

Trim Porch Field Architectural Conservation Area

Location and Boundary

The Porch Field ACA is located immediately to the east of Trim town centre, bounded for the most part on the south by the Boyne river, on the north by the Navan Road, on the west by the town wall, and its eastern extent includes the medieval borough of Newtown-Trim. The ring road connecting the Navan Road to the Dublin Road traverses the Porchfield from north to south.

Historical Development

Newtown Trim is a deserted medieval borough. In the Middle Ages it was a busy market centre with several important churches, a hospital and a mill. The Episcopal See of Meath was moved here from Clonard in the late 12th century. The church dates from 1206 and must have been one of the largest medieval churches in Ireland. South of the original nave stood the domestic buildings. To the east of the Cathedral are the remains of a small medieval church, which houses the tomb of Sir Lucas Dillon and his wife. Newtown developed as a centre of worship and of trade. In 1217 it was granted royal permission to host a weekly market, and later an annual fair.

The buildings on the eastern side of the bridge are the remains of the 13th and 15th century Friary and Hospital of St John the Baptist. From a gate beside the road on the opposite side of the river to the refectory of the monastery there is a remarkable echo.

The Porchfield of Trim lies between the new Anglo-Norman town of Trim founded c.1180 and the rural-borough of Newtown-Trim founded c.1220.

The two towns were connected through the 'open-field' Porchfield by a medieval road or 'sunken-way'. The Porchfield probably included 'three acres in the fields outside the town' for a number of the new burgesses of Trim, as documented in the Borough Charters for Kells and Drogheda.

The field was called Porch Field from at least the fifteenth Century with some sources referring to the Porchgate in association with property beside the Augustinian priory. It is thought that the derivation of the prefix Porch-may be from the French word porte meaning gate.

Character Overview

This area acts as a backdrop against which the town is set. It frames Trim Castle, The Yellow Steeple, Sheepgate, St Johns Friary, Newtown Abbey, and allows these structures to be appreciated as they historically appeared in the landscape. It provides an exceptional open space and public amenity for the town.

This land can only be used in consultation with the OPW for amenity and recreational purposes.

Significant Views and Vistas

The Area provides exceptional views and vistas in both directions along the river valley. The Trim Town Plan contains a full list of protected views. Those which affect this ACA are :

View 1: From Dublin Road at St Johns, toward the river valley.

View 2: From Newtown Bridge towards the river valley, Newtown Abbey and St. John's Friary

View 3: Trim Castle to the river valley, St. Mary's Abbey and Newtown Abbey

View 6: Towards Trim Castle and the Porch field from St. Mary's Abbey.

View 7: Westwards from Newtown Abbey to the Porch field.

View 8: West and south-westwards from the ring road to St. Mary's Abbey and Trim Castle.

View 10: View of St. John's Friary from the adjoining Dublin Road.

It is the intention of the Council in the designation of this ACA:

1. to maintain the open landscape character of the area;
2. to ensure that any proposed developments shall recognise the particular role of this area in the protection of the unique setting of the town and its heritage buildings, shall harmonise with its character and respect views and prospects along the river valley.