

Archaeological Impact Assessment & Building Appraisal Former Convent of Mercy Ballymahon, Co. Longford

Applicant: Longford County Council
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Prepared by: Marion Sutton & Philip Kenny, Shanarc Archaeology Ltd.



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1. Introduction

This archaeological impact assessment and building appraisal has been prepared as part of a Part 8 planning submission by Longford County Council in relation to a development proposal at the former Sisters of Mercy Convent at Ballymahon, Co. Longford. The convent and its present grounds are owned by Longford County Council.

The proposed development site comprises a late 19th century two-storey over basement former convent with a late 20th century single-storey, over part basement, flat-roofed annex, containing the former convent chapel, set within grounds that include the convent asphalt forecourt and the remains of a once more extensive formal garden.

The report details the extant remains of the historic convent and its present curtilage, and assesses the potential archaeological impacts and built heritage effects of the development proposal.

1.1 Location and Setting

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent is situated to the north-west end of Ballymahon town, positioned off the east side of Main Street, aligned on the R392, beside Saint Matthew's Catholic Church (Figures 1 and 2). The building faces south-east, toward the town centre, with access from local road L11281, Church View.

The building sits within a reduced original curtilage, on a 0.48 hectare (1.19 acre) site. It is bounded to the south and south-west by Saint Matthew's Catholic Church and by three former convent schools buildings, now in private ownership, used by the Ballymahon Youthreach Project and by Longford and Westmeath Education and Training Board (LWETB). The present grounds are bounded to the south-east by the avenue to the Mercy Secondary School Ballymahon, which developed on former convent lands from the mid-1970s, and to the north-east by Church View residential estate, constructed following the sub-division of the convent grounds from 1999, the year the convent was vacated by the Sisters of Mercy. The north-west side of local road L11281, Church View, also formed part of the convent grounds, and was the site of The Sacred Heart Convent National School until its demolition in recent years in advance of the redevelopment of the site.

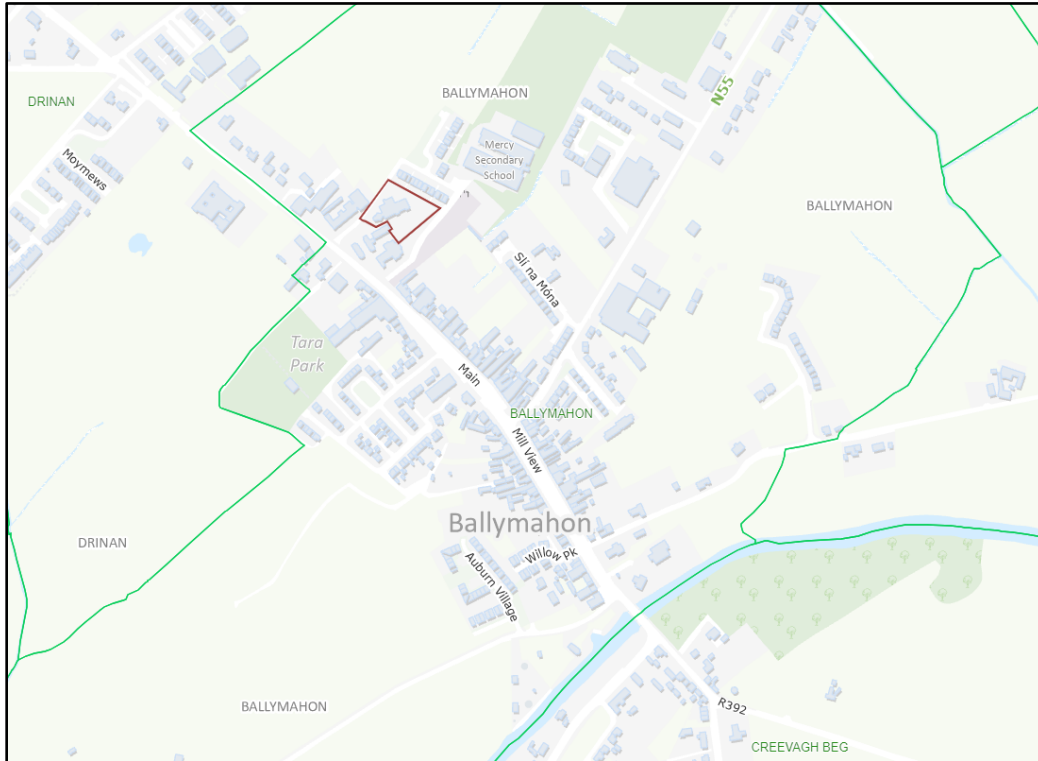


Figure 1 Location of proposed development site (in red) in wider Ballymahon context (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

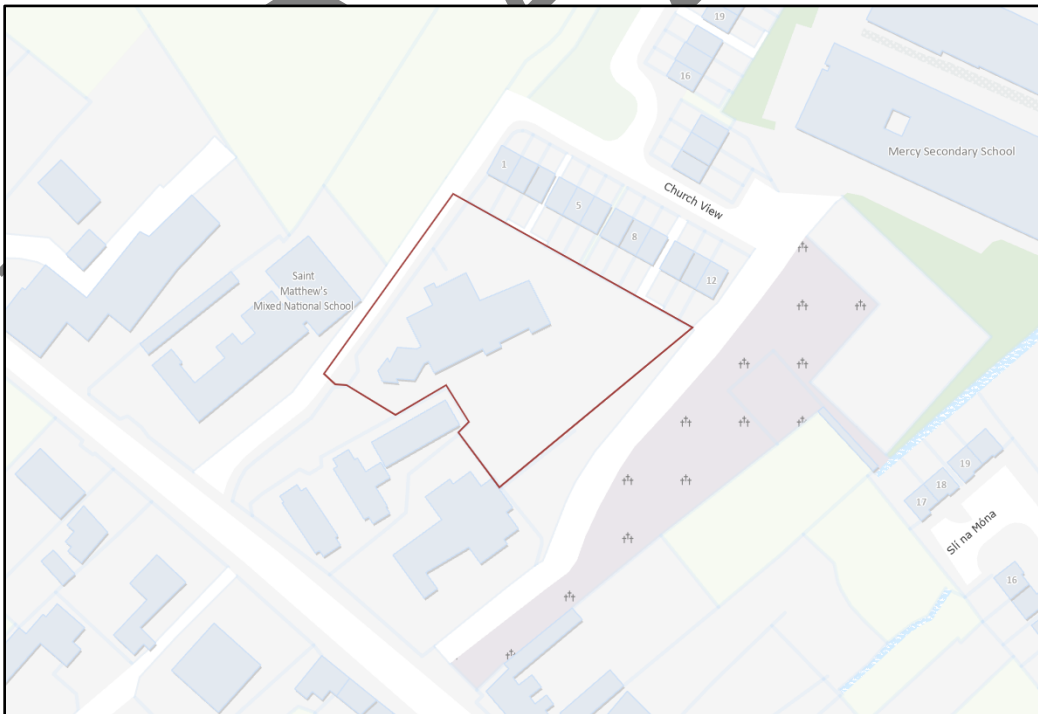


Figure 2 Location of proposed development site (in red) in local context (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

The 19th century convent building is currently unoccupied, while its late 20th century annex is used as a Day Care and Resource Centre. The convent's surviving garden is to the east and south-east (front) sides of the building, comprising un-mowed lawn and remnant trees and shrubs. The convent and garden are now separated, as a result of changes in landownership, from the convent graveyard, which is situated in the grounds of the Mercy Secondary School Ballymahon.

1.2 Legal Status

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent at Ballymahon is included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), Ref. No. 13316005, where it is assigned a 'Regional' value rating.

The building is not listed in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027 Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The building and wider site lie at the north-west extent of the archaeological Zone of Notification associated with the historic town of Ballymahon, which is listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), LF027-003006-.

Ballymahon town is not designated an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in the Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027.

1.3 Proposed Development

The development proposal consists of works to a structure listed in the NIAH, Ref. No. 13316005. The works will involve the refurbishment of the 19th century convent; part demolition, rebuilding and refurbishment of the late 20th century single-storey annex; construction of a new three-storey extension to the convent's north-east elevation; and construction of a new single-storey community hall, parking and set-down area on the footprint of the remaining convent garden (Figure 3).

The refurbishment of the unoccupied convent, as outlined in an Architectural Conservation Assessment prepared by Kenny Lyons (2024), will involve demolition of a 20th century extension at the building's north-east corner, and modifications to the internal layout to repurpose rooms, where removal of some original fabric is proposed. Repair and/or replacement of all external window and door opes, replacement of a timber rooflight, repair and/or replacement of components of the main convent roof, damp

proofing at basement level, dry lining of internal rooms and replacement of an existing lift form part of proposed refurbishment works. Painting the external 19th century convent walls is also proposed, though there is no evidence the convent was ever externally painted. Additional minor demolition works include exterior fire escape stairs and ramps.



Figure 3 Proposed site masterplan.

1.4 Planning History

A number of planning applications relate to the Sisters of Mercy Convent and its former grounds, including those relating to the development of the Mercy Secondary School from the mid-1970s, on land previously forming part of the Convent farm (Refs. 807717; 807718; 9312242). Plans submitted as part of these applications provide detail on the plan and layout of the convent and its grounds as it existed in the 1980s, including a ground plan

drawn February 1980 by Robinson Keefe & Devane (Figure 17) in association with an extension of the school. The plan suggests the original convent graveyard was relocated to its present position by 1980.

In 1999, the Mercy Sisters applied to and were granted planning permission by Longford County Council (Ref. 99166) for the retention of an annex extension built in the 1970s including oratory/chapel, sacristy, dining hall, kitchen, officers, toilets and ancillary spaces together with basement link to the existing convent building. The annex extension relates to the whole of the single-storey building, currently used as the Convent House Day Care & Resource Centre, on the south-west side of the 19th century convent building. This application includes existing plans and elevations of the annex prepared in March 1999 by Quinn Barnwall Associates, Architects and Town Planners (Figure 16).

In 2020, planning was granted by Longford County Council (Ref. 20262) for a change of use of the convent building from convent use to resource centre, internal refurbishing works and services, along with retention of the existing community resource centre in the former oratory/chapel annex, and the construction of a multipurpose room to the rear of the convent building with associated site development works and services. This application includes elevation and plan drawings of the convent and single-storey annex extension prepared by Gaynor Architectural & Design Services Ltd. At least some of the proposal did not progress, as no multipurpose room has been constructed to the rear of the convent building. Refurbishment works proposed within the convent building included repurposing of rooms to alternative accommodation, including workspace, play therapy rooms, multi-use space, counselling rooms on the first floor, ground floor and in the basement, which also did not take place. The chapel annex had previously been converted into a community resource centre, and the annex, being of modern design, was considered of limited architectural value and its use as a community resource centre was considered acceptable.

Planning permission was granted by Longford County Council (Ref. 00/825) to demolish an existing dormitory structure and to construct a development comprising 24 dwelling houses with all ancillary services to the north-east side of the convent, within former convent grounds, the present Church View residential estate. This application included plans prepared in September 2000 by Aidan Bracken Building Design recording the existing layout of the convent and grounds prior to the estates development in the period 2000-2004 (Figure 18).

2. Assessment Methodology

This assessment report is based on a desk-top study of relevant archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage sources, supported by an on-site inspection. The assessment is guided by relevant legislation, standards and guidelines in respect of archaeology, architecture and cultural heritage, as follows.

2.1 Legislative Protection for Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage

Ireland has ratified and/or is guided by several international and European conventions, charters and directives on the protection of cultural heritage, principally:

- International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (Venice Charter) 1964;
- UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention) 1972;
- European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) 1985;
- European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention) 1992;
- Principals for the Conservation of Industrial Heritage Sites, Structures, Areas and Landscapes (The Dublin Principals) 2011; and
- European Council Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment (85/337/EEC) (as amended).

National legislation protecting cultural heritage sites comprises:

- National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014;
- Heritage Act 1995;
- Cultural Institutions Act 1997;
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999;
- Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); and

- Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Act 2023 (enacted and partially commenced at date of writing, February 2025).

The following standards and guidelines were also consulted as part of this assessment:

- Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (1999), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands;
- Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation (1999), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands;
- Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers (2000), The Heritage Council;
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011), Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht & the Islands; and
- Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment of TII National Road and Greenway Projects (2024), Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

2.2 Desktop Study

The following were the principal desk-based sources consulted:

National Monuments

Under the National Monuments Act (1930) and its various amendments, archaeological sites in the ownership or guardianship of the State or a Local Authority and sites under Preservation Orders are designated as National Monuments. Such sites are offered the highest level of protection under Irish legislation, as the preservation of such sites is considered of national importance.

Record of Monuments & Places and Sites and Monuments Record

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments (Amendment) Act. The statutory RMP is a list of archaeological monuments known to the National Monuments Service (NMS). The RMP is based on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) files housed at the National Monuments Service, with new sites identified being added to the SMR and then scheduled for inclusion in the statutory RMP. RMP sites are accorded statutory protection as recorded monuments under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014.

Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) are the national archive of all known antiquities recorded by the NMI. These files relate primarily to artefacts but also include references to monuments and contain a unique archive of records of previous excavations. The find-spots of artefacts can be an important indication of the archaeological potential of an area. Any archaeological object found without a known owner at the time it was found is protected under National Monument's legislation and is deemed to be in the ownership of the State.

Excavations Bulletin and Excavations Database

The Excavations Bulletin is both a published annual directory and an on-line database that provides summary accounts of archaeological excavations and investigations carried out in Ireland – north and south – from 1969 to the present. The on-line database has been compiled from the published Excavations Bulletins from the years 1970-2010, with additional online-only material from 2011 onwards. The database gives access to summary descriptions of archaeological excavation and investigation reports and is updated on a constant basis.

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

Each City and County Development Plan is compiled in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and contains lists of national monuments, registered historic monuments, recorded monuments, archaeological landscapes, and archaeological sites subject to preservation orders, in addition to a Record of Protected Structures (a list of buildings which cannot be materially altered or demolished without grant of permission under the Act), Conservation Areas and Architectural Conservation Areas (to protect and enhance the special character of an area).

The Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 sets out Longford County Council's vision and strategy for the proper planning and sustainable management of the County's heritage. Built and Culture Heritage are addressed in Volume 1, Chapter 11, including architectural heritage (from Section 11.5) and archaeological heritage (from Section 11.9). Recorded Monuments under Preservation Orders, the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), Recorded Monuments in State Ownership, Longford County Architectural

Conservation Areas (ACAs) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) are included as Appendix 6, Built and Cultural Heritage, of the Plan.

Architectural Heritage is defined in Volume 1 of the plan (Section 11.6, pg. 313) and "...relates to monuments, groups of buildings and sites, and includes all relevant man-made structures and features of the landscape in the County...It is important that provision is made to ensure adequate protection for the built environment in its existing form and that consideration is given to the sympathetic re-use of historic buildings." Archaeological heritage..."includes monuments, sites, and objects on land or under water" (Section 11.9, pg. 322).

Council Policy Objective (CPO) 11.9 aims to:

"Ensure that proposals for development to structures included as part of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (DoEHLG) and any updated version, maintain and enhance the character of these structures."

Council Policy Objective (CPO) 11.10 aims to:

"Ensure that development in the vicinity of a Recorded Monument or Zone of Archaeological Potential is sited and designed in a sensitive manner with a view to minimal detracting from the monument or its setting."

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is an ongoing survey within the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The work of the NIAH involves identifying, recording and evaluating the architectural heritage of Ireland, from AD1700 to the present day, to aid in the protection and conservation of the country's built heritage. The NIAH survey of Longford, carried out in 2005-6, is the largest survey of the post-1700 built heritage of the county. Under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999, structures rated as being of regional or above importance are included in the Minister's recommendations to planning authorities for inclusion in their Record of Protected Structures.

Cartographic Sources

Information gathered from cartographic sources is fundamental to the identification of archaeological and architectural heritage sites, including cultural landscapes e.g. demesne landscapes, which, based on the level of landscape change, are now often identified from cartographic records alone. The earliest Ordnance Survey maps date to the late 1830s and early 1840s, but much change has occurred in the use and treatment of the landscape in the intervening years, particularly during the second half of the 20th century, making these a valuable resource in tracing the development of a study area.

Toponymy Sources

A townland name may preserve information relating to its archaeology, history, folklore, ownership, topography or land use. Most placenames were anglicised by the Ordnance Survey, which began in the 1830's. Despite some inaccuracies in translation, the Gaelic, Viking, Anglo-Norman and English origins of placenames are generally recognisable. The Placenames Database of Ireland website (www.logainm.ie) hosts online bi-lingual placename research and archival records for townlands.

Documentary Sources

Documentary sources are a valuable means of completing the written archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage record of an area, and of gaining insight into the history of the receiving environment. A list of all consulted documentary sources is provided in bibliographic form.

2.3 On-Site Inspection

On-site inspection offers the opportunity to examine a study area in light of desk-based research and evidence. Inspection is essential in determining the nature and extent of any surviving above-ground built heritage evidence, and in predicting the potential effects of a proposal on potential below-ground remains or on the visual appreciation, setting and amenity of recorded monuments and built heritage. A site inspection at the former Sisters of Mercy Convent at Ballymahon, Co. Longford was conducted by the authors on 05 and 18 February 2025. Both the exterior and the interior of the convent building was accessible during the inspection, with the exception of the attic space.

3. Receiving Environment

3.1 Archaeological and Historical Background

The placename Ballymahon is anglicised from *Baile Uí Mhatháin*, translated as the town of Ó Matháin (www.logainm.ie), or 'Mahon's town', which developed at a bridging point on the Inny River. The Reverend Joseph MacGivney (1908, 43) refers to the placename as MacMahon's town. The placename and settlement may have medieval origins, with a reference to a castle at Ballymahon in AD 1401 in *Miscellaneous Irish Annals* (www.logainm.ie). Mahon is understood to be the warrior King of Thomond, brother of Brian Boru, who in 960AD defeated Fergal Ó Ruairc after a great battle at Shrúle on the Inny River (Lewis 1837, 146; Leo Casey Historical Society 2013, 10).

However, the earliest confirmed references to Ballymahon date to the 1500s, with houses and adjoining lands in the town conveyed to Robert Dillion and his heirs in 1578 (Farrell 1891, 335). Irish patent rolls of James I record a land grant in 1620 to James McWilliam Ferrally, that included a castle (LF027-003004-), town (LF027-003006-) and lands at Ballymahon (www.archaeology.ie). The focus of the early town was on the north bank of the Inny River, to the east of a bridge (LF027-003003-), as shown on mid-17th century Down Survey maps. The Civil Survey, carried out at a similar period to the Down Survey, between 1654 and 1656, records a mill (LF027-003005-) and the '*ruines of a castle with some chimney houses and Irish creats, also some chimney houses with Irish creats dispersed in several places*' (Simington 1961, vol. 10, 48). A subsequent description of the town in 1682 describes it as a market town with a wooden bridge on the river crossing (Whelan 2001). The town and lands fell to Molyneux for services rendered to William III (Farrell 1891, 335), a 1659 census recording the arrival of Capt. Adam Molyneux to Ballymahon (Leo Casey History Group 2013, 19). Molyneux resided at Ballymulvey House (*ibid*), located c. 1km east of the town on the north bank of the Inny River. Ballymahon went on in the 18th century to develop as a thriving market town, with the Shuldham's as landlords, who built a number of public buildings in the town. The Shuldham connection arose from the marriage of Molyneux's daughter to the Rev. Samuel Shuldham (*ibid*).

Ballymahon is described in 1837 by Samuel Lewis, in his *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837, Vol. 2, 146), as a market and post-town containing 1081 inhabitants. Lewis makes mention of the former castle, stating nothing remains except some arches over which a dwelling house was erected. Lewis also records the town's association with the

weaving industry, and the nearby presence of The Royal Canal, which opened in 1817 and would have assisted with trade and the economic fortunes of the town. Ballymahon has a long history of small industry, business and trade, much of which was connected with its situation on the Inny River, and in addition to a flax/linen industry (in decline by the 1870s) eel fishing and subsidiary industry was an important element of the town's economy (Leo Casey History Group 2013, 11). While still a prosperous town in the early 1870s, there was also distress and poverty, and this was the situation in 1872 when the Sisters of Mercy first arrived in Ballymahon (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008, 116). A description of the town as it looked around 1889 describe thatched houses aligning both sides of a wide, gravelled Main Street, with cottages standing at the top (north-west) end of the town, at an area known as 'Rapparee Hill' (Leo Casey History Group 2013, 10).

Sisters of Mercy

A branch of the Sisters of Mercy congregation was established in Ballymahon in April 1872, following the arrival of four Sisters from an existing house in Moate at the request of the Bishop of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise, the Most Rev. Dr. George Michael Conroy (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). The new foundation was set up in the Parochial House, which the Sisters occupied until the present convent was built in the period 1880-1882. The Parochial House, also known more informally as 'the Bishop's house', was situated to the immediate south of the grounds of Saint Matthew's Church, and was demolished to make way for the present entrance to the Mercy Secondary School on Main Street. Saint Matthew's is the second Catholic Church on the same site, the present church being built in the period 1902-1906.

The Sisters were involved in education at Ballymahon from the outset, operating a Pension School initially from a pre-existing building in the town. In March 1877, the foundation stone for a new national school – which became known as Saint Cecilia's Hall – was laid on a plot of ground purchased by the Sisters for £750. The plot was located in part of the town known as 'Rappery Hill', at the top end of the town, occupied at the time by old and ruinous houses (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). Part of this plot was later taken for the construction of the present Saint Matthew's Catholic Church. The national school, set back from the Main Street road frontage, opened in September 1878.

The foundation stone for the convent, set well behind the national school, was laid on March 17th 1880 by Bishop Bartholomew Woodlock (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). The building of the convent formed part of a late 19th century building programme

carried out by the Catholic Church across the country, with the Order of Mercy building a number of convents in Longford County during the 1880s and 1890s (Cumming 2010, 79). The convent was built in Gothic revival style, with gabled breakfront and pointed arched window openings, having worked limestone detailing. In the same year (1880), the Pension School initially established in 1872 was discontinued and all pupils were accommodated in the national school (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008).



Plate 1 Sisters of Mercy Convent, undated, view from S to SE (front) and SW (side) façades (reproduced in Ballymahon Local History Group 2008, 18).

The first Mother Superior, Rev. Mother M. Francis Whelan, was appointed at Ballymahon in August 1881, when it became independent of the house in Moate. The Sisters moved into the new convent in May 1882 (Plate 1). In 1886, a wall was built to enclose the convent grounds and national school and the foundation stone of an oratory adjoining the earlier parish church was laid by Rev. E. Mahon Adm., which was available for mass the following year (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). This suggests an early church used by the Sisters was detached from the Convent and likely abutted the church that preceded Saint Matthew's Catholic Church. A new wing was added to the Convent in 1895 (*ibid*), and it remains unclear to what part of the present Convent this addition relates to.

The following year, 1896, provision was made to accommodate boarders, requiring a new building for 30 boarders initially. Boarders appear to have been accommodated in the convent until Saint Mary's Dormitory was constructed, possibly post 1912, as no clear dormitory is shown on the 25-inch edition Ordnance Survey map that was surveyed that year; a single storey range present by 1912 to the north-northeast side of the convent could have been used as a dormitory at this time. In 1940, Saint Joseph's Dormitory was built for extra student accommodation, which was added to in 1953. The 20th century boarders dormitory's were located both to the immediate rear (north-west side) of the convent and along the edge of the gardens to the north-east side of the convent, also serving, along with glasshouses, to delineate the formal convent gardens from the convent farmland (Plates 2 and 3). The dormitories, garden structures and any surviving outbuilding or farm building to the north-east side of the convent gardens were removed to facilitate the 'Church View' housing estate that was constructed in the period 2000-2004 in the former convent grounds.



Plate 2 Aerial photograph of Sisters of Mercy Convent, undated, view from SW also showing detached former dormitory buildings (reproduced in Ballymahon Local History Group 2008, 42).



Plate 3 Aerial photograph of Sisters of Mercy Convent and grounds, c. 1967, with gardens, dormitory buildings, glasshouses, farm buildings and original burial ground (at centre right edge of image) in wider setting; National Schools and Saint Matthew's Church front Main Street (Source: www.historicalpicturearchive.com; Ref. FL-00003).

The increase in pupil numbers required the provision of additional classroom accommodation, and a new National School, *Scoil Naomh Bridge* opened in 1923 between the 1878 school building and the Main Street. This building became known in later years as the Intermediate School, for first, second and third year students, being where secondary schooling by the Sisters began. In 1937, work began on a new primary school, *Scoil An Chroí Ró Naofa*, The Sacred Heart Convent National School, which opened on 11 January 1938. The school was built to a design by Ralph Henry Byrne (www.dia.ie)¹, by Mr Duffy, an Athlone contractor (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). The school occupied a good position in the convent grounds beside the public road, on the same side of the road and to the north of the earlier national school buildings. This school has in recent years been demolished, with a single, derelict school building remaining opposite the convent on the north side of local road L11281, Church View.

Around the same time as work began on The Sacred Heart Convent National School, the congregation at Ballymahon were considering the provision of a new chapel at the convent. A sketch plan drawn by the Mother Superior, dated 1937, titled 'Plan of 1st floor,

¹ Designs dated 1937 held at the Irish Architectural Archive under W.H. Byrne & Son drawings collection, ACC 2006/142.

Convent of Mercy, Ballymahon' is held at the Irish Architectural Archive in the W.H. Byrne & Son drawings collection, Ref. ACC 2006/142 (while labelled as the first floor, the sketch appears to be of the ground floor) (Figure 4). The proposal in the sketch, which depicts a new chapel attached to the north-east corner of the convent, was never built, but the sketch provides additional detail on the use of convent rooms on the ground floor at the time, including a refectory between a stairwell and temporary toilet. It also notes what are possible 'unfinished gables' in the north-east corner.

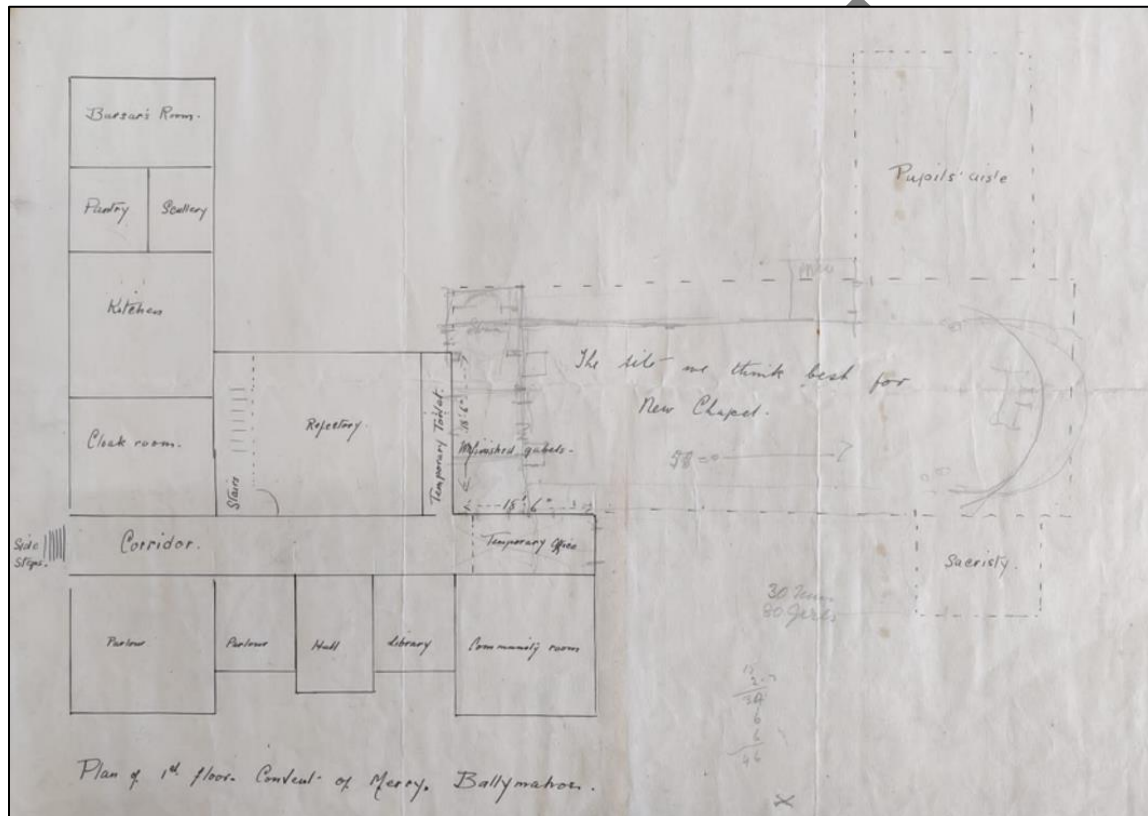


Figure 4 Sketch plan of the ground floor of the convent in 1937 (Source: Irish Architectural Archive, Ref. Acc.2006/142).

The Sisters of Mercy secondary school became co-educational in 1959, requiring additional classrooms to cater for the increased number of pupils, and a new hall, Saint Anne's Hall, built by Banagher Tiles Ltd., was provided between the convent and the early National Schools. Saint Anne's Hall was partitioned into three classrooms during the day and also doubled as a recreation and study hall. The co-educational secondary school premises consisted of Saint Anne's Hall, Saint Cecilia's, with some classes taught in the convent. As numbers increased, the Dean Egan Library was used, as was the Parochial House (known as 'the Bishops house'), later demolished to make a new entrance to the present Mercy Secondary School.

In June 1972, renovations and extensions were begun at the convent, with digging of the foundation for a ground level chapel annex on the south-west elevation (Ballymahon Local History Group 2008). Extended accommodation for boarders including new dining room and some dormitory renovation was carried out in the same year. Mass was celebrated in the new chapel annex in 1974. Work on a new secondary school commenced in 1975, at its current location, which opened the following year, with further extensions in 1983 and in 1993/1994. The new secondary school stands in fields once forming part of the farm lands attached to the convent.

The boarding school in Ballymahon closed in June 1992. The convent went up for sale in 1999, the Sisters having moved to private accommodation at two premises purchased by the congregation on the Main Street in Ballymahon (Murphy's Licensed Premises and the former Bird's Hotel). The last house to be resided in by the Sisters was the Convent House on Main Street. Since that time, the former grounds have been broken up and sold to different parties (Plate 4).



Plate 4 Sisters of Mercy Convent, undated, view from E into gardens, prior to subdivision of grounds (reproduced in Ballymahon Local History Group 2008, 124).

3.2 Cartographic Evidence

Analysis of historic mapping shows how landscapes and buildings evolve, and relevant extracts are presented from the following historic maps:

- Down Survey County Longford map, 1656-58 (Figure 5);
- Down Survey 'Rathline' Barony map, 1656-58 (Figure 6);
- Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the Roads of Ireland, 1777 (Figure 7);
- William Edgeworth's Grand Jury Map of County Longford, 1814 (Figure 8);
- First edition Ordnance Survey 6-inch map, 1837 (Figure 9);
- 25-inch edition Ordnance Survey map, 1902 (Figure 10); and
- Last historic Ordnance Survey 6-inch map (Figure 11).



Figure 5 Extract from Down Survey County Longford map, 1656-58 (www.downsurvey.tcd.ie).

Sir William Petty's 1656-58 Down Survey map of County Longford (Figure 5) records a tower house type castle and a bridge crossing at 'B. maha' (Ballymahon). Two dotted routeways are recorded, one from the north-west, the highway to Longford, heading to 'B. Moleire' (Ballymulvey), with a branch toward the bridge, the main route to the bridge being from the west, via settlements at Castlcar (Castlecore), Shrewr (Shrulle) and beyond.

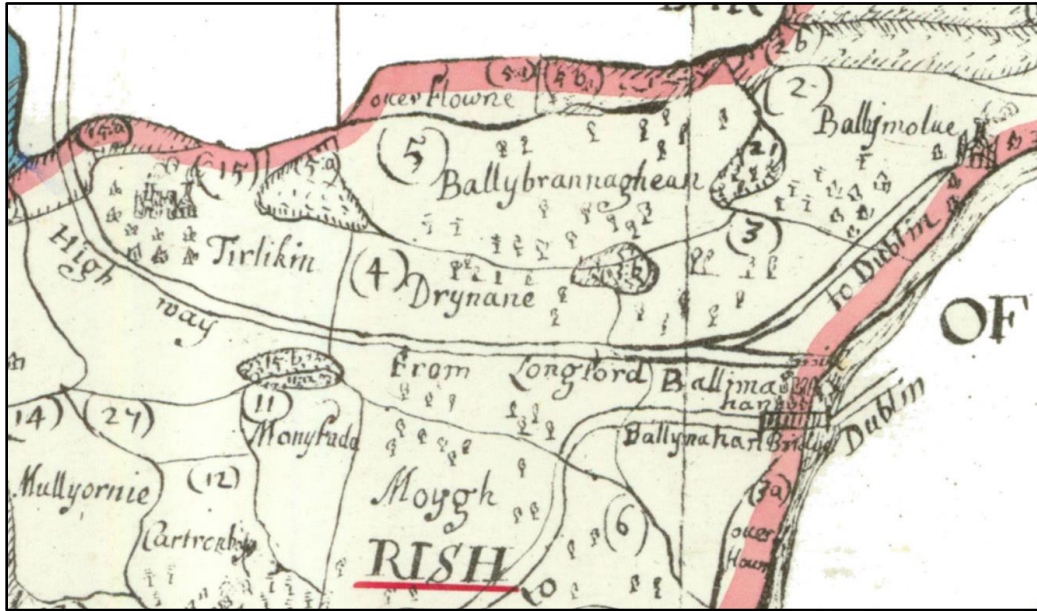


Figure 6 Extract from Down Survey 'Rathline' barony map, 1656-58 (www.downsurvey.tcd.ie).

The 'Rathline' barony map (Figure 6), recording somewhat more detail, shows the settlement at Ballymahon focussed at the river crossing, marked by 'Ballymahon Bridge'. A cluster of houses are depicted on the north bank of the river to the east of the bridge. The bridge is aligned on the highway from the west, via Castlecore and Shrute. The main highway from Longford is shown separate, aligned from the north-west. Both highways are marked 'to Dublin,' on both the north and south sides of the river, the road on the north side passing by way of a large house at 'Ballymolue' (Ballymulvey).

George Taylor and Andrew Skinner's 'Maps of the Roads of Ireland', surveyed during 1777, contain 288 maps and over 1,100 routes. Ballymahon is covered by three maps, Map 67, Map 233 and Map 241. The extract shown (Figure 7) is from Map 241, representing the road from Athlone to Longford. The map shows the town at Ballymahon extending to either side of the Inny River, aligned on both sides of a main street oriented north-west to south-east. The property purchased by the Sisters of Mercy at the north-west end of the town likely had buildings on the street frontage at this time.



Figure 7 Extract from Taylor & Skinners Map 241, 1777, showing approximate location of proposed development site (circled red) (www.swilson.info).

Longford's Grand Jury map was prepared by William Edgeworth (1813) and published in 4 sheets by W. Faden, London in 1814. Sheet 3, covering the south-west of the county, includes Ballymahon (Figure 8). The map records buildings with distinct rear plots aligning both sides of the main street to the north of the Inny River, with a road to Ballymulvy and the forerunner to the N55 running to the east and north-east of the main street respectively. The widest part of the main street is to the north of the N55 junction, to just south of the annotated 'Chapel,' which represents the location of the town's first Catholic Church. The chapel is set back from the street, with separate buildings nearer the street frontage to its immediate north-west; these buildings form a triangular space at the north-west extent of the town.



Figure 8 Extract from Edgeworth's map of County Longford, Sheet 3, 1814, showing approximate location of proposed development site (circled red) (virtualtreasury.ie).

The first ever large-scale survey of Ireland was undertaken by the Ordnance Survey between 1829 and 1842, producing highly accurate maps at different scales. The first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, Sheet LD027, surveyed in 1836 and published in 1837, pre-dates the construction of the Sisters of Mercy Convent at Ballymahon (Figure 9). At this time, the plot of ground purchased by the Sisters to develop a convent was partly agricultural land and partly town land. Town land, that nearest the street, comprised a widened street or triangular plot delineated with buildings, as recorded on Edgeworth's earlier map. The rear of these houses is enclosed, possibly with stone walls. A single, small building – a possible outbuilding - is depicted within a narrow strip of land well back from houses on the street front. The T-plan Catholic Church, annotated 'R.C. Chapel,' is depicted to the south side of the enclosed land backing the houses on the street front. The Chapel is shown with additional buildings to its rear, along with a large formal garden, possibly associated with the (now demolished) Parochial House.

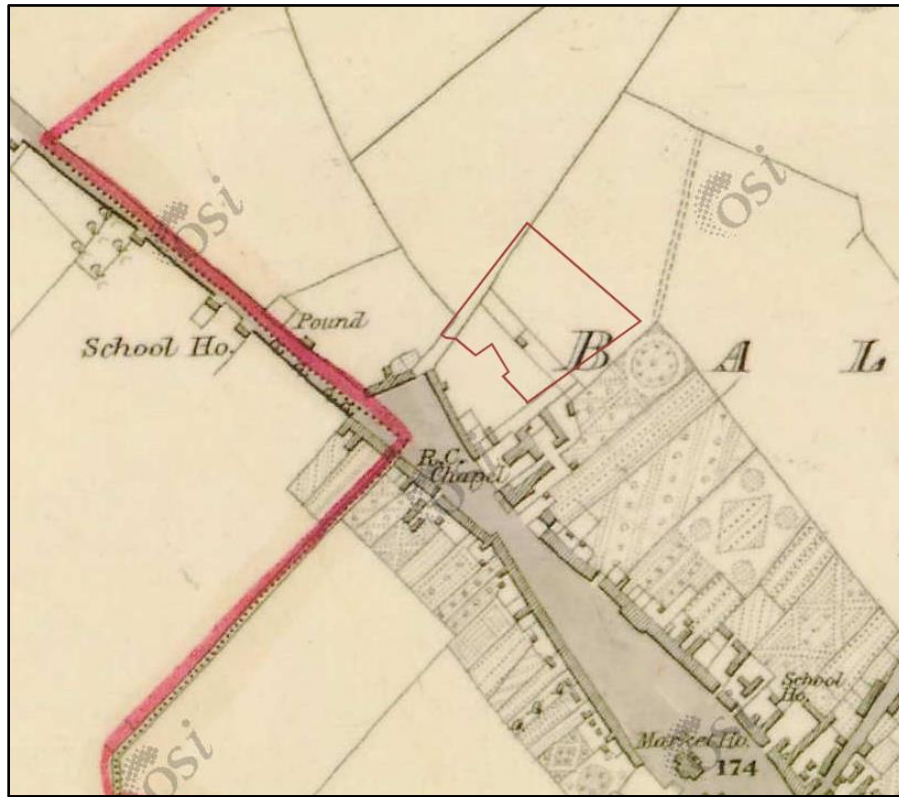


Figure 9 Extract from first edition 6-inch OS map, published 1837, showing approximate location of proposed development site (in red) (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

The first full-scale valuation of property in Ireland, published between 1847 and 1864 and commonly known as Griffith's Valuation, records a John Shuldham as owner of the land. Griffith's Valuation records that the houses, with or without yards and gardens, that lined the north-west extent of the main street at Ballymahon, and including the Roman Catholic (R. C.) Chapel and yard, were all leased from John Shuldham, the town's landlord.

The 25-inch edition OS map, Sheet LD027-01, surveyed in 1912 and published in 1913, is the first map to record the 'Convent' and its ground, and in some detail (Figure 10). The whole of the 19th century convent is recorded in plan, with access steps to entrances on the south-east (front) and south-west (side) elevations. An enclosed, linear space aligned on the south-west (side) elevation represents a sunken, open passage that provided light to the basement level.

The first 'Convent School', dating from 1878, is shown to the south-west of the convent grounds, next to 'St. Matthew's R. C. Church'. A range of small, attached buildings is also shown on the north-east side of the grounds, on the edge of the formal convent garden. The garden is laid out with a large number of plots partitioned by paths.

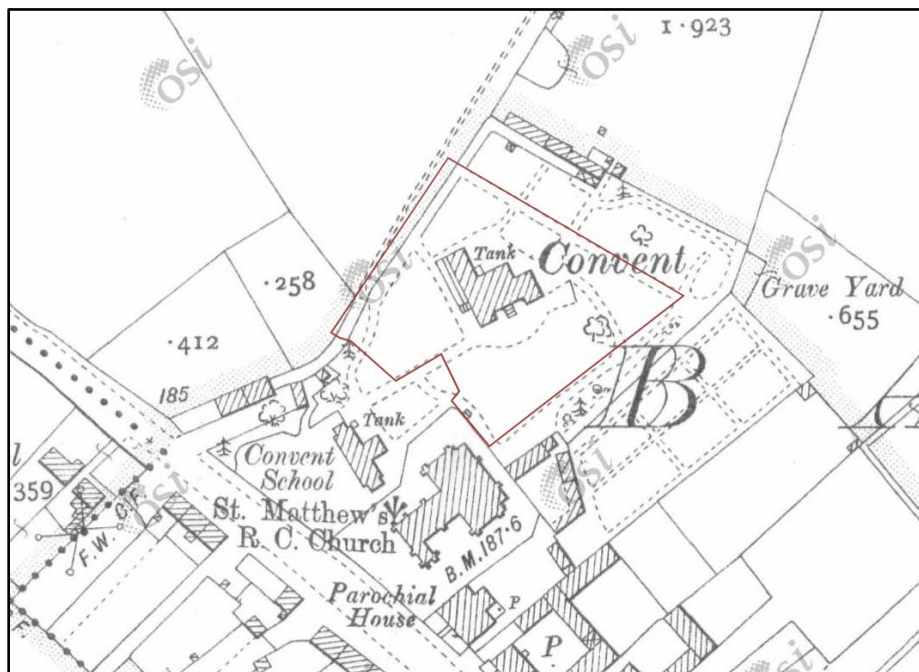


Figure 10 Extract from 25-inch edition OS map, published 1913, showing approximate location of proposed development site (in red) (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

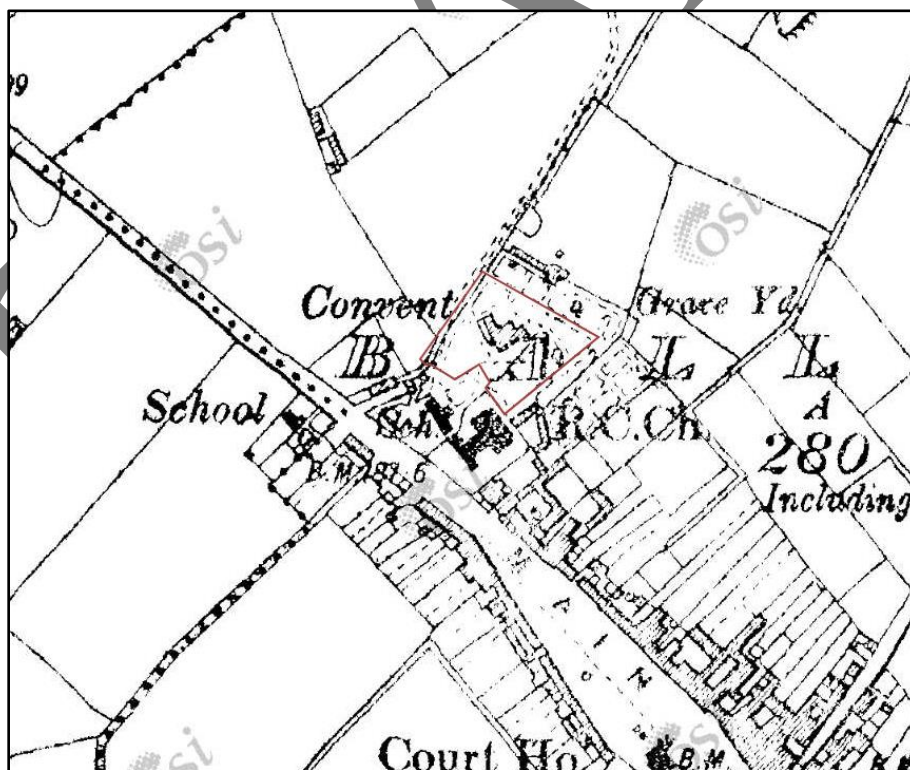


Figure 11 Extract from last historic 6-inch OS map, published 1914, showing approximate location of proposed development site (in red) (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

Notably, a small, enclosed rectangular convent 'Grave Yard' is surveyed outside the east corner of the garden. This is not the present position of the convent graveyard. The graveyard was moved from its original position at some point later in the 20th century, when existing burials were presumably exhumed and reinterred. An historic aerial photograph, dated to c. 1967 (Plate 3), shows the original graveyard with a number of white crosses. The graveyard had been relocated by 1980, suggesting it was moved as part of the provision of the present entrance to the Mercy Secondary School. Steps on the rear boundary wall at 'St. Matthew's R. C. Church' record a direct link between the convent grounds and the Catholic Church. Three buildings shown to the north-west of the convent school, off the Main Street, are earlier buildings, the likely remains of the buildings that existed at the north-west extent of the town and recorded on Edgeworth's 1814 map and on the 1837 first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map.

The last historic 6-inch OS map was published in 1914 (Figure 11), a similar period to the 25-inch edition, and records no additional site detail.

3.3 Archaeological Heritage

3.3.1 National Monuments

A small number of archaeological monuments in County Longford are in state ownership or guardianship. None of these are situated at, or in proximity of Ballymahon.

3.3.2 Record of Monuments & Places and Sites & Monuments Record

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent is partly situated in the 'Zone of Notification' associated with the historic town at Ballymahon, RMP LF027-003006- (Figure 12). Such zones do not define the exact extent of archaeological monuments but rather are intended to identify them for the purposes of notification under Section 12 of the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended). These zones give an indication that archaeological considerations may be an important aspect in any development proposed in such zones.

No recorded sub-elements of the historic town are located within 500m of the former convent, which were focussed closer to the banks of the Inny River, and include a church (LF027-003001-) and graveyard (LF027-003002-), a castle site (LF027-003004-), a water mill site (LF027-003005-) and a bridge (LF027-003003-) on the river crossing. The extent of the 'Zone of Notification' north-westwards on Main Street relates to a potential for uncovering

early houses at the town, the mid-17th century Civil Survey describing the presence of dispersed chimney houses and Irish creats. The reference to chimney houses relates to more substantial timber frame or possibly stone built houses, while the creats were small, oval, often windowless, single roomed dwellings possibly built of post and wattle or sod walls.

The nearest monument to the former Convent of Mercy is a ringfort, LF027-002----, which predates the historic town. This monument, an early medieval (5th to 12th century AD) semi-defended farmstead, annotated as a 'Fort' on the first edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map, is situated for the most part on playing pitches to the rear of the Mercy Secondary School. The monument has been levelled and is not visible at ground level.

Locations of recorded monuments relative to the former convent are shown on Figure 12. Monuments are listed in Table 1, with distance calculated from the redline boundary of the proposed development site to the recorded centre point of monuments (represented by a red dot on Figure 12).



Figure 12 Location of proposed development site (outlined in red) in relation to Recorded Monuments (red dots) and Zones of Archaeological Notification (shaded pink) (Tailte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392781).

Table 1 Recorded monuments in Ballymahon townland.

SMR/RMP No.	Class	Townland	Irish Grid Reference (E,N)	Proximity to Development Site (m)
LF027-002----	Ringfort - rath	Ballymahon	615612, 757676	240m
LF027-003001-	Church	Ballymahon	615731, 756992	520m
LF027-003002-	Graveyard	Ballymahon	615741, 756996	520m
LF027-003003-	Bridge	Ballymahon	615766, 756903	65m
LF027-003004-	Castle - Unclassified	Ballymahon	Unknown	Unlocated
LF027-003005-	Water mill - Unclassified	Ballymahon	Unknown	Unlocated
LF027-003006-	Historic town	Ballymahon	615699, 756986	0m

3.3.3 National Museum of Ireland's Topographical Files

One file of relevance in the National Museum of Ireland's (NMI) Topographical Files (NMI 1937:2574-8) relates to a collection of artefacts – a bronze leaf-shaped sword, a flat copper axe-head, two bronze palstaves and a bronze spearhead – acquired from a shop in Dublin that were allegedly found somewhere in the vicinity of Ballymahon. The finds are indicative of prehistoric activity in proximity of Ballymahon. There is also a record of human remains (NMI 1990:104), undated, found during agricultural land clearance in adjacent Creevagh Beg townland, on the south side of the Inny River. The find was reported to the National Museum by Gardaí in September 1990, but no burial evidence was found by museum staff (Cahill and Sikora 2011). Records of a souterrain at Ballymahon (1A/149/1975) and possible cist in adjacent Ballymulvey (1A/109/1984) are also included in previous archaeological reporting in respect of Ballymahon town (Ó Donnchadha 2005).

3.3.4 Previous Archaeological Investigation

All archaeological investigation carried out to date at Ballymahon has been to the south-east end of the historic town, to either side of the Inny River.

In 1999, test excavation was carried out at a development site on the north bank of the Inny River, on the east side of the main street adjacent to church LF027-003001- and graveyard LF027-003002-, at the location of two mill buildings. Carried out under licence 99E0441, the backfilled remains of a mill-race associated with the upstanding mill was uncovered (Excavations Bulletin No. 1995:539). No evidence of earlier archaeological activity was found.

In 2005, an anomaly in a field known locally as the Fair Green was tested by Moore Archaeological & Environmental Services Ltd. under licence 05E0062 in advance of a housing development (Ó Donnchadha 2005). The site is to the south-west side of the town, on the north bank of the Inny River, to the rear of houses on the street frontage. The investigation exposed finds that dated from the late 18th century onwards (pottery shards, glass and fragments of red brick), and possible evidence for a horse showing or lunging ring where horses were displayed when the field was used for fairs/markets (to 1973). This site was subject to archaeological monitoring during construction. Nothing of an archaeological nature was identified (Doherty & Doherty 2005).

The installation of a Gas Networks Ireland gas pipeline at Ballymahon was monitored by John Cronin & Associates under licence 18E0094, where the pipeline traversed roadway in the Zone of Notification of the historic town (LF027:003006-) (Excavations Bulletin No. 2018:233) (Chambers 2018). The pipeline commenced south-east of the bridge crossing on the Inny River (LF027-003003-), installed on both the R392 and N55. No archaeology was found.

Most recently, a greenfield area within the Zone of Notification for the historic town was the subject of archaeological testing under excavation licence 19E0446 (Excavations Bulletin No. 2019:342), associated with the N55 Ballymahon Main Street Improvement Works Project (Hull 2019). The site was located at the south end of the historic town, immediately south-east of the bridge crossing on the Inny River (LF027-003003-), at the junction of the R392 and N55. Archaeological testing revealed no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts.

3.4 Architectural Heritage

3.4.1 Record of Protected Structures

A Protected Structure is defined in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Volume 1 (pg. 315) as:

"...a structure that the local authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The protection afforded to structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) applies to all parts of a given structure, including: the interior; the land lying within its curtilage (the area of land attached to or associated with a building

and usually forming one enclosure with it); any other structures in that curtilage; specified features in attendant grounds, and; all fixtures and fittings forming part of the interior of a Protected Structure or of any structure within the curtilage".

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for Ballymahon is included in Appendix 6 of the Plan. The former Sisters of Mercy Convent is not included on the RPS, nor are any surviving buildings or structures of its former attendant grounds.

Two buildings are listed in the RPS within 100m of the former convent, the former Dean Egan Library (RPS No. 103) and a former school, Scoil Naisunta Naomh Colmcille (RPS No. 255), which are both situated on the opposite side of Main Street (Figure 13).



Figure 13 Extract from Longford County Development Plan 2021 – 2027, Appendix 6, map titled ‘Ballymahon Record of Protected Structures’, proposed development site is outlined in red (Source: <https://www.longfordcoco.ie>).

3.4.2 Architectural Conservation Area

A Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is defined in the Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027, Volume 1 (pg. 318) as:

"...a place, an area, or a group of structures or townscape that is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value; or it contributes to the appreciation of Protected Structures..."

There is no ACA designation in Ballymahon.

3.4.3 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) building and garden survey results are available online via www.buildingsofireland.ie.

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent at Ballymahon is included in the NIAH, Reg. No. 13316005. It is listed as being of architectural, artistic and social special interest, and has been assessed as being of regional significance.

The building is described in the NIAH as a:

"Detached seven-bay two-storey over basement former convent with attic storey, built c. 1882 and extended in 1895, having central three-bay gable-fronted breakfront and advanced single-bay gable-fronted breakfronts to either end of the main façade (southeast). Now in use as a day care centre. Multiple-bay two-storey over basement return with additional three-storey flat-roofed extension to the northeast and various flat-roofed single-storey extensions to the southeast. Pitched slate roofs with ridge tiles, overhanging eaves, brick chimneystacks, wrought-iron finial to central breakfront gable and cast-iron rainwater goods. Cut stone kneeler stones to gables to front elevation and corbelled eaves courses. Lined-and-ruled rendered walls over projecting plinth with moulded cut stone detailing. Round-headed niche to first floor central bay having trefoil-headed canopy with spired roof and containing statue on cut limestone plinth, the latter a continuation of the adjoining limestone sills and supported by a marble column and console bracket. Pointed arch openings to attic storey of gable-fronts, containing sheet metal vents. Pointed arch window openings to first floor having tooled limestone sills and replacement windows. Segmental-headed windows to ground floor with tooled cut limestone sills and replacement windows. Pointed arch door opening to

central breakfront having square-headed doorway with timber panelled door, cut stone surround, plain overlight and flanking pointed arch sidelights with cut stone surrounds. Doorway approached by flight of cut limestone steps. Set back from road in extensive grounds to the northwest end of Ballymahon with garden to south and southeast of site, with cast-iron railings and pedestrian gate leading to St. Matthew's Roman Catholic church (13316007). Modern school buildings to site. Convent graveyard to the northeast".

The NIAH has appraised the building as being a:

"...substantial and well-proportioned late nineteenth-century convent [that] retains its original imposing form and character despite recent conversion to a new use. The Institutional Gothic form of this building is characteristic of the convent architecture in Ireland during the second half of the nineteenth century, a period when a great many buildings of this type were constructed. The plain front façade is enlivened by the advanced gable-fronted breakfronts, the variety and treatment of the window openings and by the Gothic detailing to the canopied statue niche...This building is of social importance to the local community as a school and is an historical reminder of the role of the Sisters of Mercy in Ballymahon. The simple railings, gates and the convent graveyard complete the setting and add to this composition."

The original curtilage of the former convent included an associated National School complex, also included in the NIAH, Reg. No. 13316006, as is Saint Matthew's Roman Catholic Church, Reg. No. 13316007 (Figure 14). The convent, national school complex and Catholic Church all form part of an interconnected and related group of structures, each contributing to each other's setting.

The NIAH survey of Co. Longford took place in 2005-6, and from photographs taken by the NIAH at this time, available at www.buildingsofireland.ie, some changes have occurred to the building and its grounds in the intervening 20 years. Notably, ground floor windows have been boarded, the reduced garden has not been maintained in similar fashion, and minor structural alterations have been made to the rear basement level entrance (Plate 5); a flat-roofed porch was removed and replaced, attached outbuildings next to the porch were altered and the present configuration of ramp, retaining wall and railings added.

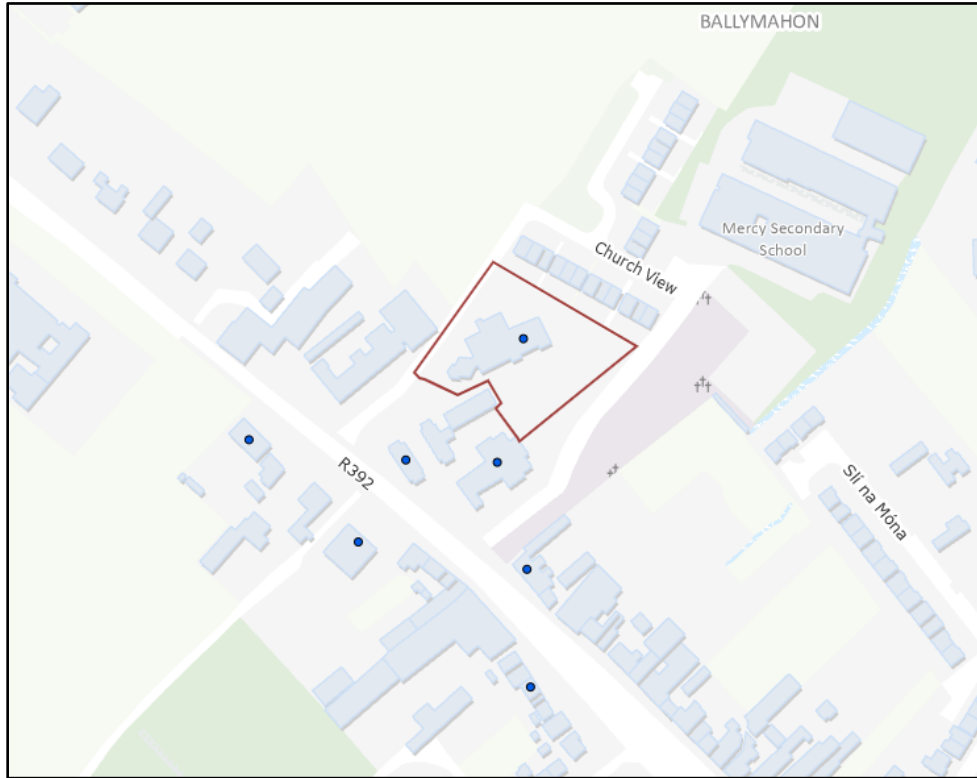


Figure 14 Location of proposed development site (*outlined in red*) in relation to buildings included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (*blue dots*) (Failte Eireann Surveying Licence No. CYAL50392181).



Plate 5 Rear basement level access in c. 2005-6 as recorded in the NIAH (Source: www.buildingsofireland.ie).

4. Site Inspection and Building Appraisal

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent was visited on 5 and 13 February 2025 to inspect the site and its setting, to consider potential archaeological effects, to conduct a built heritage appraisal of the historic convent building, and to record the extant remains and related features of the convent and its present curtilage.

4.1 The Site and Setting

The 'site' is defined by the former Sisters of Mercy Convent, comprising the original late 19th century convent building and 20th century extensions and additions within the present curtilage or grounds held by Longford County Council (Plates 6-7). The buildings stand to the NW side of the present grounds, which comprise asphalt surfaces in the rear (N side) yard and across the front (S and SE sides) access, parking area and curved forecourt; the remains of the formerly more extensive formal garden, now largely under grass, survive to the E and SE sides of the grounds (Figure 15).

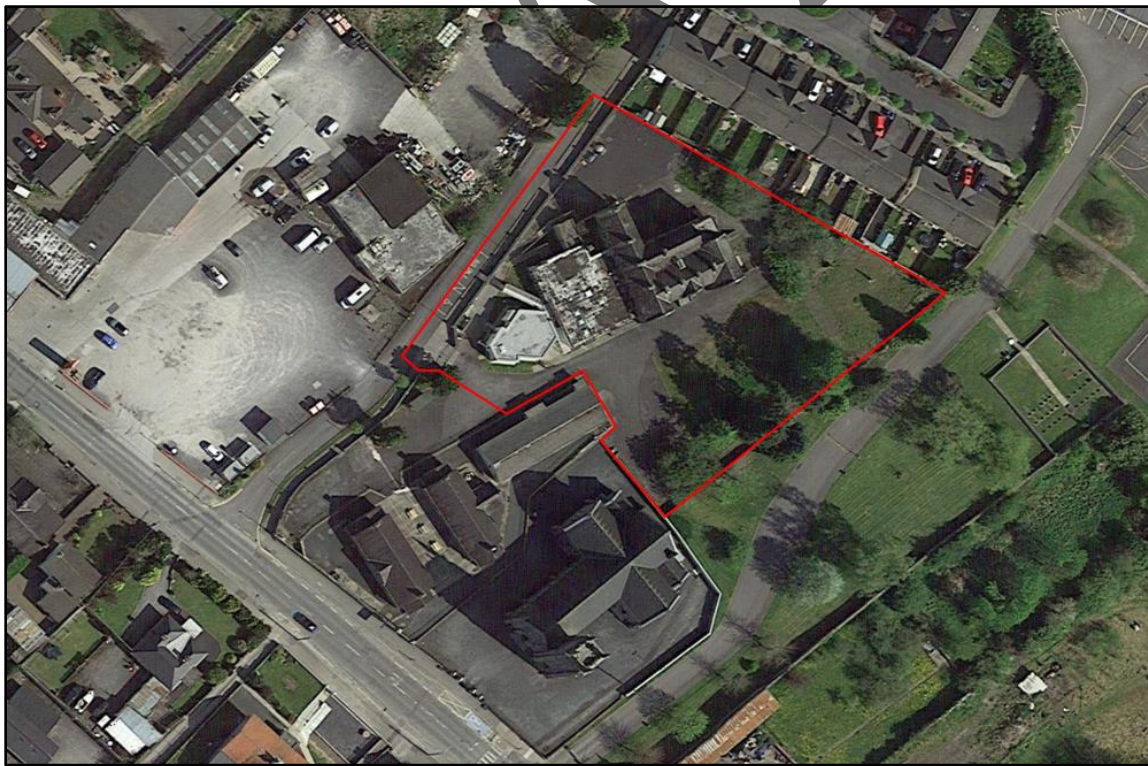


Figure 15 Location of proposed development site (*outlined in red*) on Google Earth imagery dated '4/25/2021-newer' (Source: earth.google.com).

The ground level at the site varies, with the asphalt forecourt at the front (SE) elevation sitting higher than basement level at the NE and NW elevations. The forecourt may be artificially raised and levelled, as the general trend is gently sloping from the rear N yard to the basement, and from the forecourt to the site boundary at the E and SE sides (Plate 8). The NE end of the forecourt is retained by a concrete capped stone wall, which is obscured by overgrown garden plants; an overgrown garden path runs from basement level around the base of the wall (Plate 10). Access from the front forecourt area at the NE end is provided by concrete steps on an earthen bank with added central hand-rail (Plate 11).

Mature evergreen trees and shrubs on the SE boundary are surviving remains of the former convent gardens. The SE boundary, comprising partly concrete block wall and partly high metal fencing post-dates 1999. The original SE boundary of the convent was stone built, and pre-dated the convent, being part of an earlier garden wall, and was likely demolished to make way for the present entrance to the Mercy Secondary School. Remnant garden trees and shrubs are also present centrally along the modern NE boundary, a concrete block wall defining the boundary with the Church View residential estate.

A catholic statue of moulded concrete, painted white, stands on a white painted concrete plinth, near the E corner of the site (Plate 9). It is unlikely to stand in its original position as a result of post 1999 changes. As evidenced from historic aerial photos, the statue was one of two that stood in the gardens; a grotto also stood in the east corner of the former gardens, near the convent glasshouses, which was relocated to the grounds of the Mercy Secondary School, possibly as part of the Church View residential development, and certainly by the early 2000s.

The site is bordered on Church View road with a block wall with a plaster finish, containing a vehicle entrance to the rear of the convent and pedestrian entry to the Convent House Day Care & Resource Centre occupying the later 20th century annex (Plate 6). A surviving connection with the adjacent Saint Matthew's Catholic Church is represented by cut stone steps with side walls accessing a metal pedestrian gate in the rear stone wall of the church grounds (Plate 12).

4.2 External Description

The 19th century convent consists of three main ranges, (1) a front range facing SE oriented NW-SW, (2) backed by a rear range of similar orientation, both having pitched slated roofs and brick chimneystacks on ridgelines, and (3) a long range on the SW side oriented NW-SE, also with a pitched slated roof and brick chimneystacks on the ridgeline. Overhanging eaves have black painted timber fascia boards and corbels. A flat-roofed, later 20th century extension (post 1937, undated) was added as an infill structure to the NE corner of the convent, and a larger annex was added abutting the long SW range during the 1970s, which incorporated a pre-existing open basement level passage to create an enlarged basement floorplan. The convent is constructed of stone and brick with external elevations finished in a false ashlar (lined-and-ruled) concrete render. Window opes vary in size and shape throughout, with original opes having consistent stone sills and chamfered reveals. Accessible rainwater goods, namely downpipes, generally appear to be plastic replacements, many in a different position to the originals (marked by scars on render); gutters may be original cast metal. Ground floor windows throughout are generally boarded as a result of damage caused to the vacated building.

4.2.1 Front (SE) elevation

The front elevation (Plate 13) is a five-bay, two storey over basement façade with attic storey, having a central three-bay gable-fronted breakfront, with finial, and a projecting single-bay gable to either end, all on a vented projecting plinth with a punch dressed limestone basecourse. The central entrance is accessed by a flight of cut limestone steps and side walls topped with later handrails, having a pointed arched door ope flanked on either side with pointed arched window opes, all with worked limestone surrounds. A timber panelled door has a timber framed overlight; the flanking windows are timber framed with textured glass. Larger, segmental headed ground floor windows, now boarded, have replacement aluminium frames. First floor, pointed arched window opes have replaced aluminium frames. A central, first floor, round headed niche above the entrance has a trefoil and pendant decorated canopy with pointed roof, containing a statue on a cut limestone base at sill level, on a marble column with capital supported on a console bracket. The attic storey has pointed arched opes with ventilated infills. Exposed worked limestone decorates the base of roof pitches, with carved brackets carrying projecting stone coping above gables. Metal ventilation grills and metal and glass lightwell covers at the foot of the façade provide light to basement level windows.

4.2.2 Side (NE) elevation

The NE side elevation (Plate 14) is a three-bay, two storey façade over an exposed basement, with two later fire escape stairs added. Ground floor and first floor window opes are identical to the front façade, having replacement aluminium frames. The north window ope to both floors have been modified, to provide door opes, having later doors, to the fire escape stairs (Plate 15). The ground floor fire escape is a mass concrete and concrete block structure providing cover to a slightly lower basement level square headed door ope that is likely a modified square headed window ope. The basement level windows are square headed and boarded. A concrete lined, rectangular sunken feature at ground level outside the south basement window is filled with rubbish; its function is unknown. A 20th century two-storey over basement pebble-dashed addition infills the convent's NE corner, having square headed timber framed windows to basement and ground floor and square headed aluminium framed window at first floor. Basement level windows and one ground floor window are barred.

4.2.3 Rear (NW facing) elevation

The rear NW facing elevation (Plate 16) comprises a rear 19th century, four-bay, two-storey over exposed basement range, with a 20th century two-storey over basement corner infill addition abutting the NE gable. The pitched gable lacks the carved stone brackets and stone coping at the roof edge that is apparent on the gables of the front range. Basement level windows are square headed, the E window being smaller and at slightly higher level in the façade (carried through at first and ground floor level), all with barred 2 over 2 light timber sliding sash windows (Plate 17). The present basement entrance is a very modern addition, resulting from post 2005-6 modification. The window opes in the central two bays at ground and first floor level match those on the front (SE) and NE elevation, also having replacement aluminium frames, with distinctly different window opes above the basement entrance marking the position of the internal stairwell (Plate 18). The ground floor window is a smaller segmental headed ope with two timber sliding sash windows. The uppermost window is a tripartite pointed arched ope with worked limestone surrounds and timber sliding sash windows with textured glass. Of interest is the finish to the worked stone surround in the angle with the long SW range; part of the worked stone appears to be covered, and could suggest the window pre-dates the north end of the SW range.

4.2.4 Rear (NE facing) elevation

The rear NE facing elevation (Plate 19) forms part of the long SW range of the convent, comprising a 19th century, three-bay, two-storey over basement elevation, with a modern outbuilding (boiler room) abutting the façade at basement level. The fenestration or window arrangement is less symmetrical than other façades, with bays positioned closer, and the north end of the façade lacking opes. A single basement window ope is segmental headed, barred and boarded from the interior. At ground floor level windows are also barred, with a distinctly different square headed window ope with straight sided reveals and possible concrete sill positioned above the basement entrance, having a casement timber frame and reinforced glass; this may be a modified window. Two narrow, segmental headed window opes at ground floor level have replacement PVC frames. First floor, pointed arched window opes have replaced aluminium frames.

4.2.5 Rear (NE) gable of SW range

The rear gable of the long SW range (Plate 20) has decorative carved stone brackets and stone coping at the roof edge, but a flattened pitch at the ridgeline, distinct from all other gables. A single square headed window ope with straight sided reveals, concrete sill and aluminium frame is a later intervention at first floor level. A slightly projecting painted wall at the base continues beneath the base of the pebble-dashed annex; this wall is likely original to the convent, with the re-used section below the annex originally delineating the open basement level passage on the SW range.

4.2.6 Side (SW) elevation

The long SW elevation of the 19th century convent is a 10-bay, two-storey over basement range abutted by a single storey over part basement 1970s annex (Plate 21). The annex obscures the whole of the basement level, and all but a single, boarded, segmental headed ground floor window ope with replacement aluminium frame at the S end. Historic photos of the convent show that all ground floor windows were segmental headed; a side entrance door, accessed by a flight of steps, was also segmental headed, providing access to an internal corridor oriented NE-SW that runs the length of the front range. First floor, pointed arched window opes have replaced aluminium frames, with a tripartite pointed arched ope with worked limestone surround at first floor (above the former side door) marking the position of an internal corridor at first floor level.

4.2.7 Convent House Day Care & Resource Centre Extension

The Convent House Day Care & Resource Centre operates from an annex on the south-west side of the 19th century convent. This extension was built initially as a ground level, with part basement, single-storey nuns oratory, with altar, offices, sacristy, shower and toilets, dining hall and kitchen (Figure 16). The extension is of concrete block cavity or concrete block walls with an exterior dry-dash finish and concrete floor. The former oratory is now used as a dining room and kitchen as part of the current Day Care operation.

4.3 Interior Description

The interior of the 19th century convent remains largely unaltered since it was vacated by the Sisters of Mercy in 1999. Evidence of refurbishment and redecoration during its use as a convent is evident throughout, some of which relates to the changing needs of the congregation, such as the provision of an elevator shaft from basement to first floor level. Some of the refurbishment work likely coincides with the construction of the 20th century infill extension at the NE corner of the convent, as well as with the 1970s annex extension at the SW end. Refurbishment included infilling of earlier door ope and/or modification of earlier window ope as doors, the latter occurring on the SW elevation to provide access from the 19th century convent to the 1970s annex and on the NE elevation to provide fire escapes. The addition of limited partition walls has also resulted in minor modification to room layouts. The stairwell shows various signs of modification, which includes blocking access from the main corridor at ground floor level. The 20th century infill extension at the NE corner of the convent resulted in the removal of 19th century wall fabric from the original NE gable of the rear range at ground floor level, enlarging the early refectory room in the rear range.

4.3.1 Basement

The basement was accessed via the stairwell positioned at the SW end of the rear NE-SW oriented range, where the current 21st century entrance, which widened the original door ope, incorporates an original blocked-up window ope with timber sliding sash window. The timber staircase is understood to be original, having white painted carved newel post and balusters and red painted handrail over three flights with landings (Plate 22). The basement level has a long NE-SW oriented corridor, with a modern staircase to the 1970s annex at the SW end (currently blocked) and modern timber fire escape door at NE end (Plate 23).

The basement level rooms in the NW end of the long SW range (to NW side of central corridor) have flagstone floors, and appear to have mortared brick internal walls above stone foundations (at a minimum, mortared red brick surrounds opes). The rooms incorporate a lift shaft with arched door ope and deep reveal; a laundry room with exposed timber joists on brick corbels (Plate 25) with stone floor above, original window opes with timber sash window frames to the NE (Plate 24) and SW elevations (with modified embrasures), and a modified window ope forming a door to the basement level of the 1970s annex (Plate 26); a corridor with original window ope having a timber lined splayed embrasure and timber sliding sash window; and two store rooms with exposed joists, timber batten doors and original window opes with timber sliding sash windows and timber shutters to the SW elevation. An original window ope in the N end of the SW elevation has been modified to provide access to a narrow store in the 1970s annex (Plate 27). An original window ope in the S end of the SW elevation has been modified to provide access from the extended basement to the 1970s annex into a fuse room abutting the lift shaft (Plate 28).

The main NE-SW basement level corridor contains evidence of infilling (cupboard infill opposite stairwell; Plate 29) or blocking of segmental arch door opes in the SE corridor wall (Plate 30), evidencing former refurbishment. The basement level rooms to the front range are symmetrical, comprising changing rooms with attached toilet and shower rooms (Plates 31 and 35), to either side of a blocked up generator room. The blocked generator room contains a non-fixed chattel (a large 'Convent Food Machines Ltd.' food mixer; Plate 33). Small, square headed window opes with splayed embrasures positioned on the SW and SE elevations have varied type timber windows surviving in varied condition (Plate 32). Stepped brick embrasures external to basement level front (SE) window opes provide light from ground level grills and/or lightwell covers at external ground level. Window opes in the NW external elevation of the rear range (Plate 34), and in the NE external elevation of the front range have original timber sliding sash windows. The 19th century room of the rear range has two infill cupboards to either side of a blocked chimney breast on the SW wall; a dog-leg partition (possible concrete block) forms the NE wall.

4.3.2 Ground Floor

The ground floor rooms in the NW end of the long SW range (to NW side of central corridor) have been subject to internal layout changes, with modification to some original opes on the SW external elevation, as a consequence of refurbishment during construction of the

1970s annex. The ground floor was accessed from the rear, via the 1970s annex, where a short corridor connects to the 19th century convent via a modified ope in the original SW external elevation. Three segmental headed window opes in the SW elevation, opening onto an open yard in the annex, have replacement PVC windows (Plate 36). One original window ope in the annex kitchen is boarded; a second has been modified as a door from the annex to the 19th century SW range; and the external wall has been painted (Plate 37). The door enters an earlier kitchen modified with a stud and plasterboard partition wall (Plate 38) and possible later door ope intervention into the stairwell. Additional partition walls to the NW end of the earlier kitchen modifies an earlier room layout (Plate 39).

The original side entrance door at the SW end of the main NE-SW corridor, providing access between the 1970s annex and 19th century convent has a replacement timber door (Plate 40). Toward the NE end of the corridor, a square headed glazed and panelled timber door with flanking panels and an arched framed overlight with spandrels is original, and delineates a former temporary office at the NE end of the corridor (Figure 4; Plate 41). A replacement PVC fire escape door at the NE end of the corridor retains original timber embrasure lining, shutters and architrave (Plate 42). Access to the stairwell from the corridor is blocked with a rendered partition (Plate 43); elsewhere along the hall the walls are hung with white wallpaper. Central along the corridor, an original round headed statue niche with timber architrave and pilasters on the NW wall faces the main front entrance hall (Plate 44).

The ground floor rooms to the front range are symmetrical. A front parlour at the SW end of the range has a square headed door ope with timber 4-panelled door, three original window embrasures with timber shutters and replacement aluminium frames on the SW and SE external elevations, and cornice moulding and panel to walls; a marble fireplace mantle with brick tile surround and landscaped hearth tiles is positioned on the internal NE wall, next to a cupboard infilling a former door ope (Plate 45). An adjacent smaller parlour has a marble fireplace mantle with checkerboard tiled surround and hearth, square headed door opes with timber 4-panelled doors, one original window embrasure with timber shutters and replacement aluminium frame on the SE elevation and cornice moulding and panel to walls (Plate 46). The main entry hall has original timber features to the front door and flanking side lights (timber sash windows with timber shutters and textured glass; Plate 47) and a separate wide segmental arched original timber door screen between the hall and main corridor (Plate 48). A small room to the NE side of the hall, once used as a library (Figure 4) has a square headed door ope with timber 4-

panelled door, one original window embrasure with timber shutters and replacement aluminium frame on the SE elevation, cornice moulding and dado rail height wall mounding incorporating a square headed moulded surround (Plate 49). A former community room (Figure 4) at the NE end of the range has a timber floor, square headed door ope with timber 4-panelled door, three original window embrasures with timber shutters and replacement aluminium frames on the NE and SE external elevations and cornice moulding and panel to walls (Plate 50); a cast iron fireplace mantle with fireplace hood, decorated cheek tiles and tiled hearth is positioned on the internal SW wall (related grate currently sitting centrally in the room) (Plate 51); a blocked door ope into the room on the NW wall is evident on the wall face in the main corridor.

The ground floor in the rear range is a single large space consisting of a former refectory room (Figure 4) opened out through the 19th century NE gable into the 20th century infill extension at the NE corner of the convent. It has three square headed door opes, two with timber 4-panelled doors, one smaller sized with a flat panel door. Two door opes in the SW wall access the stairwell, to either side of a blocked chimney breast (Plate 52). The room contains two original window embrasures with timber shutters and replacement aluminium frames on the NW external elevation, and a small window, visible from the exterior is hidden behind the room's wallpaper lining. The room is wallpapered white throughout, with a timber dado rail. Two projecting wall stumps, represent original gable wall fabric, marking the divide between the 19th century convent and 20th century infill (Plate 53).

4.3.3 Stairwell

The stairwell is wholly located in the rear NE-SW oriented range, at the SW end, running from basement, through ground floor to first floor level, comprising three flights. Lighting at basement level is via a small square headed embrasure with original timber lining, shutters and architrave, positioned high above the basement entrance on the NW elevation of the rear range (Plate 54). Access from the landing at ground floor level was via a segmental arched ope across the full width of the stairwell, currently blocked with painted plasterboard (Plate 55). A square headed tripartite window on the NW elevation of the rear range lights the first floor landing, having original timber elements including timber tracery on spandrels and above pointed arches, timber sliding sash windows and textured glass (Plate 56). A timber and glass screen in a segmental arched ope across the full width of the stairwell provides access to the first floor corridor of the front range (Plate 57). A modified door ope also accesses the long SW range off the landing; a square headed

door ope has been inserted, with jambs off-line, into an earlier arched door ope on the NE facing elevation of the long SW range (Plate 58). The original arched ope embrasure is visible on the opposite side of the wall, from a corridor in the SW range.

4.3.4 First Floor

The first floor rooms in the NW end of the long SW range (to NW side of central corridor) have been subject to internal layout changes, a stud and plasterboard partition with reinforced glass extending to the rear of the lift shaft providing a corridor to toilets at the NW end of the range (Plate 59). Window embrasures on the external NE facing wall have original timber elements, including shutters, with some evidence of later repairs. A room off the corridor to the rear of the lift shaft, used as a kitchen, has two window embrasures with original timber shutters on the SW facing elevation (Plate 60), with a timber dado rail, and a square headed long ope in the internal NW wall, which could be an infilled earlier door ope. The toilet space at the NW end of the range has a partial false ceiling, a hatch in the ceiling to the attic space, later internal stud and plasterboard partition walls, with most window embrasures on the NE and SW elevations having original timber shutters. A square headed window ope in the NW gable is a later intervention and likely dates to a similar period to the toilet refurbishment (Plate 61). Earlier dividing walls may have been removed during refurbishment, with a possible surviving stub surviving on the NE elevation at the ope to a disabled toilet.

The lift shaft at the SW end of the first floor corridor has an adjacent square headed door ope into a small room with hot water cylinder, a later intervention, next to a square headed tripartite window at the SW end of the corridor with original timber shutters in embrasures and replacement aluminium window frames (Plate 62). The corridor has textured white wallpaper throughout, from the last phase of refurbishment, and older wallpaper beneath is exposed in places, including on the SE wall neat the tripartite window (Plates 63 and 64) and at the NE end, where there is an aluminium framed fire escape door inserted into a former window ope (Plate 65). A rectangular, pitched timber rooflight is positioned roughly centrally along the corridor, having an ope into the attic on the SE side and a latched door accessing the external roof valley on the NW side (Plate 66).

The first floor rooms to the front range are symmetrical, comprising large room in the SW corner with three window embrasures with original timber shutters and existing chipboard lining on the external SW and SE facing elevations. A chimney breast and a cast iron fireplace mantle and surround with grate are positioned on the internal NW wall (Plate 67),

with possible hand-painted earlier wallpaper exposed beneath textured white wallpaper on the internal NE wall next to a scar of a possible former internal room division (Plate 68). Dado rail to all walls. Three smaller rooms positioned centrally in the front range have been opened to create a single larger room by the removal of internal walls; projecting stubs of the original dividing walls remain on the external SE elevation and internal NW wall and across the ceiling (Plate 69). The room has four window embrasures with original timber shutters in the SE (front) elevation, dado rail to all walls, evidence of existing chipboard lining to walls and textured white wallpaper. A blocked original door ope to the middle space on the internal NW wall is visible from the corridor (Plate 70). The front room in the NE corner has three window embrasures on the external SE and NE facing elevations, two on the NE retaining original timber shutters. The internal NW wall, with projecting cupboard, is a narrow stud and plasterboard partition wall, a later intervention indicating the room at the NE end of the first floor corridor was once larger (Plate 71), likely installed during the addition of the 20th century infill extension at the NE corner of the convent. Possible hand-painted earlier wallpaper is exposed beneath textured white wallpaper on the internal SW wall (Plate 72).

The first floor room in the rear range (to the NW side of central corridor) has three square headed window embrasures on the external NW facing elevations, the larger two retaining original timber shutters, the smaller having a lowered ceiling above with a hatch to the attic space (Plate 73) showing a concrete block gable wall forming the NE internal wall (Plate 75), added during the addition of the 20th century infill extension at the NE corner of the convent. The attic hatch shows original timber roof frame and lime mortar torching to underside of roof slate (Plate 75). There is a scar of a possible former internal NW-SE oriented room division centrally in the room, and a modified fireplace ope in the chimney breast on the SW wall (Plate 74).

5. Impact Statement and Recommendations

5.1 Archaeological Impact

The former Sisters of Mercy Convent relates to late 19th century development at the north-west of the historic town at Ballymahon, RMP LF027-003006-, in an area next to the original 18th century catholic church. The site is partly situated in the 'Zone of Notification' associated with the historic town, on town land that contained street front houses dating from at least the 18th century, in an area known as 'Rappery Hill'. Street front houses may also have existed at 'Rappery Hill' in 17th century; the mid-17th century Civil Survey records the existence of dispersed '*Irish creats*' (poorer residences) at the town.

The proposed development site, which is focused at the convent and its immediate surrounding grounds, is set back from the street front, the location of the 1878 and 1923 National School buildings being more closely positioned on the location of earlier buildings. The original construction of the convent and National Schools, as well as provision of Saint Anne's Hall in the mid-20th century and construction associated with the 1970s annex extension has modified earlier ground levels – the front (SE side) of the convent may be artificially raised and levelled –, and it is not anticipated that material culture pre-dating the convent will be impacted as a result of the development proposal.

Potential sub-surface remains will more likely relate to the convent and developments at the site over its lifetime, including a past dormitory that stood at the immediate rear of the convent, as well as potential evidence of the former garden – garden soils and footpath network. A potential impact on the original convent graveyard was considered, but it appears this was wholly relocated to its current position in the grounds of the Mercy Secondary School in the later 20th century, most likely during provision of the present entrance to the Mercy Secondary School. These works also likely removed an earlier stone garden wall that formed the original south-east boundary of the convent grounds, potential trances of which could survive to the east corner and south-east boundary of the proposed development site.

5.2 Built Heritage Impact

The development proposal directly impacts a heritage building listed in the NIAH, Ref. No. 13316005, with a 'Regional' value rating.

The 19th century Sisters of Mercy Convent building is largely unaltered since it was vacated by the Sisters of Mercy in 1999, and retains much of its external and internal character, which comes from its patina of age and its obvious use as a convent. The convent's original curtilage and setting has been more greatly affected, resulting from the sub-division of the convent grounds following its sale in 1999. The development of the Church View residential estate resulted in significant impact to the curtilage, as dormitory buildings and much of the gardens still survived at this time. The building has also been disconnected from associated elements of its curtilage, in particular the convent graveyard now in the grounds of the Mercy Secondary School. Though no longer connected with the convent, the 1878 and 1923 National School buildings and Saint Anne's Hall survive as elements of the original curtilage to the Main Street side of the current grounds. The former link with Saint Matthew's Catholic Church is retained in physical fabric comprising steps and access gate in the rear boundary wall of the church grounds.

Externally, the development proposal will impact what remains of the once more extensive gardens, resulting from the provision of a community hall to the east corner of the grounds and extended car-parking and a turnabout area, displacing a surviving catholic statue in the garden. The visual link between the former convent graveyard in the grounds of the Mercy Secondary School and the front façade of the convent will also be partly effected by the provision of the community hall, although its placement parallel with the north-east boundary acknowledges and maintains a greater part of the visual link, and frames the relationship of the site with the former convent graveyard. A three storey addition to the NE elevation will largely obscure this elevation from view, and directly impact a concrete lined, rectangular sunken feature at ground level outside the NE elevation. It is acknowledged the NE elevation is the least visible elevation approaching the former convent from local road L11281, Church View and when entering the grounds from the SW, making it more suited to an addition. The sunken feature outside the elevation was functional to the convent, and is not of high value in its own right.

There is no evidence to indicate the convent was painted externally, and any proposal for painting the external façades of the convent will directly and negatively impact the building's character. New interventions in the NW gable are proposed to provide additional window opes, and an original wall extending (SW) from the NW gable under the pebble-dashed 1970s annex may be directly impacted by demolition of the annex. This wall enclosed the end of an open basement level passage on the SW range, providing light to the basement and, subject to construction feasibility, it may be possible to retain

and reuse the wall for its original purpose. Despite much replacement of window frames throughout the building, original timber sliding sash windows survive, especially at basement level, at the front ground floor entrance and at the stairwell. Removal of original window fabric will directly and negatively impact the building's character.

Internally, the 19th century buildings contains most of its original fabric, including in floor arrangements (joists, floorboards, stone paving) and in the roof space, as well as fireplaces (of which cast iron examples may be original), original timberwork to window embrasures, timber panelled doors throughout ground floor level, and evidence of early wallpaper. There is also much evidence of 20th century refurbishments, and earlier opes in the building are blocked and/or hidden. Removal of original internal fabric will directly and negatively impact the building's internal character. The proposed removal of wall fabric to repurpose rooms or create new opes will also result in the removal of additional original 19th century wall fabric – which began in particular with the 1970s annex extension. There is little in the way of surviving internal chattels associated with the buildings use as a convent; a food mixer currently stored at basement level represents surviving chattel and should be retained at the property.

5.3 Archaeological Recommendations

It is recommended that groundworks at the proposed development site be monitored by an archaeologist, to address the potential for uncovering sub-surface evidence associated with the development and evolution of the convent, and to record any buildings archaeology evidence associated with the upstanding fabric. Buildings archaeology may be exposed during groundworks at the base of walls, externally and internally at basement level. Any removal of, or intervention to fabric at ground level, such as at the concrete-lined, rectangular sunken feature at ground level outside the NE elevation can be recorded through archaeological monitoring prior to removal or intervention.

5.4 Built Heritage Recommendations

The refurbishment of the 19th century convent should be based on built heritage best practice, on the principals of minimal intervention, compatibility and reversibility to maintain the buildings external and internal character. Original fabric should be retained and repaired in the first instance, with replacement as a last resort. Existing opes, including

currently blocked opes or previously modified opes, should be considered in the first instance in terms of building circulation, minimising new opes through original fabric. Fabric includes evidence of early wallpaper, which should be retained.

Works should be identified and carried out in consultation with a conservation architect, and all modifications and new intervention should be recorded and reported on by an appropriately qualified built heritage professional or buildings archaeologist. Wall fabric removed, or any wall intervention, should be monitored to confirm construction material and relationship to the original building. Any reporting produced in connection with the development proposal, including existing floor and elevation plans, should be lodged with the Irish Architectural Archive as a publicly accessible record.

The visual link between the convent and former graveyard should be maintained in respect of development at this site. The link has been acknowledged in the project design, aligning the proposed community hall to reduce the effects and to frame the site with the former graveyard. It has been confirmed that the present catholic statue in the surviving garden will be retained on site; a green or planted area of the site for relocation is recommended. The steps and access gate in the rear boundary wall at Saint Matthew's Catholic Church should remain unaltered, in acknowledgement of the former relationship between the convent and the church. A remaining chattel at basement level, a food mixer associated with the convent, should also be retained internally.

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7. Figures

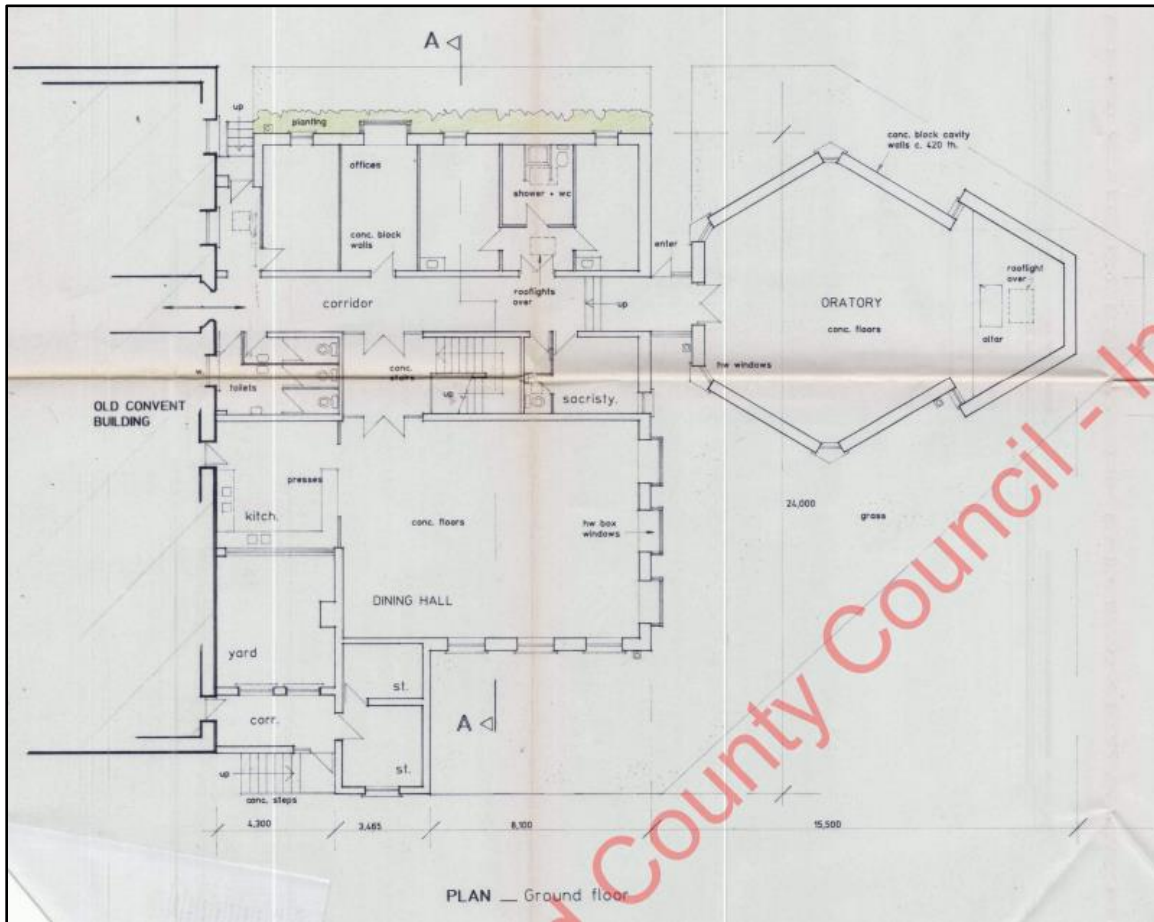


Figure 16 Ground plan of 1970s annex extension added to convent's south-west elevation, surveyed March 1999 by Quinn Bernwell Associates (Source: www.eplanning.ie/LongfordCC, Ref. 99166).

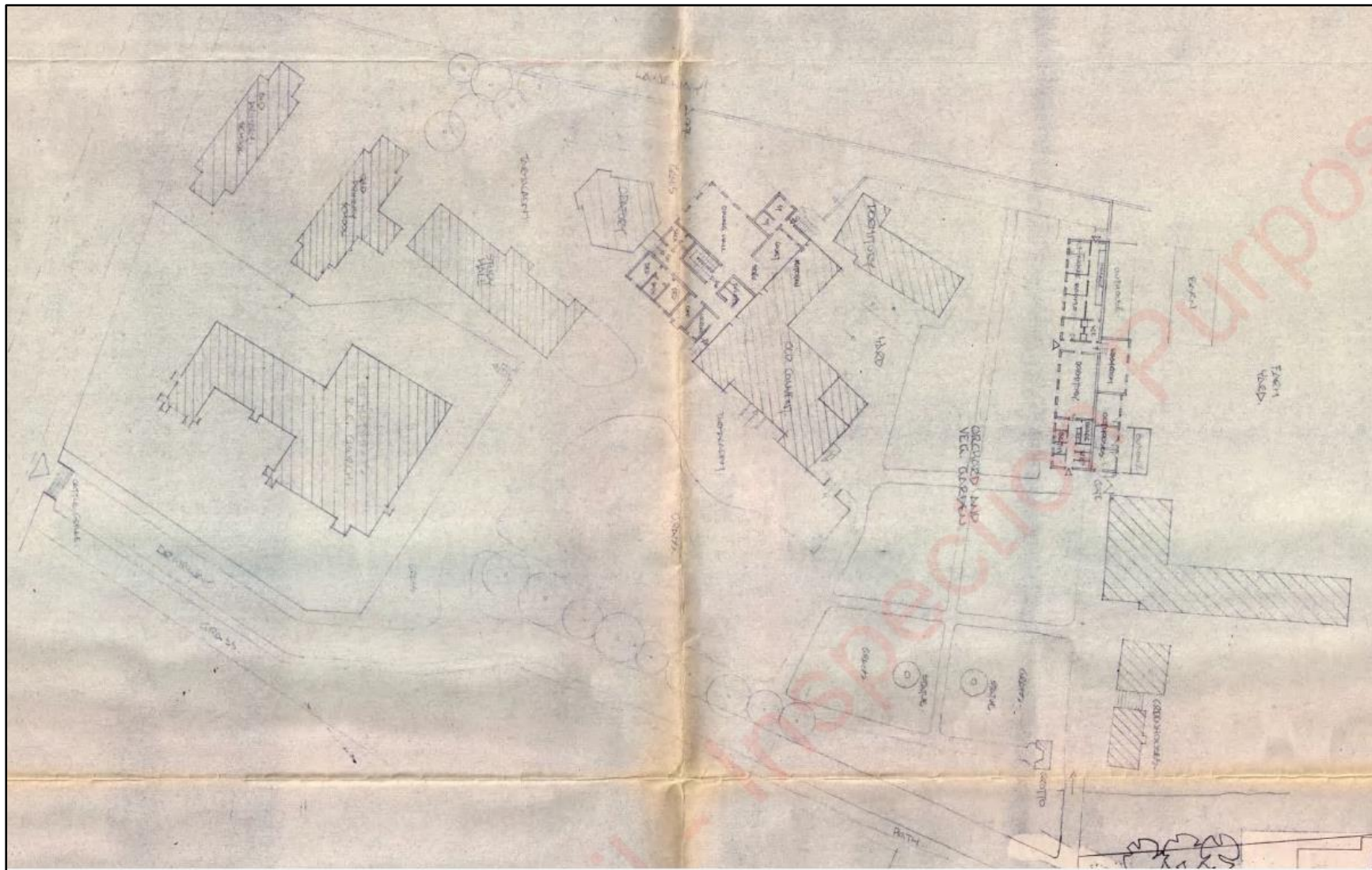


Figure 17 Site plan of convent and grounds, drawn February 1980 by Robinson Keefe & Devane (Source: www.eplanning.ie/LongfordCC, Ref. 807717).

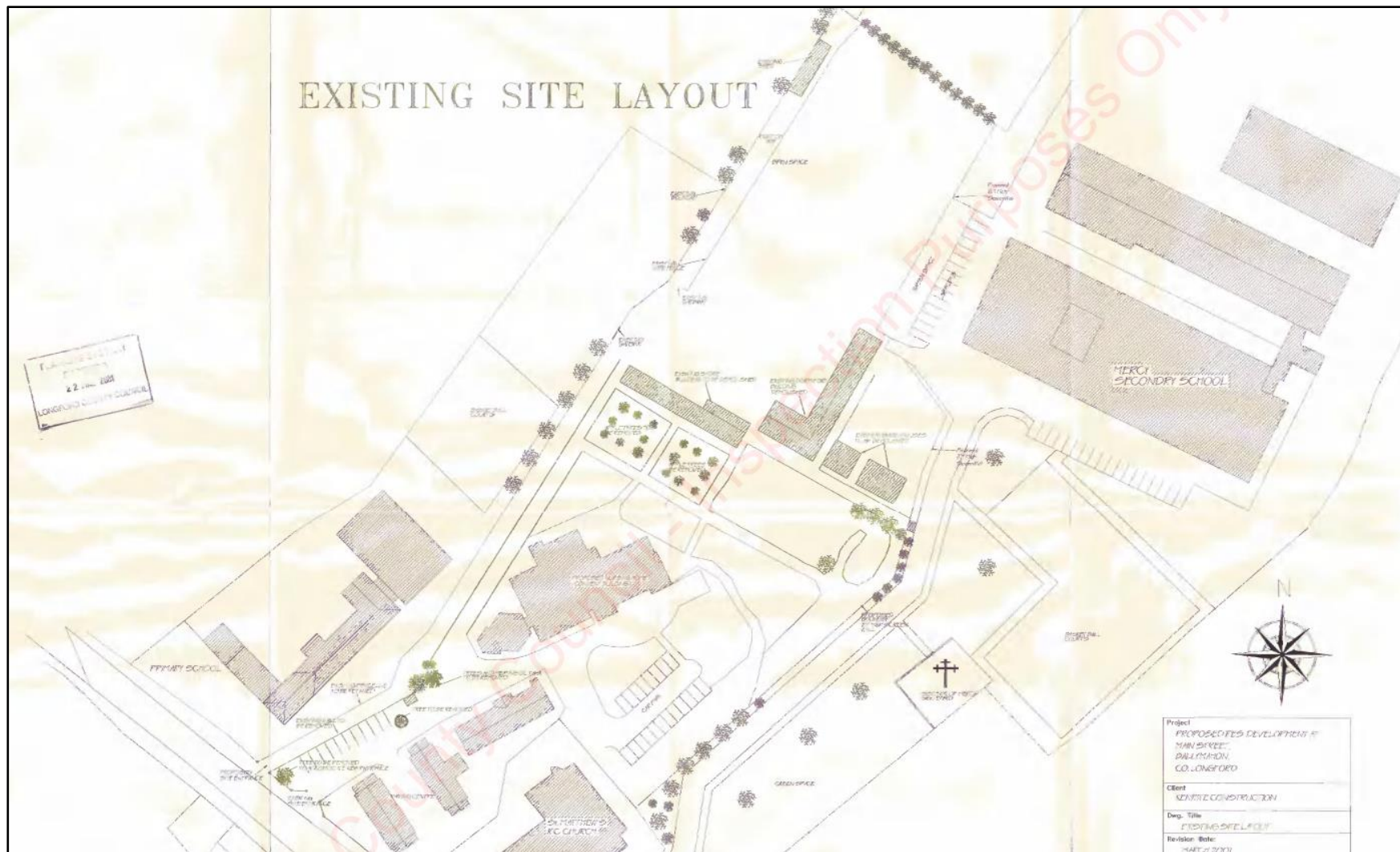


Figure 18 Site plan of convent and grounds, drawn September 2000 by Aidan Bracken Building Design (Source: www.eplanning.ie/LongfordCC, Ref. 00825).

8. Plates



Plate 6 Site entrance from local road L11281; view E across modern single-storey annex to SW elevation of convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 7 View NE on internal access of modern single-storey annex with convent in background (05.02.2025).



Plate 8 View E across asphalt forecourt and parking area to sloping garden on the E and SE sides of convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 9 View W from E corner of site across sloping garden on the E and SE sides of convent, with surviving statue (in centre and in inset) (05.02.2025).



Plate 10 Steps from front forecourt to basement level on NE side of convent; covered opening at base of steps; Saint Matthew's Catholic Church in background (05.02.2025).



Plate 11 Overgrown garden plants obscuring concrete capped stone retaining wall at NE end of front forecourt (05.02.2025).



Plate 12 Cut stone steps with side walls from convent grounds into Saint Matthew's Catholic Church (05.02.2025).



Plate 13 Front (SE) elevation of convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 14 NE elevation of convent with fire escape stairs (05.02.2025).



Plate 15 NE elevation of convent with 20th century addition to N corner; fire escape stairs from modified window opes (05.02.2025).



Plate 16 NW rear elevation of convent with 20th century addition at N corner to left of image (05.02.2025).



Plate 17 Close up of basement level timber sliding sash window on NW rear elevation of convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 18 Timber sliding sash windows at stairwell on NW rear elevation of convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 19 Rear NW and NE facing elevations of convent with basement access at centre image (05.02.2025).



Plate 20 Rear NW gable end of SW range, with later window ope; painted wall at base continuing outside image to right beneath the modern annex is original to convent (05.02.2025).



Plate 21 Modern single-storey annex abutting SW elevation of convent (05.02.2025).

Basement Level

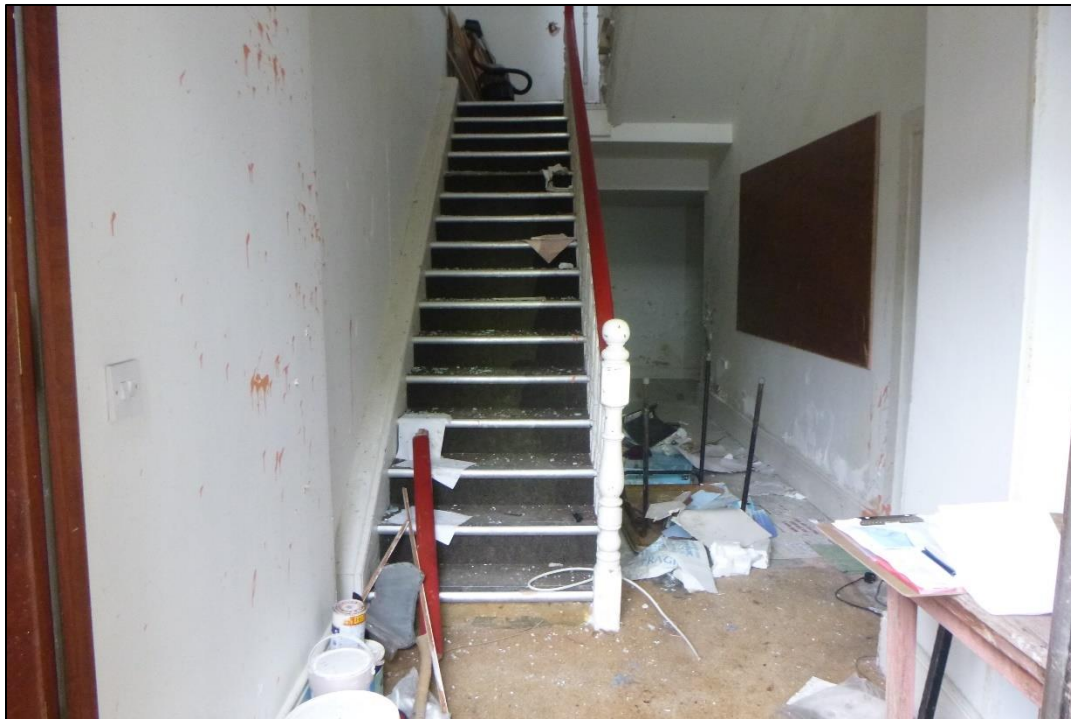


Plate 22 Basement level stairwell with first flight of timber staircase (18.02.2025).

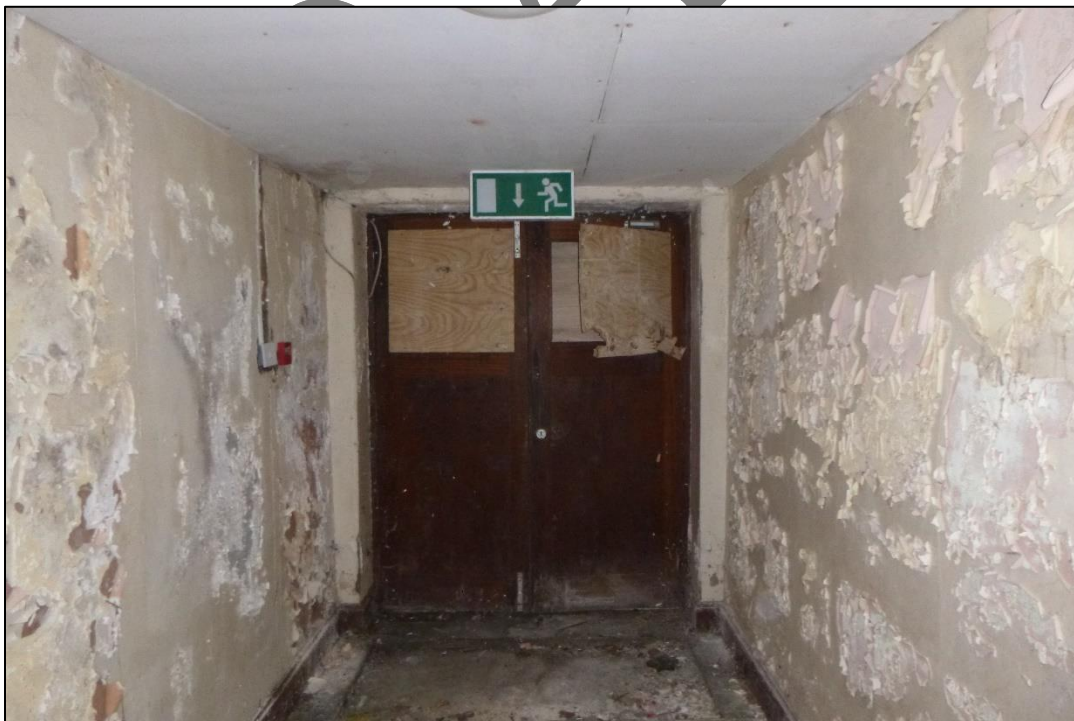


Plate 23 Blocked timber fire escape door at NE end of central corridor at basement level (18.02.2025).



Plate 24 Blocked basement level window type with original timber sash window frame (18.02.2025).



Plate 25 Original timber joists supported on brick corbels at basement level (18.02.2025).



Plate 26 Sample modified window ope on SW elevation at basement level, accessing extended basement level to 1970s annex (18.02.2025).



Plate 27 Basement level storeroom at NW end of SW range with original window ope and modified ope at door in original SW elevation; exposed joists above (18.02.2025).



Plate 28 Basement level drying room in 1970s annex extension with modified opening in original SW elevation (18.02.2025).



Plate 29 Infill cupboard in basement level corridor (SE wall) marking location of former segmental arched door opening (18.02.2025).

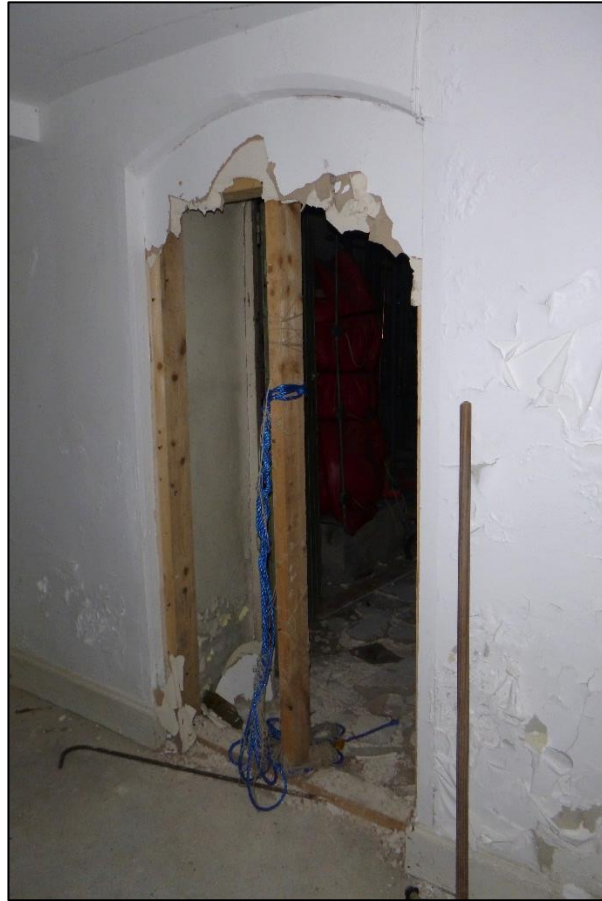


Plate 30 Sample blocked segmental arched door opening in basement level corridor (SE wall) (18.02.2025).



Plate 31 Basement level changing room at SW corner of front range with original splayed window embrasures in external walls (18.02.2025).



Plate 32 Original window embrasure and timber window in basement level generator room positioned centrally in front range (18.02.2025).



Plate 33 Non-fixed chattel (food mixer) in generator room positioned centrally in front range (18.02.2025).



Plate 34 Basement room to SW end of rear range with original window opes and timber sash windows in NW elevation (18.02.2025).



Plate 35 Basement level changing room to NE corner of front range with original window opes and timber sash windows in NE elevation; former room partitions demolished (18.02.2025).

Ground Floor Level



Plate 36 Segmental headed ground floor windows with PVC frames in SW elevation overlooking annex yard (18.02.2025).



Plate 37 Ground floor annex kitchen with peeling paint on original SW external elevation and modified window opening at doorway (18.02.2025).



Plate 38 Earlier kitchen in SW range ground floor looking to partition wall with doorway; square headed window on NE facing elevation of range (18.02.2025).



Plate 39 Ground floor corridor to NW corner of SW range with partition wall to right and original window opes with timber shutters to SW elevation to left (18.02.2025).



Plate 40 Original door open at side entrance to convent on SW elevation, looking NE from annex (18.02.2025).



Plate 41 Original door internal to corridor to NE end, looking NE in corridor (18.02.2025).



Plate 42 PVC fire escape at NE end of corridor with original timberwork internal to embrasure (18.02.2025).

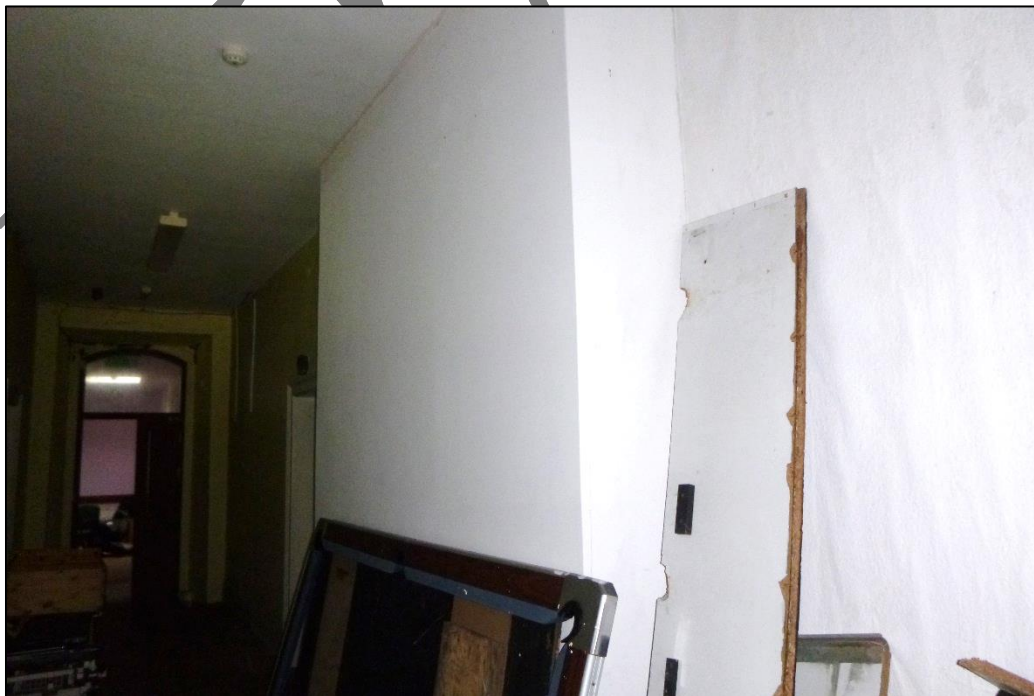


Plate 43 Blocked access to stairwell from main ground floor corridor (18.02.2025).



Plate 44 Statue niche in main corridor facing front entrance hall (18.02.2025).



Plate 45 Fireplace with decorative hearth tiles in NE internal wall of parlour to SW end of front range (18.02.2025).



Plate 46 Small front parlour to SW side of front hall with timber 4-paneled door, fireplace and original shuttered window embrasure (18.02.2025).

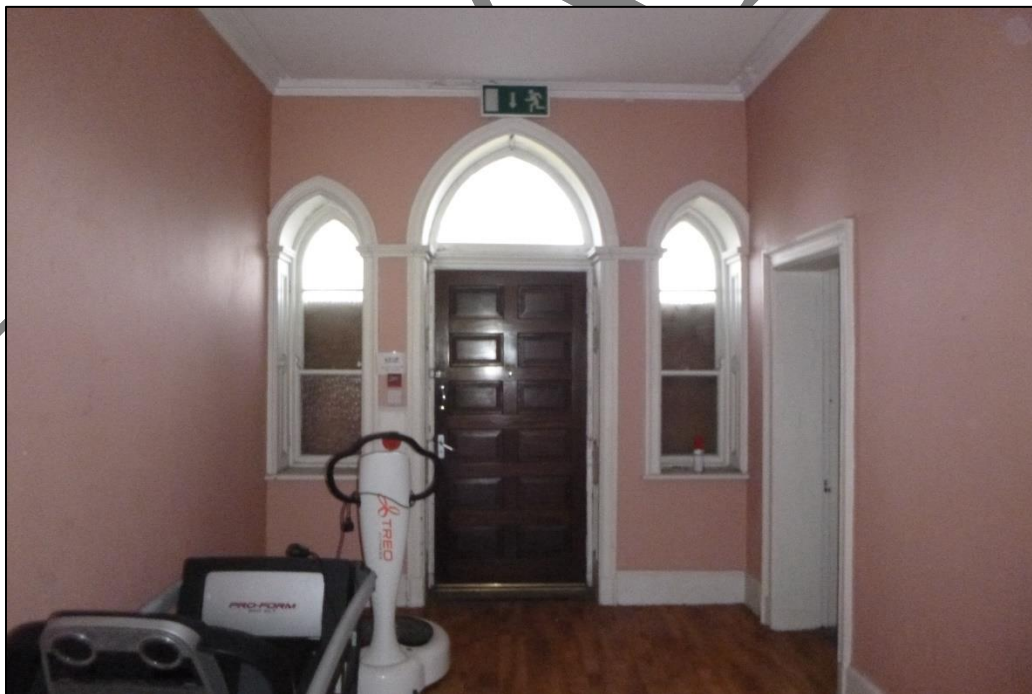


Plate 47 Interior view of original front entry door and sidelights with original timber windows from hall (18.02.2025).



Plate 48 Interior wide arched original door and frame between hall and main corridor (18.02.2025).



Plate 49 Small front library to NE side of front hall with original shuttered window embrasure and wall moulding (18.02.2025).



Plate 50 Community room at NE end of front range with original shuttered window embrasures, replacement aluminium window frames and timber floor (18.02.2025).



Plate 51 Community room at NE end of front range with fireplace and timber 4-pannelled door (18.02.2025).



Plate 52 Former refectory room in rear range (view toward stairwell) with original shuttered window embrasures and replacement aluminium window frames on NW external elevation (18.02.2025).



Plate 53 View NE from former refectory room to 20th century infill at NE corner of convent; original gable wall knocked through into extension (18.02.2025).

Stairwell



Plate 54 Small window in NW elevation of rear range lighting stairwell from high in basement level (18.02.2025).



Plate 55 Stairwell landing at ground floor level showing blocked wide segmental arched ope (18.02.2025).



Plate 56 Tripartite window in NW elevation of rear range lighting stairwell at first floor level with original timber detail and decoration (18.02.2025).



Plate 57 Stairwell landing at first floor level showing wide segmental arched ope to first floor in front range (18.02.2025).



Plate 58 Modified door ope in NE facing elevation of long SW range at first floor stairwell landing (18.02.2025).

First Floor

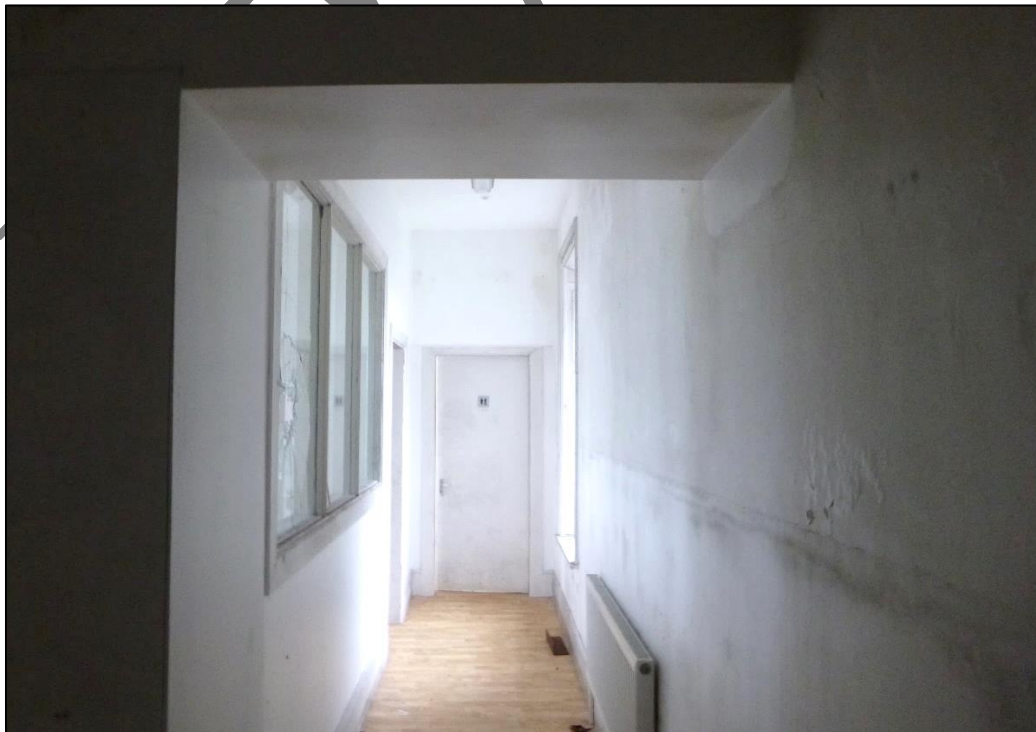


Plate 59 Corridor with later partition wall accessing toilets at NW end of long SW range (18.02.2025).



Plate 60 Former kitchen space at rear of lift shaft, view to window ope on SW elevation (18.02.2025).



Plate 61 Later partition walls forming toilets in NW end of SW range, view to later window ope in NW gable (18.02.2025).



Plate 62 Tripartite window at SW end of first floor corridor next door open to hot water cylinder and lift shaft (18.02.2025).



Plate 63 Sample earlier wall paper exposed on SE wall of corridor by tripartite window (18.02.2025).



Plate 64 View NE along first floor corridor from SW end (18.02.2025).



Plate 65 NE end of first floor corridor to later aluminium framed fire escape door (18.02.2025).



Plate 66 Timber roof light located centrally along first floor corridor (18.02.2025).



Plate 67 SW corner room to front range with chimneybreast and cast iron fireplace on internal NW wall (18.02.2025).



Plate 68 SW corner room to front range with early wallpaper and former partition scar (arrowed) on internal NE wall (18.02.2025).



Plate 69 Enlarged central front room to front range with projecting stubs of original internal dividing walls, view to SW (18.02.2025).



Plate 70 Blocked up door ope from corridor into former middle room in front range (18.02.2025).



Plate 71 NE corner room to front range, view to later NW internal partition wall (18.02.2025).



Plate 72 NE corner room to front range with early wallpaper on internal SW wall (18.02.2025).



Plate 73 NW elevation of room to rear range, with lower ceiling and attic hatch above small window and partition scar (arrowed) (18.02.2025).



Plate 74 SW internal wall of room to rear range with chimneybreast and modified fireplace ope (18.02.2025).



Plate 75 View through attic hatch to NE concrete block gable, original roof timbers and lime mortar torching (18.02.2025).