

CMF Reference Code: CMF25-2-GA001

ITM: 542730/717981

SMR Nos: Church (GA103-131003-) and Graveyard (GA103-131004-).

ÆGIS Ref.: 64-25

Conservation and Management Plan for Killeely More Church and Graveyard, Killeely More and Beg townlands, Co. Galway.



ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

086 8293220

info@aegisarc.com

www.aegisarchaeology.com



Report lead author: Frank Coyne MA MIAI

Report Status: Draft

Date: 13 November 2025

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Client— Galway County Council

Please note...

That the archaeological and other recommendations, mitigation proposals and methodology followed in this report are similar to those used on previous similar projects. The report follows most recent best practice in the compilation of Conservation and Management Plans and references are listed in section 8.

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Contributors

Project Lead Frank Coyne, archaeologist, MA in Historic Building Conservation

The following individuals have contributed to the final report:

Karol O'Mahony, architect, Grade 2 conservation, KOMA

Darren O'Sullivan, surveyor, OESM

John Britton, Conservation Engineer.

Ruth Minogue, environmental consultant, Minogue and Associates

Acknowledgements

The information supplied by the client and information gathered from the RMP and SMR maintained by the ASI and NMS are kindly acknowledged. Third party information and images are acknowledged individually in the text. The landowner of the monument is thanked for permitting access which allowed this project to be undertaken.

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Cover Image

Aerial view of site.

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I. Executive Summary

This report is a conservation management plan and statement of heritage significance for Killeely More Church and Graveyard, a fine example of a medieval parish church, located within an ecclesiastical enclosure, and a deserted medieval village.

A record of the upstanding remains and a condition survey was carried out as part of this report, and a detailed inventory of the features and issues compiled. The condition survey has identified a number of issues and has made recommendations as to how to remedy these. This report sets out a plan of action to prevent this from happening.



Frontispiece: Aerial view of Killeely More Church and Graveyard.

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III. Abbreviations and Terms Used

ASI	Archaeological Survey of Ireland, a division of the DHLGH.
Barony, Parish,	These terms refer to land divisions in Ireland. The barony is the largest land division in a county, which is formed from a number of parishes. These parishes are in turn made up of several townlands, which are the smallest land division in the country. The origins of these divisions are believed to be in the Early Medieval/Christian period (AD500-AD1000), or may date earlier in the Iron Age (500BC-AD500).
Townland	
CMP	Conservation and Management Plan.
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
E	East.
F	Feature.
First Edition	This relates to editions of the OS 6-inch maps for each county. The first edition map completed for the area dates to the early 1840s and this is referred to in the text as the 'First Edition'.
HEV	Historic Environment Viewer available at https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/ or through links on https://archaeology.ie/ .
KCC	Galway County Council.
Km	Kilometre(s).
M	Metres, all dimensions are given in metres or part of a metre, unless otherwise stated.
Monitoring	Archaeological Monitoring refers to the requirement to have an archaeologist(s) on site during the earth moving/construction works to undertake a watching brief in case archaeological material is revealed.
N	North.
NGR	National Grid Reference.
NIAH	National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, see www.buildingsofireland.ie .
NMI	National Museum of Ireland.
NMS	National Monuments Service. Regulatory body with responsibility for archaeological heritage. A division of the DHLGH.
NPM	Natural parent material (subsoil).
OD	Ordnance Datum (height above sea level).
OS	Ordnance Survey.
OSI	Ordnance Survey of Ireland.
Pers. Comm.	Personal Communication.
Plinth	The projecting base of a wall.
PO	Preservation Order.
PS	Protected Structure.
Quoin	The dressed stone at the corner of a building.
Recessed	Architectural term for a section of a wall or side of a building that is set back from the front.
Refs	References.
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places. A paper record on which all known archaeological sites at the time of the record are marked and listed in an accompanying list. The sites marked are afforded legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930–2014. The record is based on the 6-inch map series for the country and is recorded on a county basis. Each archaeological monument on the RMP has a unique code known as the RMP number prefixed by GA for Galway.
RMP Number	This code is the number of the site on the RMP constraint map. It begins with the county code, for example, KE, the 6-inch sheet number, followed by the number of the archaeological monument on that sheet.
RPS	Record of Protected Structures.
S	South.
Sheet	This relates to the 6-inch map for each county, which is divided into sheets.
SMR	Sites and Monuments Record. It relates to the archive files and on-line database relating to all currently known archaeological monuments, maintained by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI). It is regularly updated. It can be viewed at http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/ .
TB	Townland Boundary.
W	West. Width; where used with dimensions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Structure

The aims of this report are three-fold: first, a baseline description and record of the church and graveyard at Killeely More, which can support potential future funding applications; second, a statement of heritage significance; and third, a conservation and management plan with policies for the church and graveyard. In addition to these main aims, an appraisal of options for the sustainable enhancement of the church and graveyard is also outlined.

The structure of this conservation and management plan report (CMP) is as follows: this section provides an introduction to the project including its genesis, scope, and purpose. An overview of the current statutory protections of the complex is provided, and guiding philosophical approaches are outlined. Methodologies used in the gathering of the data and the compilation of the report is provided. Section 2 provides background to the church in order to understand it and place it in its broader archaeological context. A brief cartographic review, which traces the place over time is included. The church as a monument and associated feature types represented, and chronology, are discussed. A summary of heritage assets of the location is provided. A description of the current remains is given. Section 3 includes an assessment of key heritage values leading to a statement of significance. Section 4 lists and defines the current management issues and vulnerabilities of the complex. Risks and opportunities for the ecclesiastical complex are outlined; while section 5 outlines future management policy aims that will assist in mitigating these vulnerabilities and includes an appraisal of options for future re-use. Section 6 is an action plan for the policies outlined in section 5. Section 7 provides a brief summary and concluding remarks. Section 8 is the bibliography, section 9 a signing-off statement, and section 10 includes supporting information set out in a series of appendices.

1.2 Statutory Protection and Policy

There is a range of existing statutory and regulatory policies upon which this report is based. Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments (amendment) Act 1930–2014. Further protection is provided by the following legislation: Heritage Act, 1985; Architectural Heritage (national inventory) and Historic Monuments (miscellaneous provisions) Act, 1999; Planning and Development Act, 2000 (plus amendments); and Planning and Development Regulations, 2001. This legislation is endorsed by Galway County Council in its county development plan (Galway County Council 2022-2028). A summary of protections afforded to the church at Killeely More is provided in Table 1.1. A list of pertinent international charters that apply to this study is in Table 1.2.

Table 1.1. Heritage asset information.

Common name	
Townland	Killeely Beg and Killeely More
Civil Parish	Killeely
Barony	Dunkellin
County	Galway
Six-inch map sheet	GA 103
Protected Structure	N/a
National Inventory of Architectural Heritage	N/a
Structural elements	Church, Graveyard, Settlement Deserted, Ecclesiastical Enclosure, Bullaun Stone, Holy Well, Graveslabs
RMP/SMR Nos	GA103-131003- (Church), GA103-131004- (Graveyard)
Archaeological Classification	Church and Graveyard
Development & Other Plans	N/a
Ownership	Galway County Council
Other designations	N/a

Table 1.2. List of pertinent international charters consulted in this study.

Common name	Date	Charter Title
-	1972	UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
Venice Charter	1964	International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites
-	1975	The Congress on European Architectural Heritage
Burra Charter	1979 (revised 1981, 1988, 1999 & 2013)	The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
Granada	1985	Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe
Valetta Charter	1992	Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage

The philosophical approach underlying the understanding of conservation management plans is that an understanding of the monument and its significance is first established, followed by an assessment of how this significance might be threatened or impaired in the future. Once these issues have been clearly outlined a set of measures and policies can be adopted to avoid or mitigate these potential impairments and safeguard and enhance significance for future generations (e.g. Aygen, 2012; CPRE, 2004; Forsyth, 2007; Historic Scotland, 2000; Semple Kerr, 1996).

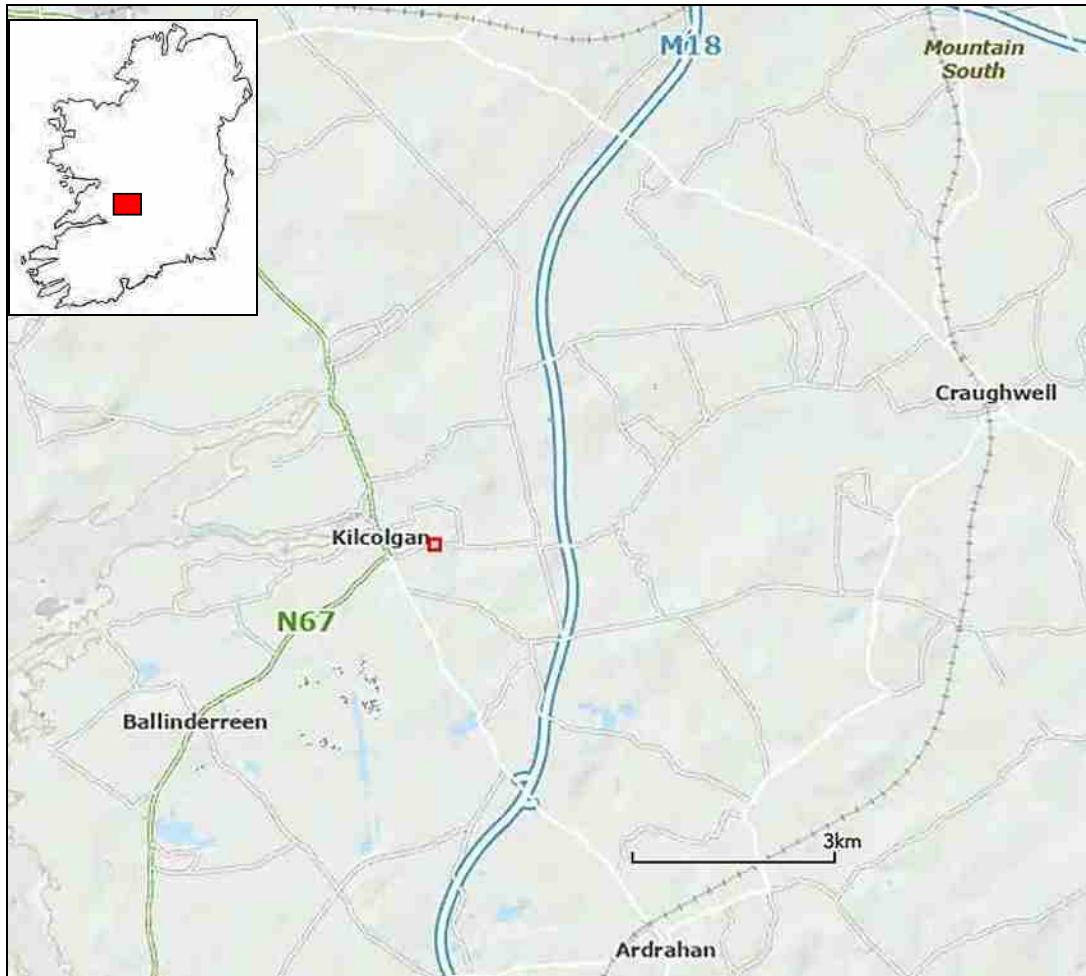


Figure 1.1. Location map, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.



Figure 1.2. General location map townlands indicated, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.



Figure 1.3. Detailed location map, subject site indicated in red (www.osi.ie). North to top.

1.3 Methodologies

The following resources and methods of establishing the status of the church monument at Killeely More were used:

- The church was inspected, photographed, recorded and a condition assessment was made during several visits;
- The church and graveyard was surveyed (appendix);
- A baseline natural heritage survey was undertaken (section 2.5.1);
- Web-based assessment: Historic mapping and photographs (section 2); placename and folklore records (section 2.4.5);
- Desk-based assessment: A wide range of historical records relevant to the church monument its type and zone of influence; The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) constraint maps and list (section 2); The topographical files housed in the National Museum of Ireland ;
- Stakeholder consultation represented by Joe Murphy.

1.4 Limitations

No limitations were encountered.

2. Understanding the Monument

2.1 Description of Place, Topography, and Setting

Killeely More is an example of a medieval parish church, located in the south-Galway lowlands, less than one kilometer to the east of the village of Kilcolgan (Figure 2.1). The underlying geology is monotonous limestone & dolomite (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>). The Kilcolgan River (which is named the Dunkellin River to the east) flows in an east-west direction approximately 600m to the north of the site(Figure 2.2).

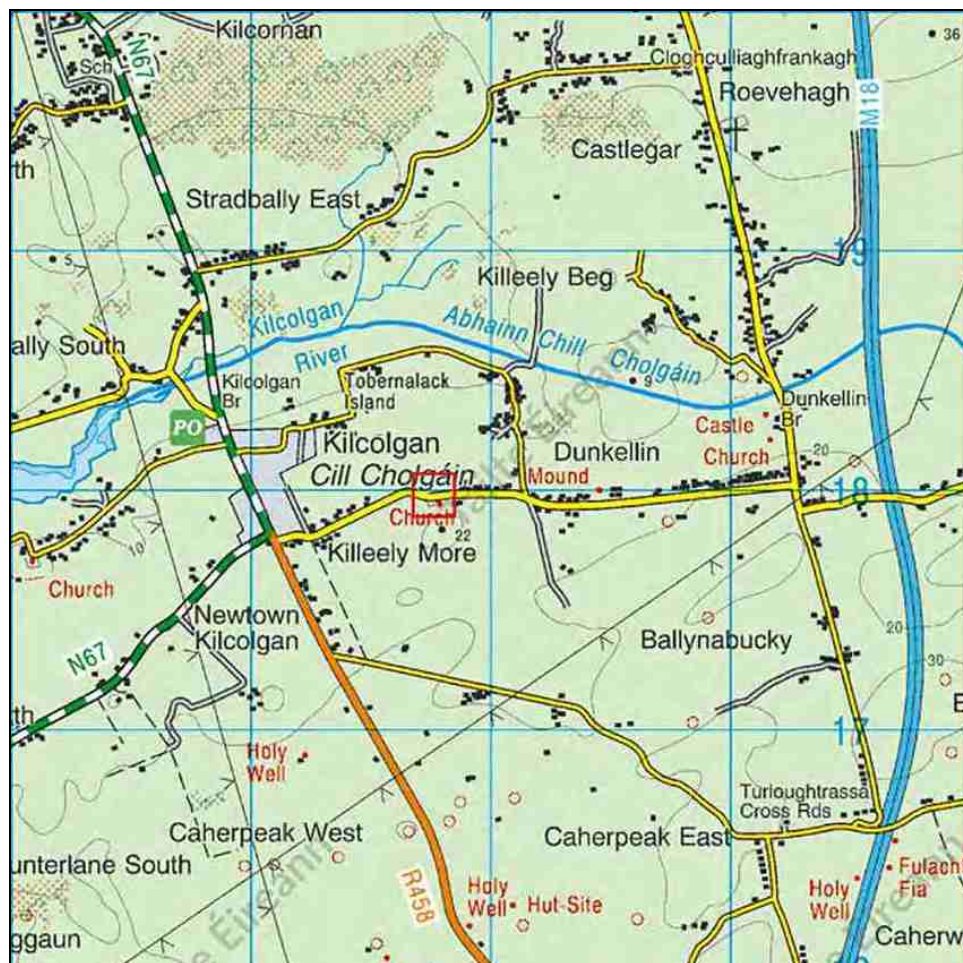


Figure 2.1. Discovery Series map (1 box = 1km). North to top. Site indicated by red box.

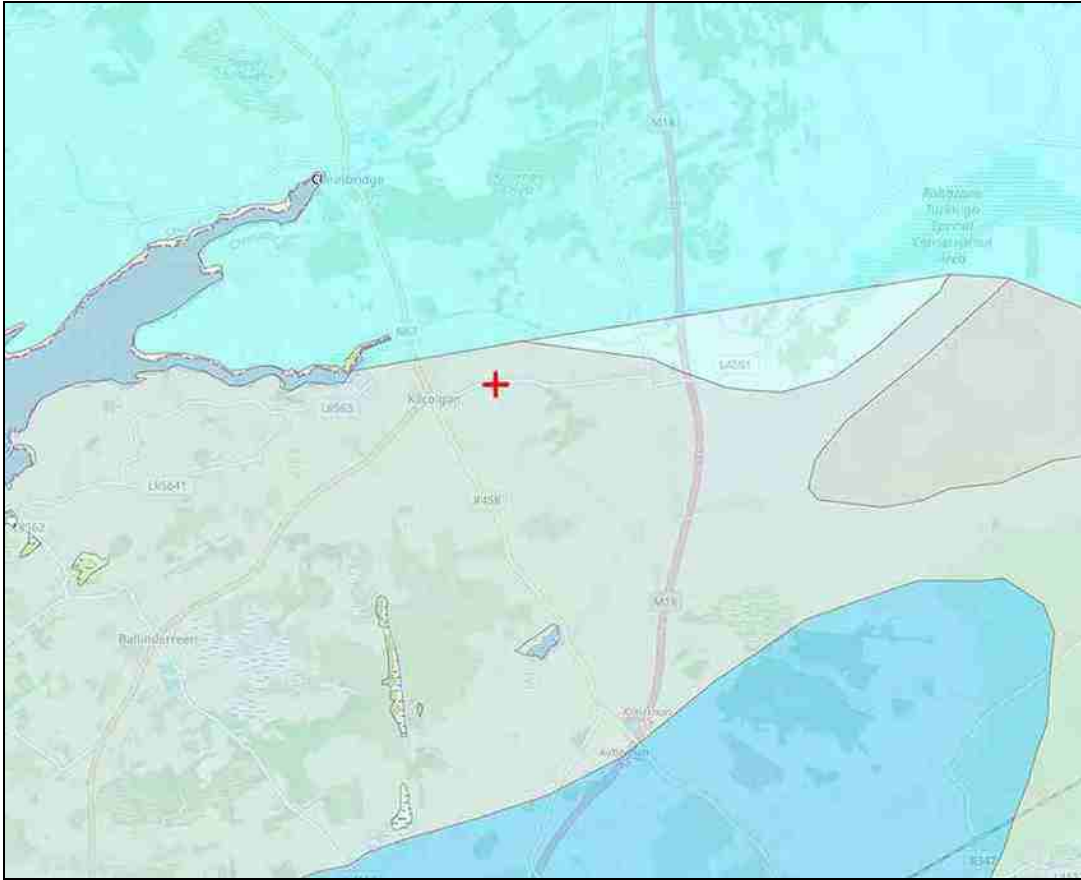


Figure 2.2. EPA map showing location underlying geology of the subject site (<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/SEA>). The church and graveyard (indicated by the red cross) are located in an area of monotonous limestone & dolomite, with an area of undifferentiated limestone to the north.

Killeely More Church and Graveyard (ITM 542730/717981) is situated in an area of generally level ground, approximately 24m above sea level, which rises gently to the south. Views from the site are generally towards the north. The church and graveyard are situated in the townland of Killeely More (the east gable of the church is the townland boundary), with the additional features situated in the townland of Killeely Beg..



Figure 2.3. Aerial view of site looking north (F. Coyne).



Figure 2.5. Grand Jury map for Galway, dated from 1819 (<https://virtualtreasury.ie/item/LBC-GJ-15-11>).



Figure 2.6. Lewis Topographical Dictionary 1837 (<https://www.swilson.info/lewismaps37.php?coid=11>).

The first detailed map of Killeely Church is the Ordnance Survey first edition six-inch map which dates to c. 1840 (Fig. 2.8). It depicts the site, and is annotated 'Killeely Church and Grave Yard'. The full ground plan is depicted.



Figure 2.7. Extract of the First Edition Ordnance Survey six-inch map surveyed 1838, published 1840 (reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Scotland).

The later twenty-five inch map (Fig. 2.9) shows the monument described as 'in ruins'.

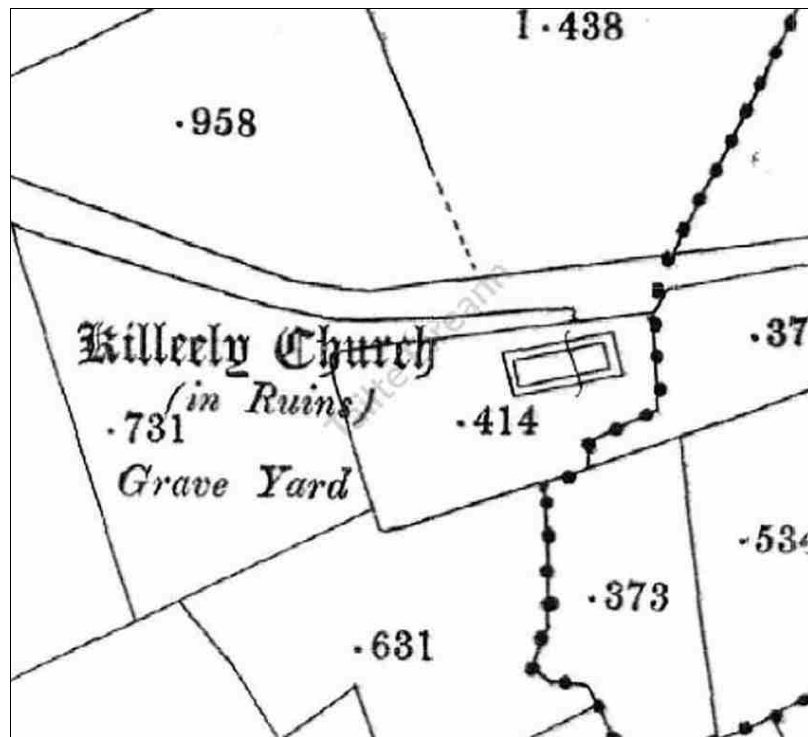


Figure 2.8. Extract from the 25-inch map, surveyed 1893, published 1895 (after www.archaeology.ie).

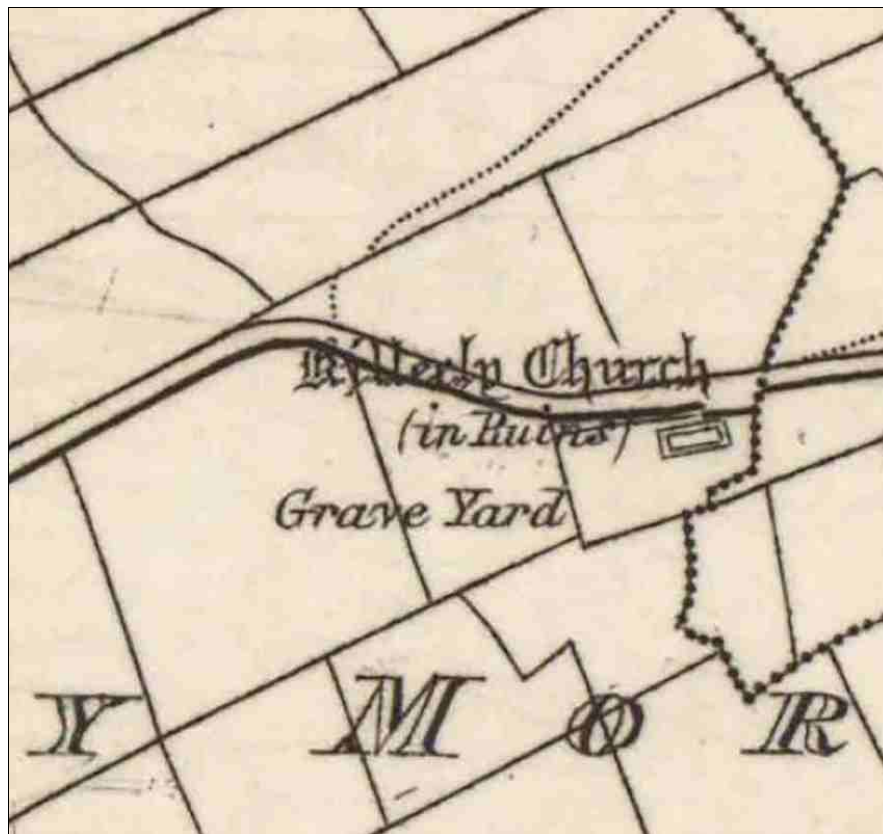


Figure 2.9. Extract of the twenty-five-inch Ordnance Survey map c. 1894, published c. 1897 (reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Scotland).

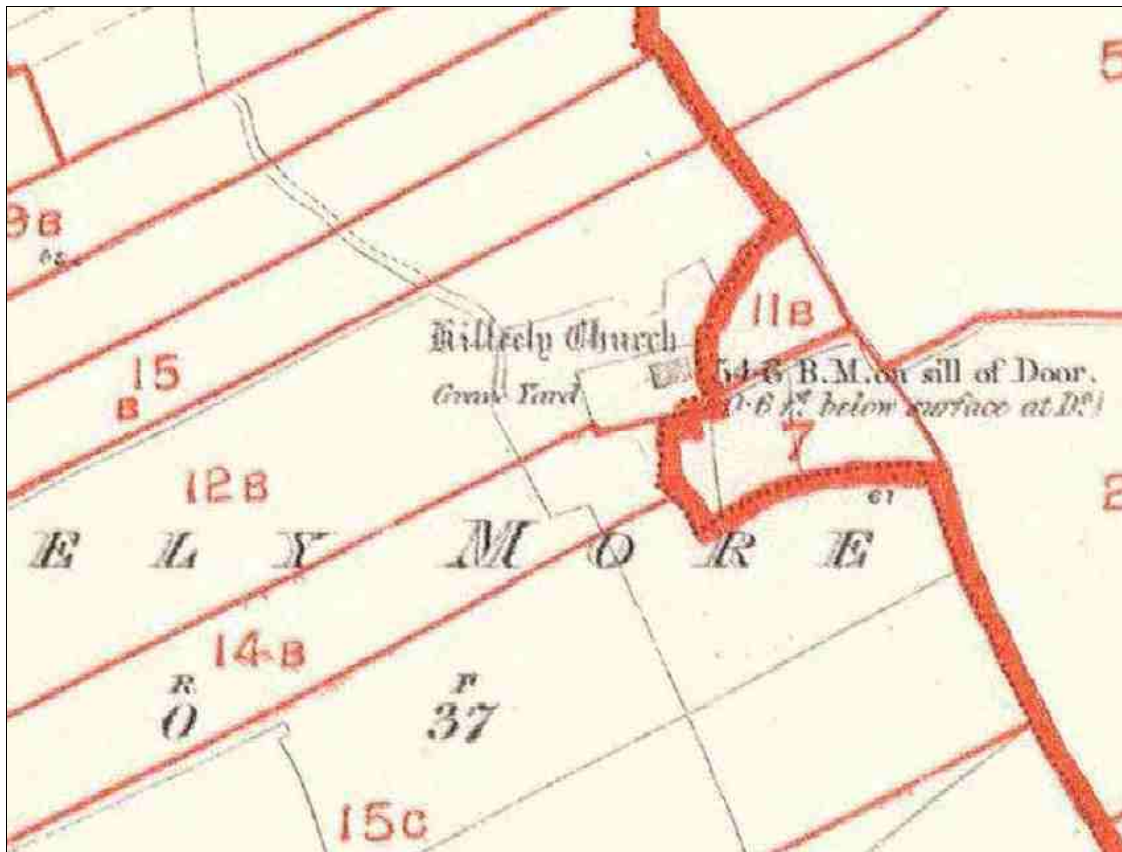


Figure 2.10. Griffith's Valuation mapping showing the land holdings in the general area (www.askaboutireland.ie).

Various landowners occupy the land on and in the immediate vicinity of the church. Plot 7 in Killeelybeg is rented by Thomas Lane, Michael Lane, John Lane Jnr, John Mourphy and John B. Murphy, all renting from James S. Lambert. Plot 11a is rented by John (Michael) Murphy, also from James Lambert.

Plot 12b in Killeelymore is rented by Redmond Fahy from Christopher St. George, while Plot 14b is rented by Michael Nielan f, also from Christopher St George.

Interestingly, an annotation on the map reads '54.6 B.M on sill of door (0.6 ft below surface at D.o). This was not located during the site visits.

2.3 Monument Type, Elements, and Chronology

Killeely More church and graveyard is a ruinous example of a twelfth/thirteenth century late medieval parish church, partly incorporating an earlier 11th-12th century church. This church was then remodelled in the fifteenth century. The graveyard also contains many fine examples of grave slabs, headstones and table tombs.

Table 2.1. List of element types comprising the church and graveyard at Killeely Beg and Killeely More.

SMR No	Section	Element type
GA103-131002-	2.3.1	Settlement deserted - medieval
GA103-131003-	2.3.2	Church
GA103-131004-		Graveyard
GA103-131005-		Ecclesiastical enclosure
GA103-131006-		Bullaun stone
GA103-131007-		Ritual site - holy well
GA103-131008-		Graveslab
GA103-131009-		Graveslab
GA103-131010-		Graveslab
GA103-131011-		Graveslab
GA103-131012-		Graveslab
GA103-131013-		Graveslab
GA103-131014-		Graveslab
GA103-131015-		Graveslab
GA103-131016-		Graveslab

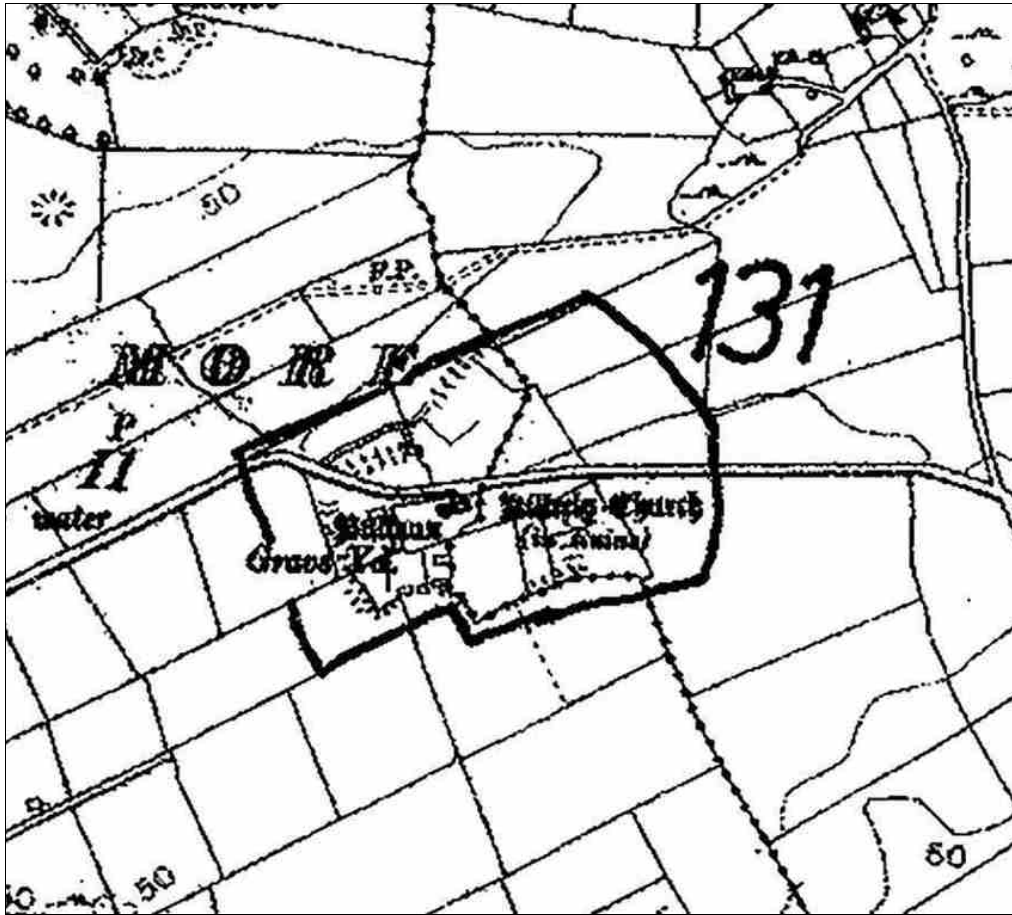


Figure 2.11. RMP map extract, sheet GA096 on 1933 map for Killeely More indicated by No. 121 (Archaeological Survey of Ireland 1997). It is described in the accompanying manual as 'Church and Graveyard'.

2.3.1 Early Ecclesiastical Sites

It would appear that there were already Christians in Ireland during the fourth century (Bhreathnach 2014, 152). The first reliable date in Irish history is AD 431 (Ó Cróinín, 1995, 14), the source being the Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine, which records the official introduction of Christianity into Ireland. He wrote; To the Irish believing in Christ, Palladius, having been ordained by Pope Celestine, is sent as first bishop. Therefore, by 431 the number was sufficient for Palladius to be sent to Ireland, although the outcome of his ministry is unknown. The subsequent mission of St Patrick (AD 432) was apparently confined to the northern half of the country. Much more is known about Patrick's mission to Ireland, through his own near contemporary writings, namely his Confession and Letter, although he gives little personal detail (Bhreathnach 2014, 152–9; Stout 2017, 19–40). The initial early Church was led by bishops, was diocesan, and territorial in nature. During the second half of the sixth century, however, monasticism rapidly spread in Ireland and many important monasteries were founded at this time, for example, Clonmacnoise. (Edwards 1990, 99). During the sixth century the introduction of monasticism led to the development of a system of monastic paruchia (monastic families or federations), which particularly suited Irish society as at the time it was rural and tribal (Bhreathnach 2014, 17–129). Both systems—monastic and diocesan—co-existed for a time, but the role of the bishops was eventually reduced (O'Sullivan and Sheehan 1996, 246). By the late seventh and eighth centuries the monastic paruchia or federations had become the dominant ecclesiastical unit (Cuppage 1985, 257; Edwards 1990, 100).

There is a wide variety and diversity of early ecclesiastical sites extant in Ireland that date to the early medieval period (c. AD 450–1100). These range from the great monastic 'cities', such as Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly and Glendalough, Co. Wicklow, to much smaller isolated hermitages, with a range of lesser monasteries and church sites in between (Cuppage 1986, 257; Ó Carragáin 2014, 121). Some were minor monasteries, others were small church sites with priests who served a lay community, or a mixture of both (Edwards 1990, 114). Despite the spectrum and range of early ecclesiastical sites of this date, there is a consistency in their morph and layout which Ó Carragáin terms 'design principles that are evident in nearly all Irish ecclesiastical sites [...] by remarkable consistency owing to shared ideas across the country' (Ó Carragáin 2014, 121). The majority of Ireland's approximate 5,000 early ecclesiastical sites were established between AD 500 and AD 800 (see Stout 2012), with the most important ones, for example, Kildare, being founded by AD 650; usually these important centres were established and maintained with support from important ruling families (Bhreathnach 2014, 168–74). As already mentioned, the morphology or layout of

these ecclesiastical sites is remarkably similar in the field, and the diversity noted between them is usually based on size and scale. This suggests that there was an over-arching idea or plan of what an ecclesiastical settlement was supposed to contain. Indeed, it may be that ecclesiastical sites took inspiration from the high status concentric circular secular complexes, such as Tara or Navan Fort, along with several biblical descriptions (Ó Carragáin 2014, 122).

First, the area of the ecclesiastical settlement site area is demarcated by a single, or series of concentric, usually curvilinear or circular enclosures (Hughes and Hamlin 1877, 54–6). These enclosures can vary in diameter from the smaller western sites, which are usually about 30–40m in diameter (similar in size to the contemporary secular settlements of ringforts and cashels, see Stout 1997) to over 400–500m in diameter for the very large complexes. On average, outer enclosures (where there is more than one) tend to be about 100m in diameter. Enclosure seems to have been an important feature of ecclesiastical sites from their genesis. Excavations at Caherlehillian, Co. Kerry, which dates to the early sixth century showed the enclosure to be a primary element of the complex there (Sheehan 2009; 2014), as did excavations at Toureen Peakaun, Co. Tipperary (Ó Carragáin 2014). Enclosures, depending largely on the local topography, may have been constructed of earthen banks and ditches (fosses), of stone, or in combination.

Where there were several enclosures, the innermost, considered the most sacred space, contained the most important structure, the church. Where there is just a single enclosure the church is usually (though not exclusively) in the eastern half of the enclosure. On more important sites, there may have been several churches which may have used at the same time but for different purposes, for example smaller churches may have been reliquaries or shrine chapels (Ó Carragáin 2003). Churches were initially constructed of timber, such as that found in Caherlehillian, Co. Kerry (Sheehan 2014); and later, the timber was replaced by stone. Some of these early medieval churches were extended or incorporated into churches of the later medieval period, for example at Inishmaine, Co. Mayo, Killeevy Co. Armagh, or as has been established most recently at St Canice's, Finglas, Co. Dublin (Duffy 2023). In addition to churches (see Ó Carragáin 2010; 2021), other religious monuments that are associated with early medieval ecclesiastical sites, many of which are still extant at some sites, include round towers (Lalor 1999); bullaun stones (Dolan 2013); high crosses (Harbison 1991; Stalley 2020); sundials (Hamlin 1987); cross slabs, cross-inscribed slabs, stone crosses (Hughes and Hamlin 1977, 80–101); and holy wells (Carroll 1999). It is also important to remember that ecclesiastical sites were as well as ritual/religious centres were also the location of burial and where a religious

community lived and worked. It is highly likely that these sites were also the home of lay families who helped support the religious community and were part of larger ecclesiastical landed estates, as has been demonstrated in Fir Maige region of County Cork (Ó Carragáin 2014a). These ecclesiastical sites were also centres of craftworking and artistic production including metal working, bone and antler working, manuscript production and illumination (Edwards 1990).

2.3.2 Bullaun Stones

In addition to documenting ancient churches, crosses and other ecclesiastical antiquities, Ordnance Survey field-staff were from 1834 primed to take note of the names, legends and feast-days of saints venerated, and the dates of rounds at the parish well, and they occasionally recorded more detailed information on the behaviour of pilgrims. It was in this context that many rock-basins or bullaun stones and their associated legends and customs were documented for the first time. The vernacular term *bullán* would not be adapted for specialised use by antiquaries for another twenty years many bullauns being instead identified as primitive fonts (McGuinness 2013, 14). Bullan stones may be described as ‘boulders with between one and nine human-made concave depressions, widely found at old monastic sites. They are taken by some to have acted as mortars for grinding corn or ore, while others believe they held water for blessing and curing’ (Harbison 2003, 139). Edwards (1990, 116) notes that they are found on large and small ecclesiastical sites , but rarely on their secular counterparts.

Stones found at holy wells include curing stones, holed stones, praying stones, bullaun stones, penitential stations or cairns, ogham stones, pillar stones and cross inscribed stones. These features can be incorporated into the pilgrimage practice at the wells, whether it is adding a stone to a penitential cairn or incising a cross into a special stone. Sometimes these stones were arranged in the shape of a chair or a bed, on which the saint is said to have sat or slept on. The type of stone also had significance, coloured stones or quartz were thought to be endowed with supernatural powers. Bullaun stones are commonly found at holy wells. Bullaun stones contain natural or artificial depressions, the word ‘*bull*’ meaning a bowl or basin. The hollow in a bullaun stone was sometimes said to have been created by the saint using the stone as a pillow. The water that gathered in a bullaun stone was said to have healing properties, particularly effective for curing warts. In some cases the stones themselves have been regarded as the holy well (McHugh 2023, 24).

reforms. The Irish version of this unit is best described as 'local-túatha', ubiquitous in eleventh and twelfth century Ireland. The term túatha means 'people', 'community' or 'laity'. The local-túatha was a unit of society comprising a number of taxable estates (bailte), with a leader (taíseach) or steward (maor), and represents the earliest example of the local community and may be the remote ancestor of the secular elements of the modern rural parish. In areas where the Anglo-Normans did not settle, the *túath* system partially survived for centuries after the invasion (McCotter 2019, 58).

The reform period in the twelfth century had its origin in the efforts of the Uí Brian dynasty in the later eleventh century to forge links with the English Church, and indirectly with the Roman Church. By 1111 there are efforts at regulating the existing territorial episcopal structures, and it is unlikely that these reforms were enacted without a pre-existing system of pastoral care. Opponents of this view that parish-like structures were already in existence in Ireland in the pre-reform period is the absence of a compulsory tithe payment system. However, it appears that there was a system on non-compulsory tithe payment in Ireland from at least the eighth century, which continued into the twelfth century (McCotter 2019, 45-49). At the Council of Cashel in 1172 the Irish bishops agreed to apply the customs of the English church to Ireland. At this time, various ecclesiastical hierarchies had been in existence in neighbouring regions of Europe, many of these three layered, consisting of chapels under mother churches under episcopal seats. This conformity with England took the form of the creation of a parish system along English lines. Most English parishes conformed to lay estates. The parish priest was known as the rector (one who has rights) or parson. Lay ownership of churches was phased out in England was opposed by Rome and phased out after 1100. This was the system that was imported into Ireland after 1170. Many of the colonists may have come from a background where lords and landowners had influence over church income, with appointment of family members to rectories, and so a large number of clerics were among the settlers who came to Ireland after the Anglo-Norman invasion. A problem for the English church arose in the early twelfth century, which saw many vicars become absentee, substituting vicars or chaplains, often with no formal education and paid a pittance and no security of tenure, which led to general neglect. In order to counteract this, the office of perpetual vicar was created, who could only be appointed or removed by a bishop. This system was then exported to Ireland, and was adopted by the Irish bishops, who erected perpetual vicarages in places where there were absentee vicars.

Therefore, by the early twelfth century the development of the túatha church structure had become part of the reform agenda, as well as territorial reforms and enforcement of the tithe payment. The process of the Gregorian reform was a complex one, with assumed ownership of church benefices

by the new landowners, who erected rectories on their new landholdings, and whose estates were erected on pre-invasion territorial units. A new relationship was also created by the erections on manors on the bounds of bailte, accounting for the relationship between parish and baile. The difficulties in the deliverance of pastoral care led to the creation of perpetual vicarages, resulting in a new wave of parish formation based on demographics and not land ownership. In many cases it was the vicarage which became the geographical template for the parish, and not the rectory (McCotter 2019 57-67).

There is a growing consensus about the evolution of pastoral care, understanding the significance of churches and their accompanying territories. To understand the parish, three strands must be recognised;

- The historic parish which emerged from the middle ages.
- The Roman Catholic parish.
- The Church of Ireland parish.

These latter two evolved from that older structure. It is the first example which we are concerned with. The common antecedent of the Catholic and Church of Ireland parishes was the late medieval parish. The parish became the earliest convenient administrative unit, and the seventeenth century parish may be taken as a reliable representation of the late medieval parish. Civil parish linkages can be established back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in documents related to Papal taxation lists. There are broad regional contrasts in parish geography, with an evident relationship between the small parishes of the manorial regions in the areas colonised by the Anglo-Normans, and the larger parishes in the Gaelic, predominantly western regions (Duffy 2005, 33-41).

For much of the medieval period it is likely that there was more emphasis on property than pastoral duties as a defining factor of the parish. The genesis of the historic parishes has been traced back to the twelfth century reform of the Church in Ireland, especially in the decades after the Anglo-Norman invasion. As elsewhere in Europe, the development of parish territorial structures was closely associated with secular territorial structures. Therefore, the twelfth century reforms in Ireland aimed at introducing mainstream European standards to the Irish church by constructing dioceses which were synchronised with political order, and parish formation in Ireland was most closely associated with Anglo-Norman manors. (Duffy 2005, 43).

The Norman manor was an economic, political and judicial unit, which became the basic unit of the Domesday survey. These were often based on pre-existing Anglo-Saxon estates. The manor was controlled by a 'lord', which might be the King, a baron, a bishop or religious house. Manors varied in size, ranging from just a couple of farms to vast estates (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/domesday/world-of-domesday/order.htm>). The Domesday Book (Originally known by the Latin name *Liber de Wintonia*, meaning "Book of Winchester", where it was originally kept in the royal treasury) is a manuscript record of the "Great Survey" of much of England and parts of Wales completed in 1086 at the behest of King William I, known as William the Conqueror.

On what were these Anglo-Norman manors in Ireland based? There was a strong driving force for territorial inertia, and continuity within parochial structures which were meshed in a web of local privilege, entitlement and duties of pastoral care (Duffy 2005, 46). Before the twelfth century reforms, many of the smaller local churches and their pastoral territories had been abandoned and were in ruins (Duffy 2005, 48). It is within the territorial hierarchy of the *túatha* that the parish inserted itself (Duffy 2005, 56).

2.3.4 Parish churches

The Archaeological Survey of Ireland has served to highlight the regional identities of groups of parish churches. The ruinous condition of some of the churches and the poor survival of items that may indicate parish status are an obstacle to identification of whether a church was a parish church. The primary indicators of parish church status are a baptismal font and a fenced graveyard. Other items may hint at parish status, such as a defined liturgical space, such as chancel and a nave, evidence for a rood screen, a bell tower, priest's quarters, a piscina, a stoup and an aumbry, although these features may also be found in a chapel (Fitzpatrick 2005, 62-3).

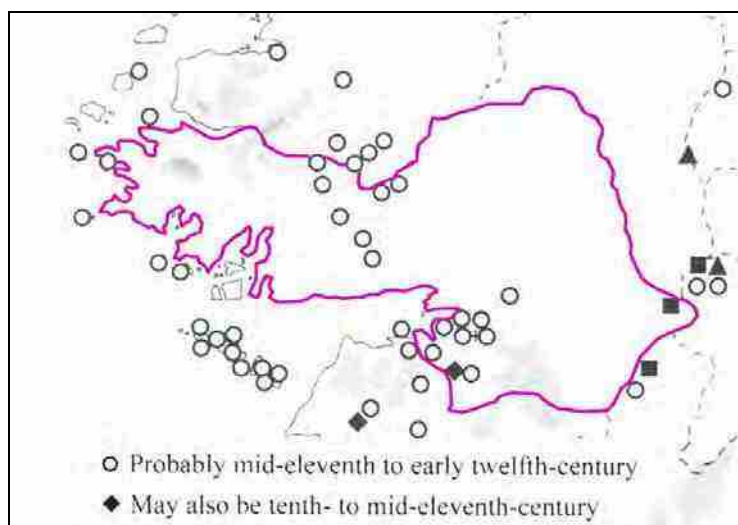
The parish church was the most significant buildings in the medieval community. The parish church, with an enclosed churchyard formed the heart of the parish. Adjacent to the church was the glebe, a small piece of land with grazing and tillage for the priest. Larger parishes might have smaller dependant chapels to serve outlying areas. These differed from parish churches in that neither burial nor baptism could be performed within them.

Little is known for certain about the endowment of the earliest parish churches. By the 13th century the situation is clearer when legislation made the priest responsible for the upkeep of the chancel,

while the congregation maintained the nave, belfry and churchyard, and ensured that the church had plate, vestments, mass book and font. The primary role of the church was to provide a space for communal worship, but also functioned as a space for parishioners to store their precious goods. The psychological scars left by the Black Death in 1348 led to a renewed fixation on morality, and a renewed focus on the parish church. Church naves were expanded, and regular prayers for the souls of the departed were secured in the fifteenth century. Traditionally the main entrance to the church in Ireland was through a door in the west gable, but by the thirteenth century southern doorways had become common, and frequently contain a holy water stoop on the inner eastern jambs to facilitate blessing with the right hand when entering the church. Burials took place within the church and in its surrounding cemetery. The medieval parish churches became the property of the established Protestant church following the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and many churches, particularly in rural areas contracted in size or gradually fell into decay (Moss 2014, 172-175).

2.3.5 Cyclopean Masonry

This is building technique that uses massive, irregular stones fitted together without mortar. The term comes from the ancient Greeks' belief that only the mythical Cyclopes had the strength to move such large boulders. The Irish examples are mortared. O'carragain has suggested a mid-11th to early 12th century date for the cluster of galway churches of which Killeely More is part (see figure XXX). A superb example of a church built using this style of masonry is to be found c. 2.5 kilometres to the SSE at Kiltiernan (also a National Monument in State Guardianship). It is located within an ecclesiastical enclosure.



Likely date-ranges for the mortared churches (after O'carragain 2005, 141, annotated by writer).



Figure 2.13. Early church at Killeely built in cyclopean masonry style



Figure 2.14. Killeely church within ecclesiastical enclosure.

2.3.6 Priest's Residences

The definitive article of priest's residences has been written by Helen Bermingham (2006, 168-185). Priests residences are integral to the study of the late medieval parish church. In Ireland studies have tended to concentrate on the architecture of the churches themselves rather than the quarters occupied by the priest. Harold Leask was among the first scholars to identify priestly accommodation. Occasionally, architectural some feature, directly indicating the presence of a priest's residence have been misidentified or not recognised as such. As the parish system developed, accommodation for the incumbent priest, close to the church was a necessity, who may also be apportioned glebe land to cultivate his own crops.

Birmingham proposes a working classification for priests residences;

- Accommodation inserted into the body of the church at the west gable end. The nave or the chancel was occasionally lengthened to accommodate the priest's quarters. ;
- Accommodation attached to one side or gable end of the church;
- Residential tower attached to the (usually) west end of the church;
- A free standing priest's house, which is less common.

At Killeely, due to the presence of joist holes in the north and south walls, and an inserted window in the west gable, that a priest's residence was inserted into the western side of the church in the late 15th/early 16th century, probably when the door in the south wall was remodelled.

2.3.7 Deserted Medieval Settlements

in the United Kingdom, a deserted medieval village (DMV) is a former settlement which was abandoned during the Middle Ages, typically leaving no trace apart from earthworks or cropmarks. Many were thought to have been abandoned due to the deaths of their inhabitants from the Black Death in the mid-14th century. While the plague must often have greatly hastened the population decline, in England most DMVs actually seem to have become deserted during the 15th century. At this time. Enclosure Acts and other policies allowed land traditionally cultivated for cereals and vegetables to be transformed into pastures for sheep. This change of land use by landowners, which was to take advantage of the profitable wool trade, led to hundreds of villages being deserted in England.

Ireland's pattern of rural settlement in the Middle Ages is very different from Britain, because the main impetus behind nucleation there, the Roman conquest and settlement, never impacted upon us. Even as late as the tenth century, apart from the major monasteries such as Glendalough in County Wicklow or Clonmacnoise, County Offaly, and the large Hiberno-Norse ports such as Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, and Cork mainly concentrated along the east coast, there is no certain evidence for large numbers of nucleated settlements (Barry 1994, 28-36).

During the early part of the thirteenth century the Anglo-Normans founded cities, towns, villages and hamlets throughout that part of Ireland that was under their control. There must also have been many smaller settlements that have still to be located, as they did not feature in the surviving documents of the period (Graham 1993, 82-3). In more remote hills, bogland or forested areas within the Anglo-Norman Lordship there were probably many dispersed settlements.

2.3.8 Key church elements



Figure 2.15. View of church from NE.

The remains of church now comprises at least three phases of construction. The door is located in the south wall. It consists of a fifteenth century pointed arched doorway, which is a later insertion.

2.3.9 Phasing



Figure 2.16. Elevation of exterior N of church wall showing cyplopean masonry(after OSECM, annotated by writer)

It is clear when that there are at least three obvious construction phases. The earlier phase, visible as cyclopean masonry dates to the 11th/early 12th century. These massive blocks of stone are visible in both the north and south walls. It appears that the church was extensively rebuilt in the late 12th century, and the quoin stones reused in the gables of the 12th/13th century church. The windows were added in the 12th century in the E, S and N walls.

A new door was inserted in the S wall in the late 15th/early 16th century, and there seems to be extensive rebuilding at the W end of the church at this time. Joist holes in the N and S walls suggest that there a priest's residence/gallery was inserted at this time. The cusped piscina with trefoil head may have been added below the window in the S wall at this time.



Figure 2.17. Door in the southern wall, from S.



Figure 2.18. Detail of hanging eye, from NW.



Figure 2.19. Aumbrey, piscina and window, from N.

2.3.10 Differentiation of interior space

Joist holes in the western side of the church might suggest that a priests residence/loft was inserted here in the 15th century.



Figure 2.20. Interior of church, from E.

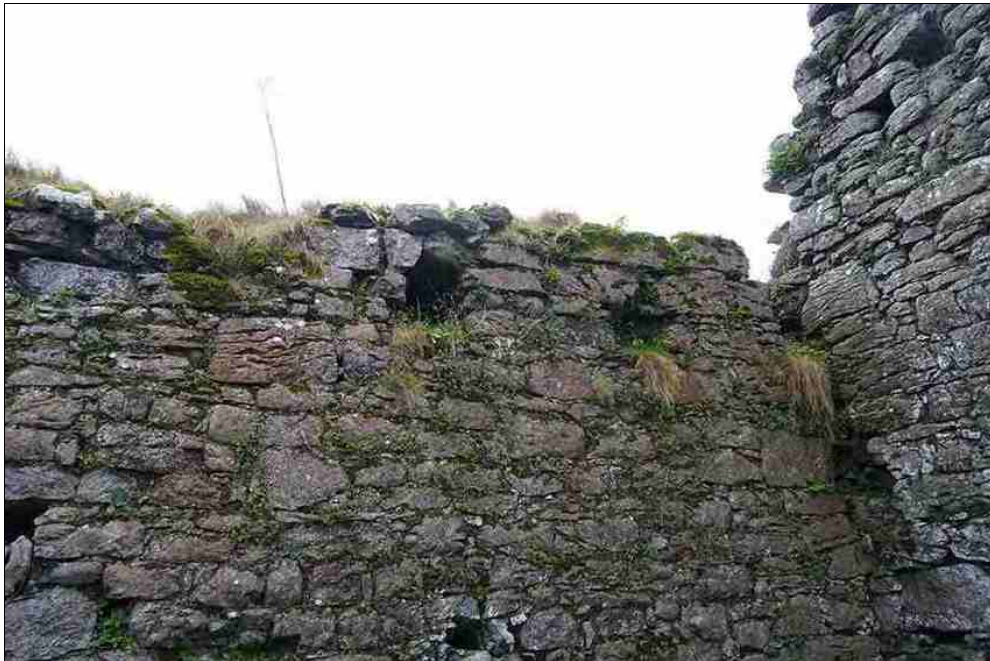


Figure 2.21. Joist holes in S wall, from N.

2.3.11 Burial

A variety of burial markers are visible in the interior of the church and the graveyard. The majority of the grave markers are nineteenth century in date, and comprise highly decorated ledger slabs and headstones.



Figure 2.22. Nineteenth century headstones, from E.



Figure 2.23. Nineteenth shouldered headstone with 20th century repair, from SE.



Figure 2.24. Selection of grave slabs.



Figure 2.25. General view across graveyard, from NE.

2.4 Associated Heritage Assets (*Ruth Minogue and Associates*)

2.4.1 Site Description

The site is primarily underlain fine loamy over limestone bedrock, with areas of Fine loamy drift with limestones adjacent to the site. The subsoils consist mainly of Limestone till (Carboniferous), karstified limestone bedrock as surface and Alluvium undifferentiated.

The immediate habitats on site comprise the following:

- BL1- stonewalls and other stonework.
- GA2- amenity grassland associated with the graveyard.

The surrounding lands comprise the local road L4501 to the north of the church, with a relatively intact hedgerow network east and south of the church. Mixed scrub/woodland is present immediately south west and west of the churchyard.

The church ruin stands within a small graveyard enclosure, with portions of limestone masonry visible through ivy growth. The boundary walls are partly overgrown. The Kilcolgan_050 river segment is the nearest surface water feature, flowing adjacent to Kilcolgan village to the north of the church. The river flows generally east to west. Water quality in this section of the Kilcolgan River is classified as moderate.

2.4.1.2 Policy framework

The Galway County Development Plan 2024 -2030 includes a number of policies that are relevant to the conservation management plan and include:

- BD 5.1 Promote the integration of biodiversity conservation and enhancement measures into land use planning and development processes.
- BD 5.2 Support the protection and management of designated sites, including SACs, SPAs, and NHAs, as well as areas of local biodiversity value.
- BD 5.3 Encourage the restoration and connectivity of ecological networks such as hedgerows, woodlands, wetlands, and riparian corridors.
- BD 5.4 Seek funding opportunities, benefit-in-kind opportunities, and work with project partners to achieve the aims of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.
- BD 5.5 Promote and participate in biodiversity events such as National Biodiversity Week, National Hedgerow Week, National Heritage Week, World Wetlands Day, and other themed events and programmes.
- BD 5.6 Support and promote citizen science initiatives and local biodiversity recording to enhance understanding of Galway's natural heritage.
- BD 5.7 Integrate climate action and biodiversity objectives, promoting nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation.
- BD 5.8 Encourage the management of invasive alien species through awareness, monitoring, and coordinated local action.
- BD 5.9 Protect and enhance riparian zones and buffer areas along rivers, streams, and coastal areas to support biodiversity and water quality.
- BD 5.10 Collaborate with landowners, community groups, and educational institutions to promote biodiversity-friendly land management practices.

In addition to the relevant policies and objectives in the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028, there are also useful resources that apply in terms of planting schemes for nocturnal pollinators and community groups, these are listed under the Recommendations Section.

2.4.2.3 Protected Sites

The nearest protected sites are Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area and Galway Bay Complex Special Area of Conservation both located around 890m west of Killeely Church.

The Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031)

The Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031) is located along the northern coastline of Galway Bay, extending from Galway City eastwards to Kinvarra and encompassing the estuarine area at Kilcolgan. It lies within 1km of our site. This extensive coastal and estuarine site includes intertidal flats, saltmarshes, rocky shores, and shallow marine waters. It is of international ornithological importance, supporting large numbers of wintering and breeding bird species associated with coastal and wetland habitats. A site summary is presented below:

The Inner Galway Bay SPA comprises a diverse range of coastal habitats including mudflats, sandflats, saltmarsh, shingle, and rocky shores. These habitats support extensive populations of wintering waterfowl and waders that utilise the intertidal zones for feeding and roosting. The site also includes several small islands and inlets that provide nesting grounds for breeding seabirds and terns.

The SPA is internationally significant for wintering populations of species such as Great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer*), Light-bellied Brent Goose (*Branta bernicla hrota*), and Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*). It also supports nationally important populations of Teal (*Anas crecca*), Wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), and Redshank (*Tringa totanus*). The combination of estuarine mudflats and sheltered coastal waters provides ideal feeding conditions for these species during the winter months.

Breeding species include Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) and Sandwich Tern (*Thalasseus sandvicensis*), which utilise the coastal islands and sheltered bays for nesting. The area is also of importance for Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), and other resident coastal birds.

The site is designated for the conservation of Wetlands and Waterbirds [A999], reflecting the overall ecological diversity and the large numbers of waterfowl that depend on the site throughout the year. The SPA plays a critical role within Ireland's Natura 2000 network, providing essential habitats for both migratory and resident bird species of European conservation concern. Maintaining the integrity of intertidal and coastal habitats, as well as protecting the natural hydrological and tidal regimes, is key to preserving the site's ecological value.

Galway Bay Complex SAC (Site Code: 000268)

The Galway Bay Complex SAC is located on the west coast of Ireland, spanning the inner marine area of Galway Bay and adjacent coastal zones between County Galway and County Clare. This site encompasses large shallow inlets, bays, intertidal flats, and complex coastal habitats, and is of international significance. It covers an area of approximately 144 km² (largely marine) and includes both intertidal and terrestrial habitats of conservation importance. A summary of the site is presented below:

The Galway Bay Complex SAC comprises a broad array of habitats including mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide, extensive shallow bays and inlets, reefs, coastal lagoons, vegetated sea cliffs, salt meadows (Atlantic and Mediterranean types), and inland turloughs and limestone pavement fragments. These habitats support a rich biodiversity and have been shaped by natural tidal and fluvial processes along with low-intensity land and sea uses.

The SAC also supports key species including the Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and the Harbour Seal (*Phoca vitulina*), which utilise the coastal zone for resting, feeding, and breeding-related activities. The marine and intertidal habitats provide feeding and nursery grounds for benthic invertebrates, fish, and seabirds, contributing to the ecological integrity of the bay system.

This SAC is of high importance in Ireland's Natura 2000 network for both habitat conservation and species protection. The maintenance of natural hydrological and tidal regimes, minimal disturbance of intertidal flats and lagoons, and control of anthropogenic pressures such as aquaculture and shoreline development are essential to its conservation value.

2.4.1.4 Woodland habitats

The NPWS datasets for Ancient and long-established Woodland Inventory (2010) and the National Survey of Native Woodlands 2003 – 2008 were downloaded from the NPWS and reviewed to identify the presence of any such woodlands within or in the immediate vicinity of the project site. No ancient woodlands were located within over 5km of the site.

2.4.1.5 Review of Historical Maps

A review of the historical first edition 6 inch map from 1843; the 25 inch map from 1909; and last edition 6 inch map from 1940 was completed for the project site and surrounding area. The earlier maps show the church in ruins and a distinct hedgerow pattern to the north and west of the church; this has been modified in the intervening years with scrub transitional woodland establishing to the west, field boundaries and hedgerow pattern remain strong.

A 10km (M41) search was undertaken using the National Biodiversity Centre database. The following protected mammals under the EU Habitats Directive and/or Wildlife Act are recorded within 10km of the site:

Species name

- Badger (*Meles meles*)
- Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*)

- Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)
- Irish Hare (*Lepus timidus* subsp. *hibernicus*)
- Irish Stoat (*Mustela erminea* subsp. *hibernica*)
- Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)
- Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Otter (*Lutra lutra*)
- Pine Marten (*Martes martes*)
- Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* sensu lato)
- Pygmy Shrew (*Sorex minutus*)
- Red Squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)
- Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*).

A desktop review of publicly available relevant data was undertaken on the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) and National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) websites. The National Biodiversity Data Centre was reviewed for relevant data, specifically

- i) existing species records for the 2km square in which the study site is located (NO1C) and
- ii) an indication of the relative importance of the wider landscape in which the study site is located, based on Model of Bat Landscapes for Ireland (Lundy et al. 2011). In the latter, the index ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for bats.

A desktop review of publicly available relevant data was undertaken on the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) and National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) websites. The National Biodiversity Data Centre was reviewed for relevant data, specifically

- i) existing species records for the 10km and 2km square in which the study site is located and
- ii) an indication of the relative importance of the wider landscape in which the study site is located, based on Model of Bat Landscapes for Ireland (Lundy et al. 2011). In the latter, the index ranges from 0 to 100, with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for bats.

Designated Sites

No statutory sites designated for bats are located within 5km of the site.

National Biodiversity Database was searched on 5th November 2025 for 10km tetrad (NO1c) and the following records were returned:

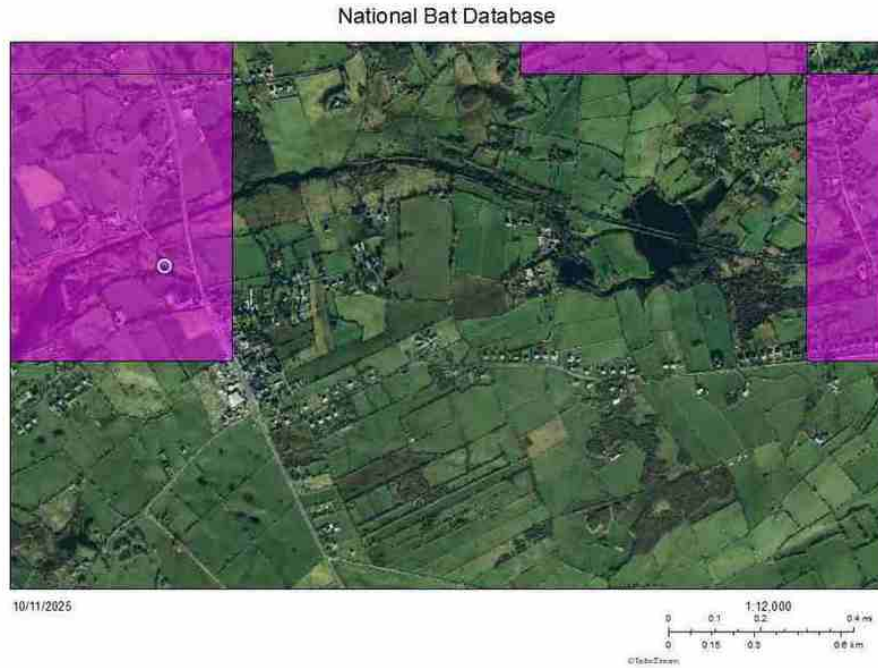
Species name

- Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)
- Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu stricto*)
- Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)
- Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus sensu lato*)
- Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)

The following table presents record of bats found within 2 km of the site in the last 10 years.

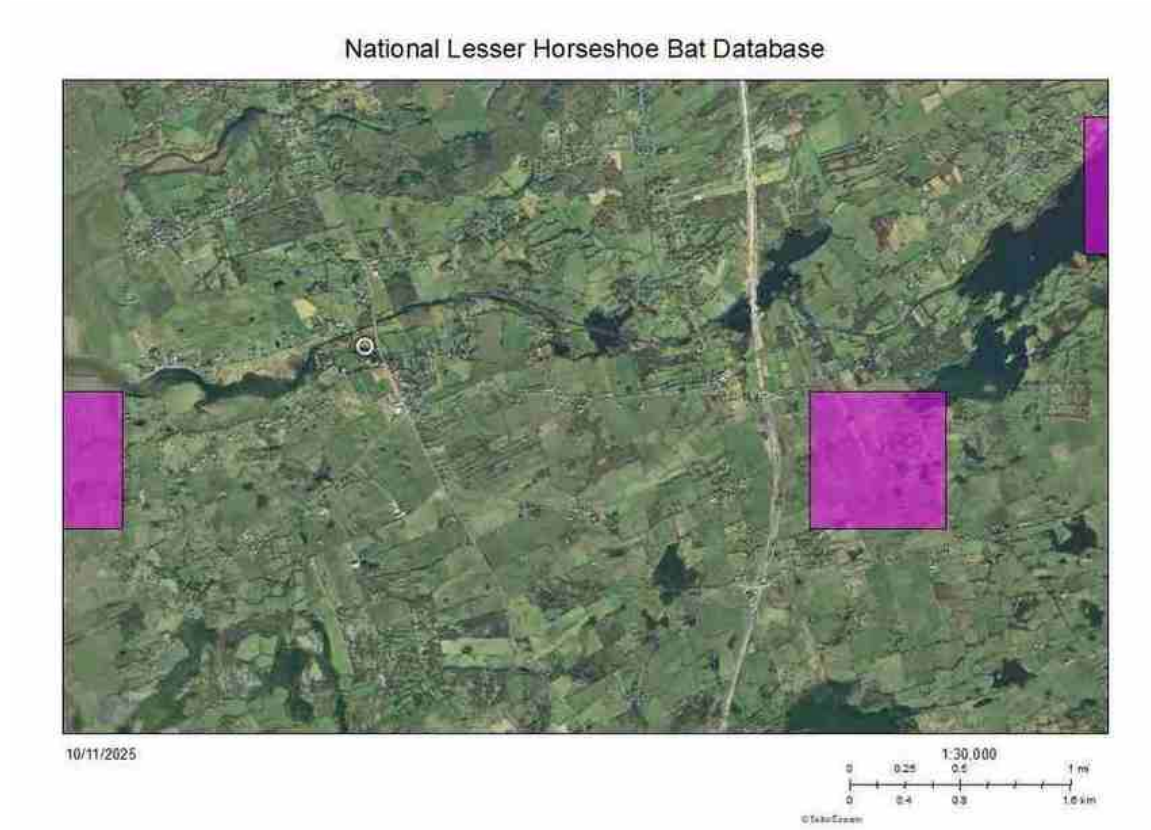
Table Error! No text of specified style in document.-1 bat records within 2km 2014-2024

Species	Year/location	Designation
Leisler	07/06/2018 , Circa 400m West of the site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Common Pipistrelle	04/08/2005, Circa 800m east of the site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Soprano Pipistrelle	14/09/2021 , Circa 1100m North-East of the site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Daubenton's Bat	07/06/2018 , Circa 400m West of the site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	10/02/1996, Circa 1.8km East of our site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex II Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Pipistrelle	21/08/2018, Circa 2km North of our site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Natterer's Bat	04/08/2005, 1.8km North-East of our site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts
Brown Long-eared Bat	25/08/2020, Circa 1.2km North of our site	Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive Protected Species: EU Habitats Directive >> Annex IV Protected Species: Wildlife Acts



The bat habitats at landscape scale database was reviewed and this shows the project site and environs is of the second highest suitability for all bats. See Figure below.





2.4.1.6 Recommendations

- The All Ireland Pollinator Plan provides useful guidance including to community groups for actions for pollinators, as well as actions for nocturnal pollinators which could comprise relevant actions for planting schemes or actions around the churchyard. Some are presented below and can all be accessed at the following link: [Resources » All-Ireland Pollinator Plan \(pollinators.ie\)](https://pollinators.ie)
- Only native tree /shrub policy- for hedging and trees planted in the grounds. Smaller shrub species may be appropriate, for example Guelder rose, spindle, crab apple and hazels. These do not grow large and providing foraging for wildlife. Essential that any species are of native stock.
- Should physical works be proposed, a bat survey in the activity season should be conducted and a breeding bird survey also completed.
- Vegetation should be removed outside of the bird nesting season.
- Consideration should be given to a grassland mowing regime that could provide for greater diversity of plant species and/or provision of nesting sites for insects as appropriate.

2.4.2 Associated archives and collections

At the time of writing there are no known archives associated with the monument at Killeely More. The National Museum of Ireland Topographical File Collection was consulted for artefact finds in the townland of Killeely beg and Killeely More. No stray artefact finds were recorded.

2.4.3 Placename evidence and dedication

The Placenames Database of Ireland contains the following information on the place name Killeely More. Killeely More is a townland in South Galway, in the barony of Dunkellin and the civil parish of Killeely (<https://www.logainm.ie/en/s?txt=killeely+more>, accessed 19 October 2025). The townland name is translated from the Irish *Cill Fhaoile Mhór* meaning *cill* (church) of *Fhaoile*. John O'Donovan (OSNB) translates this as 'St Feelia's Church'. The earliest record of the townland name is on the Down Survey, where the townland is spelt as *Killualida*

Table 2.2. Historical references to the placename Killeely listed by the Placenames Database of Ireland (<https://www.logainm.ie/en/20002>).

Date	Placename	Abbreviated Reference provided in Placenames Database of Ireland
1302	Killualida	CDI 5.220
1423	Kyllyle	CPL 7.253
1442	Kylheid	Arch. Hib. 26.76
1448	Kylhillayn	CPL 10,398
1451	Kilyle	CPL 10.520
1451	Kylylle	CPL 10.521
1484	Kyllyly	Arch. Hib. 14.68
1499	Chillyde, Kyllile, Chillide	Arch. Hib. 21.72
1500	Killily	Arch. Hib. 26.142
1565	Kyllyle	Arch. Hib. 26.157
1584	Kylealy	Inq 1.39
1585	Killeyle	Inq 1143
1585	Killyle	CBC 34
1585	Killyl	CBC 51
1588	Killyly	F. 5236
1608	Killile	Inq. 3.31
1610	Killily	CPR 177
1617	Killelly	Inq. 3.146
1617	Killillee	Inq 3.158
1645	Kill-faile	Colga acta Sanct. 456
1660	Killelly, Killylye	BSD 2.110
1660	Killilly	BSD 2.112
1677	Killeely	ASE 237.24
1838	Glebe of Killeelybeg	AL: BS
1838	Cil Ile, Cill Fhaidhle, Chil Faile	AL: OD
1838	Ecclesia Sanctae Failiae Virginis	AL: Colgan

2.4.4 Folklore

The Schools Collection contains the following entries for Killeely.

Killeely is the home of my ancestors. It is situated east of the village of Kilcolgan and it is in the parish of Clarinbridge. There is an old graveyard south-east of the village in which there is the remains of an old Church. It is supposed that this church was founded by St. Fiola who was a sister of St. Colga that founded a church near Kilcolgan. From this the village derived its name Cill Faoighle which in English means 'Killeely'
(Michael Murphy, Killeely. Age about 74 years).

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4569044/4566406/4574365?HighlightText=killeely&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

There lived in Killeely long ago a rich man. This man had three daughters named Fingin, Nora, Eillee. He had a big holding which he divided between his daughters. They each got a holding and they each built on their land. Fingin built her church in Killeely (cill-Fingin) and the village is called Killeely which means the Church of Fingin. Nora built her church in Killeora and the village is called Killeara which means the church of Nora. Eillee built her church in Killeely and the village is called Killeely which means the church of Eillee.
(Denis Kelly).

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4569046/4566566?HighlightText=killeely&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

Killeely, Killeely and Killeora, were three famous Churches built by three sisters, St Fingin built Killeely Church. St Favile built Killelly Church, St Nora built Killeora Church. Those three Churches were built by those three sisters. The three Churches got their names from the three sisters. Those three Churches were called the three sister Churches and it was said that if you stood in one Church you would see the other two Churches from it when they were built at first. There is nothing left to be seen in any of the Churches but the ruins of the four walls with ivy grown on them now. Those three Churches are three graveyards now. The three villages in which those three Churches were built got their names from the three Churches also. Those three Churches were knocked at the same time also (Michael Forde).

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4569046/4566548/4583524?HighlightText=killeely&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

In this district you very frequently meet old churches now almost a mass of ruins. Most of these grounds are now used as grave yards. They were all knocked in the Cromwellian period. These were also at one time great seats of learning. These were all built in Ireland's happiest and brightest periods. All these Churches had their schools attached to them. Here the Franciscans taught and out from Ireland went new scholars and her Saints to bring learning and religion to pagan Europe. Killeely, Killeely and Killora built and endowed by three princely sisters are the most noticeable in this district. The buildings are yet very substantial and are said to show much taste and design but Cromwells iron soldiers came and destroyed them all. Three beautiful [d] buildings are but sad witnesses of a glory that is past away (Michael Glynn).

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4569046/4566519?HighlightText=killeely&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

2.5 Surviving Remains



Fig. 2.26. Plan of Killeely More (after OESM).

Table 2.3. List of recorded features and labelled as part of this study

Label	SMR number	Element
A	GA103-131003-	Church
B	GA103-131004-	Graveyard
C	----	East window
D	----	North window
E	----	South window
F	----	Aumbrey and Piscina
G	----	Cupboard/Niche
H	----	Church door
i	----	West window
J	----	Joist holes/Priest's residence
K	---	Bullaun stone
L	----	Grave slabs
M	---	Graveyard wall
N	---	Gate
O	GA103-131007-	Holy well-does not exist
P	GA103-131005- & GA103-131002-	Ecclesiastical Enclosure and Deserted Medieval Village

2.5.1 Description



Figure 2.27 View of church and graveyard from E.

Killeely More church and graveyard site are located slightly sloping and undulating in the south Galway lowlands.

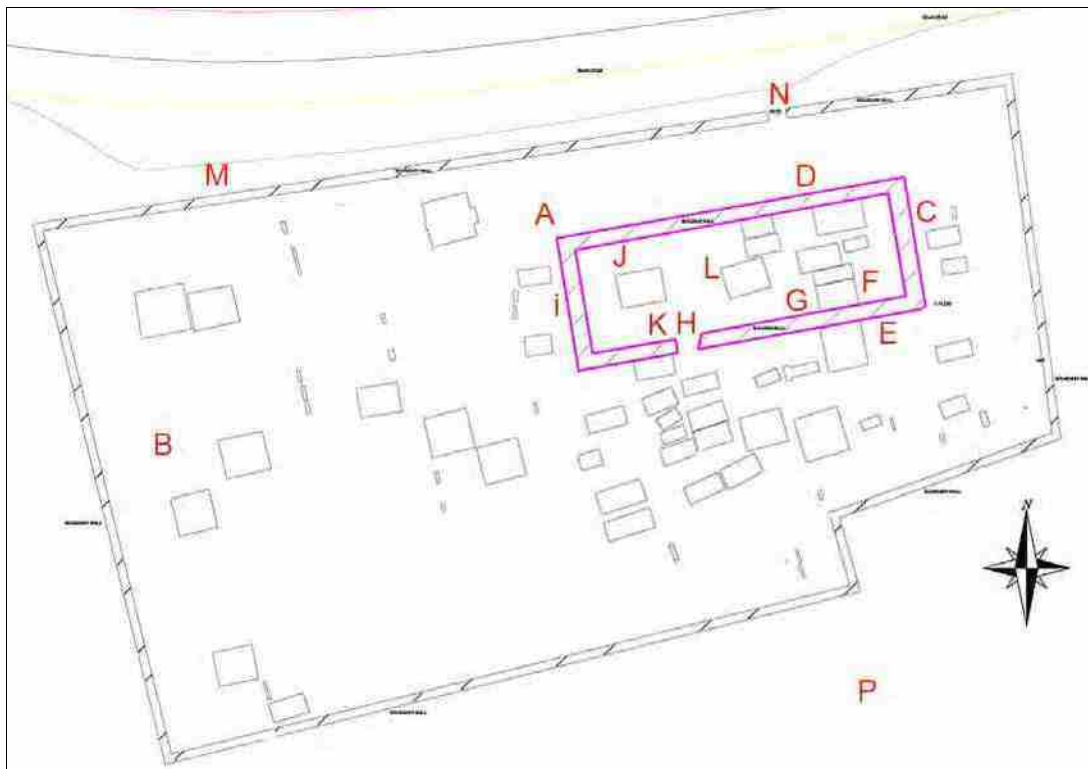


Figure 2.28. Plan of church and graveyard. Elements numbered as per descriptions below. (after OESM survey, annotated by writer).

Element A: Church
GA103-131003-

Within a graveyard (GA103-131004-) in Killeely More townland. The graveyard is partly within Killeely Beg townland. This rectangular late-medieval parish church 6.35m E-W; 19m N-S) is in quite good condition. Cyclopean masonry is visible in the N and S walls suggesting an earlier structure, possibly pre 12th century.

The pair of lancet windows in the E gable date to the 13th century, as do the windows in the N and S walls. An ornate piscina in the south wall with an early form of ogee head is also of thirteenth century date. Diagonal tooling of this period is also noted on the aumbry beside the piscina. Two overgrown areas in the S wall may represent additional windows

The masonry in the W side of the church is of poor quality random rubble. This is probably the result of rebuilding in the late 15th or early 16th century, when the pointed arch doorway was inserted. A priest's residence may also have been inserted at this time, and a new window inserted in the gable.



Figure 2.29. Church, from SW.

Element B: Graveyard
GA103-131004-

The graveyard is in reasonably good condition. The graves are reasonably accessible, although the grass is high. It measures approximately 60m E-W by 30m N-S.



Figure 2.30. Graveyard, from W.

Element C: East window

The e window consists of a pair of pointed lancet windows of 13th century date. Internally the remains of a sloping cill can be discerned.



Figure 2.31. East window, from SE.



Figure 2.32. Line of cill, from W.

Element D: North window

The N wall contains a cut stone single narrow lancet window with 13th century diagonal tooling. Internally, the form of the sloping cill can be discerned. To the east side of the window is a hole-its function is unclear.



Figure 2.33. Window in N wall, from NE.



Figure 2.34. Window in N wall, from S. Note hole to right of window.



Figure 2.35. Hole on E side of N window, from SE.

Element E: South window

The N wall contains a cut stone single narrow lancet window with 13th century diagonal tooling. Internally, the form of the sloping cill can be discerned.



Figure 2.36. External view of window in S wall, from S.



Figure 2.37. Internal view of window in S wall, from S. Note aumbrey and piscina below.

Element F: Piscina and Aumbrey in South wall

An aumbrey and piscina are located in the S wall at the E end of the church. An aumbrey is a cupboard or recess with a door in the wall of a church used for reservation of the Blessed Sacrament after the Eucharist or Mass, or for the Holy Oils. A piscina is a stone basin used for washing holy vessels used during Mass or Communion services. Piscinas are usually set into a niche in the church wall near the altar (usually to the south side of the sanctuary or chancel). There is a drain hole at the bottom of the piscina to allow water to escape. The ornate piscina in the south wall has an early form of ogee head, is also of thirteenth century date (<https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/content/archaeology/churches/killeely-church>). However, this piscina appears to have been inserted at this location at a later date to the window above.



Figure 2.38. Piscina and aumbrey, from S.



Figure 2.39. Piscina, from S.

Element G: Wall niche or cupboard in South wall

An wall niche is located about midway along the S internal wall. Its function is unclear.



Figure 2.40. Wall niche/cupboard, from S.



Figure 2.41. Wall niche/cupboard, from W.

Element H: Church door

The door in the south wall is in good condition. However, minor repairs may be necessary, as some of the masonry has become loose in the drawbar socket.

The door exhibits two phases of construction-an earlier 12th/13th century original stonework, and later 15th century pointed arch and replacement jambs.



Figure 2.42. Church door, from S.



Figure 2.43. Detail of hyphenated decoration and sparrow pecking on S door, from S.



Figure 2.44. Internal view of church door, from N. Note infill and cracked lintel over door.



Figure 2.45. Hanging eye for door on W side of entrance.



Figure 2.46. Concrete repairs on W side of door. Original door jamb missing at this side.

Element i: west window

2023 fieldwork

A narrow single light window is situated in the W gable. There has been extensive modern interventions around this window with part of what appears to be a metal gate used as a lintel. Externally, the narrow light has a flat lintel. O'Donovan record sin the O.S. Letters for County Galway (1838, 154) that there was a lancet window in the W gable.



Figure 2.47. Internal view of window in W gable, from E.

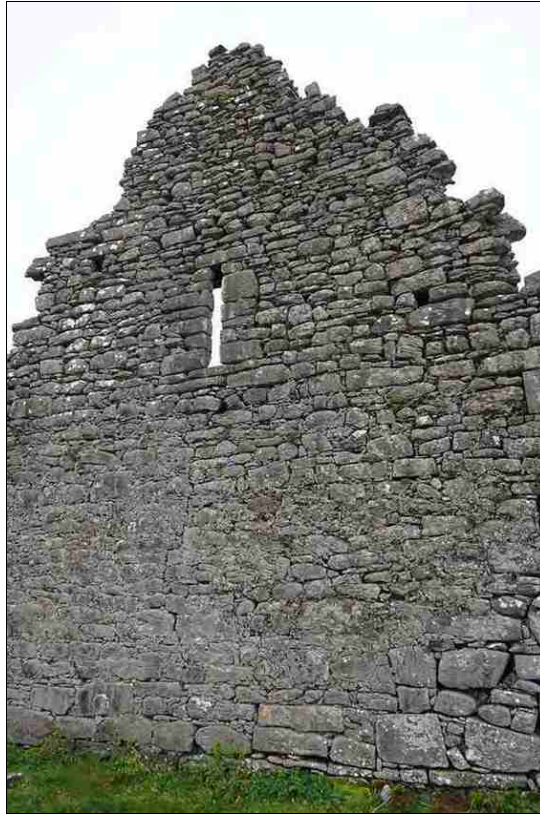


Figure 2.48. External view of W gable, from SW.



Figure 2.49. Detail of 15th century window (external), from W. Note cracked lintel.

Element J: Joist holes/Priests residence

2023 fieldwork

The grave is in reasonably good condition. It has a concrete surround, and a modern headstone. Two memorial plaques commemoration mark and Patsy Callanan are screwed to the wall, and held in place with cement on either side of the church door.



Figure 2.50. Joist holes in S wall, possible indication of a priest's residence, from N.



Figure 2.51. Joist holes in N wall, possible indication of a priest's residence, from S..

Element K: Bullaun stone
GA103-131006-

This bullaun stone lies immediately inside the door of the church. It is made from granite, , and measures 0.65m by 0.30m high, with the circular hollow measuring 0.33m in diameter and XXXm deep.



Figure 2.52. Bullaun stone.

Element L: Graveslabs on HEV

GA103-131008-, GA103-131009-, GA103-131010-, GA103-131011-, GA103-131012-, GA103-131013-, GA103-131014-, GA103-131015-

No information is available on the HEV for these graveslabs. All are located within the church.



Figure 2.53. Overgrown medieval grave slabs, from W.



Figure 2.54. Medieval slabs and architectural fragments, from E.

Element M: Graveyard wall

2023 fieldwork

The graveyard is surrounded by a dry stone wall, It is very overgrown, but the wall itself appears to be in good condition. Some very large stones are visible in its lowest courses adjacent to the entrance.



Figure 2.55. Graveyard wall, from NE.

Element N: Graveyard gate

The graveyard is access through a wrought iron gate and mortared stone piers. It appears to be of nineteenth century date. It is in good condition.



Figure 2.56. Graveyard gate, from S.

Element 0: Holy Well
GA103-131007-

There is no trace of a holy well at Killeely. The only evidence is a story from the Schools Manuscripts collection that says there was a well and that the farmer covered it over to stop his cattle falling in - but even in the 1930s there was no trace. The bullaun stone in the church may have been labelled a holy well at some stage (Z. hector, pers. comm.).

t

Element P: Ecclesiastical Enclosure and Deserted Medieval Village
GA103-131005- and GA103-131002-

2023 fieldwork

An Ordnance Survey benchmark stone is visible in the external face of the boundary wall close to the gate. This benchmark is indicated on the 25 inch Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1893 and published in 1895. Its value is annotated as 89.6 feet.

It is in good condition. It has been inscribed on an earlier architectural stone, possibly 12th/13th century. Its setting as the lower courses of the wall give it a good degree of protection from being stolen.

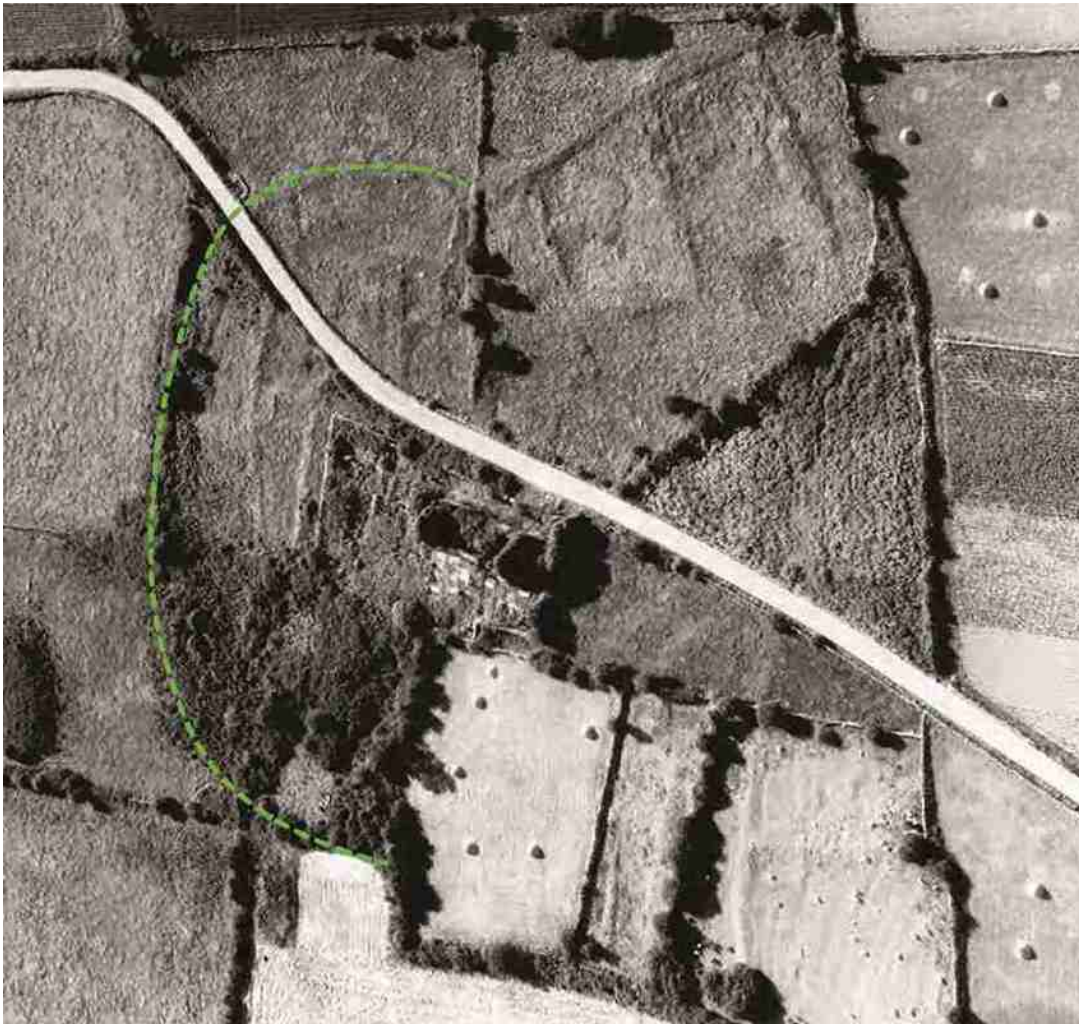


Figure 2.57. Enclosure and DMV on 1970 aerial photo. Possible line of ecclesiastical enclosure in green (annotated by writer)..



Figure 2.58. Earthworks surrounding the church on Google Earth image 10 March 2025.



Figure 2.59. Earthen bank in field at E of church, from NW.

2.5.2 Current management information

The site is in the ownership of Galway County Council.

2.5.3 Condition survey

During the recording of the site a detailed condition survey was undertaken on various dates between August and September 2023. The site is in good condition.

The graveyard itself is in quite good condition, with a variety of grave markers being utilised. A graveyard survey would be very useful.

2.6 Zone of Influence

Killeely More is located in the civil parish of Killeely. Killeely More has an area of 285.47 acres, while Killeely Beg has an area of 284.79 acres (<https://www.townlands.ie/en/galway/killeely/>). While the focus of this report is the church and graveyard at Killeely More, based on the fact that it is a parish church, its zone of influence can be said to extend to all the townlands in the parish. There is one possible medieval parish church listed in the SMR for the parish of Killeely. There are 25 townlands in the parish. 21 townlands contain recorded archaeological monuments

Table 2.4. List of townlands in the parish of Killeely.

Townland name English	Irish translation
Ballygarraiff	An Baile Garbh
Ballynabucky	Baile na bPoicáí
Ballynastaig (Dunkllin By).	Baile na Stéige
Caheraloggy East	Cathair an Langaigh Thoir
Caheraloggy West	Cathair an Langaigh Thiar
Caherweelder	Cathair Mhaoilir
Carrigeen East	An Carraigín Thoir
Carrigeen West	An Carraigín Thiar
Carrowmaneen	Ceathrú Mhainchín
Castlegar (no monuments)	An Caisleán Gearr
Deerpark (Rahasane ED)	Páirc na bhFianna
Dunkellin	Dún Coillín
Garraun (no monuments)	An Garrán
Killeely Beg	Caol Beag
Killeely More	Caol Mór
Lavally (Dunkellin By.)	An Leathbhaile
Lavallyconor	Leathbhaile Uí Chonchúir
Parkroe (no monuments)	An Pháirc Rua
Pollnagarragh East	Poll na gCarrach Thoir
Pollnagarragh West	Poll na gCarrach Thiar
Rahasane	Ráth Asáin
Rathmoyle (no monuments)	An Rath Maol
Rinn ((Killeely ED)	An Rinn
Roevehagh	An Ruabheitheach
Toberbracken	Tobar Beacáin

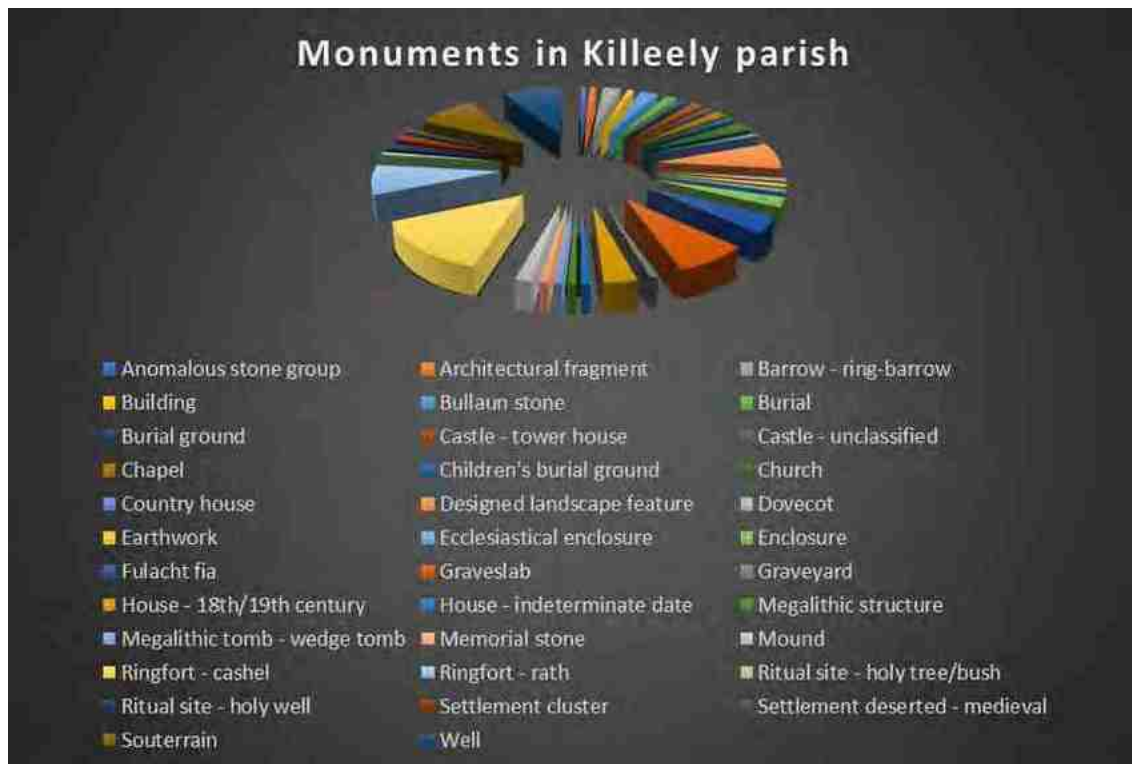


Figure 2.60. Distribution of monuments in Killeely parish.

Of the total of 112 recorded monuments in the parish, 9 grave slabs recorded at Killeely Church. 25 are either cashels or ringforts, or roughly a quarter of the sites are early Medieval settlement sites. There is one ecclesiastical enclosure also at Killeely. There is one medieval parish church listed in the SMR for the parish of Killeely. This is located at Dunkellin (GA103-120003-). Redington (1912, 68-9) suggested that the church might be of 13th-century date based on the surviving architectural features, which included the remains of 'three lancet windows' in the E gable. She also noted another window at the E end of the N side-wall and part of the W jamb of a doorway with 'broad chamfers' at the W end of the same wall. None of these features are now visible.

2.5. List of monuments and numbers in Killeely parish.

Monument Type	Number
Anomalous stone group	1
Architectural fragment	1
Barrow - ring-barrow	3
Building	1
Bullaun stone	3
Burial	2
Burial ground	1
Castle - tower house	2
Castle - unclassified	1
Chapel	2
Children's burial ground	1
Church	3
Country house	1
Designed landscape feature	8
Dovecot	1
Earthwork	1
Ecclesiastical enclosure	1
Enclosure	3
Fulacht fia	5
Graveslab	9
Graveyard	1
House - 18th/19th century	4
House - indeterminate date	1
Megalithic structure	1
Megalithic tomb - wedge tomb	1
Memorial stone	1
Mound	2
Ringfort - cashel	16
Ringfort - rath	9
Ritual site - holy tree/bush	1
Ritual site - holy well	2
Settlement cluster	2
Settlement deserted - medieval	1
Souterrain	10
Well	10

Figure 2.44. Pie chart showing numbers of monuments by type.

3. Statement of Significance

This section shows the assessment and statement of heritage significance which is an essential aspect of the plan. It sets out why Killeenly More Church and Graveyard is important, which encompasses a variety of reasons of equal merit.

3.1 Key Values: Assessment of Significance

A variety of guidance informs this assessment (Bond and Worthing, 2016; Clark, 2001; CPRE, 2004; DAHG, 2011; DCHG, 2017; English Heritage, 2000; 2008; Historic England, 2019; Lithgow and Thackray, 2009: 17; Semple Kerr, 2013). Killeely More was assessed using a number of stated criteria ‘a family of heritage values’ (Fig. 3.1; see English Heritage, 2000 for context; English Heritage, 2008: 23; Historic England, 2019: 16).

‘Value’ and ‘significance’ are loaded terms, embodying different things to different groups. In this report it is defined as ‘an aspect of worth or importance, ascribed by people to qualities of places or monuments’. Value is categorised: aesthetic, communal, evidential or historical. These valuations are subjective, and are thus defined as an assessment

that reflects the values of the person or group making that assessment. Significance is defined as the *sum* of the cultural and natural heritage values (English Heritage 2008, 24, 60). This assessment has

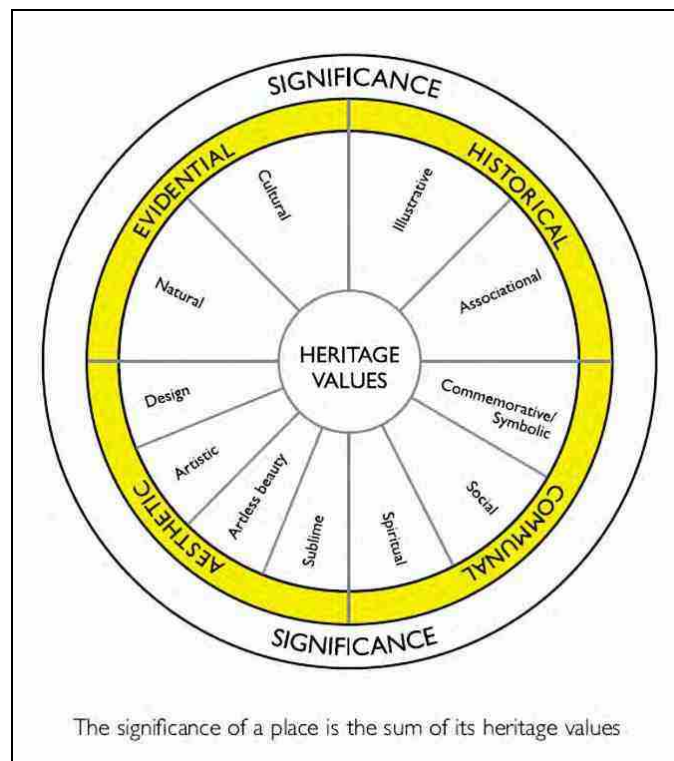


Figure 3.1. Chart illustrating values in an assessment of significance (after English Heritage 2007).

been compiled with consultation and is tabularised in Table 3.1. It has used English Heritage's heritage values (2008) and more recent heritage interest guidance (Historic England 2019, 16).

Table 3.1. Assessment of significance of Killeely More Church and Graveyard.

Value Category	Heritage Value (interest)	Assessment
Evidential	Archaeological and Cultural	Killeely More Church and Graveyard has a high evidential value as it is an excellent example of a late parish medieval church and surrounding graveyard.
	Natural	Killeely More has some potential for supporting research in disciplines such as wildlife species (bats) and their habitats. It has the potential to become a site for increased biodiversity in a landscape increasingly dominated by housing dominated by grazing.
	Architectural (architectural)	Killeely More Church has an architectural value as it contains It has evidence of three phases of construction. The graveyard also contains a variety of headstones, graveslabs and tomb types.
Historical	Illustrative (historic)	Killeely More Church and Graveyard is considered to be of some historical value as it is an excellent example of a parish church.
Communal	Commemorative/Symbolic	
	Social	It currently has a relatively low social value but has the potential to raise its social value, significantly, through increased awareness such as the dissemination of information and improvements in access.
	Spiritual	The monument has a significant spiritual value having several elements associated with late medieval parish church,
	Landscape and amenity	The landscape and amenity value of the Killeely More Church and Graveyard is high. It is set in a beautiful flat countryside of south Galway It has potential for amenity in the form of a destination point for visitors interested in the architecture of late medieval Ireland, as well as Irish and international visitors who have an interest in the literature of eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland The site is easy to access with limited parking, (sections 4; 5; and 6).
Aesthetic	Sublime (artistic)	Killeely More church and graveyard is considered as being of 'sublime' aesthetic value, as its architectural design and surrounding graveyard are fine examples of late medieval ecclesiastical archaeology.
	Artless Beauty, Artistic and Art Historical	Killeely More Church and Graveyard is not considered as having an 'artless beauty', in itself but in its local setting is regionally important.
	Design (architectural and artistic)	Killeely More Church and Graveyard is a pleasing design and a typical example of its type.

3.2 Statement of Significance

Killeely More Church and Graveyard is of regional significance as an fine example a multi-period medieval church. It has its origins in the 11-th-early 12th century. It contains numerous elements that one would expect to find in a late medieval church and graveyard, for example, the church which exhibits at least three phases of construction, medieval grave slabs, fine examples of nineteenth century headstones and graveslabs and table tombs. It maintains historic links with the local community, and visitors.

4. Risk: Defining Management Issues and Assessing Vulnerability

There are some factors that are either already risks or are potential risks to Killeely More Church and Graveyard that make the monument vulnerable (Table 4.1). There are also a number of opportunities that would improve the overall condition and environment of the monument which would protect it for future generations to enjoy (Table 4.2). This section assesses those risks and lists potential opportunities, while the following section 5 makes suggestions to mitigate risks and presents options for stabilisation or re-use of the monument.

Table 4.1. List of risks and vulnerabilities to Killeely More Church and Graveyard (relative risks: Low; Medium; High).

Risks and vulnerabilities No.	Sub-risks	Commentary	Relative risk level
1. Fabric Condition	Current condition Future deterioration Issues and lessons learned	Structurally, the fabric of the church is in relatively stable state. However the doorway is in a precarious state, as the lintel is cracked over the N window. .. Conservation without regular maintenance is of limited effectiveness.	M
2. Use levels: changes and appropriateness	Levels of use over time and changes to use Access Vandalism Antisocial behaviour	There is no evidence of antisocial behaviour (littering, graffiti) or vandalism. This is publicly accessible graveyard. There is a dedicated walkway to lead the visitor to Raftery's grave. walkways to control circulation.	L
3. Site constraints	Resources Statutory controls Boundaries Other legal constraints	Funding is intermittent and ad hoc, being available in emergencies. Statutory controls are beneficial and serve to protect monument as an archaeological monument. Local authority policies are supportive. Boundaries are unclear on ground, the complex is in private ownership, though access is freely permitted. There is no formal management plan for maintenance in place	L
4 Wider context issues	Siting Proper knowledge, understanding and appreciation of monument Other external factors	The siting of the monument is good. While the site is very well known locally and perhaps regionally; few know the detail of its history, archaeology or architectural features.	H

4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

As part of this assessment, a SWOT analysis was undertaken in an attempt to tease out strengths and opportunities for the monument in order to capitalise on these aspects, while acknowledging the inherent weaknesses and threats to the monument—which fed into the risks considered in Table 4.1. Strengths and weaknesses relate to internal forces, while opportunities and threats are external forces to the monument, some of which, it must be acknowledged may not be easily controlled or mitigated for in the future (see section 5). In some cases, forces might be considered both a strength and also a threat.

Table 4.2. Results of SWOT analysis.

<i>Internal forces</i>	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
	S1. Fine example of a late medieval parish church, with evidence of earlier cyclopean masonry (pre-12 th century) 13 th century original fabric, and later 15 th century alterations.	W1. The location of the graveyard and church at a dangerous stretch of road. There is limited parking available however. .
	S2. Generally, in good condition and repairs required relate primarily to the gables and door. The S window is also in need of attention.	W2. There is no maintenance regime and graveyard is overgrown with long grass.
	S3. Within a short drive from the main roads and the Wild Atlantic Way	W3. Access to monument is not demarcated. Visitors access from the main road. It is not connected to known waymarked walking routes.
	S5. Many tourists visit the Wild Atlantic Way, Killeely More More Church and Graveyard site presents an opportunity to visit a medieval parish church, and the grave of the renowned Gaelic poet, and other regionally important poets such as the Callanan brothers.	W4. While there is information available at the site, the signage is dated.
<i>External forces</i>	Opportunities (O)	Threats (T)
	O1. Many local authority policy objectives in both the Development Plan and local authority initiatives encourage the re-use of heritage sites.	T1. Future climate changes may see monument inundated. Strong winds/gales have a detrimental effect on structural fabric.
	O2. There are increasing opportunities for new novel tourism products Galway and its hinterland, such as walking tours and looped walks.	T2. Urgent repairs needed..
	O3. Community Monument Funding or Heritage Council funding for conservation, a plan and maintenance into the future and other funding opportunities.	
	O4. Opportunities for research projects.	

4.2 Gap Analysis

Killeely Church is currently overgrown with ivy on its western gable, which is obscuring the graves externally on its western side. This ivy is due to be trimmed as apart of his project. The graveyard is accessible, through a wicket gate and partway from south. This path is now uneven, and requires relaying. This path leads to the grave of Anthony Raftery, which is indicated by signage erected in the 1950s. With a moderate amount of conservation work and signage it will become an important destination, where the architecture of a medieval parish church can be appreciated, and where the grave of one of Ireland’s pre-eminent Gaelic poets can be visited. A number of options as to how this ‘vibrant place’ might be practically achieved are outlined in section 5.3.

5. Conservation Management Policy Aims

5.1 Policy Context

Conservation policies for Killeely Church and Graveyard are based on the statement of significance assigned in section 3.2, the relative levels of significance in section 3.3, and identified vulnerabilities outlined in section 4. This in turn informs positive strategic aims that can be achieved through the conservation policies below. The implementation of these policies is ideally via a future agreed action plan between all the stakeholders (section 6). The process is informed by a vision statement formulated after the statement of significance. These policies are aligned to the objectives set out in local authority documentation (appendix 8.6).

5.2 Vision

Killeely church and Graveyard shall be conserved, maintained and introduced to a new generation of visitors. Its ultimate conservation and repair as an archaeological monument, shall maintain its integrity, authenticity, and significance for future generations. Its conservation and ongoing maintenance shall be sensitive to its original use as a medieval parish church.. Knowledge and understanding about the monument and its setting shall be advanced. Measures shall be taken to ensure the continued protection of character of the monument.

5.3 Future Options and Appraisal

Following consultation and research on similar projects as a benchmarking exercise, the following options were suggested. It is important to note that (excepting the “do-nothing” option required for comparison; EPA 2017) only options that respect the statement of significance and embody the vision for the monument were listed (table 5.1). All options are in keeping with local authority objectives and national regulation (appendices 8.6; 8.7). A major advantage is that there is already an electricity supply to the lighthouse cottage and a new fuse board installed. A general heritage impact assessment for capital works has been undertaken as part of this study (appendix 8.5).

Table 5.1. Options and individual appraisal matrix.

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Outline of Extent of Works Required
1. Do Nothing	No cost implications	Monument will rapidly become ruinous	N/a
2. Stabilisation	Lower cost implications Considerations such as visitor welfare and access do not need addressing.	Monument will in time become ruinous.	Establish a programme of regular maintenance.
3. Repair	Maintaining complex for future generations to enjoy. Improve access for visitors	Cost implications; Schedule of future maintenance required to keep building sound; Future cost implications	Repairs to structure around door, S window and gables. Medieval grave slabs exposed..
4. Re-purpose for public presentation as part of looped walk or trail.:	In addition to 3. above public access (physical and intellectual) will be promoted.	Increased footfall and insertion of information boards etc. may lead to increased erosion on site.	Information panel to be added.

5.4 Management Policies

Overarching conservation policies are recommended for the conservation of Killeely More Church and Graveyard regardless of the preferred option from table 5.1. They are in no particular order. The themes are deliberately broad and there is some overlap where policies straddle a number of topics:

Table 5.2 Conservation management plan policies.

Policy Number	Policy	Description
CMPP1	Protection	There will be the presumption in favour of retaining and conserving all <i>in situ</i> portions of the monument of all periods whether they are extant or sub-surface as important contributions to the character development of the monument. The levels of significance in this document will be adhered to. Ensure the protection of the monument as an architectural/archaeological resource by allowing architectural/archaeological investigations only where it is deemed necessary, justifiable and appropriate and where such work will contribute to a better understanding of the monument. Any work should be in accordance to an agreed research framework. No interventions for conservation or architectural/archaeological purposes shall be permitted without agreed and approved provision for research, recording, analysis, publication and archiving. Under the current legislation at the time of writing, consents are required for such works.
CMPP2	Future conservation, prioritisation of repairs, inspection and maintenance	To conserve the monument and to provide an effective and continuous maintenance programme thereafter for conservation and repair through a programme of works (see section 6 below). The following policies are adopted for repair and conservation works: To be done on a phased basis, in a sustainable way; Archival quality photographic record to be undertaken prior to conservation works; To provide a suitable environment in which conservation workers and visitors are accommodated to ensure safety; To save money in the longer term through effective maintenance; No damp proof courses to be inserted in structures that did not have one previously; That lead should be repaired. If possible, all lead should be replaced with a lead alternative. There are several new materials available which, apart from the environmental benefits, would also prevent future vandalism and theft as it would have no re-sale value; During these works, information and interpretation will be provided to explain what is happening and to increase public awareness and understanding. A regular programme of inspection should commence for the monument by a designated person, which could include for safety, structural and conservational issues. It is recommended that this take place on a regular basis for the purposes of monitoring the stability of the monument. Appropriate craftspeople and professionals will be utilised for all work where feasible. Training will be provided for continued maintenance personnel. Advice from regulatory bodies such as the NMS architectural division should be sought in this regard. The Heritage Officer to approve all specialist contractors and conservation specialists. There is a presumption against removal of material from a historic location. Consideration in favour of repair rather than replacement should always be applied in the first instance. Where materials cannot be salvaged from the monument and re-used, new local materials may be sourced, with appropriate regulation followed.
CMPP3	Understanding,	The known recorded history and archaeology have been recorded in this

	Education and Research, Access	document. An oral history project was beyond the remit of this plan but there may be a wealth of local oral history and tradition associated with the monument that has yet to be recorded. An oral history project could collect this information in order to increase public awareness and to provide opportunities for increased awareness. Encourage research and understanding, for all, including 1st and 2nd level curriculum development and through a variety of media. For example, interpretive tools which would include but not be limited to maps, guides, trails, videos, DVD, posters, an information board, an educational pack, which are publicly accessible. Develop ideas to provide for both physical and intellectual access of the monument. This should take into account disability and other pertinent legislation, and might include signage in Braille, or access to support those with limited mobility. The interpretation of the monument will be as holistic as is possible to include histories, natural, cultural, social history and archaeology in the context of the wider landscape of south Galway.
CMPP4	Management	A graveyard committee is already in place, and should undertake ongoing decision-making and conflict resolution where it may occur. The steering committee to take responsibility for funding support and ongoing budgeting.
CMPP5	Archive management (paper archive; collections, contents)	Steering committee to oversee the creation of an ongoing archive of records of conservation work as it proceeds and the ongoing collection of material of relevance.
CMP6	Environment and wider landscape context	Cognisance to be taken of the ecology of the monument and its surroundings. An ecology survey should be considered in advance of any conservation/re-purposing work and undertaken at the correct time of year. Care should be taken to preserve the current landscape setting of the monument in so far as is practicable.

6. Action Plan: Future Implementation

Table 6.1 outlines a plan of action in order to achieve the management policies and vision for Killeely More Church and Graveyard while strictly adhering to its statement of heritage significance. It is suggested that a steering committee be formed of stakeholders to take responsibility for the actioning of this plan (CMPP4).

Table 6.1 Conservation management plan actions (short within 1 year; medium 2-3 years; long 4-5 years).

Action No.	Description	Management policy reference	Action duration (short, medium, long term)
			Short
			Short
			Short
			Short
			Short
			Medium
			Medium
			Medium
9	Complete removal of ivy and a programme of consolidation and repair of the church.	2	Long

6.2 Indicative Costs

Table 6.2. Indicative costs.

Task	Net (Euro)	Vat 13.5%	Vat 23%

7. Conclusion

This is a conservation management plan and statement of heritage significance for Killeely More Church and Graveyard. This site has been a vital part of the heritage of Killeely Parish since its establishment in at least 11th/12th century. A condition survey was carried out as part of this report, and a detailed inventory of the features and issues compiled.

The condition survey has identified a number of issues and has made recommendations as to how to remedy these issues. However, the overarching conclusion is that, with appropriate intervention, Killeely More Church and Graveyard can become a stop for visitors to south Galway, who have an interest in church archaeology and graveyards brothers.

Killeely More Church and Graveyard has been part of the landscape south Galway since at least the 11th century, and with care and attention will continue well into the twenty-first century and beyond.

8. Project References

The following were consulted during the course of the project and have not necessarily been cited in the text.

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9. Signing-Off Statement

Archaeological Firm: ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Writer: Frank Coyne MA MIAI,
Aegis Archaeology,

Client: Galway County Council

Signed:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Frank Coyne', written over a horizontal line.

For ÆGIS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

Report status: Draft

Dated: 13 November 2025

10. Appendices

10.1 Engineers report *by John Britten*

10.2 Survey drawings and images *by OESM*

**Killeely Church, Kilcolgan, Co. Galway – Interim
Report on Potential Stone Lintel and Archway
Collapse; our ref. 1827**

1. Introduction, Instruction

This report is prepared on the instruction of Ms. Bernie Doherty, Community Archaeologist, Galway County Council. A site visit was arranged for March 14th 2024 attended by Ms. Doherty and John Britton of John Britton Consulting Structural and Civil Engineers.



2. Background, Location

2.1 The church is understood to be no later than early mediaeval and may have been constructed between the years 1000 CE and 1200 CE. This is indicated in particular by the extensive use of cyclopean limestone masonry.

2.2 The church is orientated East–West, parallel to and 6m from the L4501 road, approximately 1km east of Kilcolgan, County Galway. The church is rectangular in footprint, measuring 21.15m by 8.03 metres externally, and 19.15m by 6.30m internally.



2.3 The doorway of concern is on the southern elevation and approximately one-quarter of the distance between the west end of that southern elevation and its east end.

2.4 Both gables and both flank walls are substantially in place, but all need some conservation and stabilisation works to ensure that they are preserved. It is understood that a Conservation Management Plan might be authorised in the coming months. This interim report does not seek to address matters other than those related to the stability of the masonry over the doorway.

3. At-Risk Doorway

3.1 The external, southern, side of the doorway is approximately 1.1m wide and has carved stone framing, including a pair of curved arch stones approximately over the reveal lines of the doors. Better stability would have been achieved if the springing points were even as little as 50mm beyond the reveal lines. Very little of the original mortar survives in this south-facing external wall.



3.2 The west reveal steps inwards approximately 100mm behind the carved stone framing and then runs square to the inner face of the wall. The east reveal also steps in approximately 100mm behind the carved stone framing and runs in a splayed manner to the inner face of the wall. The doorway is 1.6m wide on the line of the inner face of the wall.



3.3 The inner door head is formed in a 400mm wide by 100–125mm deep stone lintel spanning that 1.6m clear distance between the support lines. A flattened semicircle of stone is constructed above the lintel, with its crown 600mm above the soffit of the stone lintel. There is a relieving arch and stone masonry above this, also appearing to be of well-selected and largely unworked field stone. The springing point of the arch appeared to be bearing on more solid masonry beyond the reveal lines.



3.4 The underside of the lintel has cracked badly near its mid span: the crack is opened to approximately 10mm wide in places. There is significant risk of collapse.



4. Causes of this Crack

4.1 The crackling appears to have opened over the past five years or so; the faces of the stone within the crack do not appear weathered. If the stone lintel satisfactorily carried the load of the stone overhead for hundreds of years and then appears to have cracked relatively recently, one must ask has there been a change in the status quo to cause such cracking.



4.2 The soffit of the lintel is planar either sides of the crack, indicating that the crack is not the result of settlement of the masonry to one or both sides of the doorway. The most likely reason for the crack therefore is flexural tension.



4.3 The span:depth ratio of the lintel is approximately 12 to 14. This is not excessive if the lintel were just to carry the 600mm of flattened semi-circular stone build-up above the lintel up to the underside of the relieving arch. The elastic flexural stresses in such a lintel, if averaging 125mm deep, carrying such a load over this span, are approximately 4MPa. The lintel is of limestone which is a naturally occurring material. Its tensile strength parallel to its bedding planes can be somewhat variable. However a flexural tensile stress of 4MPa would appear to be the generally accepted minimal tensile strength of limestone.

4.4 It appears likely therefore that the stone lintel has, in recent years and maybe even in recent months, been subjected to additional loading. The most likely source of such additional loading would appear to be from the relieving arch overhead.

4.5 As noted above much of the outer face mortar has been lost. There has been substantial water ingress, both laterally and vertically, for centuries. This in turn may have caused further loss of mortar, particularly at the core of the wall, where weaker mortar might have been used.

4.6 Such a loss of mortar can form paths for water from the top surface of the wall and also from the south-facing external face of the wall. This water might have been running diagonally and vertically down toward the lintel below. The ingress of water, as noted, can cause mortar erosion and loss. It can also cause washout of small pinning stones, which are crucial to the transfer of compression forces in the relieving arch. The water ingress can also cause freeze-thaw damage. It appears likely the combination of one or more of these three types of deterioration has caused a weakening of the relieving arch overhead.



4.7 If such a weakening of the relieving arch occurred then it might have slipped, even by as little as 5mm, in such a manner that the centre of the relieving arch is placing its load onto the centre of the flattened semicircle of masonry above the lintel. This load must pass down to the lintel.



4.8 The top of the wall is 1.6m above the underside of the lintel. If there has been some survival of informal arching action higher up the wall, to pass some of this load to either side of the doorway below, there may still be as much as 800mm or 900mm of masonry passing its load, via the slightly slipped arch to the lintel below.

4.9 The flexural stresses and the lintel below, in this scenario, would have risen to 8MPa. This higher flexural stress may well be the cause of the tensile crack in the soffit of the lintel. If informal arching action is not working, the tensile stress could be as high as 16MPa.

4.10 It is considered likely that there may well have been similar slight deterioration of the external relieving arch, which may be placing load under the carved stone framing to the external face of the doorway. The geometry of the carved stone framing may be better able to resist this load than the relatively thin, flat stone lintel to the interface. However, given that the lower western mullion of that framing is missing, it would be prudent to consolidate the relieving arch on the external face of that doorway before it passes any further load to the carved stone door framing.



5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Fence off the doorway to prevent access under this unstable masonry.
- 5.2 Place Acrow-type props on steel spreader plates, ensuring a minimum of 600mm clear between the props and the protection round those props for access for works. This should prevent immediate collapse and would be required for the safety of any persons carrying out works over the lintel. However Acrow-type propping is not a safe or suitable solution for any period of more than just a few weeks.
- 5.3 Props need to be two to each side with a safe working load of 1.2 tonnes at an extension of 2.25m. The grass at the base of the doorway should be carefully removed without disturbing the soil build-up below that grass. The feet of the props should be provided with a single 600x300x12 spreader plate, on a thin bed of sand, to each side of the doorway. The tops of the props should have timber spreaders and packers to the underside of the lintel.
- 5.4 Carefully remove a small quantity of the packing stone between the lintel and the relieving arch near the springing point to one side. Take care to avoid disturbing the relieving arch stones or allowing them to come loose. Rebuild this packing stone with lime mortar mix allowed to cure for minimum 4 – 5 days; and longer if the curing conditions are not good. Repeat this operation near the springing point on the other side of the doorway and allow cure for a similar. Repeat the operation again on the centre one-third of the packing stones under the crown of the arch.
- 5.5 Consolidate the arch in-situ with grout so that it can once again safely bear the load of the stone overhead without relying on the lintel below. This grouting or consolidation work would require some local pointing on both faces of the wall above the door head level, and sponge packing to the underside where there is unbound masonry between the lintel and the carved external door head.
- 5.6 Provide 2 no. stainless steel plates to the underside of the lintel. Fix the plate to the underside of the lintel with M8 stainless steel pins, resin-anchored 75mm into the stone lintel. Minimum 4 no. pins each plate each side of the crack; minimum 16 no. total; allow 20 no. Grout any space between the steel plating and the underside of the stone lintel with relatively high-strength grout: 5N Coulinex or similar.
- 5.7 Leave all in place for a minimum of 14 and preferably 28 days. Carefully remove the Acrow props over a period of a day or two, releasing the load by one-quarter turn of the Acrow prop at a time, monitoring the stonework overhead throughout.

6. Longer-Term Considerations

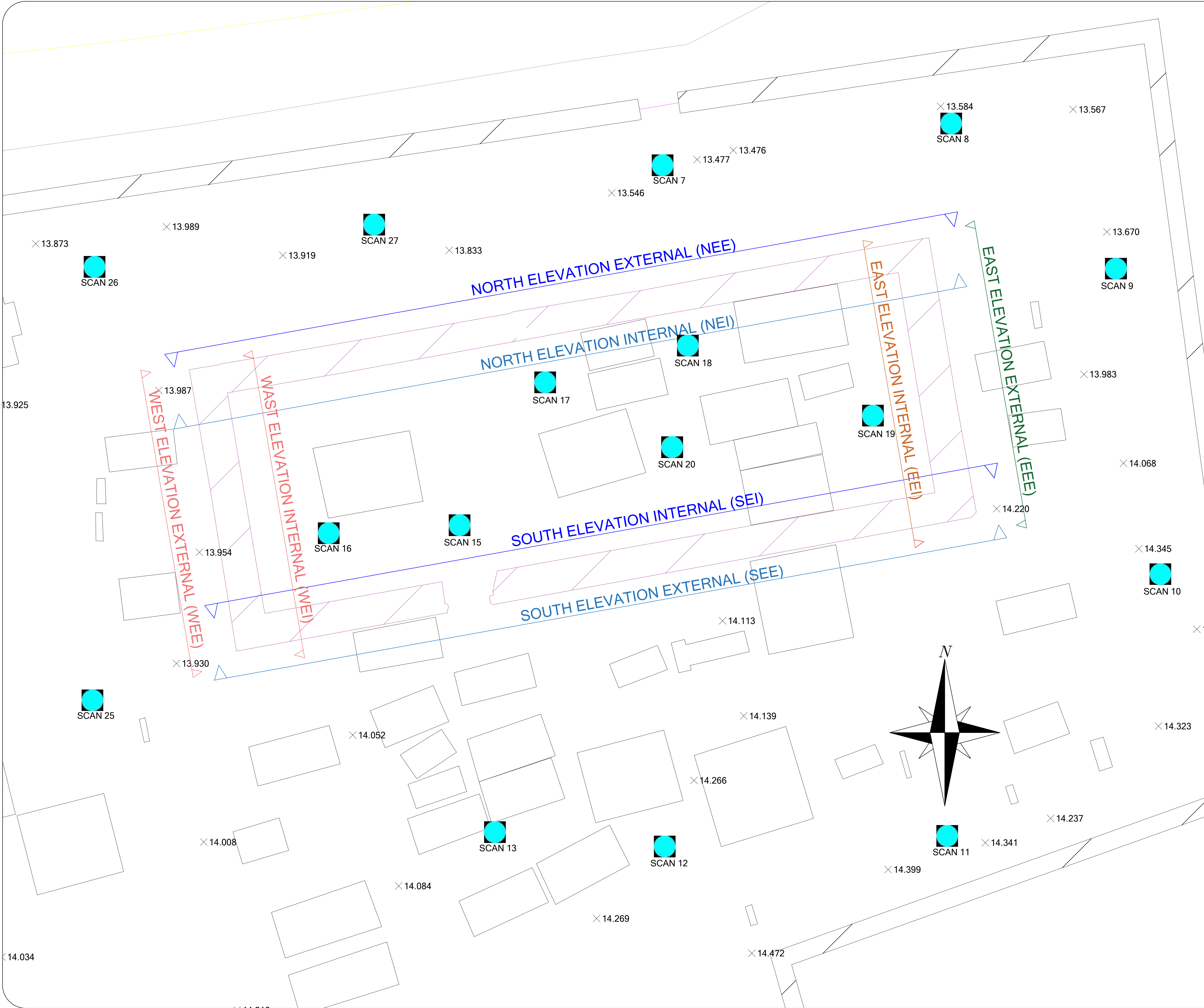
The ingress of water must be minimised if not arrested, as this is, as noted above, the cause of a combination of freeze/thaw damage, mortar erosion and washout of pinning stones. Soft capping to the tops of walls, while visually attractive, simply does not prevent vertical water ingress. Rough-rack capping to the top of the wall, in a generous bed of lime mortar; and reinstatement of pointing to the vertical faces has a far better chance of significantly reducing such vertical and horizontal water ingress.

***John Britton Consulting
Structural & Civil Engineers***

A limited extent of consolidation of the gable could be carried out in conjunction with such rough-racking works. This would prevent the further collapse of the (currently precarious) stonework at the top of the gables.

I note however that such longer-term considerations are not within the current brief, which is two weeks to address the instability of the masonry over the doorway.

John Britton
Chartered Structural Engineer



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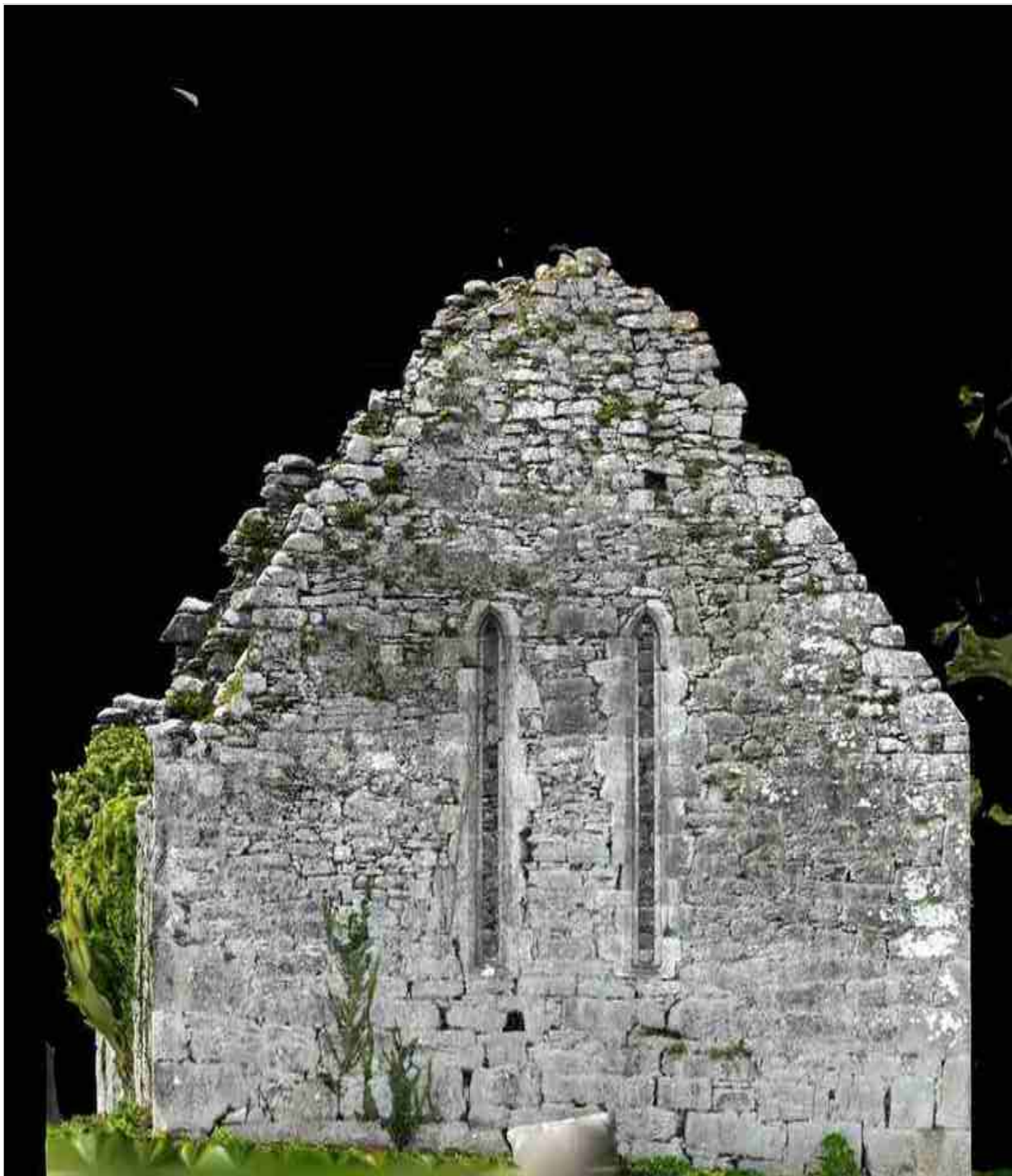
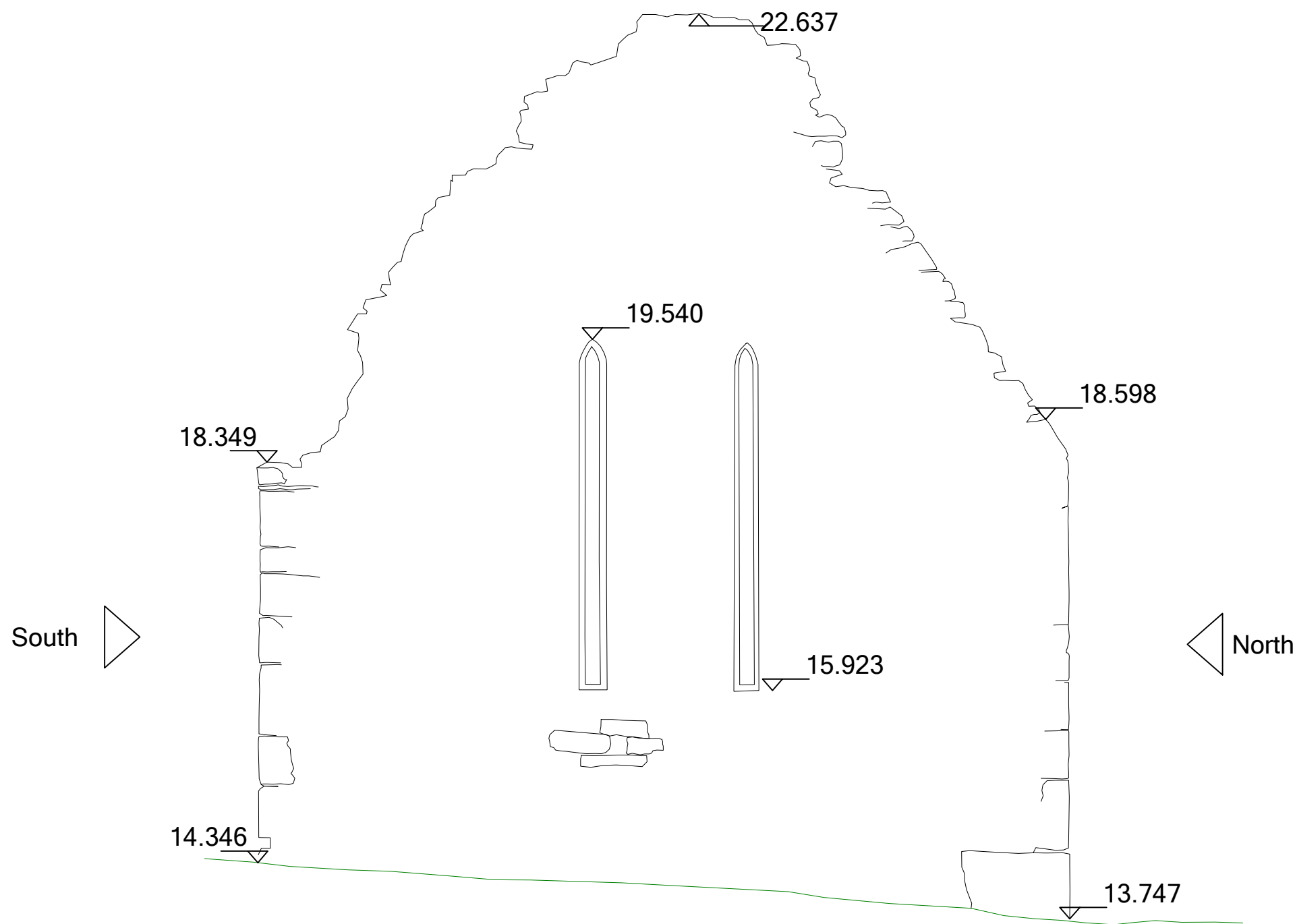
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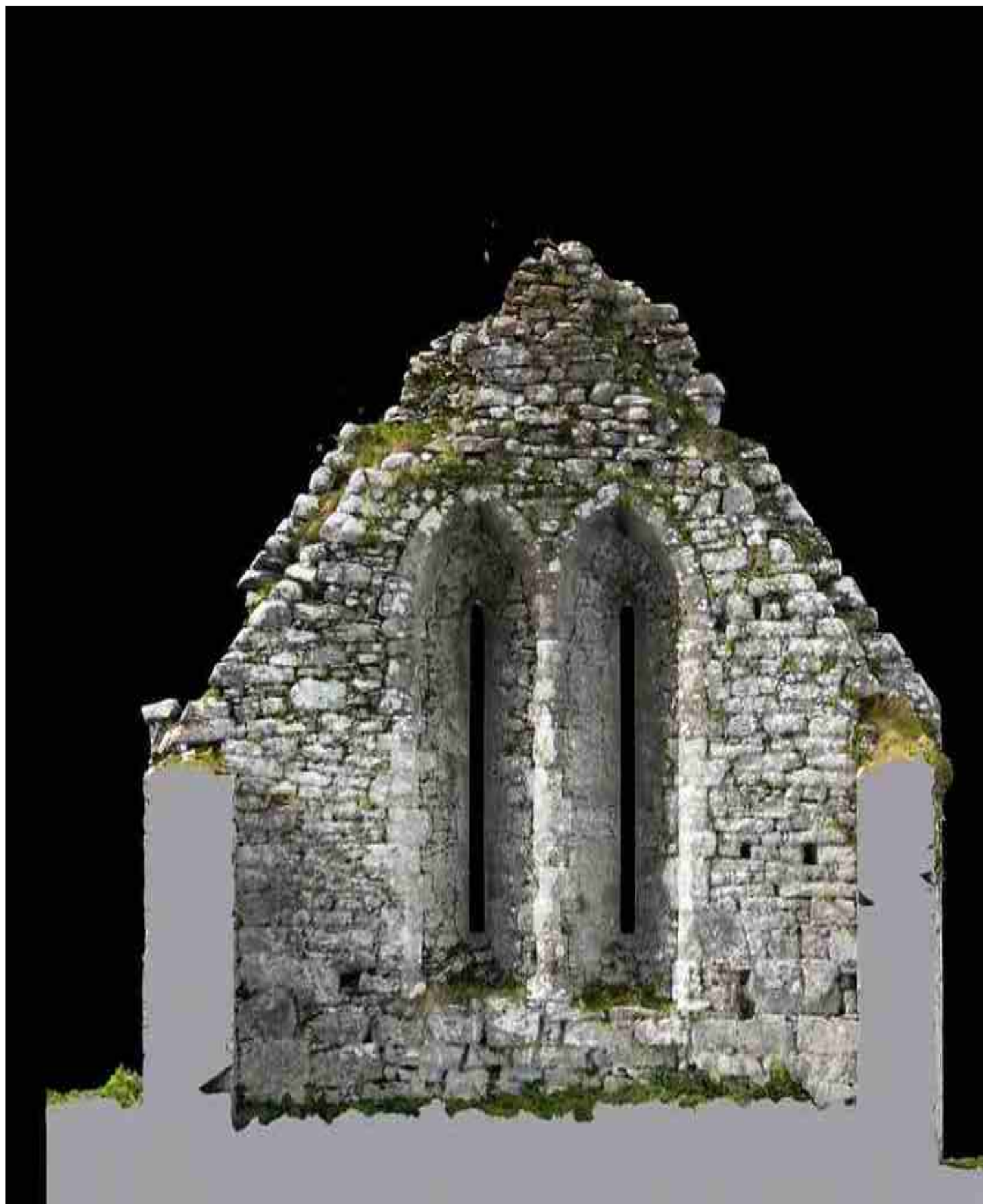
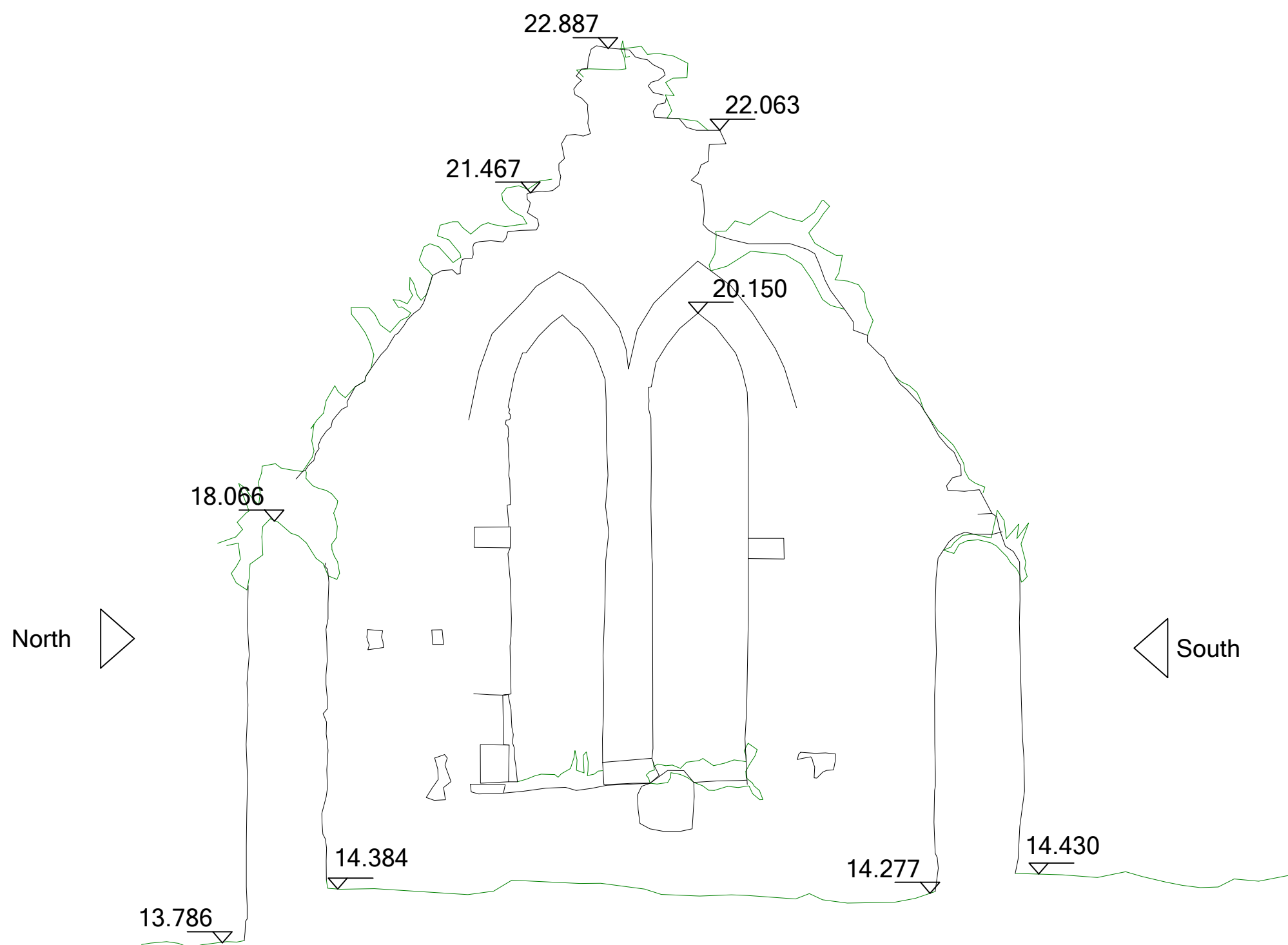
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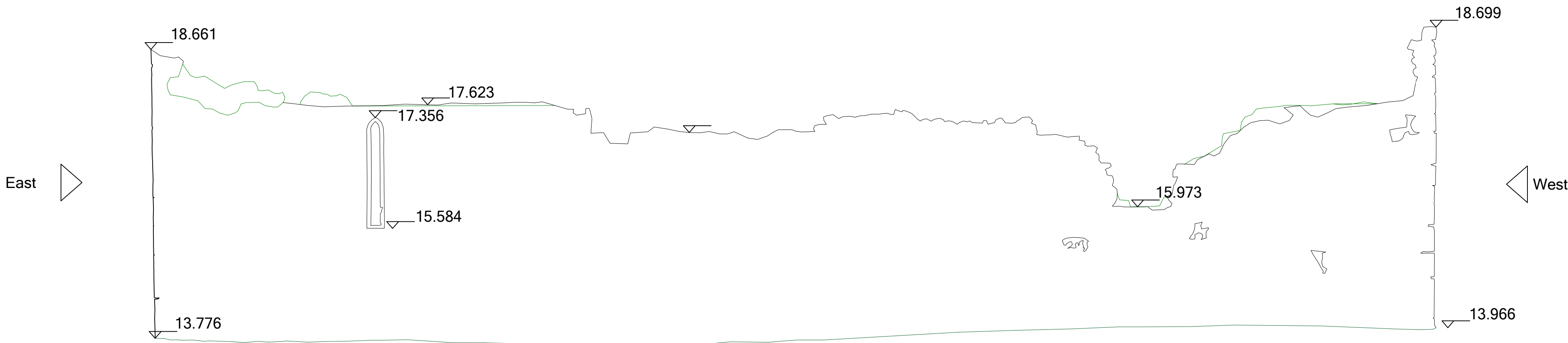
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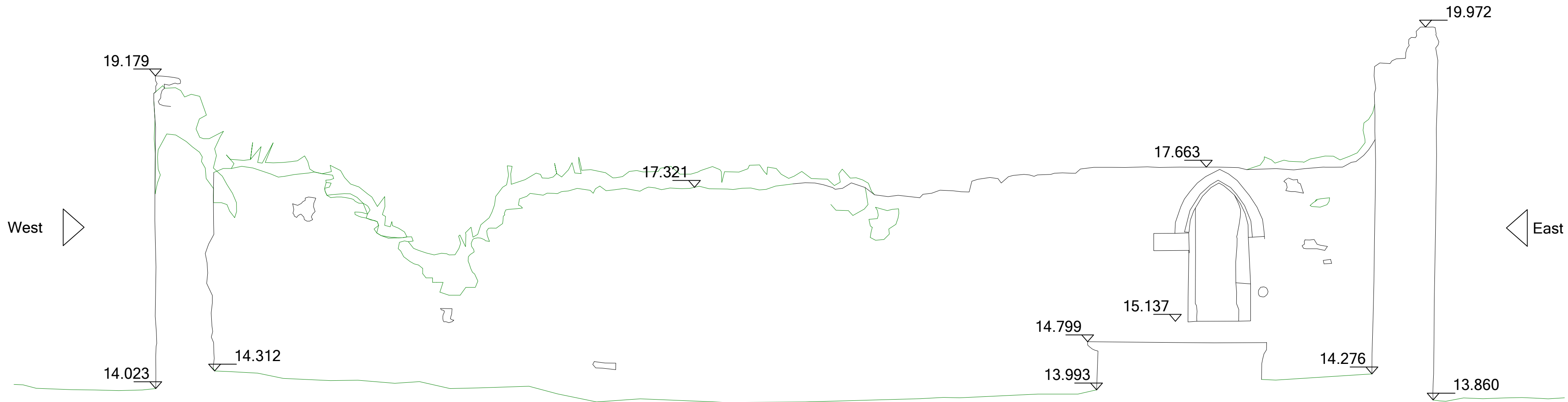


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AEGIS ARCHAEOLOGY Ltd

PROJECT:

KILLEEN MORE CHURCH GALWAY

TITLE:

KILLEEN NORTH ELEVATION INTERNAL

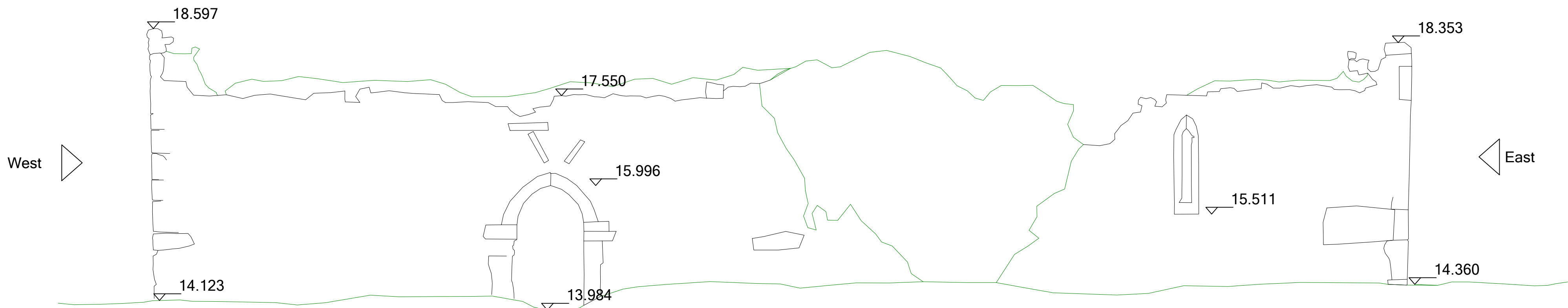
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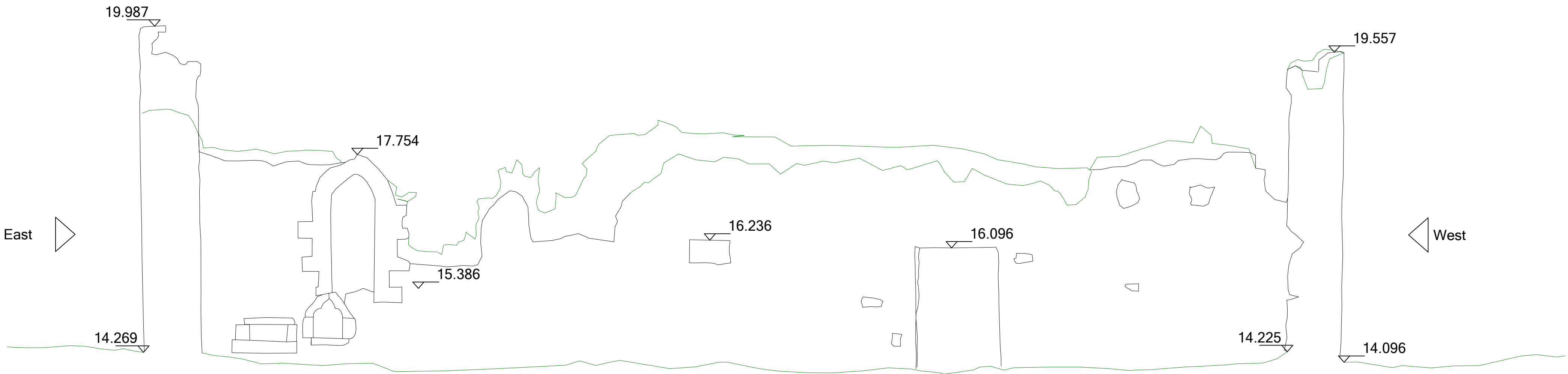
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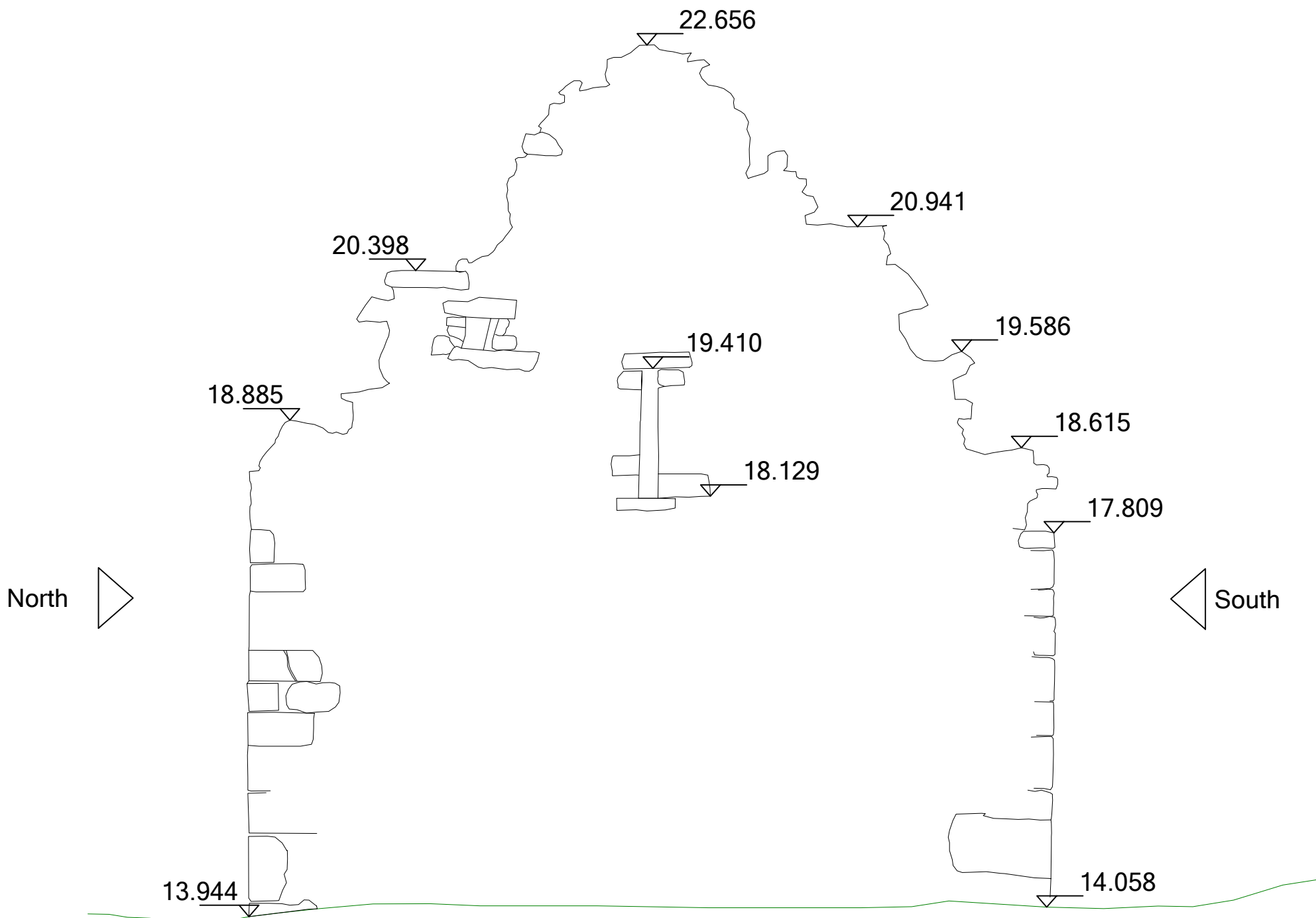
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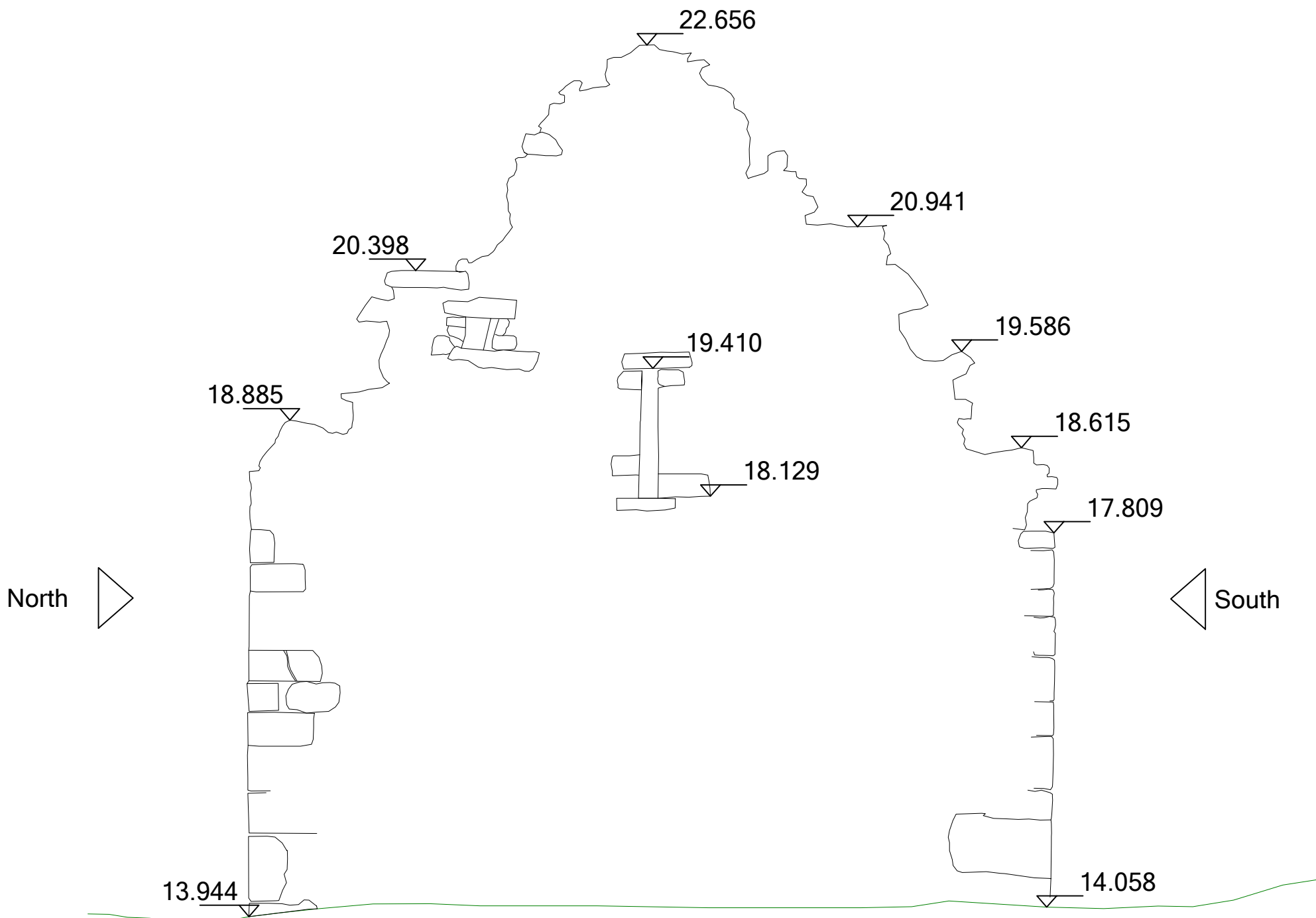
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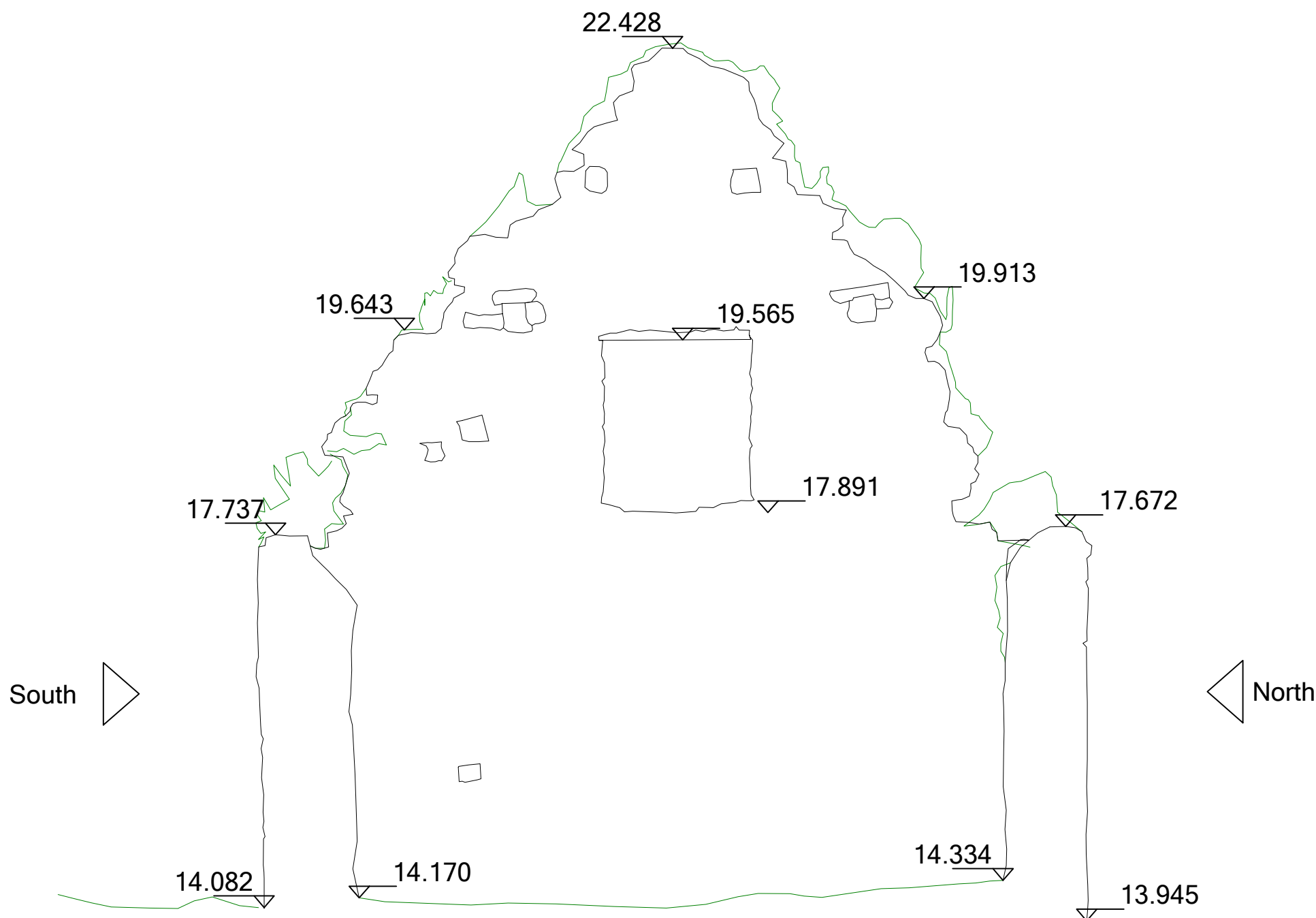
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KILLEEN MORE CHURCH GALWAY

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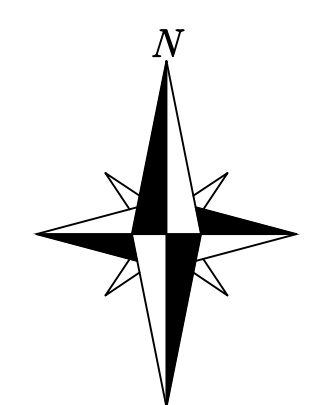
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SITE SURVEY

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32 Nicholas Street | King's Island | Limerick City | V94 V6F7
086 829 3220 | info@aegisarc.com | www.aegisarchaeology.com
VAT Reg. No.: IE8275638J | Co. No.: 275638