The Chantry College, looking north-west.

The Chantry College is a smaller building adjacent to Hatch’s Castle. It is located to the east of St John the Baptist Church, on Market Street, a continuation of Castle Street, 200m north of the present town centre. It was formerly used as the residence for chaplains to St Mary’s College and was occupied by the sexton as recently as 1875. He further states that the Ardee chantry college chapel at Moore Hall.

The Chantry College, looking south.

Hatch’s Castle

Located to the west of Moore Hall, Hatch’s Castle with its gabled and turret above. The ground-floor plan is roughly semicircular with four floors, with a doorway on the north-west, where there was a vault over the foundations. The internal space on the ground floor is about 185m by 64m by 4.3m.

The original entrance to the building was by means of a lofted opening on the north-west, where there was a vault over the ground floor. The interval space on the ground floor measured is about 185m by 64m by 4.3m.

It is unclear how the upper storeys were accessible from the ground, but Bradley suggested that there may have been a wooden staircase on the exterior of the north wall. On the first floor there is an opening that may be a flat-headed window and another that may have been a doorway. A further opening on the east wall appears to be a blocked fireplace with a flue that continues through the gable of the second floor. The top floor appears to have a correspondingly low roof.

This building is a smaller version of Hatch’s Castle, known as Hatch’s Castle, located outside the present graveyard wall, south of the river and to the east of the bridge. Human remains have been discovered in this area in recent years, far from Moore Hall.

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The motte and bailey

The remains of a route and bailey provide some of the earliest evidence for an Anglo-Norman presence in Ardee. It likely that the route would have been constructed around 1145, when Prince John granted the barony of Ardee to Clifford Pipard.

The motte, known as the Castle Guard or Dawson’s Moat, is located on the eastern outskirts of Ardee on the south side of the river, c. 600m from the present bridge. The mound that forms the motte, one of the largest in the country, may have been built, possibly to the height of 4.3m, with a diameter of 12m by 40m and a flat top measured to the east. It is likely that the bailey would have been located along with the banks and ditches that would have surrounded the route itself.

Further reading


Motte and bailey

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Further reading

Introduction

The town of Ardee, some 30 miles southwest of Drogheda, shows evidence of development from the New Grange site to the Norman era. Today the town is a vibrant shopping venue, its long main street allowing many shops, services, bars and restaurants to present their wares to the passing pedestrian. As a result of its continued development, many of the buildings in the southeast of the medieval town have been re-erected or re-faced and now line Parasol Drive. Nevertheless, the surviving monuments are both spectacular and indicative of Mesolithic activity close to the town and its origin.

The death of Ferdia

Of the many locations mentioned in the Táin, the conflict with Ferdia ranks among the most traumatic episodes for Cuilinn.

The bridge

The principal line of communication through Ardee is the southwest-northeast Market Street from the Bremore Road to Castle Street. A 1641 map indicates by a reference to a quay that the Arthur’s Bridge had been replaced by the Market Bridge, which was re-erected in the eighteenth century.

Town walls and street plan

The earliest surviving monument from the thirteenth century is the market cross. An indication that Ardee may have had more than one bridge is the market bridge. At the earliest, a three-arched bridge forms an integral part of the town’s defences.

St Mary’s Church

A church has been established in Ardee before 1315. In 1337 it is recorded that Edward Bruce had burned ‘the Church of St Mary, the Viga, full of men, women and children’. Of the surviving structure of St Mary’s Church: incorporates three phases of building within it— the fifteenth-century church, a sixteenth-century aisle and the present seventeenth-century, church. The present seventeenth-century facade on the south side is an expensive reconstruction, with a blank elevation marking the site of the earlier building.

The Courthouse

The Courthouse has an important role in the town. From the building facing the largest market fair house to survive in Ireland. The site of its present location dates to the mid-nineteenth century. The earliest sixteenth-century building is the original town hall. The present building replaced the old town hall and is therefore of the same architectural style as the town hall.

Medieval cross fragment

A fragment of the stone cross which apparently dates from the twelfth century, is now in the Courthouse. The surviving fragment of the cross has been re-erected on a concrete shaft and base.

The Courthouse

The Courthouse stands on the main road in the town from Castle Street to the larger market fair house to survive in Ireland. The site of its present location dates to the mid-nineteenth century. The earliest sixteenth-century building is the original town hall. The present building replaced the old town hall and is therefore of the same architectural style as the town hall.