

Navan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area

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.

Boundaries

The Navan ACA 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.

Street Pattern

Although the present town largely developed in the 18th and 19th centuries, its street pattern survives from the medieval period when the town was walled. The street pattern is essentially Y shaped, and consists of Trimgate Street, Ludlow Street and Watergate Street.

Built form

The 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 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 and Railway Street, while the more important institutional and commercial buildings have dressed stone facings. In common with many Irish towns, the roofscape of Navan consists primarily of pitched slated roofs with chimneystacks.

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. 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.

Objectives:

1. To preserve the character of the Navan Historic Core Architectural Conservation Area, its buildings, streetscape, and public realm.
2. To preserve the historic street pattern within the core of the town, including the laneways.
3. To require the retention of all structures which contribute in a positive manner to the character of the ACA.
4. To support and encourage the re-use of suitable redundant or obsolete buildings within the ACA.
5. 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 and to require that all new developments within or adjacent to the ACA shall observe the existing scale of the town.
6. To retain historic 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.