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Draft County Planning Plan  
Forward Planning  
Wicklow County Council  
Station Road  
Wicklow Town  
A67 FW96

25<sup>th</sup> August 2021

RE: Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027

I wish to lodge a submission in relation to the Record of Protected Structures as set down in the Draft Wicklow County Development Plan, 2021 – 2027. These are related to errors in the proposed addition of ADD\_16 - The Octagon, Bellevue Demesne, Glen of the Downs, Delgany:

The current proposed description is listed as *“Octagonal shaped, picturesque viewing tower constructed of roughly quarried stone in late 18th century. One large room in interior with pointed arched window openings on west facing wall. Second floor added in 19th century, no roof.”*

**Background:**

The octagon building was constructed for David La Touche (1703-1785) in 1766 by Enoch Johnston and the underground addition of the gothic dining room was added in 1788 by Francis Sandys.

Described in many sources as a Tea-Room/Hunting Lodge with an underground banqueting room.

Photos from the Lawrence Photograph Collection (1865-1914) in the National Library show the Octagon Building in the distance.

(Holdings: Glen of the Downs, Co. Wicklow, 2021)



**Construction:**

The Octagon building is originally of red brick construction, to which rustic masonry has been added at some stage in the past to stabilise the ruins. There are remains of original plasterwork present, especially on the interior of the underground room.

The underground room is also of red brick construction with a layer of rustic rock added for effect.

**Further History regarding this building can be found in the following sources:**

<p>After indulging in this delightful prospect, the visiter leaves the tent, and proceeds along the top of the hill, in a direction exactly contrary to that by which he reached it, by a path winding through thick shrubberies of evergreens, for a distance of near a quarter of a mile ; on the left side of this walk a little cottage is concealed amongst the trees , where an old woman resides, whose chief employments are the care of the octagon room , and to attend upon visiter.</p>	<p>The octagon building was erected in 1766 by Enceh Johnson. The Gothic dining-room -- which is extremely curious, and feems like a rock , was added in the year 1788, by Francis Sandys , who was an excellent architect. The defign and execution of his various works will remain a lafting honour to his name and to his country . He was a native of Ireland, and died at Bellevue on the 15th of July 1785 .</p> <p>(Ferrar, 1796) pg 111</p>
<p>The Octagon House is a small building, raised upon a rock in an extremely exposed and elevated situation ; the interior is lined with drapery, and assumes the appearance of a bell tent ; from the windows, which are glazed with plate glass, there are varied and extensive views, that to the south , over the Downs, to the north , of the Sugar -loaf, Scalp, &amp; c. : there is here'a small but judicious collection of books, and some few shells and minerals. In the hall of the octagon building is a stuffed panther, so placed, that it scarcely ever fails of startling the stranger who enters unconscious of its presence.</p>	<p>Name: JOHNSTON, ENOCH          Building: CO. WICKLOW, BELLEVUE (DELGANY)          Date: 1766          Nature: Octagon. Gothic building of rustic masonry, with kitchen and lesser offices on ground floor and little drawing on upper floor. Contained 2 'well devised deceptions': window glazed with mirror to give appearance of an inner room; door which concealed occasional fireplace.</p> <p>Refs: 'A descriptive view of the Glen of the Downs, 1773' in NLI, R.D. Walshe cuttings and notes on Co. Wicklow, MS. 14,044; John Ferrar, A view of ancient and modern Dublin, with its improvements to the year 1796. To which is added A tour to Bellevue, in the county of Wicklow, the seat of Peter la Touche, Esq. (Dublin, 1796), 11; IB 20, 5 May 1878, 146</p>
<p>Below the octagon house is a very curious building of rustic masonry , or rock - work , called the Banqueting Room ; it is built in the Gothic style, and in imitation, probably, of a room excavated from a solid rock ; in 1822 it was much gone to ruin . The Octagon building, which was erected in 1766, is the design of Mr. Enoch Johnson ; the Gothic Banqueting Room was built in 1788, after the design of Francis Sandys, Esq . , an eminent architect, and a native of Ireland, who died at Belle View on the 15th of July, 1785.</p> <p>(Rev. G.N. Wright, 1822) pg 36/37</p>	<p>Name: SANDYS, FRANCIS [1]          Building: CO. WICKLOW, BELLEVUE (DELGANY)          Date: 1788          Nature: Addition of Gothic dining room to octagon.</p> <p>Refs: John Ferrar, A view of ancient and modern Dublin, with its improvements to the year 1796. To which is added A tour to Bellevue, in the county of Wicklow, the seat of Peter la Touche, Esq. (Dublin, 1796), 98.</p> <p>(CO. WICKLOW, BELLEVUE (DELGANY) Dictionary of Irish Architects -, 2021)</p>

**References**

CO. WICKLOW, BELLEVUE (DELGANY) Dictionary of Irish Architects -. (2021). Retrieved from Dia.ie: <https://www.dia.ie/works/view/8940/building/CO.+WICKLOW%2C+BELLEVUE+%28DELGANY%29>

Ferrar, J. (1796). *A View of Ancient and Modern Dublin with its improvements to the year 1796*. Dublin.

Holdings: *Glen of the Downs, Co. Wicklow*. (2021). Retrieved from Catalogue.nli.ie: <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000321630>

Rev. G.N. Wright, A. (1822). *A Guide to County of Wicklow*.

**Proposed amendment to description to Record of Protected Structures:**

Octagonal shaped Tea-Room/Hunting Lodge on picturesque viewing location comprising of kitchen and main room on ground floor and dining room on upper floor, with pointed arched windows on west side constructed from Red-Brick/Rustic Stone in 1766. Upper floor and Roof no longer present. Additional Underground gothic style banqueting room with pointed arched windows on west side added in 1788.

I Trust you will find this an appropriate amendment to correctly and fully describe this building.

With Thanks

Stephen Butler