



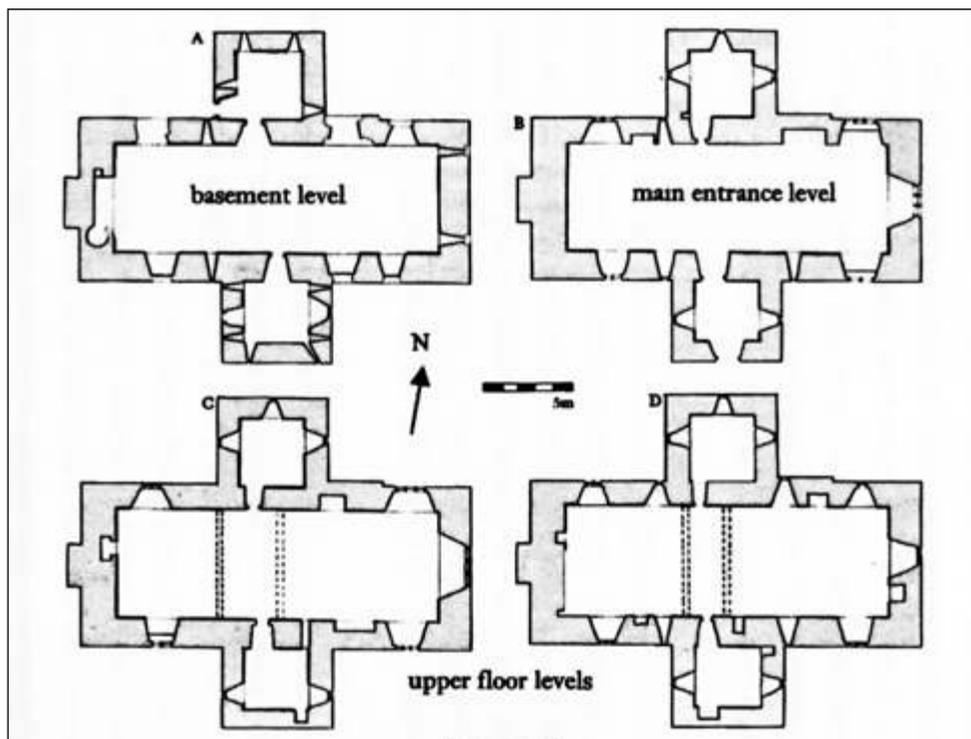
Ightermurragh house from the south-west. String-courses clearly delineating the floor levels, with four useable living spaces and a basement.

Ightermurragh fortified house

Location: Townland of Ightermurragh, Ir. lochtar Morú (the lower, northern part of Morú), Co. Cork.

Description: On a gentle north-facing slope, 120m north of the Womanagh river, stands a cruciform fortified house comprising a main block measuring 21.75m by 9.5m with centrally situated blocks projecting to the north, measur-

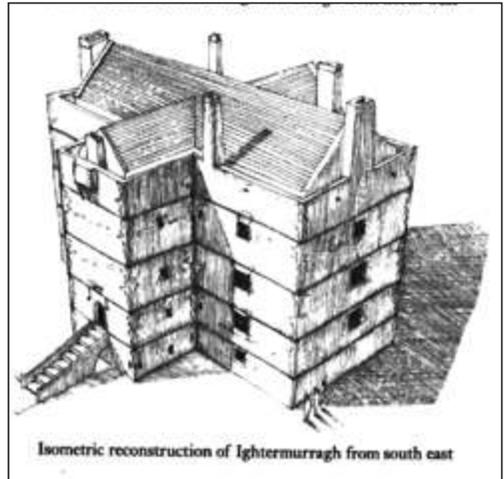
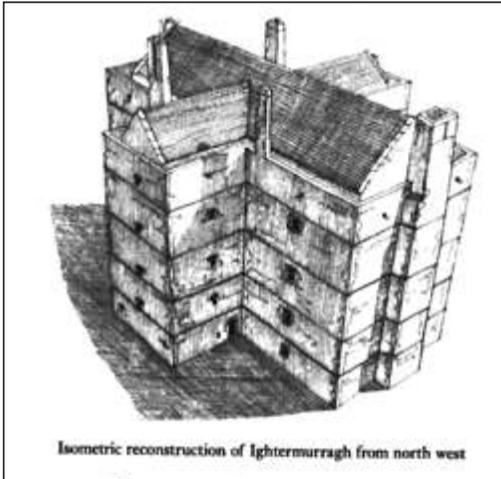
ing 5m by 6.25m, and to the south, measuring 5m by 5.75m. The walls stand to their full height but their battlements have gone. Built on a limestone outcrop, the north end of the house has been partly undermined by quarrying. Comprising four storeys with an attic, the floors are differentiated by continuous string courses on the outside elevations. The ground-floor entry has a semi-circular arched door in the west wall of N projection. In the west wall



Ightermurragh. Plan of basement, main entrance level, and the upper two levels. Attic storey omitted.

of the main block there is a kitchen fireplace with a broken lintel, with two bread ovens, their surrounds removed. The chimney stack protrudes externally. There are thirteen gun loops at ground level, mainly in the north and south projections. The main entrance door, at first-floor level, is in the south wall of the south projection. The sill and bed of the doorway are missing but it has a semi-circular arch with a rebate on the outside. There is a recess for a stone plaque above the door but the plaque has been removed. At all levels except ground-level, there are opposing doors into the south and north projections from the main block. The intervening area was divided by wooden partitions, their positions indicated by plaster shadows on the inner wall faces), from principal chambers to the east and west. All floors were wooden but only the joist holes survive. The north projection contained a wooden newel staircase,

indicated by plaster shadows, that gave access to all upper floors and to the wall-walk. Further defence was provided for on the first-floor level by another three gun loops and there is a machicolation at the top of the wall over the first-floor door in the south projection. All floors are well lit by large windows. All have rectangular lights, varying from a single opening to ones divided by two mullions and a transom. Nearly all window and door embrasures are missing their covering lintels. These were 'cut-stone' and reportedly removed a century and a half ago. Twelve fireplaces and six chimney stacks survive, and a seventh stack has fallen. Fireplace surrounds are all finely carved. A joggle-arched lintel over the first-floor fireplace east of the centre of the north wall bears an incised Latin inscription which has been translated as 'Edmund Supple and Margaret Gerald, whom love binds as one, built this



Ightermurragh fortified house, from the south. A cruciform house of the 1640s. Main entrance up the exterior stairs (top right) on axis with the round-headed portal. The reconstruction drawings are by Tadhg O’Keeffe from O’Keeffe and Quirke, 2009.

house in 1642’. The remains are in the style of that period and show little signs of change or alteration. The house was described in 1750 as ‘one of the most modern structures of this kind, in the country inhabited by Mr. Smith’.

Reference: T. O’Keeffe and S. Quirke, 2009, ‘A house at the birth of modernity: Ightermurragh Castle, Co. Cork’ in J. Lyttleton and C. Rynne (eds), *Plantation Ireland: Settlement and Material Culture, c. 1550-c. 1700*, Dublin: Four Courts Press.