

# Conservation Grants Scheme

Stuart Blakley



The Irish Georgian Society (IGS) is proud to announce the eighth year of its Conservation Grants Scheme, which assists owners of historic structures to fund necessary works. IGS London has continued to support this important scheme and, despite the economic impact of the epidemic, a total of €30,000 was raised. This year's funding has been distributed among 11 successful applicants including six private houses, two churches, an Irish Landmark Trust property, a school and a folly. Works to windows were a popular entry this year! The geographical spread of recipients ranged from County Donegal to County Cork, and even a successful scheme in Northern Ireland.

One of this year's more unusual winning projects is at 8 Upper Pembroke Street, an early 19th century

two bay, four storey over basement townhouse. We contributed towards the reinstatement of a lantern in the elegant fanlight over the entrance door, including replacement of 18 sections of damaged glass. A little piece of historic Dublin will soon sparkle again. Although a private residence, the owner considers, *"The work will also enhance the public realm and improve the streetscape value."*

The owners of Dromdiah House in County Cork are undertaking an ambitious rebuilding of this ruin. It was a fine Greek Revival five bay, two storey over basement main block with flanking single storey wings dating from 1833. The first phase of works to remove all debris and vegetation is complete. Ongoing phases are to repair the structure, construct a new roof and floors, and install historically correct

windows. IGS's grant supports the installation of windows with slim profile glazing bars sympathetic to the original architecture.

Kildrought House in County Kildare, close to Castletown House, is a handsome piece of 18th century architecture attributed to Thomas Burgh, perhaps best known for designing Trinity College Dublin library. Its two principal elevations are very different in character: the street front appears as a three bay, two storey building, whereas the garden elevation is five bay, three storey. The construction materials are particularly attractive: harled rubble limestone with yellow brick dressings. Kildrought House is another worthy recipient of a grant for restoring windows.

Temple House in County Sligo is a 'Big House' at the heart of one of



Ireland's great estates. While it is a previous recipient of an IGS grant, we are delighted to continue our support of the ongoing restoration of its myriad windows. The house mainly dates from a massive 1860s rebuilding of an early 19th century core. A porte-cochère over the entrance combines beauty and practicality. In the same family ownership since 1665, the current generation bravely continues maintaining and restoring this vast building.

Kilburry House, County Tipperary, and Kilderry House, County Donegal, both received our financial support for conservation reports. The three bay, two storey over basement Kilburry House is flanked by substantial outbuildings linked to the main block by lower quadrant wings. It dates from

at least the early 18th century. The interior includes interesting features such as a staircase with Doric newels. Kilderry House is a large two storey late 18th century building with distinctive chamfered and bowed projections, and bow stepped label mouldings over the entrance front windows. The conservation reports will include historical research and recommendations for much needed works on a scale of priority for these two homes.

St Eugene's Catholic Church, Glenock, County Tyrone, is one of two churches to be awarded grants this year. In a happy case of incidental ecumenism, the other church is Protestant. St Eugene's has an architecturally complex history dating back to 1785. The steeple was added by the notable Derry architect, Edward Toye, in 1904. Unusually, the church has both round headed 'umbrella fanlight' windows and pointed arched windows with 'trellis pattern' glazing bars. Our financial backing is towards restoring and, where required, reproducing these historic window types. Often referred to as the "French church" because of its Huguenot origins, the current building of St Paul's Church of Ireland, Portarlinton, County Laois, is 19th century Gothic Revival. Our grant will go towards the restoration of stained glass of artistic and social heritage interest.

The Irish Landmark Trust was established in 1992 to conserve and convert historic properties into self-catering holiday accommodation. Termon House, County Donegal, was built for the land agent of the local landlord, the Marquess of Conyngham, circa 1770. The L shaped, two storey stone house stands at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean. The Trust notes, "Although vernacular in scale, the property has some of the detailing of more formal Georgian buildings..." We are pleased to support this fellow heritage charity. Our grant will go towards overhauling and repairing the traditional timber sash windows, which have been damaged by continuous exposure to severe weather.

IGS London, IGS Inc. (USA) and IGS

President, Sir David Davies, presented a combined grant to Headfort House, a school in County Meath. Headfort House is an excellent example of a country house sympathetically converted to educational use. It has operated as a preparatory school since 1949, retaining many original interior features by Robert Adam. The 11 bay, three storey over basement main block, built to the design of George Semple in the 1770s, is austere and impressive. Our grant will contribute to an ongoing programme of necessary window restoration.

Larchill Arcadian Garden in County Kildare raises the conservation conundrum of whether we should be contributing to historic structures with a use, or instead support decorative structures that are less likely to be financially sustainable? The Larchill folly firmly falls into the latter category. Dr John Olley, Historic Architecture and Landscape Consultant, confirms that, "Larchill Gardens have been both identified as a 'Ferme Ornée', and described as an 'Arcadian Landscape Garden.'" The circular gazebo is one of 10 follies built between 1740 and circa 1800. Our grant will contribute towards repointing the walls with lime mortar and reinstating the roof using limestone and slate slabs.

It is exciting to see how IGS can tangibly make a difference to 11 fascinating historic structures. We would like to thank all our London members for making this year's scheme possible and are pleased to announce we plan to continue offering grants in 2022.

Stuart Blakley is an IGS London Trustee and IGS Conservation Grants Scheme Committee Member.







