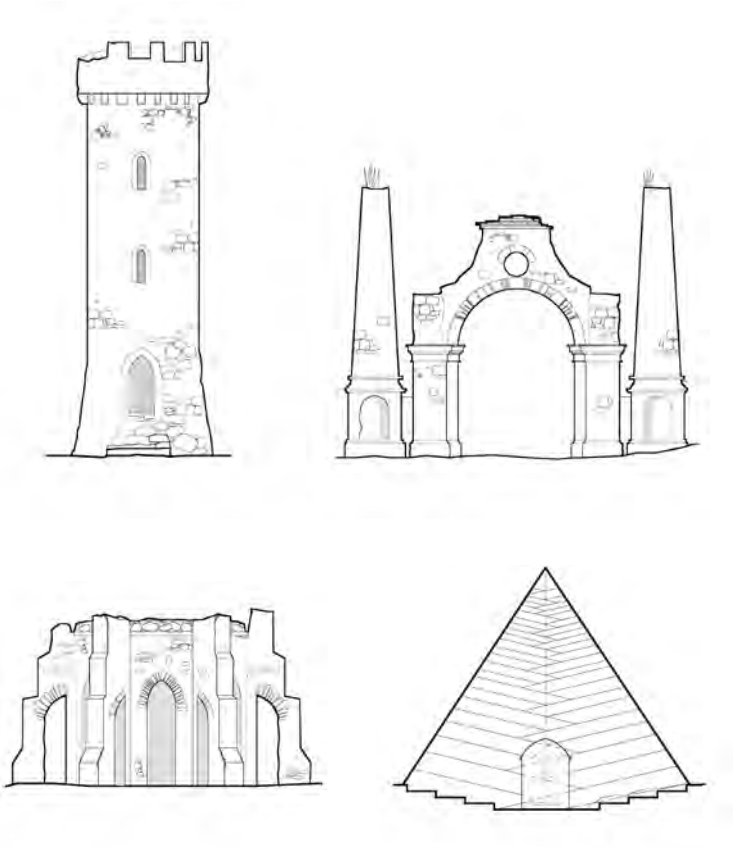
ELEVEN FOLLIES IN COUNTY OFFALY

CONDITION SURVEY & MEASURED DRAWINGS



October 2013

HOWLEY HAYES ARCHITECTS

This report was commissioned by Offaly County Council with financial assistance from the Heritage Council to consider the history, significance, condition and conservation of a disparate group of follies and garden building located in County Offaly. The structures range in scale from a pair of small circular stepped plinths, situated in a pond and measuring less than two meters in height, to an impressive eye-catcher rising to over fourteen meters. Most of the structures date from the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries, and some were designed to provide impressive prospects of the surrounding countryside. Surprisingly, for a county that is generally thought to be flat and boggy, Offaly contains a significant number of hills, on which many of these structures are found. With the exception of one earthwork structure, now heavily overgrown and lacking definition, most of the structures survive in a reasonable state of preservation, albeit often in a poor state of repair. While the primary purpose of this report is to illustrate and describe the significance of these structures, and equally important purpose is to recommend practical ways in which there long term future can be preserved, wither by active conservation or by slowing the current rate of decline. The report was prepared by Howley Hayes Architects and is based on site surveys carried out in July and August 2013.

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

- Follies and garden structure constitute an eclectic architectural group, for the most part occurring in the designed landscapes of great country houses in situations of great natural beauty.

- Offaly is not noted for an abundance of great country house demesnes, and much of the landscape is low-lying and lacking variation. Despite this the county contains an impressive number of follies and ornamental garden structures.

- Most of the structures that fall within this interesting collection are - eyecatcher/landmarks, summerhouses or prospect towers, some of which contain two or three of these attributes.

- The significance of this group is high, with most being of regional or national importance and most have been relatively well constructed.

- Today, none of the structures has a functional purpose and as a result all have been neglected and are in a poor state of repair.

- Most of the buildings are situated remotely in fields or woods, at some distance from the sites of the country houses they were built to ornament, and in less than half of the structures the original house survives intact.

- Almost all of the structures require some work to arrest the current rate of decay and prevent further loss of historic fabric.

- The extent of minimum works required for each structure varies but is in most cases relatively modest and straight forward if handled by experienced stone masons, who understand and have worked successfully with historic structures.

- For the current time, the conservation philosophy should be that of sensitive repair as ruins, with an emphasis on consolidation, capping and the eradication of harmful plant growth.

- Detailed recording of former construction detail should also be carried out, where possible without causing further damage to the structures.

- Collectively, this group of buildings is interesting and worthy of preservation and every effort should be made to prevent any further deterioration and loss of historic fabric.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

General

Small historic structures are abundant in the Irish countryside, often in a ruined state that tell the history of our nation with a greater degree of accuracy than a written history could ever hope to achieve. In *The Architecture of Humanism* Geoffrey Scott alludes to this phenomenon when he notes that - *the history of civilisation leaves in architecture, its truest and most unconscious record.* While Scott is referring more to the great architectural monuments that define the cultural capital of any society in a given time of its history, he could equally be referring to the more commonplace structure that helped to make these societies function. Such buildings were for the most part functional, erected to provide protection or to assist manufacture or extraction, occasionally they were designed purely for ornamentation, in the great tradition of Irish folly building during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More often than not, ornamentation and function were combined, particularly where the setting marked a place of exceptional natural beauty, or offered the opportunity of a striking landmark or day mark along the coast to assist sailing ships from an earlier time. Sometimes a building can become a romantic, folly-like structure, merely by its state of ruination, or by the circumstance of a spectacular setting.

Significance

The history of castles, tower houses and monasteries that frequent the Irish landscape has been given lavish attention through many scholarly publications. Less so the equally extensive collection of modest unassuming structures created to serve more prosaic functions. These include lime kilns, signal towers, mine chimneys, gun emplacements, canal bridges and aqueducts; structures found across the Irish countryside that tell of evolving industrialisation, transportation and the threat of military invasion. Such buildings also have an important part to play in the history of a country and its sense of change and development over time. In addition to the story they can often relate, is the visual enrichment they can bring to their landscape or townscape settings. Often associated with follies and ornamental landscape structures is the is the matter of prospect, either from the base of as structure constructed on high ground, or better still from the top of a tall accessible tower. Follies were constructed not only to enhance the visual qualities of a designed landscape, but also to provide the best places from which to enjoy views over the landscape. In this role they act as “signposts” to some of the most interesting scenery in Ireland much of which was carefully planted in the early eighteenth century and which, since the breaking up of the large estates of the ascendancy and disappearing into smaller farm holdings. Ivy clad, semi ruinous and often abandoned, these interesting structure survive only as romantic landmarks long after their original purpose has been forgotten.

County Offaly

While most of County Offaly consists of lowlands and peat bog, there are a number of elevated areas distributed throughout the county. The highest ground lies to the south on the northern edge of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, which exceed 300m in height. Elsewhere there is a line of low hills running NE to SW, which exceed 100m in height with a significant number of eskers, also running NE to SW, which offer some elevation to an otherwise flat county. Offaly does not enjoy the rich and varied

topography that marks the coastal counties of Ireland, where dramatic natural features were incorporated to great effect into the great designed landscapes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Where important demesnes were laid out in Offaly, such as those at Charleville and Birr, artificial water features were created by diverting and widening rivers, or by forming cascades or artificial lakes. In a generally flat landscape any opportunity of gaining height was taken enthusiastically to create vantage and prospect points from which to view the surrounding countryside.

Threats

The greatest threat to any building is redundancy. If a building no longer serves a useful purpose it is unlikely its fabric will be maintained and in time it will slip into a state of dereliction, leading eventually to ruination. In a small country like Ireland, historic buildings must be of exceptional cultural significance to justify their being kept in a fully intact and maintained state simply to serve as an architectural exhibit without viable function. The Marino Casino is one such example, but buildings of this type are rare. Many other structures, in particular our large collection of ancient monuments survive mostly as incomplete ruins, which in itself constitutes a rich and interesting landscape phenomenon, combining memory with romance. What makes Irish ruins so very resilient is our building tradition of rubble masonry construction, stretching over a thousand years from the ninth to the nineteenth century. Irish building stones for the most part comprise hard carboniferous limestone or granite. Being relatively hard to work the buildings constructed of these stones are of random rubble resulting in thick walls that disintegrate slowly, even after they have become roofless and floorless shells. Often all that is required is the removal of ivy, the consolidation of loose masonry, particularly to the tops of the walls and the repair of any sections that have become unstable or at risk of collapse.

Council Policy

Offaly County Council has an active policy of preservation and conservation of historic buildings within the country, both outside and within council ownership. The County Development Plan includes a Record of Protected Structures as a means of safeguarding the built heritage. Up until recent years it also administered an architectural conservation grant scheme to assist in essential repair and conservation works. This scheme is currently on hold due to the economic downturn. For its own historic building stock the council is committed to set an example of the highest standards of conservation and on-going maintenance. This policy includes not only large and important historic places such as the Birr Town Council offices, but also in its smaller, more obscure and unusual buildings. During the past ten years, these have included repairs to the Chearnley Column in Birr, the Georgian gateway at Syngefield house, the medieval church of St Brendan in Birr, St Manchan's Church in Lemanaghan and the church at Kilbride outside Clara.

Subject Group

The eleven structures in this collection are all in private ownership with the exception of Acres' Folly in Tullamore. A few stand close to inhabited houses, while the remainder are found in isolated fields or woods. They fall into four main categories – *towers, gazebos, eye-catchers* and *miscellaneous.* Only one of the structures, the Gloster Archway is designed in the classical style, and only one Acres' Folly, appears to have been inhabited. Three of the towers contained staircases and two or

possibly three structures appear to have had a practical function. These include the Kinnitty Mausoleum and the Hollow House structures and possibly Acre's Folly. Categorisation of follies and garden buildings into identifiable groups is fraught with difficulties. Many structures might easily fall into more than one category and the definition of *function* might also prove to be ambiguous in some interpretations. As such – it is always wise to include a *miscellaneous* section to welcome both eccentrics and singletons the solitary nature of which falls short of a group in this relatively limited study.

Conclusions

The condition of this disparate group of structures ranges from reasonably intact, to neglected, semi derelict and in one case almost gone. Despite the variety of conditions, the basic superstructure of most structures survives with most of the damage being more a crumbling away of exposed wall heads, rather than serious structural movement. A few occur in visited public places, others are familiar, albeit distant, local landmarks, and some are either in the grounds of private homes, or isolated on open ground or hidden in woodland of working farms. All play an important part in the built heritage of the county and a strong case can be made for their preservation. In some cases this is likely to require little more than consolidation and retention largely as found, whereas for others a more comprehensive level of conservation and perhaps intervention is justified. Final decisions about the recommendations proposed for each of the structures described in this report will be governed by considerations of - interpretation, financial viability and the desirability (or otherwise) of permitting public access.

2.0 TOWERS

Acres' Folly

Description

Acres' Folly is an unusual tower-like structure, which rises to some 9m in height from a ground plan measuring approximately 4m x 6m. Internally is contains a vaulted undercroft, while the upper rooms were originally divided by a partition in a proportion of one third to two thirds. Within the smaller space a timber staircase rose to what appears to have been a roof terrace, while the larger space provided basic, limited accommodation heated by an open fireplace in the gable end. The purpose of the structure is not clear. It may have been constructed to serve as a watchtower, but is more likely to be a simple pleasure building combining summerhouse and prospect tower, to serve the nearby Acres' Hall built by the prosperous Thomas Acres in 1786. Local tradition suggests that Acres' Folly was built in 1812 to commemorate the victory of the Duke of Wellington over Napoleon during the Peninsular War.

Lime dashed and rubble built, with thick walls measuring 730mm, the folly resembles closely a tower house in form if not detail. The fireplaces and accessible roof suggests it was simply a place for the Acres family to go to enjoy views of their garden and out over the surrounding countryside. The door and window openings are dressed in crisp finely tooled limestone, as are the copings and the wonderful octagonal chimney pots. While some of the narrow window openings and the pistol loop are medieval in proportion other openings are much less historical in their appearance. Indeed at first glance the orthogonal geometry and sharp detailing of the overall composition could be easily mistaken for a modern movement dwelling from the early twentieth century. The reason for the strange chamfered corner measuring about 2m in height that exists between the ground and first floor chambers on the northeast corner is unclear, and only adds to the strangely contemporary style of the structure. Internally the walls of the upper floors are lime plastered and it is certainly possible that the structure was used as a servants dwelling in addition to its function as a summerhouse. The vaulted undercroft is accessible through an opening in the floor while the entrance to the tower was from a short walkway that once lead to the elevated front door on the southwest gable, which is now blocked.

Condition

The structure is completely derelict with the roof and roof terrace now entirely gone and only some rotten floor joists remaining from the original first floor. Similarly the timber staircase has been removed in its entirety leaving only an imprint in the plaster as to its former presence. Most of the internal cross wall, which like the floor vault was constructed of brick, has fallen and all of the original door and windows and chimney pieces are now missing. The original entrance door and window to the undercroft have been in-filled with concrete blocks. Despite this advanced state of dereliction the structure is relatively sound and appears to be at rest. This is partly due to the excellent limestone copings that will have protected the wall heads. However, these have only been viewed from the ground using binoculars and should be inspected at close quarters to ensure that they are not loose and at risk of falling. A similar inspection should be made of all the window surround and structural heads, the railings and chimney pots, together with the fragmented cross wall, brick vaulted

ground floor and the rotten first floor joists. As part of this process the interior should be cleaned out particularly the ground floor and undercroft.

There is currently a health and safety risk posed by youths and children entering the structure through the large southeast facing opening and this should be blocked with a metal grille as a matter of urgency. To create safe access for maintenance, the doorway in the southwest gable should be unblocked and a secure gate installed.

Significance

Despite its strangely modern appearance, Acres' Folly is of some significance as a pared-down interpretation of a fifteenth-century tower house, roofed weathered and heated, and possibly built to commemorate an important historic event. For the sake of comparison within a range of 1-5, where 1 is the least and 5 the most significant, I would consider Acre's Folly to justify a categorisation of 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Carry out a high level inspection, using a cherry picker, of all wall heads and interior of the structure with an experienced stone mason in attendance.
2. Take down or consolidate any loose masonry, plaster or rotten timbers.
3. Clear out all debris from ground floor and undercroft.
4. Unblock door and window in southwest elevation and make good reveals.
5. Install metal grilles in three openings in ground floor and undercroft.
6. Consider installing internal metal staircase, guard rails and decking to first floor and roof levels to restore rooftop viewing gallery.
7. Thin back some of the mature surrounding trees to improve views to and from the structure.

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ACRES' FOLLY

1. View of south east elevation from town park
2. North east elevation of folly.
3. Unusual detail at corner.
4. View of parapet with stone copings, chimney pots and remains of a handrail.
5. Scar of the former staircase to the south west elevation.

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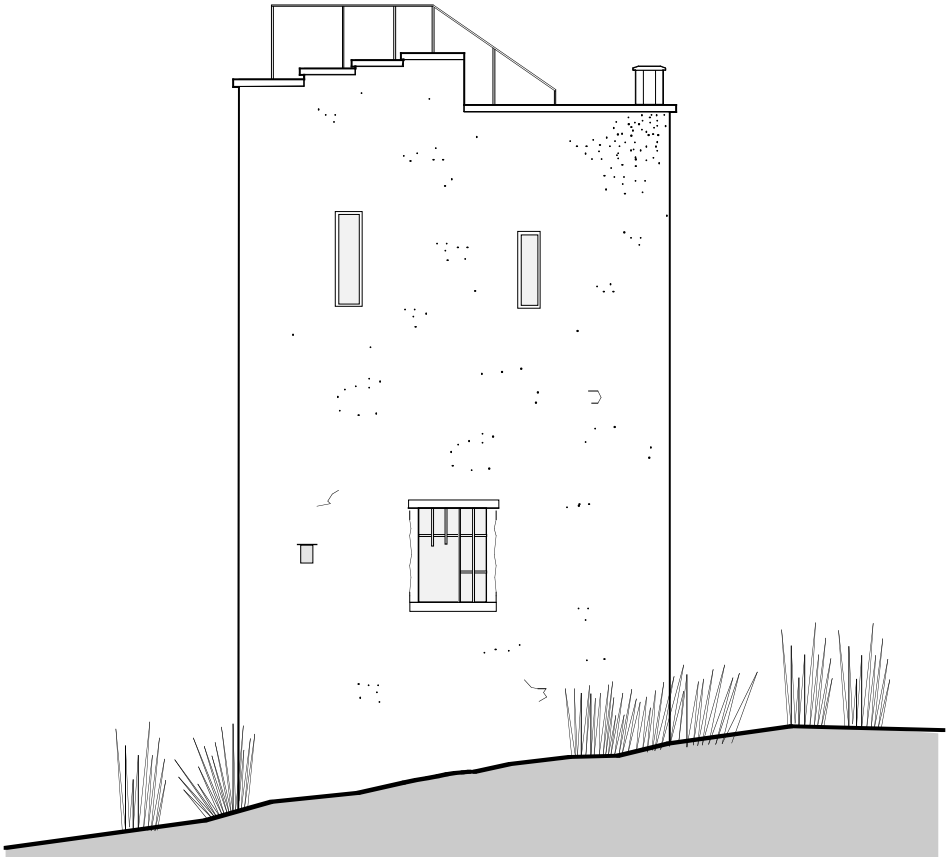
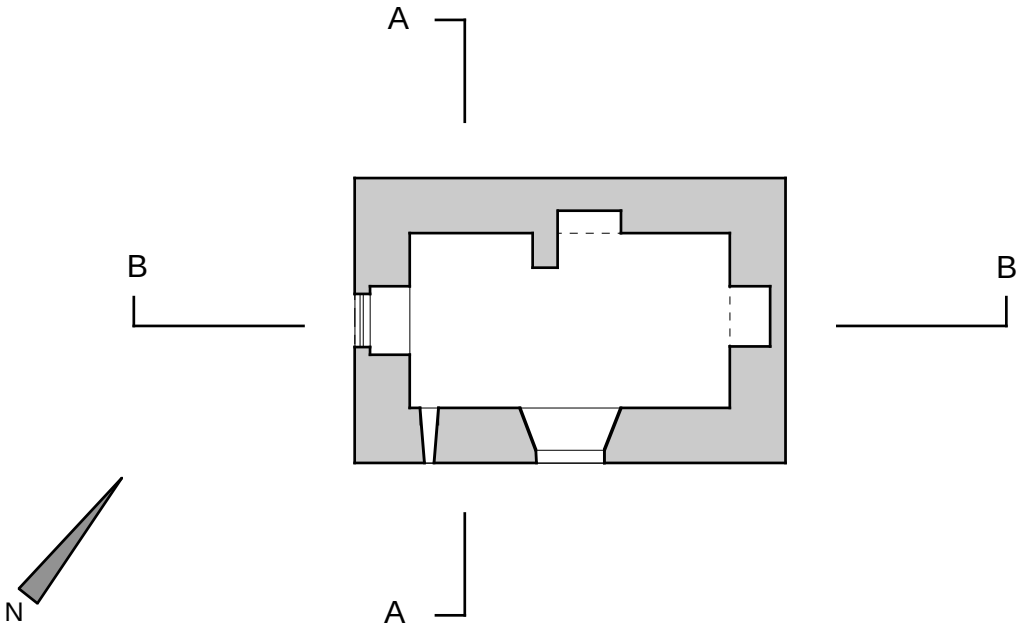
ACRES' FOLLY

1. Internal view of remains of first floor.
2. scar of staircase in north west corner.
3. Former opening for fireplace.
4. Remains of former cross wall.
5. Vaulted basement.

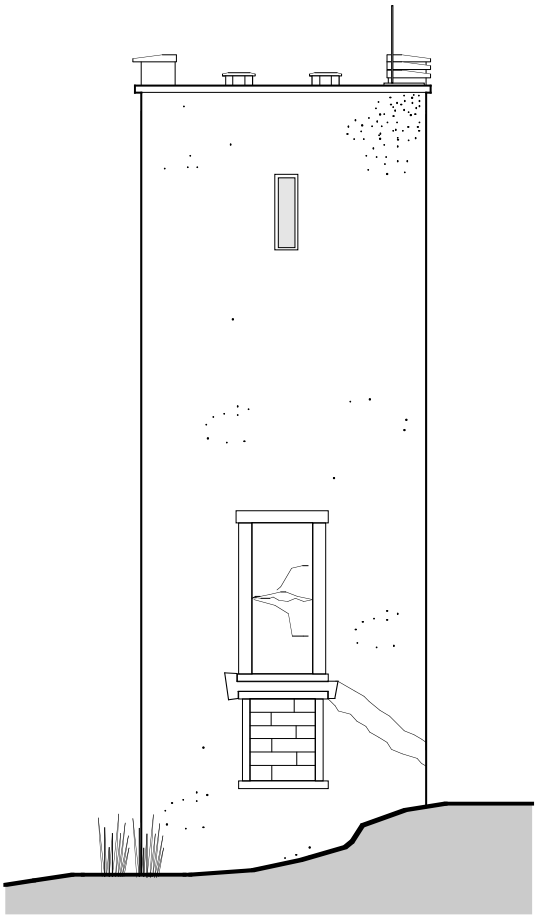
ACRES' FOLLY



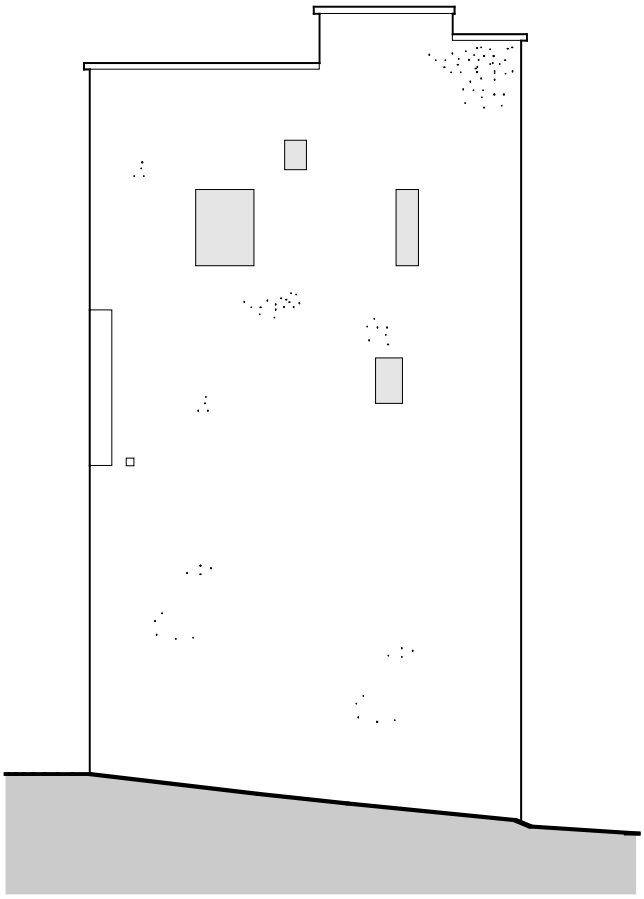
SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



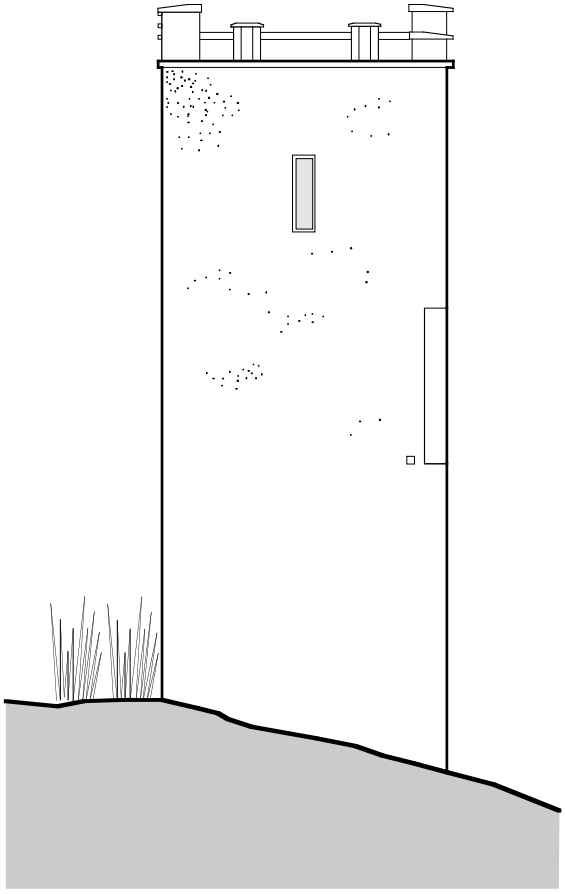
GROUND LEVEL PLAN



SOUTH WEST ELEVATION



NORTH EAST ELEVATION



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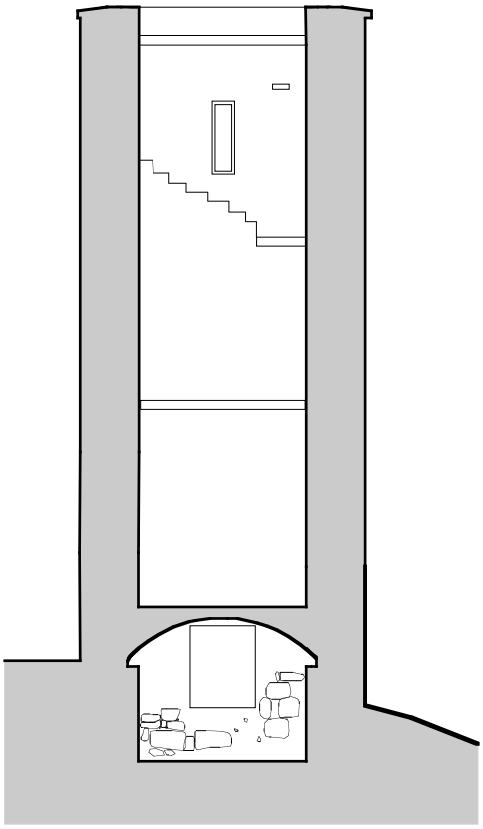
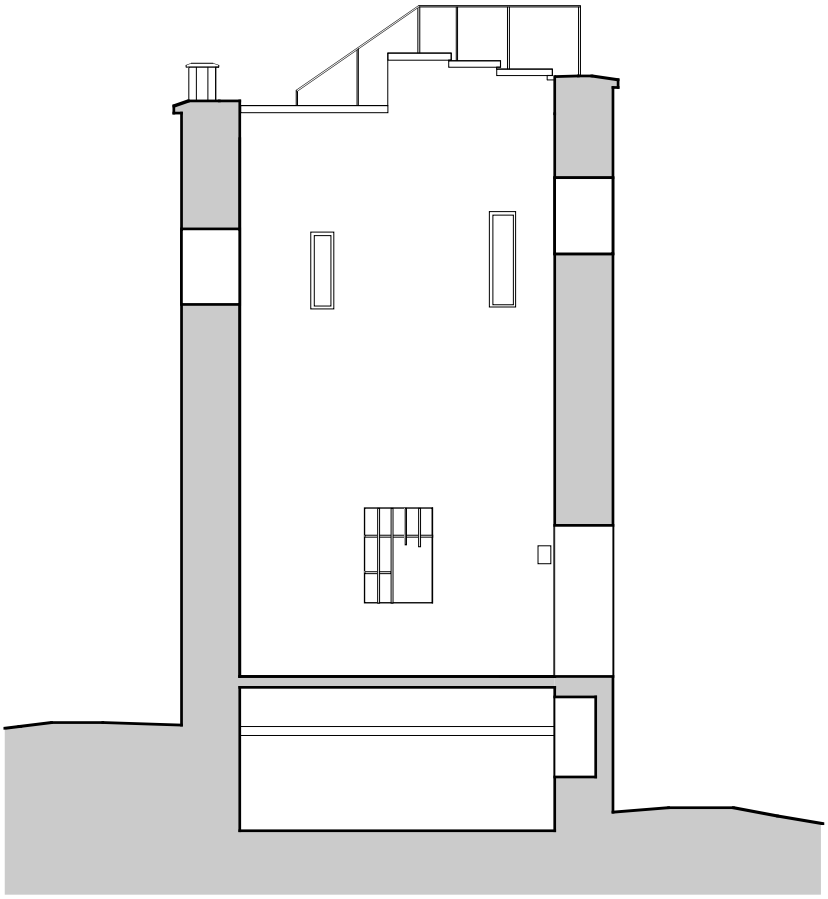


SECTION A - A



SECTION B-B

Busherstown Tower

Description

Busherstown Tower is an attractive round tower that was constructed on high ground overlooking Busherstown House and demesne. Rising to a height of approximately three storeys from a battered base, the structure is crowned with a projecting castellated parapet supported on stone corbels. Built of rubble limestone with dressed limestone enrichments in the form of pointed-arched door and window surrounds. The entrance door surrounds have an interesting punched finish that is often found in medieval masonry. Internally there is a splendid cast iron spiral staircase made by Hayward Brothers of Union Street in Borough, south London. Hayward Brothers were a successful firm of London glaziers who expanded into cast iron metal works in 1848, famous for their coal hole covers, they also made pavement light wells and architectural items such as staircases.

The detail of the tower generally suggests a slightly earlier date of construction, and major alterations were carried out to Busherstown House in the early nineteenth century, but it is possible that the staircase was installed some years after the tower was originally constructed. A thin coat of lime dash is evident on some of the masonry suggesting that the structure may originally have been plastered. The tower creates an impressive local landmark that can be seen from a considerable distance away and is particularly impressive when viewed from the west of the house over which it towers. From the base of the tower the panoramic views are impressive, and one can safely assume they are magnificent from the top of the staircase, which is no longer accessible.

Condition

The condition of the tower is generally good with the exception of two of the battlements on the north side of the parapet, which have fallen or been pushed over. There are a number of small holes and a few limited areas of masonry that are severely weathered, which would benefit from pinning and pointing. Much of the upper levels have been cement pointed, which is unsightly but for the moment not causing any significant damage. The makeshift metal gate is unsightly and the light chain and lock used to close it are far from secure. Leading up to the entrance door was a flight of stone steps that have been dislodged, probably by cattle. The greatest structural damage is to the internal cast iron staircase, many of the treads of which have been broken, most likely as a result of vandalism, or removed deliberately as in Belview, Kilclare. This is not only a great loss of an important early cast iron, highly decorative staircase, but denies access to what would have been one of the finest vantage points in Offaly.

Significance

While the Busherstown Tower is for the most part quite a modest structure, it is well built, well detailed and contains the remnants of a splendid cast iron staircase. This is a classic prospect tower from which a comfortable landowner could look over his demesne in its entirety with pride in his achievements, or alternatively enjoy the beauties of wider prospects out over the surrounding countryside. I would consider the Busherstown to justify a categorisation of between 3 and 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Carry out a high level inspection, using a cherry picker, of all wall heads with an experienced stonemason in attendance.
2. Take down or consolidate any loose masonry to wall heads and flaunch in sand and lime to weather.
3. Clear out all debris from the interior of the tower – set aside the iron fragments of the staircase.
4. Spray any plant growth on the structure with approved biocide.
5. Pin and point holes and minor areas of weathered masonry.
6. Repair the original stone steps leading up to entrance door.
7. Install a secure metal gate to the entrance door.
8. Consider restoring cast iron staircase and guardrails to restore rooftop viewing point.
9. If funds were ever available the cement pointing should be removed and the masonry repointed using sand and lime.
   (The latter two items are highly desirable but relative expensive to undertake.)

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BUSHERSTOWN

1. View of tower from Busherstown house.
2. West facing elevation of the tower.
3. North facing elevation of the tower.
4. South east elevation of the tower.
5. Detail view of the parapet of the tower with missing battlements.

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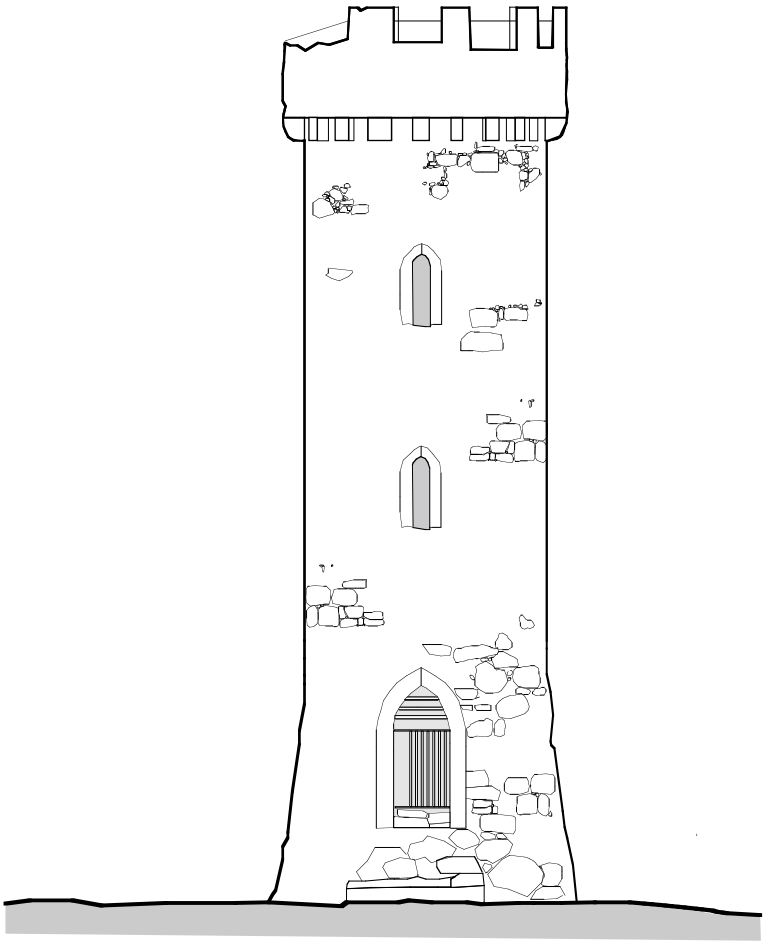
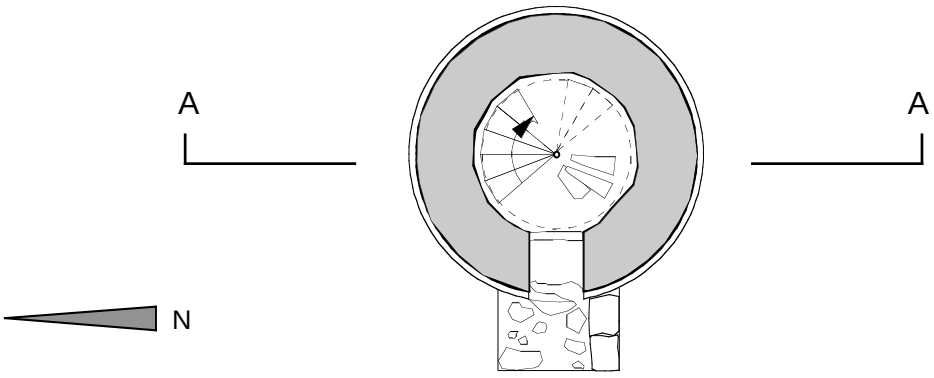
BUSHERSTOWN

1. The makeshift unsightly metal gate to the entrance.
2. General view of the internal cast iron stair-case showing damage.
3. Detail of dressed limestone enrichments forming door jamb.
4. Detail of the cast iron stair treads.
5. Detail of area of loose masonary.

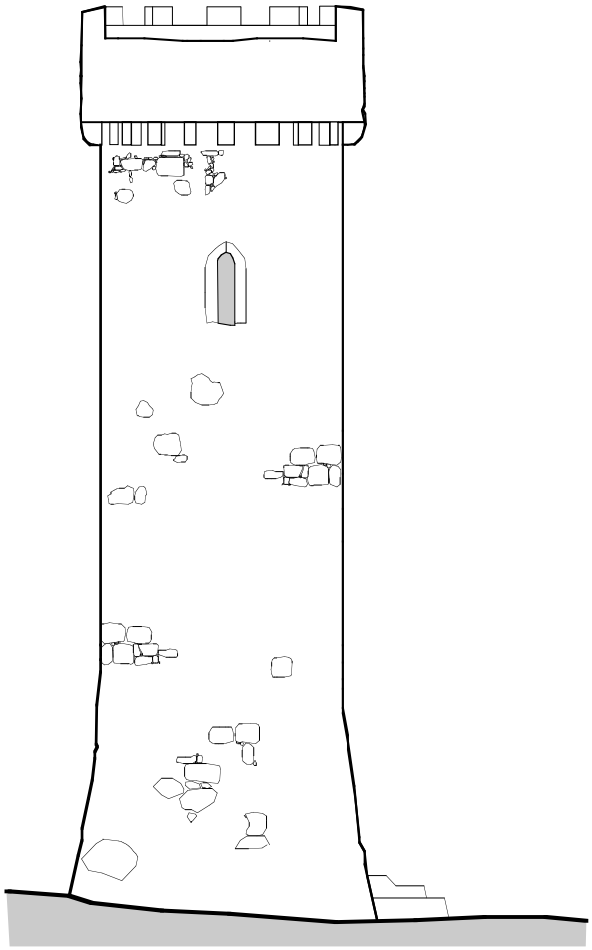
BUSHERSTOWN TOWER



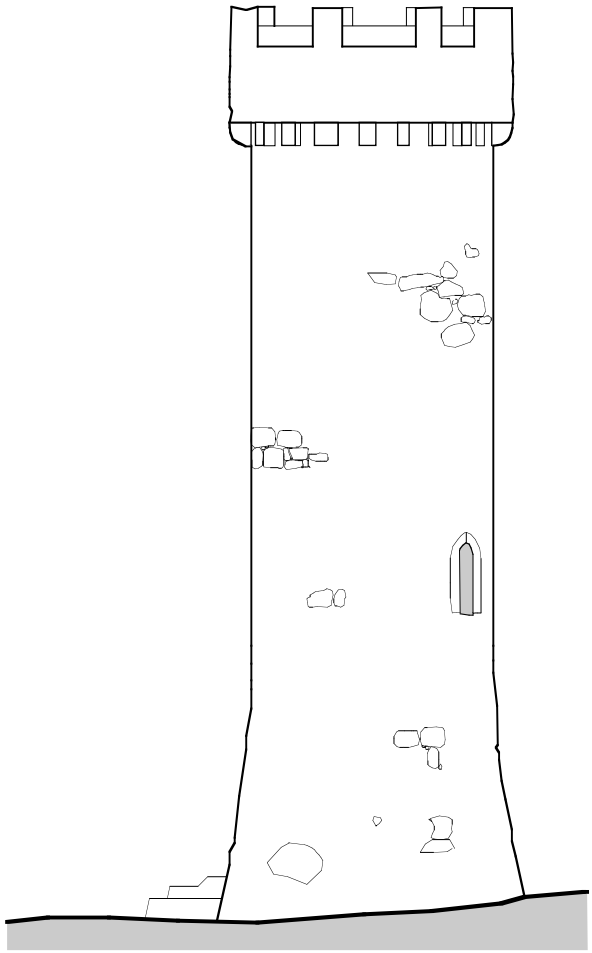
WEST ELEVATION



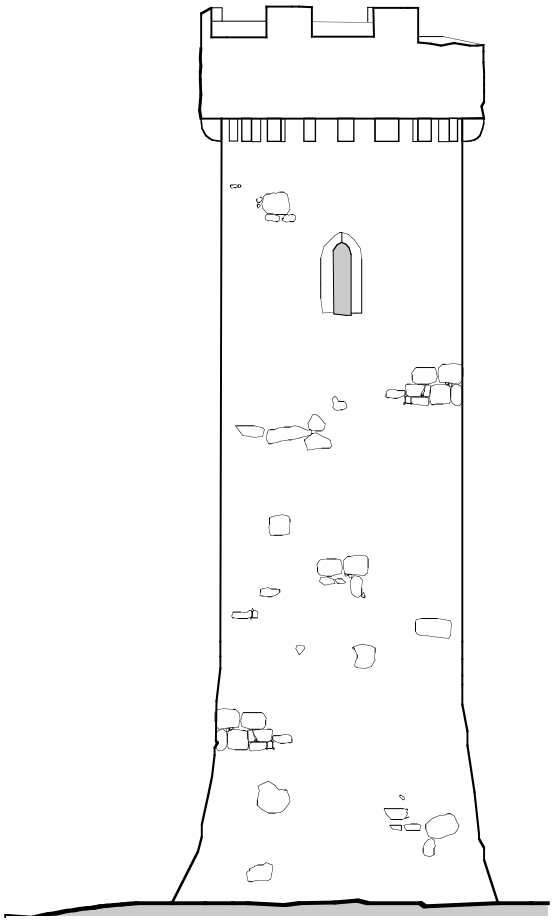
PLAN



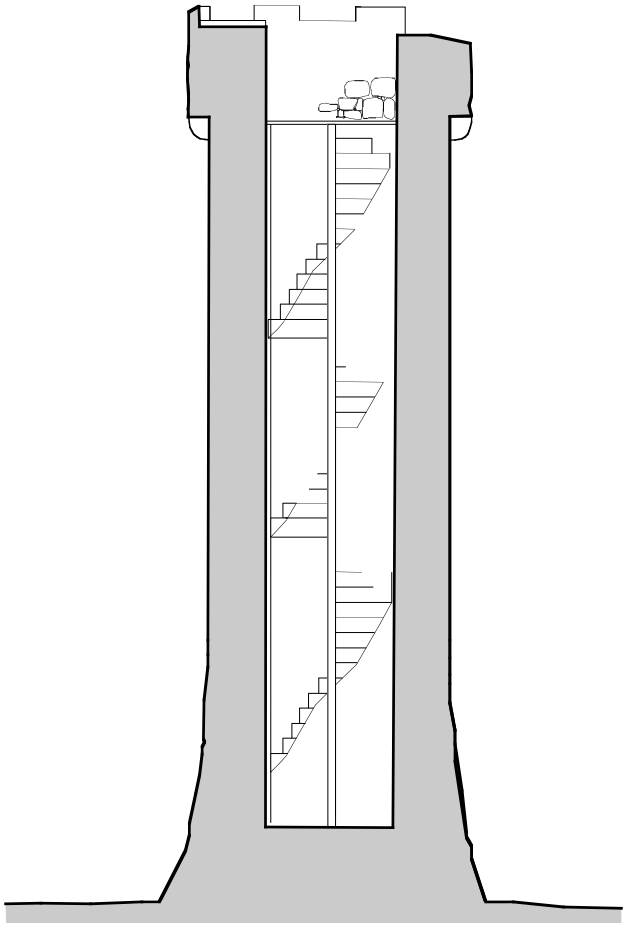
NORTH ELEVATION



SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



SECTION A-A

Belview Tower

Description

Belview, as its name suggests, is another prospect tower, which stands on a densely wooded esker that was once part of the demesne of the now derelict Belview House. Isolated and today largely concealed by mature trees, this fine circular tower no longer dominates the surrounding landscape as it once did. The form of the Belview Tower resembles that of the Irish round towers that were built at monastic sites between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Built of random rubble masonry with a lime and sand dashed finish, the tower has a single Gothic doorway with tooled limestone surrounds. Above the door is nicely carved date stone with a raised, cushioned border and the inscription AD 1817carved in a delicate Roman font, which doubtless records the year of the construction of the tower. A cut stone stringcourse encircles the tower at a level just above the plaque, and contrasts with the narrow, arrow-slit windows that light a fine dressed stone staircase that rises in a spiral within the structure. The wall heads at the top of the tower are irregular due a significant loss of stone, and it is impossible to guess their original form without closer inspection.

Condition

With the exception of the internal staircase and the wall heads, the structure survives in a sound condition with very little damage apparent. Sadly several treads have been sheared off and tumbled down the staircase. It appears that this was done to restrict access to the top of the structure, which may have been considered a health and safety risk.

Significance

Belview Tower is an interesting former prospect tower, that when built would have commanded splendid views out over the surrounding countryside and doubtless back towards the house. It reflects the early nineteenth-century growing interest in antiquarian studies in Ireland, wherein the architecture from the Hiberno-Romaneque period assumed considerable importance in helping to establish national identity. A very similar structure survives in the Curraghmore Demesne in County Waterford. The detailing of the plaque, door surround and stringcourse add a touch of refinement not normally associated with these early structures. I would consider the Belview Tower to justify a categorisation of between 3 and 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Carry out a high level inspection, using a combination of the internal staircase and a ladder, of the wall heads with an experienced stonemason in attendance.
2. Take down or consolidate any loose masonry to wall heads and flaunch in sand and lime to weather.
3. Clear out all debris from the interior of the tower – set aside the stone fragments of the staircase for possible reuse.
4. Spray any plant growth on the structure with approved biocide.
5. Install a secure metal gate to the entrance door
6. Consider restoring stone staircase and guardrails to restore rooftop viewing point.
   (The latter item is highly desirable but relative expensive to undertake.)

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BELVIEW TOWER

1. View of the south elevation of the tower above the treeline.
2. Detail of the ground floor of the tower filled with debris.
3. View of the upper levels inside the tower with missing stone stair treads.
4. Detail of the remaining stone stair at lower level.
5. Detail of small window to the upper level.

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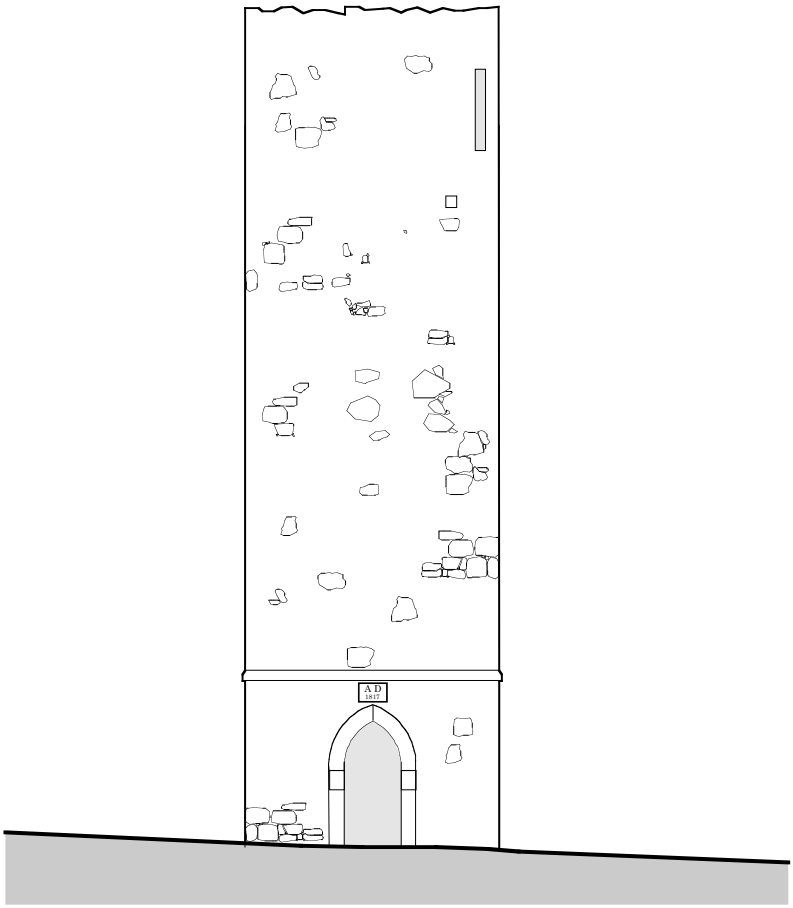
BELVIEW TOWER

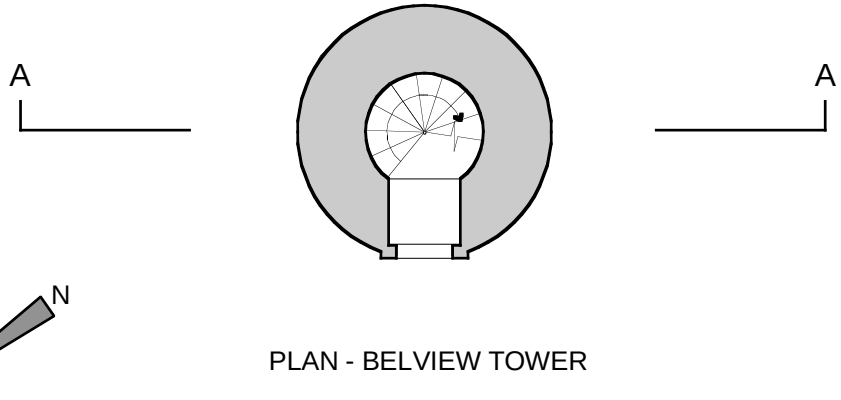
1. View of the tower just visible above the treeline.
2. View of the north facing elevation.
3. General view of single Gothic doorway with tooled limestone surrounds.
4. Detail of plaque AD 1817 carved in a delicate Roman font.
5. Detail view of the weathered wall heads.

5.

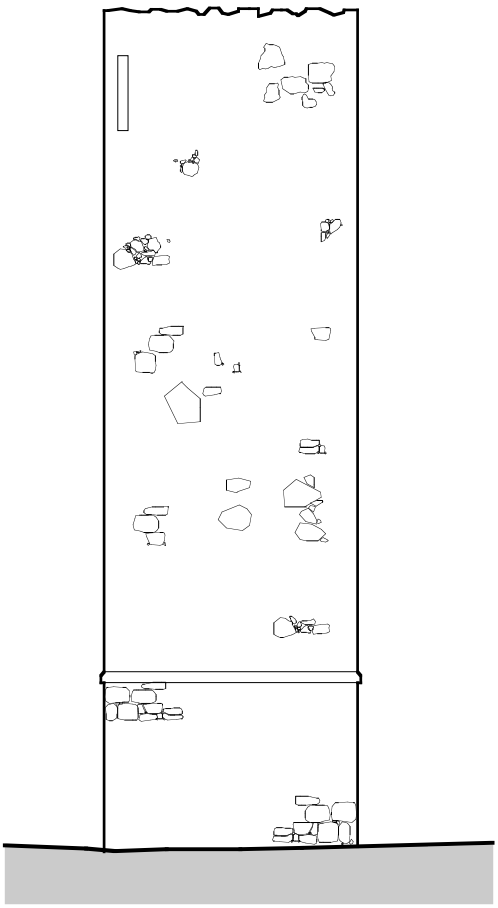
BELVIEW TOWER



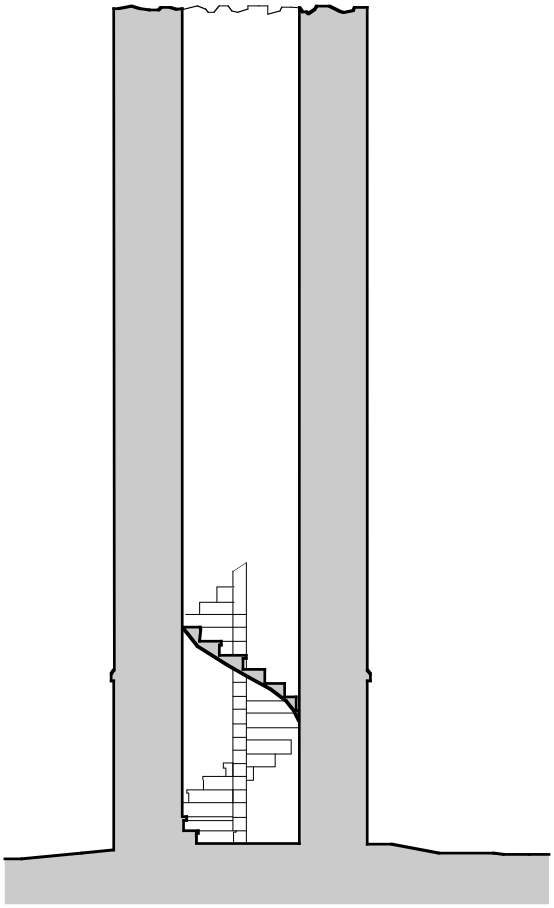
NORTH EAST ELEVATION - BELVIEW TOWER



PLAN - BELVIEW TOWER



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



SECTION A-A

0 1M 5M

3.0 GAZEBOS

Ballycumber Folly

Description

The Ballycumber Folly is an impressive circular gazebo or belvedere with six flying buttresses. It stands on a high artificial mound overlooking the River Brosna that runs to the north. The entrance door faces eastwards towards the river, while one of the windows provide oblique views looking back to the fine early eighteenth-century house. Internally there are two window openings, a fireplace and the remains of plastered wall finishes, which indicate that the structure was once roofed and used as a pleasure building or summerhouse from within which good views of the river and the house could be enjoyed. Built of rubble sandstone with roughly dressed, dressings and voussoirs to the Gothic arched apertures, the overall quality is good and the structure may well date from the mid eighteenth century. The visual impact of the flying buttresses is particularly striking creating an attractive and varied silhouette. There is a mature yew tree growing at the base of the mound and a large walled garden can be seen in the distance to the north

Condition

The condition could best be described as fair as the wall heads and crowns of the buttresses are loose and friable and the structure has been invaded with a great many self-seeded plants and saplings. Despite this, the arches to the openings and undersides of the buttresses are generally intact and in a reasonable state of repair. The form of the roof is not obvious from the ground but might become obvious when the rafter sockets are cleaned out and inspected at close quarters. If the plant grown from within, around and on top, is not removed promptly and the wall heads consolidated the structures will not survive for very long.

Significance

This is a fine example of its type and most likely a relatively early example of an ornamental garden building in Ireland. It has an interesting and unusual form, creates an impressive eye catcher in the landscape and provides excellent views from within. We would consider the Ballycumber Folly to justify a categorisation of between 3 and 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Remove all plant growth from within and around the structure.
2. Drill and poison all embedded roots.
3. Take down all loose masonry to wall heads and set aside for reuse – remove any embedded roots.
4. Rebuild wall head, and buttress tops and flaunch with sand and lime to weather.
5. Consolidate loose and missing areas of rubble masonry.
6. Rake out and point any open joints and allow for inserting slate wedges in voussoirs of the arches where needed.

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BALLYCUMBER FOLLY

1. General view of gazebo on artifical mound from Ballycumber House.
2. Detail of one of the flying buttresses.
3. View of the entrance door which faces eastwards towards the river.
4. General view of the entrance.
5.Detail of the rubble stone walls with cut stone dressings.

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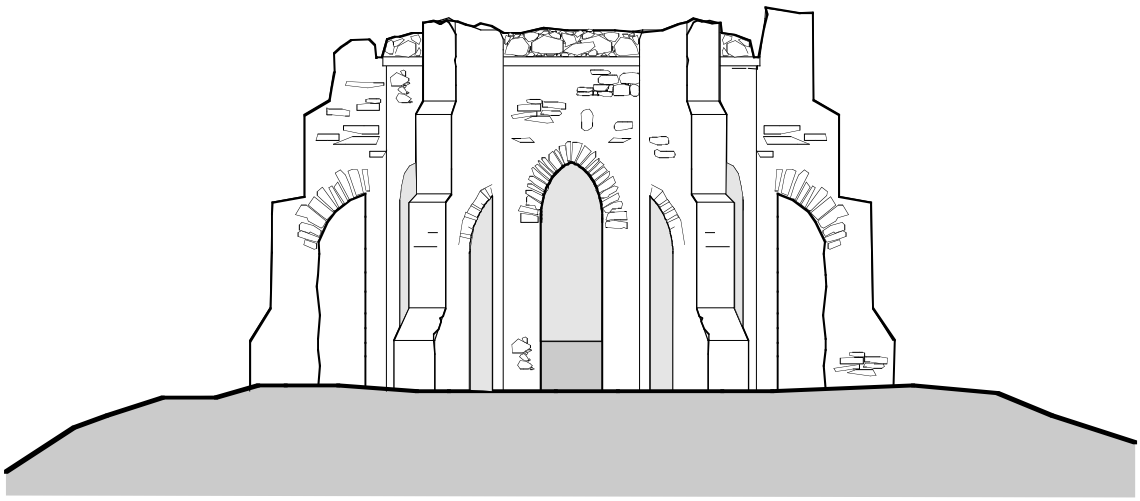
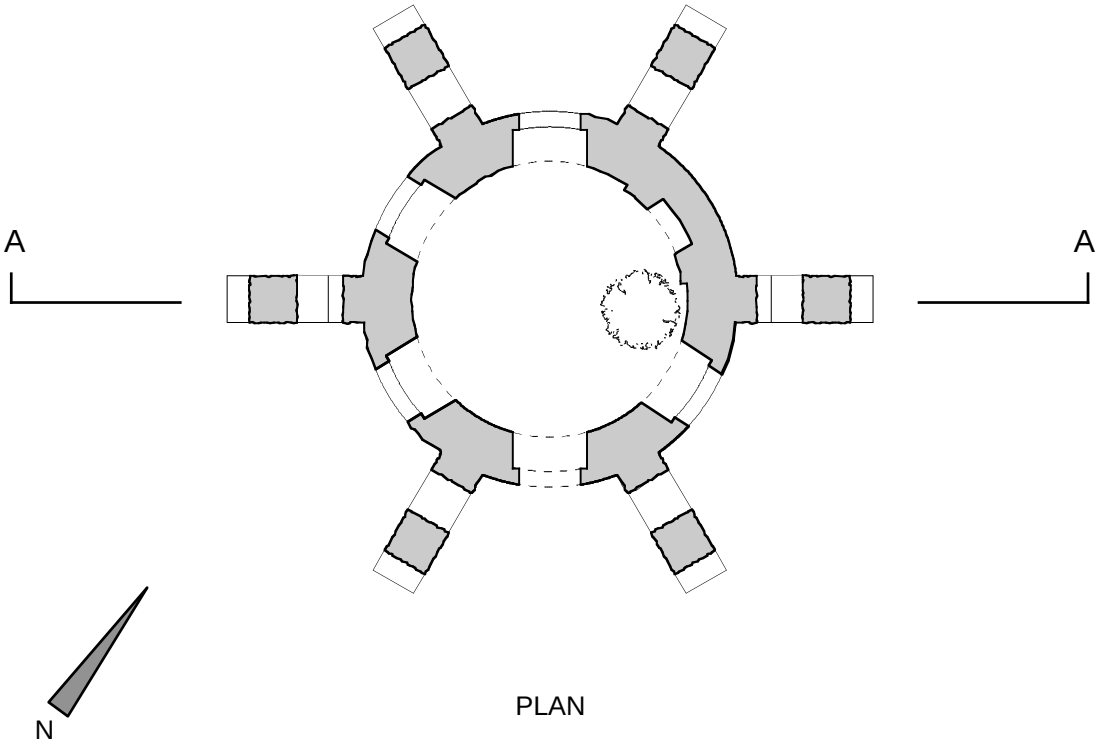
BALLYCUMBER FOLLY

1. View of the former fireplace and window.
2. Detail of a window reveal.
3. View out through the entrance door.
4. Internal view showing mature tree growth.
5.Detail of internal plinth level.

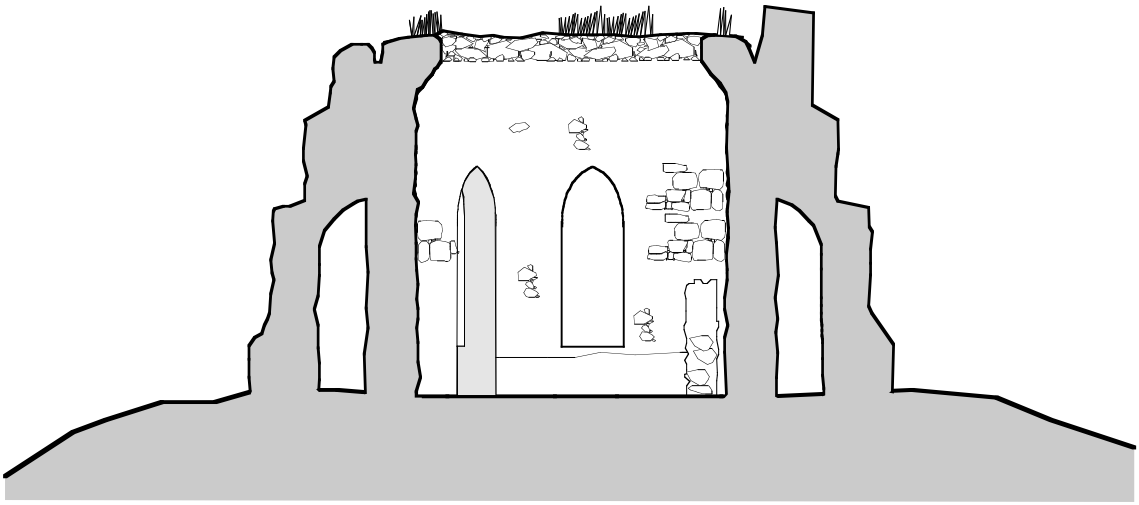
BALLYCUMBER FOLLY



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



PLAN



SECTION A - A

Toberdaly Folly

Description

The Toberdaly Folly is an impressive composition, consisting of an irregular octagonal gazebo sitting on top of the upper vaulted floor of a modified fifteenth-century tower house, complete with circular bartizan and barrel-vaulted roof. Also constructed of rubble limestone, with brick and limestone dressings, the gazebo consists of four pointed-arched windows set within the wider faces of the octagon, aligned on the cardinal points with a door, external niche and fireplace, set within three of the four narrower faces. A narrow walkway, protected by a battlemented parapet surrounds the structure, on the east side of which stone staircase rises from the tower house below, while the remains of a circular bartizan survives to make an attractive external seat at the south west corner. The interior of the gazebo was originally roofed and plastered and was clearly used as a summerhouse, which enjoyed spectacular views out over the flat surrounding bogs. Standing at the corner of a raised garden terrace that once served the now ruined Toberdaly House, the much altered tower house features a cut stone Gothic entrance door on the east side and a number of other small window openings on the south and west sides, some of which are now covered by dense ivy. The door was removed from the ground floor and inserted in the first floor, probably when the terrace and gazebo were constructed, thus creating a more direct route from the house. A large irregular opening has been made in the south wall of the tower house that measures over a meter in thickness and much of the internal partition have partially collapsed. What survives, however, is the magnificent vaulted roof that today supports the gazebo.

Condition

The massive walls and vaulted roof of the tower house are relatively intact, with the exception of the irregular opening on the south side, where the current stability is provided by natural arching in the rubble stonework. A dense covering of ivy has become established over most of the tower house and saplings and woody plants and shrubs have become established on the roof. All woody plants are potentially damaging to masonry structures and it is essential that these be removed without delay. Once ivy has become rooted into the masonry its effects are highly damaging if left unchecked. Even substantial defensive structures such as Toberdaly will start to crumble as the ivy roots expand, depleting the core mortar and loosening stonework. “Soft topping” – which is the use of turf, moss and ferny plants to protect a wall head, or flat roof, are only effective if easily accessibly so that saplings and woody plants can be removed when they self-seed. The masonry of the gazebo is relatively intact, but requires some consolidation and re-pointing, together with a lime and sand capping to the wall heads.

Significance

While the gazebo is relatively plain and quite simple in form, its juxtaposition – perched on top of a medieval tower house, with the resultant panoramic views, make it a most impressive assembly. While many medieval ruins have been adapted to serve as eye-catchers or pleasure buildings, or both, there are few examples of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century structures being constructed on top of a medieval ruin. The combination of the two structures from different periods, justify a categorisation of and 4, as a structure of regional, or possibly national importance.

Recommendations

1. Remove all ivy from walls of tower house and drill and poison all embedded roots.
2. Remove all woody plants and saplings from walkway around gazebo.
3. Take down all loose masonry to wall heads and battlements and set aside for reuse – remove any embedded roots.
4. Rebuild missing and loose sections of the battlements and flaunch with sand and lime to weather.
5. Rebuild wall heads of gazebo and flaunch with sand and lime to weather.
6. Consolidate all loose and missing areas of rubble masonry.
7. Insert arch or lintol to stabilize unsupported opening on south side.
8. Repair staircase and guardings to create safe access to roof and gazebo.
9. Rake out and re-point any open joints.

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TOBBERDALY FOLLY

1. View from north showing gazebo on former tower house.
2. South facing elevation, from terrace showing heavy covering with ivy.
3. West facing elevation.
4. The lower opening to the building facing fields.
5. Detail of the vaulting on the tower house.

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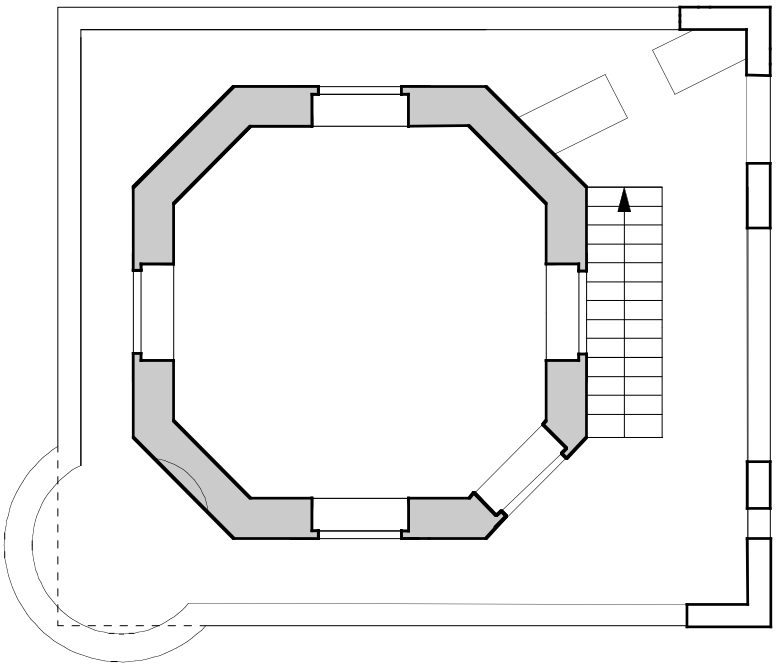
TOBBERDALY FOLLY

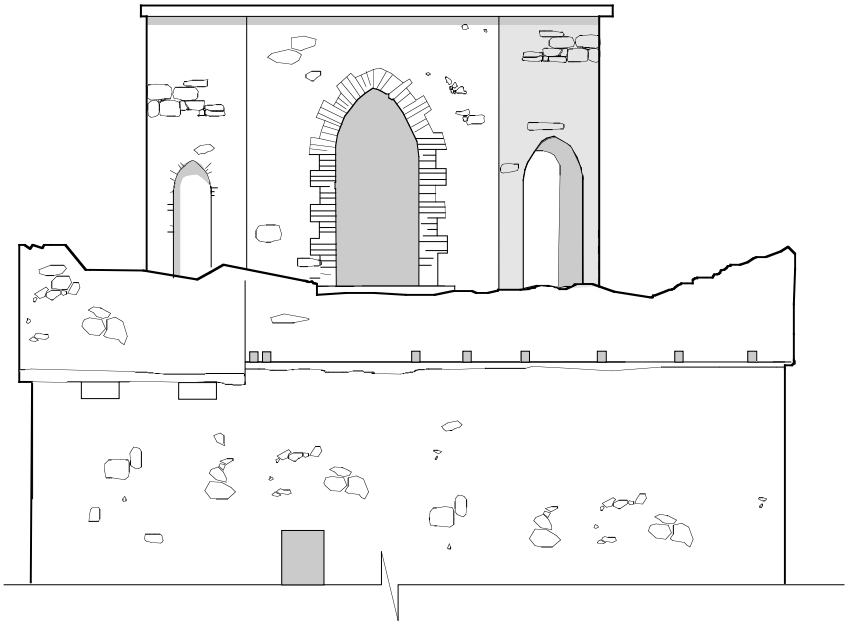
1. Detail of the gazebo level of the folly.
2. View of stairs from tower house leading to gazebo.
3. View through the door at gazebo level.
4. The cut stone cill.
5. Detail of walkway and parapet at gazebo level.

TOBERDALY



N

PLAN AT UPPER LEVEL



NORTH ELEVATION

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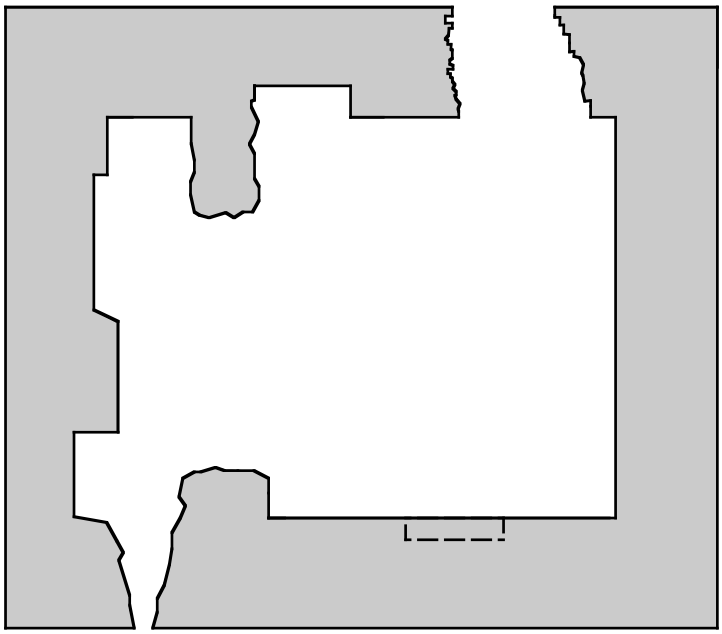
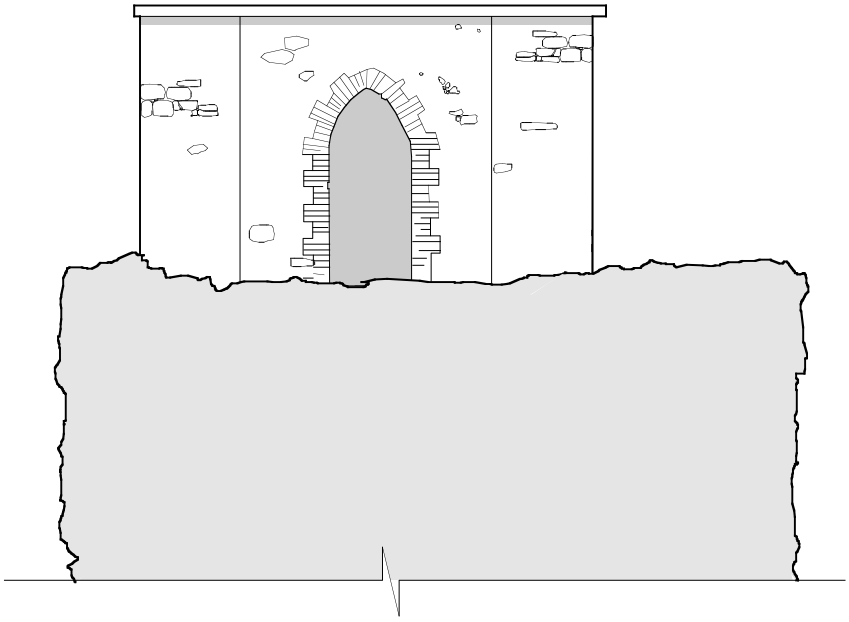


LOWER GROUND LEVEL



SOUTH ELEVATION

4.0 EYECATCHERS

Tinnamuck Spire

Description

The Tinnamuck Spire is a tall, lighthouse-like structure rising to a height of approximately 14m. It consists of a tall cylindrical tower, standing on a substantial plinth both of which are circular in plan. The plinth is divided into four quadrants by two intersecting vaulted passageways located on the cardinal points. Constructed of rubble sandstone with brick dressings to apertures and vaulting that were initially lime dashed, there is a elegant carved limestone plaque set into the wall just above the doorway at the base of the tower. Inscribed on the plaque is *Richard Holmes 1811*, which no doubt commemorates the person who built it and the date of construction. At the top of the structure is a sequence of six square-headed window openings and an irregular weathered wall head that suggests the structure may once have been roofed. Certainly the elevated hillside location would ensure spectacular views from the top of the structure, however, there is no indication of how a visitor would gain access either to the doorway at the base of the upper section, or to the upper levels of the tower. Further investigations should be carried out during future repairs to try to understand more about the design intentions of this intriguing structure.

Condition

While the structure appears to be at rest, with no obvious signs of structural stress, there are a number of concerns about this impressive structure. The wall heads at the top of the tower and the weathered surfaces of the projecting outer edges of the plinth are both vulnerable to water ingress, frost action and gradual deterioration. This is particularly serious at the top of the structure where the wall heads are loose and friable above six large window openings the stability of which will be easily undermined by any further deterioration to the masonry. There are also a number of large holes in the masonry of the plinth that require attention, as does the heavy build up of plant growth on the top edges.

Significance

This is an interesting structure that was most likely constructed to be both an eye-catcher and a prospect tower. The scale, geometry, and overall ambition of the structure are all impressive and it makes a strong visual impressive as an important local landmark in the surrounding area. I would consider the Tinnamuck Spire to justify a categorisation of between 3 and 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Carry out a high level inspection, using a cherry picker, of the wall heads and outer edge of plinth, with an experienced stonemason in attendance.
2. Take down or consolidate any loose masonry to wall heads and outer edge of plinth and flaunch with sand and lime to weather.
3. Consolidate loose and missing areas of rubble masonry.
4. Clear out all debris from the interior of the tower – and set aside any material from a staircase that might exist or possible reuse.
5. Spray any plant growth on the structure with approved biocide.

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TINNAMUCK SPIRE

1. General view from the main road to Moate.
2. View of the north east elevation showing central opening.
3. View of the east side of the tower through central openning.
4. Above the doorway the plaque is Richard Holmes 1811.
5. Detail of six square-headed window openings.

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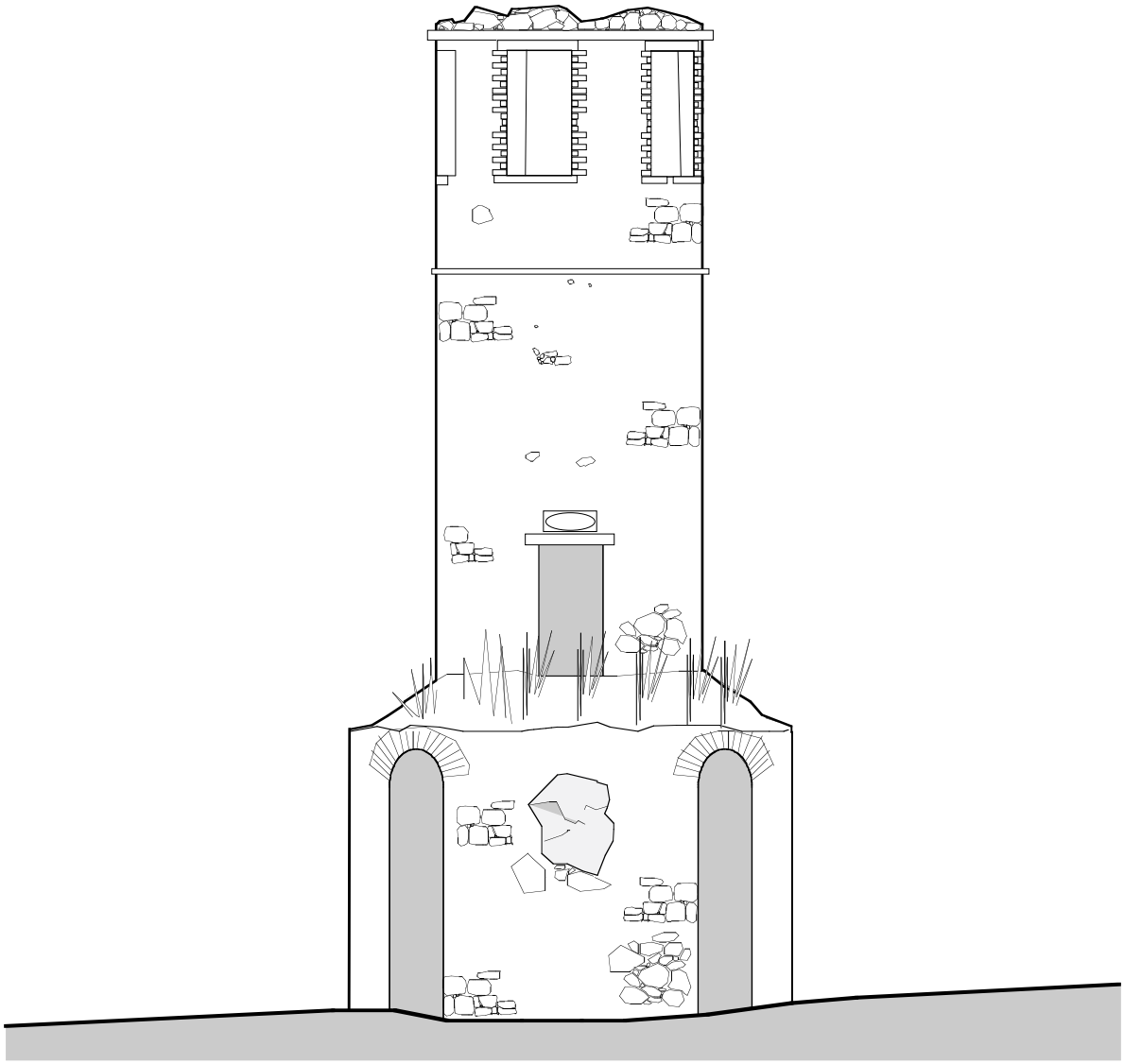
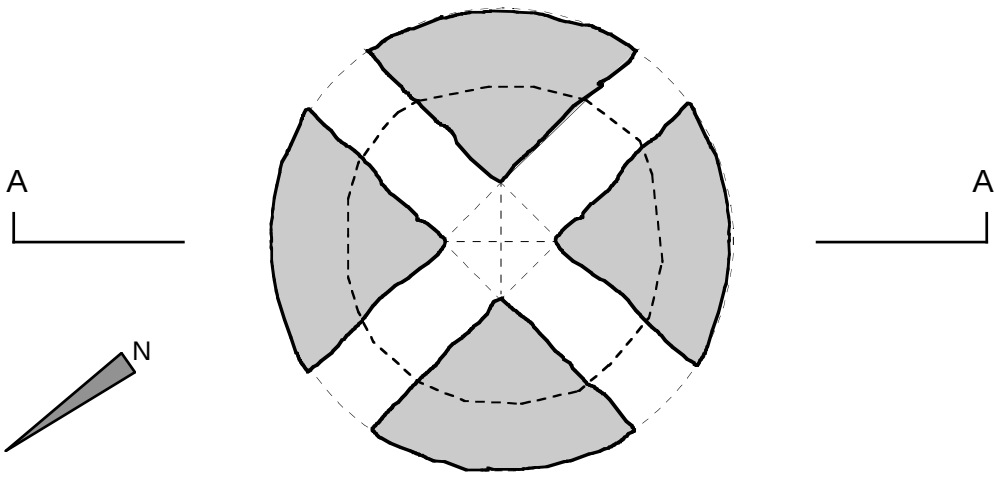
TINNAMUCK SPIRE

1.View of the brick arches to the front vaulted passageways.
2. View of the plinth on the north elevation.
3. Detail of the wall construction with remains of the lime render.
4. The brickcross vaulting viewed from below.
5. The north west elevation of the tower and surrounding landscape.

TINNAMUCK SPIRE



NORTH EAST ELEVATION



PLAN AT GROUND LEVEL

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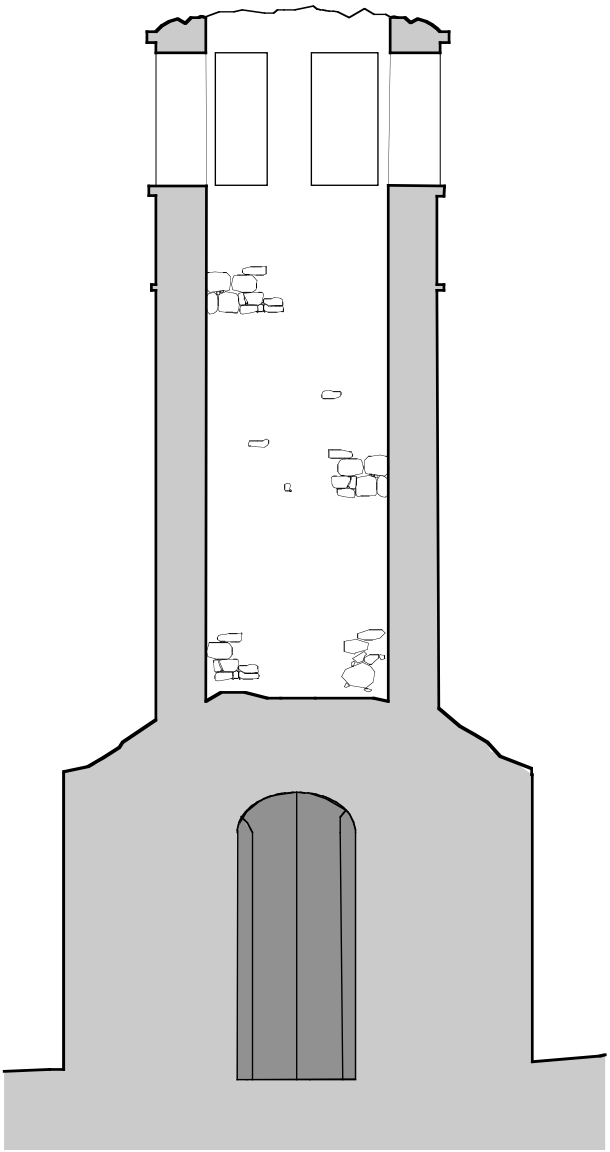
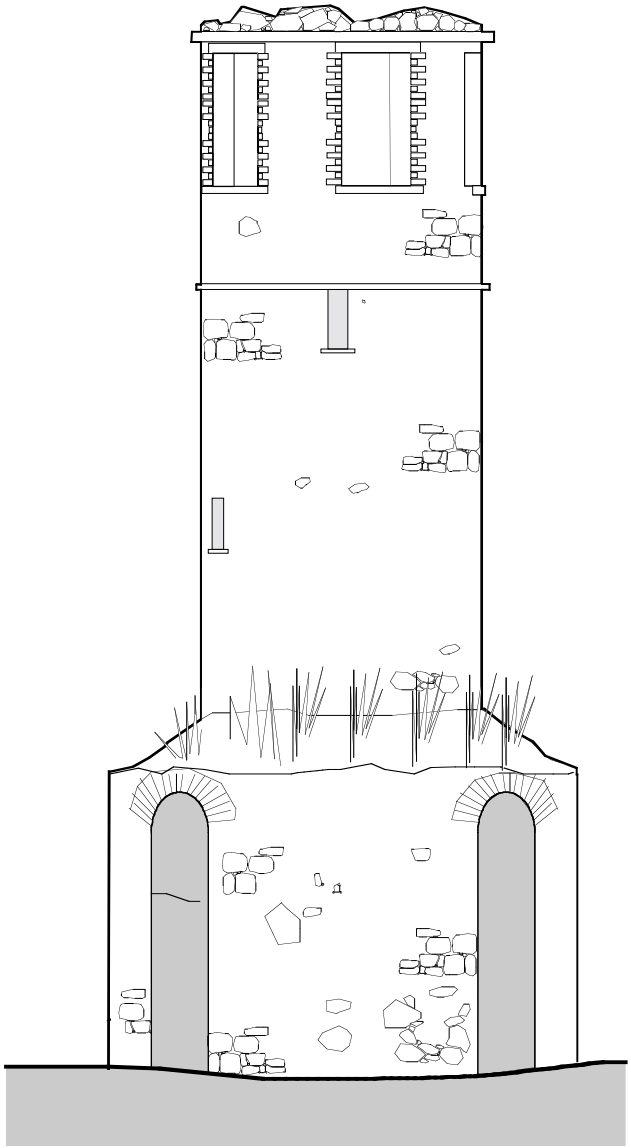


SECTION A-A



NORTH WEST ELEVATION

0 1M 5M

Gloster Archway

Description

The Gloster Archway consists of a fine rubble stone archway with a Baroque sweep to the crown, pierced with an elliptical opening. Flanked by rubble stone obelisks the archway stands on the edge of a field, terminating an impressive vista along an allée running eastwards from the impressive Gloster House. The obelisks stand on tall plinths into which niches are recessed. While the construction in rubble sandstone with roughly squared sandstone dressings and string courses is quite basic, the overall appearance is one of great sophistication in its detail and proportions. A thin coat of lime dash originally protected the masonry and created a more uniform appearance. This survives in some areas and has weathered back in others. Gloster House was remodelled in the early eighteenth century by a highly accomplished architect, possibly Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, and it is likely the archway is work by the same hand and of similar date. If so this was an early example of the obelisk form in Ireland, the first being Pearce's great monument to Lady Allen in Stillorgan, Co Dublin.

Condition

While the archway is largely intact it is currently in a very friable condition, with a thick covering of ivy from which adventitious roots have become deeply embedded in the masonry well above ground level. (This phenomenon can occur when the main growing stem is cut at ground level but the growth not removed higher up the plant causing new roots to tap horizontally into the masonry.) The pyramidons capping the obelisk shafts have eroded, as has the crown of the arch and there are numerous areas of both rubble masonry and in the dressed stone courses, where the bed mortar has eroded significantly. While the voussoirs of the stone arch appear to be at rest, some of the joints are eroded and if action is not taken promptly will become unstable and will collapse.

Significance

The sophisticated classical detailing, the early use of the obelisk form and the overall profile of the composition, which frames the countryside beyond the pleasure grounds of the house, make this a most impressive eye-catcher and a garden building of the first order. We would consider this to be a structure to justify the highest categorisation 5, as the structure is of national importance for its architectural quality and association with Ireland's greatest architect of the early eighteenth century.

Recommendations

1. Spray ivy with approved herbicide and cut any primary roots. (Carry out this task only when masonry consolidation works are planned to begin.)
2. When ivy has died back carefully remove all ivy down to embedded roots.
3. Drill and poison all embedded roots.
4. Take down all loose masonry to wall heads and pyramidons and set aside for reuse – remove any embedded roots.
5. Rebuild wall head, pyramidons, top of arch and flaunch with sand and lime.
6. Consolidate loose and missing areas of rubble masonry.
7. Rake out and point any open joints and allow for inserting slate wedges in voussoirs of the arch.
8. Spray any plant growth in immediate vicinity to create sterile zone immediately around the base of the structure.

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GLOSTER ARCHWAY

1. Silhouette of arch looking from Gloster House.
2. Partial view of the archway and obelisk with its thick covering of ivy.
3. The pyramidons capping the obelisk shafts have eroded, as has the crown of the arch and there are numerous areas of both rubble masonry and in the dressed stone courses, where the bed mortar has eroded significantly.
4. Detail showing squared sandstone dressings at spring of arch.
5. Detail of the base of the rubble stone obelisks which have eroded significantly.

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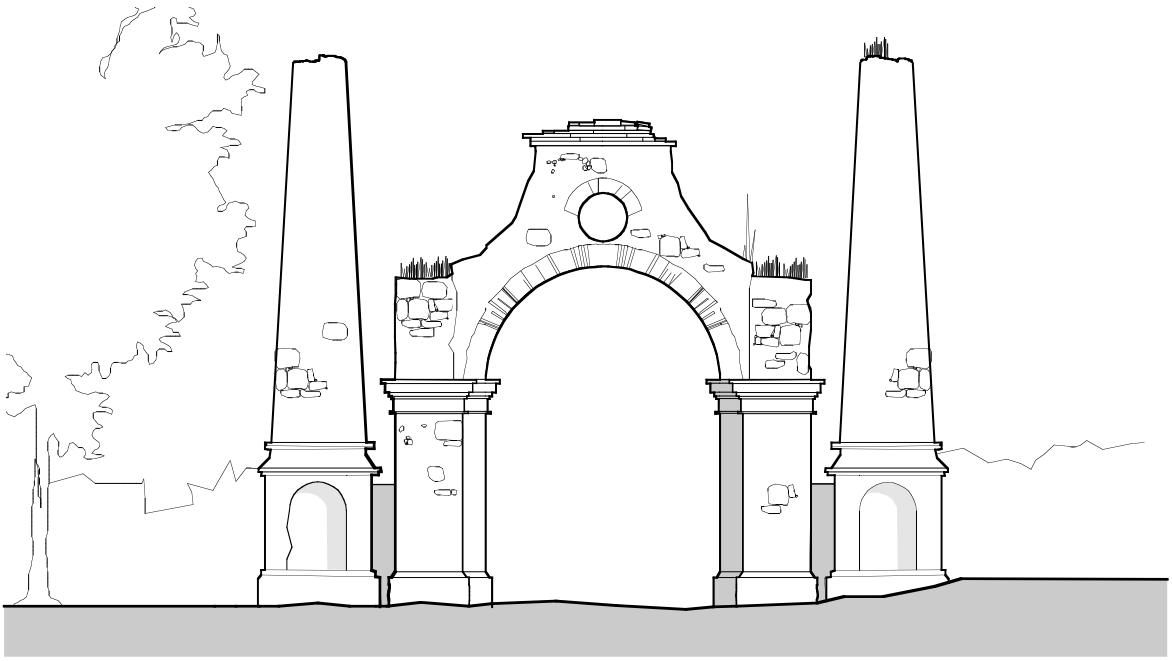
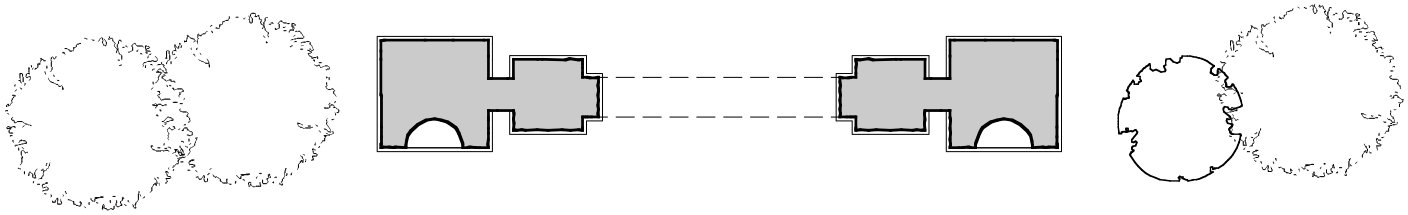
GLOSTER ARCHWAY

1. View of a Baroque crown with an elliptical opening from the east.
2. Detail showing the ivy growth.
3. View of the north west facing rubble stone obelisks.
4. Detail showing the base of the niche.
5. Detail of the base of the rubble stone plinth which has eroded significantly.

GLOSTER ARCHWAY



WEST ELEVATION



PLAN

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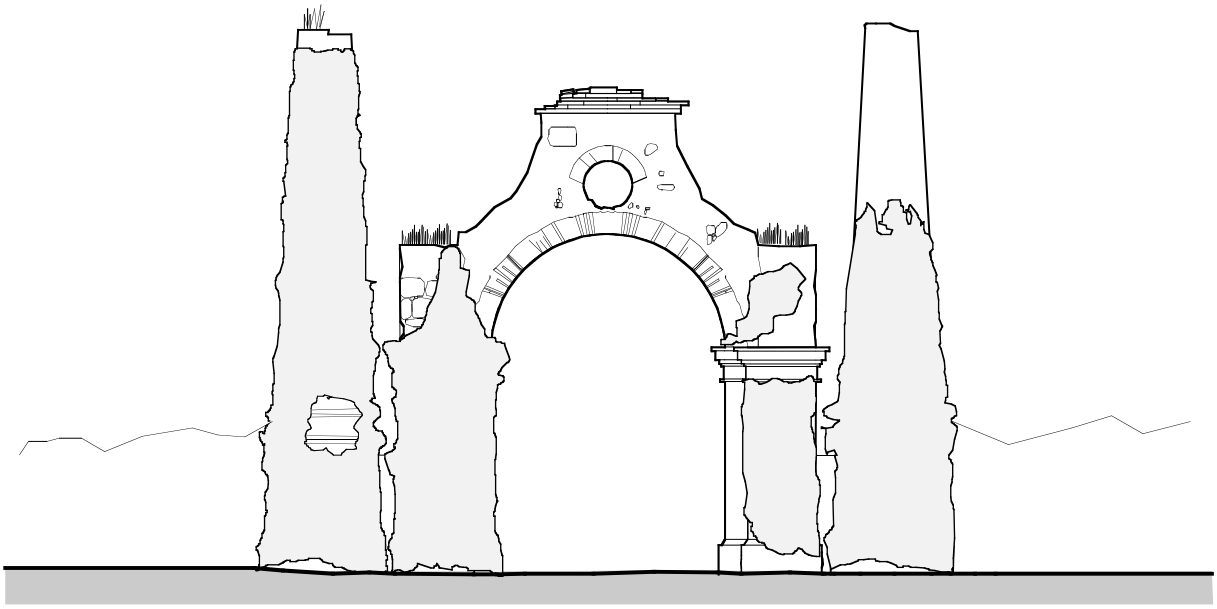

EAST ELEVATION

0 1M 5M

5.0 MISCELLANEOUS

Hollow House Ziggurats

Description

These unusual structures measure just two meters in height and just under three meters in diameter at their base. Constructed of grotesque, river-worn limestone rubble, they consist of four diminishing steps, rising concentrically from a circular plan. Both structures stand on the central axis of a large rectangular pond that dries up during periods of drought, which might possibly help to explain their purpose. On each of the two structures, which resemble circular ziggurats, the top step is considerably higher than the lower steps and might originally have been the plinth of a more elaborate, ornamental top, possibly in the form of an irregular crown as suggested by the form of the better preserved of the two structures. An interesting cross is incised into a large stone in one of the structures. Located as they are quite close together and in the very middle of the pond, suggests that they may have been constructed as safe night perches for waterfowl that once inhabited the pond.

Condition

Both structures are in a very poor state of repair, with much disturbed and loose masonry. The structural deterioration has been accelerated by cement rich pointing and repairs that have been carried out previously, most of which have failed. There are some holes in the face of the pointing which reveal that much of the mortar in the core has been washed out over time. There are some vertical cracks in the upper sections of both structures that suggests the footings or bearing strata has been disturbed in some way, which is not surprising as the foundations of the structures are under water for much of the year.

Significance

The structures are extremely simple and fairly crudely built with a high proportion of very small stones used in the lower areas. Their main interest lies in their ornamental qualities as small artificial islands in a pond, built from quirky grotesque stone that may have had a meaningful function as a refuge for waterfowl. I would consider the Hollow House ziggurats to justify a categorisation of between 1 and 2, as structures of local importance.

Recommendations

1. Remove all sand and cement pointing, consolidate any loose masonry, re-point and flaunch in sand and lime to weather.
2. Fill interior of structure with sand and lime grout.
3. Spray any plant growth on the structure with approved biocide.

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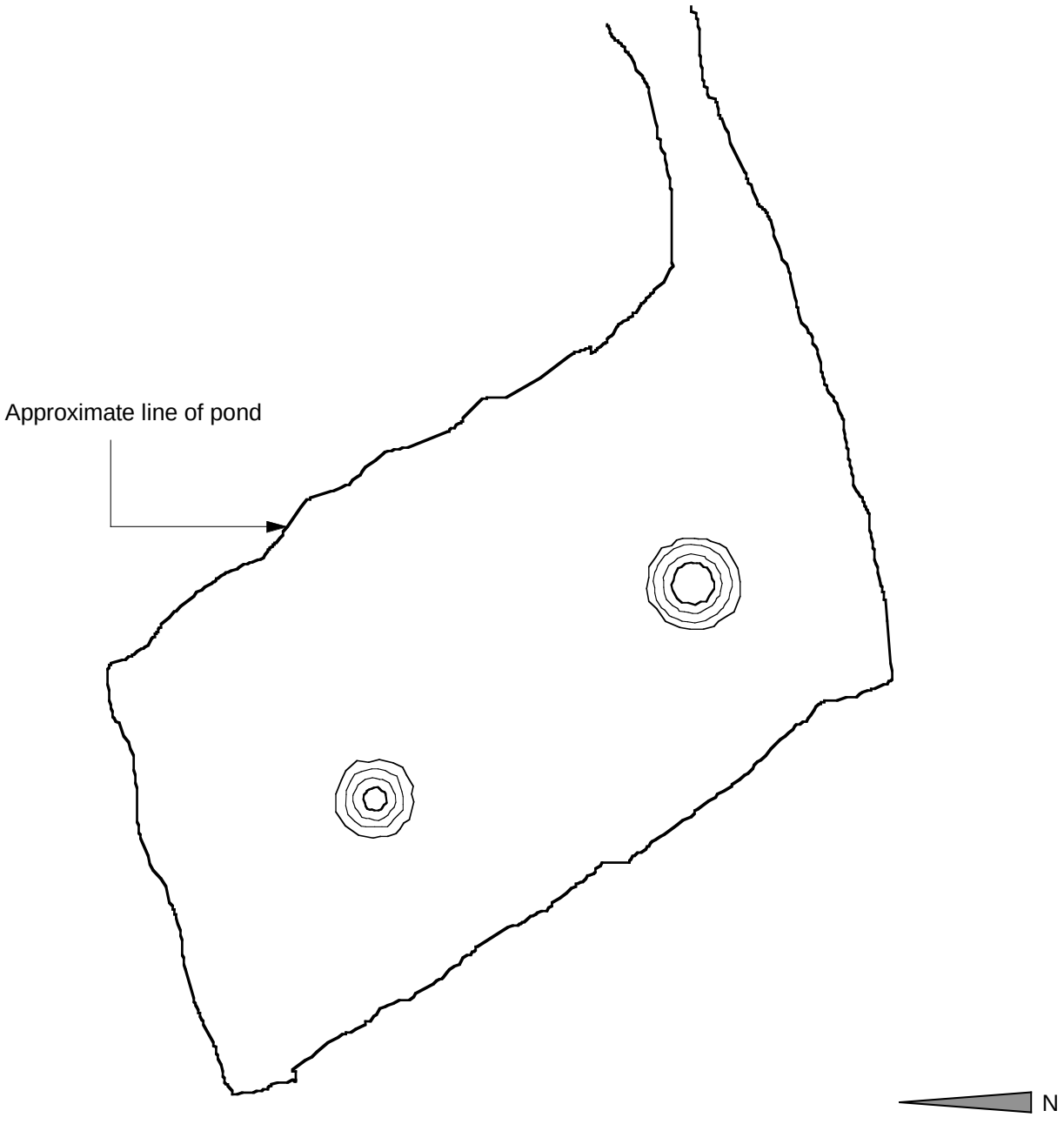
HOLLOW HOUSE ZIGURATS

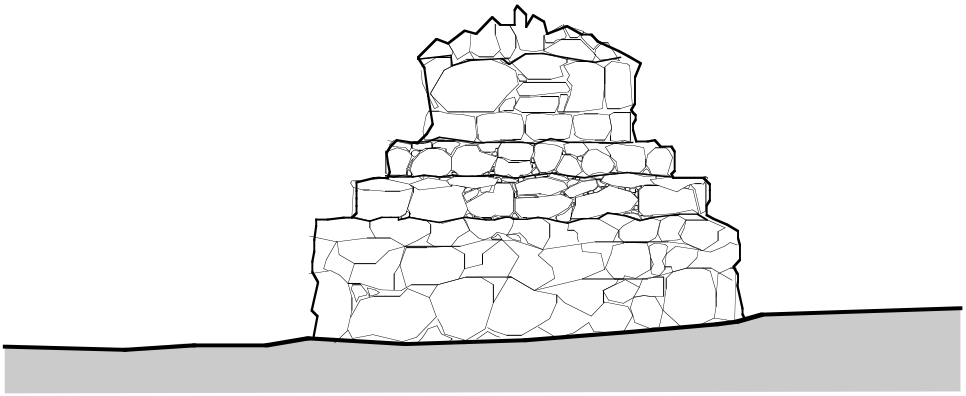
1. View of the zigurats looking north towards Hollow House.
2. Detail view of the north zigurat.
3. Detail view of the east zigurat.
4. Detail view of the rubble limestone construction which has eroded significantly.
5. Detail view of the crown of the north zigurat with plant growth.

HOLLOW HOUSE ZIGURATS

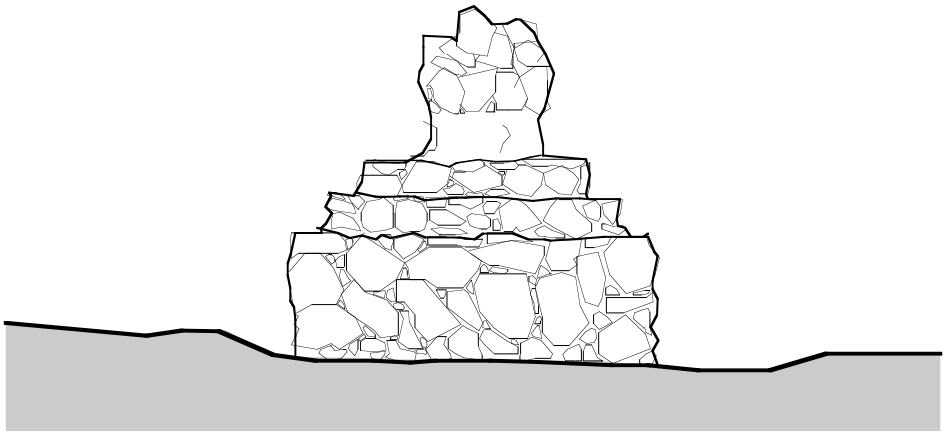


GROUND LEVEL PLAN

0 5M 10M



EAST ZIGURAT



NORTH ZIGURAT

Moorock Turret

Description

This structure is extremely hard to interpret as currently it is surrounded by a dense thicket of trees and is heavily overgrown with briars, nettles and saplings. Several sketches survive on historic maps, all at a very small scale. The earliest (OS 1809) shows a tapering tower like structure, not unlike a stepped pyramid standing to the north east of Moorock House, while the second (OS 6" 1829-41) and third (OS 25" (1897-1913) both appear on ordnance survey maps. Of these, the first edition shows a small circular structure contained within a pentagonal base at the vetices of which five trees are shown. The second edition shows a turret or tower standing within a circular form or enclosure around which four trees are depicted. From the remains that survive the structure appears to rise in the form of a rubble based mound, 4-5m in height and about 10m in diameter. It appears to take to the form of five buttresses rising to a high point in the centre, forming a structure that is roughly circular in plan. A ring of mature ash trees surrounds the structure.

Condition

The condition is hard to judge as the original form remains unclear. Clearing all vegetation off the mound will no doubt reveal considerably more information and may reveal the original form and constructional method. There are areas of small sized rubble stone and larges isolated stones lying in the undergrowth near the base of the structure, which suggests it has been vandalised as some point in its past.

Significance

Significance is hard to judge without more information. However, the structure is certainly interesting in that an early cartographer thought it important enough to record on a map. Earth works were an early form of garden ornamentation and this may well date from the late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries when landscape gardening in Ireland was still very much in its infancy. I would consider the Moorock to justify a categorisation of between 2-3, as a structure of local or possibly regional importance. (This will be determined by the extent of any evidence that comes to light when the structure is cleared of planting.)

Recommendations

1. Remove all plant growth from on top of mount and from around the base of the structure out to the ring of ash trees.
2. Sort and grade any loose masonry that comes to light during the clearing and set aside for possible reuse.
3. Spray the structure with an approved biocide.

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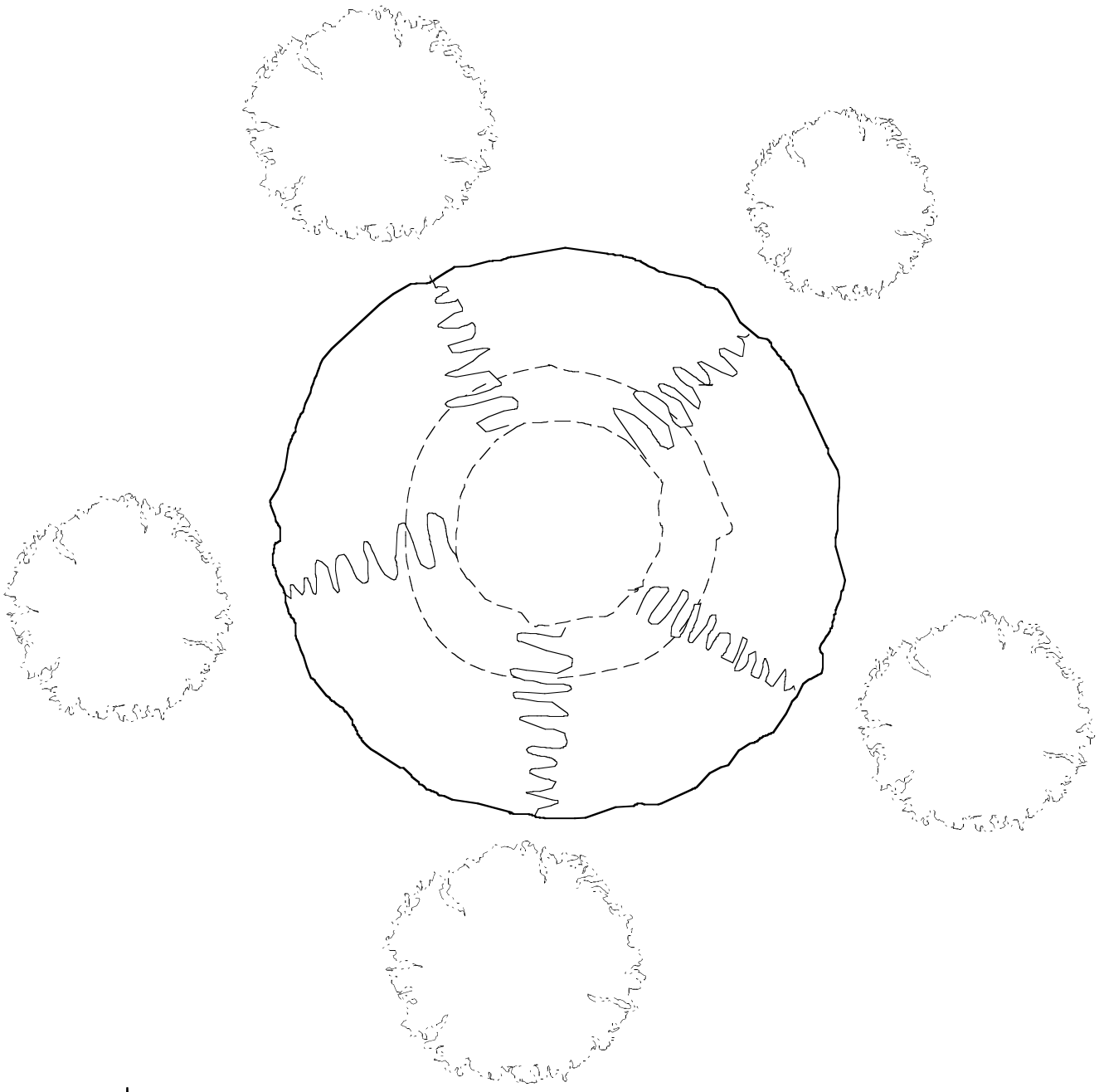
MOOROCK TURRET

1.General view of setting it is a dense thicket of trees and is heavily overgrown with briars, nettles and saplings
2. View of one of the mature ash trees which surround the structure.
3. View from bottom of mound.
4. Detail of the fallen rubble stonework construction.
5. Apex of the mound with loose stonework.

MOOROCK TURRET



CONJECTURAL LAYOUT

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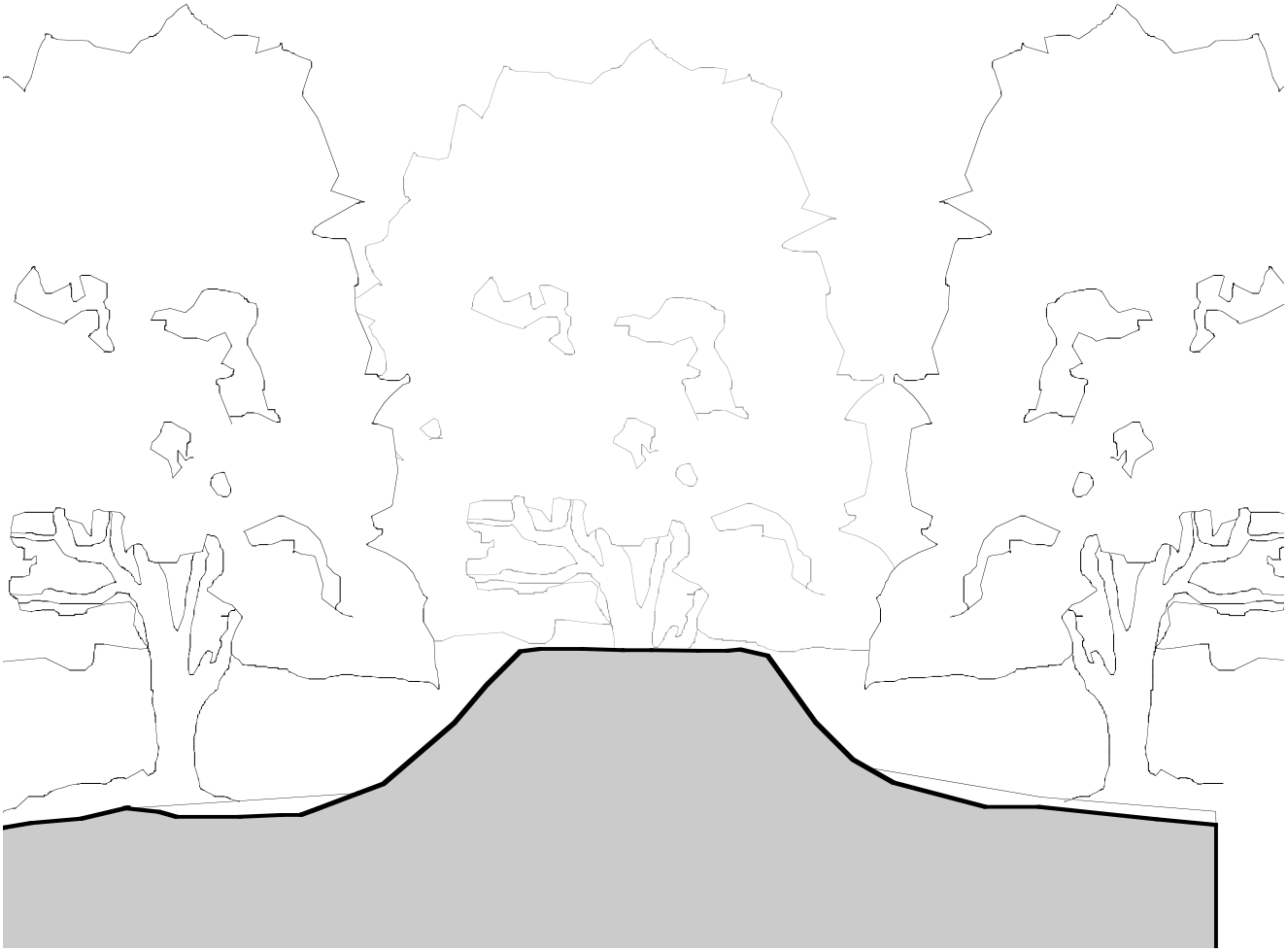
0 1M 5M



SECTION - MOOROCK TURRET

Leap Castle Gateway

Description

A wonderful example of “paste-board castle-style” where a boundary wall is thickened, raised and enriched to create the illusion of a barbican. At Leap Castle the gateway consists of a shallow segmental archway flanked by two narrow piers, all enriched with simple battlements and blind and open arrow slits, all constructed of rubble limestone, with sand and lime wet dash finish. Gothic doorways are send into the flanking walls, one blind the other providing a pedestrian entrance. Beyond the flanking screen walls, curving walls extend outwards to meet with the boundary wall of the estate. That these walls are convex, rather than concave, which is more common is worthy of note. There are simple iron gates to both the main carriageway and pedestrian entrance and behind the northern screen wall is a Tudor style gate lodge.

Condition

The structure is generally in a reasonable state of repair with only minor repair and re-pointing necessary, together with the removal of some minor plant grown. In the voussoirs of the wide central arch and the blind arch to one side, the joints are opening and should be repaired to avoid more serious damage occurring. The gates are rusty and need of preparing and painting.

Significance

The gateway is an interesting example of late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century ornamentation, wherein simple design and construction have created a classic eye-catcher style folly, where illusion is very much the aim. I would consider the Leap Castle gateway would justify a categorisation of between 2 and 3, as a structure of local importance.

Recommendations

1. Consolidate any loose masonry, re-point and flaunch in sand and lime to weather.
2. Wedge open joints of voussoirs of central arch and arch to blind doorway with slate and re-point.
3. De-rust and paint gates.
4. Spray any plant growth on the structure with approved biocide.

1.

2.

3.

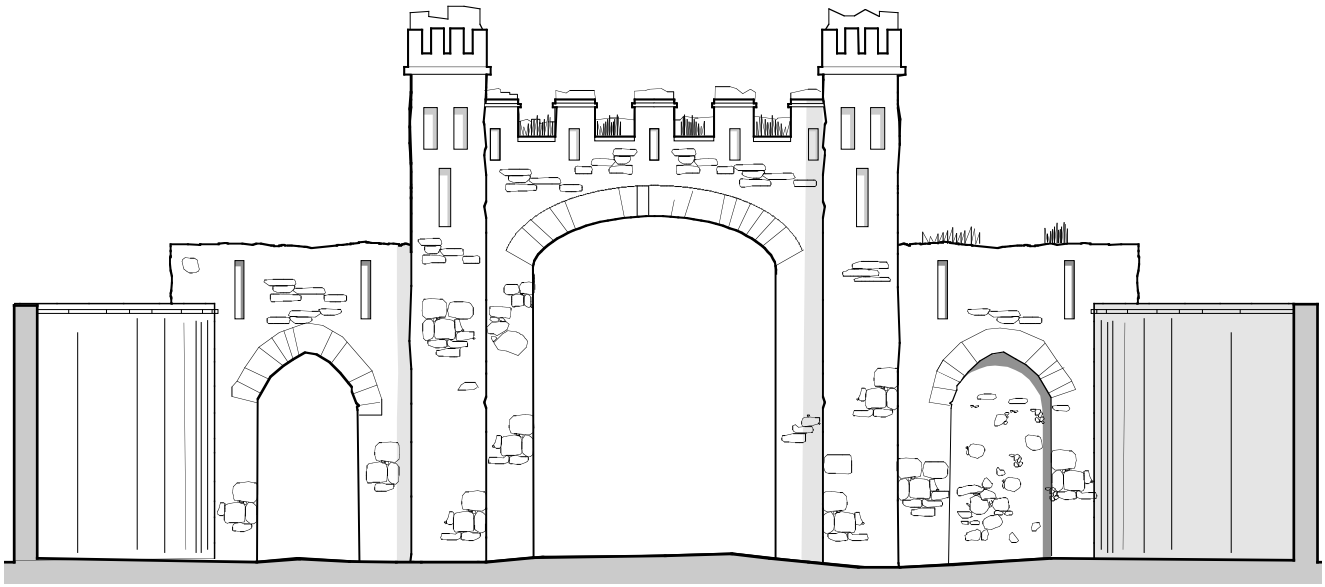
4.

5.

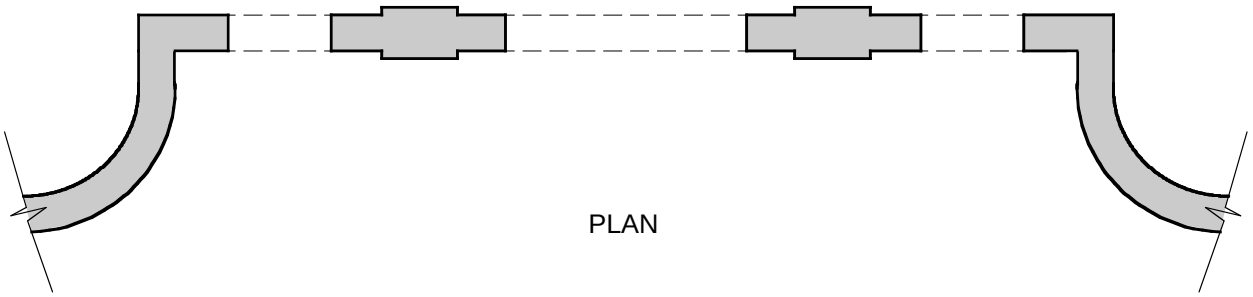
LEAP CASTLE GATEWAY

1. View of the front elevation of the gateway.
2. Detail view through main entrance archway with iron gate visible.
3. View of the side archway.
4. Detail of battlements.
5. View of the gateway and flanking walls.

LEAP CASTLE GATEWAY



FRONT ELEVATION



PLAN

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Kinnitty Mausoleum

Description

The Kinnitty Mausoleum is a beautifully designed and detailed pyramid. Rising from a square base, it is constructed of crisply cut sandstone blocks, dressed with a punched finish. A pointed-arched entrance on the northwest face is secured with a pair of heavy iron doors. The bed joints of each course of the stonework run almost perpendicular to the line of the arrises of the pyramid, forming a most interesting pattern that interlocks like a zip fastener on the centre line of each face. It is more common to run the bed joints of a masonry structure parallel to the ground plane. This pattern of unusual masonry jointing is continued across the face of the cast iron doors. Situated on high ground partially surrounded by trees in a quiet corner of the Church of Ireland graveyard, the mausoleum is approached by a long flight of shallow steps rising on axis with the pyramid through a collection of heavily overgrown graves. From the base of the town there are fine views out over the village of Kinnitty.

Condition

The pyramid/mausoleum is in a very good state of preservation and a more than reasonable state of repair. Some cement rich re-pointing has been carried out in the past, but this is unsightly rather than damaging. There is a little loose masonry at low level to the right of the entrance doorways to the vault, which would benefit from consolidation.

Significance

While there are several pyramid style mausoleums in Ireland, this is a very significant example of the type. Well built and beautifully sited, its classic geometry and Egyptian funerary associations make this a memorable monument, the visual impact of which was probably intended to extend beyond the boundaries of the graveyard. I would consider the Kinnity Mausoleum would justify a categorisation of 4, as a structure of regional importance.

Recommendations

1. Remove cement pointing and re-point in sand and lime.
2. Consolidate rubble masonry at base of north-facing entrance face of the pyramid and re-point.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

KINNITY MAUSOLEUM

1. General view of the approach to the mausoleum.
2. View of the south west elevation.
3. Detail of the pointing.
4. View of the steps to the north east of the entrance.
5. Detail to the corner of the mausoleum.

1.

2.

3.

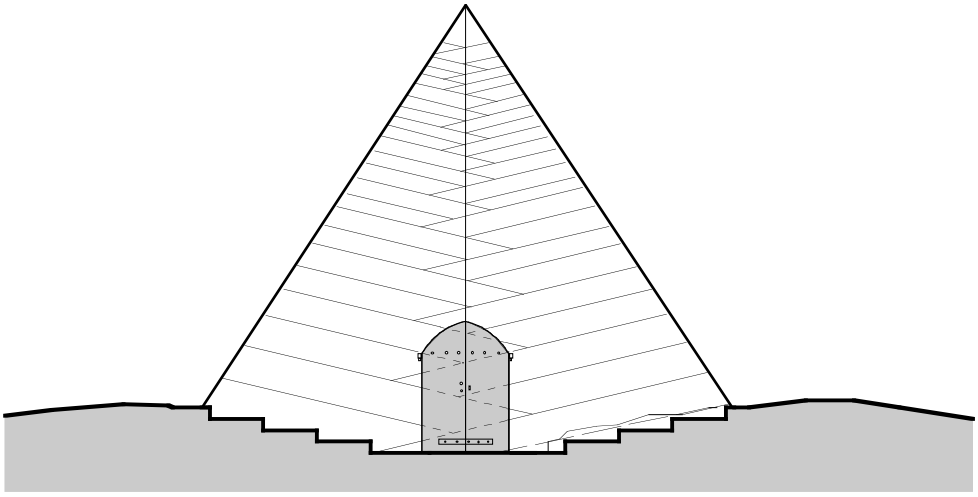
4.

5.

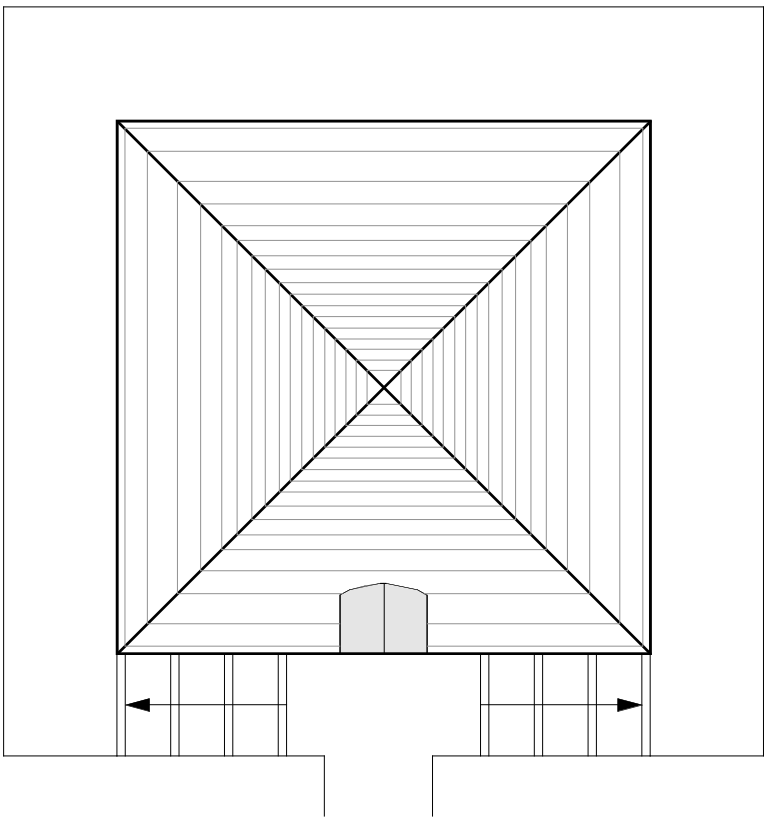
KINNITY MAUSOLEUM

1.Detail of the fine iron entrance doors to the mausoleum.
2. Detail of the bed joints running perpendicular to the line of the arrises of the pyramid.
3. Stone coursing with pattern carried onto the irons doors.
4. View of the steps to the west of the mausolem.
5. Detail of the surface finish of limestone.

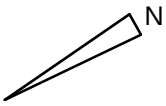
KINNITTY MAUSOLEUM



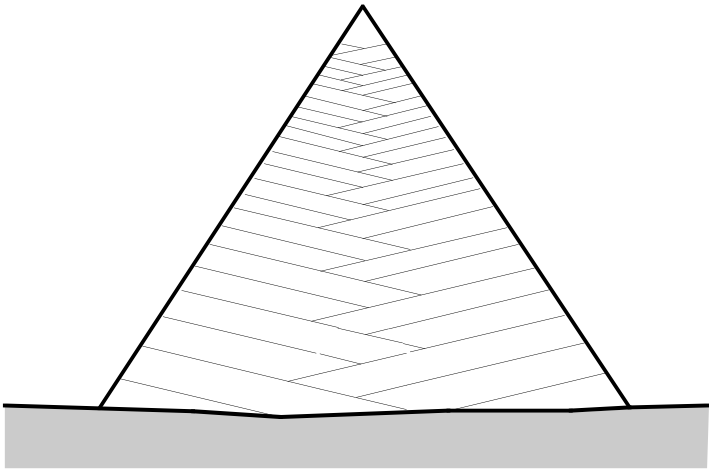
NORTH WEST ELEVATION



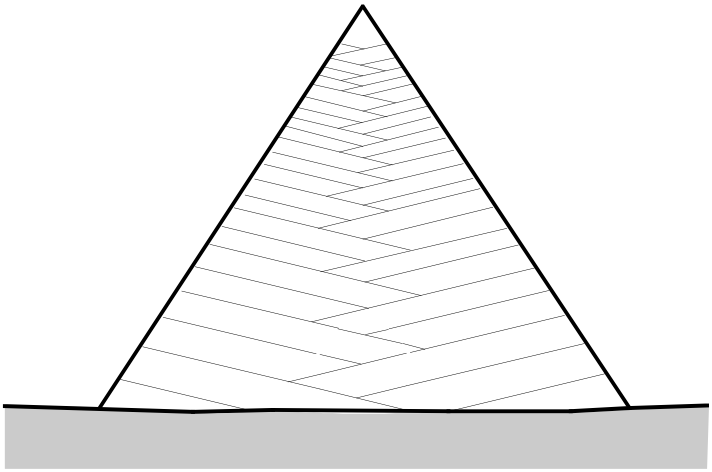
PLAN



KINNITTY MAUSOLEUM



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION



NORTH EAST ELEVATION

Howley Hayes Architects are recognised for their work in both contemporary design and for the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, structures and places. The practice has been responsible for the conservation and reuse of numerous buildings and places of national and international cultural significance, several of which have received RIAI, Opus or Europa Nostra Awards. Under the Conservation Accreditation System, implemented by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Howley Hayes Architects is accredited as a Conservation Practice Grade 1. Director James Howley and Associate Director Fergal Mc Namara are Grade 1 conservation architects. Over the years the practice has completed many projects for the restoration and conservation of numerous historic buildings, gardens and landscapes and James Howley is the author of – The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland, published by Yale University Press. Howley Hayes Architects have, to date, been responsible for over 120 conservation reports and strategic master plans for clients such as the Heritage Council, the World Monument Fund, the Office of Public Works, together with numerous local authorities and private clients.