



Historic Landscape
Character Assessment

Killeigh, County Offaly

Offaly County Council

Dublin Institute of
Technology

Autumn 2006

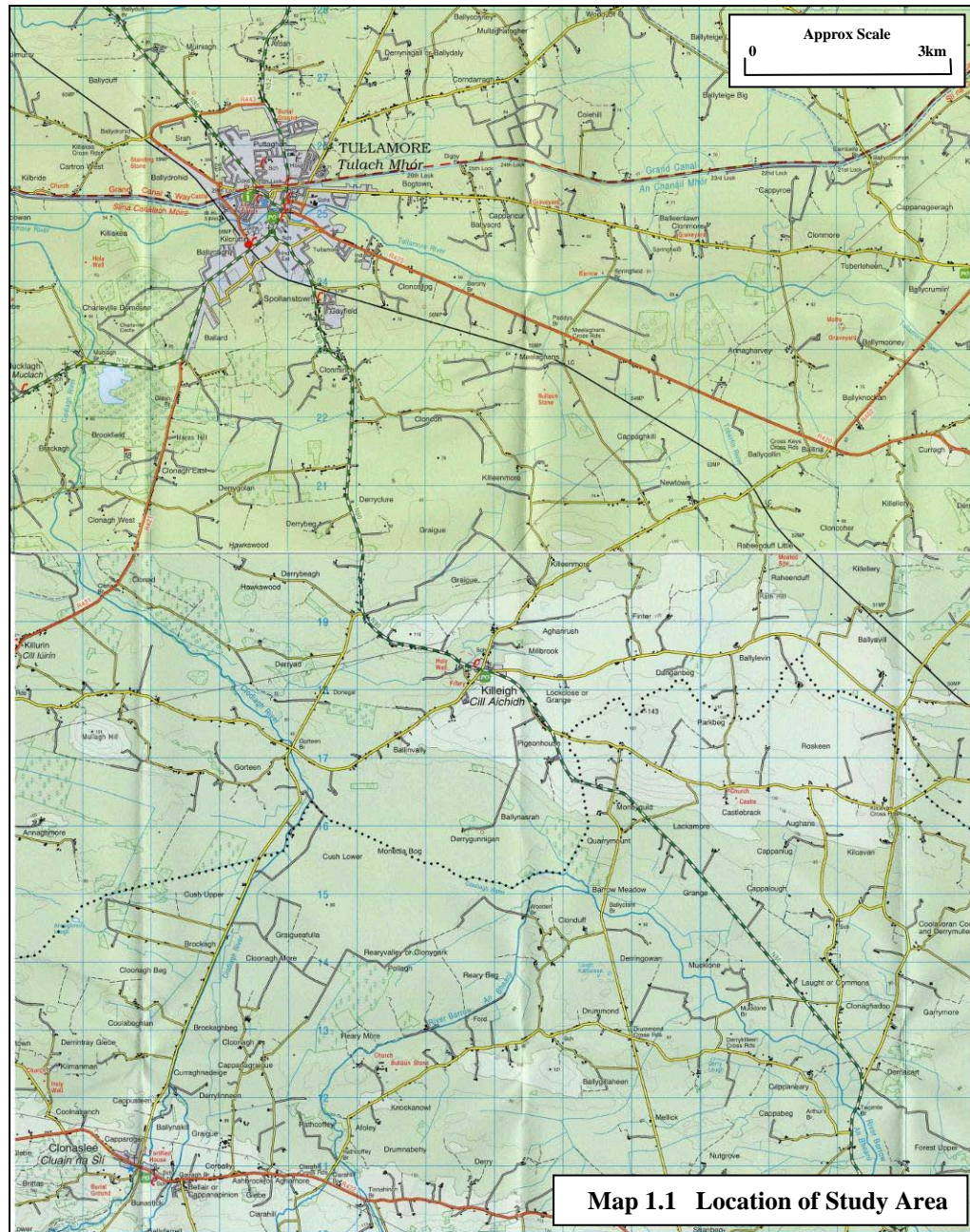
**Historic Landscape Character
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Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 1 Introduction

Index

Part	Page
Part 1 Introduction.....	4
Part 2 Geographical Context	5
Part 3 Topography	8
Part 4 Biodiversity.....	11
Part 5 History and Society.....	14
Part 6 Archaeology.....	17
Part 7 Landscape Evolution.....	22
Part 8 Morphology and Streetscapes	28
Part 9 Architectural Fabric	37
Part 10 Analysis	52
Part 11 Historic Landscape Character.....	56
Part 12 Recommendations.....	59
Part 13 Bibliography	61



Source: Ordnance Survey of Ireland, 1:50,000 Discovery Series, Sheets 48 & 54

Introduction

This Historic Village and Landscape Character Assessment of Killeigh is prepared by members of the Dublin Institute of Technology, on behalf of the Heritage Officer, Offaly County Council.

The report has been produced with the assistance of the Heritage Council.

Assessment Team

The members of the assessment team are drawn from three main areas of discipline and include:

- Dr Ken Boyle (Lecturer in Environmental Management, specialist in forestry management, wildlife management, and soil ecology)
- Dr Pat Dargan (architect and planner by profession with a special interest in heritage and sustainability)
- Dr Kevin Griffin (is a geographer whose specialisms include settlement morphology and sustainability)

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Contextual Overview

The assessment is prepared to provide an historic landscape character overview of Killeigh.

Historic Landscape Character Assessment

This Historic Landscape Character Assessment is a method by which a detailed holistic study of the historical development and environmental significance of an area can be undertaken. The technique presents an overview of the physical, natural, human, and cultural heritage of an area with specific reference to the interaction between the various elements.

The significant feature of the Historic Landscape Character Assessment process is that it offers a dynamic perspective of the history and development of the total landscape, thereby contributing to the promotion of sustainable development within the study area.

Scope

The assessment covers the Geographical, Socio-economic, Natural, and Built Environments of the study area.

Resources

Material for the assessment is drawn for the professional experience of the team members, publications, maps, and consultations with relevant professionals.

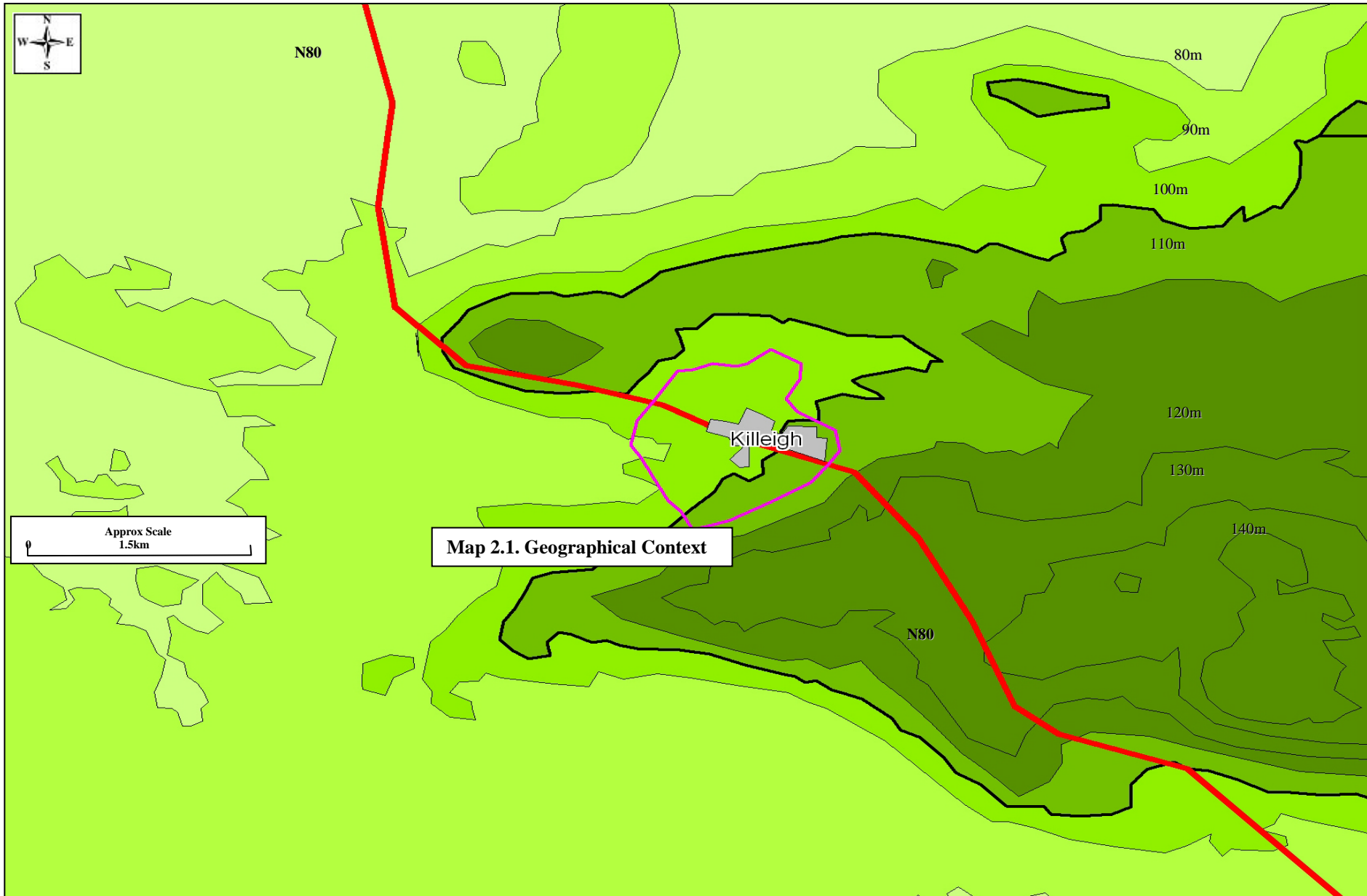
Presentation

The assessment is presented in a printed and bound A3 document and in electronic disc format.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 2 Geographical Context



Context

As an introduction to this project, in the *Guidelines for a Killeigh Framework Plan* the following statement is made:

Killeigh is a small relatively compact rural village, located approximately 6km south of Tullamore and approximately 14km northwest of Mountmellick, Co. Laois. It is located on the N80, National Secondary Road. Given its location, Killeigh could be a candidate village for the sort of significant development pressures which have come to bear on villages and settlements around the eastern part of the country which are on National Roads and in close proximity to large towns.

The village is sited to the west of an outcrop which rises from the lowlands of the Irish midlands. The altitude of the study area ranges from approximately 80 to 100 meters above sea level rising from west to east (shading and lines in Map 2.1. denote 10m contour lines). The village is tucked into a saucer-like depression in the landscape which results in a spatially compact settlement layout. This compact form is particularly evident as the site is approached along the N80 from Tullamore to the North.

To the east and west the landscape is dominated by the boggy central plains of Ireland, with the bulky outcrop of the Slieve Blooms located to the south.

This plan is developed in the context of a village plan for Killeigh, and potentially for the development of a 'sraid' plan, by means of a variation to

the County Development Plan. As such this Historic Landscape Character Assessment aims to inform the planning and development process.

It is envisaged that this report will assist in the future planning of this area by highlighting the characteristic features of the study area.

The site is intrinsically linked to its historical origins which are closely linked to the development of particularly ranging from the early Christian period right up to present times.

Study Area

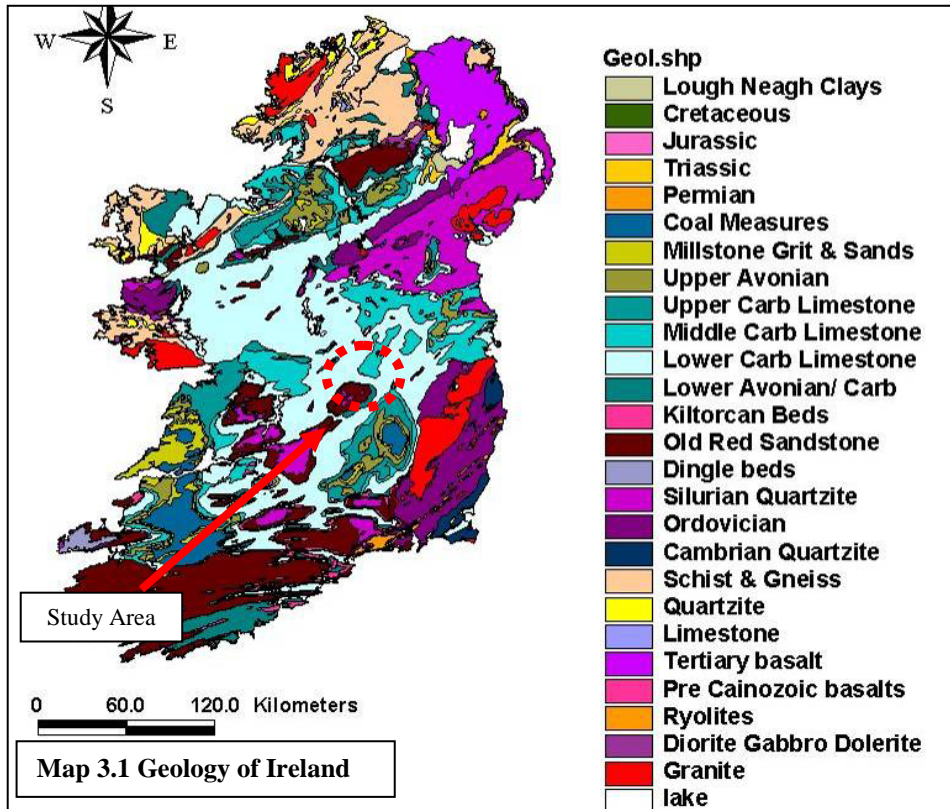
The study area for this Historic Landscape Character Assessment is focused on Killeigh which is located 7km southeast of Tullamore.

The area contains a variety of historical dwellings and one-off housing ranging mainly from the nineteenth century to the present day. It also contains a number of historical churches, evidence for which is scattered around the settlement of Killeigh. The organically evolved village contains basic public services and facilities and the local area appears to possess a strong identity, defended by the local population.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 3 Topography



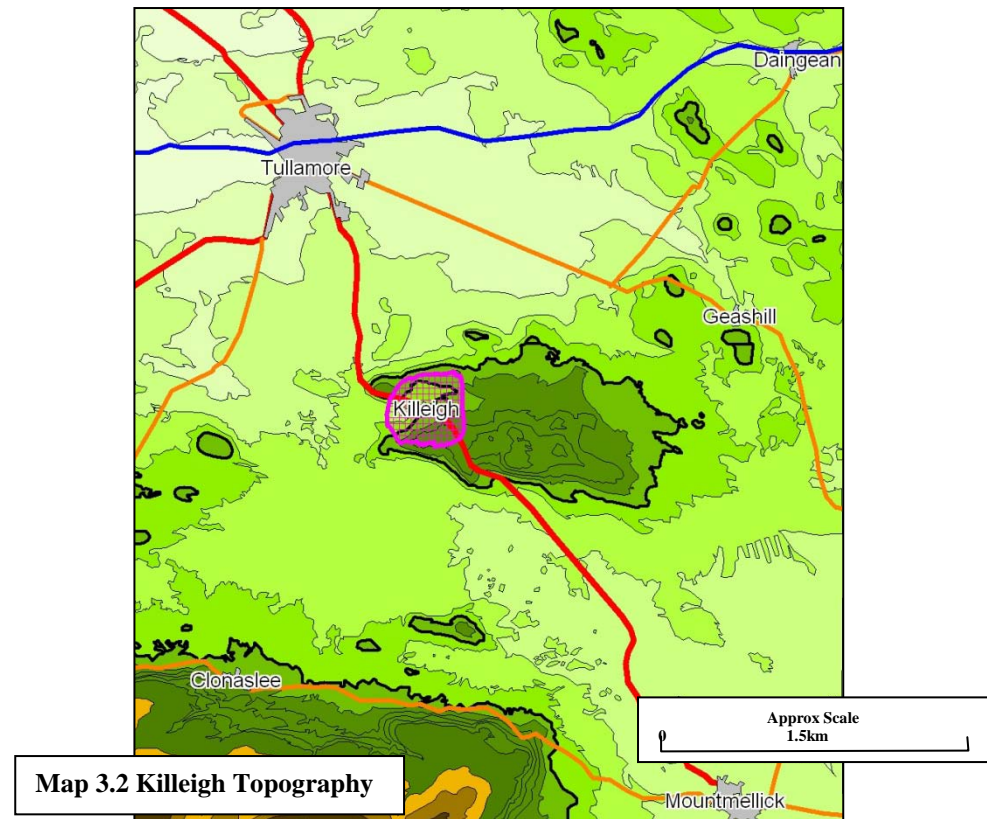
Geology

The central lowlands of Ireland are underlain by Carboniferous limestone (Figure 3.1.). This geology is best developed in a continuous zone from Galway to Dublin, south of Newry Axis. The study area of Killeigh is located in this landscape.

These Central lowlands are interrupted by two types of upland: residual plateaux of Upper Carboniferous shales, grits and thin coal seams which are younger than the limestone; and isolated mountain ranges formed on anticlinal inliers of resistant Old Red Sandstone and Silurian slates and shales which underlie the Carboniferous. The latter group include the Slieve Bloom mountains which lie to the south of the study area,

In general these central lowland mountain ranges rise abruptly from level lowlands to over 300m and in some places to over 600m. The Slieve Blooms which rise to a height of approximately 560m developed on Armorican folds while their clear north-east-south-west trend suggests the influence of Caledonian structures.

Most of the Carboniferous limestone in the Central Lowlands is concealed by glacial deposits and peat bogs which are recent in geological terms. The landscape in the vicinity of Killeigh is elevated from the surrounding plains and thus is predominantly covered in glacial drift which is thicker to the east of the country and thins out west of the Shannon.



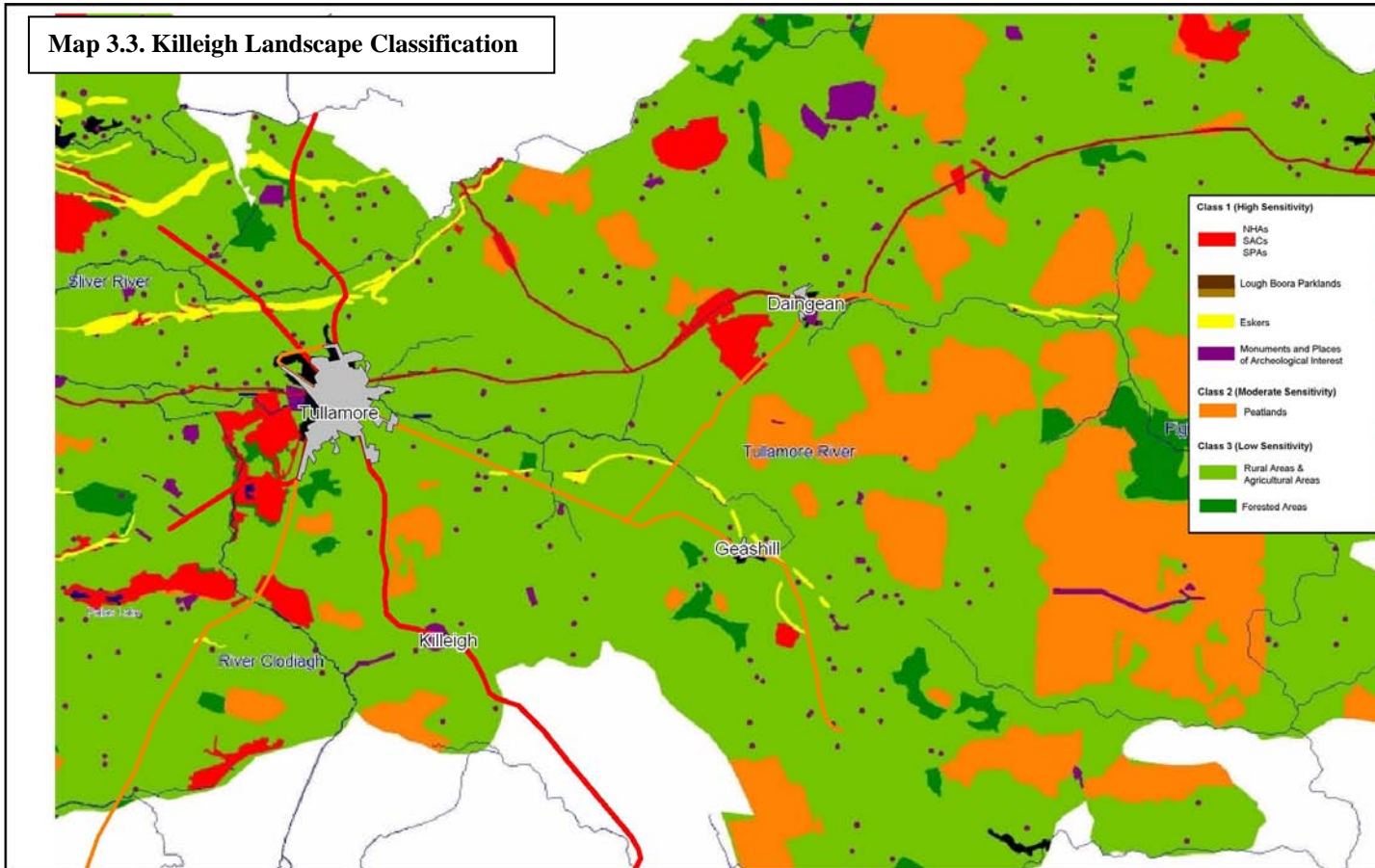
Physical Landscape

This is classic example of undulating landscape of the Irish lowlands, modified by glacial deposition of the last ice age.

Due to its situation at an elevation which is predominantly lower than the surrounding landscape, the views from the study area of the surrounding area are limited. There are views into Killeigh from a number of the approach roads. The N80 approaching from the north or south particularly highlights the manner in which the physical landscape influences the compact and unfragmented nature of the settlement.

Killeigh lies to the west of an outcrop which forms part of a more continuous northeast-southwest ridge stretching from Daingean to Geashill and Killeigh continuing to join with the Slieve Blooms to the Southwest (Figure 3.2.). To the northwest and southeast of this ridge lies lower land, which is more poorly drained and more prone to the development of bog. Reference to Map 3.3 demonstrates that this lower land which is poorly drained, is prone to the development of peat.

Map 3.3. Killeigh Landscape Classification



Source: Based on Map 8(3), Offaly County Development Plan 2003-2009

Soil

Across this landscape there is evidence of glacial deposition. Map 3.3. demonstrates this with the presence of eskers to the north and east of Killeigh, while the poorly drained lowland soils prone to flooding and therefore peat development, are scattered around the area. The natural vegetation for much of this landscape (other than natural bogland) would have been broadleaf forestry. In recounting the history of the local landscape the following extract from Lewis' Topographical Dictionary (1837) is quoted in full (it is interesting to note the 'never-failing' fuel supplied by the bogs of the region):

[In Co. Offaly] the principal woods are those of Killeigh, Charleville, and Castle Bernard; there are likewise very extensive plantations and ornamental timber around Woodfield, Droughtville, Mountpleasant, Leap, Goldengrove, Doone, Moystown, Geashill, Newtown, and Clara. The timber is large and excellent: the ash from this part bears the highest price in Dublin; oak, birch, and lime also thrive well. Much planting has been effected on the borders of the bogs, and on the islands and derries interspersed through them, some of which are ancient stands of timber. Trees are also found growing within a few feet of the ancient timber, which is now several feet under the surface. The bogs, which cover so large a portion of the land, supply a never-failing quantity of fuel: their elevation renders them easily reclaimable, and the quantities of limestone and gravel found in the escars and derries with which they are interspersed afford great facilities for bringing them into a state of tillage.

Summary

The undulating landscape of the Irish midlands forms the main physical feature of the landscape at Killeigh. This landscape is a legacy of the glaciations which occurred approximately 10,000 years ago, leaving a glacial till which is prone to bog development in the lowland hollows, but quite productive land in the elevated glacial features.

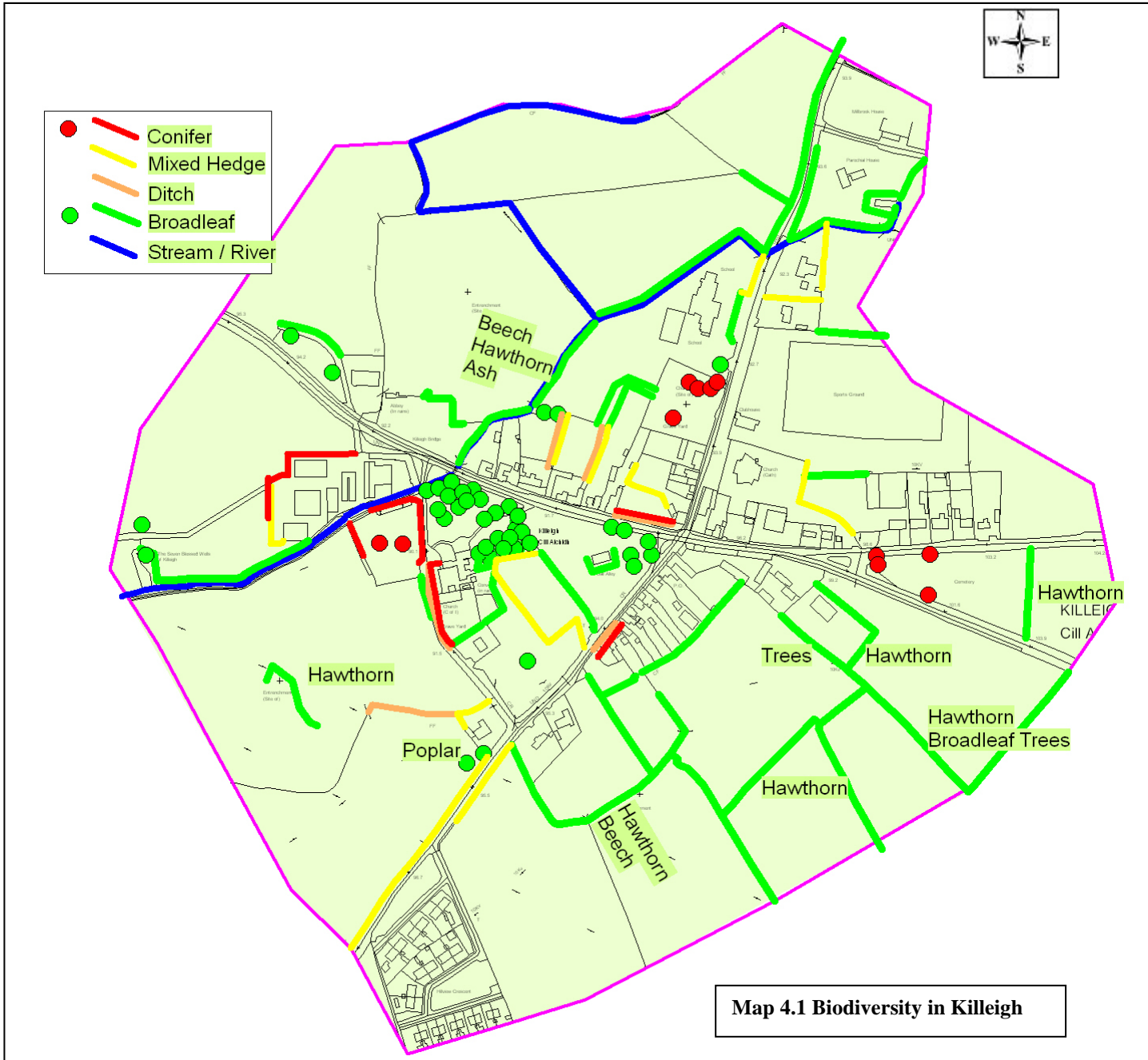
**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 4 Biodiversity

Biodiversity

The habitats and land use types in a region determine biodiversity, the number or diversity of species found in an area. The impacts of humans on habitats and the landscape have greatly influenced biodiversity. In Killeigh, the predominant influence on biodiversity is the surrounding agricultural landscape. Grasslands and hedgerows are the primary habitats for plants and animals in the region.



Hedgerows

Hedgerows function as refuges for insect species in winter months and as nesting and feeding sites for bird species throughout the breeding season and into the winter. In addition, hedgerows act as windbreaks and provide a canopy for species that might otherwise only be found in woodland situations.

At Killeigh the primary ecological function of the network of hedgerows is to provide linkage across the landscape. This is particularly so for the mature hedgerow that runs north to south along part of an ancient embankment which forms a circuit around the settlement (see description and discussion in Section 6), and essentially links to hedgerows in the surrounding landscape.

A further function of this hedgerow is intimately linked with the structure of the embankment. The trees and shrubs may in part protect the embankment from erosion and trampling and act to hold the embankment together through the network of roots. In the section of hedgerow adjacent to the national school, there are mature beech, ash, hawthorn and elder with occasional dog rose (see picture to the right).



Dog Rose



Overgrown hedgerow

The variety of tree and shrub species with an understorey of ivy and bramble suggest a greater diversity than is usually found in the surrounding landscape where hawthorn dominates in the hedgerows.

The photos to the right show the overgrown nature of the hedgerow network in the Killeigh hinterland. In the foreground the land is rough pasture with a mix of grasses and buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) predominating. The hedgerow runs east to west north of the national school. To the foreground are occasional hawthorn shrubs. These shrubs follow the line of the ancient entrenchment that rings the village. In the background mature beech, ash and occasional oak demarcate the line of the hedgerows.



Extent of hedgerows and grassland in study area

Water Courses

The streams that flow through the area were, in the past, used to drive mill wheels. Currently the waters are generally of good quality. Possible spillage of diesel was evident from the smell and discoloration of the stream adjacent to the village green. An accumulation of black organic deposits are evident in the photograph below and may indicate a number of polluting events that in the past produced anoxic conditions. Such activities will have a definite detrimental effect on stream biodiversity.



Stream along hedgerows



Stream along hedgerows

Bird Life

Of particular interest in the village proper was the numbers of swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) and occasional house martins (*Delichon urbica*) feeding over green areas. The availability of nesting sites in surrounding farm buildings is probably critical to the maintenance of such populations in the area. A programme to inform or make people aware of the value of these birds and the importance of maintaining nest sites would be something to consider if development is to increase the built fabric of Killeigh in the coming years.

Stone Walls

Stone walls within the village have a mix of species commonly found in such habitats including stone crop (*Sedum spp*), ferns, ivy, mosses and lichens



Stone wall with variety of plants



Detail of stone wall plants

Managed Landscapes

The key areas for biodiversity in the study area are the hedgerows, pasture (particularly grazed areas) and the occasional areas of scrub around the village. Many of the gardens in the village are mature with a mix of introduced and native tree and shrub species. The presence of large flocks of feeding swallows in and around the village is evidence for an abundance of nesting sites in and around buildings in the village and feeding sites over fields and village green areas.



hedgerows

Habitat Protection and Diversity

Due to relatively intensive agriculture, biodiversity has a low base in Killeigh, with areas of interest focused on unimproved grassland, the watercourses and the hedgerows. If development has no alternative but to remove a section of hedgerow, linking corridors of hedgerows should be planned or appropriate mitigation planting be proposed. Any proposed actions should be balanced with planned planting of shrubs such as hawthorn and blackthorn, and tree species such as oak, ash and beech, which already predominate in the hinterland.

A weakness overall is the poor diversity in terms of habitats in the area. This however is a reflection of the rolling topography and soils which have reasonably good potential for grazing and tillage. Agriculture is the predominant land use in the hinterland and will continue so into the future, though perhaps less intensively in some areas. It is possible that some of the agricultural land in the area has never been intensively used. Land such as this which has only been used for grazing and has never been ploughed, would most likely be of higher biodiversity value, while also being an appropriate use of land for sensitive archaeological landscapes – such as land beside the Abbey.

In the long-term the hedgerows are a valuable educational resource. Where hedgerows are associated with the old bankment, they may have a protective role in retaining the integrity of the embankments structure.

Summary

While this is a small study area with limited habitat variation, the landscape in the Killeigh area has a value for a range of bird species, small mammals, a number of plant and insect species. The extensive agricultural landscape is criss-crossed with hedgerows and is influenced by the surrounding agricultural land.

There are opportunities for the development of management plans for the area to control damage to the landscape and maximise the educational value of the habitats.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 5 History and Society

Meaning of ‘Killeigh’

Killeigh or Kill-Achaidh, Droma Foda has been a site of historical importance since the early days of Christianity in Ireland. While two places of the name Cill Achaidh are mentioned by the Irish annalists as ecclesiastical establishments, the site under investigation in this work is

sacred to St. Sincheall and is always distinguished . . . by the addition Droma Foda’. (O’Donovan, 1837)

The term ‘Achadh Droma Foda’ means the Field of the Long Ridge, and Cill as a prefix means Church. Thus Cill Achaidh Droma Foda signifies "the Church of the Field of the Long Ridge"

O’Donovan in the mid 19th century commented:

‘a name truly descriptive of the locality, for a remarkably long, low Drum or rising ground runs to the southwest, immediately over the village’ (O’Donovan, 1837).

The Stone Age

While there is no direct evidence of hunter-gatherers in the immediate vicinity of Killeigh, the discovery of a Mesolithic site at Lough Boora is an example of how new discoveries can result in a radical rewriting of history. In the late 1970s, archaeologists working in Boora bog, near Kilcormac uncovered evidence of a lakeshore settlement dating from the Mesolithic period (7,000 BC)

Before this discovery, the earliest evidence of humans in Ireland came from a Mesolithic site at Mount Sandel in Co. Down. Because of its coastal location, archaeologists initially speculated that early humans came from Europe and settled along the coastline as the interior of the country was impenetrable due to the dense forests. The Lough Boora site changed all that. Dated between 7,000 BC and 6,500 BC, the finds at the site proved that people had frequented this part of the country for up to 9,000 years.

There is also little evidence of Neolithic peoples in this area. In fact there are just two possible megalithic tombs in the whole of Offaly – both of these are located in the Slieve Bloom mountains to the south, but because of their poor state of preservation it is impossible to classify them precisely.

Bronze Age

The period known to archaeologists as the Bronze Age lasted from c.2000BC until the Iron Age around 600BC. During this era society changed from an agricultural economy with the large-scale communal tombs of the Neolithic, to an elitist or hierarchical type society possibly based on a warrior aristocracy.

Offaly plays an important role in providing information on this new society from discoveries of artefacts and excavations of settlements. A wealth of Bronze Age material has been preserved in bogs, including dress fasteners, lunulae, torcs, ear-rings, musical trumpets and bronze weapons such as shields and swords. Most of these items have been discovered in collections or hoards of artifacts found in wetland locations. Several important hoards have been found in Offaly, the most famous of all being the Dowris Hoard which was found near Birr in the early nineteenth century.

General landscape features from the Bronze Age period include standing stones, burial mounds and Fulachta Fiadh. While there are no remains of this period in the immediate study area, elements from this period all survive in the vicinity.

Iron Age

Around 500BC Ireland moved from a bronze-making culture to one based on iron. This new technology appeared gradually and slowly displaced the earlier bronze-based technology. This displacement may have given rise to a new form of society with new social and economic relationships.

The landscape features from this period range from hillforts, which exist in the Slieve Blooms to Linear earthworks which are found scattered throughout the county. While there are no definitive examples of remains from this period in the study area, some of the archaeological fabric such as ringforts and earthworks, may indeed date from the Iron Age.

Ecclesiastical Origins of Killeigh

St. Sinell, or Senchell, 'one of the most distinguished ecclesiastics of his time', is credited with founding the first church at Killeigh at the beginning of the sixth century. In later periods this became known as the Priory of the Holy Cross of Canons Regular of St. Augustine.

In a litany written in AD. 799, there is evidence of Killeigh being an important site during the Christian period:

Thrice fifty holy bishops with twelve pilgrims, under Senchell the elder, a priest; Senchell the younger, a bishop; and the twelve bishops who settled in Cill Achaidh Dromfota in Hy Failghi. (Comerford, 1883)

It would appear from other documents that Senchell was a contemporary of St. Kevin of Glendalough and Petrie suggested that buildings of contemporaneous age to those in Glendalough would have existed in Killeigh. However only suggestions of the site remain, predominantly in the survival of the surrounding enclosure.



Artist's Impression of Early Christian Enclosure at Killeigh (as seen on information in Killeigh Green)

The status of Killeigh is further evidenced in the large number of references to it made in the various Annals – particularly the *Annals of the Four Masters*.

Church Enclosure

The settlement at Killeigh probably began as a church site which stood within a monastic enclosure. The surviving boundary encloses approximately 30 acres of land. Within this structure are the ruins of Augustinian and Franciscan foundations and an Augustinian nunnery.

The evidence suggests that this site was surrounded by a double ring of earthen banks, which would have served to delineate the church site from the surrounding landscape. It has been proposed that this enclosure may date to the late twelfth century, but, considering the extent to which the surrounding fieldscape is formed around the village, and comparing this with similar sites throughout Ireland, it is likely that an enclosure was originally constructed between the sixth and ninth centuries and possibly re-built in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

Comment on early Settlement

While there is evidence of humans in County Offaly from the earliest periods of Irish settlement, it is not until the Early Christian period that there is direct evidence of a habitation at Killeigh.

From the evidence of Early Christian landscape change, and reshaping, it is likely that elements from previous periods would have been removed, or reused. There is evidence throughout Ireland of earthworks from the Iron Age being employed by the builders of church enclosures, and this may have happened here in Killeigh.

This church founded in the first millennium was a major religious site and while there are few remains of a very early nature, the survival of two churches, documentary evidence of other structures, physical survival and evidence for church enclosures and geophysical evidence of activity within the enclosures are all worthy of serious consideration for the future development of Killeigh.

The Geophysical analysis of the landscape around Killeigh by Gibson highlights the presence of an inner and an outer enclosure (see commentary on enclosure in Section 6). Added to this is evidence of activity throughout the entire enclosed area. The data may suggest that settlement and other activity such as trade and manufacture were carried out within the ecclesiastical enclosures – as has been demonstrated in church sites elsewhere such as Armagh and Nendrum (Griffin, 2003; Dargan, 1994; 1995).

Significance of Church site at Killeigh

County Offaly contains many ancient churches (O'Brien in *Stories from a Sacred Landscape* focuses on 23 such sites throughout the county) and

while some are still used as places of worship, many others have faded back in to the soil from which they rose (O'Brien, pg. 198).

Thus, while there is little direct evidence of prehistoric settlement in the area of Killeigh, the uninterrupted presence of a church site for approximately 1500 years is of vital importance. The significance of this is even more striking when it is noted that Killeigh is perhaps the only early church site in County Offaly which is not either in State ownership or within an urban setting, and is in a location with development potential.

Summary

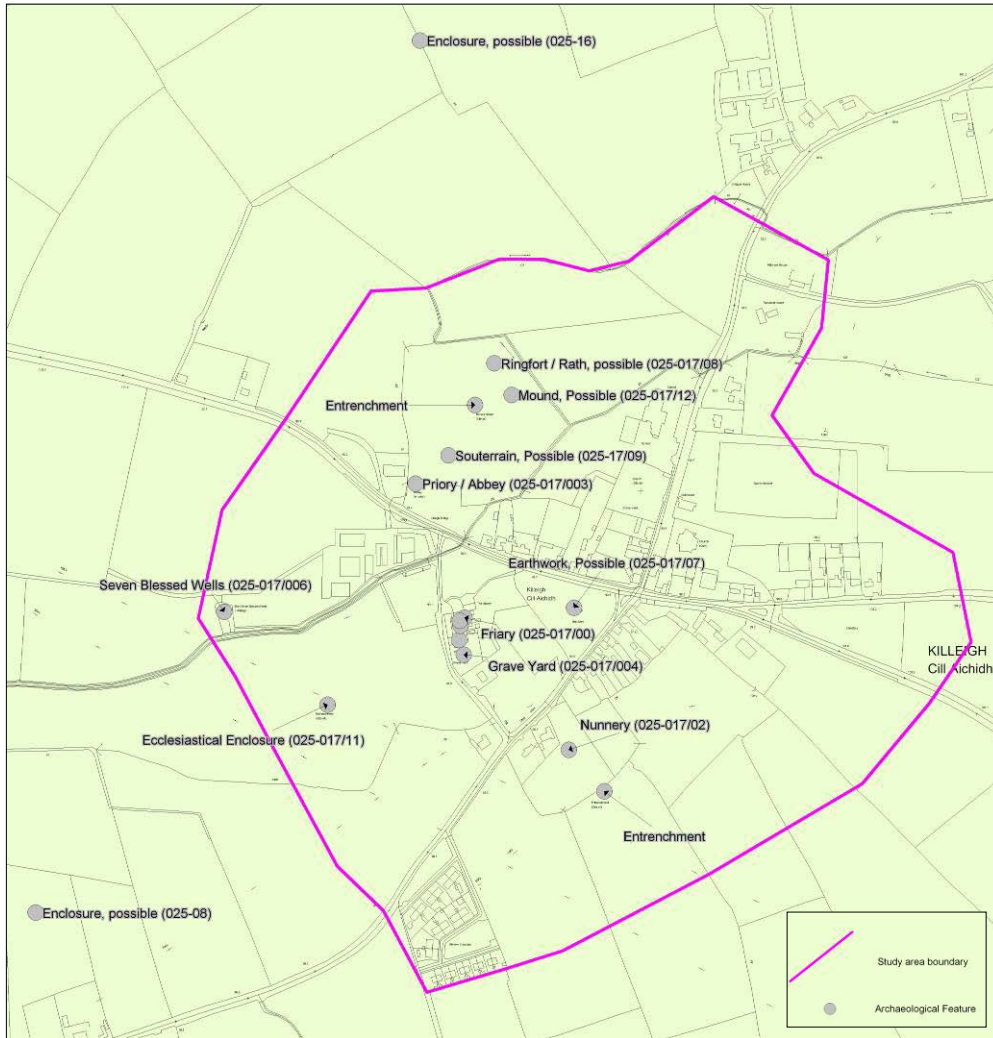
The existence of a church site at Killeigh for a millennium and a half has shaped the landscape, and influenced its present-day structure and form.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 6: Archaeology

Map 6.1. Archaeological Sites



Note: Un-numbered 'entrenchments' are identified on various maps.
 Friary / Graveyard complex contains a number of ecclesiastical elements such as cross slabs etc.

Archaeology

The village contains a number of key sites of archaeological significance. These include the following:

- The site of the Franciscan Friary
- The site of the Augustinian Priory
- The site of the Augustinian Nunnery
- Holy Wells

In addition, the line of the ecclesiastical enclosure circumscribes an area of land, all of which is archaeologically important.

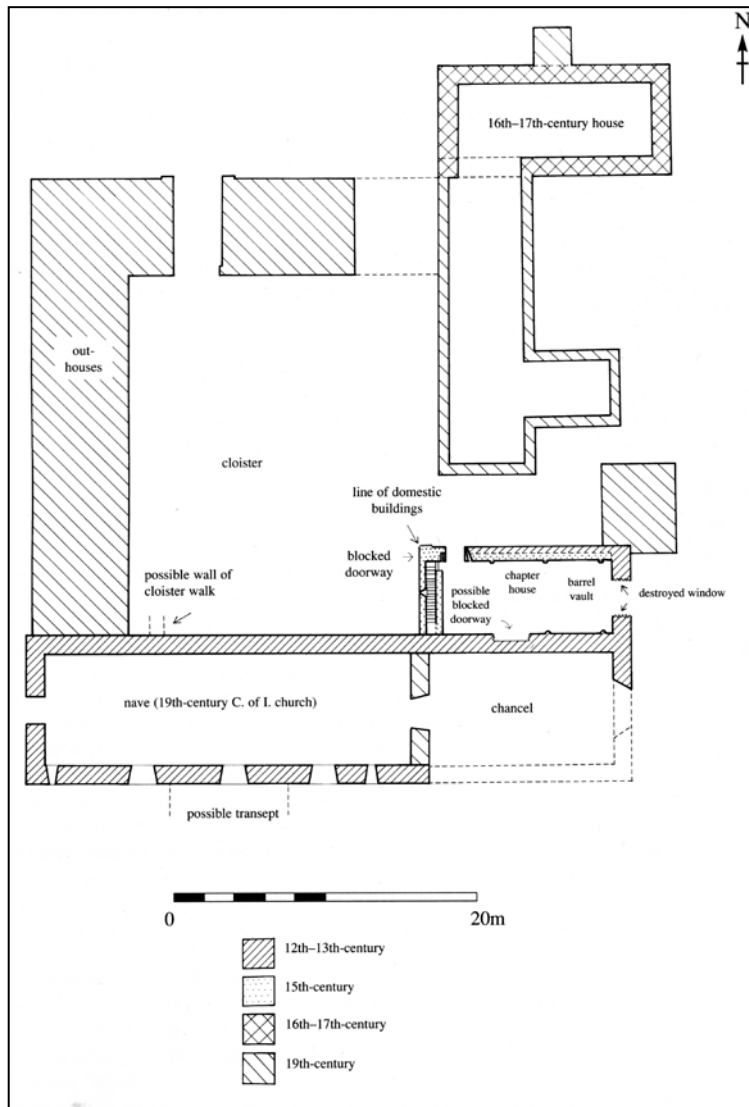
The complex is protected on the Record of Monuments and Places, but the extent is unclear.

The village area also contains the possible sites of additional earthworks, mounds, a ringfort and a souterrain

The individual elements within each of the areas are recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places, and much detail is recorded in the *Archaeological Inventory of County Offaly*.

Record of Monuments and Places (Sites Within Killeigh Area)	
RMP Number	Classification
OF 025-017 001	Friary
OF 025-017 002	Nunnery
OF 025-017 003	Priory / Abbey
OF 025-017 004	Graveyard
OF 025-017 005	Graveslabs
OF 025-017 006	Holy well
OF 025-017 007	Earthworks (possible)
OF 025-017 008	Ringfort (possible)
OF 025-017 009	Souterrain (possible)
OF 025-017 010	Stone sculpture
OF 025-017 011	Ecclesiastical enclosure
OF 025-017 012	Mound
OF 025-017 013	Mill
OF 025-017 014	Building
OF 025-017 015	House / Castle-unclassified
OF 025-017 016	Stoups
OF 025-017 017	Architectural fragments
OF 025-017 018	Bullaun stone
OF 025-017 019	Cross slab
OF 025-017 020	Cross-inscribed stone
OF 025-017 021	Stone sculpture

Record of Monuments and Places (Sites Adjacent to the Killeigh Area)	
RMP Number	Classification
OF 025-008	Enclosure (possible Site)
OF 025-016	Enclosure (Site of)



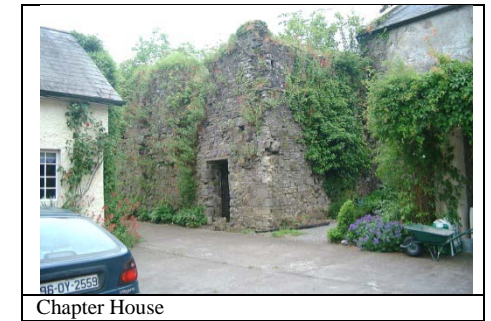
Ground Floor Plan of Franciscan Friary, Killeigh
(Source : Fitzpatrick, E. & O'Brien, 1998)

Franciscan Friary

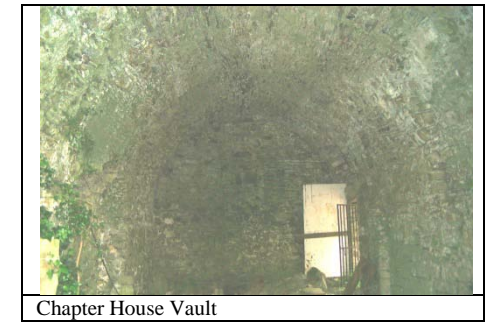
Complex site with remains of Franciscan friary including:
 Part of church
 Chapter house
 Part of Chapterhouse
 Miscellaneous medieval stone fragments in Chapterhouse.
 Cemetery

Stonework - The chapterhouse contains a range early medieval ecclesiastical elements including: a bullaun stone, a cross-slab, a cross inscribed slab.

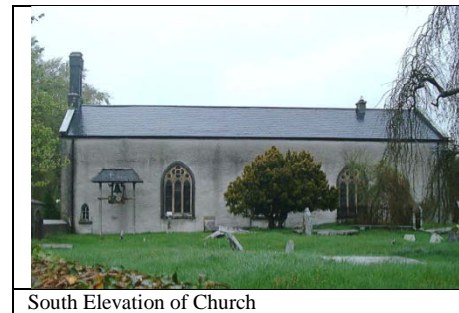
The church is now in Church of Ireland use and was re-ordered in the 19th century.



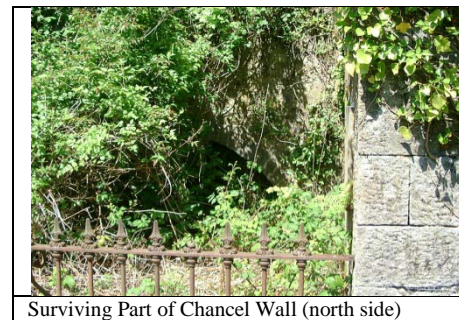
Chapter House



Chapter House Vault



South Elevation of Church



Surviving Part of Chancel Wall (north side)



Stone Fragment



Stone Fragment



Date Stone: 1644



Graveyard

Summary

A very important archaeological complex including the remains of the Franciscan Friary, part of church, chapterhouse, and stone carvings,

The Abbey (House)

16/17th Century House, with annexe and outbuildings that were originally part of Franciscan monastery. Parts of the outbuildings seem to be part of the original domestic range of the monastery. The buildings are protected, although the house, annexe and outbuildings are now much altered



Abbey House, Front Elevation



16/17th Window , Rear of House



Rear Annexe to House



Outbuildings



Outbuildings – internal view indicating original roof line

Summary

A very important 16/17th house much altered, including an annex and outbuildings that originally formed part of Franciscan monastery.

Ecclesiastical Enclosure

The early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure consisted of a double bank separated by a fosse. The enclosure is oval in outline with the sub-rectangular 'Nuns Enclosure' attached to the south-east side. Only sections of the enclosure survive above ground level. Nevertheless the full extent of the outline can be identified.



Northern Stretch of Enclosure



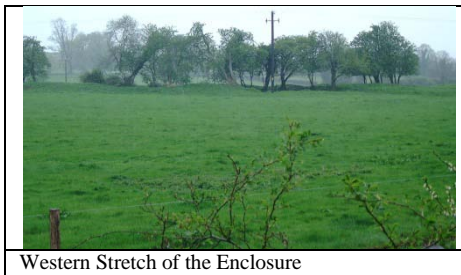
Nuns Enclosure



Nuns Enclosure



Nuns Enclosure

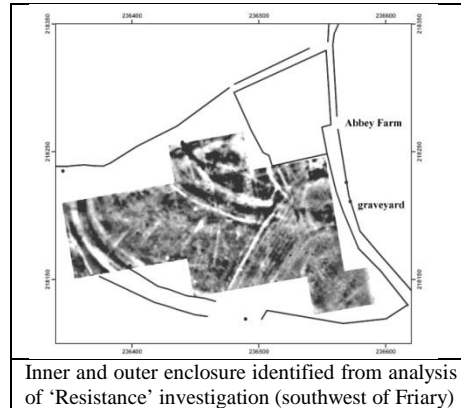


Western Stretch of the Enclosure

Geophysical analysis of Killeigh

In 2005 a detailed geophysical analysis of a number of sites around Killeigh was undertaken by Dr Paul Gibson. The techniques used included magnetometry, resistance and ground penetrating radar

In the area southwest of the Friary site (in the vicinity of archaeological feature OF025-017/011) this investigation identified what appears to be an inner and an outer enclosure.

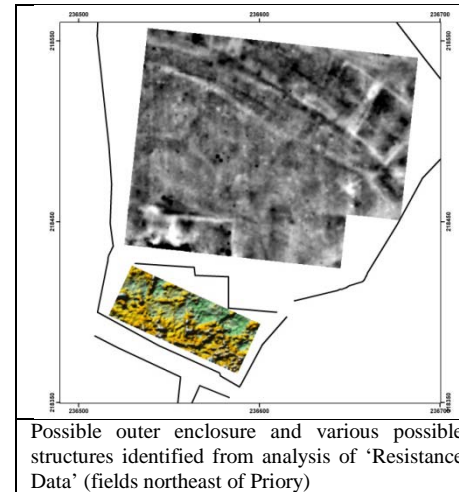


Inner and outer enclosure identified from analysis of 'Resistance' investigation (southwest of Friary)

According to Dr Gibson:

The most prominent features on the resistance plots are the pale arcuate [curving] lineaments which delineate the western enclosure boundary. . . . A second arcuate set of lineaments within this enclosure boundary is evident on the resistance data, indicating the possible existence of an inner enclosure boundary. The inner one also encompasses Abbey Farm, the generally accepted monastic centre in this part of Killeigh (2005).

Examination of the landscape in the vicinity of the northern Priory shows a number of well-defined linear features, one of which apparently forms some type of enclosure. Others show very prominent sharp angles suggesting that they may be the corners of buildings or plots of land (coloured section in southern portion of following map).

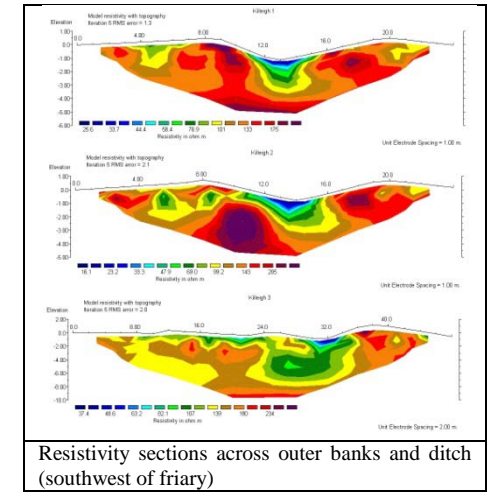


Possible outer enclosure and various possible structures identified from analysis of 'Resistance Data' (fields northeast of Priory)

The large field to the north of the Priory also shows the presence of linear features which may represent walls of the abbey. These are parallel or at right angles to existing boundaries.

A number of major arcuate linear features are also apparent . . . in the northeast part of the field up to 170m in length. A slightly undulating pale band can also be determined which may possibly be the course of an old filled in river (Gibson, 2005).

In addition to identifying possible features the Geophysical analysis of Killeigh undertook an analysis across the southwestern banks in order to investigate if they were constructed by stone or consisted of earth. It was determined that the resistivity for the banks is of the order of 200-300 ohm m. This result is far too low to be in keeping with a structure formed by stones or masonry.



Resistivity sections across outer banks and ditch (southwest of friary)

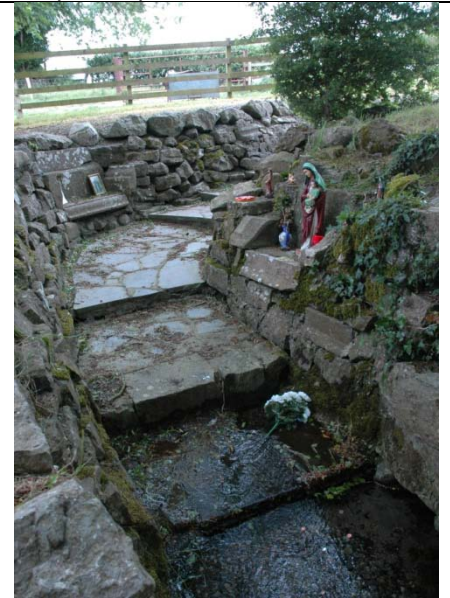
Summary

Extensive and very significant remains of early Christian ecclesiastical enclosure survive.

Holy Well (Seven Blessed Wells)

The Seven Holy Wells of Killeigh are located to the west of the village and consist of a series of adjacent springs that flow into the nearby village watercourse. The wells have a rag tree growing nearby.

The edges of the springs are stone lined. Some of the stones are dressed and probably came from the Abbey or Priory ruins.



Seven Blessed Wells



Rag Tree

Summary

Holy well lined with re-used medieval masonry.

Augustinian Priory

Little remains of the Augustinian Priory above ground except a short section of stone walling. However, the geophysical analysis discussed above identifies traces of a number of features, suggesting considerable remains of buildings underground.



Remains of Priory Wall

Summary

Small surviving section of Augustinian priory

Mound

The mound in the Village Green is part of a once much larger feature and is possibly the remains of a barrow or motte.



Remains of Mound

Summary

Surviving section of barrow or motte

Summary

Killeigh presents a rich collection of archaeological monuments from both the Early Medieval Ecclesiastical and the Medieval Periods. The former includes extensive lengths of the curvilinear ecclesiastical banks, a range of carved stones and a holy well.

The monuments of the Medieval Period include the partial remain of the Franciscan Friary, the Augustinian Priory, a motte and a much altered 16/17 century house.

In addition, it is highly likely that the village area contains an extensive range of below-ground monuments.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

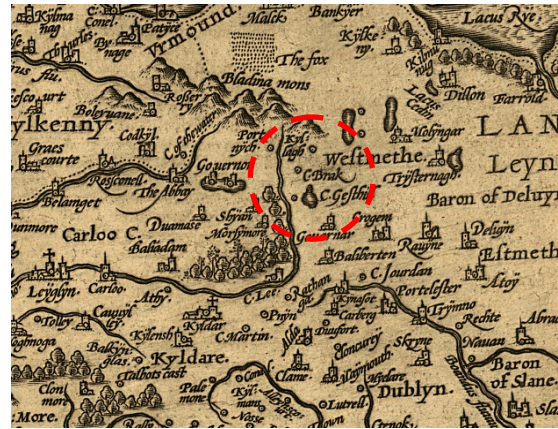
Part 7 Landscape Evolution

Sequence of historical Maps

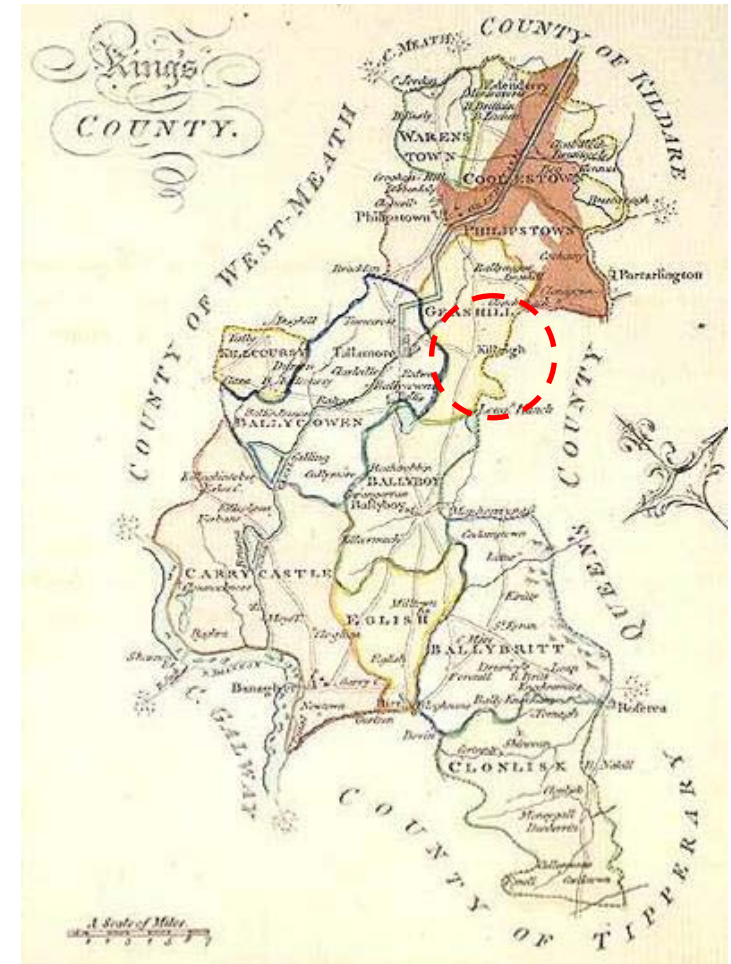
The following sequence of maps demonstrate the development of cartography in Ireland, ranging from the symbolic representations of the 17th century up to the more easily recognisable maps of the mid 19th century. The first three maps are orientated with North to the right of the image, the last map with north to the left.

The maps are used here to demonstrate the relative importance of settlements in the vicinity of Killeigh. Gegashill appears to be represented in all the maps, as is Tullamore (Kingstown). In the first three maps the placename Kyllagh, Killey or Killegh (respectively) appears. This may be Killeigh, but appears to be located a little too far to the west (top of map).

Killeigh is fully identifiable in the barony of 'Geashill' in the 1776 map in this sequence.



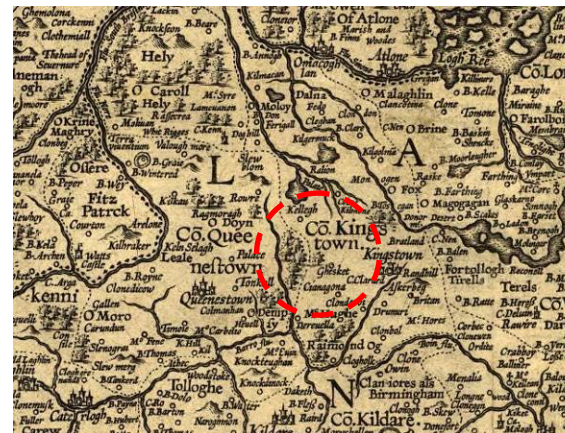
Map 5.1. - 1598



Map 5.4. - 1776



Map 5.2. - c. 1600 - Mercator

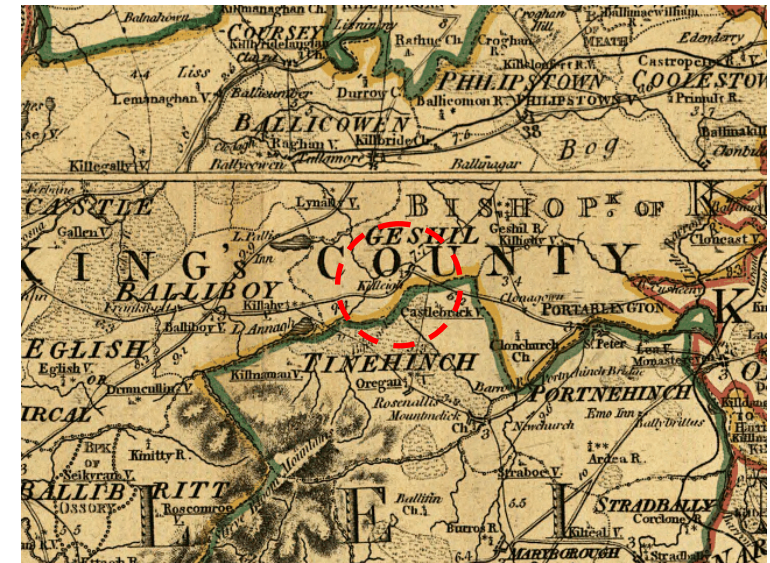


Map 5.3. - 1606 Baptista



Map 5.5. - 1790 Roque

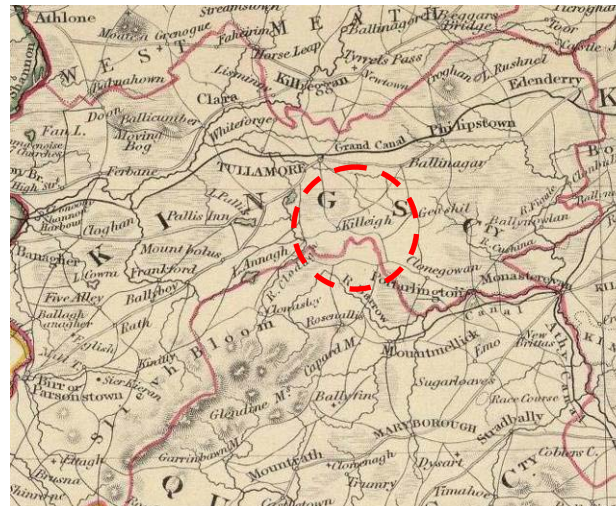
The maps on this page are far more informative, regarding the location of Killeigh. Interestingly Roque’s 1790 map illustrates Killeigh to the east of an extensive woodland. In this map the road to ‘Tullymore’ is not seen as important – reflecting the historical importance for communication of the northeast – southwest ridge upon which Killeigh is located. This east-west orientation continues in the 1797 map, with the northern route to Tullamore being of minor importance



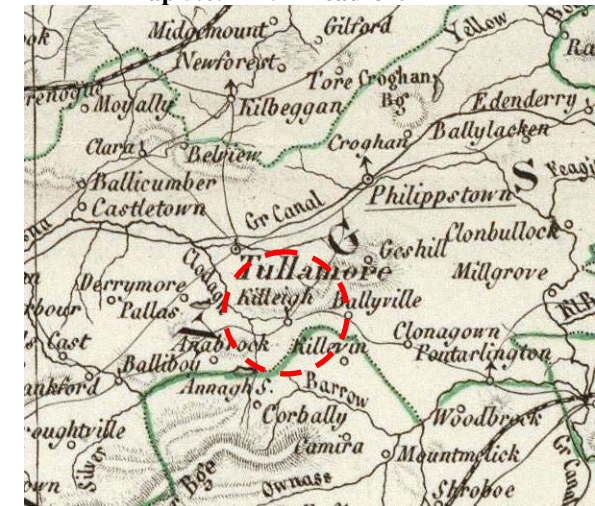
Map 5.6. - 1797 Beaufort



Map 5.7. - 1801 – Weimar



Map 5.8. - 1830 – Society for the Diffusion of useful Knowledge



Map 5.9. - 1853 Atlas

Chronological Sequence of Historic Maps – 1840s to Present Day

Map 5.10 OS First Edition 6 inch – 1840

Map 5.11. OS 6 inch – 1885



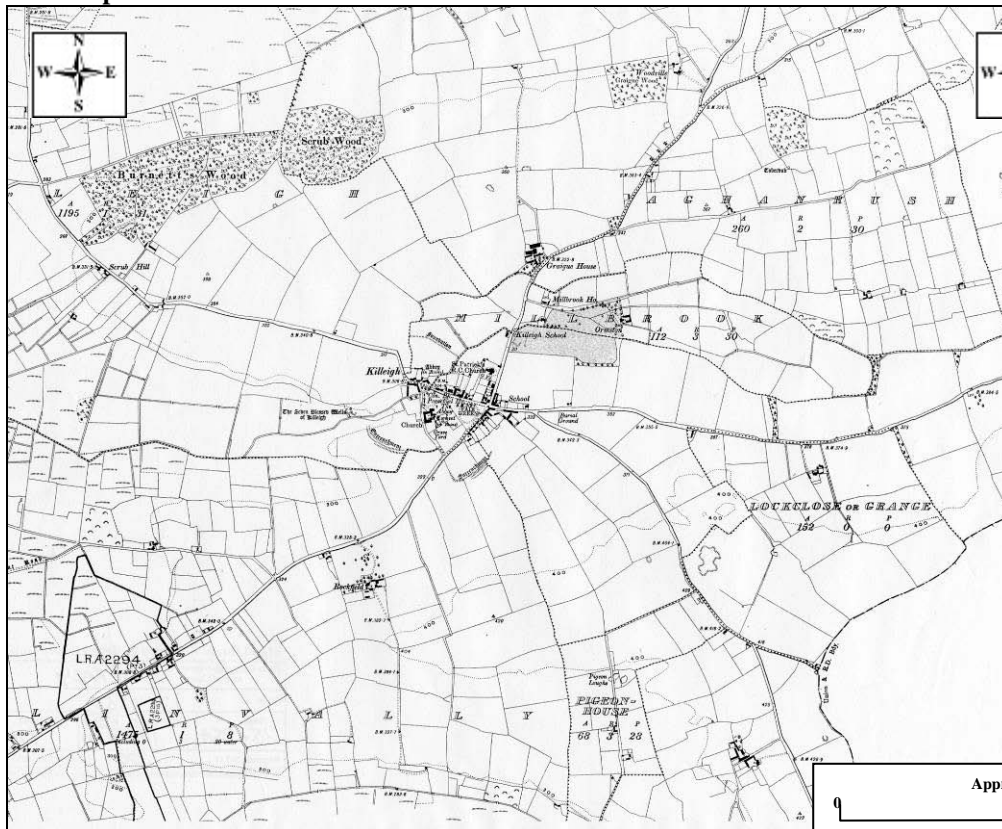
Points to note in map sequence:

Survival of central core area throughout all maps
 Continuity of boundaries – particularly townland boundaries (note survival of curvilinear northwestern border of Millbrook townland parcel throughout all maps - northwest of central Killeigh – see Section 6 for further commentary).

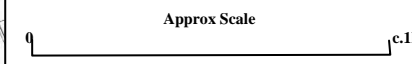
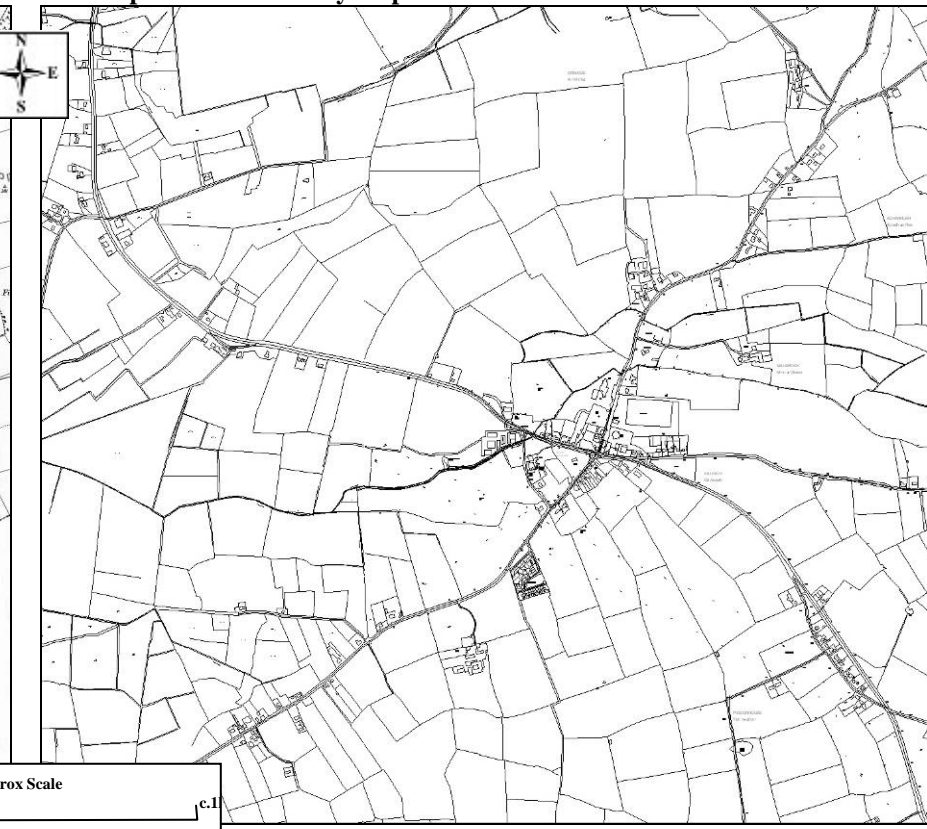
Points to note in this map:

Within 45 years relatively no change.
 Minor changes in detail – which may reflect change in use, or method of recording – i.e. brewery gone, school change to ‘National’ school.

Map 5.12. OS 6 inch – 1912



Map 5.13. Present Day map



Points to note in this map:

Cut-back of demesne lands (may just reflect different cartographic representation, but may indicate substantial change in landuse and ownership).

Development of Burial ground east of village.

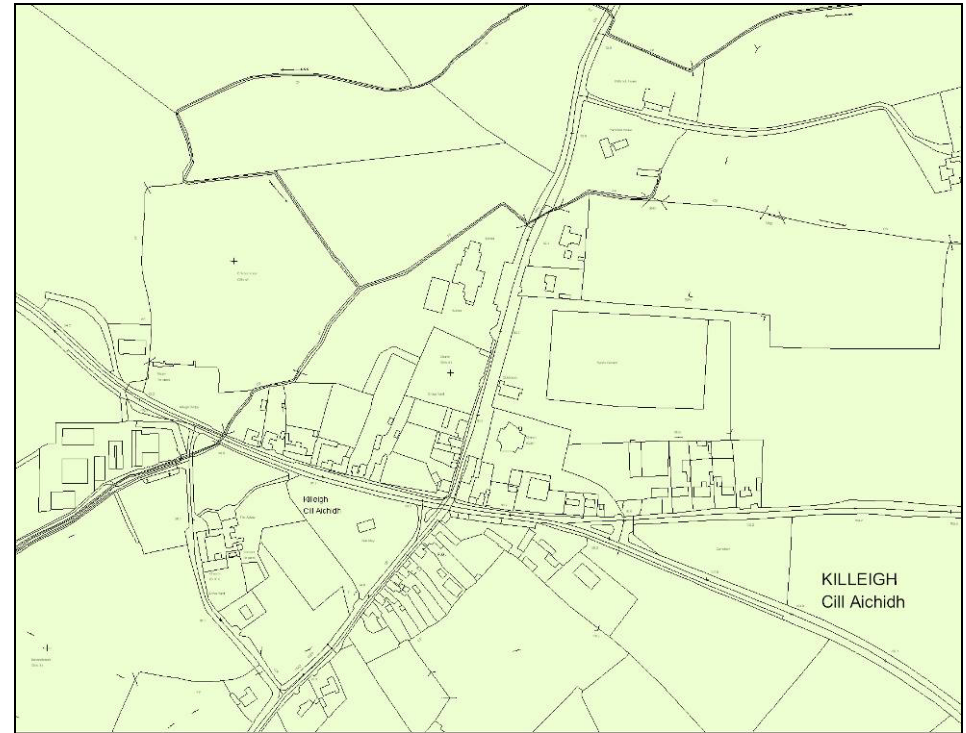
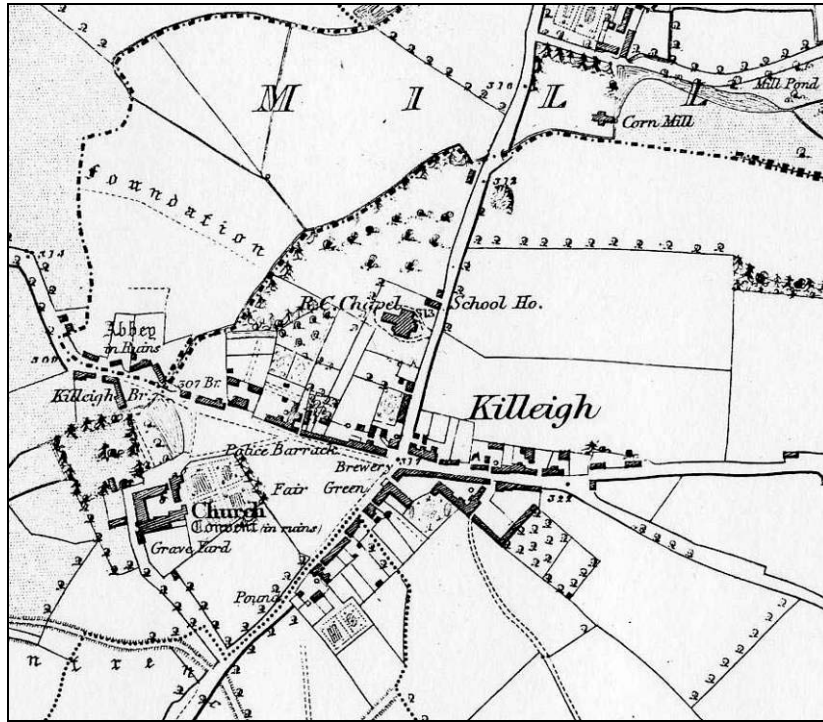
Disappearance of Corn Mill to north of village.

Points to note in this map:

Disappearance of Burnette's, Scrub and Graigue Woods.

Disappearance of original RC. Church.
Some field consolidation east of the village.

Some Infilling with new houses – surprisingly little in almost 100 years. However building of houses in the southeastern entrenchment, has possibly compromised the archaeological value of this stretch of enclosure.



Maps 5.14 & 5.15. 1st Edition Ordnance Survey 6” map with present day landscape for comparison

Points to note in this map:

Despite the improvement of the roadway through Killeigh, and almost 150 years, the overall character of the site has remained relatively intact. Relatively little in-filling has occurred.

The main location within the study area where pressure has become manifest in the fabric of the landscape is the area of the playing pitch northeast of the central crossroads.

Aside from a small number of developments, the level of boundary continuity is the main characteristic of the area.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

**Part 8 Morphology and
Streetscapes**

Overview of Morphology and Streetscapes

Morphology

The morphology of Killeigh village consists essentially of a central triangular green with a cross road at the apex of the space, from which four streets radiate outwards. The village is positioned on a low ridge set in a low-hill topography.

The current village form overlies an early medieval ecclesiastical settlement pattern of oval enclosures, which is only partially identifiable.

Streetscape

The current village streetscape includes a range of elements that are incorporated into single carriageway that radiate outwards from the village centre. These elements include: roadways, grain, massing, street furniture, monuments, watercourses, boundary walling, gateways, landscaping, internal vistas, external views, and ruins.

Architecture

The village building stock includes a range of 19th century detached, semi-detached and terraced houses and cottages, arranged mainly around the village green. There is also a small range of public buildings. The fabric around the green dates mainly from the nineteenth century, while the remainder is mainly a mix of nineteenth and twentieth century architecture.

In addition, the village has a number of earlier structures including: sections of the early medieval enclosure, the remains of the two medieval religious houses and a 16/17th century house.



Approach Roads

The approach roads to Killeigh are narrow, with grass margins and a range of hedgerow, tree and fence type boundaries. The Tullamore Road has a hard shoulder.



Ballingar Road



Cloneygowan Road



Killurin Road



Tullamore Road



Village Entrances

The village has a gateway on the Tullamore and Mountmellick Roads, in the form of common, though insensitive, traffic calming islands.



Village Entrance - Tullamore Road



Village Entrance - Mountmellick Road

Summary

The village has narrow approach roads with grass margins and natural boundaries.

Summary

The village has two traffic-calming type entrances.

Village Streets

Most of the village streets are flanked by footpaths. The main axis has houses that open directly onto the paths.



Ballingar Road



Mountmellick Road



Kilurin Road



Tullamore Road



Tullamore Road



Church Road

Summary

The village has a range of roads flanked by footpaths and by grass margins.

Grain

The term grain refers to the village plot pattern and consists of a mixture of regular and irregular shaped plots arranged around the village green and the approach roadways.

Massing

The massing consists mainly of detached and terraced, single and double storied houses with a small number of larger infrastructural buildings such as the church and school.

Summary

The grain consists of a mixture of regular and irregular shaped plots arranged along the roadways.

Summary

A range of single and double storey houses with a small number of supporting infrastructural buildings.

Street Furniture and Monuments

The village has a limited range of street furniture that includes a church bell beside the Abbey Church, public seating on the village green, and three roadside memorials.



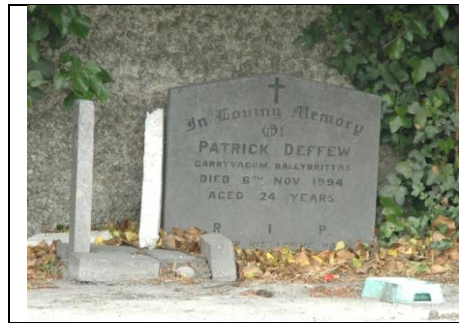
Church Bell



Memorial



Memorial



Memorial

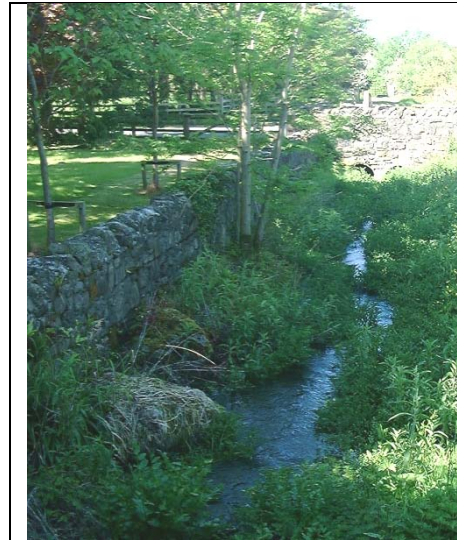


Seating

Summary
The villager has a small range of monuments

Watercourses

The village has a single narrow water course that swings around the north-west quadrant of the village, although it is only visible adjacent to where it passes under the Tullamore Road. The run-off from the Holy Well joins the watercourse on the west side of the village.



Waterway



Waterway



Waterway

Summary

A single narrow watercourse is accessible from the Church Road, immediately adjacent to the intersection with the Tullamore Road.

Front Boundary Walling

The village has a large and rich body of low stone front boundary walling.



Village Green



Village green



Village Green



Village Green



Seven Blessed Wells



Mountmellick Road

Summary

The village has an extensive and important range of low stone front boundary walling

Gates

The village has an extensive range of traditional metal farm-type gates.



Ballingar Road (Protected).



Ballingar Road



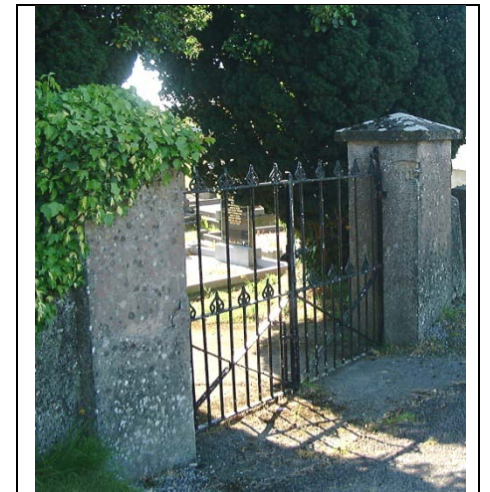
Ballingar Road



Kilurin Road



Mountmellick Road



Mountmellick Road

Landscaping

The landscape village and the surrounding landscaping play a very important part in the village character. The central green consists of an open lawn with tress and landscape elements around the central core. There are also three graveyards which act as open landscaped elements. In addition, the village houses have a variety of landscaped gardens and these add to the overall landscape backdrop.



Village Green



Old Grave yard, Ballincor



Fair Green



Fair Green

Summary
The village has an extensive range of metal farm-type gates.



Mountmellick Road



Tullamore Road



Church Road

Summary
The village has a very important and extensive body of landscape features including, mature trees, hedgerow, and gardens

Internal Vistas

The village has a range of internal street and landscape vistas which play a significant part in the character of Killeigh.



Village Green



Village Green



Village Green



Village Green

Views from Village Streets

The village has an extensive range of views of the surrounding countryside.



Village Green



Ballingar Road



Clonygoran Road



View from Village Green



Church Road



Ballingar Road



Clonygoran Road



Ballingar Road



Church Road

Summary

The village has an extensive range of significant internal vistas.

Summary

The village has an extensive range of views of the surrounding countryside.

External Views

There are some excellent views of the village on the approach roads particularly from the Tullamore Road where the settlement can be seen to be nestling into the folds of the landscape.



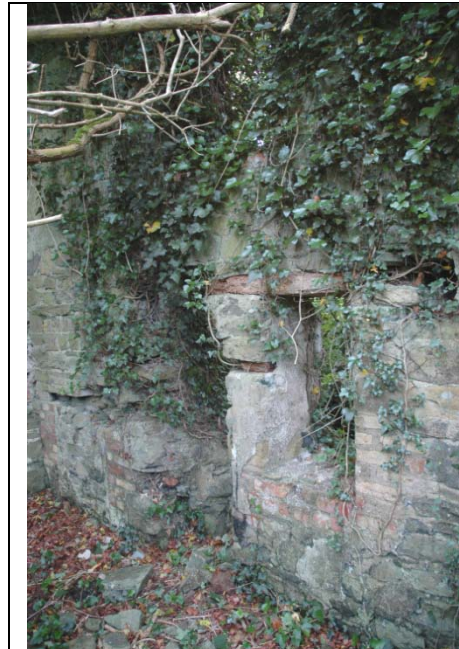
View from Tullamore Road



View from Tullamore Road

Ruins

The village has a small collection of ruined buildings including the ruins of an old mill and the rubble from a recently demolished house and the remains of the old Roman Catholic Church in Ballingar Road, as well as an un-roofed outbuilding on the Village Green.



Old Mill, Ballingar Road



Outbuilding, the Village Green



Demolished House, Ballingar Road



Footprint of Demolished Church, Ballingar Road



Outbuilding, the Village Green

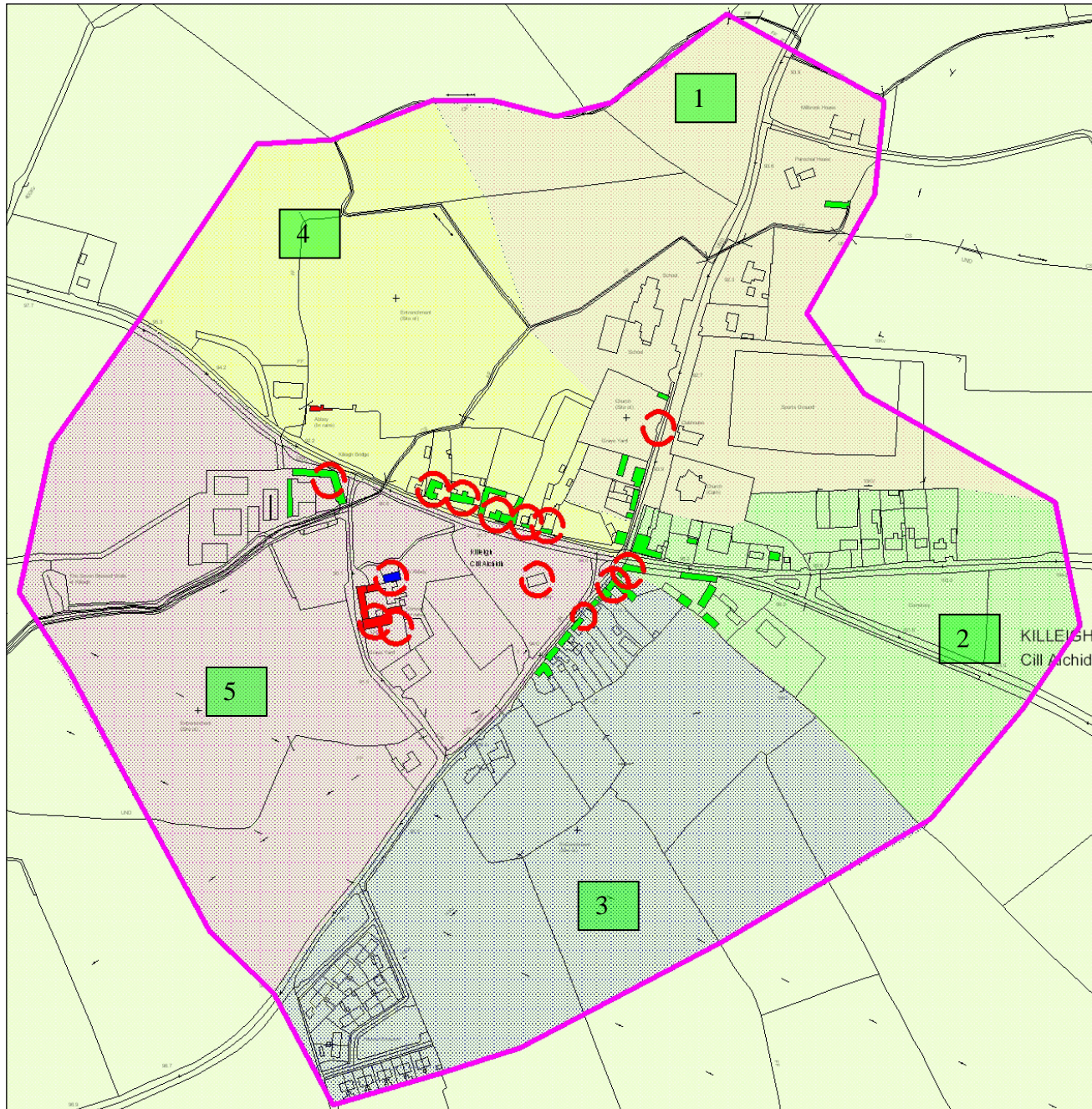
Summary

The village has small range of ruined buildings

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 9 Architectural Fabric



Architectural Fabric

Nodes

In order to facilitate the study of the architectural fabric of Killeigh, the village has been divided into six nodes (Map xx) each based on a road alignment. Each node contains a range of residential and administrative buildings. The nodes have no topographical significance other than for analytical purposes.

Node	Road
1	Ballingar Road
2	Mountmellick Road
3	Kilurin Road
4	Tullamore Road
5	Fairgreen and Abbey

Historic Key	
Medieval	■
16 th /17 th Century	■
19th Century	■
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	■

Protection

A number of the buildings in the study area are designated 'Protected Structures' under the Planning Acts.

Where this is not the case, but where protection is considered to be required, the individual buildings in question are indicated as: **In need of further study and protection.**

The recommendation here is that these buildings be subjected to further study as, and when, development is proposed.

1 Ballingar Road (North Axis)



Historic Key	
Medieval	Red
16 th /17 th Century	Blue
19th Century	Green
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	Red dashed line

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Double Storey House
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Two storey house

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Single storey school house
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Wooden joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: 1820
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Old School House



Date Stone, School House

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Terrace of single storey cottages
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Terraced cottages

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Single story outbuilding
 MATERIALS: Partly surviving stone wall, metal deck roof
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Stone outbuilding

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Range of twentieth century infrastructural buildings including Church, Sports pavilion and school
 MATERIALS: Rendered walling, Slate roof, Wooden joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Brick and concrete block walling
 HISTORY: late twentieth century



Parish Church - Roman Catholic



GAA Pavilion



School

ADDRESS: Ballingar Road

FORM: Range of suburban-type houses and bungalows

MATERIALS: Rendered and brick walling, Tiled roofs, Wood and plastic joinery

SITE: Regular plot

BOUNDARY: Block and natural boundaries

HISTORY: Late twentieth century



Bungalow



Bungalow







House

Summary

Very important range of nineteenth century, housing, outbuilding, and school house. Number of twentieth century infrastructural buildings and housing.



2 Mountmellick Road (East Axis)

Historic Key	
Medieval	
16 th /17 th Century	
19th Century	
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Terrace of double storey houses
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Terraced Houses

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Single storey cottage
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Cottage

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Double storey House
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century – much altered.
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



House

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Double storey cottage
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Natural boundary
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Cottage

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Single storey cottage
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century – much altered
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Cottage

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Single storey outbuilding
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Metal deck roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Outhouse

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Former Brewery - Extensive range of single storey barns
 MATERIALS: Stone wall, Slate and metal deck roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary



Industrial Building

HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Barns (site of former brewery)



Barns

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

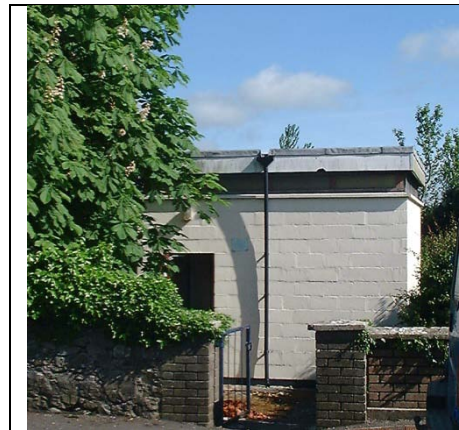
FORM: Double storey houses
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Plastic joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Wooden fencing
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century



Houses

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Single storey industrial building
 MATERIALS: Concrete block walling, Felt flat roof, Wooden joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Brick boundary
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century



Industrial Building

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

FORM: Single storey industrial building
 MATERIALS: Concrete block and metal decking walling, Flat roof, Plastic joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century

ADDRESS: Mountmellick Road

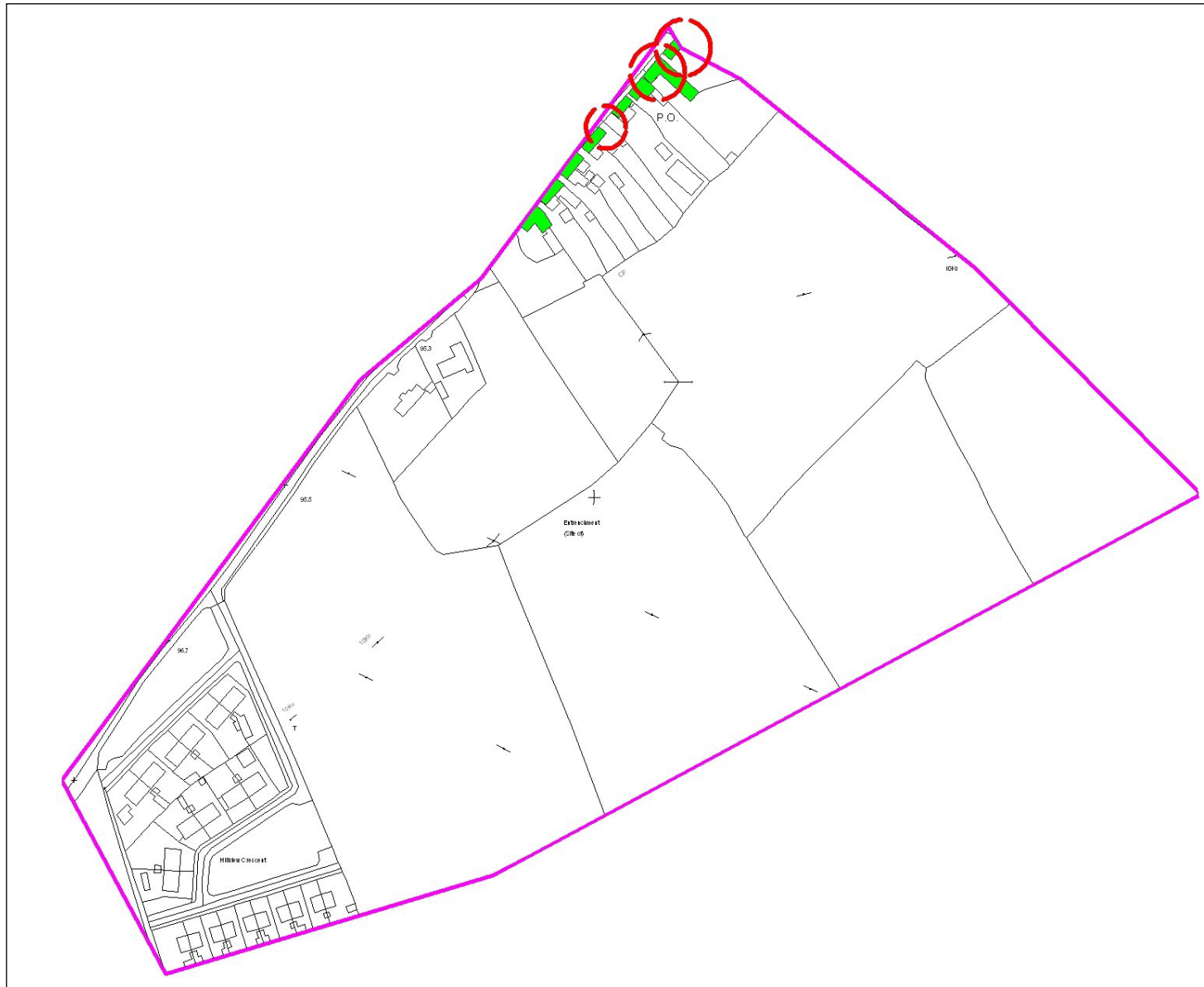
FORM: Single storey industrial building
 MATERIALS: Concrete block and metal deck walling, metal deck roof, wooden joinery
 SITE: Regular plot
 BOUNDARY: Concrete block boundary
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century







Industrial Building

Summary

Range of important nineteenth century houses, cottages and outbuildings; in addition to as well as late twentieth century housing and industrial buildings



3 Kilurin Road (South Axis)

Historic Key	
Medieval	
16 th /17 th Century	
19th Century	
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	

ADDRESS: Killurin Road

FORM: Range of linked and detached double storey houses
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery. One house with rendered removed
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Detached House (Protected)



Detached House



Detached House



Post Office

ADDRESS: Killurin Road

FORM: Range of twentieth century suburban type houses and bungalows
 MATERIALS: Rendered and brick walling, Tiled roofs, Wooden and plastic joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Rendered walling
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century



Detached House



Bungalows



Houses

ADDRESS: Killurin Road

FORM: Terrace of single storey cottages
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



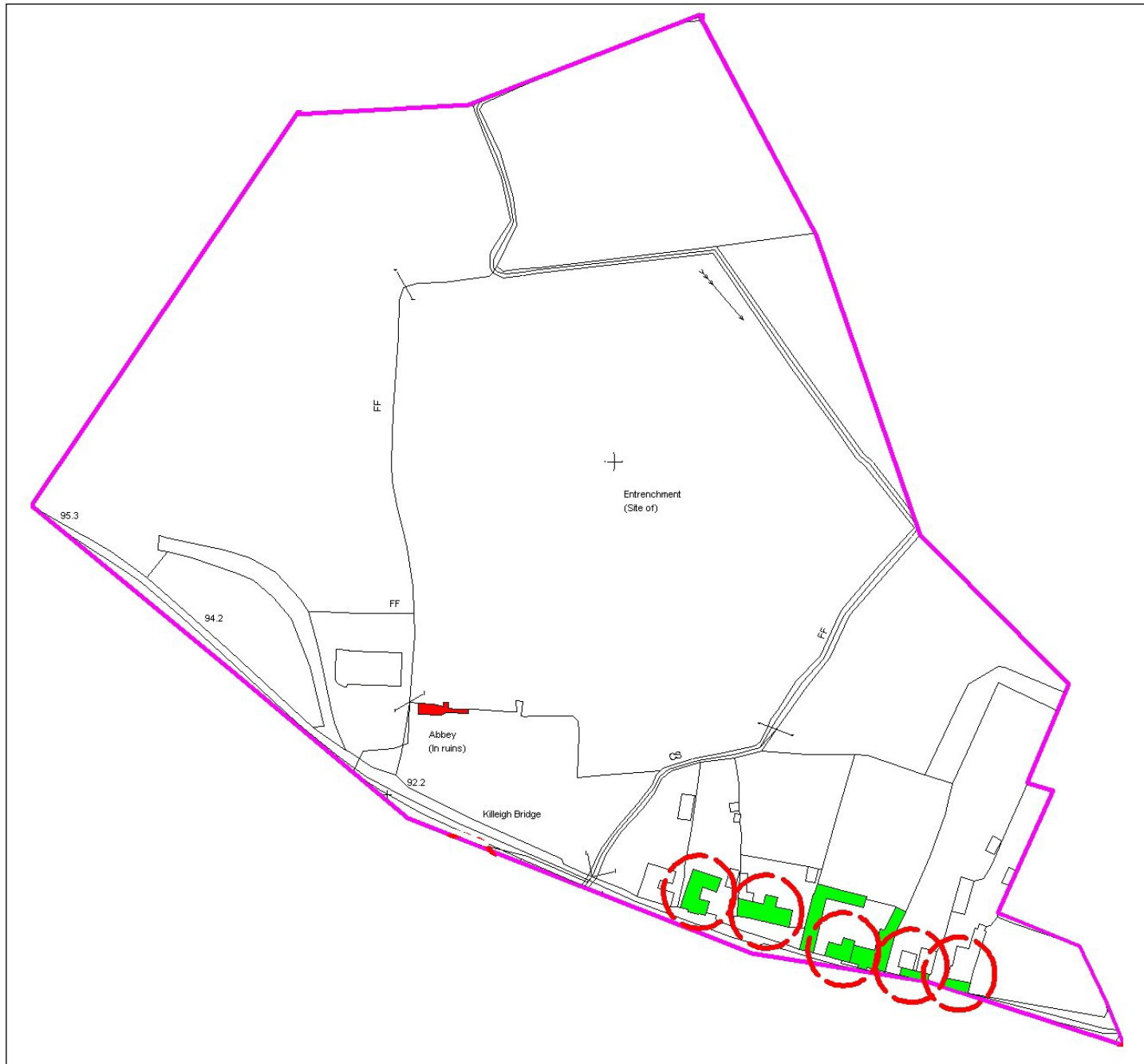
Cottages







Cottages

Summary

Important range of nineteenth century houses and cottages; as well as some late twentieth century housing



4 Tullamore Road (West Axis)

Historic Key	
Medieval	
16 th /17 th Century	
19th Century	
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	

ADDRESS: Former Forge, Tullamore Road

FORM: Detached single storey forge
 MATERIALS: Stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: Protected. Much altered, in need of further study



Former Forge

ADDRESS: Former Presbytery, Tullamore Road

FORM: Detached double storey house with extensive outbuildings
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery.
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Former Presbytery

ADDRESS: Cottages, Tullamore Road

FORM: Pair of semi-detached cottages
 MATERIALS: Stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery. It is unclear whether or not the buildings were originally rendered.
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: Protected. Very much altered. In need of further study



Cottages

ADDRESS: House Tullamore Road

FORM: Detached corner house
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



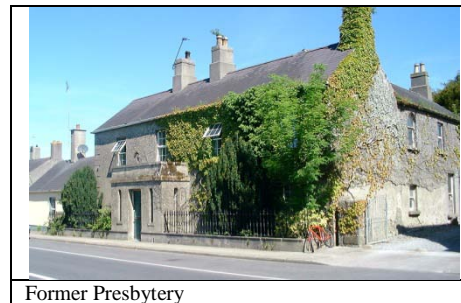
Corner House

ADDRESS: Former RIC Barracks, Tullamore Road

FORM: Detached double storey houses
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery.
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: Protected. In need of further study



Old RIC Barracks



Former Presbytery

ADDRESS: Former Forge, Tullamore Road

FORM: Pair of semi-detached houses. One used as forge
 MATERIALS: Rendered stone wall, Slate roof, Replacement joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary to rear
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: Protected. Very much altered. In need of further study



House and Shop

ADDRESS: Barns, Tullamore Road

FORM: Range of single storey barns and farm buildings arranged around farmyard
 MATERIALS: Stone wall, Slate roof, Wooden joinery. Also twentieth century metal decked hay shed
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone and natural boundaries
 HISTORY: Nineteenth century
 PROTECTION: In need of further study and protection



Barns



Farmyard

ADDRESS: Community Hall, Tullamore Road

FORM: Large hall
 MATERIALS: Rendered wall, Slate roof, Wooden joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Natural boundary
 HISTORY: Late twentieth century



ADDRESS: Bungalow, Tullamore Road

FORM: Detached bungalow
 MATERIALS: Stone and rendered walls, Tiled roof, Plastic joinery
 SITE: Regular plots
 BOUNDARY: Stone boundary
 HISTORY: Twentieth century

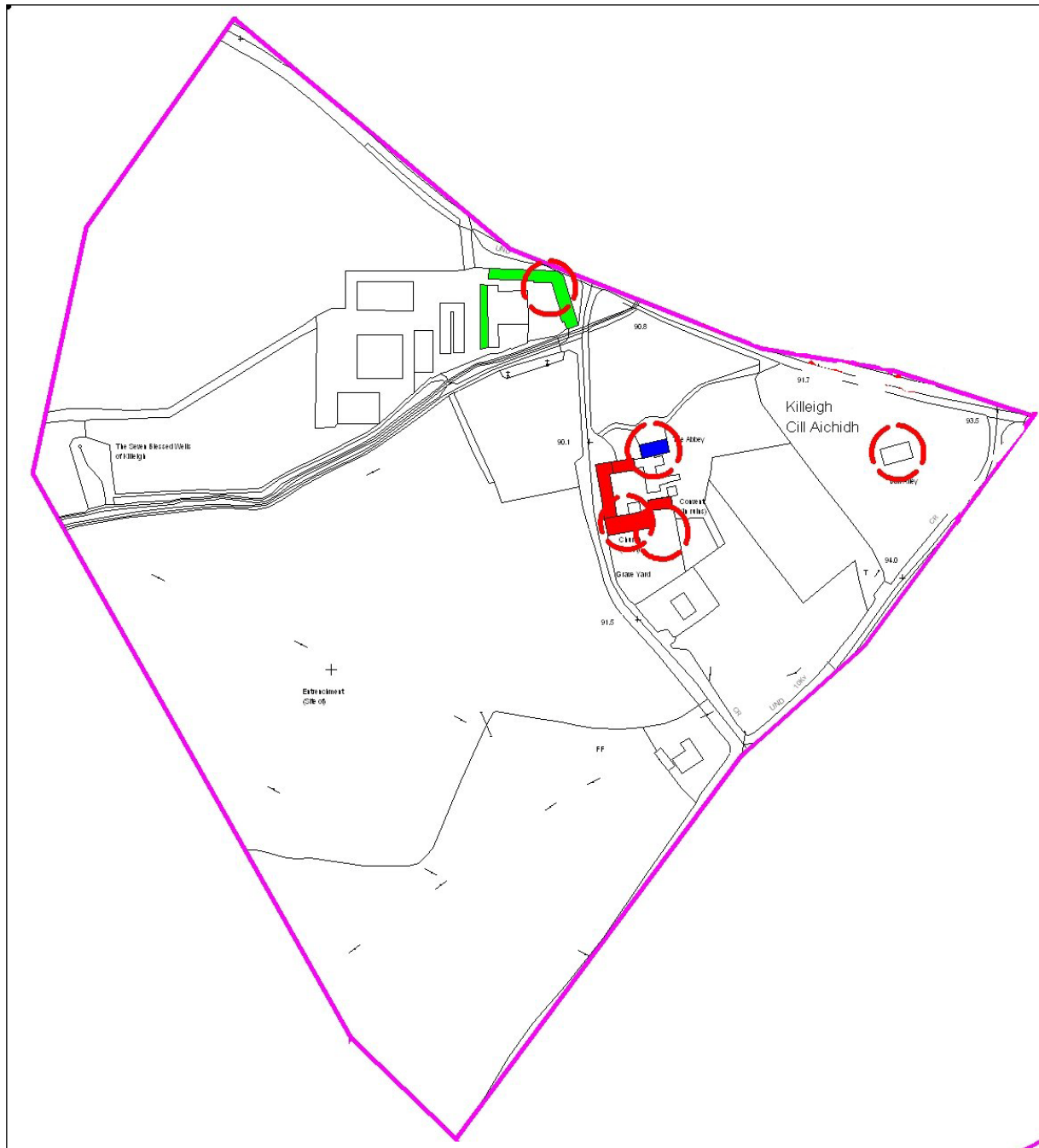


Bungalow

Summary

Important range of nineteenth century housing and barns. Also twentieth century bungalow.

5 Fair Green and Abbey



Historic Key	
Medieval	
16 th /17 th Century	
19th Century	
Protected Buildings / Listed in Inventory of Irish Architecture	

ADDRESS: *Franciscan Monastery Complex – (Discussed earlier in Part 6, Archaeology)*
FORM: Church, part of cloister building and house
MATERIALS: Rendered Stone
SITE: Complex
BOUNDARY: Stone walling
HISTORY: Medieval
PROTECTION: Protected. Very significant complex in need of further study

16/17th Century House

ADDRESS: Handball Alley, Fair green
FORM: Hand Ball Alley
MATERIALS: Mass concrete
SITE: Central position in village green
BOUNDARY: N/A
HISTORY: c.Mid twentieth century
PROTECTION: A key central and historical structure in the village morphology, worthy of protection.

ADDRESS: *Housing, Village Green*
FORM: Range of Suburban –type houses
MATERIALS: Rendered walling, Tiled roofs, Wooden joinery
SITE: Regular
BOUNDARY: Fencing
HISTORY: Late twentieth century



Parish Church - Church of Ireland



Parish Church - Church of Ireland



Hand Ball Alley

Summary
 Very important remains of the Franciscan friary and late medieval house. The hand ball alley is also an important social and architectural feature. The area also has a small range of late twentieth century housing.



House



House



Bungalow

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 10: Analysis

Elements	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Topography</p>	<p>The landscape in the Killeigh area is strongly influenced by the undulating form of underlying limestone. This site is in a transition zone between the lowlands to the west and ridge to the east. This gives the area a distinct character.</p> <p>Despite the low elevation of the site, there are some views of the surrounding landscape. From the approach roads (particularly the northern road) the views into the settlement emphasise the manner in which it is 'tucked into' the landscape.</p>	<p>The underlying rock and water-retaining nature of the soil may be factors to consider in future developments in the area.</p> <p>Soils are heavy and peat-based, thus, susceptible to waterlogging. The margins of the study area may be prone to such issues.</p>	<p>Future development should take cognisance of the surrounding landscape – particularly the views of the nearby hills and mountains</p> <p>Where practical, local materials should be employed, to retain and enhance its distinct character.</p>	<p>Development in the area, especially of an intrusive high density nature, could seriously inhibit the characteristic views of the surrounding landscape.</p> <p>Expansion of Killeigh beyond its current compact form would impact on the views into the settlement.</p>
<p>Biodiversity</p>	<p>The study area has a number of quality woodland areas and hedgerows which are a strong element of the landscape and have a high habitat value. Their importance for biodiversity is important in the area.</p>	<p>This is a small site which has a limited range of habitats.</p> <p>Some of the area is under intensive agriculture and recreational use which can limit the habitat and biodiversity value.</p> <p>Hedgerow management is needed for a number of stretches.</p>	<p>Under the direction of environmental schemes opportunities could be taken to maximise habitat value and to retain hedgerows.</p> <p>There are opportunities to control damage and maximise educational value of habitats.</p> <p>There is potential to preserve the habitats in the area, to maintain the high scenic and biodiversity quality of the landscape</p> <p>Following the pattern of species already thriving in the area, native hedging should be encouraged and promoted in all areas where planting is planned. .</p>	<p>Afforestation of agricultural land would radically alter this habitat.</p> <p>There is growing pressure for development in the area. This could impede and subsequently endanger movement of species.</p> <p>Overuse of chemicals and intensive techniques in the areas of agricultural and horticultural land management are potential threats to the biodiversity in the area.</p>
<p>History and Society</p>	<p>The Killeigh area displays evidence of settlement dating from the early Christian period.</p> <p>Some of the landscape features around Killeigh have survived for considerable periods. This includes boundary lines, stands of trees, individual buildings, vegetation patterns and some settlements with a long history of habitation.</p> <p>Perhaps the most important feature of the landscape is the holistic survival of the religious landscape which influences the layout of the settlement and field patterns.</p>	<p>A number of structures are in poor condition. Also, some of the landscape features are neglected (hedgerows, boundaries etc.), requiring more proactive management strategies.</p> <p>There is a good awareness of the history of the area, but this focuses particularly on the importance of some of the buildings.</p>	<p>While the recreational potential of the local landscape is high, there is little opportunity for public participation. The existence of the green space in the core of the 'village' offers a wonderful opportunity as a focal point for community activity and engagement with the local heritage and landscape.</p> <p>The survival of relatively intact church boundaries offers educational, environmental, historical and recreational opportunities</p>	<p>The local society is potentially at risk to high pressure development from larger settlements in the area – particularly Tullamore which is only 6-7km away.</p> <p>A number of historic landscapes have been altered over time to allow for modern use. While change of use and in-filling are agents of development, they pose a serious risk to the integrity of the heritage at Killeigh.</p>

Elements	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Archaeology</p>	<p>Killeigh contains a highly significant and rich body of large scale and small scale archaeological material from the Early Medieval, Medieval and Late Medieval Periods. The village area also contains significant below-ground monuments. The significance of the village archaeology is generally respected and appreciated by the community.</p> <p>The absence of major development to date has resulted in the survival of much of the village archaeological material.</p> <p>A number of reports have outlined the importance of archaeology in the area, The Sweetman and Gibson Reports provide a good baseline for such work.</p>	<p>A high level of archaeological investigation has been carried out in parts of the area. However, no overall comprehensive study has been completed.</p> <p>The great bulk of the archaeological monuments – both above and below ground - are physically unprotected and consequently very vulnerable damage or loss.</p> <p>There is little ‘joined-up’ analysis of archaeology in Killeigh, many reports exist both locally and nationally, but these need to be considered in a holistic manner.</p>	<p>The low level of development around the village area to date offers the opportunity to undertake further investigations and study of the area to improve the securing and protection of archaeological heritage.</p> <p>A number of reports outline the importance of archaeology in the area and these must be used to provide ‘joined-up’ analysis of Killeigh. The Sweetman and Gibson Reports in particular provide clear direction regarding the scale, scope and extent of the village archaeology.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to conserve and protect the various archaeological features through liaison with landowners on appropriate measures for their care.</p> <p>Integrated analysis of Killeigh would prove beneficial in further developing the scale, scope and extent of the village archaeology.</p>	<p>Un-controlled future development, future farming and neglect will impose possible significant threats to the survival of the village archaeology.</p>
<p>Built Environment - Morphology</p>	<p>The village has a strong nineteenth century morphological form and character. This consists of a central landscaped triangular green, framed by a range of domestic scale buildings, from which four village streets roads radiate outwards from the apex of the grebe.</p> <p>The village is fortunate in that it has experienced very little from ribbon development.</p> <p>The extensive mature landscape and vistas also plays a significant part in the village character.</p>	<p>The nineteenth century triangular morphology, coupled with the radiating lines of the streets, overrides and almost completely masks the early medieval settlement forms.</p>	<p>The current unspoilt aspects of the village present the opportunity to protect and safeguard its unique morphological quality and character, through a programme of sympathetic and sustainable developments.</p>	<p>The effects of twentieth century village morphological developments have, to date, been minimal. However, future insensitive developments, both within, and at the edge of the village, could have a disastrous impact on the established form and character.</p>

Elements	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Built Environment - Streetscape</p>	<p>The powerful central landscaped green, wide radiating streets, uniform grain, low intensity massing, garden landscaping, stone boundary walling, as well as the form and scale of the village architecture, all combine to project a unique rural village atmosphere.</p> <p>The views into and out of the Green are particularly significant, as are the view of the adjoining countryside from the radiating streets.</p>	<p>Passing traffic very busy indeed.</p>	<p>The opportunity exists to extend the landscape character of the village into the radiating streets and to strengthen the views of the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>The opportunity exists to incorporate the early medieval enclosure, particularly the enclosing ramparts, into a curvilinear park. This would follow, highlight and protect the curved line of the enclosure and accentuate the unique character of the enclosed area.</p>	<p>The stone boundary walling and traditional gateways are in danger of being lost through new development.</p>
<p>Built Environment - Architecture</p>	<p>The traditional fabric of the village, with its mix of stone and rendered walling, double and single storey houses, and other nineteenth century building elements, offer a very important example of rural village architecture at a national level.</p>	<p>A number of recent developments have departed from the established scale, elements and external finishes of the village architecture and have impacted unfavourably on the overall character of the village.</p> <p>About 80% of the traditional joinery in the village has unfortunately been replaced by PVC and other replacement windows.</p>	<p>The traditional architecture, character, details, and materials of the village – such as the stone waling, rendering and natural hedging - provide a template for future sustainable development in the village.</p> <p>The reinstatement of traditional windows could be encouraged.</p> <p>Opportunities also exists to secure and protect both the medieval and 18th/19th century village fabric through the designation of the Village Green as an Architectural Conservation Area.</p>	<p>The established scale, elements and external finishes of the village architecture is in danger of being destroyed or overshadowed by future insensitive development.</p>

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

**Part 11: Historic Landscape
Character**

Historic Landscape Character - Killeigh

The significant feature of the Historic Landscape Character Assessment process is that it offers a dynamic perspective of the history and development of the total landscape, thereby contributing to the promotion of sustainable development within the study area.

The following sections draw together the various parts of this report in an attempt to provide an overall assessment of the Historic Landscape Character of Killeigh.

Prehistoric Landscape

The underlying limestone or Ireland's central plain, overlain by glacial drift forms the foundation for the character of Killeigh. In terms of building materials and topographical form, the present day landscape reflects its geological heritage.

While there was formerly a belief that the earliest inhabitants of Mesolithic Ireland settled exclusively by the coast, recent research suggests that these peoples moved inland and settled along the rivers and lakes of Ireland. No evidence from this period has surfaced in Killeigh.

Settlement in the Neolithic period was strongly influenced by landscape. The upland nature of the area to the south of the site with its lighter, well-drained soils and thin forest cover was suitable for early agricultural practices. Throughout the Neolithic period and into the Bronze Age, use was made of these upland sites, with the extensive forestry of the lowlands relatively untouched. There is however, plentiful evidence throughout the midlands in the form of hoards that the Bronze Age and early Iron Age peoples frequented the lowlands – most likely using the eskers and upland stretches of land as communication routes. Again, there is no direct evidence in Killeigh from this period, though the topography of the area would make the northeast-southwest ridge suitable as a communication route.

Early Christian Landscape

The majority of the archaeological elements in Killeigh have their roots in the early Christian period and the landscape is indicative of a proto-urban settlement typology focused on a central church site. At a physical level this model is characterised by a centrally located church site, an enclosing embankment or property boundaries and a number of other ecclesiastical elements. This pattern of land use still plays a major part in the present day landscape character.

It is likely that the overall settlement form in the area was established at this early stage, with present day siting of churches, settlement and agricultural landuse following a pattern established in the early historic period.

Key Features:

- Two concentric curvilinear ecclesiastical enclosures, with adjoining extension (nunnery).
- Extensive architectural fragments.
- Ecclesiastically influenced settlement.
- Embankment.
- Assorted ecclesiastical elements – placename, tradition, historical records etc..

Medieval

The key archaeological elements in the landscape at Killeigh date from the medieval period. There is evidence of a mill, a tower house, an Augustinian Priory a Franciscan Friary, and possibly an Anglo-Norman Motte. All of these features are located within the curvilinear enclosure which was reinforced during this period, continuing the landscape character which commenced in the earlier Christian period..

Key Features

- Possible Anglo-Norman Motte.
- Franciscan Friary.
- Church.
- Chapterhouse.
- Medieval fragments.
- Range of domestic building in evidence.
- Graveyard.
- Augustinian Abbey - only one wall survives above ground.
- Augustinian nunnery - no surviving remains above ground.
- 16/17 house adjacent to Abbey.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

There is little evidence of development in the area in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There appears to have been very little dynamic growth in the area, while demesnes and luxurious landscapes were developed elsewhere by the landed gentry. Some new field patterns evolved, but the main infrastructure remained unchanged

The surrounding landscape would have been good agricultural land with lower-lying heavy water-logged land nearby. The overall pattern is for agricultural activity to become more extensive in the better drained raised ridges and hills.

Through this period Killeigh remained a rural landscape and other than some 'estate village' gentrification did not witness much drive towards development or modification. The central location of the churches and schools would have assisted in developing a local identity and pride which survives to the present day.

Key Features:

- Laying out of nineteenth century estate village around the central triangular green..
- Modification to Friary church.
- Modification to Abbey farm buildings.
- Stone-built farm building complexes at the east and west extremities of village.
- Building of double and single storey estate cottages around the central triangular green.
- Building of RC Church (now demolished), graveyard, Parochial House, two school houses, Dispensary, Constabulary Barracks, Post Office, forge, and corn mill.
- New graveyard at east edge of village.
- Possible re-organisation of holy well, old stones.

Twentieth Century

The early twentieth century saw the development of a range of individual houses throughout the study area, somewhat in-filling the landscape. However these were sited here for practical domestic purposes rather than high amenity value of the surrounding landscape or outstanding views.

These houses often consist of modest single storey bungalows with characteristic 20th century elements including symmetrical forms, rendered walling, hipped tiled roofs, large metal framed windows, and bay windows.

However, the introduction of these structures has been diffused enough at this stage not to have caused any major change in the character of the landscape. The present day landscape is an amalgam of elements passed down through centuries of change, but the overarching pattern is one of continuity rather than change. The kernel local character in Killeigh an ecclesiastically influenced settlement form laid upon an agricultural landscape.

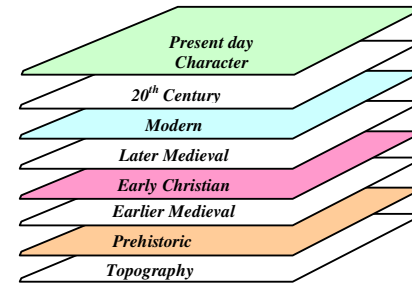
Key Features:

- Demolition of cottages on western edge of village.
 - New twentieth century bungalows and houses on radiating roads.
- The twentieth century has seen a limited extension of the village fabric including:
- RC Church demolished and new church built.
 - Industrial buildings.
 - Construction of Hand ball court.
 - A small development of two storey houses on the eastside of the Village Green.
 - Small clusters of late twentieth century bungalows and houses at the extremities of the radiating roads.
 - Small range of metal framed and decked industrial and farm buildings near the extremities of the east and west roads.
 - New school.
 - GAA clubhouse.
 - Community hall.
 - Church bell mechanism.

Historic Landscape Character

The Historic Landscape Character of an area is determined by many layers of history laid one upon the other formed upon the physical landscape.

These many layers determine the character of the area as it exists in the present-day.



Summary

In Killeigh, the character is predominantly one that was formed in the early Christian period, with high levels of morphological continuity in evidence throughout the site.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 12: Recommendations

Recommendations

Based on the detailed analysis undertaken throughout this document, the following are the key recommendations of the research team.

Topography

- All development in the area needs to take cognisance of the topographical opportunities and threats outlined in the analysis
- There is a need for any development that occurs to be low-level and the use of local materials needs to be encouraged.

Biodiversity Data

- Development, agricultural change, recreation and all other uses of the landscape needs to pay attention to issues of habitat protection and biodiversity management.
- A key element of maintaining biodiversity and habitat is the linkage of habitats.

History and Society Development

- While a number of the historical structures in the village are well documented and some require further investigation, the overall historical and social character of the area is of paramount importance and its protection and management deserves the highest level of reflection.

Archaeology

- Opportunities exist in Killeigh to plan for maintaining the integrity of the archaeology. The archaeological heritage is of importance to the local population and future zoning / development plans for the area should take this into account.
- Following the advice of Sweetman, certain zones around Killeigh should be protected from development while development could take place in other areas, which are of a less sensitive nature.
- All development in the village must be subject to detailed archaeological investigation.

Streetscape

- Protection is required for streetscape elements, particularly landscape vistas and views.

Architecture

- Establish Architectural Conservation Area around Village Green area, taking into account conservation principles of the Department of Environment (DOEHLG, 2004)
- A number of buildings in the area are of regional significance and included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Buildings of Ireland, 2006). However, the primary significance of the village architecture lies in grouping of buildings rather than in the individual buildings themselves. For this reason it is strongly recommended that awareness of nineteenth century buildings is promoted, throughout the study site but particularly around the Green.

Design Guide

Future developments in the Killeigh area should be sympathetically absorbed into, and blended with, the existing village character elements. In order to safeguard the established character of the Killeigh area and achieve an acceptable degree of sustainable development, it is recommended that future developments take into account the following design elements.

Landscape

- Trees
- Hedges
- Gardens
- Views
- Vistas

Morphology

- Road Layout
- Carriageways
- Grain
- Street Furniture
- Boundary Walling and Gateways

Architecture

- Massing
- Architectural Elements
- Materials
- Colours
- Scale

Policy Recommendations

These Recommendations are made, taking note of the overall Landscape Character of Killeigh.

The Historic Landscape Character of Killeigh is primarily rural, with origins in eighteenth and nineteenth century morphology, streetscape, and architectural forms, based around a much earlier ecclesiastical form. It is therefore recommended that every effort be made to sustain this character as follows:

Protection

Every effort should be made to protect the historic landscape and morphology, in terms of grain, streetscape, landscape, massing, stonework, colour, texture, and overall architectural character of the Killeigh area.

The excessive alteration and destruction of historic houses in the area is a practice that should be discouraged.

The surviving earthworks surrounding the village and the area they enclose merit the highest level of protection.

Sustainability

All new developments in the area should be sufficiently sympathetic to emphasise, strengthen and enhance the established character of the area - particularly in regard to morphology, grain, streetscape, street furniture, landscaping, architecture, massing, proportion, materials, colour, and texture.

**Historic Landscape Character
Assessment**

Killeigh, County Offaly

Part 13: Bibliography

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