



## Dunboyne

Architectural Conservation Area  
Statement of Character  
December 2009

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# Dunboyne

## Architectural Conservation Area

### Statement of Character

Lotts Architecture and Urbanism

with Michael O'Neill

On behalf of  
Meath County Council and  
County Meath Heritage Forum

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
The Heritage Council



An action of the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011  
supported by Meath County Council and the Heritage Council

## Foreword

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In 2007 Meath County Council adopted the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011, prepared by the County Heritage Forum, following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public. The Heritage Forum is a partnership between local and central government, state agencies, heritage and community groups, NGOs local business and development, the farming sector, educational institutions and heritage professionals. The Heritage plan is a cross-agency strategic plan which aims to identify, promote, enhance and conservation Meath's rich heritage. It is an action of the Heritage Plan to evaluate the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in the county.

It is an objective of the county Meath Development Plan 2007-2013 to carry out an appraisal of existing and proposed Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) during the lifetime of the plan. This publication describes the special character of Dunboyne ACA and will be a useful guide for the public and local authority. We would sincerely like to thank all those who contributed to this project and to the Heritage Council for providing funding.

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# Introduction

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## 1.0 Introduction

The towns, villages and landscapes of Co. Meath contain areas of architectural, historical and cultural interest, whose character is derived from the grouping of structures and open spaces, and their setting in the landscape. These areas of particular heritage value may develop and change with time, but their special character is considered worthy of protection. Planning legislation allows a planning authority to include objectives in its Development Plan to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscapes that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contribute to the appreciation of protected structures. Such areas are known as *Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)* and may include the following:

- groups of structures of distinctiveness, visual richness or historical importance.
- the setting and exterior appearance of structures that are of special interest, but the interiors of which do not merit special protection.
- the setting of a protected structure where this is more extensive than its curtilage.
- designed landscapes, for example, urban parks, historic demesnes, cemeteries or industrial sites.
- groups of structures which form dispersed but unified entities but which are not within the curtilage of a single dominant structure.

An ACA could therefore include a terrace of houses, a streetscape, a town centre or an ensemble related to a specific building type, such as a mill or a country house. The significance of buildings within an ACA lies in their positive contribution to the character and cultural importance of the group and their protection relates to their external appearance and associated external spaces. The objective of

the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure that future development is carried out in a manner sympathetic to the special character of the historic place.

Works to the exterior of a structure within an ACA only qualify as exempted development if the works do not affect the character of the exterior or that of neighbouring structures or open spaces. Whilst alterations, extensions and new build may be permitted within an ACA, any new development should respect or enhance its special character and should be carried out in consultation with the Planning Department and Conservation Officer of Meath County Council, following the usual planning application process. There are currently eighteen ACAs designated in Co. Meath. This document is one in a series which identifies the special character of individual ACAs and gives advice and guidance to those seeking planning permission, such as homeowners, developers and planning professionals, on the type of works that would be acceptable within that particular ACA, to avoid loss or negative impact to its special character.

# Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

## 2.0 Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

Dunboyne is located near the south-east boundary of County Meath with Fingal, some 19km north-west of Dublin city centre. It lies 2km west of the N3 National Primary Route connected by the R156 and R157 which meet in the centre of the village. Before being bypassed it was on the route from Dublin to Navan and Dublin to Maynooth. Dunboyne serves a broadly rural hinterland and is a relatively short distance away from Leixlip, Kilcock and Maynooth in County Kildare. Today, it can be considered a commuter village or small town within the greater Dublin Metropolitan area. The village streetscape extends along the three roads radiating from the crossing and primarily around the square formed by the widening of one of the streets.

The landscape character assessment (LCA) of the setting for Dunboyne is one of 'Rural Valley and Canal Character Area'. This particular definition applies to the Tolka and Liffey valley area with the Royal Canal Corridor. The Tolka is located north of Dunboyne and flows from north-west to south-east to Dublin, it has no presence in the village. The Tolka valley is characterised by grassland along the meandering river valley. The area in the ACA no longer has a direct relationship to this characteristic landscape setting because of the surrounding suburbs.



Fig. 1: The location of Dunboyne in the local context (from [www.meath.ie](http://www.meath.ie))



Fig. 2: Aerial view of Dunboyne

# Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

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## 2.1 ACA Boundary

The ACA boundary for Dunboyne encompasses St Peter's Church of Ireland and graveyard at the west end and the entrance square to the church. Crossing the Maynooth road it continues west along the wall at the rear of houses facing onto the green/square. The boundary turns north at the end of the terrace of six houses dating to c.1909. It continues east along Main Street to include Dunboyne Cottage and then north enclosing the Catholic church of Sts. Peter and Paul and its walled grounds. The boundary to the north of the village runs behind houses on the south side of River Court. The southern apex of the green formed between Navan Road and Summerhill Road is included and it encloses an area north east of the Church of Ireland. The boundaries of the ACA are delineated on the accompanying Figure 3.

The following streets and thoroughfares are located partly or wholly within the boundaries of the ACA: Main Street (part of), Summerhill Road (part of), Navan Road (part of), Maynooth Road (part of).



## Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

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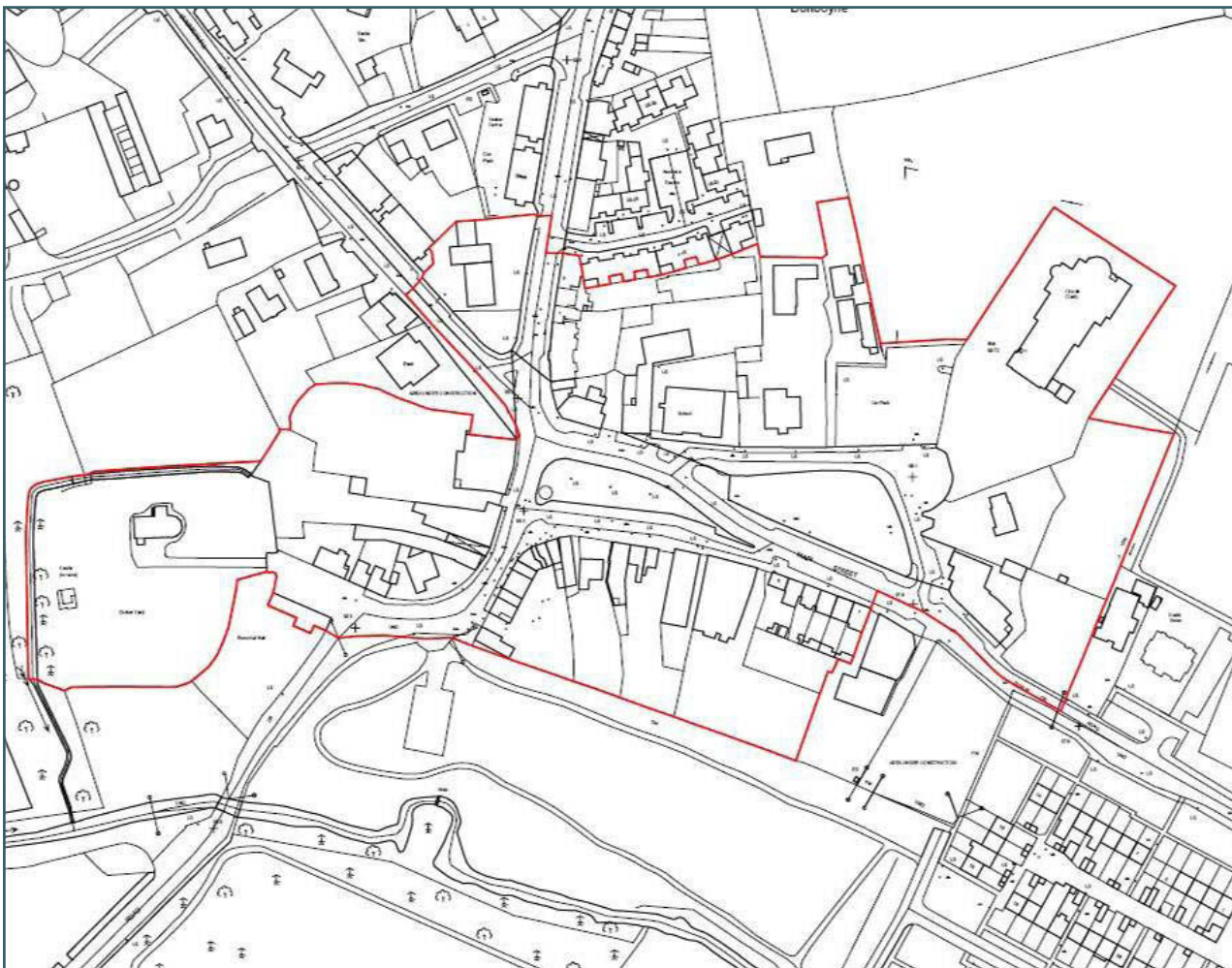


Fig.3: Boundary of Dunboyne ACA

# Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

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## 3.0 Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

There are a number of protected structures within the boundaries of the Dunboyne ACA that are protected under Part IV of the Planning & Development Act 2000. A protected structure is a structure or part of a structure that a Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The full extent of a protected structure includes the land lying within the curtilage of the protected structure and other structures within that curtilage and their interiors. The concept of curtilage is not defined by legislation, but is understood to be the parcel of land immediately associated with that structure and which is or was in use for the purposes of the structure. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, Appendix V.

The Record of Monuments and Places lists structures and sites of archaeological heritage. The schedule is available to the public at the Planning Office of Meath County Council, Teagasc Offices and Town Councils and on the internet on the website of the National Monuments Service, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government ([www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)). A small proportion of National Monuments are in state ownership and care.

# Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

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## 3.1 Protected Structures

Within the boundary of the Dunboyne ACA there are fourteen protected structures comprising: landmark 18th and 19th century residences and public buildings; detached 18th and 19th century houses with private gardens; uniform terraces of 18th and 19th century houses of various scale; terraces of 19th century residential and commercial buildings, and street furniture. A number of these structures form focal points for views into and out of the area. Others are more modest buildings that represent examples of archetypal shop-fronts or pattern-book terraced houses.

• RPS No. MH 050-203	Saint Peter's Church of Ireland Church, Maynooth Road
• RPS No. MH 050-210	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-211	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-212	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-215	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-216	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH050-217	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-218	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-219	St. Mary's Terrace, Navan Road
• RPS No. MH 050-220	Dunboyne National School, Main Street
• RPS No. MH 050-221	8-bay, 2 storey house, The Green (south)
• RPS No. MH 050-222	Dunboyne Parochial House, The Green (north)
• RPS No. MH 050-223	Dunboyne Cottage
• RPS No. MH 050-224	Saint Peter and Paul's Roman Catholic Church

The terraces of six houses on the south side of the green and a further terrace of ten houses further north on Navan Road, both similar in style to St. Mary's Terrace, are also worthy of inclusion on the RPS.

## 3.2 Recorded Monuments

The following archaeological sites, features and artefacts within the ACA for Dunboyne are protected by National Monument legislation as they are listed as Recorded Monuments in the Record of Monuments and places:

• RMP Ref. ME050-021	Town, Castlefarm, Dunboyne
• RMP Ref. ME050-021001	Church, Dunboyne
• RMP Ref. ME050-021002	Architectural Fragments, Dunboyne
• RMP Ref. ME050-021003	Font(s), Dunboyne
• RMP Ref. ME050-021004	Graveyard, Dunboyne

# Development Plan Zoning & Objectives

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## 4.0 Development Plan Zoning & Objectives

The Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 has been superseded by the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace Local Area Plan was adopted on the 22nd September 2009. Detailed policies and objectives are prescribed in the aforementioned plans. In considering new development within this LAP area the policies and objectives prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Dunboyne/Clonee/Pace Local Area Plan 2009-2015 are of relevance.

## Historical development of the area

### 5.0 Historical development of the area

Dunboyne is the name of one of the twelve baronies making up modern County Meath. It is the smallest barony (16,781 acres) and contains only two civil parishes – Dunboyne (13,685 acres) and Kilbride (3,096 acres). The townland of Dunboyne within the civil parish encompasses some 946 acres. These territorial divisions date to the sub-infeudation of Meath in the late twelfth-century. Following the Anglo-Norman invasion, Meath (which then included Westmeath and parts of Longford) was granted by Henry II to Hugh de Lacy who in turn settled William le Petit on Dunboyne barony. (Cart. Llan., 32). William le Petit presented the church of his manor at Dunboyne to the Cell of Llanthony Priory in 1205-10. In the same document the castle chapel is also mentioned. (1)

Dunboyne received a grant of a weekly market in 1226 (2) and a yearly fair in 1229 (3). It was thus the major market centre for the barony (4). Dunboyne was in the second tier of Anglo-Norman settlement in County Meath. The upper stratum included the five walled boroughs of Trim, Kells, Navan, Athboy and Drogheda (Meath side). The smaller, unwalled settlements of second rank included Dunboyne, Slane, Nobber, Dunshaughlin, Duleek, Skreen and Ratoath (5). The Papal taxation of 1302-07 valued Dunboyne parish at 40 marks, which compared favourably to the parish revenue of other second rank settlements (6). That it had borough status, probably from the late twelfth-century can be implied from the fact that a writ was issued in 1423 ordering “the Provost and Commonality of the town of Dunboyne to be at Trim with all their powers for its defence” (7).

By the early fourteenth century the Lordship of Dunboyne had passed from the Petits to the Butlers. This followed the marriage of Sidolna, daughter and heiress of Sir William Petit, to Thomas Butler (8).

In 1464 parliament ordained and established that a “chantry of two chaplains be founded anew in honour of God, Saint Mary the Virgin, St. Nicholas

and St. Katherine the Virgin in the holy church of the Apostles Peter and Paul in Dunboyne” (9).

It is quite likely that the surviving ruined western residential tower of the church dates from this period and may have prompted Edmond Butler to rebuild his nearby castle.

The Statute Rolls of Edward IV for 1475-6 state that “Esmond (Botiller alias Persson) “proposes by the grace of God to commence to erect and complete a castle anew at Dunboyne”. Esmond was granted 12d. for every ploughland in Meath and given one year in which to complete his castle. This castle no longer survives but it is likely that it was on the site of the present Dunboyne Castle, built in 1764 by George Darley.

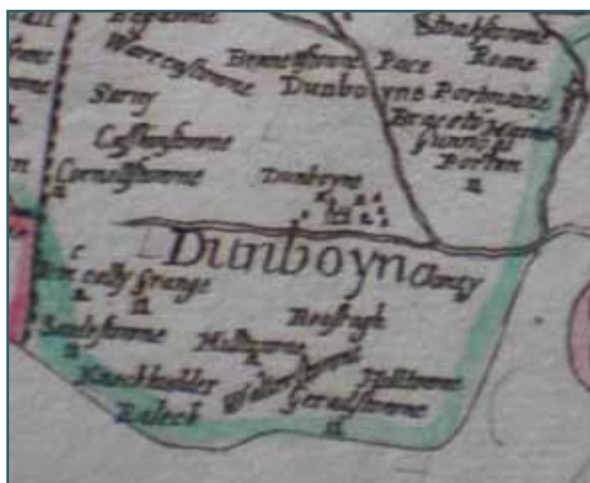


Fig. 4: From Petty's Map of County Meath

Hugh Brady was appointed first protestant bishop of Meath in 1563. Born in Dunboyne, he was buried in the medieval church in 1583. In his will he left a bequest for ‘boordes’ for the nave of the church – possibly timber for wainscoting. By 1621, according to James Ussher, then bishop of Meath, both the chancel and nave of this ‘great church’ were in ruin. The Civil Survey jurors in 1654 mention the great church with its choir, nave and great steeple but not its condition. In the 1680s Bishop Dopping reported that the chancel had been put back into repair and in 1723 Bishop Ellis recorded that “the body of the church is ruinous but the chancel which is large is kept in repair by the parishioners. It is very decently fitted up

## Historical development of the area

& provided with everything convenient". Isaac Butler, writing in 1745, described it similarly. It presented a contrast to Dunshaughlin where, at that time, the tower and nave were in repair but the chancel there was in ruin. Like many other medieval churches in county Meath, Dunboyne chancel survived in use until the early decades of the nineteenth century when a new church was built c.1810. This building was a simple rectangle on plan with an entrance lobby, and two bays long with an un-differentiated chancel and could accommodate 155 people. Rather confusingly Lewis described it as an ancient edifice, "for the repair of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners recently granted £127." On Larkin's Map of 1812 both a Church Ruin and a Church are depicted. Perhaps the medieval chancel has been remodelled rather than demolished in 1810. In any case there are now no remains of the medieval nave and chancel or the work of c.1810. A new church was built to the north east of the medieval residential western tower in 1866. This will be described below.



Fig. 5: Dunboyne Castle

Dunboyne Castle was extensively remodelled in 1764 by George Darley for Sarah Hamilton. Casey and Rowan suggest that what was remodelled at this time was a plain five bay double plan house which was two rooms deep. The main front, facing north, is seven bays long and three storeys high with a rusticated ground floor and two tall upper floors. A tripartite doorcase with Tuscan columns and open pediment frame the entrance door (10). Dunboyne Castle and its attendant grounds are outside the ACA.

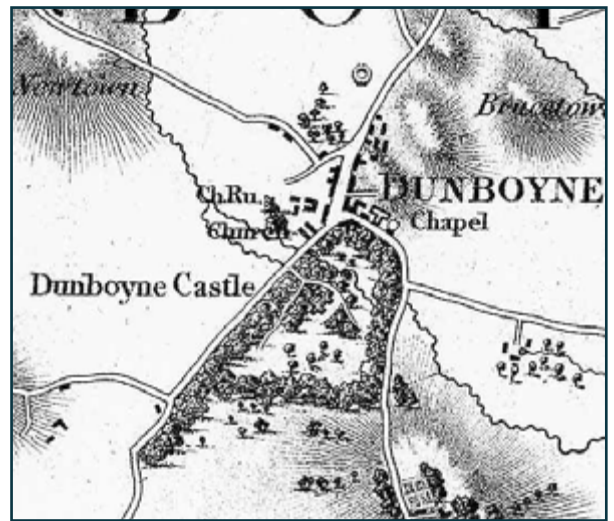


Fig.6: Larkin 1812, reproduced from Arnold Horner, Mapping Meath in the early 19th Century

The town or village was burned during the disturbances of 1798. In Larkin's map of 1812, the main stock of housing is located on the Navan Road east and north of the medieval church site. By the 1840s, according to Lewis, the village contained 111 houses. Comparing the Larkin and Ordnance Survey 1st edition maps of Dunboyne, indicates that the large square in the centre of Dunboyne, with the tree-lined triangular green at the east end, is early nineteenth-century in date. It was carved out of the north-east corner of the castle demesne. This hypothesis is consistent with the dates of the various buildings around the square/triangular green. The earliest buildings then are at the west end, nearest the medieval church and on the Navan Road, which was the earlier focus of the manorial village. The change of focus of the village centre seems to have been prompted by the location of the T-plan Catholic church, built 1800-1. The morphology of Dunboyne then is quite complex. Initially a manorial village with a substantial medieval church both located to the north of the castle demesne, in the course of the nineteenth century it developed attributes both of a chapel village and that of an estate village.

## Historical development of the area



Fig. 7: Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1837

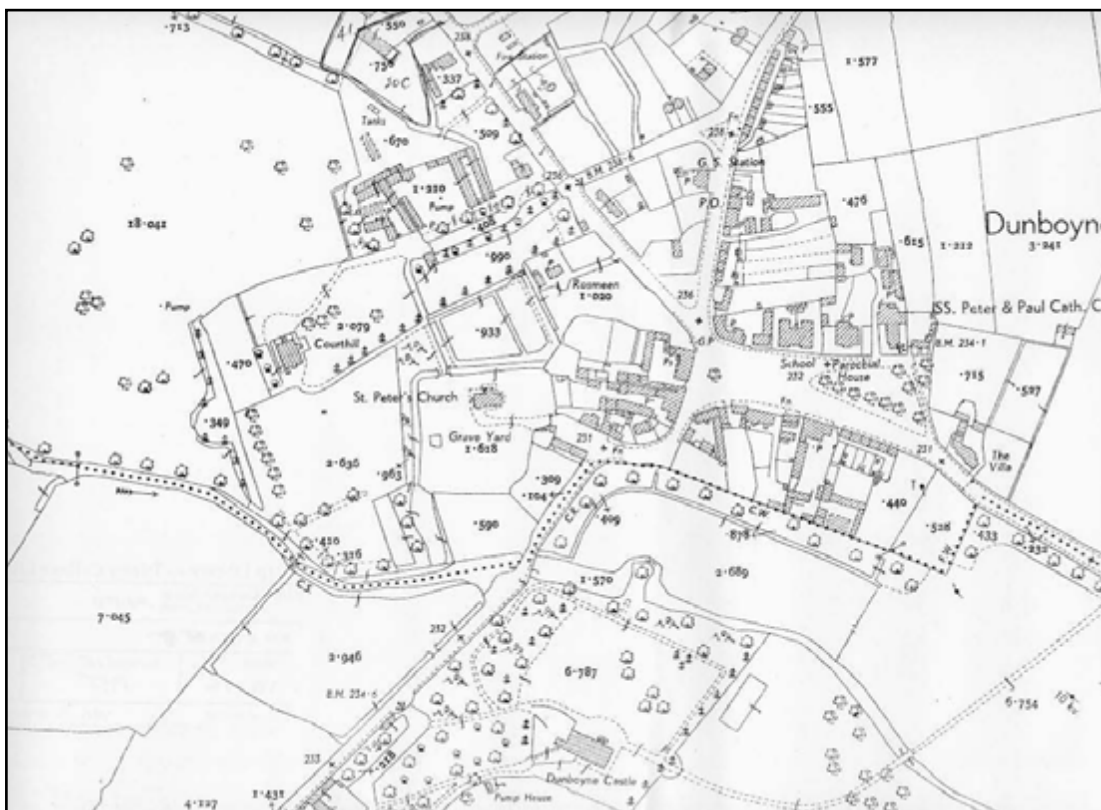


Fig 8: OS 3rd Edition, 1955, from Trinity Map Library

# Character overview of Dunboyne ACA

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## 6.0 Character overview of Dunboyne ACA

This section provides a brief description of the designated ACA under the following headings: layout; socio-economic functions; building types and materials.

### 6.1 Layout

The street pattern within Dunboyne reflects the pattern of growth since the eighteenth century and probably the medieval period. Petty's Down Survey map suggests that the settlement in the mid-seventeenth century was near the church and west of the Navan Road. The town developed from west to east, from the medieval church and Navan Road and then in the nineteenth century to around the square bounded on the north east by the T-plan Catholic church.

A distinctive feature of the area is the regularity of plots on the north and south sides of the green compared to the more amorphous arrangement on the west side which reflects earlier arrangements.

There are significant runs of limestone kerbing on the green, in front of the parochial house and former school on the north side; on Navan Road and on the corner onto the Maynooth Road.

The main open space within the ACA is the rectangular space significantly enhanced by the tree-lined triangular green within it. A second narrower triangle at the western end has harder landscaping and its function is primarily traffic calming, parking and separation. A smaller open space leads to the Church of Ireland entrance gates. There is a significant well-kempt graveyard surrounding this church but its accessibility is limited. There is hard landscaping around the Catholic Church to the north-east. The church car park is the site of the earlier T-plan church which was demolished in 1993.

## 6.2 Socio-Economic Functions

The town of Dunboyne serves a broadly rural hinterland. It is a dormitory town and service centre for a primarily commuter based residential population. Its role and function has been determined by its proximity and especially convenient road access to Dublin. It provides a variety of services to the local population. However a significant number of the new services provided in the town are part of recent development around the historic core. The building design is formulaic and rarely sympathetic to the original nineteenth and early twentieth-century grain.



# Character overview of Dunboyne ACA

## 6.3 Building types and materials

There are four common building typologies found in Dunboyne ACA.

- Early Twentieth-century residential terraces
- Nineteenth-century detached residences
- Nineteenth & early nineteenth-century commercial structures
- Ecclesiastical buildings

The prevailing building materials are limestone, as raised quoins, in exposed random rubble and rock-cut form and as kerbing, and red and pale brick.

Nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings were usually faced with stucco or render. Red brickwork was used in chimney-stack construction and to embellish single-storey building types. It is used most notably in the terraces of early twentieth-century two-storey houses and as window and door trim on the Gothic Revival church.

Timber is used for windows and doors and as such forms standard elements of the archetypal shop-fronts. Many buildings within the ACA retain their natural slate roofs which add to the visual richness of the area. There are also noteworthy examples of ironwork, in front of the early twentieth-century former national school.



Fig.9: Rock-cut limestone wall



Fig.10: Metal railings to National School

# Street by street appraisal

## 7.0 Street by street appraisal

All of the streets included within the boundary of the ACA contain buildings and other elements that are a positive contribution to the character of Dunbooyne. This section provides a brief description of each street and open area within the ACA boundary under the following headings:

- **Architectural Character and Building Uses**

This is an appraisal of various buildings along a street, in a laneway or courtyard and within private grounds. Its character is identified through historical use, design, scale and building materials. It also refers to the use of the buildings on the street and how they influence the special character of that area.

- **Quality and Treatment of Open Space**

Spatial quality is defined by the relationship between buildings and the street, how each street relates to each other and the open space within the area. Included in this section is an inventory of extant street furniture and historic street surface treatment. It also refers to the manner in which a site is enclosed; for example, walls, hedges, railings and gates.

## 7.1 St. Peter's Church of Ireland Church and Graveyard

### 7.1.1 Architectural Character and Building Uses

This group of buildings and graveyard is a significant part of Dunbooyne's architectural and cultural heritage. The fifteenth-century western residential tower is covered in dense ivy, cleared of this it would provide a good western landmark for the town. The ground floor is vaulted, the upper storeys had wooden floors. A hearth on the 1st floor and wide windows on the top floor indicate that it had residential as well as defensive functions. It indicates, confirmed by documentary sources, that Dunbooyne had a large medieval church. Fragments including window tracery survive in the graveyard and in the porch of the later church. A sixteenth-century font is located in the later church.



Fig.11: St.Peter's church, west gable

## Street by street appraisal



Fig.12: St.Peter's church from the south-east

St. Peter's Church was built between 1866 and 1868 by the English architect Samuel Rollinson of Chesterfield. Funds were donated by Rev. James Hamilton of Ballymacoll, vicar of Melbourn, Cambridgeshire. It is a compact church of four bays with an absidal east end and a bell-cote on the west gable. It has a northern vestry and a south-west porch and is built in the Early English gothic style. Rock faced coursed limestone walling with quoins, windows, door surrounds and bell-cote in pale yellow brick (though Paisley specified white bricks), providing a cheerful and simple polychromatic effect. There are paired lancets in the nave with three single lancets lighting the east end. Trefoils in cut stone light the porch and the roof-space of the tall slated roof. The rock-faced limestone contrasts tellingly with the roughly-coursed limestone of the medieval tower to the west.



Fig.13: Hamilton mausoleum



Fig.14: Doric monument with residential tower in background

There are several fine tombstones in the graveyard. The freestanding Hamilton mausoleum, erected c.1799, is an ashlar cube, surmounted by a carved stone urn. Ashlar granite walls with raised quoins and carved stone plaques. Tuscan columns flank the entrance door. It is partially obscured by foliage. A second free-standing monument has Doric columns framing a large raised plaque. The columns support a full entablature and pediment.

## Street by street appraisal



Fig.15: Entrance gates to St.Peter's church grounds



Fig.16: Church square approach to St.Peter's church grounds

In front of the gates to the church and churchyard is Church Square. The long low houses on the west side are among the few vernacular buildings within the ACA. This enclave provides an important focus when approaching Dunboyne from the south-west on the Maynooth Road and it announces the presence of the church and graveyard in the village.

### 7.1.2 Quality and Treatment of Open Space

The approach to the church is through a large set of iron double gates with a side gate for pedestrians. A row of tall narrow spaced trees stand to either side of the approach from the gate to the church area beyond. Though overgrown these trees play a significant part in defining the character of the graveyard and

signalling its presence to the outside world via Church Square. The new church is seen apse end on and the old ruin stands further ahead. The relationship of the buildings to one another and the further relationship of these to larger and smaller gravestones and grave monuments is central the character of St.Peter's.

The large mature trees to the west end of the graveyard on the graveyard site and beyond add immeasurably to the character of the setting as a backdrop and enclosure to the church, ruins and graves. Further mature specimen trees in the graveyard such as yews are also of importance. The present pathway and drive is a tarmac surface that has a practical function but detracts from the high quality architectural and landscape expression of the ensemble.

The boundary to the graveyard is best marked by the surrounding trees and entrance gates and posts. Otherwise a contemporary metal security type railing surrounds the site. Pre-fabricated school buildings to the south can be seen from the graveyard, screening with planting should be considered to hide this view. Historically a gate link existed on the north side of the graveyard to Courthill house. This no longer appears to exist but the site to the north is unbuilt. The tree screening to this side is thin and care needs to be taken if any development takes place that could have a negative visual impact on the character of the graveyard. As mentioned, the trees to the west end of the site contribute significantly to the graveyard, these should be retained and maintained. They also give a historical reference to the existence of Courthill house and its relationship to the church and grounds.

The area retains much of its original character of church use with demesne lands to the north and west. There remain a number of trees and green areas to the south that support the historical interpretation of the graveyard as being on the edge of the village beside the river.

# Street by street appraisal

## 7.2 The Square

### 7.2.1 Architectural Character and Building Uses



Fig.17: Triangular green within the Square seen from the west



Fig.18: 'Big Tree' to western end of the Square

As discussed above in the historical section, this large square was carved out of the castle demesne in the early nineteenth-century. This eastward movement of the village focus was prompted by the location of the Catholic Church here c.1800. At the western end, at the apex of the smaller hard-landscaped triangle is a lone patriarchal tree, known locally as the 'Big Tree'. A larger tree-lined triangle is fitted into the north-western end of the square.



Fig. 19: The Presbytery, built 1878



Fig. 20: Former National School, 1908

On the north side of the green is the primary school, the presbytery and the Catholic church in front of which is a tree-lined north side of the triangular green. Iron railings front the former school and a rock-cut limestone wall is in front of the presbytery. These are among the few buildings within the ACA that do not front directly onto a footpath. A stone walled narrow laneway, Barrack Lane, beside the presbytery, leads to a single storey house and stores or sheds.

## Street by street appraisal

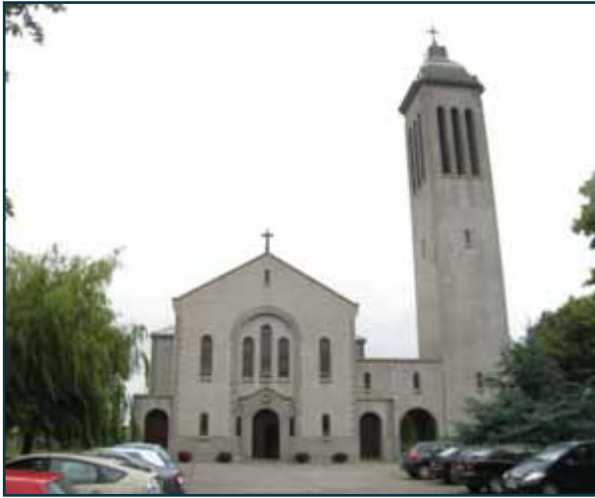


Fig. 21: The Catholic church, built 1956

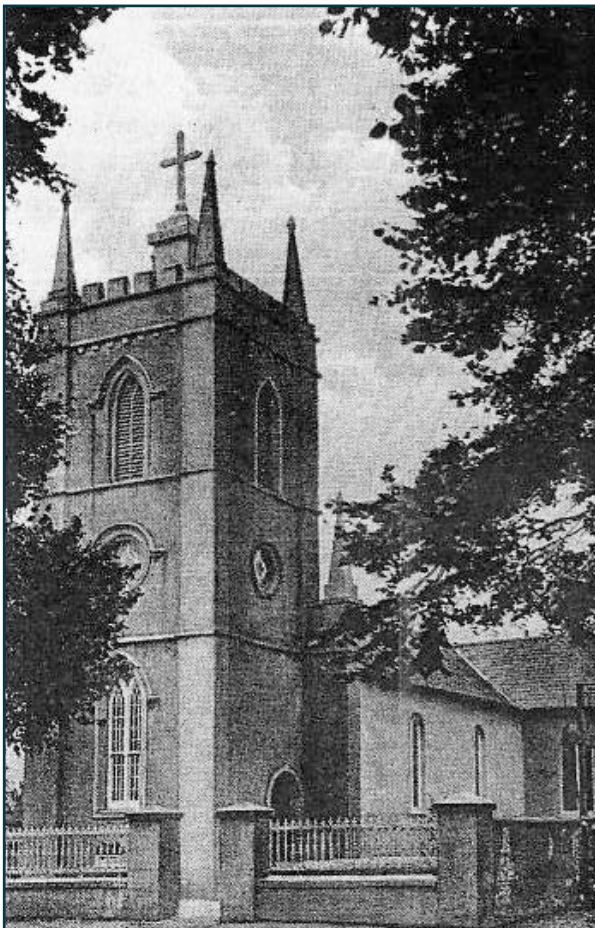


Fig. 22: The former Catholic Church, built 1800

The former school was built in 1908 by W.H. Byrne & Son. The same architectural practice would build the large new Catholic Church in 1955. The single-storey former national school of nine bays has a three-bay central block flanked either side by advanced gable-ended bays. Simple barge boards and finials with timber and infill panelling are located below the gable apex. The walls are otherwise plainly rendered with segmental headed windows. Good ironwork railings stand in front.

The presbytery, built in 1878, is a two-storey cube-shaped house with a Mulvany-style flat-roofed central entrance porch with engaged pilaster pairs supporting a plain entablature and attic storey. It has roughcast rendered walls and raised limestone quoins. The low pitched hipped roof has bracketed corbels and there are substantial brick stacks. An enlivening detail is the paired gothic lights on the side elevation above blind quatrefoil panels, visually linking the presbytery to the church complex. The building is fronted by a rock-cut limestone wall on a low plinth.

Saint Peter and Pauls Catholic church, built in 1956 by Simon Aloysius Leonard, is a large church with a tall detached bell-tower. It is set back from the square, the early nineteenth-century church it replaced was on the site of the church car-park and nearer the square. It has an impressive gabled front of three bays with flanking side entrances; over the entrance porch is a round-headed triplet recessed within a round arch. The church has a long and tall side elevation of five bays, flanked towards the ritual east end with low flat roofed sacristies and confessionals. It has a tall shallow eastern apse with side lights. Rendered walls with quoins are enlivened by a shallow pitched copper-clad roof to church and belfry.

An immense barn-like interior somewhat relieved by a coffered barrel-vaulted ceiling is flanked by flat sides. A deep chancel arch has the altar placed below it and flanking lower arches open into side altars. An organ gallery is located over the entrance bay. The interior is intact with good wooden doors and confessionals.

## Street by street appraisal

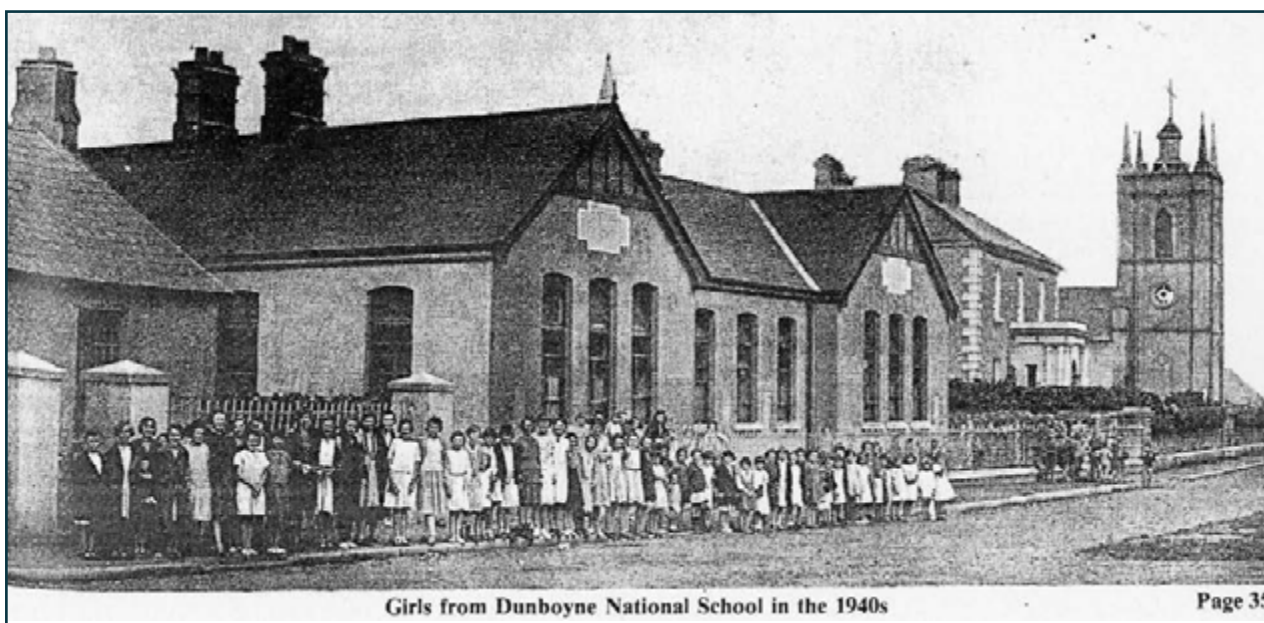


Fig. 23: South side of the Green, c.1940



Fig. 24: Public house at the corner of the Navan Road



Fig. 25: Private house to the east of the Catholic church

To the west of the former school is a free standing two-storey commercial building from the 1960 or 1970s. It has a utilitarian character at variance with the character of the Square. Further to the west is a two-storey red brick pub that stands on the corner to the Navan Road and links with the buildings on that road. The original windows and slate have been removed but in terms of scale and expression it remains sympathetic to its setting.

To the east of the Catholic Church is a private bungalow house set far back from the road and largely hidden by boundary planting. The planting helps to hide the house which is suburban in character and differs from the public character of the Square.

## Street by street appraisal

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Fig. 26: Public house to the west end of the Square

A long two-storey public house with a pitched slate roof stands at the west end of the Square. It has the same scale and architectural expression as the public house opposite on the corner of the Navan Road and Brady's pub further away on the south side of the Square. It plays an important role of closing the space at the western end of the Square.



Fig. 27: Dunboyne Cottage

Dunboyne Cottage immediately east of the Green is a two-storey three bay house with a hipped roof with good bracketed eaves. It has roughcast rendered walls with rendered platband, continuous sill course and quoins. The windows have been replaced. To the west is an extended two-storey building with slated pitched roofs and brick dressings to the window openings. The original building functions well in defining the corner to the Green.



Fig. 28: Terrace to south side of the Green

A row of six terraced two storey houses on the south side of the green grouped under a hipped slate roof with substantial brick stacks on the party walls. Three bays wide with brick dressings to doors and windows and rendered walls. Probably dating to 1903 and by Anthony Scott, two other similarly detailed terraces on the Navan Road are together an important and unifying aspect of the architectural fabric of Dunboyne.



## Street by street appraisal



Fig 29: Brady's, south side of the Green

Next to this terrace is Dunboyne House, a low ten-bay two-storey shop and pub, formerly two separate houses. Built c.1870, but possibly as late as 1914, it now has an artificial stated pitched roof. It also has segmental-headed ground floor windows and original sash windows and stone sills and good later nineteenth or early twentieth-century shop fronts. Brady's once combined a bar and grocery with hotel accommodation and livery stables.

### 7.2.2 Quality and Treatment of Open Space

The square expresses a classic feature of Irish towns and villages in the juxtaposition of its wide thoroughfare faced with low and unassuming two-storey houses. Its individuality lies in the ranging of the school, parochial house and Catholic Church on one side with a tree-lined triangular green in front, with a residential terrace and pubs and shops opposite. A two-storey public house complex closed the view to the west, with roads leading away to the north and south. Other than the public building of the Catholic Church, land use on the Square is a mixture of residential with a small number of commercial premises, which add to the street's ambiance and sustains the local community and village character.



Fig 30: The Square, c.1950

Most of the buildings on the south side are street fronted with no boundary treatment. The exception is a set-back suburban type bungalow in use as a flower shop to the western end of the south side. This has a low wall, gate and concrete covered front area.

The buildings to the north side include the former National School, the Presbytery and the Catholic Church. The former two have small set-backs, the National School has quality metal railings and the Presbytery has a fine stone wall and metal gate.

## Street by street appraisal

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**Fig 31: Entrance to the Catholic church**

The Catholic Church has a long curved stone wall with pedestrian gates either side of a larger gated opening, all in scale with the church building behind.

Other than the grass area surrounded by the large scale trees of the Green, the Square is a confusing collection of different paving types (tarmac, concrete slabs and pavers, stone etc). Limestone kerbing survives in front of the former national school and Parochial house and in front of the early-twentieth-century residential terrace. However, there are many variations in the kerbing lines for car parking bays and together with the many bollards dotted throughout the space, gives a busy and small scale appearance at variance with the historic character of simplicity and minimal clutter. The dense planting of small scale trees to the west end of the space causes further clutter and inhibits cross views in a north-south direction across the Square. No historic street furniture survives.

# Street by street appraisal

## 7.3 Navan Road

### 7.3.1 Architectural Character and Building Uses



Fig 32: Navan Road, east side



Fig 33: Navan Road corner to Summerhill Road

This part of the ACA is an important entrance to the rectangular space of the Green at the heart of Dunboyne. Spatial definition is strongest on the east side with buildings on the Navan Road especially the row of four terrace houses. These are three-bay two-storey houses from c.1910 with a slated roofs. The walls are rendered with stone quoins and red brick dressings to the openings. These relate to another terrace of ten houses further to the north at St. Mary's terrace.

### 7.3.2 Quality and Treatment of Open Spaces

Buildings to the south of the space at the junction with Summerhill Road are recent but do keep the building line and are two-storey in height. A single-storey free-standing bank building of dark brick with a large pyramid roof stands to the west and its set-back position disrupts the street line. There is a lack of special definition at the filling station in the corner that has no boundary treatment and is fronted by a triangular grassed area at the junction of the Navan Road and Summerhill Road. The uses are a mix of small commercial activities that give the Navan Road a vibrant character that is sympathetic with the village character of the ACA.

## Summary of significant views & vistas

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### 8.0 Summary of significant views & vistas

The flat nature of the terrain within the ACA precludes any vantage points affording panoramic views over the town or any part of the surrounding countryside.

The significant views and vistas are:

- The main landmark within Dunboyne is the tall belfry of the Catholic Church, visible from many locations within the town.
- As suggested above, stripping the ivy and growth on the medieval church tower (under proper conservation supervision) would produce another landmark building at the west end of the town, inside the ACA.
- Outside the ACA, to the south on a slightly elevated site is Dunboyne Castle. Its strategic location suggests strongly that this was also the site of the medieval castle. At present it has little visual presence in the view out of the ACA along the Maynooth Road.
- The view from the Maynooth Road northwards into the ACA is bounded on the right by the demesne of Dunboyne Castle. A house at the end of Church Square directs the view towards the gates to St. Peter's Church and graveyard to the west and to the ACA to the east (see fig. 27). This house also plays an important role in giving an elevation of the village of Dunboyne on approach.
- Views from the Navan and Summerhill roads focus on the patriarchal tree at the west side of the Green.
- Views from the Dublin Road focus on the tree-lined triangle at the east end of the Green.
- The main views within Dunboyne are those in the square, in particular the incidental views provided through the tree-lined triangular green.
- Secondary views are offered between buildings to the spaces behind. These are important in that they allow observers to perceive other parts of the ACA and important locations on the periphery of the ACA. A good example is the laneway to the east of Brady's pub. This gives a view of the demesne wall and large scale park planting beyond. In contrast the lane to the east of the Presbytery leads to a single-storey house with a private garden. This change in scale from public Green to private dwelling is very well articulated. As buildings around the Square have important side elevations, these views are also of significance.

## Summary of significant views & vistas

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Fig 34: Navan Road looking south



Fig 35: View into the Square from the north-west



Fig 36: View into the ACA from the Maynooth Road

## Summary of significant views & vistas

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Fig 37: The Square seen from the west



Fig 38: The Square seen from the east on the Dublin Road



Fig 39: Incidental views through the trees in the Green

# Summary of Special Character

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## 9.0 Summary of Special Character

The special character of Dunboyne is derived from an overlapping of features derived from its long historical development, often very subtly registered. Its manorial origin is reinforced by the presence of Dunboyne Castle to the south and the medieval church tower, tucked away to the west and away from later developments. This western axis of church and castle is one important aspect of the character of Dunboyne. Another major element is the rectangular green, east of the medieval core, and carved out of the demesne in the early nineteenth-century. Within this area the tree-lined triangular green space provides a haven of tranquillity from busy routes through the town. The mature trees are important in that they give a sense of scale and unity to the space.

Another character of Dunboyne is the predominance of early twentieth-century buildings – Brady’s (Dunboyne House), the former National School, terraced two storey houses on the Green and Navan Road reflect early twentieth-century re-ordering of a more vernacular landscape of low thatched houses seen in older photographs. Slightly earlier and more formal architecture was represented by Dunboyne Cottage and the Parochial House, the T-Plan church of c.1800, the initial focus of the green was demolished in 1993, while its replacement had been built nearly forty years earlier.

More recent development has been less than sympathetic to the early twentieth-century grain of the square – taller and generic infilling, ignoring both the roof lines and the restrained character of the architecture.

# Summary of Special Character

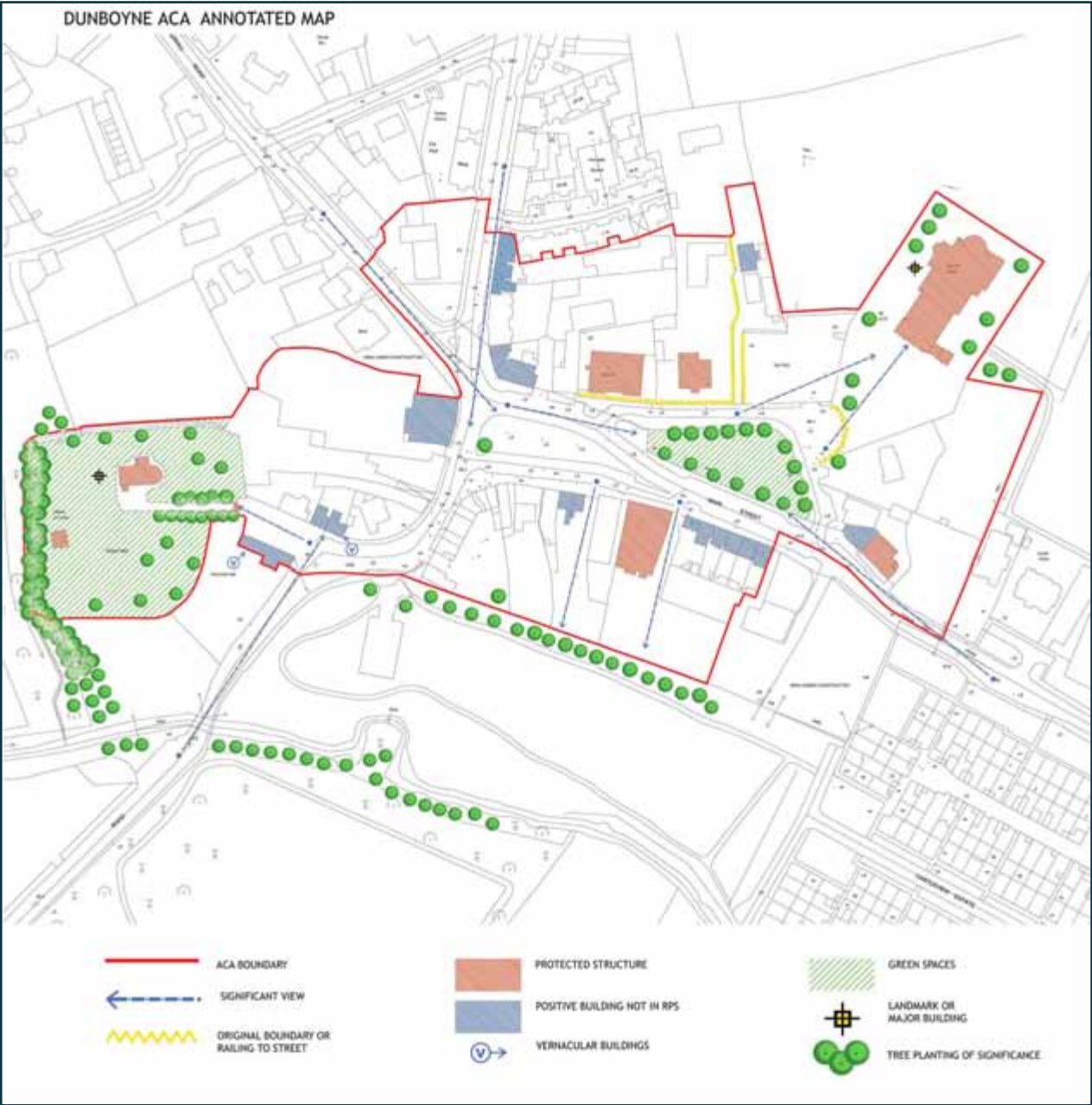


Fig.40: Dunboyne ACA



# Implications for Planning and Development

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## 10.0 Implications for Planning and Development

The objective of Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) designation is to protect the special character of an area through rigorous control and positive management of any changes made to the built environment. Under the Planning & Development Act 2000 there is a requirement to obtain planning permission for all development works which do not constitute exempted development. Section 4 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 lists developments which are constituted as exempt, for the purposes of the Act. With regard to Architectural Conservation Areas it is important to take into account Section 4(1)(h) of the Act which states that the following shall be exempted development:

*“Development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of the neighbouring structures.”*

### **Protected structures:**

Planning permission is required for all works that would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of the structure including its curtilage, which contributes to its special character. Under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 an owner/occupier may request a declaration from Meath County Council as to whether any works they propose require planning permission. A declaration issued under this section sets out the type of works the Planning Authority considers would or would not affect the character of a structure or any elements thereof, which contributes to its special interest.

### **Non-protected structures within the ACA:**

Owners and occupiers of buildings and lands located within the Dunboyne Architectural Conservation Area which are not protected structures should be aware that works, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority would materially affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area will require specific grant of planning permission under Section 82(1) and (2) of the Planning & Development Act 2000. In considering any application, the effect of the proposed development on the special character of the ACA must be taken into account.

# Implications for Planning and Development

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## 10.1 Works requiring planning permission

### 10.1.1 External walls

The majority of building facades in Dunboyne have a render or stucco finish with stone and brick details. Many of the existing facades have had their original lime mortar pointing removed and replaced with an unsuitable cement based mortar. This type of repointing in a style or manner other than existing would be deemed unacceptable by the Planning Authority and the restoration of suitable render will be encouraged. The painting of natural stone, brick or unpainted render-finished structures can damage the special character of the ACA and would not be deemed acceptable. Use of modern paints which can be detrimental to the building's fabric, or the sand blasting of external surfaces which may lead to porosity and water ingress are also unacceptable. Dramatic use of colour for facades and façade details should be avoided in order to allow buildings to act harmoniously with one another, this is especially important in terrace situations.

### 10.1.2 Roofs

The roofscape of the Dunboyne Village ACA is significant and is part of its integral special character. Original elements should be retained where possible, and repaired and reused rather than replaced. The following works require planning permission:

- The removal of the original roofing material such as natural slate and ridge tiles. Their replacement with modern materials like fibre-cement tiles will not be deemed suitable by the local authority
- The removal of existing chimney-stacks and early terra-cotta or clay pots or other features of the roofscape such as cast-iron gutters and down-pipes.
- The removal of timber bargeboards and other eaves details and their replacement in a material other than the existing.

- The installation of roof lights or dormer windows on the front or prominent elevation of a structure, visible from the public realm. There is no tradition of dormer windows within the Dunboyne Village ACA and their installation will not be deemed appropriate by the local authority.
- The erection of, or alterations to, externally mounted signs and advertisements at roof level, including banners.
- The provision of awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- The erection of solar panels, TV satellite dishes, communication antennae or support structures for same. These are considered to have a highly negative impact on the character of the area and should be avoided when visible from the public realm. Where existing aerials have become redundant they should be removed.

### 10.1.3 Window and door openings

The buildings within the ACA of Dunboyne Village retain a considerable number of original window and doors, however a large number of windows have been replaced with uPVC or timber windows of inappropriate design. Original elements should be retained where possible, and repaired and reused rather than replaced. The following works require planning permission:

- The alteration or enlargement of original openings.
- The removal of original timber and metal windows, and their replacement with modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium.
- The removal of stone sills and doorsteps.
- The removal of fanlights and original timber doors, and their replacement with

## Implications for Planning and Development

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modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium.

- Repairs to historic windows and doors should be carried out following consultation with the conservation officer of Meath County Council.

### 10.1.4 Commercial frontage

Planning permission is required for the alteration of commercial frontages whether the structure is within an ACA or not. However alterations within the ACA boundaries will be assessed on the impact of the proposed design on its adjoining and surrounding structures, having regard to scale proportion, material and details. The overall aim in the design of new shop fronts should be to reinforce the unity and integrity of the whole elevation. The following guidance should be adhered to:

- High quality, durable materials should be used, such as stone, brick, timber, vitrolite tile and glass, rather than artificial contemporary materials.
- Fascia boards should be in proportion to the shop front and colours should be complementary to those of the building and adjoining structures.
- New and extended shop fronts should never obscure architectural details of the original structure, such as sills, stringcourses, eaves details, windows and doorways.
- The windows to the main façade of the shop front should be of clear glass and not used as a surface for advertisements or other coloured signage.
- While outdoor advertising is necessary for commercial activity, new signage must not detract from the special character and visual amenity of the ACA. A good example is Brady's pub-grocer. Endeavours should be made by other owners and occupiers of commercial premises to maintain an appropriate style, which complements extant historic structures. This practice should continue where possible and hand painted signs will be encouraged. The use of corporate signage will depend on its compatibility with adjoining buildings, but plastic box signs and the use of incompatible colours on shopfronts is strongly discouraged by the Planning Authority. This is most pertinent in the case of certain commercial premises such as fast-food outlets, bookmakers, amusement arcades and phone call centres.
- Planning permission will be required for external vending machines, ATMS, newspaper receptacles, and storage boxes and bays. All commercial premises should endeavour to limit the clutter of temporary external retail furniture such as, external heaters, various bins, menu-boards, seating and tables and ensure that these elements do not detract from the special character of the ACA.
- Awnings should be traditional in style and retractable, and made of a heavy duty natural material rather than plastic.
- Where security is an issue, the design of security shutters and grilles should complement rather than negatively impact on the structure. Metal roller blinds with visible boxes are not acceptable within the ACA boundaries. Shutters can be positioned discreetly behind the fascia board or lattice grilles may be positioned behind the shop window. Security shutters should never cover the whole commercial frontage but only the vulnerable glazed areas and should be painted or finished in colour to complement the rest of the exterior. Where external security screens are deemed acceptable they should be of transparent open chain-link grille design rather solid or perforated shutters, which are not transparent when viewed obliquely.
- Separate access to the upper floors of the buildings should be maintained where existing and commercial uses that bring vitality to upper floor areas will be encouraged.

## Implications for Planning and Development

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### 10.1.5 New build

New development within the ACA of Dunboyne Village includes extensions, including porch extensions to the front of buildings, infill sites and all new build that impacts on the street facing elevations of buildings that are visible from the public realm and that impact on the curtilage of existing protected structures, including those not visible from the public realm. Designation as an ACA puts an obligation on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design, which should contribute to the visual enhancement of the area while respecting its physical character. The following guidance regarding new development should be adhered to:

- The concept of the direct imitation of earlier styles is not always appropriate but if this model is to be followed then the elevation treatment of the new development should be well-proportioned and built with respect for its context. Buildings should follow the eaves heights, roof pitches and building lines which predominate in the respective streets and should employ windows of matching proportions and alignment. Materials should be of good visual quality and durability. Features which are not found amongst the historic buildings of the town should be avoided. These include projecting eaves, fascia and soffit boards, dormer windows and roof windows, standard-issue concrete cills or copings, top-hung casement windows, pressed aluminium gutters or uPVC features of any kind. Roofs should be covered with natural slate, terra-cotta decorative elements, lead or other roofing which enhances the character of the ACA.
- High quality contemporary architectural design that is complementary to the character of the ACA is acceptable but the development of any infill sites within the ACA, particularly of part of a street terrace, will require a very sensitive design approach and should positively contribute to the character of the area. A design impact statement providing

justification for the proposal in terms of design concept, scale, materials and proportions should accompany such an application.

- New buildings should take into account existing building lines and plots in order to retain the existing grain and character of the ACA. See also the following section (10.1.6) on the amalgamation of sites.
- Extensions should be kept to the rear of properties and be of an appropriate scale, built with suitable materials and finishes. Ridge lines to buildings should not be exceeded or broken by rear extensions. Extensions to the side or front of street-front structures within the ACA, will not be encouraged by the local authority as these could be particularly detrimental to the character of Dunboyne Village.

### 10.1.6 Amalgamation of structures, properties and sites

The amalgamation of structures requires planning permission regardless of whether they are located in an ACA or not, unless it involves reversing the subdivision of what had originally been a single dwelling. Proposals for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA should take into consideration the impact of changing or extending the existing plot sizes on the streetscape. Original entrances should remain in use. The amalgamation of sites within the ACA, especially with an increased density should respect the scale, mass, height and design of not just the adjoining buildings but of the entire streetscape. This will require sensitive planning and design treatment in order to complement the fine grain of the established streetscape. A design impact statement providing justification for the proposal should accompany such applications.

### 10.1.7 Demolition works

Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA, whether it is a protected structure or not will require planning permission. Demolition will normally only be permitted

## Implications for Planning and Development

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where the structure makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Where permission is sought for demolition on the ground of structural defects or failure, a report containing annotated photographs and drawings will be required. The report is to be produced by a suitably qualified and experienced professional regarding the existing condition. As part of the justification for any demolition within the ACA on structural grounds, details will be required of repairs and remedial works usually carried out in similar circumstances and details of why they are not deemed suitable in this case.

### 10.1.8 Boundary Treatments

Removal of original railings, gates, gate piers and boundary walls, whether visible from the public realm or not, require planning permission. This also applies to significant trees. Most buildings with the Dunboyne Village ACA have street frontages but landmark buildings on the square are bounded by stone walls or railings, which add to the special character of the village. Where these still exist they should be retained. In the instance where a section of a boundary wall has been removed in order to provide a new entrance to a property or site, the broken edges of the original wall piece should be finished appropriately and never left in a ruinous state.

### 10.1.9 External Lighting

Proposals for the illumination during night-time hours of certain buildings and landmark features within Dunboyne Village ACA should be agreed beforehand with Meath County Council. The method of lighting, i.e. type of fitting, fixing method and type of light would need to be specified by the applicant in seeking permission and should be designed so that it does not result in light pollution or negatively impact on other structures in the ACA.

### 10.1.11 Preservation of views

The significant views are outlined in this document. It is vital to the special character of the village that these views are preserved and any works within the ACA should not adversely impact or block these views.

## 10.2 Works not requiring planning permission

### 10.2.1 Internal Alterations

The ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements to structures which are not listed as protected structures within the ACA, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of the structure. However, all internal changes must comply with current building regulations.

### 10.2.2 Works to the public realm

Generally, works to the public realm will be carried out by Meath County Council or major utility and service providers, and may be exempt from planning permission. However, prior to commencement of the works, consultation with the Conservation Office of Meath County Council will be required, to ensure that these works enhance and improve the special character of the ACA and do not negatively impact on it. The following areas will require careful consideration:

- Works to public footpaths, including the preservation of historical street surfaces such as original kerbing. New pavements should not be of poured concrete or tarmacadam with reconstituted stone kerbing, but should reflect the natural materials of the village. When cobble-lock style paving is used it should be of an appropriate scale, colour and detail to complement the character of the village. The choice of material for paving should compliment other paved areas to avoid a patchwork effect. Service ducts and manhole covers should be kept to a minimum and be integrated with an appropriate paving system as much as possible.

## Implications for Planning and Development

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Fig.41: Profusion of service access in paving



Fig.42: Service boxes in important views

- Changes to traffic management and parking within the ACA. This should take into account its ACA designation and seek to preserve and enhance the character of the area in the design and provision of parking meter machines, signage, ramps, renewed surface treatment and pavement layout. Suitable design of public signage, in particular tourist information will be encouraged. A traffic study should be considered for the Square to reduce the number of parked cars directly in the square and along footpaths. Vehicles clutter the space and create significant pedestrian and visual barriers between the north and south side of the Square. Parking at right angles, such as at the vernacular buildings on the south side of Church Square should be discouraged and not used in any other part of the ACA. Parking bays should be kept to a minimum in order to allow footpaths to have good defining lines. Other solutions should be sought to reduce fussy kerbing lines in the Square.
  - New street-lighting should be in a manner which enhances the village. The lighting should not obstruct the significant views within the ACA.
  - The removal of redundant distribution poles, wires and services which hang across the streets or deface commercial frontages and residential terraces should be promoted. Equally, initiatives to place overhead service underground will be supported and facilitated where possible.
  - Landscaping should be respectful of the simplicity and scale of the space in the ACA. Fussy and small scale planting should be avoided. Replacement trees should be of an appropriate size and existing trees well maintained and monitored for decay.
- The installation and location of utility boxes, such as large ESB metre boxes, should be given careful consideration with regard to their position within the ACA and the impact of its colour and massing on the adjoining boundary treatment and surrounding buildings. Painted finishes of muted colour rather than galvanised finish should be considered.
  - Retention and preservation of all surviving items of street furniture, which contribute to the special character of the ACA, such as original lamp standards, cast-iron water pumps and post boxes. New street furniture when provided will be of high quality reflecting the character of the ACA.

## Implications for Planning and Development

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### 10.2.3 Maintenance & repairs to non-protected structures only

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and genuine repairs within this ACA (such as roof, rainwater goods or window repairs) as long as original materials are retained where they exist, or where replacement is necessary that it is on a like-for-like basis.

Please note that some of the works listed in Section 10.0 and all its subsections above require planning permission irrespective of whether the area is protected or not, but are included to highlight the need for careful consideration of the design of the proposed works. This is to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the special character of the area. The list is not in itself a comprehensive list of all works, in all circumstances that require planning permission, but identifies those works that would impact on the character of the ACA. Development works would still have to adhere to the general provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 and Planning Regulations. The area planner and conservation officer of Meath County Council can be consulted if there is any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not.

#### (Endnotes)

- 1 E. St. John Brooks, *The Irish Cartularies of Llanthony Prima & Secunda* (Dublin, 1953), 74-5.
- 2 H.S. Sweetman ed., *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, I, No. 1389.
- 3 *Ibid.*, I, No. 1673.
- 4 *The capite baroniae* (the centres of the major land grants of the sub-infeudation).
- 5 B.J. Graham, 'Anglo-Norman Settlement in County Meath', *Royal Irish Academy*, 75C, 11, (Dublin, 1975), 223-248 at 226.
- 6 H.S. Sweetman ed., *Calendar of Documents relating to Ireland*, II, No. 693. Dunshaughlin (10L = 15 marks), Skreen (37marks), Slane (40 marks) and Nobber (20 marks), but considerably less than Duleek (30I = 45 marks) and Ratoath (20I = 30marks).
- 7 S. Lewis, *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*, I, 554; G. Martin, 'Plantation Boroughs in Medieval Ireland, with a handlist of Boroughs to c.1500', in D. Harkness and Mary O'Dowd eds., *The Town in Ireland* (Dublin, 1981), 40.
- 8 Linda Clare, 'Dunboyne in medieval times', in *Dunboyne, Kilbride & Clonee. A Picture of the Past*, (Dunboyne, 1993), 2.
- 9 Statute Rolls of Edward IV, Part 1. quoted in Clarke, *ibid.*, 4.
- 10 C. Casey and A. Rowan, *The Buildings of Ireland. North Leinster* (London, 1993), 258

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta  
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