



Slane Village

Architectural Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd

On behalf of
Meath County Council and
County Meath Heritage Forum



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Foreword

In 2007 Meath County Council adopted the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011 prepared by the County Meath 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 conserve 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 identifies the special character of the Slane Village 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

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 protect 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 its 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 must respect or enhance its special character and must 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

Slane Village is located at the meeting of two national routes, namely at the intersection of the Dublin to Derry (N2) and the Drogheda to Navan (N51) roads. Its position is approx 40 kilometres to the northwest of Dublin and 12 kilometres to the west of the port of Drogheda. Today, it can be considered a commuter village within the greater Meath and Dublin areas. The village is bounded to the north by Slane Hill, and by the River Boyne and Slane Mill to the south. Its position at a higher point above the river affords views of the village's historic core from the southern approach road (Dublin Road) and from Slane Bridge. The village streetscape extends along the four roads radiating from the square at the centre of the crossroads but most predominantly to the north and to the west.

2.1 ACA Boundary

The ACA for Slane Village extends from the main square at the crossroads, out along the four roads which radiate from the square, to the edges of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century building fabric and before twentieth-century development begins. To the north, the ACA encompasses the streetscape on both sides of Chapel Street as far as the former Slane National School to the north of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and includes the eighteenth-century house and gardens of Mountcharles Lodge and the nineteenth-century rectory and gardens of Cill Ghrian on the west side of the street. To the south the area stretches to the west to include St. Patrick's Church of Ireland on Church Street and at that point the boundary is defined by the wall of the Slane Castle demesne, which burrows deep into the village and runs close to the rear of the properties to the south of Church Street. The southern boundary ends at the demesne wall to the west of Mill Hill and to the east the border terminates at the rear of the southeast house on the main square. The eastern boundary of the village includes the streetscape of the shop fronts on both sides of Main Street and terminates at the twentieth-century housing estate of Ledwidge Hall on the north side. The

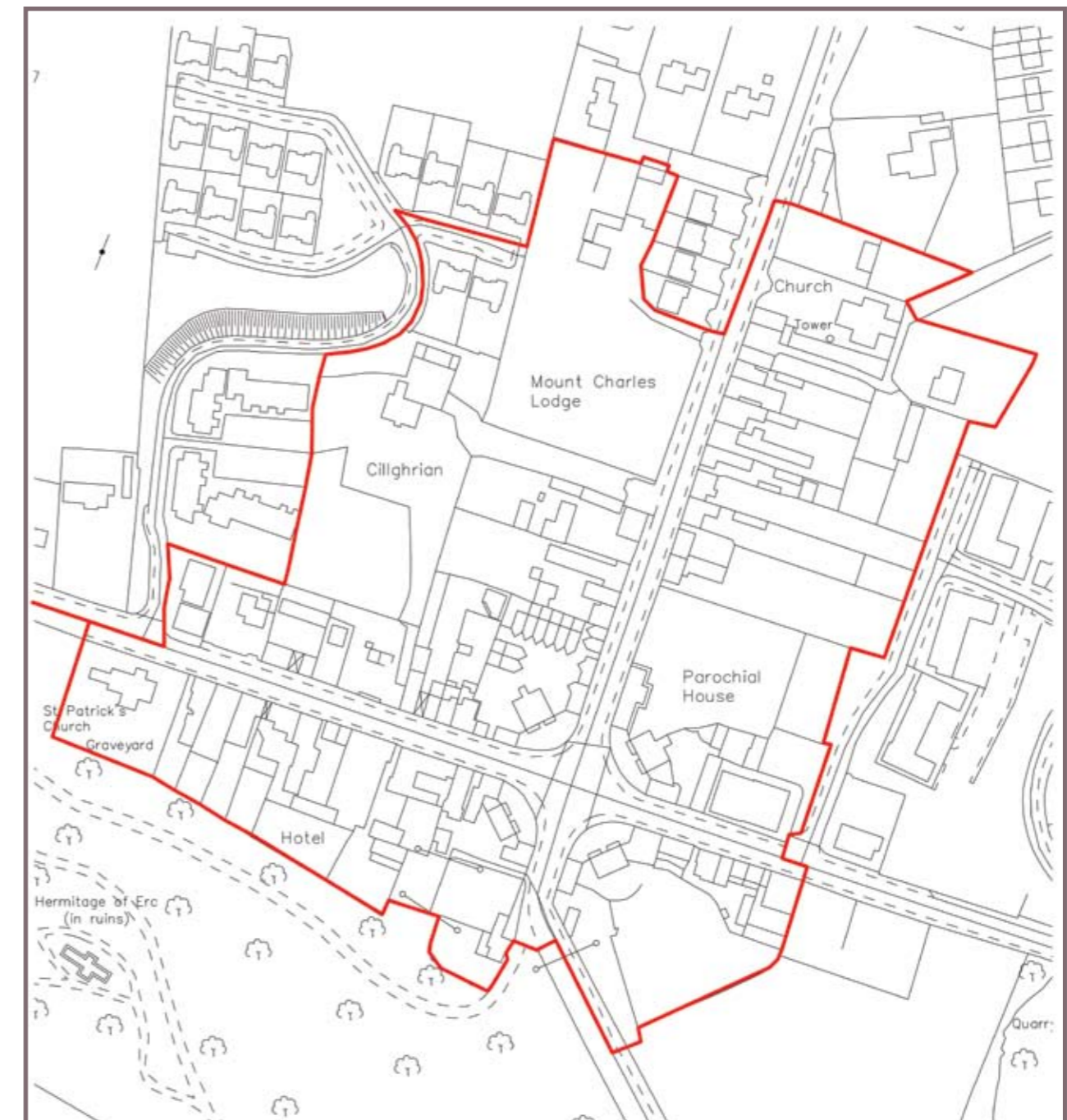
boundaries of the ACA are delineated on the accompanying Figure 1.

The following streets and thoroughfares are located partly or wholly within the boundaries of the ACA:

- The Square
- Chapel Street
- Main Street
- Mill Hill
- Church Street

Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

Fig.1: Boundary Map



Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

3.0 Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

There are a number of protected structures within the boundaries of the Slane Village 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. A small proportion of National Monuments are in state ownership and care.

3.1 Protected Structures

Within the boundary of the Slane Village ACA there are forty-four 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.

Schedule of Protected Structures

- RPS No. 203 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, Church Street south
- RPS No. 204 Terraced house, Church Street south
- RPS No. 205 T. Meade, Church Street: Outbuilding to rear
- RPS No. 206 T. Meade, Church Street: Main building on street, south
- RPS No. 207 Conyngham's Arms Hotel, Church Street south
- RPS No. 208 Slane Glebe House, Cill Ghrian, Church Street north
- RPS No. 209 Terraced house, Church Street north
- RPS No. 210 House of Paul, Church Street south
- RPS No. 211 Terraced house, Church Street north
- RPS No. 212 Terraced house, Church Street north
- RPS No. 213 Terraced house, Church Street north
- RPS No. 214 Terraced house, Church Street north
- RPS No. 215 The Village Inn, Church Street south
- RPS No. 216 Regina House, The Square
- RPS No. 217 Lodge, Mill Hill west
- RPS No. 218 House (former outbuilding), Church Street north
- RPS No. 219 Hand pump & cylinders, Rock House, The Square
- RPS No. 220 House (former outbuilding), Mill Hill west
- RPS No. 221 Set of gates & stone piers, Regina House, The Square
- RPS No. 222 Rock House, The Square, north-west
- RPS No. 224 Set of gates & stone piers, Rock House, The Square
- RPS No. 225 House (former outbuilding), Mill Hill east
- RPS No. 226 Slane fireplaces, former outbuilding, Chapel Street west
- RPS No. 227 Mount Charles Lodge, Chapel Street west
- RPS No. 228 Water pump, Chapel Street west
- RPS No. 229 Detached house, The Square, south-east
- RPS No. 230 Parochial Hall (former outbuilding), Chapel Street, east
- RPS No. 231 Maloney's Pub, Chapel Street, west
- RPS No. 232 Parochial House, The Square, north-east
- RPS No. 233 Art Gallery, (former outbuilding), Main Street north
- RPS No. 234 Terraced house, Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 235 Post office (former outbuilding), Main Street south
- RPS No. 236 Terraced house, Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 237 Terraced house, Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 238 Terraced house, Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 239 Single-storey terraced house, off Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 240 Terraced house, Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 241 Single-storey terraced house, off Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 243 Two-storey house, off Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 244 Gates & railings to St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church
- RPS No. 245 Single-storey terraced house, off Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 246 Single-storey terraced house, off Chapel Street east
- RPS No. 247 Belfry, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Chapel Street
- RPS No. 249 St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, Chapel Street

source: Meath Co Development Plan 2007-2013

Recorded Monuments

3.2 Recorded Monuments

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

- RMP Ref. ME019-23 Grave Slab, St. Patrick's Church of Ireland
- RMP Ref. ME019-23001 Effigy
- RMP Ref. ME019-23002 Graveslab
- RMP Ref. ME019-23003 Architectural fragment
- RMP Ref. ME019-23004 Armorial Plaque
- RMP Ref. ME019-25 Font, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church

Development Plan Zoning & Objectives

The Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 contains the 2001 Development Plan for Slane which has been readopted pending its replacement with a Local Area Plan. Work has commenced on this LAP which will be completed in 2009.

Historical development of the area

5.0 Historical development of the area



Fig. 2: Extract from William Larkin's road surveys in Co. Meath, 1806-10 (courtesy of the National Archives of Ireland, ref. no. NAI, OPW 5HC/6/206)

Slane is situated above the River Boyne at the first fordable point inland from Drogheda and at the crossroads of the primary routes between Dublin and Derry, and Drogheda and Navan. Its name is derived from Baile Slaine meaning Slaney's town. According to tradition St. Patrick began his conversion of Ireland by lighting a fire on the hill of Slane in defiance of Druidic law. The early settlement of the village was destroyed in 1156 and 1161, and again in 1172 by Dermot McMurrough and his ally Strongbow. Once the Normans consolidated their rule a new settlement and castle were observed at Slane, when Hugh de Lacy commented that it was 'a considerable town in one of the boroughs in his palatinate of Meath'. It was during this period that one of de Lacy's knights, Archembald Fleming, was granted the lands around Slane. From then until the beginning of the eighteenth century the Fleming family dominated the town and the adjoining estate. The title Lord Slane was first formally recognised by the Crown in 1489.

In the seventeenth century The Civil Survey for Meath recorded one large stone house, two chapels, a friary, an old castle and twenty-five tenements in the village. T.J. Westropp writing about Slane in 1901 describes William Petty's Down Survey from 1652, which showed sixteen houses (one large one with gables) in the village, extending down the hill from the crossroads towards the bridge. The medieval historian John Bradley concurs to some extent with Westropp's description, claiming that the earlier settlement was in fact in two portions, one near the bridge and one at the top of the hill near the crossroads. During the Williamite War, Fleming's lands at Slane were confiscated and subsequently bought by Brigadier Henry Conyngham, a prominent agent and landowner from Donegal, at an auction of forfeited estates in Dublin. A report of these estates in 1700, produced by the commissioners for potential investors, illustrates in greater detail the nature of the land at Slane, and the scale of the town indicating 44 tenements, 4 of which belonged to the rector of Slane.

Historical development of the area

During the early-eighteenth century, various improvements were carried out at the village including the construction of the early block of the St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, instigated by William Conyngham, Brigadier Conyngham's eldest son. For convenience the church was located at the edge of the village, at its boundary with the demesne. The village grew in a simple pattern extending along the streets from the crossroads and predominantly towards the church at the west end and northwards on the road to Collon. By the mid-eighteenth century Williams' brother Viscount Henry Conyngham had taken over the estates and with the encouragement of his nephew, the inimitable William Burton Conyngham, a new residential square was laid out on the old market place at the crossroads. As part of this improving impetus Slane Castle was reconstructed and Slane Mill was established, the largest corn mill in Europe at that time. The square in the village was planned as a formal set-piece to attract wealthier tenants with four large houses forming an octagon and their respective outbuildings onto the street. With these new additions a flurry of building activity ensued at the village; a hotel and additional residential and commercial premises were erected on the main streets and also a hunting lodge for the Conynghams on Chapel Street called Mount Charles Lodge. Again the bulk of new buildings extended largely towards the west and north, with no attempt made to build on the agricultural land to the south and east. At the end of the eighteenth century the Conynghams granted a site for the Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick's at the top of Chapel Street.

In the nineteenth century the village continued to develop along the same lines, with the addition of the rectory (now Cill Ghrian), a national school for the village, which was built on the site adjoining the Catholic Church and a new gate lodge for the northeast entrance to Slane Castle demesne. During this period the village never expanded beyond the sites of the church buildings, nor were any endeavours made to create an open public space other than the market, informally held at the octagon on the main square. In 1813 J.C. Curwen MP commented on Slane as "neatly

built and entirely new". Twenty years later John O' Donovan in his Ordnance Survey diaries from 1835 described the village as 'a small neat village containing 64 houses, a Church Chapel and 3 schools. Of the houses 5 are 3 stories, 41 are 2 stories and 9 one storey; only one is thatched and the rest slated. The trades represented are 5 carpenters, 3 blacksmiths, 1 mason, 1 slater, 8 shoemakers, 2 tailors, 1 butcher, 12 publicans and 8 grocers. There is a fairly comfortable Inn, which is much frequented by persons going to or returning from Dublin..."

During the twentieth century, the nineteenth-century cabins and walled garden of the rectory building were removed from Church Street to provide toilets, a car park and open space for the public. Further along the street the mature trees forming the picturesque vista at the end of the street were removed and a series of modern residential and commercial buildings were constructed within the boundaries of the ACA. Similarly, to the east of the village a modern terrace of commercial buildings was built on Main Street. During the same period developments were carried out to the rear of diverse properties in the village, notably the infill residential development in the former gardens to the rear of Rock House, on the north-western side of the square. Today, Slane can be considered a commuter village within the greater Meath and Dublin areas.

Character overview of Slane Village ACA

6.0 Character overview of Slane Village ACA

6.1 Street pattern & materials



Fig.3: Extract from the 1837 first edition Ordnance Survey map showing Slane, Village (Courtesy of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland)

The form of Slane Village ACA is much as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Twentieth-century structures have replaced a small number of nineteenth-century residential buildings but the edges of the village remain as they were, with ecclesiastical structures delineating the boundary to the north and the west. The early morphology of the village developed in an organic pattern along the primary routes between Dublin and Derry, and Drogheda and Navan until the mid-eighteenth century when the octagon was formally laid out on the old market square at the crossroads. The village extended from there, predominantly towards the north and west where it meets the demesne and its boundaries. The approaches and exits to and from the village are largely defined by rubble stone walls, framed by mature trees, a classic feature of eighteenth-century Irish villages and it must be emphasised that these features are just as significant as the building fabric within the village. The octagon or diamond at the main square is a unique example of enlightened planning and is an iconic piece of architecture with which the village is best associated. The streetscape of the four main streets is currently

made up of a combination of residential and commercial buildings linked in terraces or detached houses in their own grounds. Pertinent to these are the stone outbuildings and coach-houses set in courtyards to the rear of the terraces and the private gardens of detached residences.

There is little trace of historic street materials or furniture left in the village with the exception of a small stretch of cobble in a carriageway between two terraces on Chapel Street, a cast iron pump on the same street and some cut stone steps leading to several commercial premises. One of the eight flambeaux that lit the village has been restored and moved to a new position on the square, but only its stone base is original. The remaining street furniture is modern, comprising painted timber and metal street benches in honour of Francis Ledwidge and some fluted metal bollards. Footpaths and kerbs are generally reconstituted stone with concrete flagging or tarmacadam.



Fig.4: Wall lamp on Chapel Street



Fig.5: Cast-iron water pump on Chapel Street

6.2 Form & arrangement of public space

In the last century the main square was still used as a public space but today this is dominated by traffic and other than the yards of the respective churches and a derelict open space on Church Street there is currently limited open public space within the ACA. The latter area was planned by the council in 1963 with the removal of a walled garden and single storey buildings on Church Street. It comprises a car park and public toilets for the village and is bounded by a stone planter to the street. Due to the lack of appropriate lighting, landscaping and seating it has evolved

Character overview of Slane Village ACA

into an impractical, useless space, never used as an appropriate amenity by the residents of Slane.

6.3 Socio-Economic Functions

There is a varied mix of uses within the ACA reflecting the historic function at the village such as residential, ecclesiastical, and commercial, with commercial activity founded in smaller shops such as butchers, bakers, hairdressers and the restaurant business. Most of the residential is based in private ownership but infill development and some of the over-the-shop domestic accommodation is based in the rental sector.

With the sale of the Parochial House on the northeast side of the main square there is little community activity within the ACA, as the National School falls just outside the boundary.

6.4 Building types

There are seven common building typologies found in the Slane Village ACA.

- Eighteenth & nineteenth-century residential terraces
- Eighteenth & nineteenth-century detached residences
- Eighteenth & nineteenth-century commercial structures
- Ecclesiastical buildings
- Outbuildings & coach-houses
- Twentieth-century residential development
- Twentieth-century commercial structures

6.5 Palette of materials

The prevailing building materials are limestone (in both cut stone and dressed stone) and exposed random rubble form, and red brick. In the eighteenth century the limestone was quarried locally, usually from the Ardbraccan or Sheephouse quarries. This can be observed in the majority of the eighteenth-century structures in the village where the stone is used extensively in decorative façade treatment, in outbuildings and boundary walls. The colour and quality of the stonework is an important element in defining

the special character of the village.

As opposed to the eighteenth-century terraces with exposed stonework facades, nineteenth-century buildings were usually faced with stucco or render. In some cases this has been inappropriately removed to expose uncoursed rubble stonework and brickwork around openings. In addition to the removal of the render the original lime mortar has been replaced with sand and cement pointing, a visually and technically unsuitable measure which will result in damage to the historical fabric. Red brickwork was used in chimney-stack construction and to embellish single-storey building types. It is used most notably in the otherwise sombre façade of Gothic Revival gate lodge on Mill Hill, which is enhanced by the decorative brickwork of its window surrounds and in the elegant chimneys of the houses on the square.

Painted 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, particularly cast-ironwork, namely in the impressive gates to the four houses on the square and the decorative railings and gate piers to the front of St. Patrick's Catholic Church. Wrought ironwork can be observed at the Gate Lodge on Mill Hill and in the last remaining flambeau on the square.



Fig.6: Restored flambeau



Fig.7: Detail from gates on the Octagon (courtesy of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage)

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 make a positive contribution to the character of Slane Village. In general the condition of the built fabric is good but there are individual properties which are in poor condition or derelict. This section provides a brief description of each street and open area within the ACA boundary under the following headings:

- Architectural Character
- Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment
- Boundary Treatment
- Land Use

7.1 The Square

7.1.1 Architectural Character

The square (known in the nineteenth century as Mount Charles Square) was laid out in c. 1767 by the Conyngham family. It is a fine example of a formally planned diamond and still forms the focal point of the village as it did in the eighteenth century. The octagon was carefully designed as a unit with four three-storey over basement residences, diagonally positioned and connected by screen walls to outbuildings forming pavilions to the streets, which radiate from the square. The four houses (known as the Four Sisters) flanking the octagon appear to match in their façade treatment but their varied ground plans, which adapt to sloping site constraints, lend idiosyncrasies to each building in their fenestration and roof structures. Slane's predominant building material, limestone, features strongly here: in the façades, the surrounds to basement areas and boundary walls to the front gardens. The fronts are faced with squared limestone and are dressed with a limestone plinth, eaves courses and ashlar quoins. Each house has a hipped slate roof, of varied height depending on the floor plan, with elegant red brick chimneystacks. The buildings show their

individuality in their splendid doorways, each of a different design with block-and-start stone door surrounds, decorative keystones, plain glazed fanlights and timber panelled doors, and each approached by flight of stone steps. The windows have block-and-start stone surrounds, with a projecting keystone, limestone sills and timber sashes. Rubble stone walls with limestone capping surround the open basement areas other than at Regina House (south-west) where the limestone walls have sadly been replaced with modern railings and concrete block piers.

Each of the four houses is linked by a screen wall to a pair of outbuildings to form the octagon, and the gables forming flanking pavilions faced with blind arcades. The square's individualism lies in this arrangement, forming a unifying type of colonnade around the square. The gables of all eight pavilions facing onto the square are dressed with ashlar limestone to form a blind arcade. The blind arches were originally defined by a render finish, which in most cases has been removed or hidden by poor choice of planting and wall creepers. In the case of the southeastern pavilion, the render has been removed in one of the archways and a window with a brick surround has been inserted, in addition to a red brick chimney in the hipped roof. These interventions are part of a layering process that occurred in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but should be avoided in landmark buildings as they undermine the original design intention.

Other notable developments have caused serious and irreversible damage to the curtilage of two of the houses on the square, both protected structures. In the case of Rock House (north-west), the residential development in the original gardens to the rear of the property has a monolithic presence, which fails to take cognisance of the existing eighteenth-century house's proportions and detail. At Regina House (south-west) a twentieth-century extension to the Village Inn (which includes an open roof garden) on Church Street has encroached upon the rear of the protected structure of Regina House and is spatially damaging to the historical fabric at piano nobile and lower levels. These

Street by street appraisal

cases at Slane demonstrate how inappropriate or ill-considered development in the curtilage of the houses in the village can irreversibly damage the special character of the ACA.



Fig. 8: Regina House on the south-western corner of the square, showing the former outbuildings of the house on Mill Hill & Church Street.



Fig.9: Detail of Regina House with its modern railings and concrete entrance piers

7.1.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

The set-piece of the external space, streetscape and roofline created by the formal octagon has defined Slane throughout the centuries and is the architectural icon of the village to this day. As the village's only planned open space, its role has been highly significant and its uniqueness is expressed in the status of the surrounding buildings, which were planned as residential rather than public. The proportion of the four houses in relation to the scale of the old market place lends a level of sophistication to the village, which otherwise conforms to archetypical provincial planning. This plan derived from European principles of urban design, observed in the many forms of piazza seen in eighteenth-century France and Italy, and later in nineteenth-century Spain. This type of octagon

Street by street appraisal

was rare at a provincial level in eighteenth-century Ireland and makes the square at Slane a prominent example of informed urban planning. The square's location provides a ceremonial entrance from the lower Mill Hill and Church Street and is enhanced by mature trees to the front of the houses, which complement the roofline of the ensemble. Approaches to the square from higher locations afford views down across the splendid Boyne valley and towards the church tower, framed by the demesne plantations to the west.

Lawrence photographs taken in the nineteenth century depict a gravel surface lined with rubble stone creating a footpath or walkway around the square. Later photographs show a harder surface with a stone kerbing. This has been removed and replaced with a tarmac pavement, with reconstituted stone kerbing. Low modern metal bollards (approx. 300mm in height) have been placed on each corner of the square to prevent trucks from driving onto the kerb. A wonderful example of the original flambeaux, which lit the

village in the nineteenth century, stands now on the square on the north side. Its original stone base survives and a new lamp standard as been fashioned in wrought iron to hold a metal lantern. Although some of the overhead wiring has been reduced in recent years, the character of the square is currently marred by a high concentration of on-street traffic signage (no less than sixteen sets of traffic lights) clustered close to the junction of the four roads.

7.1.3 Boundary Treatment

Originally the fronts of the houses were open to the square where a market was held on a weekly basis in the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, curved boundary walls of rubble stonework, with ashlar limestone gate piers and cast-iron gates, were added to give privacy to each residence. The piers are adorned with carved stone caps (an idiom repeated at the Church of Ireland and at Mount Charles Lodge) and the cast-iron gates are decorated with oval



Fig.10: Rock House on the north-western corner of the square, showing the former outbuildings of the house on Church Street & Chapel Street.

Street by street appraisal

and fleur-de-lis motifs and interlocking shamrock and thistle floral finial, symbolising the Act of Union of 1800. The rear boundaries to the four houses have changed dramatically over the years and most of the original stone walls are lost with the exception of the south-eastern house which retains its site boundary and wall of random stonework and the boundary wall of the Parochial House to the Chapel Street.

7.1.4 Land Use

Contrary to the popular myth that the four houses were built to house four Conyngham sisters who were not on speaking terms, the houses were originally intended as residences for the wealthier tenants of the estate and for a small amount of commercial use. Rock House (on the north-western corner) was originally planned as an Inn until it was taken over by a Justice of Peace who lived there with his family. During the same period other prominent figures lived in the remaining three houses, such as the local doctor, police constable and rector of Slane. Although Rock House lost its original ground plan due to recent developments, the square still maintains its original eighteenth-century use as primarily residential.

7.2 Chapel Street

7.2.1 Architectural Character

Chapel Street begins its ascent northwards from the square to the main road to Collon. The greatest variety of historic building types survives on Chapel Street and its architectural character derives from its range of terraces, private residences and laneways leading off the street. As in all of the four streets extending from the square, Chapel Street starts with the pavilions (linked by screen walls to the houses on the square) on either side of the street. Here, they are single-storey buildings of random stonework walls, with a limestone eaves course and hipped slate roofs. The building on the east side of the street has been rendered. The southern gables of both buildings hold the cut limestone blind arcades facing onto the square.

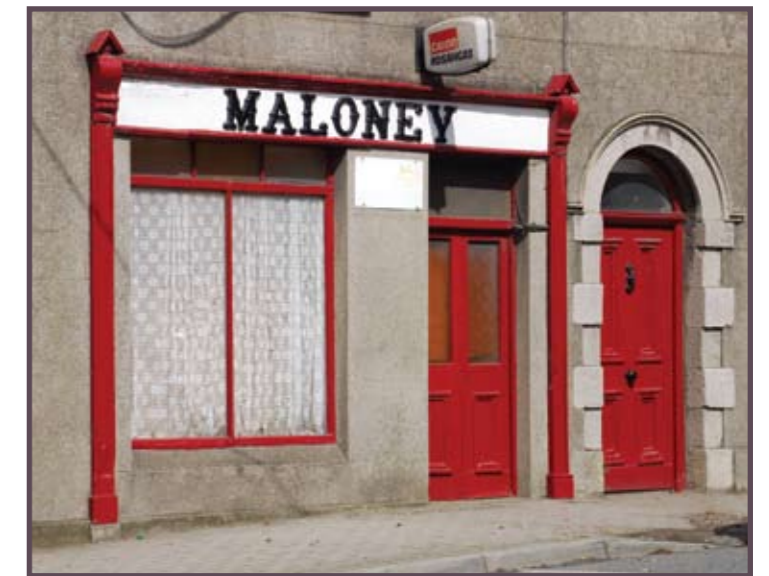


Fig.11: Maloney's pub on Chapel Street

Above the pavilion building on the square, on the west side of the street, a range of street fronted buildings include a pair of nineteenth-century houses with integral carriage arches leading to large outbuildings to the rear, most of these are now rather dilapidated. Between these buildings and Maloney's the stone façade of a former building has survived on the street front, with its openings now filled in. Beyond this is a detached two-storey building which houses Maloney's pub, a fine example of a simple rendered façade, elegant fenestration and a modest timber shop front, common to most Irish towns of this period. Beyond Maloney's pub on the west side of Chapel Street, the entrances to the detached residences of Cill Ghrian and Mount Charles Lodge are linked by a limestone boundary wall, set against mature trees, which gives the street an additional layer of architectural character. The buildings and their attendant grounds are of special historical and architectural interest. Mount Charles Lodge, a three bay, two-storey house, was built as a hunting lodge in the mid-eighteenth century for the Conyngham family, and Cill Ghrian, a three bay, two-storey over basement house, was the rectory attached to the Church of Ireland in the nineteenth century. Both have large mature gardens extending below the front of the houses and Mount Charles Lodge retains an impressive set of outbuildings in a little courtyard to the rear. The carved stone capping to

Street by street appraisal

the limestone gate piers observed in the square can be seen here again in the entrance to Mount Charles Lodge and a later version at Cill Ghrian. On the east side of Chapel Street a diverse range of terraces line the street: from eighteenth-century two-storey houses, to classical nineteenth-century structures with traditional shop fronts and stuccoed façades, their upper floors originally designed for domestic accommodation, as well as one and two-storey buildings perpendicular to the street line. The pair of terraces of two four-bay houses beyond the square, built c. 1768, have exposed limestone facades, fanlights and fine block-and-start door and window surrounds, recalling the details of the four houses on the square. Both terraces have typically long plots to the rear and retain a number of coach-houses and other outbuildings in their attendant grounds.



Fig.12: Range of stone facades to terraces on the east side of Chapel Street

Of particular interest are the nineteenth-century structures built perpendicular to the street line. A single-storey terrace of four houses creates a laneway in an enclosed setting beyond the stone terraces. These houses of random stonework, were built for workers on the Conyngham estate in the early nineteenth-century. Although they are now sadly derelict they retain most of their limestone and red brick dressings, and their slate roofs. These houses add a layer of complexity to the historical fabric of the town and their details add to the richness of the palette of materials. Two more

buildings are set a right angle to the street to the north of this little terrace. Modest in detail with rendered facades, the two-storey pair of buildings face each creating a small enclosed space off the street. They are of historical interest and in the nineteenth century housed the courthouse and the tholsel for the village. St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church and its grounds command an important position towards the end of the ACA boundary of Chapel Street. Erected in 1802, the church sits alongside its belfry and a small burial ground to the front. The imposing gable-fronted façade is of ashlar limestone, with central and terminating breakfronts, and pointed blind arches to the pediment. The freestanding belfry, with random stonework walls and lancet window openings, is capped by an ogee dome with a cast-iron finial. This is an eccentric ensemble and a notable historic and architectural feature in the village. Above the church and set back from the street stands the former Slane National School, built c. 1845 and in use until the mid-twentieth century when St. Patrick's National School was built further along the Collon Road. The school is a plain stone building with a slate roof and rendered chimney. Various small additions to the rear occurred during the nineteenth century.



Fig.13: Range of derelict nineteenth-century estate cottages perpendicular to Chapel Street.

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7.2.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

Chapel Street rises northwards from the square, expressing 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 impressive boundary walls and trees lining the grounds of the private detached residences and the setting of terrace and pair of buildings planned perpendicular to the street. The primacy of the street affords splendid views southwards towards the set-piece of the square, its dramatic roof line and out towards the rural landscape rising to the south of the river.

Concrete-flagged pavements, with reconstituted stone kerbs, flank the street. Between the pair of limestone-faced terraces, a short cobbled laneway leads to the gardens and outbuildings to the rear; a single remnant of eighteenth-century surface treatment surviving in the village. On the west side of the street there is a cast-iron water pump, from the late nineteenth-century. Its fluted base and cap is embellished with a lion's head framing the spout. Like the square, Chapel Street has some painted timber and metal street benches of recent date, engraved with the words Ledwidge Country to celebrate the birthplace of the poet Francis Ledwidge.



Fig.14: View down Chapel Street towards the square with limestone boundary wall of Mount Charles Lodge to the right and the southern side of the Boyne Valley in the distance.

7.2.3 Boundary Treatment

As most of the houses front directly onto the street, of interest is the limestone boundary wall framed by mature trees, on the west side of the street, which borders the grounds of Mount Charles Lodge and meets the entrance to Cill Ghrian to the south. The richness of the stonework adds another layer to the building palette and to the architectural character of the street. The walls evoke the low stone walls lining the demesne at the west end of the village, and are a typical feature of the many approaches to eighteenth-century villages in Ireland. To the rear and north of Mount Charles Lodge a tall stone boundary wall survives between the grounds and the twentieth-century housing estate. Several of the other terraces and detached houses on the street also retain their original rubble limestone boundary walls, which are an essential part of the character of the ACA of Slane Village. An impressive set of highly decorative cast-iron gates, piers and railings on limestone plinths enclose the grounds of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, which also retains a random rubble limestone boundary wall to the north and to the south.



Fig.15: St. Patrick's Catholic Church on Chapel Street

7.2.4 Land Use

Other than the public building of the Roman Catholic Church and the derelict single-storey terrace, land use on Chapel Street is predominately residential with a small number

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of commercial premises, which add to the street's ambiance and sustains the local community and village character.

7.3 Main Street

7.3.1 Architectural Character

This street, like Chapel Street, rises from the square, but less steeply and eastwards towards Drogheda. Despite the significance of the direction towards the Port of Drogheda the area was never extensively built on until the twentieth century, when large residential estates were developed on the north east side of the road. Main Street has a mixed residential and commercial character, its shop fronts and facades are generally rendered and painted. Again the street begins with the former outbuildings of the houses on the square – part of the set-piece of the octagon; in this case with a single-storey building on the north side and a two-storey building on the south. The two-storey building on the south side currently

houses the village post-office with a private residence in the adjoining bay. The fenestration to the house has been altered and the original timber sash windows widened, resulting in an unbalanced façade. The remainder of the street on this side comprises a mix of eighteenth and nineteenth-century two storey buildings with varied fenestration and doorcases which enliven their respective terraces.

At the northeast end of the street a twentieth-century terrace of commercial and residential use is set back from the street line, on a raised area. The architecture of the terrace endeavours to recall typical nineteenth-century shop fronts with modest domestic accommodation in the upper floors. However, by ignoring the traditional street line and in its use of rubble stone facing and low pitched roofs it fails to enhance the street and is out of keeping with the architectural character of the village. Equally the infill development to the rear of the aforementioned terrace, which



Fig.16: Lawrence Collection photograph of the Octagon seen from Main Street in the late nineteenth century (Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

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adjoins the original outbuildings of the Parochial House, fails to take cognisance of the proportions and materials of the original eighteenth-century structures.

7.3.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

Like Chapel Street, Main Street is a wide thoroughfare with low and modest terraces flanking it. It, too, affords splendid views from its raised geographical location down through the set-piece of the square, towards the Church of Ireland on Church Street and the demesne plantations to the west. The terrace of commercial buildings set back from the street line, does little to add to the spatial quality of the street. Nineteenth-century Lawrence photographs depict a gravel surface lined with rubble stone creating a footpath along the street. Later photographs show a harder surface with a stone kerbing but this has been removed and replaced with a concrete flagged pavements and reconstituted stone kerbing. Modern fluted metal bollards line most of the street, preventing cars from parking on the pavement.



Fig.17: View down Main Street towards the octagon, Church of Ireland and demesne to the west. The arcaded pavilions in the octagon have been obscured by shrubs and by traffic signage.

7.3.3 Boundary Treatments

The majority of the buildings on the road are street fronted other than the twentieth-century terrace which has concrete steps and modern railings which are out of character with the historical context.

7.3.4 Land Use

Land use on Main Street is predominately commercial with a small number of residential properties and domestic accommodation in the upper floors.



Fig.18: The Boyne Valley Inn at the eastern end of Main Street

7.4 Mill Hill

7.4.1 Architectural Character

Mill Hill leading to the south is the shortest road within the ACA and it comprises the two outbuildings to the houses on the square on either side of the road and a Victorian gate lodge to the southwest, at the village entrance to the Slane Castle demesne. The annex on the east side of the road is a detached two-storey slated building with roughcast rendered walls and a limestone eaves course, which lends a rural character in contrast to the grandeur of the octagon. A window opening with red brick reveals has been inserted in the cut stone blind arcade facing the square. From this building a high rubble stone wall, typical to the village, curves southwards and down Mill Hill until it is

Street by street appraisal

interrupted by a rear entrance to the site. On the west side of the road the annex is a detached two-storey house with roughcast and smooth rendered walls and a name panel above the entrance door. It was extended to the rear during the twentieth century.

Set back into the curve of the road to the south is the eccentric single-storey gate lodge, built in the mid-nineteenth century and embellished with a castellated front wall. Clearly influenced by the early Gothic Revival of Slane Castle, it enhances the architectural character of the road. The main house has rendered façades but the squared limestone walls and red brick surrounds to the front add to the richness of the building material palette. The building retains its sash windows and decorative pilasters and over-light to the entrance doorway. A high rubble stone wall to the demesne, extends from the gate piers of the gate lodge down along Mill Hill, creating a formal avenue with its counterpart to the east.



Fig.19: The gate lodge to the Slane Castle demesne on Mill Hill.

7.4.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

The unique spatial quality of Mill Hill derives directly from its building line, as it curves dramatically up the hill, creating a strong sense of enclosure and an element of surprise as it turns the corner towards the set-piece of the main square of the village. The high stone walls flanking the road add to the formal approach and are important elements in the village ACA. Spectacular views of the rural landscape of the

valley and bridge from the summit of Mill Hill, important to the full appreciation of Slane but are impeded by traffic signage gantries along the hill, erected to guide trucks and other vehicles towards the traffic lights at the bridge. The footpath of tarmacadam and reconstituted stone kerbing finishes when it meets the railings of the gate lodge. The footpath also ends abruptly on the east side before the road straightens.



Fig.20: Entrance to the village from Mill Hill.

7.4.3 Boundary Treatment

All of the buildings on Mill Hill, other than the little gate lodge, are directly on the street front. The front area of the lodge is enclosed by wrought iron railing while the cast-iron entrance gates to the demesne are framed by cut limestone gate piers. Two other gateways, with rendered piers, break the building line between the lodge and the two-storey house on the west side of the road. The remaining boundaries are defined by high rubble stone walls, a defining feature of Mill Hill and the other entrances to Slane village.

7.4.4 Land Use

Land use here is primarily residential.

7.5 Church Street

7.5.1 Architectural Character

Church Street is made up of a combination of eighteenth and nineteenth-century commercial

Street by street appraisal

premises, with a small amount of residential properties, as well as twentieth-century developments which are mainly on the north side. The ACA boundary here terminates with the grounds of St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, a fitting bookend to the street before it meets the demesne wall. Like Chapel Street, the architectural character of Church Street derives from its range of traditional shops fronts, rendered facades, terraced houses and their respective outbuildings, which also play an important role in the ACA. The buildings lining the street on both sides are generally two-storeys in height. As with the other three streets Church Street begins with the former outbuildings of the houses on the square, in both cases a detached three-bay, two-storey buildings with rendered façades, facing the square with hipped gables and blind limestone arcades forming part of the architectural set-piece. The building on the south end is currently used as a public house, the Village Inn, and has been extended to the rear.

The north side of the street is a mix of residential with commercial units. A terrace of five two and three-bay two-storey stone houses, built in the early nineteenth-century, sits below the former pavilion to the square. Like many of the terraced houses and commercial premises in the village the terrace has had its render inappropriately removed and its squared rubble limestone walls with a red brick eaves course are now exposed. It retains an integral carriage arch, slate roof with terracotta ridge tiles and red brick chimneystacks. Red-brick dressings frame the door and window openings. A modern shop-front has been inserted at the east end of the terrace.

Beyond this terrace is a bland little square, opened in 1963, when nineteenth-century cabins and the walled garden of the old rectory of Cill Ghrian were removed to accommodate public toilets and a small park for the village. The result is a dreary, ill-defined space lacking appropriate landscaping, lighting or seating for the public. Currently it holds a private car park in addition to the little toilet annex.



Fig.21: Early nineteenth-century terrace on north side of Church Street.

A twentieth-century residential complex has been built on the western boundary of this space. The complex comprises two blocks in a typical terrace module, one directly to the street and a second terrace to the rear with a modern carriage archway for vehicular access. Despite respecting the street line and the adaptation of the material palette of the village, this terrace is unsuccessful (like its modern counterpart on Main Street) with its random rubble stonework facing, its low roof pitch with disproportionate chimneys and its inconsistent fenestration is out of place among the well-proportioned buildings of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Breaking the street line once more a modern bungalow, with a garden and railings onto the street, sits between this terrace and a modern pair of houses, which have commercial premises at street level. They too fail to capture the original architectural character of the village in their massing and façade treatment.



Fig.22: Car park & public toilets in an open space on Church Street.

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The south side of the street is particularly rich in historic buildings. It is made up of various retail premises and the Conyngham Arms hotel. A notable example of a late nineteenth-century street fronted building is a detached five-bay two-storey building, formerly two houses, with oriel windows (one with a fine pedestal) to its terminating bays. It now houses one shop front at ground floor level, towards the west. The building has rendered walls and retains its timber sashes, ridge cresting and decorative terracotta finials to the roofline. Its tall red brick chimneys dominate the skyline. Below this sits the Conyngham Arms hotel, an impressive three-storey building, also in five bays. Faced with squared limestone walls it has a rendered plinth and a moulded brick eaves course. The building also retains its limestone block-and-start door surround and is approached by two limestone steps. A modern pub front has been inserted to the east of the front elevation. The building was converted to commercial use circa 1840 and is of architectural and historical importance to the village. Possibly the single example of a traditional shop, in its entirety, is that of Meade's towards the end of the street. Built in 1769, this building forms part of a group with the building to the east, which was built as part of the same terrace. The render has been removed from the façade and is typically and inappropriately, pointed with sand and cement mortar. The fenestration on the upper floor is a particular notable feature of the building, due to scale of the openings and it retains its stone block-and-start door surround, reminiscent of the buildings of the same period on the square and on Chapel Street. To the rear of the site there is a group of substantial outbuildings of three-storeys with lime-washed rubble stone walls, brick relieving arches and timber lintels to its openings. The scale and detail of these buildings suggest industrial origins, possibly as a granary. Their addition to the protected structure list is significant and they form an integral part of Slane Village ACA.



Fig.23: Façade of Meade's butcher shop on Church Street

Closing the ACA boundary is St. Patrick's Church of Ireland, its associations with the Conyngham family and the architect Francis Johnston makes it of architectural and historical importance, and one of the more noteworthy buildings in the village. The earlier detached church was erected in 1712 by the Conyngham family and among the many additions made to the building throughout the eighteenth century was the elegant bell tower, built by Johnston in 1797. Set in enclosed grounds with a graveyard which slopes away from the building to the west and south, the simple cruciform building is enlivened by the bell tower with its decorative finials, castellation and dressings. The building has roughcast rendered walls to its nave, chancel and vestry extension whereas the tower is faced with stone walls and string courses and ashlar limestone to upper area. A pointed arch doorway with a chamfered limestone surround gives access to the tower and Diocletian windows and round-headed windows light the nave and chancel. Ogee-arch window and door openings with ashlar limestone dressings embellish the vestry block. Of interest are the medieval fragments salvaged from Stackallen Church (when it was demolished in 1959), and incorporated in the vestry walls. These elements add a level of archaeological interest to the site.

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Fig.24: St. Patrick's Church of Ireland on Church Street.

7.5.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

Church Street is of similar scale to Chapel Street and Main Street and leads westwards towards the main entrance to Slane Castle (the other entrance is opposite the mill). However, the scale and proportions of the buildings flanking the street lend a more enclosed feel to the street and creates a sense of intimacy, typically associated with village streets. The open space accommodating the car parking and public toilets does little to enhance the spatial quality of the area and has dramatically altered the street line and the nineteenth-century character of the street. However, the ceremonial approach along the terraced street front towards the octagon and the views back westwards towards the church tower and demesne setting, qualifies Church Street as the village's most characteristic thoroughfare.

Concrete flagged pavements line both sides of the street, interrupted only by the limestone steps accessing the hotel and terrace of houses on the north side. Like the square, the roofline of the street has been marred by overhead wiring and twentieth century street lighting. Very little eighteenth or nineteenth-century street furniture or surface treatment survives here. Modern fluted metal bollards line most of the street, preventing cars from parking on the pavement.



Fig.25: View of Church Street, with Church of Ireland bell tower and demesne.

7.5.3 Boundary Treatment

The majority of the buildings on the road are street fronted other than St. Patrick's Church which is set back in its own grounds and the bungalow on the north side which is enclosed by a rubble stone plinth, brick gate piers and modern railings. The church and the graveyard are enclosed by a high rubble wall and a modest gateway, framed by handsome Ardbraccan stone piers with their distinctive capping, also observed at the square and at Mount Charles Lodge. The stone wall of the graveyard meets the lower demesne wall at the graveyard boundary, a seamless junction of church and estate. The boundary of the open space on the north side of the street is made up of a long stone planter, in very poor condition and despite the planting being maintained, it is of little consequence architecturally.

7.5.4 Land Use

Land use on Church Street is predominately commercial with some domestic accommodation in the upper floors and a large number of residential properties on the north side of the street.

Summary of significant views & vistas

8.0 Summary of significant views & vistas

Resulting from Slane's street pattern of four roads extending from the crossroads and its position at a considerable height above the River Boyne, significant views are afforded towards the village from the valley below and from the village streets outwards, forming important vistas.

8.1 View from the Dublin Road

The most noteworthy view towards Slane from the Boyne valley is from the southern bank of the river and the Dublin Road. This view embraces all the elements which form an important approach to the village and show the striking beauty of the landscape setting of the village. It includes Slane Bridge, the Boyne Navigation, the southern demesne entrance (Gothic Gate) designed by Francis Johnston, the ascent up Mill Hill with the stone terrace of houses built for the mill workers, the rear elevations of the houses on the square (which forms the southern entrance to the village), the mature plantations of Slane Castle demesne framing the ensemble to the west and to the north at the crown of the hill (see below). The view of the rear elevation of the south-eastern house on the square is very significant as it is the first glimpse perceived of the historical fabric of the village from the southern approach. Although some of these elements lie within the Slane Castle and Slane Mill ACAs, they are connected historically and geographically to the village and form a single cultural entity. Unfortunately the traffic gantries on Mill Hill currently spoil part of the view from the valley.



Fig.26: View from the Dublin Road across Slane Bridge towards Mill Hill, the houses on the square in Slane Village and the demesne plantations above.

8.2 View from Mill Hill

Equally the views south from Mill Hill as it turns a corner below the square are significant to the character of Slane. A dramatic vista through the avenue of high stone walls is created down the sweep of the hill towards the river, the canal and the valley, and then terminating with the unspoilt rural landscape rising to the south.



Fig.27: View down Mill Hill south towards the Boyne Valley, currently obstructed by traffic gantries.

The square provides a focal point for all views through the village and as the street pattern and building lines remain more or less as they were in

Summary of significant views & vistas

the nineteenth century, the current views survive much as they were in the eighteenth century. The primacy of Chapel Street affords fine views southwards, down through the set-piece of the square and its dramatic roof line, and out towards the naturalistic landscape of the demesne and beyond, which rises to the south of the river (see below).



Fig.28: View from Chapel Street towards the square, with the southern side of the Boyne Valley in the distance.

The vista generated through the square to the west, with Church Street sloping towards the church tower, which is framed by the trees of the demesne below, retains to a great extent the character of the Lawrence photograph of the village captured at the end of the nineteenth century. The main differences are the removal of mature trees, the addition of contemporary street



Fig.29: View of square looking westwards down Church Street.

surfaces and the plethora of overhead wires and traffic signals.

The geographical location of the square and the streets rising up from it and towards it, provide ceremonial approaches from Church Street to the square and from the square uphill along Chapel Street. These approaches provide important vistas through the village to focal points or to the distinctive entrances and exits of the village that play a vital role in enhancing its special character.



Fig.30: Approach road to the village from the western end of Church Street.

Summary of Special Character of Slane Village ACA

9.0 Summary of Special Character of Slane Village ACA

The special character of Slane derives from its geographical setting – the natural topography of the site - the iconic formal set-piece of the octagon, the use of stone in its architecture and its association with the adjoining ACAs of Slane Castle Demesne and Slane Mill, to which it belongs both historically and socially, the three together forming a significant cultural landscape. Furthermore the historical associations to the Conyngham family and the architects and builders employed by them, adds to its special archaeological and architectural significance.

The location provides dramatic views through the village towards the evolved natural landscape of the beautiful Boyne Valley and towards the plantations of the adjacent demesne. The approaches and exits to and from the village are key elements to the special character of Slane and are largely defined by rubble stone walls framed by mature trees, a classic feature of many eighteenth-century Irish villages.

The built fabric of Slane's streets and enclosed private grounds is typically austere and well defined by a hierarchy of house types forming an eclectic mix of uniform terraces, houses with varied plot widths and detached landmark buildings in both residential and ecclesiastical use. The octagon or diamond at the main square is a highly sophisticated example of enlightened planning, which is rare in a provincial context, and is an iconic piece of architecture with which the village is best associated. In essence the intrinsic qualities of the village are its rooflines, tall elegant chimneys, limestone details, church towers, demesne walls, its mature plantation setting and views across the valley. A palette of materials particular to the area, namely limestone, red brick, slate, painted timber and ironwork provides unity of character. Although the buildings are relatively unadorned, fortunately many retain original features such as fanlights, timber sash windows, slate roofs, railings and other boundary treatments which make up the attractive streetscapes. It is the combination of all

of these elements that contribute to the special character of the ACA of Slane Village.

Summary of Special Character of Slane Village ACA

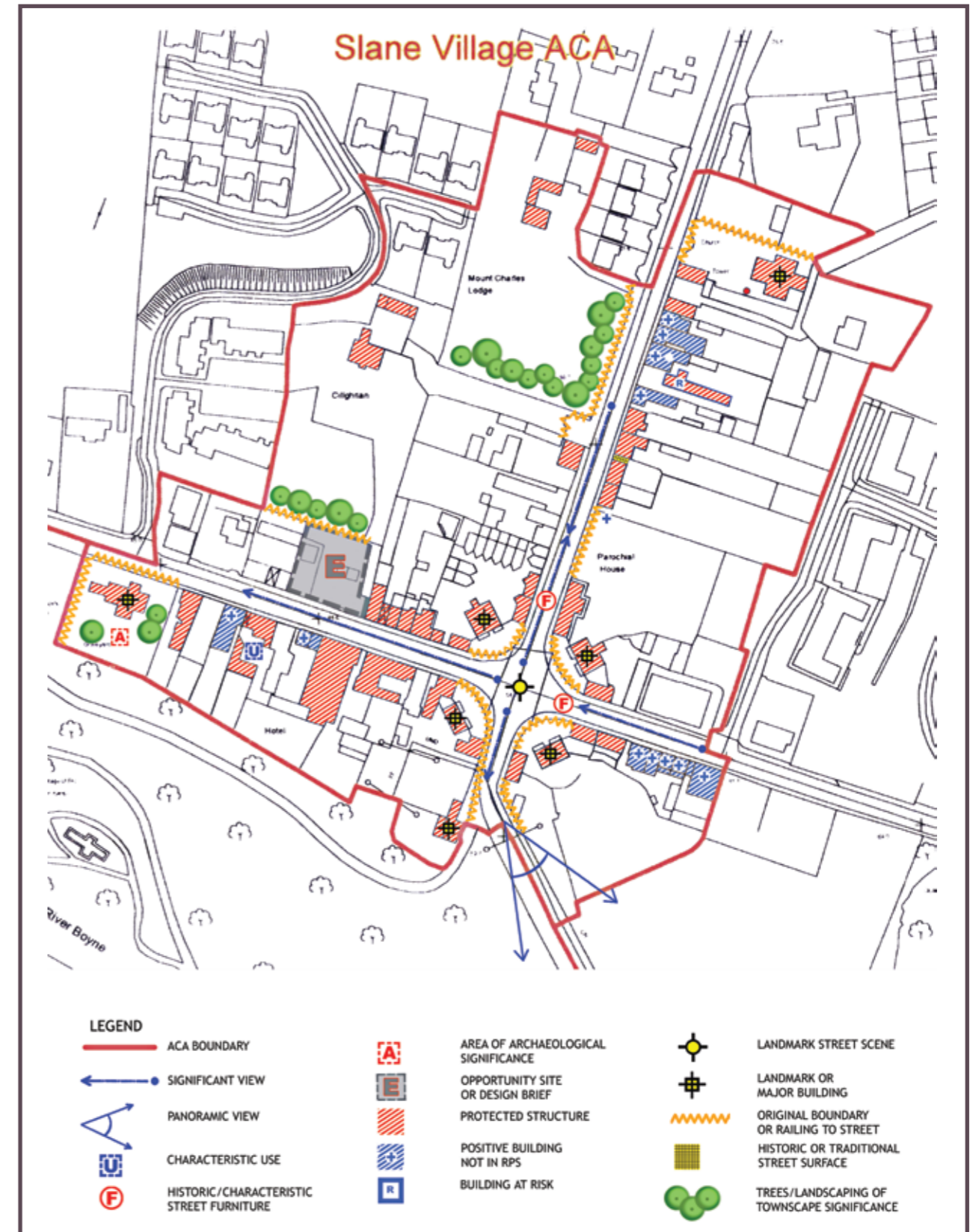


Fig 31: Character map of Slane ACA (Base map courtesy of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland)

Implications for Planning and Development

10.0 Implications for Planning and Development

The objective of Architectural Conservation Area 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. Works to a protected structure that constitute essential repair and maintenance works require a declaration from Meath County Council under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000. 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:

Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the Slane Village Architectural Conservation Area 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) of the Planning & Development Act 2000.

10.1 Works requiring planning permission

10.1.1 External walls

The majority of buildings in Slane are constructed with limestone facings, other than some of the more typical nineteenth-century shop fronts and some of the larger residences which have a render or stucco finish. In some instances the render or plaster has been removed from the façade, exposing rubblework or brickwork. This practice not only significantly alters the architectural character of the structure and affects the visual integrity of the building, particularly in a terrace, but it also exposes the building to decay and damage, once its protective layer is removed. In addition to this practice of removing the water-resisting surface, 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.

Implications for Planning and Development

10.1.2 Roofs

The roofscape of the Slane Village ACA is highly 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 Slane 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 Slane 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 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.

Implications for Planning and Development

- 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.



Fig.32: Detail of lettering on Chapel St.

Fig.33: Metal signs on Boyle's

- While outdoor advertising is necessary for commercial activity, new signage must not detract from the special character and visual amenity of the ACA. There are a number of fine shop and pub-fronts in Slane Village with traditional lettering to their fascia boards, such as Maloney's Pub on Chapel Street and Boyle's on Church Street. Endeavours have also been made by other owners and occupiers of commercial premises to maintain an appropriate traditional 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. In some buildings the original internal timber shutters can be used for security purposes. 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.

10.1.5 New build

New development within the ACA of Slane Village such as extensions, including porch extensions to the front of buildings, infill sites and all new build that impacts on the out-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

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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 elevational 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 complimentary 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 follow existing plot boundaries to retain the existing grain which is an important determining factor of the special character of the ACA. Where larger developments span across former individual boundaries, the original plot divisions should

be articulated in the volume of the new buildings, both to the front and the rear. See also the following section (10.1.7) on the amalgamation of sites.

- Extensions should be kept to the rear of properties within the Slane Village ACA, and be of an appropriate scale, built with suitable materials and finishes. Due to the geographical location of Slane Village rear extensions may often be visible from higher streetscapes and their design must follow the same principles for new development as laid out above. 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 Slane Village.

10.1.6 Development within the grounds of larger residences

In the case of buildings with large gardens or grounds, special consideration must be given to the impact of any new development on the buildings, and on their respective existing boundaries. Within the Slane Village ACA this is most relevant in the attendant grounds of the larger residences such as the four landmark houses on the square, and Mount Charles Lodge and Cill Ghrian on Chapel Street.

The importance of the latter two properties lies not only in their spatial and aesthetic qualities, but also their historical and cultural associations with the village and demesne. Cill Ghrian was the Glebe House (rectory) for the Church of Ireland and Mount Charles Lodge was built as a hunting lodge for the Conyngham family, and this aspect of their significance is protected in the planning act. The gardens of the two properties were strategically placed to the front of the houses, rather than to the rear, due to their geographical location on sloping terrain and in order to take advantage of the southern aspect. The key features in the attendant grounds of the two residences are their attached outbuildings, courtyards, landscaped gardens and decorative features. Both properties have large mature trees, which form part of the boundary to the village streets with the limestone

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rubble walls, in particular on Chapel Street and Church Street. All of these elements are an integral part of the streetscape and the special historical character of the village of Slane and must be preserved. Both properties are currently zoned A3, and defined by Meath County Council 'to conserve and protect the character and setting of institutional complexes and heritage buildings in residential redevelopment and infill proposals in accordance with an approved framework plan'. To protect the character and setting of such sensitive sites, suburban type development is deemed unsuitable and would be damaging to the properties. New development within these sites should retain the predominance of the existing historic house on the site and should follow the rectilinear pattern of the historic urban grain. A small amount of linear terraced mews-type development, of maximum two-storey, positioned to maximize the distance from the main house and to protect the historic landscape of its setting would be appropriate. The standard of design of the new build - as outlined above - should follow the stipulations set out in Section 10.1.5 of this document.

The same principles apply to the landmark houses on the square, and in particular to the north-eastern and south-eastern houses where the gardens are still intact. In the case of the south-eastern house, the rear of the site is clearly and highly visible from the public realm, namely from the ascent to the village from Mill Hill, which provides an important entrance to the village and forms part of one of the most significant views of Slane Village from the valley below.

10.1.7 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 and plots 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.

10.1.8 Demolition works

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

10.1.9 Boundary Treatments

Removal of original railings, gates, gate piers and boundary walls, whether visible from the public realm or not, require planning permission. Most buildings with the Slane Village ACA have street frontages but landmark buildings on the square and various residential properties and ecclesiastical buildings on Chapel Street and Church Street are bounded by limestone walls or elaborate cast-iron 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

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property or site, the broken edges of the original wall piece should be finished appropriately and never left in a ruinous state.

10.1.10 External Lighting

Proposals for the illumination during night-time hours of certain buildings and landmark features within Slane Village ACA must 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 outlined in this document are namely those looking down through the square towards the Boyne Valley to the south from Chapel Street, and down Church Street towards the Church of Ireland and the edge of the demesne from Main Street and the square. Equally important are the views towards Slane from the west end, i.e. the road from Navan along the demesne wall, and from the lower reaches of the Boyne and the Dublin Road to the south. 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 cobbles or 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.



Fig.34: Cobbled laneway on Chapel Street

- 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.

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- 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.



Fig.35: Obtrusive metre boxes against the boundary wall of the Church of Ireland

- 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.
- New street-lighting should be in a traditional style, which enhances the village. The lighting should in no way mar or distort the well-defined and elegant roof-scape of Slane Village or obstruct the significant views within the ACA. Consideration could be given to the reproduction to correct historic detail of the historic flambeaux which formerly provided public lighting to the village.

- 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.
- Other than the planting observed in private residences, and on the boundary edges at the Slane Castle demesne, there is very little soft landscaping within the ACA and this should be addressed. The derelict space on the north side of Church Street contains a long planter with some flower-beds which borders the street. This space would benefit from a carefully landscaped public park in order to enhance the streetscape.

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 of there is any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not.

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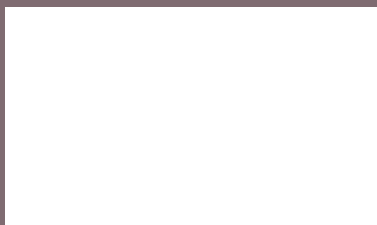
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Notes

Notes



An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council