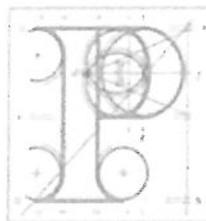


**Our Case Number:** ACP-323606-25

**Your Reference:** Christopher Fingleton & Mary Tyrn



An  
Coimisiún  
Pleanála

Bluett & O'Donoghue Architects  
1 Chancery Street  
Dublin 7

**Date:** 11 February 2026

**Re:** Proposed construction of 67 no. housing units  
on a site at Tyrells Land, situated along Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co Laois

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at [laps@pleanala.ie](mailto:laps@pleanala.ie)

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Eimear Reilly  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line: 01-8737184

AA02

Teil  
Glao Áitiúil  
Facs  
Láithreán Gréasáin  
Ríomhphost

Tel  
LoCall  
Fax  
Website  
Email

(01) 858 8100  
1800 275 175  
(01) 872 2684  
[www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie)  
[communications@pleanala.ie](mailto:communications@pleanala.ie)

64 Sráid Maoilbhríde  
Baile Átha Cliath 1  
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1  
D01 V902

**Attachments:**

L2- An Coimisiún Pleanála Final.pdf; Judith Hill Preliminary Heritage Assessment Report Feb 2021 IMAGES.pdf; Judith Hill Preliminary Heritage Assessment Report Feb 2021 TEXT.pdf

**From:** Emma Curran <emma.curran@boda.ie>

**Sent:** Monday, February 9, 2026 2:30 PM

**To:** LAPS <laps@pleanala.ie>

**Cc:** Mary Tyrrell <maryt@fptco.ie>; Chris Fingleton <chris.fingleton@gmail.com>

**Subject:** ACP-323606-25 Tyrrell's Land, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois Section 177AE

You don't often get email from [emma.curran@boda.ie](mailto:emma.curran@boda.ie). [Learn why this is important](#)

**Caution:** This is an **External Email** and may have malicious content. Please take care when clicking links or opening attachments. When in doubt, contact the ICT Helpdesk.

To whom this may concern,

Please find attached submission in relation to the above development to include the following:

- L2 - An Coimisiún Pleanála
- Judith Hill Heritage Assessment Report 2021– Text
- Judith Hill Heritage Assessment Report 2021- Images

Please acknowledge receipt of this email and all attachments once received.

Kind regards,  
Emma



**Emma Curran** *Architectural Graduate / Planner*  
BArch MPlan

One Chancery Street Dublin 7 D07 DD56 Two John Street Kilkenny R95 EY22  
Dublin +353 (0)1 8656 265 Kilkenny +353 (0)56 7762 907  
IRELAND

**BLUETT & O'DONOGHUE**  
[www.boda.ie](http://www.boda.ie)

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# BLUETT & O'DONOGHUE

PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING BUILT HERITAGE PLANNING FORENSICS

Our Ref: C25-003 L2 - An Coimisiún Pleanála  
Reply to: 2 John St., Kilkenny, mail@boda.ie  
Date: 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026

An Coimisiún Pleanála/The Commission,  
64 Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1

By email to An Coimisiún Pleanála/The Commission,

## Attention: The Planning Section

**Re:** Tyrrell's Land, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois Section 177AE  
**Re:** Case reference: ACP-323606-25  
**Client:** Christopher Fingleton and Mary Tyrrell, Portrane House, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise.

**Re:** The construction of 67 no. housing units consisting of : 6 no. 1 bed 2-person, 5 no. 2 bed 3 person, 17 no 2 bed 4 person, 35 no. 3 bed 5 person, 4 no 4 bed 7 person on a site of 2.0ha at Tyrrells Land, situated along Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. The site is within the Curtilage of a Protected Structure, RPS 925, Portrain House, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise. The development will also include the provision of public open space, public walk-way along east boundary, flood defence infrastructure, public lighting, upgraded vehicular access along the Stradbally Road, 116 no. car parking spaces including both in-curtilage and on street parking, (includes required accessible parking space and EV charging spaces), cycle parking, boundary treatments, ESB Substation, laying of underground sewers, watermains and pipes, attenuation, the importation of soil and stone as by product for engineering and landscaping purposes within the development and all associated ancillary works including site development works, and hard and soft landscaping.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, *BLUETT & O'DONOGHUE* thank you on behalf of Christopher Fingleton and Mary Tyrrell of Portrane House, Portlaoise, Co. Laois for your letter dated 21 January 2026 inviting us to make a submission in relation to Laois County Council's response document.

We have been appointed to prepare this submission in response to the proposed development at Tyrrell's Land, Stradbally Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois. Our clients are the owners of Portrane House, a **protected structure (RPS 925)**, situated on adjoining lands to the west of the site.

Our client has no objection in principle to the proposed development and welcomes the development of housing on the site.

We have reviewed Laois County Council's response document. Our initial submission to Laois County Council on the Part VIII application and reiterated again in our submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála on the Council's resubmission under Section 177AE have not been adequately considered by Laois CoCo.

One Chancery Street, Dublin, D07 DD56  
+353(0)1 8656265  
mail@boda.ie

Two John Street, Kilkenny, R95 EY22  
+353(0)56 7762907  
mail@boda.ie

Peter Bluett

Cormac O'Sullivan

James O'Donoghue

Danyal Ibrahim

Aidan Murphy

**We comment on Laois County Council's response to our submission as follows with extracts from their submission in italics;**

## **Item 1**

***“The development respects the curtilage as defined in the Judith Hill baseline heritage report.”***

*Laois County Council's Response Document, Section 5.1*

We find this comment surprising as the Judith Hill report does not state this. The Judith Hill Report was written in 2021 in advance of the current scheme being developed. Therefore, it should have been considered as part of the scheme.

Please see extract below of the Judith Hill report that outlines the purpose of her report:

### *1.1. Aim and scope of the report*

*Portrane House, a protected structure, is situated at the north-west corner of a development site, the lands of which were once part of the Portrane estate. Future changes and development on these lands will have a potential impact of the house and its immediate setting. The objective of this report is to define the significance of Portrane House, and to outline the sensitivities of the site with regard to heritage issues for the masterplan that is to be developed for the development site on Stradbally Road.*

*Judith Hill Preliminary Heritage Assessment Report 2021, pg. 4*

The curtilage of Portrane is defined in paragraph 7.2 of the Judith Hill report:

*“It is considered that the curtilage of Portrane House is the area immediately around the house - outbuildings, gardens, entrance and tennis court”.*

Judith Hill states in paragraph 8:

*“it is recommended that the following be considered: (map 14) a generous buffer zone between the boundary of Portrane House and the proposed housing”*

Map 14 in Appendix A3 clearly shows this buffer well outside the tennis court and extending south towards the esker. The current housing plan shows houses on the tennis court. On this basis it cannot be stated that “the development respects the curtilage as defined in the Judith Hill baseline heritage report.”

Our report of 20/10/2025 provides an exemplar sketch of an alternative layout that provides for a buffer zone as recommended by Judith Hill. We request that Laois County Council fully consider the Judith Hill Heritage report and take due consideration of the importance of the site and its context. Specifically, we re-iterate her recommendations and include an extract in Appendix A1.

The Judith Hill report contained recommendations which should have been considered as part of the development of the current scheme. (Please see also Appendix A1 setting out specific recommendations to be used in assessing the suitability of a scheme as it is designed).

It is not clear if Laois County Council's response document in relation to conservation matters was authored by a conservation architect as the document was not signed. The statement on whether or not the current plan respects the curtilage of the protected structure should be based on a review of the site and Judith Hill report by a suitably qualified person.

## Item 2

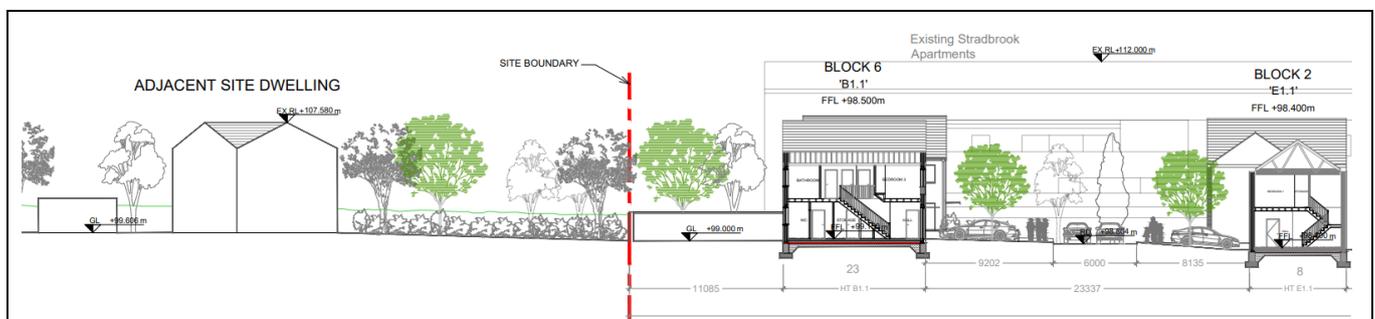
**“The proposed units adjacent to Portrane House do not obscure principal elevations.”**

*Laois County Council’s Response Document, Section 5.1*

This statement is also evidently inaccurate as we have demonstrated previously. The scheme has a full line of 2 storey houses with their rear gardens facing the principal elevation of Portrane House.

The Judith Hill report sets out specific recommendations to be used in assessing the suitability of a scheme as it is designed. The second recommendation (see Appendix A1) notes that “one or more open areas/sight lines through the housing development which would enable view of Portrane house” ... should be considered.

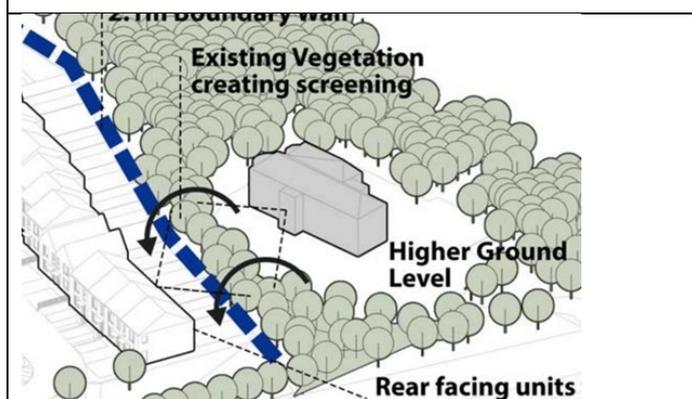
It is suggested in the Laois CoCo design statement that Portrane House is on higher ground. However, as demonstrated in the section submitted with ground levels drawn in, the principal elevation of Portrane house it is still going to be blocked by this row of houses.



SECTION C-C

**Figure 1 (above)**

Section through proposed Development with rear gardens backing the front of Portrane House (Source: Laois County Council’s Submission)



**Figure 2 (left)**

3D extract from Laois CoCo submission showing exaggerated tree cover on lands outside the current proposed development site, see Fig 3 for actual view.



**Figure 3 (right):**

Photo of front of Portrane House from Development site (Source: Design Statement van Dijk Architects) This view could be retained with a modest adjustment of the development layout.

Note also the photo above shows the front of the house. It is clear that there is far less tree coverage than suggested by the Architect’s Design Statement drawing to above left.

**Item 3**

**“The design approach appropriately fronts/publicly addresses the internal street network—not the protected structure—consistent with modern best practice in residential urban design and permeability.”**

*Laois County Council’s Response Document, Section 5.1*

This statement does not consider Dr Judith Hill’s recommendations and the setting of Portrane House (See Appendix A1).

Our suggested potential design alteration is but one potential option of addressing the issue of the protected structure setting. It provides a buffer zone and demonstrates that our concerns can be solved without major impact on density or housing provision. Such an adjustment is also consistent with modern best practice in residential urban design and permeability while also addressing the protected structure setting.



**Figure 4:** Exemplar of potential sketch design adjustment that provides a more appropriate setting for both the principal elevations of the protected structure and the new residential development (Source: Proposed site plan by Van Dijk Architects, cropped and edited to overlay exemplar potential sketch redesign over proposed by BO'D 2025)

#### **Item 4a**

***“This would result in houses presenting gable ends and rear boundaries to the public street.”***

*Laois County Council’s Response Document, Section 5.1*

Our design option does not have rear boundaries directly facing the public street and Laois County Council’s design also contains gable ends facing the public street.

The provision of an appropriate setting for Portrane house will enhance the proposed development

#### **Item 4b**

***“It conflicts with permeability, passive surveillance and DMURS principles.”***

*Laois County Council’s Response Document, Section 5.1*

The suggested alteration to respect the setting of Portrane house would not conflict with passive surveillance as fronts of houses are still facing public open space. It would not reduce permeability as the road network is of similar design. A key objective in DMURS is to create a sense of place. Section 2.2.1 of DMURS states:

*“Whilst the movement of traffic is still a key issue, there are several others, including the ‘sense of place’, which are of core significance to the creation of safe and more integrated street designs.”*

Considering the setting of Portrane house will improve the scheme. The proposed scheme currently turns it back on Portrane house, ignoring the context of the site and character of Portrane house with no visual connection to it. A view of the house from the road network would enhance the sense of place.

## Item 6

***“It is not required by the Development Plan or Heritage Guidelines.”***

*Laois County Council’s Response Document, Section 5.1*

Considering the setting of a protected structure is required by the Development Plan. The policy objectives for protected structures contained in the *Laois County Development Plan 2021-2027* are as follows:

*“PS3: Any development, modification, alteration, or extension affecting a Protected Structure must be **prepared by suitably qualified persons** and accompanied by appropriate documentation as outlined in the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DAHG, 2011] to enable a proper assessment of the proposed works and their impact on the structure or area and be carried out to best practice conservation standards. Its setting will be considered against the following criteria, and whether it is:*

- a) **Sensitively sited and designed;***
- b) **Compatible with the special character;***
- c) **Views of principal elevations of the protected structures are not obscured or negatively impacted;***
- d) **Of a premium quality of design and appropriate in terms of the proposed scale, mass, height, density, layout, and material so that the integrity of the structure and its curtilage is preserved and enhanced. Where appropriate, the Protected Structure status is used as a stimulus to the imaginative and considered design of new elements.”***

It is also required by the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities [DAHG, 2011]. See Chapter 13 on Curtilage and Attendant Grounds Section 13.7.2. page 203 for full list of items the planning authority should have considered. Specifically, item (f) below has not been considered sufficiently:

*“Are there important views of or from the structure that could be damaged by the proposed development? Would important vistas be obstructed by new development?”*

The vista to Portrane house is currently not considered in the scheme being assessed.

**Item 7** We also note the Council's comments regarding the boundary wall treatment.

***“ A 2m block wall with appropriate capped finish, landscape buffer, and native tree planting (already proposed) achieves: No adverse impact on heritage significance.”***

*Laois County Council's Response Document, Section 5.2*

Chapter 13 of the Heritage Guidelines, Section 13.4.1 states:

*“The features used to define the boundaries of a protected structure can often make an important contribution to the quality and character of the building and the surrounding streetscape or landscape.”*

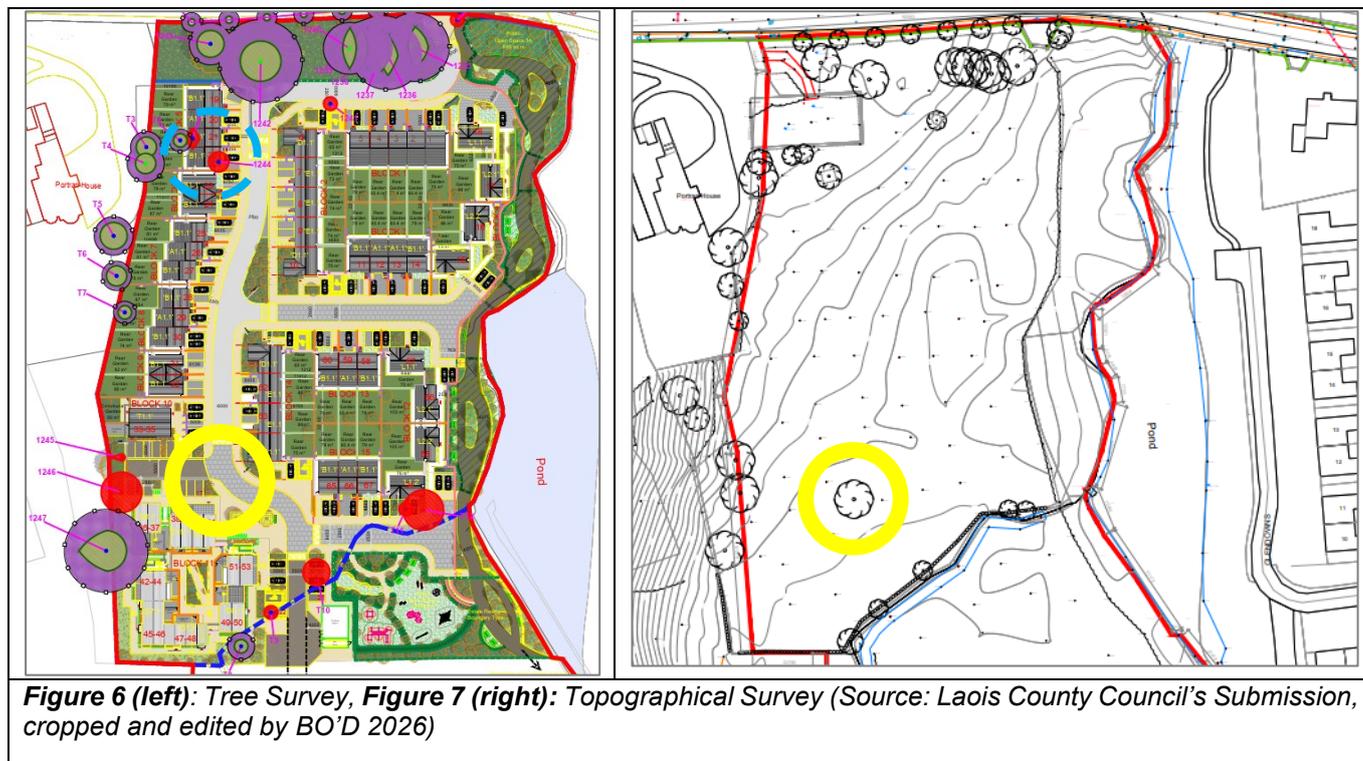
Please see Photo 1 from the Design Statement prepared by van Dijk Architects of the wall on the front boundary. This ties into the overall concept of the scheme. There is a requirement to respect the setting of the protected structure and where the vista is provided with an open space, the most appropriate wall finish would be stone masonry. This would be similar to the current setting walls as noted in the design statement.



**Figure 5:** Photo 1 view of wall -current curtilage wall for Portrane House  
(Source: Design Statement by van Dijk Architects)

## Item 8 Tree survey/ tree removals

We compare the Tree Survey/ tree removal proposals (left under) with the Topographical survey (right under). A substantial tree has been omitted from the tree survey. See location indicated with a yellow circle below.



A number of the trees to be removed (as indicated as a red circle, some of which have also a blue central dot) and are category B rating *“those of moderate quality and value: those in such a condition as to make a significant contribution.”* It is not clear what value assessment / consideration has been given to these trees as the layout design was developed.

In our suggested potential alternative scheme 2 of these trees could possibly be retained to the east of the protected structure as indicated with blue dashed circle in Figure 6 above. This would also be consistent with the principles as set out by Judith Hill in her report.

## Item 9

Laois County Council's final point is particularly concerning and lacks sufficient consideration of the Dr Judith Hill Report and awareness of the heritage significance of the development site.:

### ***"The Judith Hill report confirms:***

- ***The meaningful parts of the historic landscape relate to the front field and Esker ridge***
- ***No historic avenue or designed tree feature exists within the development lands"***

*Laois County Council's Response Document, Section 5.5*

The proposed development is to take place within the 'Front Field' as described in Dr Judith Hill's Report (Please see Appendix A2 Map1). There are also 5 significant view lines and a tree of significance (Please see Appendix A3).

### **Conclusion: -**

We would respectfully request An Coimisiún Pleanála to carefully consider our submission and make an order to adjust the scheme to take into account the setting of Portrane house with appropriate conditions. Alternatively, refuse the application as it is currently configured so that Laois County Council can prepare an appropriate updated submission.

We would be grateful if you could acknowledge receipt of our submission

Yours sincerely,



**EMMA CURRAN**

*Bachelor of Architecture (BArch)  
Masters in Planning and Sustainable Development (MPlan)*

**BLUETT & O'DONOGHUE**



**PETER BLUETT**

*B.Arch., Sc., Dip. Arch., M.Sc., (Fire Eng'), CEng. MI(Fire)E. FRIAI, RIAI Grade 2  
Conservation Architect. MIEI*

**BLUETT & O'DONOGHUE**

**Enclosure: Judith Hill Heritage Assessment Report 2021– Text  
Judith Hill Heritage Assessment Report 2021- Images**

**Appendix A (Attached)**

**Cc: Client**

**APPENDIX A1 – DR JUDITH HILL'S RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to safeguard these features it is recommended that the following is considered: (map 14)

- A generous buffer zone between the boundary of Portran House and the proposed housing. This zone should include a strip of land adjacent to Stradbally Road where the beech trees grow and it should flow into the area zoned open space at the foot of the esker. (figs 25, 28) (map 14) There is an opportunity to treat this buffer as parkland, and to incorporate a path to link Stradbally Road and the housing development to the rest of the site. (see below) As map 2 shows historically there was a network of paths linking the north end of the demesne where the beech trees are located with the southern part of the demesne. The buffer zone would be reinforced if the housing development was designed in such a way that there was a concentration of gardens or public open space adjacent to the buffer. The single evergreen tree may fall into the buffer zone or be incorporated into landscaping in the housing scheme. This would help to preserve the setting of Portrane House and allow a view of the beech trees from the house and garden.
- One or more open areas/sight lines through the housing development which would enable views of Portrane House in a setting that includes the ridge. This could be associated with a new path system, giving access to the open space amenity and linking with a path in the buffer zone. Important views include figs 21, 22, 11. (map 14)
- A low rise housing scheme that would retain the view of the trees lining the River Derry from Portrane House. (fig 23)
- Retention of existing features of the Esker Ridge including the viewing point and the trees. (figs 2, 5, 9, 10, 19, 21)

**APPENDIX A2- MAP SHOWING DEVELOPMENT /FRONT FIELD FROM DR JUDITH HILL'S REPORT**

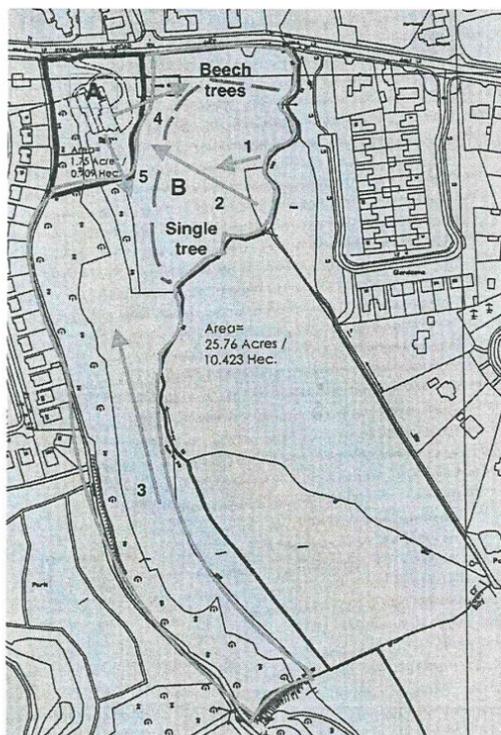
Maps



A & B: access to paths to east of the site  
 C: Established path from Maryborough Drain crossing the esker and leading to Downs Lane

map 1 Map showing outline of current land holdings, names and features.

**APPENDIX A3 - MAP SHOWING SIGNIFICANT VIEWS FROM DR JUDITH HILL'S REPORT**



For view 1 see fig 21  
 For view 2 see fig 22  
 For view 3 see fig 29  
 For view 4 see fig 30  
 For view 5 see fig 23

map 14 Map showing curtilage, attendant grounds (map 5) and significant views. Blue dashed line: suggested boundary of buffer zone.

# Stradbally Road, Portlaoise

## Preliminary Heritage Assessment Report

### Text



**Dr Judith Hill**

Architectural Historian and Heritage Consultant

12 Harbour View Terrace

South Circular Road

Limerick

Tel: 00353 87 9240187

[hill@elive.ie](mailto:hill@elive.ie)

February 2021

#### Disclaimer

The results and conclusions contained in this document are based on information available at the time it was prepared and written. Every effort was made to collect all relevant data, but the author accepts no responsibility for omissions or inconsistencies that may result from information becoming available subsequently to the completion of this document.

#### Executive summary

Heritage sensitivities for the site derive from the existence of Portrane House, a protected structure, to the north west corner of the site. A significant part of the site is within the attendant grounds of the protected structure (defined in the report). Loais County Council is committed to protecting the features and setting of protected structures. It is argued in the report that the masterplan could take account of the heritage sensitivities arising by: proposing a buffer zone between the proposed housing development in the former Front Field and the curtilage of the protected structure; by linking this buffer zone with proposals for a path network on the site; by respecting a number of views, which could also be linked to a new path network; and by protecting selected features (both natural and manmade) in the attendant grounds.

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  - 1.1. Aim and scope of the report**
  - 1.2. Client**
  - 1.3. Copyright**
  - 1.4. Methodology**
- 2.0. Site, situation, ownership (map 1)**
  - 2.1. Ownership & situation.**
  - 2.2. Boundaries.**
  - 2.3. Access and paths.**
  - 2.4. Location**
- 3.0. Outline history of the development site.**
- 4.0. Outline history of Portrane House.**
  - 4.1. Esker ridge.**
  - 4.2. Maryborough.**
  - 4.2. Eyre Cootes and the building of Portrane House.**
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- 8.0. Discussion and recommendations**
  - 8.1. Outline proposals for the site**
  - 8.2. Heritage sensitivities**

### **References**

### **Appendix**

### **Vol 2**

### **Images**

### **Maps**

### **Photographs**

## **1.0. Introduction**

### **1.1. Aim and scope of the report**

Portrane House, a protected structure, is situated at the north-west corner of a development site, the lands of which were once part of the Portrane estate. Future changes and development on these lands will have a potential impact of the house and its immediate setting. The objective of this report is to define the significance of Portrane House, and to outline the sensitivities of the site with regard to heritage issues for the masterplan that is to be developed for the development site on Stradbally Road.

### **1.2. Client**

Laois County Council

### **1.3. Copyright**

The use of any written material or original drawings and photographs in this report in published or unpublished work should be acknowledged and the author's name referenced.

### **1.4. Methodology**

A visual and photographic survey of Portrane House and outbuildings and the development site was made on 1 December 2020. The history of the site was investigated using deeds, Valuation Office Records, historic maps, family photographs and secondary sources.

The sources are listed in the references section at the end of this report. The data was analysed to construct a building and demesne history and to define the curtilage, attendant grounds and setting of Portrane House. Local authority documents and NIAH were also consulted. The scope of the project and the role of heritage was discussed with the team, and reviewed by local counsellors and officials. The report was written with reference to the Department of the Environment's *Architectural Heritage Protection: Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2011)

## **2.0. Site, situation, ownership (map 1)**

**2.1. Ownership & situation.** The development site is in the ownership of Laois County Council. It is situated to the south of Stradbally Road, just beyond the historic town centre of Portlaoise.

**2.2. Boundaries.** (figs 1–3) (map 1) The site comprises a wooded esker ridge to the west sloping down to low-lying fields. The east boundary is defined by the Derry River, lined with trees and undergrowth, while Maryborough Drain, lined by low hedge, runs through the site. The Stradbally Road forms the northern boundary of the site, giving the site an urban edge, while the presence of schools and associated sports facilities define the character of the southern boundary of the site. Where the Derry River changes direction on the east boundary an aqueduct is marked on the Ordnance Survey maps. (maps 3 & 4) This feature seems to have been misnamed.

**2.3. Access and paths.** There is a recessed entrance from Stradbally Road in the north east corner of the site, constructed recently, at the time the Stradbally Apartments were built. (fig 4) There are two pedestrian public rights of way to the east which lead into housing estates: Glendowns to the north and Glenlahan to the south. (A & B on map 1) The Ordnance Survey maps reveal a network of paths in what was Portrane House demesne. (see below 3.0) (map 2) There remains an established crossing over Maryborough Drain which is linked to an established path at the south end of the site which crosses the esker and gives access to Downs Lane which runs along the west base of the ridge. (C on map 1) (figs 5 – 7) The path that crosses the Esker is now a muddy track, but appears to have been more important in nineteenth century when it served a house at the foot of the esker which has now gone. (maps 3 & 4)

**2.4. Location.** The site is located in the townland of Borris Little, (formerly Small Borris) in the barony of Maryborough East.

### **3.0. Outline history of the development site.**

The earliest surviving records of Portrane House describes an estate of just over 15 acres which is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1838. (Valuation Office Records) (map 1) This map shows that the demesne comprised the house and outbuildings to the north adjacent to the entrance from the road and addressing an area of parkland to the east. To the south was the esker ridge and east-facing slope, wooded in the vicinity of the house, but only the highest part wooded to the south.

Referring to map 1, the ‘front field’ equates to most of the nineteenth-century park; the house and its immediate gardens comprise part of the wooded area and part of the park on the 1838 map; the esker ridge and sloping field to the east are also shown on the nineteenth-century map. (figs 8 & 9)

In 1960s the owners (see below), who still held 15 acres of land around Portrane House, acquired Kelly’s Field (map 1), an area of to the south of what is now the development site, and in 1993 they acquired Egan’s Field, situated between Kelly’s Field and the Front Field. (Duff) (figs 10 & 11) These three fields, together with the greater part of the esker ridge and field were sold to Laois County Council in 2019. This left an area of 1.75 acres around the house and outbuildings of Portrane House, now situated to the north west of what has become a development site. (map 5)

### **4.0. Outline history of Portrane House.**

#### **4.1. Esker ridge.**

The esker ridge on the site is part of the remains of a roughly north-south ridge that runs from Timahoe to beyond Tullamore and is prominent in the area around Portlaoise: it can be found on the site, and to the north of the site where there is an extended burial ground. (map 6) The ridge was largely cleared of woodland in the prehistoric period, when it provided well-drained, easily worked land. (Feehan, p.7) Feehan notes that archaeological features are concentrated on such ridges, although none are recorded on the Ordnance

Survey maps that cover the site. There was an ancient road along the esker ridge, which was still in use in the early nineteenth century, though not in the Coote demesne. (O'Hanlon & O'Leary, vol 1, p. 192) (map 3) It is extremely likely that there was an ancient route along this ridge. The earliest remains that are evident today are in the stretch of ridge to the north of the site with burials and grave markers from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century. (map 6)

#### 4.2. Maryborough.

Portlaoise, known as Maryborough until 1920, is a plantation town first established around a garrison – Maryborough Fort – in the sixteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The early planters displaced established Gaelic inhabitants, who periodically attacked the fort in the early years. However, the planter town flourished, being granted borough status in 1569, and by the 1650s it had become the third largest town in what was then Queen's County. (Loeber, p. 398)

The historians of Queen's County, O'Hanlon and O'Leary, write that 302 acres of forfeited land, described in the Down Survey as Burres, was assigned as commons for the Corporation of Maryborough, and that it was later illegally transferred by the burgesses to certain families – De Vesci, Parnell, Coote – who established their own estates. This suggests that Eyre Coote (see below) may have been the beneficiary of such a land transfer, allowing him to create, among other holdings, the small estate around Portrane House. (O'Hanlon and O'Leary vol 1 p. 195.) (map 7)

#### 4.2. Eyre Cootes and the building of Portrane House.

The founder of the Portrane estate was a nabob. Sir Eyre Coote 1 (1726–83), who was born in Ash Hill, Co Limerick and brought up by his uncle, George Evans in Portrane House, Dublin, had an extremely successful career in the British army fighting, from 1754 to 1762 in India against the French, where he made a great deal of money. (Quinn, *DIB*) He distinguished himself at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, and at Pondicherry in 1761 which saw the destruction of French power in India. When he returned to England in 1762 the directors of the East India Company presented him with a ceremonial sword.

Eyre Coote had an interest in Queen's County from at least 1761, where he was MP for Maryborough from May to December 1761. He acquired substantial estates in the county with an annual rental of £2,000 (Johnston-Liik p. 500) and built Portrane House. (Quinn, *DIB*) Maryborough was expanding at this time and some mid–late eighteenth-century buildings survive. Eyre Coote's subsequent career suggests that he was not resident in Portrane House, or if he was, not for very long: he was MP for two English boroughs – Leicester (1768–74) and Poole (1774–80) – and continued his army career, promoted to colonel in 1765, returning to India in 1769, dying at sea off the coast of Madras in 1783. He was buried on his English estate at West Park, Hampshire.

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<sup>1</sup> Portlaoise is derived from Port Loisghse, which is translated 'the town of Laoighis'. (O'Hanlon and O'Leary, vol 1 p. 102)

The front range of Portrane House is the part that survives from the 1760s. It was five bays and two-stories, terminating in a south-facing bow. (figs 12 & 13) The joinery of this house survives: six-panelled doors and architraves; four-panelled shutters that reflected the divisions of sash windows that have been replaced; and an imperial stair that seems a little grand for the scale of the house. (figs 14–16) A line of outbuildings incorporating stables and a carriage room was constructed parallel to the rear of the house. (map 3) (fig 17) Although altered, the central pediment, carriage arch and round hay loft windows survive, and there are still three stables in the range. The arched entrance to the stable yard was probably constructed at the same time. (fig 18) The remnant stone structure on the ridge may be part of a viewing platform that was constructed at this time, which would have enabled views south-east to the Rock of Dunamase. (fig 19)

Portrane House and estate remained in the possession of the Coote family until 1931 when it was sold to James Peter Tyrrell. From 1784 to 1925 four men named Eyre Coote were the owners: Eyre Coote II (1759–1823), nephew of Eyre Coote I; Eyre Coote III (1806–34) son of Eyre Coote II; Eyre Coote IV (1830–64) son of Eyre Coote III; and Eyre Coote V (1857–1925). His brother, Charles Henry Eyre Coote inherited in 1925 and sold the estate to Tyrrell. It is recorded that Eyre Coote II lived in Portrane House, but that his successors leased the house to tenants, including William Woodruffe (recorded by Samuel Lewis in 1837) who sub-let the house in the mid-nineteenth century until 1874. (Valuation Office Records) The house was inhabited by clergymen from the late nineteenth century to the 1931. (Valuation Office Records)

Eyre Coote II, like his uncle, was an active soldier and politician. He may have lived at Portrane House in the last years of the Union when he was MP for Ballynakill (1790–7) and Maryborough (1797–1800) and was involved in the suppression of the United Irishmen in Cork in 1797. His residence may have continued after the Union when he was MP for Queen's County (1802–1806), a time when Irish MPs were encouraged to be resident in Ireland. However, he had other houses elsewhere: he had inherited West Park in Hampshire, he had a residence of College Green and Forest Lodge Queen's County. (Johnston-Liik, 501)

#### 4.3. Enlargement of Portrane House

Portrane House was extended and altered in the nineteenth century. The house was given a new roof, slightly higher than the older one, with wide eaves; this work may date to the 1830s. (fig 12) An extension with a bay window on the south façade was added in the later nineteenth century. (map 4) (fig 13) The brick chimneys and the plate glass windows date to the later nineteenth century. The nineteenth-century porch, visible on older photographs, was replaced in the 1960s by the current porch. The outbuildings were extended, including a piggery and hen houses added to the front range. (fig 20) The 1911 census lists 14 outbuildings – one of almost every type – which suggests a strong measure of self-sufficiency on the estate, then inhabited by a Church of Ireland clergyman, Rev Edmond Eves, his son, and two servants.

Maryborough extended significantly in the nineteenth century; not only did the core expand with new houses and public buildings, but by 1838 large institutional buildings in extensive grounds had been constructed east of the town to the north of Portrane House: the county hospital, prison and psychiatric hospital. (map 8) Enlarged and modernised Portrane House still stood in its 15-acre estate, a world away from the expanding town. Even by the early twentieth century, when the town boundary was extended to incorporate Portrane House, the estate (map 9)

#### 4.4. Tyrrells.

James Peter Tyrrell, who bought the estate in 1931 died ten years later and the property came into the possession of his son James T. Tyrrell, who ran a veterinary practice from the outbuildings. He and his wife, Joanne, had eight children. His daughter Mary Tyrrell is the current owner with her husband, while two of her brothers continue the veterinary practice.

#### 5.0. Statement of significance

The significance of Portrane House can be found in a number of aspects:

- Its historic roots as a mid-eighteenth century country house, built outside Maryborough, then a small town that was emerging from its role as a fortified planter town.
- Its long association with the Eyre Coote family which, in the latter part of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, produced military men who made significant contributions to British imperial history.
- Its picturesque setting derived from the wooded esker ridge which was such a prominent feature of its relatively small demesne. (fig 21)
- Its continuing character as a country estate as Portlaoise has expanded to the east and south of the site. (map 10) This derived from the demesne and the twentieth-century acquisitions of Egan's and Kelly's Fields. (fig 22)

#### 6.0. Legislation and policy

NIAH: Portrane House is listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage: reg no 12507122; regional rating; categories of special interest: architectural and social.

RPS: Portrane House is a Protected Structure in Laois County Development Plan: RPS 925.

ACA: Portrane House is not in Portlaoise ACA (map 11)

Archaeological Significance Zone: Portrane House is not in Portlaoise Archaeological Significance Zone. (map 12)

Portlaoise Local Area Plan 2018–2014.

Built heritage concerns in the current Portlaoise Local Area Plan are focused on the historic town centre, which, as can be seen above, is to the west of Portrane House. However, the Portrane House is subject to protections as a protected structure.

Objectives – BH 02 Conserve, protect and enhance the built heritage of Portlaoise, including ... all protected structures and attendant grounds ... in accordance with best conservation practice.

BH 04: 'Ensure all development works on or at the site of protected structures, including any site works necessary, shall be carried out using best heritage practice for the protection and preservation of those aspects or features of the structures/site that render it worthy of protection.'

#### Laois County Development Plan 2017–2023

Policies relating to built heritage in the current Laois County Development Plan refer to consultation with the relevant government department and express concern that new developments in the vicinity of the protected structure are of a high quality that relate to the existing protected structure.

Objectives – OBJ4 Protect all structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical character or interest in County Laois.

Policy – BH 2 Consult with the DAHG in considering planning applications that may affect protected structures or ACAs.

BH 5 Safeguard protected structures from works that would adversely affect or erode their special character, and where proposals are made to ... site new buildings within the curtilage of a Protected Structure, ensure Protected Structure status is used as a stimulus to the imaginative and considered design of the new elements.

## 7.0. Curtilage and attendant grounds

### 7.1. Definitions

#### Curtilage

Curtilage is not defined by legislation. *The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* defines curtilage as 'the parcel of land immediately associated with the [protected] structure and which is (or was) in use for the purposes of the structure.' (para 13.1.1, p. 191) It goes on to say; 'The extent of the curtilage will need to be determined on a case-by-case basis'. (para 13.1.4 p. 191) In 13.1.5 it outlines considerations to be taken into account when making a decision as to the extent of the curtilage of a protected structure

'a) Is, or was there a functional connection between the structures?'

'b) Was there a historical relationship between the main structure and the structure(s) within the curtilage which may no longer be obvious?'

#### Attendant grounds

*The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* defines the attendant grounds of a protected structure as 'lands outside the curtilage of the structure

but which are associated with the structure and are intrinsic to its function, setting and/or appreciation.' (13.2.1, p. 192.) Features within the curtilage and attendant grounds can, according to *The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities*, (13.2.3 p. 192) be identified as being worthy of protection.

## 7.2. Curtilage, attendant grounds and setting of Portrane House (map 5)

It is considered that the curtilage of Portrane House is the area immediately around the house – outbuildings, gardens, entrance and tennis court – which is in the ownership of the Tyrrell family. These structures and landscape features are close to the house and have a continuing functional relationship with it. (fig 23) NB

It is considered that the attendant grounds are the areas beyond this which were once in the demesne and had a functional relationship with the house and estate, but are now no longer in the possession of the Tyrrell family. This includes Front Field (the former park), the esker ridge and its slopes. (fig 24)

There are several features in these lands which lend character and witness earlier uses. They are:

- Line of mature beech trees and a single beech (the remnants of a longer line) parallel to Stradbally Road. (fig 25)
- A single evergreen tree in Front Field which is all that remains of the parkland trees and which stands out in the landscape. (figs 26 & 27)
- The stone structure on the ridge which may have been a viewing point. (fig 19)

The setting of Portrane House is best appreciated from the east and south-east in the former Front Field. (figs 21 & 22) This reveals the house surrounded by the trees of its gardens and the wider setting of the esker ridge. The view of the esker ridge includes the land sloping up to the ridge itself, the trees on the upper slope and the skyline, which is composed of the line of the ridge with intervals of trees. In the foreground is the former park, with its line of beech trees to the right and single evergreen to the left. NB

## 8.0. Discussion and recommendations

### 8.1. Outline proposals for the site

This report is intended to assist with proposals for the site. Land use for the site is zoned by Laosie County Council: the former Front Field is zoned residential; former Egan's Field and the Esker ridge and field at its base is zoned open space and amenity and former Kelly's Field is zoned community, educational and institutional. (map 13)

### 8.2. Heritage sensitivities

Proposed housing development and part of the area for proposed open space and amenity will be situated within the attendant grounds of the protected structure.

*The Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* outlines issues that should be considered for new development within attendant grounds. (p. 201) They include:

- whether proposals would affect the character of the protected structure
- whether the proposals would affect the relationship between the protected structure to its surroundings and attendant grounds
- whether the protected structure would remain a focus of its setting
- whether the proposals would conserve significant features in the landscape
- whether the proposals would affect significant views to and from the protected structure
- whether distant views of a landmark or a skyline be affected
- the effect of the scale, height, massing, alignment and materials of a proposed construction have on the protected structure.

In the case of Portran House two aspects of its significance are relevant:

- Its picturesque setting
- Its character as a country estate

In order to safeguard these features it is recommended that the following is considered: (map 14)

- A generous buffer zone between the boundary of Portran House and the proposed housing. This zone should include a strip of land adjacent to Stradbally Road where the beech trees grow and it should flow into the area zoned open space at the foot of the esker. (figs 25, 28) (map 14) There is an opportunity to treat this buffer as parkland, and to incorporate a path to link Stradbally Road and the housing development to the rest of the site. (see below) As map 2 shows historically there was a network of paths linking the north end of the demesne where the beech trees are located with the southern part of the demesne. The buffer zone would be reinforced if the housing development was designed in such a way that there was a concentration of gardens or public open space adjacent to the buffer. The single evergreen tree may fall into the buffer zone or be incorporated into landscaping in the housing scheme. This would help to preserve the setting of Portrane House and allow a view of the beech trees from the house and garden.
- One or more open areas/sight lines through the housing development which would enable views of Portrane House in a setting that includes the ridge. This could be associated with a new path system, giving access to the open space amenity and linking with a path in the buffer zone. Important views include figs 21, 22, 11. (map 14)
- A low rise housing scheme that would retain the view of the trees lining the River Derry from Portrane House. (fig 23)
- Retention of existing features of the Esker Ridge including the viewing point and the trees. (figs 2, 5, 9, 10, 19, 21)

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# Stradbally Road, Portlaoise

## Preliminary Heritage Assessment Report

### Images



**Dr Judith Hill**

Architectural Historian and Heritage Consultant

12 Harbour View Terrace

South Circular Road

Limerick

Tel: 00353 87 9240187

[hill@elive.ie](mailto:hill@elive.ie)

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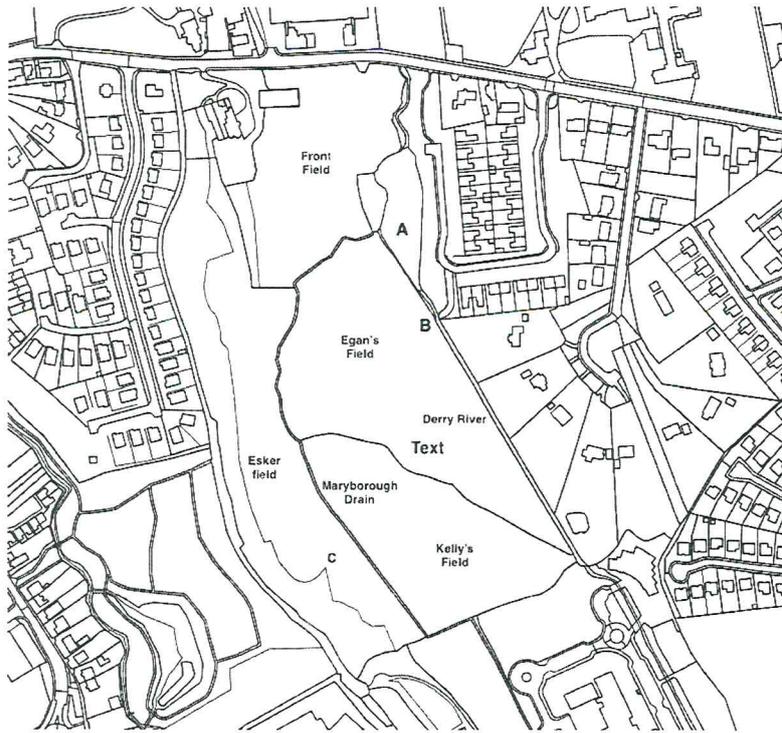
## Maps

- map 1 Map showing outline of current land holdings, names and features
- map 2 Map showing historic footpaths.
- map 3 Map showing outline of demesne on 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1838.
- map 4 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1907.
- map 5 Map showing curtilage and attendant grounds.
- map 6 Map showing esker ridge
- map 7 Extract from Down Survey 1656–8.
- map 8 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1838 showing wider area.
- map 9 Last edition Ordnance Survey map mid-twentieth century.
- map 10 Geohive contemporary map of Portlaoise
- map 11 Portlaoise ACA from Portlaoise Local Area Plan
- map 12 Archaeological Significance Zone in Portlaoise from Portlaoise Local Area Plan
- map 13 Zoning from Laois County Development Plan
- map 14 Map showing curtilage, attendant grounds and significant views.

## Photographs (taken by Judith Hill unless otherwise stated)

- fig 1 East boundary showing trees along River Derry.
- fig 2 View of Maryborough Drain and hedge.
- fig 3 View of north boundary showing Stradbally Apartments on Stradbally Road.
- fig 4 Access to the site from Stradbally Road.
- fig 5 View across Maryborough Drain towards the esker path.
- fig 6 View of the esker path
- fig 7 View of Downs Lane
- fig 8 View of Front Field.
- fig 9 View of esker ridge and field looking north.
- fig 10 View of Kelly's Field.
- fig 11 View from Egan's Field to Front Field.
- fig 12 Front (east) elevation of Portrane House.
- fig 13 South elevation of Portrane House.
- fig 14 Interior of hall showing door joinery.
- fig 15 Shutters in south bow showing fluted detail.
- fig 16 View of imperial stair in hall.
- fig 17 View of outbuildings directly behind the house.
- fig 18 Entrance arch to rear yard.
- fig 19 Rubble stone structure on esker ridge which may be the remains of a viewing platform
- fig 20 Outbuildings to north of house
- fig 21 View of the house from the east in the setting of the esker ridge.
- fig 22 View of the house from the east set in garden trees.
- fig 23 View of garden to the south of the house.
- fig 24 Historic photograph children playing in the front field with the south part of Portrane House in the background.
- fig 25 View of line of beeches and single beech to left in Front Field.
- fig 26 View of single evergreen and Front Field from the north.
- fig 27 View of single evergreen and Front Field from the north.
- fig 28 View of Front Field from the esker ridge.
- fig 29 Looking north towards Portrane House with the esker on the left
- fig 30 View out from the front of Portrane House through the garden trees towards the beech trees along Stradbally Road.

## Maps



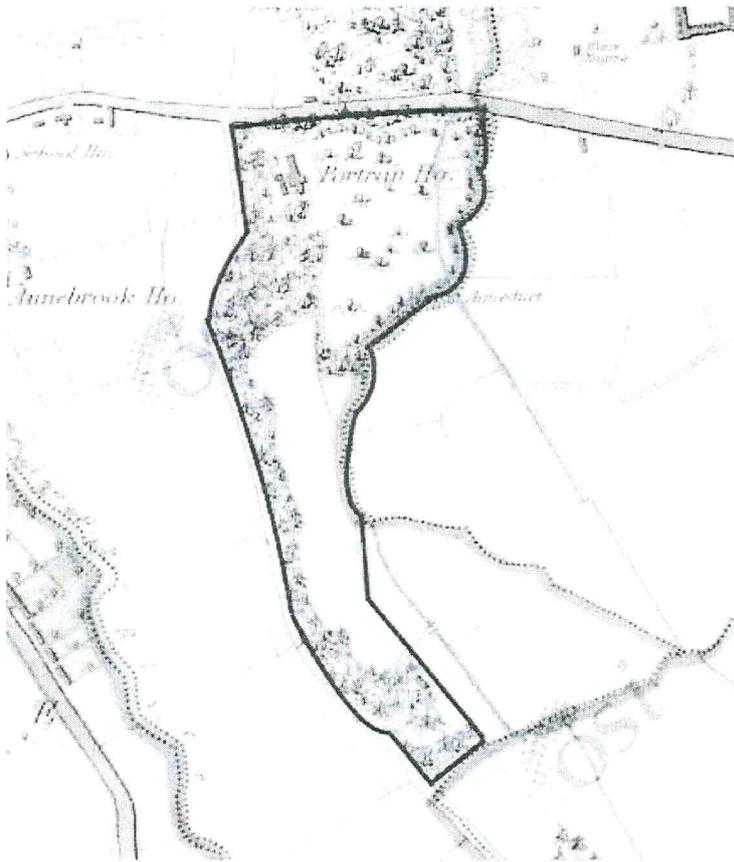
A & B: access to paths to east of the site  
 C: Established path from Maryborough Drain crossing the esker and leading to Downs Lane

map 1 Map showing outline of current land holdings, names and features.

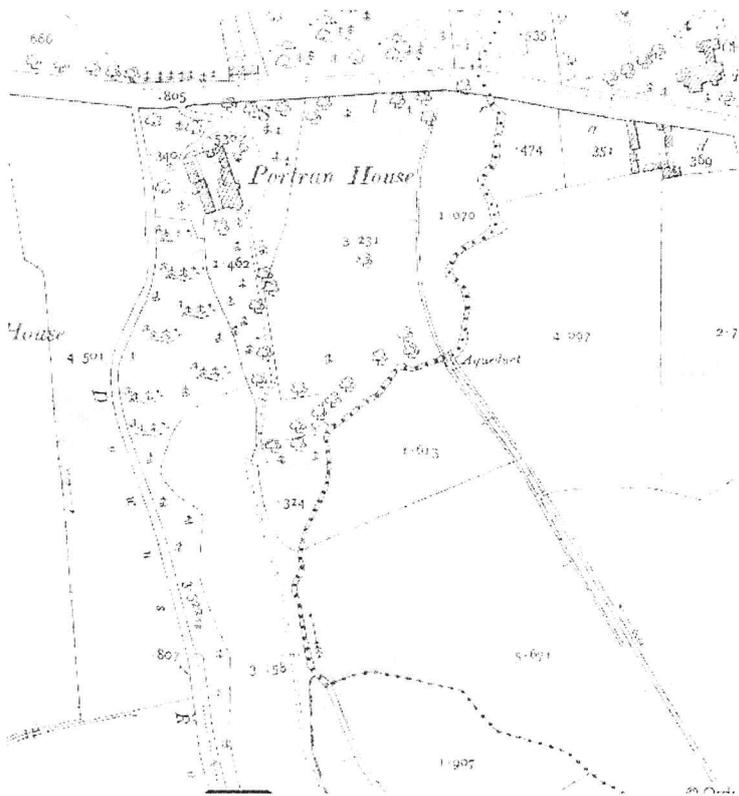


Red line: 1838 OS map  
 Green line: 1907 OS map  
 C: see map 1

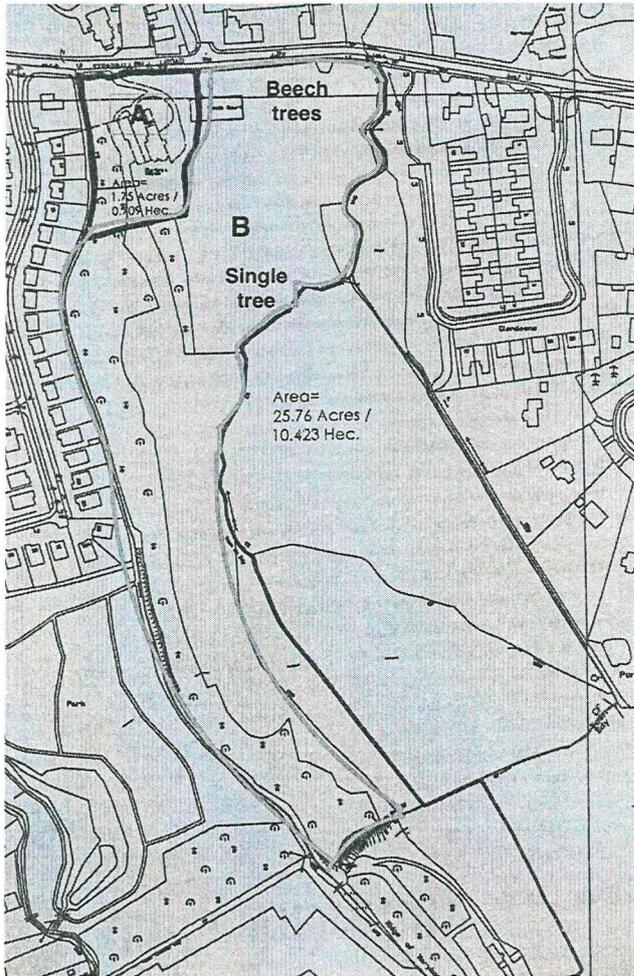
map 2 Map showing historic footpaths.



map 3 Map showing outline of demesne on 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1838.

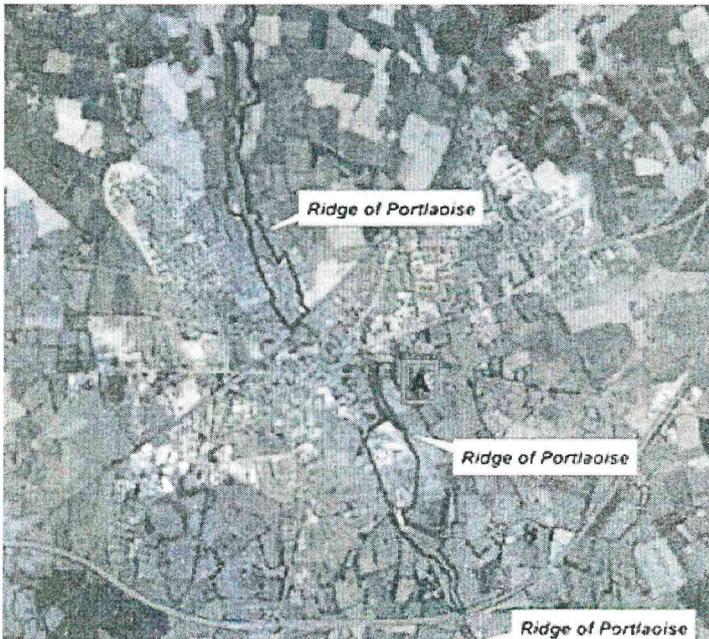


map 4 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed 1907.



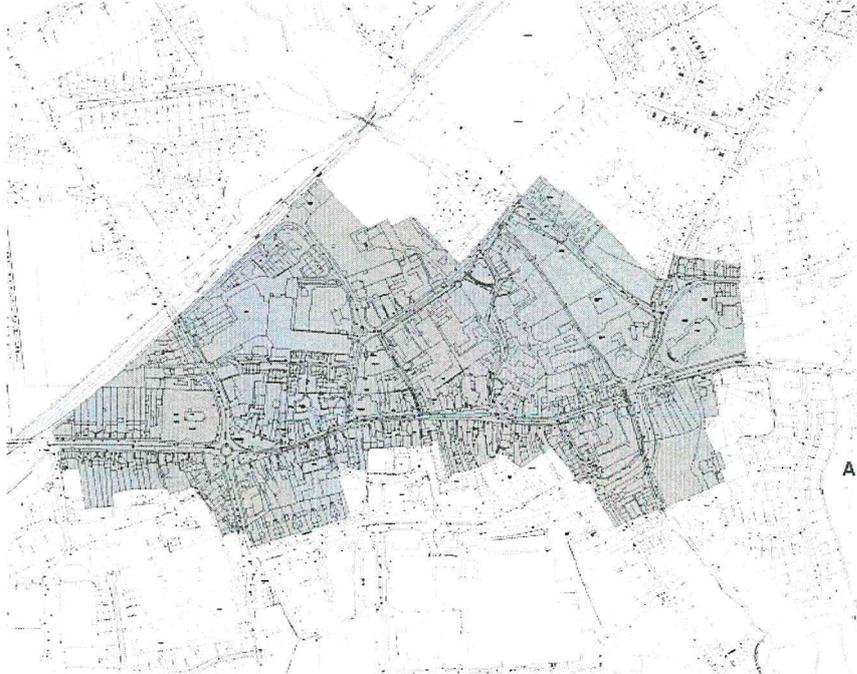
map 5 Map showing curtilage and attendant grounds. Base map: deed.  
A Curtilage. B Attendant Grounds.

[NB curtilage needs to be altered to include tennis court]





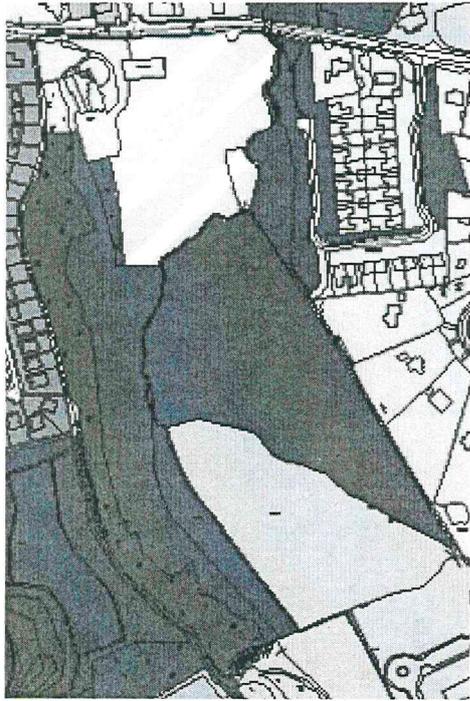




map 11 Portlaoise ACA from Portlaoise Local Area Plan: Position of site marked A

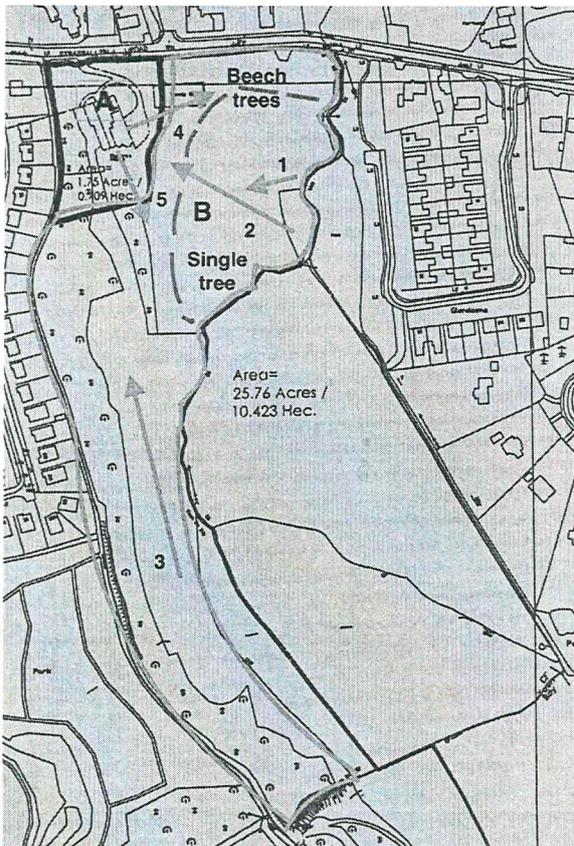


map 12 Archaeological Significance Zone in Portlaoise from Portlaoise Local Area Plan: Position of site marked A.



-  Residential 2 - New Proposed Residential
-  Community, Educational & Institutional
-  Open Space & Amenity

map 13 Zoning from Laois County Development Plan.



- For view 1 see fig 21
- For view 2 see fig 22
- For view 3 see fig 29
- For view 4 see fig 30
- For view 5 see fig 23

map 14 Map showing curtilage, attendant grounds (map 5) and significant views. Blue dashed line: suggested boundary of buffer zone.

**Photographs** (taken by Judith Hill unless otherwise stated)



fig 1 East boundary showing trees along River Derry.



fig 2 View of Maryborough Drain and hedge with esker ridge behind.



fig 3 View from Egan's Field of north boundary showing Stradbally Apartments on Stradbally Road.



fig 4 Entrance to the site from Stradbally Road.



fig 5 View across Maryborough Drain towards the esker path.

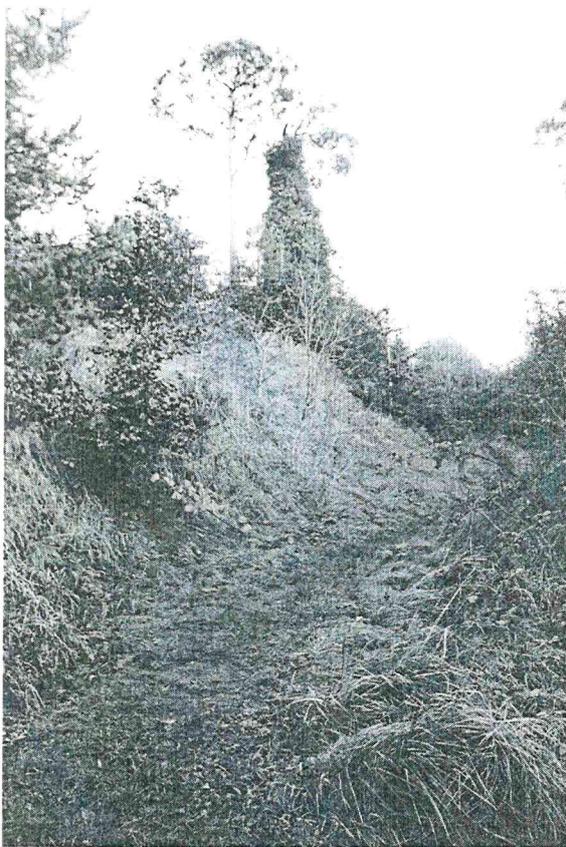


fig 6 View of the esker path looking east

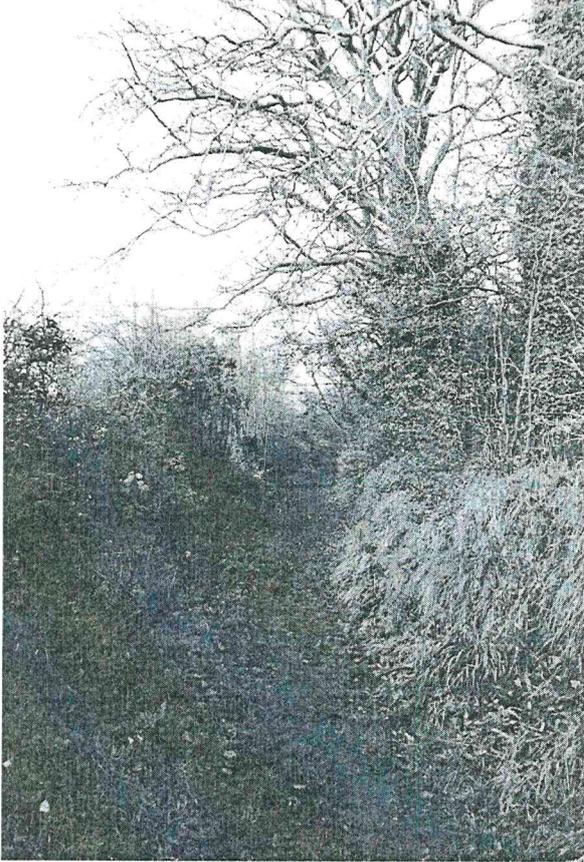


fig 7 View of Downs Lane



fig 8 View of Front Field. In distance with esker ridge and field in foreground.



fig 9 View of esker ridge and field looking north.



fig 10 View of Kelly's Field looking west towards the esker ridge



fig 11 View from Egan's Field to Front Field.



fig 12 Front (east) elevation of Portrane House.



fig 13 South elevation of Portrane House.

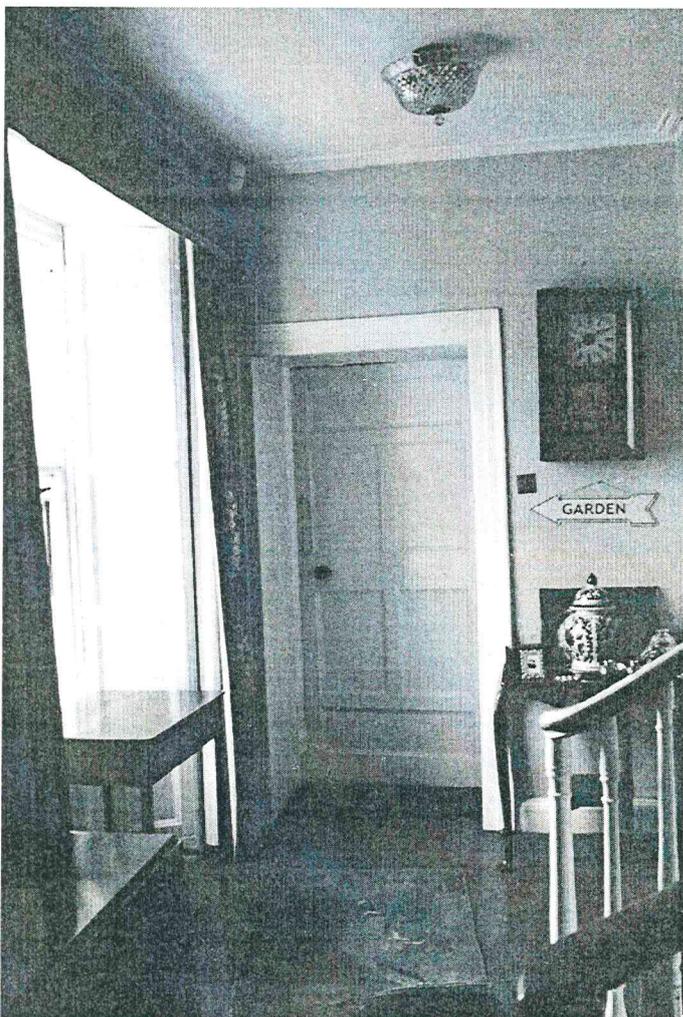


fig 14 Interior of hall showing door, shutter and staircase joinery.



fig 15 Shutters in south bow showing fluted detail.



fig 16 View of imperial stair in hall.



fig 17 View of outbuildings directly behind the house.



fig 18 Entrance arch to rear yard.



fig 19 Rubble stone structure on esker ridge which may be the remains of a viewing platform

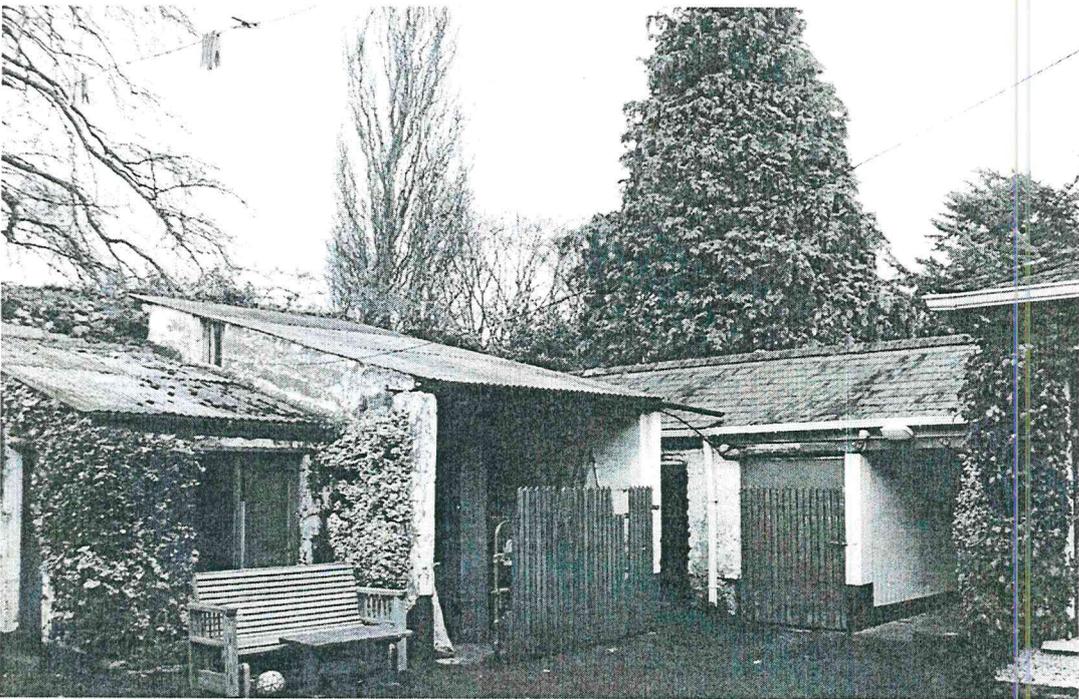


fig 20 Outbuildings to north of house



fig 21 View of the house from the east in the setting of the esker ridge.



fig 22 View of the house from the east set in garden trees.



fig 23 View of garden to the south of the house.



fig 24 Historic photograph children playing in the front field with the south part of Portrane House in the background. (From E Duff Conservation report)



fig 25 View of line of beeches plus single beech to left in Front Field.



fig 26 View of single evergreen and Front Field from the south.

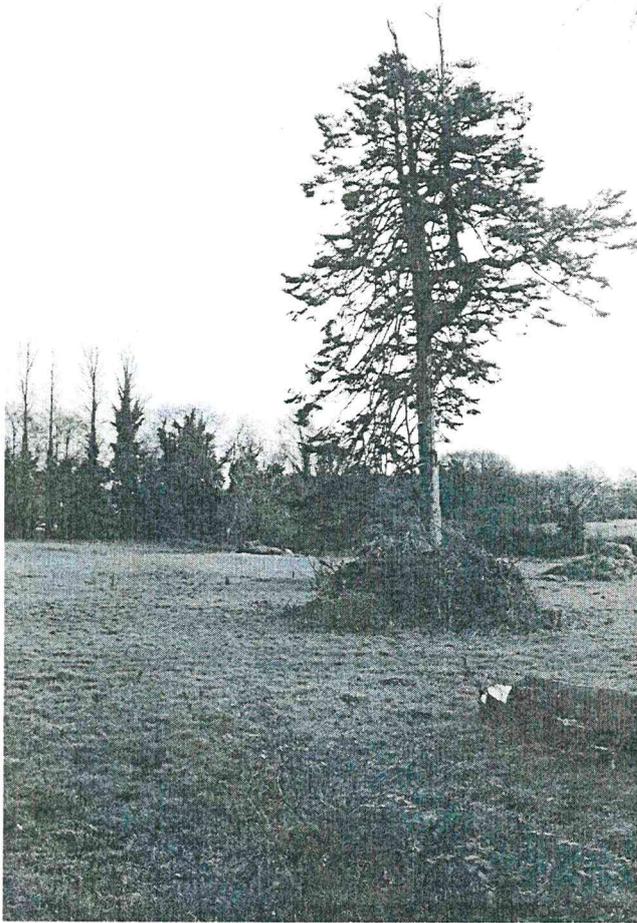


fig 27 View of single evergreen in Front Field from the north.



fig 28 View of Front Field from the esker ridge.



fig 29 Looking north towards Portrane House with the esker on the left



fig 30 View out from the front of Portrane House through the garden trees towards the beech trees along Stradbally Road.