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Medieval Window Head at Fethard

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During the removal of a field bank in The Valley - the road running along the south side of the river Clashawley - at Fethard, Co. Tipperary in August 1990, Mr Frank Kearney and his fellow employees of Tipperary S.R. County Council discovered a cut stone, which appears to be medieval in date. (Plate 1)



Plate 1: *Medieval window head at Fethard, (scale in 5 cm segments).*

PHOTO: J. KENNY.

The stone was found buried in the bank forming the original field boundary, which itself consisted of a bank. This bank was levelled in order to make way for the new wall. The wall is situated south of the Clashawley river, on the south side of the roadway, and is approximately 50 metres from the southern part of the medieval town wall. (Fig. 1)

The stone may be identified as the broken head of a plain ogee-headed two-light window. It measures 37 cm in height and 57 centimetres in width. The left light is broken, leaving only a partial width of 17cm. The right light, which is unbroken, is 31 cm wide. The stone may now be viewed, having been reset in the wall by the County Council. The lights have also been filled in with rubble. (Plate 2).

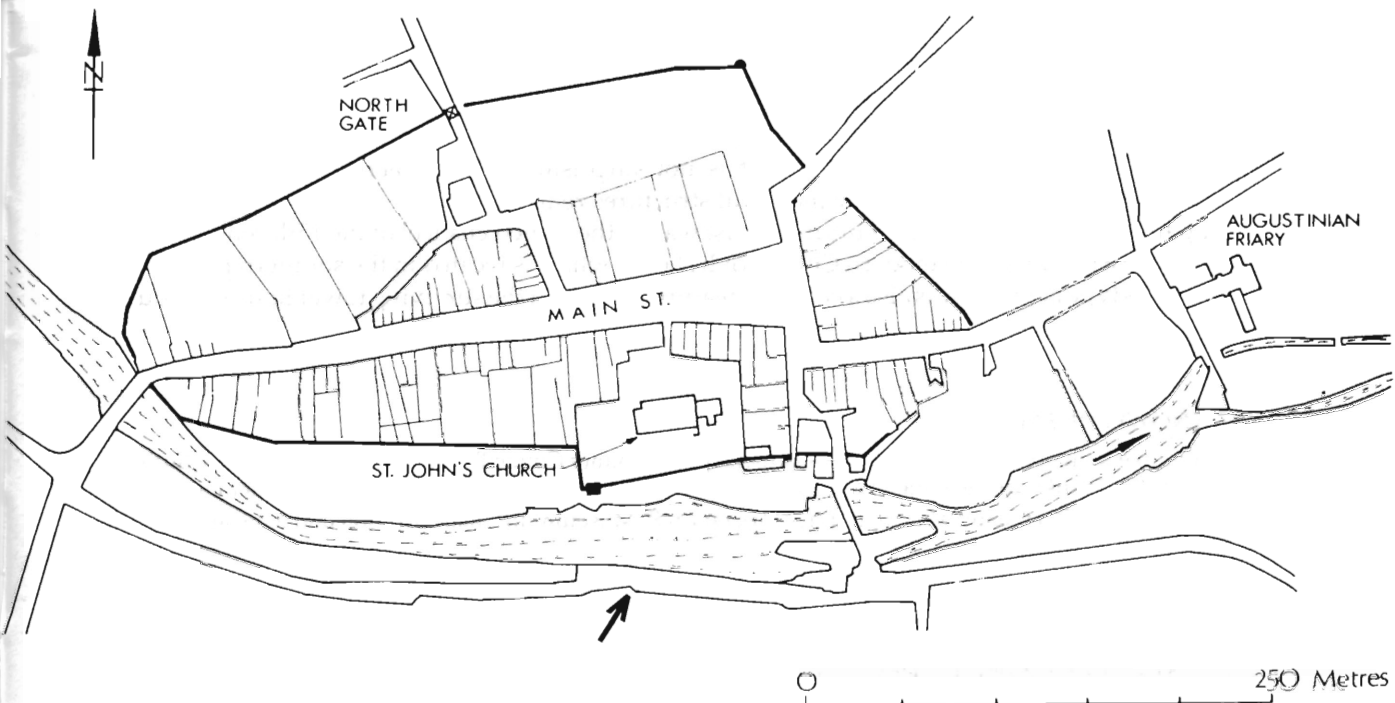


Fig 1.: Plan of Medieval Fethard (after Bradley)² with find-spot of window head indicated by arrow.



Plate 2: The window head at Fethard as set in the modern wall.

PHOTO: J. KENNY.

The ogee-headed window of one or two lights may be classed as the hallmark of fifteenth-century architecture.¹(Leask, 1978) Accordingly, it is not surprising to come across this architectural fragment in a town where so many medieval structures remain.

A parallel for this cut stone occurs in the east wall of the ruined chancel of the 15th century Holy Trinity parish church (the modern Church of Ireland), which is located in the southern part of the town. This type of window is also a common feature of many of the surviving tower houses in South Tipperary.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Leask, H.G.: *Irish Churches and Monastic Buildings* (Dundalk, 1978), p.114.
2. See art by J. Bradley in *Tipperary: History and Society*, ed. W. Nolan (Dublin, 1985), pp. 34-59.

