



Buttevant Castle, a courtyard castle with a 9.5m diameter circular tower at its SW corner (left foreground), was much altered in the early 19th century, including the addition of a matching 'tower' at the SE corner. The description of a circular ground floor chamber and a hexagonal first floor chamber is reminiscent of the west tower at Kilbolane – could Kilbolane perhaps be a de Barry castle of the (?) early/mid-/later 13th century along with Liscarroll and Buttevant?

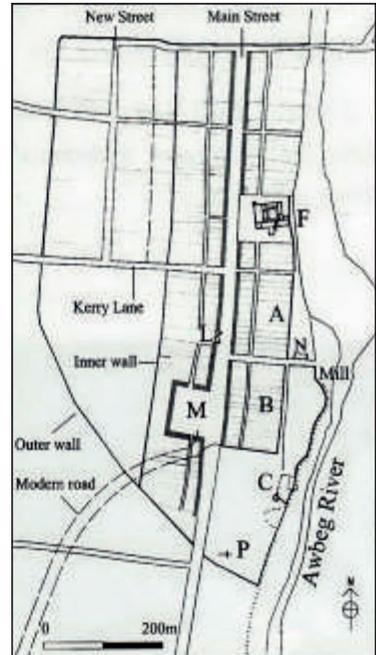
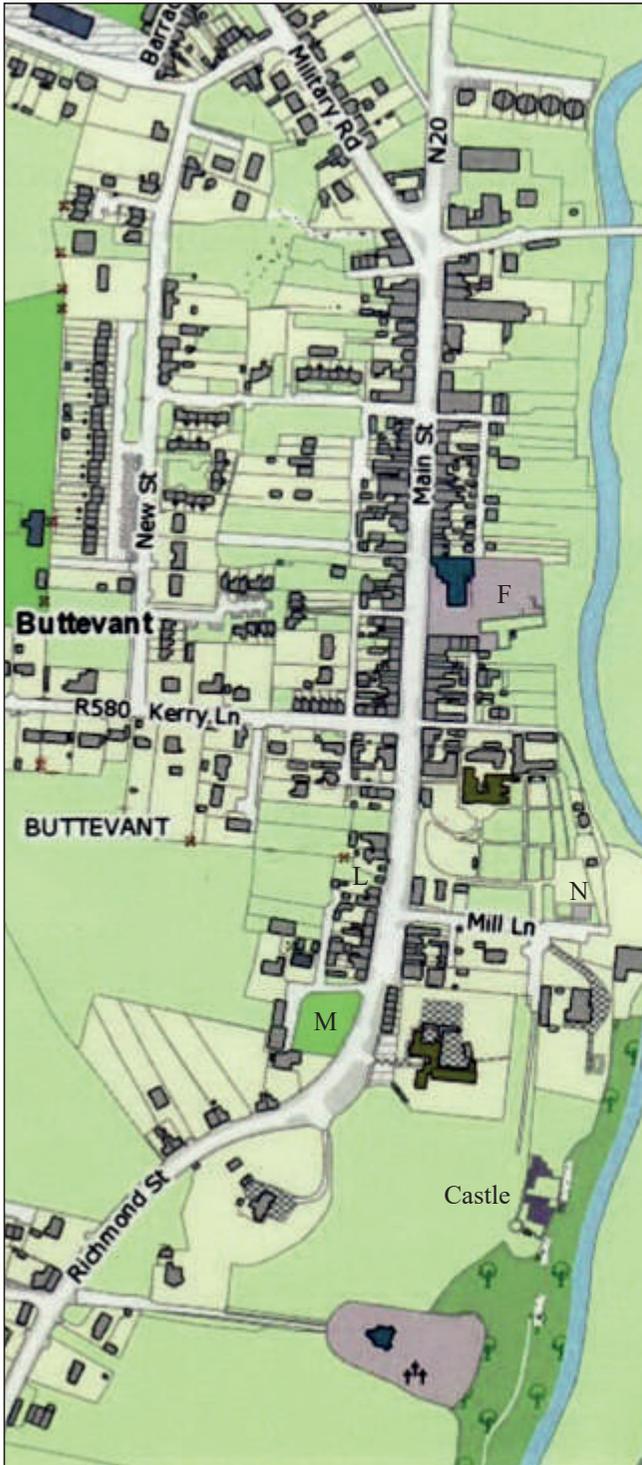
Buttevant

Location: Townland of Buttevant, Fr. Botavant (from *boutez en avant*, 'push forward' or 'be in front'), Ir. Cill na Mallach (the church of Mullach or the Summits), Co. Cork.

Description: In 1234 David de Barry obtained a licence for a weekly market and annual fair 'at his town of Buttevant' on the west bank of the Awbeg River, on the main Cork to Limerick road. There are references to burgesses from the end of the 13th century and the Barrys had obtained a murage grant for the town by 1320. The exact area enclosed by the town wall is uncertain. It had a 'linear' main street between a bridge to the north and a castle to the south, and probably two cross-lanes located north and south of the Franciscan friary. A rental of 1364 mentions 'Main Street' and 'Mill Lane'. Unusually, the parish church appears to lie outside the line of the town walls, to the south of the castle and within its demesne. The town subsequently declined and 'suffered considerable devastation' in the 15th century.

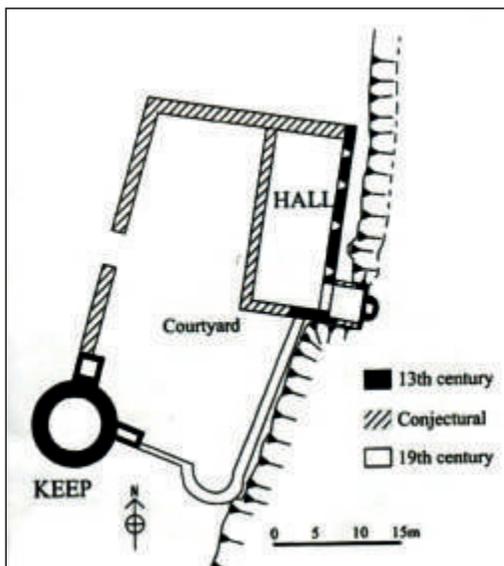
Town Walls: The earliest reference to town walls in Buttevant is a murage grant of 1317 which allowed John de Barry to 'enclose it with walls' under his supervision. Mention is made in 1375 of the town's 'North Gate'. Nothing appears to survive of the town's walls but they had a rectangular circuit enclosing an area somewhere between 5 and 15 hectares, the possible line suggested by two boundaries, parallel and 25m apart, suggesting perhaps an inner and outer wall. 18th century writers noted 'remains of a wall that surrounded the town; and they also shew the traces of an outward wall, which enclosed the other, and took up a considerable circuit of ground'. The 1842 OS 6-inch map does not show town walls, and the exact line of the town wall(s) has yet to be established.

Buttevant Castle: The fragmentary remains of a courtyard castle with a 9.5m-diameter round tower at its SW corner, perhaps once a smallish 13th century-type donjon, is incorporated into an early 19th-century country house complex,



Reconstructed layout of medieval Buttevant
 P = parish church
 C = castle
 M = marketplace
 N = possible munnery
 F = Friary
 L = Lombard's Castle

Above: The de Barry town of Buttevant. In 1234 David de Barry obtained a licence for a weekly market and annual fair. They obtained a murage grant in 1320 but the exact area enclosed by the town wall is uncertain. Suggested layout of the town walls, with remaining medieval landmarks. The town subsequently declined and suffered considerable devastation in the 15th century.



Buttevant castle - ground floor plan.

now ruinous, standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking the Awbeg River to the east. The country house complex comprises an enclosed courtyard containing many ruined farm buildings, and a house built by John Anderson in the early 19th century at the south end, which has circular towers at its SE and SW corners. The west and south courtyard walls also incorporate parts of the castle as do ruined structures on the cliff edge immediately east of the courtyard.

The circular tower at the SW corner stands four storeys high on walls 1.8m thick with a crude, low base batter and 19th-century crenellated wall-tops. The tower has been extensively renovated, with inserted brick-built windows and doors, and much of the stonework is obscured by 19th-century plaster. An entrance on the ground floor from within the courtyard is via a ruined brick-built doorway. The ground-floor chamber, with a 6m diameter, is lit on the south side by a large window in a brick-built recess on S side. There are also brick-built recesses on the west and east sides, the latter possibly a fireplace. A 1905 description refers to a doorway near the fireplace leading to a 'passage curving round to the back of the fireplace' (neither located). The chamber is roofed by a high vault of



Buttevant castle showing the full length of the west enclosing courtyard.

unusual, semi-domical construction and a partially blocked door on the north side suggests an intermediary wooden floor originally, now missing. Attached to the north wall of the tower is slim square tower 3m long. This has an inserted ground-floor door in the east wall giving entry from the courtyard into a 2m-square small chamber.

A first-floor round-arched door in the north wall of the tower was originally reached by a flight of steps from the courtyard, most of which are now missing. Inside this door, a straight flight of steps leads south to the first floor of the main tower, a six-sided chamber with late inserted windows in the west, SW and SE sides. A door on the east side of the chamber accesses a mural stair leading up to a second-floor chamber in the square tower and down to a now inaccessible chamber in the south wall of the courtyard. This stair may originally have been connected to the passage behind the ground-floor fireplace referred to above. A door in the north side of a SE window embrasure leads to a stair rising to the north, in the thickness of the tower wall, to a third-floor chamber in the square tower.

To the east of the courtyard a semi-circular tower with an internal diameter of 3m stands against the cliff face. On top of a cliff edge are two short lengths of wall projecting NW and SW from the tower, probably the remains of the castle enclosure. A ruined rectangular tower on the cliff edge about 10m to the north is also probably part of castle.