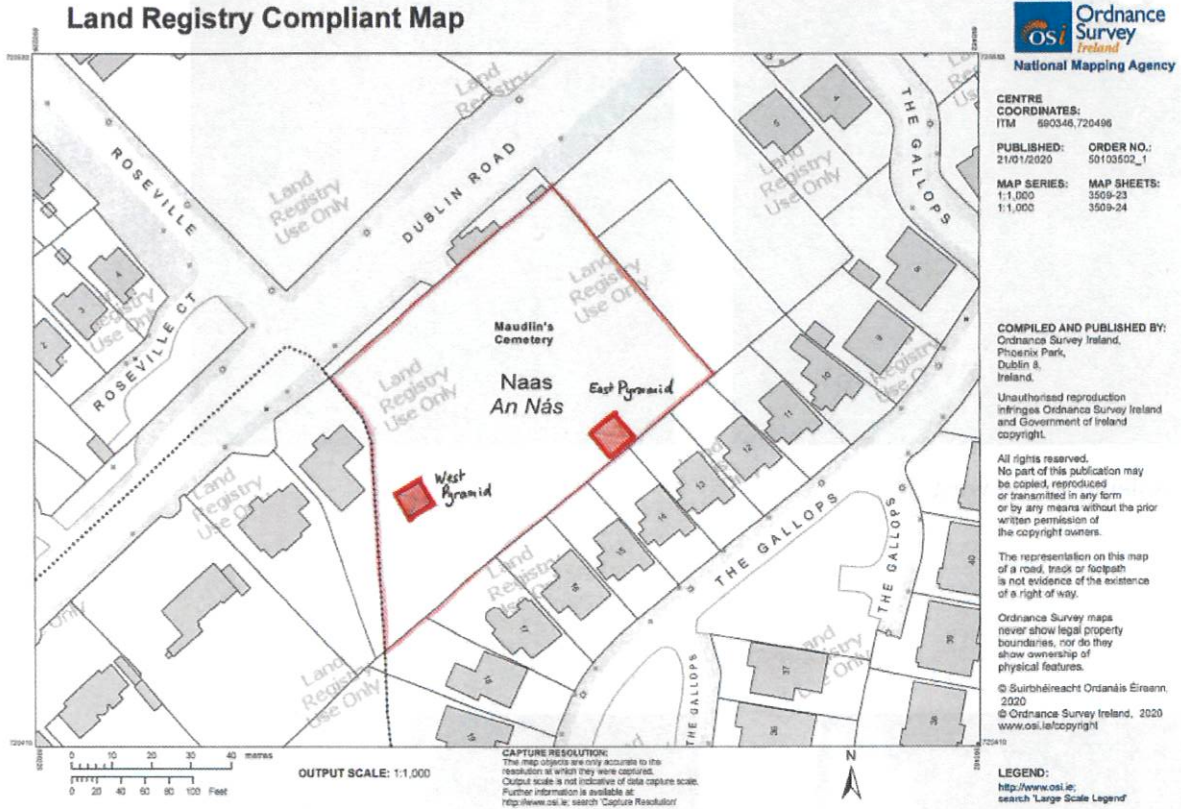


Two Pyramid Mausolea, Church of Ireland Cemetery, Maudlins, Dublin Road, Naas





Mausoleum to the west



Mausoleum to the east



PROPOSAL FROM THE FOLLIES TRUST TO KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL TO
CONSIDER PLACING TWO PYRAMID MAUSOLEA IN MAUDLINS BURIAL
GROUND, NAAS, ON THE RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES

PROPOSAL

The Follies Trust is requesting that Kildare County Council place the two pyramid mausolea in Maudlins burial ground, Naas, on the Record of Protected Structures.

Currently they are on the RMP as a zone of archaeological potential but we believe placing them on the RPS will increase their profile and make information about them more accessible to the public. In his book 'Up to a Point – in search of Pyramids in Britain and Ireland' David Winpenny wrote:

NAAS IS UNIQUE. Nowhere else in the British Isles are there two large pyramids in such close proximity. They are little documented.'

It would appear that these two structures are of national interest as rarely do historians make such claims; they deserve to be better known and appreciated.

In addition there are similar pyramid mausolea in Counties Meath and Offaly which are on the list of Protected Structures in their Counties.

Swifte mausoleum, Castlerickard, Co. Meath. Erected 1810-1820 and on the Record of Protected Structures (registration no. 14404109)

Barnard mausoleum, Kinnitty, Co. Offaly. Erected 1820-1840 and on the Record of Protected Structures (Registration no. 14821003)

LOCATION:

The two mausolea are in Maudlins Burial Ground, Naas, which is owned by the Representative Church Body (RCB) of the Church of Ireland.

Co-ordinates 53.227434, -6.647089

Graveyard code: KD-MDLN

The Graveyard is included in the RMP as a zone of archaeological potential Graveyard site KD019-021---- at Maudlings townland.

CRITERIA FOR PLACING A STRUCTURE ON RPS

The Planning and Development Act 2000 requires that a protected structure be of special interest under one or more of the following categories.

Architectural – architecturally these structures, dating from 1820-40, are significant because of their construction and rarity. The quality of their stonework, their proximity to each other is significant. No where else in Britain or Ireland are there two pyramid structures so close together. Description:

'These pyramids,have squared limestone blocks laid diagonally from the arrises, interlocking in the centre of each face (cf. mausolea at St Finian, Kinnitty, Co. Offaly (q.v.) and St Nicholas, Castlerickard, Co. Meath). Each is about 23 ft (7m) square, on a plinth. That to the w, to Elizabeth Hussey Burgh, died 1834, wife of Walter Hussey of Donore, has a bold bolection granite door surround under a limestone coat of arms with the Burghs' chained-cat crest. The second pyramid, cramped against the back wall of the cemetery, has no inscription

and lacks the contrasting stonework.’

The Buildings of Ireland Central Leinster Kildare, Laois and Offaly by Andrew Tierney, Yale University Press. 2019.

Historical – the de Burgh family has long associations with the area. Thomas Burgh, of Oldtown, born in 1670, was one of Ireland’s greatest military engineers and a fine architect. He was responsible for designing many buildings including one of Ireland’s finest rooms – the Library at Trinity College Dublin. Members of the family were MPS for Naas and played an active part in political life.

It is not possible to put a precise date on the building of the de Burgh mausoleum in Maudlins burial ground, but it is likely to have been soon after 1834, since Elizabeth Hussey Burgh died in that year, at the early age of 33. Her widower, Walter Hussey Burgh, built it to contain her remains. The inscription on the mausoleum says, ‘Approaching dissolution held no terrors for her.’ The monument was erected by her husband ‘as a monument to her departed worth and as a resting place for himself and family in future.’

Since the second (anonymous) mausoleum is of a similar, though not identical, design, it is likely to be of have been erected soon after 1834.

Archaeological – the structures sit within a burial ground which is a zone of archaeological potential.

Artistic - the structures are themselves artistic as a pyramid is one of the purest forms of geometry and architecture. In addition the design of the doorway is very arresting with its ‘bold bolection granite door surround under a limestone coat of arms with the Burghs’ chained-cat crest’.

Cultural – the Burgh family played a significant part in the cultural life of Ireland and left these memorials which were made by Irish craftsmen and stand as an important part of our architectural heritage.

6. Scientific;

7. Technical;

8. Social.

CONDITION OF THE MAUSOLEA & THEIR FUTURE

Andrew Tierney (see above) points out that they are ‘In poor condition at the time of writing: the apex shrouded in ivy, saplings sprouting from between the blocks.’

In Section 2.9 of Naas Town Council’s 1999 Development Plan; objective CE8 says it aims to ‘preserve the Church of Ireland cemetery on the Dublin Road including the surrounding wall, caretaker’s cottage and two pyramid tombs.’

It is difficult to find anyone to restore or conserve mausolea as descendants are hard to locate and the structures need specialist care. The owners of the burial grounds or graveyards do not want to take responsibility for them so the Follies Trust was pleased to see an Objective seeking their preservation included in the 1999 Development Plan.

The Follies Trust is prepared to work with Kildare County Council to conserve the pyramids.

We will work with the local community, raise funds, obtain necessary permissions from the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland and ensure they are conserved to best conservation standards. In October we met Bridget Loughlin, Heritage Officer, the Rector of St David's, a member of the local community and a RIAI Grade 1 Conservation Architect to discuss their conservation. We have been in touch with Peter Black, Conservation Officer, and the Department of CHG.

All have expressed willingness to work with us on this project but to proceed we need to have the Pyramids on the Record of Protected Structures.

BACKGROUND TO THE FOLLIES TRUST

The Follies Trust is a small charity, set up in 2006, which aims to encourage the appreciation and conservation of Irish follies, to promote traditional building skills and to encourage appreciation of Ireland's artistic and cultural heritage. Taking our inspiration from James Howley's book *The Follies & Garden Buildings of Ireland* we include within our remit follies, grottoes, mausolea, monuments and other unusual structures across the island of Ireland.

Our first project was the conservation of two grade 11* mausolea in Knockbreda churchyard, Belfast. Work commenced there in 2008 and since then, over the past decade, we have conserved twenty-six structures. These include seven mausolea and range from an obelisk on the north coast of Ireland to a fountain in the south-east, a memorial column beside the Cliffs of Moher, on the Wild Atlantic Way, to a folly fort and pig crews in north-east Ulster!

During that time we have raised and spent over €600,000 (£500,000) on the conservation of structures. Over 90% of the funds raised by the Follies Trust is spend on projects as our Trustees act in a voluntary capacity and we have neither Office nor Staff.

The Follies Trust would like to work with Kildare County Council and all concerned to conserve these mausolea which are an important part of Ireland's heritage.

Primrose Wilson
Chairman
The Follies Trust
19 November 2019