

Restored Kilshane House opened by Ahern

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More than 80 heads of industry joined the Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, for lunch yesterday when, on a visit to Co Tipperary, he officially opened Kilshane House, a Regency country house which will be used as a centre for corporate and private functions.

Mr Ahern said he was delighted to see so many key representatives of industry and commerce from the Munster region present.

"You will appreciate the importance of a venue such as this for the people of Tipperary and indeed even further afield," he said.

Kilshane House, three miles south of Tipperary town, is the centrepiece of 320 acres of private parkland and has undergone a huge restoration and renovation programme in the past four years.

The house was built in 1822 and is at the end of a half-mile driveway which crosses a trout river flowing past a Victorian landscape garden. It has been restored by its owners, Ms Jane de Roquancourt, an American-born architect, and her partner, Mr Finbarr McLoughlin. The couple worked on a number of other major restoration and renovation projects, including Headfort Demesne.

Kilshane House has many distinctive features, including a large curvilinear conservatory built about 1860 and restored with the assistance of the



The Taoiseach, Mr Ahern, in the curvilinear conservatory of Kilshane House with Ms Jane de Roquancourt; the Minister for Defence, Mr Smith; and Mr Finbarr McLoughlin. The house has undergone a major restoration and renovation programme in the past four years. Photograph: Brenda Fitzsimons

Heritage Council. The Orangerie can seat 220 for a formal dinner, and 330 for a concert, theatrical or corporate event.

The house has 34 bedrooms, and a custom-built conference centre for up to 80 delegates will be available in September.

An equestrian training centre is in operation at the house, and

the first dressage competition takes place in June. There is also an international language school with many European business executives, diplomats and private individuals coming there to learn English.

Speaking at the opening, Mr Ahern said the refurbishment to such a high standard made a

wonderful contribution to preserving the county's rich heritage.

He commended the developers, saying: "Conservation and preservation of our heritage are very important to our country, and the work you have done here will be enjoyed by many generations to

come." Thanks to both, he said, the area now had a venue to suit all occasions. And he told the event managers of the venue, Corporate Solutions, they also had an important role to play in the overall promotion of the region as a tourist destination, of which Kilshane House could be a vital part.