

## Dunsany Castle Demesne Architectural Conservation Area

### Historical Development

Dunsany Castle is located outside the village of Dunsany, Co. Meath. Dunsany is one of the oldest surviving country houses in Ireland and probably the oldest one in Ireland associated with a single family. The castle was built around 1181 by Hugh de Lacy and owned by the Plunkett family. Through successive generations, Dunsany was modified and remodelled. Some of the most significant changes took place in the 1840's under the architect, James Shiel. Because Dunsany has survived for over 800 years and because it has been reshaped down through the ages, it provides a microcosmic insight to the changing tastes and fashions of country house owners from the beginning of such houses right down to the present day.

### Built Form

The castle, gates and gate lodges form part of a group of demesne structures with stables, outbuildings, church, estate cottages, demesne walls and a bridge. A wayside cross is located outside the Gothic gate.

The open view from the front of the castle included a ha-ha to protect the front lawn from cattle.

The demesne includes a walled garden, and icehouse, and extensive parkland.

The estate contains three mottes, the one to the east is likely to have been the site of the original Normal Stronghold. A manorial church, in ruins, is situated by the motte.

### Objectives:

1. To preserve the character of the demesne, its designed landscape and built features by limiting the extent of new development permitted within the demesne and requiring that any such development respect the setting and special qualities of the demesne.
2. To require that all works, whether of maintenance and repair, additions or alterations to existing buildings or built features within the demesne shall protect the character of those buildings and features by the use of appropriate materials and workmanship.