AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE of COUNTY LONGFORD
For a small county, Longford has a rich and varied architectural heritage dating from the start of the eighteenth century to the present. The built heritage covers a great range of building types, from country houses and ancillary structures, churches and public buildings to the more modest but equally important vernacular dwellings and farm buildings. The larger and more impressive architectural entities are generally appreciated but the more modest elements of the built heritage are often overlooked and so are in danger of being lost without record.

In 2005-6 the NIAH undertook the largest survey to date of the post-1700 AD built heritage of County Longford. In all, 951 structures were recorded during the course of the survey, of which some 840 have been recommended for protection. During the course of this survey, a large number of different buildings were identified and recorded. It is hoped that alongside those buildings that have been traditionally admired, the survey will also help to draw attention to many of the less well-known elements that make up the layers of our built environment. In rural areas these include bridges, mills, vernacular dwellings, barns and other agricultural outbuildings, gates and gate piers, and water pumps; while in towns there are houses and local authority dwellings, shopfronts and street furniture.

The survey of County Longford is one of a series to be produced by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH). The NIAH is a state initiative managed by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. It aims to encourage the appreciation of, and contribute to the protection of, the post-1700 AD built heritage by systematically recording that heritage on a nationwide basis.

The NIAH survey of the architectural heritage of County Longford can be accessed on the Internet at: www.buildingsofireland.ie

For the purpose of this Introduction the spelling for all Parishes, Townlands and Towns is as set out in the Index to the Townlands, and Towns, and Parishes and Baronies of Ireland (1851).
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Introduction
Longford is a northern midland county in north-west Leinster, bordered by Westmeath to the south and south-east, Cavan to the north-east, Leitrim to the north-west, and the River Shannon to the west, which separates it from Roscommon. The major towns are Longford Town, the county town, which is situated close to the centre of the county, Granard to the north-east and Ballymahon to the south-east.

Set in the geographical centre of Ireland, Longford is the fourth smallest county in the country, running approximately 45 kilometres from north to south at its greatest length, 35 kilometres from east to west at its greatest width, and covering 1,091 square kilometres.

Comprising rolling plains and large tracts of bog land to the west and south-west, the topography is generally flat and low lying. The northern third of the county is hilly, forming part of the drumlin belt stretching across the northern midlands. Cuirt Hill is the highest point at 279 metres. The best agricultural lands are found in the east and south-east of the county, particularly to the east of Longford Town and surrounding Ballymahon.

The main rivers are the Shannon and its tributaries the River Camlin and the River Inny. The Camlin passes through Longford Town to join the Shannon at Cloondara, while the Inny crosses through the south of the county from its source in County Westmeath to feed into Lough Ree.

Lakes dotted with islands are characteristic of the borders of the county to the north and west. Lough Forbes and Lough Ree are found along the Shannon to the west and south-west respectively, while Lough Gowna and Lough Kinale form part of the border with Cavan to the north-east. The islands on these lakes were attractive locations for early medieval ecclesiastical settlements as the lakes provided both isolation from the mainland and, conversely, transport links via the rivers through which they were fed. Monastic ruins dating from the sixth century survive on several islands, such as Inis Mór in Lough Gowna and Inchcleraun and Saints Island in Lough Ree.

The county is largely underlain by carboniferous limestone with namurian shales to the north and isolated tracts of sandstone near
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General view of the undulating landscape to the north of the county.

View of the raised bog that characterises much of the west and south-west of the county.
the O’Farrell Boy clan holding sway to the south. In later centuries the southern area became associated with the developed market economy of Leinster, while the northern area remained similar to the less economically developed area of south Ulster and north-east Connaught.

Samuel Lewis, in his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* of 1837, described the landscape of Longford thus:

“much of the north of the county is in a state of nature, and the practicability of draining, reclaiming, and cultivating to any profitable purpose is exceedingly doubtful. Toward the south the prevailing character is a rich vegetable mould resting on blue clay, very retentive of moisture. In this part of the country every kind of grain and green crop may be cultivated to the greatest advantage.”
There is archaeological evidence of human activity in Longford dating back for several millennia. The earliest known monuments are generally found in the northern half of the county. A group of four megalithic portal tombs, dated to between 3800 BC and 3200 BC, is located close to the western shore of Lough Gowna. The tomb at Aghnacliff is widely known and is a well-preserved example of its type (fig. 1). This can be seen as part of a group of portal tombs that extends across the drumlin belt, with further examples in Cavan and Leitrim to the north and north-west. There are two Late Neolithic or Early Bronze Age stone circles in the Abbeylara area, known as the Cartronbore and Cloghchurnel stone circles, which are among the few stone circles known in the midlands of Ireland.

The extended group of prehistoric trackways to the south-west corner of the county, known collectively as the Corlea trackway or togher, is the most significant recent archaeological find in the county. The main trackway (fig. 2), constructed of oak planks and dated by dendrochronology to 148 BC, is one of the most extensive monuments of its kind found in Europe.

An extensive linear earthwork comprising an earthen bank and a ditch extends across the north of County Longford from the shores of Lough Gowna to Lough Kinale, on the border with Westmeath, close to the village of Abbeylara. This feature forms part of an extensive earthwork that extends discontinuously from County Leitrim across the north midlands before terminating at Dorsay in County Armagh. This intriguing feature, commonly known as 'The Black Pig's Dyke', is believed to have formed part of the ancient boundary of Ulster, and excavations in Monaghan and Armagh have yielded dates in the last centuries BC.

Ringforts are the most commonly and widely distributed of Irish archaeological sites. In essence a ringfort comprises a circular or oval area, usually measuring between 20 and 40 metres in diameter, enclosed by one or more banks of earth and/or stone excavated from the external ditch(es) that surround the monument. Within the enclosed area archaeological excavation has revealed evidence of circular and, later, rectangular house sites and ancillary buildings. These were not forts in any military sense but rather the defended farmsteads of
AGHNACLIFF DOLMEN
(3800 BC to 3200 BC)
This spectacular portal tomb dates to the Neolithic period and is one of a group of four found close to Lough Gowna. Portal tombs are mainly found in the north of Ireland, and the Longford examples are among the few known in the midlands. They are single-chambered structures characterised by two tall portal stones at the entrance, generally with a massive capstone forming the roof. They were originally covered with an earthen and/or stone cairn, now generally absent or greatly eroded, and usually contained cremation-type burials.

Courtesy of the Photographic Unit, DoEHLG

CORLEA TRACKWAY
Corlea, near Keenagh
(148 BC)
This important Iron Age monument is the most impressive of a large group of toghers or trackways discovered in the Corlea area of south-west Longford. They have been suitable for wheeled traffic. It is estimated that at least 300 large oak trees were needed for its construction.

It was dated to 148 BC by dendrochronology (tree ring dating) and was originally over a kilometre in length. The complexity of construction and the scale of this monument provide evidence of large-scale social organisation in the area at the time of construction.

Courtesy of the Photographic Unit, DoEHLG
relatively prosperous minor lords or chiefs. The majority of excavated examples date to the early medieval period (c. 500 – c. 1200 AD) although some examples are known to be from the Iron Age and a few appear to have been inhabited into the later medieval period. There are numerous ringforts in County Longford, mainly concentrated in the areas of good quality agricultural land to the east and the south-east. The trinavate ringfort at Binney near Aghaclea, with its three sets of banks and ditches, is an interesting example of its type, but more common are those surrounded by a single bank and ditch, such as the one found at Sleavehun (fig. 3).

Lough Ree was a centre of ecclesiastical development from the early medieval period. Set on the Shannon, the great monastic centre of Clonmacnoise in County Offaly was accessible by river, and a number of satellite foundations to this ecclesiastical centre were established further north in Lough Ree. These foundations flourished for a thousand years until the dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century. Sites of prayer and meditation, they were also centres for pilgrimage, learning, agriculture and milling.

St Diarmuid, reputedly the teacher of St Ciarán of Clonmacnoise, founded a monastery at Inchcleraun (fig. 4) in 540 AD. The importance and scale of the monastery is evidenced by the recorded plundering by the Vikings in 1010, 1057 and 1193. It evolved from a small-scale early medieval monastery to an Augustinian priory in the twelfth century, when it became a noted centre of learning. Other monastic sites developed on Saints Island, also in Lough Ree, during the thirteenth century, and at Inis Mór or Inchmore in Lough Gowna, which was reputed to have been established by St Columcille in the fifth century and later converted to Augustinian rule in the late twelfth century.
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ST MEL'S CATHEDRAL
Ardagh Demesne (c. 1050)

This simple single-cell church has the projecting stone ailes and flat-headed doorway that are characteristic features of early stone churches in Ireland. Recent excavations at the site in 1967 revealed that the church was constructed upon the site of an earlier timber church, probably of eighth-century date.

Courtesy of the Photographic Unit, DoEHLG

GRANARD MOTTE
Moatfield, Granard (1199)

This enormous motte was originally built by Richard Tuite in 1199 as a frontier castle on the border of the Anglo-Norman lordship of Meath. Motte were built during the initial phase of Anglo-Norman occupation in Ireland. They were surrounded by a wooden or sometimes a stone tower. The raised D-shaped enclosure to the height of the motte is a bailey, which was used to house auxiliary structures, homes and livestock. The site was later the probable inauguration site of the O’Farrell Bane chieftains during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Courtesy of the Photographic Unit, DoEHLG
Early medieval church sites also developed further inland in less vulnerable sites away from the river. St Mel, said to be one of St Patrick’s nephews, is thought to have founded a church at Ardagh in the fifth century. The extant St Mel’s Cathedral (fig. 5) is a partly reconstructed eleventh-century ruin, built on the site of an earlier timber church.

Longford has always been an important line of communication through the midlands. One of the major early medieval routeways, known as the Slighe Assail, passed through the centre of the county in an east–west direction. This route was traditionally the main route from Meath to Connaught, and had a significant bearing on the subsequent settlement pattern in the county.

The Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169 was one of the major turning-points in Irish history. In 1172, Henry II granted the Kingdom of Meath, which then included Longford, to one Hugh de Lacy. To consolidate and facilitate their conquest, the Anglo-Normans built earthen mottes, raised mounds of earth originally topped with a timber or stone tower. Balleys, which are enclosures surrounded by an earthen ditch surmounted with timber palisades, are often found in association with mottes. The motte at Granard (fig. 6), originally built in 1199 by the Tuite family, is a fine example of an Anglo-Norman motte and is one of the largest of its type in Ireland. There are a number of other mottes in County Longford, generally found in the eastern half of the county.

The Anglo-Normans were responsible for the original development of many towns in Ireland but, unusually, they are not thought to have founded any in County Longford. They established three boroughs in Longford however, at Granard (an existing settlement and the oldest of the urban centres in County Longford), Lanesborough (then Athlagle) and at Lisardowen, which is located to the east of Longford Town. These boroughs had the legal privileges of towns but the urban functions of large villages.

New religious orders were established throughout Europe in the twelfth century. In Ireland the Cistercian order was first, quickly followed by the Augustinian, and later the Dominican, Franciscan and other orders. The Cistercians introduced a standardised monastic plan, comprising a central open cloister square flanked by the church to the north, kitchen and refectories to the south, sacristy and chapter to the east, store rooms to the west, and often including dormitories on the upper levels on two sides.
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Ecclesiastical establishments followed in the wake of economic prosperity, with monastic endowments by both Anglo-Normans and the native Irish. A Cistercian abbey at Abbeyshrule was colonised by monks from Mellifont, c. 1200, under the patronage of the Gaelic O’Farrells (fig. 7), and another was established at Abbeylara c. 1205 or 1211 by the Anglo-Norman Richard Tuita. Both are now in ruins. Other monastic establishments, also now in ruins, include the Augustinian priory of Abbey Derg or Abbey Daing, founded c. 1205 by Gormghal O’Quinlin, Lord of Ballylong, and another Augustinian foundation established by Sir Henry Dillon before 1244 on Saints Island in Lough Ree.

In the thirteenth century the motte and bailey was superseded by the stone castle. Generally taking the form of a tower or keep surrounded by high curtain walls, castles were built by both the Anglo-Normans and the native Irish. The necessity of these defensive buildings is apparent from a period of local unrest that occurred in 1295, during which Geoffrey O’Farrell destroyed castles at Barry, Carnagh and Moydow.

War, famine and the Black Death brought economic decline in the fourteenth century. The town of Granard was sacked by Edward Bruce’s army in 1315, and the O’Farrells recovered control over their former territory lost during the Anglo-Norman conquest. By the early fifteenth century the Gaelic lords had lost their strength and many Anglo-Normans or Old English families had either retreated towards the heartland of the Pale to the east or had become more integrated into native Irish life. The Anglo-Norman boroughs at Athleague, Granard and Lisardowan declined in importance during the fifteenth century, and were eventually abandoned.

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(fig. 7) Abbeyshrule Abbey
Abbeyshrule
(c. 1200 to c. 1700)

An aerial view of the Cistercian abbey at Abbeyshrule. This was the fifth religious house established by the order in Ireland, and was colonised by monks from Mellifont under the patronage of the Gaelic O’Farrells of Athleague. The abbey church was built on a high terrace that includes the remains of the abbey church and a late sixteenth-century tower-house or residental tower. Later, possibly in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, a small chapel was built inside the chancel of the abbey church using the walls of the existing structure.

Courtesy of the
Photographic Unit, DoEHLG
This imposing towerhouse was originally constructed by the powerful O'Farrell family. The most likely builder is Richard O'Farrell, Bishop of Ardagh between 1541 and 1553. It consists of a narrow-tower with a slight batter to the base. It is constructed of roughly coursed limestone and an unusual local conglomerate known as 'pudding stone' that was quarried at Slieve Caldragh, near Ardagh.

The late medieval towerhouse, common throughout Ireland, was developed around this time. There are a small number of surviving towerhouses in County Longford, mainly sited to the south and east of the county. Branches of the important O'Farrell clan built Castlerea Castle (fig. 8), c. 1550, to the west of Ardagh, and Mornin Castle, c. 1500, east of Keenagh. These were constructed in a style typical of towerhouses, with two or three storeys over a vaulted basement. Rathcline Castle (fig. 9), near Lanesborough, a three-storey towerhouse with base batter, was originally built or rebuilt by the Quinn family during the sixteenth century and later extended during the early seventeenth century with the construction of a large three-storey fortified range and flanking towers to the bawn.
Rathcline Castle was a three-storey towerhouse built by the Quinn family during the sixteenth century. It was extended in the early seventeenth century with the construction of a fortified three-storey range and towers to the corners of the town. Rathcline Castle was attacked by Cromwell, and later restored and enlarged in 1666 by Sir George Lane, secretary to the Duke of Ormond and the patron of the town of Laneborough, only to be heavily damaged during the Williamite Wars. Surrounding the ruins are the remains of seventeenth-century formal gardens and a former fish pond.

The growing wealth and confidence of the native Irish is demonstrated by the development of market centres in the late medieval period at the O’Farrell strongholds of Granard and Longford. Abbeycartron, or Máinnistir Cartruin, was founded in Longford in 1400 by Domhnall O’Farrell, who built a Dominican foundation on of the banks of the River Camlin. The presence of friary, castle and market is indicative of the status of Longford Town as an urban centre of some significance.

The territory now comprising County Longford was traditionally known in the early medieval period as Annaly (Annalfa), or Toffta (Teabhtha), and formed the territory of the O’Farrell clan. In 1543, as part of Henry VIII’s strategy for regaining control of Ireland, Meath was divided into two counties and Annaly was included with County Westmeath. Later, in 1570, Annaly was made a shire named Longford after its main town by Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy. It was then considered...
one of the seven counties of Connaught. County Longford was subsequently included as part of Leinster by James I in 1608, with the county being divided into six baronies and its boundaries being officially defined.

The seventeenth century began with the defeat of Hugh O’Neill’s army at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 and the subsequent demise of Gaelic aristocracy. The Stuart conquest under James I began on his accession to the throne in 1603. A systematic approach for the plantation of Longford was drawn in 1618 by Oliver St John, Lord Deputy. This envisaged the transfer of 25 per cent of the county to New English settlers, at the expense of the native Irish and Old English inhabitants. Arthur Forbes received lands surrounding Newtownforbes and the title Earl of Granard in 1619, and developed a new

![Image](fig. 10 LONGFORD CASTLE
Longford Town
c. 1900)

Lawrence collection
photograph of Longford Castle, c. 1900. It was sited at the gates to the Sean Connolly Barracks, and replaced an earlier castle in the town that was destroyed by Hugh O’Donnell in 1591. It was built c. 1507 by Francis Lord Argyll, who founded the town in the 1620s. Later, in 1641, during the Irish Confederate Wars, it was captured and sacked by parliamentary forces under the command of Thomas Preston, 1st Viscount Tara. Parts of the castle survived until the 1970s.

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland
Construction of the first family seat, Castle Forbes, was begun by his wife Lady Jane Lauder in 1624. A possible flanker of the original castle survives as a dovecote, although this may date to an earlier structure as Castle Forbes was described as ‘an antient seat’ by Dowdall in 1682. It was at this time that the large fortified house of Baltinmore Castle was built by Sir Richard Browne south-east of Killashee. Francis Edgeworth received lands at Edgeworthstown. Lands surrounding Granard and Longford were granted to Francis Aungier, with the title Earl of Longford. He built or rebuilt Longford Castle as his stronghold in 1627. Sir Nathaniel Fox was granted the lands of Rathraagh, near Legan, and built a house, Foxhall, now demolished, and a now ruined church, which retains a very rare example in rural Ireland of a classical doorcase dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. Sir Nathaniel Fox is commemorated in the church by a remarkable classical effigial tomb with Jacobean influences, dated 1634. It is known locally as the Stoneman of Foxhall.

**Foxhall Church**

Foxhall Glebe, near Legan.

**Rathreagh Church**

Foxhall Glebe, near Legan.

**The Stoneman of Foxhall**

Foxhall Glebe, near Legan (c. 1630; rebuilt 1772)

Detail of the elaborate Doric doorcase, which is a rare example of early seventeenth-century classicism in rural Ireland. An inscription above the door is dated 1772, and refers to the rebuilding of the church, at which time the doorway was removed from its original position and rearranged during reconstruction.

Fig. 11: An inscription above the door is dated 1772, and refers to the rebuilding of the church, at which time the doorway was removed from its original position and rearranged during reconstruction.

Fig. 12: This elaborate classical wall-tomb with some Jacobean influences commemorates Sir Nathaniel Fox. It features many finely sculptured features including Ionic columns, Jacobean scrols, Cupid’s head, motto and the Fox family coat of arms. The reclining statue depicts Sir Nathaniel Fox clad in early seventeenth-century armour.
The seventeenth century, despite being a period of political and economic turmoil, saw the development of a number of other new urban settlements. Ballinakeen was established in 1618 at the initiative of Oliver St John, Lord Grandison, from whom it received the name St Johnstown. It was later incorporated by Charles I as the 'borough and town of St Johnstown' in 1627. By 1641 there was a shoemaker, tanner, blacksmith and joiner listed in the town.

The Irish Confederate Wars of 1641-53 saw the occupation of Longford Town, still the main urban centre, by Jacobite forces and the sacking of Longford Castle, as well as the burning of the Edgeworth family seat and the capture of Castle Forbes. Two centres of New English influence, Newtown-Forbes and Killashane, were also burned to the ground. A de facto sovereign state was established, remaining outwardly loyal to Charles I. Cromwell and his New Model Army arrived towards the end of 1649 to reassert English control. In three years the whole island was conquered. 61 per cent of the land in Longford was confiscated at this time, much of it from the Gaelic O’Farrell clans. Catholic strongholds, such as Rathcline Castle, were also sacked.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 introduced a relatively peaceful period. Charters were granted for the towns of Longford, Granard and Lanesborough. Land settlements were made to those who had remained loyal to the king in the Act of Settlement. Sir George Lane obtained Rathcline Castle and the associated lands at Lanesborough in 1664, and proceeded to build 'a stone house and a fair church with a tall steeple'. Lane also built a bridge over the Shannon at Lanesborough in about 1667, which was described by Dowdall in 1682 as 'in length and breadth the largest in the kingdom'. Dowdall also records stone bridges over the Inny at Abbeydruie and Ballymacarrow, as well as a wooden bridge at Ballymahon. The Achmuty and Sankey families built or rebuilt houses at Brianstown and Tennalick respectively, c. 1660. Mosstown House, near Keenagh, was built or rebuilt by Sir Thomas Newcomen during the second half of the seventeenth century.

The O’Farrell clan, who attended the royal court in exile on the continent throughout the 1650s, were regranted some of the confiscated lands they held prior to the rebellion. They continued to hold their lands into the early eighteenth century, at which time they were sold off for various reasons mainly in order to pay off high levels of debts.

Economic activity increased in the late seventeenth century and Longford became part of the hinterland that supplied a rapidly growing Dublin. Dowdall, writing in 1682, noted considerable exports of wool and also that there was sufficient corn grown to serve local needs. He described Longford Town as being like ‘a large country village but a few good houses in it’. Landlords also benefited from the growing prosperity and began estate improvement. The Earl of Longford rebuilt his house and remodelled his gardens, Sir Arthur Forbes improved his estate lands and developed estate towns at Granard and Newtowen-Forbes. The lands of Newcastle demesne were purchased by Robert Choppayne or Chopin Esq. in 1680 and he built a ‘fayre house and a wooden bridge’, while Sir John Edgeworth improved his estate lands ‘building a fair house, planted orchards...'
and gardens very sumptuous... and purchased land near him on which he planted a very good country town which hath a market and two fairs'.

The Penal Laws were introduced in 1695 to safeguard the Protestant Ascendancy after the turmoil and warfare of 1690-1. Landlords sought new English tenants for their estates, not only for religious reasons, but also because they were seen as more agriculturally progressive than the native Irish. While Longford never experienced plantation on a par with the plantations in Ulster or Munster, changes in landownership and influxes of new social and ethnic groups greatly altered the traditional character of the county.
Pre 1700

MOSSTOWN HOUSE
Mosstown Demesne, near Keenagh (built or rebuilt c. 1660 and altered c. 1730)

The interior of Mosstown had timber panelling of probable early eighteenth-century date.

Courtesy of the Photographic Unit, DoEHLG
The Eighteenth Century

Following the upheaval and unrest of the seventeenth century, the eighteenth century was a period of relative peace and stability. Successful land settlements had allowed the New English to gain 85 per cent ownership of the land, including the vast majority of land in areas characterised by good quality soils and drainage. Trade and agriculture improved and foreign travel became more common, opening up the country to new ideas and fashions from the Continent. Security and confidence continued to grow following the failure of the Jacobite Rising in Scotland in 1715. Landlords invested in estate improvements. As seats no longer required fortification, wealthy landowners engaged architects from Britain and the Continent to transform their homes, estate buildings and landscapes. Palladian architecture, with its mathematical proportions and subtle decoration seen as emblematic of order and reason, was the style of the times.

Longford did not experience the advent of country houses on the same scale as other counties, particularly compared to the counties to the east, possibly on account of the poor agricultural land that characterised large swathes of the county. However a number of large estates were established or extended during the century, including the Edgeworth estate, the Fetherston estate at Ardrahan, Carrigglas by the Newcomen (later the Gleadowe-Newcomen) family, and by the Bond family who built houses at NewtownBond and at Farragh or Farra. Many of the smaller estates were sublet by non-resident landlords living in Britain. Sublet, in the words of Richard Lovell Edgeworth to ‘a kind of half-gentry or mock-gentry’ of ‘middlemen who relet the lands and live upon the produce, not only in idleness, but in insolent idleness’. This sharp comment comes from the second volume of his Memoirs, edited and published after his death by his daughter, the writer Maria Edgeworth.

Middle-sized houses, such as Tennalick House, Richmount Hill and Castlewilder, were built in the first quarter of the century in the south-east corner of the county on the good agricultural land in the vicinity of Ballymahon. Tennalick House (fig. 14) near Ballymahon, was rebuilt or extended c. 1705. Described by Maurice Craig in 1976 as ‘a very remarkable building indeed, unlike anything else in Ireland... it looks more like something in the Cotswolds than an Irish building’. Although now derelict, its former grandeur can be discerned in the elaborate cut-stone doorcases with cornices. The engaged Doric columns supporting the groin-vaulted ground-floor ceilings are particularly notable surviving features.
The Eighteenth Century

(fig. 14)

**Tennalick House**

Tennalick (c. 1705)

Archival view of Tennalick House c. 1950, now sadly derelict. Tennalick has a plain, rather vernacular appearance that is enlivened by the fine classical doorcases with cornices and by a flat, ashlar stringcourse. It was the seat of the Gore family during the second half of the eighteenth century but passed, through marriage, into the ownership of the important Gore family at the start of the nineteenth century. It is likely that the house was rebuilt or heavily altered immediately after the Gore family came into possession. It was later reportedly used as stabling for dray horses working on the nearby Royal Canal during the nineteenth century but returned to residential use from the late-nineteenth century until c. 1950.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive

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**Gore Memorial Monument**

Taghshinny Church of Ireland Church (1753)

The exceptional marble memorial monument, dated 1753, commemorates Judge George Gore (1675-1753) of nearby Tennalick House. It was carved by John Tap nostr the Younger (c. 1710-1805), a Limerick-born sculptor from a renowned family of sculptors. The monument has a late baroque character and is of high artistic merit. George Gore served as Attorney-General of Ireland in 1725 and subsequently as one of the chief judges of the Common Pleas from 1726. George Gore was later succeeded by his second son John Gore (d. 1789) who also served as Attorney General of Ireland of Ireland, Lord Chief Justice and Speaker of the Irish House of Commons in 1767.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive
This plain but substantial house dates to the first decades of the eighteenth century. The unusual proportions to the main elevation, particularly the large gap between the top floor windows and the eaves, suggests that this building may have formerly had another storey or that the roof originally had a much steeper pitch.

Archival view of Brianstown House prior to the removal of the upper floor and dormer roof. The Palladian motif to the ground floor was retained on the first floor with a central window flanked to either side by round-headed niches. The deeply pitched roof with dormer window openings harks back to earlier buildings such as Beaulieu, County Louth, and Mosstown House, near Kesh. Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive.
Richmount Hill and Castlewilder House, both built c. 1720, retain much of their original form, with regular plans, gabled roofs with end chimneys, centrally placed entrances and small attic windows to the gable ends. Though some fittings have been replaced and later additions somewhat obscure the overall composition, particularly at Castlewilder, they are typical examples of early eighteenth-century middle-sized houses in Ireland.

Brianstown House (figs. 15-6), built in 1731 for Samuel Achmuty whose heraldic device survives above the door, demonstrates more awareness of formal design and decoration than the earlier houses. Originally a two-storey house over basement, the first floor was removed following a fire in the early twentieth century. Craig describes this building as standing ‘Janus-like’ between houses such as the Dutch-inspired Beaulyieu in County Louth, and the eighteenth-century Palladian classicism then becoming current through the influence of James Gibbs and William Kent. Grander, more architecturally aware houses following on from the Brianstown precedent date from the mid-eighteenth century. Three particularly interesting houses survive within close proximity of each other, again in the southern area of the county.
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Ledwithstown House
Ledwithstown (1746)

This well-proportioned small-scale Palladian country house has been attributed to the eminent architect Richard Castle (d. 1751). It has a robust, almost muscular, appearance on account of the heavy parapet with pronounced voussoir cornice, the raised corner quoins, and the large tall sash chimney stacks that are aligned with the front elevation. The fine pedimented tripartite doorcase is strongly detailed and provides a central focus to the main elevation. This central focus is further enhanced by the spanned flight of steps.

Detail of the fine pedimented tripartite Tuscan doorcase with sidelights.
Ledwithstown House (fig. 17), dated 1746, is perhaps the most architecturally significant of the houses built in County Longford during the first half of the eighteenth century. Attributed to the prolific country-house architect and protégé of Edward Lovett Pearce, Richard Castle, it is an exercise in miniature Palladianism. This well-proportioned and well-executed house is as finely detailed as any of Castle’s grander commissions, such as at Tudenham Park and Watertown in adjacent Westmeath, although perhaps not as grand as his sophisticated designs for a hunting and fishing lodge at Belvedere, to the south of Mullingar.

Creevaghmore House (fig. 18), built c. 1750 to the south-east of Ballymahon, conforms more to an early Georgian farmhouse type than to a country house. The U-plan form, with returns to either end of the rear elevation, appears to reflect its practical purpose, with offices and stable to the rear stretching to embrace the closely set stable buildings. While this house is interesting in its own right, the courtyard retains early stable furniture which contributes to the significance of this fascinating group.
Newcastle House (fig. 19), although probably dating in part to the end of the seventeenth century, was greatly extended throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the Harman and subsequently the King-Harman family, creating a large rambling composition with a complicated and confusing chronology. It represents a departure from the middle-sized house, designed on the scale of the grand demesne house and built to exude strength, power and solidity. The Newcastle estate reached its largest extent in 1888, some 38,616 acres in size, when Wentworth Henry King-Harman was in residence. The estate was described in 1900 as:

“a master-piece of smooth and intricate organisation, with walled gardens and glasshouses, its dairy, its laundry, its carpenters, masons and handymen of all estate crafts, the home farm, the gamekeepers and retrievers, kennels, its saw-mill and paint shop and deer park for the provision of venison. The place is self supporting to a much greater degree than most country houses in England.”
Newcastle was probably originally built during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. It was later extended and altered on a number of occasions throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, creating a composition with a complicated and confusing chronology. A number of interesting features survive to the interior, including marble fireplace, a number of early Georgian timber panelled doors with lugged surrounds, and high-quality neoclassical plasterwork that is probably the best example of its type in Longford. The house was sold to an order of nuns during the mid-twentieth century and was later in use as a hotel.

The unusual Dutch-style curvilinear gable to the porch is echoed over the centre of the main elevation. These were probably added as part of remodelling works c. 1820. The fine carved coat of arms over the doorway is probably that of the King or Harman-King family.

NEWCASTLE
Newcastle Demesne
(c. 1820)

fig. 19
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CASTLECROWN
Castlecore
(c. 1740 or c. 1765)

View of the extraordinary central chimneypiece to the Octagonal Room, which has marble fireplaces to each of the four faces flanked by Corinthian columns. The mirrors above the fireplace, now modern replacements, reflect the views of the countryside from the four tall round-headed window openings. The walls are decorated with late nineteenth-century neo-Egyptian artwork, which may have been inspired by illustrations in Owen Jones' book 'Decoration', published in 1856.

Aerial view of Castlecor House, c. 1960. The original building is to the top of the image and consisted of a central octagonal block with four projecting wings to alternating sides. The two later extensions somewhat obscure the original architectural impact of this unusual building. It was originally built as a hunting lodge by the Very Revd Cutts Harman (1706-84), later Dean of Waterford Cathedral from 1759. The original architect is not known.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive
The most remarkable building from the middle part of the century is Castlecor (fig. 20), near Ballymahon, probably built c. 1740 (alternatively, there is some evidence to suggest it may have been built as late as 1765). It was originally built as a hunting lodge by the Very Revd Cutts Harman, a younger son of the important Harman family. The original structure now forms the rear of the building. It was originally constructed as a symmetrical two-storey block on octagonal plan with four short projecting wings to alternating sides.
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(Clogh) (c. 1800)
This well-maintained thatched house retains its early form and character, representing one of the more attractive examples of its type in County Longford. It also retains much of its salient fabric, including timber sliding sash-windows. Modest in scale and form, this house exhibits the simple and functional form of vernacular building in Ireland.

(Castlerena Mountain) (c. 1800)
The attractive vernacular house near Ardagh is aligned at a right-angle to the road-alignment, a feature of Irish vernacular buildings. The position of one of the chimneys suggests that it originally had the 'lobby-entry' plan arrangement that is characteristics of vernacular buildings in the midlands of Ireland.
The single wide room to the octagon at first-floor level has an extraordinary central chimneypiece (fig. 21) with marble fireplaces to its four faces. This room must rank as one of the most unusual and interesting rooms built anywhere in Ireland during the eighteenth century. The original splendour and architectural effect is somewhat swamped by subsequent nineteenth and twentieth-century additions that were built on to the front, c. 1850 and c. 1913.

The vast majority of the population lived in significantly more modest vernacular buildings. Most farm holdings in Longford were smaller than the Irish average, particularly the average in Leinster. Vernacular, in architectural terms, refers to buildings that are not architect-designed but follow a traditional plan and use the building methods and materials of the locality. These structures were typically single-storey, one room deep with steeply pitched roofs and often built at right angles to, or facing away from, the nearest road. Vernacular buildings are difficult to date as the plan and materials used remained the same over a long period of time, with examples been constructed into the late nineteenth and perhaps even the early twentieth century. In the midlands, vernacular houses usually had a “hearth and lobby” arrangement, with the hearth being in line with the entrance lobby. They could be extended lengthways or, more rarely, vertically, so that some now form the lower storey of a two-storey farmhouse. They were usually constructed of local rubble stone, limewashed and roofed with a hipped thatched roof. Typical examples can be found at Clogh (fig. 22) and Castlerea Mountain (fig. 23), both built c. 1800.

There are some surviving examples of vernacular houses of mud/earth construction to the east of the county, such as is found at Freaghmeen (fig. 24), near Edgeworthstown. Thatch was often replaced by corrugated iron and later by corrugated cement, as can be seen at Rathmore, near Ballymahon, and at Coolcor.
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BARNEY
Near Ardagh (c. 1840)
This substantial building is a relatively rare example of a two-storey vernacular house surviving in good condition in the county. The steeply pitched roof suggests that this building may have been thatched originally. The form of this building hints that it may have been extended along its length, a typical feature of vernacular houses.

CARTRON (SHRULE BARONY) (c. 1860)
An attractive and well-maintained two-storey house. The irregular spacing on the window openings lends it a strong vernacular character. The form of this building hints that it may have been originally single storey with the first floor added at a later date.

ABBEYSHRULE (c. 1860)
The form of this building suggests that it is a vernacular interpretation of the typical three-bay two-storey house with modest classical pretensions, examples of which are a feature of the rural Irish countryside.
near Granard. Attractive two-storey vernacular houses, built in the nineteenth century, are to be found at Barney, near Ardaugh (fig. 25), Cartron, near Ballymahon (fig. 26) and at Abbeyshrule (fig. 27).

The linen industry was for a time an alternative to agriculture, with women engaged in spinning and men in weaving. An Act of Parliament passed in 1699 that prevented the exportation of woollen goods from Ireland had the unexpected effect of increasing the acreage of flax, which resulted in a flourishing linen industry in rural Longford. By the middle of the eighteenth century a reported 2,000 looms were operating in the county. Arthur Young’s Tour of Ireland in 1776 also tells of extensive spinning and weaving and three bleaching greens in the county.
AUNGIER MARKET HOUSE, Sean Connolly Barracks, Longford Town (c. 1710 or earlier)

This building is the former market house in Longford, which was constructed by the Aungier family before c. 1720. It is one of the earliest and best surviving examples of its type in Ireland. It differs from the usual market houses in that it has only one storey. The round-headed arches of the arcade were constructed using building stone, a local conglomerate. It is now located in the grounds of Sean Connolly Barracks, and was used as barracks stables from c. 1774.
The Eighteenth Century

ST JOHN'S CHURCH OF IRELAND CHURCH
Church Street, Longford Town
(c. 1710; c. 1785; 1810-12)
This church was built c. 1710 and subsequently altered and enlarged during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, largely to accommodate the burgeoning congregation brought about by the construction of the military barracks in 1796. It has a late eighteenth-century mid-Georgian classical character on account of the round-headed window openings, round-headed niches and the classical doorcase. The delicate needle spire is a dominant feature of the skyline to the north end of Longford Town.

The dominance of Longford Town as the major urban and commercial centre continued throughout the century. The Aungier family, who probably laid out the plantation scheme burbage plots and main streets in the latter part of the seventeenth century, secured royal grants for fairs and markets to attract economic activity. The Aungier Market House (fig. 28) was built c. 1710 by the family and is one of the earliest and best surviving market houses in Leinster. St John’s Church of Ireland church (fig. 29), also built c. 1710 but altered on a number of subsequent occasions throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is set facing the site of the castle and was probably originally patronised by the Aungier family. The continued prosperity of the town was secured by the arrival of the military following
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LONGFORD TOWN COURTHOUSE
Main Street, Longford Town.
(c. 1791-5; altered c. 1830, and 1859-61)

This imposing public building dominates Main Street in Longford Town. It dates to the late eighteenth century but has a confusing chronology due to later alterations, and it possibly contains earlier fabric. The top floor was added in alterations carried out 1829-31. Its form is unusual for a building of its type, and it has the appearance of a grand domestic residence. This building was also in use as the Longford Grand Jury headquarters throughout the nineteenth century (until 1898).

View of the impressive pedimented Doric porch with triglyph frieze.

(fig. 30)
The Eighteenth Century

Granard Market House
Main Street, Granard (c. 1785)
This market house was built under the patronage of the McCartney family. It retains typical Georgian market house features, including the arcaded ground floor, shallow hipped roof and regularly placed openings on the upper floor, which was used as a courthouse throughout the nineteenth century. The hood mouldings are later nineteenth-century additions. The presence of a large market house in Granard is testament to the economic prosperity and confidence enjoyed in the area during the late eighteenth century.

Granard
Main Street (c. 1760 or earlier)
This unusual building occupies a focal point in the centre of the town, and is probably the earliest building still extant along the main street. Though the rhythm of the fenestration has been altered by the enlargement of some window openings, the proportions, the central narrow block-and-start doorcase, and the large gable chimney stacks are reminiscent of an architectural style that is associated more with rural middle-sized houses dating to the first half of the eighteenth century.

Clonwhelan House
Clonwhelan (c. 1775)
Well-proportioned and substantial house dating to the second half of the eighteenth century. The symmetry and the tall ground-floor window openings illustrate the classical intentions of the design, while the simple doorcase with spoked fanlight over provides an attractive central focus.

Granard
Main Street (c. 1760 or earlier)

The purchase of the castle and market house by the Royal Commissioners of Barracks in 1774. By 1776 Longford barracks was the largest garrison in the midlands. Longford courthouse (Fig. 30) dates to the final decade and takes the unusual domestic form of a Georgian town house. Originally a five-bay two-storey building, an extra floor and a pair of courtrooms were added to the rear in the mid-nineteenth century.
The economies of towns and villages depended on the agricultural hinterlands, and were greatly affected by the lifting of the ban on live cattle exports in 1759 and by the reorganization of the brown linen markets in 1762. It was in the landlords’ interest to ensure that the revenue of market day was brought to their estates; and so began a period of building and rebuilding of estate urban centres. Estate villages such as Kilnagh, Granard, Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon expanded at this time and wide main streets were laid out to accommodate fairs and markets. Granard was largely redeveloped in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century as a regular Georgian street town. A number of late eighteenth-century buildings survive in close proximity along Main Street, including the market house, built c. 1785, The Greville Arms, and an unusual two-storey building with a block-and-start doorcase.
Estate-building and rebuilding grew in the second part of the century in tandem with the developing rural economy. Richard Lovell Edgeworth took up full-time residence at his Longford estate in 1782, determined to create a model estate. Until then, like many landlords in the area, he had been a non-resident landlord with little interest in inward investment. He also concerned himself with moral improvement, and established a school for children on his estate. An amateur architect, cartographer, mathematician and a noted inventor, he applied his talents to both useful and somewhat eccentric inventions. He invented a timber railway that laid its own track as it moved forward to facilitate the working of the estate bogs for fuel, a central heating system that emitted warm air above the manetipples, a large umbrella for covering haystacks and a telegraph system linking Edgeworthstown with Pakenham Hall in County Westmeath some twelve miles distant. He also carried out various quirky experiments with the layout of the house (fig. 31), partially creating its unusual appearance today. His philanthropic outlook informed his daughter Maria’s novels *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee* and *Ormond*.

Landlords also turned their attention to the building and remodelling of demesne-related structures. The octagonal-plan pigeon house (fig. 32) at Mosstown demesne is an interesting example of a functional building also designed as a folly. The former Shuldham Arms at Ballymahon, built c. 1780, is an unusually imposing building in the streetscape and may have been built for the Shuldham estate steward. A four-acre walled garden was laid out in the late eighteenth century at Newcastle demesne by Laurence Parsons-Harman. The garden book of the estate lists 150 species of trees and vines planted between 1787 and 1789.
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CARRIGGLAS MANOR Carrickglass Demesne (1792-1804)

Archival view of the magnificent, if austere, stable block at Carrigglas Manor, built to designs by the eminent architect James Gandon (1743-1823) for Sir William Gladstone's estates. It was constructed using the highest quality armorial limestone masonry, and the neoclassical language of Gandon's architecture is given free reign in these functional yet highly refined structures. Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive

CARRIGGLAS MANOR Carrickglass Demesne (1792-1804)

View of the farmyard to the south-west. This courtyard has a more rustic quality compared with the stable block but is nevertheless architecturally impressive and well composed. The differing architectural treatment to the two yards has been interpreted as a metaphor for the superior status of the horse over agricultural and farmyard activity. Courtesy of The Irish Times

CARRIGGLAS MANOR Carrickglass Demesne (1792-1804)

View of the entrance block to the stable block. The mutules to the pediment are a feature of Gandon's architecture. The symmetry of the complex can be seen with the entrances to the other yards visible inside the entrance arch. Courtesy of The Irish Times
The most significant estate buildings constructed in County Longford during the eighteenth century are the magnificent courtyards at Carrigglas Manor (figs. 33-35), built between c. 1792 and c. 1804 to designs by the eminent neoclassical architect James Gandon. This complex comprises an elegantly proportioned walled rectangle divided into two courtyards with a stable block to the north-east and a more architecturally plain and rustic, but nevertheless impressive, farmyard complex to the south-west. The entrance ranges are distinguished from the side ranges, which housed the stables, the animal houses and possibly also accommodation for farm workers, by austere pedimented breakfronts. The owner of Carriglas at the time of the construction, Sir William Gleadowe-Newcomen, also commissioned Gandon to...
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CARRIGGLAS MANOR
Carrigglass Demesne (1792-1804)

Elevations and sections
of Gandon's unexecuted
plans for a neoclassical
house or villa at
Carrigglas. The unusual
designs feature a bowed
projection to the rear
elevation, surmounted by
a shallow dome.

Courtesy of the National
Library of Ireland and the
Irish Architectural Archive

(fig. 36)
CARRIGGLAS MANOR
Carrigglass Demesne
(1792-1804)
design an unusual neoclassical country house or villa (Fig. 36), but these designs remained on paper following severe financial troubles that led to the eventual collapse of the Newcomen Bank in 1825. Gandon also designed an elegant triumphal-arch gateway (Fig. 37) incorporating a gate-lodge to either side at Carrigglas, while an unusual red-brick gardener’s house, set within an oval-plan walled garden lined with red brick, may also have been built to his designs.
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Shannon Navigation Offices
Cloondara (c. 1760)
This attractive building was probably originally built as a lock-keeper’s house or offices associated with the Cloondara Canal. It was designed by Thomas Omer for the Commissioners of Inland Navigation. The recessed round-headed blind arches and the ashlar limestone stringcourses are a feature of many of the lock-keeper’s houses built by Omer along the Grand Canal and the Shannon Navigation. It was later in use as Shannon Navigation Offices c. 1840.

Knock Windmill
Knock, near Lanesborough (c. 1760)
This conspicuous former windmill (for corn) stands proudly on a elevated site to the south-east of Lanesborough. It was extant and in use by 1764. Although out of use for a considerable period of time and now ruined, it remains a local landmark, adding historical interest to the local landscape.

Carrigglas Manor
Carrickglass Demesne (1792-1804)
This elaborate and impressive gateway, incorporating two gate-lodges, constitutes the main entrance to Carrigglas Manor and acts as a fitting prelude to this important demesne.

Knock Windmill
Knock, near Lanesborough (c. 1760)
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The transport network in Ireland remained poorly developed until the later stages of the eighteenth century. Although the mail coach services spread throughout the island following the establishment of the General Post Office in 1710, and later two turnpike roads were provided for in an Act of Parliament of 1735 — namely the Mullingar to Longford Town route and a road from Longford Town to the important crossing-point of the Shannon at Lanesborough — it was not until the latter part of the century that road improvements began in earnest, following the passing of the Grand Jury Act of 1765. This Act was a major impetus for construction on a local basis as it offered financial assistance for the building of roads and bridges. This was partially brought about by an expansion in trade and commerce and by the increased independence of the Irish parliament, which sought to spend treasury surpluses rather than passing them on to the Crown. The majority of the straight roads radiating from many of the towns and villages in County Longford, as well as many of the small single- and double-arched bridges scattered throughout the countryside, were probably constructed in the late eighteenth century by the Grand Juries.

Inland navigation was also developing in the latter part of the century. The Commissioners for Inland Navigation employed the engineer Thomas Omer to undertake the improvement of the River Shannon upstream from Limerick from 1735. A series of locks and beacons were constructed between Lanesborough and Portumna as part of these works. At Cloondara Omer built a short canal with the intention of linking the River Shannon with the Camlin, thus promoting trade and commerce in the area. The fine lockkeeper’s house or navigation offices (fig. 38), bridge, and the lock itself located along the Cloondara Canal are interesting precursors to those along the later Royal Canal.

The legislative independence of Grattan’s parliament (1782–1800) brought increased optimism and economic prosperity. Industrial development in County Longford was mainly concentrated along the west county border, close to the Shannon Navigation. Now in ruins, the circular-plan windmills at Efflat and at Knock Hill, near Lanesborough, formed part of a group of five that were built c. 1760 on glacial hills and ridges around Lough Ree. Richmond Mill (fig. 39) and miller’s house were constructed in 1771 at Cloondara, possibly to avail of the transport opportunities presented by the opening of the Shannon Navigation.
Church-building throughout the century appears to have been mainly confined to the Church of Ireland minority. Under the Penal Laws an annual tithe of 10 per cent of all agricultural produce was to be paid to the Church of Ireland for maintenance and upkeep. As well as the income generated from the tithes, the Church of Ireland also received revenue from the Board of First Fruits, which was established in 1721. Initially dependant on voluntary contributions, funding for the Board of First Fruits was low and aspirations for a comprehensive building programme remained unrealised. Church-building therefore required additional funding, often supplied by landowners such as the Edgeworth, Forbes and Fetherston families, who during the mid-century patronised the construction or alteration of church buildings close to their seats at Edgeworthstown (fig. 40), Castle Forbes and Ardagh respectively. The Church of Ireland church at Granard also partially dates to the mid-eighteenth century. Edgeworthstown rectory was built c. 1740, probably, at least partially, under the patronage of the Edgeworth family. Killashee rectory (fig. 41) dates to just after the union of the vicarages of Cluan-a-donald and Killashee in 1781.
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KILLASHEE RECTORY
Templeton Glebe, Killashee (c. 1786)
This former rectory is an example of the language of classical architecture stripped to its fundamental elements. Its three-bay two-storey form is characteristic of rectory buildings and many middle-class gentlemen’s residences dating from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It was built at a cost of £511 following the union of two vicarages in 1781.

EDWORTHSTOWN RECTORY
Edgeworthstown (c. 1735; enlarged c. 1830)
This plain Church of Ireland rectory dates to the mid-eighteenth century. Its diminishing window openings and the widely spaced openings are typical of early Georgian architecture. The building is the reputed birthplace of Henry Bate Edgeworth (1750–1807). Lady Edgeworth, De Firmont and the Catholic Vice-General of the Diocese of Paris at the height of the French Revolution. He attended Louis XVI on the scaffold prior to his execution.

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Arguably the most interesting eighteenth-century religious building in the county is Corboy Presbyterian meeting house (Fig. 42) built in 1729 to replace an earlier timber building reputedly founded here in 1675. It conforms to the pattern-book Presbyterian churches of the period, such as those found at Enniskillen in Cavan, with its hipped roof, long front elevation and tall round-headed windows. (It is interesting to note that much of the original Corboy congregation emigrated to North America to escape religious persecution in 1729.) It was constructed under the patronage of the Revd James Bond, of Scottish descent, who also built a fine country house at nearby Newtownbond, c. 1731.

Political unrest grew in the final quarter of the century, culminating in the 1798 Rebellion. A Longford magistrate is recorded as stating that a book was in circulation in February 1798, which contained the motto ‘May the Potatoes [sic] Bed of Ireland be manured with the blood of its Tyrants’ and also states ‘As the Hopes of [French] Invasion increase, I see the spirit of disaffection here vastly stronger and more universal than in April or May last, and very little spirit it here to meet or counteract this disaffection.’ Open rebellion broke out in that year and many villages and country seats were laid waste. The Edgeworth family seat was saved by chance, as the English housekeeper had done a kindness to the leader of the rebel group.
The Eighteenth Century

The insurgents were joined by approximately 1,000 French soldiers under General Humbert who landed in Killala, County Mayo, in August. Initially victorious at Castletubber, the campaign soon ran out of steam, and the combined forces were eventually engaged and defeated at Ballinamuck in north Longford on the 8 September 1798 by the superior forces of Lord Cornwallis. While the French were treated as prisoners of war, the Irish were massacred. Those captured were tried and executed – many are thought to be buried at Bully’s Acre in Ballinalacken following trials at the former Masonic hall in the town.

**VIEWMOUNT HOUSE**
Knockhaw, Longford Town (c. 1745)
This substantial house dates from the early-to-mid-eighteenth century. The small size of the window openings and the large expanses of blank wall are indicative of a relatively early date. The porch is a nineteenth-century addition. This building was in use as a Church of Ireland chartered school from 1753 until 1826, originally founded under the patronage of Thomas Palethorn (later Baron Longford). It was later in use by the land agent to the Palethorn family to administer their Longford estates, c. 1860.
The nineteenth century introduced a period of rapid social and political change. The autonomy of the Dublin parliament was undone by the Act of Union, which came into effect on 1 January 1801. Britain, anxious to avoid a repeat of the 1798 Rebellion, sought to strengthen its political hold on the island. This ushered in a century of unrest and agrarian tensions, resulting in an increased military and police presence. Social changes, most notably Catholic Emancipation in 1829, brought about a new era of church and school-building, while the catastrophic effects of the Great Famine (1845-9) changed the social and demographic profile of Ireland forever.

The prosperity established in the mid-eighteenth century continued into the first decades of the nineteenth century. The economy prospered during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-15) as Britain relied on Ireland for agricultural and grain supplies. A demand for grains in particular changed the agricultural tradition from pastoral to tillage, which in turn resulted in the development of the rural milling industry. A number of new country houses were built, such as Carriglas Manor and Coolamber Manor, and others were extended and remodelled, such as Castle Forbes and Newcable. Towns such as Ardagh were redeveloped while Longford Town grew in extent, particularly to the north end, close to the barracks complex. The transport network expanded to facilitate growth and movement with the construction of the Royal Canal and with works to the Shannon Navigation, and later by development of the railways.

The substantial flour mill at Shrule (fig. 43) on the River Inny and the corn mill at Ballymacoly, near Granard, were constructed or extended around this time. At Rodgers Mill,
SHRULE MILL (c. 1800; extended c. 1850)

This massive structure was one of the few purpose-built flour mills constructed in Longford. It dates to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century but was extended c. 1850. It was producing 4,000 barrels of flour annually c. 1835. It has interesting historical associations with the noted poet and nationalist John Keegan Casey (1846-70), one of the main figures in the Fenian Rising of 1867, who worked as a clerk at the mill sometime during the 1860s.

SHRULE (c. 1860)

The form of this house is of a type that is relatively common in the expanding mid-nineteenth-century suburbs of the larger towns and cities in Ireland but is rare in County Longford. The regular layout is enhanced by the dormer with its elegant cast-iron cupola and the distinctive and unusual timber sash windows. The location of this building adjacent to Shrule Mill hints that it may have been originally built by the owner or manager of the mill.
Drumlish (fig 44), there is a restored composite overshot water wheel and an elevated headrace. An imposing mid-nineteenth-century cornmill survives at Cloghan, complete with a detached corn kiln. One of the most important elements of the industrial heritage of County Longford is found at Grillage Mill (figs. 45-6), near Killashee, where a small-scale vernacular corn mill survives in remarkably good condition. Of particular significance is the survival of much of the early internal plant and fittings - including machinery to drive three sets of millstones, an undershot water wheel and a drying kiln - which represents a rare intact example of its type in Ireland.

An inevitable depression followed the end of the wars in 1815 resulting from a sharp decline in demand for Irish produce. The depression was compounded in Longford, particularly in the Granard area, by the collapse of the rural linen industry in the 1820s following the introduction of large-scale industrial mechanisation in Britain. Industrial machinery could now produce mill-spun yarn and the cottage linen-spinning industry was largely eliminated. The weaver industry moved to the north-east of Ireland, close to the centres of mechanisation around Belfast. A flax mill was opened at Clossandra, formerly Richmond Harbour, in 1821, but it quickly fell into disuse. During the 1830s and 1840s, emigration from Longford increased enormously. An average of 1.1 per cent of the county's population was leaving every year, the highest rate in Ireland at the time.

**RODGERS MILL**

Drumlish (c. 1810)

This small-scale vernacular mill was owned and operated by the Rodgers family for nearly two centuries, crushing corn and milling oats for a wide hinterland, before its closure in the 1950s. Of particular note is the restored composite waterwheel and elevated headrace, which provides an interesting insight into historic industrial processes.

**AGHINAGORE**

(c. 1820)

Lime kilns were a common feature of the rural landscape throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This example is built into the side of a hill to allow for the easy loading of limestone through an opening in the roof. The kilns were used to burn limestone to produce lime, which was used in construction as a mortar and a render, or to produce a fertiliser, which was then spread on agricultural land. Lime was also used for lime-washing buildings, particularly farm buildings, as it was regarded as a cleansing agent.
This small vernacular watermill was in use into the 1950s and represents a rare intact example of its type. Of particular significance is the survival of much of the early machinery and equipment to the interior of both the corn mill and to the associated corn-drying kiln to the north-east. This includes machinery to drive three sets of millstones powered by an integral undershot water wheel.

View of the interior of the corn mill at first-floor level. Note the two sets of millstones in the foreground. The internal undershot water wheel also survives in remarkable condition; this formerly ran a spur drive in addition to the main drive to power the internal machinery.

View of the oven of the former corn-drying kiln to the north-east of the main mill building. The corn and/or oats were laid onto clay drying lye on the floor above this heating apparatus.
The depression brought discontent, which was increased by the political situation following the suppression of the 1798 Rebellion. Fearful of a repeat of the rebellion, the British parliament took steps towards the introduction of a full-time police force in Ireland with the Peace Preservation Act of 1814. The Irish Constabulary Act of 1822 marked the real beginning of the Royal Irish Constabulary and a campaign of barracks-building throughout the country. While the barracks at Castletewlde (fig. 47), Ballinasloe, and at Dublin Street in Longford Town are purpose built, barracks were sometimes accommodated in converted buildings, such as at Ballymahon. RIC barracks were often located close to courthouses and gaols or to a landlord’s seat. During the redevelopment of the estate village at Ardagh by the Fetherston family, both a barracks and a courthouse were set close to the demesne entrance.

**THE OLD FORGE**

Castletewlde (c. 1860)

This interesting and picturesque former RIC barracks was built during a period of increasing agrarian unrest in rural Ireland. It was replaced by an RIC barracks built in Athabasca (now demolished) and was partially in use as a forge from c. 1860 until the first decades of the twentieth century.

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**BALLYMAHON RIC BARRACKS**

Main Street, Ballymahon (c. 1820)

This robust terraced building in Ballymahon was converted for use as an RIC barracks c. 1830, and was the divisional headquarters until c. 1921. It was attacked and damaged by the IRA led by Sean Connolly in August 1920 when a number of guns and ammunition were taken.
A large prison was constructed in Longford Town during the 1820s, replacing an earlier prison in the town. This complex was largely demolished during the twentieth century but a substantial administration block is still extant (fig. 48). New buildings were also constructed at the cavalry barracks in the town by the Barracks Commissioners between 1808 and 1843. The most impressive of these is a fine classical-inspired accommodation block built to designs by John Behan in 1815 (fig. 49). There was also a large artillery barracks to the north of Longford Town, now demolished.
The plan of Longford Prison provides an historical insight into the new thoughts on prison design at the time of construction: the governor’s house provides a central vantage point to monitor and control the prison blocks to the rear and the radiating exercise yards between. The prison blocks, now demolished, were segregated into four ‘felon’ blocks and two ‘debtors’ prisons, a prison infirmary and a solitary-confinement block, all served by individual exercise yards to preclude the mixing of inmates.

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland
The Nineteenth Century

LONGFORD PRISON
Battery Road, Longford Town (c. 1825)
Elevations of the prison blocks and the front and rear elevations of the governor’s house, possibly prepared by John Hargrave (c. 1788-1833).
Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (fig. 48)

An impressive building originally built as the administration/governor’s block of Longford Town prison, now largely demolished. Originally designed to hold 195 prisoners and cost £1,000 to construct. It was built to designs by John Hargrave (c. 1788-1833), an architect who worked extensively in Longford in the 1820s.
Toome Bridge
Toome (Shrule Barony) (c. 1815)
Typical canal bridge over the Royal Canal near Ballymahon. Although modest in form, canal bridges have a robust functional elegance and are attractive features in the rural landscape of south Longford. It was probably built to designs by John Killaly (1766-1832), the engineer responsible for the construction of the Royal Canal between Coolnahay to Cloondara. Apparently, canal passengers alighted here to catch the Bianco coach to Athlone from c. 1817-50.

Frances’ Cottage
Lock-keeper’s House, Lock 44. Ballyclare (Moydow Barony) (c. 1815)
Constructed by a single authority, it is not surprising that lock-keeper’s houses along the Royal Canal follow a standard plan. The recessed blind arches containing the openings help give this charming building a formal architectural quality. This architectural motif was commonly in canal architecture in Ireland, as can be seen with the earlier example at Cloondara, built to designs by the engineer Thomas Orme.

Richmond Harbour
Cloondara (c. 1817)
This canal dry dock is the only example of its type in County Longford. The quality of the dressed limestone construction is typical of the attention to detail afforded to even the most mundane of structures by the Royal Canal Company.
Undoubtedly the development of commerce encouraged a growth in communication, the most important being the construction of the Royal Canal. This was built to provide an important communication route from Dublin to the centre of the country, opening up the midlands to trade and industry as well as providing for passenger traffic. It reached the edge of the county by 1814 and was completed by 1818. This monumental feat of engineering had a profound impact on the landscape of south County Longford; finely built canal bridges, locks and lock-keeper’s houses became familiar features. The quality of the workmanship was of a very high standard, particularly in the bridges, which is testament to the skill of the craftsmen involved and to the long-term ambitions of the Royal Canal Company and later the Directors of Inland Navigation. Of particular note is the magnificent five-arch Whitworth Aqueduct (fig. 50), near Abbeyshrule, which is arguably the single most impressive feature along the entire length of the canal. Cloondara (formerly Richmond Harbour) straddling the Royal Canal, River Camlin and the Cloondara Canal leading to the Shannon, developed as a transport terminus. It became an important centre for canal business, with a harbour, dry dock, offices, accommodation for the harbour master, stores and an inn. In 1826 work commenced on a new five-mile branch canal linking the Royal Canal main line with Longford Town. It was completed in 1830.1 and a large harbour was constructed at the south end of Longford Town. The canal was never a complete financial success, although it was carrying 134,000 tons of goods traffic annually by 1833, while passenger traffic peaked at 46,000 in 1837.
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RICHMOND HARBOUR
Cloondara (1814-7)

View of Richmond Harbour from the canal bridge in Cloondara. Richmond Harbour is the terminus of the Royal Canal, and is located adjacent to the River Shannon. Former canal warehouses, offices and harbour master’s house are visible to the right of the image. The scale of the harbour and associated structures provides an historical insight into the grandiose ambitions of the Royal Canal Company during the early part of the nineteenth century.

LANESBOROUGH BRIDGE
Lanesborough (c. 1835-43; altered 1993)

Despite modern alterations, this fine bridge with its broad and elegant arches represents a significant mid-nineteenth-century engineering achievement. It was probably built to designs by Thomas Rhodes (1789-1868), the chief engineer with the Shannon Navigation Commissioners at the time of construction and the engineer responsible for a number of elegant bridges over the Shannon. This bridge formerly had a metal swing section to the west end, which was built to allow for the passage of river traffic.

NAVIGATION BRIDGE
Lanesborough (1865-70; altered 1993)

In addition to the Swing Bridge, Lanesborough Bridge has a handsome, red sandstone and granite bridge head. This structure was designed by Thomas Rhodes, and the bridge has been the subject of preservation and improvement efforts.

RICHMOND HARBOUR
Cloondara (1814-7)

Navigation Commissioners at the time of construction and the engineer responsible for a number of elegant bridges over the Shannon. This bridge formerly had a metal swing section to the west end, which was built to allow for the passage of river traffic.
This appealing and robust Victorian railway station was built to designs by George Wilkinson (1814-90) for the Midland and Great Western Railway Company in 1855 to serve the Mullingar - Sligo line. It has a functional solidity that is typical of the railway architect of the time.
This elegant footbridge represents an interesting example of mid-to-late-nineteenth-century industrial prefabrication. Despite the functional purpose of the footbridge, it has some fine cast-iron decorative detailing that enhances its aesthetic appeal. It may have been installed during the 1880s, a period when many iron railway footbridges were erected at railway stations in Ireland.
Trade along the canal was focused not only on Dublin, but also on the River Shannon. The invention of steam propulsion brought increased traffic along the river from 1826, which used Lanesborough on the Roscommon – Longford border as a port. The Shannon Navigation Act of 1835 and the appointment of the Shannon Commissioners brought about a phase of improving works in the 1830s and 40s between Killaloe and Carrick-on-Shannon. Elegant new bridges were constructed in ashlar limestone at Lanesborough and Termonbarry in the early 1840s. But the years of commercial inland navigation were to be short lived, as both river and canal trade were severely affected by the advent of the railway in the 1850s.

The Midland Great Western Railway Company bought the Royal Canal in 1845 and used the land along the banks to build the railway from Dublin. The first section of the Dublin – Sligo railway line was opened as far as Longford Town in 1855. George Wilkinson, best known for his workhouse designs, was employed as architect. Fine stations with open platform shelters were built at Edgeworthstown (fig. 51), Longford Town and at Newtown-Forbes. Ballywillin Station was built on the Inny Junction to Cavan line, an offshoot of the main Dublin – Sligo line. Goods sheds, bridges, footbridges (fig. 52) and signal boxes are among the related buildings that were built in fine materials to excellent design.

This signal box was originally built by the Midland and Great Western Railway Company to serve the Inny Junction – Cavan line, which opened in 1856 and closed in 1963. It is of a standard design introduced by the Great Western Railway Company from about 1920. It possibly replaced an earlier signal box at Ballywillin that was damaged during the Civil War (1922-3), a fate that was suffered by many signal boxes. The variety of materials used in its construction make for a visually pleasing composition, while the decorative brackets add an aesthetic quality to the principal elevations.
Following the passing of the Education Act of 1831, the National Education Board began a school-building programme. Many schools were constructed to standardised plans but few early buildings remain intact. The designs for national school buildings were standardised in the 1860s by the Board of Works. St Columkill’s National School near Aghnacullin, built in 1892, is a relatively intact example of a Board of Works school.

Schools outside the national school system were built throughout the century, such as a former Church of Ireland school at Edgeworthstown (fig. 53), dated 1840, with an external staircase providing access to the upper-level schoolroom, an interesting precursor to the later Board of Works schools. Luke White funded the construction of a school at Tullyvane near Laneborough, close to his seat at Rathcline. A two-storey school at Ardagh (fig. 54), built c. 1835, was patronised by the Church of Ireland. An attractive Arts and Crafts-style complex of school and master’s house on Battery Road in Longford Town (fig. 55), built in 1896, is an interesting departure from the historical Gothic and classical styles that had dominated school architecture throughout the century.

This former national school was probably at least partially constructed under the patronage of the Edgeworth family. The form of this school building indicates that it was originally a two-classroom school, the classroom to the top floor accessed by an external stone staircase to one end. This suggests it had separate classrooms for boys and girls, a common feature of Victorian schools, reflecting the strict social thinking of the time.
Catholic Emancipation in 1829 ushered in a period of church-building. Catholic church-building in Longford falls into two distinct periods, pre-1840 and post-1860. Simple barn-style, T-plan or cruciform-plan churches were built in the period leading up to the Great Famine. The church at Cloondara is a typical example of the simple hall, while Newtown-Cashel, built 1833, has transepts added to the hall to create the ubiquitous T-plan church.
More prominently sited and elaborate architectural churches, influenced by the work of the celebrated English architect A.W.N. Pugin (1812-52), are associated with the post-1860 period. A great Gothic Revival exponent, Pugin looked to medieval church architecture for inspiration. Opposed to classicism, he advocated irregular plans that expressed the function of each element of the building, truth to materials, and the use of decorative details such as carved stone, mosaics and stained glass. St. Mary’s at Granard (fig. 56), built in 1867 to designs by John Bourke, has a soaring broached spire, added c. 1887, which dominates the skyline of the town. Pugin’s influence is most apparent at the magnificent St. Brigid’s Church.
ST MARY'S CHURCH
Church Street, Granard
(built c. 1862; altered c. 1887 and c. 1904-7)

This fine church dominates the east side of Granard Town and is a notable example of the late nineteenth-century penchant for dramatic, even theatrical, architecture. It is externally detailed with high quality cut-stones which demonstrates the growing power, wealth and architectural ambition of the Church at the time of construction. It was built in an Early English Gothic style to designs by John Bourke (d. 1871) on a site granted to the Church by Richard Greville. The tower was finished c. 1887.

The bright spacious interior is enriched by the stained-glass windows. The principal feature is the elaborate open timber roof structure with hammerbeams and cross-braces having decorative carved openwork.
at Ardagh (fig. 57). Dated 1881 and designed by William Hague, it is one of the finest parish churches of this period in Leinster. Executed in rock-faced sandstone with extensive cut and dressed limestone detailing throughout, the side aisles, spired bell tower, transepts, chancel, stair tower and sanctuary are all clearly expressed as individually massed elements. The tower and spire were completed c. 1903 by T.F. McNamara, a partner of Hague and an accomplished and prolific architect in his own right. It is only on viewing the interior that a complete picture of this accomplished building can be assessed. Wall mosaics, stained glass mainly, by Mayer & Co. of Munich, and the marble reredos exhibit the highest level of craftsmanship.

A spectacular and complex church, built to designs by William Hague (1836-99). The high-quality design is embellished by extensive stone carving, the stained-glass windows, mosaics and marble altar goods. The contrast between the yellow sandstone masonry and the grey limestone detailing creates a highly picturesque composition. The tower and spire were completed c. 1903 by T.F. McNamara (1867-1947), a partner of Hague and an accomplished and prolific architect in his own right.
ST BRIGID’S CHURCH
Ardagh
(c. 1890)
View of the fine stained-glass window to the west gable end by J. Watson & Co. of Youghal, depicting the Baptism and Visitation.

ST BRIGID’S CHURCH
Ardagh
(1878-81)
Detail of richly detailed mosaic work to a side chapel.

ST BRIGID’S CHURCH
Ardagh
(1878-81)
Detail of carved head of St Brigid adjacent to doorway. It is carved in Caen stone and was possibly executed by James Pearse (1839-1900) who worked extensively on the detailing of the building. James Pearse was the father of the political figure Patrick Pearse (1879-1916).
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ST MEL’S CATHEDRAL
Longford Town (c. 1890)

This imposing, if austere, cathedral is considered one of the finest classical-style churches in Ireland and represents one of the largest building projects undertaken by the Catholic Church in the country during the nineteenth century. Its construction was commissioned by Bishop O’Keefe, a man noted for his extravagant taste. It is the work of three eminent architects of the nineteenth century: John B. Keane (d. 1859), who made the original plans; John Bourke (d. 1871), who designed the campanile tower and continued the works after Keane’s death; and George C. Ashlin (d. 1887), who supervised the construction of the tetrastyle entrance portal. The designs were not universally admired, and Popin in about 1890 described the plans as a bad copy of that wretched compound of pagan and Protestant architecture, St Pancras New Church in London.

Photograph from the Lawrence Collection taken prior to the completion of the campanile, with works still in progress.

Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland
The lull in church-building from 1840 to 1860 was primarily due to the inevitable economic collapse brought about by the Great Famine but also to the channeling of available funds towards the construction of the great St. Mel’s Cathedral in Longford Town. William O’Higgins, Bishop of Ardagh from 1829 to 1853, played a significant role in the development of the Catholic Church in the county. He campaigned for the construction of a cathedral and seminary, and for the establishment of Catholic classical schools as he was opposed to the national school system. These classical schools aimed to teach Latin to young boys with the intention of creating future priests. He founded schools in Drumlish and Ballymahon and laid the foundation stone of St. Mel’s Cathedral (fig. 58) in 1840. Constructed in a classical style, and apparently modelled on the Pantheon, St John Lateran in Rome and the Madeleine church in Paris, it represented a departure from the favoured Gothic Revival style in vogue at the time. An exceptional feature of the design is the five-storey bishop’s palace set at the rear behind the high altar (fig. 59). Delayed by the onset of the Great Famine, the cathedral was dedicated by O’Higgins’s successor Bishop John Kilduff in 1856, and finally consecrated in 1893. It is the work of three eminent architects of the nineteenth century: John B. Keane (d. 1859), who made the original plans; John Bourke (d. 1871), who designed the campanile tower and continued the works after Keane’s death; and George C. Ashlin (1837-1921) who designed or supervised the construction of the Ionic entrance portico. The distinctive profile of the Italianate campanile tower makes it a dominant feature on the skyline of Longford Town. The well-crafted, if rather austere, exterior conceals a fine interior that is remarkable for its use of space, and for the richness and complexity of its decoration.
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ST MEL’S CATHEDRAL
Longford Town (1840–93)

View of the austere and unusual rear elevation, which was originally intended as an episcopal residence. However, it was never used for this purpose.

ST MEL’S CATHEDRAL
Longford Town (c. 1893)

View of attractive early twentieth-century stained-glass window in one of the side chapels. The style of these windows is reminiscent of the work of the renowned Harry Clarke Studios.
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ST MEL’S CATHEDRAL
Longford Town
(1840-93)

The impressive and well-lit interior is remarkable for its use of space, and for the complexity of its decoration. The side aisles are separated from the main body of the church by continuous Ionic arcades. The high semi-circular rib-vaulted ceiling is lit by lunette openings at clerestory level.
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ST ANNE’S CHURCH
Ballycloghan (1860)
Simple mid nineteenth-century church, executed in good quality snecked limestone masonry with ashlar trim. It was built to designs by John Bourke (d. 1871) at a cost of £600.

ST MEL’S COLLEGE
Longford Town (1858-63)
This imposing building was originally constructed as a Catholic seminary. The scale of this building is testament to the increasing confidence of the Catholic Church in Ireland at the time. The bulk of this structure is alleviated by the various breakfronts, the central Italianate tower, the variety of window openings and by the fine Tuscan porch. It was built to designs by John Bourke (d. 1871), who was overseeing the works to St Mel’s Cathedral at the time of construction. It cost over £16,000 to build.

ST MEL’S COLLEGE
Longford Town (1858-63)
View of the fine Tuscan porch in crisp limestone and the elegant fanlight over the doorway.

ST ANNE’S CHURCH
Ballycloghan (1860)
Simple mid nineteenth-century church, executed in good quality snecked limestone masonry with ashlar trim. It was built to designs by John Bourke (d. 1871) at a cost of £600.
The late nineteenth-century building programme carried out by the Catholic Church also included the construction of convents and seminaries, often on a massive scale. Bishop Kilduff continued Bishop O’Higgins’ plans and engaged John Bourke to design St Mel’s Seminary (fig. 60), which was completed in 1863 and opened to students in 1865. Bourke went on to design the Convent of Mercy, Longford Town in 1874, perhaps the largest ecclesiastical complex in the county. Built in snicked rock-faced limestone, the polychrome brick dressings, carved stone and timber details and variety of openings enliven the façade. The Convent of Mercy established a number of convents throughout the county in the 1880s and ‘90s. Gabled breakfronts, hood-mouldings and pointed-arch openings are typical Gothic Revival features found at Edgeworthstown, Newtown-Forbes and at Ballymahon. The convent at Granard (fig. 61), built on the site of the former union workhouse, is perhaps the most accomplished of the small-town convents, with gabled projections, decorative bargeboards and extensive carved limestone detailing.

**CONVENT OF MERCY**

**Newtown-Forbes** (1897)

This chapel was constructed to serve the former Convent of Mercy, built in 1867. The crisp limestone dressings to the openings provide an attractive textural effect against the plain rendered walls. It was built to designs by the eminent architect William Hague (1836-99).

**LONGFORD METHODIST CHURCH**

**Battery Road, Longford Town** (1897)

A simple but attractive late nineteenth-century Methodist church. The contrast between the dark grey rock-faced masonry and the light-coloured cut-stone detailing to the openings helps to create an appealing textural and tonal variation to the façade. It cost £2,700 to construct and replaced an earlier Methodist church on the same site.
Church-building by minority Protestant denominations in Longford was limited. A well-detailed, small-scale Primitive Methodist church at Keenagh, built c. 1820, is an interesting reminder of the religious diversity in rural areas. The Methodist church on Battery Road in Longford Town continues the simple hall-and-porch form of the Keenagh church, though the fine rock-faced limestone masonry gives a more robust appearance. A Presbyterian church was also built at Lisraghtigan, near Granard, using finely cut and carved stone. It is interesting to note that these churches were built in the Gothic Revival style, a style which was generally adopted for church-building by both the established church and non-conformists throughout the nineteenth century.

There was a great boom in Church of Ireland church-building in the first decades of the century. The extraordinary activity of the Church of Ireland’s Board of First Fruits, funded between 1801 and 1821 by government money and supported by tithes, resulted in the construction of many small-scale churches throughout rural Ireland. Most, like St Catherine’s at Ballymacormick (fig. 62), conform to a simple hall with two, or sometimes three, pointed windows and a three-stage tower to the west end. In the larger towns, Church of Ireland churches usually had spires, as can be seen in Longford Town and at Ballymahon. Interestingly, many churches in the county benefited from landlord patronage and are more elaborate than the norm. The Countess...
A typical example of the standard hall-and-tower-type church that were built in great numbers throughout the country by the Board of First Fruits (1712-1833), particularly between 1808 and 1830. This church was constructed using a gift of £900 from the Board. These simple but well-built churches have become almost iconic features of the rural Irish countryside.
of Rosse patronised a number of churches including St Munis’s at Forgney (fig. 63) and St George’s at Keenagh (fig. 64). St Thomas’s near Aghnacliff (fig. 65) is a curious almost minaret- ted church, while St Paul’s church at Neatstown-Forbes (fig. 66), built or rebuilt under the patronage of the Forbes family, has distinctive crow-stepped parapets. An interesting feature found at a number of the Church of Ireland churches in Longford is the presence of side vestibules flanking the tower to the west end. Examples of this can be found at St Patrick’s in Ardagh (fig. 67), at Forgney, and at the now ruined St Anne’s church, Kilglass. The Church of Ireland Portal featured a number of windows commemorating figures associated with the Forbes family, including Oliver Goldsmith, who was minister of Forgney from 1718 to 1730 at an earlier church in the parish. The window was made by Watson & Co of Youghal.

Courtesy of Representative Body of the Church of Ireland Photograph: David Lawrence
This well-detailed church differs from the more commonly encountered Board of First Fruits hall-and-tower church in that it has unusual short transepts. The wide window openings retain interesting reticulated tracery and quarry glazing. A plaque to the tower indicates that it was built under the patronage of Jane, Dowager Countess of Rosse. It was constructed to designs by William Farrell (d. 1851) at a cost of £2,000.
This picturesque Church of Ireland church was built in 1829 using a gift of £830 from the Board of First Fruits. The simple form is enhanced and emphasised by the corner buttresses and the pinnacles, which help to give the church a strong silhouette and preserve its appearance similar to a number of churches built in Ulster around the same time.
St John’s Church is a picturesque cruciform-plan church with wide Tudor arch window openings and with high-quality cut-stone detailing used throughout. It was originally built to designs by John Hargrave (c. 1785-1833) c. 1825 and later extended, c. 1832, probably to designs by William Farrell (d. 1853). Lewis (1837) records that it was constructed using a gift of £3,300 and a loan of £300 from the Board of First Fruits, and that it was enlarged in 1832 by aid of a loan of £300 from the same Board, and with a donation of £100 from the Countess Dowager of Rosse.
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ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, Ardgagh (1810; tower 1812; altered c. 1860-5)

A substantial hall-and-tower-type church with the side vestibules flanking the tower that are a feature of a number of the Church of Ireland churches in Longford. It was a cathedral church for a period during the early nineteenth century, until the Dioceses of Ardgagh and Kilmore were united in 1839. It was remodelled, c. 1860-5, to designs by James Rawson Carroll (1830-1911).

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH, Ardgagh (c. 1860-5)

This charming lychgate is significant both as the entrance to the church and as a symbolic point where coffins were traditionally met by the clergyman. Lychgates are unusual in Ireland, being a typical feature of Anglican churches. It was erected to designs by James Rawson Carroll.
of Ireland did little building during the second half of the nineteenth century as numbers of parishioners were already in decline. However, a notable exception is St John’s church at Lanesborough (Fig 68). This church is of a more informed Gothic Revival style and displays Pugin’s influence with individually massed nave, chancel, porch and belfry.

The Board of First Fruits also provided housing for clergy. In common with church-building, most rectories were constructed in the first decades of the century. ... is the three-storey example at Ardagh, which was in use as the bishop’s residence from its construction in 1823 until 1839.

This church was built under the patronage of the Forbes family of Castle Forbes. The crow-stepped parapets to the gables are an unusual feature, being usually Scottish Baronial in character, and may have been inspired by the Scottish heritage of the Forbes family. They have a parallel in a stable range at Castle Forbes. It was built to designs by John Hegarty, who was commissioned to carry out work at Castle Forbes itself around the same time.
KILCOMMOCK RECTORY
Kilcommock Glebe, near Trim (rebuilt 1827)
Typical Board of First Fruits rectory built during the first decades of the nineteenth century. It is an example of the language of classical architecture stripped to its barest fundamental elements. The brick porch is a later addition, probably added during the late nineteenth century.

MOYDOW CHURCH
OF IRELAND RECTORY
Moydow Glebe (c. 1760; altered c. 1830)
The form of this substantial rectory, having projecting wings to either end, suggests that it originally dates to the mid-eighteenth century. The finely executed limestone doorcase provides an attractive central focus.

BALLINALEE RECTORY
Vicarsfield Glebe, Ballinalee (1822 or 1827)
This rectory is of a higher architectural standard than is usually encountered in Longford. The low overhanging hipped roof lends it a Regency character. It was built to designs by John Hargrave (1788-1833), the architect responsible for the original design of the nearby associated church in Ballinalee.
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The housing of the Catholic clergy was generally more akin in proportion and scale to the prosperous farmhouse and set on smaller plots of land. Predominantly dating to the second part of the century, several parochial houses in Longford are unusually architectural and well-executed. While the parochial house at Newtown-Cashel is an early classically inspired building, bolder houses in the Gothic Revival style were built at the end of the century. St Brigid's Parochial House at Ardagh (fig. 69) is a notable example of its type and is constructed in the same rock-faced sandstone and dressed limestone as the adjacent church. The Bishop's House, built in 1905 on the outskirts of Longford Town, is notable not only for its fine ecclesiastical-style entrance gates, well-massed and articulated exterior, but also for the delicately painted drawing-room ceiling.
Land hunger in Longford, one of the most densely populated counties, was a serious problem. In the period before the Great Famine the Leinster counties were noted as having a population of, on average, 247 people per square mile, while the figure in Longford was 362 people per square mile. While the high population density meant increased rents for landlords, it left much of the population vulnerable to starvation.

The Poor Law Union was established in 1838 to address growing problems of destitution. They instituted large-scale public works including the construction of union workhouses. These were built to a standard plan in the Tudor-Gothic Revival style to designs by George Wilkinson. Three workhouses were built in the county on the outskirts of Ballymahon, Granard and Longford Town. Longford Town workhouse was built to the east of the town and opened in 1842. Intended to accommodate up to 1,000 inmates, 2,300 were recorded in 1848. More than 16,000 people died at the workhouse in the first ten years of operation, necessitating the creation of mass graves to the south in the area that became known as ‘Bully’s Acre’. Now largely demolished, the former fever hospital (Fig. 70), built in 1848 to designs by Wilkinson, is the only surviving structure of the institution. Granard and Ballymahon workhouses, both now also demolished, were opened in 1842 and 1850 respectively, and both were designed to accommodate 600 inmates.
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(longford union workhouse)
Dublin Road, Longford Town (1848)

View of the former infectious diseases hospital/infirmary of the Longford Town Union Workhouse, built to designs by George Wilkinson (1813-90). The geometrical form and the projecting end bays are typical of workhouse architecture in Ireland. Workhouses are historically linked with the Great Famine and are an important physical reminder of this traumatic period in Irish history.

View of the original drawings of the elevations for the infectious diseases hospital/infirmary at the Longford Town Union Workhouse, as prepared by George Wilkinson (1813-90).

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive
The effects of the Great Famine were deeply felt throughout County Longford, as elsewhere in the country. Statistically, the rate of ‘excess mortality’ in the county was around twenty per thousand per year between 1846 and 1851 and was in the middle range of the national experience, though higher than the majority of Leinster counties. The Census Reports tell that the population fell from 115,491 in 1841 to 82,348 in 1851. This trend continued throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and by 1900 the population of the county stood at 46,672, or only 40 per cent of the pre-Famine figure. Longford Town, however, seemed to defy this general pattern of decline. By 1861, its population had increased to 4,872 and, in 1867, Thom’s Directory recorded that ‘in point of extent and trade this place is by far the most thriving and important town between Dublin and Sligo.’

The Famine also had a long-term effect on the economy. Landowners saw a steep decline in rents and a resulting shortage of funds for improvements. The late 1870s and 1880s were particularly hard, with record rainfalls, falling harvests and agricultural depression followed by evictions. The National Land League, led by Michael Davitt and Charles Stewart Parnell,
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Portarun Lodge
Cleraun (c. 1875)

The form of this house is typical of many medium-sized houses built throughout rural Ireland during the second half of the nineteenth century. The central entrance porch doubles as a viewing platform overlooking Lough Ree to the south. The elaborate cast-iron railings to the porch add decorative interest.

This charming boathouse opens onto Lough Ree. It is unusually well-built using high quality dressed ashlar limestone with cut-stone detailing throughout. The craftsmanship and conscious design involved is evident in the simplicity and the harmony of its parts. It demonstrates the attention to detail afforded to even the most prosaic of structures at the time.
This imposing house was built in a late Georgian/Regency classical idiom to designs by John Hargrave (1788-1833). The giant order pilasters between the bays of the two main facades, along with the very prominent eaves cornice and blocking course, lend this building a distinctive appearance that is reminiscent of a contemporary seaside villa. The full-height bow to the side elevation adds incident along the main approach to the house.
Typical mid-to-late nineteenth-century house or farmhouse, which is enhanced by the retention of all salient fabric. As in many buildings of its type, the decorative focus is reserved for the central doorway.

and founded in 1879, was active in Longford. The League held massive demonstrations calling for the reduction of rents and gave support to tenants under threat of eviction. Between 12 and 14 January 1881, the local Land League successfully resisted the forcible eviction of a large number of Lord Granard’s tenants in the Drumlish area. This pressure eventually led to the various Land Acts and a great change in the political, social and landholding structures.

As the population declined, there was a corresponding increase in farm size and a move back towards a pastoral economy. The mid-to-late nineteenth century saw the emergence of a new middle class and the construction of a number of modest-scale two-storey houses throughout the county. A number of these adopted features, such as symmetrical layouts and fanlights, from more classical houses, like Torboy House. Attractive middle-sized houses such as Ommersent and Portanure Lodge (fig. 73), both constructed c. 1870, represent a continuation of the classical tradition prevalent during the first half of the century.
This rambling Tudor Revival house, with its dramatic roofline of Tudoresque chimneyspots, turrets and gabled projections, is one of the finest houses of its type and date in the country and is an example of the nineteenth-century penchant for dramatic architecture given a romantic interpretation. It was designed by Daniel Robertson (d. 1849) for Thomas Langlee Lefroy, Baron of the Court of Exchequer in 1841 and later Lord Chief Justice of Ireland (from 1852).
Large-scale estate building projects were undertaken by Thomas Langlois Lefroy at Carrigglas, the seventh Earl of Granard at Castle Forbes and Thomas John Fetherson at Ardagh. For the rebuilding of Carrigglas Manor, Castle Forbes and Ardagh estate village, all three landlords chose Gothic Revival styles. The Gothic Revival style was popular with many landlords, as it suggested connection with the medieval past and was in keeping with the fashionable Romantic movement. An exception is Coolamber Manor (fig. 72), built in Regency classicism for Major S.W. Blackhall, c. 1830.

Carrigglas Manor (fig. 73) can be described as Tudor Gothic. The regular rhythm of the façade is Gothicised by soaring towers, lofty Tudor-style chimneystacks, gablets, castellations and carved embellishments.
Although originally dating to the seventeenth century, Castle Forbes was greatly modified and altered on two occasions during the nineteenth century, firstly (c. 1828) by John Hargrave following a fire in the 1820s. More extensive works were later carried out (c. 1860) to designs by J. J. McCarthy (1817-82) working in a Gothic Revival style that he was familiar with due to his numerous ecclesiastical commissions. Castle Forbes has been the home of the Forbes family, Earls of Granard, for almost 400 years.

Courtesy of Lady Forbes.
The alterations to Castle Forbes (fig. 74), on the other hand, are executed in a more evolved Gothic Revival style. Designed by the rising church architect J.J. McCarthy (1817-82), and provides a dramatic entrance to the courtyard at Castle Forbes. The central clock tower provides a dominant focus and adds to the picturesque skyline of turrets and towers at Castle Forbes. The crow-stepped parapets are a feature of the Scottish Baronial style and are, perhaps, a reference to the Scottish ancestry of the Forbes family.

The Nineteenth Century

CASTLE FORBES
Newtown-Forbes (c. 1860)

This flamboyant gatehouse was built to designs by J.J. McCarthy (1817-82), and provides a dramatic entrance to the courtyard at Castle Forbes. The central clock tower provides a dominant focus and adds to the picturesque skyline of turrets and towers at Castle Forbes. The crow-stepped parapets are a feature of the Scottish Baronial style and are, perhaps, a reference to the Scottish ancestry of the Forbes family.

The alterations to Castle Forbes (fig. 74), on the other hand, are executed in a more evolved Gothic Revival style. Designed by the rising church architect J.J. McCarthy for the seventh Earl of Granard, this building demonstrates an understanding of the works of two of the most influential figures in nineteenth-century architecture, A.W.N. Pugin and John Ruskin. Advocates of the Gothic Revival, they looked to the Middle Ages for architectural inspiration, encouraging not only the imitation of architectural features, but also proposing the adoption of construction methods to improve structural clarity.

CASTLE FORBES
Newtown-Forbes (c. 1860)

The central clock tower provides a dominant focus and adds to the picturesque skyline of turrets and towers at Castle Forbes. The crow-stepped parapets are a feature of the Scottish Baronial style and are, perhaps, a reference to the Scottish ancestry of the Forbes family.

Courtesy of Lady Forbes
Sir Thomas John Fetherston employed the architect James Rawson Carroll to improve Ardagh Village in 1860-5 as a memorial for his late uncle, Sir George Ralph Fetherston. Set around a triangular green and close to Ardagh House, this picturesque village owes much to the aesthetic views of the Romantic movement. Carroll’s scheme involved the construction of a number of estate worker houses of various designs (fig. 75), a land agent’s house, an RIC barracks (fig. 76), and a courthouse centred around a triangular village green, with an earlier Church of Ireland church enclosing the east end of the village. The village is laid out so that the demesne of Ardagh House, originally constructed or rebuilt during the first half of the eighteenth century, forms the north end of the village while the front elevations of the majority of the estate buildings in the village face towards the front of the house. Common Gothic and Tudor Revival features found throughout the village include steeply pitched roofs, tall chimneystacks, cast-iron pivot windows, overhanging eaves and decorative carved bargeboards. The impressive and richly ornamented Gothic-style clock tower (fig. 77) at the centre of the village green forms the focal point of the entire project.
Ardagh (1860-5)

This appealing former RIC barracks was originally built to designs by James Rawson Carroll (1830-1911) as part of his extensive remodelling work in Ardagh for the Fetherston family. The steeply pitched roofs, pointed gables, pierced bargeboards and mullioned windows with quarry glazing are characteristic features of Carroll’s work in the village.
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF COUNTY LONGFORD

FETHERSTON CLOCK TOWER
Ardagh (1860-5)
This complex Gothic-style memorial clock tower exhibits stone masonry and craftsmanship of the very highest quality. It forms the focal point of Carrigtwohill and commemorates the memory of George Fetherston and commemorates his life-long devotion to the moral and social improvement of his tenancy.
Attractive high-quality wrought-iron gates and railings are a feature of Ardagh, adding artistic incident to the streetscape at the centre of the village.

An unusual and functional feature, which occupies a prominent position in the centre of Ardagh Village. It continues the early tradition of providing a travellers' rest in the centre of a village or town.

View of the streetscape of Ardagh depicting a number of detached and semi-detached workers' houses.
Urban development continued throughout the nineteenth century, in spite of setbacks brought about by economic downturns, famine and emigration. Pigot’s Commercial Directory of 1824 describes a ‘prosperous’ Longford Town, with a Saturday market and two annual fairs, two military barracks, a courthouse and a prison under construction. The prison was enlarged in the middle of the century, perhaps reflecting the increased activity of the RIC and the courthouses in the county. Market houses at Ballymahon (fig. 78) and at Edgeworthstown, indicate the importance of these towns as regional market centres.

Increased market activity brought banking to rural towns. Banks were usually designed in an Italian classical style, communicating a sense of permanence and security to its customers. An Italianate Ulster Bank (fig. 79) was built in Longford Town while the branch at Granard, designed by Thomas Jackson & Son c. 1872, took on a more domestic classical appearance. The National Bank buildings at Ballymahon (fig. 80) and Longford Town were built to designs by Francis Caldbeck in the Italianate style favoured by the company. These buildings conform to Caldbeck’s standard bank design of a three-storey block with projecting...
The Nineteenth Century

(this fig. 79)

ULSTER BANK
Main Street,
Longford Town
(c. 1863)

This richly detailed building was one of the first bank buildings to be constructed in the southern counties by a Belfast bank. It has a commanding presence in the streetscape, reflecting the period when bank buildings were designed to express the solidity and wealth of the institutions through their architecture. It was built to designs by James Bell Junior (1829-83).

(this fig. 80)

BANK OF IRELAND
Main Street,
Ballymahon
(1869)

This Italianate building was originally built to designs by William Caldbeck (1824-72) as a branch of the National Bank. It represents a good example of his standard bank design, which became the template for bank buildings in the late nineteenth century throughout Ireland. A condition of the purchase of this plot in 1866 was that the building erected should cost no less than £1,000.

ULSTER BANK
Main Street,
Edgeworthstown
(1915)

This purpose-built Queen Anne Revival-style building has a strong presence in the streetscape due to the steeply pitched roof with dormer openings and the tall chimneys. It is well detailed with extensive render decoration to the principal elevation, while the Doric porch provides a central focus.
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ST JOHN’S HALL
Church Street, Longford Town (1861-4)

This attractive Italianate Church of Ireland hall was constructed using the highest quality limestone and is extensively detailed throughout. Built to designs by James Bell junr (1829-81), at an estimated cost of £1,500, this impressive structure has the appearance of a mid-to-late nineteenth-century bank building.

KING-HARMAN MEMORIAL MASONIC HALL
Battery Road, Longford Town (1890)

An eclectic building with rich terracotta detailing, used to create a striking composition. Such an approach was typical in the late-nineteenth century, when many devices of eighteenth and early-eleventh-century English and Flemish architecture were employed as part of a more liberal attitude to design. It is named in honour of Col. E. R. King-Harman, MP, a former Provincial Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Meath from 1880 until his death in 1888. It was built to designs by John O. Moyan, a Cavan Freemason, on a site provided by the Earl of Longford.

Detail of the Masonic crest with the characteristic square and compass devices.
end bays containing separate entrances to the banking hall and to the associated bank manager’s residence. Bank-building continued into the first decades of the century with the Queen Anne Revival-style Ulster Bank, built at Edgeworthstown c. 1915, the curious gable-fronted former Munster & Leinster Bank, built in 1922 in Longford Town, and the Georgian Revival-style Bank of Ireland built or rebuilt at Granard in 1933.

The latter part of the century saw the rise of purpose-built society buildings. The Protestant Hall (fig. 81), built c. 1861-4 on Church Street in Longford Town, indicates a strong Protestant presence organising itself in reaction to the rising Fenian movement at the time. The quirky and richly detailed King-Harman Memorial Masonic Hall (fig. 82) built on Battery Road in Longford Town, along with the lodges at Ballymahon, built c. 1850, and Granard, built c. 1870 (fig. 83), are interesting historical reminders of the strong Freemasonry movement in Longford at the time of construction.

As the century progressed houses in towns and villages were improved or rebuilt, particularly in areas that were close to the canal and later the railway. Uniform terraces such as Kiernan’s Terrace and along Church Street in Longford Town, built in 1838 and c. 1835 respectively, based on classicism and exhibiting knowledge of proportion and with features such as fanlights, were built by speculators to accommodate the growing middle class.

The majority of the surviving traditional shopfronts date from the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Their frontage was usually constructed of timber, moulded render or a combination...
Although out of use, this building retains a simple timber fascia with attractive carved timber lettering, and a timber half-door flanked by delicate pilasters.

Attractive early nineteenth-century building enhanced by the later timber shopfront. The timber fascias and pilasters are particularly well carved and serve as a reminder of the quality of craftsmanship available at the time. Brightly coloured traditional shopfronts add vibrancy and incident to Irish towns and villages but are now fast disappearing.
COUNTY LONGFORD CLUB
Main Street, Longford Town
(c. 1885)
This richly detailed late nineteenth-century terraced building is enlivened by the extensive stucco decoration to the main facade. This building was formerly in use as a gentleman's club known as the 'County Longford Club' from c. 1895 until c. 1925. Its members were made up mainly of successful local businessmen and members of the legal profession.

KING-HARMAN MEMORIAL CLOCK TOWER
Keenagh (1878)
Impressive and imposing turret-like Gothic clock tower. It commemorates Laurence King-Harman (1816-75) of Newcastle House 'a good landlord and an upright man'. It was built to designs by Sir Robert William Edis (1839-1927) while Slater’s Directory (1881) states that it cost over £1000 to erect.

Detail of the plaque featuring a carved marble portrait of Laurence King-Harman set in a classical aedicule. The carved foliate decoration is particularly noteworthy.

of both. These shopfronts are a feature of Irish towns and villages, adding colour and vibrancy to the streetscape. Unfortunately they are now a rapidly disappearing feature in Ireland as is the case in County Longford where few examples are still in existence. Many traditional shopfronts are based on a simplification of the classical formula of columns and entablature, with the columns flanking the display windows and the entablature supplying a fascia for the shop or family name. Examples in Longford range from well-executed name fascias, such as O'Hara's at Granard, to simple name fascias and pilasters such as J. Hopkins near Newtown-Cashel, to more elaborate shopfronts with decorative consoles such as Skelly's at Ballymahon and P.P. Masterson at Abbeylara.
The opening decades of the twentieth century were a time of enormous political and economic upheaval. The Great War (1914-18), The Easter Rising (1916), the War of Independence (1919-21) and the Civil War (1922-3) profoundly changed the political landscape. From the foundation of the Free State until the end of the twentieth century, Ireland was characterized by prolonged periods of economic stagnation and emigration. The population of Longford continued to decline, and by the mid-1960s the population was 28,989 or a mere 25 per cent of the 1841 census figure. Such a climate was not conducive to architectural innovation or development on a major scale.

The main focus of public building activity was largely confined to improving the poor social infrastructure, most notably in the provision of social housing and the construction of new schools, hospitals and garda stations.

During the War of Independence, republicanism had strong support in Longford, particularly in the north of the county. However, as a county, Longford experienced only a low level of destruction of property during the upheaval of 1916-23, with the exception of some disturbances in north Longford. The main street in Granard was largely burnt out by the Black and Tans in November 1920 following the assassination of the District Inspector of the RIC. The flying column of the Longford Brigade of the IRA, under the command of Sean MacEoin, the ‘Blacksmith of Ballinaker’, organised several effective ambushes of Crown forces in Longford including the Clonfin Ambush in February 1921. A number of RIC barracks were also attacked and damaged, including Ballymahon barracks.

After 1922, the Land Commission was given the power to purchase and break up large landholdings that were not being farmed by the owner, resulting in the break-up of many country estates. Country houses were left with only their demesnes and, unless the owners had another income, this could scarcely support the maintenance of a large property. Many houses were abandoned and subsequently demolished. Longford lost a number of important houses during the twentieth century including Newtownbond (fig. 85), Foxhall (fig. 86), Mosstown, Lisard (fig. 87) and Farragh, while Doory Hall (fig. 88) is now a scant ruin. Other important structures such as Ardagh House, Edgeworthstown House, Newcastle and Castlerea were sold and converted to institutional use.
GREVILLE ARMS HOTEL
Main Street,
Granard
(c. 1790; rebuilt c. 1922)
This large late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century house was converted for use as a hotel during the mid-nineteenth century. It was burnt by the Black and Tans in 1920 and subsequently largely rebuilt. It has historical connections with Michael Collins (1891-1922), who first stayed at the hotel in 1917 and became a regular visitor to the town between 1917-22. Collins was engaged to Kitty Kiernan, the sister of the hotel owner at the time.

NEWTOWNBOND
Newtownbond, near Edgworthstown
(c. 1730; altered c. 1770)
Plain early- to mid-eighteenth-century gable-ended house that was the home of the Bond family for almost 200 years. The attractive pedimented doorcase with sidelights provided a central focus. It was demolished sometime during the mid-twentieth century.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive
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FARRAGH
Farraghroe (c. 1820; extended c. 1855)
Large eclectic house of fine ashlar masonry built to designs by John Hargrave (c. 1788-1833) for Willoughby Bond. Later Victorian works, including the unusual bowed projection to the side elevation, were carried out to designs by Nathaniel Montgomery. It was demolished c. 1961.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive

FOXHALL HOUSE
Foxhall, near Legan (c. 1750)
Large country house of mid-eighteenth-century appearance, having central pedimented breakfront. The Fox family was originally granted extensive lands here in the early seventeenth century. The estate was later acquired by the Land Commission and the house subsequently demolished.

Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive
LISSARD HOUSE
Lissard, near Edgeworthstown (c. 1770; incorporating earlier block c. 1700)
Substantial three-storey house with unusual ‘blind’ floor between the ground and top floors to the principal elevation. It was associated with the O’Ferman/More O’Ferrell family throughout the nineteenth century, and was latterly inhabited by Richard More O’Ferrell, who was murdered by the IRA in 1932.

DOORY HALL
Doory (c. 1820)
Elegant late Georgian country house with fine Doric porch. It was built to designs by John Hargrave for Mrs Frances Jessop, replacing an earlier Jessop house to site. It is now in ruins.
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WINSTON
Battery Road, Longford Town (1897)
This interesting house was reputedly built by an English gentleman who worked in the Foreign Office. The irregular massing and plan, and the variety of materials and finishes used in its construction, help give this building an attractive appearance.

CARTRON HILL
Battery Road, Longford Town (1896)
An attractive house with some Arts and Crafts influences. The deliberate asymmetry is part of an ordered coherent scheme that is typical of the late Victorian period.

WINSTON
Battery Road, Longford Town (1897)
Detail of a grotesque terracotta roof finial.
Given the social and economic climate, it is hardly surprising that no new large-scale houses were built during the twentieth century. Instead, the focus of middle-class house-building shifted to the suburbs of the larger towns, with a number of interesting houses constructed by professionals in their vicinity. Battery Road in Longford Town became a fashionable suburb from the mid-nineteenth century associated with the wealthy middle class and with military officers and officials at the large barracks complexes at the north end of the town. Canton Hill, Winston (fig. 99) and Eden Vale (fig. 100) are eclectic detached houses with various Arts and Crafts influences dating to the turn of the century. Later twentieth-century additions on Battery Road include the Arts and Crafts-style St Ronan, built 1927, and the plain International-style Hill Crest.
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HILLCREST
Battery Road, Longford Town (1937)

The stark horizontal block-like forms of this building are a feature of the formalist Modernist style. It is a rare example of its type in the midlands.
Example of a typical rural local authority house. It is well built to a conscious architectural design, which could be considered an ‘improved’ interpretation of vernacular housing of the time.

The gable-fronted forms along this attractive terrace of twenty local authority houses make a strong architectural statement along St Mel’s Road. It was built by the Longford Town Commissioners and dates to a period when a great many houses of this type were being built on the outskirts of the larger towns in Ireland.
By 1921, following the enactment of various Land and Labourers Acts (1880-1921), almost two-thirds of Irish tenants owned their land; over 50,000 houses, built to various designs on half-acre roadside sites, were constructed throughout the country. Housing styles varied considerably; but they were generally simple and solid, with masonry or concrete walls and slated roofs. Many of these buildings still exist, although the majority have been heavily altered and extended. A good surviving example can be seen at Corboy, near Edgeworthstown. Local authorities constructed social housing in the larger towns and cities. A particularly noteworthy terrace of twenty houses with a distinctly Arts and Crafts flavour was constructed by the Longford Town Commissioners along St Mel’s Road in Longford, in 1898.

The Bord na Móna housing developments built c. 1952 at Lanesborough and at Derraghan, near Keenanagh, are two of a number built throughout the midlands following the Turf Development Act (1950) and were an important landmark in Irish public housing. Designed by Frank Gibney and containing a number of different housing types, they provided simple but modern accommodation for workers employed at the nearby power station at Lanesborough. Gibney’s ideas were derived from various sources including the English Garden City movement and 1930s architecture in the Netherlands. The Lanesborough scheme, comprising sixty-one houses on the outskirts of the town, is interesting for its eye-catching circular-plan house set at the entrance to the estate (fig. 91).

(fig. 91) BORD NA MÓNA HOUSING Lanesborough (1952)

This distinctive house marks the entrance to the Bord na Móna housing scheme at Lanesborough. The scheme was built to designs by Frank Gibney (1920-78) for workers employed at the nearby power station. It is one of two schemes he designed for Bord na Móna workers throughout the midlands during the early 1950s.
Laneborough Power Station, built by Bord na Móna in 1958, is a notable example of government-sponsored functional architecture and, perhaps, the largest structure ever built in County Longford. The functional design of the power plant owes much to the early twentieth-century architectural styles of the Bauhaus and the work of Le Corbusier and is constructed using the most modern materials available at the time. The two chimneystacks are local landmarks and dominate the skyline of Laneborough. Sod peat, and later milled peat, was transported to the station using an extensive bog railway system. These narrow-gauge rail networks are important in social and economic terms, and are an integral element of the landscape of the midlands. Electricity substations, such as the example at Conacarta (fig. 92), were part of a broader network of electricity distribution arising from the Rural Electrification Scheme in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Substations of this nature were built to a common plan throughout Ireland as part of the Rural Electrification Scheme in the late 1940s and 1950s. The linear fenestration pattern, matched by flat-roofed profiles, show an awareness of the contemporary Modernist movement. The distinctive thunderbolt-and-wave motif in use by the ESB at the time provides a decorative element on an otherwise stark functional structure.
Building activity under the new state was focused on meeting social needs. Simple functional buildings such as Ballymahon library (Fig. 93) and Lanesborough garda station, built 1930 and c. 1924 respectively, were constructed throughout the country. A new county hospital was constructed in Longford Town in 1962 on the site of the former union workhouse. Education was also an important priority and the Office of Public Works embarked on an extensive school-building programme from the 1930s, of which numerous examples still exist today. Standard plans, often displaying light Modernist design influences, were produced and designs adapted to fit the needs of a particular site. Scoil Naomh Padraig near Ballinamuck is a typical mid-century school with tall windows for natural light.
The Catholic Church continued to build in the grand Gothic tradition of the nineteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century, with St Matthew’s (fig. 94) in Ballymahon the most notable example in the county. Several modest churches in a variety of architectural styles were built towards the middle of the century, particularly to the north of the county. St Columba’s (figs. 95-6) at Mullanaghta, built in a muted Hiberno-Romanesque style, is the most significant of the mid-century churches in Longford.
The slightly battered walls and the round-headed openings lend this building a muted Hiberno-Romanesque feel. It was built to designs by Ralph Henry Byrne (1877-1946), an architect noted for his academic and rather eclectic approach to design. It was built using stone taken from nearby Derrycassan House, the former seat of the Dopping family. The carved stone detailing is unusual in a twentieth-century building, even a high-status public one such as a church.
ST JAMES’ CHURCH
Drummeel, Clonbroney
(c. 1825; remodelled 1929-33)

Unusual and distinctive church remodelled in the early 1930s to designs by Rudolph Maximilian Butler (1872-1943) who added the round tower, gabled roof and the circular dome-type window to a typical early nineteenth-century T-plan chapel. The closely remodelled was apparently inspired by the then parish priest’s experiences of Moorish architecture during his time as a seminarian in Salamanca, Spain.

View of a fine stained-glass window in the style of the renowned Harry Clarke Studios.

Detail of intricate mosaic tiling to floor, possibly by Oppenheimer Ltd.
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CONVENT OF MERCY
St Joseph's Road, Longford Town (c. 1900)

View of an attractive and well-detailed oratory in the nun's graveyard at the Convent of Mercy, Longford Town. It represents a fine example of an early prefabricated structure, and it is notable for the high quality ironwork and carved timber used throughout.

CONVENT OF MERCY
St Joseph's Road, Longford Town (c. 1900)

Detail of the carved timber and moulded ironwork.
At Drummeel (fig. 97), Rudolph Maximilian Butler carried out a quirky remodelling of an earlier T-plan chapel, creating a distinctive and unusual building. New styles were adopted for church-building projects following liturgical changes brought about by the Second Vatican Council (1962-5). Our Lady of Lourdes at Abbeyshrule and St Dominic’s (fig. 98) in Keenagh are departures in plan, form, interior and embellishment from traditional church design and construction. Both these buildings were built in the early 1980s to designs by John Kernan.

Changes in technology brought about changes in building form and design. Concrete and steel were increasingly utilised as the century progressed. Providers, a furniture and hardware shop on Main Street in Longford Town, built in 1950, has bands of glazing to achieve an almost transparent façade. Black’s, also in Longford Town, has a surviving Vitrolite shopfront with chrome trim, c. 1950. These sophisticated shopfronts are becoming increasingly rare in Irish streetscapes, with Black’s being the last surviving example of its type in the county.

The inventive plan adopted for this church is the result of liturgical changes adopted by the Second Vatican Council in the early 1960s. This allowed architects to move away from traditional church plans and experiment with unconventional forms and styles.
The built heritage of County Longford makes an important contribution to its identity and sense of place. Architectural heritage not only tells of changes in building and design fashions through the decades and centuries, it contributes as layers of social, economic and historic information that significantly aid our understanding of a place and its people. Buildings also demonstrate technological developments, apparent in the use of traditional materials, such as timber, stone, plaster, slate, cast iron and thatch in older buildings, through to the use of modern materials, such as concrete and steel, in more recent buildings.

Many sites and structures included in this survey have survived due to the high-quality materials and excellent craftsmanship that went into their construction. It is important to recognize that these buildings contribute to local, regional and national identity. The relative prosperity of the first decade of the twenty-first century has created new opportunities as well as potential dangers—opportunities to conserve and protect what is special about a building or place, but also the potential to destroy. Derelict and poorly presented architectural heritage is common in urban and rural areas. Routine maintenance and respect for traditional building techniques can do much to ensure the survival of these buildings. It is important to safeguard the built heritage as it is a tangible link to the past.

The public reaction to the recent catastrophic fire at St Mel’s Cathedral clearly illustrates the importance of historic buildings within the community and it should be possible to find the resources to restore this important landmark structure. On a more positive note, the recent renovation of Longford Town courthouse, which was closed in 1994 and threatened with demolition, has resurrected an important architectural centrepiece, improving the visual amenity along Main Street in the process. Leitrim House has also been rescued from near demolition in recent decades, ensuring the survival of an important mid-eighteenth-century house. Castletown House, one of the more important elements of the
View of the shores of Lough Ree at Cleran.

LONGFORD

View of the shores of Lough Ree at Cleran.
The built heritage of Longford, has recently been purchased by new private owners, which hopefully will ensure its survival for future generations. The reopening of the Royal Canal as far as the Shannon will help create more opportunities for tourism in the county, as well as providing an important local amenity. Protection of our built heritage is not just a matter of the big restoration projects. There is always the danger that the less prominent elements of the built heritage are not recognised and are insensitively altered or destroyed. These are as important to our understanding of a place as the fine country house, the richly detailed church and the large civic building. Small incremental alterations to the details and fabric, such as the replacement of timber sash windows and slate roof, can also erode a building’s heritage value over time. Longford County Council administers a conservation grant scheme to aid owners of buildings on the Record of Protected Structures to undertake sympathetic repairs. Preventive maintenance, such as the repair of slipped slates and the clearing of gutters, will prolong the life of a traditional building almost indefinitely.

Designated a ‘Heritage Village’ and three-time winner of the National Tidy Towns Competition, Ardagh Village is a testament to this ‘good housekeeping’ philosophy and the benefits this can give to both the people who live there and to the visitors who come to experience and enjoy the gems of our built heritage.

The range of structures highlighted in this introduction is a small proportion of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage of County Longford. The survey contains a broad range of sites and structures that are urban and rural, public and private, large and small; these all contribute to the unique character of the county. The survival of these structures is testimony to the durability of their construction, the quality of their design and the care and respect of their owners. It is hoped that the survey and this publication will help increase a popular awareness of, and an appreciation of, the county’s rich and varied heritage. As time passes and more buildings are constructed throughout the county, there will be the need for further assessments.
MONEFRADLAGHAN HOUSE
Monefrodlaghan
(c. 1860)
Attractive house of late-nineteenth-century appearance that retains its early fabric.

"THE YANK’s HOUSE"
Lisduff (Montgomery)
(c. 1865)
This attractive house is currently (late 2009/early 2010) undergoing sensitive restoration after years of dereliction. The well-proportioned façade elevation, and the two-stone over-named basement form, lends this building quite a formal architectural character for what is, in essence, a vernacular farmhouse. It was reputedly built in the 1860s by a local man returning to the area after a number of years working in America.

Courtesy of Catherine Kane
Further Reading


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The striking silhouette of St. Catherine's Church of Ireland church, Killoe. This fine church was originally built to designs by John Hargrave (1788-1833) in 1824 using a gift of £900 from the Board of First Fruits and £200 from Willoughby Bond, Esq., of nearby Farragh or Farraghroe House. The tower may have been added in 1861 as part of ‘sundry works’ at the church carried out to designs by William Gillespie and William Joseph Welland, the architects for the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF COUNTY LONGFORD

Registration Numbers

The structures mentioned in the text of this Introduction are listed below. Further information on each structure may be found by accessing the survey on the internet at www.buildingsofireland.ie and searching by the ‘Registration Number’. Structures are listed by page number.

Please note that most of the buildings listed are in private ownership and are not open to the public.

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2 Cloondara Canal
Cloondara Td.
Reg. 13307006

2 Cloondara Bridge
Cloondara Td.
Reg. 13307005

5 Inis Mór Ecclesiastical Site
Inchmore
Not included in survey

5 Inchcleraun Ecclesiastical Site
Inchcleraun
Not included in survey

5 Saints Island Ecclesiastical Site
Saints Island
Not included in survey

7 Castlerea Castle
Castlerea Td.
Not included in survey

7 Aungier Market House
Sean Connolly Barracks, Longford Town
Reg. 13002495

7 Royal Canal
Multiple townlands

8-9 Aghnacliff Dolmen
Aghnacliff Td.
Not included in survey

8 Cartronbore Stone Circle
Cartronbore Td.
Not included in survey

8 Cloughshinny Stone Circle
Cloughshinny Td.
Not included in survey

8-9 Corlea Trackway
Corlea Td.
Not included in survey

Black Pool Dyke
Multiple townlands, near Abbeylara

9 Breany Ringfort
Breany Td.
Not included in survey

9 Cloondara Td.
Reg. 13307006

10-11 Inchcleraun Ecclesiastical Site
Inchmore
Not included in survey

10 Saints Island Ecclesiastical Site
Saints Island
Not included in survey

10 Inis Mór Ecclesiastical Site
Inchmore Td.
Not included in survey

10 Saints Island Ecclesiastical Site
Saints Island
Not included in survey

10 Inis Mór Ecclesiastical Site
Inchmore Td.
Not included in survey

10 Saints Island Ecclesiastical Site
Saints Island
Not included in survey

12-3 St Mel’s Cathedral
Ardagh Demesne
Not included in survey

12-3 Granard Motte
Moatfield Td., Granard
Not included in survey

14-5 Abbeyshrule Abbey
Abbeyshrule Td.
Not included in survey

14-5 Abbeyshrule Abbey
Abbeyshrule Td.
Not included in survey

14-5 Abbeyshrule Abbey
Abbeyshrule Td.
Not included in survey

14-5 Abbeyshrule Abbey
Abbeyshrule Td.
Not included in survey

15-20 Mosstown House
Mosstown Td.
Not included in survey

(Continued)
A INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE OF COUNTY LONGFORD

72-3 St Brigid’s Catholic Church
Lynamore Td., Ardagh
Reg. 13312031

74-7 St Mark’s Catholic Church
St Mark’s Square
Longford Town
Reg. 13002207

78-9 St Mark’s College
(formerly St. Mark’s Seminary)
Derrynavarra Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13009002

78 St Mel’s Catholic Cathedral
St Mel’s Square, Longford Town
Reg. 13002327

78 St Mel’s College
(formerly St. Mel’s Seminary)
Deanscurragh Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13003002

78 St Anne’s Catholic Church
Ballycloghan Td.
Reg. 13401915

79 Convent of Mercy
St. Joseph’s Road, Longford Town
Reg. 13004039

79 St Elizabeth’s Convent of Mercy
Townparks (Longford By.) Td., Newtown-Forbes
Reg. 13303029

79 Convent of Mercy
Ballymahon Td., Ballymahon
Reg. 13316005

79 Convent of Mercy
Ballymahon Td., Ballymahon
Reg. 13316007

80 Primitive Methodist Church
Keragh Td., Keragh
Reg. 13005012

80 Longford Town Methodist Chapel
Ballymacarrett Road, Longford Town
Reg. 13003011

80 Tully Presbyterian Church
Longfortgh Td., near Keragh
Reg. 13001017

80-81 St Catherine’s Church of Ireland Church
Corry (Mayo) Td., Ballymahon
Reg. 13005006

80 St Catherine’s Church of Ireland Church
Ballymahon Td., Ballymahon
Reg. 13100019

82 St Mary’s Church of Ireland
Fergney Td.
Reg. 13802772

82 St Anne’s Church of Ireland
Cloonmore Td., Fiveland
Reg. 13106022

82-3 St George’s Church of Ireland
Kilcommock, Keenagh
Reg. 13313025

84 St Thomas Church of Ireland
Rathmore (Granard By.) Td., near Aghnacliff
Reg. 13400601

85 St John’s Church of Ireland
Gorteenrevagh Td., Ballinalee
Reg. 13304009

86 St Patrick’s Church of Ireland
Edgeworthstown Road, Ardagh
Reg. 13312032

87 St Paul’s Church of Ireland
(Longford By.) Td., Newtown-Forbes
Reg. 13303021

87 St John’s Church of Ireland
Lanesborough Td., Lanesborough
Reg. 13310007

87 Shrule Rectory
Glebe (Rathcline By.) Td., near Lanesborough
Reg. 13402610

87 Rathcline Rectory
Glebe (Rathcline By.) Td., near Ballymahon
Reg. 13401447

88 Kilcommock Rectory
Kilcommock Glebe Td., near Keenagh
Reg. 13402209

88 Ballinalee Rectory
Vicarshold Glebe Td., Ballinalee
Reg. 13306007

88 Moydow Rectory
Moydow Glebe Td.
Reg. 13401922

89 Templemore Rectory
Templemore Glebe Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13006025

89 Nenagh-Cahill Parish House
Naenagh-Cahill Td., Naenagh-Cahill
Reg. 13402122

89 St Brigid’s Parochial House
Lynamore Td., Ardagh
Reg. 13312033

89-90 St Michael’s Bishops House
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401401

90 Ballymahon Union Workhouse
Ballymahon Td., Ballymahon
Reg. 13005005
demolished

90 Granard Union Workhouse
Granard Td., near Ballymahon
Reg. 13401706

90 ‘Bully’s Acre’
(former workhouse graveyard)
Longford Town Union Workhouse Glack Td., Dublin Road, Longford Town
Reg. 13005116

90 Longford Town Union Workhouse (former workhouse infirmary)
Glack Td., Dublin Road, Longford Town
Reg. 13405606

90 Templemichael Rectory
Templemichael Glebe Td., near Longford Town
Reg. 13401401

91-92 Templemichael Rectory
Templemichael Glebe Td., near Longford Town
Reg. 13401402

92-3 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402501

93 Portanure Lodge
(boathouse)
Cloonmore Td., Templemichael
Reg. 13402505

93 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401403

93 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401404

93 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401405

93 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401406

93 Portanure Lodge
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13401407

94 Costarbar Manor
Costarbaragh or Costarbar Manor Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13403204

95 Torley House
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13403193

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402116

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402117

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402118

96-97 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402119

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402120

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402121

96 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402122

96-97 Carraigmore Manor
Carraigmore Demesne Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402123

100 Ardagh House
Ardagh Td., Ardagh
Reg. 13313005

100-101 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13305005

100-101 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13305006

100-101 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13305007

100 Castle Forbes
Cloonmore Td., Templemichael
Reg. 13402506

100 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402507

100 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402508

100 Castle Forbes
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13402509

101 RIC Barracks
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13312016

101-2 Fetherston Clock Tower
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13312017

102 Rotherstone Clock Tower
Templemichael Td., Longford Town
Reg. 13312018

103 Traveller’s Rest
Ardagh
Reg. 13312019

103-4 Portarane Lodge
Cloonmore Td., Templemichael
Reg. 13402505

103-4 Portarane Lodge
Cloonmore Td., Templemichael
Reg. 13402506

103-4 Portarane Lodge
Cloonmore Td., Templemichael
Reg. 13402507
Acknowledgements

Built Heritage and Architectural Policy,
DoEHLG
Principal Officer Brian Lucas
Chef Architect Martin Colney

NIAH
Senior Architect Willy Cumming
Architectural Heritage Officer TJ. O'Meara
Grd Joanne O’Wondan, Alan Murray
Terence O’Sullivan, TJ. O’Meara
Additional NIAH Staff Mildred Dunne,
Gareth John, Debrah Lawlor, Damian Murphy,
Barry O’Reilly, Jane Wales and Ann Kennedy.

The NIAH gratefully acknowledges the following in
the preparation of the Longford County Survey and
Introduction:

Survey Fieldwork
Jane Wales Associates

Recorders
Jane Wales, Natalie de Roiste, Brigid Fitzgerald,
Sandra O’Brien, Jennifer O’Leary, Marie-Anne
Lennon, Aliyan Smyth

Introduction
Writers Jane Wales and TJ. O’Meara
Editor Willy Cumming
Copy Editor Lucy Freeman
Photographer Nutan Photography; Jacques Piraprez
Designed by Bennis Design
Printed by Hudson Killian

The NIAH wishes to thank all those who
allowed access to their property for the purpose of
the Longford County Survey and the subsequent
photography.

The NIAH wishes to acknowledge the generous
assistance given by the staff of the Irish
Architectural Archive, particularly Eve McAuley and
Aisling Dunne; The National Library of Ireland,
particularly Honora Faul; The National
Photographic Archive, particularly Keith; Tony
Roche of the Photographic Unit of the Department
of the Environment, Heritage and Local
Government; our archaeological colleagues in the
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local
Government, particularly Laura Claffey, Paul Walsh
and Paddy O’Donovan; Catherine Ives, Máiréad Ni
Chonghaile, Kirsty Murphy, Lisa McDaid and
Clare Bannan at Longford County Council; Martin
Morris, Archihe, Longford County Council; Susan
Hood, Representative Church Body Library; Honora
Faul, Department of Prints and Drawings, National
Library of Ireland; Richard McDoughlin, Lotts
Architecture and Urbanism; Sarah Gusty, Brian
Ginty and Loretta Grogan; Niall Walsh; Catherine
Kane; Clare Eagle; Joseph Kenny; Brendan Feehy;
Cathal Kenny; Rhina Ronan; John Donivan; Paul
McClary; Michael O’Donnell; Helen Gaynor; Mr
and Mrs Duffy; Damian Cunningham; Evelyn
Wright; William O’Callaghan; and Julie Sheehan; Roy
and Alice Keynes; Lady Forbes; Mark Connelian;
Phili McClary; Sahira Duncan; David Lawrence;
Niall Walsh; and Mary and Daniel O’Meara.

All of the original photographs in this
Introduction were taken by Nutan Photography or
the NIAH unless otherwise indicated in the text.
The NIAH has made every effort to source and
acknowledge the owners of all archival illustrations
included in this Introduction. The NIAH apologis-
es for any omissions made, and would be happy to
include acknowledgement in future issues of this
Introduction.

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ed are in private ownership and are not
open to the public.