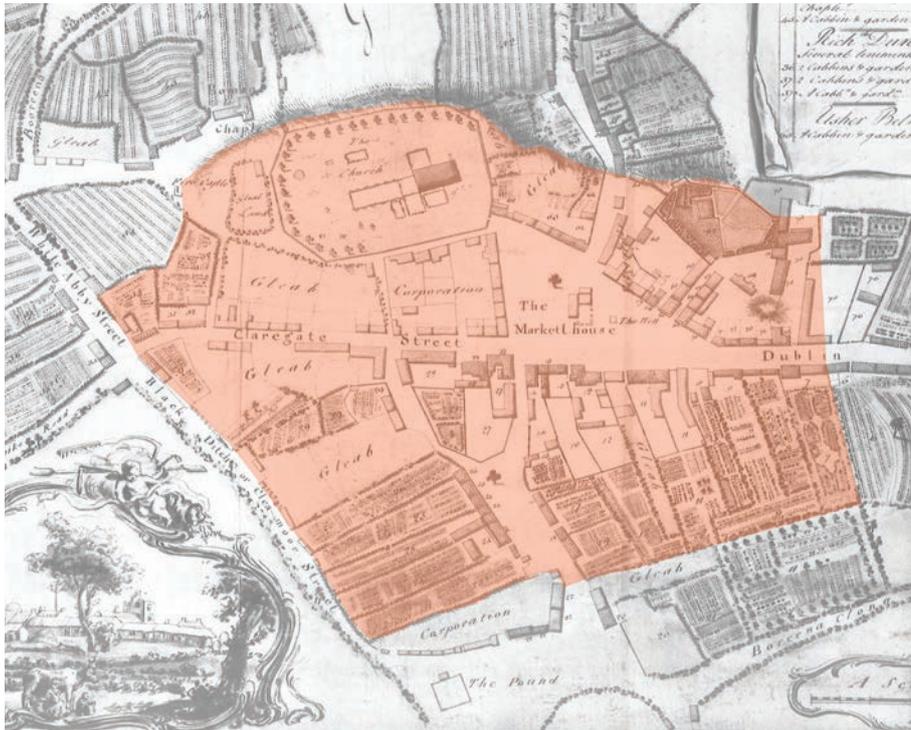


KILDARE TOWN WALLS



CONSERVATION, INTERPRETATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

Final Draft

October 2014



HOWLEY HAYES ARCHITECTS

Howley Hayes Architects & CRDS Ltd. were commissioned by the Kildare Town Tourism Group, Kildare County Council and the Heritage Council to prepare a Conservation, Management & Interpretation Plan for the historic town defences of Kildare, Co. Kildare. The surveys on which this plan are based were undertaken in July and September 2014.

We would like to thank Bridget Loughlin, Peter Black and Mario Corrigan of Kildare County Council. Liam Mannix of the Irish Walled Towns Network, Kildare Tourism Group members Frieda OConnell and Paul Lenehan and especially Tom Mc Cutcheon for their time and guidance in the preparation of this plan, as well as all those who attended the public meeting and who provided useful input on the early drafts and supported the initiative.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- Kildare is located fifty kilometres southwest of Dublin close to the M7, the main road to Cork. It is situated on relatively high ground overlooking the Curragh plain to the east at ten kilometres equidistant from the rivers Barrow and Liffey.
- It is arguably the oldest continuously occupied settlements in the country, in its possible origins as a pre-Christian shrine in the form of a perpetual fire dedicated to the Celtic deity, Brigid.
- St. Brigid founded a church and monastery on the site in the late fifth-century that flourished as an important pilgrimage site, and was recorded as being a city as early as the seventh century.
- By the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion, it was of key strategic importance and used as a base by Strongbow. A castle was built outside the monastic enclosure, and it was likely that town defences, in the form of stone walls, ditches or timber palisades were erected around the settlement. However, the first reference to defensive walls dates from the early sixteenth century.
- The outline of the walled town of Kildare remains conjectural, based on documentary sources, placenames and interpretation of historic maps. However, no maps survive that record the actual alignment of the town walls outside the precincts of the cathedral and castle or the location of its gates.
- The town is one of fifty-six towns where evidence of wall circuits survive, thirty-five others have been identified as possible walled towns. Irish walled towns range in size from the larger cities to places that now are small villages or have been abandoned.
- Although Kildare had lost the standing sections of its walls by the middle of the eighteenth century, they are a crucial aspect of the development of the oldest town in Ireland, with its rich archaeological heritage.
- The townscape of Kildare contains an impressive collection of medieval structures set among buildings from later eras. This forms a repository of information on evolving styles of Irish urban architecture from its origins up to the present day.
- Eighteenth and nineteenth-century buildings form the predominant historic character of the town today, adding a significant layer of interest alongside the medieval fabric. The continued use of some of the most important medieval buildings such as the cathedral, and to a lesser extent the castle, contributed to their partial preservation.
- Although the extent and outline of the town walls are not certain, there is a demonstrable sense of pride in the town's built heritage, and this should be broadened to include the rich repository of medieval fabric.
- It is important to set out clearly the messages and themes that are to be communicated to the relevant audiences. The story of the walls should commence with the early history of the settlement, describing major historical events, and daily life, up to the present day. It is important to communicate up-to-date archaeological knowledge, along with the necessity for the long-term conservation of the historic monument.
- Much of the surviving wall sections to the cathedral and castle site will need to be consolidated to ensure their stability. If this work is not carried out as a matter of urgency the remains will continue to collapse. The

standing historic walls should be retained by implementing urgent programmes of repair and maintenance, together with the preservation of their settings.

- Repairs are to be carried using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials of matching quality. Repair works are to be prioritised, and informed by regular inspection and expert advice.
- The proposed two kilometre wall circuit route intersects the most important medieval sites in the town, while also encountering other aspects of the built heritage that would not be immediately obvious to those visiting the town or passing through. The walk could easily be extended to include the sites of Grey Abbey to the south, and White Abbey to the north west, of the historic core for a total distance of 3.5 kilometres.
- Archaeological investigations over time could help identify the location of parts of the circuit, as well as the former gates. For now, a conjectural line will have to be used, with a zone each side of high archaeological potential. Where the conjectural wall circuit is located in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting.
- An illustrated map of the town should be produced to aid interpretation of the walled town. The map could be an artist's impression of an aerial view that emphasizes the medieval sites as well as highlighting the wall circuit. Websites, apps, audio-tours and other media can be used to broaden access to updated information.
- Community groups can play an important role in the interpretation of the archaeological heritage. During a walled town or medieval festival days, key points along the walled town circuit could be occupied by theatrical groups giving short medieval-themed performances that people encounter while walking the route. The market square, former fair green, cathedral park, the back lanes and the car parks could host events.
- The heritage centre has information panels describing the heritage of the town on display, these should be supplemented with material on the medieval town walls. Interpretative panels should also be located at key sites, and ideally should be capable of being updated.
- There is an existing proposal to plant out the empty plot below the cathedral precinct as a medieval garden. This would make an excellent new amenity in the town, in a location that is currently overgrown.
- Restoring the *park* as shown on nineteenth century maps could enhance the setting of the rich archaeological heritage at the castle site. This would involve the cooperation of the owners in the opening up of the former bawn to the public. The water tower could be retained as a viewing point, much as the round tower. Most of all, this fascinating site would be better presented, and its preservation assured.
- There remains much still to be understood, geophysical surveys might provide further archaeological information, at a reasonable cost. This would expand our understanding of the town's development, making it possible to portray its history in a more vivid and authentic way. It would also provide guidance about future developments or the installation of utilities into areas of archaeological potential.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION
- 2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE
- 3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE
- 4.0 ASSESSMENT & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
- 5.0 DEFINING ISSUES & VULNERABILITY
- 6.0 CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES
- 7.0 INTERPRETATION & MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES
- 8.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

APPENDICES

Statutory Protection
Bibliography

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Place

The historic town of Kildare is located fifty kilometres southwest of Dublin close to the M7, the main road to Cork. It is situated on relatively high ground (approximately 110m above sea level) overlooking the Curragh plain to the east at ten kilometres equidistant from the rivers Barrow and Liffey. It is arguably the oldest continuously occupied settlements in the country, in its possible origins as a pre-Christian shrine in the form of a perpetual fire dedicated to the Celtic deity, Brigid. The conversion of one of their number, who became known as St. Brigid, led to her founding a church and monastery on the site in the late fifth-century that flourished as an important pilgrimage site. While the establishment of urban centres in Ireland is understood to have been commenced by Norse settlers, there is a reference to Kildare as a *city* as early as the seventh century, and Brigid herself is described as setting the boundary.

By the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion, it was of key strategic importance, a castle was built outside the monastic enclosure, and it was likely that town defences, in the form of stone walls, earthen banks, ditches or timber palisades were erected around the settlement. While it later lent its name to both the county and the earldom of Kildare, its declining prominence in the early modern period meant that Naas became the county town. The three main historical phases of its development; early Christian, Anglo-Norman and early nineteenth century remain evident. To this day, the cathedral precinct and the adjacent market square remain the prominent features of the town, however, the castle bawn the main feature dating from the Anglo-Norman phase is hidden from view and inaccessible to the public.

The Irish placename *Cill Dara* is translated as *Church of the Oak* and relates to the humble oratory



Fig. 1 Aerial view of Kildare showing conjectural town wall outline (Google maps).

founded by St. Brigid that over time became one of the most important Christian centres on the island. While the Anglo-Normans colonised the town in the late twelfth century, the first reference to defensive walls dates from the early sixteenth century. As an outpost situated outside the Pale, with poor transport links, it lacked the means to maintain its defences into the modern era. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the town was endowed with many fine buildings typical of an Irish town that reinforced the medieval street layout. However, no historic maps survive that record the alignment of the town walls outside the precincts of the cathedral and castle.

On the approaches to the town today, the round tower and cathedral on the hilltop still give notice of its ecclesiastical importance. The layout and placenames of the streets and lanes, along with the market square, remain in their medieval alignments. Later developments have obscured much of what has survived from this period from the casual visitor. While behind the fine traditional shopfronts or

below their floors, evidence of the medieval town may remain, street widening and the developments of recent centuries have removed much that would allow us to describe the extent and appearance of the former town walls of Kildare.

National & European Context

The few existing remains of town-wall fortifications, which formerly enclosed and protected every important town in Ireland, and which yearly diminish in number, are, as a class, undeservedly overlooked by writers on the antiquities of such towns as they describe.

Writing almost one hundred years ago, J.S. Fleming commenced his study on nineteen of the walled towns of Ireland by commenting on the lack of knowledge and understanding of this aspect of our cultural heritage. Avril Thomas, in her extensive study published in 1992 described fifty-six towns where there exists certain proof of wall circuits, with thirty-five others for which defensive walls were a possibility and twenty others for which only the most tentative claims could be made. They range in size from the capital and the most populous cities and towns, down to what now are small villages or indeed have long been abandoned. Among these categories, settlements of less than one thousand inhabitants vied in importance with cities that are closer to a hundred thousand today. Defences were installed around settlements from the Neolithic period, and were also found around early-Christian monasteries and port towns established by the Norse. Following the colonization of parts of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans, stone-built defences started to replace less robust timber structures and earthworks. These towns formed outposts, as well as creating new trading networks and led to the economic development of the country as a whole. The walls vary in scale, detail and material - in each case responding to the local topography, as well as the prevailing economic and political context. Over the centuries, they played a key role in historical events and in the development of our towns and cities.

Ireland is located on the periphery of Europe, and was relatively late in developing an urban culture. However, the Irish walled towns characterize political and economic developments on the island in relation

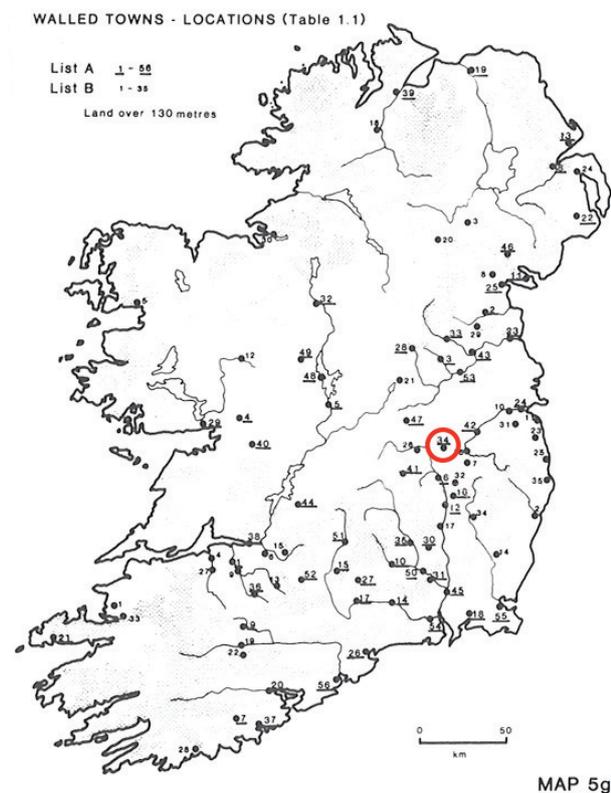


Fig.2 Map showing Irish walled towns (Thomas 1992).

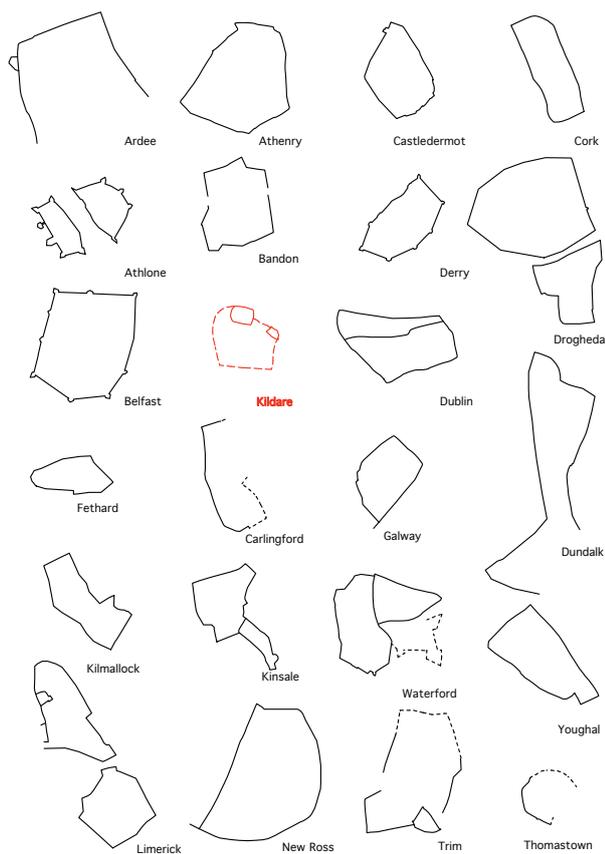


Fig.3 Comparative plans of Irish Walled Towns (based on Thomas 1992).

to Britain and the continent. Starting with the port settlements founded by the Norse, the Anglo-Normans established a more lasting hold on the interior until falling away in the early fifteenth century. Each brought their own construction methods and settlement patterns from their homelands, but adapted these to local circumstances. The Tudor and Stuart plantations also relied on town defences. In the early modern era, following the Cromwellian and Jacobite/ Williamite conflicts defensive walls and ditches quickly became redundant. This led to their gradual but widespread removal starting in the eighteenth century, so that knowledge of the extent of Irish walled towns, and their position in a wider European context, was much reduced.

The Heritage Council established the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in April, 2005 to unite and coordinate the strategic efforts of Local Authorities involved in the management and conservation of historic walled towns in Ireland, both North and

South of the border. The Irish Walled Town Network is formally linked to the international Walled Town Friendship Circle (WTFC), which is the International Association for the sustainable development of walled towns, walled cities and fortified historic towns.

The Piran Declaration, which outlines the reasons for maintaining historic walled towns, was outlined at an Annual General Meeting of the Walled Town Friendship Circle in Piran, Slovenia in 1998.

Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable Timestones of History.

Aims & Objectives

This conservation plan is drawn up in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the revised Burra Charter published by ICOMOS in 1999, which provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. The charter sets out standards of practice for those with responsibility for the guardianship of such places. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors. Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection: to the community; the landscape; to the past and to the shared experiences of the inhabitants.

A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. This defines conservation as *all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.*

The general aims of a Conservation Plan are to:

- Provide an accurate record of the place.
- Understand the significance of the place.
- Identify any threats to the significance.
- Formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the place.

- Outline proposals for necessary conservation work.
- Provide accurate documentation of the site to guide future decision-making.
- Manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the monument.

Following publication of the Burra Charter, the Ename Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 2008 and deals specifically with the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage. This charter provides a framework for the communication of the cultural significance of a place to the public. Its objectives are to facilitate understanding and appreciation of the site; communicate its meaning, safeguard the tangible and intangible values and respect its authenticity. This is particularly relevant in Kildare, as the walls are no longer prominent and prove difficult for the general public to appreciate and understand. For this reason, the plan has a particular emphasis on proposals for how the walls can be best presented and their significance understood and appreciated by both locals and visitors.

Project Team

This conservation plan was prepared by Howley Hayes Architects & CRDS Ltd. with funding provided jointly by the Irish Walled Towns Network and Kildare County Council.

Stakeholders

The grant application was made by the Kildare Town Tourism Group, which includes community and public

representatives, Kildare Chamber of Commerce, St. Brigid’s Cathedral, Cill Dara Historical Society, Irish National Stud and Gardens, Kildare Heritage Centre & Tourist Office, Solas Bhríde Centre and the Tidy Towns Committee. These stakeholders are represented by the following bodies, which have formed a steering group:

Irish Walled Towns Network	Liam Mannix
Kildare County Council	Bridget Loughlin
Kildare County Council	Peter Black
Kildare Heritage Centre	Mario Corrigan
Kildare Heritage Centre	Tom Mc Cutcheon
Irish National Stud	Frieda O’Connell
Kildare Chamber of Commerce	Paul Lenehan

Public Consultation

A public consultation meeting was held on the evening of the 16th of October in the public library. There were over forty attendees, including property owners, public representatives and council officials. Following an introduction and background by Tom Mc Cutcheon of the Kildare Town Heritage Centre, representing the Tourism Group, HHA and CRDS gave a presentation of their archival research and field studies. They also presented proposed interpretation initiatives around the town, described the importance of conserving the standing heritage and the need to carry out further, targeted investigations to determine the extent of the town wall. Liam Mannix of the IWTN then spoke about their activities and aims, the strength of their network, and possible sources of funding for events and works to repair the walls. The attendees took particular interest in the way that the relatively hidden medieval heritage could be enhanced and provide link between the early Christian and eighteenth and nineteenth-century built fabric that predominates. It was proposed that the existing Tourism Group forum should keep the public up-to-date with developments as they occur, and that the next step following the publication of the plan was to organise a medieval festival. It was also noted that it would be important to include the conjectural outline of the walls on development plan maps and tourism maps of the town, to increase awareness of the town defences in terms of planning policy, locals and visitors.



Fig.4 Public consultation meeting held in town library, 16.10.14.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

Documentary Evidence & Sources

The development of the town of Kildare and its defences is detailed in a number of key works including the Irish Historic Towns Atlas Kildare (Andrews 1986), the Urban Archaeological Survey County Kildare (Bradley et al 1986), local history publications and local journals including the Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society. Recent reports undertaken for the county council including The Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation (2011) and the Kildare Town Architectural Conservation Area (2012) provide a synthesis of information on the built heritage of the town and have been drawn on for this report. Primary cartographic sources consulted included the Ordnance Survey 6" maps, first and later editions (T.C.D. Map Library) and the valuations maps of the town dating to c. 1850-1900 (Valuations Office, Dublin). Earlier cartographic sources include Rocque's map of Kildare Town (1757), Taylor's map of County Kildare (1783) and estate maps of Kildare Town by Sherrard (1798) and Sherrard, Brassington and Greene (1817). The excavation bulletin website (www.excavations.ie) was consulted to identify previous excavations that may have been carried out in Kildare town. This database contains summary accounts of excavations carried out in Ireland from 1970 to 2010. Particular emphasis was placed on excavations that crossed the postulated line of the town wall or those that identified medieval structural material including walls or ditches. The following is a summary of the information included in the references above.

Early-medieval period

The foundation of a permanent settlement at Kildare is associated with St. Brigid who established a monastery at *Druim Criaig*, or *ridge of clay*, during the fifth century. Brigid is likely to be a Christianised version of a Celtic goddess and the foundation at Kildare demonstrates a notable degree of continuity between the pagan and early Christian periods putting it among the oldest settlements in the country. It was subsequently named *Cill* or *Cell Dara*, the *Church of the Oak*. The oak is thought to have marked a pagan

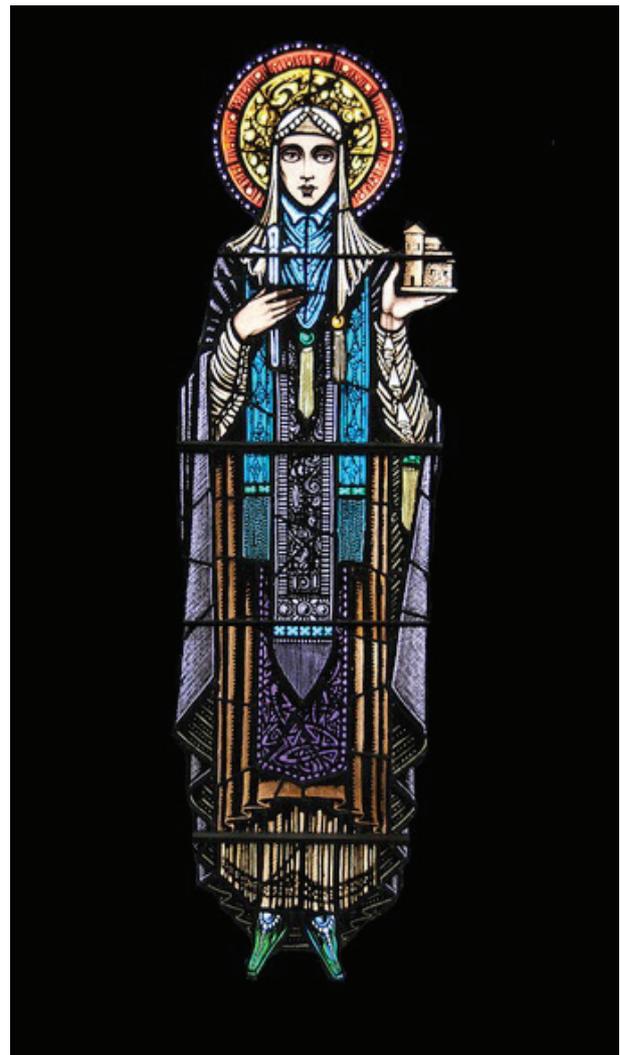


Fig.5 St. Brigid panel by Harry Clarke in St. Mary's Church, Ballinrobe.

shrine. Giraldus Cambrensis recorded the tradition of a perpetual sacred fire at Kildare in the twelfth century. The fire is described as burning in a *circular fenced enclosure, forbidden by men, tended by nineteen nuns*.

Whatever its origins, the monastery at Kildare became one of the most important in early medieval Ireland. The monastery was first founded for women but it later became a dual monastery with both monks and nuns. The first bishops were Conleth, who died in AD 520 and Áed Mac Colmáin who died in AD 639. The monastery itself was ruled by abbesses whose succession can be traced from the eighth century until the coming of the Normans.

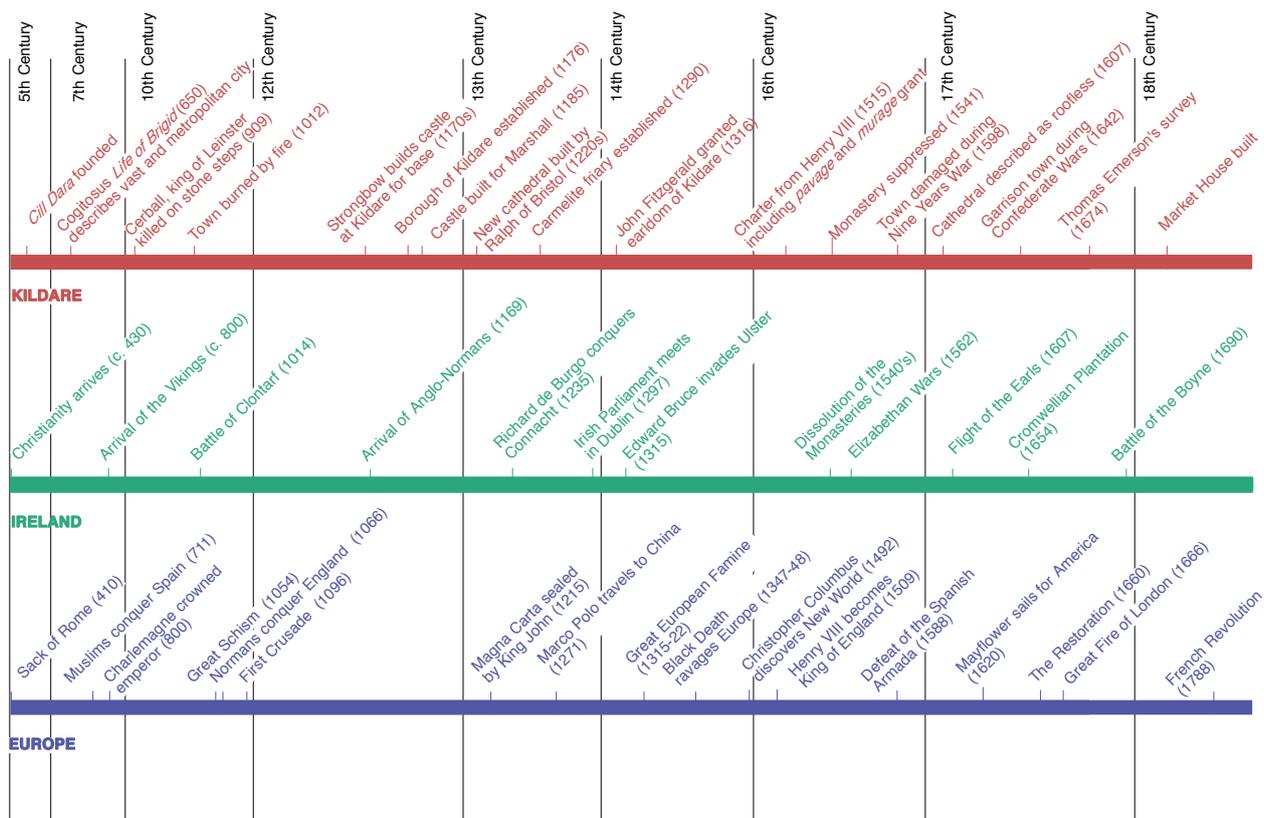


Fig.6 Timeline showing key dates in development of town defences alongside major historic events in Ireland & Europe.

The historical evidence suggests a large and wealthy ecclesiastical foundation at Kildare in the early medieval period. Indeed, some of the references to Kildare indicate something more than a purely ecclesiastical site. Cogitosus in his *Life of St. Brigid*, written in the seventh century, describes an exceptionally significant building that contained the relics of Brigid and Conleth. He also describes Kildare as a *vast and metropolitan city... within whose outskirts, which St. Brigid marked out with a clearly defined boundary, no earthly adversary is feared* and indicating there was a *doorway of the ornate cashel which surrounds the church*. Roughly circular or elliptical enclosures are a common feature of early Irish monastic topography.

An eleventh-century annalistic fragment records the death of Cerball, king of Leinster, in 909 as the result of an accident outside the house of a combmaker (*ciormhaire*) in the street of the stone steps or flag-stones (*sraite in cheime chloici*). The Annals of

Clonmacnoise record that in 1012 *all the Town of Kildare was burnt by a thunderbolt but one house*. These references raise the possibility of a secular and possibly proto-urban settlement associated with the church. The importance of Kildare was recognised at the synod of Rathbreasail in 1111 when it became the centre of a large diocese.

Outer ditches or banks enclosing a ring of less sacred land outside the churchyard are also often recorded. These would have been occupied by dwelling houses of both the religious and laity. Some ecclesiastical settlements possessed more than one of these outer enclosures, concentrically arranged and separating different degrees of secularity. These outer ditches, although no longer physically extant, are thought to have influenced the present courses of streets, lanes, walls, field banks and property boundaries of the modern towns. Scholars have found several such curvilinear elements in modern maps of Kildare.

Late-medieval period

During the twelfth century, Kildare was the most important settlement in the county, a fact that attracted the Anglo-Norman colonisers. Strongbow used it as a base on many occasions during the early 1170s. Due to its strategic hilltop location and access to rich farmland it became the principal manor of his north Leinster lordship. In establishing his military base Strongbow constructed a castle, likely a motte and bailey, the location of which may equate with the mound marked at the east end of Market Square on Rocque's map on 1756. The borough was established before Strongbow's death in 1176 and there are repeated references to burgesses in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. A stone castle, built by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Leinster was in existence before 1185. Marshall only resided at Kildare for a short period after which the *castrum, manerum et comitatum de Kildare* (the castle, manor and county of Kildare) passed to William de Vesci in 1297. Unfortunately no thirteenth century charter has survived for the town which may have give an indication whether it was defended at this time. However the former existence of such a charter is indicated in the Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls where a claim was made by the burgesses of Kildare to try offences within the town *by charter of the Lords of the Liberty*.

The town prospered during the relative peace of the thirteenth century, the clearest evidence of its wealth being provided by the records of church building both within the town and its surrounds. A new cathedral, traditionally attributed to Ralph of Bristol (bishop of Kildare 1223-32), was built, the Preceptory at Tully



Fig. 7 Artist's impression of Nendrum monastic site, Co. Down. Nendrum Paint the Past <http://www.philarm.com/ecclesiastical.aspx>



Fig. 8 Fitzgerald family coat of arms.

East was founded c. 1212, the Franciscan friary or Grey Abbey was founded c. 1254-60, the Carmelite friary or White Abbey was established c. 1290 and church of St. Mary Magdalene, with its associated hospital, was in existence by 1307.

In 1316 John FitzThomas FitzGerald was created earl of Kildare and the *castrum et villam* (castle and town) were granted to him by King Edward II. The association of the FitzGerald family with the town continued until the 20th century although their principal seat during the Middle Ages was at Maynooth Castle. Kildare Castle, positioned on elevated ground to the east of the monastery, comprised four towers and out-offices surrounded by a bawn. An indication of the size of the borough at this period may be deduced from the accounts of royal escheators (legal managers) during gaps in the succession of the earls. In 1328, for instance, Walter Wogan accounted for £4 14s 10.25d burgage rent for Kildare, representing two-thirds of the burgage rent during a nine month period. At the standard rent of 1s per burgage this indicates that Kildare had about 200 burgages and a population possibly in the region of 1000. This

population indicates the built up area of Kildare in the medieval period may have been similar to that of the eighteenth century town.

It is possible that there was some form of town defences this time, possibly incorporating elements of the monastic enclosure, though definitive references to them are scant. A reference from the Patent Roll of Henry VI dating to 1435 includes a petition from James White of Kildare a merchant. His house was burned by the *Caryr Oconghir* and White proposed to build a good hall with a *forcelletto kernelat* (crenellated fortress) and wanted licence to have the *lapides* (stones) of Rowsplace and the *muror antiquor* (ancient walls) of Smythesplace to complete those works. It is possible that this reference to the ancient walls indicates that some form of fortification may have been in place and elements of it may have been taken down to construct stone buildings or boundary walls within the town.

In 1515 Kildare received a new charter of incorporation from Henry VIII which has been transcribed by Gearoid MacNiocaill in the *Red Books of the Earls of Kildare*. As well as laying down regulations for the functioning of the corporation it granted the town a weekly market, *pavage* (to maintain and improve roads and streets) and *murage* (to build and repair the town walls). Due to its frontier position the grant licensed the burgesses to enclose the town with *fossatis et muris de petra et calce* or *ditches and walls of stone and lime* indicating substantial town defences were proposed. The line of the sixteenth century



Fig.9 Late 18th c. view of ruined cathedral and round tower by Beranger.

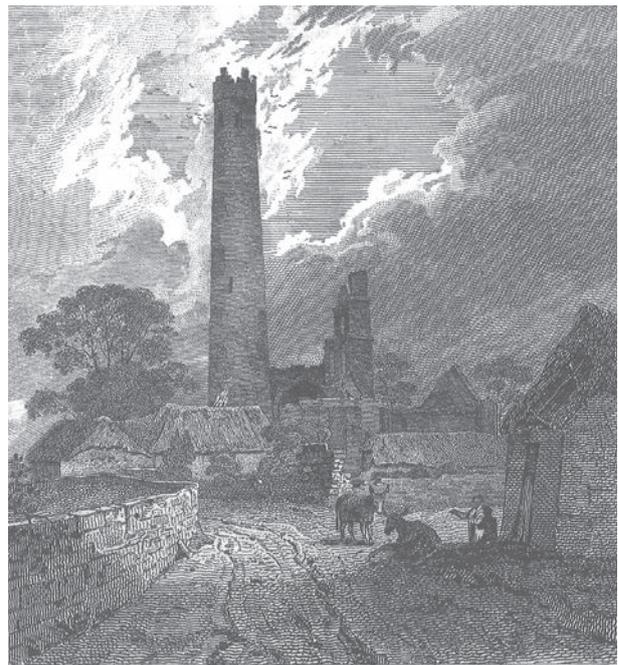


Fig.10 19th c. view of round tower and cathedral by Petrie.

defences is conjectural but may have included parts of the defences of Kildare Castle and the walls of St. Brigid's monastery. Recent excavations on the site of Kildare Credit Union on Bride Street uncovered a medieval ditch comparable to those found at the early medieval sites of Dunshaughlin and Kells and the base of an Anglo-Norman defensive tower. These features lie some distance within the conjectural southern boundary of the medieval borough and outside the conjectured line of the inner monastic enclosure. In the absence of further archaeological investigation it is difficult to clearly associate these features with either of the conjectural boundaries. It is also possible that they were part of a smaller structure enclosing a significant building which formerly stood on the site.

Post-medieval period

Records indicate that the town entered a period of decline in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The monastic house fell into decay after the reformation in 1540. The town was the scene of an engagement in 1598, during the Nine Years War, when it was so badly damaged that Fynes Moryson described it as *altogether disinhabited*. A *Description of Ireland and the State thereof* written in 1598 records that the county of Kildare contained *no townes (sic)*

of importance saving Castledermot and Athy, which hath been walled but now ruined indicating a reduction in the importance of Kildare town. The cathedral was still ruined and roofless in 1604 and a number of properties were described in 1607 as *ruinous* or *lately burned*.

The town was an important garrison site during the Confederate wars and in 1642-3 three hundred royalist troops were garrisoned there. During this time the cathedral was totally ruined, reputedly bombarded by Lord Castlehaven. References to the repair of the town wall also appear at this time. The town became isolated from the main routes between Dublin and Munster due to the continuing threat from the Irish with travellers preferring to pass through more secure towns located within the Pale. Kildare lost its administrative functions as shire town to Naas.

Cartographic Sources

Historic maps and surveys provide one of the

principal sources for the investigation of the defences of Kildare. A number of surveys exist for the town that predate the Ordnance Survey including a survey of the manor of Kildare by Thomas Emerson in 1674, a map of the town by John Rocque in 1757 and a survey of the by Thomas Sherrard in 1798.

Emerson's survey entitled *A book of reference of the towns and lands belonging to the Right Honourable John Earl of Kildare, lying and being in the barony of Ophaley in the county of Kildare* was surveyed in 1674. A copy survives in the Leinster Papers in the Public Records Office, Northern Ireland (PRONI ref. no. D30782/3/5 and MIC 541/1). A wealth of boundary and placename detail is included in the text. Parcel reference numbers included in the written descriptions refer to locations on an accompanying map which would have allowed the more precise location of a number of features associated with the town defences at Kildare. Unfortunately the maps associated with the survey have become separated from the surviving written descriptions. While there



Fig. 11 John Rocque's plan of Kildare Town of 1757.



Fig.12 Survey by Thomas Sherrard of 1798.

are no direct references to the existence of the town wall, reference is made to the town gates and related structures including Clare Gate, White Gate, Ellis Gate, Fire Castle and the tholsel (a building used for collection of tolls). Parcels of land being either *within* or *without* the gates indicating that some manner of enclosure may have survived or the gates may have stood at this date. The references include:

- A parcel without Clare Gate, formerly a common for the earl's tenants and of right now is lately ditched up and grazed by one person.....(Parcel 18)
- A surround of the parks west of the Abbey Lane without Clare Gate and the highway to Dunneany and the small parks betwixt Dunneany highway and the highway from Fire Castle, wherein is several gardens and cabins and several roads and highways within the surround. Bounded on the west with the land of number

17 in the map and Little Cuneburra; on the north with White Abbey, White's land and bishop's land; on the east with church land, Fire Castle, Clare Gate and Abbey Lane; on the south with Dixon's land (Parcel 19)

- A little garden near Clare Gate south; bounded with bishop's land and Abbey Lane (Parcel 20)
- One garden, the west end bounded with the Abbey Lane which is without Clare Gate; on the south with a common near a pinfold, the east point near the tholsel on the north side with the aforesaid garden belonging to the 49 interest (Parcel 22)
- A surround of several houses and gardens.....on the north with the middle street which goeth straight from White Gate place to Clare Gate. Without White Gate three cabins; within White Gate two cabins; then a large stone wall house, now the sign of the Fitzgerald Arms; two other houses, betwixt which is a house and garden, church land; (Parcel 23)

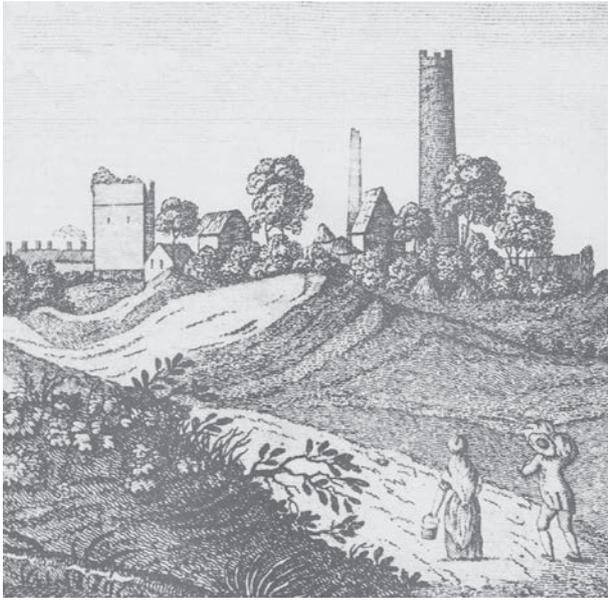


Fig.13 Extract from W. Beauford's View of Kildare from the North 1794.

- A surround on the outside of the walls of the earl's castle, and also the house without the walls which now hath the sign of the Ormounte Arms, and two little dwellings on the north west of the castle walls within Ellis Gate about two perches (Parcel 25)
- A surround where in is two gardens and cabins, the Earl's Park on the north of the castle walls east of the highway without Ellis Gate, and three cabins and gardens west of the highway without adjoining Ellis Gate..... (Parcel 26)
- A parcel called Farringate, arable land, 40 perches from Ellis Gate. Bounded on the south with bishop's land, on the west with Dunmurray Lane, on the north with bishop's land, on the east with Rathbride Lane' (Parcel 30)

Some 83 years later John Rocque completed a manuscript map entitled *A Survey of the Town of Kildare belonging to his Excellency James Earl of Kildare*. By the time of the survey the town walls appear to have been taken down; there is no direct reference to the wall in the key. However a number of features may indicate where the town defences once stood. Long narrow burgage plots are indicated on the south side of Dublin Street and on the west side of Bride Street. These may respect the line of the town defences at these locations. A distinct change in the plot morphology of Dublin Street is evident

on Rocque's map (between Plot 7 and Plot 6). This location is directly south of the castle and may indicate where the town wall crossed Dublin Street and the possible location of White Gate. A slight constriction is evident the west end of Claregate Street which may correlate with the position of Clare Gate. *Black Ditch* or *Clae Moor Street*, a name derived from the Irish for *great ditch* is indicated on this map. It may represent the line of a ditch associated with the western sector of the monastic enclosure and the line of the later town wall but much of the western side has been removed by the construction of the wallpaper factory in the 1930s.

A large-scale town plan of Kildare was produced by Thomas Sherrard for the Duke of Leinster in 1798. The detailed reference table, which contains information on the land holdings, occupiers and structures only has one direct reference to a feature of the town defences. Plot 31 of Heatherington's holding, tenanted by William Higgins, contains a dwelling house, old tower and yard. The old tower is one of the corner towers of the castle curtain wall. Sections of curving street pattern are also evident, particularly at the south end of Nugent Street and Fire Castle Lane that may mark the line of the inner monastic enclosure. The outer monastic enclosure

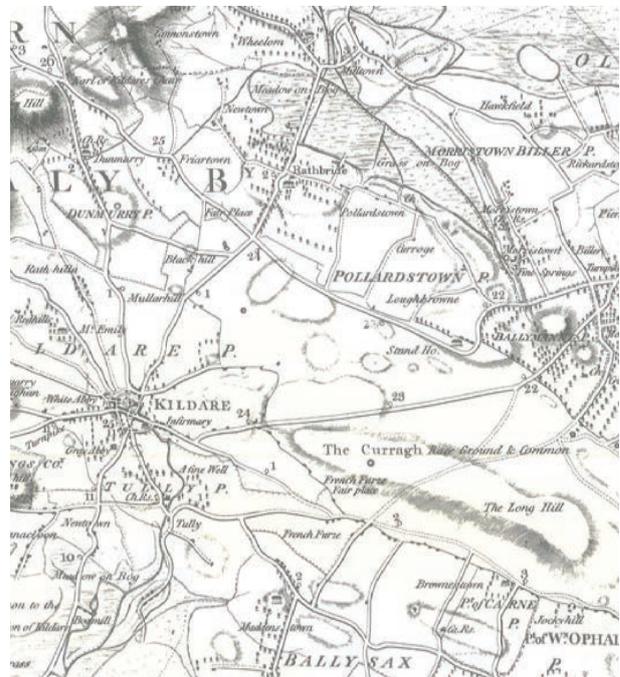


Fig.14 Extract from Alex Taylor's map of 1783.

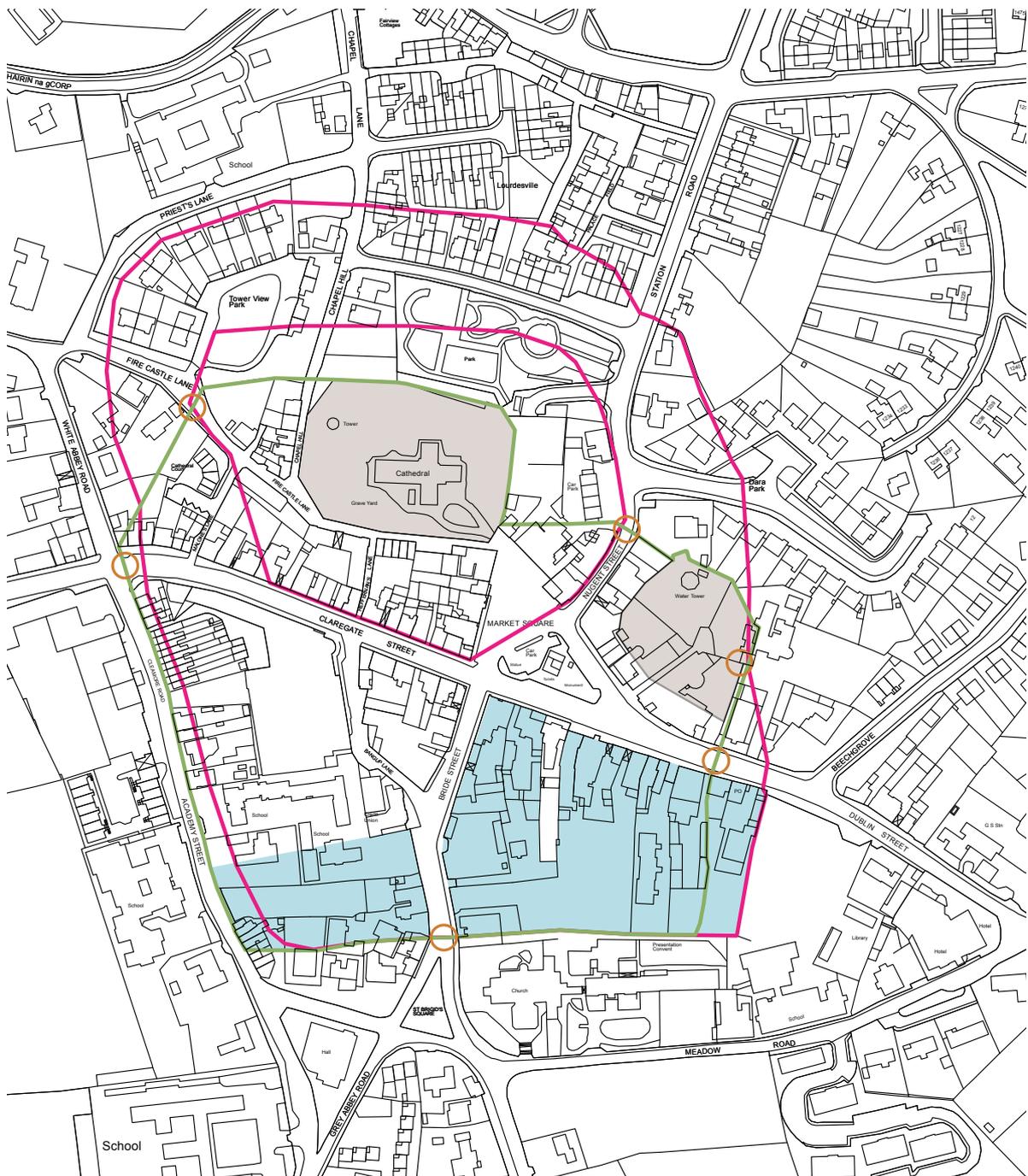


Fig.15 Primary Valuation map of Kildare Town (after 1850).

may be represented by the line of Academy Street (unnamed on the survey), White Abbey Street and Priests Lane (unnamed on the survey). The later medieval town wall may be indicated by the long linear property boundary to the rear of buildings on the west side of Bergen Street (now Bride street), the rear property buildings on the south side of Dublin Street, and a curving plot boundary (Plot 42 and Plot 43) to the north of the curtain wall of the castle.

Archive material in the Valuations Office, Dublin was also assessed to determine whether any references to sections of the town defences survived into the mid-nineteenth century. While the Primary Valuation Books and Cancelled (or revised) Land Books dating to c. 1850 – 1900 contained no definitive references to the town walls some incidental references may indicate the survival of defensive features within the town. Plot 22, located on the north side of Church and Friary lane (now Firecastle Lane) is annotated

the site of the Fire Castle on the associated valuation map. Plots 17-30 on the east side of Chapel Street (now Bride Street) are annotated in the valuation books *old walls all levelled and made rite (sic) and good garden* though it is not clear whether this refers to a portion of town wall or simply the walls of the small tenements which stood on the site. Plot 37 on the north side of Main Street (now Dublin Street) was owned by the Duke of Leinster and contained an *Old Castle and Pleasure Grounds* though the area now occupied by the council yard is vacant of buildings on the associated valuation map. The archive material indicates alternative names for many of the streets within the town which were in use up to the 1870s and 1880s. Claregate Street was named West Street, Dublin Street was Main Street, Bride Street was Chapel Street, both Chapel Hill and Firecastle Lane were named Church and Friary Lane and Cleamore Road and Academy Street were named Back Lane.



TOWN WALL & MEDIEVAL HERITAGE

- Burgage Plots as shown on Rocque map 1757
- Church & Castle Precincts
- Monastic Enclosure (Inner & Outer)
- Town Wall Alignment
- Town Gate Locations

Fig. 16 Map showing the conjectural lines of the monastic and town wall enclosures along with burgage plots and town gates.

3.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The Defences of Kildare

The walled town of Kildare covers an area of nine hectares, which places it among the smaller Irish walled towns of that period including those of nearby Naas and Athy. The medieval street pattern has largely been retained, although street widening and the loss of its gates have made the historic layout more difficult to appreciate on the ground. Of the former town walls only the enclosures to the cathedral, and to a lesser extent the former castle, remain above ground. Other sections may be buried underground, or have been partially rebuilt along subsequent property boundaries.

Monastic Enclosure

Kildare is situated on top of a low ridge of rising ground 10-15m above the surrounding ground. The Cathedral is located on the western end of the ridge. Kildare has a long history of settlement dating back to the prehistoric period with permanent settlement likely starting with the foundation of the monastery.

Inner Enclosure

Roughly circular or elliptical enclosures are a common feature of early Irish monastic settlements. Scholars have attempted to trace the remains of the early monastic site within the modern town of Kildare.



Fig.17 View of inner face of cathedral enclosure wall.



Fig. 18 View of outer face of cathedral wall at Firecastle Lane.

The churchyard of St. Brigid's Cathedral is bounded by a stone wall containing the cathedral, round tower and high cross. The wall is sub-rectangular in shape, constructed of rubble limestone and is heavily buttressed along the exterior eastern side. The inner enclosure is likely to have encompassed a greater area than the churchyard and its layout can be conjectured from the cartographic sources and from the curvilinear street pattern. The curved line of Nugent Street and the southern end of Station Road are likely to respect the line of the enclosure. The northern boundary is traceable as a linear cropmark in aerial photographs taken of the field to the north of the Cathedral before the development of the public park (Cambridge Aerial Photograph). The enclosure is likely to have crossed Chapel Lane before turning south and running south-east along Church Lane and east along Claregate Street.

Outer Enclosure

Outer ditches or banks enclosing a ring of less exclusively sacred land, outside the churchyard are also often recorded. These would have been occupied by dwelling houses of both the religious and laity. Some ecclesiastical settlements apparently possessed more than one of these outer enclosures, concentrically arranged and separating different degrees of secularity. These outer ditches, although no longer visible, are thought to have influenced the present courses of streets, lanes, walls, field banks and property boundaries of the modern towns. Scholars have found several such curvilinear elements in modern maps of Kildare.

The radial course of Priest's Lane, Academy Street, St. Brigid's Square and Convent Road was likely preserves the line of the enclosure or a routeway that developed parallel to it. It is also likely that parts of the enclosure were incorporated into the defences of the Anglo-Norman town as happened at Kells, Co. Meath. Along the north and north-west side the ditch probably lay somewhat south-east of Priest's Lane and east of Academy Street which was named *Black Ditch* or *Clea Moor* on Roque's 1757 map of Kildare. The southern boundary of the outer enclosure, which would have been located north of St. Brigid's Square and Convent Road may be indicated by the position of the long property boundary running east from Bride Street. The eastern boundary of the enclosure is not immediately evident but it may be the same as that of the medieval defences.



Fig. 19 View towards Heritage Centre on Nugent Street.

Leo Swan has suggested a line following Priest's lane, White Abbey Road, the old property boundaries south of Claregate Street and the southernmost stretch of Station Road and Nugent Street. Andrews suggest that there are several *places outside of Swan's hypothetical enclosure where alternative or additional outer boundaries may be sought*. He also notes that the possibility of a second outer enclosure at Kildare. Allowance must also be made for some contemporary habitation outside all the enclosures. The monastery is known to have possessed its own watermill, for instance, yet the nearest likely mill-site is at Tully, more than a kilometre from the cathedral and well beyond the limits of any of the suggested enclosures. In the absence of clear archaeological evidence, the form of the early settlement at Kildare must remain entirely conjectural.



Fig. 20 Extract from Rocque's map showing Castle site.

Kildare Castle

The castle is located at the east end of a ridge of high ground that drops away sharply to the north and east and less sharply to the west and south. The castle consisted of a polygonal keep enclosing 0.43 hectares, bounded by a stone curtain wall with four towers. On Rocque's map on 1757 a hachured mound is indicated in the south-eastern angle of the enclosure, possibly representing the site of an earlier earthen motte. The northern portion is in use as a council yard with a modern water tower. The curtain wall survives on the north-west, north-east, south-east and south-west sides. It is an un-coursed

limestone wall, battered at the base. It survives to a maximum height of 6m externally and 1.5m internally.

The Gatehouse

Access to the castle was through a gatehouse on the south-east side of the curtain wall. A rectangular, three-storey over basement structure, built of uncoursed rubble limestone with a base batter on the north, east and west walls. It measures c. 11.5m in length and 9.8m in width externally. It is still inhabited and has undergone several modifications over the centuries. There is an external batter on the north, east and south walls. Part of the north wall has been broken out in order to link the gatehouse with a modern extension on the north. The roof and parapet are of modern date.

Angle towers

A rectangular tower labelled *old tower* is indicated (Plot 31) in the south-west corner of the curtain wall on Sherrard's map of Kildare in 1798. There is no surface evidence of the tower.

The remains of north-west tower are incorporated into the rear of the building on the corner of Market Square and Station Rd. It appears to have been rectangular and was possibly open-backed. The visible wall is 1.6m thick and the tower has maximum dimensions of 9.8m.x 4m.

This north-east tower consists of the remains of an open-backed rectangular structure with a maximum length of 8.8m; its width unknown. Internal ground level is some 6m above the exterior at this point.



Fig. 21 View of wall head to castle bawn retaining wall.



Fig. 22 View of the east side of the Gatehouse.

Later Medieval Town Defences

There are no structures surviving within the town that can be specifically linked to the town defences and their original course and the area enclosed remains conjectural. The earliest documentary evidence occurs in Henry VIII's charter of 1515 that authorized the burgesses to enclose the town with stonewalls and fosses and granted them murage to pay for this. While this document indicates an intention to enclose the town, it does not guarantee that they were constructed. The earliest definitive references to the town defences occur in Emerson's survey of the town dating to 1674.

Clare Gate

First mentioned in Emerson's survey of 1674 and recorded in the Kildare rent roll of 1684. It evidently stood near the west end of Claregate Street and was named West Gate in the early nineteenth century. It was demolished before 1757 and its precise location is now unknown. Roque's map shows an indentation of the street line at the west end of Claregate Street that may indicate the site of the gatehouse.

Fire Castle

This building stood to the west of the cathedral on the south side of Church Lane and north of Fire Castle Lane. It is first referred to as the 'fire castle' in Emerson's survey of 1674. Two walls of it are shown on Roque's map of Kildare in 1757. This may be the castle belonging to the convent of *St. Brigid de Firehouse* that is referred to in the Dissolution documents of 1540 as *a small castle or fortillage with a chapel* and described as lying within the precincts of the nunnery. It was demolished before 1798 but the site is recorded in the valuation of 1853.

Ellis Gate

First mentioned in Emerson's survey of 1674 and recorded in the Kildare rent roll of 1684. It appears to have been located on Station Road. It was demolished before 1757 and its exact position is now unknown. It was probably located at the crest of the ridge before Station Road drops towards the north.

White Gate

First mentioned in Emerson's survey of 1674 and recorded in the Kildare rent roll of 1684. White Gate was located at the eastern end of the town in Dublin Street. It was demolished before 1757 and its exact position is now unknown. At the west end of Dublin Street there is a slight constriction (Plot 7) in the building lines which may correlate with the position of the gate.



Fig. 23 View looking west along Fire Castle Lane.



Fig. 24 View looking west along Claregate Street towards site of gate.



Fig. 25 View looking north along Cleamore Road.

Cleamore Road

Black Ditch or *Clae Moor Street* is indicated on Rocque's 1757 map of Kildare. The name is derived from *Clea Mór* meaning *great ditch* and it may represent the line of a ditch associated with the western sector of the monastic enclosure. In the 1930s, much of the area was obliterated by the building of the wallpaper factory.

Bride Street/Bangup Lane

An archaeological assessment was undertaken in 1999 for the Kildare Credit Union. The site, at the junction of Bride Street and Bangup Lane, was located beyond the conjectural line of the inner monastic enclosure and inside the later medieval defences of Kildare. The assessment uncovered an early medieval ditch which bears comparison with enclosures at other Early Christian sites. A roughly square stone structure was built over the ditch in the mid-twelfth to mid-thirteenth centuries and may

have represented the remains of an Anglo-Norman defensive tower. The date of the tower may suggest that the line of the town wall lies much closer to Claregate Street than previously thought. It might also be the remains of a fortified house or compound, such as found at Lombard's Castle, in Buttevant, Co. Cork.

The position of these features and the layout of property boundaries indicate a possible course for the medieval town wall. One circuit would have run from Fire Castle to Clare Gate, then south along Academy Street to the north end of St. Brigid's Square. It turned eastwards crossing Bride Street running along the property boundary to the rear of house on the south side of Dublin Street. It then turns north, crossing Dublin Street at the site of the White Gate.

The curtain wall and castle would have provided security for the north-east corner of the town rendering the need for an additional wall unnecessary. From the castle the wall may have run west crossing Station Road at Ellis Gate, encompassing the site

of the Bishop's Palace and cathedral and may have reused the line of the inner monastic enclosure.

Archaeological Investigations

The town of Kildare is located on a ridge of ground rises c. 15m above the surrounding countryside. Within the town ground level slopes up to two distinct high points, occupied by the Cathedral c. 112m OD and the site of the Kildare Castle c. 110m OD. To the north and south of these high points the ground slopes down to c. 90-100m OD. Archaeological excavations have revealed a wealth of medieval and post-medieval material in recent years and indicate areas of archaeological potential within the town of Kildare. While many of the excavations have intersected with the conjectured lines of the monastic enclosure, town wall or the sites of the town gates, few have provided definitive evidence for their existence.

Kildare Castle (Excavation Licence No. N/A, 1989)

An archaeological assessment was undertaken as part of application for change of use at the building at the corner of Market Square and Nugent Street

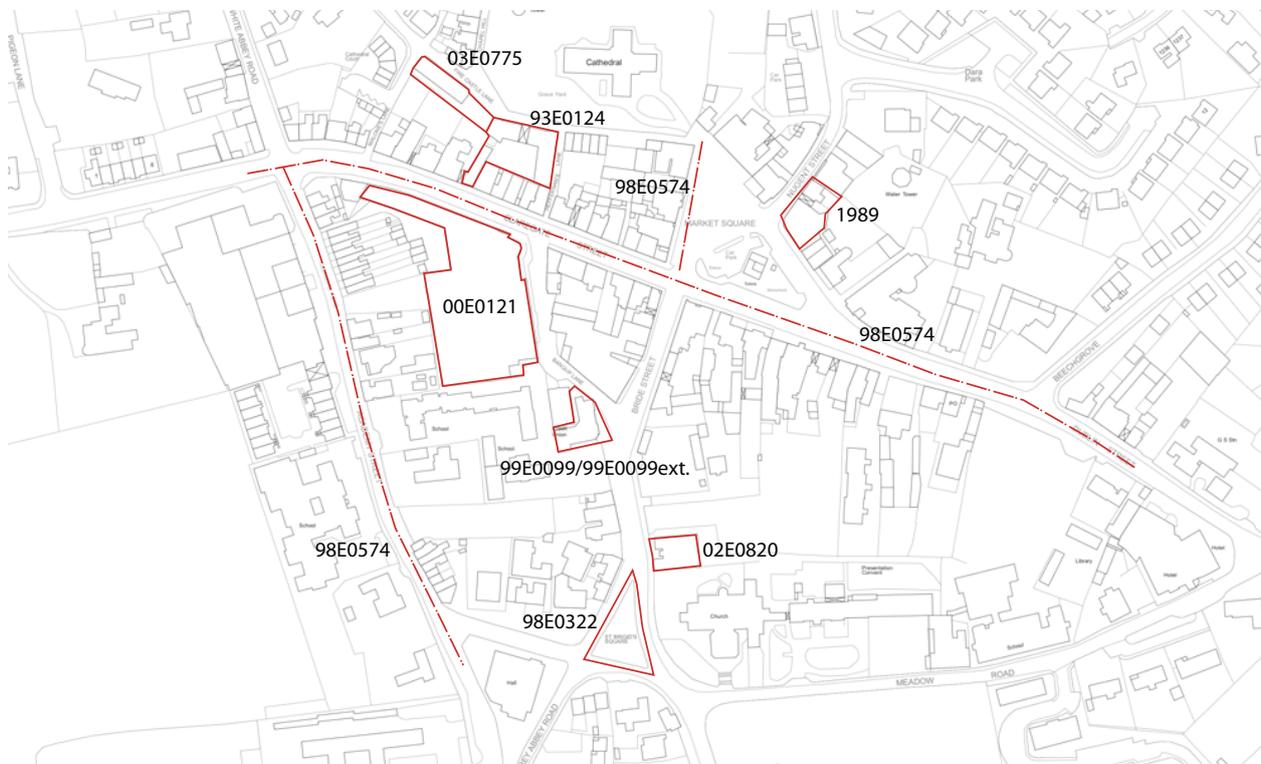


Fig. 26 Map showing location of archaeological investigations around town centre with reference numbers.



Fig. 27 View along cathedral enclosure wall on Chapel Hill.

(formerly Graham's Bakery). The north-west tower of the castle curtain wall is believed to have stood on the site. A two-storey structure built against the curtain wall occupies the approximate site of the tower. It has three walls forming an open-backed building, the east wall abutting the curtain wall. The north-east corner has a batter which begins some 3m above ground level. The stonework is regular similar to that in the curtain wall itself. The north wall comprised much later stonework due to insertion of two windows. The northwest corner was not battered and contained a lot of red brick, indicating later rebuilding. As this corner would be impacted by the development it was subject to assessment. The excavation of a large manhole and the installation of gas and sewerage pipes impacted much of the area exposed in the excavation. The foundation courses of the structure were revealed and areas of disturbed boulder clay that may represent the presence of a ditch associated with the curtain wall.

Church Lane (Excavation License No. 93E0124)

The site, on the corner of Church Lane and Heffernan's Lane, is located within the conjectured bounds of the Early Christian enclosure and the town walls. Apartments were planned for part of the site. Three trenches were excavated revealing five pit-like features, some of which were cut into the boulder clay and some cut down from the surface. One of them had modern pottery in the fill while none of the others produced finds; one of them yielded a sequence of ash and clay with charcoal and animal bone.

Bord Gáis pipeline (Excavation Licence No. 98E0376)

Eight test-trenches were excavated at seven sites within the historic centre of Kildare town in advance of large-scale pipe-laying undertaken by Bord Gáis Éireann. The positioning of seven trenches was to ascertain whether the gates, town wall and monastic enclosure would be revealed at the depth of the proposed works (c. 1m). The eighth trench was excavated on the north-west side of Market Square in the centre of the town beside the cathedral and within what would have been the monastic enclosure. Significant archaeological levels were observed adjacent to the cathedral only. No archaeological deposits were noted.

Bord Gáis pipeline (Excavation Licence No. 98E0574)

Just under 3km of gas pipeline was laid within Kildare town between November 1998 and March 1999. Most of this was within the zone of archaeological potential, although some stretches were outside the zone also. The trench running from the junction of Bride Street northwards towards the Cathedral contained seven sherds of medieval pottery, along with a cut antler, an iron nail, red brick, several pieces of cremated bone, and unburnt animal bone and teeth. The trench running from the junction of Station Road to Dublin Street contained four sherds of medieval pottery, all from the extreme north-west end of the trench. While sections of the pipeline crossed the conjectural line of the town defences including sites at Claregate Street, Dublin Street and Cleamore Street no archaeological remains associated with the medieval town wall, gatehouses



Fig. 28 View looking north along Bangup Lane



Fig. 29 View towards credit union on Bride Street.

or the early monastic enclosure were uncovered. Due to the shallowness (under 1m) of the trenches excavated as part of the scheme, it is possible that medieval remains associated with the town defences lay sealed within deeper deposits.

Bride Street / Bangup Lane (Excavation Licence No. 99E0099/99E0099 ext.)

An archaeological assessment was undertaken in advance of the development of the new Kildare Credit Union at the junction of Bride Street and Bangup Lane. The development was located beyond the conjectured line of the inner Early Christian circuit and within the outer Early Christian circuit and later medieval defences of Kildare town. A large north-south aligned ditch was excavated at the western end of the site. The ditch was moderately steep sided measuring 4-5m wide and 2.2-2.3m deep. The ditch was cut into natural deposits and was filled with dark organic clay fill and olive yellow sub-soil. No trace of an associated bank was uncovered by this may have been levelled by later activity at the site. The ditch bears comparison with other Early Christian sites excavated at Dunshaughlin and Kells. Artefacts recovered from the ditch indicate a mid twelfth to mid-thirteenth century date. A roughly square, stone-built structure was later constructed over the ditch. The origin and date of the structure was difficult to determine but it was possibly the base of an Anglo-Norman defensive tower. The structure was constructed after the initial built up of deposits at the base of the ditch and was separated from the earlier activity by a series of layers of re-deposited clays. The remains comprise four walls of roughly

hewn, randomly coursed limestone. The eastern wall may have been earlier in date, with the other three walls built up against it.

St. Brigid's Square (Excavation Licence No. 98E0322)

An archaeological assessment was undertaken on Bride Street in advance of the development of St. Brigid's Square. The site lies within the zone of archaeological potential associated with Kildare town, to the south of the proposed line of the outer early medieval monastic enclosure and the later medieval defences. The test trenching indicated that much of the site had not been disturbed before the commencement of the assessment. However, the foundation remains of a building illustrated in the 1908 map of Kildare were uncovered on the northern end of the site. One sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from a disturbed context but no other deposits or structures were uncovered.

Claregate Street / Bangup Lane (Excavation Licence No. 00E0121)

An archaeological test excavation was undertaken on a site adjacent to Claregate Street and Bangup



Fig. 30 View of dig at Credit Union (Declan Moore for Mary Henry and Associates, licence no. 99E0099 and 99E0099ext.).

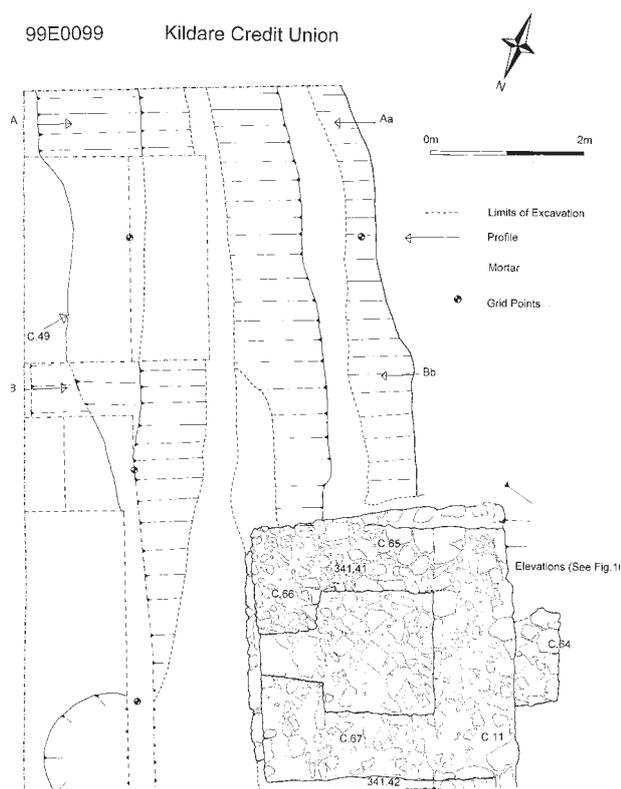


Fig. 7 : General Plan of Linear Ditch Feature, Phase 1 and Phase 2 – Stone Structure

Fig. 31 Drawing of ditch and tower base (Declan Moore for Mary Henry and Associates, licence no. 99E0099 and 99E0099ext.).

Lane in advance of a commercial supermarket development. One of the trenches was situated in the north-eastern part of the site and revealed modern debris underneath which was a dark silty soil which comprised the fill material of a double-ditch dug into the natural subsoil. A double-ditch was revealed running perpendicular to the trench in a north-south direction. The overall width was c. 5m, the eastern ditch measuring 1.5m in width and the western ditch measuring 1.7m in width. The ditches were U-shaped and separated with natural subsoil.

Arus Bhríde, St. Brigid's Square (Excavation Licence No. 02E0820)

An archaeological assessment was undertaken of the extension and alteration of the existing parish centre. The southern limit of the monastic enclosure may have been located within the site boundary and the conjectural line of the town wall may correspond with the line of the north wall of Arus Bhríde. Excavation revealed that the natural slope had been levelled

through the introduction of new material. This material was removed. No archaeological material was uncovered during ground reduction of during excavation for the wall footing and no surviving remains of the town wall were uncovered.

Firecastle Lane / Malone's Lane / Heffernan's Lane (Excavation Licence No. 03E0775)

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken of a proposed residential development located between Malone's Lane on the west, Firecastle Lane on the north and Heffernan's Lane on the east. The site lies within the zone of archaeological potential around Kildare and is located immediately south of the cathedral, which probably marks the site of St. Brigid's monastic foundation. Around 1223, Ralph of Bristol founded the cathedral that was later restored in the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. Wall foundations and cellars associated with the building demolished prior to development were encountered in the north-west part of the site and three pits were revealed during excavations in the east part. No finds were recovered from the pits and the fills were quite sterile. The pits appear to be relatively modern and may be associated with a garage and service station



Fig. 32 View towards cathedral along Heffernan's Lane.

that operated on this part of the site in the mid-twentieth century. Some disarticulated human bones were found during monitoring along the northern edge of the site. The bones were contained within the foundation trench and lay near the cathedral boundary wall. They were found in a disturbed context and all associated finds were modern. There was no evidence of burials, burial cuts or any other archaeological material and it seems likely that the bone was imported onto the site as part of a fill.

Archaeological potential

The standing evidence for the medieval occupation of the town includes the cathedral and round tower, the castle gatehouse and curtain wall and the Franciscan Friary (Grey Abbey). Other features have been removed by the development of the town in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Public and private buildings were constructed, many of which were provided with cellars or basements, were constructed likely removing much of the medieval archaeological stratigraphy. Modern development, from the mid-twentieth century onwards, has infilled previously undeveloped areas including that between Priests Lane and Chapel Hill, that between White Abbey Road and Firecastle Lane, Lourdesville and the area bounded by Bangup Lane, Bride Street, Claregate Street, Cleamore Road and Academy Street.

Archaeological investigations within the town have revealed evidence for the early and later medieval occupation of the town. While few sites have provided evidence on the nature of



Fig. 33 View of recent conservation repairs to east gable of Grey Abbey.



Fig. 34 View towards Beech Grove House, one of the lodges.



Fig. 35 View towards turret folly along lane leading to Leinster Lodge.

the town defences material recovered including medieval pottery and animal bones provides an indication of the daily life of the town's inhabitants. No archaeological assessments undertaken have necessitated deep excavations for basements or underground carparking. Archaeological features and finds have generally been recovered between 0-3m below ground level. Future residential or commercial developments within the town will be subject to archaeological assessment. Due to the longevity of settlement within the town, any site within the urban envelope is considered to have high archaeological potential. Those that are on the conjectured line of the town defences have the ability to provide new information on the nature of the enclosing elements and the presence of associated features including mural towers and gatehouses.



Fig. 36 View of cathedral enclosure wall, site of proposed medieval garden.

Architecture & Townscape

As a small town that has remained in continuous occupation for over one thousand five hundred years, Kildare has a fascinating collection of built heritage. Unlike the Anglo-Norman heritage - the cathedral, round tower and market house are particularly prominent and well known. The cathedral, the outlying sites of Grey Abbey and White Abbey, as well as the nineteenth-century churches and religious institutions represent the ecclesiastical significance of Kildare.

The fine lodges, civic buildings and commercial premises attest to a relatively prosperous period in recent centuries; along with the terraced streets and industrial buildings that record the passing of time since the walls were removed. These buildings are largely modest and unpretentious, but their

adherence to the medieval grain has helped to retain some vestiges of the Anglo-Norman town in the alignments of Cleamore Road, Claregate Street and Firecastle Lane. The importance of the town as a military base that prevailed in the Anglo-Norman era was re-established in the nineteenth century with the founding of Curragh camp nearby and Magee Barracks on its outskirts. The growing interest in antiquities in the period is represented by the substantial folly erected in the front garden of one of the lodges, Beech Grove. It takes the form of a D-shaped turret and wall, running along the conjectural line of the town wall. It incorporates medieval windows in both limestone and granite, perhaps salvaged from medieval structures on the castle site close by, or the site of White Gate adjacent. When built by the Heatherington family in the mid-eighteenth century, perhaps the memory of the town defences remained in the town.

4.0 ASSESSMENT & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

General

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that: *Cultural Significance is a concept, which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.*

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the level of a place's cultural significance: Archaeological, Historic, Architectural, Artistic, Cultural, Scientific, Technical and Social interest categories will be used to assess the significance of the town walls of Kildare.

Archaeological Interest

Kildare is arguably the longest continuously occupied urban centre in the country. There were at least three main phases in its development, from the early Christian to the modern era.

Dating from the twelfth century or earlier, the round tower is a highly visible landmark in the town. While the purpose of round towers is not fully understood, it is thought that they were used as belfries, way markers and as places of refuge to store treasures when the monastery was under attack.

The walled town of Kildare is of particular interest as it involved the incorporation of an established ecclesiastical settlement, which was likely enclosed, into an Anglo-Norman market town.

Due to the lack of documentary sources about the town, a greater understanding of the development of the town will only be gained by further archaeological investigations.

Although Kildare has over time lost most of the standing sections of the former town defences, excavations undertaken by archaeologists over the years have contributed to our understanding. However, much remains to be discovered about their design and extent.



Fig. 37 19th c. photograph along Chapel Hill (Lawrence Collection).

The fact that no standing sections of the town wall remain enhances the significance of surviving remnants that may be uncovered during archaeological investigations. It is hoped that they will provide vital information as to the original scale and design of the walls for their defensive purpose.

Historical Interest

The walls played an important part in the history of Kildare, in its development from an early Christian monastery into an Anglo-Norman market town.

It was also an important Anglo-Norman outpost beyond the Pale, at the edges of Gaelic-held territory and the bog to the west.

The streets, lanes and historic buildings give visitors a vivid sense of the historical continuity of the place, from ancient times to the present day.

Along with nearby historic walled towns of Athy, Naas and Castledermot- they make a valuable cluster with similarities and differences that provide rich evidence of the medieval period in Ireland.

Architectural Interest

The former town walls of Kildare characterised the development of the town, having been built to create a distinct defensible boundary that allowed the town to trade and flourish during the late Medieval period.

The outline of the walls is key to understanding the urban morphology of the town. It defines the pattern



Fig. 38 View over cathedral towards castle site and water tower, taken from round tower prospect.

of the medieval layout of the town's streets and burgage plots, that have remained largely unaltered despite the walls being largely removed, and the outskirts being developed in recent decades.

The removal of the walls is also of interest, attesting to both developments in martial technologies as well as political and social change. At other walled towns such as Athenry and Fethard, long sections of the walls stand to this day. However, among the group of fifty-six confirmed walled towns, there is a sizeable sub-group for which there is only scant physical and documentary evidence.

Kildare has an interesting collection of buildings dating from the medieval period up to the present, that form a repository of information on evolving styles of Irish townscapes.

Cultural Interest

The former defensive walls make a contribution to our understanding of the development of Irish

society during the medieval period. They were built to protect an Anglo-Norman town on land seized by conquest of the native Gaelic families and a long-established religious centre of pilgrimage.

Although the extent and outline of the town walls are not well understood by the general public, there is a demonstrable sense of pride in the town's medieval heritage as demonstrated by the vibrant heritage group and the several initiatives to promote understanding of the town's heritage.

Technical Interest

There are several historical maps and views of Kildare dating from the eighteenth century that illustrate the development of the town together with early cartographical techniques and styles.

The walls are also a record of the development of the war and defence technology from the late-medieval period.

Social Interest

The former town defences are evidence of how society was organised between the early Christian and the seventeenth century in Ireland, with the Anglo-Norman (urban) populace protected within, from the Gaelic (rural) families living outside, and how these two communities interacted.

The removal of the walls is also of social interest, the town expanded into as the threat of invasion subsided due to technological advances, and a period of relative peace during the eighteenth century prior to the rebellion of 1798.

Statement of Significance

Kildare was founded by St. Brigid in the fifth century, and it remained an important monastic site until the late thirteenth century when it was settled by the Anglo-Normans. It became an important strategic outpost outside the Pale, evolving into a prosperous

market town before retreating into relative obscurity in the early modern period. It is relatively small in size, and along with many other walled towns in Ireland, the only evidence of its former extent are its topography and street names along with references in annals and official documents. The walls of the cathedral precinct and castle bawn have survived, and would have once formed part of the town wall circuit. Our evolving knowledge of the medieval heritage of the walled town will remain a subject of interest and debate. With its exemplary architecture and medieval street plan, the walled town of Kildare is an interesting example of an Anglo-Norman town founded on early Christian or even pagan foundations. It contains wide-ranging evidence of over fifteen centuries of continuous habitation in a modestly-sized settlement. The town wall heritage deserves to be better known by the locals, and more vividly presented to visitors. It contributes to a town that is arguably of international cultural significance.



Fig. 39 View of ruined cathedral and round tower by John Dawson, 1780.

5.0 DEFINING ISSUES ,VULNERABILITIES & THREATS

Statutory Protection

Statutory protection for the walls of Kildare is in place under the following legislation which is supplemented by policy documents and guidance:

- *National Monuments Acts, 1930 – 2004*
- *Planning and Development Acts 2000-2002*
- *Record of Monuments and Places, established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994*
- *National Policy on Town Defences 2008*
- *Local Plans & Policy*

Kildare County Council is the relevant planning control authority. The town has been designated as an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) and this encompasses some the conjectural wall circuit. The town defences are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential. It is a policy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017 to protect the archaeological heritage of the county.

NOTE: A full description of the statutory protections for the town defences is included in the appendix.

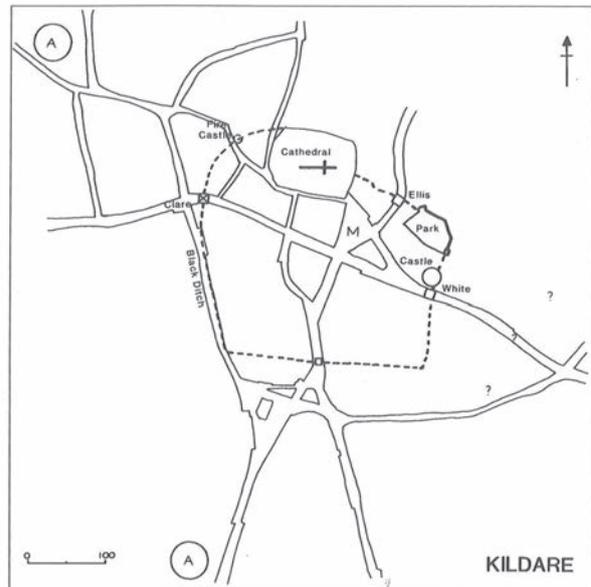


Fig. 41 Map showing walled town outline by Avril Thomas.

Interpretation

In places such as Kildare, where much of the former defensive walls have been removed, buried, embedded or altered; the proper interpretation of the walls can be challenging. However, the intangible values can be revealed to the general public for interpretation in many ways - through transient activities such as research, education programmes and public events, or through permanent initiatives that provide up-to-date information and analysis and improve understanding and access to the place for the enjoyment of all. Although upstanding sections such as the castle bawn and cathedral precinct are visible and easily recognised by the local community, understanding and knowledge of the extent of the remainder of the town wall circuit is less prevalent. This has been inhibited by scarcity of physical evidence leading to conjectural theories published by scholars that should, with further investigation, be gradually refined and improved. As access to whatever remains of the former wall circuit will understandably be restricted; remote means of presenting and interpreting the walled town heritage can be used. By increasing understanding and appreciation of the monument and its context, a *virtuous circle* can be created where the local community can become more active stakeholders in the preservation of the walls, which will in turn become more attractive to visitors for the benefit of all.

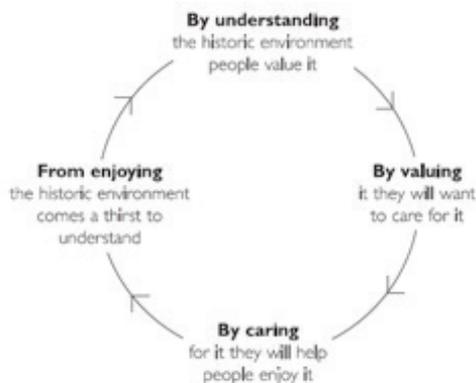


Fig. 40 Diagram by English Heritage illustrating the *Virtuous Circle*.



STATUTORY PROTECTION

- Recorded Monument
- Architectural Conservation Area
- Protected Structure
- Zone of Archaeological Potential

Fig. 42 Map showing extent of ZAP, ACA, recorded monuments and protected structures.

Ownership

The conjectural wall circuit passes through properties in both public and private ownership, and it is important to note that the historic core of Kildare is both home and workplace and that this needs to be respected. The sections of the circuit on lands such as public roads and open space are the responsibility of the local authority. Other sections passing through the grounds of institutional buildings such as the schools and churches are the responsibility of the various trustees or boards of management. The graveyard is owned and cared for by the Church of Ireland, and much of the former castle bawn or 'park' remains in the ownership of Kildare County Council. There are numerous private landowners around the circuit where the conjectural line of the wall forms boundaries, on both the internal and external sides, or travels underneath their property. This makes access to the walls and responsibility for their care complex, involving negotiation and collaboration.

Use

While the walls no longer serve their defensive purpose the sites along its conjectural line are now used as private dwellings and gardens, playing fields, burial grounds, public open space, or for industrial or commercial use. Parts of the line fall within areas that may be redeveloped in the future, and will require ministerial consent as they are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential (ZAP).



Fig. 43 View of gates to entrance to council yard at Castle site.



Fig. 44 View from Dara Park towards castle bawn retaining wall.

Lack of Knowledge

The lack of evidence about the walls makes it difficult to be certain whether any remains still exist, either standing or buried. A programme of strategic, non-invasive archaeological investigations could provide valuable information, confirming the location and nature of the remains of the walls and gates.

Condition

The walled enclosures to the castle and cathedral graveyard are likely to have been included in the defensive circuit, and have been damaged by general neglect and invasive vegetation including ivy, trees and shrubs. While the cathedral wall is unlikely to be of early medieval date, it is nonetheless of historic importance and requires assessment and consolidation. In order to repair these sections, extensive clearance, treatment of embedded roots, followed by consolidation and repair of the masonry will be necessary. This is particular public safety issue to the retaining walls to the castle site, where they are located in private gardens.

Access & Settings

Issues such as access, health and safety and rights of way present challenges to the interpretation of the former wall circuit. These can be overcome to some extent in a number of ways by means of interpretation and presentation, and by proper

management and consultation. Parking is available in many places around the town, including close to the heritage centre, which is a natural place to start and finish a walled town tour. Restrictions on access to different sections of the wall outline should be made clear to those undertaking the tour to avoid disappointment. Establishing a route that follows the wall circuit as close as is possible will be an important strategic initiative that will enhance the experience of the town's heritage and assist in the wall's protection and conservation into the future. This will involve extensive consultation and the cooperation of the various stakeholders.

Visitor Facilities

The lack of visibility and alterations to their setting makes the walls difficult to interpret. The historic buildings that are contained within its boundary have complex development histories that need to be presented in a coherent way. The design of high-quality interpretative material is essential for greater understanding of the walls. The heritage centre could be used for the display of information panels, whether dedicated to the town walls, or to supplement existing displays. The display at the heritage centre could be supplemented with information panels or markers erected at key locations with the cooperation and consent of the owners.

Vulnerabilities

In relation to the issues outlined above, the vulnerability of the archaeological heritage can be summarised as set out below:

Preservation

- Interventions may be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise a structure. This work needs to be informed by current best practice, be reversible and should not detract from the setting of the monument.
- The complex ownership of the walls can make it difficult to assign responsibilities for their maintenance, as well as obtaining access for their inspection and presentation. It also makes it difficult to carry out archaeological investigations, even using non-invasive methodologies in built-up areas.



Fig. 45 Kildare Town Heritage Centre logo.



Fig. 46 View across car park towards Leinster Lodge and Gatehouse.

- Some parts of the castle and cathedral graveyard walls are in a vulnerable state, and will require significant repairs and consolidation.
- Defects when left unchecked can bring about rapid deterioration, resulting in considerable financial loss that can be avoided by a regime of routine maintenance.

Understanding

- At present it is difficult for the general public to understand the form of the walls, the general chronology of the town's development and the relationship between the various structures and monuments. This is due to the lack of upstanding remains, as well as precise knowledge of the location of the walls.
- The buried remains along the wall circuit are often located on private properties or along boundaries.
- The lack of knowledge about the precise location and condition of the wall circuit is the most significant threat to its preservation.

6.0 CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

Approach & Objectives

All conservation works are guided by the principle of minimum intervention as set out in the Burra Charter - *as little as possible, but as much as is necessary.*

The conservation objectives for the former defensive walls of Kildare (at the castle and cathedral precinct) and other walls associated with the medieval period, such as those lining burgage plots, can be summarised as follows:

- to provide for the effective maintenance of the walls
- to provide guidance on best conservation practice for the repair of the walls
- to provide guidance on the long term reversal on inappropriate alterations and additions to the walls

Principle: Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Buried)

Non-intrusive methods of archaeological investigation should predominate, combined with traditional excavation only where justified by a comprehensive research and best conservation practice. A research framework should be created and piecemeal impacts to the subterranean archaeology are to be avoided. Any proposed excavation should have a strong rationale and be designed to contribute to the understanding and interpretation of medieval Kildare.

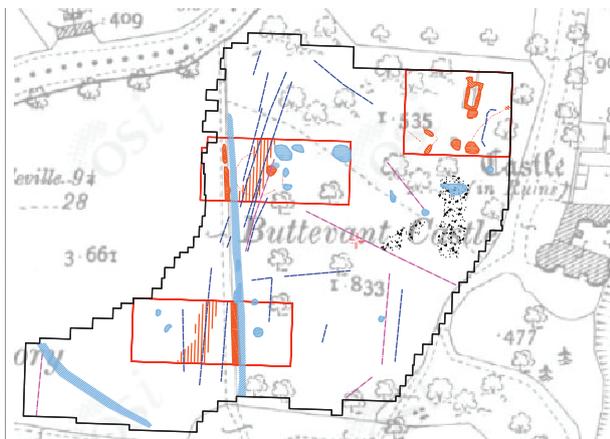


Fig. 47 Example of geo-physical survey undertaken at Buttevant in 2012.



Fig. 48 View of conservation works being undertaken at Athenry, 2014.

The sub-surface archaeology should be disturbed as little as possible so that it can be preserved intact. Provide physical protection where appropriate.

Principle: Protection of Archaeological Heritage (Standing)

The standing walls that are associated with the medieval heritage of the town include the cathedral precinct walls, the walls to the castle bawn, and boundary walls that may relate to burgage plots. These standing historic walls should be retained by implementing urgent programmes of repair and maintenance, together with the preservation of their settings. Ensure that these actions, or any other works proposed in the vicinity of the monument, do not cause damage to the walls.

Principle: Regular On-going Maintenance

Provide regular on-going maintenance as the most effective way to preserve historic structures. Repairs are to be carried using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials of matching quality. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency, and informed by regular inspection and expert advice.

Principle: Intervention

Where interventions are found to be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise a structure, these are to be designed to the highest standards of best conservation practice and should not detract from the interpretation of the

architectural heritage.

Principle: Reversibility

All interventions should follow the principle of the reversibility, so that a structure can be returned to its former state if so desired. Developments proposed above or beside archaeological remains should be designed so that they can be removed without causing disturbance. This is particularly important where standing sections of the walls have been embedded into existing buildings and their extent and location is not fully understood.

Principle: Expert Advice & Skills

Ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (conservation architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced tradesmen. All professionals and on-site workers participating in conservation work are to be made aware of the significance of Kildare, the reasons behind the conservation work, and the archaeological sensitivity of the place.

Principle: Licensing & Approvals

Any archaeological investigation (excavation) and geophysical survey are to be licensed in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. All conservation works to upstanding archaeological monuments are to be planned in conjunction with a suitably qualified archaeologist with relevant experience. An appropriate methodology is to be created and submitted to the National Monuments Service for approval.



Fig. 49 View towards overgrown wall head to castle bawn.

Principle: Continued Liaison

Liaise with the National Monuments Service in relation to proposed development works adjacent to the walls to share knowledge and ensure that best practice is adhered to in relation to any future archaeological investigations. Promote the excavation, presentation and educational interpretation of the walls as a policy in future Development Plans.

Principle: Settings & Key Views

Protect and enhance the settings of the monuments and key views of the townscape through planning policies and strategic conservation plans. This is required for both standing and buried archaeology.

Principle: Monitoring & Inspections

Set in place procedures for on-going monitoring of the condition of the walls to ensure their long-term preservation.

Principle: Archaeological Supervision

Works involving ground disturbance close to the wall circuit are to be carried out only under archaeological supervision. Before conservation work is carried out the architect/engineer is to conduct a pre-works survey. This document should include survey drawings with both the areas and nature of the proposed interventions clearly illustrated. A suitably qualified archaeologist with relevant experience is to interpret the various features.

Principle: Periodic Reviews

Review this Plan at agreed intervals (to coincide with Development Plans) to benchmark progress in implementation, reassess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies.

Principle: Further Research & Investigation

Multi-disciplinary research into the archaeological heritage of the town should be supported with the assistance, where possible, of third-level institutions to further our understanding and interpretation of the buried sections of the walls.

7.0 INTERPRETATION & MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Approach & Objectives

The approach and objectives in relation to the interpretation and presentation of the walls of Kildare can be summarised as follows:

- to increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of the walls
- identify key messages and themes to be communicated to users
- to ensure that interpretations of the extent of the walls are well-researched
- set out strategies for passive and active learning in order to facilitate a wide audience
- provide encouragement and resources for interpretation and engagement with the archaeological heritage with the walls as a key component
- to provide for the use of the walls to the cathedral and castle as a cultural and educational resource
- set up a permanent exhibition of material in relation to the former walls and include a repository of sources on the medieval heritage of the town to act as a resource to inform planning
- to ensure that the castle and cathedral walls are accessible to all, but at no risk to the archaeological heritage or the safety and health of the public
- to ensure that all developments within the Zone of Archaeological Potential carry out appropriate archaeological assessments and do not impact adversely on the archaeological heritage
- promote the walls as a heritage asset and identify funding sources for its ongoing maintenance
- provide for the long-term enhancement of the setting of the walls through planning policies and identification of key strategic aims

Principle: Depth in Time

Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the walls of Kildare, along with the historic structures within the town, requires that all the layers that contribute to its cultural significance be valued.



Fig.50 View of setting to wall in cathedral enclosure.

Principle: Authenticity

Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the built heritage is communicated to the general public. In a place such as Kildare where there are stone walls dating from later periods, the cultural value and antiquity of those remnants dating from the Medieval period surrounding the cathedral precinct and castle should be emphasized.

Principle: Define Town Wall Circuit

Create a defined route around the town wall circuit, with interpretative material and signage to help visitors to gain a better understanding of the place. Signs should be located close to the monument but should not detract from its setting.

Principle: Town Wall Encounters

Identify and conserve sites where the public can encounter surviving remnants of the medieval town walls to help realise their heritage potential and to improve interpretation of the walled town for the benefit of locals and visitors.

Principle: Access for All

Where the integrity and character of the walls can be maintained, ensure that access is improved for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Principle: Stakeholder Consultation

Foster good communication and cooperation in the best interests of the heritage asset. Consult with stakeholders regarding proposed interventions



Fig. 51 Example of illustrated, multi-lingual information panel.

adjacent to the wall and conservation of existing sections of the wall.

Principle: Public Safety

Prioritise public safety in relation to the condition and setting of the walls.

Principle: Interpretative Area

Provide information panels so that the general public can meaningfully interpret the walls. These should be permanent displays, supplemented with temporary exhibits on relevant themes.

Principle: Presentation of Artefacts & Fragments

Curate and display representative artefacts taken from archaeological investigations that are stored or presented elsewhere.

Principle: Settings for Cultural Events

Promote the standing sections of the cathedral and castle walls as settings for cultural events that will enhance public awareness of these sites and form a backdrop or theme for performances or exhibitions.

Principle: Interpretative Infrastructure & Media

Provide high quality interpretative material, using street signage, aerial views and artists impressions as appropriate, to improve public understanding about the former alignment of the walls and the historic development of the town.

Principle: Formal & Informal Learning

Present the cultural heritage of the town walls to reach as broad an audience as possible. This should

aim to communicate to those with little or no interest in medieval heritage.

Principle: Knowledge Gaps

Seek to develop a research framework addressing gaps in the current knowledge on the town walls of Kildare. Undertake archaeological assessments to determine the location of the eastern section of the circuit and the southern and eastern gates.

Principle: Research

Ensure that on-site archaeological research is guided by an approved research strategy that seeks to answer specific questions, using non-invasive methodologies followed by targeted excavation when opportunities and resources allow.



Fig. 52 Bronze cast impressions of Viking Dublin artefacts.



Fig. 53 Detail of wall marker in Dublin using quality materials.

Principle: Research

Ensure that the dissemination of research findings, in a variety of media involving the community where possible, is made accessible to the public.

Principle: On-Going Interpretation

Ensure that as knowledge and understanding of the walls grows and changes through further research and archaeological investigations, interpretation media are updated accordingly.

Principle: Ownership

Consider rights of private owners and engage with them in relation to the access, conservation and presentation of the archaeological heritage.

Principle: Marking the Alignment

Where the conjectural wall circuit is located in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting. This would be particularly effective at the gate locations to mark the outer limits of the medieval town to the public. A paving stone could be inscribed with a description of the feature and a location map identifying its location along the wall circuit.

Principle: New Developments

Where new development has uncovered a section of the former wall, the site should be made accessible and visible to the public in some way through consultation with the owner/developer.

Principle: Sustainability

Promote and support visitor facilities and marketable products, raising revenue to be allocated for the conservation and improved presentation of the walls.

Principle: Branding

Develop the Kildare: Walled Town brand for the promotion of the heritage asset and to protect potential revenues by licensing its use. The potential of the walled town heritage to form a link between the fifth-century monastic settlement to bustling modern town should be explored, drawing attention to the fifteen centuries of history on the site.

Principle: Local Area Plan Map

Include the conjectural outline of the wall in future

development plan maps and other local authority publications to reinforce understanding of the extent and location of the walls to the general public and to aid forward planning for service providers and building and planning professionals.

Principle: Settings & Key Views

Protect and enhance the settings and views of the monuments through planning policies and strategic conservation plans. This is required for both standing monuments and buried archaeology. All new developments should be designed to enhance the setting and provide public access to discoveries.



Fig. 54 View of Archaeofest event demonstrating archaeology to public.

Principle: Outreach & Participation

Arrange specialist training programmes where their practitioners might engage with the archaeological heritage as the subject of study. Examples include the IMWTN Walled Town Days or a medieval-themed festival, but consideration should be given on how to broaden the potential audience as much as possible.

Principle: School Outreach

Encourage local schools to take advantage of the walls as a teaching resource and organise programme for site visits and access to archived material for school projects. Local schools should be encouraged to take groups for guided walks along the town wall circuit, allowing them to appreciate the medieval heritage of their town in a new way. Combining the guided walks with historical re-enactments or art-based projects will help make the experience more engaging.

8.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Why Interpret?

From the eighteenth century, the study of *antiquities* was foremost an artistic response to the picturesque appeal of ruins, and interest in myths and legends. Over time, this has evolved into the science of archaeology, leading to a more profound understanding of our cultural heritage. Archival research has identified tentative references to town defences, and archaeological investigations have uncovered evidence, that while fragmentary, has contributed to our understanding of the walled town of Kildare. The scant evidence available makes it imperative that it is presented in a way that distinguishes between informed speculation and historic fact, while remaining engaging for the general public.

Aside from its rich built-heritage and picturesque setting, Kildare has a number of energetic community groups that have organised many successful events celebrating the wide range of the town's cultural heritage. This plan is intended to provide a framework for future initiatives, with an emphasis on medieval town defences. It also makes recommendations on how change is to be managed in the best interests of the monument. It outlines ideas for how the walls could better be understood and presented, with descriptions of how these initiatives could be implemented at key sites. Responses to the walled town heritage should seek to be inclusive and authentic, while also being imaginative and playful so



Fig. 55 View of ruined cathedral by George Petrie.



Fig.56 Example of reconstruction of timber palisade and moat.

that the living heritage can be presented alongside the preserved remnants of the past.

In places such as Kildare, where much of the former defensive walls have been removed, buried, embedded or altered; the proper interpretation of the walls can be challenging. However, the intangible values can be revealed to the general public for interpretation in many ways - through transient activities such as research, education programmes and public events, or through permanent initiatives that provide up-to-date information and analysis and improve understanding and access to the place for the enjoyment of all.

Meanings

From a pre-Christian shrine, to an important monastic centre, Anglo-Norman outpost, nineteenth-century garrison town; the boundaries of the settlement are a defining feature. The Anglo-Normans built substantial stone town defences throughout the country, some of which have survived to this day. They also erected less robust timber palisades and dug ditches, which along with the natural topographical features of the site, conferred advantages to the defenders from invaders. As the town is probably the oldest in Ireland at over 1500 years old, having a clear understanding of the extent of the walls will provide evidence of the evolution of Irish urban culture and society over that period of time. Over time, through further investigation, our understanding of the extent of the walls will be gradually refined and improved. There is still some debate whether the walls ever

existed, whether they were stone, timber or earth, or whether the cathedral and castle enclosures, as well as others found around the town, formed parts of the former defences. These questions should be communicated to the general public, in order to enthuse them about the search for answers using scientific methods of investigation. Both informed theories and firm evidence are crucial to enhancing their understanding of the archaeological heritage.

Audiences

By increasing understanding and appreciation of the monument and its context, the local community can become more active stakeholders in the preservation of the walled town, which will in turn become more attractive to visitors for the benefit of all. The conservation of a complex site that encompasses the entire town involves input from many different sources, with differing interests and objectives. These stakeholders are the intended audience of the Conservation Plan. Their understanding and adoption of the conservation and interpretation policies is crucial to the successful maintenance and

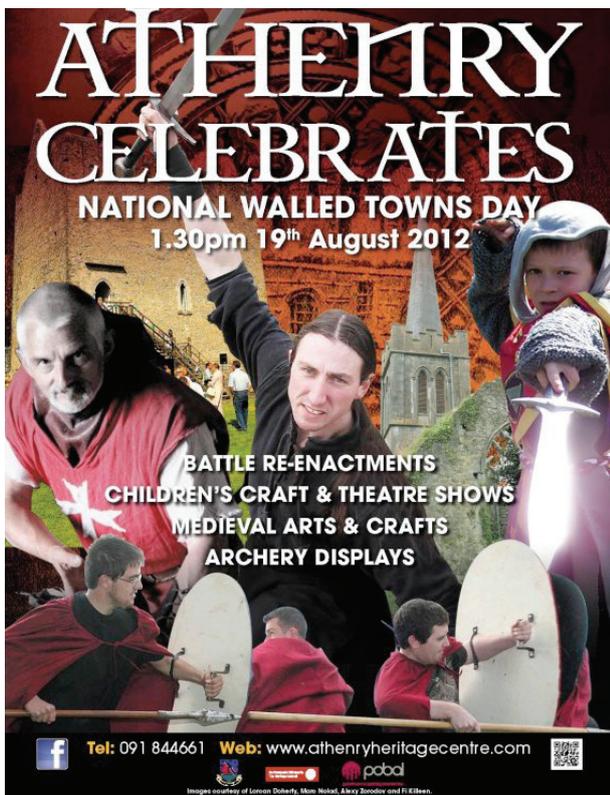


Fig. 57 Flyer used to promote Athenry Walled Towns Day in 2012.



Fig. 58 Screen grab of Kildare Heritage Centre website.

promotion of the walls of Kildare, with potential for being a valuable tourism asset.

State Bodies- The local authority and the state have a responsibility to ensure that our shared cultural heritage is conserved for future generations. Increasing knowledge of the walls among public bodies will help coordinate initiatives or works that impact on the medieval heritage and direct funding for their identification, protection and enhancement.

Landowners & Leaseholders- As much of the conjectural wall circuit is in private ownership, it is acknowledged that the state needs to support the ongoing conservation of the medieval heritage while taking into account the property rights of individuals. Providing access to some of the most important sites requires the permission and forbearance of the owner. Those that own or lease property that contains archaeological heritage or has potential, should have access to information regarding their responsibilities to safeguard and not damage the historic fabric. They should then seek expert advice and liaise with the local authority in relation to the walls, especially when proposing building works.

Local Community- Improving understanding and appreciation of the town walls among the local community will enhance local pride in their heritage, and make residents more actively involved in their protection and presentation to visitors.

Visitors- Both domestic and foreign visitors should be considered when presenting interpretation material. Domestic visitors may include locals who take the opportunity to improve their understanding their town's heritage. Signage and presentations should be multi-lingual.

Schools/ Universities- The best way to foster interest and appreciation of the walled town heritage among the younger members of the community is to include education programmes for schools. Supporting education programmes at third level can lead to further academic research on the walls by students of archaeology, architecture, history, anthropology as well as tourism and heritage protection. Experience to date suggests that it is likely that the very best information will be obtained from publicly-funded research programmes.

Cultural & Heritage Groups- Local groups with interest in heritage and culture should be encouraged to engage with the walled town heritage as part of their activities that communicate with both locals and visitors. Collaboration with groups in other walled towns in the region or abroad should be encouraged.

Built Environment Professionals- Those involved with the conservation and development of the town should have access to information that will improve their understanding of the extent of the walls, the need for and means of their protection as well as ideas for their enhancement.



Fig. 59 Example of artist's impression of siege.



Fig. 60 Extract from comic book prepared with school children at Athenry, with emphasis on daily life of young boy.

Key Messages/ Themes

In order to frame the interpretation of the walls, it is important to set out clearly the messages and themes that are to be communicated to the relevant audiences. As the evidence is fragmentary, it is even more important that an understanding of its importance, its former extent, historic events, along with the everyday detail of its long history is communicated clearly to the general public.

Historic Events- The story of the walls should commence with the history of the probable site of the pre-Christian temple and early Christian settlement leading up to the founding of the Anglo-Norman walled town. The various sieges and attacks by Gaelic, Anglo-Norman, and Tudor forces should be outlined giving the social and political context, illustrating the times by reference to important historical figures that lived or visited the town.

Everyday Life- In order to understand the context

and consequences of the important historic events, the story of the day-to-day lives of the religious communities, burgesses, merchants and the rest of the inhabitants within the walls, and those in the hinterland. These should be relayed through the imagined contemporary experience of ordinary people. Stories about children at that time will be of particular interest to school groups.

Archaeological Finds & Conservation- Of utmost importance is to communicate our increasing, but as yet incomplete, knowledge of the walled town through archaeological investigations. This involves making material intended for an academic audience understandable and interesting to the general public. An excellent example already in place in the town is the tower and wall fragment presented in-situ under the floor at the Credit Union. The messages should illustrate how such evidence challenges or corroborates accepted theories. The long-term investigation and conservation of the town defences is also a vital message, informing the public on the importance of protecting vulnerable and fragmentary archaeological heritage as well as the techniques used.

Interpretation & Presentation Recommendations

The various initiatives are grouped into short, medium and long term goals. However, opportunities may arise sooner than expected, and simple tasks can be delayed. Enhancing and preserving the medieval heritage of Kildare will take a long time, but by setting achievable goals, a lot can be achieved. Mentoring



Fig. 61 View of glass floor in Credit Union over archaeological finds.



Fig. 62 Example of GPR scanner equipment.

from other towns who have had similar experiences can be an invaluable way of acquiring skills and knowledge, and avoiding mistakes made elsewhere.

Short Term

Archaeological Investigations

There remains much still to be understood about the development of Kildare. Surveying the various open plots around the town using geophysical techniques might provide further archaeological information, at a reasonable cost. Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) is best suited to urban environments, and could be used to determine the location of the gates or the alignment of the walls along the streets and lanes, as well as open areas such as the car park to the east of the cathedral. This would expand our understanding of the town, making it possible to portray its history in a more vivid and authentic way. It would also help to inform and guide landowners and the planning authority about future developments.

GPR is an advanced, non-invasive sub-surface imaging technique that typically uses short pulses of electromagnetic energy to see into the ground. GPR



Fig. 63 View of damage to castle bawn wall showing fallen masonry.



Fig. 64 View of palisade fencing in gap to cathedral wall, with fallen masonry visible in undergrowth along sloping bank.

can image through soil, concrete, tarmac, rock, wood, ice and even water. It is capable of probing down to a 30 metres, depending on the system type and ground conditions, and provides the user with a cross-section that allows both the nature of subsurface features and their depth to be measured. In 2007 a GPR survey was undertaken by archaeological consultants, CRDS Ltd., on Main Street and Connaught Street, Athboy as part of the Meath Bundled Wastewater Collection project. A possible section of the town wall and features associated with Athboy Gate were identified during the survey. In 2013 a GPR survey was undertaken in the inner ward and adjacent parkland of Kilkenny Castle as part of the Kilkenny Archaeological Project. The GPR survey identified a number of archaeological anomalies as well as the foundations of two gatehouse towers on the edge of the inner ward.

The use of GPR within the town of Kildare has the potential to assist in the location of the town gates which would provide a point from which the line of the town wall could be projected and would provide an accurate location for the marking of the town wall by a change in the paving. Locations at the west end of Claregate Street, Dublin Street, Nugent Street should be examined to determine if any features associated with Clare Gate, White Gate and Ellis Gate survive along with the north end of St. Brigid's Square to determine if a gate survived along the southern boundary of the town. It is also recommended that GPR be undertaken within the council yard to detect whether any subsurface features associated with Kildare Castle survive.

Another aspect that could be explored would be to assess whether the building stone found in the walls around the town was worked by medieval masons. Large quantities of such material could explain why there is no trace of the stone walls, if that is what they were, above ground as they were used as salvage for new structures.

Conservation Repairs

The retaining walls to the castle site require urgent repair; starting with the careful removal of ivy and consolidation of loose masonry. Trees that are undermining the walls should be felled. Access will need to be provided from the private properties along its base. The wall heads should be cleared of

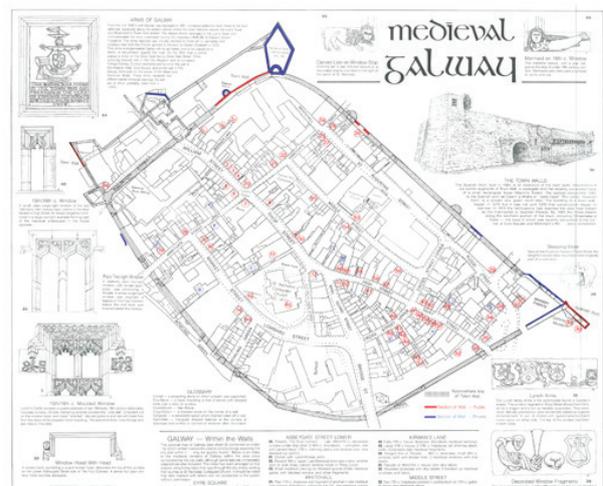
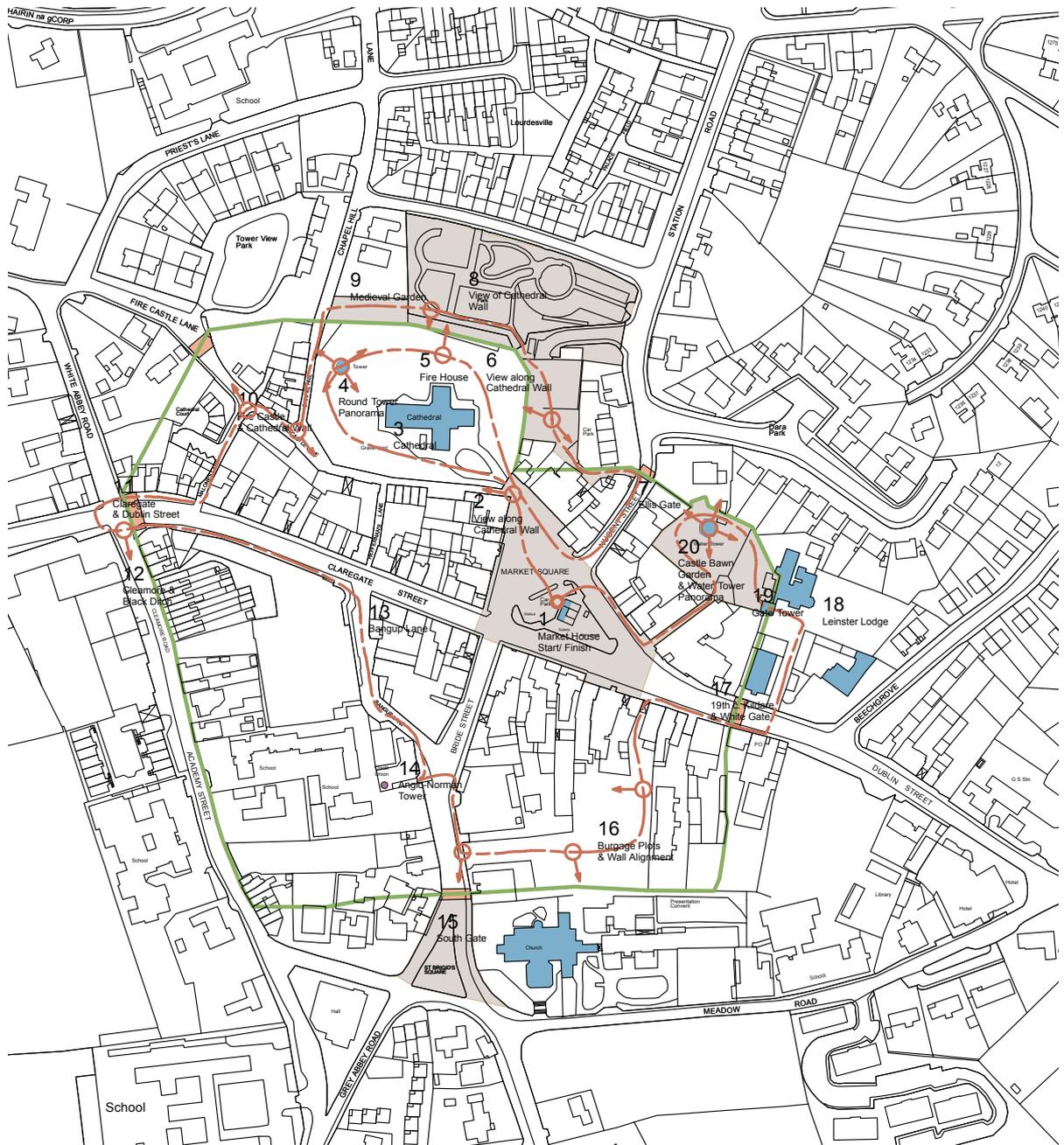


Fig. 65 Example of map of wall route for information & souvenir.



PRESENTATION & INTERPRETATION

- Town Wall Outline
 - Landmark Buildings
- Walled Town Day Venues
 - Town Wall Walk
- Gate Paving Markers

Fig. 66 Plan showing proposed Town Wall Walk, along with main interpretation sites and paving markers.



Fig. 67 View of historic re-enactors at Walled Towns Day at Buttevant.

the concrete capping, and re-flaunched using stone and lime capping. Only lime and sand mortars should be used in the repair of the masonry.

To the cathedral wall, archaeological testing should be undertaken along the bases of the walls to retrieve any fallen masonry. Should a good supply of medieval masonry be recovered in this way, permission could be sought to restore the missing part of the wall so that this impressive section could be reinstated to fill the wide gap now fitted with a timber palisade fence. If the stone retrieved is not sufficient, a timber log palisade could be installed to represent the monastic enclosure, with care taken not to disturb buried archaeology. Otherwise, ivy should be removed from the walls where it is deeply embedded, and hard cement removed. Some of the previous repairs carried out the wall, such as the steel shoring to Church Lane, should be reversed if possible. These repairs have a short lifespan, and visually detract from the appearance of the wall.

Interpretative Area

The heritage centre will make an excellent base to present interpretative material on the walled town. However, it does not replace the need to use more site-specific means of presenting the walls at the other key sites along the walled circuit.

Developments along Walled Circuit

While planning policies ensure the protection of the national monument, the local authority should also support initiatives that enhance the setting of the walls

through imaginative design and access improvements. The opportunities to improve key sites will require early consultation and a creative approach should be encouraged that does not detract from, or cause harm to the historic fabric. Views of the medieval monuments and their walls should be protected, the conjectural alignment of the walls should be reinforced in the form of the buildings and spaces proposed, access routes around sites, landscaping and boundary/ plot lines.

Project: Walled Circuit Route

The proposed wall circuit route intersects the most visible and intact fragments of the defensive walls, while also encountering other aspects of the built heritage. The route provides a sense of the scale of the medieval town, as well as the range of different settings. The route should be capable to be used by both guided tours, and where appropriate, visitors



Fig. 68 View over Market Square towards Heritage Centre.



Fig. 69 View of car park along the base of the cathedral enclosure wall.

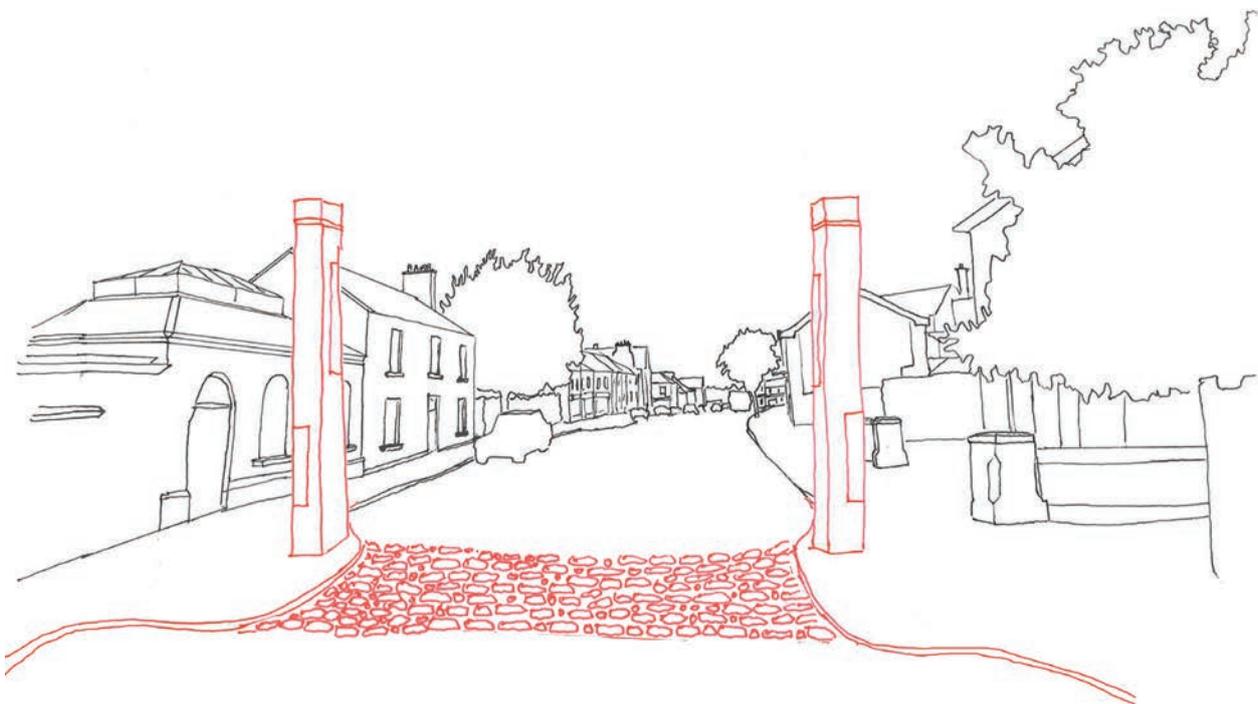


Fig. 70 Sketch view showing proposed piers containing signage and cobble pavement, marking location of White Gate.

wishing to encounter the walls in a less formal way. Specialised tours should be considered, along with tours that encourage audience participation. When circumstances permit, excavation open days along the route should be hosted during Walled Town festivals or outreach programmes. In order to ensure that the walk is engaging, the route should be continuous as far as practicable. For that reason, it is proposed to create access into the *park* from the side of the Silken Thomas. This would allow guided walks to proceed more directly along the route. This would only be undertaken with the permission of the landowners and would be for guided tours only or on Walled

Towns Day. This shortcut would make the wall circuit easier to interpret and would shorten the route.

Project: Settings for Cultural Events

Kildare's community groups can play an important role in the interpretation of the archaeological heritage. The pleasant setting of the Market Square could be used for Walled Town Days where the community would gather for medieval-themed events. On these days, key points along the walled town circuit could be occupied by theatrical groups, such as the Silken Thomas Players, giving *live* re-enactments or short performances on aspects of the medieval heritage that people encounter while walking the route. The former fair green, cathedral park, the back lanes and the car park to the east of the cathedral could host ancillary events appropriate to their context. It could be used as a powerful way of enlivening these spaces, so that they are transformed from their ordinary use for a short period. The concrete water tower, while obviously not contemporary with the walls, nonetheless in its form and situation could prove an imaginative way of evoking the medieval heritage. The use of these settings would emphasize the medieval theme of the festival, and the preparations of the site would help maintain the grounds. This would



Fig. 71 Image of QR code used on interpretative panel.



Fig. 72 Detail of paving marker for wall circuit in Kilkenny.

be subject to the approval of KCC and adjacent landowners, with a plan put in place to ensure that the archaeological heritage, and public health and safety, is not put at risk.

Town Plan Map

An illustrated map of the town should be produced to aid interpretation of the walled town. The map could be an artist's impression of an aerial view that emphasizes the medieval sites as well as highlighting the wall circuit. A fold-out map with the walking routes around the town superimposed could be used to facilitate self-guided tours of the walls.

Interpretative Panels

The heritage centre has information panels describing the heritage of the town on display, these should be supplemented with material on the medieval town walls. Interpretative panels should also be located at key sites, providing information regarding the main themes and ideally should be capable of being

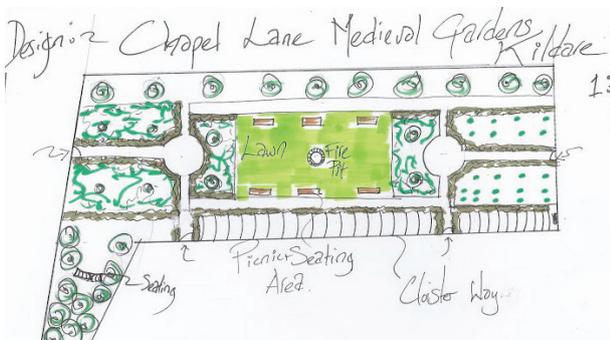


Fig. 73 Proposed plan of medieval garden at base of cathedral wall.

updated. Using a number of different approaches ensures participation by the widest audience available, including those who were not initially motivated to seek out the wall circuit, but make use of the panels to engage with the heritage in an informal way. The panels do not need to be conventional signage, but could be a series of unique installations that provide windows on aspects of the walls through text, film, images or bringing attention to historic fabric or artefacts in imaginative and accessible ways.



Fig. 74 View of hard landscaping and conserved market house at Abbeyleix, Co. Laois.

On-line Resources

The physical markers should also link into online resources using QR codes so that the wealth of information regarding the town can be appreciated in its entirety. The potential of providing resources online through the use of the well-established kildare.ie website, or links to relevant material held elsewhere, should be expanded. This website could cater for a wide range of audiences in both formal and informal ways - experts seeking references and research material, tourists planning their itineraries, students researching a school project, building professionals undertaking development proposals. If the aerial view of the town was uploaded, the user could locate themselves as they move around the circuit.

Audio Guides & Apps

Audio-guides allow visitors to encounter the town's heritage at their own pace, and helps those with visual impairments have a meaningful engagement with the wall circuit. The heritage centre already supplies



Fig. 75 Sketch photomontage showing carpark below cathedral enclosure wall being used as a setting for Walled Towns Days.

a number of such guides for tourists to use when they visit the town. The guides could also include site-specific reconstructions of medieval life or historic events in a vivid and interesting way. Smartphone apps could be used to provide such material, and could also include tasks, games or activities that reinforce the learning process. Guides could be hired or for sale, or downloaded from the website. It is important that guides are available in a number of different languages.

Medium Term

Wall Marking on Street Surfaces

Archaeological investigations over time could help identify the location of parts of the circuit, as well as the former gates. For now, a conjectural line will have to be used, with a zone each side of high archaeological potential. Where the conjectural wall circuit is located in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting. This would be particularly effective to mark the outer limits of the medieval town core, in a town that is now several times larger in area than even fifty years ago. A

paving stone should be inscribed with a description of the feature and a location map identifying its location along the wall circuit. An integrated scheme for the paving markers should be developed to ensure consistency, using high quality, robust materials. Cast impressions of artefacts uncovered at these sites could be set into the paved surface to be discovered. Texts could be used to describe important events.

Project: Medieval Garden

There is an existing proposal by Dr. Mary O'Connor to plant out the empty plot below the cathedral precinct as a medieval garden. While there is a useful precedent in the archaeological restoration of the garden at Rothe House in Kilkenny, however, it is not known whether this site was ever used as a garden. Map evidence indicates that the site, while clear during the eighteenth century, was the site of a terrace of houses in the nineteenth century. Should archaeological remains of a previous structure be identified, consideration could be given to resolving part of the site and presenting it to the public. This would make an excellent new amenity in the town, in

a location that is currently overgrown.

Project: Round Tower Panorama

The round tower is one of the few that are accessible to the public, and could easily enhance the experience of visitors to Kildare in their appreciation of the former town defences. Used as a prospect tower, visitors to the town, with the assistance of audio guides or visual material, can imagine the extent and nature of the early Christian monastery as well as the Anglo-Norman town, as part of their walking route around the town.

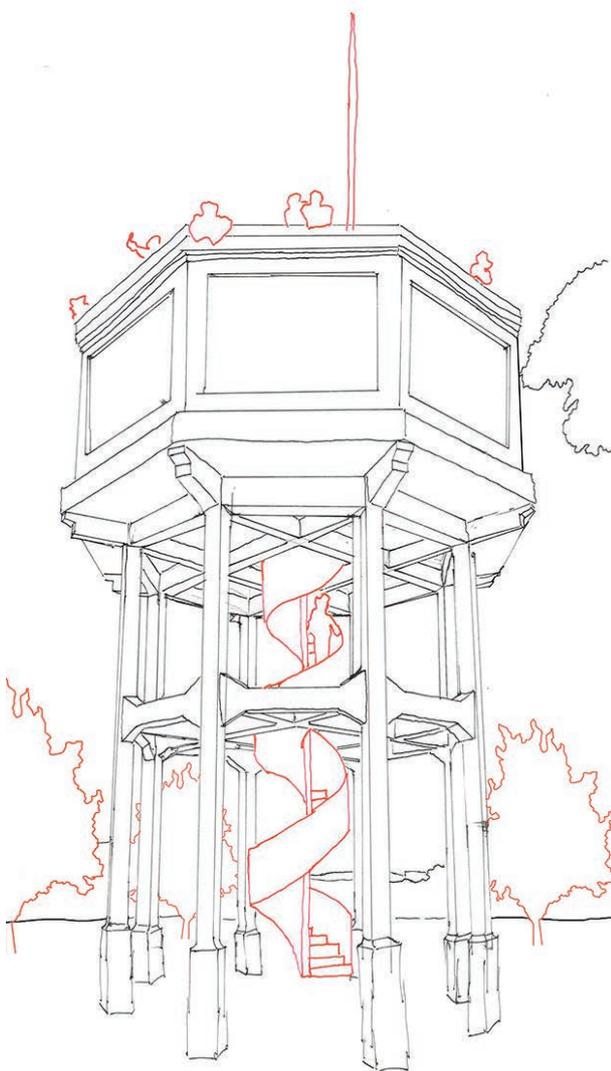


Fig. 76 Sketch view of proposed re-use of defunct water tower as a prospect and interpretation area for castle site.



Fig. 77 Example of students visiting historic medieval interior.



Fig. 78 View of Dunloe Castle, recently restored by HHA.

Long Term

Project: Market Square

The Market Square remains the civic focus of the town. In order to reflect the importance of the space, its surfaces should be paved in the same way as the wall markings. This surface would be shared by both vehicles and pedestrians and would be a fine public realm improvement now that most of the traffic has been diverted to the motorway. Examples of similar civic design projects can be found in Kilkenny and at Abbeyleix. Archaeological investigations as part of the works may uncover interesting evidence of the marketplace, and perhaps also the buildings that lined it. These findings could then inform the basis of the paving patterns, and be presented to the public



Fig.79 Proposed new park on castle site to provide improved setting for walls and gatehouse.

through the use of carved or inlaid pavements such as found at Christchurch in Dublin and on the streets of Kilkenny.

Project: Castle Park

Restoring the *park* as shown on nineteenth century maps could enhance the setting of the rich archaeological heritage at the castle site. We would propose that the park be a *hidden* garden behind the street front, that would provide a better environment to visit and appreciate the castle walls and the gate house and would involve the cooperation of the owners in the opening up of the former bawn to the public. The water tower could be retained as a viewing point, much as the round tower, with the presence rather than the appearance of a castle keep. Archaeological investigations undertaken in advance would identify the location of the structure, it is shown directly underneath the water tower on historic maps. This would then form the focus of the new park, with the fencing removed and the grounds planted out as shown on Rocque's map. The walls would be lined by a gravel pathway, and the walls of the keep outlined out in stone paving, below the

base of the water tower that is accessed by the spiral stairs. With the agreement of the owner, the modern bungalow to the side of the tower house should be removed. The historic structure should be refurbished so that it can remain in use, or else carefully conserved to preserve it in its current state. New uses might include a garden building or short-term accommodation associated with the Silken Thomas and Lord Edward premises. The gable of the Silken Thomas is vividly decorated with a mural, and something similar could be installed along the narrow access lane to the west side, using themes from the town's history forming a timeline. The new park could be fitted with gates at night to discourage anti-social behavior, as well as steps and ramps to negotiate the changes in level. The carpark to the east of Leinster Lodge could remain, but laid out in bays that follow the planting shown on the Rocque map, and screened and its impact softened with hedges. In this way, the Silken Thomas could benefit from the improved setting to the rear of its premises, and the general public would enjoy a new amenity for the town. Most of all, this fascinating site would be better presented, and its preservation assured.

APPENDICES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrews, J., 1986. *Irish Historic Towns Atlas, No. 1 Kildare*. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.
- Bradley, J. et al. 1986. *Urban Archaeological Survey, Part 3. County Kildare*. Office of Public Works, Dublin.
- Bradley, J. 2000-1. *Archaeology, Topography and Building Fabric, The Cathedral and Town of Medieval Kildare*. Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, Col. XIX (part I), pp. 27-
- Byrne, J., 2004. *Dictionary of Irish Local History*. Mercier Press, Cork.
- Fitzgerald, W. 1902. *The Castle of Kildare* in Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol. 3, p. 486-8.
- Fleming, J.S. 1914. *The Town & Fortifications of Ireland*. Paisley.
- Gwynn & Hadcock, 1970, *Medieval Religious Houses of Ireland*, London, Longman.
- Harbison, P., 1968. *Catalogue of Irish Early Bronze Age associated finds containing copper or bronze*. Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 67C, 35-91.
- Harbison, P., 1969a. *The daggers and the halberds of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland*. Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abteilung VI, Band I. C.H. Beck, Munich.
- Harbison, P., 1969b. *The axes of the Early Bronze Age in Ireland*. Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abteilung IX, Band I. C.H. Beck, Munich.
- Hogan, E. (ed.) 1878. *The Description of Ireland and the State thereof as it is at this present in Anno 1598*.
- Horner, A. 1997. *Thomas Emerson's Kildare Estate Survey 1674-1697*. In Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society 1996-1997. Vol. XVIII (Part III). 399-429.
- Kildare County Council, 2011. *Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017*.
- Killanin, Lord and Duignan, M. 1967, *Shell Guide to Ireland*. Dublin, Gill and Macmillan, p. 154.
- Lewis, S. 1837. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*. London
- Mills, J. (ed.) 1905. *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls or Proceedings of the Court of the Justiciar XXIII to XXXI Years of Edward I (1295-1303)*.
- Murphy, D. 1898-9. *Kildare: Its History and Antiquities* in Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 289-302.
- Otway-Ruthven, A. J. 1959. *The Medieval County of Kildare* in Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 11, p. 181-99.
- Pender, S. 1939. *A Census of Ireland, Circa 1659: With Supplementary Material from the Poll*. Dublin.
- Public Records Office Northern Ireland. Unpublished. *The Leinster Papers 1250-1949* (PRONI ref. D3078 and MIC 541).
- Sheridan Woods Architects. 2011. *Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation*
- Thomas, A. 1992. *The Walled Towns of Ireland*. Volume 2. Irish Academic Press, Dublin, 49-51.
- Trinity College Dublin. 2012. *Circle A Calendar of Irish Chancery Letters c. 1244-1509* (www.chancery.tcd.ie)
- Valuations Office Dublin. Unpublished. Valuations records and associated mapping relating to the town of Kildare c. 1850-1900.
- White, N. 1943. *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540-1541*. The Stationery Office, Dublin.

STATUTORY PROTECTION

Introduction

The Heritage Council established the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) in April, 2005 to unite and coordinate the strategic efforts of Local Authorities involved in the management and conservation of historic walled towns in Ireland. It is formally linked to the European Walled Towns for Friendship and Professional Co-Operation (formerly the Walled Town Friendship Circle) which is the international association for the sustainable development of walled towns, walled cities and fortified historic towns (Irish Walled Towns Network Constitution 2010, 2).

The Piran Declaration, which outlines the reasons for maintaining historic walled towns, was outlined at an Annual General Meeting of the Walled Town Friendship Circle in Piran, Slovenia in 1998.

Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable Timestones of History.

International Charters and Conventions

The plan has been informed by policies and guidance included in a number of international charters and conventions on the protection of archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage including:

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *International Charter for the Conservation of Monuments and Sites*, 1964 (commonly known as the Venice Charter),
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, 1972,
- Council of Europe *Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe*, 1985 (commonly known as the Granada Convention),
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter on the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas*, 1987 (commonly known as the Washington Charter),
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, 1988 (commonly known as the Burra Charter),
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Protection and Management*

of the Archaeological Heritage 1990,

- Council of Europe *European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* 1992 (commonly known as the Valetta Treaty),
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) *Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites* 2008 (commonly known as the Ename Charter).

National Monuments Legislation

The known and expected circuits of the defences (both upstanding and buried, whether of stone or embankment construction) and associated features of all town defences are to be considered a single national monument and treated as a unit for policy and management purposes. There should be a presumption in favour of preservation in-situ of archaeological remains and preservation of their character, setting and amenity. (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2008, 4).

In 1999 the State published two significant documents titled 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' and 'Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavations'. These documents outline the Government's policy in relation to the protection of the archaeological heritage, the conduct of archaeological excavations and reflect the obligations on the State under the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta Convention 1992).

The national policy for the protection, preservation and conservation of town defences is set out in a document entitled *National Policy on Town Defences* published in 2008 by the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

Monuments, such as town defences, included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) are referred to as recorded monuments and are protected under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. A monument is defined in Section 2 of the Act as:

any artificial or partly artificial building, structure, or erection whether above or below the surface of the ground and whether affixed or not affixed to the ground

and any cave, stone, or other natural product whether forming part of or attached to or not attached to the ground which has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the ground) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position and any prehistoric or ancient tomb, grave or burial deposit, but does not include any building which is for the time being habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes

The town defences of Kildare are currently designated as:

- KD022-029009- (Town defences, Kildare townland, not precisely located).

In addition all town defences are considered national monuments, as defined in Section 2 of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, by reason of their historical, architectural and archaeological interest. A national monument is defined in the Act as:

the expression "national monument" means a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest attaching thereto and also includes (but not so as to limit, extend or otherwise influence the construction of the foregoing general definition) every monument in Saorstát Eireann to which the Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882, applied immediately before the passing of this Act, and the said expression shall be construed as including, in addition to the monument itself, the site of the monument and the means of access thereto and also such portion of land adjoining such site as may be required to fence, cover in, or otherwise preserve from injury the monument or to preserve the amenities thereof

Ministerial Consent

Where national monuments, including town defences, are in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht or a local authority or have been the subject of a preservation order, Ministerial Consent is required in order:

- (a) to demolish or remove it wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with it, or
- (b) to excavate, dig, plough or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in proximity to it, or
- (c) to renovate or restore it, or
- (d) to sell it or any part of it for exportation or to export it or any part of it.

Works requiring notification or Ministerial Consent includes preparatory work, enabling works, carrying out of groundworks in proximity to remains of town defences, carrying out of masonry repairs, widening existing openings and rebuilding fallen stretches.

In considering applications for Ministerial Consent for works affecting town defences, it shall be the policy of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Department of the Environment and Local Government 2008, 10-11):

- To seek the protection and preservation in-situ of these national monuments including the town walls, embankments and ditches, gates, bastions or ancillary fortifications or portions thereof;
- To seek the preservation of important views and prospects inside and outside the walls so as to preserve the setting of the monuments and to increase the appreciation of the circuit and character of the walled town. The Department may require a satisfactory buffer area to be established between any new development and the town defences in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the amenity associated with the presence of town defences within the historic urban pattern;
- To require any proposals for works to town defences to be preceded by a detailed measured survey of the monuments so as to have an appropriately detailed record;
- To provide pre-planning advice to developers where town defences are close to or included in their proposal site;
- To require the involvement of qualified and experienced conservation professionals in the detailed design and overseeing of works to town defences;
- Not to favour new roads crossing the wall or the line of the wall or the formation of any new openings in the wall;
- To favour the minimal intervention necessary to the authentic fabric of the monument and avoidance of unnecessary reconstruction;
- To require good quality, context-sensitive design for development proposals affecting the upstanding town defences that would not detract from the character of the town defences or their setting by reason of the location, scale, bulk or detailing;
- To encourage the enhancement of the setting of town defences including the pedestrianisation of town gates where this can be achieved without requiring new roads to be opened through the circuit of the walls.

- To encourage also the improvement of signage and public utilities structures, etc. where these affect the visual amenity of the defences;
- To require as a condition of Ministerial Consent that appropriate programmes of regular maintenance and repair works to the town defences be put in place;
- To promote the retention of the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional burgage plot widths within historic walled towns where these derive from medieval or earlier origins and to discourage the infilling or amalgamation of such plots and removal of historic boundary walls save in exceptional circumstances.

Planning and Development Act 2000

Where the town defences, or elements of the defences, are listed as Protected Structures or located within Architectural Conservation Areas they are also protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010. The Acts require that Local Authority Development Plans include objectives for 'the conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage'. In addition, development plans are to include a Record of Protected Structures which comprises a list of structures or parts of structures which are of 'special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest' within the Authorities boundaries.

The town defences are not included in the Record of Protected Structures in the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017.

Local Plans and Policy

Kildare County Council is the relevant planning control authority within the town. The town defences are located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential designated for the town. It is a policy of the Kildare County Development Plan 2011-2017:

- To have regard to the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Urban Archaeological Survey when assessing planning applications for development. No development shall be permitted in the vicinity of a recorded feature where it detracts from the setting of the feature or which is injurious to its cultural or educational value (Policy AH 1).
- To seek to protect and preserve archaeological sites which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) (Policy AH 2).
- To ensure that development in the vicinity of a site

of archaeological interest is not detrimental to the character of the archaeological site or its setting by reason of its location, scale, bulk or detailing and to ensure that such proposed developments are subject to an archaeological assessment. Such an assessment will seek to ensure that the development can be designed in such a way as to avoid or minimise any potential effects on the archaeological heritage (Policy AH 3).

- To protect historic burial grounds within the county and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles in co-operation with the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) (Policy AH 4).

- To ensure that disturbance, removal and alteration of the line of town defences are suitably safeguarded within the historic towns and settlements of County Kildare (Policy AH 5).

- To retain where possible the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins (Policy AH 6).

- To promote and support in partnership with National Monuments Section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), the concept of Archaeological Landscapes where areas contain several Recorded Monuments (Policy AH 7).

- To encourage, where practicable, the provision of public access to sites identified in the Record of Monuments and Places under the direct ownership, guardianship or control of the Council and/or the State (Policy AH 8).

- To encourage the provision of signage to publicly accessible recorded monuments (Policy AH 9).

Protecting and enhancing Kildare town's significant and unique built heritage is one of the core objectives of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

Relevant Built Heritage Policies

- To use the *Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation* (2011) as a tool to aid the protection and enhancement of Kildare towns built heritage (BH 1).
- To protect and preserve buildings and the spaces between buildings that create a distinctive character in the proposed ACA. Improvements to historic buildings and the public realm will consolidate and protect this asset (BH 2).
- To protect and preserve those built heritage items

listed in Table 12 and shown on Maps 8.3 and 8.3(a) of the Local Area Plan (BH 3).

- To protect and preserve the views to and from those items listed in Table 12 and shown on Maps 8.3 and 8.3(a) of the Local Area Plan (BH 4).
- To require an appropriate *Visual Impact Assessment* for proposed development that may have the potential to impact adversely on significant built heritage and landscape features within and adjoining the plan area (BH 5).
- To resist where appropriate the demolition of vernacular architecture of historical, cultural and aesthetic merit, which make a positive contribution to the character, appearance and quality of the local streetscape and the sustainable development of Kildare town (BH 6).

Relevant Archaeological Policies

- To require an appropriate archaeological assessment to be carried out by licensed archaeologists in respect of any proposed development likely to have an impact on the Zone of Archaeological Potential

(KD022-029001-), a Recorded Monument or its setting (AH 1).

- To seek the protection of burial grounds within Kildare in co-operation with agencies such as the Office of Public Works and the National Monuments Section of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, as appropriate (AH 2).
- To ensure that due regard is taken for all developments requiring subsurface excavation in close proximity to the walls of St. Brigid's Cathedral (KD022-029005-) (AH 3).

The Kildare Town Historic Landscape Characterisation (Kildare HLC) study and report were completed in 2011 in order to establish a greater understanding of the historic evolution of rural and urban landscapes of Kildare town. The Kildare HLC includes recommendations and guidelines that seek to protect, preserve and enhance Kildare town's archaeology, built heritage and townscape. These findings and recommendations have informed the preparation of the Kildare Town Local Area Plan 2012-2018.

Howley Hayes Architects are recognised for their work in both contemporary design and for the sensitive conservation of historic buildings, structures and places. The practice has been responsible for the conservation and reuse of numerous buildings of national and international cultural significance, several of which have received RIAI, Opus or Europa Nostra Awards. Under the Conservation Accreditation System, implemented by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, Howley Hayes Architects is accredited as a Conservation Practice Grade 1 and its director and associate director James Howley and Fergal Mc Namara are Conservation Architects Grade 1. Over the years the practice has completed many projects for the restoration and conservation of numerous historic buildings and places including – Russborough, Lambay, Larch Hill, Dromoland & Carton. Howley Hayes Architects have to date been responsible for over one hundred and twenty conservation plans, reports and strategic masterplans for clients such as the Heritage Council, the World Monument Fund, the Office of Public Works together with numerous local authorities and private clients.