

**Proposed Addition to the  
Record of Protected Structures  
maintained by  
Limerick City and County Council  
pursuant to the provisions of  
Part IV [Architectural Heritage]  
of the  
Planning and Development Act, 2000  
(as amended)  
May, 2020  
Reference No. P.P.S. 2020-A I & II  
Former Order of Mercy Convent and Chapel  
at Doon, Co. Limerick**





### **Introduction:**

Part IV [Architectural Heritage] of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 – 2014 allows a planning authority to keep its Record of Protected Structures (R.P.S.) under review on a continual basis. While this can be used as a means to remove structures from the R.P.S. where the planning authority is of the view that their protection is no longer warranted it is normally applied as a means by which buildings or features of significance because of their architectural heritage are added to the R.P.S. as they are identified and as resources permit.

Limerick City and County Council now proposes to add a feature to the Record of Protected Structures. This report sets out some features of significance and importance in respect of a former Order of Mercy Convent and its attendant Chapel. It is located in the Townland of Lisgaugh, in the village of Doon, Co. Limerick. On May 15, 2020, correspondence was received from representatives of the South Central Province of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy requesting that the Complex be considered for addition to the R.P.S.

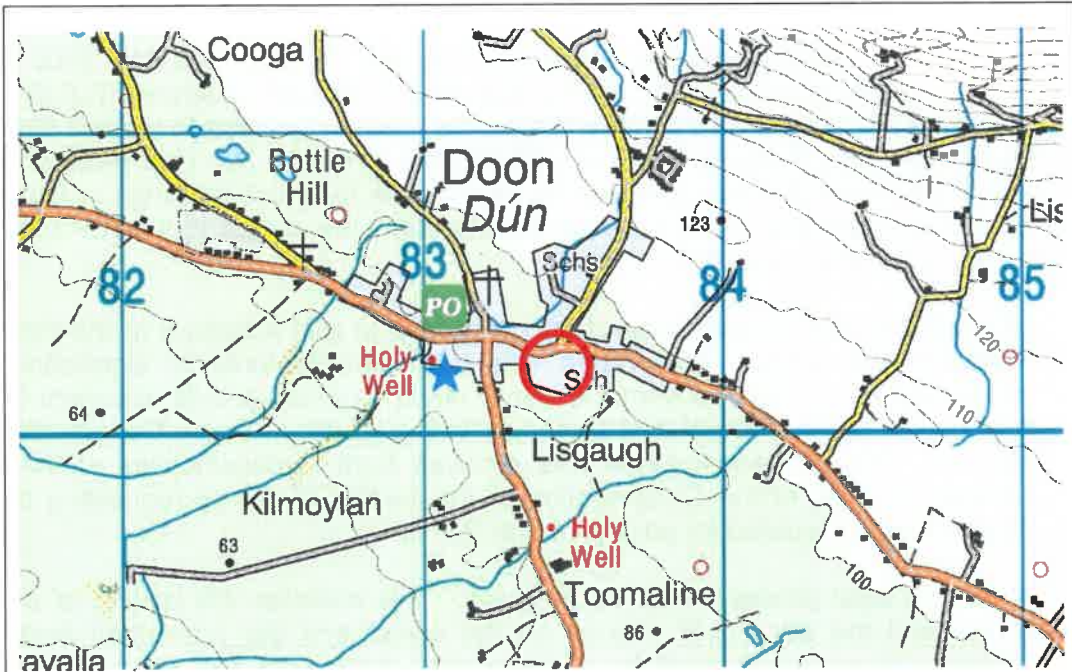
A distinct legal process must be followed. This includes the issuing of a Public Notice and the serving of Notices on the owner and the prescribed bodies. A minimum of six weeks must be given to allow submissions or observations to be made. Any member of the public, or an agent acting for them, may make such a contribution- this reflects the fact that the stakeholders in the county's built heritage are many and should be afforded the opportunity to comment whenever changes are contemplated.

The prescribed bodies are:

The Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (it should be noted that a Ministerial Recommendation, on foot of Section 53 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 was received by Limerick County Council in respect of these buildings);  
An Taisce;  
The Arts Council;  
The Heritage Council;  
Fáilte Ireland.

Submissions or observations made by owners, occupiers, the prescribed bodies, the Minister and members of the public, must be taken into consideration before the final decision is made. Following the completion of the public consultation period the file on the building will be considered by the elected Members of the Cappamore – Kilmallock Municipal District and, as such decisions are a Reserved Function, they will make the final determination on the matter. This decision must be reached within the timeframe set out in Part IV of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

**N.B.:** This site carries a Ministerial Recommendation per the provisions of Section 53 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), being given a Rating as being of Regional Significance by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Ref. No. 21809006 (Convent) and Ref. No. 21809007 (Chapel)) arising from that agency's Interim Survey of Co. Limerick. Any submissions or observations received will be forwarded to the Minister for her consideration. The Minister has four weeks from receipt of the forwarded submissions or observations to make her comments to the planning authority.



**Fig. I:** Location Map for the Convent Complex in Doon, Co. Limerick. The site of the structure is outlined by the red circle.



**Plate. 2020/A(1):** View, taken from the south showing the irregular layout of the complex and the haphazard fenestration patterns evident in the elevations. The Chapel is visible to the righthandside of the image and is identifiable from the Romanesque arches on the windows.

**Ref. No.: P.P.S.2020/A**

**(located in the Cappamore- Kilmallock Municipal District functional area)**

**Limerick City and County Council  
Conservation Office**

**Proposed Addition to the Record of Protected Structures**

- Building Type:** Convent of Mercy and Chapel Complex
- Owner/Occupier:** Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy
- Location Map:** Yes- see Fig. 2020/A1 above. Historic mapping is held on the main file
- Photographs:** Yes- several included in this report, others held on the main file
- Site Visited:** Yes- on several occasions before and during the recent planning application process
- Location:** Main Street, Doon in the Townland of Lisgaugh, Doon Civil Parish, Barony of Coonagh, to the south of the main street.
- Report:** The site is an evolved complex of buildings and wings which have grown outwards from the site of the convent's original foundation- Doon House, which was demolished as the Order of Mercy developed its facilities on the site.

Today, the main building's central block is rectangular three storey structure aligned east-north-east – west-south-west with its principle elevation facing southwards (See Plate 2020/A1). Extensions and wings are located at either end of the building, the most significant of these stretch southwards to form a courtyard sheltering a grassed area in from of two entrances- one in the south elevation, the second in the western wing. Both of these are shelter by external porches. Other service entrances allow access to pantries and kitchens, while a separate porch, on the eastern side of the complex, permits access to the Lay Chapel, a wing of the Community's L-Plan place of worship.

The fenestration pattern of the main elevation is quite regular up through the three storeys, but is not spaced evenly across the façade- possibly reflecting the many building campaigns undertaken throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While most window opes retain their timber units (ranging from 1/1 rise and fall sashes to Wyatt types), some have been replaced. The chapel windows range from good 19<sup>th</sup> century Mayer glass, from their Munich studios, to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century abstract leaded glass units.

The grounds contain the remnants of the classical garden layout shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey mapping, augmented by a hothouse, with a cemetery for the Community provided for also.



**Plate 2020/A(2):** View, looking eastwards, of the institutional type corridor that runs in a single storey extension located between the main building and the public road. Note the telephone booth constructed at the top end of the corridor.



**Plate 2020/A(3):** View, looking eastwards, of the Community Refectory. Note the Art-Deco fireplace, partially obscured by the dining table, but featured on the first page of this report.



**Plate 2020/A(4):** One of the many corridors on the second and third floors, off which the individual rooms that provided sleeping accommodation for the members of the Order of Mercy's Community in Doon over many decades.



**Plate 2020/A(5):** An example of the excellent roofing structures that characterise the construction techniques used throughout the various building phases of the Convent Complex's evolution from its foundation through to the completion of the Chapel in the 1950s. Note the white lime plaster beneath the slates. Known as parging, it provided a seal against drafts through the natural slate cover but was also breathable- allowing accumulated moisture in the building to evaporate through.



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**Plate 2020/A(6):** View of the Sanctuary from the Community's Wing of the L-Plan Chapel. Constructed originally solely as a facility for the nuns in the convent, as the cloister rule relaxed throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century the building was altered and extended to permit members of the laity to use the building, while respecting the Community's right to privacy.



**Plate 2020/A(7):** View, looking eastwards, of the Lay Chapel.



**Fig. II:** Map showing the proposed Curtilage for the Convent Complex, to which the Protected Structures provisions will apply. This has been advised to the Representatives of the South Central Province of the Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.

### **Conservation Officer's Statement of Significance**

The former Convent and Chapel in Doon, is significant due to its

Architectural, Artistic, Historical, Social and Technical

features as prescribed under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

The curtilage of the site has been defined in Fig. 2020/A II above and included with documentation forming the formal Notice for service on the owners.

**It is my Recommendation, as the Planning Authority's Architectural  
Conservation Officer,**

**Having discussed the correspondence with the Planning Department's Senior  
Manager**

**Having advised the Elected Members of the Cappamore-Kilmallock Municipal  
District of the request received from the South Central Province,**

**that the former Convent and Chapel of the Congregation of the Order of Mercy  
in Doon, P.P.S. Reference No. 2020/A, be considered for addition to the Record  
of Protected Structures maintained by Limerick City and County Council and  
that the statutory legal process be instigated.**

**SIGNED:**

  
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**Architectural Conservation Officer**