



Kilmessan

Architectural Conservation Area
Statement of Character
December 2009

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Kilmessan

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



Foreword

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 Kilmessan 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 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

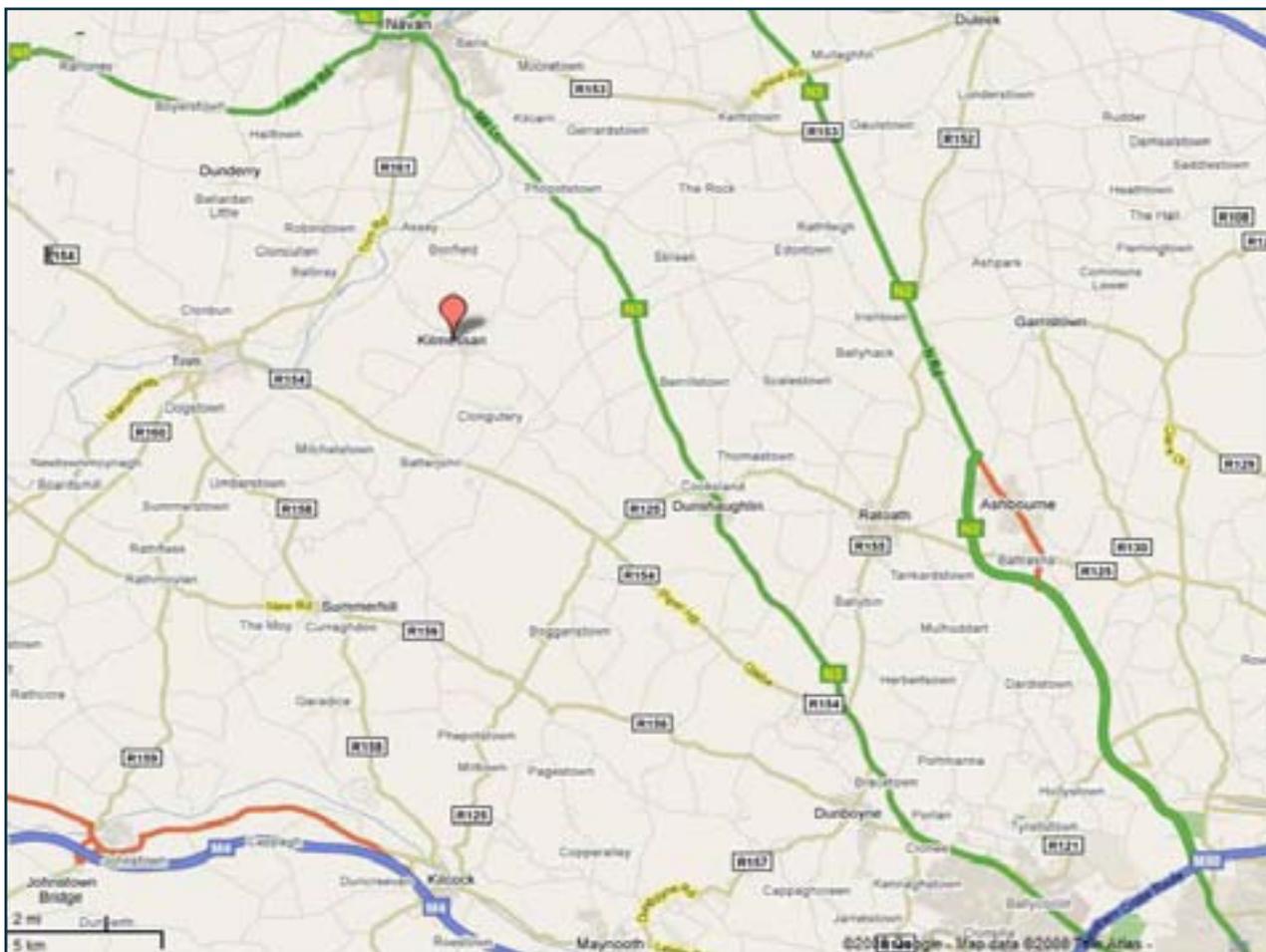


Fig. 1: The location of Kilmessan in the local context (from Google maps)

Kilmessan is located in the south centre of County Meath, some 40km north-west of Dublin city centre. It lies 7km east of Trim, 8km north-west of Dunshaughlin and 10km south of Navan. The R154 runs 3km south of Kilmessan connecting Trim to the N3 in the east, the R161 lies to the west and connects Trim to Navan. Kilmessan lies at the junction of five Third Class Roads which meet in the centre of the village. Kilmessan serves a broadly rural hinterland, the village has survived the plight of faceless development so often seen in other locations. The historic village streetscape extends in a roughly north south direction from a junction of three of the main routes.

The landscape character assessment (LCA) of the setting for Kilmessan is designated LCA6 – Central Lowlands. This describes a lowland landscape of rolling drumlins interspersed with numerous large estates and associated landscapes and the landscape character around settlements being a well tended patchwork of fields, hedgerows and woodland. Directly to the east the designation is LCA8 – Tara Skryne Hills, a raised upland south of Navan. This landscape is one of great visual and cultural significance.

To the north the Boyne flows south-west to north-east. A small river, the Skane, flows through Kilmessan in the direction of the Boyne.

Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area



Fig. 2: Aerial view of Kilmessan ACA

Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

2.1 ACA Boundary

The ACA boundary for Kilmessan encompasses St Mary’s Church of Ireland and graveyard, the former glebe house and grounds, a police station and free standing house at the junction of three roads at the north end of the ACA. The village street continues further north from the junction. The northern end includes some houses north of the approach road from the east and stops at a bridge over the river Skane. Here it follows the river to the east and continues south around the grounds of the glebe house to return on the west side back up to the village. The boundaries of the ACA are delineated in Figure 3.

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

- Skein Abbey (part of)
- Church View (part of)
- Glebe Hall (part of)

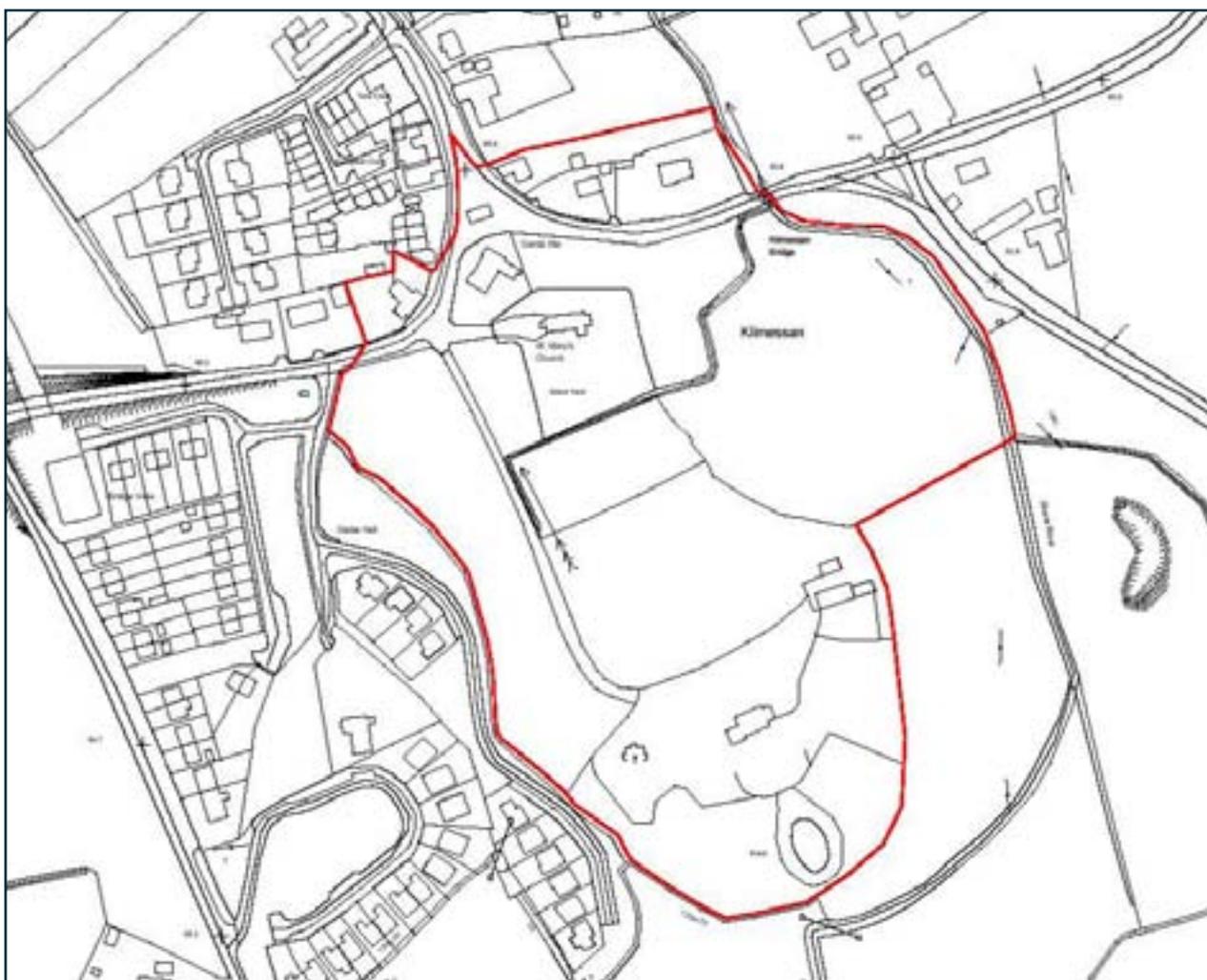


Fig.3: Boundary of Kilmessan ACA

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 Kilmessan 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). A small proportion of National Monuments are in state ownership and care.

Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

3.1 Protected Structures

Within the boundary of the Kilmessan ACA there are two protected structures comprising a landmark 18th century church and a 19th century residence.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • RPS No. MH037 - 211 | Saint Mary's Church of Ireland Church, Church View |
| • RPS No. MH037 - 212 | Glebe House, Church View |

To the west of the ACA is a large stone railway bridge which is outside the ACA boundary but is an important feature when seen from the ACA.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| • RPS No. MH037 - 205 | Stone arched railway bridge, Bridge View |
|-----------------------|--|

3.2 Recorded Monuments

The following archaeological site, features and artefacts within the ACA for Kilmessan is protected by National Monument legislation as it is listed as a Recorded Monument in the Record of Monuments and places:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| • RMP Ref. ME037-029 | Church, Kilmessan |
|----------------------|-------------------|

North of the ACA to the west of Skein Abbey is another Recorded Monument:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| • RMP Ref. ME037-004 | Earthwork, Kilmessan |
|----------------------|----------------------|

Development Plan Zoning and Objectives

4.0 Development Plan Zoning and Objectives

The Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 has been superseded by the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The Kilmessan Local Area Plan was adopted on the 25th of May 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 Kilmessan Local Area Plan 2009-2015 are of relevance.

Historical development of the area

5.0 Historical development of the area

Kilmessan village is within the Civil Parish of the same name. In the medieval period Kilmessan parish was part of the rural deanery of Skreen, an area co-terminus with a land grant to Adam de Feipo by Hugh de Lacy after 1186, as part of the sub-infeudation process following the Anglo-Norman invasion. The tithes of the parish of Kilmessan were granted to the Augustinian Canons at Duleek, a cell of Llanthony Priory in Gloucester. The Canons were in turn responsible for the upkeep of the chancel and the provision of a priest, the parishioners being responsible for the upkeep of the nave. Following the Dissolution of the monasteries the tithes of impropriated parishes were often granted to laymen, in the case of Kilmessan, these were by the early seventeenth century in the hands of Sir Gerald Moore. These tithe-holders generally had little interest in providing well-educated clergymen in the parishes and were even less inclined to repair or maintain the chancels of the parish churches.

In the case of Kilmessan, in the early seventeenth-century, Bishop Usher of Meath reported in 1622 that the 'church is reasonably repaired, the chancel ruinous'. The situation did not improve throughout the seventeenth century, in the 1680's both nave and chancel were in ruin, there was a seven acre glebe attached. Assuming Bishop Dopping was using an Irish acre measurement, this translates to 11.3 statute acres, very close to Lewis account stating that the glebe had 12.5 acres attached.



Fig.4: St Mary's Church of Ireland church, west gable



Fig.5: St Mary's Church of Ireland church, view from north-east

What makes Kilmessan church deeply interesting is that, in the early eighteenth century, it was largely rebuilt and brought back into use. Bishop Ellis, in his visitation of 1723/33, mentioned that 'the church has been ruinous since 1641 but is now repairing'. Lewis also stated that the church was rebuilt in 1731.

The attached and surviving glebe land is also hugely important, providing a glimpse of the medieval and early modern layout of church and attendant lands to support the provider of pastoral care.

Development Plan Zoning and Objectives

The church, churchyard, glebe and glebe-land encompass the major part of the ACA. The village of Kilmessan lies to the north of the ACA, it is a predominately linear village which grew up around the former Navan-Dublin railway line.



Fig.7: Larkin 1812, reproduced from Arnold Horner, Mapping Meath in the early 19th Century



Fig.8: OS 1st edition of 1837

Character overview of Kilmessan ACA

6.0 Character overview of Kilmessan 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 meandering roads in and on the perimeter of the ACA are a distinctive part of its character. The roads change level with the topography and encompass a bridge crossing over the river Skane. A further bridge crossing with embankments over a former railway line to the west of the ACA is a significant feature on approach from that direction.

Important to the layout is the junction of Skein Abbey and Church view to the north. Skein Abbey continues in a straight line to the north either side of which houses, some commercial premises, church buildings and a school are organised.

Large mature trees play a very significant role in defining space and views within the ACA setting.

The main open space is the Skein Abbey, the main street to the north of the ACA at the junction of Church View and the continuation of Skein Abbey to the east. This is defined by the free-standing two-storey building at the crossroads that closes the view along the main street from the north and orientates those arriving from the east and west.

On approaching from the west one descends from the railway bridge towards a set-back space where gated entrances to the church and glebe house are located. They stand close to one another in a corner-like situation. These announce the presence of both these structures, the church is partially visible from the road and the glebe house is only visible on nearer approach.

6.2 Socio-Economic Functions

The village of Kilmessan serves a broadly rural hinterland. Church and school functions as well as some retail support a growing population. Most of these functions are outside the boundary of the ACA. Within the ACA the two-storey building at the junction of Skein Abbey and Church view now accommodates a credit union and the police station behind is still in use. St Mary's Church seems to be little used and the glebe house is well kept and in private ownership.

6.3 Building types and materials

There are four common building typologies found in Kilmessan ACA.

- Twentieth-century residential single-storey houses
- Nineteenth-century detached residences
- Nineteenth & early twentieth-century official structures
- Ecclesiastical buildings
- Bridges

Most of the buildings have painted render facades with slate roofs. St Mary's Church has a stone west gable, stone is also used for boundary walls and retaining walls around the church grounds and glebe house. Many of the monuments and grave stones in the graveyard are of different types of stone. Wrought iron gates form the entrances to both of these.

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 Kilmessan. 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 Northern and western boundaries to the ACA.

7.1.1 Architectural Character and Building Uses

With the exception of the two storey building at the junction of Skein Abbey and Church View, few buildings of note have any strong visual presence. Some houses are located to the north of the junction between Skein Abbey with Church View to the west and Kilmessan Bridge to the east. These have little or no architectural quality. The exception to these is a small building set perpendicular to the road along the broad curve into the main north-south stretch of Skein Abbey when entering the village proper. The house presents a gable and window to the road at a scale sympathetic to the village character of the ACA. It has however been heavily modified and extended. It is perhaps the house indicated in the Ordnance Survey first edition plan of Kilmessan.

Street by street appraisal



Fig.9: Gabled house at junction to north of the ACA



Fig.10: Free standing two-storey house at junction to north of the ACA

The two-storey free standing structure at the junction and at the end of the long stretch of Skein Abbey plays an important role in defining the relationship of the village to the church and glebe house and their grounds. It is a double house with an irregular fenestration arrangement, quoined corners, painted plaster finish and slate roof. No chimneys remain. It is in a very prominent position and before 1838 this site was undeveloped and a view of St. Marys

Church of Ireland would have been possible from the main street of Kilmessan. The double house has an understated formal character sympathetic to the village character of Kilmessan.

The church and glebe house are described later in this section. The site on the opposite side of the road to the entrances to St Mary's church and glebe house is now vacant and behind a wooden screen.

Street by street appraisal

7.1.2 Quality and Treatment of Open Space

The approach to Kilmessan from the bridges to the east and west of the ACA is an important part of the experience of the special character of the ACA. On approaching from the east one crosses Kilmessan Bridge, this lies west of a T-junction with an open triangular grassed area. Two houses stand parallel to one another to the north and east of the junction. These are much altered vernacular houses. From here an important view is offered across an open green area to the elevated church graveyard with the church itself visible. Also visible from here is the approach road to Kilmessan and Kilmessan Bridge. This important view remains unspoilt.



Fig.11: T-junction and house east of Kilmessan bridge



Fig.12: View from T-junction east of Kilmessan Bridge

Street by street appraisal



Fig.13:Details of Kilmessan Bridge



Fig.14: Kilmessan Bridge

The road is well defined by stone boundary walls at the bridge and by a stone wall that runs from the whole way from the T-junction to Church View and further and around the glebe grounds on the western side. The line of trees south of the wall reinforces the boundary character of the wall and together they give good definition to the approach to Kilmessan proper.

From the bridge a good view is offered to the gable end of St Mary's Church on raised ground with a stone retaining wall separating it from the lower level of the riverside field. The retaining wall echoes the road wall in material, scale and size. The church sits in a picturesque setting with a backdrop of large mature trees with mature Irish yews and other smaller specimens to the foreground.



Fig.15:View of St Mary's Church and graveyard from Kilmessan Bridge

On approaching Kilmessan proper, the stone wall continues to the south side of the road with a line of poplar trees. Straight ahead the gable of the two-storey building signals the end of the main street. It has an elevated position relative to the approaching viewer. As the building is free standing, the rear elevation is an important part of the quality of the view. The buildings to either side of Skein Abbey are of little architectural quality and do little to add to the village character but have a backdrop of large mature trees to the north.

To the south of the two-storey building is a police station located behind the sweeping curve of the stone boundary wall. It is single-storey with

Street by street appraisal

projecting ends and is now almost invisible from the road, it faces onto Church View with gate way access and it is typical of the style of police stations from the 1930s.

To the south of the police station on Church View are separate entrances to St Mary's Church and the Glebe House and both are set within the stone wall. To St Mary's the entrance is set back with a narrow entrance with double wrought iron gates, to the glebe house the entrance is wider with wrought iron gates and fences to either side. Large mature trees along this side of Church view reinforce the unity of character of the church and glebe grounds.



Fig.18: Police Station, view from south



Fig.16: View of two-storey building from east at the end of Skine Abbey



Fig.17: View of two-storey building from the Main Street in Kilmessan looking south

Street by street appraisal

From the road in front of the church and glebe quality metal gates one can see towards the former railway bridge, it echoes Kilmessan Bridge but is very different in scale and size. The stone wall to the glebe demesne continues on the south side of the road with large trees behind. The trees are echoed by poplars on either of the bridge embankments.



Fig.19: Entrance to St Mary's Church from Church View



Fig.20: Entrance to the glebe house from Church View

Street by street appraisal



Fig.21: View to the former railway bridge from Church View



Fig.22: View from the former railway bridge towards Kilmessan

Street by street appraisal

The view from the bridge is important as it affords views of the church and glebe entrances, the stone walls and trees. The area retains much of its original character of church use with a graveyard and landscaped grounds around the glebe house. To the north side of the road are a number of suburban type houses and gardens. These lie west of the ACA boundary and are well set back from the road. Further to the east within the ACA is a vacant site where a building had once stood alongside Church View. This is a highly visible location when seen from the western approach and any development needs to be sensitive to the view. The side elevations of any building in this location will be as important as the front elevation.

bridge. Newer detached housing stands further south and closer to the glebe grounds. The latter can be seen from the drive-way approach to the glebe house.



Fig.23: Western boundary of glebe grounds

Fig.24: New housing facing the western side of the glebe grounds

A road runs south from Church View along the western edge of the glebe house grounds. The stone wall continues to part of the boundary and the whole is reinforced by a belt of large mature trees. Some suburban semi-detached housing stands west of an open green south of the

Street by street appraisal

7.2. St Mary's Church and grounds

7.2.1 Architectural Character and Building Uses

The early eighteenth-century St. Mary's Church with its very short chancel (the porch is later) demonstrates the biblio-centric reformed church layout. The plan is very different to the medieval arrangement of long nave and equally long screened off chancel. Later modifications include the Decorated style window tracery, the addition of a western porch and the quinfoiled cusped roundel in the west gable.

7.2.2 Quality and Treatment of Open Space



Fig.25: Trees, grave stones and monuments in St Mary's graveyard

The graveyard is characterised by fine stone monuments and mature yew trees. Many graves lie hidden by overgrowth. From the graveyard there is a fine view to the east towards Kilmessan Bridge across an open field and the river at a lower level. The entrance area is gravelled with no remaining distinct edge to the bordering grassed areas.

The church grounds are elevated relative to the river side fields to the east. A stone retaining wall defines the eastern and northern edges of the graveyard. The boundary to the west is marked by the stone wall and large mature trees that are found along much of Skein Abbey and Church View and by a stone retaining wall and trees to the glebe entrance way. The boundary to the south to the glebe house is marked by a row of trees and there may also be a stone retaining wall here as well. The entrance is made by a set of wrought iron gates with gateposts.

Street by street appraisal

7.3 Glebe House

7.3.1 Architectural Character

The glebe house, dating to c.1800, described by Casey and Rowan as 'however modest, one of the most elegant country houses in the county'. Three bays wide and two storeys over a semi-basement, it has later single storey wings added to each side and it has shallow hipped roofs. The middle bay is advanced, the sash window set in a segmental-headed recess over a wide elliptical fanlight doorcase, and one central chimneystack all suggest the hand of Francis Johnston.

To the east of the house there are two stone outbuildings facing one another with a small yard in between. They are attached to a series of fine stone walls and these have large gate posts and iron gates.

7.3.2 Quality & Treatment of Open Space

The house sits on a rise and is approached by a straight tree lined way with a curve to the southern end towards the house. There are mature trees to either side of the avenue near the entrance at Church View and new trees have been planted along the avenue between here and the house. To the west of the avenue is a narrow field, to the east is a large open field with a free standing large specimen tree. This open field affords a view of the house in the distance on approach. A mature willow stands directly opposite and close to the house. A thick belt of trees divides the glebe grounds from St Mary's Church to the north and the riverside field to the east.

There are large mature trees to either side of the rear of the house, the garden slopes down to the south with an oblong shaped pool that is enclosed by a mature hedge in sweeping curves.

The boundary treatment to the west and north of the glebe house grounds is of a belt of large mature trees and a low stone wall. Boundary definition to the south and east is by means of a wooden fence and a belt of mature trees.

The historic relationship of the house and grounds to the church and graveyard and to the village and approaches is well reflected in the remaining layout and setting of these elements to one another and is central to the character of the ACA.

Street by street appraisal

8.0 Summary of significant views & vistas

The light undulating nature of the terrain into and within the ACA affords fine views and spatial sequences of significance.

The important views and vistas are:

- The view along Skein Abbey (the main street in Kilmessan) southwards to the two-storey building at the end of the street that is within the northern part of the ACA.
- The views from this building east and west along the routes out of the village.
- The view from Kilmessan Bridge and further east from the T-junction looking west towards the village and St Mary's Church and graveyard.
- The view from St Mary's Church and graveyard eastwards towards Kilmessan Bridge.
- The view from the gate entrance area in front of St Mary's Church and glebe house westwards towards the railway bridge.
- The view from the railway bridge to the gate entrance area in front of St Mary's Church and glebe house grounds.
- The view towards the glebe house along the tree lined approach.
- The view looking north from the glebe house front elevation to a field with free standing trees and boundary trees.
- The view to and from the rear south garden elevation of the glebe house.

Summary of significant views & vistas

9.0 Summary of Special Character

The special character of Kilmessan ACA is derived from the relationship of features derived from its historical development. These are the relationship of the historic village to the church and grounds and in turn the church to the glebe house and its grounds. The axis of the village is terminated spatially by a modest building in keeping with the village architectural expression. This building acts as a pivotal marker on approaching and traversing the village. Behind this the police station is part of a collection of public functions located along the main street and its official status has an appropriate architectural expression. It plays an important part in the tradition of village functions serving the wider community.

Other major elements are the stone bridge approaches from the east and west and the strong boundary definition of these routes given by stone walls and mature trees.

The landscape settings of the glebe house and church graveyard are strong in character and in their relationship to one another. Though larger than the church grounds, the glebe house grounds are more introverted and private in character. The church and graveyard are quiet and removed from everyday hustle and bustle but are visible from the Kilmessan Bridge area and play an important role in announcing the village to the visitor on approaching.

A major contribution to the character of the ACA is made by the historic landscape design with large scale mature trees defining boundaries, screening and creating backdrops to buildings. More recent trees along the bridge embankments to the west and the road due north of St Marys's further enrich the landscape setting. The importance of trees is reflected in Kilmessan village itself with fine examples near the Catholic church and in the street scenery looking north.

Recent development has been less than sympathetic to the historic part of Kilmessan

village beyond the ACA. The arbitrary planning of housing estates to the west of the ACA is also worrying as is the suburban rather than a village character of the houses and their boundaries north of the road between Kilmessan Bridge and the main street in Kilmessan. None of the developments take the character, scale, architectural expression or landscape arrangement of Kilmessan into account and they erode the special character of the ACA.

Summary of Special Character



Fig.30: Kilmessan ACA

Implications for Planning and Development

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 Kilmessan 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

10.1 Works requiring planning permission

10.1.1 External walls

The majority of building facades in Kilmessan have a render or stucco finish with stone and brick details. Some 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 Kilmessan ACA is significant and is part of its integral special character. Buildings are seen in the round more so than in other village settings and the integrity of the roofs to all sides must be guaranteed. 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

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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 Kilmessan 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 Kilmessan retain a considerable number of original window and doors, however 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.
- 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.

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- 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. 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 grills 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.

10.1.5 New build

New development within the ACA of Kilmessan includes extensions, including porch extensions to the front of buildings 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

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design that is complementary to the character of the ACA is acceptable but the development of any infill sites within the ACA, 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. Applications for development should include high quality and accurate views of the proposed development from designated viewpoints in order to assess the impact on views within and without the ACA.

- 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 Kilmessan ACA. Applications for development should include high quality and accurate views of the proposed development from designated viewpoints in order to assess the impact on views within and without the ACA.

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 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. Some buildings within Kilmessan ACA have street frontages but other buildings are bounded by stone walls or railings, which add to the special character of the ACA. 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

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be finished appropriately and never left in a ruinous state. Gates of an appropriate material and design should be fitted to these openings.

10.1.9 External Lighting

Proposals for the illumination during night-time hours of certain buildings and landmark features within Kilmessan 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 Kilmessan 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.
- 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.



Fig.31: Overhead cables, antennae and satellite dishes, poor quality paving and road widening for parking bays take from the visual quality of the village.

- 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. Parking at right angles in front of commercial premises 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. Parking on or half on footpaths should be discouraged.
- 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.

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.

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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.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council