

19th & Early 20th Century Architecture of Dunmore Town

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Sion Hill (The Glebe)



This Georgian detached three-bay two-storey over basement house was built in 1828 for Sir George Shee (info from Renate Cooke). It was the residence of a number of Church of Ireland Ministers whose church was at that time part of the Augustinian Friary. Church of Ireland services were held in the house in 1865 as renovations were taking place to the church in the Friary. There is allegedly a tunnel linking the house to the Abbey under the river (pers. comm. Joan Walkin) The Black and Tan soldiers occupied the house for a while. It was bought by Dr John Cooke from the Bank of Ireland c.1931 and the Cooke family remained in residence until 2002.

Photograph: Sion Hill (The Glebe) 2020

The house is set on its own grounds adjacent to 'Friars Walk' Housing Estate. It has a shallow breakfront to the entrance bay and a flat-roofed entrance porch with a flat concrete roof supported on square columns. The porch was added c.1920. The six-panelled double-leaf timber front door has an elaborate Adam-style fanlight with radial glazing bars forming a central orb and each segment ending in an ogee arch.

There are single-storey, rubble stone outbuildings to the rear of the house. The house is now derelict and the square-headed windows are boarded up. The house is a listed protected structure on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH Reg. No. 30330006).

The set of stone piers and cast iron gates on Sion Hill opposite the National School, mark the original back entrance way to the house. They are not original to the house but were purchased from a Convent in Ballyhaunis Co. Mayo in the 1970s. (Information from Renate Cooke to Joan Walkin). The main entrance to the house was located close to the present day entrance to Friars Walk housing estate.



Photographs: Back entrance cast iron gates and stone pillars to the former Sion Hill House (The Glebe)

St Marys' House

Set in its own grounds this simple Georgian style house is composed of a detached four-bay two-story block built c.1810 and a three-bay additional block added c.1830 to the side. Two Victorian-style canted-bay windows were added to the front of the house c.1880. The grounds are enclosed by rendered walls and metal gates. The house has a natural slate roof which is pitched on the older block and hipped on the later block. The walls are roughcast rendered, with dressed limestone quoins and plinth. The timber eight-panel main entrance door is flanked by sidelights. A flat concrete canopy supported on cylindrical cement columns shelters the doorway. The house is a protected structure listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330003) and on the RPS.



Photograph: St Mary's House Dunmore

High St



The terraced three storey house in High St. was built c.1820 and retains its original proportions and use. It has a four-bay ground floor and three-bay upper floors. The walls are cement ruled and lined with probable rubble stone beneath. The square-headed windows have raised moulded cement surrounds and limestone sills. The ground floor windows are the original margined timber sliding sash one-over-one pane but the upper floors have replacement uPVC windows. There are two doorways at ground level. The round-headed doorway has a spoked timber fanlight, while the square headed doorway has an overlight. Both have 19th century timber panelled doors. The house is a protected structure listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330010) and the RPS.

Photograph: House on High St., Dunmore

Parochial House, High Street



The Parochial House on High St is a detached three-bay two-storey L-plan house which was built c.1820. On the 1890 OS 6-inch map, it is labelled as 'Merton House'. It is placed in a strategic position facing down the street opposite and is set back from the street with wrought-iron railings on a rendered plinth wall and a decorative wrought-iron pedestrian gate set between a pair of limestone piers with caps. The façade is of fine squared limestone with rendered ends. The hipped roof has graduated slates which are now quite rare.

Photograph: Parochial House, Dunmore

The rendered chimneystacks are set behind the roof ridge. A shallow entrance breakfront has a wide segmental-headed doorway with a replacement timber door and fanlight. The tall square-headed windows have limestone sills and replacement uPVC glazing. The house is a protected structure listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330013) but it is not included on the RPS.

Thomas Byrne, The Square

Thomas Byrne's commercial premises in the Square is a well-proportioned and significant building which retains its original use. It is one of the few buildings in the town to preserve an original late nineteenth-century shopfront, which is enhanced by the hand-painted signage.

The shopfront is set into a terraced five-bay three-storey house with an integral carriage arch to the ground floor. The house was built c.1830 and the shop frontage added c.1870.

The building has a low pitched natural slate roof with three rendered chimneystacks. The rubble limestone walls are rendered and painted, ruled and lined on the upper floor and channelled on the ground floor. The square-headed window openings on the upper floors have stone sills and raised render surrounds. They are replacement uPVC windows.

The shopfront is defined by decorative pedimented brackets, a plain fascia with a moulded cornice and painted lettering. A central double-leaf panelled timber door is flanked by two display windows divided by a central mullion. The building is listed as a protected structure on the NIAH (Reg. No. 30330012) and also on the RPS.



Photograph: Thomas Byrne Bar and Lounge, Dunmore.

Thomas Fahy & Son, Castle Street



Photograph: Thomas Fahy & Son Public House 2020.

This terraced two-bay two-storey house was built c.1830 and a public house front was added c.1881 to the ground floor. The building was remodelled c.1910. There has been a marked dilapidation of the building and shopfront since it was recorded for the NIAH inventory in 2009. In 2009, the NIAH described it as ‘the fine render shopfront is one of the best in Dunmore and the incorporation of mirrors into the brackets is unusual and decorative’.

It has a pitched slated roof with rendered chimneystacks and the walls are rendered and painted with parallel, raised quoins. The shopfront has panelled pilasters with plinths and brackets which were recorded as incorporating mirrors by the NIAH. The double-leaf timber panelled entrance door has a rectangular overhead. The display windows are protected by wrought-iron railings. The building is listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330008) and on the RPS.

Castle Street



Photograph: Former shopfront, Castle Street

This early twentieth-century shop and house are a noteworthy part of Castle Street. The range of well-maintained mouldings and plasterwork sets the building apart from its neighbours and adds to the architectural variety of the town.

The building is a four-bay two-storey terraced house, dated 1902, with a shopfront and integral carriage arch to the ground floor. The front is rendered with raised plaster quoins.

The whole of the ground floor is capped by a moulded cornice at first floor sill level. Panelled pilasters with fluted consoles and pediment tops with shamrock motifs bookend the ground floor.

The carriage arch at the north end is flanked by panelled pilasters and topped with a moulded arch with a fluted keystone. The first floor windows openings are camber-headed with moulded architraves and replacement timber casement windows. They are grouped in two pairs to the south end.

The timber entrance door is square-headed and flanked by decorative pilasters with moulded panels and has ornate brackets, a moulded cornice and dentil course, with a date plaque between brackets.

The shopfront also has panelled pilasters with square-headed display windows set between them. The centrally placed, square-headed shop door has an over light. A decorative wrought-iron bracket extends from the first floor and was possibly used for signage. The building is listed on the NIAH (Reg. No. : 30330007) but it is not included in the RPS.

Bank of Ireland



The building that formerly housed the Bank of Ireland, though typical in detailing of a late Victorian bank building, is unusually single storey. It is sited on Barrack St and has a small grass area to the front enclosed by metal railings on a rendered plinth.

The detail of the elaborately moulded entrance porch and timber roof brackets make it a unique feature of the town's architectural heritage. It was built over one hundred years ago c.1880,

Photograph: Former Bank of Ireland Dunmore

It is a detached five-bay single-storey building with a gabled breakfront which houses the main entrance round headed doorway. The breakfront has render copings with ball finials and apex detail, and the projection to which it is inset has a curvilinear gable with ball finials to ends. The roof is hipped with carved timber brackets. It has a natural slate roof with two rendered chimneystacks with moulding copings. The walls are rendered with raised plaster quoins and a moulded plinth. The windows are camber-headed with moulded surrounds. Double windows flank the porch. The painted stone sills have decorative brackets beneath. One of the window openings has been converted for use for the ATM.

The building is listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330009) and on the RPS. The Bank of Ireland in Dunmore was scheduled for closure in September 2021 and closed its doors the following month on October 8th, 2021.

The Weighbridge



The weighbridge and house located in the Town Square is a notable and unique feature of the architecture of Dunmore and its history as a market town. Once a common feature in market towns most have been removed.

The octagonal-plan single-storey weigh-house has a conical roof and rendered painted walls. A square headed doorway is located on the north side. Limestone plaques commemorating local history and events have been inserted around the exterior wall



Photographs: Weighbridge and House, the Square, Dunmore

The decorative cast-iron weighbridge is located on the south-east side of the house. There are four wheel channels at the corners. The makers name and date 'W&T Avery Ltd Birmingham 1925 No. 537' are inscribed in raised lettering and decorative motifs give a very attractive pattern. The house and weighbridge are listed on the NIAH (Reg. No.: 30330011) and on the RPS.

Other architectural notables around the Town



Photograph: The Bridge Bar, Dunmore

This building dating to the late 1800s was designed to fit into the layout of the earlier, possibly medieval street plan. John Loftus, the owner of the Bridge Bar built a Handball Alley to the rear of the building. The back wall of the alley is still standing. (Information from Hubert Birmingham).



Photograph: Former McDonnells Department Store, Bridge St., Dunmore

This derelict building on Bridge St. exhibits many of the architectural features common in the town including square headed windows with moulded surrounds set on brackets, a continuous sill course to the first floor and a shopfront inserted into the ground floor. The recessed entrance doorway is 111 tiled with a

very attractive mosaic pattern inscribed with the owner's name. This was once the entrance to a large department store owned by Martin McDonnell, a merchant from Roscommon who prospered significantly in the mid-1800s. He later opened branches in Tuam, Milltown, Mountbellew, Ballyhaunis and Cloonfad. He held eight townlands in the parish of Boyounagh, one in the parish of Tuam and one in the parish of Dunmore at the time of Griffith's Valuation. He bought almost 6,000 acres of Lord Fitzgerald's estate in the vicinity of Dunmore in the early 1850s. By the 1870s he owned over 9,000 acres in county Galway, 2,940 acres in county Roscommon and three acres in county Mayo. (<http://landedestates.nuigalway.ie/>) His life and times are detailed in the book 'The Life and Times of Martin McDonnell, Merchant, Landlord and Poor Law Guardian' by William Keaveney. (Information from Joan Walkin)



Photograph: Mosaic tiled entrance door step Bridge St., Dunmore



Photograph: Former houses with integral shopfronts, Bridge St., Dunmore

A number of derelict houses with integral vernacular shopfronts are located on Bridge St. A noticeable feature of these buildings are the high chimneystacks. The buildings on the east side of Bridge St. are due for demolition under the Dunmore Rural Regeneration Scheme which is underway by Galway County Council.

<http://www.galway.ie/en/services/roads/roadsprojects/dunmore/> The purpose of the project is to improve the centre of

Dunmore to enable regeneration within the town, improve the usability of Bridge Street and encourage use of the Square. A feasibility study was completed with public consultation in 2020 with five route options presented to alleviate traffic flow problems in the town. Option 2 has been selected and is currently being forwarded for planning.



Photograph: An unusually narrow three storey, two bay building with integral shopfront, the Square, Dunmore



Photograph: Traditional shopfront with hand painted name plate and modern post office shopfront set into ground floor of house. Second floor windows with decorative channelled architrave with central pediment.

An elegant carriage archway is located in the corner of the Square. It is the original entrance to the rear yard and stables of the Steed's family shop and public house. Customers would leave 'sidecars' and horses there, when visiting the public house or when attending mass. (pers. comm. JJ Higgins)

Plaster work

A number of buildings display decorative plasterwork which was very likely to have been the work of a local craftsman. John McHugh was a local plaster craftsman in the early part of the 20th century (pers. comm. JJ Higgins)



Photograph: Plaster decoration on quoin stones of building in The Square.



Photograph: Plaster decoration on lined and rendered façade of upper floors of house in Castle St. with remains of fascia of a traditional shopfront over ground floor.