates and a castle, of which only the Carlow Gate to the west survives. From the turn of the sixteenth century, the town has been known as *Castledermot*, and it would seem that much of the settlement was extensively rebuilt at that time following decades of unrest and decline. The putative castle is associated with the earl of Kildare, but no remains have been found and its location is a matter of conjecture. Following its medieval importance, the town declined and lost its defences and by the mid-eighteenth century very little remained on early
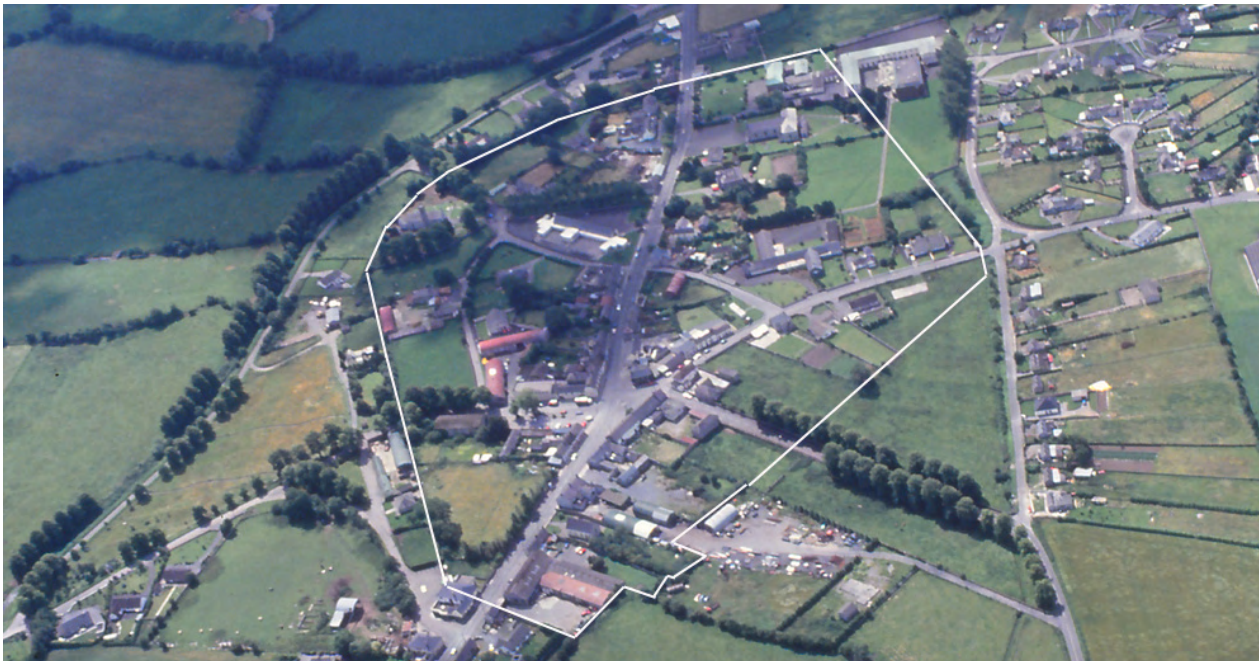

Fig.1 Aerial view of Castledermot showing outline of wall circuit (courtesy G. Barrett).

maps or in contemporary accounts. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the town was endowed with many fine buildings typical of an Irish town that reinforced the medieval street layout while altering many of the burgage plots.

Passing through the town the most visible clues to the of its former wealth are the friary and the round tower visible over the roofs and along the laneways. Otherwise it gives the impression of a typical rural main street or *sraidbhaile*, with fine traditional shopfronts lining the market square quickly giving way to farm buildings and enclosed pastures behind. The town has many well constructed stone walls, to buildings and as boundaries that date from this time and among these, the remnants of medieval walls are found.

National & European Context

The few existing remains of town-wall fortifications, which formerly enclosed and protected every important town in Ireland, and which yearly diminish in number, are, as a
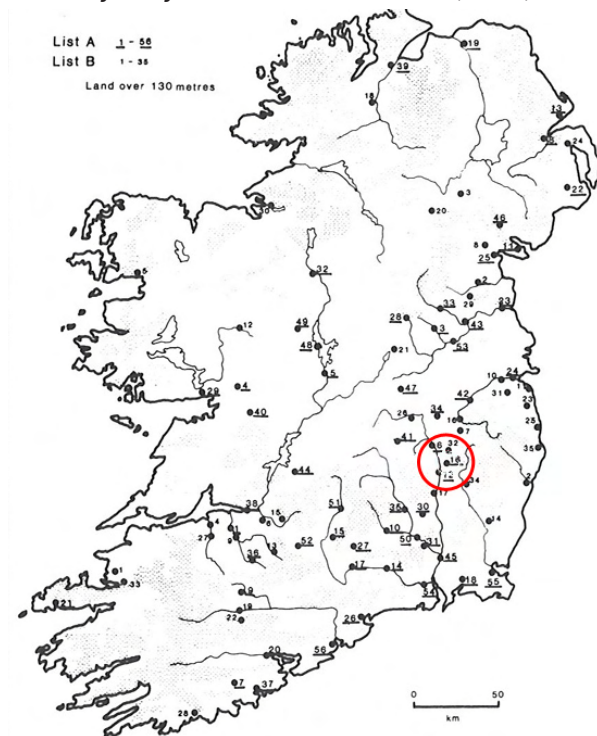

Fig.2 Map showing walled towns (Thomas 1992).

class, undeservedly overlooked by writers on the antiquities of such towns as they describe.

Writing almost one hundred years ago, J.S. Fleming commenced his study on nineteen of the walled towns of Ireland by commenting on the lack of knowledge and understanding of this aspect of our cultural heritage. Avril Thomas, in her extensive study published in 1992 described fifty six towns where there exists certain proof of wall circuits, with thirty five others for which defensive walls were a possibility and twenty others for which only the most tentative claims could be made. They range in size from the capital and the most populous cities and towns, down to what now are small villages or indeed have long been abandoned. Among these categories, settlements of less than one thousand inhabitants vied in importance with cities that are closer to a hundred thousand today. Defences were installed around settlements from the Neolithic period, and were also found around early-Christian monasteries and port towns established by the Norse. Following the colonization of parts of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans, stone-built defences started to replace less robust timber structures and earthworks. These towns formed outposts, as well as creating new trading networks and led to the economic development of the country as a whole. The walls vary in scale, detail and material- in each case responding to the local topography, as well as the prevailing economic and political context. Over the centuries, they played a key role in historical events and the development of our towns and cities.

Ireland is located on the periphery of Europe, and was relatively late in developing an urban culture. However, the Irish walled towns characterize political and economic developments on the island in relation to Britain and the continent. Starting with the port settlements founded by the Norse, the Anglo-Normans established a more lasting hold on the interior until falling away in the early fifteenth century. Each brought their own construction methods and settlement patterns from their homelands, but

Ardee Athenry **Castledermot** Cork

Athlone Bandon Derry

Drogheda

Belfast Buttevant Dublin

Fethard

Carlingford Galway Dundalk

Kilmallock Kinsale Youghal
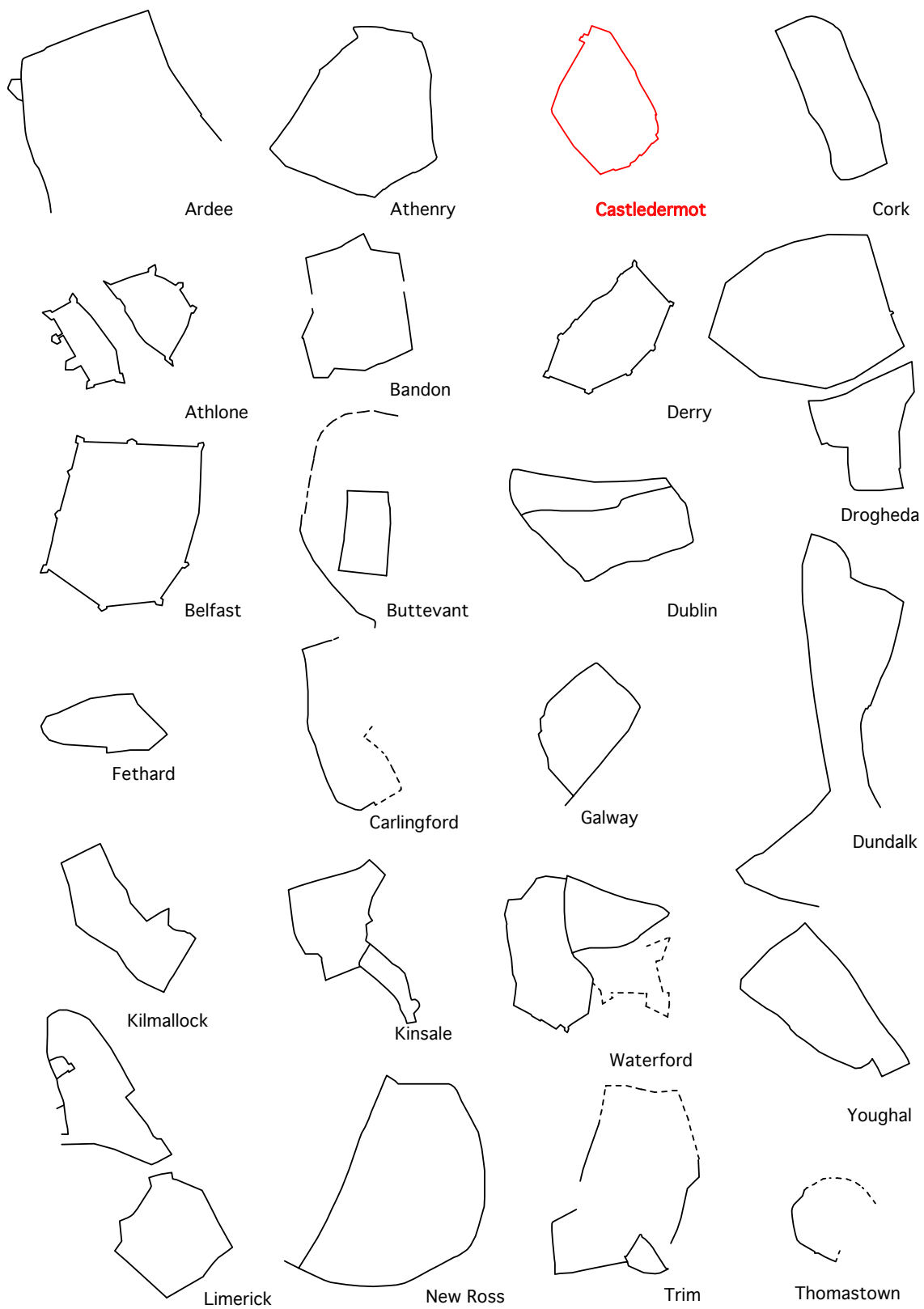
Waterford

Limerick New Ross Trim Thomastown

Fig.3 Comparative plans of Irish Walled Towns (based on Thomas 1992).

3

adapted these to local circumstances. The Tudor and Stuart plantations also relied on town defences. The adaptation and reinforcement of the town defences during the Cromwellian and Jacobite/ Williamite conflict did not prevent the walls becoming quickly redundant. This led to their gradual but widespread removal starting in the eighteenth century, so that knowledge of the extent of Irish walled towns, and their position in a wider European context, was much reduced.

The Heritage Council established the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in April, 2005 to unite and coordinate the strategic efforts of local authorities involved in the management and conservation of historic walled towns in Ireland, both north and south of the border. Castledermot is now a member of the network, which will be of great benefit for the protection of its archaeological heritage. The IWTN is formally linked to European Walled Towns (EWT), which is the international association for the sustainable development of walled towns, walled cities and fortified historic towns.

The Piran Declaration, which outlines the reasons for maintaining historic walled towns, was outlined at an Annual General Meeting of the Walled Town Friendship Circle in Piran, Slovenia in 1998:

Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect,

Fig.4 Eighteenth century drawing of abbey by Francis Grose.

damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable Timestones of History.

Aims & Objectives
This conservation plan is drawn up in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the revised Burra Charter published by ICOMOS in 1999, which provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance (See appendix 1). The charter sets out standards of practice for those with responsibility for the guardianship of such places. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors. Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection: to the community; the landscape; to the past and to lived experiences.

A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. It defines conservation as *all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.*

As such, the general aims of the Conservation Plan are to:

• Provide an accurate record of the place.
• Understand the significance of the place.
• Identify any threats to the significance.
• Formulate policies to address the threats, and guide the future preservation and management of the place.
• Outline proposals for conservation work.
• Provide accurate documentation of the site to guide future decision-making.
• Manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the monument.

Following publication of the Burra Charter, the Ename Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 2008 and deals specifically with the interpretation and presentation of cultural

Fig.5. View of presentation at public consultation meeting.

heritage. This charter provides a framework for the communication of the cultural significance of a place to the public. Its objectives are to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the site; communicate its meaning, safeguard the tangible and intangible values and respect its authenticity. This is particularly relevant in Castledermot, as the walls are no longer prominent and prove difficult for the general public to appreciate and understand. For this reason, the plan has a particular emphasis on proposals for how the walls can be best presented and their significance understood and appreciated by both locals and visitors.

This document should be the basis for all future decisions on the conservation, management and interpretation of the Town Walls.

Limitations
Certain sections of the wall in private ownership were not accessible during our surveys. These areas are noted within the text. Parts of the wall that required special access such as ladders were also not inspected.

Project Team
This conservation plan was prepared by Howley Hayes Architects & CRDS Ltd. An Irish Walled Towns Network/ Heritage Council grant was secured by the Castledermot Local History Group (CHLG) with the support of Kildare Co. Co. to fund the preparation of the plan.

Stakeholders

The stakeholders are represented by the following bodies which have formed a steering group:

Heritage Council	Liam Mannix
Kildare County Council	Bridget Loughlin
Kildare County Council	Peter Black
CLHG	Sharon Greene
CLHG	Colm Heslin

Consultation
Consultation to date included the following:

Local Landowners & Leaseholders
Local Building Professionals
Local Heritage Groups
Academic Institutions
National Monuments Service

A public meeting was held in the local community centre on the 20th of November 2012, which was attended by approximately 20 people. The meeting was advertised using posters and was announced on local radio. Questionnaires were provided at the meeting in order to obtain valuable feedback. The session included an introduction by Sharon Greene of the CLHG that included the background to the project, Liam Mannix outlined the aims of the IWTN and the importance of Castledermot's walled town status. Howley Hayes Architects then gave a presentation of their findings and proposals for the conservation of the archaeological heritage and how best to present it to the public. There were a number of concerns raised regarding funding, maintenance, access and privacy. There was also keen interest in the potential of the town walls in the presentation of the heritage of the town to tourists. It was agreed that partnerships with local groups such as the Tidy Towns committee and the Vintage Club should be encouraged, as well with local walled towns such as Athy and Carlow. The project team and steering group members discussed these issues in detail, emphasizing the importance of consultation, planned implementation and community involvement.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

Historical Background

The earliest reference to a settlement at Castledermot is associated with the monastic site of Díseart Diarmada. It was founded as a hermitage around 600 by Diarmait, the son of the Ulster (Dál Fiatach) king Diarmait mac Aedh Róin, who had been given lands in the area by Bradudh, king of Leinster in 594[1]. Another Diarmait, possibly abbot of Díseart Diarmada is recorded in the Annals around 812[2]. It was located on the southeast side of the current town where St. James Church of Ireland Church now stands. Diarmait, whose death was recorded in the annals between 823 and 825, is described as 'an anchorite, and a distinguished doctor'[3,4]. Typically the term 'díseart' is used to refer to an isolated hermitage but it appears that Díseart Diarmada grew into a significant settlement and it appears in numerous references in the annals during the early medieval period. The construction of a round tower at the site and the erection of two high crosses indicate the former wealth of the place and it is likely that the community was supported by a local family, possibly the O'Tooles.

Fig.7 Artist's impression of early Christian monastery (de Paor).

The community's wealth also attracted some unwanted attention and Viking raids on the site are recorded in the Annals around the years 841 and 867[5]. The graveyard contains a hogsback grave marker (the only recorded example in Ireland), which provides another indicator of Hiberno-Norse contact with the settlement. The subsequent decades heralded a period of relative stability which was to last till the early eleventh century. The final reference to the site in the pre-Norman period dates to 1106 when its oratory was destroyed by fire[6]. The prominence of the site during the ninth and tenth centuries diminished and there are no further references to the site until after 1170.

A Romanesque church occupied the site, though only the west doorway now survives. The doorway is located to the west of the St. James Church of Ireland Church. An antiquarian drawing by Grose shows that the remains of the church were more extensive in the late eighteenth century and that the south wall of the church was still extant. The church was extended to the east in the thirteenth century and is said to have been rebuilt in the seventeenth century[7]. To the north of the church is a 20m high round tower of tenth-eleventh century date. The top of the tower, which is crenelated, was restored in the nineteenth century. A number of early medieval monuments are located within the graveyard surrounding the church including
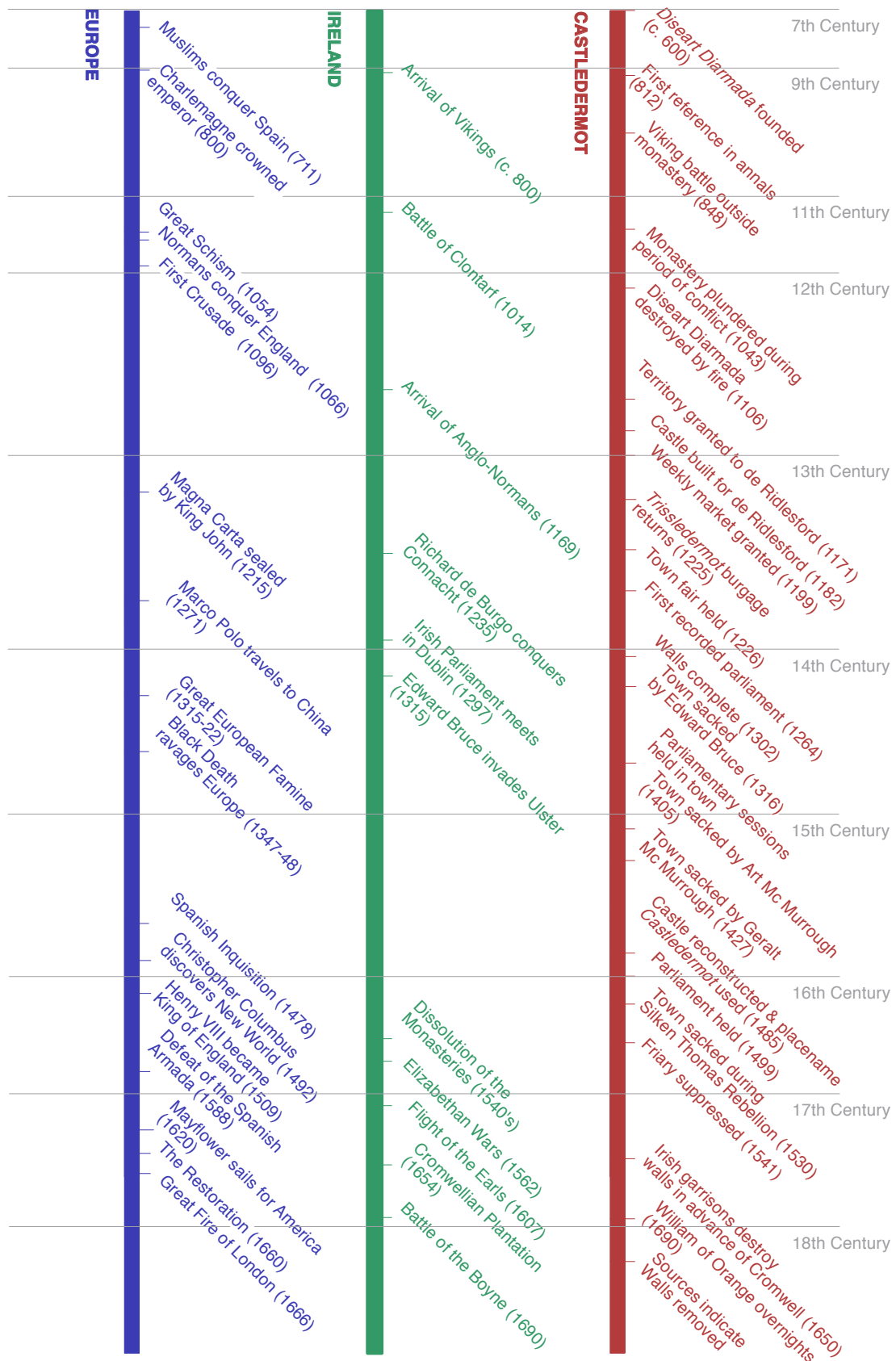

Fig.6 Drawing of church by Francis Grose (1791).

EUROPE

- Muslims conquer Spain (711)
- Charlemagne crowned emperor (800)
- Great Schism (1054)
- Normans conquer England (1066)
- First Crusade (1096)
- Magna Carta sealed by King John (1215)
- Marco Polo travels to China (1271)
- Great European Famine (1315-22)
- Black Death ravages Europe (1347-48)
- Spanish Inquisition (1478)
- Christopher Columbus discovers New World (1492)
- Henry VIII became King of England (1509)
- Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588)
- Mayflower sails for America (1620)
- The Restoration (1660)
- Great Fire of London (1666)

IRELAND

- Arrival of Vikings (c. 800)
- Battle of Clontarf (1014)
- Arrival of Anglo-Normans (1169)
- Richard de Burgo conquers Connacht (1235)
- Irish Parliament meets in Dublin (1297)
- Edward Bruce invades Ulster (1315)
- Dissolution of the Monasteries (1540's)
- Elizabethan Wars (1562)
- Flight of the Earls (1607)
- Cromwellian Plantation (1654)
- Battle of the Boyne (1690)

CASTLEDERMOT

- Diseart Diarmada founded (c. 600)
- First reference in annals (812)
- Viking battle outside monastery (848)
- Monastery plundered during period of conflict (1043)
- Diseart Diarmada destroyed by fire (1106)
- Territory granted to de Ridlesford (1171)
- Castle built for de Ridlesford (1182)
- Weekly market granted (1199)
- Trissledermot burgage returns (1225)
- Town fair held (1226)
- First recorded parliament (1264)
- Walls complete (1302)
- Town sacked by Edward Bruce (1316)
- Parliamentary sessions held in town
- Town sacked (1405)
- Town sacked by Art Mc Murrough
- Town sacked by Geralt Mc Murrough (1427)
- Castle reconstructed & Castledermot used
- Parliament held (1485)
- Town sacked during Silken Thomas Rebellion (1530)
- Friary suppressed (1541)
- Irish garrisons destroy walls in advance of Cromwell (1650)
- William of Orange overnights (1690)
- Sources indicate Walls removed

- 7th Century
- 9th Century
- 11th Century
- 12th Century
- 13th Century
- 14th Century
- 15th Century
- 16th Century
- 17th Century
- 18th Century

Fig.8 Timeline of walls of Castledermot

7

two scriptural high crosses of tenth century date and a number of simpler incised cross-slabs[8].

The territory of Hy Muireghaigh, within which Díseart Diarmada was located, was granted to Walter de Ridelsford by Richard de Clare around 1171[9,10]. The Roll of Names attached to the second charter of Dublin dating from around 1172, indicates that four families were settled at Thristeldermot and it is possible that the settlement had gained borough status by the late twelfth century. Walter received a royal grant to hold a weekly fair at 'Listeldermot' from Prince John before 1199[11]. After the coming of the Normans the name of the settlement was changed in Latin and English documents to Tristeldermot or Thristeldermot. It is possible that Tristel is derived from the word 'Tristre' meaning 'a hunting station' but it may simply have meant a place where people came together[12,13]. Giraldus Cambrensis and O'Donovan indicate that a castle was built at Thristeldermot in the 1181 but it has been suggested by Orpen and others that this castle may refer to the motte and bailey erected at Kilkea five kilmometres to the northwest of the town.

As the only urban settlement in the territory, Thristeldermot began to grow and develop. The earliest documentary evidence for the existence of a borough at Castledermot occurs in a charter of Walter de Ridlesford, who succeeded his father around the year

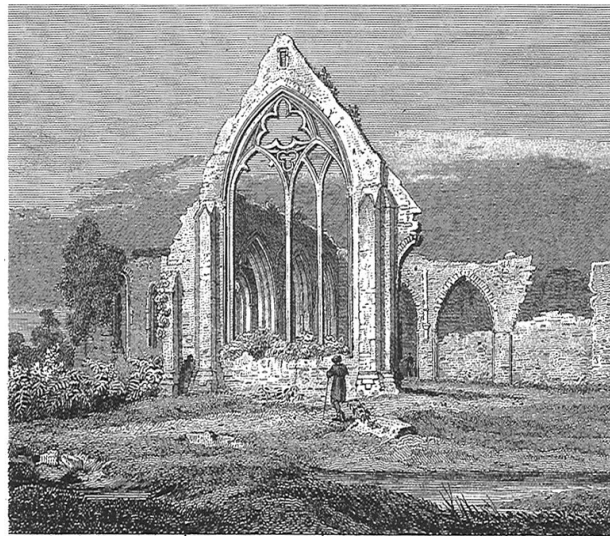Fig.9 Engraving of south side of abbey by George Petrie.

Fig.10 Engraving by George Petrie of the north window

1200, confirming the returns of a burgage in the 'vill of Trisseldermod' between 1225 and 1233. Walter obtained a royal grant to hold an annual fair at Thristledermot in 1226, which supported an increase in local trade[14]. A grant to hold a second annual fair was obtained by de Ridlesford's heiresses in 1248.

The Franciscan Friary is first referred to in documents in 1247, but may have been founded by Walter de Ridlesford before his death in 1238 or 1239. The friary, which was located at the southern entrance to the town, was destroyed by Edward de Bruce in 1316 and was subsequently rebuilt. Only the church survives from the original complex. The nave and chancel date from the thirteenth century date, while the aisle and transept were added in the fourteenth century and a domestic tower was added to the south side of the chancel in the fifteenth century[15]. A medieval ditch excavated during works for the Castledermot Sewerage Scheme may have encompassed the friary while it is likely that another two excavated ditches ran between the friary and the town.

By 1284 the Fratres Cruciferi or *Crutched Friars* founded a priory and hospital dedicated to St. John. All that remains of this complex today is a square-plan tower in a private garden at

the north end of the town. As at the friary, a ditch found during archaeological excavations undertaken in advance of the Castledermot Sewerage Scheme would have encompassed the foundation; while two further ditches would have separated it from the town[16].

The town also took on an administrative role in the thirteenth century. An inquisition was held there in Easter 1286 indicating that there was some official hall or other building within the town that could accommodate an event of that size[17]. In the late thirteenth century the settlement began to receive annual subsidies and in 1287 the subsidies were used to pay the 'army of Trestledermot'[18]. The administrative function developed further in 1297 when regular court sessions commenced[19]. By the late thirteenth century the number of burgages in the town is estimated at 180[20].

As a result of instability in the areas surrounding the town, the burgesses of Thristeldermot applied for a murage grant in 1295. The grant received allowed them to toll goods passing through the town:

Grant to the bailiffs and good men of Thistildormot in aid of enclosing their vill and for the greater security of those parts that from the day of making these presents until the end of 7 years they may take in that vill….. On completion of the 7 years the custom shall cease and be abolished.[21]

The document illustrates the volume and variety of trade which was passing through the town during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and includes corn, salt and fresh meat, fish, wool, skins, cloth, wine, honey, iron and lead[22].

The murage grant ran for a period of seven years between 1295 and 1302 and it is likely that the town wall was substantially complete by the end of this period. The area enclosed within the wall has been variously described as lozenge or pear-shaped or as an irregular rectangle with the main street running along the longer north-south axis. The area enclosed by the walls measured 550m north-south and 375m east west and the circuit had a circumference of approximately 1450m[23,24]. At least three gates gave access into the town, Dublin Gate to the north, Carlow Gate to the west and Tullow Gate to the south. The wall was bounded on the east side by the River Lerr and on the west side by a small stream, both of which formed areas of swampy ground at the base of the wall and may indicate that the wall was formerly augmented by a fosse. Two of the more important later medieval structures, namely the Priory and Hospital of St. John and the Franciscan Friary are located immediately outside the town wall circuit but immediately adjacent to two of the main town gates. There may have been a fourth town gate on the eastern side of town close to either the site of

Fig.11 Historic photograph of abbey (National Library).

Díseart Diarmada or at the end of Keenan's Lane but it is not mentioned in the records before the eighteenth century.

The town grew in size and importance during the fourteenth century in part due to its strategic location on the main route from Dublin to the southeast. Thomas, Lord of Ossary, gave a large building grant to the Franciscan Friary in 1302 and a period of significant construction began at the site. However, this period of stability was short lived as the friary, and probably the town, were sacked by Edward the Bruce in 1316. The town recovered quickly

Fig.12 Plan showing the main sites and extent and outline of town wall circuit.

ST. JOHN'S
HOSPITAL

LIBRARY
GARDEN

MARKET
SQUARE

CARLOW
GATE

ST. JAMES'
CHURCHYARD

FRANCISCAN
ABBEY

PO

The Green Bridge

BARRACK ROAD

MAIN STREET

THE DEALS

KEENANS LANE

IVORS LANE

Parochial House

CARLOWGATE

MAIN STREET

School

Rectory

CHURCH LANE

School

School

Church View

Church (CofI)

School

Church (RC)

School

ABBEY STREET

Abbeylands

Convent

Doyle's Bridge

KEY SITES

WALL CIRCUIT

STANDING REMAINS

10

from the attack and was subsequently used as the site for a King's Council[25]. Further council meetings and parliamentary sessions were held at Thristledermot throughout the fourteenth century indicating the strategic and administrative importance of the town. Following this, the citizens of the town lived in relative peace until the 1390s, when Art MacMurrough rose against the settlers. In order to avoid the destruction of the town they paid a ransom of 85 marks. However, in 1405 the walled town of Thristeldermot along with Carlow and Wexford were destroyed by MacMurrough. In 1427 it was destroyed once again by Art's son Geralt and the damage was sufficiently extensive to warrant a grant of a subsidy to aid in its repair. The instability continued for most of the fifteenth century, affecting a decline in the administrative function of the town, and no references to court, council or parliamentary sessions are recorded during the period. In 1443-4 a complaint was lodged against the Treasurer of Ireland Christopher Barnevale that due his negligence *the towne of Tristeldermot, a good walled town…one of the best Kaies of Leinster…was destruyng by the Kinges enemys not late ago.* The letter may indicate that the town had fallen into the hands of the Kavanaghs'.

By the late fifteenth century the settlement was in back in the hands of the Earl of Kildare. In 1485, as holder of the manor of Thristeldermot, he obtained a royal grant of labour for the reconstruction of the castle. Castledermot,

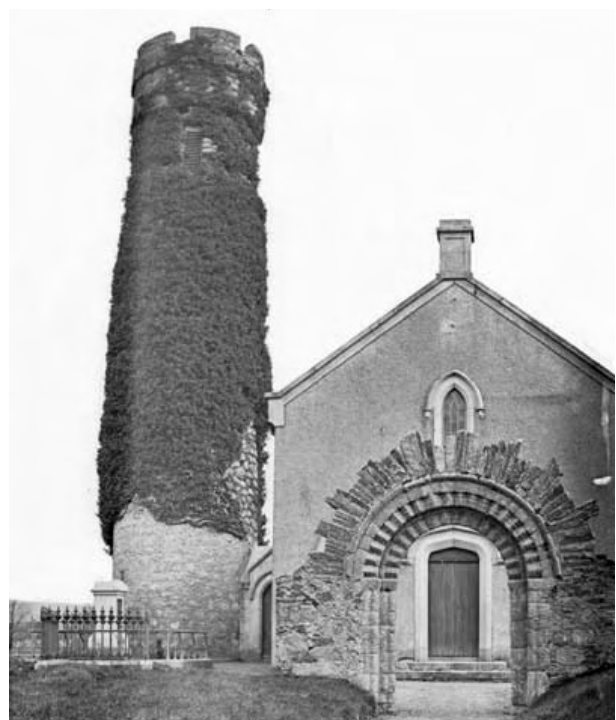Fig.13 Drawing of abbey by Gabriel Beranger.

Fig.14 Historic photograph of church (National Library).

the modern name for the settlement was first recorded in the early sixteenth century and appears to be connected with the reconstruction of the castle. A letter written by the Earl dated 1507 and written 'from our castle of Castledermot' indicates that the construction had been completed by this date[26].

The town was sacked by crown forces in the 1530s during the rebellion of Silken Thomas[27]. The key religious institutions in the town were suppressed during the Dissolution and the loss of both the religious and administrative functions meant the town was unable to recover. The church was granted to the Lord Deputy, Sir Anthony St. Leger[28]. In the late sixteenth century the town had regained sufficient importance to be listed, with Kildare, Naas and Athy as one of the four main towns of Kildare. A description of the friary at the time of its dissolution recorded *a tower, two halls, and a kitchen, a garden, and an orchard, and a cemetery, and a cartilage (courtyard) walled with stone*[29]. Dissolution documents record that at the Hospital of St. John the church was roofless and the belfry was used as a castle for

Fig.15 Engraving of west side of church by George Petrie.

the defence of the townspeople. In 1628 the site was granted to William Archbold[30].

In 1650 the Cromwellian's, under Hewson, marched on the town but the garrison that was quartered there had *burnt down a great part of the town, pulled down the walls, and betaken themselves to a strong tower*[31]. The tower in question may refer to the castle constructed by the Earl of Kildare in 1485.

With the loss of both its administrative and religious functions the town became more dependent on its market. By the mid-nineteenth century Lewis describes the town as having *neither trade nor manufacture; the place is wholly dependent on agriculture, and on the traffic resulting from its situation on a public thoroughfare…The market has been long discontinued; but fairs are still held on Feb. 24th, Tuesday after Easter, Mary 24th, Aug. 4th and 5th, Sept. 29th and Dec. 19th, chiefly for horses, cattle and sheep, but also for general merchandize*[32]. Lewis records the population of the town as 1,385 in 1837. The Parliamentary Gazetteer of 1844-45 records that there were 265 houses within the town and describes it as *a straggling and poorly edificed place, altogether of village character, yet not squalid or offensively mean; and it arrests attention by its architectural antiquities and its historical associations*[33]. The architectural heritage of Castledermot is characterised by two-storey commercial and residential buildings dating from the nineteenth century.

Cartographic Sources

Cartographic representations provide one of the principal sources for the investigation of the defences of Castledermot. Two key surveys exist for the town from the period pre-dating the Ordnance Survey namely a survey of the manor of Castledermot by Thomas Emerson in 1697 and a map of the town by John Rocque in 1758.

At the time of the Emerson's survey in 1697, the lease on Castledermot, which was granted in 1656, was due to expire[34]. The map associated with the survey has become separated from the written descriptions which survive in the Leinster Papers in the Public Records Office, Northern Ireland[35]. The survey is titled 'the contents of acres of the several denominations in the manor of Castledermott in the county of Kildare belonging to the Right Honourable John Earl of Kildare and &c according to a survey made in the year 1697 by me, Tho. Emerson'. The descriptive information is set out in four columns namely 'numbers on

Fig.16 Historic photograph of high cross in churchyard (National Library).

12

the map'; 'denominations and qualifications' which comprises a description of the holding; 'acres, roads (sic) and perches' or area and 'Lands not belonging to the earl'. There are a number of references to the town walls in the survey indicating that while the garrison had 'pulled down the walls' prior to the arrival of the Cromwellian's in 1650 large portions of the defences were still extant. References to the town walls include 'a parcel on the south end of the Keloge touching the town wall', 'a parcel next Carlow gate', 'the common where fairs are kept, lying east and south without the town walls with river', 'a parcel.......adjoining to the town wall on the west side', 'the contents of the housesteads, gardens, marketplace, common streets abbey land & church land within the walls of the town of Castledermott', 'to Mr. Moore. John Groter & Mr. Robt Blackstock to

Carlow Gate', 'all the other land and streets, houses and gardens betwixt Castle Street and the east side of the town wall', 'betwixt Mr Palmers and Mr Moores from back lane to the wall', 'the Earl and Mr Dowling's tenants along Castle Street to the wall on the east of the town from Dublin gate'[36].

Some 60 years later John Rocque completed a manuscript map entitled *A Survey of the Town of Castledermot being part of the Manor of that name belonging to the Right Hon. J. Earl of Kildare*. The town retains its medieval character and the burgage plots are clearly evident particularly at the north end of Main Street. The town has not expanded far beyond the confines of the medieval defences. The only exception to this is a narrow band of extramural development abutting the eastern town wall between it and
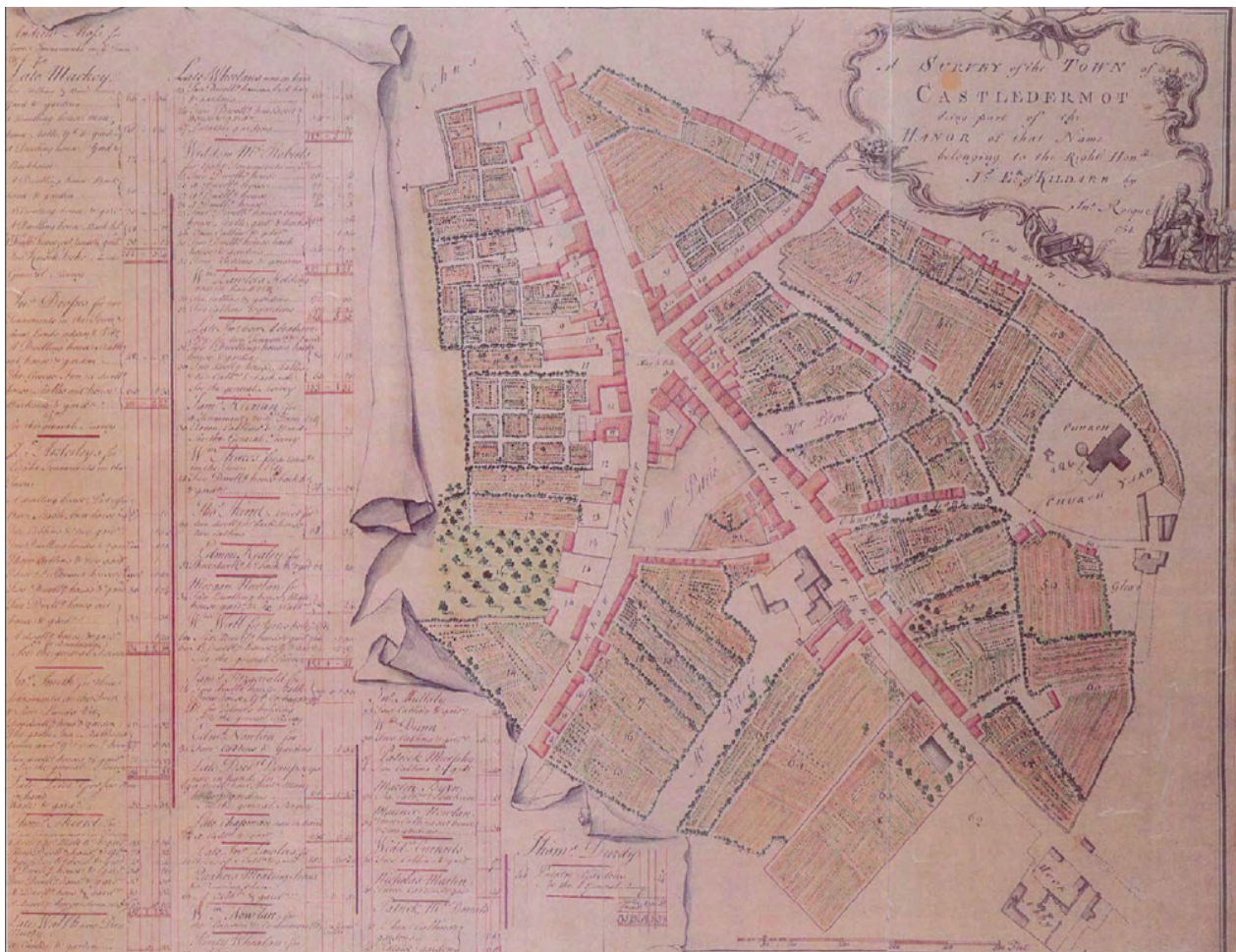

Fig.17 Rocque's map of Castledermot (1758)

the Fair Green. At the northwest end of the town the town wall is clearly depicted including a westwards protrusion around Plot 2 and 3. It has been speculated by Thomas[37] and others that this protrusion may have accommodated a tower or other defensive structure. Much of the line of the wall is represented by lines of trees or hedgerow and it is possible that much was now represented by a bank of stone and earth. There is a slight constriction shown at the north end of Main Street which may correlate with the position of Dublin Gate. A large empty plot (Plot 62), now occupied by a modern convent building, is depicted at the southern end of Abbey Street. The town wall is not depicted in this plot and its relationship with the precinct of the Franciscan Friary is difficult to determine. Rocque's map shows Keenan's Lane extending beyond the line of the town wall to the 'Commons'. Church Lane, lying to the south of St. James's Church of Ireland, also appears to extend beyond the confines of the wall though this lane would have terminated at a large pond on the River Lerr which ran from the St. James Church to the Franciscan Friary.[35]

The First Edition Ordnance Survey 6" map was surveyed c. 1838-9 and shows that Castledermot had still not witnessed large scale

Fig.18 Extract of Rocque's map showing market square

Fig.19 First edition OS map of Castledermot (1838).

extramural development by the first half of the nineteenth century. The line of the town wall is evident, though the nature of what remained of the structure at this stage is unclear. On the west side of town, the wall is marked 'site of town Wall' and forms the rear property boundaries of plots on the west side of Carlow Gate Street and Main Street. The westward projection at the north end of the wall, which was shown on Rocque's map, is still evident. The constriction at the north end of Main Street at the approximate location of Dublin Gate is also still evident and a house or other structure projects eastwards into the street. On the east side of town the wall is marked 'site of Town Wall' and is abutted on both the interior and exterior sides by house plots and gardens. Between St. James church and the south end of Abbey Street a large pond abuts the exterior of the town wall. Later Ordnance Survey maps show that this pond was drained and the land reclaimed and developed with housing. It is difficult to determine the exact relationship between the town wall and the northern precinct wall of the Franciscan Friary. The First Edition Ordnance Survey indicates that the walls met at the northwest corner of the precinct but the

14

town wall may have run in a more westerly direction joining the precinct wall at the friary buildings. From here the wall marked as 'site of Town Wall' runs in a northwesterly direction through the grounds of the Roman Catholic Church towards the remains of Carlow Gate. A small stream runs along the outside this section of the wall.

Large scale 25" inch maps were produced of Castledermot by the Ordnance Survey in the early twentieth century. This map provides more detail on the nature of the remaining sections of the town defences. Two areas are shown as upstanding sections denoted by 'Town Wall in Ruins'. A short upstanding section runs along the rear property boundary of two house plots on the north side of Carlow Gate Street. A longer stretch, which still encompasses the westward projection described above, runs from Barrack Street northeast towards Dublin Gate. The remaining sections of the town wall are described as 'Town Wall (site of)'. In the southwest corner of the town, where the town wall does not correspond with a property boundary it is represented by a dashed line.
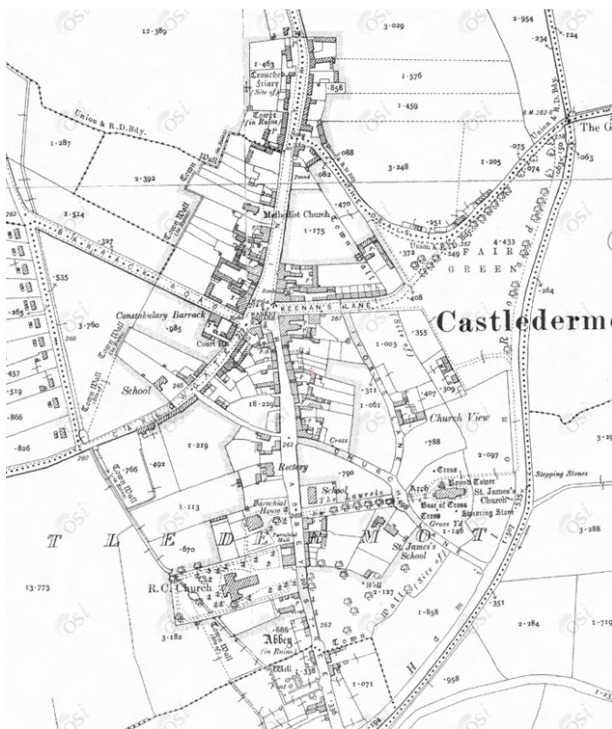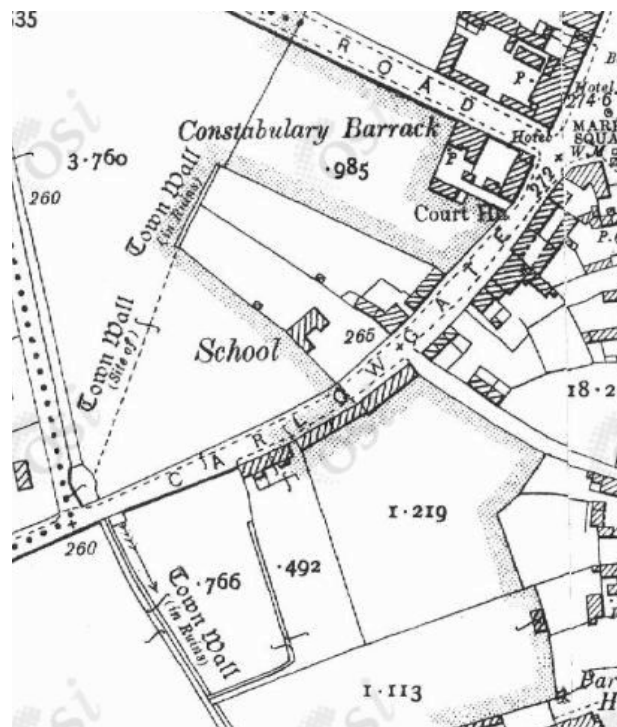

Fig.21 Extract from second edition showing notes on town wall.

The northern portion of the 25" map (Sheets 38-13 and 38-14) was revised in 1972 while the southern portion (Sheets 40-01 and 40-02) was revised in 1987. The extent of the town defences is similar to that on the 1908 map. Only one small section of the town wall, located at the rear boundary of the plot to the south if the Methodist Church, appears to have been removed in the intervening years.

Fig.20 Second edition OS map of Castledermot (early 20th c.)

3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Introduction

The walled town of Castledermot covers an area of fifteen hectares, which makes it larger than many comparable Irish walled towns of similar date and importance. The medieval street pattern has largely been retained, and its distinctive lozenge-shaped plan form remains legible from above through isolated fragments of the original and later boundary walls. There are only four main stretches of wall visible above ground, other sections may be buried underground, or have been partially rebuilt along subsequent property boundaries.

Archaeological Excavations

Archaeological excavations have revealed a wealth of medieval and post-medieval material in recent years and indicate areas of archaeological potential within the town of Castledermot. Those outlined below were associated with the town defences.

Carlow Gate (04E0391)

The remains of the town wall were revealed during test excavations at a site on the northwest side of Carlow Gate Street in 2004. These consisted of a band of uncut stone of various sizes mixed with mortar on the line of the town wall as indicated on the map included in the

Fig.22 View of Carlow Gate from west.

Fig.23 View of Carlow Gate from north.

Urban Archaeological Survey for Castledermot. The western boundary of the site was located on the line of the medieval town wall, however it is not considered that there is any original medieval fabric in the present site boundary wall. A possible ditch was uncovered at the western end of the trench, cutting into the sandy subsoil. It measured 1.8m in width and was oriented roughly north-south. Two pieces of medieval pottery were recovered from the upper fill of the feature. It is likely that the ditch is a medieval feature associated with the town wall[38].

Main Street/Keenan's Lane (04E0870)

An archaeological test excavation was undertaken at the site on the north side of Keenan's Lane in 2004. The east end of the site is bounded by the line of the medieval town wall. No evidence of any medieval fabric was found during the excavation.

Abbey Street (06E0787)

An archaeological test excavation was undertaken at a site on the east side of Abbey Street. The site is bounded to the north by the line of the town wall and it is northeast of the postulated site of the Tullow

Fig.24 View of wall remains along stream bank.

Gate, the southernmost gateway leading into Castledermot. A stretch of the original medieval town wall measuring approximately 20m in length survives on the opposite site of Abbey Street. This stretch of wall, which is 2.5m high and 0.84m thick, has a modern facing on the northern side[39]. The gate and associated road surface leading into the medieval town of Castledermot was located somewhere between the surviving portion of the town wall and the eastern end of the proposed development. It would appear that the town wall ran along the northern side of the proposed development though there was no extant evidence of this[40]. Records dating from the 1780s indicate that the southern gate was no longer visible at this time

Fig.25 View north along line of wall circuit in field.

- 'the entrance southwards still bears the name Carlow Gate and the other to the north, Dublin Gate, though there are not the least remains of either left'[41]. The excavation, which was undertaken to the south of the postulated line of the town wall uncovered a cobbled surface and a stone-lined drain at a depth of 1.10m below the concrete slab[42].

Athy Road (98E0225)
An archaeological assessment of a large greenfield site, located between Barrack Road, Carlow Gate Street and the Athy Road was undertaken in 1998. The line of the town wall runs through this site from Carlow Gate northeast to Barrack Road and can still be seen behind the rear boundary of the largest of the

Fig.26 Aerial photograph showing wall lines in field (courtesy G. Barrett)

properties which front onto Carlow Gate Street. The topography of the site is undulating with a number of low ridges and linear hollows. Three of the test trenches (Trench 1, Trench 6 and Trench 7) excavated across the site revealed evidence for the remains of the town wall. Two possible ditch features, 1.5m and 1.3-2.7m wide respectively were located in Trench 1. A wide stony band, approximately 5.2m wide, consisting of uncut stone of varying sizes mixed with mortar was also uncovered. This feature corresponds closely with the line of the town wall as indicated on the map accompanying the Urban Archaeological Survey for Castledermot and it is reasonable to interpret these features as representing the surface indication of the remaining elements of the town wall. Its surface

was identified at a depth of 0.50m beneath the ground surface[43].

Trench 6 was located in the southeast corner of the site running parallel with the eastern site boundary. Several features were noted in this trench including three disturbed bands of stone material in the vicinity of the town wall. The features were clear cut on both sides and were located between 0.2m and 0.4m below the ground surface and were between 1.8 and 3m wide. These consisted of concentrations of small to large sized stones, which were interpreted as the upper surface of the remains of the town wall[44].

Trench 7 was located to the north of the visible line of the town wall to the rear of the boundary of two sites running northeast from Carlow Gate Street. Near the south end of the trench, a layer of large and medium stones, set in sand was visible. This layer, which was just under the topsoil at a depth of 0.3m, is approximately 0.25m thick and may be relatively modern. It produced a single sherd of medieval pottery and a medieval ring brooch[45]. In general the area outside the town wall is relatively free from archaeological material[46].

Castledermot Sewerage Scheme (00E0550)
Archaeological testing was undertaken in advance of the Castledermot Sewerage Scheme in 2000, during which significant archaeological deposits were recorded on
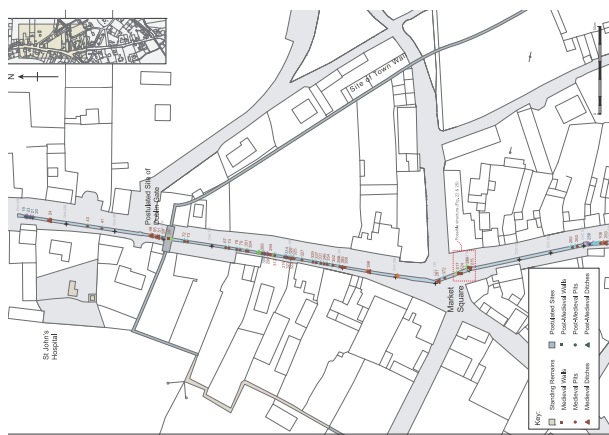

Fig.27 Drawing showing testing along sewer route (Eachtra).

Fig.28 Photos of wall uncovered along sewer route (Eachtra).

the site of the Franciscan Friary, Dublin Gate, Market Square and the Priory and Hospital of St. John the Baptist[47]. Excavation, undertaken at the site of Carlow Gate, revealed no structural evidence, however archaeological remains may have existed outside the area tested. Excavation, undertaken at the postulated site of Dublin Gate, revealed no structural evidence for the gate but there appeared to be at least two phases of medieval activity represented by a compacted clay floor surface and by refuse pits 9[48].

Additional archaeological excavation of the route of a proposed pipeline trench through the town of Castledermot by Kildare County Council, carried out between June and December 2004. Areas of archaeological potential, the Franciscan Friary, Carlow Gate, Dublin Gate, Market Square and the Priory and Hospital of St. John, had been identified along the route during a previous assessment and during archaeological testing[49]. Two
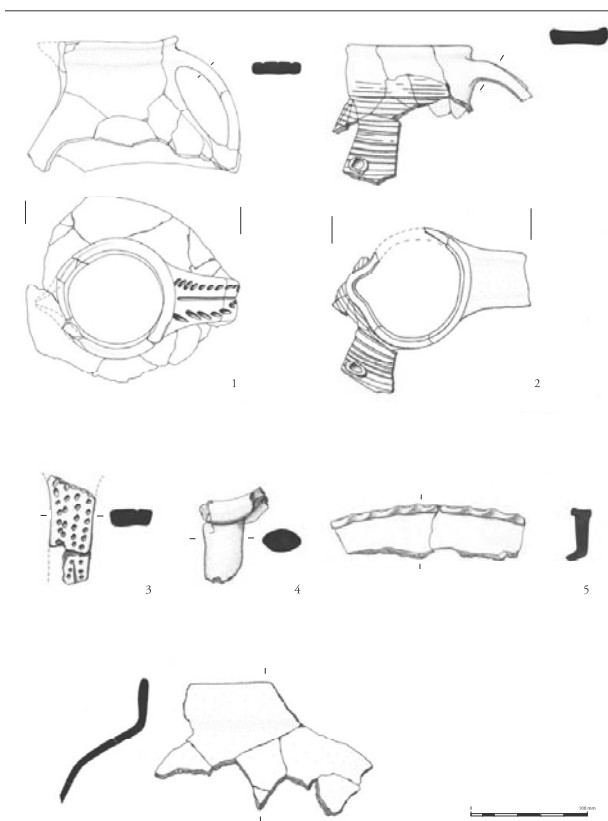
Fig.29 Drawings of pottery uncovered during digs (Eachtra).

the settlement. Their alignment is echoed in the burgage plots on Rocque's map of 1758. An extension of the northernmost ditch may have encompassed the Priory and Hospital of St. John while the two other ditches would have separated it from the town[52].

A stone wall, which had been impacted by the insertion of an early modern stone-lined drain, was located in the northern part of Area 2. This wall, of which only two courses now survive, was quite wide. It was constructed of reasonably large stones set with mortar and probably represents the lowest courses of the northern part of the medieval town wall. To the south of the wall a complex of twenty eight medieval pits was revealed and the excavated examples were found to be refuse pits[53].

It was speculated that the southern line of the town wall would be intersected in Area 5 near the modern convent. Medieval archaeological

trenches were excavated at Carlow Gate. One of these was taken up entirely by the existing sewer trench while the other contained no archaeological remains. Two more trenches were opened up at the postulated site of Dublin Gate[50]. Medieval archaeological remains were found in both trenches, at approximately 0.30m below present ground level (PGL). The natural subsoil occurred at a depth of 1.10m below PGL.

Three medieval ditches were uncovered in Area 1 at the north end of Castledermot. The northernmost ditch was the most substantial and contained sherds of medieval pottery. A less substantial u-shaped ditch lay to the south and the upper fill contained animal bones and iron slag. The southernmost ditch was relatively wide and shallow and contained a single sherd of thirteenth-century pottery, a single piece of iron slag and two metal artefacts[51]. It is possible that these ditches had a defensive purpose and may have been part of the earliest enclosure of

Fig.30 View looking north towards site of Tullow (South) Gate.

Fig.31 View looking south towards site of Dublin (North) Gate.

19

Fig.32 Plan showing extent of archaeological investigations and sites of particular archaeological potential.

Legend:

- ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL
- POSSIBLE STANDING REMAINS

Map labels: The Green Bridge, PO, Main Street, The Deals, Barrack Road, Keenans Lane, Ivors Lane, Parochial House, Church View, Carlowgate, School, Rectory, School, Church (CofI), Church Lane, School, Church (RC), Main Street, School, Abbey Street, Convent, Abbeylands, Doyle's Bridge

Fig.33 View of town wall fragment to north boundary of abbey.

Fig.34 View of abbey from west over stream.

features uncovered included a pit and two walls, spaced approximately 3m from each other. The northern wall was aligned northwest-southeast and the southern wall was oriented east-west. These probably represented a small portion of a gate or entrance feature associated with the southern section of the medieval town wall. The northern wall consisted only of foundation courses constructed from large rounded granite rubble set in sandy mortar, while the exposed section of the southern wall was quite wide with four courses surviving. Of these, the upper courses consisted of large sub-angular granite set in sandy mortar with the lower courses consisting of large rounded granite rubble set in silt. There was some evidence of facing around a central core. The alignment of these two walls suggest the possibility of a staggered gateway with a medieval roadway running between[54].

Area 7 was the final area excavated at the southern end of Castledermot. The medieval features uncovered included a ditch, aligned east-west, measuring approximately 1.1m wide, which was filled with dark silty clay. This ditch may have encompassed the Franciscan Friary[55].

Abbey Grounds
From the cartographical evidence, the Franciscan Friary (or Abbey) was located adjacent to the south (Tullow) gate abutting the exterior face of the wall. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey map shows the former wall line commencing some forty metres to the west of the friary along the line of the now culverted stream, but there is no evidence for this on site.

A convent school was built in the former church field to the north of the friary, and this wall has been incorporated into a more modern wall. The ancient section of wall begins just behind the west-facing wall of the friary and extends about fifteen metres as far as the modern gate. It is approximately two metres tall and almost entirely covered in ivy, with its wall head covered in turf and weeds. The wall construction is similar to the stonework seen on the ancient sections to the rear garden of the library.

St. James Churchyard
Rocque's map shows a 'Gleabe' to the south-east corner of the churchyard, in an

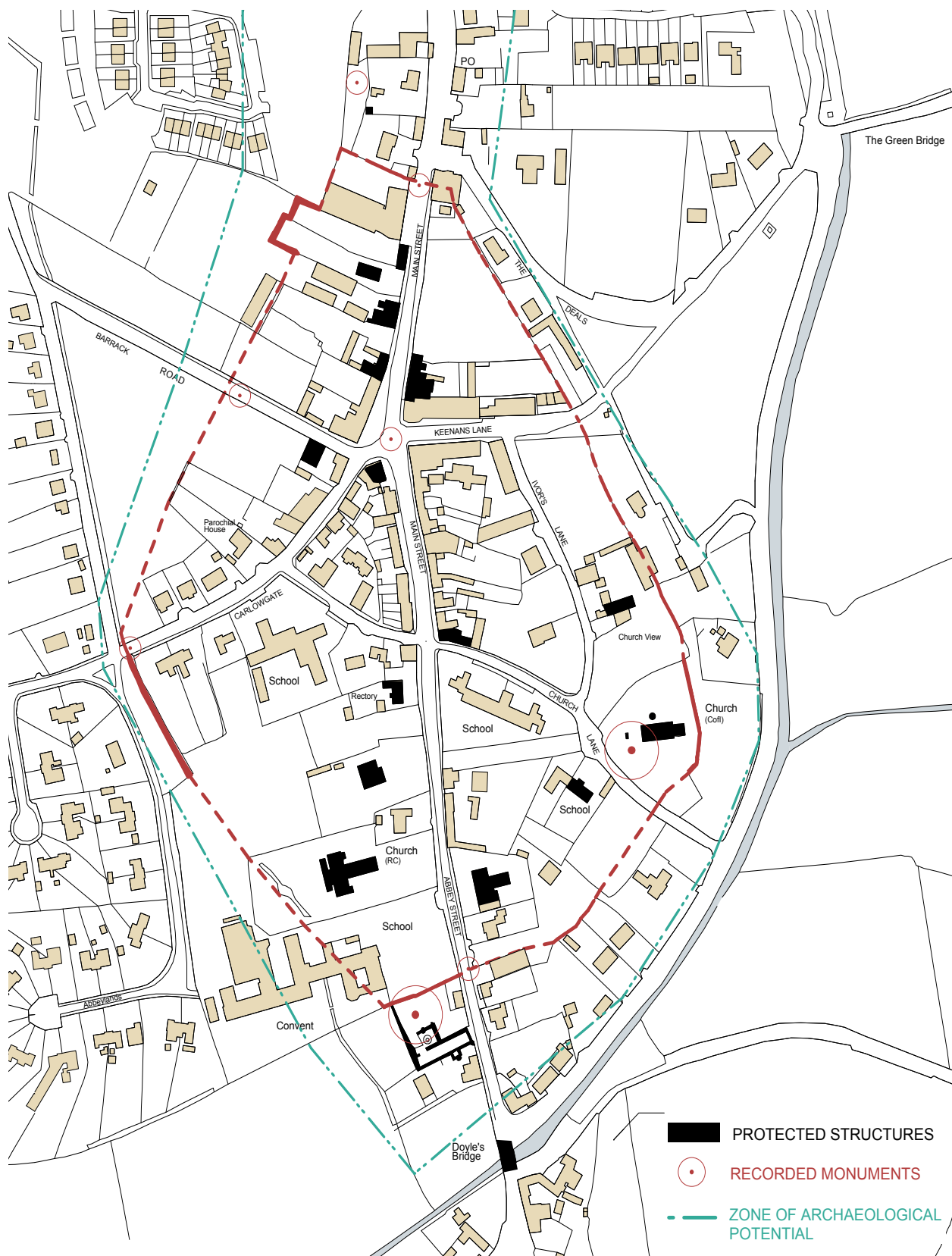Fig.35 View along top of town wall section at graveyard.

Fig.36 Plan showing zone of archaeological potential, recorded monuments and protected structures.

Legend:
- PROTECTED STRUCTURES
- RECORDED MONUMENTS
- ZONE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Map labels: The Green Bridge, PO, MAIN STREET, THE DEALS, BARRACK ROAD, KEENANS LANE, IVOR'S LANE, Parochial House, CARLOWGATE, School, Rectory, School, Church View, Church (CofI), CHURCH LANE, School, Church (RC), School, ABBEY STREET, Convent, Abbeylands, Doyle's Bridge

Fig.37 Detail of wall head to churchyard.

arrangement that crosses church lane and could have incorporated a gate. This is not shown on the first edition OS map, but rather the site is shown as part of the floodplain of the Lerr. The OS map also indicates that the churchyard was extended to the east through the line of the wall circuit. This extension is also visible on Rocque's map, but here it is part of the glebe compound.

The east wall of the churchyard is low, no more than 1.5m high and approximately 600mm wide, the top of which has been crudely flaunched with cement. A further section, of similar scale, continues on and has retained a course of stone cappings. While not in imminent danger of collapse, the ivy growth and extensive use of hard cement are causes for concern.

Library Garden (Rear of Former Methodist Church)
Both the interior (east) face of the wall at the rear of the current library, housed in the former Methodist church, and the exterior (west) face of this wall that stands within a truck repair compound are badly overgrown with vegetation including ivy and trees. The overgrown garden on the library side has recently been cleared to facilitate a detailed survey of the condition of this section of wall, however, the face within the compound remained largely covered.

Of the ancient wall that stands within the garden, three sections protrude beyond the

wall line. Thomas (1992) speculates that this might be the location of the castle, with another possibility being to the south side of the market square.

The boundary wall to the north side of the garden contains masonry characteristic of the construction pattern found in the famine relief works undertaken by the Duke of Leinster around the village. The final four metres at the west end of this wall appear to be more ancient, in contrast to the well-coursed and dressed granite of the more recent section of wall, which contains a mixture of several types of stone and features in-filled brick arch-headed niches that may have been constructed as bee boles.

The west wall is approximately seventeen metres in length and is in very poor condition.

Fig.38 View of west wall in Library garden.

Fig.39 View of end of south wall in Library garden.

23

Fig.40 View of sluice under road beside Carlow Gate.

Fig.41 View looking south along river back towards school wall.

A four metre long section has almost entirely collapsed, with a large mound of earth and stone at its base. Rising to approximately 2.7m, the middle section has a slight batter running from the base to the remaining head, and is detached from the adjoining sections perpendicular walls. The masonry consists mostly of granite with a mixture of limestone and sandstone and some brick inserts. Parts of this wall are reasonably well-coursed, and where inserts are used these consist of a relatively crude re-facing of the wall. While the wall retains some lime mortar, much has been lost and both faces of the wall are now covered with deeply embedded ivy roots. Their stability is also threatened by their close proximity to mature trees.

The wall to the south is approximatley ten metres in lenght and is close to the point of collapse, being held in place by the matrix of ivy roots. It is relatively level at approximately 1.9m, and is no longer properly bonded to the east wall.

Carlow Gate & Stream
The section at the Carlow Gate is the most visible and intact evidence of the town wall that remains. It is approximately four metres high from its base to the highest point, ten metres in length and almost two metres in width. It has a distinct batter on the both faces, and the end facing the road, on the north side, seems to have been refaced, together with the tops of the wall. This work was undertaken by the local authority to consolidate and weather the partially ruined wall some twenty years ago. No records were found of the extent of the works undertaken or the appearance of the wall at that time. Ivy has begun to re-colonise the top and the interior face of the wall, but is not of immediate concern. There may be some evidence of the northern section of the gate on the other side of the road below ground. Large stones have been used to the base of the more modern granite walls lining the road that may have been salvaged from the gate.

A stream runs underneath the road to the base of the gate and continues towards the wall of the school grounds approximately ninety metres to the south. Lining the stream are the remains of the town wall, in the form of large stones in the low sections of masonry that retain the gardens

Fig.42 View of possible wall fragment to rear of haybarn.

24

Fig.43 View of large stones loosely laid in retaining wall.

Fig.44 View of possible wall fragment to agricultural building.

behind. These are heavily overgrown with tree roots along the seventy metres stretch. This section of the wall is particularly vulnerable to further losses due to the tree roots and its proximity to the stream, which will make consolidation particularly challenging.

Boundary Fragments
Cartographical evidence suggests that there may be more sections of the former defensive wall hidden beneath, or contained within, current building plots or field boundaries. Sections to the west include those within plots lying to either side of Barrack Road. The section close to the rear of the Shamrock Bar is too densely covered in ivy to be inspected with any accuracy, and this is also true of the section in the field to the south. Other possible sections are contained within the farm enclosures and out buildings

along the east side, where there is evidence of significant changes of level between plots on either side of the assumed wall alignment. In some cases these consist of hedgerows, in others low retaining walls. Much of the defensive wall would have been salavaged for re-used in building new structures such as boundaries and dwellings. The garden of the Church of the Assumption has been landscaped with a number of stone features, such as a stone bridge, which contains stonework that suggest belonged to medieval structures, and even architectural fragments such as column sections and window jambs.

Architecture
As a small town that has remained in continuous occupation for over one thousand years, Castledermot has a fascinating collection of built heritage. Unlike the town walls- the church and abbey are well known. St. James' Church and graveyard is the site of the earliest settlement. It is an interesting multi-phase building that has been in continuous use since the ninth century. A twelfth-century Romanesque doorway is now located ten metres to the west of the present entrance. The church also contains fabric dating from the thirteenth, seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Aside from the early doorway, and the round tower attached to the north, the church has a largely nineteenth-century appearance. The abbey is located on a prominent site visible on the roadside of what was until recently, the main road from Dublin

Fig.45 View of salvaged masonry in RC church garden.

Fig.46 View of St. James' Church, round tower & arch.

to Carlow, Kilkenny and Waterford. Of the extensive complex recorded at the time of the Dissolution- dormitories, two halls, a kitchen arranged around a cloister, only the church remains. The chancel, nave and north aisle and north transept have been preserved, with a fifteenth-century residential tower with a spiral staircase added to the chancel in the fifteenth century. The structure is being maintained by the OPW, who have carried out repair works relatively recently. Of a third religious building complex, the early twelfth century St. John's Priory & Hospital, only a square-plan tower house remains. This is well preserved to height of twelve metres, and has an incongruous location in the private garden of a bungalow just outside the town wall circuit. Alongside the ancient buildings, the town benefited from the patronage of the Dukes of Leinster who

Fig.47 View of former Methodist Church in use as library.

had a seat in nearby Kilkea Castle. Aside from the fine houses and commercial premises that attest to a relatively prosperous period in the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches (the latter now converted into the library), former barracks, farm and industrial buildings and former school houses all record the passing of time since the walls were removed. These buildings are largely modest and unpretentious, but along with the larger institutional complexes give the town a distinct character that rewards taking time to encounter the town's heritage on foot. The Laurels, a formal tree-lined pathway linking St. James' Church to Abbey Street, is a picturesque

Fig.48 View of cast iron gate and granite posts to the Laurels.

innovation on the medieval town plan. It features cast iron railings and turnstiles at each end, and the finely crafted granite masonry that is to be found on boundary walls and gates throughout the town.

4.0 ASSESSMENT & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that:

Cultural Significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the level of a place's cultural significance: Archaeological, Historic, Architectural, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical and Social interest categories will be used to assess the significance of the walls of Castledermot.

Archaeological Interest
Castledermot is one of the longest known continuously occupied settlements in the country. There were at least four main phases in its development, and as the various town-names suggests, each had a different character. Díseart Diarmada, founded around AD600, contains standing remains dating from the tenth century.

Díseart Diarmada was located at the site of St. James' Church and graveyard, which contains a wealth of archaeological remains.

Fig.49 View of Viking hogback grave marker.

Fig.50 View of high cross in St. James' churchyard.

Earliest remains include two high crosses, a round tower and the west door of a Romaneque church. The crosses form part of a group of granite crosses along the Barrow valley at Moone, Ullard and Graignemanagh.

Alongside the crosses, the graveyard contains the only known example of a Viking hogsback grave marker in Ireland. It likely dates from the tenth century, and is surrounded by numerous other grave slabs of interest dating from the twelfth centuries to the nineteenth century.

Dating from the twelfth century, the round tower is a highly visible landmark in the town. While the purpose of round towers is not fully understood, it is thought that they were used as belfries.

The walled town of Castledermot, known as *Thristledermot*, is of interest as it involved the enlargement of an established ecclesiastical settlement into an Anglo-Norman market town.
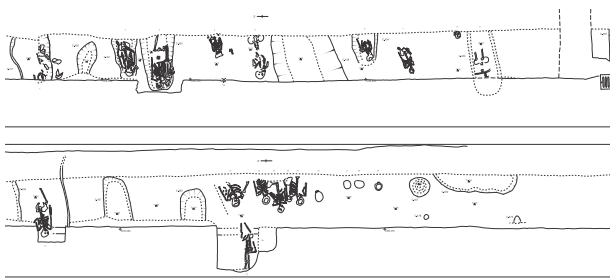
Fig.51 Extract of drawing of archaeological dig (Eachtra).

Although Castledermot has over time lost most of the standing sections of wall, excavations undertaken by archaeologists over the years have contributed much to our understanding of their former extent. The archaeological investigations undertaken recently when the main sewer was replaced along the main street uncovered fascinating evidence of the medieval walled town.

Much remains unclear, with some uncertainty as to the original location of the castle, the houses and buildings used by the burghers and the precise outline of the wall. There is, however, significant archaeological potential around the circuit given that much of the town survives as open space within the alignment of the former walls.

Of particular interest is the garden at the rear of the Library. This would seem to constitute a burgage plot that has remained intact. The identification of bee boles in the walls would suggest that the garden has been in use

Fig.52 Extract from Rocque's map showing Library garden site.

since medieval times, perhaps by those with a relatively high status.

Due to the lack of documentary sources about the town, our greater understanding of the development of the town will only be gained by further archaeological investigations.

Fig.53 View of cleared site to rear of Library garden.

Historical Interest
The walls played an important part in the history of the town, in its development from an early Christian monastery into an Anglo-Norman market town.

It was also an important outpost of the Pale situated along the 'marches' at the interface with Gaelic-held territory. The walls are a testament to the resurgence of the Gaelic population.

The town hosted the first Irish parliament in 1264 and another twelve sittings occurred until the early fifteenth century.

Those sections of the wall that remain bear witness to these historic events and while Castledermot may have waned in importance since then, it retains valuable information about the development of an Anglo-Norman market town in the Irish midlands.

The streets, lanes and historic buildings give visitors a vivid sense of the historical continuity of the place, from ancient times to the present.

28

Fig.54 View looking east along the Laurels.

Architectural Interest
The former town walls of Castledermot define the development of the town, having been built to create a distinct defensible boundary that allowed the town to trade and flourish during the late Medieval period.

The fact that so few standing sections of the town wall remain enhances their significance as surviving remnants. They provide vital information as to the original scale and design of the walls for their defensive purpose.

The outline of the walls is key to understanding the urban morphology of the town. It defines the pattern of the medieval layout of the town's streets and burgage plots, that have remained largely unaltered despite the walls being largely

Fig.55 View of east front of abbey church along main road.

removed and the outskirts being developed in recent decades.

Castledermot has an interesting collection of buildings dating from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries that form a repository of information on evolving styles of Irish townscapes all contained within the line of the town walls.

Artistic Interest
The town is rich with quality granite craftsmanship, from the modest but exemplary masonry walls, gate posts and stiles to the rich carvings on the high crosses, among the finest examples of early Christian sculpture.

Fig.56 View of cottages restored by the Tidy Towns Committee.

There are several historical maps and views of Castledermot dating from the eighteenth century by George Petrie, Francis Grose, Gabriel Beranger and John Rocque. These illustrate the development of the town together with cartographical techniques and styles of topographical recording.

Scientific Interest
The wall remains are of broader scientific interest as they have provided evidence of the construction techniques, diet, and rituals of the late medieval period. The archaeological resolution of the several open sites around the village has the potential to provide more significantly more material that will be of interest to scholars.

Technical Interest
The walls are also a record of the development of the war and defence techniques from the late-medieval period.

The removal of the walls is also of interest, attesting to developments in weaponary as well as political change.

Social Interest
The walls are evidence of how society was organised between the thirteenth and the seventeenth century in Ireland, with the Anglo-Norman (urban) populace protected within, from the Gaelic (rural) families living outside, and how these two communities interacted.

The removal of the walls is also of social interest, attesting to the expansion of the village into the surrounding areas, as the threat of invasion subsided due to technological advances and a period of relative peace during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Although the extent and outline of the town walls are not well understood by the general public, there is a demonstrable sense of pride in the town's medieval heritage as demonstrated by the vibrant heritage group and the several initiatives to promote understanding of the town's heritage.

Statement of Significance
Castledermot was founded by Diarmait in the seventh century, and it remained a small monastic site until the late thirteenth century when it was settled by the Anglo-Normans. They used it as an important strategic outpost at the edge of the Pale, which evolved into a prosperous market town. It is not among the largest, or best preserved of the more than fifty walled towns on the island. The town wall sections that remain require improved access and enhancements to their settings in order for their former extent to be fully appreciated. Our evolving knowledge of the medieval heritage of the walled town will remain a subject of interest and debate. With its exemplary
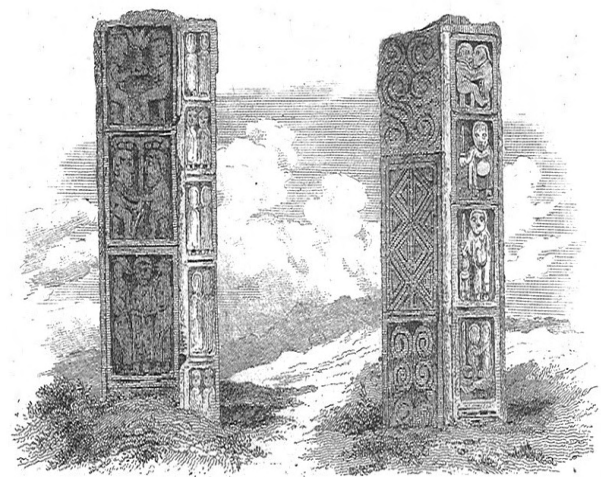

Fig.57 Etching of high cross fragment in churchyard (G. Petrie).

buildings and street plan, the walled town of Castledermot is an interesting example of an Anglo-Norman town founded on early Christian foundations. It contains evidence of over one thousand years of continuous inhabitation, with an extraordinary collection of important stone carved monuments and architecture in a modestly-sized settlement. The location and extent of the town walls deserve to be better known by the locals, and more vividly presented to visitors. They contribute to a place that is undoubtedly of national, and arguably of international, cultural significance.

5.0 DEFINING ISSUES & ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

Statutory Protection

Statutory protection for the walls of Castledermot is in place under the following legislation which is supplemented by policy documents and guidance:

• *National Monuments Acts, 1930 – 2004*
• *Planning and Development Acts 2000-2011*
• *Record of Monuments and Places, established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994*
• *National Policy on Town Defences 2008*
• Local Plans & Policy

Kildare County Council is the relevant planning control authority. The town has been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and this encompasses some the wall circuit. The town defences are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential. It is a policy of the *Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017* to protect the archaeological heritage of the county.

Interpretation

In places such as Castledermot, where much of the former defensive walls have been removed, buried, embedded or altered; the proper
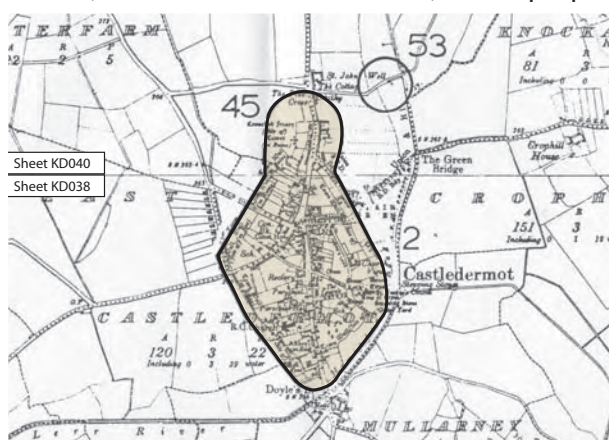

Fig.58 Map extract showing Zone of Archaeological Potential.

Fig.59 View towards St. John's tower over private garden.

interpretation of the walls can be challenging. However, the intangible values can be revealed to the general public for interpretation in many ways - through transient activities such as research, education programmes and public events, or through permanent initiatives that provide up-to-date information and analysis and improve understanding and access to the place for the enjoyment of all. Although upstanding sections such as the Carlow Gate are visible and easily recognised by the local community, understanding and knowledge of the extent of the remainder of the town wall circuit is less prevalent. This has been inhibited by scarcity lack of clear physical evidence leading to conflicting theories that should over time, and with further investigation, be gradually refined and improved. Where access to parts of the former wall circuit is understandably restricted, interpretation and presentation can be provided. By increasing understanding and appreciation of the monument and its context, a *virtuous circle* can be created where the local community can become more active stakeholders in the preservation of the walls, which will in turn become more attractive to visitors for the benefit of all.

Ownership

The wall circuit passes through properties in both public and private ownerships, and it is important to note that Castledermot is both home and workplace to over 1,000 people whose rights are to be respected. The sections
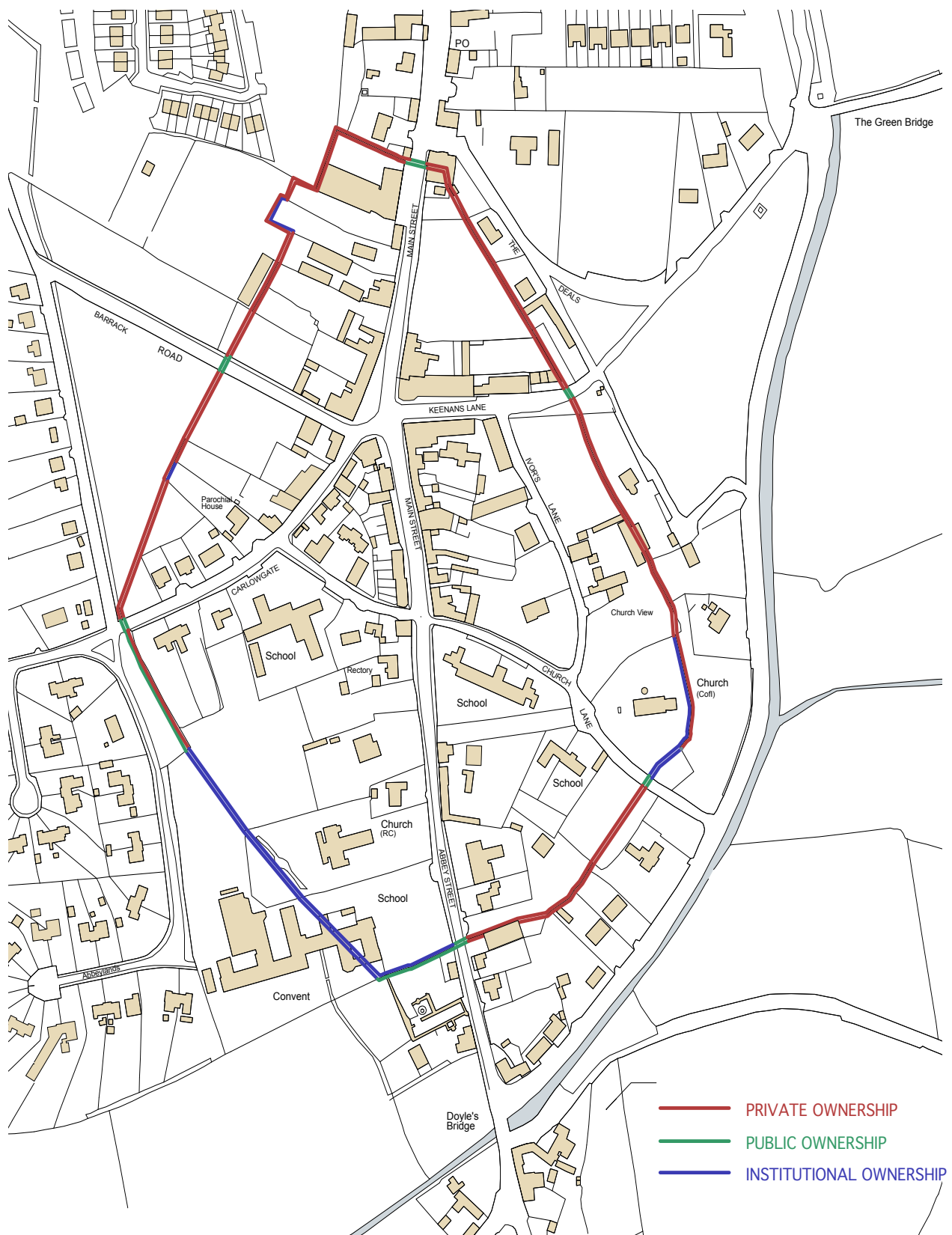
Fig.60 Plan showing ownership of the walls (assumed).

Fig.61 Detail view of masonry to wall in Library garden.

of the circuit on lands such as public roads, open space and parks are the responsibility of the local authority. Other sections passing through the grounds of institutional buildings such as the schools and churches are the responsibility of the various trustees or boards of management. National monuments owned by the National Monuments Service and managed by the Office of Public Works include the friary, round tower, and St. James Church. The graveyard is owned and cared for by the Church of Ireland, and the garden at the rear of the Roman Catholic church also contains a section of the wall circuit. There are numerous private landowners around the circuit where the wall forms field and property boundaries, on both the internal and external sides. This makes access to the walls and responsibility for their care complex, involving negotiation and collaboration. It is important for the conservation of the monument that this is managed properly in order to reduce the risk of damage or deterioration.

Use
While the walls no longer serve their defensive purpose, they continue to demarcate sites in different ownerships, retaining walls, boundaries and changes in level. Many of these sites are now used as private gardens, playing fields, burial grounds, public open space, or for agricultural use. Some are neglected and

badly overgrown while others fall within areas that have been proposed for redevelopment, and will require ministerial consent as they are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential.

Condition of the Historic Fabric
The upstanding remains along the walled circuit are almost all in a vulnerable, or very vulnerable, structural state. The Carlow Gate was extensively repaired as recently as twenty years ago, and is no longer in danger of collapse. However, lack of knowledge about the original form of this structure has resulted in a good deal of conjectural restoration. The use of cement-rich mortars, although common practice at the time, will certainly lead to future failures which will need attention in due course. The sections along boundaries such as the stream and the rear of private properties have been seriously undermined by general neglect and invasive vegetation including ivy, trees and shrubs. In order to repair these sections, extensive clearance, treatment followed by consolidation of the masonry will be necessary.

Access & Settings
Issues such as access, health and safety and rights of way present challenges to the interpretation of the former wall circuit in many places. These can be overcome to some extent, in a number of ways by means of interpretation and presentation and by proper management and consultation. Parking is available in many

Fig.62 View through existing gate to front of RC church.

33

places around the town, but consideration should be given to concentrate visitor parking at the heritage centre, which could serve as a starting and finishing point to a walled town tour. Restrictions on access to different sections of the wall should be made clear to those undertaking the tour to avoid disappointment. Establishing a route that follows the wall circuit as close as is possible, will be an important strategic initiative that will enhance the experience of the town's heritage and assist in the wall's protection and conservation into the future. This will involve extensive consultation and the cooperation of the various stakeholders, as an extension of their established tolerance of, and assistance to those wishing to access the monuments.

Fig.63 View of former school to be used as Community Centre.

Visitor Facilities
The lack of visibility and alterations to their setting makes the walls difficult to interpret. The walls and the several historic buildings that are contained within its boundary have complex development histories that need to be presented in a coherent way. The design of high quality interpretative material is essential for greater public understanding of the place. It is intended to create a dedicated space in the community centre (former primary school building) for the display of information panels. The building will also have toilets etc. for the use of visitors. The community centre could also be used to commence heritage walks through the town, with ample car parking, with the information panels erected at key locations.

Vulnerabilities
In relation to the issues outlined above, the vulnerability of the archaeological heritage can be summarised a set out below:

Preservation
· Interventions may be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise a structure. This work needs to be informed by current best practice, be reversible and should not detract from the setting of the monument.
· The complex ownership of the walls can make it difficult to assign responsibilities for their maintenance, as well as obtaining access for their inspection and presentation.
· Generally the walls are in a very vulnerable state, and will require significant repairs and consolidation.
· Defects when left unchecked can bring about rapid deterioration, resulting in considerable financial loss that can be avoided by a regime of routine maintenance.

Understanding
· At present it is difficult for the general public to understand the form of the walls, the general chronology of the town's development and the relationship between the various structures and monuments. This is due to the scarcity of upstanding remains, as well as precise knowledge of the location of the walls.
· The buried remains along the wall circuit are often located on private properties or along boundaries.
· The lack of knowledge about the precise location and condition of the wall circuit is the most significant threat to its preservation.

6.0 CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES & POLICIES

Approach & Objectives

All conservation works are guided by the principle of minimum intervention as set out in the Burra Charter - as little as possible, but as much as is necessary.

The conservation objectives for the walls of Castledermot can be summarised as follows:
• to provide for the effective maintenance of the walls to provide guidance on best conservation practice for the repair of the walls.
• to provide guidance on the reversal of inappropriate additions to the walls.

Principle: Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Buried)

The sub-surface archaeology should be disturbed as little as possible so that its can be preserved intact. Provide physical protection where appropriate.

Principle: Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Buried)

Non-intrusive methods of archaeological investigation should predominate, combined with traditional excavation only where justified by a comprehensive research strategy and best conservation practice. Any proposed

Fig.64 Photograph of uncovered wall foundation. (Eachtra)

Fig.65 View of Carlow Gate from east.

excavation should have a strong rationale and be designed to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of medieval Castledermot.

Principle: Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Standing)

The standing historic walls should be retained by implementing urgent programmes of repair and maintenance, together with the preservation of their settings. Ensure that any activities in the vicinity of the monument do not cause damage to the walls. The use of management strategies is preferred over physical protection. Any physical protection measures should not detract from character of the monument.

Principle: Regular On-going Maintenance

Repairs are to be carried using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials of matching quality. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency, and informed by regular inspection and expert advice.

Principle: Intervention

Where interventions are found to be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise a structure, these are to be designed to the highest standards of best conservation practice and should not detract from the interpretation of the architectural heritage. Where development is to take place immediately adjacent to the line of the town walls, the opportunity should be taken to incorporate

any archaeological remains (above and below ground) into the design.

Principle: Reversibility
All interventions should follow the principle of the reversibility, so that a structure can be returned to its former state if so desired. Developments proposed above or beside archaeological remains should be designed so that they can removed without causing disturbance. This is particularly important where standing sections of the walls have been embedded into existing buildings.

Principle: Expert Advice & Skills
Ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced tradesmen. All professionals and on-site workers participating in conservation work are to be made aware of the significance of Castledermot, the reasons behind the conservation work, and the archaeological sensitivity of the place.

Principle: Licensing & Approvals
Any archaeological investigation (excavation) and geophysical survey are to be licensed in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. All conservation works to upstanding archaeological monuments are to be planned in conjunction with a suitably qualified archaeologist with relevant experience. An appropriate methodology is to be created and submitted to the National Monuments Service for approval.

Principle: Continued Liaison
Liaise with the National Monuments Service in relation to proposed development works adjacent to the walls to share knowledge and ensure that best practice is adhered to in relation to any future archaeological investigations. Promote the excavation, presentation and educational interpretation of the walls as a policy in future Development Plans and will help to promote in conjunction with state heritage

Fig.66 View along repaired wall towards ancient wall in garden.

agencies the tourism, educational and the historical and archaeological study preservation and conservation of these features.

Principle: Settings & Key Views
Protect and enhance the settings of the monuments and key views through planning policies and strategic conservation plans. This is required for both standing and buried archaeology.

Principle: Monitoring & Inspections
Set in place procedures for on-going monitoring of the condition of the walls to ensure their long-term preservation.

Principle: Archaeological Supervision
Works involving ground disturbance close to the wall circuit are to be carried out only under archaeological supervision.

Principle: Periodic Reviews
Review this Plan at agreed intervals (to coincide with Development Plans) to benchmark progress in implementation, reassess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies.

Principle: Further Research & Investigation
Multi-disciplinary research into the archaeological heritage of the town should be supported with the assistance, where possible, of third-level institutions to further our understanding and interpretation of the buried sections of the walls.

7.0 INTERPRETATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Approach & Objectives
The approach and objectives in relation to the interpretation and presentation of the walls of Castledermot can be summarised as follows:

-to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the walls.
-identify key messages and themes to be communicated to users.
-ensuring that interpretations of the extent of the walls are well-researched.
-set out strategies for passive and active learning in order to facilitate a wide audience
-provide encouragement and resources for interpretation and engagement with the archaeological heritage with the walls as a key component.
-to provide for the use of the walls as a cultural and educational resource.
-set up a permanent exhibition of material relating to the walls and include a repository of sources on the walls to act as a resource to inform planning.
-ensure that the walls are accessible to all, but not to the detriment of the archaeological

Fig.67 Detail of restored stonework at Carlow Gate.

Fig.68 View of possible wall fragment as boundary wall.

heritage or the safety and health of the public.
-ensure that all developments within the Zone of Archaeological Potential carry out appropriate archaeological assessments and do not impact adversely on the archaeological heritage.
-promote the walls as a heritage asset and identify funding sources for its ongoing maintenance.
-provide for the long-term enhancement of the setting of the walls through planning policies and identification of key strategic aims.

Principle: Depth in Time
Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the walls of Castledermot, along with the historic structures within the village, requires that all the layers that contribute to its cultural significance be valued.

Principle: Authenticity
Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the built heritage is communicated to the general public. More recent interventions using conjectural restoration that confuse or obscure the interpretation of the walls should be removed over time. In a place such as Castledermot where there are many stone walls dating from later periods, the cultural value and antiquity of those remnants dating from the Medieval period should be emphasized.

Principle: Define Town Wall Circuit
Create a defined route around the town wall

circuit, combined with improved interpretative material to help visitors to gain a better understanding of the place.

Principle: Town Wall Encounters
Identify and conserve sites where the public can encounter surviving remnants of the town walls to help realise their heritage potential and to improve interpretation of the walled town for the benefit of locals and visitors.

Principle: Access for All
Where the integrity and character of the walls can be maintained, ensure that access is improved for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Principle: Stakeholder Consultation
Foster good communication and cooperation in the best interests of the heritage asset. Consult with stakeholders regarding proposed interventions adjacent to the wall and conservation of existing sections of the wall.

Principle: Public Safety
Prioritise public safety in relation to the condition and setting of the walls.

Principle: Settings After Dark
Install discrete lighting for the effective presentation of the walls at night time.

Principle: Interpretative Area
Provide visitor facilities and information panels so that the general public can meaningfully interpret the walls. These facilities should contain permanent displays, supplemented

Fig.70 Example of information signage with safety messages.

with temporary exhibits on relevant themes. The visitor facilities should be located as close as possible to the wall circuit.

Principle: Presentation of Artefacts & Architectural Fragments
Curate and display representative artefacts taken from archaeological investigations that are stored or presented elsewhere.

Principle: Presentation of Artefacts & Architectural Fragments
Consideration should be given to how the monuments within the church enclosure and the friary might best be protected and presented.
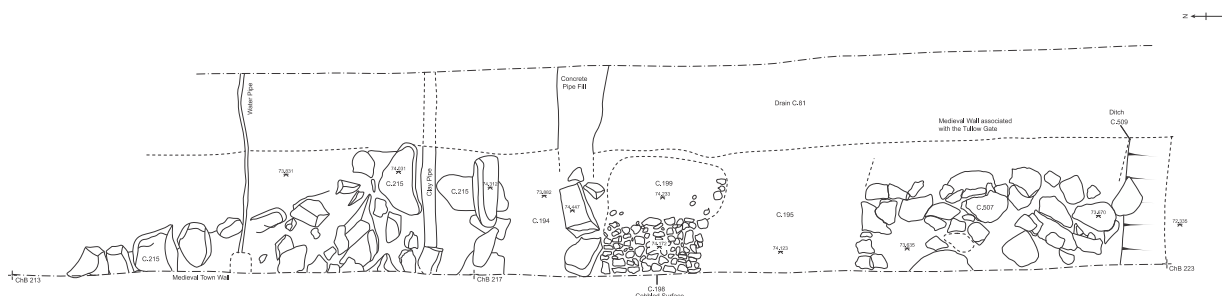

Fig.69 Section drawing of town wall close to Tullow Gate site (Eachtra).

38

Principle: Settings for Cultural Events
Promote the standing sections of wall as settings for cultural events that will enhance public awareness of these sites and form a backdrop or theme for performances or exhibitions.

Principle: Interpretative Infrastructure & Media
Provide high quality interpretative material, using street signage, aerial views and artists impressions as appropriate, to improve public understanding about the former alignment of the walls and the historic development of the town.

Principle: Formal & Informal Learning
Present the cultural heritage of the town walls to reach as broad an audience as possible. This should also consider those who are not motivated to interpret the walls, but are informed of their significance indirectly.

Principle: Public Lecture Series
Organise a series of annual lectures or seminars on the theme of the walled town and its medieval heritage.

Principle: Research
Ensure that on-site archaeological research is governed by an approved research strategy that seeks to answer specific questions, using non-invasive methodologies followed by targeted excavation when opportunities and resources allow.

Fig.71 View of activities on Walled Towns Day in Buttevant.

Fig.72 Example of illustrated, multi-lingual information panel.

Fig.73 View of paving marker showing Viking house in Dublin.

Principle: Research
Ensure that the dissemination of research findings, in a variety of media involving the community where possible, is made accessible to the public.

Principle: Knowledge Gaps
Seek to develop a research framework addressing gaps in the current knowledge on the town walls of Castledermot. Undertake archaeological assessments to determine the location of the eastern section of the circuit and the southern and eastern gates.

Principle: On-Going Interpretation
Ensure that as knowledge and understanding of the walls grows and changes through further research and archaeological investigations, interpretation media are updated accordingly.

Principle: Signage
Improve signage to and around the walled

Fig.74 Examples of walled town branding.

circuit both in quality and quantity. Signs should be located close to the monument but should not detract from its setting.

Principle: Ownership
Consider rights of private owners in relation to the access, conservation and presentation of the archaeological heritage.

Principle: Reinforcing the Alignment
Reinforce the form and location of the wall boundary by ensuring that developments are well set back. Where the wall circuit is located in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting.

Principle: Reinforcing the Alignment
Where the former wall circuit is located within the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting. This would be particularly effective at the gate locations to mark the outer limits of the medieval town to the public. A paving stone could be inscribed with a description of the feature and a location map identifying its location along the wall circuit.

Fig.75 View of wall marking in Berlin using metal rods.

Principle: New Developments
Where new development is due to take place, the walls and their curtilages are to be made accessible and visible to the public through consultation with the owner/developer.

Principle: Sustainability
Promote and support visitor facilities and marketable products that can raise revenue that can be allocated for the conservation and improved presentation of the walls.

Fig.76 Detail of paving marker for wall circuit in Kilkenny.

Principle: Branding
Develop the Castledermot: Walled Town brand for the promotion of the heritage asset and to protect potential revenues by licensing its use. The Rocque Map has great potential to become a recognizable symbol for the town.

Principle: Local Area Plan Map
Include the outline of the wall in future development plan maps and other local authority publications to reinforce understanding of the extent and location of the walls to the general public and to aid forward planning for service providers and building and planning professionals.

Principle: Walled Town Outline
Promote the outline of the walled town (with its distinctive diamond shape) as a symbol of the medieval heritage through on-line resources, postcards, posters and interpretative material.

Principle: Settings & Key Views
Protect and enhance the settings of the monuments and key views through planning policies and strategic conservation plans. This is required for both standing sections and buried archaeology.

Principle: Settings & Key Views
All new developments in the vicinity should be designed to enhance the setting and provide public access to the walls.

Principle: Outreach & Participation
Organise and support events that promote understanding of the archaeological heritage and that communicate its cultural significance. The stakeholders will seek to participate in and promote the aims of the Irish Walled Towns Network and the Walled Towns Friendship Circle.

Fig.79 View of playing pitch along wall circuit to school.

Principle: Outreach & Participation
Arrange specialist training programmes where their practitioners might engage with the archaeological heritage as the subject of study. Examples include the IWTN Walled Town Days, but consideration should be given on how to broaden the potential audience as much as possible.

Principle: School Outreach
Encourage local schools to take advantage of the walls as a teaching resource and organise programme for site visits and aces to archived material for school projects.

Fig.77 View of conservation open day at Clonmel.

Fig.78 View of excavation open day at Trim.

8.0   CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

Introduction

Archaeological investigations have uncovered historical documents and historic fabric that provided evidence that has improved our understanding of the walls. Aside from its built heritage and picturesque setting, the town has an energetic heritage group that have organised several very successful cultural events. This Plan is intended to provide a framework for future initiatives and makes recommendations on how change is to be managed in the best interests of the monument. It also outlines some ideas for how the walls could better be understood and presented, with descriptions of how these initiatives could be implemented at key sites. These projects could be carried out incrementally as funds and circumstances permit. Responses to the walls should seek to be inclusive and authentic, while also being imaginative and playful so that the living heritage of the town can be presented alongside the preserved remnants of the past.

Audiences

The conservation of a complex site that encompasses the entire town involves input from many different sources, with differing interests and objectives. These stakeholders are the intended audience of the Conservation
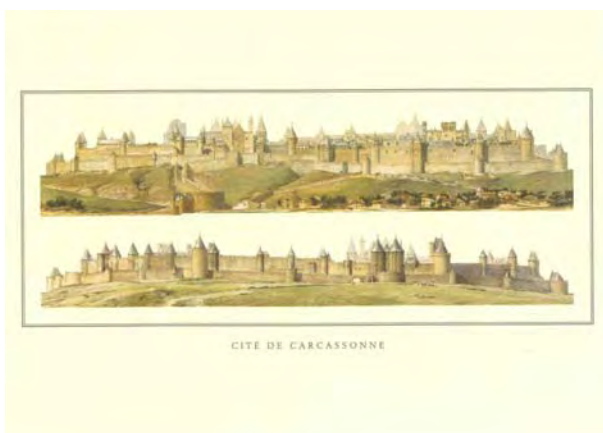

Fig.80 Postcard from Carcassonne, a walled town

Fig.81 People taking part in a re-enactment at Athenry

Plan. Their understanding and adoption of the conservation and interpretation policies is crucial to the successful maintenance and promotion of the walls of Castledermot, a valuable tourism asset. The responsibility for the walls is shared, each group depends on the other to act in their collective interest, and the best interest of the archaeological heritage.

State Bodies

The local authority and the state have a responsibility to ensure that the national heritage is conserved for future generations. Increasing knowledge of the wall among public bodies will help coordinate initiatives or works that impact on the walls and direct funding for their protection and enhancement.

Landowners & Leaseholders

As much of the wall circuit is in private ownership, it is acknowledged that the state needs to support the ongoing conservation of the walls while taking into account the property rights of individuals. Providing access to some of the most important sites require the permission and forbearance of the owner. Those that own or lease property that contains archaeological heritage should have access to information regarding their responsibilities to safeguard and not damage the historic fabric. They should then seek expert advice and liaise with the local authority in relation to the walls, especially when proposing building works.

Local Community

Improving understanding and appreciation of the walls among the local community will enhance local pride in the heritage, and make residents more actively involved in their protection and presentation to visitors.

Visitors

Both domestic and foreign visitors should be facilitated when presenting interpretation material. Domestic visitors may include locals who take the opportunity to improve their understanding their town's heritage. Signage and presentations should be multi-lingual.

Schools/ Universities

The best way to foster interest and appreciation of the walled town heritage among the local community is to include education programmes for schools. The schools in Castledermot are all located close to the wall circuit, and any archaeological investigations in the vicinity, or project to enhance the presentation of the walls should involve the schools. Supporting education programmes at third level can lead to further academic research on the walls, the wall fragments are a valuable teaching aid for students of archaeology, architecture, history, anthropology as well as tourism and heritage protection.

Cultural & Heritage Groups

Local groups with interest in heritage and culture should be encouraged to engage with

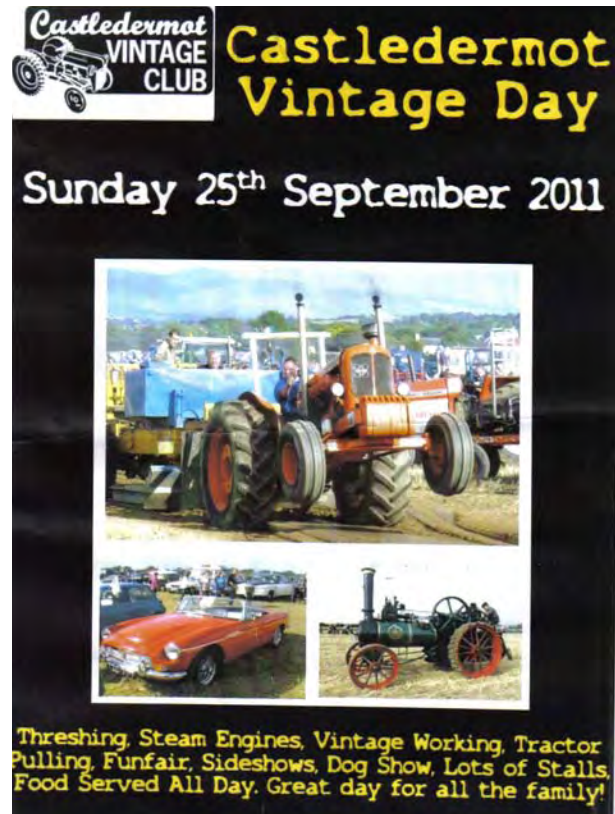Fig.82 View of Walled Towns Day at Youghal.

Fig.83 Vintage Day poster.

the walled town heritage and communicate with both locals and visitors.

Built Environment Professionals

Those involved with the conservation and development of the town should have access to information that will improve their understanding of the extent of the walls, the need for and means of their protection as well as ideas for their enhancement.

Key Messages/ Themes

In order to frame the interpretation of the walls, it is important to set out clearly the messages and themes that are to be communicated to the relevant audiences. As the built heritage is fragmentary, it is even more important that an understanding of its importance, its former extent, historic events, along with the everyday detail of its long history is communicated clearly to the general public.

Fig.84 Example of integrated wayfinding scheme.

Historic Events

The story of the walls should commence with the history of the early Christian settlement leading up to the founding of the Anglo-Norman walled town. The various sieges and attacks by Viking, Anglo-Norman, Gaelic, Tudor and Cromwellian forces should be outlined giving the social and political context, illustrating the times by reference to important historical figures that lived or visited the town.

Everyday Life

In order to understand the context and consequences of the important historic events, the story of the day-to-day lives of the burgesses, merchants and the rest of the inhabitants within the walls, and those outside. Stories about children at that time will be of particular interest to school groups. The consequences of the many military assaults should be relayed through the imagined contemporary experience of ordinary people.

Archaeological Finds & Conservation

Of utmost importance is to communicate our increasing knowledge of the walled town through archaeological investigation. This involves making material intended for an academic audience understandable and interesting to the general public. The messages should illustrate where this evidence challenged received wisdom or corroborated cherished traditions. The long-term conservation of the walls is also a vital message, informing the public on

the importance of protecting vulnerable and fragmentary archaeological heritage as well as the techniques used.

Interpretation & Presentation Recommendations

Interpretative Area

The new Community Centre (in the former national school) has the potential to be an excellent interpretative centre for the walled town. While the provision of a formal interpretative area is desirable, it does not replace the need to use more site-specific means of presenting the walls at the other key sites along the walled circuit.

Fig.85 Bronze cast impressions of Viking Dublin artefacts.

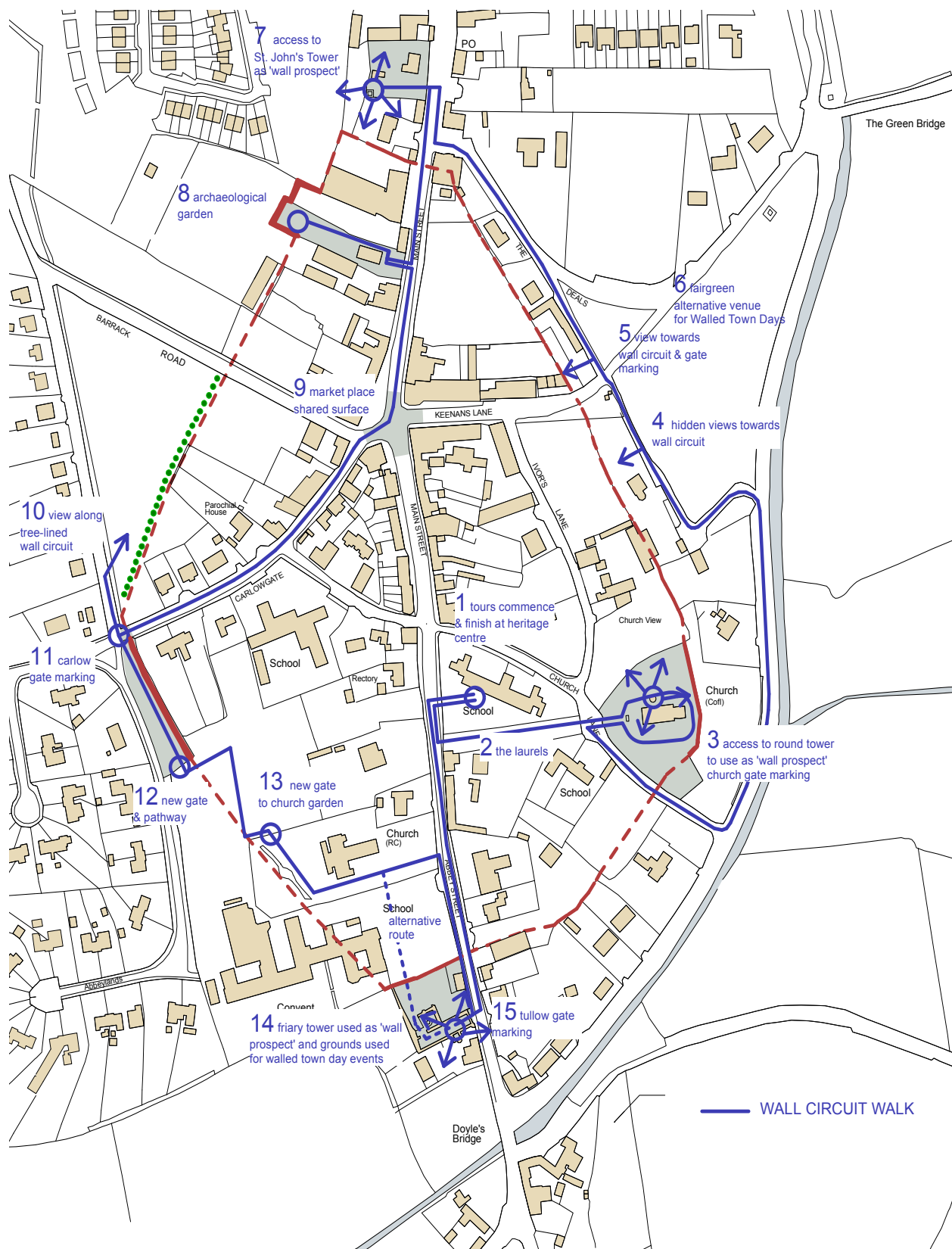Fig.86 Detail of wall marker in Dublin using quality materials.

44

Fig.87 Plan showing proposed wall circuit route and key sites.

The following labels appear on the plan:

7 access to St. John's Tower as 'wall prospect'

8 archaeological garden

6 fairgreen alternative venue for Walled Town Days

5 view towards wall circuit & gate marking

4 hidden views towards wall circuit

9 market place shared surface

10 view along tree-lined wall circuit

11 carlow gate marking

1 tours commence & finish at heritage centre

2 the laurels

3 access to round tower to use as 'wall prospect' church gate marking

13 new gate to church garden

12 new gate & pathway

School alternative route

14 friary tower used as 'wall prospect' and grounds used for walled town day events

15 tullow gate marking

WALL CIRCUIT WALK

Map labels: PO, The Green Bridge, BARRACK ROAD, KEENANS LANE, THE DEALS, MAIN STREET, IVORS LANE, Parochial House, CARLOWGATE, School, Rectory, Church View, Church (CofI), CHURCH, School, Church (RC), ABBEY STREET, Abbeystands, Convent, Doyle's Bridge

45

Developments along Walled Circuit

While planning policies ensure the protection of the national monument, the local authority should also support initiatives that enhance the setting of the walls through imaginative design and access improvements. The opportunities to improve key sites will require early consultation and a creative approach should be encouraged that does not detract from, or cause harm to the historic fabric. Views of the walls should be protected, and the alignment of the walls be reinforced in the form of the buildings proposed, access routes around sites, landscaping and boundary/ plot lines.

Fig.90 Examplle of map of wall route for information & souvenir.

Wall Marking on Street Surfaces

Where the wall circuit is located in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting to an agreed design to ensure consistency. This would be particularly effective at the Dublin and Tullow gates to mark the outer limits of the medieval town along the main road. Archaeological investigations could help identify the location of an eastern gate, corresponding to the Carlow Gate on the western side of the town. A paving stone should be inscribed with a description of the feature and a location map identifying its location along the wall circuit. An integrated scheme for the paving markers should be developed to ensure consistency, using high quality, robust materials such as granite, the material used on the original sections of the wall. Cast impressions of artefacts uncovered at these sites could be set into the paved

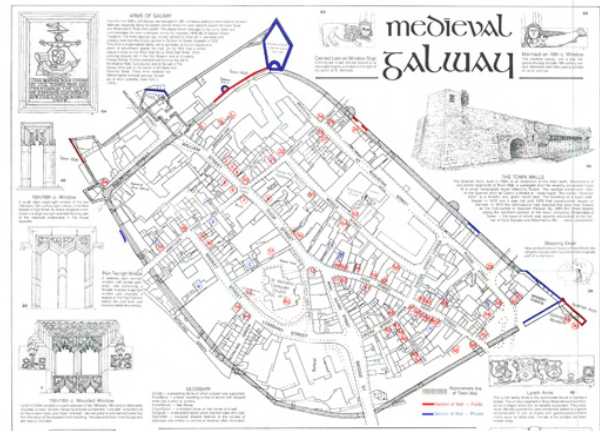Fig.89 Example of aerial view being used as guide.

Interpretative Panels

The Castledermot Local History Group have produced information panels regarding the heritage of the town that are to be erected in the new community centre. Interpretative panels should also be located at key sites, providing information regarding the main themes. The panels should not detract from the wall setting and ideally should be capable of being updated. Using a number of different approaches ensures participation by the widest audience available, including those who were not initially motivated to seek out the walls, but make use of the panels to engage with the heritage in an informal way. The panels do not need to be conventional signage, but could be a series of unique installations that provide 'windows' on aspects of the walls through text, film, images or bringing attention to historic fabric or artefacts in imaginative and accessible ways.

On-line Resources

The physical markers should also link into online resources using QR codes so that the wealth of information regarding the town can be appreciated in its entirety. The potential of providing resources online through the use of a castledermot.ie website, or links to relevant material held elsewhere, should be explored. Such a website could cater for a wide range of audiences in both formal and informal ways- experts seeking references and research material, tourists planning their itineraries,

students researching a school project, building professionals undertaking development proposals. If the aerial view of the town was uploaded, the user could to locate themselves as they move around the circuit.

Audio Guides & Apps

Audio-guides allow visitors to encounter the town's heritage at their own pace, and helps those with visual impairments have a meaningful engagement with the walls. It is important that guides are available in a number of different languages. The guides could also include site-specific reconstructions of medieval life or historic events in a vivid and interesting way. Smartphone apps could be used to provide such material, and could also include tasks, games or activities that reinforce the learning process. Guides could be hired or for sale, or downloaded from the website.

Project: Conservation Repairs

The conservation and repair of the remaining standing sections of the walls should be the first priority in the implementation of the plan. At present, there are four main sites that can be identified as standing sections of town wall, while several other areas can be tentatively identified as such, until further investigation is

Fig.92 Example of fold-out map & audio guide, easily porrtable.

undertaken. All of these sections of historic wall are worthy of being conserved, and some will require urgent intervention if they are to be preserved. Conservation works to repair historic town walls attract grant funding from the IWTN, and numerous similar projects have been carried out to walled towns around the country at Athenry, Kilkenny, Fethard and Youghal for example.

The sections of wall that can be most confidently associated with the former town defences are the Carlow Gate and stream bed, the northern boundary of the abbey grounds, the eastern boundary of St. James' graveyard and the western boundary of the Library garden.

Carlow Gate & Stream Bed

The Carlow Gate should be cleared of obtrusive ivy along the wall head and any embedded roots removed and the masonry consolidated. Should historic photographs of the monument be obtained, these would be useful for determining the extent of the alterations carried out during the repairs twenty years ago. This might inform ways of reducing its impact on the footpath by removing masonry that is not original fabric. The masonry wall that is currently retaining the bank of the stream is under serious threat from the line of trees growing directly on top. The trees are a mixture of deciduous with some conifers planted in between to create a screen There are issues of privacy to be considered along this line, and any repair works will require

Fig.91 Image of QR code uaed on bronze plaque.

consultation with the adjacent landowner. The trees and vegetation should be cut down, the loose earth removed, and the remaining loose masonry from the bank and stream bed retrieved. This work woud need to be carried out under archaeological supervision. This stone would then be used to consolidate the remaining sections of the wall along its length. Ideally, a new hedgerow should be planted behind the line of the bank, so that a screen can be re-established.

Abbey Grounds Boundary
The section of wall within the grounds of the Abbey requires immediate intervention with the removal of the extensive cover of ivy. Due to the prevalence of embedded roots, the wall head will likely require consolidation, but the full extent of the works necessary will not be clear until the ivy is removed. Overall, the wall is not in danger of collapse. The loose stones at the base of the wall should also be retrieved and used in consolidating vulnerable areas.

Graveyard Boundary
Only the section of wall to the north eastern corner of the site is considered to be part of the town defenses, a large protrusion is thought to be a later extension. The wall above ground is stable, but much reduced in height and depth. One section has been flaunched with hard cement mortar, and another section has been left exposed and is being colonised by weeds, ivy and briars. While it is not good conservation practice to use hard cement in the repair of historic masonry, to remove it at present would result in unacceptable loss of fabric in a low section of wall.

Library Garden Boundary
The wall fragments at the western end of the garden to the rear of the Library are considered to be part of the former town wall circuit. They are in a very vulnerable state, and require the removal of the embedded ivy roots and small trees at their base. Much of the wall will need to be consolidated in order to ensure its stability, it will continue to collapse unless these repairs are carried out as a priority. The ivy will first need to be sprayed with weed killer in advance of the repair works in order to give some time for the vegetation to die back. Following the clearance of the loose branches and tendrils, embedded roots are treated with root killer. The loose stone is carefully retrieved from the top of the walls, and any stone lost in the undergrowth or buried at the base of the wall should be retrieved under archaeological supervision. Then the collapsed sections of the wall are re-built using lime and sand mortar and the tops of the walls capped with lime and sand flaunching to weather the walls. Part of the

Fig.93 Views of a defensive tower in Athenry before, during and after conservation repairs.
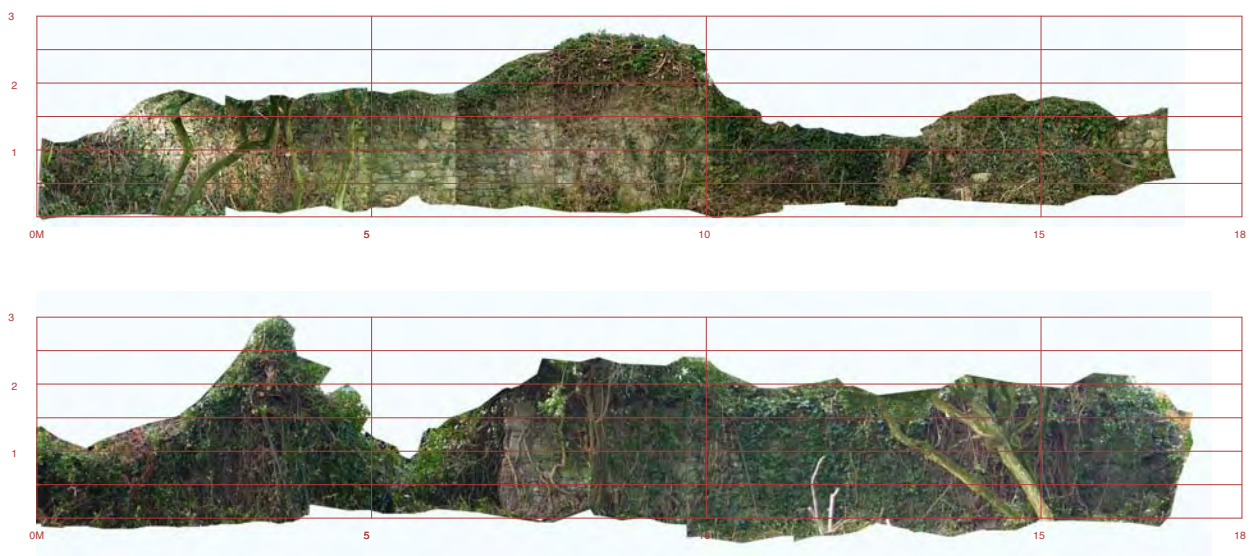
Fig.94 Rectified photogrpahic survey of south and west walls in Library garden.

nineteenth century section of the wall lining the northern boundary of the garden has recently been rebuilt. It is important that the remaining ancient walls are preserved as ruins, and no attempt is made to rebuild them so that they appear to be new or complete.

Project: Walled Circuit Route

The proposed wall circuit route intersects the most visible and intact fragments of the defensive walls, while also encountering other aspects of the built heritage. The route provides a sense of the scale of the medieval town, as well as the range of different settings. The route should be capable to be used by both guided tours, and where appropriate, visitors wishing to encounter the walls in a less formal way. Specialised tours should be considered, along with tours that encourage audience participation. When circumstances permit, excavation open days along the route should be hosted during Walled Town festivals or outreach programmes. In order to ensure that the walk is engaging, the route should be continuous as far as practicable. For that reason, it is proposed to install two new gates into the boundary walls of Coláiste Lorcáin and the Church of the Assumption on the section of the wall south of the Carlow Gate. This would allow guided walks to proceed more directly

along the route, picking up the interesting stone fragments found in the church garden, and utilising the existing gates linking the front of the church and the school. This would only be undertaken with the permission of the landowners and would be for guided tours only. This shortcut would make the wall circuit more easy to interpret and would shorten the route by over 200 metres.

Project: Settings for Cultural Events

Castledermot's community groups can play an important role in the interpretation of the archaeological heritage. The expansive and pleasant setting of the fair green could be used for Walled Town Days where the community would gather for medieval-themed events. On these days, key points along the walled town circuit could be occupied by theatrical groups giving 'live' re-enactments or short performances on aspects of the medieval heritage that people encounter while walking the route. Another option would be to use the open area enclosed by the north transept of the abbey and a section of the town wall just off Abbey Street. The use of the ruins as a backdrop would emphasize the medieval theme of the festival, and the preparations of the site would help maintain the grounds. The section of the town wall could be presented to the public, especially following its

49

repair. This would be subject to the approval of the OPW and adjacent landowners, with a plan put in place to ensure that the archaeological heritage, and public health and safety, is not put at risk.

Project: School Interpretative Centre

The new community centre will re-use the school, and will be a suitable place to present material on the town's heritage. It is proposed that information panels would be erected within the centre where they could be viewed by both locals and visitors alike. The centre could be used as the start and finishing point of tours, with ample parking and WC facilities.

Project: Library Archaeological Garden

The garden behind the Library relates to a former burgage plot, and has particular archaeological potential. Following archaeological testing, consider recreating an example of a medieval garden based on thorough research. This could be of a similar methodology as that used at Rothe House, Kilkenny. Map evidence indicates that the site has been clear since at least the middle of the eighteenth century. Should archaeological remains of a previous structure be identified, consideration could be given to resolving part of the site and presenting it to the public. Architectural fragments could also be displayed as part of the garden design.

Project: Tree Planting alongside the Circuit

The location of the walled circuit under the field to the north of the Carlow Gate is well understood

Fig.95 Sketch of proposal to line wall circuit with trees.

Fig.97 Sketch proposals for prospect or camera on round tower.

following several archaeological investigations associated with planning applications in the last fifteen years. The alignment of the town wall could be presented to the public by planting native trees with shallow root systems (such as birch) or a hedgerow parallel to (not on top of) the wall circuit, taking care not to disturb any archaeological remains including any defensive ditch external to the walls. This could be preceded by additional archaeological investigation using non-invasive techniques as appropriate. An alternative would be to use timber or steel poles, which could be fitted with flags on festival days, however, this would not be as long-lasting and would need to be carefully designed.

Project: High Level Prospect

The three ancient towers in the town have the potential to enhance the experience of visitors to Castledermot. Used as prospect points, they offer the potential for the town to be viewed and interpreted from above using a close circuit television, or a camera obscura, to create an interesting way of viewing the town and its surrounds. The staircase in the friary tower could be sensitively adapted to allow such access as part of guided tours, St. John's tower could be made more accessible by the provision of a new lightweight steel staircase. Improved access will make routine inspection and maintenance of the structures easier.

Fig.98 Sketch proposals for archaeological garden.

Fig.99 Sketch showing abbey being used as a Walled Towns Day setting.

Fig.101 Present view of market square junction.

Project: Market Square

The former market square was the commercial focus of the medieval town. In order to emphasize its importance and as an opportunity to create a formal civic space in the town centre, the surface of the former market square should be paved in the same way as the wall markings. This surface would be shared by both vehicles and pedestrians and would be a fine public realm improvement now that most of the traffic has been diverted to the motorway. Examples of similar civic design projects would include O'Connell Street in Dublin. Archaeological investigations as part of the works may uncover interesting evidence of the marketplace, and perhaps also the buildings that lined it. These findings could then inform the basis of the paving patterns, and be presented to the public through the use of carved or inlaid paviours.

Project: Geophysical Survey

There is much left to be understood about the development of the town, including the location of the castle, the extent and design of the religious centres, precise alignment and design of the walls, burgage plot locations with their houses, gardens and workshops. Surveying the various open plots around the town using geophysical technologies could identify sites of archaeological potential, at a reasonable cost. This would enhance our understanding of the town, making it possible to portray its story in a more vivid and authentic way, and equip landowners and the planning authority with valuable information regarding future developments in advance. Key sites include the Library garden, the site of St. John's Hospital, the area around the friary and the many open plots within and immediately outside the walled town circuit.
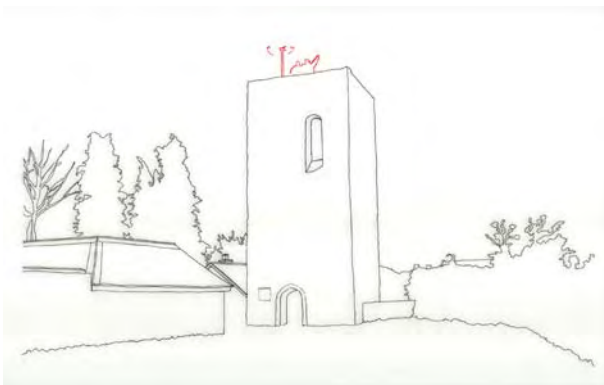

Fig.100 Sketch proposals for prospect from St. John's tower.

APPENDICES

Statutory Protection

Bibliography

Cartographic Sources

Historic Timeline

Endnotes

STATUTORY PROTECTION

Introduction
The Heritage Council established the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in April, 2005 to unite and coordinate the strategic efforts of Local Authorities involved in the management and conservation of historic walled towns in Ireland. It is formally linked to the European Walled Towns for Friendship and Professional Co-Operation (formerly the Walled Town Friendship Circle) which is the international association for the sustainable development of walled towns, walled cities and fortified historic towns

The Piran Declaration, which outlines the reasons for maintaining historic walled towns, was outlined at an Annual General Meeting of the Walled Town Friendship Circle in Piran, Slovenia in 1998.

Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable Timestones of History.

International Charters and Conventions
The plan has been informed by policies and guidance included in a number of international charters and conventions on the protection of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage including:

•United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *International Charter for the Conservation of Monuments and Site*s, 1964 (commonly known as the Venice Charter),
•United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972,
•Council of Europe *Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe*, 1985 (commonly known as the Granada Convention),
•International Council on Monuments and Sites

(ICOMOS) *Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas*, 1987 (commonly known as the Washington Charter),
•International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, 1988 (commonly known as the Burra Charter),
•International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage* 1989,
•Council of Europe *European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* 1992 (commonly known as the Valetta Treaty).
•International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites*, 2008 (commonly known as the Ename Charter).

National Monuments Legislation

The known and expected circuits of the defences (both upstanding and buried, whether of stone or embankment construction) and associated features of all town defences are to be considered a single national monument and treated as a unit for policy and management purposes. There should be a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and preservation of their character, setting and amenity.
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2008.

In 1999 the State published two significant documents titled *Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* and *Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavations*. These documents outline the Government's policy in relation to the protection of the archaeological heritage, the conduct of archaeological excavations and reflect the obligations on the State under the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention 1992).

The national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of town defences is set

54

out in a document entitled *National Policy on Town Defences* published in 2008 by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

Monuments, such as town defences, included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) are referred to as recorded monuments and are protected under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. A monument is defined in Section 2 of the Act as:

any artificial or partly artificial building, structure, or erection whether above or below the surface of the ground and whether affixed or not affixed to the ground and any cave, stone, or other natural product whether forming part of or attached to or not attached to the ground which has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the ground) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position and any prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, but does not include any building which is for the time being habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes

The town defences of Castledermot are currently designated as:

• RMP no. KD040-002001- (Town defences, Abbeyland, Castledermot, Garterfarm, Saint Johns, Skenagun, Woodlands East, NGR 278280, 184970).

In addition all town defences are considered national monuments, as defined in Section 2 of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, by reason of their historical, architectural and archaeological interest. A national monument is defined in the Act as:

the expression "national monument" means a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest attaching thereto and also includes (but not so as to limit, extend or otherwise influence the construction of the foregoing general definition) every monument in Saorstát Eireann to which the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882, applied immediately before the passing of this Act, and the said expression shall be construed as including, in addition to the monument itself, the site of the monument and the means of access thereto and also such portion of land adjoining such site as may be required to fence, cover in, or otherwise preserve from injury the monument or to preserve the amenities thereof

Ministerial Consent

Where national monuments, including town defences, are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a local authority or have been the subject of a preservation order, Ministerial Consent is required in order:

(a) to demolish or remove it wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with it, or
(b) to excavate, dig, plough or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in proximity to it, or
(c) to renovate or restore it, or
(d) to sell it or any part of it for exportation or to export it or any part of it.

Works requiring notification or Ministerial Consent includes preparatory work, enabling works, carrying out of groundworks in proximity to remains of town defences, carrying out of masonry repairs, widening existing openings and rebuilding fallen stretches.

In considering applications for Ministerial Consent for works affecting town defences, it shall be the policy of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Department of the Environment and Local Government 2008, 10-11):

•To seek the protection and preservation insitu of these national monuments including the

town walls, embankments and ditches, gates, bastions or ancillary fortifications or portions thereof;

•To seek the preservation of important views and prospects inside and outside the walls so as to preserve the setting of the monuments and to increase the appreciation of the circuit and character of the walled town. The Department may require a satisfactory buffer area to be established between any new development and the town defences in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the amenity associated with the presence of town defences within the historic urban pattern;

•To require any proposals for works to town defences to be preceded by a detailed measured survey of the monuments so as to have an appropriately detailed record;

•To provide pre-planning advice to developers where town defences are close to or included in their proposal site;

•To require the involvement of qualified and experienced conservation professionals in the detailed design and overseeing of works to town defences;

•Not to favour new roads crossing the wall or the line of the wall or the formation of any new openings in the wall;

•To favour the minimal intervention necessary to the authentic fabric of the monument and avoidance of unnecessary reconstruction;

•To require good quality, context-sensitive design for development proposals affecting the upstanding town defences that would not detract from the character of the town defences or their setting by reason of the location, scale, bulk or detailing;

•To encourage the enhancement of the setting of town defences including the pedestrianisation of town gates where this can be achieved without requiring new roads to be opened through the circuit of the walls.

•To encourage also the improvement of signage and public utilities structures, etc. where these affect the visual amenity of the defences;

•To require as a condition of Ministerial Consent that appropriate programmes of regular maintenance and repair works to the town defences be put in place;

•To promote the retention of the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional burgage plot widths within historic walled towns where these derive from medieval or earlier origins and to discourage the infilling or amalgamation of such plots and removal of historic boundary walls save in exceptional circumstances.

Planning and Development Act 2000

Where the town defences, or elements of the defences, are listed as Protected Structures or located within Architectural Conservation Areas they are also protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010. The Acts require that Local Authority Development Plans include objectives for 'the conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage'. In addition, development plans are to include a Record of Protected Structures which comprises a list of structures or parts of structures which are of 'special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest' within the Authorities boundaries.

The upstanding sections of the town defences are not included in the Record of Protected Structures and the town is not designated as an Architectural Conservation Area in the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

Local Plans and Policy

Kildare County Council is the relevant planning control authority within the town. The town defences are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential designated for the town. It is a policy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017:

• To have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Urban Archaeological Survey when assessing planning applications for development. No development shall be permitted in the vicinity of a recorded feature where it detracts from the setting of the

feature or which is injurious to its cultural or educational value (Policy AH 1).

• To seek to protect and preserve archaeological sites which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) (Policy AH 2).

• To ensure that development in the vicinity of a site of archaeological interest is not detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing and to ensure that such proposed developments are subject to an archaeological assessment. Such an assessment will seek to ensure that the development can be designed in such a way as to avoid or minimise any potential effects on the archaeological heritage (Policy AH 3).

• To ensure that disturbance, removal and alteration of the line of town defences are suitably safeguarded within the historic towns and settlements of County Kildare (Policy AH 5).

• To retain where possible the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins (Policy AH 6).

• To encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State (Policy AH 6).

• To encourage the provision of signage to publicly accessible recorded monuments (Policy AH 6).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bradley, J., Halpin, A. and King, H. 1984 *Urban Archaeological Survey. Part VII(i). County Kildare.* Unpublished report, Office of Public Works.

Byrne, M. 2000. *Archaeological Assessment Skenagun, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report, Byrne, Mullins and Associates, Archaeological Consultants.

Byrne, M. 2000. *Proposed sewerage and water improvement schemes, Castledermot, Co. Kildare:archaeological assessment.* Unpublished report, Byrne, Mullins and Associates

Byrne, M. 2007. *Archaeological Assesment of Residential Development at Carlowgate, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report, Byrne, Mullins and Associates

Byrne, M. 2008. *Archaeological Assesment of Residential Development at Carlowgate, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report, Byrne, Mullins and Associates

Comerford, M. 1884. *Collections relating to the diocese of Kildre and Leighlin.*

Comerford, M. 1896 *Castledermot: its history and antiquities.* Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society 1 (6).

Fennessy, I. 1999. *Castledermot and the Franciscans* in Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol. 18, 542-561.

Gwynn and Hadcock, 1970, *Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland*, London, Longman, p. 211.

Harbison 1975, *Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland*, p. 121.

Harbison, P. 1991/92 *Daniel Grose's 1798 drawing of Castledermot Church.* Journal of the KildareArchaeological Society 18 (1), 96-100.

Harte, A. and Richardson, A. 2010. *Archaeological Excavation Report (04E0750) Castledermot town, Co. Kildare. Medieval town walls and cemetery*, Eachtra Journal.

Herity, M. 2002. *Ordnance Survey Letters of Co. Kildare.*

Horner, A. 1997. *Thomas Emerson's Kildare Estate Survey 1674-1697.* In Journal of the County KildareArchaeological Society 1996-1997. Vol. XVIII (Part III). 399-429.

Kildare County Council, 2011. *Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017.*

Killanin, Lord and Duignan, M. 1967, *Shell Guide to Ireland.* Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, p. 154.

Lang J. T. 1971 *The Castledermot Hogback.* In Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. Vol. 101, 154-158.

Lynch, R. 2000. *Archaeological Asssessment of Castledermot Sewerage Scheme, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report, IAC.

McLoughlin, C. 2004. *Archaeological Testing, Carlowgate, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report, Stafford McLoughlin Associates.

Mullins, C. 1998. *An archaeological evaluation of a site at Athy Road, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report.

Mullins, C. 1998. *Programme of testing at a site at Carlowgate, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report.

Murphy, D. (ed.) 1896 *The Annals of Clonmacnoise, Dublin.* O'Donovan, J. (ed.) 1854 (reprint) The Annals of Ireland. Volumes I, II and III, Dublin and NewYork.

O'Sullivan, E. 2006. *Archaeological Excavation at Abbey Street, Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* Unpublished report.

P.F.P. 1973. *Review of Dinnseanchas Iml. V, Uimh. 2*, in the Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and History Society, Vol. 18, No. 1 (1973), p. 90

Petty, W. 1939 *The census of Ireland 1659*, Dublin.

Roe, H. M. 1967 *A Carved Stone at Castledermot, Co. Kildare.* In Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland. Vol. 97, 179-180.

Sweetman, H. S. 1895 (reprint 1974) *Calendar of documents relating to Ireland 1171– 1251.* Volumes I– VI, London.

Thomas, A. 1992. *The Walled Towns of Ireland. Volume 2*. Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 49-51.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

(after Harte and Richardson, 2010; Bradley, 1984 and Thomas, 1999)

Century	Castledermot	Ireland	Europe
9th	First reference in the annals the early monastic site of Díseart Diarmada or 'Diarmait's Hermitage' (c. 812)		
	Diarmait's death recorded in the Annals (823)	Arrival of the Vikings in Ireland	
	Viking raids on Castledermot recorded in annals (c. 841 and 867)		
10th	Cormac mac Cuilleannain, king-bishop of Cashel was buried at Díseart Diarmada (902)		
	Hogback tomb erected in graveyard (10th century)	Battle of Tara (980)	
11th	Period of conflict from 1037 to 1043 during which Díseart Diarmada was plundered by the Uí Ceinnseallaigh and prisoners taken (c. 1040) and the chief of the Uí Ceinnseallaigh and his wife were killed at Díseart Diarmada by the Uí Baillain in 1043	Battle of Clontarf (1014)	
12th	Díseart Diarmada and its oratory were destroyed by fire in 1106		
	Territory granted, as part of Kilkea, to Walter de Ridlesford by Richard de Clare c. 1171	Arrival of Anglo-Normans in Ireland (1169), Henry II arrives in Waterford and declares himself Lord of Ireland (1171)	
	Four Anglo-Norman families settled in Castledermot (c. 1172).		

	Giraldus Cambrensis records that a castle was built for Walter de Ridlesford c. 1181 but it has been suggested that this was the motte and nearby Kilkea rather than Castledermot.		
	Prince John granted right to hold weekly market at Listildermot before 1199, which may indicate that a borough had been founded.		
13th	Walter de Ridlesford succeeded by his son Walter c. 1200.		
	Walter confirms the returns of a burgage in his vill of Trisseldermot (1225 - 1233)		
	Walter de Ridlesford obtained royal grant to hold annual fair at Cas-tledermot in 1226. After his death royal grants given his heiresses to hold an annual fair in 1248.		
	The first recorded coun-cil held at Castledermot in 1264.		
	Burgesses of Castled-ermot apply to the King for a murage grant. Granted tolls from goods passing through the town for a period of seven years 'in aid of enclosing their vill and for the greater security of those parts' (1295).	The first representative Irish Parliament meets in Dublin (1297)	
14th	The town defences were probably completed by 1302.		Great European Famine (1315-22), Black Death ravages Europe(1347-8)
	Franciscan Friary and possibly the town de-stroyed by Edward de Bruce in 1316	Edward de Bruce arrives in Ireland	

	Council and parliamentary sessions held at Castledermot thorugh the later 14th century.		
	Ransom paid to Art MacMurrough to leave the town of Castledermot at peace.		
15th	Castledermot along with Carlow and Wexford burned to the ground in 1405 by Art MacMurrough.		
	Town subsequently sacked by Geralt MacMurrough in 1427.		
	Archbishop Swyane refers to Castledermot as a walled town		
	Town received royal subsidy in 1428 to aid its repair		
	Gerald, Earl of Kildare, got grant of labour for the reconstruction of the castle in 1485, which is the derivation of the modern name of the settlement.		
	Parliamentary session held at Castledermot indicating a period of renewed stability (1499).		
16th	Town sacked by Crown forces during Silken Thomas Rebellion (1530s)	Thomas Fitzgerald, 10th Earl of Kildare, renounces his alliegence to the English Crown (1534)	Henry VIII became King of England (1509)
	Reference to 'the gates of the Earl's (Earl of Kildare) own manor of Castledermot' (1532) and 'castle and walled town of Tristledermot' held by Earl of Kildare (1534).		Protestant Reformation (1517)
	Hospital, friary and church suppressed (1541)	Dissolution of the Monasteries (1540s)	

	Castledermot, along with Kildare, Naas and Athy, sufficiently important to be named as one of the four main towns of Kildare in 1591	Defeat of the Spanish Armada (1588)	
17th		Flight of the Earls (1607), Plantation of Ulster (1609), Gaelic Catholic Rebellion of 1641	Pilgrim Fathers sail for America on the Mayflower (1620), Hostilities between England and Spain (1625-28)
	Irish garrison had 'burnt down a great part of the town, pulled down the walls, and betaken themselves to a strong tower' before the coming of the Cromwellians in 1650.	Oliver Cromwell storms Drogheda (1649)	
18th	Castledermot 'had formerly four gates, the entrance southwards bears the name of Carlow Gate, and the other to the N, Dublin Gate, though there are not the least remains of either left (1780), 'was a walled town with 4 gates, parts of walls still remain' (1786)	Irish Parliament gains legislative independence from Britain (1782),	
Irish Rebellion (1798)			

ENDNOTES

[1] Kane pers. com.
[2] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 2
[3] Fitzgerald 1892, p 66
[4] Fennessy 1999, p 543
[5] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 3
[6] Bradley 1984, p 98
[7] Bradley 1984, pp 110-111
[8] Bradley 1984, pp 111-118
[9] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 4
[10] Comerford 1896, p 367
[11] Bradley 1984, p 99
[12] Bradley 1984, p 97
[13] Fennessy 1999, p 534
[14] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 4
[15] Fennessy 1999, p 556
[16] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 46
[17] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 4
[18] Sweetman 1895, vol. II, p 126
[19] Mills 1905, p 100
[20] Bradley 1984, p 99
[21] Sweetman 1895, vol. VI, pp 106-107
[22] Harte and Richardson 2010, pp 5-6
[23] Bradley 1984, p 106
[24] Thomas 1992, p 51
[25] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 6
[26] Bradley 1984, p 101
[27] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 7
[28] Bradley 1984, p 108

[29] Fennessy 1999, pp 550-551
[30] Bradley 1984, p 125
[31] Bradley 1984, p 102
[32] Lewis 1837, p 295
[33] Parliamentary Gazetteer 1846, pp 359-60
[34] Horner 1997, 400-1
[35] Horner 1997, 402
[36] Horner 1997, 423-426
[37] Thomas 1992, 50
[38] McLoughlin 2004, p 4
[39] O'Sullivan 2006, p 1
[40] O'Sullivan 2006, p 4
[41] Thomas 1992, p 50 after Luckombe
[42] O'Sullivan 2006, p 9
[43] Mullins 1998, p 2
[44] Mullins 1998, p 7
[45] Mullins 1998, p 8
[46] Mullins 1998, p 9
[47] Lynch 2000, p 1
[48] Lynch 2000, p 16
[49] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 9
[50] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 10
[51] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 14
[52] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 46
[53] Harte and Richardson 2010 pp 16-17
[54] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 34
[55] Harte and Richardson 2010, p 46

Howley Hayes Architects are recognised for their work in both contemporary design and for the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, structures and places. The practice has been responsible for the conservation and reuse of numerous buildings of national and international cultural significance, several of which have received RIAI, Opus or Europa Nostra Awards. Under the Conservation Accreditation System, implemented by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Howley Hayes Architects is accredited as a Conservation Practice Grade 1 and its director James Howley is a Conservation Architect Grade 1. Over the years the practice has completed many projects for the restoration and conservation of numerous historic buildings, gardens and landscapes including – Larch Hill, Dromoland and Russborough, and James Howley is the author of – The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland, published by Yale University Press. Howley Hayes Architects have, to date, been responsible for over one hundred conservation reports and strategic master plans for clients such as the Heritage Council, the World Monument Fund, the Office of Public Works together with numerous local authorities and private clients.