

Conservation and Management Plan, Donard Church and Graveyard, Co. Wicklow.

HERITAGE COUNCIL AWARD CH2119 MONUMENT NUMBERS

WI021-005003-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab
WI021-005004-	DONARD LOWER	Memorial stone
WI021-005005-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab
WI021-005001-	DONARD LOWER	Church
WI021-005002-	DONARD LOWER	Graveyard



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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



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1 Section 1: Background Information

1.1 Introduction

This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Donard with accompanying specialists' reports is submitted in compliance with the Community Heritage Grants Scheme 2024 (CH2119) for the Heritage Council. This CMP aims to place the church in its archaeological and historical context, in order to assess its significance and define and address any potential management issues. The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is intended to inform any future conservation works at the site. The report is divided into sections; 1 Background information on the project, 2. The Past- the setting of the church and its historical background and 3. The Future, what are the issues at the site and what are the proposals to address these issues so that the site can be maintained for future generations.

The background to this project began in 2023 when Donard Tidy Towns Association and Donard Imaal History (iCAN) contacted Deirdre Burns Heritage Officer to discuss a heritage council application as they were concerned that the church and graveyard boundary needed urgent repairs and were anxious that such an important site be preserved for future generations.

A successful application was then made for a grant under the Community Heritage Grants scheme in 2024 to allow the preparation of a conservation plan for this monument which is the subject of this report. With the generous permission of the local community, the support of the Community Heritage Grants Scheme in 2024, and the encouragement of the Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council, the way was now clear for the community to preserve this site and understand the wider environs of this significant historical site.

This CMP example outlines a clear, phased plan that balances urgent repairs, historical restoration, and public engagement while maintaining the site's integrity and sustainability.

1.2 Objectives and Aims of the Project

The principal objective of this plan is to enable the local stakeholders to establish a framework within which the significance of the monument and its setting can be preserved and enhanced for future generations as outlined below:

- To understand the historical importance of Donard Church and Graveyard

- To situate the church in its historical context and how it relates to the wider environment (section 2)
- To assess and understand the current condition of the church and site with an evaluation of threats to its survival and its vulnerabilities (section 3)
- To set out a strategy for conservation works
- To be mindful of the natural and ecological heritage and character of the place

The methodology for this conservation plan is loosely adapted from the James Semple Kerr model (Semple Kerr 2013). The aim is to situate Donard Church and graveyard within its archaeological and historic context (the past), to evaluate its current condition (the present), and to assess its vulnerabilities and recommend actions to best conserve the physical structure and to suggest ways that the church can deliver a sense of participation and local identity to the community (the future). This report has been divided into Sections to follow the James Semple Kerr Model with Section 1 providing the background to the project, Section 2 discussing the past history of the monument, Section 3 the current condition and Section 4 the future of the monument.

1.3 Steering Group and Stakeholders

Steering Group

- Donard Tidy Towns Association and Donard Imaal History (iCAN)
- Wicklow County Council

Stakeholders

- Donard Tidy Towns Association and Donard Imaal History (iCAN)
- Heritage Office Wicklow County Council
- The Heritage Council

Project Team

The multi-disciplinary team involved in the project includes:

- Dermot Nolan- Historic Buildings Consultants and Consulting Engineers
- Fin Dwyer – Historical Research
- Faith Wilson – Ecologist

➤ Yvonne Whitty– Archaeologist

1.4 Statutory Protection & Guidelines

Donard Church and Graveyard is protected under national legislation and statutory guidance. These include the National Monuments Acts 1930- 2004, the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013 and the County Wicklow Development Plan 2016-2022 which will have a bearing on any proposed policies and actions in this conservation management plan. In relation to natural heritage, the following directives and acts should be noted: the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the Wildlife Acts 1976, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010.

1.4.1 National Monuments Acts 1930-2004

is listed in the Record of Monuments. The following are the SMR monument numbers at Donard.

WI021-005003-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab
WI021-005004-	DONARD LOWER	Memorial stone
WI021-005005-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab
WI021-005001-	DONARD LOWER	Church
WI021-005002-	DONARD LOWER	Graveyard

Table 1: SMR Numbers associated with Donard (www.archaeology.ie).

As a result, the site is protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. When the owner or occupier of a property, or any other person, proposes to carry out any work at, or in relation to, a recorded monument, they are required to give notice in writing to the Minister two months before commencing any work.

1.4.2 Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013

The 2000 Act set out the development plan as the basic policy document of the planning authority in which the overall strategy and specific objectives for sustainable development and proper planning within an area are set out (Grist 2012, 11). The legislation requires that each planning authority renew its development plan every six years. The planning authority have an obligation to create a record of protected structures (RPS) which lists structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest. This record forms part of the planning authority's development plan (DAHG 2011, 15). In addition, the National Monuments Acts (1930-2014) protects monuments of archaeological, historical, or architectural interest creating an overlap with the 2000 Act in the protection of

structures of special interest. Newchurch is a Recorded Monument afforded statutory protection under the National Monuments Acts.

1.4.3 County Development Plan (2016-2022)

The current County Wicklow Development Plan (2016-2022) recognises that ‘Wicklow has a significant archaeological heritage, which provides a valuable cultural, educational and tourism resource and that Wicklow County Council recognises the importance of preserving, protecting, and fostering a greater public appreciation of the County’s archaeological heritage.

1.4.4 Wildlife Protection

Protection to a number of species and designated landscapes is provided under the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the Wildlife Acts 1976, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010. Where development is proposed that impacts upon a protected species or place, a derogation license must be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

1.4.5 Guidelines

This report has been compiled in accordance with best practice outlined in the following resources and at all times complies with the National Monuments Acts and amendments (1930 – 2014):

- ‘Framework & Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage’ (1999)
Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands.
- ‘ICOMOS charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites.’
ICOMOS (2008)*
- ‘Ruins – The Conservation and Repair of Masonry Ruins’ (2010)
Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government
- ‘Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (2011)
Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht
- ‘Conservation Plan. Seventh edition.’ James Semple Kerr (2013)
ICOMOS Australia.

The core principles of the ICOMOS charter aim to ‘safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts’ and

to 'respect the authenticity of cultural heritage by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure or inappropriate interpretation'.

1.5 Methodology & data collection:

The methodology for this conservation plan is loosely adapted from the James Semple Kerr model (Semple Kerr 2013). The aim is to situate Donard Church and graveyard within its archaeological and historic context (the past), to evaluate its current condition (the present), and to assess its vulnerabilities and recommend actions to best conserve the physical structure and to suggest ways that the church can deliver a sense of participation and local identity to the community (the future).

Using these three strands is a useful way of improving our understanding of this monument.

- The past is our understanding of why Donard Church and Graveyard is significant and why this significance must be recognised (Section 2)
- The present is how Donard Church and Graveyard is now: who owns it, who has responsibility for conserving it, what condition is it in? (Section 3)
- The future is constructed out of our understanding of both the past and the present: the condition of Donard Church and Graveyard now, together with the needs of relevant stakeholders dictates what must be done to ensure the site has a future.

Information and data gathered for this document have been obtained in a variety of ways and from a variety of sources.

1.5.1 Desktop assessment:

A desktop assessment was completed by the author. The historical background research was completed by Fin Dwyer.

1.5.2 Site inspection

Yvonne Whitty has carried out a site inspection which have provided a detailed picture of the present condition of the site.

1.5.3 Baseline Ecological Assessment

A baseline ecological assessment was prepared by Faith Wilson, Ecological Consultant and is attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

1.5.4 Structural Survey

A structural appraisal and recommendation for the repair of church and associated featured was undertaken by Dermot Nolan, Historic Buildings Consultant and Consulting Engineer and is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

1.5.5 Community Engagement

A series of meetings were held with the group. A bat walk was held by Faith Wilson as part of a Heritage Week Event in 2024. The project has been shared on social media and this report will be uploaded to www.ourwicklowheritage.org.



Plate 1: Site meeting with local community to discuss the project.

1.6 Sources Consulted

DAHGI 1999 *Framework & Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage*.

Government Publications.

DAHG 2011 *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Local Authorities*.

Government Publications.

DEHLG 2010 *Ruins- The Conservation and Repair of Masonry Ruins*

Grist, B. 2012 *An Introduction to Irish Planning Law*. Institute of Public Administration.

Kerr, J. 2013 *The Conservation Plan 7th Edition*. ICOMOS Australia.

2 Section 2: Understanding the Monument- The Past

Section 2.1 completed by Fin Dwyer provides a detailed historical background on Donard Church and Graveyard and its surrounding area. It begins with an exploration of the site's broader historical context, followed by an archaeological assessment of the site in Section 2.2 by Yvonne Whitty.

2.1 Historical Background

2.1.1 Overview

Situated at the northern end of the Glen of Imaal in Co Wicklow, Donard has a rich history stretching deep into the prehistoric period. Monuments in the locality indicate a human presence throughout this time.

In the early Middle Ages, the wider West Wicklow region, and Donard in particular, had strong links to the earliest Christian missionaries to Ireland.

The Norman invasion of the 13th century led to the erection of a fortification beside an existing church. These sites formed the nucleus of the modern village. However, its position along a medieval frontier limited the expansion and development of the settlement. The region was beset by violent conflict into the dawn of the modern era.

The settlement has enjoyed a period of comparative peace and stability over the last two centuries, remaining a small rural village with multiple sites of historic and archaeological importance. Despite a dramatic population decline since the Great Hunger, it has experienced modest growth in recent times. It has attracted surprisingly limited commentary in historical and archaeological sources.

2.1.2 Donard in Prehistory

The significance of Donard as a site in Irish prehistory is attested by the range of monuments in the immediate landscape. The presence of a portal tomb at Broomfield indicates human activity as far back as the Early Neolithic.

Rock art, tentatively dated to the Early Bronze Age or possibly even the late Neolithic¹ can be found at Kilbaylett. This is one of several sites in the West Wicklow/Carlow area with similar features, indicating the emergence of a distinct culture in the region around this time. The

¹ O'Connor, B. (2006 unpublished PhD thesis) *Inscribed landscapes: contextualising prehistoric rock art in Ireland* <https://researchrepository.ucd.ie/handle/10197/3703>

stone circles at Athgreaney (the Piper Stones) and Kilruddery to the south are of a similar date.

In the immediate vicinity of Donard itself, there are numerous earthworks and ringforts suggesting continual human activity into the Iron Age and early historic period.

That the area has a long history is unsurprising. Donard and the surrounding hinterland have strategic importance, shaped by the Wicklow Mountains to the east of the town. Prior to the construction of the Wicklow Military Road in the early 19th century, there was no route running north-south through the uplands. This left a road that ran along the western slopes of the hills through Donard as an important routeway².

Donard is also situated in close proximity to one of the three east-west routes through the mountains. Of these routes, two remain of great importance: the Sally Gap and the Wicklow Gap. However, in centuries past, a southern route along the modern walking path, the Table Track, linked the Glen of Imaal with Glenmalure. This provided access between Brittas Bay and the plains of Kildare³. This was recorded on Neville's map of Wicklow in 1760⁴. A corrected 1820 copy of this map survives today (see below).

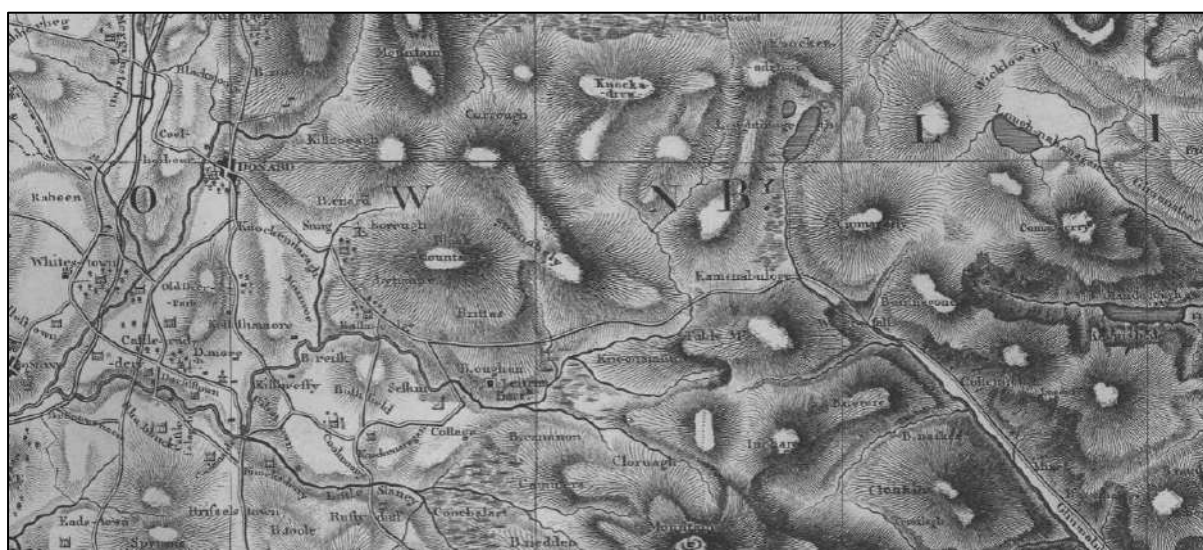


Figure 1: Allens' Map of the County of Wicklow Engraved from Mr R. Nevill's Map and corrected from a recent survey. Source <https://virtualtreasury.ie/item/LBC-GJ-9>

² Walshe, *The Antiquities of the Dunlavin-Donard District*, p115-116

³ O'Keefe, *Alexander Taylor's Road Works in Ireland 1780-1827*, p27

⁴ *Wicklow Grand Jury Map by Jacob Nevill*, <https://virtualtreasury.ie/item/LBC-GJ-9> Accessed Sep 30th 2024

This track remains inaccessible in inclement weather, and as discussed below, the failure to develop it into a road was one of the factors that impacted the development of Donard (although it did preserve the scenic beauty of the area).

2.1.3 The origins of the settlement of Donard

The location of the earliest settlement at Donard is unclear. The name Donard itself and most variants—Dunarde, Dunardathe, Dunardache, Donardet, Downarde—are derived from the Irish, Dún Ard, meaning 'high fort'. The Anglo-Norman motte and bailey erected in the late 12th century probably stands directly on the original fortification⁵.

Walshe (1931) posited an alternative theory, arguing the name may have derived from the term Domhnach Ard, meaning 'high church'⁶. A reference from the opening years of the 14th century recorded Donard as Donarchmor⁷, lends a degree of credence to this argument. However, most agree the etymology of the name lies in Dún Ard, meaning 'high fort'.

While it seems likely the site was occupied in the pre-Christian period, there is no question that Donard's early history was shaped by strong links with the early Christian Church and Paladius (one of the earliest Christian missionaries to Ireland) in particular.

He remains a figure of significant debate but has a long association with South and West Wicklow. There are numerous sites stretching across the wider region associated with the pre-Patrician missionary sent to Ireland in 43⁸.

Along with Killeen Cormac, in Kildare, Donard is regarded as a Paladian foundation⁹.

Donard, in particular, has a strong folk association with an associate of Paladius, St Sylvester. His relics were reputedly held at Donard until the 6th century, with Ronan (1941) noting

Donard is said to be Domnachairtef, one of the three churches of Palladius, in which the relics of SS. Sylvester and Solinus, his two companions, were preserved until the end of the 6th century when they were removed to Inisboheen, south of Wicklow town, for safety. The ancient granite slab, with inscribed cross, in the old church is regarded as marking the tomb of St. Sylvester who is the patron of other churches in the vicinity.

⁵ Logaimn.ie, Accessed Sep 30th 2024

⁶ Walshe *The Antiquities of the Dunlavin-Donard District* p116

⁷ *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland (C.D.I)* Vol V, p283. The text Donartchinon was corrected in the corrigenda p. =xi

⁸ O Croinin, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p.43

⁹ O Croinin, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p.43

The slab referenced, which is discussed below, is of much later medieval provenance. Nevertheless, folklore certainly suggests a strong link with St Sylvester. The School's Folklore Collection recorded the following account in a discussion about the medieval church.

At either end is a cross the larger one at the head is one ft: eight ins long while the base of that at the foot is continued to meet the base of the head Cross. Local tradition holds that the body of St Sylvester, brother Presbyter of Solenius, whome Palladius left in charge of the Church he founded in Donard was buried beneath this Stone. His remains being afterwards removed across the mountains to Ennis [sic]¹⁰

The original medieval church underwent major redevelopment in the late Middle Ages, making it difficult to date its precise origin. Archaeological investigation and surveying may yield more evidence regarding the nature and dating of the settlement in the early medieval period.

2.1.4 Later Medieval History

In a process replicated across multiple medieval sites in Wicklow, the history of Donard was shaped by the emergence of Glendalough as a major religious centre from the 7th century. Over the following centuries, it expanded its power and influence across the mountains, and Donard, along with numerous other sites in the wider vicinity, was among the vast domains in the possession of the monastery by the 12th century.¹¹

As mentioned above, the precise nature of the early medieval ecclesiastical settlement is very difficult to determine without further analysis and work. The site that survives today is somewhat atypical for an early medieval church site. The surrounding enclosure is square (rather than oval).

Early Ordnance Survey maps indicate this has been the case for at least two centuries. However, Henry Shearman in 1873 recorded major changes to the site in the 19th century in the following passage:

*there was an ancient disused cemetery, containing some rugged boulders, pillar-stones, some of the latter were removed when the place was tilled, some built into fences, and others were unfortunately destroyed.*¹²

Archaeological excavation would help deepen understanding about the provenance of this site. While an ecclesiastical settlement provided a foundation, the development of the modern

¹⁰ *The Schools' Collection, Volume 0914, Page 178*

¹¹ *McNeill Alen's Register p.2 p.21*

¹² *Shearman No. III. Loca Patriciana. The Palladian Churches. Teach Na Roman, Domnach Arda, p490*

settlement can be traced back to the seismic events that followed the Anglo-Norman invasion of the late 12th century.

2.1.5 Anglo-Norman Donard

The strategic significance of Donard and the wider Glen of Imaal may have been evident to the Norman invaders from the earliest days of the conquest. While small contingents of Norman forces arrived in the late 1160s, the main invasion force arrived in Waterford in the late summer of 1170. Led by Strongbow (Richard de Clare), they captured Waterford in a brutal siege before marching on the strategically key city of Dublin.

As an alliance of Gaelic Irish and Hiberno-Norse forces prepared a defence of the city, the Norman army and their allies in the kingdom of Leinster took a circuitous route through the Wicklow mountains to circumvent the defensive line being prepared to the southwest of Dublin. Geraldus Cambrensis, the Norman chronicler who visited Ireland in the 1180s, described this in the following terms:

Diarmuid having received intelligence that the citizens of Dublin had summoned the people from all parts of Ireland to succour them in defending the place, and that all the roads through the woods and other difficult passes were beset with armed men, was careful to avoid mischance, and leading his army by the ridges of the mountains of Glyndelachan (Glendalough)¹³.

While an exact route was not recorded, O'Toole (2016) among others have speculated that march may have brought Strongbow through the Glen of Imaal past Donard, along the Table Track into Glenmalure before turning North to Glendalough and then Dublin.¹⁴

In the following decades, Donard would go on to enjoy an importance it had not previously or arguably since. While the site commanded a view over one of the main egress points from the Wicklow Mountains through the Glen of Imaal, it also (and potentially more significantly) lay on the frontier between two major figures in the emerging Norman lordship of Leinster: the emerging Fitzgerald family in Kildare and the Archbishops of Dublin.

Donard, as discussed above, had become a key possession in the lands of the monastery of Glendalough. In the decades after the Norman conquest, the Normans took steps to take this vast holding into their possession. This was done through the aegis of the church and the office of the Archbishop of Dublin, a position exclusively held by Anglo-Normans following the death of the prelate Lorcan O'Toole in 1180.

¹³ *Cambrensis, Expugnatio Hibernica* p.26

¹⁴ O'Toole, *Glenmalure: The Wild Heart of the Mountains* p.4

Through the late 12th century, lands were already being transferred from Glendalough to the Archbishopric of Dublin. In 1216, the dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough were merged. In May 1216, Pope Innocent III confirmed the transfer of the vast estates of Glendalough, including Donard, to the See of Dublin¹⁵. This in effect made the archbishop one of the largest landowners in Leinster.

In West Wicklow, these estates at Donard and to the north at Hollywood abutted against other Norman lords, the most significant of whom were the Fitzgerald family, who would in time become the Earls of Kildare.

This perhaps explains why Archbishop John Comyn elected to grant the lands in West Wicklow to the de Marisco family. Hollywood was granted to Geoffrey de Marisco, while a large tract of land around Donard was granted to his brother Jordan de Marisco.¹⁶

The choice of tenant in the de Marisco family was significant. Not only was the family one of the most powerful figures in early 13th-century Ireland, but Geoffrey and Jordan were nephews of Archbishop Comyn in Dublin¹⁷. The motives behind this are worth exploring in greater detail.

That the bishop would reward his own nephews with preferential treatment was common practice in medieval society. However, the assumption that their greatest concern was the Gaelic Irish in the mountains is questionable. The decision to directly administer the lands in the heart of the mountains, where Gaelic Irish were strongest and the Norman presence weakest, suggests the archbishops had little concern in this regard in the early 13th century.

Indeed, there is some anecdotal evidence that relations between the Normans and the Gaelic Irish in West Wicklow were peaceful. Around the turn of the 12th century, a certain Finnachta Macgrogane was listed as a tenant in the Glen of Imaal¹⁸.

An alternative explanation lies in what Colin Veach described 'inbuilt trend towards factionalism'¹⁹ in the Anglo-Norman lordship of Ireland, a feature promoted by successive kings in England. While this prevented any individual and potential rival from emerging in Ireland, it fomented unrest, which led to outbreaks of violence between these aristocratic landowners. This at times erupted into full-scale civil war. Such fears over attack or encroachment from rival Norman lords gave Donard a strategic significance for the archbishops of Dublin.

¹⁵ McNeill, *Alen's Register*, p.191

¹⁶ McNeill *Alen's Register* p.191

¹⁷ Brooks, *the Family of Marisco* p.50

¹⁸ McNeill *Alen's Register* p.191

¹⁹ *Cambridge History of Ireland Vol 1* p.168

Historian Emmet O'Byrne has speculated this move may have been prompted by the growing power of the Fitzgeralds to the west in Kildare²⁰. This is supported by the fact that in summer of 1243, the King ordered the Fitzgeralds 'not to molest the king Luke the archbishop of Dublin or his tenants'²¹.

While the document recording the grant of land to Jordan de Marisco is undated, Brooks (1932) argued that it was around the year 1192²². We can say with a degree of confidence, therefore, that the motte and bailey castle (the site known as the Ball Moat) was erected around the turn of the 13th century. The choice of location, to the south of the early medieval ecclesiastical site, presumably was where the original earthwork that gave Donard its meaning of 'high fort' was located.

While defence was a primary concern, the motte and bailey would have also served as an administrative centre for de Marisco's lands in the Glen of Imaal. There is little documentary evidence about the nature or size of the settlement that emerged around the fortification in the early 13th century. We know, as discussed already, it was situated in close proximity to a medieval church.

Unfortunately, little is known about the nature of the church building in the 13th century either. The current ruins on the medieval site date to the 15th or 16th centuries (see below). The site does contain artefacts from the late Middle Ages, however. The crude stone-carved grave slab, often claimed to be the 6th-century grave of St Sylvester, dates from this period.

However, as Corlett (2003) points out, this slab was probably moved in the 18th or 19th century. While difficult to date, Corlett provided a 'tentative' date of 13th or 14th century²³. Indeed, in the medieval period and much of the following centuries, records of this church provide one of the best insights into life in the area.

In the early 13th century (between 1213 and 1228), the church in Donard and several others in the surrounding locality were transferred into the possessions of the Hospital of St John of Newgate in Dublin. The intention was that the tithes and revenues from associated lands were to be used in 'support of the sick'²⁴. Whether this reflected a prosperous time in West Wicklow or an aspiration for what the settlement might become is unclear.

²⁰ O'Byrne, *War Politics and the Irish of Leinster* Vol 1 p.72

²¹ C.D.I. Vol I p.256

²² Brooks, *the Family of Marisco* p.69

²³ Corlett *The Hollywood Slabs* p.105

²⁴ McNeill, *Alen's Register* p.287

By the early 14th century, there is evidence Donard was struggling. In the opening years of that century, the deanery of Donard was valued at 40 shillings, one of the lowest in the entire See of Dublin²⁵.

Extrapolating the exact reasons for this low value is difficult, but there is no question life in the wider Wicklow region was becoming increasingly difficult.

The years between 1270 and 1370 marked a period of intensive conflict in the wider Wicklow area as the Gaelic Irish, who had appeared surprisingly accepting of the Norman presence, revolted. Numerous settlements came under attack and, in some cases, were abandoned by the Anglo-Normans.

While the neighbouring valley of Glenmalur was the centre of this conflict in the 1270s, the first record of the impact of the conflict in Donard can be found in surviving documentation from the early 14th century.

After accusations of financial irregularities were levelled against the then Archbishop of Dublin, Alexander de Bicknor, his archiepiscopal estates were taken into the hands of the king. This prompted a valuation, which was conducted by royal officials in 1326 and revealed Donard was a frontier settlement increasingly engulfed by war.

Four carucates of land (around 500 acres) at Donard were described as 'waste and in the hands of the Irish'²⁶. The region seems to have been a frontier. Rents at Kilbaylett, to the north of Donard, were described as '13s 4d in decrease of rent' for similar reasons²⁷.

This conflict resulted in the refortification of several medieval settlements such as it was certainly peripheral to the unfolding conflict in the mountains. Records of expenditure on this conflict provide great insight into life in the 14th century; however, Donard is not mentioned in Exchequer Rolls.

While these records of royal expenditure, castles held by the archbishop or aristocratic families such as Castlekevin and Wicklow were sequestered by the royal authorities for this campaign.

While Donard generally was clearly on a frontier, there is no evidence to suggest the town fell from Anglo-Norman control as did several other mountainous settlements. However, the conflict must have taken an inevitable toll on the development of Donard. McNeill (1925), for

²⁵ *C.D.I. Vol V p.238*

²⁶ *McNeill, Alen's Register p.38*

²⁷ *ibid*

example, noted how the Hospital of St John in Dublin, whose activities its possessions in Donard supported, struggled to exert influence over some of its more distant possessions.

This is evidenced by the fact the institution had to reduce its capacity from 155 beds in the early years of the 14th century to just 50 by the 1530s²⁸. It is difficult to determine, what exact impact this had in places like Donard.

However, gleaning other records in the later 16th century does provide some insight into the nature of life in Donard. Vicars, for example, included Dionisins O'Somaghan (1532)²⁹, Gerald MacKeagho (before 1562) and Hugh Cawgane who was appointed in 1562³⁰.

The fact all men were Gaelic Irish suggests an increasing Gaelicisation of the community.

While the connection between the town and the Hospital of St John was formally ended in 1539 when the hospital was dissolved by Henry VIII, the institution had long ceased to have any direct involvement in life in Donard. By the early 16th century at the latest, the Hospital had leased the tithes and lands of Donard to the Fitzgerald Earls of Kildare³¹.

The growing interest and influence of the Fitzgerald family in Donard provoked the Gaelic Irish leader Art Og O'Toole to burn the town in 1533³². What size the settlement was at this point is difficult to determine.

It was during this time period that the medieval church was completely rebuilt. Grogan and Kilfeather (1997) dated the new nave to the 15th or 16th centuries, while speculating the porch was added at a later point³³. A more precise date would help determine whether this took place before or after the Hospital of St John in Dublin was dissolved. One suspects it was after 1539, given the institution's limited involvement in the community.

The fragmentary evidence that survives suggests a continued unsettled life in the community. In 1549, a certain Ferral McThomas of Donard received a pardon, although unfortunately his crimes were unspecified.³⁴ However it was certainly indicative of what was to come. After nearly three centuries of declining influence, the later 16th century witnessed renewed efforts

²⁸ McNeill, *Hospital of S. John without the New Gate*, p63

²⁹ PROI PUB/Chancery1/17 *VirtualTreasury.ie* Accessed Sep 27th 2024

³⁰ PROI PUB/Chancery1/3247 *VirtualTreasury.ie* Accessed Sep 27th 2024

³¹ White, *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-1541*, p.66

³² *ibid* p.63

³³ Grogan & Kilfeather. *Archaeological Inventory of County Wicklow*

³⁴ PROI PUB/Chancery1/1491 *VirtualTreasury.ie* Accessed Sep 29th 2024

on behalf of the English authorities to re-exert influence across the island of Ireland. This led to the Laois-Offaly plantations of the mid-16th century, followed by the Munster Plantation and then the Ulster Plantation in the early 17th century. Wicklow was not immune from this process.

2.1.6 Early Modern Donard

While Wicklow did not experience anything as dramatic as the Munster or Ulster plantations, Donard nevertheless witnessed its own process of colonisation and resettlement from the 16th century onwards.

In the 1540s, the Fitzgerald Family fell from favour after the Silken Thomas revolt. This resulted in large tracts of land being taken from the family. In West Wicklow, this led to territory around Hollywood and Donard, being passed to new settlers from England—the Travers family. By the later 16th century, these lands, including Donard, passed through marriage into the hands of Robert Piphó³⁵.

While the Piphó family were resident in the region, a change from previous centuries they were based in Hollywood, and this was one of the factors that saw Donard somewhat eclipsed by the neighbouring town (Hollywood) in the following 150 years.

Nevertheless, the granting of Donard church and associated tithes to English knight Sir Edward Moore, on the condition he would not grant them to anyone 'except to persons of the English Nation or born in the Pale', is evidence of how colonisation affected the settlement.³⁶

This reflected a new assertiveness among the royal authorities in Dublin regarding Wicklow more generally. The process of shiring Wicklow began in 1579, a move the authorities viewed as part of taming a mountain wilderness inhabited by 'idle and evil disposed persons'.³⁷ Interestingly, the maps produced for this do not record Donard (Hollywood is marked on the map).

This drive by settlers to control life not only in Donard but also the wider region provoked a major revolt. In 1580, Fiach McHugh O'Byrne defeated a major English army at the Battle of Glenmalur. However, the following seven decades would witness unparalleled bloodshed and turmoil across the island that resulted in English domination.

³⁵ Corrigan, *The history of Hollywood West Wicklow*, 21

³⁶ PROI DKPRI 13/7 *VirtualTreasury.ie* Accessed Sep 29th 2024

³⁷ *Cambridge History of Ireland Vol II* p26

The plantations also had a strong religious element, with new settlers mainly being Protestant, which would transform life in Donard—the local church became a site of Protestant worship. However, the nature and size of the early Protestant community is difficult to determine.

In 1630, the church in Donard, now Protestant, was described as ‘fallen down to the ground’³⁸. Only 16 families were attending religious services in what was a joint parish of Donard and Hollywood³⁹. How representative this was of the wider community is difficult to state given the state of the churches.

We also have no sense of the overall population of Donard. The first detailed picture comes in the 1660s; however, the three decades between 1630 and 1660 were some of the most violent in Irish history.

The 1641 rebellion and the subsequent Cromwellian invasion devastated the island. Donard was far from a centre of activity even on a local level. As mentioned earlier, the Pipho family were resident in the town of Hollywood, elevating its status. This is evidenced by the scant references to Donard in the 1641 depositions.

Nevertheless, the community at Donard did survive. The Hearth Money Rolls in the 1660s record Donard as a small community of 30 houses; 24 had just one hearth, and 2 had no chimney at all. We do get some sense of the changing life in the area. While the Pipho family were still major landowners⁴⁰, wealthier residents (those with more than one hearth) were listed as G. Heighington, J. Jackson, Wm. Shortcliffe, and J. Weatherell.⁴¹

2.1.7 The Emergence of Modern Donard

The 18th century was a time of comparative peace and stability in Ireland. Unfortunately, we have very limited information about life in Donard at the time. The village held a fair twice a year⁴². However, the failure to complete a road over the Table Track into Glenmalur left Donard unable to take advantage of the mining that began in the western end of Glenmalur around this time.

One notable visitor to Donard in the 1760s was John Wesley, the English founder of Methodism. His recollection of his visit and a sermon he gave was brief:

³⁸ *Ronan, Archbishop Bulkeley's Visitation of Dublin, 1630 p78*

³⁹ *Ibid p7*

⁴⁰ *Books of Survey and Distribution. Co. Dublin, Co. Wicklow, 1641-1701.p148*

⁴¹ *Price, The Heart Money Rolls for Co Wicklow, p.173*

⁴² *Corrigan The history of Hollywood West Wicklow p43*

*I rode to Donard a small town in the Co of Wicklow. Here I met with more noise and stupid senseless impudence, than I have since I left England. But the chief man of the town having handled one of the disturbers roughly and another of them being knocked down (not by a methodist) I concluded my discourse without any further hindrance.*⁴³

Wesley's experience hints at sectarianism, a feature of life that would shape modern history in Donard. While Wicklow in general had a comparatively high Protestant population, the Barony of Talbotstown, where Donard was located, was something of an exception. Early 19th-century data records the Protestant population of Talbotstown numbered just 5% of the overall total⁴⁴. However, Donard was an outlier with a significant protestant minority of around 30%⁴⁵. This community appears to have been well established by the 1790s given a branch of the Orange Order was established in the town.

Unsurprisingly, the 1798 Rebellion, a revolt marred by sectarian violence, had a major impact on the town. Tensions had been rising in the locality in the preceding years, but during the rebellion itself, Donard was severely damaged⁴⁶. Samuel Lewis, who visited in the 1830s, claimed:

During the disturbances of 1798, the village was burnt by the insurgents, the inhabitants having been driven to seek refuge in Dunlavin⁴⁷.

This is supported by contemporary sources. There were dozens of claims for compensation in the aftermath of the rebellion from the residents of Donard. The Vestry book in the neighbouring parish church of Donoughmore described the rebellion as a 'cataclysm'⁴⁸.

Tensions would remain high in Donard for years. Meetings of the Orange Order frequently resulted in members firing shots at the house of Anthony Byrne, who it was believed had aided Michael Dwyer⁴⁹.

One of the major casualties in terms of architecture was the medieval church. In the absence of a fortified position, the military occupied the Protestant church. Unfortunately, this took a major toll on the building, pushing it beyond repair.⁵⁰

Samuel Lewis described:

⁴³ Wesley, *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley Vol III*, p.224

⁴⁴ Nolan & Hannigan, *Wicklow History and Society*, p795

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p449

⁴⁷ Lewis, *A topographical history of Ireland*, p471

⁴⁸ O'Donnell, R. *Aftermath: Post rebellion insurgency in Wicklow* p28

⁴⁹ *ibid* p181

⁵⁰ Styles, *The Inheritance of My Fathers*, p. 10

the church was garrisoned by the yeomanry, on this occasion, which greatly injured it, and it has since become dilapidated.⁵¹

Nevertheless, in the following decades, the town slowly recovered. The Heighinton family, one of the largest landowners in the locality, built Donard House, a large two-storey country house. Their previous residence had been damaged in the 1798 rebellion, with George Heighinton claiming over £160 compensation for furniture, clothes, and general provisions.⁵²

In the 1820s, a Catholic church was erected on the site of the current community hall⁵³. Then, in the 1830s, a new Protestant church was built on a new site. This was funded by the Board of First Fruits, an organisation which funded church construction and repair.

Nevertheless the town continued to struggle. When Samuel Lewis visited in the 1830s, he noted that Donard:

A market and two fairs were formerly held here by patent, but both have been discontinued, though a pleasure fair is yet held on the 15th of Aug.⁵⁴

This was followed by the Great Hunger, which had a devastating impact on Donard. In 1841, the town comprised 86 houses and a total population of 513 residents.⁵⁵ Ten years later, as the Famine was easing, the number of houses had fallen by 12, while the population had declined by over 35%⁵⁶. In 1851, there were only 328 residents⁵⁷. This was followed by decades of slow decline. By 1881, there were only 59 houses occupied. The population had declined by a further 20% to 262.⁵⁸

Many of the institutions of village life struggled. The Orange Lodge was in existence as late as 1842 but not afterwards. In 1872, the Protestant church amalgamated the parishes of Donard and Donoughmore, although services continued to be held in Donard⁵⁹. Despite its decline, sectarian tensions continued to flare, notably during the Home Rule crisis of 1886.

⁵¹ Lewis, *A topographical history of Ireland*, p471

⁵² Cantwell, *1798 Claimants and Surrenders*, <https://www.findmypast.ie> Accessed Sep 11 2024

⁵³ <https://donardimaalhistory.wicklowheritage.org/places/chapel-of-ease-the-church-of-the-holy-trinity-donard>

⁵⁴ Lewis, *A topographical history of Ireland*, p471

⁵⁵ *1881 Census Report the Province of Leinster*, p1117

⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁵⁷ *1881 Census Report the Province of Leinster*, p1117

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Styles, *The Inheritance of My Fathers*, p12

2.1.8 The 20th Century

By the turn of the 20th century, Donard had declined still further. Its population was just 187 people. In 1900, the British military began to use the Glen of Imaal as an artillery range, which has continued by the Irish Army up to the present day.

However, the town itself struggled. By 1914, church attendance at Protestant services was around 40. However, through the vicissitudes of the 20th century, these stabilised, remaining similar into the late 1950s.⁶⁰ Services continue into the present on a rotational basis between Donard, Donoughmore, and Dunlavin.

One of the few major additions to the town in the early 20th century was a new Catholic church erected in 1926.

On the whole, the 20th century proved a relatively sedate period in Donard, standing in contrast to its past. There was very limited activity in the town during the Revolution and Irish War of Independence. In a pattern reflected across the island, the population of Donard continued to decline, falling to just 151 in 1951.⁶¹ This represented a 70% decline since 1841.

At various times, the idea of building a road along the Table Track was mooted, which would have connected Donard to east Wicklow and potentially increased tourist traffic; however, this never came to pass.

Nevertheless, in the late 20th century and 21st century economic growth, the expansion of Dublin, and improved transport have combined to see the town enjoy modest renewal. By the 2020s, the population of Donard had grown to 238.

⁶⁰ *ibid* p12

⁶¹ 1951 Census *Alphabetical list of towns with populations, 1951*. CSO.ie Accessed Oct 4th 2024

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2.2 Archaeological Background

Donard church and graveyard are in the townland of Donard Lower, the Barony of Lower Talbotstown, in the Civil Parish of Donard, located at the northern end of the Glen of Imaal, in the western part of the Wicklow Mountains. The village is surrounded by Table Mountain (702m), Church Mountain (546m), Lugnaquilla (925m), the highest in Wicklow, and Keadeen Mountain (655m) (Figure 1).

The previous section of this report completed by Dwyer, provides a comprehensive history of Donard. In summary, prehistoric monuments, such as portal tombs and rock art from the Bronze Age, suggest early human activity in the area. Donard's location along important ancient routes through the Wicklow Mountains further emphasized its strategic importance.

In summary, during the early Christian era, Donard had strong connections to some of the first missionaries to Ireland, including Paladius. This period shaped the village's ecclesiastical heritage, with St. Sylvester being a key figure, and relics tied to him were reputedly held in Donard.

In the medieval period, the arrival of the Normans saw Donard become a frontier settlement, with the construction of a motte-and-bailey castle by the powerful de Marisco family. The village's development was hindered by its location on the edge of the Norman-controlled lands and by ongoing conflict with the Gaelic Irish.

The early modern era brought colonization and religious changes, particularly during the 16th and 17th centuries, with settlers from England establishing a Protestant community. The town was affected by the 1641 rebellion and Cromwellian invasion, as well as subsequent conflicts, but remained largely under the control of English landowners.

By the 19th century, Donard experienced further challenges, including a sharp population decline due to the Great Famine, and its significance waned. The village was heavily impacted by sectarian tension during the 1798 Rebellion, when it was burned by insurgents.

In the 20th century, Donard remained a small rural community, though the area around it, particularly the Glen of Imaal, became a military artillery range. Despite ongoing population decline, recent economic growth and the expansion of Dublin have brought modest renewal to the village, with its population rising slightly in the 21st century. This section of the report is

a desk-based assessment coupled with a site visit in order to understand the monument and establish a receiving baseline environment.

2.2.1 Principal Data Sources

The following sources (documentary, cartographic and databases) were consulted to a) establish the nature of the receiving baseline environment. The result of this research is contained within the following paragraphs.

- Place Name Analysis.
- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP).
- Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).
- National Monuments in State Care Database
- Preservation Orders List.
- Register of Historic Monuments
- Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, and Conservation Areas
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).
- Cartographic and historic photo sources relating to the study area.
- Aerial Photographs.
- Database of Irish Excavation Reports (1970- 2023).

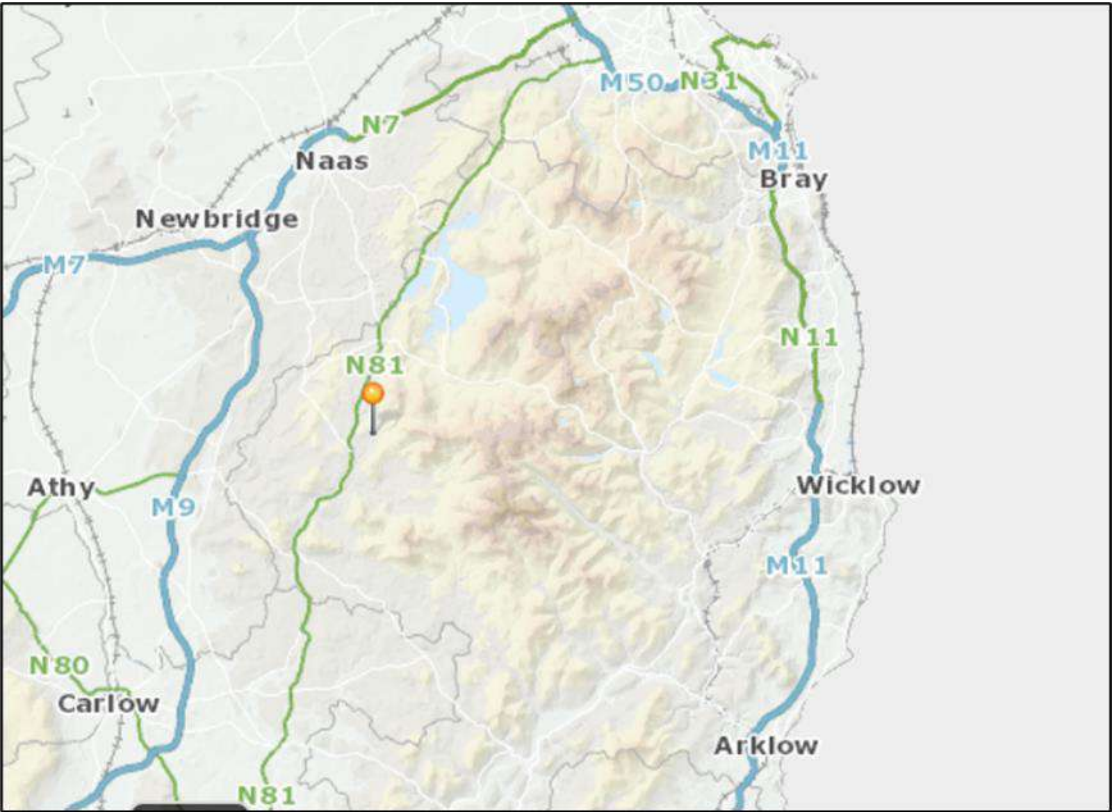


Figure 2: Location Donard, County Wicklow.

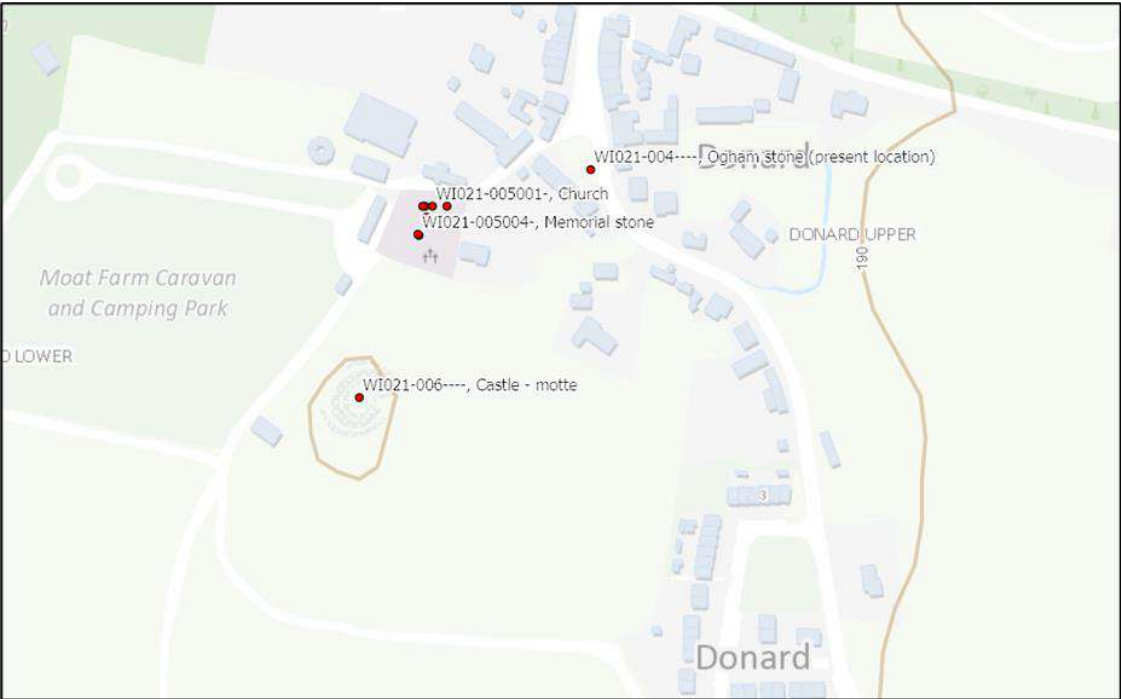


Figure 3: Site location map Donard Church and graveyard Co. Wicklow. With SMR number listed.

2.2.2 Place Name Analysis.

Below is a table that lists historical references for Donard from www.logainm.ie The Placename Database of Ireland.

1172-6	Dunarde	Alen's Reg.
1172 -6	Dunard	Crede Mihi
1173	Dunard	Crede Mihi
1181-99	Dunardathe	Alen's Reg.
1185-95	Dunardathe	Alen's Reg.
1185 -95	Dunardach	Crede Mihi
1190 c.	Dunarde	Reg. St. Jn. B.
1192c	Dunliard	RBO
1192	Dunarde	Alen's Reg.
1192	Dunard	Crede Mihi
1200	Durand'	CDI
1216	Donard	Alen's Reg.
1216	Donardet	Crede Mihi
1230	Dunhardach	CDI
1280	Donard	Crede Mihi
1290	Dunarde	Alen's Reg.
1302-6	Donartchinon	CDI
1326	Donnarde	Alen's Reg.
1530	Donard	Alen's Reg.
1533	Donarde	Rep. Vir.
1538	Donarde	F Alt: 543
1540	Donard	Ir. Mon. Poss. <i>Leathanach</i> : 66

1540-41	Villata de Downarde	Crown Surv.
1549	Donarde	F <i>Alt: 298</i>
1549	Donarde	F <i>Alt: 279</i>
1551	Donarde	F <i>Alt: 774</i>
1560	Donarde	F
1561	Donard (Presentation of Hugh Cawgane to the Vicarage of)	CPCR
1569	Donarde	F
1571	Donarde	F
1575	Dún Ard	LBrn.
1579	Donarde	F
1579	Donarde	F
1594	Donarde	F
1595	Downard	CSPI
1600	Donarde	F
1605	Donard	CPR <i>Leathanach: 69</i>
1606-07	Donarde	CSP J I
1625	Dunard & Hollywood	CPR <i>Leathanach: 588</i>
1641-47	Downard	Outlaws
1668	Doonard, Donnard	HMR (CM)
1683	Donard	Dublin Wills
1692	Donard	Dublin Wills

1712	Dunnard	CGn.
1713	Dunard	CGn.
1713	Dunard	CGn.
1725	Donard	Dublin Wills
1747	Donard	CGn.
1760	Donard	Nevill 1760
1778	Donard	T&S
1791	Donard	Dublin Wills
1793	Denard	Dublin Wills
1809	Dunnard	Scale's Atlas
1817	Donard	CGn.
1821	Donard	Duncan
1839	Donard Parish	Wilson, J.:AL <i>Leathanach</i> : CM034,36
1839	Donard Parish	Doody, P.:AL <i>Leathanach</i> : CM034,36
1839	Donard Parish	Fox, P.:AL <i>Leathanach</i> : CM034,36
1839	Donard Parish	Rec. Name:AL <i>Leathanach</i> : CM034,36 <i>"& townland! - Remarks are on the parish" [pl];</i>
1839	Donard Parish	BS:AL <i>Leathanach</i> : CM034,36
1839	Donard	LSO (CM)
1910	D[omnach]. airte fd. by Palladius in Lein., Tl. 30; ¶ in E. of c. Wick., Lb. 26; ¶ Donard p. and 5 tls. in Wick.	Onom. Goed

1910	D[ún]. árd in d. Glendal., c. Wick., Cr. 1192, 1173; ¶ Donard in Balimór dry., Dublin, Cr.; ¶ raided by Aodh O Byrne, siad aráon anesbaidh cruith, D. A. as Baile an Blacuigh, Caithréim Aodha, Bran. 92.	Onom. Goed
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Table 2: Historical references for from www.logainm.ie.

Donard is a townland located in the civil parish of Dún Ard (Donard) within the barony of Talbotstown Lower in County Wicklow. It translates as Dún which means fort in English and ard, meaning high, so high fort.

The placename "Donard" (and its various historical forms such as Dunarde, Dunard, Dunardathe, Donardet, Downard, etc.) is in the civil parish of the same name and also the barony of Talbotstown Lower. Donard is associated with an elevated fortification or "Dún Ard" in Irish, which translates to "high fort" or "high stronghold."

Throughout historical records, from the 12th century to modern times, Donard and its variations have appeared in significant legal and ecclesiastical documents. The earliest records, such as those in Alen's Register from the late 12th century, reference "Dunarde" and "Dunardathe," indicating its importance as a place of note, possibly a landholding or religious settlement. Similarly, references in Crede Mihi confirm the presence and status of Donard in the same period.

By the late 1500s, Donard had become a well-established parish, as seen in several records, including church and property documents, such as the Crown Survey and entries in Fiant registers, which track the administration of English crown lands in Ireland. By this period, the placename also appeared in the Irish Monastic Possessions and Presentation of Hugh Cawgane to the Vicarage of Donard in 1561, indicating its religious significance.

Over time, as seen in the 18th and 19th centuries, the name stabilized as "Donard," continuing its ecclesiastical and administrative relevance, often noted in Dublin Wills and other landholding documents. References to the area are also found in geographical sources such as Scale's Atlas in 1809 and various scholarly works in the 20th century.

2.2.3 Archaeological Landscape of the Early Medieval Period c. 500-1100 AD

By 380 AD, Christianity formally became the professed faith of the powerful Roman Empire after the Emperor Constantine attributed his victory at the Battle of Milvian Bridge to divine intervention by a Christian God who had brought him victory ⁶². New contact between Ireland and Romanised Britain formed because of trading and raiding. New settlers and traders brought new customs with them to Ireland: they brought a new religion that included a new form of burial practice – supine, extended inhumation together with the establishment and construction of churches.

Despite the general belief that St Patrick ‘brought Christianity to Ireland’ in 432 AD, there were already Christians in this part of Ireland before his arrival and they were Roman raiders and traders. During the early Christian era, Donard had strong connections to some of the first missionaries to Ireland, including Paladius. This period shaped the village's ecclesiastical heritage, with St. Sylvester being a key figure, and relics tied to him were reputedly held in Donard.

The Romans replaced the practice of cremation with inhumation in the second century AD. This inhumation burial rite spread to Ireland by the later fourth or early fifth century⁶³. Cremation was the dominant burial practice in Ireland before this. The east-west orientation of the burial (head to the west) was traditional by the fourth century in Britain and eventually became identified with Christianity in both Britain and Ireland.

The early Christian monastic system adopted the native Irish settlement style by enclosing their early monasteries with earthen banks ⁶⁴. In addition to internationally famous monastic sites such as Glendalough and Clonmacnoise, there were smaller Christian communities throughout the Irish countryside like Donard. These communities mostly consisted of lay people and were concerned mainly with ministering to the spiritual needs of the people in their area⁶⁵. Most early ecclesiastical sites appear to have originated with a founding saint who lived in the sixth century, and Saint Sylvester is associated with Hollywood ⁶⁶. These settlements along with containing churches and cemeteries, were also centres of craft working and the occupants engaged in farming ⁶⁷. During the gradual conversion from paganism to Christianity,

⁶² Noonan, 2015, p. 1

⁶³ O' Brien, 2020, p. 49

⁶⁴ Noonan, 2015, p. 4

⁶⁵ O Sullivan & Downey, 2020, p. 43

⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 44

⁶⁷ O Sullivan & Downey, 2017, p. 18

the laity would have still buried their dead in familial cemeteries that would have supported a local, secular community.

This practice was tolerated by the church up to the eighth century. Prior to this, burial in monastic centres like Donard would have been reserved for high-ranking members of society; typically, bishops, abbots, clerics and patrons. However, from the eighth century onwards, the Church began to legislate regarding acceptable burial practices and the '*Collectio Canonum Hibernensis*' ('Collection of Irish Canons') urged the faithful to abandon burial among their ancestors in favour of burial in church cemeteries⁶⁸ This is where early medieval church sites such as Donard came into use. These sites range from the better-known monastic complexes like Glendalough and Clonmacnoise, to small and almost forgotten places in secluded fields, there are over 100 historic graveyards listed in the SMR for Co. Wicklow.

The earliest churches were small timber structures. They were founded in the period 500–800 AD and were built primarily of timber frames with post-and-wattle walls and clay⁶⁹. Only twenty timber churches have been identified to date. Mortared stone churches may have replaced an earlier wooden church in many instances. There are approximately 140 churches in the country which were built between the tenth and mid-twelfth centuries.

These early church sites were defined by one or more curvilinear enclosing elements which could comprise ditches, banks, stone walls and palisades. The remains of inner enclosure is possibly still visible in the graveyard at Donard, however further analysis including geophysical survey may highlight the location of the enclosure in the surrounding landscape. Recent research suggests that there are approximately six thousand ecclesiastical sites in Ireland which is on average, one for every ten townlands⁷⁰.

Many small early medieval church sites contained a church and cemetery on the eastern side with domestic and craft areas in the western part of the enclosure. The innermost core was called a vallum in which the church and graveyard were located, and this was considered sacred⁷¹. Carved stone crosses often mark the boundary of this sacred area defining it from the outer enclosed areas where craft, domestic, agriculture, cereal processing and iron working were carried out⁷². Some people also lived in and around the monastic sites, either as monks living within the enclosure or workers on the monastic estate living in the area outside the enclosure. A range of features are associated with these sites comprising the

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ O Sullivan & Downey, 2020, p. 44

⁷¹ Noonan, 2015, p. 5

⁷² O Sullivan & Downey, 2020, p. 46

church and graveyard, dwellings, various ovens / kilns, wells and mills as well as field systems, although some of these would have been located outside the ecclesiastical enclosure.

The three main farm animals on early church sites were cattle, sheep/goats and pigs. Barley was the dominant cereal, followed by oats and occasionally wheat and rye. Mills were often erected near the church sites, with corn-drying kilns typically within the outer precincts.

At Donard there is very little above ground traces of the early medieval church site, the graveyard is roughly square and the original church was replaced and the current one dates to possibly the 15th or 16th century.

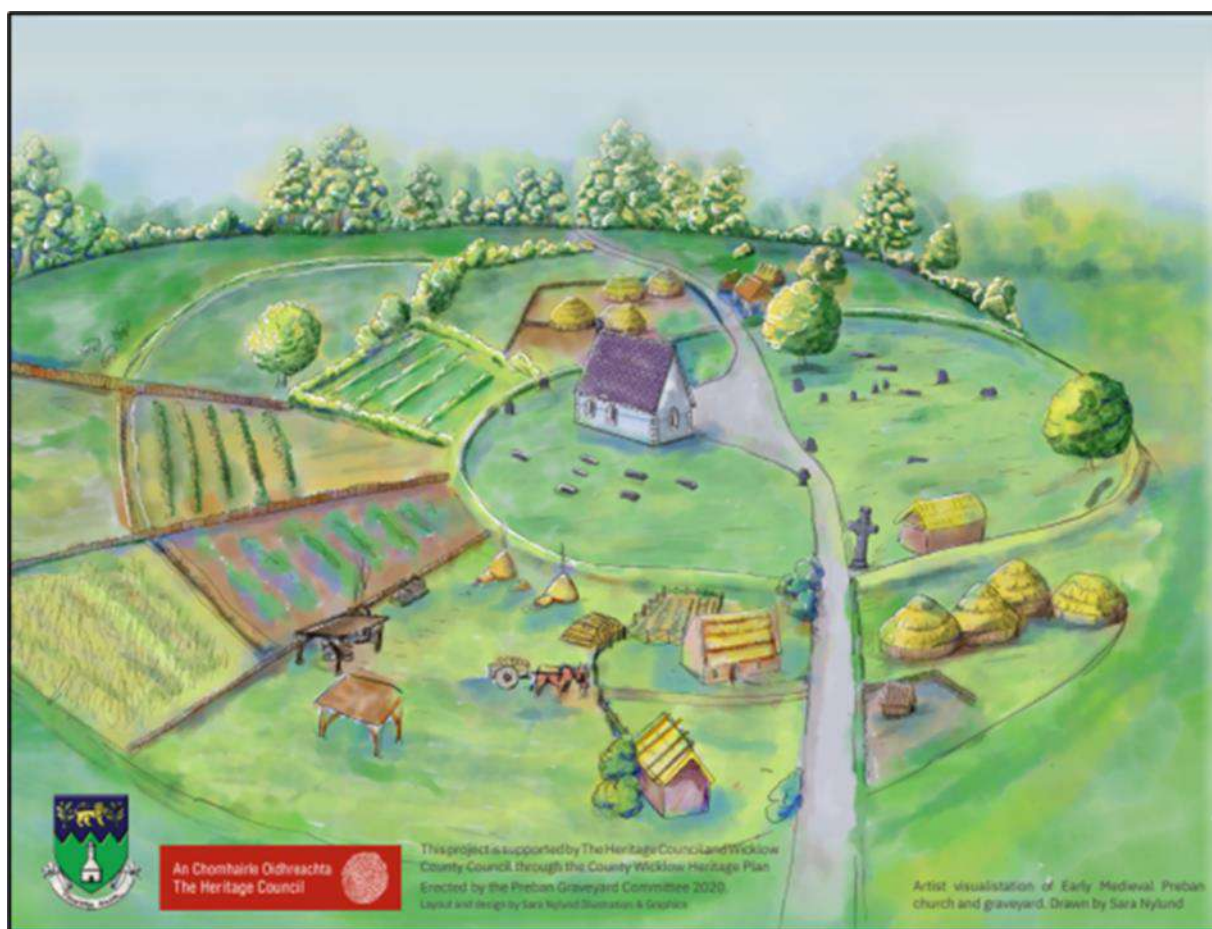


Plate 2: Reconstruction drawing of an early medieval church site by Sara Nylund.

2.2.4 Archaeological evidence for the Anglo-Norman Period in Donard

In 1169, Richard de Clare (Strongbow) and his Norman forces arrived in Ireland, invited by Diarmuid MacMurrough to help reclaim his kingship of Leinster. The Normans swiftly advanced through the south and captured Dublin within two years. Diarmuid was restored as King of Leinster and solidified his alliance with the Normans by offering his daughter Aoife in marriage to Strongbow. At that time, Diarmuid's brother-in-law, Lorcan O'Toole, was the

Archbishop of Dublin and played a crucial role in negotiations between the Normans and the Irish, being trusted by both sides.

After Lorcan O'Toole's death in 1180, King Henry II was determined to prevent another Irishman from becoming Archbishop of Dublin. He influenced the election of John Comyn, an Englishman who had served the king for many years. Comyn, who had assisted the king in various state affairs and negotiations with the pope, was consecrated as Archbishop of Dublin on March 21, 1182, after being ordained a priest one week earlier.

In 1192, Comyn persuaded Prince John to transfer most of the estates from the bishopric of Glendalough to Dublin, arguing that Glendalough was sparsely populated while Dublin was impoverished. This transfer made Comyn one of the wealthiest landholders in the area. He granted Donard to his nephew, Jordan de Marisco around 1192 as discussed by Dwyer previously in this report. It is around this period that the motte and bailey castle, known as the Ball Moat, was established. Positioned south of Donard's early medieval ecclesiastical site, this fortification likely marked the location of an original earthwork that inspired Donard's name, meaning "high fort."

After the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169, the new settlers began the construction of castles to extend their control, the majority of which were built of earth and timber. These were favoured materials because of the speed with which castles could be erected and they may also have customized pre-existing earthwork⁷³. Early castles were of two principal types: mottes and ringworks.

The motte and bailey consisted of a flat-topped, steep-sided, earthen mound supporting a wooden tower, with an associated courtyard or bailey, which is often raised and enclosed by a bank and fosse, as it is at Donard.

The motte and bailey castles were constructed by piling up layers of earth and stone. They were quick to build using local materials and did not need skilled labour. The motte would have had steep sides making it easy to defend in times of attack.

The bailey which would have been a bustling settlement would have been possibly surrounded by a wooden palisade, and a ditch (called a fosse). If it was possible, nearby streams were diverted into the ditches to produce a moat.

⁷³ O Keefe, The archaeology of Anglo-Norman castles in Ireland. Part 2: Stone castles, 1990, p. 15

The residential, administrative, farm and other buildings essential to the day-to-day activities of the Anglo-Norman fortification may have been in or adjacent to the bailey which in some instances may also have functioned as a fortification for a military garrison⁷⁴. Access from the bailey to the motte was probably by some form of wooden bridge or gangway.



Plate 3: Extract from the 70m long Bayeux Tapestry which tells of the conquest of England by William the Conqueror in 1066.

The motte at Donard is described in the SMR files as a predominantly natural, steep-sided mound with a diameter of approximately 40 meters and a height ranging from 4 to 8 meters. Its summit is relatively level and circular, measuring about 24 meters in diameter and encircled by an earthen bank that is 1.7 meters wide and between 0.4 and 0.7 meters high. Access to the summit is provided by a 3-meter-wide entrance, along with an access ramp situated on the northeastern side. On the eastern side, a possible fosse lies approximately 4 meters below the summit level, balanced by a berm on the western side, adding both functional and defensive elements to the structure.

While the subjugation of the more remote parts of the island would take generations, Norman settlement in Wicklow was well underway by the late 12th century. To develop an Anglo-Norman system of agriculture, which differed considerably from that of the Gaelic Irish, most of the land was divided into political and economic units known as manors. These manors encompassed several thousand acres of land around an administrative center, or caput, which usually took the form of a village or small town built around a fortified site. The site at Donard was chosen as there was a pre-existing church site there as is the case with many other

⁷⁴ O Keefe, 2007

examples including Hollywood. While primarily defensive, the motte and bailey also served as the administrative center for de Marisco's holdings in the Glen of Imaal.

It was observed that many medieval villages and towns had designated areas, known as burgage plots, where the burgesses constructed their houses, typically situated at the street end of the property. These features manifested as traces of elongated, narrow plots. The size of these medieval plots varied depending on their location and intended land use, with dimensions often based on a medieval unit of measurement known as a "perch". There is no historical sources which reference burgage plots at Donard.



Plate 4: Aerial view of Motte at Donard WI021-006----.

2.2.5 Cartographic Analysis

Analysis of historic mapping shows the human impact on the landscape and its evolving nature over clearly defined time intervals. The comparison of editions of historic maps can show how some landscape features have been created, altered, or removed over a period of time. The following paragraphs detail all the maps that specifically relate to Donard.

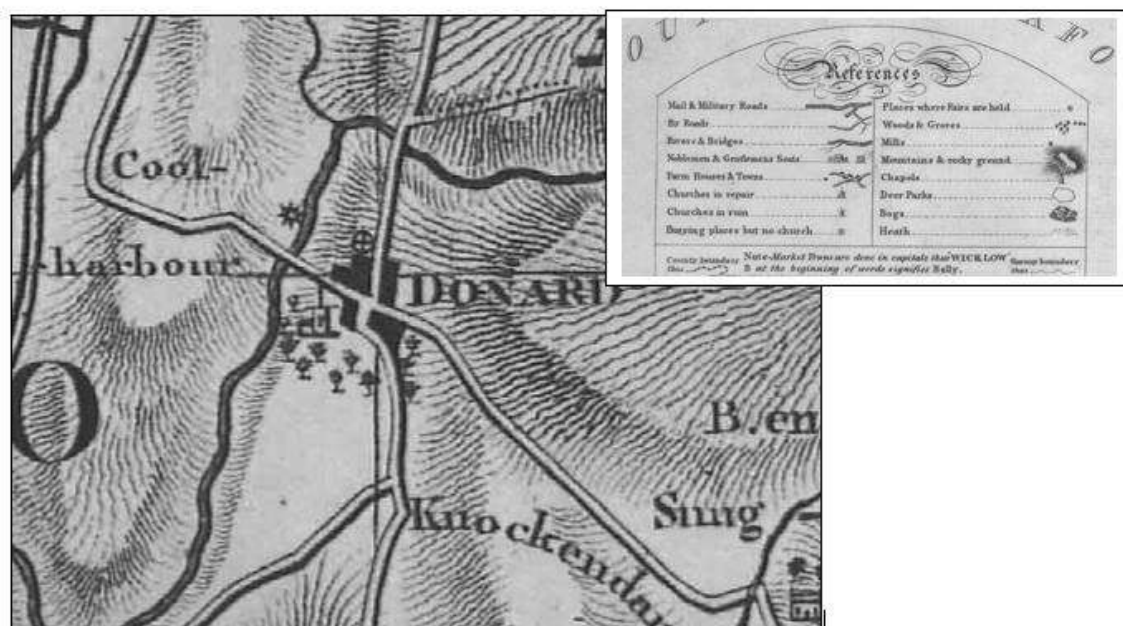


Figure 4: Wicklow Grand Jury Map 1760 content, created 1812⁷⁵

At the time of the Grand Jury Map, the content dates to 1760 and the map was created in 1812, Donard is depicted as having a market place, a church in repair, with farmhouses around the village (Figure 4). A mill is also depicted to the west of the village. As Dwyer notes in section 2.2 a southern route along the modern walking path, the Table Track, linked the Glen of Imaal with Glenmalure and this is depicted on the Grand Jury Map by Neville (see Figure 1).

⁷⁵ [Wicklow Grand Jury Map by Jacob Nevill - Virtual Treasury](#)

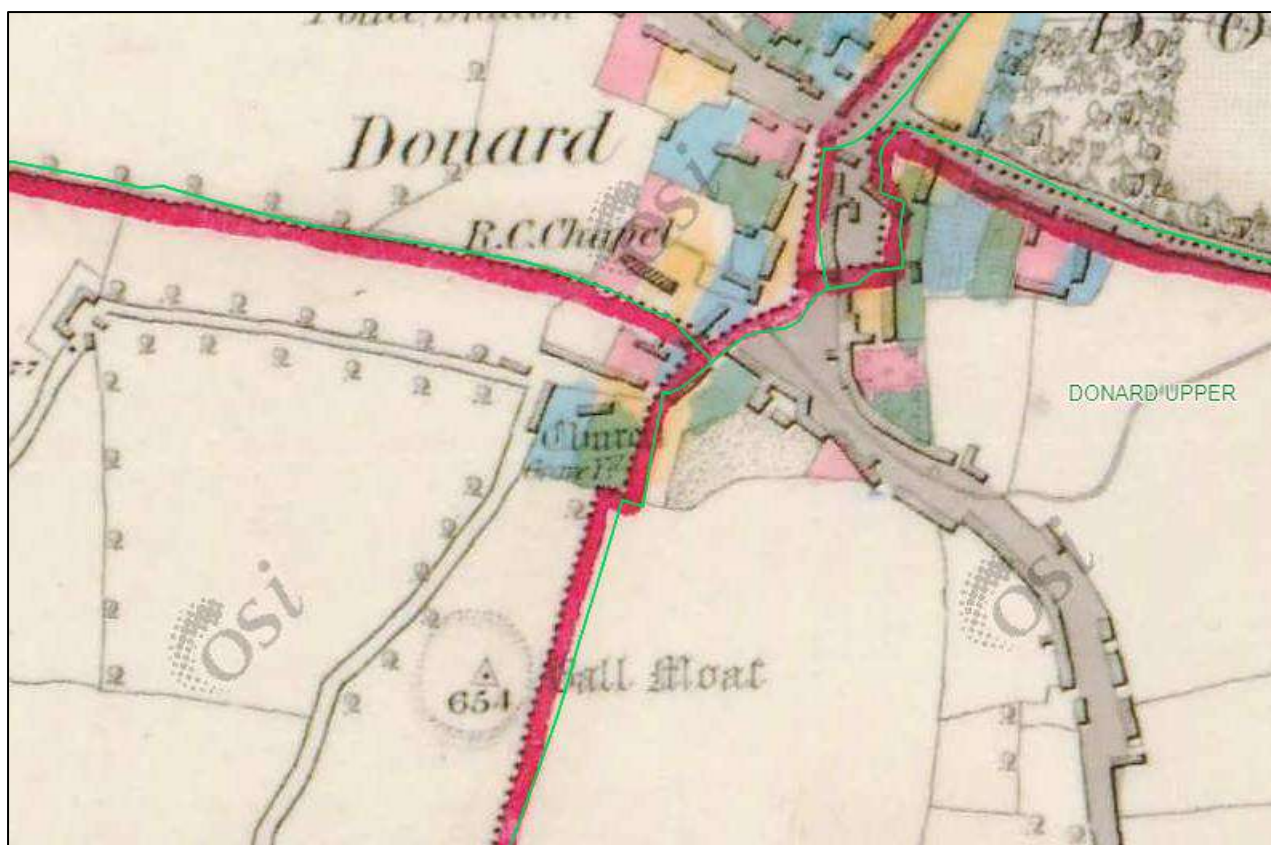


Figure 5: First edition 1829 – 1841 OS map (www.archaeology.ie).

On the first edition map, the church and graveyard are clearly marked (Figure 5). The church appears as a long rectangular building aligned east to west, situated within a roughly square graveyard. The northern boundary of the graveyard coincides with the townland boundary separating Donard Upper and Lower. A laneway runs along the western side of the graveyard, with a building depicted near its western boundary. The motte is shown as a circular raised area and is labelled the "Ball Moat." Additionally, the map labels the R.C. Chapel, along with numerous houses lining the streets.

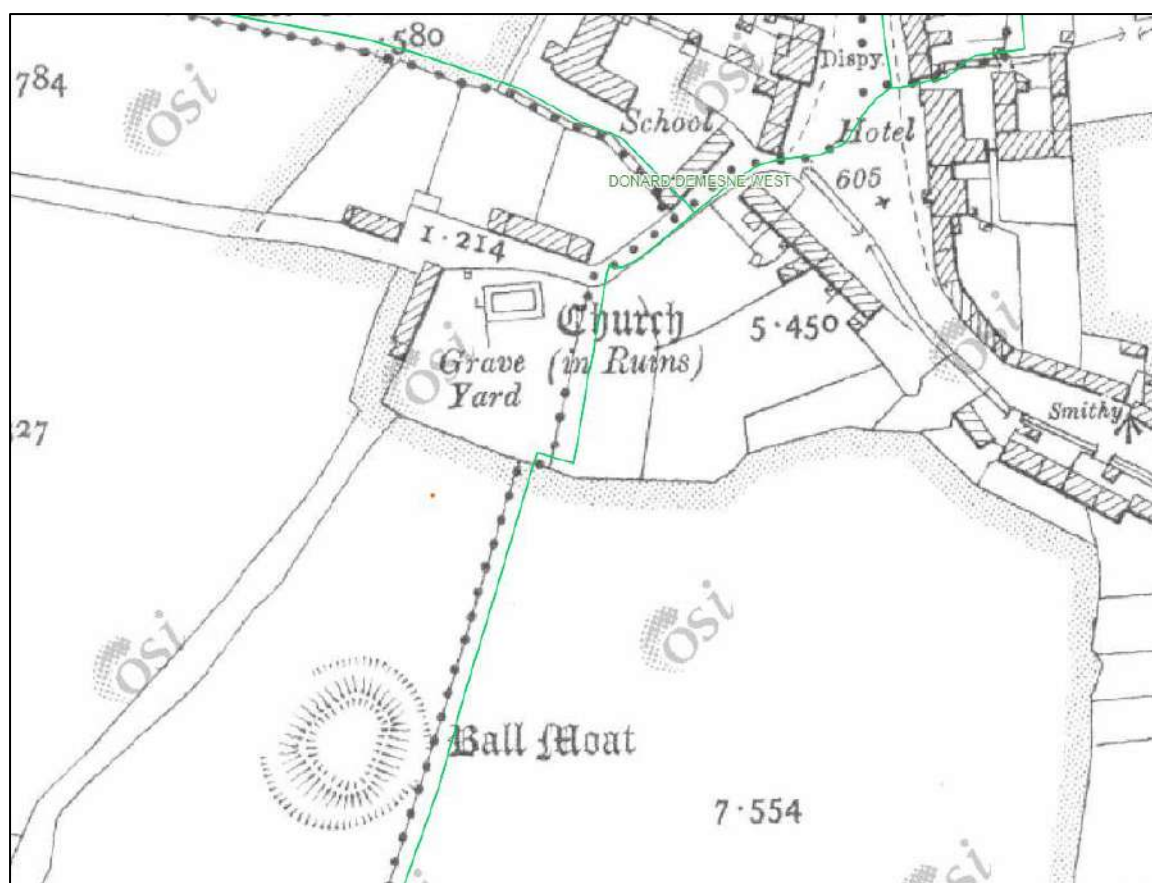


Figure 6: Third edition OS map 1908-09 (www.archaeology.ie).

On the third edition map, the church is labelled as being in ruins, with the graveyard also marked. The building adjacent to the laneway, shown on the first edition map, remains extant. A small L-shaped wall is attached to the western end of the church, and a possible wall extends from the southwest corner of the graveyard. The Ball Moat, with its flat top and steeply sloped sides, is also depicted.

2.2.6 Record of Monuments and Places

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under section 12(1) of the 1994 National Monuments (Amendment) Act and provides that the Commissioners (now the Minister) shall establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where the Minister believes there are monuments, such record to be comprised of a list of monuments and relevant places and a map or maps showing each monument and relevant place in respect of each county in the state.

It is based on the older non-statutory Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and information from county archaeological inventories. It records known upstanding archaeological monuments, the original location of destroyed monuments and the location of possible sites identified through documentary, cartographic, photographic research, and field inspections.

The following the SMR details for Donard as extracted from (www.archaeology.ie).

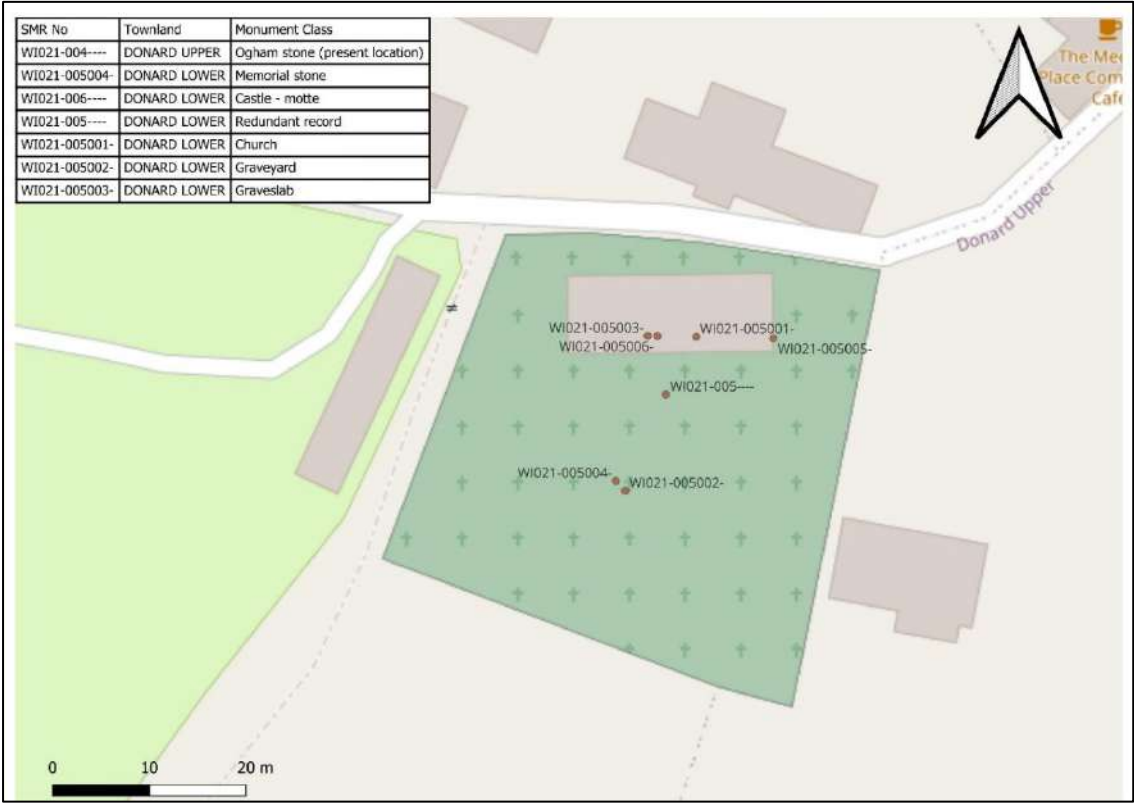


Figure 7: SMR sites Donard, Co. Wicklow.

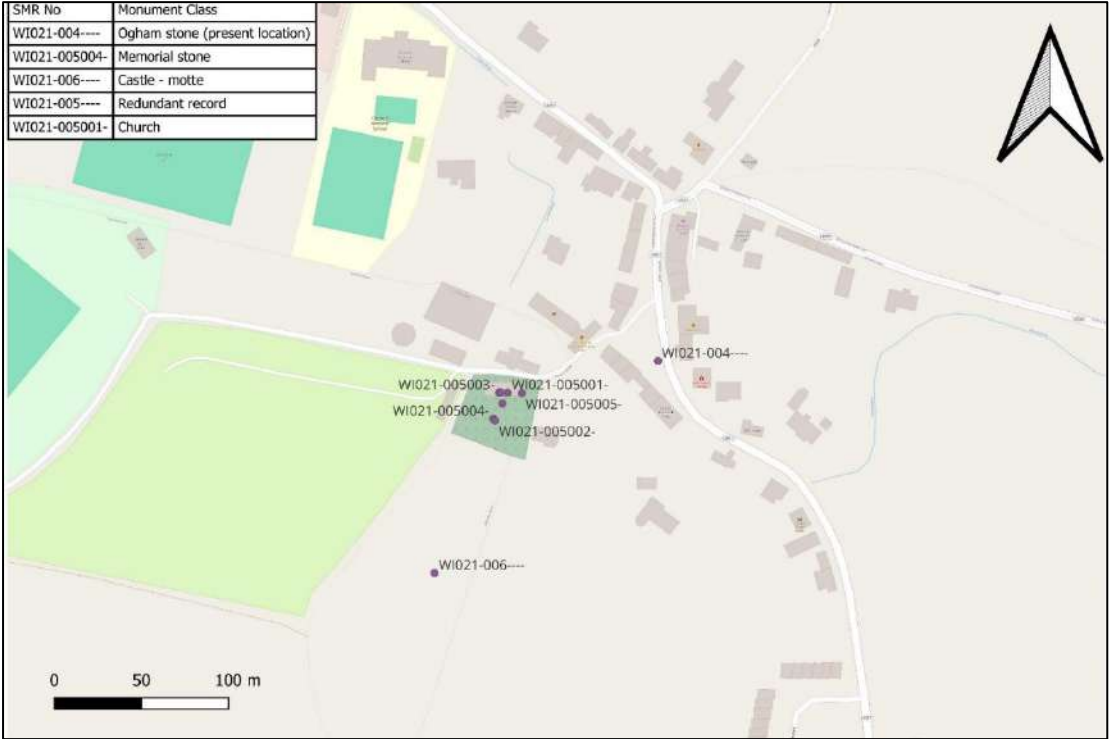


Figure 8: Zoomed out view SMR sites in Donard.

SMR No	Townland	Monument Class	WebNotes
WI021-005003-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab	One of two late medieval graveslabs at Donard church (WI021-005001-). A recumbent tapering slab (L 1.79m; Wth 0.74-0.53m; T 0.19m) with bevelled edges immediately inside W door believed locally to cover the grave of St. Sylvester. The upper face is ornamented by a cross in outline at either end joined by shafts. A second tapering slab (WI021-005005-) (L 1.06m; Wth at top 0.54m; T 0.28m) with similar but cruder ornament is now erect outside the E gable of the church. (Corlett 2003, 95-97) Compiled by: Mary Tunney Date of upload: 20 November 2012
WI021-005004-	DONARD LOWER	Memorial stone	Listed as 'Miscellaneous' in the SMR (1986), this record relates to the original location of a subrectangular inscribed granite slab (L 0.5m; Wth 0.28cm; T 0.25m) described by Walsh (1931, 139) as reading: ') M T (' on the first line and '171) 1V' on the second line, perhaps representing the builder's initials and a date. The present location of the stone is unknown. Compiled by: Mary Tunney Date of upload: 20 November 2012
WI021-005005-	DONARD LOWER	Graveslab	Set upright against the outer face of the E wall of a church (WI021-005001-). A granite trapezoidal graveslab (visible above ground to a height of 1.06m; Wth 0.54m at broad top end; T 0.28m). The upper end is decorated with a cross defined by a groove (D 0.005m; Wth 0.002-0.003m) and two grooves extend down to ground level. The slab and decoration are in the same style as the other slab (WI021-005003-) inside the church but are considerably cruder. Compiled by: Mary Tunney Date of upload: 20 November 2012
WI021-005001-	DONARD LOWER	Church	Situated on level ground at a break in a S/SW-facing slope. A fifteenth or sixteenth-century nave and chancel parish church (ext. dims. 12m x 6.5m) built of uncoursed masonry with punch-dressed quoins. The W wall has a bellcote and a central door with a possibly later porch. The window in the E wall has glazing-bar-holes and the internal tracery has been removed. Lying on the floor of the church at the W end is a late medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-) (L 1.79m; Wth 0.53-0.74m; T 0.19m) with bevelled edges. The upper face has the outline of a cross at either end joined by a shaft. A second tapering graveslab (WI021-005005-)(min. L 1.06m; Wth at top 0.54m; T 0.28m) stands upright against the outer face of the E wall. The ornament is similar to the former but is more crudely executed. There is no trace of the inscribed granite slab (WI021-005004-) described by Walshe (1931, 139-40). The church stands towards the N side of a rectangular graveyard (WI021-005002-)(dims. 45m NE-SW; 40m NW-SE) defined by a modern stone wall. A motte (WI021-006----) lies 75m to the SW. The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Wicklow' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1997). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research. Date

			of upload/revision: 20 November 2012 Revised by: Mary Tunney
WI021-005002-	DONARD LOWER	Graveyard	Situated on level ground at a break in a S/SW-facing slope. A rectangular graveyard (dims. 45m NE-SW; 40m NW-SE) defined by a modern stone wall. A fifteenth or sixteenth-century nave and chancel parish church (WI021-005001-) stands on the N side. A medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-) lies within the church and another (WI021-005005-) lies against the outer face of the E wall. Revised by: Mary Tunney Date of revision: 20 November 2012
WI021-006----	DONARD LOWER	Castle - motte	Situated overlooking the medieval church of Donard (WI021-005001-). Archbishop John Comyn of Dublin granted Donard to Jordan de Marisco before 1190 and this may be the site of a motte built by him (Price 1953, 189). Largely natural steep-sided mound (diam. c. 40m; H c. 4-8m) with a level, roughly circular summit (diam. 24m) defined by an earthen bank (Wth 1.7m; H 0.4-0.7m). There is an entrance (Wth 3m) and an access ramp at the NE, a possible fosse at the E (c. 4m below the summit), with a corresponding berm at the W. The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Wicklow' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1997). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research. Date of upload/revision: 17 December 2008 This monument is subject to a preservation order made under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 (PO no. 119/1940).

Table 3:SMR details from www.archaeology.ie.

2.2.7 Historical Photographic Analysis



Plate 5: Photograph on display in Donard Community Centre, Donard Co Wicklow.



Plate 6: View of the village from Donard Imaal History Archive, church and graveyard to left of image.



Plate 7: Bellcote on west wall of Church from 2012.⁷⁶

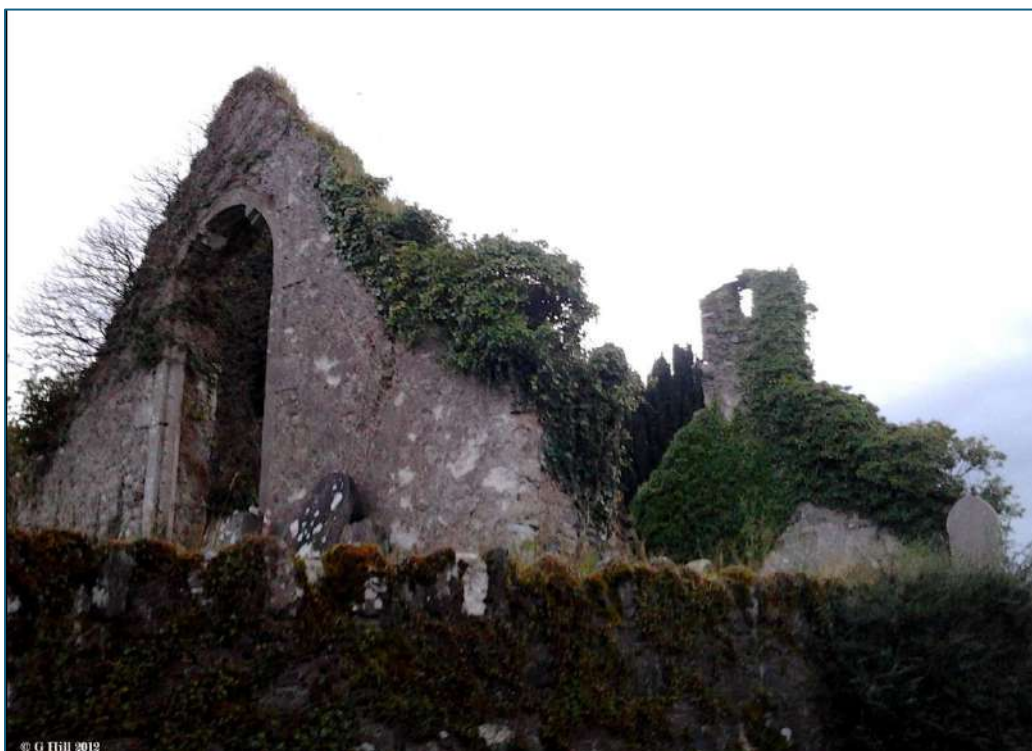


Plate 8: East round-headed window in east wall of church from 2012.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ [Ireland In Ruins: Old Donard Church Co Wicklow](#)

⁷⁷ [Ireland In Ruins: Old Donard Church Co Wicklow](#)

2.2.8 Recorded protected structures (RPS)

Donard Church and graveyard is not a Recorded Protected Structure nor is it listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage's website.

2.2.9 Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI).

The topographical files are held in the National Museum of Ireland in Kildare Street. These files identify all recorded finds which are held in archive and have been donated to the state in accordance with national monuments legislation. Stray finds from the townland of Donard was checked and no finds were recorded.

2.2.10 Database of Irish Excavation Reports (1970- 2023).

A review of the excavations bulletin indicates that there have been no excavations in the townland of Donard.

3 Section Three: The Present: Donard Church and Graveyard Current Condition

3.1 Site Description

The church is located on the northern side of a rectangular graveyard (WI021-005002-), which measures 45 m northeast-southwest and 40 m northwest-southeast (Plate 9). The graveyard is now enclosed by a modern stone wall. The entrance to the graveyard is on the northern side, which is bounded by a small road 1.9 m lower than the graveyard (Plate 10). The northern graveyard wall is 1.9 m high and 0.6 m wide, constructed of roughly coursed stones bound with a whitish-grey mortar. Entry to the graveyard is through two stone pillars with pyramidal granite caps, though the westernmost pillar has been dislodged. Six granite steps lead into the graveyard, measuring 1.6 m wide at the top and 2 m wide at the bottom (Plate 11). The church ruins will be described followed by the graveyard and then the boundary walls.

3.1.1 Church ruins and setting

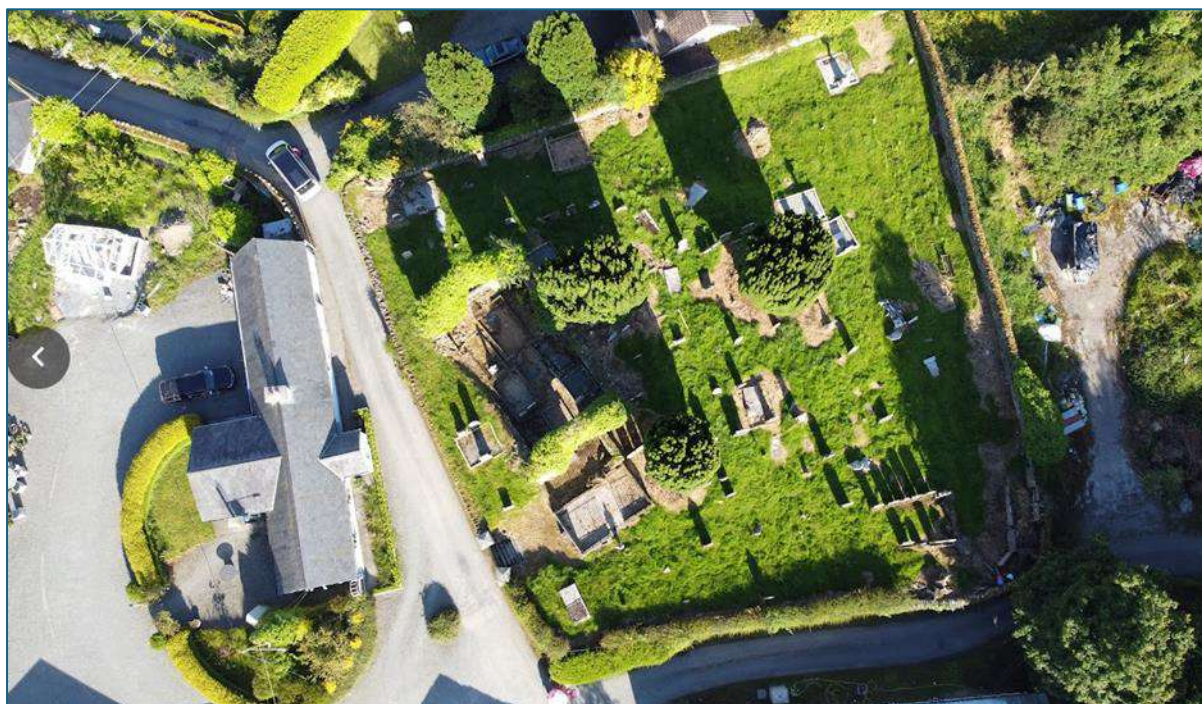


Plate 9: Overview of Donard Graveyard.



Plate 10: View of church and graveyard from the road.



Plate 11: Entrance to the graveyard note pillar on gate is dislodged.

The parish church, dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century, measures 12m by 6.5m externally and the gables are covered in vegetation (Plate 12 -Plate 15). It is constructed from uncoursed masonry, with punch-dressed quoins at the corners.

3.1.2 Western gable of Church

A bellcote is located on the west wall, which also features a central doorway. This doorway may have been altered later to include a porch external to the building. The doorway measures 1.20m wide and is 2.15m in height and 0.70m in depth (Plate 16 - Plate 18). The top of the doorway is framed by an arch of 10 voussoir stones. Traces of a harling are visible on the doorway. The tomb of the Heighton family is located to the west of the church, and three large ledger slabs rest against the western gable.



Plate 12: Aerial view of church ruins.



Plate 13: Western gable of the church, bellcote and doorway, the railings in the foreground is the family plot of the Heightons.



Plate 14: View of doorway in west gable of the church from inside the ruins.



Plate 15: Internal view of west gable, note bellcote and entrance doorway.



Plate 16: South jamb of doorway.



Plate 17: View of arch of doorway.



Plate 18: View of northern jamb of the doorway.

There is a small later east to west aligned wall which is built against the western gable of the church and is 1.9m high and 0.60m in width. It appears to have continued running north to south but has collapsed and may represent a porch. It comprises roughly coursed stone,

different to the church and is bound with mortar. Three large graveslabs are standing upright resting against the western gable of the church (Plate 21).



Plate 19: Later wall which abuts the west gable of the church at the doorway.

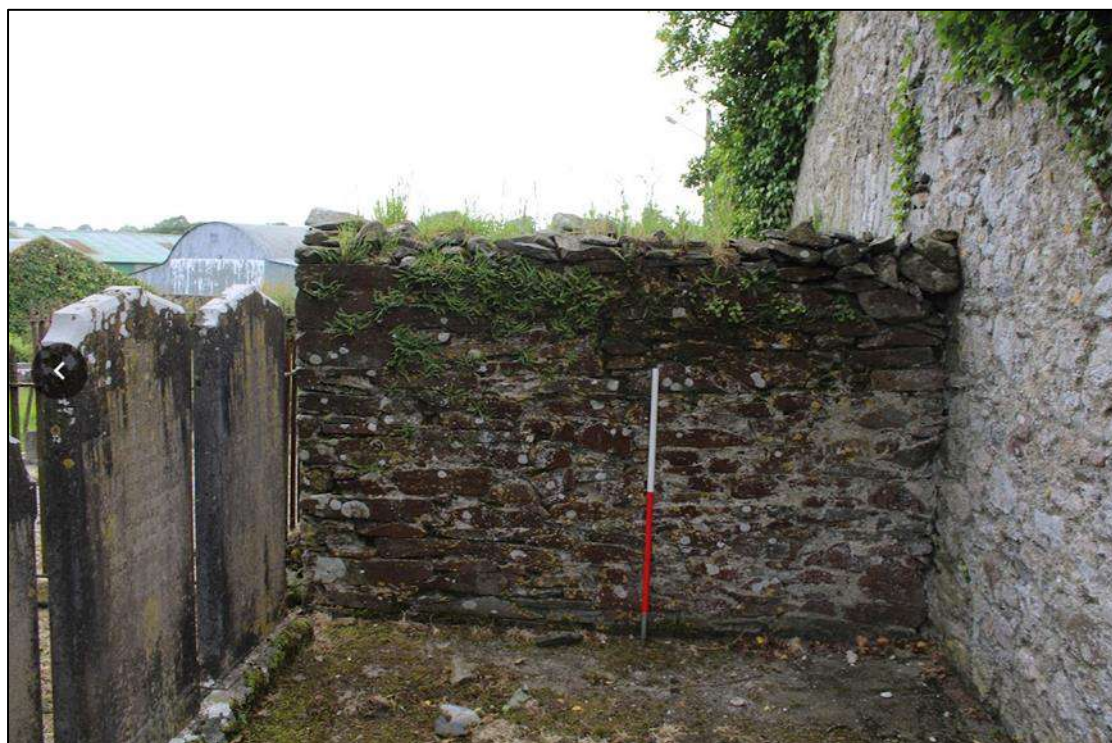


Plate 20: View of later wall, from southern side, may be the remains of a porch.



Plate 21: Slabs resting against the western gable of the church.

3.1.3 Interior of Church

Inside the church, near the west end, there is a late medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-) in addition to many 19th and 21st century headstones. The medieval cross slab lies on the south side of the interior. It is 1.82m long, but its full width is obscured by a large slab. The cross slab is made of granite and appears to taper towards its foot. The decoration includes an incised cross measuring 0.4m wide and 0.5m long. A narrow line, 0.07m wide, runs for a length of 0.99m, ending in a small cross measuring 0.23m across and 0.12m high (Plate 23 - Plate 25).



Plate 22: View of interior of the church facing southeast.



Plate 23: East terminal of late medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-).



Plate 24: View of late medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-).



Plate 25: Western terminal of late medieval graveslab (WI021-005003-).

A second graveslab (WI021-005005-), more roughly executed and tapering in shape, stands upright against the exterior of the east wall. This slab measures at least 1.06m in length, 0.54m

wide at the top, and 0.28m thick, and has similar ornamentation to the first slab. An inscribed granite slab (WI021-005004-), mentioned by Walshe in 1931, is no longer present.



Plate 26: Graveslab (WI021-005001-).

Set against the exterior of the eastern gable wall of the church (WI021-005001-), this granite graveslab stands upright, with only 1.06m visible above the ground (Plate 26). It is trapezoidal in shape, measuring 0.54m wide at the broader top end, and has a thickness of 0.28m. The upper section features a cross design, outlined by a shallow groove (5mm deep and 2-3mm wide), while two grooves run down the length of the slab to ground level. Though it shares stylistic similarities with another slab inside the same church (WI021-005003-), this external slab appears to be much cruder than the graveslab inside the church.

3.1.4 South wall of church

There is evidence of two windows on the south side of the church, which was once plastered on the inside, with traces of plaster still visible. The south wall survives to a height of 0.90 m, while the windows reach 1.90 m. The wall itself is 0.90 m thick. The north wall, standing at a height of 1.05 m, is built from roughly coursed stone, primarily sandstone with occasional granite, all bound together with mortar.



Plate 27: South wall of the church with western gable and bellcote.



Plate 28: South wall of the church with evidence of window and plaster.



Plate 29: South wall of church with evidence of blocked up window at eastern end.



Plate 30: Overview of south wall of church.

3.1.5 Eastern Gable

The eastern gable of the church features a large window, measuring approximately 1.5m in width and 4 m in height. The window is constructed from finely cut granite, with visible glazing-bar holes, and it has a rounded head. However, it is now almost entirely concealed by vegetation. Photographs from 2012, when the window was less overgrown, clearly show its shape and reveal that it originally had tracery (Plate 8).



Plate 31: View of east gable window from inside church.

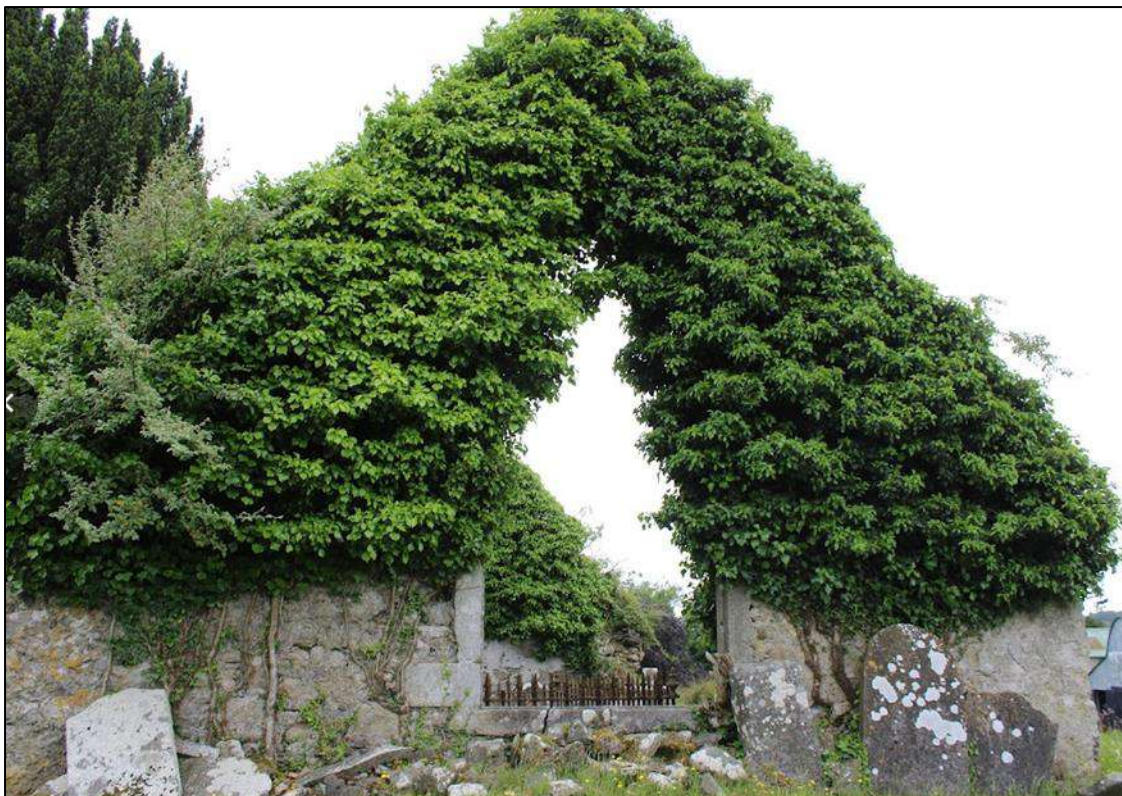


Plate 32: View of eastern gable of church from the exterior of the building.

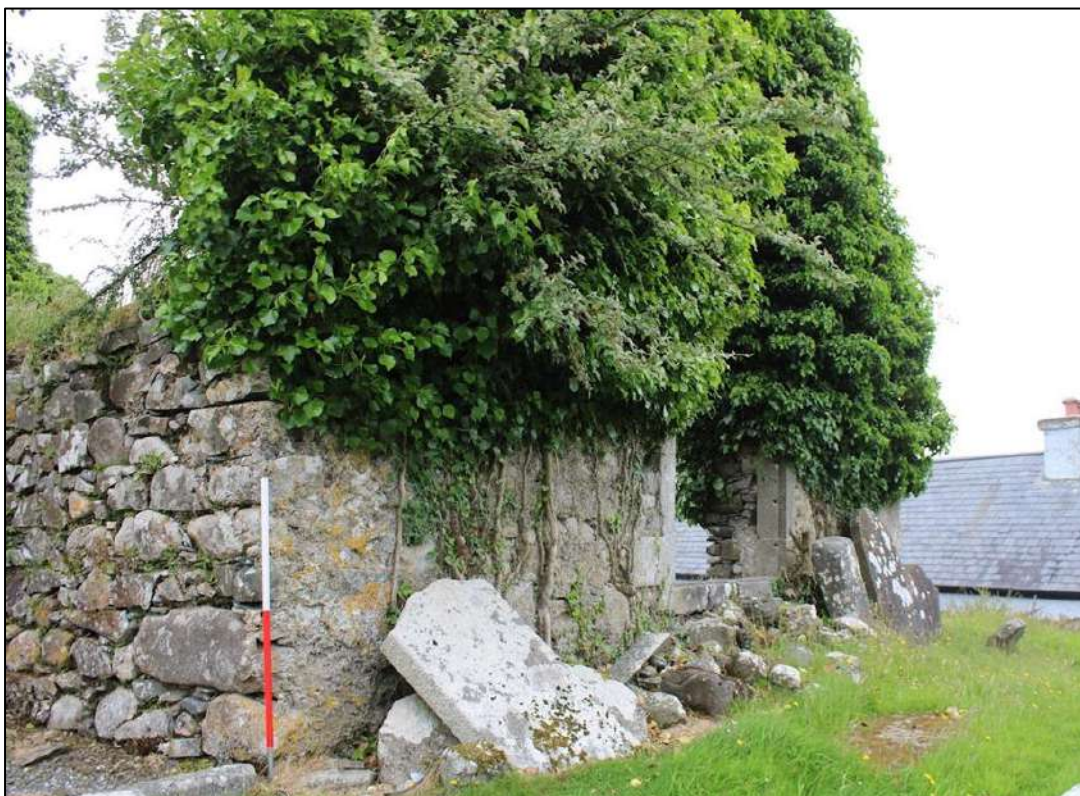


Plate 33: View of southeast corner of eastern gable of the church.



Plate 34: View of granite window jambs with glazing bar holes.



Plate 35: View of granite windowsills from interior of the church.



Plate 36: View of collapsed masonry at base of window in east gable.



Plate 37: View of plaster below east gable window.

Set against the exterior of the eastern gable is the previously discussed granite graveslab (WI021-005001-) (Plate 26).

3.1.6 North wall of church

The north wall of the church survives to a height of 1.05m. It comprises roughly coursed sandstone with occasional granite all bound with mortar. The north east section of the wall appears to have been built in clay and faced with stone.



Plate 38: North wall of church and western gable.



Plate 39: North wall of church and eastern gable. Note the clay wall is where solitary bees were identified by the ecologist.

3.1.7 The graveyard

The rectangular graveyard (WI021-005002-) measures 45 m from northeast to southwest and 40 m from northwest to southeast. Irish yew trees grow throughout the graveyard, which is elevated 1.9 m above the road level to the north. Access is provided by a set of granite steps flanked by pillars. The graveyard is enclosed by stone walls on all sides, except to the west, where a concrete wall forms the boundary. Historical maps from the first and third editions show a house once located in this area.

The headstones in the graveyard date from the 19th to the 21st centuries, and a comprehensive record, along with a plan of the site, has been created by the local community. This information is stored in the community hall. The majority of headstones are upright, though there are also ledgers, tombs, and occasional iron crosses. The most notable monument is the Heighton family tomb, located near the western gable of the church and enclosed by iron railings. There is also a noticeable difference in ground level in the southeast corner, possibly indicating the remains of an earlier enclosure. There is a late medieval graveslab and granite cross in the graveyard.



Plate 40: View of graveyard facing north with Irish Yew trees.



Plate 41: View of graveyard with difference in ground level.



Plate 42: Tomb and upright headstones.



Plate 43: View of graveyard and iron cross facing west.



Plate 44: Granite cross.



Plate 45: Southwest corner of the graveyard wall which has collapsed.



Plate 46: Crack at southwest corner of the graveyard boundary wall.



Plate 47: Concrete retaining wall on west boundary of the graveyard where the houses which were visible at the time of the first and third edition map were located/



Plate 48: Northern graveyard boundary wall.



Plate 49: Eastern boundary wall of the graveyard.



Plate 50: View south towards Motte.

3.2 Ecological Setting

The following information was extracted from the accompanying ecological report which is attached as Appendix 2 and should be read in conjunction with this report as it contains detailed photographs of the receiving environment. Below is an extract from this report which describes the ecological setting of Donard Graveyard.

The dominant habitat in Donard Old Graveyard is Dry Meadows and Grassy Verge Grassland (GS2), surrounded by stone walls and other stone work (BL1). Species identified from the grassland within the grounds of Donard Old Graveyard included Sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), False oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*). Herbaceous species within the graveyard include; Sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Hairy Bitter-cress (*Cardamine hirsuta*), Cuckoo Flower (*Cardamine pratensis*), Smooth Hawksbeard (*Crepis capillaris*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Marsh Thistle (*Cirsium palustre*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Broad-leaved Willowherb (*Epilobium montana*), and Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*). Around the perimeter of the graveyard is a clipped hedgerow (WL1) with Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Gorse (*Ulex*), and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). There are some Irish Yew (*Taxus baccata fastigiata*) and the remains of a Cypress (*Cupressus sp.*) in the north eastern corner overhanging the wall. The non-native shrub Firethorn (*Pyracantha sp.*) is also found within the hedgerow alongside saplings of Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). A nice community of Liverworts (*Marchantiophyta sp.*) were recorded at the base of the wall alongside species such as Groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Cleavers (*Gallium aparine*), Bush Vetch (*Vicia sepium*), Nipplewort and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*). The walls supported populations of Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Barren strawberry (*Potentilla sterilis*), Ivy leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) growing in the lime mortar with Broad leaved Willowherb, Nipplewort, Smooth hawk's-beard, Dandelion, and Early hair grass (*Aira praecox*). The non-native and invasive Red valerian populations on the wall and monument should be removed and controlled. Some use of herbicide was noted in the graveyard and around the headstones. This is both environmentally unfriendly and unsightly and can cause the headstones to move as the bare ground cracks and shrinks when the vegetation is removed. There was also an area of dumping at the rear of the graveyard with Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Foxgloves (*Digitalis*

purpurea), Yellow clover (*Trifolium dubium*), Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), False oat-grass, Yorkshire fog, Rough meadow grass (*Poa trivialis*), Broad-Leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), and some scattered Grey willows (*Salix cinerea*). Tree species in this area include Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) and Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*), Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*), and Slender speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*) were also noted. The treeline of Ash that leads from the graveyard to the motte is of high ecological value for foraging bats and the mature Hawthorn here have a rich lichen flora. species such as Hedgehog, Pygmy shrew, Brown rat and Wood mouse are likely at Donard. The bare earth near the motte supports solitary bees and wasps.

During this study, two species of bats were recorded in the environs of Donard Old Graveyard; Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle. Figures 17 – 18 contain sonograms of the bat echolocation calls recorded during the survey. Preliminary examinations of the monument found no evidence of bats roosting in either the stonework or any of the trees in the vicinity of the monument site based on a visual examination, but they all offer potential for roosting bats. There are a series of suitable crevices, holes and areas of dense ivy within the monument. The landscape surrounding Donard Old Graveyard offers a darkened and safe hunting area for bats with a diversity of natural vegetation which in turn supports a variety of insects on which bats feed.

The graveyard contained a limited number of birds during the survey but the dense ivy and holes in the stonework offer birds a location in which to nest. These should be conserved and not infilled/repointed.

3.3 Statement of Significance

Cultural significance, as defined by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), refers to the ability of places to enrich people's lives by connecting them to their community, environment, and heritage. This connection often spans generations and is deeply rooted in both shared history and personal experiences. Donard Church and graveyard embodies these qualities, representing an important cultural and historical landmark. Its significance is multi-dimensional, reflecting the key values highlighted by the Burra Charter: architectural, historical, archaeological, cultural and social significance.

3.3.1 Architectural Significance

The Donard Church, dating back to the 15th or 16th century, has distinctive features, including a bellcote and a large window which has glazing bar holes and tracery. Despite its partial ruin, the building retains much of its original character, with punch-dressed quoins and medieval graveslabs.

3.3.2 Historical Significance

Donard has a rich historical heritage, linked to early Christian missionaries. The church and graveyard serve as a testament to centuries of religious and social change, including the Norman influence after the 12th century and the religious upheavals of the 16th century. The church also bears scars from the 1798 Rebellion, when it was garrisoned and damaged.

3.3.3 Archaeological Significance

The site holds significant archaeological value due to its medieval foundation and late medieval graveslabs. The presence of an early medieval motte nearby enhances its importance as a multi-period archaeological site.

3.3.4 Cultural Significance

The church and graveyard form an integral part of the cultural identity of Donard village. Over the centuries, it has been a focal point for the local community, witnessing key life events such as baptisms, marriages, and burials. The associated folklore, including the belief that St. Sylvester's relics were kept here, ties the site to local traditions and oral histories. Its connection to both Catholic and Protestant communities add to its multicultural significance in the region.

3.3.5 Ecological Significance

Ecologically, the site plays a vital role in supporting local biodiversity. The graveyard's variety of habitats, including dry meadows, stone walls, and mature trees, provide homes for numerous species. The presence of solitary bees in the vicinity, bats, and other fauna highlights its importance from an ecological perspective.

3.3.6 Social Significance

The church and graveyard continue to hold social significance as a symbol of community identity and continuity. The site is still used for burial and this fosters a strong sense of place and connection to the past for residents of Donard. Community-led conservation efforts reflect local engagement in preserving this important historical landmark for future generations.

3.4 Issues and Vulnerabilities

This section highlights the main concerns and potential risks associated with Donard, as determined through the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) process. These challenges are typical of many culturally significant sites, shaped over centuries by human intervention and weathering. Below are the vulnerabilities which have been identified. The below are summaries taken from the accompanying specialist reports where appropriate.

3.4.1 Structural Condition- Dermot Nolan

Extracts from the Structural Report by Dermot Nolan is attached as Appendix 1 to this report and below are extracts from this report.

The site was visited by the writer, Dermot Nolan on the 6th of June 2024 and sketches were made, photographs and measurements were taken. The church structure is in a ruinous state and, at the time of the visit was largely covered in vegetation which obscured many of the details and prevented a comprehensive assessment of the structure. The graveyard walls were likewise partially covered in vegetation and, in places inaccessible.

Phase 2 of the current project, to be carried out in the future, will involve complete removal of the vegetation from the church and graveyard walls and a measured survey of the extant fabric will be prepared. This will permit detailed structural proposals to be prepared and illustrated on the drawings.

It should be noted There is no evidence of subsidence in the remaining church walls and therefore it is unlikely that any underpinning or subsurface work will be required.

3.4.2 Ecological Vulnerabilities- Faith Wilson

The Donard Church and Graveyard Ecological Survey attached as Appendix 2 outlines several key ecological vulnerabilities at the site which are detailed below as follows:

Invasive Species: Non-native plants, such as Red Valerian, were identified and noted as a concern due to their potential to disrupt native plant communities. Strict control measures are recommended to prevent their spread.

Herbicide Usage: The use of herbicides around headstones was observed, which not only affects the appearance but may destabilize headstones by causing ground cracks when vegetation is removed. Herbicide use also poses broader ecological risks to flora and fauna at the site.

Lighting Impacts: The presence of artificial lighting from nearby sources affects local bat populations, particularly by disturbing their nocturnal feeding patterns. Reducing artificial lighting is advised to maintain dark skies, beneficial for local wildlife, including bats.

Grassland and Habitat Management: Improper mowing schedules threaten the flowering cycles of native plants essential for insects and birds. The report recommends leaving some areas uncut until after flowering and adjusting mowing frequency to support pollinators and small mammals.

Protection of Bats and Birds: Structural features in the graveyard, such as crevices and ivy-covered walls, provide nesting or roosting sites for bats and birds. Conservation work should prioritize maintaining these features, as their removal could significantly impact roosting and breeding habitats for these species.

Butterfly and Pollinator Habitat: The graveyard supports essential plant species for butterflies and other pollinators. Ensuring suitable overwintering habitats, such as leaf litter and uncut vegetation, is vital for the butterfly life cycle. Overly tidy landscaping could diminish these resources.

These vulnerabilities highlight the need for careful management to preserve Donard's biodiversity while maintaining the cultural heritage of the site.

3.4.3 Climate Change and Environmental Impact

The remaining structures and graves are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall, flooding, and wind damage. Long-term climate changes, such as warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, could accelerate the deterioration of organic materials and the erosion of the medieval granite grave markers and inscriptions on the headstones. Studies indicate that these patterns are expected to continue, increasing the site's vulnerability over time.

4 Section 4: The Future- Conservation Policies and Actions

4.1 Conservation Policy

A comprehensive framework is essential for identifying, conserving, and managing the significance and setting of heritage sites and landscapes. The guidelines provided by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) establish best practice principles recognized globally for cultural heritage conservation. The primary goal of these conservation guidelines is to enable informed decision-making and establish a sustainable, transparent management system for all aspects of the historical environment.

The Burra Charter, a key document for heritage management, promotes a cautious approach to change: “Do as much as necessary to care for the place and make it usable, but change it as little as possible to retain its cultural significance” (ICOMOS, 2013). This philosophy ensures that heritage sites remain both preserved and accessible.

Global best practices emphasize the importance of collaboration in the management and preservation of heritage sites. A well-defined framework assesses the site’s current condition, outlines objectives and strategies for conservation, and provides a clear plan for future actions. This approach ensures that all stakeholders are involved and aware of their roles in safeguarding the heritage site’s value.

The work in preparing this CMP for Donard Graveyard which received Heritage Council Funding in 2024 have highlighted the significant history and heritage attached to the site and also the issues and vulnerabilities which are extant.

The following policy recommendations are based on best-practice conservation principles and have been formulated in the light of the advice presented in the following state-issued guideline documents:

- Ruins – The Conservation of Masonry Ruins, ‘Framework & Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage’
- Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’.
- Conservation Plan – 7th Edition (ICOMOS Australia)’ by James Semple Kerr (2013)
- Framework & Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage’ issued by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & Islands (1999)

These policies have also been formulated within the guidelines of Objectives 3 & 4 of the 'ICOMOS Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites' which are to:

- Safeguard the tangible and intangible values of cultural heritage sites in their natural and cultural settings and social contexts.
- Respect the authenticity of cultural heritage by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure or inappropriate interpretation.

The policies have been formulated taking the views of the identified stakeholders into consideration and a list of actions to achieve each of the below mentioned policies is listed below in section 4.3.

4.2 Management of the Site

Donard Church is in the ownership of Wicklow County Council. This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) aims to provide a structured approach for the long-term care of the site. Both vision and a determined strategy are essential to manage the site for the future. The conservation plan is the next step in protecting this asset for the benefit of the community and wider audiences. This objective will be achieved through a partnership approach involving national and local bodies with collaboration from local interest groups.

Donard Church and graveyard currently presents conservation issues which, if left unremedied, will lead to further deterioration of the building. The project team for Donard includes a diverse group of specialists with each expert contributing to the conservation and future management of the site through their specialized knowledge.

4.3 General Conservation Policies

The conservation policies are informed by the site's historical significance, the identified vulnerabilities, and consultations with key stakeholders during the CMP development process. These policies aim to guide future preservation efforts, ensuring the church and graveyard are maintained and enhanced over time. The cooperation of the local community at Donard, the

National Monuments Service (NMS), and Wicklow County Council will be essential in implementing these policies effectively.

The following policies have been identified for the Church and Graveyard:

1. **Protection:** The primary goal is to ensure the protection of the archaeological, architectural, natural, and intangible cultural heritage associated with the site. Preservation efforts should focus on minimizing alterations and preserving the site's significance.
2. **Conservation Management and Maintenance:** All conservation and maintenance efforts must follow best practice as detailed in the Appendices by Dermot Nolan Historic Buildings Consultant and Consulting Engineer (Appendix 1) and Faith Wilson Ecologist (Appendix 2). It is critical to retain the archaeological, architectural, natural, and cultural significance of the site in all stabilization and restoration projects.
3. **Access and Presentation:** To enhance and manage access to the church and graveyard in a way that ensures safe, convenient, entry for all visitors, while preserving the site's archaeological integrity.
4. **Interpretation and Research:** Efforts should focus on enhancing public appreciation of the Church and Graveyard with perhaps adding a graveyard plan to the site.
5. **Heritage Tourism & Community Links:** Donard Church and Graveyard shall be developed and promoted as a heritage tourism asset, representing its rich archaeological, historical, and cultural significance and open days during heritage week. Efforts will focus on involving local communities and providing educational opportunities to ensure a deepened understanding of the site's history and its place in Ireland's heritage.

4.4 Policies and Actions

4.4.1 Policy No 1: Protection:

The primary goal is to ensure the protection of the archaeological, architectural, natural, and intangible cultural heritage associated with the site. Preservation efforts should focus on minimizing alterations and preserving the site's significance.

Policy No 1	Objective	Recommended Actions
1.1	Ensure the protection of the archaeological, architectural, natural, and intangible cultural heritage associated with the site. Preservation efforts should focus on minimizing alterations and preserving the sites significance.	<p>Recognize and respect the protected status of the site. As Donard Church and Graveyard is a recorded archaeological monument it is protected under the National Monuments Acts and the Planning and Development Act.</p> <p>Any works depending may need to be licensed, notice for works will need to be sent to the National Monuments Services two months in advance of works commencing in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.</p> <p>This plan must be submitted to the National Monuments Service along with a Method Statement for Works so that they can advise on the licencing requirements.</p>
1.2	Protection to a number of species and designated landscapes is provided under the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the Wildlife Acts 1976, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010.	Where built heritage repair works are proposed that impacts upon a protected species or place, a derogation license must be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. All works must be carried out under the guidance of an ecologist and following the recommendations as outlined in the Ecological survey report.

1.3	Encourage collaboration between relevant stakeholders, including local authorities, heritage professionals, and community groups, to ensure ongoing protection and preservation efforts for the site.	Facilitate discussions and partnerships among stakeholders to create a cohesive approach to the site's conservation and management.
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4.4.2 Policy 2: Conservation and Maintenance

To ensure the archaeological, architectural, natural and intangible cultural significance of Donard Church and Graveyard is retained and protected in accordance with international best practice, with regard to any intervention, conservation and/or stabilisation works at the site.

Policy No 2	Objective	Recommended Actions
2.1	Establish a five-year programme for the effective maintenance and conservation of the site, with appropriate review by the Donard Tidy Towns, the NMS, Wicklow County Council, and other relevant stakeholders.	Establish a review process involving key stakeholders to ensure the plan's objectives are monitored and adjusted as needed.
2.2	No work should be undertaken on or near the monument without prior notification to the National Monuments Service, as outlined in the National Monuments Acts. The site is archaeologically sensitive and there is the possibility of finds associated with the church and graveyard to be uncovered during clearance works.	Coordinate with the National Monuments Service to ensure that all legal obligations are met before work begins on or near the monuments. Avoid unnecessary disturbance to the site and any rubble removal should be supervised by an archaeologist under licence.
2.3	Ensure that any physical conservation, stabilisation, and maintenance works are undertaken with the requisite licences, assessments, reports, approvals, and recommendations in place, and in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.	Ensure all required legal and procedural guidelines are followed during any physical works on the site.

2.4	Follow the recommendations in this conservation management plan, as set out by the, engineer, ecologist and archaeologist, to minimise impacts and ensure compliance with best practices.	Adhere to the recommendations provided in the CMP for each discipline, ensuring all actions are based on expert guidance to minimise impact and maintain best practices.
2.5	Maintain a log of conservation works, as well as any maintenance and repairs.	Keep detailed records of all conservation activities, including repairs and maintenance tasks, to ensure transparency and accountability in addition to creating an archive of works completed.
2.6	Manage the site to enhance and improve its biodiversity value, as set out in the ecological assessment.	Improve the site's biodiversity in line with the findings of the ecological assessment, creating a healthier environment for wildlife and local plant species.
2.7	Ensure all activities comply with Irish Wildlife Acts and EU Habitats Directives, particularly for bats, birds, and protected flora. This includes securing necessary licenses before any construction activities that may disturb these species.	<p>Resurvey for bats before any repointing or construction, especially in ivy-covered areas and crevices in the old church ruins, and obtain necessary permits if bats are identified. Where feasible, retain bat access points .</p> <p>Ensure that vegetation removal or management is done outside of the nesting season for birds (March 1 to August 31), with ecologist inspections for bird presence when clearance is unavoidable during this period.</p> <p>Due to limited nesting habitats following ivy removal, bird boxes should be installed around the</p>

		<p>graveyard to enhance habitat availability for bird species. These should be installed under the guidance of an ecologist.</p> <p>Retain mosses, lichens, and ferns on stone walls during any reconstruction by carefully removing and replacing stones with vegetation intact. This approach supports native bryophyte and lichen communities .</p>
2.8	Explore all available funding opportunities to enable conservation, repair, stabilisation, and maintenance works to be carried out as appropriate.	Identify and pursue funding opportunities to support ongoing conservation, repair, and maintenance work on the site.

4.4.3 Policy 3: Access and Presentation

To enhance and manage access to the site in a way that ensures safe, convenient entry for all visitors, while preserving the site's historical and archaeological integrity.

Policy Number No. 3	Objective	Recommended Actions
3.1	Enhance access to the church and graveyard ensuring safe and convenient entry for all visitors.	Assess current access routes for safety, fix the pillar cap, repair graveyard walls, conserve church ruins.
3.2	Provide clear signage to illustrate to visitors the burial map and historical and archaeological significance of the site.	<p>Create an information panel which details the history and archaeology of the church and graveyard.</p> <p>Ensure signage is sympathetic to the site's aesthetic and complies with planning regulations.</p>

4.4.4 Policy 4: Interpretation and Community Involvement

Efforts to enhance public appreciation of Donard Church and graveyard are underway.

Policy Number 4	Objective	Recommended Actions
4.1	Initiate community heritage projects to enhance public appreciation and community involvement.	Hold an open day to illustrate the repair works and discuss the history and archaeology of the site.
4.2	Support research initiatives to deepen the understanding of the site's archaeology, history, and cultural significance	Geophysical survey to find the monastic enclosure and any features associated with the motte.
4.3	Develop interpretive strategies that balance historical significance with functionality.	Implement digital interpretation methods, such as QR codes, linking to heritage trails or digital content.
4.4	Encourage community involvement in heritage projects to foster a sense of stewardship and ownership.	Organize community heritage projects, such as open days when the works are being completed. Collaborate with the local community in hosting events like Heritage Week. Encourage visitors to the camping site in the village to visit the graveyard and church ruins.

4.5 Proposed Conservation Works

Donard Church and Graveyard, Co. Wicklow has been subject to deterioration. The following conservation works have been developed to preserve the church's historical fabric, protect its archaeological integrity, and enhance public accessibility.

The project will be carried out in phases, with each phase focusing on addressing different levels of urgency and the specific conservation needs of the site. This work may be carried

out over several years depending on grant monies available. The following paragraph is a summary of the works and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying appendices completed by each specialist.

Refer to Appendix 1 for a comprehensive list of works, which will be updated in 2025 pending trimming of the ivy to allow for closer inspection of the east and west gables and also along the boundary walls. Once vegetation around the church ruins and walls is trimmed, a closer inspection and measured survey of the existing structure will be conducted. This will support the development of detailed structural proposals, which will be illustrated on survey drawings and used in tender documents.

Nolan noted that there is no evidence of subsidence in the remaining church walls and therefore it is unlikely that any underpinning or subsurface work will be required.

In summary the conservation works to be completed are detailed below, once funding becomes available and all legal and ecological guidelines are followed during any physical works on the site.

It should be noted there is no evidence of subsidence in the remaining church walls and therefore it is unlikely that any underpinning or subsurface work will be required. Below is an extract from the Structural Report please see Appendix 1 for more detail.

GENERAL

The structure is in a ruined state and has many of the defects common to decayed medieval structures including washed out mortar, collapsed masonry, roots embedded in masonry, voids within the masonry, fragmented wall tops. There is a considerable amount of fallen stone around the exterior and some in the interior of the church. The fallen stone is mixed with collapsed and broken grave markers and much of it is partially embedded in grass and earth. The stone should be exposed and sorted for reuse in the conservation works. The grass and vegetation should be cut, and the stones should be sorted and collected under the supervision of the archaeologist. As far as possible the stone should be reused in repairing the masonry adjacent to where it is found.

There is no evidence of subsidence in the remaining church walls and therefore it is unlikely that any underpinning or subsurface work will be required.

Attention shall be paid to the necessity of identifying and protecting the necessary access routes within the graveyard and around the church for personnel and movement of materials and equipment during the course of the works.

The stone used generally appears to be the Ordovician sandstone of the locality. The stone used in the later porch is different and may be mica-schist which is found nearby.

WEST WALL

The West wall contains the main access door to the church and carries the bellcote. The upper part of the wall is completely obscured by vegetation and details of the bellcote and its condition will not be available until the vegetation is cleared. A photograph from 2012 appears to indicate that the bellcote was reasonably intact at that time. The west ends of the north and south walls have been ruined and only remnant junctions with the west wall remain. These areas will have to be pointed and mortared. The corner formed with the South wall is badly damaged and reconstruction of this end of the wall will be required. The architrave (which it is presumed would have been stone) is entirely missing and the exposed wall returns have lost their mortar. The returns and the inner and outer wall faces will have to be filled and pointed. Consideration may be given to grouting this wall. There are formed arches on the inner and outer faces and all the voussoirs are intact. They are in good condition and require only minor work. It is likely that the gable wall top will require to be capped with mortar.

The remnant of the porch is in good condition and will require local repointing and the provision of capping along the wall top.

EAST WALL

The upper part of the East wall is entirely obscured by vegetation, and it is not known whether any elements of the former East window survive at the upper level. However, a photograph from 2012 shows a fine curved window with intact ashlar all around the window opening. There is a carved granite sill and architrave. The visible part of this appears to be in good condition. It is not known whether additional parts of the architrave survive behind the vegetation in the upper parts of the wall. The granite architrave will have to be reset and secured in place and repaired as necessary. The inner face of the wall below the sill has collapsed and will have to be rebuilt. There is some remnant plaster on the interior wall face at low level and this should be stabilised as necessary and retained. The junction of the wall with the South wall is intact almost up to eaves level. A short section of the North wall survives at the end of the East wall and the corner is relatively intact. The wall faces will require pointing and the wall top will have to be capped.

NORTH WALL

A short length of the North wall survives at the east end. The ground level outside the North wall is approximately 1 metre higher than the floor of the church and a lengthy section of the wall (ca 5 metres) at the east end has been completely demolished and this has exposed the

face of the earthen bank. Some of the fallen stones are on the floor of the church beside the bank. The remainder of the wall is about 1 metre high and rises to about 2 metres at the west end where it adjoins the West wall. Where the masonry wall survives, the top should be capped and damaged wall faces should be mortared. Consideration might be given to rebuilding the demolished section of the wall to provide protection to the face of the earthen bank which appears stable at present but is vulnerable to erosion.

SOUTH WALL

The east end of the South wall for a length of about 4 metres is intact up to a height of about 2 metres and appears securely bonded to the East wall. This section requires repointing on both faces and capping. The west end of this section appears to be a roughly filled in window opening. The filling is unmortared. The best way to stabilise this rough work may be to grout it. The former window is bounded on the west side by another approximately 2 metres high section and 1 metre long of badly damaged wall. This will have to be stabilised, pointed and capped. The next section is approximately 1 metre high above the church floor and 300 mm above the exterior graveyard ground. This section has retained interior plaster and will have to be carefully repaired without damaging the remnant plaster. This section requires to be capped. The section west of this includes a destroyed window opening of which only the west reveal remains and a higher section of wall adjoining the west wall. Interior wall plaster remains on this part of the wall also. This part must also be capped, and the interior plaster should be conserved.

GRAVEYARD WALL

The graveyard wall is formed as an approximate square, each side of which is approximately 40 metres long. Like many graveyard walls this wall appears to date from the nineteenth century. The wall is approximately 500 thick rubble masonry and is capped by a 'soldier' course of stones. The wall appeared in part to have been repointed in cement. The ground level of the graveyard has risen considerably over the years, particularly near the front (north side). Although substantial sections of the wall are completely covered in vegetation, the entire length of the top of the wall is generally affected by light vegetation. This should be removed, and it may be found necessary to reset stones and mortar the wall top.

The wall on the north side is approximately 2 metres high above the road and the graveyard level is at the top of the wall. The graveyard entrance is near the west end and comprises steps between two substantial wall piers. The capping stone on one pier has been dislodged and needs to be reset. About 50% of the wall is completely covered in vegetation and could not be assessed. However, the visible section of the wall appeared to be in good condition.

Subject to inspection after removal of the vegetation, it will be necessary to repoint the wall locally. The top of the wall may need remedial work as mentioned above.

The central section of the west wall has been replaced by a reinforced concrete retaining wall which is in sound condition. The north and south sections were completely covered in vegetation and could not be assessed. At the south-west corner of the graveyard a section of the wall is leaning out quite badly and impinging on a timber pole. There is a substantial crack at the point where the wall begins to lean out. The leaning section of the wall is about 10 metres long and beyond this is a section of completely collapse wall about 5 metres long. It is likely that the leaning section of the wall will have to be taken down and 15 metres of the wall will have to be reconstructed. This will have to be done very carefully to avoid any interference with graves in the vicinity.

The south section of the wall rises about 1.6 metres above the adjacent field and its height above the graveyard varies along its length. It appears to be intact although much of the mortar has been washed out so that it is effectively a drystone wall at this stage. Consideration should be given to repointing the wall if funds are available but, as noted, it appears to be intact. It may be appropriate to effect repairs in several locations where stones have been dislodged from the wall.

The east section of the wall abuts the garden of an adjacent house, and the exterior face could not be closely examined because of dense vegetation within the garden. On the graveyard side the wall height varies from ground level at the north end to about 1.5 metres at the south end. No serious defects were note at this wall except for leaning at the south end, possibly caused by a tree in the adjacent garden.

4.6 Working within a Historic Graveyard – Do’s and Don’ts

When undertaking work within a historic graveyard there are a number of procedures which should be followed. First it is important to determine the level of work to be carried out. In general maintenance work can be undertaken with lawnmowers or strimmers to keep down high grass growth. However beyond this level of work Notification to the National Monuments Service will be required⁷⁸. The Heritage Council has published an advice booklet entitled ‘Guidance for the Care, Conservation and Recording of Historic Graveyards’, which can be downloaded at [Publications & Reports - Heritage Council](#). It is recommended that all persons working with historic graveyards download a copy of this document.

Do’s	Don’t
Contact Wicklow County council or the National Monuments Service for advice before you commence works.	Don’t remove any vegetation from graveyard walls without professional advice. Doing so may affect the structural integrity of the remaining walls and also have ecological implications in terms of birds and bats.
To properly manage the grassland as a biodiversity-rich resource, it should not be cut between March and September to allow the species within it to flower and seed.	Don’t bring any mechanical excavators or dumpers within the confines of a historic graveyard without professional advice. These machines cause damage to the historic character of the site.
Check who owns the historic graveyard; sites may be in private or local authority ownership	Don’t excavate into the ground for any reason in a historic graveyard.
	Don’t cut back hedges within the nesting bird season which runs from 1st March to 31st August. Doing so is illegal under the Wildlife Act.
	Don’t remove small stones from the graveyard surface. The stones are burial

⁷⁸ [NMS Notification Form \(archaeology.ie\)](#)

	markers or footstones which indicate the presence of historic graves.
	Don't use weedkiller in graveyards. Weedkiller is not recommended due to the effects it has on the flora, fauna and architecture of the historic graveyard.
	Don't attempt to uncover gravestones; doing so constitutes archaeological excavation and should never be attempted without professional advice. It may also cause damage to stones.
Consult an ecologist and ensure that the works including vegetation removal from ruins, tree felling will not impact upon bats which are strictly protected under both Domestic and European Legislation.	

Work which can be undertaken without Section 12 (3) Notification

- Lawnmowing
- Strimming
- Weeding

Work which requires Section 12 (3) Notification:

- Removal of vegetation from church ruins and boundary walls
- Installation of new pathways
- Installation of signage
- Excavation for any reason (i.e., drainage, signage, fencing etc.)

4.7 Funding

Funding is crucial to ensure the long-term preservation, maintenance, and enhancement of Donard Church and Graveyard. A variety of funding sources are available and should be explored to cover the different aspects of conservation, interpretation, and management of the site. The following funding opportunities should be explored.

➤ Community Heritage Grant Scheme

Managed by the Heritage Council, the Community Heritage Grant Scheme funds projects by community groups and non-profit organizations. The scheme focuses on improving the management and maintenance of heritage collections, buildings, and sites. The application process is annual, with grants usually announced in the early part of the year. Applications are made through the Heritage Council's Online Grants System. It is recommended that an application is made for this scheme in 2025. The minimum amount available is €500 up to a maximum of €25,000. They envisage the average offers to be in the €10,000 to €15,000 range and that about 150 groups or organisations will be supported by this scheme. Funding will be allocated on a competitive basis.

➤ Adopt a Monument Scheme

This scheme, funded by the Heritage Council and managed by Abarta Heritage, aims to help communities actively engage in the conservation and interpretation of local archaeological and cultural heritage sites. It offers specialist expertise, mentoring, and ongoing support for maintenance and protection.

➤ Community Monuments Fund (CMF)

The objective of this fund is to support the conservation, maintenance, protection and promotion of local monuments and historic sites. It contains a number of different measures aimed at enabling conservation works to be carried out on archaeological monuments which are deemed to be significant and in need of urgent support, encouraging access to archaeological monuments and improving their presentation and also building resilience in archaeological monuments to enable them to withstand the effects of climate change. This fund is administered by Wicklow County Council and covers 100% of the proposed works with no match funding required.

To secure and manage funding effectively, the following actions are recommended:

- **Monitor funding opportunities:** Regularly review updates from funding bodies, including the Heritage Council and Local Authorities, to identify new funding rounds or changes in application criteria.

- **Engage professionals:** Ensure that all applications include oversight from qualified conservation professionals to meet eligibility requirements.
- **Community engagement:** Leverage community involvement to apply for grants aimed at both conservation and public engagement.
- **Long-term planning:** Establish a rolling funding strategy that targets smaller, phased projects under schemes such as the Community Heritage Grants Scheme, alongside larger, more comprehensive applications to the Community Monuments Fund.

4.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Donard Church and Graveyard aims to ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of this historically significant site. By implementing a phased approach, the CMP addresses critical areas such as structural repairs, conservation of architectural features, and public engagement. The collaboration between local stakeholders, conservation experts, and national bodies underscores the shared commitment to safeguarding the church and graveyard. The plan also emphasizes the importance of balancing heritage conservation with community involvement ensuring that Donard Church and Graveyard continues to be a place of historical, cultural, and educational significance for future generations.

The key objectives outlined in this CMP emphasize the importance of:

- Preserving the historical fabric of the site through sensitive conservation efforts, guided by expert assessments in engineering, architecture, archaeology, and ecology.
- Ensuring community involvement in heritage activities to foster local stewardship and ongoing care of the site.
- Developing partnerships with local authorities, heritage bodies.

The CMP also addresses key vulnerabilities, such as structural deterioration, environmental impact, and ongoing maintenance needs. These issues are being tackled through targeted interventions, such as emergency stabilization works, and the development of a long-term phased plan.

Thanks to the Community Heritage Grants Scheme and other funding initiatives by The Heritage Office of Wicklow County Council, critical works have been initiated, but continued support will be essential for the successful execution of future phases. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended conservation strategies, this CMP ensures that Donard Church and Graveyard will be safeguarded for the future.

The sustained cooperation between stakeholders, the local community, and conservation professionals will be vital in the ongoing preservation of this historic site. By engaging the community and enhancing public appreciation of its significance, Donard will remain a place of historical significance for generations to come. The project's phased approach, coupled with local and national support, ensures that Donard remains a vibrant, protected historical site that the community can explore and cherish. Through well-planned policies, conservation efforts at Donard Church and Graveyard highlight the importance of preserving cultural heritage

alongside natural biodiversity, setting a precedent for sustainable heritage management in the county.

5 Appendix 1- STRUCTURAL CONDITION REPORT ON DONARD MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD.

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STRUCTURAL CONDITION REPORT ON DONARD MEDIEVAL CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is an outline report on the structural condition of the medieval church at Donard, County Wicklow. It forms part of the Conservation and Management Plan for the site, which is prepared by Yvonne Whitty, Archaeologist. The report is funded by a grant from the Heritage Council under the Community Heritage Grants Scheme 2024 (CH 2119).

The site was visited by the writer on the 6th of June 2024 and sketches were made, photographs and measurements were taken. The church structure is in a ruinous state and, at the time of the visit was largely covered in vegetation which obscured many of the details and prevented a comprehensive assessment of the structure. The graveyard walls were likewise partially covered in vegetation and, in places inaccessible.

Phase 2 of the current project, to be carried out in the future, will involve complete removal of the vegetation from the church and graveyard walls and a measured survey of the extant fabric will be prepared. This will permit detailed structural proposals to be prepared and illustrated on the drawings.

This report contains:

- (a) Outline drawings (to approximate scale) showing the condition of those parts of the church structure and graveyard walls which are currently visible.
- (b) A methodology for removal of vegetation
- (c) A methodology for carrying out the necessary conservation works when these have been detailed.

2.0 GENERAL

The structure is in a ruined state and has many of the defects common to decayed medieval structures including washed out mortar, collapsed masonry, roots embedded in masonry, voids within the masonry, fragmented wall tops. There is a considerable amount of fallen stone around the exterior and some in the interior of the church. The

fallen stone is mixed with collapsed and broken grave markers and much of it is partially embedded in grass and earth. The stone should be exposed and sorted for reuse in the conservation works. The grass and vegetation should be cut, and the stones should be sorted and collected under the supervision of the archaeologist. As far as possible the stone should be reused in repairing the masonry adjacent to where it is found.

There is no evidence of subsidence in the remaining church walls and therefore it is unlikely that any underpinning or subsurface work will be required.

Attention shall be paid to the necessity of identifying and protecting the necessary access routes within the graveyard and around the church for personnel and movement of materials and equipment during the course of the works.

The stone used generally appears to be the Ordovician sandstone of the locality. The stone used in the later porch is different and may be mica-schist which is found nearby.

3.0 WEST WALL

The West wall contains the main access door to the church and carries the bellcote. The upper part of the wall is completely obscured by vegetation and details of the bellcote and its condition will not be available until the vegetation is cleared. A photograph from 2012 appears to indicate that the bellcote was reasonably intact at that time. The west ends of the north and south walls have been ruined and only remnant junctions with the west wall remain. These areas will have to be pointed and mortared. The corner formed with the South wall is badly damaged and reconstruction of this end of the wall will be required. The architrave (which it is presumed would have been stone) is entirely missing and the exposed wall returns have lost their mortar. The returns and the inner and outer wall faces will have to be filled and pointed. Consideration may be given to grouting this wall. There are formed arches on the inner and outer faces and all the voussoirs are intact. They are in good condition and require only minor work. It is likely that the gable wall top will require to be capped with mortar.

The remnant of the porch is in good condition and will require local repointing and the provision of capping along the wall top.

4.0 EAST WALL

The upper part of the East wall is entirely obscured by vegetation, and it is not known whether any elements of the former East window survive at the upper level. However, a photograph from 2012 shows a fine curved window with intact ashlar all around the window opening. There is a carved granite sill and architrave. The visible part of this appears to be in good condition. It is not known whether additional parts of the architrave survive behind the vegetation in the upper parts of the wall. The granite architrave will have to be reset and secured in place and repaired as necessary. The inner face of the

wall below the sill has collapsed and will have to be rebuilt. There is some remnant plaster on the interior wall face at low level and this should be stabilised as necessary and retained. The junction of the wall with the South wall is intact almost up to eaves level. A short section of the North wall survives at the end of the East wall and the corner is relatively intact. The wall faces will require pointing and the wall top will have to be capped.

5.0 NORTH WALL

A short length of the North wall survives at the east end. The ground level outside the North wall is approximately 1 metre higher than the floor of the church and a lengthy section of the wall (ca 5 metres) at the east end has been completely demolished and this has exposed the face of the earthen bank. Some of the fallen stones are on the floor of the church beside the bank. The remainder of the wall is about 1 metre high and rises to about 2 metres at the west end where it adjoins the West wall. Where the masonry wall survives, the top should be capped and damaged wall faces should be mortared. Consideration might be given to rebuilding the demolished section of the wall to provide protection to the face of the earthen bank which appears stable at present but is vulnerable to erosion.

6.0 SOUTH WALL

The east end of the South wall for a length of about 4 metres is intact up to a height of about 2 metres and appears securely bonded to the East wall. This section requires repointing on both faces and capping. The west end of this section appears to be a roughly filled in window opening. The filling is unmortared. The best way to stabilise this rough work may be to grout it. The former window is bounded on the west side by another approximately 2 metres high section and 1 metre long of badly damaged wall. This will have to be stabilised, pointed and capped. The next section is approximately 1 metre high above the church floor and 300 mm above the exterior graveyard ground. This section has retained interior plaster and will have to be carefully repaired without damaging the remnant plaster. This section requires to be capped. The section west of this includes a destroyed window opening of which only the west reveal remains and a higher section of wall adjoining the west wall. Interior wall plaster remains on this part of the wall also. This part must also be capped, and the interior plaster should be conserved.

7.0 GRAVEYARD WALL

The graveyard wall is formed as an approximate square, each side of which is approximately 40 metres long. Like many graveyard walls this wall appears to date from the nineteenth century. The wall is approximately 500 thick rubble masonry and is capped by a 'soldier' course of stones. The wall appeared in part to have been repointed in cement. The ground level of the graveyard has risen considerably over the years, particularly near the front (north side). Although substantial sections of the wall are completely covered in vegetation, the entire length of the top of the wall is generally

affected by light vegetation. This should be removed, and it may be found necessary to reset stones and mortar the wall top.

The wall on the north side is approximately 2 metres high above the road and the graveyard level is at the top of the wall. The graveyard entrance is near the west end and comprises steps between two substantial wall piers. The capping stone on one pier has been dislodged and needs to be reset. About 50% of the wall is completely covered in vegetation and could not be assessed. However, the visible section of the wall appeared to be in good condition. Subject to inspection after removal of the vegetation, it will be necessary to repoint the wall locally. The top of the wall may need remedial work as mentioned above.

The central section of the west wall has been replaced by a reinforced concrete retaining wall which is in sound condition. The north and south sections were completely covered in vegetation and could not be assessed. At the south-west corner of the graveyard a section of the wall is leaning out quite badly and impinging on a timber pole. There is a substantial crack at the point where the wall begins to lean out. The leaning section of the wall is about 10 metres long and beyond this is a section of completely collapsed wall about 5 metres long. It is likely that the leaning section of the wall will have to be taken down and 15 metres of the wall will have to be reconstructed. This will have to be done very carefully to avoid any interference with graves in the vicinity.

The south section of the wall rises about 1.6 metres above the adjacent field and its height above the graveyard varies along its length. It appears to be intact although much of the mortar has been washed out so that it is effectively a drystone wall at this stage. Consideration should be given to repointing the wall if funds are available but, as noted, it appears to be intact. It may be appropriate to effect repairs in several locations where stones have been dislodged from the wall.

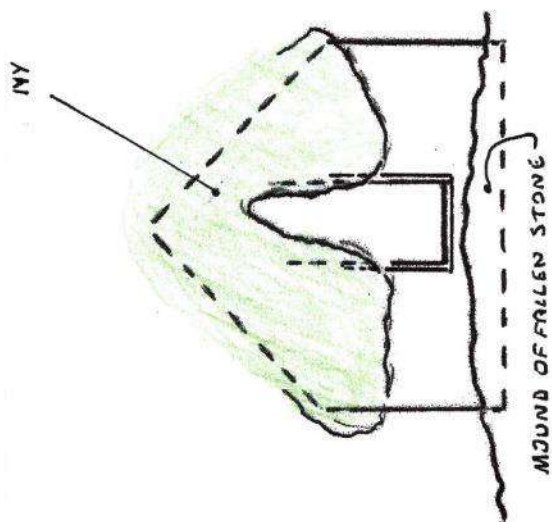
The east section of the wall abuts the garden of an adjacent house, and the exterior face could not be closely examined because of dense vegetation within the garden. On the graveyard side the wall height varies from ground level at the north end to about 1.5 metres at the south end. No serious defects were noted at this wall except for leaning at the south end, possibly caused by a tree in the adjacent garden.

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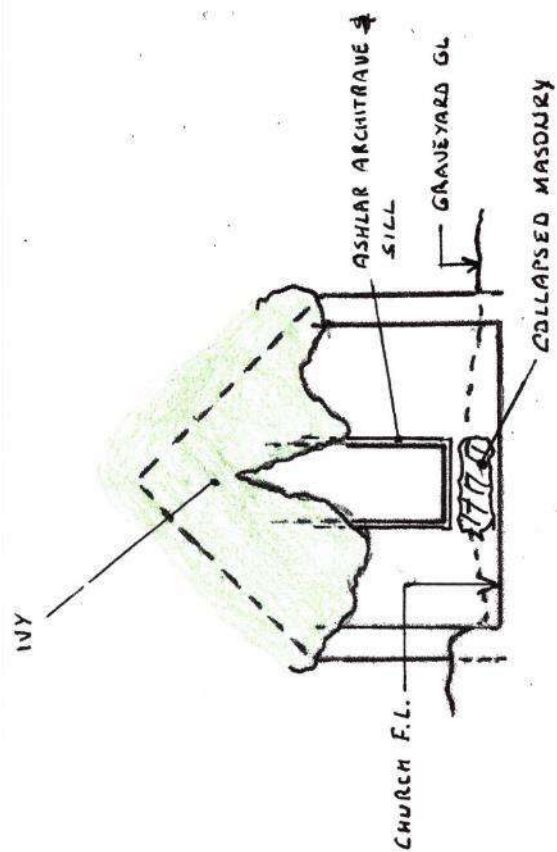
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APPENDIX 1

Sketches of the Church Walls



EAST WALL - EXTERNAL



EAST WALL - INTERNAL

NTS (APPROX 1:100)

Nov 2024

DONARD CHURCH

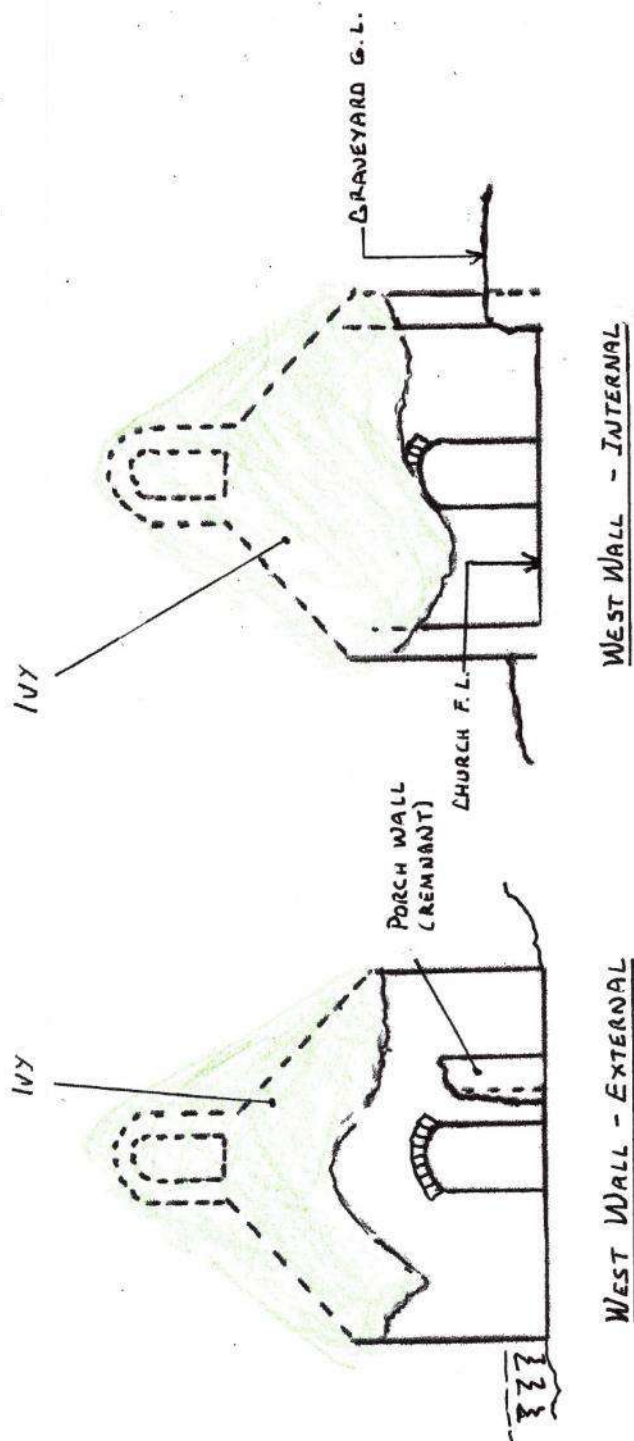
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NTS (APPROX 1:100)

Nov 2024

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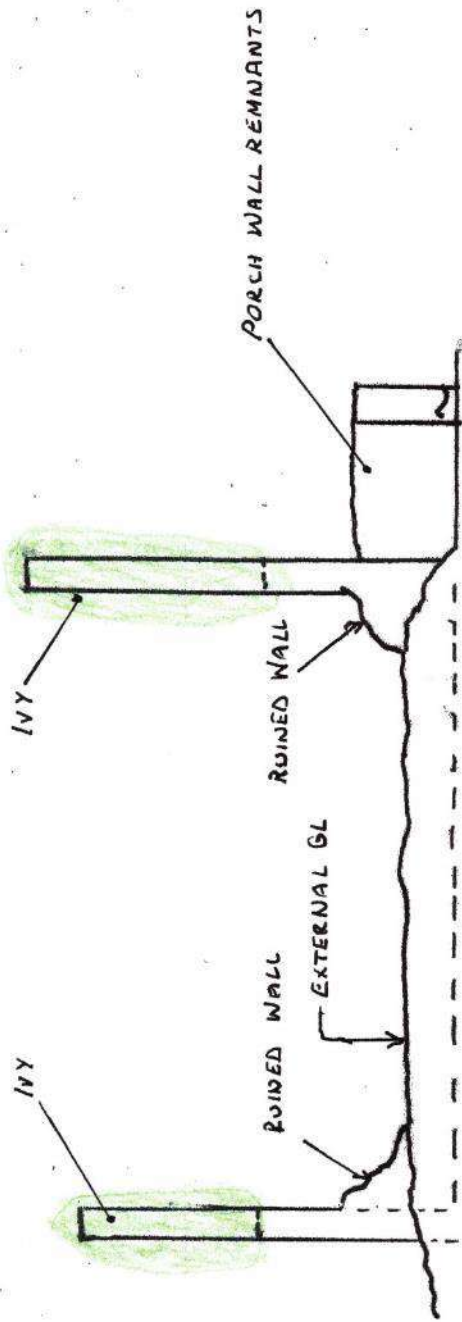
Dermot Nolan

dermotnolanandassociates@gmail.com

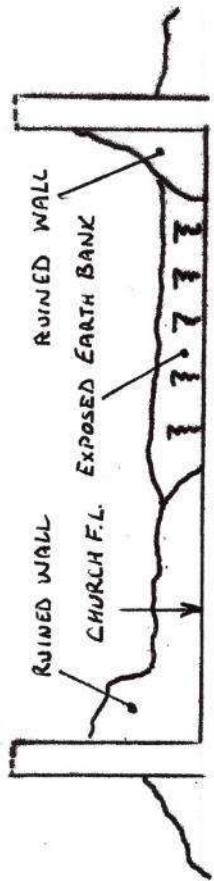
13 Lanesville
Monkstown, Co. Dublin

087 2431189

DONARD CHURCH



NORTH WALL - EXTERNAL



NORTH WALL - INTERNAL

NTS (APPROX 1:100)
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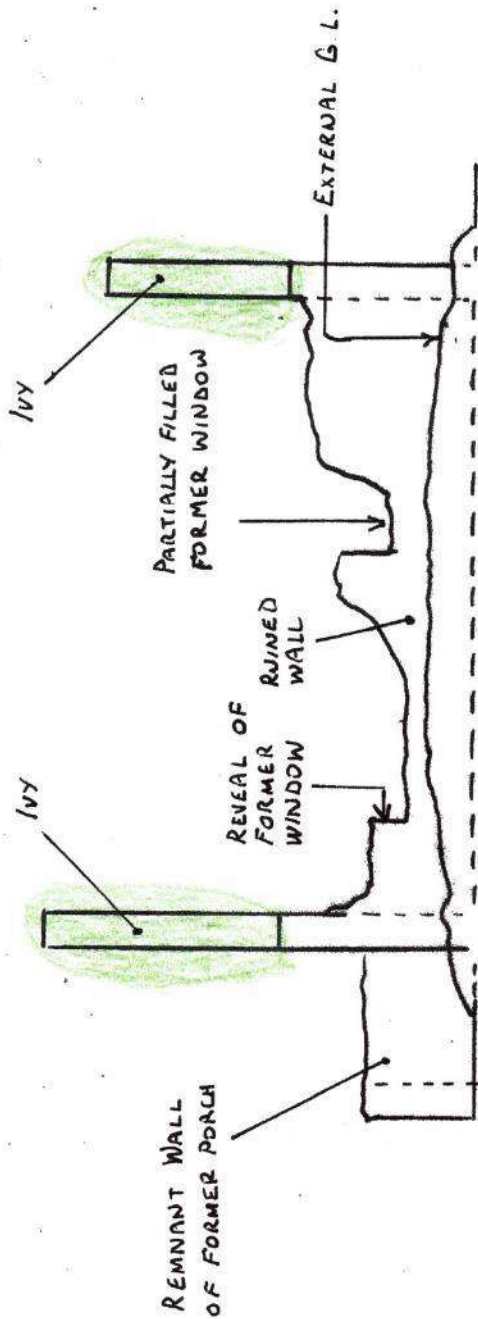
Dermot Nolan

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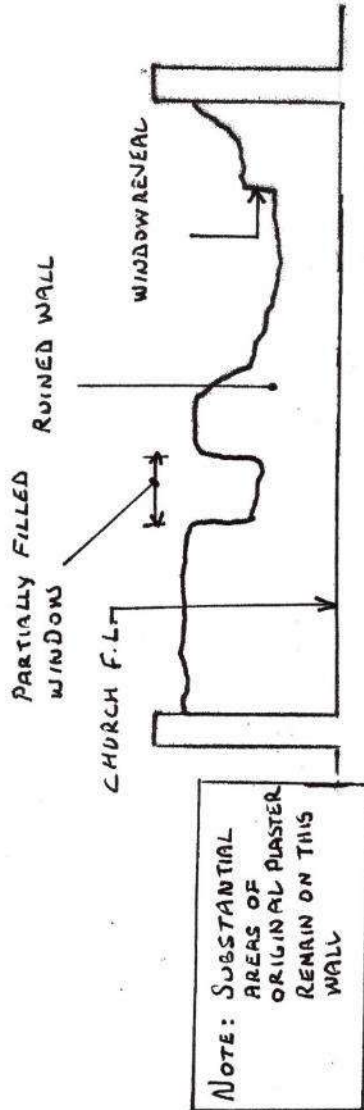
13 Lansaville,
Monkstown, Co. Dublin

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DONARD CHURCH



SOUTH WALL - EXTERNAL



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SOUTH WALL - INTERNAL

DONARD CHURCH

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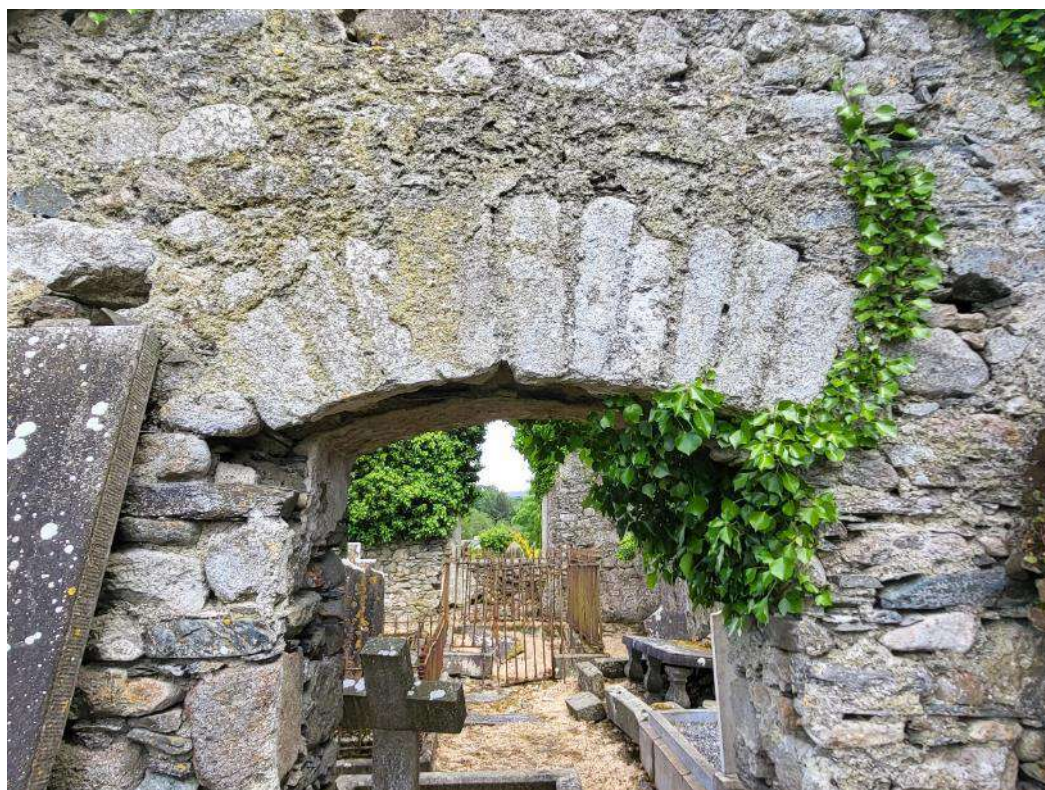
NOV 2024

APPENDIX 2

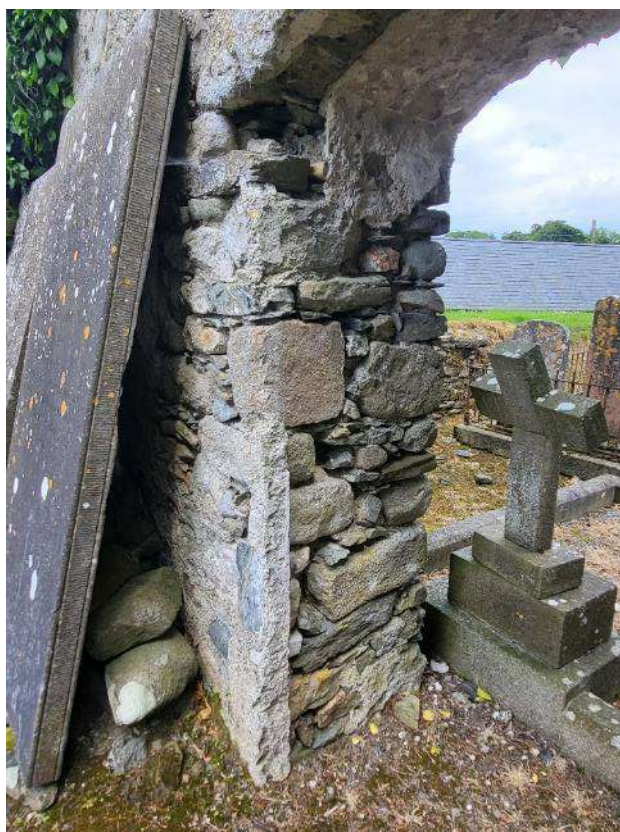
PHOTOGRAPHS



1. West Wall (Note porch wall remnant at arched entrance)



2. Detail of arch in West Wall



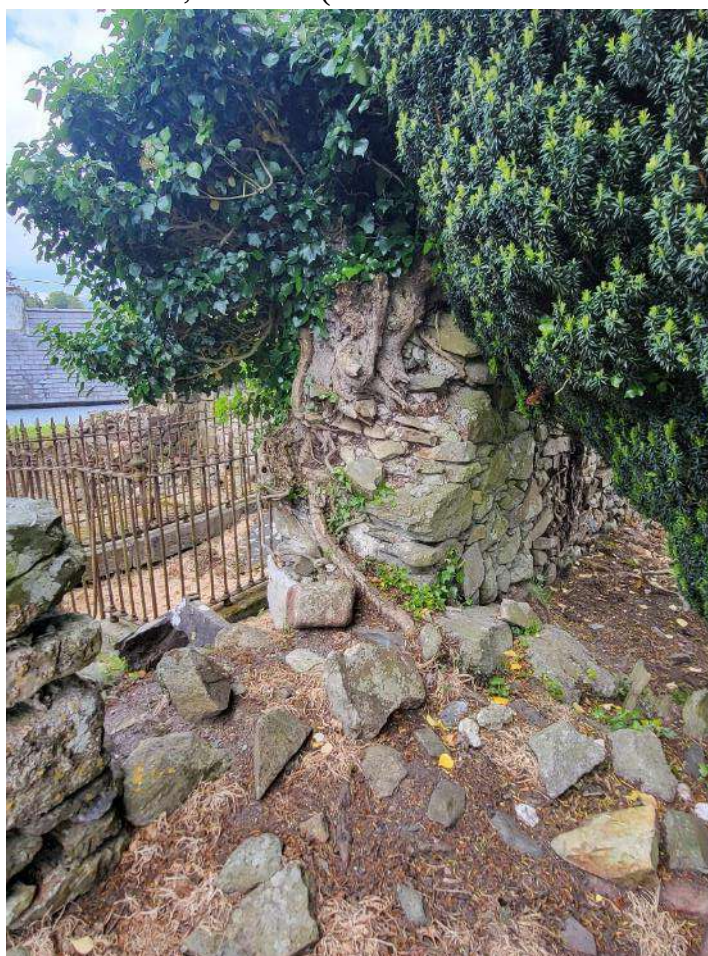
3. Door Reveal in West Wall (Note mortar wash out)



4. Detail of South-West corner (exterior)



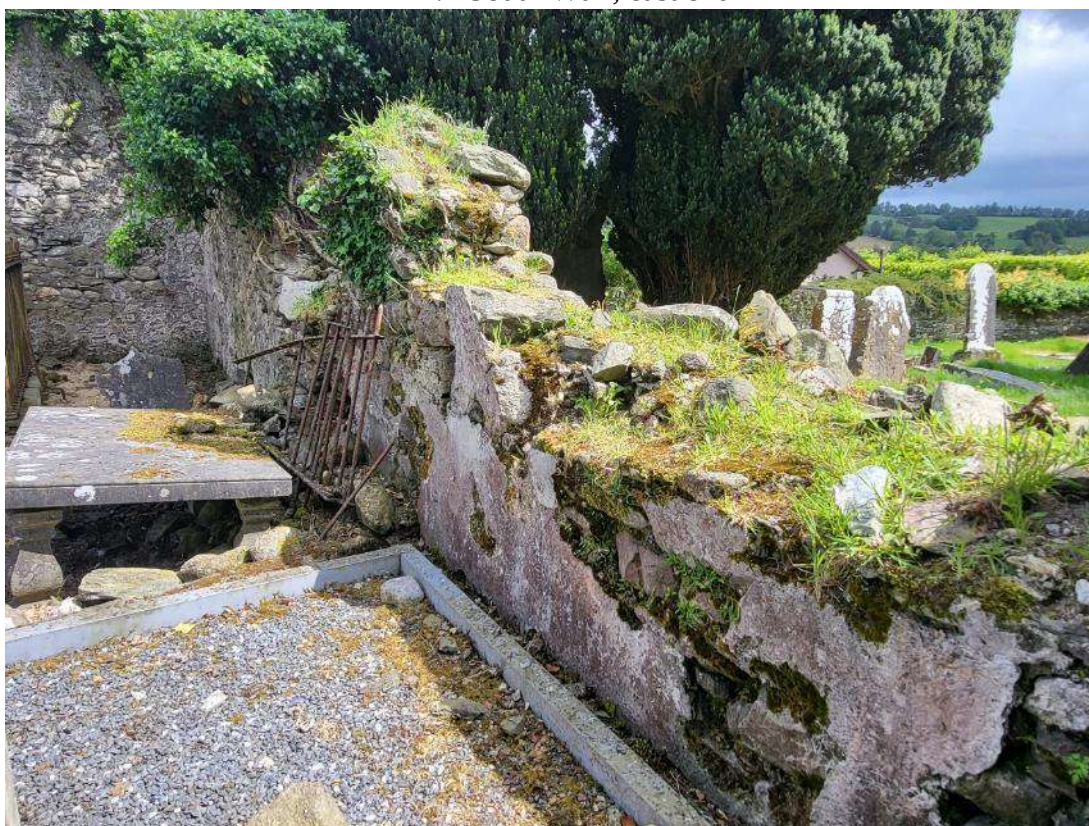
5. South Wall, west end (note window reveal at left side)



6. South Wall, centre (note partially filled in window)



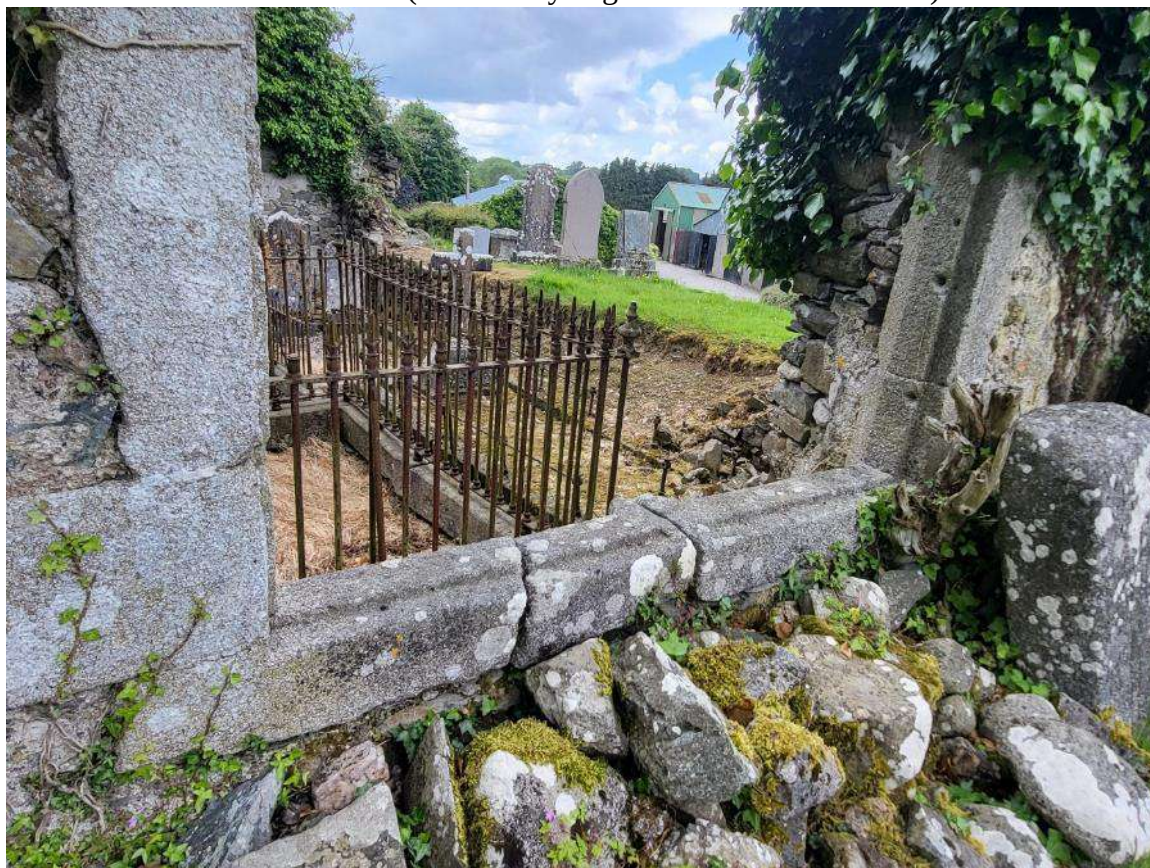
7. South Wall, east end



8. South Wall inner face (Note historic plaster)



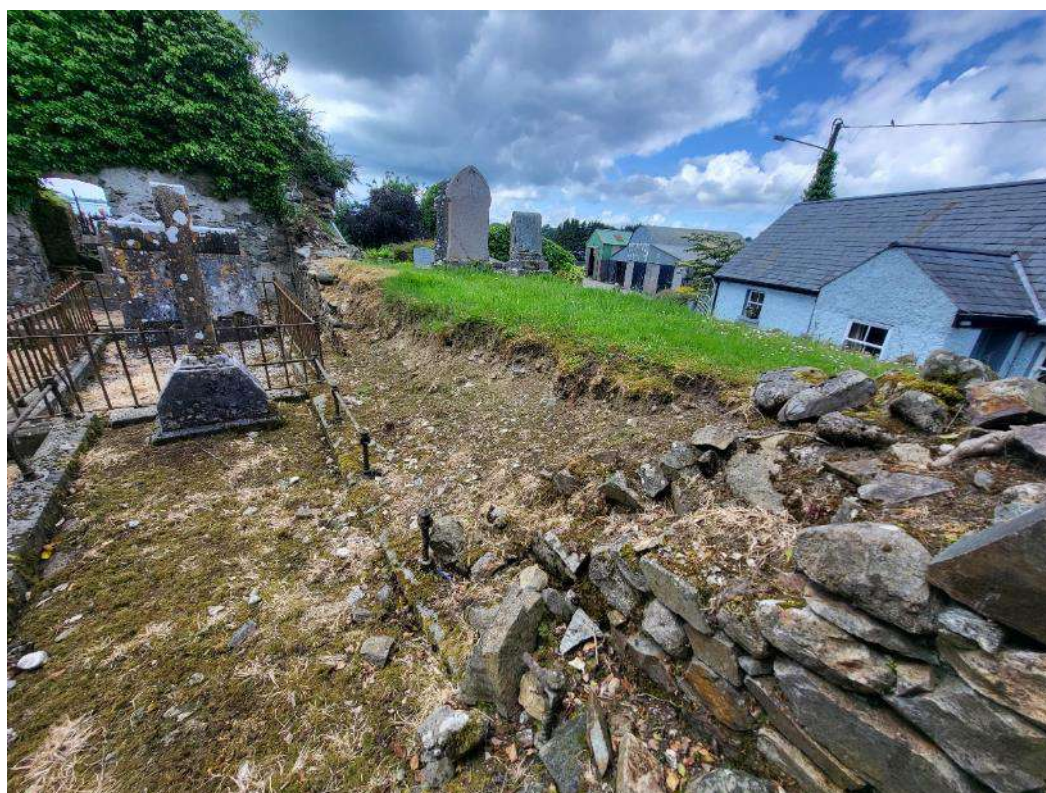
9. East Wall (Note heavy vegetation and fallen rubble)



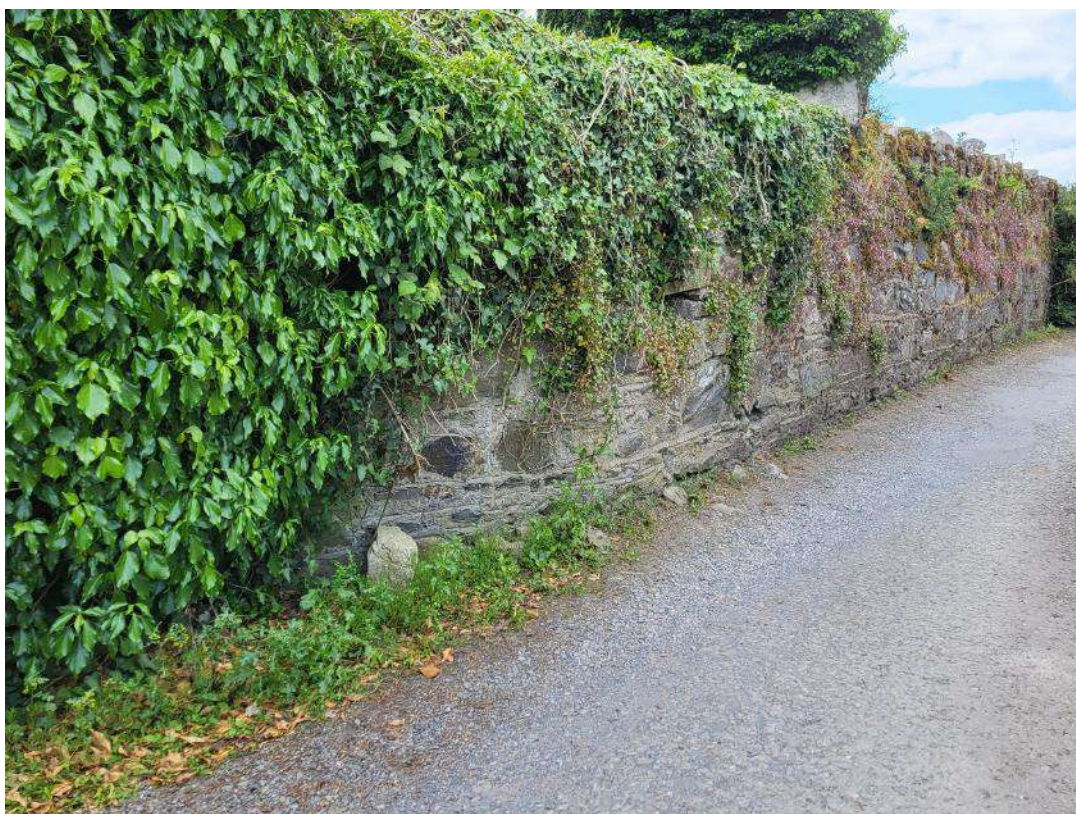
10. East Wall detail (Note ashlar sill and reveals and rubble)



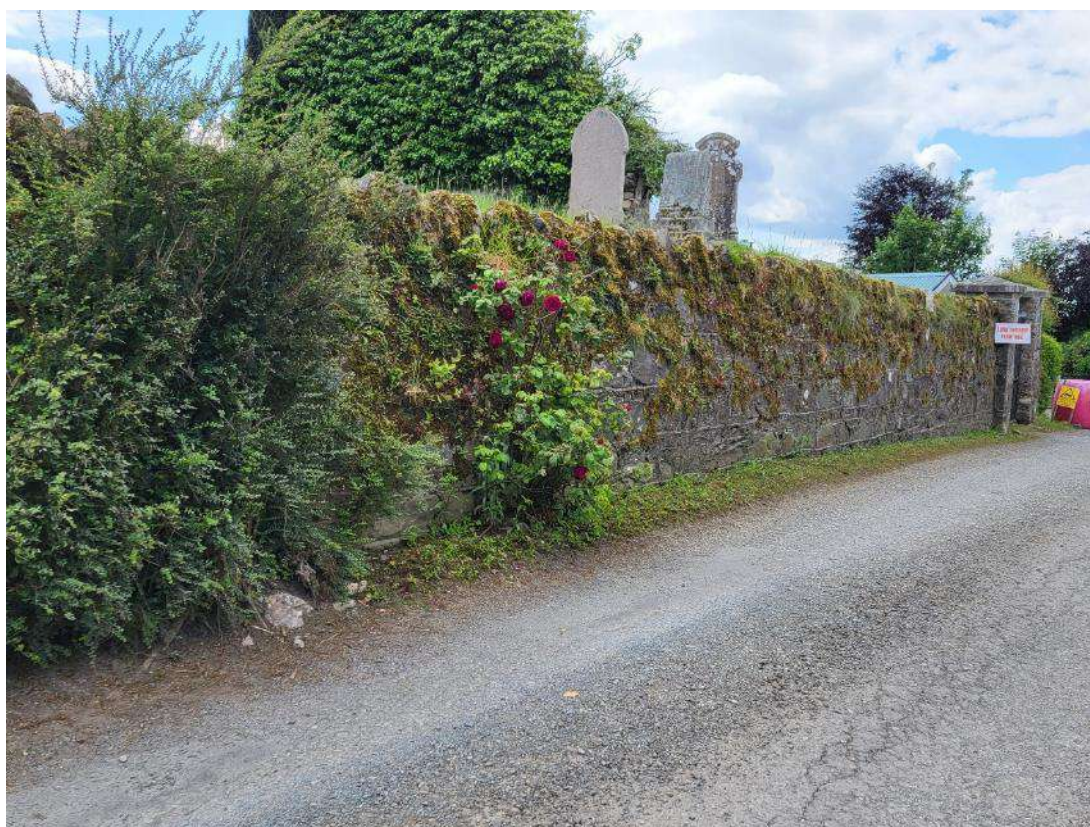
11. East Wall, north end and North wall east end (Note collapsed masonry under windowsill, and earthen bank on the line of the North wall).



12. View of ruined North wall.



13. North Graveyard wall, east end (Note vegetation).



14 North Graveyard wall central section



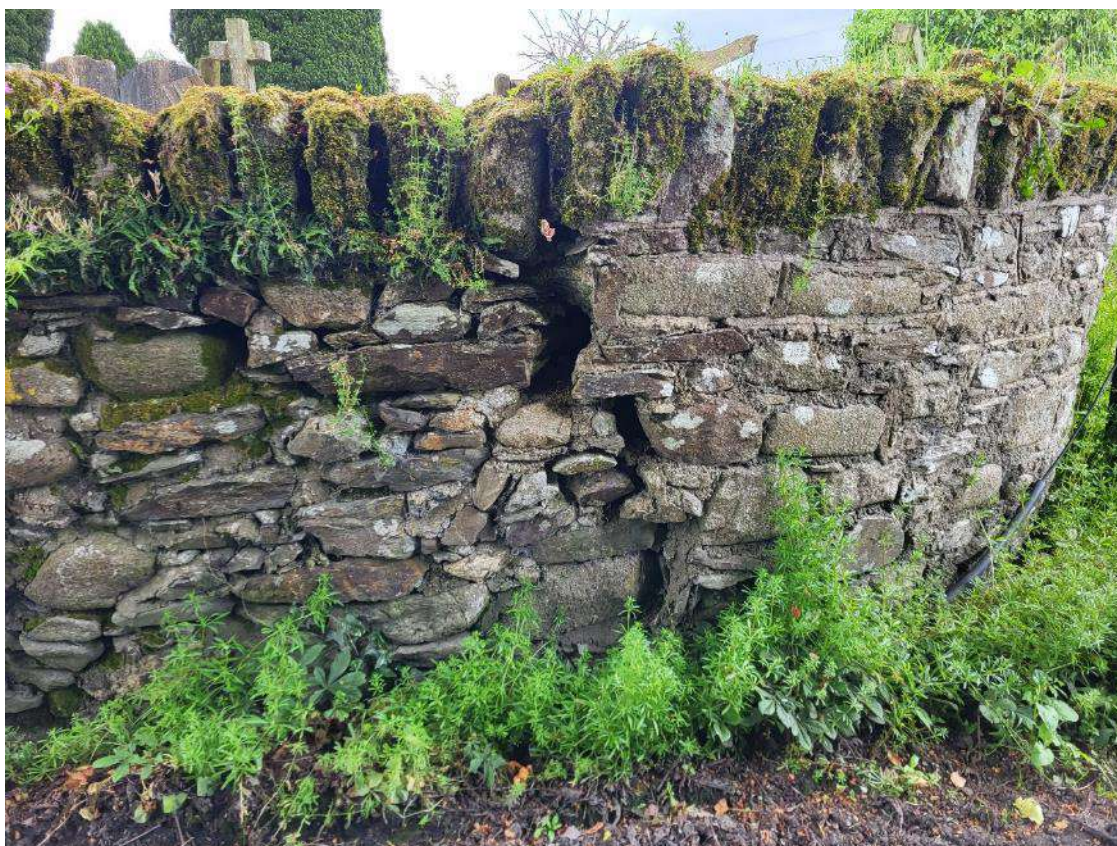
14. North Graveyard wall entrance (Note dislodged pier cap)



15. West graveyard wall, north end (Note vegetation)



16. West Graveyard wall, south end (Note concrete replacement in central section).



17. Serious crack in the wall at the south-west corner.



18. Graveyard wall leaning out at the south-west corner



19. South Graveyard wall collapsed at the west end.



20. South Graveyard wall. (Note local damage)



21. North-east corner of the Graveyard. (Note ground level is at the top of the wall)



22. East Graveyard wall, general view looking north.



23. East Graveyard wall (Note severe leaning)

APPENDIX 3

PRINCIPLES OF METHODOLOGY FOR CONSERVATION WORKS

DONARD CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD

PRINCIPLES OF METHODOLOGY FOR CONSERVATION WORKS

GENERAL

As the building is a Recorded Monument the design and execution of all works to the existing fabric or which may affect it will be guided by the following documents and advice books:

1. The Burra Charter (2013) prepared by Australia ICOMOS provides the internationally recognised framework for investigating, understanding and developing and implementing policies for the appropriate protection and management of places of cultural significance. The principles and recommendations of the charter will govern all works to, or affecting the protected structure.
2. The recommendations of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG) *advice series booklets* (2007 – 2011). The relevant booklets are those which provide guidance on:

Ruins

3. The detailed recommendations of the relevant English Heritage *Practical Building Conservation* books (2011-2013) as follows:

Conservation Basics

Stone

Mortars, Renders and Plasters

DAHG *Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011).

4. Other publications including:

BS 7913 Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings

Historic Scotland conservation advice leaflets

BEST CONSERVATION PRACTICE

All works will be carried out in accordance with the conservation best practice. The following principles will be applied to all interventions in historic fabric:

Expert advice and supervision

All conservation works shall be designed and detailed and site works shall be supervised by qualified and experienced conservation professionals.

Special Character

The special character of the structure and its elements including its setting shall be identified and the works shall be designed, planned and carried out ensuring that the special character is protected at all times. All proposed interventions shall be assessed to ensure that any negative impact on the special character of the structure is minimised.

Previous interventions or alterations

It is understood that previous interventions form part of the history of protected structures and may add to the special character and in some cases may make an important contribution to it. Such interventions will be identified and taken into account in planning and executing the conservation works.

Minimum intervention

All works will be designed and carried out on the basis of ensuring that interventions in the historic fabric are minimised.

Reversibility

All conservation works will be designed, planned and executed in a manner which ensures the maximum possible reversibility of all interventions.

Recording

Before any intervention the historic fabric shall be recorded by photograph, drawing and written description, as appropriate. Recording will be carried out during the course of the works and at the end a full record of all interventions will be prepared. All works shall be dated and recorded in a site diary.

Works to be carried out by skilled operatives

Only workers experienced and skilled in conservation shall be engaged in carrying out the works.

Protection

The historic building will be fully protected from the weather and from inadvertent damage at all times during the works. A protection plan shall be elaborated prior to the commencement of the works.

Particular care shall be taken in designating and isolating or protecting, as appropriate routes through the site which will be used for movement of personnel and materials. Where necessary the floors, walls and ceilings of such routes shall be protected with sheet plywood or equivalent. The designated routes and their protection shall be approved by the conservation consultant.

Detailed Method Statements

No intervention, no matter how small, shall take place until a specific method statement has been prepared by the contractor and signed off by the conservation consultant.

The method statement shall contain:

- (a) A description of the methodology and level of recording which will be used
- (b) Details of the materials and of the sources of the materials which will be used in the work.
- (c) Details of the temporary works and equipment to be used.
- (d) A description of the sequence of operations to be carried out.
- (e) A programme for the works.

Materials

Only appropriate and compatible materials shall be used. All materials used in the works must be approved by the conservation consultant. Under no circumstance should Portland cement be used anywhere in the works without specific authorisation by the consultant.

Salvage

As far as possible, materials salvaged on the site should be kept on the site and reused in the works. If this is not possible they should be delivered to the County Council or another approved recipient for appropriate reuse elsewhere. Salvaged materials retained on site for later reuse should be carefully identified, stored in a secure location and protected. As far as possible materials which are temporarily removed should be stored close to their original location.

Salvaged materials from other historic sites should not be used unless absolutely necessary and with the specific approval of the conservation consultant. The provenance of such materials shall be established and recorded.

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November 2024

APPENDIX 4

METHODOLOGY FOR REMOVAL OF VEGETATION FROM STRUCTURES

DONARD CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD

IVY REMOVAL

It is recommended that Ivy growth at Donard Church is assessed and treated in accordance with Coombes et al. (2017), as detailed below. All decisions concerning ivy removal and the specific methodologies to be used in each case shall be referred by the contractor to the consultants. The following is a general guidance on the procedures to be adopted. At present partial removal is proposed which will involve pruning the vegetation. The ivy will not be cut at the roots but will be cut approximately 500mm above the roots. The purpose of the pruning work is to permit closer examination of the masonry and carry out a measured survey.

Partial Removal

Initially, the Ivy should be partially removed to fully assess whether the ivy is damaging the buildings or not. With partial removal it is important to ensure the juvenile (climbing) stems are fully removed from the cutting point forwards to the growing tip. Ivy will regrow from the cut point, but this does not encourage the formation of ‘true’ roots which grow into the structure. Any portion of stem left between the cut point and the growing tip may, however, sprout ‘true’ roots. The arboreal stems, which may grow in excess of three metres in length can be cut back to any point along their length and will regrow from this point.

Situations where partial removal may be advisable include:

- ☐ Where the arboreal (flowering) stems of ivy are growing outwards and rubbing against sections of the structure when moving in the wind.
- ☐ When the mass of ivy stems, particularly the arboreal stems, threatens to destabilise a structure.
- ☐ Where the structure needs to be inspected (removal of some growth, particularly dense arboreal growth may uncover enough of the structure for inspection, but this will not always be the case).
- ☐ Where the ivy is encroaching on particularly vulnerable or visually important parts of a structure.

Management

Ivy growth can be managed in the same way as any plant growth. Regular cutting back of growing stems or arboreal growth as described above can be undertaken without detriment to the plant or the structure it covers. Management in this way needs to be undertaken on a regular, though not necessarily frequent, basis.

Adopting a regime of pruning is an option if the partial removal of ivy has shown that it is not causing obvious deterioration of the structure. Regular management may be annually, biennially, or even longer, as the scale of the work and vigour of the plant dictates.

Situations where management may be advisable include:

- ☐ Where the arboreal (flowering) stems of ivy are growing outwards and begin to rub against sections of the structure.
- ☐ Where it is necessary to maintain the mass of ivy stems, juvenile and/or arboreal, to a size which cannot de-stabilise a structure.
- ☐ Where the ivy needs to be kept away from a vulnerable or visually important parts of a structure.

Herbicide

Vegetation shall be removed by physical means as described above where practicable. The use of airborne sprayed herbicide is not permitted. Targeted direct herbicide application should only be used where vegetation removal by physical means is not possible. In such a case, the use of persistent herbicides will be prohibited. The application of herbicide can only be carried out by an 'Approved Pesticide User' as per the requirements of the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive. Refer to PRCD - Pest Management Trained Professional Users (PMUs) Register (agriculture.gov.ie) for a list of registered professionals.

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November 2024

6 Appendix 2- Faith Wilson Ecology Report