



Cottages in Livery

The Gate Lodges of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

Some of the images used in this exhibition are taken from Gate Lodges, a 1996 display curated by Veronica and David Rowe for An Taisce South County Dublin Association, later donated to dlr Libraries. Special thanks are due to Veronica and David Rowe, J.A.K Dean and Peter Pearson for their generous assistance.

Many of the buildings featured in this exhibition are located on private property and should not be entered without prior permission.

This exhibition is an initiative of the Decade of Centenaries 2021 programme for Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, on the theme of the Big Houses of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

Researched and compiled by David Gunning, dlr Historian in Residence
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The gate lodge is an important but often overlooked element of the cultural heritage of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. While these modest buildings are mostly associated with roadside entrances to the great mansions, suburban villas and large farmhouses of the county, they are also found at cemeteries, churches, convents, hospitals, public parks and schools.

Aerial photograph of Dún Laoghaire, 1953. The gate lodge for the People's Park is visible at top right. Granite Hall House can be seen at lower right while its gate lodge is surrounded by trees and barely visible off the Glenageary Road. Granite Hall was later demolished but the lodge survives as a private family home (Courtesy Britain From Above)





This online exhibition showcases a number of the different types and styles of gate lodges that are found throughout the county.

Detail of map showing Granite Hall House and gate lodge
(dlr Local Studies)



The improvement of roads along with the opening of the Dublin to Kingstown railway in 1834 allowed the monied classes to move from the chaotic and crowded capital to embrace a healthier rural lifestyle in the sparsely populated countryside south of Dublin city. Most of the gate lodges scattered throughout the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown region today were erected to serve the big houses built in the area by wealthy landlords and homeowners during the nineteenth century.

The gate lodge to Kilmacud House stood off Lower Kilmacud Road in Stillorgan. Built c. 1852 to designs by John Skipton Mulvany, the lodge was an unusual mix of architectural styles including a distinctive oriental bell-shaped roof. The building was a well-known landmark in the locality until its demolition during the 1960s (Courtesy YouWho.ie)

Focus on... Italianate Lodges

The Italianate style of gate lodge is one that is most prolific in south County Dublin. The quiet dignity of these gate lodges, simple structures dressed up with fanlight doors, ornamental moulding around windows and pilaster quoins appealed to the merchant classes who built big houses and villas in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area from the middle of the nineteenth century. Dean calls architect John McCurdy 'the master eclectic in his mastering of the Italianate' and he was responsible for the almost identical gate lodges found at Bellosguardo, Galloping Green; Homestead, Dundrum; Newtownpark, Blackrock and Tibbradden, Whitechurch.

(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photographs by Norman Campion, Joy Mawhinney and David Rowe, 1996)





Standing alongside decorative gates and gate piers at the opening of an avenue, the gate lodge guarded the entrance to the private and privileged world of the big house, one that few ordinary Irish people, other than those employed on the property, would ever enter.



This redbrick gate lodge off Mount Anville Road is the only remaining lodge of three that originally served Mount Merrion House. The crest above the door contains an intertwined P & M for Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, the owner of the estate (Photographs by David Gunning)

Focus on... Mount Anville

The two original gate lodges for Mount Anville House were demolished by William Dargan, engineer and *Father of the Railways*, when he bought the property in 1851. Dargan hired architect John Skipton Mulvany to carry out remodelling work to his newly purchased house in 1853. This included the design of a new entrance with a large decorative gate lodge built of local stone which Pearson notes as a 'magnificent example of his work'. Mulvany also designed the unusual oriental-style gate lodge for nearby Kilmacud House which was later demolished.



The lodge is a variation of the Italianate style with tall round-headed windows, low-pitched roof and pedimented windows and doors. The pointed or arrowhead bay window allowed the gatekeeper a wide view of the gates and avenue. The building is topped by a triple chimney stack. Mount Anville was purchased by the Society of the Sacred Heart in 1865 and has operated as a school since then. The lodge, later known as St Jude's, provided accommodation for employees. The impressive cut stone entrance to Mount Anville was removed and relocated further up Mount Anville Road for road widening during the twentieth century. Fortunately, the gate lodge survives as a distinctive element of the built heritage of modern Dún Laoghaire Rathdown.

(Courtesy Society of the Sacred Heart | Photographs by David Gunning)





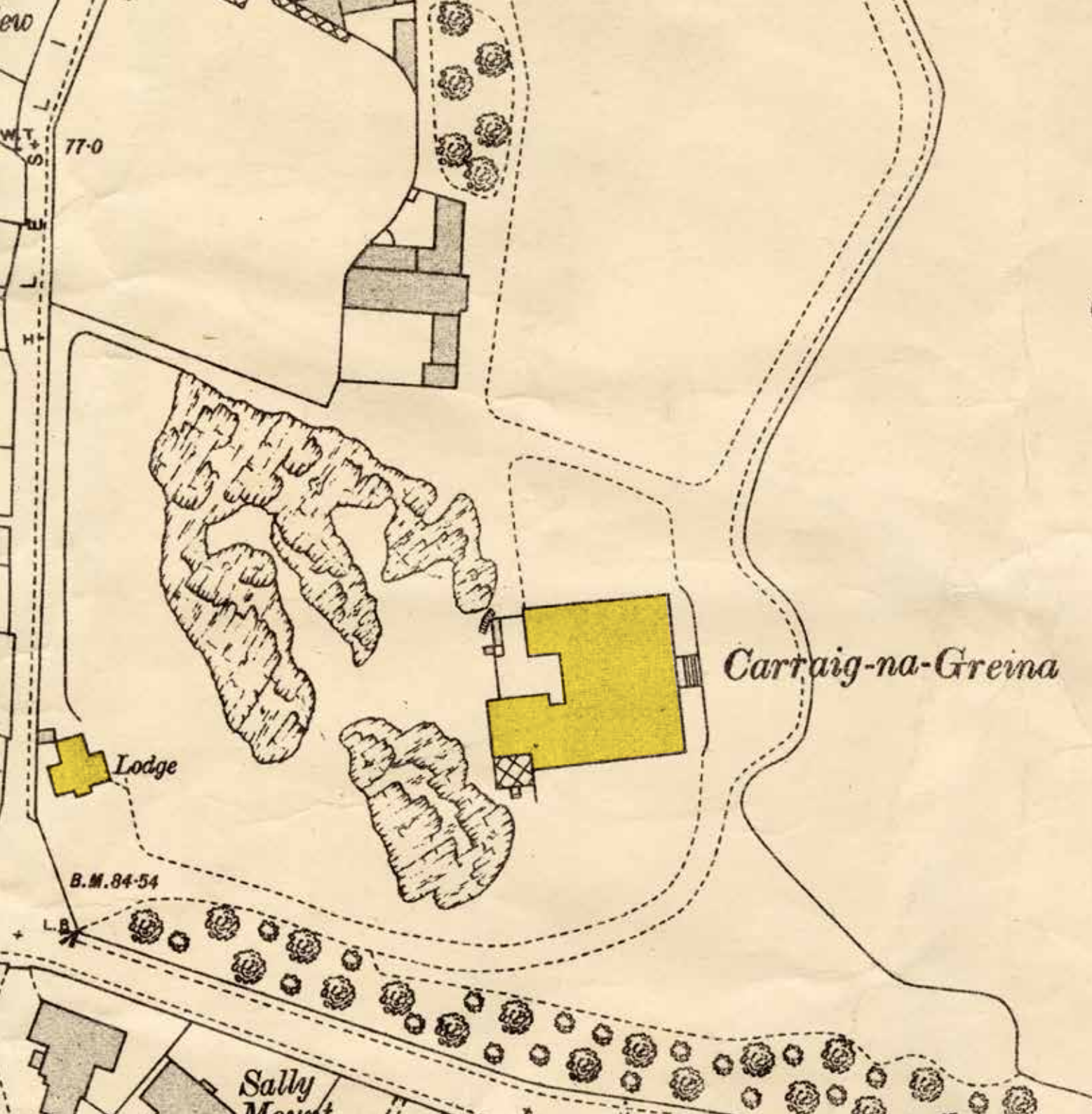
As a descendant of the fortified medieval gatehouses that controlled access to the interiors of towns and castles, the gate lodge, located at the border of a private estate, was also concerned with site security.

The gatehouse at Monkstown Castle is an impressive example of the medieval gatehouse from which modern gate lodges developed. The gatehouse can be seen today from the Mounttown Road (Courtesy Eamon Sweeney)



Most big houses in Ireland were surrounded by high boundary walls and any access point or entrance through these was vulnerable. Therefore, the gate lodge was an essential building to mitigate against the risk of angry tenants, poachers, rebels or thieves entering the estate.

The decorative gates and gate lodge at Knockrabo near Goatstown. Both lodges built to serve Knockrabo survive today. Knockrabo House was used as a family residence before it was converted into a school during the twentieth century. The house and grounds were later sold to the Bank of Ireland and the house was demolished in 1984 to make way for a new sports centre. The site has been developed as housing in recent years (Photograph by David Gunning)



The gatekeeper occupying the lodge acted as sentry with responsibility for monitoring visitors to the property and ensuring that no undesirables breached the gates. However, in some instances, the gatekeeper themselves could pose a threat. During the 1798 rebellion, the gatekeeper at The Grange in Rathfarnham, Mr McDonogh, raided the house of his employer along with a group that included the gardener. Mrs McDonogh also joined the raid and threatened to cut the throats of the occupants of the big house before being dissuaded from doing so!

Detail of map showing Carraig na Greina House and gate lodge in Dalkey (dlr Local Studies)

Like the big house itself, the gate lodge symbolised the authority and control of the owner. The presence of a lodge reminded passers-by that somebody important and powerful owned and occupied the property. It wasn't uncommon for owners to erect multiple lodges for different entrances to their estate. For example, St Helen's in Booterstown and Landscape House in Churchtown had gate lodges at each of their three entrances, none of which survive today.

The lodge at Lisbalally, formerly known as Avonmore, in Foxrock was built c. 1870. The lodge, with its neat hip-roof porch, was swept away for road widening in recent years (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Sylvia Dockeray, 1996)



Focus on... Rathfarnham Castle - Triumphal Archway

The spectacular Dodder or Ely Arch, formerly the entrance to Rathfarnham Castle, is found on the north-east border of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown. The vaulted archway is a throwback to the triumphal arches of ancient Rome. While triumphal arches were most often built to commemorate wars (Fusiliers' Arch on St Stephen's Green was erected in 1907 to honour those who fought in the Second Boer War), Ely arch was built to be an imposing and individual statement of power. The man responsible for its construction was Charles Tottenham Loftus, owner of Rathfarnham Castle, who had it built to celebrate his elevation to the peerage of the UK as Baron Loftus in 1801.

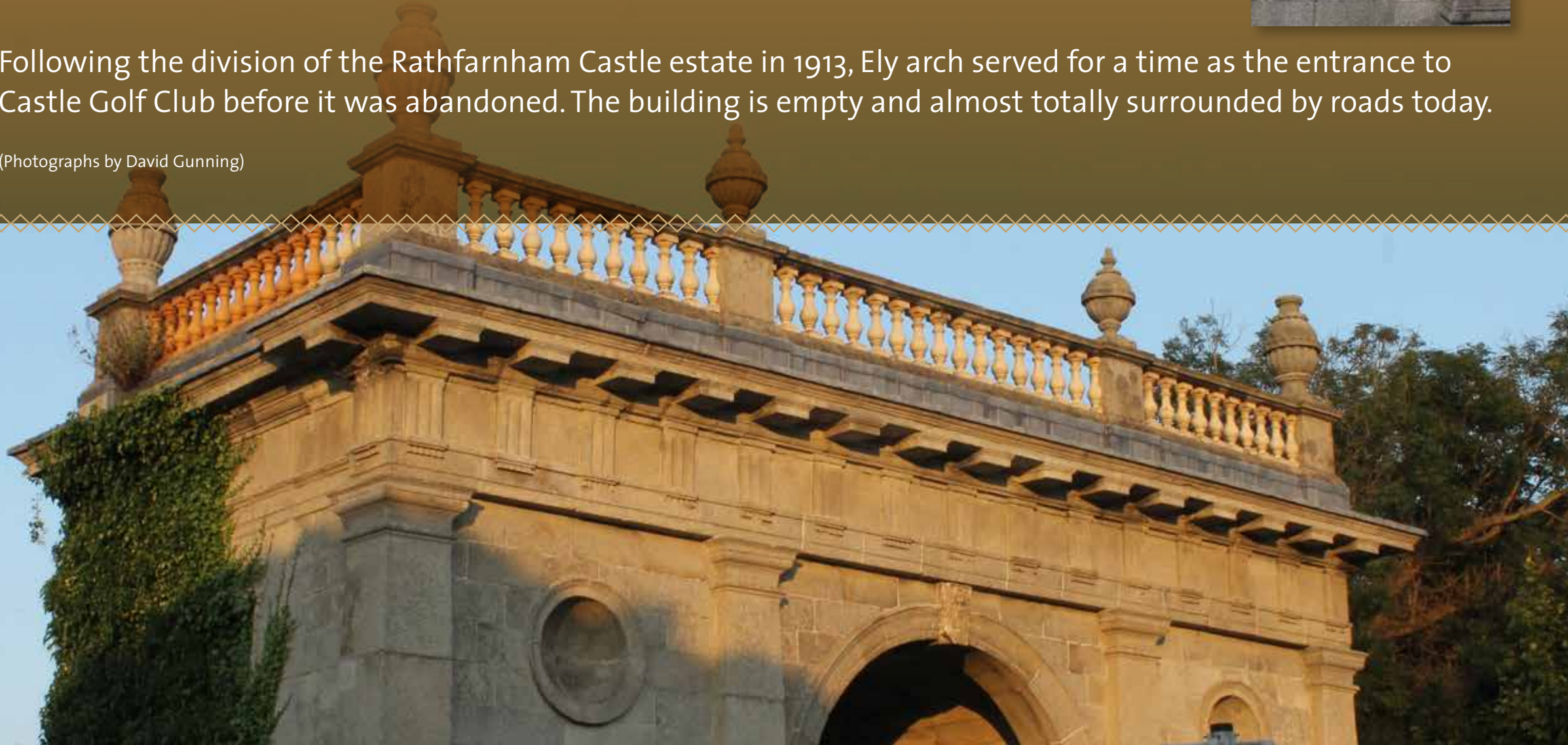


The archway was built with gatekeeper accommodation contained within which is split in two, with access gained via doors at ground level on either side of the arch. The interior was dimly lit, with just two single square windows on either side of the outer walls to provide light, both of which have since been filled in. The simple interior contrasts with the ornamental features on the exterior including rounded niches, decorative stone urns above the roof and the head of a Roman god in the central keystone.



Following the division of the Rathfarnham Castle estate in 1913, Ely arch served for a time as the entrance to Castle Golf Club before it was abandoned. The building is empty and almost totally surrounded by roads today.

(Photographs by David Gunning)





Gate lodges fulfilled an important purpose as sentinel posts for the big house. However, as Ireland became more settled during the nineteenth century, they were increasingly viewed as status symbols, and their construction was seen as an opportunity to demonstrate the style, good taste and wealth of the owner. An attractive and well-designed gate lodge might offer a tantalising glimpse of what to expect when one arrived at the big house.

The Gothic gate lodge at The Aske in Shankill mimics the style of the main house it serves. This decorative little lodge features ornamental bargeboards, latticed windows, pinnacles and a tall chimney (Photographs by David Gunning)



An 1872 architectural publication emphasised the significance of ornamental design, noting that gate lodges should be ‘cottages in livery...not more important in size than an ordinary cottage, but only to be more important in appearance, simply because it is part of the mansion - the outer porch’. Their miniature size allowed for architectural innovation as more adventurous owners chose to erect lodges in a range of different styles that incorporated interesting and unusual features. Many gate lodges were striking features of the landscape, announcing the grandeur of the estate beyond.



The Gothic gate lodge at The Aske in Shankill (Photographs by David Gunning)

Focus on... Loreto Abbey - Day and Night lodges

The tiny twin gate lodges at Loreto Abbey, formerly known as Palliser's Park, in Rathfarnham were built c. 1825, just after the property had been purchased by the Loreto Sisters who ran a boarding school, convent and farm here until 1999. The lodges face each other across the inside of the impressive gateway and were initially erected as single roomed buildings, with one lodge designed to be used for work during the day, and the other for sleeping at night.

(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Marylou Glynn, 1996) Aerial photo: (Courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)





While gate lodges were designed to be petite and picturesque, they still served a functional purpose, providing a working and living space for the inhabitants, generally a gatekeeper or porter along with their family. While the external features of the gate lodge were often eye-catching, they enclosed a plain and simple interior, generally consisting of two or three rooms including a scullery and bedroom.

The gate lodge for The Priory in Monkstown seems to have first served Richview House (later St Grellans). Built in the Swiss Cottage style, characterised by steeply-pitched gabled roofs and decorative bargeboards, the lodge stood until the 1980s when it was abandoned and derelict. A fire further damaged the property before it was completely rebuilt and enlarged by conscientious owners (Photographs by David Gunning)





In his comprehensive gazetteer of the gate lodges of Leinster, J.A.K Dean notes that a small number of lodges were ‘surprisingly commodious’ like those at Blackrock House and Mount Anville or ‘unusually long and narrow’ like that at Fernhill, since demolished.

The gate lodge to Drummartin Hill near Dundrum was a small redbrick cottage with a steeply-pitched roof. The lodge was demolished c. 2000 when Overend Way was developed as an arterial road for the M50 (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Veronica Rowe, 1996)

Focus on... Woodtown Park - Classical Delight

The lodge at Woodtown near Rathfarnham may have been designed by Decimus Burton who was also the architect for gate lodges in the Phoenix Park. The lodge at Woodtown was built for its owner, Henry Joy around 1835. Dean calls this lodge 'the finest Classical porter's lodge in the whole of Dublin county'. This perfectly sized lodge is a single storey granite building with a pediment over the doorway. The pediment rests on a pair of Doric columns that stand beside two square pillars at either side of the front fanlit door.





Courtesy Veronica
and David Rowe |
Photographs by
David Rowe, 1996

The gate lodge often housed more senior servants such as stewards or gardeners, and it was very often their wives who became the official gatekeepers at the lodge. A number of women are listed as gatekeepers in south County Dublin during the mid-nineteenth century. These include Mary Hackett at Kill Abbey House, Kill of the Grange; Mary McDonnell at Castle Dawson in Williamstown (now Blackrock College); and Mary Rooney at Rockbrook House (now Rockbrook School).

The gate lodge to Gortmore House, now known as Gort Muire in Ballinteer. The lodge survives albeit cut off from the main house by Wyckham Way, an arterial road for the M50 (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Veronica Rowe, 1996)

Focus on... Monkstown Park

The original eighteenth century house at Monkstown Park was torn down by Charles Haliday in 1843 when he built a new villa on the grounds. Haliday, a well known banker and historian, erected a fine square house reached by a long avenue that led from Pakenham Road in Monkstown. The attractive gate lodge was built at the entrance to the rear avenue that opened off Mounttown Road and mirrored the big house in its external features.



(Courtesy Peter Pearson)

The lodge contained three rooms and was unusual in that it included a basement. Margaret Golding was listed as the gatekeeper at Monkstown Park in 1849. Following Haliday's death in 1866, the property was sold a number of times before it was purchased by the Christian Brothers in 1950. The buildings were adapted and extended for use as CBC Monkstown Park. Unfortunately, the gate lodge suffered a fire and was demolished in 1983. The former site of the lodge is now part of the school car park.

(dlr Local Studies)





Gate lodges also served a variety of purposes that sometimes benefited the local community. Lodges could be used as schoolhouses for local children, and William Plant, a surgeon at Rathdown Fever Hospital, ran a dispensary from the gate lodge at his home, Plantation (now known as Gortmore) on the Monkstown Road.

The gate lodge to the Meath Industrial School on Carysfort Avenue in Blackrock. The school was established in 1875 to house homeless children and those convicted of minor offences. The school buildings and attendant gate lodge were demolished and the site is now the Avondale Business Park (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Veronica Rowe, 1996)



The rapid urbanisation of Dublin during the twentieth century brought about great changes for the county with many of the big houses and private estates in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown acquired to make way for new housing estates. This often included the demolition of the big house along with its attendant gate lodge.

The gate lodge at Knocksinna in Foxrock. The single storey lodge with wooden porch entrance was built c. 1873 and removed for widening of the Stillorgan Road in 2000 (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Alan Gilmer, 1996)

Focus on... Millmount Cloth Mill - A Golden Oldie

The 'crude but charming' gate lodge at Millmount in Edmondstown was built c. 1800 making it one of the earlier gate lodges still standing in the county. The exterior wall of the lodge follows the curve of the road and two large windows allowed the gatekeeper a good view of the road. The distinct slate roof was likely thatched when the lodge was first built.

(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photographs by Veronica Rowe, 1996)



In recent decades, their close proximity to the roadside often signalled the demise of gate lodges as they are removed for road realignment and widening. Many others have been demolished to make way for larger houses where land is at a premium. This is not a new phenomenon; the gate lodge for Beech Grove in Glenageary, built in 1907, was removed by 1936 to make way for new housing on the Lower Glenageary Road. It stood for less than thirty years.

The gate lodge at Prospect Hill in Woodtown is a standard single storey dwelling built c. 1820. The lodge is totally overgrown today (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Veronica Rowe, 1996)



Focus on... Marlay and Cabinteely - dlr County Council

Cabinteely Park

The gate lodge to Cabinteely House is the only surviving lodge of the three buildings that originally served the estate. This lodge was built in 1880 and replaced an earlier one on the same site. In 1849, the lodge was occupied by John Rosin. The housekeeper for the main house occupied this lodge during the twentieth century.



The second lodge at Cabinteely originally stood at the entrance to Brennanstown House and was built c. 1825 by the Pim family who owned the estate up to the mid-twentieth century. The lodge was enlarged in 1845 in the Neoclassical style indicated by Doric columns on either side of the doorway. The Brennanstown estate was later purchased by the McGrath family of Cabinteely House and was incorporated into the public park opened at Cabinteely in 1982.

(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photographs by Joy Mawhinney and Veronica Rowe, 1996)



Marlay Park

The two storey gate lodge to Marlay House in Rathfarnham is the only surviving lodge of three built for the La Touche family who purchased the estate in 1764. In 1849, John Maggin was the gatekeeper living here. The Tudor influence is evident in the building with latticed windows and front facing gables. The entrance to the building is slightly recessed under a shallow porch. This long and large lodge was boarded up for many years before undergoing a restoration by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council that left it 'smartly rehabilitated'. It stands at the Ballinteer Avenue entrance to Marlay Park which was officially opened to the public in 1972.

(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photographs by Joy Mawhinney and Veronica Rowe, 1996)





Where gate lodges do survive in the county, they are oftentimes disconnected from their original setting and submerged in a sea of suburban housing. Many have been modified, extended or absorbed into larger houses, becoming unrecognisable as original architectural features are removed.

The only surviving gate lodge of two built c. 1845 to serve Greenfield House in Kilgobbin, the building is a solid single storey home faced in a silver-grey granite with a gently pointed doorcase. The lodge still serves its original purpose at Greenfield and has been restored and extended in modern times (Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe | Photograph by Sylvia Dockeray, 1996)

Focus on...

Roebuck Castle - Victorian Gothic

The gate lodge for Roebuck Castle dates to 1872 when Edward Westby, the then-owner, erected a conspicuous and eye-catching arched entrance to his home. Dean notes that the theatrical lodge, built of local stone with contrasting colours in brickwork, is one of the 'architectural delights of south Dublin'. The spired tower is three storeys high and the family crest of Edward Westby as well as the date of construction are visible in the stonework. A similar lodge in the gothic revival style was built at nearby Roebuck Cottage, later known as Ardilea. The carriage opening in the archway was closed in and turned into a living room in recent years. The house forms a unique family home in modern Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.



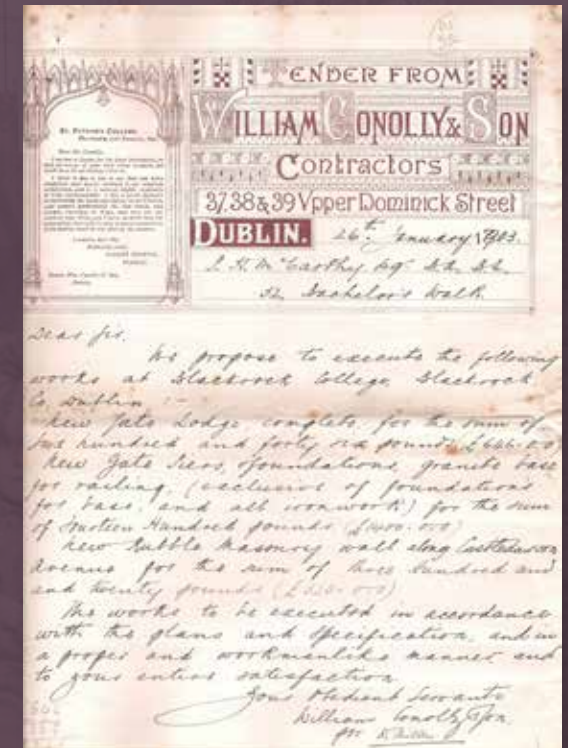


Dean estimates that of the 1,109 gate lodges built in Dublin city and county south of the Liffey, only 330 remain today, representing a loss of 70%. These small buildings often disappear without any dispute; Dean notes that while the controversial demolition of Frescati House was highly publicised and protracted, the destruction of its gate lodge ‘passed without a whisper’.

The Gothic gateway was one of two entrances to Ballawley Park on Sandyford Road in Dundrum. The roof of the lodge is visible at the left of the image, behind the screen wall. The lodge and entrance were largely demolished in the 1970s. The gates belonging to the other entrance survive and serve as an entrance to the public park that was opened in 1984 (Courtesy Irish Architectural Archive, Kevin Harrington Collection)



While the gate lodge served as an ornamental building or ‘cottage in livery’, it also provided a home for those people employed by wealthy owners and in this way it represents the lives of ordinary working people from the past.



The gate lodge to Blackrock College on Rock Road, 1903. The men are laying the foundations for a new avenue to the school. The gate lodge and gateway cost £2,046 (Courtesy Blackrock College Archives)

Focus on... Killiney Castle - Romantic Sham Castle

The Killiney Castle gate lodge takes the form of a two storey octagonal tower with battlements - a defensive feature forming a low wall on the roof of the tower with square openings for shooting through. This romantic version of a medieval fortified tower includes mock arrow loop windows for effect. A smaller tower closes off the opposite side of the gateway. The chimney is cleverly incorporated as a turret with a stone crest below. The lodge projects from a screen wall and the windows on both levels allow the gatekeeper to monitor all comings and goings at the property. The interior was small and ill-lit, and the gatekeeper would have lived and worked in cramped conditions. A modern single storey extension was later added to provide more space.



The gate lodge was built from locally quarried granite to the design of Sandham Symes, architect and grandson of Robert Warren, owner of Killiney Castle. Symes was also responsible for the gate lodge leading to Victoria Castle at Killiney village; Dean notes that both of these eye-catching lodges form 'delightful compositions' in the local area.

(Photographs by David Gunning)





The prices that some gate lodges in the area sell for today would likely make their original occupants' heads spin - Camelot, the original gate lodge to Victoria Castle in Killiney was offered for sale for €1.25m in 2020.

The gate lodge at Rockville House in Kiltarnan was built c. 1890 to replace an earlier lodge. The building sits on an elevated site looking down to the entrance gates. The recent development of housing on the lands at Rockville along with the retention and sympathetic restoration of the gate lodge and its big house give the place an air of distinction today.

Photograph by David Gunning.

Focus on...

Shanganagh Castle - The Last Lodge

The gate lodge at Shanganagh Castle dates to 1926, making it one of the last gate lodges built for a private house in the Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown area. It replaced an earlier gate lodge and was designed by architect Ralph Henry Byrne, in the Tudor style, indicated by a steeply-pitched roof and tall rectangular windows. While the gateway by the lodge was removed in 1979, the building remains an important part of the history of the Shanganagh Castle estate which is due to be developed soon.



Photograph by
David Gunning



Though small by their nature, the quality of detail and fine architectural features on many of these buildings is enviable and they are a testament to the quality of Irish workmanship at a particular time. Many gate lodges throughout the county have been tastefully renovated to become charming family homes today. For those fortunate enough to live in them, they provide a unique home with a tangible link to the older and quieter days of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown.

The gate lodge to Glencairn in Sandyford, the official residence of the British ambassador to Ireland.
(Courtesy Veronica and David Rowe |
Photograph by Sylvia Dockeray, 1996)



Why not explore the historic OSI maps at <https://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:40377> and see if you can identify gate lodges in your local area.

Acknowledgements

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