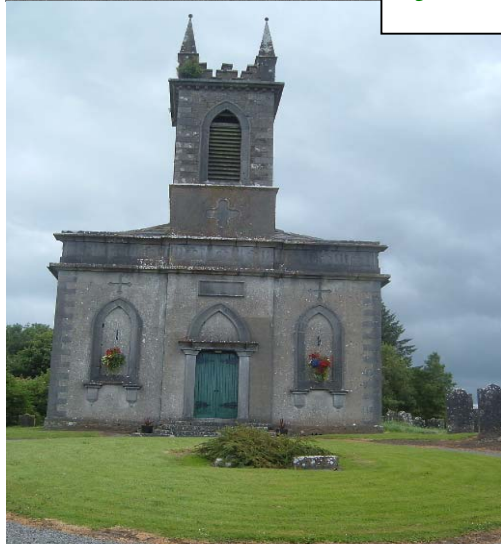




Ardagh



Urban Conservation Plan
Kirsty Anne Murphie

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1.0 Summary

This urban conservation plan is intended to highlight the historic and architectural significance of Ardagh and recommend how the village can be maintained for future generations to enjoy. Ardagh is often described by locals and visitors alike as “a little gem.” Its unique arts and crafts style and characteristics are quite rare in Ireland, and it is important that these features are protected.

Ardagh has a long and varied history, from its importance in pre-Christian times, the coming of St. Patrick and the founding of the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise to the arrival of the Fetherston family, the building of Ardagh House in the early eighteenth century and the unusually designed village itself. In addition to the ancient sites of St. Mel’s early-Christian Monastery, dating from the sixth century, and St. Brigid’s Holy Well, dating back to pre-Christian times, there are three Churches which reflect the religious importance of the village: the ruins of a later medieval church (probably Norman), St. Patrick’s Church of Ireland Church and St. Brigid’s RC Church, both dating from the nineteenth century.

The most visually important part in Ardagh’s long history is the John Rawson Carroll nineteenth century design of the village. The village deliberately best viewed from the front door of Ardagh House, where one can see most of the village from the Protestant church to the old rectory. The design of the village also takes the weather into consideration: the houses are built with their backs to the wind.

The Arts and Crafts-style village is unique to the area, with elaborate fascias, latticed windows ornate redbrick chimneys, and different

features depending on the character area. These features should be retained as far as possible in order to preserve the area for the benefit of present and future generations. This can be done by ensuring that appropriate materials are used correctly for necessary repairs, and that no substantial alterations are made which would affect the character of the building and the area. Since the original materials are nearing the end of their lifespan, it is imperative that the correct decisions are made now to ensure the longevity of the buildings singularly and the village as a whole.

The village would benefit from some social and physical enhancement. Small changes such as new, more appropriate litterbins and street surfaces would radically improve the look of the village. New developments should take into account the local building styles and features, and should use some of these paradigms, although care should be taken to prevent the area becoming too “Disneyfied.” Similarly, the re-opening of the Heritage Centre would attract people to the area, both visitors from other parts of the county and those from further afield.



2.0 Introduction

2.1 Reasons for Appraisal

Ardagh is Longford County's most picturesque village, and this has been recognised in various competitions such as the National Tidy Towns Competition, which it won in 1989, 1996 and 1998. The village has also been acknowledged in many European competitions, such as the British Airways Tourism for Tomorrow Environmental Awareness Competition, which it won in 1998. However, in order to maintain the character and appearance of the village, it is necessary to highlight what is historically and architecturally important, drawing attention to what should be retained and protected, and outlining policies for doing so. Ardagh is a small but beautiful village, with many historically and architecturally important features, which should be maintained as far as possible.

2.2 Location

Ardagh is located in the southern part of County Longford, 10 km south west of Longford town (see map below). It is a traditional rural Irish village but with many unique qualities, particularly in its Arts and Crafts-style houses. The village is situated beside

the ancient Ardagh Mountain, which stands 650ft (200m) high.

2.3 The importance of the village

The village is a unique example of nineteenth century improvement in an estate village and, interestingly, it is the Arts and Crafts building style that is the first feature of which people think when Ardagh is mentioned. However, the local and national importance of Ardagh dates back to pre-Christian times, and the village also played an important role in the development of Christianity in Ireland, with the founding of a monastery by St. Patrick in the fifth century. The village then grew up around the religious settlement. Ardagh gave its name to the Diocese, of which St. Mel was the first bishop, and the site of the original Cathedral. The Cathedral of the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, still known as St. Mel's was built in 1840, and is located in Longford town. Ardagh village today is a unique example of a nineteenth century estate village: while there are other planned villages in Ireland, Ardagh is the only one built in the Arts and Crafts style.



Map of Longford, showing location of Ardagh

3.0 History and Context

3.1 Reasons for Location

The history of Ardagh village begins with Ardagh Mountain. Ardagh Mountain was an important part of pre-Christian Ireland, and it is no coincidence that St. Patrick decided to found a monastery at an already established place of worship. The village developed around the monastery, and grew from there. Ardagh remained the centre of the Diocese until the Reformation in the mid-sixteenth century, and beyond, at least as a spiritual if not physical ecclesiastical centre.



View from Brí Léith

3.1.1 Brí Léith

Ardagh Mountain, which stands 650 ft high, was known as Brí Léith, and was an important part of pre-Christian Ireland, believed to be the home of Midir, a pre-Christian deity. Much folklore is associated with Brí Léith, and mentioned in the Book of Tara. Bilberries are mentioned in the Book of Rights: the High King was entitled to have bilberries from Brí Léith as part of his harvest meal. Bilberry Sunday, until fairly recently, was a day when local children went up Ardagh Mountain to gather Bilberries.¹



Model of Midir in Ardagh Heritage Centre

3.1.2 St. Patrick & St. Mel

It is no surprise that Ardagh changed from being a centre of pre-Christian worship to such an important site of Christian settlement. St. Patrick is thought to have arrived in Ardagh sometime during 434 or 435, and it is understood that the most probable date for the founding of the see at Ardagh is 435 (McNamee, History of Diocese of Ardagh, p. 27) Unfortunately, like the pre-Christian era, there is little or no contemporary documentary evidence relating to St. Patrick or St. Mel, with the first mention of St. Mel appearing in Tirechán's Latin account of St. Patrick's mission, dating from 700AD. St. Mel was consecrated a Bishop by St. Patrick and made head of the Diocese of Ardagh. St. Brigid was another of St. Patrick's followers to visit Ardagh. It is thought that Brigid was, according to legend, professed as the first nun in Ireland by St. Mel in Ardagh, and some even claim she was made a bishop. Along with St. Mel, St. Brigid is patron of the Diocese, hence the reason why she is patron of the nineteenth century Catholic Church in the village.

¹ (St. Brigid's Church Ardagh Centenary Booklet 1881-1981, p. 6)



Mural depicting St. Mel & St. Brigid in Ardagh (left) and a statue of St. Mel (right) both displayed in St. Brigid's Church

3.1.3 Religious Turmoil

For some time throughout the medieval period, Ardagh suffered great turmoil. In 1167, the whole of Ardagh, encompassing the church and the houses, was razed to the ground. Again, in 1230, Ardagh was the scene of a contest for the bishopric, and as a result opposing factions caused the destruction of the Episcopal house and cathedral tower. In 1496, William O'Ferrall, who had been bishop since 1479, attempted to take over as chieftain of Annaly (Longford) from the other branch of the O'Ferrall family, which resulted in a severe attack on Ardagh, leaving little of the cathedral intact. The roof,

Sacristy, campanile and bell were all destroyed, leaving only a single altar. The church, which is still in ruins today, never recovered from this attack. This had an adverse effect on village itself. Writing in 1682, Nicholas Dowdall Esq. described Ardagh as "a place quite ruined, there being only a few thatched houses, there is the ruins of the Cathedral but clearly demolished." The village did not recover from these earlier religious feuds until the Fetherston family arrived in the early 1700s.



The remains of the Cathedral, destroyed in 1496

3.1.4 The Fetherston Family Estate

The first recorded Fetherstons in the Midlands area arrived from Northumberland in the late seventeenth century, although they did not settle in Ardagh until the early eighteenth century. The first Fetherston recorded in Ardagh was Thomas Fetherston, who bought the house and 235 acres of land around 1703 and died 1749. The family was given the rank of Baronet in 1780.² Although there is no exact date, it is thought that Ardagh House was built before 1745, the year that the writer Oliver Goldsmith is said to have visited the house. According to local legend, Oliver Goldsmith is thought to have arrived in the village and asked locals for an inn, who, in jest, pointed him towards Ardagh House. The Squire Fetherston, instead of being affronted, played along, agreeing to accommodate him, the squire's daughter pretending to be a servant. Goldsmith only discovered the truth when asked for the bill at breakfast. It is believed that this story inspired Goldsmith's most famous play, "She Stoops to Conquer."

The most significant mark left by the Fetherston family was the substantial social improvement carried out in the village in the 1860s, and which is still visible today. The village was designed and built by an architect friend of Sir George Fetherston's nephew Sir Thomas, J. Rawson Carroll, as a memorial to his uncle, although it was Sir George who initially considered it. It is thought that the design was based on lady Fetherston's idea of a Swiss village, which she had seen whilst on holiday. The clock tower, village green and the arts-and-crafts-style houses were all designed with the view from the house in mind.

² Hodgins, J. *The Featherston Family of Ardagh in Teathbha* (Journal of the Longford Historical Society) Vol. II, No. 1 (July, 1980)

By 1891 Sir George Fetherston who, by this stage was the fifth baronet, was a member of the Anglican clergy and an absentee landlord living in Wales, with his sisters Adeline and Caroline living in Ardagh House.



Oliver Goldsmith (top), Dedication to Sir George Fetherston on the Clock Tower (middle), the Fetherston Coat of Arms, still displayed on the estate house (bottom).



Ardagh House today



Ardagh House in the nineteenth century

3.1.5 Ardagh post 1922

Ardagh House was taken over by the Sisters of Mercy of Longford in 1927, and the house became a technical school for girls. Ardagh village, since Ireland gained its independence, has followed the pattern of most traditional Irish villages. Population decline as a result of migration has been a common problem, although, like many Irish villages, the last decade has seen a substantial increase in Irish people returning to their home counties, whether from the cities and towns or from further afield. This presents a turnaround in the fortunes and the character of such a village: while once the area was relatively poor and, for the greater part, consisting of an elderly community, today Ardagh has many more families living there, thus redressing the age balance and injecting new life into the area.

The ecclesiastical importance of Ardagh lives on in its ruined churches, which bear testimony to the turbulent history of the parish, as well as in the names of many of the townlands in the parish. Cross and Bohernacross are named after the termon crosses which marked the boundaries of the church lands, while others, such as Meeltanagh and Ardnyskine are named after events concerning St. Patrick's time in the area, and Glenanaspic, Aughanaspic and Ardbohill indicate the site of bishops' residences. The legacy of the Fetherston family lives on in the carefully designed Ardagh House and village.

3.2 Regional Context

County Longford boasts a long and varied history. All around the county evidence of habitation, defence, burial and religious worship, dating from pre-history to modern times, can be found. There are hundreds of ringforts, megalithic burial grounds and cashels,

as well as sites of pre-Christian worship, such as the sun-worship sites at Granard and Brí Léith, and a great many churches, abbeys, monasteries, castles and historic houses. The last great battle of the 1798 rebellion was fought at Ballinamuck, and both folklore and history highlight many other battles and power struggles throughout the ages. Although Ardagh is located on the slope of a substantial hill, the county is generally flat and there are substantial areas of bogland, as well as forestry and farmland.

3.3 Historic Pattern of Land Use

Although there is little documentation, the presence of the churches indicates that there has been some form of village settlement since early Christian days, although it is only the churches, holy well and cross pedestal that have survived. The name of the village in Irish, Ard Achadh, meaning the high field, suggests that in the days of St. Mel the area was undeveloped land. The area remains, as it has always been, predominantly agricultural.

3.4 Settlement Development

When St. Patrick established the monastery at Ardagh, the religious focus changed from Ardagh Mountain to Ardagh village, and the people began to live in the vicinity of the church, thus establishing a village settlement. However, there is little trace of habitation dating back to before the eighteenth century, other than the religious buildings and graveyards. The 1659 poll tax register indicates that there were eighteen people (all Irish) living in the townland of Ardagh, and 971 Irish and 19 English in the barony of Ardagh. By 1837, Samuel Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland indicated 25 houses in the village and 142 inhabitants. The village today has approximately 225 inhabitants.

3.5 Monuments

The following structures in or near Ardagh village are all national monuments:

- ◆ St. Mel's Cathedral
- ◆ Medieval Church and graveyard
- ◆ Holy Well (St. Brigid's Well) (South of the village)
- ◆ Graveyard beside St. Patrick's Church
- ◆ Cross Pedestal, to the east of the village

3.6 Protected Structures

The following buildings in Ardagh village are all protected structures:

- ◆ Old Rectory (Glebe House)
- ◆ St. Brigid's Church
- ◆ St. Brigid's Parochial House
- ◆ 15 stone houses (designed by J. Rawson Carroll – see map 12.3)
- ◆ St. Patrick's Church and Lychgate
- ◆ Clock Tower, including railings and boundary walls.



The centre of the village as it was in the late nineteenth century

4.0 Character and appearance

4.1 Setting

Ardagh village is mostly flat, although it is located on the slope of Ardagh Mountain, which has commanding views towards Roscommon, Westmeath and Carrickboy. The name in Irish, *Ard Achadh*, means “high field.” The village has a substantial amount of greenery. Ardagh’s position in South Longford near the Westmeath border places it among some of the best farmland in the county with abundant trees and forestry.

4.2 Views & Vistas

Although Ardagh is flat, there are still a great many impressive vistas, some of which appear to have been planned by the architect who designed the village. The best prospect of the village, and arguably the most deliberate one, is from the front door of Ardagh House (see photos above). This vista illustrates the aesthetic importance of the village from the

viewpoint of the Fetherston family who commissioned it. This is an architecturally and historically important, as well as beautiful, vista, which should be preserved as far as possible. From the front door or Ardagh House, the view encompasses the village from the Protestant church on the left to the old Rectory on the right; these two landmarks could be described as bookends, marking each end of the village as it was in the eyes of Rawson Carroll the architect and the Fetherston family. The agent’s house is the only house where the front door faces Ardagh House, and this has been done deliberately so that the estate manager and the Fetherston could communicate with each other. Another pleasant vista, this time of Ardagh House itself, is from the gate at the end of the garden beside St. Patrick’s Church, at the village green. The view of the Protestant Church through the lychgate is also worthy of note.



A representation of the panorama of Ardagh village from the front door of Ardagh House. Note St. Patrick’s Church (left), the clock tower (centre left), the estate house (centre right) and the Rectory (right).



View of Ardagh House and stables from beside St. Patrick’s Church, and view of St. Brigid’s steeple from the centre of the village.

4.3 Activity & Movement



OS Map (1837) and Modern Map Showing Ardagh's "cross" street plan. Note how the road north has been realigned, as part of the 1860s improvement. This shows that the road southwards has never been an important road.

Although Ardagh is no longer on any main routes, it has been, in the last five years, somewhat rejuvenated, with an influx of young families building new houses beside the village. During the day, the village is relatively quiet, as most of the inhabitants work in the nearby towns. There is a primary school, with pupils coming from the village and nearby farms. There is also a community centre in the village, housed in the old Church of Ireland Primary School, which is used for community events such as bingo and quizzes, although some locals would argue that this facility is not used to its full potential.

4.4 Street Patterns

The centre of Ardagh village is the village green, and there are four roads which stem from the centre towards Longford (north), in the direction of Ballymahon/Mullingar (west), eastwards in the direction of Edgeworthstown and the road south, past the side of Noone's TV repair

shop, is a cul de sac. The shape of the village is cruciform, with all four roads coming together to a point at the centre beside the village green.

4.5 Buildings & Townscape

Although there are different styles of house in Ardagh village dating from the Rawson Carroll building period of the 1860s, the materials used are virtually the same throughout. Other buildings in the village are built from similar materials, although the level of detail, with the exception of the Catholic Church, is more modest, and the stone on the outside walls is usually covered with plaster, as per the local style, for example Lyons' pub. The townscape value of the village is quite unique to Ireland, and as a result is both worthy and expectant of protection, for future generations to enjoy. Unfortunately, many of the important features are nearing the end of their 150-year lifespan, and need replaced. It is important that this is achieved sympathetically.



Traditional brick chimneys and slate roofs. The ridge tiles are also original.

4.5.1 Chimneys

Red and brown bricks are commonly used in chimneys because of their durability, and in Ardagh they serve both a practical and an aesthetic purpose, being both durable and decorative.

4.5.2 Roofs

Traditional slate roofs are the norm in Ardagh, although some have been replaced with modern equivalents.

4.5.3 Guttering

Black cast iron gutters were once used on all the houses, but some have been replaced with aluminium or uPVC equivalents.



White uPVC guttering and drainage (left) replacing original black cast iron (right)

4.5.4 Fascia



Examples of original (top) and new (bottom) fascias

The fascias are arguably the most distinctive feature of the 1860s houses in Ardagh. The original fascia boards are ornately carved timber, although some more modern and other uPVC ones have replaced the originals. The fascia design changes between styles of house.

4.5.5 Soffit

Most of the houses were built with timber soffits, although some were built without any, using eave stones instead. The original timber soffits on some houses have been replaced with uPVC.



Timber soffit (Garda Station)

4.5.6 Walls

The 1860s houses are all built from ashlar limestone or sandstone, with limestone cornerstones and details around the windows. The other houses are a combination of stone (for the older ones) and concrete block (for the newer ones) with plastered exterior finish.

4.5.7 Windows

All of the houses built in the 1860s, apart from the agent's house, had cast iron latticed windows although, unfortunately, only some houses still have the originals. Some of the houses have a trefoil/shamrock fanlight above the door.



The trefoil/shamrock fanlight and the various types of latched windows

4.5.8 Doors

No original doors remain, and it is difficult to estimate what the original doors were like. However, the unusual shape of the doorway suggests that they originally could have been double doors. The doors would have been timber, and the old RIC barracks, now a house beside the clock tower, would be the best remaining example. Modern front doors are generally timber, but in different styles.



Front door to old RIC barracks (beside clock tower)

4.5.9 Curtilage

Each of the houses designed by Rawson Carroll also has a shed, which is part of the character of the house and the village, as well as being a practical feature. White cast iron gates are another important curtilage feature. They appear in the same form in front of every house, and Ardagh House has similar but fancier gates. Although white appears to have been the original colour of the gates, some people have painted their gates different colours to match the gables.

Boundary walls are also an important part of the house and village design, and come under the curtilage. Many of the Demesne boundary walls were, according to local folklore, built as part of the relief work during the Famine period.



The gate on the right is at one of the entrances to Ardagh House.



Boundary walls and cast iron gate



One of the Tree-Lined Avenues Today, and OS Map (1837) showing tree lined approaches

4.6 Planned Landscapes

Both the 1837 and 1913 Ordnance Survey maps show different designs of formal gardens, although in the same place, in the grounds of Ardagh House. Both maps also show tree-lined avenues towards Ardagh House from the direction of Longford and from Ballymahon. The village itself is a planned landscape, with the clock tower on the triangular village green at the centre, and is intentionally best viewed from the main door of Ardagh House. Another, more recent, planned landscape is Ardagh Neighbourhood Park and Heritage Trail, in the grounds of the Heritage Centre, which was begun in 1990.

The tree-lined avenues (mentioned above), on the Longford and Ballymahon roads towards Ardagh House, are shown on 1837 Ordnance Survey map. Additionally, the surrounding area is predominantly farmland, providing a great deal of natural green spaces nearby, in addition to Ardagh Mountain and Corn Hill.

The graveyards also serve as planned green spaces, and they have some interesting wildlife, plant life and topiary.



Ardagh Heritage Park and Heritage Trail, with the famine memorial (top right)



The village green at the centre of Ardagh



Green spaces: outside St. Brigid's (left) and St. Patrick's churches and in the cemetery (right)



Green spaces: at the entrance to Ardagh from Longford (above) and a grass verge beside St. Patrick's Church

4.7 Different Character Areas

There are different groups of houses, which are built in different styles:

- ◆ The single-storey, semi-detached with arts and crafts features (west road)
- ◆ The semi-detached two-storey half-hipped roof with shared chimney (east road)
- ◆ The single-storey semi-detached with fewer arts and crafts features (north road)
- ◆ The various two-storey arts and crafts-style houses on the north road and in the centre of the village

4.8 Negative factors

- ◆ Some of the houses are in need of repair – one in particular (see below)
- ◆ Some poor (but obligatory) road/tourist signage
- ◆ Some new housing not in the distinct village style
- ◆ Some poor quality alterations made to protected structures and other historic buildings, which detract from the character of both building and village

5.0 Building by building analysis

5.1 Ardagh House

5.1.1 Exterior

Ardagh house is a magnificent structure, and a typical eighteenth century neo-classical style landowner's house. The original part of the house was ten-bay and three storeys high over the basement, with a typically neo-classical porch with Doric

columns and (see photos below). The top floor was destroyed by fire in 1948, and was subsequently removed. Since the house became a convent in the 1920s, more extensions were added, although care has been taken to ensure that these extensions do not detract from the rest of the house.



Ardagh House, as it was in the nineteenth century, front (left) and rear (right). Note how, in true Victorian style, the ashlar stone is visible. It is possible that the house was built this way, but it is also possible that the mortar was removed during the nineteenth century, because it was fashionable to show the stone, to make buildings look "old."



Feather details for the Fetherston family: on the porch outside (left) and inside (centre). One of the ceiling-to-floor windows from the outside (right).



Wooden panelling in a doorway and the Doric columns in the grand entrance.

5.1.2 Interior

Inside Ardagh House, although many of the original features have been removed, perhaps as a result of the 1948 fire, some original features still

remain intact and in use. Some of the original carved and painted ceilings are still visible and well maintained, as are many of the original fireplaces.



The original Fetherstons' fireplace (top left) and a cupboard in the entrance hall, believed to have been there since the time of the Fetherstons. A door dating from the Fetherstons' time leading to the porch (bottom left), one of the few original ceilings remaining inside Ardagh House (bottom centre) and the original ceiling-to floor window surrounds with wooden panelling and intricate ceiling carvings. The window itself is a uPVC replacement.

5.1.3 Stables

The stables at Ardagh House were built in the nineteenth century and designed by John Rawson Carroll, who designed the village. The stables are of a courtyard design, with buildings around the four sides and an extensive courtyard in the middle with a well at the centre. The entrance has a clock tower above two green cast iron gates, and the buildings surrounding the courtyard are built with ashlar limestone, with green timber doors and

windows, and a slate roof with red ridge tiles. The second storey windows are in the arts and crafts style, which can be found throughout the village. Some of the buildings around the side are now used as classrooms, although some have been accurately restored, and contain many original features, such as tiles, drainage and fireplaces, as well as old tools, such as butter churns and horse harnesses (see photos below).



Various views of the stables. Note the half-hipped roof at the entrance, a style which is repeated in the Garda Station, and the semi-detached stone houses along the east road, and is copied in some modern houses. Note also the triangular arts-and-crafts-style dormers.



Interesting new design in the walls of the stables (Harp, Shamrock & St. Brigid's Cross)



Some of the traditional features maintained inside the stables. Note especially the tiles on the floor, and the acorn (top left) which was commonly used in the nineteenth century.

5.1.4 Gate Lodges

The two gate lodges at the entrance to Ardagh House date from the nineteenth century, in line with most of the village. They are of ashlar limestone construction. The main (north) entrance gate lodge has a symmetrical horizontal emphasis (see photo below). The windows, in line with the rest of the village have a vertical emphasis. Although still in its original form (with no extensions), the original slate roof, chimney, fascias soffit, window and

doors have all been replaced using modern materials, which are not complimentary to the overall character of the area.

The other (east) gate lodge (see photo below) has an unusual arts and crafts style timber porch, and the original windows, slate roof, chimneys, fascia, soffit, guttering, cast iron gates and railings have all been retained.



One of the two gate lodges, at the main entrance to Ardagh House today and in the nineteenth century. Note the difference in the way the uPVC windows (above) and the timber ones (below) open. Note how the cornerstones were once painted a light colour.



The other gate lodge, at the entrance on the east road. Note how the railings were once dark much darker than they are today.

5.1.5 Outbuildings

The outbuildings are built in the local nineteenth century vernacular style: limestone walls with brick surrounds around doors and windows, traditional

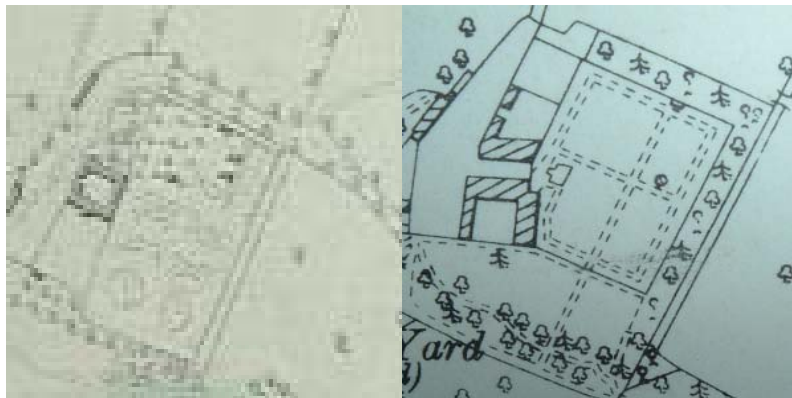
slate. They are still used in their original capacity, as storage/farm buildings.



One of the outbuildings. Note the original wide doors, of which only one is left (on the right).



Another vernacular outbuilding, with original timber windows.



The walled garden today (bottom left), as it was in 1838 (top left) as it was in 1913 (top right) and late Victorian-style benches in storage in Ardagh House – would be fitting in the walled garden if it was ever fully restored (bottom right) Similar ones can be found in Tyrrellspass, Co. Westmeath, used as public benches.

As the Ordnance Survey maps suggest, the walled garden was once a magnificent and fashionable feature of the house, a symbol of status as well as a pleasant place to pass the time.

Although the garden is still well maintained, the necessary resources are not available to fully restore the garden back to its former glory.

5.2 North Road (see map 2)

1. *The Clock Tower (protected structure)*

The clock tower, along with the rest of the village, was built as a memorial to Sir George Fetherston by his wife and his nephew. It was, along with the rest of the village which was built at the same time, designed by Gothic architect John Rawson Carroll, and is the most Gothic feature of the village (apart from St. Brigid's Church, which was designed at a later date and by a different architect). It is octagonal in shape, and the decorative spire, along with the pinnacles and rose window, is reminiscent of a great Gothic cathedral. The clock tower was intended as a symbol of mortality, and bears an inscription, dedicating the village to the memory of Sir George Fetherston. This symbol of mortality could relate to the fact that Sir George Fetherston died, and one day so will all of us, or it could be more lateral,

suggesting that our time on earth is running out.



The clock tower: the clock face, the spire, how it looked in the nineteenth century (with dark railings) and the railings. Note the inappropriate and out-of-place bin beside the railings

2. *Old RIC Barracks (protected structure)*

The former RIC barracks are now a rented two-storey detached house, which is currently inhabited, and the owners, at present, live in South Africa. However, this house is probably the best example of the original features that all of the Carroll houses would have had:

- ◆ The chimneys are the original redbrick – both decorative and practical
 - ◆ The slate roof is original
 - ◆ The timber fascias are original (although the colour may not be – in the black and white photo the fascias appear to be a darker colour than white)
 - ◆ The guttering and drainpipes are original black cast iron
 - ◆ The soffits
- ◆ The windows are of the original latticed design
 - ◆ The walls are the original brown sandstone with limestone detailing around the windows and doors as well as the cornerstones
 - ◆ The door may be an original (although there is an element of uncertainty)
 - ◆ Although much of the original boundary wall has been demolished to allow access for vehicles, some of the wall remains, as does the original cast iron gate, painted white to match the fascias



Once the RIC Police Barracks, now a rented house (although currently uninhabited). The photos suggest that little has changed, and this is probably the best example of how the houses once looked.



One of the narrow windows in the porch, and a mark showing repairs where an insignia once was but has been removed, above the door.

3. Agent's House (protected structure)

The agent's house is the largest of the houses in the village designed by Carroll. The agent would collect rent from the tenants at a door around the back (see bottom left). Note also the angle of the front door which, unlike the other houses, points towards Ardagh House. The bay window is another unusual feature, and all of these combined show that the agent's house was a rank above all the others. The sheds around the back of the house are quite extensive, and also worthy of note (see photo below). Some features have been retained, such as the small windows around the door, the

chimneystacks and the guttering. However, a considerable amount has been altered:

- ◆ Roof (although a similar type of slate has been used successfully)
- ◆ Fascias (new timber replacements)
- ◆ Windows (poor white uPVC replacements have been used – note how the white windows (below right) are a stark contrast to the darker timber ones (below left))



The door where rent used to be paid (left) now replaced with a white uPVC door, and quaint sheds, both at the back of the agent's house (above).

4. *Old Post Office (protected structure)*



The old post office, now a residence

This house also served as a post office until 1990. Original doors have been replaced with acceptable modern timber ones in a traditional style, and aluminium. The trefoil fanlight above the door has been retained, along with the original guttering. The brick surrounds around the windows and doors and hipped roof are typically nineteenth century features, which are particularly common across the Midlands (the brick surrounds can frequently be found in Roscommon,

chimney is new, as are the fascias and soffits.

5. *Community Centre (Old Church of Ireland Primary School) (protected structure)*

Westmeath and Offaly) and an example of this can also be found in the outbuildings beside Ardagh House. The modern lean-to extension is inappropriate and detracts from the overall quality of the building and of the area. The school was initially built in the 1830s by the local Dean, and was, according to local folklore, used as a “souper school” where, during the famine, Catholics were offered soup if they converted to Protestantism.





Community Centre

6 & 7. Stone Houses (protected structures)

The two semi-detached stone houses beside the community centre are less decorative than the rest of the cottages in Ardagh, but no less worthy of note. They are both substantial stone-built bungalows, with old slate roofs and

new chimneys, guttering, front doors and gates. The house on the left (6) has an unusual neo-classical style modern porch, and the one on the right (7) has an extension on the right.



Houses 6 and 7: note the unusual porch (house 6) and the extension (house 7)

8. *Stone House (proposed protected structure)*



House 8: note the inappropriate entrance on the left

This single-storey limestone house stands alone, although it has an unusual entrance on the left (see photo below) with an inappropriate white uPVC French window. The original chimneystack has been replaced using new red brick, and the guttering is white uPVC. The boundary walls and cast iron gate are original

9. *Hairdresser's*

The hairdresser's is a quaint little cottage, typical of most rural areas. Its symmetry is unusual but adds to its interest. The chimney is original, as is the slate roof, although the windows and door are new but are appropriate, especially the door. The guttering is black uPVC.



House 9: hairdressers

10. Display Window



The Display Window

Formerly known as Byrne's shop, it was closed in late 1980s, and is now used as an advertisement bureau for Ardagh village and its tourist attractions. This is a modern building, which does not fit in with the nearby buildings, although it has successfully blended into the surroundings as a result of the extensive ivy growth (see photo below), and it is well-maintained. It is also a useful asset for visitors to the village, providing them

with information concerning the history of Ardagh, as well as an information board highlighting places of interest.

11. Old Police Station *(proposed protected structure)*

This house appears as "Police Station" on the 1837 Ordnance Survey Map. Although it has new windows, a porch added later and an extension at the right, the house remains relatively unchanged.



Old Police Station (1837 OS Map) The chimneys show the extent of the building originally. From the road (left) and the rear (right).

12. Curate's House



The Curate's House (12)

Although now inhabited by a family, this house is known locally as the curate's house, because in the past when there was more than one priest in the parish, the parish priest lived in the parochial house, beside the church, and

the curate lived in this house. Note the unusual, Dutch-style roof, where the steep pitch becomes shallower at the bottom. This style is also mimicked on the garage (see photo above).

13. Modern House

This house is set back from the road, and built in the grounds of the old rectory. Although it is a modern house, it uses many Georgian-style paradigms, which also feature in the old rectory. The doorway is typically Georgian (although it differs somewhat from the old rectory front door) with a

fanlight above the door, with two narrow windows either side of the door. Although the windows are made from uPVC, there are in the Georgian sash-and-case style, and the size of the house is comparable with the old rectory.



Modern House (13) and the gates to it, which were originally the gates at the entrance to the old rectory

14. The Rectory (Glebe House) (protected structure)

The old rectory was built in 1823 at a cost of £600, and has been uninhabited since the 1960s. The present owners, who live in the adjacent new house (see above), have made the house wind and water tight, by repairing the roof and covering all the broken windows. The render on the walls is not original, and great care should be taken if it is ever removed. Timber sash and case windows are appropriate, and a lime-based render should be used on the external walls. The slate on the porch roof is indicative of what would have been used throughout, as is the guttering and drainage. An inspection of the interior was not permitted due to safety hazards prevalent within. It is

sad that such a fine building has been reduced to this, although at least it is protected from the elements, and perhaps some use will be made of it, realising its full potential, in the future.

The outbuildings are also worthy of note, but unfortunately are in a state of disrepair and have had little done to them to protect them from the elements. Some of these buildings are merely a shell with little remaining, although the largest of these, which may have been stables originally, still has some of its original detailing, such as a circular window, an assortment of large and small timber windows and a fireplace (see photos below).



Glebe House (Rectory) from the road, built in 1823, uninhabited since the 1960s (top left), the outbuildings (top right), the main entrance to the house (middle left) inside the outbuildings (centre) the extent of the ivy growth, and one of the cast iron drainpipes (middle right) a seriously weathered outbuilding (bottom left) and the gates leading into the rear of the rectory/outbuildings complex (bottom right).

5.3 South Road

There are currently only four houses on this road, most built recently, but using many of the traditional local styles. The photo below gives an example of one of these houses, using the local paradigms. This area is part of the development envelope, zoned for new houses.



An example of the new development on the south road: note the use of triangular gables and windows with a vertical emphasis, as well as the pitch of the roof.

5.4 East Road

1. National School

Ardagh National School is a modern building (built in 1981) and is set back from the road, somewhat hidden by the trees. It is

a single-storey building, which is well kept and does not detract from the surrounding area.



Ardagh National School

2. Heritage Centre

Ardagh Heritage Centre is housed in the old National School, which was built in 1896 on the site of the old Catholic Church (which was used until the new St. Brigid's was completed). It is a typical late-nineteenth century national school building, which can be found in many villages across Ireland. It is a single storey building with redbrick

chimneystacks, traditional slate roof, and timber windows and doors and cast iron gates, all painted blue. The walls are pebble dashed and painted white. In the grounds of the heritage centre is a famine memorial, which has been built incorporating the styles of the Rawson Carroll houses.



Ardagh Heritage Centre (2) and the famine memorial

3. *Modern House (B & B)*

Although this is a modern house, it has an old gateway, which was not originally located here, but was taken from Mount Jessop in the

neighbouring parish of Moydow and rebuilt here. The gate is directly opposite one of the gateways to Ardagh House.



Modern B & B (3) with salvaged gateway

4. *St. Brigid's Parochial House (protected structure)*

St. Brigid's parochial house is a substantial two-storey residence, typical of the late Victorian and Edwardian periods, and is quite distinctively Scottish in style, with features such as sandstone walls, bay windows over two storeys and irregular shape. The windows are timber and the roof is slate. The limestone detailing around the windows is a stark contrast to the local sandstone, and the same technique is used in some of the

Rawson Carroll houses. It is thought that such a vast house was built in such a small village partly because a new Bishop's Residence had recently been built, and the intention was to highlight Ardagh's importance as the seat of the Diocese of Ardagh. The stained glass trefoil fanlight and the stained glass window above it are interesting details. The house was built in the early 1900s under the direction of Mgr. O'Farrell.



St Brigid's Parochial House, and stained-glass window detail

5. Stone House (protected structure)

Houses 5, 6, 7 and 8 are particularly unusual, and are the most English-style houses in the village. They are relatively small, two-storey houses, with half-hipped roofs and fascias at the sides, an intricate wrought iron air vent beside the front door and a shared, highly decorative redbrick chimney. They have two windows at each side at first floor level, and a window and door at the front. The chimneys, as well as the

detailing around the windows and doors, are the most significant features of these unusual houses. House 5 has its original shared chimney, slate roof, guttering and soffit. The sash and case window at the front is timber, and those at the side are uPVC. This house also has an extension to the rear of the house, and the window and door surrounds have been painted over.



Stone houses 5 (left) and 6, and the air vent



The extension to the rear of house 5 (on the left, perpendicular to the original house)

6. *Stone House (protected structure)*

House 6 has all of the traditional features mentioned above, in line with the other houses in this group. It has new windows and a new

door, as well as a small single-story extension to the rear of the building.



House 6, showing the extension

7. *Stone House (proposed protected structure)*

House 7 is, unfortunately, unoccupied and semi-derelict. The photos below show the extent of the damage, which has occurred as due to neglect. Windows are broken, and there is already some damage to the roof, which could be

damaging the interior of the structure. The fascia at the side is also broken. However, as it stands the house is a good example of the original design of all four of these particular houses.



Stone houses 7 (left) and 8, and the shared chimney, in need of repair



House 7, showing the damaged brick detail surrounding the doorway, problems with the roof, guttering, broken windows, damaged fascias and the shed.

8. Stone House (protected structure)

House 8 has new windows, doors and a kitchen extension to the rear of the building. The brick surrounds around windows and doors remain intact, and the mono-pitch-roofed shed is still fully intact.



The shed behind house 8



House 8, showing the kitchen extension and the new redbrick surrounds

9. *Garda Station (protected structure)*

The Garda station in Ardagh is another variant on the arts and crafts theme: this time, in a fashion reminiscent of the English thatched house, the half-hipped roof has been used at the front as well as the

side of the building. The windows are timber and are of an unusual semi-circular shape, similar to the stone window surrounds in the gate lodges. Note also the red ridge tiles and blue fascias.



Garda Station

10. *Noone's TV Repair Shop*

The TV repair shop building is a large and imposing twentieth century structure, although the slated hipped roof is in keeping with the rest of the village, and windows of a similar shape to those in the Garda station. The shop front signage is rather large but, although not in-

keeping with the rest of the village, it is appropriate on this relatively large building. The windows in this building are similar to the original timber ones in the Garda Station building, located on the left of this building (see above).



Noone's TV repair shop: note the unusual windows, similar to those in the Garda Station building

5.5 West Road



Detached stone house 1

1. Stone House (protected structure)

House 1 is built from local red sandstone with limestone detailing in the cornerstones and around windows and doors. It has retained the original slate roof and the latticed windows. New redbrick chimneys, timber front door and timber fascias have been added tastefully.

2. Stone House (listed)

Houses 2 and 3 are unusual because, although they are semi-detached, they

are different sizes: only house 3 contains the triangular middle section. House 2 is built from limestone, and still has the original slate and ridge tiles, rear chimney, timber fascias, cast iron gate and boundary walls, although the door is new, as is the front chimney (redbrick) and the guttering, which is white uPVC. The sheds to the rear are also worthy of note.



Semi-detached houses 2 and 3



Behind houses 2 (left) and 3

3. Stone House (protected structure)

House 3 is also built from limestone, and has the original roof, timber fascias boundary walls and cast iron gate. However, timber windows that do not resemble the

originals have been used in place of the original latticed ones, and the door has also been replaced. The guttering has been replaced using white uPVC.



Semi-detached stone houses 4 (right) and 5, and shed behind house 5, typical of the sheds to the rear of each of these houses.



The back of houses 4 (left) and 5. Note the extension – one such as this would be disastrous at the front but to the rear it is less noticeable.

4. Stone House (protected structure)

This house is one of the semi-detached single-storey cottages in the village, designed by John Rawson Carroll. It still has its original slate roof and red brick chimneys, but new doors, windows and uPVC guttering, fascias and soffits. A Velux window has been added at the side of the house. The original white cast iron gate and boundary wall remain intact.

5. Stone House (protected structure)

This house has its original slate roof with new red brick chimneystacks. The windows are the original latticed style typical of the village, and the timber fascias

are a replacement, which are a simpler style than the originals.

6. Modern House

House 6 is a modern bungalow which, despite broadly incorporating the local paradigm of the triangular front gable is different to the rest of the village.

7. Modern House

House 7 is also a modern bungalow, which is not part of the village design, particularly with the red-tiled roof. However both 6 and 7 are on the outskirts and, therefore, have little impact on the rest of the village.



Houses 6 (left) and 7



Houses 8 (left) & 10. Note the half-hipped roof, which resembles that of the Garda Station building

8. *Modern House*

This modern house is modern in its design. Although it takes some of the local paradigms into consideration, such as the triangular pediment over the entrance area, it is not in a similar style to the rest of the village.

9. *Old Farm House*



This old house appears in the OS Map dating from 1837, and appears to be of late eighteenth/early nineteenth century design. The shallow-pitched hipped roof may not be original but dates back to at least a century, and the porch and the pebbledash have been added later. The windows, doors and chimneys are new.



Old Farm House 9, shown on the 1837 OS Map (right) on the horizontal road (the last house to the left of the crossroads before the tree-lined avenue).

10. *Modern House*

This is a substantial two-storey house, constructed from brick and with a half-hipped roof in places. It does consider some of the local paradigms: for example, half-hipped roofs, designed by Rawson Carroll, can be found on the Edgeworthstown Road.

11. *Modern House*

This is a substantial two-storey house, with a slate roof, dry dash and half-hipped roof in places. It does consider some of the local paradigms, such as the half-hipped slate roofs, and the triangular part of the front gable.



Modern House (11)

11. Lyon's Bar

The building which houses Lyon's Bar is not a part of Rawson Carroll's design, but is typical of many Irish towns and villages. The left of the building, beyond the chimney, appears to be an extension, and the original extent of the building was from one chimney to the other. The Irish style is reflected in the traditional slate roof, the horizontal emphasis and the (former, pre-extension) symmetry, as well as the cornerstone/windowsill details.



Lyons Bar

12. Post Office

The post office-cum-bar is owned by another member of the same Lyons family, and it is another typically Irish building, found in all towns and villages across the country. The cornerstones, in particular, are a particularly common feature.



Lyons Bar and Post Office

13. Former Courthouse (listed)

The former courthouse, now a private residence, is another variation of the arts and crafts style. It is built from local sandstone with limestone detailing around the windows and doors, and a steep-pitched slate roof. The original doors, redbrick chimneys and original windows have been replaced in a similar style, and a vast window at the side of the

house has been replaced with a much smaller one (see photo below). A stone extension at the rear of the building takes the pitch of the roof into consideration, although a more modern extension beside it is flat-roofed. The shed (see photo below) is a good example of a rural vernacular building.



The former courthouse, a vernacular stone shed to the rear and the once huge and imposing window at the side. The bottom photo shows the extension at the back of the house. In the nineteenth century, this building, like the others, had darker fascias and gates.

6.0 Churches

6.1 St. Mel's Cathedral (Monument)

St. Mel's Cathedral was established in the fifth century, and was initially of timber construction, but the stone ruins still visible today are thought to date from the eighth or ninth century. It has been in ruins since the end of the fifteenth century, when it was destroyed during an internal feud among the O'Ferralls. The monastery was built using traditional timber construction methods, and for this reason, among others, the remaining parts of the church are invaluable. Archaeological excavation was carried out on the church and surrounding area

by Dr. Liam de Paor, who discovered that the remains of the eighth/ninth century church were built on the site of earlier timber churches, and there were many burials in the immediate vicinity, with the burial ground extending across the modern-day road. St. Mel's Crosier was found in the immediate vicinity during the nineteenth century.

Other important features dating back to the early Christian and pre-Christian times are St. Brigid's Well and the Cross Pedestal, which are still venerated as holy shrines today.



Views of St. Mel's Cathedral, showing the doorway (top left) the huge stone used (top right) and the full prospect of the early Christian Church



St. Brigid's Well (left) and the Cross Pedestal

6.2 Medieval Church & Graveyard (Monument)

The medieval ruins, it is believed, were once the medieval parochial, which was built during the Norman period. It has been in ruins since the eighteenth century. The church today shows little detail, being somewhat overgrown, and the extent of the ivy growth makes the building quite dangerous: stones have started to come loose, because the ivy roots have begun to replace the mortar. However, photos taken around twenty years ago show some detail around the windows and door, and writings dating back over a century describe Romanesque features.¹ Within the church is a Fetherston family grave, surrounded by black cast iron railings, and the graveyard contains some important memorials, reputedly the grave of Pat Farrell, who fought in the 1798 Battle of Granard.



Fetherston tomb



The ruins of the medieval church. Note the ivy growth

¹ (O'Farrell's History of the County Longford, 1891)

6.3 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Church (Protected Structure)

This church was built in 1810, and is still in use as a Church of Ireland church, although not as frequently as it once was, and the congregation has greatly depleted in the last ninety years. It is an integral part of the village design, particularly in the view from the front door of Ardagh House. The interior of the church is relatively sparse, and the exterior resembles most Church of Ireland churches, but the

most interesting feature is the lychgate. A lychgate is a typically Anglican feature (although both Scotland and Ireland have a few each), and was intended as a covered area where the minister could welcome a coffin into the church. The red pan tiles on the roof of the gate are particularly unusual in Ireland, being most commonly found in countries and regions that border the North Sea.



The interior of the church, the pulpit and the door to the vestry (top), the main entrance to the church and the lychgate (middle) and a photo of the church from the nineteenth century and the fireplace in the vestry (bottom).

6.4 St. Brigid's RC Church (Protected Structure)

St. Brigid's Church was begun in 1881, although it was not completed until after 1900, and was finally consecrated in 1905. The church was designed by William Hague, another famous Gothic architect, and it is interesting to note that it is situated on the outskirts of the village: in other words, separate from the "designed" village. Its location, carefully positioned away from the Protestant

church, was chosen on purpose so as not to "spoil" the look of the village. However, the Gothic design of the church fits in very well with the rest of the Gothic-style village.

Inside, the church has many great details and much decoration. There are some fine mosaics around the altar, as well as intricately carved marble features and stained glass windows.



Views of St. Brigid's Church

7.0 Public amenity intrusion

7.1 Signage



Cast iron signage. The sign on the left was once a common sight in towns and villages across Ireland soon after the Free State was declared, but is now somewhat rare. The car park sign is an interesting and appropriate take on the original cast iron signage. Other signs in the village are standard directional green road signs and brown tourist information signs, which would benefit from being replaced with cast iron equivalents where possible.

There is one original cast iron black and white sign with a harp symbol, which is positioned at the side of the road on the way into Ardagh from the east and the west. Until the late 1980s, there was an old cast iron sign in the middle of the village green.

7.2 Street Furniture

Ardagh is lucky to still have some of its original traditional street furniture.

The Travellers' Seat, beside the Protestant Church, is a unique and traditional way of providing a seat for members of the public whilst maintaining the character of the area. Another interesting piece of original traditional street furniture is the water pump, which is still in its original position on the village green.



The old water pump and the traveller's seat in the middle of Ardagh village.



A bench, a hanging basket stand and an information board, found all over the county.

The public amenity rubbish bins are, at present, not in keeping with the character of the place. However, the bins currently used in Longford town centre, in the new courtyard complex,

would be suitable for Ardagh. It is possible to personalise these bins with decorations such as the Fetherston family coat of arms, or those for the ancient diocese of Ardagh.



The inappropriate bins in Ardagh (left) and the new ones in Longford (right). Note also the difference in paving between the two.



Street lighting in Ardagh

7.3 Street Lighting

Street lighting in Ardagh does not detract from the overall character of the area. However, if changes were made, the lighting on the left (above) is more appropriate than the lighting on the right.

vehicles, such as lorries and tractors, which do pass through the village regularly.

7.4 Effect of Traffic

Traffic is not a serious problem in Ardagh, because it is not part of any of the main routes through the county. However, there are still some heavy

7.5 Street Surfaces

Street surfaces in Ardagh are another area on which much could be altered to radically improve the area, but without too much cost. When compared with street surfaces in other towns (see below) the difference is clear.



Some street surfaces in Ardagh (left) and in Longford (centre and right)

8.0 Survey of Distinctively Local Details

8.1 Local Materials

Local materials used in Ardagh's buildings include limestone, found all over Ireland, local reddish sandstone, which can be found in the northern half of the country, traditional slate and timber and cast iron detailing. Because estate records concerning the Fetherston family have never been found, it is difficult to know exactly where the original materials originated. However, it would appear that the money was no object to the Fetherstons, and so many of the materials could have come from England.



Lyons Pub, a traditional Irish pub frontage.

8.2 Building Details

Building details that are commonplace in Ardagh include the cast iron latticed windows, ornately carved timber fascia boards, relatively steep-pitched roofs with (often with an arts and crafts style triangular emphasis) and a combination of sandstone and limestone.

8.3 Shopfronts

There are only two pubs in Ardagh and one shop. The shop fronts are in a traditional Irish style, and add to the character of the area, adding another dimension to the quaint arts and crafts buildings.



Lyons Bar and Post Office/Shop



Noone's TV shop

8.4 Gates, Railings and Boundary Walls

The gates, railings and walls in Ardagh are important features, which contribute to the overall character of the area. There are many different designs of gate and pier (as illustrated below), some simple and some more ornate, and steps should be taken to ensure that they remain so. Even though they are automatically included

in the curtilage of a protected structure, special mention should be made of these features. Although the majority of these gates and railings are white, some of the gates on the Rawson Carroll houses have been painted to match the fascias. However, it is hard to tell what colour they originally were from black and white photography.



Some of the cast iron gates and railings found in Ardagh: gate to the medieval church (top left), entrance to Ardagh House on the north road (top right), entrance to heritage trail (centre top left), entrance to cemetery (centre top right), railings around clock tower (centre bottom left), gates at rear of old courthouse (centre bottom right), gates to St. Brigid's church (bottom left) and one of the gates found on all the Rawson Carroll houses.

The boundary walls and piers are also important: many of these were built during the famine period, providing relief work, which adds to their historical importance. Some of the piers, such as those around the clock tower, are intricately carved from limestone, while others are built in random rubble, making them a more vernacular style.



Pier around clock tower



Gate to Ardagh House, beside St. Patrick's Church



Entrance to Old Rectory



Vernacular random rubble wall, outside hairdressers



Gate to Ardagh House from east road



Gateway to Ardagh House (north road)

10.0 Opportunities for development

10.1 The Development Plan

The development plan for the county for the period 2003-2009 highlights areas of Ardagh which are available for further development, and the aims presented within the plan state that: “dwelling houses should respect their location in terms of siting, design, materials, finishes and landscaping...designs should be site specific.” The underlying desire is to maintain the character of the place using the traditional paradigms, particularly the pitch of the roof, the triangular gables and windows with a vertical, as opposed to horizontal, emphasis.

10.2 Design Statement

Houses built near Ardagh in the last five years have adhered to the many of the local architectural paradigms used in the village. Features such as the angle of the pitch of the roof, the triangular arts and crafts style gables and windows with a vertical emphasis are simple ways of using the features in new buildings to incorporate them into the local area without compromising the character. Details such as detailed timber fascias or latticed windows are also possible ways of doing this, although care must be taken that new developments still appear new and are not simply a “pastiche” of the Rawson Carroll designs.



An example of recent development near Ardagh village. Note the architectural paradigms similar to those in the old buildings nearby (triangular gables, use of symmetry, use of stone, pitch of roof etc).

11.0 Opportunities for planning action

11.1 Effects of Permitted Development

There are many new houses, built in the last five years, which blend in well with their surroundings and add to the character of the village.

11.2 Funding

11.2.1 Heritage Council Grant Scheme

Each autumn, the Heritage Council calls for applications for funding for heritage projects under the Heritage Council Grants Programme. The Heritage Council allocates around €1 million of National Lottery funding towards six grant schemes:

- ◆ Local Heritage
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ Museums & Archives
- ◆ Wildlife
- ◆ Architecture Research
- ◆ Archaeology

Requests for application forms and information should be made in writing only to The Heritage Council, Rothe House, Kilkenny or alternatively information and application forms are available on the [Heritage Council website](#). Details for next years grants scheme will be posted on this site as soon as they become available. The closing date for receipt of applications is usually in early November. Further information and application forms are also available from the Heritage Office, Longford County Council.

11.2.2 Vodafone and Conservation Volunteers Nature Fund

The Vodafone and Conservation Volunteers Nature Fund aims to encourage the appreciation and protection of Ireland's unique natural environment through the funding of locally-based environmental projects and initiatives.

Further information on this scheme is available from: Vodafone and Conservation Volunteers Ireland Nature Fund, The Stewards House, Rathfarnham Castle, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14 Tel: 01 4952878 www.cvi.ie

11.2.3 Repairs to Historic Buildings

There are a number of funding sources that can be considered that will assist in planning for conservation works to historic buildings. They are

1. the Local Authority Conservation Grant Scheme for Protected Structures,
2. The Heritage Council's Buildings at Risk Programme,
3. Tax relief for expenditure on approved heritage buildings from the Revenue Commissioners,
4. Grant for the repair or renewal of thatch from the Department of the Environment
5. Conservation Grant Scheme for Public Buildings and
6. Irish Georgian Foundation Grant Scheme.

It is important to note that funding under the above schemes is not guaranteed and retrospective applications for works already carried out will not be considered.

(i) Local Authority Conservation Grant Scheme for Protected Structures

The Local Authority allocates grants each year for the conservation of Protected Structures (as listed in the RPS). This scheme is advertised in Spring and is usually 50% of the approved costs of the works, subject to a maximum of €12,697.00. In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority can approve grant aid to meet 75% of the cost of the works subject to a maximum of €25,395.00.

For further details of the scheme contact the Planning Office of Longford County Council.

(ii) The Heritage Council Buildings at Risk Programme

The Heritage Council has in place a database of buildings, which require funding for essential repairs. Each year the list of buildings is reviewed and buildings prioritised and selected for funding. Grant assistance is usually 50%. Further information and application forms are available from the Heritage Council, Rothe House, Kilkenny. Application forms are also available from the Longford County Council Heritage Office.

(iii) Tax Relief for Significant Buildings and Gardens Under Section 482 of the 1997 Taxes Consolidation Act, an owner/occupier of an approved building (including surrounding garden) can apply for tax relief in respect of expenditure for the repair, maintenance or restoration of an approved building or garden. Gardens, in their own right, are also included.

An approved building or garden is one which:

- ◆ The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has determined to be intrinsically of significant historical, architectural or aesthetic interest. In relation to a garden, it must be a garden, which is intrinsically of significant horticultural, scientific, historical architectural or aesthetic interest.
- ◆ The Revenue Commissioners have determined that reasonable access is provided to the for members of the public

or in the case of a guest house that it is in use as a guest house for at least six months of the year.

The scheme is administered by the Revenue Commissioners. For further information contact your local tax office.

(iv) Thatching Grant

Grants for the 'Renewal or Repair of Thatch Roofs of Houses' are available from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. To be eligible for this grant the house must be a normal place of residence. Further information and application forms are available from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Housing Grants Section, Government Offices, Ballina, Co. Longford. Tel: 096 24200, LoCall 1890 30 50 30

(v) Conservation Grants for Public Buildings

Under the Urban & Village Renewal Regional Operational Programmes 2000-2006 a scheme of EU Co-Financed grants has been put in place for the restoration and conservation of the architectural heritage. Under the Scheme, operated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, grants may be provided in respect of buildings which are in public ownership or open to the public generally, which are considered to be of considerable architectural merit. In general applications are invited from local authorities, civic trusts and other not-for-profit organisations. Buildings in use for public administration or which are in private ownership are not eligible for grant-aid. For further information contact the Urban and Village Development Section of the Dept. of

the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Tel: 01 888 2814.

(vi) Irish Georgian Foundation Grant Scheme

The Irish Georgian Society run a scheme throughout the year for small grants - ranging from €1,000 to €10,000. Grants are offered to

buildings that are architectural significant or rare in their locality, that do not have to be on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Grants are also available for condition/conservation reports. For further information contact: Irish Georgian Society, 74 Merrion Square, Dublin Tel: 01-6767053.

12.0 Recommendations

12.1 Conservation

1. Ardagh village should be designated an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), encompassing the Rawson Carroll houses, Ardagh Demesne and Ardagh Heritage Centre (see map 12.3), as per the County Development Plan 2003-2009, section 5.2.5.1.
2. The following buildings should be added to the Record of Protected Structures (see map 12.3):
 - ◆ Ardagh House, including in the attendant grounds the stables, gate lodges, outbuildings and all gates, railings and boundary walls.
 - ◆ The water pump in the centre of the village.
 - ◆ The cast iron sign at the entrance to the village.
 - ◆ House 7 on the East Road
 - ◆ The Travellers' Rest
3. The historic street pattern and layout of the village should be retained.
4. All significant views and vistas should remain unspoilt: this is particularly important in the case of the view from the front door of Ardagh House, from where the design and layout of the village is best viewed, and best illustrates the setting of the estate. (See section 3)
5. Traditional features and materials should be used where possible: such as timber fascias, cast iron railings and gates, slate roofs, timber and cast iron windows, brick chimneys etc (see section 3)

12.2 New Works

6. New development should be strictly controlled so as to avoid overtly inappropriate and disproportionate designs spoiling the look and the style of the village.
7. Traditional features, such as roof pitch, timber fascias etc should be incorporated in new designs, although these should not simply become "pastiche".
8. Extensions to Protected Structures and buildings in the ACA should be built out of sight.
9. Curtilage should always be considered in any new development/ alterations to existing Protected Structure or building within the ACA.

12.3 Enhancement

10. The ivy growing around the medieval church should be trimmed, after consultation with the Heritage Officer, and in accordance with the National Monuments legislation.
11. The two historic graveyards should be maintained and important historic gravestones should be protected.
12. New, appropriate pavement surfaces should be used to replace current ones. Sandstone slabs would be the most appropriate and sympathetic material.
13. New, more appropriate public amenity litterbins should replace existing inappropriate ones (see section 7).
14. Signage, both commercial and directional, should be appropriate to the place and unobtrusive.
15. External lighting should be unobtrusive.

16. One colour for fascias, railings and gates throughout the village should be encouraged.
17. A social attraction, ideally the reopening of the Heritage Centre, would be a sympathetic way of revitalising the village.
18. A new use should be found for the Old Rectory.
19. Native trees should be replanted on the approach roads towards Ardagh House as per OS Maps, especially within the boundary walls of Ardagh House and on southern side of road from Ardagh Mountain.

12.4 Future Course of Action

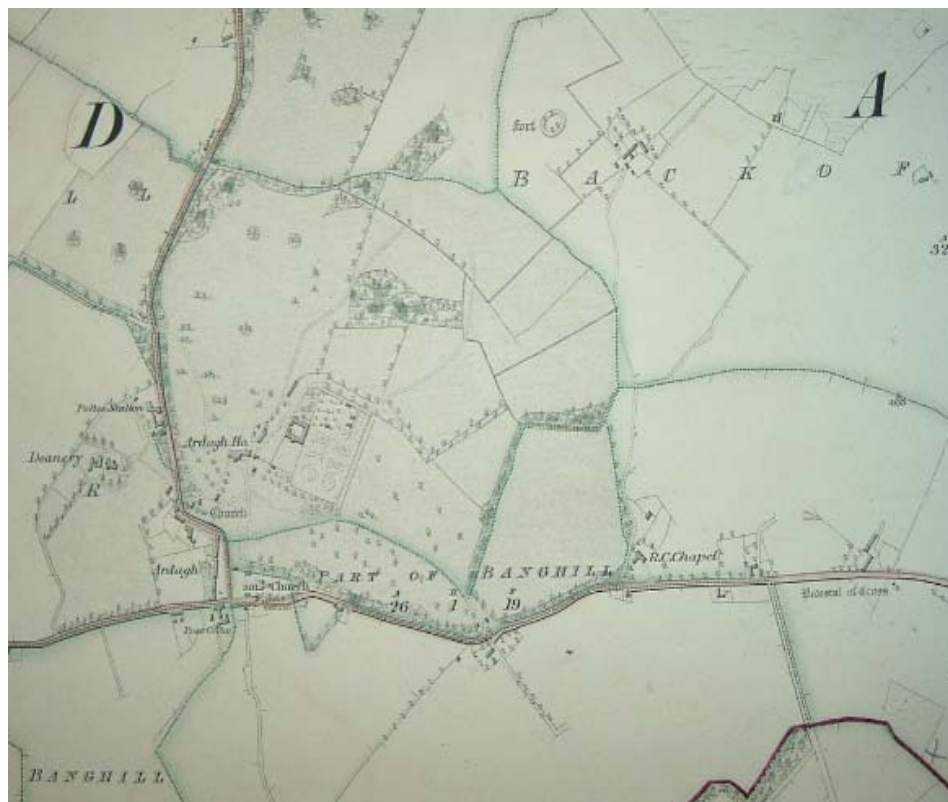
20. All works affecting National Monuments, Protected Structures and buildings within the ACA should be carried out in accordance with the County and National Development Plans, County Heritage Plan, Planning and Development Act 2004 and National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.
21. A Village Policy Statement should be developed for Ardagh, following on from the findings of this report.
22. The findings of this report should be monitored and reviewed periodically, by means of photographic survey.

13.0 Select Bibliography

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Canon Corkery, *St. Brigid's Church Centenary Souvenir* (1991)
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Teathbha: Journal of the Longford Historical Society (Vol. II, No. 1, July 1980)
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14.0 Appendices

14.1 1837 OS Map of Ardagh

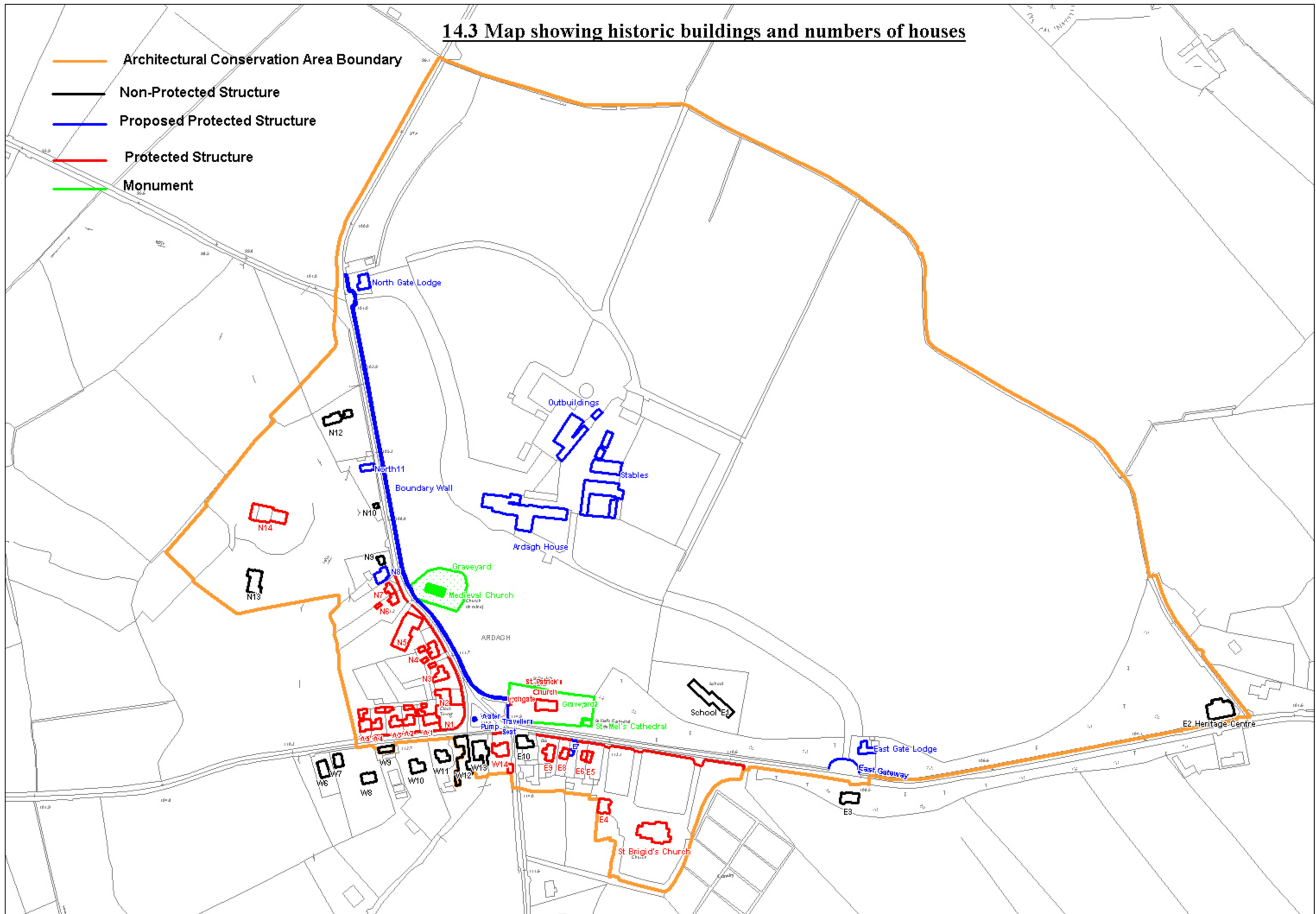


14.2 1913 OS Map of Ardagh



14.3 Map showing historic buildings and numbers of houses

- Architectural Conservation Area Boundary
- Non-Protected Structure
- Proposed Protected Structure
- Protected Structure
- Monument



14.4 Where traditional materials can be obtained

Architectural Salvage & Builders

Levaghy Lodge

Irvinestown Rd.

Enniskillen

Co. Fermanagh

BT74 6AL

Tel: 028 6632 6071

Particularly useful for Bangor Blue Slates, salvaged bricks etc

O'Hara Gutters Ltd.

Tubbercurry

Co. Sligo

Tel: 071 918 5385

Fax: 071 918 6385

Email: info@oharagutters.ie

Useful for cast iron guttering

Castit

Unit 612 N. Extension,

IDA Business Park,

Waterford.

Tel: 051 370 393

Fax: 051 370 398

Email: info@castit.ie

Useful for street furniture in-keeping with the character of the area

Ardagh of St. Mel

I've walked the ring of Ireland round
From Letterflack to Slane
And spring and summer glory found
In many a hidden lane
But best beloved of all the ways
On which my footsteps fell
Were those that went by whingold's blaze
To Ardagh of St. Mel

The great St. Patrick trod these ways
By Streete, Glen Lough, Croshea
And helped St. Mel a church to raise
That stands still on Brí Léith
Yet, still it stands, as stood its folk
Through persecution's hell
When Cromwell clamped his cruel yoke
On Ardagh of St. Mel.

These roads the saintly virgin trod
With live coals in her breast
To slander vile her trust in God
Gave answer with this test
She walked unharmed to Killen Pound
Then back to cloistered cell
Oh, yes, we stand on holy ground
In Ardagh of St. Mel.

These roads Noll Goldsmith rode one eve
Towards Mostrim from Lissoy
And found, too late, that men deceive
Who come from Carrickboy
But how those jokers round him grouped
How low their faces fell
When lady fair to conquer stooped
In Ardagh of St. Mel

*In Ninety-eight, from Ballinree
Brave Paddy Farrell rode
To bear his pike for Ireland free
Along the Granard road
His mare returned that lonely night
Alone, her master fell
Yet, dying, left a name still bright
In Ardagh of St. Mel*

*Brave are the sons of Ardagh yet
And strong their manly pride
And lucky is the man who'll get
An Ardagh girl for bride
For helping hand and kindly face
Cast their own special spell
On all who find a biding-place
In Ardagh of St. Mel*

*So, though I've walked Ireland all round
And shuiled a bit in Spain
Your equal yet I've never found
In sunshine or in rain
Your wealth the silver of your streams
The gold of cowslip's bell
Your peace, of which the great world dreams
Dear Ardagh of St. Mel*

(Appears in St. Brigid's Church, Ardagh – St. Mel Centenary Souvenir 1881-1981)