



# Declaration

In accordance with Part IV, Section 57 (2) of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000 (as amended).

## Louth County Council:

This declaration specifies what works would, or would not, in the opinion of the planning authority materially affect the character of the protected structure, or any element thereof, and, as a result, require planning permission. Under the Act, protection extends to the entire structure including its interior and the land lying within its curtilage. It also extends to any other structures lying within the curtilage of the protected structure, to their interiors and to all fixtures and features that form part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures. Where specified in the Record of Protected Structures, protection may also extend to any other feature within the attendant grounds of the protected structure.

Nothing in this declaration exempts works that would not otherwise be exempt from a requirement for planning permission. Changes of use or intensification of the current use may require planning permission. If in doubt, the owner/occupier should consult the planning authority for further advice before commencing any works.

This Declaration may be referred to An Bord Pleanála for review within 4 weeks of its issue, upon payment of the requisite fee in accordance with Part IV, Section 57 (8) of the Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended.

<b>Applicant Name:</b>	The Sisters of St. Louis		
<b>Status (i.e. Owner or Occupier):</b>	Owner		
<b>Date of Request for Declaration:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	N/A
<b>Date of Issue of Declaration:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	<b>Previous Declarations:</b>	None on record

### Address:

### Location:

Name of Building:

Address 1:

Address 2:

Address 3:

Eircode:

National Grid co-ordinates:

O.S. Map Type:

Map Sheet:

Site Number:

### Protection Status:

Y / N

### Details:

<small>Under the Planning and development Act 2000 (as amended)</small>		
Record of Protected Structures:	<input type="text" value="Y ✓"/>	<input type="text" value="N"/>
Architectural Conservation Area:	<input type="text" value="Y"/>	<input type="text" value="N ✓"/>
<small>Under the Planning and development Act 2000 (as amended)</small>		
Record of Monuments and Places:	<input type="text" value="Y ✓"/>	<input type="text" value="N"/>
Zone of Archaeological potential:	<input type="text" value="Y"/>	<input type="text" value="N ✓"/>
Preservation Order or Temporary P.O.:	<input type="text" value="Y"/>	<input type="text" value="N ✓"/>



NIAH Registration No. (if applicable):

None

**Introduction:**

The referrer has sought a Section 57 declaration as per the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of works to a protected structure at Bellew's Castle.

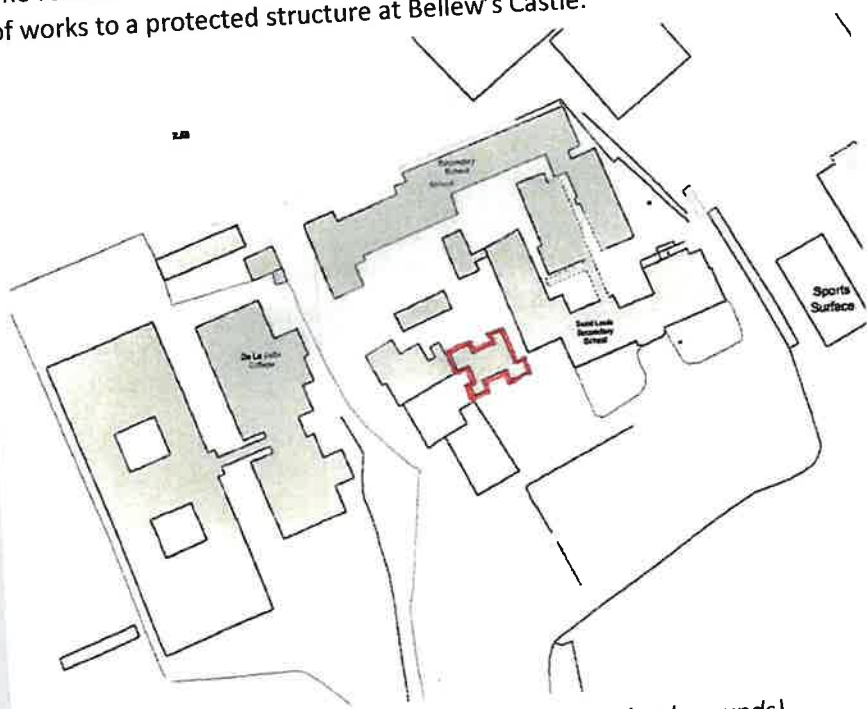


Figure 1: Site Location (within St. Louis Secondary School grounds)



Figure 2: Views of castle tower (flat hidden roof to be repaired)

**Protection Status:**

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is set out in the Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 as varied. This building is identified in the RPS under Ref: D091.

**Planning History:**

**22/325** – Permission to replace the windows in the main school building with new windows in a similar style and all ancillary works associated with same. St Louis Secondary School is a Protected Structure - ID numbers D090 Convent Building (NIAH 13900737); D091 Bellew's Castle and D092 Grottescue Sculpture – Granted.

**19/223** – Retention permission for a number of minor alterations to the property to upgrade the fire safety status of same. (1) Installation of 4 no. new external escape doors. (2) Installation of 4 no. Automatic Opening Vents. (3) Minor alterations to Assembly Hall layout and general floor plans. (4) Installation of new fire alarm system. (5) Removal of fire destroyed buildings and forming amenity courtyard. (6) Restoration / replacement of damaged stained glass windows, timber windows and upvc windows. (7) Installation of fire hydrants around school site. (8) All ancillary works associated with the above. St Louis Secondary School is a protected structure , ID No.s D090 Convent Building - NIAH ID No. 13900737, D091 Bellew's Castle, D092 Grottescue Sculpture – Granted.

In addition to much older repair works, the following works were previously carried out to this protected structure in recent years (as per the report submitted):

**2019-2022**

In 2019 the Sisters of St Louis engaged John Deaton to prepare a Conservation Plan for Castletown House, Bellew's Castle and associated grounds. The plan was prepared following the guidelines of James Semple Kerr's Guide to Conservation Plans and the UK Heritage Lottery Fund's Conservation Plans for Historic Places (1996). The Plan assessed the significance of the place and identified its vulnerabilities. It then set out policies for its conservation.

The Sisters of St Louis is actively implementing the policies set out in the Plan as part of its ownership and management strategy for Castletown.

**Actions undertaken to date:**

2019 – Preparation of Conservation Plan

2019 – Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (SW)

2020 - Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (NW). Accessibility study.

2021 – Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (SE). Removal of creepers and embedded iron from facades. Bolton report on façade mortars and renders.

2022 - Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (NE). Removal from façade of the derelict iron escape stairs

**Description of the Structure:**

The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the current Louth CDP 2021-2027, as varied, describes this property as follows:

*"c. 1475 by Richard Bellew, a four stage tower with four corner turrets".*

I note that there is no appraisal in the RPS. The structure is not included in the NIAH.

**Referral Question:**

**Would works materially affect the character of the protected structure and as a result, require planning permission?**

Presently rainwater is penetrating the walls in the corner turret and is then pooling on the internal spiral stairs. The proposed works would entail the removal of inappropriate Portland cement rendered areas and cement pointing, and then repointing in lime and lime rendering, whilst retaining the dressed stone surrounds to windows and doors. I am satisfied that these relatively minor works do not materially affect the character of the protected structure. W

I note that Brendan McSherry is also satisfied that the above works are appropriate, as per his email to Turlough King (SEP) dated 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Legislative Provision:**

Section 57(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states 'that notwithstanding Sections 4(1)(h) and any regulations made under Section 4(2), the carrying out of works to a protected structure, or proposed protected structure shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of:

- a) the structure; or
- b) any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest.

Section 68 of the Act stipulates that the carrying out of any works specified in a notice under section 59 (1) or 60 (2) shall be exempted development.

**Assessment:**

On the Cover Letter and on Page 24 of the report titled "**Request for Declaration under Section 57 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)**", relevant proposed works are described as follows:

- Remove all cement render from masonry (internally and externally)
- Rake out mortar joints and remove all cement pointing. Do not rake out any sound lime based mortar joints. All to be in accordance with a detailed method statement.
- Repoint using lime mortar in accordance with specified mix and a detailed method statement.
- Scud, undercoat and finish coat in lime-based harling with specified mix and a detailed method statement.

I consider that the works detailed above will not materially affect the character of the protected structure, and would not require planning permission.

Please note that the works to "*repair and repaint windows*" as indicated on Page 24 has not been considered, as this has not been indicated in the Cover Letter, the Declaration Request Form or any other documents submitted and no details of these works to the windows have been submitted, apart from a short note on the elevational drawings submitted.

**Any further documentation attached (maps, photographs, sketches, notes etc.)? Y**

- Declaration application form.
- Drawings/ map submitted.
- Report titled "Request for Declaration under Section 57 of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended)".

**Conclusion:**

I conclude, that WHEREAS a question has arisen as to whether the proposed development works detailed in the Request for Section 57 Declaration –

- Remove all cement render from masonry (internally and externally)
- Rake out mortar joints and remove all cement pointing. Do not rake out any sound lime based mortar joints. All to be in accordance with a detailed method statement.
- Repoint using lime mortar in accordance with specified mix and a detailed method statement.
- Scud, undercoat and finish coat in lime-based harling with specified mix and a detailed method statement.

would or would not materially affect the character of protected structures or any element of the structures which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest at Bellew's Castle

**AND WHEREAS** Bellew's Castle requested a declaration on the question from Louth County Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024,

**AND WHEREAS** Louth County Council in considering this referral, had regard particularly to –

- (a) Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (b) Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (c) Section 4 (1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (d) Section 68 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended,
- (d) Section 77(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (e) the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities,
- (f) the nature and extent of works set out in the referral question in respect of this structure,

**AND WHEREAS** Louth County Council has concluded that:

- (i) the stated works to the protected structure comprise of works and are, therefore, **development**, and
- (ii) the stated works would **not materially affect** the character of the structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest,
- (iii) the stated works would consist of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement and alteration of this structure which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures.

**NOW THEREFORE** Louth County Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 57 of the 2000 Act as amended, hereby decides that the proposed works above, to Bellew's Castle, Castletown, Dundalk, Co. Louth as detailed by the Request for Section 57 Declaration and submitted information and details, **constitutes development** that is **exempted development**.



**Signed by Inspector**

**Signed by Planning Authority Officer**

**Terence Loane, Executive Planner**

**Joanna Kelly, Senior Planner**

**Date**

**Date**

26<sup>th</sup> March 2024

28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ORDER**

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000 (as amended)**

**Section 57 Declaration – Works to a Protected Structure**

**Chief Executive's Order No:** 231/2024

**Reference No:** S57 D24-01

**Date Application Received:** 08<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Description:** Remove all cement render from masonry (internally and externally)  
Rake out mortar joints and remove all cement pointing. Do not rake out any sound lime based mortar joints. All to be in accordance with a detailed method statement.  
Repoint using lime mortar in accordance with specified mix and a detailed method statement.  
Scud, undercoat and finish coat in lime-based harling with specified mix and a detailed method statement.

**Name of Applicant:** The Sisters of St. Louis

**Location of Development** Bellews Castle, Castletown, Dundalk, Co. Louth

**WHEREAS** a question has arisen as to whether the proposed development works detailed in the Request for Section 57 Declaration –

- Remove all cement render from masonry (internally and externally)
- Rake out mortar joints and remove all cement pointing. Do not rake out any sound lime based mortar joints. All to be in accordance with a detailed method statement.
- Repoint using lime mortar in accordance with specified mix and a detailed method statement.
- Scud, undercoat and finish coat in lime-based harling with specified mix and a detailed method statement.

would or would not materially affect the character of protected structures or any element of the structures which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest at Bellew's Castle

**AND WHEREAS** Bellew's Castle requested a declaration on the question from Louth County Council on the 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024,

**AND WHEREAS** Louth County Council in considering this referral, had regard particularly to –

- (a) Section 2 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (b) Section 3 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (c) Section 4 (1)(h) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (d) Section 68 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as amended,
- (d) Section 77(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended,
- (e) the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities,
- (f) the nature and extent of works set out in the referral question in respect of this structure,

**AND WHEREAS** Louth County Council has concluded that:

- (i) the stated works to the protected structure comprise of works and are, therefore, **development**, and
- (ii) the stated works would **not materially affect** the character of the structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest,
- (iii) the stated works would consist of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement and alteration of this structure which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures.

**NOW THEREFORE** Louth County Council, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by Section 57 of the 2000 Act as amended, hereby decides that the proposed works above, to Bellew's Castle, Castletown, Dundalk, Co. Louth as detailed by the Request for Section 57 Declaration and submitted information and details, **constitutes development** that is **exempted development**.

SIGNED: J. Kelly  
Joanna Kelly  
Senior Planner

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**ORDER:** In pursuance of the powers conferred upon the Council by the above Act, I concur with the above recommendation and I hereby direct that a **Section 57 Declaration of Exemption be Granted** for the works, as described above.

SIGNED: Thomas McEvoy  
Thomas McEvoy  
Director of Services

Dated: 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

To whom this function has been delegated in accordance with the provision of Sections 154 of the Local Government Act 2001 by Order no CE.S.335/22 dated the 01st day of September, 2022.





Comhairle Contae Lú  
Louth County Council

**PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000  
REQUEST FOR SECTION 57 DECLARATION  
(PROTECTED STRUCTURE)**

The above Act provides that any works which would affect the character of a protected structure, or a proposed protected structure will require planning permission, even where those works would normally be exempt under Section 4 (1)(h) of the 2000 Act.

As an owner or occupier of a protected structure you are entitled under the above act to request the Council to issue a declaration as to the type of works which may or may not be permitted in your structure. In order to issue this declaration you should supply the following information:

1. Name of Applicant: The Sisters of St Louis
2. Address of Protected Structure: Bellews Castle, Castletown, Dundalk, Co. Louth
3. Correspondence address: (if different from 2 above) John Deaton, Conservation Architect, 44 South Richmond Street, Dublin 2
4. NIAH Ref No. & Louth RPS Number  
Protected structure reference number DO 91 Bellews Castle (Tower house).  
Register of monuments Reference Number LH007-118001.
5. Is structure owner occupied or rented? Owner Occupied
6. If rented state name and address of owner: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Use of structure (residential, commercial etc.): educational/community currently vacant
8. **Site location map** to the scale of 1:1000 clearly identifying the structure and boundaries to which the application refers (subject structure to be outlined in red, overall land holding to be outlined in blue)
9. Has a declaration been sought previously? Yes

I wish to apply for a declaration from Louth County Council as to the type of works which need permission in my structure.

Signed:  John Deaton on behalf of the Sisters of St Louis

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Daytime contact telephone Number: 0872951838

It should be noted that the Council is normally obliged to issue this declaration within three months of the request being made and that you will be contacted within this period to arrange an appointment for a suitably qualified person to carry out a detailed survey of the internal and external features of the structure.

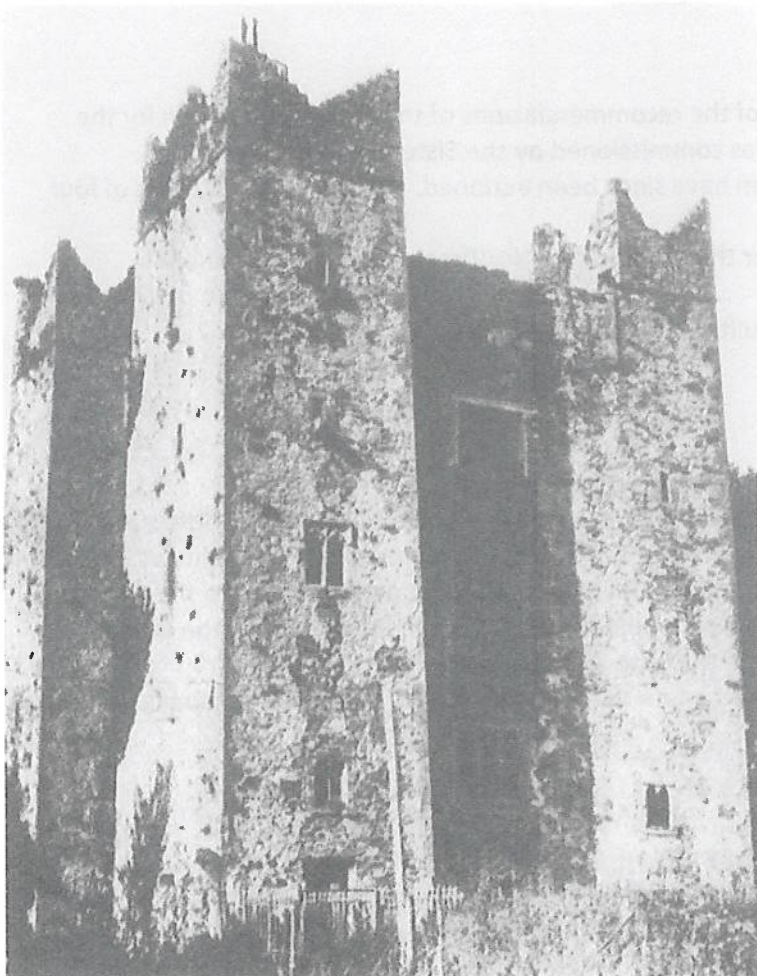
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**Please return completed form to:**  
**Conservation Office, Planning Dept. Louth County Council,**  
**Town Hall, Crowe St, Dundalk, Co Louth**  
**Email: [conservation@louthcoco.ie](mailto:conservation@louthcoco.ie)**

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**REQUEST FOR DECLARATION UNDER SECTION 57 OF THE PLANNING ACT  
2000 (as amended)  
PROPOSED REPAIR WORKS TO STAIRS TURRET WALLS  
BELLEWS CASTLE, CASTLETOWN, DUNDALK, Co. LOUTH**

For the Sisters of St Louis, Dundalk, Co. Louth



1950

John Deaton/Deaton Lysaght Architects  
RIAI Accredited Conservation Architect Grade One  
44 South Richmond Street, Dublin 2  
014754960 0872951838 [jdeaton@dlarch.ie](mailto:jdeaton@dlarch.ie)

## Introduction.

### Purpose of this report

This report is prepared as part of a reference to Louth County Council under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. The report describes urgent and essential repairs to the external walls of the stairs turret which are necessary to arrest penetrating dampness.

### Background

The proposed works comprise part of the recommendations of the Conservation Plan for the House, Castle and Grounds which was commissioned by the Sisters of St Louis in 2019. Certain recommendations of the Plan have since been actioned. The roofs and parapets of four corner turrets have been repaired. Section 57 references were made for these works and Notifications under the National Monuments Act were issued. Grant aid was provided under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme.

### Conservation outlook

The Conservation Plan noted that Bellew's Castle was vacated due to Health and Safety and Insurance issues. These related mainly to issues of access and egress. An accessibility study was undertaken in 2022. This identified a solution involving connection of the castle to the adjacent school building for access and egress. This would be achievable in the context of the school acquiring ownership of the castle from the Sisters of St Louis. The Sisters of St Louis are anxious to maintain the castle in good order whilst remaining vacant.

### Current Issues

The Conservation Plan identified water penetration thru the walls and the necessity for re-pointing and re-rendering of the external walls. The increasing incidence of storms and the recent bad weather has resulted in increased water penetration through the walls. This is particularly severe in the stairs turret where the walls are at their thinnest. Rainwater is currently pooling on the steps of the stairs. It is hoped that grant aid under the Community Monuments Fund 2024 can be obtained to undertake the necessary repairs.



Rain penetration in stairs turret.

## Statutory Protection and Policies

Archaeological heritage is protected under the National Monuments (amendment) Act 1930 – 2014. Architectural heritage is protected by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Policy is based on the relevant international charters.

### Heritage asset information

<b>Name</b>	<b>Bellew's Castle</b>
<b>Townland</b>	Castletown
<b>County</b>	Louth
<b>Six Inch Map Sheet</b>	LH 007
<b>National Inventory of Architectural Heritage</b>	-----
<b>Structural elements</b>	Castle
<b>RMP/SMR no.s</b>	LH007-11801
<b>Archaeological Classification</b>	Tower House
<b>Development Plan</b>	2021-2027
<b>Ownership</b>	Sisters of St. Louis
<b>Ordnance grid reference</b>	30318/30866

### List of relevant international charters

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Charter Title</b>
	1972	UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
<b>Venice Charter</b>	1964	International charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites
	1975	The Congress on European Architectural Heritage
<b>Burra Charter</b>	1979 (revised 1981, 1988, 1999 & 2013)	The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance
<b>Granada</b>	1985	Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe
<b>Valetta Charter</b>	1992	Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage

The repair of the castle is guided by the following principles:

Minimal intervention

Faithful repairs based on investigation and research.

## Castletown

### History

For upwards of five thousand years before the arrival of the urbanising Anglo Normans the Dundalk area had been inhabited by prehistoric communities. *Gosling (1943)*

The limited archaeological remains of prehistoric date which are known to us from Dundalk support the thesis that the area was not densely settled until the Neolithic early bronze age transition (3200-2200BC)

Gosling states that the only prehistoric monument visible in Dundalk today is the squat granite standing stone which stands just off the summit of Castletown Ridge in a field beside Cu Chulainn's Castle. This once had a taller companion on the Bellews Bridge Road but the latter was evidently removed in the early part of the 20th Century when Castletown Cottages were being built.

The character of the coastal plain in prehistoric times would also have influenced travel and the ancient trackways undoubtedly kept to the higher ground along the access of the Ballybarrack and Castletown ridges. In this regard the siting of the two standing stones already mentioned on the crest and northern foot of the Castletown Ridge indicates their possible functions as route markers on an ancient trackway leading to the Fjord on the Castletown river at Tubberona.

Gosling notes that there remains a question as to whether there was a town at Dundalk before the arrival of the urbanising Anglo Normans in the late 1180s. Though the existence of such has long been held in oral tradition there is absolutely no archaeological evidence to support the hypothesis. It states that on available evidence the Anglo Normans do not appear to have begun colonising the area about Dundalk until after 1185 some sixteen years after they had first set foot in Ireland.

Bertram de Verdon came to Ireland in 1185 in the retinue of the lord of Ireland, Prince John and established a house just outside the walls of Dublin. Prince John appointed Bertram as Seneschal of Ireland and custodian of the Castle of Drogheda. He granted Bertram the lands in North Louth approximating to the present-day Baronies of upper and Lower Dundalk. Gosling states that the foundation of the settlement of Dundalk was at Castletown and must be put between 1185 and 1190.

He states that, like most other settlements of this period (13<sup>th</sup> Century), very little is known of the extent and organisation of the Manor of Castletown. Though many people today think of Bellew's Castle in the grounds of Saint Louis Convent as the oldest part of Castletown, the earliest monument is the Motte along with its bailey. This Motte was probably synonymous with the early Manor house. It is the case that we know little about the number location and character of the buildings at early Castletown. Given the abundance of timbers and raw materials at the time the vast majority of the buildings which stood on the plots are likely to have been wooden construction. He states that the *grizzly Mouth Puller* now imbedded in a wall at Saint Louis Convent, though no doubt leering at our speculations regarding its origin and function does at least suggest presence of one stone building (perhaps the church) at Castletown the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The Castletown village possessed a water Mill. A visual record of it occurs on Garstin's (1655) map, where it shows a small rectangular building situated on the stream to the East of Mill Road. The

course of this stream can still be traced today in the fields to the North West of Saint Louis Convent. However due to its diversion into a Mill race into a new Mill in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the exact site of the medieval water mill is not now known.

Gosling states that there is no solid evidence for the construction of a stone Castle until Bellews Castle was erected in the late 15<sup>th</sup> Century by that time Castletown had probably declined to the status of a suburban village on the western outskirts of its more prosperous offspring the medieval new town of Dundalk.

Castletown's prospects for development were severely curtailed in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> Century by the foundation of the new town of Dundalk and the construction of Castleroche. Its parish was amalgamated with Dundalk from at least the early 14<sup>th</sup> Century. However, Castletown was to survive as a separate physical entity right through the medieval period.



## Bellew's Castle

### History

*Dalton and O'Flanagan (1864)* state that Castletown was commonly called "Castletown/Bellew". A castle is said to have been erected here as early as AD 1297 which was occupied by Edward Bruce in AD 1316; but the present edifice was more probably that referred to in the following enactment of a Parliament held at Naas under Edward the IV- "*Richard Bellew Esquire has built and furnished a tower in the Castle Town of Dundalk on the Borders of the Marches of the County of Louth and intends to build another tower anew in the said town. Enacts that he shall receive and take twelve pence in every plough-land in The County of Louth for building the same.*"

Gosling notes that exactly how the Bellews came into possession of Castletown is a complicated matter. Their interest in it appears to date from 1366 when Sir John Bellew first styled himself as "Lord of Dundalke and Le Roche" (McNeill and Otway-Ruthven 1960, 239), having bought out de Furnivall portion of the great de Verdon inheritance in that year.

In 1414 Sir John Bellew is described as "*Lord of Bellewstown and of the other portion of the town of Dundalk*" It is questionable as to whether this included the whole of Castletown. Gosling States that it is not until the 1470's that we get direct evidence that the family had gained full ownership. He states that Bellews constructed two fortified tower houses at Castletown in the 1470's. Details of the first of these are recorded in an act of 1472. "*Likewise at the request of The Commons, that whereas Richard Bellew Esquire intends with the grace of God and the support of the inhabitants of the County of Louth to commence to build a tower or Peel at the Castleton by Dundalk on the frontiers of the March of the Louth County containing in the same length, width and height according with the statute in that case provided, which Tower or Peel thus commenced, built and completed will be a singular refuge and help to all the Kings faithful liege people their inhabiting and a resistance and defence against Irish enemies setting before them to destroy the aforesaid county*"

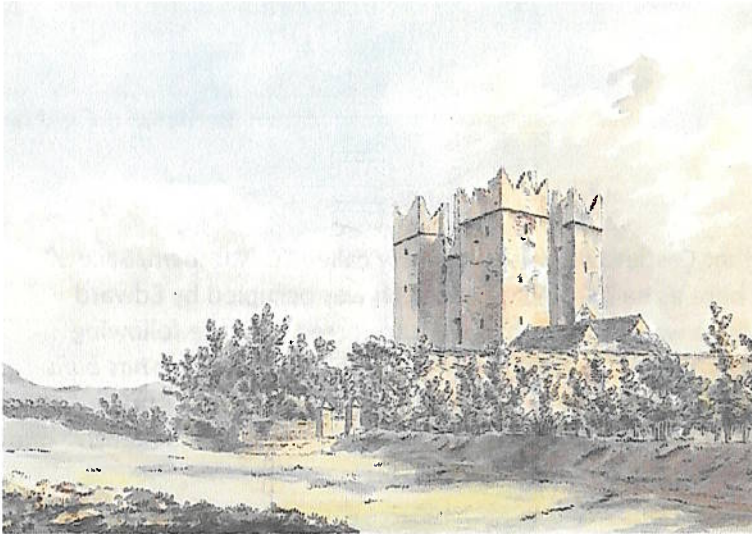
The reference to the size of The Castle being in accordance with Statute is a reference to the wide-ranging act of 1429 where the Dublin Parliament had authorised a grant of 10 pounds to whoever might build a castle or a tower 20 feet by 16 feet and 40 feet high or more in height. This sought to assist loyal Palesemen in protecting their families and lands from incursions by the Irish.

The second Castle dates from 1479 when Richard petitioned to Parliament at Naas to build another tower anew in the same town. These Castles are shown on Garstin's map of 1655. Gosling is of view that the second Castle to have been built is the existing surviving Castle.

He observes that there were at least ten Castles that can be attested with certainty from cartographic and documentary sources, six within the walled town and two in Castletown, and one each within the suburbs of Castletown on Upper End. Of these, only Castletown remains.

The Bellew connection with Castletown continued at least until 1639 when Sir Christopher Bellew of Castletown was noted as member of The Commons House of Parliament. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the Castle was virtually a ruin, and a more modern house was built beside it around 1740 by Edward Tipping. The Castle continued to be used for servants' quarters.

In 1950 the Sisters of Saint Louis purchased the property. Extensive conversion and alterations were undertaken to the Castle which served as classroom and residential accommodation since then. The Castle is currently vacated.



View from the North West by Thomas Cocking  
Drawn 1783-91

This view shows the castle with two pitched roof lean-to's and the mark from a previous lean-to structure. The 1740 house is not included in the view.  
The bawn wall is shown intact. This may coincide with the courtyard wall of the 1740 house.



View from the South West (unattributed) shows the castle front with machicolation and chimney stack above the main entrance. The main entrance area is shown overgrown with creeper suggesting that it was disused at this time. There appears to be a steep escarpment in front of the castle.

## Scope Note

### Protected Structure

Protected structure reference number DO 91 Bellews Castle (Tower house).

### Recorded Monument

Register of monuments Reference Number LH007-118001.

Class Castle-Tower House Scope Note.

Class: Castle-Tower House

Townland: CASTLETOWN (DUNDALK UPPER BY.)

**Description:** *The following description is derived from both the published "Archaeological Inventory of County Louth" (Dublin Stationary Office, 1986) and the Archaeological Survey of County Louth" (Dublin: Stationary Office, 1991) In Certain Instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research.*

*Date of upload/ revision: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007*

*Built c 1472 by Richard Bellew (Tempest 1943b, 184), probably on the site of an earlier de Verdun castle, and according to Wright (1758, bk 11,8) it was "once defended by a strong wall and other works of circumvallation", presumably a bawn wall.*

*It is a large tower house built of roughly coursed limestone blocks and rubble; four storeys high with four protecting corner-towers. The diagonally opposing towers at the NW and SW angles are larger than the other two. The tower at the SW angle has the stairwell and that at the NW has wardrobes from first-to third -FLOOR LEVELS which are contained in separate chambers at the E side of the tower. The building was taken over in the 1940 by the Sisters of St Louis and renovated for use as a school. However, Tempest (1943b,180-95) made some attempt to record the monument prior to its recent occupation and has published elevations and plans (1943b, 187,190) All four angle- towers project out beyond the line of the walls of the body of the castle on both sides, except for the NE tower which only projects to the N. Access at the ground-floor level is gained through a doorway just to the E of the SW angle-tower. This leads both to the ground-floor area and to the stairwell immediately to the W of the entrance. The doorway is constructed of finely punch-dressed limestone and has a two-centred arch. The ground floor does not appear to have had a barrel vault over but rather a wooden floor. All the angle-towers on the ground floor were accessible from the level except for SW one which contained the stairwell. This is unusual since most of County Louth houses have basal levels of the angle-towers solid or else access is gained from the first-floor level. The remains of a pit for the garderobe lie outside the wall in the NE angle of the NW tower.*

*The first-floor level was lit by two large mullioned windows of limestone in the E and W walls and a slit ope in the N. Access to the corner-towers was from the floors of the main building through doorways and down rough steps. Apparently, the floor level of the angle-towers was lower than that of the main building at the time Tempest recorded the tower house (1943b, 191), but he concluded that this was due to relatively recent alterations. In the SW angle of the main building was an almost square murder hole directly over the centre of the entrance passage which leads from the outside doorway. The second floor had three large mullioned windows, all of which have been altered or blocked up, and a fireplace in the S wall.*

*This floor, which is covered with stone slabs, is carried on a large barrel vault. Access to the third-floor levels in the SE and NW towers is gained by stairs within the towers and not from the main floor area. Therefore, whoever had the use of the main second-floor level also had access to the third level corner-towers, indicating that these were the important chambers of the castle. The SE tower in the E wall had a two-light window with ogee heads and hood moulding but this is not extant. All the floor levels of the SE tower are carried on barrel vaults. It is possible that this tower had a chapel at second-floor level and the chaplain's room immediately above.*

*The third-floor level of the uppermost living area was carried by large joists and corbels. A modern roof had already been placed over it by the time Tempest (1943b, 191) recorded the castle. The NW angle-tower is cut off from the main floor area, as is the SE one, and access was from the lower level. At the E side of the NW tower is a garderobe which has two outlets.*

*The fireplace in the N wall has been blocked up, as have the windows in the W and S walls. The corner-towers all rise above the level of the roof and contain is a wall-walk covered with large transversely-laid slabs slightly sloping outwards. Each angle-small chamber. There is a wall walk covered with largely transversely-laid slabs slightly sloping outwards. Each angle tower at roof level can be reached by short narrow steps from the allure. (CLAJ 1925, 1-2; Tempest 1943b,180-95)*

*The third-floor level of the uppermost living area was carried by large joists and corbels. A modern roof had already been placed over it by the time Tempest (1943b, 191) recorded the castle. The NW angle-tower is cut off from the main floor area, as is the SE one, and access was from the lower level. At the E side of the NW tower is a garderobe which has two outlets.*

*The fireplace in the N wall has been blocked up, as have the windows in the W and S walls. The corner-towers all rise above the level of the roof and contain small chambers. There is a wall-walk covered with large transversely-laid slabs slightly sloping outwards. Each angle-tower at roof level can be reached by short narrow steps from the allure. (CLAJ 1925, 1-2; Tempest 1943b, 180-95)*

*Tempest HG 1943B Bellews Castle, Castle Town Bellew, or Castle Town Castle, Dundalk, Co. Louth, Archaeological and Historical Journal 10 (3) 180-95*

- 1) *Wright, T-1758 Louthiana; or An Introduction to the Antiquities of Ireland London, Thomas Payne.*

## Evaluation

### Significance

Value Category	Heritage Interest	Assessment
Evidential	Archaeological and cultural	Bellew's castle has a high evidential value. Although many of its features have been altered, the plan of the castle survives. Its structure including the turret roofs remains intact. It is a good example of a late 15 <sup>th</sup> century tower house.
Historical	Associational	Bellew's castle the surviving one of two castles constructed in the late 15 <sup>th</sup> century is synonymous with Castletown which at one time rivalled Dundalk in importance
Communal	Social	Once the centre of a larger settlement of cottages, school and mill, the castle structure illustrates its social evolution from a defended keep to a community school and has been at the centre of the community.

Bellew's castle is of regional significance as a surviving example of corner turreted castles constructed in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The castle is important both as a monument and in its role in the social and political history of Dundalk.

The current arrangements have changed somewhat since Tempests report.

### 20<sup>th</sup> Century alterations.

The most significant alterations to the building were made in 1950 as part of the alteration and refurbishment of what was a derelict building to serve the needs of the St Louis School.

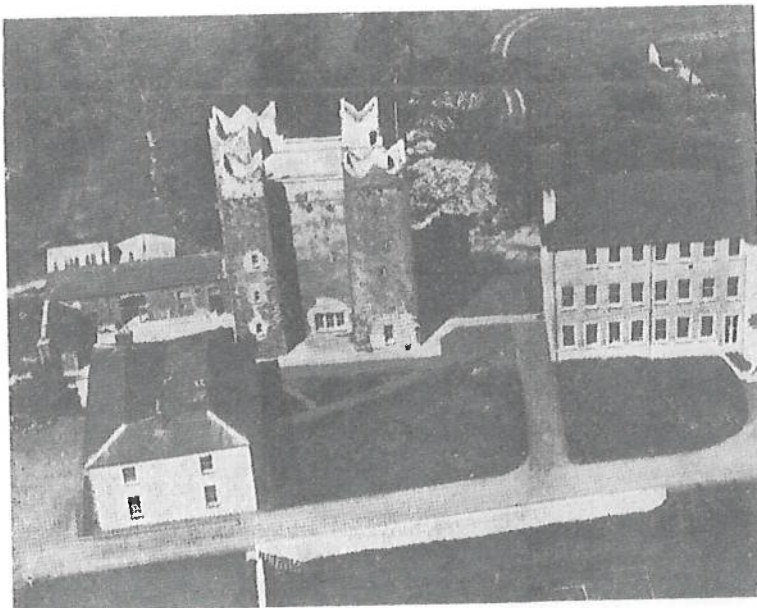


Figure 1: - Irish Independent 1956 - newspaper cutting with an aerial photograph of the castle post refurbishment. The alterations to the façade stand out as the lighter areas. This also shows the house and stable yard which was intact.

The alterations to the building included:

**Widening of certain turret windows.**

**Replacement of existing windows with large windows to the main central room on each floor to both east and west ends.**

**New large window to the ground floor south elevation.**

**Re-building of battlements to turrets.**

**Replacement of battlements to the main roof with flat parapets.**

**Repointing facades of turrets in Portland cement.**

**Rendering entrance façade in Portland cement.**

**Rendering of rear façade over existing lime render.**

**Reinforced concrete main roof with concrete capped parapet.**

**Removal of fireplaces and chimneys. Blocking up with concrete.**

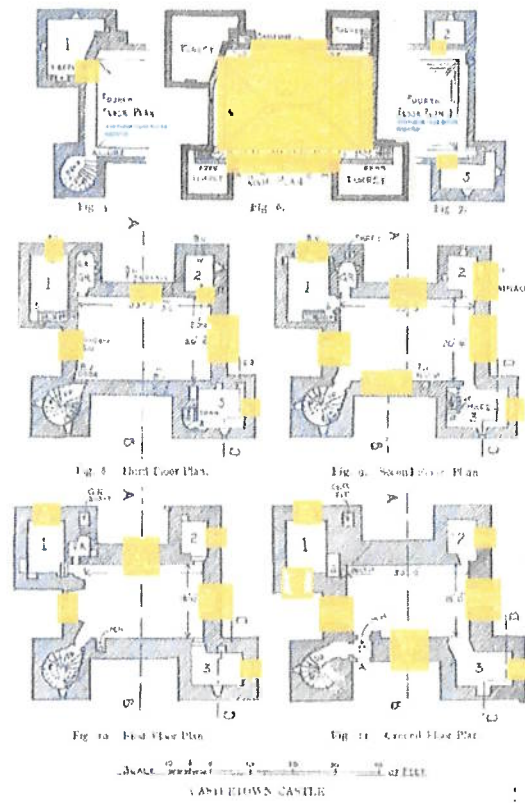
**Insertion of 4<sup>th</sup> floor tank room.**

**Dry-lining of the interior walls and ceilings.**

**Turret rooms at 4<sup>th</sup> floor level have been sealed off and are full of rubble.**

**The turret steps have been finished in terrazzo.**

**Installation of bathrooms, heating, plumbing and electrics.**



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Figure 2: - Mark up of Tempest's floor plan showing in colour the areas which have been altered. - *Tempest (1943)*  
- Maps downloaded from [Jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org). All use subject to their terms.

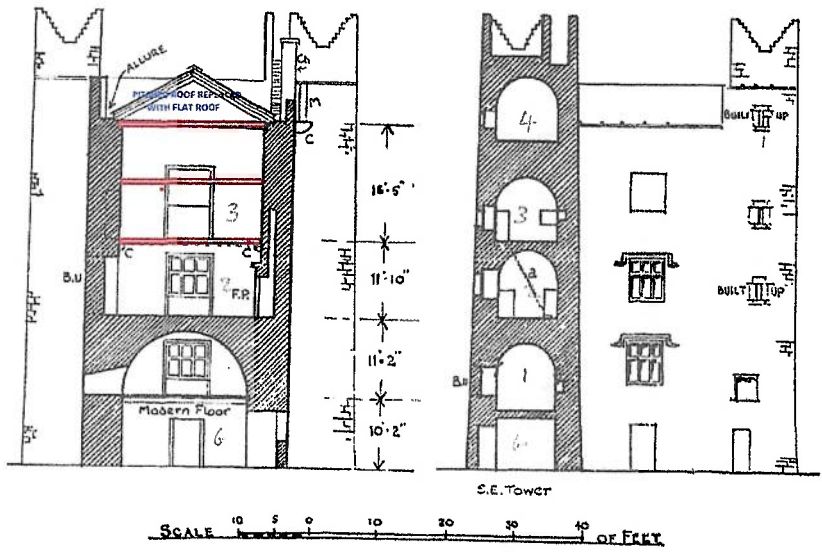


Fig. 12.  
 Section on line AB, looking East.

Fig. 13.  
 Section on line CD, looking West.

Figure 3:- Mark-up of Tempest's sections showing alterations

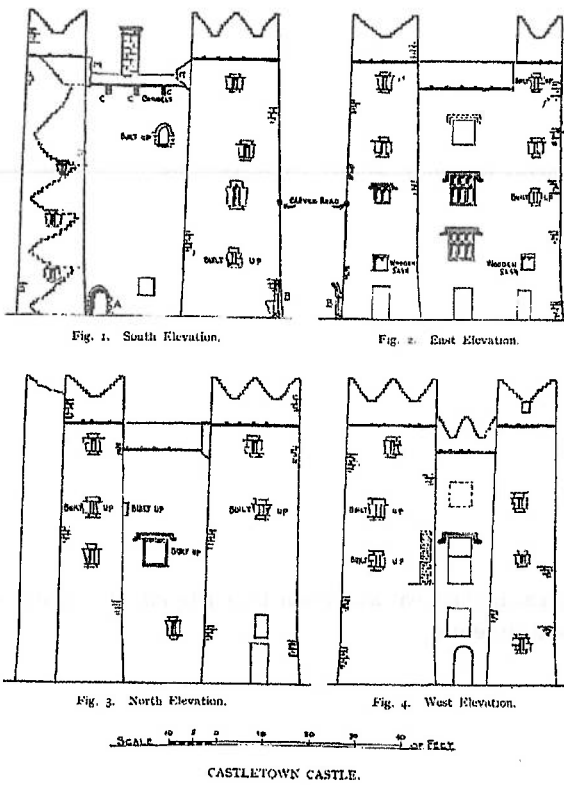


Figure:- 4 Tempest's elevations.

In Tempest (1943) noted that certain alterations to the original arrangements had been made, including:

The machicolation screen had fallen and was lost.

There were 7 openings on the ground floor where there were previously none except the entrance door.

There was a modern slated roof.

The floor of the third storey was removed.

Certain fireplaces had been blocked up or altered.

The large mullioned windows, the large fireplace in the second storey, the smaller one in the third and their two chimney stacks were considered to be later insertions in the opinion of Mr Harold Leask.

The stepped battlements were observed to not be traditional and probably an alteration of the original.

While the 1950 work brought a derelict building into re-use it did involve the additional removal or obscuration of original fabric.

Of particular note is the fireplaces which have been blocked up in concrete and the chimneys which have been removed. One fireplace remains in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor turret room to which access has yet to be gained in order to assess its significance.

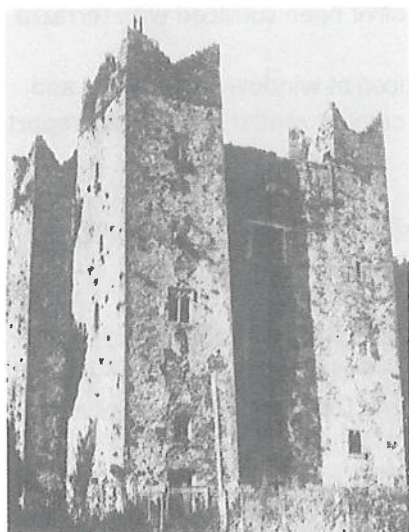
Some original fabric remains hidden behind the dry-lining including:

The murder hole at first floor level

Certain small windows

The wicker marks on underside of the stone vaulting.

The rubble stacked in the turret rooms at 4<sup>th</sup> floor level may include significant original fabric and should be investigated.



1950



2021

## Recent repairs

### 2019-2022

In 2019 the Sisters of St Louis engaged John Deaton to prepare a Conservation Plan for Castletown House, Bellew's Castle and associated grounds. The plan was prepared following the guidelines of James Semple Kerr's Guide to Conservation Plans and the UK Heritage Lottery Fund's Conservation Plans for Historic Places (1996). The Plan assessed the significance of the place and identified its vulnerabilities. It then set out policies for its conservation.

The Sisters of St Louis is actively implementing the policies set out in the Plan as part of its ownership and management strategy for Castletown.

Actions undertaken to date:

2019 – Preparation of Conservation Plan

2019 – Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (SW)

2020 - Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (NW). Accessibility study.

2021 – Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (SE). Removal of creepers and embedded iron from facades. Bolton report on façade mortars and renders.

2022 - Repair of roof and parapet of stairs turret (NE). Removal from façade of the derelict iron escape stairs

## Proposed works

### Proposed works to façade of stairs turret

#### Description

The castle consists of a central chamber with four corner turrets.

One of these is the stairs turret. The stairs are stone steps which have been surfaced with terrazzo and mosaic tiles. This was most likely part of the 1950 works.

The castle walls are 6ft-8ft thick rubble limestone. These are reduced at window embrasures and in the turrets. The stairs turret wall is rendered internally in hard cement render. The Sisters report that this was in response to dampness ingress.

The turret roof consists of limestone stone flags laid on falls and discharging through rectangular ports in the parapets. The roof and parapets were repaired in 2019.

Penetrating dampness through the external walls was noted in 2019 when the Conservation Plan was prepared. This has continued and has been exacerbated by the increased incidence of wet weather and storms. It is proposed to repair the external walls of the turret as phase one of a programme of rolling repairs subject to finance being available.

#### Bolton Report

Dr Jason Bolton's 2019 report dealt with the existing pointing and rendering of the facades and made recommendations for mortars and renders which would be suitable for repairs.

Inter alia Dr Bolton noted:

- *Lime Render: Traces of lime-based render survive on the surface of the masonry on all elevations. However, it is unclear whether this is original medieval render, or whether this is later Georgian render.*

- *Portland Cement Render: The lime render is overlain in places with a grey-coloured coarse-grained limestone-rich sharp gritty Portland Cement-based render. A Portland Cement render, incised to resemble stone masonry, was also applied to the external faces of the corner turrets.*
- *Past Repairs: There has been extensive use of Portland Cement-based mortars for repointing and 'plastic' mortar repairs to re-face some stones (Fig.9). The parapets were repaired at some point in the past using brick and sandstone in addition to local stones. There was extensive use of concrete in the 1950s at all levels of the castle .*
- *Masonry Fabric: The masonry fabric was built using local stone (a hybrid sandstone, also termed a calcareous greywacke) with limestones, red sandstones and some other stones, all bedded in a gritty limebased mortar (Figs.7-8). A fossiliferous limestone was used for quoins (Fig.9).*
- *Recent Repairs: Repairs have been made to the large flat hewn greywacke roofing slabs over the turrets (Figs.17-18) and these have probably significantly reduced but not eliminated water ingress into the building fabric (as a number of other sources of water ingress were noted during the course of the site visit).*
- *Water Ingress: Invasive vegetation was noted on all elevations, and the penetration of root systems allows pathways for water to enter the building. In addition, there are a number of cracks visible in the walls, and areas where the cement-based repointing mortars have failed.*

The report noted also:

*The masonry has been repointed, repaired, re-faced and in some areas rendered with Portland Cement-based mortars, in addition to the extensive alterations undertaken in concrete. Lime-based bedding mortars can be seen where the repointing mortars have failed. All elevations show invasive vegetation indicating multiple points of water ingress; in addition to the open cracks which also allow water penetration.*

#### Proposed works

The existing pointing and rendering have failed resulting in penetrating dampness. Their Portland cement composition is unsuitable for stone masonry. The Portland cement rendered lining is trapping moisture resulting in soluble salt crystallisation. It is proposed to remove all cement-based pointing and rendering and to repoint and re-render in lime-based mortar. Whereas it is intended to remove all cement render internally and externally it is proposed that the external work be undertaken as a priority. In the event that financial constraints prevent the removal of the internal render at this stage, sections of it would be removed to facilitate and monitor the drying out of the walls.

#### Criteria for rendering

The castle currently presents as a combination of unrendered stonework and cement render. Resulting from the 1950's alterations and earlier interventions there are a number of combinations of sub-strata and finishes:

- Areas rebuilt in concrete;
- Original masonry areas repointed & re-faced (stone facing repairs) in cement-based mortars;
- Small areas of exposed rubble masonry with lime-based bedding mortars;
- Render 'sandwich' (limewash on top of cement render, on top of lime render, on top of rubble masonry substrate);
- Lime render (where cement render has fallen away).



Entrance faced showing cement render to the centre, side of turret and around windows.



The cement render has been incised to give a "stonework effect".  
Sections of the façade to the rear are lime rendered which in some locations has been rendered over in Portland cement.



Rear façade showing rendered blockwork infill at window insertions and older render on turret.



Earlier lime render over-rendered with Portland cement material.



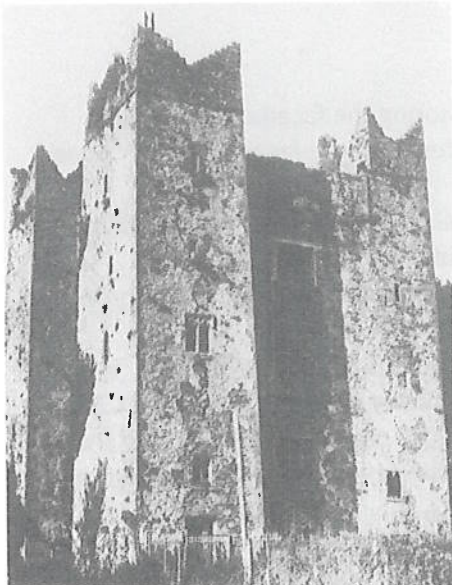
Cement render over lime render. Incised lines in render.

The Bolton report noted in relation to the external rendering mortars:

*In addition to the cement-based repointing and repair mortars and the concrete interventions, the exterior of the castle can be said to show a number of layers of external rendering mortars adhering to the surface of the masonry in places:*

- *Layer 1: Rubble masonry substrate laid in a lime-based bedding mortar*
- *Layer 2: Lime-based render*
- *Layer 3: Lime wash (multiple coats)*
- *Layer 4: Grey Cement render with sharp dark-grey limestone aggregate & brick dust*

At high level there are traces of early lime render. The Bolton report notes that this may be early mortar or of the Georgian period.



Photographs from the early 1950's show extensive white-coloured render detaching from the tower house.

It is now generally accepted that many of early stone buildings were originally rendered or harled. From examination on site it is clear that Bellew's castle was rendered although it is not possible to determine when.

In recent times a number of buildings contemporaneous with Bellew's castle have been rendered in lime such as Rathfarnham Castle undertaken by the Office of Public Works. This is now considered to be good practice especially where weatherproofing is an issue.



Rathfarnham castle, Co. Dublin



The alternative to rendering is to re-point only. This would leave exposed the large areas of in-situ concrete and concrete blockwork which were part of the 1950's alterations. In addition to being visually poor the exposed concrete, in the absence of being rendered, would be porous.

Accordingly it is considered that the re-rendering of the castle:

- Is necessary to achieve weathertightness
- Is appropriate to its architecture and the period in which it was built
- Is consistent with its appearance, noting that much of the render from the 1950's has weathered away.

#### Door and window opes

Many of the window and opes are 1950's alterations.

Consideration was given to undoing these alterations and restoring the façade to its original appearance. It was also considered as to whether the re-rendering of the façade would "copper-fasten" the interventions.

It was considered that in the absence of a new use or undertaker which might involve a complete restoration, the current emphasis should be on making the building weathertight. The interventions are now part of the accumulated history of the castle. None of the works proposed would compromise a future restoration of the castle were that to be proposed.

Window and door surrounds are of dressed limestone. These do not project beyond the face of the rubble work. Opinions differ as to whether these were originally rendered over or not. The stone surround to the entrance doorway has been repaired in the past. A small section of the original surround remains. This is sparrow picked to a geometric appearance and is incised on its inner reveal. This indicates that it was intended to be seen. The quoins are roughly dressed limestone. It is proposed to render over these.

Re-rendering details – Dr Jason Bolton

The stair tower (south-west tower) consists of original rubble stone masonry of two-leaf-and-core tripartite construction, with insertions of concrete at the windows and parapet level. Examples of original lime-based render and multiple layers of limewash were identified in 2021 on the north elevation of the castle indicating that the castle was previously coated with a lime-based external render.

Two rendering mortars are required for the repair of the south-west stair tower:

- A base coat of St. Astier Hourdex to be applied on the 1950s concrete elements only.
- A base coat of St. Astier NHL 3.5 as a basecoat on the rubble masonry, and as a finishing coat throughout (to provide a homogenous finish).

The St. Astier NHL 3.5 is also to be used at parapet level to replace the existing lime slurry shelter coat with a new lime haunching and lime render.

**Concrete Masonry:** The concrete elements should first be prepared with a base coat render of St. Astier 'Hourdex'<sup>1</sup>. This is to be subsequently coated with an NHL 3.5 top coat along with the rest of the tower. A trial panel of this is to be prepared prior to the onset of the work for approval by the Architect.

Proportions:

Hourdex (manual application)	Sand	[ Mix ]
1	2 ½	[ 1 : 2 ½ ]

*Table 2: Suggested mix for a basecoat on concrete elements based on St. Astier 'Hourdex'.*

**Masonry:** The rubble masonry should be rendered with an NHL3.5 lime render (See Table 1 below). A trial panel of the mix is to be prepared prior to the onset of the work for approval by the Architect.

	NHL 3.5	Aggregate: Limestone with a quartz fraction	Hair*	Binder:Aggregate
Base/Scratch Coat (3-5mm) <sup>2</sup>	1	1 ½	Yes	1 : 2 - 2 ½
Floating Coat (15-20mm)	1	2 ½	Yes	1 : 2 - 2 ½
Finishing Coat (5.10mm)	1	2 - 2 ½	-	1 : 2 ½

*Table 1: Suggested mix based on natural hydraulic lime. \*Hair added to the base and floating coat will improve tensile strength and decrease the potential for shrinkage cracks.*

<sup>1</sup> St. Astier 'Hourdex' is a proprietary ready-mixed mortar based on a mix of St. Astier Natural Hydraulic Lime (NHL) with white Portland cement. With a compressive strength of 1.5 N.mm<sup>2</sup> after 24 hours (rising to 4.5 N.mm<sup>2</sup> at 7 days, and 6.7 N.mm<sup>2</sup> at 28days) compared with 5-9 N.mm<sup>2</sup> at 28 days for an NHL 5, this binder should bond with a mid-twentieth century concrete substrate.

<sup>2</sup> St. Astier recommend the scratch coat be cast on.

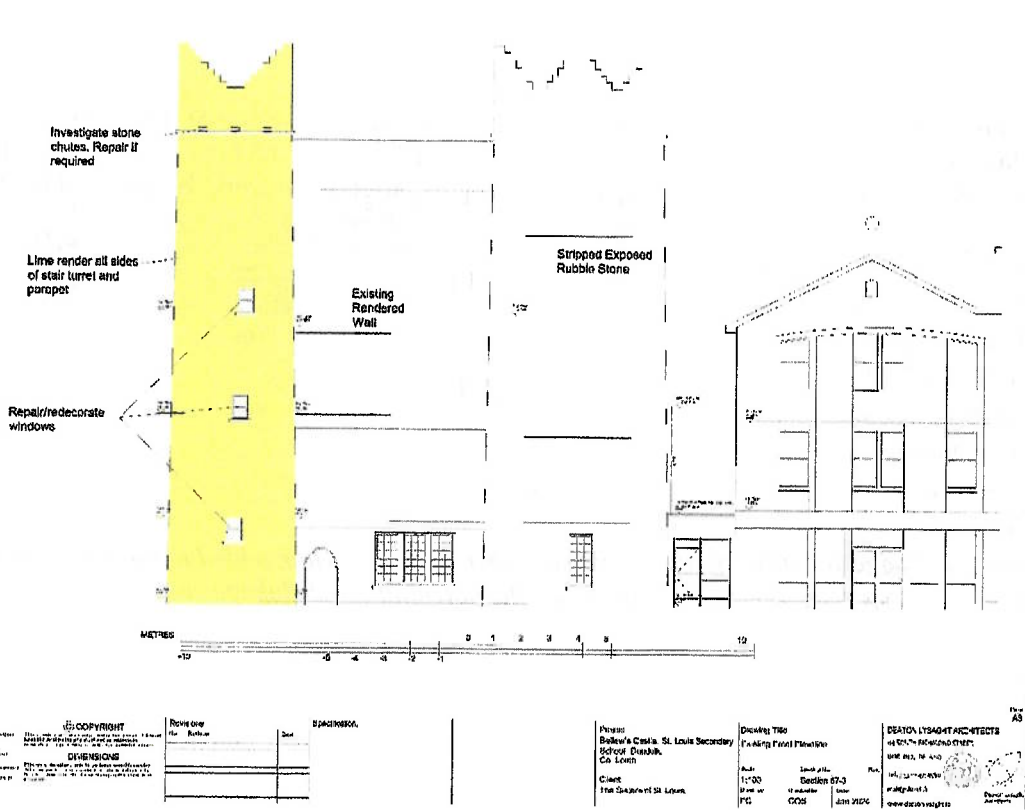
Wall finish

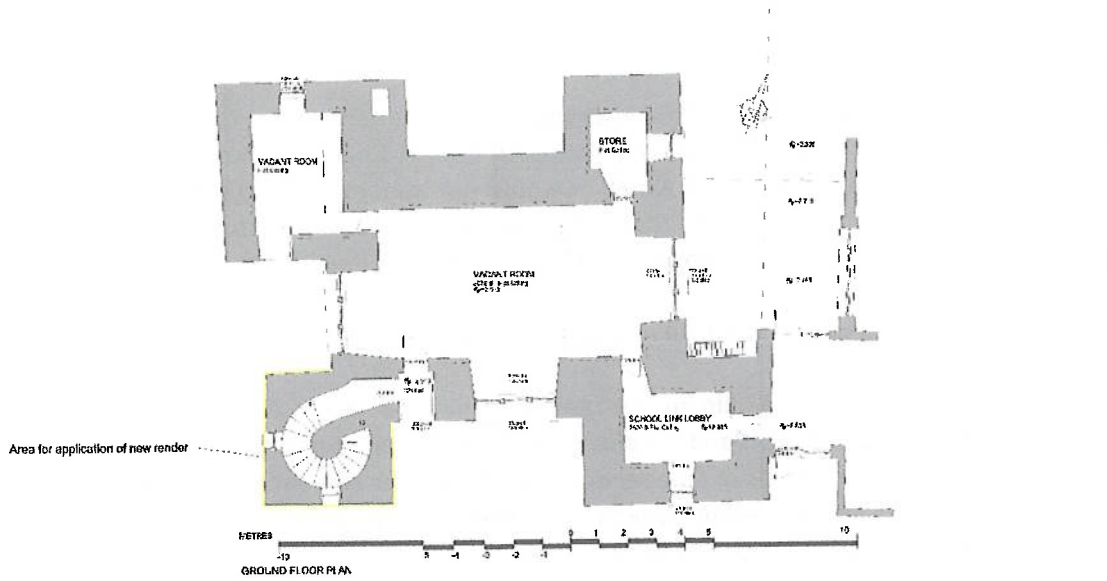
It is proposed to bring the walls to a light harled finish allowing the texture of the masonry to show through.



Example of harled walls

Drawings





**NOTES**  
 1. All work to be carried out in accordance with the specifications and drawings.  
 2. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary permissions and consents.  
 3. The contractor shall ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner and to the satisfaction of the architect.

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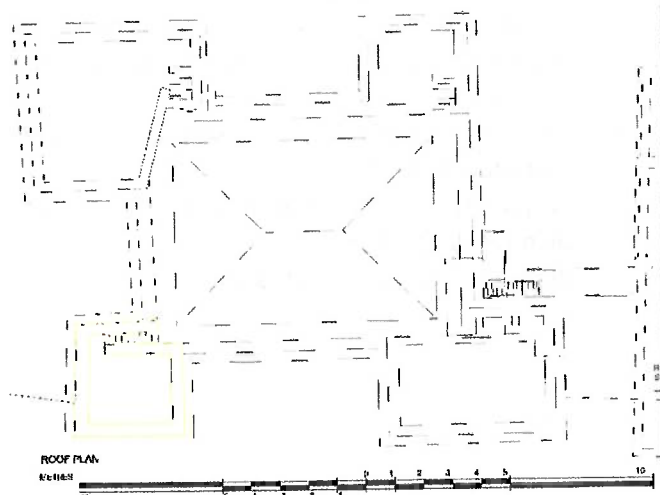
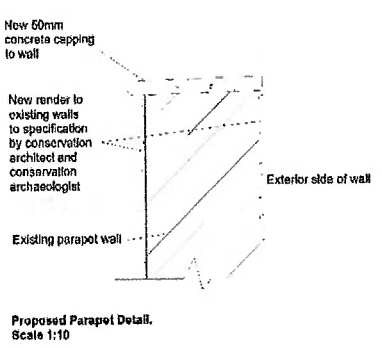
Revision	No.	Author	Date

**Specimen**

**Project**  
 Bellew's Castle, St. Louis Secondary School, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
**Client**  
 The Sisters of St. Louis

**Drawing Title**  
 Existing Ground Floor Plan  
**Scale**  
 1:100  
**Date**  
 2014

**DEATON ARCHITECTS**  
 45-47, The Arcade, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
 Tel: 0429 224444  
 Fax: 0429 224445  
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**NOTES**  
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Revision	No.	Author	Date

**Specimen**

**Project**  
 Bellew's Castle, St. Louis Secondary School, Dundalk, Co. Louth  
**Client**  
 The Sisters of St. Louis

**Drawing Title**  
 Roof Plan and Parapet Detail  
**Scale**  
 1:100  
**Date**  
 2014

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 www.deatonarchitects.com

## Section 57 – Request for declaration.

### Request for declaration

In accordance with Section 57 (2) of the Planning Act 2000 (as amended) The Sisters of St. Louis as owner the protected structure hereby request Louth County Council to issue a declaration whether the proposed type of works would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or of any element, referred to in *subsection (1)(b)*, of that structure.

It is suggested that the proposed works would not materially affect the character of the structure for the following reasons:

- The proposed works comprise essential repairs necessary to make the structure weatherproof.
- The proposed works would involve removal of unsatisfactory 20<sup>th</sup> C interventions which involved the use of Portland cement-based pointing and rendering.
- The existence of panels of lime render underlying later cement render and 1950 photographs are compelling evidence that the building was fully lime rendered. The proposed rendering of the building in lime based harling would restore the character of the turret walls.

### Proposed works.

- Works to be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced heritage contractor.
- Works to be specified and monitored by an RIAI Grade One accredited conservation architect or equivalent. Archaeological Impact Assessment to be provided by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- Liaise with the conservation architect to agree a safe working area for the works.
- Provide scaffolding and hoists as appropriate. Do not remove any fabric or make any pudlock holes without prior approval of the conservation architect.
- Provide suitable and adequate protection to the castle during the works.
- Remove all cement render from masonry (internally and externally).
- Rake out mortar joints and remove all cement pointing. Do not rake out any sound lime based mortar joints. All to be in accordance with a detailed method statement.
- Repoint using lime mortar in accordance with specified mix and detailed method statement.
- Scud, undercoat and finish coat in lime-based harling with specified mix and detailed method statement.
- Prepare samples of pointing and rendering for prior approval of the architect and the planning authority.
- Repair and repaint windows.

John Deaton/Deaton Lysaght Architects  
RIAI Accredited Conservation Architect Grade One  
44 South Richmond Street, Dublin 2  
014754960 0872951838 [ideaton@dlarch.ie](mailto:ideaton@dlarch.ie)

## References

**Gosling (1991)** - "From Dún Delca to Dundalk: The Topography and Archaeology of a Medieval Frontier Town  
A.D. c. 1187-1700

Paul Gosling

*Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*

Vol 22, No. 3 (1991) pp 221,223-353

DOI:2307/27729714

**Dalton and O' Flanagan (1864)** - "The History of Dundalk and its Environs from the earliest historic period to  
the present time with memoirs of its eminent men"

John D'Alton Esq & J.R. O'Flanagan Esq M.R.I.A.

Dundalk - Published by William Tempest 1864

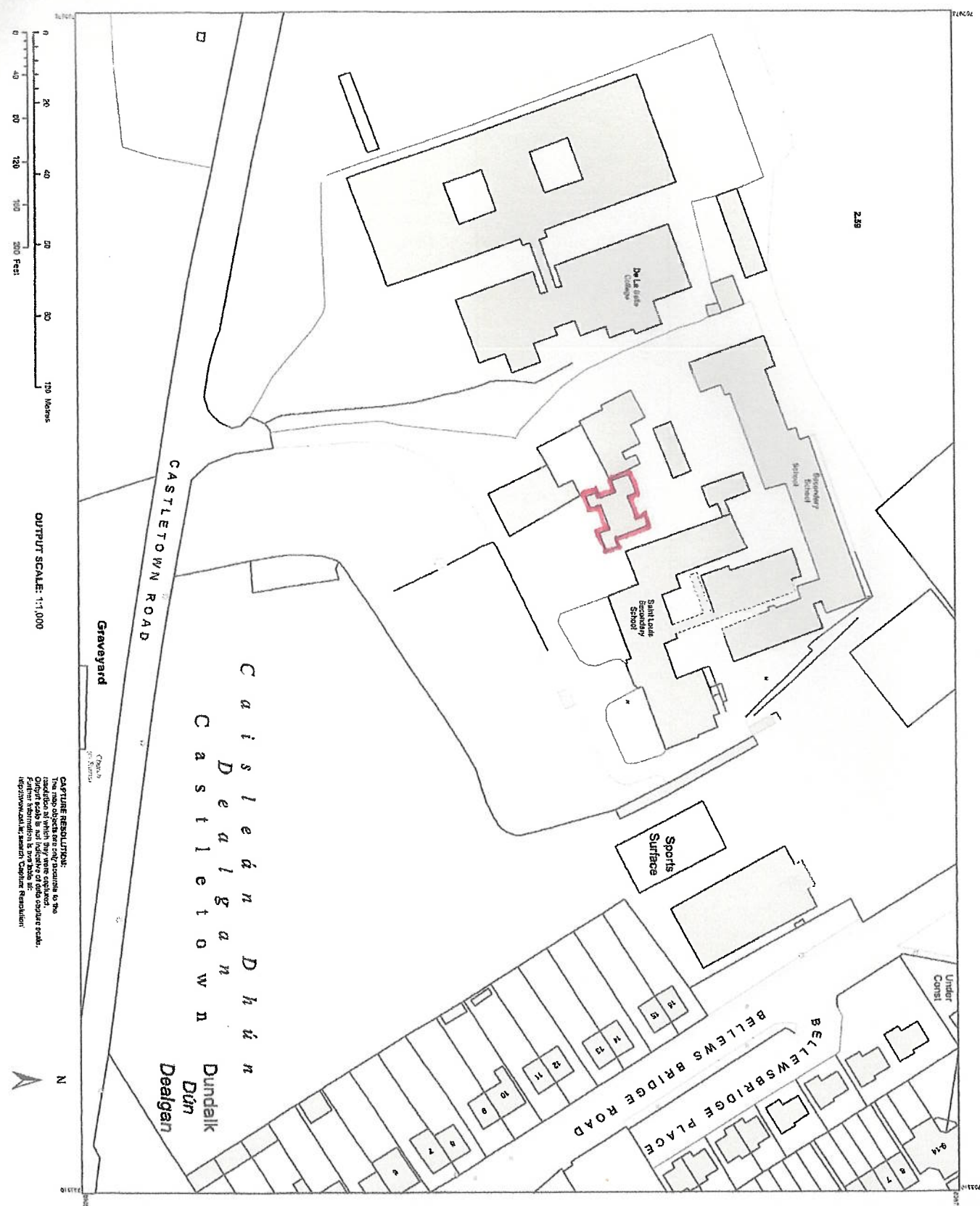
**Tempest (1943)** - Bellews Castle, Castle Town Bellew, or Castle Town Castle, Dundalk,  
Co. Louth,

Tempest H.G. and O'Connell V.J.

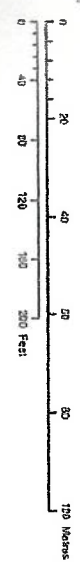
*Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society*

Vol 10 No.3 (1943) pp 180 - 195





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