Heritage Houses of County Cork

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Message from Cllr Alan Coleman Mayor of the County of Cork and Tim Lucey, Chief Executive, Cork County Council

This book, a publication of the Heritage Unit of Cork County Council, looks at the wide range of Heritage Houses in County Cork. It follows on from the very successful Heritage Bridges of County Cork publication, which was published by Cork County Council in 2013. It aims to draw attention to the interesting character of houses of all sizes in County Cork, both big and small and everything in between.

The development of houses from earliest times right up to the recent past, tells a wonderful and engaging story. Cork's earliest homes, simple timber houses built in the Neolithic period, changed slowly, over thousands of years, to become the houses we know today. Each development and change which occurred added a piece to the story of the house. All houses reflect something of the architectural styles predominant in that area when they were built, be it the vernacular style or more formal styles seen in grand houses. This publication gives an understanding of the structure of our Heritage Houses by examining their form and fabric and the way that they changed over time to meet the needs of their inhabitants. It is well written and illustrated with fine drawings and photographs demonstrating the rich architectural heritage of the County.
In the County of Cork, the vast majority of Heritage Houses continue to be lived in and many have been lovingly restored in keeping with sound conservation practice. Although living in a heritage house is often not without its challenges, the regular maintenance and upkeep of these houses add significantly to the cultural landscape of County Cork. Heritage houses, like those considered in this book, carry old memories. These houses were and still often are the home of Irish culture, where traditional Irish music was played, oral traditions handed on and the places where much of our prided art and literature emanated from. There is a growing appreciation of the importance of Heritage Houses in the County and this publication will work well towards enhancing that interest.

We feel confident that this latest publication by the Heritage Unit of Cork County Council will encourage a greater appreciation and sense of pride in the many fine houses in our county and commend all those involved in producing this fascinating and very informative publication.

Preamble and Acknowledgements

This publication is an action of the County Cork Heritage Plan which has gratefully received funding from the Heritage Council and through the heritage budget of Cork County Council. For more information on the effortless work and support of the Heritage Council, visit their website www.heritagecouncil.ie.

The Heritage Unit of Cork County Council (www.corkcoco.ie/heritage) wishes to sincerely thank Dr. Elena O' Brien Turk (Bluebrick Heritage) and Miriam Carroll and Annette Quinn (Tobar Archaeological Services) as the primary authors of this publication. Their unfaltering commitment and professionalism is truly commendable. Both Elena O' Brian Turk and Síle O' Neill created the wonderful illustrations that can be seen throughout this book and the map inserts were undertaken by Annette Quinn. Additional text, images, amendments and overall editing was carried out by Conor Nelligan, Mary Sleeman and Mona Hallinan of Cork County Council's Heritage Unit.

The project process from commencement to completion was managed by County Heritage Officer, Conor Nelligan, with the backing and support of John O' Neill, Director of Service, Mary Sleeman, County Archaeologist and Mona Hallinan, County Conservation Officer. A special thank you also to Isabell Smyth, Head of Communications, Heritage Council and Beatrice Kelly, Head of Policy and Research, Heritage Council, for their advice and support.

As part of this project, numerous Heritage Groups and individuals throughout the County were asked to get involved, by recommending the inclusion of any houses in their local area, together with any stories or details they could provide about them. Although the number of houses put forward greatly outweighed the scope of this publication, it was delightful to see such a high response. We are extremely grateful for every single contribution and it is thanks to these submissions that this publication contains such a variety and wealth of information. Thank you all.

The most special thank you in terms of this publication is for each and every person who kindly allowed Cork County Council to feature their dwelling in this book. For the most part these are private homes and it demonstrates the goodwill and kind nature of their owners in sharing their stories and photos with us, in turn allowing us to share their homes on these pages. Thank you ever so much to each and every house owner who assisted and a very special thank you to all at Carraig Print who worked expertly in creating the typeset and layout for the publication as well as the printing of same.

Lastly, thanks to you, the reader, for your interest in the shared Heritage of County Cork.

Conor Nelligan
Heritage Officer
Cork County Council

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction 01

Chapter Two: The History and Development of Houses 04

Chapter Three: The Houses of the Elite 33

Chapter Four: Architectural Styles and Features 54

Chapter Five: Heritage Houses of County Cork: 30 Exemplars 97

Chapter Six: Protecting Heritage Houses for the Future 179

Chapter Seven: Conclusion 182

Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

"Where we love is home,
Home that the feet may leave
But not our hearts."
~ Oliver Wendell Holmes

The landscape of County Cork, both urban and rural, is host to a wealth of Heritage Houses, from the smallest vernacular cottages to the largest of grand Country Houses. Houses of different shapes and sizes were built all throughout history by all classes of people and this publication shines a light on the fascinating history and development of the house in County Cork. One important aspect that all houses share in common is their use as a home.

Our houses truly are one of the most important buildings we will interact with in our lives. They are one of the first buildings we ever recognise as a child, and many Heritage Houses have seen generations of families come and go; they accommodate our happiest and saddest memories as we age. Houses take on aspects of our personality and come to represent how we see ourselves and our roles within our families as well as the wider environment or ecology of life. In fact the term ecology can literally be translated as meaning the study of the home, derived from the Greek Words *oikos* meaning home and *logos* meaning understanding. This publication is the study of the house and indeed the home and aims to show how our houses have changed overtime based on our evolving requirements for home living.

The primary need which houses meet is the need for shelter but houses are much more than this. When one talks about how they move about the world, it nearly always relates to the house – we are away from home; we go home from work or school. Indeed our homes and houses are the essence of life. In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow established the theory, more a hierarchy, of human needs. The most essential needs are physiological, meaning water, food, warmth and sleep. Next is safety including security and shelter, followed by belonging, i.e. family and community. For the very most part our homes provide for these three fundamental tiers of human need and as such, houses are quite literally essential for human life.

Sometimes it is difficult to see the heritage value of these buildings in our daily lives, and so the wealth and variety of Heritage Houses surrounding us often go unnoticed. We often forget just how much our homes have changed, even in living memory. Heritage Houses have seen so many different lives and lifestyles, and from earliest times, have adapted to meet changing needs over time. Today the majority of us associate the house with comfort, i.e. the home comforts, but it was not that long ago when houses were even without running water or electricity – rural electrification in

Ireland only started arriving in 1955. Many today would find it hard to picture home life without a TV, let alone electricity, yet for millennia we have lived without them. In times gone-by, the fire was the heart(h) of the home but now, more than ever, the usable space within the house has dramatically increased.

This book, a publication of the Heritage Unit of Cork County Council, is the second in a series of guidebook-style publications on heritage sites and buildings in the County, following on from Heritage Bridges of County Cork which was published in 2013. It endeavours to highlight the rich architectural heritage of Cork County, in particular our more modest historic buildings - those which lie somewhere between the grandeur of the Country House and the quaintness of the Thatch Cottage. In highlighting this heritage, this publication covers the development of the house over time, from the earliest recorded structures in the County dating from the Neolithic period right through to the early 20th century. The book furthermore examines the form and fabric of houses as they developed throughout the centuries and the prevailing architectural styles of the times are also touched upon.

A number of houses which typify certain styles or features are mentioned in the main body of the text, and the book provides a selection of 30 examples discussed in more detail. These 30 exemplars have been selected to illustrate the development and history of Cork houses, highlight interesting stories and illustrate specific features. This is by no means a full catalogue of all Heritage Houses in Cork; however it is intended as a small representative sample of the typical architectural styles which can be seen in the County of Cork. Some of the exemplars discussed in detail are open to the public, however, many are not and in this latter instance it is requested that the privacy of each owner be respected. Following a brief overview of heritage legislation and an overall conclusion the book contains an extensive photographic selection of a wide variety of County Cork's fascinating and varied housing heritage. Whether a house is a mansion or a cottage, it is part of a shared history and heritage of homes – let us begin by looking at the earliest houses in County Cork.

Chapter 2
THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSES

The architectural heritage of County Cork is extremely rich and diverse including a variety of building types ranging from the ordinary to the extraordinary. This chapter looks at the history and development of the ordinary house in Cork. These buildings represent the bulk of our architectural heritage and are where the vast majority of the Irish people lived out their daily lives. While many of our archaeological sites remain only as sub-surface features, later buildings particularly those from the 18th and 19th century are still present within the physical fabric of our rural and urban environment, so much so they are often taken for granted. Larger houses, those lived in by the elite and heavily influenced by trends in architectural fashions, are considered in chapter three.

Prehistoric Houses

The history of the Irish house has its origins in prehistoric times. People first came to live in Ireland during the Mesolithic period (around 8000-3900BC). However, these early settlers were hunter-gatherers who moved around constantly to find food such that their homes were very light and flimsy – more like tents than houses. While we know there were Mesolithic people in Cork, evidenced by the flint stones they left behind, archaeologists have yet to find mesolithic houses here. The earliest houses we have evidence for in County Cork are from the Neolithic period. The Neolithic period follows the Mesolithic, beginning around 3900BC and lasting until around 2400BC. The major social and economic change which occurred at this time was the spread of farming. People began to clear forests to make small fields where they could grow crops and rear animals. The farming lifestyle is much more settled than that of the Mesolithic hunter-gatherer, and so settled pastoral communities began to develop. With this settled life came the requirement for a more permanent form of house structure.

They built strong timber houses but unsurprisingly, none survive above ground. Recently however, the foundation of seven Neolithic Houses have been discovered in the County, adding significantly to our knowledge of our Neolithic ancestors. At Pepper Hill, near Buttevant, a house was found during excavations for the Bruff – Mallow gas pipeline in 1986. More recently, Neolithic Houses have been excavated in Barnagore (near Ballincollig), Ballinglanna North (west of Kilworth), Caherdrinny and Gortore (near Fermoy) as part of national road schemes. These Neolithic Houses were fairly solid in nature and similar to other Neolithic Houses found in other parts of the

Country. The next time you are driving the M8 between Fermoy and Mitchelstown or indeed along the South Link Road, it is worth bearing in mind that theses landscapes were moulded by neolithic farmers and their houses over 6000 years ago.

The houses of the Neolithic peoples were typically fairly solid in nature. They were rectangular in plan, usually between 5m-7m long and 4m-6m wide – about the size of a large sitting-room in a modern house. Although this seems small, it is important to remember that many of the day to day activities like food preparation and craft work may have taken place outside the building. It is thought that a structure of this size may have housed perhaps 6 individuals – possibly a single family[1]. The walls were generally built of a combination of woven withies of hazel or willow; mud (wattle and daub) and sections of split timber planks (often oak). These organic materials do not survive well, but archaeologically the trenches they were set into can be seen, and a few fragmentary remains of the timbers have been found. Neolithic Houses would have had a doorway closed with a timber plank or hung with a blanket. It is not known if they had windows because only remains of the building at floor level have been found. Likewise we cannot tell what kinds of roof these houses had, but we assume an organic material like thatch or sod would have been used, probably in a gabled shape. Some Neolithic Houses do, however, have evidence of internal partitions and fireplaces. In general, few artefacts survive in the houses, however, the discovery of domestic animal bones from cattle, sheep and pigs as well as the discovery of cereals and grains, indicate they were farming the surrounding land.

The Bronze Age follows the Neolithic period, and lasts from around 2400-700BC. The transition from Neolithic to Bronze Age societies in Ireland was marked by the introduction of new technologies like metal working (metallurgy) and the introduction of new types of stone monuments. The population increased during this time and this is reflected in the large number of archaeological monuments that survive from this period, such as fulacht fiadh, stone circles and standing stones. The Neolithic style rectangular houses gave way to circular houses in the Bronze Age, particularly in the Middle Bronze Age period (1600-1100 BC). We do not know why this change occurred. It is possible that the intensification of farming had diminished the supply of timbers suitable for making plank-walled timber houses. The circular form is much easier to make when using a woven wattle-and-daub type construction. To date, County Cork has produced at least ten recorded examples of Bronze Age Houses, mainly as a result of excavations carried out for road schemes. Three unenclosed circular houses which form part of a nucleated settlement were excavated at Ballybrowney Lower, near Rathcormac as part of the M8 road scheme. They measured c.7m in diameter. The walls were made of wattle and daub set in a narrow trench. The roof, which was probably thatch or sod, was held up by several larger posts[2]. These posts are apparent as post holes inside the house. As with Neolithic Houses, we cannot tell if there were windows, however, the door is apparent as a gap in the walls. Some of these Bronze Age Houses occur in clusters such as at Ballybrowney Lower, providing evidence of a community, while others constitute isolated farmsteads. Similar to the earlier houses some of the Bronze Age Houses have produced evidence of internal partitions and internal and external fireplaces.

Not all houses at this time were built of wattle-and-daub. In the stonier lands of West Cork we have a few examples of stone walled huts from this date, such as at Drombeg next to the late Bronze Age stone circle. The choice of stone as the building material was pragmatic in this case – stone was more readily available that timber withies. These small huts, like the wattle-and-daub houses, were circular in plan. No roofed examples survive, but archaeologists have suggested that the roofs were steeply pitched and thatched like those of other houses of this date.

The Iron Age follows the Bronze Age, and lasts from around 700BC - 400AD. The main change which characterises this period is the introduction of iron working. The Celts dominated cultures across Western Europe and Ireland at this time had an Irish speaking culture with a strong 'Celtic' identity[3]. We know that we had Iron Age settlements in County Cork because we find artefacts associated with these people as well as some large monuments called hill forts and promontory forts. However, Iron Age Houses are extremely rare. Some evidence has recently come to light which seems to indicate that these house types did not change much between the Bronze and Iron Ages. Two possibly circular or 'C'-shaped structures were uncovered at Ballinaspig More on the N22 road scheme, both of which were radiocarbon dated to the Iron Age[4] and which are likely to represent small-scale agricultural settlements.

Early Medieval Houses

Around 400AD the Early Medieval period began. This period lasts until the Norman invasion in 1169 AD. The main cultural change which defines the start of the Early Medieval period is the introduction of Christianity, and so this is sometimes called the Early Christian Age. Farming continued to be the foundation of the Irish economy. People lived in houses not unlike those seen in the Bronze Age, but they began to protect their houses with an enclosing bank, with an external fosse. The above ground remains of the houses have disappeared, but the bank survives. These enclosed farmsteads are known as ringforts, raths, lios, dún and as 'fairy forts' (because fairies are thought to live in them) and they essentially functioned as early medieval farmsteads and would have housed both people and animals. They are probably the most numerous archaeological monument which can be seen in Ireland - with over 45,000 examples in the country and several thousand in County Cork alone. These are clearly evident on any Discovery Series Map and some of the well known examples in the County include Garryduff, Lisleagh, Garranes and Kilmoney.

We know a lot more about houses in this period than we do about the prehistoric period. The reason for this is two-fold; we now have much more archaeological evidence from several excavations which have been carried out and we also have written tracts which provide us with information on daily life. Such written evidence can inform us of many things, such as the clothes worn at the time:–

"*the everyday attire was a knee-length linen tunic clinched at the waist with a leather*

belt. Over this, to ward off an lingering winter chill, he wore a woolen cloak wrapped around him several times and fastened over his chest with a pin. These were the garments of early medieval Ireland, for women as well as men” [5]

Evidence from the archaeological excavation of ringforts has also shown that early medieval houses were built of both timber and stone. The predominant raw material used to construct the houses in Cork was wood. The remains of timber stakes, thicker timber posts and thin wicker or wattle walls have all been found in the course of archaeological excavations. These houses are typically circular in plan, measuring between 5m-8m in diameter. A number of excavated examples are at Lisleagh near Kilworth, Lios na gCon near Clonakilty, a number along the new road schemes and a recent discovery at Annakissha, near Mallow.

Some ringforts, such as Garranes (a trivallet ringfort), were occupied by important royal families and archaeological evidence for metal and glass working has been found at these sites. Ringforts like this, occupied by these powerful families, were usually multi-vallet – they had two or more enclosing banks and ditches creating concentric rings around them. Sites with two banks and ditches are called bivallet, those with three banks and ditches are trivallet. These multiple concentric rings would have made the site easier to defend as well as much more impressive looking.

Manuscript sources such as the famous law tract Críth Gablach (dated to c.700AD) are important in understanding houses in the Early Medieval period too. There is clearly a social hierarchy already well established by this time as demonstrated in this text, which sets out the dimensions of house appropriate for each societal class. A Boáire febsa (a well-to-do or “strong” farmer) was entitled to live in a house 27 feet in diameter, with an outbuilding or store 15 feet in diameter, a kiln, barn and piggery as well as calf and sheep pens, presumably all contained within a ringfort. The law tracts at the time, which originated from oral tradition, also tell us that there were serious legal penalties for damaging someone else’s house, even looking into a house without being invited could cost a transgressor a fine of one cow[6]. Clearly privacy was important in the early medieval period. Críth Gablach gives extensive lists of furniture, utensils and tools which could be found in each house and it was clear that people at this time were by no means living in empty huts devoid of comforts. They could sleep on hay filled beds (hitting the hay has a literal meaning!) with warm woollen blankets. In the modern day we are used to a duvet instead of a top sheet, blankets and bedspread, but it was not until the 1970’s that the Duvet arrived on the scene from Scandinavia[7].

In Early Medieval Times one could also cook with a variety of implements, drink from leather or wooden cups and adorn themselves with colourful cloths or glass beads. We can learn a little more about day to day life in these houses by looking at folk tales preserved in other medieval texts. Eachtra Neraí, one of the preparatory tales from the Táin Bó Cuailnge, is an excellent example of one such tale. In it Nera, the protagonist, ends up carrying a talking cadaver on his back on Halloween night, looking for a drink of water. As he comes to each house the corpse tells him something of the inhabitants. At the first house they come to we are told;

Then they saw something - a lake of fire round that house. 'There is no drink for us in this house' said the corpse. 'There is no fire without sparing in it ever' [they bank the fire every night to have hot embers for the next day]. 'Let us therefore go to the other house, which is nearest to us'[8].

There are several other examples in this tale of houses which were protected because they were well maintained in various ways. The message of this story, which is found in a manuscript dating from 1517, and is thought to have its origins in the 10th century if not earlier, is that keeping your house clean and tidy will protect you from demons and evil spirits!

In relation to the particular siting and location of a house at this time, a lot of it came down to inheritance:

"*The rules governing inheritance declared that upon his death, the father's share of the land would pass to his sons. In order to guarantee that each heir received a share of equal value, the youngest son normally would divide the property, and his brothers would then select their portions, with the oldest son choosing first. Since the youngest chose last, it was in his interest to make as equitable a division as possible*" [9]

While rural settlement has been the focus of our discussions thus far, early urban settlement can also be seen in County Cork from around 900AD onwards. Within towns, houses began to show significant influence from Vikings who were settling in Ireland at this time. Evidence for the 9th or 10th century Viking settlement in Cork City has yet to be discovered, however we do have houses from Cork's settlement from 1000 - 1100AD[10]. Houses most recently excavated on South Main Street, Cork comprised rectangular timber structures constructed using a combination of upright posts and wattle walls, some with bracken packing as insulating material, which largely date from the 12th century.

Late Medieval Houses

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in Ireland in 1169AD marks the beginning of the Late Medieval period. This period lasts until around 1550AD. The main social change which characterises the beginning of this period is the introduction of Feudalism by the new ruling power. Feudalism is a system of governance based around the holding of land in exchange for services. The Norman Lords owned all the land, ordinary people were only allowed live on and work their farms in return for giving service to the Lord. This would have had a significant impact on where and how houses were built. We see at last the divergence of ordinary houses and the houses of the elite. The vast majority of people served a small group of powerful lords who lived in castles (discussed in the next chapter).

During the initial phase of Anglo-Norman occupation, rectangular enclosures, known as 'moated sites' were constructed. 'Moated sites' are like rectangular ringforts – they are rectangular areas with a moat and bank. Within these defended farmsteads archaeological evidence for rectangular houses has been found. Houses were built using timber posts for the walls, and examples with clay-bonded stone walls are also known, for example at Ballinvinny South, Co. Cork[11]. There are 138 recorded moated sites in County Cork, many of which are built alongside a number of ringforts which continued to be occupied.

By the 13th and 14th centuries, however, the vast majority of people probably lived in undefended rural settlements, with no enclosing bank or moat. Their houses are known from a small number of archaeological excavations. They are rectangular in shape and they are likely to have been timber houses or timber framed houses, similar to the timber framed houses being built in towns at this time. Like prehistoric houses, we do not know what the roofs looked like, but were likely to be either thatched or shingled. A cluster of two undefended houses were excavated at Mondaniel, north of Rathcormac, as part of the M8 road scheme. Plant and other remains such as wheat and barley grains and goat/sheep dung pellets recovered from the site suggest that they functioned as domestic farmhouses[12].

Within towns, similar rectangular houses were being constructed. These were built from either timber frames on a timber cill beam, or as timber framed walls on top of stone footings. Some houses may have been entirely stone walled but it is very difficult to tell because only the base of the walls survive. These small rectangular buildings made up the bulk of houses in the Anglo-Norman towns. Examples have been excavated from the 13th - 14th century at Grattan Street in Cork City. Other excavations in Cork City have uncovered fragments of roof ridge tiles, suggesting that the roofs of these houses may have been slated or shingled with shaped clay tiles along the ridges. Similar houses were probably built in smaller towns like Youghal and Kinsale.

17th Century

The Desmond rebellions and the beginning of the Elizabethan era in England mark the beginning of the end of the Late Medieval period in Ireland. The 'long 17th century' had arrived. This time saw massive social change affecting every aspect of life in Ireland. In terms of architectural heritage, in reality very few buildings from this period remain. Those that do survive tend to be the more substantial stone built houses, including fortified houses. What is beginning to emerge in recent years is the physical remains of earlier structures embedded in heavily remodelled/rebuilt houses of the 18th and 19th century, especially in urban contexts. There are 36 houses in County Cork that have been identified by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland as dating to the late 16th and 17th century.

One of the major catalysts for change to life in County Cork at this time was the Plantations. The English Crown had seized large tracts of land after the end of the Desmond Rebellion, and the Nine Years War. Queen Elizabeth decided that the best way to make sure Ireland stayed loyal to England was to plant loyal Protestant subjects

on these lands, and the plantation of Munster began in the 1580s. The establishment of new towns was an important part of this strategy. Towns accommodated commercialism and at the same time offered some social and legal infrastructure. Towns like Mallow, Clonakilty, Skibbereen, Macroom and Midleton[13] all had settlement associated with the Munster Plantations. We also have a number of slightly later towns built or developed along the same model by Richard Boyle, 1st earl of Cork, most successfully at Bandon (walled c.1620). Within plantation towns the style of architecture was heavily influenced by English traditions because many of the settlers were craftspeople who had been born and trained in England.

In the town of Bandonbridge, English settlers built about 250 houses in the 'English Fashion'. This means that they were two-storey with gabled slated roofs. In England at this time, houses were commonly built using a structural frame of timber which supported the roof. However, in Ireland there appears to have been a marked preference for stone walls externally. While timber was sometimes used, it is more commonly seen in internal walls where the spaces between timbers could be filled with wattle (woven sticks covered in mud plaster), or loose bricks and stones (called 'nogging'). Survival of these kinds of houses is extremely rare, but we do know of a house in Ennis, which has been recently dated to this period, and there was at least one well-known example in Drogheda, which is now unfortunately no longer extant. On a positive note for the County of Cork, a house on North Main Street in Bandon has very recently been found to be a timber framed house retained within a later 19th century house.

Separate bedrooms and public rooms would have been common in these plantation houses, meaning that people could experience privacy in the home for the first time. It was at this time, too, that the use of glass in windows became more common, and so it is likely that the houses in plantation towns had glazed side hinged casement type windows allowing lots of light into those multiple rooms. Fireplaces heated the house and were used for cooking, with smoke now being taken away by a massive projecting chimney. Chimneys become more commonplace in the 17th century having first been introduced in the larger dwellings and castles in the 13th and 14th centuries[14]. With the chimneys now carrying smoke out of the house, inhabitants for the first time were able to enjoy a meal in a smoke free atmosphere, similar perhaps to one of the many benefits following on from the introduction of the smoking ban in Ireland on the 29th of March, 2004!

These plantation houses with the large stone or brick chimney stacks are clearly evidenced on pictorial maps of Bandonbridge from this time[15]. Walter Raleigh's house at Myrtle Grove in Youghal was built around 1580-1600, and it shares numerous characteristics with the houses in Bandon. There are multiple gable-fronted sections to the front of the house, small paned casement windows, and massive stone chimney stacks to the rear of the building.

While there is documentary and cartographic evidence for houses within our towns during this period, there is little information or physical remains available in relation to the ordinary dwellings outside of the larger urban centres. The few buildings from this

period that do survive in a rural context include Carrigashinny farmhouse and the 'Thatch and Thyme' in Kildorrey. These buildings display some typical architectural features for this period including thick stone walls, large projecting chimney stacks, steeply pitched gabled roofs and irregular fenestration patterns and casement windows, albeit these were often replaced with timber sliding sashes at a later date.

It is presumed that vernacular style dwellings were constructed simultaneously with the more substantial two storey dwelling houses during this period. It is likely that these vernacular dwellings were similar to those constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries, on the basis of continuity of construction type and materials associated with vernacular dwellings.

18th Century

After the turbulence and unrest of the 1600s, the 1700s saw a new phase of relative peace in Ireland. This was also, however, a time of real complexity and social change, which facilitated the rise of the landed gentry with vast estates, tenant farmers and merchant classes. Today most of our heritage housing stock dates from this period. It is during this period that Irish art and culture began to blossom and the ideas of renaissance architecture with its mathematically defined classical proportions finally begin to translate into the architecture of the houses. Yet at the same time the Penal Laws, strengthened by a series of new laws in the 1690s and early 1700s, had a detrimental effect on the lives of most small farmers and labourers, limiting their ability not only to worship, but to inherit land, attain an education, or hold public office.

Vernacular houses built at this time are likely to have changed very little from those which went before. The term 'vernacular' means that these houses were not formally designed or planned. There was as yet no need for planning permission and no formal building inspections were carried out, no one feature was standardised or managed.

Planning permission as we know it today did not come in until 1964. However, in relation to siting there is a tradition in some parts of checking if the location was ok with the fairies by leaving a small arrangement of upright stones over night – if not knocked down in the morning the fairies had given their "planning permission".

Instead of being planned or designed, many of these vernacular dwellings exhibit characteristics particular to a specific area. They are reflective of local traditions in building, using local materials and meeting local needs. Houses like this can be grouped into two main plan forms based on the way they are entered; 'direct entry' and 'lobby entry'[16] . The main difference between these plan forms is the relationship between the front door and the hearth. Direct entry houses open straight into the kitchen, while lobby entry houses open in to a small lobby in direct alignment with the hearth. This lobby provided additional privacy and is thought to be a slightly later plan form than the 'direct entry' type. Poorer houses had just one or two rooms, while better off houses were wider with three or four rooms.

Vernacular houses were normally one room deep, they were typically extended only to either end – rarely to the front or back. Some folktales suggest that this was because to have a house more than one room deep was to invite bad luck in. However, it is as likely to be a result of the size of available roof timbers. Roofs were either hipped or gabled or a combination of both, and most vernacular houses were thatched with wheat straw. Today many have been re-thatched using reeds. The walls of vernacular cottages are often either stone rubble, or clay 'cob'. When rendered and painted, it can be very difficult to tell the difference between these two walling types. Some houses made use of existing walls, such as medieval town walls or high field banks, to form part of their structure.

Vernacular cottages of this date typically have small square or rectangular window openings, with either fixed windows or small sash windows. However some houses in West Cork are known to have had no glazed windows at all, instead straw was stuffed into the window opening at night and in cold weather – this is likely to be a continuation of a practice carried out in the century before. Vernacular houses had square headed door openings with simple timber doors, often with a half door. The doorway was sometimes flanked by shallow projections called 'windbreaks'.

It is noted in West Cork that vernacular dwellings were slightly different, being smaller containing normally only one or two rooms, with stone walls and gabled thatched roofs. The long direct entry and lobby entry vernacular house style, which is seen in most parts of Cork, is not at all apparent in the West. This anomoly certainly warrants further research with one plausible reason possibly being the poorer farmland in this area.

Most of these houses were lived in by tenant farmers who did not own the land that they were built on (as late as 1870 only 3% of Irish farmers owned the land they worked[17]). It is believed that some houses like this were probably built as a sort of community project by a local group of workers called a meitheal. This group of workers was made up of family or friends of the person who wanted to build the house, with perhaps one or two local people with prior experience. When built on rented land, the landlord may have designated the area for the house. In general the house was located on any suitably flat area, probably an area that had not been cultivated for farming before so that the house was using as little as possible of the fertile farm land.

The room containing the hearth is usually referred to as the kitchen. It was typically a spacious room with a high ceiling. It was used for cooking and heating, but it was also the social centre where stories were told and songs sung. Ted Nelligan recalls that 'the most noteworthy feature in the kitchen was the fireplace: it was not a fireplace in the conventional sense as the fire which was hardly ever let go out was on the floor (no grate)... Over the fire there was the crane: this was a simple but extremely functional contraption from which pots were hung and there was a mechanism for raising or lowering the pots to the required level over the fire during cooking. The fire was raked every night to make sure there would be embers the following morning to get the fire going again for the day'[18]. It is interesting to note that Ted remembers this tradition of saving embers at night to light the next morning's fire which is similar to the account

found in the medieval text Eachtra Neraí discussed earlier. The hearth had a thick wooden lintel over it, and the fireplace itself had no flue so one could look up the chimney to see sky.

Not all farmers lived in single storey cottages. Some better off farmers lived in two storey houses, standing between three and five bays wide. We can think of these houses as 'strong farmer's houses'. A few were thatched and known as Thatched Mansions, for example at Ballysheehan, near Mallow. Some examples may have begun as simple thatched houses, and with time a second storey was added along with a new roof. Others may have been formally planned in advance of construction, although almost certainly not by an architect. These houses had slated roofs and rendered stone walls. They have square headed windows with timber sliding sashes, and square headed door openings with timber panelled or battened doors. Over time certain changes are made to reflect prevailing styles and personal tastes. These changes can include the addition of decorative rendering be it in the form of window and door mouldings, decorative eaves details, panelled doors, stone door surrounds with side and overlights and with timber porches. Many farmhouses would have had a complex of outbuildings to the rear of the main dwelling house. The farmhouse is the most prominent building type in rural Ireland and was constructed with little variation into the early 20th century.

Farmers living in these larger farm houses probably enjoyed a reasonable amount of luxury in the home and many such homes had a "good room", this being the parlour which was set aside for guests and special visitors. These farmers probably also had a wider range of imported and shop-bought produce, than other smaller farmers. Shops often opened accounts for labourers and smaller farmers, who would only occasionally have cash. Within towns and villages, the shop owner was a powerful individual who dominated the local social scene. Shop owners occupied another type of home – the house and shop property. This was a house which formed part of the commercial premises. The living accommodation was usually over the shop in larger urban areas, and attached to one side of the shop in smaller towns and villages.

Towns and villages grew at a phenomenal rate during the 18th and 19th century – nearly all towns and villages in County Cork were rebuilt during this period. Terraced houses with shops on the ground floor were erected, and wide streets were created to facilitate increased trade and commerce. In other cases more formal planning was used; some landlords invested heavily in the village near their country seat as part of estate enhancement projects fashionable at this time. Mitchelstown, County Cork, is perhaps one of the most significant town developments carried out in Ireland with other examples in County Cork including Fermoy and Midleton. Mitchelstown was redesigned between 1776 and 1830 by the second and third Lords Kingston, planned on a grid pattern around a number of housing squares – principally King Square.

Around the same time many members of the gentry began to build villages which promoted industrial development near their estates. Irish estate-sponsored cotton manufacturers were eligible for grant-aid support from the Linen Board. In Cork, Sir Richard Cox established a linen manufacturing village at Dunmanway in 1735, and,

around the same time, Thomas Adderly built houses at Innishannon to encourage Huguenot and Ulster Scott linen weavers to settle there. At Blarney, in 1766, James St John Jefferyes paid for the construction of a series of houses and a bleaching green, again with the support of the Irish Linen Board. Not all of these industrial villages were associated with textile production, however, industries such as the Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills (1795) were also important and had associated houses such as the Long Range and the Short Range. Industrial workers' houses like these were usually stone walled with slate roofs. In their plan form, they were probably similar to small vernacular houses. However, instead of being freestanding and built on an ad hoc basis to meet local needs, they were formally planned and built in long terraces.

Houses of 19th Century Cork

Following the 1798 rebellion there was an increased political tension between England and Ireland. The English Government responded with the 1801 Act of Union which promised to repeal the Penal Laws and improve the lot for the ordinary people of Ireland.

The types of houses built in the first half of the 1800s in rural areas were broadly similar to those built in the 1700s – vernacular houses with thatched roofs and rubble stone walls with mud also still frequently in use. The majority of people in Cork would have lived in vernacular dwellings at this time. The 1841 census showed the population of City and County as being over 850,000 (this is 331,000 more than the population of Cork according to the 2011 census) with over 70 per cent (circa 600,000 people) dependent on farming for their livelihood[19]. Farm Labourers or cottiers as they were termed, worked the land of a much wealthier farming landlord who in return for the labourer's efforts, provided a plot of ground for a house and a couple of sheep[20].

The condition of cottiers' housing, in particular, at this time was often substandard. We know from the 1841 Census that almost half the population (48%) were living in the poorest of accommodation. These structures consisted of only one if two rooms, in stark contrast to the 1st class houses of the elite which consisted of 10 plus rooms[21]. Classes of dwelling were established by the Census Commissioners in 1841 and give a notable perspective on class divisions at the time, particularly when almost 80% of the population lived in 3rd or 4th class dwellings, compared to only 2.8% in 1st class structures. All of these structures are indicated on the 1842 6-inch Ordnance Survey map.

A few years after the first census of 1841, life in Ireland changed forever. The first widespread cases of potato blight were reported in 1844, and one year later saw the commencement of the Great Famine, one of the darkest periods in Irish history (1845 – 1850), changing the political, social and cultural landscape of Ireland. The post-famine era saw a notable increase in the awareness of the need for a good standard of housing. This is particularly evident from the 1861 census which documented that over 80% of the 4th Class dwellings, often referred to as bothans or shibíns, had been demolished[22]. Many

such houses were simply abandoned, due to starvation, eviction or emigration and others were intently removed as part of farm consolidations. The times were certainly changing and a later census showed that the number of landless farm labourers in Ireland had dropped from 700,000 in 1845 to 300,000 by 1910. The number of cottiers (farmers with less than five acres) likewise fell nationally from 300,000 in 1845 to just 62,000 in 1910[23].

In our towns and villages, the mid 19th century saw a massive influx of people. Many of the landed gentry and industrial entrepreneurs built workers houses, for example the 5th Viscount Midleton hired the architect A.W. Pugin to design workers houses as part of a scheme to invest £15,000 in the improvement of Midleton town in 1845[24]. Indeed, as a response to the devastation wrought by the famine, philanthropically motivated 'Model Villages' such as the new developments at Blarney and indeed "Model Village", partly in the parish of Dripsey, became an important part of County Cork and the wider Irish landscape. This movement reflects the general concern expressed in Ireland and Britain over the quality of housing for the working classes and the health dangers of overcrowding. For example in Pikes Lane (off North Main Street, Cork City) one survey in 1843 found that 33 families were living in just 8 houses[25].

While slums were not generally a problem in Cork's County towns, some rural houses were often quite overcrowded, evidenced sometimes by an entire family sleeping in one room.

"*An observer of life in early 19th century rural Ireland noted that families lay down in order, the eldest daughter next the wall farthest from the door, then all the sisters according to their ages, next the mother, father and sons in succession, then the strangers, whether the travelling pedlar or tailor or beggar. Thus the unmarried girls were wisely kept as far as possible from the unmarried men, while husband and wife lay together in the middle*" [26].

In addition to the small size of many dwellings, which saw the above example of entire families sleeping in the one bed, rural areas also had their own housing and social troubles which were sometimes met with new housing forms. The farm consolidations encouraged by the Land Improvement Acts (which began in 1847) had created, by 1870, serious agrarian unrest over unfair evictions. This is known as the 'Irish Land Wars'. As early as 1860 the government had begun to offer small grants for the construction of labourer's cottages as a way to reduce these tensions. However, the Office of Public Works published a book of house plans which had to be followed to meet the conditions of these grants. The plans were generally based on the English picturesque vernacular style, and alterations to meet local needs were not allowed, so the grants were not widely taken up. The Land League, a group who campaigned during the Land War, occasionally erected prefabricated huts with timber walls and corrugated iron roofs to temporarily accommodate families which had been evicted. A Land League hut was built for the family of famous Land League rebel 'The Bard' (Seán Riobaird O Súilleabhain) at Knocknakilla following eviction in 1884[27]. 'Land League Huts' now only live on in folk memory. The Land Act of 1881 gave working

class people security of tenure for the first time, and workers could now confidently make their house their home. By the 1890s the Land War was coming to an end.

One of the most significant steps in the ability of the Law to control the quality of housing was the adoption of the 1890 Public Health (Amendment) Act which, for the first time, enforced minimum standards in housing form, fabric and number of occupants. In the same year the Housing of the Working Classes Act came into force[28]. This act replaced most of the existing acts, which had been largely applied to urban areas, and gave Local Authorities the power to repair and improve existing buildings as well as build new ones. The houses built under this act tend to be very easy to identify as they are all somewhat similar. They were designed by architects approved by Local Government Boards who tended to follow a set format, influenced by the plans proposed by the OPW in 1860, but with much more consideration of Irish vernacular styles.

In general, Labourers' Acts houses are three bays wide and stand one-and-a-half storeys high, with two rooms downstairs and two in the loft. These houses generally had half acre plots providing enough grazing for a cow and also for the growing of potatoes. There are sometimes lean-to roofed projections to house the scullery. The front door is often set in a small canopy style porch, sometimes with decorative barge board detailing which is replicated on the gable walls. The walls, which are usually covered in lime render, are typically of coursed rubble stone construction. In later houses the masonry was of cement, and brick quoins were used to the corners of the buildings in some cases, but whole scale brick construction was rarely used. Window and door arches were of brick, usually locally sourced. The brick around windows and doors, which was often hidden by the cover of lime render, improved the regularity of the opening size (allowing the use of mass produced windows and doors). Details in the contracts for fireplaces, flues and chimney stacks can include specifications for fire bricks as a further fireproofing measure. The chimney was a small rectangular stack located centrally on the roofline. Chiselled limestone jambs are usually laid at the base of external doors. The roofs were slated, often with double courses at eaves and crown of the roof, and usually with locally sourced clay ridge tiles. Timber eaves boards were added to give further protection to the roof and to mount rainwater goods. Inside, the high ceilings were covered in lath and plaster. Internal walls are often timber panelled, while the main walls were smooth plastered. One contract specified they should be painted in 'two coats of strong lime wash with added tallow'[29]. Adding animal fats to lime wash was a way of making it more hard-wearing and durable. Many of these houses survive today in a similar format - although because they are so small they are often taken for granted. They were architecturally designed over one hundred years ago.

Labourers' Acts houses often have associated features which were also part of the original construction contract. Wrought iron gates set in simple square plan gate piers, lean-to sheds and associated coal sheds and outhouses were all built at the same time as the house, and many survive in County Cork. The toilet was usually located in one of these outbuildings. It was a simple construction – a seat set over an open cess pit which needed to be emptied. Although the flush toilet was widely available in urban areas

from around the middle of the 1800s, it was not available in rural areas until well into the 20th century.

From 1891 a new body, the Congested Districts Board, began to be associated with the construction of houses in rural Ireland in areas which were considered very poor. The Congested Districts Board was established to relieve poverty in the overpopulated or 'congested' districts of the west of Ireland. Congested Districts Board houses were built at the same time as the Labourers' Acts houses, and should be seen as part of the overall movement to 'kill home rule with kindness'. The British Government were undertaking a series of well publicised philanthropic endeavours at this time, as a way to impress on the Irish people the many advantages of staying part of the Union. We know of several two-storey houses in the West Cork area which were built by the farmer himself with government grant aid money, and these houses remain quite a dominant feature of the West Cork landscape today.

Houses of this type tend to be modest in scale, although larger than the Labourers' Acts houses. This type of house is usually referred to as a 2nd class house by the census enumerators because they have more than four rooms and have slated roofs, while the Labourers' Acts houses with their four rooms are considered at the upper limit of the 3rd class house bracket. Most of these houses are two storeys high and three bays wide, with gabled slate roofs and coursed rubble stone walls. The chimney stacks tend to be located on the gable ends. They have square headed window openings with timber sash windows, and square headed door openings with simple timber doors. Surveys have shown that many of these houses incorporated the earlier and smaller vernacular houses into the structure.

Houses in the 20th Century

The early 1900s saw the continued application of the Labourers' Acts in the construction of housing. Urban and Rural District Councils invested heavily in improved housing at this time, and a large number of architects and engineers made their living through designing large housing projects. For example, Edwin Green designed numerous houses for Youghal Urban District Council in 1906 (at Cork Lane and South Cross). In such houses brick was increasingly used as a decorative feature, and high quality Ballinphellic, Belvelly or Youghal Brick is commonly seen defining window and door openings in government sponsored houses around Cork. Similar houses were being built all over the country, and many houses in other Counties share similar plan forms and design elements. Another big change was the introduction of cement as a building material in the form of mortar, walling materials, window cills and indeed as concrete roof tiles - a feature which is increasingly obvious from the beginning of the 20th century. Roof shapes began to vary more around this time too, with many labourers' and artisans' houses built by County Councils having hipped roofs.

By 1936 an amendment to the Labourers' Act allowed Local Authorities to make schemes to allow tenants to purchase cottages for the first time and Council houses as we think of

them today became a permanent feature of our social landscape. Following, in 1964, the introduction of planning permission as a requirement, Cork County Councils planning department has played an important role in managing the development and design of subsequent housing proposals in the County, even releasing a Rural Design Guide in 2003, recently updated.

Advances in technology can also lead to many changes in the local landscape and this cannot be truer in respect of the impact of the construction of the Inniscarra Dam in the mid 1950s. Thirty nine dwellings were acquired by the ESB to facilitate the construction of the dam reservoir, and the majority of these dwellings, including other buildings and structures on 3,500 acres of local land were flooded. All in all 211 land holdings were affected[30] and this included the settlement of Annahala in the Gearagh. This inhabited settlement and surrounds, with its own unique history and stories (particularly in relation to local poteen maker Jamsie Kearney (RIP), and indeed Seán Rua na Gaoire (a Robin Hood type legend in the area), is now sadly no longer inhabited. At its peak, Annahala contained a village shop (Horgans), a road for cars, and a blacksmiths[31]. A number of vernacular dwellings, many of which we would have termed today as Heritage Houses, are also sadly no more and this is a stark reminder in showing how settlements, houses, and indeed ways of life can come and go over time.

In concluding this chapter one should note that it is the smaller and medium sized houses that are the most common house types in the County. They have a complex history which reflects in a very real and physical way the social changes which affected people's lives over many thousands of years. They give us a local identity and a sense of place which sets us apart. As such, these small and middle sized 'ordinary' houses are among the most important houses in the County. In the next chapter we will explore the kinds of houses most people will think of as Heritage Houses – the high profile and very visible houses of the upper and middle classes.

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Chapter 3
THE HOUSES OF THE ELITE

Throughout history the houses built by the upper classes reflect their power and influence in society, also their wealth, privilege and education. From the 17th century the gentry and ruling classes are building large Country Houses that reflected their status in society. Since then the houses of the upper classes have always been big, bold and brash.

Social stratification, as reflected in the size of a house, has not always been so obvious, however. In prehistoric times there seems to be little variation in the size and construction of houses, perhaps reflecting a more egalitarian society. In the Neolithic period, farming practices improved to such an extent that food surpluses became possible, and material cultures therefore became more complex. But it is in the building of Houses for the Dead, the great megalithic tombs like Newgrange in County Meath, that this increase in wealth and resources is seen, rather than in the houses of the living.

A different type of society emerges in the Bronze Age. The discovery of metalworking coincides with a more stratified society, as reflected in the archaeological record. Metal objects like bronze axes and gold ornaments were items of conspicuous consumption, symbols of individual social power[1]. Again this increase in individual wealth and power is not reflected in the size and appearance of houses, which are typically circular with a conical thatch roof and wattle-and-daub walls.

In the later Bronze Age we see a development in settlement types that shows a greater need for defence and therefore presumably a more warlike element in society. These settlements are known as hillforts because they are typically located on hilltops with earthwork defences defining the settlement area. These earthworks follow the contours of the hill and consist of one or more high banks with deep external ditches, often with evidence of palisade fences on top of the banks. The enclosed area is large enough to accommodate an extensive settlement of houses – a typical hillfort encloses an area of around 1ha (3 acres). Clashanimud, near Bandon, is a good example of a hillfort in Cork, and dates to c.1100BC[2]. Its banks enclose a site measuring 1.02km in perimeter. Although we do not know a lot about the houses themselves at this site, because traces found in excavations have proved inconclusive, they were probably very similar to those built in earlier times but rather, clustered within a defended settlement. We can, however, be fairly confident that this site was occupied by a warrior elite class.

By the Early Medieval period the majority of the population was also living in defended settlements but now much smaller in area than hillforts. These are the ringforts, cashels, and crannógs that appear in great numbers throughout the Country from about 400 AD up to about 900 AD. The houses in these enclosures are still largely circular in plan with conical thatched roofs, very like those from the Bronze Age. Status and power is

reflected more in the form and size of the enclosing element of the settlement rather than the houses within. It is only with the construction of Castles in the Late Medieval period, approximately from the 12th century onwards, that we begin to see real differences in the actual houses of the wealthy as opposed to those of the masses.

Medieval Castles

The Anglo-Norman colonisation of Ireland from 1169 onwards marks a new phase in the type of buildings appearing in the Irish countryside, particularly in terms of ecclesiastical and military architecture. Within a hundred years of their arrival, the Normans had control of about two-thirds of the country, and their settlement of this area is characterised by the construction of Masonry Castles; in the earlier phase of conquest Castles were mostly earth and timber constructions[3]. The Normans promoted a feudal organisation of society – a system where a Lord was granted land by the King, in return for military services. The chief residence of this feudal elite was in a Castle, however, castles had a much wider context than as purely military outposts.

The first stone castles, built in the 12th and 13th centuries, would have been an imposing new sight in the landscape of Cork, very different from any houses which had been seen before. These buildings, military structures as well as homes, were designed to proclaim ownership and assert control by the incoming Anglo-Norman lords over the native inhabitants. The earliest Norman Masonry Castle was a tall tower with stout walls, termed a 'Keep'. A typical Keep had a first-floor entrance door, a projection on top of the walls for dropping missiles down on attackers (machicolations) and narrow slit openings through the walls for firing arrows out at attackers (arrow loops). These arrow loop windows would not have had any glass and did not allow much light to enter. As such, because of the need for defence, the interiors were dark, ill-heated and cramped. Such isolated keeps are very rare but there is a circular example at Inchiquin in East Cork and a rectangular one at Glanworth Castle, though surrounded by later additions.

As the 13th century progresses Castles become more sophisticated in style and design. These new buildings, known as Enclosure Castles, are essentially a central open area (ward) surrounded by a high stone 'curtain wall' with towers guarding the entrance gateway and positioned along the wall, especially at the corners. Along with these developments in defence comes a far greater emphasis on comfort in the castle's accommodation. Examples of this type in Cork are Kilbolane Castle and Liscarroll Castle, both in North Cork.

Tower Houses

From the late 13th century Ireland became unstable politically and socially with increased attacks on the Norman colony and the resurgence of Gaelic lordships. In this

climate little permanent building took place but by the early 15th century the situation had stabilised enough for a new building boom to emerge. Some academics contend that the boom in house construction around this time can be traced to a grant of £10, offered by King Henry VI in 1429, for the construction of small stone castles to defend the Pale area around Dublin. However, the resurgent Gaelic Lords were also building numerous stone Castles. Cork at this time was part of the Gaelic Kingdom of Desmond and there were a number of notable Castles built by the Gaelic Lords including primarily the McCarthys, but also the O'Learys, O'Callaghans, Healys, O'Mahonys, O'Donovans, O'Driscolls, O'Sullivans and many more.

The surge in construction at this time involved the rebuilding of most parish churches, the building of new monastic establishments as well as the rebuilding of existing ones. It was also a time that saw the building of a new form of lordly residence - the Tower House, with over 2000 examples in Ireland and over 130 examples in the County of Cork alone.

In appearance a Tower House looks much like a Norman Keep, albeit the entrance door is now on the ground floor. A Tower House is a tall tower with thick, random rubble stone walls, and narrow windows on the lower floors, and like the earlier Keeps, the interiors were cold and cramped, especially in the earlier 15th century examples. One of the many interesting features of a Tower House is what is termed a "base batter" – where the wall gets slowly thicker towards the base, often up to one metre, to make the wall more stable and of course, given the need for defence, to make it harder for someone to break into the tower by quarrying out the walls.

By the middle to late 16th century, and while defence was still an important consideration; we do see a greater emphasis on comfort inside the Tower House, with the introduction of fireplaces and larger windows. There is also a sense of emerging privacy with the inclusion of small rooms in the design, most probably bedrooms for the Lord and his immediate family. Hundreds of Tower Houses were built in County Cork in this period and outstanding examples include Barryscourt Castle and Blarney Castle, both now functioning as important visitor attractions. In relation to Blarney Castle, we are all very much aware of the Blarney Stone. It is interesting to note that the hole through which tourists are lowered to kiss the stone, constitutes part of what was originally used for dropping hot stones or hot oil onto attacking enemies. This therefore forms part of a machiolated battlement – a common defensive feature at the roof level of a Tower House. Many a Tower House also had a trick-step internally, a step which is much higher or narrower than others on the stairs – so that an attacker who does not know the castle, coming up the stairs at night in the dark, was likely to be tripped up.

The main function room in a Tower House was the hall. This room was usually placed high up in the tower where larger windows were possible without compromising the tower's defences. This room was where the main business of the tower, social, commercial and political, took place. As in the Medieval Castle, the Lord with his family and retainers ate here communally, in the fashion of the time. Also in common

with the Norman Keep, Tower Houses featured a ‘garderobe’ or toilet. In a garderobe the plumbing was fairly basic; a timber seat exited into a vertical shoot down through the thickness of the tower’s wall with an opening at the base. The term ‘garderobe’ is the French for wardrobe, and it is alleged that Lords would have kept their most expensive clothes here because of the ammonia-rich environment which would have warded off fleas and other pests. Some people today would still ask “where is the cloakroom?” when looking for the toilet[4].

17th Century

By the closing decades of the 16th century great changes are afoot in Ireland. For a start, the introduction of gun powder in the 17th century was the death nail of castle building, as they were too easy and vulnerable a target for the blast of the cannon ball. After the failure of various rebellions, culminating with the defeat of O’Neill at Kinsale in 1600, New English settlers are being planted onto the land confiscated by the Crown from rebellious Lords. In the south-west the main settlement was the Munster Plantation, which began after the defeat of the Earl of Desmond in the 1580s. By this stage in England the landed elite were able to build large houses without any defensive features. However, this was not possible in Ireland and whilst the New English settlers were building large stone houses for themselves they still retained defensive features, notably a proliferation of gun loops in the walls of the house.

The best surviving example of a Planter’s house from the Munster Plantation is Mallow Castle, which though essentially ‘English’ in style, also contains many gun loops for its defence. It also has noticeably small windows at ground floor level and the entrance door is hidden in the corner of a turret. Because of their defensive features, houses of this period are often referred to as ‘Fortified Houses’. Most Fortified Houses were not built by planters but by native Irish landowners. Examples in Cork include Kanturk Castle built by a branch of the Mac Carthys; Mountlong Castle near Kinsale by the Long family, and Reenadysert Castle on Bantry Bay by the O’Sullivans. Other houses of this type were built by the emerging entrepreneurial class like Coppinger’s Court near Glandore, which was built by Sir Walter Coppinger in the early 17th century.

One important element that changed within the house during the Early Modern period was the degree to which privacy was accommodated. People willingly began spending more time by themselves and “this new trend for solitude, linked to the rise of reading, called for new, small and private rooms” [5]. The evidence for timber or wicker partition walls, to make such smaller rooms, can sometimes be seen as an imprint on the internal plasterwork. Heavily carved oak furniture was common at this time, with rich dark coloured tapestries and coverings on the walls. The defensive spiral stone staircase of the Tower Houses gives way to a wide timber staircase in the Fortified Houses. The garderobe style toilet, which had been so much a feature of medieval architecture, fell out of fashion by the 1600s. Instead occupants of Fortified Houses made use of chamber pots in stool closets which had a far greater degree of privacy than a garderobe but they

did require servants to empty them on a regular basis. Chamber pots were in fact still quite common, particularly in rural areas, up until the middle of the 20th century; think of our surprise in visiting a house, asking where the toilet is, only to be told it is kept under the bed!

It was not just their personal houses, which the upper classes used to display their social standing. Through investing in the construction of Alms Houses the ruling elite could highlight their pre-eminence in a given area. Alms Houses, which were charitably built to house many an elderly person, often display the crest or name of the patron. In earlier medieval times, under native Irish Law, it is interesting to note that it was the son or sons in a family that looked after any elderly parents. This was not just the noble thing to do but in fact a legal requirement and "the law regarded parental care so highly that a man without sons was allowed to adopt someone from outside his kinship group to look after him and his wife in their old age" [6]. Alms Houses were an important part of the plantation town, and 17th century Alms Houses, such as those which still stand in Youghal, exhibit some of the same architectural embellishments seen in the Fortified Houses of the same date.

The world of the Fortified House came to a sudden end with the outbreak of rebellion in 1641 when many examples were burnt and have remained ruins ever since. The next three decades saw much warfare and destruction in the Irish countryside. The conditions for house building on a grand scale did not emerge until the closing decades of the century.

In design and décor these new 'Restoration Houses' were much more in line with contemporary English styles and were the first truly un-fortified houses built by the landowning elite in Ireland. Roger Boyle (Lord Broghill), third son of Earl of Cork, had been rewarded with the Earldom of Orrery after the restoration. He built a large mansion at Charleville in North Cork in 1661, renaming the town in honour of Charles II. This house was regarded as the most elaborate of its time in Ireland. It was burned down and wholly destroyed in 1690 by the Duke of Berwick after he had dined in it. Nothing now remains of this house today, but the location of the deerpark, fishponds and boundary walls can still be discerned.

Whilst very few late 17th century houses survive it is accepted that these mark the beginning of a new stage in house design, the emergence of the classical-style. These houses often have a hipped roof with wide eaves and windows, which were now set with a tall flush-framed timber sash – these were particularly suited to the sense of proportion important in classical facades. Dormer windows are often incorporated into the roofline, as are large multi-flue chimney stacks. These houses did not just look different from their early 17th century predecessors, they were made of new materials as well – brick began to be used in Ireland around this time. Irish town houses dating to before 1720 are extremely rare, however, the Red House at Youghal (built c. 1710) and the 'Queen Ann' House facing the Crawford Art Gallery in Cork City are very important examples.

18th Century

In the eighteenth century, Ireland was ruled by a minority made up of the landed gentry, protestant clergy and members of certain professions. These people were known as the ascendency or ascendant class, and they had vast estates with large fashionable houses. It is in the 18th century that Ireland saw the beginnings of a great rebuilding of the country, when the old buildings of the medieval and plantation era were often swept aside as symbols of the past, and replaced with new elegant structures. This great rebuilding is the reason so many buildings in Irish towns are of 18th century date or later, even if the town itself is known to have medieval origins.

It is at this time that the large Country House began to dominate the Irish countryside. These were built by landlords to reflect their social status as the ruling elite in Ireland and the houses themselves began to represent the taste and social aspirations of the owner. Indeed it was also at this time that the interior of a dwelling started becoming very important and often reception rooms were full of "superfluous objects, chosen for ornament rather than use"[7].

These Country Houses were built within large grounds known as demesnes. The demesne was set aside for the private use of the owner and created a suitable setting for the main house. Typical features within the demesne can include walled gardens, follies, ornamental lakes, stables and deer parks, all of which would generally be encompassed by a demesne wall, with a formal entrance, gates and gate lodge. The demesne wall ensured the privacy of the occupants but had no strong defensive purpose.

The dominant architectural style of this time, known as the Georgian period remained strongly influenced by the principles of classical architecture. This architectural style is known as Neo-classical or sometimes referred to as Georgian Architecture and was characterised by a strong sense of symmetry and balanced proportion that is reflected in both the internal and external design. These buildings would have been architecturally designed; tended to be two to three storeys in height over a basement and have hipped slate roofs, many with a central valley. The front elevation is always the most formal and regularly laid out elevation. It would normally consist of a decorative central door with fanlights and/or a central portico, with a sweep of stone steps to the entrance door. The size, position and proportion of window openings in the facade were a key component in achieving harmony and symmetry in the overall design. The newly introduced timber sash window was readily adopted in these properties as its vertical emphasis and defined glazing patterns reinforced the symmetry and rigid proportioning that defines Neo-classical architecture. More elaborate features that are exhibited in these properties can include the application of Classical orders (such as columns, pilasters and capitals) to doors and windows; the creation of a central breakfront, the introduction of pediments and architraves to openings as well as the application of ashlar stonework, which is often dressed.

There are 1327 Country Houses with associated demesnes shown on the 1842 Ordnance

Survey Maps for Cork City and County. Recent research by County Archaeologist Mary Sleeman has identified that approximately 80% of these properties are still extant; 10% are in ruin. While the larger Country Houses such as Kilshannig and Doneraile form a small percentage of the overall number, the vast majority are the more modest Country House, which were mostly designed from pattern books. While they display clear elements of the popular Neo-classical architectural styles they are typically fairly small – three to five bays wide and standing two or two-and-a-half storeys in height. These smaller sites also had associated demesne lands and were occupied primarily by minor gentry and professionals.

In both large and smaller Country Houses the number of rooms internally would have increased. Even in smaller Country Houses, ornate dining rooms and sitting rooms were the minimum standard of accommodation provided. In larger sites, studies, libraries, drawing rooms, dining and ballrooms could all be found, as well as billiard rooms (the game of billiards having originated in the 16th century). Entertainment was an important part of everyday life at this time, and these public rooms were lavishly decorated with plasterwork in the latest styles. Most formal rooms would have had timber joinery such as moulded skirting, timber panelling, dado rails, architraves and floors. Many houses such as Fota, Riverstown and Lota House have highly elaborate plasterwork and frescos.

Each room used by the family was heated by a fireplace, typically with elaborate fire surrounds incorporating plasterwork or decorative stones such as marbles. Cast iron fire surrounds were later used. The number of bedrooms increased and dressing rooms were also common. The chamber pot remained important of course - viable flushing toilets, although patented by Joseph Bramah of Yorkshire in 1778, were not widely installed in Ireland until the late 1800s, where "earth closets (just a wooden seat positioned over a midden) in the backyard were still commonly used at the time in rural areas" [9]. It was not until 1853 when the flushing toilet as we know it (with a pivoted arm/handle) was invented by a gentleman by the name of Joseph Adamson from Leeds, England. Another English gentleman by the name of Thomas Crapper sold these sanitary appliances wholesale across the UK in the latter part of the 19th century, and this surname is still synonymous with many a toilet! [10]. Rooms such as the kitchen, washroom, stores and larder would have been located to the rear of the houses in the basement level.

With large numbers of indoor and outdoor staff, stately homes and Country Houses were often one of the most important employers in the district. Servants' quarters were typically located in a basement or attic, while the few married servants were occasionally accommodated in ancillary workers housing. In larger houses, there were two sets of stairs, one main stairs built in a lavish decorative style, which was used by the house owners and only went to main floors, and a second back stairs or servants' stairs, which was used by the staff to access the basement and attic.

At the edge of each Demesne was often one or many Gate Lodges. The Gate Lodge embellished the entrance to the Country House and represented the boundary between

two types of landscape – public and private. Many of the Gate Lodges in County Cork are single storey houses built immediately inside the gate. They can have either hipped (for example at Fota House east of Cork City) or gabled (for instance at Brookville in North Cork) slate roofs. Most stand three bays wide facing onto the avenue. While most are fairly simple structures, with any embellishments applied to the gate rather than the gate lodge, some have ornate window mouldings or decorative eaves boards, for example at Maryborough House south of Cork City. They can be in simple vernacular style, as at the Gate Lodge at Ballybeg East south of Buttevant, or built in the antithesis of common sense vernacular, for instance at Creag Castle near Doneraile. There are a number of more elaborate Gate Lodges which stand out. Some were built to match the design of the main house for example at Bantry House, where the gate lodge is built in an arch form over the gate itself.

During the 18th century, many of Cork's wealthy people also lived in a Town House. Town Houses built in the 1700s, particularly the mid-late 1700s, have a very distinctive character. Georgian Town Houses are tall structures, three to four storeys in height. Their façades are usually fairly restrained, with little or no ornamentation beyond decoration of the door case or the walls on the ground floor. Brick, although synonymous with Georgian Architecture, is not that common in Georgian Houses in County Cork. In country towns, stone continued to be the more widely used building material, although houses were usually rendered and the stone was only visible if it was well dressed. Most of these houses were built as part of long terraces or housing squares. Terraces, squares and grid like street plans were important design elements which were introduced in the 18th century, as can be seen at Kings Square, Mitchelstown, or Emmet Square in Clonakilty. Many Georgian terraced houses were the primary residences of professionals such as solicitors and doctors.

Houses of this type have a strong sense of symmetry and regularity to the arrangement of the bays. Windows form straight vertical and horizontal lines. The door is central where possible, although in narrower houses it is set to one side to allow reasonable sized rooms internally. The door itself was often round or elliptical headed, with a decorative doorcase made of stone, render or wood. Doorways of this type have fanlight windows and timber-panelled doors. Door furniture usually included a knocker, and a doorbell was sometimes set to one side – frequently embellished with an ornate brass backing plate. Many Georgian Houses have a Piano Nobile; this is one floor which is emphasized more than the others in the front façade, usually the ground floor. This emphasis is achieved by either distinctive rendering details or the use of larger windows. The Piano Nobile contained the reception rooms internally, and was the main interface between public and private in the town house.

19th Century

By the 19th century Britain had experienced the full effects of the industrial revolution. Ireland also saw rapid social change associated with industrial development of the 18th

and 19th centuries. One of the major social developments which occurred was an upsurge in the numbers of people who could be considered middle class. This group of society – the industrialists, merchants, professionals and so forth – rapidly gained social and political power. This included many English people but also a growing Irish middle class, as, following the Act of Union 1801, which made Ireland a part of Great Britain, and the subsequent abolition of the Penal Laws, it was now possible for Catholics, and even Methodists and Quakers to operate at higher societal levels. The upper classes were slowly changing and the new elite needed to highlight their social position by the construction of new houses. For example, in the closing decades of the 1700s Sir Henry Browne Hayes, an industrialist who had made his money in Cork's glass making and distilling business, built the impressive Vernon Mount on a site overlooking the city.

The elite houses of the 19th century are generally characterised by a high level of ornamentation and decorative embellishment. Middle class houses, such as the large detached and semi-detached suburban houses built in Cobh and Monkstown at this time often make use of gabled breakfronts, dormer windows, canted bay windows and a variety of contrasting building materials such as render, stone and brick. Suburban life had been made possible by the spread of transport infrastructure– most particularly the trains.

The construction of Country Houses continued in rural areas, with one notable change in style. While the classical style was still dominant, buildings began to show some influences from the more elaborate Victorian fashions, generally a trend toward Neo-gothic, reusing medieval architecture in a modern idiom. Many of the larger Country Houses, were remodelled or rebuilt in this style, such as Castlefreke, Blarney Castle House and Ballygiblin House. The European Continent also continued to influence building style in the 19th century and in the early 1850's, on the banks of the Airgideen near Clonakilty, Lisselan House was built, designed by the architect Lewis Vuliamy in the French Chateau Style.

At the time, there were also a number of advances in domestic technologies, which dramatically changed day-to-day domestic life and at the time of their introduction, it was generally only the elite who could afford them. A major advancement was the various improvements in lighting, beginning with gaslight. In February of 1816 a Cork newspaper reported on the first ever use of gas for domestic purposes in Ireland – used to light Mr James O'Brien's Shop on Tuckey Street, Cork City. Large Country Houses made use of private gas supplies where possible, but oil lighting was also still important in rural areas. In 1879 Thomas Edison invented the electric light bulb and by 1892 Ireland had its first Electricity Power Station at Fleet Street in Dublin. Prior to this it is worth considering how one could cope during a long winter night when "the cost of candles and firewood meant that only the richest and most powerful people could turn night into day" [11]. The difference that gas and electric light made in the domestic setting cannot be overestimated.

In the 19th century, kitchen closed stoves became much more common. Coal was rapidly becoming the main source of heat for cooking, and, as coal imparts an

unpleasant flavour to food (in contrast to wood), enclosed stoves were a necessity in every house. By the end of the 19th century the flushing toilet also became commonplace. The installation of this advancement, known as a water closet (W. C.), was accompanied by the installation of complex plumbing systems, which also allowed piped bath water within the house. Prior to this all baths had to be filled by hand.

The houses of the elite have changed dramatically, both externally and internally, as social, economic and political developments occurred. These buildings, as physical embodiments of past lives, create a sense of stability and permanence, which is important in modern Ireland. Yet, as has been seen, they also express the vagrancies of fashion and changing taste. They are not static structures, but rather buildings that grew and changed and adapted over time. The next chapter will look at the different elements to be found in houses both great and small. It looks at the parts of the building from roofs to walls, windows to staircases, as a way to trace adaption and change over time and it also considers how the plan forms of houses were changed with extensions and additions. These different elements, although a small part of the overall house, contribute to each building's character and patina of age. Each element makes up part of a much loved home.

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Chapter 4
ARCHITECTURAL STYLES AND FEATURES

Houses as they developed over time have clearly been influenced by fashions, economic trends and technological advances. In this chapter a brief overview of the development of architectural style is provided and how it influenced the design and shape of the more formally designed houses in the County. This is followed by an examination of the different elements and features that make up the dwelling house and how they changed and evolved over time. It is these changes, often subtle, that allows us to understand and date buildings from different periods of time.

Architectural Styles

Architectural style was influenced not only by international trends but also by local fashions, by the individual tastes and preferences of the architect and house owner, and by the skills and abilities of local craftsmen. In this section the focus is on the broad styles and architectural movements which swept across Ireland from the end of the 17th century, and how these trends are reflected in the Heritage Houses of County Cork. These styles are predominantly found in the 18th and 19th century formally designed buildings whose owners had not just money but also a keen interest in keeping up with the latest architectural styles. Though vernacular buildings were not influenced by prevailing architectural styles there was inevitably a slow trickle down affect, particularly in the 19th century.

Ireland does not have a Renaissance period that is comparable to that experienced in mainland Europe, with flamboyant architectural styles in the baroque fashion. The earliest surviving architecturally designed houses in Cork (outside the Medieval Castles) are the Fortified Houses of the 17th century. Fortified Houses bridge the gap between the older defensive austere Medieval Castles and the modern house, with creature comforts of larger windows and numerous fireplaces providing extra heat and light.

The early 18th century was a period of consolidation which witnessed the rebuilding of the Country following the wars and revolution in earlier centuries. Like the rest of the Country, the new landowning gentry began to build houses in the most fashionable style, furthermore transforming landscapes to create a suitable setting. For clarity and convenience, these various architectural styles are now discussed under periods which most people will be familiar with.

The Queen Anne Period

The architectural period from 1700 to 1720 is generally known as the Queen Anne Period (Queen Anne reigned between 1702 and 1714). Classical Queen Anne Style houses are simple, yet elegant. The houses were generally built of brick or used brick detail and had a central front door with cut stone surrounds, often with a pointed or curved pediment over. The windows are generally square headed with 'flush frame', sash windows, replacing the now old fashioned casement windows of the Medieval period. The roof is typically punctuated by dormer windows and has multi-flue chimney stacks. Many Queen Anne houses will have projecting quoins, highlighted by using material in contrast with the main walling material - so if the wall is brick the quoins may be stone. They often have a central breakfront capped by a pediment. Queen Anne houses are quite rare in the County but, the Red House in Youghal is an excellent example.

During this period there was a successful shipping trade between Ireland and Holland and the influence of Dutch Architecture began to be seen. In port towns, buildings are often built entirely of brick, which was imported as ballast in incoming ships. The buildings, particularly in urban centres, were generally narrow with curvilinear gables– called 'Dutch Billies'. While very few examples survive in Ireland today, we know that this style of building was common through historic illustrations. An 18th century painting of Cork City by Chearnely, on display in the Crawford Art Gallery, clearly shows several buildings with distinctive curvilinear gables (Dutch Billies) across the inner City, although this style was much rarer in the County. There are however, some good examples in Kinsale such as the Market House, which had a curvilinear gable added to its facade in 1703, and the Dutch House on Cork Street. A unique example of a Queen Anne house in a rural setting in Cork County is Palace Anne, the Country House of the Beamish family, built near Bandon around 1714. Unfortunately today only the wing of the original building survives.

The Georgian Period

The Georgian period begins when George I was crowned King in 1714, and continues until Victoria comes on the throne in 1837. This period is heavily influenced by the fashions which swept across continental Europe, a time when many buildings were designed using features of classical Greek and Roman architecture.

This style of architecture is called Neo-classical and is characterised by a sense of restraint and symmetry. Buildings are very regularly laid out, with a clear sense of proportion to the façade. Tall rectangular sash windows with individual small panes were very important in houses of this style, and some windows were decorated with moulded surrounds, often having curved or triangular pediments on top. Classical Doric and Ionic columns, straight out of Greek and Roman architecture, were often used to

frame openings and some columns had acanthus leaf decorations after the ‘Corinthian’ style.

One of the most iconic architectural features in the Georgian period must be, however, the round-headed door with fanlight. The fanlight lit up the entrance hall within and had delicate glazing bars in the shape of an open fan above the door. The opening became more complex over time, and stretched to become a wider elliptical shape. There are numerous examples of these fan lit doorways in the more formal Heritage Houses across the County such as Crosshaven House, Doneraile Court, Coole Abbey and Ballinvonare House.

The numerous ‘Georgian’ Townhouses built at this time also adhered to this architectural style having symmetrical fenestration, with sash windows diminishing in size – the windows get smaller in the upper floors creating the impression that the building is taller than it actually is.

The Neo-classical style was the dominant and enduring design of the vast majority of the buildings constructed in the 18th/19th century and even into the early 20th century. It is fortunate that much of the building stock that makes up our towns and villages is made up of this elegant, aesthetically pleasing and well proportioned design.

Neo-classical architecture, in its purest form, is based on very strict ideas of proportion developed initially by Pythagoras – the Greek mathematician. Pythagoras had speculated that the universe was governed by a set of numbers which are found everywhere from musical harmonies to the curl of a fern frond. This ratio is called the ‘golden mean’ and it is a ratio for length to width of rectangles which is thought to be particularly pleasing to the human eye.

In the early years of the Georgian period, Palladian architecture, named for architect Adrea Di Piero who was called Palladio[1], was dominant in larger Country House design. Palladian architecture was a variation on the simpler Neo-classical style. Country Houses in this style have highly symmetrical wide façades with a central block flanked by service wings. This wide style of building design was particularly suited to Country House owners of large estates who wanted to hide farm buildings behind a beautiful façade. Though uncommon in County Cork as it was mainly confined to the very large Country Houses, an exceptional example of Palladian architecture can be seen at Kilshannig House near Rathcormack.

The Victorian Period

Victoria came to the throne in 1837 and the Victorian period ends with her death in 1901. The Neo-classical style continues to dominate in Cork, but in this period it begins to be influenced by aspects of the Gothic architecture of the earlier Medieval period. This style is known as the Neo-gothic. Neo-gothic architecture draws its inspiration, not

from the buildings of the classical world, but instead from churches and castles built in medieval Europe. The Neo-gothic style is best seen in the houses of those who could afford to rebuild in the height of fashion – such as at Castlefreke, where the owners turned their classical house into a medieval castle with the addition of battlements, machicolations and turrets. Annsgrove near Castletownroche, North Cork, also exemplifies this style, where a Gate Lodge was built as a gothic tower. Other examples are Blarney Castle House, Mallow Castle House and Puxley's Mansion in West Cork. The Neo-gothic architecture drew its inspiration from the romantic appeal of Medieval architecture, including Tudor/Elizabethan, Jacobian and Scottish Barronial.

The clash between the still popular Neo-classical and the newly fashionable Neo-gothic is referred to as the 'Battle of the Styles'. Emerging out of this clash came the type of architecture we think of today as Victorian. Buildings become dramatic and even whimsical with the use of purely decorative finials, gable fronts and shaped barge boards, and simultaneously the symmetry of the Neo-classical period become less important. Floral and foliate motifs become increasingly common, and the canted bay window begins to be seen in houses built all over the County. In more ordinary sized houses of the newly empowered middle classes, profuse decorative ornament and increased fussiness became the norm. Working class houses also show some influences - they make use of brick and are built in long terraces with embellishments like barge boards and dormer windows. In many people's eyes these are the true icons of Victorian Architecture.

The Edwardian Period

The Edwardian period dates to the turn of the 20th century. The dominant architectural fashion at this time was the Arts-and-Crafts Movement. This was a reaction to the mass production and general consumerist frenzy of the Victorian era. It placed heavy emphasis on hand-made products and one-of-a-kind pieces. Arts-and-crafts houses relied on simple forms without superfluous decorative elements; on the use of quality local materials rather than ornamentation. It drew inspiration from earlier architectural styles such as high steeply pitched roofs, small windows, gable fronts, and projecting porches to create a romantic picturesque design. Hollybrook House near Skibbereen is a rare example of a Country House built at this time and its design is much influenced by the Arts-and-Crafts Movement.

One of the most important changes which occurred in architecture at this time was a slow drift away from vertical emphasis in façades. Windows and doors became much wider, as for instance at Clonevin house in Charleville. Some houses made use of the old style casement windows rather than sash such as the Arts and Crafts house in Annabella at the edge of Mallow. Nonetheless, the style of houses built in the Victorian period continued to be constructed well into the 20th century – although with markedly less embellishment. The houses of Glenview Terrace, built c. 1910, illustrate this well. They are typical Victorain style houses, which make use of some slightly wider window

openings. Also popular was the employment of render detailing, such as surrounds, pediments and mimicked the lines of timber framed houses – as at the gabled dormers of Annanbella Terrace in Mallow (c.1910).

The Inter-War Years

In the period between the First and Second World Wars, the Edwardian style of architecture continued to be built in Cork. Houses with wide window openings, some with casement windows, were built. However, some houses were influenced by a new style called the 'Modernist Movement'. This is the style associated with the Art Deco artistic movement and the Bauhaus school of architecture. It draws heavily on the repetition and nesting of simple geometric motifs like circular or elongated rectangular windows. The regularly sized window openings seen in earlier years become larger, and modern materials like reinforced steel girders and concrete become commonplace. Art Deco influences are not very common in County Cork but some examples can be seen in a few shop fronts such as Lombard's in Fermoy.

Vernacular

Throughout the Queen Anne, Georgian and early Victorian period, vernacular style architecture continued to be built and occupied in Cork, particularly in more rural areas. The vast majority of ordinary people lived in vernacular houses and these make up the bulk of our heritage building stock in the County.

'Vernacular architecture' refers to the traditional architecture of ordinary people, built to accommodate local needs, by local craftspeople, using locally available materials and adapting to the local environment. Vernacular architecture ' appears informal, but nevertheless orderly. It is utilitarian and at the same time possesses remarkable beauty' [2]. The study of the vernacular has often been neglected in the past and further research is required to understand and raise the profile of this simple yet important part of our heritage. In their simplicity, continuity of tradition and as the houses of the ordinary person, there is a growing awareness of their value and importance as part of our cultural and architectural heritage.

The Parts of a House

Houses are made up of many different parts, and it was changes in these individual components that made up the overall style.

Walls

The walls are one of the most important parts of the house, they are the part that

encloses the rooms and makes our houses sheltered and secure. The materials and fabric used in the walls can influence the whole shape and appearance of the buildings. Walls can be solid and load-bearing, able to support the roof, while others are non load-bearing, instead using lighter material such as wattle and daub whereby the roof is supported by external and/or internal posts.

Wattle-and-Daub

Many houses in prehistory made use of non load-bearing 'wattle and daub' walls. Thin branches, usually willow or hazel, were woven in between upright supports to form a thick basket-like weave. This is the wattle. The wattle was then covered in a layer of 'daub' made from a mixture of clay, straw and sometimes dung. The daub when set created a waterproof wall. Wattle and daub was used side by side with timber plank walls from the Neolithic period onwards.

Timber

Timber was a dominant building material up until the end of the 17th century, and in Medieval times, many a dwelling was in fact of timber construction including timber framed buildings. In timber framed houses the walls were made from an open cage of upright timbers, posts and cross beams which supported the roof. The spaces between these timber frames were infilled with various different materials like stone, wattle and daub and even brick at later date.

Clay Walls

Clay walls are a type of mass walling material which is quite common in vernacular buildings in South, North and East Cork, as shown in the County Thatch Survey[3]. It is an excellent and versatile building material and has been used the world over. Clay or 'cob' walls were made by mixing clay and sand with water and straw and slowly forming it into the shape of the wall by hand. Cob walls were built up in layers, with each layer allowed to harden slightly before the next layer was added. The timing was crucial in such cases – allow the cob to dry too much and the next layer would not stick properly creating horizontal cracking in the wall, but if the cob was not dry enough it would not support the weight of the next layer and the wall would collapse. It was vital that the cob be kept dry, and so in most cases a low stone footing was used as the base, and a thick render applied when the wall was dry. When a cob wall is finished and covered with lime render it is very difficult to tell apart from a stone wall.

Stone Walls

Stone starts to be used around 1000AD in churches and castles, however, it does not become common in smaller and medium sized houses until the 1600s onwards. In general, the type of stone used is dictated by what is easily available in the locality. The bedrock of County Cork is predominantly limestone and sandstone, and these are the most common stones used.

The stonework generally used was rough unworked stone, called 'rubble stone'. Rubble stone walls can be either coursed or un-coursed known as 'random rubble'. Well shaped

and dressed stone, called quoins, were often used to strengthen the corner of buildings. The masonry walls of the Medieval buildings for structural and defensive reasons tend to be wider (1-2m) than the walls of 18th/19th century houses (c. 0.55-0.75m). For the most part rubble stone walls would have been rendered over to protect them.

When stone was shaped and smoothly dressed it was called ashlar. Ashlar stonework is labour intensive and so is very expensive. It is generally only found in the houses of the wealthy and is commonly confined to details around windows, doors and porches. Ashlar stonework was important in the restrained style of Neo-classical houses. Ashlar stone can be highlighted by emphasising the shape or texture of the stone – this is known as rusticating.

Brick Walls

Brick was used on rare occasions in Ireland prior to the 1700s, but it was not until the early 18th century that brick began to be used in houses, and even then it was mainly confined to chimneys as well as dressings around doors and windows. The main advantage of brick was that it was easy to create regularly sized building blocks on a large scale and 17th and 18th century bricks show a degree of variety in size and colour because of the way they are made and fired. They are hand moulded so they vary in size and were fired in primitive kilns.

By the 19th century technologies had improved so much that bricks became more evenly coloured. Bricks, by the mid 1800s were machine mixed and moulded or extruded in long slabs and wire cut. They were fired in a more sophisticated kiln (called a Hoffman Kiln), which allowed for even, controlled temperatures. County Cork had at least three large brickworks – at Youghal, Belvelly and Ballinphellic.

Following the introduction of brick it was primarily used in urban centres, however there are some rural examples from this time such as Lombardstown House near Mallow. Lombardstown House was built in the mid 18th century, and was home to the ancestors of Princess Diana[4] (RIP). Unfortunately this beautiful brick structure no longers stands, having been devastated by fire.

Renders and Mortars

The individual stones/bricks of a wall are bonded together using ‘mortar’. From the Medieval period into the early 20th century, lime-mortar was the main bonding material used although in some vernacular buildings simple mud is known to have been used, and some houses in West Cork are said to have mixed it with bulls blood. Lime-mortar is made from quick lime and sand. Quick lime is a whitish substance produced when limestone is burnt in a lime kiln. It reacts with water to form a chemical reaction, which will set hard given enough time. Cork had a plentiful supply of lime which is clearly illustrated by the thousands of limekilns shown on the 1842 OS map scattered throughout the limestone areas of Cork. Lime was also used as a render, a cover over the outside of the structure or in a simple limewash.

The end of the 19th century saw the introduction of Portland cement based mortars on a

very limited scale. Cement sets much harder than lime and can cause structural issues if used on historic buildings. Cement can also be mixed with aggregates like gravel to form concrete which can then be cast to create structural members. Concrete in the early 20th century soon becomes the most common material, however, it should be noted that when used in older buildings it can cause problems because, similar to cement, it sets much harder than original lime based components.

Walls were usually rendered as protection from the weather. In old masonary walls these were lime based renders though the use of cement based renders have been used in later buildings. Some buildings are weather slated as well as rendered. This means that the walls are covered in slates, as well as the roof. Weather slating is common in certain parts of Cork, particularly in coastal areas such as Kinsale. It was a way to protect the building from heavy driving rain.

Decorative Features and Finishes on Walls

The walls of a building were often ornamented using various embellishments. These could be made of brick, stone or render depending on the current fashion trends, budget and the preferences of the house owner. Render features, seen on houses from the end of the 18th century on, are probably the cheapest to create. Stone is the most expensive because stone is the most labour intensive to work.

In some houses, decorative effect was achieved by mixing different walling materials. In large Country Houses, ashlar stone work may have been used on the ground floor, while coursed rubble and lightly squared stones called squared rubble, may have been used on upper floors. Alternatively ashlar stones could have been used to make quoins to the corners of the building, or around window and door openings.

When walls were built of rubble stone and rendered over, a similar effect could be achieved by creating the impression of courses as lines in the render. Where these lines are incised in render to resemble ashlar it is called ‘lined and ruled’ render. This technique is commonly used from the 19th century onwards.

Brick walls were embellished with the use of different coloured bricks from the 19th century onwards. Yellow brick could be made by adding lime to the clay; cherry red bricks could be produced by adding iron to the mix. Sometimes the heads of bricks were intentionally burned to create a blue-black fire-skin. This was then used to make decorative ‘diaper’ patterns in the walls.

A band of stonework or projecting render that travels horizontally all the way across the elevation of a building is called a ‘string course’. If it is set under the eaves of the roof it is called an eaves course, while if it forms the base of the wall it is called a ‘plinth course’. A string course that travels along touching the tops of window and door openings, like one continuous lintel, is sometimes called an ‘impost course’.

Mouldings that are set above windows and doors are called ‘hood mouldings’ or ‘label mouldings’. Where a string course travels along, stepping up over the tops of windows

and doors, it is called a continuous hood moulding.

Some classical houses used ‘pediments’ in the shape of semi-circles or triangles over doors and windows to further enhance the decorative aspect of the building. Where the pediment was open on top it is referred to as a ‘broken’ pediment. Neo-classical houses also often have a pediment at the top of the wall which was designed to hide the roof and increase the sense of symmetry in the building. Architraves are also commonly found around windows and doors in Neo-classical houses.

In market towns, a pragmatic feature commonly found in windows – a bull bar – sometimes developed into a decorative embellishment. These are iron bars set across ground floor windows to protect them from damage caused by livestock on market days. In some cases they are embellished with foliate details, or have fleur-de-lis shaped terminals.

Roofs

The roof topped the walls and kept out the rain and weather. The structure and shape of roofs, and the covering materials used to make them weather tight, changed over time in response to architectural fashions and technological advances. Roof structures are complicated to create, and so the basic foundation of the roof is often very slow to change. The structural timbers used in historic roofs are frequently older than the coverings which may have been replaced many times in the life of the building. As a result, studying the roof timbers can be a good way to gain clues as to the true date of any house.

Roof Shapes

Roofs come in lots of different shapes and sizes, the two main types of roofs seen in County Cork are gabled and hipped. A gabled roof is pointed like a tent; there are two pitches which rise to a central ridge. A hipped roof has pitches on all sides rising to this centre ridge. Both gabled and hipped roofs are common in County Cork, and are seen on all classes of houses, from vernacular Thatched Cottages to Country Houses. In some cases the rises on the narrower end wall of the building are only half as long as the main rises – this is called half-hipped, and like the simple gable and hip, it is common in County Cork, particularly in our vernacular houses.

The span of the roof is limited by the length of available timbers, and so houses from the 1700s and early 1800s which employed simple gabled or hipped roofs tend to be narrow – only one room deep. The double-pile gable, and the Georgian box-hip were developed to address this issue and allow buildings to be two or three rooms deep. The double-pile roof is made of a number of gabled roofs joined together with a valley in the middle. It is seen in a number of larger and middle-sized County Cork houses, for instance at Mount Corbett near Liscarroll. This valley was made weather-tight with sheets of lead or shaped clay tiles.

The box-hip is a type of hipped roof with a flat section or hidden well at the top, the span is increased by complex joinery in this central section. It is quite a complex shape

to make, but when it first began to be used it allowed so much more scope in terms of a building's size that it soon became the dominant roof type in Cork's Georgian period Country Houses, for instance at Churchtown House in North Cork.

The mansard roof is like a gabled roof with a step halfway up, creating an interesting profile to the gable. This type of roof is rare in County Cork, but can be seen on sites such as Mount Alvernia, west of Mallow.

Roof Trusses

The roof shape is formed by timber structures called trusses. The truss is made up of several types of beams including; the wall plate (a beam that sits on top of the walls of the house), the rafters (timbers that form the slope of the roof) and purlins (timbers that lay at a right angle to the rafter). In the Medieval period most roof trusses would have been made of oak. Early beams are visibly different from modern roof beams because they are finished with a hand held tool called an adz. Later, timber beams were shaped with a saw, and the marks from the saw tooth can also be seen in the beams. These later timbers, from the 18th century onwards, are also more likely to be made of soft woods like pine.

Roof trusses can be arranged in a number of different shapes, as indicated in the previous illustration. The cruck truss is very rare, we do not have any known examples in County Cork. The collar beam and queen post trusses are the most common types in Cork. The Collar Beam is frequently found in vernacular buildings, and it is the simpler of these types to construct. The King post truss is generally only found in grander buildings such as Castles or Churches.

Early roof timbers were held together with joinery such as lap joints and mortise and tenon joints. These joints were pegged together with simple wooden pegs in most early roofs. Between 1790 and 1820 a number of machines were invented to mass produce iron nails, after this time nails became more common in roofs. However, the fixing materials and timbers are not the only things which can indicate the date of the roof. Careful inspection of the timbers can reveal examples of carpenter's marks. These simple geometic marks were cut into the timbers when they were first shaped. They helped in the erection and fitting together of the roof timbers on site, and can sometimes help in dating a structure.

Roof Coverings

The trusses of the roof had to be covered in order to make them weather tight. In some cases, timber battens were laid across the trusses to form a solid timber base on which to fix the coverings. However, this is more common in colder climates where the roof needed to be strong enough to hold up under a covering of snow, and was not regularly carried out in County Cork.

A number of different roofing materials have been used to cover roofs in Ireland. The earliest type is probably thatch. Thatch is found mainly on vernacular buildings as it was a cheap and readily available material. It was rarely used in the larger more formal

houses. Thatch can be made from a number of different natural materials such as wheat straw, oat straw, and water reeds, all of which were used in the past. Reeds are now the most common type of thatch used, and some of this is sourced locally from the Bandon estuary, or from nearby Counties such as the Shannon estuary in Limerick or from the Blackwater River near Lismore in Waterford.

From around 1820 corrugated iron began to be used as a roofing material in Ireland. From the 1860's, it began to be mass produced making it a relatively cheap, effective and easily available roofing material - quickly becoming a popular choice for vernacular roofs. Corrugated iron was often used over existing thatch providing a relatively inexpensive permanent roof while still retaining the important insulating qualities of the thatch. The long durability of corrugated iron has helped to preserve a large proportion of our vernacular heritage buildings in Cork and indeed throughout Ireland.

Slate was the main roofing material in the 18th and 19th century. Like stone walls, slates were associated with the more impressive buildings in the past. They tended to be used in Medieval Castles because, unlike thatch, they are not flammable. Later on, the slate roof was one of the requirements listed for planter's houses in the Munster plantation. It soon became a symbol of high status living, and so it is natural that larger houses in the 17th century tended to have slate roofs. By the 18th century, slate was the roof covering of choice for many houses especially in our towns and villages, and by the late 19th century it was common across rural and urban areas, for houses of all classes.

Slate is a very fine grained metamorphic rock which fractures in very clean layers to form very thin light slabs. In County Cork, the West Cork area with its underlying shales provided a good source of roofing material. The slate quarries at Benduff near Rosscarbery and the numerous small quarries along the West Cork coast were important sources. However, imported Welsh slates dominated the Irish roofing industry from the 19th century on. These slates, like Bangor Blue and Grey Welsh, are more even in tone than native examples, and by the 19th century they were being machine cut into thin, evenly sized fairly large slates [5].

Roof tiles made of fired clay have been used since medieval times and continue to be used today. Ridge tiles were used to protect the ridges and junctions of slate roofs and were often decorative. Some decorative Medieval ridge tiles have been discovered on the archaeological excavations in Cork City. Roof tiles which covered the entire roof are much rarer and are generally not found in Cork. Timber tiles, known as shingles, were also sometimes used as roofing materials. They may indeed have been quite commonly used in Medieval times and earlier, but the evidence for them has not survived.

Cement tiles began to be used around the turn of the 20th century when cement became more common. Cement tiles were sometimes tinted a reddish colour to resemble clay tiles. They became the most popular roof covering in the later 20th century. Today both

cement and synthetic slate are commonly used. These modern roofing materials are very uniform in colour and create a solid block colour effect when used in roofs.

Pitch

The aim of the roof is to protect the house from the elements, rainwater in particular. In order to be waterproof, some roof coverings like thatch need water to be carried away very quickly or they will become saturated. By contrast, slate can cope with water sitting on it for a reasonably long time before it begins to leak. The speed with which rain moves down the roof is dictated by the steepness or pitch of the roof, however, pitch is also impacted upon by architectural fashions and the length of available roof timbers. Buildings from the 17th century tend to have a very steep pitch – up to 60˚. However, in general roofs are commonly pitched between 40-50˚, with thatch at the high end of this (around 50˚) and slates, corrugated iron and/or clay tiles, around the 40˚-45˚ mark. In larger houses of the 18th and 19th centuries, the desire to hide the roof behind a parapet led to some roofs having a very shallow pitch of 30˚ or less.

Rainwater Goods

It was important to have some method to control the water as it leaves the roof. In Medieval castles and some churches the rainwater was thrown clear of the walls by projecting stone spouts. In thatched houses the roof projects beyond the external wall, thus facilitating the water run-off without damaging the external wall. By the 17th century, rainwater goods had come into use in larger buildings, although deep eaves continued to be built onto houses for decorative effect.

Rainwater goods are made up of three distinct parts – the gutters (horizontal channels at the base of the roof), the down pipe (vertical pipes which bring the water to ground level) and the hopper (a funnel at the top of the down pipe). Early rainwater goods, on 17th century buildings, were made of lead. However, lead is not very strong and not a very suitable material for down-pipes. Lead, copper and wrought iron were all used in the 1700s, but by around 1760/70[6] cast-iron rainwater goods appear. These cast iron goods began to be mass produced in the 19th century and many are still in use today.

In larger houses it was not uncommon for the rainwater hopper to be decorated, with either a date or a family crest. In smaller houses, which made use of mass produced cast-iron rainwater goods, decorative detailing to the base of the roof was sometimes applied to the timbers which supported the gutters – the eaves boards/barge boards. In houses from around 1800 onwards, it is common for eaves boards to be very decorative elements which have little to do with the support of the rainwater goods.

Chimneys

The advent of the chimney as we know it came about in the Late Medieval period, with the construction of masonry buildings. Early chimney stacks tended to be particularly large structures and this is because the fireplaces would have been large and open; one could stand inside the hearth and look straight up to the sky. These early chimneys tended to be located in gable walls and by the 17th century the whole stack sometimes projected out slightly from the wall, probably to create more room within, as can be

seen at Carrigashinny. In the more formal houses of this period in East Cork such as Myrtlegrove in Youghal and Castlemartyr House, the stack was contained within the wall. In addition, some Fortified Houses of the same period used similar stacks but also included tall slender single flue chimneys.

Over time, fireplaces became more and more advanced. By the 18th century houses with multiple fireplaces made use of flues. Flues make the opening above a fire inside a room much smaller - they reduce the amount of air which is allowed to flow up the chimney. This makes the fire more efficient in heating the room. It also makes the chimney more efficient in carrying away the smoke because the hotter the air the faster it rises. Chimney pots added to the top of the chimney added height, and therefore improved the draw of the flue. Decorative chimney pots made of clay or terracotta became fashionable in the 18th century and continued to be used on houses built into the early 20th century. After this time they became much simpler in form. You can tell the number of flues, and therefore the number of fireplaces a building has, by counting the number of chimney pots on the chimney.

Doorways

Doorways in their simplest form are rectangular openings which allow for ingress and egress. This element does not fundamentally change but is simply decorated over time with the addition of pointed arches, fanlights, sidelights and surrounds. In the late Medieval period, at the high point of Gothic architecture, the pointed arch would have been an important shape for doorways in castles and churches. It was fashionable from the 12th to the 16th centuries and used again during the Gothic Revival style of the late-18th and 19th centuries.

The semi-circular arch doorway was commonly used in houses from the 18th century onwards, when Neo-classical architecture was fashionable. Doorways of this shape (when the overlight is rounded on top (fanlight)) are an iconic feature in Georgian Houses. The glazing bars, which in the earliest fanlights would have been thick timber bars, give it the shape of an open fan. From the late 18th century onwards, some houses made use of a wider curved arch to form their doorways. This often incorporated side lights, which allowed light into the hall beyond. The curved arch could be semi-circular or, as often was the case, elliptical in shape. By this time, the wider fanlights would have had thin and ornate glazing bars sometimes made of metal as well as timber.

Further decorative features to the doorways can include, stone, timber and render columns, pilasters, capitals, architraves and pediments, all of which are again features of classical architecture. Columns with simple flat tops (capitals) and simple bases (plinths) are called Doric style columns. Columns with scrolls on the capitals are called Ionic Columns, while those with carved acanthus leaf decorations are called Corinthian Columns. Sometimes columns have both scroll work and foliate carvings, and these are called Composite Columns. The columns hold up a section of moulded stone called the entablature. This comprises a wide space, sometimes with decorations, called the frieze, and a moulded/stepped section on top called the cornice moulding.

Doors

In prehistoric houses the door may have been made of timber planks, animal skins or woollen blankets which were just hung in the opening. By the Medieval period, solid timber doors had begun to be used.

Doors can be made in a number of different ways. The earliest form of solid wood doors were probably made using straight timber planks vertically set and held together using horizontal cross pieces. This type of door was called a timber battened door, and it was in use from at least the 12th century in Ireland, if not before. Timber battened doors continued to be used on smaller houses well into the 20th century, and ornate examples of timber battened doors were employed as part of many grander houses built in the Gothic Revival style or the Arts and Crafts style.

Doors made from shaped sections of wood panels set in frames are called timber panelled doors. The panel was fitted into the door by slotting it into grooves carved into the vertical timbers (the stiles) and the horizontal timbers (the rails) which made the rectangular frame of the door. Timber panelled doors require much more skilled carpentry than timber battened doors, and so for the majority of the 18th century they were usually only seen in the houses of the better off. In the beginning of the 1700s, vertical half doors, or double leaf doors, were common in the houses of the well off. These were timber panelled doors, of a normal doorway width, but split vertically into two leafs. These doors became less common towards the end of the 1700s. Mass production in the 19th century saw the timber panelled door becoming more easily accessible.

Irish vernacular houses are famed for the use of timber ‘half-doors’. These are doors with a horizontal break half way up. It is thought that this type of door was designed to allow the house owner to open the top of the door to see out and/or ventilate the house, while at the same time the bottom of the door stayed closed to keep animals inside or out. These half-doors have become iconic of traditional Irish culture.

Windows

The windows are one of the most important features of the house, however, Prehistoric Houses, with wattle and daub walls, may not have had windows at all. At this time, most of the work would have taken place outside the house, and so it was not necessarily too much of a hardship that the inside of the building was very dark. However, as time progressed and houses became larger and more complex, windows became important. They allowed light in, and allowed occupants inside to see out.

The earliest windows were not glazed. A timber shutter may have been fitted to these openings and there are some accounts of windows being stuffed closed with straw. Glass was not commonly used in windows until the 1600s. No original Medieval shutters survive in Cork, but little sockets in the stone surrounds of some windows in Tower Houses indicate they were used.

The earliest window openings we have evidence for are in Castles where small narrow slit windows are used. They are defensive in nature as they allowed soldiers to shoot arrows at attackers and protected the soldiers inside from archers outside. The later Medieval period saw the use of similar defensive narrow pointed windows with hood mouldings which can be seen in the many Tower Houses across the County. From the 14th to 16th century the use of ogee curved heads become popular and provide a very datable architectural feature.

In the 17th century Fortified House windows are included at all levels. The narrow windows of the Medieval period are replaced with wider window openings, divided by stone mullions with transoms and hood mouldings, particularly on upper levels. The openings are generally square headed, however, round headed or very slightly curved camber headed types also occur. Glass began to be used by this time, when the plantations were bringing innovative new technologies and new building styles to the County. Glass production had a political element too- one English glass maker who wanted permission to build a glasshouse in Cork said he wanted to build in Ireland because it would use up all the woods in Ireland 'which in time of rebellion Her Majesty has no greater enemy there'[7].

The panes of glass it was possible to make using 17th century techniques – small mouth-blown bubbles flattened out into panes – were quite small. The panes were flattened out and squared off and then fitted together with strips of lead to create larger glazed panels. These panels were then fixed into grooves cut in stone mullions or were set into casement windows – windows which are side hung and open like a door. Casement windows made use of hinges, and early examples were typically hinged along one side and opened outwards.

The 18th century classical architecture made abundant use of the rectangular window opening with emphasis on the vertical. The vertical emphasis of the sash window, a new type of window, suited this style of architecture and begins to be used from the early 18th century. The sash window is a timber framed window made from two panels or 'sashels' which are set in a frame called the sash box. The panels are slid up or down to open the window. Early sash windows were flush framed – the sash box was set flush with the wall. These windows with their wide frames were somewhat of a fire hazard, however. An Act of Parliament passed in 1730 made it a legal requirement that sash boxes be set back from the façade and contained within a recess in the wall. However this law was indifferently enforced in Ireland, and flush framed sashes continued to be fitted until around 1760.

The first sash windows were unhung – they were not suspended from counter balancing sash weights – and so could be quite heavy and difficult to open. Sash windows as we understand them today are hung off sash weights, attached by cords hidden in the sash frame. These weights form a counter balance to the glazed panel making it easier to lift. Sash windows in the 18th century often have multiple small panes of glass making up the panel. The arrangement of nine panes on the top panel and six panes on the bottom panel was very common for ground floor windows in larger houses in County Cork.

Many houses, particularly Georgian Town Houses, had 'diminishing opes' (window size decreased in the upper floors). In general what often was used to create this effect was nine over six windows on the ground floor, six-over-six panes on first floor windows, and sometimes three-over-three on top floor windows.

Cork had become a national centre of glass production in the 18th century because the glass tax implemented in Britain was not applied in Ireland. There were several glass companies operating in Cork City. Window glass was made in two ways. 'Crown glass' was created by heating and spinning a globule of molten glass attached to a hollow metal tube called a pontil. This formed it into a large disc up to 1.5m in diameter. Panes were then cut from this. The rounded edges and the part which had been attached to the pontil, where there was a scar, were called bulls eyes. These were generally thrown back into the fire and re-melted, however there are some examples of bulls eye glass used in rear windows in rural County Cork. 'Cylinder glass' was made by blowing a bubble into a globule of glass by blowing air down the pontil. The glass bubble was stretched into a long tube or cylinder and heated as stretched as thin as possible. The cylinder was then cut down one side and opened out to create a flat glass pane. The cylinder could be up to 1m in length.

Another window type found particularly in formally designed houses is the tall semi-circular headed window. This is normally located on the rear elevation and used to light the stairs and landing. In addition, the façade of some buildings were enlivened with Venetian windows or the later, similar, but flat headed tripartite Wyatt window. The Venetian window was an important element of Palladian architecture in the early 1700s. It is a tripartite window arrangement, in which the centre window is taller than the two flanking windows, and has a rounded top. The upper glazing bars of the sash form a fanlike arrangement. The two flanking windows are normal square headed opes, although they are usually narrower than other windows in the building. The Wyatt window was a similar tripartite arrangement but excluding the round headed section. It was common in the late 18th/19th century and was named after the English architect James Wyatt.

The Bow Window became a common feature in 19th century houses. A bow is created when the wall of the house bowed out into a wide curve. These bows in the wall can stand the full height of the building, or else can just be on one floor. Bow windows are rounded in profile, and so the glass for them must be specially shaped and can be very expensive.

The sash remained the dominant window type in 19th century houses, however, the heads of the windows are often slightly curved or camber headed. The number of panes diminish because glass making technology had improved and much larger panes were now available. This type of window glass, made from the 1830s onwards, was called 'Plate Glass'[8]. It is made by pouring liquid glass onto a casting table and is then polished to remove the marks of the table.

19th century sash windows had fewer and fewer panes, so that one-over-one arrangements were becoming common by the mid 1800s. The larger panes of glass made the timber frames flimsier. To counteract this, sash horns were added to windows. These little projections of the side timbers of the sash frames help re-enforce the window and guide it in sliding up and down. Sash horns can be simple in shape, or can be curved – when they are called ogee sash horns.

By the mid-late 1800s, 'canted bay' windows had become a common feature of houses in Cork. These projecting windows gave a similar impression to bow windows, but the walls were made up of angled straight lines rather than one long curve. As a result of this, the window panes could be made with flat glass. Thus canted bay windows were cheaper than bow windows.

The timber sash window was in use from the early 18th century and continued in use until the mid 20th century. The survival of sash windows, with regular maintenance and care is a testament to the high quality materials and craftsmanship of the joiners, and are an important part of our built heritage.

With good care, timber windows have been shown to last much longer than unplasticised Polyvinyl Chloride (uPVC) windows which themselves have a lifespan of only 25 years, and timber windows are also easier on the environment, being clean and renewable [9]. Unfortunately, many of our original sash windows have been lost or replaced and this has eroded the character of many of buildings as well as our historic streetscapes.

Interiors

An entire book could be written on the history of the interiors of our homes, so this publication will now just touch on a few of the main features, particularly those such as stairs and fireplaces, which can in themselves have a dramatic effect on overall plan form and external appearances.

Interior Design ~ Hearths and Fireplaces

Open hearths were the usual method of heating homes from prehistoric times right until the 16th century in Cork, but fireplaces with chimneys were used in important buildings like Tower Houses from around the 15th century. By this time the fire surrounds were made of stone, usually dressed with ornate carvings and details. Often fireplaces, as the heart(h) of the home, support crests and date-stones. By the 17th century some fireplaces with associated bread ovens began to be built. These ovens were generally simple brick domed recesses set to one side of the hearth. The 17th century Coppinger's Court in West Cork or the 17th century thatched mansion at Ballysheehan have good examples of this type of oven. The grate, a metal frame which holds the fuel off the floor and increases the oxygen getting to the fire, was introduced in the end of the 1600s. It was commonly used in grand houses by the 1700s but remained rare in

vernacular houses until much more recently.

In vernacular buildings large fireplaces with massive timber lintels were used. These early fireplaces were all of the open hearth form, usually with the fire set directly on the stone ground with no grate. Fire cranes and spits would have been commonly used. Some houses have a clevy or spit rack on the walls even today. This is a pair of shaped brackets once used to hold a long bar spit for roasting meat in front of the open fireplaces. Some Irish dressers have clevy brackets to the sides which once served the same function[10]. By the 1830s the rotary bellows[11] had become a common sight. Pierce of Wexford, the inventor of this type of bellows, patented it as the 'Pierce Fire Machine'. Many houses in County Cork retain rotary bellows which bear the 'Pierce' label. The bellows function by having a buried pipe leading from a hand turned pump to an opening in the floor of the hearth. The pump handle is set to one side of the fire, and when it is turned, air is forced along the pipe and into the hearth floor where the fire sits. Such a devise made a big difference in cottages where the fire was set directly on the floor, and also helped in the efficient burning of one of Ireland's most common fuels - turf - which can need a bit of help to get started.

Elaborate marble fire surrounds were generally found in the main reception rooms of the larger Country Houses and Town Houses. By the 19th century pre-made cast-iron fire surrounds were installed in most houses. The hearth area had become much smaller by this date due to the introduction of the flue, and the back of the hearth was usually made from a fire-brick which would throw back heat into the room. Mechanisms to control the amount of air going up the chimney, by opening and closing the flue, were usually part of these fireplaces. Cast-iron fireplaces could be made with a high degree of ornamentation at relatively little extra cost. These mass produced surrounds allowed ordinary people to have embellished fire surrounds for the first time. By this time too, the closed stove had become common in the kitchens of urban houses where coal was the main fuel.

Stairs

The earliest stair type which we have evidence for is the intermural staircase found in Tower Houses and other Medieval Castles. These stone stairs were built into the thick walls and were mostly spiral though some linear examples occur such as at Carrigaphooca Castle. Intermural stone stairs used the mass of the walls themselves to support the steps of the stairs. These steps were made of heavy dressed stones.
By the 17th century timber stairs had begun to be built in Fortified Houses. Newel stairs, where a straight flight of treads were supported from a massive timber post called a newel post, were used in some houses in Cork, such as Ighertmurragh Castle (a Fortified House).

In the 18th and 19th centuries in the more formal houses, elegant, wide, wooden, and straight stairs were used. They often had a landing half way up which was lit by a large round headed fanlight window in the rear elevation. In Town Houses the stairs often had an open-well where the stairs wrapped around an open rectangular area. These staircases had hand rails to hold onto, supported by timber rods called balusters. In

early staircases the balusters sat on top of a solid board which concealed the sides of the steps - known as a closed string stairs. Later, in the mid 18th century, the sides of the steps became clearly visible and were usually decorated with carvings – known as open string stairs. Both open and closed string stairs were common in houses of the 18th and 19th centuries. Simple straight or ladder like stairs without handrails would have been used in vernacular houses by the 1700s.

In the 1700s the cantilevered stairs began to be seen in very wealthy houses. This is a type of stairs where each step is supported by the weight of the next step set on top of it, pushing it down. It is an extremely complex balancing act and was an engineering revolution when first introduced. Maryborough House has a beautiful example.

Decorative Features

In larger houses such as Country Houses or formal Town Houses, the key reception rooms were separated from the kitchens. The hallways, drawing rooms and dining rooms of these formal houses are often dominated by decorative plasterwork. One of the most embellished parts of the room was the ceiling. This large open space, not being useful for any other purpose, and protected by its location for day to day wear and tear, was the perfect canvas for the ornamental plasterer. In the early 1700s Rococo plasterwork with is deeply moulded flora and fauna was fashionable, for instance at Castlemartyr House in East Cork.

By the mid-late 1700s, Adamesque style interiors began to dominate. Adamesque makes abundant use of curved walls and circular reception rooms/halls. Mouldings, while still using some of the foliate imagery and swags seen in the Rococo style, tended to be finer and lighter.

The walls of the main rooms were divided horizontally by plaster work in the same way as the external walls were divided by string courses. The point where the ceiling meets the walls was decorated by the cornice moulding. The mid point of the wall was embellished by the dado rail, which also served to protect the walls from being hit by furniture. The base of the wall was marked by the skirting board. Both the skirting board and the dado rail were made of timber and painted to look like plaster, because timber was hardier than plaster and could stand up to the general wear and tear of day to day life. Some houses also have a picture rail from which paintings were hung; this was also of painted timber.

The walls themselves, in 18th century houses, were plastered and decorated with paintings, frescos or hung with tapestries. Vernon Mount House near Cork has exceptional examples of paintings on the ceiling. By the 18th century wallpapers had come into vogue for larger houses, and by the 19th century these same papers were being mass produced at centres like Blarney, and were common to houses of many classes.

Extensions and Changes of Plan

Heritage Houses, which have been lived in for and by many generations, are not static

things. They grow, change and adapt to meet the changing needs of their families. Many houses discussed in this book are multi-phase constructions, so it is worthwhile considering the ways houses changed over time.

"In a medieval peasant's cottage, the only room of the house was its kitchen, which served as bedroom and living room as well"[13]. As the vernacular house developed into later centuries and with it additional rooms in many instances, the kitchen still remained the most important, often larger and with a higher ceiling than these other rooms, but also being the room where the majority of socialisation took place. However, in the late 19th century we see the emergence of a new room in the smaller house with the introduction of the parlour. The parlour was a reception room with no other function than socialisation and display. The parlours were inspired by the larger drawing rooms of the bigger house and were often reserved for 'good use' only. They were kept clean and neat and generally only used when important visitors came to the house.

Around the same time, in smaller houses, we begin to see a trend for splitting up bedrooms into smaller private spaces. This reflects the adoption of a sense of morality which discouraged boy and girl children from sharing rooms. This idea was largely promoted by the growing middle classes, who campaigned for improved housing in an attempt to affect the morals of the working classes. One newspaper reported 'The wretched lodgings of the poor are the cause of more than half the misery now existing. It is of no use preaching religion, or making education cheap... while the present state of things in this respect exists. Give to the poor man a cleanly and cheerful home … and then order and sobriety will ensue . . .'[14] clearly good homes made clean minds in the eyes of the philanthropic middle classes!

As the 1800s progressed the numbers living in our urban centres grew which led to increased competition for land, and so houses began to go up. Soon the most commonly built house plan for the ordinary working classes was a 'two-up-two-down' plan. This is a house with two rooms on the ground floor, and two bedrooms above. This development of a second storey as standard is an important point in the creation of modern house plans. Most of these houses would also have had a scullery in an outshot to the rear. The trend for increased height also occurred in rural areas particularly towards the end of the 19th century, as seen in the many West Cork houses built at this time.

The privy, a simple non-flush toilets set over cess pits was usually located in an outbuilding to rear. By the mid-1800s the flushing toilet was available in urban areas, although still located in an outbuilding to the rear. However, this innovation was slow in coming to rural areas, and in many cases it was not until the 1950/60's that many rural houses in Cork added an extension at the back of the house to accommodate a toilet and bath. The toilet had come to larger County Houses in rural areas a little before this, and in these houses it was common for smaller bedrooms or dressing rooms to be converted to bathrooms with toilets.

In conclusion, this chapter has covered many of the architectural styles and features that

changed over time in dwellings. The next chapter now presents a selection of 30 different dwellings in the County of Cork, which typify the numerous different house types that occurred throughout the ages.

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Chapter 5
HERITAGE HOUSES OF COUNTY CORK: THIRTY EXEMPLARS

The foregoing chapters have discussed the general history and physical development of the house in County Cork, both the vernacular, lived in by the majority of people, and the houses of the elite, occupied by the privileged few.

To truly understand the vast range of house types and styles throughout the County, however, it is useful to consider specific examples in a little more detail. To that end, this section of the book considers a selection of thirty houses in County Cork which illustrate the development of the house or can be considered good examples of their type.

A brief description of each exemplar is provided, followed by a discussion of its overall importance and historical context, concluding with interesting features or stories relating to the said houses.

These are not, of course, the only interesting Heritage Houses in Cork, but it is hoped they do give a good flavour and general understanding of what can be found throughout the County.

1. The Neolithic House at Barnagore, Ballincollig

The earliest evidence for a house yet found in County Cork was discovered in 2002 in Barnagore townland, near Ballincollig. Here an archaeological excavation uncovered evidence of a structure shown by radiocarbon dating to have been built in the Early Neolithic, that is about six thousand years ago. The excavations were part of the archaeological work carried out in advance of the construction of the N22 Ballincollig Bypass.

What was discovered is the foundation trenches of a rectangular house, with an overall length of 5.5m and a width of 4.5m. Excavation of this trench showed that the walls were built using a combination of materials. The western and southern walls were constructed of split oak planks set vertically in a slot trench. However, the northern and eastern walls were built of wattle-and-daub. One can see the narrow trench for the wattle at the bottom of the photograph with the wider trench for the oak planks at top and right. In addition there were a number of upright circular posts incorporated into the walls giving extra

stability to the structure. The timbers were radially split probably using polished stone axes, wedges and hammers. A gap in the trench indicated the position of the doorway but no evidence of the actual door survived. The roof was probably wooden, covered with sod or thatch. The house appears to have been one large room; however, some stake holes may indicate internal partitions or screens. Unfortunately, due to the truncated nature of the site little evidence of habitation survived, although a flint arrowhead was found nearby.

This house at Barnagore appears to be an isolated farmhouse and not part of a settlement cluster. However there is evidence of clustered Neolithic settlement further to the east where Neolithic pottery, stone tools and grains were uncovered during archaeological excavations in the townlands of Curaheen and Ballinaspig More. Here fragments of burnt timbers were found showing that one of the houses was burnt down. These houses were radiocarbon dated, one to between 3940–3640BC and the other to 3790–3520BC. A number of large post-holes uncovered inside the house indicate that large timber posts were used to support the roof, which must have been fairly sturdy.

Seven Neolithic houses have so far been discovered by archaeological excavations in Cork – Pepperhill (North Cork), one at Caherdrinny, two at Ballinglanna North and two at Gortore (all north of Fermoy) and this site at Barnagore, near Ballincollig[1]. There are as yet no reconstructed examples in County Cork. Excavation has shown that most houses of this date tend to be roughly rectangular in plan. They usually had timber walls made from a combination of split planks and wattle-and-daub. The location of the entrance in the north-eastern corner of the house is a recurring feature[2]. The evidence suggests that the roofs were gabled, supported by timber posts. To date no roofing material has been found but either thatch or sod as covering materials have been considered likely by archaeologists.

The Neolithic period was the era in which people began farming for the first time. This house represents more than a building, but a radical change of lifestyle and economy. These farmers had to clear the natural woodland to create fields for crops and animals. Pottery was made for the first time in Ireland and new tools such as polished stone axes also appear. In the Neolithic, people were settling down and investing time and resources into making permanent settlements with houses which would last for years instead of just one season.

Whilst their houses were built of perishable materials like timber and thatch, prehistoric people were capable of building in stone but we only see this in their spiritual monuments, especially in the tombs they built for the dead (a majestic example being Newgrange in County Meath which was designated as a World Heritage Site in 1993). In Cork we have smaller examples of Megalithic tombs which occur mainly in the south-west part of the County. However, at Labbacallee near Glanworth in North Cork, is one of the largest examples of its type in Ireland.

Houses like the one discovered at Barnagore probably occurred across County Cork throughout the Neolithic. These houses have been fully archaeologically excavated and

recorded and the results published with reconstruction drawings. This information gives us a window to the past, and a greater understanding of the houses of our very distant ancestors.

2. Early Medieval Houses at Gortnahowen II, Mitchelstown

The enclosure site at Gortnahowen II, south of Mitchelstown, was excavated as part of works for the N8 Fermoy to Mitchelstown Bypass. It revealed the foundation trenches of two early Medieval Roundhouses. The larger of the two houses was c.7m in diameter, defined by a shallow slot trench. Several post holes inside the house showed that the roof was supported by strong timber posts. There were two hearths inside, and archaeologists found remains of oat and barley which had been accidently burnt in these fires. Numerous smaller stake-holes near the fire suggested that there was a fire feature, possibly a seat or drying rack. This house was dated to between 660-771AD. The smaller Roundhouse, located to the north-west, was just 4.3m in diameter but was of similar construction. It was slightly earlier in date (593-654AD), however, suggesting a continuity of settlement in the area over a long period of time. The excavation also produced evidence of ancillary buildings within the enclosure such as a small shelter, a workshop and a metal working area [3].

This site was probably occupied by a large extended family, who were part of a wider community that lived in the numerous Ringforts that occurred across the countryside. These early Christian farmers made good use of the surrounding fertile lands to provide for their families and the wider community. The Golden Vale must have been as attractive then as it is today, with lush grass providing plenty of fodder to feed their cattle, sheep and pigs and fertile land to grow oats and barley. The size of the house, and the presence of fitting inside, suggests some comforts and activity within the home.

Houses in the Early Medieval period (c.400–c.1100AD in Ireland) are known from many archaeological excavations – to date there have been c.550 examples identified from various projects around the country[4]. These houses tend to be circular in plan, with wattle and daub walls supported by larger timber posts. The roofs are thought to have been generally conical, supported by massive timber posts outside of the house. There are no intact upstanding remains of Early Medieval Houses, however, some of the rarer stone-walled examples do leave a trace above ground. These can be seen in parts of Kerry and around the Burren where stone walling is more common. A few Early Medieval Houses have been reconstructed such as Lios na gCon near Clonakilty which is based on the archaeological excavation carried out on the site.

The houses of this date were often built inside enclosures or defended forts called Ringforts. These are circular earthen banked enclosures around an Early Christian farmstead. They functioned as defended farmsteads and consist of a circular or oval area enclosed by one or more earthen (or in some areas stone) walls with outer fosses or

ditches. The fosse had a dual purpose as it provided the material for the inner bank and added to the site's defences. The archaeological evidence indicates that their main function was for habitation but they may also have been used for social gatherings or for animals.

The farmstead would have contained wooden houses, outbuildings and associated farm yard features, the remains of which have long since disappeared and now remain as subsurface archaeology. Similar to farms today, the farming activity was not confined to inside the fort - much activity occurred in the fields outside. Ringforts are called raths (ràth) or Lis (lios), Dún or Caher (usually stone) and often appear as part of a placename. In Cork, for example, of the 5,429 townlands present, Richard Forrest, Cobh Library, has recently documented that 38 begin with Dún; 65 begin with Ráth and 152 townlands begin with Lios. Many more begin with Caher, all in all indicating the rich Early Medieval heritage in the County.

3. A late Medieval Tower House at Ballynacarriga, Dunmanway

Ballynacarriga Castle is a four story Tower House, a Late Medieval Castle. This castle may date to as early as the mid 1400s, but the upper floor and roof were modified later, when a date stone of 1585 was added. The tower is four storeys high and originally had a gabled roof. The walls are coursed rubble stone, primarily local limestone but with some other local stones like quartz also incorporated. Damage around many of the openings and at the base of the tower was the result of the stone being taken to build a nearby mill in the 18th/19th century. The corners of the tower use dressed quoin stones. There is a slight base batter, the base of the wall slopes out to become slightly thicker for structural and defensive purposes. Projecting bartizans occur on the north-west and south-east corners protecting the vulnerable corners from attack. Some corbel stones at the top of the east wall suggest the original presence of a machicolation that would have protected the door below. The doorcase surround has been removed but was probably a pointed gothic arch, and a slot over the door suggests the presence of a portcullis-like feature which would have protected the door. There are a number of thin arrow-loop style windows. Although many have lost their original surrounds, some do survive, particularly on the west and southern walls, with ogee heads and decorated with ornamental carved details. Some sections of the bawn wall with corner tower survive on the east side of the castle.

Inside, the door opens into a small vaulted lobby area, with a guardroom to the left of the door with the main chamber opposite the door. There are large fireplaces in the southern wall of the main rooms on the first and third floors (the great hall), so these large rooms would have been fairly comfortable places for the Lord and his Ladies to sit. The first floor also possesses a carved window embrasure with chevron and foliate detailing, indicating a high level of sophistication and elegance - beautiful and impressive to sit in. A short straight flight of stone steps from the ground floor leads to a spiral intramural staircase in the north-eastern corner of the tower. The stairs provided

access to the upper main floors along with several smaller side chambers. A long passage set in the thickness of the north wall at 2nd-floor level gives access to a garderobe (the toilet) and the exit chute for this can still be seen opening out of the north wall externally. The third floor may well have also functioned as a chapel, as carved stones in the window embrasure in the south wall show various Christian motifs.

Tower Houses are Medieval fortified residences of a powerful local lord or landholder in the 15th/16th century and were often enclosed by a bawn wall. They are the most common type of castle found in Ireland with 134 examples in Cork alone. Tower Houses are usually fairly small castles, generally rectangular in plan and three to five storeys high - each storey occupied by one main room. The interior is lit by narrow arrow loop windows, sometimes with larger openings on upper floors like those seen here at Ballynacarriga. Inside, there were usually one or two internal stone vaults, which strengthened the structure of the building and provided a solid floor above.

An interesting carving occurs on the east external wall over the door at Ballynacarriga Castle, known as a Síle-na-gig carving. Síle-na-gigs are female figures usually associated with fertility (they often emphasise the genitalia). These figures can be seen on buildings from the 12th-17th century around Ireland and there are 10 recorded in County Cork. Síle-na-gigs like the one here may have been intended as a form of protection, and some people suggest they have pagan roots. However, they are also quite commonly associated with churches (for instance at Ballyvourney in Cork). The Ballynacarriga figure is standing with legs splayed, feet turned upwards and bent arms grasping from behind. The upper part of her body is disproportionately large, possibly because she was to be viewed from below and the stone mason wanted the viewer to see her upper body clearly. Her head is rounded, with what may be large droopy ears or 14th century style plated hair on either side and "what looks like a lunar crescent encircles her right eye"[5].

Ballynacarriga Castle is famous for the intricacy of its carved stone decorations in the building demonstrating the skill of the craftsmen and the sophistication of the owners.

The beautiful stone carvings on the third floor main chamber suggest that the Lord of Ballinacarriga Castle, Randal Muirhily (Hurley), spared no expense in the practicing and promotion of his Catholic religion. This room has a window with embrasure decorated with scriptural subjects. Motifs include the crucifixion and the instruments of the passion as well as figures which may represent St John, the Blessed Virgin and St Paul. This room possesses a date inscription reading "1585 R.M.C.C." (the initials refer to Randal Muirhily (Hurley) and Catherine O'Cullane). During the Confederate War of 1641-52, the Hurleys of Ballynacarriga Castle supported Lord Muskerry (MacCarthy More), and in consequence the castle was dismantled by Cromwellian troops and their lands forfeited.

Ballynacarriga Castle is a National Monument in State Guardianship and worthy of a visit, however the interior is only accessible by arrangement. The area around the castle has been developed as an amenity walk with picnic area near to the lake. Parking is

available across the road.

One might find it interesting to note that outside a wall of the building, which contained the chute from the Garderobe, is an imprint on the ground which is known as “Moll the Pooka Hole”. “Legend says the entity would enter the castle through the chute and create havoc around the building until chased out” and the Púca was also known to have transformed “into a large dark horse or dog and harass travellers on the nearby roads”. Perhaps the Sheela na Gig, which are also believed to ward off evil spirits, was placed on the castle wall to curtail Moll the Púca’s excursions of terror![6]

4. The 17th Century Fortified House of Kanturk Castle, Kanturk

Kanturk Castle is an attractive example of a Fortified House dating to the 17th century. Situated on land sloping gently down to the Brogeen River, about a mile from Kanturk town, the ruins dominate the local landscape. The house itself was built in a rectangular-plan block, with massive external chimney stacks, and four square-plan corner towers called ‘flankers’. It stands four storeys high, with the corner towers slightly taller at five storeys. The roof which does not survive was probably hipped and the corner towers have corbels which suggest the presence of a machicolation/projecting wall walk. The towers were defended by a series of splayed gun-loops, however, an absence of any gun-loops on the western side suggests that this side of the house was protected by an enclosing bawn wall which may have surrounded a courtyard or formal gardens.

The walls of Kanturk Castle are built of coursed rubble stone, primarily the local limestone, with dressed stone quoins to the corners. There is a slight base batter on all the walls except on the west side. The walls were probably rendered originally, and are embellished by continuous string courses marking the floor levels to the upper floors. The main entrance door is located in the centre of the western wall at the first floor level and it retains a fine carved limestone door surround with a round arch, flanked by columns on stepped pediments and with a frieze and cornice over. A ground floor door, directly beneath this main door, are the remains of the door opening providing access to the ground floor/half basement area. There is a second ground-floor doorway in the centre of the east wall, which has a door surround with pointed gothic arch. This is embellished with twist-carved stonework and there are yett holes suggesting the presence of further defences. All floors were well lit by symmetrically arranged window openings. The ground floor has single round headed openings while the upper floors have larger rectangular opes with mullion and transom divisions all covered by a hood or label moulding. The windows are likely to have been casement windows with small-paned leaded glass.

The interior of Kanturk Castle today looks like a massive open space, roofless with a gravel floor and stone walls. It is hard to imagine the house as it once was, with wooden

floors throughout – traces of these can be seen as lines of joist sockets in the main walls. The house has numerous fireplaces, a testament to the luxury which this type of building afforded its occupants, particularly when compared to Tower Houses and other castles. These look a bit strange today, floating on the floorless walls. The fireplaces in the main block were all positioned near either end of both long walls, suggesting internal timber walls would have divided the large rectangular plan space into a number of smaller rooms. One fireplace surround on the third floor has a carved mantle piece with frieze and cornice over it, suggesting this may have been an important reception room. At the opposite end of the building, at ground floor level, a large open hearth fireplace can be seen with the remains of a domed bread oven on the south side, suggesting the presence of a kitchen here. The stairway was located in the northeast tower, the sockets and scars in the plastered walls suggest it was a winding timber staircase, probably with a landing at each corner.

Fortified Houses began to be built in Ireland in the 1600s. They are less common than Tower Houses, with just 22 examples in County Cork. Buildings of this type are often rectangular in plan with a number of square or polygonal flanking towers, just like Kanturk. They stand 3–4 storeys tall with thick stone walls, massive chimney stacks, large window openings, and originally had timber floors and stairs inside. Many Fortified Houses have musket or gun loops either flanking the door or on the defensive towers. These houses are essentially a mid point between the heavily defended castle of the medieval period and the undefended Country Houses built in the 18th century. Other good examples in Cork include Mallow Castle, Ightermurragh Castle, Monkstown and Coppinger's Court.

Kanturk Castle was the chief residence of the Lords of Duhallow – the Mac Donough branch of the Mac Carthy family "who forfeited this estate for aiding the rebels in 1641"[7]. It is believed it was built either by Dermot mac Owen, or by his son Dermot Óg, shortly after his father's death in 1625. There are a number of legends associated with the building of Kanturk Castle, one of which says that it was built by seven stone masons all named John, and this is why it is sometimes called Carrig-na-shane-saor (the rock of free John). It passed to the Perceval Family in the late 17th century and remained in private ownership until 1906 when it was presented to the National Trust. It is now in the guardianship of the State and accessible, with interesting information boards also on site.

5. The 17th Century House at Carrigashinny, Mogeely

The farmhouse in Carrigashinny townland, just south of Mogeely near Castlemartyr in East Cork, is a picturesque example of a Strong Farmer's House built in the 17th century in Cork. Its value is not only in its simple yet elegant appearance but also in its rarity as known houses from this date are extremely rare. Carrigashinny has a gabled roof, covered in slate with massive external projecting chimney stacks. The thick

masonry walls are covered in render. The walls stand two storeys high and are probably built of coursed rubble stone. Carrigashinny house was originally rectangular in plan, but it now has a single storey addition to the rear accommodating a warm sitting room within. The windows are square headed rectangular openings of different shapes and sizes. Those on the first floor are more regular than those on the ground floor, and they are very slightly irregularly arranged so that they do not form even bays on the façade. The window openings may have been altered in the 1700s with the insertion of timber sliding sash windows. The front door is square headed and set centrally on the front elevation with a later timber surround, the other door is on the side elevation and leads into the entrance hall with wooden stairs to rear. A second door occurs on the side elevation and provides access to the kitchen via a short well worn stone paved passage. Hidden behind the open door is a steep wooden stairs known as the priest stairs and according to the present day owner Ms. Walsh, is where the priest could escape up during the penal laws. Inside the house, the kitchen at the east end has a large open fireplace. This was reduced in size probably in the late 19th century and two cast stoves were installed on either side. The iron crane may have been inserted at this stage, but it now contains a modern stove.

The early modern period – around 1600–1700AD – was a time of real change in Ireland. Settlements associated with the plantations had introduced a new way of life in both rural and urban settings. The introduction of planters brought new ideas and buildings into the Country. Some lived in timber framed houses though the preference appears to be for the stone built houses with slate roofs. Though rare in the County, a few 17th century houses are known in Cork, including a newly discovered timber framed house on North Main Street in Bandon, and the ruined 17th century house attached to Castlemartyr Tower House.

These 17th century houses tended to have massive chimney stacks located in the gable walls. The roofs were likely to have been slated, though examples of thatch are known. Fenestration was not necessarily arranged in neat bays and the windows were likely to have been fixed or casement. Openings can often vary in size, and are generally designed more to suit the internal layout of the building than the external appearance. As a result, windows and doors can sometimes appear staggered externally. Rural 17th century houses that do survive tend to have long wide straight avenues. There is no doubt that with further reserach and survey, our understanding and knowledge of 17th century houses will grow and the list of known examples will be added to over time.

Carrigashinny House was occupied by a strong prosperous farmer in the 1600s, and is located in close proximity to the 17th century town of Castlemartyr. The front façade of the building was modified with the framing of the doorway and insertion of the sash windows, to appear more like a small 18th century house. However, the irregular arrangement of windows and the large chimney stacks tell us otherwise. The house is still lived in, it is a private farm and is not open to the public. There are, however, a number of houses in Castlemartyr and Killeagh, to the south of Carrigashinny, which also have external chimney stacks and may date to the same period.

6. The Red House, Youghal – A Queen Anne style house from the early 18th century

The Red house in Youghal is a unique example of a brick-built early 18th century house in Cork. It was constructed between 1706–1715 by a Dutch architect and builder named Claud Leuvethen, using large quantities of imported Dutch bricks. The house is a detached, seven-bay two-storey over basement town house, with large rectangular brick chimney stacks set in the ridge of the roof. This rigid symmetry is emphasised on the front façade by a central, three-bay breakfront with triangular pediment. The corners of the breakfront, along with the ends of the house, are framed by limestone quoins. There is also a limestone string course dividing the first and ground floor. A limestone eaves course, with little projections called dentils (because they look a little like teeth), marks the base of the roof below overhanging eaves. The windows are square headed with timber sliding sash windows. The sash-boxes are exposed and flush framed, and the sashes are made up of multiple small panes – both indications of very early sash windows. A circular window called an oculus with star shaped glazing pattern decorates the centre of the gable-pediment on the breakfront. The breakfront is flanked by round headed dormer windows topped with terracotta finials. The rounded tops of the dormer windows are reflected in the stone pediment over the central doorway on the ground floor. The doorcase of cut limestone is exquisitely carved with fluted ornate consoles holding up the frieze and moulding. The numerous terracotta chimney pots on top of the large chimney indicate the large number of fireplaces within.

The Red house is set back from the Main Street in Youghal town, with the three stone steps up to the entrance gate mirrored by a flight of stone steps approaching the door. The garden in front of the house is given a formal, symmetrical, layout by a pair of sweeping paths which are typical of the kinds of landscape design employed in architecture of this date. There are Memel pinewood panels to the interior of the house, which are thought to be original.

The reign of Queen Anne, from 1702 to 1714, marks a period in the early 1700s which had its own distinctive architectural forms. Queen Anne style houses have symmetrical façades, often with a central breakfront capped by a pediment. These houses make use of brick, either as the main wall material or for details such as quoins or eaves courses. They have deep overhanging eaves and dormer windows to the slated roof. Early 1700s houses had 'flush framed' sash windows and pediments over the square headed doors. Many examples nationally are approached by a sweeping carriageway. Surviving houses from this date are very rare in Ireland. However, Cork is fortunate to have four good examples, including Palace Ann near Bandon, The Red house in Youghal, the Cork Civic Trust building on Popes Quay in Cork City and Queen Anne House on Emmet Place in Cork City.

The Red House was built using Dutch brick, probably because it was a high quality material that was imported as ship ballast in the nearby port of Youghal. The warm red brick of the walls would have been a modern and highly visible addition to the

streetscape, and the impression it made carried through to today in that this building is still known as the Red House. This building, built for the Uniacke Family who also had a classically designed Country House in nearby Mount Uniacke, unfortunately now in ruins, would have been a townhouse of occasionally occupied when the family wanted to enjoy more cultural pursuits which were carried on in a town.

Youghal was already a bustling settlement at this period in time, being the very town that the first potatoes in Ireland arrived, courtesy of Sir Walter Raleigh[8]. At this time, there had even been petitions to create a 'County Youghal' from lands in East Cork and West Waterford, with the thriving port and college base of Youghal as the principal city. The town of Youghal "was incorporated by King Edward IV, in the second year of his reign, by the interest of Thomas, the great Earl of Desmond, who, the following year, 1463, was made Lord Deputy of Ireland"[9].

The red house is a distinctive local landmark. While it is privately occupied and not open to the public, it is, however, visible from the main street.

7. Doneraile Court, Doneraile, An 18th Country House

Doneraile Court is one of Cork's finest example's of a classically proportioned 18th century Country House, set in a well preserved demesne landscape immediately east of Doneraile Town. The house stands on high ground overlooking a natural rolling landscape, ornamented with stands of mature trees with the Awbeg river flowing though. It was built around 1725, to the design of Isaac Rothery, for the St. Leger Family, although some academics suggest that it incorporates parts of an earlier mansion house built c.1645. Doneraile Court is a detached three-storey house built over a basement, with coursed squared rubble stone walls, limestone quoins and string courses, and a hipped slate roof. The original rainwater goods survive, and there is a lead fire-plaque dated '1725' above one of the upper windows. The north-eastern entrance front, which overlooks the parkland, is seven bays wide, with a central three-bay breakfront and with beautiful curved bow windows on the side elevations. The window openings retain their timber sash windows; the upper windows have moulded stone surrounds with decorative keystones, and all have moulded stone cills. The windows diminish in size towards the upper floors giving the appearance of greater height to the building. The porch, added in the 19th century, is located to the centre of the breakfront and is the main focus of decoration on the house. It is built of smooth limestone ashlar, with a balustraded pediment on top and square-profile piers to each corner. The porch has an open pediment with oval heraldic motif set in a foliate decorative surround. The cornice below is moulded with a beaded course, and it is supported on composite (Ionic and Corinthian) engaged columns. The original round-headed 18th century entrance, with a double-leaf timber panelled door and decorative fanlight, was incorporated into this porch.

The interior of the building is beautifully set out and the stairs in the main hall are the

focal point of the house. These stairs are floating, elliptical in shape with winding treads, curved newel post and turned timber banisters. There are carved timber panels to the sides and decorative render roses to the under stair. The hall has an ornate Adam-style ceiling with central ceiling rose and decorative fluted surround, and the hallways leading off are groin-vaulted with decorative marigold style ceiling rose and mistletoe wreath detailing supported on compound Ionic and Corinthian-style corbels and pilasters with bell chain motif. Many of the main reception rooms have deep plaster detailing in the form of cornice mouldings and ceiling roses, and the building retains a wide range of beautifully made timber panelled doors. The basement is a maze of groin-vaulted corridors. The stone mullion and jamb stones in one basement window in the southwest bow of the southeast elevation may have come from a nearby castle, the stone tool marks on them appear to be medieval.

As the 18th century progressed, Neo-classical architecture became popular. For those who could afford it, this Neo-classical style was the primary choice for a large Town House or Country House. Many of the Country Houses, large rural mansions set in private grounds called demesnes, are built in this style. These houses typically have symmetrical façades, standing generally two or three storeys high and usually more than three bays wide. They have rectangular window openings set in straight, regularly spaced bay arrangements with timber sliding sash windows. Many of the larger Neo-classical houses have stone window surrounds and pediments, however in general, the Neo-classical architecture of the 18th century was fairly restrained. Houses in this style generally have the round headed door openings with fanlights so iconic of our concept of 'Georgian style' architecture.

Doneraile Court stands at the centre of a large well preserved demesne. It has all the typical features of this type of landscape including demesne wall, haha, garden features such as ornamental bridges[10], a farmyard complex and a large deer park. Entry to the demesne around this Country House is controlled by beautiful entrance gates and lodge, both built in the Neo-classical style. Doneraile Court stands just 400m from the site of a Tower House, the fabric of which was taken to build part of the Country House. This juxtaposition of mansion and ancient castle site is quite common for the larger demesne estates, because one family typically lived on the estate over a long time, rebuilding when fashions dictated a change in house style. The architect who designed Doneraile, Isaac Rothery, is also credited with the design of Bowen's Court and Newmarket Court in County Cork. He was an important Country House architect in North Cork throughout the early 1700s. For Doneraile Court, the St. Legers chose a restrained Palladian style, with simple classical proportions broken up into the classic three-part façade with its entrance breakfront. The house did not remain static however, it was burnt down in 1805 and during reconstruction the south eastern side elevation was extended with a bow at one end creating a three-bay bow ended garden elevation.

The house was famously the scene of the initiation of one of the few female members of the Stone Masons. At a Masonic Lodge meeting in the house (c.1710/12) Elizabeth St. Leger, Daughter of the 1st Viscount Doneraile, witnessed some of the secret ceremonies in the neighbouring room. She was discovered by the members of the lodge, and, to

ensure the continued secrecy of the proceedings, was initiated into the order. Doneraile Park is associated with the famous poet Edmund Spenser who refers to the River Awbeg which flows through the park as the ‘gentle mulla’ - the St. Legers bought the lands from the Spenser family. The wide river pond in the valley in front of the house is man made, created as part of the landscaping of the park in the 1700s[11]. Before this natural looking valley was made, the gardens would have been much more formal and geometrical in layout. There are the remains of a long pond, called a duck decoy (because a net could be stretched over it to catch ducks), in the park. It is alleged that the “lands around Doneraile are home to a phantom pack of hounds, sometimes heard but not seen and at other times observed running in silence”[12].

Doneraile Court and park was restored by the Irish Georgian Society and was open to the public for some time in the 1980s. The house was subsequently taken over by the OPW who have carefully restored the building and caretaker the park. The park with its numerous walks and children’s playgrounds is a wonderful amenity that has become very popular with visitors from near and far. The house also has been given a new lease of life with the opening of a cafe by the local community group.

8. The 18th/19th Century Bantry House

Bantry House, is one of Cork’s most impressive Country Houses. Built in the Neo-classical style, it is however much more heavily adorned and was built over a number of successive phases. It is built at the edge of Bantry town and takes full advantage of the picturesque setting on elevated ground overlooking Bantry Bay.

Bantry House is a detached five-bay, two-storey house built in the early decades of the 1700s. In the early 1800s, the house was enlarged. Two long, bow ended, blocks were added on the East and West sides, creating a new view front on the West side with spacious rooms and spectacular views of Bantry Bay. The house was further dramatically enlarged in 1845 with an impressive garden front to the West side of the house, divided into three blocks, as seen in the photo below. The additions indicate that the owners had a strong commitment to keeping up with the fashion of the time while at the same time retaining the architectural heritage of the house. The result is what we see today - an interesting and elegant Country House.

The roof is hipped slate with multiple chimney stacks. There is a rendered parapet with a distinctive stone balustrade adding further decorative embellishment to the roofline. The walls are a mixture of rubble stone, roughcast render with some lined-and-ruled rendered sections. The use of string courses and red-brick Corinthian style pilasters add further interesting and colourful embellishments to the façade. The windows are a mixture of square and camber headed openings with most having limestone cills with red-brick surrounds. Many retain the multi-pane timber sliding sash windows which would have been so important a part of the 18th century aesthetic. The central main door is approached by a flight of cast-iron and timber steps. The doorcase is made of

timber, with simple square profile pilasters holding up the entablature. The tops of the timber doors have slightly curved heads making an interesting feature of the door. The large porticos on the east and west elevations are quite attractive with Corinthian columns supporting a plain frieze with moulded architrave over.

This house has characteristics of the Palladian style of classical architecture, having a wide façade and a number of additions. The oldest part of Bantry house was built by the Hutchinson Family in the early 1700s. Bantry House was the home of the White/Hedges White family since about 1765 when Captain Richard White, son of Simon White of Knocksentry, near Limerick, purchased what was then Blackrock House[13]. The White family invested heavily in extending the property, but it nevertheless retains a sense of unity in its façade, looking at it from a distance you might not necessarily know how many different phases of construction are incorporated into it.

The house played an important military role in this part of Cork. In December 1796 it was used as the headquarters for a general and his staff when troops were rushed here to intercept a French fleet under Admiral Hoche. In WW2 it was a base for the troops of the Bantry Garrison.

The house stands within a complex demesne estate, with a fascinating Gate Lodge in the style similar to a triumphal arch straddling the road, yet with a practical function. Its main purpose was to make the entrance to the estate seem quite impressive, and it certainly succeeds. Bantry House is set in beautifully laid-out parkland with formal Italianate gardens. In the latter, statuary fountains and stone carved balustrades reflect the architectural detailing on the house itself. There are some well executed garden buildings including a cast-iron gazebo and an ashlar limestone archway. Behind the house there is a very impressive terraced garden, cut into the steep hillside to rear. Access to the top is by a series of stone steps and if one manages to get to the top, it provides a bird's eye view of the house and gardens and a panoramic view of Bantry Bay. There are also a fine range of farm buildings to the rear including stables which are also built in a Neo-classical style. These date to the mid 19th century when Richard White, Second Earl of Bantry, carried out several embellishments to Bantry estate. The house was extended laterally as part of White's designs, and the stable block was built to appear like further lateral extensions. This created a Palladian style front elevation to the overall complex. The entrance block to the stables has wide elliptical arches with rectangular windows over. Each bay is divided by stone pilasters. Entry is via a gable fronted breakfront with clock and domed cupola over and there are several render details as well as venetian style windows to the complex.

Bantry House has been open to the public since 1946, and hosts a music festival in the summer. The interior retains fabric of significant interest including Pompeii tiling, Venetian glass and Italian plasterwork.

9. The Multi-phased Ballymaloe House, Cloyne

Ballymaloe House is a great example of a house that changed over time as fashions and family circumstances dictated, showing developments from the Medieval period right up to the 18th/19th century. The main front block of the house as seen today was built in the early 1800s as an extension to an L-plan house to rear built around 1730. The house is attached to a Tower House built c.1450 which is on the side of the building today, and there are also modern single-storey additions to the rear.

The main house is a detached, south facing, six-bay two-storey rectangular-plan building, built in front of a long 7 bay three storeys house to the rear. The roof is hipped and slated, with rendered chimney stacks having their original terracotta chimney pots and cast-iron rainwater goods. The walls are covered in render beneath a thick growth of creeper. The main door is set slightly west of centre in the south elevation and has a wide round-headed marigold petal fanlight set over the door with side lights in the typical Neo-classical style of the 1700s. The fanlight and relatively simple entablature is supported on Doric pilasters made of timber. It makes a very attractive and eye-catching centrepiece to the house. Most window openings in the house are square headed with stone cills and multi-pane sash windows diminishing towards the upper floors.

The early 1700s house stands to the eastern end of this block. It is an L-shaped block, with a gable at one end and a hipped roof where it joins with the main house. It has a brick eaves course on the gabled section. There is documentary evidence for production of bricks on this estate in the 1660s, and these may be associated with this structure, suggesting it has an earlier date than at first appears[14].

The Tower House stands on the west side of the house. Today it is three storeys in height but it is believed that it may have been taller. In keeping with the Neo-gothic fashion of the time, imitation crenulations were added to the top of the building in the early 19th century to make it look more authentically gothic! The Tower retains a number of typical Tower House features such as the thin arrow loop windows, some gun loops, stone spiral stairs, pointed vault and a garderobe chute; the exit shoot of which is still visible on the outside of the north elevation. A second larger tower was demolished in the 19th century to make way for additions to the rear. The Tower House was once surrounded by a bawn walls with corner towers - a low square tower on the east side of the house is still extant today. An archway to the south of this tower has the date of '1709' cut on its keystone.

Ballymaloe House has a fascinating sequence of changes in development and is an excellent example of a house which has been modified over many hundreds of years to meet the changing needs of the family who called it home. The original Tower House was constructed in the mid 15th century by the Fitzgeralds of Imokilly. A stone plaque inscribed with the date 1602, now set in the north wall to the rear of house, commemorates the enlargement of the castle by John FitzEdmund Fitzgerald and bears

his initials and coat of arms. The Fitzgerald family lost the house in the 1641 rebellion and in 1642 it was occupied by Roger Boyle otherwise known as Lord Broghill, who was a loyal soldier to the English Crown. It was then acquired by Hugh Lumley sometime before 1734[15]. Lumley added some buildings to the original structure – possibly on the north side of the Tower House. Around this date the demesne associated with the building, the feature which makes it a 'Country House' rather than simply a mansion or farm, was being developed in the fashionable naturalised landscape style which it still retains. The house was passed to the Allen family in 1948. Ballmaloe House today is one of Ireland's best known restaurants and remains the home and focal point of the culinary famous Allen family. It is open to the public as a restaurant and guest house.

10. A Small 18th Century Country House – Creggane House, Churchtown

Neo-classical architecture, in a more restrained style, can be seen in numerous smaller houses around the County. This house near Churchtown in North Cork is a typical example. Creggane House was built in the late 18th century.

The front elevation is three bays wide and stands two storeys tall over basement. The roof is U-shaped, hipped at the front, with an interesting double gable to the rear. It has deep overhanging eaves. The paired chimney stacks are of limestone ashlar and are set centrally in the ridge, bracketing the central bay of the façade and highlighting the importance of symmetry and balance in the house's overall design. There are additional chimney stacks on the gable ends of the rear, and many of the original terracotta chimney pots survive.

The walls are likely to be rubble stone which have been rendered. The window openings are square headed, classically proportioned, and slightly diminishing in size towards the upper floor, and retain their original timber sash windows. One window to the basement at the south is a small 'Wyatt' window. There is a round headed window set in a square headed opening to the rear, lighting the stairs internally. The centrepiece of this house is the beautiful doorway. It is set to the centre of the façade, slightly elevated because of the basement, and approached by a flight of diminishing limestone steps. The door opening is segmental, with limestone ashlar voussoirs over. The timber panelled door is framed by sidelights with a simple fanlight over head.

There is a fine range of farm outbuildings to the rear of the house, set around a courtyard. Creggane House albeit a small Country House and set within a small demesne, was clearly the house of a Strong Farmer with a well functioning farm. The wide elliptical arches in these farm buildings, coupled with an elongated oculus widow in the north range, are in keeping with the Neo-classical style of the house. Other demesne features at Creggane include the avenue, parkland and simple Gate Lodge at the entrance to the estate. This small Gate Lodge is typical of the style which can be

seen at the entrance to a vast number of estates all over the County. It is three bays wide and single storey. The walls are coursed limestone and sandstone rubble, and there are no profuse decorative embellishments or architectural details to draw attention to the building. Emphasis is instead placed on the entrance gates, which are set in walls of snecked (stepped and staggered) limestone ashlar.

Small Country Houses are a very important feature of rural Cork. There are over 1000 Country Houses in the County and the vast majority of these were built by or lived in by minor gentry, clergy, and prosperous farmers and such houses can be seen in large numbers in the fertile farmlands of North and East Cork. These smaller Country Houses are commonly square plan, built in the Neo-classical style. They stand 3-5 bays wide and at least two storeys high. These buildings are all set within small demesnes which are marked on the early 19th century OS maps – this is after all what makes them a Country House rather than a Farm House.

The house is currently in the ownership of the Lynch family. It was occupied by 'representatives of Sarah Barry' in the mid-19th century when it was assessed for the Griffith Valuation at a value of £35. At that time it was held from Sir Edward Tierney, meaning that the owners of Creggane, although occupying what is essentially a small Country House, were tenants rather than landowners in their own right. This arrangement was very common in Cork, where some landowners owned estates of many thousands of acres. They could not manage the entire property themselves and so divided it up into lands leased to minor gentry or hired agents.

The house has been associated with several families in its long history, including the Croft, Hennessy and Hitchin families. One occupant, by the name of Massey, reportedly died from eating poisonous mushrooms. Creggane House is in private ownership and is not open to the public.

11. The 19th Century Mallow Castle House.

Mallow Castle House is located in a mature demense landscape to the north of Mallow Castle Fortified House, at the eastern side of Mallow Town. It is a beautiful example of a Neo-tudor Country House. During the late 18th /19th century the Neo-gothic style became fashionable and many Medieval architectural styles were revived including the Tudor/Elizabethean, Jacobean, and Scottish Baronial as part of the whole Neo-gothic movement.

Mallow Castle House is a long U-shaped two-storey structure, with pitched slated roof and constructed of coursed limestone and sandstone rubble walls with limestone quoins. The south elevation is divided by the presence of a square-plan, four-storey tower, with a decorative pediment built to resemble medieval battlements. The whole of the south-east elevation was reputedly rebuilt in 1955 with limestone set aside in 1836, it was

built to mimic the established Neo - tudor architecture of the Fortified House. The Neo-tudor style is achieved through the use of multiple projecting gable fronted sections, as evident on both south and north elevations of Mallow Castle House. Other identifiable characteristics of this style of architecture include the square headed stone windows, divided by a mullion and tramson and hood mouldings over the windows, although these are not actually functional as window frames – small paned sash windows have been set behind them. The multiple tall slender limestone chimneys are reminiscent of those found in 16th and 17th century English architecture. It is the combined and reoccurring use of projecting gables, towers and chimneys as described above that creates a strong Neo–tudor style.

The fortifications and houses at this site have a long and complex history. Around 40m to the southeast of the Fortified House there are the remains of an even earlier castle, which was probably a Tower House. This fortification, on the banks of the Blackwater overlooking Mallow Bridge, was the Castle of the Earls of Desmond. The site was again fortified and expanded in the late 16th century after the Desmond Rebellion. After the confiscations Mallow passed to Sir John Norreys, who had been appointed Lord President of Munster. Sir John died in 1587 and the property with the office passed to his brother, Sir Thomas Norreys, who built the Fortified House. Mallow at the time, in the early half of the 17th century, "consisted of 200 English houses, 30 of which were strongly built and slated"[16].

Sir. Norreys's daughter Elizabeth was married to Sir John Jephson. The well known 19th century historian Windele recorded a curious story in relation to Mallow Castle and Sir John Jephson. Apparently Jephson, through love of pleasure, was having serious money problems. One night a stranger appeared to him and promised him a bag of gold to pay off his debts if he would take a white rat and have it sit next to him at meal times. Jephson agreed, and kept the rat for many years despite being ridiculed by his peers. Eventually getting tired of the mockery he gave the rat away. The stranger reappeared instantly and stole Sir John Jephson away. The white rat then appeared before the demise of the head of the Jephson family. The Castle and house are thought to be haunted by the ghosts of John Jephson and Miss Norreys. In 1689 the Fortified House was burned down, and the Jephson-Norreys family retreated to a stable block. It is this building which is thought to have formed the kernel of the Country House. It was Sir Denham Norreys Jephson, with the assistance of Edward Blore, who is thought to have altered and enlarged the stable blocks to form the present house. Plans dating to 1822, drawn by Patrick Lee, show the layout of new buildings which were proposed at that stage. These plans clearly show the house incorporating some of the older structures. The south eastern block, which was not built until the 1950s, was planned as early as this.

Mallow Castle House's long façade, punctuated by the gabled breakfronts and overlooked by the central tower, makes a strong impression on the complex. The house is now in the ownership of Cork County Council and undergoing a careful process of restoration and development. The parklands still support a herd of beautiful white deer,

said to be descendants of two white deer which were given to Elizabeth Norreys by her god-mother Elizabeth I, Queen of England. The Fortified house is cared for by the OPW and open to the public. There is also a beautiful amenity walk along the banks of the Blackwater River which provide enjoyable views of the Castle complex.

12. The 19th Century Blarney Castle House

Blarney Castle Country House stands to the south of Blarney Castle, set in a well preserved demesne landscape immediately to south of Blarney town. The 19th century witnessed the romantic return to medieval architecture and Blarney Castle House is an unadulterated and a magnificent example of this style of architecture.

Blarney Castle Country House was built in 1872 replacing an earlier house at the base of Blarney Castle, to the designs of John Lanyon for the newly married owners of the Blarney estate, Louisa and George Colthurst. Lanyon constructed this building in the romantic Scottish Baronial style, a type of Neo-gothic architecture which draws its influences primarily from the later Medieval Castles built in Scotland. This style made every effort to avoid the strict symmetry of the earlier classically styled architecture.

The house is a multi- bay three storey edifice built over a basement. The main house is rectangular in plan, with a round tall corner tower and several projecting canted bays. There is a short single storey wing to the right which terminates in a corner turret. The architect’s treatment of the walls adds to the overall gothic feel. They are built of local limestone ashlar giving the appearance of undressed stone which is snecked, that is randomly set and not in strict courses giving a unified and weighty texture to the building. In striking contrast the architect used smoothly dressed light coloured sandstone from Scotland in all the detailed work such as the surrounds around openings, eaves cornice, quoins and string course.

One of the most striking features of the building is the numerous stepped gables - a very Scottish feature. The façade is enlivened further with a tall corner tower, turrets, bartizans, crenulated parapets, all typical features of the Scottish Baronial style. To add extra gothic feeling there are stone gargoyles and an armorial plaque. The overall design and decorative features create the desired affect of an impression of asymmetry, the desired affect which was important in the Neo-gothic design. The door is slightly out of place as it is set within an ornate stone porch with classical columns, believed to have been salvaged from the Colthurst family home at Ardrum. The windows are square headed, most with decorative chamfered stone surrounds and timber sliding sash windows. Window openings to the round-plan corner towers are much smaller, making them look a little like arrow loops as are the windows at basement level, adding to the Gothic experience. Like Mallow Castle Country House, the roof is studded with large stone chimney stacks designed to look medieval.

This house externally is a full blown unadulterated Neo-gothic expression save the

nostalgic reuse of a classical porch, however, the interior is another story. The interior design shows notable classical Greek and Roman influences and typifies the idea of the Battle of the Styles. There are Greek-style fluted door surrounds, lightly executed plaster work cornices and a massive barrel-vaulted entrance hall lit by elliptical arched openings around the first floor landing. The house sits in the centre of extensive mature demesne or parklands, within which stand the intriguing and now famous Blarney Castle complex. The world famous Blarney Castle is a Tower House, in fact two conjoined, and was the family home of a branch of the powerful McCarthy family in Medieval times. Other outbuildings including a fine range of stable buildings, Gate Lodges (the main entrance lodge is of similar gothic design), an ice house and the remains of a large double lime kiln. The castle, demesne and wider estate was purchased by Sir James Jefferyes, Governor of Cork, in 1703 after it was confiscated from the McCarthys. This confiscation occurred in 1602 when Cormac Mac Dermot Carty was accused of a "treasonable correspondence with the Irish rebels, and obliged to deliver up this castle to captain Taafe, for the Queen's use"[17]. Historically Blarney Castle was considered very strong, and in "Queen Elizabeth's time, it was reckoned one of the strongest fortresses in Munster"[18].

The Jefferyes' lived at first in the castle itself, and then later in a Georgian mansion attached to the base of the Medieval Tower House. In 1820 this mansion house burnt down, and the family moved to Inishera House in East Cork. In 1846, Louisa Jane Jefferyes married Sir George Conway Colthurst, and the Blarney lands passed to the Colthurst family. Louisa and George Colthurst decided to move back to Blarney, but the Castle was a major tourist attraction by this time, and so they decided to build their new house a little distance away. Today, it is the home of their descendant, Sir Charles Colthurst. The house is open to the public during the summer months while the estate and castle are open year-round. According to the website www.cork-guide.ie, Blarney Castle now receives over 200,000 tourists per year, the vast majority of whom are seeking the "gift of the gab", obtained, it is held, by kissing the "Blarney Stone" (a machicolated battlement).

13. A Neo-gothic Gate Lodge at Castlefreke, Rathbarry

The Neo-gothic style was often employed on structures other than the Country House, notably on demesne buildings like a gate lodge. The Gate Lodge at Castlefreke is a good example of this use of a grand style on a relatively humble building. It is located on the avenue at the edge of the demesne of Castlefreke House, close to the pretty village of Rathbarry, and today is still much admired as a handsome building.

The lodge is an ornate, pretty and well maintained two-storey building, standing guard on the east entrance to Castlefreke House and demesne; another similar lodge occurs on the west side of the demesne. It was constructed c.1820 as part of an overall transformation of the house and its estate in the romantic Gothic style so fashionable at the time. The lodge is largely built of rubble stone but ashlar is used on door and

window surrounds and on the tall ornamental chimney stacks. This combination of rubble and cut stone adds to the overall texture and design of the building. One of its strongest features is the steeply pitched gabled roof with decorative timber barge boards and ornate dormer windows – all iconic features of the Neo-gothic Victorian architectural style. The façade is broken by oriel and canted-bay windows, a lean-to veranda and a box-bay projection. These break-up the façades and create complex and interesting profiles, again so typical of the Neo-gothic style. The use of label or hood mouldings and some pointed windows again are essential ingredients to the overall design and add to the Neo-gothic look. The door opening, set inside a lean-to porch, is pointed-arched and has timber-panelled doors.

It is interesting to note that the original Medieval Castle at Rathbarry was incorporated into the estate farm yard complex during the same time in which the big house was transformed to look like a castle! The castle is a late-medieval Tower House built by the Barrys. Like many Gaelic Lords, the Barrys lost control of their estates after the failure of the Desmond Rebellion in the late 16th century and by 1617 their lands were occupied by the Frekes. In 1642 local clans besieged the castle, in what is believed to be the longest siege in Irish history. The site was largely destroyed in 1648 when it was seized by Cromwellian forces and returned to the control of the Freke family. This family were part of the new ruling landowning elite that emerged by the end of 17th century and who, by the early 18th century were building comfortable grand houses within their demesne. The Frekes became Barons of Carbery in 1715, and by 1780 Sir John Evans-Freke had built a new house at Rathbarry in the fashionable Neo-classical style. This is located on elevated ground overlooking the sea to the west and some distance away from the medieval castle. In 1820 Sir Richard Morrison, a well-known architect, was given the task to transform the 18th century house into a Neo-gothic pile as was the fashion at the time. He achieved this by adoring the house with castellated turrets and towers, false machicolations and even a medieval-style courtyard with a false portcullis. As part of this transformation a number of buildings on the estate were also built in this style, including the Gate Lodges, the head gardeners house and a number of buildings in nearby Rathbarry village.

Gate Lodges are an intrinsic and important part of the architectural vocabulary of demesne landscapes. They are generally small in scale but the design can vary from modest to ornate. They mark the entrance to the demesne and set the tone of what is to be expected within.

The lodges at Castlfreke clearly announce the presence of the Country House beyond, before the visitor sees anything of it, and hint at the grandeur which can be encountered therein. Lodges were also practical, as they provided accommodation for the porter who opened and closed the gates thus controlling access to the demesne. This Neo-gothic lodge and indeed the nearby village of Rathbarry, inform us that the Freke family were capable of building such structures and in keeping with the fashion of the time. The Gate Lodge is now a private house.

14. A Georgian Square - Number 7 Emmet Square, Clonakilty

A very specific style of house was built in towns during the 1700s to house not only the gentry when they came to town but also the newly emerging middle classes. This was the Georgian Town House, which is so often associated with this period.

Number 7 Emmet Square is a good example of this type of house. The end-of-terrace structure was built c.1795. The walls are smooth rendered, with weather slating to the first and second floors as a means of protecting against the harsh sea air. The building also has sash windows, which diminish in size at the top floor level. Unusually, the door is set in the gable wall rather than facing out into the square. It is round headed, with a simple fanlight set over a timber panelled door. The doorcase itself is reasonably simple, with a pointed pediment architrave supported on a simple entablature over Doric-style rendered pilasters. The door is approached by two diminishing limestone steps. It is the only opening on this side of the house.

The 18th century saw a revolution in the way towns were planned. The winding narrow streets typical of Medieval and late-Medieval towns were being replaced by a more rationally planned urban form. Formal town planning had finally arrived in Ireland. Dublin and Limerick are famous for the size and scale of their 18th century housing terraces built on rigid grid-like patterns. Brick terraces, standing 3-4 storeys tall and with each house 2-3 bays wide, have come to typify our idea of Georgian style architecture. Typically these have regularly spaced rectangular multi-pane sash windows. The main embellishment is confined to the doorcase with classical pillars and its round-headed door fanlight. Georgian terraces built around an open square are generally more common in the large urban centres and cities and conversely, not at all as common and indeed quite rare, in smaller towns.

In many cases the open area as part of the square was maintained as a walled garden, and only those who occupied the houses had keys to the gate and paid a small maintenance fee for a gardener. The gardens were an exclusive, secluded, private space which allowed occupants of the houses some semblance of private parkland living in an urban environment. Today, most of these Georgian garden squares have become public parks, like here at Emmet Square. This square is one of County Cork’s finest example of a Georgian square.

Emmet Square, named for Robert Emmet, the Irish Nationalist and Republican, was originally called Shannon Square after the Earls of Shannon. It was laid out between 1785 and 1810, in the centre of a square accommodating the wealthier classes of Clonakilty. Number 7 was formerly the home of Margaret O’Driscoll, Michael Collins’ sister. Michael Collins, Cork’s most famous revolutionary leader, lived here for a short period between 1903 and 1905. Today, the house is in the ownership of Cork County Council, who had restored it as a museum to Collins and other local heroes.

15. A Georgian Townhouse, Number 4 King Square, Mitchelstown

King Square in Mitchelstown was built c. 1780 as part of a redevelopment of the town led by the local landlord Lord Kingston. Number 4 has been selected as it is a good example of a Georgian town house in a market town.

Number 4, King Square, is five bays wide and stands two storeys tall. It has a gabled slated roof with cast-iron rainwater shoots and rectangular chimney stacks. The walls are smooth rendered. The sash windows, with six-over-six lights, are decorated with render surrounds. The central round-headed doorway with its simple curved over-light forms the visual focus of the elevation. The doorway has a simple elegant rendered surround with moulded entablature and keystone supported by Doric pilasters. Like many Georgian Town Houses it has a cast-iron boot scrape beside the door, for scraping the mud off ones boots before entering the house. On either side of the door is a small garden enclosed by wrought iron railings.

The houses on King Square are fine examples of Georgian architecture as it was applied to smaller towns. These houses have some very similar characteristics to those seen on Emmet Square in Clonakilty, with square headed windows and round headed door openings facing out onto a landscaped square. However, the houses on King Square are much wider and lower than other examples of Georgian squares in Cork; their proportions are closer to the layouts seen in small Country Houses. These are urban translations of the small Country House, and were mostly occupied by wealthy middle class professionals.

King Square incorporates many Neo-classical features such as the round-headed door openings with simple fanlights and the overall sense of rhythm and symmetry. This house has been carefully restored and is now a private residence. The joinery and ironwork of the façade lend it an air of quality and grace in keeping with the square it is set in. King Square was built in the late 18th century by the Earl of Kingston to accommodate well off merchants and professionals in the town. The Kingston estate invested heavily in the remodelling of Mitchelstown around this time in an attempt to encourage industrial development and investment. Today the town is known as an example of an 18th century ‘model’ development. A secondary purpose of this building project was to highlight the social importance of the Kingstons. King Square and Kingston Square flank the entrance gates to Mitchelstown Castle where the Earl himself had his residence. Number 4 is set on the south eastern quadrant of the square, overlooking an open lawn. The smaller houses on the north side of the square, known as Kingston College, were built to house poor Protestants and retainers of the Earl - fine examples of Georgian architecture.

16. An 18th Century Town House, Number 2 St. John's Hill, Kinsale

There are several examples of middle class, 18th century Town Houses in Cork which were built as single houses or in small one-off groupings adapting to the local street plan. Number 2, St John's Hill, has been selected to represent this style of house. In many ways it is a typical middle sized Georgian Town House but rather than in a formal square, it is set in a terrace along an old narrow street.

Number 2 St John's Hill is a three-bay, three-storey terraced house. It has square headed sash windows with original glazing bars. The original sash boxes are exposed and are almost flush with the façade, suggesting an early 18th century date for the house. The central door is enhanced with a timber doorcase and all in all this structure is home to many typical features of a Georgian Town Houses. However, in other respects the house displays some features which are not necessarily Georgian, and are more particular to the County of Cork such as the weather slating of the upper floors and the central curved oriel window over the door. The gabled roof is slated, with red brick chimney stacks on the gable ends. The building is built on a steep hill, and a low terrace step creates a level platform in front of the door. The doorway is square headed, with fluted pilasters supporting a simple entablature just below the oriel. The door is timber panelled with brass door furniture including a large brass key plate.

Georgian houses which were not part of large formally planned developments, such as St. John's Hill, often have the same regularly spaced and sized windows and doorways associated with Neo-classical influences and seen in more formal terraces; however they show considerably more variety in size and composition. It is these less formally composed houses which make up the bulk of County Cork's Georgian urban architecture.

In the past, Kinsale was one of the most important ports in the south of Ireland, and it still remains an important focal point for tourism and sailing. The town was a major garrison town in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, and this, coupled with the large numbers of wealthy merchants and ship owners, has left a legacy of large and middle-sized townhouses in the town. Number 2 St. John's Hill is an excellent example of this type of building. The street, which was originally known as Brass Cock Hill and later as Cock Hill, was home to professionals including at least one physician. Number 2 was listed as unoccupied in the Griffith Valuation although it was owned by Reverend W. Newman. It is typical of reasonably well off houses built in port towns in Cork in the early 18th century.

Oriel windows, like the one seen here, are quite a common feature in the town and one occurs on the neighbouring house as well. Curved bow fronted facades are also common in the town. It is possible that the local craftsmen, having worked in boat building, were particularly adept at creating curved timbers and so these beautiful features were easily added to houses. Importantly, this house retains its original curved

glass in the oriel widow – a rare survival and difficult to replicate today.

The use of weather slating, too, is a strong feature of the Kinsale streetscape which is a pragmatic response to the local climate. Kinsale, like other towns along the south coast, was exposed to the driving force of the prevailing wind and rain directly off the sea. The slate coverings to the walls helped protect the underlying masonry and the contents within. Here at Number 2, the original weather slating has been exceptionally preserved and adds significantly to the overall authenticity of the building. The slates are hand cut with little nibbled edges and a range of variation in shades, giving an interesting and decorative texture to the front elevation. This soft tonal variation contrasts well with the red-brick of the chimney stacks, which shows shades of light and dark reds. Number 2 is now in private ownership and is not open to the public, but it can however be viewed from the street.

17. Living over the shop; A. Golden, South Square, Macroom

By the second half of the 18th century, Ireland was in the firm control of the small yet powerful ruling elite who now turned their attention to the towns and villages. They quickly saw the economic and social benefits of creating more formal space with well designed houses and streets with designated market places. This led to the replacement of many of the old narrow Medieval streets with their scattered arrangement of small houses with wide linear streets, flanked by terraces of two and three storey houses with retail outlets on the ground floor. This development continued well into the 19th century like Golden's Pub in Macroom. It has been selected to represent this building type 'Living over the Shop' that make up the core of built heritage in our many towns and villages throughout the County.

Golden's in Macroom is a good example of a house and shop constructed in the early 19th century. The building is part of a long terrace of similar houses with ground floor shops, and was later in use as a pub. It is five-bays wide and stands three-storeys high. There is an archway on the side, which was originally designed to give access to the rear yard and garden. However this was turned into a public lane in the 1900s, giving access to the houses built in the garden to the rear called Duggan's Lane. These archways are often seen in towns and villages, they provided vehicular access to the rear of the building and the corners were often protected by a spur stone, adding character to the general streetscape.

The walls of this building are rendered, but are likely to be of local rubble stone which was generally coated with a smooth limestone render. The building is enhanced, like many others in the town, with the use of strong rendered decorative features such as moulded surrounds around the windows, string course below eaves level, and cill course that divides the upper floors. The windows are typical of the time, being plate glass timber sash. The centre piece of the building is of course the traditional shop front on the ground floor. It is made of timber, with A. Golden, General store, Porter and

Spirits written on the facia board in traditional sign writing script. The influence of the Neo-classical can even be seen here in its simplest form with the use of pilasters framing the doors and windows, the entablature making a suitable facia or name board. The facia is supported at either end by console brackets with sheaf of corn motifs. The display windows are plate glass divided into three by slim wooden mullions. Being near the market place the windows were wisely protected by wrought iron cattle guard rails. There are two doors, one centrally in the shopfront accessing the commercial part of the building, and one to the side accessing domestic accommodation. Both doors have square over lights and timber panelled doors. The centre/shop door is double leaf, again a typical feature of a commercial entrance from this period.

It is likely that there was a small settlement here in Macroom in the 13th century when Macroom castle was built adjacent to the fording point of the Sullane River. No evidence of these buildings remains as they were probably swept away or possibly incorporated within the rebuilding of the town undertaken in the mid 19th century. Robert Hedges Eyre, the landlord at the time, made several improvements in the town including the rebuilding of the present Market House. He also incidentally transformed the old castle into a County House in a Neo-gothic style. Macroom, like many towns and villages all over the Country, was rebuilt in part by direct input from the local landlord but also by local shop owners and business men. This resulted in houses being built in a piece meal fashion which is reflected in the varying heights and sizes within the town, however the use of the similar style with classical proportions created a rhythm that is both elegant and unifying.

Ireland has a strong tradition of shopfronts which began to appear at this time when shop owners started to display their wares in a large window(s). The early examples were made of timber and painted, the later 19th century examples were often of plaster. The timber examples were made by the local carpenter using certain Neo-classical features that suited the design such as columns or pilasters, entablatures and cornices, often with a local twist. There was a wide variety of goods sold in shops providing for all the needs of the people in the surrounding area and particularly the growing number of townspeople. Most of the goods were locally sourced or produced.

By the time this house was built, in the 19th century, Macroom was already an important market town known primarily for its trade in corn, but also for a healthy trade in butter for export, and for cattle and pigs traded at regular fairs. The sheaf of corn details to the console brackets illustrate the importance of grain trade in Macroom, while the cattle guard rails to the windows tell of the bustling animal markets which once filled the streets of the square. The lively trade which would have been carried out on market days would have made shops like this one, selling both groceries and spirits, very busy places.

18. A Victorian Semi-detached House, Fernbank, Ringmeen, Cobh

The 19th century saw a massive growth in the numbers of people in the middle classes. This new well endowed group were eagerly looking for a fitting residence to suit their social status. The restrained Neo-classical style continued to be built, however, the bold and brash style of Victorian architecture appealed to many of them. Victorian architecture has no specific style as such, it was essentially an eclectic revival of historical features and styles from the past now expressed in a confident and vigorous manner. It is often brash but also quaint and aesthetically pleasing and very much embraced by the middle classes. These houses were often built in groups by developers at the edge of town with the now readily available mass produced materials of the time such as brick and ceramic tiles. There are many examples of Victorian middle class houses in the County towns of Cork; Cobh in particular. Fernbank has been selected to represent this type of building.

Fernbank is on one side of a semi-detached two storey building built in 1870 on the outskirts of Cobh. It is one of six very similar semi-detached 19th century houses on this section of road, all employing similar features such as gabled fronts and canted bay windows, and all are set in landscaped gardens overlooking Cork Harbour. The building displays several features which are typical of a Victorian House including dormer windows and a projecting gabled breakfront, both with beautifully characteristic decorative timber barge boards topped with pointed finials. The canted bay window on the roadside elevation is also a characteristic feature of Victorian architecture.

The intriguing use of crenulations here and on the entrance porch harks back to the battlements of the Medieval Castle, a feeling enhanced with the use of pointed arch headed window openings in places. All the windows have limestone cills and some openings retain their original plate glass sash windows. There is a low pointed-headed opening to the front porch with a timber panelled door. The house has an attached single-bay single-storey lean-to to one side and it is set in a landscaped garden surrounded by a stone wall with double leaf iron gates. It is interesting to note that the houses in this series are similar and provided with individual names. While many of these Victorian Houses made use of red brick, here at Fernbank walls are smooth rendered giving a restrained dignified look. The roof is gabled and covered with natural slate, with rendered rectangular chimney stacks.

The emergence of the middle class was the result of the growth of industrial and commercial activities and the rise of the professional classes - the white collar workers who proudly used mental skills rather than physical labour. These included many professions today which we take for granted such as doctors, dentists, engineers, architects, teachers, bankers, managers and chemists to name a few. By the mid 1800s middle class lobbyists were influencing government decisions on topics as diverse as health, prison reform and education. With this political power came an aspirational attitude which saw their houses begin to reflect the style and embellishment of upper

class homes. With the spread of rail transportation suburban living became a possibility, and the middle classes left the crowded and unhealthy city centres. They built their houses in the newly developing suburbs and in smaller towns linked by rail networks, just like Cobh. Terraces of large middle class houses, and even more impressive semi-detached examples such as Fernbank, began to be seen across Ireland. Victorian middle class houses are characterised by profusion of ornament such as the barge boards, finials and pediments seen in this example. These houses internally were comfortable, warm and well lit. Gas was now available in towns and used for lighting heating and cooking. Bathrooms were incorporated and running water was readily available.

19. A Vernacular Style Urban House - Thatch and Thyme, Kildorrery

Many of our towns and villages were rebuilt in the 18th and 19th century with more formal street lines, replacing the earlier, more random series of buildings. The Thatch and Thyme on the Main Street in Kildorrery, has been selected as it bridges the gap between these two forms of street layout.

The Thatch and Thyme, as it is now called, is a two-storey, three-bay vernacular Town House attached to a taller 19th century two-storey house on the right (west) but originally was attached to a similar height house to the east. It is gable ended with a recently restored thatched roof. Both gables have chimney stacks, however the stack on the east gable is large and projects out from the wall similar to 17th century houses, as seen at Carrigashinny House. However, this chimney may be large as it was shared with the neighbouring house that once stood on the east. The window openings on the first floor are small, while the large ground floor window to the right of the door was probably a shop display window. The door opening is square headed and today has a modern timber door with overlight.

This house represents the kinds of small two-storey vernacular houses and shops that were common in the majority of Irish towns in the 18th and 19th centuries, but are now sadly rare. These smaller houses are vernacular in nature rather than formally designed. In general, houses of this style are not overly adorned, their masonry walls are lime rendered and frequently lime washed. Like many buildings in small towns and villages across the County it was probably originally a combination of a residential house and a shop.

The Thatch and Thyme was restored by the Kildorrery Community Association in 2013 with assistance from Ballyhoura Development. It is now run as the tourist information office and a restaurant. As part of this restoration, the old corrugated iron roof was removed and the original thatch roof restored. During the course of the restoration a date of 1777 was recorded which may place the construction of the building and a more general rebuilding of Kildorrery in the late 18th century.

Kildorrery was formerly part of the Kingston estate and in the 1780s Robert the 2nd Earl of Kingston began developing his properties. He demolished whole villages and replaced them with planned towns with wide streets of two-storey houses. It is possible that some older buildings, such as the Thatch and Thyme, were retained and incorporated into the new design. The original house may have been built in the 1600s when Kildorrery was being developed and promoted as a Market Town by Maurice Fitzgibbon. The form and fabric of the building, coupled with the massive projecting chimney tentatively support this argument. Either way, the Thatch and Thyme is one of the oldest buildings in the village of Kildorrery and contributes significantly to its historic streetscape.

20. Mid Cork Vernacular Styles – Kiltoohig Thatched Cottage, Charleville

The Thatched House at Kiltoohig, just outside Charleville, is a good example of a traditional vernacular farmhouse. It has been selected to represent the large number of vernacular farm houses built across the fertile lands of North, East and Central Cork during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Kiltoohig is typical, both in terms of form and layout, of the type of farmhouse built by farmers and tenant farmers in much of the County in the 18th and 19th centuries. It is five bays wide and like most vernacular farmhouses, is single storey in height (although this house did previously have small attic rooms). It is one room deep, although today there is a modern flat-roofed extension to the rear. The roof is hipped and covered with reed thatch pinned down using scallops (willow and hazel sticks with sharply pointed ends). The vulnerable ridge has an extra protective layer that forms a decorative line. The central large chimney stack is in line with the door, indicating a lobby immediately inside and this layout is called a Lobby Entry. The windows are regular in size and spacing, giving a balanced fenestration. The central door is set in a more recent porch. The walls are thought to be made of cob, although it is difficult to tell as the walls are rendered. There are three ranges of corrugated iron roofed farm buildings, forming a rectangular yard, at the rear.

Vernacular buildings by their nature have regional variation. They are built according to local tradition, using local materials and adapted to the local environment. The vernacular houses of the 18th and 19th century built by farmers in the fertile areas of the County, tend to be similar in design and layout. Both hipped and gable roofs were used, though the curved hipped is the more common. The windows in the early buildings tend to be small and fixed, but by the 19th century, sash windows were used. These houses are one room deep with any additions added to either end. The parlour is often an addition of the 19th century. Farmhouses of both the Lobby Entry, as seen at Kiltoohig, and the Direct Entry (door goes directly into the kitchen), were built in Cork. The majority were built of rubble stone masonry but it is not unusual for cob (mixture of mud and straw) to be used, particularly in this area of North Cork.

Their simplicity, their contribution to local identity and distinctiveness, and their connection with the past makes them an important and valued part of our built heritage. The present owners continue to farm today and are fully aware of the heritage value of their house, noting that numerous tourists take photos during the tourist season! Kiltoohig is, as mentioned, a great example of a vernacular Lobby Entry Thatched House, and the present owners thankfully brought the house back from the brink of ruin many decades ago.

21. West Cork Vernacular Styles – A house near Ardfield, Farran

This small house near Ardfield in West Cork is typical of the type of vernacular houses built in West Cork during the 18th and 19th centuries. It was selected to represent the small cottage that occurred throughout the West Cork area prior to the improvements and replacement of houses that occurred in the area in the late 19th/early 20th century.

This structure is a small free-standing three-bay single-storey house with a small loft. There are door openings in the centre on both sides, both of which contain modern timber doors. The house is gable ended with a modern slate roof, but is likely to have been originally thatched. There are chimneys on the gable ends. The walls are built of coursed rubble stone. There is a modern porch to the front of the house, however the rear and gable ends of the building give a good indication of its original character. The window openings are small and have square-headed openings with stone cills. A projecting stone in the gable facing the road may indicate an interesting feature in the past, which certainly adds to this house's curiosity. The walls are coursed rubble with clay mortar, and there are no foundations. Internally the walls are thicker towards the base which may have been to add structural support. The interior had a beaten earth floor and the ground floor was divided into two rooms with a small open loft above.

The 18th and 19th century Vernacular Houses in West Cork tend to be small and there is a particular absence in West Cork of the longer vernacular farmhouse seen in the rest of Cork, such as Kiltoohig. They are usually single-storey in height and often with a loft, generally not more than three-bays wide. The gabled roof seems to be standard probably as this type of construction is better able to withstand the prevailing westerly winds. The door gives access directly into the kitchen which was often the only room on the ground floor in dwellings such as these. The walls are typically rubble stone often with only clay mortar and would usually be lime rendered to protect them from the weather. While no Thatched House survives in West Cork today, there is certainly evidence that thatch was common in the past; a cluster of buildings at nearby Red Strand were known as 'Straw Town'[19] and an old photograph in the Ardfield Rathbarry Journal shows a cluster of four Thatched Houses at Long Strand [20]. Another photograph in the same journal shows similar houses at Sandycove but with these having slate roofs, probably sourced at a local quarry.

This house is road-side and was lived in by Phil Keohane who ran a local shop in a corrugated iron structure at the front of the house and a busy forge in a building at the back. It once served as an important social and economic centre providing the locals with essential supplies and where farmers met to shoe their horse and catch up with the local news. There is now a growing awareness by all, from architectural historians to local community groups, that vernacular buildings such as this are an important element of our physical and cultural heritage. More study of these buildings will lead to a greater awareness and appreciation of their importance to our understanding of the past. Given their size few are now permanent residences, however some, like this example, have been carefully restored and are now used as homes. It is important to remember these distinctive local styles of vernacular heritage and the important part they play in the story of West Cork.

22. Corrugated-iron Roofed Vernacular House, Ladysbridge

The small vernacular detached house in Knocknaglass townland, on the main street in Ladysbridge, is an excellent example of the smaller houses which were once common on the edges of Irish towns.

The building is a three-bay single-storey house. It is likely to date to the late 18th / early 19th century. The gable-ended roof is likely to have been originally thatched but today it is covered by a corrugated iron roof. Corrugated iron was a useful roofing material that has saved many a building from falling into ruin. Here at Ladysbridge, it was probably put up at the end of the 19th century when corrugated iron became readily available and commonly used as a building material to replace or cover thatch. The walls are made of rubble stone and in vernacular buildings like this they are often uneven in thickness, and furthermore, the floor plan is not always an exact square. The rubble walls are protected by several layers of whitewash which follow the contours of the underlying stonework, these giving an interesting texture to the walls.

The two windows are square-headed but are different in size and not symmetrically set – this is not likely to have bothered the owner and indeed adds to the overall charm of the building. In fact, the openings are interesting and tell their own story. It may have been the case that when building the house the openings were made for the window frames rather than vice versa. However, more likely they were altered to accommodate the vertical sash windows on the left. The window opening on the right has a fixed multipane timber window, and given the size and shape of the opening it may have originally contained a casement type window. There is a single, very small, fixed pane window to the rear. The low central doorway has a simple timber battened door. There is no evidence externally of a chimney, however, one may have been removed when the gable end was heavily modified.
Corrugated-iron was first used as a roofing material in 1820. By the late 19th century it had become part of the vernacular tradition. This new material was used in both new builds and in repairing old ones. It was frequently used to cover thatch, making a

permanent roof yet retaining the insulating qualities of a thatch. Corrugated iron roofed houses are often found at the outskirts of towns, occupied by members of the working classes who often had small plots to the rear where they grew vegetables. For many generations these simple small one/two roomed houses were the main dwellings in the rural area, built continuously from the 17th century onwards. This type of house is part of the vernacular heritage, with a simple façade, standing one storey high and just one room deep.

Although no longer occupied, this little house is much admired and provides an interesting connection with the past. It forms an important part of the modern streetscape of Ladysbridge. Its diminutive size and vernacular style lend it a strong character. The social history associated with houses like this is another fascinating story - if only the walls could talk! But they do - the building itself with its layers of white wash, windows of different size, the simple door, and rusty red roof, all have a story to tell and add to the charm and character of its locality. Dating houses like this is often difficult and we often have to rely on cartographic evidence. This house is shown on the 1842 Ordnance Survey and so is at least early 19th century in date.

23. A Vernacular House at the Edge of a Town, Liscarroll

A characteristic feature of the edges of smaller towns and villages in Cork is a terrace of small vernacular houses. They were often the dwellings of local artisans and small shop owners. Their rhythm and regularity gives a distinctive character to a town's streetscape and this example has been selected to represent these buildings. It is located on the outskirts of Liscarroll, overlooked by the substantial remains of Liscarroll Castle.

This house is semi-detached, one of a pair of similar structures. Like most buildings on the outskirts of the town it is one storey high and set directly on the street line. It has a loft or small attic which is lit by a small window in the gable. This room provided much needed extra space for the large family that often lived in these dwellings. The house has a central door with a small sash window on either side. The roof is gabled and covered in corrugated iron - according to the owner it was originally thatched.

There is a small rendered chimney on the gable indicating the location of the hearth within. The walls are protected by a modern render, with modern embellishments of slightly uncharacteristic slim ornamental pilasters at either end of the front elevation. The windows have an interesting feature to protect them called a 'bull bar', in this instance a simple wrought iron bar probably made in the local forge. This was designed to protect the window from cattle during fair days. The door opening is set slightly off-centre and closer to one of the windows. At the base of the door are stone footings which are usually seen supporting the timber frame of a door or shop front. These stone footings suggest this was likely to have been the home of an artisan with a modest timber shop front to display his wares.

Corrugated iron was used in both new builds and older buildings and was particularly popular in the 19th century to cover the thatch in older houses. Corrugated iron replaced thatch for convenience as thatch required regular and constant maintenance. Though this led to the rapid loss of thatch, the traditional roofing material for generations, the benefits of corrugated iron cannot be underestimated in the preservation of the houses of common folk. The evidence of a shop front on the house in Liscarroll suggests that this was a small shop but more likely an artisan dwelling of a local craftsman such as tailors, shoemakers, or harness makers. This Liscarroll house, like most vernacular buildings, is difficult to put a date on; according to the owner the house is hundreds of years old. Indeed, this could very well be true as it is likely to date at least to the 18th century and possibly even earlier. The settlement of Liscarroll itself dates back a number of centuries with Liscarroll Castle allegedly having been built during the reign of King John over 800 years ago[21].

24. A Typical Successful Tenant Farmer's House, Churchview House, Kill-St-Anne South, Castlelyons

This farmhouse, with its attendant outbuildings, is located near the old Medieval parish church of Kill-St-Anne near Castlelyons. It represents the large number of farm houses occupied by farmers in the 18th and 19th centuries.

This Kill-St-Anne South Farm House is a small yet solidly built 18th century house. It is a two-story house, originally three bays wide and gable ended, having been extended in the 19th century in a similar style to make a five-bay front elevation. The extension to one side has broken the sense of symmetry, meaning the door is no longer central. This has lent the house an informal appearance that somehow enhances its visual appeal. The slate roof is gable ended. The house is narrow, being only one room deep. The stone walls are smooth rendered. The square-headed windows are unadorned, and retain their two-over-two pane timber sliding sash frames, and have finely tooled limestone cills. The front and back doors have simple square heads, which today are concealed behind a porch. To the rear, the first floor window openings are smaller than those seen elsewhere in the house, and nestled beneath the eaves. The retention of timber sash windows and the different sized window openings to the rear enhances the house's historical character.

The very fertile farmlands in parts of County Cork allowed a number of 18th and 19th century farmers and tenant farmers to make an adequate living off the farm. These farmers were confident and relatively prosperous and hired local labourers or cottiers to help run the farm. To reflect their social position, and give themselves as comfortable a life as they could afford, they built comfortable large Farm Houses like this example, Churchview. These houses tend to be fairly simple in design, but reasonably large. They are typically two-storey houses, with solid slated roofs supported by masonry stone walls. They usually have simple square headed window and door openings, and will

always be built in association with a farm complex or outbuildings. This charming house is still in use as a farmhouse and is not open to the public.

25. A Formally Planned Succcessful Farmer's House, Cloheen House, Clonakilty

Cloheen House, near Clonakilty, is an example of a prosperous Farm House which has been influenced by the Neo-classical style and looks similar to the small Country Houses in the areas.

Cloheen House is an elegant two storey Farm House built in the mid-19th century on or near the site of an earlier house. The front elevation is designed to be symmetrical and well balanced. It is three bays wide and a single bay deep. The roof is hipped, and the two rectangular chimney stacks are set in the ridge flanking the central bay of the main façade. The masonry walls have a smooth rendered finish. The windows have square headed openings and are framed with a decorative block-and-start plaster surround. The windows are modern, the original windows would have been sliding timber sash windows. The central door opening has a modest square headed overlight. There are several farm buildings to the rear indicating the house is the dwelling of a busy and prosperous farmer.

Cork's rich lands allowed many farmers and several tenant farmers to prosper and accrue wealth and social influence. Some of these farmers as well as the new middle classes, the minor gentry and the clergy built new houses which expressed their position in society. The houses were formally planned and built along classical lines influenced by the design of the big houses and clearly breaking away from the vernacular tradition. They tended to be modest three to five bays wide, two to three storeys high, with a hipped slate roof, chimneys off centre and rendered walls. The central door way tended to have a modest light over.

The houses are larger than the vernacular with aspirations of the spectacular albeit in a modest way. They also had no demesne set aside for their own pleasure, a distinguishing feature of the Country House, although some may have a good entrance and Gate Lodge. This house's formal layout, with its classically proportioned bays, belies its small size. These houses represent the social aspirations of many of the middle class and the well-to-do farmers who prospered in the 19th century.

26. A Late 19th Century West Cork House at Lahertanavally, Ballydehob

This house at Lahertanavally, near Ballydehob in West Cork is a typical example of the houses built throughout Cork in the late 19th and early 20th centuries as economic

circumstances improved. In West Cork, where many of the less well-off were living in very poor houses, a huge level of rebuilding took place funded by government grant aid. These houses were all built to a similar design, often enlarging the old vernacular single storey house, like the one in Farran, or rebuilding the house entirely.

This house at Lahertanavally, is a solid, stone built two storey dwelling. The building is rectangular in plan and three bays wide. It is gable ended with rectangular chimneys at the gable ends. An important feature of these buildings is that they were fitted with solid slate roofs. The walls are rendered with a smooth finish. The simple square headed door is centrally placed and the windows are the typical plate glass sash. Some of these houses had dormer windows lighting the first floor. The regular size and spacing of the windows around the central door is well balanced and quite formal in design. In comparison to the old single storey Thatched House, these are solid, spacious and more comfortable dwellings and became very popular. The appetite for these buildings understandably was enormous and many of the old vernacular dwellings were soon replaced. These buildings can be seen across West Cork today, still functioning as comfortable residences.

In 1891 the British Government in Ireland established a body called the Congested Districts Board to deal with rural poverty, particularly in areas along the northwest and west coast of the Country. A congested district was one where occupation was too dense for the land to be able to comfortably sustain the population – this does not necessarily mean that people were living very close together, but rather that the land was too poor. Parts of West Cork were soon classed as congested, and the board began assisting with farm consolidation and investing in industrial development in these areas. Grants were offered to farmers who had a proven ability to manage farms efficiently, so that those farmers could run larger farms. As part of this grant system a number of Farm Houses were built. They all look similar, and have smooth rendered walls with simple square-headed openings. Houses like this have two chimneys, one set in either end of a sturdy slated gable roof. While there are no records which state that this house at Lahertanavally was built with grant aid from the Congested Districts Board, it is similar to a number of plans they recommended in the late 19th and early 20th century. This plan form, possibly a version of the ‘Congested Districts Board plan no. 6’ was very popular in Cork, although the latter plan details a pronounced eaves overhang in the early 20th century buildings. The board also assisted in the construction of Labourers’ Cottages similar to those built under the Labourers’ Acts.

27. Labourers’ Acts House, Shanballymore

The Labourers Acts of the 1880s introduced a new house type into the County Cork building story. These are the numerous Labourers’ Cottages built by the Local Authority for the many cottiers or landless labourers at the end of the 19th century/early 20th century. This small labourers’ cottage near Shanballymore, North Cork, has been selected to represent these houses that occur throughout the County.

The pretty little cottage near Shanballymore is a well preserved Labourers' Cottage retaining many of its original features. It is a free standing, single storey house with an attic under a steeply pitched gabled roof. The front elevation is three bays wide with a central door. The gable ends are decorated with timber barge boards. The roof is slated with a central rendered chimney stack. The house is stone built and the walls are covered in a roughcast lime render. The windows on the front elevation are slim plate glass sash. An interesting feature is the gabled awning style porch that covers the central door. It is clear that this building was formally designed – a style easily recognizable throughout the County today. Outbuildings such as latrines and sheds would have been located to the rear, and the property is demarcated by a low boundary wall.

These Labourers' Cottages were built as the result of much pressure to improve the housing for the poor and the introduction of the 1890 Public Health (Amendment) Act, for the first time, enforced minimum standards in housing form, fabric and number of occupants. In the same year the Housing of the Working Classes Act came giving Local Authorities the power to repair and improve existing buildings as well as build new ones. The design of the new houses were of a high standard as they were designed by architects approved by Local Government Boards who tended to follow a set format, influenced by the formal plans that the Office of Public Works had proposed but with a more local flavour.
This example at Shanballymore is typical of this type of building though the door could be on the side in some instances. This house type was generally built along the road side, often in pairs, and while most are free standing some are semi-detached. They all had a small land holding behind.

By 1883 the Labourer's Acts allowed Local Authorities to build houses themselves for the first time. Cork County Council, after its establishment in 1899, invested heavily in these small Labourers' Houses as a way to improve the standard of living in rural areas of the County. A large number of these houses are still lived in today. The labourers' movement had gained significant political power by this time, and construction of high quality housing in this style was seen as a way to calm agitation for Home Rule.

28. A Sheehan Cottage, Dove Cottage, Model Village, Tower

Activism for improved Labourers' Houses continued well into the 20th century and a new style of cottage became common. This cottage in Model Village near Tower is a good example of this style.

Dove Cottage is one of a series of houses in the Model Village, a purposely planned attractive row of similar houses - this road still containing some of its original character today. This cottage is a three-bay single storey house, which was built around 1906. The roof is hipped and slated, with terracotta ridge tiles. The rectangular plan multi-flue

chimney stack is built of brick. The walls are smooth rendered with decorative brick block-and-start surrounds around the windows and at the corners. The window openings are square headed and the door is set in a brick porch. The latrine and a coal shed would have originally been located to the rear of the house and it also has a small front garden.

The mid-Cork MP, D.D. Sheehan, was one of the primary political advocates for improved working class housing in this part of the Country, and his work helped to bring about the new Labourers (Ireland) Act in 1906. This codified and formalised acceptable plan forms for Labourers' Houses built under the Labourers' Acts. It also included several financial provisions which were drafted by Sheehan himself. These houses, known as Sheehan's Cottages, have hipped slate roofs with clay ridge tiles. In addition, these cottages have timber sliding sash windows, and the simple doors set in small gabled porches were timber battened.

The Labourers' Act provided for the erection of almost 7000 houses in County Cork alone. Sheehan also invested heavily in a Model Village Scheme at Tower near Blarney. This co-operative project combined resources from a local land lord, the Irish Land and Labour Association and the Cork Rural District Council. It initially comprised just 17 cottages with a school and community hall. The house described here is a typical 'Sheehan's Cottage' and follows the plans proposed by the 1906 guides on plan forms. The house is in private ownership, but can be seen from the street. One of the owners of this house acted as Lizzie Quinn in the well known 1998 Irish film Waking Ned. Internally the house is full of character, just like the occupants!

29. Industrial Workers' Houses, Blarney

The main village of Blarney is defined by its Industrial Workers' Houses. The houses on the square were built in the 18th century as part of an industrial expansion sponsored by the Jefferyes family, while those on the hill and near the woollen mills were built in the 19th century connected to the Mahony's Woollen Mills. It is the latter examples that have been selected to represent the Workers' Houses around the County.

These houses stand in seven terraces north of the Blarney Woollen Mills. The houses are all built to a uniform plan, with only very slight differences. Mangerton terrace is the longest terrace in the complex, with 24 houses which run north-south up hill. Other terraces include Telephone Terrace, Muskerry Terrace, St. Helen Row, Shamrock Terrace and Millstream Terrace, which runs east-west directly outside the Woollen Mills.

The houses are all two-storey terrace and each house is two-bays wide. Their most noticeable feature is their roofs. These curved tarred roofs with projecting eaves are known in Ireland as 'Portlaw roofs' after the village in Waterford where they were first used. Some houses retain decorative timber barge boards at the eaves. The houses are all built of coursed siltstone rubble with red-brick surrounds to windows and doors, and

forming quoins at corners. Some are now rendered. The windows are square headed with timber sliding sash, the majority of which have been replaced. The doors are likewise square headed, and would probably have been closed with simple timber battened doors when first built. Most houses have small front gardens and all have small rear yards with privy and coal sheds.

The spread of industrialisation in the 19th century led to an explosion in this type of house – the Industrial Workers' House – across Ireland and Britain. These houses were built in long terraces of fairly small houses – usually with two rooms on the ground floor and two on the first floor. They have simple unadorned façades and were designed to be functional parts of a working complex. Industrial Worker's Houses often employ materials which would have been used in the construction of the factory itself – for instance brick. Blarney began to grow as an industrial centre in the 1780s when the Jefferyes family, the local landlords, and the Linen Board paid for the construction of a series of houses to encourage an influx of skilled industrial workers into the area. They were built of stone with slate roofs and were set around a large central square. Unfortunately this early purposely-built workers' housing was not a lasting success. When Croften Croker visited Blarney in 1821 the central square was overgrown and some of the houses were roofless.

However, by 1822 Mahony's woollen-mill had been established in the town. By the end of the 1840s the company employed 200 people, and by 1892 over 700 people worked in the woollen mills. It was probably around 1870/1880 that the Mahony's first began to build workers' housing. They chose to follow the model set in 1860 by the Malcomson family in Portlaw, County Waterford. The houses in Blarney are almost identical to those built in the Waterford village, down to plan form and roof details. The Malcomsons had launched a campaign to promote the curved 'Portlaw' roof because they saw it as a cheap way to build high quality houses with tall ceilings internally. Ceiling height was considered an important factor in the 19th century. It allowed good ventilation and so was thought to combat diseases like TB. These Workers' Houses in Blarney became a hub of social life. The following poem is one learned in childhood by many people living in Blarney;

A job in the mill,
A house on the hill,
A book in the sham,
And a child in the pram.

Blarney Woollen Mills and Blarney Castle are of course open to the public all year round, but it is worth taking a little more time to walk around the village square and up the hills. The worker's houses of the 18th and 19th centuries, thought unassuming in form, create a unique and appealing impression for the visitor.

30. Railway Terrace, Midleton

This terrace of seven Workers' Houses was built c.1890 to accommodate workers in the nearby Midleton Railway station. There were originally 11 houses in the row, now only numbers 5-11 remain. They are located opposite the station master's house and the train station itself. They are built in a Victorian style.

These houses are all two-bay two-storey buildings, with gabled slated roofs. The rooflines are embellished with central gable-fronted dormer windows with decorative timber barge boards. These barge boards lend them a distinctive character. The chimney stacks are red-brick, and the window and door openings are also flanked by red brick in a stepped pattern. The lintels over the slightly camber-headed window and door openings are of concrete, with decorative tiles set in the centre of each. The tile over the door gives the house number. The window openings were probably originally sash, however no original ones survive. By the early 1900s at least one house had metal pivot windows and one example of this type of window remains in the terrace. The doors would originally have been timber battened, and some of these survive. The houses all have small walled rear yards, and front gardens surrounded by red brick boundary walls with wrought-iron railings and gates.

Railway companies regularly built Workers' Housing along their routes – either in terraces near stations or as stand-alone cottages at isolated junctions or crossings which needed constant attendance. Like much of Ireland's railway architecture, there is a strong sense of uniformity to the design and layout of Railway Workers' Houses. A single architect would be employed to design for an entire line, and so houses in one place would look similar to other houses along the route. Railway Houses commonly make use of brick around windows and doors. They employ embellishments like dormer windows which reflect the architectural style used in railway stations. Railway architecture is usually high quality and the style tended to be Victorian as seen here, if somewhat restrained.

These Workers' Houses were built by the Great Southern and Western Railway (GSWR) to house employees working in Midleton Railway station and they employ materials commonly used by the GSWR, including red brick and decorative barge boards. Concrete lintels like those seen here were often used for Working Class Houses after c.1880 in Cork, however they are enlivened with the centrally placed terracotta tiles, which may have been made in Ballinphelic or Carrigaline. The Cork and Youghal Railway Company was granted permission to construct railway links between Cork City and Youghal in 1854. The first section of this track, linking Dunkettle and Midleton, was opened on the 10th November 1859. The full length was opened in 1860 but by 1866 the company was in financial difficulty. They sold their railway shares to the Great Southern and Western Railway (GSWR), who continued to operate and develop the line. Midleton Station closed to all traffic in 1988, but was reopened in 2009 and now serves as a valuable commuter service run by Iarnród Éireann.

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Chapter 6
PROTECTING HERITAGE HOUSES FOR THE FUTURE

The understanding of what constitutes our architectural heritage is and has been interchangeable over the centuries and today the term "Heritage House" means many different things to different people. For some our Heritage Houses are the large Country Houses or the distinctive red brick Georgian Town Houses, for others it is the Medieval Castles and Abbeys and for others still, it is our Thatched Cottages. As this book has shown, every historic house has its place in our shared heritage and this chapter now touches briefly on the legislative protection of such houses.

Many of the properties featured in this publication are subject to statutory protection through a number of mechanisms. The primary means by which we protect our architectural heritage is through the addition of structures to the Record of Protected Structures. Under the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010, a Local Authority must maintain a Record of Protected Structures (RPS). Structures which are considered to be of architectural, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest can be considered for inclusion in the RPS. The protection applied to a building on the RPS extends, for the very most part, to all parts of the structure – inside and outside – and to any features in the curtilage of the building (the demesne in the case of a Country House for instance). Under the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010, planning permission is required if the proposed works would materially alter the character of the structure, in other words, interfere with the very reason(s) for which the house was first deemed to be worthy of protection. Works that involve routine maintenance and repair and which are carried out in accordance with best conservation practice and employing appropriate materials and technologies would not necessarily require planning permission. Nevertheless, clarification should always be sought from the Local Authority's Conservation Officer.

Many individual structures, groups of structures or entire streetscapes within our towns and villages are designated Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's), again under the Provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000-2010. These ACA's can contain a whole range of different structures including Civic and ecclesiastical buildings, commercial premises and of course a variety of houses. With respect to ACA's, any works which are deemed to materially alter the exterior character of the area, even where such works are normally considered to be exempt, will require planning permission. There are 54 Architectural Conservation Areas in County Cork and to clarify and advise on many of the important issues, Cork County Council has produced a most useful publication entitled 'Guidelines on the Management and Development of

Architectural Conservation Areas' which is available online at www.corkcoco.ie/heritage. The publication is also available, free of charge, from the Planning Department, Floor 3, County Hall, Cork.

The National Monuments Acts (1930-2004) defines and protects Ireland's archaeological heritage and many of the houses in the book have been recorded by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. Clearly there is some overlap between archaeology and architectural heritage as the qualities of archaeological or architectural interest are not mutually exclusive and certain structures can have both qualities.

The location and descriptions of the archaeological heritage is available on www.archaeology.ie and in the published series of Archaeological Inventories for County Cork. The principal mechanism for protection of the archaeological heritage is through the provision of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) which was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. Under this legislation, two months written notice must be given to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for any works on or near a site listed on the RMP. In addition, the Cork County Development Plan has an objective to protect all known archaeological sites.

The Heritage Unit is at hand to provide advice and information in respect of any proposed works to our Heritage Houses, designated as archaeological monuments, protected structures, or both. To contact the Heritage Unit, send an email to cork.heritage@corkcoco.ie or phone 021 4276891.

Chapter 7
CONCLUSION

"It takes hands to build a house, but only hearts can build a home"
~ Anonymous

Every County in Ireland possesses its own unique structures and building traditions, and Cork is certainly no exception in this regard, reflective of the availability of raw materials locally, the climate and the local economy. No building shows this as clearly as the house. Yet we must also bear in mind that every County is connected to a wider social and technological world. This book has shown how, through reflecting changing architectural fashions and adopting new building materials, our homes illustrate these national and international connections. Our houses grow with our families and change with us even as they encapsulate a sense of tradition and permanence. This is as true today as it was 10,000 years ago when the first settlers to Ireland built their temporary huts in the Mesolithic Age. As author Peter King has put it "we dwell within traditions, which may evolve and change, but which keep us within the bounds of what is known and what works".

The houses that are highlighted in this publication represent a minute sample of those which can be seen in our towns and countryside. Those discussed here tend to be buildings which are still occupied and have survived reasonably well. It is however recognised that many of our Heritage Houses have been lost or are now ruinous. In some cases they have been heavily altered and are not easily recognisable as a Heritage House to the casual passer-by. The loss of traditional features such as timber sash windows and panelled doors, lime render finishes, cast iron rainwater goods, traditional slates and their replacement with uPVC windows and joinery, cement render or other modern finishes such as pebble dash and the introduction of synthetic slates, all contribute to the erosion of the character of our Heritage Houses, however it does not detract from the fact that they are still Heritage Houses and ultimately their character can be restored through the sensitive replacement of historic features that have been previously lost. On the other hand, as this publication clearly illustrates, many of our Heritage Houses are extremely well conserved and sensitively adapted to modern living requirements. Many owners have gone to great lengths and expense in conserving and restoring their historic properties for the benefit of future generations.

In protecting our Heritage Houses we should bear in mind, the purpose is not to prevent change, this is inevitable, but to manage changes in a sensitive and appropriate manner so as not to detract from the character of the historic buildings and their setting. It is a balanced approach which involves respecting what has gone before and what is yet to come. It is important to remember that heritage properties were built in a certain way

and with the use of particular materials. Modern materials and technologies are in many instances not always compatible with these structures and their application often causes problems or exacerbates the very problem owners were trying to eliminate. Employing the proper methods and materials will benefit a Heritage House in the long run and it is important to always seek professional advice from suitably qualified persons. Today there is a wealth of information available for owners of Heritage Houses to assist in maintaining their properties - useful resources are mentioned at the end of this publication. Remember, do as little as possible but as much as is necessary.

All in all there is certainly hope for the future of Heritage Houses in County Cork. There has been a noticeable increase in interest in heritage in Ireland over the past few years. This has been a result of awareness created by the Heritage Council's Heritage Week initiative, Heritage Open Day, the Gathering 2013, the promotional work of Heritage Officers, Conservation Officers and Archaeologists throughout the Country and an increased education in heritage at primary and secondary school level. We now recognise that these buildings are part of our shared cultural identity, and are as important to that identity as our well loved literature and traditional music and dance is. Houses built in local vernacular traditions play a key role in the formation of the kind of local identities which creates cohesive communities. We have seen, too, an increased recognition of the ecological benefits of refurbishment rather than new construction and so Heritage Houses are beginning to be seen as having unique potential.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the reader has enjoyed the journey from house to house throughout our prehistoric and historic past whilst all the while noticing that things do not stay as they are for very long; this being a very important reason for us collectively to preserve what we can. The monuments to the past which we call our Heritage Houses, with careful preservation and promotion, will inform future generations of the different types of life and lifestyles humanity has gone through. One thing is for certain though, home will always be home.

Final Remarks

In producing this book the intent was to explore the variety of Heritage Houses throughout the County of Cork, presenting to the reader a representative sample of these, and perhaps in doing so, challenging some of the established perceptions of what constitutes a Heritage House and encouraging one to look beyond the modern alterations and interventions that sometimes occur and see the true nature of the structure that lies beneath.

This publication is essentially an exploration that brings us from our simple functional prehistoric houses, through to our castles and fortified houses, country estates, town houses, farmhouses, thatch cottages, workers houses and social houses, from the large to the small, from the ornate to the simple and all that falls in between. While the publication itself provides but a small selective sample of the Heritage Houses that exist within the County, it is hoped that it has shed new light on the variety of the Heritage Houses within the County of Cork and created a greater appreciation and understanding of this element of our architectural heritage.

'Why shall we seek for histories, why make museums, why study the manners of the dead, when we foully neglect, or barbarously spoil their houses, their castles, their courts, their graves? He who tramples on the past does not create for the future.' ~ Thomas Davis.

Learn More About Heritage Houses

There are a wide range of sources of information on County Cork Houses. As archaeologically and architecturally important buildings, many of the houses discussed in this book are described in some detail in the Archaeological Survey Database (www.archaeology.ie), and published in the five volumes of the Archeological Inventory of County Cork.

Another most useful source is the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The NIAH is a National programme of survey and recording designed to help inform Local Authorities as to which buildings should be considered for inclusion on the RPS. There is currently c.4000 houses listed in the NIAH for County Cork alone. Further information is available at www.buildingsofireland.ie.

Another great resource which incorporates the RPS and the RMP as well as a range of other heritage aspects is the Heritage Council's map viewer (available through www.heritagecouncil.ie).

As part of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, the Cork Archaeological Survey Team (1982-2009) carried out a comprehensive survey of all named houses on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Maps. Files from these visits have been digitised, and can be viewed in the County Library.

Guidelines for a whole range of proposed works to historic structures are available on the website of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht including: Energy Efficieny in Traditional Buildings; A Guide to the Repair of Historic Brickwork, A Guide to the Repair of Historic Windows, and many others – www.ahg.gov.ie.

For those with an interest in the archaeological development of the house there is a wonderful resource called "Archaeology in the Classroom". This is an excellent educational resource for everyone, not just for school-goers! See www.itsabouttime.ie for more information.

Another valuable source of information is Cork County Council's very own heritage website – www.corkcoco.ie/heritage. The Heritage Unit also periodically sends out a heritage update email, should you seek to subscribe, send an email to cork.heritage@corkcoco.ie.

The Thatcher

A Poem by Diarmuid Kingston

Old man Hegarty was known as ‘The Thatcher’, he lived
Near the crossroads in a small two roomed house
With squat chimney, one door, two windows
Without a wife or a dog for company.
His craft, it was said, that many men could do, but few
Could do well; he used his own scallops, the twisted
Lengths of sally rod to trace, though he sometimes used
Hazel to secure the straw or rush in place.
All year was his season, another thatch made, his scian
Needle, yoke and rake, ladders long and short
The butting mallet, the tools of his trade.
Nearer the coast of Ring and Ballinglanna, more exposed
To stormy weather, inhabited by fisherman and cottier
He used marram grass or heather.
The best thatch was oaten straw, threshed a little green
Unripened slightly, so sticks would not be too brittle
But yielding more sprightly.
The best straw, he would claim, was threshed
The same as in medieval times against
A stone or timber frame.
Thatcher Hegarty died when he was old and I was young
The baskets and panniers he fashioned from rush and
Briar brought in turf and kindling to start the fire
On frosty mornings for generations
All over the parish.

Diarmuid Kingston (c)

Heritage Houses
A Poem by Conor Nelligan

From humble beginnings to architectural feats
Many Heritage Houses still line our streets
The past is presented by their presence today
The memories they hold cannot fade away.

For each house has a storey for us all to behold
Where time plays its part through a number of roles
And familiar names too, lets think back if we can,
When Edward met Vicky and George met Anne.

Workers and Labourers, Lords and the Gentry
Shared one thing in common – their homes were not empty.
Full of life but not life as we know it
Things slowly changed and our houses do show it.

A hearth of stone was a comfort at last
A place of warmth where every night passed
With candlelit meals and stories and songs
A place to call home and the place to belong.

To live is to learn is to love is to long,
For the place we call home – our story, our song.

Conor Nelligan (c)

Index of Houses

A. Golden, South Square, Macroom	98, 148, 149, 150
Aherla Labourers’ Act House	27
Annabella Terrace Mallow	49, 61
Annahala, the Gearagh	30, 31
Annakissha	10
Annsgrove Gate Lodge	59, 191
Annsgrove House	59
Ardfield Vernacular House	98, 157, 158
Ballerina Boutique, Macroom	193
Ballinaspig More	8
Ballincollig Gunpowder Mills Workers’ Houses	22, 23
Ballinglanna North	5, 101, 192
Ballinvinny South	13
Ballybeg East Gate Lodge	46
Ballybrowney Lower	7
Ballyduvane House, Clonakilty	200
Ballyellis House, Buttevant	189
Ballygarvan	75
Ballygiblin House	50
Ballymaloe House	98, 126, 127, 128
Ballynacarriga Tower House	98, 106, 107, 108, 109
Ballysheehan Thatched Mansion	21, 89
Ballyvonare House	57, 204
Bandon	14, 15
Bantry House	98, 123, 124, 125
Bantry House Gate Lodge	46, 125
Barnagore	5, 98, 100, 101, 102
Barryscourt Castle Tower House	36, 205
Belvelly Tower House	206
Blarney Castle House	50, 59, 98, 135, 136, 137
Blarney Castle Tower House	36, 37, 135
Blarney Workers’ Houses	22, 23, 25
Bowen’s Court	121
Boyle’s Alms Houses, Youghal	40
Brinny Rectory House	191
Brookville Gate Lodge	46
C. Cronin, Millstreet	198
Caherdrinny	5, 101
Carrigaphooca Castle	91
Carrigashinny Farmhouse	16, 79, 98, 113, 114, 115, 153
Carrignamuck Castle, Dripsey	202
Castledonovan	189
Castlefreke Country House	50, 59, 98
Castlefreke House Gate Lodge	138, 139, 140
Castlemartyr House	79, 93, 114
Charleville Restoration House	41

Churchtown Country House	73
Churchview House, Kill-Saint-Anne, Castlelyons	98, 163, 164
Clashanimud Hillfort	34
Cloheen House, Clonakilty	98, 165, 166
Clonevin House, Charleville	61
Coole Abbey House	57
Coppinger’s Court Fortified House, Glandore	39, 89, 112, 191
Cor Castle	59
Creag Castle Gate Lodge	46
Creggane House, Churchtown	98, 129, 130, 131
Cresent Victorian Terrace, Cobh	201
Crosshaven House	57, 193
Doneraile Court	44, 57, 98, 119, 120, 121, 122
Doneraile Thatched Cottage	18
Dove Cottage, Tower	98, 171, 172
Dromatimore House, Aghabullogue	200
Emmet Square Clonakilty Georgian Houses	47, 98, 141, 142
Fermoy Georgian Town House	47
Fernbank, Lower Road, Cobh Victorian House	98, 151, 152
Fota House	45
Fota House Gate Lodge	46
Four Alls, Sam’s Cross, Clonakilty	201
Garranes	9, 10
Garryduff	9
Glanmire Alms Houses	202
Glanworth Castle Keep	35
Gortnahown II	98, 103, 104
Gortore	5, 101
Greggane House Gate Lodge	130
Hollybrook House, Skibbereen	60
Ighertmurragh Castle Fortified House	92, 112
Inchiquin Keep	35
Inishera House	137
Innishannon Worker’s Houses	22
Kanturk Castle Fortified House	39, 98, 110, 111, 112
Kilbolane Encolsure Castle	35
Kilcrohane House, Cloyne	206
Kilkern Lake Castlefreke	20
Killinardrish Country House	184
Killinardrish House Gate Lodge	46
Kilmaloda House, Timoleague	192
Kilmoney	9
Kilshannig Country House	44, 58
Kiltoohig Thatched House, Charleville	98, 155, 156
Kings Square Mitchelstown Georgian Houses	22, 47, 98, 143, 144
Knocknakilla Land League Hut	26
Ladysbridge Corrugated Iron-Roofed Vernacular House	98, 159, 160
Lahertanavally Ballydehob West Cork House	98, 167, 168
Laurintinum House, Doneraile	87
Lios na gCon Ringfort	9, 10, 104

Liscarroll Enclosure Castle	35, 162
Liscarroll Vernacular House	98, 161, 162
Lisleagh	9, 10
Lisselan House Clonakilty	50
Lombard's Castle, Buttevant	203
Lombard's Shop, Fermoy	62
Lombardstown House	67
Longueville House	57, 81
Lota House	45
Macroom Castle Country House	150
Mallow Castle Fortified House	38, 70, 112, 132, 133, 134, 196
Mallow Castle House	59, 98, 132, 134, 136
Mangerton Terrace, Blarney	173
Maryborough House	43, 44, 68, 92
Maryborough House Gate Lodge	46
McSweeny's Railway Terrace, Midleton	98, 176, 177
Midleton Workers' Houses	25
Millstream Row Workers' Houses, Blarney	98, 173, 174
Millstreet single storey terraced dwelling	190
Model Village Workers' Houses	25, 171
Mondaniel	13
Monkstown Castle	90, 112, 195
Mount Alvernia, Mallow	73
Mount Corbett, Liscarroll	72
Mount Uniacke	118
Mountlong Castle Fortified House Kinsale	39
Muskerry Terrace, Blarney	173
Myrtle Grove Youghal	16, 79
Newmarket Court	121, 197, 204
Newtownshandrum Corrugated Vernacular Cottage	62
Oriel House, Ballincollig	199
Palace Anne Country House, Bandon	56, 117
Pepper Hill	5, 101
Puxley's Mansion	59
Red House, The, Youghal	41, 55, 98, 116, 117, 118
Reenadysert Castle Fortified House Bantry	39
Riverstown Country House	45, 196
Rock, Windmill Hill, Skibbereen	207
Shamrock Terrace, Blarney	173
Shanballymore Labourer's Act House	98, 169, 170
Shandyhall, Coachford	192
Sheahan's Cottages	171
Spa House, Mallow	207
St. Helen's Row, Blarney	173
St. John's Hill, Kinsale	98, 145, 146, 147
Telephone Terrace, Blarney	173
Thatch and Thyme Kildorrery	16, 98, 153, 154
Timoleague Rectory	194
Tyntes Castle, Youghal	196
Vernon Mount	49, 94

Villa Rosa, Mallow 89
Youghal Council Houses 29