

## **CHAPTER 5: BUILT & NATURAL HERITAGE**



### **SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER**

- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Built Heritage: Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures**
- 5.3 Archaeological Heritage**
- 5.4 Natural Heritage**



## **5.1 Introduction**

Trim has a rich history dating back many centuries from which we are fortunate to have inherited many structures and monuments of great heritage value. The town also has many natural heritage features to offer residents and visitors alike, with the River Boyne and its associated candidate Special Area of Conservation located in the heart of the town. The Trim Wetland pNHA is located east of the town at the bend in the Boyne at Scurlockstown. However conservation of the town's heritage resources is a complex issue due to the need to achieve balance between the conservation of the town's indispensable heritage and the facilitation of necessary development to serve the present and future population of the town. In order to fully appreciate this, full understanding of its historical development and its changing nature, function, and form is critical.

The Planning and Development Act 2000, Section 10 (2), as amended, outlines the mandatory objectives in respect of built and natural heritage in development plan preparation. These are as follows:

- The conservation and protection of the environment, including in particular the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph;
- The protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- The preservation of the character of Architectural Conservation Areas, and;
- The preservation of the character of the landscape, where and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has published Guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 that all planning authorities are required to have regard to in the performance of their duties and functions. Broad and comprehensive architectural heritage guidance is contained in Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2004 (of which paragraph 5.2.3 was revised in October 2007), which sets down Ministerial guidance in relation to plan preparation and the development management process. The function of these guidelines is to help to protect our architectural heritage by guiding planning authorities but also to inform owners and occupiers of protected structures, of proposed protected structures or buildings within Architectural Conservation Areas. The guidelines state that each development plan must include policy objectives to protect the architectural heritage in its functional area.

## **5.2 Built Heritage**

Built heritage refers to all manmade features in the environment including buildings and other structures such as bridges, wells, archaeological sites, field boundaries and pumps. The development plan must consider both the townscape and individual structures in the historic core. Development has influenced the current form of the town and how it has evolved in the recent past. Development can have a positive impact and can conserve, enhance and provide a new use for older structures. However, development can also threaten and damage the character of Trim both in the form of individual developments which may involve the demolition of buildings of architectural and historic interest, have a negative visual impact, or the cumulative impact of a number of small scale developments. Inappropriate alterations such as the removal of historic sash windows, traditional gutters and downpipes, and render, the addition of inappropriate signage and lighting proposals all detract from the character of individual buildings and have a cumulative negative impact on the streetscape.

**Policy**

In terms of the Built Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 1: To preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Trim and to ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to the historic character of Trim.

**5.2.1 Architectural Conservation Areas**

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a legally defined designation under Section 81 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. This section of the Planning Act obliges planning authorities to include objectives in their development plans to preserve the character of such locations. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has produced leaflet PL12 accessible from the Department's website ([www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)), the website of Meath County Council, ([www.meath.ie](http://www.meath.ie)), and the Meath Planning Department, which is designed to act as a simple guide to architectural heritage for the general public by providing answers to many frequently asked questions on the topic. It explains that "an architectural conservation area is a place, area, group of structures or townscape which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest in its own rights, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures."

Planning permission is required to totally or substantially demolish any building within an ACA. Generally there is a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of an ACA. Permission must also be obtained before making changes to the exterior of buildings, such as stripping plaster, replacing windows, changing shopfronts, adding signage, lighting fixtures, roller shutters and putting up satellite dishes, to ensure that any alterations do not detract from the area's appearance. This does not prevent alterations, extensions or new development within the area but seeks to ensure that any new development is compatible with the special character of the area.

**Objectives**

In terms of the Built Heritage it is an objective of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER OBJ 1: To achieve the preservation of the special character of places, areas, groups of structures and townscapes within the town and environs by:

- Setting out Architectural Conservation Areas of appropriate extent within the town and its environs.
- Encouraging local initiatives which promote the preservation of the special character of Architectural Conservation Areas.

HER OBJ 2: To preserve the character of the following Architectural Conservation Areas in Trim.

- Historic Core.
- Trim Porch Field.

**5.2.2 Trim Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area****Boundary**

The Trim Historic Core ACA was designated in the Trim Development Plan 2002. The area has been reviewed and it is proposed to adjust the boundary of the ACA on the west side of Haggard Street, south side of Patrick Street, and to the west of the Wellington Monument as shown in the associated map. It is considered that the character of these sectors is not of sufficient interest to warrant continued inclusion in the ACA.

### **Historical Development**

The site of Trim was known from the earliest times as a fording point of the River Boyne, at the upper limits of navigation. It is thought that the Watergate Street crossing is the original ford point. The first clear evidence of settlement is described in the Book of Armagh which details the foundation of a monastery by St Loman in 432A.D. The site of the castle was selected by Hugh de Lacy in 1172 and fortified. The earliest reference to Trim as a borough is in the early years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the castle was built in the first half of that century. Trim became Meath's principle urban centre in the Anglo-Norman period. The dissolution of the Abbey and Friaries in 1539 and 1540 had far reaching impacts on the economic, social and political powers in Trim and by 1584 the town was a substantial and well-fortified city and recommended as the site for Trinity College. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Trim acted as the county town for Meath and a thriving market centre until overtaken by Navan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the plan of Trim had hardly changed from the pattern of the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the exception of an expansion to the south and the building of St Marys Catholic Church. The construction of Wellington Place in 1817 added a monumental element to the townscape.

In 1835 the corporation was replaced by town commissioners who brought about major improvements in the form and fabric of the town. In 1852/53, two major projects were commenced – the building of a Town Hall, and installation of gas lighting. Trim did not grow to any great extent during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The workhouse was converted into a hospital and a number of large schools were established. In the latter half of the century small suburban districts were established along the Kells Road but the greatest changes in the town occurred as a result of the growth in the commuter hinterland of Dublin in the last 10 years.

### **Layout/Street Pattern**

Although the present town developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, its street pattern survives from the medieval period and consists principally of one large curving street – Navan Gate Street, High Street and Castle Street, off which Haggard Street, Mill Street and Market Street run in an east-west direction. The Augustinian Priory was located immediately north of the river and the curving pattern formed by High Street and Navan Gate Street is thought to represent an old monastic boundary. Watergate Street and Emmet Street run north-south from the western river crossing point and are linked back by Market Street, the main commercial street, creating a H shaped plan.

The medieval burgage plot pattern is largely intact within the ACA, in Navan Gate Street, High Street and particularly in Emmet Street where it backs onto the town wall. The presence of a clear burgage plot pattern outside the town wall in Emmet Street suggests that there may have been an early suburb there.

### **Built Form**

Trim is notable for the survival of medieval structures, most prominently, Trim Castle, which is the largest and most impressive Norman Castle in the country. The majority of commercial and residential buildings in the town core are two or three storeys in height, and plain and unadorned Georgian in style. The Castle Street cottages are exceptional in that they were built by the Dunsany estate in 1890 and are a row of 10 estate cottages with decorative timber bargeboards, and small diamond paned windows. However, the last 15 years has seen a gradual erosion of the town's architectural character by the removal of traditional sash windows, plaster, and rainwater goods. However, there is the potential to retain, and restore where necessary, the distinctive quality and historic character of the town.

### **Materials**

The buildings in Trim are predominantly plastered and painted in a variety of colours, however the more important institutional and commercial buildings have dressed stone facings. There are several impressive houses on Navan Gate Street with stone facades, and a small number of late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings have brick facades with interesting detailing. In common with all small Irish towns, the roofscape of Trim consists of pitched slated roofs.



Terrace of dwellings on Castle St. within Trim's Historical Core ACA

### Landmark Views

The Castle dominates the centre of the town and its eastern approaches. Visitors climbing to the roof are given panoramic views of the town and the river valley. The skyline is pierced by churches and towers including the tower of St Patrick's cathedral (C of I), the Yellow Steeple and the spire of St Patrick's church (RC). Particular views are noted on the attached maps.

### Policies

In terms of the Built Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 2: To support and encourage the re-use of suitable redundant or obsolete buildings within the ACAs in accordance with good conservation practice.

HER POL 3: To retain where practical any structure which contributes in a positive manner to the character of the ACAs.

HER POL 4: Within the Architectural Conservation Areas the Planning Authorities will have regard to:

- The impact of proposed development on the character and appearance of the Architectural Conservation Area in terms of the height and massing of built forms, and the compatibility of design, materials, colour and finishes.
- The impact of proposed development on the character and integrity of the area and the approaches thereto, and will promote compatible uses within compatible forms of infill development.
- The need to retain important architectural and townscape elements such as shop fronts, sash windows, gutters and down pipes, decorative plasterwork, etc.

HER OBJ 3: It is the intention of the planning authorities by the designation of this Architectural Conservation Area:

- To preserve, protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Trim for future generations.
- To preserve the historic street pattern within the core of the town.
- To require that all new developments shall observe the existing scale of the town.
- To protect the character of the existing streetscape by giving consideration to the suitability of style, construction materials, colour and decoration to be used in any

- proposals for development taking place within this area.
- To encourage appropriate new uses for empty and under-utilised buildings.
  - To avoid the destruction of minor historic elements whose cumulative loss would severely erode the cumulative cultural significance of the town.

### 5.2.3 Trim Porch Field Architectural Conservation Area

#### Historical Development

The field was called Porch Field from at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century with some sources referring to the Porchgate in association with property beside the Augustinian priory. The derivation of the prefix Porch may be from the French word *porte* meaning gate. The Porch Gate may have been the postern gate of the Augustinian prior and situated on a lane linking Trim with Newtown.

#### Form

This area acts as a backdrop against which the town is set. It frames Trim Castle, Nangles Castle, the Yellow Steeple, Sheepgate, St Johns Friary and allows these protected structures to be appreciated as they originally appeared in the landscape. It provides an exceptional open space and public amenity for the town. This land can only be used in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW) for amenity and recreational purposes.

#### Objective

In terms of the Built Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER OBJ 4: It is the intention of the planning authorities in the designation of this ACA to ensure that any proposed developments shall recognise the particular role of this area in the protection of the unique setting of the town and its heritage buildings, shall harmonise with its distinct open landscape character and respect views and prospects along the river valley.

### 5.2.4 Implications of an Architectural Conservation Area for the Public

Any development which would materially affect the character of an Architectural Conservation Area will require planning permission, as set out in Section 82 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. This includes works to the rear of buildings, within backland sites and gardens, and to boundaries. Where development takes place without planning permission, the planning authority will require the owners or occupiers through the enforcement process to restore the character of the building or site, where it is considered that the development is inconsistent with the character of the area.

However it should be noted that the designation of an Architectural Conservation Area is not made to prohibit or unduly restrict occupiers or owners from enhancing their property or lands, it is made to ensure that Ireland's unique and valuable built heritage is protected for the benefit of present and future generations. Development proposals within an ACA should be both sympathetic and complimentary to the existing built environment and therefore it is vitally important that any proposal is of a very high quality in terms of design, layout and materials to be used. Members of the public may find it useful to consult the publications section of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's website ([www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)) where copies of best practice architectural heritage conservation principles, and planning guidelines are available to download free of charge.

### 5.2.5 Protected Structures

A protected structure unless otherwise stated in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure, any other structures

and their interiors lying within that curtilage and in addition all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of these structures.

The review of the RPS for the Trim Development Plan has been undertaken as follows:

- (a) The structures listed in the 2002 Development Plan have been re-assessed. All structures currently listed are proposed to be retained on the Record of Protected Structures.
- (b) The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for County Meath (NIAH) surveyed Trim and recorded 80 structures. The NIAH sites have been inspected and considered by the Planning Department.
- (c) The NIAH survey of Trim evaluated the 80 structures as follows:
  - 75 of regional importance
  - 5 of local importance
  - 0 record only

45 of these structures are already contained on the Trim Record of Protected Structures. (Appendix I) 42 being of Regional importance, 3 of Local importance.

The nationally important Trim Castle, the town wall and other defences, are included in the RPS but are not included in the NIAH survey as they are separately recorded under the National Monuments Acts.

28 structures rated as being of Regional Importance are recommended by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and are now proposed to be added to the Record of Protected Structures.

### Policies

In terms of Built Heritage: it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 5: The following shall be the policy of the planning authorities with regard to protected structures in the Trim Development Plan area:

- To refuse permission, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures, save in exceptional circumstances.
- To resist removal or modification of features of architectural importance.
- To resist interventions which would negatively affect the character of a structure, either externally or internally.
- To resist development that would adversely affect the setting of a protected structure.
- To require that all planning applications relating to protected structures shall be accompanied by drawings and documents sufficient to describe the impact of the proposed development on the character of the structure.

### 5.2.6 Implications of a Protected Structure designation for the Public

Structures which are listed in the Record of Protected Structures do not benefit from exempted development rights under the Planning and Development Acts 2000 to 2007, as amended, or regulations made thereunder, unless the works would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Therefore any alteration, extension or demolition of the structure or within the curtilage of the structure, that would materially affect the character of the structure, will require planning permission. An owner or occupier of a protected structure may make a written request to the planning authority within whose area the structure is situated, to issue a declaration under Section 57 of the Planning and Development Acts



2000 to 2007, as amended, as to the type of works which it considers would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure. In order to assist property owners in the upkeep of protected structures the planning authorities (Trim Town Council & Meath County Council) will seek to provide grant aid through its administration of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's Grants Scheme. The Scheme will be advertised on an annual basis and applications will be prioritised on the basis of the council's adopted 'Scheme of Priorities'.

### 5.2.7 Views and Prospects

A number of views and prospects have been identified for protection given their special amenity value. Some views and prospects have been chosen for their natural beauty, others because of their innate heritage value to the town of Trim.



Protected view of the River Boyne

### Objectives

In terms of Built Heritage, it is an objective of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council that:

HER OBJ 5: The following views shall be protected, as illustrated on associated Map 3:

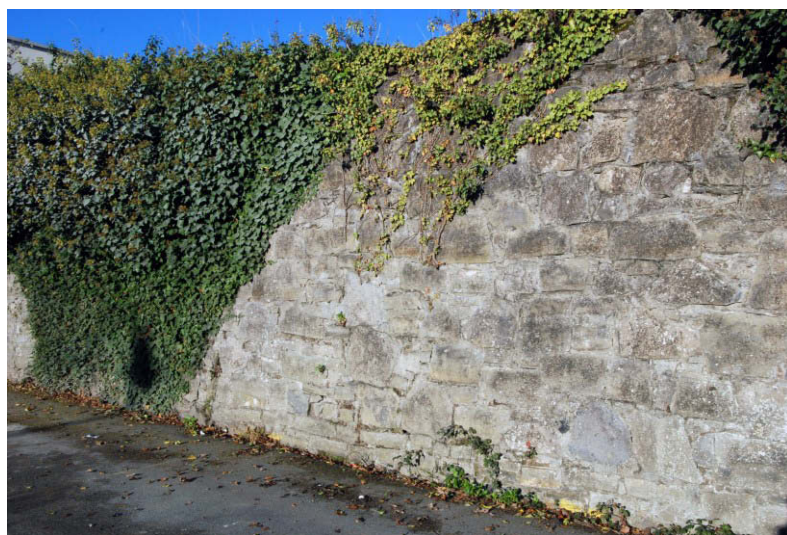
- From Dublin Road at St Johns, toward the river valley, Trim Castle, Newtown Abbey and Newtown Bridge.
- Newtown Bridge towards the river valley, Newtown Abbey and St. John's Friary
- Trim Castle to the river valley, St. Mary's Abbey and Newtown Abbey.
- Watergate Bridge towards the river valley to the west and towards the town centre to the east
- Castle Street to Talbot Castle and St. Mary's Abbey.
- Towards Trim Castle and the Porch field from St. Mary's Abbey.
- Westwards from Newtown Abbey to the Porch field.
- West and south-westwards from the ring road to St. Mary's Abbey and Trim Castle.
- Eastwards from Oldbridge in High Street.
- View of St. John's Friary from the adjoining Dublin Road.
- Views of the Wellington Monument from Patrick's St., Emmet St., and the Summerhill Road.



### 5.3 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects, monuments of other kinds as well as their contexts where in land or underwater. An understanding of the archaeology of Trim is critical in assessing how best the character of the town can be conserved. The Urban Archaeological Survey for County Meath (OPW 1985) addresses the urban heritage of Trim and identified a zone of archaeological potential which was included in the 2002 Development Plan and which is included in this plan, see map 3. The significance of Trim from an archaeological viewpoint is without question, the town is a recorded monument in the Record of Monuments and Places<sup>1</sup>, (ME 036-048). Within this area are a number of archaeological sites and monuments.

Trim's historic Town Walls, which date back to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, enclosed an area of 19.2 hectares with a length of 2km, both above and below ground. More survives of the town walls at Trim than is usually realised. A total of almost one kilometre, or half the circuit, can be traced above ground at different locations around the town and sections as high as 2.5m remain in four locations. The town walls and defences enjoy protection both as National Monuments and protected structures (Appendix I).



A section of the Trim Town Wall

Meath County Council, working in partnership with the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) has commissioned a conservation and management plan for the Trim Town Walls, (including the walls, towers, gates, fosses and other defences surviving above and below ground). Meath County Council, are now in a position to co-ordinate the future conservation and management of this important monument in a planned and integrated manner, and in accordance with *International Best Practice*<sup>2</sup>.

Any work which impacts on national monuments in state or local authority care or which are subject to a preservation order require the written consent of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Record of Monuments and Places was established under Section 12 of the National Monument (Amendment) Act, 1994 and it protects all known sites.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in accordance with relevant ICOMOS's Charters and Resolutions e.g. *The Venice Charter*, *The Burra Charter* and *The Bruges Resolutions*.

<sup>3</sup> Section 14 of the National Monument (Amendment) Act, 1994 as amended by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004

Under Section 12 of the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004, any person intending to carry out works at or in relation to a Recorded Monument, or within the zone of archaeological potential, must give the National Monuments Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government two months notice in writing.

### Policies

In terms of Archaeological Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

#### HER POL 6:

- (a) To protect (in-situ where practicable or as a minimum, preservation by record) all monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places (including those newly discovered).
- (b) To seek to protect, where practicable, the setting of and access to sites. In securing such protection the planning authorities will have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
- (c) To require that all applications for development within the zone of archaeological potential are accompanied by a professional archaeological impact assessment.
- (d) Where remnants of burgh plots do remain intact, development proposals on such plots should reflect this character within the design and layout of proposals. In order to promote the renewal of such areas, design guidance will be provided, if necessary, for such sites at pre-planning stage.

HER POL 7: To protect the site of the medieval town wall alignment as an area of high archaeological sensitivity from new development.

HER POL 8: To propose the Conservation Plan for the Trim Town Walls for adoption when completed and to include its recommendations and provisions as objectives of this Plan, where possible.

### Objectives

HER OBJ 6: The Council, in consultation with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will prepare a map indicating the extent of the buffer zone to the town wall where new development will be prohibited.

HER OBJ 7: When considering development in the vicinity of archaeological monuments, the planning authority shall aim to achieve a satisfactory buffer area between the development and the monument in order to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the amenity associated with the monument. This shall be achieved in consultation with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Buffer areas shall not be included within the required open space area of any development but should be in addition to such requirements.

## 5.4 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage composes of native plants, animals and their habitats, geology, landscapes, seascapes and inland waterways. The natural heritage of Trim includes the Boyne River Valley which is a candidate Special Area of Conservation, the Trim Wetland proposed Natural Heritage Area, trees and hedgerows, uncultivated grassland within the town centre particularly in the Porch Field area. Old derelict structures and monuments also provide shelter for certain species of birds. The National Biodiversity Plan (2002) sets out aims for the conservation of Ireland's biodiversity and requires local authorities to prepare and implement local biodiversity action plans. This plan seeks to secure the conservation, including where possible the enhancement and sustainable use of biological diversity in Ireland. The overall objective of this plan is "To secure the conservation, including where possible

the enhancement, and sustainable use of biological diversity in Ireland and to contribute to conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity globally.” Specific objectives include:

- Conserve habitat diversity, including all sites of special biodiversity importance.
- Conserve species diversity.
- Conserve genetic diversity, both wild and domesticated.
- Contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to advancing other obligations of the Convention on Biological Diversity in the EU, regionally and internationally.

The National Heritage Plan (2002) “Places heritage at the heart of public life” and recognises that protection of heritage must begin at local level enabling everybody to become actively involved in preserving and enhancing that which belongs to us all. The National Heritage Plan requires all counties to prepare 5 year heritage plans. The County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011 is at draft stage.



River Boyne flowing through Trim

### Policy

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 9: To protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural heritage of Trim including wildlife (flora & fauna), habitats, geology, landscapes and/or landscape features of importance to wildlife or which play a key role in the conservation and management of natural resources such as water.

### Objectives

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is an objective of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER OBJ 8: To encourage and promote the appropriate management and enhancement of Trim's biodiversity

HER OBJ 9: To promote an awareness and appreciation of the natural heritage of Trim in conjunction with the County Meath Heritage Forum and through the implementation of the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011 and County Meath Biodiversity Action Plan 2008-2012



HER OBJ 10: To promote the sustainable usage of the River Boyne and the lands in State ownership at the Porch Field for amenity/recreational use including the creation of an urban habitat.

### 5.4.1 Heritage Designations

#### Candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC)

The River Boyne & River Blackwater, site code 002299 is a cSAC. The site is selected for alkaline fen and alluvial woodlands (both of these are listed habitats on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive). The site has also been selected for the following species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive: Atlantic Salmon, Otter and River Lamprey.

The 1992 Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) is the legal basis for site selection. This Directive seeks to protect wildlife and its habitats. The European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997 and European Communities (Natural Habitats) (Amendment) Regulations, 2005 set out how these SACs are to be protected and managed by the relevant planning authorities. The cSACs enjoy full protection under the EU Habitats Directive, the term 'candidate' refers to the fact that the sites are currently under consideration by the European Commission.



The extent of the Boyne cSAC and Trim pNHA is shown above. Source: [www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie)

#### Proposed Natural Heritage Area

Trim Wetland, site code 001357 is located just north of the bend in the Boyne at Scurlockstown on the banks of the Boyne 5km east of Trim. The underlying geology of the area is one of carboniferous limestone with extensive areas of limestone till and long esker chains. This area is periodically flooded during the winter months. The main habitat is that of freshwater marsh and species include Yellow Flag and Water Mint. The secondary habitat is that of wet grassland and among the species recorded are Tall Fescue and Meadowsweet. Other more minor habitats that occur on this site are dry grassland, reed swamp, scrub, hedge, drainage ditches and river. This site is of interest due to the presence of Strawberry Clover here. This is one of the few inland locations in Ireland for this coastal plant species.

### Protected Species

Certain plant, animal and bird species are protected by law. This includes plant species listed in the Flora Protection Order, 1999 (or other such Orders), and animals and birds in the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000 and subsequent statutory instruments, those listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive, and those listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, for example the Kingfisher which is known to feed along the River Boyne in the town.

### Policies

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 10: To maintain, protect and where possible enhance, the conservation value of the cSAC and pNHA in Trim and any additional sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan.

HER POL 11: To have regard to the views and guidance of the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the DoEHLG in respect of proposed development where there is a possibility that such development may have an impact on candidate or designated Special Areas of Conservation or proposed or designated Natural Heritage Areas.

HER POL 12: To require any planning application that proposes development within or adjacent to the area designated as a cSAC or pNHA to be accompanied by an ecological impact assessment carried out by appropriate professionals. The Ecological Impact Assessment will be forwarded to the National Parks & Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government for their comments prior to the making of a decision by the appropriate planning authority.

HER POL 13: To permit development on a designated SAC or NHA or those proposed to be designated over the period of this plan, only where an assessment carried out to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and National Parks & Wildlife Service of DoEHLG, indicates that it will have no adverse effect (such as disturbance, pollution or deterioration of habitat quality) on the protected area.

HER POL 14: To prohibit any development that would be harmful or that would result in a significant deterioration of habitats and/or disturbance of species.

HER POL 15: To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

### 5.4.2 Habitats and Species Outside Designated Sites

The section above details heritage policies in respect of designated sites, however in Trim natural heritage is not confined to those sites with statutory designations. Trees and hedgerows are a visual amenity in the town and provide a home for wildlife. A key issue is to achieve their preservation in a viable way in the urban environment where they are conserved and appreciated and where they provide a migratory corridor for wildlife. Likewise consideration must be given to species such as the Kingfisher protected under the Birds Directive which does not benefit from a Special Protection Area in Trim.

**Policies**

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 16: To ensure that , where possible, proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures

HER POL 17: To establish ecological corridors within new development which permit the potential movement of wildlife and which include indigenous vegetation.

HER POL 18: To encourage the use native tree and hedgerow species in the landscaping of new developments.

HER POL 19: To restrict the cutting of hedges during the bird-nesting season (1st March until August 31st), except in certain legally defined circumstances, in accordance with the provisions of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000.

HER POL 20: To promote the environmentally sensitive management of hedgerows in the town in accordance with best practice guidelines.

**5.4.3 Public Rights of Way**

The planning authorities will use their powers under the Planning Acts to preserve and maintain existing rights of way, to create new ones where appropriate and to promote their greater use in amenity areas.

**Policies**

In terms of Public Rights of Way, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 21: To preserve for the common good all existing public rights of way which contribute to amenity.

HER POL 22: To create new rights of way or extend/enhance existing rights of way in the interest of recreational amenity.

**5.4.4 Landscape**

The Landscape Character Assessment of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 identifies Trim in landscape character area 5, the Boyne Valley. The Landscape Character Assessment classes the value of the Boyne Valley landscape as exceptional and of international importance, with a high sensitivity to development. It shall be the policy of the planning authorities to ensure that this landscape quality is not undermined by inappropriate development.

**Policy**

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 23: To maintain and enhance the diverse and high quality landscape in Trim and its environs



### 5.4.5 Trees and Woodlands

Trim contains many large trees and groups of trees of considerable merit which enhance the urban fabric of the town. Trees function as a wildlife habitat, provide visual relief and are an important visual amenity for the town.

**Table 6: Trees identified for Preservation**

Map Symbol	Group of Trees to be Preserved	Location/Setting
TP 1	Line of mature deciduous and coniferous trees	On the eastern side of the grounds of the Catholic Church, visible from Castle street.
TP 2	Riverside Trees	Northern bank of the Boyne, in park immediately west of Watergate Bridge.
TP 3	Mature Conifers	In the grounds of Highfield House (B&B) on Castle Street, and visible from Castle Street/Dublin Road
TP 4	Deciduous Trees	On both sides of road linking Newtown Bridge and the Dublin Road (near St John's Friary)
TP 5	Deciduous Trees	Tree's in Convent Grounds Emmet Street
TP 6	Group of Sycamores	Beside the White Lodge B&B close to Navan Gate Roundabout
TP 7	Deciduous and coniferous trees	In the grounds of Diocesan Hall, the Old Glebe and Priory Estate.
TP 8	Deciduous and coniferous trees	In the grounds of the Wellington Court Hotel and Mornington House.
TP 9	Beech Tree	Beside the old painted cottage near the Garda Station, Castle Street.
TP 10	Oak Tree	Beside the cannon in Castle Street Car Park

### Policies

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Trim Town Council:

HER POL 24: To retain trees and hedgerows of value as illustrated on the Zoning and Objectives Map no. 1.

HER POL 25: To have a presumption in favour of the retention of existing trees and their incorporation into any new development unless this can be shown to be impractical, and to protect, preserve and ensure effective management of trees and groups of trees considered to be of special amenity value and to prepare Tree Preservation Orders where considered appropriate.