

Former Garda Barracks Ballitore

ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE IMPACT
ASSESSMENT

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Property: The Old Garda Barracks, Ballitore
Status: NIAH No 11822021
Project: Development and Refurbishment at the old Garda Barracks, Ballitore, Co. Kildare
Location: Townland: Ballitore
Coordinates: 679924, 695970
Client: Kildare County Council

Prepared by:

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1. INTRODUCTION

The former Garda Barracks in Ballitore has been recently acquired by Kildare County Council and is to form part of a housing development which will comprise of 6 units, two of which will occupy the former Garda barracks. The other four units will occupy two sympathetically designed new buildings proposed within the curtilage of the site, subservient to the Garda Barracks.

The former barracks is not a protected structure on the register of protected structures, but is listed on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and is noted as being a structure of regional importance.

Initially a desktop survey was carried out into the Kildare County Development Plan 2023-2029, the Record of Protected Structures and the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, to identify and assess the structure, its architectural value, and the relevant policies relating to development of historic buildings and buildings within the curtilage of historic building in County Kildare. Historic maps and relevant documents were assessed to further build a picture of the history of the structure.

Once this information had been collected and assessed, a site visit was carried out on February 28th 2025, to fully assess the historic character of the structure and what impact the proposed development might have.

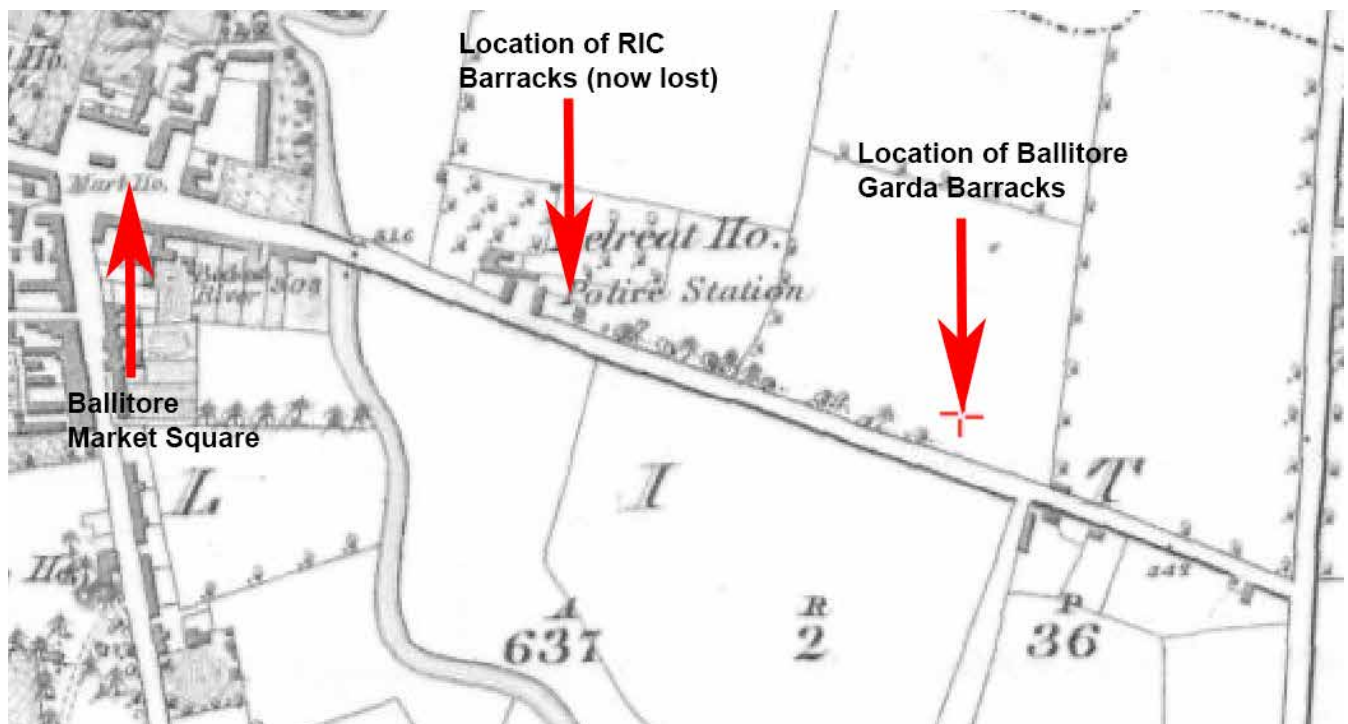


Fig.01 - First Edition OS Map with location of Ballitore Garda Barracks shown

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE

The structure is a detached five-bay two-storey Garda Síochána Station, built circa 1950. The walls are of painted roughcast render with advanced, profiled doorcases. The roof is hipped, with slate, with clay ridge tiles, with overhanging timber eaves. The chimney stack is in redbrick and the building retains original cast iron rainwater goods, most of which are in good condition. Any remaining windows are replacement uPVC casement windows, not reflective of the original timber fenestration (examples of which can be seen in the identical former Garda Barracks in Kilcock). Likewise, the door has been replaced and is not reflective of the original.

The structure is set back from the road in an open site behind a rendered boundary wall with cast iron gates which are in poor repair. A small outhouse is located to the rear of the dwelling.

The structure is in overall good condition, retaining original aspect and most salient original features such as stairs, window boards, skirting, architraves and fireplaces internally and external features discussed above including original rendered finishes, roof, and rainwater goods. All remain and in good condition.

The site area is 0.55ha (approx.) and is zoned B: Existing Residential/Infill in the Kildare County development Plan 2023-2029.



Fig.02 - Original cast rainwater goods, sections in need of repair.

3.0 HISTORY OF STRUCTURE

The village of Ballitore (Ballytore) itself is of huge historical significance, being the first planned Quaker settlement in either England and Ireland, with its meeting house founded in 1707. A number of buildings of significant cultural, social, historical and architectural importance remain dotted around the market square and out into surrounding areas.

The former Garda Barracks was erected in a greenfield site at the edge of the village of Ballitore at a further remove from the market square than the original for the Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks (no longer extant).

The Ballitore barracks is a fine and well-maintained example of the purpose built Garda Stations built in the 1940s and 1950s across the country to a standard design by the Board of Works. The design and development grew from the need to provide purpose built stations to accommodate a growing force in the years following independence and the establishment of the State. These stations also marked a move away from the older and outdated Royal Irish Constabulary barracks, which dotted the country. As such the building holds significant social and historical interest in its own right.

The design was simple, and functional. Split into two separate units, each entered by its own door located at opposing ends of the structure, one section accommodated the public facing element of the station with accommodation above for a junior garda, whilst the section provided accommodation for a serving garda and family. It is also an excellent example of the simplistic style of mid-century public architecture, and retains many salient features to this days. Plans for the Ballitore Station date from September 1950.

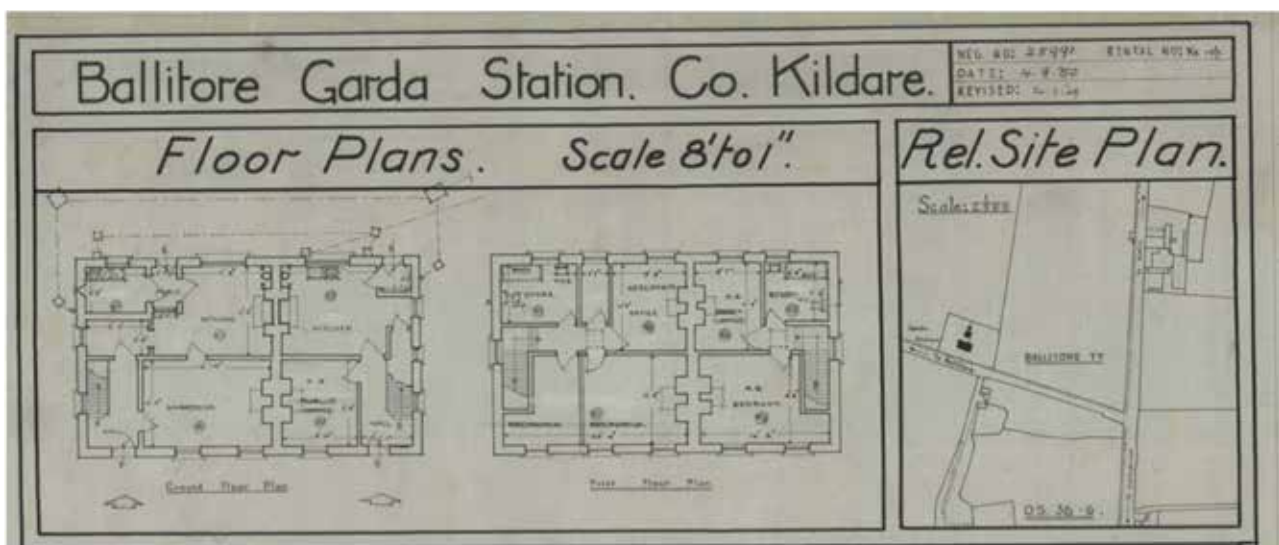


Fig.03 - Plans for the Barracks, dating from 1950

4.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The development consists of the refurbishment of the existing former barracks to create two dwelling units (1 no. 3 bed, 2 storey and 1 no. 2 bed, 2 story) and the construction of two additional buildings within the curtilage of the structure, each comprising of two dwelling units (1 no. 1 bed, 1 story and 1 no. 2 bed, 2 story). In total the proposed development will consist of six dwelling units.

Proposed works to the former Garda Barracks

- 1) Replacement of all non-original windows and doors with anthracite grey triple glazed timber sash windows, and timber doors, the design and profiles of which reflect the original design.
- 2) Cleaning down and localised repair of the existing roof, retaining existing timber soffit and fascia and cast iron rainwater goods.
- 3) Complete rewire and replumb with new heating system
- 4) Internal reconfiguration works
- 5) Excavation of existing ground floor to install new concrete slab with required insulation, radon sump barrier etc
- 6) Internal linings to achieve required sound proofing and insulation
- 7) Quilt insulation to attic
- 8) Demolition of proposed outbuilding

New Dwellings within structure's curtilage

The proposed new dwellings comprise of an L-shaped plan with a two storey and single storey sections. The form is simple and the materials selected mirror in the main those of the Barracks, and those that differ do not impact. The siting the buildings and the scale and form ensure that they are subservient to the heritage structure.



Fig.04 - External details - rendered doorset, cast rainwater goods, brick chimney

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact of development on the structure has been assessed against the following legislation and guidelines:

1) Section 59 of the Planning and Development Act 2000

“Under Section 58 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, each owner and occupier must ensure that a Protected Structure or any element of a Protected Structure is not endangered through harm, decay or damage, whether over a short or long period, through neglect or through direct or indirect means.”

2) The Architectural Heritage Protection - Guidelines for Planning Authorities [2004], paragraph 13.7.2, which states:

- (a) Would the development affect the character of the protected structure?
- (b) Would the proposed works affect the relationship of the protected structure to its surroundings and attendant grounds?
- (c) Would the protected structure remain the focus of its setting? For example, a new building erected between a structure and a feature within the attendant grounds will alter the character of both;
- (d) Do the proposed works require an alteration of the profile of the landscape, for example, the creation of a golf course? How would this affect the character of the protected structure and its attendant grounds?
- (e) Do the proposals respect important woodland and parkland? Do they conserve significant built features and landscape features?
- (f) Are there important views of or from the structure that could be damaged by the proposed development? Would important vistas be obstructed by new development?
- (g) Would distant views of important architectural or natural landmarks be blocked or changed? Would a significant skyline be altered?
- (h) Even where the proposed development is at a distance from the protected structure, could it still have an impact? This could include tall or bulky buildings interrupting views of or from the protected structure and other features of the designed landscape;
- (i) Where the new works would not be directly visible from the protected structure, would they be visible from the approaches to the structure or from other important sites or features within the attendant grounds? If so, would this be acceptable?
- (j) What effect would the scale, height, massing, alignment or materials of a proposed construction have on the protected structure and its attendant grounds?

The list of definitions given below is taken from Table 3.4: Descriptions of Effects contained in the Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports prepared by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The definitions from the EPA document are in italics.

- Imperceptible - An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences.
- Not Significant - An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment but without significant consequences. Changes that would not be significant in terms of Planning Consent
- Slight - An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the environment without affecting its sensitivities. This suggests the overall Heritage Significance of the property would not be impacted by the proposed changes even though they would be noticeable
- Moderate - An effect that alters the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends. Some impact on the Heritage Significance, but within acceptable limits.



Fig.05 - Internal details including early doorsets and door furniture, fireplaces and surrounds

- Significant - An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters a sensitive aspect of the environment. Some impact on Heritage Significance, moving outside of acceptable limits.
- Very Significant: An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of a sensitive aspect of the environment. Where the Heritage Significance is severely impacted/ lost altogether even though some of the structure may remain.
- Profound effect which obliterates sensitive characteristics. Loss of the entire structure or all of its Heritage Significance.

PROPOSAL IMPACTS

Proposed works to the former Garda Barracks

1) Replacement of all non-original windows and doors with anthracite grey triple glazed timber sash windows, and timber doors, the design and profiles of which reflect the original design.

No original windows or door sets remain, and any remaining windows are uPVC and in very poor repair. The proposed replacement timber frame sash windows with sympathetic design to match the original is very welcome, as is the proposed anthracite grey colour.

Impact: Imperceptible

2) Cleaning down and localised repair of the existing roof, retaining existing timber soffit and fascia and cast iron rainwater goods.

The condition of the original roof, fascia and soffits and rainwater goods is good, and the proposal to retain, clean and repair all is welcomed.

Impact: Imperceptible

3) Complete rewire and replumb with new heating system

This is an important and necessary piece of work to insure that the heritage building can be safely used to contemporary standards and regulations. Method statements to be provided.

Impact: Imperceptible

4) Internal reconfiguration works

Some internal reconfiguration works are proposed and both ground and first floor level to allow for current standards for living accommodation to be met. Whilst this will result in the loss of some original aspect of the building, it is considered necessary for the proper functionality of the development. The existing aspect should be carefully documented in advance of any works being carried out. Method statements to be provided.

Impact: Moderate

5) Excavation of existing ground floor to install new concrete slab with required insulation, radon sump barrier etc

Important work required to improve the efficient of the building.

Impact: Slight

6) Internal linings to achieve required sound proofing and insulation

The internal lining works proposed are important to achieve required insulation and sound standards. Whilst the lining works themselves would not have a significant impact on the heritage, the potential loss of detail should be considered namely skirting, architraves, window boards, all of which will be affected by the additional depth. This can be avoided by carefully removing the existing original architraves and skirting and replacing them on the newly lined walls.

Impact: Moderate without mitigation, Slight with mitigation

7) Quilt insulation to attic

Impact: Imperceptible

8) Demolition of existing outbuilding

Impact: Imperceptible

New Dwellings within structure's curtilage

The proposed new dwellings comprise of an L-shaped plan with a two storey and singled storey sections. The form is simple and the materials selected mirror in the main those of the Barracks, and those that differ do not impact. The siting the buildings and the scale and form ensure that they are subservient to the heritage structure.

The proposed designs are sensitive to the former garda barracks, and subservient to the existing structure in terms of scale and volume, which is welcome. The siting of the development is well-considered, with the proposed site layout forming a pleasing solution which retains the prominence of the Garda Barracks within the site, using the stepping back of the new dwellings to form parking and amenity space. The proposed buildings are situated at some remove from the barracks, ensuring the site does not look crowded or overdeveloped, which would have a detrimental impact on the heritage structure.

Materials reflect the existing and are sensitively chosen and designed so as not to detract or overpower. Sensitive planting and landscaping features are also proposed which will knit the old and new together in a considerate manner.

Impact: Moderate



Fig.06 - Original internal joinery throughout the building

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed works to the Garda Barracks are considered considerate and important to the redevelopment of the building and returning it to use. The proposals have varying impacts but none that go beyond acceptable limits and are considered acceptable.

The new development is sensitive and well considered. Whilst it will impact the site and the heritage building, it is not considered that this impact moves beyond limits which are acceptable. As such it is considered that the proposals will not have a detrimental effect on the historic fabric and are acceptable.

In the event of the development being approved it is suggested that conservation principles be applied throughout the works and across all areas of work. Traditional material should be used where practicable and all works should be sensitive and adhere to conservation practice, i.e.; repair with like materials or replace with what was – and in like manner – where at all possible. Full documentation including notetaking and a photography should be maintained throughout the project, and it should be reviewed by a suitably qualified conservation consultant.

7.0 PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig 7.01 - 03

Curtilage of the building - overgrown gardens with outbuildings





Fig 7.04

Rendered rubble pillars with cast iron gates



Fig 7.05

Pillar detail



Fig 7.06

Degraded render showing rubble form



Fig 7.07 - 09

Rear of building with outbuilding and separating wall, render and cill details





Fig 7.10

Cast iron rainwater details



Fig 7.11

Rendered details to doorset



Fig 7.12

Bootscraper adjacent to front door - should be retained and incorporated into the new scheme



Fig 7.13

Bootscraper in context



Fig 7.14

Original joinery (door, skirting, floorboards)



Fig 7.15

Fire place and detailed surround



Fig 7.16

Fireplace detail



Fig 7.17

Existing internal elevation, proud of window frame

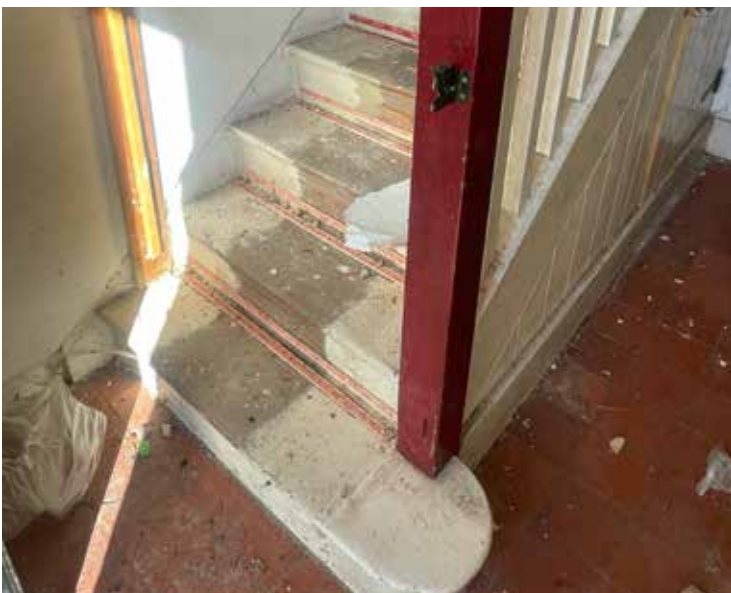


Fig 7.18

Original stairs



Fig 7.19-21

Stair details - handrail and balustrades





Fig 7.22

Painted brick fireplace



Fig 7.23

Counter



Fig 7.24

Skirting and architrave details



Fig 7.25

Landing with original newell posts



Fig 7.26

Internal insulation sitting proud of original architraves/window boards



Fig 7.27

Bathroom



Fig 7.28

Original doors and door knobs



Fig 7.29

Door knob detail



Fig 7.30

Internal partitions and improper internal insulation



Fig 7.31

Improper insulation taking away from original features



Fig 7.32

Cast iron bedroom fireplace



Fig 7.33

Timber door knob



Fig 7.34

Damage to original doors



Fig 7.35

Cast iron bedroom fireplace



Fig 7.36

Original skirting and floorboards



Fig 7.37

Non original windows to be replaced with more appropriate timber windows



Fig 7.38

Quarry tiles to hallway



Fig 7.39-41

Timber soffit and cast iron rainwater goods





Fig 7.42

Stone threshold



Fig 7.43

Architrave and skirting detail



Fig 7.44-45

Stair details - original staircase along with newell, balustrades and handrails





Fig 7.46

Original architrave detail - should be used to replicate throughout scheme



Fig 7.47

Cast-iron fireplace



Fig 7.48

Built in joinery to be removed



Fig 7.49

Buildings in need of complete re-qire



Fig 7.50

Brick fire place



Fig 7.51

Original door knobs



Fig 7.52

Bottom step detail



Fig 7.53

Cast-iron fireplace



Fig 7.54

Original ironmongery



Fig 7.55

First floor internal details



Fig 7.56

First floor internal details/cornice



Fig 7.57

Original architrave/skirting/dado, with non-original window



Fig 7.58

Original skirting and floorboard



Fig 7.59

Original floorboards



Fig 7.60

Rendered doorway in roughcast rendered walls



Fig 7.61

Cast-iron drainpipe and roughcast render



Fig 7.62

External render, downpipes, soffit and gutter in good condition



Fig 7.63

Brick chimney