

KILCLOONY CASTLE

MILLTOWN, CO GALWAY

CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

JANUARY 2020



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RIAI Conservation Grade 1



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**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

**An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conservation management plan was commissioned by Milltown Heritage Group with the support of Galway County Council Heritage Office and funding under the Community Monuments Fund 2020, administered by the National Monuments Service in the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage.

The report draws on recent research at Kilcloony Castle undertaken by Professor Elizabeth FitzPatrick and her colleagues at the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies, NUI Galway.

In the preparation of this report the authors would like to acknowledge the input and assistance of the Melia family, owners of the castle who facilitated access for inspections.

We would also like to thank Áine Ní Shioradáin and members of the Milltown Heritage Group, who have undertaken several successful initiatives to promote Kilcloony Castle and who provided valuable background information.

Also the advice and guidance of Bernie Doherty, Galway County Archaeologist and Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer with Galway County Council (GCC); Gearóid Conroy, Archaeologist with the DHLGH.

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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 PREAMBLE

This conservation and management plan for the Kilcloony Castle was commissioned by Milltown Heritage Group with support from Galway County Council. It was funded under the Community Monument Scheme 2020, National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Galway County Council. Prepared by 7L Architects in collaboration with John Britton Consulting Engineers and Through Time Ltd., the purpose of the plan is to assess the history, cultural significance and current condition of the tower house – in terms of its known standing remains, buried archaeology, and associated cultural heritage. It assesses the threats to its significance; outlines a conservation strategy and makes recommendations for enhancement, improved management and interpretation. Field surveys were carried out in November 2020.

Location	Kilcloony, Milltown, Co Galway
Grid Coordinates	542272; 760557
Local Authority	Galway County Council
Statutory Protection	SMR ref: GA016-062001
Rating	National
Special Interest	Architectural, Archaeological, Historical, Artistic, Social
Principal Dimensions	9 X 10M (plan of tower house)
Inspection Date	November 2020 & January 2021
Prepared by	Fergal Mc Namara & Martin Fitzpatrick
Report Issued	January 2021

1.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Kilcloony Castle is a ruined tower house located approximately eight kilometres north of Tuam, Co Galway. It is situated on a ridge surrounded by pasture, and drained by a stream that flows into the River Clare and on to Lough Corrib. It shares its name with its townland, in Irish is given as *Cill Chluaine* or *Church of the Meadow*.

There are thought to have been about 3,000 tower houses built across the island between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and as many as 200 in Co Galway. Today, the National Monuments Service records a total of 129 castles or tower houses in the county.

Kilcloony tower house is recorded as being occupied by Donell Ó hUigín in 1574 and the connection of the building with the Uí hUiginn clan is of particular significance. A poem by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, dated 1550-91, refers to seventeen poets from Ulster having studied their art at Kilcloony.

Bardic schools were places where students, young kinsmen of the *ollamh* or head poet of the learned family, would travel to acquire knowledge and practice their art. While there once would have been many such schools around the country in the late-Medieval period, few sites have been identified other than from documentary sources.

1.3 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Kilcloony Castle is located within 200m of the N17, the principal route linking Galway to Sligo and part of the Atlantic Corridor route along the

west coast of Ireland. It is set within a medieval settlement landscape that includes 25 recorded monuments including a church site and burial ground.

Kilcloony burial ground is located 400m south-east of the bawn. Two stone crosses are recorded from the old part of the graveyard while traces of earthworks are recorded surrounding the graveyard in the north, south and west. Recent field work may indicate the site of an early church.

Kilcloony church is recorded 275m north of the tower house as depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. It consists of a rectangular shaped area (E-W; L c.15m; W.4.6m) bounded by low grassed-over foundations (W.; 0.8m).

The bawn is set on a natural promontory, and it enjoys views to the south, west and north over the plains to the east of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. It is rectangular in form, just over 32m in width and 37m in length.

The tower house survives to a height of approximately 6m, having been reduced to a vaulted room at ground level and first floor levels. Much of its stone has been taken away, although more recent falls can be found strewn around its base and to its interior.

While it has retained some of its facing stone, it remains vulnerable to collapse where almost all of the bedding mortar has eroded away, voids and missing quoins have left the surviving stones in a precarious state.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE

There are few known surviving bardic school sites surviving in Ireland, making Kilcloony potentially a site of national interest. Should this

attribution to a bardic school strengthen through further investigation, Kilcloony Castle and its medieval settlement landscape would be worthy of consideration for statutory protection as a national monument.

1.5 THREATS

Of most concern for the conservation of the tower house is its advanced state of decay. This gradual process will continue unless the structure is stabilized and weathered, its surviving floor vault being at risk of collapse.

Further evidence will be required, in the form of strategic testing, to identify the location of the bardic school, and to fully understand the role of the tower house and bawn, as well as the wider settlement landscape, of the Uí hUiginn base at Kilcloony.

1.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to priority, we would propose the following phasing:

Phase 1: Laser scan recording of the tower house and bawn; conservation structural repairs to the roof vault and walls; archaeological testing to the possible school sites (bawn & *church*) by summer field school under licence.

Phase 2: Access works including pencil post fencing to walking route, estate fencing to the buffer enclosure to the bawn; weathering repairs to the tower house; interpretive displays & directional signage.

Phase 3: Parking spaces; extension of walking route as appropriate; conservation repairs, interpretive display and landscaping to school site.

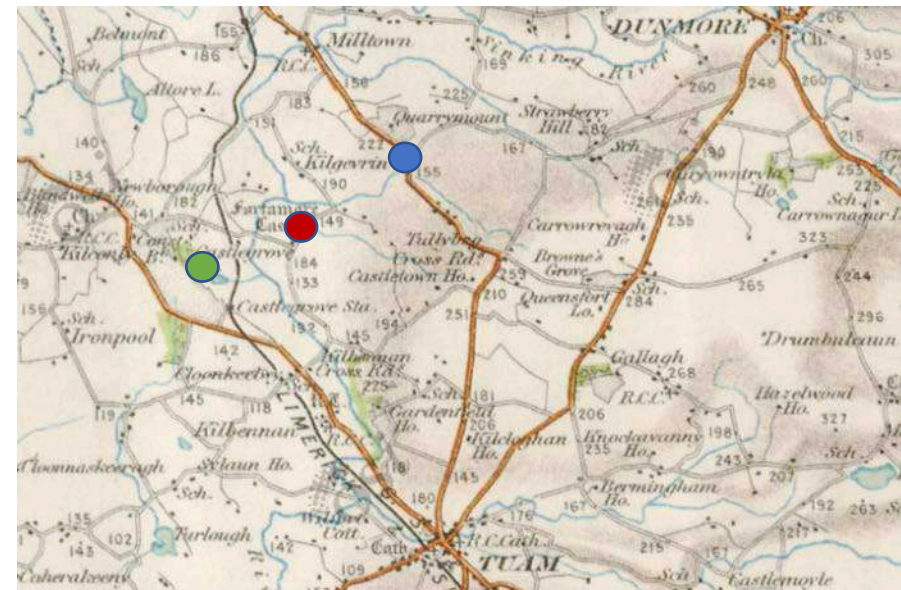
2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 THE PLACE

Kilcloony Castle is a ruined tower house located approximately eight kilometres north of Tuam, Co Galway. It is situated on a ridge on grazing land that rises above marsh, drained by a stream that eventually flows into the River Clare. It has fine views of the plains that stretch towards Kilmaine and the lake shores of Lough Mask and Lough Corrib twenty-five kilometres to the west, where the most dominant physical feature is Knockma (Cnoc Meadha), over thirteen kilometres to the south.

Access to the tower house is through a field gate off the busy N17 route, then 200m downhill across farmland in private ownership. Today, the tower house has been reduced down to a third of its original height by a combination of human and natural factors; its finely dressed building stone was removed for use on new buildings, thereby accelerating the process of erosion where its walls and floors have collapsed over time. Its impressive internal vaulting and carved architectural detailing are in a vulnerable state, making it unsafe for visitors and a risk to livestock.

A recent study prepared by Professor Elizabeth FitzPatrick of the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies, NUI Galway on behalf of the Milltown Heritage Group explored the wider landscape of the castle and its archaeological heritage. It also presented its rich cultural heritage associations with the Uí hUiginn hereditary learned family of poets who hosted a bardic school on the site from the sixteenth century.



1: Extract from late 19c. large-scale OS map showing location of Kilcloony (blue dot). Fartamore Castle (red) and Jenning's Castle (green) are also shown.

2.2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The intention of this conservation management plan is to guide the necessary steps required to preserve this special place of historic interest for the benefit of the landowner, local community, scholars, and wider society. Essentially, the aim of conservation is to *retain the cultural significance of a place*. Published by ICOMOS in 2013, the revised Burra Charter provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance; setting out standards and guidelines for its

guardians. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors. Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to – family and the community; the landscape; to the past and to lived experiences. A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. The charter defines conservation as - *all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.*

Following publication of the Burra Charter, the Ename Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 2008 and deals specifically with the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage. This charter provides a framework for the communication of the cultural significance of a place to the public. Its objectives are to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the site; communicate its meaning, safeguard the tangible and intangible values and respect its authenticity. This is particularly relevant for Kilcloony Castle, where the cultural heritage of the Uí hUiginn bardic school is represented by texts, and the tower and associated archaeological heritage is in a vulnerable state and a risk to the safety of visitors and livestock.

As such, the aims of this Conservation & Management Plan are to:

- provide an accurate record of Kilcloony Castle and the Uí hUiginn bardic school, through field studies and research of the sources;
- understand the significance of its cultural heritage both tangible and intangible along with its built and natural heritage;

- identify any threats to this significance;
- formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the tower house, and the associated cultural heritage relating to the bardic school;
- outline an appropriate and engaging interpretive strategy for the tower house and bardic school;
- manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the historic place, to act as a guide for future decision-making;
- assess the impacts of proposals to improve access to the Castle, and devising strategies to mitigate any impacts;
- identify priorities for the conservation of the tower house for capital works and ongoing maintenance;
- to make the case for Kilcloony Castle and the cultural landscape of the Uí hUiginn bardic school to be taken into state care and declared a National Monument.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Areas that were not inspected included those that required special access or unsafe, were fenced off or locked, buried, obscured by ivy or vegetation. Specific limitations are noted within the text.

2.4 NOMENCLATURE

Throughout the report we have referred to the Uí hUiginn learned family; there are several variations of the spelling found in descriptions. For the purposes of the report, we have described the main entrance of the tower as facing southwest.

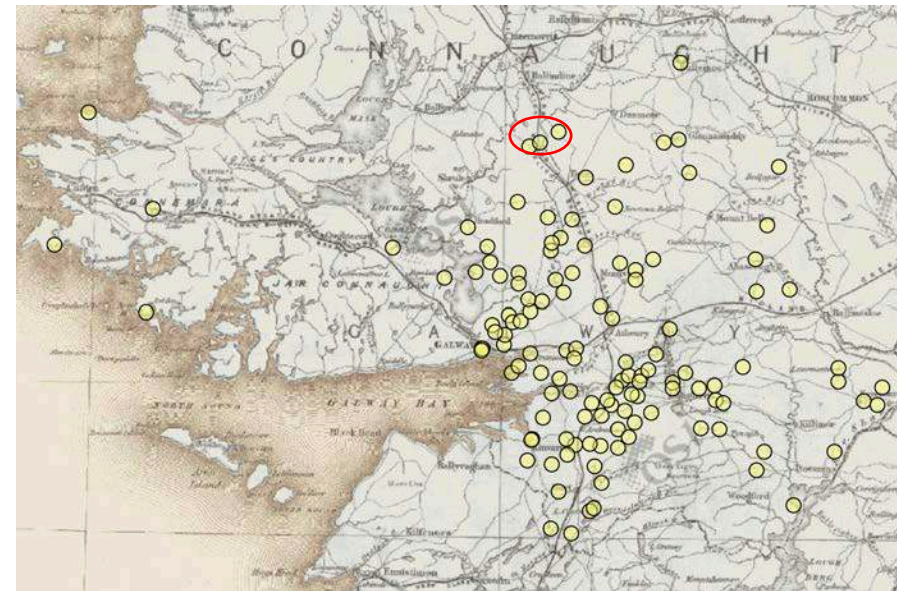
2.5 TOWER HOUSES IN COUNTY GALWAY

The National Monuments Service records a total of 129 castles or tower houses in County Galway; there are thought to have been about 3,000 built across the island, another seventy tower houses in the county have been documented, many of which no longer survive above ground. Tower houses in the vicinity of Kilcloony include Fartamore (GA016-053001), located 3.4km to the west and in a similar state of decay. Castlegrove East tower house, a further two kilometers in the same direction, is designated a National Monument (No. 428). Known locally as *Jennings Castle*, according to Harbison was a de Burgo building of late sixteenth or seventeenth century date (Harbison, 1970) and is in a far more complete state.

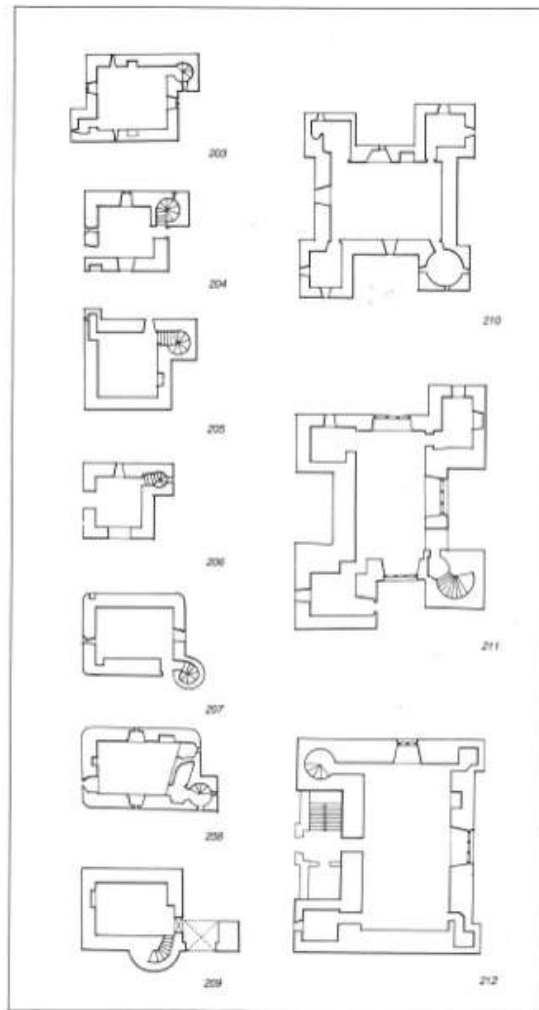
Generally, tower houses are rectangular in form between four and six storeys in height, with battlement defences and occasionally an outer enclosure known as a bawn forming a defensible yard at the base of the tower. They were constructed of mortared stonework, roughly faced, with dressed stone reserved for the quoins, doorways and windows. Lime coatings were commonly used to weather the walls externally and to the interior spaces, the easier to maintain and keep clean. The core of the wall was a mixture of rubble and mortar, with inner and outer facings of random-coursed stonework. Timber was extensively used both in construction and in the internal fittings, floors and roofs, little of which survives.

The tower walls were thickest at ground floor level where there was usually an external batter. This wall thickness allowed the incorporation of various mural chambers and features- the most common of them being the

garderobe (toilet). Generally, the main entrance to a tower house is at ground floor level. Entrances were usually constructed of dressed and chamfered stone and were defended with an array of features including *machicolations*, *yetts*, *portcullis* and *murder holes*. Window openings came in a variety of shapes and sizes with the largest openings reserved for the top level of the tower house; openings at ground floor level are usually small and narrow.



2. Extract from National Monument Services Historic Environment Viewer showing distribution of tower houses in County Galway. Cluster between Milltown and Tuam highlighted in red.



3. Tower house plans included in *A Lost Tradition* by McCullough Mulvin.

Floors within towers were usually of beaten earth, stone slabs or wooden planking; the latter were supported by timber beam wall-plates secured by joist holes and projecting stone corbels. The vast majority of tower house structures have at least one stone vault, usually located at the lower levels of the building. They served to stabilise the tower with a solid base and core and prevent the spread of fire between floors. Where possible, tower houses were built on rock outcrop, providing a natural sound base for the building, usually on a slightly elevated position.

The quantity of materials used in these towers suggests their construction involved a large labour force working over a long period of time. This work required specialist craftsmen overseeing teams of low-skilled labourers, the majority of whom were recruited locally. Construction of tower houses probably took between one and two years. Similar architectural features and masonry techniques displayed in the buildings of native Irish and Anglo-Norman tower houses suggest the same group of masons were involved in their construction.

Tower houses were often defended by a bawn enclosure. Bawn walls usually consist of stone walls with flanking towers. Architectural, cartographic and historical sources confirm outbuildings adjoined or surrounded tower houses. Their function is not certain but they may have provided additional space for a banqueting hall, housed servants or provided shelter for animals.



4. Restored in the 1990s by the OPW, Ardamlivian Castle near Gort is one of the most complete examples of a tower house in County Galway.

Tower houses had a dual role of residence and defence and were protected by a large array of features to allow it to withstand a short-lived assault by a small force. Within the tower house – battlements; bartizans and machicolations were all forms of defence. Loops, narrow vertical slots with wider embrasures to the interior, were employed throughout the tower covering the various angles of attack from different heights. The doorways were heavily defended by such features as portcullis, yetts, musket holes and murder holes. Prior to the widespread use of cannon – patience, siege and privation were the main methods employed in taking a tower house.

The residential function of the tower house is highlighted by the provisions made for heating, lighting and sanitation. Aesthetic finishes to the exposed stonework and the use of internal plaster, sometimes decorated with wall paintings, emphasise the importance of comfort.

The tower house evolved in response for the need for a residence befitting a nobleman, with the necessary defensive capabilities in a time of unrest and war. This building typology endured for over 200 years because it successfully catered for both these needs. It allowed its owner a relatively safe, comfortable residence, as well as providing an extravagant display of wealth and power of the lord. Some tower houses were adapted for continued residence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, usually through the addition of a larger structure with light-filled rooms with open aspects in times of relative peace. They were succeeded by large mansion houses set in designed landscapes with few defensive considerations, albeit also intended by their owners to make a statement to both their tenants and their peers.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

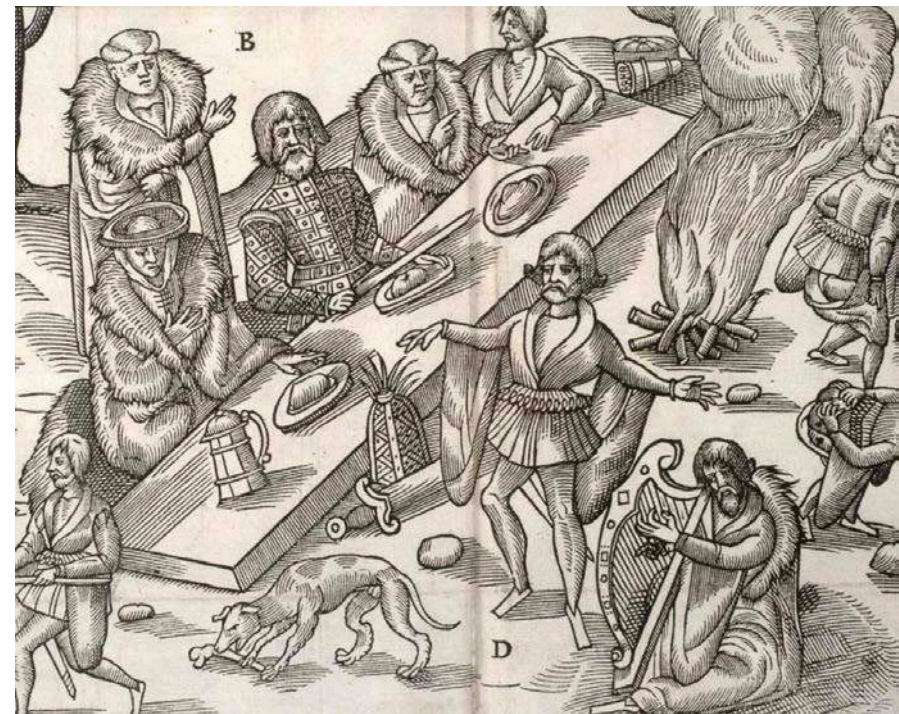
The tower house at Kilcloony lies close to the Mayo-Galway county border in what was previously the de Bermingham lordship of *Connhaicne Mac Fheóruis* also known as *Connhaicne Dúna Móir*. Kilcloony tower house is recorded as being occupied by Donell Ó hUigín in 1574 and the connection of the building with the Uí hUiginn clan is of particular significance (Nolan, 1900-1901). A poem by Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, dated 1550-91, refers to seventeen poets from Ulster having studied their art at Kilcloony:

Léigfead Aodh d'fhearaihbh Éireann (verse 6)

<i>Seacht bhfir dhéag d'éigsibh Uladh</i>	<i>Seventeen men died in Ulster</i>
<i>do-chuaidh d'iarraidh ealadhan,</i>	<i>who went in search of art,</i>
<i>dál an chuaine fhinn Ultaigh</i>	<i>the Ulstermen went</i>
<i>go Cill Chluaine i gConnachtaibh.</i>	<i>to Kilcloony in Connaught.</i>

FitzPatrick writes that - during the sixteenth century the school house (*sgoilteagh* or *tighe na sgoile*), based on the plan and orientation of medieval parish churches, emerged in Ireland as a response to the need for non-clerical learned families to have dedicated space for schooling (2015, 165-89). According to FitzPatrick, the Ó hUiginn *ollamh* (head of the

learned family) would have had a school house separate from his tower house residence. FitzPatrick makes the case that the location of the school house was the structure located to the north of the tower house recorded in the ordnance survey maps as *Kilcloony Church*, and that the early medieval church at Kilcloony may have been located at the nearby burial ground (2019).



5. Extract from plate in J Derrick's *The Image of Irelande* of 1581 of a bard and harpist entertaining the Mac Sweney clan at dinner.

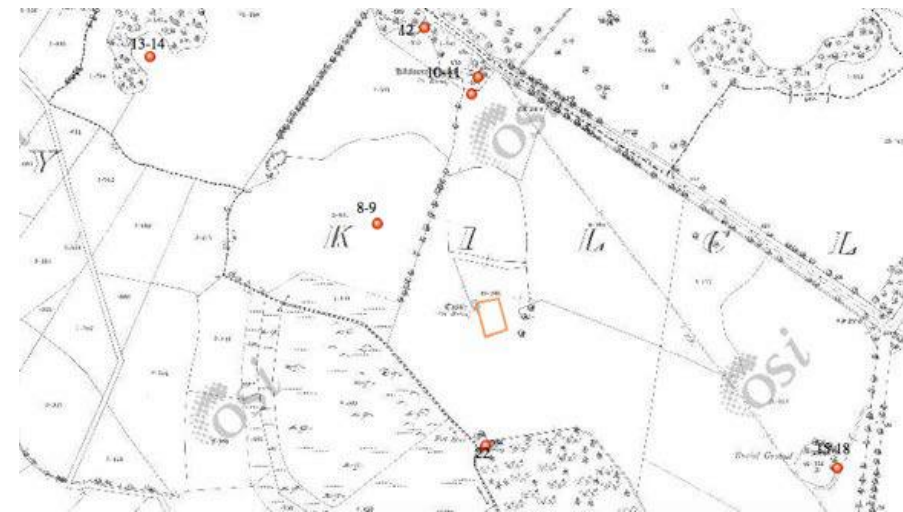
Thomas O'Sullivan provides a description of a bardic school in Connacht in a preface to a biography of the fifth Marquess of Clanricarde (1604-1657) published in 1772:

The students upon thorough examination being first divided into classes, wherein a regard was had to every one's age, genius, and the schooling had before, if any at all, or otherwise. The professors (one or more as there was occasion) gave a subject suitable to the capacity of each class, determining the number of rhimes, and clearing what was to be chiefly observed therein as to syllables, quartans, concord, correspondence, termination and union, each of which were restrain'd by peculiar rules. The said subject (either one or more as aforesaid) having been given over night, they work'd it apart each by himself upon his own bed, the whole next day in the dark, till at a certain hour in the night, lights being brought in, they committed it to writing. Being afterwards dress'd and come together into a large room, where the masters waited, each scholar gave in his performance, which being corrected or approv'd of (according as it requir'd) either the same or fresh subjects were given against the next day.

The extent of the lands associated with the Uí hUiginn tower house at Kilcloony is not recorded. The Landed Estates Database record that – (T)he Kilcloony estate, parish of Tuam, barony of Dunmore, county Galway, was granted to Edward Bodkin by Francis Bermingham, 21st Baron Athenry and James Daly in 1759. The Bodkin estate included lands in the parishes of Dunmore, Tuam and Liskeevy'. Kilcloony estate was bought by the Irish Land Purchase and Settlement Company in 1884. In the adjoining townland and c. 520m north of the tower house is Quarrymount House,

home to the Bodkin family in the nineteenth century. The same database records that the house was leased to Edward O'Kelly in 1881 for 31 years. By the early twentieth century it was in the possession of the Congested Districts' Board (CDB) and then passed onto the Land Commission who sold the house and 220 acres to the Gordon family.

A newspaper report entitled *Threatened Destruction of Kilclooney Castle* in the Western People of 28 February 1903 – *Kilclooney Castle....stood the other day in imminent danger of destruction. It was on the eve of being levelled to the ground for the purpose of providing stones for the building of tenants cottages. An intervention by members of the CDB stopped their own officers from the contemplated act of vandalism.*



6. Extract from Second Ed. OS map; archaeological sites numbered in accordance with Table 1 in the appendices. Bawn shown as orange line.



7. View of tower from approach to east.

The first edition OS map shows the newly built Quarrymount House, but also another, Siller House located at the end of a wide avenue. It no longer survives but is shown as a substantial holding with associated gardens, woodland and farmyard buildings. Kilocloony Castle is located towards the centre of the largest of the fields that make up the townland. A footpath running diagonally from Kilocloony church to the burial ground is indicated on the second edition (25-inch) ordnance survey map. Siller House is not annotated on this map and the land holdings have changed slightly from

the first edition map with some fields divided into more regular rectangular shapes. The footpath, indicated on the 25-inch map is not marked on the third edition OS map, where the greatest change appears to be the division of land holdings in the south-east of the townland into smaller, regular shaped, holdings and may reflect the division of land from the former Siller House estate.

In 1971 Henry Gordon sold the house and remaining 20 acres. The house was extensively renovated in recent years by the Costello family. The first edition OS Map of 1838 depicts *Siller House* in the south-east of Kilocloony townland and c. 950m south-east of the tower house structure. The house, which no longer survives, is marked on the map as a substantial holding.

3.2 KILCLOONY CASTLE TODAY

The castle today has been much reduced in height; surviving to first floor level with much of its facing stone and almost all of its dressed stone removed. Its facing stone is more carefully coursed with squared rubble in comparison to other tower houses. The plan of the structure is comparable to similar structures throughout the county and would have comprised of a main chamber and subsidiary chamber at the various levels.

Being in a rural location, and with clear views over its medieval landscape setting, the most obvious encroachment is in the form of the busy N17 directly to the north of the tower house and within a few metres of a possible site of the bardic school.



8. Aerial photo showing main sites in setting of Kilcloony tower house and bardic school. (Google maps)

4.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The descriptions below are based on a survey carried out in November 2020. The following survey concentrates on the condition of the fabric of the monument, and associated historic features. The purpose of the survey is to identify defects and recommend outline repairs and remedial works to improve the condition and presentation of the ruined tower house.

4.1 SETTING

Kilcloony Castle is located within 200m of the N17, the principal route linking Galway to Sligo and part of the Atlantic Corridor route along the west coast of Ireland. It shares its name with its townland, in Irish is given as Cill Chluaine or *Church of the Meadow*. This tower house is set on sloping farmland that is drained by a small stream and marshland to its west. To the north west of the tower house, alongside the main road is a structure shown on the first edition OS map of 1838 as *Kilcloony Church (in Ruins)*. Prof. FitzPatrick suggests that as there were no burials found close to this building during the N17 road upgrade in 1997, it may have been the bardic school, with the *ollamh* living in the tower house nearby.

Within the townland of Kilcloony a ringfort and associated field system are located 150m north-west of the tower house, a second ringfort with a souterrain is located 500m to the north-west while a third ringfort, with an internal structure, and associated field system, is located 680m south-east of the bawn. Ringforts are the most widespread and characteristic monuments in the Irish countryside and are basically a circular or roughly



9. View of church remains from the east.

circular area enclosed by an earthen bank formed from material thrown up from a concentric fosse (or ditch) on its outside. Those with banks of stone are known as *cashels* or *caiseal*. Archaeological excavation has shown that most ringforts were enclosed farmsteads, built in the early medieval period and acted as a defence against natural predators like wolves, as well as attacks by rival groups. A souterrain within a ringfort afforded the occupants to store goods and produce in a cool environment. Larger sized ringforts may have been utilised as livestock enclosures rather than settlement sites. The construction of ringforts reflects a relatively stable and wealthy society at the time of their building. Many ringfort sites are likely to have continued

in use for considerable period servicing the wider agricultural practices; some examples in south County Galway were utilised as enclosures for tower houses.

Kilcloony burial ground is located 400m south-east of the bawn. On the first edition ordnance survey map the burial ground is depicted as a roughly rectangular shaped area (45m x 40m) bounded by trees. It has expanded considerably since then and now occupies an area measuring 115m x 50m. Two stone crosses are recorded from the old part of the graveyard, while traces of earthworks are recorded surrounding it to the north, south and west. The features were initially identified through aerial reconnaissance in 1967 which revealed traces of a series of linear banks that tended to follow a roughly N-S axis. Recent field work has identified foundations that may indicate the site of an early church (FitzPatrick 2019).

A church site is recorded 275m north of the tower house, which is depicted on the first edition ordnance survey map. It consists of a rectangular shaped area (E-W; L c.15m; W.4.6m) bounded by low grassed-over foundations (W.; 0.8m). Briars have encroached on the western end of the ruins there is a gap at the east end of the southern wall, which could mark the site of a doorway; no architectural features survive. A curving earthen bank located to the south of the church is indicated on the first edition ordnance survey map and would appear to be part of the landscaping associated with Quarrymount House to the north. The former gate lodge to Quarrymount House is located c. 80m north-west of the church site.



10. Aerial view of tower house from south commissioned by MHG. (Drone Dudes)

A small pond located c. 150m south of the tower house ensured that a fresh water supply was available to the inhabitants of the tower house. This water source located on the townland boundary with Clashaganny is indicated as a circular well feature on the first edition map and a rectangular area annotated *spring* on the 25-inch map.



11. View of bawn and courtyard building (outlined) from hoist, looking east.

4.2 BAWN

The bawn is set on a natural promontory, and it enjoys views to the south, west and north over the plains to the east of Lough Corrib and Lough Mask. It is rectangular in form, just over 32m in width and 37m in length, oriented on a NW-SE axis following the natural contours of the promontory. The tower house is set into the NW corner of the bawn. It is more usual for the tower to be placed inside the bawn enclosure, forming an outer perimeter on all sides. It may be that the bawn is a later addition that was constructed along with the rectangular courtyard building adjacent to the SE corner of the tower house. with a possible entrance gate in the SE end suggested by a break in the mound. The tower house itself forms part of the bawn defence to its NW corner.

The rectangular courtyard building is approximately 21m long and 7m wide, with two main spaces and a central lobby. A levelling of the ground in the SE corner suggests a sub-enclosure of 13x16m in dimension. Both of these features would require archaeological testing to confirm their date and to provide clues as to their former purpose.

4.3 TOWER HOUSE

The tower house survives to a height of approximately 6m, having been reduced to a vaulted room at entrance level and part of the first floor. Originally, it would have been about three-times this height. Much of its stone has been taken away, although more recent falls can be found strewn around its base and to its interior. Externally it measures approximately 10.5m NW-SE and 9m SW-NE, giving it a relatively compact plan and

slender silhouette, similar to Merlin Castle near Galway city. The first floor of the castle has been left exposed to the elements, with the ruined wall forming an uneven low parapet where a thick bed of grassy turf has colonised, spreading over the edges of the tops of the surviving walls.



12. View of southeast face of tower and main entrance door.

4.3.1 EXTERIOR

The main entrance door faces south east, looking across the bawn towards the base of the hill, and not visible from the road. Only the SW and SE faces of the tower have retained much facing stone. The other sides, facing away from the prevailing winds, have their wall cores exposed leaving only a few courses of their base batter giving them an appearance closer to a rock pile. While some of its distinctive rounded quoins survive at higher levels, much of this stone has been robbed out to all corners leaving the facing stone more vulnerable to collapse.

Around the entrance, the stonework has fallen away to expose the elaborate door and yett slots to either side then up as far as an ogee-headed slot window with decorative spandrels. The entrance lobby and the edge of vaults supporting the first floor level are exposed to the exterior. It is difficult to discern the arrow loop accessed from the stairs to the east side, given the amount of movement in the facing stone along with mortar loss; the small curve to form the head, about 30mm in diameter, being the best way to identify it. A gun loop positioned just to the east of the door has also been exposed, a half of its finely dressed circular opening still surviving. Looking towards the SW side, it is more obvious that the entrance facade is freestanding above ground level as the side walls to the first floor level have fallen away. A wide and deep embrasure to light this space may have made is more susceptible to collapse. Again, while it has retained most of its facing stone up to 6m in height, it remains vulnerable to collapse where almost all of the bedding mortar has eroded away, voids and missing quoins have left the surviving stones in a precarious state.



13. View of north west face.



14. View of north east face showing temporary barricade.



15. View of south west face.



16-19. Aerial views of tower house commissioned by MHG. (Drone Dudes)



20. View of robbed-out corner to south of tower showing cantilevering quoins.

Some of these large, dressed stones are cantilevering in excess of 75% of their mass, and they pose a risk to visitors and livestock around the base of the tower. The largest surviving opening to the north end of the vaulted room has been partially filled with loose salvaged stone where the robbed-out surround has led to a large void. The small chamber beside the entrance lobby is lit by a single rectangular slot, visible externally.

The NW side is distinguishable by a large opening (1.3m wide x 1.4m tall) that still lights the vaulted room at first floor level. Below, and set further to the east is another window, which has also been extensively robbed out, facing stones lying loose around it. Above the base batter, the wall core has eroded away so that the wall becomes thinner towards the top. It should be noted that it is likely that the vault and walls would have completely fallen away some time ago if it were not for the well-mortared core of the walls allowing the superstructure to survive the loss of its weathering face. It is likely that its fine facework of squared dimensioned limestone made it particularly desirable for pilfering for re-use on new buildings.

To the NE, the exposed wall core appears looser, and this side has the least surviving facing stone. It also features the exposed shaft of a garderobe chute and a pointed arch opening, the largest surviving at almost 2m in width and 2m in height. The front of its arch with its wickerwork centring is now exposed and slowly falling away. A window to the south end lights the staircase; this has a slightly curved lintel but no jambs or cill survive.



21. View of missing facing stone and drywall infill stone to window to south west face of tower house.



22. Detail of exposed wall core to north west face.



23. Detail of eroded ogee-window to south east face with extensive mortar loss to surrounding facing stone.



24. Detail of musket hole close to door.



25. Detail of exposed wall core.



26. Detail of surviving facing stone at risk of collapse



27. Detail showing cavity between facing stone to narrow front wall.

4.3.2 INTERIOR

The vaulted entrance lobby would once have provided a confined threshold space (1.1m x 2.1m) prior to entering the staircase giving access to the rest of the tower. It has partially collapsed above, and the loss of the stonework either side of the door has left it exposed. Stones are strewn on the floor where they may have fallen, and very little wickerwork centring survives in comparison to other spaces in the tower. Scant traces of wall plaster have survived. A squint allows those in the vaulted chamber behind the separating wall a view of those just entering the tower.



28. View of wickerwork centering to vault to chamber on ground level.

To the west side is another chamber with a barrel vault, running perpendicular, contains a small alcove and a window. It has retained much of its centring, at only 2.1m in height, it can be easily inspected for stray twigs for radiocarbon dating. The walls of the alcove are covered with a green biofilm which is not present elsewhere. To the east of the entrance is the spiral stairs, with only the final step surviving complete, and parts of other steps close to the base, winding in a clockwise direction. The



The doors between these spaces are all missing, leaving the cross walls in a vulnerable state. Bar holes can be seen on each of the doors, a further layer of defence inside the tower. One door survives, the finely dressed, arch-headed door (1.65m high x 1.1m wide) that gives access to the main chamber. Immediately inside the doorway a number of broken paving stones indicate the floor level. The remainder of the floor is covered with clay and strewn with rubble, the source of which is uncertain, being fairly evenly distributed. This chamber is roughly cuboid; just less than 5m in each dimension with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. The vault is asymmetrical, springing at +3m to the west side, and +4.25m to the east side where the timber mezzanine floor was placed, the top of the arch is flattened. Wicker centring has survived but is missing to the centre where

29. Detail of bottom step to stairs.

the arch has washed out around a hole to the sky at the highest point, making the vault vulnerable to collapse. Carved stone corbels survive, two to each of the side walls at a level of +2.3m; another in the south wall and two put-log holes in the north wall originally supported a timber ceiling.

The space is lit to three sides with wide embrasures that form alcoves although the windows would have been narrow slot windows for defensive purposes. A robbed-out window opening is set in a splayed embrasure located off centre to the east in the north wall. The roof of the embrasure opening has traces of wicker centring while the base has been partially



30. Detail of mezzanine corbel.

robbed-out. A deep embrasure (1.65m deep) located in the northern end of the west wall retains the partial remains of a narrow rectangular loop. A large rectangular embrasure centrally placed in the east wall has much of its stone robbed-out and no trace of the window opening survives. A void at low level in the south corner of the room links to the alcove in the west chamber, thereby undermining this massive wall, up to 2.3m thick.

At the first floor, a door accesses the mezzanine from the stairwell. A stone with a rounded recess for a door pivot has survived to the east jamb. The floor of the subsidiary chamber to this level is also exposed, and has fallen away in places. It ran east-west along the south wall of the building, was also accessed via the stairway. The main first floor level originally had a wooden floor and a vaulted roof with evidence of wicker centering. Its only feature is a robbed-out window, set in a rectangular embrasure, centrally placed in the north wall. The subsidiary chamber was lit by a dressed and chamfered cusped ogee headed window, which partially survives, in the south wall.

The wall separating the subsidiary space from the main chamber is very badly eroded, to the extent that there are holes and gaps. It is in danger of falling away entirely leaving the barrel vault fully open to one end. At the higher level, the circular wall to the stairs, already the thinnest in the tower, is at risk of collapsing with the facing stone having eroded away. Above first floor level, little visible survives being almost completely covered by a thick covering of grass. Faint traces of a former embrasure and window are visible off centre to the south in the west wall, while the remnants of the garderobe chute are visible at the north end of the east wall.



31. View of vault to main chamber, daylight visible to centre and extensive wash out of joints.



32. View of internal doorway.



33. View of alcove with void to base of wall.



34. Loose stone to floor.



35. View of subdividing wall to main chamber. Note large voids to stonework at high level, corbels and squints.



36. View from hoist looking north.



37. View from hoist looking west over subsidiary chamber.



38. View looking north over main vault showing grass covering and eroded wall tops.



39. View overlooking subsidiary chamber showing badly eroded walls



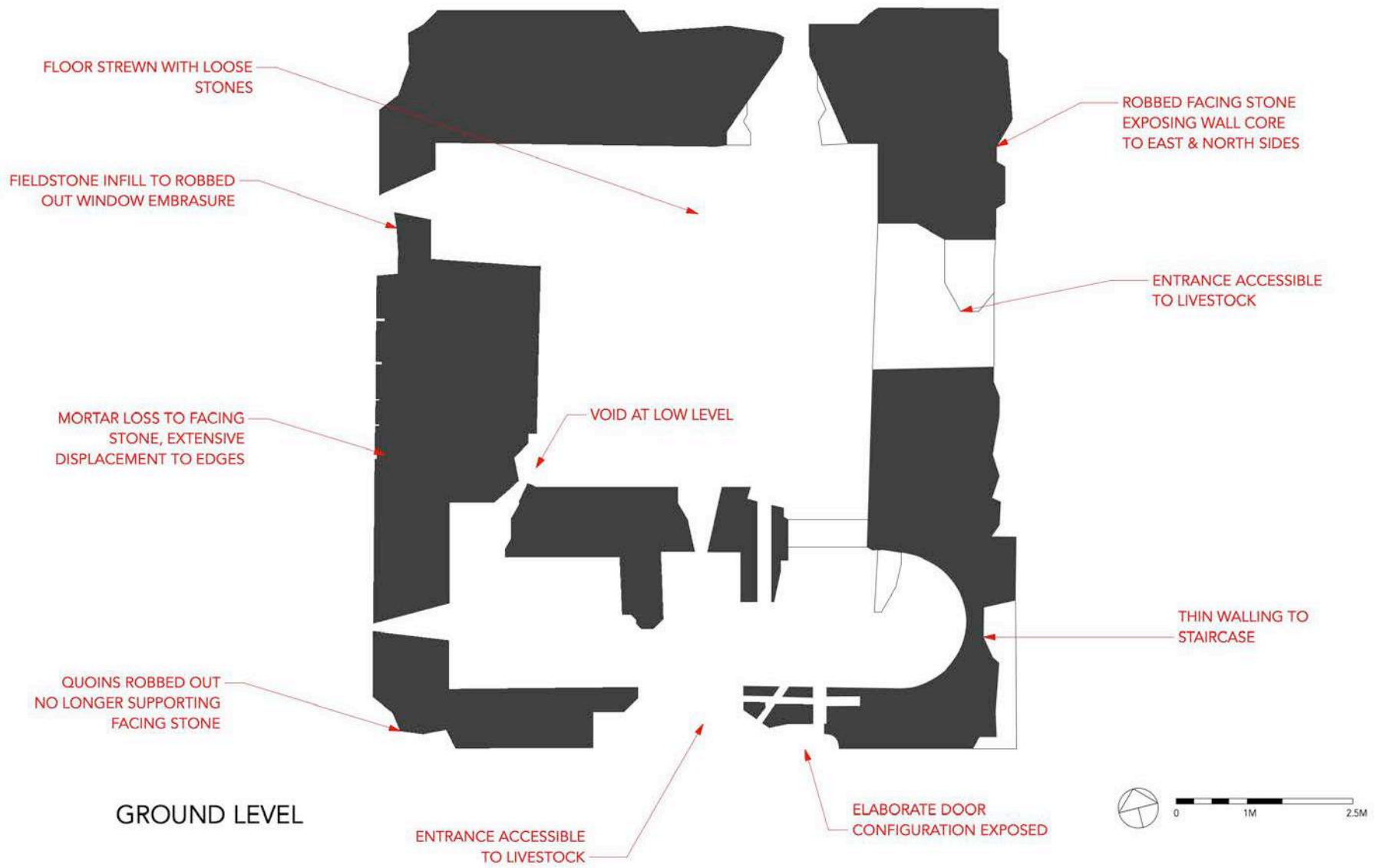
40. View down stairs showing thinness of wall in this location.



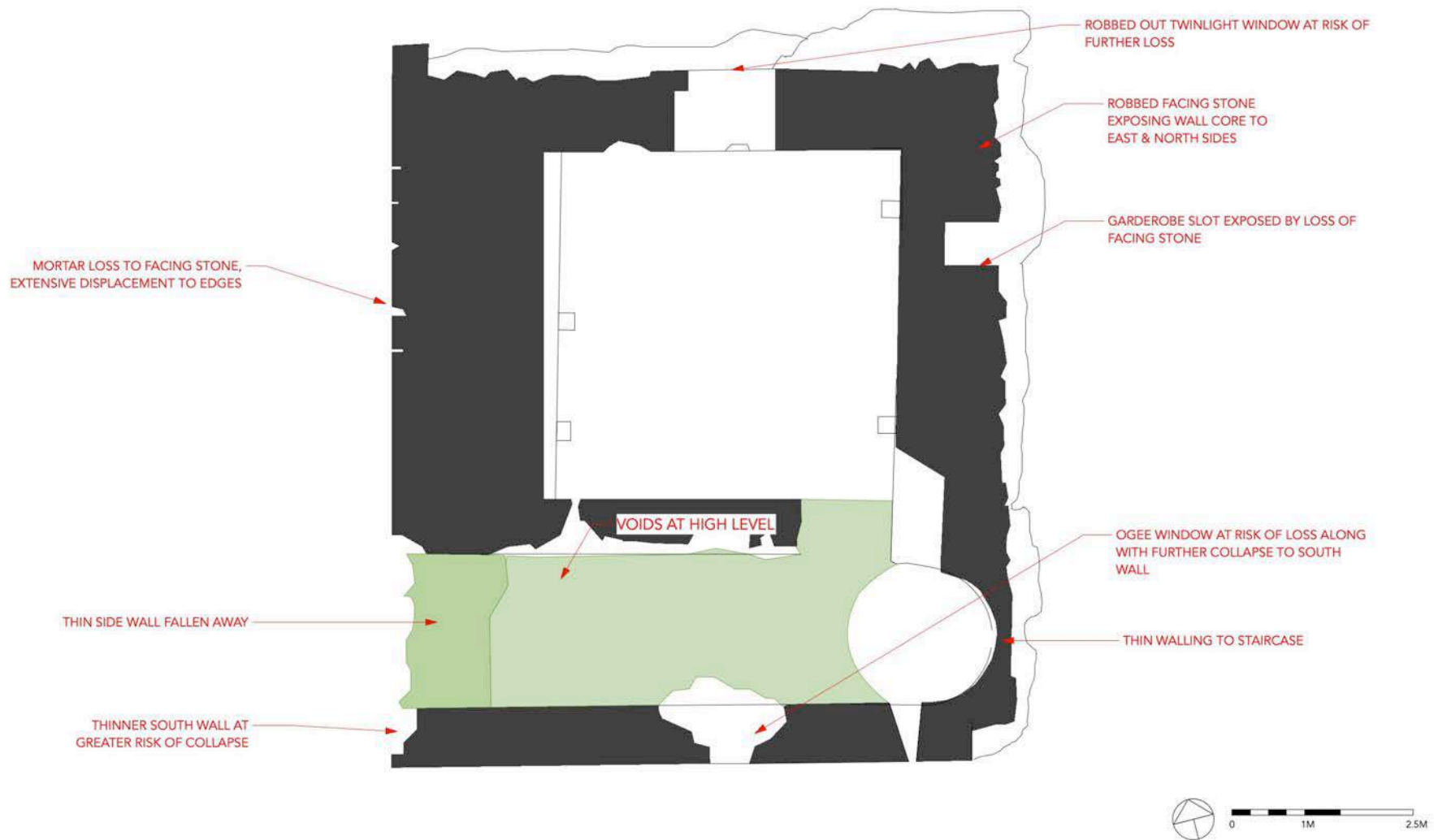
41. View of exposed garderobe chute to north east side.



42. View of vulnerable masonry at top of stairs.

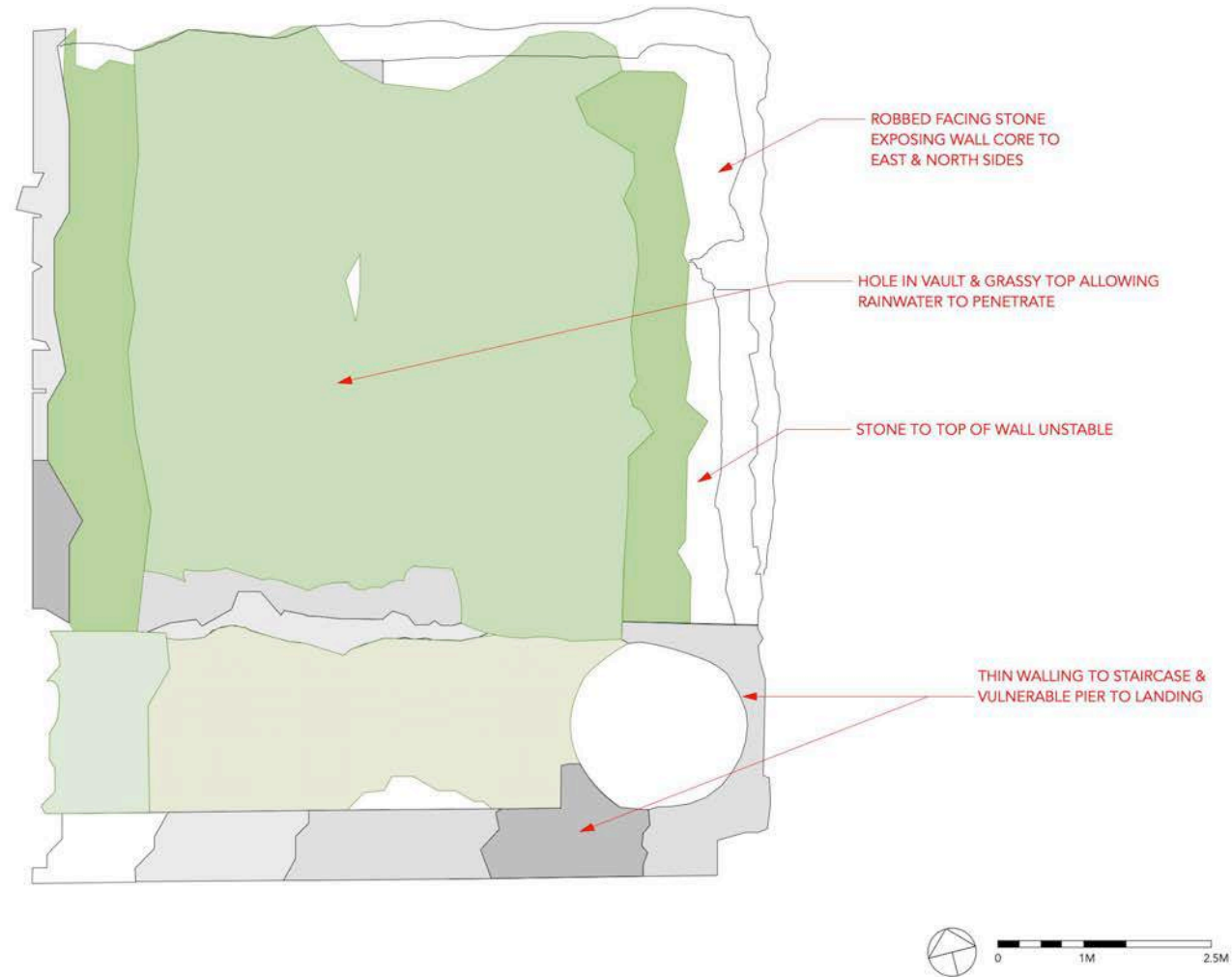


43. Ground level plan of tower house noting principal features and areas of concern.



FIRST FLOOR LEVEL

44. First floor level plan noting principal features and areas of concern. (Dimensions approximated from observation).



ROOF LEVEL/ SECOND FLOOR

45. Second floor level showing principal features and areas of concern (dimensions approximated from observation).



46. Section through main vaulted space (dimensions approximated through observation).

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that:

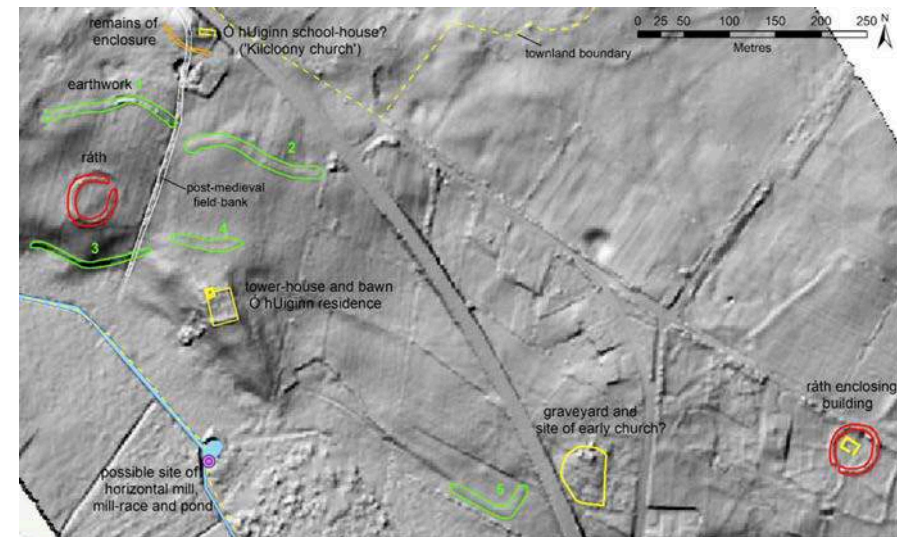
Cultural Significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the level of a place's cultural significance. *Archaeological, Historical, Architectural, Social and Artistic* interest categories will be used to assess the significance of Kilcloony Castle, near Milltown, Co Galway.

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Standing archaeology at Kilcloony Castle includes the lower levels of a tower house; the archaeological remains of its bawn and a courtyard building; a 'church' that may relate to the bardic school; and a nearby burial ground. Also identified are earlier settlements in the forms of rath and caiseal, along with a possible horizontal mill.

LiDAR analysis carried out by Dr Noel McCarthy and Professor Elizabeth FitzPatrick identify a medieval settlement within a wider cultural landscape of the Uí hUiginn learned family.



47. LiDAR analysis by N. Mc Carthy of Kilcloony townland showing principal features. (FitzPatrick 2019).

While there are six schools listed in the National Monuments Service database for Co Galway, these are post-1700 in date. A bardic school at Kilcloony is not yet included as a recorded monument and would be the only known example in the county and part of a select group nationally.

Bardic schools and their settings in several locations around the country form the subject of recent specialist academic research, and Kilcloony has the potential to contribute further to our understanding of this important aspect of our cultural heritage. Further research and testing will be necessary to identify the most likely site of a bardic school at Kilcloony.

5.2 HISTORICAL INTEREST

Bardic poets left a valuable resource for researchers in a wide range of subjects on Gaelic culture in the late-Medieval period. Their poems contain insights into Irish society and historic events not found elsewhere.

Learned families belonged to wide networks of patronage, the Uí hUiginn clan being prominent in Gaelic society and culture in Connacht over many generations.

Associated with the bardic schools were the Brehon law schools of juristic families such as the Mac Aodhagáin at Park Castle, 17km to the east of Kilcloony and Duniry, to the south of the county close to Tynagh.

Among the Uí hUiginn learned family, who had a base at Kilcloony, were a number of renowned poets over several generations from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries in Connacht. Other branches of the family were based in Co Sligo and Co Mayo.

The bardic schools were the precursors to the *hedge schools* of the early modern period; providing education as well as passing on traditions prior to state-funded education being provided to all in the nineteenth century.

5.3 ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

The bardic school at Kilcloony forms part of small a group with sites associated with the bardic schools, setting it apart from other tower houses and buildings surviving from this period.

Recent research suggests that schools took the form of early churches with an east-west orientation in common. Bardic schools are associated with - Kilbarron Castle in Co Donegal; Finavarra Castle in Co Clare; Dromnea in Co Cork; Church Island on Lough Gill.

What survives of the tower house conforms closely to the typology as found in North Galway in terms of scale, arrangement of the rooms and construction detail. Its advanced state of decay, albeit with its ground floor rooms surviving, will be an interesting case study should funding be made available for its conservation.

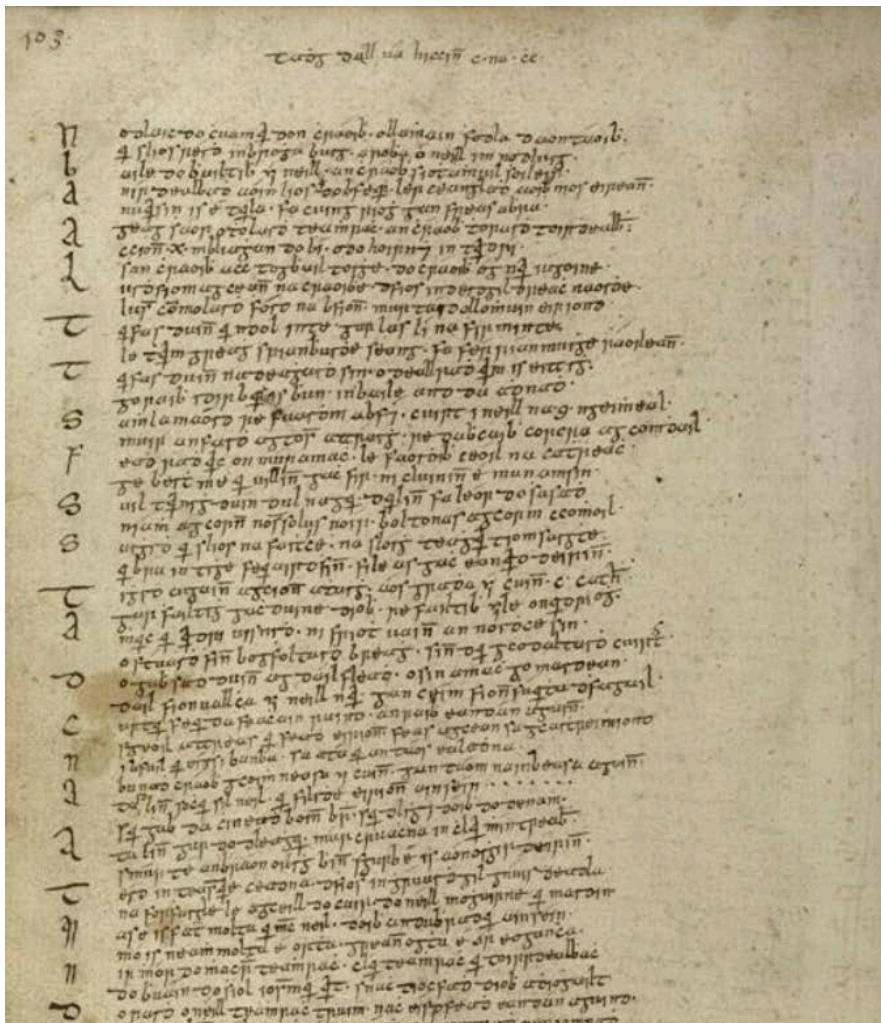
Nearby tower houses include the impressive Jennings's Castle at Castlegrove, a national monument; and Fartamore, a recorded monument in an advanced state of ruination.

5.4 SOCIAL INTEREST

The important role of the bard in Irish society under Brehon law during the Gaelic Lordship during the late-Medieval period is well understood. The learned families were held in high esteem, which was attached to the clan as well as the heads of family or *ollamh*.

They formed wide networks of kinship and knowledge sharing where poets would travel to learn their profession or art from *ollamh* around the country.

The survival of their poems provides an insight into the intangible heritage of the bardic schools, as well as society and day-to-day life during the Gaelic Lordship.



48. Extract from a manuscript copy of a poem by Tadhg Dall O'hUiginn (RIA).

5.5 ARTISTIC INTEREST

From their base at Kilcloony, the Uí hUiginn learned family made important contributions to the corpus of late-Medieval bardic poetry in Ireland.

Approximately two thousand bardic poems have survived to the present; work carried out by Dr Katherine Simms and colleagues have contributed to a wider understanding of their context; meaning; and artistic value.

5.6 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Kilcloony Castle is one of approximately 3,000 tower houses built in Ireland between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. As only its lowest levels have survived, Kilcloony could not be considered to be representative of the built heritage of tower houses in North Galway. Its special significance is undoubtedly its connection with the Uí hUiginn Bardic School along with its surrounding medieval landscape with views out over the surrounding countryside. The archaeological heritage at Kilcloony is a palimpsest of the historic development of the townland and parish from the medieval to the early modern period.

There are few known surviving bardic school sites surviving in Ireland, making Kilcloony potentially a site of national interest. Should this attribution to a bardic school strengthen through further investigation, Kilcloony Castle and its medieval settlement landscape would be worthy of consideration for statutory protection as a national monument.

6.0 DEFINING ISSUES & ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

6.1 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

Historic built fabric and wildlife to the tower house and its surrounds are given protection under the following legislation:

- National Monuments Acts, 1930–2004, and in particular the Record of Monuments & Places, established under Section 12 of the 1994 Act.
- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC)
- Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)

6.1.1 NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACTS 1930-2004

Statutory protection is afforded by the Sites & Monuments Records. Monuments included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) prepared by each local authority, or the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) prepared by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, are referred to as recorded monuments and are protected under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. All works proposed for the monument need to be notified to the National Monuments Service at least two months in advance, as required under Section 12 (3) of the Act. The SMR references include recommendations for certain sites of interest to be included in the next edition of the RMP, if they have not been already included. Local authorities can issue a report to the Department of Housing,

Local Government & Heritage so that they can assess whether the monument should be classified as a National Monument.

A monument is defined in Section 2 of the Act as:

'any artificial or partly artificial building, structure, or erection whether above or below the surface of the ground and whether affixed or not affixed to the ground and any cave, stone, or other natural product whether forming part of or attached to or not attached to the ground which has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which .. appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position and any prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, but does not include any building which is for the time being habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes'

The castle site has three recorded monuments; listed as; GA016-062001- Castle – tower house; GA016-062002- Field system; GA016-062003- Building; GA016-062005- Bawn; GA016-062006- Building; GA016-062007- Building. A now redundant record (GA016-066-) 140m to the south relates to the possible location of a horizontal mill. About 150 metres to the northwest is a rath, 57m in diameter. To the north, 280m away along the current N7, is a ruin (GA016-061-) recorded as a church on the OS maps and SMR, but that Prof. Elizabeth FitzPatrick proposes may be the bardic school. Immediately to the south of the church/ school is a designed landscape feature (GA016-061001-), a low curving rocky bank.



49. Detail of Fóggra notice on castle.

It should be noted that a Fóggra or notice is set low down on the eastern corner of the tower house on a steel frame referring to the tower as being a 'National Monument in State Care'. However, it is not included on the list of National Monuments in State Care for County Galway, issued in 2009. In all, twenty-five recorded monuments are located within 700m of the tower house at Kilcloony. Descriptions of the monuments derived from the published *Archaeological Inventory of County Galway* are included in Appendix

1. All but two of the monuments are

located within the townland and indicate settlement in the form of ringforts, field systems, religious sites and earthworks which surround the tower house and bawn features.

6.1.2 WILDLIFE PROTECTION

The site is within 200m from the Lough Corrib SAC (Site Code 000297), on pastoral farmland that predominates to the east of the lake. The stream to the east of the castle that eventually flows into the Clare river about two kilometres to the west and the principal river feeding Lough Corrib. The SAC includes the stream along with a small woodland to the southeast of the castle. As noted in the Natura 2000 statement *Lough Corrib is one the*

best examples of a large lacustrine catchment system in Ireland, with a range of habitats and species still well represented. These include 15 habitats which are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive, six of which are priority habitats, and nine species which are listed on Annex II. The lake is also internationally important for birds and is designated as a Special Protection Area.

Sheltered ruins such as Kilcloony Castle have potential as bat roosts, and this should be determined by bat surveys prior to work being put in hand. Although managed as pasture, wild or underused land in this area could support some of the species identified in the SAC. SACs are prime wildlife conservation areas, considered to be important in a European and Irish context. The legal basis on which SACs are selected and designated is the EU Habitats Directive, transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), as amended. In the interest of nature conservation, any proposed development works within the designated boundary of an SAC must be accompanied by an environmental impact assessment report, prepared by a suitably qualified professional.



50. Detail of biofilm to alcove.

6.2 OWNERSHIP & USE

Ownership and leases are an important consideration for any site of historic significance. The castle, bawn and surrounding fields are owned by the Melia family, and managed as grazing land for cattle and horses. Any proposals for conservation repair work, improved access and security or initiatives for the interpretation of the site would be in partnership with the owners as one of the principal stakeholders. It is important that the issues relating to the castle are addressed appropriately in terms of rights and responsibilities of all parties, collaborating in the best interest of the monument.

One of the primary concerns of the owner is the issue of the condition of the tower house, and the risk posed to livestock who seek shelter inside the structure during inclement weather. The robbed-out quoins and mortar loss has destabilized the facing stone, which has almost completely fallen away to the north and east sides. Internally, the hole in the stone vault as well as the ruined walls means that there is a risk of falling masonry or partial collapse.

As part of this plan, consideration is given to the securing of the bawn site as well as the openings into the tower. At present, unauthorized access by members of the public engaging in anti-social behaviour is not a significant issue. This may change as the increased profile and understanding of the significance of the castle, as well as improved accessibility means that visitors may increase.



51. View of tower house and livestock from east.

6.3 BUILT HERITAGE

Of most concern for the conservation of the tower house is its advanced state of decay, having been reduced to approximately a third of its former height. While much of the structure we see today would likely survive for an indefinite period, the very gradual process of its decay has been accelerated by theft in earlier times will continue unless interventions are proposed to arrest this decline in the form of works to weather and stabilize the structure in close to its present state. The corners of the castle have been lost to theft to the extent that the facing stones have fallen away. Stonework joints are extensively washed out, allowing rainwater in behind

the stones causing them to become detached from the mortared wall core. Encroaching ivy, shrubs and saplings will need to be addressed as a matter of urgency to prevent further losses.

6.4 ACCESS & SETTINGS

The castle is accessed via a field gate along a busy national route, the N17. Directly opposite is a short section of the former N17 prior to its realignment in this vicinity in the 1990s. This is now a safer place to park when accessing the monument, as the use of the hard shoulder is not permitted unless in an emergency. This section of road has been cut off by the new thoroughfare leaving two dead-ends in the vicinity, which could be used for parking vehicles wishing to access the castle site. However, it should be noted that the road crossing remains a significant risk being a National Route designation.

Once inside the gate, the ground slopes steeply down towards the stream at the base of the rise. The castle is approximately 200m from the gate, to the southwest and is immediately visible at the gate, if difficult to observe from the road due to the boundary wall unless you are already familiar with its location. Although well-drained, the ground on the approach to the castle is best suited for track-vehicles or tractors outside of dry periods.

Given its ruined state, it is also a dangerous structure to access without taking precautions to avoid unstable areas, many of which may be concealed or difficult to identify from the ground. The castle has now been secured with temporary fencing and barricades placed directly into its openings (with no fixings), but a more permanent solution is required.



52. Detail of exposed and unstable floor and walls over entrance.

6.5 HEALTH & SAFETY

The safety and health of the owners, livestock and visitors to the castle is to be considered as part of any future programme of conservation works. Risks include falling masonry or collapse; uneven ground; boggy ground; unguarded drops; confined spaces; livestock and farming practices. As soon as funding permits, steps should be taken to properly secure and make safe the site; the bawn and the tower house itself. These works should not be to the detriment of the built or natural heritage.

6.6 INTERPRETATION

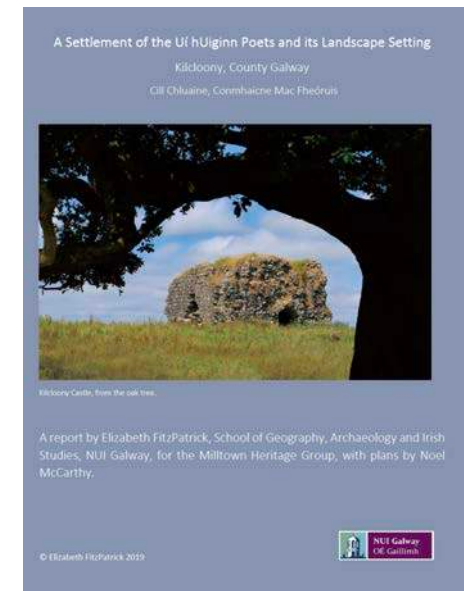
The distinguishing feature of Kilcloony Castle is its association with a bardic school from the sixteenth century. While the advanced ruination of the tower is regrettable and a challenge to its conservation, it nonetheless represents valuable cultural heritage in terms of the output of the bardic school and the Uí hUiginn learned family that has survived through the centuries.

In recent years, the Milltown Heritage Group have undertaken a number of excellent initiatives to increase awareness and understanding of the cultural heritage of Kilcloony. The commissioning of a research paper prepared by Prof. Elizabeth FitzPatrick of NUIG; the production of a 3-D reconstruction of the castle by RealSim; the commissioning of this report in association with GCC with the support of funding from the Community Monuments Fund (CMF) administered by the National Monuments Service.

However, the vulnerable condition of the tower house, and its setting in farmland, makes it unsafe and inaccessible for many visitors, thereby placing a limit on the appreciation of the cultural heritage to local community groups, specialist or academic interest.

6.7 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TESTING

In April 1997 Richard Crumlish monitored the removal of topsoil along a section of the N17 (License 97E0123). The works extended to within 1.8m of the north-east corner of Kilcloony church (GA016:061) and adjacent to a gatelodge (GA016:065), and measured 128m in length and 4-13m in width. The topsoil was stripped using a mechanical digger. The stratigraphy encountered consisted of topsoil above natural subsoil. Adjacent to the gatelodge at the north-west end of the section a thin layer of pebbles was visible in the topsoil, probably the remains of its forecourt. (www.excavations.ie, 1997:211).



53. Cover of NUIG report.



54. Detail of surviving defensive features at main door.

6.8 VULNERABILITIES & THREATS

Further to the issues outlined above, the vulnerability of the cultural heritage can be summarised as set out below:

- Interventions will be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise what survives of the tower house. This work needs to be informed by current best practice, be reversible and should not detract from the setting of the monument or its cultural heritage.
- The perilous condition of the structure will require urgent works in order to prevent further collapse and loss, which is putting livestock and visitors to the castle at risk.
- At present, the tower house is unsafe to access or maintain, risking further deterioration regardless of how well conserved the structure may be in the medium term.
- It is important to avoid the over-restoration of the ruin, leading to a loss of historic character.
- Further evidence will be required, in the form of strategic testing, to identify the location of the bardic school, and to fully understand the role of the tower house and bawn, as well as the wider settlement landscape, of the Uí hUiginn base at Kilcloony.
- Initiatives undertaken by Milltown Heritage Group in partnership with the Melia family as owners of the castle should be safeguarded by achieving tangible objectives such as addressing issues of farm and public safety; access and preservation of ruins.
- Interpretation of the ruins and the cultural heritage of the bardic school should be presented at Kilcloony Castle, while conserving what has survived making it a safe and engaging place to visit.

7.0 CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

7.1 APPROACH & OBJECTIVES

All conservation works are guided by the principle of minimum intervention as set out in the Burra Charter – *or as little as possible, but as much as is necessary*. The conservation objectives for Kilcloony Castle and its associated features that may have survived can be summarised as follows:

- to provide guidance on best conservation practice for the preservation of the built heritage; the ruined tower house, its bawn and outbuildings, and all associated earthworks and buried archaeology
- to provide for the effective management of the flora and fauna, including timely treatment of invasive species, and assessment of the impact of the natural heritage on the cultural heritage to find the correct balance
- to set out an approach as to how to improve access to the castle to locals and visitors, as well as the presentation of its rich cultural heritage
- to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the bardic school and its setting, including its several phases
- identify key messages and themes to be communicated to visitors

- ensure that interpretations of the built and cultural heritage of the bardic school are well-researched and engaging
- to provide for the use of the settings of the tower house as a cultural, amenity and educational resource
- ensure that Kilcloony Castle is accessible to as many people as possible, but not to the detriment of its built heritage or to the safety and health of the public
- to maintain the ruin, seeking capital funding for repairs and the enhancement of its setting
- to promote the castle and bardic school as a heritage asset for Milltown and North Galway, making links and forming networks with other heritage sites in the region and bardic schools elsewhere on the island of Ireland and in Scotland
- to make the case for Kilcloony Castle to be taken under the care of the state and be declared a National Monument.

7.2 POLICIES

7.2.1 PROTECTION OF BUILT HERITAGE

Ensure the protection of the built heritage through its maintenance and repair and the preservation and improvement of its settings. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency (physical stability, public safety), and informed by regular inspection and expert advice. The necessary

conservation works to the tower house should commence as soon as funding allows. It should be noted that the monument should be preserved in its current ruinous state. As a ruin, it has retained cultural value as an authentic historic fabric, in its original setting. Over-restoration should be avoided, leading to a loss of historic character.

7.2.2 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (BURIED)

Non-intrusive methods of archaeological investigation should predominate, combined with traditional excavation only where justified by a comprehensive research and best conservation practice. A research framework should be created and piecemeal impacts to the subterranean archaeology are to be avoided. The LiDAR survey has identified features of interest, and any proposed excavation should have a strong rationale and be designed to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of Kilcloony and its setting.

7.2.3 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (BURIED)

The sub-surface archaeology should be disturbed as little as possible so that it can be preserved intact. Provide physical protection where appropriate.

7.2.4 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (STANDING)

As a recorded monument, the remains of the tower house, the bawn and the school should be conserved by either implementing urgent programmes of repair and maintenance, or with the continued protection of their settings. The opportunity should be taken during the works to record and try to understand the phasing of the buildings. Ensure that any

actions, or any other works proposed in the vicinity of the monument, do not cause damage to the standing archaeology.

7.2.5 PROTECTION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Carry out a habitat study for the bardic school setting, with an aim to increase species diversity. Avoid the use of herbicides, seeking to maintain the planting on a seasonal rather than a weekly/monthly basis.

7.2.6 REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

Provide regular on-going maintenance as the most effective way to preserve historic structures and landscapes. Repairs to historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials of matching quality. Conservation should proceed to an overall strategy for repair and maintenance of built and natural heritage.

7.2.7 URGENT WORKS

The condition of the exposed floor vault is of most concern. Careful sequencing of specialist repair works will be required to ensure that the risks to public safety, and preservation of the monument are addressed.

The facing stone is at risk of continue to fall away unless immediate action is taken to support the surviving quoins, and to re-point and weather the joints. This will likely necessitate replacing robbed out quoins with new dressed stone due to the extent of losses.



55. Detail of ogee window over entrance door.

7.2.8 INTERVENTION

Where interventions are found to be necessary to conserve a structure, or to improve access, they are to be designed to the highest conservation standards and should not detract from the interpretation of the heritage.

7.2.9 USE

The lands that surround the castle and its bawn should continue to be used for farm practices such as grazing of livestock. Activities such as tillage or forestry have the potential to damage archaeological material and should be avoided close to the monuments.

7.2.10 REVERSIBILITY

As a general principle, interventions should be reversible, so that a structure or site can be returned to its former state where possible. In the context of Kilcloony Castle, authentic historic fabric on the site is represented by the standing and buried remains of the tower house and its bawn as well as the putative remains of the bardic school, wherever they may be identified in time.

7.2.11 EXPERT ADVICE & SKILLS

Continue to ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (specialist conservators, conservation architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced artisans and tradesmen.

7.2.12 OWNERSHIP

Consider the rights of the Melia family as private owners as regards the access, conservation and presentation of the archaeological heritage, and standing remains. Cooperation and understanding between the owners and authorities will be necessary for the conservation of the bardic school.

7.2.13 CONSULTATION

Consultation with the Melia family as owners should continue whenever any initiative; temporary or permanent, is being considered for Kilcloony Castle.

Consultation with the wider group of stakeholders, including state bodies and academics, should also be sought where particular specialisms such as bardic schools apply.

7.2.14 SETTINGS & KEY VIEWS

Protect and enhance the settings of the built heritage including views toward the tower house along the N17.

7.2.15 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

In time, the N17 route may be subject to upgrades which may have an impact on the setting of the monument. It is important that developments that encroach or impact on the setting of the monument are thoroughly assessed and any necessary mitigation implemented.

Such developments may be an opportunity to improve accessibility and visibility of the monument, for which early, positive and constructive engagement will be necessary.

7.2.16 ENCROACHMENT & INVASIVE SPECIES

Being ruinous, Kilcloony Castle is vulnerable to vegetative encroachment. Fortunately, ivy is not an issue, and this can cause extensive damage to structures if not treated and removed promptly. At present, the grassy layer on its exposed top serves to inhibit the growth of more damaging shrubs and saplings to an extent but is not entirely maintenance free.

Monitoring and treatment should be undertaken, using best practice by avoiding the use of herbicides and reducing potential impacts on the environment, being close to a Special Area of Conservation, as well as the built heritage.

7.2.17 CLIMATE CHANGE

Review this plan in relation to climate change where more frequent and extreme weather events, along with changes in average temperatures and precipitation can accelerate the rate of decay of the monument requiring additional intervention and protection measures.

7.2.18 CONSERVATION PLAN REVIEW

Review this Plan at agreed intervals to benchmark progress in implementation, re-assess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies. This overview reduces the risk of cumulative impacts due to incremental change without an agreed plan.

7.2.19 LICENSING & APPROVALS

Any archaeological investigation will 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.

7.2.20 INSPECTIONS

Set in place procedures for on-going monitoring of the condition of the tower house to ensure its long-term preservation.

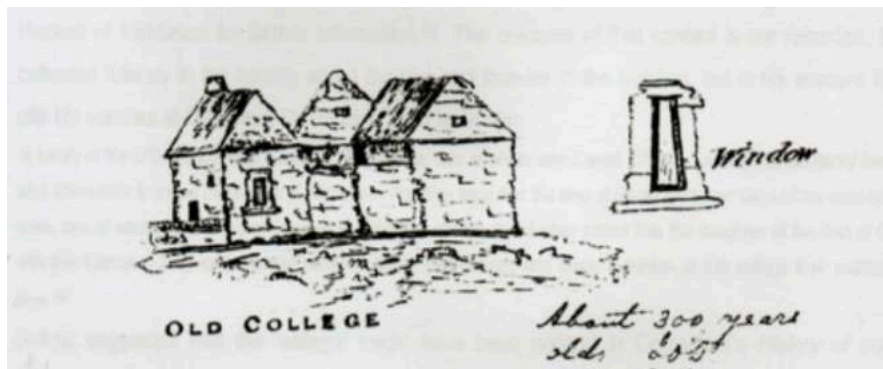
7.2.21 DEPTH IN TIME

Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the built and cultural heritage of the bardic school at Kilcloony requires that all the aspects that contribute to its cultural significance be valued.

7.2.22 RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Ensure that on-site archaeological and historical research continues to be governed by an approved research strategy that seeks to answer specific questions, using non-invasive methodologies followed by targeted excavation, when opportunities and resources allow.

Ensure that the dissemination of research findings, involving the community where possible, continues to be made accessible to the public. In due course, the precise location of the bardic school should be explored.



56. Sketch from 1845 of O'Daly bardic school in Dromnea included in Eachtra report.

7.2.23 WIDER ASSOCIATIONS

Historic places should not be considered in isolation, but rather as parts of a wider cultural landscape, where each element relates to the other. The bardic school at Kilcloony and its associated structures should be conserved as a cultural landscape for the benefit of the public, respecting its status as one of the few surviving schools of this period on the island.

7.2.24 AUTHENTICITY

Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the built heritage is communicated to the general public. This is particularly important for the bardic school, as the written literature and the built heritage both represent a rich cultural heritage whose intangible aspects are a subject of continued study and research through disparate sources.

7.2.25 PUBLIC SAFETY

Prioritise public safety due to the lack of a pedestrian crossing, carparking or set down area, the condition of the ruined tower house and the uneven ground conditions on its approach. Access to the tower house and its immediate setting will need to continue to be restricted until such time as these issues are addressed.

7.2.26 FARMING PRACTICES & ANIMAL WELFARE

The survival of the sub-surface archaeology at Kilcloony Castle relies on appropriate and sympathetic farming practices. It is also important to ensure that the safety and welfare of livestock is maintained by removing risks posed by the condition of the tower house and in devising security or

access improvements. The continued use of the fields adjacent to the tower house for pasture presents no significant immediate threat to the sub-surface archaeology and should continue.

7.2.27 LEAVE NO TRACE

Visitors to Kilcloony Castle are to be informed of their shared responsibility for its conservation by avoiding activities or behaviour that put it at risk. Members of the public entering the site should behave responsibly - making sure to close farm gates; avoid bringing dogs or disturbing livestock; and taking care not to damage the land or enclosures.



57. View along N17 and signpost opposite tower house.

7.2.28 ACCESS TO NATURAL & LANDSCAPE HERITAGE

Should part of the lands that surround the castle be managed less intensively in order to improve access, or ensure the welfare of livestock, these areas should encourage biodiversity, compatible with its proximity to

the Lough Corrib SAC. Suitable signage should be erected to inform visitors of the initiative, and the natural heritage that might be encountered.

7.2.29 INTERPRETIVE STRATEGY

Devise an interpretative strategy to engage visitors so that they can more meaningfully interpret the cultural heritage of the site, bardic poetry and the role of bards in Irish society in the late-Medieval period. Installations should be well-designed and located so as not to detract from their setting.

7.2.30 FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING

Ensure that the presentation of the cultural heritage of the bardic school is aimed at as broad an audience as possible.

7.2.31 ON-GOING INTERPRETATION

As knowledge and understanding of the bardic school at Kilcloony grows and changes through further research and investigations, ensure that interpretation media are updated accordingly.

7.2.32 SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure that all events and initiatives in relation to the cultural and natural heritage of the bardic school are carried out using sustainable practices.

7.2.33 OUTREACH & PARTICIPATION

Support and promote initiatives that provide accessible resources for those undertaking the study of Gaelic society and culture in the late-Medieval period to research remotely or from abroad. Encourage local schools to use the bardic school as a teaching resource. Field trips could be managed by appointment and would have relevance to history, civics, and literature.

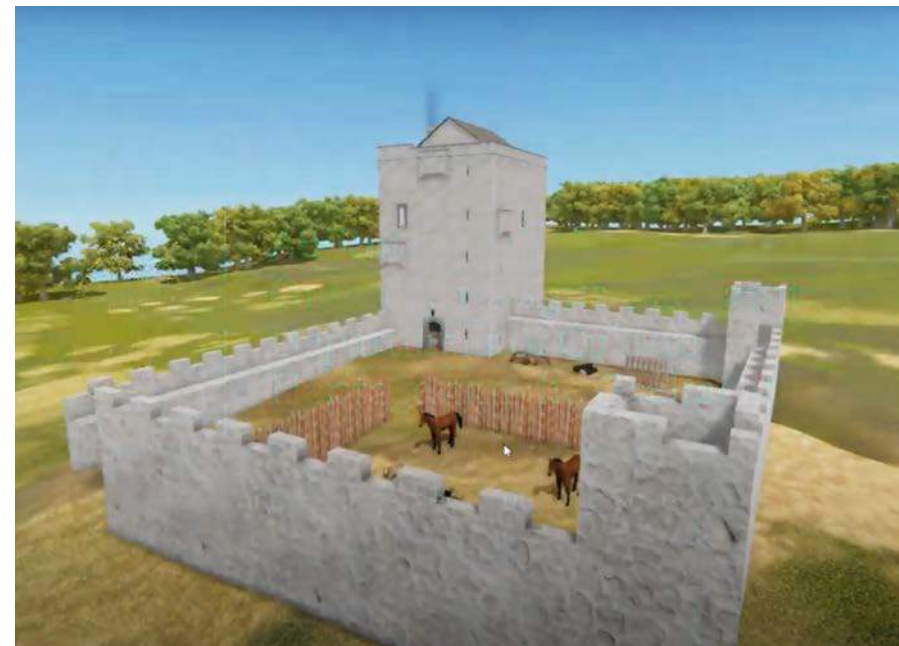
8.0 CONSERVATION & ACCESS STRATEGIES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Kilcloony Castle, common with numerous other tower houses, is in a ruinous condition and located on private farmland. Although there appears to have been some recognition of its special interest in the form of the Fógra notice and pencil post sign erected as part of the roadworks in the 1990s, it has remained in much the same ruinous condition for at least one hundred years. Over recent years, a number of initiatives have been undertaken by Milltown Heritage Group;

- lecture on Gaelic learned families by Prof. Elizabeth FitzPatrick as part of Heritage Week 2018
- preparation of a report by Prof. Elizabeth FitzPatrick on Kilcloony Castle - *A settlement of the Uí hUiginn Poets and its Landscape Setting* (2019)
- commissioning of a 3-D virtual model with a reconstruction of the tower house and bawn, along with a drone survey of the structure

These initiatives were successful in furthering research and knowledge of the bardic school at Kilcloony, which helps to make the case for funding for its conservation. Works to the historic fabric of the tower house are essential to public safety and that of livestock. While its associated cultural heritage in the form of bardic poetry is published and accessible, the setting and form of the tower house and site of the school itself is at risk.



58. Screen shot of Virtual model of tower house and bawn by RealSim for MHG.

8.2 AUDIENCES

The conservation of a complex site involves input from different sources, each with their particular expertise or areas of responsibility. These stakeholders are the intended audience of the Conservation Plan. Their understanding and adoption of the conservation and interpretation policies are crucial to the preservation of Kilcloony Castle and its setting as a place of cultural significance for the benefit of the whole community.

8.2.1 STATE BODIES

The National Monuments Service in the DHLGH oversees the statutory protection of recorded monuments. GCC provide advice and guidance to community groups. Both provide funding for their maintenance and repair through various schemes, most recently the Community Monuments Fund.

8.2.2 OWNERS

It is essential that the Melia family as the owners of the tower house are consulted and advised as to their rights and obligations; while also communicating knowledge gained through research and testing on their lands to which they have a special connection. They could have a valuable role in providing access and interpretation of the site.

8.2.3 LOCAL COMMUNITY

The MHG have made progress improving understanding and appreciation of the bardic school and tower house among the local community. These initiatives will enhance local pride in their cultural heritage.

8.2.4 VISITORS

Visitors to Ireland come with many different motivations and interests. Bardic schools were succeeded by the hedge schools during penal times, and in the modern period Irish literature is renowned worldwide with many visitors to Ireland having an interest in the works of Swift, Yeats and Joyce. Visitors with an interest in Irish literature will gain insights at Kilcloony not available at many other locations elsewhere.

8.2.5 SCHOOLS/ UNIVERSITIES

The best way to foster interest and appreciation of the cultural heritage among the local community is to include education programmes for schools. It would be a valuable teaching aid for students in subjects such as archaeology; music; poetry; architecture; as well as tourism and heritage protection; flora and fauna.

8.2.6 CULTURAL HERITAGE & HISTORICAL GROUPS

Local groups with interest in heritage and culture, or groups with specialist interest, should continue to be encouraged to engage with the cultural heritage that the bardic school and tower house represents and communicate this to both their neighbours and visitors.

8.3 KEY MESSAGES/ THEMES

8.3.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Further research is necessary to understand the historic development of Kilcloony and its bardic school in the late-Medieval period. It is important that existing knowledge is accurately conveyed and further research questions outlined and presented in ways that make visits to the site more vivid. Future licenced archaeological testing may assist in dating sub-surface structures which will allow a more complete story to be told.

At sites such as Kilcloony, a rich story of Irish society in the late-Medieval period can be told. The surviving ruins of the tower house, its bawn, the 'church' and earthworks also provide a *sense of place* and *depth in time* that can create memorable encounters for locals and visitors.



59. High level inspection of tower house underway in November 2020..

8.3.3 CONSERVATION & MAINTENANCE

A historic ruin in an advanced state of decay can seem like an insurmountable challenge to a local community group that relies on voluntary contributions and fundraising. In 2020, MHG with the assistance of GCC have temporarily barricaded the openings into the castle to allay the immediate concerns of the Melia family in relation to the welfare of their livestock. There is a risk at Kilcloony of *over-restoration*, where historic character is obscured by heavy-handed repairs and re-construction.

Building on the MHG initiatives, with the assistance of GCC and DHLGH, the next task should be the conservation of the monument. Its facing stone and floor vaults are in a vulnerable state, and may require several phases of specialist conservation works. Proceeding in steps, rather than waiting for larger capital grants, demonstrates steady progress and commitment. Ideally, the tower house and its setting should be brought to a state where the MHG and local volunteers can collaborate with the Melia family to maintain the site safely and without the necessity of capital investment.

8.4 CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.4.1 STATUTORY PROTECTION

Of the approximately two hundred tower houses recorded to have been built in Co Galway, only about 5% are National Monuments in State Care. All of these are much better preserved than Kilcloony and are either in state ownership or guardianship where there is a formal agreement for its maintenance and repair with the owner. The presence of a Fógra notice would seem to indicate that the process of taking the monument into the care or guardianship of the State was in consideration in the past. Given the rich cultural heritage that Kilcloony bardic school represents strengthens the case for its designation as a National Monument due to its rarity. Using this plan and recent research by NUIG, an application should be made to the National Monument Services of the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, supported by MHG and GCC.

← → ↻ 🔒 bardic.celt.dias.ie

Search the Database

*Hint: to find words beginning "mac" use mac**

First Line:	<input type="text"/>	Area:	0. Any 1. Unknown 2. Ulster 3. Connacht 4. Leinster
Motif:	<input type="text"/>		
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60. Screen shot of Irish Bardic Poetry Database.

8.4.2 IMPROVED LINKAGES

MHG host a useful website with information on Kilcloony Castle which presents their initiatives at the bardic school, giving it a wide audience. While a 'bardic school' could be considered of niche or academic interest, making connections to other sites and resources can enhance its profile. Trinity College Dublin and the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies host the Irish Bardic Poetry Database <https://bardic.celt.dias.ie/> where research can be undertaken into bardic poetry.

MHG should seek to collaborate with other groups, such as the Muintir Bháire Community Council who have researched the O'Daly Bardic School in Dromnea, West Cork. Closer is Finavarra in North Clare, with their own connections to an Ó Dálaigh bardic school, with a monument to the famous poet, Donncha Mór Ó Dálaigh of the thirteenth century. As the project at Kilcloony progresses, contacts to institutions and resources should be made to ensure that their information on the monument is up-to-date.

8.4.3 COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING

Increasing knowledge and understanding of the bardic school and its historic context among the local community will assist in its preservation. MHG have already made great progress in this respect, and engagement with the wider community should continue.

8.4.4 INTERPRETATIVE MEDIA

While there remain research questions as to the precise setting of this school, the surviving vaulted chamber is an ideal location to present both the tangible cultural heritage of the tower house, its setting and the surviving songs and poems produced by the Uí hUiginn bardic school; along with the now-lost intangible cultural heritage of the daily lives, societal roles and oral tradition or *seanchas* of a Gaelic learned family over several generations.

Being situated close to a major road, improves access for potential visitors. If properly conserved and its setting developed to improve access, it is possible that the ruin could be used as a setting for events, either using the bawn for outdoor activities or the vaulted chamber for more intimate performances, making the most of the acoustics of the space.

8.5 CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Kilcloony Castle requires urgent repair in order to arrest its continued erosion, exacerbated by historical robbing out of its finely dressed facing stone and carved stone windows and doorways. While at an advanced state of ruination, urgent action to consolidate its structure and improve weathering of the stonework should allow it to be conserved in close to its current state.

Fortunately, the walls of the tower appear to have been thoroughly mortared, to the extent that the loss of the facing stone has not led to immediate destabilisation. However, the remaining facing stone is at risk, not least due to the loss of the quoins at low level leaving large dressed stones with distinctive rounded arrises at immediate risk of collapse.

The first-floor vault has long been exposed to the elements, and now have a thick covering of grassy turf. While this insulates the wickerwork vault below, a hole has formed in the centre of the vault, and the gable walls to either end have become so thin due to gradual loss due to erosion that voids have opened up at high level.

We would recommend that a laser scan survey be carried out to the castle in the first instance. This would allow the eroded structure to be analysed, to determine areas where there is such a significant loss as to warrant rebuilding and consolidation. The sketch drawings prepared for this plan are based on site measurements and observations, but would not have the required level of accuracy to make the final assessment on the level of

intervention required to ensure the structural stability of these vulnerable areas.

The proper sequence of works will be devised to allow the works to proceed safely and in order to minimise the risk of accidental damage to the monument. No works can proceed to the second floor / 'roof' vault without installing props, carefully designed to avoid damaging the wickerwork centring.

A summary of the necessary repairs and works is as follows:

- Propping of the interior vaults to allow access to the first and second floor levels.
- Consolidation of side gables where walls have thinned to the extent that the vault has poor supports.
- Installation of shuttering to hole to first floor vault.
- Removal of grassy and soil build up to first and second floor levels to allow the top of the vault to be assessed.
- Backfilling of vault spandrel with rock where fill has been displaced.
- Consolidation of vaults with salvaged stone set in a hot lime mix gauged with NHL 3.5.
- Installation of lime mortar capping to vaults to seal and form layer to throw off rainwater. To be laid to fall over edges and gaps in surviving walls exposed by grass removal.

- Install soft capping using imported grassy turf (locally sourced) set on a clay/sand mix compacted onto the top of the flanching surfaces to the stone vault and wall heads to the first floor. Sections to be pinned into place and then folded over leaving 100mm overhang to sides.
- New dressed limestone quoins bedded in lime mortar to be set on a solid base to support the corners to the south and west walls.
- Rough racking and stone pinning of exposed wall core on the east and north sides. Stones left around the wall base and to the interior to be used for this purpose.
- Installation of new gate to south entrance door and grille to canted arch window to east side. Stainless steel gate framework to be used to tie wall across entrance to reduce risk of collapse.
- Consolidation of window jambs to robbed out openings to all sides. Grilles to be fitted to accessible openings (if required).

8.5.1 MAINTENANCE & REPAIR OF BUILT HERITAGE

- The structural stability and weathering of the tower house should take priority. In this way, the gradual process of decay is arrested, allowing this historic place to be maintained in perpetuity.
- The cultural heritage value of the castle would be enhanced by improving accessibility, in a way that respects the sensitivity of the site and the rights of the landowner.

- Emergency repairs to the floor vault and walls will be required to assist in their preservation as well as the security of the site and safety of the public. This work is to be carried out by conservation specialists.



61. View of Achill Field School in association with NUIG.

8.5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Geophysical survey techniques are constantly improving, and may well yield interesting data that will provide insights into the archaeological heritage. This might include obtaining more detail on the bawn enclosure and the most likely location for the bardic school, close to the tower or at the site of the 'church' closer to the road. The conservation works required to stabilize the existing tower house structure could be combined with

targeted archaeological testing - geophysical survey and radiocarbon dating that together will help tell the story of Kilcloony.

The Historic Environment Viewer of the National Monuments Service (www.archaeology.ie) records a possible further structure in the southern sector of the bawn, and a possible outer rectangular enclosure (NW-SE 26.5m NE-SW 23m) that extends off the southeast wall. Archaeological testing through the bawn and the grassed-over structure adjacent to the tower house may provide answer to the date and function of these features. A radiocarbon sample could be obtained from the wicker centering to the vaults, providing a more accurate date for the construction of the tower house. Targeted archaeological testing of the church remains should assist in establishing its function and confirm whether it is possible that it was once the school. From the map evidence, there is a path running from the church to the burial ground, leaving open the possibility that it was a place of worship, rather than a place of learning. The testing could take the format of a Summer Field School hosted by NUIG or licenced archaeologists.

8.6 ACCESS & SAFETY PROPOSALS

Kilcloony Castle and its setting also has the potential to contribute to the amenity of the area in a way that further enhances its cultural heritage, while respecting the archaeological sensitivity of the site and its use as farmland. As proposed by Prof. FitzPatrick, the burial ground, bardic school and tower house, along with the raths, should be considered together as a medieval settlement landscape. However, given that these features are spread out

across several hectares of farmland in multiple ownerships, with few upstanding remains, it is not proposed to make all the features accessible.

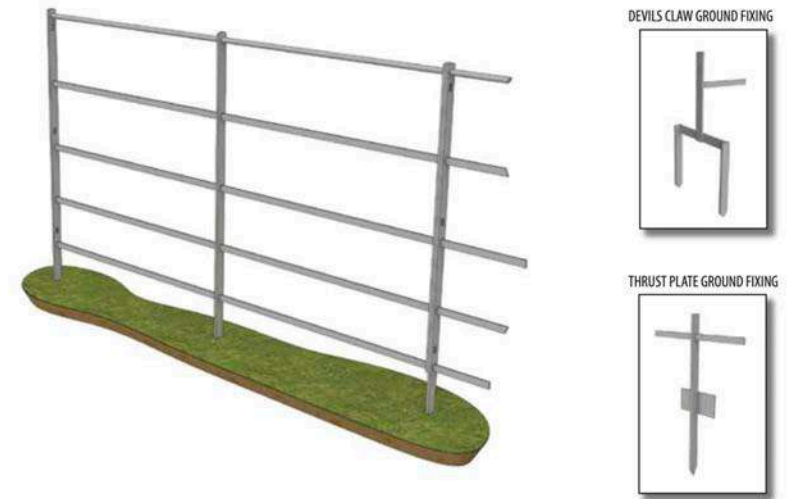
Enclosing the most sensitive areas with fencing will prevent damage to the archaeological heritage, while also making it safer for both visitors and livestock. Should the school site be identified, its enclosure along with the bawn and tower house may be desirable. Firstly, parking of vehicles should be provided nearby. If possible, spaces should be placed on the same side of the road as the tower house in accordance with the National Route designation of the N17 for entrances, set-backs and sightlines. This would have negligible impact on the built heritage of the site, the existing blockwork wall, gate and animal pen date to the 1990s.

A re-design of the field boundary along the roadside, using fencing for example, could allow clearer views towards the castle and create a 'cultural pit-stop' on the Atlantic Corridor route. Should the N17 be further upgraded, e.g. a dual carriageway or motorway in future, along with minimising impacts on the bardic school and tower, there may be an opportunity for improving access and presentation of the monument.

Should this location not be feasible, parking areas might be available to the other side of the road. A number of parcels of land left over from the road re-alignment could be suitable for use as landscaped parking spaces. This would involve a safe crossing point with traffic calming and controls, although these are not generally permitted on national routes outside of urban areas, the nearest being in Milltown. Another option might be a pedestrian bridge over the road or tunnel beneath, but these would be costly to design and implement.



62. Possible site layout showing options for parking and pathways.



63. Example of estate fencing with options for ground fixings.



64. Photomontage of possible display to present former scale of tower house.

A walkway, running along the east, and south of the existing field boundaries, would lead to the castle and then continue to the site of the Kilcloony Church/Bardic School (subject to further testing). This would be wide enough to allow for mowing by a tractor and be parallel to existing field boundaries to reduce the amount of useable farmland required. Should it be decided that there would be little of visual interest for visitors to encounter at the church site, it could be interpreted at the tower house with information boards, and the amount of new path and fencing reduced.

It is preferable that a mown path would be provided, with local drainage or surfacing provided to any soft or wet areas, especially on ground towards the bottom of the hill. Field gates would be installed to allow the passage of livestock, while also ensuring that the path is kept clear. The margin along the fence could be managed for biodiversity - wildflowers should be encouraged to proliferate; noxious weeds or invasive species to be removed. Management contracts with the owner are often put in place for similar historic sites, on a case-by-case basis.

A painted mild steel estate fence is proposed around the bawn and tower house features. This is a lightweight but effective barrier to the livestock that can follow the contours of the landscape, its traditional design being less obtrusive. If necessary, a 'devils claw' detail could be used to the base of the fencing posts, so that they would need less depth for stability. Estate fencing is preferable to pencil post fencing close to the monument due to its longevity requiring less disturbance or replacement. Also, pencil posts have a larger cross-sectional area than the blade-like posts of estate fencing, causing more damage to archaeological layers. They could be

utilised along the path outside of archaeologically sensitive areas, thereby reducing costs. Pre-development testing could identify the best locations and alignment for the fencing to reduce impacts on the archaeology while also ensuring that their visual impact on the setting of the tower house and its surroundings is also minimised.

As noted above, it is also proposed to install stainless steel grilles and gates to the tower house to inhibit unauthorised access. A considerable amount of consolidation and repair will be necessary prior to gates being installed, and due to erosion the large size of the openings would mean that these fittings will have a significant visual impact. These may be omitted if it is determined that the estate fencing is sufficient to prevent livestock entering the tower, or that the castle is safe for unguided access and unlikely to suffer vandalism.

Fencing and security grilles should be agreed in advance and may require archaeological testing in the areas that will encroach within the zone of notification for the tower house and bawn, ringfort and Kilcloony Church. Any works within the zone of notification require National monuments to be notified in writing at least 8 weeks in advance of commencement.

8.7 INTERPRETIVE PROPOSALS

Whether a bardic school is identified within the bawn or at the church, it is appropriate that those sites are protected in-situ, and the tower house utilised in interpret this cultural heritage. Initiatives to reconstruct the form of the school would be speculative and would detract from the authentic historic fabric that survives.

A permanent exhibit could be installed into the chamber using recent technological advances to both reduce the amount of impact on the built and archaeological heritage while enhancing the cultural experience. Instead of panels with images and texts, an aural and virtual experience could be curated using recorded performance, projection of images or video on the walls. Wi-fi links could allow the control equipment to be hosted remotely, batteries could be fed by discreet solar panels, speakers could also be powered by batteries, small in size and difficult to notice. Most visitors will have access to a smartphone, allowing for all interpretive material to be web- or app-based, removing the necessity for any permanent installations within the tower house.

On the approach to the tower, the prospect framed by an oak tree could be enhanced by the installation of a 'window' on the past in the form of a simple glass panel, which from its location is overlaid with a reconstruction of the tower to give the viewer a sense of its former scale and silhouette, and that of the bawn. This would be located in such a way as to not detract from the view of the tower in its current, authentic, state.

8.8 PROPOSED PHASING

In order to priority, we would propose the following phasing:

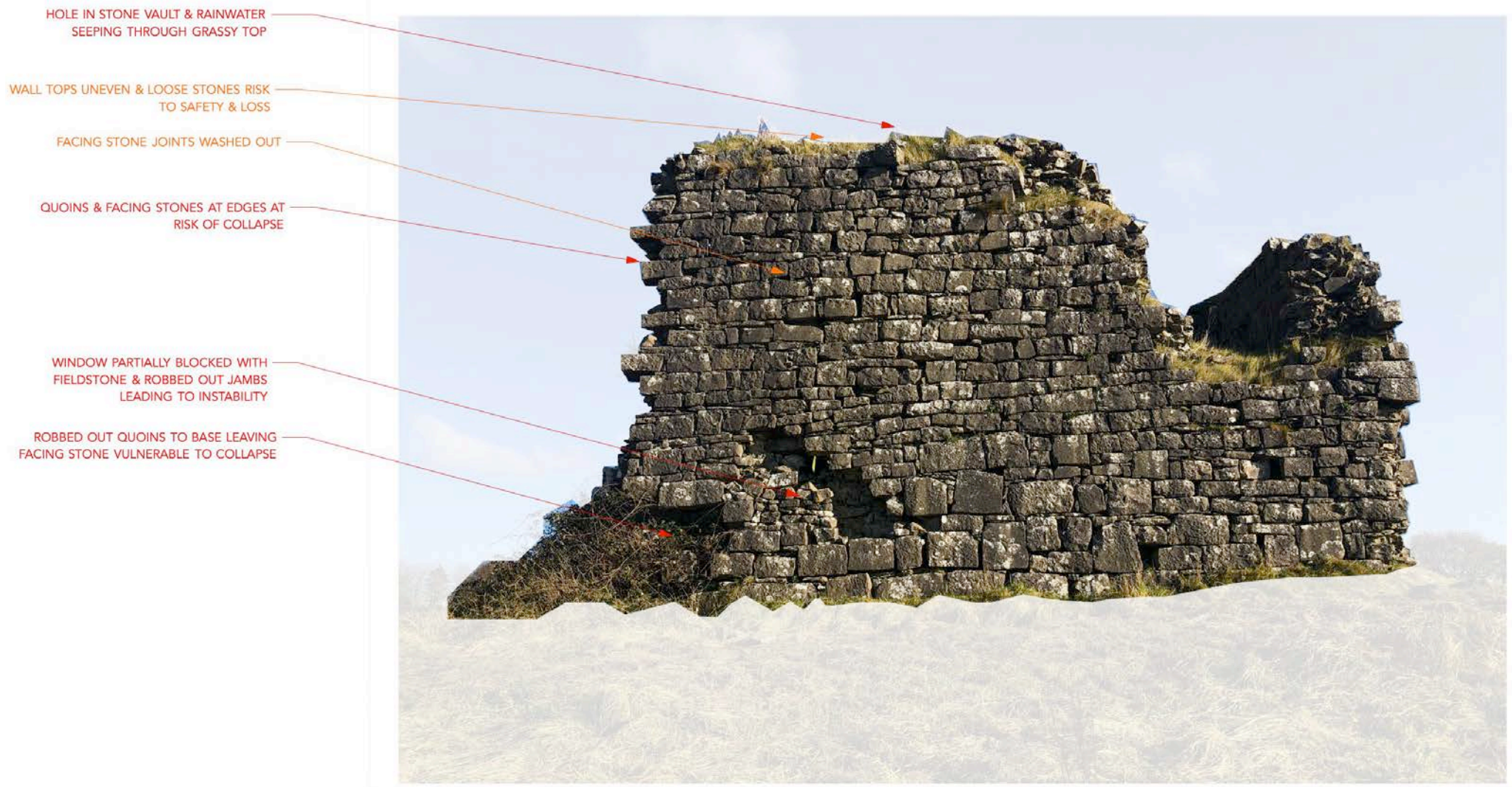
Phase 1: Laser scan recording of the tower house and bawn; conservation structural repairs to the roof vault and walls; archaeological testing to the possible school sites (bawn & *church*) by summer field school under licence.

Phase 2: Access works including pencil post fencing to walking route, estate fencing to the buffer enclosure to the bawn; weathering repairs to the tower house; interpretive displays & directional signage.

Phase 3: Parking spaces; extension of walking route as appropriate; conservation repairs, interpretive display and landscaping to school site.



65. Elevation of south east façade showing conservation issues to be addressed.



66. Elevation of south west façade showing conservation issues to be addressed.

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVENTORY ENTRIES

The following descriptions, where available, are derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Galway Vol. II - North Galway' compiled by Olive Alcock, Kathy de hÓra and Paul Gosling (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1999) and from the Historic Environment Viewer of the National Monuments Service (www.archaeology.ie).



67. Site plan of Kilcloony townland showing recorded monuments..

NUMBER	MONUMENT REF.	TOWNLAND	TYPE
1.	GA016-062001	Kilcloony	Tower House
2.	GA016-062002	Kilcloony	Field System
3.	GA016-062004	Kilcloony	Road
4.	GA016-062006	Kilcloony	Building
5.	GA016-062005	Kilcloony	Bawn
6.	GA016-062007	Kilcloony	Building
7.	GA016-062008	Kilcloony	Enclosure
8.	GA016-064001	Kilcloony	Field System
9.	GA016-064	Kilcloony	Ringfort
10.	GA016-061001	Kilcloony	Designed Landscape Feature
11.	GA016-061	Kilcloony	Church
12.	GA016-065	Kilcloony	Gate Lodge
13.	GA016-060	Kilcloony	Ringfort
14.	GA016-060001	Kilcloony	Souterrain
15.	GA016-063001	Kilcloony	Burial Ground
16.	GA016-063002	Kilcloony	Earthwork

17.	GA016-063003	Kilcloony	Cross
18.	GA016-063004	Kilcloony	Cross
19.	GA016-137001	Kilcloony	Ringfort/Cashel
20.	GA016-137002	Kilcloony	Structure
21.	GA016-137003	Kilcloony	Field System
22.	GA016-066	Kilcloony	Redundant Record
23.	GA016-037	Clashaganny	Ringfort
24.	GA016-125	Quarrymount	Country House
25.	GA016-067	Kilcloony	Enclosure

Table 1: Recorded monuments in the area surrounding the tower house.

No. 1 GA016-062006 Kilcloony Townland Tower House

Within a field system (GA016-062002-). In existence in 1574 when it was in the possession of 'Donell Ohigin' (Nolan 1901b, 117). Only two storeys of this poorly preserved rectangular tower (L 10.6m, Wth 9.2m) survive. The robbed-out doorway in SE wall was defended by a gun loop to E. It opens into a lobby with the guardroom to S and the spiral staircase in E corner. A stone vault exists between 1st/2nd floors. Windows consist of rectangular slits and a blocked-up single light with an ogee head. The tower lies in NW corner of a rectangular bawn (NW-SE 32.5m, NE-SW 28.5) defined by wall-footings (OPW Topgr. Files). Remains of rectangular structures occur in NE corner and S sector of the bawn, and a possible outer rectangular enclosure

(NW-SE 26.5m NE-SW 23m) extends off SE wall. It is defined by a change in vegetation colour (ibid.) A church (GA016-061----) lies 280m to N.

No. 13 GA016-060 Kilcloony Townland Ringfort

On a rise in otherwise level grassland. Poorly preserved sub-circular ringfort (E-W c. 45m) defined by a bank of earth and stone and an external fosse from NNW through N to ESE. No visible surface trace of the enclosing elements survives elsewhere. Gap at NE may be original. A field bank radiates from the monument at NW. A souterrain (GA016-060001-) is associated. (Costello 1903, 5).

No. 14 GA016-060001 Kilcloony Townland Souterrain

Within a ringfort (GA016-060----). Represented in name only on 3rd ed. of OS 6-inch map (1932). Apart from a circular hollow (D c. 3m), no visible trace survives. Costello (1903, 5) refers to it as 'a two-chambered cave of the usual'. According to local information, it was destroyed in the late 1970s.

No. 11 GA016-061 Kilcloony Townland Church

On a slight rise in undulating pastureland. A very poorly preserved rectangular church (E-W; L c. 15.4m, Wth 4.6m); only the low grassed-over foundation lines now survive. There are gaps towards E end of S wall, and W end of N wall, either of which could mark the site of a doorway. No architectural features survive. A curving earthen bank which encircles the foot of the rise from E to SW appears to be part of the landscaping associated with Quarrymount House to NNE. A castle (GA016-062001-) lies 280m to S.

No. 15 GA016-063001 Kilcloony Townland Burial Ground

On a SW-facing slope in grassland. Marked on 1st ed. of OS 6-inch map as a roughly square area (c. 45m by c. 40m) delimited by a broken line outside of which is a line of trees. Considerably extended to E by the time of 3rd ed. (1932), it is now enclosed by a stone wall and is entered via a gate on E side. Within the older W section are numerous small uninscribed set stones, including two with crudely cut crosses (Higgins 1987, 392, no. 112). An earthwork (GA016-063002-) is associated. (O'Flanagan 1927, Vol. 1, 27; CUCAP ATF 56)

No. 16 GA016-063002 Kilcloony Townland Earthwork

Surrounding a graveyard (GA016-063001-). Aerial reconnaissance in July 1967 (CUCAP ATF 56) revealed traces of a series of linear banks immediately to S, W and N of the graveyard. Though tending to follow a roughly N-S axis, they form no coherent pattern. No visible surface trace survives of those to N of the graveyard.

Nos. 17 GA016-063003 Kilcloony Townland Cross

Located within a burial ground (GA016-063001-). Described by Higgins (1987, ii, 392, no. 112) as - *a thin plain cruciform-shaped stone with an almost semi-circular top, short stubby arms and a narrow shaft which splays outwards near the bottom*. The cross (H 0.56m; Wth across the arms 0.21m; Wth at base 0.23m; T 0.05m) is set in the ground in a secondary position.

No. 18 GA016-063004 Kilcloony Townland Cross

Located within a burial ground (GA016-063001-). Two roughly cut stone crosses were noted in the older part of the burial ground on inspection in October 1984 (SMR file). One was 0.8m high and 0.4m wide; date unknown. For details on the other see GA016-063003-.

No. 22 GA016-066 Kilcloony Townland Redundant Record

In rolling pasture and bog land. This is a small pond with a pumping station beside it.

No. 33 GA016-037 Clashaganny Townland Ringfort

On a rise in otherwise level grassland. Very poorly preserved originally circular rath (D c. 48m) defined by two banks and two fosses from E through S to SW. A field bank cuts the monument at E and SW, and no visible surface trace of the enclosing elements survives to NW of it.

No. 25 GA016-067 Kilcloony Townland Enclosure

On a hillock in grassland within the former Quarrymount Demesne. Marked on 3rd ed. of OS 6-inch map (1932) as a circular enclosure (D c. 40m). No visible surface trace survives.

No. 10 GA016-061001 Kilcloony Townland Designed-landscape feature

No. 12 GA016-065 Kilcloony Townland Gate Lodge

No. 24 GA016-0125 Quarrymount Townland House