

Alterations and improvements to paving, kerbing, car-parking, trees, public lighting, bollards, bus stop, dual-carriageway median strip and right-turn lane at Rathfarnham Road, between the dual carriageway at Rathfarnham Road, beside Rathfarnham castle.

Appendix: DESIGN, CONDITION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

to be read as part of the documentation for a public consultation process under Part VIII of the Planning and Development Acts

January 2015



The site of the proposed project, photographed in October 2014



South Dublin County Council's Architectural Services department is a Grade 2 conservation practice accredited by The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland

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1. The project background

South Dublin County Council intends to alter the approach to and view of Rathfarnham castle from Rathfarnham road, to make the approach to the castle and its public park more accessible to visitors and to improve the connection between the historic village and the castle. The poor presentation of the site and views of the castle from Rathfarnham road, and the awkward disconnect that exists between the historic village and the castle is the main driver of this project. The historical, archaeological, social and architectural significance and strategic position of this site makes this proposed development an important element in the overall regeneration of Rathfarnham village.

Rathfarnham village is one of the nine villages of South Dublin County Council identified for the Villages Initiative. The works which are the subject of this Part VIII are part of this programme of design and works intended to improve the villages in terms of social, economic and environmental performance. The Village Initiative intends to encourage and grow community involvement and partnership to complement and energise Council environmental and maintenance programmes and develop new projects. One of the primary goals at Rathfarnham is to improve footfall in the village by addressing the disconnect between visitors to the castle and park and the village. These new projects will help to develop the villages as the accessible focus of walking and amenity networks for their adjoining communities.

The Office of Public Works are presently carrying out works to the castle: improving the courtyard finish, installing access ramps and a lift in the south-western tower to improve access to this historic building. The Planning Reference number for these works is SD09A/0133. South Dublin County Council's proposals dovetail onto these works, improving the approach and access to the castle, tearooms and public park and improving connection between the village and castle for pedestrians.

The project proposes improvements to the pavements and kerbs, car-parking, trees, public lighting, bollards, the bus stop, dual-carriageway median strip and right-turn lane at Rathfarnham Road. No works are proposed to the castle itself which is owned by the State; responsibility for its maintenance is devolved by the Minister of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht to the Office of Public Works. This report addresses the design and impact aspects of the proposed project. It provides a comprehensive description of the

site, the history of the site, the proposals and their impact on the special significance of the site, its artefacts, the castle and the village. The vision for the site can be summarised as follows:

- To improve the connection between the village and castle for pedestrians
- To improve the appearance and setting of the castle and the approach to it for visitors.
- To contribute to the regeneration of Rathfarnham village and to boost its economy.



Figure 1.1. An aerial view of the proposed project from the south-west. The north-western flanker or tower of the castle is partly shown on the right side of the image. The re-development of the courtyard and the access ramps by the Office of Public Works (O.P.W.) is now on site. South Dublin County Council proposes to extend these works out to the public footpath, to part of the car park and to the road crossing.

2. The Rathfarnham area and the village

Previously discovered artefacts show that the Rathfarnham area was first settled in the later Mesolithic period about 5000 years ago. The granite mountains to the south of Dublin are the source of several rivers, the Griffeen, Camac, Dodder and Owendubh which allowed early farmers to settle in the valleys. Small archaeological finds have been found at Rathfarnham which indicate small scale settlements existed along these rivers and tributary streams at that time. Neolithic arrowheads and ritual monuments have been found in the mountains to the south of Rathfarnham. The name of the town indicates that a Rath was to be found here although no trace has yet discovered. It may have been cleared to build the present castle.¹

Rathfarnham Bridge was erected in 1765 and still exists today in modified form; it was widened for modern vehicular traffic in the mid-twentieth century. It replaced an earlier wooden bridge that was regularly swept away by floods and reconstructed.

Rathfarnham village dates at least to medieval times. Its proximity to the rivers and to the ancient Slighe Chualainn, the road that leaves Dublin and proceeds in a south-easterly direction towards Wexford and Waterford are the likely reasons for settlement. The Vikings tended to settle in urban clusters at the confluence of two or more rivers as they did in Dublin and a Viking grave slab was found in the graveyard of the ruined church in Rathfarnham.² By the sixteenth century it had become part of a strategic line of villages which defined the southern boundary of the Pale, an area around Dublin city which was effectively controlled by the crown and which expanded and contracted according to events over time. These villages acted as bridgeheads between the city and the plains to the west and mountains to the south, between the opposing cultures and languages of the Gaelic Irish and the urbanised Anglo-Norman settlers.

Following the construction of the castle, the village developed as an important part of it, attached to the western edge of the demesne wall and providing services and staff to the castle. The extensive fruit and vegetable gardens, glasshouses, farms, mills and the castle itself needed a large staff to maintain them: servants, attendants, and services – weavers, drapers, masons, coachmakers, smiths, etc. Up to the beginning of the

¹ Much of this information was sourced in “Dublin City and County ...” by F.H.Aalen and from “The Shell Guide to Ireland” by Lord Killanin and Michael V. Duignan (2nd edition, Ebury Press, London 1967), p.410

² The monuments reference number for the grave slab is DU022-01304 and for the church is DU022-01301

twentieth century Rathfarnham remained a small village in rural south county Dublin. Like other town and villages in Ireland, new institutions were developed in the nineteenth century: the R.C. church, the school at Hermitage, the Loreto convent, and the courthouses in the early twentieth century. Rathfarnham was the terminus of one of Dublin's tram lines. With the sale and splitting of the demesne in 1913 came gradual development of suburban villas, the golf club, the occasional motorcar. The South Dublin Rural District Council developed labourers' houses, mains drainage and new roads throughout the 1920s and 30s. In the 1950s a new wave of suburban development began which fundamentally changed the relationship of the village to its hinterland and castle. Increasing reliance on the private car as a mode of transport brought the bypass and the development of suburban shopping centres - Nutgrove, Grange Road, Dundrum, which further isolated the village and reduced its historic purpose as a provider of goods and services, a nucleus where people lived and congregated. Some people still live and work in the village but more could be done to bring more visitors to the castle, and to bring some of them to the village. This project is about trying to give the village greater relevance and to improve its connection with the historic castle and what remains of its demesne.



Figure 2.1. The approach to Rathfarnham village from the north, photographed by Robert French. The photo was taken shortly after completion of the new courthouse in 1914, visible on the left side, beside the tram. The wall on the left was part of the castle demesne wall and was demolished. The cobbles and tram tracks are gone. The terrace on the right still stands. (Source: National Library of Ireland)

3. Rathfarnham Castle

There are numerous entries in the State Papers, which refer to a fortified dwelling in Rathfarnham from the very first years of the Norman invasion.³ In 1199 King John granted the lands to Milo le Bret as part of a ring of fortifications which included Dundrum, Drimnagh and Tallaght to protect the Pale. Although no definitive trace of this castle now remains, it has been suggested by one source that the narrow ridge of ground to the west of the tributary streams that flow into the Dodder from Rathfarnham Golf Club and Woodside Drive today, may be a motte and bailey that was used defensively.⁴ Paddy Healy, archaeologist and local historian writes that this ridge, about 16 metres high, is a typical Norman construction, possibly built as a temporary measure until a stone castle and wall could be built. It may have been built by Milo le Bret. However the absence of any archaeological evidence and legal protection under the National Monuments Acts would suggest otherwise. After the Desmond rebellion the lands at Rathfarnham were confiscated by the crown. They had been part of the estate of James Eustace, the Viscount Baltinglass who with his brothers was convicted of high treason for their part in the rebellion.

Adam Loftus, a Yorkshire man was granted lands at Oldbawn, Tallaght and Rathfarnham, including the village during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. He rapidly set about developing a large castellated house with necessary defensive fortifications because of the ever-present threat of cattle raids and military incursions by the clans in the mountains to the south. Loftus was the first provost of Trinity Collage Dublin, Archbishop of Armagh and was Lord Chancellor of Ireland for many years.⁵ He first occupied the castle around 1585⁶. In 1600 the castle had to withstand an attack by the Wicklow clans and again in 1641 it was garrisoned by the Royalists, held out against the Confederate army and was only handed over to the Parliamentarians in 1647 when the Duke of Ormonde returned from exile in France to Dublin. In 1649 it was garrisoned by the Parliamentary forces, was stormed and taken by the Royalists again. Around this time other defensive outposts were developed at Templeogue and Newcastle. Templeogue castle guarded the valuable and strategic watercourse that supplied water

³ Archaeological excavation reports in the Record of Monuments and Places, numbers 94E161 and 05E1169

⁴ "Rathfarnham Roads" by Paddy Healy ,pg.6 (South Dublin Libraries, 2005)

⁵ Much of this information was sourced in The Irish Georgian Society Records Volume V (published 1969) and Ball E.F. "A History of the County of Dublin, ..., Part II" (1903 edition)

⁶ Craig M. "The Architecture of Ireland from the Earliest Times to 1880" pp. 116, 117

to the south-western part of the city by a series of culverts. Rathfarnham castle is significant for two reasons. It was the first of a type of fortified house of which several were built over the next 50 years or so at Kanturk, Portumna, Manorhamilton and Raphoe. Though they vary a great deal from one another they have in common a thick spine wall in the middle of their plan and a tendency toward bigger and more numerous windows than was common previously. Secondly Rathfarnham is probably unique in this house group in that it has always been roofed and has not become a ruin or a source of building stone like so many contemporary fortified houses.⁷

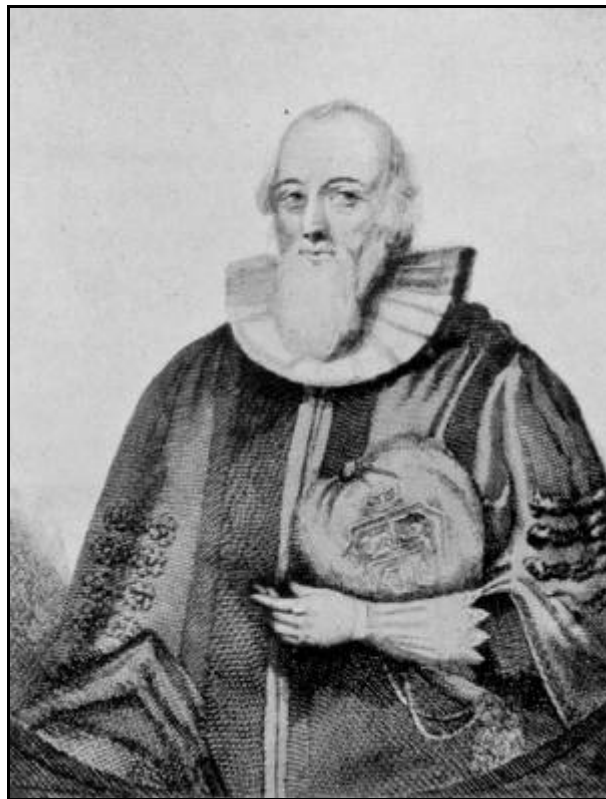


Figure 3.1. Adam Loftus (taken from an engraving in the possession of the Rev. William Reynell, which was copied from “The History of County Dublin – II”, by Francis Elrington Ball)

⁷ Craig M. “The Architecture of Ireland from the Earliest Times to 1880” pp.114-118
South Dublin County Council

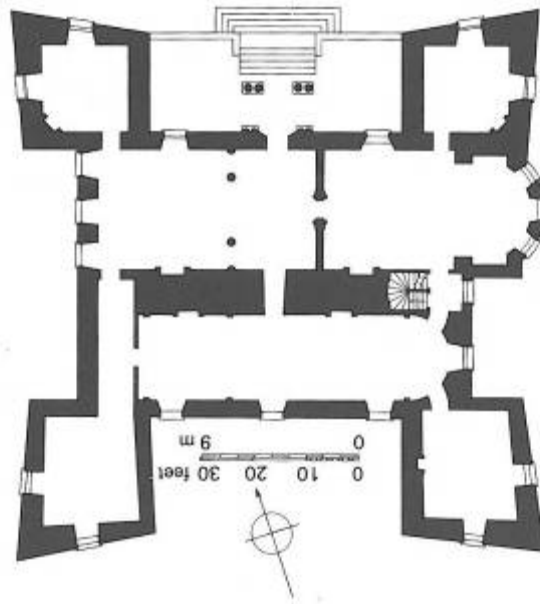


Figure 3.2. A plan of Rathfarnham Castle (Sourced from “The Architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880” by Maurice Craig, Lambay Books, Dublin 1997, p.116)

Around 1741 the castle was sold to Primate John Hoadley, Archbishop of Armagh who began to transform the mediaeval castle to a country house. For example the Rococo modelling of the ceilings began in 1740. He died in 1746 and it passed to his son-in-law, Bellingham Boyle who lived there until 1767. John Rocque’s Map of County Dublin of 1760, describes part of the estate as “Boyle’s Park”. Nicholas, Second Earl of Ely, head of the house of Loftus and a direct descendant of Adam Loftus the castle’s builder bought it for £17,500 in 1767. Still a young man, he died in 1769 and was succeeded by his uncle Henry Loftus who was the Fourth Viscount Loftus. Henry became the “First Earl of the Second Creation” in 1771 – as he was uncle to the Second Earl he could not inherit the title and become the “Third Earl”. Under his ownership Lord Ely’s Gate was built as a new secondary entrance to the demesne, splendid new gardens were laid out and the new kitchen wing was built to the west of the castle – beside the courtyard which is presently being improved by the Office of Public Works (O.P.W.).

During the eighteenth century the appearance of the castle was partly changed from late medieval castle to a country house: large new windows were built in, an entrance was made in a massive classical style, the interiors were decorated in the fashionable style with decorative plasterwork, painted ceilings and new furniture using the services

of two London-based architects of the time, Sir William Chambers and James “Athenian” Stewart. The floor level of the first floor was changed. A two-storey kitchen block was added to the south-west and the service buildings were built to the north of the north-western tower. Spectacular gardens were laid out to the north and east, keeping the more functional stables, outhouses, yards, fruit and vegetable gardens and flower garden to the west. The main rooms of the house overlooked the landscaped gardens, the serpentine streams, statues, dovecote, temple, Hall’s folly, now known as the “Bottle Tower” in the distance to the east. Far to the north-east a new entrance gate in the form of a Roman triumphal arch with its gate lodges and curved Palladian flanking walls was built for Henry Loftus. Numerous contemporary sources admired the gardens at Rathfarnham:-

“The Castle at Rathfarnham the seat of Lord Loftus is a noble edifice. It hath very extensive and beautiful demesne, gardens and plantations. The greenhouse here is for foreign and scarce plants is remarkably elegant; and the aviary, containing great numbers of curious birds, hath been much admired. There is also a pheasantry here that is esteemed the best in the kingdom”.

(“The Dublin Guide” by Richard Lewis, Dublin, 1787)

“At Rathfarnham on the left is the Castle of the noble Marquis of whose mansion with fine and extensive demesnes, the seat of the late Earl of Ely, there is here a remarkable fine green house for exotic plants and an aviary containing a prodigious variety of curious birds”.

(“Post Chaise Companion” 1784, p. 187. The “Marquis” refers to Charles Tottenham who inherited the estate on Nicholas’ death in 1783.)

“By this time in the Castle of Rathfarnham was the focus of wealth taste and grandeur ... Nor were the grounds less attended to Aviaries, filled with the rarest of birds, summer fruits flowering at Christmas the very seasons changed at the whim of wealth”

(“Freeman’s Journal” 2nd December 1807)



Figure 3.3. Part of John Rocque's map of 1760, properly titled "An actual survey of the county of Dublin on the same scale as those of Middlesex, Oxford, Barks and Buckinghamshire by John Rocque. 1760".

North is to the right. Note the L-shaped building to the north-west of the castle.

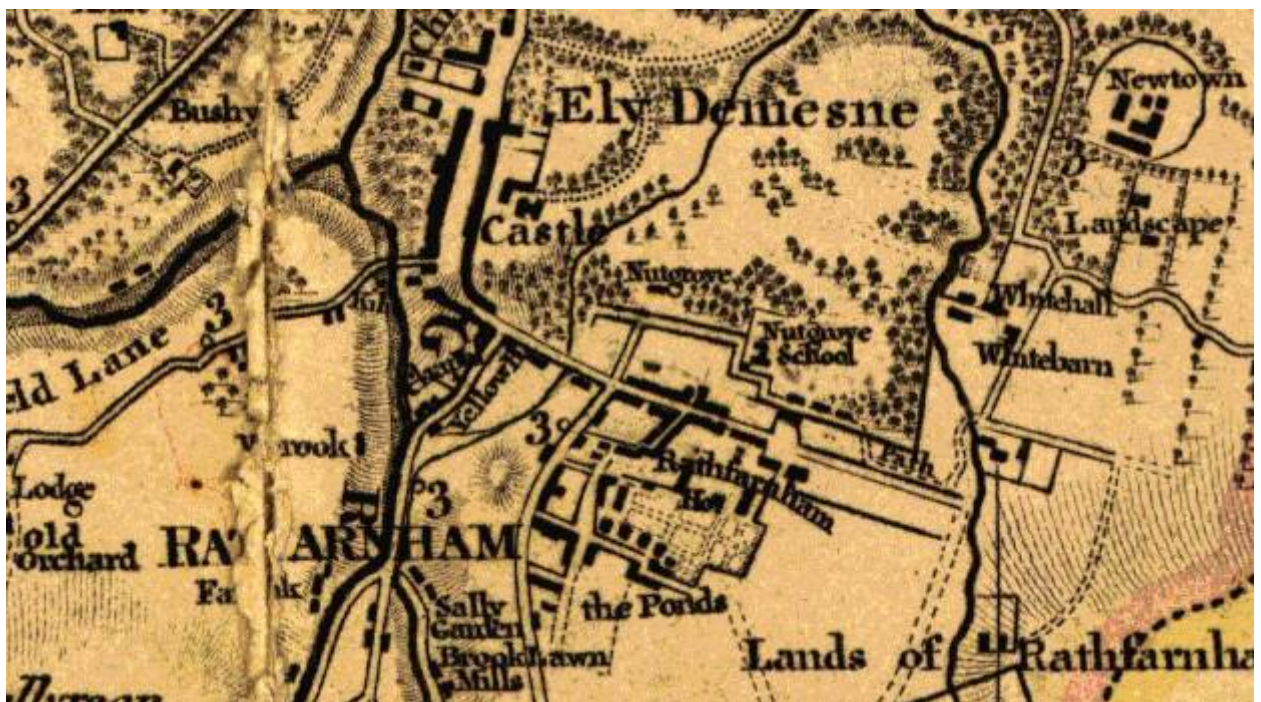


Figure 3.4. Part of Taylor's Map of the Environs of Dublin, 1816. North is up the page. Note the L-shaped building to the north-west of the castle and the outline of the yards. The curve of the entrance avenue is almost certainly an error, a common feature of some privately-commissioned surveys and maps.



Figure 3.5. Part of William Duncan's Map of the Environs of Dublin, 1821.



Figure 3.6. An extract from the first edition ordnance survey map, 1843. The accurate layout of buildings and yards shown is very similar to that which exists today. The once famous, south-facing green house is shown in the large walled garden to the north-west of the castle, above the “Post Office” text.

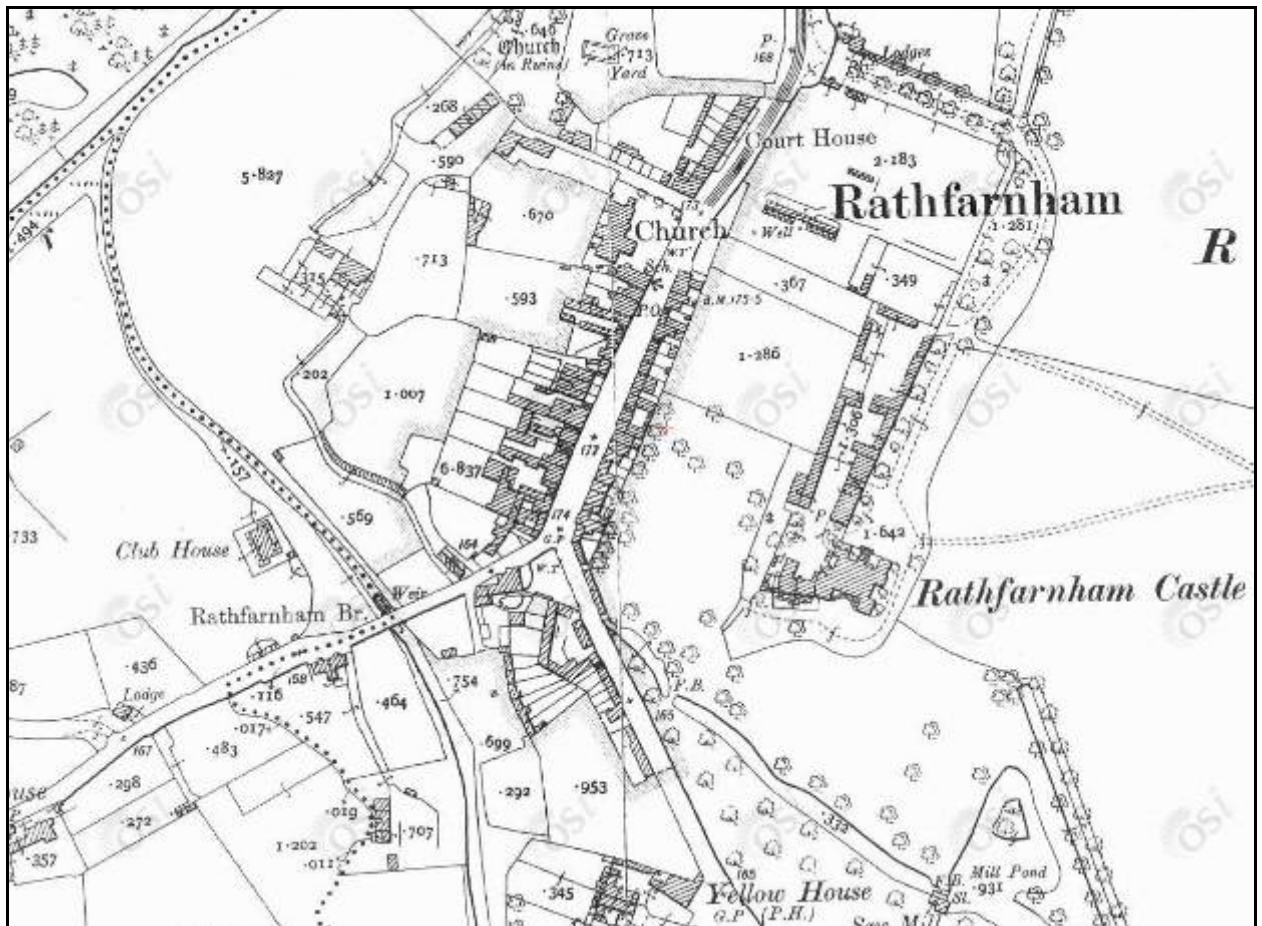


Figure 3.7. An extract from the 25" to 1 mile map taken from the historic mapping page of the website of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. The map shows the estate in the early twentieth century before the construction of the Jesuits' two wings of accommodation. Several of the walls which once separated gardens and the remains of the glasshouse had been taken down. One long range of buildings, possibly a glass house remains in the northernmost garden, south of the gate lodge.

Despite the changes, the castle retained some of its mediaeval character: the flanking towers, some of the battlements and musket loops remain. Early in the nineteenth century the estate and castle were sold and the Earl retreated and his family retreated to Loftus Hall on the Hook peninsula, county Wexford. Not for the first time some of the estate was sold off to release much needed cash⁸ and this land was re-developed as "suburban villas" like Ashfield House and Darwin Hall. The collections of art and furniture for which the castle had become famous were dispersed. The Castle was occupied by the Roper family, the lands were used for dairy farming and gradually it was allowed to fall into disrepair. In 1838 d'Alton wrote that the "once beautiful grounds of Rathfarnham now all eloquently waste, the undulating hills covered with rank

⁸ Title documents indicate that Adam Loftus, the builder of the castle sold part of his estate to "Daniel Reading of Rathfarnham"
 South Dublin County Council
 Department

herbage, the rivulet stagnant and sedgy, the ice houses open to the prying sun, the fish ponds clogged with weeds, mouldering architecture of the castle ... loudly proclaim the evils of absenteeism".⁹ In 1852 the castle was leased by Francis Blackbourne, Lord Chancellor of Ireland whose family stayed there until 1913. In that year the estate was sold and divided, most of the eastern part became a golf links, the castle and western portion were bought by the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit order as a centre for their young students attending University College Dublin. They built the stairs in the south-western tower or flanker and two large wings were added for dormitories – these were demolished in the late 1980's.

The older maps indicate that the main entrance to the Castle and its demesne was probably originally in the western boundary of the demesne opening to the village at the top of the main street.¹⁰ Rathfarnham village had developed from its pre-Norman origins to an estate village. Tottenham's gate and one attached lodge were demolished when the bypass road was built to the east of Rathfarnham village and to the west of the castle in the 1970's. One detached gate lodge remains. The temple in the garden was demolished in 1979 by the golf club. In 1985 the castle and its demesne was sold to a property developer and in 1986 a Preservation Order was made on the castle by the Commissioners of Public Works under the National Monuments Acts. The modern residential developments along Dodder Valley Road, Woodside Drive, Crannagh Park, Crannagh Road, Rathfarnham Park, Ballytore Road and latterly Woodside were all built on the central and northern parts of the old estate during the second half of the twentieth century.

Rathfarnham castle has been owned by the state since 1988 and is open to the public. It is maintained and managed by the Office of Public Works which has carried out structural repairs, re-roofing, installation of services and limited works to the internal finishes and decoration. The former kitchen wing was restored for use as the tea rooms. The parkland around the castle is owned and maintained by South Dublin County Council. Although the public park is much smaller than the demesne which was at its greatest extent in the early nineteenth century, the surrounding area still contains many important features which were once part of this designed landscape: fragments of the

⁹ d'Alton *ibid* pp. 7&8

¹⁰ Richard Frizell's map of 1779 lists the "Great Avenue to the Gate"
South Dublin County Council
Department

deer leap still remain near the national school at Willbrook, in the golf course the site of the former tea house is visible in the modern gravel beside one of the modern stone bridges, the stream still has some of its original walls, some of the walled Ha Ha remain; this kept cattle in the eastern part of the estate from wandering to the western part. Also in the golf course, an L-shaped structure shed or outhouse, and the grotto seat and its arched structure over it still remain. The former icehouse is substantially intact. A fascinating structure, it consists of a deep chamber with a shallow brick dome from which food was suspended from hooks, some still visible. One chamber has since been filled in. It would have been built by specialist contractors who could dig and build wells and such structures. Ice was taken during winter laid near the stream and stored between layers of straw to insulate it.

The dovecote or pigeon house is now in the garden of a private house at Crannagh Road. The classical entrance gate known as Lord Ely's Gate or the Roman Arch stands at the awkward road junction of Dodder Valley Road, Lower Dodder Road and Braemor Road. Part of the former pleasure gardens - the ponds and stream still remain in altered, overgrown and reduced form in the southern part of the park. Although the walled gardens and yards to the west of the castle were mostly destroyed by the construction of the bypass road and the relationship between the village and castle was severed, parts of the demesne wall still remains around Rathfarnham, Willbrook and Nutgrove. For example, the brick-faced, calp limestone wall of the fruit and vegetable gardens still stands behind the former courthouse (built 1914) at the top of the village main street and runs south through the Loftus Hall and Castlecourt developments (built 1990's). This very old demesne wall is a composite structure of an old Calp limestone wall, later faced with bricks during the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century. The wall has been lowered in height since 1985, has been capped with concrete copings and new brick piers have been built at either end.



Figure 3.8. The brick-facing (probably late seventeenth or early eighteenth century) to an older calp limestone demesne wall of the former kitchen garden behind the former Court of Petty Session (1914). The high brick wall retained solar heat and provided a sheltered environment for growing soft fruit.



Figure 3.9. A close up view of the former kitchen garden wall: a wrought iron pin in the mortar joint of part of the wall which would have once secured old rags to retain a soft fruit tree espaliered to the wall.



Figure 3.10. An aerial view of Rathfarnham castle from the south-west, photographed by “European Photo Services Ltd. in 2008. The southern end of the main street is centre-left. The modern by-pass road was built in the 1970’s on the site of the former fruit and vegetable gardens and yards. The road curves around to the west and south-west of the castle. The Rathfarnham estate was at its largest extent in the early nineteenth century. Now housing development covers most of the central and northern parts of the nineteenth century estate and the golf course further east can be seen in the top-right of the photo.

(Courtesy of South Dublin Libraries)



Figure 3.11. An aerial view of Rathfarnham village and castle from the west dated 1969, before the construction of the bypass road. The photograph is quite blurry but the long shadows cast by a low winter sun show the high walls of the Dutch-style fruit and vegetable gardens which ran up to the existing spine wall right behind the east side of the village main street. The two wings built by the Society of Jesus can also be clearly seen. (Source of image: National Library of Ireland)

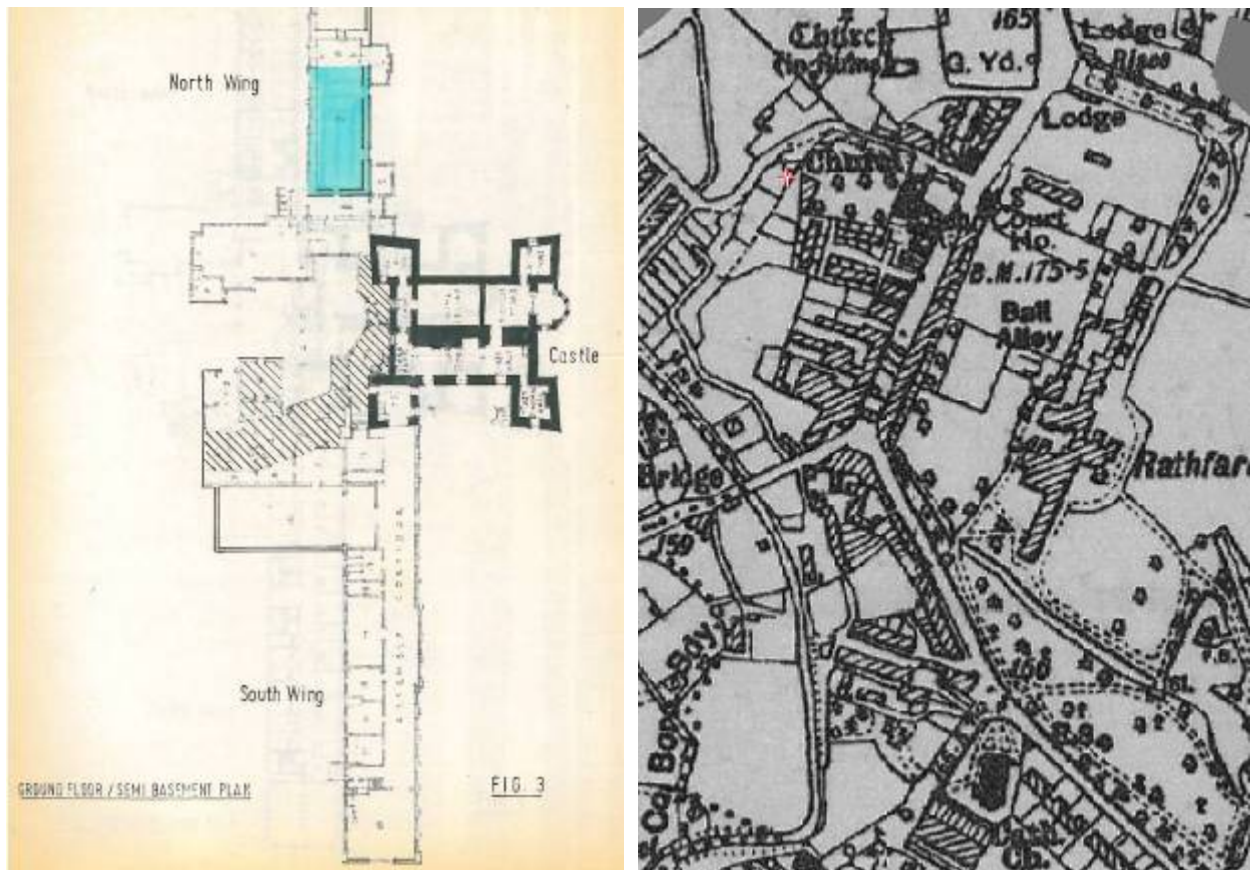


Figure 3.12 (left side). This drawing from a survey of 1985 by Dublin County Council shows the layout of the castle as it existed then. North is up the page. The two long ranges of accommodation which extend north and south of the west side of the castle were built by the Society of Jesus. There were to be demolished shortly after this survey. The “Cromwell’s Fort”, coloured blue on the drawing was retained; the buildings above it and those between it and the north-western flanker or tower were demolished. The buildings with the diagonal shading are now the tea rooms - parts were demolished to clear the space around the castle. Figure 3.13 (right side). An extract from the 4th edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed in 1936. The extensive suburban development of former farm land around the village is evident. A ball alley is shown on the site of the former kitchen garden.

4. Rathfarnham castle outbuildings, yards and former fruit and vegetable gardens

The site of the proposed project is on the former kitchen and flower gardens of the castle. These spaces and service buildings were an essential part of the castle and of any demesne; walled gardens and glasshouses were used to cultivate flowers, herbs, fruit and vegetables; yards and sheds were built to accommodate animals, store farm equipment and machinery, process and store food from the gardens and from other parts of the demesne – poultry and game from the dovecote and duck ponds, fish from the ponds, deer from the estate. Self-sufficiency in fruit, pigeon, venison, fish and game was essential for day-to-day eating and for hosting grand banquets. During the early nineteenth century the Roper family extended the range of buildings to include stables and cow byres for dairy farming. After the Society of Jesus acquired the buildings in 1913, they built a long range of accommodation over part of the east range of these buildings. Their extensions were demolished in the late 1980's. It is important to state that no works are proposed to these buildings by this project. They are included in this report for two reasons: their proximity to the site of the proposed project and to state that South Dublin County Council is presently carrying out a conservation plan for these buildings.

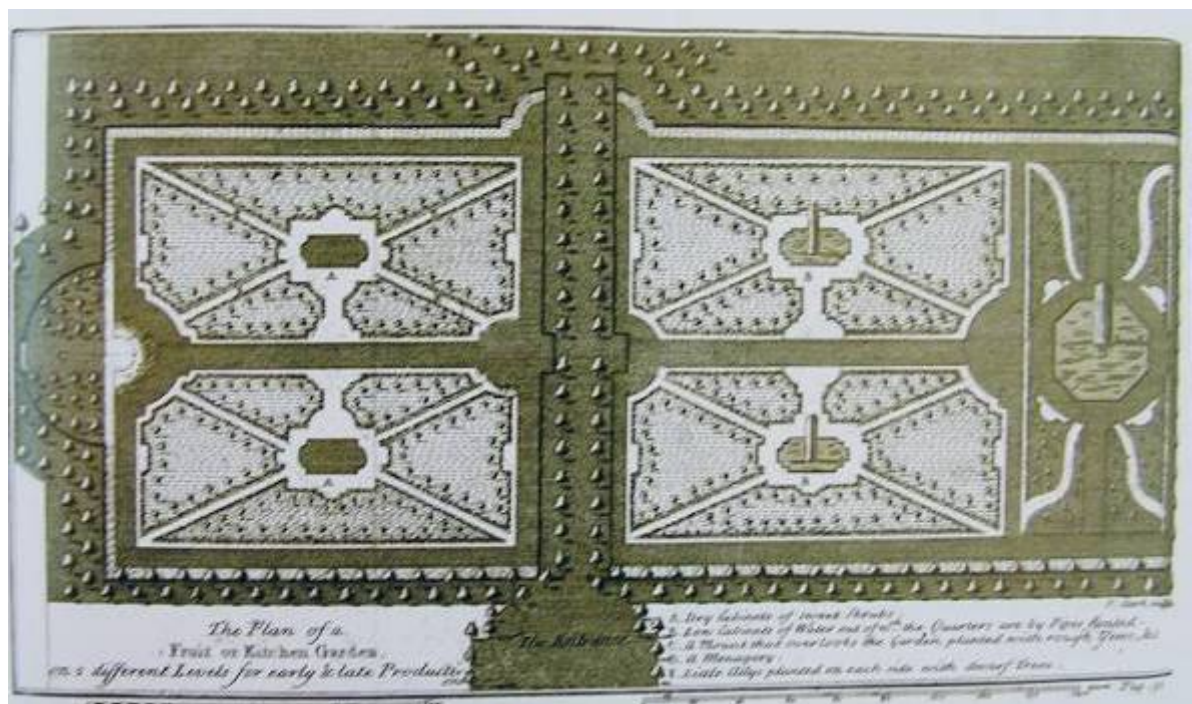


Figure 4.1. A diagrammatic drawing of an eighteenth century kitchen garden. (Sourced from O’Kane, F. “Landscape design in eighteenth century Ireland: mixing foreign trees with the native”)

Most of the buildings west of the old entrance avenue were built during the early nineteenth century with some later additions and alterations. They were coach houses, accommodation for labourers, grain stores, stables, dairies and cow byres, arranged around three cobbled yards, north to south.¹¹ Although much overgrown by ivy, trees and shrubs and dilapidated now, there are several significant buildings, some robustly built and some unusual construction details. The buildings incorporate some earlier built fabric, such as high walls built in the eighteenth century, possibly earlier, shown on Richard Frizell's map of 1779, Figure 4.2 below. The first edition ordnance survey map of 1843 (Figure 3.6 above) shows a range of buildings broadly similar to those which exist today.



Figure 4.2. Part of Richard Frizell's map of "Rathfarnham Park", dated 1779. The castle is shown on the bottom right. The key on the left numbers each yard as follows: 1. The Castle out Offices Yard, 2. Hay Yard, 3. The Sweep opposite the Castle & Avenue to Gate, 4. Flower Garden and Green House, 5. First Closet in Fruit Garden, 6. Second Closet in Ditto (Fruit Garden), 7. Third Closet to Fruit Garden, 8. Fourth Closet to Fruit Garden, 9. Store Yard and Stores, and 10. Walled Garden next the Lodge. (Source: The National Library of Ireland)

¹¹ Much of the information on these buildings was sourced from a report "Courtyards at Rathfarnham Castle, A Historical and Condition Report" by Paul Arnold architects, dated January 2000. The report is a thorough investigation of the condition, development and uses of these buildings.

The buildings known as the “Seismograph House” and “Cromwell’s Fort” partly pre-date the stables. The latter building is to the east of the site of the proposed project, coloured blue on Figure 3.12 above. Built mainly from calp limestone with a large single vault inside, the building may have been built in the very early nineteenth century as a coach house. However the large vaulted roof with its wattle and daub finish is very unusual for such a building of that period, so further investigation is needed. The “Seismograph house” was built in the early nineteenth century probably as a Steward’s House and was modified in the early twentieth century when a seismograph was installed to measure movements in the earth’s crust.



Figure 4.3 (left). A view of the southern edge of the northernmost of the three yards, now a county council depot yard, the northern edge of the range of buildings, taken October 2013. Figure 4.4 (right). The same range viewed from the south.



Figure 4.5 (left). A view of the south-eastern edge of the western range of buildings, taken October 2013.

The buildings were built from calp limestone with large granite dressing stones and brick linings to the window and door openings and to the dormer windows above. Many of the buildings are finished with a brick cornice on top. Figure 4.6 (right). The southernmost of the three yards between the eastern and western range of buildings, viewed from the south.

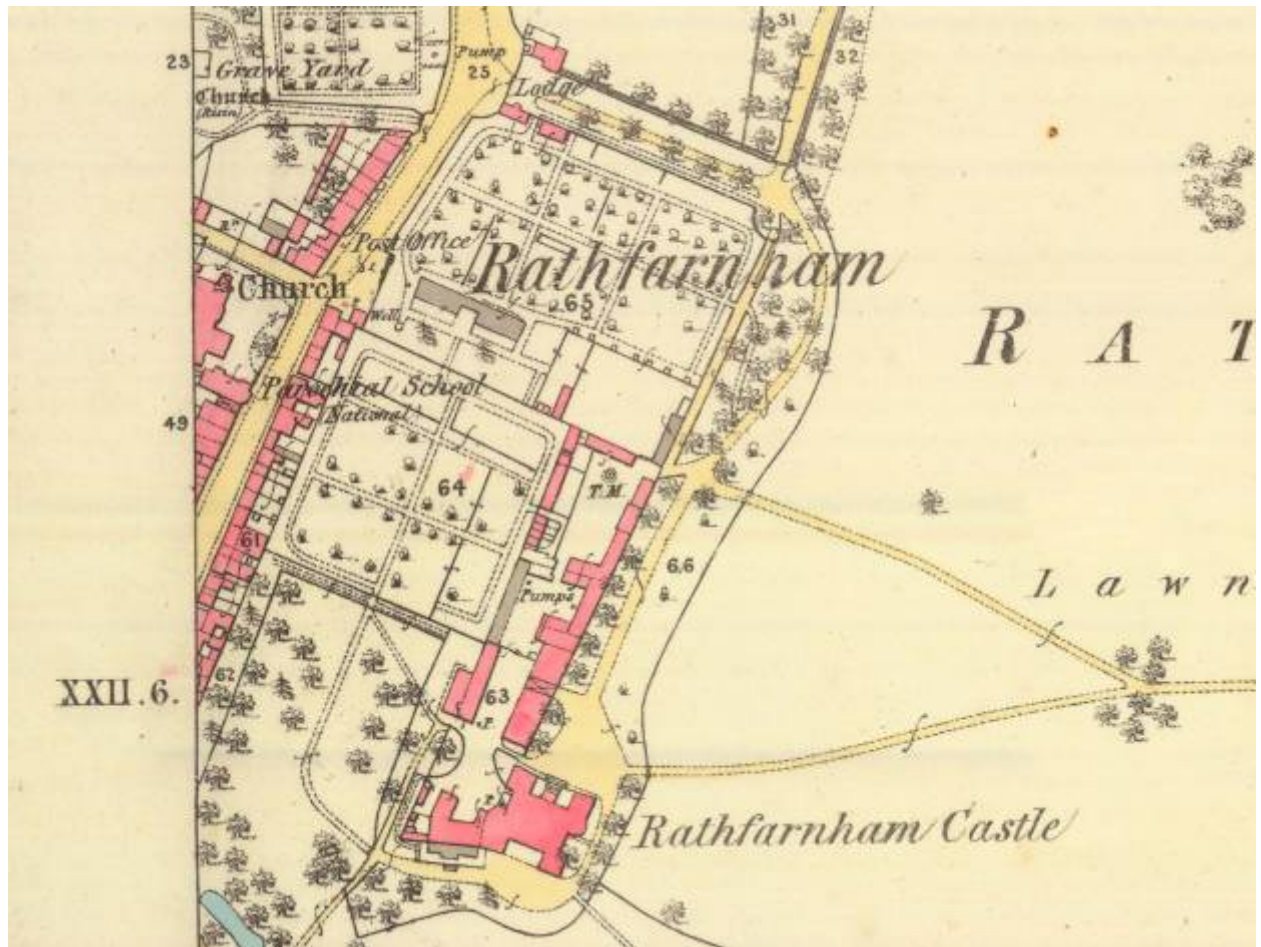


Figure 4.7. Part of the second edition Ordnance Survey map of Rathfarnham, drawn from a survey conducted in 1864. The greenhouse referred to in the Frizell map of 1769 (Figure 4.2 above) and admirably cited in several written descriptions is gone. The range of buildings built between the entrance avenue and the gardens is arranged around three yards, north from the castle. The long thin buildings ranged around the northern and western edges of the northernmost yard are gone now, leaving a tall boundary wall with unusual slit ventilation holes

5. Statement of Significance

Rathfarnham castle is one of the most important historic country houses in county Dublin by reason of the rarity of its type, its imposing size, its fine internal details, decoration and finishes from many centuries, the remains of its landscaped demesne. Although the castle has been extensively remodelled, it retains the plan form and defensive attributes from earlier years as well as much fabric of significance from the later remodellings. Intimately associated with the history of the area, it remains a focal building within the village and in south county Dublin.

Although the former outbuildings have deteriorated and become much overgrown, they are almost all still there. There are several significant buildings, some robustly built and some unusual construction details. The buildings have great potential to be re-used and could make a positive contribution to the local park, to visitors to the castle and to the local village.

Although the former demesne of the castle has been vastly reduced in size, built on and developed for housing and a golf course, and the public park around the castle is very different from the designed landscape and gardens that were developed during the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, many significant parts of the demesne remain scattered around the surrounding area.

Rathfarnham castle is listed under the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (N.I.A.H.) as being of Regional Interest, Registry Number 11216007. The N.I.A.H. lists its categories of special interest as being of architectural, archaeological, historical and social interests. The N.I.A.H. rates the building as being of national importance.

6. The defects, the interventions and the design philosophy underpinning them

1. The castle is severed from the village:-

Before the bypass road was built the castle's grounds were attached to the village. The main entrance to the castle and its demesne was through the Palladian entrance gates at the north end of the village's main street. The service buildings, yards and walled gardens of the castle adjoined the backs of the building plots along the east side of the village main street. The village, the castle and what remained of its demesne were attached. The construction of the bypass road in the 1970's on the former yards, kitchen gardens and walled fruit and vegetable gardens between the castle and the village severed this connection and impacted negatively on the presentation of the castle: one of the gate lodges was demolished, leaving half a formal entrance which was later absorbed into a modern housing estate along with the former dovecote. Perhaps one small advantage of the bypass is the castle being more visible from the public road - much of its western and southern facades are visible – although the view is marred by the vast extent of road, traffic lights, road signs, moving traffic and various wall finishes.

The proposed project would cross the existing north-south route of the dual carriageway with an improved east-west link for pedestrians between the historic core of the village and the castle and the public park. The number of road crossings would be reduced from three (as exists at present) to one. The proposed project will extend the pedestrian zone around the castle and forecourt and will complement and extend the works being done by the Office of Public Works at present. The works will also improve access to the castle and its public park by mobility impaired visitors by creating two additional car parking spaces at the forecourt.

2. The poor quality approach to the castle:-

The castle and the public park created out of the remains of the demesne can be accessed from one of the several gates in the park boundary, parts of which were once the wall of the demesne. The former entrance at Lord Ely's Gate was sealed with the construction of the golf course and the later construction of Braemor Road and Dodder Valley Road. There are existing gates near Nutgrove to the south, along Rathfarnham Road to the west, at the junction of Castleside Drive and Rathfarnham Road to the north-west and from Castleside Drive to the north. The latter approximately follows the

line of the oldest and original entrance to the castle from the north. All of these entrances are accessible to pedestrians only; the entrance from Castleside Drive allows staff vehicles to access the castle and county council depot yard. Cars and buses which serve members of the public use the car park on Rathfarnham Road, beside the former service buildings and yards. Access to the castle and public park from this car park is across the courtyard – the construction site presently being coordinated by OPW and the site proposed by this project. This access could be improved: mobility impaired visitors have to cross the car park exit and to climb a slope to reach the courtyard. Also the surface of this approach varies: tarmacadam finish, gravel and grass lawn, some of which are challenging for mobility impaired visitors, wheelchair users, adults pushing children's buggies, etc.

The proposed project will extend the pedestrian zone around the castle and forecourt and will complement and extend the works being done by the Office of Public Works at present. The enhanced forecourt presently being improved by OPW will be extended out to the public road by this project, extending the public realm, the pedestrianised zone and making a safer, more accessible approach to Rathfarnham castle on a limestone pavement. The project will also improve access to the castle and Rathfarnham village in several directions, linking the historic village and the castle and its park to the east, and linking the village and castle with the proposed green route cycle way.

7. Assessment of the impact on the castle and its historic buildings and setting

1. The setting.

The proposed project will impact on the existing car park and courtyard and approach to the castle and public park from Rathfarnham Road. As stated previously, the existing parking facilities and access to the castle are not ideal in terms of appearance, suitability and effectiveness.

The proposed works will simplify the materials, making an easier surface to walk on and will reduce the number of road crossings from three to one. The works proposed by the project will be to the area between the dual carriageway bypass and the castle courtyard, an area which has already been substantially altered and disturbed, and will therefore have minimal impact on the existing historic fabric. The remaining pieces of the former fruit and vegetable garden are scattered. Therefore we consider that the impact on historic building fabric will be low when compared with the benefit of improved access for pedestrians, appearance and connection with the village.



Figure 7.1 (left side). A view of the works by O.P.W. in front of Rathfarnham castle, taken January 2015.



Figure 7.2 (right side). A view of the trees beside the dual carriage way and hoarded off site for the O.P.W.'s works, taken January 2015.

2. The existing buildings

The works will also impact on the setting and views of the former service buildings and on the building known as “Cromwell’s Fort” to the north of the proposed project. These buildings have been unused for decades and their condition has deteriorated: the roofs have collapsed and ivy, weeds and shrubs have settled and grown from the wall tops,

destabilising them and allowing water and weather to affect the masonry. No works are proposed to these buildings by this proposal but South Dublin county Council is preparing a Conservation Plan to address their immediate condition, their conservation and to plan for possible new uses of the buildings and spaces between in the longer term.

The new works proposed by this development will change the appearance of the ground and setting of the southernmost of these buildings but not in a negative way. This project only proposes to lay new gravel on a weed suppressant membrane along a strip between these buildings and the new paving and car parking. Therefore we consider that the impact on historic building fabric will be low when compared with the benefit of improved access and appearance.

Should the project proceed, a schedule of protective mechanisms and installations would be agreed with the contractor to protect the existing historic buildings that are beside the proposed project site from accidental damage that could be caused by the works – for example a dumper truck or excavator accidentally reversing into one of the older buildings. Typically these would include protective barriers and fencing.

3. The views and vistas

The works will impact on the vista or view of the castle from the south-west and north-west, the views of the castle from the bypass dual carriageway. The bulk of the castle is clearly visible from these directions. At present the views are dominated by the bypass road, road signage, the various different types of wall and railings that make the boundary of the public park. Closer to the car park and approach to the castle the views are dominated by the overgrown former stables and outbuildings of the castle; these have been abandoned, are derelict and have been heavily colonised by trees, weeds, shrubs and ivy.

Although the former stables and outbuildings will not be improved by this project, the more distant views will be improved by the replacement of the various boundary conditions, road and footpath surfaces by a more ordered, unified approach to the courtyard, tearooms and castle. The proposed limestone pavement and stabilised gravel will match precisely the finished being laid by OPW at present, which will give the

approach and view of the castle from the bypass road greater unity and clarity. The proposed new trees, granite kerbs, flagpoles and public lighting columns will also visually tie in with the OPW's works and will give the approach a scale and unity appropriate to the width of the bypass dual-carriageway road and appropriate to the setting of the castle. Therefore we consider that the impact on the views or vistas of the castle from the south-west and south-north-west will be positive.

4. The trees

South Dublin County Council's Environmental Services department and parks section have been consulted about the proposed works and specifically about the existing trees on the site. There is a cluster of small young trees at the north end of the proposed project site. It is proposed to remove these trees to allow for the construction of the new plaza.

There are three mature trees along the southern end of the site. These are a Cupressus Macrocarpa, an oak tree and a lime tree. The Cupressus Macrocarpa is a mature, good quality tree which will be retained. The oak tree is semi-mature and its root system has suffered from soil compaction. This tree is considered to be of low quality and will be removed. The lime tree is a mature, good quality tree of high amenity value and will be retained. It is unlikely that these trees are part of the historic designed landscape at Rathfarnham, more likely that they seeded themselves in the area from other trees further south.

Should the proposal proceed to site works, protective measures will be put in place to protect these trees and their roots from damage by the site works and from the proposed finishes. This will include temporary root protection areas to be maintained during the works period.

South Dublin County Council would endeavour to maintain these trees and monitor their condition for a fixed period after the works.



Figure 7.3 (left side). A view of the courtyard to the west of Rathfarnham castle, looking to the west, taken October 2013. The project proposes the removal of the two large trees in the centre-left of the photo.

Figure 7.4 (right side). A view of the trees beside the existing exit lane from the car park, taken October 2014. The project proposes the removal of all these trees, between the south-eastern edge of the exit lane and the existing building.

8. Statutory Protections

Rathfarnham castle is protected under the Planning and Development Acts. The castle and all the structures within its curtilage are Protected Structures in the Record of Protected Structures in South Dublin County Council's development plan, Map Reference Number 221.

Rathfarnham castle is also protected under the National Monuments Acts. The castle is a National Monument, numbered DU022-014 on the "Record of Monuments and Places" (R.M.P.), classified as a "castle" in the 1988 Record of Monuments and Places. In the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act (1994) it is classified as a "fortified house".

Therefore the proposed project will require a formal public consultation process under Part VIII of the Planning and Development Acts because the proposed works are not exempted development as defined in the Act. The project proposes works within the curtilage of Rathfarnham castle, a Protected Structure and National Monument. The proposed project will require an application for ministerial consent under the National Monuments Acts.

South Dublin County Council's Architectural Services department has consulted with the council's Conservation Officer on all aspects of the proposed works. There has also been extensive consultation with the Office of Public Works and with interest groups in Rathfarnham, the local residents' association and local traders in the village.

9. Conclusions

As part of its Villages Initiative, South Dublin County Council intends to improve the connection between village and castle and invest in the improvement of the setting and accessibility of the castle. The works which are the subject of this Part VIII are part of this programme of design and works intended to improve the villages in terms of social, economic and environmental performance.

The Village Initiative intends to encourage and grow community involvement and partnership to complement and energise Council environmental and maintenance programmes and develop new projects. These new projects will help to develop the villages as the accessible focus of walking and amenity networks for their adjoining communities. The village and town centres can become more open and accessible, facilitating walking and cycling, increasing footfall and encouraging social and community encounters and interaction in festivals, performances and open-air markets.

The promotion of quality, choice and diversity in goods, services and recreation in a lively, well-maintained setting, will attract more locals and visitors alike adding to the vibrancy and vitality of successful urban life. Village surveys and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of the nine villages have identified a number of key areas requiring attention in order to build on the villages' existing strengths. These include the need for improved landscaping, prioritisation of open spaces, greater legibility and ease of access.

The environmental activity of landscape, public realm and quality of buildings and shop fronts will be improved through design, capital projects and grant-aid. Support is available for Tidy Towns, community projects and festivals, to grow community support. The implementation of this programme will be led by the Architectural Services Department but will involve a multidisciplinary approach and a steering group involving all of the key staff covering public realm, planning, heritage, community has now been established.

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