

ST MARY'S CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD
ST MARY'S LANE
KILKENNY

CONSERVATION PLAN

The Integrated Conservation Group

AN
CHOMHAIRLE
OIDHREACHTA



THE
HERITAGE
COUNCIL

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APPENDICES

THIS CONSERVATION PLAN IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE REPORTS WHICH MAY BE EXAMINED BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE HERITAGE COUNCIL.

- APPENDIX 1: FULL TEXT OF A NOTE BY CARRIG ON THE CONDITION OF GRAVES AT ST MARY'S, KILKENNY
- APPENDIX 2: FULL TEXT OF THE LANDSCAPE DESIGN STATEMENT
- APPENDIX 3: NATIONAL MONUMENTS LEGISLATION
- APPENDIX 4: ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE (NATIONAL INVENTORY) AND HISTORIC MONUMENTS (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT, 1999
- APPENDIX 5: LEGAL PROTECTION FOR LISTED HISTORIC BUILDINGS
- APPENDIX 6: SOME OF THE IDEAS FOR USE TABLED AT THE MEETINGS OF STAKEHOLDERS IN JULY 2001 AND SEPTEMBER 2001
- APPENDIX 7: FULL TEXT OF REPORT BY LISA EDDEN, STRUCTURAL ENGINEER
- APPENDIX 8: TEXT OFFERED BY AMY HARRIS MA ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOMBS (CURRENTLY PART OF HER PhD RESEARCH)

FOREWORD

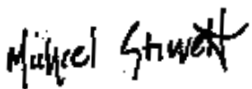
The Conservation Plan for St Mary's Church and Graveyard, Co. Kilkenny is the result of a number of years' work and co-operation between the Trustees of St Mary's, Kilkenny Borough Council, The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, An Taisce, The Kilkenny Archaeological Society, The Garda Síochána, University College Maynooth, Kilkenny Security and the Heritage Council, all of which are delighted to see this Plan brought into the public domain.

The stimulus for this Plan arose from the concern of the people of Kilkenny to ensure the long-term survival of St Mary's Graveyard and the unique burial monuments it contains. The significance of the Graveyard, as the Plan reveals, is due to its central position and its potential to be an amenity for the whole city as well as the presence of the monuments of many notable historic personages of Kilkenny.

The Plan should be viewed in the context of national heritage legislation and policy, both in its recommendations and the process used in its drafting, with consensus as the cornerstone. Government policy, as expressed in the National Heritage Plan, emphasises the role of heritage conservation in maintaining the quality of life and the need to encourage local communities to become involved in heritage protection. This Conservation Plan provides a framework within which government policy can be realised.



Dr Tom O'Dwyer
Chairperson
The Heritage Council



Michael Starrett
Chief Executive



1. SUMMARY

1.1 CONSERVATION PLAN

This Conservation Plan is the outcome of a conservation-focused study of St Mary's Church and Graveyard in the centre of Kilkenny city (Figure 1). The study team was comprised of archaeologists, building history researchers, a structural engineer, conservation architects, building and stone material consultants, and a landscape architect.

A Conservation Plan is an integrated study looking at all aspects of an historic place. It comprises the following sections:

- Understanding the Place
- Documenting the cultural significance of each aspect of the Place
- Identifying issues which may affect that significance
- Writing policies to address the issues
- Suggesting mechanisms for implementation and review

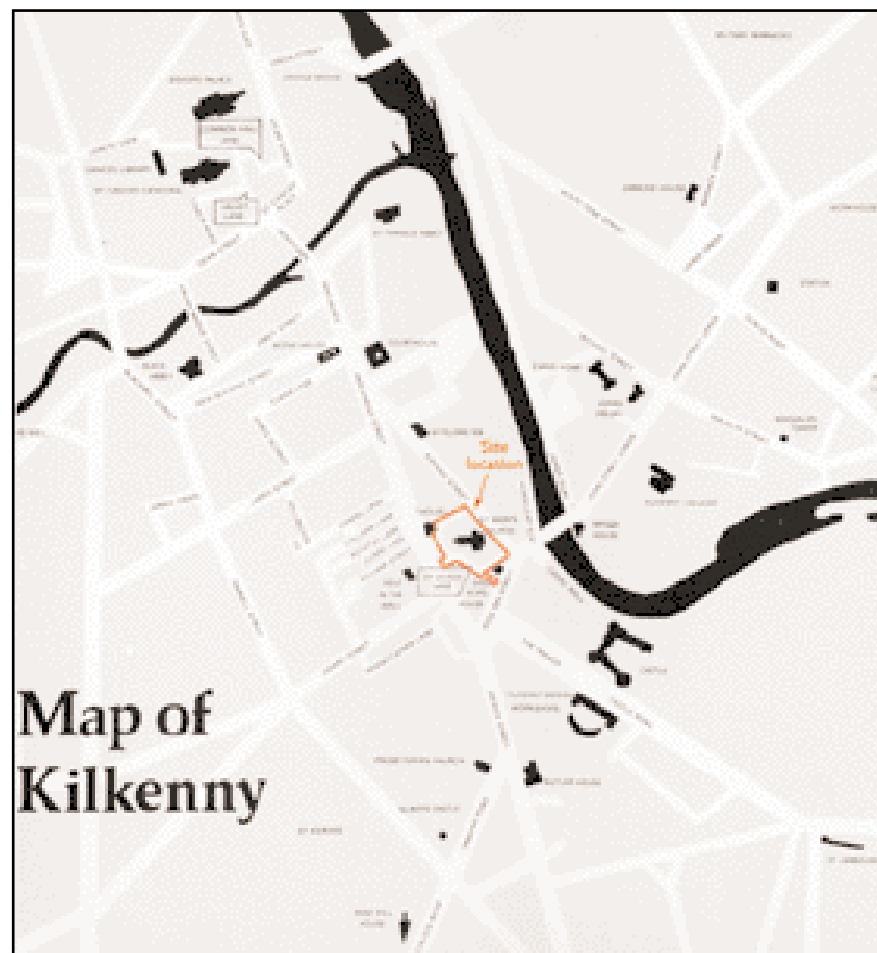


Figure 1: Location Plan

1.2 UNDERSTANDING

The Plan includes a brief historical background study of St Mary's Church and Graveyard, a detailed scaled survey of the site (Figure 2) and a physical study of the site, its monuments and buildings as they are currently. These studies have helped to lead to an *understanding* of the site and its components, their contribution to the integrity of the site, and the issues it faces.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

The *understanding* leads to a statement of the *significance* of St Mary's Church and Graveyard. This is based on:

- The integrity of the site
- The architectural qualities of the graveyard, the church building, the almshouses and the tombs
- The wildlife habitats within the graveyard
- The importance of the site in its urban context in the centre of Kilkenny city

1.4 ISSUES

The study identifies the following range of key short-term and long-term *issues* for safeguarding the significance of the site:

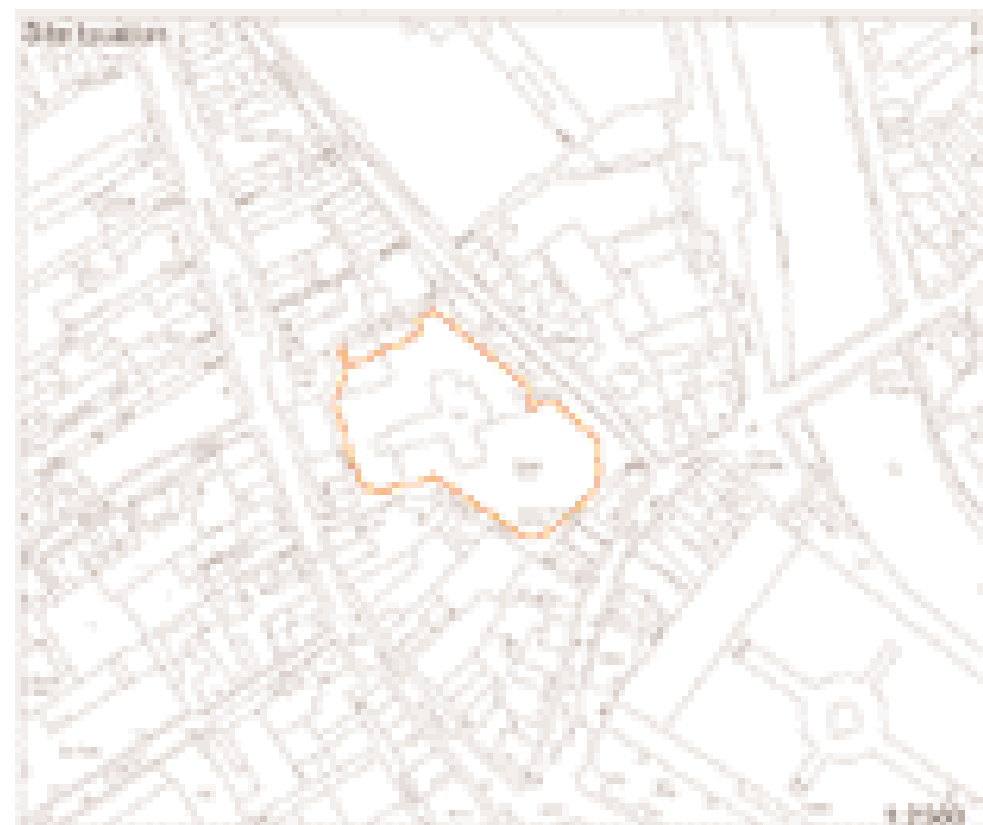
- Physical damage that has affected the fabric and integrity of many of the very important tombs in the graveyard
- Issues of public safety and the security of the tombs
- The vacant, derelict almshouse
- Issues relating to the access, management and conservation of the site
- Issues relating to current ownership and usage of the site, the church and the almshouses, in particular the reduction in use and the maintenance of the site

1.5 POLICIES

Policies for the protection, conservation and enhancement of the graveyard, church and almshouses have been devised on the basis of a provisional *vision statement*.

These policies are put forward to encourage the protection of the integrity of the church, graveyard, tombs and other structures, while supporting this approach through the development of the commercial/civic potential of the church and the opening up of the site to greater public access and integrated civic usage.

Three roundtable meetings with stakeholders who are both involved and interested in the welfare of the site (Section 2.4) were especially helpful.



Photographs of ground





1.6 IMPLEMENTATION

The *implementation* of these policies will require a substantial investment of time, funding and project management. It is unlikely that the Representative Church Body (RCB) and the parish will be able to resource this.

Support is more likely to be based on a detailed, professional economic/architectural appraisal of the potential for multipurpose usage of St Mary's Church and the vacant almshouse within the context of proposed civic and urban development. It is recommended that such an economic/urban planning appraisal be commissioned as soon as practical.

The involvement of Kilkenny Borough Council will be crucial. It should result in the opening up of pedestrian routeways through the site which would forge a link through the surrounding laneways to the High Street and Kieran Street.

The Borough Council might also become involved in the landscaping and management of the graveyard as a public, park-like green space in the heart of the city centre, immediately adjacent to one of its most important civic offices, the Tholsel.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 ST MARY'S CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD

With its origins in the 13th century, St Mary's Church has experienced much alteration to its fabric since that time. It is one of the earliest of the ecclesiastical buildings to be erected in Kilkenny and was built some time before 1205 (Hogan, 1884). A 'large medieval parish church with a long chancel, an aisled nave and transepts with several side chapels, it was dedicated to the Holy Trinity and to SS Peter, James and Nicholas. By 1205, it was sufficiently well established for Hugh de Rous, bishop of Ossory (1202-1218), to convene an ecclesiastical court there' (Bradley 2000a:97).

In 1739, the church was substantially rebuilt, incorporating elements of its 13th-century fabric. Much of its present fabric dates to that time (Bradley 2000b).

In 1951, the parish celebrated the final service in the church, which was then deconsecrated and closed to worship six years later.

The graveyard, which is contemporary with the church, is now disused. It was referred to as a cemetery in 1337, a churchyard in 1788, and is described as a graveyard in all editions of the Ordnance Survey (Bradley 2000b).

As a consequence of continued use, particularly by a number of old Kilkenny families during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, the graveyard possesses a rare and significant collection of tombs, some of which are unusually and beautifully carved.

The church was in a neglected state when it was closed in the late 1950s, having lain vacant for almost 10 years. The Office of Public Works (OPW) was then approached to take on the ownership of the site as a national monument. At the time, the OPW argued that it could only do so if the roof was removed.

To secure the site and the building, a decision was made in the early 1960s to transform the church building into a parish hall. In 1963, works were undertaken which led to the creation of the hall, service areas and the Freemasons' meeting rooms in a newly created upper floor. Refurbishment was greatly assisted by funds raised from the sale of the Freemasons' existing premises and their decision to incorporate their meeting rooms into the building.

2.2 THE SITE LOCATION

The site lies in the heart of Kilkenny's busiest commercial and tourist area (Figure 1) and is bounded on three sides by St Mary's Lane. Its eastern boundary is characterised by a drop in level of some 6m to Kieran Street (Plate 1) and to the rear of some properties along that street.





Plate 1: View of St Mary's Church and Graveyard boundary wall from Kieran Street

Although the laneway maintains a great deal of its historic character (Plates 2 and 3), it has seen some deterioration in the fabric and presentation of its buildings. There have also been some unfortunate interventions, none of which is very modern or recent, apart from those relating to the security of doors and windows.



Plate 2: View along St Mary's Lane from the Tourist Information Office towards the Church

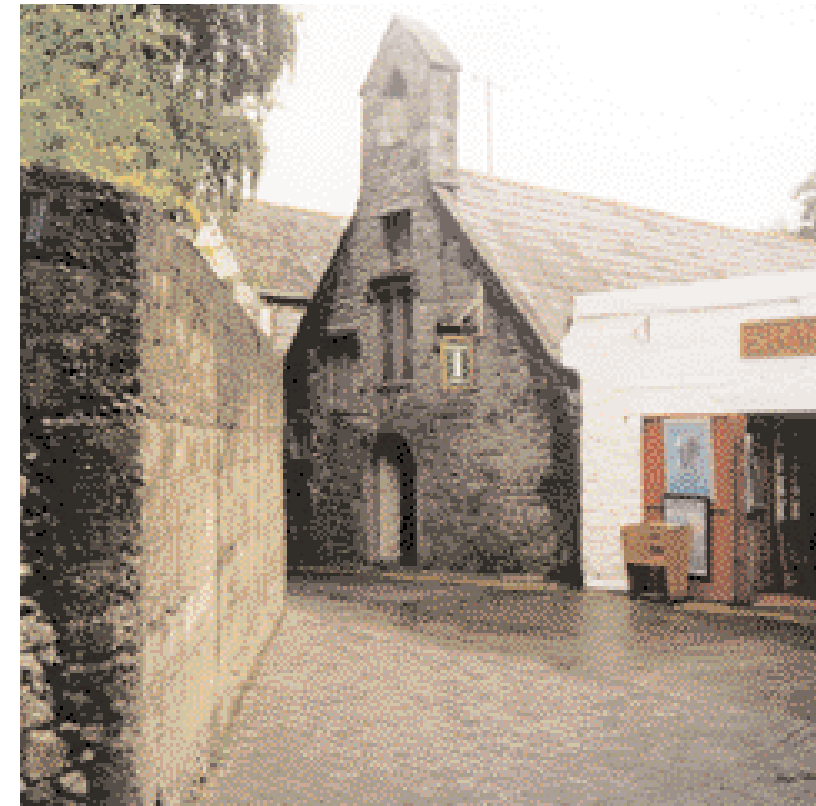


Plate 3: St Mary's Lane looking towards the rear of the Shee Almshouse (Tourist Information Office)

St Mary's Lane is a busy pedestrian route on the southern side, providing access to the rear of the Tourist Information Office (the Shee Almshouse). However, it is not used to such a great extent on its northern side, even though it links Kieran Street (Plate 4) with High Street through the arcaded entrance to the Tholsel (City Hall) (Plate 5).

The site — along with the church and graveyard and at least two sites that are scheduled for redevelopment (one fronting onto Kieran Street and the second incorporating the former Crotty's Bakery) — presents the opportunity for improvement within a strategic, integrated planning context.



Plate 4: A view towards the access to Kieran Street from the front of the vacant Almshouse

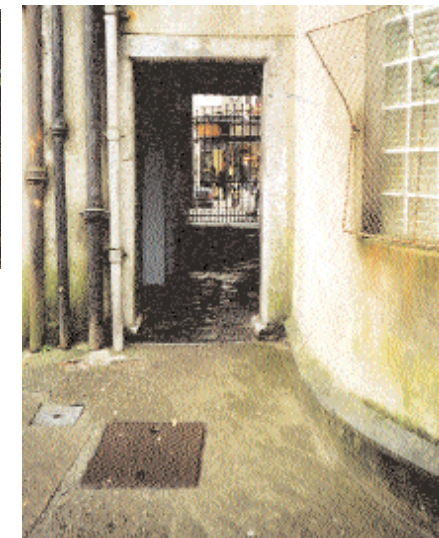


Plate 5: View of the rear entrance to the Tholsel Arcade from St Mary's Lane

2.3 THE REPRESENTATIVE CHURCH BODY (RCB)

The site is owned by the RCB and is managed by the parish through the office of the dean.

The ownership of the graves and monuments, however, is apparently vested in each of the families concerned, and the parish does not consider their care to be either its responsibility or that of the RCB. This has contributed to a failure to provide for the effective security of some particularly important historic funerary monuments and graves within the site.

The parish operates a car park on the site which generates much-needed cash (Plates 6, 7 and 8). The dean has partial responsibility for the gated access to the church, graveyard and almshouses. The gate remains open during the day while the car park is in operation (Plates 8 and 9). It is often not closed until 11.00pm when the hall is in use, leaving the site open to misusers (Plates 10, 11 and 12).

The current use of the church building as a parish hall and Freemasons' meeting rooms is conducted in an agreed arrangement with the RCB and the parish, rather like a lease agreement. The works to convert the building in 1963 were primarily funded by the Freemasons and the parish congregation.



Plate 6: Entrance to the site and car park



Plate 7: Indicative density of cars using the car park at the north of the site



Plate 8: Indicative density of cars using the car park inside the entrance area



Plate 9: View of Church, and the entrance to the site and car park from the interior of the site



Plate 10: View of the Church building from east



Plate 11: Vandalised monument at the east of the Church (detail)



Plate 12: Vandalised area at the east of the Church (behind the hoarding)

2.4 STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CONSERVATION PLAN

Although this Conservation Plan did not have a steering group as such, it benefited considerably from three meetings between stakeholders. These were convened and chaired by Charles Mount, former Archaeological Officer with the Heritage Council, and hosted in the Heritage Council's offices at Rothe House, Kilkenny. The results of these meetings were circulated by Charles Mount. The attendees included:

Dean Norman Lynas, trustee of St Mary's (client)
 Frank Gray, Kilkenny Borough Council
 Sergeant Pat Murphy, Kilkenny Garda Station
 Justin Maher, Kilkenny Security
 Brian Hamilton, An Taisce
 Brendan Leary, Kilkenny Archaeological Society
 George Sherwood, trustee of St Mary's Hall
 John Bradley, Historian, University College, Maynooth
 Melissa Lennox-Cunningham

Also in attendance were:

Charles Mount, Archaeological Officer, the Heritage Council
 Viney Shine, the Heritage Council
 Margaret Gowen, for the Integrated Conservation Group

Other consultees were:

Margaret Cosgrove, Arts Officer, Kilkenny Borough Council
 Tony Walsh, Director of Public Services, Kilkenny Borough Council
 William Murnagh, City Engineer and Chief Planner, Kilkenny Borough Council

The draft plan was presented at the final meeting in December 2001. Of particular benefit was a presentation by Tony Walsh, Director of Public Services, Kilkenny Borough Council, on proposals for the improvement, upgrading and streamlining of the public services provisions for the city in the coming 10 years in the context of the proposed new Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan (in preparation).

This project is to be tabled for public interest and discussion in the coming months.

2.5 THE INTEGRATED CONSERVATION GROUP

Margaret Gowen and Company, Archaeologists, represented by Margaret Gowen (co-ordinator) and Jackie Jordan.

Consarc, Conservation Architects, represented by Dawson Stelfox.

Carrig, Building Material Specialists, represented by Peter Cox and Emma Clarke.

Lisa Edden, Structural Engineer.

Nicholas Pearson Associates, Landscape Architects, represented by Clare Houston.

2.6 PREVIOUS FÁS SURVEY

The Integrated Conservation Group had hoped to avail of a detailed survey and inventory of the graveyard prepared as part of a Borough Council-sponsored FÁS scheme carried out under the direction of Eoin Sullivan. The survey report and results could not be located, however, so some of the budget allocated to historical research for the Plan had to be used to conduct a new, scaled geodetic survey of the site and the monuments (Figure 2).

2.7 ECOLOGY

Insufficient time/budget were allocated to conduct a full ecological survey of the site. However, an inspection of the site was conducted for this purpose, as it was clear to all team members that its existing ecology should be treated with the greatest sensitivity and accommodated within the landscaping concept proposals (Appendix 2).

3. UNDERSTANDING THE SITE (1)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ST MARY'S CHURCH AND GRAVEYARD

The historical background in Sections 3 and 4 is based primarily on the extensive research of John Bradley, author of a number of books and articles on the history of Kilkenny city, including St Mary's Church and Graveyard.

The medieval walled town of Kilkenny consisted of four distinct elements (Figure 3). The northern portion was called Irishtown, site of a pre-Norman enclosed ecclesiastical settlement. The primary area settled by the Anglo-Normans extended northwards from the castle and over 400m downstream from St Canice's Cathedral. This area between the castle and Irishtown was known as Hightown, within which St Mary's Church and Graveyard are located. Later, during the 13th century, a further enclosed element called St John's was added on the other side of the river. The borough of Donaghmore was established to the south (Bradley 2000a).



Figure 3: Map showing the medieval layout of the city (after Bradley 2000a)

‘The defences of Hightown enclosed a roughly rectangular area, with maximum dimensions of 800m by 350mm and a perimeter of about 1.45km, enclosing an area of about 28 hectares.’

(Bradley, 2000b: 2)

The main thoroughfare and central market place for Hightown was High Street, originally called ‘Earl’s Villa’ after its founder, the Earl Mareschal, (Hogan 1884; Bradley 2000b). (‘Mareschal’ also appears as ‘Marschal’ and ‘Marshall’.) St Mary’s Church is situated on St Mary’s Lane, which connects High Street to the west of the church and St Kieran’s Street to the east. It is notable that St Mary’s occupied an important central position in the medieval and later town, which is very clearly shown on all the maps of the city.

Given its central location within Hightown, the church probably ‘began as a chapel for those living near the castle’ (Bradley 2000b: 3). Phelan (1972) believes that the congregation of St Mary’s was made up largely from the merchant classes, while St Canice’s Cathedral, in Irishtown, was patronised by the landed proprietors.

In addition to religious services, St Mary’s was also used for civic functions, with financial support from the town corporation.

‘The corporation maintained the church and an annual contribution of 4d (four pennies) was collected from each house and 0.5d (a halfpenny) from each stall or shop for this purpose. The patronage and upkeep of St Mary’s was a visible sign of the pride and wealth of the burgesses, its tombs and chapels reflected their status and it was an important venue for civic ritual. Both church and bell tower, which was evidently spacious, were frequently used for meetings of the corporation and of the town court... in the sixteenth century, if not before, it was one of the principal locations for the performance of the town plays.’

(Bradley 2000a: 97)

Records indicate that corporation meetings were held in the church in 1352, 1364, 1391 and 1428 (Bradley 2000b).

St Mary’s Church is one of the oldest ecclesiastical buildings in Kilkenny.

‘In the “Deeds of Exchange” between Bishop de Rous and William Earl Mareschal, the “Church of the Blessed Mary of Kilkenny” is mentioned as being then in working order... and if the deeds between the earl and the bishop were executed in AD 1202, as the Rev. Mr. Graves inclines to believe... the Church of St Mary must have been erected during the life of Bishop O’Dullany towards the end of the twelfth century, a conclusion fully sustained by the architectural details of the building.’

(Hogan 1884: 395-6)

In *The Urban Archaeological Survey: County Kilkenny*, the church building is described as ‘cruciform in shape and... originally aisled. The nave, transepts and part of the chancel are all original. The present steeple, erected in 1819-29, replaces an earlier tower which dated to 1343’ (Farrelly, O’Reilly and Loughran 1993: 50). The side chapels were ‘dedicated to the Holy Trinity and to SS Peter, James and Nicholas’ (Bradley 2000a: 97). ‘St Mary’s Church, unlike St Canice’s,

was erected almost destitute of decoration, having been built in the plainest style of the “Early English”, in its simplest and least adorned designs’ (Hogan 1884: 395).

The church was rebuilt in 1739, after it ‘had fallen into ruin, and in an effort to restore it for Protestant worship’ (Hogan 1884: 396). Since then, numerous alterations, which incorporated the medieval fabric, have reduced the size of the church. However, it is still possible to identify some of its original medieval elements. Hogan (1884: 396) provided a detailed description of the mid 18th-century alterations:

‘The church originally consisted of a commodious chancel — much wider than the nave — lengthy transepts, narrow nave and lateral aisles. In the middle of the last century this church had fallen into ruin, and in an effort to restore it for Protestant worship, the arches supporting the side-walls of the nave were built up, and the mouldings which formed the capitals of the square piers that supported the arches and side-walls of the nave, were battered off to prevent them projecting through the plaster... the clerestory windows were at the same period built up, as may be observed in the upper part of the north wall of the nave, where the dressed stone window frames still hold their early English position in the original masonry of that wall.

The gable of the north transept appears to have been entirely taken down at the period of the Restoration, for no trace of the original window ope has been preserved in this gable, unlike that of the south transept, in which the original arches of the primitive window opes still remain in the masonry and form a strong contrast with the more modern window opes now inserted in the same wall. The original chancel was been contracted. It formerly extended to the wall east of O’Shea’s monuments, and any observer of this old ruin will at once detect the alteration.’

During renovations to the church in the 1960s, a ‘monument room’ was created within the north transept of the church. It houses the fine 13th-century Gothic fluted font and a number of memorials to the Garvey, Watson, Archer, Murphy, Dunphy and Rothe families (Lanigan and Tyler 1977; Farrelly, O’Reilly and Loughran 1993). It also contains a number of inscribed medieval tombstones and a stone which marked the entrance to a crypt that lies sealed beneath its floor.

‘In a stone screen to the right of the entrance door are six heraldic shields of the old families (Pembrokes, Shees, Rothes, Kellys, Archers, Daniels) which must have been put there for safety years ago. They measure roughly 2ft x 3ft and are of Kilkenny limestone with a raised surrounding frame and were originally used by the old merchant families to adorn and mark out their homes.’

(Lanigan and Tyler, 1977: 23)

St Mary’s Church finally closed to worship in 1957 and has been used as a parish hall since 1963. The graveyard, which is contemporary with the church, is now disused.

Contained within the graveyard of St Mary’s are a number of high-status burials and recognisable civic family names from medieval Kilkenny (see Section 4).

'The wealthiest of burgesses were allowed rights of burial within the church while the remainder of the population was interred in the churchyard. The reverence with which the churchyard was viewed is evident in the ordinance of 1337, which rewarded anyone who killed pigs found within the churchyard.'

(Bradley 2000a: 98)

The graveyard has a unique collection of unusual and elaborate grave slabs, including 'the effigial one to William Goer and his wife Margareta (or Margaret) (c. 1350)' (Plate 19) and 'the slab to Helen, wife of William of Armoyle... inscribed in Norman-French' (Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 23). Prominent Kilkenny families like the Shees and the Rothes are well represented within the church and graveyard at St Mary's (Section 4). The Shee mausoleum and a number of Shee family altar tombs (Plates 11, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 28) are located to the east of the church, including the tomb of Sir Richard Shee (d. 1608) (Lanigan and Tyler 1987). Evidence suggests that the tomb of John Rothe FitzPiers and his wife, Rose Archer, was moved to its current location in the graveyard north of the church (Lanigan and Tyler 1987). Their tomb was constructed in 1612 but was not used until John Rothe's death in 1619 (Lanigan and Tyler 1987). The tomb of Richard Rothe (d. 1637) is another fine funerary monument.

St Mary's Almshouses (Plates 20 and 21) open onto St Mary's Lane, with their main entrances and front elevations within the church grounds; they are recorded as having been founded by the 'Rev. Peter Roe, Rector of St Mary's, around 1840' (Lanigan and Tyler 1977, 76). Lanigan and Taylor (1977) describe the almshouses in detail as

'...a 3 storey 5 bay building in random rubble with a hipped roof overhang. The window voussoirs and quoins are of dressed stone. The second and fourth bays are slightly advanced and pedimented and until relatively recently were doorless. Basic skills in stone cutting and stone masonry are displayed here and have been effectively handled by the architect.'

Their architectural style, however, suggests an early 18th-century date; two buildings matching the almshouses are shown on Rocque's map of 1758 (Figure 5).

4. UNDERSTANDING THE SITE (2)

IMPORTANT KILKENNY FAMILIES ASSOCIATED WITH ST MARY'S GRAVEYARD

4.1 INTRODUCTION

That St Mary's served the merchant and upper classes of Hightown is evident in the financial support of the corporation and the burgesses, members of a small exclusive ruling class consisting 'of about 15 families that would control the town...' from the end of the 15th century '...until 1650' (Bradley 2000b: 5). Mostly of Anglo-Norman descent, the burgesses dominated every aspect of secular and sacred life in medieval Kilkenny and the church was often used to hold town functions (Section 3). The burgesses' 'tombs and chapels reflected their status' (Bradley 2000b: 3). The most high-status burials were placed inside the church, leaving the other parishioners of Hightown to rest in the graveyard (Bradley 2000a; 2000b). Within the graveyard itself, the status of the individuals buried there is reflected in the style and type of monument.

4.2 THE SHEE FAMILY

Members of the Shee family held the position of sovereign 'on seven occasions between 1493 and 1544' (Bradley 2000b: 5). The Shees were the only family 'of Irish origin among' the leading civic families of Kilkenny and are well represented within St Mary's graveyard, particularly to the east of the church (Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 21). Decorative examples of Shee family monuments from the 16th and early 17th centuries are located in this section of the graveyard (Lanigan and Tyler 1987). The altar tomb of Sir Richard Shee (Plate 11, detail)

'...has a fine superstructure depicting Faith, Hope and Charity. Around the base are shown the 12 Apostles, the only place in Ossory where all 12 are present.'

(Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 23)

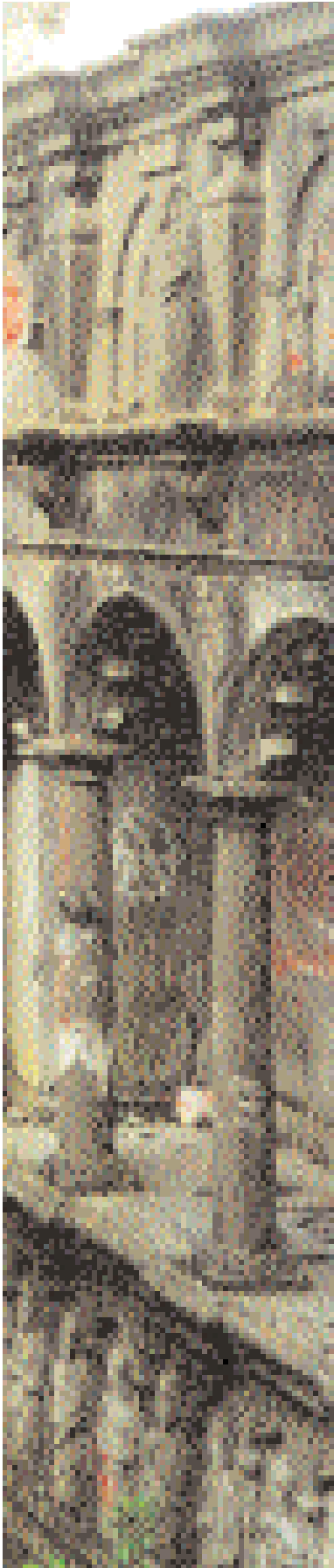
This tomb is all the more remarkable in that plans for the erection of the tomb are recorded in Sir Richard Shee's will (Bradley 2000b).

Sir Richard Shee is best known for founding the Shee Almshouse in 1582, 'one of the few surviving Tudor Almshouses in Ireland', which backs on to St Mary's Lane (Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 21). Sir Richard, like many of his kinsmen, had a 'predilection for the law' but added to the family fortune by acquiring 'former church properties, which had come on the market as a result of the Reformation'.

(Ó Cochláin 1986: 8; Bradley 2000a: 96)

4.3 THE ROTHE FAMILY

Another prominent merchant family in medieval Kilkenny, members of the Rothe family were appointed sovereign 18 times between 1440 and 1544 (Bradley 2000b). The tomb of John Rothe FitzPiers and his wife, Rose Archer, both of whom came from 'minor branches of two of the leading civic families of medieval Kilkenny', is located in the graveyard to the north of the church (Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 24). John Rothe built Rothe House in 1594 and later commissioned the tomb for himself and Rose, which was completed seven years before his



death (Lanigan and Tyler 1987). ‘When he died in 1619 business was already being carried on by some of his eleven children and their families’ (Lanigan and Tyler 1987:24). In 1642, ‘Bishop Rothe, who was a cousin of John Rothe...’ arranged for the National Ecclesiastical Assembly to be held in Rothe House, which ‘...led to the formation of the Parliament of the Confederation in October’ of that same year (Lanigan and Tyler 1987: 24). It is possible that Bishop Rothe (d. 1650) is also buried in the same tomb as his cousin and wife (Lanigan and Tyler 1987).

4.4 THE GOER FAMILY

To the west of the church, the handsome tomb of William and Margaret (or Margareta) Goer (c. 1350) ‘provides a record of the costume worn by the burgesses of Kilkenny in the second half of the fourteenth century’ (Bradley 2000a: 17; Lanigan and Tyler 1987) (Plate 19).

5. UNDERSTANDING THE SITE (3)

CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

5.1 DOWN SURVEY OF KILKENNY, c.1655

Petty’s Down Survey map (Figure 4) provides a rough depiction of the city of Kilkenny. It clearly shows the town wall and castle. The various churches are shown, including St Mary’s, which is located to the north-west of the castle. However, the detail shown on the map is minimal, and the small scale does not allow for proper analysis of the church and its site. The church and graveyard occupy a central position within the town.

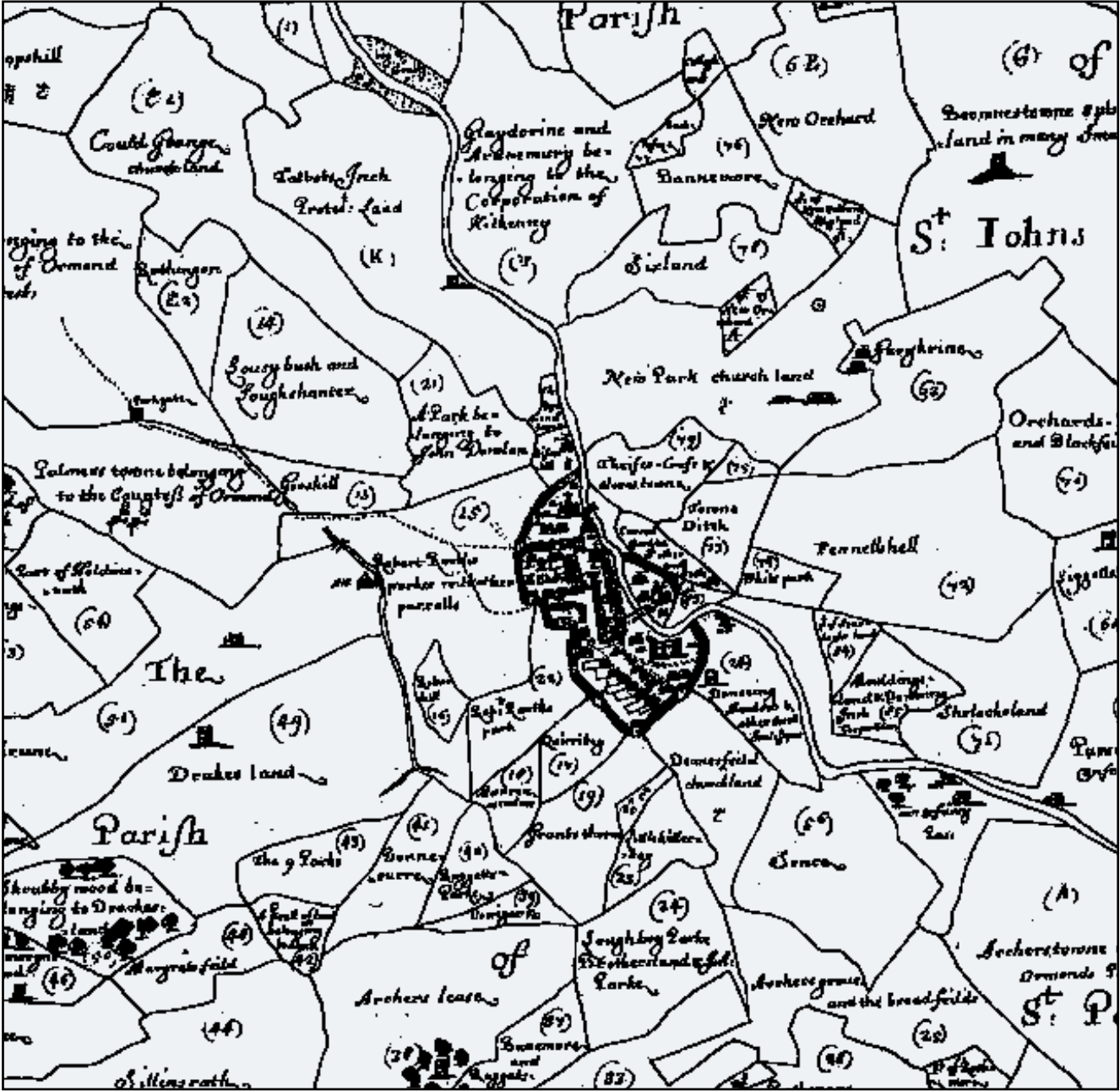


Figure 4: The Down Survey Map of Kilkenny, c.1655

5.2 ROCQUE'S MAP OF KILKENNY, 1758

Rocque's 1758 map of Kilkenny (Figure 5) provides substantially more detail than the Down Survey. St Mary's Church is clearly depicted to the east of High Street, at the rear of the Tholsel. The cross-shaped church is shown in the centre of an irregularly shaped site, which is completely delineated by a boundary wall. A structure, possibly a bell tower, is located near the west end of the church. Midway along the eastern side of the site, a small L-shaped structure is positioned against the boundary wall. This is most likely a vault. The remainder of the church grounds is indicated as having a covering of grass. The site is almost completely surrounded by an unnamed lane (St Mary's Lane), except along a section of its east side where part of a terrace of structures butts up against the site boundary wall.



Figure 5: Rocque's Map of Kilkenny, 1758

5.3 FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY, 1841

Original scale 1:1,056, reduced by approximately one-third to 1:1,548

The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map (Figure 6) provides more detailed information regarding the layout of the church and its graveyard. The site has retained its configuration and is surrounded on four of its five sides by St Mary's Lane. The eastern side of the site abuts a terrace of buildings which front onto King Street, previously known as Back Lane. Two separate steps lead off the

west side of King Street, accessing St Mary's Lane. The main entrance gates of the site are located in the south-west corner. A 'Parochial Subscription School' is located abutting the south-east corner of the site on a wedge-shaped plot of land. A row of mature trees flanks the inside of the boundary wall, except along the north and part of the east sides. The graveyard is situated to the south and east of the church and is separated from the rest of the site by two walls, with gates, which extend from the west end and north-east corner of the church to the boundary wall. Another wall extending from the east end of the church to the east boundary wall divides the graveyard in two. The northern part of the graveyard is much smaller. Three vaults are shown, two abutting the boundary wall and one abutting the east end of the church. Numerous smaller rectangular grave slabs are dotted throughout the area. Along the dividing wall with the southern graveyard, a feature of the wall is annotated by the script 'Three Apostles'. The larger southern part of the graveyard is surrounded by a row of mature trees. A large vault is positioned against the south-east corner of the church. The eastern end of the southern graveyard is dotted with rectangular grave slabs, while only two square-shaped structures are shown in the larger western end.

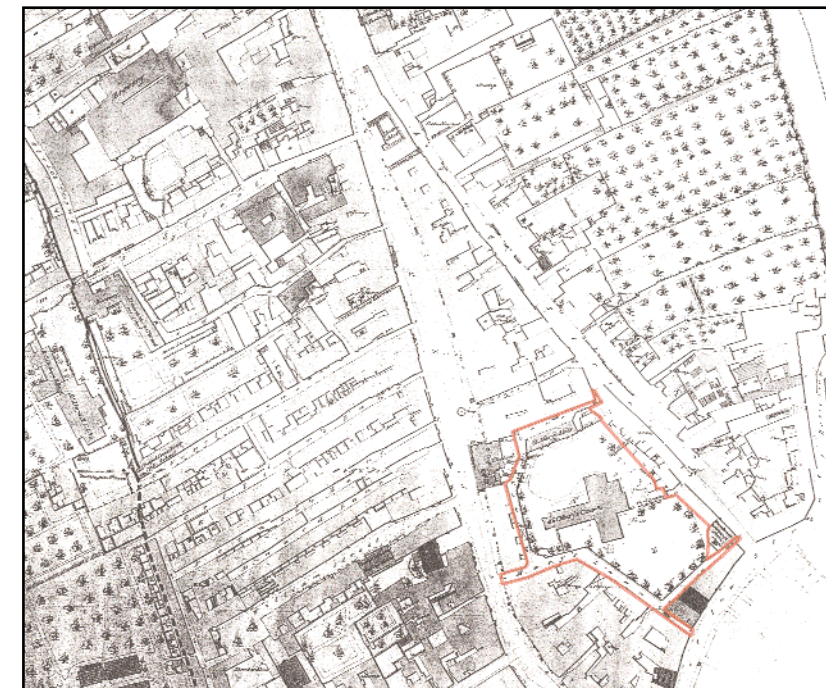


Figure 6: First Edition OS Map, 1841

St Mary's Almshouses are located along the north side of the site. Pillared steps lead up to both entrances. To the east of the almshouses, at the north-east corner of the site, is a wedge-shaped, roofless grave structure. An irregularly shaped building is positioned to the rear and seems to be part of the site, as it is bounded by the site wall. In the area in front of the almshouses, a path runs from the tree-lined church entrance, along the north of the site and up to the church entrance on the north transept.

5.4 REVISED EDITION OS MAP, 1871

On the revised edition OS map of 1871 (Figure 7), St Mary's Church and Graveyard site remains substantially unaltered since the first edition OS map 30 years earlier. The graveyard, located to the east and south of the church, retains the dividing wall which extends from the east end of the church. A winding path runs from the east end of the southern graveyard, through the dividing wall and into the northern graveyard where it branches in two. One path leads up to a church entrance by the north transept, while the other path exits the northern graveyard and links up with the path running from the main entrance to the almshouses. The southern graveyard is shown largely devoid of grave features. Only two structures are depicted: a large vault abutting the south transept of the church, and a small square feature against the wall dividing both graveyards. A row of mature trees flanks most of the southern graveyard, with a small cluster of trees near the centre. The northern graveyard is shown with three large vaults and two smaller rectangular grave slabs. The feature previously called the 'Three Apostles' projects slightly from the dividing wall with the southern graveyard. Along the eastern boundary wall, to the north of the northern graveyard, there is a long rectangular space which is separated from the rest of the site by a wall with a centrally positioned gate. A small group of trees is positioned in front of the gate. The wedge-shaped grave feature remains in the north-east corner of the site, to the east of the almshouses.

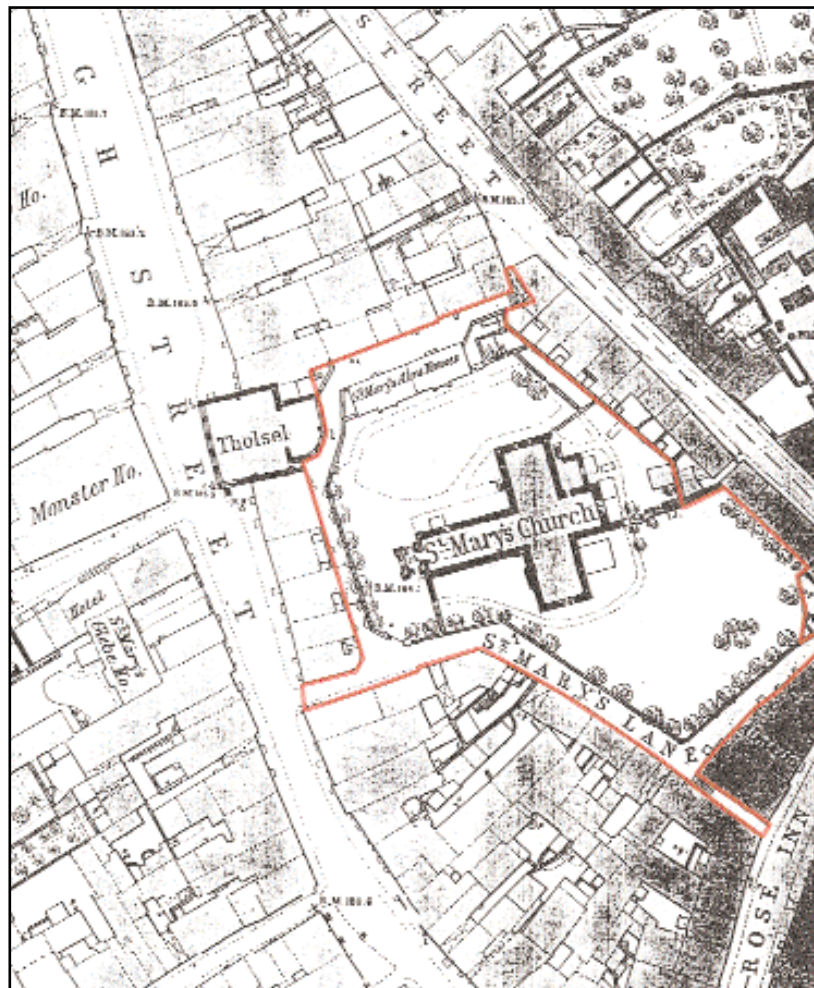


Figure 7: Revised Edition OS Map, 1871

5.5 REVISED EDITION OS MAP, 1900

The 1900 edition of the OS (Figure 8) shows less detail than the previous edition of 1871. The dimensions of the site surrounding St Mary's Church remain unaltered, and the whole east side of the site is still flanked by a terrace of buildings fronting onto King Street. St Mary's Lane surrounds the remainder of the site, with steps leading down to King Street. Inside the site, the two graveyards are shown to the east and south of the church.

Unlike the earlier OS maps, however, few of the internal graveyard features are depicted. The exception is a large vault shown on the east side of the northern graveyard. The winding path connecting the two graveyards is indicated by a hatched line. Another hatched line indicates the path leading from the main entrance area, in the south-west corner, to the almshouses along the north side of the site. The wedge-shaped feature in the north-east corner is now represented by a square structure.

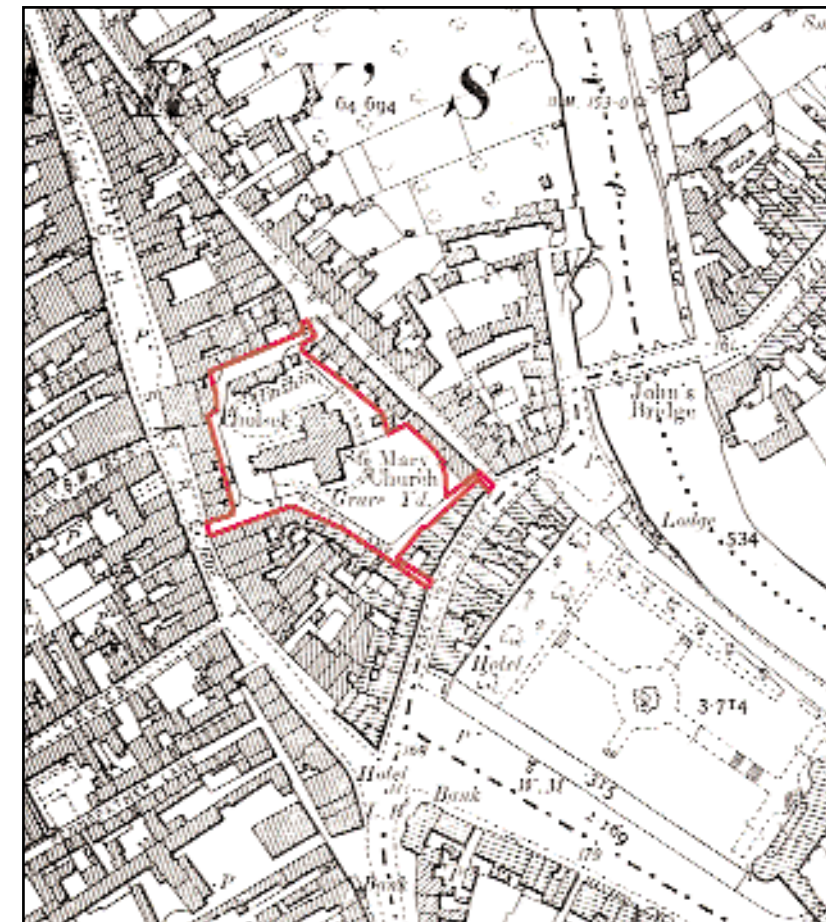


Figure 8: Revised Edition OS Map, 1900

5.6 REVISED EDITION OS MAP, 1913-14

The 1913-14 OS edition (Figure 9) reveals some minor changes to the site since the survey carried out 13-14 years previously. The basic dimensions of the site have remained largely the same, with the exception of the eastern boundary wall, where part of the southern graveyard seems to have extended to the east as far as Kings Lane. The extension of the site covers a small area previously occupied by a two-terraced house that fronted onto King Street.

Another change to the site is the removal of the north graveyard wall which once separated it from the rest of the churchyard. For the first time, all of the grounds surrounding the church are referred to as a 'graveyard', suggesting that the original confines of the graveyard have been extended to the north and west of the church. The boundary walls of the southern graveyard remain intact. The internal features of graveyards are rarely depicted. Only the large vault to the east of the northern graveyard is shown. None of the graveyard paths or the path from the main entrance to the almshouses are depicted. Some alterations have also taken place in the north-east corner of the site, where the square-shaped structure has been removed, and only one grave feature is now shown adjacent to the almshouses.

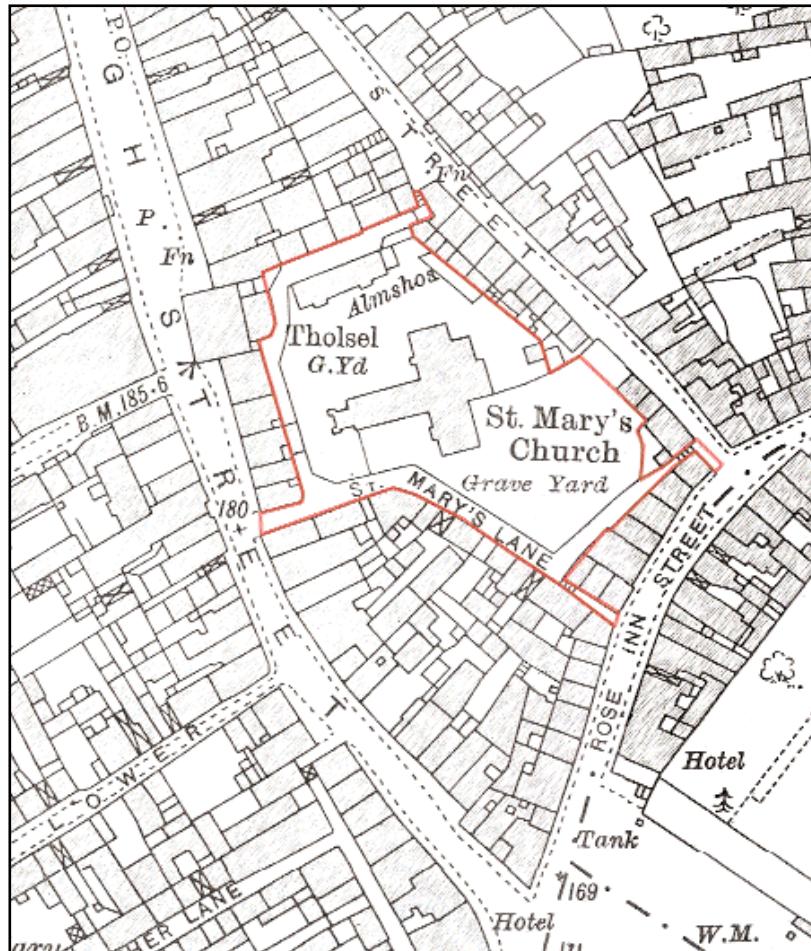


Figure 9: Revised Edition OS Map, 1913-14

5.7 REVISED EDITION OS MAP, 1946

The 1946 OS map (Figure 10) shows only one alteration to the layout of the site since the survey 32 years previously. The extension of the southern graveyard eastwards has been reversed to its original state, with the construction of a block of buildings on the south-western corner of Kieran's Street, previously King Street. Part of the original terrace has been replaced by this block, which also incorporates the site of the Parochial Subscription School to the south-west of the site. The remainder of the site remains much the same, with the extension of the graveyard into the north and west parts. As with the previous OS map, only one of the internal grave features is depicted and none of the interior pathways is shown.

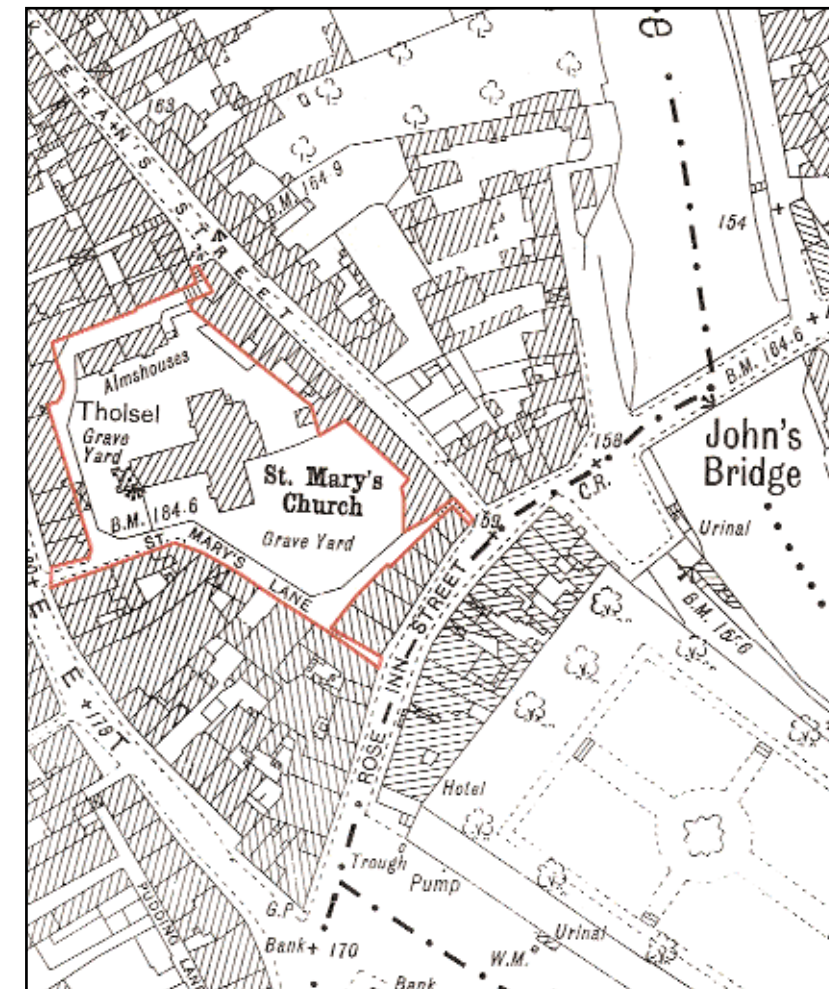


Figure 10: Revised Edition OS Map, 1946

6. CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 THE INTEGRITY OF THE SITE

St Mary's Church and Graveyard form an important medieval ecclesiastical site that has survived relatively intact to the present day. Once the parish church and cemetery of medieval Hightown, they are located at its heart and possess some of the most important Renaissance tombs in Ireland. However, these have suffered an unacceptable level of damage as a result of vandalism.

6.2 THE CHURCH

The church building was significantly reduced in size in the 18th century; its external 18th-century presentation is in a rather plain neo Gothic style. The church, which has been deconsecrated for a number of years, contains many fine medieval and Renaissance sculptured monuments, including a magnificent work commemorating Richard Rothe (d. 1637), and the tomb of Sir Richard Shee (d. 1608).

Having lain idle for more than 12 years, the church was converted for use as a parish hall in 1963 (Figures 11 and 12). Its creation was a significant venture for the city, incorporating new meeting rooms for the city's Freemasons who had contributed significant funds for the refurbishment of the building through the sale of their former premises.

The 'hall' appears to have served a vibrant, socially focused parish community for meetings, amateur drama and occasional musical performances. Until quite recently, it was used for badminton and other indoor sports. Now, however, local hotels provide more up-to-date facilities, with multiple courts and modern dressing rooms.

In recent years, the hall has been used as exhibition space during Arts Week, but lack of maintenance has resulted in the deterioration of its interior.

To protect the church's collection of medieval, Renaissance and later memorial monuments, a 'monument room' was created during the conversion in the 1960s. The monuments were moved from the other parts of the church, with some incorporated into a new concrete floor and newly plastered walls. In recent years, increasing numbers of broken sculptural items from endangered and damaged graves have been brought indoors for safe-keeping.

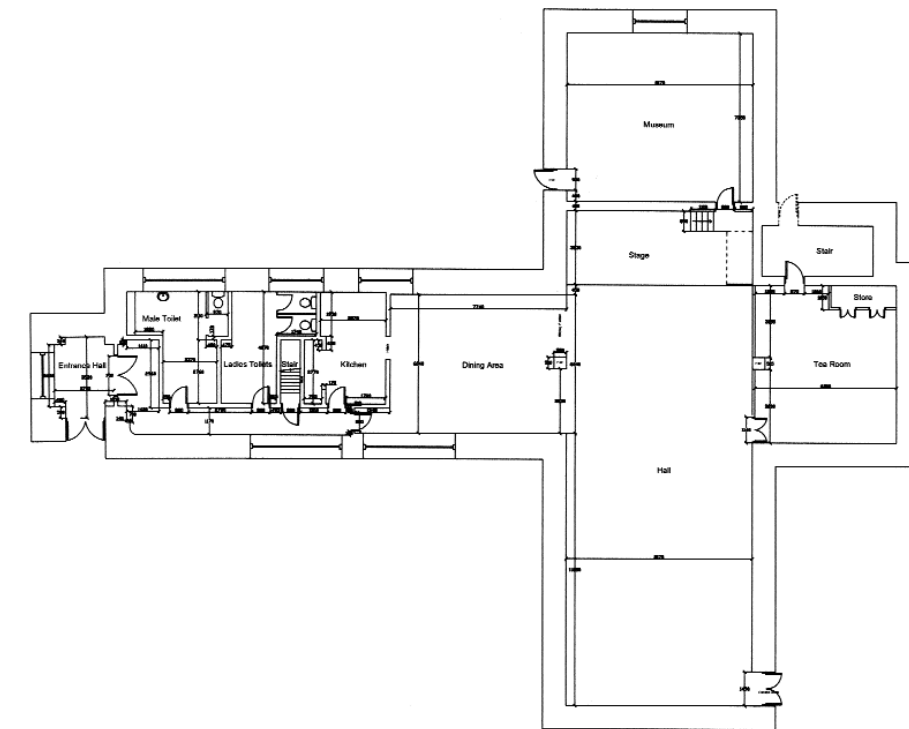


Figure 11: Measured survey of the Church (ground floor) by Consarc

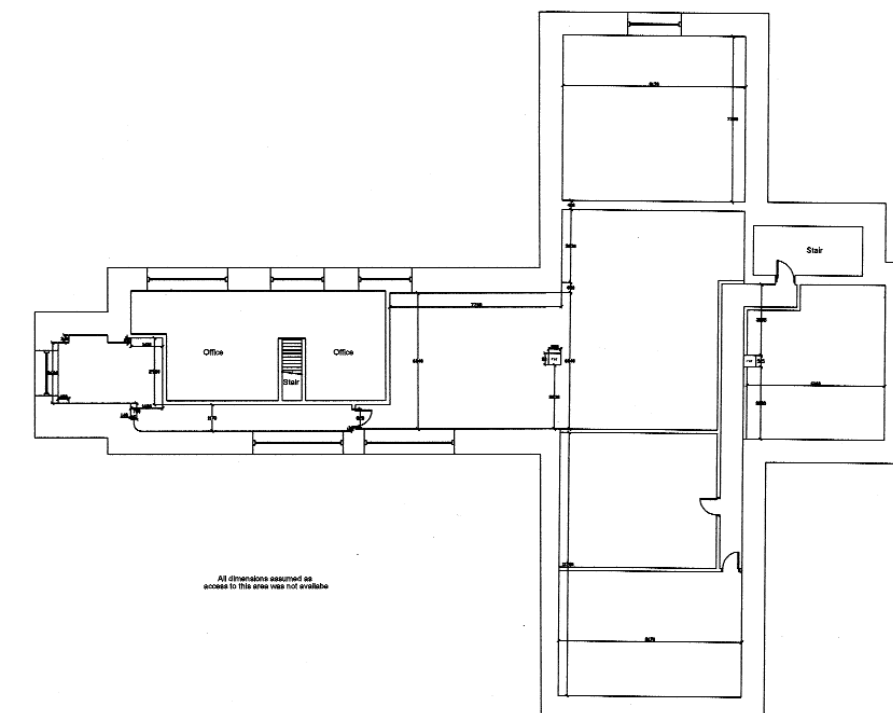


Figure 12: Measured survey of the Church (1st floor) by Consarc

6.3 THE GRAVEYARD

According to the documentary sources, the graveyard appears to be contemporary with the church and has always been associated with it. It has remained largely intact (Plates 13, 14 and 15), and its boundary has remained unchanged. The graveyard possesses some of the finest Renaissance-style and later tombs in the country (Plate 19). Several very important arcaded, altar-type monuments to the east of the church were probably originally housed inside the church (John Bradley pers. comm). The gravestones and memorials are of immense historical, social and artistic interest. They provide an important record of local historically important families, as well as particular changes in stylistic and representational religious art at the beginning of the 17th century in Ireland. Unfortunately, it is these tombs and some of the mausoleums which have suffered most from vandalism (Plates 16, 17, 18 and Appendix 8).



Plate 13: General view of the Graveyard and Church building from the south



Plate 14: View of the successfully protected portion of the Graveyard at the south of the Church



Plate 15: Inappropriate use of the boundary wall to the rear of the Kieran Street properties



Plate 16: Vandalised tomb to the east of the Church



Plate 17: Destroyed altar-type monument to the east of the Church



Plate 18: Attempted opening of a lead coffin (now blocked by cemented breeze blocks for security purposes)



Plate 19: Renaissance-style tombstone at the west of the Church

6.4 THE ALMSHOUSES

The site incorporates the two three-storey-over-basement St Mary's Almshouses which date to at least the early 18th century; they may indeed be of medieval origin. One is unfortunately derelict (Plates 20 and 21), and there are considerable problems relating to the original trust (Section 7.8).



Plate 20: The occupied Almshouse



Plate 21: The derelict Almshouse

6.5 ST MARY'S LANE

The site is bounded by St Mary's Lane, which certainly has medieval origins and remains intact and unobstructed. It features a number of important and attractive historic buildings, including the rear of the Tholsel (City Hall) and the Shee Almshouse (Tourist Information Office) and is used by a significant number of pedestrians.

6.6 LEGAL STATUS AND FRAMEWORK

Both the church and graveyard have protected status under the 1999 Planning and Development Act. All graveyards come under the category of protected sites under the National Monuments Acts, 1930-2004. (See Appendices.)

7. ISSUES AFFECTING ST MARY'S GRAVEYARD

THE FOLLOWING ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED AT THE FIRST MEETING OF INTERESTED STAKEHOLDERS IN JULY 2001.

7.1 CONDITION OF MONUMENTS

The graveyard has been quite systematically vandalised over the past few years (Plates 22, 23, 24 and 25). In the very recent past, the problem appears to have become more extreme for a number of reasons: the use of the church building has slowed; street-based drinking and drug-taking have increased; the vacancy of the second almshouse continues and its dereliction accelerates.



Plate 22: Tomb of Elias Shee c. 1613 located to the east of the church. Photo taken 2000-2001



Plate 23: Tomb of Elias Shee c. 1613. Photo taken August 2001



Plate 24: Tomb of William Shee and Margaret Walsh c. 1554 located to the east of the Church. Photo taken 1995



Plate 25: Tomb of William Shee and Margaret Walsh c. 1554. Photo taken 1996

The vacant almshouse formerly looked out over what has become the most vulnerable part of the site (Plate 26 and Figure 2). It is now absolutely hidden from all view and provides a quiet retreat for those involved in drinking and drug-taking.



Plate 26: Ground in front of derelict almshouse

Many of the finest early 17th-century monuments have been spray-painted with graffiti. They have also been subjected to repeated and concerted damage in an attempt to demolish and destroy their most beautifully carved columns and arcading. Of particular concern is the recent attempt to break open one of the lead coffins exposed by the dismantling of a mausoleum (Plate 18).

Litter, broken bottles and other items (syringes have not been noticed) have been discarded throughout this favoured 'haunt'. The most hidden area of the graveyard at its eastern side is easily accessed, despite the parish's efforts to secure it with plywood hoarding (Plate 27).



Plate 27: Vandalised hoarding

Attempts have been made to protect the most vulnerable and important monuments by increasing the height of the boundary wall (Plate 28) and building a hoarding across the portion of the graveyard in which they are located. These efforts, however, have simply strengthened the resolve of those perpetrating the damage. Each time the site has been visited in the past year, the hoarding has been easily breached with a crowbar or something similar. Like the tombs, it too has been subject to concerted damage.



Plate 28: Heightened perimeter wall

Three of the earliest tombs are now buried and archaeological excavation will be required to reveal them (Bradley pers. comm.).

In the past, attempts to clean the monuments have led to a significant loss of the stone surface and of carving/inscription detail (Plate 29). The Rothe tomb with its very fine incised decoration and the Shee tomb have been very badly spray-painted with graffiti. This will have to be treated with the greatest care during any cleaning exercise. (For more information, see Appendix 1.)



Plate 29: Damage caused as a result of cleaning off graffiti

7.2 UNDER-USE OF ST MARY'S PARISH HALL

There has been a consistent and marked decline in community use of the parish hall in recent years. The Freemasons only meet several times a year; the hall is no longer used for indoor sports such as badminton; amateur theatrical events are rarely held there; and its Arts Week use may no longer be sustained. The functional requirements of the parish hall within the modern city are no longer what they used to be. The building is now rather 'tired' and requires very significant refurbishment (Plates 30 and 31).



Plate 30: Neglected rear entrance doorway



Plate 31: Security mesh on windows

7.3 PROBLEMS OF PRESENTATION

The presentation of the site cannot be effectively achieved at present for a number of reasons:

- The poor quality of the current maintenance and presentation of the site
- Its 'closed' character — solid, high boundary wall
- The fact that St Mary's Hall is largely unoccupied
- The derelict, deteriorating almshouse
- The need to keep the remaining portion of the graveyard locked
- The lack of on-site security
- The lack of a guide/caretaker

The site as it is currently presented actually represents a potential danger to unattended visitors. There are also issues of public safety.

7.4 PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITE

Lack of maintenance, under-use, dereliction, lack of appropriate security and very limited funds all affect the preservation of the important historic elements of the site, its monuments and buildings. As the alignment of St Mary's Lane is not

going to alter, the site itself is not under threat, nor do any tabled development proposals constitute a danger to the site.

7.5 **NEED TO PRESERVE/CONSERVE INTERNATIONALLY IMPORTANT TOMBS**

When the church was deconsecrated in the 1960s, it was clear to the parish that the site and its very significant monuments would require active protection and conservation. It was for this reason that the OPW was approached at the time. The conservation and protection of the monuments have remained concerns and are now matters of great urgency.

7.6 **MAINTENANCE OF MONUMENTS AND GROUNDS**

The greatest difficulty faced in maintaining the site is providing a focus, a reason and a demonstrable public benefit for such maintenance.

Vegetation is extensive, both around the stones and on the boundary wall. This should be removed, as it will lead to damage and loss of pointing.

The declining usage of the church building, especially its very limited daytime use, has resulted in the increasing perception of the site as one that is vacant. The dereliction of the almshouse contributes very significantly to this.

The funds generated by the use of the site as a car park are clearly not adequate for its upkeep (Plate 32).



Plate 32: Damaged downpipe

7.7 **TOMB OWNERSHIP**

The parish takes the view that the ownership of the tombs is not vested in the parish (which manages the site) or in the RCB (which owns the site). There is significant confusion about the extent to which the Church of Ireland can be regarded as responsible for the monuments. A duty of care does exist, however, and the parish and dean have made repeated, if unsuccessful, efforts to keep the graveyard safe.

7.8 **RENOVATION OF ALMSHOUSES**

The dereliction of the eastern house of the two almshouses is probably one of the greatest contributing factors to the lack of security on the site, increasing the opportunity for vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the portion of the graveyard it overlooks.

This building was derelict in the 1980s when the present dean took over the position. The western house is occupied by a tenant on an extremely low rent (0.63c per week) and the family, understandably, will not move willingly.

The buildings are held in trust by the RCB, and their care and maintenance have not been the responsibility of the parish (or the dean).

The original Rev. Peter Roe trust deed is gone, leaving the issue of legal title, duty of care and onward sale/lease and management of these buildings extremely problematic. It is felt that discussion with the Corporation in the 1960s may have failed for this reason.

7.9 **RETENTION OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The key elements of the site — the church, the almshouses and the monuments — have such a strong visual, historic character that the retention of their significance should not constitute a major issue for a potential change of use.

7.10 **SITE SECURITY**

Need to deny access to misusers

This will only be achieved, ultimately, by ‘peopling’ the site, and the buildings within it, in a dynamic, open-access and multipurpose-use framework. Otherwise, the gate will have to remain locked at all times, and the boundary wall will have to be raised, with parts protected with unsightly deterrents such as razor wire. Barbed wire and the present, already damaged, reinstated hoarding (as of October 2001) clearly do not work as deterrents. The entrance barrier creates no obstacle to those using the site for anti-social purposes.

New by-laws to prevent public drinking

Laws of this nature require monitoring to ensure compliance and cannot be effective if hidden public spaces exist in which this sort of activity can occur. The hoarding around the most vulnerable area of the graveyard has simply served to provide such a space. The graffiti and vandalism occur unseen and unchecked behind it.

Public safety

At present, the site is not a safe place for unsupervised public access.

Lack of natural surveillance/activity

Because the building is not constantly open and in use, the site is largely unoccupied except by those who drive in to park. This non-use of the site and its buildings, along with its high, solid boundary wall, are the greatest contributors to the poor security situation. Apart from the view through the gateway, there are no lines-of-sight from St Mary's Lane into the site. The occupants of the almshouse do not have a line-of-sight towards the most vulnerable part of the site, nor do the windows of the public (City Hall) and private buildings that surround the site — many are single-story structures. The lane and site are very poorly lit at night.

7.11 LACK OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The parish can no longer generate the funds to maintain the site or its buildings or to finance adequate security for the protection of its monuments.

Note

In the past the Heritage Council has awarded funds to assist the short-term security arrangements for the site.

8. POLICIES

8.1 POLICIES FOR THE PROTECTION AND RETENTION OF THE HISTORICAL INTEGRITY OF THE SITE, ITS BUILDINGS AND ITS MONUMENTS

The guiding policy in this Plan seeks to retain, protect, restore and enhance the integrity and historical significance of St Mary's Church, almshouses, monuments and graveyard in their entirety. The policy should be guided by:

- International conservation charters — specifically the ICOMOS Venice Charter and the Granada Convention.
- Planning and development law — specifically the Planning and Development Act, 1999.
- National Monuments law.

Notwithstanding the requirements for protection and preservation, within the context of inner city development, the St Mary's complex is a site of immense historical significance. It has the potential to become a singularly attractive, vibrant, green space with economically sustainable public, civic, arts, administrative and residential uses for its buildings.

Any development proposals for the site and its environs must acknowledge this guiding policy. All of the features associated with the graveyard should be respected and retained, including the boundary walls, gateways, mausoleum, memorials, tombstones and burial enclosures. The layout of the graveyard should be respected, with existing pathways retained wherever possible. Reordering the layout, moving or reconstructing box tombs, gravestones or memorials and levelling the ground should not be considered.

The context of the graveyard is important. It should not be looked at in isolation but as part of an integrated complex bounded by and accessed from St Mary's Lane.

The current rate and extent of vandalism and dereliction must be urgently arrested. This requires the immediate provision of comprehensive, short-term security measures (CCTV, lighting and manned security).

The Conservation Plan process and the meetings with stakeholders have reached a stage at which a 'vision' for the site has been framed. Dialogue with all stakeholders and potentially interested parties must be urgently progressed to advance the provision for a workable new use for the buildings and for the site.

Short-term, interim funding has been provided by the Heritage Council, ensuring that adequate and appropriate security measures can be taken while dialogue progresses.

Significant efforts should be made to locate the detailed inventory and study of the site conducted as a FÁS scheme under the direction of Eoin Sullivan.

A new study should now be conducted to examine the architectural and urban planning potential of the site. This should include particular reference to the proposed Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan which is currently in preparation.



8.2 POLICIES FOR THE CREATION OF A WORKABLE ‘VISION’ FOR THE SITE

Following the second of the two stakeholder meetings on 4 September 2001, a number of clear, potential ‘visions’ for the site were articulated. These were further discussed and developed at the third and last of the stakeholder meetings on 4 December 2001. They can be summarised as follows:

- Open doors, open building and an open, peopled site.
- Multipurpose community/public service venue.
- Multipurpose arts venue, with the almshouses serving a caretaker function.
- Creation of a public green space, with input from Kilkenny Borough Council on planting and maintenance. (expanded in Section 8.3)

The RCB and parish need to analyse the following:

- the current use of the site and its buildings
- the issues relating to ownership and the Roe Trust
- future security arrangements
- the management and maintenance provisions for the site

The requirements of the congregation must be assessed, and a decision on the future of the site must be made. These should take cognisance of existing obligations to the congregation and to those legal provisions of the Planning and Development Acts and the National Monuments Acts which deal with the protection and maintenance of the site and its listed buildings.

A clear statement from the RCB, the dean, the parish administration and the Freemasons is required. (It is understood that the Freemasons would have no difficulty with a move to another venue, but the dining area in such a facility would require seating for 50.)

Should the RCB and the parish agree that a new multipurpose, nondenominational function for the site can be agreed, the meetings of the existing stakeholders and any other relevant stakeholders should continue as a matter of urgency. These should actively seek to promote a new civic function for the buildings and the site within the context of the proposed Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan.

Civic, arts, tourism, pedestrian circulation and green-space requirements for the city centre should be reviewed in consultation with Kilkenny Borough Council, especially in the light of Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan which is currently under consideration. This would help to clarify the site's potential for meeting existing requirements and developing a sustainable civic, community, arts, tourism, administrative and commercial function. (See Appendix 5.)

8.3 POLICIES FOR THE ARCHITECTURAL TREATMENT OF THE SITE

(DAWSON STELFOX, CONSARC CONSERVATION)

St Mary's Church and the surrounding churchyard and almshouses are of immense historical, cultural and architectural significance, but are today in a state of disrepair, suffering from vandalism and under-use. The following policies aim to support a strategy for the restoration and reuse of the complex that will address these problems.

There are four main areas where action is required to provide a sustainable solution:

1. Viable new uses for the church to justify investment in restoration.
2. Restoration of the almshouses as residential accommodation.
3. Creation of pedestrian links through the graveyard to open it up for public use.
4. Restoration of the graveyard to create an attractive setting for the church.

1. Viable new uses for the church to justify investment in restoration

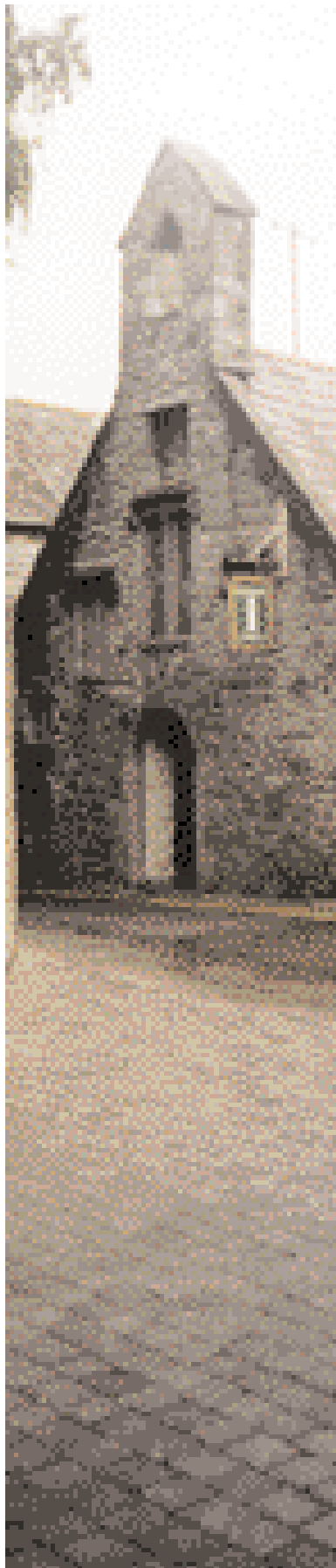
The church has been poorly converted in the past, with the insertion of an intermediate floor and subdivisions, to the extent that most of the historic character has been lost. The rear first-floor section, which has independent access, is currently used by the Masonic Lodge. Part of the ground floor is used for storage, and the rear ground floor hall is under-used as a youth, performance and sports facility.

The ground floor area is 400m², giving 800m² on the two floors. If a significant part of the original height of the building is to be reinstated, the usable total floor area is estimated at 600m².

Given that a primary aspiration would be to have the building used by the community, it would seem that the most appropriate uses would be a combination of:

- Offices for a public service.
- Performance/exhibition space for the festival and other community events, allowing the full height of the church in at least one section to be realised.
- A Kilkenny historical display linked to the nearby Tourist Information Office.
- Continuing use by the Masonic Lodge in the rear section.
- Ancillary toilets etc. and accommodation.

Additional potential exists for a crèche, after-school club, nursery etc.



A full feasibility study and economic appraisal are required to: assess the balance of uses; test financial viability; identify the lead body to co-ordinate the project; and determine the availability of capital funds. The likely capital cost is in the order of £1.5 - 2.0 million.

2. Restoration of the almshouses as residential accommodation

The derelict nature of the right-hand almshouse is having a serious effect on the complex, encouraging vandalism and misuse. It should be an urgent priority to restore the almshouse, probably as apartments. One apartment should be offered free-of-charge for a caretaker/handyman to maintain the grounds and deter vandalism.

The likely restoration cost is in the order of £350,000 - £500,000.

3. Creation of pedestrian links through the graveyard to open it up for public use

Considerable potential exists for the creation of pedestrian links through the site to encourage its use. This will, in turn, bring increased 'supervision' and 'ownership' of the site and so deter misuse and vandalism.

In order of priority, these links are:

- (a) At the southern corner of the site, exiting onto the corner of St Mary's Lane, close to the rear of the Tourist Information Office. The boundary wall at this point is relatively low, is built of mass concrete and has low historical significance. The graveyard is approximately 1.2m higher than the land, so a ramped access will be required. Visitors to the Tourist Information Office should be encouraged to use this route to visit the church and site.
- (b) In the north-west corner, there is a blocked-up gateway that has a direct link through to the Town Hall and High Street. This should be reopened and the route established from (a) above through the graveyard to the town centre.
- (c) To the north of the site, at a sudden bend in the rear lane, is a further potential entrance, which would open up that side of the site.
- (d) Close to the existing entrance is a small Gothic arch set into the boundary wall. This may be the remnants of a very old entrance that should be opened up, subject to statutory approvals and a cost plan.

The likely costs for the physical works are in the order of £320,000 - £450,000.

4. Restoration of the graveyard to create an attractive setting for the church

This was the original concept of the study and is still one of the most significant aspects of the work. Nevertheless, it is recognised that restoring the graveyard in isolation from other building works will increase the costs and leave it vulnerable to vandalism. The step-by-step approach outlined above has a much better chance of succeeding and will be the most cost-effective in the long run.

8.4 POLICIES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TOMBS

(CARRIG)

The graveyard is an important historical record and must be protected from further damage. While plans for its future are discussed, the entire graveyard should be enclosed by a semi-permanent fence which must be sturdy enough to withstand damage, as has happened to the temporary hoarding in the northern section. It is obvious that the stones in the southern section of the graveyard, which is inaccessible to the public, are in slightly better condition than those in the unprotected area and do not suffer from graffiti.

The edges of some tombs have been chipped and may be repaired using a plastic mortar repair. A more conservative approach, however, would be to leave the chips as they are if they do not appear to be causing water damage to the stone below.

The slabs over the tops of the tombs that are badly cracked may be carefully dismantled and rebbed in a lime-based mortar. The resulting joints should be narrow and may be carefully pointed to blend in with the stone. Other cracked stone may be more difficult to reinstate, especially headstones that are designed to stand vertically, but it may be possible to repair these using stainless steel pins and resin injection techniques. Monuments that have been pushed over or disassembled should be carefully reinstated in their original positions.

The cracked slab to the table-shaped gravestone in the southern section of the graveyard is vulnerable to collapse. The stone should be supported from below in accordance with the advice of Lisa Edden (structural engineer). It may be possible to repair the slab using stainless steel pins and resin injection techniques.

The damaged mausoleum in the northern section of the graveyard could be reconstructed if its original appearance is known. Alternatively, it may be simply conserved in its current condition. A repointing scheme will be necessary as part of the stabilisation works. A soft mortar mix containing lime should be used. Moss and vegetation should be removed from the remains of the walls.

The removal of graffiti, the cleaning of stone and treatment with biocide should only be carried out after full-scale site trials. Only as a result of these trials could a full specification be produced. It is inappropriate to table various cleaning techniques without such technical trials being undertaken.

Water should be prevented from ponding on the carved stone in the southern section of the graveyard. This may be achieved by raising the stone slightly at one end to encourage water to run off.

Any open joints in the boundary wall and in several of the tombs and mausoleums should be repointed to prevent further damage. A soft mortar mix containing lime should be used.

Vegetation should be removed from around the gravestones and boundary wall. Roots will penetrate the walls, causing damage to the rubble core and weakening the structure. Care should be taken to avoid damage to the boundary wall when removing the ivy. Plants that have grown up through tombs should

also be removed and the cracked slab repaired as above. A biocide may be applied to the core of the tomb before reinstatement of the slab in order to prevent further growth. After removal of vegetation, small stone pieces may be found. These should be matched, if possible, to the gravestones from which they came.

8.5 **POLICIES FOR THE LANDSCAPING AND ECOLOGY OF THE SITE**

(CLAIRE HOUSTON, NICHOLAS PEARSON AND ASSOCIATES)

Introduction

The conceptual landscape proposals for St Mary's Graveyard, Kilkenny (Appendix 2), seek to conserve the inherent historical character of the site whilst simultaneously creating a landscape that is suitable for contemporary civic use (Figure 13). The key elements of the design are: Planting, Architectural and Historic Character, Ecology and Users. However, it should be noted that the plans are conceptual only and that further detailed ecological surveys and landscape management plans may be required.

Figure 13: Conceptual landscape proposals



Planting

The planting should be designed to be attractive and have year-round interest, yet have low maintenance requirements to ensure that management costs are kept to a minimum.

Architectural and Historic Character

Both the graveyard and church have a significant historical value and are the two most important elements in the site. For this reason, the design concept for the landscaping has deliberately been kept simple and low key, providing a more attractive setting for the church and surrounding graves without overshadowing them.

Planting within the graveyard will comprise non-invasive species that will not pose a threat to the integrity of any of the stonework. The clearance of existing invasive and non-suitable plant species will allow conservation work to be carried out on stonework where necessary.

Ecology

Existing trees have been retained to ensure that any dependent wildlife will be largely unaffected by changes to the overall landscape. The addition of appropriate shrubs, herbaceous plants and wildflower meadows will enhance the ecological value of the site by providing a more diverse range of habitats and feeding opportunities for the birds and animals that inhabit the graveyard and surrounding area. The careful location of footpaths will serve to steer visitors away from any particularly sensitive ecological areas.

Users

It is crucial that any landscaping treatment will make the graveyard more attractive to visitors. To this end, it is proposed to enhance the entrance area and to open up and replace some of the boundaries with iron railings. This will open up views into and out of the graveyard and increase awareness of its location. Circulation routes within the site will be vastly improved through the provision of well-defined and surfaced paths. These will allow people to access more areas in the graveyard. The addition of benches will provide areas for contemplation and rest for visitors, as well as places from which to enjoy the landscape.

8.6 **POLICIES FOR THE CONTEXT OF THE SITE WITHIN ST MARY'S LANE**

Policies for St Mary's can be further developed with Kilkenny Local Authorities in the context of the proposed Local Area Plan for Kilkenny City.

An integrated area study for the St Mary's Lane pedestrian route could take into account the presentation, use and finishes of any new property development under consideration along the laneway.

The new three-storey Kieran Street development provides a modern gateway to the lane from Kieran Street towards the rear of City Hall and past the almshouses. It has both doorways and windows looking out onto the laneway.

Consideration might be given to the redevelopment of the narrow, vacant and landscaped site that backs onto the graveyard side from Kieran Street. A new, stepped pedestrian entrance to the site might be considered, with three-storey 'living over the shop' type development considered to allow the residential aspects of the scheme to overlook the new steps and graveyard to the rear (Figure 14).

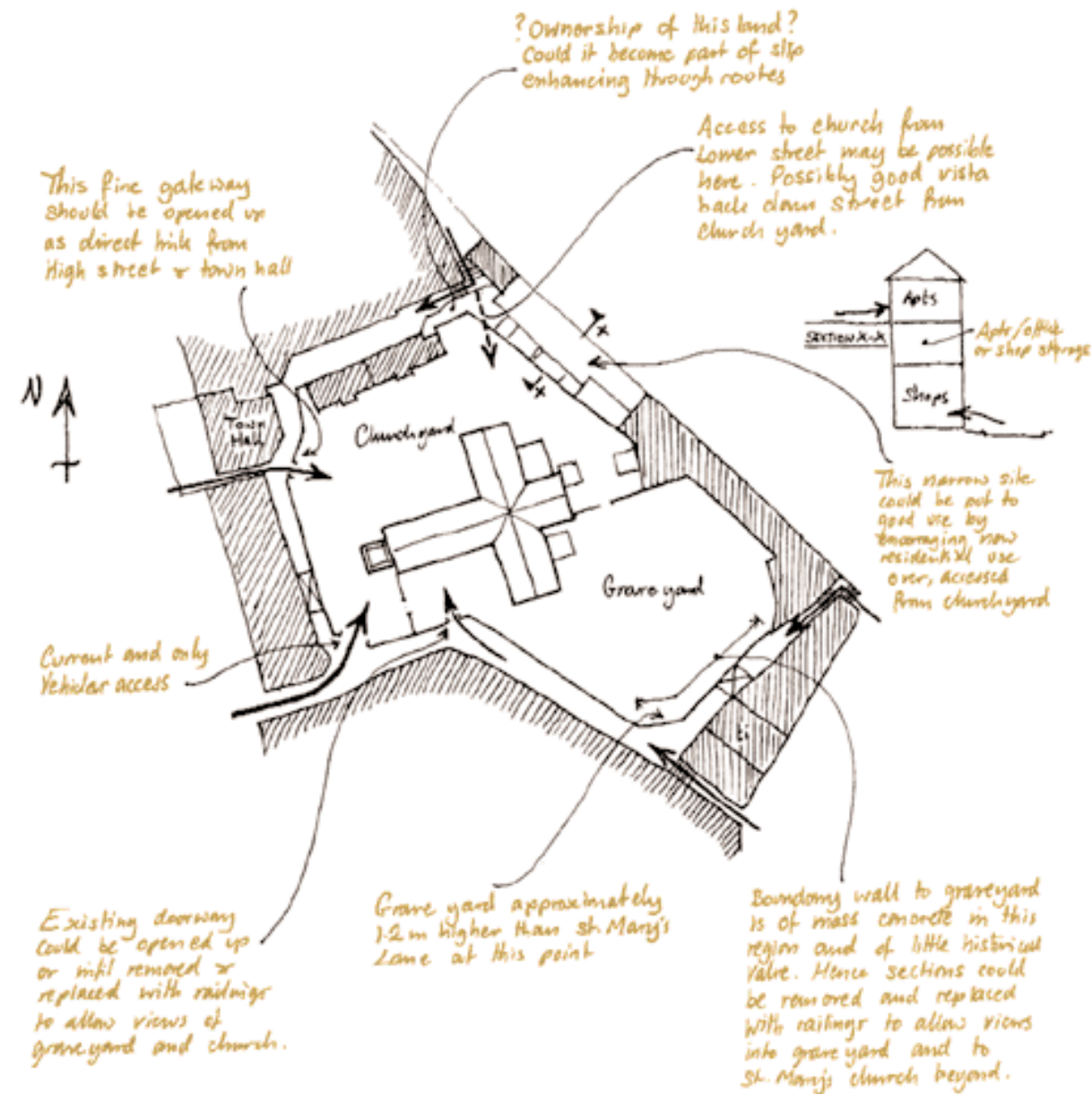


Figure 14: 'Opening up the site': Sketch drawing by Lisa Edden

Between City Hall and the (vehicular) access to High Street, the presentation of properties could be safely reconsidered in the event that the St Mary's site had a new use and its solid, high perimeter wall was opened up by the use of railings.

Should a civic/public service use be considered for the building, a strong link between the church and the Tholsel would need to be considered. The boundary wall to the graveyard might require opening up at this point to create this link.

Between the site entrance and the Tourist Information Office, the solid boundary wall could also be opened up by the use of railings, creating a new tourist pedestrian route from the rear of the Tourist Information Office (the Shee Almshouses). Consideration might be given to a new 'wicket' gate style of entrance to the site at this location (there is a slight difference in level between the inside of the site and the laneway).

Any redevelopment proposals for the Crotty's Bakery site should seek to integrate with increased pedestrian use of the lane and should accommodate the scale, grain and character of the other properties along this portion of the lane. It is understood that planning approval has been given for restaurant use to be extended from High Street through this site as far as the laneway.

8.7 POLICIES FOR MAINTENANCE, REPAIR AND REMEDIAL WORKS

St Mary's graveyard and associated structures should be cared for by a planned maintenance and repair programme, based on as complete a knowledge of the building and its materials as possible, regular inspection and prompt preventative maintenance and repair.

Only people qualified and experienced in working with the relevant materials (stone, slate, lead, copper etc.) should be employed, and only under appropriate supervision.

8.8 POLICIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

It is clear that any implementation of the policies outlined above must now be framed with reference to the proposed Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan currently in preparation.

A follow-up study to this Plan should be prepared as a matter of urgency.

In particular, the study should address the opportunities and potential issues presented by the Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan currently in preparation which may ultimately embrace the Tholsel (City Hall), St Mary's, Kieran Street, the Quays, the proposed new pedestrian river crossing and the Carnegie library, and the Evan's Hospital building on the other side of the river.

The policies contained in the document will need adjustment to meet unforeseen circumstances and in response to developing needs.

This Plan, and the policies in it, should be reviewed as the need arises but no later than five years after their initial adoption. Procedures for review mechanisms should be established by the bodies responsible for implementation of this Conservation Plan.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- While this Plan was prepared as an integrated exercise, each member of the group assessed the site independently.
- There was a unanimous response to the issues facing the site. There was also an extraordinary unanimity in the identification of key elements that lie at the heart of providing the solutions to these issues. These are outlined in each of the policies presented in Section 8.
- These policies are summarised in the views expressed by Dawson Stelfox (Section 8.3) and Claire Houston (Section 8.5), and illustrated by Lisa Edden (Figure 14).
- A new architectural and urban planning study should now be prepared as a matter of urgency. This will examine the current opportunities for the conservation, restoration and urban integration of the site, with specific reference to the Kilkenny City Centre Local Area Plan (in preparation) and the related debate that will form part of the dialogue with interested parties now sought by Kilkenny Borough Council.
- A singular opportunity to take effective measures to ensure the long-term security, conservation and viability of the site exists at this time.

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