

# THE GREEN FORT CONSERVATION PLAN



Draft 7.0 Document for Public Consultation  
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Prepared by Jason Bolton, Pat Dargan and Niamh Roche for Sligo County Council



This draft publication is available from:

Siobhán Ryan  
Heritage Officer  
Sligo County Council  
City Hall  
Quay Street  
Sligo

**Conservation Team**

Dr Jason Bolton (archaeology and conservation)  
Dr Pat Dargan (architecture and planning)  
Dr Niamh Roche (ecology and environmental management)

**Green Fort Technical Group**

Martina Butler, Voluntary Facilitator/Representative of Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society  
Emer Concannon, Senior Engineer, Roads/Parks Section, Sligo County Council  
Brian Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads/Parks Section, Sligo County Council  
Pauline Gleeson, Senior Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs  
Kevin Gunn, Architect, Estates Department, HSE North West  
Sean Martin, Acting Senior Architect, Sligo County Council  
Sam Moore, Lecturer, Archaeology Department, IT Sligo/Representative of Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society  
Paddy O'Donovan, Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.  
T.J. O'Meara, Architectural Conservation Advisor, Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit, Built Heritage, Architectural Policy and Strategic Infrastructure, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht  
John Joe Rooney, Chairman, Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society  
Siobhán Ryan, Heritage Officer, Sligo County Council

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## **Executive Summary**

This Conservation Plan for the Green Fort has been prepared for Sligo County Council to provide a framework to protect, manage, interpret and present the site. The conservation plan was undertaken to address ongoing public concern over the level of protection of the Green Fort, a general low level of public awareness of the heritage site and a desire to manage, interpret and present the monument for the benefit of all.

The Plan has been developed by the Green Fort Technical Group with representatives from Sligo County Council, the National Monuments Service and Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit with the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, HSE North West, IT Sligo and representatives of Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society. The Technical Group was supported in its work to develop the conservation plan by Jason Bolton Conservation.

The purpose of any conservation plan is to, understand the site, understand the significance of the site, understand the vulnerability of that significance in order to write policies with appropriate actions to protect that significance.

The Green Fort is a bastioned earthwork and the last visible reminder of Sligo's seventeenth-century town fortifications. The History of the Fort indicates it was in use during periods of conflict during the seventeenth-century and may have been built as early as 1600 during the Nine Years War 1594-1603, certainly in existence during the Confederate Wars c.1649-58, and re-fortified c.1689-91 during the Williamite Wars, at which time it formed part of the earthen town defences of Sligo. The Green Fort was abandoned soon after the end of the Williamite Wars and was ruined by 1739, at which time it still retained iron and brass guns. Its military function was superseded by the Barracks of Sligo town, and the fort has been abandoned for over 300 years.

An assessment of the significance (Part 3 of the Plan) of the Green Fort provided that:

- The fort is an archaeological monument of National Importance, protected under the National Monuments Acts and a dedicated Preservation Order which protects the site from inappropriate development and interference.
- The fort is in shared public ownership with public access throughout O'Boyle Park.
- The lands immediately surrounding the Green Fort form a significant green area within Sligo which are of value for biodiversity. The Green Fort is locally important as a relatively natural biodiverse area within an urban setting. Some protected (badger, song birds) and vulnerable species (e.g. meadow pipit, snipe) occur on the site.
- The monument is located in a strategic position with panoramic views over Sligo town and the surrounding countryside providing excellent opportunities for interpretation of the surrounding geography/geology/landscape.
- The site is a unique vantage point from which the story of Sligo can be told. The site has been used as a recreational viewing point since at least the nineteenth century with historic photographs and illustrations showing views from Fort hill over Sligo town and the surrounding landscape.
- The site is a rich educational resource utilised by IT Sligo for lifelong learning and research.
- The local community have a strong and deep engagement with the Green Fort and its association with the military history of Sligo.

Part 4 of the Green Fort Conservation Plan defines the issues that affect the Green Fort and makes an assessment of how the monument is vulnerable. Part 5 proposes a series of policies and actions to address the issues and vulnerabilities identified as they relate to the Green Fort and its setting.

The vision for the Green Fort is to preserve and protect the fort as a cultural heritage site within a public park,

and to explore its potential as a tourist attraction. Sligo County Council, in partnership with the relevant agencies and the local community, will endeavour to raise awareness of the Green Fort, protect and preserve the upstanding remains, and facilitate public access to the site.

The implementation of the Green Fort Conservation Plan will be dependent on the implementation of the policies and actions proposed, along with the provision of adequate resources, both human and financial, to realise the vision proposed in this Plan for the Green Fort.

## Part 1: Introduction

### 1.1 The Conservation Plan

This Conservation Plan for the Green Fort has been prepared for Sligo County Council to provide a framework to protect, manage, interpret and present the site.

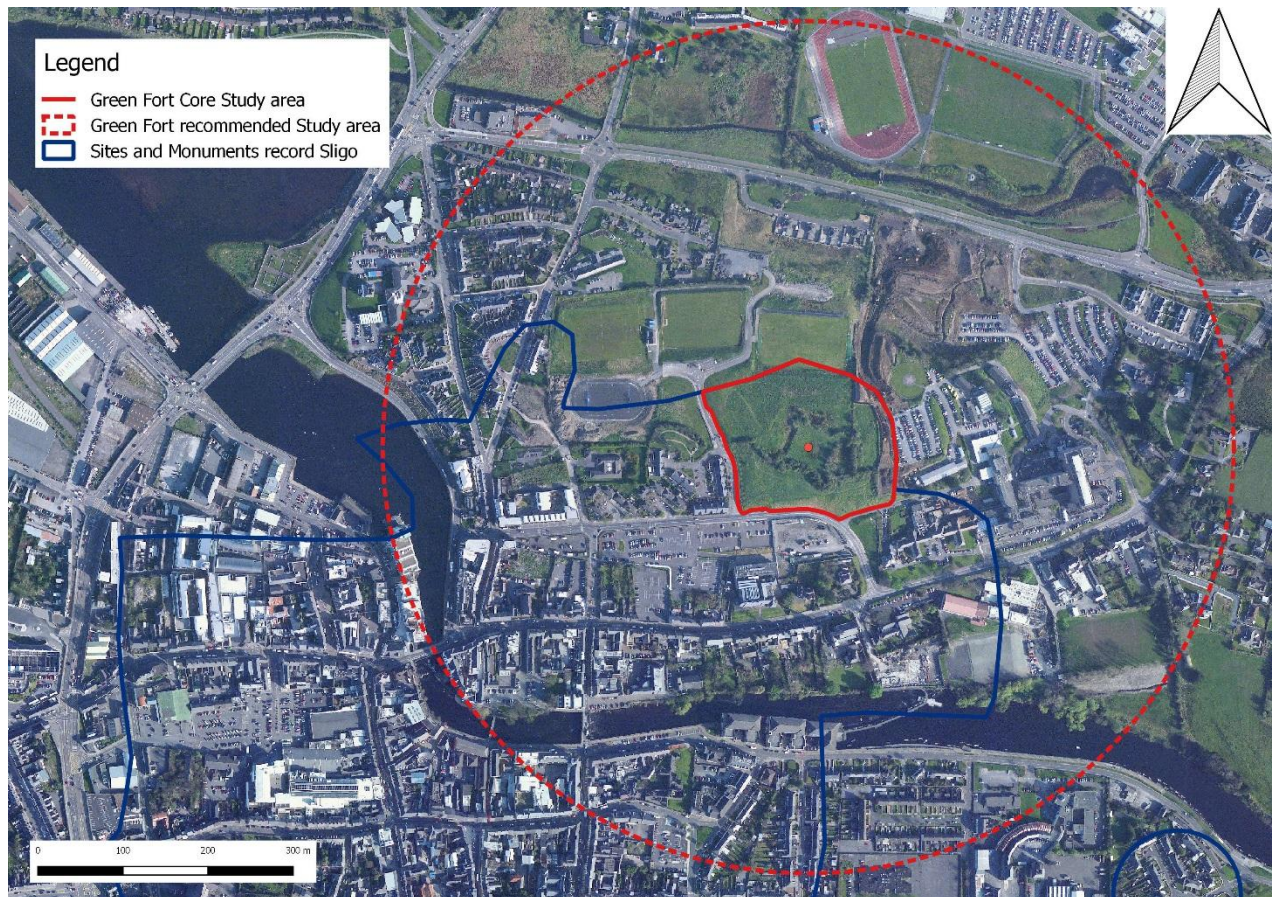


Fig.1: Aerial of The Green Fort, Sligo indicating the study area for the conservation plan. Image courtesy of Sligo County Council.

### 1.2 Aims and Objectives

In accordance with the principles of the Australian ICOMOS charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) as revised (2013) and other guidance documents, this conservation plan intends to:

- Assess the significance of the Green Fort and its significance as part of the surrounding environment while having regard to the limitations set by the current levels of available knowledge about the site.
- Explore and identify issues that threaten the Green Fort and its significance.
- Provide a framework to inform the future conservation and sustainable management of the Green Fort.
- Present options for the future use of the Green Fort, including partnership options for its future.
- Provide the context through which the many different cultural values of the Green Fort and appropriate management can be discussed; whether it be in terms of archaeology, architecture, military history (former battlefield), biodiversity, landscape, community, infrastructure, education, access, tourism etc.
- Assist in the future development of appropriate interpretation at the site.



- Provide guidance for a programme of regular maintenance.
- Provide a framework within which actioned progress for the long-term protection, conservation, management, interpretation and accessibility of the Green Fort can be planned for and measured.
- Set appropriate policy aims and objectives to guide the management of the heritage of the place.
- Agree a series of management actions to interpret, maintain, and care for the site by implementing the objectives of the Conservation Plan and its agreed policies.
- Monitor and review the plan.

### 1.3 Structure of the Conservation Plan

The Green Fort is an earthen bastioned seventeenth-century fort located on Fort Hill with 360° views of Sligo town and the surrounding landscape, and is located in the townland of Rathquarter, Sligo.

### 1.4 Ownership and Legal Designations

The east side of the monument forms a legal boundary between lands held by Sligo County Council and managed by the Parks Department of Sligo County Council, and by the Health Service Executive (HSE) as part of the HSE's lands at Sligo Regional Hospital. The monument is therefore atypical in that ownership lies with two separate authorities.

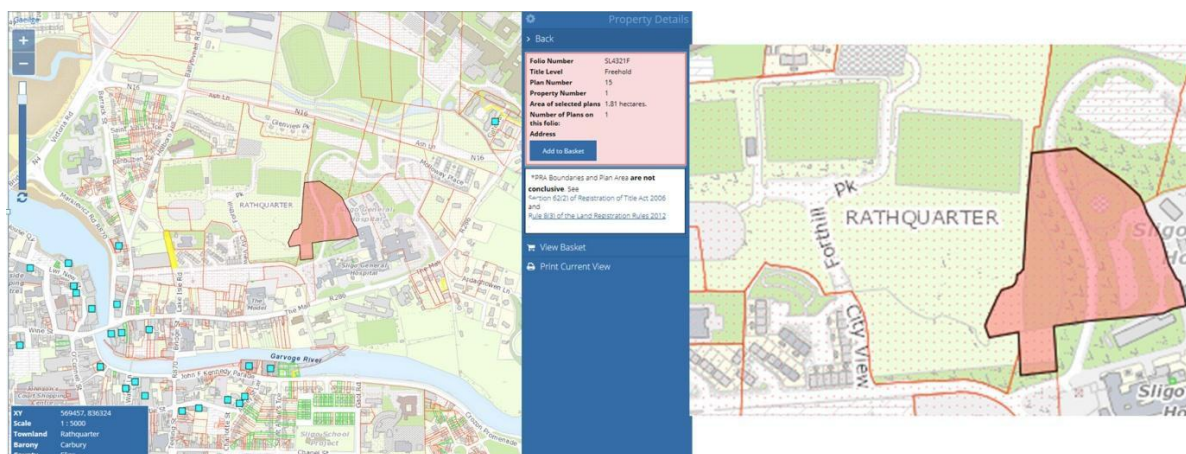


Fig.2: The east side of the Green Fort is in the ownership of the Health Service Executive, Folio SL4321F. Source: Property Registration Authority, landdirect.ie

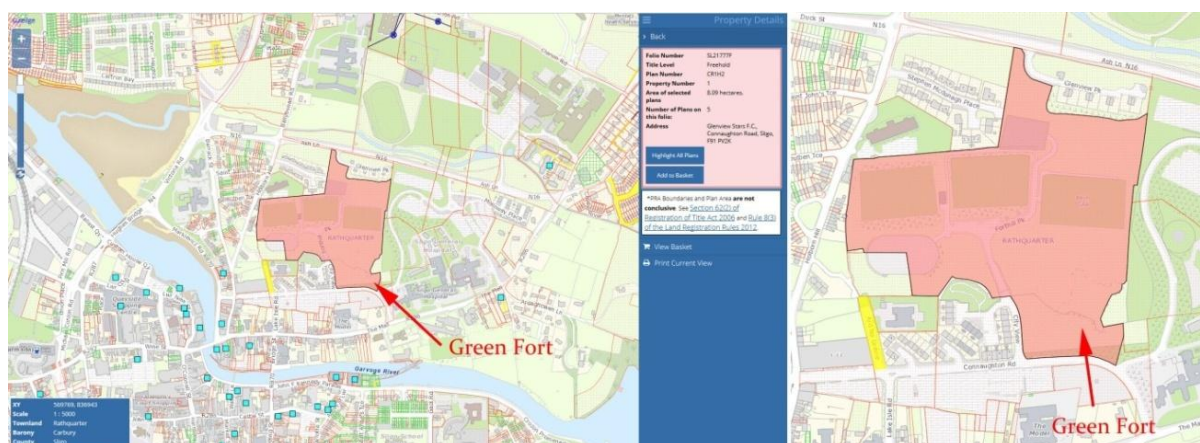


Fig.3: Most of the Green Fort lies in O'Boyle Park and is in the ownership of Sligo County Council. Folio SL21777F. Source: Property Registration Authority, landdirect.ie

The Green Fort is located on the top of Fort Hill on the north side of Sligo Town, in the townland of Rathquarter, in the electoral division of Sligo North Urban, Barony of Carbury in County Sligo. The Green Fort is an archaeological monument (SMR No. SL014-065 on the Record of Monuments and Places), and is included in the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP) that defines the extent of the historic town of Sligo.

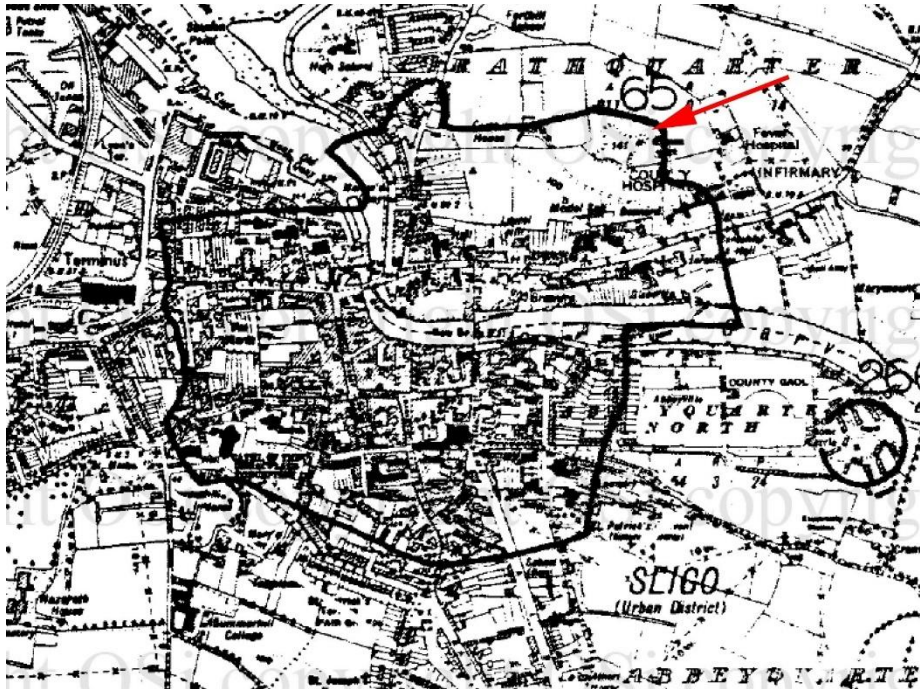


Fig.4: The Green Fort (SMR SL014-065014) is afforded legal protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014. It is located within the Historic Town of Sligo, Recorded Monument SL014-065---, which is included in the Record of Monuments and Places ("the Record") for County Sligo as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994. It is so included as Recorded Monument SL014-065- and described therein as "Town".

The monument is also subject to a Preservation Order under the National Monuments Acts (No. of P.O. 2/83 dated 02/03/1983) which was applied to the site during the development of Connaughton Road (Fig.5), and which remains in place.

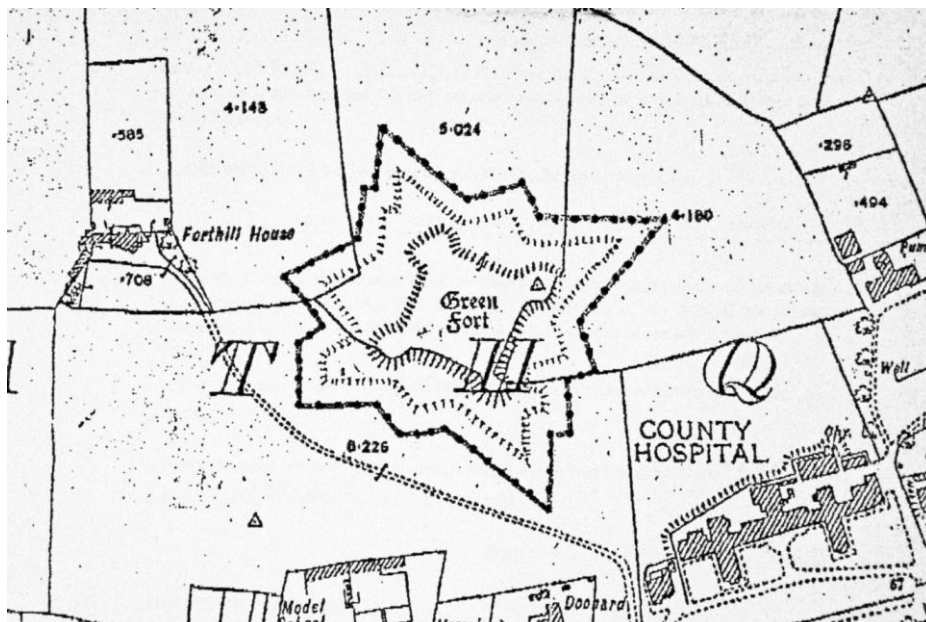


Fig.5: The limits of the Green Fort as noted on the 1977 Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) map that accompanied the 1983 Preservation Order. Source: National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.

The Forthill area was identified as an area of culture-led regeneration potential in the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016:

"The Green Fort area has the potential to provide a "touchstone" or orientating point that will engage people with the city and landscape, highlighting topographical, archaeological and artistic features throughout the city and wider environs. This can be appreciated on numerous different levels and reflected in the design and programming of the civic space in particular.

The civic space can therefore play a pivotal role for a wide range of people of different ages and interests. The space is much more than a destination – it is an entrance point to many diverse facilities and a crossing point on key routes through the city.

O'Boyle Park has the potential to become a major public space for all people living in or visiting the city, be they residents, commuters, shoppers, tourists, users of the Regional Hospital or students. The civic space can be an integral part of the success of the Park", Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, P.48

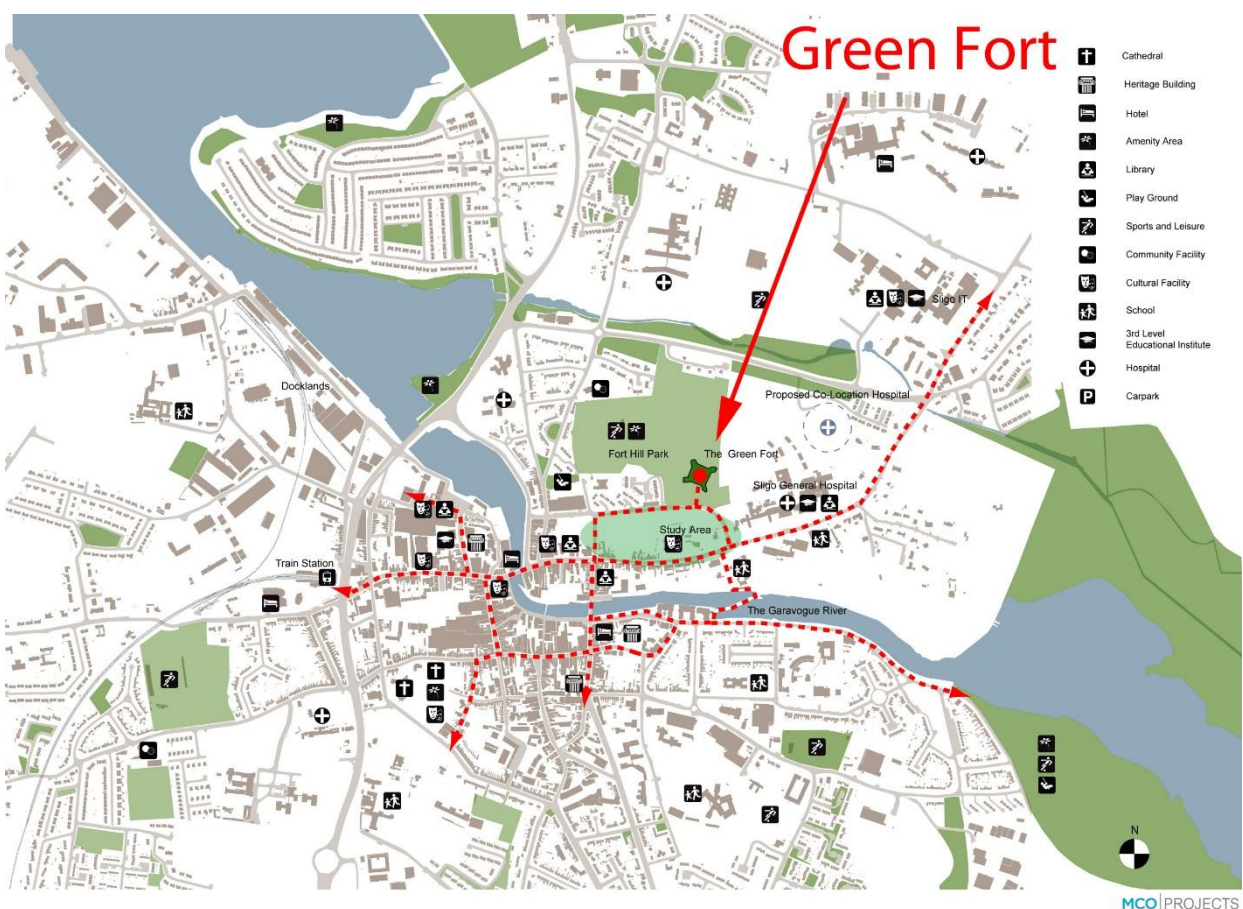


Fig.6: The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 noted that the Green Fort's central, prominent location and 360° panoramic views make it suitable to be an orientation point for visitors and a high-amenity area for residents. Source: Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016, map of links and facilities courtesy of MCO projects.

The Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 provides for the current and anticipated needs of Sligo while reinforcing the historic urban shape and acknowledging more recent development. A key component of the Sligo and Environs Development Plan 2010-2016 is the promotion of cultural continuity through respect for historical assets (architecture and archaeology) and the promotion of cultural activities. Within the context of the strategic zoning policies for Sligo, one of the cultural development policies of the plan is:

**SP-Z-5** Protect designated nature conservation sites, landscape, archaeology, valuable natural amenity areas, water and natural resources, while allowing for the possible further expansion of the city in the long-term.

**SP-Z-6** Safeguard and improve existing amenities.

**P-CD-2** Ensure a high-quality public domain in the vicinity of cultural and heritage buildings and, where possible, ensure that such buildings are linked to public spaces and to the wider open space network. A priority of this plan will be to support the development of high-quality, imaginative solutions to public space linkages for O’Boyle Park, the Green Fort and the area of the Civic Space.

The Development Plan also intends to reinforce Sligo Town’s role as a regional shopping centre, including encouraging development of retail outlets at The Mall/Connaughton Road area (Green Fort) as part of the city centre retain planning policies, and considering the possibility of creating a heritage trail in the city and environs which would include the Green Fort.

**P-RP-6** Encourage specialist retail shops on Castle Street/Old Market Street and at The Mall, in conjunction with the Green Fort project.

**O-RP-7** Encourage the provision of retail uses ancillary to the proposed County Museum and Model:Niland Gallery within the Greenfort area.

**O-TOU-2** Explore the possible provision of a heritage trail in the City and Environs that might include such features as St. John’s Cathedral, the Courthouse, City Hall, Old Market Street, the Abbey, Forthill, the Model:Niland, the County Museum, the Famine Graveyard and the archaeological features of Carrowroe and its vicinity.

Sligo County Council have also developed a Fort Hill Masterplan (2008) to explore options for O’Boyle Park which was subject to Part VIII planning [see SBC Planning Files Ref. 081 (2008)]. To date, the masterplan has focused on the provision of playing fields and public access to the park.

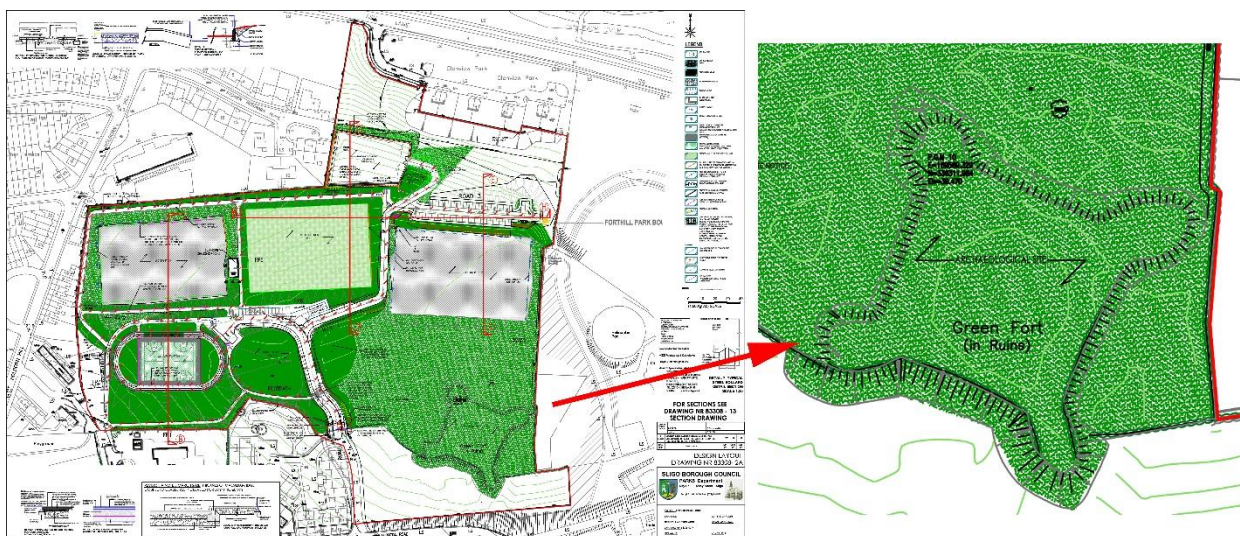


Fig.7: The Green Fort set within the context of the draft Fort Hill Master Plan. Source: Sligo County Council.

Various legal instruments such as The Wildlife Act (1976) and the amended Wildlife Act (2000) as well as the Flora Protection Order (2015), provide protection for species of National conservation importance. Proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHA) are conservation designated areas that protect species and habitats of regional and national importance.

The EU Habitats Directive (1992) and the EU Birds Directive (1979) oblige member states to protect species and habitats that are of importance on a Europe-wide scale. The Habitats Directive was transposed into national legislation with the European Union (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94/1997, which have been amended twice with SI 233/1998 and SI 378/2005. The 1997 Regulations and their amendments were subsequently revised and consolidated in the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011.

Annex I and II of the Habitats Directive and Annex I of the Birds Directive list species and habitats that are of greatest conservation importance on an EU-wide scale and for which conservation areas must be designated. These designations are: Special Protection Areas (SPA) for Birds listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive; and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive and species listed in Annex II. Some of these habitats or species are prioritised for conservation measures (\*Priority Species or Habitats). A number of other Annexes in both Directives list species that require strict protection but not necessarily conservation designated areas.

The newest wildlife-related legislation pertains to preventing the introduction and spread of invasive exotic species, EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species 1143/2014.

Ireland is also signatory to a number of conservation-related agreements and conventions such as the Bern and Bonn Conventions

## **1.5 The Conservation Plan Process**

*The Conservation Plan is a process that seeks to guide the future development of a place through an understanding of its significance*

James Semple Kerr<sup>1</sup>

A Conservation Plan is a document<sup>2</sup> that states why a place is significant, and develops policies to ensure that significance is retained in the long-term. It is driven by the need to understand why a place is important, and it provides a framework for managing the place so that its cultural significance is not lost in the future. The Conservation Plan process was developed after the 1981 *Burra Charter* of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) which introduced the concept of cultural significance as the basis for conservation policy making and management. Since 1988, Conservation Plans have been advocated for and encouraged in Ireland by The Heritage Council as a useful tool to understand and protect historic sites, to secure funding for conservation works and particularly to achieve consensus for historic places where there are several elements of historic significance and conflicting priorities.

The Conservation Plan differs from other types of reports used for historic places such as management plans (which can have a wider scope and include financial planning and immediate works) and archaeological or architectural heritage reports (which are often prepared in response to a particular development proposal). A Conservation Plan instead focuses on understanding a place, and then translating that understanding into specific policies and actions to care for what is important about a site.

*Conservation, at its most basic, involves handing on to future generations what we value. Conservation advisors are not there to stand in the way of change, but to negotiate the transition from the past to the present in ways that minimize the damage that change can cause, and maximize the benefits.*

Kate Clarke<sup>3</sup>

The Conservation Plan process is a useful tool to re-assess the significance of the place, and provides a focus on the policies for the future of the Green Fort. The plan sets out a framework to:

- Understand the site
- Understand the significance of the site
- Understand the vulnerability of that significance
- Write policies with appropriate actions to protect that significance

## **1.6 Consultations**

TO BE COMPLETED POST PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS

## **1.7 Project Team**

The Conservation Plan was prepared by Dr. Jason Bolton (archaeology and conservation), Dr. Pat Dargan (architecture and planning) and Dr. Niamh Roche (ecology and environmental Management), overseen and advised by the Green Fort Technical Group.

## **1.8 Green Fort Technical Group**

The Conservation Plan was overseen and advised by the Green Fort Technical Group which comprised representatives from the staff of Sligo County Council, the National Monuments Service within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, the Health Services Executive (HSE), IT Sligo, and Forthill Men's Art and History Group. The Green Fort Technical Group consists of the following members:

Martina Butler, Voluntary Facilitator/Representative of Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society,

Emer Concannon, Senior Engineer, Roads/Parks Section, Sligo County Council,

Brian Flynn, Senior Executive Engineer, Roads/Parks Section, Sligo County Council,

Pauline Gleeson, Senior Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht,

Kevin Gunn, Architect, Estates Department, HSE NorthWest

Sean Martin, Acting Senior Architect, Sligo County Council,

Sam Moore, Lecturer, Archaeology Department, IT Sligo/Representative of Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society,

Paddy O'Donovan, Archaeologist, National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht,

T.J. O'Meara, Architectural Conservation Advisor, Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit, Built Heritage, Architectural Policy and Strategic Infrastructure, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht,

John Joe Rooney, Chairman, Forthill Men's Group Art and History Society,

Siobhan Ryan, Heritage Officer, Sligo County Council.

## Part 2: Understanding the Monument

### 2.1 Geology

The Green Fort lies at the boundary between two limestone bedrock formations - a dark fine limestone and calcareous shale from the Glencar Limestone Formation which extends to the north-west, and the fine-grained cherty limestone of the Dartry Limestone Formation that extends to the south-east. Forthill is overlain with quaternary till derived from limestone with no significant rock outcrops or features of special geological interest. The hill appears to have a relatively high water table, with the defensive ditch becoming water-logged, and a well recorded within the Green Fort in 1689.

### 2.2 Landscape/urban/recreational setting



*Fig.8: The Green Fort lies in semi-natural grassland at the top of Fort Hill, overlooking Sligo Town and the Garvogue River, with Sligo University Hospital to the east, and with playing fields to the north and north-west. Source: Google Maps.*

The monument lies on semi-natural grassland with sports grounds and Sligo Northside Community Partnership Centre to the north, a hospital to the east, sub-urban housing to the west, and overlooks Sligo town and The Model to the south. The site has 360° views of Sligo town and the surrounding landscape. The adjacent sports grounds form an important local amenity and are managed by the Park's Department, Sligo County Council. There is a single formal vehicular and pedestrian access from Connaughton Road through the housing estate of City View. A number of informal pedestrian access routes are also present.



Fig.9: Modern aerial photograph showing the position of the Green Fort in relation to Sligo town prior to development of O'Boyle Park. Photo Peter Barrow Photography.

### 2.3 Archaeological Significance of the Green Fort

The Green Fort is an earthwork artillery fortification measuring approximately 86m N-S by 90m E-W externally, and 45m by 49m E-W internally, standing c.3.9m high at its maximum, enclosing an area of approximately 7.7 acres/3100m<sup>2</sup>. The fort comprises a raised rectangular platform, with spear-shaped gun bastions at each of the four corners, encircled by angled earthen slopes and ditches. The fort retains no standing structures, internal features (entrances, covered way, gun emplacements, well etc.) and no surface indication of outer defensive works. The monument now forms part of a field system and has no regular access path; but informal access is gained from Connaughton Road and from the public car park within O'Boyle Park. The site lies on raised ground

c.30m north of Connaughton Road/R286 adjacent to the entrance of Sligo University Hospital.

The south and eastern sides of the fort including the south-east and south-west bastions feature mature hedgerows. The interior of the fort, the west and north banks, and the north-east and north-west bastions show grass cover, with wet boggy ground conditions found within the northern ditch and along the east side of the fort. A later field boundary intersects the south-west bastion at the south-west corner of the site.

The Green Fort formed part of the towns defences in the seventeenth century, and is the last visible remains of this period which we can still see today. The fort is one of c.65 bastioned forts found in Ireland, and one of seven such forts known in County Sligo. The Green Fort, together with the fort at Coney Island and the now-lost fort beneath Sligo Town Hall acted to protect Sligo town. Other seventeenth-century forts in Sligo were built at Doonfore, Emlaghfad and Bellahy.



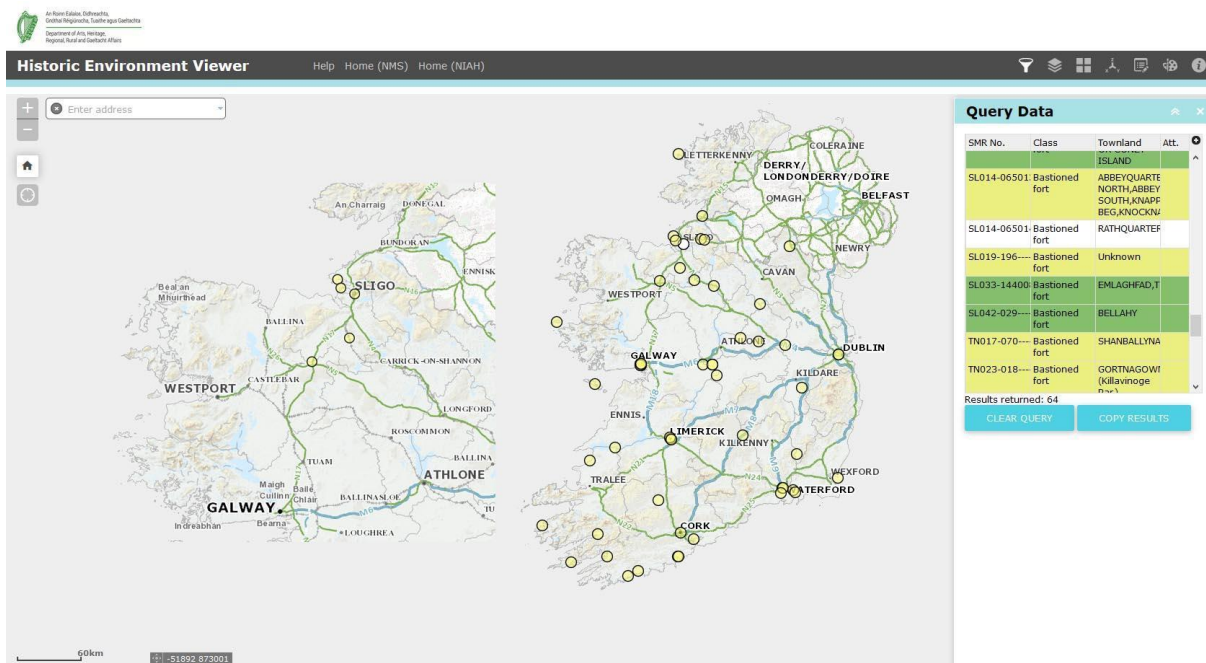


Fig.10: The distribution of bastioned forts (including the Green Fort) in Ireland and in County Sligo, as shown on the Historic Environment Viewer provided by the Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.

The Green Fort was depicted on a map in 1698 (Fig.12) which labelled the key parts. These included a well 'continually full of water', the main entrance at the south end of the west side of the fort, and a 'sally port' (a type of fortified doorway) in the east side which would allow troops from the fort to reinforce the outer defences. Today, the outer defences have been lost and only the Green Fort stands above ground as a visible testament to the seventeenth-century fortifications of Sligo town.



- C. The Green Fort, ‘The Earth Fort’
- D. Main entrance to the Fort
- E. Sally port to reinforce outer defences
- F. “ A Well, which is continually full of water”

Fig.11: Henry Luttrell's 1689 plan of the town and forts of Sligo, as re-drawn by Wood-Martin, 1882-92, ii, p.134 depicts the fort with outer entrenchments with their own earthen bastions, and a fortified 'sally port' to allow troops in the Green Fort to reinforce troops in the outer defences.

Apart from the seventeenth-century defences, there are no known archaeological monuments at Forthill. However, historical references suggest that the Green Fort may have been built on or adjacent to an earlier earthen enclosure referred to as 'Rath da Bhrítog', and there is therefore the potential for earlier archaeological remains to be found below ground level.

## 2.4 A Brief History of Sligo and the Green Fort

The Green Fort is the largest and strongest of three spear-shaped bastion forts erected in the seventeenth century to protect Sligo town. These forts were the still-extant Green Fort and Coney Island Fort, and the now-lost Stone Fort which lay beneath Sligo Town Hall<sup>4</sup>. The Green Fort appears to have had two or possibly three stages of development or active use, and then passed into a long three hundred year period of abandonment.



Fig.12: Aerial photograph showing the location of the three forts defending Sligo in the seventeenth century - the Green Fort, the Stone Fort and Coney Island Fort.

#### 2.4.1 A brief history of Sligo Town

The town of Sligo occupies a strategic position on a fording point across the Garvoge River, and acted as the main passage between Ulster and northern Connacht. By the end of the twelfth century, a bridge had been built across the Garvoge and a settlement had developed. The Anglo-Normans arrived in 1236, burning the bridge and taking control of the settlement with the lands granted to Maurice FitzGerald who made Sligo the centre of his manor of Carbury. Sligo Castle was built in 1245 by Maurice FitzGerald to secure his lands, as by the 1260s the Fitzgeralds controlled about half of the present county of Sligo<sup>5</sup>. FitzGerald founded the Dominican Friary of Sligo c.1252-3, and in 1289 Sligo was described as a borough with 180 burgages recorded. The history of Sligo during the medieval period is dominated by attacks on the town and castle. The town changed hands between rival Gaelic lords (the O'Donnell and the O'Connor families) many times from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and the town was attacked at least twenty times between 1315 and 1602.

The town of Sligo began to develop as a trading centre in the fifteenth century, coinciding with the strengthening of the O'Connor lordship and began to appear on the portolan (navigational) maps of European traders. Trade with England, France and Spain begins, with ships visiting for fish and trading in agricultural produce such as hides, meat and wool in exchange for wine, salt and a small amount of other goods. The pattern of trading is believed to have been three-cornered, with ships leaving English ports, stopping at France, Spain or Portugal to exchange English goods for wine, honey and salt, and then sailing to Galway, Sligo and other ports from Dingle to Lough Foyle on the west coast to exchange wine, salt and honey for hides and agricultural produce. The rise in prosperity in the Sligo area led to the construction of new tower houses, the establishment of a Franciscan friary in the town, and additions and improvements to Sligo Abbey.

English administration arrived in Sligo in the second half of the sixteenth century. However, the ongoing unrest meant that Sligo did not prosper. Sligo town was described in 1576 as:

"upon a good haven and hath been a greate towne full of marchauntes howses, all of which are now disinhabited and in ruyn, therein is a large monasterie of White Friers, and a busshops house".

Sligo town grew after the Nine Years War in Ireland (1594-1603) as it was transformed into a garrison and a county town. A small garrison was present from 1603, and in 1612 the town was incorporated and a provost and twelve burghers appointed. In 1622, Sligo was created a statute staple port which was a designated port where specific goods could be imported and exported, and could also have a dedicated 'Court of Staple' where

disputes relating to commercial matters could be resolved. New settlers were attracted to Sligo, with sixty British protestant families settling in the town by 1641. Some of these were ex-Elizabethan soldiers and administrators, while others were merchants and skilled tradesmen including butchers, clothiers, a shoemaker and a cutler, most of whom were part-time farmers as well as tradesmen. Sligo remained unwalled, and many of the residents rented 'parks' in the surrounding land for crops and livestock. Maritime trade continued, though perhaps as few as a dozen trading ships arrived in Sligo each year, exchanging wine and salt for hides, wool, beef and pork.

The increase in prosperity and population of Sligo town in the seventeenth century was also accompanied by new buildings. Historical records refer to houses in the town belonging to the Crean and French families as well as new settlers. The main residential area was along Castle Street, with the market, new jail and sessions house at Old Market Street, and fifteenth century urban tower houses also stood in the town. While it is unclear how many houses were in Sligo in 1641, the presence of sixty British protestant families suggests that Sligo was larger and more populous than many towns in the Ulster plantation. The Green Fort is likely to have been used during the Irish Confederate Wars 1641-53. These wars were part of a series of civil wars in Ireland, England and Scotland which were then under the rule of Charles I. The Irish Confederate Wars<sup>6</sup> were fought to determine who would govern Ireland, who would own most of the land, and which religion would predominate. Sligo remained an important passageway between Ulster and northern Connacht during this period as Parliamentary and Royalist forces vied for control. Sligo town was attacked in 1641 by Royalist forces, and attacked again and captured by Parliamentary forces in 1645 under Sir Charles Coote. Documentary accounts of money (twenty guineas) for the fortification of Sligo town in 1646 likely included the GreenFort<sup>7</sup>.

Date	Chronology of Sligo and the Irish Confederate Wars, 1641-53.
1641	Outbreak of the Irish Rising on 22nd October
	<b>In December, Catholic landowners in Sligo, Roscommon, Tipperary and Kilkenny join the rebellion</b>
1642	12th February Defeat of Confederate party at Deansgrange by Dublin forces Confederate Assembly holds inaugural meeting in Kilkenny on 24th October James Butler, 1st Earl of Ormonde given command of English Forces
1643	Armistice signed between Ormonde and the Confederates
1644	Ormonde appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and seeks to maximise Irish support for Charles I.
1645	<b>Catholic Bishop Malachy O'Queally is killed leading a Confederate attempt to take Sligo</b>
1646	As a result of ongoing raids and skirmishes, Ormonde finds his military position untenable and negotiates with the English Parliament to hand over Dublin, Drogheda, Dundalk, Trim and other towns in return for political and military guarantees.
1647	Ormonde surrenders Dublin and the office of Lord Lieutenant, and leaves Ireland.
1648	Ormonde returns to Ireland to lead a Royalist-Confederate alliance.
1649	29th January Prince Rupert, commander of Royalist fleet, arrives at Kinsale with Royalist warships 30th January Charles I executed in London 1st June Ormonde marches on Dublin 22 June Cromwell accepts nomination of Lord General of Ireland 2 August Ormonde and Confederate army defeated at Battle of Rathmines 15 August Oliver Cromwell and New Model Army land at Ringsend Sept - Oct Cromwell takes Drogheda (11 Sept) and Wexford (11 Oct)
1650	Mar-May Surrender of Kilkenny (27 March) and Clonmel (18 May) 27 May Cromwell leaves Ireland Dec Ormonde is replaced as commander-in-chief by Earl of Clanricarde
1651-3	Surrender of Waterford, Limerick and Duncannon in 1651 and Galway in 1652 results in ongoing guerrilla warfare and small-scale violence.
1654-6	Civil Survey of Ireland provides details of boundaries and valuations of properties.
1656-8	Down Survey of Ireland surveys and maps Ireland to allow redistribution of land confiscated from Catholic Irish landowners.

While many new settlers left Sligo during the Irish Confederate Wars 1641-53, some returned after the end of the wars and were joined by new settlers, mainly from Scotland. In 1682, a rental record for part of the town recorded 106 British tenants, but the total number of British families may have been over 200, with possibly another 100 Irish families also living in Sligo amounting to a population of under 2000 people. Many of these new settlers may have been soldiers forming part of the town garrison. In 1666, the town garrison comprised a Major and 66 men. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Sligo appears to have been a garrison town, with a significant proportion of its male protestant tenants either serving or having formerly served in the army.

After the Irish Confederate Wars, Sligo town appears to have been divided into three parts: 'the Castle quarter, now the New Fort', the Fort Hill quarter where the Green Fort stands, and the Abbey quarter around Sligo Abbey. A 1663 survey listed occupants and houses at New Fort and Fort Hill but not Abbey quarter. In this survey, most of the occupants were British, with soldiers found in both quarters. The Irish population occupied 33 of the total of 144 tiled and slated houses and thatched cabins listed. Nearly all houses had gardens or yards, and some had access to 'parks' outside the town. Sligo continued as a market town exporting agricultural produce and importing tobacco, wine and brandy, but there was little industry in the town.

#### **The Williamite Wars in Ireland 1688-91**

The Williamite Wars in Ireland was a conflict between Jacobites (supporters of the Roman Catholic King James II of England and Ireland, also the Stuart King James VII of Scotland) and Williamites (supporters of the Dutch Protestant Prince William of Orange, later King William III). King James had been deposed and replaced by his daughter Mary II who ruled jointly with her husband and first cousin (James' nephew) William in 1688. James intended to use his widespread Catholic support in Ireland to regain his three kingdoms. William landed in Ireland with a multi-national force, with James leaving Ireland after his defeat at the Battle of the Boyne on 1 July 1690. The Irish Jacobite position became untenable after their defeat at the Battle of Aughrim on 12 July 1691. Limerick was the final stronghold to surrender on 23 September 1691, with the Treaty of Limerick signed on 3 October 1691 offering favourable terms to Jacobites willing to stay in Ireland and swear loyalty to William

III. Part of the Treaty permitted Patrick Sarsfield to leave Ireland with 14,000 men and around 10,000 women

#### **2.4.2 The Construction of the Green Fort**

The date of construction of the Green Fort remains unknown. A fort is first depicted on the north bank of the Garvoge River on Captain John Baxter's map of the north-west of Ireland c.1600 (Fig.13). However, there is no other documentary evidence for the fort in this early period. Artillery forts had been built at a number of coastal locations in Ireland since the 1580s, and a wave of new artillery forts were built during the Nine Years War in Ireland (1594-1603) which developed into a nationwide rebellion aided by a Spanish expeditionary force. A large number of bastioned artillery forts were built along the coast and at strategic locations inland. Baxter's map suggests that the Green Fort may date to the Nine Years War, and had been constructed or was proposed for construction by 1600.

#### **Topographic and Cartographic Views of the Green Fort**

A fort with spear-shaped bastions on the north side of the Garvoge River is first shown on Baxter's map c.1600 (Fig.13), and this may be the first depiction of the Green Fort. The fort is shown again on the Barony of Carbury and the parish of Calrie (Calry) maps during the Down Survey c.1655-8. The southern bastions are shown on Thomas Philips 'Prospect of Slego' c.1685 which show the fort abandoned and without any buildings within the earthen fortification. The fort and the town of Sligo appear to have undergone extensive re-fortification during the Williamite Wars c.1689-91 which included a defensive system of bastioned earthen defences encircling both the Green Fort and Sligo town. These were depicted on Luttrells 1689 defensive plan of Sligo. The Green Fort appears to have been abandoned relatively soon after the Williamite Wars and is not marked on Taylor and Skinners 1777 map of Sligo or William Larkin's 1810 map. The Green Fort is shown on the 1837 Ordnance Survey Fair Plan of the Parish of St. John's (Fig.22) and on all later Ordnance Survey maps (Fig.24) where it is shown as an isolated but well-defined rectilinear fortification with spear-shaped bastions.



Fig.13: Captain John Baxter's map of north-west Ireland c.1600 depicting the presence of a bastioned fort on the north bank of the Garvoge River; presumably at the Green fort<sup>8</sup>. Source: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

The Green Fort is one of 65 bastioned forts recorded in the Republic of Ireland, seven of which are in County Sligo. Most bastioned forts in Ireland were built to defend the coast, ports and natural harbours from seaward incursions by Spanish, Dutch and French forces, and also from opposing forces during periods of rebellion and civil war during the late sixteenth and seventeenth century in Ireland. Forts are very different to castles - they were not centres of lordship and did not have the same residential, judicial or administrative functions as a medieval castle. Forts were normally designed by a professional military engineer and its primary function was to mount artillery and protect a garrison during periods of warfare. Due to the high cost of maintenance, forts quickly fell into disrepair during periods of peace, and would be quickly re-fortified at the onset of the next conflict. Forts therefore often show a pattern of sudden fortification followed by longer periods of dereliction.

### Bastion Forts in Ireland

The Green Fort is a spear-shaped bastion fort. This type of fortification was developed in Italy in the late fifteenth-century and first appeared in Ireland c.1580. The spear-shaped bastion design proved both effective and popular, and was used for the defence of towns and cities, ports and harbours as well as individual strongholds across western Europe, and was spread by Spain and Portugal to their overseas territories in Africa, India and the Americas. Spear-shaped forts were built throughout Ireland during the Nine Years War 1594-1603, many of which were depicted by the cartographer Richard Bartlett and others c.1600-3. Military engineers such as Paul Ives left contemporary documentary descriptions of the types of earthen artillery forts they built:

"The Manner of Fortifying with Earth

There is another manner of fortifying which is with earth: in which, instead of a face of brick or stone, is a face of turf used, and for the Counterforts, faggots ... The experience thereof has been sufficiently seen in the late wars of the Low Countries; but it is not so durable against the weather, but being of good earth and the faggots green, it will longer continue, and although the face waste and moulder away with the weather, yet will the Fort continue defensible. And the best is, the face may be repaired again with little charge".

The Green Fort is a bastioned fort formed by a roughly square enclosure with spear-shaped artillery bastions at each of the four angles. This fortification type spread throughout Europe by professional military engineers during the ongoing conflicts in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was used in Ireland from the 1580s onwards.

The introduction of gunpowder had a dramatic effect on the design of defensive architecture across Europe. Gunpowder (a mix of 75% saltpetre, 15% charcoal and 10% sulphur) was introduced to Europe in the fourteenth century, and guns appear in Ireland as early as AD 1332 when a 'brass engine' or gun is reported in historical sources<sup>9</sup> for the King's Castle at Clonmore<sup>10</sup>. Firearms and artillery appear with increasing frequency in Irish historical records from the fifteenth century onwards. Balrath, County Westmeath is the first castle to fall against artillery in 1488 (De hOir 1982<sup>11</sup> and Cairns 1985<sup>12</sup>) and guns were used at the siege of Waterford in 1495. The Eighth Earl of Kildare used the King's Ordnance to undertake extensive campaigns against his opponents, including Dungannon Castle in 1498; Roscommon, Athleague, Tulsk and Castlereagh in 1499; Omagh Castle in 1509; Pailis Castle, County Kerry in 1510; and Cavetown Castle near Boyle, Belfast Castle and Larne Castle in 1512, and artillery engagements occur with increasing frequency throughout the sixteenth century<sup>13</sup>.

The first known plans of spear-shaped bastions appear in 1487, attributed to Giuliano di Francesco Giambeti, and the city of Verona in the Veneto region of Italy is the first known bastioned town c.1530. The design proved both effective and popular, and was used for the defence of towns and cities, ports and harbours as well as individual strongholds. Italian military engineers were responsible for the development and dissemination of angled bastions to individual fortifications and town and city defences throughout the Mediterranean during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries<sup>14</sup>. Angled bastions were favoured for the defence of cities, ports and individual strongholds, and the technology spread from Italy to Spain, France and then further north.

In the 1540s, dedicated military forts began to be constructed, beginning with Fort Protector (Maryborough) and Fort Governor (Philipstown) in County Laois. However, these were essentially rectangular enclosures intended to garrison troops and provide a fighting platform, and while Fort Protector was provided with a single circular angle turret, this did not reflect changing defensive architectural building practice known in continental Europe at this time.

Bastions began to appear in Ireland in the 1570s, and in 1590, the Italian bastion system was adopted for the defences of Limerick and Waterford. The cartographer Richard Bartlett's maps c.1600-3 commonly show earthen spear-shaped bastioned fortifications throughout Ireland. These earthen artillery fortifications typically had two or sometimes three entrances and typically contained low white-washed thatched single-storey buildings. Earthen forts were therefore quick to build, and while vulnerable to weather, could be quickly and cheaply re-fortified. This fortification type proved popular during the many conflicts of the seventeenth century.

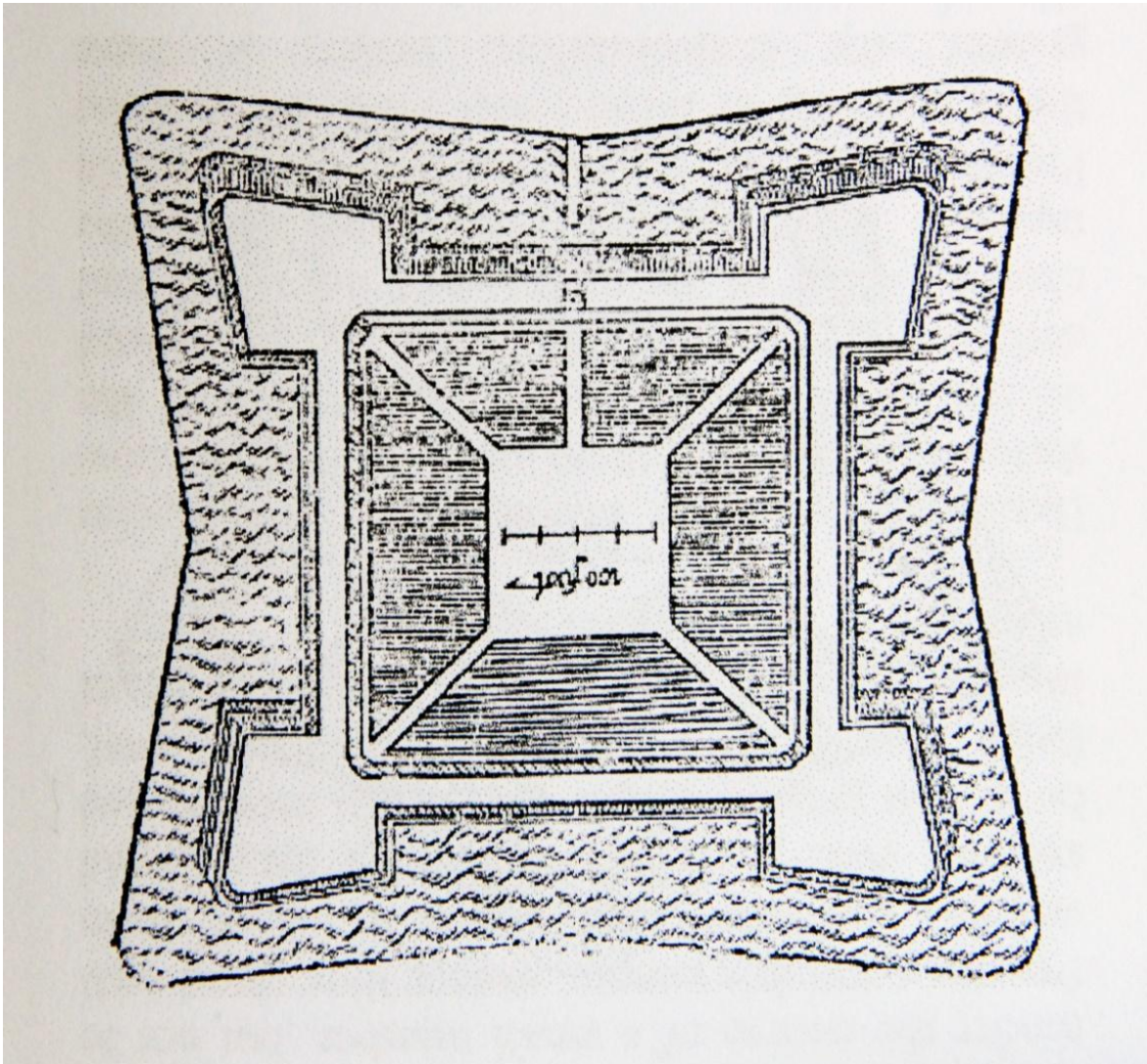


Fig.14: Plan of a spear-shaped bastion fort, almost identical to the Green Fort, published by Paul Ives in 'The Practice of Fortification' in 1589. Ives was active in Cork building fortsc.1600.

The Green Fort is shown on Down Survey maps made after the end of the Irish Confederate Wars where it is shown as a spear-shaped bastion fort. Sligo is also listed as a centre of military significance on a list of walled and fortified towns prepared for the Irish government in 1659. The Green Fort appears to have been maintained into the 1660s, with substantial sums in Sligo noted on a list of fortifications, though it is difficult to determine how much was spent on the Green Fort specifically, and what type of work was carried out at the fort.



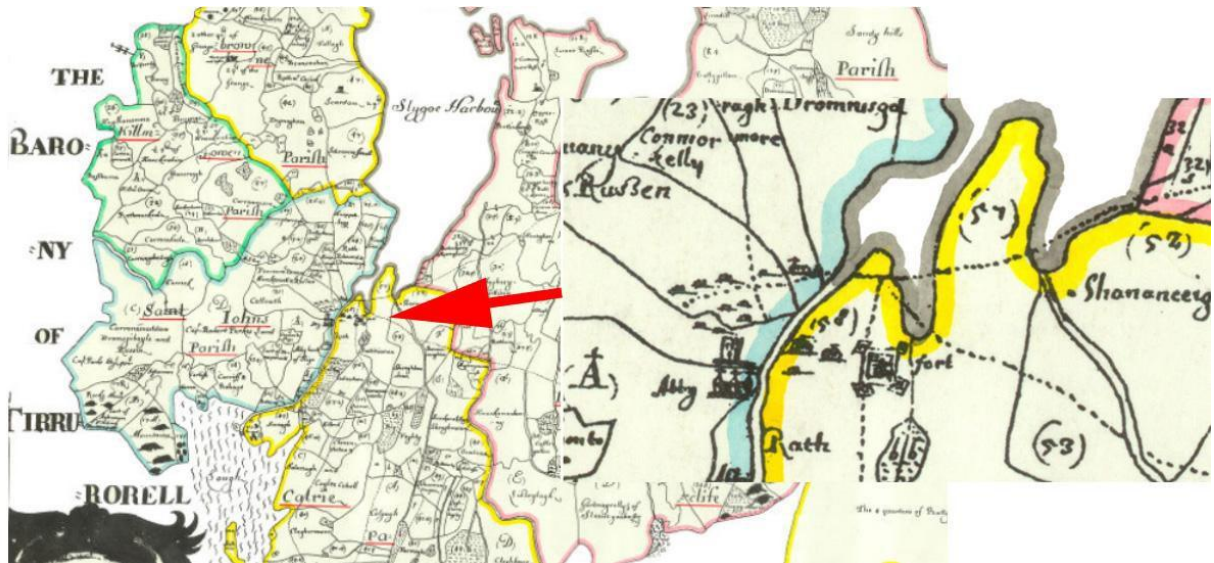


Fig.15: The Green Fort overlooking Sligo town as shown on the 1655-58 Down Survey Barony of Carbury map. Source: Trinity College Dublin.



Fig.16: The 'Forte' as depicted on the 1657 Down Survey Parish of Calrie' map. Source: Trinity College Dublin.

### 2.4.3 The Green Fort during the Williamite Wars

The Green Fort was depicted on a 'Prospect of Slego' by Thomas Phillips in 1685. This showed the southern side of the fort on Forthill overlooking Sligo town. No buildings or structures are shown inside the fort, and it is possible that the fort had been abandoned by this period. The hill shows no entrenchments or other defensive structures around the Green Fort, which stands isolated above the town and does not appear in active use.



Fig.17: Thomas Phillips was sent to Ireland by George Legge, Master General of the Ordnance, to survey the stores and forts in Ireland with a view to securing the kingdom from invasion. Phillips survey was submitted to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormond in 1685, which included 'A prospect of Slego (Sligo)'<sup>15</sup> showing the Green Fort (arrowed), Sligo town, Sligo Castle, Sligo Abbey and Ben Bulben in the background.

The Green Fort was used by and changed hands between both sides during the Williamite Wars in Ireland 1688-91. The earliest military activity in Sligo appears to be the foundation of a Protestant Association in early 1689 who occupied Sligo and a number of strategic points around the town. The Association abandoned Sligo in March 1689 and marched to Derry, whereupon James II appointed Colonel Henry Luttrell governor of Sligo. The Green Fort was re-fortified during this period, and incorporated into a network of defensive earthworks which enveloped Sligo town and also included the 'Stone Fort' defending the approach along the Garvoge. In 1689, Colonel Henry Lutterell, with the aid of Robert Burton 'his Majesty's engineer', constructed an earthen palisade around the town which incorporated the Green Fort and a redoubt fortification at the junction of Barrack Street and Holborn Street (labelled as 'O' on Luttrell's 1689 map, see Fig.12) , which he recorded on his map of Sligo town.

In June 1690, Sir Teague O'Regan was placed in charge of Sligo on behalf of Williamite forces, and a number of authors have noted that the Green Fort was a superior fortification to the stone fort in the town; with that O'Regan brought ordnance up to strengthen the Green Fort. However, it should be noted that while the Green Fort was a strong fortification, it was not the headquarters of the defence of Sligo. O'Regan oversaw additions to the defences of Sligo town including earthworks to defend the two gates and a wide moat. The Green Fort was attacked on Saturday 12th September 1691 by Williamite forces under Colonel John Michelburne who had noted that while Sligo had been reinforced, only a single company of grenadiers was stationed at the Green Fort. Michelburne and his forces advanced rapidly to secure the defensive ditch and broke into the fort - causing the defenders to escape by jumping over the parapets and retreating to the Stone Fort<sup>16</sup>. Sir Teague O'Regan was besieged in the Stone Fort, and with the arrival of further Williamite troops to Sligo, came to a negotiated surrender with O'Regan marching away with his garrison and two cannons on Monday 14th September. O'Regan handed the keys of the Stone Fort to Michelburne who was appointed Governor of Sligo. The Williamite forces took possession of the Green Fort which had "sixteen other cannons mounted in the wall, and thirty barrels of gunpowder in the magazines, as well as stores of all kinds"<sup>17</sup>.

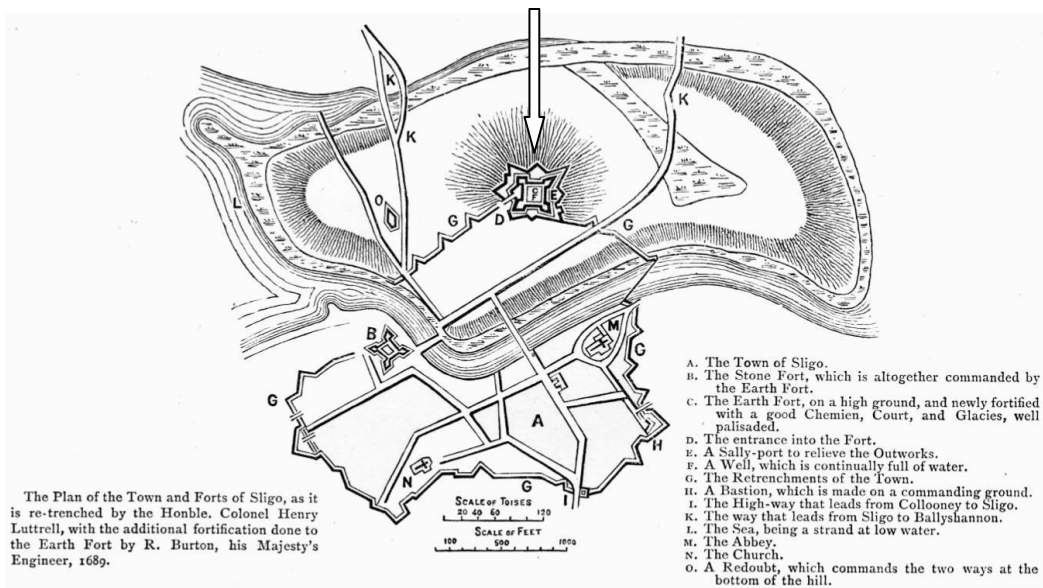


Fig.18: Henry Luttrell's 1689 plan of the town and forts of Sligo, as re-drawn by Wood-Martin, 1882-92, ii, p.134 showing the Green Fort (arrowed), with the 'Stone Fort' (B) commanding the approach from the Garvoige; both forts for part of an extensive series of defensive (presumably) earthen defences to protect the town during the Williamite Wars.

A commemorative medal of the 1691 capture of Athlone, Galway and Sligo was struck, with a copy now held in the British Museum. The medal shows Queen Mary II and King William III on the reverse with Athlone, Galway and Sligo depicted in three cartouches on the face of the medal. Athlone is shown in flames at the top with the Williamite army crossing the Shannon, with the march of Williamite troops into Galway shown on the lower left. Sligo, with the Green Fort shown, is depicted on the lower right of the medal.

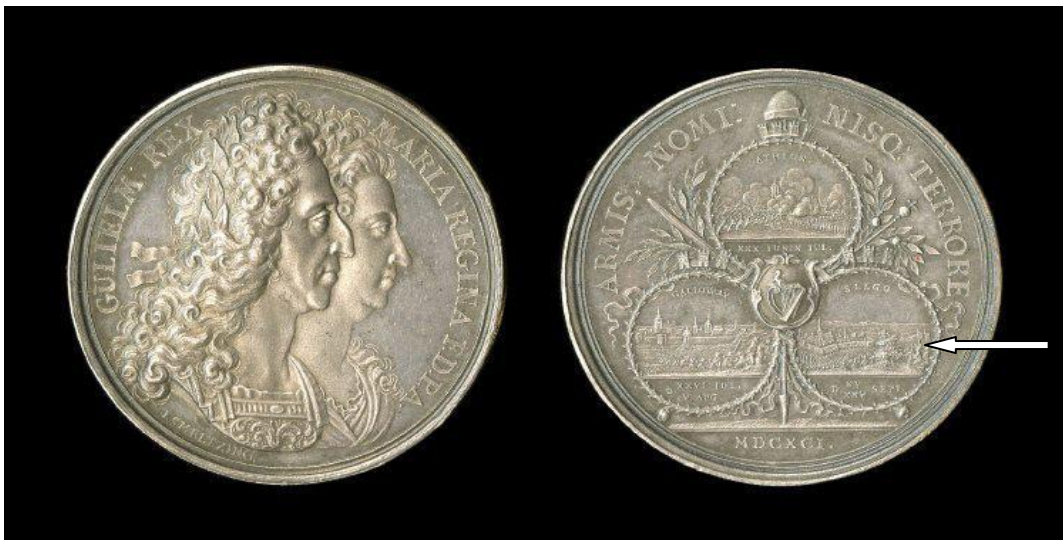


Fig.19: Medal held in the British Museum commemorating the Williamite capture of Athlone, Galway and Sligo (arrowed) in 1691. Source: British Museum.

#### 2.4.4 The Green Fort after 1700

The Green Fort was in a ruinous condition by 1739, by which time its military function had been superseded by the barracks of Sligo: Strand Barracks on Barrack Street, Middle Barracks on Holborn Street, the Horse Barracks on Bridge Street, and the Old Stone Fort on Quay Street. Forthill House was built adjacent to the site in the mid-eighteenth century (see Section 2.3.4) but from this period onwards, the Green Fort appears to have lain abandoned and unused. It continues to be depicted on historic maps, photographs and illustrations, but does not appear have undergone any development, alteration or reuse.

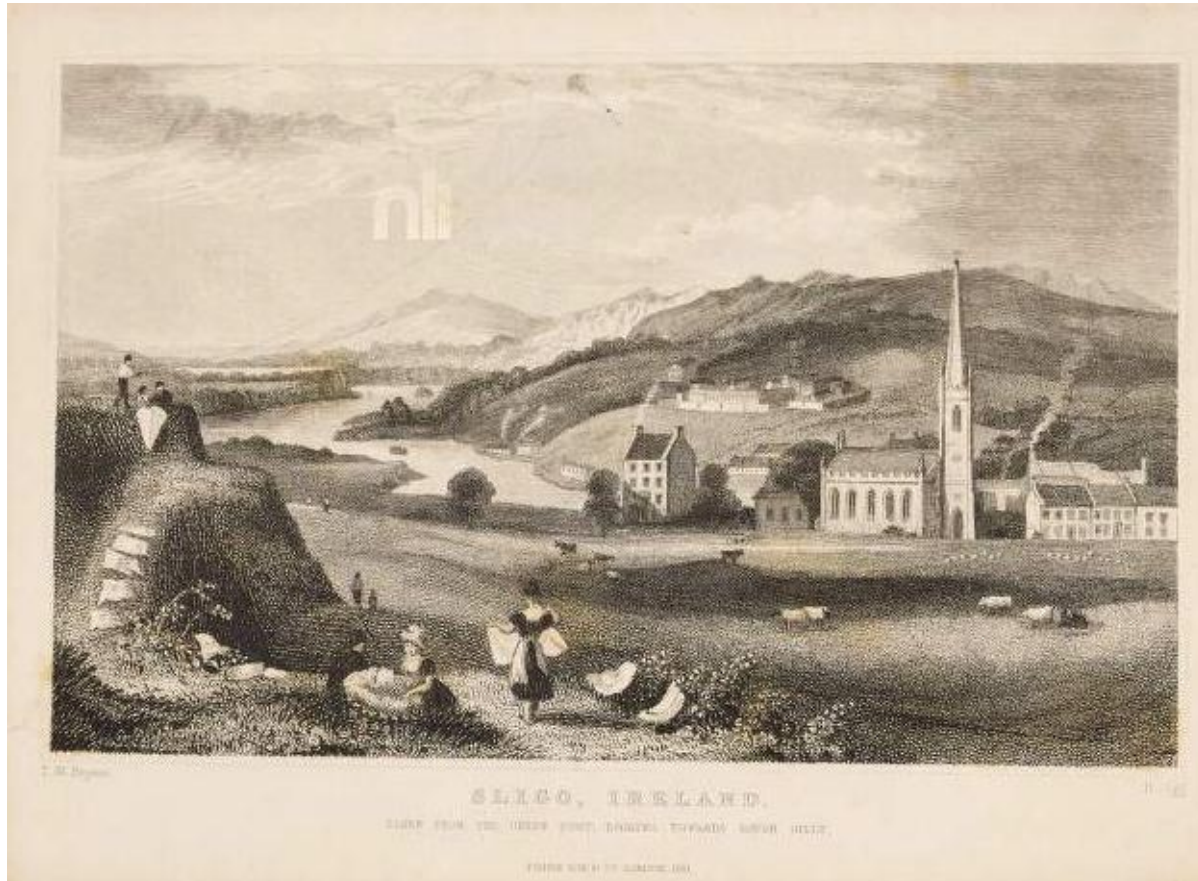


Fig.21: A view of Sligo taken from the Green Fort by T.M. Baynes in the 1830s held in the National Library of Ireland. The viewing point shown on left map be one of spear-shaped bastions. Source: National Library of Ireland.



Fig.20: The Green Fort as depicted on the 1837 Ordnance Survey Fair Plan parish of St. Johns held by the National Archives of Ireland. Source: National Archives of Ireland.

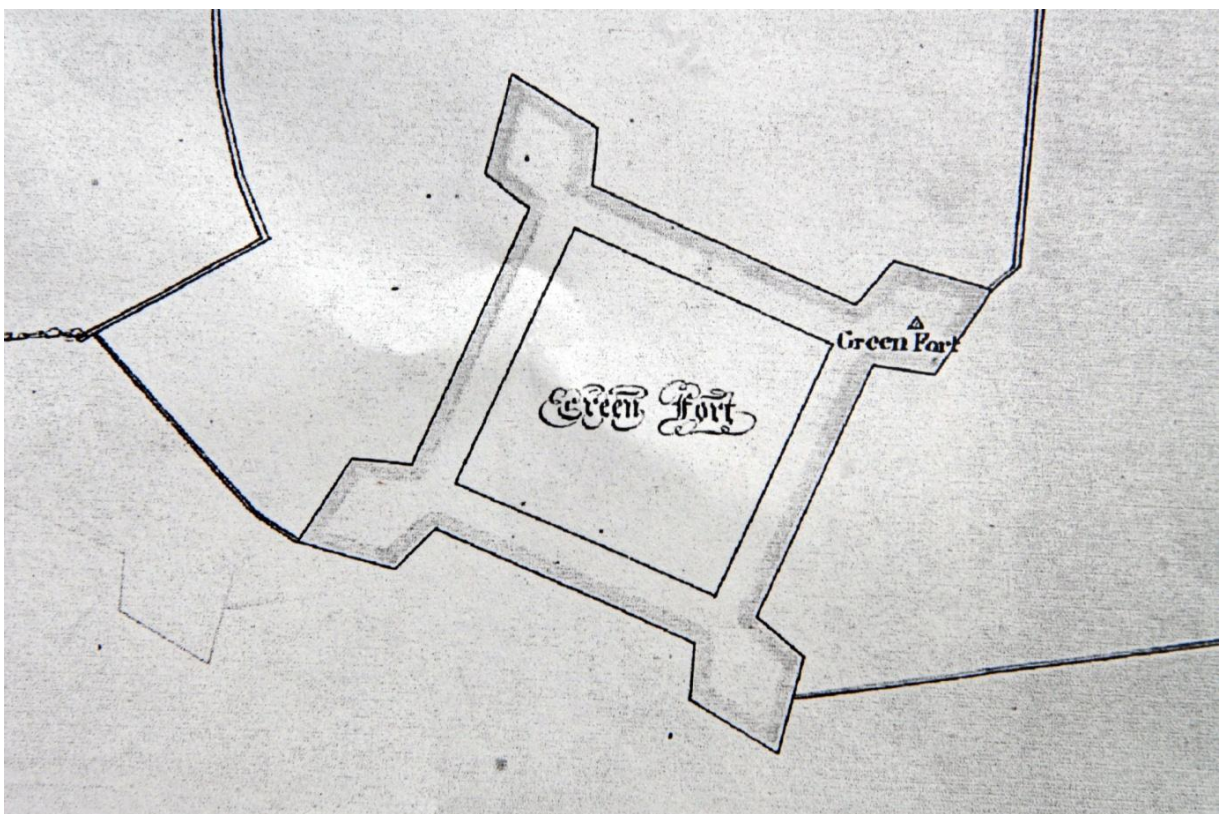


Fig.21: The Green Fort as shown on the 1843 Ordnance Survey 1:1056 manuscript map held in the National Archives of Ireland. The bastions appear very sharp and without any loss or weathering, and these may be an idealised representation of the fort. Source: National Archives of Ireland.



Fig.22: The National Library of Ireland retains a series of photographs by Robert French taken from the vantage point of the Green Fort as panoramic viewing points of the area. Source: National Library of Ireland.

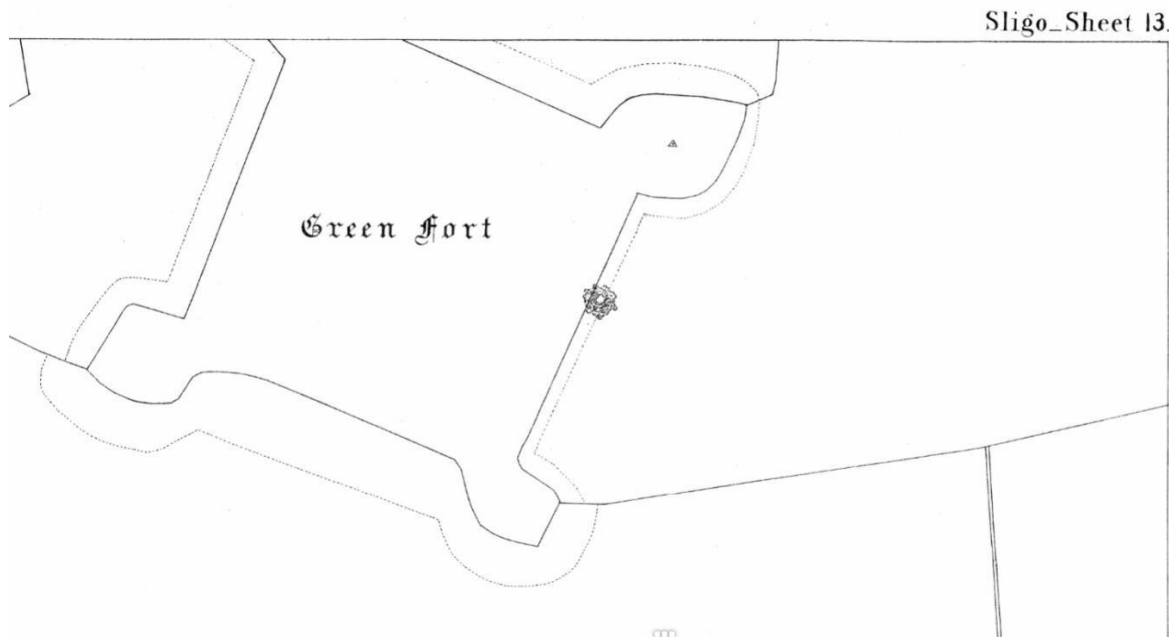


Fig.23: The Green Fort as shown on the 1875 Green Fort Sligo Sheet 13. Source: Trinity College Map Library.

The fort does not appear to have been disturbed since it was abandoned after the Williamite Wars. However, archaeological investigations at a site 40 metres to the west of the Green Fort (Eogan 2000<sup>18</sup>) uncovered part of the Williamite Wars defences from 1689. These defences consisted of a flat-bottomed ditch 2.94m wide and 0.74m deep. The pottery found in the ditches suggested that they had been backfilled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

## 2.5 Habitats, Flora and Fauna

The Green Fort is situated within an urban setting on elevated ground in Sligo town. To the north and west there are playing fields and hard surfaced driveways/parking spaces. It is bounded by Sligo hospital lands to the east. Local access roads (Connaghton Road and the R286) border it to the south. The area of the Green Fort itself and the grasslands and hedgerows immediately adjacent to it remain undeveloped. It was managed as agricultural land, probably mainly for grazing, up until relatively recently. The Fort and its immediate surroundings consist of a mosaic of semi-natural habitats. There are areas of grazed, unimproved grassland along with ungrazed rough grassland. In waterlogged places some wet grassland/marsh habitat can be found. There are thickets of bramble scrub which have spread from the hedgerows. Despite its small area the site supports a good diversity of flora and fauna, some of which, including badgers and songbirds are protected under the Wildlife Act. The site is likely to be of importance for pollinators.

Hedgerows on the site provide shelter and food sources for songbirds and mammals. Taller woody species found along the hedgerows include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), willow (*Salix* sp.), and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Herbaceous ground flora species include broad buckler fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), scaly male fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum*), harts tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), lesser hogweed (*Heraclium sphondylium*), tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) and lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*).

## 2.6 Architectural Heritage

In the mid-eighteenth century, the now-lost Forthill House was built by the Wynne family but was leased to a number of well-to-do tenants including James Beatty, Governor of Sligo Gaol in the early nineteenth century. The house was depicted on the first edition Ordnance Survey map c.1843 which shows the house, a bay window to the south elevation, and extensive formal gardens to the rear. However, the house does not appear to have had any direct link with the Green Fort. The house was occupied until c.1975, fell into disrepair and was demolished. No trace of the building survives. There was formerly a military barracks in the Forthill area, but this did not have a direct association with the Green Fort.

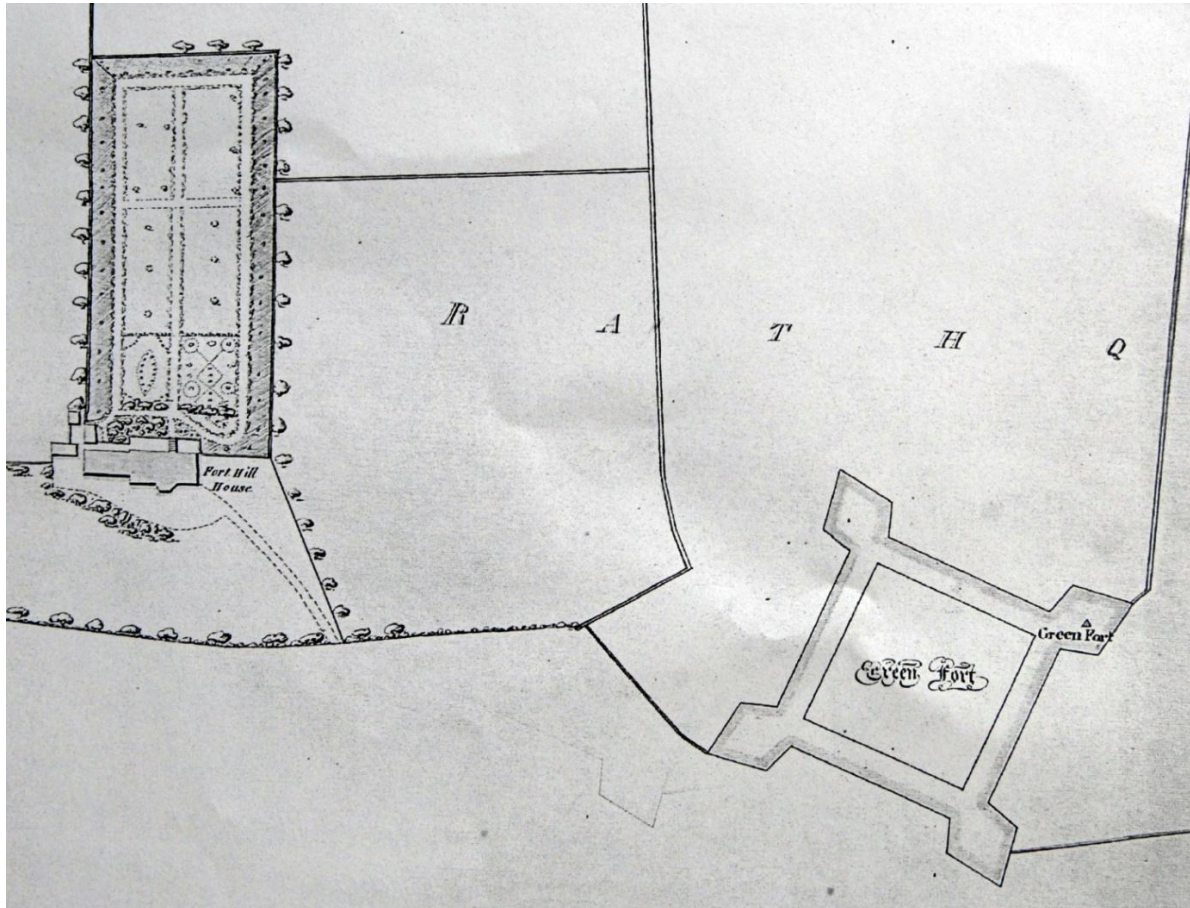


Fig.24: Fort Hill House and its formal gardens lay to the west of the Green Fort, and while there is a placename association between the two sites, there was no direct link. The 1843 Ordnance Survey 1:1056 manuscript map held in the National Archives of Ireland depicts Fort Hill house and the Green Fort. Source: Trinity College Map Library.



### Part 3: Assessment of Significance

**The Green Fort is a bastioned earthwork and the last visible reminder of Sligo's seventeenth-century town fortifications.** The Green Fort is a bastioned earthwork artillery fortification, and as part of a group of three forts built in the seventeenth-century to protect the town of Sligo, which lay on the main passage between Ulster and north-west Connaught. The Green Fort was the largest and strongest of Sligo town's forts, and commanded the entire town and its approaches. The 'stone fort' built c.1644 protected the town, while the fort at Coney Island defended the seaward approaches to Sligo. Sligo maintained a permanent garrison in the town from 1603 onwards, and most of the soldiers lived in the Forthill or 'New Fort' quarters. The population of the town varied, but was generally under 2000 people, composed of one-third Irish and two-thirds British, many of whom were soldiers or former soldiers, and reflect the strong military heritage of Sligo town.

**The History of the Fort indicates it was in use during periods of conflict during the seventeenth-century** and may have been built as early as 1600 during the Nine Years War 1594-1603, certainly in existence during the Confederate Wars c.1649-58 , and re-fortified c.1689-91 during the Williamite Wars, at which time it formed part of the earthen town defences of Sligo. Thomas Phillips illustration of the fort in 1685 suggests the fort was used only during times of conflict, and otherwise left unmanned. The Green Fort was abandoned soon after the end of the Williamite Wars and was ruined by 1739, at which time it still retained iron and brass guns. Its military function was superseded by the Barracks of Sligo town, and the fort has been abandoned for over 300 years.

The Green Fort is an **earth fortification**. Military heritage is an emerging area of interest in Ireland, though it has been established elsewhere for some time. Earthen forts became popular during the many conflicts of the seventeenth century as they were quick to build and bring into operation, and while vulnerable to weather, could be quickly and cheaply re-fortified.

- The fort is an archaeological monument of National Importance, protected under the National Monuments Acts and a dedicated Preservation Order which protects the site from inappropriate development and interference.
- The fort is in shared public ownership with public access throughout O'Boyle Park.
- The lands immediately surrounding the Green Fort form a significant green area within Sligo which are of value for biodiversity. The Green Fort is locally important as a relatively natural biodiverse area within an urban setting. Some protected (badger, song birds) and vulnerable species (e.g. meadow pipit, snipe) occur on the site.
- The monument is located in a strategic position with panoramic views over Sligo town and the surrounding countryside providing excellent opportunities for interpretation of the geography/geology/landscape.
- The site is a unique vantage point from which the story of Sligo can be told. The site has been used as a recreational viewing point since at least the nineteenth century with historic photographs and illustrations showing views from Fort hill over Sligo town and the surrounding landscape.
- The site is a rich educational resource utilised by IT Sligo for lifelong learning and research.
- The local community have a strong and deep engagement with the Green Fort and its association with the military history of Sligo.

## Part 4: Defining the Issues and Assessing Vulnerability

### 4.1 Ownership and responsibilities

The western part of the monument is under the ownership of Sligo County Council while the eastern part of the monument is under the ownership of the Health Service Executive (HSE). At present there is no coordinated approach to the management, use and care of the monument. There is no concerted plan of action, and an absence of resources to implement any such actions.

The Parks Department, Sligo County Council, undertakes maintenance of O'Boyle Park through contractors with a focus on the playing pitches to the north of the Green Fort. Limited grass cutting is undertaken in the summer months to maintain a green path to the edge of the Green Fort. No management is undertaken by the HSE on the Green Fort partially located on the adjoining lands to the east.

The Green Fort is a National Monument subject to a Preservation Order dated 2nd March 1983 under Section 8 (1) of the National Monuments Act, 1930. The prior written consent of the Minister is required for any works at or in proximity to the Green Fort. Types of work which would require Ministerial consent include hedgerow maintenance and trimming, the laying of pathways, signage and any type of form of development, repair or conservation works.

### 4.2 Conflicting interests

The fort is isolated and largely invisible from Sligo town. This invisibility and lack of awareness of the monument together with its exposed position at the top of the hill has assisted in its preservation since its abandonment over three centuries ago. The fort was designed to have a low visual profile, and in one sense it has survived because of its own camouflage of vegetation. Increased awareness and increased visitor numbers have the potential to remove its isolated character and to expose the structure and the site to visitor pressure and associated development (for example of facilities and access provisions) in the park. The grass in the interior of the fort is grazed by ponies, which is unauthorized. Animal grazing is effective at preventing earthen monuments from being entirely enveloped by vegetation, however there can be issues relating to erosion and wear of the monument at access points. The main threat to biodiversity of the Green Fort is lack of habitat management and a clear vision for managed access by visitors. The hedgerows require active management.



Fig.25: Small ponies grazing the interior of the fort (January 2017).

The fort experiences occasional anti-social behaviour such as littering, the cutting and burning of vegetation, bike, and quad bike access which can damage the monument and detracts from the character and recreational value of the place. There are therefore occasional unauthorised recreational uses of the monument which are not compatible with its conservation, management, interpretation and management.

### 4.3 Vulnerability of the Monument and its Setting

**4.3.1 Erosion and Attrition:** The monument is physically vulnerable from weathering and erosion of its earthen defences. All earthen banks and the three visible bastions show significant erosion and none can be said to retain an original 'face' of the fortification. The south-western bastion appears in the best condition in the most recent survey of the Green Fort by IT Sligo. However, the Monument Condition Report by Jason Bolton (2017) undertaken to inform the conservation plan (see appendix 1) noted that this bastion is entirely overgrown and the external slopes of the bastion are invisible from close inspection. It would be necessary to remove the existing vegetation to determine its actual condition. The earthen defences of the fort are covered with grass, trees and hedgerows. However, excessive removal of the existing vegetation cover would expose the earthen defences to erosion and weathering. Modern geotechnical solutions are available to preserve exposed soil slopes from erosion, however, these tend to be unsightly and would detract from the character and appearance of the monument.

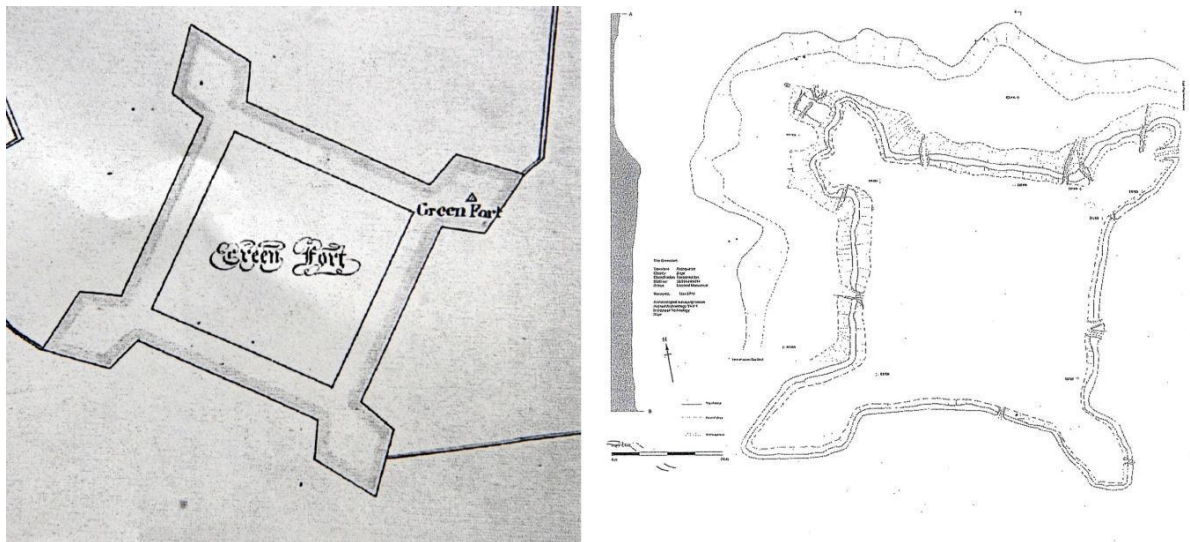


Fig.26: Comparison between the Ordnance Survey map of the Green Fort in 1837 (see Fig.22) (left) and a drawing prepared by Sam Moore, IT Sligo in June 2016 (right) indicating loss to the bastions

**4.3.2 Lack of Understanding of the Monument:** While the earthen core of the Green Fort survives, there is no indication of where two entrances referred to in historical sources were located, no trace of any structures or defensive walls in either the fort or its environs, and no visible trace of the extensive outer defensive earthworks that enveloped the fort which are known from documentary sources and previous archaeological

excavations elsewhere in the Forthill area. There is a natural depression within the enclosure which is likely to be the well of the fort. However, it is unclear if there are any sub-surface remains of buildings or other structures within the fort. Any such remains would be vulnerable to erosion or to invasive archaeological investigations. There is likely to be a significant amount of buried archaeological features and deposits in and around the fort, and potentially from an earlier ringfort which is suspected to have stood on Forthill before the Green Fort was constructed. Further archaeological survey work and investigation would be required to better understand the Green Fort.



*Fig.27: Overlay of Luttrell's plan of the Green Fort and adjacent late seventeenth-century earthwork town defences prepared by Sam Moore, IT Sligo. No trace of these extensive earthen fortifications are visible at ground level. However, nearby archaeological excavations have confirmed that stretches of these defences survive below ground level.*

**4.3.3 Vegetation and Animals:** There is a small amount of animal erosion and poaching from foot traffic at the current main entrance on the west side of the fort. The south and east sides of the fort are obscured by mature hedgerows. The north side of the defensive ditch of the fort becomes waterlogged in places, which restricts access to parts of the monument.



*Fig.28: The main grassed entrance path west of the fort shows animal erosion and damage from foot traffic in wet conditions within the defensive ditch.*

**4.3.4 Setting and Access:** The setting of the monument is vulnerable to any inappropriate development would obscure the panoramic views from the Green Fort. However, there are physical limitations on how access could be improved. The 'cut' between the Green Fort and the hospital forms a physical barrier between O'Boyle Park and Sligo University Hospital, and prevents easy public access between the two sites. There are no linkages between the fort and IT Sligo, the hospital to the east, Connaughton Road to the immediate south of the monument, and no obvious walkway or link between the fort and the urban centre of Sligo.

**4.3.5 Past Repairs and Maintenance:** There have been no conservation works to the Green Fort, and no maintenance works to its earthen defences. There is a lack of clarity about what types of work are beneficial, what works are damaging to the monument and its setting, and what the potential impacts of taking no decisions on the maintenance and upkeep of the monument may have.

**4.3.6 Relationship to other Archaeological Sites:** The fort has been considered as an isolated standalone monument, and there has been little exploration of its relationship with the seventeenth-century defences of Sligo town, the other two forts which defended the town, or its relationship with other bastioned forts elsewhere in Ireland. This type of information would enrich an understanding of the significance of the Green Fort, and potentially attract visitors to the site.

#### **4.4 Threats to Ecological Significance**

Lack of habitat management on the site means that rough grassland will continue to develop into scrub. At present, access and egress to the site is uncontrolled and unmonitored and this has resulted in:

- The presence of domestic animals (horses) resulting in overgrazing and poaching of the fort itself, which means grassland herbs cannot flower or set seed, thus reducing potential foraging for pollinators.
- Felling of scrub for firewood (from a north easterly hedgerow).

Continued unmonitored and uncontrolled access may lead to:

- Further erosion of Fort embankments and its semi-natural grassland flora due to uncontrolled trampling.
- Poaching of wet areas due to uncontrolled trampling.
- Disturbance of ground nesting bird species and/or badgers by humans and their pets.

These activities *may* be less likely to occur in a managed setting where access routes and points are more clearly defined and opening hours are controlled.

#### **4.5 Recreation/Visitor Pressures and Impacts**

The Green Fort is isolated from Sligo town, with limited visitor numbers and a lack of general and local awareness of the monument. There is currently limited access via Connaughton Road (through a modern housing estate) to access the park. The Green Fort lies within O'Boyle Park, which was officially opened by the Mayor of Sligo Councillor Veronica Cawley in May 2009. The fort is not signposted from Connaughton Road; an information sign was developed by Forthill Mens Group, Art and History Society as part of the *Hidden*

Histories Project undertaken through PEACE III. The monument is marked with 2 no. damaged 'Fogra' notices probably dating from the 1983 Preservation Order notice. However, it is not immediately clear to any new visitors to the fort as to where the fort is located, the extent of the fort or how best to access it.

At present visitor numbers to the site appear to be quite low. However, there is no management of visitors, no defined walking routes and no signage informing them of the significance of the site and how vulnerable it is. This means that ground nesting birds are very vulnerable and that all areas of the site, including potentially unsafe steep embankments, are equally accessible. Any proposed increase to visitor numbers also requires clear vision and management to minimise disturbance of key species and habitats – especially given the fact that the site is quite small in area. There are significant views of the surrounding landscape from the Green Fort. Any increase to visitor numbers has the potential to lead to physical damage through erosion from foot traffic to the monument.



Fig.29: Walking routes around the Green Fort.



Fig.30: Informal grass path leading to the south-east bastion.



Fig.31: The main grassed entrance path to the west side of the fort shows animal erosion and damage from foot traffic in wet conditions within the defensive ditch.

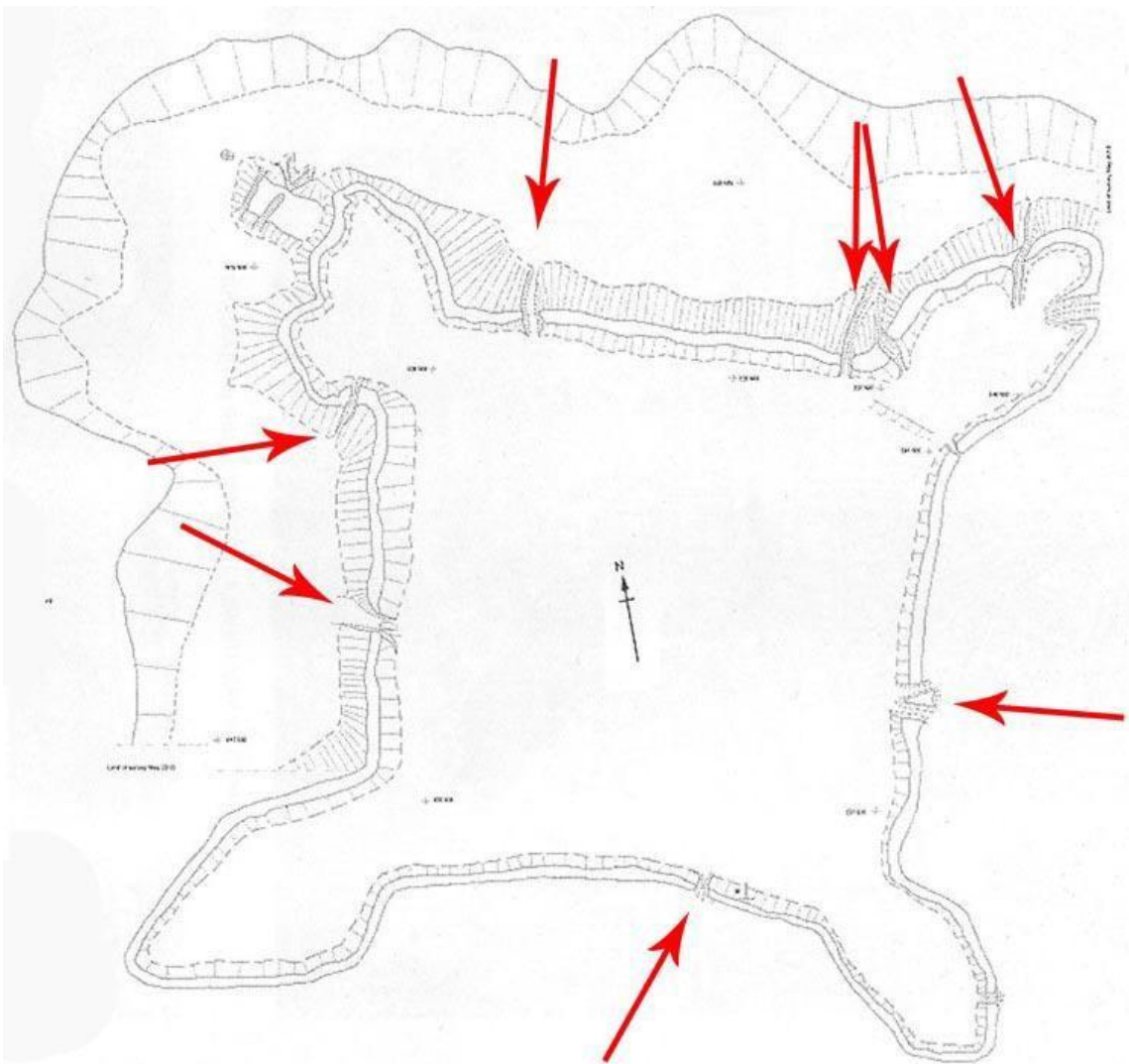


Fig.32: Pedestrian entry points onto the Green Fort, drawing courtesy of Sam Moore, IT Sligo.



Fig.33: The main access onto the fort shows minor damage from human and animal traffic.



Fig.34: Access routes on the north bank of the fort forming relatively deep cuts into the earthen banks.



Fig.37: The east side of the fort is largely inaccessible (left). The south bank and bastions are largely overgrown and former

#### 4.6 Proper understanding of the Place

There are gaps in our knowledge not only of the fort, but also of the surrounding landscape and memories of the past use of the place. There is a vulnerability in how this knowledge is collated and passed on.

An information board has been erected inside the entrance to O'Boyle Park providing information on the historical and archaeological significance of the Green Fort, as well as the place of the fort within a timeline of Sligo town. The information sign was developed by Forthill Mens Group, Art and History Society as part of the *Hidden Histories Project* undertaken through PEACE III.

However, there is no information for visitors explaining the surrounding landscape, natural heritage or the historical significance of the site and its relationship to Sligo town.

The Forthill Mens Group, Art and History Society provide a history of the Green Fort through their website, but aside from the information board within O'Boyle Park, there is little if any information available for tourists to



Sligo and the general public informing them of the existence, significance, location and access to the Green Fort.

#### **4.6.1 Research and Knowledge Gaps**

- **Buried archaeology:** The full extent of the sub-surface archaeology of the place is unknown. The location and full extent of the outer Williamite defences which surround the Green Fort is unknown.
- **Original Layout of the Green Fort:** The original layout, and any later modifications to the layout of the Green Fort are unknown. The location of the two entrances to the fort, the layout of the interior of the fort, and the presence of any structures within the fort is unknown. There is a significant knowledge gap in the type(s) or ordnance which were mounted in the fort, and how they were used during periods of conflict. Guns are the *raison d'être* of bastioned artillery forts and historical references note both iron and brass ordnance at the Green Fort. There is a significant knowledge gap in the number and types of ordnance which could be accommodated in the Green Fort, the number of men required to use the guns. The effective range of any guns is also unknown, therefore it is unclear as to the extent of area the Green Fort controlled, or how the fields of fire overlapped with the defences of the Stone Fort or the entrenchments constructed during the Williamite Wars. Without understanding the guns, there is only a limited understanding of the fort.
- **Troops stationed at the Green Fort:** There are significant knowledge gaps in the types of troops who were stationed and housed in the Green Fort during the three major conflicts of the seventeenth century - the Nine Years Wars, the Confederate Wars and the Williamite Wars.
- **Flora:** The ecological survey underlying this Conservation Plan was constrained by seasonality - having taken place in winter - so a full list of vascular plant species could not be obtained. Smaller plants such as bryophytes and small invertebrates have not been assessed on the site. Examination of the biodiversity records for the general area indicated the presence of some rare snails and bryophytes within the 5km tetrad. Further study may reveal the presence of rare species on the Green Fort. The unimproved grassland of the Green Fort may support orchid species but the sward is currently too grazed to allow proper development of plants and flowering heads, should these be present. Surveying in early summer for these species may be appropriate if grazers are removed.
- **Badgers:** The extent of usage by badgers of the sett on the site is somewhat unclear.
- **Bats:** Bats may occur on the site from time to time although they were not recorded there as part of the ecological survey undertaken for this Conservation Plan. A few of the hedgerow trees or shrubs are large enough to providing roosting opportunities for bats.

**4.6.2 Interpretation and presentation:** There is no information for visitors explaining the surrounding landscape, natural heritage or historical significance of the site or its relationship to Sligo town and the surrounding region.

**4.6.3 Engagement with stakeholders and the local community:** While there are a number of stakeholders with an active interest in the preservation and maintenance of the Green Fort, there appears to be little engagement with the wider local community of Sligo town.

There are a number of active ecologists and groups with environmental interests in the area. The environmental representative of Sligo Tidy Towns expressed interest in carrying out nature walks and bird watching events on the site for members of the public while another noted that the site is an important area for wildlife within the town's urban fabric.

#### **4.7 Infrastructure**

**Facilities:** O'Boyle Park has car parking facilities and is accessible from Sligo town. However, despite the presence of playing fields, there are no recreational or other sporting/activity/playground facilities which would encourage visitors to O'Boyle Park and the monument.

**Trackways and Pathways:** There are no clear pathways or walking routes around the fort. The informal pathways in use to access the fort and around its perimeter are vulnerable to an increase in visitor numbers.

Designated public access is provided through the main entrance gate to O'Boyle Park off Connaughton Road. However, informal access has developed along other boundaries of the Park, particularly between the Northside Centre and the playing pitches and the Green Fort.

**Interpretation and Visitor Awareness:** While there is local signage about the Green Fort within O'Boyle Park, and while Forthill Men's Group, Art and History Society maintain a website providing information on the Green Fort, there is no information for visitors explaining the surrounding landscape, natural heritage or historical significance of the site or its relationship to Sligo town and the surrounding region.

## Part 5: Conservation Policies

### 5.1 Conservation Policies

### 5.2 Explanation

This Conservation Plan has set out the current understanding of the Green Fort, its significance and its vulnerability. The purpose of the conservation policies and actions set out below are:

- To ensure the conservation of the significant and vulnerable aspects of the fort
- To promote an understanding of the fort and its history
- To provide a guide for the future protection, conservation and management of the Green Fort, taking into account practical requirements for appropriate use as well as the need to retain significance.

The recommended policies are set out in italics below and are not in any order of priority. They are preceded by the information on which the policies are based and, where appropriate, are followed by examples of actions following from the policies. Policies should be read in conjunction with the associated text as this will make the context clear and help interpretation. The first section covers policies with a general application. The subsequent policies relate to the protection, conservation and management of the Green Fort, as well as the provision of public access and interpretation of the monument.

### 5.3 Vision for the Green Fort

The Green Fort is a bastioned artillery fort, an archaeological monument of National Importance, and the last visible reminder of Sligo's 17th century town fortifications. The site is a unique vantage point with 360° panoramic views over Sligo and the surrounding landscape, and also forms a significant green area within the urban area of Sligo which provides a valuable biodiversity asset to the town.

The vision for the Green Fort is to preserve and protect the fort as a cultural heritage site within a public park, and to explore its potential as a tourist attraction. Sligo County Council, in partnership with the relevant agencies and the local community, will endeavour to raise awareness of the Green Fort, protect and preserve the upstanding remains, and facilitate public access to the site.

*The vision of the community for the Green Fort, which is shared by the Council, is to protect and preserve it first and foremost as an archaeological monument and heritage site that:*

- 1. Is conserved and actively managed within a public park setting with the ongoing oversight and support of all relevant stakeholders.*
- 2. Is a source of pride within the local community and that, that pride is expressed in their involvement in its protection and promotion.*

*In addition to being an archaeological monument and heritage site, the Green Fort site also serves as a panoramic viewing platform, green amenity area and biodiversity haven within an urban setting that is safely and easily accessed and for which there are good interpretive resources available and is thus:*

- 3. An educational resource for schools and colleges, special interest groups and the wider public*
- 4. A popular local and national tourist visitor attraction.*

## 5.4 Basis of Approach

The Burra Charter is a useful general guide to the conservation of sites such as the Green Fort, Sligo. It provides a philosophical framework that can be flexible.

**Policy 001** *The future conservation and development of the place should be guided by the principles of the Australia ICOMOS charter for the Conservation of places of cultural significance (the Burra Charter) as revised 2013.*

**Policy 002** *The significance of the place and the assessments of individual items, contained in more detail in the policy section, should be accepted as the basis for future planning and work.*

**Policy 003** *The policies recommended and options discussed throughout this document should be endorsed as a guide to planning of future work at the Green Fort by Sligo County Council, other relevant owners and parties to the Conservation Plan.*

**Policy 004** *The Green Fort Conservation Plan should have a dedicated objective/policy within the forthcoming Sligo and Environs Local Area Plan.*

**Policy 005** *Conservation policies for the Green Fort should uphold all relevant statutory protections of its archaeological, historical, cultural and natural heritage.*

## 5.5 Continuity of Conservation Advice

Irreparable damage can be caused to archaeological monuments by inexperienced or inadequate professional advice.

**Policy 006** *Appropriate and experienced conservation advisers should be consulted in the planning and execution of any proposals.*

**Policy 007** *There will be compliance with all statutory requirements and relevant legislative provisions when planning and carrying out works to the Green Fort.*

## 5.6 Ownership

The Green Fort is in the shared ownership of Sligo County Council (SCC) and the Health Services Executive (HSE). While most of the monument is Council owned within O'Boyle Park, a portion of the monument (eastern section) is owned by the HSE, but is in effect isolated from the rest of the HSE land holding at Sligo University Hospital. Bringing the monument under single ownership would allow for more effective protection, management and presentation of the Green Fort within O'Boyle Park.

**Policy 008** *The Green Fort lands to be consolidated by agreement between Sligo County Council and the Health Service Executive, and brought under the Sligo County Council Parks management by lease or transfer of ownership.*

## 5.7 Landscape and Setting

The Green Fort is located on elevated ground to the north east of Sligo town. From its hilltop vantage point, the monument enjoys 360o panoramic views of the Sligo countryside.

The Green Fort is mostly located within O'Boyle Park, which is owned and managed by the Parks Department, Sligo County Council. O'Boyle Park is relatively isolated within Sligo Town due to its elevated location and that it is not readily overseen or observed by the public from surrounding public spaces. The Park has one dedicated access point from Connaughton Road, along with additional uncontrolled access points along the park boundary facilitating access for uncontrolled grazing and quads/scramblers. Day-to-day use of the Park is

limited to sports clubs using the playing pitches developed there. Apart from dog walkers, there is limited recreational use of O'Boyle Park. While Sligo County Council has a key role in developing and maintaining the capital sports facilities provided there, developing increased use of O'Boyle Park for sports activities is facilitated by Sligo County Council in partnership with Sligo Sports and Recreation Partnership, the Northside Centre and the sports clubs that use the Park. There is limited general recreational use of O'Boyle Park and there is no pedestrian access routed through the park to link the northern part of Sligo with the city centre.

The current low level of usage generally of O'Boyle Park has a direct impact on the Green Fort in terms of its protection, conservation, management, access and interpretation. While it is recognised that the use and management of O'Boyle Park are outside the remit of the Green Fort Conservation Plan, there are a number of policies relating to the use and management of O'Boyle Park, which would strengthen and underpin the Conservation Plan.

**Policy 009** *Enhanced management and presentation of the Green Fort as an integral feature of O'Boyle Park.*

**Policy 010** *Maintain and enhance the commanding views from the Green Fort over Sligo town and the surrounding landscape by controlling vegetation growth to maintain or open up viewing points from the monument.*

**Policy 011** *Resist proposals for works and development that may detract from the landscape setting of the Green Fort and views to and from the monument.*

**Policy 012** *Secure the boundary of O'Boyle Park from uncontrolled access to protect the Green Fort from uncontrolled grazing and mechanical vehicles.*

**Policy 013** *Horses and ponies shall not be permitted to graze at the Green Fort site so as to ensure that the monument is protected and to ensure that greater pedestrian use of the Green Fort ~~by pedestrians~~ can be facilitated through safe public access.*

**Policy 014** *Support the publication and operation of formal opening and closing times for O'Boyle Park.*

**Policy 015** *Sligo County Council to consider the preparation and adoption of byelaws for O'Boyle Park to address the policies above as appropriate.*

## **5.8 Archaeology**

The Green Fort is an earthen fort of National importance and is the last visible remains of the 17<sup>th</sup> century earthen defences of Sligo town. The extent of subsurface archaeology around the monument is likely to be significant, particularly as the site is a former battlefield ~~and was~~ in use through three military campaigns.

Like all archaeological and historical remains, earthen monuments are a finite resource and any damage is irreversible and results in the loss of archaeological deposits, information and form. The vulnerability of the Green Fort is dependent on the nature of how the site is managed, the nature of the monument in terms of its form, composition and location, and the environment that affects it. Best practice conservation advice would be to conserve the monument as found, thereby maintaining the continuous protective care of the monument, its features and its landscape setting.

**Policy 016** *Future conservation of the Green Fort will aim to protect and conserve the monument in its current form, and in compliance with the relevant statutory protections and consents.*

**Policy 017** *To protect the lands within and surrounding the fort from interference or damage as they have high potential for buried archaeology (e.g. extensive outer ramparts and former battlefield).*

**Policy 018** *To maintain the unique landscape setting and amenity of the Green Fort and to protect it from inappropriate development.*

**Policy 019** *To manage and control the trees and hedgerows on the Green Fort as part of the process of monument protection.*

**Policy 020** *To examine the best methods to prevent further encroachment of scrub and bramble on the monument and to control and/or remove scrub and bramble from the monument where deemed appropriate.*

**Policy 021** *To undertake a condition survey of the Green Fort every two years to record any changes to monument condition and visitor impacts on the monument in cooperation with IT Sligo.*

## 5.9 Ecology

The Green Fort and the lands immediately surrounding it provide valuable habitat of local importance for protected species within an urban setting. While small in scale, the lack of vegetation management on the Green Fort has resulted in growth of hedgerows and the spread of scrub and bramble. Large areas of rough grassland surround the monument with unimproved grassland within the centre of the monument. Wet grassland drainage ditches surround the Green Fort on three sides, as well as in the central platform. The site in its current form has moderate to low biodiversity value, but this could be significantly improved with appropriate management. Any works to improve the biodiversity of the Green Fort and its setting, must have regard to the archaeology of the site, which is of National importance.

**Policy 022** *Increase the biodiversity value of the Green Fort and the lands immediately surrounding it through appropriate vegetation management and control, while having regard to the need to protect the archaeology of the site.*

**Policy 023** *Carry out further habitat survey and an assessment of the biodiversity value of the Green Fort within optimal survey periods (April – September) so as to inform the preparation of a vegetation management plan for the site.*

**Policy 024** *Carry out a tree and hedgerow survey of the Green Fort and implement recommendations for pruning/felling work as required, while protecting the archaeology of the site.*

**Policy 025** *To prevent the further spread of scrub and bramble on the Green Fort and to examine the best methods to control and/or remove scrub and bramble from the monument where deemed appropriate.*

**Policy 026** *To formulate and implement an annual grass cutting programme for designated areas of the Green Fort.*

## 5.10 Folk History

The memories of the past of a place and its folklore are held and passed on from generation to generation by the local community and maintain a strong link between a community and its heritage.

**Policy 027** *The future management of the Green Fort will recognise that the history and traditions of the local community form a valuable part of its heritage, deserving of research and recording.*

## 5.11 Visitors

Visitor numbers to the Green Fort are low at present, but with greater awareness and improved access and interpretation, it is anticipated that visitor numbers will increase over time.

**Policy 028** *The future management of the Green Fort will acknowledge and the level of public interest*

*in the monument, to the degree that is sustainable and in conformity with conservation needs and statutory heritage protections.*

**Policy 029** *The future management of the Green Fort will seek to facilitate greater and sustainable visitor access to the monument, while having regard to the protection of the monument.*

**Policy 030** *That the number of visitors accessing O'Boyle Park and the Green Fort be monitored using counter systems where practicable in order to form a baseline to inform future proposals and management of the site.*

## **5.12 Access and Interpretation**

At present, visitor numbers to the Green Fort are low. However, the monument with its rich story, panoramic views of Sligo and the surrounding countryside, and proximity to the city centre has the potential for greater use by the local community and visitors alike. While a number of informal grass paths have developed over time, there are no formal/surfaced paths providing easy access to and around the monument. In addition, there is no directional signage guiding visitors to the Green Fort from the adjoining road network or on the best access route to explore the monument. While visitor numbers are low at present, sustainable development and improvement of the grassed path network would be sufficient at this time. However, in the future, increased awareness, access and visitor numbers to the Green Fort will require a review of access provision around the monument and the consideration of surfaced pathways for sustainable access, subject to the protection of the Green Fort and statutory requirements.

An information sign on the Green Fort was researched and installed by the Forthill Mens Group, Art and History Society with the support of Peace III. This is located at the entrance to O'Boyle Park. It is considered that the monument would benefit from interpretation, which tells the story of the Green Fort, its setting in the landscape and its function in defending Sligo town in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The panoramic views from the monument to the wider countryside provide an opportunity to tell the story of Sligo and its landscape from the scenic vantage point of the Green Fort.

**Policy 031** *Develop and implement an awareness, access and interpretation plan for the Green Fort with an initial focus on improving the existing informal grass path network to and around the monument, subject to archaeological assessment and the protection of the monument.*

**Policy 032** *Awareness, access and interpretation plan to be revised should visitor numbers increase significantly.*

**Policy 033** *Develop a guide map and interpretation leaflet for the Green Fort with complementary low-impact signage at key locations, including a child friendly version of this material.*

**Policy 034** *Monitor opportunities to develop and promote digital interpretative material for the Green Fort for the web and other social media platforms.*

**Policy 035** *Provide directional signage to the Green Fort from Sligo town and at the access point into O'Boyle Park from Connaughton Road.*

**Policy 036** *Support proposals to provide a new pedestrian access point into O'Boyle Park from Ash Lane, thereby increasing the permeability of the park for pedestrian access generally, and also to the Green Fort.*

**Policy 037** *Support proposals to create greater access links between O'Boyle Park and the HSE lands at Sligo General Hospital in order to encourage greater access to and use of the Green Fort for*

*pedestrians, subject to the protection of the monument and its amenity and setting.*

**Policy 038** *Provide training and support for volunteer site guides to foster further community participation in the promotion of the site as well as to enhance the educational and visitor experience.*

### 5.13 Knowledge Gaps

The following knowledge gaps need to be addressed in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

**Policy 039** *Undertake aerial drone photographic survey and 3D mapping of the Green Fort in order to generate an accurate baseline survey for future condition surveys, subject to statutory requirements.*

**Policy 040** *Undertake a geophysical survey of below ground archaeology on and surrounding the Green Fort in order to determine the full extent of the monument and to map the outer extent of the earthen defences.*

**Policy 041** *Sligo County Council will maintain an archival record of the Green Fort to be lodged with Sligo County Library and the National Monuments Service.*

**Policy 042** *To endeavour, where possible, to provide access to the Green Fort for academic research purposes.*

**Policy 043** *To encourage research about the Green Fort to promote its protection, and to increase the value of the archival record of the monument.*

**Policy 044** *Requests from relevant institutions, organisations and agencies to carry out non-destructive archaeological work on the site will be considered by Sligo County Council, in consultation with the relevant statutory bodies.*

### 5.14 Implementation and monitoring

The successful implementation of the Green Fort Conservation Plan will depend on the commitment of the main stakeholders to successfully achieving the following:

**Policy 045** *Form a management group to oversee the implementation of the Conservation Plan through annual work programmes.*

**Policy 046** *Adopt the general and specific policies in the Conservation Plan.*

**Policy 047** *Resolve issues of ownership and responsibility.*

**Policy 048** *Co-ordinate stakeholder's implementation procedures.*

**Policy 49** *Provide resources for the implementation of the Conservation Plan.*

**Policy 50** *Review the conservation plan and implementation measures in 5 years from year of adoption of the Green Fort Conservation Plan.*



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## Appendix 1- Archaeological Condition Assessment of the Green Fort, 2017

### The Green Fort: Conservation Report

Dr Jason Bolton MA DipArchaeology PhD MIAI

#### 1. Introduction

This archaeological condition assessment of the Green Fort was prepared by J. Bolton as part of the Green Fort Conservation Plan. The purpose of the report is to assess the vulnerabilities of the earthwork fortification, and to provide a record of the current condition of the fort.

#### 2. Background

##### 2.1 Location and Climate

The Green Fort is located on the summit of Fort hill in the townland of Rathquarter (Position 569546 836292) overlooking Sligo Town and is exposed to weather on all sides. Sligo has a west coast climate which is mild, with no dry season, warm summers and heavy precipitation occurring during mild winters. Annual mean temperature is 9.4°C with average monthly temperatures varying by 10.5°C. The average summer high temperature is 18°C, while in winter temperatures range from 8°C during the day falling to 1.3°C overnight. Total annual precipitation averages 1131mm.



Above: The Green Fort is located on a hill overlooking Sligo town, and is located on the exposed west coast of Ireland.

##### 2.2 Methodology and Limitations of Inspection

The assessment considered the current land use, size and shape of the earthwork, vegetation coverage, identifiable erosion processes and visible past and present management strategies in assessing the condition of the Green Fort. The assessment refers to two key concepts:

- **Erosion:** Loss to the earthwork by long-term attrition by physical, natural or human effects which can take place over tens or hundreds of years.
- **Damage:** A significant episode resulting in the weakening or loss of part of the monument. This may result from direct human intervention, or by a sudden natural event (e.g. a tree fall on an earthen bank).

There are a number of decay typologies which have been proposed for the assessment of earthen monuments, which broadly consider the following factors as being important for understanding deterioration:

- The surrounding environment - location, exposure to decay agents including water, wind, temperature etc.

- The materials - type(s) and stability of soil and any aggregate
- The architectural form and its history
- The building technique (monolithic excavated earth structure, poured earth, shaped earth, rammed earth etc).
- Past and present uses of the monument (history of use and abandonment, human activity, past changes, repairs or alterations etc.)

There are no previous condition assessments of the monument, and the presence of mature hedgerows create difficulties for accurate survey work. The fort is most easily viewed and understood through aerial photographs. Ordnance survey mapping is the basis for official maps of the fort. A series of drawings and overlays have been prepared by Sam Moore, IT Sligo, which provide the best representations of the current and past extents of the Green Fort.

### **2.3 Decay Processes affecting Earthwork Monuments**

Earth is one of the most widely used construction materials in the world, yet it is also one of the most vulnerable. Over time, declining expertise in earthen construction, lack of maintenance and poor management of resources tend to lead to the decay of earthen structures.

The deterioration of earthen architecture are typically found at the top of the structure where erosion occurs if it is not protected by an adequate roof or shelter, and at the base where water is present. Deterioration may occur from a combination of intrinsic (associated with material composition or construction type) and extrinsic/external factors (human activity, water, wind and other environmental agents). Relatively little has been published on the weathering processes of earthen structures and materials (in contrast to the wealth of material available on stone, timber, plasters, mortars and metals) and most publications on earthen structures are focused on adobe brick and rammed earth construction and the stabilisation of excavated archaeological sites rather than field monuments such as the Green Fort.

It should be noted that earthwork monuments are not generally at risk from single catastrophic events, and deterioration of an earthwork monument is often the result of the accumulation of a combination of processes occurring over time. Earthworks in Ireland are generally constructed of the materials available at the site, and are often formed of glacial drift material that is variable in nature. In addition, the steepness of any slope plays an important role in the durability of an earthwork, and historical records indicate that the defensive ditches associated with fortifications regularly required repair to allow them to remain serviceable for defence. The geometry of the monument, especially where water collects and flows is also important, as almost all soil fills are adversely affected by water seepage. The geometry of banks and ditches can also encourage visitor or animal movement around the perimeter resulting initially in simple erosion but eventually to the loss of the toe of the bank and eventual collapse or displacement of the bank, especially in breaks or gaps where movement is concentrated. In general, the key agents of damage and erosion to earthwork monuments are animals, uncontrolled vegetation growth, and human activity.

- **Burrowing animals** generally exploit slope faces and favour locations beneath thick vegetation which affords privacy and protection from predators. **Grazing animals** crop ground cover vegetation, leaving root systems intact and allowing them to regenerate over time. However, over winter months and after bouts of rainfall, softer ground is more liable to puddling/poaching.
- **Vegetation** acts to protect an earthen slope and vulnerable soil surfaces, and suitably selected and maintained vegetation cover is important in resisting surface erosion. An uncovered, unbound earthwork surface is unable to resist the impacts of natural weathering, animal activity and visitor pressure. Trees typically have an extensive root system, and those of a significant size can pose a threat to sub-surface archaeology while alive, and to the stability of the earthwork after death.
- **Human activity** may include visitor pressure, development, and accidental or intentional damage.

### 3. Condition Assessment

The Green Fort is an earthwork artillery fortification measuring approximately 86m N-S by 90m E-W externally, and 45m by 49m E-W internally, standing c.3.9m high at its maximum, enclosing an area of approximately 7.7 acres/3100m<sup>2</sup>. The fort comprises a raised rectangular platform, with spear-shaped gun bastions at each of the four corners, encircled by angled earthen slopes and ditches. The fort retains no standing structures, internal features (entrances, covered way, gun emplacements, well etc.), and no surface indication of outer defensive works. The monument now forms part of a field system and has no regular access path, but informal access is gained from Connaughton Road and from the public car park within O'Boyle Park. The site lies on raised ground

c.30m north of Connaughton Road/R286 adjacent to the entrance of Sligo University Hospital.

The south and eastern sides of the fort, including the south-east and south-west bastions, feature mature hedgerows. The interior of the fort, the west and north banks and the north-east and north-west bastions show grass cover, with wet boggy ground conditions found within the northern ditch and along the east side of the fort. A later field boundary intersects the south-west bastion at the south-west corner of the site.

#### 3.1 Visibility of the Monument

While the shape and extent of the Green Fort is very clearly seen in maps and aerial photographs, it is difficult to appreciate the archaeological significance of the fort from ground level, especially as no upstanding structures survive within the fort, and the extensive outworks survive only below ground level. In contrast to the often clearly defined boundaries and upstanding remains of stone archaeological monuments, earthworks can be more difficult to understand, and in general the perception of landowners and the general public towards the protection and management of earthworks is perceptibly different to that of ruined churches or castles for instance. While the Green Fort is located on a hill-top, it is conversely a low visibility monument due to its original design (artillery fortifications were designed to have a low profile to protect them from gunfire), and subsequent vegetation development which obscures the monument, rendering it difficult to distinguish from hedgerows. From within O'Boyle Park, the fort is visible from the car park, but is not easily recognisable as a monument. The bastions become clear on close inspection and from within the fort, but require interpretation for the general public to understand and appreciate the extent of the fort. Therefore, there is likely to be little public awareness of the presence or significance of the Green Fort.



Above: The Green Fort is delineated by hedgerows, and it is not clear from Connaughton Road that the site is an archaeological monument.



*Above: The grassy path towards the fort from the O'Boyle Park car park is visible, however, it is not immediately clear that the raised bank and hedgerows beyond are part of an earthwork fortification.*



*Above: On closer viewing, the bastions become clearer as an earthwork feature. However, it would be difficult for the general public to appreciate the archaeological significance of the fort without interpretation in the form of a guided tour or additional signage.*



*Above: The bastions are the most easily recognisable feature of the Green Fort from ground level, and are best viewed from within and immediately adjacent to the fort.*



Above: View along the north bank showing the north-west bastion with Sligo Bay in the background. The bank and wide ditch are visible but may not be recognisable as part of an archaeological monument to a casual visitor.



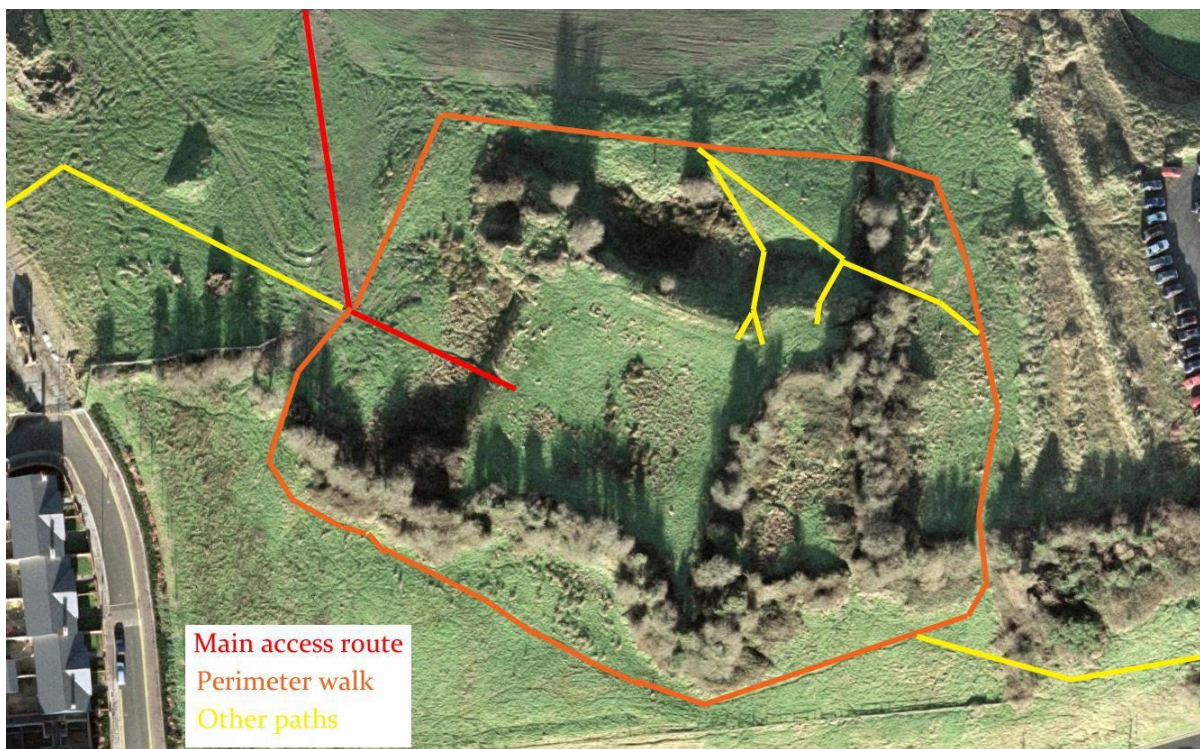
Above: The elements of the Green Fort (raised platform, banks, ditch, bastions) can be difficult to read, and despite the presence of two Fógra notices from the National Monuments Service and the information board placed at the entrance to the park, it may be difficult for the general public to understand the layout and significance of the fort.



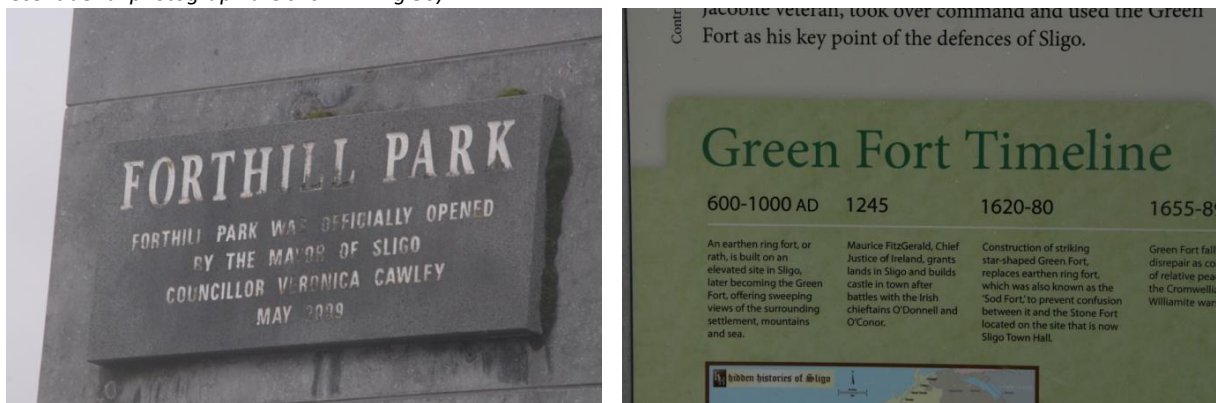
Above: The east side of the fort is partly water-logged and overgrown and is largely inaccessible, and it is not clear that an archaeological monument is present.

### 3.2 Land Use and Visitor Traffic

Earthworks are found in a variety of locations and areas of land use from rural areas rarely visited by tourists, to highly trafficked areas such as the Hill of Tara in Co. Meath or where archaeological monuments have become a major tourist attraction. The Green Fort was inspected a number of times over the course of the Conservation Plan process during the morning and afternoon. The main access path onto the fort appears to be in daily use, and showed some poaching on the west bank of the fort. Subsidiary pathways are found on the north bank, and overgrown pathways were noted on the south bank. However, the access points through the hedgerows on the south bank appear overgrown, and most visitor traffic appears to pass around the southern perimeter of the fort and accesses Connaughton Road adjacent to the entrance to Sligo University Hospital. The east side of the fort is overgrown and partly waterlogged, and does not appear to attract visitors. Overall, there appears to be very low visitor numbers to the site, with most site inspections encountering either no visitors, or single visitors. Despite the proximity of sporting facilities and a nearby car park, both of which are in active use, there appears to be very little visitor traffic to the fort, and negligible damage caused by visitors.



Above: Walking routes around the Green Fort show before the development of the playing fields (walking routes on a more recent aerial photograph are shown in Fig.30).

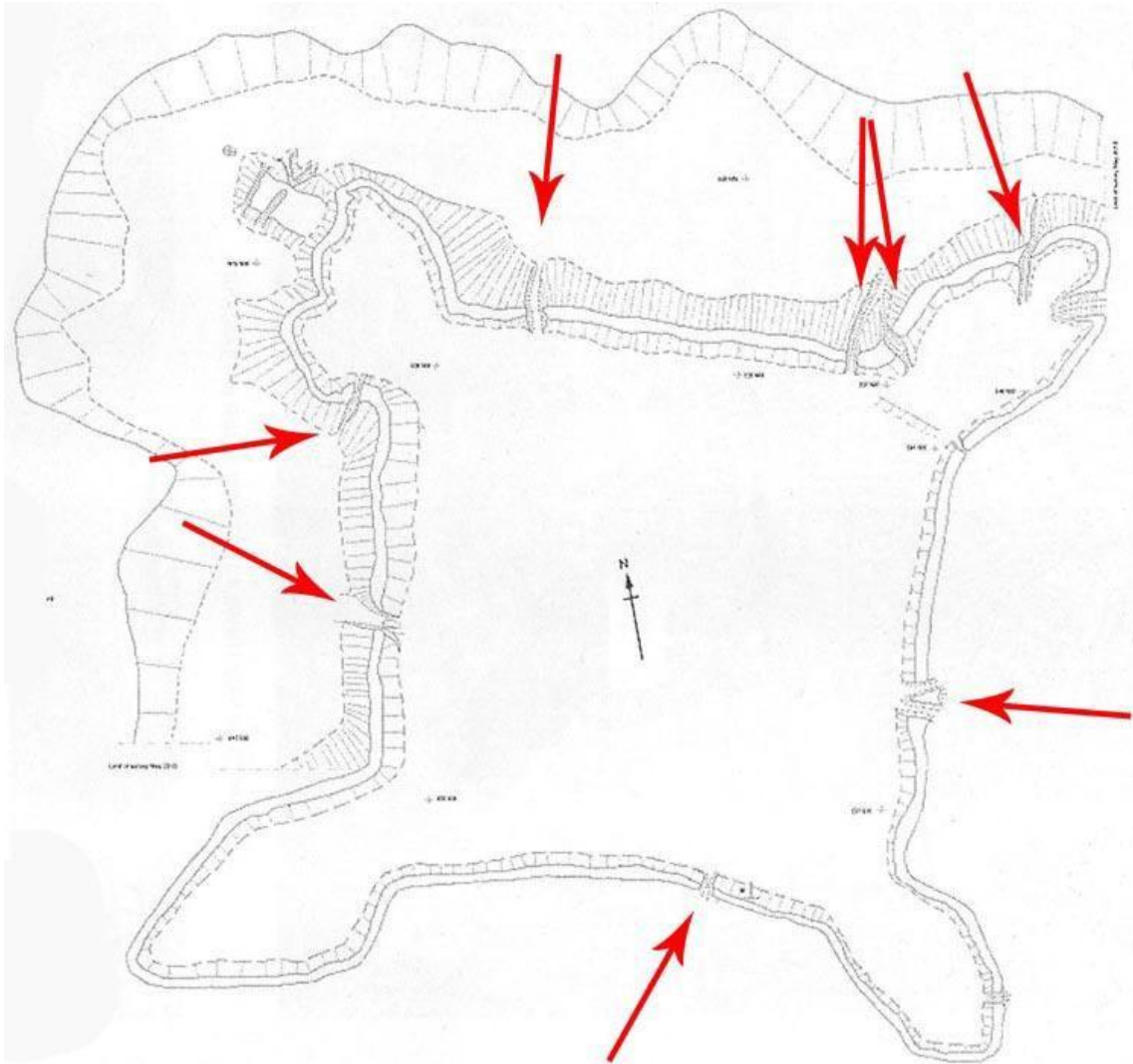


Above: The Green Fort is located in O'Boyle Park which was officially opened in 2009. The entrance to the park is through a housing estate and is not signposted from Connaughton Road, with an information board about the Green Fort.



### 3.3 Deterioration of the Earthwork

The earthwork banks show erosion and loss at access points where pedestrian and animal activity is concentrated. These appear as cuts into the bank, with loss of the protective vegetation cover and exposure of the underlying soil where traffic is concentrated. In general, loss to the structure of the Green Fort appears to be the result of attrition over a long time period rather than sudden damage (see Section 3.6).



Above: Pedestrian entry points onto the Green Fort, drawing courtesy of Sam Moore, IT Sligo.



Above: The main access onto the fort shows minor damage from human and animal traffic.



Above: Access routes on the north bank of the fort forming relatively deep cuts into the earthen banks.



Above: The east side of the fort is largely inaccessible (left). The south bank and bastions are largely overgrown and former access paths are closing up. Access paths on the south slope are indicated by trackways of exposed soil.

### 3.4 Vegetation

The majority of the fort is covered with pasture and hedgerows (see Appendix 2 - Green Fort Flora and Fauna). The central area of the fort platform is closely grazed, and shows vegetation suggesting parts become waterlogged, possibly indicating the source of a well within the fort. The east and south banks have developed to become mature hedgerows, and obscure the east and south banks and the south-east bastion. The south-western bastion is overgrown with brambles and its extent and condition could not be established. The north-western bastion shows grass and small trees, while the north-east bastion is grassed. Stretches of the north and east banks are waterlogged and muddy. While these are vulnerable to poaching and puddling, they are unattractive to pedestrians and livestock and show no significant damage.



Above: The central section of the fort appears waterlogged at times, and pathways through the fort tend to avoid this area.



Above: The south-west bastion is obscured by brambles and its extent is unclear.

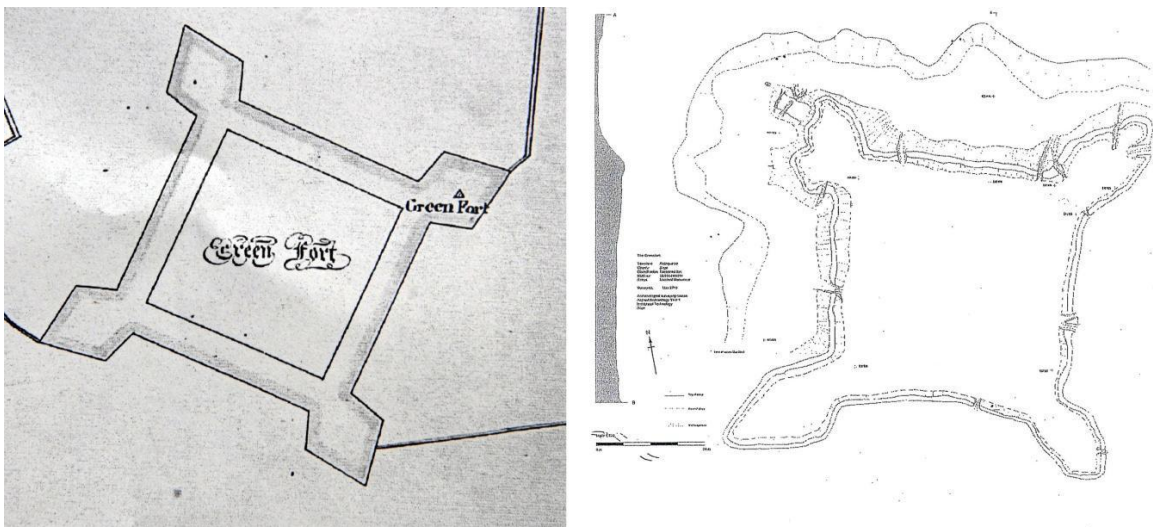


Above: The southern side of the Green Fort features mature vegetation and is arguably the most imposing side of the monument, with views over Sligo town.

### 3.5 Animals

Two small ponies were observed to use the main platform of the Green Fort for grazing, and while some poaching was noted on the approach over the west bank, the ponies cause relatively little disturbance to the fort due to their size and the low stocking rate. Occasionally, horses also graze the slopes south of the ramparts and above Connaughton Road. The fort is also used by dog walkers. Burrowing animals in the form of rabbits and a badger are present at the fort. A badger sett is present on the eastern hedgerow, and while in use, is believed to be an outlier sett rather than the main sett (see Appendix 2 - Green Fort Fauna and Flora). However, in general, animal activity does not appear to be having a significant impact on the monument, but will require ongoing monitoring to ensure that the condition of the monument does not deteriorate over time.

### 3.6 Attrition



Above: Contrast between the 1837 Ordnance Survey map of the Green Fort (left) and a drawing prepared by Sam Moore, IT Sligo in June 2016 (right) showing recession of all four banks, and loss of detail to all bastions.

All banks and bastions show recession, most likely arising from long-term attrition. Relatively deep ruts have been cut into the north bank by pedestrian traffic, and abrasion of vegetation and exposure of the soil can be seen where pedestrian access occurs at small points on the west and south banks. All four bastions show significant loss of profile, and their spear-shaped plan indicated on historic maps does not survive on the ground today. None of the bastions retain their spear-shaped plan, and all four show slumping of their slopes. All ditches surrounding the fort also appear to be partly filled in due to an accumulation of material over time. There is no trace of any original entrance or entrances to the fort, and no trace at surface level of any structures or features. It should be noted that the fort is weathered, and to 'restore' it to the profile indicated on nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey maps, it would be necessary to add a substantial amount of new earth to re-build the bastions and re-form the defensive banks. However, there is no clear indication as to exactly where the bastions originally extended to, and any restoration works would be conjectural and extremely damaging to any sub-surface archaeological deposits or features.

### **3.7 Other Archaeological Features**

Apart from the platform, bastions and ditches of the fort, there are no other archaeological features visible at ground level at the Green Fort or in the immediate area. There is no indication of where the original entrance or entrances were located, no trace of any structures or defensive walls in either the fort or its environs, and no visible trace of the extensive outer defensive earthworks which enveloped the fort which are known from documentary sources and previous archaeological excavations elsewhere in the Forthill area. There is therefore likely to be a significant amount of buried archaeological features and deposits from the fort, and potentially from an earlier ringfort which is suspected to have stood on Forthill before the Green Fort was constructed. In addition, there is likely to be a certain amount of battlefield archaeological remains (burials, shot etc.) present at and around the fort. The condition and extent of any buried archaeology is unknown.



*Above: Overlay of Luttrell's plan of the Green Fort and adjacent late seventeenth-century earthwork town defences prepared by Sam Moore, IT Sligo. No trace of these extensive earthen defences are visible at ground level. However, nearby archaeological excavations have confirmed that stretches of these defences survive below ground level.*

#### **4. Approaches to Earthwork Fort Conservation**

A great deal of conservation work has been undertaken on fortifications in recent years, aimed to retain the values of military heritage structures, and seeking opportunities to turn often forgotten and neglected structures, as well as the spaces they occupy, into a focal point for revitalising a local area. This has been a global phenomenon with artillery forts restored and conserved in Europe, the Americas and across Asia. The focus has been largely on providing fortified heritage sites with a use that is compatible with its historic character, but also provides for a sustainable future for the site. In most cases, there are only a limited number of opportunities to turn a fort into a museum, a tourist attraction or a performing arts centre, and increasingly, new innovative uses are sought for fortifications. A key feature of the conservation of fortifications has been community engagement, and seeking public uses (including innovative new uses) for fortifications.

"fortresses have gone from being a centre of power for defence to a centre of power for citizens, inasmuch as they represent a place to meet up, for public enjoyment, leisure etc"<sup>19</sup>.

However, most of the work undertaken internationally on fortifications have focused on large fortifications such as the star-shaped fortresses encircling the cities of Milan in Italy and Pamplona in Spain. In many places, forts exist as part of a group, and approaches to their conservation have moved to forming a network of fortifications, for example on the island of Malta, Rome and within the Venetian lagoon. Major capital investment is often required, and works are generally undertaken in cities and other areas with high population centres. The vast majority of conservation works to fortifications have been carried out on stone fortifications such as Charles Fort, Co. Cork, and Duncannon Fort, Co. Wexford where there are structures as well as defensive ditches available, which increases the flexibility of the site for potential new use(s).



*Above: The bastioned fort of Cromwell's Barracks, on Port Island defending Inisbofin Harbour, Co. Galway.*

Earthwork fortifications in Ireland tend to survive as field monuments, most often conserved as part of a parks setting. Most Irish earthen forts survive as earthworks with hedgerows developing along their boundaries such as at Monaghan Fort, Co. Monaghan, while others such as Mullanashee Fort at Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, no longer survive above ground. A small number of forts, such as James Fort in Kinsale, Co. Cork, act as public parks. However, the majority of earthen bastioned forts in Ireland survive as field monuments with no interpretation, such as Dun an Oir in Smerwick, Co. Kerry, or the bastioned forts of Valentia Island. This pattern is also found internationally, with only exceptional sites such as the 'Queen's Sconce', in Newark-on-Trent in the United Kingdom, being developed as part of a major public park development. In this context, such as with the 'Queen's Sconce', the fortification is preserved as cultural heritage within a large area of open grass and woodlands, with supporting facilities, parking, public toilets, a cafe, children's play area and fitness and walking trails provided to provide a range of activities to encourage public use of the area.



Above: Contrast between the earthwork defences of James Fort (left) and the stone defences of Charles Fort (right) defending Kinsale, Co. Cork. Both are star-shaped bastion forts, Charles Fort is a major tourist attraction, while James Fort acts as a public park.

Internationally, earthwork fortifications in Europe have also followed this general pattern of abandonment and re-use as part of public parks or visitor attractions. For example, the Labirinto Delle Masone outside Parma in northern Italy was re-imagined as a garden maze. However, most forts have standing structures which allow more potential new uses. Those surviving only as earthworks, tend to be retained as landscape features.



Above: The star-shaped fort of Labirinto Delle Masone, Parma, Italy, re-created as a garden maze.

**Appendix 2- Green Fort Ecology Report**

**The Green Fort, Sligo: Conservation Plan Ecology Report**

Dr Niamh Roche MCIEEM

**General Introduction**

The Green Fort is situated within an urban setting on elevated ground in Sligo town. To the north and west there are playing fields and hard surfaced driveways/parking spaces. It is bounded by Sligo hospital grounds to the east. Local access roads (the Mall and the R286) border it to the south. The area of the Green Fort itself, and the grasslands and hedgerows immediately adjacent to it, remain undeveloped, however.

The panoramic views of surrounding mountain ranges and Sligo Bay from the Green Fort, Sligo are a highlight for the visitor to this site. However, the Green Fort also offers an area of relatively undisturbed wildlife habitat. The presence of a number of song bird species, mammals and a variety of habitats with native flora, albeit small in area, means that it is reasonably biodiverse. Its situation within the intensive urban setting of Sligo town suggests that it has considerable potential as a local resource for biodiversity education and nature walks. In addition, there are management strategies that could be adopted to ensure that it retains its complement of existing species in tandem with increased visitor numbers, while improving its attractiveness to pollinators.

**Assessment Method**

**General Flora and Fauna**

The Green Fort site was walked systematically, while noting vascular plant species, habitat types, and searching for signs of mammal activity or live mammals. Signs of mammal activity include tracks and footprints, discarded prey items, scats and burrows or other resting places. Bird species were noted whenever encountered. Habitats were categorised to Level 3 Fossitt (2000).

Ecology survey work was carried out on the site on November 24<sup>th</sup> 2016 and January 7<sup>th</sup> 2017. Field work was carried out by Dr Niamh Roche MCIEEM who was accompanied on the visit in January by Dr Don Cotton. Seasonal constraints were such that it was not possible to compile a comprehensive species list for the site. However, it was possible to determine elements of interest and importance.

This assessment was guided by a number of publications such as biodiversity Red Lists (e.g. Marnell, et al., 2009; Wyse Jackson *et al.*, 2016), identification guides (Stace 1997; Parnell and Curtis 2012) the *Irish Guide to Habitats in Ireland* by Fossitt (2000), and other relevant publications such as *The Irish Mammal Atlas* (Lysaght and Marnell, 2016) and the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan* (Anon., 2015). An ecology survey and report on the Green Fort site and the area that now constitutes the playing fields was carried out by Don Cotton in 2001 and this document was also consulted. Domestic and international legislation such as the Wildlife Act (2000) as amended, the Flora Protection Order (1999) and the EU Habitats Directive & Regulations are referred to as appropriate.

#### *Desk Survey: Biodiversity Records & Consultation*

The Green Fort location was checked for records of species of conservation importance, using the National Biodiversity Data Centre website mapping service. This search resulted in quite a number of biological records dating from the 1800s to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, many of which were not likely to occur on the site but which arose due to overlap of the study site with survey tetrads (records for shore birds, seaweeds, aquatic species etc.).

Some red-listed, protected or threatened species have been recorded from within a 5km radius although most are highly unlikely to occur on the site itself. The Bat Conservation Ireland database [www.batconservationireland.org](http://www.batconservationireland.org) was checked for the presence of any bat roost or activity records for the area.

Local interest groups and ecologists were contacted for information about the site including; the Sligo Tidy Town environment representative, Dr Don Cotton and Barbara McInerney. NPWS were emailed about the Conservation Plan although it had not responded at the time of this report.

#### **The Green Fort Habitats**

The Green Fort is situated in an elevated area to the north of the Garvoge River, Sligo. The following habitats occur in mosaic on the site:

- Unimproved pasture (Fossitt Habitat GS1 – dry calcareous and neutral grassland)
- Marsh vegetation grading to wet grassland (Fossitt Habitat GM1 Marsh/GS4 Wet Grassland)
- Scrub dominated by bramble (Fossitt Habitat WS1 Scrub)
- Rough unimproved grassland (Fossitt Habitat GS2 Dry meadows and grassy verges)
- Hedgerows (Fossitt Habitat WL1 Hedgerow)

#### *Unimproved pasture (GS1)*

Within the confines of the fort itself grassland is currently grazed by horses and the sward is cropped short in places. On the steep-sided embankments, where horses cannot graze regularly, the sward is longer. Among the species noted on unimproved pasture on the site were creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*), self heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), cats ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), clover (*Trifolium* spp.), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), crested dogs tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) and sweet vernal grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*).





**Figure 1: Unimproved grassland at the Green Fort in the foreground. This close-cropped sward is currently maintained by grazers. Rough grassland can be seen in the middle distance. November 24th 2016.**

### **Recommendations**

If grazing ceases then a mowing regime should be devised within the boundaries of the fort itself. At present, the grazing regime is too intensive to allow flowering of the diverse range of grassland species. Therefore, it is recommended that pasture on the site should not be mowed until after the orchid flowering season (approx. mid-July), with the exception of any grassed pathways. A light mowing regime (every 3 weeks approximately) with the mower set to a high sward setting (with the exception of grassed pathways) should then be used for the remainder of the season. Clippings should be removed and composted off-site or on another part of the site.

### *Marsh/Wet Grassland (GM1)*

In depressions immediately surrounding the fort and also in circular patches within the fort itself there are areas of wet grassland with elements of marsh vegetation. The species most clearly visible during the winter is flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), although other water-tolerant species are also present including hairy willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) and various rushes soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), hard rush (*Juncus inflexus*) and jointed rush (*Juncus articulatus*). Hairy willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) was also present. Hairy sedge (*Carex hirta*) was found in one location where marsh-type vegetation graded into bramble scrub.



**Figure 2: Marsh/wet grassland in the north-facing ditch at the Green Fort. Rushes, flag iris and grasses are the main plants visible in winter. November 24th 2016.**



**Figure 3: Marsh/wet grassland on the Green Fort itself. November 24th 2016.**

### **Recommendations**

These habitats are typically maintained by light grazing to prevent development to scrubland. Therefore, in the absence of grazing a single mowing late in the season (or even every two to three years to allow flowering of flag irises) may suffice to maintain these habitats and prevent succession to willow scrub.

*Bramble dominated scrub (WS1)*

Due to the absence of grazing or mowing in parts of the site, brambles are spreading from hedgerows. In places these form impenetrable thickets. Plant species in and around scrub include bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), robin-run-the-hedge (*Galium aparine*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cocksfoot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), hairy sedge (*Carex hirta*) and bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*).



**Figure 4 Scrub dominated by brambles spreading from the south facing hedgerow at the Green Fort. November 24th 2016.**

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that further encroachment of bramble scrub is prevented and controlled. The bramble scrub already present could be retained on the site, however, to provide shelter and food for songbirds and mammals as well as food for pollinators. Any bramble control should be carried out by hand using non mechanical means rather than chemical sprays and should not be carried out during the bird nesting season March 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. Targeted use of chemicals can be considered using a wipe application system for removal/control of dense bramble thickets and scrub.

*Rough grassland (GS2)*

This grassland has not been maintained by grazing. As a result of the lack of cutting or trampling a matt of decomposing vegetation has formed under the sward in places and in others it grades into scrub. Species that are found here include rough grasses such as false oat, cock's foot, Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), smooth meadowgrass (*Poa pratensis*) as well as herbaceous plants including, field thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), ragwort, bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*), broad dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), sharp flowered rush (*Juncus acutiflorus*) and nettles (*Urtica dioica*).



**Figure 5: Rough grassland with various grass species and creeping buttercup. Facing north towards Ben Bulbin and the Dartry Mountains at the Green Fort. November 24th 2016.**

### **Recommendations**

Most of the areas immediately surrounding the Green Fort constitute rough grassland. An annual mowing regime is recommended. While some plants found in rough grassland, such as nettles, docks and thistles may be considered unsightly by some, they are hugely beneficial for many invertebrates including butterflies and pollinators. Therefore, it is not recommended that they should be controlled by herbicidal sprays or mechanical means other than as part of an annual mowing regime.

### *Hedgerows (WL1)*

Hedgerows on the site provide shelter and food sources for songbirds and mammals. Taller woody species found along the hedgerows include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), willow (*Salix* sp.), and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*). Herbaceous ground flora species include broad buckler fern (*Dryopteris dilatata*), scaly male fern (*Dryopteris affinis*), male fern (*Dryopteris filix-mas*), soft shield fern (*Polystichum setiferum*), harts tongue fern (*Phyllitis scolopendrium*), germander speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*), lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), lesser hogweed (*Heraclium sphondylium*), tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*) and lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*).



**Figure 6: Hedgerow with hawthorn, ash and ivy as well as bramble scrub at its base, the Green Fort. November 24th 2016.**

A badger sett was found along an easterly hedgerow. One active entrance was located, with considerable deposit of bedding at its opening in January 2017, and a second large burrow entrance that may occasionally be used by foxes and/or badgers was also found along the same hedgerow. Placement of the bedding partially obstructing the entrance suggests that this sett may not be permanently used and may instead be a regularly used annex or outlier sett, rather than main sett.



**Figure 7: Active badger sett at the Green Fort January 7th 2017. Fresh bedding was deposited at the entrance.**

## Recommendations

It is recommended that hedgerows are left as they are, where they are not causing damage to the monument. Little management is required since they do not need to be stockproof. Any hedgerow management, such as trimming should not be carried out during the bird nesting season March 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>.

### Birds

A number of bird species typical of hedgerows were identified during winter surveys. These included robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), dunnoek (*Prunella modularis*), blackbird (*Turdus merula*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), wood pigeon (*Columba palumbus*), magpie (*Pica pica*), wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*), jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*), hooded crow (*Corvus cornix*) and blue tit (*Cyanistes caeruleus*). Two species were recorded that specialise on grassland habitats: meadow pipit (*Anthus pratensis*) and snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). Seabirds were also observed in flight over the site but are not expected to occur on it. These included oystercatchers (*Haematopus ostralegus*), black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*) and common gull (*Larus canus*).

Meadow pipits are red-listed due to serious declines from 2009. Snipe are amber-listed due to moderate declines in Europe. Song birds are protected under the Wildlife Act and it is an offence to trim hedgerows between March 1<sup>st</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>.

## Recommendations

In order to provide food sources and shelter for birds all year round, the diversity of habitats on the site should be retained, as should hedgerows and some bramble thickets. Herbicidal or pesticidal sprays should not be used in the site. Any bramble control or hedgerow management should be carried out by hand (not with machinery) means rather than chemical sprays and should not be carried out during the bird nesting season March 1<sup>st</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. Nesting meadow pipits may be vulnerable to disturbance by dogs: Signage at entrances to the site should ask visitors to keep their dogs on leads with a short explanation as to why.

### Mammals

An active badger (*Meles meles*) sett (although possibly an outlier/annex) is located on the south-east hedgerow on the site. In January 2017, a large amount of bedding material was deposited at the single entrance on that occasion. An additional entrance that may be used by badgers and/or foxes was found along the same hedgerow. At least one fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) is also present on the site. Hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europeus*), Irish stoat (*Mustela erminea subsp. Hibernica*), pygmy shrew (*Sorex minutus*), rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) and wood mice (*Apodemus sylvaticus*) are likely to occur although were not recorded during the survey. Badgers, hedgehogs, stoat and shrews are protected under the Wildlife Act. There was some evidence of rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) burrows although fresh rabbit droppings were not noted. Rabbits, foxes and rats are not protected under wildlife legislation. Several species of bat have been recorded in the vicinity of the site, in Sligo Town and its environs. Species include Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) (on the Garavogue River), brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*), common and soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, *P. pygmaeus*) and Leisler's bats (*Nyctalus leisleri*). The two pipistrelles species may be expected to forage on the site from time to time, particularly along the hedgerows.

## **Recommendations**

The diversity of habitats on the site should be retained, as should hedgerows and some bramble thickets. Herbicidal or pesticidal sprays should not be used in the site. Badger setts may be vulnerable to disturbance by dogs: Signage at entrances to the site should ask visitors to keep their dogs on leads with a short explanation as to why. Also, should scrub clearance be proposed, a badger survey should be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure the animals will not be impacted. Maintaining dense vegetation in and around the badger sett entrances would be important to prevent disturbance by humans.

### *Pollinators*

In accordance with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan it is recommended that mowing regimes are devised that allow flowering of most grasslands on site. Along the margins of the site, perhaps along with paved areas or places that have already been subject to disturbance, wild flower meadow seed (**of native provenance only**) could be used. In addition, potential nesting sites for solitary bees could be increased along the south facing slope of the site – along the boundary with Connaughton Road for example. Removing vegetation and exposing soil underneath from a number of small areas (e.g. 5 areas of 1x1m), but that will not cause erosion, may be sufficient to attract solitary mining bees, subject to archaeological considerations.

## **Other Recommendations**

*Information panels for biodiversity* - Two kinds could be considered for the site:

1. Illustrations of the panoramic views and highlighting scenery of interest in the distance and middle distance. Geological summaries of the Dartry and Ox Mountain ranges would be appropriate here, as well as information about the habitats visible from a distance. Information about Sligo Bay and its habitats would also be appropriate.
2. Illustrations of the wild birds and plants found on the site.

### *Pathways*

In order to facilitate access for the public a combination of hard and soft landscaped pathways could be considered. Any hard surfaced pathways that are developed on the site should be as narrow as possible (given that the site is small) and kept to the outer perimeter so that the majority of visitors, who will stick to paths, will not disturb wildlife. On the green fort itself which has diverse unimproved grassland flora, mowed pathways are recommended at present. If trampling results in erosion of the fort embankments or poaching of marsh soils, other means of provided access such as wooden steps/elevated boardwalks may be considered. Mowed pathways up and over the fort should be routed to avoid the south eastern corner of the fort since this is where there are steep sided banks.

### *Night lighting*

Artificial night lighting has a detrimental impact on many wildlife species. In order to maintain wildlife habitat integrity increased lighting in the vicinity of the Green Fort at night should be avoided unless there are essential health and safety reasons for doing so. Any installations should be of as low lumen as possible and set on low bollards with hoods, caps or louvres to prevent unintended overspill into areas where not required.

**Table 1: List of plant species recorded during visits to the Green Fort site in November 2016 and January 2017.** The following list does not constitute an exhaustive account of the species present.

GS1: Unimproved Grassland. This includes short cropped grass on the fort proper and slightly longer sward found on its steep sided embankments. Occasional patches of this grassland type are also found in mosaic with rough grassland.

GS2: Rough grassland. This is former pasture that has been left unmown and mostly ungrazed.

GM1: Marsh vegetation/wet grassland. Found in the ditch on three sides of the fort (with the exception of the well drained south facing side) and in waterlogged patches within the fort itself.

WL1: Hedgerows

WS1: Scrub – mainly bramble dominated scrub that has developed from hedgerows.

Main Habitat	Species Latin Name	Species Common Name
GS1, GS2	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
GS1, GS2, WS1	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping bent
WL1	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder
GS1, GS2	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal grass
GS2, WS1	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oatgrass
WL1	<i>Arum maculatum</i>	Lords and ladies
GS1	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy
GM1	<i>Carex hirta</i>	Hairy sedge
GS1, GS2	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	Knapweed
GS2	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Field mouse ear
GS2	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Field thistle
GS1	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle
GS1	<i>Clover</i>	Trifolium sp.
WL1	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn
GS1	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested dogs tail
GS2	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocksfoot
WL1	<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	Scaly male fern
WL1	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	Broad buckler fern
WL1	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	Male fern
GM1	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Hoary willowherb
GM1	<i>Flag Iris</i>	Iris pseudacorus
WL1	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
WS1, WL1	<i>Galium aparine</i>	Robin-run-the-hedge
WL1	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
GS2, WS1	<i>Heraclium sphondylium</i>	Lesser hogweed
GS2	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire for
WL1	<i>Hypericum androsaemum</i>	Tutsan
GS1	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cats ear
WL1	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly
GS2, GM1	<i>Juncus acutiflorus</i>	Sharp flowered rush
GM1	<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	Articulated rush
GM1	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft rush
GM1	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	Hard rush
WL1	<i>Phyllitis scolopendrium</i>	Hart's tongue fern



GS1, GS2	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain
GS1, GS2	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	Smooth meadowgrass
WL1	<i>Polystichum setiferum</i>	Soft shield fern
GS2	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	Silverweed
GS1	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self heal
WL1	<i>Prunus spinose</i>	Blackthorn
WL1	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken
GS1	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup
WL1	<i>Ranunculus ficaria</i>	Lesser celandine
GS1, GS2	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup
GS2, WL1	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble
GS2	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Sorrel
GS2	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broad dock
WL1	<i>Salix sp.</i>	Willow sp.
WL1	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
GS1, GS2	<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort
GS1, GS2	<i>Taraxacum officinales agg.</i>	Dandelion
GS2	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettle
GS2, WL1	<i>Veronica chamaedrys</i>	Germander speedwell
GS1, GS2	<i>Vicia sepium</i>	Bush vetch
WL1	<i>Viola sp.</i>	Violet

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Kerr, J.S. (1996) *The Conservation Plan: a guide to the preparation of Conservation Plans for places of European cultural significance*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., The National Trust of Australia (NSW), Sydney.

<sup>2</sup> Further information on the conservation plan process can be found in 'Conservation Plans for Historic Places', Heritage Lottery Fund, 1998 and 'The Conservation Plan' by James Semple Kerr, National Trust of Australia, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Clarke, C.M. (2001) *Informed conservation: understanding historic buildings and their landscapes for conservation*. London. English Heritage

<sup>4</sup> Halpin, E. 2002. "Archaeological excavation at Sligo Town Hall Gate Lodge, June 2002", in Timoney, M.A. [ed] *A Celebration of Sligo*. Sligo. Sligo Field Club. Pp.193-4

<sup>5</sup> O'Connor, K. 2000 "Sligo Castle", in Timoney, M.A. [ed] *A Celebration of Sligo*. Sligo. Sligo Field Club. Pp.183-192.

<sup>6</sup> The Confederate Wars originated in Ulster with the Rebellion of October 1641, and which quickly spread southwards into Leinster and throughout the country with the Association of the Confederate Catholics of Ireland formed in Kilkenny in 1642 to organise the war effort of the Catholic landed gentry. Military support for the Dublin administration was slow in arriving due to conflicts in England between king and parliament, but Sir Simon Harcourt and 1100 armed men landed in Ireland on New Year's Eve 1641 to support the Lord Justices in Dublin. From January to March 1642, military engagements developed from minor clashes to expeditions to secure Naas, to relief forces to break sieges at Kilsallagh Castle in north Dublin and the town of Drogheda in Louth before the army returned to Dublin on 17th March 1642, and state forces began to look to secure south Dublin.

<sup>7</sup> Some authors have suggested that the Green Fort was built during this period, however the presence of a fort on John Baxter's map of 1600 suggests that the money may have been to re-fortify the fort. The Parliamentary army held Sligo until 1649 when it was re-taken by the Confederates under the Marquis of Clanricarde. Halpin, E. 2002. "Archaeological site assessment west of the Green Fort", in Timoney, M.A. [ed] *A Celebration of Sligo*. Sligo. Sligo Field Club. Pp.229-230.

<sup>8</sup> National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, United Kingdom, Ref F2013 *Donegal and Sligo Bays A true description of the Norwest partes of Irelande wherin is showed the most parte of O'Donnells contre, part of Tirones, part of McGuyres, part of Orowercks: all of the Co. of Slego, part of McWillms and parte of the Co. of Roscomon truly collected and observed by Captain John Baxter. Finished by Baptista Boazio. Scale: [ca. 1:250 000 (meas)]. Cartographic Note: North at 270 degrees. Scale in Irish miles. Additional Places: Ireland. Contents Note: Houses, churches and forts depicted. Roads marked, relief indicated, Depiction of 3 Spanishe shippes cast away in ao 88 (Armada wrecks at Streedagh), Text notes relating local legends: sighting of '2 water horses of a huge bigness'; a holy man who can, by turning stones, cause the death of people who anger him; a bog where scenes of battles, castles and cattle can appear. © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London*

<sup>9</sup> Forty-fourth report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records and the Keeper of the State Papers in Ireland. (Dublin 1912, P.20).

<sup>10</sup> Jones, R. (2007) "The first gun in Ireland: 1332?" *Irish Sword: the Journal of the Military History Society of Ireland*. Vol. XXV. No. 102. Pp.361-362.

<sup>11</sup> De hOir, S. (1982) "Guns in Tudor Ireland", *Irish Sword*, Vol. XV P.76-88

<sup>12</sup> Cairns, C. (1985) "Guns and Castles in Tipperary", *Irish Sword*, Vol. XVI, No. 63, Pp.110-116

<sup>13</sup> Kerrigan, P.M. (1995) *Castles and Fortifications in Ireland 1485-1945*. Cork. Collins Press.

<sup>14</sup> Marconi, P., Fiore, F. P., Muratore, G. and Valeriani, E. (1978) *I Castelli: Architettura e difesa del territorio tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*. Novara. Istituto Geografico de Agostini.

<sup>15</sup> Phillips, Thomas, 1685: *Rules Orders and Directions for Regulating the Office of the Ordnance in Ireland. Together with exact Surveys of the Cheife Harbours, Forts, and Fortifications, in the said Kingdom, and Estimates of ye charge for Fortifying ye most Important Places therein. By directions of his matie King Charles the Second unto ye Right Honble George Lord Dartmouth, Mr General of his Majesties Ordnance in England; and performed by Thomas Phillips. Anno 1685. NLI Ms 3137.*

<sup>16</sup> Childs, J. (2008) *The Williamite Wars in Ireland 1688-91*. London. Hambledon Continuum. P.170

<sup>17</sup> McTernan, 2000, 184

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<sup>18</sup> Eogan, J. 2000. Excavation License No.: 00E0395 Report on the archaeological assessment of a site at Connaughton Road, Sligo. Unpublished technical report. July 2000. Archaeological Development Services Limited.

<sup>19</sup> Elizade, E. (2014) Conference Report. in Garcia, J. and Marquina, E. (eds) Proceedings of the International Conference on Fortified Heritage: Management and Sustainable Development, Pamplona 15-17 October 2014. Pamplona City Council, Spain, P.33