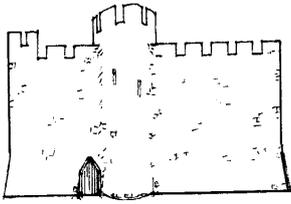


Ancient Sites & Buildings

Bagenalstown Area

Dunleckney Rural Area



Dunleckney. *Dun Leicne. The fort of the flags.* The townland is situated to the north of the modern town of Muine Bheag, founded by the Bagenal family in 1790 and known locally as Bagenalstown.

The Motte

The earliest trace of Norman settlement is most likely the motte known as Dunleckny Motte which is accessible through the graveyard and surrounded by dense woodland. The dense vegetation now covering the mound makes it difficult to explore. Other more famous mottes in the county are at St Mullins and Ballyknockan (*Dinn Ri*) near Leighlinbridge.

The mound is typical of the fortified motte and bailey positions which the Normans constructed when they conquered new territory. There are 476 mottes in Ireland only one third of which have a bailey attached. Built late 12th and early 13th century, mainly along the fault lines between Gael and Gall. Early gains were consolidated later by building a string of stone castles and fortified houses in the conquered territory.

Despite a lengthy library search we have been unable to find any historical references to this period for Dunleckney. The recorded history of the townland starts effectively with the Bagenal family who built their manor here in 1612.

Our survey conducted in 2004 confirmed that the mound (ND1) was once surrounded by a fosse (traces of which still remain). The stream which fed this fosse still flows nearby. Traces of a bailey not found. (See site map).

According to our readings on site the mound was once topped by a timber palisade, with a tower like structure immediately to one side of the gate. Within the palisade was a single timber framed building.

We have reason to think that the mound predated the Norman conquest by at least a thousand years and may have been a Celtic inauguration or ceremonial site.

In the 19th c the motte was converted into a picnic area and ornamental shrubs were planted. A car track wound up the side making access easier for riders or light vehicles (pony or donkey drawn)

662 DUNLECKNY (Dunleckny Borough)
OS 16:6:2 (346,388) OD 200-300 27192,16292
Motte (possible) Large oval mound (Dims 110m NW-SE; 70m NE-SW) to W of church and graveyard (no. 542), possibly a motte. (Bradley 1989, 21)
16:85(01)

Buildings

The year 1300 AD was taken as reference year for our survey purposes. Houses found were generally of stone construction with a thatched roof. Dwelling ND7 was the only example found to have a timber frame.

Typical house layout was two rooms with a connecting doorway. Dwelling ND4 was the largest and had a long entrance hall leading to the living space and inner room. This building was later extended by constructing another building against its east wall. It can be seen from the site map that the buildings occurred in clusters and were probably surrounded by dense woodland at that time. Our overall impression is that the settlement here was a garrison consisting of Norman/Welsh settlers.

As may be expected houses of this period had many features in common regardless of size. For example narrow slit windows unglazed, a single entrance door, thick solid stone walls, no chimneys.

The attic space was floored in many cases, access by ladder from the living space. Where evidence of a hearth was found it was usually in the gable end corner. A chimney breast of timber over the hearth covered a short flue. Smoke exhausted via a hole in the wall higher up.

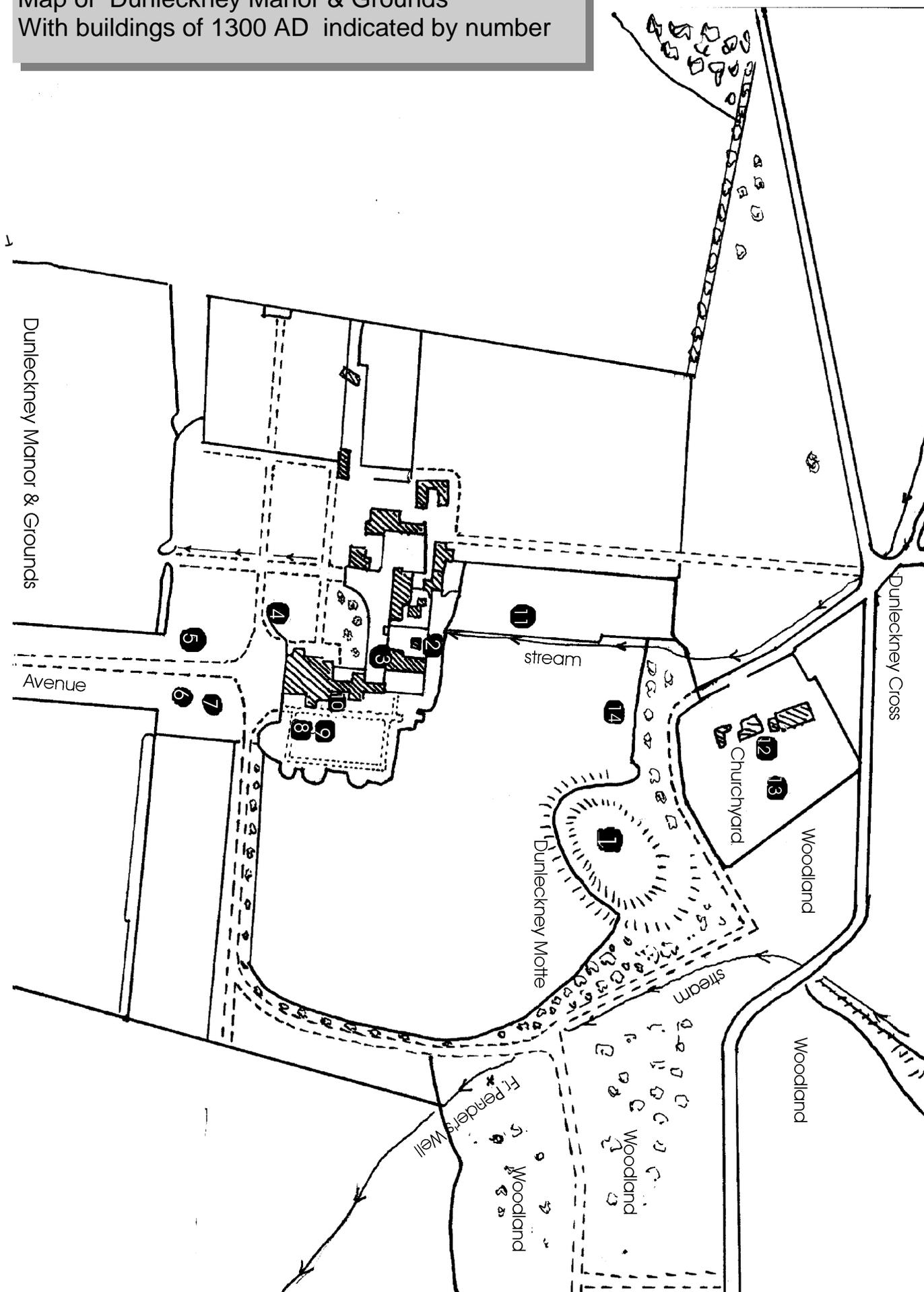
Dunleckney Church

In the graveyard a small church pre-dating the existing church ruin (15th c) was located. According to a note in the Archaeological Inventory of Co Carlow for Bohermore/Dunleckney (539); *the church was granted to nunnery of Graney (Kildare) in 1207.*

Dunleckney Castle

In the stable yard at rear of the manor house was a small castle (ND 3). This building has many features which we find puzzling. For example it was unroofed and normally not lived in. The inner yard had two chambers set into the walls at opposite sides. Our view is that it was used mainly to stable horses and as a defensive position in case of attack. *Because of its location partly beneath a modern building many survey sampling points had to be obtained externally.*

Map of Dunleckney Manor & Grounds
With buildings of 1300 AD indicated by number



ND 1.

Dunleckney Motte. (@ 1300 AD)

Was in existence in 500 BC . In use to 300 BC for mainly ceremonial purposes. However from 300 BC to early AD was used as a defensive position. Height 26' (7.9m) with two defensive ditches.

Normans rebuilt in 12th c raising height and placing a 10' (3m) wooden palisade around top, with a gate on E side 8' (2.4m) wide.

Rectangular timber building within palisade with orientation SW-NE. Ground dimensions; 18' x 16' (5.5 X 4.8 m) with wall height of 8' (2.4m) . Thatched roof , door at SW end . Second building at gate on E side .

Tower for gate 6' x 6' (1.8m sq) with height 14' (4.2m).

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ND 2.

Located beneath back wall of manor garden, 16' S of doorway.

Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway. Existed 13th to end of 14th c.

Long axis aligned E-W. Thatched.

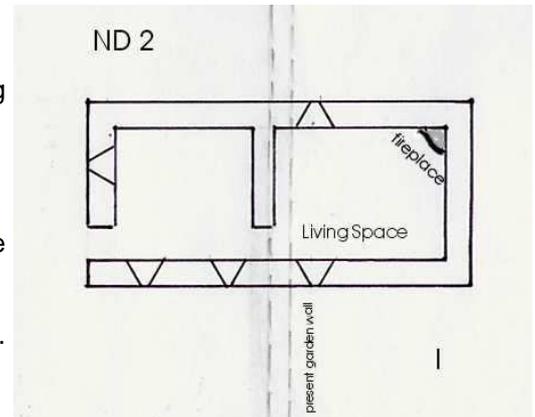
External dimensions; 30'-6" x 12'. (9.3 x 3.6m).

Windows 30" h x 12" wide .

Living space 14'-6" x 7'(4.4 x 2.1m). Eating & cooking here. Fireplace at E end. Smoke opening in wall @ 6'-0" (1.83m) above floor.

Inner room 8'-0" x 7' (2.44 x 2.1m). (entrance here ??).

Walls 2'-6" (0.76m) wide and 7' (2.1m) high with 13' (4m) to apex. Fabric forms a ceiling over living space.



ND 3. Castle

54' (16.4 m) long x 48' (14.6 m) wide.

Orientation is E-W. Main gate 10' (3.3m) wide facing south. At 8" (2.4m) from gate is a second wall which divides internal area into two courtyards. In the inner courtyard were four arched hollow chambers in the walls (marked 'ac' on drawing).

Wall height including battlements was 22' (6.7m).

Building was un-roofed. Turret tower midway along wall at W side is integral with wall and protrudes at centre of wall externally. Access to tower is by external stone steps Spiral (newell) staircase leading to encircling walkway below battlements (14' (4.2m) above floor). *Tower floors at 8' (2.4m), 14' (4.2m) and 22' (6.7m) above ground.*

Main gate opens up/down and probably of the portcullis type. Gate opening (Gothic) 10' (3.3m) wide and 12' (3.6m) high. All external walls battered at base.

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∪Markout (partial) of Castle in stableyard



ND 5;

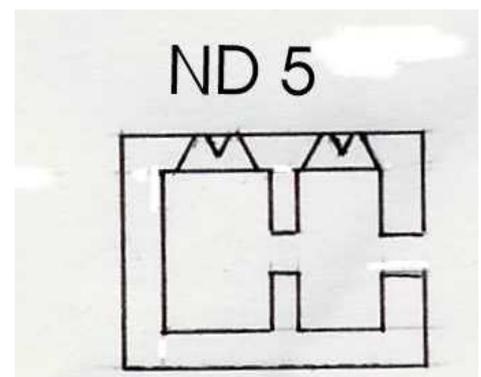
Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway. Long axis aligned NW-SE. Entrance at NW gable end. Walls are 11' (3.3m) high to eaves and 22' (6.7m) to ridge. Roof was thatched.

Room Internal dimensions; Inner Room; 12'-6" (3.8m) wide x 7'-6" (2.3m) long. Living Space; 12'-6" (3.8m) wide x 8'-6" (2.6m) long . Four windows all face SW. Windows are 12" (0.3m) wide splayed on inside.

Full length of house was lofted at 7'-6" (2.3m) above the floor. Ladder opening at SE corner of each room. Small windows high up both gables light the attic space

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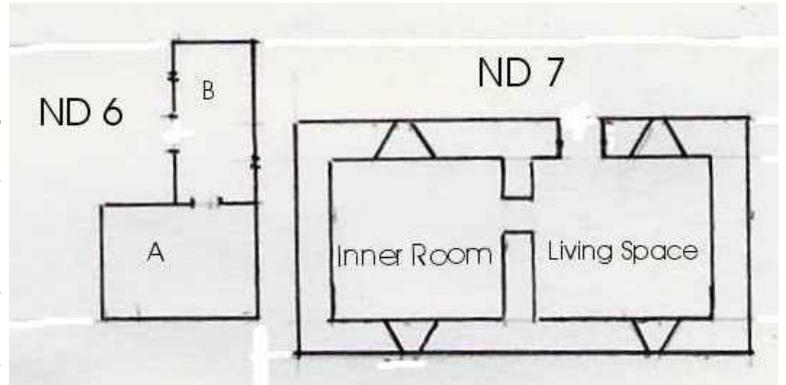
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ND 6; All timber building. Unknown Purpose
 Two separate buildings Shown as A & B, with
 interconnecting doorway.
 Long axis aligned NS. Entrance at section B
 facing W.

Section A; Living Space 11'-0" L (3.3 m) x 9'-0" W (2.7 m), walls 4" thick & 11'-0" (3.3m) high . Height to apex 14' (4.27m). The thatched roof was hipped. Floored at height of 6' (1.8m) above ground. One window on upper floor at W side.

No windows at ground level. Hole 3' x 2' opening in upper floor for ladder access for sleeping or storage. Walkway around three sides of building E, S & W sides. Steps to access walkway on E side. No entrance from walkway to inside.



Section B; Hallway 11'-0" (3.3m) L x 5'-0" (1.5m) W with a wall of thickness 4". Roof to apex 15'-0" (4.6m). Windows; 1 @ E side. 1 @ W side. Entrance door middle of W long side.

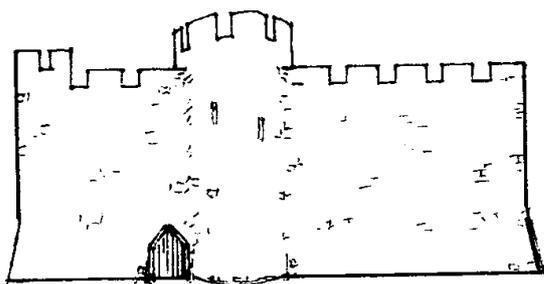
ND 7; Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway.
 Long axis aligned E-W. Living space on E side. Entrance at N side of E room. Walls are 12' (3.66m) high to eaves and 21' (6.4m) to ridge. Roof was reed thatched.

Dividing wall goes to apex requiring a ladder opening at both sides of wall for access to attic space.
 Floor over living space for storage, over inner room for extra sleeping accomodation.

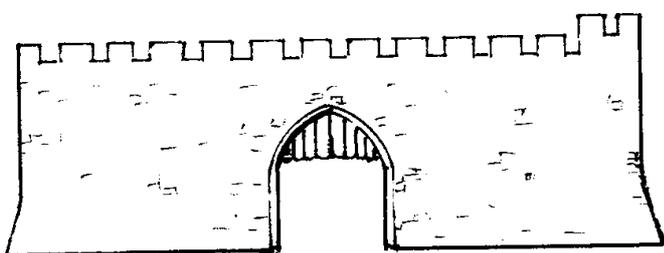
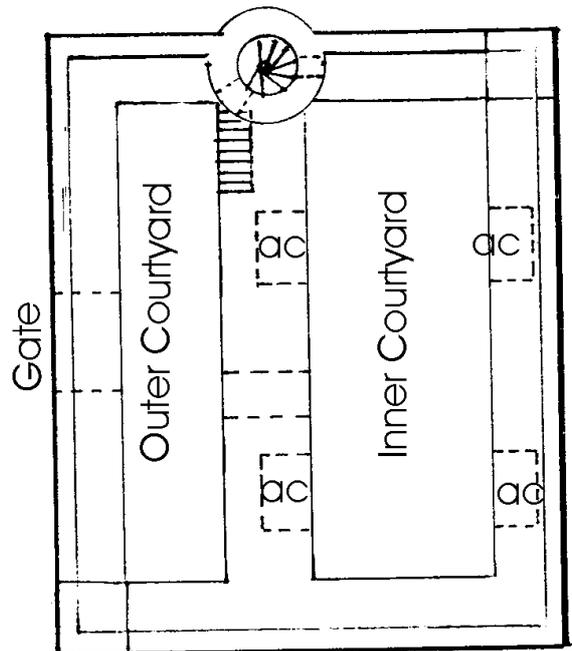
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ND 3 Dunleckney Castle 1300 AD

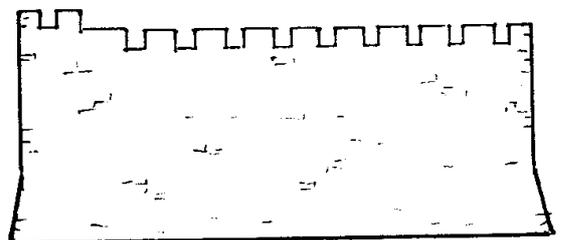
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West Elevation



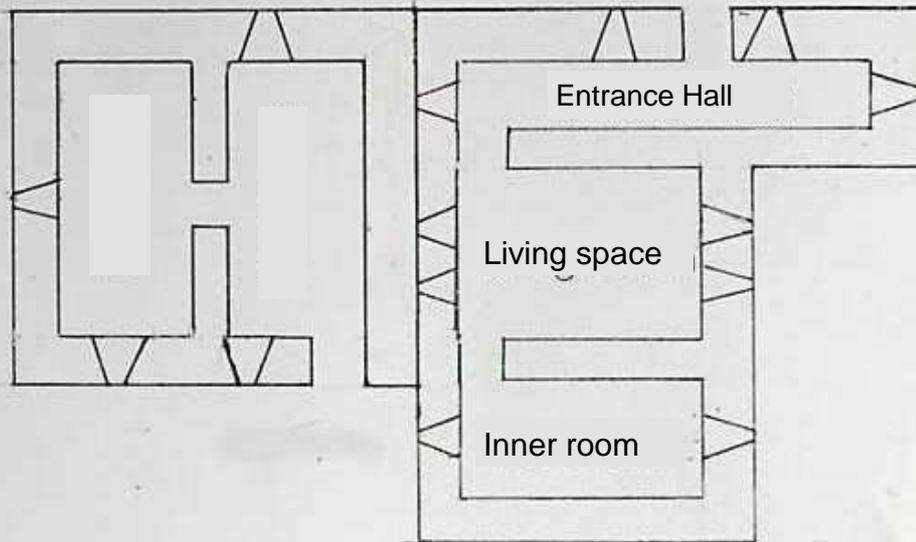
South Elevation



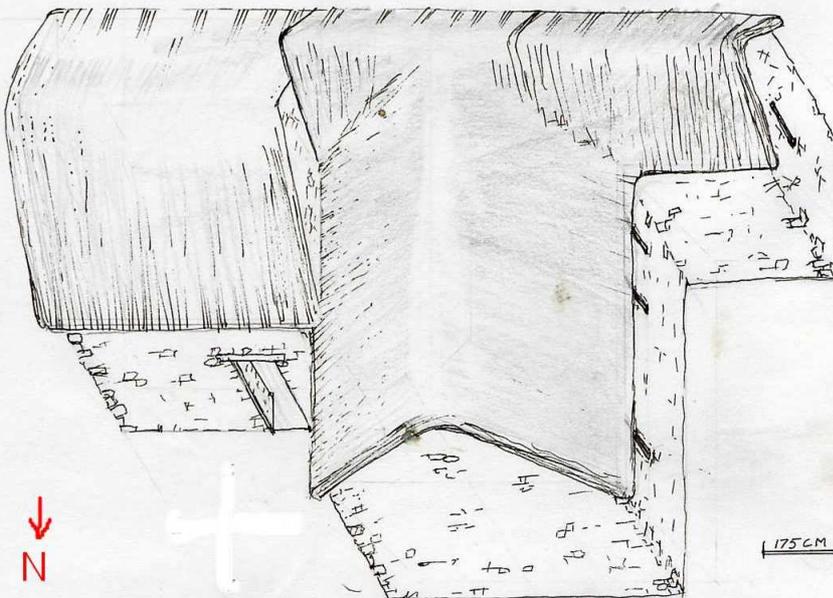
North Elevation

Floor plan of
Norman Dwelling Num 4

Location; Raised lawn to NW (immediately
left of present manor house)



Dwelling 1300 AD



View from rear of building

Stone wall construction.

Height to eaves; 9' (2.7 m)
Height to ridge 14' (4.2 m)
Wall thickness; 3' (.9 m) at
gables, otherwise
2'-6" (.76m)

Internal Dimensions;

Hallway; L - 23' (7 m)
W- 10' (3 m)

Living Space; L- 12' (3.6 m)
W- 10' (3 m)

Inner room; L- 12' (3.6 m)
W- 6' (1.8 m)

All windows splayed;
Outside ope—12" (.3 m) W
x 38" (.96 m) H

Building to left is later and
separate from the main house.
Entrance from rear of house.

Group of three buildings in Pleasure Gardens (Dated to 1300 AD)

ND 8; Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway. Long axis aligned N-S. Walls approx 3' (0.9 m) thick. Roof was thatched
External dimensions; 12'-6" (3.8 m) wide x 29'-0" (8.8 m) long. Living space on N side with fire-place in NE corner, chimney breast fabricated from timber and venting out through hole in wall 7' (2.1 m) above the stone floor. Room at S end is lofted overhead, resting on the dividing wall @ 8' (2.4 m) high.
Access to loft area is by ladder.
Windows at ground floor level are approx 13" (.33 m) wide x 34" (.86 m) high

See separate drawing

ND 9; Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway. Long axis aligned N-S. Living space on N side. Entrance at N gable end.
Walls are 7' (2.1 m) high to eaves and 19' (5.8 m) to ridge. Roof was thatched.
External dimensions; 14' (4.26 m) wide x 29'-0" (8.8 m) long. The two window on opposite sides of living room are 2' (.6 m) wide with double opening. Other windows are the normal 13" (.33 m) wide x 34" (.86 m) high. Small window high up in S gable lights the attic space

See separate drawing

ND 10; Dwelling constructed of field stones. Two rooms with interconnecting doorway in a dividing wall 8' (2.4 m) high.
Long axis aligned N-S. Living space on N side. Entrance at NW end. Walls were 8'-6" (2.6 m) high for 11' (3.3 m) from S gable, rising to 10' (3 m) at N end. Ridge height along complete building was 21' (6.4m).
Roof thatched.
External dimensions; 17' (5.2 m) wide x 33'-0" (10 m) long, the largest of the three houses. An unusual feature of this building is that it had a window immediately above the entrance door. All windows are 7' (2.1 m) above ground level. Small window high up in S gable lights the attic space.
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See separate drawing

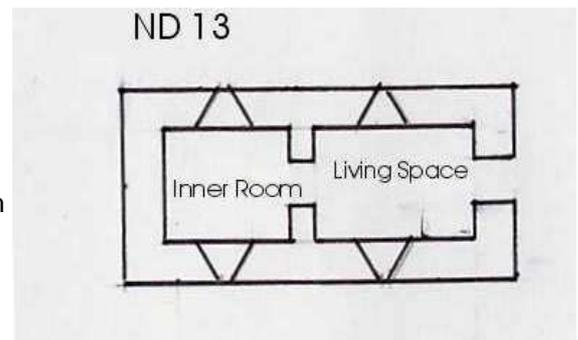
ND 12

Church 12th c. Stone. In use early 12th to early 14th c.
Internal dimensions; 12' x 24' (3.6 x 7.3 m)
E-W orientation. Running parallel with and 15' (4.6m) distant from existing ruin of 14th c church.

ND 13. In clearing in graveyard. Dwelling 13th c .
Orientation E-W.

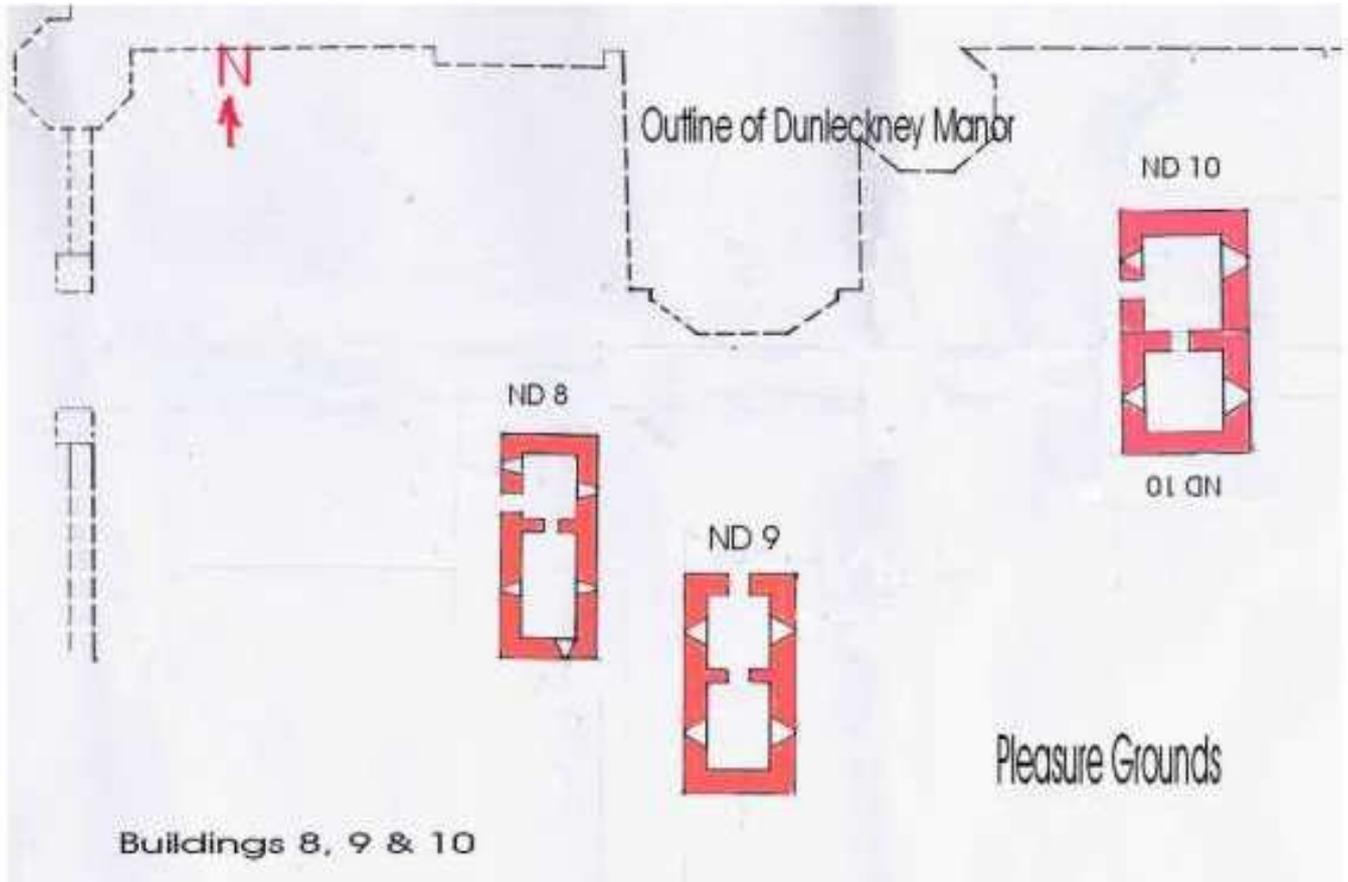
Two rooms. External walls approx 3' (0.9m) thick. No loft.
Walls 9' (2.7m) high to eaves, and to ridge 15' (4.6m).
Living space; 11' x 8' (3 x 2.4 m) dividing wall 2' with door.
2 windows 1 @ S, 1 @ N side. Door at E gable end.
Inner Room; 10' x 8' (3.3 x 2.4m). Fireplace at RH corner of room opposite door.

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ND 14

In field N of Dunleckney Motte.
Two room dwelling ,stone building. 27' x 17' (8.2 x 5.2m). Walls 3' (0.9m) wide x 9' (2.74m) high.
Ridge height ; 16'. (4.87m).
Orientation E-W. Entrance door at E end leads to Living Space. Connecting door to Inner Room.
Windows; 1 @ N and 1@ S of each room.



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