

The background image shows a large, multi-story stone building in a state of significant ruin. The structure features a prominent tower on the left side and several windows that are either missing or heavily damaged. In the foreground, a stone wall runs across the frame, and a small graveyard with several crosses is visible. The overall scene is set against a dark, overcast sky, and the entire image has a blue-tinted overlay.

Donald Insall Associates
Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Rathmullan (Community & Heritage) Regeneration Project

Heritage Impact Assessment
For Donegal County Council



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Contents

1.0	Heritage Impact Assessment	1
2.0	Historical Background	4
3.0	Site Survey Descriptions	58
4.0	Assessment of Significance	102
5.0	Commentary on the Proposals	106
	Appendix I - National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Entries	112
	Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance	115



1.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by Donegal County Council in September 2021 to assist them in the development of proposals for the seaside town of Rathmullan, including the refurbishment of the Napoleonic wartime Battery Fort as a museum, improving public access and interpretation at Rathmullan Abbey and wider public realm enhancements.

The investigation has comprised historical research, using both archival and secondary material, and a site inspection. A brief illustrated history of the sites, with sources of reference and bibliography, is in Section 2; the site survey findings are in Section 3. The investigation has established the significance of the sites, which is set out in Section 4 and summarised below.

The specific constraints for the sites are summarised below. This report has been drafted to inform the design of proposals by Robin lee Architects and Pasparakis Friel Architects and Section 5 provides a justification of the scheme according to the relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance.

1.2 The Buildings, their Legal Status and Policy Context

Rathmullan Abbey (also known as St Mary's Priory) and Rathmullan Battery Fort are Protected Structures (Ref: 4081907 and Ref: 40819002 respectively). Neither site is located in an Architectural Conservation Area. Planning permission is required for any works that

materially affect the character of a protected structure. In this instance the proposed development is a Local Authority own development which will be carried out jointly or in partnership with Rathmullan The Way Forward CLG. The development will either comply with the provisions of Section 179 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations, 2001 (as amended) in that regard, or if it is determined that Appropriate Assessment and/or Environmental Impact Assessment is required then application shall be made to An Bord Pleanála for approval in accordance with the provisions of Section 175 and 177AE of the said Act.

The Battery and the Abbey's graveyard are also recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, which is a central database of architectural heritage covering the period since 1700 (Ref: 40819002 and Ref: 40819027). The sites are noted as being of 'Regional' importance and their entries are included in Appendix I, while extracts from the relevant legislation and planning policy documents are in Appendix II.

Part IV of the **Planning and Development Act 2000** (as amended) plays a central role in protecting architectural heritage. One of the main features of the 2000 Act is the clear obligation of planning authorities to create a record of protected structures (RPS), which includes all structures or parts of structures that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Section 78(a) of the Act makes it clear that a Planning Authority may use a

protected structure for any purpose connected with its functions and in so doing shall have regard to its protected status.

All development proposals potentially impacting a protected structure should have regard to the **Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities** (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht publications, 2011). These guidelines are a practical guide for planning authorities and for all others who must comply with Part IV of the Act 2000 regarding the protection of the architectural heritage. This document is further supported by a number of publications that form part of the **Advice Series** (2007-2020) produced by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

The **County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)** was adopted in June 2018 and the principal aim of Chapter 7: The Natural and Built Heritage is '*to conserve, protect and enhance the County's natural, built and cultural heritage for future generations and encourage appreciation, access and enjoyment of these resources.*' Regarding built heritage, the aim is '*to preserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of the County.*' This chapter has numerous policies relating to built heritage.

Of particular relevance are:

- Policy **BH-P-1** - '*to conserve and protect all structures (or parts of structures) and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures...*'
- Policy **BH-P-4** - '*to ensure the repair, reuse and appropriate refurbishment of vernacular and/or*

historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the built heritage of the area including those as referred to on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.'

- Policy **BH-P-6** - *'to ensure, where appropriate, measures to extend, modify or materially alter the fabric of vernacular and/or historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and craftsmanship and do not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of a structure.'*
- Policy **BH-P-8** - *'it is a policy of the Council to facilitate appropriate and high quality design solutions including considerations of scale, proportion, detailing and material specification for development proposals affecting vernacular and/or historic buildings...'*
- Policy **BH-P-9** - *'to conserve and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of towns and streetscapes in the County, including street layouts, historic structures, building lines, traditional plot widths, signage and historical street furniture as well as the character of the area.'*

The Abbey, associated graveyard and boundary walls are a National Monument (DG005-018) and are afforded archaeological protection. The Abbey is also listed on the RMP (Ref: DG037-007003), as is Rathmullan Town (Ref: DG037-007), the boundary of which includes the Abbey site, the Battery and the site of the proposed Community Hub. The town is a Zone of Archaeological Potential.

1.3 Summary Assessment of Significance

A detailed assessment of significance, including guidance on the relative significance of elements of fabric, is included in **Section 4.0** of this report. The following paragraphs are a summary explaining why these historic sites are of significance.

Rathmullan Battery Fort

In 1798, pairs of temporary batteries were erected on either side of Lough Swilly to defend the channel during the French Revolutionary Wars, which were replaced by permanent structures by c.1813. These were important strategic military sites, and their locations are of significance. The grouping of these structures is also of significance, particularly those that are paired to provide adequate artillery cover over an expanse of water, such as Rathmullan and Inch. These structures also formed part of a much wider programme of military buildings erected by the British in Ireland during the Napoleonic wars. Rathmullan Battery Fort is therefore not only of significance locally, but also nationally and internationally.

The Napoleonic-era Rathmullan Battery Fort comprised a blockhouse supporting two guns and a D-shaped battery with five guns, while a ditch with grass glacis/ embankments defended the site on the landward side. The site became obsolete after it was erected and by 1869 it was retired and the gunners removed. Rathmullan Battery Fort forms a unique example of British coastal artillery defences of the Napoleonic period. This impressive, if austere, structure is of fine military engineering that is of high significance. However, loss of original features

detracts from the site: the guns are now missing and several structures within its courtyard were removed, likely in connection with the insertion of a large oil tank during the First World War. The use of the site during the First World War is, however, of some historic significance.

The site was used for storage in the early-20th century to support the local herring industry, while in the 1990s it was converted to a museum and heritage centre. Although the museum introduced a detracting set of external stone steps to the blockhouse, it opened up the site to the public and it consequently become a significant public amenity to the local community and tourists. The site was unfortunately later abandoned and closed to the public.

The original defensive grass glacis have been altered over the years, which also detracts from the site's significance, particularly with the removal and levelling of the south glacis and the alteration of the north glacis with the cut-through road to the pier. The setting of the site has also been unsympathetically altered, most noticeably with the erection of a modern car park to its northeast.

Rathmullan Abbey

The Carmelite Priory at Rathmullan was founded in 1516 by Maire Ni Mhaille, wife of Ruidhri (Rory) MacSweeney (Lord of Fanad). Although the original structure has been altered and is now in ruins, the remaining medieval fabric is of the highest significance as it illustrates the layout, and in some instances the form, of the original religious site. The original Priory

also signifies an important period in Irish history, when clans endowed religious orders as a gesture of their piety, wealth and status

In 1607, the nearby Flight of the Earls took place, marking the end of the old Gaelic Order and beginning of English, and Scottish settlements, known as the 'Plantation of Ulster'. The Abbey has high historic interest as it survives from this poignant period in Irish history and is representative of this significant transition, with its consequent conversion to a fashionable plantation house by 1618 for Andrew Knox, Scottish Bishop, appointed Bishop of Raphoe, Donegal. The remaining Jacobean fabric is consequently of the highest significance. Together, the medieval and Jacobean fabric has evolved into a distinctive composition that symbolises a fracture in Irish history.

The Abbey has stood at Rathmullan for over 500 years and this ruined structure has become an evocative, picturesque landmark on the west coast of Lough Swilly that has strong cultural and communal interest. The Abbey's graveyard - as an overall composition - is of significance, while the individual memorials are of varying degrees of historic and architectural significance. Several factors also detract from the significance and the setting of the site, such as the 20th-century residential development that encloses the site to the west, north and east, and the areas of overgrown vegetation within the Abbey that prevent visitors from accessing or viewing certain areas of the building.

2.0 Historical Background

2.1 A Summary of the Development of Rathmullan

2.1.1 Early History of Rathmullan

Rathmullan is a small seaside town on the west side of Lough Swilly in the Fanad Peninsular. In the 13th century the country was ruled by a clan system, whereby different areas of land were ruled and managed by different clans, led by chieftains. The O'Donnell clan ruled over Ulster, including Tir Conaill (most of present-day Co. Donegal) [Plate 2.1.1]. The Mac Suibhne (MacSweeney) clan were mercenaries or gallóglaigh (galloglass) from Scotland brought in as allies with the O'Donnell chieftains who needed to safeguard their power over parts of their territory in Ulster. The MacSweeney clan seized control of Fanad in the 13th century and eventually settled on the coast of Lough Swilly, setting up a base in Rathmullan.¹ The O'Donnell's ran a lucrative salmon and herring fishing industry which appears to have been monetised by the MacSweeney's in Lough Swilly. A castle was built off the coast of Rathmullan prior to the 16th century but was rebuilt in 1516 and is thought to have been located on the Hillyhead, at a place called Ardachashel. Clans would often endow religious orders as a gesture of their piety, wealth and status; in the case of Rathmullan, they built a Carmelite Priory (see Section 2.2).

From as early as the 16th century, the historical events around Rathmullan have been chronicled in a series of books, such as the *Annals of the Four Masters* and the *Leabhar Clainne Suibhne* (Book of MacSweeneys), which give a rare insight into the early development of the area. The following are important events that took place in or near Rathmullan or which directly impacted the development of the town.

The Capture of Red Hugh O'Donnell

The seat of power of the O'Donnell clan was at Donegal Castle and in the 1570s-80s, was home to Hugh O'Donnell, also known as Red Hugh, who had been fostered by a branch of the MacSweeney clan as part of a long-held Irish tradition.² Tensions were rising as the English were trying to gain authority in Ireland and a plot to kidnap Red Hugh was devised by the English authorities in Dublin. In September 1587, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir John Perrott, sent a ship to Rathmullan masquerading as a merchant vessel. Red Hugh had been visiting the MacSweeney clan at Rathmullan Castle and was invited on the ship, with his friends, to inspect the wine. The ship was a ruse and once onboard, the ship took sail and took Red Hugh and the other prisoners to Dublin Castle. They were held hostage for three years with the hope that the English could use Red Hugh as a pawn to subdue Gaelic chieftains in the north and discourage rebellion. This was unsuccessful - Red Hugh managed to escape in 1591 and return to his duties.

The Nine Years War (1594-1603)

The Nine Years War was a war between the English and the Gaelic chieftains (Red Hugh O'Donnell and Hugh O'Neill) in Ulster who were trying to retain power over their land. The Irish adopted a guerrilla-style warfare which largely consisted of ambushes and hit-and-run tactics, whilst the English proceeded to devastate the Ulster countryside by destroying crops and livestock to provoke famine. Rathmullan was invaded by the English in 1595 and the Abbey was 'plundered' and turned into a garrison by the English forces in 1600. It was the largest conflict fought by England under Queen Elizabeth I and by 1600, more than 18,000 English soldiers were fighting on Irish soil.³ The war was brought to an end in December 1601, after the Irish and their Spanish supporters were defeated at the Battle of Kinsale, in Co. Cork. By 1603, both the O'Donnell and O'Neill clans had submitted to the English rule.

1 There were two other branches of the MacSweeney clan across Donegal: MacSweeney Doe, to the west of Danad and MacSweeney Banagh to the southwest.

2 The Irish custom sought to ensure the loyalty of kinsmen and allies by the fosterage of their sons and heirs.

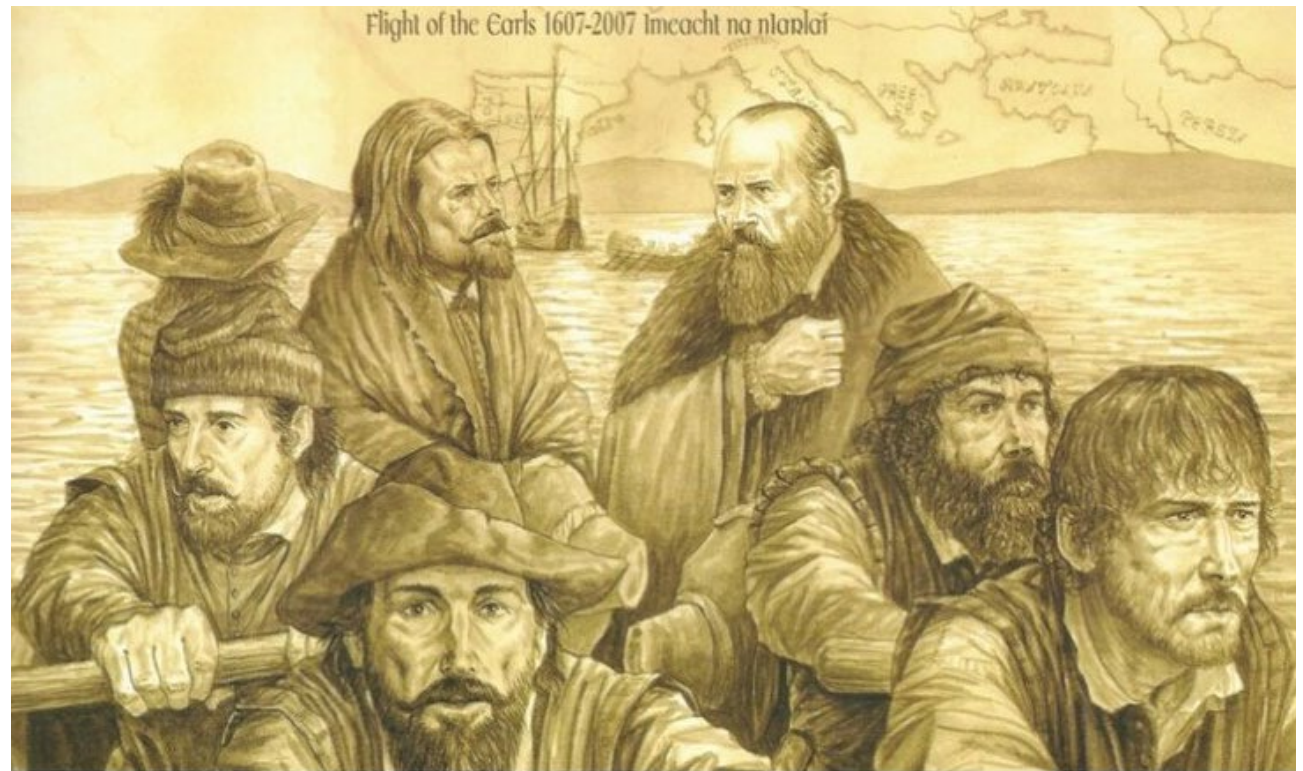
3 Patricia Deeney, *The Abbey at Rathmullan*, (2011) p13



2.1.1 16th-Century map showing land ownership across Ulster; Rathmullan is circled in red and was under the ownership of 'MacSweeney Fanad' (The British Library)

The Flight of the Earls

After defeat at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601, Hugh O'Donnell travelled to Spain to seek support from Philip II. Unsuccessful, he died in Spain and was succeeded by his younger brother Rory O'Donnell. In 1607, the northern chieftains – which included O'Donnell and O'Neill – decided to leave Ireland and seek help in Spain; their departure being named 'The Flight of the Earls' [Plate 2.1.2]. It is unclear if this was meant to be a temporary measure with the hopes of returning and reclaiming their authority over territories in Ulster or if this were a decision to leave permanently, though many scholars have argued the former.⁴ The ship set sail from a small, sheltered inlet named Portnamurry to the west of Rathmullan, next to Rathmullan Wood, with approximately 99 people onboard. Heavy storms diverted the ship to France and they ended up settling in Rome without ever making it to Spain, whose recent peace with the English would have likely prevented them from providing aid. The 'Flight of the Earls' signified an important transition in Irish history, marking the end of the old Gaelic Order and beginning of English and Scottish settlements, known as the 'Plantation of Ulster'.



2.1.2 Depiction of the Flight of the Earls (Seán Ó Brógáin)

4 'Flight of the Earls' in *War and Conflict: The Plantation of Ulster*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/plantation/planters/es02.shtml>

The Plantation of Ulster

The departure of the Irish chieftains and other leaders allowed their lands to be forfeited to the Crown. James I granted the land mainly to English and Scottish undertakers and servitors.⁵ Some native Irish chieftains who had pledged their allegiance to King James I, such as the MacSweeneys, were re-granted their lands. Though in the case of Rathmullan, these lands were eventually granted to Captain Ralph Bingley, a Welsh soldier, adventurer, and speculator. Bingley spent a lot of his time away from Rathmullan and never managed to fully establish a new settlement. In 1617, Andrew Knox, first Protestant Bishop of Raphoe, became the main proprietor of Rathmullan and turned the former priory into formal residence, fortifying the house (discussed in Section 2.2). It was during this time that the castle fell into ruin, later references to the 'castle' relate to the fortified house.

The Cromwell Era

Landownership in the mid-17th century was particularly unstable due to the warfare between Irish Catholics (many of which had been ousted by the plantations) and English/Scottish Protestants. This was escalated when the English Monarchy was abolished in 1649 to be led by the Protestant 'Commonwealth of England' under Oliver Cromwell who sought to re-conquer Ireland, penalising and confiscating Catholic land. In 1655-68, a detailed survey, known as the Down Survey, was made of the land to enable transfer of

5 Undertakers were those settlers who took up leases and built castles, bawns and provided defensive militia. Servitors were used for the defence of the settlements. Donegal County Council, *Plantation Architecture and Landscape in Derry and Donegal* (2011)

landownership. Rathmullan had remained under Protestant ownership and was recorded in the survey [Plate 2.1.3]. The map shows Rathmullan labelled 'the towne and castle of Ramallen' with a rudimentary drawing of Knox's fortified house (former Carmelite Priory) referred to as the 'castle' surrounded by a series of smaller houses, and Killygarvan Church to the far east. The town and surrounding land was owned by 'Major Knoxcks'. In the terrier for the map, it states that there are 'several stone and thatched houses' in the parish along with a 'church in repair', most likely that of Killygarvan.⁶ Despite Cromwell's efforts, the monarchy was reinstated in 1660 and Charles II was recognised as King of Ireland, followed by his younger brother James II in 1685.



2.1.3 1655 Down Survey showing Rathmullan under the ownership of 'Major Knoxcks'

6 The Down Survey of Ireland <http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#bm=Killmacreenan&c=Donegal&p=Killgarvan>

The Williamite War

In 1688, James II was overthrown by his Protestant daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange due to increased opposition to James II's Catholic beliefs. James II sought refuge in Ireland which was, for the most part, pro-Catholic and had received concessions from James II during his reign. Enniskillen and Derry were the only two garrisons in Ulster that were loyal to Protestant William and Mary. In 1689, James II marched into Derry with an army of Irish (Jacobites) and French Catholics known as 'The Siege of Derry'. Derry locked its gates and refused to surrender for 105 days.

During this turbulent time, a Williamite fleet sailed around Lough Swilly and anchored off Rathmullan, setting up a garrison on Inch Island. The troops travelled across to Rathmullan to assist any inhabitants that were in support of William III. The town was attacked by part of the Jacobite army and was defended by Knox's fortified house (the former Carmelite Priory). The Williamite party withstood the attack and set sail with supporters but, upon their departure, the Jacobite's set the town on fire. The extent of damage caused from the fire is unclear, however, a sketch from over a century later shows a small built-up town to the west of the former priory [Plate 2.1.4].



2.1.4 Town of Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin IE TCD MS 942.2 image 156)

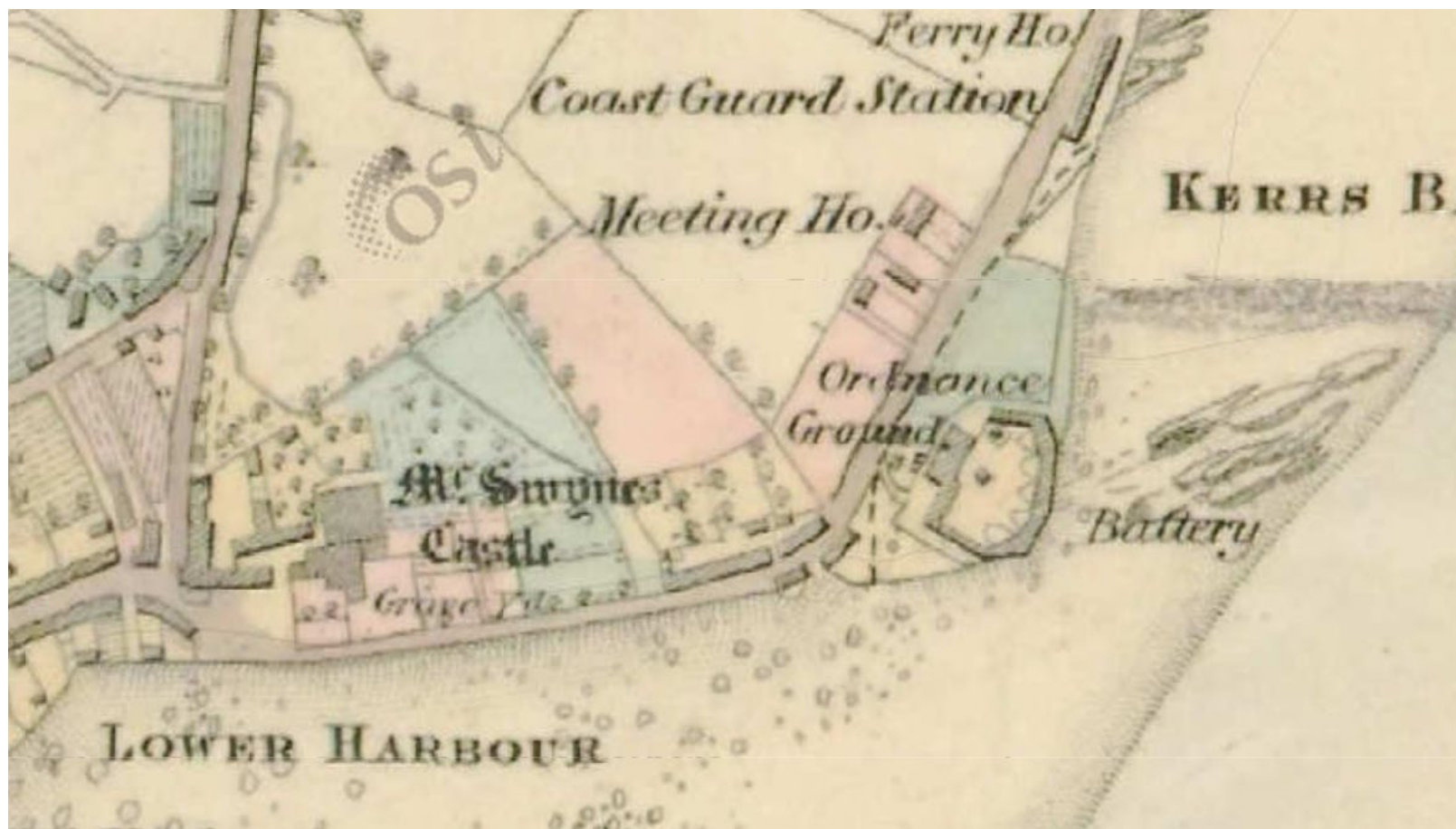
2.1.2 Expansion of Rathmullan in the 19th-Century Military Defences & Naval Services

At the turn of the 19th century, Lough Swilly was placed in the centre of a military endeavour between the Irish rebels 'the United Irishmen', their French supporters and the British Navy. The United Irishmen were led by Wolfe Tone and sought to regain power over Irish territory from the British government with the aid of French troops who were pursuing their own battles following the French revolution. A naval battle took place off the coast of Donegal in 1798 and the French ships were captured. From then on, a British government mission to fortify Lough Swilly began with the erection of a series of temporary battery forts along either side of the coast, including one at Rathmullan (see Section 2.3). These were eventually replaced with permanent battery forts between 1810 and 1815, after which date there was no serious threat of attack as the Napoleonic wars had ended.

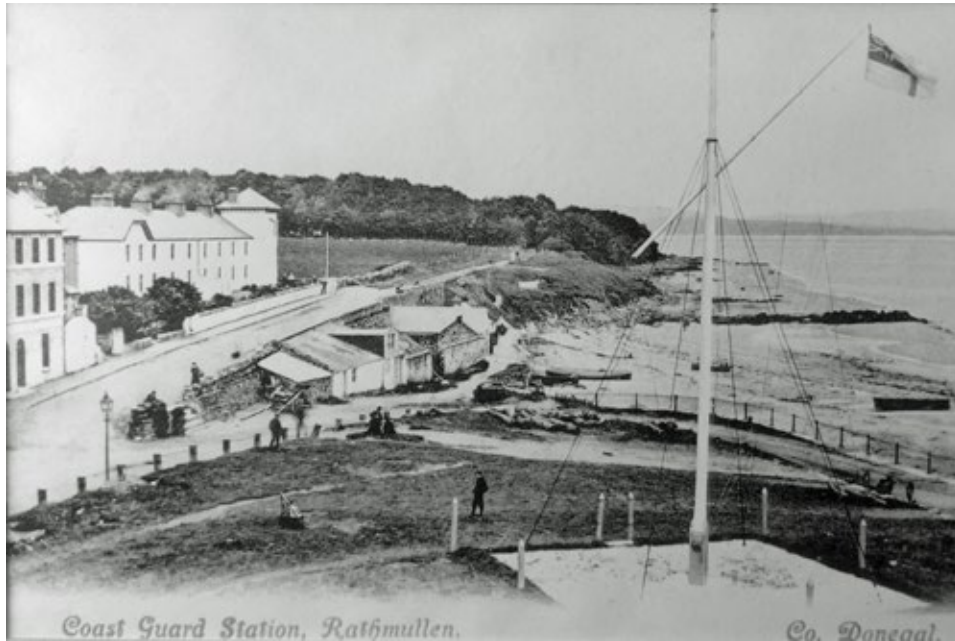
These structures formed part of a much wider programme of military buildings erected in Ireland during the Napoleonic wars. It was thought that Napoleon would first attempt to take over Ireland, which had a lack of effective coastal fortifications. As such, the British built 52 Martello towers between 1804 and 1815 around the Irish coastline. The greatest concentration of towers was in Dublin, which was considered to be especially vulnerable to a French landing as it had no permanent coastal defences. A series of 28 fortified sites - comprising 26 Martello towers and ten gun batteries - were consequently erected along a 50km stretch of the east coast to defend Dublin City.

The c.1839 Ordnance Survey (OS) map provides the earliest detailed map of Rathmullan and shows the battery fort along the edge of Kerrs Bay **[Plate 2.1.5]**. To the north of the fort was the coast guard station, a large white building which was formed to prevent smuggling, ship wrecks and illicit distillation off the coast of Rathmullan **[Plate 2.1.6]**. In 1856, the responsibility of the Coastguards was given to the Admiralty who almost exclusively recruited ex-naval men. A small group of buildings lined the north side of Kerr's Bay, including a meeting house and a group of terraced cottages, which are thought to have been built for the British soldiers who maintained the fort.⁷ East of the coast guard station, directly fronting the sandy beach (now the car park), were a group of houses and boat sheds **[Plate 2.1.7]**. West of the Battery, was the priory, labelled incorrectly as 'McSwynes Castle' on the 1839 OS map; the nearby castle had been demolished by this time. The priory was set back from a coastal road, while beyond was another series of roads forming the residential part of the town. The long road leading northwards from the coastal main street was later named Wesleyan Street, likely after the Wesleyan chapel built on its west side in the mid-19th century. Another church, St Columb's, was built in 1814.

7 Pasparakis Friel, *Napoleonic Gun Battery, Rathmullan, Co. Donegal: Future Use Feasibility Study for Rathmullan Way Forward* (2019) p18



2.1.5 Ordnance Survey Map, c. 1839



2.1.6 Photograph of the coastguard station and Kerr's Bay



2.1.7 Photograph of Rathmullen and Fort c. 1865-1914 (Eblana Photograph Collection, NLI - EB_0393)

A Seaside Town

Due to the nature of Rathmullan's location - a sheltered coastal town with long stretches of sandy beaches - the area provided the ideal conditions for swimming and bathing. The introduction of the railway and ferry steamships in the 19th century also meant an increase in excursions to Lough Swilly and Rathmullan, boosting commerce as a tourist location. Indeed, there were at least six boarding houses and two hotels on Kerrs Bay and Pier Road alone by the early-20th century.⁸

The Knox family, who owned the land and property of Rathmullan, had vacated the town in the early-18th century but maintained links with the area. George Knox built a summer house to the north of the town in 1820 called the Lodge (now Rathmullan House Hotel). It was bought in 1832 by a Narcissus Batt, whose son Thomas Batt bought the entire Knox estate in 1837. Thomas Batt extended the house and made various other improvements to the land including laying out a woodland walk across the estate which led south, along the coast to Kerrs Bay.

The Pier

Lough Swilly was well known as for its deep anchorage and was an important harbour for both military and fishing boats but had been at a disadvantage without a pier. In 1845, Thomas Batt, the landlord of the district, applied to the Office of Public Works for a pier to be built. The new pier was completed in 1849, extending from Kerr's Bay to the immediate east of the battery fort; the pier is shown in Griffith's town map from 1847-1864 [**Plates 2.1.8-9**]. The map also shows that by the mid-19th century, a new road was laid out to the northwest of the battery fort, later named 'Pier Road', lined with a small group of buildings including a presbyterian church. A group of buildings, including the Pier Hotel and cottages had been built on Kerr's Bay Road opposite the battery fort, with a separate terrace of three houses further west, towards the Abbey. The land to the north remained vacant with the exception of two houses that had been built on the east side of Wesleyan Street and those flanking the new road.

8 Mary Bowden, Margaret Carton, Áine Ní Dhuibhne (ed.), *Along Rathmullan's Shore: A Maritime Memoir* (2001) pp. 118-119



2.1.8 Griffiths Valuation Town Plan, c.1847-1864



2.1.9 Photograph of Rathmullan Pier c. 1870-90 (Eblana Photograph Collection, NLI - EB_2873)

2.1.3 20th-Century Development

In the early-20th century, the British Reserve Fleet set anchor in Lough Swilly off the bay of Rathmullan awaiting the announcement of the First World War. The deep anchorage of the river made Lough Swilly a suitable base for the British Grand Fleet and was full of minesweepers, armed trawlers and oil tankers. A wooden extension was added to the pier as temporary measure of improvement. In addition, the area to the north of the pier and coastguard station was used as a barrage balloon station with equipment and operators in a field, thereafter known as Airfield.⁹ A series of Nissan huts were set up to accommodate the operators.¹⁰

After the First World War, the brief 'War of Independence' took place in an attempt to achieve freedom from British authority. This culminated in a treaty in 1921 which gave independence to 26 counties of Ireland, including Donegal. The terms of the treaty gave Britain control of Rathmullan harbour and the defences of Lough Swilly until 1938 when control was returned to the Irish.

Another extension was made to the pier in 1936 in the form of a reinforced concrete gangway, 100ft in length, in an effort to accommodate steam fishing vessels

[Plate 2.1.10]. During the 1930s, Rathmullan thrived as a sea resort offering sea bathing, boating, and fishing as well as stretches of sandy beaches.¹¹

After the Second World War, plans for a new pier were made by the Ministry for Industry and Commerce and the Board of Works. The new pier was constructed in ferro-concrete and was completed in 1957. Whilst the new pier was being constructed, the Irish Potato Marketing Company Ltd asked the Council for their involvement in the provision of a potato store at the pier.¹² Donegal was the principal region in Ireland for the production of both seed and ware potatoes and the new pier provided a perfect opportunity to take advantage of the potato market with economic shipping facilities. The company envisioned a store capable of holding 1,000 to 1,500 tons. The store was complete in 1960, costing around double the estimated cost and was built on land beyond the sea wall adjacent to the pier which formerly comprised the shore to Kerr's Bay (this area now forms part of the car park) **[Plates 2.1.10-11].**¹³ In 1970, a slip was constructed adjoining the pier. Alongside the successful potato trade and following from the diminishing fish-markets after the Second World War, the town continued to market itself as a holiday resort.

The area of Rathmullan has gradually been built up across the 20th century, infilling any large areas of undeveloped land. The area between Wesleyan Road and Pier Road has been developed with a residential cul-de-sac called Abbey View and St Joseph's Terrace. At the beginning of the 21st-century, a slipway was added to the north side of the pier to provide access to a car-ferry, with a car park laid out where the potato store was located. Most recently, a new tourist information centre and toilet block has been constructed between the pier, green and battery fort.

9 Barrage Balloons were large untethered balloons used to defend ground targets against aircraft attack and kite balloons tethered to boats to observe and spot enemy submarines.

10 Shore (2001) p26

11 Shore (2001) p119

12 Local historian Margaret Carton suggests the new stone pier had impacted the tide and current and the high water mark had receded from the bay leaving a large area of land above water level suitable for the potato store. Margaret Carton, Rathmullan, A Walking Tour (1978) p28

13 Shore (2001) p80

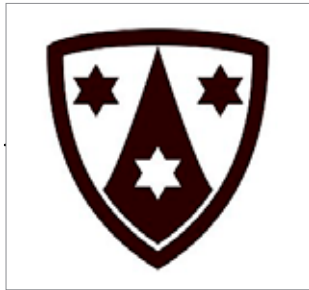


2.1.10 *Photograph of Rathmullan showing Pier and Fort, 1954 (Morgan Aerial Photograph Collection, NLI - NPA MOR276)*



2.1.11 *Photograph of the potato store during construction, 1960*

Rathmullan Abbey Timeline



St Mary's Priory C13th
Carmelite order
founded in Palestine

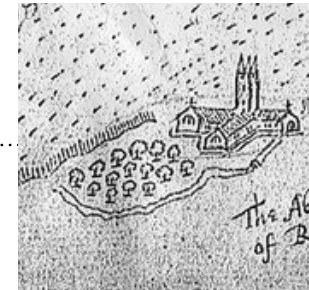
1270s

First Carmelite priories in Ireland



c.1516

MacSweeney's founded St Mary's Priory, Rathmullan, and gave it to the Carmelites (some sources state this occurred in 1403). Nearby Rathmullan Castle destroyed and rebuilt.



1516

The Priory comprised a nave, tower, chancel, transept, domestic ranges and cloister. (1601 map)



c.1539

Dissolution of the monasteries within the Pale begins under Henry VIII. The Priory becomes a refuge for monks.



1570

Mahon MacSweeney, Prior at Rathmullan, appointed Master Provincial of the Carmelite Order. Continued communication with Rome (England had broken from Rome).

1587

Red Hugh O'Donnell kidnapped from MacSweeney castle, indicating the area could no longer evade English interference. (Escapes in 1591)



1595

During the Nine Years War, Captain George Bingham, attacks the Priory. The monks seek refuge in Rathmullan Castle.

1600

Mahon MacSweeney and other religious superiors petition Rome, requesting that their business be brought to an end.

1601

Sir Henry Docwra sends men to take possession of the Priory, placing Captain Ralph Bingley in charge.

1602

Bingley granted lease of the Priory and monastic land. Priory used as a garrison.



1603

King James I grants the Priory to James Fullerton, who later sells it back to Bingley.

1606

Bingley goes on expedition at sea and is imprisoned for piracy.



1607

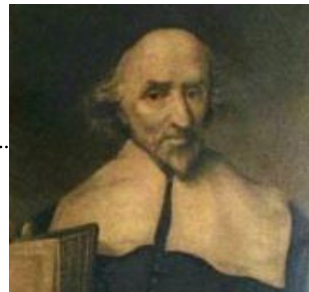
Flight of the Earls takes place.

1608

Preparation for Plantation of Ulster begins. Bingley returns to Rathmullan.

1609

Bingley renews lease of Priory and is assigned large landholdings in Donegal.



1611

Andrew Knox, Scottish Bishop, appointed Bishop of Raphoe, Donegal, and takes up residence at the Priory.

1617

Bingley leaves the property to Knox.



1618

Knox completes the conversion of the nave and transept to a fortified house, including adding two storeys, corner turrets, and a small entrance extension. Chancel used as private chapel.

1633

Knox dies and the Priory is inherited by his son, Reverend Andrew Knox.



1655

Down Survey shows the house, referred to as 'Castle of Ramallen' with crenellations.



1689

Siege of Derry: Major Andrew Knox defends Derry City, while the Priory is occupied by Williamites against the Jacobites.

1706

Chancel consecrated as parish church.



1730s

Knox family move to Prehen House, near Derry, resulting in the site falling into disrepair.



Early-C19th

Captain Sir William Smith (1778-1832) sketches the Priory, showing it largely in ruins, apart from the chancel.



1814

New parish church, St Columbs, built on a site to the west. The Priory is fully abandoned.

1837

Sold to Thomas Batt, a Belfast Banker. Changes at this time unclear, apart from the addition of a family crypt in the transept.

1901

Batts sell the Priory at auction.



1903

Plan drawn of the structure, similar to the current layout.

1942

Part of the Priory transferred to the Church of Ireland.



Mid-C20th

By this time, encroached upon by residential development.



1958

Photographs record its ruined state and ivy.

1999

Sam Scott last person buried at the Priory.



Early-C21st

Completely covered in ivy.

2015-2020

Removal of ivy and phased conservation works undertaken.

2.2 Rathmullan Abbey

Also referred to as: Rathmullan/St Mary's Priory, Friary and Monastery.

The Carmelite Priory at Rathmullan was founded in the early-16th century and used as a religious site until the end of that century when it was sacked and used briefly as a garrison. In the early-17th century, part of the site was converted into a fortified house for the Scottish bishop Andrew Knox and it remained in use as a house until the 1730s, when the Knox family moved their seat to Prehen and left most of the priory site to decay. Knox retained the chancel as a private chapel, however, and from 1706 it was used as a parish church until it was abandoned in 1814, following the construction of St Columb's church in the village. The entire site was left to ruin and has become a picturesque landmark on the west coast of Lough Swilly, having recently undergone a series of conservation repairs.

2.2.1 The Founding of St Mary's Priory

The Carmelite Order

The Carmelite order originates from a group of hermits who lived on Mount Carmel in Palestine in the *circa* 13th century and were dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The instability created by the Crusades from *circa* 1230 resulted in the dispersal of the Carmelite order across Europe as they began to vacate the Holy Land. The earliest reference to Carmelites in Ireland is in a charter of 1271 giving royal protection to the order for five years, and the first foundations were at Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow (c.1272) and Dublin (1274).

During this time, it was very common for chieftains and clans to be patrons of religious houses to ensure stability by setting a religious example and salvation of their souls, as well as a demonstration of wealth and status. By the end of the 13th century, at least nine Carmelite houses had been established by patrons and by the end of the 16th century there were 25.¹⁴ The Carmelites took vows of poverty and toil and swore strict obedience to their prior. The daily routine of Carmelites involved constant prayer, morning mass, silence from evening to morning prayers, abstinence from all meat except in cases of severe illness and fasting from Holy Cross Day on September 14th to Easter the following year.

St Mary's Priory

In the early-16th century, Rathmullan was under the lordship of the MacSweeneys, sub-chieftains of the O'Donnell's, who had a castle on the coast (thought to be located on Hillyhead). The founding of St Mary's Priory at Rathmullan is unclear, with several different dates and names of founders provided in different accounts. According to the records of the Irish Province of the Order, the priory was founded in 1403, however, most accounts provide the date 1516 as its foundation.¹⁵ In a translation of the 16th-century chronicle of the MacSweeneys *Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne*, the founding of the priory is attributed to Maire Ni Mhaille, wife of Ruidhri (Rory) MacSweeney

(Lord of Fanad), following the death of their son Rory Og in 1508.¹⁶ The manuscript states that the monastery was erected and completed on account of Rory's death and was consecrated in 1516, having brought Suibhne MacSweeney and his Carmelite community to the priory from a monastery in Munster **[Plate 2.2.1].**¹⁷

Rowan, in the architectural series *The Buildings of Ireland* (1979), suggests that as 1516 was the year that the Four Masters record the fall of Rathmullan Castle to an attack, the friary was likely restored or re-founded that year, after the MacSweeneys returned.¹⁸ He also states, along with other sources from the 19th and 20th century, that the priory was founded by Owen Roe MacSweeney; this perhaps stems from a mistranslation of the *Leabhar Clainne Suibhne* which ambiguously mentions both Rory and Eoin (Owen) before mentioning the priory.¹⁹ Nevertheless, by the early-16th century, a Carmelite priory dedicated to St Mary had been founded in Rathmullan.

14 Monastic Ireland; Deeney p29

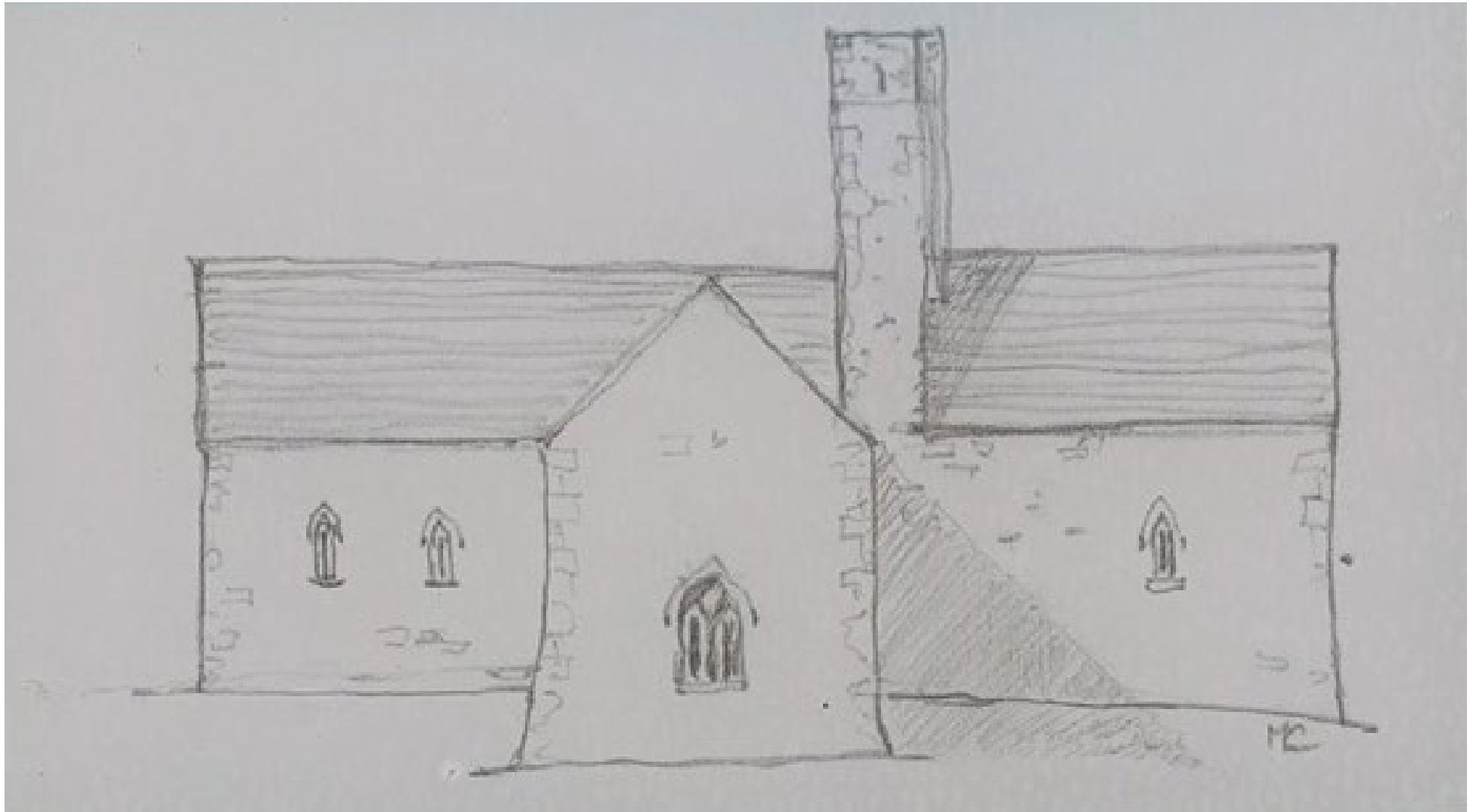
15 Rowan (1979) p472. Aubrey Gwynn, *Medieval Religious Houses in Ireland* (1988) also provides the same date of 1403. This date is based on a transcript of documents made by Fintan O'Brien, O. D. C manuscript *The Irish Province of the Carmelite Order from its foundation c. 1265 to 1625 – examined by Aubrey at St Mary's Priory, Gayfield, Dublin.*

16 Paul Walsh, *Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne : an account of the MacSweeney families in Ireland, with pedigrees* (1920) pp. 65-67. Deeney (2011) p12: 'Rory Og was described as a 'noble, princely man' who was very well educated. He could speak several languages and travelled to many countries, undoubtedly coming into contact with Renaissance culture on the Continent.'

17 Walsh (1920) pp. 65-67

18 Rowan (1979) p472

19 Rowan (1979) p472; Brian Lacy, *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal: A Description of the Field Antiquities of the County from the Mesolithic Period to the 17th Century A.D.*(1983) p343; Walsh (1920) pp. 65-67.



2.2.1 Artist's Impression of the 16th-century Structure (Margaret Carton)

The Layout of the Site

The priory consisted of an east-facing church with a cloister and domestic ranges to the north, made of rubble with ashlar quoins and dressings in grey sandstone with typical 16th-century punch tooling. A 1601 map by Robert Ashby shows the English campaign along Lough Swilly (discussed in Section 2.2.2) and is the earliest depiction of the priory [Plate 2.2.2]. This map shows the priory in detail as well as the castle to the west. The priory is shown with three wings (to the east, west and north) and a tower, with an orchard to the northeast enclosed by either a wall or fence. It is difficult to make sense of the depiction and orientation of the priory. In comparison to other buildings on the map, an effort has been made to accurately illustrate each building to an extent, but this depiction is still largely speculative.

Unfortunately, there are no early plans of the priory, the only plan of the site dates from the early-20th century (1903) and shows the variation between 16th century and 17th century (and later) fabric [Plate 2.2.3]. The layout of the priory was largely similar to other monastic sites, particularly friaries, in Ireland, especially Donegal Friary which was also endowed by the MacSweeney clan at the same time as Rathmullan.

The **church** comprised a nave, tower, chancel, and south transept. The nave was for the laity, whilst the chancel was for the friars, divided by a tower with a double-arched vestibule between the two main spaces. It was common in Irish friaries for the tower to be smaller in plan than the nave it crossed, resulting in narrow arched crossings which focused the view from the nave on to the altar and east window and

screening the sides of the chancel.²⁰ A small square tower with a spiral stair was added to the south side of the crossing tower, it is unclear if this was part of the original structure or added later. Fragments of the original interior which relate to its use as a priory remain within the structure, including a double piscina - a perforated stone basin used for rinsing sacred vessels or the cleansing of celebrant's fingers with a drain to carry water down into ground - in the east wall of the south transept.

To the north were the **domestic ranges and cloister**. The 1903 plan does not show this area in too much detail, with an arbitrary dotted line to indicate the potential site of a cloister, north range and east range. Maurice Craig in *The Architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (1990) suggests that often in friaries, domestic buildings were laid to the north (as opposed to other orders where they were placed to the south of the church) and opened off a cloister, the size of which generally corresponded to the length of the church [Plate 2.2.4].²¹ In some cases, the cloister was integral to the buildings, constituting part of the surrounding buildings rather than a single-storey arcade with a lean-to roof.²²

The east range still retains a north gabled end with a stairs and garderobe in the northeast corner; Rowan (1979) suggests alternatively that the garderobe was a bartizan (corner turret). The remaining fabric gives an indication of the length and width of the building

20 Rowan (1979) p473

21 Maurice Craig, *The Architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (1989) pp. 84-85

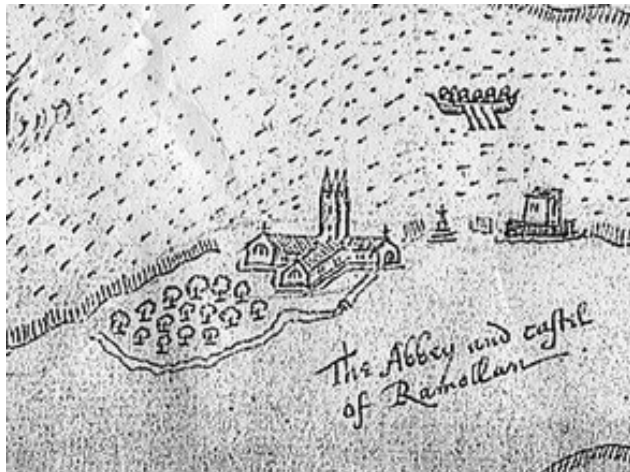
22 Craig (1989) pp. 84-85

which was most likely used as a refectory and/or dormitory. The exact layout of the cloister and possible north range is, however, ambiguous. Ashby's 1601 map only appears to show a single-gabled structure, presumably the east range, but this is a rough sketch that cannot be fully relied upon (see Plate 2.2.2). The existing west wall projecting from the north end of the nave is of later fabric - except for the north end which would have formed the west wall of the possible north range, as shown in the 1903 plan - and therefore does not necessarily indicate the line of the cloister. The exact layout and form of the cloister at Rathmullan is therefore unclear, but it does appear to have been accessed through an opening in the tower. The layout of the cloister and possible north range are purely based on conjecture, site analysis and comparison with other sites; further understanding of the layout and use of these parts of the priory may be possible through below-ground archaeological investigations.

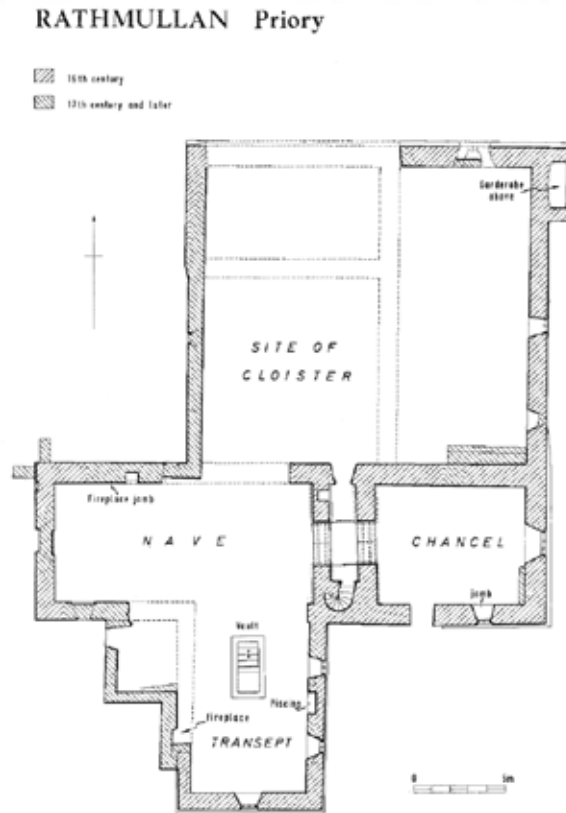
The Breaking of the Peace

The Dissolution of the Monasteries Act 1536-39, spearheaded by Sir Thomas Cromwell on behalf of King Henry VIII, succeeded in suppressing a number of Carmelite foundations in Ireland, with approximately half of the religious houses in Ireland suppressed by 1547. The far north and west of Ireland, however, were far enough away from England's rule at the time that the religious houses, including St Mary's Priory, were able to evade suppression.

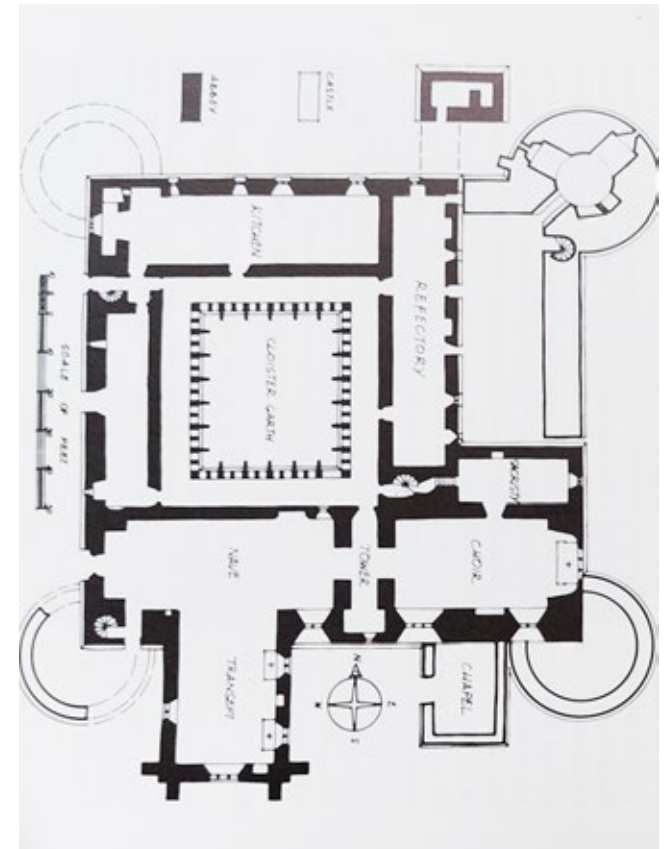
St Mary's Priory became a refuge for the whole Carmelite Order in Ireland and the administration of the Order was moved there. Mahon MacSweeney, Prior at Rathmullan, was named licensed Master



2.2.2 Lough Swilly and the River Foyle, Ireland, by Robert Ashby, 1601, showing 'Abbey and Castle of Rathmullan' (The National Archives, MPF 1335)



2.2.3 Archaeological plan of Rathmullan Abbey (Archaeological Survey of County Donegal)



2.2.4 Plan of Quin Franciscan Friary, Co. Clare taken from Maurice Craig's 'The Architecture of Ireland' (1982)

Provincial of the Carmelite Order in the Irish Province on 16th January 1570 with continued communication with Rome during a turbulent time (as England had broken from Rome under Henry VIII's rule). The nearby kidnapping of Red Hugh O'Donnell from MacSweeney Castle in 1587, however, was an indication that Rathmullan and the north could no longer evade English interference.²³

2.2.2 The Sacking of St Mary's Priory

During the Nine Years War (1594-1603), Captain George Bingham, son of the English Governor of Connaught, attacked the priory in 1595. The monks escaped and sought refuge in Rathmullan Castle. An account of the event was recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters*, stating that Bingham: '*plundered St Mary's Abbey, which was [situated] on the brink of the Strand, and carried off the Mass vestments, chalices and other valuable articles*'.²⁴

In 1600, Prior Mahon MacSweeney, signed a petition with other superiors of the Raphoe Diocese, including the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Franciscan Tertiaries, to send to Rome requesting that their business be brought to an end. The Carmelites monks were driven out of the priory in 1601.²⁵

23 Deeney (2011) pp.30-31

24 John O'Donovan, *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the earliest period to the year 1616, Volume VI* (1854) p1969

25 Deeney (2011) p13, p31

English Occupation

In March of 1601, Sir Henry Docwra, (later founder and Governor of Derry), sent 200 men to Rathmullan to take possession of the priory and establish a garrison there. Docwra had placed Captain Ralph Bingley, a Welsh soldier and later speculator, in charge of the endeavour, viewing the abbey as a gateway to the northwest. A letter dated 13th March from Sir John Bolles, an army commander in Ireland, to Sir Robert Cecil, Secretary of State to Queen Elizabeth I, stated that there was '*little resistance*' when taking over the priory.²⁶ The last prior, Mahon MacSweeney, had remained at the priory but was later taken by Hugh Bui O'Donnell to Burt Castle. A month later, Docwra appointed Niall Garbh O'Donnell (cousin to Red Hugh O'Donnell) and his army to take Rathmullan Castle, demonstrating the growing support for English rule as Gaelic families began to turn on each other.

In 1602, Docwra granted Bingley the lease of the priory and monastic land in Rathmullan and Inch Island, as well as the lucrative fishing rights in Lough Swilly. The lease description of the priory broadly matches Ashby's 1601 depiction (refer to Plate 2.2.2) as follows:

the site etc. of the late monastery of the begging friars of the B. V. M. of Rathmullan in M'Swinie Fanet's country, containing in itself one ruinous church, a steeple, a cloister, a hall, three chambers, an orchard, a quarter of stony and unfertile land

26 Denney (2011) pp. 15-16

*called Killinecrosse, and half a quarter of the like land called Farrennebragher [Fearann na mbrathair or Friar's Land].*²⁷

The priory remained in use as a garrison throughout 1602 and the lease of the priory was renewed by Bingley in 1603 and extended to include monastic lands of Derry and Kilmacrennan. In 1603, King James I had granted the priory to his trusted agent James Fullerton who later sold it back to Bingley. However, in 1606, Bingley went on an expedition at sea and was imprisoned for piracy.²⁸ The occupation of the priory during the *Flight of the Earls* which took place further along the shore in 1607, is therefore unclear.

In 1608, Bingley returned to Rathmullan and renewed the lease of the priory again in 1609. At this point, strategic planning of the Ulster Plantation had begun and Bingley was assigned 2110 acres in the Barony of Kilmacrennan and 210 acres in Rathmullan to establish a new settlement. Bingley never created a new settlement in Rathmullan and left the area in 1617 to fight in the war with France, having given the property to his son-in-law, Bishop Andrew Knox.²⁹

27 Ibid.

28 Deeney (2011) p17

29 Deeney (2011) p18. Judith Carroll & Company, *St Mary's Priory, Rathmullan, Co. Donegal*, October 2005, p12, refers to the priory temporarily belonging to a Henry Persse in 1611 but it is not clear where this information came from and cannot be corroborated.

2.2.3 Conversion into a Fortified House

Andrew Knox was a Scottish Bishop who had come to Ireland in 1611 to take on the position of Bishop of Raphoe. Upon his arrival to Ireland, Knox was unable to find a suitable residence as many of the buildings had been ransacked by local chieftains to prevent the English from using them. It was intended for Knox to reside in Donegal, however, as described in a letter between the Lord Deputy of Chichester and King James I in 1612, the house of Donegal was in a 'ruinous state' and Knox had instead decided to live at *'Sir Ralph Bingley's house ... where he resides with his wife and family and seven ministers that he brought out of Scotland'*. Knox and his men were hated by the Irish and the King had ordered for 25 horsemen and 15 soldiers to serve the Bishop under the command of Bingley.³⁰

Bingley left Ireland in 1617 leaving the property to Knox, though it should be noted that some sources state that the Knox acquired the manor from Turlough Oge MacSweeney.³¹ It was during this time that Knox converted the site of the priory into a fortified house.

Externally, Knox added bartizans (corner turrets) on moulded corbel courses with circular pistol loops at second-floor level to the west elevation of the former nave in the 17th-century Scottish style, using bands of different coloured stone to create a polychromatic effect [Plate 2.2.5]. Above were chimney stacks shaped like eight-pointed stars – the absence of chimney flues suggests these stacks were purely

decorative only. Three flat-headed mullioned windows under label mouldings, in a typically English style, were added to the south gable of the transept, whilst windows on the west side had half-round mouldings in the Scottish style [Plate 2.2.6]. A full-height gabled entrance hall was inserted at the re-entrant angle of the former nave and transept. Architectural historian, Alistair Rowan, suggests that this area may have also housed the stairs.³² The hall was entered by a doorway in the west wall, above which was a stone which bore the date '1618', along with Knox's initials 'AN KN SC' and the Knox family coat of arms which comprised two crescent moons and a fish [Plate 2.2.7].³³ Above the door and adjacent to the chimneybreast was a small machicolation in the side of the flue supported on moulded corbels, used for defence in case of intruders.

Internally, the nave and transept were converted into Knox's private home, raising the height of the walls of both spaces, and inserting two additional floors to create a three-storeyed house. The original line of the west gable of the nave is visible on the internal face. The west door was replaced with a window (since blocked up). The chancel was restored, along with the tower, and used as a private chapel. It is not entirely clear but it would appear that the remainder of the priory, to the north, was left to ruin.

Though it would appear likely that these alterations were all made by Knox upon his acquisition of the site in 1617, it is also possible, that alterations had already

been made to make the priory more suitable for living prior to this date – described as 'ruinous' in 1602 and then referred to as Bingley's residence in 1612 and recommended for Knox to reside there with his family from 1612.

Knox died in 1633 and was succeeded by his second son, Reverend Andrew Knox, who had been rector of Killaghtee near Killybegs. The Knoxs continued to spread the Protestant faith and lost 580 acres of land under the Cromwell administration in the 1650s. The 1655 Down Survey shows the house, referred to as 'Castle of Ramallen' with crenelations [Plate 2.2.8]. During the Siege of Derry in 1688-89, Knox's son Andrew (grandson of Bishop Knox) was a major in the besieged army and brought his garrison to Derry to help protect the city along with his cousin, George Knox, who was Provost Marshall of Derry. Whilst absent, a Williamite fleet led by Major General Percy Kirke established a garrison on Inch Island and crossed over Lough Swilly; they used Knox's fortified house to resist attack by the Jacobites and successfully remove local Williamites to safety.

30 Deeney (2011) p19

31 Rowan (1979) p472

32 Rowan (1979) p473

33 Unfortunately the incision is largely illegible now.



2.2.5 *Artist's Impression of the Fortified House after 1617 (Margaret Carton)*



2.2.6 Photograph of Rathmullan Abbey c. 1870-90 (Eblana Photograph Collection, NLI - EB_0359)



2.2.8 Detail of the 1655 Down Survey showing a crenelated house representing the converted priory



2.2.7 Photograph of west door in Abbey showing detail Knox initials and date, 1958 (Donegal Archives)

2.2.4 Abandonment and Ruin

The priory remained in use as a principal residence for the Knox family until the 1730s, when Andrew Knox (Bishop Knox's great-great-grandson) married Honoria Tomkins and moved to her family home, Prehen House, near Derry. Their daughter, Mary-Ann Knox, was brought back to Rathmullan and buried in a family vault which is thought to be located under the tower.³⁴

The house soon fell into disrepair but the private chapel was maintained, having been consecrated along with the churchyard as the parish Church of Killygarvan in 1706.³⁵ It is thought that the door to the chancel was added during this time.³⁶ Some fragments of timber have been found on site which, based on dendrochronological analysis, date from the late-17th century and could have possibly been used when the chapel was converted into public use.³⁷ It is also possible that the chapel was unofficially used as a parish church before its formal consecration in the 18th century as the church in Killygarvan had been referred to as in 'ruins' in 1622.³⁸ The services continued until 1814 when a new parish church, St Columb's, was built on a site to the west of the priory, known as 'Jockies Acres', donated by Andrew Knox.

From the end of the 18th century, the military engineer Captain Sir William Smith (1778-1832) travelled across Ireland as part of his work during the Napoleonic-era and painted a number of military and antiquarian buildings, including Rathmullan Abbey **[Plates 2.2.9-2.2.13]**. The detailed sketches provide an accurate depiction of the Abbey after all but the chapel had been left to decay, showing parts of the Abbey roofless, covered in ivy and/or in ruin. The sketches appear to show a single-storey structure with a pitched roof projecting from the west end of the nave (see Plates 2.2.10-11). This structure is also shown on the c.1839 OS map, which shows a group of houses to the west of the Abbey **[Plate 2.2.14]**. A c.1865 painting by Belfast painter Andrew Nicholl shows this structure removed, exposing the west elevations of the nave and transept, and also shows a curved boundary walls with an open gate flanked by stone piers **[Plate 2.2.15]**.

The house and site of the Abbey, as well as the rest of the Knox estate, was sold to Thomas Batt, a Belfast Banker, in 1837. It is not clear what changes Batt made to the building except for a family crypt that was added to the transept as a burial place for the Batt family (shown in the 1903 plan, see Plate 2.2.3).³⁹

It is not clear when the two set-back buttresses at the northwest corner of the nave were added, nor when some of the window openings were blocked but they are likely to date from this period.⁴⁰ A c.1888-1913 OS map shows that the buttresses had been added by this time, as well as two small additions to the west wall of the cloister and north wall of the domestic east range **[Plate 2.2.16]**.

34 Deeney (2011) p21

35 Ibid.

36 Lacy (1983) p344

37 Richard Crumlight, *Report on Conservation Works at Saint Mary's Priory, Rathmullan, County Donegal*, January 2001, p24

38 Deeney (2011) p21

39 Deeney (2011) p23. Batt also makes his own reference to this vault in his article 'The Priory and Castle at Rathmullen' in *The Journal of the Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland*, 1889, Vol. IX, 4th Series, No. 78, pp. 42-43

40 Lacy (1983) report p344



2.2.9 Castle and Town of Rathmullan as seen from a nearby field by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin, E TCD MS 942.2 image 168)



2.2.10 Castle at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, Trinity College (Dublin IE TCD MS 942.2 image 132)



2.2.11 Old Castle and Church at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 942.1 image 30) above left



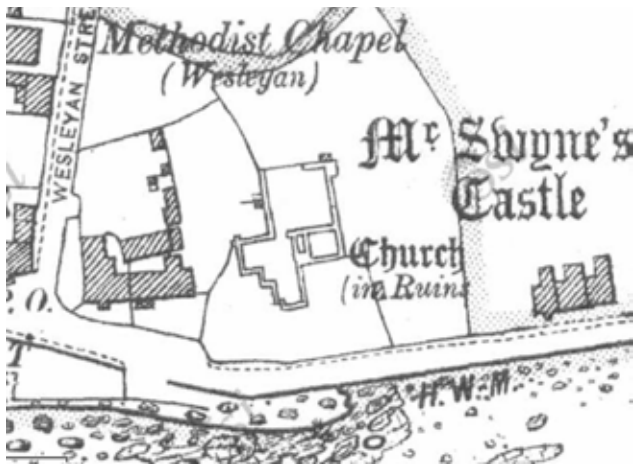
2.2.12 Old Castle and Church at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 942.1 image 26) above



2.2.13 Old Castle and Church at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 942.1 image 29) left



2.2.14. Ordnance Survey map, c. 1839 showing the Abbey labelled 'McSwyne's Castle'



2.2.16 Ordnance Survey Map, c. 1888-1913



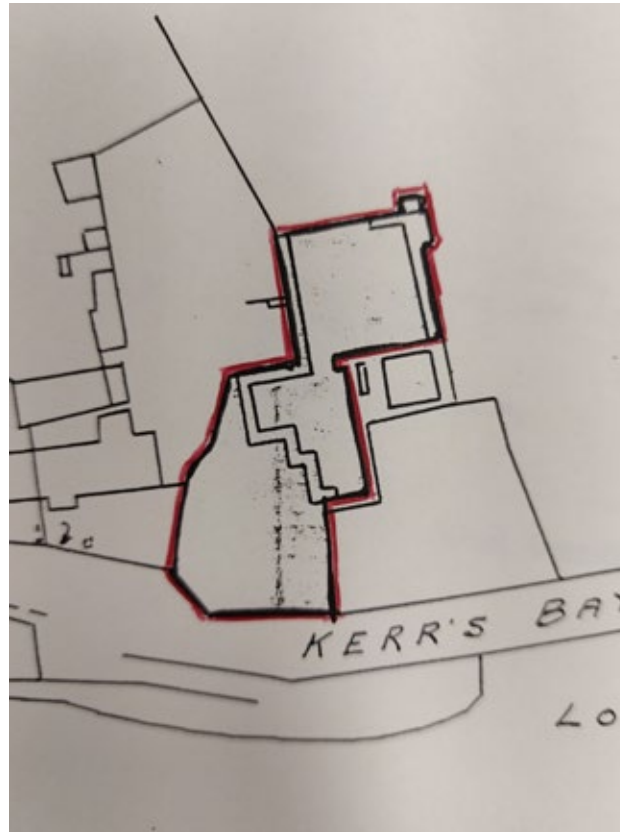
2.2.15 Watercolour of the Abbey at Rathmullan, c. 1865, by Belfast painter Andrew Nicholl

20th Century

Batt was declared bankrupt in 1901 and the property was sold to a Mr Corry at auction. The property did not include the chancel, which appears to have been mistakenly excluded with no existing title to the land. In 1942, the Church of Ireland were able to transfer ownership of the Abbey, excluding the chancel, from the late Mr Corry to the Church of Ireland for £5 [Plate 2.2.17]. The chancel had been placed in the care of the Board of Works for preservation as a National Monument in 1930.⁴¹

By the mid-20th century, the site of the Abbey was encroached upon by residential development [Plate 2.2.18]. The photograph shows a boundary wall enclosing the Abbey site to the north and east. Further residential development has since enclosed the Abbey to the north, west and east, including a garage which directly abuts the north buttress to the north wall of the former nave.

In the 1970s, an ecumenical service was held in the Abbey to acknowledge the unique history of the building and area. Representatives from both Protestant and Catholic religions came together for the ceremony which presents one of the first ever occasions when both congregations prayed together with a full congregation. A presbyterian farmer, Sam Scott, was the last person to be buried at the Abbey in 1999.



2.2.17 Site plan of Rathmullan Abbey, 1942 showing transfer of ownership to the Church of Ireland (Donegal Archives)

41 Donegal Archives. *File on Rathmullan Priory*. Letter dated 18th January 1930.



2.2.18 Aerial photograph showing the ruined Abbey and surrounding development

Conservation Work

Since the Abbey was left vacant, parts have become covered in ivy [Plates 2.2.19-22]. Several attempts were made to remove the ivy throughout the 20th and 21st century: in c.1930 by Friar John Doherty; in the 1960s by Rathmullan Development Committee; and proposals were put forward in 2005 by the local community group 'Rathmullan 21' to celebrate the centenary of the Flight of the Earls in 2007; but these works do not appear to have been carried out.⁴²

The ivy continued to engulf the site until it was nearly fully concealed [Plate 2.2.22]. However, a *Conservation Report* (2005) and *Archaeology Report* (2005) were produced as part of the Flight of the Earls 400th Anniversary. Following this, a series of phased conservation works were undertaken by the conservation architectural practice Dedalus to repair the Abbey following ivy removal. In 2015, the first phase of works was implemented and involved clearing the site of vegetation and general re-pointing of the chapel and monks quarters perimeter wall. A section of the east gable of the chapel including the east window was reconstructed. The next phase of works involved repairs to the bartizan towers, Jacobean chimney and perimeter walls, and the last phase of works included repairs to the tower and the north and west walls of the cloister. Vegetation was removed from the top of the tower and the vault in the transept was filled with rubble. New gates were fitted in the south wall of the chapel, and a door in the west wall of the early-17th-century extension and the south side of the tower to prevent use of the stairs. The works were completed in 2020.



2.2.19 Photograph of the Abbey from the south east shown covered in ivy c.1900

42 Deeney (2011) pp. 55-57



2.2.20 Photograph of the Abbey from the southwest showing the nave and transept, 1958 (Donegal Archives)



2.2.21 Photograph of the Abbey from the north showing the north gable end, 1958 (Donegal Archives)



2.2.22 *Abbey Fully Concealed by Ivy*

2.2.5 Graveyard and Burials

The graveyard at Rathmullan Abbey appears to have been used from the early-19th century, when the chapel was still in use as a parish church, until the late-20th century and looked after by local caretakers [Plate 2.2.23].



2.2.23 Photograph showing caretaker, Thomas Ewing, stood in the tower arch, 1958 (Donegal Archives)

The graveyard was located to the south of the Abbey, as depicted in the c.1839 OS map (refer to Plate 2.2.14) and comprised a collection of upstanding, recumbent and table-type memorials. This included a free-standing memorial commemorating Captain William Pakenham, Captain of the Royal Navy frigate HMS Saldhana which sunk off Ballymaddock Bay to the north in a storm in December 1811, along with

a number of grave-markers for those with naval and military connections, including Commd Fitzmaurice Acton, CMO Royal Navy (died 1920), Walter Edward Elliot (1860-1900), Lieutenant Royal Navy, Darcy Irvine, Commander Royal Navy ('died at Carralenna in 1907'), Colonel John Hewitt Jellett CMC, Royal Artillery (died 1832), and Colonel Arn, Shrewsbury Montgomery (died at Fort Royal Rathmullan in 1924).⁴³

The boundary wall to the graveyard is depicted in Smith's early-19th century sketches and Nicholl's c.1865 painting and suggest that changes took place in the early-mid-19th century, including a replacement of the wall and gate at the west end. Smith depicts a low, angular, continuous wall and arched gate bounding the southwest of the graveyard to the coast, whilst Nicholl's painting depicts a curved boundary walls with an open gate flanked by stone piers, similar to how it is today [Plate 2.2.24; refer also to plates 2.2.11 & 2.2.15]. Neither depict any graves or detail of the graveyard apart from its gradual gradient from the coast towards the Abbey.

In the mid-20th century, it was recorded that the boundary wall to the burial ground was in a poor state and was repaired.⁴⁴ Photographs from the late 1950s show the overgrown state of the graveyard and condition of the graves [Plates 2.2.25-26]. The boundary wall along the east side of the graveyard was repaired as part of the 2015-2021 conservation works at the Abbey.

43 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Old Rathmullan Graveyard, Reference Number: 40819027

44 Donegal Archives. *File on Rathmullan Priory*. Correspondence from Donegal Council, 1981.



2.2.24 Castle at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin IE TCD MS 942.2 image 131)



2.2.25 Photograph from the southwest showing graves in the foreground, 1958 (Donegal Archives)



2.2.26 Photograph from the southeast showing graves in the foreground, 1958 (Donegal Archives)

2.3 Rathmullan Battery Fort

2.3.1 The Military Defences of Lough Swilly

In the final act of the Irish Rebellion of 1798, a French squadron containing 3,000 troops on board was intercepted off the northwest Donegal coast at the *Battle of Tory Island* by the Royal Navy. The squadron, which was heading to invade Donegal via Lough Swilly with additional boats in tow, was aiding Irish troops led by Wolfe Tone, who sought to rise against the British Rule in Ireland. After the Irish rebels and French defeat at Tory Island, the French flagship *Hoche* was brought into Lough Swilly and the heavy guns from the ship were taken ashore to be used in temporary batteries that were being erected either side of Lough Swilly. These appear to be the first coastal defence works in the north of Ireland during the French Revolutionary War, the only pre-existing coast defence in Ulster had been provided by the guns of Carrickfergus Castle which overlooked Belfast Lough.⁴⁵

The temporary batteries were: Rathmullan (the subject of this report), Muckamish, Knockalla on the west side and Inch, Saltpan Hill, Neids Point and Dunree on the east; they were designed to work in pairs on either side of Lough Swilly to defend the channel [Plate 2.3.1]. The forts were detailed in an undated manuscript which Paul Kerrigan, in his book: *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland 1848-1945*, attributes to c.1798-1799.⁴⁶ In 1799, E. B. Litterhales, military secretary to the Lord Lieutenant and Commander of the Forces informed the Board of Ordnance that it was considered that 'a sum

45 Paul Kerrigan, *Castles and fortifications in Ireland, 1485-1945* (1995), p233

46 Kerrigan (1995) p236

not exceeding £300 will effectually complete the works at Lough Swilly', which indicates the temporary nature of these forts.⁴⁷

Sir Captain William Smith, assistant engineer, documented the construction of these temporary forts in his sketches and watercolours.⁴⁸ The depiction of Rathmullan dating from 1800 is far from detailed but does include a caption in Smith's hand referring to two 42-pounders on traversing platforms; these were the guns taken from the *Hoche* ship [Plate 2.3.2]. The use of these defences at the beginning of the 19th century appears to have been trivial, as an 1804 report on the batteries refers to the shortage of artillerymen at Lough Swilly: '*The ordnance and ammunition is in good condition though the means of using them is inadequate from the scanty number of artillerymen – due to reduced numbers the brigades are of twenty gunners instead of the establishment figure of thirty-four*'.⁴⁹

Though these were temporary defences, by the early-19th century all except Saltpan Hill had been replaced with permanent works; Kerrigan suggests that the present Battery was likely built upon the foundations of this temporary site.⁵⁰ In 1806, plans were made by Gother Mann (1747-1830), army officer and military engineer, to construct a permanent battery at Rathmullan with 'a tower for two guns, extend battery to five guns and two mortars' for £7,000. Ireland was still unsettled after 1798 and there were fears by the British that there could still be

47 Kerrigan (1995) p236

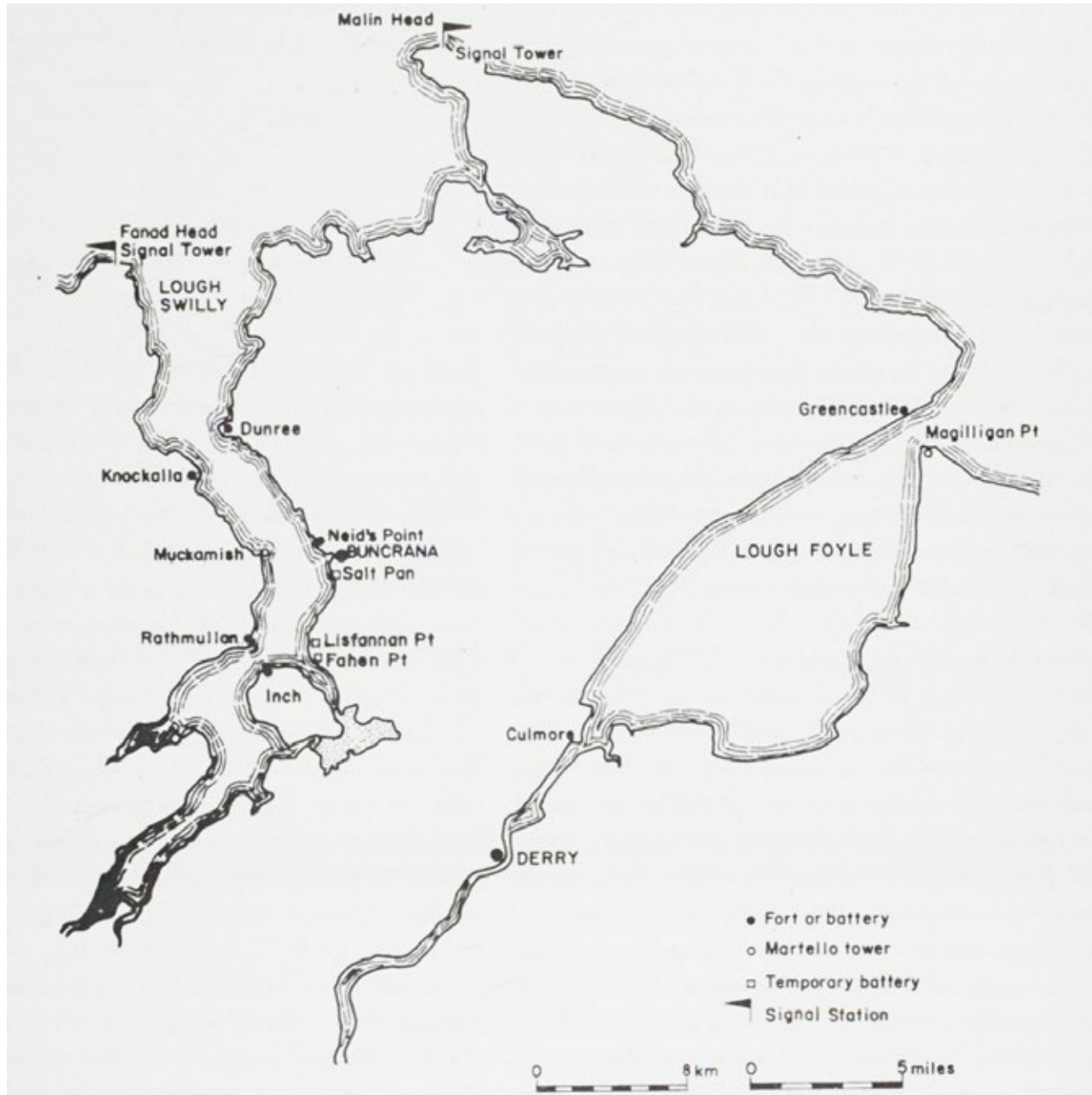
48 These drawings are in the manuscript collection at Trinity College Dublin, under reference MS 942.1 & 942.2.

49 Kerrigan (1995) p236

50 Kerrigan (1995) p237

a possibility of a French invasion. Despite this, it was not until 1809 that the Ordnance Office approved estimates of £4,918 for the construction and improvement of the fortification at Rathmullan as part of wider improvement scheme of the six fortifications at Lough Swilly.⁵¹ By c.1813, the six temporary forts on Lough Swilly were fully replaced by permanent battery forts. The Battle of Waterloo in 1815, which ended the Napoleonic Wars, meant that the forts on Lough Swilly were largely obsolete shortly after their construction.

51 NIAH, 'Flight of the Earls Heritage Centre', No. 40819002 (2010)



2.3.1 Showing the batteries and martello towers built along Lough Swilly 1798-1815, Kerrigan's 'Castles and fortifications in Ireland, 1485-1945' (1995)



2.3.2 Point at Rathmullan by Sir William Smith, (Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 942.2 image 141)

2.3.2 Construction of Rathmullan Battery Fort c.1813

Construction of the permanent battery at Rathmullan, which was paired with that on Inch, did not begin until c.1813 due to contractual issues and was supervised by Captain Cardew RE and contractor Edward Edgar.⁵² The fort comprised a stone battery with five 24-pounder long guns (cannons) set on a D-shaped traversing platform protected by a two-storey blockhouse or 'bomb-proof barrack' to the rear which had two 5.5-inch howitzers (artillery guns) on the roof, in a similar plan to the fortifications on the Shannon Estuary.⁵³ The cannons had a large calibre and range and were intended to destroy an enemy ship's cannon whilst the roof-mounted howitzers had a high shot trajectory and would be used to penetrate decks of enemy ships. The fort would have been manned by members of the Royal Artillery who came under the command of the Board of Ordnance.⁵⁴

The earliest depiction of the site is in the first edition of the OS map from c.1839 which shows the Battery against the coast of Lough Swilly and enclosed by a continuous ditch/moat with a curved sunken roadway to the west leading to the main road **[Plate 2.3.3]**. There was also a grass glacis surrounding the site on the landward side, extending north of the site. The map shows the gun platforms of the Battery in outline; both the long guns and howitzers were referenced in an 1817 report indicating that they had been installed

by that time.⁵⁵ A detached powder magazine is also visible in the northwest corner and a central enclosure comprising a shot furnace, where the cannon balls were heated.

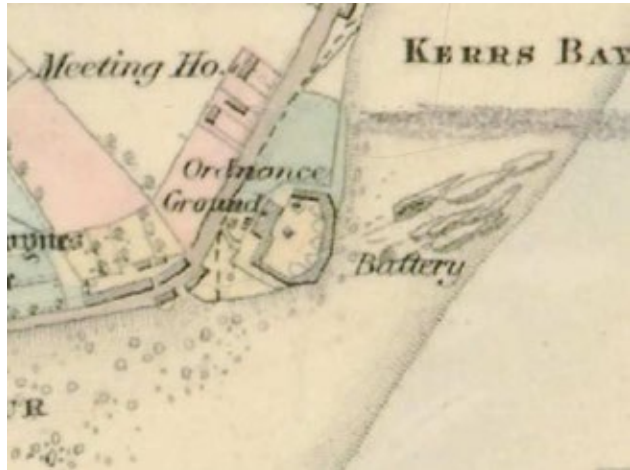
The battery fort is shown in much greater detail in a plan and section from 1851 **[Plates 2.3.4-5]**. This more clearly shows the grass glacis surrounding the site on the landward side, in addition to a narrow glacis/ embankment to the east (coast). At the north end, a road wrapped around the glacis, providing access to the recently erected pier. The entrance to the Battery courtyard was through an arched opening in the southwest corner which was flanked by rooms. There were steps on the inner-facing south wall providing access to a gallery. On the other side of the blockhouse was an enclosed magazine store (where ammunition was stored) and privies. There also appears to be an upper gallery on this side, although no steps for access are visible. The section drawing shows the mounded earth to form the glacis/ embankment by the coast and the ditch and grass glacis to the rear of the blockhouse. It also shows that the ground level within the courtyard of the Battery was lower than it is today.

52 NIAH (2010), note NIAH gives date of 1812 but all other sources give date of c. 1813

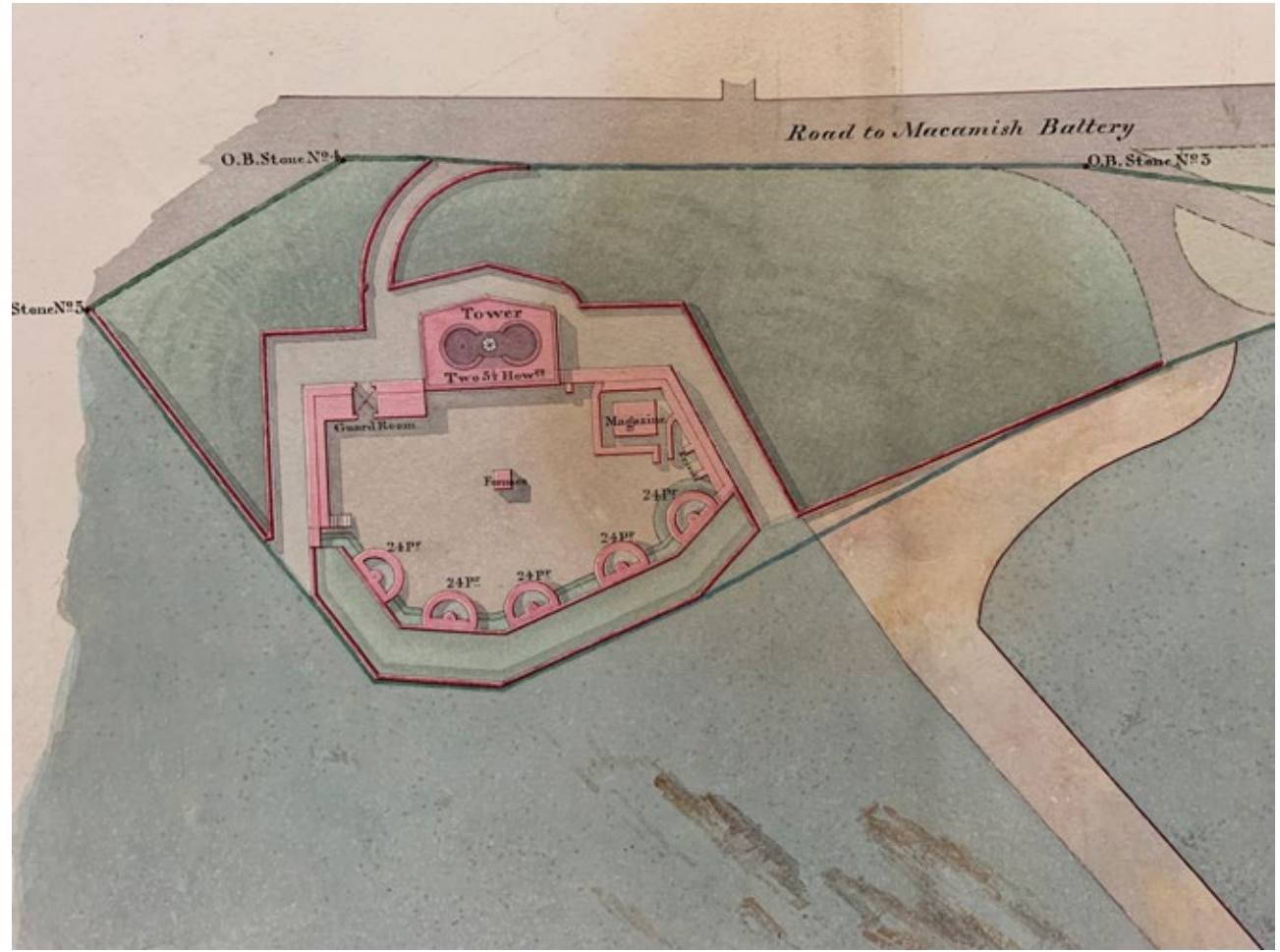
53 Kerrigan (1995) p237; see Kilkerin Point Battery

54 Inch heritage

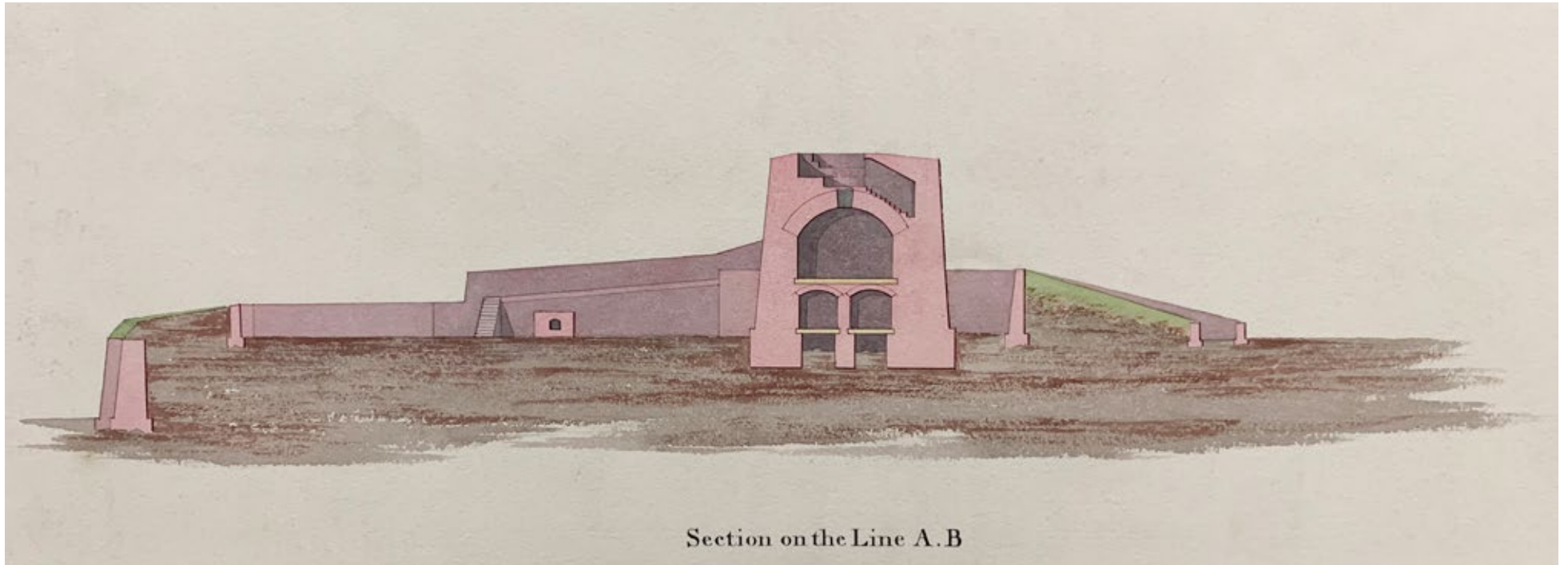
55 NIAH (2010)



2.3.3 Ordnance Survey map, c. 1839



2.3.4 Plan of Ordnance Ground and Rathmullan Battery, 1851 (The National Archives)

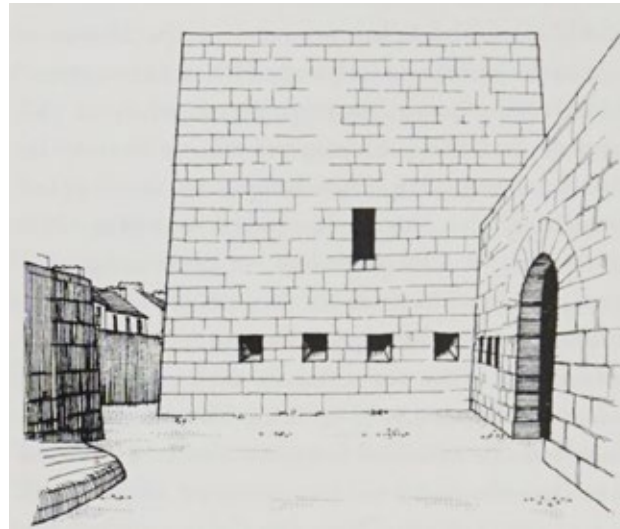


2.3.5 Section drawing of Rathmullan Battery, 1851 (*The National Archives*)

The Blockhouse

The blockhouse was a two-storey, bomb-proof barracks built from Scottish stone comprising storage and accommodation for artillery forces with a gun platform on the roof. Though it is not shown in the plan or section, the entrance to the blockhouse would have likely been at first-floor level via a removable ladder with access to the ground and basement floors by an internal trapdoor. It was also common for blockhouses and towers to be accessed from first floor via a drawbridge over the ditch/moat but that does not appear to be the case at Rathmullan.⁵⁶ At either end of the blockhouse were a series of loopholes for musketry and above were deep, single window openings, which were a common feature and defence manoeuvre to enable light and ventilation internally without breaking the upper section of wall that faced the sea [Plate 2.3.6].⁵⁷

It is not clear if the **basement** was used for a particular purpose but it could have possibly been used as extra storage. The section drawing shows the basement divided into two bays and exposed to the earth, which was at a lower height than the earth level outside of the blockhouse (see Plate 2.3.5).



2.3.6 South side of the blockhouse, Kerrigan's 'Castles and fortifications in Ireland, 1485-1945' (1995)

The **ground floor** would have been the main magazine and provision store in addition to the magazine and stores to the immediate north of the blockhouse and was barrel vaulted at its centre. It was often the case that, in order to keep the gun powder dry, a second inner wall with ventilation slits was built in to enable better air circulation within the magazine level of the tower; it is not clear from the drawing if this was the case at Rathmullan.⁵⁸ The section drawing also shows timber floors both at ground and first-floor level. Though not shown in the section, site survey investigations have also revealed that there is a large well to the south of the ground-floor level, which appears to go through the basement, with 19th/early-20th-century brickwork below the floor level (modern

above). It is not clear when this well was added, however, it was common for there to be a water system within a blockhouse or tower, and often these came with an internal drainage system linked to the roof to collect rainwater. Another example of a battery fort with a well in its tower is at Milligan Point, which was one of the last Irish towers to be built.⁵⁹

The **first floor** is shown in the section with one large barrel-vaulted ceiling, which would have limited any damage from enemy attacks and supported the weight of the gun artillery above. The first floor would have likely been divided into three sections, a main room for soldiers, another room for the officer and a small room for the quartermaster sergeant's store.⁶⁰ Access to the gun platform (or terreplein) was via an internal stone staircase as shown in the section drawing and flagpoles were often fitted into the recesses of the parapet wall of the gun platforms, part of which has remained.⁶¹ Both the section and plan show a roof lantern in between the two gun platforms (see Plates 2.3.4-5).

56 Bill Clements, *Martello Towers Worldwide* (2011) p35 - entry to towers usually through a single door at rear of tower on first floor level approached by ladder or across a small drawbridge if surrounded by a ditch. entered by means of ladder through stone chute in sill of door to take ladder, iron plate in aperture fitted across top of chute to allow ladder to be pulled through the sill when door closed.

57 Clements (2011) p35

58 Clements (2011) p36

59 Clements (2011) p36, pp. 90-91

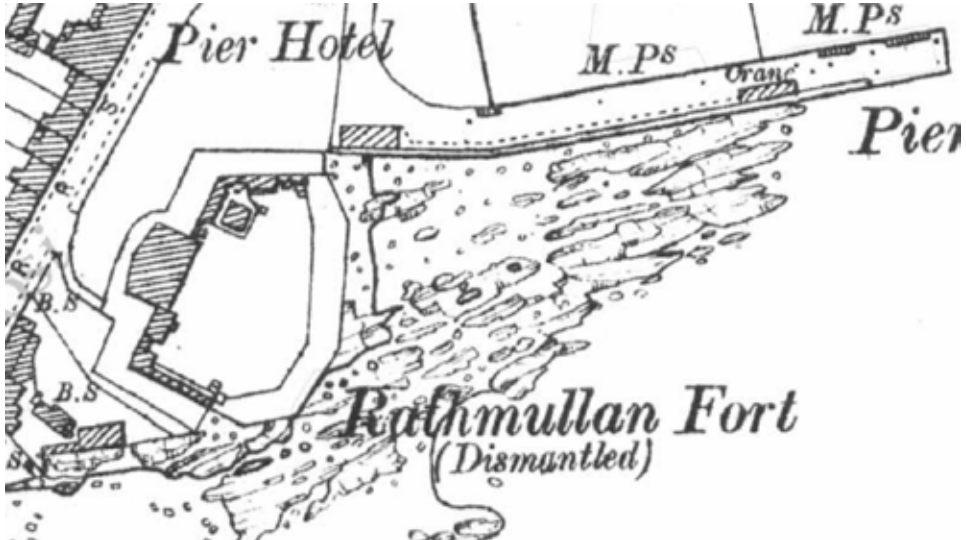
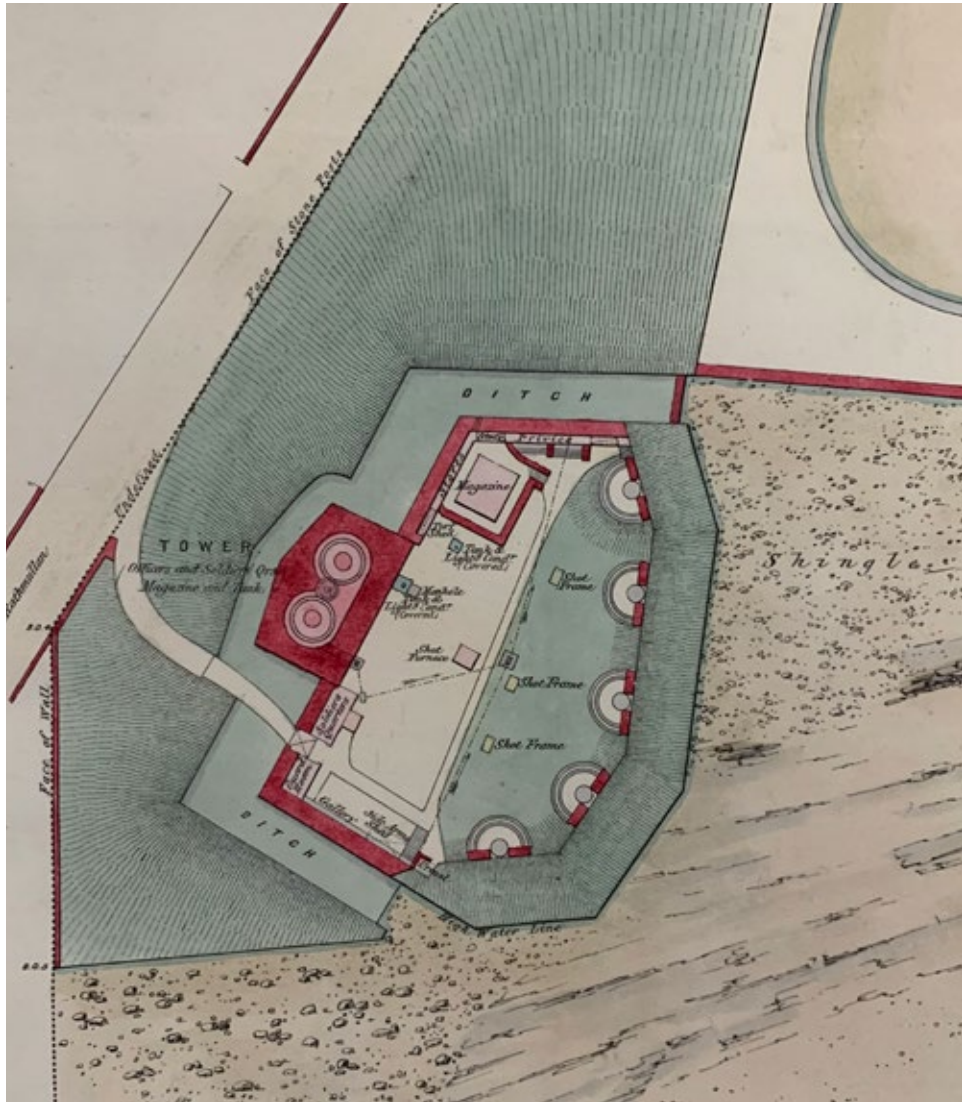
60 Clements (2011) p37

61 *Ibid.* Often the gun platform was accessed by an oak door with a sliding hatch at bottom of door to enable shots and ammunition to be passed through to gunners without opening the door. Sometimes this was also provided by a shaft leading from the gallery adjacent to the blockhouse.

2.3.3 Late-19th-Century Alterations

The battery fort at Rathmullan was maintained by the military for the following decade and an 1862 plan provides a detailed insight into the layout and use of the fort, with some later additions from the 1851 plan and section **[Plate 2.3.7]**. The fort held 1 artillery officer, 11 privates, 2 married soldiers and had the capacity to store 224 barrels of powder in the magazine and 1700 gallons of water in tanks. Flanking the south wall steps onto the gallery was a 'side arms shed' and a urinal. The guard room adjacent to the blockhouse had been converted into additional 'soldiers quarters' with a small square addition to the front. Against the north wall, running behind the enclosed magazine, were a group of stores and privies, with a series of steps which led to an upper gallery dating to the original construction. Two covered tank and lightning conductors were added to the site abutting the blockhouse and adjacent to the magazine to protect the powder magazines. In addition to the original shot furnace, were three 'shot frames', likely concrete blocks used to pile cannons in preparation for fire.

By 1869, the fort was retired and the gunners removed from the site. In the late-19th century, cannon artillery had been superseded by use of exploding shells and guns with much greater range. It is not clear what alterations, if any, were made at Rathmullan, the 1888-1913 OS map shows that all the artillery had been removed from the site as well as the shot furnace **[Plate 2.3.8]**. Other coastal defences on Lough Swilly were modernised with the complete renewal of battery forts at Inch, Ned's Point and Dunree, and the construction of a new fort at Lenan. This 1888-1913 map also shows the addition of steps in the northeast corner of the courtyard. By this time, buildings had been erected to the southwest of the south ditch, which likely resulted in the full removal of the mounded earth of the south grass glacis, as is found today.



2.3.8 Ordnance Survey map, 1888-1913

2.3.7 Ordnance Survey Plan of Rathmullan Fort, c. 1862 (The National Archives)

2.3.4 Rathmullan Battery Fort in the Early-to-Mid-20th Century

Rathmullan was a major fishing port and, in the early-20th century, the Battery was used as storage for the local herring industry operations [Plate 2.3.9]. The photograph shows the additional northeast steps and the former gallery, as well as the retaining wall to the rampart.



2.3.9 Early 20th-century photograph of the battery fort showing use as part of the herring industry (MacGabhann Architects)

During the First World War, a temporary wooden extension was made to the pier, led by the Board of Admiralty, to enable the continued use of the bay for anchorage. As part of these works, a water main was laid from Gortlough to the town and a large concrete holding-tank was built within the north ditch of the Battery with a pipe connecting to the water at the end of the pier.⁶² In addition, a large oil tank was built in the

62 Bowden et. al. (2001) p77

courtyard of the Battery to be used as a fuelling stop for ships [Plate 2.3.10].⁶³ A gate, steps and bridge were added to the north side of the fort to provide access to the green on the other side of the ditch, where there were also temporary cabins. The insertion of the oil tank likely resulted in the loss of a number of internal features of the fort including the magazine enclosure.

The control and defence of Lough Swilly was retained by the British government as one of the 'Treaty Ports' following Irish Independence in 1921. The oil storage tank at Rathmullan was included in Article 8(a) of the Treaty to be '*offered for sale to commercial companies under guarantee that purchases shall maintain a certain minimum stock for British Admiralty purposes*'.⁶⁴ The treaty was not considered acceptable to many who fought in the War of Independence (1919-1921) and resulted in a civil war which ended in 1922. Much of the civil war was located at Inch Island and local tradition has it that the last shots of this war were fired across Lough Swilly between opposing factions at Inch and Rathmullan.⁶⁵

In 1938, Britain's control over the care and maintenance of the harbour defences was relinquished and the oil tank was dismantled under the supervision of engineers from Harland & Wolff, Belfast shipbuilders.⁶⁶ A mid-20th-century photograph shows the various alterations that had been made to the battery fort in the early-to-mid-20th century [Plate

63 Ibid.

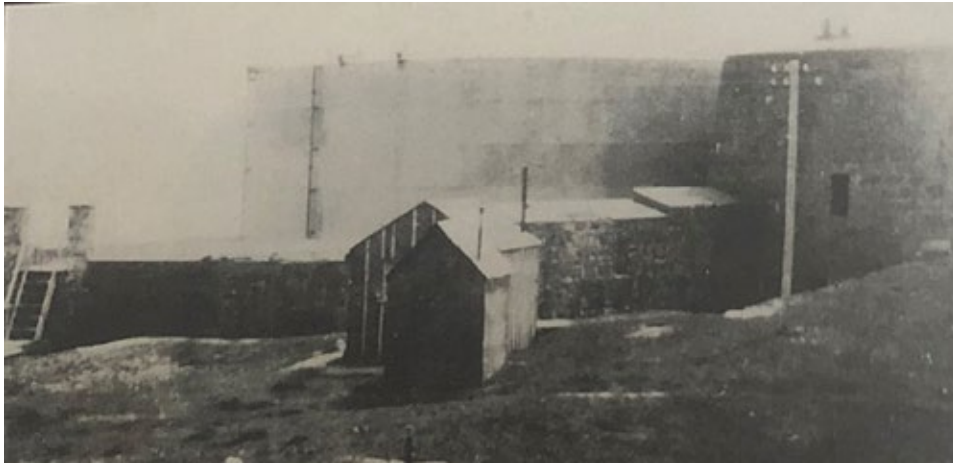
64 Bowden et. al. (2001) p27

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

2.3.11. By this time, no internal structures remained except that of the blockhouse, the guard room and the south gallery with its associated steps. The magazine enclosure, privies, stores, shot furnace, shot frames, and soldiers quarters had all been removed and/or blocked. The early-20th-century footbridge had been removed and the rampart had been partly-levelled, exposing part of the external face of the wall. This photograph also shows the large water tank in the north ditch.

Late-19th and 20th-century photographs show that paths had been formed over time in the grass glacis to the north of the Battery, including a cut-through road providing a more direct route from pier road to the pier [Plates 2.3.12-13]. This road access was later made more permanent, with the small grass area to the far north being removed to form part of the car park. The remaining north grass glacis has been in use as putting green since the 1960s.



2.3.10 Photograph of the temporary oil tank located in the courtyard of the battery fort



2.3.11 Aerial photograph showing the battery fort from the mid-20th century showing the guns and magazines in the courtyard removed



2.3.12 Path through North Glacis c. 1865-1914 (Lawrence Photograph Collection, NLI - L_ROY_07665)



2.3.13 Cut-through Road to Pier, 1954 (Morgan Aerial Photograph Collection, NLI - NPA MOR276)

2.3.5 Later Alterations

In 1978, Rathmullan was a point of topic at the Rathmullan Development Committee. The correspondence mentions that works had been carried out on the site earlier so that it could be used by the community. The proposed works included enlarging an existing opening on the northern side to provide a second exit but this was not implemented.

In the 1990s, works were carried out at the site to convert it into a museum and heritage centre with a focus on the old Gaelic order and Flight of the Earls. The drawings connected with these works could not be located but the works to the blockhouse appear to have included:

- insertion of a new entrance at ground-floor level;
- insertion of external steps to existing first-floor entrance opening;
- insertion of new ceilings (which have since been removed);
- removal of a section of wall on the ground floor and the addition of a reception desk.

The site was later abandoned and consequently neglected.

More recently, works were undertaken by the conservation architectural practice Dedalus, following the completion of a Conservation Report (2019). The concrete tank was removed from the north ditch and the fencing along the edge of the north green was replaced with a new, set-back, fence. A number of small remedial works were carried out to the blockhouse including:

- rebuilding the chimney stack;
- replacement of roof-light;
- lime mortar re-pointing;
- new entrance door added;
- new windows to first floor.

2.4 The Pier Hotel and Cottages on Kerrs Bay

2.4.1 Pier Hotel

The pier hotel was constructed in the mid-19th century. Prior to this, in the early-19th century, the site comprised two small buildings set back from the road, next to a meeting house [Plate 2.4.1]. In the mid-19th century, a new road (later named Pier Road) was laid out, running between these two buildings and the meeting house. These two buildings were later demolished; Griffith's Valuation town plan (1847-64) shows that both buildings had been built by c.1864, numbered 21 and 22 [Plate 2.4.2]. The building numbered 21 was built as an inn and posting house, with outhouses and stables to the rear. The building numbered 22 was built in the 1860s as 'The Pier Hotel' and included rear wings. Both buildings were purchased by James Deeney in the late-19th century and combined to form a large hotel. According to tradition, an architect who worked on Lord Leitrim's hotel in Rosepenna had stayed at the hotel and carried out the building work.⁶⁷ A late-19th/early-20th-century photograph shows that the hotel site comprised two three-storey buildings [Plate 2.4.3]. The corner building (No. 21) was three bays wide and its roof was lower than the adjacent five-bay-wide No. 22.

The hotel, which faced onto the pier, catered for the commercial traveller and tourist, benefitting from the regular passenger ferries on Lough Swilly. During the First World War, Admiral Jellicoe resided at the hotel whilst his Grand Fleet were anchored in Lough Swilly. In the 20th century, a large ballroom/function room was added to the rear of the building. The hotel also became used frequently by the community and described by one local as the village's 'living room'.

In the early-21st century, the hotel was demolished and proposals were put forward for the reuse of the site, along with the two adjoining cottages to the southwest, but these have not been implemented. Instead, the site has been turned into a small green, fenced off from the road.



2.4.1 Ordnance Survey map, c. 1839 showing approximate location of hotel and cottages



2.4.2 Griffiths Valuation Town Plan, c. 1847-1864, showing site of hotel and cottages highlighted in red

67 A brief history of the site is provided in a documentary 'Memories from the Pier Hotel' (February 2021) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4JISR9YSjY>



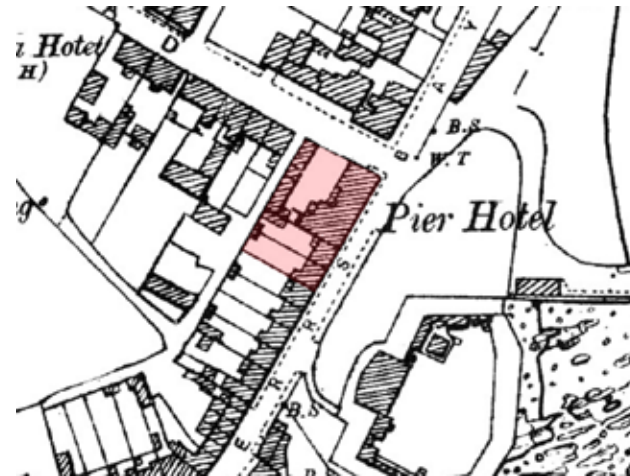
2.4.3 Photograph of Rathmullan Pier Hotel c. 1865-1914 (Lawrence Photograph Collection, NLI - L_ROY_09306)

2.4.2 Cottages on Kerrs Bay

The two cottages located to the southwest of the land where the former Pier Hotel was situated, appear to have been constructed in the mid-19th century and are thought to have been built for the British soldiers who maintained the fort.⁶⁸ Griffith's Valuation town plan (1847-1864) is the earliest map to show the buildings, numbered 19 & 20 (refer to Plate 2.4.2). The map shows two terraced cottages of the same depth and width with long narrow gardens containing a small shed/store at the rear. The historic photograph shows simple two-storey cottages, three bays wide with pitched roofs (see Plate 2.4.3).

By the turn of the 20th century, both cottages had small extensions added to the rear of the main building [Plate 2.4.4]. A small store or building was added to the rear of the northernmost yard, abutting the buildings to the rear of the Pier Hotel.

In the early-21st century, the Pier Hotel was demolished and the flank end of the northernmost cottage was rebuilt. Both rear extensions appear to have been removed and there is no longer any yard definition, forming one large green with the site of the former hotel. In 2017, a proposal was refused by the council for the demolition of these two buildings.



2.4.4 Ordnance Survey map, 1905 showing site of hotel and cottages highlighted in red

68 Pasparakis Friel (2019) p18. It has not been possible to find accurate occupancy records for the site.

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National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Old Rathmullan Graveyard, Reference Number: 40819027

3.0 Site Survey Descriptions

3.1 The Setting of the Sites

3.1.1 The Wider Setting

Rathmullan is a small seaside town on the west side of Lough Swilly in the Fanad Peninsular. The town is bound by the sea and beaches to the south and east [Plates 3.1.1-2]. It originally developed to the south, around the area of the Abbey (described in Sections 3.4-5) and the former castle, and expanded to the east in the 19th and 20th centuries, including the erection of two prominent structures: the early- 19th-century stone battery fort (described in Sections 3.2-3) and the mid-19th-century stone pier with its 20th-century extension [Plate 3.1.3].

The roads are lined with mostly two-storey, rendered buildings, generally in terraces [Plates 3.1.4-5]. These are mostly residential, although there are some commercial premises, such as cafes and public houses. Buildings throughout the town mostly appear to date to the 19th and 20th centuries.

The site of the former Rathmullan Castle is a grass mound, located to the west of Rathmullan Abbey, that extends from the coastline and is flanked by beaches [Plate 3.1.6]. There are also several churches in the town, including the 19th-century St Columb's of cut stone and roughcast render by Church Hill Road, the late-19th-century stone Presbyterian church on Pier Road, and the late-19th-century rendered St Joseph's Catholic Church on a hill to the northwest of the town.

To the north of the battery fort, along the east coast, an area of former beach has gradually been built over and now includes a large car park [Plate 3.1.7]. Just north of this is a grass area with a children's playground, in addition to a modern art installation commemorating the Flight of the Earls [Plate 3.1.8]. To the northwest of this are playing fields, while further north are the grounds of Rathmullan House, a 19th-century rendered house with canted bays that was converted to a hotel with modern extensions [Plate 3.1.9]; within the grounds are clusters of small cottages. Along this east coast is a wide beach that extends to the north.

Rathmullan Wood is a large, wooded area located to the far west of the town by the coast. This is adjacent to a small, sheltered inlet where the Flight of the Earls ship set sail in the 17th century [Plate 3.1.10].

To the southeast of Rathmullan's battery fort, on the opposite side of Lough Swilly, is Inch Island where an early-19th-century battery fort that was paired with Rathmullan was erected. The battery fort survives but it is now overgrown as the site has been abandoned and is neglected [Plate 3.1.11].



3.1.1 Beach along South Coast (Insall, 2021)



3.1.2 Beach along East Coast (Insall, 2021)



3.1.3 Pier with 20th-century Extension (Insall, 2021)



3.1.4 Rathmullan Village Generally (Insall, 2021)



3.1.5 Rathmullan Village Generally (Insall, 2021)



3.1.6 Site of Former Rathmullan Castle (Insall, 2021)



3.1.7 Car Park (Insall, 2021)



3.1.8 Flight of the Earls Art Installation (Insall, 2021)



3.1.9 Rathmullan House (Insall, 2021)



3.1.10 Location of Fight of the Earls (Insall, 2021)



3.1.11 Battery on Inch Island (Insall, 2021)

3.1.2 The Immediate Setting

Rathmullan Battery Fort

The battery fort is strategically positioned on a corner position, providing views of the adjacent south and east coastlines; it is bound by land to the west and north. To the northeast of the site is a large modern car park; the 19th-century stone pier extends to the east with its 20th-century extension. The west side of the car park is lined with single-storey, stone structures (some with missing roofs), including a late- 19th-century L-shaped boathouse [Plate 3.1.12].

West of the car park, directly north of the site, is the White Hart public house, a large 19th-century, three-storey, five-bay corner building faced in roughcast that houses. Further north is a late-19th-century, multiple-bay, two-storey coastguard station of white-painted render with a three-storey square tower at its north end [Plate 3.1.13]. Opposite the White Hart, on the south side of Pier Road and northwest of the battery fort, is a large empty site surrounded by railings, the former location of the Pier Hotel [Plate 3.1.14]. Adjacent is a row of small two-storey rendered cottages that extend to the south, opposite the battery fort, that turn at the corner and extend further west. To the east of the north grass glacis of the battery fort, close to the pier, is a single-storey, stone-clad, modern structure that houses a tourist information centre and toilet block [Plate 3.1.15]. Behind this are modern boathouses with an area enclosed by modern railings extending to the east. East of the battery fort and south of the pier, is a beach area that connects with a narrower beach that extends along the south coastline.



3.1.12 West Side of Car Park (Insall, 2021)



3.1.13 White Hart Pub and Coastguard Building (Insall, 2021)



3.1.14 Location of Former Pier Hotel (Insall, 2021)



3.1.15 Modern Tourist Information Centre Insall (Insall, 2021)

Rathmullan Abbey

The Abbey faces the sea to the south and, together with its southern graveyard, is set behind a stone wall. The site is bound to the south by a road, Main Street, and a stone wall that runs along by the coast **[Plate 3.1.16]**. Further west of the wall is a slip road that provides access to the beach below, and a narrow grass area bound by a stone wall extends further west along the coast **[Plate 3.1.17]**. Tall telephone poles flank the south side of the graveyard, with high-level wires that cut across the site.

The Abbey site is bound by private residential buildings and land to the west, north and east. To the west is a pair of two-storey houses that front the road, while behind is a modern house with a pitched roof and a separate garage that abuts the northwest corner of the Abbey, at the junction of the nave and cloister **[Plates 3.1.18-19]**. North of the site a single-storey modern residential development with a pitched roof, while east is a detached single-storey house with accommodation at roof level, surrounded by a large garden **[Plate 3.1.20]**. Further east of this is a group of three 19th-century- terraced houses.



3.1.16 Stone Wall along South Coast (Insall, 2021)



3.1.17 Grass Area Southwest of Abbey (Insall, 2021)



3.1.18 Houses West of Abbey (Insall, 2021)



3.1.20 House East of Abbey (Insall, 2021)



3.1.19 Garage Northwest of Abbey (Insall, 2021)

3.2 Rathmullan Battery Fort - Overview

This granite battery fort was erected in c.1813 in conjunction with the battery fort on Inch Island, on the opposite side of Lough Swilly [Plates 3.2.1-2]. The site comprises a two-storey battered-stone (i.e. sloped) blockhouse and a D-shaped battery, with a courtyard area that originally housed five guns (now missing) along the east (coast) side. Several original structures are also missing from the courtyard area, including the magazine⁶⁹, privies, north guard room (later a 'Soldiers Quarters') and shot furnace. Surrounding the site is a deep ditch (north, west, and south) and an altered steep grass defensive glacis⁷⁰ that defended the site on the landward side, in addition to an original western serpentine entrance approach from the road. By the coast, east of the former guns, a narrow sloped embankment has been lowered and levelled to create a walkway.



3.2.1 Aerial View of the Battery Fort (MacGabhann Architects)

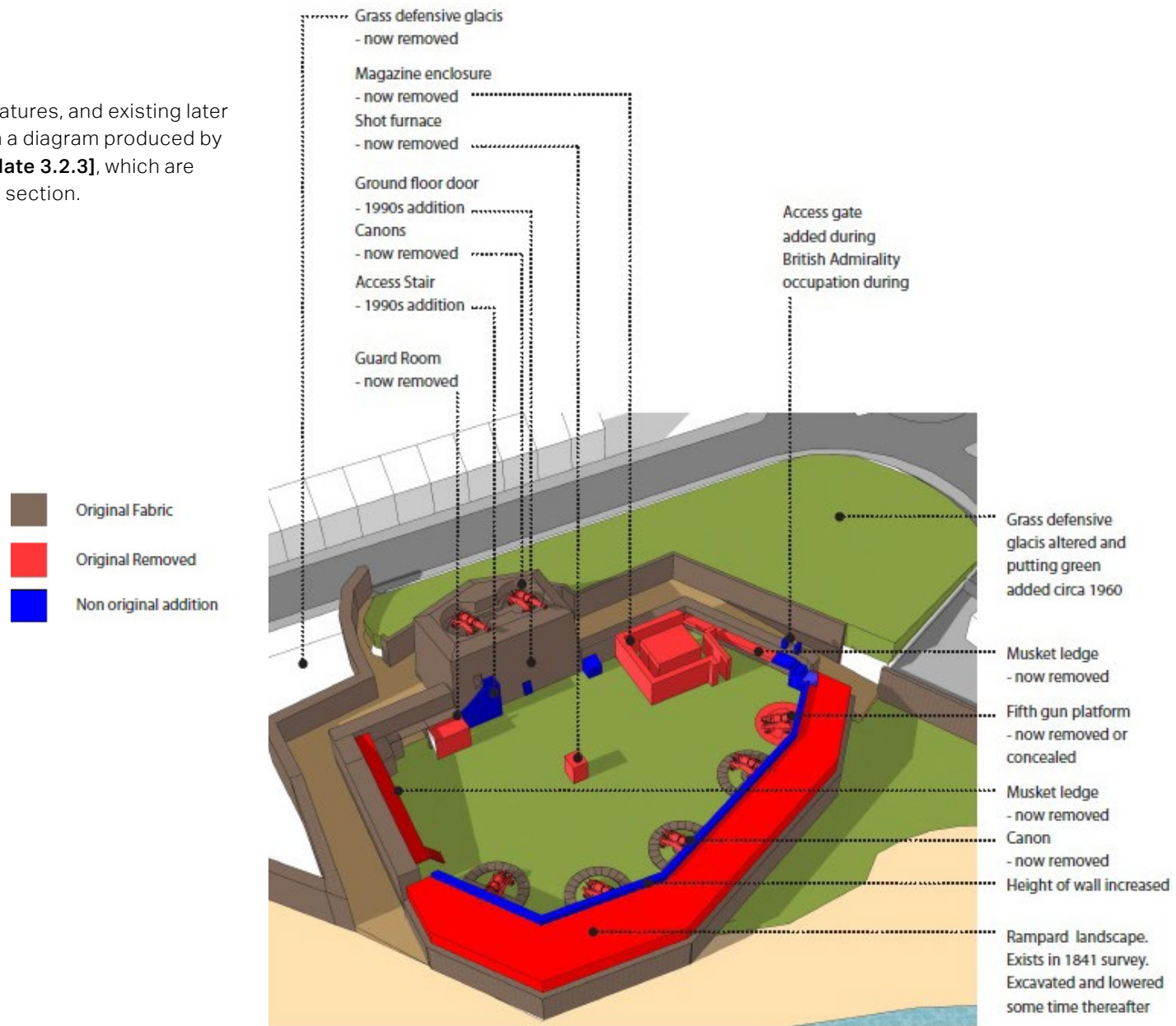


3.2.2 Battery Fort (Insall, 2021)

69 Magazine: store for ammunition or other explosive material.

70 Glacis: a natural or artificial slope incorporated into the defences of a fortification.

Original fabric, lost original features, and existing later additions are clearly shown in a diagram produced by architects Pasparakis Friel [Plate 3.2.3], which are described in detail in the next section.



3.2.3 Diagram Showing Alterations to the Battery Fort (Pasparakis Friel)

3.3 Rathmullan Battery Fort – Detailed Description

3.3.1 The Courtyard and East (Coast) Embankment

The D-shaped battery with its **central courtyard** originally housed five 24-pounder long guns (cannons) along the coast (east) edge [Plates 3.3.1-2]. The guns are now missing but four of the five semi-circular stone bases remain. The missing fifth stone base, at the very north of the site, may also survive but the area is now concealed. The courtyard floor level has been raised and is now higher than the internal floor level of the blockhouse, rather than lower as shown in the 1851 section (see Section 2 of this report). The courtyard is mainly grass but there are modern concrete tiles forming a path in the southwest corner and cutting across the site, west to east. At the centre of the courtyard was a small structure that housed a shot furnace; this has been removed.

In the **northeast corner** of the site are stone steps with a concrete finish and plain modern railings with a gate (see plate 3.3.2). A straight flight of stone steps was added to this area by the early-20th century; the existing steps are a later rebuild that are L-shaped in plan and include a landing. These steps lead up to a pair of stone piers and a black-painted metal gate that were added during the First World War [Plate 3.3.3].



3.3.1 The Battery Fort Courtyard (Insall, 2021)



3.3.2 The Battery Fort Courtyard (Insall, 2021)



3.3.3 WWI Stone Piers and Gate (Insall, 2021)

There was a gallery along the **north edge and northwest corner** of the courtyard, which has since been removed. However, there are remnants of render indicating its former location in the northwest corner **[Plate 3.3.4]**. Along the north edge and northwest corner are rubble-stone arcaded casemates, with rendered recesses and blocked square-headed gun loops (see Plates 3.3.1-2 & 4). As the ground level of the courtyard has been raised, a gunner would now be positioned too high above the gun loops for practical use **[Plate 3.3.5]**. There is a low-level modern flower bed along the north edge, with vegetation that mostly conceals the northern arcaded casemats, while a small modern rubble-stone store with a mono-pitched roof has been added in front of the most southern arch in the northwest corner. The northwest corner of the site was originally occupied by a large single-storey magazine and privies, but these structures have since been removed.



3.3.4 Northwest Corner of Courtyard, showing Arcaded Casemates and Remnants of Former Gallery (Insall, 2021)



3.3.5 Showing the raised courtyard level resulting in a gunner being positioned too high for gun loops (Insall, 2021)

In the **southwest corner** of the site, to the south of the blockhouse (described separately in Section 3.3.2), is the original entrance with an original single-storey guard room to its south and fragments of a lost guard room to its north [Plate 3.3.6]. The existing guard room has a segmental brick arch in its east elevation, with rubble infill beneath and a doorway now blocked with a plain modern timber panel (internal access was not possible at the time of survey) [Plate 3.3.7]. The north wall of the guard room comprises ashlar granite with three gun loops facing the carriage entrance, with a flat ashlar-stone ceiling above. The wall on the flanking side of the entrance - forming the south wall of the lost guard room - has been altered with the removal of its east end, resulting in the removal of one gun loop. A section of the segmental brick arch of the former north guard room remains, while the gun loops in the walls to the south (facing the internal entrance way) and west (facing the ditch) have been blocked [Plate 3.3.8]. The modern stone steps that provide external access to the first floor of the blockhouse also partially cut across the location of the lost guard room. The original gallery and steps along the **south of the courtyard** have been removed but long thin fragments of stone show the location of the gallery along the rubble-stone south and west walls (see plate 3.3.7).

The **original entrance** connects with the west ditch and the serpentine entrance approach from the road. The entrance includes a pair of modern timber slatted doors and an ashlar segmental opening with voussoirs and keystone on the ditch (west) side, with three gun loops either side [Plate 3.3.9].



3.3.6 Southwest Corner of Courtyard, showing Entrance and Guard Room (Insall, 2021)



3.3.7 Original Guard House and Entrance with Modern Gates (Insall, 2021)



3.3.8 Lost Guard House (Insall, 2021)



3.3.9 Original Entrance with Modern Gates, West Side (Insall, 2021)

Along the **east (coast) side**, the original grass sloped embankment has been lowered and levelled to create a grassed walkway **[Plate 3.3.10]**. The lowering of this area has exposed the east side of the courtyard's east wall, with jagged stones now visible; the capping of this inner rubble wall is also a later addition. There is a modern light-grey metal fence providing the walkway with protection, which is appropriately set back from the edge to reduce its visual impact. The walkway connects with the steps in the northeast corner of the site, as described above, and an opening that has been formed to the south of the courtyard with a modern metal gate and three steps **[Plates 3.3.11-12]**.



3.3.10 Lowering and Levelling of East (Coast) Embankment (Insall, 2021)



3.3.12 Southern Access to East (Coast) Embankment (Insall, 2021)



3.3.11 Northern Access to East (Coast) Embankment (Insall, 2021)

3.3.2 The Blockhouse

External

The two-storey blockhouse is located to the west of the Battery's central courtyard. It comprises a five-sided granite ashlar structure with mildly battered (sloped) walls that were recently repointed with lime mortar [Plates 3.3.13-15].

The east elevation faces the courtyard and includes a central modern doorway at ground level, comprising a plain black-painted timber door and concrete surround, with a modern light above (see plate 3.3.13). The original entrance at first-floor level is to the south of the structure; it has a modern plain black-painted timber door and is accessed via a flight of modern stone steps that rise from the south - the entrance was originally access via a ladder. To the north of this elevation, there is a small protruding stone, five rows down from the parapet, which would have supported a flag pole. Above the parapet are two central plain render chimney stacks (one recently reinstated). There is a central modern black-painted metal rainwater pipe that kinks to avoid the ground-floor entrance.

The north and south elevations include four gun loops at ground level and a single narrow window at the centre of the first floor, with a modern four-over-four sash window (see plate 3.3.14). There is also a modern black-painted metal rainwater pipe to the east of the north elevation. The west side, which comprises two shallow angled walls, has no openings or features (see plate 3.3.15).



3.3.13 *The Blockhouse, Courtyard Side (Insall, 2021)*



3.3.14 *The Blockhouse, North View from the Ditch (Insall, 2021)*



3.3.15 *The Blockhouse, View from the Road (Insall, 2021)*

Roof

The roof originally supported two 5.5-inch howitzers (artillery guns) [Plate 3.3.16]. The guns have been removed but the circular stone bases with supporting rusted iron pivots points remain, which provided 360-degree cover. A stone plinth surrounds these areas with recessed channels to the west that would have originally connected with metal tracks in connection with the guns; whilst the metal tracks have since been removed the fixings in the stonework remain [Plate 3.3.17]. To the north and south of the roof are pairs of recesses in the parapet, which is sloped and includes an outer drainage channel. Between the gun areas is a small round rooflight that was recently replaced. It is located in front of an original entrance with a plain black-painted modern door and lead flashing above. North of the entrance is a rusted iron bracket fixed into the stonework that would have supported a flagpole. Throughout the floor of the roof are narrow channels for drainage.



3.3.16 *The Blockhouse Roof (Insall, 2021)*



3.3.17 *Showing Fixings of Missing Tracks (Insall, 2021)*

Internal

Ground Floor

The ground floor is accessed via a non-original external opening that has been formed to the east; it was originally accessed from the first floor through a trapdoor/s (location unknown). Internally the walls are of red-brick construction. This level has a central area with two barrel vaults, spanning north to south, flanked by areas with a flat ceiling [Plate 3.3.18].

The barrel vaults have been altered with the formation of a large opening in their central dividing wall; this opening is supported by a white-painted concrete lintel and flanked by sections of modern brickwork. It also appears that large sections of brickwork have been removed from the south end walls of both barrel vaults and the north end wall of the western barrel vault. Presumably some of these walls had openings providing internal connections but their locations are unclear. The north wall of the eastern barrel vault is intact and has been altered with the insertion of brickwork in narrow ventilation openings [Plate 3.3.19]. Along the west wall is a segmental arched recessed opening, the function of which is unclear.

In the flanking areas, the original flat timber ceilings have been replaced with concrete ceilings, which are also supported by modern steel beams [Plate 3.3.20]. These ceilings are higher than the original ceiling level, as shown by the location of the plain stone corbels. In the south area is a well, with modern red brickwork above



3.3.18 Ground Floor of Blockhouse (Insall, 2021)

floor level and historic brickwork below. The north and south walls of the blockhouse have four high-level gun loops that have been infilled with modern metal mesh.

Modern concrete floor finish throughout, which presumably has replaced the original timber floor. In various areas are recent lime render repairs, coloured red and white to match the brickwork and mortar joints. There is modern track lighting in several areas.



3.3.19 Showing Infilled Ventilation Opening (Insall, 2021)



3.3.20 South Side of Ground Floor, showing well and raised ceiling level (Insall, 2021)

First Floor

Large open space that may have originally been subdivided. It is a plain red-brick room with a barrel vaulted ceiling that includes a central round opening for the rooflight above **[Plate 3.3.21]**. There are two fireplace openings in the east wall - a tall arched opening to the south and a small opening to the north - but the chimneypieces are missing. The original entrance is also to the very south of the east wall, with a modern timber door. The north and south walls have central narrow splayed recesses with small modern sash windows. There is stonework below the north window, while the area beneath the south window has been altered with the addition of concrete steps. The west wall has the original opening with a metal security gate that provides access to the original narrow stone staircase that leads up to the roof **[Plate 3.3.22]**.

Concrete floor throughout, which replaced the original timber floor. In various areas are recent lime render repairs, coloured red and white to match the brickwork and mortar joints, showing the location of previous modern partition walls, electrical wire trunking and lowered ceilings.



3.3.21 *First Floor of Blockhouse (Insall, 2021)*



3.3.22 *Staircase Connecting First Floor and Roof (Insall, 2021)*

3.3.2 The Ditch

The original ditch surrounds the Battery to its north, west and south [Plates 3.3.23-4]. It is served by a series of gun loops from the rubble walls of the Battery and blockhouse, and has rubble granite retaining walls. Remnants of the WWI concrete water tank that infilled the northwest corner of the ditch remain [Plate 3.3.25]. A section of the retaining wall has also been rebuilt to the north where the WWI steps and bridge connected the Battery with the grass area to the north [Plate 3.3.26]. Opposite this are small openings in the stone wall of the Battery that would have supported the bridge/ step structure. At the east end of the south ditch are several openings in both walls, suggesting that there may have previously been gates or a structure here [Plate 3.3.27]. Curiously, these do not exist at the east end of the north ditch. Leading west from the west ditch is the original serpentine entrance approach from the road flanked by rubble-stone retaining walls.



3.3.23 View of Ditch from Northwest (Insall, 2021)



3.3.24 View of Ditch from Southwest (Insall, 2021)



3.3.27 Openings in Retaining Wall, End of South Ditch (Insall, 2021)



3.3.26 Rebuilt Section of Wall, North of Ditch (Insall, 2021)



3.3.25 Remnant of WWI Water Tank in Northwest Corner of Ditch (Insall, 2021)



3.3.28 Serpentine Entrance Approach from Road (Insall, 2021)

3.3.3 The Defensive Glacis

The Battery was originally surrounded on the landward side (north, west and south) with grass sloped defensive glacis. These survive to the north and west, albeit with some alteration, and originally allowed shells to be fired directly north and south into the lough.

A road now cuts across the northern end of the **north grass glacis** to provide direct access from Pier Road to the pier [Plate 3.3.29]. The north glacis has functioned as a putting green since the 1960s and is surrounded by a modern white-painted timber picket fence with wire mesh. There is also a modern green-coloured metal hut within the putting green, while outside the fence are several modern benches. On the northwest corner are several signposts and a number of electricity boxes. The west side is largely intact, apart from the addition of modern information boards and the formation of a small flower bed adjacent to the serpentine approach from the road (see Plate 3.3.15).

The **north and west glacis** are surrounded by a low modern stone border. Along the west side, this stone border is set between 19th-century stone markers, which denote the edge of the site. Metal bars connected the stone markers but these have been removed, apart from a single bar. The border also incorporates two sets of three steps, to the north and west.



3.3.29 North Grass Glacis (Insall, 2021)

The **south glacis** has been removed and the area has been lowered and levelled to meet with the road level. This has exposed the rear of the associated stone retaining walls of the south ditch and the serpentine approach from the road, which now display jagged stones [Plate 3.3.30]. The area is now used in connection with a public house and there are a number of temporary structures within the site, facing the sea. Fronting the road is a section of the original stone wall, while the rest of the wall has been removed to enable the construction of two 19th-century, two-storey structures, including a three-bay pebble-dashed house with two-over-two sash windows and a six-bay rendered block in use as a public house [Plate 3.3.31].

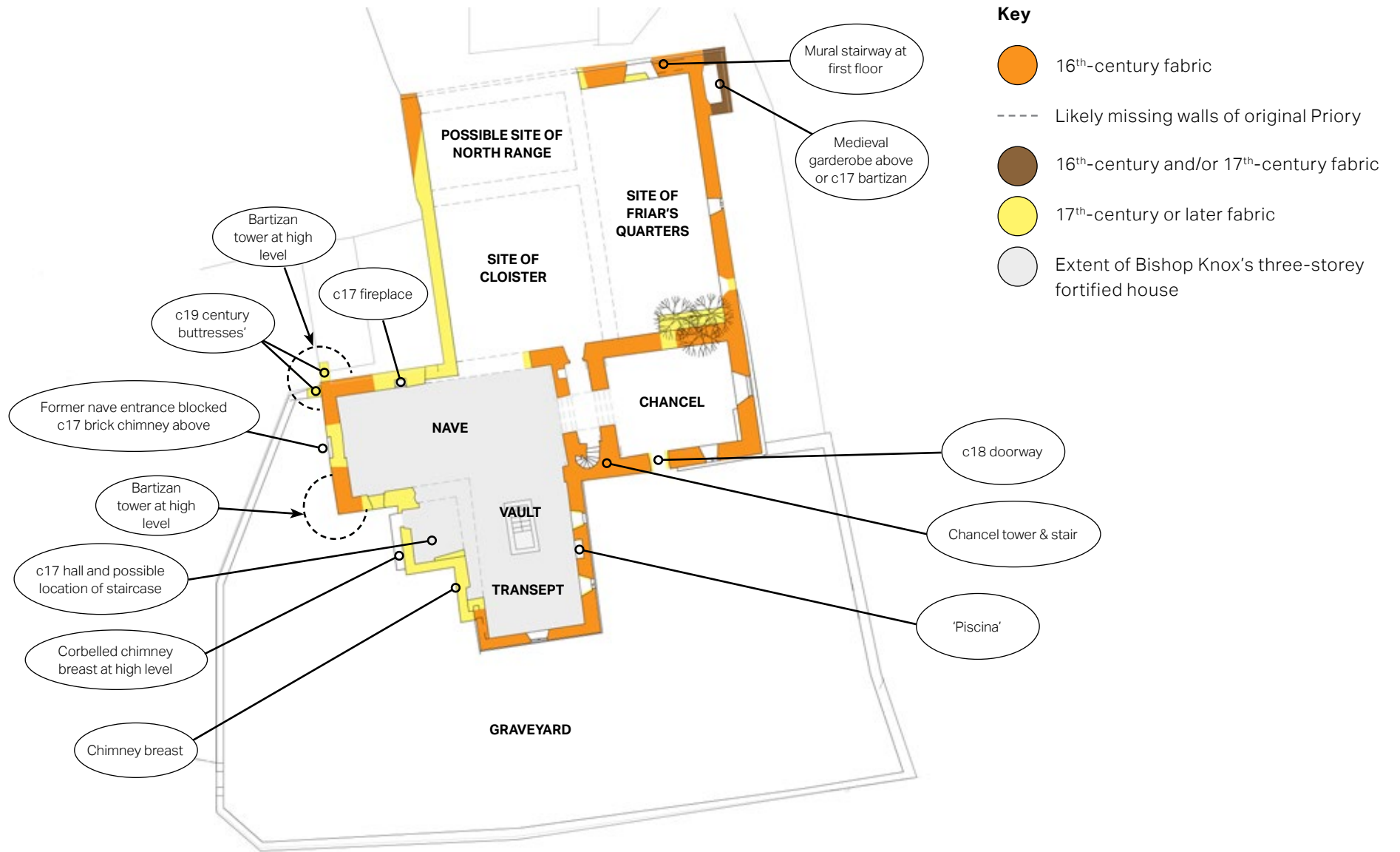


3.3.30 Lost South Grass Glacis (Insall, 2021)



3.3.31 Buildings on Former South Grass Glacis (Insall, 2021)

Rathmullan Abbey Development Plan



3.4 Rathmullan Abbey – Overview

Also referred to as: Rathmullan/St Mary's Priory, Friary and Monastery.

The Carmelite Priory is of at least two phases; founded as a religious site in the early-16th century - although some sources suggest that it originally dates to the early-15th century - with part of the site converted to a fortified house in the early-17th century. The site is in ruins with missing roofs and it has consequently become a picturesque landmark on the west coast of Lough Swilly. Several internal walls and a small section of the most northern elevation are also missing.

The site originally comprised a nave (east), tower (central), chancel (west), transept (south), domestic ranges (north) and a cloister (north), which all remain, albeit ruined **[Plates 3.5.1-3]**. The single-storey nave and the chancel were converted to a house in the early-17th century, which involved raising the height of their outer walls to accommodate an additional two storeys and erecting a small, three-storey extension at their junction. It appears that the first floor was the principal level as earlier windows were retained at ground-floor level. The site is of rubblestone construction with ashlar quoins and dressings in grey sandstone, while throughout the site are fragments of render. The internal ground level was raised over the years, and there is grass and vegetation throughout.

Within the internal grounds of the transept is a 19th-century crypt, erected as a burial place for the Batt family; Thomas Batt, a Belfast banker, bought the site in 1837. The crypt is now blocked. There is also memorial in the northeast corner of the chancel, while there are several fixed and loose memorials along the west side of the cloister area and the nave.



3.5.1a *Abbey, View from Southwest Showing Former South Transept (Right) and Nave (Left) (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.1b *Internal View, Showing Former South Transept (Left) and Nave (Right) (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.2 *Rathmullan Abbey, View from Southeast (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.3 *Rathmullan Abbey, Former Domestic Ranges and Cloister (Insall, 2021)*

3.5 Rathmullan Abbey – Detailed Description

3.5.1 The Chancel

The original single-storey chancel of the Abbey is located to the east of the tower. It runs west to east and originally had a pitched roof, which is now missing; the tops of the walls have consequently been affected and stonework is missing. The lower sections of the south and east walls are battered (sloped). The chancel is accessed from the west underneath the tower and an external opening to the south. There was also an opening at the centre of the north wall that has been infilled.

The **south elevation** is largely plain, apart from a small window at its east end [Plate 3.5.4]. This is a two-light pointed window with a missing central mullion and a vesica-shaped opening above [Plate 3.5.5]. The hood mould above the pointed-arched window opening terminates with label stops carved with faces. Internally, the inner arch of the window is double chamfered, while beneath the jamb of a wall-press or piscina-niche is visible in the wall [Plate 3.5.6]. There is a plain arched doorway near the centre of the south elevation, likely added in the 17th or 18th century for public access. This now contains a modern metal security gate.



3.5.4 South Elevation of Chancel and Tower (Insall, 2021)



3.5.5 Detail of Window, South Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)



3.5.6 Internal View of South Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)

The **east elevation** of the chancel is the gable end of the structure [Plate 3.5.7]. It retains a large pointed-arched opening but most of the original three-light cusped design with a tracery pattern is missing, as indicated in Smith's early-19th-century sketch [Plate 3.5.8]. The hood mould above, which terminates in stylised vine leaves, remains but is missing in places. It also originally included a keystone with a mitred figure that is also missing (see Plate 3.5.8); the framed niche above remains. Internally, the inner arch of the window is double chamfered but sections of the grey-sandstone dressings are missing [Plate 3.5.9].



3.5.7 East Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)



3.5.8 East Elevation of Chancel, Sir William Smith, Trinity College Dublin, IE TCD MS 942.1 image 29



3.5.9 Internal View of East Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)

The **north elevation** would have originally been internal, forming part of the east domestic range to the north, or possibly a small sacristy [Plate 3.5.10]. A later stone buttress has been added to its east end, which blocks a former door at the centre of the north elevation, the segmental head of which is still visible [Plate 3.5.11]. There are the remains of a tree stump above the east end of this wall. Internally, the wall is plain and includes the outline of the blocked doorway, while to its east an adjacent section of stonework is missing from the upper level [Plate 3.5.12].

The **west elevation** forms part of the tower and is described as part of that structure in Section 3.5.2.



3.5.10 North Elevation of Chancel and Tower (Insall, 2021)



3.5.12 Internal View of North Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)



3.5.11 Visible Arch of Blocked Doorway, North Elevation of Chancel (Insall, 2021)

3.5.2 The Tower

The original tower is positioned between the chancel (east) and the nave (west), and spans north to south. It is unclear if the narrower section to the south, which houses a spiral staircase, formed part of the original construction or was a later addition. The tower was originally four storeys and oversailed the roofs of the chancel and nave; the top storey now only survives to cill height. Between the second and third floors a string course wraps around the entire tower.

The **east elevation** has a large double-chamfered arched opening at ground level [Plate 3.5.13], with an inner order that springs from moulded imposts above inverted, tapering, half-octagon corbels (a single vine leaf decorates the north corbel) [Plate 3.5.14]. Above the opening is a small, rectangular infilled window that would have faced the high altar. Further above are the remains of the coping of the former pitched roof of the chancel. At second-floor level, the main tower has a similar small, open, rectangular window. The *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) describes the top window, which has mostly been lost, as being two light. However, the fabric that exists today appears to show a single-light window, similar to the lower-level windows of this elevation.



3.5.13 East Elevation of Tower (Insall, 2021)



3.5.14 North Corbel with Single Vine Leaf, East Elevation of Tower (Insall, 2021)

Elements of the **west elevation** are similar to the east, including the ground-floor arched opening decorated with corbels, the coping marking the position of the former pitched roof of the nave, and the small, open, rectangular window at second-floor level **[Plate 3.5.15]**. Rather than a window at first-floor level, there is an off-centre pointed doorway, which may have provided access to a pulpit and/or loft. A small lancet window also serves the staircase between the first and second floors. The remains of the two-light window in the top storey are visible on this side of the tower. Internally, there is a wall press to the north of the ground-floor opening **[Plate 3.5.16]**.



3.5.15 West Elevation of Tower (Insall, 2021)



3.5.16 Wall Press, to the Rear of the Northwest Pier of the Tower (Insall, 2021)

The **south elevation** is narrow as it forms part of the spiral staircase enclosure (see Plate 3.5.4). It has small narrow rectangular windows at first-floor level and between the second and third floors. At ground-floor level are fragments of grey sandstone dressings, possibly suggesting the presence of a blocked opening but the position of the staircase behind may indicate that this stonework could have been reused from elsewhere [Plate 3.5.17]. Internally, the spiral staircase could not be inspected at the time of survey but it is accessed from the north via a pointed-arched doorway with a modern metal and mesh security gate [Plate 3.5.18]. This doorway sits within a deep, tall, pointed-arched recess, positioned between the two large openings (west and east) of the tower.



3.5.17 Ground Floor of South Elevation of Tower (Insall, 2021)



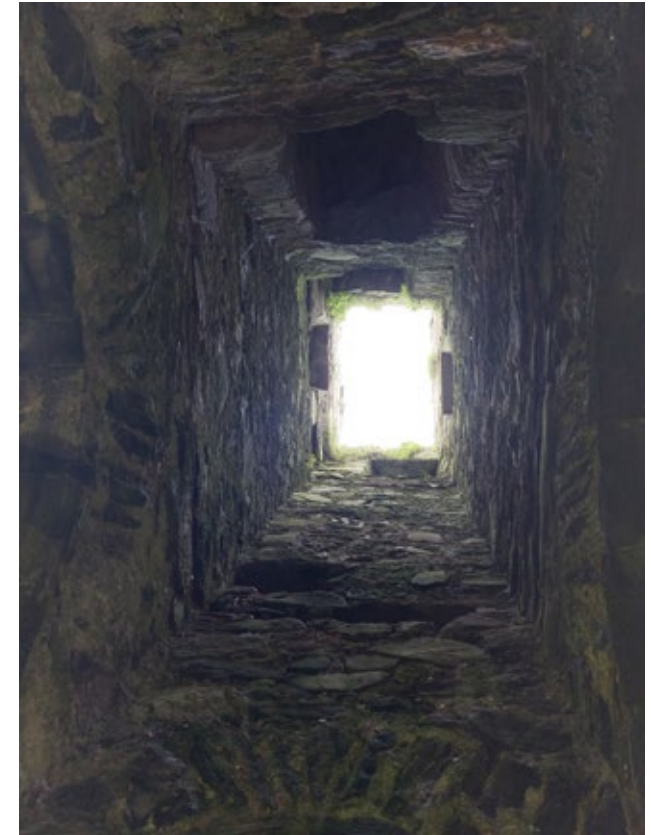
3.5.18 Entrance to Spiral Staircase of Tower (Insall, 2021)

The **north elevation** has double-chamfered doorway opening at ground level (see Plate 3.5.10), which is of rubble stone externally, but it retains grey sandstone dressings to its inner arch. The site's raised ground level is particularly apparent in this location as the top of the doorway is quite low. Above the doorway is a protruding stone support. The coping of the former chancel's roof is below a small, rectangular, first-floor window. A similar, slightly larger window is at second-floor level. Internally, the ground-floor doorway sits within a deep, tall, pointed-arched recess, positioned between the two large openings (west and east) of the tower [**Plate 3.5.19**]; the wall press noted above is located to the west of this recess.

Internally, the tower had timber floors, which have been lost [**Plate 3.5.20**]. As noted above, access to the staircase and the top of the tower was not possible at the time of survey.



3.5.19 Northern Section of Interior of Tower (Insall, 2021)



3.5.20 Missing Floors of Tower (Insall, 2021)

3.5.3 The Nave

The original nave of the Abbey was substantially altered in the early-17th century when, together with the south transept, it was converted into an L-shaped fortified house. As part of this, it was increased by two floors to create a three-storey house, while the east end of the south wall was removed to enable the erection of a three-storey gabled extension at the intersection of the nave and south transept. The round moulding profiles of the openings are typically Scottish in character.

The gable-fronted **west elevation** of the nave is one of the most striking features of the site [Plate 3.5.21]. The crow-stepped gable is crowned with a pair of red-brick chimney stacks, shaped like eight-pointed stars. These appear to be purely decorative as there is no visible evidence of flues or fireplaces in this wall. Flanking the gable at second-floor level are two round bartizans (corner turrets) on moulded corbel courses with circular pistol loops in the 17th-century Scottish style, using bands of different coloured stone to create a polychromatic effect [Plate 3.5.22]. There is a central window opening at this level but the dressings are missing and the head is supported by several modern timbers. At first floor is a flat-headed rectangular window, now blocked, while beneath was a former ground-floor doorway, later converted to a window; however, this is now blocked and the north jamb and cill are missing. Further north is a small window, now blocked. At the northwest corner of the nave are a pair of buttresses, possibly added in the 19th century and certainly added by the 1903 plan.



3.5.22 Gable of West Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)

Internally, the former ground-floor doorway, now blocked, is visible [Plate 3.5.23]. The original line of the gable of the church is also visible above the blocked opening at first-floor level.

The second-floor, round, bartizan continues around the corner of the **south elevation** [Plate 3.5.24]. Fragments of an adjacent window also remain at this level. There are also flat-headed windows at ground and first floor levels, now blocked. This elevation is plain internally, with just the blocking of the window openings visible [Plate 3.5.25].



3.5.21 West Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)



3.5.23 *Internal View of West Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.24 *South Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.25 *Internal View of South Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)*

The **north elevation** was not fully visible at the time of survey as it faces private property [Plate 3.5.26]. However, the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) notes that sections of a 16th-century window remain about midway along the exterior face. The second-floor, round, bartizan also continues around the west corner of this elevation. The east end of this wall has mostly been demolished, now creating a large opening between the nave and the cloister. Where the east end of the wall now terminates, there appears to be fragments of a first-floor window. Internally, this wall incorporates the main fireplaces, added in the 17th century and located at ground and first-floor level [Plate 3.5.27]. The fireplaces had large openings that were subsequently partially infilled to accommodate smaller fireplaces. On the second floor there are fragments of a fireplace that was built out from the inner face of the wall and supported on corbels.

The **east elevation** forms part of the tower and is described as part of that structure in Section 3.5.2.



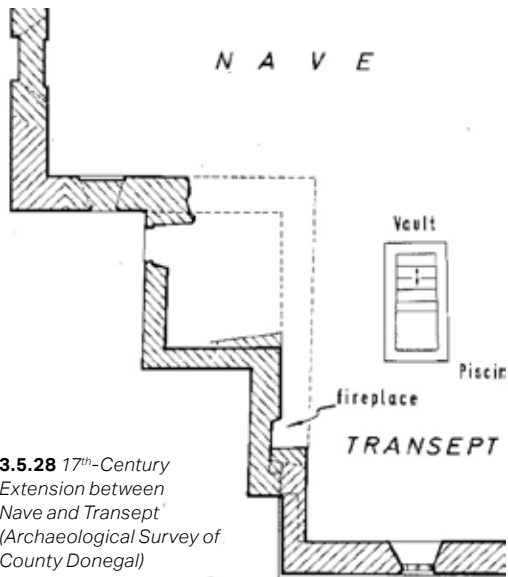
3.5.26 Partial View of North Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)



3.5.27 Internal View of North Elevation of Nave (Insall, 2021)

3.5.4 Early-17th-Century Extension

When the nave and the south transept were converted into an L-shaped fortified house in the early-17th century, a small three-storey gabled extension was erected at their intersection. This involved the removal of the east end of the south wall of the nave and the removal of a large section of the west wall of the south transept, although a section of this was rebuilt adjacent to the original line, as depicted on the 1903 plan [Plate 3.5.28]. Architectural historian, Alistair Rowan, suggests in *The Buildings of Ireland: North West Ulster* (1979) that this extension may have housed the staircase, due to the staggered positioning of the windows.



The main entrance to the house is in the **west elevation** of this extension [Plate 3.5.29]. Above the door, flanking a central panel, are the initials AN KN SE and the date 1618 (now almost illegible) [Plate 3.5.30]. The *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) states that the central panel had the Knox family coat of arms, but this is no longer visible. The door opening has a modern metal and mesh security gate, while the lower part of the original door surround to the north is missing. Between the ground and first floors, to the south, is a narrow, rectangular window, possibly originally serving an internal staircase. Above the entrance there is a rectangular window with light-grey stone dressings. There is a projecting flue supported by moulded corbels above this window but the former chimney stack above is missing. To the north of the flue, at second-floor level, is a small machicolation - an opening supported by corbels through which items could be dropped on attackers - while to the south is a rectangular window with light-grey stone dressings. The crow-stepped gable above the second floor is missing sections of stonework. Internally, additional features include a fireplace opening with grey-sandstone dressings on the second floor [Plate 3.5.31]. The fireplace and adjacent window have missing lintels now supported by modern timbers. A section of the demolished south wall of the nave remains to the north of this elevation.



3.5.29 West Elevation of Early-17th-century Extension (Insall, 2021)



3.5.30 Main Entrance of Fortified House (Insall, 2021)



3.5.31 Internal View of West Elevation of Early-17th-century Extension (Insall, 2021)

The **south elevation** of this extension is plain and only includes a two-light, flat-headed window between the ground and first floors, now blocked, and a smaller single window above at first-floor level to the east **[Plate 3.5.32]**. Internally, only the first-floor window opening is visible, which has a modern timber lintel **[Plate 3.5.33]**. There is also a section of built-out stonework at the east end at ground-floor level.



3.5.32 South Elevation of Early-17th-century Extension (Insall, 2021)



3.5.33 Internal View of South Elevation of Early-17th-century Extension (Insall, 2021)

3.5.5 Transept

The original south transept of the Abbey was substantially altered in the early-17th century when, together with the nave, it was converted into a house. As part of this, it was increased by two floors to create a three-storey house, while most of the west wall was demolished in connection with the erection of a three-storey gabled extension at the intersection of the transept and nave (see Plate 3.5.28). A section of this west wall was rebuilt, but adjacent to its original location. The east, south and return of the west wall rise from battered (sloped) lower courses.

The **west elevation** is in two planes, owing to the early-17th century alterations [Plate 3.5.34]. Only a small section of the original west wall remains in the southwest corner. This was extended upwards during the conversion works and retains a flat-head early-17th-century window, now blocked, at first-floor level, while there are fragments of a similar window above at second-floor level. Internally, this section of wall steps out at ground-floor level [Plate 3.5.35]. To the north, the wall projects from the main building line and was erected in the early-17th century to house fireplaces and flues. As such, it is plain externally. Internally, the inner face of the wall has fallen away, revealing two flues, one extending from the ground floor, the other from the first floor (see Plate 3.5.35). The first floor also includes an area of red brickwork, where a fireplace was presumably located previously.



3.5.34 West Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)



3.5.35 Internal View of West Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)

The **south elevation** was extended in the early-17th century and its gable retains most of its original 17th-century coping [Plate 3.5.36]. There is a single bay of windows at the centre, which are English in character. At ground floor is a two-light window and the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) notes the jambs and cill are probably 16th century but that the openings have been reduced in height, reusing the original arched heads surmounted by a lintel. It also states that the three-light window on the first floor, with a horizontal hood mould, was likely relocated from another part of the Abbey. The third storey has a small rectangular gable window with chamfered dressings. Internally, stone supports flank the ground-floor window, which may have supported a timber floor [Plates 3.5.37-8]. These are lower than the window head, suggesting that the window may have been repositioned.



3.5.36 South Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)



3.5.37 Internal View of South Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)



3.5.38 Stone Support (Insall, 2021)

The **east elevation** is two storeys and retains two 16th-century windows at ground level, comprising two-light, ogee-head windows, while there are three blocked rectangular openings with no dressings above (a large opening to the south and two small openings to the north) [Plate 3.5.39]. Internally, the ground floor windows had originally served a pair of arched altar recesses that were later partly demolished and rebuilt as simple splayed openings with segmental window heads [Plate 3.5.40]. The *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) states that the south window cill has two 16th-century hood-moulded panels preserving weathered, animal carving and stylised vine leaves, noting that one of these – formerly set in one of the gable – had previously been incorrectly described as the McSwyne coat of arms. These windows flank the remains of a piscina set within a hood-moulded recess [Plate 3.5.41]; the south piscina is missing. Engaged outer columns with spandrels above remain but inner spandrels supported by a central stone support appear to be missing. A large stone within the recess has been defaced with graffiti. Alistair Rowan, in *The Buildings of Ireland: North West Ulster* (1979) suggests that this was a fireplace, but this appears to have been an error as there is no flue visible.



3.5.39 East Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)



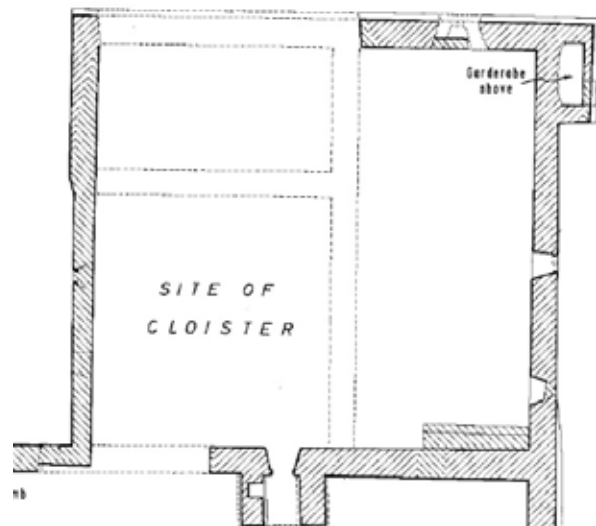
3.5.40 Internal View of East Elevation of Transept (Insall, 2021)



3.5.41 Remains of a Piscina (Insall, 2021)

3.5.6 The Domestic Range and Cloister

The domestic range and cloister formed part of the original structure and are located to the north of the site. There was originally an east range, with the cloister to the west. It is unclear if there was a range north of the cloister, as indicated on the 1903 plan [Plate 3.5.42]. Ground investigations would be required to ascertain this, as the walls of this potential north range, as well as the west wall of the east range, have been demolished. The external elevations of this area of the site could not be fully inspected at the time of survey as the site is bound by private land to the north, northwest and east.



3.5.42 Domestic Range and Cloister (Archaeological Survey of County Donegal)

The **east elevation** forms part of the former east range and was partially visible externally in long views at the time of survey **[Plate 3.5.43]**. There is a square three-storey projecting structure, lit by lancet windows to the north, described by the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) as a garderobe and by Rowan in the *Buildings of Ireland: North West Ulster* (1979) as an early-17th-century corner bartizan; a detailed inspection of this area was not possible but either description is possible. There are also two large visible openings at first-floor level but it is unclear if stonework is just missing or if these relate to former openings. This structure was depicted with two conical roofs in the early-19th-century sketches by Smith. The rest of the east elevation is two storeys and at the centre is a ground-floor two-light ogee-headed window with a central transom (missing mullions) with rebates for wooden shutters **[Plates 3.5.44-45]**. Further south is a splayed recess, presumably serving a former opening that is now blocked internally. The *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) states that the dormitory extended over the whole length of the first floor, where two narrow lancets are visible at the north end; one is blocked internally. Otherwise, sections of stonework are missing from the length of the first floor, possibly indicating the location of former windows. Internally, at the northeast corner of the east range is an arched doorway at first-floor level, providing access to corner structure (garderobe/ bartizan) (see Plate 3.5.44).



3.5.43 East Elevation of Domestic Range, with Chancel to the South (Insall, 2021)



3.5.44 Internal View of East Elevation of Domestic Range (Insall, 2021)



3.5.45 Central Ogee Window (Insall, 2021)

The **north elevation** of the east range was only visible in limited views from the surrounding area, but was fully visible internally **[Plate 3.5.46-47]**. It is a two-storey gabled structure with a large window at first-floor level comprising two lights with ogee heads and transoms (missing mullions and spandrels) with rebates for wooden shutters. A mural staircase is built into the wall east of this window, leading to the upper storey of the corner structure (garderobe or corner bartizan) and/ or out to the roof **[Plate 3.5.48]**. At the top of the staircase opening is a pierced stone for the pivot of a door. Stone corbels support the staircase on the inner face of this elevation, while there are also two corbels above the ground floor. There appears to be a blocked central opening at ground floor level, with a high-level lancet window to its west. West of the main window on the first floor is a lower rectangular window. Further west, the north wall of the north range (or cloister) is missing, but a later low-level stone wall has been erected slightly further north of the main building line **[Plate 3.5.49]**.



3.5.46 *Internal View of North Elevation of Domestic Range (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.47 *Partial View of North Elevation of Domestic Range (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.49 *Missing West Section of North Elevation of Domestic Range (Insall, 2021)*



3.5.48 *Mural Staircase (Insall, 2021)*

The **west elevation** of this area was not accessible at the time of survey. However, the *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) suggests that the north end of this wall, although rebuilt and pointed, formed part of the original structure as it has battered (sloped) lower courses, and states that this was therefore the western limit of the potential former north range. The stonework of the rest of the west elevation is of an indeterminate date, so it is unclear if it follows the original line of the west elevation of the cloister [Plate 3.5.50]. Sections of stonework have also fallen away from the inner face of this wall. The *Archaeological Survey of County Donegal* (1983) also states that the wall includes small horizontal windows with re-used dressings and a segmental-headed rear-arch of a blocked window or door.



3.5.50 Internal View of West Elevation of Domestic Range Area (Insall, 2021)

3.5.7 The Graveyard

The graveyard surrounds the site to the south and appears to have been used from the early-19th century, when the chapel was still in use as a parish church, until the late-20th century when it was looked after by local caretakers. The gravemarkers mostly date to the 19th century and are a mixture of upstanding, recumbent and table-type memorials [Plates 3.5.51-53]. They are mostly located in the southwest corner of the site and are more limited to the south and southeast. They are generally modestly designed, many depicting crosses, in addition to an obelisk, in a mixture of stone and marble. The most impressive is the stone table-type memorial dedicated to Captain William Pakenham (see Plate 3.5.52). It is decorated by bulbous pilasters and surrounded by rusted, wrought-iron railings with corner ball finials. The site is enclosed by a rubble stone wall to the south and east [Plate 3.5.53]. A grass path runs through the graveyard, flanked by higher level grassed areas. There are areas of rough-cast render and brick repair, in addition to a 19th-century entrance at the west end with pyramidal-capped stone piers and a wrought-iron gate.



3.5.51 View of Southwest Corner of Graveyard (Insall, 2021)



3.5.52 View of South Area of Graveyard, including Captain William Pakenham's Memorial (Insall, 2021)



3.5.53 View of Southeast Corner of Graveyard (Insall, 2021)



3.5.54 Wall Surrounding Site (Insall, 2021)

4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of significance of Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey, so that the proposals for change to these sites are fully informed as to their significance and so that the effect of the proposals on that significance can be evaluated.

The assessment begins with a general summary of the buildings' history and significance. Where relevant, the various elements of the site are assessed according to a sliding scale of significance, reflecting the extent to which they contribute to the special interest.

4.2 Assessment of Significance

Rathmullan Battery Fort

In 1798, during the French Revolutionary War, pairs of temporary batteries were erected on either side of Lough Swilly to defend the channel. They were located at Rathmullan, Muckamish and Knockalla on the west side and Inch, Saltpan Hill, Neids Point and Dunree on the east. By c.1813, these six structures were fully replaced by permanent battery forts. However, the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 which ended the Napoleonic Wars, meant that the forts on Lough Swilly were largely obsolete shortly after their construction. Nevertheless, these were important strategic military sites, and their locations are of significance. Although not physically attached, the grouping of these structures is of also significance, particularly those that are paired to provide adequate artillery cover over an expanse of water, such as Rathmullan and Inch.

These structures also formed part of a much wider programme of military buildings erected by the British in Ireland during the Napoleonic wars; 52 Martello towers were erected between 1804 and 1815 around the Irish coastline to protect the island from French invasion. Rathmullan Battery Fort is therefore not only of significance locally, but also nationally and internationally.

The Napoleonic-era Rathmullan battery comprised a blockhouse supporting two guns and a D-shaped battery, with a courtyard area that housed five guns. A ditch with grass glacis/ embankments defended the site on the landward side (north, west and south). However, the site became obsolete after it was erected in c.1813 and, by 1869, it was retired and the gunners removed. In the late-19th century, cannon artillery had been superseded by exploding shells and guns with much greater range, and several coastal defences on Lough Swilly were consequently modernised, including Inch but not Rathmullan. As such, the Rathmullan Battery forms a unique example of British coastal artillery defences of the Napoleonic period. This impressive, if austere, structure is of fine military engineering that is of high significance. It dominates the coastline and is an important element of the built heritage and history of the local area.

Several factors, however, detract from the significance of the site. The guns are now missing and several structures – including the magazine, privies, galleries, north guard room (later a 'Soldiers Quarters') and shot furnace - within its courtyard were removed, likely in connection with the insertion of a large oil tank during the First World War. However, the use of the site during

the First World War is of some historic significance, and the stone piers and gate to the north of the site, which remain from this period, are consequently of moderate significance. A WWI water tank was located in the northwest corner of the ditch, spanning its width and blocking access, but this was recently removed as it detracted from the appearance and use of the site; sections of cement render, however, still remain concealing the stone walls of the ditch.

The original defensive grass glacis were also altered, which further detracts from the site's significance, particularly with the removal and levelling of the south glacis and the alteration of the north glacis with the cut-through road to the pier. The north glacis has been further altered with its conversion to a putting green during the 20th century. While the associated white-painted timber fence and metal hut detract from the significance of the Battery, the putting-green use is of some significance to the local community. The setting of the site has also been unsympathetically altered over the years, most noticeably with the erection of a modern car park to its northeast.

The site was used for storage in the early-20th century to support the local herring industry, while in the 1990s it was converted to a museum and heritage centre with a focus on the old Gaelic order and Flight of the Earls. The museum use resulted in the erection of a detracting set of external stone steps (providing access to the first floor of the blockhouse that was originally accessed via a ladder) and the removal of sections of walls in the ground floor of the blockhouse. Nevertheless, the museum use opened up the site to the public and it consequently become a significant

public amenity to the local community and tourists. The site was unfortunately later abandoned and closed to the public. However, recent conservation repairs were undertaken, following the completion of a Conservation Report (2019), which are part of a series of works to reopen the site.

This special interest is manifest in the fabric and form of the site, which has the following hierarchy of significance:

Of the **highest significance** are:

- The original site comprising the Battery with its courtyard and granite walls, the blockhouse, the surrounding ditch, the serpentine entrance approach and the defensive glacis, although factors detract from these elements, which are outlined below;

Of **high significance** are:

- The stone bases of the guns within the courtyard, but the loss of the guns is unfortunate;
- The existing guard room structure and entrance way, although factors detract from these elements, which are outlined below;

Of **moderate significance** are:

- The stone piers and gate added to the north of the site during the First World War owing to their historic interest;
- The interior of the blockhouse, although factors detract from this, which are outlined below;

- The historic brick well (not including the modern brickwork above floor level, which is of neutral interest);
- The 19th-century stone markers around the edge of glacis, where these remain;

Of **neutral significance, neither contributing to or detracting** from the significance of the whole are:

- The modern flower bed along the north side of the Battery courtyard - although the associated vegetation largely blocks views of the north wall, this area has already been considerably altered;
- Modern features, including the entrance gates, surrounding metal fence and gates, doors and reception desk;

Factors which detract from the site's significance are:

- The altered setting, particularly the road that cuts across the north glacis and the car park (northeast);
- Loss of several original structures, including the guns, magazine, shot furnace, privies, and galleries;
- Removal of most of the north guard room structure and the associated alteration of the entrance way with the loss of a gun loop;
- Loss or concealment of the fifth gun stone base;
- Modern concrete tiles forming paths in the courtyard;
- Raising of the courtyard level, particularly as a gunner would now be positioned too high for practical use of the gun loops in the surrounding walls;
- Blocking the gun loops of the arcaded casements and entrance way;

- Modern stone store along the west side of the courtyard;
- Modern stone steps providing permanent external access to the original first-floor entrance of the blockhouse (this was originally accessed via a ladder);
- Modern addition of the ground-floor entrance to the blockhouse, as this was originally accessed internally from the first floor;
- Internal alterations of the ground floor of the blockhouse, including the loss of sections of brickwork walls and the raising of the flat ceiling levels;
- Loss of chimneypieces at first floor of blockhouse;
- Remaining fragments of the WWI concrete water tank in the northwest corner of the ditch detract from the appearance of the site, although they are of some limited historic interest;
- Alterations to the grass defensive glacis, including the loss of the south glacis and the cut through of the north glacis with the pier road;
- Additions to the grass defensive glacis which detract from the appearance of the site, including the putting green fence and hut to the north (although these have some communal value), and clutter such as the signposts and electricity boxes to the northwest corner.

Rathmullan Abbey

Ireland was historically ruled by a clan system, with the O'Donnell clan ruling over Ulster, including most of present-day Co. Donegal. The Mac Suibhne (MacSweeney) clan were mercenaries from Scotland brought in as allies with the O'Donnell chieftains. The Carmelite Priory at Rathmullan was founded in 1516 by Maire Ni Mhaille, wife of Ruidhri (Rory) MacSweeney (Lord of Fanad), following the death of their son Rory Og in 1508. The original medieval Priory at Rathmullan was a European importation and originally consisted of a church - which comprised a nave, tower, chancel, and south transept - and a cloister and domestic ranges to the north. Although the original structure has been altered and is now in ruins, the remaining medieval fabric is of the **highest significance** as it illustrates the layout, and in some instances the form, of the original religious site.

The Abbey was sacked in 1595 by the English during the Nine Years War and used briefly as a garrison for English forces, which is of historic interest. In 1607, the nearby Flight of the Earls took place, signifying an important transition in Irish history: marking the end of the old Gaelic Order and beginning of English, and Scottish settlements, known as the 'Plantation of Ulster'. The Abbey has high historic interest as it survives from this poignant period in Irish history and is representative of this significant transition, with its consequent conversion to a fashionable plantation dwelling by 1618; Andrew Knox, Scottish Bishop, appointed Bishop of Raphoe, Donegal, converted part of the site to fortified house, with only the chancel being retained as in religious use as a private chapel. The walls of the nave and transept were extended

to form a three-storey house and a gabled three-storey extension was erected at their junction, which included the entrance door and possibly the staircase (since lost). The nave's west elevation was decorated with round bartizans (corner turrets), a crow stepped gable and chimney stacks shaped like eight-pointed stars, while fireplaces were added to the nave and transept (two survive in the north wall of the nave). The remaining Jacobean fabric is also of the highest significance as it represents the conversion of the site from religious to (mostly) domestic use, a fate that faced other religious sites in Ireland because of *English rule. The Scottish-style features were also fashionable elements of plantation houses and the juxtaposition with the earlier medieval features is of historic and architectural significance. Together, the medieval and Jacobean fabric has evolved into a distinctive composition that symbolises a fracture in Irish history.*

The original Abbey signifies an important period in Irish history, when clans endowed religious orders as a gesture of their piety, wealth and status, and the site's original connection with both the Carmelite order and the MacSweeney clan is of **high historical significance**. The connection with the Knox family is also of high historic significance, as they occupied the site for over 100 years and are representative of the site's later use as a plantation house. When the Knox family left the site in the 1730s, the Abbey was then left to ruin, apart from the chancel which had been consecrated as a parish church in 1706. However, when a new parish church was erected elsewhere in 1814, the Abbey site was fully abandoned and left

to decay; only the graveyard continued in use. Later owners, such as the Batt family, are consequently of more **limited historic significance**.

The Abbey has stood at Rathmullan for over 500 years and this ruined structure has become an evocative, picturesque landmark on the west coast of Lough Swilly. It has strong **cultural interest**, which has shifted over the years, from fulfilling its original religious purpose for the Carmelite order, then supporting residential use and later local religious use, to becoming an important amenity for the local community and tourists over the last two centuries. The site's location is also of **significance**, as its position on raised ground, close to the shore of the sheltered deepwater of Lough Swilly, meant that it had a commanding presence as it could be seen from the distance and was easily accessible, especially from water. This unfortunately meant that it was also of strategic importance to invading forces, and was consequently particularly important in the imposition of plantation rule.

Separate to the Abbey structure, there are other elements of the site that are of interest. The 19th-century burial vault within the transept is of **some architectural and historic significance** as it was added by the Batt family, who owned the Abbey during much of the 19th century. The graveyard to the south of the site was in use for c.200 years and represents the site's historic use as a parish church. The active use of the graveyard until the end of the 20th century is also of significance to the local community. The graveyard as an overall composition is of **significance**, as is the stone boundary wall and the 19th-century

entrance piers and gate, while the individual memorials – some of which are within the walls of the Abbey - are of **varying degrees of historic and architectural significance.**

Several factors, however, **detract** from the significance of the site. In particular, its setting has been eroded over time with 20th-century residential development enclosing it to the west, north and east, resulting in the north side of the Abbey being inaccessible to the public. A garage has also been erected adjacent to the structure, at the junction of the nave and west wall of the cloister. Tall modern telephone poles connected by wires also flank the south boundary wall, which interrupt views of the site from the south. There is also insensitive graffiti at the back of the piscina in the transept and there are some areas of overgrown vegetation within the Abbey that prevent visitors from accessing or viewing certain areas of the building, such as the west half of the nave.

5.0 Commentary on the Proposals

5.1 Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Built Heritage

The proposals are described in the drawings and Design Report produced by Robin Lee Architecture, which this assessment accompanies. The Rathmullan (Community & Heritage) Regeneration Project is situated within the historic core of Rathmullan led by Donegal County Council in association with the local voluntary community group 'Rathmullan The Way Forward'. There are six key elements of the project, as follows:

Work Area 1: the regeneration of the Rathmullan Battery Fort, which is the centrepiece of the project

Work Area 2: the erection of a new Community Hub

Work Area 3: public access and interpretation improvements at Rathmullan Abbey

Work Area 4: public realm enhancement

Work Area 5: creation of public amenity space

Work Area 6: elevated coastal walkway

Work Area 1: Rathmullan Battery Fort (Napoleonic Gun Battery)

Following the conversion of the Rathmullan Battery Fort to a museum in the 1990s and its subsequent closure, this landmark site has been left vacant and under-utilised for a number of years. The proposals therefore seek to renew and repurpose the site to serve and function as a new 'Village Square' and an education and interpretation centre. The Battery would be sensitively extended and upgraded to ensure that these proposed uses would provide long-term viable uses of the site.

Extension

An extension is proposed in the courtyard, in the form of a large, canopied structure along its west side. The structure would be designed as a modular grid supported by columns - with no fixings proposed into the fabric of the Battery - and subdivided by glazed and infill panels to form functional internal spaces at ground-floor level; including a foyer, reception, long gallery, WCs, AV display room, learning space, and store. The foyer would be glazed and would align with the blockhouse to ensure that this structure is expressed and remains visible from within the courtyard. The northwest and southwest corners of the courtyard were historically occupied by structures, such as the magazine, but most of these were removed leaving the arcaded casemates and fragments of lost structures exposed. Locating the new extension along the west side is, therefore, appropriate and it would be comfortably accommodated; its location would also allow the gun bases along the east side, which are of high significance, to be retained and unaffected by the proposals. Furthermore, the west and north walls of the Battery would be exposed and remain visible within the structure, particularly with the introduction of a long gallery along the west edge, encouraging visitors and users of the site to better engage with its historic fabric. The guardhouse would be retained with the modern timber door/panel removed to allow the interior to form part of the interpretation experience and the terrace set back to allow the roof to be exposed and viewed from the terrace area. Glazed panels are also proposed along the west edge of the terrace on top, allowing the historic fabric to be viewed from above and the junction between the two to be readily apparent.

The modern stone steps that currently provide access to the first floor of the blockhouse, and detract from the significance of the site, would be removed. A staircase would be integrated beneath the canopy structure at its south end to provide access to its roof and the blockhouse. The use of the canopy roof as a terrace would provide incredible views of Lough Swilly and its surrounding landscape. This raised level takes inspiration from the galleries that historically lined the north and south sides of the courtyard, which have since been lost. To maintain views of the blockhouse behind, an open stainless-steel balustrade would provide fall protection along its eastern edge.

The new extension along the west side of the courtyard has been sensitively considered. In part, it would renew the historic line of building along the western edge of the courtyard, while still permitting the remaining structures to be clearly read. It would be a high-quality, sympathetically designed, modern structure that would work successfully with the historic site, whilst allowing its existing form and features to be visible and celebrated. It would have a neutral impact on the significance of the protected structure, whilst supporting necessary uses to secure the long-term viability and beneficial use of this vacant site.

The Blockhouse

The blockhouse would be utilised to house interpretive content, conveying the history of the Battery and its environs. The modern central doorway on the ground floor would be retained but marginally widened for universal access, which would have neutral impact on the significance of the building as the doorway was a modern insertion. Within the ground floor, the

modern reception desk would be removed, as would the modern brickwork above the historic well. Glazing would be inserted in the floor above the well allowing it to be visible, thereby preserving the significance of this feature.

The ground floor was historically accessed from the first floor, likely through trapdoors. However, vertical circulation has been lost due to the replacement of the first-floor timber floor with a concrete floor. It is proposed to reinstate internal access between the two levels with the insertion of a staircase and lift to the north of the blockhouse which would see the removal of a section of the flat, replacement, concrete floor. Locating access to the north would preserve the pair of barrel vaults at the centre of the ground floor. On the first floor, the vertical circulation would be separated from the main space by a partition wall. As this level was historically subdivided, although the original plan form is unknown, this insertion could be comfortably accommodated.

These proposed works to the blockhouse would have a neutral impact on the significance of the protected structure, as non-historic 1990s fabric would be removed, whilst providing some enhancement with the reinstatement of access between the two levels. Furthermore, the insertion of a lift and widening the ground-floor entrance would provide universal access, which would be a public benefit. Previous work repointing the masonry in breathable lime-based mortar may address the long-standing humidity problems within the blockhouse, which contributed to the failure of the 1990s museum works, and this will be monitored over time. For the present, interpretative

content within the blockhouse will be constrained by this, and elements requiring a dry environment will be placed within the proposed extension.

The Courtyard

In front of the canopy will be a large open amenity space contained within the Battery walls – envisaged to form a 'Village Square'. The landscaping would incorporate hard and soft landscaping and will provide space for the local community to use for events and activities and allow them to better engage with the Battery's historic significance.

The creation of a 'Village Square' would have a neutral impact on the significance of the protected structure, whilst providing space for community use and increasing engagement with the Battery, which would be a public benefit.

The Glacis

Improvements are proposed to the north grass glacis with the removal of visual clutter - including the white-painted timber fence, the putting green hut, information boards, signposts, electricity boxes, benches, and the modern low stone walls between the historic stone markers - which would enhance the significance and setting of the protected structure. A key element of the project is to improve access to the Battery, which is currently via the serpentine entrance on the west side. As the site was originally designed for defence, access is consequently not easily apparent, particularly from the car park to the north where most visitors commence their exploration of Rathmullan. Direct access from the north, in the form of a natural granite sett stepped path, is proposed

along the east edge of the north grass glacis. A sloped path would also span northwest-southeast across the grass; this path would connect with a pedestrian crossing on the road, adjacent to the proposed Community Hub (as described above). The sloped path would incorporate stone or high-quality concrete inlays to facilitate access but would be largely grassed and would consequently have a limited impact on the appearance of the north glacis. Both paths would meet at the edge of the north ditch, where a level bridge is proposed in the location of an historic bridge (indicated by gate piers) that would connect with the east embankment; the embankment has already been lowered and levelled to create a grassed walkway. Balustrades are required at the edges of the raised east and south edges of the north glacis to provide necessary protection for the safe use of the site, these would be stainless steel following the design of those proposed within the Battery.

The proposals have been sensitively considered to take advantage of historic access routes to the Glacis and Courtyard. Although there would be some visual impact on the site, namely with the stepped path and necessary balustrades, the proposals would be an improvement on the current arrangement as the white-painted timber fence surrounds the entire north glacis and there is also additional clutter. The proposals would also offer the key benefit of providing improved and direct access to the site from the north, which would support the long-term viability and beneficial use of the protected structure.

A pathway is also proposed to provide direct access from the car park to the beach east of the Battery, as access to this part of the beach is only via the battery's ditch, which is similarly not easily apparent to visitors. The pathway would run between the north glacis and the modern single-storey structure to its east, which houses a tourist information centre and toilet block.

This pathway would be sensitively accommodated with only limited loss of green space it would not have an adverse impact on the setting or significance of the protected structure, whilst providing a key public benefit.

Work Area 2: Community Hub

The proposals also include a new-build structure, which would function as a Community Hub. This would be a unique and flexible space with digital capacities for the community, business and remote working whilst also supporting local tourism by offering facilities which would increase dwell-time.

The Community Hub would be located on the site of the former Pier Hotel, on the corner of Pier Road and Kerrs Bay, to the northwest of the Battery. There were previously two large, three-storey, Victorian buildings previously on this site are no longer in existence and it is now an empty site surrounded by a fence. The site also includes the two small two-storey cottages to the south, which connect with a long terrace. The proposed new structure includes a low podium that references the scale of the two small cottages and wraps around the site on Pier Road, where the datum aligns with the string courses of the adjacent buildings. A taller structure is set back from the streets that

would be similar in height to the former building on the site and would align with the height of the three-storey White Hart pub on the opposite corner. There would also be lower structure that would be located behind the two cottages. The jewel in the crown of the Community Hub is the proposed roof terrace which would offer breath-taking views across the sea and of the wider coastline. It would be constructed with a stone facing. This accords with the materiality of the other community buildings in Rathmullan, and differentiates the building from the residential structures nearby, which are in white painted render. Fenestration in the Kerrs Bay Road and Pier Road elevations will be differentiated to respect the scale of the adjoining buildings and to mark it as a community and civic building whilst also engaging people with the internal activities and allowing for the stunning views to be appreciated from inside the building as well as on the terrace. A south-facing window will allow the setting of both the Battery and the Abbey to be enjoyed.

Although the new Community Hub would have a contemporary appearance, it would be a high-quality addition in appropriate materials that would be sensitive to the scale of the surrounding buildings. The fine detail of the proposals for this building are a synthesis of the elements which form its setting.

Work Area 3: Rathmullan Abbey

The key aim of the proposals is to introduce sensitive interventions to Rathmullan Abbey to improve accessibility within the monument to enable its increased public use and purpose and support local tourism / increase dwell-time. A floor is proposed

within the ruins of this structure, which would be located in areas that were historically internal spaces and allowing people to experience the ruinous walls at close proximity, thereby aiding the interpretation of the site. As such, the cloister to the north of the tower would largely remain as an open green space; it is unclear if there was originally a north range at its northern end. The floor would comprise rectangular stone panels on a grid system supported by non-intrusive pedestals over the undulating ground surface. The floor would be set away from the walls and would consequently not affect the above-ground structure. Similarly, the grid would be designed around features, such as the 19th-century vault, to allow them to remain visible. Lighting and interpretation would be integrated within the floor structure to better reveal the historic development and significance of the Abbey to the local community and visitors alike. Overgrown vegetation that prevents visitors from accessing or viewing certain areas of the building, such as the west half of the nave, has now been removed and the new floor would allow full access to all areas of the site.

The proposed floor would be a subtle insertion that would provide level access throughout the ruined building, allowing full access to all internal elevations, which would enhance the significance of the protected structure and improve the visitor experience. The clever integration of lighting and interpretation into the floor structure would enable these necessary services to be discreetly accommodated, whilst significantly enhancing the user experience and understanding the site.

Improvements are also proposed at the entrance to the graveyard, at the southwest corner of the site. At present, there is an earth sloped bank that leads up to the entrance gate. New non-slip stone paving is proposed at the entrance, set behind an integrated bench which mediates the level differences and encouraging visitors to approach the entrance from a gentler slope to the west.

The access improvements at the entrance of the Abbey site would provide safer and improved access. This would be a sensitive addition in appropriate materials that would not have an adverse impact on the setting or significance of the protected structure.

Work Area 4: Public Realm (Walkway/ Street)

The proposals seek to connect and celebrate the two protected structures, namely the Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey, in several ways.

Improvements are proposed to the public realm between the two sites with a focus on widening pedestrian footways where possible and replacing the existing tarmac finishes with natural granite setts in key areas to signal pedestrian priority and signify key moments within the public realm such as the Battery, Community Hub and Rathmullan Abbey.

The proposed improvements to the public realm will enhance the setting of the protected structures and increase their connectivity, namely the Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey, whilst providing a safer environment for local residents and visitors, which would be a public benefit.

Work Area 5: Public Amenity Space

It is proposed to repurpose the green space to the south of the village for community use. The stone perimeter wall would be retained enclosing a green space to the rear with a public space created in the area in front of the sea wall to act to as a generous viewing platform from which people can experience the unique setting of Rathmullan and its significant relationship with the sea. Owing to its close proximity to the point from which the Flight of the Earls took place in September 1607 and views due south to Rome and Coruna the viewing platform has great potential for interpretation which will provide people with a greater understanding of the area's historic context.

The proposed public amenity space will bring public benefits in creating a space where people can dwell and enjoy the wider setting of the historic sites whilst offering the opportunity to introduce interpretation to increase understanding of their historic context.

Work Area 6: Elevated Coastal Walkway

A further element of the proposals is introducing a coastal walkway between the Battery and Abbey to provide safe access between the two sites. At the Battery, this would partially wrap around the entrance to the ditch, to the south of the main structure, and then span westwards towards the Abbey, terminating at the slipway to its southwest. The walkway would be cantilevered from the coastal stone wall on steel support structure with a lightweight extruded aluminium plank deck with regularly spaced steel fins to enable maximum views with integrated lighting.

The coastal walkway would only marginally occupy a section of the Battery's ditch and would clearly be a modern insertion. As such, it is considered that it would not have an adverse impact on the significance of the Battery. The walkway would bring significant public benefits in terms of the safe access it would provide between the two historic sites. However, more importantly, as an unashamedly modern addition to the coastline it would signify the interest of the Battery and Abbey as heritage assets and as interconnected visitor attractions whilst allowing people to engage with the wider setting including the water and landscape in a new and exciting way.

5.2 Justification of the Proposals

The principal aim of Chapter 7: The Natural and Built Heritage of the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)* is 'to conserve, protect and enhance the County's natural, built and cultural heritage for future generations and encourage appreciation, access and enjoyment of these resources.'

This aim sits at the heart of this proposals, as key elements of built heritage in this coastal historic town would be conserved, protected and enhanced, particularly with the sensitive alteration and extension of the Rathmullan Battery Fort to support a new museum, and improving public access and interpretation at Rathmullan Abbey. These proposed works are also specifically designed to encourage current and future generations to appreciate, access and enjoy these under-utilised historic sites at the core of Rathmullan.

Regarding built heritage, it is a policy of the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)* is to ensure *'the repair, reuse and appropriate refurbishment of...historic buildings'* (Policy **BH-P-4**).

Both protected structures - Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey – have recently undergone considerable repair works. However, regenerating these under-utilised sites and providing them with long-term viable uses would ensure their long-term maintenance and *'repair'*. The alterations proposed to support the *'reuse'* of and improved access to the Battery and the insertion of the floor to improve public access and interpretation of the Abbey have been carefully considered; these historic buildings would undergo *'appropriate refurbishment'* and, as outlined above, their significance would either be preserved or enhanced by the proposals.

Other relevant policies of the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)* aim to ensure that *'measures to extend, modify or materially alter the fabric of...historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and craftsmanship and do not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of a structure'* (Policy **BH-P-6**) and to facilitate *'appropriate and high quality design solutions including considerations of scale, proportion, detailing and material specification for development proposals affecting vernacular and/ or historic buildings in both urban and rural settings'* (Policy **BH-P-8**).

As demonstrated above, the proposals to extend, modify and materially alter Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey have been sympathetically developed. Although contemporary materials and structures are proposed, these would be *'high-quality design solutions'* that would complement and be entirely *'appropriate'* and *'sensitive'* to the *'character and appearance'* of these historic buildings. There would also be no *'detrimental impact'* on these protected structures. Furthermore, the new Community Hub has sought to present a *'high-quality design solution'* informed by its surrounding historic setting, including *'scale, proportion, detailing and material'*.

Regarding the townscape, a policy of the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)* aims to *'conserve and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of towns and streetscapes in the County, including street layouts, historic structures, building lines, traditional plot widths, signage and historical street furniture as well as the character of the area'* (Policy **BH-P-9**).

The proposals have been developed to ensure that the *'quality, character and distinctiveness'* of this historic town would be conserved and also enhanced by the proposals, particularly with the improvements to the public realm. The new Community Hub has been designed to be sympathetic to the established scale and materials of the existing urban grain whilst introducing an unashamedly contemporary building

which will signify its community, tourism and civic use and capture the significant relationship between the town and its coastal setting. The removal of the clutter, such as the white-painted timber fence and signposts, from the north grass glaxis of the Battery would also *'enhance'* the character of the townscape.

Specifically relating to the public realm, a policy of the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)* aims to *'ensure the sensitive design, siting and rationalisation of modern street furniture and elements... which will visually integrate with their host locations'* (Policy **BH-P-12**).

The public realm proposals will enhance the pedestrian experience and, through design and materials, create pedestrian priority at key locations including Rathmullan Battery Fort, Community Hub and Rathmullan Abbey. The wider proposals, including the improvements at the glaxis, the viewing platform and the coastal walkway will enable the local community and visitors alike to engage with both the historic sites and their wider setting in new ways, increasing understanding, whilst also creating better connectivity between them.

5.3 Summary

Heritage is at the heart of this regeneration project, which has been developed by Robin Lee Architecture with valuable input from the design team, Donegal County Council and the local voluntary community group 'Rathmullan The Way Forward.' The proposals centre on Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey, which are protected structures, with the aim of transforming these landmark and under-utilised assets in the historic core of Rathmullan, as well as upgrading and enhancing the public realm and providing a new Community Hub.

Rathmullan Battery Fort is the iconic and landmark centrepiece of the project. This site would be renewed and repurposed to serve and function as a new 'Village Square' and an education and interpretation centre. The proposed changes to support these uses, including the extension along the west side of the courtyard and the reinstatement of internal vertical circulation in the blockhouse, would be appropriate to the character and appearance of the site and would preserve the significance of this protected structure. The proposals also offer the key benefits of improved and sensitively-designed public access from the north and securing a long-term viable and beneficial use for the site.

The insertion of a floor at Rathmullan Abbey would significantly enhance public access and the interpretation of the site, whilst preserving the significance of the protected structure. In terms of the setting of the protected structures, the proposed improvements to the public realm would

be an enhancement. Whilst it is acknowledged that the Community Hub proposed on the former site of the Pier Hotel would have an impact on the historic townscape, through the use of appropriate materials and sensitivity to the scale of the surrounding buildings, this contrast will signify its community, tourism and civic use whilst affording dramatic views of Lough Swilly and its surrounding landscape.

Overall, the setting and significance of the protected structures – Rathmullan Battery Fort and Rathmullan Abbey – would be preserved and enhanced by the proposals, whilst offering significant public benefits, including:

- the provision of a new village square and an education and interpretation centre;
- improved access to the Battery and beach;
- improved public access and interpretation of Rathmullan Abbey;
- enhanced public realm;
- the provision of a Community Hub.

The proposals would also accord with the relevant policies relating to built heritage in the *County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied)*. It is, therefore, the conclusion of this report that the proposals are acceptable in heritage terms and would ensure the beneficial long-term and viable uses of these historic sites.

Appendix I - National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Entries

Flight of the Earls Heritage Centre, Main Street, RATHMULLAN AND BALLYBOE, Rathmullan, DONEGAL

Reg No: 40819002

Rating: Regional

Categories of Special Interest:

Architectural, Historical

Previous Name: Rathmullan Coastal Battery

Original Use: Barracks

In Use As: Heritage centre/interpretative centre

Date: 1810 - 1815

Date Recorded: 23/09/2010

Description

Former coastal battery, built c. 1813, comprising a two-storey blockhouse or 'bombproof barrack' on five-sided plan with mildly battered walls flanked by single-storey rubble stone curtain walls to the north and south (formerly with single-storey buildings to interior, now demolished), and with D-shaped traversing platform to the west (adjacent to coast) with five gun emplacements (on circular plan). Flight of external stone steps to the east elevation of two-storey barrack building giving access to doorway at first floor level. Section of rubble stone curtain wall to the south-west side of enclosure having segmental-headed carriage-arch with ashlar granite block-and-start surround, ashlar granite voussoirs with projecting keystone, projecting ashlar granite plinth blocks, and with modern timber gates. D-shaped enclosure to the east, adjacent to coast, having rubble stone boundary walls. Now in use as a heritage centre and museum. Barrel-vaulted ashlar stone roof to main barrack building having ashlar parapet walls over with rounded coping,

and with modern rendered chimneystacks. Two circular gun mountings to roof. Roof reached from first floor. Battered tooled coursed stone walls to main building, rubble stone to boundary and curtain walls. Square-headed gun loop openings having stayed reveals to the north and south elevations of barrack and to the west side of adjoining single-storey curtain walls. Square-headed gun loop openings to the section of curtain wall to either side of carriage-arch to the south-west. Single square-headed window openings to the north and south elevations of blockhouse having replacement timber windows. Central square-headed doorway to the east elevation of blockhouse at ground floor level having cement rendered surround, and with replacement timber door; square-headed doorway to the south end of the east elevation at first floor level having replacement timber door. Remains of rubble stone vaulted structures to the interior of enclosure to the north and south sides of blockhouse. Five former gun emplacements (on circular-plan) set along the interior of enclosure to the east side (overlooking Lough Swilly). Located to the east side of Rathmullan adjacent to the shores of Lough Swilly. Enclosure surrounded by dry moat with steep grass glacis to north-west. Sunken roadway to the west.

Appraisal

This impressive Napoleonic-era coastal fortification is an important element of the built heritage and history of County Donegal. Despite some modifications over the years, and recent works to create a museum, it retains much of its stark and original character and form. It is one of six such coastal batteries and Martello towers that were established along Lough Swilly to defend against possible French invasion

during the Napoleonic Wars of the early years of the nineteenth century (there was an attempted landing in Lough Swilly by a French fleet under the command of the Hoche in 1798 with a force of some 8,000 men that was repelled at sea); these formed part of a wider group erected at this time at strategic locations along the Irish coastline and along the River Shannon. The other contemporary coastal defences along Lough Swilly can be found at Knockalla (see 40901801) and Macamish (see 40902801) to the north, and across the Lough to the east at Neds Point (see 40902922), near Buncrana, Inch Island (see 40903705), and at Dunree (see 40901813). These batteries were designed to work in pairs, and Rathmullan battery was paired with the fortification at Inch Island to the east with the forts defending the channel between. Plans were made for these six forts in January 1806 although construction work did not take place at majority of sites until 1812-3 (although temporary batteries were established at a number of sites from 1798, initially with modest British cannon supplemented with eight heavy canon from the captured French naval vessel the Hoche). By 1801 there was a temporary battery at Rathmullan armed with two 42-pounders. The 1806 plans (see above), proposed by Gother Mann, included the construction of a battery at Rathmullan with 'a tower for two guns, extend battery to five guns and two mortars'; this was costed at £7,000. In 1809 the Ordnance Office approved estimates of £4,918 for the construction\improvement of the fortification at Rathmullan (as part of a total of an estimated £32,594 for 'improvement' of the six fortifications at Lough Swilly). The designs for Rathmullan consisted of a battery with five 24-pounders set on a D-shaped traversing platform adjacent to the coast protected by an austere two-

storey barrack building to the west with two 5.5-inch howitzers of the roof; this was built as planned. To the north-west of the barracks was a detached powder magazine (the vaulted basement level of the two-storey barracks was probably also a powder magazine), there was a guard house adjacent to the gateway to the south, and to the centre of the enclosure there was a shot furnace (Griffith's Valuation map c. 1860) where cannon balls were made. The barrack building was apparently constructed using stone imported from Scotland. Construction did not start until 1812 due to contractual issues. The works were supervised by Captain Cardew RE with Edward Edgar the contractor. A report of 1817 records that the planned five 24-pounder guns and two 5.5-inch howitzers at Rathmullan were installed by this time. Rathmullan Fort remained in use until 1869 when the gunners stationed here were withdrawn. It was restored in 1990 as a museum and heritage centre focusing on the old Gaelic order and the Flight of the Earls (which took place from Rathmullan), and is now an important amenity for tourists and for the local community. This impressive if austere structure dominates the coastline at Rathmullan, and is an important element of the built heritage and history of the local area.

Old Rathmullan Graveyard, Main Street, RATHMULLAN AND BALLYBOE, Rathmullan, DONEGAL

Reg No: 40819027

Rating: Regional

Categories of Special Interest: Artistic, Historical, Social

Previous Name: Rathmullan Friary

Original Use: Graveyard/cemetery

In Use As: Graveyard/cemetery

Date: 1800 - 1940

Date Recorded: 23/09/2010

Description

Graveyard (on complex irregular-plan) located to the south of the remains of Rathmullan\St. Mary's Friary (see RMP DG037-007003-), in use from c. 1800 until c. 1965. Now out of use. Contains collection of upstanding, recumbent and table-type memorials. Metal railings and or enclosures to some memorials. Freestanding memorial to the south of site commemorating Captain William Pakenham, Captain of the Royal Navy frigate HMS Saldhana (which sunk off Ballymastocker Bay to the north in a storm in December 1811); gravemarker comprises table-type memorial having classical pilasters to corners, and with wrought-iron railings having wrought-iron posts to corners of enclosure with ball finials over. Site surrounded by partially roughcast rendered rubble stone boundary wall. Gateway to the south-west corner of site comprising a pair of ashlar gate piers having pyramidal cut stone coping over, and

with wrought-iron gate. Located to the centre of Main Street, Rathmullan, overlooking Lough Swilly across road to the south.

Appraisal

This interesting and atmospheric graveyard contains an interesting collection of gravemarkers of mainly nineteenth century date. It occupies the south side of the site of Rathmullan\St. Mary's Friary (see RMP DG037-007003-), which was originally founded in 1516 for the Carmelite Order by Owen Roe MacSweeney and dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The priory survived intact until 1595 when it was plundered by Bingham; the friars returned and repaired the site afterwards. Andrew Knox, Bishop of Raphoe, obtained possession of the site in 1618, and subsequently converted the nave and transept into a private dwelling. In 1706, the chancel was consecrated by Bishop Pooley as the parish church for Killygarvan. Services were discontinued here when a new parish church, St. Columb's (see 40819009), was built a short distance to the west in 1814. The dwelling probably fell into ruins during the second half of the eighteenth century after the Knox family moved to Prehen, near Derry. The graveyard itself appears to have come into use at the start of the nineteenth century. It contains a collection of upstanding, recumbent, and table-type memorials of mainly nineteenth century date (although there are some memorials dating to the 1960s), some of which are of modest artistic interest. One of the most impressive of these is a table-type memorial with classical pilasters to the corners to the south side of the enclosure. This commemorates Captain William Pakenham (died aged 29), Captain of the Royal Navy frigate HMS Saldhana, which sunk off

Ballymastocker Bay to the north in a storm on the 4th of December 1811 with the loss of over 250 lives. (The Saldhana was a warship weighing 951 tons and armed with 36 canons. It was built by Temple and Sons in South Shields in 1809. The ship named after the Battle of Saldhana Bay off South Africa in 1796). William Pakenham was the son of the second Baron Longford of Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, an illustrious military family at the time. The graveyard also contains a number of other memorials with naval and military connections including gravemarkers to Commd Fitzmaurice Acton, CMO Royal Navy (died 1920), Walter Edward Elliot (1860-190?), Lieutenant Royal Navy, Darcy Irvine, Commander Royal Navy ('died at Carralenna in 1907'), Colonel John Hewitt Jellett CMC, Royal Artillery (died 1832?), and Colonel Arn(old?) Shrewsbury Montgomery (died at Fort Royal Rathmullan in 1924). This interesting site is an interesting addition to the built heritage and social history of Rathmullan, and forms part of an interesting complex along with the remains of the friary to the centre of Rathmullan. The simple rubble stone boundary walls, and the fine gateway to the south-west corner of the site with ashlar gate piers add to the context and setting.

Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Part IV Architectural Heritage

Chapter 1 Protected Structures in Section 512(1) states that:

For the purpose of protecting structures, or parts of structures, which form part of the architectural heritage and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, every development plan shall include a record of protected structures, and shall include in that record every structure which is, in the opinion of the planning authority, of such interest within its functional area.

Section 57(10a) of the 2000 Act makes clear that a planning authority (or the Board on appeal): *in considering any application for permission in relation to a protected structure, shall have regard to the protected status of the structure.*

While 57 (10b) states that:

A planning authority, or the Board on appeal, shall not grant permission for the demolition of a protected structure or proposed protected structure, save in exceptional circumstances.

Section 58(1) states that owners and occupiers of protected structures shall:

ensure that the structure, or any element of it which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, is not endangered.

Section 78(a) makes clear that a Planning Authority may:

- a) use a protected structure acquired by it under this Act or any other enactment for any purpose connected with its functions, or
- b) sell, let, transfer or exchange all or any part of that protected structure,

and in so doing shall have regard to its protected status.

Donegal County Council

The County Donegal Development Plan 2018-2024 (as varied) was adopted in June 2018 and the principal aim of Chapter 7: The Natural and Built Heritage is:

to conserve, protect and enhance the County's natural, built and cultural heritage for future generations and encourage appreciation, access and enjoyment of these resources.

Regarding built heritage, the aim is:

to preserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of the County.'

The policies relating to built heritage are as follows:

BH-P-1: *It is a Policy of the Council to conserve and protect all structures (or parts of structures) and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures that are of special, architectural, historic, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.*

BH-P-2: *It is a policy of the Council to review the RPS on an ongoing basis, and to add structures (or parts of structures) of special interest, including, those recommended by the Minister through the NIAH Survey of Donegal or other buildings which the Council consider to have special interest.*

BH-P-3: *It is a policy of the Council to ensure retention of vernacular and/or historic structures (and parts of structures), including their functional and decorative details, that are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and do not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of a structure and are in accordance with current conservation guidelines and best practice.*

BH-P-4: *It is a policy of the Council to ensure the repair, reuse and appropriate refurbishment of vernacular and/or historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the built heritage of the area including those as referred to on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.*

BH-P-5: *It is a policy of the Council to protect and preserve vernacular and/or historic industrial and maritime buildings. Proposals for restoration or adaptive re-use should be facilitated subject to a full architectural assessment.*

BH-P-6: It is a policy of the Council to ensure, where appropriate, measures to extend, modify or materially alter the fabric of vernacular and/or historic buildings are sensitive to traditional construction methods and materials and craftsmanship and do not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of a structure.

BH-P-7: It is a policy of the Council to promote and retain building fabric such as lime mortar, slate, thatch, timber windows, rendering and joinery and the reinstatement of such will be encouraged.

BH-P-8: It is a policy of the Council to facilitate appropriate and high quality design solutions including considerations of scale, proportion, detailing and material specification for development proposals affecting vernacular and/or historic buildings in both urban and rural settings.

BH-P-9: It is a policy of the Council to conserve and enhance the quality, character and distinctiveness of towns and streetscapes in the County, including street layouts, historic structures, building lines, traditional plot widths, signage and historical street furniture as well as the character of the area.

BH-P-10: It is a policy of the Council to ensure the retention of historic shop fronts, pub fronts and traditional (hand-painted) signage as part of the streetscape of towns and villages and roads of both urban and rural Donegal.

BH-P-11: It is a policy of the Council to ensure proposals on the Islands will conserve and/or enhance the intrinsic character, scale and visual amenity of the architectural heritage respecting the character of existing buildings, important

views and spaces and the historic settlement pattern in terms of scale, height, grouping, density, design, materials, traditional building techniques and workmanship.

BH-P-12: It is a policy of the Council to ensure the sensitive design, siting and rationalisation of modern street furniture and elements such as lighting, seats and benches, litter boxes, bollards, railings, street signs, post boxes, telephone kiosks, paving, kerbstones, utility boxes, cables, posts, antenna, statues, plaques and other monuments, which will visually integrate with their host locations.

BH-P-13: It is a policy of the Council to identify and promote the re-use of traditional building clusters/ groupings in both rural and urban settings which add to the unique and specific value of a given landscape character.

BH-P-14: It is a policy of the Council to continue to protect the built heritage fabric of the County by identifying appropriate Architectural Conservation Area designations.

BH-P-15: It is a policy of the Council to preserve, protect and enhance the special built character and functions of the 'Heritage Towns' of Ardara, Ballyshannon, Moville, Ramelton and Raphoe.

BH-P-16: It is a policy of the Council to carry out village design statements for its five 'Heritage towns' to contribute to a greater understanding of these townscapes resources of the County and plan for future appropriate development.

BH-P-17: It is a policy of the Council to require that any historic structures that have to be demolished or significantly altered are photographed and recorded (including scaled drawings) to agreed professional standards.

BH-P-18: It is a policy of the Council to preserve the integrity of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscape sites in County Donegal identified in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (www.buidingsofireland.ie/Surveys/Gardens/).

Project Ireland 2040

The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (NDP) combine to form Project Ireland 2040. The NPF sets the vision and strategy for the development of the country to 2040 and the NDP provides the enabling investment to implement that strategy.

Regarding rural town, National Policy Objective 17 of the NPF states:

Enhance, integrate and protect the special physical, social, economic and cultural value of built heritage assets through appropriate and sensitive use now and for future generations.

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht publications, 2011).

Advice Series (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, various dates 2007-2020)

