

WONDER WANDER FRESHFORD



INSTRUCTIONS

TAKE A 'WONDER WANDER' THROUGH FRESHFORD:

- Wander through our streets, find the picture clues and delve into the stories that our village tells through its rich architectural heritage.
- Take ten minutes to spot the features on our architectural scavenger hunt, or simply relax and enjoy our carefully curated self-guided tour of Freshford.
- Always remember to glance up, peer down, and never cease to WONDER!

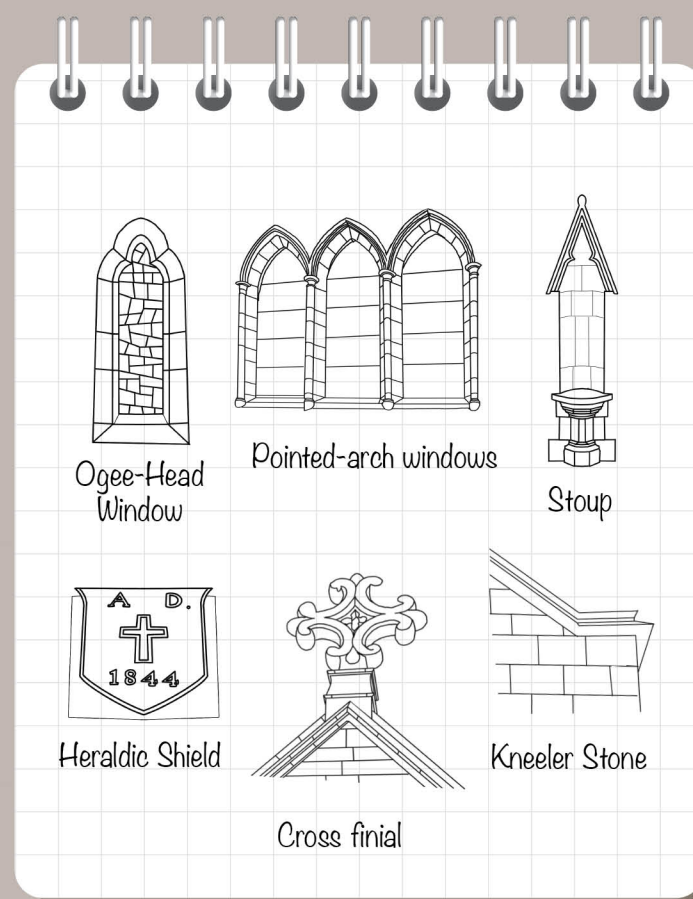


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SCAVENGER HUNT

HOW MANY OF THESE FEATURES CAN YOU SPOT AT ST. LACHTAIN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH?



THE STORY OF FRESHFORD

Freshford became a significant monastic site with the arrival of St. Lachtain in the 6th century. The present Church of Ireland church which bears his name largely dates to the 18th century but incorporates a Romanesque doorway from around 1150.

The arrival of the Normans in 1169 brought great change in the region. Domhnall McGiolla Padraig of the Kingdom of Osraige (Ossory) was defeated in a battle that saw the balance of power shift away from the traditional Gaelic chieftains and to the Norman conquerors.

In the 13th century Bishop Mapleton established Freshford as the seat of the Bishops of Ossory. He built a fine residence called Uppercourt, which was the Bishop's Palace until the Reformation. The estate subsequently passed to Sir Richard Shee, but was later acquired by Sir William Morres, who built the present house in the late 18th century.

By the mid-19th century Uppercourt Estate had been sold to Thomas Joseph Eyre, an improving landlord who was committed to modernising the estate and village. The Great Famine of 1845 to 1852 brought significant hardship and many people were forced to emigrate from the area.

Freshford prospered during the early 20th century. Its bustling square, lined with fine houses and commercial premises, was an important focal point and urban centre for the surrounding hinterland. Today the local community are proud custodians of their rich heritage and keepers of a history that goes back for more than a thousand years.

Want to learn more about Freshford Architectural Conservation Area and other Architectural Conservation Areas in the county? Contact the Kilkenny County Council Architectural Conservation Officer.



With special thanks to the local community for their assistance in developing the trail.

NATIONAL INVENTORY of ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh Kilkenny County Council

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TICK THE BOX AS YOU WONDER

1. THE SQUARE AND WAYSIDE CROSS

The village square has long been a local focal point for both markets and public gatherings. The wayside cross was erected in the early 17th century, in memory of Lucas Shee of Uppercourt, on a road to the north of the estate. The road is now named Buncrusha Street, derived from the Irish meaning 'base of the cross'. The monument was moved to its present location in 1790, and though only the base remains, it is a popular meeting spot.

In 1914 Thomas Stanislaus Eyre, then owner of Uppercourt, planted the fifty-two horse chestnut trees, one for each week of the year, around the perimeter. One of the 'nuttier' events on the square was an annual Conker Festival, first held in 2000.

2. THE FOWL MARKET

A bustling poultry market was once held in this small area just off the village square. Locals would gather to sell eggs, chickens, and all kinds of fowl. Poultry rearing was largely

a female occupation that provided families with welcome additional income.

3. PUBLIC HOUSE

The fine render pubfront with decorative rosette motifs dates to the early 1900s. This hardwearing and durable material was an alternative to timber, and was used for the pilasters that flank the openings and support the moulded entablature and decorative brackets.

Look down as you walk around the ACA and spot the surviving historic paving. The narrow section of pavers in front of the pub are thought to date to around 1900. The tooled surface provided additional grip under foot. If you look closely, you might even spot a fossil or two.

4. FRESHFORD COMMUNITY HALL

This distinctive building, with its flat roof and projecting corner windows, was built around 1900 by Emma Browne-Clayton. A local philanthropist and benefactor, she gave the building to the local community which in time was used by the Catholic Young Men's Society which promoted the intellectual, moral and physical

advancement of young men. A glass case, once sheltered beneath the open fronted porch, was used to display newspapers free of charge. The benevolence of Emma Browne-Clayton also extended to the construction of eight houses for the Jubilee Nursing Association on nearby Kilkenny Street as well as housing on Buncrusha Street.

Before continuing on the trail, take time to visit St. Lachtain's Church. Largely dating from the 18th century, the church incorporates a richly carved Romanesque doorway from the late 12th century. It is said that the front railings were added in the 1850s to deter local butchers from sharpening their knives on the sandstone doorway.

5. LIAM Ó SÉAGDA'S

The Celtic Revival cló gaelach signage is a reminder of the renewed interest in the Irish language in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In a further expression of patriotism, locals recall that the shopfront had originally been painted in green, white and gold. The template for the signage was recently rediscovered in the former workshop of Dick Brennan, an Urlingford carpenter and signwriter, who carried out the work in the 1940s.

6. PUBLIC HOUSE, FORMER GROCERY AND FILLING STATION

Before the arrival of chain stores in the late 20th century combined family-owned grocers and public houses, such as this one, were a common feature of villages and towns. Can you spot the old weigh bridge that was used to weigh goods such as flour and coal?

The business also had a filling station. Although the country's first petrol pump was installed in 1920 on Nassau Street in Dublin, it was the mid-century before there was a demand for kerb side petrol pumps in rural locations. Early petrol pumps were often crowned with illuminated glass lanterns to catch the attention of passing motorists.

7. FORMER RIC BARRACKS

Dating to around 1825, this terraced house with a Gothic-Revival fanlight was built as a Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) barracks. Locals recall that a holding cell, known as the 'black hole', was located at the rear, though it is purported that this was more

often used to detain intoxicated individuals than hardened criminals.

The building next door provided accommodation for the officers and the small window set high in the gable is said to have been used as a look-out.

8. ST. RITA'S

This 19th century house was once home to the village doctor, with the archway at the side providing access to the rear dispensary. Dispensing doctors were first established in 1805 to provide medical advice and treatment to the poor.

Charles Stewart Parnell, the Irish nationalist, statesman and leader of the struggle for Home Rule, addressed the people of Freshford from the steps of this house in 1890.

The parish priest lived next door until a parochial house was built in 1927 on Chapel Street. This building is said to have once housed the bell from the Catholic church, as during the penal laws steeples and bells at Catholic and Protestant Dissenter places of worship were prohibited.

9. ST. LACHTAIN'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Lachtain's was built in 1844 to replace an earlier church on the site. The Dublin-based architect William Deane Butler was commissioned by the Bishop of Ossory to design the building.

Look at the walls, can you see a difference in the masonry between the north and south elevations? It is said that one was constructed by stonemasons from Ballyragget while the other was by local masons from Freshford.

To the south of the church is a baptismal font with an upturned head that may be from the medieval St. Lachtain's. Why the head is upside down remains a mystery. A second medieval font remains in use inside the church.

Pause here to identify some of the features in our Scavenger Hunt.

10. AND 11. FORMER MALE AND FEMALE SCHOOLS

In the late 19th century Thomas Eyre commissioned designs for a formal entrance to Uppercourt House from the southern side of the square. The entrance was to be flanked by separate boys' (see stop

10) and girls' (see stop 11) national schools, to create a balanced composition. Although the two schools were built to identical plans in 1876, the ambitious entrance to Uppercourt was never realised. Both schools remained open until 1967. Can you read the inscription plaques on the buildings?



12. WATER PUMP

This is one of two water pumps on the square that were installed as part of a late 19th century public water supply scheme. The bucket was placed on the elevated stand and any run-off would flow into the adjacent cobbled drainage channel.

The contemporary sculpture by Canadian artist Ian Lazarus was installed in 1996 and features five Kilkenny limestone blocks, intended to reflect the transience of time.

13. NEW ROW

Understood to be built for workers on the Uppercourt Estate, the rendered elevations of this largely uniform terrace are ruled with shallow lines to give the impression of high quality ashlar masonry.

Take a moment to consider the variation in window sills across the ACA. Some, like a number on New Row, are rock-faced while others are more finely dressed and have drafted margins.

14. THOMAS EYRE WATER PUMP

This water pump was erected in 1878 as part of a programme of civic improvements by Thomas Eyre. The second of two pumps in the ACA, this fly wheel pump is less common than the shorter hydrant type. Can you read the foundry name?

The pump stands on the former site of the village maypole, a tall wooden poll around which people would have danced on the first day of May. This tradition was not common in Ireland, though maypoles are known to have stood in Kilkenny, Mountmellick, Kildare and Longford. Today the only surviving maypole on the island is in the village of Hollywood Co. Down.



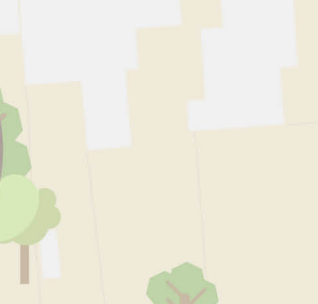
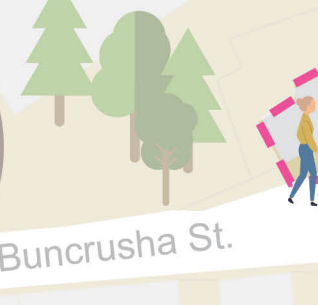
FRESHFORD

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

WALKING TRAIL

ACHADH ÚR

WANDER THE ROUTE USING THE PICTURE CLUES OR BREAK IT UP AND WONDER...



SRÁID AN TSEANDROICHID OLD BRIDGE STREET

Where do streets get their names?

Old Bridge Street is named for the bridge which carries the road across the River Nuenna. A plaque on the bridge is dated 1788 and bears the name M.J.M. Werm. Have a look around and try and find the more unusual street names.

MAP LEGEND

- Architectural Conservation Area
- Walking Route, 630m
- 1 Trail number
- 1 Picture Clue Number
- P Parking
- 📍 Scenic View

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