

Architectural Conservation Area

KILLALOE

The town of Killaloe is one of the most ancient urban settlements in Ireland. It grew from the monastic centre associated with St. Flannan in the early 7th century and the nearby fortified palace of Brian Boru in the 10th century. Due to its antiquity, the town centre is a recorded archaeological zone and the tourist Board designated it as one of only two Heritage Towns in the county. As the centre of Royal O'Briens lands, Killaloe was much patronised by that family who were responsible for building the Early Christian Oratories, the Romanesque, later Gothic Cathedral, the great earthen fort at Beal Boru and the first bridge on this site in 1054AD.

Llyod describes Killaloe in 1780 as “an old village and a bishops see, it's a market town, well inhabited”. Its street pattern today is very similar to that shown on the Grand Jury Map of 1787 and it is likely that many of the existing houses and shops date from before that period. By 1837 Killaloe town had 1411 inhabitants in 300 houses. At the time the town had a thriving fishing industry and a local clothing trade but the biggest employers were the nearby slate quarries producing 100,000 tonnes of slate annually and a water driven slate factory for cutting local slate into fireplaces, flags and slabs for export. The new Shannon Steam Navigation Company ran a boat building yard at the Pier Head and the town had “a spirit of cheerful industry and enterprise.”

The town of Killaloe today has not greatly changed 180 years later. In spite of some modern interventions, the town still preserves its industrious character. Its modern prosperity is due to more tourism and leisure pursuits than industry. Many of its ancient and later public buildings still remain; boat repairs are still carried out by ESB at the Pier Head.

Killaloe comprises for the most part two storey buildings constructed of rendered walls of local sandstone rubble with Killaloe – Portroe slate roofs. These are invariably gabled with roof pitches of c.40 degrees. Large wide chimneys of stone or brick sit on the ridges of roofs and windows are mostly of wooden sliding sash type, Some examples of sash windows with small panes and light glazing bars are still to be found, particularly on the rear of buildings or in back lanes. Many fine 18th and 19th century formal, detached houses are found near the town.

It is important, in order to maintain the integrity and character of this historic town that repairs and renovations of existing buildings are carried out using sympathetic materials and that in fill new build designs reflects the existing pattern of development in both scale and materials.

What works might alter the character of ACAs and so require planning permission?

- a) Altering the design of roofs e.g., pitches, barges.
- b) Changing the type of slate on a roof.
- c) Installing fascia or soffit boards.
- d) Removing or altering chimneys.
- e) Changing design and materials of windows, doors and cills.
- f) Erecting signage.

- g) Changing the finish of external walls, e.g. stone cladding, plaster.
- h) Erecting or altering existing shopfronts.

Map of the Architectural Conservation Area in Killaloe

