Addition of the Old Cork Prison to the

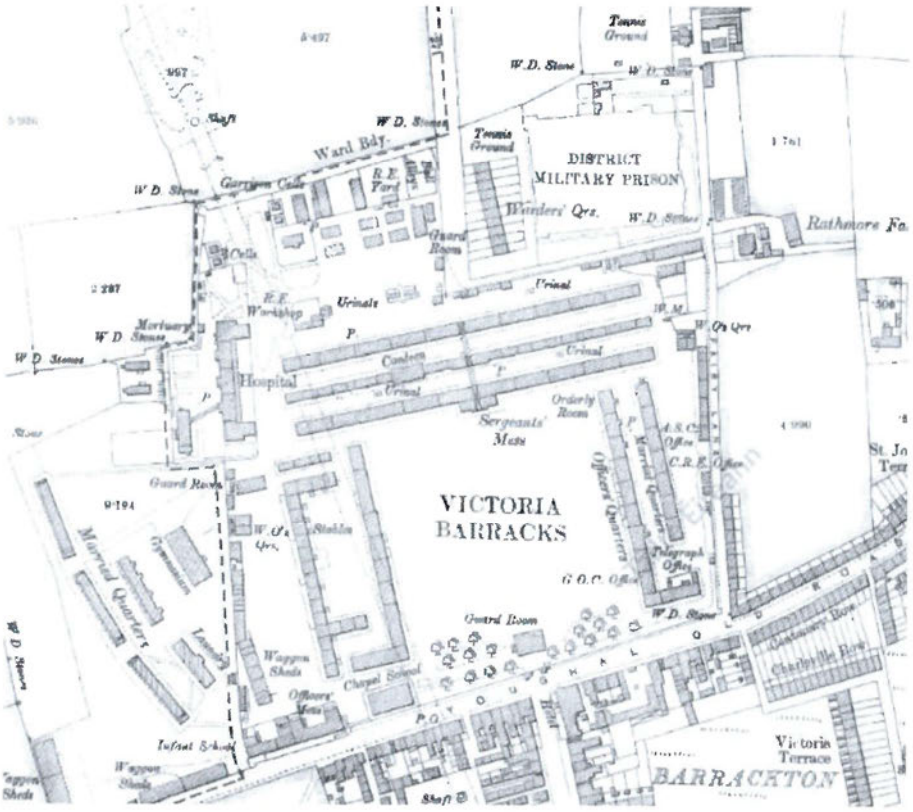
Record of Protected Structures

Introduction

It is proposed to add the Old Cork Prison to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). This would include two structures on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), namely the Old Cork Prison building (NIAH; Reg. 20863169) and its associated prison walls and gatehouse (NIAH; Reg. 20863177) that are located on Rathmore Road, Rathmore, Cork.

Overview History and Significance

This site includes a mid-19th-century prison and its surrounding gatehouse and walls. Referred to as the Old Cork Prison (originally the District Military Prison), the prison was built to the northeast of Collins Barracks (originally Victoria Barracks):



Showing the District Military Prison to the NE of the main Victoria Barracks

25-inch Ordnance Survey Map (1897-1913)

Collins Barracks was erected between 1801 and 1806 in response to the threat posed to Britain and Ireland from Revolutionary France. The British Government consequently increased the number of barracks throughout the British Isles, which included this site on the town land of Rath Mór overlooking Cork city. Collins Barracks was designed by John Gibson and built by

Abraham Gibson to accommodate 2000 men and 230 horses. The site comprised three long three-storey ranges enclosing a vast parade ground, which remain today. This site is of historic interest for many reasons, including its use as a staging post during some major conflicts, such as the Napoleonic War, Crimean War, Zulu War, Boer War and the First World War.

In 1847, the prison was erected nearby in connection with the Barracks, operating as a military prison. It was designed by Colonel Joshua Jebb (1793-1863), Royal Engineer and British Surveyor-General of convict prisons including Pentonville (1842), London, which became a template for prison construction across the British Empire.

The Old Cork Prison remains today and is a fine limestone building of three storeys with a three-bay central breakfront. Notable features of the breakfront include a limestone cornice to the parapet, round-headed window openings with dressed limestone voussoirs, and a limestone cornice supported by consoles to the entrance door. The main prison block has camber-headed window openings with limestone surrounds.

In c. 1860, the prison gatehouse and walls were erected around the main prison building. The three-bay gatehouse has a central limestone ashlar surround to a round-headed gateway flanked by end bays with curved corners. The NIAH entry states that the western stone wall and its corner bastions survive and that the north and south walls are concrete. A 1960 aerial photograph shows the prison and its surrounding walls (lefthand side of the image), with the main Barracks at the centre:



https://www.echolive.ie/corknews/arid-41377915.html

On the 9th May 1916, the Irish nationalist Thomas Kent (1865-1916) was executed and buried at the Old Cork Prison. Apart from Roger Casement (Pentonville Prison), Thomas Kent was the only person outside of Dublin to be executed following the 1916 Rising, which adds to the history of the site. The prison walls include a grave marker to note the presence of his burial on

the site; this grave maker is located in the northwest corner of the site, on the inner side of the western wall. In 2015, Kent's body was located and exhumed and was identified by scientific DNA analysis.

During the War of Independence (1919-1921), the site was specifically utilised as a military detention facility and the remaining yard was a site of execution.

In 1922, the British Government handed over the main Barracks, which included the prison, to Commandant Seán Murray of the Free State Army. The handover represented a major milestone for the emerging Irish state, and the complex was shortly renamed Collins Barracks in honour of the Irish Leader Michael Collins (1890-1922).

In 1971, the prison was converted to a civil prison and remained in use until 2016. A new Cork prison was erected to the east of the site, which has been in operation since 2016.

Recommendation

Under Section 306(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2024, a protected structure is a structure that the local authority considers to be of special interest from an 'architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical' point of view.

The NIAH assessment states that the Old Cork Prison is of architectural, social and technical interest, while the prison walls and gatehouse are of architectural, historical, social and technical interest (*see NIAH entries and current photographs below*).

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, hereafter known as the Minister, can make recommendations to Cork City Council to designate structures included in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as protected structures.

As such, the Minister recommended in July 2012 that 752 NIAH structures in Cork City be added to the RPS. This included the Old Cork Prison and its walls and gatehouse, which were surveyed by the NIAH in March 2011. Cork City Council agrees with this Ministerial recommendation and considers that the subject structure would be worthy of addition to the Record of Protected Structure for reasons including:

- it is a substantial mid-19th century prison building with notable external features (architectural interest);
- it was designed by Colonel Joshua Jebb (1793-1863), Royal Engineer and British Surveyor-General of convict prisons including Pentonville (1842), London, which became a template for prison construction across the British Empire (architectural and historical interest);
- its deep connection with Colin's Barracks (historical interest); and
- the wealth of social history on the site, including its connection with Irish nationalist Thomas Kent (1865-1916), who was executed and buried at the Old Cork Prison, and it being used as a military detention facility during the War of Independence, with the remaining yard a site of execution (historical and social interest).

[redacted] 03/11/26

Ashleigh Murray

Executive Architectural Conservation Officer

[redacted]

Niall Ó Donnabháin

Director of Services, Planning and Integrated Development

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Entries

Cork Prison, Rathmore Road, RATHMORE, Cork, CORK



View on map

Survey Data

Reg No	**20863169**
Rating	**Regional**
Categories of Special Interest	**Architectural, Social, Technical**
Previous Name	Cork District Military Prison
Original Use	Prison/jail
In Use As	Prison/jail
Date	1845 - 1850
Coordinates	168277, 73107
Date Recorded	29/03/2011
Date Updated	--/--/--

Description

Detached twenty-three-bay three-storey prison with three-bay central breakfront, built 1846, as military prison associated with the military barracks located to the south. Converted to use as a civil prison in 1971, with various subsequent additions. Roof hidden behind ashlar limestone parapet with intermittent pilasters. Squared rubble limestone walls with carved limestone cornice. Round-headed window openings to breakfront with limestone sills and dressed limestone voussoirs and reveals. Camber-headed openings with limestone sills and surrounds. Replacement windows throughout. Square-headed door opening to breakfront with limestone cornice supported on stone console brackets, block-and-start reveals and replacement timber double-leaf doors.

Appraisal

Cork Prison has been operating as a detention prison for more than 150 years. Built as a military prison associated with the British army barracks to the south, it was transferred to the ownership of the Free State Army in 1922, along with the barracks. In 1971 it was converted to a civil prison. Still in use today, it contains 138 cells. Despite much development in the surrounding site, the original prison building has retained its original form and, together with its associated walls and gatehouse, is a fine example of a nineteenth-century penal building. It was built to a design by Colonel Jebb, Royal Engineer and British Surveyor-General of convict prisons. It is a valuable and interesting part of Cork's social and military history.

https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/20863169/cork-prison-rathmore-road-rathmore-cork-cork Accessed 21/09/26, 15:50





Photographs: Old Cor Prison (25th September 2026)

Cork Prison, Rathmore Road, RATHMORE, Cork, CORK



View on map

Survey Data

Reg No	**20863177**
Rating	**Regional**
Categories of Special Interest	**Architectural, Historical, Social, Technical**
Previous Name	Cork District Military Prison
Original Use	Prison walls
In Use As	Prison walls
Date	1840 - 1880
Coordinates	168321, 73103
Date Recorded	29/03/2011
Date Updated	--/--/--

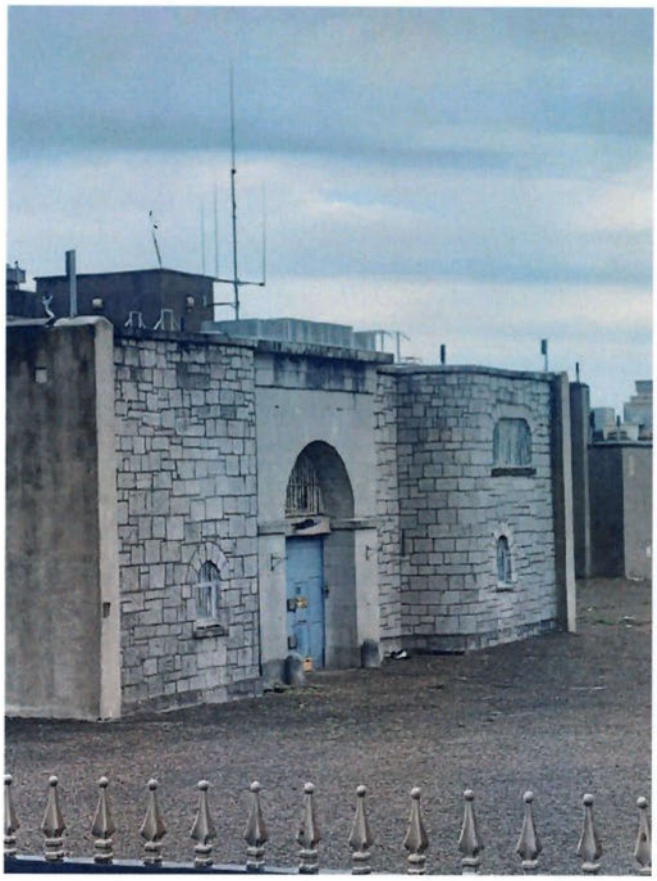
Description

Prison gatehouse and walls, built c.1860, as part of prison associated with the military barracks located to south. Converted to use as civil prison in 1971. Three-bay gatehouse comprising central bay with round-headed gateway set in projecting ashlar surround and flanked by projecting end bays with curved corners. Roof hidden. Squared rubble limestone walls with concrete coping and razor wire. Round-headed window openings to end bays stone sills, dressed limestone voussoirs to heads, metal bars and replacement windows. Round-headed gateway with limestone impost course, limestone carriage stops and replacement gates with metal railing to replacement fanlight. Rubble stone boundary wall survives to west of complex with corner bastions and topped by concrete with razor wire. Concrete walling to north and south. Stone gravemarker mounted to wall in north-west corner marking the alleged grave of Thomas Ceannt who was executed following the 1916 Rising.

Appraisal

Cork Prison has been operating as a detention prison for about 150 years. Built as a military prison in association with the British army barracks to the south, it was transferred to the ownership of the Free State Army in 1922, along with the barracks. In 1971 it was converted to a civil prison. It remains a valuable and interesting part of Cork's social and military history. The gatehouse, ashlar entrance, and surviving sections of boundary walls with the surviving western bastions are a foreboding and sombre ensemble. The alleged grave of Thomas Ceannt, who was the only person to be executed outside Dublin following the 1916 Rising, further adds to the site's history.

https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/20863177/cork-prison-rathmore-road-rathmore-cork-cork 15:55





Photographs: Prison Walls and Gatehouse (25th September 2026)