

Conservation Report & Impact Statement, Open Library Project at Drumahaire, Dromahair, Co.Leitrim



Project	Open Library Dromahair	
Location	Drumahaire, Dromahair, Co Leitrim	
Client	Leitrim Co Co	
Issue	Client	1
Date	12/09/2020	NS
Scope	Conservation Report and Impact Assessment	

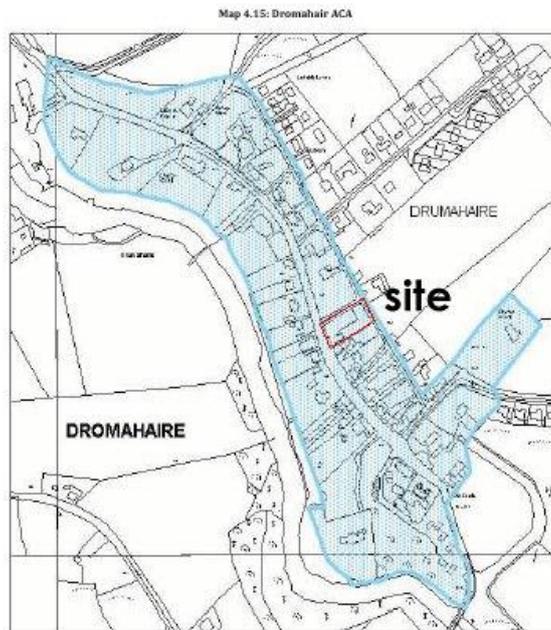
PROJECT INFORMATION

Purpose of Report	This Conservation Report and Impact Statement has been prepared as part of planning application for a Proposed Open Public Library Development to west of site with regard to proposed future development of balance of site as social housing
Owner	Leitrim County Council
Address of Structure	Drumahaire Td, Dromahair, Co Leitrim. F92YF6E
Description	Proposed Open Public Library Development at Dromahair, Co.Leitrim. The Proposed Development will comprise of (a) Demolition of existing two storey Hotel including existing Function Room & storage sheds (b) construct new two storey Open Library circa 500 sq. m consisting of Reference/Study space, Computer area, Workshop/Activity space, Listening/Viewing facilities, Exhibition space, Multipurpose meeting rooms, Office space, Staff room, Comms. room, Public toilets, Storage areas and all associated site development works including construction of footpaths, roads, car & bicycle parking areas, street lighting, ducting for utilities, hard & soft landscaped areas, formation of new connections to existing foul/surface water drainage and existing utilities. The proposed development is located within the Dromahair Architectural Conservation Area.
Coordinates	580331. 831280
Site Area	0.17Ha
Zoning	Mixed Use as per LCDP 2015-2021
Current Use	Former Breffni Centre Hotel Site/Semi Derelict
ACA	Within Dromahair ACA (Map 4.15 LCDP 2015-21)
Planning Authority	Leitrim County Council
Site Location	LCDP 2022-28 is at Pre Draft Stage Inside Development Boundary (Map 3 Zoning Drumahair) LCCDP 2015-21) Dromahair Development Framework (under development) Dromahair UFP 2006? Dromahair is a Tier 2B Centre
Access Road	Located on the eastern side of Main Street (R288) in the centre of Dromahair Village. Back Line to rear (NE) Laneway to NW
Protected Status	Within the ACA area only
Author	Nicholas Sweeney RIAI Conservation Grade 3, Post Graduate Diploma in Applied Building Repair & Conservation
Date of Inspection	12 th September 2020

INTRODUCTION

Sweeney Architects have been retained by **Leitrim County Council** to prepare a Conservation Report and Impact Statement in relation to proposed Open Library & Residential Project, Drumahaire, Dromahair, Co Leitrim. The balance of site (to rear, east) is proposed as future housing project and is indicatively laid out in the planning submission. Sweeney Architects are a Grade III Conservation Practice registered with the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI). The property was inspected on 12th September 20120.

The site is located to centrally along main street Drumahair to east side within the Dromahair Architectural Conservation Area. The design team and client have sought to follow the guidelines for best conservation practice as inscribed in the Guidelines issued by the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht and ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites) Charters of Burra and Venice.



Map 1: Dromahair ACA (Map 4.15 LCDP 2015-21)

HISTORY

Dromahair Village lies in the hilly north west of Leitrim some is 10 km from Manorhamilton and 17 km from Sligo town. The "Sleeping Giant" mountain formation (comprising Keelogyboy, Leean and Benbo) is visible on approaches to the village, as is Lough Gill below the Slieve Daeáne and Killerry mountain. Located on the banks of the River Bonnet, which flows into Lough Gill much of Dromahair was reputedly modelled on a village in Somerset by the Earl of Leitrim, and the central streetscape still follows the pattern set down by him.

The village takes its name from the ridge of high ground on which it is located above the Bonnet river. The ridge was the site of the important early church site of Drumlease, a Patrician foundation

of the fifth century AD. The name in Irish is Droim dhá Ethiar, meaning apparently the "Ridge of Two (Air) Demons"

During the medieval period Dromahair was the capital of Breifne - a Gaelic confederation that stretched from Kells in County Meath across County Cavan and north County Leitrim to County Sligo. It was the seat of the O'Rourkes - the ancient Kings of Breifne. The ruins of the O'Rourke castle (built c. 950 AD) and banqueting hall are present in the village. On the ruins of this ancient site now fourteen holiday cottages have been built. It is also the place from which Devorgilla (wife of Tiernan O'Rourke) was abducted by Dermot McMurrough (the King of Leinster) in 1153 to Ferns, an act which brought about a feud and McMurrough's eventual exile from Ireland

Dromahair Heritage

Samuel Lewis A topographical Directory of Ireland 1837

Dromahire, a village, in the parish of Drumlease, barony of DROMAHAIRE, County of LEITRIM, and province of CONNAUGHT, 8 miles (S.E. by E.) from Sligo, on the road from Collooney to Manor-Hamilton; containing 336 inhabitants.

A castle was built there in early times by chieftain of this district, called O'Rourke, and named after him, part of which still exists, but most of it was used by Sir William Villiers in the erection of the castle of Dromahaire, under patent dated 1626, by which 11,500 acres of land, with power to empark 2,000 acres, and hold two markets, was granted to the Duke of Buckingham. Of this castle, seven massive and ornamented stacks of chimneys remain, and the lodge occupied by Mr. Stewart, agent of G. L. Fox, Esq, occupies part of the site.

At Creevlea a monastery for Franciscans of the Observantine order was established, in 1508 by Margaret ny Brien, wife of O'Rourke. This building was never completed, but the walls, in which are some curious figures are entire, and the alter is nearly so.

The effigy of the great O'Rourke lies at full length on a tomb over the burial-place of his family, and there are also curious figures over the graves of the Morroghs, Cornins, and others.

The village, which, together with the entire neighbourhood, has been greatly improved under the auspices of Mr. Lane Fox, contained, in 1831, 64 houses: it has a penny post to Collooney and is a constabulary police station.

A market is held on Monday in a neat marke-house, and a fair on the 13th of every month, and petty sessions are held on alternate Wednesdays.

A dispensary is partly supported by a subscription of £20 per annum from Mr. Lane Fox. On the side of a hill are the ruins of an old church, consisting of a nave and chancel, divided by a heavy tower supported by elliptical arches. The conventual building, of which the foundation is attributed to St Patrick, formed two squares contiguous to the church.

DRUMLEASE, a parish, in the barony of DROMAHAIRE, county of LEITRIM, and province of CONNAUGHT, on the road from Manor-Hamilton to Sligo ; containing, with the village of Dromahaire (which is described under its own head), 3901 inhabitants. An abbey was erected here by St. Patrick, who placed St. Benignus over it ; the site is said to have been that occupied by the parish church. The parish comprises 14,403 statute acres : there is a considerable quantity of bog. Limestone abounds, and at Dromahaire is a good marble quarry. Besides the fairs at Dromahaire, twelve monthly fairs are held at Newtown, where there are also fairs on the 25th of Feb., May, Aug., and November. The gentlemen's seats are Shriff Villa, the residence of Capt. H. Palmer ; Bellvue, of P. Carter, Esq. ; and Dromahaire Lodge, of D. Stewart, Esq., agent of G. L. Fox, Esq. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Kilmore, and in the patronage of the Bishop ; the rectory is appropriate to the see. The tithes

amount to £130, of which, £86. 13. 4. is payable to the bishop, and £43. 6. 8. to the vicar. The glebehouse was built by aid of a gift of £100, and a loan of £900, in 1834, from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners ; the glebe comprises 577 acres. The church is a neat edifice, in a picturesque situation, rebuilt by aid of a loan of £1000 in 1817, from the late Board of First Fruits, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have recently granted £154. 19. 6. for its repair. In the R. C. divisions the parish is the head of a union or district, comprising also a small portion of Clonlogher ; the chapel is in the townland of Luglustran. There is a place of worship for Primitive Methodists. About 420 children are taught in the four public schools of the parish, and there are five private schools, in which are about 450 children. Near the villa of Shriff is an ancient burial-ground, used by the Roman Catholics By the side of Loughgill are the ruins of a fine old castle ; and there are remains of religious houses near Drumahaire, and at the Lodge. There are a sulphureous and a chalybeate spring. Crystal spars abound in the rocks of the mountains

Downes Survey 1670

Two separate townlands straddling the Village are unfortified at the time of the survey:

Townland of KILLALEEN

1641 Owner(s): [Land, Unforfeited \(Protestant\)](#)

1670 Owner(s): [Land, Unforfeited \(Protestant\)](#)

County: Leitrim

Barony: Drumahaire

Parish: Drumlease

Townland of DRUMLEASE

1641 Owner(s): [Land, Unforfeited \(Protestant\)](#)

1670 Owner(s): [Land, Unforfeited \(Protestant\)](#)

County: Leitrim

Barony: Drumahaire

Parish: Drumlease



Fig 1 Drumahaire Castle 1791, by T Cocking

In 1620 at the start of the Plantation of Leitrim Brian O'Rourke chieftain was imprisoned in London when George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, a favourite of the catholic King James 1st, was granted 8000 acres in Leitrim.

In spite of opposition from a jealous Court, George was granted 6,500 acres of good land and 1,500 acres of bog in "O'Rourke country". One of the provisions stated that there was no obligation to reside on the estate as long as an agent stayed there as caretaker. There must also be two weekly markets on Tuesdays and Saturdays in the "Manor of Dromahere" as well as two fairs yearly on 20th July and October

However, soon afterwards, Villiers was assassinated in Portsmouth and the estate passed to his half-brother William, in 1828 who built the castle over the next year. Adjacent to the ruin lies the remains of old hall of the O'Rourkes



Fig 2 Drumahaire Castle (contemporary)

Creevelea Abbey, located on the outskirts of the village, is a Franciscan Friary which was founded in 1508 and was in use until the 17th century when the Franciscans were forced to leave by the Cromwellian army. The nave, choir, tower and transept are well preserved and it is now protected as a national monument.



Fig 3 Creevelea Abbey

Parke's Castle occupies a striking setting on the northern shores of Lough Gill 3 miles to NW of Village. Parke's Castle (also known as Newtown Castle and O'Rourke's Castle) is a plantation era castle situated on the banks of Lough Gill, in County Leitrim, Ireland. Constructed on site of an earlier fifteenth-century O'Rourke (Uí Ruairc) castle or towerhouse, it came into the possession of Sir Roger Parke, who, by 1628, had completed his fortified manor house within the earlier out walls



Fig 4 Parkes Castle

The Abbey Hotel located centrally in the Village on west side backing onto the Bonnet River has a colourful history. Joseph Jetier from Saarbrucken, Germany purchased the Abbey with a thatched roof in 1895 and rebuilt the front combining German with Victorian Style

Detached seven-bay two-storey double-pile hotel, built c.1860, with projecting entrance bay with pyramidal roof and gabled dormer lights. Pitched slate roof, currently being rebuilt. Rendered chimneystacks. Ransom coursed limestone with red brick dressings and rendered walls to side and rear and with cut stone relieving arches to ground floor windows. Timber casement windows with stone sills and brick surrounds. Upper windows have gables with carved bargeboards. Replacement glazed timber door with brick surround and fanlight. Carved stone head over doorway at south end of façade

Extract: NIAH Ref: 30806008



Fig 5: Old Photograph Abbey Hotel

Extract from Archeology Database

LE014-009----**Class:** Castle - hall-house**Townland:** DRUMAHAIRE**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** Yes

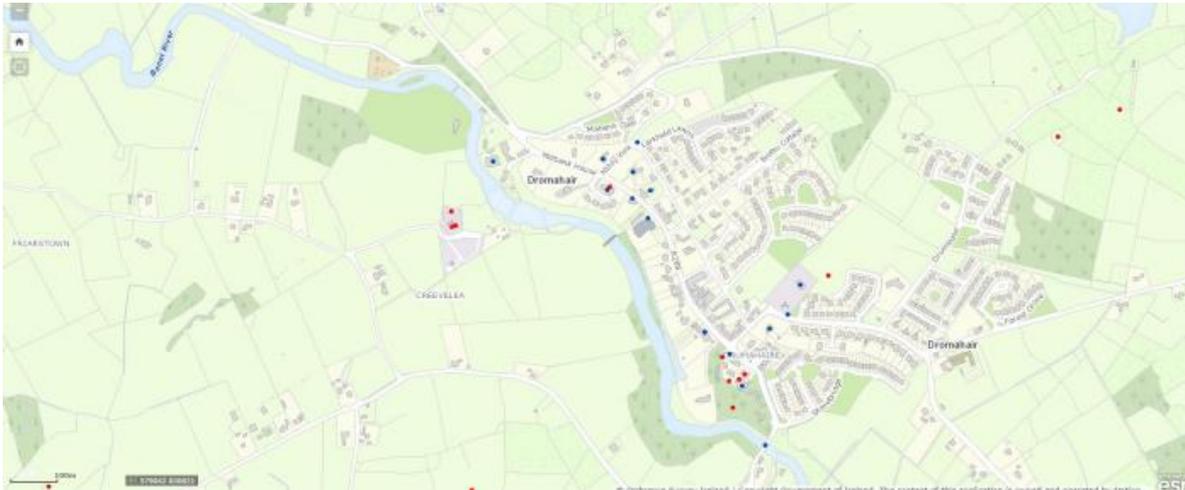
Description: Situated on a high bluff overlooking a gorge of the Bonet River which is immediately to the S, and it is at the S end of Drumahaire village. This is a hall-castle, possibly of 13th-century date, which was known as O'Rourke's Hall, and it remained a stronghold of the O'Rourkes until the 17th century. The castle may have been built by William Gorm de Lacy who undertook in 1221 to build three stone castles in Breifne for Philip de Angulo (Manning 1989-90, 22). Alternatively it might have been built by the O'Rourkes themselves after the Battle of Magh Sleacht in 1256 when they regained control of west Breifne (Co. Leitrim) and moved their centre of power into the fastness of north Leitrim. However, it is likely to date to a later period, perhaps the fifteenth or sixteenth century, suggested by the punch dressing used on some of the stonework (O'Connor and Fredengren 2019, 82-4; McDermott 2019, 111-13), unless this is repair. Despite the advantage of isolation Sir Richard Bingham, Governor of Connaught, is said to have launched a surprise attack on Drumahaire in 1588 (Grose 1791, 2, 92).

The surviving remains are a single-storey rectangular structure (int. dims 21.5m NE-SW; 7.38m NW-SE) built of mortared limestone walls (Wth 1.5-2m; H 5-6m), the stone of which is probably derived from quarries immediately adjacent to the SE and NW. The walls are ivy-covered but there were four round-headed window embrasures in each long wall as illustrated by Grose (ibid. 2, Pl. 35), all of which are now robbed-out. There is a destroyed doorway (Wth 1.3m) at the S end of the NW wall, which is approached from the SW by an unexcavated shelf of rock (Wth c. 2m), and this is probably the original entrance. A destroyed doorway (Wth 1.03m) with two steps down inside it at the E end of the NE wall might be an inserted feature. There is no indication of an upper storey. There is a modern standing stone (LE014-008004-) c. 100m to N, and the Villiers fortified house (LE014-008001-) is c. 60m to the N. (Harbison 2002, 43-7)

LE014-004001-[Scope note](#)**Class:** Religious house - Franciscan friars**Townland:** CREEVELEA (Drumahaire By.)**Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP:** Yes

Description: Situated on a shoulder overlooking the Bonet River, which is c. 150m to the NE. This is an Observant Franciscan friary, known as Carraig Phádraigh – Patrick's Rock - founded by Owen O'Rourke and his wife Margaret O'Brien in 1508, the pious couple who also commissioned the Shrine of St Caillin of Fenagh (LE025-096001-) in 1526 (Murphy 1892). Creevelea was accidentally burned in 1536 before it was suppressed in 1541, but it continued to be used intermittently by the friars until the 1590s (O'Connell

1937, 137-50; Kelly 2019, 200-01). Con O'Rourke, a grandson of the founders, entered the order at Carraig Phádraig, but on returning from a period in Rome was martyred at Kilmallock in 1579 (ibid. 199). The church, consisting of nave, chancel, tower and S transept, survives almost complete. The cloister and domestic buildings, largely reduced to the ground-floor level and foundations, are N of the church. The nave (int. dims 18.6m E-W; 6.6m N-S) has a pointed W doorway (Wth 1.1m; H 2.1m) with a hood-... The structure is now a National Monument. ..



Map 2: Extract Archeology.ie

CREEVELEA BLAST FURNACE

One of the few coke-fuelled ironworks in Ireland was built in 1852 by a Scottish company at Creevelea, near the town of Dromahair, in Co Leitrim in the NW of the Irish Republic. It stood on the site of a charcoal-fuelled furnace built by Charles Coote, Earl of Mountrath (d 1661), that was destroyed during the wars of the 1640s, but revived and worked with charcoal until 1768. The two new blast furnaces, blown by an 80 hp engine, and supplied with ore by a horse tramway, worked for less than five years but were momentarily revived, in 1861-62 using peat as the fuel. During a further revival from 1896 under the Peat Charcoal Fuel & Iron Company of Ireland just one pig of iron was cast, although the company invested capital in an aerial ropeway to transport peat. Parts of the works were demolished to provide road metals in the 1940s but one of the blast furnaces still stands

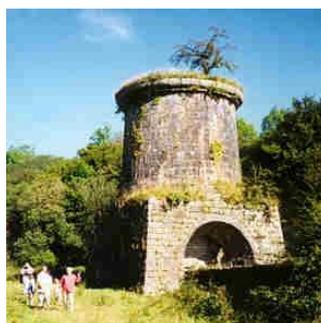


Fig 6: Blast Furnace, Creevelea

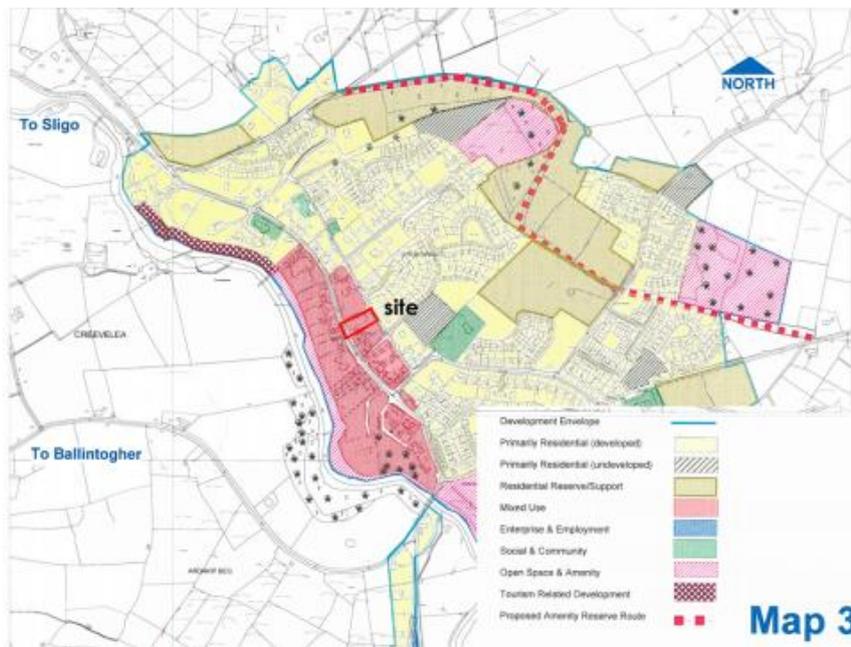
National Library of Ireland

- [Lane/Lane-Fox](#) - In 1666 Sir George Lane was granted lands in the counties Dublin, Meath, Kilkenny, Longford, Waterford and Cork. Sir George was the son of Richard Lane of Tulsk, county Roscommon and was granted the Irish peerage title, Viscount Lanesborough, in 1676. He was Secretary of State for Ireland and received lands in the baronies of Roscommon and Ballintober, county Roscommon and in county Longford in April 1678 and May 1679 respectively. Weir notes that these grants were further augmented by the purchase of the Duke of Buckingham's Irish estates in 1710. In 1724 the Lanesborough title became extinct with the death of his son. The Lanesborough estates in England and Ireland were inherited by the 2nd Viscount's sister who was married to Henry Fox. Though the Longford and Roscommon properties were sold to Luke White in 1819, the Lane-Fox family continued to hold substantial property in both counties Leitrim and Waterford. In 1848 George Lane Fox junior, was High Sheriff of Leitrim. For the most part they were absentee landlords, their estates being managed by a succession of stewards, including Joshua Kell, who was a member of the Grand Jury for Leitrim in 1851. The property at Larkfield was leased for a long period to the O'Donnell family who built a house there. At the time of Griffith's Valuation in 1850, George Lane-Fox was among the principal lessors in the parishes of Drumcannon and Kilburne, barony of Middlethird, county Waterford. In 1848 he also held townlands in the parish of Kilbarry, barony of Gaultiere. The Waterford estate amounted to over 5000 acres in the 1870s. In October 1856 and again in June 1860, Matthew Anthony Fox offered for sale, in the Landed Estates Court, his interest in the lands of Cross (otherwise known as Mount Wilkinson), barony of Gaultiere, county Waterford. These lands were part of an original 1741 lease agreement between Samuel Barker and Geoffrey Wilkinson. In June 1857, George Lane Fox had offered for sale over 3000 acres of his Waterford estate in the Encumbered Estates Court. The Freeman's Journal gives details of the purchasers. The family sold the bulk of their remaining Irish estates to the Land Commission in the early years of the twentieth century.

Capt. George Hewson purchased part of the Lane-Fox estate near Drumahaire in 1894. He acted as agent for several landlords. He extended and renovated the house known as the Lodge, which had been there from the Lane-Fox time. He was a son of the Reverend Francis Hewson of the Ennismore, county Kerry, family

Zoning

Mixed Use as per LCDP 2015-2021



Zoning Map LCCDP 2015-22

Planning History

Ref:	041956
Application date	23 December 2004
Description	Demolish the existing Breffini Centre hotel and function room and to construct a 3 storey hotel complex plus part basement comprising of reception, bar, function room, restaurant area, and 40 no. bedrooms with on-site parking, all to connect to existing public sewer, pedestrian access to adjoining roadways, vehicular access to rear of site and all associated site development works in lieu of 24 bedrooms and 4 no. townhouses
Decision:	granted with 21 conditions
Decision Date	9 Feb 2006
Ref:	071233 (ABP pl:12.235230)
Application date	20 th Nov 2007
Description	demolish the existing Breffini Centre hotel and function room and to construct a 3 storey 1739 sqm building to incorporate a supermarket at ground floor (gross floor area 902 sqm to include retail floorspace of 600sqm), a creche at first floor (543.5sqm) and outdoor play area, part covered of 112 sqm, a gym at second floor level of 197sqm and a community room of 44sqm. Levels on site will result in first floor being at ground level to the rear with vehicular access to 27 on-site car parking spaces over the supermarket and the outdoor play area level with the creche.The proposal includes the provision of all circulation and access within the structure, connection to the existing public sewer and watermain, and all associated site development works
Decision:	granted on appeal by An Bord Pleanala
Decision Date	6 th Nov 2008
Ref:	17132
Application date	27 th Jul 2017
Description	1. Change the use of part of former hotel to sit down/take away restaurant use. 2. Amend the internal floor areas to allow for revised usage. 3. Amend the front elevation to allow for revised usage 4. Erect a new shop front 5. Convert a section of the existing hotel bedroom space into living accommodation 6. Connect to the existing sewer and water networks and all ancillary works
Decision:	granted with 5 conditions
Decision Date	8 th Feb 2018

Dromahair Architectural Conservation Area



From the original OS series the main street was set out in line with the Bonet River to west from its crossing point and Castle in the south to the Corn Mill at north end. The Village character is the large plots with the original buildings set back from the road and large dwelling size. The features of the ACA area extend to the boundary walls and landscaped plots as well as the predominately hipped roof double pile dwellings

St Patricks Roman Catholic Church (1890)

Gothic idiom with pitched slate roof, cast iron finial, ashlar bellcote and stone corbels, rock faced Ballisadore Limestone walls

Millbank House (1800-1840)

Detached three-bay two-storey double-pile house, built c.1820, Hipped slate roof with rendered chimneystacks and terracotta pots. Roughcast rendered walls with plinth course. Replacement timber sash windows with stone sills. Segmental-headed door opening with spoked fanlight and timber panelled door with sidelights within modern glazed porch. Roughcast rendered single- and two-storey outbuildings. Random limestone boundary wall with stone piers and cast-iron gates

Drumalease Church of Ireland Church (1810)

Pitched slate roof with stone finials and rendered chimneystack to vestry. Pebble dashed walls with limestone sills, dressings and hood mouldings to windows. Tooled pointed-arched windows with limestone tracery and stained glass to rear wall of nave and with timber tracery to front. Square-headed openings to second stage of tower

Church View

Detached three-bay two-storey double-pile house, built c.1880, with gables to elevations, advanced end bay, single-storey porch and extensions to side and rear. Set within mature gardens. Pitched tiled roof with yellow brick chimneystacks and terracotta pots. Pebbledashed walls on nap plinth. Timber margined sash windows with stucco surrounds and stone sills. Glazed timber panelled door. Outbuilding to north-east. Site bounded by random limestone walls with cut stone piers and wrought-iron gate

Existing Layout

The site contains semi-derelict 2 storey Hotel facing main street with ballroom to rear. The original 2 storey structure (coloured green) was extended to north west-side following the 1908 OS survey (coloured purple). The southern end was extended in the mid 20th Century with a rear ballroom also added around this time.



Opportunity to retain structure

- The ground floor ceiling level at southern end is slightly less than the required 2.4m height and any option to retain would need to resolve this issue.
- The building is highly altered from the original structure with several walls propped at ground level. Only a single fireplace at ground level has been retained. The ground floor corridor width at 900mm is extremely narrow and unsuitable for a public building
- The likely original entrance with stairs (now entrance to bar) cannot be replaced with a *public* type stairs within the area constraint.
- The NE/SW access road lacks a footpath and the corner to the hotel and main street cannot achieve a 6m radius in the current position.

PHOTOMONTAGE



Existing View –facing South East



Proposed View –facing South East



Existing View –facing North West



Proposed View –facing North West

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For all sites, significance should be assessed according to the criteria set down in Chapter 2 of *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011) Published by the Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht:

- a) Architectural;
- b) Historical;
- c) Archaeological;

- d) Artistic;
- e) Cultural;
- f) Scientific;
- g) Technical;
- h) Social.

Architectural

Building forms part of original Georgian street frontage onto Main Street which is both historically and currently important to the Dromahair ACA

Historical

No know associations

Archaeological

Not within zone of archaeological interest as per Current Development Plan

Artistic

No know associations

Cultural

No know references

Scientific

None known

Technical

None known

Social

None known

CONSERVATION PRINCIPALS

Conservation Principals are assessed according to the criteria set down in Chapter 7 of *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011) Published by the Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht:

Keeping a building in use

Researching and analysing

Using Expert Conservation Advice

Protecting the Special Interest

- Promoting Minimum Intervention
- Respecting Earlier Alterations of Interest
- Repair rather than replacing
- Promoting Honesty of Repairs and Alterations
- Using Appropriate Materials and Methods
- Ensuring Reversibility of Alterations
- Avoiding Incremental Damage
- Discouraging the Use of Architectural Salvage from Other Buildings
- Complying with the Building Regulations

Item	Proposed Intervention	Rationale	Conservation Impact	Justification
	Removal/Demolition			
1	Demolish Existing Building	Allow purpose built public building	Low	Not Listed in RPS Front line is predominately on line of exiting building Opportunity to provide footpath to side access road
2	Construction of new building on existing building line	Maintain street frontage to east side of Main St.	Positive	Material and finishes sympathetic to the existing rendered buildings. Slate roof to match. Upright windows at first floor level

REFERENCES

- Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011) Published by the Dept. of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht:
- Buildings of Ireland: National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
- Archaeology Survey of Ireland: National Monuments Service
- Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-21
- Killadoon List in NLI printed 20/11/07
- Dromahaire Heritage
- Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, Samuel Lewis 1837