

# Appendix E

## Trim Town Walls Conservation Plan



# CONTENTS

<b>1.00 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>Page 01</b>
1.01 Preamble.....	01
1.02 Terms of Reference.....	02
1.03 The Steering Group.....	02
1.04 The Consultancy Team.....	02
1.05 Legal Status.....	03
1.06 Objectives of the Conservation Plan.....	03
1.07 Methodology.....	03
1.08 Acknowledgements.....	03
<b>2.00 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.....</b>	<b>Page 05</b>
2.01 The Place.....	05
2.02 The Walls.....	06
<b>3.00 A VISION FOR THE WALLS.....</b>	<b>Page 10</b>
<b>4.00 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONUMENT.....</b>	<b>Page 11</b>
4.01 Statement of Significance.....	11
4.02 Threats to Significance.....	12
<b>5.00 GAZETTEER.....</b>	<b>Page 13</b>
5.01 Layout of Walls.....	13
5.02 Zone 1.....	14
5.03 Zone 2.....	15
5.04 Zone 3.....	16
5.05 Zone 4.....	16
5.06 Zone 5.....	17
<b>6.00 CONSERVATION POLICIES.....</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
6.01 Explanation.....	18
6.02 Basis of Approach.....	19

6.03 Relationship between Assessed Level of	
Significance and Policy.....	19
6.04 Management.....	20
6.05 Continuity of Conservation Advice.....	21
6.06 Review of Policies.....	21
6.07 Maintenance, Repair, Remedial Works and	
Associated Health and Safety Issues.....	21
6.08 Archaeology.....	21
6.09 Legislative Framework.....	21
6.10 Access.....	22
6.11 Interpretation.....	22
6.12 Events.....	23
6.13 Interventions and Enhancements.....	24
6.14 Ecology.....	24
6.15 Work to the Walls.....	25

<b>7.00 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>Page 26</b>
-------------------------------	----------------



# 1.00 INTRODUCTION

## 1.01 PREAMBLE

With a few notable exceptions, town walls in Ireland are elusively fragmentary. Trim is the perfect example. On approaching the town for the first time from the north-east, the visitor is immediately struck by the superb Norman castle and the precipitous soaring shard of the Yellow Steeple of St. Mary's Abbey. The only hint of town walls are the squat remains of Sheep Gate and a low wall climbing up through Porch Field extending off to the north, which could just as easily be a field boundary. From the air (Figure 1), more evidence of the existence of town walls can be discerned from property boundaries and undulations in the land surface. Otherwise, elsewhere in the town, virtually all obvious evidence has disappeared, although the line of the walls can sometimes be traced in the shape of the modern town. To the south-west, a significant stretch of the walls, delineating the back boundary of properties fronting onto Watergate Street and Emmet Street survive, although at present lost to sight as result of raised ground levels and heavy over growth. It is in this area that the most



Figure 1: Aerial view of Trim

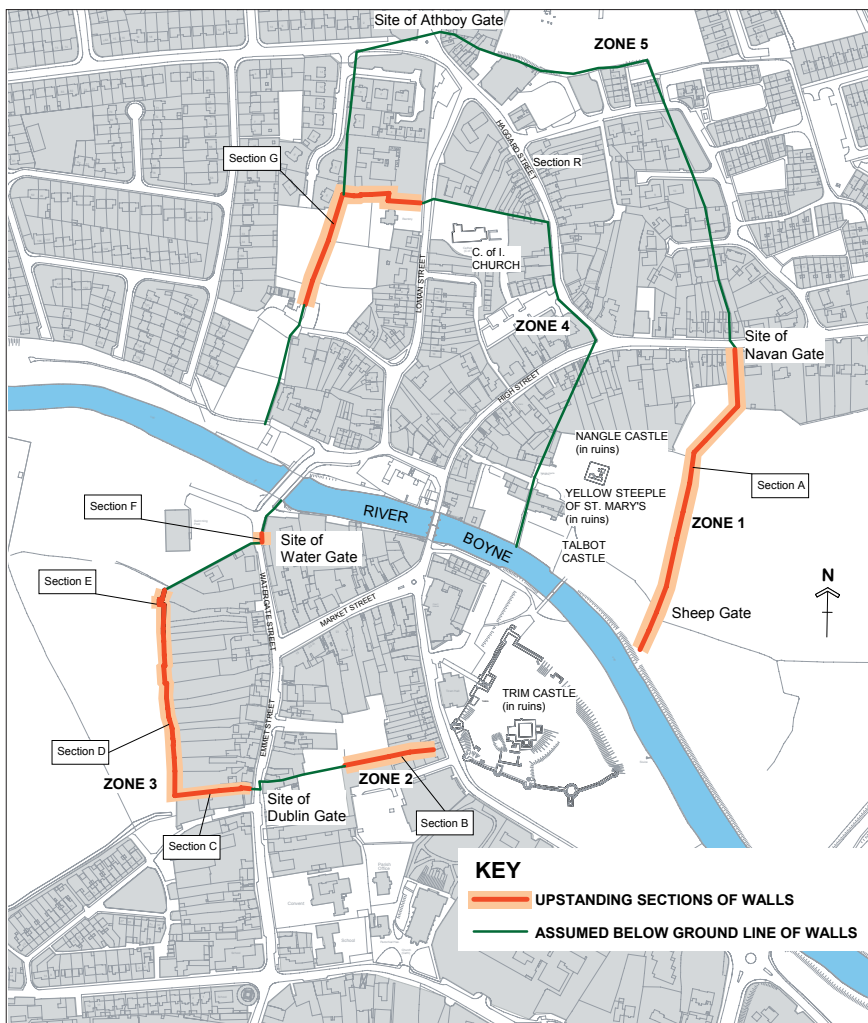


Figure 2: Map of Trim showing upstanding sections of walls

potential resides for developing a greater appreciation of the walls.

In the past, once their original function ceased, the people of Trim clearly placed little importance on their town walls. But times have changed, as evidenced by the numbers attending the public meeting arranged in connection with this Plan, and there is now a concern that no more precious fabric should be lost and what remains should be conserved, understood and cherished for the benefit of future generations.

## 1.02 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Conservation Plan was commissioned by Trim Town Council, working in partnership with the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN). The Plan has been prepared by Alastair Coey Architects, which was appointed in October 2007. The Conservation Plan provides the background to a Management Plan which was commissioned at the same time and is drafted to take into account the policies outlined in this document.

## 1.03 THE STEERING GROUP

The conservation plan was evolved in consultation with a Steering Group consisting of the following people:

- Brian Murphy, Town Clerk, Trim Town Council
- Gerry Lynn, Town Engineer, Trim Town Council
- Councillor Danny O'Brien
- Councillor Ray Butler
- Councillor Phillip Cantwell
- Jill Chadwick, Conservation Officer, Meath County Council
- Loreto Guinan, Heritage Officer, Meath County Council
- Rosanne Meenan, Field Monuments Advisor, Meath County Council
- Louise McKeever, Heritage Office Research Assistant, Meath County Council
- Kevin O'Brien, Office of Public Works
- Ana Dolan, Architect, Office of Public Works
- Dr Geraldine Stout, Archaeologist, Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government
- Dr Michael Potterton, Discovery Programme MME
- David Sweetman, Archaeologist
- Jim Reynolds, Local Historian
- Noel French, Local Historian
- Orla O'Brien, Executive Planner, Forward Planning Department, Meath County Council Planning Department
- Ned Wall, representing Trim residents
- Anne Crinion, representing Trim residents
- Sean Foley, An Taisce Meath and representing Trim residents
- Alastair Coey, Alastair Coey Architects

## 1.04 THE CONSULTANCY TEAM

The team leader was Alastair Coey. Expert opinion was provided by the following team members:

- ARCHAEOLOGY - Claire Walsh, Archaeological Projects Ltd
- ECOLOGY - Paul Murphy, EirEco, Environmental Consultants
- HISTORICAL CONTEXT - Dr Brian Turner

## 1.05 LEGAL STATUS

The remains of Trim Town Walls lie within a Zone of Archaeological Potential, which is a national designation included in the Record of Monuments and Places, conferring protection under the terms of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and the Planning and Development Act 2000. Most importantly, the Acts require that Ministerial Consent be obtained from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government prior to any works to upstanding sections of the Walls which are in Local Authority ownership. Privately owned sections of the Walls are also subject to this requirement, with an exception being made for minor upstanding remains which are deemed to be structurally unrelated to any part which is in Local Authority ownership. Such sections are subject to the normal planning process.

Since work on this Conservation Plan began, a National Policy on Town Defences (Figure 3) has been published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (November 2008). This is greatly welcomed as it '... demonstrates a strong commitment ... towards the protection and conservation of our historic urban defences'

An Archaeological Impact Assessment Report may be required to accompany planning applications within or adjacent to the Zone of Archaeological Protection.

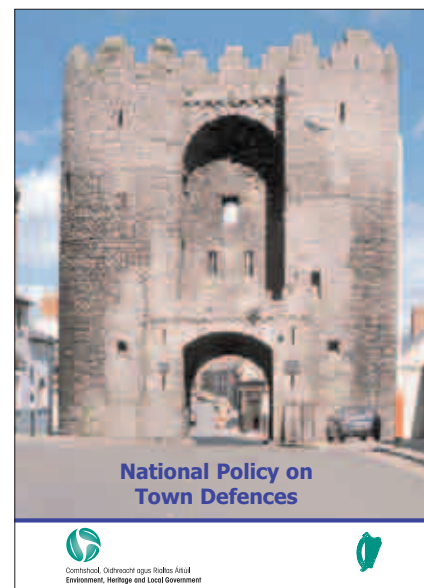


Figure 3: Cover of National Policy Document

## 1.06 OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSERVATION PLAN

The purpose of the Conservation Plan is to identify the significance of Trim Town Walls, the threats to their continuing significance, and to propose policies for the future protection and management of the Walls.

## 1.07 METHODOLOGY

The following methodology was adopted in the preparation of the plan. Each expert was briefed as to the required input in the context of the conservation plan and visited Trim prior to preparation of their focussed reports.

A photographic record was prepared.

A public meeting was held on Wednesday 21 November 2007 in the Castle Arch Hotel, Trim. Members of the public were invited to attend this meeting, through a newspaper advertisement and other media publicity. Elected representatives and other key people were invited by letter. Approximately sixty people attended the meeting. A list of attendees was retained.

Steering Group meetings were held on Monday 12 November and Friday 30 November 2007. At the second meeting the team leader reported on progress and issues emerging from the research were debated and discussed in detail.

## 1.08 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Alastair Coey Architects wish to thank all who contributed to the preparation of this Conservation Plan. The members of the Steering Group gave freely of their time. In particular, we would like to acknowledge the contribution

## 2.00 HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN WALLS OF TRIM

***Unfortunately, the natural processes of monumental decay are dwarfed by the threats posed by the nature of current developments to the structure and the integrity of what survives of Trim's rich medieval inheritance.***

**Michael Potterton**

Medieval Trim (2005, p.348)

### 2.01 THE PLACE

It would be a particularly insensitive visitor to Trim who would not immediately see signs of its particular history, towering from the lower fabric of its more recent centuries. On a rock by the river is one of the largest and most impressive medieval castles in Ireland; on the rising ground of the opposite bank is the jagged ruin of the 'Yellow Steeple' of St Mary's Abbey, still the tallest surviving medieval structure in the country, despite reputed Cromwellian attempts to blow it up; St Patrick's Cathedral, on the highest point, and the probable site of the Early Christian settlement, incorporates a fifteenth century tower; and to remind us of change, continuity, and the association between height and prestige, a statue of the first Duke of Wellington, thought to have been a local by birth and former MP for the town, stands on a massive column erected in 1817, two years after his victory at Waterloo. Behind and below these obvious visual aids lies the story of a town which has played a significant part in the complex history of Ireland.

The town of Trim is on a crossing point of the River Boyne in south-west County Meath, 25 miles north-west of Dublin and about 20 miles from Drogheda, where the Boyne meets the sea. Its surrounding agricultural land is considered to be among the best in Ireland. The town has a population of about 7,000 and is growing rapidly, with a planned target of 15,000 within a few years. (Trim Development Plan, 2002, p.11-12).

The Boyne valley combines well-drained and fertile land with navigable access to the eastern seaboard and is one of the most archaeologically rich and significant areas in north-west Europe. People have been attracted here since prehistoric times, as most clearly illustrated at the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site, Europe's largest and most important concentration of prehistoric megalithic art. Just eight miles east of Trim is the Hill of Tara, associated with the 'high-kingship' of Ireland, and surrounded by a complex of monuments dating back to the Neolithic period. Sites of Early Christian and medieval significance abound throughout the valley, as do the signs of a prosperous agriculturally based economy in succeeding centuries. Trim – Áth Truim, 'Ford of the elder tree' - was near the head of the navigable part of the river, and at an important crossing place. It was a significant settlement even before the foundation of its first church, reputedly by St Lommán in the mid-fifth century. So, long before the arrival of the Anglo-



Figure 4: 1655 Down Survey (National Library of Ireland)



St Patrick's Cathedral



Normans Trim was a strategic location with a rich hinterland.

At the beginning of the Norman colonisation of Ireland Henry II, king of England, granted Hugh de Lacy the palatine lordship of Meath, a vast area stretching from the east coast to the Shannon in which he was expected to organise and exercise most of the powers of a medieval monarch. Trim was at the centre of this area, at a junction of land and water transport. Between 1175 and 1202 de Lacy, and his son Walter, built a castle on the rock beside the ford and made it the head or caput of the lordship (Figure 5). As such the castle was the central military stronghold of the lordship and a massive and intimidating symbol of conquest. As colonisation proceeded it also accommodated the full range of feudal administration necessary for a 'lordship', with its own military, financial, and legal powers.



Figure 5: Conjectural view of Trim, looking north, c.1175 by Uto Hogerzeil

The earliest charter for the town of Trim, clustered outside the castle, dates to 1194, but the urban community had probably been established by Hugh de Lacy before his death in 1186. Towns are important in the development of a society organised beyond the point of subsistence farming. They provide social and economic focus and a place for trade. In the context of the Anglo-Norman colonisation of Ireland these functions required comparative security. So Trim had town walls.

## 2.02 THE WALLS

The basic structure of Trim Castle, with its keep and curtain wall with mural towers, dates from the late twelfth century, although it was modified and strengthened in succeeding centuries. The traceable line of the town wall is over two kilometres long, including a 200 metre section of the castle wall, and encloses an area of about 23 hectares, configured in two roughly rectangular sections, of which the part north of the river is roughly twice the size of that to the south. In total this is of similar size to the walled area of medieval Waterford. North of the river the curving street lines are rather unusual for a planned Anglo-Norman town and may reflect some accommodation with previous boundaries associated with the Early Christian site.

Within the walls the fourteenth century bridge of Trim still stands, but only one of the five gates, Sheep Gate, remains visible in the undeveloped Porch Fields which stretch eastwards to Newtown Trim. Three others,



Sheep Gate



Athboy Gate (north), Navan Gate (east), and Dublin Gate (south) have long disappeared, although the names are still applied to their locations. A fragment of Water Gate (west, Figure 6), survives in a whitewashed wall by the modern roadside.

Some town defences may have been in place in the twelfth century but, as stated by Michael Potterton: *'The earliest known evidence for the walling of Trim dates to January 1290 when Geoffrey de Geneville was given a seven-year grant to impose customs on goods coming into Trim in aid of enclosing the town 'for the greater security of Ireland'.* (2005, p.168)

Trim was not only defending itself and the settlers in its region, but was also a key to the security of the whole Anglo-Norman enterprise in Ireland.



Figure 7: Conjectural view of Trim, looking south-east, c.1400

Further murage grants followed as Trim held its place as a strong point of the colonial settlement which was under attack from the Irish 'malicious rebels and enemies', and as the central town in which 'all the fideles of Meath congregated'. In 1407 Henry IV 'granted a charter confirming the rights and liberties of the portreeve and burgesses, including the entitlement of the portreeve to collect duties such as murage, pontage, lastage, and quayage' (Potterton, 2005, p.169), that is, for walls, bridges, the right to move goods, and for quays. Although not always effectively administered, the continued concern for collection of taxes to repair the town walls and to pave and drain its streets emphasises the distinction of the medieval town of Trim within its surrounding social and economic landscape.

By the mid-seventeenth century the walls had been allowed to decay but in 1689, in the build-up to the Williamite Wars, the urgency of defence returned and the inhabitants were ordered to work for six days on repairing the walls. A hundred years later commentators were remarking simply on elements of the defences 'which still remain', and by 1861 Richard Butler wrote about the places where 'the town wall may be traced'.

For three hundred years it appears that the walls of Trim have passed from the consciousness of its people. Everything from workshops to grass clippings have been piled against it; back entrances have been cut through it; neglect and vegetation have collapsed it; and its stones have been quarried for other uses. Despite the fact that the Trim town walls are a national monument and the subject of a Preservation Order, some

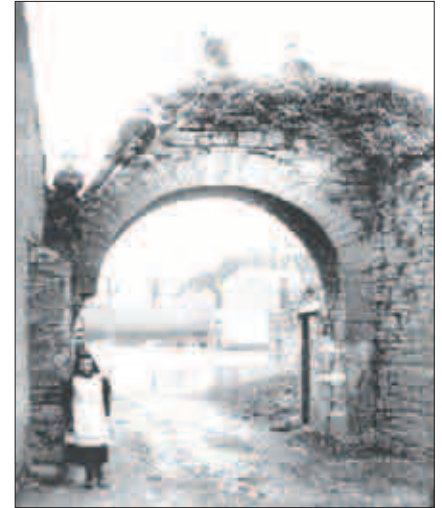


Figure 6: Westgate in the nineteenth century



Materials piled against walls



Figure 8: 'View of Trim', looking west c. 1780

archaeological investigation, and an impression that local goodwill exists in respect of their proposed conservation, the various agencies involved have not yet managed to present them as a feature of the town which would be obvious to an enquiring visitor.

Nevertheless, the line of Trim town walls can be traced over a substantial portion of their length. On the east side the ruin of the wall, including the remnants of the Sheep Gate, is clearly visible in the Porch Fields, running from Navan Gate Street to the river. On the south side, and at the south-west corner, there are substantial sections standing up to 4 metres high. All along the western side, south of the river, the line is clear although the extent of surviving wall, and associated ditch and towers, is completely obscured by vigorous but neglected vegetation. North of the river another upstanding section survives behind the Church of Ireland rectory, running south to Crowpark House. Modern building in the north-eastern quadrant seems to have obliterated most of the previous topography but both an existing ditch and bank, and the townland boundary, may be suggestive as to the line of the defences. Without considerable clearance of vegetation and other obstructions it is not possible to make an estimation of the precise



Figure 9: Ordnance Survey 1837

form of the walls nor of the degree to which the surviving wall has been subject to repair or renewal in the past.

The importance of walls around medieval towns such as Trim may be pictured by imagining these towns as islands within a sea of landscape which might have many and changeable moods. From the point of view of both colonised and coloniser they were engines of aggression and control. In social and economic terms they provided a link between the countryside and the wider world. They were intended not only to provide a military base but a secure environment for trade and for industry, and comparatively comfortable living conditions which would attract merchants and others with money and resources. In that context the walls were not only a defensive structure but a clear boundary between the 'wildwood' outside, and the, at least in theory, regulated and controlled environment within. In the case of Trim it was one of the most important of such towns in Ireland as the centre of the extensive twelfth century grant to Hugh de Lacy, and as the major north-western defence of the Pale during the Irish resurgence of the later medieval period.

The Trim Town Centre Local Area Plan, adopted by both Trim Town Council and Meath County Council in 2004, demonstrates awareness of the important challenges and opportunities presented by the town walls, and states:

*'It is an objective of this Local Area Plan to preserve and enhance the site of the medieval town wall of Trim, by methods agreed with the Planning Authority and DoEHLG..' (p.17).*

Trim is fortunate in the opportunities which exist to make its medieval walls both visible and accessible. The long stretch from Navan Gate Street to Sheep Gate is in an open area in public ownership which can both be seen from a distance and be examined closely, and also understood in visible relationship to the castle. South of the river the whole western side preserves the boundaries of medieval burgage plots inside the wall, while outside the wall the major building work currently taking place on the town centre expansion, including a new headquarters building for the Office of Public Works, provides an obvious opportunity to restore the walls as a showpiece project. This could be of social, educational, and economic value in a national context and, with careful consideration, might well be achieved within the resources already allocated to overall development in this area.

At present Trim makes an immediate impact with its castle guarding the river and medieval bridge. Its other monuments add to the feeling of this being a place with a very particular history, which can be related both to Ireland and to a formative period in the development of western Europe. However, it is the restoration and public interpretation of the walls which would return a sense of coherence and identity to the historic core. This would help both inhabitants and visitors to understand and take pride in their town as an evolving place rather than a scattered collection of monuments around which modern building is taking place.



Figure 10: Market Street, looking east, c. 1900 (Lawrence Collection)



Figure 11: Trim, looking south-east, c. 1900 (Lawrence Collection)



## 3.00 A VISION FOR THE MONUMENT

**The remains of Trim town walls will be preserved in perpetuity for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors alike. The Monument will be maintained to the highest possible conservation standards and will be accessible to all.**

This vision has been evolved by the Steering Group after consideration of the issues highlighted during the course of the consultation process.

In order for the Conservation Plan to become an effective tool in the delivery of this vision a number of actions need to be prioritised. Most important is establishing a clear and strong executive management structure for the future care of the Monument. Closely associated with this will be acceptance and implementation of the guidelines contained in the Management Plan which has been prepared in parallel with the Conservation Plan. Finally the method of resourcing the implications of both documents will need to be resolved.

## 4.00 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MONUMENT

The general approach to assessing the nature of the significance of Trim's town walls (The Monument) is adapted from that set out in *The Conservation Plan* by James Semple Kerr. It relies on an understanding of the physical attributes, uses, relationships and associations of the place up to and including the present.

### 4.01 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1. Trim was a principal strategic settlement in the Anglo-Norman conquest and colonisation of Ireland. Its massive castle and associated town walls are national monuments and protected structures. Not only did the walls provide a defence function but also served as field and townland boundaries far beyond their original thirteenth century function.
2. Trim stands at the heart some of the best agricultural land in Ireland, at the junction of ancient east-west and north-south land routes, and it takes its name, Áth Truim, 'Ford of the elder tree', from its position at a crossing point of the River Boyne, still navigable in flat-bottomed boats, some twenty miles inland from the Irish Sea. It has been a significant place throughout recorded history, and is designated as a 'Heritage Town.'
3. The line of Trim town walls surrounds the several upstanding medieval structures which are immediately obvious to the visitor. The surviving medieval street pattern and burgage plots are best understood by residents, visitors and planners, in relation to the defensive walls within which they were situated.
4. Trim's status, granted in 1172 by Henry II to Hugh de Lacy, whose family can be traced to Lassy in Normandy, provides an excellent educational opportunity to demonstrate its connection to an important period in the development of western Europe as a whole. The Anglo-Norman surnames, for example, Sweetman, Wall, Peppard and Roche, borne by a significant proportion of the modern residents of the area provide a tangible link with this aspect of medieval history.
5. Major twenty-first century investment in the conservation of Trim castle, as the caput (headquarters or capital) of a major palatinate lordship, the site of medieval parliaments, and of a visit from King John in 1210, will be enhanced by placing it in the visible context of its attached medieval town, defined, bounded and identified by its surrounding walls.
6. Conservation of the town walls will enable further archaeological investigation in a place of national historical significance, providing evidence for many aspects of social life and history from a formative period in Irish history.
7. Conservation of Trim town walls as a visible mark of identity and civic

pride is a necessary step in representing the town as a distinctive and desirable place of residence and a destination for visitors, with associated opportunities for economic and social benefit.

## **4.02 THREATS TO WALLS AND THEIR CONTINUING SURVIVAL**

The principal threats to the contextual significance of the Monument are:

1. Lack of knowledge and failure to appreciate the asset.
2. Incremental degradation of the historic fabric as a result of natural weathering and erosion, vegetation and mechanical damage caused by traffic and other uses.
3. Neglect or inappropriate management and maintenance regimes.
4. Inappropriate development which may have adverse visual and other impacts upon its setting.
5. Failure to grasp opportunities to open up and explore the walls.
6. Loss of potentially important open space adjacent to the walls.
7. Vandalism and anti-social behaviour resulting in physical damage and under-use.
8. Inappropriate modern interventions such as street furniture including seating, signage and railings.
9. Safety and health statutory requirements which might compromise authenticity.



## 5.00 GAZETTEER

### 5.01 LAYOUT OF THE WALLS

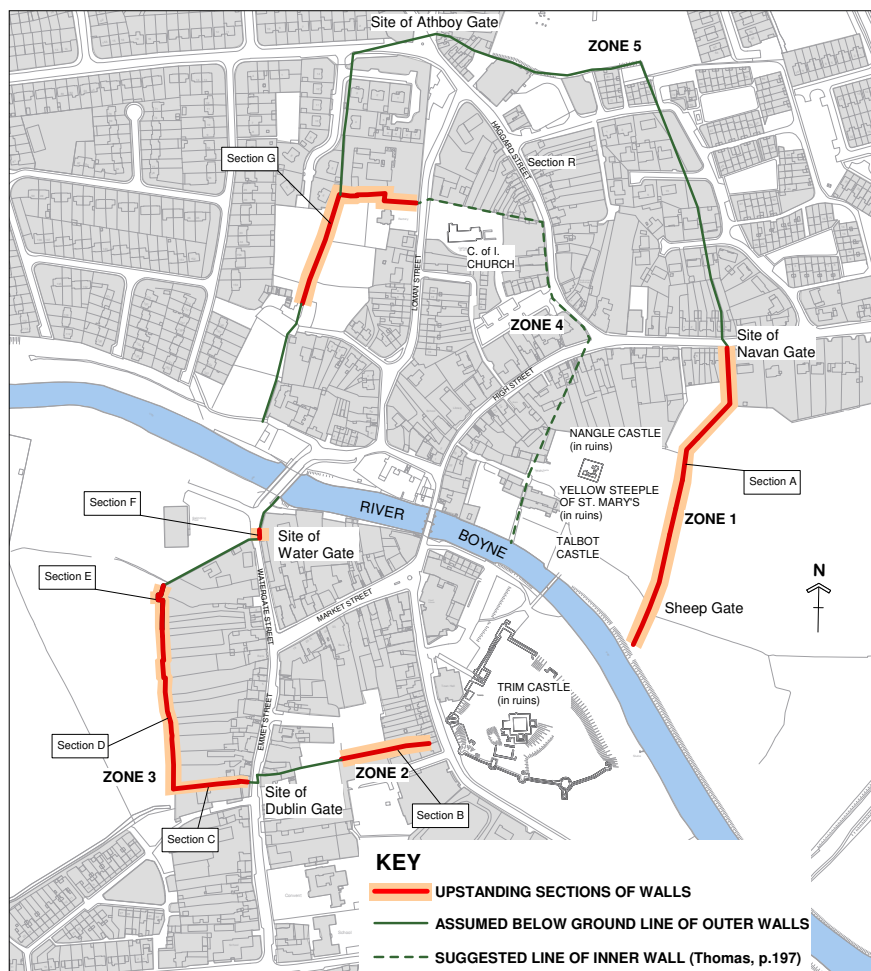


Figure 12: Layout of Walls

'The Monument' means not only the town walls but also adjoining land and property and associated below-ground archaeology which form its setting. For clarity and ease of reference, the layout of the Monument is deemed to form an elongated rectangle with longer east and west sides with an internal area of 23 hectares and a perimeter of 2400 metres. The River Boyne runs through the enclosed town from north-west to south-east. The fortifications of Trim Castle occupy the south-east corner. The line of Castle Street, Bridge Street, High Street and Navan Gate Street arcs in a 'C' shape from the west side of the castle to the site of Navan Gate to the north-east. On the west side of the town, Emmet Street extends northwards to Watertown Street, to the site of Water Gate and across the river at Watertown Bridge, where it turns eastwards into Mill Lane and then north along St Loman Street, which joins Haggard Street, for a short distance, before reaching the site of Athboy Gate on the north side. These two principal south-north routes are linked, on the south side of the river, by a new west-east street from Emmet Street to Castle Street and by Market Street from Watertown Street, to Castle Street. On the north side of the river, Mill Street and Haggard Street link the routes.



View north-west from footbridge towards Trim bridge



Trim Castle from Castle Street with Yellow Steeple to right



Side of Athboy Gate at junction of Kildalkey Road, Haggard Street and Kells Road from the south-east

For clarity and ease of reference, the line of the original walls has been sub-divided into five discrete zones as follows:

- Zone 1 - Navan Gate Street (site of Navan Gate) to north bank of River Boyne opposite Trim Castle
- Zone 2 - Castle Street (at western edge of Trim Castle) to Emmet Street
- Zone 3 - Emmet Street to south bank of River Boyne at Watergate Bridge
- Zone 4 - North bank of River Boyne at Mill Lane to north bank of River Boyne opposite Frenche's Lane
- Zone 5 - North extension of the enclosure from the south-east corner of the former Rectory on Loman's Street to Navan Gate Street (site of Navan Gate).

Within each zone, the upstanding remains of the town walls have been identified as sections A - G on the location plan (see figure 12). The internal and external faces of each section are sub-divided into numbered sub-sections pre-fixed either 'I' or 'E' to indicate either 'internal' or 'external' face. This numbering system is applied consistently throughout the Management Plan and should be used in referencing all future work in connection with the Monument.

For the purposes of this Gazetteer, the outer circuit commences and ends at Navan Gate Street to the north of Porch Field and is conducted in a clockwise direction. The inverted 'U' shape of Zone 4 forms the inner north circuit.

The surviving remains of the walls are generally constructed in uncoursed, locally-quarried, rubble shale. With the exception of Sheep Gate, no evidence of dressed or ashlar stone was discovered.

The Gazetteer describes the Monument as it existed in November 2007.

## 5.02 ZONE 1

Zone 1 commences at Navan Gate Street, at the site of Navan Gate, of which no evidence remains.

Section A extends southwards between an end-terrace house at 1 High Street to the west and a detached villa to the east, on Navan Gate Street. Although there is a rubble stone wall on this line, it does not appear to be associated with the original town wall.

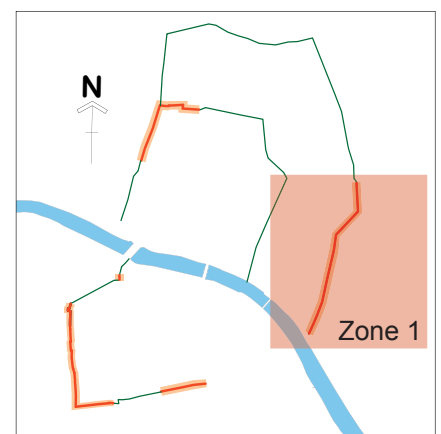
The squat and heavily overgrown upstanding remains of the wall appear at this point as the line dog-legs to the south-west for a straight stretch to



View north-east towards Zone 1 and Yellow Steeple from Trim Castle



View north to Talbot Castle and Yellow Steeple



meet the south-east end of the rear boundary of properties fronting onto High Street. From here, it extends southwards, forming the east boundary of the grounds of the yellow steeple of St. Mary's Abbey, with extensive pasture land to either side. An opening has been formed in the centre of this stretch, linking the two. The landscape in this area is almost exactly as it was during Medieval times.

A set of square cement-rendered gate piers, carrying a five-bar agricultural gate, is located immediately to the north of Sheep Gate.



View north towards site of Navan Gate on Navan Gate Street



View north, Section A



Opening, Section A



View south towards Sheep Gate with Trim Castle to right and Catholic Church to left



View east towards Sheep Gate from foot bridge



View north towards build-up arch. Yellow Steeple in background

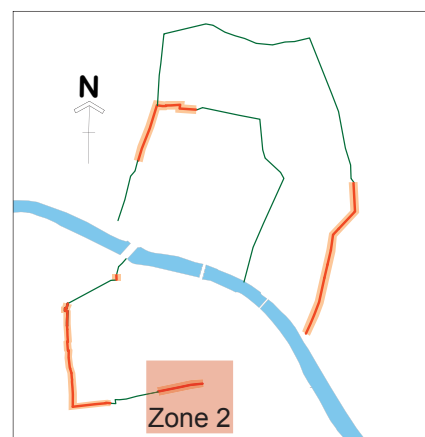
Section A then reaches Sheep Gate, probably a postern serving the Augustinian monastery. Although heavily restored, it is of considerable importance as it is the only surviving town wall gate. It is rectangular on plan with a central archway. The upper reaches have completely disappeared, and it is unclear why the gate is extra-mural with vulnerable loops and a built-up segmental-headed arch on its south side, both apparently outside the wall.

To the south, the wall appears just above ground level, extending southwards and disappearing beyond a public path which intersects it, before reaching the north bank of the river. It is not known how the river gap between the town wall, on the north bank and the castle on the south, was defended.

### 5.03 ZONE 2

Zone 2 extends westwards, as Section B, from the boundary between 10 and 11 Castle Street. The eastern end of the internal north side faces into the long, narrow, private garden of 10 Castle Street and, the outside, into the grounds of a medical centre. The western end has public car parking to both north and south sides.

The line of the wall then continues below-ground under the courtyard of a new commercial development (marked incongruously by two parallel metal





strips resembling railway tracks, set in concrete-block paving) to terminate in the north wall of a tall L-shaped rubble stone warehouse building, at the site of Dublin Gate.



External face of town wall at car park. Trim Castle to east

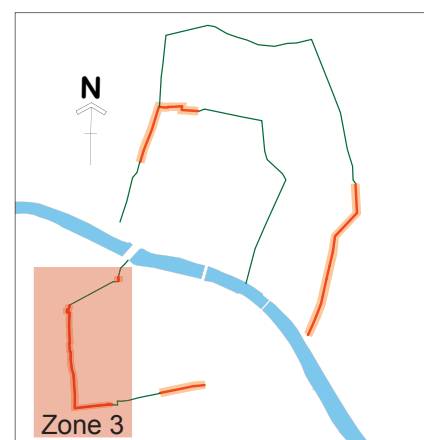


Line of wall delineated in paving at commercial development

## 5.04 ZONE 3

The first leg of Zone 3 (Section C) extends from the site of Dublin Gate to the south-west corner (the site of a tower now disappeared). Here, the upstanding remains are substantial and reasonably intact, being bounded on the internal, north, side by the rear grounds of commercial premises and, on the external, south, side by a builders' merchants.

The second leg (Section D) extends northwards, forming the rear boundary to the long narrow back gardens of properties fronting onto Emmet Street and Watergate Street. Here, while the line of the walls can be clearly seen, an overburden of vegetation effectively conceals virtually all upstanding masonry. To its north end is a knoll, Section E, which contains the outline of a small square tower.



Section C from builders' merchant's yard



Construction site to west of town wall



View to east from knoll (Section E) towards Yellow Steeple

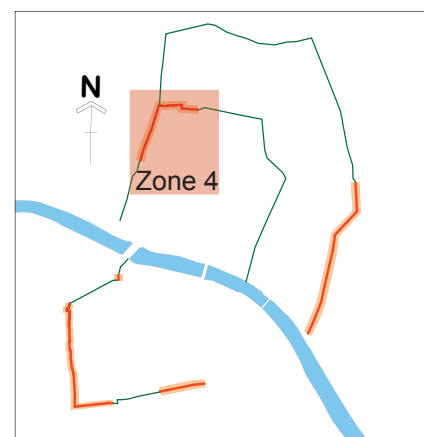
The third leg turns north-eastwards forming the southern boundary of swimming pool grounds and the northern boundary of a service station. All above-ground evidence of the wall has been lost here.

The line of the wall crosses Watergate Street, at the site of Water Gate, where it turns northwards and appears to remain upstanding in a whitewashed length of rubble stone walling which extends towards the south bank of the river (Section F).

## 5.05 ZONE 4

Zone 4 forms an inverted 'U' extending from the north bank of the River Boyne at Mill Lane to the north bank, opposite Frenche's Lane.

The first part of the straight western leg between the river bank, Mill Lane



and Sarsfield Avenue is no longer visible, having long since been absorbed into mill buildings which themselves have since disappeared. It is, however, possible that some fragments may remain in the boundary between the east and west sides of the line of the wall. Upstanding Section G extends northwards from Crowpark House, forming the boundary between the rear garden to Crowpark House to the west and a number of grass open spaces behind St Loman's Street to the east. It then turns at the south-west corner of the grounds of the former rectory (now a school) to disappear once more at St Loman's Street.

From here, the line of the wall appears to have formed the northern boundary of St Patrick's Church of Ireland cathedral, travelling eastwards and steeply down-hill, until it reached Haggard Street where it turned southwards once again to cross High Street and pass through the grounds of Nangle Castle and Talbot's Castle, to reach the riverbank.



Crowpark House from east



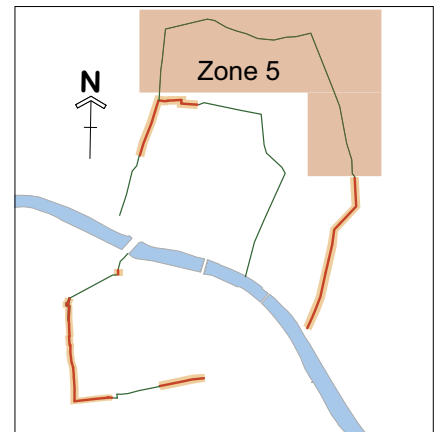
Former rectory on St Loman's Street



St Patrick's Church of Ireland from south

## 5.06 ZONE 5

The line of Zone 5 also adopts an inverted 'U' and its precise route can only be surmised. The western leg seems to have passed along the rear boundary of the rectory grounds before turning eastwards to Athboy Gate (the line of the wall here has been delineated, following archaeological excavation, in concrete-block paving, on the macadamed carriageway). From here, the wall continued eastwards before turning south to the site of Navan Gate. In this final leg, mounds between the rear gardens of properties fronting Griffen Park and Navan Gate Street (Section R) possibly indicate the line of the wall.



View north along St Loman's Street towards Haggard Street and site of Athboy Gate



Granite setts in pavement marking site of Athboy Gate

## 6.00 CONSERVATION POLICIES

### 6.01 EXPLANATION

The purpose of the conservation policies is to provide a guide for the future development and management of Trim's town walls, both above and below ground, taking into account practical requirements for use as well as the retention of significance.

The policies are framed to:

- be flexible enough to facilitate the continued amenity of the Monument;
- retain or complement the character and quality of the existing structures when planning repairs, adaptations or development;
- identify existing or future patterns of development which might adversely affect the Monument and which might be in need of modification;
- inform the future development outside the existing boundaries of the town walls (both material and non-material), which could affect its continued significance;
- emphasise the need to include conservation advice within the decision-making process of future developments.

The recommended policies are colour highlighted. They are preceded by the information on which the policies are based and, where thought appropriate, are followed by examples of treatment or options following from the policies. Policies should be read in conjunction with the accompanying text.

The first section covers policies with a general application. The sequence of following sections is not in a particular order of importance.

The following definitions are taken from the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (a copy of 'the Burra Charter' is included in the Management Plan):

**Fabric** means all physical material of the place.

**Conservation** means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may, according to its circumstance, include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

**Maintenance** means the continuous protective care of the fabric, contents and setting of a place, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction and it should be treated accordingly.

**Restoration** means returning the existing fabric of a site to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the addition of new material.

**Reconstruction** means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or



old) into the fabric. This is not to be confused with either re-creation or conjectural reconstruction, which are outside the scope of the Charter.

**Adaptation** means modifying a place to suit proposed compatible uses.

**Compatible use** means a use which involves no change to the culturally significant fabric, changes which are substantially reversible, or changes which require a minimal impact.

## 6.02 BASIS OF APPROACH

The current legislative position contained in the National Monuments Acts (and associated planning legislation) under-pins all policies contained in this Conservation Plan. In addition, the Burra Charter is a useful general guide to the conservation and protection of places such as Trim's town walls. It provides a philosophical framework that can be flexible and recognises the need for the continued development that is associated with continuing occupation of a site. The Burra Charter is published by ICOMOS, a non-governmental organisation whose mandate is to seek to protect the world's cultural heritage.

Application of policies 01 to 38 will help achieve consistency and continuity of approach.

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Policy 01 | The future conservation and development of the Monument will be guided by relevant legislation and the principles of the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) as revised 1999. |
| Policy 02 | The Statement of Significance and the assessments of individual items contained in more detail in this section will be accepted as the basis for future planning and work.   |
| Policy 03 | The policies recommended and options discussed throughout this document will be a guide to planning of future work on the Monument.  |
| Policy 04 | A note stating the existence of the Conservation Plan should be appended to the existing statutory designations of the place.  |

## 6.03 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSESSED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AND POLICY

In general, the greater the level of significance of a part of the Monument, the more care is needed in planning its future treatment. Specific significance grading of each section is beyond the scope of this conservation plan. Significance will change with time as alterations are made, original fabric is lost, and new information is unearthed. However, it is important that the significance of the entire circuit of the walls as a single entity should also be appreciated. The intention should always be to retain and, where appropriate, reinforce significance - including character, quality and ability to reveal past history.

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Policy 05 | The more significant a fabric, relationship, space or vista, the more care should be taken in planning work which may affect it, so that the work will not reduce, and may reinforce, its |
|-----------|---|

significance.

- Policy 06 Where some reduction of significance is necessary to achieve overall conservation objectives, alternatives should be tested using a risk impact assessment methodology to reveal the least damaging approach and mitigate adverse impacts. In general, the alternative involving least alteration of the fabric is preferable.

## 6.04 MANAGEMENT

Without pro-active monitoring, the Conservation Plan will be ineffective. A properly functioning management group will therefore be essential to the co-ordinated management of the Monument and to encouraging wider participation of stakeholders in future developments. Implementation of the policies contained in the Conservation Plan can only be successfully achieved if progress is monitored on an ongoing basis by such a group of individuals familiar with the policies and committed to their implementation. Where relevant, the group should also be responsible for setting out timescales for delivery of policies. The group should be convened under the aegis of Meath County Council. A formal structure and terms of reference for the management group would be determined by a focus group representing the key stakeholders.

In addition to representatives of Trim Town Council and Meath County Council, the management group should ideally include in its membership representatives of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, The Office of Public Works and the Meath Archaeological and Historical Society. The management group might appoint representatives of other groups and organisations as might seem appropriate. Needless to say, it is important that the management group be afforded sufficient recognition, otherwise its comments and reports will not be acted upon. As part of its remit, the Group should ensure periodic referral with the wider group of stakeholders.

The impact of proposals which fall outside the development control framework, for example alterations to traffic routes, hard surfacing, open spaces and buildings within the immediate vicinity of the Monument should be subjected to scrutiny by the management group.

- Policy 07 A Management Group shall be established and shall meet periodically to review and update the Conservation Plan and the Management Plan.

There is at present no written policy for holistic management and upkeep of the Monument. A management plan was commissioned concurrently with the Conservation Plan. Its purpose is to set out procedures which will ensure that policies contained in the Conservation Plan are implemented in an appropriate and consistent manner.

- Policy 08 A Management Plan shall be prepared to provide guidance for such matters as the ongoing maintenance, conservation and repair of the Monument and for the organisation of events.

- Policy 09 A warden system, incorporated into the current neighbourhood scheme, should be introduced for supervision of the Monument in daytime.

## 6.05 CONTINUITY OF CONSERVATION ADVICE

Irreparable damage can be caused to historic monuments by inexperienced or inadequate professional advice. Implementation of the recommendations contained within this Conservation Plan can only be successfully achieved if progress is monitored on an ongoing basis by a range of individuals familiar with the policies and committed to their implementation.

- Policy 10 Appropriately qualified and experienced conservation advisers should be engaged in the consideration and execution of any proposals.

## 6.06 REVIEW OF POLICIES

The policies contained in this Conservation Plan will need adjustment to meet unforeseen circumstances and in response to developing needs.

- Policy 11 This Plan, and the policies in it, should be reviewed two years in advance of the publication of a new Town Development Plan, or as the need arises, but not later than five years after their initial acceptance by the Steering Group. Procedures for review mechanisms should be established by the bodies responsible for the implementation of the Plan. Meath County Council will reconvene a meeting of the Steering Group for this purpose.

## 6.07 MAINTENANCE, REPAIR, REMEDIAL WORKS AND ASSOCIATED HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Systematic, regular maintenance and prompt minor remedial works will ensure that the upstanding remains of the Monument will continue to stand for the foreseeable future. The Management Plan sets out clear guidance for maintenance and repair procedures.

- Policy 12 The value of preventive maintenance should be promoted and best practice in repair should be demonstrated in all work to the Monument through rigorous implementation of the Management Plan.

## 6.08 ARCHAEOLOGY

A detailed archaeological appraisal is included in the associated Management Plan.

- Policy 13 Any ground work taking place within the immediate vicinity of the Monument must comply with all statutory requirements.
- Policy 14 All extant archaeological records shall be collated and archived in a suitably-located dedicated Monument archive, possibly located in the town library.

## 6.09 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The planning authority will undoubtedly fulfil a key role in ensuring the successful implementation of this Conservation Plan.

The following documents provide the relevant statutory framework within which all planning decisions which might have a bearing on the Monument are made:

- Draft Trim Development Plan 2008 and 2014
- Trim Town Centre Local Area Plan 2004 - 2009
- Meath County Development Plan 2007 - 2013
- County Meath Heritage Plan 2007 - 2011
- National Monuments Acts 1930-2004
- Planning and Developments Acts 2000-2006.

With the exception of the northern portions (Zone 5, Figure 12) the Monument lies within the Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area. The Porch Field Conservation Area extends westwards from Zone 1. The south-west portion (Zone 3, Figure 12) is subject to a Preservation Order. The impact of development on the Monument is not restricted to the streets and spaces in its immediate vicinity. The fact that there are, in some locations, expansive views out from the walls to the surrounding landscape and, in others, views towards the Monument from more distant locations such as the approach from the north-east, means that these also need be taken into account. Important views, aspects and vistas will need to be identified and then cherished and preserved.

**Policy 15** The impact of all new developments should be fully considered and, where these impact on the Monument and its setting, should not be permitted unless a compelling case is presented.

## 6.10 ACCESS

Almost by definition, appreciation of the Monument is a three-dimensional experience - from without, within and above (the Castle ramparts). Each experience is different and affords radically distinctive perspectives which should be available, in as far as is practicable, to all.

**Policy 16** An inclusive approach to access to the Monument shall be adopted which will permit enjoyment of it by all including those with disability.

**Policy 17** A signage strategy providing clear directional guidance to the Monument from town car parks and the Castle shall be implemented.

## 6.11 INTERPRETATION

Interpretation is central to how the visitor experiences an attraction. Good interpretation will leave the visitor with a feeling of attachment, stimulation and inspiration. Therefore the Monument must be represented in a way that the visitor can relate to and enjoy for the attraction to be a success. Interpretation should be designed to be readily understood while being historically balanced and without bias. Physical interpretation is by no means the only method of interpreting the walls. The use of good quality audio devices should also be developed. These have the added advantage of providing a facility to communicate effectively with non-English speaking and visually impaired visitors. Specially prepared material designed to appeal to children should also be available.

**Policy 18** The Monument should not be interpreted in isolation, rather, all interpretation should strive to place historical events



- pertinent to the town in the wider context of Irish, British and European history.
- Policy 19 A range of interpretation media should be designed to be relevant to a wide range of age and ability.
- Policy 20 Audio interpretation should, where feasible, be available in multiple language format.

Interpretation panels are subject to weathering, vandalism and inadvertent mechanical damage. Therefore they need to be of robust construction while being visually appealing, readily cleaned, easily read and appropriate to their setting. It should also be possible to replace damaged or out-dated panels with the minimum of inconvenience. Generally, fixing of panels directly to the historic fabric of the Monument should be avoided. All fixings should be of corrosion-resistant materials.

None of the foregoing should overrule the basic requirement for high standards of design to be achieved in the design of interpretation materials and the need for design proposals to be subject to rigorous external assessment.

- Policy 21 Interpretation panels, and other displays, should be designed to high standards which should be subjected to appropriate expert assessment of design and content before approval is given to installation. All interpretation panels and displays should be freestanding unless otherwise approved by the Management Group.

## 6.12 EVENTS

The open area to the north bank of the Boyne between Sheep Gate and the ring road is, potentially, an ideal location for public events with the walls and castle as a backdrop. Events should be regarded as a positive and essential aspect in assisting to highlight the importance of the town walls and will assist in enlivening their environment. An imaginative programme of events, as diverse as fireworks displays and festivals, could be developed and co-ordinated by the Town Council.

The Management Plan will contain guidance, procedures and controls to allow events to be considered in a holistic manner. It will address issues such as impact on residents and businesses not directly involved, crowd control, traffic management, marshalling, capacity calculation, clean-up methodology, health and safety issues, minimising physical damage to the Monument and disaster planning.

It will also be necessary to provide adequate infrastructural services such as mains water and electrical supplies to facilitate the development of events.

- Policy 22 The Monument should be positively promoted as the focus for a range of events organised by the Town Council.
- Policy 23 Events should only be permitted when a fully developed Event Management Plan has been approved by the Management Group or its nominated representative.

## 6.13 INTERVENTIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS

Incremental changes, often of an apparently minor nature and well-intentioned, often accumulate and, ultimately, can effectively result in the loss of original significance.

Nevertheless an opportunity presently exists to expose, consolidate and enhance the western extent of the walls to the rear of Watergate Street and Emmet Street. If this area were to be developed as a linear park, extending from the site of Water Gate to the north to the site of Dublin Gate to the south, it would greatly enhance the amenity of this area.

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Policy 24 | All proposed enhancements and interventions to the Monument should be submitted to the Management Group before issuing approval unless conforming to a previously agreed format outlined in the Management Plan. |
| Policy 25 | A linear park should be developed to highlight the western side of the Monument.   |
| Policy 26 | All interventions should be designed to be fully reversible in accordance with best conservation practice.   |
| Policy 27 | All interventions should be designed to a high standard utilising good quality and durable materials.  |
| Policy 28 | A palette of natural paving materials should be selected for use, where appropriate, around the Monument.  |
| Policy 29 | A programme for installation of high quality street furniture should be prepared for use in appropriate locations around the Monument.   |
| Policy 30 | A guided walk, appropriately way-marked should be devised to include the walls and other places of interest in the town.   |

Artificial lighting should be used to enhance the Monument and to improve security at night. As a general rule, new light fittings should be installed at a distance from the Monument either mounted on buildings or in appropriately-designed ground locations.

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Policy 31 | A lighting strategy should be devised which will involve minimal physical impact on the Monument while providing levels of illumination which will engender a sense of safety. |
|-----------|--|

## 6.14 ECOLOGY

The biological interests associated with the Monument are currently limited. The masonry walls do however offer the potential to support a diverse but typical wall plant community which is of benefit for wildlife and attractive to visitors.

In a number of locations rampant weed growth is causing physical damage to the masonry walls.

A detailed ecological appraisal is included in the associated Management Plan.

- Policy 32 Guidance should be included in the Management Plan that will ensure existing ecological and wildlife interests are identified, managed and protected in an appropriate manner.

## 6.15 WORK TO THE WALLS

Historic fabric once lost cannot be replaced. Sadly, ill-informed restoration in the past has led to the loss of some significance of the Monument. It is important that, in its future management, a scrupulous approach is taken to all conservation work. This should include measures such as researching the composition of original mortar mixes. Likewise, sources for replacement stone should be carefully researched. Written justification for the approach to be adopted should be prepared for all future work to the Monument.

Recording of the relevant section of the Monument, prior to any work being carried out, should be conducted in line with accepted best practice and in accordance with the procedures for the recording of monuments set out by the DoEHLG and the Office of Public Works. Original records should be kept in a safe place.

- Policy 33 Relevant sections of the Monument must be recorded before alteration or major intervention.
- Policy 34 All work likely to affect the appearance of the Monument should be submitted to the Management Group for consideration and approval.
- Policy 35 All work likely to impinge upon the Monument should be subjected to full archaeological assessment and shall comply fully with current regulations and best practice.
- Policy 36 Only appropriately qualified professionals and tradespersons should be permitted to work on the Monument.
- Policy 37 All work to the Monument shall be carried out in accordance with best conservation practice.
- Policy 38 All work to the Monument should be recorded in a suitable and consistent format and records should be deposited for safe keeping in an appropriate archive.

## 7.00 BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Kerr, James Semple**, *The Conservation Plan*, (National Trust of Australia, 1985)

**Hennessy, Mark**, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas No.14: Trim*, (Dublin, 2004)

**Potterton, Michael**, *Medieval Trim*, (Dublin, 2005)

**Thomas, Avril**, *The Walled Towns of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1992)

**Meath County Council**, *Trim Development Plan* (2002)

**Meath County Council**, *Trim Town Centre Local Area Plan* (2004)

**www.excavations.ie**, Database of Irish excavation reports – search under ‘County Meath <Trim’.