

NAAS TOWN DEFENCES

CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT PLAN

DECEMBER 2022



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RIAI Conservation Grade 1



Research + Dig
Urban Regeneration & Heritage



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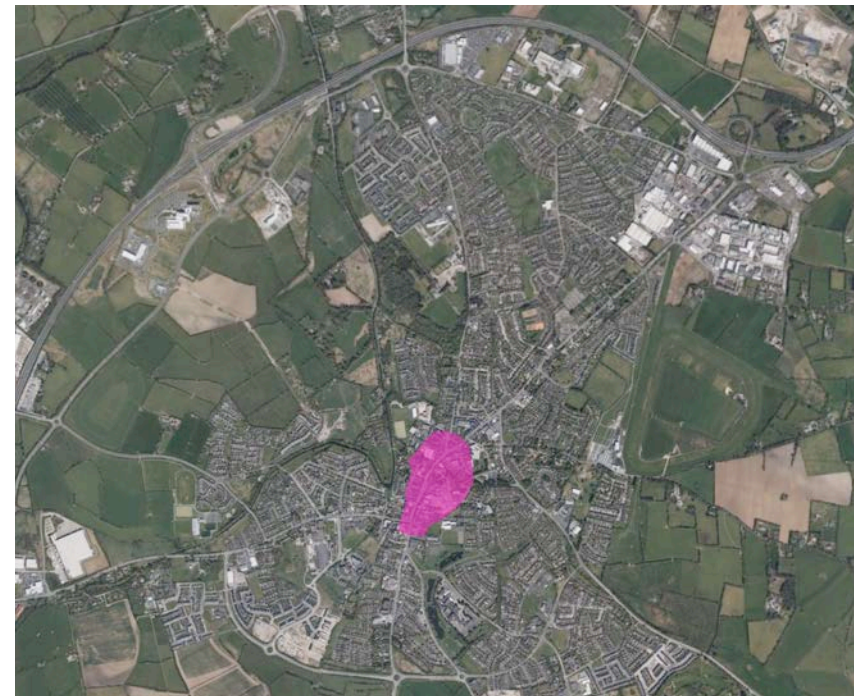
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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 PREAMBLE

This conservation and management plan for the town walls of Naas was commissioned by Kildare County Council with funding provided by the Irish Walled Towns Network. Prepared by 7L Architects in collaboration with Research + Dig, the purpose of the plan is to assess the history, cultural significance and current condition of the walled town – in terms of its known standing remains, buried archaeology, layout and associated buildings. It assesses the threats to its significance; outlines a conservation strategy and makes recommendations for enhancement, improved management and interpretation. Field surveys were carried out in June 2022.

Location	Naas, Co Kildare
Grid Coordinates	689245, 719440
Local Authority	Kildare County Council
Zoning	Commercial/Town Centre
Statutory Protection	SMR ref: KD019-030----
Rating	Regional
Special Interest	Architectural, Archaeological, Social, Technical
Principal Dimensions	17 hectares (est.)
Inspection Date	June 2022
Prepared by	Fergal Mc Namara & Liam Mannix
Report Issued	September 2022



1. Aerial view of Naas showing the extent of population growth relative to medieval core (in pink).

1.2 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- Naas was given a charter in the fifteenth century, although there is evidence of earlier occupation of the site from the third century and throughout the early medieval period.
- Naas is an example of a purpose-built Anglo-Norman market town taking control of an important strategic site, long a power base of Leinster kings.



2. Extract from aerial photo of Naas ca.1950 from Morgan Aerial Collection (NLI).

- Naas was founded for the purposes of collecting taxes, establishing administration of the hinterland and regulating markets.
- The impact of the town walls remains evident in the urban morphology of Naas. Burgage plots has been retained in places to either side of the main street.
- Naas retains its medieval core despite the extensive development beyond the town defensive line in the latter half of the twentieth century.

1.3 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

- Today, no definitive physical evidence survives of Anglo-Norman town walls. However, there are a considerable number of boundary

walls of possible late-medieval date, and both 'moats' have been retained that date from the early medieval period.

- Its town plan shares similarities to other medieval towns of this size around the country such as Fethard and Thurles with their distinctive trumpet-shaped main streets that were used as market squares.
- Today there is only tentative, fragmentary evidence for a town defensive circuit detected in buried remains, street alignments and burgage plots.
- Developments in recent decades have uncovered valuable evidence suggesting the presence of town defences along the likely circuit. In the past, other works might have destroyed such

evidence or missed opportunities to learn more when not overseen by an archaeologist.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE

- The immediate environs of Naas have undergone several phases in their urban development from at least the early medieval period. Today, it is the county town of Kildare.
- The medieval heritage of Naas deserves to be better known by locals, and more vividly presented to visitors. It makes a valuable contribution to a place of regional cultural significance.

1.5 THREATS

- Increasing knowledge and understanding of the town defences among the local community will assist in their preservation.
- While the lack of knowledge about the precise location and condition of the wall circuit is a significant threat to its preservation; statutory protections, and planning policies already in place create a legal framework facilitating the protection of the alignment.

1.6 POLICIES

- Repairs to medieval historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials.
- Whenever possible, inappropriate interventions along the town wall alignment should be removed. The integrity of the town defences should be reinforced where necessary.

1.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Future development around the town may provide opportunities to present the medieval heritage of Naas where it is encountered, especially during the construction of infrastructure or buildings.
- The protection and maintenance of existing built heritage of Medieval Naas should take priority. In this way, the historic place to be maintained in perpetuity.
- A long-term project is to improve access and setting of the surviving medieval structures, some of which likely formed part of the town defences.
- When the opportunity arises, the house placed on top of the North Moat should be removed, and steps access provided to the summit to provide a prospect over the town.
- In time, the sensitive enhancement of the medieval settings of St David's Church and Castle along with the later St David's House, would improve the public realm and amenities in the town centre.
- This could be achieved by improving access between the church and its namesake castle and house, so that the settings can be enjoyed together, providing views between the monuments.
- The former potato market is a vacant site close to the main street, which also enjoys excellent views of the church tower and high stone walls that bound the precinct. Its redevelopment as a market place should enhance the heritage value of Medieval Naas.
- When the proposals to repair the walls and use it for outdoor events are realised, it will become a cultural asset, allowing Medieval Naas to be better explored and presented on Walled Town events.



3. Overlay of 1871 5-foot map sheets for Naas.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 THE PLACE

The historic town of Naas is located approximately thirty kilometres southwest of Dublin, close to the M7. It is the county town of Kildare, situated along a lengthy spur off the Grand Canal, on the main routeway between Dublin and the south and southwest. Its placename *An Nás* means 'place of assembly', and is mentioned as early as the third century. A monastery dedicated to St Feichin was founded in the seventh century, while throughout this period it was an important base for the kings of Leinster. Its long-established strategic importance influenced the Anglo-Normans in establishing a town in this location.

Many questions remain as to the precise outline of the medieval town, requiring further archaeological investigation. Burgage plot boundaries survive, with evidence of tower houses and some remnants of the earlier houses also. Archaeology is an important means by which to learn about the medieval heritage of Naas to understand its character and extent. The protection of buried archaeological deposits, or medieval built fabric incorporated into the current streetscape is essential. Otherwise, there is a risk of further losses of our shared heritage without their being preserved.

2.2 NATIONAL & EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The few existing remains of town-wall fortifications, which formerly enclosed and protected every important town in Ireland, and which yearly diminish in number, are, as a class, undeservedly overlooked by writers on the antiquities of such towns as they describe.

Writing in 1914, J.S. Fleming commenced his study on the most prominent of the Irish walled towns by lamenting the poor appreciation of this essential component of urban development which emphasized the prominent buildings. In 1992, Avril Thomas, listed fifty-six Irish towns which were certain to have had town defences, thirty-five where some evidence (if only documentary) exists, and twenty other settlements for which only the tentative or indirect evidence has been found.

Walled settlements range in size from the most populous cities down to abandoned villages. Defences were installed around farmsteads during the Neolithic period and were also installed to protect early-Christian monasteries and by the Norse. Gaelic settlements usually used earthworks; but stone was also used to protect larger settlements or 'Dún', creating a place of refuge and control. There is documentary and physical evidence of such structures at Naas.

Irish walled towns characterize political and economic developments on the island in relation to Britain and the continent in the medieval period. Ireland was on the periphery of Europe, remote from the Roman Empire, and was relatively late in developing an urban culture. Starting with the monasteries, Hiberno-Norse ports, and Gaelic settlements, the Anglo-Normans established control on the interior of the island for three centuries until retreating to the confines of the Pale by the early fifteenth century. The Tudor and Stuart plantations also relied on town defences. In the early modern era, defences erected during the Cromwellian and Jacobite/Williamite conflicts quickly became redundant. This led to their gradual but widespread removal starting in the eighteenth century, so that knowledge of the extent of Irish walled towns was much reduced.

The Walled Town Friendship Circle (WTFC), is the international association for the sustainable development of fortified historic towns and cities. The

Piran Declaration, which outlines the reasons for maintaining historic walled towns, was presented at the WTFC AGM in Piran, Slovenia in 1998.

Walled Towns are unique inheritances from times long past and should be treasured, maintained and safeguarded from neglect, damage and destruction and passed on into perpetuity as irreplaceable 'Timestones of History'.

In 2005, the Heritage Council established the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) to coordinate the management and conservation of historic walled towns through local authorities on the island, linking into the activities of the WTFC. In 2022, Naas joined this network; following three other Kildare towns – Athy, Castledermot, and Kildare town as members.

2.3 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Essentially, the aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place. Published by ICOMOS in 2013, the revised Burra Charter provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance; setting out standards and guidelines for its guardians. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors. Places of cultural significance enrich people's lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to – family and the community; the landscape; to the past and to lived experiences. The charter defines conservation as - all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. Following publication of the Burra Charter, the Ename Charter was adopted by ICOMOS in 2008 and deals specifically with the interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage. This charter provides a framework for the communication of the cultural significance of a place to the public. Its objectives are to facilitate understanding and



4. Methodology for conservation management plans from the revised Burra Charter (ICOMOS 2013).

appreciation of the site; communicate its meaning, safeguard the tangible and intangible values and respect its authenticity.

As such, the aims of this Conservation Plan are to:

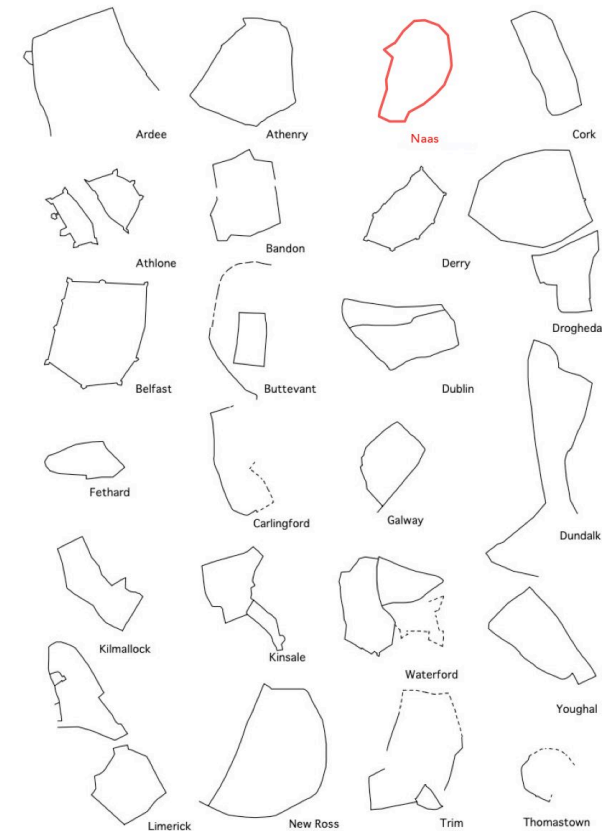
- provide an accurate record of the walled town of Naas, through field studies and research of the sources;
- understand the significance of its cultural heritage both tangible and intangible along with its natural heritage;
- identify any threats to this significance;
- formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the walled town and its associated cultural heritage;
- manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the historic place, to act as a guide for future decision-making;
- assess the impacts of possible future development within the setting of the town wall, devising strategies to mitigate impacts;
- identify priorities for the conservation of the walled town for capital works and ongoing maintenance.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

Areas that were not inspected included those that required special access at high level, private, were fenced off or locked, buried, obscured by ivy or vegetation. Specific limitations are noted within the text.

2.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Bridget Loughlin, Heritage Officer, for her guidance in the preparation of this plan.



5. Comparative analysis walled towns form and scale (after Thomas)

3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE PLACE

3.1 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before there was a medieval Anglo-Norman town, there was a Gaelic settlement at Naas, with references dating back to the eighth century. The current placename is derived from the Irish An Nás, or Nás na Riogh meaning 'The place of assembly' or 'Place of Assembly of the Kings' but more commonly Nás na Laighean 'Place of Assembly of the Leinstermen'. In the Annals of the Four Masters it is referred to as Dún Náis, or 'fort of the place of assembly'. This pre-Anglo-Norman settlement is likely to have been composed of a ringfort or dún, along with a monastery dedicated to St Feichin, and associated craft and service workshops. It has been suggested that the curved route of Corban's Lane may follow the boundary of the Gaelic monastery (Bradley, Halpin & King, 1986). For almost seven centuries the settlement was the seat of the Kings of Leinster. The last King of Leinster resident in An Nás was Cearbhall. He died in the early tenth century and is believed to be buried along with eight other kings of Leinster at the cemetery of Cill Chorbain (the church of Corban) (Durney, 2007) thought to have been located close to the Corban's Lane to the southeast of the present town centre (KD019-030046----).

Naas is strategically located along the route between Dublin and the south and west of Ireland. The ancient pre-Anglo Norman route from Tara to the mouth of the Shannon - Slighe Dhála Meic Umhóir - passed thorough Naas and the nearby Curragh). St Patrick is said to have visited Naas several times (Kiely, n/d).

Soon after the Anglo Normans arrived in Ireland, the Gaelic settlement of An Nás was conquered in 1175 by Richard de Clare (Strongbow) (Mulvey,

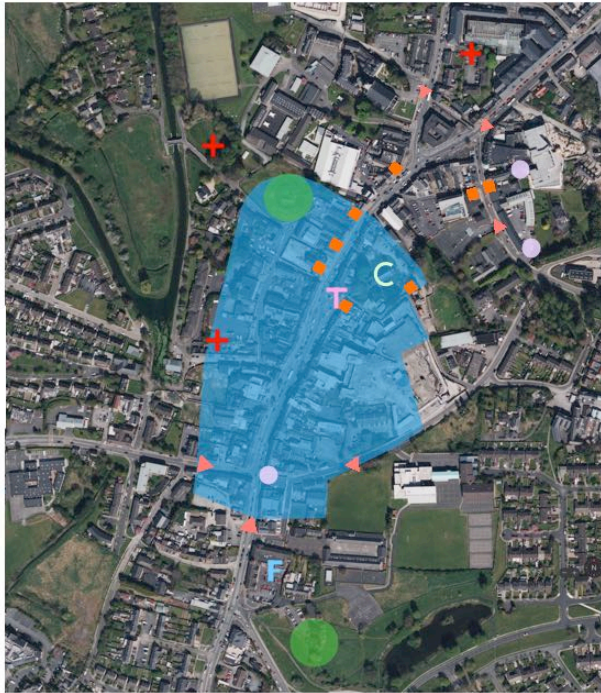


6. Photograph over canal towards North Moat ca.1900 (NLI).

2013). He subsequently granted the rich lands of the newly created Barony of Naas to one of his supporters during the conquest, Maurice Fitzgerald.

The grant to the Fitzgeralds was later confirmed by England's King Henry II in 1177. Along with the Fitzgeralds came settlers from the St David's area of Pembrokeshire in Wales. Together, they set about creating the medieval town of Naas. Much of the current street pattern was laid out during this initial period of colonisation. The town was planned in the classic medieval manner with a long linear street having lanes and other minor streets going off at right angles to it (Keily, n/d). In the case of Naas, the long linear street now comprises North Main Street and South Main Street.

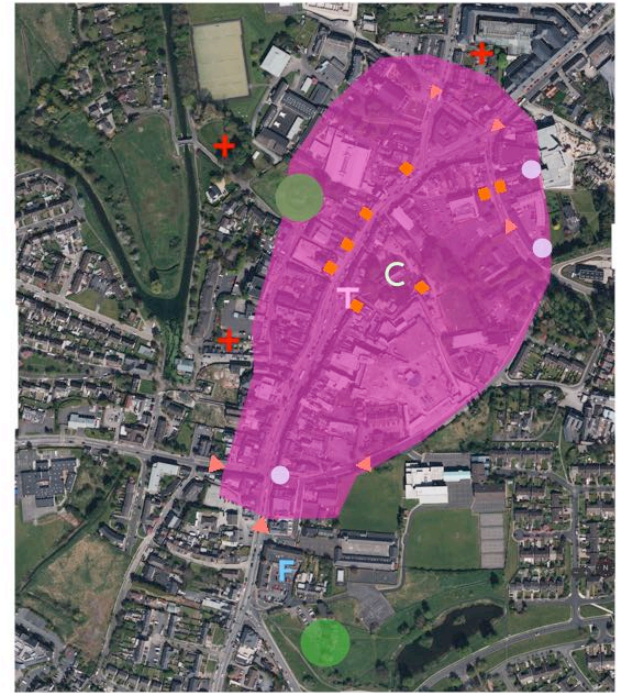
According to Bradley, Halpin and King (1986) the broad South Main Street with its marketplace is reminiscent of a seventeenth-century town layout, so may have been widened at that time, with the north end closer to its



MURTAGH TOWN WALL CIRCUIT



THOMAS TOWN WALL CIRCUIT



BRADLEY TOWN WALL CIRCUIT

F C T fair green, church (medieval), tholsel

▲ town gate

■ tower house

● motte

✚ religious house

● archaeological find

7. Maps showing medieval features and town defensive circuits as proposed to date.

original width. Another possibility is identified by Mulvin (2021) given the similar layouts found at other medieval towns of the status of Fethard and Thurles which feature a 'trumpet-shaped' main street which was used as a market square. Running lengthways from the main street were burgage plots provided for rent by the Fitzgeralds. While this land division is still visible on both sides of South Main Street, none of the existing houses are known to contain pre-1700 building material.

In addition to laying out the town, the colonists also set about demolishing or adapting the Gaelic parish church and founding a new place of worship dedicated to St David. This Anglo-Norman church was probably in existence by the early thirteenth century. It is likely that the Gaelic Irish church was dedicated to either St Corban or St Patrick. The current church dates from c.1830 when it was extensively reconstructed and remodelled and incorporates material from an earlier church, dated c.1600. The large tower at the east end of the church is likely pre-1700 but was also remodelled along with the church. (Reg. No. 11814125, NIAH).

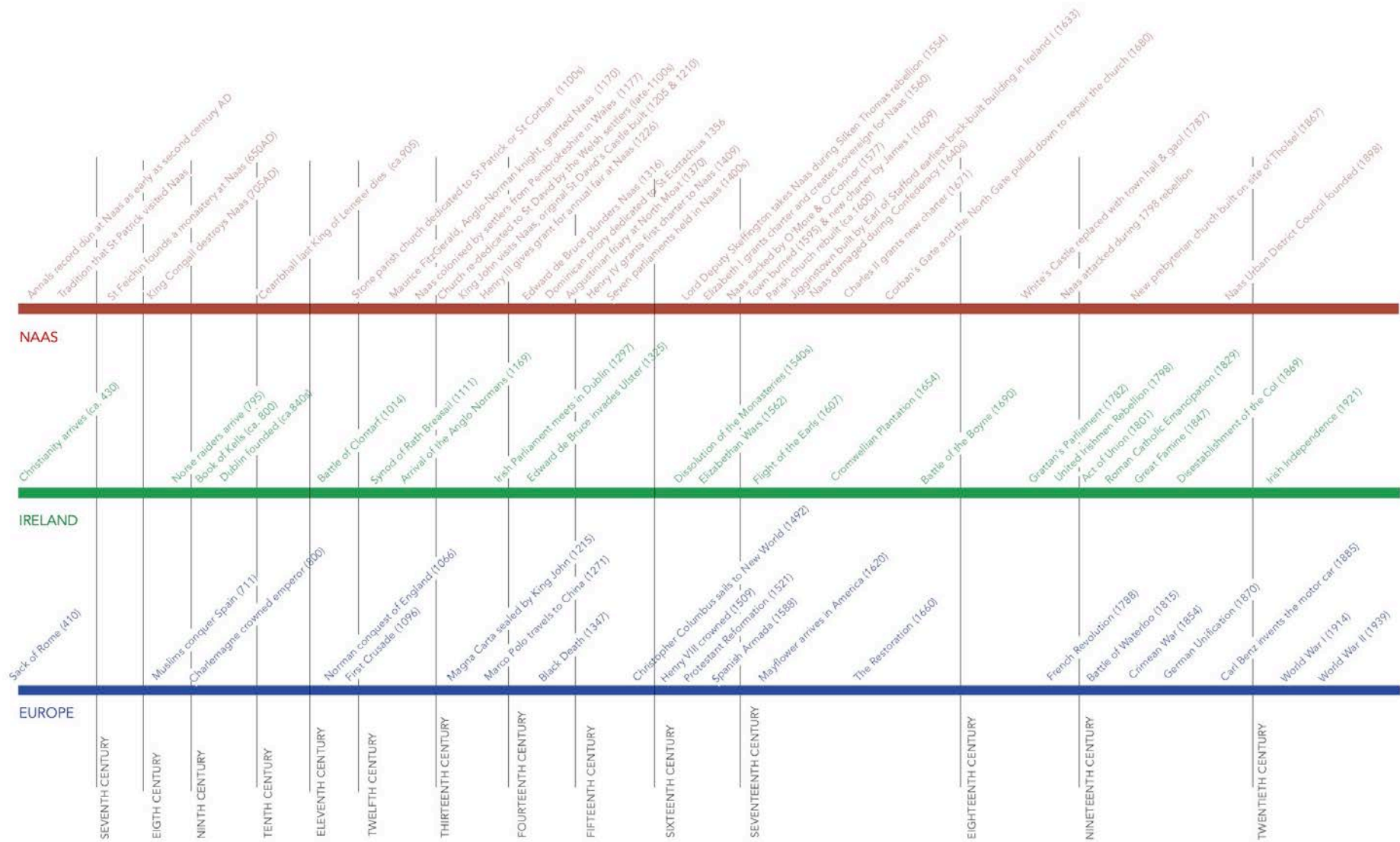
Two mottes were built to defend the new town; the North Moat and the South Moat. The large mound of the North Moat which is located on the western edge of the medieval town core is still mostly intact and is presumed to have been erected by Maurice Fitzgerald. It is possible that the North Moat was constructed over the Gaelic ringfort or 'Dún' of Naas (Conroy, 2011 A). In the National Schools Folklore Collection an underground passage from the North Moat to Jigginstown House is mentioned (Higgins, n/d). Constructed in 1630s by the Lord Lieutenant, Jigginstown House is located c.1.3km to the west. It was intended as a base for King Charles I during a visit to Ireland, evidence of the continued prominence of the town during this period. Although the South Moat has been significantly disturbed by later interventions, there are still indications of the monument present in the landscape as part of a large hillock (figure

5). Archaeological investigations in 2001 discovered the presence of a large ditch and other features that the excavator tentatively linked to activity associated with the South Moat (Deheane, 2001).

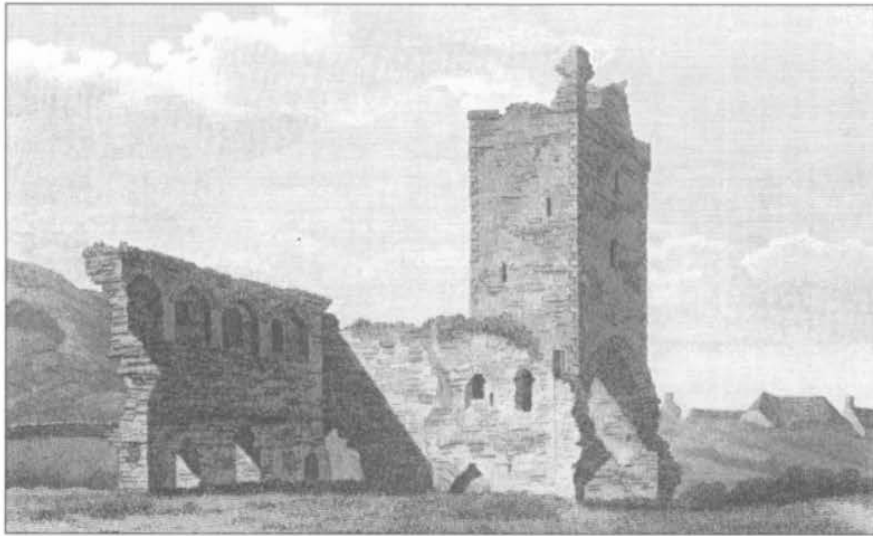
In the late twelfth century, William Fitzmaurice founded a priory for the Canons Regular of the Order of St Augustine. Dedicated to St John the Baptist, a hospital was added later. In 1540, the church was used as a barn (Bradley, Halpin & King, 1986). What become known as St John's Abbey is now demolished, with the house of the parish priest likely standing on the site (kildarelocalhistory.ie). Digging in the 1950s uncovered stone walls thought to be part of the priory. In 1990, a ditch (3.3m-3.7m wide and 1.2m deep) was discovered during archaeological testing (Conroy, 2011 D), interpreted as being part of the priory boundary. Ten years later, the previously unknown priory graveyard was discovered and archaeologically investigated.

King John visited the town in 1206 and 1210. During his second visit he held a parliament there. It was around this time that Kildare became a separate county from Dublin. In 1226, Henry III granted the town the right to hold an annual fair. Previously, in 1186, the town had been granted the right to hold a weekly market (Conroy, 2011 G). This market may have been held at the north end of South Main Street, where the tholsel or later town hall subsequently stood.

The town defences were tested and breached by Edward de Bruce in 1316, the Scots burned Naas and pillaged the religious sites during their Irish campaign. Following this, the key developments in Naas during the fourteenth century were the establishment of two more religious houses. Between 1335 and 1356, the Eustace family established a Dominican Friary dedicated to St Eustachius. In 1370, another Augustinian Friary, this time for the Friars Eremites or Austin Friars was founded.



8. Timeline for development of Naas in Irish & European contexts.



9. 'The Abbey graveyard in Naas, C. Kildare' by D. Grose, 1792.

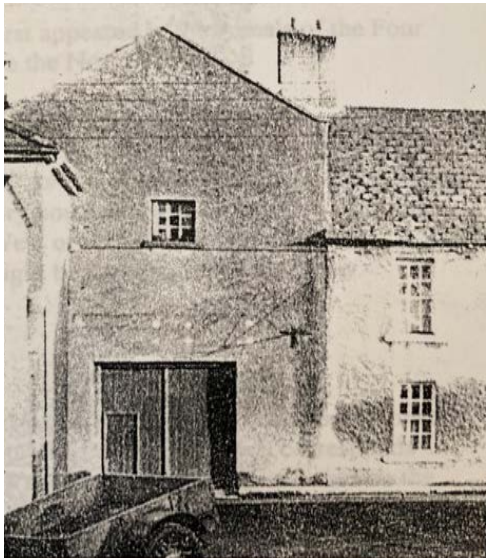
Although the location of the Augustinian Friary is marked on the OS map to the northwest of the North Moat, Bradley stated that the location shown was almost certainly that of the Dominican Friary established by the Eustace family (Conroy, 2011 B). The vicinity of Friary River is given as a possible location of the Augustinian Friary (Bradley, Halpin & King, 1986). The likely Dominican Friary – beside the North Moat – was visited in 1792 by Daniel Grose who sketched substantial standing remains. There were still some standing remains of the Dominican Friary until c.1835 (McCabe, 1999). According to Bradley, the graveyard that is presently on the site contains no pre-1700 memorials or building remains (Conroy, 2011 C).

All three of Naas' abbeys were dissolved in the mid-sixteenth century by order of King Henry VIII. These religious houses are shown by Thomas (1992) in her map of the walled town of Naas as being outside the town walls.

DEVELOPING THE TOWN DEFENCES

In 1409, King Henry IV granted Naas its first charter as a corporation (kildarelocalhistory.ie). Five years later, King Henry V granted the town the right to collect tolls at entry points to fortify Naas with walls and gates (Thomas, 1992). This was likely a reaction against the deteriorating security and political situation for the English crown in Ireland coupled with the obvious weakness of the town defences previously exposed by the Scots. It was also during the fifteenth century that possibly eight or more tower houses were built within the town by merchant families (Murtagh, 1983-4). Most other dwellings in the town would have been humble structures, described as 'lowe thatched housies' in the account of the 1577 attack on the town (Bradley, Halpin & King, 1986). Interestingly, eight tower houses in Naas identified by Murtagh are concentrated to the historic core; they were known as Eustace Castle; St David's Castle; Watergate Castle; Naas 'D' or Lattin's Castle; Black Castle or Duke of Leinster Castle; Lyard's/Magee's/Motley's Castle; White Castle/White Chamber/Old Castle; Wheatley's Castle/Watley's Castle/Lord Mavo's Castle.

The castle identified by Murtagh (1983-84) as Naas 'D' or Lattin's Castle is the only tower house not included by Thomas (1992) in her map of the walled town. The number and location of the tower houses may have been strategic, whereby the defenders of one tower could assist in the defence of at least one other tower. The only standing tower house left from this period is St David's Castle.



10. Eustace castle prior to demolition in 1973 (Begley)

It is worth noting that Bradley, Halpin and King (1986) state that only St David's Castle, Eustace Castle, Black Castle and White Castle can be located with any degree of probability. However, in 1997, an excavation on North Main Street probably exposed the remains of Lattin's Castle (Ó Riordáin, 1997). The structure was c.19m wide externally, with a likely entrance in the east wall of the castle. The excavation was in the approximate location indicated by Murtagh (1983-84).

Until relatively recently, St David's Castle did not stand alone. Eustace Castle was only demolished in 1973. Two twentieth century images show a heavily modified two storey structure. De Burgh in 1895 noted that the castle had a barrel-vaulted ground floor with a room above (Murtagh, 1983-84). Despite being effectively demolished, at least one wall – extending up two storeys – from the medieval tower house is still standing as part of a two-storey townhouse. Furthermore, from a survey as part of this report, there may also be a low section of a medieval wall associated with Eustace Castle in the rear garden of the same townhouse. In 2002, an archaeological excavation at Poplar Square/Friary Road uncovered medieval archaeological remains for a thick masonry wall, possibly associated with Eustace Castle (Conroy, 2011 E). During the same



11. Photo of St David's Castle over mill race ca. 1900 from Lawrence Collection (NLI)

excavation, a large ditch to the east and northeast of the tower house was uncovered. It was interpreted as forming part of the town defences.

The only remaining tower house in Naas – St David's Castle (Naas A in Murtagh's plan) – is heavily augmented. Located a short distance southeast of St David's Church, the building is a three-storey structure with a pointed arch barrel vault over the ground floor and projecting stairs turrets on the southeast angle (Conroy, 2011 F). It is proposed by Thomas (1992) that the tower would have formed part of the medieval town wall of Naas. This is supported by its location on the then eastern fringe of the medieval town, rather than along the internal streets, as with Naas's other tower houses. Its location may also have been a reason why it has survived while all the other

tower houses have succumbed to development from the eighteenth century onwards (Murtagh, 1983-84).

Although much of the remaining fabric and current appearance of St David's Castle dates from c.1730, it incorporates significant fabric from a c.1600 tower house (Reg. No. 118141128, NIAH). An exact date for the first castle at the site is not known. It is likely that there was a castle present at the site from at least the fifteenth century (Hickey & Kenny, 1990). According to Murtagh (1983-84), the castle is like a series of tower houses in the Pale built during the mid-fifteenth century.

Such was the importance of Naas that parliaments were held in the town in 1419, 1457, 1471, 1473 and 1477 (kildarelocalhistory.ie). By the end of the fifteenth century, Naas was a key fortified town at the edge of the Pale.



12. Extract from Down Survey map of Naas in 1647 (TCD).

A WALLED TOWN?

Although Naas was an important part of the defence of the Pale and required defending itself, there is uncertainty whether a substantial town wall was ever erected. Thomas (1992) concludes that the balance of evidence points to Naas having been a walled town. She points to significant evidence for the town being walled. Aside from King Henry V granting the town in 1414 the right to collect tolls to fortify the town, there is also the depiction of the town with walls in the Down Survey (c.1655), a 1577 report of a watch not being kept on the gates during an attack by the Irish and several other historic accounts. However, she also acknowledges there is significant evidence that directly contradicts or undermines the case for town walls ever being built.

Firstly, the historic documentary evidence is not conclusive in there being walls. For instance, although a murage grant is given in 1414, the town was described in 1463 as 'not previously walled' (Thomas, 1992, p.168). Furthermore, the 1567 murage charter raises additional doubts of the existence of a town wall by referring to the 'desire of the burgesses to fortify the borough with a fosse and walls of lime and stone' (ibid). It is possible that the depiction of a town wall in the Down Survey may be a stylised depiction of Naas. Also, in map-based evidence, there are no indications of town walls in the earliest detailed map of the town from 1722 (i.e. the Estate map of Thomas Burgh) or the mid-nineteenth century first edition Ordnance Survey for Naas (Byrne, 2019).

Additionally, the numerous occasions that Naas was sacked suggests the lack of town walls or their severe degradation. In 1534, Lord Deputy Skeffington took the town from Silken Thomas (Lewis, 1837). In 1577, Rorí Óg O'More and Cormack MacCormac O'Connor led 140 raiders in the burning of between 700 and 800 thatched houses (a likely over exaggeration according to Bradley, Halpin, King (1986). During the

Cromwellian Wars of the 1640s, the town changed hands several times (Conroy, 2011 G). Indeed, Grose notes how over the course of the 1640s the town 'was at different times taken and plundered by contending armies' (1793, p27). Finally, as regards the case against there being walls around Naas, there are no known upstanding remains. Thomas (1992) notes that the relationship between St David's Castle and Eustace Castle with the town wall defences is unknown.

Since Thomas published her analysis in 1992 there have been additional archaeological investigations that provide further information concerning the presence of walls, their composition and likely route. Of the 37 archaeological investigations in or around the medieval core of Naas on excavations.ie, only three took place before 1992.

3.2 THE WALLED TOWN TODAY

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the laying of services in and around the town have caused a major loss to the archaeological record. A large site opposite St David Castle along Church Street underwent considerable disturbance with the construction of a shopping centre which has yet to be completed. There has been a general acceleration of house-building and infrastructural projects around Naas in the last 50 years, with many housing estates were built in the neighbouring rural townlands.

Many of the modern shops and houses follow the footprint of the earlier medieval walls and later town boundary walls. It is quite possible that the foundations of the earlier burgage plot layout survives, along with further evidence of town defences sufficient to be definitive about their layout or whether they ever existed. Considerable disturbance through development of the urban footprint has obliterated material along the heavily trenched roadways throughout the town.



13. Map showing principal features relating to Medieval Naas. Extra-mural religious houses shown as white crosses.



14. View of north and west sides of parish church.



15. View of south side of St David's House.



16. View of St David's Castle in June 2022.



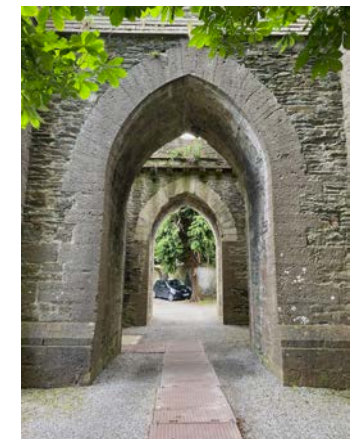
17. View along north boundary of churchyard in adjacent carpark, possible 'north barrier'.



18. View of house at entrance to churchyard, incorporating thick walls at corner.



19 & 20. Views of church tower with impressive arches allowing ease of circulation around the churchyard.



4.0 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The descriptions below are based on a survey carried out in June 2022. The purpose of the survey was to review the several town wall alignments on the ground and to understand the urban morphology and the potential for surviving medieval fabric where further investigation might be helpful.

4.1 SETTING

The town defences of Naas are described in *The Walled Towns of Ireland* (1992), by Avril Thomas, based on the earlier assessment of Bradley (1987), enclosing an area some seventeen hectares in extent. There is no direct physical evidence for town walls or defences above ground, but the street layout and plot boundaries conform to patterns found in walled towns around the country. The southern end of Naas retains its strong burgh plot pattern, which can be observed along Corban's Lane and to the rear of accessible properties such as public houses that now use their extensive, narrow plots as beer gardens and parking areas.

4.2 MEDIEVAL TOWN ENCOUNTERS

During our field survey for the preparation of this report, we walked around the town along the proposed circuit of the town defences. While we did not identify new evidence of the town walls, it was helpful to understand the topography of Naas and to compare features with other medieval towns. Below are the locations along the town defence circuit where Medieval Naas can be best encountered.

MAIN STREET

The north end of Main Street climbs uphill and splays in plan from Poplar Square as far as the gates to the church at its narrowest point. Although the buildings date from the nineteenth century predominantly, many retain a narrow frontage, contributing to a streetscape that is medieval in form. The south end is considerably wider, and splays in the opposite direction.

As noted above, this could be the site of the medieval market square, the other possibility being between the church and the old gaol (town hall). While constructed after the devastation of the 1798 rebellion, it is likely that there is considerable evidence of earlier phases of the town, including the medieval period, incorporated into these townhouses and to the rear of their plots. Public houses to both sides of the main street retain tall stone walls lining their boundaries with potential to pre-date the street frontages.

NORTH MOAT

Surmounted today by a modern bungalow, the Moat has long been a landmark for the town. Previously, a guard house was erected on the mound in the early nineteenth century, visible on early photographs. This was a continuation of its use for the defence of the town, when the Anglo Normans would have placed a timber palisade and keep on top of the mound. It is thought that the *Dún* of Naas may have already been on this site, from historical references dating to the early eighth century. From the top are fine views over the town and hinterland, and it is one of the best locations to experience Medieval Naas..

TOWN GATES

While none of the town gates survived into the nineteenth century, their former locations are set close to road junctions. However, the precise

positions of these gates remain conjectural until such time as physical evidence is uncovered.

ST DAVID'S CHURCH & GRAVEYARD

This churchyard has suffered little encroachment by modern development to adjacent areas. In scale, it conforms to many other similar ancient churchyards in towns around the country, albeit almost completely hidden from the main street and even surrounding lanes. There has been a church on this site since at least the thirteenth century, and while much altered, the present church retains medieval fabric and a rich collection of mortuary memorials. The church tower dates from 1781. Being left open at its base, it shares spatial qualities with town gates, which are lost from the streets of Naas since the eighteenth century.

ST DAVID'S CASTLE

Although the building we see today was modernised in the eighteenth century, it still retains the appearance of the medieval tower house. It overlooks an extensive garden while located in the centre of the town. Over recent years it has undergone several phases of conservation, and it is hoped that it could be more accessible to the public in time where visitors can better understand Medieval Naas. Its series of yards and its gardens could play an important role in any town wall circuit walk.

LANES & RERES

Medieval Naas had only one principal street, into which a grid of lanes fed along the burgess plots. These are lined by high stone walls, that may incorporate medieval fabric, and which are named for the important medieval buildings. Lanes include Church Lane; Chapel Lane; John's Lane; Abbey Street; Corban's Lane; Town Hall Lane; Moat Lane, many of which

retain narrow medieval proportions, high walls and are a place apart from the busy main street. Similar walls can be found in a number of public houses and to the rear of shops or offices which are now open to patrons and give a sense of the long history of the town.

CORBAN'S LANE

It is thought that the famous church and burial ground of the Leinster kings, Cill Corban or Cill Náis, was located along this lane, which retains the curved alignment common to medieval monastic sites, perhaps making it the oldest 'street' in the town. No evidence for this site has been identified, despite the large shopping centre constructed in the vicinity in recent decades.

FRIARY ROAD & EUSTACE CASTLE

Friary Road is located to the north east of the town centre, and follows a long, concave sweep that does not correlate with any known site of a religious house, despite its name or alignment. At the top of the road are the remains of Eustace Castle, which Thomas suggests formed part of the defensive circuit of the town. To the rear of the present house are stone walls which are close to an ancient wall identified in the construction of a carpark which remains on display.

NAAS PARISH OFFICE

In the parish office on the Sallins Road is a fragment of a high stone curved screen wall that has been incorporated that once belonged to a building visible on the first edition OS map set in front of St John's Abbey of which there are no upstanding remains.



21. View along Abbey Street towards the North Moat.



22. View of North Moat, bungalow screened by trees.



23. View looking north along Moat.



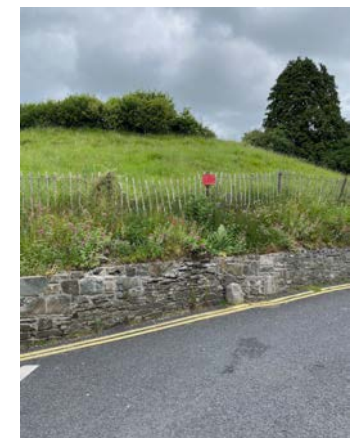
24. View looking west towards Moat from adjacent carpark.



25. View looking west towards graveyard from Moat.



26. Entry gate to Moat.



27. View along base.



28. View towards St David's Castle in former potato market site.



29. View of boundary wall to church and base of tower.



30. View towards gates and market square.



31. Detail of infilled door head in wall along lane.



32. View along boundary wall to church with building remains.



33. View of church tower in potato market site.



34. View of pier of former structure along lane.

POTATO MARKET

Accessed from Church Lane just behind the Presbyterian Church is the former potato market. It has retained 4m-high stone walls and part of the church tower. It has long been vacant, and is overgrown with ivy and encroaching trees from the churchyard adjacent. While not likely to form part of the town defence circuit, it nevertheless has retained historic character, which it shares with the high walls of Church Lane.

SOUTH MOAT & FAIR GREEN

Today the South Moat forms part of a public park on the fringes of the town centre close to artificial lakes in front of the hospital fed by a former mill race. At the base of the Moat was the fair green, which remains an open area. There was some dispute whether the mound was an archaeological feature but it is accepted that it was the site of a barracks in the seventeenth century. The low fieldstone wall separating the fair green from the motte was constructed in the mid-nineteenth century. Along with the screen of mature trees, the motte is hidden from the road, and restricts access and views between the two features. A walk to the top of the Moat could be accommodated as part of the mowing practice during summer months

Fair greens were generally located immediately outside the town defences, and consisted of clear ground set aside for these important events in the life of the town. A good example elsewhere in the county is Castledermot. In Naas, it is located immediately adjacent to the South Moat, and remains as grassy lawn set behind a low stone wall lining the Ballymore Eustace road.

4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

From the 37 archaeological investigations that have taken place in or around Naas town centre, only three are likely to have uncovered remains of the medieval town wall or ditch (licence numbers 99E0111, 96E0124 & 98E0468). Located just north of Eustace Castle, excavation 99E0111 exposed a wall at least 1.1m wide. Its exact width could not be measured because it continued into an adjacent property. Two rough courses of stone walling were excavated. The wall was interpreted as being the basal level of the town wall defences (Byrne, 1999). Human remains were uncovered in a 1995 excavation 10m northeast of excavation 99E0111. These were interpreted as being associated with the Augustinian priory. The location of the large wall roughly corresponds with the route of the town wall provided by Thomas (1992), albeit a little bit further north than indicated in her plan. The location of the human remains north of the apparent town wall also ties in with Thomas's plan of the walled town showing the Augustinian Priory outside of the town walls. The location of the wall foundations corresponds with the route of the town walls provided by Bradley, Halpin and King (1986).

Archaeological test trenching (licence number 96E0124) at the corner of Corban's Lane and South Main Street discovered a ditch (2.7m wide x 0.7m deep) running east-west (O'Carroll, 1996). Finds from the fill indicated that it was cut sometime between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries. It was interpreted by the excavator as being part of the town defences. No trace of a bank or wall was found. Due to the ditch being cut through very loose gravels and boulder clay, it could not be dug to any great depth. Because of this and the presence of slippage and homogenous fill, the excavator proposed that the ditch may have been superseded by another ditch to the



35. View along Church Lane outside Potato Market.



36. View along Church Lane towards St David's Castle.



37. View downhill along unfinished shopping centre.



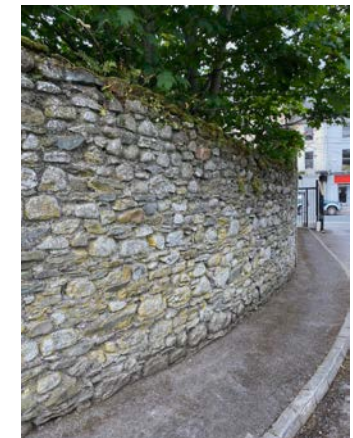
38. View towards St David's Castle.



39. View uphill along Church Lane.



40. View of gates to Potato Market.



41. Stone wall at entry to St David's church.



42. Detail of medieval punched stonework to church.



43. View of stone screen wall in parish office.



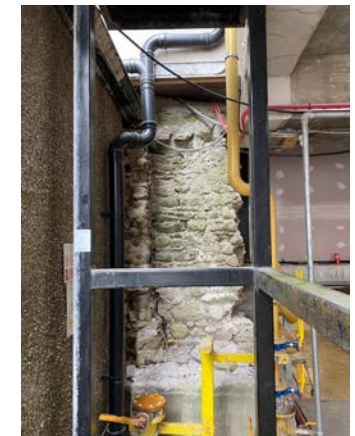
44. View of curved screen wall to St David's Castle.



45-48. View of boundary wall to the rear of property on Abbey Road containing remains of Eustace Castle.



49-51. Views of wall fragments to rear of Abbey Road.



south (ibid). The location of the ditch at the corner of Corban's Lane and South Main Street is further north than the line of the town wall as indicated by Thomas (1992), Murtagh (1983-84) and Bradley (1986). However, as O'Carroll proposed (1996), this ditch may have been short lived as a defensive feature before being superseded by another ditch to the south. Such a later ditch could correspond with the proposed line of the town wall indicated by Thomas (1992) Murtagh (1983-84) and Bradley (1986).

The final possible discovery of town wall defences was at Friary Road in 1998 (licence number 98E0468). The western edge of a linear ditch (3.4m wide) was uncovered along the line of the town wall suggested by Bradley, Halpin and King (1986). One shard of medieval pottery was found at its base indicating a medieval date (Mullins, 1998). The discovery of the ditch is a significant distance away from the route provided by Thomas (1992)

POSSIBLE ROUTES AND FEATURES OF THE TOWN WALL

All the archaeological excavations that have been carried out in Naas Town Centre have been for the purposes of enabling development. None have been explicitly for research purposes. Because of this, we have only a fragmentary understanding of the medieval town walls of Naas. What the excavation record does illustrate is the concentration of medieval settlement in Naas along the main street/historic core and around the South Moat. It also adds to the likelihood of defences having existed.

In the absence of upstanding remains, detailed written accounts or historic maps showing the walls, the current archaeological record – notwithstanding likely remains of town defences in three locations – makes the proposal of a definitive town wall route still highly conjectural. In effect, such an exercise must still be largely based on known walled town patterns elsewhere, aligned with the historical record of the town, its settlement pattern and topography.

What little information is available from archaeological investigations broadly corresponds to the proposed route of the town wall indicated by Bradley, Halpin & King (1986) and to a lesser degree Thomas (1992). Bradley, Halpin and King (1986) noted that their proposed route was highly conjectural, based on urban morphology and map evidence. Despite this, the possible town defences uncovered by archaeologists since 1986 have largely supported their suggested route. By contrast, Murtagh's (1983-84) interpretation of the town wall route is less supported by archaeological excavations. According to Bradley, Halpin and King (1986), the Murtagh alignment is unsatisfactory because it leaves three gates outside the walls.

The archaeological investigation evidence for town defences is limited to one possible section of wall (Byrne, 1999) and two possible sections of a ditch (O'Carroll, 1996; Mullins, 1998). It is worth noting that unlike the ditch uncovered by O'Carroll (1996), the ditch discovered by Mullins (1998) was substantial (3.4m wide). No physical evidence of a bank is yet to be uncovered. The sole possible section of town wall uncovered in 1999 could also be associated with the North Gate, which is believed to have stood in the area (KD019-030001 archaeology.ie as obtained from Baylee, 2018).

Although the excavation record is the result of facilitating development, rather than a targeted research programme, there was at least one excavation that took place over a considerable distance across the medieval core and presumed line of the town wall. Unfortunately, the archaeologically monitored mechanical excavation east-west along Canal Street revealed no material of archaeological significance (licence number 97E0151). That the mechanical excavation failed to find the town wall or defensive ditch is not totally surprising. The archaeological director of the Canal Street investigations noted that the trench followed a previous nineteenth century gas pipeline which had already disturbed the strata (Ó Ríordáin, 1997).

Gate	Note
North Gate	Located on north edge of the town, possibly on south end of Dublin road. Exact location unknown.
Watergate Castle	Bradley et al (1986) proposes that the Watergate Castle was almost certainly a gatehouse at the Water Gate, rather than being a domestic fortified house. Likely located on the eastern edge of the walled town, along Friary Street.
Corban’s Castle	Likely located on the eastern edge of the walled town at the junction of Corban’s Lane and Church Lane (Bradley et al, 1986).
Green Gate	Located at southern edge of walled town Bradley et al (1986) proposes that it was located where the angle of the building projects on to the footpath of the green.
West Gate	Located near New Row on the town’s western edge.
Iago’s Gate	Located on north edge of the town. Exact location unknown.

Table 1: Naas Town Gates. Source: KD019-030001 archaeology.ie as obtained from Baylee, 2018)

It is interesting to note that during works commissioned by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in 2015 to upgrade the main road through Buttevant, County Cork, a large amount of medieval material was uncovered, including a possible town wall gate. This came as a surprise to TII archaeologists who expected to find little archaeology, based off previous investigations. Those previous excavations had been dominated by mechanically dug, narrow slot trenches.

As stated earlier, the first mention of a town wall for Naas comes by way of the 1414 murage grant to levy a toll to fund its construction (Thomas, 1992). Before that, it is possible that a ditch and bank may have existed to defend the town. Such a feature was possibly uncovered by O’Carroll (1996) during her excavations at corner of Corban’s Lane and South Main Street and by Mullins at Friary Road (1998). The 1414 murage grant was followed by others in 1451 and 1468. Additional charters in 1568, 1609 and 1629 each granted tolls and customs to pay for the walling of Naas.

A ‘North Barrier’ or ‘The Barrier’ is mentioned by de Burgh (1891-5). He suggests this may have been in the vicinity of St David’s Castle. Murtagh (1983-84) proposed that this was an inner defensive line. A key part of this inner defence would have been St David’s Castle. O’Donovan (2002) contends that the presence of a barrier implies a staged development of the medieval town. Bradley, Halpin and King (1986) are sceptical of the Barrier forming an inner defensive line or being the initial north boundary of the town. From the basis of excavated sites, there was settlement on both sides of the Barrier by 1300 (O’Donovan, 2002). According to O’Donovan (2002) the distinction between North Main Street and South Main Street is likely to derive from the presence of the Barrier.

There are references to six gatehouses, with possible locations provided by Bradley et al. However, no upstanding or subterranean remains are known to exist. The location of the six gatehouses is not shown in the first edition OS map or indeed any other historic map of Naas.

Code	Site name	Site type	Likely town wall defences	Description
1979:009	Main Street North Naas ('Site of Black Castle')	Urban medieval	No	Two 13th/14th century pits discovered
1989:058	Lawlor's Hotel', Poplar Square, Naas Urban District	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
1991:076	The Random Inn, Poplar Square, Naas	Urban	No	No material found in excavation but reused medieval stonework in standing wall
1994:135	Millbrook, Naas	No archaeological significance	No	Post medieval field drains
1995:157	Abbey St., Naas	Medieval cemetery	No	Cemetery of Dominican Friary
1995:159	Corban's Lane, Naas	Urban	No	No archaeological significance
1995:161	Bank of Ireland, Main St., Naas	Early Christian, medieval	No	Two pits and one archaeological layer
1995:162	Naas Courthouse, North Main Street, Naas	Urban medieval	No	No archaeological significance
1995:163	Town Centre (west), Naas	Urban	No	No archaeological significance
1996:196	Corban's Lane/South Main Street, Naas	Town ditch	Yes	Likely town defensive ditch
1996:198	Rear of 55 Main Street, Naas	Urban medieval	No	No archaeological significance
1997:284	1A North Main Street, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Organic silty layer
1997:285	North and South Main Street, Naas	Urban	No	Disturbed material of archaeological and historical significance
1998:329	Friary Road, Naas	Urban medieval	Yes	Town ditch and possible pits
1998:330	Main Street, Naas	Post medieval	No	Post medieval artefacts and cobbled surface
1998:331	South Main Street, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Well. Organic silt layer
1999:409	Moat Club, Abbey Street, Naas	Adjacent to motte	No	19th century wall
1999:410	Dublin Road, Naas	Town wall	Yes	Excavated stone wall interpreted as being part of town wall

Table 2: Archaeological investigations in or around Naas Town Centre.

1999:411	Friary Road, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Deposits associated with early modern domestic structures
1999:417	19 North Main Street, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Medieval pit
1999:418	St Mary's College, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Almost nothing of archaeological significance
2000:0507	Dublin Road, Naas	Medieval enclosed cemetery	No	Medieval human remains
2001:670	Dublin Road, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Medieval field boundaries, wells, pits and human remains
2001:671	Naas Swimming-Pool, Fair Green, Naas	Medieval	No	Wide ditch, other linear features and pits. Possibly associated with South Moate.
2002:0964	Corban's Lane, Naas	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
2002:0966	Burkes Pharmacy, 3 Main Steet, Naas	Urban medieval/post medieval	No	Late medieval house
2002-0969	Rathasker Road, Naas	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
2003:963	Naas/Johnstown/Kill	Testing	No	Areas of specific potential or interest were investigated under site-specific licences.
2003: 967	6 Main Street South, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Medieval/post medieval buildings
2004:0854	2 Fairgreen Terrace	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
2004:0855	Lawlor	Urban medieval	No	Possible remains of Eustace Castle
2005:772	Convent of Mercy, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Human remains 19th century
2005:773	1 Highland View Terrace, Naas	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
2007:850	Corban's Lane, Naas	Urban medieval	No	No archaeological significance
2008:677	Church Lane, Naas	Urban medieval	No	Pit and truncated burial
2008:679	35-37 Main Street North, Naas	No archaeological significance	No	No archaeological significance
2018:884	Naas Town Hall, Main Street	No archaeology found	No	No archaeological significance
2019:143	Gleann na Grine, Naas	Urban. Human remains	No	Human remains of one adult

Table 2: Archaeological investigations in or around Naas Town Centre.

5.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that: Cultural Significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the cultural significance of a place. Archaeological, Historical, Architectural and Social interest categories will be used to assess the significance of the walled town of Naas, Co Kildare.

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

- Documentary sources, standing remains and excavations at Naas confirm that it was an important royal site prior to the establishment of a walled market town by the Anglo Normans in the thirteenth century.
- The precise extent and alignment of the walled town of Naas remains a matter of conjecture. The largest circuit proposed by Bradley et al. encloses an area of almost seventeen hectares.
- This makes it comparable to other walled towns such as Castledermot, which is a smaller settlement today or more intact circuits elsewhere such as Galway city, which is now a larger city.
- Although the town defences of Naas have yet to be defined, excavations and research have contributed to our understanding. Much remains to be discovered about their design and extent.

- The fact that no known standing sections of the town wall remain enhances the significance of future discoveries. It is hoped that as evidence is collected over time, more will be learned with certainty as to the design and scale of the town defences.
- Other remaining sections, where they are identified, provide vital information as to the original scale and design of the walls and their defensive structures. Many later walls found today were most likely built on the foundations of the medieval town wall circuit.



- The medieval street pattern has largely been retained, although later developments and clearances including the loss of all its gates have made the medieval character more difficult to appreciate on the ground.
- More evidence of medieval Naas is likely to be found as opportunities and techniques allow, adding to the appreciation of the cultural heritage of the place.
- As a frontier town on the edge of the Pale, the town wall and associated ditch and possible bank are of considerable archaeological interest.

52. Jostle stone at churchyard entrance.

5.2 HISTORICAL INTEREST

- Along with nearby historic walled towns of Kildare, Castledermot, Athy - they make a valuable cluster with similarities and differences that provide rich evidence of the medieval period in Ireland, especially frontier towns of the Pale.
- The central position of Naas within the Anglo-Norman lordship, hosting many parliaments in the fifteenth century, meant that it was of strategic importance.
- Town defences, present or lacking, would have played an important part in the history of Naas and are essential to understanding its development as an Anglo-Norman market town.
- Naas has grown to become the county town of Kildare with a population of over 21,000, long surpassing Kildare or Castledermot, but overtaken in recent decades by nearby Newbridge.
- The town was attacked and sacked on several occasions - by Lord Skeffington, Silken Thomas, Edward Bruce and both Irish Confederates and Cromwellian forces – suggesting that the town defences (if any) were not effective in protecting the town. Naas was also significantly damaged on at least one occasion by Gaelic Irish raiders.
- These attacks connect Naas and its defences with significant episodes in Irish history and prominent figures. The murage grants from various English kings such King Henry V and Charles I is also significant.



53. Overlay of extent of Medieval Naas on 1950 aerial view.

5.3 ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

- The outline of the defences as formed is key to understanding the urban morphology of the town. They define the pattern of the medieval layout of the streets and burgage plots, that have remained largely unaltered despite the walls being removed.

- Its topography, burgage plot boundaries separated by narrow lanes give Naas a distinctive urban grain, contributing to its medieval character. However, its complex history requires that visitors take time to understand its development.
- As late as the eighteenth century, Naas had retained large ruinous religious houses and several urban tower houses that were impressive testaments to its medieval importance. These were later removed so that only the parish church and a single tower house remain intact from this period.

5.4 SOCIAL INTEREST

- Former defensive circuits contribute to our understanding of the development of Irish society during the medieval period. They were built to protect Anglo-Norman market towns that had been founded to supplant Gaelic power bases.
- Although the extent and outline of the town walls may not be well understood, there is a demonstrable sense of pride in the medieval heritage as demonstrated by vibrant heritage groups.
- The possible removal of the defences is also of interest, attesting to both developments in the technology of warfare as well as political and social change in the Early Modern period.

5.5 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

There has been a settlement at Naas since at least the early medieval period. During the late-thirteenth century, the Anglo-Normans founded a walled market town, making use of the Moats as forts, close to an Early Christian ecclesiastical site dedicated to St Feichin. Along with many other walled towns in Ireland, only scant evidence of its former extent has survived along with its urban form and references in annals and official documents.

As part of the colonization of the island of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans, existing defences and enclosures were fortified or enlarged with stone-built defences. These towns were defensive outposts on the boundaries of the colony, while forming new trading networks. Town walls reflect their setting - topography, geology, economic, political and temporal, and are an essential component in the development of our towns and cities. The medieval heritage of Naas is best exemplified by St David's Castle and the nearby parish church, but deserves to be better known by locals, and more vividly presented to visitors.

Evolving knowledge of the medieval heritage of the walled town will remain a subject of debate. With its medieval street pattern and distinctive urban grain of burgage plots, Naas is an interesting example of a purpose-built Anglo-Norman town, and a place of regional significance.

6.0 DEFINING ISSUES & ASSESSING VULNERABILITY

6.1 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

The town walls of Naas are protected under national legislation and statutory guidance. These include the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2013 and the County Kildare Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) and Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027. Other state and local government initiatives such as the National Policy on Town Defences (2008), the County Kildare Heritage Plan 2019-2025 also have a bearing on any proposed policies and actions in this conservation management plan. Consideration is also required of the following directives and acts dealing with natural heritage: the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the Wildlife Acts 1976, and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010.

NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACTS 1930-2004

The town defences of Naas are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (KD019-030001). As a result, the town walls are protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. When the owner or occupier of a property, or any other person, proposes to carry out any work at, or in relation to, a recorded monument, they are required to give notice in writing to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage two months before commencing any work. For a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of a local authority, the written consent of the Minister is required for any works at the monument.



54. Extract from HEV showing archaeological notification area to Naas town centre.

- The full course of the town wall is located within the Zone of Archaeological Potential.
- Any proposed works to the town walls would require the consent of the Minister.

NATIONAL POLICY ON TOWN DEFENCES 2008

The Department of Environment, Heritage & 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.

This places an onus on KCC to impose archaeological monitoring conditions on developments in the vicinity of the walled town circuit, including areas where the precise alignment is not fully understood. Town defences are monuments as defined in the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and are protected under the provisions of this legislation. Town defences are also protected under the Planning and Development Act 2000 when listed as protected structures or within architectural conservation areas.

KILDARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2017-23

The CDP has a strong set of policies and objectives concerning the management of the walled town heritage in the county. Naas is explicitly mentioned in two of the four objectives within the plan, including the creation of this Conservation Management Plan.

AH 10 Avoid disturbance, removal and alteration of the line of town walls as detailed in Conservation and Management Plans or the potential line of the town walls as identified in the Urban Archaeological Survey.

AH 11 Retain where possible the existing street layout, historic building lines and traditional plot widths where these derive from medieval or earlier origins.

AO 1 Support the membership of Kildare, Naas, Athy and Castledermot in the Walled Towns Network.

AO 2 Prepare a Conservation and Management Plan for Athy and Naas Walled Towns.

AO 3 Support the inclusion of walled towns in County Kildare in the Historic Towns Initiative piloted by the DAHG. Seek the preparation and implementation of heritage led regeneration plans (including the public realm) for the historic core of relevant towns in Kildare.

AO 4 Continue to develop the programme of survey and maintenance of Council-owned monuments and structures of historic interest through the Historic Monuments Advisory Committee and with the support of the National Monuments Service.

NAAS LOCAL AREA PLAN 2021-2027

The Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 (2021) recognises the importance of the town walls. The need for Conservation Management & Interpretation Plan for the medieval town walls is noted in the Local Area Plan as part of the strong policy concerning the protection of the archaeological heritage of the town, Policy BH4 (p.109).

Policy BH4 – Archaeological Heritage

It is the policy of the Council to safeguard the archaeological heritage in Naas and avoid negative impacts on sites, monuments, features or objects of significant historical or archaeological interest.

Relevant objectives elsewhere include:

BH 4.1: Protect and preserve in situ (or upon agreement preservation by record) items of archaeological interest provided for on the Sites and Monuments Record (www.archaeology.ie) from inappropriate development that would adversely affect and/or detract from the interpretation and setting of these sites.

BH 4.2: Protect the historic core of Naas and retain where possible the existing street layout, historic building lines, traditional plot widths and medieval walls where these derive from medieval origins.

BH 4.6: Seek the implementation of heritage-led regeneration including that of the public realm, in Naas's historic core, through funding sources such as the Historic Towns Initiative and the Urban Regeneration Development Fund.

Action: To prepare a Conservation Management and Interpretation Plan for the Town Walls of Naas.

It is a policy of the Naas Local Area Plan 2021-2027 (ibid, p.105) to protect the character of the Naas Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). Much of town wall circuits as proposed by Thomas, Murtagh or Bradley et al. lies within the Naas ACA. Of the six objectives concerning Naas ACA in the Local Area Plan, two are particularly relevant for this CMP:

BH 2.1 Ensure that new development, extensions and renovation works within or adjacent to Naas ACA is sympathetic to the distinctive character of the area and enhances the special character and visual setting of the ACA including vistas, streetscapes, building line, fenestration patterns and architectural features.

BH 2.4 Conserve and enhance the unique characteristics of the laneways of Naas, their place, scale, material elements and form and promote their overall enhancement within the context of a Public Realm Strategy.

There are twelve protected views within the Naas ACA. Any proposals concerning the interpretation of the town defences need to consider any possible impact on these views. There are two objectives concerning protected views:

BH 3.1 Protect the visual amenity and character of protected views in Naas as identified in this Plan and the Kildare County Development Plan.

BH 3.2 Require a Visual Impact Assessment of proposals/planning applications for development that may impact on the special character and visual amenity of protected views as part of the development management process.

In contrast to previous approaches to natural heritage, the current Local Area Plan for Naas considers the natural heritage of the town as a strategically important attribute. As such, the natural heritage is considered as green infrastructure, essential to climate change action, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and placemaking. The aim of the relevant objectives in the plan are to:

To enhance the role of the natural environment to promote climate adaptation, placemaking and enhance biodiversity through promoting green infrastructure (p.91).

Relevant policies and objectives include:

Policy It is the policy of the Council to protect, reinforce and strengthen the Green Infrastructure network in Naas and to strengthen links to the wider regional network.

NE 1.3 Protect and enhance the built, natural and recreational potential of the Grand Canal Corridor within Naas and to encourage and promote sustainable access to and enjoyment of the Grand Canal.

It is worth noting that the presumed western edge of the town wall is close to the Grand Canal, especially the dock. The Grand Canal is a proposed Natural Heritage Area.

COUNTY KILDARE HERITAGE PLAN 2019-2025

A county heritage plan is a non-statutory document published by heritage offices in local authorities. Such plans identify priorities and establishes a framework for the management of heritage within a county. In the current county heritage plan there one specific action referring to town walls.

Action 7 Support the involvement of Kildare Towns in the Walled Town Network or Historic Towns Network.

All four strategic objectives of the plan are applicable to this CMP:

Strategic Objective 1: Increase understanding of Kildare’s heritage through awareness, education and training and to foster stewardship of and involvement in heritage.

Strategic Objective 2: Promote best practice in the conservation and management of County Kildare’s heritage resource.

Strategic Objective 3: Disseminate heritage data and information to a wide audience, undertake surveys/research and to inform and develop heritage policy which promotes heritage.

Strategic Objective 4: Promote heritage as a resource that contributes to quality of life and to cultural and economic development in County Kildare.

COUNTY KILDARE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2009-2014

Although the plan does not specifically address the town walls, any proposed actions associated with walled town heritage should be in keeping with the ethos of the plan to protect and enhance biodiversity within Naas.

KILDARE 2025 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Published by Kildare County Council, the purpose of Kildare 2025 is to guide economic development and investment within the county. It contains

eight focus areas. To allow these focus areas to be delivered there are three enabling actions. One of those is placemaking and quality of life. Within this enabling action, strategic objective 1 is of relevance for this CMP:

Strategic Objective 1 Promote the local heritage and public amenities of towns and villages that support and underpin economic opportunities.

HERITAGE IRELAND 2030: A FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE

In February 2022, Ireland’s new national heritage plan - Heritage Ireland 2030 - was published. It provides a framework for the protection, conservation, promotion and management of Ireland’s heritage. Its vision is that:

Recognised for its contribution to society and well-being, Ireland’s heritage will be valued, nurtured and protected and placed at the very centre of our decision making around Ireland’s future.

Within the document climate change and biodiversity loss are a key focus. Objectives are grouped under three themes:

- *Theme 1 Communities and Heritage*
- *Theme 2 Leadership and Heritage*
- *Theme 3 Heritage Partnerships*

Particularly relevant objectives in the plan include:

Theme 1 Communities and Heritage

6. Enhance physical and digital access to heritage in public and private ownership

8. Support the contemporary presentation and interpretation of heritage, including through better use of technology

10. Integrate the role of heritage in place-making, economic development and sustainable tourism into all relevant strategies

11. Foster opportunities and training for community partners to be directly involved in the care and stewardship of our national heritage.

Theme 2 Leadership and Heritage

9. Identify opportunities for, and realise the potential of, heritage-led economic regeneration and sustainable business and tourism development

To realise the plan’s objectives, a set of 158 actions were created. Both the objectives and actions will be added to, reviewed and amended as required. Action 37 is of particular relevance:

37. Integrate heritage considerations into urban and rural regeneration to ensure that built and natural heritage objectives underpin the planning and development process and inform the ‘Town Centres First’ policy approach.

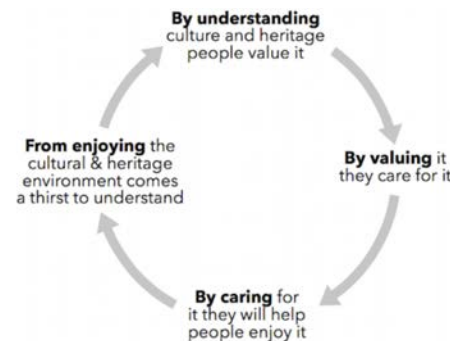
WILDLIFE PROTECTION

Protection to several species and designated landscapes is provided under the European Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) directives, Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations 2011, the Wildlife Acts 1976 and the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000-2010. Where development is proposed that impacts upon a protected species or place, a derogation license must be sought from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Although there are no designed sites along the line of the town walls, the Grand Canal proposed Natural Heritage Area is to the immediate west of the possible eastern line of the medieval town defences. Aside from designated landscapes, protected species (e.g. bats) may be impacted by proposed works.

6.2 OWNERSHIP & USE

The conjectural wall circuit passes through lands such as public roads and open space which are the responsibility of the local authority. There are numerous private landowners around the circuit where the various conjectural lines form boundaries, on both the internal and external sides, or travels underneath their property. This makes access potential town defences and responsibility for their care complex, involving negotiation and collaboration between all the stakeholders.

While the walls no longer serve their defensive purpose the sites along its conjectural line are now used as private dwellings, gardens, car parks, commercial or industrial spaces and yards. Much of the alignment is not within public ownership, fortunately the most impressive and intact section is owned by MCC and used as a works depot.



55. Cultural Heritage Virtuous Circle diagram Godden Mackay Logan Ltd. (2008)

6.3 BUILT HERITAGE

Along the circuit, upstanding remains may not be medieval, having been reconstructed on earlier foundations where they had fallen away. These are nonetheless of historic importance and require assessment by conservation experts and consolidation by skilled masons trained in the use of lime mortar and traditional techniques.

6.4 ACCESS & SETTINGS

Issues such as access, health and safety and rights of way present challenges for the wall circuit. These can be overcome to some extent by means of interpretation and presentation, and by proper management and consultation. Parking is available in many places around the town, but is also found to rear of buildings in places of archaeological and amenity potential. Restrictions on access to different sections of the wall outline should be made clear to those undertaking the tour to avoid disappointment. Establishing a route that follows the wall circuit as close as is possible will be an important strategic initiative that will enhance visitor experience and assist in the protection of the town wall and conservation into the future. This will involve extensive consultation and the cooperation of the various stakeholders.

6.5 HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and safety are important considerations to ensure that locals and visitors are made aware of the risks, and that adequate management procedures are in place, and steps taken to address areas of concern.

6.6 INTERPRETATION

The lack of visibility and alterations to their setting make the town defences difficult to interpret. When carrying out our field surveys, locals encountered along the route were surprised to hear that their property or a place for which they were familiar formed part of the walled circuit and contained fabric that was possibly five hundred years of age. Where physical evidence is lacking, interpretation strategies need to engage the imagination of the visitor so that gaps in knowledge are filled.

6.7 VULNERABILITIES & THREATS

In relation to the issues outlined above, the vulnerability of the archaeological heritage can be summarised as set out below:

Preservation

- Interventions may be necessary to provide improved access, or to repair or stabilise surviving sections of the town defences. This work needs to be informed by current best practice, be reversible and should not detract from the setting of the monument.
- The complex ownership and uncertainty in relation to the wall circuit can make it difficult to assign responsibilities for their protection or obtaining access for their inspection. It also makes it difficult to carry out archaeological investigations, even using non-invasive methodologies, on private properties in built-up areas.

Understanding

- At present, the focus on the early modern built heritage of Naas is understandable. However, it is important that the medieval urban form and streets are also presented to visitors.
- Surviving fabric from the town defences may survive under current ground levels on private properties, embedded in buildings or along boundaries. Our knowledge is confined to evidence gleaned from historic maps, documentary records, individual surveys or where archaeological testing follows development of sites.
- While the lack of knowledge about the precise location and condition of the wall circuit is a significant threat to its preservation, statutory protections and planning policies already in place could lead to a much-improved awareness and setting for the surviving sections of town wall.

7.0 CONSERVATION & MANAGEMENT POLICIES

7.1 APPROACH & OBJECTIVES

All conservation works are guided by the principle of minimum intervention as set out in the Burra Charter – or as little as possible, but as much as is necessary. The conservation objectives for the former town defences of Naas as well as boundary walls associated with burgage plots that may have survived can be summarised as follows:

- to provide guidance on best conservation practice for the preservation of the built heritage; the church, St David’s Castle, the conjectural alignments, identified surviving wall sections, and any associated earthworks and buried archaeology
- to provide for the effective management of the flora and fauna that may inhabit standing medieval fabric, including timely treatment of invasive species, and assessment of the impact of the natural heritage on the cultural heritage to find the correct balance
- to set out an approach as to how to improve awareness of the medieval heritage to locals and visitors
- identify key messages and themes to be communicated to visitors
- ensure that interpretations of the built and cultural heritage of the medieval town are well-researched and engaging
- to provide for the use of the settings of the surviving medieval fabric as a cultural, amenity and educational resource

- ensure that the medieval heritage is accessible to as many people as possible, but not to its detriment or to the safety and health of the public
- to maintain the medieval heritage, seeking capital funding for repairs and the enhancement of its setting
- to promote the medieval layout as a heritage asset for Naas, making links and forming networks with the many other heritage sites in the county and region in Ireland’s Ancient East

7.2 CONSERVATION POLICIES

7.2.1 PROTECTION OF BUILT HERITAGE

Ensure the protection of the medieval built heritage through its maintenance and repair and the preservation and improvement of its settings. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency (physical stability, public safety), and informed by regular inspection and expert advice. Of particular interest in Naas is the conservation of its street pattern, back lanes and burgage plots that give it its distinctive historic character.

7.2.2 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (BURIED)

Non-intrusive methods of archaeological investigation should be used, combined with traditional excavation only when justified by a comprehensive research and best conservation practice. A research framework should be followed and impacts on the subterranean archaeology are to be minimised. Any proposed excavation should have a strong rationale and contribute to the understanding and interpretation of medieval Naas.

7.2.3 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (BURIED)

The sub-surface archaeology should be disturbed as little as possible so that it can be preserved intact. Provide physical protection where appropriate.

7.2.4 PROTECTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE (ABOVE GROUND)

St David's Church and St David's Castle have been conserved following programmes of repair and maintenance, together with the preservation of their settings. Ensure that any actions, or any other works proposed in the vicinity of the monument, do not cause damage to potential wall circuit.

7.2.5 PROTECTION OF NATURAL HERITAGE

Carry out a habitat study for the medieval town settings, with an aim to increase species diversity. Avoid the use of herbicides, seeking to maintain the planting on a seasonal rather than a weekly/monthly basis. Ensure that any works proposals for the walls are informed by an arboricultural impact assessment.

7.2.6 REPAIR & MAINTENANCE

Provide regular on-going maintenance as the most effective way to preserve historic structures and landscapes. Repairs to historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters, using appropriate details and materials of matching quality. Conservation should proceed to an overall strategy for repair and maintenance of built and natural heritage.

7.2.7 URGENT WORKS

Vegetation removal and careful sequencing of specialist repair works will be required to ensure that the risks to the safety of the public, and preservation are addressed.

7.2.8 INTERVENTION

Where interventions are found to be necessary to improve access, or to conserve a structure, they are to be designed to the highest conservation standards and should not detract from the interpretation of the built heritage. Future projects should be focussed on conserving and improving access to historic features such as the church and castle, and the likely defensive circuit, with each initiative seen as a learning opportunity to come to a fuller understanding of the cultural heritage of the walled town.

7.2.9 USE

The preservation of the few sections of town defences and settings that have been identified depended on their former and present uses. Ensure that redevelopment or refurbishment of such sites with new uses do not put the preservation of the monument at further risk, and where possible, existing uses that are potentially damaging to the monument are discontinued.

7.2.10 REVERSIBILITY

All interventions should follow the principle of the reversibility, so that a structure or site can be returned to its former state where possible.

7.2.11 EXPERT ADVICE & SKILLS

Continue to ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (specialist conservators, conservation architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced artisans and tradesmen.

7.2.12 CONSULTATION

Consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed interventions along the town defensive circuit or in the shared setting of the church and castle is important given several different ownerships.



56. Headstones set into the nave wall of St David's Church.

7.2.13 SETTINGS & KEY VIEWS

Protect and enhance the settings of the built heritage. New developments should not negatively impact on existing monuments and settings through their placement, scale and design.

7.2.14 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As the historic core is included in the Naas Local Area Plan zoned as suitable for 'town centre' development, it is essential that the town wall alignment and setting of the surviving medieval heritage is maintained, and any surviving historic fabric conserved and presented to the public.

7.2.15 ENCROACHMENT & INVASIVE SPECIES

The surviving medieval heritage is at risk of encroachment by trees, shrubs and ivy, along with invasive plant species establishing in quiet corners unseen. Monitoring and treatment should be undertaken, using best practice by avoiding the use of herbicides and reducing potential impacts on the environment and built heritage.

7.3 MANAGEMENT POLICIES

7.3.1 CONSERVATION PLAN REVIEW

Review this Plan at agreed intervals (every 6-years to coincide with Development Plans or Local Area Plans) to benchmark progress in implementation, re-assess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies. This overview reduces the risk of cumulative impacts due to incremental change without an agreed plan.

7.3.2 LICENSING & APPROVALS

Any archaeological investigation will need to be licensed, notice for works will need to be sent to the National Monuments Services two months in advance of works commencing in accordance with the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

7.3.3 INSPECTIONS

Set in place procedures for on-going monitoring of the condition of the walls to ensure their long-term preservation.

7.3.4 DEPTH IN TIME

Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the built and cultural heritage of Naas Walled Town requires that all the aspects that contribute to its cultural significance be valued.

7.3.5 RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Ensure that on-site archaeological research is governed by an approved research strategy that seeks to answer specific questions, using non-invasive methodologies followed by targeted excavation, when opportunities and resources allow.

Ensure that the dissemination of research findings, in a variety of media involving the community where possible, is made accessible to the public.

Seek to develop a research framework addressing gaps in the current knowledge of the town defences of Naas.

7.3.6 WIDER ASSOCIATIONS

Historic places and sites should not be considered in isolation, but rather as parts of a wider cultural landscape, where each element relates to the other. This is particularly important in Naas and Co Kildare which are rich repositories of built heritage with strong associations between sites through each period of history.

7.3.7 AUTHENTICITY

Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the built heritage is communicated to the public. This is particularly important for Naas, as its Anglo-Norman town defences have disappeared, if indeed they ever existed.

7.3.8 OWNERSHIP

Consider rights of private owners in relation to the access, conservation and presentation of the archaeological heritage. Public access and preservation of the town walls will require the cooperation and understanding of landowners in partnership with the local authority.

7.3.9 PUBLIC SAFETY

Prioritise public safety in relation to accessing the town defensive circuit.



57. Example of town wall paving marker in Kilkenny.

7.3.10 LEAVE NO TRACE

Visitors are to be informed of their shared responsibility for the conservation of medieval heritage by avoiding activities or behaviour that put it at risk. This would include but not limited to littering, vandalism, graffiti, unauthorised access, lighting fires, ground disturbance or anything that would cause disturbance to other visitors or the local community.

7.3.11 INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

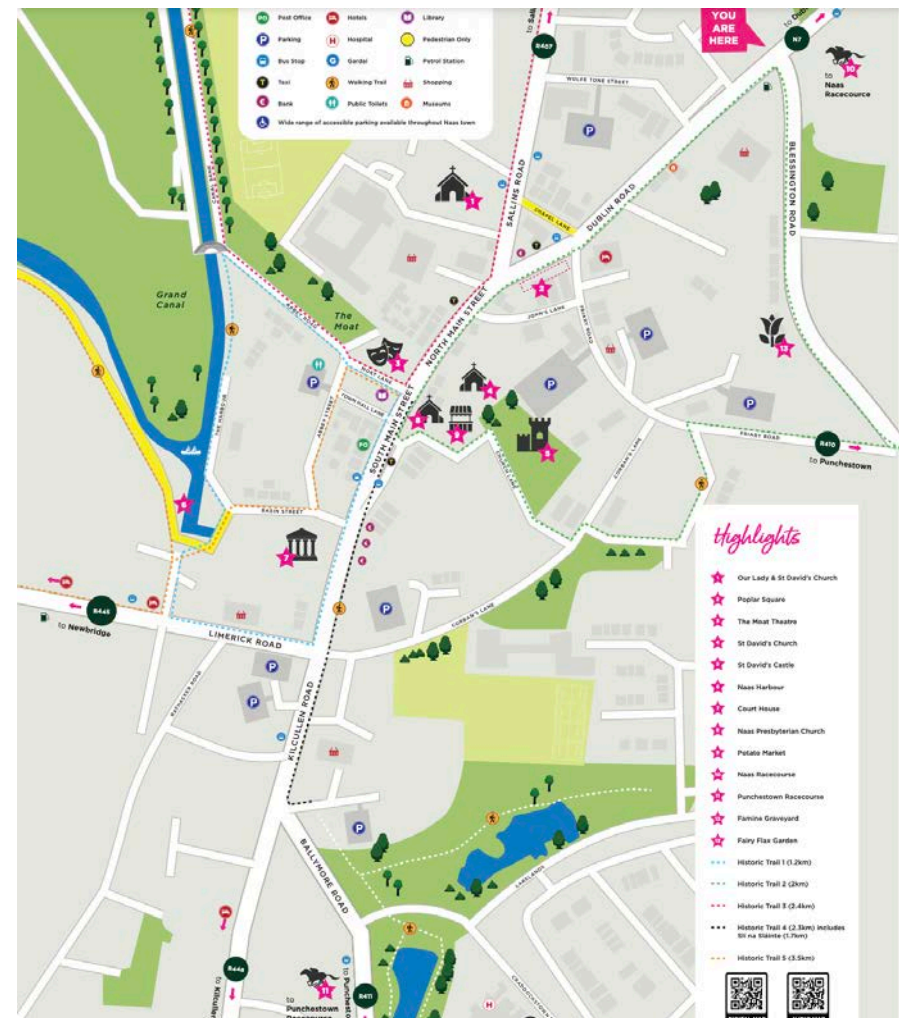
Update interpretative signage, designed in accordance with an overall masterplan, so that the public can more meaningfully interpret the cultural heritage represented by the town defences. Signs should be well-designed and located so as not to detract from their setting. Current heritage trail maps could be updated to show the conjectural town wall layout as well as the surviving sections, along with the gate sites that are shown at present.

7.3.12 MARKING THE ALIGNMENT

Where the conjectural wall circuit is in the public realm, the line of the wall should be marked with stone paving or lighting. This would be particularly effective at the gate locations to mark the outer limits of the medieval town to the public, or for those following the heritage trail. A paving stone could be inscribed with a description of the feature and a location map identifying its location along the wall circuit. Placing these plaques at high level would also contribute to an engaging visual language to emerge.

7.3.13 FORMAL & INFORMAL LEARNING

Ensure that the presentation of the cultural heritage of Medieval Naas is aimed at as broad an audience as possible.



58. Extract from Naas tourist map (intokildare.ie) showing walking routes.



59: The Kilmallock town wall walk is an community amenity, a conduit for tourists and a safe walking route for children going to school. It is also a corridor for the promotion of biodiversity.

7.3.14 ON-GOING INTERPRETATION

As knowledge and understanding of the town defences grows and changes through further research and investigations, ensure that interpretation media are updated accordingly.

7.3.15 INAPPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS

Whenever possible, inappropriate interventions along the town wall alignment should be removed. The integrity of the town wall should be

reinforced where necessary, replacing later additions such as fencing or blockwork with stonework that minimizes impact on the archaeological heritage and enhance, rather than detract from, their settings.

7.3.16 DEVELOPMENT PLAN OR LOCAL AREA PLAN MAPS

Include the conjectural outline of the wall in future development plan maps (in addition to the Zone of Archaeological Potential) and other local authority publications to reinforce understanding of the extent and location of the walls to the public and to aid forward planning for service providers and building professionals.

7.3.17 SETTINGS & KEY VIEWS

Continue to protect and enhance the settings of the monuments and key views through planning policies and development plans. This is required for both standing monuments and buried archaeology.

7.3.18 SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure that all events and initiatives in relation to the cultural heritage of the medieval Naas are carried out in accordance with sustainable practices.

7.3.19 OUTREACH & PARTICIPATION

Support initiatives that promote understanding of the archaeological heritage and that communicate its cultural significance. The stakeholders should seek to participate in and promote the aims of the Irish Walled Towns Network and the Walled Towns Friendship Circle.

Encourage local schools to use the town wall circuit as a teaching resource. Field trips could be managed by appointment and would have relevance to history and civics subjects.

8.0 CONSERVATION & ACCESS STRATEGIES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Naas has expanded rapidly over recent decades. It takes its place among once small towns and villages that surround the greater urban area of Dublin that have experienced rapid growth in recent decades such as Swords, Balbriggan, Navan, Newbridge and Bray. This is evident when viewing the development plan map for the town where the historic core that persisted for centuries now forms a relatively small proportion of the town area.

This development should be viewed as an opportunity for the medieval heritage of the town, if robust protections are in place ensuring that sensitive and imaginative responses are devised to works that involve the town defences, street layouts, frontages and burgage plots. Other heritage towns can suffer from a lack of investment and declining populations. The medieval heritage of Naas should be conserved and presented, thereby enhancing the quality of life for residents, strengthening their connection to this historic place, and providing opportunities for tourism and employment in heritage.

8.2 AUDIENCES

The conservation of a complex site involves input from many different sources, each with their own expertise or areas of responsibility. These stakeholders are the intended audience of the Conservation Management Plan. Their understanding and adoption of the conservation and interpretation policies are crucial to the preservation of the medieval

heritage and town defences of Naas as a valuable cultural place for the benefit of the whole community.

8.2.1 STATE BODIES

Kildare County Council are guardians of the town defences where they are identified with responsibility for their maintenance and for implementation of planning policy and ensuring its statutory protection. The National Monuments Service in the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage also oversee the statutory protection of any town defences, being a national monument.

8.2.2 LOCAL COMMUNITY

Improving understanding and appreciation of the town defences among the local community will enhance local pride in their cultural heritage, and assist motivated residents to become active stakeholders in preserving the monument in its separate, but linked, settings that form part of private land holdings.

8.2.3 SCHOOLS/ UNIVERSITIES

The best way to foster interest and appreciation of the cultural heritage among the local community is to include education programmes for schools. It would be a valuable teaching aid for students in subjects such as archaeology, religion, architecture, as well as tourism and heritage protection, flora and fauna.

8.2.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE & HISTORICAL GROUPS

Local groups with interest in heritage and culture, or groups with specialist interest, should be encouraged to engage with the cultural heritage that the town defences represent and communicate this to both their neighbours and visitors.

8.3 KEY MESSAGES/ THEMES

To frame the interpretation of medieval Naas, it is important to set out clearly the messages and themes that are to be communicated to the relevant audiences. It is essential that all information be communicated clearly to the public in a structured yet engaging way.

8.3.1 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Further research is necessary to understand the historic development of medieval and early modern Naas and how this relates to the town defences. It is important that existing knowledge is accurately conveyed, and further research questions outlined and presented in ways that make visits to the town walls interesting.

8.3.2 CONSERVATION & MAINTENANCE

While further development of the historic core will continue in order to ensure that suitable facilities are being provided, it is essential that Kildare County Council continue the process of conserving the town defences (where identified) and their settings.

8.4 PRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

8.4.1 STATUTORY PROTECTION

While town defences where identified are a national monument, it is important that the description of their extent and identification of possible fragments is kept up-to-date. This will provide an additional level of oversight and protection for any proposed interventions, or developments adjacent to the sites. Kildare County Council will continue to consult with

the National Monuments Service whenever development is proposed that has potential impacts.

8.4.2 IMPROVED LINKAGES

Online resources, such as Ireland's Ancient East, introduce Naas to a wide audience, with an emphasis on equine sports. Being located off the M7 motorway, along with other towns such as Kildare and Newbridge, it is easily accessible from Dublin city.

8.4.3 COMMUNITY USE

Increasing knowledge and understanding of the town defences among the local community will assist in its preservation. In time, the development of the medieval gardens as part of the public realm, accessible to the community and conserved to best conservation practice has the potential to enhance the tourist potential of the town.

8.4.4 INTERPRETATIVE MEDIA

Using several different strategies to communicate to your audience can lead to wider and more meaningful participation. Information panels should be carefully designed so as not to detract from their settings and should be capable of being updated. Signs should also link into online resources using QR (Quick Response) codes or other devices.

8.5 CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The conservation of the town defences of Naas is restricted by our lack of knowledge regarding their extent and location. Buried remains that remain undisturbed are not at significant risk; statutory protections within the town such as the Zone of Archaeological Importance should assist in their



60. Visitors on walled town guided tour at St Audoen's Gate in Dublin.

preservation into the future. There should also be an awareness of the possibility of sections of town wall, or associated medieval fabric, which may survive embedded in walls of townhouses that have the external appearance of eighteenth or nineteenth century fabric.

8.5.1 MAINTENANCE & REPAIR OF BUILT HERITAGE

- The cultural heritage value of the town defences would be enhanced by improving accessibility, in a way that respects the sensitivity of the sites.

- Proposals for the development of these settings should be considered in relation to the management and preservation of the medieval heritage, providing funding for their repair and maintenance.
- Emergency repairs to the walls and selective removal of trees will be required to assist in their preservation as well as the security of the site and safety of the public. This work is to be carried out by conservation specialists and be implemented outside the nesting season in accordance with an arboriculture impact assessment.

8.5.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Geophysical survey techniques are constantly improving and may well yield interesting data that will provide insights into the archaeological heritage. This might include the identification of other defensive features, town gates and the foundations of former sections of town defences.

PROJECT: WALLED TOWN WALK

Naas has an informative tourist map available on the intokildare.ie online resource. There are several walking routes identified, none of which map directly on the town wall circuit.. In time, linkages along the defensive circuit could be enhanced whenever sites are proposed for re-development. At present, awareness and appreciation of the town defences could be enhanced by drawing attention to the location of the former town gates. Marking the entrances into the town could form part of a festival where access can be restricted to areas and where the public walk through temporary gates. These could be created using screened scaffolds to mimic the form of medieval town gates, a version of which was installed at Housesteads Roman Fort for a festival in 2022. A more permanent feature could be used in the hard landscaping should the location of a former town gate be identified in the future.



61. Map showing proposed medieval walking route and Medieval Naas encounters.



62. Scaffolding effigy of Roman town gate at Housesteads in Northumberland. A similar strategy could be used to represent the wall circuit, town gates or Norman keep in Naas as part of a medieval festival.

An important step would be to identify key locations where the town walls can be encountered, and to include the circuit on tourist maps. Naas is fortunate in that much of the route is contained within the public realm. An obvious place to start or complete a tour of the circuit would be at St David's Church. This was an important site in the centre of the medieval town. The route would follow the wall circuit along

This could form part of a public realm enhancement scheme to link different sites of interest around Naas. Using quality contrasting materials such as stone setts, a platform crossing could be installed to allow pedestrians to

cross safely at these locations, where interpretive material would allow them to imagine the setting when the gates were still intact. Reusing historic setts that may be in storage and combining with specially commissioned plaques and signage together can assist in wayfinding as well as creating a sense of discovery. Guided walking tours of the town would emphasize these locations to discuss the history of the town. For those entering the town by vehicle, the ramps recreate a 'threshold' at the entries to the historic core that was been lost with the removal of the gates

PROJECT: WALLED TOWN SETTINGS

Future development within the historic core, and to infill sites along the circuit are important opportunities to enhance the conservation and presentation of the walled town heritage. Lanes and burgage plots are as essential to the medieval heritage of Naas and should be protected and considered at risk from development where there is a tendency to consolidate smaller properties into larger sites for development as was the case for the large shopping centre in the 2000s. Projects to improve access and settings along the wall circuit may be implemented over time as part of proposals for redevelopment of sites.

PROJECT: MEDIEVAL GARDEN

The best surviving representatives of medieval Naas are hidden from the main streets. In recent decades, the rear of the properties facing the Main Street North and South have been extended and redeveloped. A very different atmosphere pervades to the rear of the main street, where the settings of the church, castle and impressive house all named for St David form an informal cluster. In time, the North Moat and church/ castle setting could enrich the public realm of the town and improve engagement with Medieval Naas and with its surviving built heritage generally. Linking the sites visually as well as with steps, ramps and signage will allow visitors to experience these hidden or difficult to access areas.



63. Map showing public realm improvements to enhance engagement with Medieval Naas.

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