

## CHAPTER 16

### BUILT HERITAGE

#### 16.1 Introduction

'Built heritage' can be considered any individual or group of buildings, structures, monuments, or installations, or remains, which are associated with architectural, cultural, social, political, economic, or military history. Heritage items are considered to be of value because they reflect something individually or collectively about our history, something that is sufficiently important to require its preservation for future generations. It is therefore an important part of the County's identity and character.

County Wicklow is rich in built heritage, having been a location of early and monastic settlement, of wealth and position in the Georgian era, of rebellion and of mining activity. This is reflected in the abundance of archaeological sites and monuments ranging from Early Bronze age right through to Christian and Medieval eras, large country houses, planned estate villages, Georgian townhouses and other vernacular structures as well as bridges, harbours, stone walls and structures associated with the County's mining and industrial heritage.

The Council recognises the importance of protecting and conserving the built heritage of Wicklow in order to ensure the long term economic growth and development of the County. The County Wicklow Heritage Plan provides one framework through which the Council works actively with partner organisations on initiatives to further our understanding, protection and appreciation of Wicklow's built heritage.

Wicklow County Council will consult with the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government on heritage matters and will routinely request direct input into the assessment of planning and other development applications and into the drafting of new / revised local development plans.

#### Strategy

- To avoid negative impacts upon the built environment;
- To promote appropriate enhancement of the built environment as an integral part of any development;
- To mitigate the effects of harm where it cannot be avoided;
- To promote a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development needs in the interests of promoting the orderly and sustainable development of Wicklow.

#### 16.2 Context

##### 16.2.1 Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Current legislation sets out that objectives may be included in a development plan for protecting or preserving (either in situ or by record) places, caves, sites, features and other objects of archaeological, geological, historical, scientific or ecological interest. The Acts also confer a number of responsibilities to Local Authorities with regard to built heritage:

- Every development plan is required to include a record of protected structures which forms part of our architectural heritage and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- The identification and protection of architectural conservation areas;
- The control of development works on protected structures or the site of a protected structure;
- The power to issue notices requiring certain works to be carried out to protect or restore an endangered protected structure and the power to acquire a protected structure.

### 16.2.2 National Monument Acts 1930-1994

These Acts are concerned with the protection and management of national monuments. Through the definition of 'monuments', 'historic monuments' and 'national monuments' a wide range of structures and features fall under the remit of these Acts. The term 'historic monument' includes any prehistoric monument and any monument associated with the commercial, cultural, economic, industrial, military, religious or social history of the place where it is situated (or of the Country) and also includes all monuments in existence before 1700 AD. National monuments are those historic monuments of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest attaching thereto.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and structures, features, objects or sites listed in this Record are known as Recorded Monuments. As well as extending protection to all known sites, now identified as Recorded Monuments, the National Monuments Acts 1930 – 2004 extends protection to all previously unknown archaeological items and sites that are uncovered through ground disturbance or the accidental discovery of sites located underwater. Where necessary, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will issue preservation orders to ensure protection is afforded to sites believed to be under threat.

### 16.3 Archaeology

Our archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects and monuments of other kinds, as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water. In this respect, Wicklow has a significant archaeological heritage, which provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource. The Baltinglass hillfort complex and Rathgall hillfort in south Wicklow are notable monuments of national importance, while Glendalough Monastic Settlement has been proposed for the tentative list as a UNESCO World Heritage Site due to its international significance. Wicklow County Council recognises the importance of preserving, protecting and fostering a greater public appreciation of the County's archaeological heritage.

#### Objectives

- AR1** No development in the vicinity of a feature included in the Record of Monuments & Places (RMP) will be permitted where it seriously detracts from the setting of the feature or which is seriously injurious to its cultural or educational value.
- AR2** Any development that may due to its size, location or nature have implications for archaeological heritage (including both sites and areas of archaeological potential / significance as identified in Schedule 16.1 and Map 16.01 (Volume 2) of this plan shall be subject to an archaeological assessment. When dealing with proposals for development that would impact upon archaeological sites and/or features, there will be presumption in favour of the 'preservation in situ' of archaeological remains and settings, in accordance with Government policy. Where permission for such proposals is granted, the Council will require the developer to have the site works supervised by a competent archaeologist.
- AR3** To ensure that provision is made through the development control process for the protection of previously unknown archaeological sites and features where they are discovered during development works.
- AR4** To facilitate public access to National Monuments in State or Local Authority care, as identified in Schedule 16.2 (Volume 2) of this plan.
- AR5** That Wicklow recognise the important of Hillforts in south west Wicklow and that the Council request central Government to conduct a detailed study of their importance.

- AR6** To promote and campaign for the designation of the Glendalough Monastic Settlement as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

## 16.4 Architectural heritage

While all buildings and structures (or groups of structures) represent an architectural type or style, not all are considered to have heritage value. This value is not solely dependent on qualities such as age or the fame of the architect / builder but more so to the intrinsic qualities and features of the building or structure, that render it something worth protecting and passing on to future generations.

The key to protecting such structures (or groups of structures) is to find ways to protect their physical integrity and maintain their viability. In this regard, there will be presumption in favour of the active use of heritage buildings, even if this means some modern interventions, rather than preserving them forever in the past, which can ultimately result in the structure being unusable and falling into dereliction.

Wicklow has a diverse range of buildings and structures of architectural heritage importance, particularly in regard to those dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, some of which are recorded in the 2004 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. This architectural heritage not only comprises buildings of national importance, but also more modest structures from vernacular dwellings to farms and outbuildings. This wide variety of building stock has over time contributed to the special character of the County and is a unique resource which, once lost or damaged, cannot be replaced.

### Objective

- AH1** To support the work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in collecting data relating to the architectural heritage of the County, and in the making of this information widely accessible to the public, and property owners.

### 16.4.1 Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

Part IV of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006 requires every development plan to include a record of Protected Structures. A 'protected structure' is a structure that a Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. This includes the interior of the structure as well as the exterior, buildings or features within its curtilage (and their interiors) and can extend to any features specified as being in the attendant grounds.

The Wicklow RPS is set out in Appendix 4 (Volume 2) and Maps 16.02 'A-D' (Volume 2) of this plan.

### Objectives

- RPS1** To positively consider proposals to improve, alter, extend or change the use of protected structures so as to render them viable for modern use, subject to suitable design, materials and construction methods.
- RPS2** All development works on or at the sites of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures / site that render it worthy of preservation.
- RPS3** To support the re-introduction of traditional features on protected structures where there is evidence that such features (e.g. window styles, finishes etc) previously existed.
- RPS4** To strongly resist the demolition of protected structures, unless it can be demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist. In cases where demolition or partial demolition is permitted

or where permission is given for the removal of feature(s), the proper recording of the building / feature will be required before any changes are made.

- RPS5** The Council shall consider the change of use of Protected Structures, provided that it can be shown that the structure, character, appearance and setting will not be adversely affected.

## **16.4.2 Other structures & vernacular architecture**

Wicklow has many structures and features, which, while not included on the Record of Protected Structures, are nonetheless of merit, making a positive contribution to the character of the landscape and to the distinctive character of a particular area. Vernacular architecture refers to the local and regional traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills and building techniques. This would include traditional domestic buildings as well as shops, outbuildings, mills, farmsteads, stone walls, gates and gate piers. The Council will seek to retain vernacular structures where appropriate as their loss through demolition and replacement can considerably diminish the character of an area. The rehabilitation and appropriate reuse of the vernacular building stock can play a vital role in the sustainable development of the County.

### **Objectives**

- VA1** To seek (through the development management process), the retention, conservation, appropriate repair and reuse of vernacular buildings and features such as milestones, stonewalls, traditional & historic shopfronts and pub fronts, thatched roofs and other historic elements. The demolition of vernacular buildings will be discouraged.
- VA2** Development proposals affecting vernacular buildings will be required to submit a detailed, true measured survey, photographic records and written analysis as part of the planning process.
- VA3** Where an item or a structure (or any feature of a structure) is considered to be of heritage merit, the Council reserves the right to refuse permission to remove or alter that structure / item, in the interests of the protection of the County's architectural heritage.

## **16.4.3 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA)**

In accordance with Section 81 of the Planning & Development Acts, a development plan shall include an objective to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that

- (a) is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or
- (b) contributes to the appreciation of protected structures,
- if the Planning Authority is of the opinion that its inclusion is necessary for the preservation of the character of the place, area, group of structures or townscape concerned and any such place, area, group of structures or townscape shall be known as an "Architectural Conservation Area".

ACAs contribute to the revitalisation of the fabric of towns, villages and rural areas by supporting their aesthetic value, giving them a distinctive identity, and thus make a positive contribution to local economies and tourist potential.

Architectural Conservation Areas have already been identified and adopted at the following locations:

**Table 16.1 Existing Architectural Conservation Areas (Maps 16.03 A & B Volume 2)**

Settlement	Location
Enniskerry	Village centre
Tinahely	Town centre
Dunlavin	Town centre
Rathdrum	Main Street Low Town
Delgany	Village centre
Greystones	Church Road Killincarrig village The Burnaby Blacklion

### Objectives

- ACA1** Within Architectural Conservation Areas, all those buildings, spaces, archaeological sites, trees, street furniture, views and other aspects of the environment which form an essential part of their character, as set out in their Conservation Appraisals, shall be protected.
- ACA2** The design of any development in Architectural Conservation Areas, including any changes of use of an existing building, should preserve and / or enhance the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area as a whole. Schemes for the conservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of Architectural Conservation Areas will be promoted. In consideration of applications for new buildings, alterations and extensions affecting Architectural Conservation Areas, the following principles will apply:-
- Proposals will only be considered where they positively enhance the character of the ACA;
  - The siting of new buildings should, where appropriate retain the existing street building line;
  - The mass of the new building should be in scale and harmony with the adjoining buildings, and the area as a whole, and the proportions of its parts should relate to each other, and to the adjoining buildings;
  - Architectural details on buildings of high architectural value should be retained wherever possible;
  - A high standard of shopfront design relating sympathetically to the character of the building and the surrounding area will be required;
  - The materials used should be appropriate to the character of the area. Planning applications in ACAs should be in the form of detailed proposals, incorporating full elevational treatment and colours and materials to be used.
- ACA3** To designate Blessington town centre as an Architectural Conservation Area, in accordance with the Conservation Appraisal (included in Volume 2 of this plan).
- ACA4** To consider the designation of further ACAs for towns and villages in County Wicklow, when preparing future Local Area Plans, and as deemed appropriate.
- ACA5** To establish, where it is considered appropriate, “Areas of Special Planning Control”, if it is considered that all or part of an Architectural Conservation Area is of special importance to the civic life or the architectural, historical, cultural or social character of a town or village in which it is situated.

## 16.5 Historical & Cultural heritage

Wicklow has a wealth of structures, items and places of historical and cultural heritage that do not fall neatly into the categories of 'architectural' or 'archaeological' heritage. A number of examples would be

- Structures and items associated with Wicklow's industrial heritage;
- Historical mining works;
- Wicklow's Military Road;
- Places and items associated with local history and folklore such as mass rocks and holy wells.

Industrial heritage refers to such structures as mills, watermills, windmills, roads, bridges, railways, canals, harbours, dams and features associated with utility industries such as water, gas and electricity. It is an important part of Wicklow's socio economic history and contributes greatly to the interest of the Wicklow landscape.

County Wicklow has a long and rich heritage of mining, starting in the Bronze Age and continuing until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This mining was principally for copper, lead as well as lesser amounts of sulphur, iron, ochre, gold, silver and zinc. The main areas of mining activity were the Avoca Valley, Glendalough and Glendasan Valleys and in Glenmalur. Much evidence remains at each of these sites of former mining activity in the form of engine houses, machinery, adits, spoil heaps and drainage channels.

A particularly unique piece of Wicklow heritage is the Military Road, a feat of engineering developed to open up rebel territory, previously remote and only accessible with great difficulty. This road, which ran from Rathfarnham in south County Dublin to Aghavannagh in the south of County Wicklow, and with a spur running from Glencree to Enniskerry, took nine years to complete between 1800-1809. Security was a priority and barracks and police stations were constructed along the route of the road to ensure public safety and transport security.

### Objectives

- HC1** To protect and facilitate the conservation of structures, sites and objects which are part of the County's industrial heritage, in particular features which relate to former mining, transport or utilities activities, whether or not such structures, sites and objects are included on the RPS.
- HC2** To facilitate access to and appreciation of areas of mining heritage, through the development of appropriate trails and heritage interpretation, in association with local stakeholders.
- HC3** To facilitate future community initiatives to increase access to and appreciation of railway heritage, through preserving the routes of former lines free from development.
- HC4** Any road or bridge improvement works along the Military Road shall be designed and constructed with due regard to the history and notable features of the road (in particular its original support structures, route and alignment), insofar as is possible and reasonable given the existing transport function of the road.
- HC5** Through the development management process, to endeavour to identify and suitably protect items and places of local historical or cultural significance.