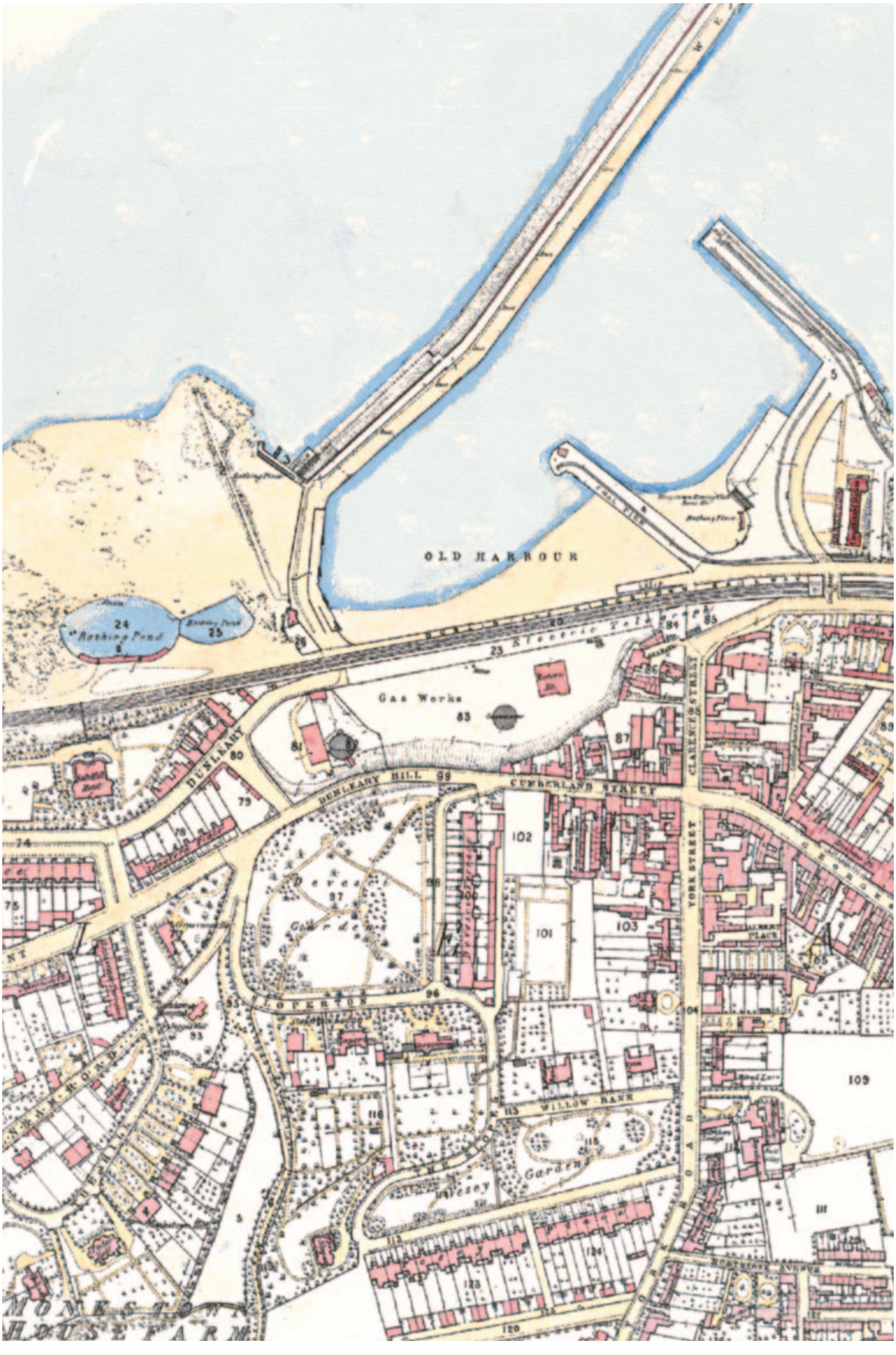
OLD HARBOUR
Bathing Pond
Gas Works
DUNLEARY HILL
CUMBERLAND STREET
CLARENCE STREET
YORK STREET
WILLOW BANK
MONKSTOWN
HOUSE FARM

‘On one level to the eye’: visions for suburbia on the Longford de Vesci estate in Dublin

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THE CREATION OF THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY COASTAL SUBURBS OF MONKSTOWN AND Kingstown on the Longford de Vesci estate in Dublin was a collaborative work of landscape design and suburban planning. Streets, terraces, villas and pleasure-grounds were laid out to create a new residential environment. Design decisions made at a large scale by the ground landlords responded to the sloping topography of the coastal setting. This involved substantial landscaping work to construct an elegant environment in which to place terraces and villas. Thomas Vesey, 1st Viscount de Vesci, and Edward Michael Pakenham, 2nd Baron Longford, had jointly inherited the estate of Monkstown in Dublin, as well as land in Cork city and county, Limerick and Hampshire, in 1778 from Charles Dunbar, a distant relative.[1] The 420 acres they inherited in Dublin included most of present-day Monkstown, Dun Laoghaire, Glenageary and Thomastown. It was unusual for two distant relatives to jointly inherit and manage a large estate, and this collaborative and dual dynamic affected Monkstown’s transformation from an eighteenth-century rural resort to a nineteenth-century residential suburb. This paper considers how the area’s fine architectural heritage of detached and semi-detached villas, and elegant, formally arranged terraces and associated pleasure grounds was influenced by the key protagonists in their creation – the ground landlords, agents and speculative developers. As F.M.L. Thompson has argued, ‘the process of creating suburbs was only translated into shapes on the ground through perfectly rational and orderly decisions by people.’[2]

John Vesey, 2nd Viscount de Vesci (1771-1855), and Edward Michael Pakenham, 3rd Earl of Longford (1817-1860), oversaw the development of significant set pieces on the Monkstown estate, including Longford Terrace, De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place.[3] Neither landlord resided on the Dublin estate, which became known as the Kingstown

1 – Ordnance Survey Parish Map of Monkstown, 1867
with De Vesci Terrace at top centre and Vesey Place at bottom centre (courtesy Richview Library, UCD)

estate after the visit of King George IV in 1821. John Vesey's main residence was at Abbeyleix, his family estate in Queen's County (county Laois), where he served as Lord Lieutenant from 1831 until his death in 1855. He rented a townhouse at no. 26 Merrion Square for his visits to Dublin, and spent time in London upon taking up his seat in the House of Lords as an Irish Representative Peer in 1839.[4] Edward Michael Pakenham's main residence was on his family estate of 14,000 acres at Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard, county Westmeath, although his duties as an officer and later a major in the 2nd Life Guards often took him abroad.[5]

By the early nineteenth century, the conflict of interest that arose from large tenants acting as local agents had become a source of concern on most Irish estates, leading to the widespread employment of professional land agents.[6] The Longford de Vesci estate employed the land agents Stewart and Swan from the year 1799, who subsequently became Stewart and Kincaid in 1829.[7] By the early 1840s this firm had become the largest land agency in Ireland, with James R. Stewart and Joseph Kincaid as named partners.[8] Stewart lived on the Kingstown estate's recently completed no. 11 Longford Terrace from the mid-1840s, then at Monkstown House on Monkstown Avenue from 1853, and finally at Gortleitragh House on Sloperton from 1857. Kincaid lived at Albany Place in Monkstown in the 1850s.[9] Their residency resulted in a more active involvement than on the families' more distant rural estates, which they also managed and generally visited just twice annually.[10] Kincaid was also a director of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway, a key piece of infrastructure on the Kingstown estate, and a member of many local philanthropic societies.

Stewart and Kincaid were involved in the development of the area at many scales, from the laying out of infrastructure to the negotiation of lease covenants. The agents often made suggestions to the ground landlords regarding the setting out, improvement and management of the estate. They managed the preparation of land for building, filling in the gravel pit to the west of York Street (present-day York Road), to provide building plots at Vesey Place and Willow Bank (Plate 2). They laid out Clifton Terrace, Longford Terrace, the Slopes, De Vesci Terrace, Vesey Place, Adelaide Road and Silchester Road, among other developments. The agents also had a design role, as they often proposed the routes of avenues or streets and gave their opinion on house types, heights and plan forms. They commissioned surveys on behalf of the estate and were involved in correcting and approving these surveys, as well as appointing architects to prepare designs for houses. The firm's role was correspondence-intensive, and as all the correspondence had to be copied to both landlords, this sometimes caused delays in decision-making. The wealth of primary sources available in the form of correspondence between the ground landlords and their agents, between the agents and tenants, maps of the estates in Dublin and Cork, and rent books for the estates provide a previously unused resource for understanding the development of nineteenth-century suburbs in Ireland.

While the significance of the Gardiner and Fitzwilliam estates in urban planning in the eighteenth century has been widely recognised, the role of estates in nineteenth-

2 – First edition Ordnance Survey map of Dublin, 1843

with De Vesci Terrace at top centre, western section of Vesey Place at middle centre, and Fairyland House at bottom centre (courtesy Trinity College Dublin)

century suburban development has been less researched to date.[11] Until recently, the history of the urban morphology of Dublin as a whole has focused on the Georgian urban core and has not considered the fringe, borderlands and suburbs of the city to the same extent. Nuala Burke states that the year 1800 marked the end of an era in Dublin's urban morphology; 'henceforth practical considerations took precedence and the more ostentatious plans were modified or abandoned.'[12] Design ambition moved to the suburbs in the nineteenth century. It was here that ambitious large-scale schemes and urban-design set pieces such as Gresham Terrace, Longford Terrace, De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place were planned and built. The influence of estate management on Dublin's suburban development has been examined by Finola O'Kane, who has described how the Fitzwilliam estate responded to the demand for suburban villa accommodation by laying out avenues in Blackrock and Booterstown in the mid-eighteenth century.[13] David Dickson describes how the Earl of Carysfort laid out land for suburban villas at Stillorgan in the late

eighteenth century.[14] In the nineteenth century, large landed estates continued to divide land into plots, which were then let to speculative developers. In this way, new residential zones were laid out and planned by ground landlords while the financial risk of constructing the houses was transferred to the speculative developer. Eve McAulay has examined in detail the role of agents and landlords in setting out the Ballsbridge area of the Fitzwilliam estate, which became the Pembroke estate in 1816.[15] McAulay describes how specifications in the Fitzwilliam house leases in the late eighteenth century were set out in general terms and varied little between plots.[16] However, in the nineteenth century, lease covenants on the Pembroke estate became more specific, and dictated the plot size, building line, form and finish of houses.[17] Susan Galavan has examined the highly prescriptive Pembroke estate leases from the 1860s on Ailesbury Road, which specified that only the best quality building materials were to be used.[18]

It has been argued that the Longford de Vesci estate was not influential in the nineteenth-century development of Kingstown.[19] This argument is based on the premise that the ground landlords lost control of large areas of land which were leased on very liberal ninety-nine-year leases in 1804 and 1812, and were then sublet by middlemen. However, in 1837 the estate bought back 'a considerable portion of the undeveloped part of the suburbs' from the original tenants, paying either a sum of money or an annual rent.[20] They paid about £25 an acre to buy back land they had originally leased at £3 to £4 an acre.[21] This investment was a turning point in the development of the architectural and spatial character of the area. Subsequent development controls enforced by the estate would be instrumental in creating a fashionable maritime suburb. Although the Longford de Vesci estate lost control of much of Dun Laoghaire close to the harbour, they still influenced many aspects of development in other parts of the estate, from laying out streets to the types and forms of houses. The high standards of housing and the elegant layout of Longford Terrace, De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place reflect the benefit of the stringent regulations imposed on certain parts of the estate. The design of these terraces emerged from the estate's decisions on orientation, plot size, road layout and lease covenants.

James Stewart explained in evidence to the select committee on town holdings how, prior to 1837, the Longford de Vesci estate had only invested about £5,000 in the Monkstown area. After this date, the estate spent approximately £12,000 in developing Longford Terrace, Vesey Place, De Vesci Terrace, the Hill and the Crescent.[22] Having regained control of these lands from middlemen and subletters, the estate dictated the plot size, building line, number, type and form of the houses to be built by speculative developers. In a form of nineteenth-century planning-control, the ground landlords insisted on approving plans before development could proceed. The impact of this policy can be read in the architectural character of the built fabric today. These formal harmonious terraces with their stucco finishes, elegant proportions and fine details differ from contemporary developments on the Pembroke estate, which are more varied.[23] On the Pembroke estate it is possible to identify where a developer changed along a terrace

or street due to changes in the parapet height, fenestration, materials or decorative details. On the more carefully controlled terraces on the Longford de Vesci estate, it is not possible to read from the built fabric where one developer finished and another began. The uniformity of Longford Terrace, De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place in terms of plot width, house height and window and doorcase design contrasts with the variety within developments built on the Pembroke estate during the same period. Where possible, the Longford de Vesci estate insisted on a visually harmonious façade of regular parapet height, window size and finish, resulting in more cohesive and ambitious streetscapes. As a coastal resort, the estate looked to examples in Bath and Brighton (Brighton Road, etc.), where the sea vista, a monumental unity of finished terrace and the symmetry of the overall composition were paramount.[24]

Dana Arnold has examined the ways in which patterns in landownership and land development in the West End of London in the long eighteenth century demonstrate how the decisions of the past still influence the present built fabric.[25] She describes how the careful economic management of these lands through the building of leasehold terraces of houses by speculative developers, and the aesthetic management of this urban environment through the enclosure of land to form garden squares, emerged from the principles of country-house estate development. This was also the case on the Longford de Vesci estate, where the emphasis lay on long-term strategies to increase the value of the estate rather than short-term profits. Elizabeth McKellar, in contrast, describes how the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century suburbs of London were 'quintessentially an unplanned landscape, in complete contrast to the eighteenth-century Westminster estates'.[26] McKellar suggests that middle-class practices and culture were central to the making of London's suburbs by creating a new suburban landscape that arose not out of aristocratic ownership (which had shaped the earlier eighteenth-century suburbs of London's West End), but through a developer-led suburban model of dwelling, leisure and commerce combined that serviced the needs of a growing middle-class consumer society.[27] Those parts of the Longford de Vesci estate that remained under the estate's direct control followed Arnold's planned paradigm, while those under the control of developers approximate more closely to McKellar's.

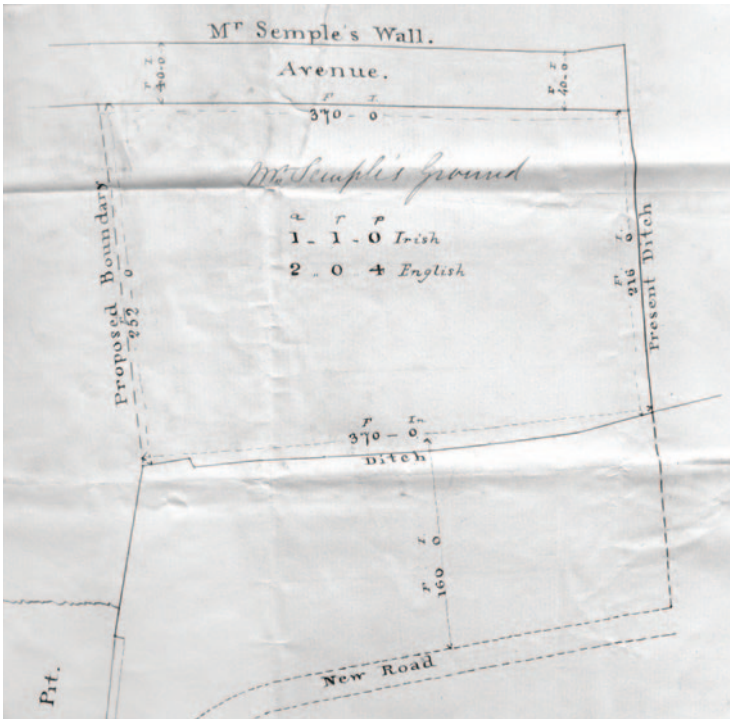
DEVELOPMENT OF MONKSTOWN AND KINGSTOWN

In the eighteenth century, many of the villas in coastal villages and settlements on the outskirts of Dublin were non-permanent summer retreats. By the early nineteenth century, Monkstown and Dunleary were growing in popularity as seaside resorts.[28] It became fashionable to live permanently in these resort landscapes partly due to a belief in the health-giving properties of the sea air. The emerging professional and upper-middle classes retreated to the suburbs to escape the overcrowded unsanitary conditions of the declining city centre.[29] Dublin's Georgian urban core was essentially com-

plete, and momentum for substantial housing projects moved to the outer suburbs. This development created something neither city nor country, but rather in-between, a new suburban landscape in which dwelling and leisure were combined. Certain social conditions were necessary to facilitate this retreat from the city to the modern suburb, 'the separation of home from workplace, of middle-class from working class, and the rise of romantic and religious notions favouring the natural and the rural over the corrupting influence of the city'.[30]

The nineteenth-century residential development of Dun Laoghaire and Monkstown was accelerated by the construction of the asylum harbour, begun in 1816, and the opening of the Dublin-to-Kingstown railway line in 1834. The construction of the asylum harbour encouraged development to the east of the original fishing village of Dunleary and resulted in an immediate increase in the working-class population.[31] The railway company promoted the attractions of open-sea bathing by providing baths at Salthill, which opened in 1835.[32] The opening of the railway allowed the middle classes with employment in the city to move out to this coastal suburb, which was no longer just the preserve of those who could afford private carriages and stabling, or residents who were there just for the season to enjoy the resort infrastructure. The increase in the number of residents led to the establishment of Dublin's first suburban township in 1834, the Kingstown Township Board, which had limited powers of taxation and development controls.[33]

The suburban environment was a combination of the built and unbuilt, the man-made and the natural, as the rugged coastline and sloping topography profoundly affected how streets and terraces were positioned. The setting out of Vesey Place and Gardens commenced in April 1838. The estate had already planned and constructed 'the new Road through the Valley', which is now called the Slopes. The Slopes winds uphill connecting De Vesci Terrace with the higher site for Vesey Place to the south. The curved route was required to overcome the steep incline between the two terraces, and the topography of the area suggested the ideal location for a pleasure ground in front of Vesey Place, where a gravel pit was located. Vesey Place was set out with the houses' principal façades facing north onto the proposed pleasure ground, which sloped away from the terrace. The orientation of this new terrace at right angles to the existing York Street created a private enclave, which was connected by the estate's new road to Sloperton and De Vesci Terrace (Plate 2). Vesey Place was not designed to relate to the poorer standard of housing which had developed along York Street. The terrace's unresolved side-on façade to York Street, the gates proposed at the eastern end of the road, and the fact that the plots closest to York Street were leased at a reduced rent all demonstrate that the design was orientated away from the eastern part of Kingstown. This was due to the fact that York Street was a fault-line between controlled and uncontrolled development on the estate. The estate wanted to separate its new residential enclave from the unsightly workers' housing which had developed on York Street, Cumberland Street and George's Street on land leased at the beginning of the nineteenth century and sublet by middlemen. There were different attitudes in administration towards different parts of the estate. Tighter



3 – Map of Mr Semple's ground, April 1838
(National Library of Ireland, De Vesci Papers, MS 38,926/4)

controls over building were imposed in prestigious parts of the estate which the ground landlords still controlled after 1837, and a laissez-faire approach was taken to building along and behind the main street of Kingstown, parts of York Street and Cumberland Street, and closer to the asylum harbour on plots which had been leased on long leases in the early nineteenth century.

For the estate, the principal design moves for Vesey Place were its elegant façade and aspect to its pleasure ground, the connection via the Slopes to the residential enclave of De Vesci Terrace and Sloperton, and that the houses should be large and of a high standard with sufficiently deep plots for stables and a stable lane. The agents wrote to the ground landlords describing the setting out of Vesey Place in 1838:

> We enclose a sketch of the ground at the rear of the upper lots on Major Power's holding, which we have been in treaty with Mr. Semple for – Your Lordship will recollect the new Road we made through the Valley where the Garden stood & along the face of the Hill.[34]

Vesey Place was to be built on the upper ground, and 'in order to build on it a Second Terrace should be made on the level that would leave very little ground for the houses Gardens – the whole depth being only 160 feet.'[35] The agents felt that the plot was not large enough to accommodate substantial houses with rear gardens, stables and a stable access lane. As shown in the 1838 drawing of Mr Semple's ground (Plate 3), the estate

required a portion of Semple's plot, which had been leased in 1804 for three lives renewable, in order to satisfactorily set out Vesey Place. The estate was determined to buy back this ground 'containing about two English Acres', which would allow them to 'set the ground for a range of buildings equal to Gresham Terrace & on something of the same plan with large Gardens for use of stabling'.[36] Gresham Terrace, which consisted of nine three-storey-over-basement three-bay stucco-finished houses, with stables located at the end of long rear gardens and a shared access lane, was considered a model development on the estate.[37] Stable lanes allowed the continuous façade of a formal terrace to be uninterrupted by carriage entrances, and also ensured that all the business of the stables was hidden from the principal streets.[38]

THREE CASE STUDIES: DE VESCI TERRACE, VESEY PLACE AND WILLOW BANK

In 1839 the estate commissioned the surveyor Martin Carroll to prepare a 'Plan of part of the land of Monkstown laid out in Building Lots' (Plate 4). This plan set out De Vesci Terrace and the first ten houses of the western section of Vesey Place. The ground landlords worked at a large scale, setting out this substantial residential area, its terraces, villas and pleasure grounds in one ambitious plan. The plan for the eastern section of Vesey Place is not shown as this land is identified as 'Ground in lease to Mr. Semple'. The area developed along a pragmatic plan with new ground opened up and laid out as it became available.

Carroll's 1839 plan shows the stables of Gortleitragh positioned opposite the house, at the southern end of De Vesci Terrace, and the very shallow plots on which the terrace was built. The proximity of the stables to the houses on De Vesci Terrace was unusual, as the occupants would have been aware of both the smell and the business of the stables.

4 – Martin Carroll, 'Plan of part of the ground at Monkstown...', 1839
(Pakenham Papers, T/3763/Q9, by permission of Thomas Pakenham)

There were several reasons for these unusually shallow plots, the first of which is revealed in a letter from the agents to the ground landlords which described how the ground sloped down 'about 12 feet from Lady Guillamore's stables to the gate at Kingstown', and would have to be filled in with gravel to provide building plots at one consistent level and to avoid a terrace which stepped down in height along its elevation. Shallower plots were less expensive to fill, and the landscaped pleasure ground in front of the terrace would mediate the steep slope down towards the coast road. In addition to the steep topography, the terrace could not be positioned closer to the pleasure ground (to the west) as this would have blocked the sea view from Lady Guillamore's villa. Finally, the stables could not be positioned further back from the houses (to the east) as this land had been leased to Mr Semple in 1804 for three lives renewable. The estate had to consider the built and unbuilt landscape when setting out terraces, taking into account the topography of the site, the existing villas and the existing leasehold structure of the land. These parameters shaped the built form of the terraces their gardens, stables and stable lanes.

A design for the central four houses of the terrace by the architect Christopher Kane, who was 'a highly respectable architect for a Mr. Mc Evoy who proposes to take the centre four lots 40 ft front each at £40 a year', overcame the difficulty of the sloping ground; 'Mr. Kane's design is for the purpose of getting over this difficulty and at the same time forming a terrace on one level to the eye.'[39] The estate approved this plan because it ensured a consistent parapet line, giving the terrace a cohesive monumental unity. All the plots on De Vesci Terrace were 42ft 7in wide and leased individually, and McEvoy was the first to build on the terrace, constructing nos 4 to 7. Then William Lawlor built nos 8 and 9, John Sheppard built no. 3, Warren Leeson built nos 1 and 2. Finally Richard M. Verschoyle, the agent for the Pembroke estate, leased the plot for no. 10. This plot was wider, at 61ft, and an additional bay was added to the house in order to resolve the awkward corner where no. 10 abutted the stables of Gortleitragh (Plates 1, 5). The wider façade concealed the stables when the terrace was viewed from De Vesci Gardens or approached from Sloperton. It also allowed the construction of a larger house on this site, with windows to the south.

The estate was not entirely satisfied with the houses built by James Jason McEvoy. In September 1840, Kincaid informed the ground landlords that he was 'most anxious since inspecting the infamously badly built houses erected by Mr. McEvoy, although the plan was good',[40] and he also noted that another developer on the terrace 'has not built in the manner that he intended he should have done, although what he has done he has done well and substantially'.[41] In spite of these reservations about the quality of construction, Lord de Vesci contributed £10 towards the cost of the parapet statue of the de Vesci coat of arms which McEvoy had erected at the centre of the terrace.[42]

Thomas Vesey's involvement in the Kingstown estate predated his succession as the 3rd Viscount de Vesci on the death of his father in 1855. From 1840 to 1855 he visited the estate regularly and instructed the agents upon his father's behalf. For example, in April 1845, Thomas Vesey arranged to meet James Stewart at the agent's 'house in

5 – Ordnance Survey Parish Map of Monkstown, 1867
with De Vesci Terrace top centre and Vesey Place bottom centre (courtesy Richview Library, University College Dublin)

Longford Terrace', and continue on 'to Glenageary & to the different other improvements in the neighbourhood of Kingstown'.[43] In addition to frequently visiting the estate, Thomas Vesey rented no. 2 Brighton Terrace for two months in 1844, and lived there with his family while he attended to business on the estate.[44]

In January 1844, Thomas Vesey examined and approved the proposed plan for extending Vesey Place to the east towards York Street; 'I only received the plan of the extension of Vesey Place this morning and will return it to you on Monday by my brother who goes to Dublin on that day.'[45] The negotiations with Semple and legal complications regarding the lease of his house, Fairyland, and it grounds, had stalled the extension of the terrace. Vesey was concerned that it would be difficult to lease the plots; 'I think the plan will be a very pretty one as to the ground but I fear there will be a little difficulty with the houses about York St.'[46] He instructed the agents that the pleasure ground should be 'at once executed as until this is finished there will be no chance of letting the ground for building'.[47] The estate invested in pleasure grounds associated with the terraces on their estate as they were essential to the success of the overall scheme. It could set out terraces, build roads and provide drainage, but the willingness of private individuals to lease the plots and subscribe to the overall scheme was essential to the success of the project. In September 1844, Thomas Vesey wrote regarding the land required for Vesey Place: 'I quite agree with you as to the expediency of getting the stables from Semple though his rent appears exorbitant and there may be loss of income for a short time.'[48] He explained

that the long-term value to the estate of constructing good houses was more important than a temporary loss of income; 'It is however of such consequence preventing a bad description of house being built on that hill that Ld. de Vesci agrees with me in considering it advisable to trade with Mr. Semple for the stables you have marked on the map.'[49]

Speculative developers generally committed to building two or three houses at a time and were influential in the design of the estate at street and house scale. The pattern of speculative development on Vesey Place was typical on the estate at this time. As on De Vesci Terrace, all the leases were granted for ninety-nine years. The first house on Vesey Place was built on a lease granted in May 1844 to Gilbert Cockburn, who was the building contractor on Deane and Woodward's Museum Building in Trinity College and also built on the Pembroke estate, including four houses on Wellington Road.[50] In December 1844, William Longfield leased three plots, each 39ft 3in wide and 219ft long, for houses nos 2 to 5.[51] Cockburn then built nos 5 and 6 on identically sized plots, leased in February 1845, and lived at no. 6 from 1853 until his death in 1862.[52] William Moyers, a builder who had provided the drainage for De Vesci Terrace on behalf of the estate, leased slightly wider plots, 40ft 6in wide, for nos 7 and 8 in April 1845.[53] The western section of the terrace was completed by Samuel Parker, who leased the ground for no. 9 in 1846, and George Jackson, who leased no. 10 in 1847. Cockburn's lease for no. 5 Vesey Place included 'the use and right of passage to the stable lane at the rere of said premises in common with other tenants and occupiers on said terrace all which said premises are more or particularly described in the map set forth on the lease.'[54] This was a standard covenant in leases granted on the estate at this time and was included in all the leases on Vesey Place and on De Vesci Terrace.[55] Typical leases on the estate required that the plans for the houses be approved by the ground landlords and developers were penalised if the house was not completed on time. Leaseholders and house tenants were forced to observe covenants which required that houses be kept in good repair. The estate often specified in the lease the minimum amount to be spent on constructing dwellings; for example, Cockburn's lease for no. 5 Vesey Place included the covenant 'to expend five hundred pounds in building one good and substantial house upon said premises'.[56]

In 1846, having secured the additional land required to complete the eastern section of Vesey Place, the estate continued with its improvements. In August, Thomas Vesey inquired if there had been 'any proposals for the ground in continuation of Vesey Terrace towards York St. I suppose the ground work in front of it is in a forward state towards completion.'[57] Joseph Kincaid reported on the improvements, which included laying out the new road in the Hollow (which is now known as Willow Bank), building the boundary walls, supplying the sewer and cess pool and levelling the road.

> Our expenditure in laying out the ground in continuation of Vesey Place including the formation of the new road in the Hollow, the boundary walls, main sewer for half the length & cess pool, besides carting in a quantity of mound to form the line of the road has come to near £500.[58]

Kincaid expected that there would be no further building on Vesey Place that year: 'I fear we shall have no offers for Vesey Terrace this year, as Spring is the time of year when Builders seem to prefer to commence their works.'[59]

By April 1849, the initial western section of Vesey Place was complete and the plots for the eastern section (closer to York Street) were under negotiation with speculative developers. The two sections of the terrace are separated by a stable access lane (Plate 6). The western part of the terrace consisted of ten three-bay-wide two-storey-over-basement houses with projecting porches and granite steps up to the centrally placed fan-lit entrance door (Plate 7). These houses were very similar to the three-bay-wide two-storey-over-basement houses on De Vesci Terrace. The simple plan of dining and drawing room to either side of a central hall offered the middle class a formula for architectural respectability. The architecture of these formal restrained terraces articulated and enforced social and economic boundaries in the new coastal suburbs.

As Thomas Vesey had predicted, it was harder to let the building ground closer to York Street, and changes to the design of the terrace were required in order to complete it. Samuel Parker and another speculative developer would take building ground if it was granted at a lower rate and if they were allowed to build three-storey-over-basement houses.

> We have had a proposal from Mr. Parker who lives in Vesey place to take 100 feet of building Ground in continuation of the present terrace & to get another gentle-

7 – View of two-storey-over-basement, three-bay-wide house on western section of Vesey Place, completed by 1849

8 – View of three-storey-over-basement, two-bay-wide house on eastern section of Vesey Place, completed by 1856 (photos: the author)

opposite

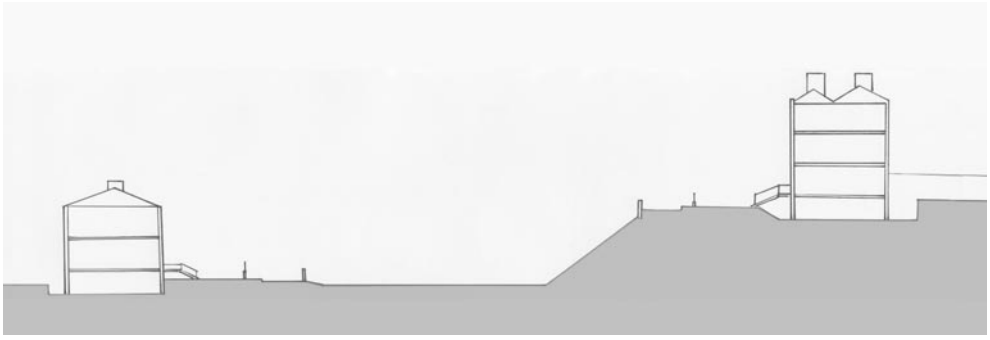
6 – Ordnance Survey map, 1910, with initials of developers and year of lease added by author
G.C. Gilbert Cockburn, 1844; W.L. William Longfield, 1844; W.M. William Moyers, 1845; S.P. Samuel Parker, 1846; G.J. George Jackson, 1847; J.S. James Smith, 1850; S.W. Samuel Warren, 1850; J.R. John Reid, 1851 (courtesy Trinity College Dublin)

> man to join him who would take from 50 to 100 feet more provided you give the land at 6/- p foot instead of 7/6 & permit them to build houses 4 stories high (including the basement) instead of 3 stories as the other houses.[60]

These two-bay-wide three-storey-over-basement houses were built on narrower plots, twenty-five feet wide, which allowed denser development of the eastern section of the site. The estate agreed to this proposal on the condition that the rest of the eastern part of the terrace maintained the same higher parapet level. The eastern section has square fanlights over the entrance doors and less ornamental detail than the earlier western terrace (Plate 8). The estate was willing to accept alterations to the permitted plot size and house type to ensure that the terrace would be completed. In May 1849, Thomas Bradley, a timber merchant who built many of the houses on Longford Terrace, offered to take the rest of the lots: 'Mr. Bradley who built so much on Longford Terrace is looking after the rest of the Vesey Place lot & we hope it may all be built this season. He will expect the Corner lot where York St. runs diagonally with Vesey at a reduced rate.'[61] The estate could not agree terms with Bradley, and instead no. 15 was leased to Samuel Warren in August 1850, no. 16 to Thomas J. Warren in July 1850, and the final houses, nos 17 to 21, were built by John Reid on ground leased in April 1851. To complete the landscaping around the terrace, Stewart and Kincaid informed the ground landlords in February 1850 that they were 'preparing to build the Piers, gate Entrance & footpaths' from York Street to Vesey Place and Gardens.[62]

The construction of Willow Bank as two pairs of semi-detached houses marks a clear move away from the urban terraced-house type of De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place. Willow Bank was laid out as two plots for double semi-detached houses facing onto the opposite side of the pleasure gardens. The further setting back of the houses from the road, the semi-detached house type, the trees and private gardens surrounding the houses and the association of the name 'willow' with natural and rural associations mark the introduction of the classic features of suburban development. The topography of the site

9 – Section through Willow Bank, Vesey Gardens and Vesey Place, showing drop in level between Vesey Place terrace and Willow Bank (drawing by the author)



10 – Joseph Kincaid, hand-drawn sketch of Gravel Pit, Willow Bank, 1846
(National Library of Ireland, De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006 and MS 39,008/12)

– in a hollow, eighteen feet lower than Vesey Place – was more suitable to semi-detached villa type development, rather than a terrace which would require a long, flat stretch of ground (Plate 9). A terrace in this lower location would also have had an inferior aspect and would have been overshadowed by the grander Vesey Place above it. An 1846 sketch by Joseph Kincaid (Plate 10), shows the gravel pit and land to the east of De Vesci Terrace, bounded to the north by Cumberland Street and to the east by York Street. The road to the north of Vesey pleasure grounds is marked 'New road at low levels'; this road is present-day Willow Bank. Steps are shown from York Street down to the new road. These steps do not exist today, and Willow Bank is a cul-de-sac accessible only from the Slopes. The site at the junction of the 'New road at low level' and York Street is marked 'Proposed Site for New Church'. Stewart and Kincaid took charge of filling the gravel pit shown on the sketch so that it could be developed. In February 1846, the estate employed a local quarryman, James Reilly, to supply and deliver from 600 to 1,000 loads of filling-in earth at the rate of 7d per cartload.[63]

A later hand-drawn sketch from 1856 (Plate 11) shows the ground after it has been filled with gravel in preparation for building. The site at the corner of Willow Bank and York Street is still marked as 'Proposed site for Church'. However, a church was not built on this site. Instead two large semi-detached, two-storey-over-basement three-bay

11 – Joseph Kincaid, hand-drawn sketch of building ground at Willow Bank, 1856
(National Library of Ireland, De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006 and MS 39,008/12)

houses were built facing onto Willow Bank, with a matching pair built to the west of them, also facing onto Willow Bank. Trees and hedgerows between the pairs of houses gave each a feeling of rural isolation. The sides of the house were visible, allowing each pair to be surveyed in the round, giving more of a free-standing villa feel, and distancing these houses from the more pedestrian terrace. To enhance the illusion of social distinction further, each pair of semis shared a single pediment, and the front façades resembled a single elevation, with the entrances located in discrete side bays. The estate described these types of identical semi-detached houses, which resembled one great house, as 'Siamese houses'.

The open space of Vesey Gardens accommodated pleasure walks and provided views. With the services of Kingstown nearby and the city a train journey away, this residential enclave successfully combined both country and city. The estate's priority was the picturesque integration of terraces, villas and landscape, while maintaining a sense of privacy and separation from less desirable parts of the estate. These houses are neither country nor city; each terraced house and semi-detached villa contributes to the suburban landscape. The gardens of the private houses of Willow Bank relate to the pleasure ground. The view of Vesey Place from the pleasure ground frames the space and creates a built edge to this natural environment, combining the natural and man-made and

public and private zones in a suburban manner.[64]

The setting-out of private pleasure grounds and public parks was an intrinsic part of nineteenth-century suburban development. Vesey Gardens, although designed as private pleasure grounds, had a low stone wall around its perimeter and was not fully enclosed. This arose either to avoid the expense of a high wall or railing, or because the gates between York Street and Vesey Place provided sufficient security. The estate also intended to construct gates at the entrance to De Vesci Terrace and Sloperton from the Dunleary Road, which would have secured the entire area as a private enclave, closing it off from the workers' housing in other parts of Kingstown. However, these gates were not constructed, and the estate's decision to lay out Knapton Road in the late 1850s further opened up the area. In general, the ground landlords encouraged the laying out of pleasure grounds on their estate for the use of nearby residents. The estate sometimes stipulated that certain areas could only be used as pleasure grounds and could not be built upon; for example, Salthill Gardens in front of Longford Terrace was described as 'assignment in trust for use as pleasure ground during continuance of leases nos 17 to 29 Longford Terrace' to C. Copeland and others, trustees'.[65] Similarly, when Charles Haliday requested a lease for 'the piece of low ground between Ranelagh House & the Hospital' in February 1840, the ground landlords included clauses in the lease to ensure that it would only be used as a pleasure ground.[66]

> All the clauses will of course be embedded & I think they contain everything that is necessary to keep the ground for the use which it was originally intended, a pleasure ground for the Tenants of the adjoining land with the addition that it is to be made and maintained as the expense of Mr. Haliday instead of at the expense of your Lordships ... No buildings whatever other than a Gate Lodge and appurtenances to be erected on this piece of ground except by consent of Lords Longford and de Vesci.[67]

While the estate encouraged pleasure grounds on the estate as an essential part of the leisure and residential environment they were trying to create, they did not want to be burdened with the full cost of their provision and maintenance. A further standard clause in leases for pleasure grounds ensured that the grounds should be accessible to nearby residents 'by permission of their Lordships' and that the ground landlords would have a right of access.[68]

Some of the pleasure grounds developed in the nineteenth century on the Longford de Vesci estate include De Vesci Gardens at De Vesci Terrace, Vesey Gardens at Vesey Place, Gresham Gardens in front of Gresham Terrace, Belgrave Square, Croswaithe Park, Clarinda Park and Royal Terrace Park. There were also ambitious proposals for public botanical gardens at Monkstown Castle prepared by Ninian Niven on behalf of James Pim, but these plans did not go ahead.[69] The estate contributed towards the upkeep of pleasure grounds, and in July 1873, in response to a request from the residents of Vesey Place, they increased their annual contribution to £25.

CONCLUSION

Vesey Place and Willow Bank are appropriate case studies of the type of designed environment the estate created with the collaboration of speculative developers in the mid-nineteenth century because they demonstrate the level of architectural sophistication and the quality of suburban design on the estate. This combination of terraces and semi-detached and detached villas around a shared pleasure ground has precedents in London in John Nash's Regent's Park and Calverly Park in Turnbridge Wells, as laid out by Decimus Burton between 1827 and 1828.[70] While these examples are not mentioned by the ground landlords or their agents in their letters, it can be assumed that they were aware of contemporary developments in London. The major terraces on the Kingstown estate were designed to have a view of either the sea or a private pleasure ground. For example, Clifton Terrace, Longford Terrace and Gresham Terrace all had views of the sea, while terraces such as De Vesci Terrace and Vesey Place overlooked private pleasure grounds. The orientation of these terraces, the size of their building plots and the layout of their pleasure grounds were influenced by the sloping topography of this coastal setting.

The evolution of Victorian suburbia has been examined in less detail than the development of the urban core. The view of urbanists has generally been that the suburb was neither city nor country and therefore its architecture and planning were undistinguished.[71] However, the suburban design decisions taken by the Longford de Vesci estate demonstrate a careful attempt to create new suburban landscapes and a considered approach to design. The Kingstown estate's ambition resulted in the construction of extensive symmetrical terraces, in contrast with the Pembroke Estate where building took place in comparatively smaller schemes. Decisions were not merely taken on a plot-by-plot basis as opportunities arose to lease out the holdings to developers. Instead, the joint ground landlords took an overall view which focused on the long-term value of the estate. It was certainly in their own financial interest to maintain standards and to encourage good-quality housing and urban design. In the late nineteenth century these housing developments were described as 'gentlemen's residences of an expensive character.'[72]

On the Kingstown estate there was and still is a readily apparent distinction in the architectural quality of certain streets. The planning and construction of fine terraces and villas in areas controlled by the estate from 1837 onwards created streetscapes which declared the aspirations of the professionals and middle classes who moved out to the suburbs. By understanding the motives and priorities of the estate we can better understand the suburban morphology of the area. The successful combination of high-quality residential built fabric with well-designed shared leisure landscapes, in the form of terraces and their adjacent pleasure-grounds, demonstrates how the planning of historic suburbia could inform the design of suburban developments today.

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ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

De Vesci Papers	National Library of Ireland, De Vesci Papers
RD	Registry of Deeds

1 Charles Dunbar, a descendant of the wealthy seventeenth-century Primate Michael Boyle, died without issue in 1778 and bequeathed part of his estate in the form of an undivided moiety to lords Longford and de Vesci, who were heirs through marriage of Primate Boyle. Dunbar stated in his will that his intention was 'to continue his real estate in the family and blood of the late Primate Boyle'. A.P.W. Malcomson, *The De Vesci Papers* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, Dublin, 2006), 10; copy of the will of Charles Dunbar, 1778, De Vesci Papers, MS 38,746/12.

2 F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Leicester University Press, 1982) 23.

3 John Vesey, born in 1771, became the 2nd Viscount de Vesci on the death of his father in 1804. Thomas Pakenham, born in 1774, inherited the title 2nd Earl of Longford on the death of his father in 1792. This unusual situation of two distant relatives jointly inheriting and managing a large estate resulted in an extensive amount of correspondence between the two ground landlords and their agents, Stewart and Kincaid. This correspondence, in conjunction with estate surveys and proposed plans, provide a valuable source for analysing the development of the area.

4 Patrick Meehan, 'More Famous Laois Men', *Laois Association Yearbook 1986* (Dublin, 1986) 28. While in London, Vesey lived at no. 4 Carlton House Terrace.

5 Eliza Pakenham, *Soldier Sailor: an intimate portrait of an Irish family* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2007) 217.

6 James S. Donnelly, *The Land and People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London and Boston, 1975) 52.

7 Stewart and Swan were employed because of the family connection of Henry Stewart with Edward Pakenham, the 2nd Baron Longford. Henry Stewart married Elizabeth Pakenham, a daughter of Lord Longford. He was the Pakenham family's land agent for their estates in Longford and Westmeath, and was an MP for Longford Borough. Pakenham, *Soldier Sailor*, xii.

8 Desmond Norton, *Landlords, Tenants, Famine : the business of an Irish land agency in the 1840s* (University College Dublin Press, 2006) Introduction, 1.

9 Alexander Thom, *Thom's Irish Almanac and Official Directory* (Dublin, 1850) 968.

10 In the 1840s it was the agents' standard practice to visit estates they managed outside of Dublin twice a year and to have a 'respectable gentleman resident managing the estate' under their 'immediate control and direction'. Joseph Kincaid, *Evidence to Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect of land occupation in Ireland* (Dublin, 1845) 30.

11 Nuala Burke, 'Dublin 1600-1800: a study in urban morphogenesis', unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 1972, 407.

12 *ibid*., 498.

13 Finola O'Kane, 'The Appearance of a Continued City: Dublin's Georgian suburbia', in Gillian O'Brien and Finola O'Kane (eds), *Georgian Dublin* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2008) 110-26. Finola O'Kane, 'An Absentee Family's Suburban Demesne: the making of Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin', in Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway (eds), *The Irish Country House: its past, present and future* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2011) 40-57.

14 David Dickson, *Dublin, the making of a capital city* (London and Cambridge, MA, 2014) 170.

15 Eve McAulay, 'The Origins and Early Development of the Pembroke Estate Beyond the Grand Canal

1816-1880', unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, 2003.

16 Eve McAulay, 'Some Problems in building on the Fitzwilliam Estate during the agency of Barbara Verschoyle', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, II (IGS, Dublin, 1999) 105.

17 *ibid*., 111.

18 Susan Galavan, 'Building Victorian Dublin: Meade & Son and the expansion of the city', in Ciaran O'Neill (ed.), *Irish Elites in the Nineteenth Century* (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2013) 56.

19 Dickson, *Dublin*, 328; Mary Daly, Mona Hearn and Peter Pearson, *Dublin's Victorian Houses* (A&A Farmar, Dublin, 1998) 29.

20 *Report from the Select Committee on Town Holdings; together with the proceedings of the committee, minutes of evidence, and appendix*, H.C. 1886 (213) 194..

21 *ibid*., 194.

22 *ibid*., 195.

23 Galavan describes the more extravagant decorative features on Meade's houses on Ailesbury Road compared to other houses on the Pembroke estate. Galavan, 'Building Victorian Dublin: Meade & Son and the Expansion of the City', in Ciaran O'Neill (ed.), *Irish Elites in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2013) 51-67: 56. Also see McAulay, 'Some Problems in building on the Fitzwilliam Estate', 99-117.

24 Chris Miele, 'From Aristocratic Ideal to Midle-Class Idyll: 1690-1840', in Julian Honer (ed.), *London Suburbs* (Merrell Hollberton, London, 1999) 49.

25 Dana Arnold, 'Rural Urbanism London's West End', in Andrew Ballantyne (ed.), *Rural and Urban: architecture between two cultures* (Routeledge, New York, 2009) 42.

26 Elizabeth McKellar, *Landscapes of London: the city, the country and the suburbs 1660-1840* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2013) preface, xii.

27 *ibid*., preface, xv.

28 The small fishing village was known as Dunleary until 1821 when the new town at the asylum harbour was renamed Kingstown. It became known as Dun Laoghaire in the 1920s.

29 Mary Daly, *Dublin, The Deposed Capital* (Cork University Press, 2011) 118.

30 Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: the rise and fall of suburbia* (New York, 1987) 239-40.

31 Peter Pearson, *Between the Mountains and the Sea; Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County* (O'Brien Press, Dublin, 2007), 194.

32 Kevin Murray, 'Dublin's First Railway', *Dublin Historical Record*, vol. 1, no. 2, June 1838, 39. Walton discusses how new railway links encouraged a growth of seaside resort towns across the United Kingdom in the nineteenth century. John K. Walton, *Wonderland by the Waves: a history of the seaside resorts of Lancashire* (Preston, 1992) 2.

33 A private Act of Parliament granted the Kingstown commissioners the power to regulate the width and layout of streets and the general alignment of buildings. However, in most cases it was in fact the Longford de Vesci estate that determined the layout of a road, whether plots were set out in a street or a square, the size of individual sites, the distances between houses and the road, and whether or not a pleasure ground would be provided.

34 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,954, Stewart Kincaid to Lord de Vesci, 12th April 1838.

35 *ibid*.

36 *ibid*.

37 Gresham Terrace was designed by George Papworth for Thomas Gresham, owner of the Gresham Hotel, with alterations made to the plan by William Murray between 1833 and 1835. It was built adjacent to the Hayes Royal Hotel which had been completed in 1828.

38 Edward McParland, 'The Geometry of the Stable Lane', in Christine Casey (ed.), *The Eighteenth-*

Century Dublin Town House: form, function and finance (Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2010) 128.

39 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,007, Stewart Kincaid to Thomas Vesey, 8th July 1843.

40 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, Joseph Kincaid to Lord de Vesci, 1st September 1840.

41 *ibid*.

42 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, James Jason McEvoy to Stewart and Kincaid, 9th December 1844.

43 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006/1, Thomas Vesey to Stewart Kincaid, 28th April 1841.

44 *ibid*., 9th September 1844.

45 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006/3, Thomas Vesey to Stewart Kincaid, 24th January 1844.

46 *ibid*.

47 *ibid*.

48 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006/1, Thomas Vesey to Stewart Kincaid, 9th September 1844.

49 *ibid*.

50 'Obituary of Gilbert Cockburn', *Dublin Builder*, vol. 4, no. 52, 15th February 1862, 43.

51 RD, 20/213/550, Memorial of Lease Granted to William Longfield, December 1844.

52 RD, 10/235/296, Memorial of Lease Granted to Gilbert Cockburn, 22nd February 1845; 'Obituary of Gilbert Cockburn', op. cit.

53 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, William Moyers to Joseph Kincaid, 20th June 1843.

54 RD, 10/235/296, op. cit.

55 RD, 8/217/ 218, Memorial of Lease Granted to Samuel Parker, 1850, and 3/56/72, 'Indenture of Lease to William Moyers' 1850.

56 RD, 10/235/296, op. cit.

57 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006/3, Thomas Vesey to Stewart Kincaid, 26th August 1846.

58 *ibid*., Joseph Kincaid to Thomas Vesey, 31st August 1846

59 *ibid*.

60 De Vesci Papers, MS 39,006/7, Stewart Kincaid to Thomas Vesey, 23rd April 1849.

61 *ibid*., 26th May 1849.

62 *ibid*., 14th February 1850.

63 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, James Reilly to Stewart Kincaid, 9th February 1846.

64 Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias*, 37.

65 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,750/3, Survey of Leases on the Kingstown Estate, 1895.

66 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, Stewart Kincaid to Lord de Vesci, 4th February 1840. Charles Haliday was a doctor, philanthropist, medical campaigner and writer who lived in Monkstown. He replaced Ranelagh House with a new villa in 1843. Haliday's house is now incorporated into the Christian Brother's School building.

67 De Vesci Papers, MS 38,955, Stewart Kincaid to Lord de Vesci, 4th February 1840.

68 *ibid*.

69 Ninian Niven, 'A General Outline of the New Public Garden', in Prospectus of the Proposed Public Gardens at Monkstown Castle (Dublin, 1839) 17-25. Frederick O'Dwyer describes Pim's proposal for a public botanical garden in the grounds of Monkstown Castle in Frederick O'Dwyer, 'The architecture of John Skipton Mulvany', *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies III* (Irish Georgian Society, Dublin, 2000) 20.

70 A.M. Stern, David Fishman and Jacob Tilove, *Paradise Planned; the garden suburb and the modern city* (Monacelli Press, New York, 2013) 27.

71 *ibid*., 12.

72 *Report from the Select Committee on Town Holdings*, op. cit., 195.

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