

CONSERVATION REPORT

Proposed Environmental and Public Realm Improvement works to Market Square and Main Street, Kilcullen including part of Bentley's Lane (L-60741-0) and part of the pedestrian walkway along the eastern banks of the River Liffey

INTRODUCTION

This conservation report has been prepared for the Paul Hogarth Company by Alastair Coey and Rory Lamb of Alastair Coey Architects. Alastair Coey is a RIAI Grade One Conservation Architect. The report is a supporting document to accompany a Part 8 application submitted in connection with proposed public realm improvement works around Main Street, Kilcullen, on the east side of Kilcullen Bridge, hereafter referred to as the Part 8 site.

The Part 8 site is bounded on either side by the properties of Main Street, the primary vehicular route through the town. These comprise mostly two-storey commercial properties with a mixture of shop front designs, mostly twentieth-century imitation designs of varying quality, and by Kilcullen Town Hall. To the south the road turns onto Kilcullen Bridge and the site terminates in a car park below the bridge featuring late-twentieth century rubble limestone and concrete walling overlooked by an apartment and office building with its own landscaping erected in the last thirty years. The north end of the site is marked by a two-storey building currently occupied by Woodbine Books which projects out into Main Street with a small pocket of the Part 8 site returning around it. The horizontal surfaces of the Part 8 site are at present, in the most part, given over to vehicular traffic and parking with an uncoordinated range of paving and walling and poor pedestrian footways.

At the outset it should be emphasised that the proposed works are confined to the horizontal surfaces of the square and no work is envisaged to the surrounding buildings which form the vertical enclosure to the sides of the Part 8 site.



Image 001: Kilcullen Bridge from the North

STATUTORY CONTEXT

The strategy for architectural and archaeological heritage in Kilcullen has been informed by national, regional and local policy and guidance documents.

Kilcullen Local Area Plan 2014-2020

The 2014-2020 Local Area Plan states that it is the objective of Kildare County Council to “safeguard the important architectural and streetscape heritage of the Town Centre area” (Objective TCO 3). It also acknowledges the contribution of “vernacular structures of historical, cultural, and aesthetic merit” to enhancing the character of the built environment including those which do not merit inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (Policy AH 1). The policy encourages the rehabilitation, renovation and re-use of older structures particularly where they positively contribute to the quality of streetscape.

The site of the scheme contains a number of traditional buildings and shopfronts, which contribute to the distinctive character of the town. Policy TC 3 notes the council aim “to promote and encourage high quality urban design and to improve the image of the town by enhancing the physical environment and streetscape” and Policy TCS 2 aims to “encourage the retention, sensitive repair and re-use of traditional shopfronts”.

Kildare County Development Plan 2017 - 2023

The wider context of the 2017-2023 County Plan provides background for the policies in the Local Area Plan. It lists as policy the intention to “promote the maintenance and appropriate re-use of buildings ... which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance or quality of the streetscape” (PS 11) and to “protect and retain important elements of the built heritage including historic gardens, stone walls, landscapes and demesnes, and curtilage features” (PS 16).

The County Plan emphasises the importance of vernacular architecture in its contribution to the heritage of Kildare and its historic townscapes (Policy VA 1-8). It promotes the objective to “identify and retain good examples of historic street furniture in situ e.g. cast-iron postboxes, water pumps, signage, street lighting, kerbing and traditional road and street surface coverings” (VAO 1).



Image 002: Fire Stop Enterprises Ltd.



Image 003: Community built walls and railings on Market Square



Image 004: Imitation shopfront at O'Connell's Bar

A further relevant policy is to investigate the designation of new Architectural Conservation Areas, including one for Kilcullen (ACA 1) and to prepare a character appraisal for the proposed area (ACAO 1). ACA designation provides a means to manage change within the ACA in order to preserve its special heritage value and to improve and enhance its presentation. A distinctive sense of place can be created through street lighting, street furniture, shopfronts, paving, signage and by encouraging best conservation practice in the repair and maintenance of historic buildings. ACA designation de-exempts works to the exterior of any structure which would materially affect the character of the area. Statutory approval is required for all significant changes to the external appearance of structures within an ACA, including changes to windows, doors, façades and shopfronts.

Architectural Heritage Guidelines

Proposals for new development in the town centre should adhere to the character of the area and to the principles of good practice, as set out in Architectural Heritage Guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2004). These provide guidance to Planning Authorities on the application of Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. The guidelines also deal with Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas in considerable detail. While primarily aimed at planning authorities, the guidelines also offer assistance and advice to owners and occupiers of protected structures and buildings within Architectural Conservation Areas.

Protected Structures

Kilcullen was recorded as part of the Kildare survey of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage in 2001 and a number of the buildings and structures recorded in the inventory are affected by the proposed scheme. However, recording by the NIAH does not confer statutory protection and only one has subsequently been included in the Record of Protected Structures, while Kilcullen Bridge is designated on the county Record of Monuments and Sites:

RPS No.	Name	NIAH No.
-	Berney's Restaurant (Fallon's of Kilcullen)	11819015
-	The Powder Room	11819016
B28-27	O'Connell/The White Horse Inn	11819017
-	Former Kilcullen Corn Mill (no longer extant)	11819019
-	Woodbine Books	11819020
RMS/SMR		
KD028-062	Kilcullen Bridge	11819013



Image 005: Imitation historic lamp posts on Kilcullen Bridge



Image 006: Side lane opposite Town Hall



Image 007: Woodbine Books



Image 008: Lane and car park beside Town Hall



Image 009: Existing surfacing outside the Bank of Ireland

MITIGATION OF IMPACT OF PROPOSED PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT WORKS ON HISTORIC FABRIC

The proposed public realm improvement works do not involve any work to the buildings forming the backdrop to the Part 8 site. The construction contractor will be required to implement appropriate measures to ensure that no damage is caused to historic fabric.

Re-surfacing

No historic surfacing materials appear to survive in the Part 8 site although it is possible that some evidence of previous historic finishes may be uncovered during the implementation stage. A watching brief by a conservation architect and archaeologist will be provided during excavation stages and any previous surfaces exposed will be evaluated and, if considered to be of significance, recommendations will be made to the Council proposing appropriate action to be taken. This might involve recording before removal, isolating the relevant surface before laying of new finishes or incorporating the surface in the scheme.

New finished ground surface levels will be designed to avoid covering building thresholds and plinths, some of which are historical, or exposing underbuilding. It is recommended that the proposed paving for vehicular crossings, for example at the entrances beside and opposite the Town Hall, comprise traditional granite setts to reinforce historic character.

The Part 8 site retains a large amount of good quality cast-iron man-hole covers, mostly manufactured by Cavanagh's Foundry, Birr. Retaining these within the re-surfacing and incorporating new iron covers where necessary is greatly favourable to introducing steel or plastic coverings.

Backlands

The backlands area to the rear of the Town Hall and connecting to Kilcullen Bridge contains little of value affected by the proposals. The wall running parallel to the river path towards the bridge appears to be of some historic interest and could be the remainder of backland plot walls. Protection



Image 010: Historical cast-iron man hole cover



Image 011: Existing surfacing at Market Square



Image 012: Granite step at Woodbine Books

should be provided where the wall meets the proposed asphalt surface and planting should avoid damaging the historic masonry.



Image 013: Carpark behind Kilcullen Town Hall

Bollards and Lighting

Proposed lighting features and bollards across the site should be of a good quality contemporary design which complement the historic character of the setting.

Free-standing features

The following free-standing features will require special consideration:

- *Carriage wheel fender post* – to south corner of Woodbine Books, circular masonry post with domed caps. This may remain in situ during the construction period but the contractor will be required to implement appropriate measures to ensure that no damage is caused.
- *1798 Rebellion memorial* – Free-standing limestone post set on smooth limestone plinth standing proud of the north parapet wall at the east end of Kilcullen Bridge. Front face contains inscriptions and bas-relief sculpture. The feature is easily missed and would benefit from relocation either within the Part 8 site or elsewhere in the town. If relocation is undertaken, the two components should be dismantled and appropriate mortars and conservation techniques employed.
- *Kilcullen Bridge* – Recorded monument. Nineteenth-century six-span masonry bridge with twentieth-century concrete widening to south side and replacement parapets. The parapet walls on the roadside are of little historical value and date from the twentieth-century widening of the structure. This structure is primarily affected by the enhancement of the pathway below its western arch and by new surfacing around the walls at its east end. The existing pathway shows signs of anti-social behaviour and this should be borne in mind when introducing the proposed lighting. It would be greatly complementary if in conjunction with the scheme the underside of the bridge arch is cleaned and existing graffiti removed.



Image 014: Historic walling in the backlands



Image 015: Wheel fender at Woodbine Books



Image 016: 1798 Rebellion memorial



Image 017: C20 extension to Kilcullen Bridge



Image 018: General view of the site looking south



Image 019: Headrush Salon and Brendan O'Connell's

Buildings on north side of Main Street

- *Bank of Ireland* – two-storey six-bay semi-detached rendered houses in use as bank with hipped natural slate roof and railed disabled access ramp and steps. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *Ruby Shoes* – two-storey three-bay semi-detached roughcast rendered house with pitched natural slate roof, and simple ground-floor shop front. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *Kilcullen Town Hall* – single-storey six-bay ashlar granite town hall with pitched roofs and 1/1 timber sliding sash windows, having rear conservatory wall overlooking backland carpark. Protection to be provided to entrance ways including granite plinths and surrounds, granite thresholds, timber doors and cast iron gates.
- *Headrush Salon/ Brendan O'Connell Insurance Investments* – two-storey five-bay shops comprising beautician and insurance office with pitched natural slate roof, quoins and high-quality imitation shop fronts. Protection to be provided to quoins and to shop fronts including stall-risers, consoled pilasters, timber and glazed panel doors and thresholds.
- *Millrace apartments* – two-storey thirteen-bay attached rendered apartment range with pitched natural slate roof and central carriage arch. No particular protection measures necessary.



Image 020: Bank of Ireland



Image 021: Kilcullen Town Hall

Buildings on south side of Main Street

- *Reidy Stafford Solicitors* – four-storey five-bay multi-use building, lower two storeys rendered and rubble stonework above with natural slate mansard roof. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *Fire-stop Enterprises Ltd.* – two-storey three-bay end of terrace rendered house with pitched slate roof. Planters to be removed during works and replaced at completion. Protection to be provided to quoins and threshold including step, four-panelled timber door and frame.
- *Rosewood House* – two-storey three-bay attached rendered house with taller attached two-storey goods entrance both having pitched

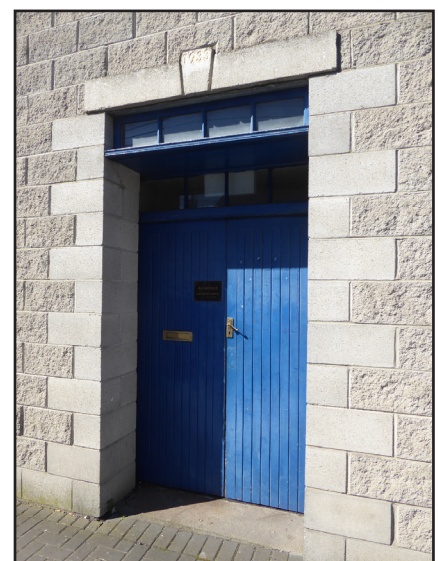


Image 022: Detail of door surround to Town Hall

natural slate roofs. Protection to be provided for mosaicked tiling in front of goods entrance.

- *House (formerly Perfect Images Beauty Salon)* – two-storey four-bay roughcast-rendered attached house with pitched natural slate roof. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *McTernan's* – two-storey four-bay rendered attached public house with pitched natural slate roof behind parapet, shopfront fascia and cart entrance. Protection to be provided to entrance ways comprising timber panel doors, frames, brass door furniture, plinths and stone thresholds.
- *Fallon's of Kilcullen* – two-storey eight-bay end of terrace rendered restaurant with pitched natural slate roof and signage fascia. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *The Powder Room* – two-storey two-bay end of terrace house in use as salon with pitched natural slate roof, timber 1/1 sliding sash windows and good quality imitation shop front. Protection to be provided to shopfront including stall riser, consoled pilasters, timber six-panel door and threshold.
- *O'Connell's/The White Horse Inn* – Protected structure. Two-storey two-bay attached public house with pitched natural slate roof, timber 1/1 sliding sash windows and good quality imitation shop front. Protection to be provided to shop front including granite plinth, stall riser, consoled pilasters, six panel timber doors and threshold.
- *Boyle Sports/ The River Café/ Employability* – two-storey five-bay end of terrace building comprising three shop units with pitched natural slate roof, timber 1/1 sliding sash windows and poorly detailed imitation shopfronts. No particular protection measures necessary.
- *Woodbine Books* – two-storey four-bay corner site house with hipped natural slate roof, decorative gutter brackets and quoining alternating in a vermiculated and reeded pattern. Protection to be provided to decorative quoins, especially in case of work to adjacent services; also to panelled timber doors, granite threshold step at main entrance and carriage wheel fender at south corner.
- *D. Brennan & Sons* – two-storey five-bay rendered shops with natural slate pitched roof and plain ground floor shop fronts. No particular protection measures necessary.



Image 023: Rosewood House



Image 024: McTernan's Pub



Image 025: O'Connell's Bar



Image 026: Woodbine Books



Image 027: The Powder Room



Image 028: Poor imitation shop fronts