



**To the chairperson and members of  
North Central Area Committee.**

4<sup>th</sup> October, 2023

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### **Killester Heritage Sign and publication update**

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The text for the heritage sign has been sent for Irish language translation. Once the translation has been received it will be issued to the designer. The sign will be two-sided and approx. A0 dimensions. There is a 6-9 week lead in time for design and installation of the sign. We are liaising with the Parks Department on the installation of the sign in a suitable location in Middle Third within view of the former Legion Hall.

We are progressing well with the publication *Killester: Dublin through the Ages*. A book manuscript of approximately 30,000 words will include essays by Professor Joseph Brady, Dr Ruth McManus and archaeologist Antoine Giacometti. The manuscript is approaching completion and archival images are currently being acquired. Quotations have been sought from publishers and it is anticipated the book will be launched locally in early Q2 2023. Dublin City Library and Archive have provided a Centenaries grant towards the publication.

Ruth and Joe are giving talks on their Killester research for the festival of History in Raheny Library, both of which are sold out. Ruth's is on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6.30 and Joes is on October 5<sup>th</sup> at 6.30.

#### **Heritage information sign text**

##### Origins

The earliest written records we have of Killester (also referred to throughout its history as Killastre and Quillestre) date back to the twelfth century, when the Normans first arrived in Ireland. At that time, Killester and its neighbouring parishes were in the possession of Holy Trinity (Christchurch Cathedral), founded in 1038 by the Hiberno-Norse ruler King Sitric.

##### Early Features

Killester was a manorial centre which contained the residence of the Lord of the manor. These residences were typically situated close to the parish church, as was the case in Killester. The church, dedicated to St Brigid, was located to the west of the manor. The 1654 Civil Survey described the church as a "decayd Chapell", and depictions by Jonathan Buck and Gabriel Beranger in the late eighteenth century show it in ruins with its external walls still standing. What remains of the church and graveyard can be found on Killester Avenue today.

The existence of several local features remain disputed. Some have claimed a motte and bailey, built by the Anglo-Norman Brun family, survived in Killester until the 1920s. Others have stated the existence of an Abbey at Killester which lent its name to later developments. A lack of evidence makes these possibilities unlikely. The lane known as “Nun’s Walk” remains as an echo of a convent in the area.

### Killester House

Killester House lay to the north of where the old Legion Hall building is now located, and was oriented to the south east to avail of the view over Dublin Bay. Dating to the early eighteenth century, it was home to the Gleadowe-Newcomen’s, the renowned Dublin banking family who resided here c.1775 to 1825. The demesne included fine entrance gates facing the modern-day junction of Howth Road and Collins Avenue, a walled garden, and an ice house in a formerly wooded area at the east end of Nun’s Walk.

When a plan for a housing scheme for ex-servicemen was burgeoning, Killester House was intended to be its centrepiece. However, on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1920, the *Irish Times* reported that Killester House had been burned to the ground. The decision was made not to rebuild, thus the House was demolished.

### ‘Homes for Irish Heroes’

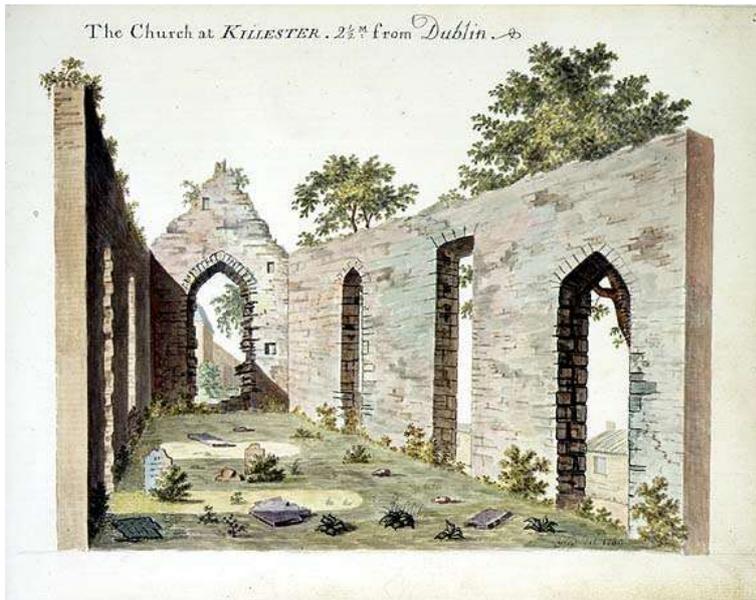
In 1919, the Irish Land (Provision for Soldiers and Sailors) Act pledged the provision of housing for ex-servicemen returning to civilian life following the First World War. Housing was initially provided by the Local Government Board for Ireland, but following the formation of the Free State the Irish Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Land Trust oversaw this across the island. Killester, by far the largest of these schemes, was unique both in terms of scale and design. Designed by Frank C. Mears, bungalows of different sizes and layouts were provided. Smaller houses in Abbeyfield tended to be occupied by privates whereas bungalows, typically found in the Demesne, were occupied by ex-officers. There were 247 houses in the completed development of 1923, comprising of Abbeyfield, Middle Third, and Demesne. A later addition in the late 1920s, Orchard and in-fill housing elsewhere, increased the total to 289.

Community spirit in Killester was high. People gathered for commemorations on Armistice Day at the Legion Hall, which was also the focus of many social events. An arson attack destroyed the original hall in 1928, which was replaced in 1932. The work of the Land Trust was curtailed in Ireland following a series of court cases in the 1930s relating to the nature of tenancy, and by the 1950s the Trust had decided to make its houses available for sale to tenants.

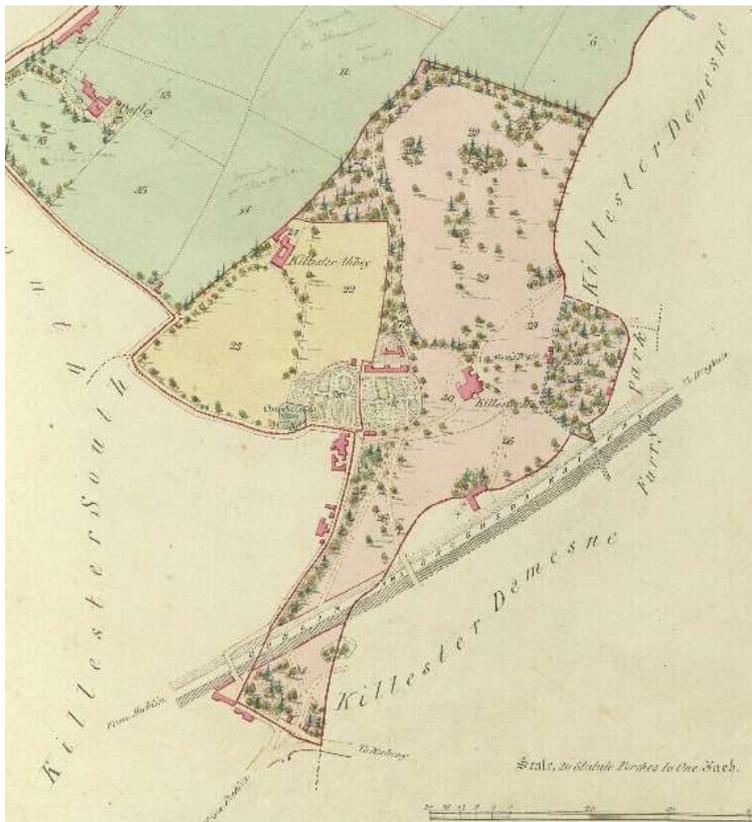
### Acknowledgements

The Killester research project and heritage sign was funded by the DCC North Central Area Office in 2023 to mark the centenary of the building of the ex-servicemen’s housing scheme. The research was commissioned and co-ordinated by the DCC Heritage Office and conducted by Dr Ruth McManus, Dr Joseph Brady and Archaeology Plan. The text of this sign was written by Abigail O’Reilly.

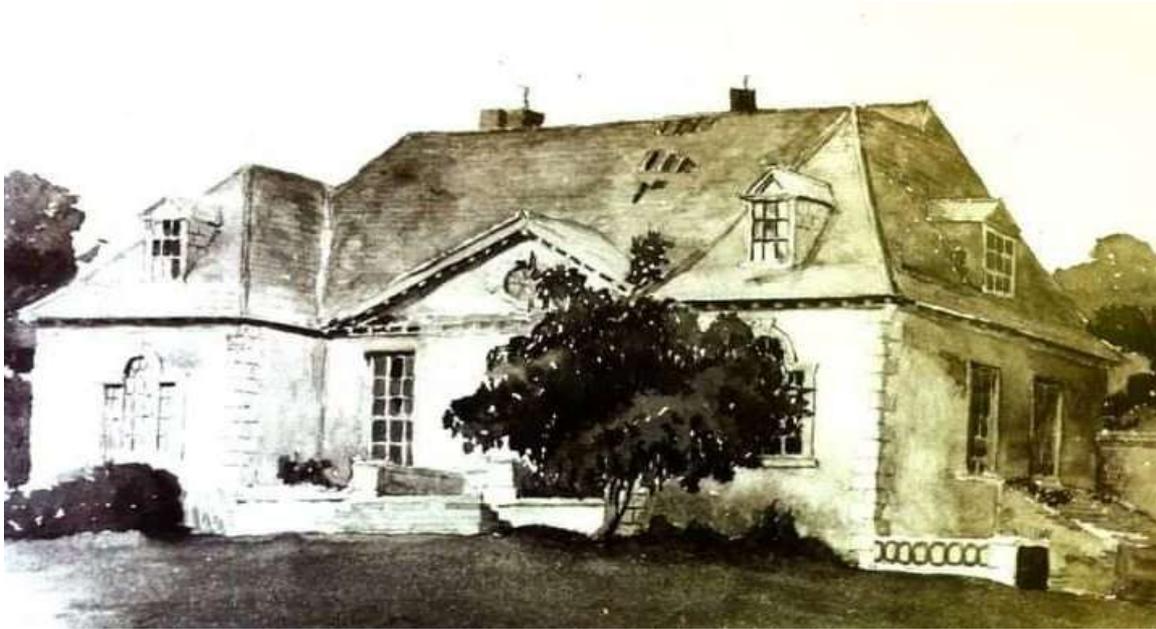
## Images



1. A watercolour by Gabriel Beranger, dated 1769, showing the ruins of Killester Church with its gable wall still standing. *Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*



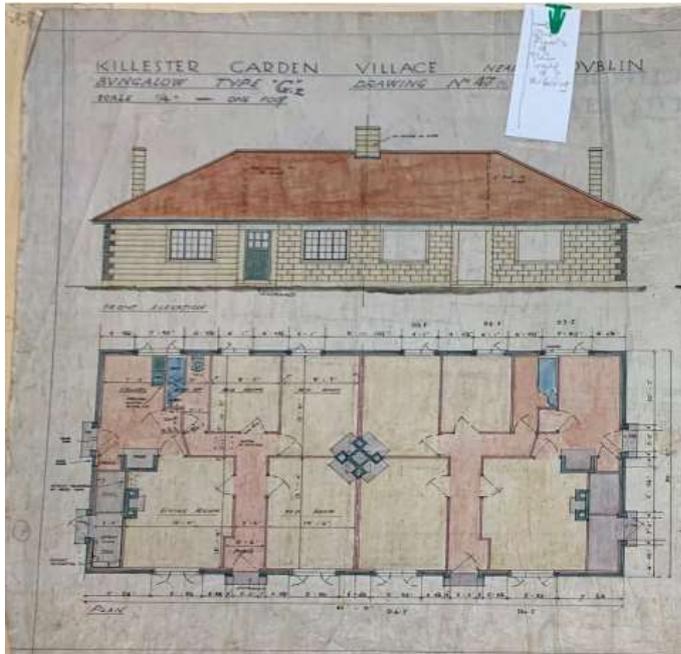
2. An 1863 map of Killester North from the Earl of Howth Estate Map showing notable features, including dwellings, the church and graveyard, Nun's Walk and an ice house. *Courtesy of Fingal Local Studies & Archive.*



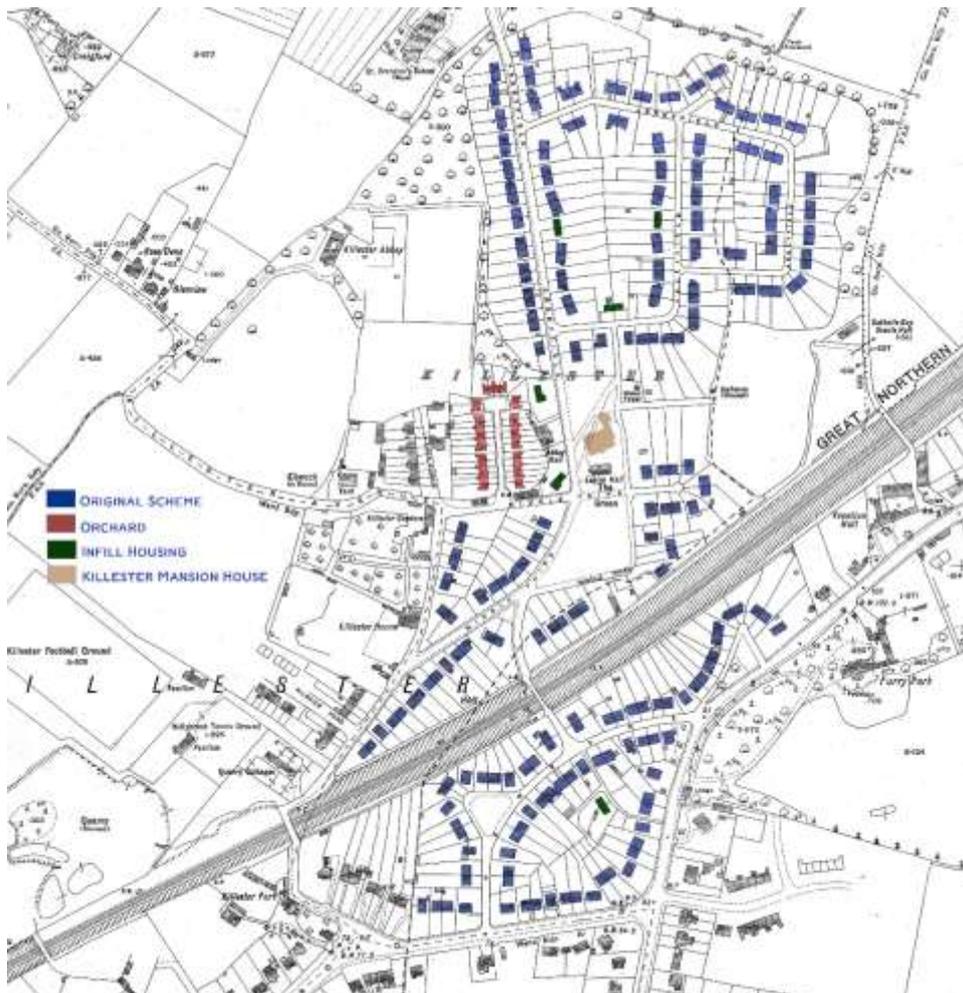
3. Watercolour of Killester House by H.G. Leask, c.1907/1908. Killester House was a particularly fine early 18<sup>th</sup> century single-storey house with a dormer attic storey. It was characterised by a steeply pitched roof with a wooden bracketed eaves cornice, and end breakfronts with Venetian windows flanking a central pediment which rose over the front entrance bays. *Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.*

4. A map of the Local Government Board's proposed garden suburb in Killester Demesne featuring Killester House as a focal point, c.1919-1920. *Courtesy of the National Archives.*





5. Outline drawing for Bungalow Type 'G', indicative of the different types of layout which can be found in the Killester scheme. *Courtesy of the National Archives.*



6. The completed Killester scheme. The map shows the original development of 247 bungalows, the Orchard addition and in-fill housing from the late 1920s and the outline of where Killester House was located. Extracts from Ordnance Survey plans 15(13) and 19(1), 1:2500, 1936 edition. *Courtesy of Dr Joseph Brady.*

**Charles Duggan**

**Heritage Officer**