

CHAPTER 5: ARCHITECTURAL & NATURAL HERITAGE



SECTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Architectural Heritage
- 5.2 Archaeological Heritage
- 5.3 Natural Heritage

5.0 Introduction

Navan 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 River Blackwater and its associated candidate Special Area of Conservation located in the heart of the town. 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 architectural 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 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 by Circular), 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.

5.1 Architectural Heritage

Architectural 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 individual structures and the townscape in the historic core. Historically development has influenced how the town evolved, to arrive at its current form. Development can have a positive impact and can conserve, enhance and provide new uses for older structures. However, development can also threaten and damage the character of Navan 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. Promote both the conservation and redevelopment of the architectural fabric of Navan.

Policies

In terms of Architectural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Navan Town Council:

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

HER POL 2: To seek the retention of historic shop fronts and pub fronts as part of the streetscape of Navan.

HER POL 3: To encourage the development of compact urban forms by consolidating existing development boundaries and utilising brownfield sites in preference to expanding urban areas into the countryside and adjoining settlements.

5.1.1 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), the website of Meath County Council, (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 or roller shutters, or 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.

The planning authority encourages the retention of all structures that contribute to the character or appearance of an ACA. Planning permission is required for the partial or total demolition of any structure within an ACA where that work would affect the character of the ACA. Permission is also required before making alterations or changes to the exterior of structures located within an ACA which affect the character of the ACA. This would include works such as stripping plaster or render, replacing windows, changing shopfronts, adding signage, lighting fixtures or roller shutter, or putting up satellite dishes. This does not prevent alterations, extensions or new development within the ACA but seeks to preserve the character of the area and ensure that any new development is compatible with that special character'.

Objectives

In terms of Architectural Heritage it is an objective of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER OBJ 1: To preserve the character of the Navan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area.

HER OBJ 2: To achieve the preservation of the special character of places, areas, groups of structures and townscapes within the town and environs by:
Encouraging local initiatives which promote the preservation of the special character of Architectural Conservation Areas.

In terms of Architectural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Navan Town Council:

HER POL 4: To ensure that all planning applications relating to structures in an ACA or proposed ACA, including public works projects, should be referred to the Conservation Officer and to the Prescribed Bodies for comment prior to a decision being made.

5.1.2 Navan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area**Boundary**

The Navan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) was included in the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 and covers the area of the historic town core of Trimgate Street, Market Square, Watergate Street, Ludlow Street, Bridge Street, Church Hill, the Fair Green and Railway Street between Trimgate Street and Circular Road. Navan's town core is a distinctive area, which in terms of street pattern, composition of streetscapes, buildings of different periods, style and detail, merits its designation as an ACA. The historic streetscapes of Navan are largely composed of town houses and shops dating from the 18th to 20th centuries, interspersed with a number of fine religious, institutional and commercial buildings. The predominant land uses in the town core have been and continue to be trade, commerce and residential. The ACA contains the bulk of the town's protected structures.

Historical Development

Archaeological evidence suggests a long history of settlement in the area where Navan now stands. The town of Navan was founded during the Norman period when Hugh de Lacy assigned the Barony of Navan to the Nangle family. Jocelin Nangle founded an Augustian abbey dedicated to the Virgin Mary in 1189 but this was confiscated by the Crown in 1539 and fell into ruins with no trace remaining today.

Navan was granted Borough status by Edward IV in 1469 and steadily developed over time. However given the town's location on the edge of the Pale and on the River Boyne, the town was at constant risk of attack and so by the late Middle Ages it became a walled town with three gates, Trim Gate, Water Gate and Dublin Gate. By the 17th century it had become a thriving market town with markets regularly taking place at 'Market Square', the junction of numerous streets in the historic core. Isaac Butler's 'A Journey to Lough Derg' (1892) notes how the town had one of the best markets in Leinster before Smithfield was developed. In 1729 an Act of Parliament was passed for the construction of a turnpike road from Dublin to Navan as the current road had become 'so ruinous and bad' that major repairs and improvements were necessary. Travel along the road was tolled to pay for the roads upkeep. The Boyne navigation canal from Drogheda has its origins in the year 1759 and reached Navan by 1800. It was of great benefit to the town, boosting local trade and commerce. Further improvements in the links between Navan and Drogheda were made in 1850 when the railway was extended to Navan from Drogheda. A further railway line between Clonsilla

and Navan came into operation in 1862 and operated for over 100 years before being finally closed in 1963.



Navan Railway Viaduct (1850)

Street Pattern and History

Although the present town largely developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, its street pattern survives from the medieval period from when the town would have been walled. The history behind the names of the various streets and roads in the town is described below.

Abbey Road

Before the arrival of the Normans an Abbey was located along this road which lent its name to the road.

Academy Street

This street was named after the catholic secondary school that was built here in the 19 century.

Bedford Place

Located between the Fairgreen and Academy St, this got its name from the Duke of Bedford, a local landholder.

Boreen Keel

Boreen Keel or 'An Bothar Caol' meaning narrow road in Irish, was named as such due to the narrow width of the road.

Canon Row

The monks of the Augustian order said prayers known as Canonical hours, these monks took their exercise on the road now known as Canon Row.

Commons Road

This road led to the commons of Navan in medieval times, a holding of 1200 acres of land granted to Navan Corporation by Charter.

Flower Hill

Due the presence of flour mills near this road on a hill, the road was called Flour Hill but this was corrupted over time into the present day 'Flower Hill'.

Kennedy Road

This road was named after Tom Kennedy, a former local politician and member of Navan Urban District Council.

Ludlow Street

Named after Lord Ludlow, a prominent member of the gentry, who was married into the Preston Family.

Trimgate Street

This street is today the main street in the town and gains its name from the 'Trim Gate' which was one of three entrances to the town forming part of the town wall.

Watergate Street

Similarly, this street takes its name from the 'Water Gate' of the town's defences which was located on the south side of Poolboy Bridge.

Architectural Form and Materials

The urban character of Navan has unique and varying qualities, characterised by its interesting street and lane patterns, streetscapes, historic sites, fine public buildings and buildings of historical significance. The physical form of the individual buildings, structures and places of historical and architectural value are symbols of the social, economic and cultural development of the town. They have acquired economic and aesthetic values and contribute to the town's distinctive character.

It is recognised that the fabric of the town is subject to continuous change and that such change is necessary to maintain and enhance the vitality of the town. Nonetheless, Meath County Council and Navan Town Council are committed to the protection and preservation of buildings, streetscapes, features and sites of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest which contribute to the distinctive character of the town. In order to address these issues, there is a need for comprehensive townscape management, which requires a number of objectives:

- Maintaining existing uses and attracting new ones to the town centre.
- Respecting the historical and traditional context, that contributes to Navan's character.
- Promoting the right balance between conservation and redevelopment.
- Enhancing the townscape through pedestrianisation and other environmental improvements (such as the placement of electricity cables underground, improvements in street lighting, paving and public art).
- Protecting key buildings of the town's architectural heritage (through the Record of Protected Structures)
- Protecting and enhancing key streetscapes and elements of townscapes (primarily through Architectural Conservation Areas).

In support of these objectives of townscape management, the joint Local Authorities will implement Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000, which relates to the protection of the Architectural Heritage, in accordance with government policy and guidelines.

The buildings in Navan are predominantly plastered and painted in a variety of colours. A number of red brick buildings can be found on the Trimgate Street. However the more important institutional and commercial buildings have dressed stone facings. There are several impressive houses around the town with stone facades, and a small number of late 19th century commercial buildings have brick

facades with interesting detailing. In common with many Irish towns, the roofscape of Navan consists of pitched slated roofs with chimneystacks.



Trimgate St. forms part of the Navan Architectural Conservation Area

Policies

In terms of Architectural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Navan Town Council:

HER POL 5: To support and encourage the re-use of suitable redundant or obsolete buildings within the ACA.

HER POL 6: To encourage the retention and protection of all structures which contributes in a positive manner to the character of the ACA.

HER POL 7: Within the Architectural Conservation Area to 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 architectural and townscape elements such as shop fronts, sash windows, gutters and down pipes, decorative plasterwork, etc. that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA.

HER POL 8: To encourage the retention of all architectural and townscape elements which contribute to the character of the ACA.

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

- To protect and enhance the architectural heritage of Navan 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 cultural significance of the town.

5.1.3 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 architectural 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) where copies of best practice architectural heritage conservation principles, and planning guidelines are available to download free of charge.

5.1.4 Protected Structures

The Planning & Development Act 2000 (Part II, Section 10) places an obligation on all local authorities to include a Record in their Development Plan for the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. These buildings and structures are compiled on a register known as the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), which is outlined in Appendix I and mapped on the Architectural Heritage Conservation Map. It should be noted that the RPS contained in Appendix I of this Development Plan has been broken up into three sections. The first part of the RPS relates to the administrative area of Navan Town Council and the second part relates to the area of the environs of Navan as contained in the Development Plan Envelop that is within the administrative area of Meath County Council. The third part lists structures that are located in both areas. Where the Register Reference Number contained in the RPS begins with NT, it refers to the Record of Protected Structures for the Navan Town Council administrative area and where it begins with MH, it refers to an extract from the RPS for County Meath.

A protected structure unless otherwise stated in the 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. Among the town's major features of historic, architectural and archaeological interest are the 12th Century Castle Motte at Moathill, Athlumney Castle c.1500, Athlumney Motte-1700, Blackcastle House-1828, Boyne Cottage Well-c.1870 and St. Mary's Catholic Church-1835-1850. In addition, there are a number of fine houses and features along Trimgate St., Ludlow Street,

Church Hill, Bridge Street and Watergate Street. Furthermore, Navan still maintains small sections of the medieval defensive wall, which surrounded the town centre in the medieval period. The review of the RPS for the Navan Development Plan 2009-2015 has been undertaken. In total 186 structures are included in the record of protected structures. One structure has been removed from the Record included in the Navan Development Plan 2003-2009 and there have been no additional structures added.

Policies

In terms of Architectural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Navan Town Council:

HER POL 9: The following shall be the policy of the planning authorities with regard to protected structures in the Navan 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.
- To encourage the retention of all features of architectural heritage importance;
- To encourage works of renovation and renewal which maintain and enhance the character of a protected structure, either externally or internally;
- To encourage development which has a positive impact on the setting of a protected structure'.



St. Mary's Church, a protected structure within the ACA

5.1.5 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 partial demolition of the structure or any works 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 (Navan 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 Conservation 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'.

5.1.6 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 Navan. The views and prospects that are considered of particular importance are along the Boyne Corridor, including the Ramparts area, of the individual built structures within this riparian landscape, Athlumney Castle, the Motte, Viaduct and bridging points of the Boyne & Navigation Canal. The conservation of these amenities is vital to the attractions and image of Navan. Where development is envisaged adjacent to such features, the relevant Planning Authority will pay close regard to the potential adverse effect on the amenity value of these views and prospects with the overriding objective of protecting them. The Planning Authority may, at its discretion, request the submission of a visual impact assessment to include photomontages where it is considered that a proposal would have significant impacts on a view, prospect or landscape of significant value. The scoping and viewpoints to be considered in any such assessment shall be agreed with the Planning Authority.



Protected view of the Railway Viaduct

Objectives

In terms of Architectural Heritage it is an objective of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER OBJ 4: That the following views shall be protected, as illustrated on an associated map:

- VP01 Towards the old Kilcarn Bridge from the new Kilcarn Bridge on the N3 Dublin Road
- VP02 Towards the old Kilcarn Bridge from the N3 Dublin Road, heading south east

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VP03 Towards the Motte and the Railway Viaduct, on the N3 Dublin Road ▪ VP04 Towards the Railway Viaduct, on the N3 Dublin Road, heading south east ▪ VP05 Towards Athlumney Bridge, the Rivermill and the Confluence of the River Blackwater and Boyne, from the N3 ▪ VP06 Towards Athlumney Bridge, the Rivermill and Athlumney Road from Timmons Hill ▪ VP07 Of the Confluence of the River Blackwater and Boyne, from the Viewing Area adjoining the N3 ▪ VP08 Towards Ruxton's Lock at the Ramparts heading east ▪ VP09 Towards Ruxton's Lock at the Ramparts heading west ▪ VP10 Towards the remains of Blackcastle House, from the Ramparts ▪ VP11 Of St. Mary's Church of Ireland from Upper Flower Hill ▪ VP12 Towards the Rivermill and the Railway Viaduct from the ancient Navan - Kells walkway ▪ VP13 Of Darker's Mill along the bank of the Blackwater River from the area of open space on the opposite side of the River along the N3 ▪ VP14 Of the Blackwater River and Weir from Blackwater Bridge looking east ▪ VP15 Towards Spicer's Mill from the proposed Town Park ▪ VP16 Towards the Blackwater Railway Bridge from the northern bank of the Blackwater, west of the proposed Town Park ▪ VP17 Of Athlumney Castle from Convent Lane, heading south east ▪ VP18 Of Athlumney Castle from Convent Lane, heading north west
--

5.2 Archaeological Heritage

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the protection of our archaeological heritage, including the licensing of archaeological excavations, through the exercise of powers under the [National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2004](#).

Monuments are protected under the National Monuments Acts in a number of ways:

- National monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister or a local authority;
- National monuments which are subject to a preservation order;
- Historic monuments or archaeological areas recorded in the Register of Historic Monuments;
- Monuments recorded in the Record of Monuments and Places.

When the owner or occupier of a property, or any other person proposes to carry out, or to cause, or to permit the carrying out of any work at or in relation to a Recorded Monument they are required to give notice in writing to the Minister two months before commencing that work. This is to allow the National Monuments Service time to consider the proposed works and how best to proceed to further the protection of the monument. For national monuments in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister or a local authority or which are subject to a preservation order, the prior written consent of the Minister is required for any works at or in proximity to the monument.

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 Navan 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 Navan and identified a zone of archaeological potential which was included in the 2003-2009 Navan Development Plan and which is included in this plan, please see the relevant map. The significance of Navan from an archaeological viewpoint is without question, the town is a recorded monument in the Record of Monuments and Places, (ME 025-044). Within this area are a number of archaeological sites and monuments. The value and significance of this archaeological heritage is acknowledged by Navan Town Council and Meath County Council and through their policies they seek to ensure the effective protection, conservation and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and their settings.

Policies

In terms of Architectural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council and Navan Town Council:

HER POL 10:

- (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 burgage 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.

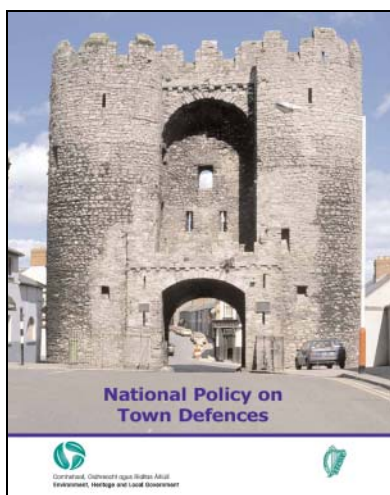
Objectives

In terms of Architectural Heritage it is an objective of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER OBJ 5: When considering development in the vicinity of archaeological monuments, the planning authorities 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.

5.2.1 Town Wall

Extremely little of Navan's town defences remain in place and scholars are not in agreement as to the former wall's exact alignment. It is known that the town was walled to protect it from attack and had three main gated entrances, namely the Trim, Water and Dublin Gates. It is also known that the wall was located within the extent of the currently recognised Navan Town recorded monument and therefore benefits from the archaeological protection that this affords.



The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued a policy directive on Town Defences in November 2008 which states "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.’ Having regard to this the Planning Authorities will impose archaeological monitoring conditions on appropriate developments in the area of the Navan Town monument, including those areas where it is believed the town wall once stood.

5.3 Natural Heritage

Natural heritage composes of native plants, animals and their habitats, geology, landscapes, seascapes and inland waterways. The natural heritage of Navan includes the River Boyne and River Blackwater candidate Special Area of Conservation, trees and hedgerows, and uncultivated grassland. 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. 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.

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 has yet to be adopted at the time of writing.



River Boyne flowing near Blackcastle Demesne, Navan

Policy

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 11: To protect, conserve and enhance the biodiversity and natural heritage of Navan including wildlife (flora & fauna), and particularly all Annex II species, 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 rivers, streams, canals, lakes, and associated wetlands including reed-beds and swamps, ponds, springs, bogs, fens, trees, woodlands and scrub, hedgerows and other boundary types such as stone walls and ditches which occur outside of designated areas providing a network of habitats and corridors essential for wildlife to flourish.

HER POL 12: To use native species wherever possible in Navan Town Council's and Meath County Council's own landscaping work and on Council property.

HER POL 13: To discourage development that would lead to a loss of, or cause damage to, the character, the principal components of, or the setting of parks, gardens and demesnes of special historic interest.

HER POL 14: To protect rivers and stream corridors and valleys by reserving land along their banks for ecological corridors and maintain them free from inappropriate development, and discourage culverting or realignment, unless done for environmental reasons, including flood prevention or flood abatement. The Planning Authority shall consult with the Regional Fisheries Board and other statutory bodies as required by the planning regulations in respect of this and shall have regard to their comments in the making of any planning decision'.

HER POL 15: To require that runoff from a developed area will not result in the deterioration of the quality of downstream watercourses or habitats.

Objectives

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is an objective of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER OBJ 6: To encourage and promote the appropriate management and enhancement of Navan's biodiversity.

HER OBJ 7: To promote an awareness and appreciation of the natural heritage of Navan 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 8: To promote the sustainable usage of the River Boyne for amenity/recreational use including the creation of an urban habitat.

5.3.1 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.



Extent of the River Boyne & River Blackwater cSAC

Protected Species

Biological diversity - or biodiversity - is one of the key terms in conservation, encompassing the richness of life and the diverse patterns it forms. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) defines biological diversity as "the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems".

Species, habitats and ecosystems, the planet's whole natural heritage, is under an ever increasing threat. Many species and habitats are in decline and in some cases their future is endangered. In certain cases irreversible losses have already occurred. For this reason 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. This development plan aims to complement the above by ensuring biodiversity is protected through the planning process.



The Heron is common sight along the River Boyne and River Blackwater

Policies

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 16: To maintain, protect and where possible enhance, the conservation value of the cSAC in Navan and any additional sites that may be proposed for designation during the lifetime of this Plan and to ensure that development within the Navan Development Plan boundary will not give rise to negative impacts on the River Boyne and River Blackwater cSAC outside of the Plan area.

HER POL 17: 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 the River Boyne and River Blackwater candidate Special Area of Conservation.

HER POL18: To require any planning application that proposes development within or adjacent to the area designated as a cSAC 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 19: To permit development in a designated SAC 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 significant adverse effect (such as disturbance, pollution or deterioration of habitat quality) on the protected area.

HER POL 20: 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 21: To ensure that development does not have a significant adverse impact, incapable of satisfactory mitigation, on plant, animal or bird species protected by law.

5.3.2 Habitats and Species Outside Designated Sites

The section above details heritage policies in respect of designated sites, however in Navan 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 protected under the Birds Directive which do not benefit from a Special Protection Area in Navan.

In national terms, protected areas (NHAs, SACs, SPAs, etc.) cover a substantial area, however in the region of 90% of land lies outside of this network. The protected area network essentially comprises of sites which are of national or European importance. Outside of this network, there are many sites or features which are of local nature conservation importance – though information on such areas is frequently limited or non-existent. Apart from such sites of national or local biodiversity importance, it is also necessary to maintain, and where possible enhance, in so far as possible, biodiversity in the broader countryside irrespective of how intensively used it is. Amongst the most important means of providing for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the wider countryside is the planning system.

Many policies and objectives are included in the Plan with a view to protecting biodiversity including non-designated habitats.

Policies

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 22: To ensure that, where possible, proposals for development protect and enhance biodiversity by minimising adverse impacts on existing habitats, (whether designated or not,) and by including mitigation and/or compensation measures.

HER POL 23: To establish ecological corridors within new development which permit the potential movement of wildlife and which include indigenous vegetation and which will link with existing biodiversity features and ecological networks.

HER POL 24: To encourage the use of native tree and hedgerow species in the landscaping of new developments.

HER POL 25: 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 26: To promote the environmentally sensitive management of hedgerows in the town in accordance with best practice guidelines.

5.3.3 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 & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 27: To preserve for the common good all existing public rights of way which contribute to amenity.

HER POL 28: To create new rights of way or extend/enhance existing rights of way in the interest of recreational amenity.

5.3.4 Landscape

The Landscape Character Assessment of the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 identifies Navan in a number of landscape character areas. The Boyne Valley is identified as being of exceptional value while the Blackwater Valley is considered to be of very high value. The North and West Navan Lowlands are only considered to be of moderate value. Development within the Plan area should take cognisance of the special qualities of these landscape and resulting impacts on the landscape. Development shall be of an appropriate design, scale and density that will enhance the landscape and ensure that no adverse impacts on the landscape will be caused. The impact of development on scenic landscapes adjoining the development plan area shall also be taken into account in the design of development. Reference should be made to the landscape character assessment of the Meath County Development Plan 2007 – 2013 which provides a detailed breakdown and guidance for each of the landscape character areas.

Policy

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 29: To maintain and enhance the diverse and high quality landscape in Navan and its environs.

5.3.5 Trees and Woodlands

Navan 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. The most notable group of trees or woodlands in Navan are to be found along the riparian corridor of the River Boyne, and particularly within the curtilage of Blackcastle House. These areas are visually important to the landscape as well as providing significant recreational capacity and important wildlife habitats. These trees, which straddle the banks of the Boyne River provide the perfect backdrop to the scenic view of the river landscape. There are also a considerable number of fine stands and groups of trees within the town, which contribute greatly to its pleasantness, character and visual amenity. Of particular merit are those located within the grounds of institutional buildings such as St. Michael's Loreto Convent, St. Anne's Convent, Meath County Council and Our Lady's Hospital. These stands of trees offer a visual break from the hard landscape often associated with a town centre.

Policies

In terms of Natural Heritage, it is the policy of Meath County Council & Navan Town Council:

HER POL 30: To retain trees and hedgerows of value as illustrated on the relevant map forming part of this development plan.

HER POL 31: 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.