FINDING NEW USES FOR IRISH DEMESNES: AUTHENTICITY AND INTEGRITY ISSUES

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ACA  Architectural Conservation Area
ASPC  Area of Special Planning Control
CDP  City/County Development Plan
COE  Council of Europe
CPO  Compulsory Purchase Order
DEHLG  Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government.
EIA  Environmental Impact Assessment
ICOMOS  International Council on Monuments and Sites
IGS  Irish Georgian Society
LCA  Landscape Conservation Area
NDP  National Development Plan
NHA  Natural Heritage Area
NIAH  National Inventory of Architectural Heritage
NLS  National Landscape Strategy
NRA  National Roads Authority
OPW  Office of Public Works
RPS  Record of Protected Structures
SAC  Special Area of Conservation
SEA  Strategic Environmental Assessment
SPA  Special Protection Area
TPO  Tree Preservation Order
UNESCO  United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WHC  World Heritage Convention
## Glossary of Terms

**Adaptation**
To make changes to cultural heritage to accommodate a new use.

**Authenticity**
A heritage resource that is materially original or genuine as it was constructed, aged and weathered through time.

**Conservation**
All the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstances include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaption and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

**Consolidation**
Physical interventions undertaken to stop further decay or structural instability.

**Cultural Landscape**
An outcome of a culture that has created them, through beliefs, ideas or physical interventions, and denotes the relationship between human beings and their environment.

**Integrity**
A measure of the wholeness and intactness of natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.

**Landscape**
An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.

**Landscape Protection**
Actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its cultural heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity.

**Landscape Management**
Action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and
environmental processes.

**Preservation**
To maintain cultural heritage in its existing form and condition and undertaking maintenance work as necessary.

**Prevention**
To alter conditions to reduce or slow the process of decay.

**Protection**
Putting in place legal, physical or other tangible measures to safeguard cultural heritage from damage.

**Reconstitution**
Re-building a collapsed/degraded cultural heritage building or property or parts of it piece by piece.

**Reconstruction**
Re-creation by building a replica of a cultural heritage building or property on its original site.

**Restoration**
Is returning a cultural heritage building or property or parts of it to a form in which it appeared at some point in the past.
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Declaration

I Michael MacDonagh confirm that this work, submitted for assessment, is my own and is expressed in my own words. Any use made within it of the works of other authors in any form (ideas, text, figures, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged at the point of their use. A list of the references employed is included as part of this work.

Signed: ________________________________

Date: ________________________________
Chronology of Irish History

1169 The Anglo-Norman Invasion: Strongbow becomes Lord of Leinster

1537 The dissolution of the monasteries.

1557 The Leix and Offaly Plantation

1586 The Munster Plantation

1601 The Battle of Kinsale

1607 The Flight of the Earls

1610 The Ulster Plantation

1649 Oliver Cromwell arrives in Ireland

1660 The Restoration of Charles II

1689-1691 The Williamite Wars ending with the Treaty of Limerick

1800 The Act of Union creates the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland

1845-1852 The Great Famine

1870 The First Irish Land Act

1881 The Second Irish Land Act

1903 The Wyndham Land (Purchase) Act

1923 The Land Law (Commission) Act

1916 The Easter Rising

1919-1921 The War of Independence

1922-1923 The Irish Civil War

1923 The Irish Free State is created and becomes a dominion of the British Empire

1949 The Irish Republic is declared and withdraws from the British Commonwealth

1963 The Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1963 is introduced

2000 The Planning and Development Act, 2000 is introduced
ABSTRACT

The demesnes of Ireland occupy a central place within the evolution of the modern Irish landscape. They were constructed by a confident and self-assured landed gentry who enjoyed absolute economic, political and social power on the island. For them, gardens were a very visible means of proclaiming newly found status and wealth, as well as authority on the island. The recreation of space in accordance with practical and fashionable aesthetic norms had the dual role of asserting the landlord’s status as members of the elite, while at the same time emphasising the social distance, which separated them from the remainder of society. Progressively, the demesne form was raised to the level of art by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where demesnes became masterpieces of architecture and landscape design. They frequently comprised of unique areas of outstanding architectural, archaeological, botanical and landscape importance.

In the decades up to World War I, the landownership system began to change radically. With these changes, the animating and unifying forces behind demesne construction crumbled and disappeared. In the newly established Irish Free State, few people saw demesnes as part of a shared heritage worth preserving. As a result, country houses and demesnes, the very symbol of British power in Ireland, came under direct attack. Demesnes were acquired compulsorily by the Land Commission and the newly formed Forest Service for use in agriculture, forestry or congestion relief. They paid little if any regard to their historic designed landscapes and, for a great many demesnes, their original context was frequently lost. This attitude continued up to the early 1980s, with the burning of a number of country houses in response to the republican hunger-strikes in Northern Ireland.

As passionate memory faded and later generations began to objectively examine the cultural heritage surrounding them, a new appreciation of these eighteenth and nineteenth century
landscapes began to emerge. However, the survival of demesnes remains under threat as development pressures, especially during the “Celtic Tiger” era, have resulted in a significant number of demesnes undergoing radical changes of use. These threats range from holiday home developments, road building exercises carried-out under the National Development Plans (NDPs) 2000-2006 and 2007-2012, urban and suburban expansion and, above all, golf and spa hotel resorts. Such developments impact upon the continued authenticity and integrity of such important cultural landscapes and, as a result, many have been needlessly destroyed.

However, conservation policy in Ireland is still dominated by conservation tools used to protect architectural structures, rather than cultural landscapes. Cultural landscapes cannot be conserved in the same manner as structures, as they are inevitably in a continual state of change through the seasons; their component plants grow and die, and they require significantly higher levels of maintenance to preserve their integrity. Such landscapes create a unique set of conservation challenges that can only be addressed though appropriate conservation legislation and policy guidance. In order to effectively conserve remaining demesnes, a new understanding of their complex composition and design interdependencies needs to be initially acknowledged before appropriate conservation tools are used to conserve them. In addition, if a demesne is to be adequately conserved in the longer-term, the potential consequences of fragmentation of land ownership and, resultant, uncoordinated development must also be addressed. Such an approach would allow for an appropriate new use to be found for a demesne, replicating the original animating and unifying forces. Only then would it be possible to maintain a demesne’s authenticity and integrity.

This is an essential prerequisite and the chief role for conservation policy in Ireland. This dissertation aims to uncover a greater understanding of the original functions that they served
and their intricate design interdependencies before making conservation policy recommendations aimed at safeguarding their continued authenticity and integrity.

To address these issues in a chronological manner, this dissertation is separated into distinct chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter introduces this dissertation’s main research question and methodology.

Chapter Two: Irish Demesnes

This chapter sets the scene with an examination of the existing definitions for demesnes.

Chapter Three: Historical Context: The Development of Demesnes in Ireland

This chapter traces the historical development of demesnes in Ireland from the twelfth to the twentieth century uncovering their historical form, function and layout.

Chapter Four: Demesne Structure in the Irish Landscape

This chapter summarises the significance and common characteristics of demesnes.

Chapter Five: The Abolition of Landlordism in Ireland

This chapter examines the decline of the system of landownership that brought demesnes into existence and their subsequent reappraisal in the 1980s.

Chapter Six: Current Threats to the Integrity of Irish Demesnes

This chapter outlines the vulnerable design elements and current development threats to the continued integrity and authenticity of demesnes.
Chapter Seven: Conservation Legislation in Ireland

This chapter undertakes a detailed examination of current conservation legislation in operation in Ireland. It will uncover how well Irish conservation legislation copes with the intricate design complexities of demesnes since it was overhauled a decade ago.

Chapter Eight: Case-study Analyses

This chapter examines the ability of current conservation legislation to protect the integrity of demesnes from the threat of erroneous development using three case-study examples.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

The final chapter will make recommendations for future legislative and policy amendments with the aim of further solidifying legislative reform begun in 2000.
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Passing through the arched gateway, we are confronted with a golf course dotted with people and Burberry sweaters… pulling little trolleys… and in the distance… we can just make out the big house, now a hotel. We struggle to imagine how it would have appeared in its original setting, but it is hopeless. The patina of age has been sanded off the antique and it is now cast as a curious anomaly in a sea of modernity (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 16).

The Irish rural landscape is a synthesis of natural and man-made features that have evolved over many thousands of years. The demesnes occupy a central place within the evolution of the modern Irish landscape, comprising unique areas of outstanding architectural, archaeological, botanical and landscape importance. Their introduction in the twelfth century heralded the formation of commercialised landscapes in Ireland, dominated by landed estates. Defined historically as the lands held by a lord around his manor for his own use and occupation, the demesne formerly enveloped almost six per cent of the landmass of the island (Aalen et al, 1997: 197). Although dependent upon their surrounding tenanted estates, demesnes evolved as separate social and economic areas, whose distinctive layouts, incorporated built features, gardens, arable and pastoral farmlands, and woodland. They continue to symbolise one of the most dominant man-made components of the Irish landscape.

However, this standing in Ireland has been significantly eroded, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, with the dismantling of the landownership system that brought them into existence. Devoid of their animating and unifying forces, a substantial number of country houses and demesnes were abandoned and allowed to fall into a state of disrepair (Plate 1.1). Those that did survive were frequently acquired by the newly formed Land Commission and Forest Service, and subsequently subdivided: their original meaning was utterly lost. Many contemporary development pressures continue to compete against campaigns to preserve
demesnes intact; such pressures include spiralling land values, expansion of urban areas, developing transportation infrastructure, fragmentation of land ownership, labour and maintenance costs, the availability of grants and tax rebates for maintenance and conservation schemes, political will and effective statutory protection. Such pressures become even more complicated where a demesne has become fragmented between a multiplicity of owners.

Plate 1.1: The main avenue and gate lodge to Bective Demesne, Co. Meath. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

This dissertation aims to analyse the original intention behind their creation, their historical form and layout in the landscape, their most vulnerable design elements and the contemporary threats that they now face. In order to effectively preserve demesnes, an understanding of the original functions that they served and their intricate design interdependencies needs to be fully understood before an appropriate role for conservation legislation can be properly understood.
This dissertation will examine the manner in which Irish conservation policy has safeguarded the integrity of three case-studies, Bective Demesne, Co. Meath, Humewood Castle, Co. Wicklow and Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon. These demesnes have been the subject of recent redevelopment proposals, which allows for an in-depth examination of the treatment of their cultural significance by conservation legislation. This dissertation also affords a timely examination of the effectiveness of Irish conservation policy, which was reformed in 2000. Following analyses of these case-studies, conservation policy recommendations will be extrapolated for the appropriate future protection and preservation of demesnes in general.

1.1 Research Scope

This dissertation will examine the strength of conservation policy at considering the complex interdependencies of demesnes, and assess whether this framework is effective by examining the effects that modern redevelopments have had on the integrity of three case-studies.

1.2 Research Question

Finding new uses for Irish demesnes that protect their authenticity and integrity?

1.3 Research Aims

This dissertation proposes that the intricate designed landscapes of Irish demesnes should be recognised as significant landscape components in their own right and that their authenticity and integrity should be preserved in their entirety. It will argue that this is preferable to the piecemeal approach currently employed in Irish conservation policy, whereby individual built features within a demesne are given statutory protection, largely ignoring the context and cultural heritage value of the wider demesne. In short, this dissertation will argue that the entire demesne must be given due consideration before its individual built features can be conserved.
Research Objectives

i. Research the cultural significance of demesnes.

ii. Research recent developments that have had an impact upon the character of demesnes.¹

iii. Research whether conservation policy is sufficient to preserve demesne integrity.

iv. Propose conservation policy recommendations for the future conservation of demesnes.

1.4 Methodology

In order to answer each of the research objectives, a comprehensive search for all relevant literature was undertaken to gain a clear understanding of the original animating and unifying forces behind demesne construction. An examination of contemporary threats and the tools available to planning authorities to conserve them was then undertaken.

A case-study approach was deemed to be the most appropriate method of assessing the strength of conservation policy at protecting demesne integrity.² Comprehensive file searches were conducted at the relevant planning office and, where first or third-party appeals were submitted to ‘An Bord Pleanála’ (The Planning Appeals Board), the Inspectors’ and the Board’s determinations were examined.³

A substantial deficiency in existing literature, regarding the effectiveness of conservation policy afforded to demesnes, was identified. As a result, a number of recommendations are made for the appropriate continued protection of the authenticity and integrity of demesnes.

¹ This dissertation does not aim to comment on which type of developments is appropriate: it will simply reason that a demesne should be recognised for its inherent cultural significance before redevelopment is considered.
² View Appendix A for a review of the methodology used to identify the three case-studies demesnes.
³ In order to gain a wider view and further analysis of the planning applications produced for these sites, a number of e-mails and informal semi-structured interviews were also conducted with representatives from both the private and public sectors, where necessary. It was foreseen that a survey of the opinions of local residents or visitors to the case-study demesnes would not be valuable, as they are likely to introduce a level of subjective bias.
2.0 IRISH DEMESNES

The term “demesne” is a word now particular to Ireland. There are numerous historical and contemporary definitions for Irish demesnes: each of which offers a variety of descriptions encompassing their main characteristics, forms and functions. Cumulatively, these definitions help to give a firm description of both the composition and role of demesnes in the Irish landscape. By thoroughly understanding the various functions and layouts that Irish demesnes undertook, more demesne-specific conservation policies can only then be realised. This would help rehabilitate those demesnes facing unrivalled challenges to their continued preservation.

2.1 Defining a Demesne

Between 1824 and 1846, the Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapped the entire island of Ireland to a scale of six inches to a mile. However, there were a number of difficulties in classifying the objects to be surveyed. Demesnes were one such difficulty. In 1834, it was agreed, at the behest of certain influential landowners, that demesnes would be mapped and shown as “matters of topographical information” (Andrews, 1975: 102) (Figure 2.1). Andrews (1975: 102) defined demesnes as:

the word, obsolescent in the ordinary speech of England, was understood by Irishmen to refer to the areas adjoining gentlemen’s country houses, not let to tenants but kept in the landlords’ own hands, and often, though by no means always, laid out as what the Ordnance Survey was later to call ‘ornamental ground’.

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4 The word “demesne” is likely to be an Anglo-French respelling of the Old French term “demaine” meaning field or area of influence, itself stemming from the Latin term “dominium” meaning property or ownership. This respelling created the Middle English term “demeine” and may have been further influenced by the French term “mesne” meaning middle: the Anglo-Norman variant of the term is “meen”. “Mesne” was a legal phrase used during this period; a “mesne lord” was a lord in the feudal system that had vassals who held land from him, but who was himself the vassal of a higher lord. A “mesne lord” did not hold land directly from the king. His subinfeudated estate was called a “mesne estate”.

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In 1885, the Commissioner of Valuation gave a director-general of the Survey, a note explaining the term “demesne lands” as:

modern usage… limits the term… to those lands surrounding the house or ‘domus’ of the lord of the manor, the squire or owner in fee, which lands are permanently in

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5 Lohort Castle is a microcosm of the radical change in landownership following the Anglo-Norman Invasion in 1169. It was built by the Gaelic-Irish chieftain Donogh Og McDonagh McCarthy in 1496 and was the scene of one of the bloodiest battles of the English Civil War when over 4,500 men were killed in battle in 1647. The castle was bombarded by Oliver Cromwell’s troops in 1650 and captured. It was rebuilt from 1750 by Sir John Percival, the Earl of Egmont, who also began developing a 100 acre (40.47 hectares) demesne around the castle in an octagonal shape. The family lived there until the early twentieth century when it was burned by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in 1921 during the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921 when the Castle was being used as a British Army observation post.
his own occupation. Where such lands are at a distance from the demesne proper, and isolated, I doubt if they can be considered “demesne lands” except they constitute a deer park or some such appurtenance to the mansion and demesne in which there is not a large proportion of the land arable (Andrews, 1975: 102).

Edward Malins and The Knight of Glin (1976: 3) offer a distinctive definition of Irish demesnes stating that it originally meant “the enclosed park round a great house, including the deer park or enclosure and the “pleasure grounds”, as the Irish called them, which were the ornamental planting and garden immediate to the house”.

B.J. Graham and L.J. Proudfoot (1993: 246) define a demesne as “that portion of his [a landlord’s] land reserved for his exclusive use and which might include agricultural as well as recreational land”.

In 1997, the editors of “Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape”, F.H.A. Aalen, Kevin Whelan and Matthew Stout (1997: 3), included numerous descriptions of demesnes. They state that “the demesne concept can be traced back to the early medieval tenurial system, when a proportion of the manorial lands were set-aside ‘in demesne’ to produce both goods and profits for the estate”. A second, later, definition offered by the authors is more comprehensive:

defined historically as the lands held by the manor for its own use and occupation, the demesne formerly occupied nearly 6% of the country, as highlighted by the finely engraved stipple on early ordnance survey maps. Although dependent upon their surrounding tenanted estates, demesnes evolved as separate social and economic areas, whose distinctive layouts – incorporating farmland, gardens, woods and buildings – still constitute a dominant man-made component of the landscape (Aalen et al, 1997: 198).

The British and later Irish Free State Land Acts from 1870-1933 also made a clear distinction between those areas of an estate that they considered to be tenanted and those untenanted core estates areas, essentially considered to be demesnes (Dooley, 2000: 16). These core estates
were restricted from sale under the terms of the earlier Land Acts but this restriction was removed by the newly formed Irish Free State from 1923.

Given the various definitions and descriptions outlined above, a number of common themes can be observed, that clearly delineating the demesne as an entity in its own right. The most obvious is the fact that the land was untenanted, cultivated directly by the landowner, and used for the purposes of making the landlord’s house self-sufficient. The land was directly attached to the landlord’s house, usually surrounding the mansion on all sides. As such, these lands fulfilled a wide-variety of functions and uses that were both practical and ornamental in nature, and had separate economic and social functions to those of the surrounding countryside. As a result, they were a distinct topographical features of the Irish landscape.
3.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMESNES IN IRELAND

A review of the historical formation and development of demesnes, including an examination of their complex construction, various design elements and landscape impact, will provide the basis for an analytical review of their cultural significance in subsequent chapters.  

3.1 The Earliest Demesnes

The history of the demesne concept can be traced to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans from 1169AD. These thirteenth century manorial demesnes were divided into two components; the lord’s division, which retained a proportion of the manorial lands to be set aside “in demesne” to produce both goods and profits for the manorial estate, and the land let-out to tenants in return for rents and services (Aalen et al., 1997: 197) (Plate 3.1). Once exposed to a more peaceful political and social environment, emerging Italian Renaissance ideas of designing houses and gardens as single units, would gradually help to transform them into great landscaped parklands by the close of the eighteenth century.

3.2 The Creation of a ‘Demesne Passionate’ Landed Gentry

The mass confiscation of land under the guidance of Oliver Cromwell from 1649 destroyed the economic, social and political power of Roman Catholic landowners on the island. Although some of these dispossessed landowners did recover their land in the subsequent tumultuous decades, the Cromwellian confiscations of the mid-seventeenth century largely shattered the

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6 View Appendix B for a detailed review of the development of Irish demesnes from the twelfth century.
7 The eighteenth century estate system grew-out of an amalgam of Anglo-Norman medieval manors, lands which were confiscated by the Crown and granted to or purchased by new British planters and settlers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly the Leix and Offaly Plantation of 1557, the Munster Plantation of 1586 and the Ulster Plantation of 1610, and the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland in the 1640s and 50s, as well as some Gaelic-Irish lands which managed to survive confiscation.
Gaelic-Irish and “Old English” land-owning classes replacing them with “New English” colonists (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224). The “New English” colonists swiftly took control of the economic, political and social machinery of the country; solidifying their position as the chief landowners in the process. This new class, frequently owning estates in both Britain and Ireland, was to evolve into what would later be referred to as the “Protestant Ascendancy” in Ireland. They were the most eager to adopt the latest trends in fashion for designing gardens in strict symmetrical association with the house (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 123). For them, gardens were a very visible means of proclaiming newly found status and wealth, as well as authority within the country.

Plate 3.1: A thirteenth century Anglo-Norman motte and bailey within South Hill Demesne, Co. Westmeath. The neo-classical rear facade of South Hill House is visible to the centre of the photograph. It became a centre of care for people with disabilities after World War II. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

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8 The term “New English” refers to the Protestant colonists who rapidly began to control social and political power within the country after 1533, especially during Elizabeth I’s reign (1558-1603). Catholic English who had migrated to Ireland before Henry VIII’s split with the Roman Catholic Church became known as “Old English”. By the mid-1650s, there were no Roman Catholic landowners of prominence remaining in possession of their lands east of the River Shannon. More than twenty years before, over eighty per cent of the land had been in Roman Catholic control. The “Old English” gradually fused with the native Gaelic-Irish after the 1691 Treaty of Limerick, ending Roman Catholic landowning power in Ireland.
3.3 Demesne Development, Form and Layout

This idea of uniting the country house and garden was followed by an increasing awareness amongst the landowning classes that the countryside surrounding their new country houses could be designed on a large scale. This was a reassuring expression of a stable, anglicised and victorious Protestant society. The self-confidence of the new landed class in Ireland, with its newly assured political position and flourishing rentals, initiated a sustained period of country house and demesne construction from the seventeenth century, which varied with oscillating fashion and taste (Aalen et al, 1997: 68).

Designed Geometric Landscapes

Given the relatively tranquil political environment after 1660, the burgeoning “New English” class enthusiastically re-designed existing confiscated demesnes or established new ones. These precursors to contemporary demesnes quickly became visible on the landscape itself as existing demesnes exponentially increased in size and provided suitably impressive settings for the great country houses under construction from the 1660s. Formal features were arranged axially upon the house on broad controlled vistas. The countryside surrounding their houses became increasingly designed and gradually began to affect much of the demesne area (Aalen et al, 1997: 200). The house now became the focus of a larger theatre, an outdoor architecture of radiating lines, vistas and axes, ultimately Baroque in inspiration.

By reorganising the demesne fields into rectangular grid-like patterns, and by extending the symmetry of the garden into the landscape through long perspectives, the new unfortified

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9 View Appendix C for a review of the character of landownership in Ireland, Appendix D for a review of the economics of emparking lands into a demesne and Appendix E for an example of the gradual emparking of Carton Demesne, Co. Kildare.
houses reflected their owner’s economic, social and political power within the country (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 200). Two clear examples of this process can be seen in the formal demesne of Carton House, Co. Kildare in the 1680s and Stradbally Hall Co. Laois in the 1740s (Figure 3.1 and 3.2). They are depicted as large white buildings acting as a nexus of a “designed landscape”, each characterised by radiating avenues and the “compartmentation of its demesne” (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67).

Figure 3.1: Carton House, Co. Kildare in the 1680s. (Source: Aalen et al, 1997: 199).

Landscape and Picturesque Parklands

By the 1740s and 1750s the popularity of the Baroque theory, that man was overcoming nature, had waned as fussy detail became unfashionable. A process of simplification led to the removal of walled courts around the country house and an opening-up of landscape views. It also, more importantly, encouraged an out-migration of garden features into the park, so that temples and other classical structures were built away from the house, crowning hillocks and terminating vistas. These concepts, which were refining the demesne form, developed over the course of the eighteenth century. Such developments increased the integration of the garden and
demesne, a process later fully realised with the emergence of the landscape park in the mid-eightheenth century (Aalen et al, 1997: 201).¹⁰

Figure 3.2: Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois. (Source: Aalen et al, 1997: 197).

This new revolutionary style demanded that flowers, fruit and vegetables be banished to walled gardens away from the house and those previously formal features, such as parterres, avenues and canals, be swept-away and replaced with an idealised conception of “natural” landscapes (Figure 3.3). Arcadian parklands secluded from the outside world by encircling walls and belts of trees enclosed the residence at their heart (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 550).

¹⁰ The spirit of simplicity that engendered it found equivalent expression in the houses built to enjoy it; Neo-Classical cubes of prismatic solidity intended to be seen in three dimensions, where the main rooms were on the ground floor and the grass rolled right up to the windows. The new style for country houses was that of Palladian architecture, imported from Italy. The largest and most palatial of the Palladian houses is Castletown House, Co. Kildare; by 1760 its demesne incorporated 1,100 acres (445 hectares). It was designed by Alessandro Galilei and Sir Edward Lovett Pearce and was completed in 1732. The Irish architect Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (1699–1733) was one of the leading advocates of Palladianism in Ireland. He rejected the Baroque after spending three years studying architecture in France and Italy.
The ideal now was to surround the newly constructed Palladian mansion with wide expresses of smooth open meadows dotted with clumps of trees, sweeping lakes in which the house and park were flatteringly mirrored and tree-lined glades with animals grazing in the shadow of romantic ruins, temples and pavilions (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 550). Sunken ha-has permitted uninterrupted views of the park from the house and a diversity of walks and rides coordinated a succession of pastoral Arcadian scenes. Mervyn Busteed (2000: 16) summarises this style. It:

...emphasised the ‘parkland’ landscape… set amidst this landscape was the house, usually built in variations of the Palladian style, both architecture and setting
manipulated to display the eternal ‘naturalness’ of existing patterns of social relations and political authority. In reality, this was a contrived landscape, the result of massive feats of planning and engineering, and designed to affirm a very specific worldview.

Although the new landscape parks originated in England they were ideally suited to the rolling Irish countryside. The “natural style” landscape parks were so enthusiastically adopted by Irish landowners that by the close of the eighteenth century only a small minority of old formal geometric layouts survived, a good example are the gardens of Kilruddery House, Co. Wicklow which were laid-out in the 1680s. They had become a ubiquitous feature of the Irish landscape by the end of the century.\textsuperscript{11}

Their popularity can be largely attributed to a variety of factors, not least their suitability to the Irish countryside, the comparatively low cost of their maintenance and the potential of parkland for allowing landowners to distance themselves physically from the economic realities that sustained them, whilst helping to convey the comforting notion that the contemporary social order was somehow natural, unchanging and inevitable (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 551).

Robinsonian Demesnes

In the nineteenth century, “taste veered from the sublimely rational to the tragic, so preferred landscapes for new buildings became wilder” leading to a more romanticised understanding of the value of natural beauty (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67) (Plate 3.6).\textsuperscript{12} In the years following the Great Famine of the 1840s, the fortunes of the Irish gentry declined. Shortages of

\textsuperscript{11} View Appendix F for a review of their locations.
\textsuperscript{12} This was particularly the case with the mid to late nineteenth century craze for Gothic-Revival or Romantic castles, such as Tullynally Castle, Co. Westmeath, Markree Castle, Co. Sligo and Killua Castle, Co. Westmeath. These houses are less classically ordered, striving instead to present an image of additive age and Gothic nobility. The asymmetric castle was made to be a part of the landscape sitting picturesquely within it, apparently formed by it as much as forming it (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 68). This placed significant demands on demesne designs to accommodate such romantic buildings with similar landscapes.
capital and, importantly, labour resulted in new parkland schemes being largely confined to the wealthier families (Aalen et al, 1997: 203). The inevitable eclipse of the landscape parkland began in the 1870s when “highly wrought works in proximity to the house, rapidly merging into more natural effects in the wider landscape” were favoured (Everett, 2001b: 16). This movement was advocated by the Irish horticulturist William Robinson (1838-1935) in his 1870 work “The Wild Garden”. He recommended that hardy exotics should be planted under conditions where they will not require further care. His advice was well received in Ireland and was widely adopted from the 1880s. as it offered the prospect of low maintenance less labour intensive parklands in which nature was left to do most of the work (Everett, 2001b: 10).

Plate 3.6: The three bay gate lodge of Bracklyn Demesne, Co. Westmeath constructed with rusticated water-weathered limestone in a grotesque, yet picturesque, appeal. It is built using a very unusual combination of a Palladian-style plan with grotto-like Gothic detailing and is more like of a folly than a gate lodge. It contrasts attractively with the neo-classical facade of Bracklyn House visible behind. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).
After World War II, when virtually all of the remaining walled kitchen gardens and formal display gardens disappeared from Ireland’s demesnes, the Robinsonian legacy remained (Reeves-Smyth, 2001: 560) (Plate 3.8).\(^{13}\)

Plate 3.8: The Robinsonian inspired demesne of Mount Usher, Co. Wicklow. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

In conclusion, it is quite clear that the demesne had a multi-functional role being both ornamental and necessarily practical and was a topographically identifiable form, one that had a major impact on the Irish landscape. The examination of the historical development of demesnes will now provide the basis for a review of their cultural significance in later chapters.

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\(^{13}\) The creation of a Robinsonian garden at Derreen Demesne began in 1870 by the fifth Marquis of Lansdowne. The Demesne is designed around Derreen House, an unassuming, mid-nineteenth century Victorian house, subsequently rebuilt and enlarged in the 1920s after being burnt by republican groups during the Irish Civil War 1922-1923. The Demesne, up to this date, was characterised by bare rock and native scrub oak. However being located on a peninsula in the south-east of the island, the demesne experienced high levels of rainfall and rare frosts. For the next sixty years, excluding the years between 1883 and 1894 when he was Governor General of Canada and Viceroy of India, the Marquis devoted himself to the task of creating a Robinsonian inspired garden within the Demesne. As a result of the excellent growing conditions there, the Marquis had the rare pleasure of witnessing his plantations grow to full maturity.
4.0 DEMESNE STRUCTURE IN THE IRISH LANDSCAPE

Having discussed the historical formation and development of demesnes, it is now necessary to summarise their cultural significance to both their creators and to the wider Irish landscape. This will highlight the many functions that demesnes assumed and help to appreciate those critical components needed to preserve their authenticity and integrity.

4.1 The Historical Role of a Demesne

As we have seen previously, the historical role of a demesne in Ireland was a combination of both residential and defence-orientated functions, transforming in the post-1660 period to one characterised solely by residential considerations. Usually sited on the landowner’s core estate, it acted as the focal point of the wider tenanted and untenanted estate, containing all of the fundamental managerial machinery required to operate the estate. Like any settlement type in history, economic, political and social pressures, as well as the circumstances of the time, generated the final demesne form known in Ireland today. The residential function, originating in the Anglo-Norman era and devoid of defence considerations from the end of the seventeenth century, would quickly be accompanied by other considerations, specifically socio-economic concerns.

4.2 The Symbolic Role of a Demesne

More practical functions were complemented by the important symbolic role that demesnes played for landowners. Proudfoot (1992: 234) argues that the major objective of their expenditure was the desire to create a well-ordered physical environment, which was consonant with the landlord’s equally well-structured and hierarchical view of society. Proudfoot (1992: 234-235) postulates a range of landlord-created or influenced environments which centred on what are termed “zones of superfluity”. The first was the landlord’s own “superbly marshalled
setting” which “preyed” on all others and which included the country house and, more importantly, the demesne. Beyond this core lay a “zone of substance” which was the physical setting of the most affluent members of the tenant community, and beyond this again lay “successive zones of need and death… the spatially peripheral locale of what were the socially, economically and politically most marginalised groups in Irish society” (Proudfoot, 1992: 235).

Graham and Proudfoot (1993: 248) also argue that the basis of this emblematic social distancing lay in the susceptibility of country house and demesne design to changes in architectural and landscaping fashion. By reconstructing the house or demesne in line with these changes, the landowner reaffirmed his social standing by signalling his adherence to his peers’ aesthetic forms.14 The sequence of park design is testament to this obedience as Baroque formalism gave way to the “picturesque” landscapes from the 1730s. This activity continually reaffirmed landlord affiliation with the prevailing political power within the country, and reinforced their warranted influence over the development of the landscape and the country as a whole. Progressively, the demesne form was raised to the level of art, where demesnes became masterpieces of architecture and landscape design. These historical and more contemporary influences resulted, not only in the basic pattern of the demesne form, but also in its character as an economic, political and social phenomenon (Graham and Proudfoot 1993: 248).

The recreation of space in accordance with practical and fashionable aesthetic norms had the dual role of asserting the landlord’s status as members of the elite, while at the same time emphasising the social distance, which separated them from the remainder of society.15

14 This in turn transcended the social milieu of Irish landownership being of essentially European origin.
15 This very important role can be seen in the fact that successful urban merchants and industrialists sought to enhance their perceived social status by purchasing country estates and laying-out demesnes in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
4.3 Tenant Farmer Perceptions of Demesnes

Dooley (2001: 18) describes the typical Irish country house and demesne as akin to an artificially created island. By reasons of wealth, social standing, religion, cultural upbringing and political power, landlords and their families had become psychologically distanced from the vast majority of people. By locating their houses amidst hundreds of acres of ornate parkland surrounded by demesne walls, landed families physically distanced themselves from the local community. A buffer of employees made up of agents, stewards, bailiffs and demesne staff maintained this distance. The vast majority of landlords were happy to insulate themselves within a demesne’s boundaries (Dooley, 2001: 18). With this socially isolationist characteristic in mind it is possible to understand where the resentment that tenant farmers felt toward the landed class came from, especially in the post-Famine period of 1845-1852 (Dooley, 2001: 10). Even in the twentieth century, it was possible to emphasise the external origins of this class, presenting them as an alien and economically parasitic group “who reinforced their economic monopoly by various forms of social predation” (Proudfoot, 1992: 230).

4.4 Common Characteristics of Demesnes

However, regardless of size, the majority of demesnes had much in common; a country house primarily located so as to take maximum advantage of the natural scenery available, demesne walls surrounding the entire demesne, gate lodges, plantations, open parkland with follies and radiating vistas, ornate gardens and expanses of lawns for recreational purposes, as well as more functional areas, such as kitchen gardens, to fulfil the house’s needs (Dooley, 2001: 40).16

16 View Appendix G for a list of features that normally characterise demesnes.
A significant determinant on the final form of demesnes the demands placed on it by the home farm. Although, contributing to the self-sufficiency of the estate and generated revenue from the agricultural exploitation of the demesne, the siting of the estate’s out-offices within the demesne had to be thought about carefully so as not to detract from the amenity of the core area of the demesne surrounding the main house. Often, these buildings formed an extension to the main dwelling, as at Russborough House, Co. Wicklow, where the front elevation of the house is lengthened by incorporating adjoining outbuildings, however generally out-offices were arranged around the sides of a cobbled courtyard, which was entered through an archway and were not necessarily located close to the house (Plate 4.1). The number of these out-offices varied according to the size of the estate. In 1911, Slane Castle, Co. Meath contained more than seventy such offices with forty stables, four coach houses, six sheds, three cow houses, two harness houses, two foul houses, two boiling houses and one calf shed, dairy, barn, workshop, potato shed, store, forge, laundry, sawmill and a motor shed.

Plate 4.1: Russborough House, Co. Wicklow. The house was built in 1751. The main residential block is extended on each side by curved colonnaded quadrant wings leading to seven-bay, two-storey pavilions. It is further extended on each side by plain walls, each pierced by a high centrally placed arch to give access to the kitchens and stable yards. The walls terminate in one-storey pavilions giving the entire facade an overall length of 215 metres, making it the longest in Ireland. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2009).
The wider demesne also provided a venue for the performance and appreciation of the arts, a setting for recreational activities, acted as a breeding ground for game, as well as places to undertake and house scientific and horticultural experiments and collections.

4.5 Continuity: Survival of Historical Nuclei within Demesnes

Historical continuity is a striking characteristic of Irish demesnes. Gaelic-Irish society consistently featured strong local and regional centres of power and authority. These included the local and regional seats of Gaelic-Irish chieftains and Early Christian ecclesiastical and monastic sites, which were later complemented by medieval Gaelic-Irish and Anglo-Norman castles and tower houses. As a result, the Irish landscape contains a wide variety of built and landscape features dating from pre-historic times. Irish demesnes retained this power and authority within Irish society despite expressing different political affiliations. Frequently, demesnes developed around pre-seventeenth century nuclei, which had seen numerous layers of development (Cork County Council, 2010: 4). The land confiscations and redistributions in the seventeenth century simply prompted the adaptation of existing landscape features and patterns to new settlement purposes with renewed nuclei (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 222).

As a result, substantial quantities of demesnes have a medieval nucleus within their confines. This is indicated either by the presence of a tower house abutting the country house or incorporated into its offices. In other cases, a castle or abbey ruin may be found close by, perhaps adapted as a folly within the landscape park. In short, the development of demesnes:

did not involve the ‘clear felling’ of all the component structures in the existing cultural landscape. Rather, wherever existing features such as settlement nodes or units of landownership displayed some continuing usefulness, they were retained, but were recombined as part of a new property matrix to form new patterns of administration and landownership which were not... necessarily completely divergent from what had gone before (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 223).
The very nature of eighteenth and nineteenth century “natural” parklands provided ideal conditions for the survival of much earlier landscape features predating park’s establishment, as these features often became follies with accompanying vistas within the parks (Aalen, et al, 1997: 197). One of the most striking features of the demesne at Rockingham House, Co. Roscommon is the use of Castle Island and its medieval castle within the adjacent Lough to act as a folly within the demesne (Plate 4.2). These were very desirable features within the demesne and can be vividly seen in the fact that substantial quantities of sham ruins were erected within these demesnes throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly 1750-1800, to augment the newly laid-out picturesque landscapes.\(^{17}\) This is clearly the case with Altamont House, Co. Carlow which was built upon the remains of an earlier dwelling dating from the sixteenth century (Aalen et al, 1997: 200).

\[\text{Plate 4.2: Castle Island, Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon. (Source: O’Kane, 2004: 68).}^{18}\]

\(^{17}\) Sham ruins were artificial ruins designed to improve the landscape, their unusual appearance drew the eye towards them, hence the term “eye catcher”.

\(^{18}\) The earliest reference to Castle Island can be found in the Annals of Lough Cé from 1184. The area was then known as Moylurg and the Kings of Moylurg were the McDermotts who had their official residence on The Rock
4.6 The Requirements of Demesnes

The demands that landowners placed on demesne forms can be summarised as follows:

- Practical considerations concerning the need to make the house self-sufficient,
- The economic, political and social statements that the landowners portrayed about themselves to the wider public,
- The aesthetic intentions that professional designers were concerned with when engaged in landscape modification, and
- The Improvement Movement associated with large landowners, as well as the adoption of innovative and more efficient methods of development.19

Despite a widely varying topography, a clear demesne form was broadly comparable across the entire island of Ireland. The varying demands placed upon them by their owners, which changed emphasis over time, resulted in demesnes consisting of both practical and ornamental considerations. Demesnes provided the basic organisational relationship that aimed to provide landowner’s with a great degree of self-sufficiency. The more ornamental components of the demesne were its sheer scale, and architectural and landscape design and layout. Naturally, those demesnes with substantial annual revenues were more capable of indulging in such ostentatious and ornamental developments. It was these elements that contributed most to the amenity value of the demesne, as well as determining the final form in which they were brought together in a particular designed and contrived landscape.

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19 The “Age of Improvement” (1700-1900) characterised the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Ireland. It led to dramatic spatial transformations and was a major catalyst in modernising Ireland’s regional economy.
5.0 THE ABOLITION OF LANDLORDISM IN IRELAND

Landownership, a fundamental building block for the landed elite, began to suffer from a series of critical setbacks from the mid to late nineteenth century. The causes of this decline are multifaceted, although the bulk revolved around the collapse of agricultural prices due to competition from outside of the UK, the slow changes in landownership arising from the 1849 Encumbered Estates Act, the various Land Acts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the union of nationalist demands with those of tenant farmers. The economic underpinning that had supported their lavish lifestyle changed so significantly at the end of the nineteenth century that the profitability of the landowner’s home farm was to prove essential to the survival of the demesne itself.

British Land Acts up to the creation of the Irish Free State in 1923 had sought to buy and redistribute the tenanted lands associated with large estates leaving the home farms and demesnes in the ownership of landlords. However, the compulsory confiscation of demesnes and home farms after 1923 was viewed as a righteous and justifiable move by the newly created Irish Free State, which saw these cultural landscapes as a parasitic expression of a self-indulgent and decadent alien group who were opposed to its inception. It was in this period that both the country house and, more importantly to land hungry farmers, the demesne were being openly pursued as a means of solving local shortages in the supply of land (Dooley, 2001 129). As a result, the animating force behind their creation crumbled and eventually collapsed under a barrage of nationalist, economic and political confrontation.20

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20 View Appendix H for a detailed examination of this decline and Appendix I for a summary of the 1919-1923 nationalist revolution.
5.1 A Gradual Reappraisal of the Cultural Heritage Value of Demesnes

In the latter half of the twentieth century, the political environment of the country gradually changed. The sons of “the Ascendancy” were finding it easier to find employment and career opportunities in Ireland. Occupations were largely gained in business circles, as the political and official worlds were still largely closed to them. Bence-Jones (1987: 299) concludes that this was largely due to the fact that the new leaders of Ireland were now on friendly terms with “the Ascendancy”, “if only because they now saw it as a picturesque survival, unlikely ‘to block the progress of the Irish Nation’”. Yet this did not translate into tax concessions for the upkeep of country houses or grants for their repair. Few people in Ireland shared the view that demesnes and country houses were part of a shared cultural heritage or that they were worth preserving. This was clear right-up to the early 1980s with the burning of a number of surviving country houses in response to the nationalist hunger-strikes in Northern Ireland. It was reflected in official government policy, which since the creation of the Free State in 1922 was slow to acknowledge their cultural significance or heritage value. Dooley (2001: 253) claims that the Wealth Tax of 1974 was to prove as detrimental to country houses and demesnes in Ireland as any legislation that had preceded it.

The first significant change in the process of erosion was through the energetic work of the Irish Georgian Society (IGS). Their campaigns to save properties like Doneraile Court, Co. Cork, Damer House, Co. Tipperary and Castletown House, Co. Kildare in the 1960s and 1970s started a slow process of re-appreciation. Indeed, the plight of Castletown House, Co. Kildare, the country’s largest Palladian country house, serves as a microcosm of the wider issues facing country houses during this period (Plate 5.1). The house’s owner, Lord Carew, decided to auction the house in 1965, to which the Irish Government of the time expressed no official concern. The demesne was bought by property speculators who proceeded to build a large
housing estate adjacent to the 250-year old lime avenue connecting the house with the estate town of Celbridge. In 1967 Desmond Guinness, the President of the recently established IGS, bought the decaying house and 120 acres (49 hectares) of the demesne immediately surrounding the house in order to save it for posterity. The IGS immediately began raising money for restoration and refurbishment works and maintained the house until it was leased to the Office of Public Works (OPW) in 1990. The equivalent lack of concern was also evident in houses bequeathed to the nation; notably Doneraile Court, Co. Cork, Muckross House, Co. Kerry and Rathfarnham Castle, Co. Dublin.


However, as passionate memory faded and later generations began to objectively examine the built and landscape heritage surrounding them, a new appreciation of these eighteenth and nineteenth century landscapes began to emerge. In 1975 ‘Bord Fáilte’ (the Tourism Board) actively cultivated this awareness by acknowledging the financial benefits that country houses and demesnes had for the tourism industry, while in 1976 ‘An Taisce’ (the National Trust for Ireland) appointed a working party to establish the responsibilities of government for their survival and welfare. However, these studies tended to focus on the categories of art and design, rather than the historical or social value that the demesnes and houses possessed.

The lack of appropriate research into the formation, design interdependencies and components of a demesne can be largely attributed to the fact that for a significant number of people, these cultural landscapes expressed the explicit economic, political and social power that the
landowning class amassed in Ireland at the expense of the indigenous population. This fact can be attributed to the bitter republican legacy that dominated Anglo-Irish relations up to the late 1980s. John Crowley argues that from the mid-1990s, the old certainties about Irish identity (Nationalism and Catholicism) have begun to unravel. This was due to the rapidly changing political, socio-economic and cultural context and it allowed for a more favourable climate in which to engage with Ireland’s modern history (Moore and Whelan, 2007: 66). “New memories and new identities better suited to the complexities of a post-national era” began to emerge, and with them a reassessment of the cultural significance of country houses and demesnes (Moore and Whelan, 2007: 66).

A shift in official government attitude gradually began to materialise in the 1980s. The 1984 Finance Act allowed tax relief on the maintenance of eligible historic properties that were opened to the public (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18). This has been a major source of benefit to the restoration of houses, such as Strokestown House, Co. Roscommon. It has also helped to maintain the demesnes of these country houses and in the 1990s an EU-funded restoration scheme for the Great Gardens of Ireland has benefited twenty-six historic parks and gardens (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18). This included the walled gardens at Ballinlough Castle, Co. Westmeath, the wider demesne at Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway and the restoration of the Arcadian parklands of Larch Hill, Co. Meath (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18) (Plate 5.2).21

21 Larch Hill, Co. Meath was an “ornamental farm” designed in the middle of the eighteenth century by a rich haberdasher based in Dublin. It was laid-out around an agricultural farm in the then fashionable ‘Ferme Ornée’ style; an expression of the wider Romantic Movement, where, for the first time, natural landscape and rural features had been included in landscape design. Here a working farm, domestic animals and the natural landscape were ornamented by allusions to Arcadia; follies and grottoes, statuary and classical texts were combined with serpentine avenued walks, flowing water and lakes, areas of light and shade, special planting and inspirational framed views. They were created to reflect man’s harmony with the perfection of nature and Marie Antoinette created such a garden at The Palace of Versailles, France with highly decorated barns and specimen animals. Freed
Plate 5.2: A triangular-plan miniature ‘children’s fort’ shaped like the fortress on the Rock of Gibraltar was constructed in the 1820s within the ‘Ferme Ornée’ demesne of Larchill Demesne, Co. Meath. Mock naval battles were staged on the lake to capture the fort. The temple island is visible in the background. Photograph taken before restorative work was undertaken on both follies. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

‘Teagasc’ (the governmental agricultural research agency) has recently restored the Victorian Gothic-revival castle and demesne of Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford, the National Botanic Gardens are restoring what remains of Kilmacurragh House, Co. Wicklow and the OPW has recently reconstructed the stables at Coole House, Co. Galway as a visitor centre (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18). 22 Bequests have further complemented this shift in from the restrictions of the seventeenth century’s formal garden style, the ‘Ferme Ornée’ landscapes were the first move towards the picturesque landscapes of the latter half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The gardens were sold in 1890 and soon fell into disrepair until the 60 acre (24.3 hectares) demesne was purchased in 1994 when it was soon discovered that it was an important lost landscape garden: the only surviving complete ‘Ferme Ornée’ example in Europe. A six-year restoration period followed, which involved repairing the ten derelict follies, the refilling of the lake, and the reinstatement of the serpentine pathways, areas of special planting and walled garden. In 2002, it was the first Irish recipient of the European Union’s prestigious Europa Nostra Award for Cultural Heritage.

22 During the early part of the twentieth century Kilmacurragh passed from its original owner’s hands and fell into a state of neglect. In 1970 the property was taken over by the Land Commission. A 58 acre (23.47 hectares) portion of the demesne comprising the house, arboretum, walled garden and entrance driveway was given to the Forest and Wildlife Services. In 1996 the National Botanic Gardens gained control of the arboretum and accompanying gardens. From 1989, the rebranded Forest Service (‘Coillte Teoranta’) manages the walled gardens and some 20 acres (8.1 hectares) of seed orchards as part of its forest tree genetics programme. While the stables and courtyard are the only remaining structures left of the old estate of Coole, Co. Galway.
government policy. The establishment of National Parks at Muckross House and Demesne, Co. Kerry and Glenveagh Castle and Demesne, Co. Donegal was only possible as a result of donations made to the state by the Bourne-Vincent and McIlhenny families associated with both of these houses, respectively. These demesnes join those at Ilnacullin Gardens, Co. Cork, Altamont House, Co. Carlow and Emo Court, Co. Laois, while Russborough House, Co. Wicklow and Congreve House, Co. Waterford are currently in trust and will eventually pass into state control.  

The Dublin local authorities have also taken advantage of the large number of country houses and demesnes in the county to create public parks including Malahide Castle, Newbridge House, Ardgillan Castle and Marlay Park.

The national priority given to the preservation of demesnes can be seen in the fact that, up to 2006, Ireland was one of only four European countries that did not possess a National Trust organisation to care for threatened heritage. Instead Ireland relied, to a greater degree than other countries, on private ownership to preserve its cultural heritage. However, private ownership does not always achieve this and a national body focussed on their preservation was required.

5.2 Summary

The gradual reappraisal of their cultural significance has now been paralleled by an ever-growing threat to those demesnes that have survived intact, particularly since the inception of the “Celtic Tiger” from the mid-1990s. The wealth created during this decade was frequently

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23 Ilnacullin Gardens is a 37 acre (15 hectares) garden island located in a sheltered inlet of Bantry Bay, Co. Cork. The islands possess spectacular sea and mountain scenery and views, as well as, a temperate climate. Ilnacullin was purchased in 1910 from the War Office by a Belfast businessman and Scottish MP, who commissioned the English architect and horticulturalist Harold Peto (1854-1933) to design a garden on the island. From 1911 to 1914 over one hundred men were engaged in moving soil, blasting rocks, planting trees, laying paths, as well as building a walled garden, a tall clock tower and an Italianate garden complete with casita, pool and pavilion. Peto's use of Italian Renaissance architecture and his adaptation of the picturesque formal style of gardening, made popular by the Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll partnership, proved to be brilliantly successful on this island setting, although it was nearly a generation later before his work could be fully appreciated.

24 View Appendix J for a review of the creation of the Irish Heritage Trust.
been used to build houses and gardens in the style of the “big houses”. The billionaire tycoon J P McManus is constructing a Palladian-style mansion at Martinstown, Co. Limerick with grounds resembling a demesne dominated by an artificial lake in the shape of the county (Plate 5.3). This money has also been used to buy the former homes of “the Ascendancy”. The dancer, Michael Flatley acquired Castle Hyde House, Co. Cork, the ancestral home of Ireland’s first president, Douglas Hyde (Plate 5.4). He originally paid IP£3 million for the house and its 150 acre (61 hectares) demesne and subsequently spent €40 million on restoration works (Irish Times, 2009). Although the house has been lavishly restored, Flatley illegally removed 250 year old beech and hornbeam hedging dating from the demesne’s long since disappeared seventeenth century geometric layout (Irish Examiner, 2000).

Plate 5.3: The newly constructed main entrance gate and gate lodges to JP McManus’s Palladian style house at Martinstown, Co. Limerick. (Source: Flickr, 2010).

Plate 5.3: Castle Hyde House and Demesne, Co. Cork located along the banks of the River Blackwater. (Source: Irish Examiner, 2010).
6.0 DEVELOPMENT THREATS TO THE INTEGRITY OF DEMESNES

Demesnes have lost their original purpose – their future depends on new uses being found for them (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 16).

Although the re-evaluation of the cultural significance of country houses and demesnes occurred gradually from the late 1970s and 1980s, they have been continually threatened by inappropriate redevelopment proposals.

6.1 Vulnerable Elements of the Demesne Concept

Previous chapters have examined and traced the development of the demesne concept through history. An examination of the significant demesne components, which are particularly vulnerable to destructive development, is now necessary. It should be first noted that although demesnes have a common form type, they are resourcefully individual. The most significant elements are; the features constructed in the demesne itself, the settings that these features create, human activities within the demesne and clear-type functional areas.

A Demesne’s Features

Each demesne in Ireland includes built features such as a large residential country house, kitchen and stable wings, farmyards characterised by dovecotes and other functional buildings, pleasure and walled gardens, as well as more distinctive landscape features such as avenues, arboreta, bridges, demesne walls, watercourses, follies, gate lodges, model farms, ornamental

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25 The relative smoothness of Castletown Demesne and, to an extent, Carton Demesne, Co. Kildare can be starkly contrasted with the naturally undulating landscapes characterising western demesnes. Western demesnes are also, generally, characterised by introvert designs in comparison to Castletown, which possesses a more extrovert design connecting the other demesnes dotted along the River Liffey into one continuous composite landscape feature (O’Kane, 2004: 3).
grazing lands, woodland, deer parks and arable lands. These features were carefully constructed in locations where they would produce a distinctive demesne form.

A Demesne’s Setting

The setting of these various features embraces the relationships between the built and landscaped features of a demesne. They consist largely of internal and external views and vistas, borrowed landscapes lying outside of the demesne, as well as more remote views of distant geographical features. However, these settings are frequently complex and often impossible to accurately measure and identify. Indeed the entire demesne itself may be considered to be the setting for the country house located at its centre. The best-known example of this is the view of the Sugarloaf Mountain from Powerscourt House, Co. Wicklow: this view is a fundamental element of this demesne’s cultural significance (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 20) (Plates 6.1 and 6.2).

Plate 6.1: The formal gardens to the rear of Powerscourt House dramatically overlook the Sugar Loaf Mountain. They were designed to complement the House’s setting during its construction in the 1730s. (Source: Flickr, 2010).

Plate 6.2: The opposite view from the formal lake looking back at Powerscourt House. (Source: Flickr, 2010).

Rathfarnham Castle, Co Dublin is a good example of how the setting of a demesne’s features can be destroyed; the pigeon house, motte and bailey, and triumphal arch have all been isolated from the rest of the demesne within ever advancing housing estates (Plate 6.3).
One of the greatest losses to a demesne’s setting is its fragmentation into multiple-ownership allowing for their redevelopment in isolation from their original context.

A Demesne’s Land Uses

Land uses and their respective human activities, according to Bernard M. Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto (1998: 15), have a very significant role to play in understanding and conserving the demesne in its entirety. This is particularly true of historic uses; particularly those that have survived, such as agriculture, scientific and horticultural experiment and botanical collection, the performance of the arts, as well as simple enjoyment of the natural amenity of a demesne. They should all be considered in acknowledging the vulnerable aspects of a demesne.
A Demesne’s Various Functional Areas

It is quite clear that certain areas of a demesne were dedicated to particular functions. The functional relationship of each area largely determined its distance from the core of the demesne: consisting of the main house and its external formal spaces, be they court, parterre or garden. An adjacent area dedicated to domestic sufficiency was often set in a contrived landscape. Beyond this area lay the home farm and arable lands. These elements were enveloped in an ornamental parkland, often used for grazing cattle controlled using a series of visually non-invasive ha-has. These clearly definable functional areas were ultimately encircled by woodland, used as shelterbelt, and encased within a demesne wall punctuated with entrance gateways and gate lodges. The importance of each functional area is considerable in helping to understand the motivation behind the construction of the demesne itself and its final form.

A Demesne’s Character

The character of a demesne can be described as being related to its overall appearance, drawing heavily from a demesne’s setting. Each demesne is unique in character for innumerable reasons; their topographical location, layout, landscaping features and planting determine a demesne’s character. The loss of setting and character between the demesne’s features can result in the loss of the context of the demesne itself.

Ultimately, without an effective knowledge of demesne features, their settings, human activities carried-out within them, the functional areas historically in operation or the character of a demesne, it is impossible to suitably preserve the original meaning behind their original construction. Any development that negatively affects any one of the five categories mentioned above can be considered to upset the authenticity and integrity of a demesne.
6.2 Current Development Threats to Demesnes in Ireland

Despite some positive decisions from the Board in recent months in relation to both Carton and Castletown Demesnes, Co. Kildare, development pressures are continuing to pose a major threat to the continued integrity of demesnes. Proposals such as golf course and hotel developments, motorway construction, road realignment and suburban expansion threaten to irreversibly alter their historic character, while more sedate forms of development, such as electricity pylons, “spoil” the setting of the demesne within the wider landscape (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 19). Their historic character and their setting in the wider landscape are rarely given the weight and significance that they are entitled to by the conservation and planning systems alike (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 20).

6.3 The Precarious State of Derelict Demesne Landscapes

The gradual abandonment of country houses from the latter half of the nineteenth century to their fate also created a substantial number of derelict demesne landscapes in Ireland. Ultimately the animating and unifying forces behind their creation have ceased to exist and, frequently, these demesnes are invisible and purely seen in agricultural or urban development terms. As a result, they are likely to be the most vulnerable demesnes. One of the best known examples is that of Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon, which is now completely subsumed within a forest park.

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26 View Appendix K for a brief review of these two cases.
27 View Appendix L for a brief review of current development threats to demesne integrity.
6.4 Contemporary Land Uses

History has shown that the viability of a demesne is largely an economic issue and ‘An Taisce’ cite the role of contemporary land uses, which echo the historical role of the demesne, have in preserving them: a good example being alternative agricultural uses (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 19).

Good examples of a successful adaptation of this use can be found at Newbridge House, Co. Dublin, where the public have access to the original home farm, as well as the house, and more recently the discovery and restoration of an eighteenth century model farm in the rare ‘Ferme Ornée’ style at Larch Hill, Co. Meath. Other demesnes have a scientific interest such as the arboretums at Headfort House, Co. Meath and Fota House, Co. Cork, and the great telescope of Birr Castle, Co. Offaly, while the vast majority provide for walks within the demesne providing amenity for local populations and tourists alike, such as Dowdstown House, Co. Meath. A very welcome trend is the purchase of country estates by wealthy new owners, if sympathetic restoration and maintenance can be guaranteed. This has taken place in recent years at Lissadell House, Co. Sligo, Castletown Cox, Co. Kildare, Abbeyleix House, Co. Laois and Ardbraac an House, Co. Meath.

However, major problems lie in the fact that numerous demesnes are now in multiple-ownership having been subdivided by the Land Commission and Forest Service (predecessor of the current State-owned forestry department ‘Coillte Teoranta’) from the 1930s or sold by their owners in a piecemeal manner to support the financial upkeep of the main residence, as has happened at Kilruddery House, Co. Wicklow. In these cases a more holistic approach to their conservation needs to be undertaken and these complexities need to be fully recognised in statutory conservation legislation.
7.0 CONSERVATION LEGISLATION IN IRELAND

In preceding chapters, the vulnerable elements of demesnes have been identified and contemporary development threats were also briefly examined. The objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of the legislative framework for demesne conservation in Ireland. This will be accompanied by a review of the terms “authenticity” and “integrity” as espoused in international conservation charters, recommendations and resolutions. It will then consider how effective this policy framework is at preserving the cultural significance of demesnes.

7.1 Cultural Landscapes: Authenticity and Integrity

Modern conservation theory largely originates from nineteenth century European debates which set the value of contemporary taste against that of authenticity (Bell, 1997: 3). This debate initially concerned itself with the protection of buildings and monuments, and that of their settings. However cultural heritage comprises more that simply built structures, it consists of a wide range of cultural property such as archaeological sites, designed landscapes, movable works, as well as the built environment itself. It was not until the later decades of the twentieth century that an appreciation, at an international level at least, of the broader qualities of the environment and the less definable, or intangible, qualities of cultural heritage materialised.

As a result of this broadening of cultural heritage, historic designed landscapes have now been termed “cultural landscapes”. There are numerous definitions of cultural landscapes, however...
a common thread running through each is the human use of the landscape and how this resultant landscape may be seen as an expression of past human attitudes and values. Such landscapes result from and reflect a prolonged interaction in different societies between man, nature, and the physical environment and are testimony to the evolving relationship of communities, individuals and their environment over time. This closely woven net of relationships can be seen primarily as a cultural artefact, consisting of tangible and intangible elements of both present and earlier cultures hinting at a community or society’s identity (Environment Australia, 1997). The evidence of this history may be easily read in any landscape however it is fundamentally fragile and will not remain visible and comprehensible to future generations unless an awareness and understanding of these relationships are properly understood and preserved (Charter of Krakow, 2000).

In 1992 the International Convention for the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) became the first international legal instrument to protect cultural landscapes.30 It states that:

> cultural landscapes represent the combined works of nature and of man and are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal (World Heritage Convention, 1992).

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30 The International Convention for the Protection of the World’s Cultural and Natural Heritage, often referred to as the World Heritage Convention, was adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1972. This international treaty established a unique international instrument for recognizing and protecting both the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value. It was not until 1992, however, that this Convention became the first international legal instrument to protect cultural landscapes.
The World Heritage Committee has identified and adopted three categories of cultural landscape, ranging from “a landscape designed and created intentionally by man”, an “organically evolved landscape” which may be a “relict (or fossil) landscape” or a “continuing landscape”, or an “associative cultural landscape” which may be valued because of the “religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element” (World Heritage Convention, 1992). One of the most easily identifiable is the clearly defined designed landscape created intentionally by man, which embraces demesnes.

In assessing cultural landscapes for inclusion on their World Heritage List, the Committee’s Operational Guidelines require that nominated properties meet the conditions of “authenticity” and “integrity”. Authenticity concerns “the ability to understand the value attributed to the heritage depending on the degree to which information sources about this value may be understood as credible or truthful” (UNESCO, 2008: 21). In relation specifically to cultural landscapes, authenticity may therefore be seen “as the ability of the landscape to represent accurately/truthfully what it purports to be” (Taylor, 2008: 10). Integrity is “a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes” (UNESCO, 2008: 21). To assess integrity, the Committee assesses the extent to which the property:

i. includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value,

ii. is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance, and

iii. suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect (Jokilehto, 2006: 12).

31The 1994 “Nara Document of Authenticity” introduces the concept of cultural diversity and states that the value of cultural property must be judged depending on the cultural context to which it belongs. Although the management and care of heritage are primarily in the hands of the culture which produced it, adherence to international charters and documents must be given. It states that “conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage” (Japan ICOMOS, 1994).
Although authenticity itself has been challenged somewhat in recent decades, specifically its European-oriented cultural heritage emphasis and the obvious ethical issues surrounding the contemporary rebuilding of the historic centre of Warsaw, Poland after World War II for example, these terms are now the watchwords of international conservation (Rodwell, 2007: 70). As the original animating and unifying forces behind demesne construction and use have long since vanished, these landscapes can now only be preserved if suitable contemporary land uses are found for them. These uses must echo their historical role in order to preserve their integrity. This is fundamentally the role Irish conservation policy must now satisfy.

7.2 Conservation Legislation for Cultural Heritage in Ireland

Built heritage in Ireland is loosely divided into the archaeological resource, covering sites and monuments from the prehistoric to the medieval period, and the built heritage resource, encompassing standing structures and sites dating from the post-medieval and modern periods. Currently, the management and protection of the country’s cultural heritage is achieved through the framework of ratified international conservation charters and EU conventions and directives, as well as national laws, policies and guidelines. Conservation protection in Ireland is chiefly provided through the following legislation:

i. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004,

ii. The Heritage Act 1995,

iii. The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and National Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999,

32 Legislative protection in Ireland began in the latter half of the nineteenth century, while the State was an integral part of the United Kingdom (UK). In many cases, British legislation was jointly applied to both Britain and Ireland. The Ancient Monuments Protection Acts of 1882, 1900 and 1910, and the Ancient Monuments Protection (Ireland) Act of 1892 were the most significant. They were largely a response to the need to protect and preserve UK monuments that were already within the ownership or guardianship of the Commissioners of Public Works.


In relation to demesnes, the most important piece of legislation is the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, which is discussed in detail below.33

The Planning and Development Acts 2000-201034

All previous Local Government (Planning and Development) Acts from 1963 to 1999 were consolidated into the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010: Part IV of which deals specifically with architectural heritage.35 In addition, the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2009 provide for consultation during the planning application process with the DEHLG and a number of prescribed bodies if the planning authority feels there is a matter of heritage concern. The introduction of this legislation has corrected the perceived and actual imbalances that existed between the protection of the State’s archaeological and architectural heritage, and the various EU Directives that the Government had ratified in the 1990s.36

The principal method of securing the conservation of cultural heritage is through the preparation and operation of a planning authority’s development plan.37 Section 15 of the 2000 Act stipulates that a development plan must contain objectives for the conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage. Each development plan must contain a Record of

33 View Appendix M for an examination of each of the rest.
34 In contrast to the UK’s planning system, which was introduced following the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, the Irish planning system only came into effect with the passing of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act in 1963.
35 The Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 will hereafter be referred to as the ‘2000 Act’.
36 Significantly, the 1985 EU Directive 85/337/EEC on Environmental Impact Assessment has been transposed into Irish law with this Act. This is an invaluable instrument for the conservation of both the archaeological and architectural heritage of the country during the pre-development phase. EIA requirements are now integrated into the land-use planning consent system, as well as several infrastructural consent systems.
37 Each planning authority is now obliged to formulate a new development plan every six years.
Protected Structures (RPS). Planning permission is required for any works to a protected structure that would materially affect its character. If a protected structure is under threat, planning authorities may now issue a notice to the owner or occupier requiring works to be carried-out. The act also contains comprehensive powers for local authorities to require the owners and occupiers to carry-out works to a protected structure if it is endangered.

Planning authorities may also designate Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA) in order to protect groups of structures or areas that combine both human and natural works. Areas of Special Planning Control (ASPC) primarily provide powers to planning authorities to conserve the character of certain areas, through restoration and requiring owners to conform to a pre-approved planning scheme. However this tool only applies to cities and large towns. In cases where distant views are simply too great to include within an ACA, a Landscape Conservation Area (LCA) may also be designated.

RPS, ACA and LCA designations are fundamentally very different conservation tools. It is important that planning authorities realise the implications involved in using these tools for the conservation of demesnes.

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38 An RPS contains structures of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest dating from the period 1700 and later. A Record of Monuments and Places lists structures and sites of archaeological heritage and includes items that are older than 1700. These heritage items are protected under the various National Monuments Acts.

39 Significant reform of existing English conservation policy has been underway over the past few years. The previous Government conducted a review of heritage protection legislation from 2003 and published their alterations in PPS 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS 5) in March 2010. The Bill allows for the creation of Heritage Partnership Agreements (HPA) or statutory development or management agreements entered into by owners of registered heritage structures and open spaces with the planning authority and other stakeholders. They have the possibility of being of particular benefit for cultural landscapes which are often affected by a variety of conservation designations, contain a range of structures of architectural heritage importance and a multiplicity of stakeholders, including national and local heritage bodies, owners and surrounding neighbours, and planning authorities. The use of HPAs in Ireland may increase recognition of the cultural significance of a demesne as a cohesive whole rather than a number of isolated components whilst offering the capacity for one coherent management plan for its continued conservation.

40 View Appendix N for a brief examination of such implications.
The Planning Authority Development Plan

Irish conservation legislation is informed by international and European charters on conservation best practice, provides for guidance from the Heritage Council and the DEHLG, identifies cultural heritage through the NIAH and finally, records this cultural heritage in the RPS listings of planning authorities or through the designation of ACAs or LCAs. Each element of this legislation interacts within a Council’s development plan, resulting in very specific protective designations for both areas and built items of cultural significance. Ultimately, the development plan is the principal vehicle concerned with the identification, recording and formulation of policies and objectives for the continued conservation of demesnes. As a result, a development plan’s content has a major bearing on whether a demesne is appropriately conserved. For this reason, MacLochlainn and Lumley (2004: 20) consider development plans as frequently being a “threat when they do not consider the historic integrity of demesne lands”. Table 7.1 figuratively highlights the development plan’s key role.

7.3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Ireland

Since Ireland’s ratification of the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1991, only two sites have been recommended by the Government to the World Heritage Committee for inscription; ‘Brú na Bóinne’, Co. Meath and ‘Skellig Michael’, Co. Kerry (Plates 7.1 and 7.2). Like other countries, the inclusion of a site on the World Heritage List does not in itself confer any additional statutory protection in Ireland.41

An examination of the approach protecting the authenticity and integrity of arguably Ireland’s most important cultural landscapes may also prove useful to this dissertation.

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41 It is the responsibility of each country to ensure that it adequately protects the outstanding universal value of a site by protecting the its setting, views and areas that are functionally important to the sites and their protection.
Table 7.1: Architectural Heritage Protection in Ireland.
Plate 7.1: The Neolithic tumulus of Newgrange with standing stones to the front within the ‘Brú na Bóinne’ World Heritage Site in Co. Meath. (Source: Flickr, 2010).


The Government has deemed the most appropriate way of meeting Ireland’s obligations is through the development of management and development plans. Ireland protects the sites’ cultural significance in two ways; the various archaeological monuments, and wildlife sites and features are protected under existing legislation, while the protection of the overall landscape and interpretation of various structures and features is largely the domain of the development plan, and management plan if appended to the development plan and given a statutory footing.

The ‘Brú na Bóinne’ complex is one of the most important cultural landscapes in Ireland. The existing Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, contains an assortment of policies and objectives aimed at protecting the authenticity and integrity of the area, which stem mainly

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42 ‘Brú na Bóinne’ refers to an area along the River Boyne where human activity from pre-historic to modern day can be easily traced in the landscape. The area has been made famous by the presence of the three instantly recognisable monuments of Dowth, Knowth and Newgrange. Although these tumuli are the reason for the significant tourist numbers attracted to the area, the area is of significant physical, geographical, archaeological and historical importance as it contains ninety-three Recorded Monuments, including passage tombs, henges, fulacht fiadh, cist burials, standing stones, ringforts, souterrains, granges, a medieval manorial village and associated field system, various ‘Battle of the Boyne’ landmarks, a regionally important demesne landscape and parts of the River Boyne’s navigation system. The international significance of this area has only gradually been revealed through a process of discovery and research which began 300 years ago when the main passage tomb monuments were rediscovered from 1699AD. It is this continued use of the area that has led to its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
from the 2002 ‘Brú na Bóinne’ World Heritage Site Management Plan. Of interest is the presence of a “buffer zone” surrounding the “core” area of the site. The core area measures 1,927 acres (780 hectares) in size and the total area extends to 8,155 acres (3,300 hectares) (Meath County Council, 2002: 9) (Figure 7.2). Such a buffer zone further solidifies the statutory protection offered to this cultural landscape within the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2011 and permits the Council to extend protection to a wider area when necessary in order to safeguard the setting and ultimately the authenticity and integrity of the site.

Figure 7.2: Extract from the 2002 ‘Brú na Bóinne’ World Heritage Site Management Plan showing the “Core” and “Buffer” zones. (Source: Meath County Council, 2002).

The Development Plan states that it is the intention of the Council to formally incorporate the World Heritage Site Management Plan into the Development Plan and to prepare a site specific Local Area Plan this remains outstanding, however the Development Plan itself provides adequate, albeit a more general level of protection for the site (Meath County Council, 2007: 329).
7.4 The Effectiveness of Conservation Legislation in Ireland

Current conservation legislation offers an overarching framework through which the recognition of the cultural significance of demesnes can occur, the theoretical elimination of any negative externalities contained within development proposals and the identification of the most appropriate tools for their continued conservation. However, it is designed for a more general application of conservation policies and is not demesne orientated.

Current conservation legislation is relatively new and is still being refined. The change from a system of “listed buildings” to one of “protected structures” with the 2000 Act has resulted in Councils not effectively populating their RPS lists and leaving undesignated cultural heritage at risk. Furthermore, as Appendix N has shown, the sole use of an RPS designation is an inadvisable undertaking as it is does not adequately take account of the broader landscape. Demesnes where structural features no longer exist to be added to an RPS would not have any protection. Finally, the adoption and execution of ACAs and, especially, LCAs by Councils, is still in its infancy and lacks the familiarity of long-term practice to guide their effective use.

It must also be borne in mind that, unlike the UK, all development proposals are assessed by the same planning application process in Ireland, be that works to a protected structure or proposals to construct new development on greenfield sites. Applications are generally undertaken by professionals who prepare all required documents and reports. They are ultimately paid for by the applicant, and as such are tainted documents supporting a planned development proposal. These applications are assessed by planners, untrained in conservation issues and based in planning authorities who do not have conservation officers to guide them.

The development plan is the most important mechanism used for the protection of demesnes and, if effectively applied, may provide them with a primary level of protection.
8.0 CASE-STUDY ANALYSES

Having examined the cultural significance of demesnes and Irish conservation policy’s methods of identifying designed landscapes and preserving surviving features, it is now necessary to examine the present condition of individual demesnes. This will highlight whether this legislative framework is suitably protecting demesnes from inappropriate development in practice. From the wide variety of demesnes in the country, three case-studies were chosen and are dealt with in chronological order. They include Bective Demesne, Co. Meath, Humewood Demesne, Co. Wicklow and Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon (Figure 8.1). It is felt that the three case-study demesnes possess such analytical qualities.

8.1 Bective Demesne, Co. Meath

The Development Proposal

In 2000, Meath County Council, applied for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) to ‘An Bord Pleanála’ to realign the R161 Navan-Trim Road in order to remove a dangerous bend along the route. Although nine alternative alignments were reviewed, the Council’s chosen alignment sought to acquire lands compulsorily along a 3.42 mile (5.5 kilometres) section of the route and had identified 186 plots of land for acquisition. This route traversed through a significant portion of Bective Demesne forever separating the core area of the demesne from St Mary’s Church, the former estate church (Plate 8.1).

44 Given the limited scope of this dissertation, this chapter will only concern itself with an examination of the development threat that each demesne faced and the level of legislative protection provided to them. An account of the historical development and form, as well as the current appearance of each case-study demesne has been placed in the appendices along with an extract from the mid-nineteenth century first edition Ordnance Survey of Ireland map highlighting the demesne at that time and a contemporary aerial photograph. 45 ‘An Bord Pleanála’ will also be referred to as “the Board”.
46 View Appendix O for a review of the historical development of Bective Demesne.
Figure 8.1: Location of each Case-Study Demesne within Ireland.
In July 2001, ‘An Bord Pleanála’ held a two-day Public Inquiry to discuss the proposal. During the Inquiry, the planning authority stated that the existing route’s “safety characteristics... [were] substandard with restricted opportunities for vehicles to overtake safely” (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 3). Of the nine alignments, only three were examined at the Inquiry.

i. The preferred option traversed through the demesne. An 850 metre stone wall would be built on the core demesne side and two-hundred trees would be removed. The only disadvantage was the “acquisition of a significant amount of good agricultural land, the felling of trees and demolition of part of a demesne wall” (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 41).

ii. The second option involved widening the route. This would have involved the removal of the majority of the demesne wall and all of the mature trees associated with it.

iii. The final option involved constructing a new road to the west of the existing route passing through existing agricultural lands. Although this route was almost immediately
discounted as it would have “given rise to the severance of a small dairy farming business” (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 39).

The Level of Legislative Protection Offered to Bective Demesne

There was no Tree Preservation Order (TPO) recorded for Bective Demesne, and only Bective House and St Mary’s Church were outlined under the 2001 Meath County Development Plan as protected structures (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 7). The entrance gates, demesne wall, estate cottages, etc, were not mentioned in the Plan despite being of significant architectural merit (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 7). To clarify uncertainty as to what built structures were actually protected, the Council detailed the level of protection that the house’s protected structure designation provided for Bective Demesne and its various demesne features. It stated that:

> the term curtilage is not defined by legislation... [but in its opinion] would relate to the house itself... walled gardens and other features and the entrance piers, gates and walls...Whilst the house and walled garden would be part of the protected structure, the area inside the Demesne walls would be considered attendant grounds (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 29).

In relation to these “attendant grounds”, the Council also examined the protection provided for Bective Demesne and its various demesne features by the term “attendant grounds” and stated:

> a protected structure can identify specified features in attendant grounds which would not otherwise have been protected... In relation to attendant grounds, specific features have to be identified... The entrance piers, wall, etc. are not identified as ‘protected structures’ (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 29).

Astonishingly, the Council was of the opinion that the entrance gate, gate lodges, demesne wall, and other similar built features were not given any protection and their individual curtilages, which may have offered some protection to the surrounding demesne, were not of due consideration in this instance. In addition, the Council unusually deemed the house’s
curtilage as extending to only “the house and walled garden” and the wider demesne would be considered to be the house’s “attendant grounds” (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 30). As such, without any designation for the demesne’s other built features within these “attendant grounds”, it was effectively unprotected from redevelopment proposals. The Council also admitted that although it “does employ a Conservation Officer... she was not in the employ of the Council when the planning report was being prepared” (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 31).

The Council also stated that Bective Demesne falls within the “Boyne Valley High Amenity Area”. It was characterised in the 2001 Meath County Development Plan as one of “high amenity and high natural beauty... [and] development within such an area would have to be designed to integrate sensitively into the landscape” (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 6). There was no specific landscape designation for the demesne itself. As such, the Council’s 2001 Development Plan required the preservation of the character and setting of the area, and the Council curiously considered that while the demesne wall will be breached, this will not affect the wider area’s character and setting (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 30).

‘An Taisce’ was also in attendance and provided a damning opinion of the Council’s approach:

> the proposal for the road is contrary to the County Development Plan and the 1999 Planning Act [The Planning & Development Act 2000]. The Council did not address its obligations towards Bective Demesne as a protected structure... There was no assessment of landscape/landscape heritage... [and] it is extraordinary that the road proposals should place greater value on local dwellings and particular curtilages, none of which have the same legal protection as the church and demesne (An Bord Pleanála, 2001: 35).

However, despite their judgment of the Council, without any effective protection for the demesne within the Development Plan, ‘An Taisce’ and the Board were effectively powerless to use the demesne’s cultural heritage significance as reasoning for an alternative alignment.
The Decision

The Board’s Planning Inspector recommended that the Council’s preferred alignment proposal was valid and recommended that the CPO be granted by the Board. In making his decision the Inspector stated that due to the limited difference in costs of the various alignment proposals, the main considerations were the acquisition of “as little land as possible and the avoidance of severance” (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2010). In addressing the demesne, the Inspector stated:

> the overall landtake from the lands of the demesne are modest given the size of the estate and its peripheral location in the estate... [and] given the offer of the Council to construct a wall similar to the demesne wall... this was considered to be a reasonable solution (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2001: 43).

In 2002, the owner was given the right to challenge the Board’s decision through a judicial review challenge to the High Court. In November 2003, he lost this challenge and in 2006 works began on the realignment of the R161 passing through the demesne.

### 8.2 Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon

The Development Proposal

In 2005, Roscommon County Council granted planning permission for three related planning applications for “an eco-tourism resort” within Rockingham Demesne (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2005: 2) (Plate 8.2).\(^{47}\) These applications consisted of seventy-eight two-storey holiday homes, a 100-bedroom three-storey hotel, twenty-seven two-storey holiday cottages, an eighteen-hole and a seventy-two par golf course, 199 no. holiday homes and c.154 car parking spaces. All of the proposed developments were sited within Rockingham Demesne and encompassed 347 acres (140 hectares), in excess of forty per cent of the demesne.

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\(^{47}\) View Appendix P for a review of the historical development of Rockingham Demesne.
Plate 8.2: The view of Lough Key from the core area of Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon including the many Lough islands and follies located on them. The former marina and remains of Rockingham House are located to the left of this photograph. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

The Level of Legislative Protection Offered to Rockingham Demesne

The statutory Development Plan for the demesne at this time was the 2002 Roscommon County Development Plan, which recorded no less than twenty-three protected structures within the demesne and a number of recorded monuments. The planning authority also assessed any development proposals in the Lough Key area according to the policies contained in the statutory 2002 Lough Key Study as it was appended to the Development Plan.

Lough Key Study 2002: Conservation Zone Descriptions and Map

The Plan states that the landscape of Lough Key is uniquely beautiful and worth protecting, and the Plan states that an essential part of the attractiveness of the Study Area “is its unspoilt rural, agricultural character... it has not been compromised by the development of inappropriate and poorly conceived development” (Roscommon County Council, 2002: 16). However it also notes that a number of significant development pressures had arisen at its time of inception; specifically demand for permanent and unoccupied housing, self-housing holiday accommodation and holiday homes. In terms of development, five separate conservation zones were proposed with each having different capacities to absorb development and differing
development policies. Lands closer to the Lough were considered to be more sensitive than those further away, open pasture was less capable of absorbing development than densely wooded lands and steeply sloping sites were more exposed than flatland.

Interestingly, although the Study does not explicitly outline Rockingham Demesne as a set landscape piece in its own right, it does recommends that lands within Zones 1 and 4 be designated as an LCA. These zones largely relate to the core area of the demesne, surrounding the former location of Rockingham House, various Lough follies, and the lawns and woods surrounding them, as well as those areas surrounding the northern Lough area that acted as a termination of vistas and views radiating from the core area of the demesne. The proposed developments were mainly located in Zone 4 of the Plan.

The Board’s Decision

The Heritage Section of the DEHLG, CLEAN Ltd and ‘An Taisce’ appealed each of the three planning applications to ‘An Bord Pleanála’. The Board subsequently refused planning permission for all three applications. However these refusal reasons were almost wholly based on considerations that did not relate to the presence of Rockingham Demesne. They were refused for five reasons, the first four of which did not relate to the demesne. They stated that the proposal would “injure the visual amenities of Lough Key Forest Park... an area of high

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48 It should be pointed-out that a LCA designation is a “reserved function” of the planning authority’s councillors under the 2000 Act and they had not undertaken to create such a designation at the time of Study’s adoption.
49 Interestingly, Section 3.5.3 of the Study relates to the cultural significance and heritage potential of Rockingham Demesne. It states that “the heritage potential of the old Rockingham Estate can be developed by refurbishing and bringing back into productive use many of the estate buildings currently lying derelict and unused” (Roscommon County Council, 2002: 22). Radically, the Study also states that more “recent structures, such as the observation tower [Moylurg Tower], which are out of keeping with the overall theme... may have to be radically remodelled or demolished” and that “the reintegration of parts of the original estate by buying out farms created... in the 1950s may be considered” (Roscommon County Council, 2002: 22).
50 It must be stated however that this may be due to the fact that Rockingham Demesne must now be considered to be a “derelict demesne landscape”, one that does not benefit from the presence of its original country house to act as a focus for the wider demesne’s preservation and as a constant reminder of the demesne’s function to complement the setting and location of a country house.
amenity value”, the Board was not convinced “that the proposed development would not destroy/damage the habitat of a significant population of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Pine Martin and Red Squirrel”, the proposed developments “contravene the... zoning objective”, and most critically of all, that the development strategy of the Study that seeks to ensure that new development should be located within the existing neighbouring settlements of Boyle and Cootehall would be “materially contravened” by the proposals (An Bord Pleanála, 2005: 30). This was a damning indictment of the Council’s original grant of permission.51

A fifth refusal reason was given for the golf course application and is the only one that cites the heritage value of the demesne. It states that the development of the golf course “would result in the removal of part of Knocknagapple Woodland, a historic landscaped woodland which it is considered necessary to preserve” (An Bord Pleanála, 2005: 30). This woodland was part of Sutherland’s original nineteenth century planting scheme for the demesne and effectively frames an extensive open parkland area close to the core of the demesne.

8.3 Humewood Demesne, Co. Wicklow

The Development Proposal

In 2008, Wicklow County Council granted full planning permission for “an integrated tourism/recreational complex” within the core area of Humewood Demesne surrounding the castle and associated outbuildings (An Bord Pleanála, 2008: 1) (Plate 8.3).52 The development proposal contained a masterplan outlining the following main elements: an extension to the castle and stable outbuildings for use as a 137 bedroom hotel and spa, leisure and conference

51 The fact that the Council granted the applications may be due to the excessive power of councillors to overrule the recommendations of their planning and conservation staff or the council’s over-reliance on commercial rates and central Government funding due to the abolition of domestic rates in the late 1970s. Councils actively compete with one another to attract commercial investment and one lucrative area has been the commercial redevelopment of country houses and demesnes into golf club, hotel and spa resorts since the 1990s.

52 View Appendix Q for a review of the historical development of Humewood Demesne.
facility. In addition, an ancillary play centre, 97 no. tourist lodges, a golf club house, 18 hole
golf course and 537 no. surface parking spaces were also granted permission. The development
also consisted of the construction of new internal access roads, and the upgrading of existing
roadways and the construction of lay-bys within the demesne. This, most importantly, included
the main internal access road from the Kiltegan Village gate and the re-positioning of the pier,
gate and railings addressing the estate village. The planning application related to works on 432
acres (175 hectares) of the demesne’s 440 acres (178 hectares).

Plate 8.3: The Gothic revival country house of Humewood Castle, Co. Wicklow. The original White designed
building is located to the right of the photograph and the Brooks extension to the left. (Source: Flickr, 2010).

The Level of Legislative Protection Offered to Humewood Demesne

Given the architectural importance and the fact that the entire demesne survived wholly intact,
it is surprising that the level of protection given to the demesne was negligible. The 2004
Wicklow County Development Plan only included Humewood Castle on its appended RPS
describing it as: “one of the most important nineteenth century houses in Ireland designed by William White”. However, Humewood Demesne contains six entries on the NIAH record, including the three gate lodges, the garden cottage, the stableyard complex and the castle itself. With the exception of the castle which has a “national” rating, the remaining structures have a “regional” rating and their special interest is “architectural” or “social” (NIAH, 2010). The demesne was not given any landscape designation by either the local planning authority.

The planning authority did not zone any of the demesne for development and so the lands were designated by default as “rural lands”, which were subject to the policies and objectives outlined in the Development Plan for such lands (Wicklow County Council, 2004: 98). Section 5 of the Development Plan allowed for “integrated tourism, leisure and recreational complexes” in rural areas and considered them as uses which were “open for consideration” on sites where access, locational and size considerations could be satisfied (Wicklow County Council, 2004: 121). Section 4.1.2 outlined a specific policy of the Council to “encourage and assist in provision of recreational and tourism infrastructure” (Wicklow County Council, 2004: 135).

The Board’s Decision

‘An Taisce’ subsequently appealed the planning application to ‘An Bord Pleanála’ requesting a split decision. It supported the new use for the castle and outbuildings but was opposed to the construction of the golf course, tourist lodges and associated structures within the demesne, citing the irrevocable damage that golf and hotel developments have had on similar designed landscapes. It stated that there was a distinct lack of legislative and implementation provisions for the ratified international conservation charters and conventions in relation to cultural landscapes. It also recommended that a “conservation and design brief” should be prepared before a masterplan and argued that the preferred use would be as a “National Trust” property.
The Board’s resultant assessment of the planning application and subsequent appeal provides a number of interesting insights into the treatment of demesnes under current conservation legislation in Ireland. Although ‘An Taisce’ was the appellant in this case, other bodies made additional submissions to the Board in support of their appeal arguments. The most significant of these was a submission by the Architectural Heritage Service of the DEHLG. It stated that Humewood Castle was “a highly important protected structure” and “a... remarkable Victorian country house... the best example of its kind in the country and very much intact in its demesne” (An Bord Pleanála, 2008: 12). The Service declared that the:

scheme would affect the relationship of the structure to the surroundings and attendant grounds, in that it requires alterations to the profile of the landscape, does not respect important woodlands and parklands, and the important views to and from existing structures (An Bord Pleanála, 2008: 12).

Of interest to this dissertation, the Service also stated that such a “large scale development proposal, for the castle, and parkland estate should be preceded by the preparation of an integrated conservation plan, to enable a fully informed assessment to be available and the masterplan does not fulfil these needs (An Bord Pleanála, 2008: 13). The Service also set-out design amendment recommendations should the Board see fit to grant the proposal. Due to their extensive nature, they highlight the damage the proposal, as granted by Wicklow County Council, possessed.

Interestingly, although the Board’s assessment of the proposals did take into consideration the quality of the designed landscape, given the Council’s onus of protection to the castle, their focus was more on the castle’s setting, as opposed to the demesne’s integrity. Although ceding that there was a desire from ‘An Taisce’ for more provisions for the International Conservation Charters and Conventions, the Planning Inspector stated that the Board’s role was to “consider the proposed development with reference to the extant legislative framework” and that although
“there is a recommendation in the Guidelines [2005 *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines*] for the preparation of a conservation plan, which is highly desirable, there is no statutory requirement” (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2008: 35).

The Inspector deemed the majority of the proposal’s contents to be appropriate given the contents of the Development Plan. Their only real concerns related to the significant number and design of the tourist lodges within the demesne, which were of a suburban nature and felt to be “incompatible with a historic designed parkland landscape” (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2008: 35). The Inspector also felt that, in principle, there was no objection to golf facilities being a major element of the development provided that it does not “dominate the designed landscape especially the relationships between main features and the centrally located core building complex and garden curtilage” (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2008: 35). As a result, the Inspector recommended that the area of the demesne stretching between the ornamental lake and core demesne area should be retained free of golf course structures to protect the character, context and setting of the castle (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2008: 35).

The Inspector recommended a split decision granting all proposals except the eighteen-hole golf course, the golf club house, and the lakeside and farmyard lodges. The Inspector felt that although a golf course could be accommodated within the demesne it was desirable to have them addressed by way of a new planning application. However, the Board’s members subsequently granted planning permission for the majority of the proposal’s contents and instead opted to only refuse permission for the lakeside lodges and three holes of the eighteen hole golf course located between the core of the demesne and the ornamental lake (*An Bord Pleanála*, 2008b: 1). In its reasoning, the Board considered that the golf course, reduced by three holes, would be acceptable in terms of its impact on the landscape.
Commentary

These case-studies have highlighted a number of deficiencies in the application of conservation policy to demesnes in Ireland. These issues are summarised below:

- The general lack of protection offered to demesnes in Ireland is worrying. Only a portion of the built structures of Bective and Humewood Demesnes appeared on the RPS, none of the case-studies had landscape designations and none were designated as ACAs, as promoted by the DEHLG, or LCAs.

- The appropriate recording of the cultural significance of heritage properties would provide significant conservation leverage in situations where their compulsory purchase for redevelopment is being proposed.

- County development plans and studies need specific policies and objectives to allow for the protection of demesnes from inappropriate new uses. It is quite clear that the reasoning behind the refusal of the proposed developments on Rockingham Demesne was as a result of the contents of the Lough Key Study, which was also appended to the county development plan. It contained very specific policies and objectives aimed at preserving the character of the landscape surrounding the Lough. The demesne was preserved only as a result of its fortunate inclusion within the Study’s boundary. Similar conservation plans for individual demesnes should be prepared and appended to the relevant development plan.

- Policies contained within development plans promoting the establishment of large-scale facilities in rural areas, which do not explicitly state that the cultural landscape heritage of each county must be protected from such developments in the process, are a significant threat to continued demesne integrity.
• Masterplans for demesne redevelopment schemes should not be undertaken before unbiased and appropriate conservation plans are prepared. Only then can the cultural significance of an individual demesne be discovered and appropriately conserved. Each of the case-studies has shown that the designed landscapes of demesnes have been effectively retro-fitted by proposed modern uses that do not preserve their authenticity of integrity.

• The planning authority’s interpretation of the “curtilage” of Bective House was fatally flawed. Over the past decade, decisions from ‘An Bord Pleanála’ have continually confirmed the DEHLG’s view that “curtilage”, in relation to country houses, relates to the entire demesne as amassed for such purposes. In addition to this, the Board has given arguably a similar weighting to the term “attendant grounds” of a protected structure, as it does to “curtilage”. Curtilage must be defined in existing legislation.

• The most deplorable issue to emanate from the Rockingham Demesne case-study was the fact that the planning authority granted each of the development proposals in their entirety despite the fact that they materially contravened their development plan. It can be argued that the planning authority was only too aware of the local support for the proposed developments, and bowing to councillor pressure, or otherwise, granted permission for each of them. It is likely that this was undertaken in the knowledge that they would be appealed to the Board and it would be forced to refuse each of them.

• Development considerations in rural areas appear to give more weight to land acquisition and farm severance issues than cultural heritage considerations.

• The Inspector’s commentary in the Humewood Demesne case-study that the landscape protection contents of the international conservation charters does not appear in the extant legislative framework is a damning indictment of Ireland’s piecemeal implementation of landscape protection.
9.0 CONCLUSION

Cultural landscapes emerge from specific geographical, economic, social and cultural circumstances and are contested expressions of authority and ownership. The Irish rural landscape changed irrevocably over the course of the seventeenth century as a very different system of landownership, begun in 1169, finally reached all areas of the island. Many major elements of the contemporary rural scene are residual reminders of an era when this estate system flourished across the island. One of the major legacies of this landownership system is the demesne: the untenanted land cultivated directly by its owner.

It is in and around these great demesnes that the cultural aspirations and expressions of the self confident and predominantly Protestant landowning class can be most vividly seen. Demesnes with their high enclosing walls, woodlands, follies and ornamental parkland remain an easily identifiable topographical unit. By possessing separate economic and social functions to those of the surrounding countryside, they remain a very distinctive and unique feature of the Irish landscape. However, since the decline of the system of landownership that supported their formation in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the animating force behind both demesne construction and maintenance has been largely lost.

Comparable to any other cultural landscape, the loss of this animating force is the single greatest threat to their continued survival. The most vulnerable demesnes are those that have been sold-off in a piecemeal manner to satisfy local agricultural and forestry demands, as well as those under intense development pressure from expanding neighbouring settlements and, the ever ubiquitous, golf course, resort and holiday home developments. Such redevelopment schemes ultimately lead to erosion, at best, or obliteration, at worst, of their original intricate design intentions. Without an effective knowledge of demesne features, their settings, human activities carried-out within them, the functional areas historically in operation or the character
of a demesne, it is impossible to suitably preserve their creators’ original design intention and meaning. Any development that negatively affects any one of these five categories mentioned can be considered to upset the authenticity and integrity of a demesne. These landscapes can only be properly preserved if suitable contemporary land uses can now be found for them. These uses must echo their historical role in order to preserve their authenticity and integrity. This is fundamentally the key role that Irish conservation policy must satisfy.

However, this dissertation has shown that due to their intangible nature, demesnes occupy a subordinate position in the ranking and practice of conservation policy. Conservation or planning tools are frequently crude instruments relative to the complexities of a demesne’s contrived landscape and remain obsessed with built structures rather than landscapes.

Although this dissertation has concerned itself almost solely with an examination of conservation policy in practice, it is quite clear that there are a number of issues in the current legislative system that needs to be rectified. There are clearly far too many local authorities who are wholly reliant on commercial rates and central Government funding. These authorities actively compete with one another to attract commercial investment and many demesnes have been forced to accommodate various commercial developments to satisfy growing local authority deficits. A stronger regional governance tier is required. The excessive power of councillors in overruling the recommendations of planning and conservation professionals is also apparent in the number of successful appeals to ‘An Bord Pleanála’. Finally, there are a number of Councils who do not even employ conservation officers and must rely on planners who are largely untrained in conservation issues to guide demesne redevelopment proposals.

In addition, it is quite clear that conservation guidance is required from the DEHLG that specifically addresses the cultural significance of demesnes, outlines the intricate design interdependencies that demesnes possess and the threats that inappropriate development has
upon their continued integrity. Heritage Impact Assessments should also become statutory requirements for proposed redevelopments in the vicinity of cultural heritage properties. These assessments can appropriately assess the impact redevelopment proposals have on integrity.

Given the large number demesnes, it is not feasible to preserve every single one intact. This dissertation proposes that a representative national list or register, populated by a broad selection of various styles, types and sizes, etc, should be proposed for future preservation and conservation. Conservation plans for their continued preservation and conservation must then be prepared. These plans must recognise their complex context, design and setting, contain specific policies and objectives for their continued preservation and, finally, be adopted into the relevant county development plan to give them a statutory footing. These plans should be undertaken by Central Government, as it has the resources and trained personnel available to effectively undertake this. These plans can be modelled on existing landscape protection plans, such as LCAs, or could replicate those used for Ireland’s WHS, particularly that of Brú na Bóinne where core and buffer areas have been identified to prevent any degradation of the wider landscape that demesnes are sited within. Such plans should also allow all stakeholders involved in a demesne’s preservation to make their views known during their preparation.

Although proposing a national register for demesnes, all demesnes should also be effectively conserved through the development plan process. The issues identified in chapter nine must be addressed. Development plans must identify each demesne within their area, contain policies and objectives aimed at finding appropriate uses for them that preserve their integrity, populate their RPS with all demesne built features and finally designate demesnes as ACAs or similar. Only such measures can effectively preserve demesnes. In short, Ireland’s conservation legislation offer is resilient enough to preserve the integrity of demesnes; however it must be applied more stringently before it can be confidently supported.
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APPENDICES

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Appendix A: Case-Study Selection Methodology

A central tenet of the methodology used to identify this dissertation’s three case-studies was that of purposeful sampling; allowing for the selection of a case-study, which best exemplifies a feature or development of interest to this dissertation. In this instance, redevelopment proposals that have been granted full planning permission since the inception of the Planning and Development Act 2000 were the focus of this investigation. Employing a limited number of case-studies, each accurately reflecting the range of contemporary threats to demesnes, permits the researcher to apply theoretical lessons, derived from literature, theory and policy, to practice and establish their presence, validity and variability in reality. An element of realism must also exist when selecting a case-study, such as accessibility and time restrictions. The main factors informing case-study selection in this dissertation were:

- Demesnes that have been the subject of planning applications assessed under current conservation and planning legislation, specifically the 2000 Act,
- Demesnes of regional and local, rather than simply, national importance,
- State-owned demesnes and those in private ownership,
- Peri-urban and rural based demesnes,
- The location of demesnes \textit{vis-à-vis} travelling distance from the main archives based in Dublin, the location of council’s offices and county libraries, and the degree of access to historical and planning information, and
- The degree of fragmentation of a demesne and whether the main country house is intact or has been completely or partially demolished.
Appendix B: The Evolution of Demesnes in Ireland

B.1 Early Medieval Demesnes

The history of the demesne concept in Ireland can be traced to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169AD. By 1175, the provinces of Leinster and Meath were under the control of the Anglo-Norman lords “Strongbow” or Richard fitz Gilbert de Clare, the Earl of Pembroke, and Hugh de Lacy, Lord of Meath, respectively. However, the political vacuum that existed within the country allowed Anglo-Norman adventurers to amass even larger territories surrounding Leinster and Meath in the post-1175 era. They solidified their newly acquired territories through manorial organisation. It was within this manorial framework’s associated economic and social transformation that military subjugation could be secured. This distinct socio-economic structure united ordinary peasants with feudal kings creating a very distinctive settlement landscape characterised by fortifications, manorial settlements, the church and, finally, towns and boroughs (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 70).

Thirteenth century manorial demesnes were largely compatible with their English counterparts and, although there were regional and structural variations, it is possible to identify a number of common characteristics. Firstly, they were lordly estates and were distinct from other types of estate organisation in that they were divided into two components: the lord’s division, which retained a proportion of the manorial lands to be set aside “in demesne” to produce both goods and profits for the manorial estate, and the land let-out to tenants in return for rents and services (Aalen et al, 1997: 197). Secondly, manors were relatively self-contained agricultural units. The labour services of the un-free ‘villein’ (servile tenants) were essential to the functioning of

53 In 1175, the Treaty of Windsor retained the Gaelic-Irish provinces of Meath and Leinster for King Henry II with the remainder of the country under the authority of King Rory O’Connor of Connacht.
54 Feudalism was a social and economic structure, which developed to control incipient or actual anarchy in the absence of centralised power.
a manor. The exploitation of the demesne, therefore, relied on the presence of a dependant peasantry. The two components of the manor were, thus, functionally linked. Ultimately, demesnes were self-sufficient entities containing fields for crops and livestock, an enclosed garden, an orchard and, most importantly, a deer park. According to Reeves-Smyth (Aalen et al., 1997: 198), deer parks were the most distinctive feature of these early demesnes; being a quintessential symbol of wealth and prestige. They usually comprised of areas of rough grazing dotted with trees, interspersed with clumps of woodland and enclosed behind either a wooden pale or a wall. Often these deer parks also encompassed warrens and fish ponds, and would also have acted as grounds for livestock, as well as game. It is this feature, once exposed to a more peaceful political and social environment, which would help transform manorial demesnes into the great landscaped parklands of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. These demesnes would have constituted a distinct component of the landscape from a very early period, their neat fields presenting a unique contrast to the surrounding unenclosed countryside (Reeves-Smyth 1997: 550).

Outside of these Anglo-Norman controlled areas, Irish monasteries, attached to continental houses, spread further than their Anglo-Norman manorial counterparts and, therefore, would have a significant influence on Gaelic-Irish gardens. Such gardens followed a basic formula, being usually small, enclosed, square or rectangular plots with raised beds and “much carpenters” work in the form of trellises, fences and arbours, often creating small cloisters (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 115). The area frequently contained sanded or gravelled paths, which lead to a central feature such as a pool or a bay tree. Essentially, the development of the

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55 The concept of enclosures stemmed from the rule of St Benedict, where clearly defined, self-contained precincts were advocated to ensure that the monks could be spared the temptation to roam abroad and encouraged them to perform their task within the spiritual sanctuary.
ornamental meditation garden in the monastery was paralleled by the pleasure garden within the castle or manor bawn (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 113).56

B.2 Post-Medieval Demesnes

With the dissolution of the monasteries from 1537 by King Henry VIII (1491-1547), an undercurrent of change slowly revolutionised both gardening and demesne design in Ireland. The sale of this land by the King, created a new wealthy elite who immediately began to construct larger and grander houses and demesnes to match their newfound socio-economic affluence (Plate B.1). Over the subsequent decades Protestant landowners from England began to accompany them. However, the demesnes that evolved in Ireland were broadly similar to those in England, France and the Low Countries, remaining fundamentally medieval in character.57 Reeves-Smyth (1999: 122) argues that there were at least 3,500 such gardens in Ireland in the early seventeenth century with the possibility of significantly more. These large post-medieval gardens and demesnes were the precursors to contemporary demesnes.

An Indulgence in Demesne Ornamentation in the Seventeenth Century

As the century progressed, early manorial functionality was gradually superseded by an indulgence in decoration (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 122). The increased availability of exotic plants and a proliferation of gardening texts in the early seventeenth century led to the demesne, and gardens in particular, becoming larger and more complex. Although demesnes continued to function as manorial home farms, their size and layouts were increasingly

56 John Harvey’s work on medieval gardens has shown that northern European gardens essentially owe their form to the central role of monasteries in developing and disseminating their horticultural expertise across Europe during the Middle Ages (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 113).

57 Features such as quartered enclosures, raised beds, tunnel arbours and trellises all continued and were increasingly complemented by the late medieval trend for knots or geometric patterns defined by perennial plants (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 115).
dominated by ornamental rather than economic considerations. Increasingly and more significantly, Italian Renaissance ideas led to gardens and the wider demesne being included as an integral part of the manor house design, striving for an overall coherence and symmetry (Aalen et al, 1997: 199). Bowling greens, fountains and statuary were standard features, while ornamental ponds and terracing became increasingly popular. However, the development of these gardens and demesnes was undertaken within an unsettled political environment, a situation that was to persist for most of the seventeenth century. Overall:

- garden design became increasingly ornamental during the sixteenth century with the introduction of mazes, arbours, topiary and ‘knots’ … however, even modest layouts still had to be protected behind palisades, while many of the grandest gardens retained defensive walls (Aalen et al, 1997: 199).

Plate B.1: Bective Abbey, Co. Meath was Cistercian abbey founded in 1147 was dissolved by Henry VIII in 1536 and, in the later eighteenth century, became a folly within Bective Demesne. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

These defensive and fortified enclosures often covered substantial areas. By the early sixteenth century, over ten acres (four hectares) was enclosed at the Gaelic-Irish O'Brien stronghold of
Lemanagh Castle, Co. Clare (Plate B.2). The manor house contained orchards, an ornamental canal and extensive gardens (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 558).

Plate B.2: Lemanagh Castle, Co. Clare was the sixteenth century stronghold of the Gaelic-Irish O'Brien clan. It enclosed ten acres within its formal and informal gardens. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2004).

B.2.1 The Creation of a ‘Demesne Passionate’ Landed Gentry

The social and political structure of Irish society was changing significantly during this period. The land settlements of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, resulting from the expansion of English governmental control in Ireland, brought waves of colonists, undertakers and administrators onto the island in ever increasing numbers. These colonists were mainly Protestant, known as “New English”, and they rapidly began to control social and political power within the country.58

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58 The term “New English” refers to the Protestant colonists who rapidly began to control social and political power within the country after 1533, especially during Elizabeth I’s reign (1558-1603). Catholic English who had
Tensions quickly developed between the Roman Catholic Gaelic-Irish and “Old English” landowners, who controlled the majority of land at this stage, and the “New English”. This ultimately culminated in rebellion by the Gaelic-Irish who were defeated at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 and the “Flight of the Earls” in 1607.59

The mass confiscation of land under the guidance of Oliver Cromwell from 1649 destroyed the economic, social and political power of remaining Roman Catholic landowners on the island. Although some of these dispossessed landowners did recover their land in the subsequent tumultuous decades, the Cromwellian confiscations of the mid-seventeenth century largely shattered the Gaelic-Irish and “Old English” land-owning classes replacing them with “New English” colonists (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224).60 By the mid-1650s, there were no Roman Catholic landowners of prominence remaining in possession of their lands east of the River Shannon. More than twenty years before, over eighty per cent of the land had been in Roman Catholic control.

The position of the “New English” was solidified in the aftermath of the Treaty of Limerick in 1691 ending the Williamite War in Ireland. It allowed the rebelling Roman Catholic Jacobite

migrated to Ireland before Henry VIII’s split with the Roman Catholic Church became known as “Old English”. This class later fused with the native Roman Catholic Gaelic-Irish after the 1691 Treaty of Limerick, ending Roman Catholic landowning power in Ireland.

59 The Battle of Kinsale was the ultimate battle in England’s conquest of Gaelic Ireland. It was the climax of the Nine Years’ War (1594-1603) and took place during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603). A number of the remaining Gaelic-Irish chieftains, including the powerful northern Gaelic-Irish chieftains Hugh O’Neill and Hugh Roe O’Donnell, rebelled against English rule on the island. Due to the involvement of the Spanish, themselves at war with England in the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604), the Battle also formed part of the wider conflict of Protestant England against Roman Catholic Spain. The Flight of the Earls involved the emigration of the northern Gaelic-Irish chieftains to the Continent a loss of political and social control following the Battle.

60 For almost four centuries, the royal administration in Ireland had distinguished between the Gaelic-Irish populations and the English population in the Pale (the area encompassing the counties of Dublin, Louth and Meath). However, the Parliament of 1613-1615 gave legal force to a new, equally impermeable cleavage between the two components of the Anglo-Irish colonial community: the Catholic “Old English” and the Protestant “New English”. By securing the rigorous enforcement of the Oath of Supremacy, the implementation of revenue-generating recusancy fines, the expulsion of all Jesuits and seminary priests from Ireland, and the confiscation of Roman Catholic lands during the parliament of 1613-1615, the “New English” government systematically excluded the “Old English” from political and social influence on the grounds of religion.
officers to leave for the European Continent in the great diaspora of Gaelic-Irish and “Old English” known as “The Flight of the Wild Geese”. The “New English” swiftly took control of the economic, political and social machinery of the country; solidifying their position as the chief landowners in the process. This new class, frequently owning estates in both Britain and Ireland, would remain in control until the latter half of the nineteenth century when they became known as “the Ascendancy”.

During this period, the three main cultural groupings differed with the degree of enthusiasm they showed to emerging Italian Renaissance ideas of designing houses and gardens as single units. It was the “New English” who were the most eager to adopt the latest trends in fashion for designing gardens in strict symmetrical association with the house, often using terraces, stairways, waterworks and sculptures (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 123). For them, gardens were a very visible means of proclaiming newly found status and wealth, as well as authority within the country. This is especially true of Sir Nicholas Malby’s great garden, laid-out in front of his new mansion, Roscommon Castle, Co. Roscommon in the 1580s and some pre-Palladian buildings like Eyrecourt, Co. Galway and Stackallen House, Co. Meath, where one formal elevation was designed to overlook and edge a walled enclosure (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67). This ostentatious approach to landscape design was also practiced by the “Old English”: however they did not appear to practice it with such fervour (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 123). The native Gaelic-Irish families on the other hand appear to have been more traditional in their approach, rejecting Renaissance ideas and opting instead for a late-medieval approach to garden design lasting until the mid-seventeenth century (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 123).

61 This was despite the fact that the house was still defensively enclosed.
B.2.2 Demesne Development, Form and Layout

The well-established Italian Renaissance idea of uniting the country house and garden was quickly followed by an increasing awareness amongst the landowning classes that the countryside surrounding their new country houses could be designed on a large scale. The development of a clear demesne typology was now beginning, with the house being the focus of a larger theatre surrounded on all sides by an outdoor architecture of formal or informal parklands.

Given the relatively tranquil political environment after 1660, the burgeoning “New English” class began to express their newfound wealth and status by enthusiastically re-designing existing confiscated demesnes or establishing new ones. As a result, a variety of demesnes were constructed from the seventeenth century, which varied with oscillating fashion and taste. They would quickly evolve into great landscaped parklands by the close of the eighteenth century.

Designed Geometric Landscapes

These precursors to contemporary demesnes quickly became visible on the landscape itself as existing demesnes exponentially increased in size as landowners began to provide suitably impressive settings for the great country houses under construction from the 1660s. Irish gardens and demesnes promptly began to divest themselves of their need to shelter within fortified enclosures, being ultimately able to completely give way to unfortified forms after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. These larger and more complex demesnes began to impact upon the wider landscape through formal geometry, which was no longer introspective as the manor demesnes and gardens had been (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67).

Ultimately, the concept of a geometric landscape was an evolution of the medieval geometric garden layouts that were used to reflect the symmetry of the house. In many cases, the original
tower house or fortified residence was extended to incorporate a large seventeenth century house, as at Dardistown, Co. Meath, or completely abandoned for a new house within the demesne, as at Loughcrew, Co. Meath. This was a reassuring expression of a stable, anglicised and victorious Protestant society. The self-confidence of the new landed class in Ireland, with its newly assured political position and flourishing rentals, initiated a sustained period of country house and demesne construction (Aalen et al, 1997: 68). Between the 1600s and 1740s, the number of country houses in Co. Cork alone grew from 25 to 200, the vast majority of which were accompanied by a substantial demesne (Aalen et al, 1997: 68). The majority of the other counties across the island also saw a similar rate of construction.

The manor gardens’ strictly formal design, highlighting the symmetry of the country house, gave initial inspiration to demesne designers who advocated that this symmetry could be extended into the surrounding landscape through long perspectives (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 131). The increase in wealth, particularly in the 1720s when existing unfavourable leases granted to nervous tenants in the tumultuous years of the seventeenth century lapsed, allowed these landowners to expand on these ideas in a very ‘grande’ manner incorporating an ever expanding acreage within their demesnes.

In conjunction with this, they began constructing formal features arranged axially upon the house on broad controlled vistas. The countryside surrounding their houses became increasingly designed and gradually began to affect much of the demesne area (Aalen et al, 1997: 200). The house now became the focus of a larger theatre, an outdoor architecture of radiating lines, vistas and axes, ultimately Baroque in inspiration and derived, in part, from the park surrounding the ‘Château de Versailles’, France designed by André Le Nôtre, a French landscape architect (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67). The park at Versailles represents the height of the French formal garden style or ‘jardin à la française’. Some of these
vistas, as at Kilruddery House, Co. Wicklow, were designed to be seen from the house while others were arranged around the demesne and were intended to be discovered only in the course of a walk around the grounds (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67). Tree-lined avenues, extending from the house, were a dominant feature of these layouts serving as symbols of the authority and rank of the owners, as well as emphasising the importance of the building in the landscape. The upsurge in tree planting was not only confined to avenues, as field boundaries were also included. This remodelling of the demesne often manifested itself in the use of oculi, a circular window in a demesne wall, to extend views into the surrounding landscape from the demesne garden (Malins and Glin, 1976: 6). It was used to extend the new gentry’s notional ownership far beyond the walls of their demesnes.

The demesne itself was laid-out in a regular, often grid-like manner, together with small blocks of tree plantations often disregarding volume to enjoy its formal qualities. These formalised demesnes became a clear manipulation of two-dimensional space (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67). Other standard features included circular pools and canals, many of which served as fish ponds as well as being ornamental in nature. Closer to the main house there were formal garden areas, terraces, bowling greens and bosquets. These were often placed between the house and the kitchen garden, orchard, haggard and outbuildings. By reorganising the demesne fields into rectangular grid-like patterns, and by extending the symmetry of the garden into the landscape through long perspectives, the new unfortified houses reflected their owner’s economic, social and political power within the country (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 200). Two clear examples of this process can be seen in the formal demesne of Carton House, Co. Kildare in the 1680s and Stradbally Hall Co. Laois in the 1740s (Figure B.1). They are depicted as large white

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62 Bosquets were a popular woodland form. A network of paths and clearings, incorporating clipped hedges, shrubs, ponds and statues, dissected such plantations. Some bosquets were so tame as to be composed entirely of tall vertical hedges flanking paths laid-out in a geometric pattern.
buildings acting as a nexus of a “designed landscape”, each characterised by radiating avenues and the “compartmentation of its demesne” (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67).

Figure B.1: Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois. The eighteenth century gardens of Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois represent a logical extension of this approach. The house was surrounded by closed squares of trees crossed by paths. (Source: Aalen et al, 1997: 197).

However by the 1740s and 1750s the popularity of the Baroque theory, that man was overcoming nature, had waned as fussy detail became unfashionable. “The quest for axes and compartmentation was first made less obvious… then dispensed with” completely (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67). This process of simplification led to a gradual widening of perspectives and saw the emancipation of the garden from this static theme. It led to the removal of walled courts around the country house and an opening-up of landscape views. It also, more importantly, encouraged an out-migration of garden features into the park, so that temples and other classical structures were built away from the house, crowning hillocks and
terminating vistas. Formal gardens were ploughed-over, avenues left to wander like country lanes, while the vista from the house was one of gently rolling greenery. These concepts, which were refining the demesne form, developed over the course of the eighteenth century. Such developments increased the integration of the garden and demesne, a process later fully realised with the emergence of the landscape park in the mid-eighteenth century (Aalen et al, 1997: 201).

Landscape and Picturesque Parklands

This intimate relationship between garden and house, so striking a feature of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, disappeared with the advent of the landscape park, whose lawns now swept up to the windows of the mansion (Reeves-Smyth, 1999: 559).

By the middle of the eighteenth century a new conception of man’s place in nature began to transform Ireland’s demesnes. The old formal geometric layouts, which sought to prove that men could subdue nature, now made way for naturalised parklands. This new revolutionary style demanded that flowers, fruit and vegetables be banished to walled gardens away from the house and those previously formal features, such as parterres, avenues and canals, be swept-away and replaced with an idealised conception of “natural” landscapes. This owed much to the portrayal of idyllic Italian scenery in the paintings of Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorraine (Aalen et al, 1997: 201). The planting and layout of these parklands reflected a new appreciation that natural features such as woods, streams and hills were beautiful in themselves,

63 The spirit of simplicity that engendered it found equivalent expression in the houses built to enjoy it; Neo-Classical cubes of prismatic solidity intended to be seen in three dimensions, where the main rooms were on the ground floor and the grass rolled right up to the windows. The new style for country houses was that of Palladian architecture, imported from Italy. The largest and most palatial of the Palladian houses is Castletown House, Co. Kildare; by 1760 its demesne incorporated 1,100 acres (445 hectares). It was designed by Alessandro Galilei and Sir Edward Lovett Pearce and was completed in 1732. The Irish architect Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (1699–1733) was one of the leading advocates of Palladianism in Ireland. He rejected the Baroque after spending three years studying architecture in France and Italy.
as well as good for the human soul. These Arcadian parklands of “untouched nature” secluded from the outside world by encircling walls and belts of trees enclosed the residence at their heart (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 550).

The ideal now was to surround the newly constructed Palladian mansion with wide expresses of smooth open meadows dotted with clumps of trees, sweeping lakes in which the house and park were flatteringly mirrored and tree-lined glades with animals grazing in the shadow of romantic ruins, temples and pavilions (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 550). Sunken ha-ha has permitted uninterrupted views of the park from the house and a diversity of walks and rides coordinated a succession of pastoral Arcadian scenes. Mervyn Busteed (2000: 16) summarises this style. It:

...emphasised the ‘parkland’ landscape… set amidst this landscape was the house, usually built in variations of the Palladian style, both architecture and setting manipulated to display the eternal ‘naturalness’ of existing patterns of social relations and political authority. In reality, this was a contrived landscape, the result of massive feats of planning and engineering, and designed to affirm a very specific worldview.

Although the new landscape parks originated in England they were ideally suited to the rolling Irish countryside. Despite Ireland’s abundance of such natural landscapes, such parkland creation was inevitably a costly undertaking involving considerable engineering skills, not least in selecting and accentuating the best existing landscape features but in moving soil and rock, felling and planting trees, diverting rivers into the park, constructing dams to create lakes, building ha-has and other contrivances to achieve this aim. Some larger undertakings involved relocating villages and re-routing main roads, as at Bective Demesne, Co. Meath. This emparkment process stood in stark contrast to the older formal geometric layouts, where horticulture was now largely confined to walled gardens, generally at a substantial distance
from the main house, while the home farm was relocated to a site beyond the perimeter of the demesne and out-of-sight of the house (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 551).

A new genre of distinctive estate architecture also emerged, encouraged by a sentimental attitude to rural life and a prevailing utilitarian philosophy (Aalen et al, 1997: 203). Estate cottages, gate lodges, dairies and hitherto humble farm buildings became worthy of architectural attention, while new model farm buildings were erected. The most enduring images of all demesne buildings continue to be the gate lodges at demesne entrances. These were normally treated in an ornamental manner, in the style of the “big house”, announcing to the visitor and passer-by alike of the grandeur of the demesne and the taste of the owner. Demesne parks had a multi-functional role being both ornamental yet necessarily practical.

The “natural style” landscape parks were so enthusiastically adopted by Irish landowners that by the close of the eighteenth century only a small minority of old formal geometric layouts survived, a good example are the gardens of Kilruddery House, Co. Wicklow which were laid-out in the 1680s. The natural style extended to even modest houses, such as rectories and town villas. They had become a ubiquitous feature of the Irish landscape by the end of the century. According to figures based on unpublished work undertaken by Reeves-Smyth (1997: 551), parkland, of ten acres (four hectares) or more, occupied around 800,000 acres (323,749 hectares) or four percent of the island, with 7,000 houses featuring associated ornamental or pleasure landscapes by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Their popularity can be largely attributed to a variety of factors, not least their suitability to the Irish countryside, the comparatively low cost of their maintenance and the potential of parkland for allowing landowners to distance themselves physically from the economic realities that sustained them, whilst helping to convey the comforting notion that the contemporary social order was somehow natural, unchanging and inevitable (Reeves-Smyth, 1997: 551).
Indeed Ireland’s abundant supply of cheap labour was a major factor in aiding their construction, due mainly to high fertility rates within the lower classes and the periodic famines that persisted throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a result, there was a distinct need for landowners to create employment on their estates; this often involved parkland construction within their demesne during times of economic hardship. This was a major reason for the construction of Connolly’s Folly and the Wonderful Barn at Castletown Demesne, Co. Kildare (Howley, 1993: 8) (Plates B.3 to B.5).


Plate B.4: Connolly’s Folly built in 1740. (Source: Howley, 1993: 8).

In the nineteenth century, “taste veered from the sublimely rational to the tragic, so preferred landscapes for new buildings became wilder” leading to a more romanticised understanding of the value of natural beauty (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 67) (Plate 3.6). However, in the years following the Great Famine of the 1840s, the fortunes of the Irish gentry declined. Shortages of capital and, importantly, labour resulted in new parkland schemes being largely confined to the wealthier families, while demesne developments were dominated by horticultural and agricultural advances that took place within the existing landscape structure (Aalen et al, 1997: 203).

Robinsonian Demesnes

The inevitable eclipse of the landscape parkland came during the 1870s. A desire to achieve a reconciliation of the wild with the cultivated led to a revival of some geometric designs. The enthusiasts favoured “highly wrought works in proximity to the house, rapidly merging into more natural effects in the wider landscape” (Everett, 2001b: 16). This movement was advocated by the Irish horticulturalist William Robinson (1838-1935) in his 1870 work “The Wild Garden”. He recommended that hardy exotics should be planted under conditions where they will not require further care. His advice was well received in Ireland and was widely adopted in demesnes from the 1880s. It offered the prospect of low maintenance parklands in which nature was left to do most of the work. It was undertaken with enthusiasm in the south-western counties of the country in particular, which were under the influence of a temperate, moist climate and an abundance of naturally sublime-landscapes (Aalen et al, 1997: 203).

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64 This was particularly the case with the mid to late nineteenth century craze for Gothic-Revival or Romantic castles, such as Tulllynally Castle, Co. Westmeath, Markree Castle, Co. Sligo and Killua Castle, Co. Westmeath. These houses are less classically ordered, striving instead to present an image of additive age and Gothic nobility. The asymmetric castle was made to be a part of the landscape sitting picturesquely within it, apparently formed by it as much as forming it (McCullough and Mulvin, 1987: 68). This placed significant demands on demesne designs to accommodate such romantic buildings with similar landscapes.
This Robinsonian theme was so successful that it led to the creation of bog gardens, lakeside gardens, rhododendron and other forms of woodland gardens, mixed borders, grass paths and the massing of naturalised bulbs in grass (Aalen et al., 1997: 203). “The wild gardens… were the creation of a society that could often appear isolated, but was hardly provincial” as their enthusiasm for plant collecting, sustained by the greater influxes of seeds, cuttings and rooted plants from expeditions within the British Empire and beyond, testified (Everett, 2001b: 16). The improvement in the design and construction of greenhouses also played a significant role in this development. Formal avenues once again became a popular method of displaying these new tree species and parterres were reintroduced around the house, sometimes with balustraded terracing used to showcase the vast number of new annual and tender plants being raised in the heated glasshouses of the walled gardens (Aalen et al., 1997: 203).

While Robinson was advocating the recreation of nature in gardening, various forms of formal gardens continued to be made during the late Victorian and Edwardian era, though not in any large number (Plate B.6). Extensive gardens in the Early Renaissance style were laid-out at Killarney House, Co. Kerry, while a number of Japanese gardens were created at Tully House, Co. Kildare. However, the desire to create or indeed maintain formal gardens declined in Ireland after the effects of the Land Acts began to be felt from the 1880s, particularly after the post-1903 era. Falling prices and general uncertainty during the agricultural depression and Land War from the 1870s,
resulted in the concept of the “naturalised” or “wild garden” becoming the preferred option in Ireland as they were less labour intensive (Everett, 2001b: 10). After World War II, when virtually all of the remaining walled kitchen gardens and formal display gardens disappeared from Ireland’s demesnes, the Robinsonian legacy remained, as at Mount Usher, Co. Wicklow and Derreen House, Co. Kerry (Plate B.7) (Reeves-Smyth, 2001: 560).65

Plate B.7: The Robinsonian inspired demesne of Mount Usher, Co. Wicklow. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

65 The creation of a Robinsonian garden at Derreen Demesne began in 1870 by the fifth Marquis of Lansdowne. The Demesne is designed around Derreen House, an unassuming, mid-nineteenth century Victorian house, subsequently rebuilt and enlarged in the 1920s after being burnt by republican groups during the Irish Civil War 1922-1923. The Demesne, up to this date, was characterised by bare rock and native scrub oak. However being located on a peninsula in the south-east of the island, the demesne experienced high levels of rainfall and rare frosts. For the next sixty years, excluding the years between 1883 and 1894 when he was Governor General of Canada and Viceroy of India, the Marquis devoted himself to the task of creating a Robinsonian inspired garden within the Demesne. As a result of the excellent growing conditions there, the Marquis had the rare pleasure of witnessing his plantations grow to full maturity.
Appendix C: The Character of Landownership in Ireland

By the late seventeenth century, the English-derived estate system had reached prominence across the entire island. The country was divided into large landed estates owned by a wealthy landed elite. These estates were leased in farms to tenants for specified periods at pre-agreed rents with only the estate’s demesne removed from this rental system. Such a system had the economic objective of stabilising regional economic and political conditions, while securing a continual rental income for those who owned the estates. Tenants were bound by their contracts to develop the landholding, build a house, pay rent, and so on. Many tenants at the close of the seventeenth century had obtained long leases on large portions of estates, which they subsequently subleased in smaller sections at higher rents, and shorter leases (Duffy, 2004). These leaseholds allowed for the repeated fragmentation of landholdings and the growth of unsustainable population densities.

By the time of the Napoleonic wars and the wartime boom in agricultural prices in the early 1800s, the population had risen rapidly. This practice continued as farms were repeatedly subdivided in the decades prior to the 1840s, a feature which contributed to the widespread devastation caused by the introduction of the potato blight and resultant Great Famine (1845-1852). In general, subdivision among tenant families, and subletting to landless labourers or cottiers occurred most often on poorly managed estates, especially in more marginal western districts that had little economic potential beyond rental farming. In regions of commercial agriculture, particularly in the east and south, estates were more carefully managed by their owners, with tenant leases and labourer numbers strictly controlled. This landownership system would continue until its dismantlement in the early decades of the twentieth century.

66 The Great Famine resulted in the death of approximately one million people, while one million more were forced to emigrate.
By the 1770s, over ninety-five per cent of all land on the island is estimated to have been held by approximately 5,000 families or less than one per cent of the total population (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224). As Ireland’s population doubled to 8.2 million by 1841, so too did the ranks of the landowning class, which swelled to 10,000 families (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224). By 1871, this figure has doubled again reaching 20,000 families despite the fact that the population had fallen to 5.4 million (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224). In 1871, the gross annual rental from these estates exceeded £10 million (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 224).

However, the size distribution of the estates owned by these families was strongly pyramidal in character. By the 1870s, the first rank comprised of approximately 300 families who owned estates of 10,000 acres (4,047 hectares) or more, although even within this group a small coterie of large magnates stood-out, including the Marquis Conyngham of Slane with 157,000 acres (63,536 hectares), the Marquis of Lansdowne with 120,000 acres (48,562 hectares) and the Earl of Kenmare who owned over 100,000 acres (40,469 hectares) (Bence-Jones, 1987: 19).

The second rank was over ten times as numerous and comprised of 3,400 estates of between 1,000 and 10,000 acres (405 and 4,047 hectares). Finally, the third rank of landowners encompassed over 15,000 families who owned less than 1,000 acres (405 hectares) (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 225).

The hierarchical and inevitably unequal nature of this landownership pattern has sometimes been taken as further evidence of the aggressive and gluttonous basis of the landlord system in Ireland. In reality, however, this pattern was paralleled across nineteenth century Europe. In the 1850s in Prussia, over 15,000 Junkers who owned estates of more than 375 acres (152 hectares)

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67 This rapid decrease in the overall population can be attributed to the Great Famine (1845-1850) and the steep increase in landlord-funded emigration over the course of the following decades.

68 It must be noted that this class included a locally numerous class of squatters who had colonised common land and acquired freeholders’ rights over their smallholdings.
accounted for over forty per cent of the land area of a country twice the size of England (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 225). Spain’s system of landownership, characterised by large landed elites, survived well into the twentieth century. This was despite the enforced sale of previously entailed ecclesiastical, municipal and crown lands up to 1855. In the 1930s, over 52 per cent of all Spanish land was contained in the 50,000 estates of more than 250 acres (101 hectares). In England the disparities were even greater, by 1874 over 55 per cent of all land was held by landowners with estates of over 1,000 acres (405 hectares), with that figure rising to 65 per cent if a 300 acre (121 hectares) threshold is used (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 225). Furthermore, 25 per cent of all land was held by 363 landowners with estates of more than 10,000 acres (4,047 hectares) (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 225).

Ultimately there was nothing remarkable about the Irish pattern of landownership and the experience of landlord decline in Ireland is heavily paralleled across Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, which experienced, to a degree, the same economic, political and social changes that manifested in Ireland. Graham and Proudfoot (1993: 225) state that the only major difference between the Irish estates and their European counterparts is that it:

was not the relative size or number of estates; rather it was that they were owned in the main by families of relatively recent origin in the country, whose rights of possession were acquired at the expense of an earlier, largely displaced, landed elite.

Although, Proudfoot (1992: 233) highlights the fact that in Co. Down, a county considered to be in the heartland of “colonial” Ireland, the process of replacement of the native landowning elite was not total and members of the Gaelic Irish, “Old English” and “New English” landowning communities lived alongside one another. Although differences existed between these groups, Proudfoot (1992: 233) argues that by the late eighteenth century these communities:
were firmly welded together into a cohesive economic group, whose shared identity as owners of land ensured their similar interest in reproducing the conditions of their existence, either at the expense, or with the co-operation, of other groups in agrarian society.
Appendix D: The Economics of Emparking

Conventionally, landowner investment in demesne construction has historically been regarded as an exercise in conspicuous construction. It was argued that they added nothing to the long-term growth of the productive economy (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 247). However, according to recent research on demesnes in County Down, Lindsay J. Proudfoot (1992: 235) argues that from the landlord’s point of view, these landscaped parks were relatively cheaply bought. According to Lindsay (1992: 235), there were two sets of costs involved; the loss of rent income from emparking land; and the subsequent cost of park construction and maintenance. The opportunity to empark land would normally only occur when a lease fell in. Where this had belonged to a “middleman”, who had sublet to under-tenants at advanced rents but only paid a much smaller head rent, perhaps set thirty years before, to the landlord, the proportionate increase lost in emparking may have been considerable (Proudfoot, 1992: 235). These costs may have been partly offset by the sale of products from the demesne. On Annesley Estate, Co. Down, the sale of timber from the park that began in the 1790s averaged £320 a year, at a time when the annual rental from the estate was £5,000 - £6,000 (Proudfoot, 1992: 235). On some demesnes, ornamental parks supported ancillary pastoral enterprises, providing both local employment and income for the estate (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 248). The 134 demesnes in the county by 1834 accounted for only 14,820 acres (5,997 hectares), or less than 2.5 per cent of the county’s total agricultural land with the vast majority of the largest demesnes located on marginal areas of relatively limited agricultural potential (Proudfoot, 1992: 235).

On the basis of present evidence, the cost of both the construction and maintenance of a demesne formed only a minor element in the overall pattern of expenditure of a normal estate. The extensive demesne at Hillsborough House, Co. Down constructed between 1742 and 1800,
cost at most £4,830 or rather less than one per cent of the overall estate’s expenditure during the period (Proudfoot, 1992: 235). The major items in this were the construction of the demesne wall between 1770 and 1780 and the extension to the lake between 1787 and 1792 costing £1,285 and £250 respectively (Proudfoot, 1992: 235). On Annesley Estate, Co. Down, the annual cost of maintaining the ornamental park and gardens around Castlewellan House was still less than £180 as late as 1824, a sum roughly equal to one per cent of the £16,500 rental income accruing to the family from their Irish estates (Proudfoot, 1992: 236).
Appendix E: How a Demesne was Formed

The construction of the demesne at Carton House, Co. Kildare is a good example of some of the attitudes, problems and changing fashions, which influenced the formation of demesnes across the wider island. Carton House, Co. Kildare was one of the largest and most influential country houses in Ireland. It invested substantial amounts of capital, labour and time in the creation of its surrounding demesne.

The name, Carton, was originally given to a townland located ten miles west of Dublin and about a mile northeast of Maynooth Village. It was part of the extensive lands in North Kildare granted to Maurice FitzGerald after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169. By the thirteenth century, the FitzGeralds had become Earls of Kildare with their influence and power reaching a zenith in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Throughout the medieval period, their centre of power was the castle at Maynooth. Carton, during this period, was of little significance. A. A. Horner (1975: 46) suggests that a castle or fortified dwelling of the tower house variety existed near the churchyard of what is now referred to as “Old Carton”. This would place the castle half a mile north of the current house and outside of its demesne. Horner (1975: 47) suggests that the final desertion of the castle may have only occurred as late as 1750, and would have been associated with the enlargement of the demesne in the 1740s and 1750s.

According to Horner (1975: 47), the commencement of development at the present site of the house at Carton is obscure and records are not available to shed any light on the topic. In the 1640s a modest but decayed house existed on the site. It was not comparable to that which existed by 1690, when a large house with extensive formal gardens was in existence. It is not possible to indicate who built it and when; although Horner (1975: 50) indicates that by the 1680s Carton was in the hands of Col. Richard Talbot, who became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1687 and was created Duke of Tyrconnell in 1689. The house faced southeast towards the
Dublin Mountains. Immediately in front of it, there was a crescent-shaped area consisting of both a lawn and an area where carriages could park and turn. This forecourt was enclosed by a stone wall and a thin belt of trees, broken only where the five avenues approached the house. The straight, tree-lined avenues were up to three-quarters of a mile in length in the Baroque style. Railed gaps or entrance gates in the stone wall around the forecourt enabled the vistas along these lines to be enjoyed from the house itself. This forecourt was complemented by a walled garden to the rear of the house enclosing four to six acres (1.6 to 2.5 hectares) of land and encompassing gravel walks, lawns, orchards and parterres. From 1691, Carton was forfeited to the crown, which held it for ten years. Although the future ownership of the property was uncertain it seems some, possibly quite extensive, repairs were undertaken to the house and gardens. In 1703, the estate was sold at auction to Major-General Richard Ingoldsby. Only minor changes were made to the house and demesne, comprising of some 450 acres (182 hectares), before it was sold to the nineteenth Earl of Kildare in 1739 (Horner, 1975: 60).

The years from 1739 to 1770 resulted in a massive transformation of the demesne at Carton as the Earl strove to make it his principal residence. In 1739, it would have looked both small and old-fashioned in comparison to the recently constructed Castletown House, Co. Kildare, Summerhill House, Co. Meath, Powerscourt House, Co. Wicklow and Westport House, Co. Mayo (Plate E.1). By 1739, the straight avenues and formal gardens at Carton were now outdated by British and European standards: not of the type one would associate with one of the leading noblemen of Ireland. It is not surprising that one of the first things the Earl did upon acquiring the residence was to renovate the house and grounds. Architects and leading craftsmen were employed for eight years to redesign the house at a cost of £21,000. However, the renovation of the demesne took much longer. The twentieth Earl of Kildare began it in 1744. It involved the acquisition of over 1,000 acres (405 hectares) in the vicinity of the house,
followed by large-scale planting and landscaping. The new demesne comprised of almost two square miles and was enclosed by a boundary wall almost five miles in length.

It was a distinctive unit of open parkland which represented a fundamental addition to the local physical landscape, a unit, too, which at a more intractable level emphasised the insulation of the landlord from the affairs and problems of the tenants (Horner, 1975: 64).

The aim, from the Earl’s point of view was to give the house surroundings, which would harmonise with it and provide the currently fashionable “natural” setting.

However, the process of acquiring land, which would be suitable for the new demesne, was in itself a difficult task. Initially only the townland of Carton was in the possession of the Earl, and it was particularly flat and topographically uninteresting. Although suitable for formal gardens and radiating avenues it did not comply with the contemporary notion of what constituted a “natural” landscape, for which undulating terrain, vales and water were a necessity. Therefore, a landscape with greater potential for the “natural” was urgently required. Such a landscape, although not an outstanding example of its type, was to be found in the Rye Water Valley to the south and east of Carton and in the deeply incised Glashrooneen Glen to the west (Figures E.1 and E.2).
Figure E.1: The Growth of Carton. (Source: Horner, 1975: 54).

Figure E.2: Lands acquired 1739-1750. (Source: Horner, 1975: 54).
Although both of these valleys were excessively incised to be of the highest landscape calibre, they were of the topographical variety around which the desired landscape could be developed. In February 1744, a detailed map highlighting the relief of the areas in question was commissioned. By 1749, almost all of the lands highlighted in this map were added to the nucleus around Carton. This was a lengthy and expensive process involving five major transactions between 1744 and 1749. The expenditure required to piece together the proposed demesne placed a severe strain on the financial resources of the Earl. Indeed, it was most likely that this financial strain, which caused the final demesne to be slightly smaller that the area originally envisaged in the commissioned map of 1744. It was only after the acquisitions that the renovation of the demesne could begin in earnest.

By 1757, when John Rocque made a map of the demesne, major changes had taken place, particularly in the area closest to the house. The gardens had been replaced by open grassland, the forecourt, encompassing a court, walls and railings and four of the five avenues had been gleaned from the landscape. The northeast avenue was retained as the principle approach to the house, owing much to the fact that it could not be seen and did not upset the requirement of a “natural” view. The expansive southeast view now encompassed open grassland, planted with small, irregular, stands of trees. The Dublin mountains could be seen in the distance while the recently constructed Connolly’s Folly, built from 1740-1741 was visible near the skyline.69 To the east nearer the house, the prospect tower of the late seventeenth century was visible above a stand of intervening trees, adding a romantic touch to a view which was now in keeping with contemporary fashion (Horner, 1975: 69).

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69 This folly was mid-way between Carton and Castletown Houses and symbolised the close relationship between the Kildare and Connolly families.
Having integrated all of the newly acquired lands into the demesne, the Kildare’s opted for unfenced field boundaries comprising of ha-ha ditches. The achievement of an expansive parkland resulted in the re-routing of both neighbouring roads and tracks. The Dublin-Maynooth Road was diverted slightly to the south, while several smaller roads which had previously passed through the new demesne were re-routed to a new perimeter road which skirted the outside of the high enclosed wall. The new routes were complemented by new gate lodges at each of the four main entrances gates into the demesne. A new home farm of 43 acres (17.4 hectares) was also created and was the only section of the demesne where crops were grown; elsewhere the open land was given over to sheep, deer and pleasure grounds.

The impact of the new demesne was not confined to the landscape alone; there were radical changes to the boundaries of townlands within the area, the basic Irish territorial unit (Figure E.3 and E.4). Part of the original Carton estate was omitted from the enclosed area, and was subsequently referred to as Old Carton. The remaining part of Carton was included in the new demesne, together with the entire area of one townland, Coolmacthomas, and parts of seven others, Blakestown, Catherinestown, Creestown, Kellystown, Maynooth, Moygaddy and Waterstown. A new unit Carton Demesne, which was five times the size of neighbouring townlands was thus created (Horber, 1975: 70). It completely transgressed older territorial boundaries and even crossed county boundaries between Counties Kildare and Meath. The status of the demesne as a single townland was officially confirmed in 1830.
Figure E.3: Carton Townland 1744. (Source: Horner, 1975: 62).

Figure E.4: Carton Townland 1837. (Source: Horner, 1975: 62).
The task of successfully landscaping the demesne began after 1749 and extended into the
1760s. It required years of determination, vision and perseverance, resources held in abundance
by its chief designer: Emily, Countess of Kildare. She dedicated herself to this task, a similar
devotion shared by her sister Lady Louisa Connolly of neighbouring Castletown House, Co.
Kildare. The Earl and Countess, Horner (1975: 73-76) argues, were the main driving force
behind the demesne’s final form: “Emily showed little interest in “building old ruins and
gateways” as some sections of contemporary fashion demanded. Work continued to be directed
mainly at developing the ‘natural park’”. When Emily left Carton, the second Duke of Leinster
did not make many changes to the demesne. 70 However, like the first Duke and Duchess, his
plans included an attempt to create a view of the river from the house and a development of a
new road from the house along the northern rim of the Rye Water valley. The fact that the
River was forty-eight feet lower than the base of the house created problems and ultimately the
desired view was not achieved. The new route to the Kellystown entrance was created but the
projected extension through Kellystown to the Luttrellstown Road was never undertaken
(Horner, 1975: 80).

In the nineteenth century, the last series of changes to the demesne occurred with the third
Duke and Duchess from 1810-1840. The rigid adherence to the “natural” was declining and is
evident in the creation of new formal plantations around the house. A major achievement was
the creation of a lake on the River Rye measuring half a mile. Completed in 1835, Horner
(1975: 86) argues that in one sense it was a failure in that water could still not be seen from the
ground floor of the house, however;

70 In 1766, the twentieth Earl of Kildare became the first Duke of Leinster.
it must be considered the final culmination of eighty years of effort to develop the river and thereby enhance the ‘natural’ appearance of the demesne. It was the last major landscaping enterprise to be attempted at Carton, and it now constitutes a central feature of the park.

The changes made by the third Duke and Duchess were extensive, yet they were essentially fragmentary. The lake was a fulfilment of a long projected objective. Other alterations were basically modifications of the existing design, not attempts at co-ordinated re-planning of the park. There was nothing of the grand visions evident in the late seventeenth century formal gardens and the mid-eighteenth century “natural” gardens. The demesne at Carton in the late nineteenth century was essentially the product of the far-reaching and sustained landscaping efforts of the period 1739-1770. It is that park that has remained in existence for the majority of the twentieth century, as later residents did not have the determination or the resources to make extensive alterations. Visiting Carton within this period offered a unique insight into the design and layout of one of Ireland’s largest demesnes (Figure E.5).

However, within the past two decades, development pressures, comprising of two eighteenth-hole golf courses, a hotel, a large extension to the country house itself and chalet-style bungalows on the expansive open ‘natural’ parkland, have irrevocably compromised this exceptional demesne. It is development of this nature, which is leading to the gradual destruction of Ireland’s remaining demesnes, and unless a new appreciation of their cultural significance, reinforced by an understanding of their complex context, design and setting by the country’s conservation legislation, is fully realised, this resource will not endure.
Figure E.5: An extract from the mid-nineteenth century Ordnance Survey of Ireland showing Carton Demesne. The demesne remained largely unchanged up to the 1990s. (Source: NIAH, 2010).
Appendix F: The Location and Size of Demesnes in Ireland

The first edition of the Ordnance Survey Six Inch Maps compiled between 1825 and 1845 identified 2,596 houses as standing in demesnes of fifty acres or more (20 hectares) (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 246). This bears immediate comparison with Bence-Jones who estimated that over 2,000 major country houses and demesnes were constructed in Ireland between 1660 and 1900 (Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 246). However, demesnes varied greatly in size and often bore no proportional relationship to the size of the overall estate to which they were fastened too (Dooley, 2001: 39). 71 The demesne attached to the 93,600 acre (37,879 hectares) estate, centred on Burnham House, Co. Kerry, measured only 170 acres (69 hectares), while the 19,300 (7,810 hectares) acre estate, centred on Moore Abbey, Co. Kildare, amounted to 1,300 acres (526 hectares) (Dooley, 2001: 40). Figure F.1 below highlights the complex regional variation in the density of these larger demesnes before the Great Famine in the 1840s. Figure F.2 shows the location of all landscaped parklands in excess of twenty hectares between 1830 and 1900.

Broadly speaking, they were less frequent in mid and west Ulster, west Connaught and Co. Kerry, and more numerous in an eastern midland belt running from Counties Longford and Westmeath in the north through Laois and Offaly to Tipperary in the south.

71 This contrasted with the country house, which according to Dooley (2001: 11), was generally proportionate to the size of the overall estate.
Figure F.1: Density distribution of demesnes of more than fifty acres in size by county, c. 1840. The value of each category represents the ratio of the extent of the total area to each demesne of over fifty acres (20.23 hectares). (Source: Graham and Proudfoot, 1993: 247).
Figure F.2: Landscape parklands of over 49 acres (20 hectares) between 1830 and 1900. (Source: Dooley, 2007: 97).
Appendix G: Features Characterising Demesnes (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 19 and Cork County Council, 2010: 9-12)

1. Country House and Formal Forecourt Area
   - Main House
   - Forecourt
   - Terraces
   - Formal Garden
   - Parterre

2. Adjacent Out-Offices, comprising of Kitchens, Stables and the Home Farm
   - Barn
   - Coach House
   - Dovecote
   - Estate Office
   - Garden Nursery
   - Glasshouses
   - Ice House
   - Kiln
   - Motor shed
   - Orchards
   - Sawmill
   - Stable Yard
   - Stables
   - Various Sheds and Out-Houses
   - Walled Garden
   - Kitchen Yard

3. Landscape Treatment: Arable and Ornamental
   - Arboretum
   - Bridges
   - Canals
   - Clumps of trees, frequently Ornamental
   - Decoys
   - Fish Pond
   - Groves
   - Ha-has
   - Grazing and Arable Fields
   - Orangerie
   - Ornamental Lakes
   - Perimeter Planting (Shelter-Belts)
   - Pinetum
   - Viewing Mounds
   - Waterfalls
   - Wilderness
4. Boundary Treatment
- Demesne Walls
- Gates and Gate Lodges
- Oculi
- Triumphal Arches

5. Curiosities
- Amphitheatre
- Bathing House
- Cottage Ornée
- Ferme Ornée

6. Follies
- Columns/Obelisks
- Ruins/Eye-catchers
- Forts
- Rustic Arches
- Gazebos
- Sham Castles
- Grottos
- Shell Houses
- Hermitages
- Summer House
- Mausoleums/Temples
- Towers

7. Associated Local Features
- Estate Town
- School
- Mill
- Other Public Buildings

8. External Areas Associated with the Demesne
- External Views / Attendant Grounds
- Interrelationship between Demesnes

9. Human Activities and Aspects of Demesne Heritage
- Archaeological
- Historical
- Architectural
- Scientific
- Artistic
- Social
- Cultural
- Technical
Appendix H: The Decline of Landlordism in Ireland

H.1 The Great Famine 1845-1848

The 1800 Act of Union made Ireland a constituent member of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 01st January 1801. As a result, Irish affairs were now directly scrutinised by the Westminster Government. In 1843, the Government, mindful that the “Land Question” was the root cause of disaffection in Ireland, set-up a Royal Commission to inquire into the laws with regard to the occupation of land in Ireland. In February 1845, the Commissioners concluded that they could not “forbear expressing our strong sense of the patient endurance which the labouring classes have exhibited under sufferings greater, we believe, than the people of any other country in Europe have to sustain” (President McAleese, 2010).

The widespread practice of land subdivision, rampant in the preceding decades of the Great Famine, the over-reliance on a single agricultural crop by the majority of the population and the exponential increase in the population of the island, increasing from five million people in 1800, to more than eight million by 1845, were just some of the factors that would have devastating consequences for tenant farmers and landless labourers less than six months after the Royal Commission delivered its findings (Etzler, 2010). The failure of the potato crop in the Autumn of 1845, due to a potato blight, heralded the commencement of the Great Famine (1845-’48), where the island's population fell by between twenty and twenty-five percent in less than a decade. The Great Famine highlighted the complex set of weaknesses and failures inherent in the prevailing system of landownership and governance (Etzler, 2010).
Aside from a poorly organised relief effort, Westminster’s response to the Famine was to pass the Encumbered Estates Act in 1849. The Act allowed estates in severe debt to be auctioned off upon petition of creditors or even at the request of bankrupt landlords. Agricultural land values largely collapsed as hundreds of estates with huge debts were auctioned at the same time. Within ten years of the passing of the Encumbered Estates Act, five thousand purchasers bought one-seventh of all land in Ireland and by 1879 this figure had reached one-fourth as many of the hopelessly insolvent estate owners had been replaced.

The Irish tenantry's response to the Famine can be seen in the creation of the Tenant League in 1850, which was characterised by its demands for agricultural reforms such as the "Three F's" (fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale). The agricultural reform campaigns and general land agitation characterising the 1840s and early 1850s became masked by the gradual economic recovery after the Famine and the agricultural prosperity that lasted from the mid-1850s to the mid-1870s. Although the Encumbered Estates Act resulted in the large-scale change in the individuals that owned land in Ireland, the laws concerning landlord and tenant relations remained unchanged at this time. However, the seeds of change had been planted and one of the enduring legacies of the Great Famine was the fact that the Irish "Land Question" now became central to both nationalist agitation and wider Anglo-Irish relations. The calls for tenants’ rights would be taken-up again as a popular cause by the Irish National Land League in 1879, when the "Three Fs" would be pursued more rigorously during times of economic depression.
H.3 The Land War in Ireland and the Land Acts

From 1873 to 1896 farmers across the United Kingdom suffered as the "Long Depression" took hold. Grain from North America and meat transported in newly invented refrigerated ships from New Zealand and Argentina were often cheaper and of a better quality than that produced at home. This resulted in the collapse of agricultural prices and a resultant increase in agrarian agitation. A “Land War” quickly developed as organised tenants allied to newly found nationalist organisations, such as the Irish National Land League and the Irish Home Rule movement, began a campaign of agitation against landlordism. The alliance between nationalist and tenants had developed in the aftermath of the Great Famine and was one that would endure for decades helping to secure self government for Ireland (Vaughan, 1984: 36).

Once the “three Fs” had been gained under the Land Act of 1881, tenants began to turn their attention to purchasing outright the land they rented from their landlords. The undoing of landlordism had commenced and the existing form of landownership on the island was swiftly changing from one of territorial landlordism to one of owner occupancy. “The Ascendancy” regarded land purchase as “confiscation” but the continued agricultural depression helped to hasten the sale of tenanted lands they gradually saw agricultural land as a very poor investment (Bence-Jones, 1987: 70).

However, despite such events, the vast majority of larger Irish landlords had managed to retain their demesnes and home farms intact, even if they had sold all or a portion of their tenanted estates. Demesnes, therefore, continued to function as the nerve centre for the majority of the

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72 The Irish Land League sought to help poor tenant farmers. Its primary aim was to abolish landlordism in Ireland and enable tenant farmers to own the land they worked on.
73 The agricultural windfall years of the mid-1850s had encouraged landlords to switch from tillage to pasture farming; particularly in the midlands and east of the country. For this purpose, landlords began to retain larger
former landed gentry, relying on their home farm and other financial investments for sustenance. The agricultural boom during World War I and the fact that land stock had been greatly reduced by wartime concessions provided further incentives to landlords to retain their untenanted farms. As Dooley (2001: 108) points out “landlords did not, as a rule, sell their houses in the late nineteenth century even if they were perceived as proverbial ‘white elephants’, too large and expensive to maintain”. This was due to two reasons; firstly “their houses… symbolised their social standing in a community and they would have been reluctant to diminish this status” and secondly, buyers were not readily available in Ireland to acquire such large houses (Dooley, 2001: 108). As a result, the fate of the demesne had been largely placed on the economic viability of the home farm and the investments, if any, landlords had undertaken with the capital generated from the sale of some of their tenanted lands through the Land Acts from 1869-1909.

However, for most landowning families, the 1903 Wyndham Land Act, the most financially attractive Land Act for both tenants and landlords, was in the long-term a “disaster”, despite providing a short-term solution to their financial problems (Bence-Jones, 1987: 93). A substantial number of the estates were left with a demesne and home farm that was not a self-supporting unit; the money generated from the sale of tenanted land was frequently badly invested or spent as income, when it should have been treated as capital (Dooley, 2001: 108). Many landowners spent money obtained through the Act on improving their houses, through the installation of bathrooms and electricity, as well as extensions to gardens, arboretums and tracts of untenanted land as they branched-out into farming to share in what was becoming an increasingly lucrative form of enterprise. By the 1870s around 15 per cent of Irish land was now held in demesnes and home farms (Dooley, 2000: 8).
the wider demesne itself.\textsuperscript{74} It was during this period, in the final decade before World War I that Bence-Jones (1987: 122) declared “if the Ascendancy achieved nothing else in its declining years, at least it left Ireland with a legacy of great gardens which compare favourably with almost any in Europe in scale and variety of planting”. The demesne form was being held together precariously by a much-curtailed version of the numerous functions that it had had originally. Dooley (2001: 119) argues that had it not been for various factors that impinged upon the investments landlords undertook, there might not have been any major dislocation of the economics of big house life. By 1923, on the eve of the creation of the Irish Free State, 3,000,000 acres (1,214,057 hectares) were still in landlord ownership in the form of both tenanted and untenanted land (Dooley, 2000: 13).

H.4 Agrarian Violence during the 1916-1923 Nationalist Revolution

As the War ended, agricultural prosperity began to wane and an agricultural depression quickly took root. The desires of both the landless labourers and smallholders, swelled by the restrictions on emigration during World War I, began to assume a more organised form demanding, as they had during the Land War of the 1880s, that estates be dismantled and subdivided into smaller holdings. This stipulation extended to core estates consisting of just home farms and demesnes. Consequently, an upsurge in agrarian crime ensued, set within the wider nationalist revolution of 1919-1923, and was directed at landowners: a direct assault on the demesne itself. It was in this period that both the country house and, more importantly to

\textsuperscript{74} The 1903 Land Act also allowed landlords to sell their demesnes and other untenanted lands to the Land Commission (established in 1881) and then to repurchase these lands under the same purchasing terms as tenants. The Land Commission could advance a maximum of £20,000 to each landlord wishing to repurchase (Dooley, 2000: 14). From 1903-1921 a total of 355 demesnes consisting of 122,100 acres (49,412 hectares) were repurchased for £1.9 million (Dooley, 2000: 14). These transactions were significant in that landlords were receiving a substantial loan at very low interest rates and, if they had also been capable of retaining a substantial amount of untenanted property, could continue to farm on a large scale, particularly in the economically viable grazier market.
land hungry farmers, the demesne were being openly pursued as a means of solving local shortages in the supply of land; they were the physical symbols of landlordism. “Even demesnes and the land immediately round the owner’s house, and already farmed by him may be considered suitable for division” (Dooley, 2001: 129).

As a result of the nationalist revolution and this economic uncertainty, land grabbing had become endemic in parts of the country (Dooley, 2001: 131). The example of the Marquis of Sligo in Westport, Co. Mayo summarises this movement. Upon refusing the demands of local town workers for land for tillage, two to three hundred people turned-out and marched to fields that had been recently added to his lordship’s demesne (Dooley, 2001: 129). They drove-off his cattle, took possession of over fifty-five acres (twenty-two hectares) and began grazing their own milch cows (Dooley, 2001: 129). The physical assault on country houses and the accompanying confiscation of their demesnes, led to numerous demesnes being abandoned or allowed to revert to open countryside. The attack on country houses during the period severed their demesne’s source of financial sustenance. The social and political status that the country house and demesne had symbolised had been eroded in the previous five decades and now this very nucleus was under attack with the creation of the war-weary Irish Free State in 1923.

H.5 Demesnes within the Irish Free State

It was in this uneasy climate that the Free State quickly began to compulsorily transfer any remaining estate lands to landless tenants. In April 1923, Patrick Hogan, Minister for Agriculture in the new Irish Free State, concluded that “while tenants are not paying rents, and while they consider that they need not pay rent in the future, they don’t want a bill, except on terms which would amount to confiscation” (Dooley, 2001: 131). It was largely with confiscation in mind that the terms of the 1923 Land Act were formulated, stating:
all tenanted land wherever situated and all untenanted land situated in any
congested districts county and such untenanted land situated elsewhere as the Land
Commission shall before the appointed day, declare to be required for the purpose
of relieving congestion or of facilitating the resale of tenanted land, shall by virtue
of this act vest in the Land Commission on the appointed day.75

Ultimately, the Land Commission could override any consideration with regard to demesnes
and home farms in the pursuit of congestion relief.76 The entire process was initially slow and
unsatisfactory and the 1931 Land Act was intended to speed up this process. However,
loopholes continued and in July 1933 Frank Aiken, Minister for Defence, announced to Dáil
Éireann (The Lower House of the Irish Parliament) that “it has been found that the safeguards
given to home farms and demesne lands have operated to impede the work of the Land
Commission in the relief of congestion” (Dooley, 2001: 133). This sounded the death knell for
many demesnes, and their accompanying country houses, dependent on agricultural acres to
sustain them.

The 1933 Land Act empowered the Land Commission to redistribute any property it found
suitable with the exception of ordinary owner-occupied farms.77 This prevented landowners
from laying claim to outlying farms as they had done in the past. By the late 1930s, the old
landed estates had eventually been broken-up in Ireland. The Free State Land Acts had vested
113,800 holdings on just over 3,000,000 acres (1,214,057 hectares) for £20.8 million in the

75 Provision was made in the Act for compulsory purchase of land owned by a non-Irish person. This provision
lasted until it was repealed in 1966.
76 The Land Commission was set-up under the 1881 Land Act as a rent-fixing body. It subsequently developed by
law into a tenant-purchase agency and assisted with the purchase by tenants of some 13.5 million acres (5.46
million hectares) of land. The Commission embarked on a countrywide programme of land structural reform
becoming both a purchaser and a distributor of land. Acquisition only ceased in 1983.
77 From 1923 the amounts outstanding under earlier land acts were paid to the British government as "land
annuities". In 1925, this was fixed at an annual rate of £250,000. The 1933 Land Act allowed the Minister for
Finance to divert the annuities for local government projects. This diversion was a major causal factor in
the commencement of the Anglo-Irish Trade War from 1933-'38. It was finally resolved by a one-off payment of
£10 million to the UK in 1938.
The largest estates included, for example, over 11,000 acres (4,452 hectares) of the Marquis of Waterford’s estate, 12,000 acres (4,856 hectares) from the Viscount of Powerscourt and 20,000 acres (8,094 hectares) from Lord Farnham (Dooley, 2000: 16).

The economic crash and prolonged agricultural depression, which followed World War I, sounded the death knell for Irish big houses. When these were added to political revolution, a campaign of big house burnings, a social revolution in the form of a new land war, a land act aimed at compulsory acquisition of all tenanted and untenanted land and a rise in rates and taxation, the decline of the big house became all but inevitable’ (Dooley, 2001: 145).

Country house owners demolished or closed parts of their houses in order to counterpart the widening gulf between their revenues and expenditures. In some cases this was not possible and from the early 1920s country houses began to enter the market in increasing numbers. Before 1935, the firm Battersby and Sons Ltd alone had sold at least sixty big houses in Ireland including Bishopscourt, Co. Kildare and Kylemore Abbey, Co. Galway (Dooley, 2001: 141). As entire landed estates were sold under the compulsory terms of the Free State Land Acts, big houses were sold with them. The shares market depression of the 1920s, coupled with the agricultural depression that lasted for two decades following World War I, resulted in the fact that it was simply impossible to maintain country houses and demesnes. This was particularly the case when the house’s treasures and other contents were stripped to pay for general maintenance; shells were of no use to the cash-strapped “Ascendancy” (Dooley, 2001: 141). By the late 1980s, Mark Bence-Jones (1988: 266) claimed that only 200 of the 2,000 or so country houses that he had identified were still in the ownership of their original owners (Plates H.1 to H.3).
Plate H.1: The eastern entrance to Killua Castle Demesne, Co. Westmeath. The entrance became disused after World War II, being subsequently only lightly-modified into an agricultural “crush” to process livestock. (Source Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate H.2: The former south-eastern entrance to Bellinter House Demesne, Co. Meath. Following the partition of the Demesne, this entrance was subsequently modified to become an entrance to a rural dwelling. (Source Author’s Collection, 2010).
The successful subdivisions of demesnes and untenanted lands began in the 1930s at Knockdrin Castle, Co. Westmeath, Woodlawn House, Co. Galway, Grantston Manor, Co. Laois and Harristown House, Co. Kildare and in the 1940s each house was sold (Dooley, 2001: 142). Other houses assumed a completely different role becoming educational centres, hospitals, hotels and even industrial centres (Plate H.4).

However a substantial number were demolished or allowed to fall into ruin after sale. Burton Hall, Co. Carlow and its demesne of 600 acres (243 hectares) were sold to the Land Commission in 1927 and the house was subsequently demolished in 1930 (Dooley, 2001: 142). Desart Court, Co. Kilkenny and Kilboy, Co. Tipperary both of which were rebuilt after having been burned during the revolutionary period were sold and demolished (Dooley, 2001: 142) (Plate H.5).
Plate H.4: The early nineteenth century South Hill House and Demesne, Co. Westmeath converted into a care facility for mentally and physically disabled children in the mid-twentieth century. (Source Author’s Collection, 2010).


During the 1950s it became profitable to demolish country houses, due to the post-War shortage in materials. In 1946, Hazlewood, Co. Sligo was put up for sale by the Land Commission with a stipulation that the buyer must demolish the house, remove all materials and level the site (Dooley, 2001: 143). It encouraged potential buyers by stating that the roof
contained a high quantity of lead. The editor of the Sligo Champion, one of a few to oppose the move, condemning what he perceived to be the Land Commission’s policy of acquiring houses simply to demolish them (Dooley, 2000: 143). He contrasted this policy with the activities of the National Trust in the UK, which sought to preserve such buildings and landscape gardens.

The fate of Shanbally Castle, Co. Tipperary summarises the fortunes of many country houses during this period. The house was acquired by the Land Commission in 1954 and by 1957, after much controversy, was demolished on the grounds that it could not find a suitable owner for the castle and that it had been unoccupied for some time (Glin et al, 1989: 136). In 1960, Denis Gwynn argued in the Cork Examiner that the house was one of the most original examples of late Georgian architecture in Ireland (Power, 2005). The formal gardens and demesne, although neglected and in need of restoration, could easily be saved (Power, 2005). Gwynn pointed out that there was no justification for the swift and expensive decision to demolish the house and subdivide the demesne. He also highlighted the wholesale destruction and clearance of the demesne’s aesthetically valuable woods, which were being removed though numerous breaches in the demesne’s boundary walls. Describing the order to demolish the castle as an “act of vandalism”, Gwynn called for an inquiry (Power, 2005).

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78 For a brief period it seemed that a purchaser could be found in the form of fifth Lord Sackville, who knew the Clogheen area since childhood. He agreed to buy the house, together with 163 acres (66 hectares), but pulled out of the transaction when the Land Commission refused to stop cutting trees in the land he intended to buy. They also ignored suggestions that a religious community might be found for the building, and also rejected its suitability as a forestry school.

79 John Nash’s (1752-1835) most important work was Trafalgar Square and the terraces surrounding Regent’s Park in London, United Kingdom. Shanbally Castle was his largest and most important house in Ireland.
The gradual disappearance of the feudal-originated landlordism in Ireland took place within the period extending from 1870 and 1933. The two great issues of who was to own the land and who was to govern the land of Ireland were always interlinked.

The new owners of Ireland were not, of course, the descendants of those dispossessed in the seventeenth century. Ireland had changed far too much for that, but nonetheless, the land settlement was seen as the righting of a great historical wrong (Killeen et al, 1994: 235).

In short, there was no decisive death knell for Irish demesnes. The starvation of their rental income and the parallel decline in the wealth, and social and political influence of the landed gentry signalled the collapse of the animating and unifying forces behind their inception.
Appendix I: The Nationalist Revolution 1919-1923

The end of World War I resulted in significant political and social uncertainty in Ireland. The War had completely changed pre-war political and social demands in Ireland. The outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, postponed the granting of Home Rule for Ireland in 1916, as set-out in the Government of Ireland Act 1914, much to the dismay of fringe nationalist groups. As the War became more protracted, this dismay quickly led to rebellion. The Easter Rising of 1916 was widely condemned in view of the heavy Irish losses on the Western Front and the disastrous Gallipoli landings. However, the British Government's mishandling of the aftermath of the Rising, specifically the protracted executions of the Rising's leaders, led to a crucial turning-point in Irish demands for Home Rule. The Rising effectively put an end to the democratic constitutional and conciliatory parliamentary movements begun in the 1880s, and replaced it with a radical physical-force approach.

In the 1918 General Election to the UK Parliament, republicans won 73 out of 105 seats on a policy of abstentionism and Irish independence: less than two years after the Rising. In January 1919, the elected members of ‘Sinn Féin’ (We Ourselves) who were not still in prison at the time, including survivors of the Rising, convened the first ‘Dáil’ and established the Irish Republic, precipitating the Irish War of Independence 1919-1921. A truce was eventually declared in July 1921 and led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. This gave Ireland Dominion status within the British Empire and effectively abolished the Irish Republic. The entire island would become Saorstát Éireann (Irish Free State) with Northern Ireland allowed to opt-out of this State, which it duly did. The passing of this Treaty in the ‘Dáil’ led to the Irish Civil War in June 1922. By May 1923, Irish Free State forces were victorious and quickly set about realising its pre-war demands.
Appendix J: The Irish Heritage Trust

The Irish Heritage Trust was established following the publication of a report entitled “A Future for Irish Historic Houses? A Study of Fifty Houses”. The Report was commissioned by the IGS, in partnership with the (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government) DEHLG in 2003, and investigated the issues facing country houses in both public and private ownership. It included discussions on the challenges of conserving them and of finding sustainable uses for those that are no longer occupied as family homes. In his foreword to the report, the ‘Taoiseach’ (Irish Prime Minister) commented that “the survival of this important part of Ireland's built heritage is of major concern to Government” (DEHLG, 2005). In an Irish context, where the country house and demesne has commonly been perceived solely as an embodiment of British colonial oppression, it was a radical statement. It recommended the establishment of a “National Trust-type body” to safeguard the future of the remaining historic houses and their contents, and provide legislation with the aim of achieving this.

In September 2005, the ‘Taoiseach’ announced that the Government had approved of the establishment of an independent Irish Heritage Trust with:

- a mandate to acquire for public access major important heritage properties where the State does not wish to acquire them directly and where there is imminent risk to their heritage value through neglect or where an appropriate use cannot be brought forward through sale to a private sector investor (Dick Roche, 2005).  

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80 The Government approved the provision of €500,000 of funding in 2006 to meet the establishment and initial running costs of the Trust. The DEHLG will provide funding for five years with endowments to operate the properties, with up to €5,500,000 earmarked for the first property, supported by contributions from non-Exchequer sources (DEHLG, 2005). The proportion of the State's contribution will diminish as more properties are acquired by the Trust and the Trust establishes itself sufficiently to maximise its fund-raising capabilities. The Trust has a remit to maximise non-Exchequer resources in support of its activities, mirroring the UK’s National Trust. It is also intended that it will operate under a strong commercial ethos to build-up income from individual membership, corporate support and commercial ventures, and to encourage the involvement of volunteers.
Officially, the Trust’s remit is “to care for historic properties, houses and gardens throughout Ireland” (Irish Heritage Trust, 2010). Although this is a welcome addition, it is clear that the Trust is still very much in its infancy and currently operates with only one heritage property within its ownership. Fota House, Co. Cork was bought in 2007 from the University College Cork and only includes a small proportion of the house’s original island demesne. Clearly, the Trust is directed towards acquiring and maintaining country houses and their contents, and lacks any reference to the demesnes that these houses were situated within.

In addition, Ireland already possesses such an expert organisation. ‘An Taisce’ was established in 1946 and is effectively a National Trust membership society. It carries out the work of a National Trust in property ownership, education programmes and advocacy similar to other national trusts but does not have statutory provision, which is a vital and fundamental requirement for the full functioning of a national trust type organisation. Since its inception, it has sought a legislative framework to permit it to effectively hold and manage heritage property in trust but it has been continually denied such an advantage. Although not officially stated, ‘An Taisce’ appears to have been continually undermined by Government due to its very active role in the planning system, where it appeals a wide variety of both local authority and central Government decisions to ‘An Bord Pleanála’ citing heritage and environmental concerns.

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81 ‘An Taisce’ The National Trust for Ireland was founded following a public meeting in Dublin’s Mansion House in 1946, convened by the R.I.A, The Royal Society of Antiquaries, An Oige, The Geographical Society of Ireland, The Dublin Naturalists Field Club and The Irish Society for the Preservation of Birds. From the outset it was the successor to the all Ireland National Trust Committee that ceased to exist that year following the passage of The Northern Ireland National Trust Act. Its constitution was modelled on that of the National Trust for Scotland. In 1963 it became a statutory consultee under the planning act of that year, a distinction shared with some other national trusts in their countries. It is a founder member of all the international organisations of national trusts and is bound by the international declarations of national trusts.
Appendix K: Positive Recent Decisions from An Bord Pleanála

Both Carton Demesne and Castletown Demesne, Co. Kildare are the premier eighteenth century natural parkland demesnes within the country and of significant cultural significance. They are located close to one another and were constructed in the eighteenth century at a time when both houses were home to two sisters: Emily, Countess of Kildare and Lady Louisa Connolly. They placed their energies into the construction of an idyllic setting to complement their newly constructed Palladian mansions. Connolly’s Folly, visible from both houses, was commissioned by Louisa and sited mid-way between both houses to physically signify this closeness. In December 2009 and June 2010, the Board refused planning permission, granted previously by Meath and Kildare County Councils, respectively, for significant development proposals that would affect the continued authenticity and integrity of both demesnes.

In relation to Carton Demesne, a 2009 planning application sought to construct “education and research/technology uses” associated with the nearby National University of Ireland, Maynooth, as well as employment and residential uses, and an ancillary neighbouring centre (An Bord Pleanála, 2010: 1). The Inspector’s Report stated that:

Carton House... and its demesne landscape constitute one of the most important elements of Ireland’s architectural, cultural and historic heritage and are of international significance... the designed landscape was an intrinsic part of the original design and, as such, inseparable from the house (An Bord Pleanála, 2010: 39).

This was despite the fact that in 1991 the Board approved the construction of two eighteen hole golf courses on Carton Demesne, and the extension and conversion of Carton House for use as a hotel, and that the site, part of the original eighteenth century woodland screening belt adjacent to the house, was recently zoned in the Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan 2009-2015 (Figures K.1 and K.2).
Figure K.1: Carton Demesne, Co. Kildare on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland First Edition 6" Series 1846. The site of the planning application is circled in red. (Source: NIAH, 2010).

Figure K.2: An extract from the Maynooth Environs Local Area Plan 2009-2015. The area circled in red corresponds to the same area in Figure J.1. The purple zoning relates to “E4: Science and Technology”, while the adjacent green zoning relates to “H2: Conservation Zone”. (Source: Meath County Council, 2009: 42-43).
In relation to Castletown Demesne, a state-owned house and demesne remnant, a 2009 planning application sought to construct a significant suburban-style expansion to the estate town of Celbridge on lands within a second demesne called Donaghcumper Demesne, Co. Kildare. Donaghcumper is located on the opposite bank of the River Liffey beside St Wolstan’s Demesne. Recent research has concluded that all three demesnes were designed as one large contrived landscape by the previous owners of Castletown House. The Board ruled that:

there is evidence of planned designed landscape extending from Castletown to Donaghcumper... it is considered that the proposed development would interfere with the character of the landscape which it is necessary to preserve (An Bord Pleanála, 2010: 51).

Again this ruling was in spite of the fact that the lands had been recently zoned by the planning authority in the Draft Celbridge Local Area Plan 2009-2015, which the Board is statutorily obliged to take consideration of when in draft form (Figures K.3 and K.4).

This is a very positive development, as the Board is beginning to refuse permission for development on zoned lands if it impacts upon the continued integrity of property of cultural significance. However, it must also be stated that Carton and Castletown Demesnes have been extensively researched, all of their built features appear on the planning authority’s RPS, their landscapes have been given ample discussion in their respective County Development Plans’ policies and objectives, and, finally, are attached to the largest country houses in Ireland, houses of international architectural importance. In short, these are exceptional demesnes and this level of protection is not afforded to other demesnes, as it will be clearly seen in Chapter Nine.
Figure K.3: Castletown, Donaghcumper and St Wolstan’s Demesnes, Co. Kildare on the Ordnance Survey of Ireland First Edition 6” Series 1846. The site of the planning application is circled in red. (Source: NIAH, 2010).

Figure K.4: An extract from the Draft Celbridge Local Area Plan 2009-2015 Zoning Map. The area circled in red corresponds to the same area in Figure J.3. The yellow zoning relates to “R: Residential/Commercial”, while the adjacent green zoning relates to “F: Open Space and Amenity”. (Source: Kildare County Council, 2009: 80).
Appendix L: Threatening Development to Demesne Integrity

L.1 Golf and Hotel Resorts

Particular concern is being expressed over the increasing level of planning applications for the development of golf hotel resorts on demesnes; generally comprising of a hotel, clubhouse and separate housing units. The “K-Club” at Straffan, Co. Kildare, opened in the 1990s, providing a bench-mark model that has been emulated in several other locations; notably, Mount Juliet, Co. Kilkenny, Faithlegg and The Island, Co, Waterford, Killeen Castle, Co. Meath and Powerscourt, and Woodstock or “Druid’s Glen”, Co. Wicklow. According to a recent report by ‘An Taisce’, Ballyfin, Co. Laois is the only major application involving a demesne to counter this type of development in recent times. The application was approved for a hotel scheme but refused to allow the development of a golf course in the demesne (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18). “Golf courses are fundamentally incompatible with the historic character of designed landscapes” (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18). Consequently, the most controversial and environmentally problematic developments have been golf-related.

This has included the highly controversial development at Carton House, Co. Kildare, which was criticised by both the IGS and ‘An Taisce’, as it involved the erection of an extension to the main house, the construction of dwellings within the demesne and, even more contentiously, the construction of two golf courses directly in front of the house. ‘An Taisce’ called the replacement of the historic grounds by golf courses as by “far the worst development affecting a nationally important parkland landscape in Ireland”, while Senator David Norris declared Carton House and Demesne to be:

architecturally, the most significant house in this country… it survives uniquely with its demesne intact. There is an eighteenth century parkland deliberately landscaped with water courses and diverted rivers, all part of its coherent, artistic and ascetic composition. The State should be extremely reluctant to upset this
particular form of ascetic balance which exists uniquely in Carton House (Seanad Éireann, 2005).

He later declared in Seanad Éireann (The Upper House of the Irish Parliament) of what had been done to the house and demesne was the equivalent of “desecration” (Seanad Éireann, 2005). The fate of Carton House’s fully intact demesneparallels the fortunes of other country houses and their demesnes. The development of Lough Rynn Demesne, Co. Leitrim, the only major country house and demesne in that County, into a hotel and golf course, accompanied by 180 dwellings, has resulted in serious damage the demesne’s Natural Heritage Area (NHA) designation due to the carrying-out of additional works that did not have planning permission. The same fate has also been bestowed on the demesnes of Powerscourt House, Co. Wicklow and Killeen Castle, Co. Meath (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 18).

L.2 Road Construction

Development on demesne lands themselves has also been complemented by the upgrading of the motorway, and national primary and national secondary road networks within the past decade. The National Development Plans (NDP), dating from 2000-2006 and 2007-2013, involved significant expenditure on the road infrastructure within the country.

The best example of which is the recently completed M3 Motorway, extending from Carnaross to Clonee, Co. Meath. It was undertaken by the National Roads Authority (NRA) and has had a significant impact upon the integrity and setting of a number of demesnes within the County. The Motorway bisects Rockfield Demesne, Co. Meath separating the early nineteenth century entrance gate and gate lodge from the recently restored Rockfield House, forever separating the demesne’s link with the nearby town of Kells. It also cuts through Dowdstown Demesne, Co. Meath, significantly affecting the demesne’s integrity and setting within the surrounding landscape, and impacts upon the setting of Ardbraann Demesne, Co. Meath. This resulted in
the destruction of a number of archaeological features within and outside of these demesnes; the most controversial of which was an early medieval multi-enclosure site and the remains of former eighteenth century geometric demesne features which were destroyed within Dowdstown Demesne during its construction.

A controversial proposal to construct a bypass for the town of Tullamore, Co. Offaly posed a serious threat to the continued integrity of the historic fabric of Charleville Castle Demesne located to the south-west of the Town. This proposal by the NRA caused significant local agitation and finally resulted in the upgrading of an existing road through the demesne rather than the construction of an entirely new road, which would have essentially separated the demesne into two distinct sections.

In addition, fractions of demesne walls are also subject to obliteration to make way for extensions to existing roads or for other piecemeal developments within derelict demesne landscapes.82 At Bective Demesne, Co. Meath substantial stretches of the demesne wall have been recently removed to make-way for road re-alignment works.

L.3 Suburban Expansion

One of the most vivid effects of the economic boom extending from the mid-1990s to 2007 has been the phenomenal pressure on demesnes located in suburban areas from residential encroachment. This is most famously highlighted in the fate of the demesnes attached to Rathfarnham Castle and Marino House, Co. Dublin, from as early as the nineteenth century.83 More recently, the same fate has also occurred to numerous similar demesnes including

82 ‘Derelict demesnes’ are demesnes where the principal country house or family residence has either been demolished or abandoned and allowed to fall into disrepair.
83 The demesne attached to Marino House contained approximately 100 acres (40.47 hectares).
encroachment from both the towns of Mallow, Co. Cork on Mallow Demesne and Dunboyne, Co. Meath on Dunboyne Demesne. In 2004, Cork County Council approved a residential development comprising of over 500 houses on 60 acres (24 hectares) of demesne lands to the rear of Dunkettle House, Co. Cork (MacLochlainn and Lumley, 2004: 19). This type of development fundamentally alters the meticulously designed demesne landscapes that surround country houses. The partial preservation of areas of demesnes does not preserve their integrity for future generations.

In addition, many demesnes have been bought by local or national authorities for use as public open space to service neighbouring urban areas. Generically understood, the introduction of public infrastructure such as street furniture, paved areas, benches, rubbish bins, public lighting, play areas for children, stationary structures for outside entertainment, lack of planning for visitor capacity and landscaping schemes, etc, have lead to a piecemeal erosion of the historic character of designed landscapes.

L.4 Electricity Pylons

Pylon installations have affected the setting of a number of important demesnes, particularly Mount Kennedy and Russborough Demesnes, Co. Wicklow. These installations are a highly visible part of the rural landscape and can compromise the setting of buildings, monuments and sites.

84 The house and its immediate surrounding lands will be retained and refurbished for use as a visitor centre among other things. A horse-riding facility, sports grounds and leisure facility will also be provided.
Appendix M: Conservation Legislation in Ireland

M.1 The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004

The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 forms the legal basis for the protection of the archaeological heritage of Ireland. The record comprises of a list of monuments and relevant places, and a map detailing their location. Sites recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places all receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994. The protection offered under these acts can, in theory, be applied to any building of any period, not in state care, although it was never envisaged that they would be the principal legislation for the preservation of post-medieval architectural heritage, specifically heritage after 1700.

M.2 The Heritage Act 1995

The primary function of the Heritage Act 1995 was to establish the Heritage Council on a statutory footing. The Council seeks to promote the interest in, knowledge and protection of Irish cultural heritage. It operates within four main fields, archaeology, architectural heritage, wildlife and inland waterways. It is primarily a policy advisory body for the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, but as yet has not released policy advice on designed landscapes. The Act specifically defines heritage gardens, demesnes and parks as an integral element of the State’s national heritage. They are defined as:

areas of natural heritage, and gardens and parks whose plant collections, design, design features, buildings, setting, style or association are of significant, botanical,

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85 There are five categories within which a monument can be placed: Record of Monuments and Places, Register of Historic Monuments, Monuments with preservation or temporary preservation orders, Monuments in State ownership and Monuments in State guardianship

86 A good example of this is the Casino garden pavilion built in the latter half of the eighteenth century for Lord Charlemont’s Marino Demesne in Co. Dublin. It is protected under both archaeological and architectural legislation being both a protected structure and a national monument.
aesthetic or historical interest or which illustrate some aspect of the development of
gardening or of gardens or parks (The Heritage Act, 1995: Section 2(1)).

M.3 The Architectural Heritage and Historic Properties Act 1999

This Act provides a statutory basis for the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), a unit within the Planning and Heritage Division of the DEHLG. The Act obliged the Government to establish a National Surveying Unit with the sole aim of identifying, recording and evaluating the architectural heritage of the State into three main categories of national, regional and local interest. This inventory is an essential prerequisite for the effective protection of architectural heritage, as appropriate protection can only be applied once an identification process has been undertaken. However, inclusion in the NIAH does not provide statutory protection; the document is only used to advise local authorities on the compilation of their Record of Protected Structures (RPS). In effect, only the structures identified as being of ‘regional’ and ‘national’ interest are considered to be the Minister’s recommendations to planning authorities for inclusion on their RPS. Currently, the NIAH is being carried-out on a county by county basis and, at the time of writing, approximately two-thirds of counties have already had a representative sample of their architectural heritage recorded.

More importantly, with respect to demesnes, the NIAH have compiled an “Inventory of Designed Landscapes and Historic Gardens”. It initially examined the first edition Ordnance Survey maps from the mid-nineteenth century to identify already formed demesnes, before complementing the list with known demesnes from the latter half of the nineteenth and early

87 The NIAH was established in 1990 to fulfil Ireland’s ratification of the 1985 Granada Convention.
These sites were then compared with contemporary aerial photography to assess their level of survival and change. This inventory consists of 5,500 designed landscapes and historic gardens throughout the country. Currently, fieldwork is now in progress to compile more accurate data regarding survival of their integrity and to allow site assessments to be undertaken. At the time of writing, only one of the twenty-nine counties, Co. Louth, has been published. It is hoped that this inventory will place a significant onus on planning authorities to recognise their cultural heritage value and conserve them. It may eventually prove to be an advocate for the introduction of specific conservation legislation for demesnes.

M.4 Statutory Planning Guidelines

An LCA designation may not be sufficiently large enough for certain landscapes and it is with this in mind that the government published the 2000 “Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines”. They view landscape as having a distinct carrying capacity regarding development and require planning authorities to classify the landscape in their area according to character, values and sensitivity and the creation of policy responses that correspond to the degree of sensitivity of a particular landscape. In addition, it is now also possible for specific landscape areas to be deemed unsuitable for certain development types. At the time of writing, these guidelines remain in draft form and a much talked about National Landscape Strategy (NLS) is still being prepared by central Government.

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88 There is an acknowledgement on the part of the NIAH that some lesser-known demesnes from the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may not have been recorded as a result of the fact that they were not known by the members of the steering committee.

89 In June 2009, the NIAH won the Europa Nostra Award for their inventory of ‘designed landscapes and historic gardens’ in the research category of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards. The jury’s report commented: ‘The methodological approach toward Irish landscape and gardens has generated much interest among the Jury. This research permitted the setting up of an identification and classification system for gardens that could be used as a prototype for a general inventory of European parks and gardens.’ (NIAH, 2010).
To complement Part IV of the 2000 Act, the DEHLG issued statutory conservation guidelines in 2005. Entitled the “Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities”, they outline the obligations that planning authorities have to protect the architectural heritage within their respective administrative areas. With respect to derelict demesne landscapes, these guidelines state that:

where a demesne survives without its principal house but with many of its features intact ... these structures can be individually protected within the RPS. The demesne could also be designated as an ACA in order that these structures, and the designed landscape as a whole, may be considered as a group (DEHLG, 2005: 193).

The 2005 “Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines” are also a material consideration for planning authorities. They specifically refer to resort type development of former demesnes and estates with provision of dwellings either as permanent residences or for letting. It is stated that in considering new dwelling provision in resort type development, planning authorities should seek to ensure that it is of a scale compatible with the character of the surrounding area and that the potential for such development to yield planning gains in terms of supporting the restoration of heritage items, including protected structures should also be harnessed.
Appendix N: The Main Conservation Tools for Cultural Heritage in Ireland

There are a variety of tools that planning authorities consider appropriate to designate and protect the cultural heritage value of demesnes. Each is set-out below.

N.1 Land-Use Zoning

Land-use zoning in Ireland is used to zone various land uses in the State’s main urban settlements ranging in size from villages to cities. It can be found in a planning authority’s Local Area Plans or Development Plans. A number of planning authorities zone entire demesnes or fragments of them as a method of conserving them and regulating any future land uses that may be proposed on them (Figure N.1). Land-use zoning is only really used for urban and peri-urban situated demesnes, and more rural-dominated planning authorities do not tend to zone such lands.

As a conservation tool, this is a completely inadequate method of protecting their continued authenticity and integrity. Agricultural zoning for example, allows for the development of intensive farming methods that can eradicate a variety of landscape features. It would also allow for the construction of both agricultural structures and residences to support farming communities. Additionally, a land-use zoning, which included a local amenity designation, may permit the construction of a golf course or a variety of community-related facilities.

N.2 Record of Protected Structures

Protection under a Record of Protected Structure (RPS) designation can be contentious and can often lead to confusion. This is mainly due to the legal definition of the term “curtilage”, which is understood to be the parcel of land immediately associated with that structure, and which is or was in use for the purposes of the structure, but is not defined by the 2000 Act. This is
Despite the fact that it is mentioned in both the definition of the term “attendant grounds” and “structure”, and ultimately the term “protected structure” within the Act. View Table N.1 below for a detailed examination of this topic.

Figure N.1: Extract from the Fingal Development Plan 2005-2011, which zoned Malahide Castle and Demesne as ‘Objective OS: to preserve and provide for open space and recreational amenities’ (in fluorescent green). The Council have also included the Protected Structures and recorded monuments on this map. (Source: Fingal County Council, 2010).

Under Section 2 (1) of the 2000 Act, the term “structure” is defined as:

any building, structure, excavation, or other thing constructed or made on, in or under any land or any part of a structure so defined, and:

- where the content so admits includes the land on, in or under which the structure
is situate, and

- in relation to a protected structure, or proposed protected structure, includes -

(i) the interior of the structure,

(ii) the land lying within the curtilage of the structure,

(iii) any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and

(iv) all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure or structures referred to in subparagraph (i) or (iii) (DEHLG, 1999).

The term “protected structure” refers to:

(i) a structure, or

(ii) a specified part of a structure, which is included in a record of protected structures, and, where that record so indicates, includes any specified feature which is within the attendant grounds of the structure and which would not otherwise be included in this definition (DEHLG, 1999).

Also relevant to this examination is the definition of attendant grounds, in relation to a structure, which “include land lying outside of the curtilage of the structure” ( ).

Ultimately, this definition and extent of curtilage has been revised through legal cases. The first significant definition is that determined under the 1951 Sinclair-Lockhart’s Trustees v Central Land Board, which defined curtilage as “the ground which is used for the comfortable enjoyment of the house or building … serving the purpose of the house or building in some necessary and reasonably useful way” (Institute of Historic Building Conservation, 2010).

Secondly, the issue was addressed in 2003 of the High Court in the case of Begley and Clarke v ‘An Bord Pleanála’. This case involved Riversdale House, the former residence of W.B. Yeats, which had fallen into disrepair. An application was lodged to demolish it in order to construct a
number of apartments. The planning authority became aware of the house’s significance and was of the opinion that it should be protected. However, the planning authority considered that the grounds were only a vestige of the historical curtilage of the building and were of no cultural significance. However, this decision was appealed to ‘An Bord Pleanála’, which ruled that since the house was a protected structure, all of the grounds within the curtilage were automatically protected, by virtue of the statutory definition of the term “structure” (‘An Bord Pleanála’, 2003). This view was upheld by the High Court.

Table N.1: The Definition of the term ‘Curtilage’ as used in Irish Planning Legislation.

Contemporarily, there are two main interpretations of the term curtilage regarding demesnes. On the one hand, curtilage may be considered to encompass all of the functional and ornamental areas of the historical demesne at some point in history, possibly when it was at its largest, geographically speaking. On the other hand, curtilage may be interpreted as consisting of only the core area of the demesne immediately surrounding each protected structure. In this case, the greater demesne and those areas of the land surrounding the demesne that add to its setting in the landscape may be considered to comprise of the “attendant grounds”. Currently, it is not entirely clear whether protection is offered within current conservation legislation to those areas of a demesne that has not had a folly or other demesne feature built upon them, although more recent decision from the Board would support the former interpretation.

The sole use of an RPS designation for the protection of a demesne’s follies and other built structures can only be described as a mediocre attempt at protecting a demesne in its entirety. Considering the fact that some demesnes do not possess their main country house, the central

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90 This view is supported in the 2005 DEHLG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines. Section 13.2.2 states that “where the curtilage of a protected structure has altered since the time of its construction, there may be important features of the original, or of a previous, curtilage which would not automatically be protected within the definition of the protected structure” (DEHLG, 2005: 192).
and unifying force behind the entire demesne concept and structure off which all other demesne structures may be protected, or that the original demesne has been forcibly separated into a variety of landownerships. A protected structure designation for a demesne’s associated features could not protect the demesne in its entirety from inappropriate development. This is due to the fact that the terms “curtilage”, “attendant grounds” and “setting” are too ambiguous to concretely protect an entire demesne. Consequently, a designation under the RPS is arguably designed to protect elements of a demesne’s architectural heritage and is ultimately too crude to adequately protect a demesne’s complex and intricate design elements.

N.3 Architectural Conservation Areas

The Act also provides that development plans may include ACAs if the Council is of the opinion that such an objective is necessary for the preservation of the character of the place, area or group of structures concerned.

Combined with the RPS designation, this method could provide a more appropriate means of protecting demesnes. An ACA allows for an extension of the boundaries of protection to those properties surrounding a demesne, particularly those that have experienced fragmented ownership in recent decades (Figure N.2). This action would control development in these adjoining areas that are often essential to the appreciation of a demesne’s setting. Ultimately, the creation of an ACA should be accompanied by both a detailed statement outlining the demesne’s key elements, adopted as part of the local development plan, and a thorough

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91 A good example of this is the Casino garden pavilion built in the latter half of the eighteenth century for Lord Charlemont’s Marino Demesne in Co. Dublin. It is now entirely surrounded by housing estates and now completely devoid of its original intended landscape setting, even though the Casino is acknowledged as the most important neo-classical building in Ireland.

92 This is particularly the case with the Connolly Folly, between both Carton and Castletown Houses in Co. Kildare. It was built in order to connect each household and lies within each demesne’s attendant grounds.
comprehension of the historical formation, enlargement and subsequent decline of the demesne, if relevant, in order to effectively protect it in its entirety.

Figure N.2: Extract from the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, which designated Oldbridge House and Demesne as an Architectural Conservation Area (in red). (Source: Meath County Council, 2010).

N.4 Landscape Conservation Areas

For larger landscape areas, Section 204 (11) of the Act makes provision for the identification and designation of a landscape within its functional area for the purposes of its future conservation and preservation.93 In effect, an LCA designation specifies that various categories

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93 The DEHLG issued draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines in 2000, with the aim of heightening awareness of landscape issues, guiding planners in their assessment of planning applications, and indicating specific requirements for development planning and control. The Guidelines set out concepts of
of development that were previously exempt from planning permission under the Planning and Development Regulations 2001-2008 would now require planning permission.

At the time of writing, a ‘pilot project’ is currently being undertaken between Meath County Council, the Heritage Council and the DEHLG, in conjunction with the local community and a variety of stakeholders, in the form of the Tara-Skryne Landscape Conservation Area. The area houses some of Ireland’s premier archaeological monuments and sites and is considered to be one of the most important historic landscapes in the Country. The area was the subject of recent controversy, not just nationally but was also the subject of European and international scrutiny, when the previous government allowed for the construction of a motorway in close proximity to the most significant site within the Valley, the Hill of Tara (Plate N.1). The Motorway was signed into law the day before the new coalition government took office in 2007. In addition, the proposal to designate a Landscape Conservation Area for Tara-Skryne is considered as part of the emerging National Landscape Strategy (NLS). It is hoped that the experience gained and the issues arising will provide central input into the development of the necessary framework for the NLS. The successful adoption of the LCA will also ensure that the Hill of Tara will be on the updated tentative list of sites for future nomination for UNESCO World Heritage Site status later this year. This tool has yet to be used to protect a demesne.

landscape character, value and sensitivity and how these should be assessed, and suggested that the landscape character areas should be the principal spatial framework for landscape policy.
Plate N.1: The Hill of Tara, Co. Meath is an archaeological complex containing a number of ancient monuments from pre-historic times. The Hill was an important place to pre-Celtic and Celtic peoples and subsequently became the place from which the kings of Mide ruled over the province of Meath. (Source: Flickr, 2010).

N.5 Summary

In reality, the most common conservation tools for protecting a demesne’s built heritage are either inclusion on a planning authority’s RPS or through the designation of an ACA. The latter is usually the reserve of more progressive planning authorities or those facing significant development pressures associated with their proximity to large urban centres. It is fundamental that planning authorities do not use land-use zoning as a means of conserving a demesne. This is not a conservation tool and should not be seen as such. Additionally, it is important that planning authorities realise the implications involved in using any or all of the above-mentioned tools for the protection or management of demesnes.
Appendix O: The Development of Bective Demesne

Bective Demesne developed from the late eighteenth century and reached its final form by the mid-nineteenth century. The core area of the demesne was strategically sited on a knoll located on a river bend on the northern banks of the River Boyne affording views stretching both up and downstream. The demesne is an excellent example of a medium-sized picturesque demesne located in the rich yet topographically uninteresting east of the country. The demesne has survived wholly intact, albeit the gate lodges and walls have fallen into a state of disrepair.

O.1 Historical Development

Co. Meath contains rich arable and pastoral lands, which are to a large extent topographically uninteresting. They are enlivened only by the presence of the River Boyne, which traverses the entire length of the County. As a result, the banks of the River Boyne were chosen for the siting of a wide variety of small and medium-sized country houses and demesnes from the mid-eighteenth century owing to its highly picturesque landscape interest.

The area of Bective came into the ownership of Richard Bolton in 1639. He was reputedly one of the cruellest soldiers in Cromwell’s army and the lands remained in the Bolton family until after World War I. Bective Demesne dates from this time and its current form and layout only gradually developed from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century.

The original house appears to have been demolished or replaced by the current house constructed in the 1850s in a Palladian style (Plate O.1). Some demesne planting was undertaken between 1760 and 1770, likely to have been in the newly fashionable natural landscape style, and a second planting scheme was undertaken in the 1830s to augment this. Its

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94 Richard Bolton is an ancestor of Lady Diana Spencer and the Princes Royal, William and Harry.
construction was a significant feat of human engineering as the owners gradually relocated the adjacent Bective Village and re-routed the existing road network to allow for the development of a 200 acre (81 hectare) walled demesne surrounding the house. It stretched in an east-west orientation along the northern banks of the River Boyne allowing for the construction of a highly contrived principal entrance.

Plate O.1: Bective House, Co. Meath. The house was constructed in the 1850s in a Palladian style on a knoll on the northern banks of the River Boyne affording it picturesque views. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).95

By the mid-nineteenth century, the demesne also included two gate lodges, a stable yard, three estate cottages and a demesne wall surrounding the entire demesne (Plate O.2 and O.3). Interestingly, a Victorian church known as St. Mary’s Church, was built by a member of the Bolton family in 1851 in a plain Gothic style and was designed by the renowned Irish ecclesiastical architect Joseph Well (Plate O.4). A unique semi-circular ha-ha wall also

95 It shares its riverside setting with Balsoon and Rathnally Houses upstream, and Bellinter, Dowdstown and Ardsallagh Houses downstream. These houses each possessed large demesnes designed to take maximum advantage of their location adjacent to the River Boyne. As a result, they may be seen as one large contrived demesne landscape fronting onto the River.
surrounds the church and cemetery. The Church of Ireland later acquired St. Mary’s and subsequently sold it in 1994 to a local artist who converted it into a residence with an accompanying art centre.

Plate O.2: The gate lodge, Bective Demesne, Co. Meath. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate O.3: The principal entrance to Bective Demesne, Co. Meath. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate O.4: St Mary’s Church, Bective Demesne, Co. Meath. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).
O.2 Contemporary Layout

In the 1920s, the original family sold the house and demesne, and it was finally purchased in 1976 by Michael Wymes, the owner of a local mining company. Wymes bought an additional 170 acres (69 hectares) of agricultural land on the adjacent side of the River Boyne in order to protect the setting of the house and demesne. View Map O.1 and Plate O.5 for a comparison between the historical and contemporary layout of the demesne.
Map O.1: Bective Demesne, Co. Meath Ordnance Survey of Ireland First Edition 6" Series 1846. (Source: NIAH, 2010). The Demesne is denoted by the dark grey shading. Please note that the relocation of Bective Village and the rerouting scheme undertaken during the demesne’s mid-nineteenth century construction had not been undertaken at this stage.
Plate O.5: Aerial Photograph of Bective Demesne, Co. Meath 2005. (Source: NIAH, 2010). The approximate location of the approved road through the demesne, which was constructed in 2008-2009, is indicated in a red dotted and is superimposed on this aerial photograph.
Appendix P: The Development of Rockingham Demesne

Rockingham Demesne was commissioned in the early nineteenth century and is considered to be one of the most significant picturesque designed landscapes in the Country. It was designed by the renowned landscape architect John Sutherland to complement the recently constructed Rockingham House, positioned on a knoll overlooking Lough Key. The layout takes full advantage of the undulating natural topography of the area dominated by its views across the Lough and contains a variety of built features including a variety of follies, bridges and lodges of significant architectural merit. The demesne’s original layout has remained largely intact despite being heavily neglected since the house was demolished in 1970.

P.1 Historical Development

Rockingham Demesne dates from the early seventeenth century. Two houses were originally constructed within the demesne, the first was built in 1673 and the second in 1771. Both were demolished in the early nineteenth century to make way for a newly commissioned house and demesne for the Stafford-King-Harman family. They previously resided at King House located in the nearby town of Boyle. At this time, the family were the largest landowners residing in Co. Roscommon owning 30,000 acres (12,141 hectares) and the new house and demesne advertised their elevation in status as one of the largest landowners in the country. In 1810, General Robert King, First Viscount Lorton, commissioned the architect John Nash to design a two-storey classical house on a knoll on the southern side of Lough Key (Plate P.1). The house was completed in 1817, coinciding with a significant increase in the size of the existing demesne under the direction of John Sutherland, a renowned landscape architect, who designed the demesne’s parkland and ancillary buildings (Figure P.1).
Plate P.1: Rockingham House Entrance Front c.1890. An additional storey was added in 1822. The house was partially damaged by fire in 1863 and was subsequently rebuilt. (Source: Roscommon County Council, 2002: 22).

Figure P.1: The core area of Rockingham Demesne. Note the number of routes through the demesne containing a wide variety of strategically placed demesne buildings to provide visual interest. (Source: Lough Key, 2010).
The demesne’s layout took the form of substantial forested areas interspersed with ornamental parkland which reportedly, at its zenith, encompassed over 2,000 acres (809 hectares) of mixed woodland, a deer park, the Lough and a number of islands. The focus of the demesne was largely centred on the natural water feature of Lough Key comprising of a six-mile diameter water body scattered with numerous large islands. There were also numerous vistas radiating from the house through the demesne’s parkland, as well as a distinct visual link between the demesne and the town of Boyle, separated at their nearest part by only 1.24 miles (two kilometres).

The demesne also featured numerous notable architectural features, such as four grand gate lodges, a family church, stable buildings, a walled garden, a substantial bog garden, a gazebo, a U-shaped harbour, mooring quays, numerous bridges and several substantial island follies (Plates P.2 to P.5). The island follies were the main focus of both the core area of the demesne and the house itself. Trinity Island contains the ruins of a twelfth century abbey and Castle Island encloses the medieval McDermott’s Castle, both were used as a folly within the demesne. Rockingham Demesne is one of the most significant demesnes in the Country.

P.2 Contemporary Layout

In the aftermath of World War I, the tenanted estate was sold to the Land Commission and Forest Service, and following a fire in 1957, which gutted the interior of the building, the house and demesne, measuring 865 acres (350 hectares) in size by that stage, were sold to the Land Commission in 1961. The external walls of the house were demolished in 1970 and a Forest Park was formally opened in 1972. It encompassed additional lands surrounding the demesne. The entire Park measures 2,667 acres (1,080 hectares) in size and is currently owned and administered by ‘Coillte Teoranta’ (Forest Service). Moylurg Tower was added during the 1970s to act as a viewing tower for the Forest Park. The Forest Park is currently heavily used
and enjoyed as a public space amenity by both locals and tourists alike. View Map P.1 and Plate P.6 for a comparison between the historical and contemporary layout of the demesne.

Plate P.2: Gate House, Rockingham Demesne. This Gothic style gate house is a three-bay two-storey crenellated gate house flanked by single-storey bays to the north and south. It was built in 1810. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate P.3: Church of Ireland, Rockingham Demesne. This church was built in 1833 for the family’s own use. It contains a three-bay nave and three-stage crenellated entrance tower to the west. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate P.4: The Temple, Rockingham Demesne. This is a detached circular-plan gazebo situated at the end of a causeway and projects out into Lough Key. It was built in 1810 for use as a fishing house. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate P.5: Fairy Bridge, Rockingham Demesne. This is a single-arched rustic bridge, built in 1836. The use of river-worn limestone in its construction gives it a fairy tale and almost grotesque quality. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).
Plate P.6: Aerial Photograph of Rockingham Demesne, Co. Roscommon 2005. (Source: NIAH, 2010). Note the proliferation of coniferous forests undertaken by the Forest Service since World War II.
Humewood Castle is a large Gothic revival building constructed in the late 1860s and is considered to be the finest Victorian country house in Ireland. It is also one of the last great country houses to be built in the country. The Castle’s architecture, specifically the gables, spires and a tall round towers which are heavily battlemented, gives the house a dramatic silhouette in keeping with the surrounding mountain setting.

The castle and its outbuildings are positioned centrally within a 440 acre (178 hectares) demesne, which was laid-out at the time of the castle’s construction in an undulating natural parkland setting containing artificial lakes, woodlands and lawns dotted with mature trees.

### Q.1 Historical Development

Humewood Castle was commissioned by Sir William Wentworth Fitzwilliam Hume Dick as a holiday lodge. It was designed by the renowned architect William White. The owner continued to lavish time and money on the project and by the 1870s, a banqueting hall, tower and extensions, and a variety of gate lodges and farm buildings, designed by the architect James Brooks, had been added to the castle and demesne. It quickly became his official country seat (Plate Q.1 and Q.2).

The castle replaced an existing seventeenth century Georgian house, which also contained an extensive designed parkland, which was subsequently incorporated into the nineteenth century redevelopment. Given Co. Wicklow’s dramatic topographical landscape, the siting and design of the castle and demesne takes full advantage of the natural backdrop of the Wicklow

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96 William White was an English ecclesiastical architect. In designing Humewood Castle, he overran the budget of £15,000 by an additional £10,000. His career was subsequently ruined when he refused to pay the builder and lost a resultant law case.
Mountains, in particular the peak of Lugnaquilla. The demesne’s layout incorporates multiple vistas and reciprocal views from a variety of routes alongside the lakes and woodlands, and from the core area of the demesne.

Plate Q.1: The north-western gate lodge, Humewood Demesne. This is a detached three-bay lodge built in 1870 next to a gate screen with cast-iron gates and railings. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Plate Q.2: Estate Gardner’s House, Humewood Demesne. This is a detached three-bay one and a half-storey house with a walled garden built in 1870. (Source: Author’s Collection, 2010).

Q.2 Contemporary Layout

Remarkably, the castle and demesne remained in the original family’s ownership until the early 1990s when it was acquired by a German businesswoman who carried-out significant restoration works to the castle and demesne. The castle and outbuildings were made available for occasions and events, while the castle and demesne have been used as a set for films.

The only major change within the demesne appears to be the selection of preferred entrances. Historically, the principle entrance to the castle is located to the south-western end of the demesne and traverses through the undulating landscape parkland. However, this contrived and exaggerated entrance is currently closed and the most used entrance is the tree-lined avenue from the nearby estate village of Kiltegan to the south of the demesne. View Map Q.1 and Plate Q.3 for a comparison between the historical and contemporary layout of the demesne.