LOUTH COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2027

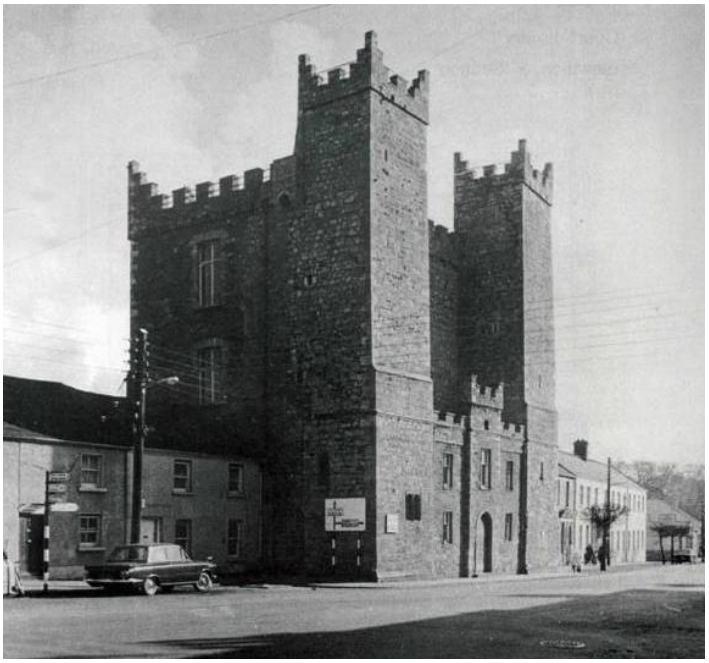
APPENDIX 12

Ardee - ACA Character Appraisal

Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

for Louth County Council
with support from
the Heritage Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council





Ardee

Architectural Conservation Area
Ardee, Co Louth

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1.0 Preface

This assessment of the special character of Ardee Architectural Conservation Area was prepared in 2011 and revised in September 2013 by Lotts Architecture and Urbanism. The study was commissioned by Louth County Council and its progress was guided by Brendan McSherry, Louth Heritage Officer and Angela Dullaghan, Conservation Officer.

Richard McLoughlin
Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd.
September 2013

Acknowledgements

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2.0 Introduction

2.1 Architectural Conservation Areas

Planning legislation allows a planning authority to include objectives in its development plan to preserve the character of places, areas, groups of structures, or townscapes that:

- Are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or
- Contribute to the appreciation of protected structures.

Such areas, places or groups are known as Architectural Conservation Areas, or ACAs. Thirty six ACAs have been designated in County Louth.

An ACA could be an historic town centre, a distinctive streetscape, a terrace of houses, or it might be a wider group of structures associated with a specific building such as a country house or an old mill.

The aim of ACA designation is to preserve and enhance the character of the area or group. The form and arrangement of buildings, structures and landscape features within an ACA are important in how they contribute to the character of the area or group. Historic materials, architectural features, prevailing heights, building lines and plots sizes, as well as the scale and arrangement of streets and open spaces all make a contribution to the character of an ACA.

For this reason, the external appearance of buildings and the features of the open space are protected in an ACA. Planning permission is required for any works that would have an impact on the character of an ACA. Importantly, works which in other locations would meet the criteria for Exempted Development as outlined in the Planning Regulations will require planning permission if they are within an ACA.

Designation as an ACA does not prevent alterations, extensions or new build within the area, but aims to ensure that any new development respects or enhances the special character of the ACA. Works must therefore be carried out in consultation with the planning department and conservation officer, and this is usually through a planning application.

This document is one in a series that set out to define the special character of each individual ACA and give guidance to homeowners, developers, architects and planning professionals on the type of works that would require planning permission in that specific area.

2.2 Location and Setting of ACA

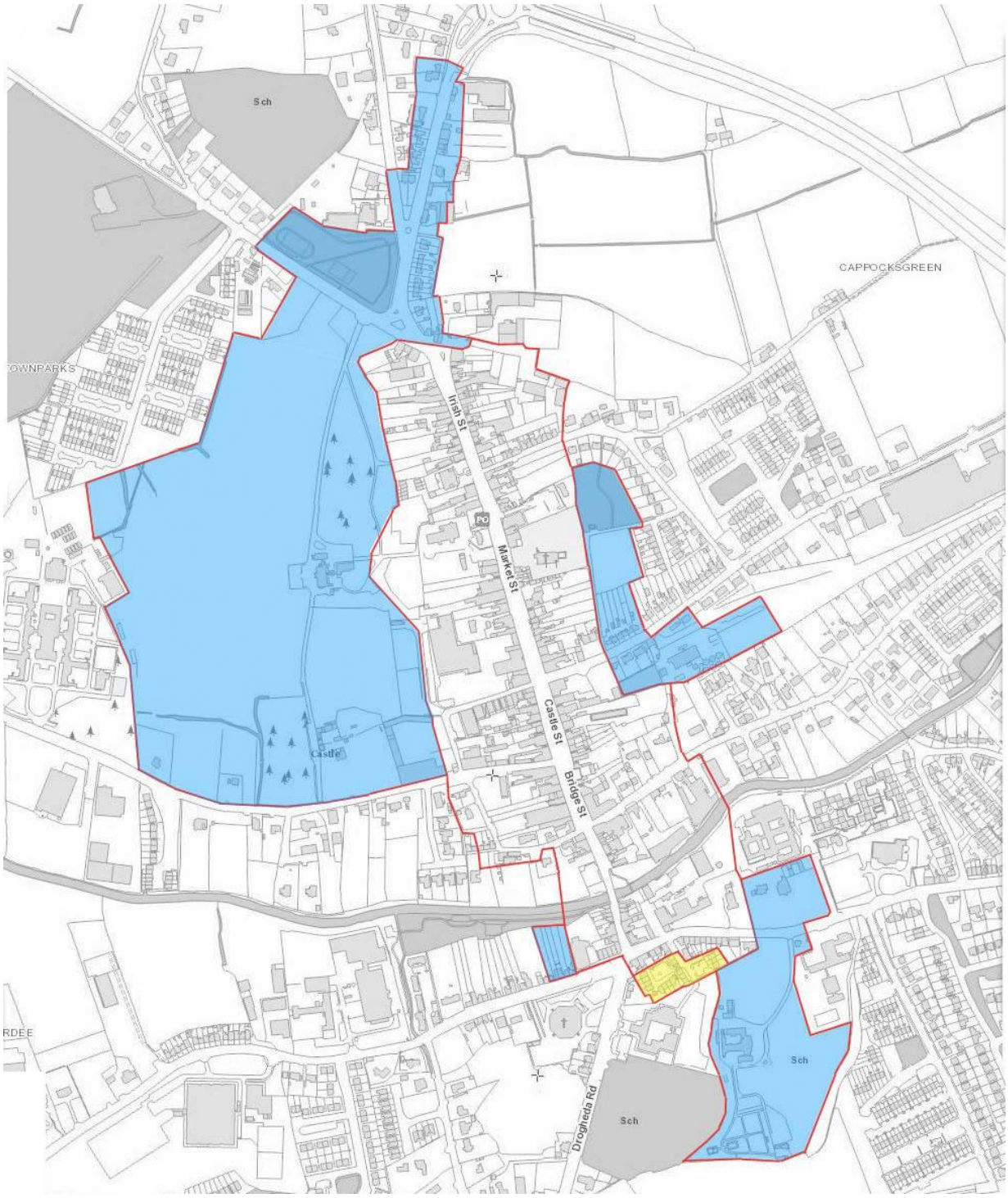
Ardee, in Irish Baile Átha Fhirdhia, is a small market town situated in the west of County Louth. It lies at the junction of the Dublin to Monaghan road (N2) and the Dundalk to Kells road (N52), 16.5km north of Slane, and 17.5 km south east of Dundalk. The town lies 8km west of the M1 motorway, to which it is connected by the N33. These busy national routes bring a lot of traffic into and through Ardee. The town is served by regional routes R170 to Dunleer to the east and R171 to Louth village in the north.

Ardee is organised around a main axis that runs roughly north-south, named variously along its length as Irish Street, Market Street, Castle Street and Bridge Street. A number of approach roads gather at either end of this axis and several others branch off perpendicular to it along its length.

Louth County Council's Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) of December 2002 locates Ardee in a landscape area called the 'Muirhevna Plain'. This is described having 'flat undulating features drained by the meandering lazy rivers of the Fane, Glyde, White and Dee rivers'. Ardee lies on topography that slopes downwards from south to north. The River Dee (An Nith in Irish) flows from west to east to flow into the Irish Sea at Annagassan. The river runs to the south of the old town and is crossed by a historic bridge at the southern end of the main street.

The Landscape Character Assessment notes the rich tree cover in Ardee. The various groups of mature broad leaf trees and the river corridor create rich visual and ecological assets that contribute much to defining the special character of the town. Specimen trees also include cedars and Scots pine.

Fig. 1: Proposed alteration of ACA boundary



3.0 Historical Development of Ardee

3.1 Historical Overview

Ardee, known as Atherdee into the nineteenth century, derives its name from the Irish Áth Fhirdia, 'the Ford of Ferdia'. The ford, an ancient river crossing located upstream from the present bridge is held to be the site of the heroic three-day single combat in which the Connacht warrior Ferdia was slain by his friend and foster brother Cúchulainn, as recorded in the Táin Bó Culaigne or Cattle Raid of Cooley, the epic tale in the Ulster Cycle of Irish mythology.

The town originated as a Norman settlement dating from the late twelfth century, and received five murage grants between 1376 and 1416. Ardee is one of the best examples of a medieval market town in Ireland, and its early footprint still endures today, with the broad linear pattern of Market Street and Castle Street forming the main artery through the town, intersected by narrower streets and laneways running east and west to the former line of the town walls. Long burgage plots are still evident, with a tight network of rubble stone walls delineating the former holdings.

The townscape is dominated by the fortified houses of Ardee Castle (formerly St Leger's) and Hatch Castle, robust reminders of its medieval past. Architects involved in the town's development include Thomas Duff, J.J. McCarthy and the nineteenth-century county surveyor John Neville.

3.2 Medieval Period

The early settlement was established soon after the Norman Invasion by Gilbert Pipard, who accompanied King John to Ireland in 1185. Developments of this time included the Pipard castle at Castleguard to the east of the town, which as late as 1795 still contained vestiges of two octagonal buildings, and the foundation in 1207 of a monastery and hospital for the Fratres Cruciferi or Crutched Friars. A Carmelite monastery was founded by Ralph Pipard in the early 1300s in the east of the town on the River Dee. In 1315 the Scottish invasion of Edward Bruce passed through the town, and the medieval parish church or St Mary, in which the townspeople had taken refuge, was destroyed.

During the later Middle Ages Ardee was an outpost at the northern edge of the Pale bordering Gaelic Ulster, where it was highly vulnerable to attack and was used as rallying point of the English on regular raids against the Ulster Irish. Murage grants given in the early fifteenth century triggered the first major building phase within the town, which saw market areas laid out and streets paved. The town was encompassed by walls as far as the River Dee, with an area of almost 62 acres enclosed. There were six gates in all, Irish Gate, Head Gate, Ash Gate, Blind Gate, Bridge Gate and Cappock's Gate to the east, which survives to the present day in a fragmentary state, the only surviving remains of a gate in the town.

Once established, the walls seem to have acted as the bounds of the town until the end of the medieval period, when the extramural suburb of Irish Street was formed to the north, but the town was not entirely built up inside the defences leaving large tracts of undeveloped areas.

While there is clear evidence for high stone walls on the western side, the side facing away from the Pale, the form of enclosure on the eastern side is less clear, and it is possible that this was an earthen bank rather than a wall of stone. The linear form of the town and the strong building line on its eastern side might indicate that there was once a wall on this line, and that the eastern area was an extension which was never fully walled in or developed. One explanation for the open area within the town would be as a refuge of English settlers driven into the town during periods of conflict.

At some point before the end of the seventeenth century Irish Street was taken into the town and a gate built at its northern end, but it does not appear that the town walls were extended to enclose this suburb.

The footprint within the walls emerged as a linear pattern, with a broad thoroughfare running north–south through the town, formed by the combination of Irish Street, Market Street, Castle Street and Bridge Street, and a number of narrow streets and laneways intersecting it. The smaller streets of Ash Walk and Lamb's Lane forming a cross-street were referred to in 1540 as the 'great cross of the town'. Market Street is mentioned in early sources in 1344 and was the site of the medieval market place where the market-cross (1450) would have originally stood. The layout of many of the burgage plots in the town would appear to have survived, as reflected in the nature of the narrow plots with rubble stone dividing walls to the rear of the both sides of the main street.

Fig. 2: Reconstruction of historical layout by John Bradley (1984)

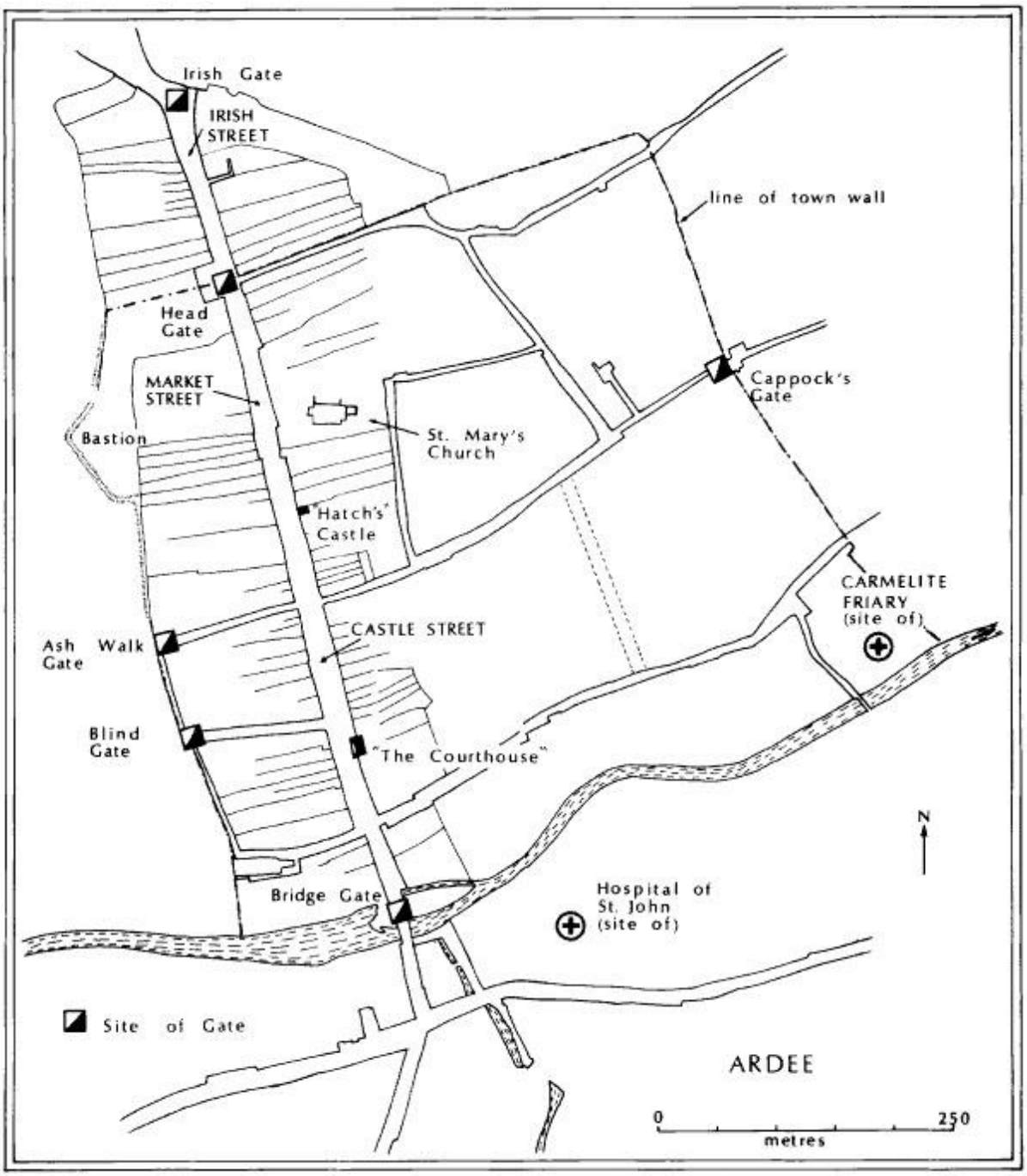
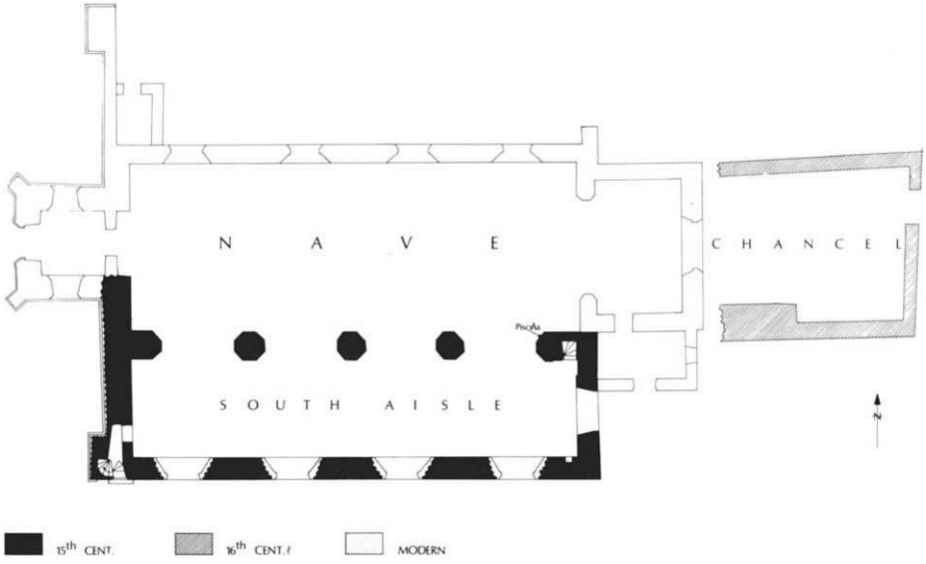


Fig. 3: Ruins of St Mary's Church from Grose's Antiquities (1791-6)



Fig. 4: Plan of St Mary's church, from Bradley



The parish church of St Mary and two chantries had been founded in the fourteenth century. The ruined south aisle, depicted in Grose's Antiquities of c.1791-6 (Fig. 7), were later integrated into the present Church of Ireland Church (Lhs017-006 NIAH 13823052). The unroofed ruin of the Chantry College, established before 1487 by Walter Verdun chaplain of Ardee, survives east of the church site, being the southern part of the original structure, and one of the few chantries to survive in this country. Ardee Castle at the south end of Castle Street (Lhs017-017 NIAH 13823004), formerly St Leger's Castle, replaced on earlier structure founded by Roger Pipard in1207. It is the largest fortified medieval townhouse to survive in the country, although its function changed through the centuries.

Fig. 5: Ardee Castle, section and elevation from Murtagh

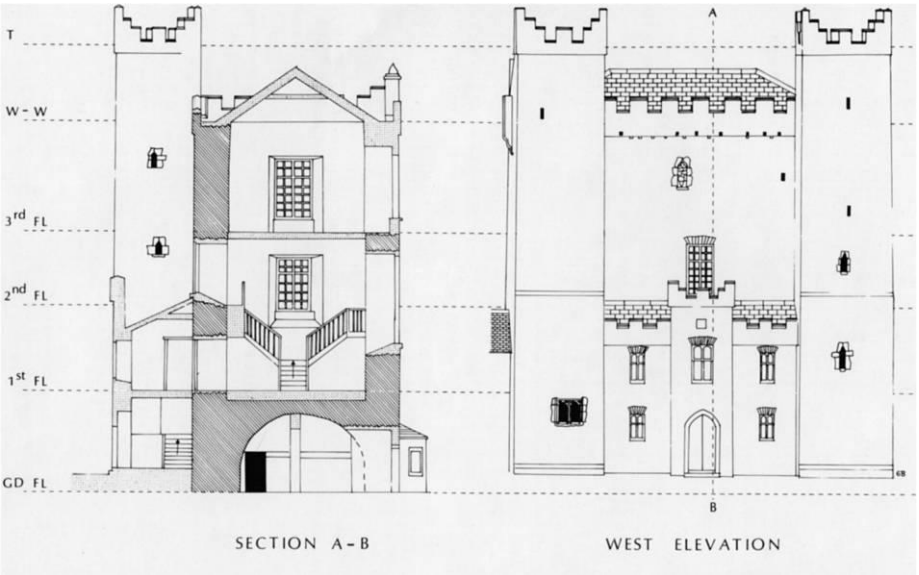
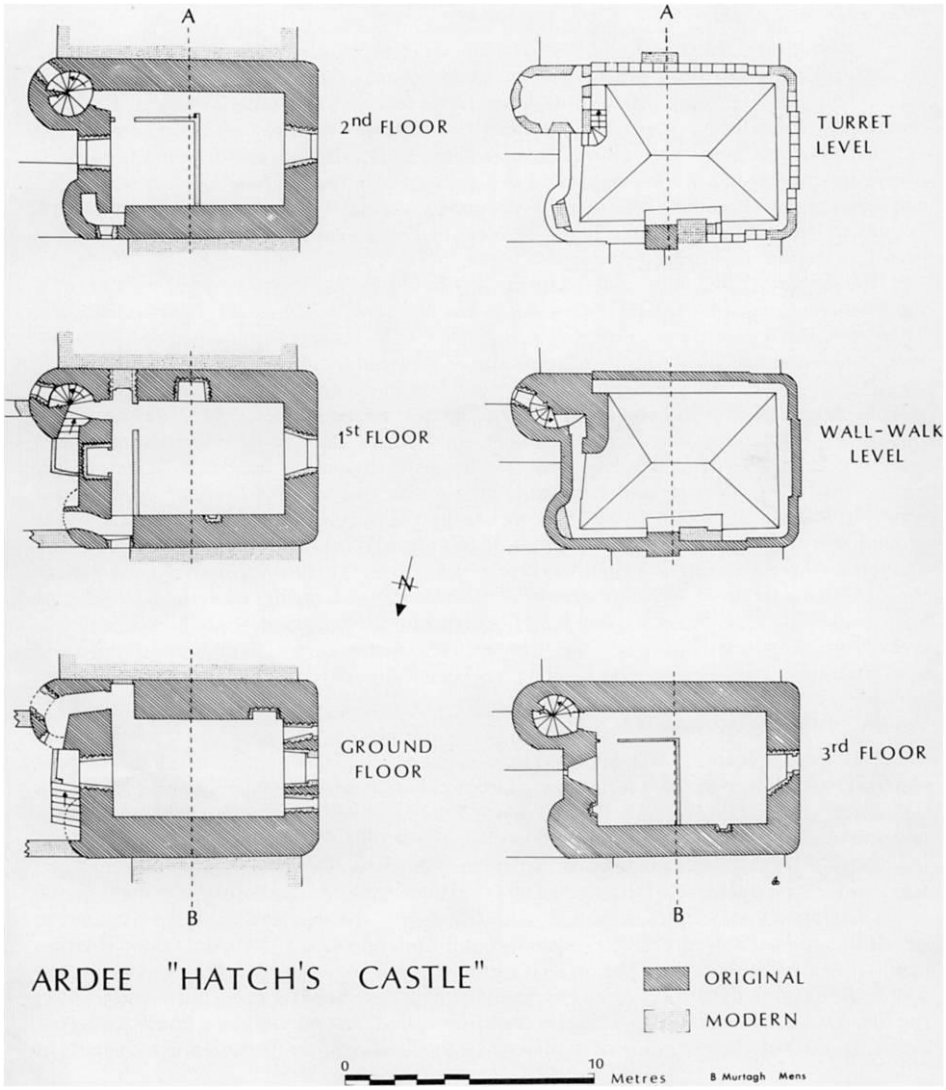


Fig. 6: Photograph of Ardee Castle, formerly St Leger's Castle, c. 1970


Plate 192—*Tower house, 'The Courthouse', at Townparks, Ardee* (No. 1137)

Hatch's Castle (further north) was built two or three hundred years later and remained a residence for the Hatch family who modernised the tower house and added revival battlements, window openings and hooded mouldings in the early nineteenth century (Lhs017-009 NIAH 13823055).

Fig. 7: Floor plans of Hatch's Castle, from Murtagh



3.3 Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

A market charter was granted to the town in the seventeenth century and the current town is largely made up of the urban footprint and street architecture which emerged in the ensuing period. The Down Survey, drawn up in 1657 as part of the Cromwellian plantation, shows little detail, but the river appears to form the eastern boundary of Ardee. An extramural religious house is shown to the west of the walled town as a building with a cross on its roof. This tower house (Lhs017-037 SMR:LH017-009) dating from the fifteenth-century survives today forming part of the farmyard of the demesne of Ardee House now St Joseph's Hospital(Lhs017-035 13823055) to the north of Jervis Street.

Fig. 8: Down Survey map of Ardee, 1657

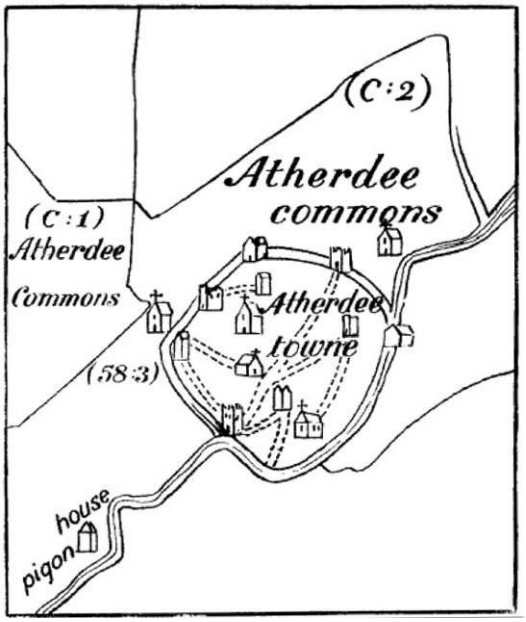


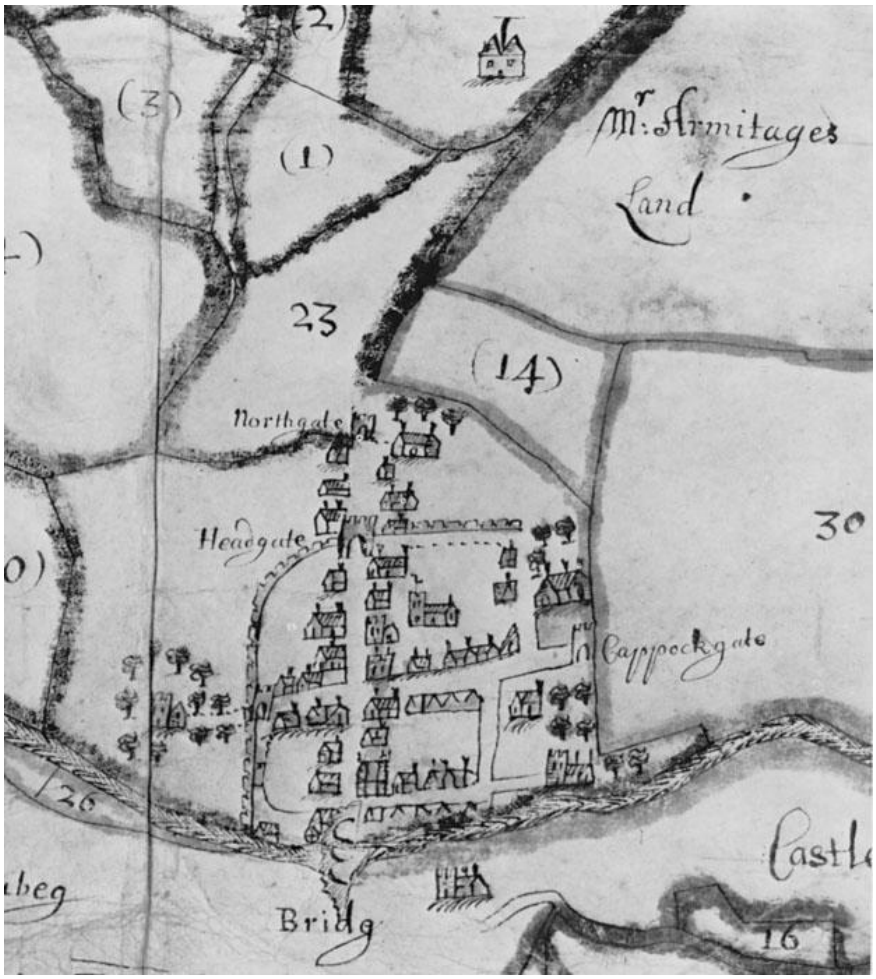
Fig. 9: Extract from 1908 OS map showing location of 14th century tower house within Ardee Demesne, relative to former Ash Gate



Fig. 10: 14th century tower house within farmyard of Ardee Demesne.

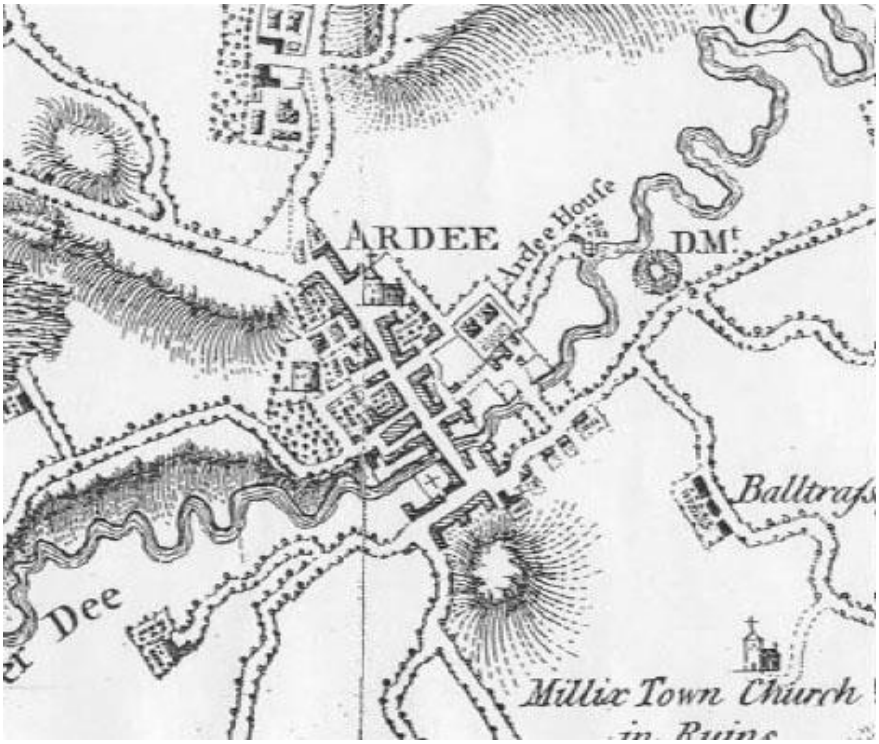


Fig. 11: Richardson map of 1677



Richardson's map of 1677 depicts the town in considerable detail. The main street is shown leading from a triple-arched stone bridge of over the river in the south to Head Gate in the north and beyond to the extramural suburb around Irish Street, with North Gate at its northern end. Town walls are shown on the north and west sides only, with Ash Gate and Cappock Gate connected by what is now Sean O'Carroll Street and Ash Walk. The eastern boundary is marked but not indicated as walled. The religious house referred to above is shown to the west surrounded by trees with an extramural extension of Ash Walk leading from Ash Gate. Tierney Street, St Mary's Church, The Carmelite Priory and south of the river the Hospital of St John are also shown.

Fig. 12: Extract from Matthew Wren's Map of the County of Louth, 1766



A fortification in the form of a pointed artillery bastion on the western wall of the town is believed to have been constructed by French engineers in the army of James II during the Williamite-Jacobite War of 1689-91. The mass of this feature can still be seen between Market Street and the former Ardee House, a substantial red brick structure of classical design at the centre of a landscaped demesne to the west of the town, built and laid out c.1780 for the Ruxton family, whose ancestor Captain John Ruxton was granted the lands of the Flemings of Slane by Cromwell.

Matthew Wren's map of 1766 shows the evolving town in this period, and marks an earlier Ardee House on the east of the town, probably that shown on Richardson's map, adjoining the Cappock Gate.

During the eighteenth century, in addition to the two castles towering over the east side of the main street, the town was dominated by the market house, sited centrally on the main street.

A typically plain building with a raised arcade through which carts and cattle could pass, it also served as a sessions-house and town assembly at the upper level. It was replaced by a later building in the early nineteenth century.

Ardee was situated in a very fertile corn district at that time and there were many flour mills and early malting houses. An extensive milling and tannery was built on the corner of Bridge Street and William Street at a later period.

3.4 Nineteenth Century Developments

In the early nineteenth century a series of improvements enhanced the major buildings fronting the main thoroughfare of the town. In 1804 St Leger's Castle, a massive four-storey rectangular house with projecting towers, was in ruins when acquired by the Louth Grand Jury. Between 1805 and 1810 the structure was extensively rebuilt as a courthouse and a bridewell.

The tower interrupts the natural line of Castle Street and projects imposingly into the street. Despite the nineteenth-century renovations the building retains its ground-floor barrel vaults, a spiral stair and some small corbelled rooms. The old bridewell was replaced in 1863 by John Neville's austere building to the rear.

Fig. 13: Main streets and courthouse, Lawrence Collection, c. 1900



The free-standing market house was rebuilt in 1810 on a newly laid out market square on the west side of Market Street. This was an elegant, low and elongated classical building, with screen walls, a clock tower and cupola. It was used as a centre for municipal affairs, and for religious activities when St Mary's Parish Church was undergoing reconstruction. The building survived until 1987 when it was replaced by the present structure.

Fig. 14: Ardee market house and square, Lawrence Collection, c. 1900



During the same period (c. 1810) the ruins of St Mary's Parish Church, were incorporated into a new structure for the Church of Ireland (NIAH 13823052). This was substantially rebuilt again in 1899 and a picturesque crenellated façade, which gave symmetry to the older structure, is now a notable landmark breaking the street-front of the east side of Market Street.

St Mary's Catholic Church, attributed to Thomas Duff, was built on John Street in 1829, probably to replace a simpler structure on the same site, marked as a cross on Wren's map of 1766. The main body of the chapel is screened to the front by a battlemented three-bay entrance front, its character is derived from its colourful coursed rubblestone and limestone trim. J.J. McCarthy extended the building in 1864, and it was deconsecrated just over a hundred years later (Lhs017-036 NIAH 13823026).

Fig. 15: St Mary's Catholic Church on John Street, Lawrence Collection, c. 1900



The three-arched bridge shown on Richardson's map of 1677 map was replaced by a simple, single-span road bridge in the mid nineteenth century (Lhs017-056 NIAH 13823008).

Although the town of Ardee did not expand significantly beyond the extent recorded on Wren's 1766 map, the face of the town did change considerably as a result of the changes described above and a number of new public buildings, which included a police barracks, post office, two schools, and the Ardee Union workhouse, parts of which survive on John Street (Lhs017-063 NIAH 13823025). The polychrome brick railway station and station master's house on Lambs Lane were built in 1896 (Lhs017-040 NIAH 13823059 and Lhs017-039 13823060) as the terminus of a branch off the Dublin-Belfast railway line, which remained in use for goods until 1975.

Fig. 16: Main Street and Hatch's castle, Lawrence Collection, c. 1900



Historical photographs taken at the end of the nineteenth-century show streets of Ardee lined with low, unassuming two-storey houses and commercial buildings in a typical Irish vernacular punctuated with elegant timber shopfronts and ample carriage arches, which still distinguish the streetscape today. Historian and geographer John Bradley suggests that it is very likely that some of the existing structures in the town incorporate earlier structures, the like of which have been identified in other medieval towns such as in Carlingford.

Notable shops and public houses include the former bakery on the corner of Castle Street and Tisdale Street (now Tierney Street) which contains a very fine curved glass window display and Hamills on Bridge Street designed by Paul Cahill c.1900. The latter is faced with elaborate faience tiles with mouldings and decoration in deep relief, and also contains robust curved glass windows. This is one of the few surviving examples of faience majolica in the country (Lhs017-024 NIAH 13823028).

Many street house and commercial premises had small industrial buildings to their rear, primarily granaries, breweries and tanneries. Several of these modest but well-built stone buildings still survive today.

Three detailed maps of the town chart the development of the town over the course of the nineteenth century, the Ordnance Survey (OS) first edition of 1835, the Griffith valuation town plan of 1854, and the 25 inch OS map of 1908 (see Figs. 16 and 17 below, and extracts in Section 4). Notable changes over this period include the disappearance of College Lane east of St Mary's Church, the realignment of Moorhall south of the river, and the arrival of the railway.

Fig. 17: Extract from first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1835 (enlarged from original scale of 6” to 1 mile).
Map may be viewed at large scale on www.osi.ie

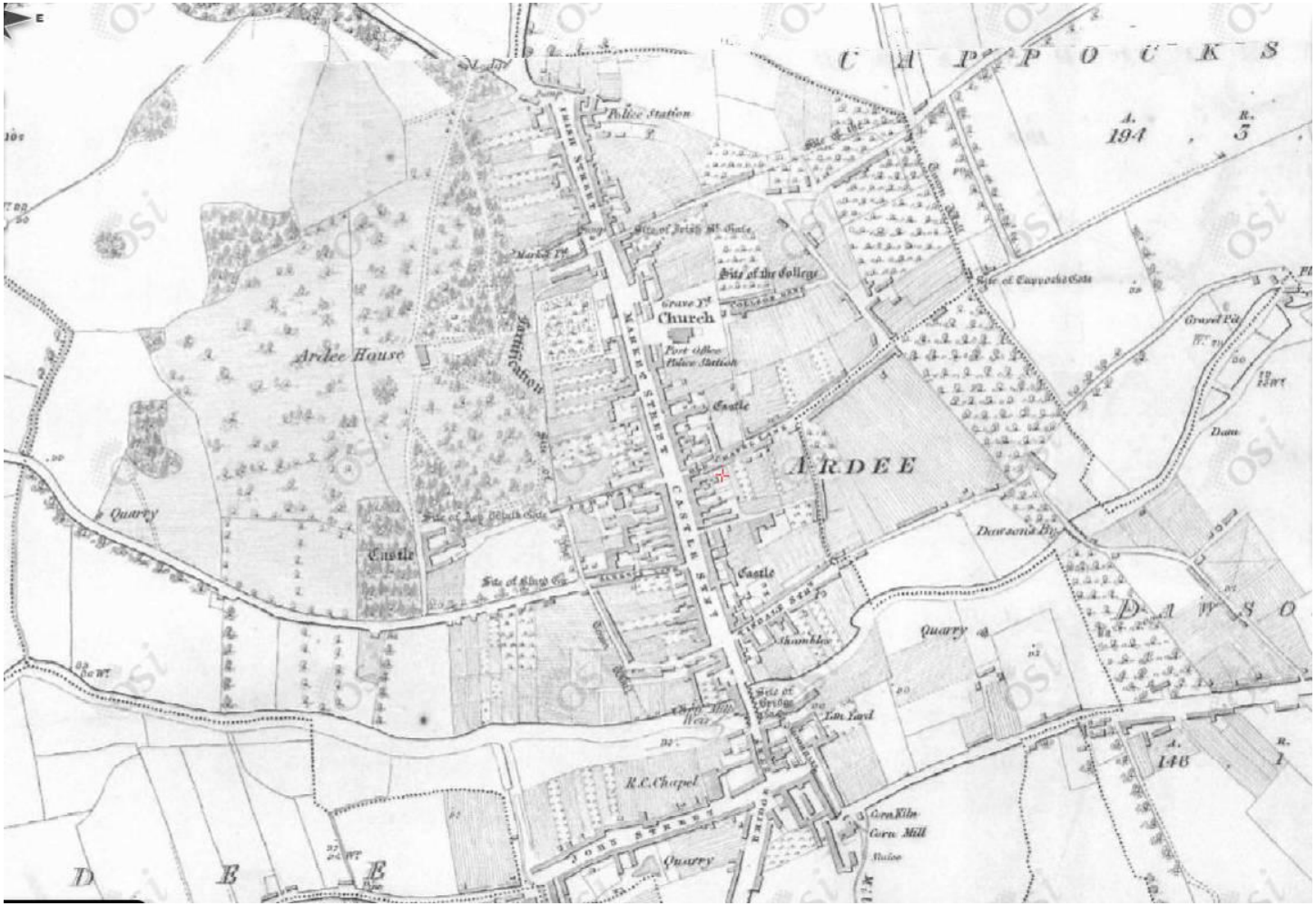
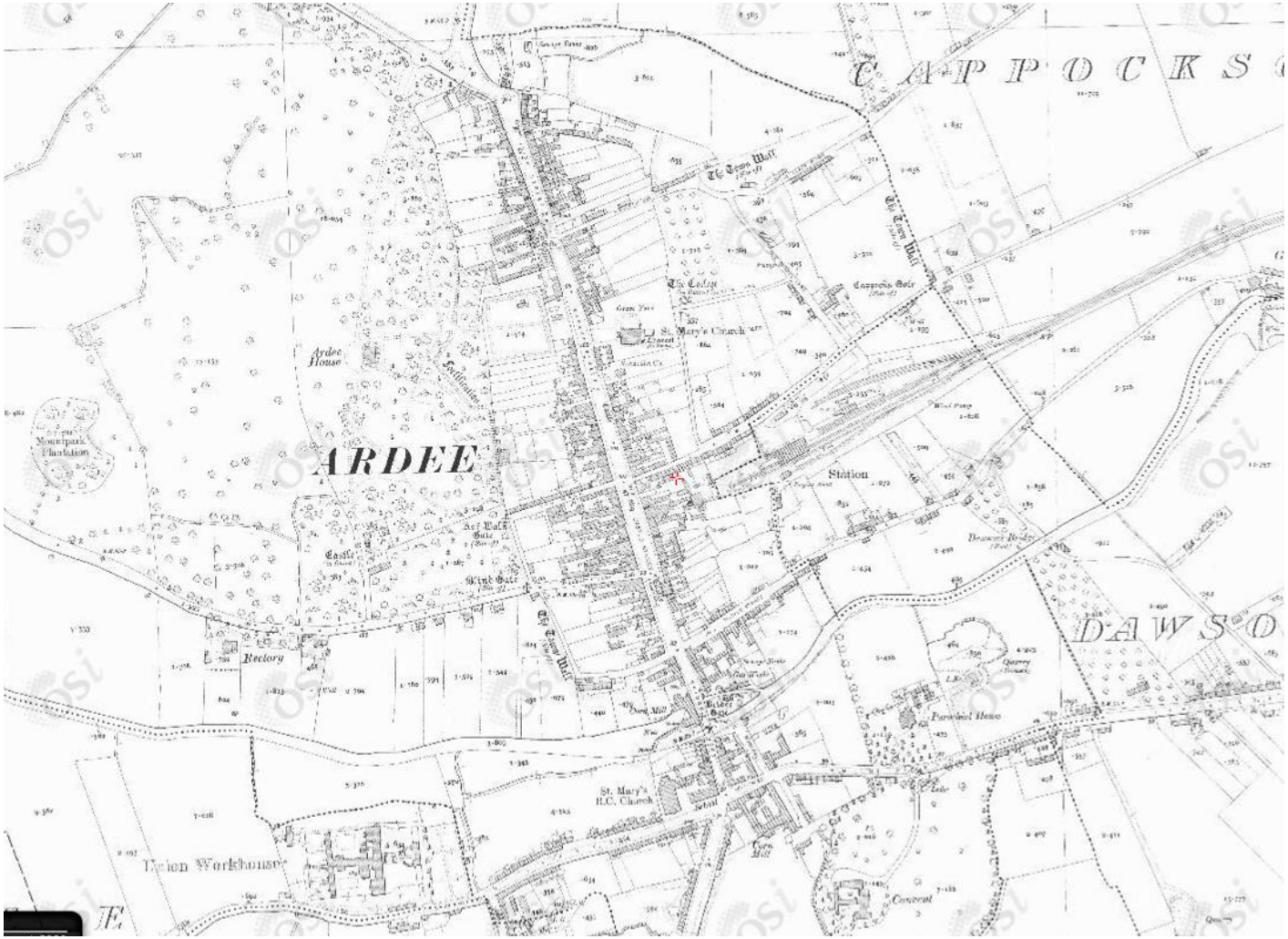


Fig. 18: Extract from Ordnance Survey map of 1908 (enlarged from original scale of 25” to 1 mile).
Map may be viewed at large scale on www.osi.ie



3.5 Twentieth Century

Comparison of the Ordnance Survey map of 1908 with Bradley's reconstruction of the medieval town plan shows that Ardee was a spacious walled town, which by the beginning of the twentieth century had not expanded into the area enclosed by the town wall. Much of the area within the circuit of the former walls remained as open space until recent decades, with development extending to the eastern side of the town.

A notable change to the architectural landscape of the main street came at turn of the twentieth century in the form of the imposing bank buildings for Bank of Ireland on Castle Street (Lhs017-011 NIAH 13823001) and Ulster Bank on Irish Street (Lhs017-003 NIAH 13823051), which counterbalanced the historic primacy of the two castles in the streetscape.

Although several shopfronts maintained their original features, and many architectural features of high quality remain, the unfortunate and widespread loss of shopfronts and erosion of fine details such as sash windows and original doors over the latter half of the twentieth century have diminished the architectural character of Market and Castle Street, which had developed over eighteenth and nineteenth-century, as seen in photographs of the earlier part of the century.

A new Catholic church, the Church of the Nativity of Our Lady, by Guy Moloney & Associates was built in 1974 on John Street (Lhs017-062 NIAH 13823024) to replace the older now deconsecrated chapel.

Fig. 19: Hatch's castle and Main Street c. 1950



Fig. 20: Ardee Castle, formerly St. Ledger's castle, c. 1950



3.6 Historical Sources

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- C. Casey, An introduction to the architectural heritage of County Louth (National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, Dublin, 2008).
- Websites:
- www.buildingsofireland.ie
- www.osi.ie
- griffiths.askaboutireland.ie

4.0 Statutory Protection and Planning Objectives

In addition to the protection afforded by the ACA designation, some individual structures within the ACA are protected in their own right by other statutory designations.

4.1 Protected Structures in the ACA

The structures listed below, many of which lie within the boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area are included in the Louth County Council Record of Protected Structures (RPS), Volume 3 in the County Development Plan 2021-2027.
In addition to the protection conferred by the ACA, these structures and their attendant grounds, known as their curtilage, are protected in their own right under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Lhs 017-002	J. Malone, Irish Street, shop
Lhs 017-003	Ulster Bank, Irish Street, bank
Lhs 017-004a	Stone Warehouse at rear of Ulster Bank, Irish Street,
Lhs 017-004b	Samson Electric, Irish Street, warehouse
Lhs 017-005	First Active, Market Street, office
Lhs 017-006	St Mary's Church of Ireland, Market Street, church
Lhs 017-007	Former Wesleyan Chapel, Market Street, former chapel
Lhs 017-008	House, Market Street
Lhs 017-009	Hatch Castle, Market Street, towerhouse
Lhs 017-0010	House, Market Street
Lhs 017-0011	Bank of Ireland, Castle Street, bank
Lhs 017-0012	Kearney's Drapery Store, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0013	Liscou, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0014	J. Kiernan Solicitor, Castle Street, office
Lhs 017-0015a	House, Castle Street
Lhs 017-0015b	House, Castle Street
Lhs 017-0016	Water pump, Castle Street
Lhs 017-0017	Ardee Castle, Castle Street, castle
Lhs 017-0018	Ardee Bread Company, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0019	Lanney's, Castle Street, shop

Lhs 017-0020	Ardee Fireplaces, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0021	Sweeny Byrne/Imbue, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0022	Allied Irish Bank, Castle Street, bank
Lhs 017-0023a	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0023b	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0023c	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0023d	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0024	Hamill's Public House, Bridge Street, public house
Lhs 017-0025a	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0025b	House, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0027a	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027b	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027c	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027d	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027e	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027f	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0027g	House, Market House Lane, cottage
Lhs 017-0028	Chantry College, College Park, ruin
Lhs 017-0029a	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029b	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029c	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029d	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029e	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029g	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029g	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0029h	House, St.Vincent's Road, cottage
Lhs 017-0030	Cappock's Gate, Ardee Town Wall (see also RMP)
Lhs 017-0031	De La Salle Monastery, Moore Hall, monastery
Lhs 017-0032	Parochial House, Moore Hall, house

Lhs 017-0033	Convent of Mercy, Moore Hall, convent
Lhs 017-0033b	Convent of Mercy, former school, now convent
Lhs 017-0033c	Convent of Mercy, gates
Lhs 017-0033d	Convent of Mercy, gate lodge
Lhs 017-0033e	Convent of Mercy, school
Lhs 017-0033f	Convent of Mercy, chapel
Lhs 017-0034	Castle Guard Fort Dawson's Demesne (see also RMP)
Lhs 017-0035	St. Joseph's Hospital, Fair Green Road, hospital
Lhs 017-0036	St Mary's former church, John Street, church
Lhs 017-0037	Tower House, Kells Road (see also RMP)
Lhs 017-0038	St Brigid's Hospital, Kells Road
Lhs 017-0038b	St Brigid's Hospital Chapel, Kells Road
Lhs 017-0039	Former railway station, Sean O'Carroll Street
Lhs 017-0040	Former station master's house, Sean O'Carroll Street
Lhs 017-0041	Former locomotive shed, Sean O'Carroll Street
Lhs 017-0042	V1 Clothing, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0043	U4Coffee, Castle Street, shop
Lhs 017-0044	Ferdia Arms, Castle Street, public house
Lhs 017-0045	Anderson's, Irish Street, public house
Lhs 017-0046	House, William Street
Lhs 017-0047	House, Irish Street
Lhs 017-0048	House, 20 Irish Street
Lhs 017-0049	Annie's, William Street, house
Lhs 017-0053	Warehouse, Market Street
Lhs 017-0055	Sheridan Services, Castle Street, house
Lhs 017-0056	Bridge, Bridge Street
Lhs 017-0057	Ardee Clinic, Bridge Street, house
Lhs 017-0059	Bridge Leisure, Bridge Street, granary
Lhs 017-0060	Odea Agri Seeds, Moore Hall, warehouse

Lhs 017-0061	Ardee Monastery School, Drogheda Road
Lhs 017-0062	Church of the Nativity, John Street
Lhs 017-0063	Ardee Workhouse, now Farrell's Factory, John Street
Lhs 017-0064	Stone Gate, John Street
Lhs 017-0065	Cuchulainn House, Bridge Street, house
Lhs 017-0070	Sir Frederick Foster Memorial, Market Square
Lhs 017-0072	Manor Mill Cappocksgreen
Lhs 017-0073	House, Castle Street
Lhs 017-0075	St. Joseph's Terrace, Lambs Lane, house
Lhs 017-0082	House, Irish Street
Lhs 017-0083	House, Irish Street

4.2 Historic Designed Landscapes

The NIAH Survey of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes includes the grounds of Ardee District Hospital and of the Red House, Ardee, with identity numbers LH0002 and LH0064 respectively. The hospital landscape includes the eighteenth-century former Ardee House, its demesne and the earlier tower house which survives within the complex.

4.3 Recorded Monuments in the ACA

The following archaeological sites, features and artefacts within the Ardee ACA are listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) as Recorded Monuments and are thereby protected under the National Monuments Acts of 1930 to 2004:

RMP No LH017-101	Historic town
RMP No LH017-009	Castle-tower house
RMP No LH017-101001	Town defences
RMP No LH017-101011	Graveslab
RMP No LH017-101006	College
RMP No LH017-101007	Church
RMP No LH017-101008	Building
RMP No LH017-101009	Cross
RMP No LH017-101010	Font
RMP No LH017-101012	Graveslab

RMP No LH017-101013	Architectural fragment
RMP No LH017-101015	Castle-tower house
RMP No LH017-101018	Castle-tower house
RMP No LH017-101022	Religious house
RMP No LH017-101023	Midden
RMP No LH017-101025	Graveyard
RMP No LH017-101026	Graveslab
RMP No LH017-101027	Graveslab
RMP No LH017-101028	Building
RMP No LH017-101033	Building
RMP No LH017-101030	Kiln-pottery
RMP No LH017-101031	Kiln-pottery
RMP No LH017-101032	Burial
RMP No LH017-101034	Excavation

4.4 Ardee Local Area Plan (LAP) 2010-2016

Under section 19(1) of The Planning and Development Act, 2000, the LAP is part of the Louth County Development Plan 2009-2015 with specific focus on the town of Ardee. The LAP zones land for particular uses and provides a policy framework for individual planning decisions.
The ten strategic objectives of the plan described in Section 1.11 include an objective in regard to the heritage of the built environment. The objectives of the Ardee ACA are described in Section 6.9. The plan is accompanied by a Land Use Zoning Map.

4.5 Ardee Age Friendly Town Strategy

Louth has been designated the first Age Friendly county in Ireland and Ardee as the first Age Friendly Town. This is an initiative piloted by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Policies for Ardee are reflected in the Louth Age Friendly County Strategy 2009 and they highlight challenges faced by elderly living in and visiting the town.

5.0 Description of Historic Built Environment

5.1 Defining Characteristics

The special character of the Ardee ACA can be defined under the following distinctive attributes:

- Layout
- Socio-economic functions
- Building types, scale and materials
- Quality and treatment of open spaces.

Fig. 21: Ardee Castle and Castle Street



5.1.1 Layout

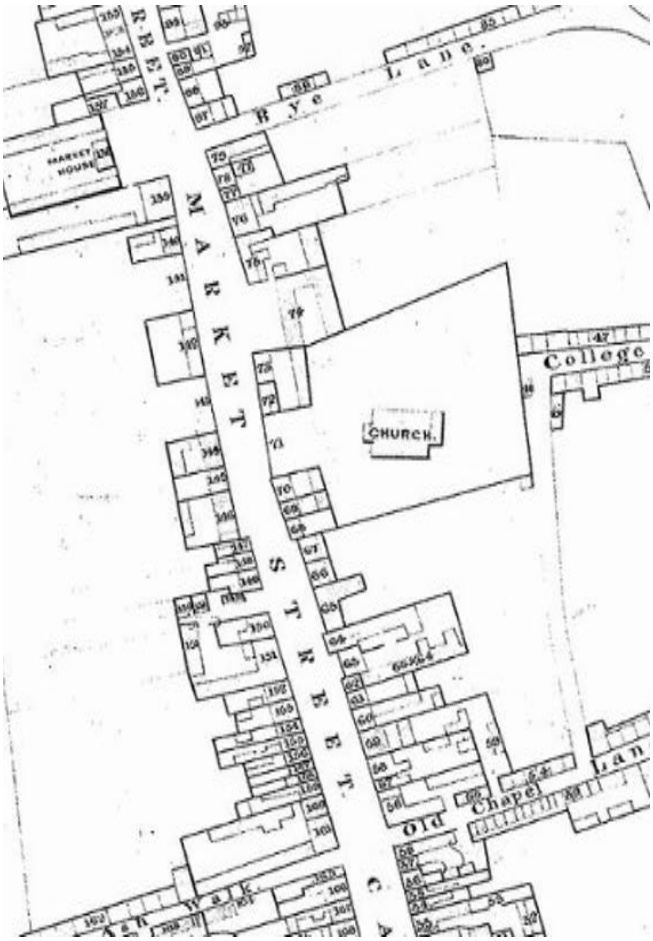
The morphology of Ardee is regular but informal, the result of its medieval origin as a planned defensive outpost of loosely rectangular form, overlaid with subsequent informal development over the centuries.

The town consists of a wide north-south street forming the main route from the bridge through the town, which though straight is informal in character and slightly varying in width, and a series of narrow secondary side lanes broadly perpendicular to the main route, three to the west and three to the east, their position determined by medieval gates in the defensive circuit, as well as some other historic connecting lanes.

An important element of the development of the layout are the more irregular areas of expansion outside the original walls at the north and south end, consisting of the Irish town at the Fair Green, with forking streets leading into the rural hinterland, and the informal area of intimate scale to the south of the river.

The position of the medieval town defences, though not readily perceptible on the ground is a primary character of the town layout. The defences ran on three sides, which with the river formed a broadly rectangular enclosure. A standing wall ran to the rear of the plots on the western side of the main street, and crossed it at Market Square where the library now stands. The subdivision of the areas between these is in long narrow parcels known as 'burgage plots' perpendicular to the main street. This type of site division survives to a large extent in the modern town of Ardee, and is one of its defining characteristics.

Fig. 22: Extract from Griffith Town Plan of 1854, showing characteristic irregularity of the Market Street, and narrow side lanes



The path of the former defensive enclosure can be traced in places along property boundaries and routes, and its course is important in the understanding of the historic town. A number of gates located on the main and secondary streets, though mostly gone, are significant features of the town layout, their positions being of particular importance as they from a connection to the historic form of the town.

The main street lies in the western half of the walled town, and the eastern part is more open, traversed by a series of paths which survive from medieval times, one of which, College Lane was built up until the mid-nineteenth century.

The rectilinear layout is not a strict right-angled arrangement and side roads are laid out at slightly skewed angles relative to the main street or with shallow curves or varying width along their length. The slight irregularity in the orthogonal arrangement adds an informal character, a distinctive feature typical of towns of medieval origin.

5.1.2 Socio-Economic Functions

Uses associated with Ardee's role as a traditional market town contribute to its historic architectural character.
Ardee is the main town serving mid Louth, as well as neighbouring areas in Co Meath. It provides a centre of employment as well as commercial, administrative and other services to its population and to the surrounding rural hinterland. Over the latter half of the twentieth century the trend was for traders and professionals to move away from the town centre, as happened in most other Irish market towns.

Though residential use is still an important component of the ACA, most residential houses in the ACA are located in the side streets, and most of the town's population now live outside the immediate core.

The area now designated an ACA was formerly characterised by the close mix of shops at street level with family accommodation above or adjoining it, and there were many other dwellings opening directly to the street. This mix is important to preserve the character of the town, and those properties still used as family dwellings make a strong contribution to the architectural character of the town.

Most of the shops were traditionally small units and were located on the main street. Some plots have historic warehouses located to the rear of the street-side buildings, reached through arched openings from the street.

As well as Catholic and Protestant churches, Ardee contains a county council administrative building, a court house, a fire station, hospital, Garda station, several banks, schools, a convent.

5.1.3 Building Types, Scale and Materials

The quality of the historic building stock in the Ardee ACA reflect its historic, architectural and social heritage and give form to its architectural character.

Fig. 23: Houses to east side of Irish Street



The street architecture of the town follows a clear hierarchy. The wide main street is the primary artery, lined with predominantly two-storey and occasional three-storey buildings, all arranged in orderly continuous rows of consistent building line and restrained expression, generally rendered and having vertical window openings with shopfronts or elaborate doorcases at ground level, the street frontage modulated by arched and gated openings giving access to the rear.

Commercial buildings which intersperse the streetscape are marked by more conscious design in their expression, scale, detailing and choice of materials. This homogenous arrangement is interrupted by two medieval tower houses, which break the prevailing continuity by their increased height, striking castellated profile, and in the case of the Ardee Castle, by standing proudly forward of the building line.

The side streets branching off the main street have less continuity in their buildings. The sense of continuity in the main street and contrasting discontinuity in the side streets are important characteristics of the ACA.

The town centre and the outlying streets within the ACA are punctuated by a number of civic and religious buildings, which are good examples of their types, exhibiting architectural expression and decoration of high quality. Aside from Hatch's Castle and Ardee Castle, St Mary's Church of Ireland church is significantly located on the highest point in the main street, and the former Catholic church is the primary feature of John Street.

Larger nineteenth-century commercial bank buildings break prevailing eaves height on the main street or express a larger scale in the treatment of their elevations. These 'special' buildings give hierarchy to the long continuous runs of houses and shops, they enrich characteristic views as well as the general skyline of the ACA, and this contrast in scale and architectural detail is an important character feature of the ACA.

A group of religious buildings to the south east of the ACA dominate the character of their immediate area forming an ecclesiastical sector of particular character, encompassing the Convent of Mercy complex, the De La Salle building and parochial house to the south of the town.

Fig. 24: Houses on east side of Castle Street



The muted palette and homogeneity of materials in the ACA is typical of buildings in rural Irish towns. Rendered and painted elevations are the mainstay of street scenes. The prevailing materials are rendered walls, many buildings having window surrounds of stucco. Most have little and simple decoration, though some the more special buildings have elaborate plasterwork marking richer or commercial uses. Roofs are typically of natural Welsh slate, though many have been replaced over the years with modern coverings.

Slate roofs are detailed without fascia or bargeboards and this emphasises the plain clear forms of the buildings, lending a neat appearance in contrast to the suburban detailing of more recent buildings, having fascia and soffits to eaves, and gable ends with oversailing verges, inappropriate details which undermine the simplicity of the prevailing historic character. Chimney stacks are an essential character feature of the skyline of the ACA, cases where these have been removed constitute a weakening of the historic architectural character of the town.

Fig. 25: Detail of shopfront on Castle Street



Red brick elevations are present, but represent an exception rather than the rule, being used in later one-off designs such as the Bank of Ireland, the railway station, a later commercial building now 'Footloose' or in the eighteenth-century Ardee House, and its extensions to form the district hospital.

Public and religious buildings predominantly have elevations of exposed rubble limestone some with ashlar dressings, examples being Hatch's Castle, Ardee Castle, St Mary's Church of Ireland church, the former Catholic Church and the Convent of Mercy.

Some of the buildings retain historic timber doors or sash windows and any surviving joinery is of therefore of crucial historic importance to the character of Ardee.

The general built fabric of Ardee ACA conforms to the following typologies:

- Two-storey 18th and 19th century houses of more formal appearance with slate roofs, rendered walls and vertical windows.
- Two and three storey 19th century shops, commercial premises and banks with varying degrees of architectural decoration and articulation.
- 19th century shops and public houses of varying degrees of richness in elevation treatment
- Single-storey 18th and 19th century vernacular houses in secondary streets.
- Rubble stone warehouses, outbuildings, farm buildings, mill buildings and corrugated-iron barns
- Carriage arches giving access to rear yards

One-off buildings include:

- Fourteenth century tower house within Ardee Demesne, formerly an extramural religious house, due west of the Ash Gate.
- St Mary's Church, a 14th century south aisle integrated into an early 19th century Gothic Revival Church of Ireland church, set in a churchyard with fine trees.
- Chantry College, a ruined 15th century stone structure, east of St Mary's Church.
- Ardee Castle, a late medieval tower house with corner towers and later crenellated parapets.
- Hatch's Castle, a small 15th-16th century tower house.
- Ardee House, a three-storey 18th century country house of classical design, set in a designed landscaped in the English Landscape style.
- St Mary's former Catholic Church in John Street, an early 19th century Gothic Revival church with rectangular stone front.
- A former 19th century modest stone Methodist church.
- St Mary's Convent of Mercy, a two and three storey 19th century complex of stone buildings, with tower and chapel, set within landscaped grounds with outlying gate lodge.
- De la Salle monastery, a two storey 19th century building with rendered elevations.
- The parochial house, a two storey 19th century residence with hipped slate roof and rendered elevations.
- Late nineteenth century former railway station buildings of polychrome brick.

5.1.4 Quality and treatment of Open Space

The main public space in Ardee is the main axis composed of Castle Street, Market Street and Irish Street. The width of the space and the reflection of its natural topography with views to the hills beyond are strong characteristics of the ACA. Most buildings on this axis open directly onto the footpath, whilst in the secondary streets there is a less formal mix of direct frontage and setbacks.

Fig. 26: Irish Street looking north



Simplicity is the key design characteristic of the open spaces in Ardee, typical of towns of this size throughout Ireland. Unfortunately, there are no visible remains of historic paving materials in the ACA, which historic photographs show to have included cobbled drains and stone paving. Modern street surfaces are for the most part tarmac and footpaths are of modern unit paving of precast concrete.

The main north-south streets have lost most of the historic street trees, planted since the Laurence Collection photographs, at some point during the twentieth century. A formal open space on the west side of Market Street, formerly the market place where the market house of 1810 was once located, marks the historic position of the northern or Head Gate. A classical monument of 1861 at the centre of this space designed by Thomas Farrell (1827-1900) commemorates a local landowner Sir Frederick Foster, and makes a strong architectural statement. The most significant boundary treatment in the street is to the front of the Church of Ireland, marked by high ironwork railings and gates.

Green spaces within the ACA include the Church of Ireland churchyard, a more recent green area adjoining it around the ruin of the Chantry College', a small riverside park adjoining the bridge, the former fair green. Outside the town core three expansive designed landscapes form the demesne of Ardee House, and the landscaped grounds of the Convent of Mercy and of the Red House.
Built features of the open spaces include the 19th century single-arched stone bridge and numerous gates, walls and railings marking entrances and boundaries, including the demesne walls to the former Ardee House and boundaries to the De La Salle monastery, the Parochial house and Convent of Mercy, with cast iron gates.

Trees contribute significantly to defining the outer boundaries of public spaces in Ardee ACA and signal the presence of the River Dee. The abundance, size and maturity of the trees contribute significantly to the special character of the ACA.

A historic weir once located to the west of the bridge no longer survives, the area east of the bridge, once an island in the River Dee with a channel to the north feeding a corn mill, is now a small park of intimate scale alongside the bridge.

Fig. 27: Historic street furniture on Market Street



Fig. 28: Park on former island in River Dee



5.2 Street by Street Appraisal

5.2.1 Dundalk Road and Carrick Road

The OS map of 1835, the Griffith valuation town plan of 1854 and the OS map of 1908 all show these northerly approach roads into Ardee as largely undeveloped. There was a dispensary on the Carrick Road, and on the Dundalk Road a Protestant boy's school on the western side, run by the Erasmus Smith Trust, and a girl's school on the eastern side, later a Sunday School. All three of these buildings remain today, the boy's school now integrated into the Educate Together National School.

Today these streets mark an important historic transition between the urban core of Ardee and the landscape to the north of the town. An informal collection of single and two-storey structures align the Dundalk Road, mostly on the street line on the east side. A small development of mid-twentieth century houses known as Moore Park occupies the angle between the streets, composed of paired houses forming a U-plan with entrances in the inner corners, distinguished by good architectural detail, red brick ground floors and hipped tile roofs.

The structures along Dundalk Street frame views to Ardee Demesne and the Fair Green, marking the point where Irish Street leads into the urban core of the town. Structures of particularly strong architectural character are a number of single-storey cottages, Branigan's shop, and a vernacular farmhouse and corrugated-roofed outbuilding to the east of the roundabout.

Fig. 29: Extract from Griffith valuation town plan, surveyed 1854

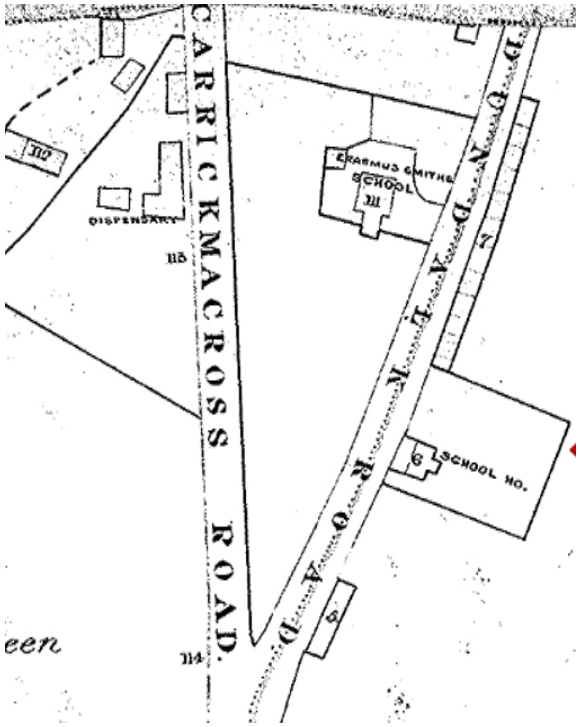


Fig. 30: Dundalk Road looking south to the Fair Green



Fig. 31: Paired houses on the west side of Dundalk Road



Fig. 32: Vernacular farm on east side of Dundalk Road at Fair Green



Fig. 33: Former shop on east side of Dundalk Road



5.2.2 Fair Green

The Fair Green is today a public park, bounded by the Carrick Road and Golf Links Road. Fair greens often developed in Irish towns as informal spaces outside the town core. The triangular green can be seen Wren's map of 1766 and in more detail in the nineteenth century maps, situated just outside the North or Irish Gate, between converging routes leading out into the rural hinterland. This space is an important location marking the entrance to the urban core and demonstrating the historical evolution of the town. It is bounded on the south side by the demesne wall and entrance to Ardee Demesne, the demesne trees strongly marking the presence of the park landscape beyond.

Fig. 34: Extract from 1908 OS map showing the Fair Green



A two-storey terrace continuing the line of the demesne wall presents an urban elevation to the approach from the north and west.
The boundary of the Fair Green itself is marked with large mature trees which determine the mature character of the park.

Fig. 35: Buildings south of the Fair Green intersection



Fig. 36: The fair green looking towards Dundalk Road



5.2.3 Irish Street

Irish Street developed as an extramural suburb outside the north end of the medieval town, clearly shown on Richardson's map of 1677. It stretches from the area beside the Fair Green in the north to the former market place in the south, and is the first of four segments which make up the main north-south thoroughfare of Ardee.

The street is characterised by rows of two-storey houses and shops lining a street space which widens gradually to the north, the site of the medieval North or Irish Gate. The straight line of the north-south axis was historically terminated here by a row of houses facing down the street. Today a pair of two-storey houses survive from this row, angled in the direction of the Fair Green, and it is probable that the gate stood in the centre of the space which they address.

Fig. 37: Extract from 1835 OS map showing Irish Street



Fig. 38: Houses on west of Irish Street



The structures along the street are relatively uniform in size, scale and architectural expression. This architectural and spatial definition is lost in a stretch of the north-west side of the street where an unsympathetic modern structure is set back from the existing building line.

The structures are a mix of small shops and dwellings and some have arched and gated street access to the properties behind. The roofs are pitched and lend definition to the street space. The southern end of Irish Street is marked by a large three storey Ulster Bank building on the east side of the street and a large type two-storey building on the west side that marks one corner of the former market place. This portion of Irish Street sets the character of the main thoroughfare that will vary as it progresses south through the ACA.

Fig. 39: Ulster Bank building



Fig. 40: Anderson's Public House

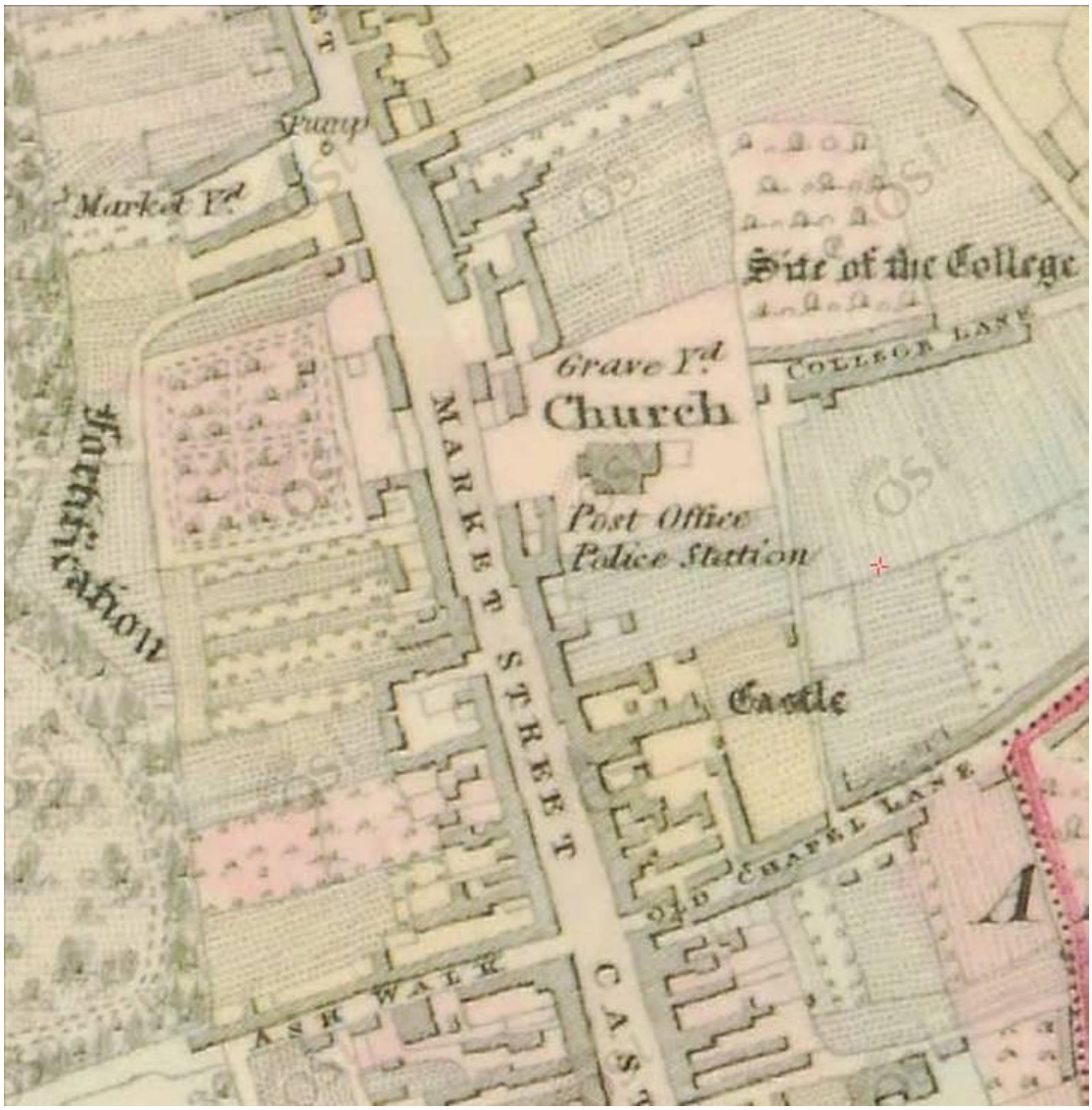


Fig. 41: Cast-iron street sign



5.2.4 Market Street

Fig. 42: Market Street in extract from Griffith Town Plan, surveyed 1854



Market Street is the part of the main street which extends from the former Market Square, site of the medieval Head Gate, to Sean O'Carroll Street and Ash Walk, formerly narrow side lanes leading to Cappock's Gate and Ash Gate respectively. The street is defined to both sides by a more or less continuous line of buildings of different size, architectural style and function, the building line forming an irregular line typical of streets of medieval origin. The street ascends from the north towards a high mid-point at St Mary's Church of Ireland church, from where it falls slightly to the south.

Fig. 43: Market Square and Market Street



The market place, laid out in 1810 and formerly addressed by a classical market house (see Fig. 13) retains little of its historic character and is now a cluttered and inharmonious space. The former elegance of this square is recalled by the fountain, a striking classical monument at its centre dating to 1861, representing Sir Frederick Foster, designed by the Irish sculptor Thomas Farrell (1827-1900) and similar in style to his monuments to William Smith O'Brien and Sir Thomas Gray in O'Connell Street, Dublin.

Today the square suffers from use as a car park, has confused hard and soft landscaping and no coherent scheme of street furniture or signage. The present library building which replaced the market house, has a formal symmetrical elevation, but lacks a suitable sense of scale or architectural expression.

Fig. 44: Monument in Market Square



The street boundary to St Mary's Church of Ireland church commands the highest point of Market Street and the church itself is on higher ground again. The churchyard extends behind the houses on either side and the open frontage is bounded high wrought-iron railings. The churchyard is an ancient site with a rich layering of features, including artefacts of medieval origin, the south aisle of the church itself dating to the fourteenth century. The slightly raised site allows views to Hatch's Castle and to the Chantry College to the east and these connections enable a clear appreciation of the medieval origin of the town, and enrich the experience of its long history.

Fig. 45: St Mary's Church of Ireland church



Fig. 46: Railings to St Mary's Church



Fig. 47: Medieval Cross at St Mary's Church



On the west side a single-storey symmetrical health centre is set back from the street with a small car park alongside, a situation which weakens the architectural definition of Market Street. Future redevelopment of the car park should ideally reinstate the building line in this area and incorporate a pedestrian linkage to the former Ardee House (now the St. Joseph's hospital). These sites correspond to a former pedestrian route which linked Ardee House (now the St Joseph's hospital) to St Mary's Church via a walled garden fitted in between the plots on the western side of the street.

Fig. 48: Extract from OS map of 1908 showing connection to Ardee House



The street line south of St Mary's Church is broken by a setback in front of the former Methodist chapel of 1852 (NIAH 13823053). The church as a modest stone gable and double windows, the opening in the street building edge affords a view of the tower of St Mary's from the southern part of Market Street. This is an important view as the tower cannot be easily seen from close up street except from directly in front of the main entrance.

Fig. 49: St Mary's Church Tower over railings to former Methodist Church



Market Street is part of the medieval thoroughfare and has a busy and urban character reflected in more individual architectural expression than seen in Irish Street. Rich architectural details and larger buildings are characteristic of the street.

The continuous terrace character of the eastern side of the street is interrupted by Hatch's Castle the medieval stone tower. On the western side a three-storey building with a pyramidal roof and classical architectural detail continuing to the side elevations takes on a tower-like presence echoing the Hatch's Castle opposite.

The street has suffered from some developments of unsympathetic character that serve to fragment the unity of the historic street scale and architectural expression.

Fig. 50: Market Street with Hatch's Castle and three-storey building opposite



Fig. 51: Hatch's Castle, Market Street



5.2.5 Castle Street

Fig. 52: Castle Street in extract from Griffith Town Plan, surveyed 1854



Castle Street is the southern half of the medieval thoroughfare of Ardee within the original town defences. It stretches from the junction with Sean O'Carroll Street (formerly Old Chapel Lane or Lamb's Lane) and Ash Walk in the north to the junction with Tierney Street (formerly Beggar's Row and Tisdale Street) in the south.

The northern portion of this continues the character of variety of scales, functions and architectural expression found in Market Street. The southern portion returns to a smaller scale and stylistic continuity more typical of Irish Street. The street continues its gradual fall towards the river from its highest point in Market Street opposite St Mary's Church. When seen from the south the structures present prominent gables, chimneys and roofs stepping up above one another, and this is a significant character attribute of the urban form.

Fig. 53: Castle Street, west side looking north



The primary feature of Castle Street is Ardee Castle, later the court house. The castle, set within a terrace of two storey houses with the former judge's quarters (Lhs017-073NIAH 13823005) to the south, stands proud of the building line, presenting its side elevations to the street to the north and south. The modest scale and form of the adjoining houses serves to emphasise the contrast in scale between the castle and its context. The houses are therefore of key important to the character of the street.

Fig. 54: Castle Street looking south



A small but prominent two-storey redbrick bank building marks the eastern corner with Sean O'Carroll Street. It has a symmetrical elevation with elaborate brick, stone and plaster banding and a projecting eaves with decorative timber brackets in a finely balanced Arts-and-Crafts influenced composition.

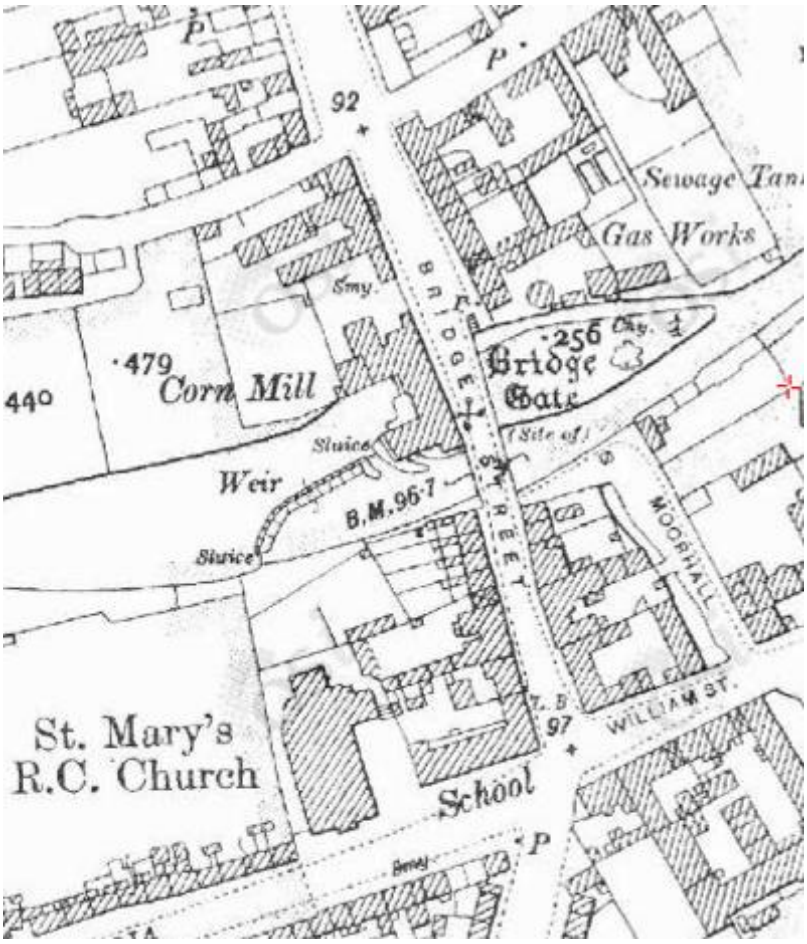
The view south from Castle Street leads to Bridge Street and is closed in the far distance by the mature trees set in the elevated grounds of the Convent of Mercy. This visual relationship is an important element defining the special character of Castle Street.

Fig. 55: Doorway on Castle Street



5.2.6 Bridge Street

Fig. 56: Bridge Street from OS map of 1908



Bridge Street extends across both sides of the bridge from Tierney Street in the medieval town to William Street and John Street on the south of the river. Historically the Bridge Gate stood on the northern end of the bridge, being the southern entrance to the fortified town. Richardson's 1677 map shows a triple-arched bridge and a mill. The maps of 1835 and 1854 show a widening of the river on the east of the bridge retained by a weir to power a mill on the west of the bridge. By 1908 this had become an island with a mill race to the north, and now the mill race has gone and the island is small riverside park entered alongside the bridge, with a collection of mature trees that signal the presence of the river, attractively sited beside the finely wrought elevation of the bridge.



Fig. 57: Bridge Street looking south from Castle Street

The street itself forms the continuation of Castle Street, but narrower in width, and is defined by a closed uniform line of modest two-storey houses which open directly to the footpath. A large five-bay three-storey Georgian house with a good quality stone doorcase, probably associated with the mill, dominates the western side north of the now vacant site where the mill once stood. This vacant site upsets the characteristic definition of the street edge, and future redevelopment should aim to reinstate the building line.

Fig. 58: Hamill's public house on the west side of Bridge Street



Most of the buildings are modest and similar to the types that characterise Irish Street at the other end of the town core. Hamill's public house one of a red brick pair, is one of the most important buildings in the town, having a rare highly moulded ceramic tiled shopfront with bowed windows either side of an arched entrance. The street forms a gentle curve with a picturesque arrangement of buildings that lead the eye to Ardee Court House to the north and to the junction with Moore Hall Street to the south. Bridge Street continues the use of building types and sizes found elsewhere on the main thoroughfare, it signals the presence of the river with a bridge and park and channels picturesque views to the north and south.

Fig. 59: Bridge seen from site of the former mill building



5.2.7 Plots to rear of main thoroughfare

Historically the main north-south street was the location of all commercial and activity in the town. The products traded in the shops facing the street were produced, handled and stored in the long burgage plots to the rear, which also provided living accommodation and stabling, as well as having productive gardens to support the households. A good many such outbuildings and warehouses survive today, some of substantial size. Warehouses and rear outbuildings are often of rubble stone with brick dressing and some yards continue through a second covered passageway to a second yard. The rear sites were reached through archways in the front buildings, many having painted timber gates, or in some cases through narrow passageways between houses. The archways are a distinctive architectural feature of the streetscape, and the rear sites are a key aspect of the architectural and social history of the ACA.

Fig. 60: Rubble stone wall with cut stone gate detailing



Fig. 61: Warehouses to rear of Ulster Bank, Market Street



Fig. 62: Former dwelling to rear of Market Street



5.2.8 Markethouse Lane

Market House Lane, once called Bye Lane, is a narrow side lane, which ran inside the original town wall, shown on Richardson's 1677 map. A vacant dwelling and warehouse at the western end adjoining Market Street demonstrate the hierarchy of the historic built fabric of the town core, and reflect the historic character of the side lanes which has now largely disappeared, yet which is important to the understanding of the ACA.

Beyond this to the east a row of single-storey cottages holds the north side of the street with only a boundary wall to the opposite south side. The historic character of the lane further east has been lost with the presence of ubiquitous suburban style houses.

Markethouse Lane frames a view to the west of the present library with the large scale trees of Ardee demesne in the background.

Fig. 63: Smaller scale buildings characteristic of secondary streets



Fig. 64: Row of cottages in Markethouse Lane



5.2.9 Sean O'Carroll Street

Formerly Old Chapel Lane, part of a network of lanes within the less developed eastern section of the medieval walled town, and later developed as Lamb's Lane, Sean O'Carroll Street still retains the late nineteenth-century former railway station, shed and rail platform, set back from the road, and the station master's house. Rows of cottages once aligned the street but today only the early twentieth-century Railway Terrace remains on the site of earlier cottages, distinguished by good architectural detail and composition. The Castle Street end, once a side lane resembling Market House Lane has been widened in the twentieth century, and frames the view to Ash Walk with the large trees in Ardee demesne forming the backdrop.

Fig. 65: End house of Railway Terrace with sash windows and railings



Fig. 66: Former Railway station



Fig. 67: Former Station Good Shed



5.2.10 College Lane

College Lane takes its name from the surviving ruin of a part of the 15th century Chantry College associated with St Mary's Church. The lane opens off Carroll Street as a pedestrian lane running alongside a stone wall behind the plots on Market Street, the plot behind Hatch's Castle having a blocked opening and plaque bearing the inscription 'M.W. HATCH /OCTR 1906'. The lane was lined by buildings, probably cottages, until at least 1854, and today only the unroofed college building survives, set in a small park. Fine trees punctuate the cemetery and rear gardens of the properties on Market Street.

Fig. 68: Buildings on Chapel Lane shown on Griffith town plan of 1854

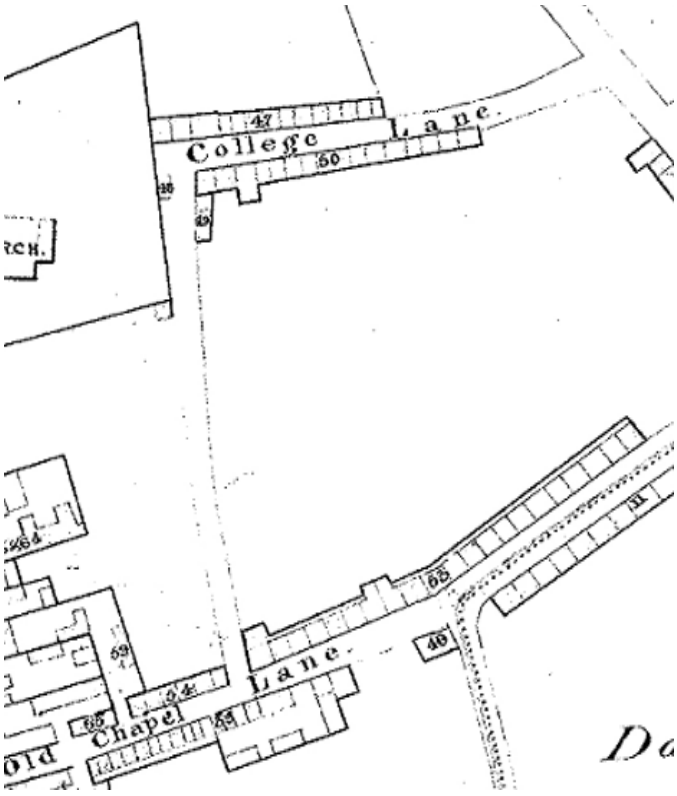


Fig. 69: Ruin of the Chantry College with St Mary's Church



Fig. 70: Blocked doorway to rear of Hatch's Castle site



5.2.11 Ash Walk

Ash Walk connected the main junction in the medieval town with the gate, Ash Gate, one of two eastern entrances to the town. Today the street is an access route to a large shopping centre that lies to the back of Market Street to the west. Recent two-storey shops and commercial premises have replaced historic structures so that the only remaining historic frontage to the street are the much altered side elevation of The Railway Bar forming the north corner to Market Street and the gable of a shop forming the opposite corner. These two corners define the historic street proportions reflecting the hierarchy between the wide main thoroughfare and the narrow side lanes, and represent an important surviving feature of the medieval town plan.

Fig. 71: South elevation of the Railway Bar on Ash Walk



5.2.12 Barret's Lane

Barret's Lane, mistakenly referred to as Barrack Lane on Griffith's town plan, historically led to the Blind Gate. It is a typical Ardee side street with a narrow street profile defined by the main buildings on Castle Street and their long rear outbuildings forming the building line into the lane. These buildings have rendered elevations with few openings and natural slate roofs, giving the east end of the lane a simple utilitarian character. This changes at the site of the Blind Gate where the street becomes Jervis Street at the junction with the lane known as Boat Trench, where a number of modern commercial buildings and a Garda Station are gathered, the corner distinguished by a distinctive curved corner building. The view to Castle Street is an important characteristic of the street with Ardee Castle visible above the roofscape and a narrow glimpse of Castle Street itself.

Fig. 72: View west towards Castle Street



Fig. 73: Building at the corner of Barret's Lane and The Boat Trench



5.2.13 The Boat Trench

The character of the Boat Trench is of a quiet unassuming lane serving backlands to properties to the rear of Bridge Street. The northern stretch of lane was once the line of the town wall. The lane is bordered by single storey outbuildings with rendered walls and corrugated metal roofs. An interesting stretch of single storey cottages lies to the west of the lane turn and lends it a residential character. The picturesque and low-key character of the southern portion of the lane is supported by large mature trees that emphasise its narrow street profile. The northern stretch of lane suffers from poor quality border treatment and loss of historic character.

Fig. 74: View west from Bridge Street



Fig. 75: Row of cottages at western lane turn



5.2.14 Tierney Street

Formerly Tisdale Street, Tierney Street is the widest side street off the main north-south thoroughfare. The street once had a continuous building line on the south side, but this has been eroded by removal of structures and new developments. It retains a narrow opening to Bridge Street characteristic of other historic side street junctions in Ardee, as well as a number of single and two-storey buildings that give good definition to the street. The north side of the street is occupied by suburban-type houses, some with large setbacks which do not contribute to its historic character.

Fig. 76: Two-storey dwelling to south side of the street



Fig. 77: Tierney Street looking west to Bridge Street



Fig. 78: Rear view of Ardee Castle from Tierney Street



Fig. 79: Finlay's Funeral home to the south-east end of the street



5.2.15 Riverside walk and Moorhall (West)

Fig. 80: Extract from OS map of 1835 showing expansion south of the Dee



The town of Ardee had already expanded south of the river by 1766, as seen on Wren's map, and the western part of Moorhall, running parallel to Bridge Street can be identified on that map. The 1835 OS map shows this area as an industrial enclave with a series of mills, kilns and tan yard, powered by the River Dee and a mill race descending from high ground to the south and running along Moorhall, with bridges at each end and at the end of what is now William Street.

Today Moorhall is a short street of intimate quality free of traffic connecting to the banks of the River Dee, but retaining this distinctly industrial character bordered by tall historic warehouse buildings of exposed stone and rendered finish. The view to the north is closed by dense trees in the small park, formerly an island in the River Dee, and a timber footbridge leads across to the park. The view to the south is to the elevated Convent of Mercy, which can be seen through a border belt of trees in its grounds.

Fig. 81: Warehouses on Moorhall with park on former island in the River Dee.



The riverside bank is bordered by a limestone wall and affords views to the park opposite as well as the bridge in Bridge Street. The bank is wide in places with mature trees that echo the character of the park. A riverside walk connects across Bridge Street to a linear park the south bank of the river west of Bridge Street, once the location of a weir, mill race and mill building, none of which survive. The linear park affords fine views of the historic stone bridge and trees on the former island as well as the rear of the former St Mary's Catholic church.

Fig. 82: Historic stone bridge in Bridge Street seen from the west



Fig. 83: Stone riverside wall and view east to park on former island



Fig. 84: Trees define the parkside character of the river north of Moor Hall



5.2.16 William Street and Moorhall Street (East)

William Street was originally a short street, but since the realignment of the western part of Moorhall Street in the latter part of the nineteenth century it now forms part of an east-west route south of the river. This route of which John Street is also part, became the site for a series of nineteenth century buildings associated with the Catholic Church, including the former church, a school, parochial house and Convent of Mercy, their position outside the historic town core being a recurring feature of Irish towns, reflecting the later development of Catholic institutions.

Fig. 85: Extract from 1908 OS map showing realigned Moorhall

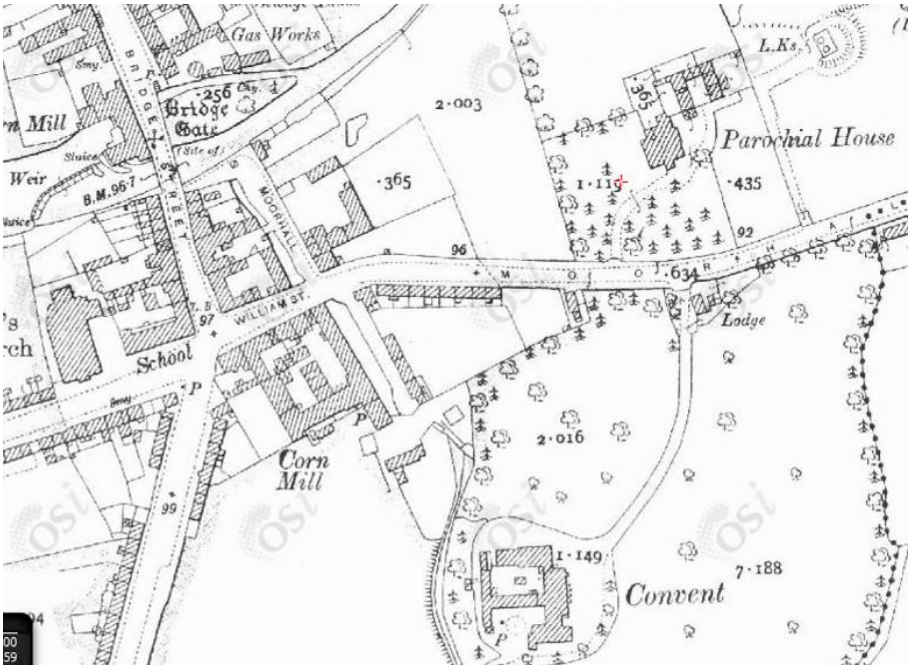


Fig. 86: Terrace of houses to the south of William Street



The south side of William Street is defined by a row of fine two-storey houses and shops. The north side has a varied building line of one, two and three-storey structures. Both sides give a strong and urban character to the street that contrasts to the more peripheral character of Moorhall to the east. The houses on the north side retain covered passageways characteristic of other historic streets in Ardee. Some fine door and window details remain. The street frames good views to the west to the former St Mary's Catholic Church and to the grounds of the religious institutions with many their mature trees to the east.

The character of Moorhall Street, the continuation of William Street to the west is defined by stone boundary walls, a row of single-storey cottages and large mature trees in the grounds of the neighbouring religious institutions. The trees can be glimpsed above the row houses and have a strong presence in the street space. The De La Salle building, Parochial House and Convent of Mercy with its gate lodge can be glimpsed from the street. The strongest characteristic of this stretch of Moorhall Street is of a park landscape with stone boundary walls and cast iron entrance gates.

Fig. 87: De La Salle House



Fig. 88: Moorhall Street looking west



Fig. 89: Gate lodge and trees to the Convent of Mercy



5.2.17 John Street

John Street gives important definition to the southwestern approach to the ACA. The former St Mary's Catholic Church dominates this part of the street with an imposing early Gothic Revival screen elevation. This is flanked to the west by a row of historic single-storey houses. The historic structures to the east of the former church no longer survive. The linear row of dwellings and broad elevation of the church serve to direct the open street space towards Bridge Street and are an important urban ensemble.

The end gable of the row houses at the church is made of stone and echoes the stone elevation of the church itself. The boundary of the church site to the street is formed with cast iron railings, piers and arched openings of stone.

Fig. 90: Former St Mary's Catholic church and adjoining cottages



5.2.18 Convent of Mercy

Apart from its interesting historic buildings this complex has large grounds with substantial borders of tree shelter belts and free standing specimen trees. The effect is one of a picturesque park landscape. It echoes strongly Ardee demesne to the west of the town. This landscape defines much of the historic character of Moorhall Street and the trees contribute as a backdrop to important views within the town.

Fig. 91: Convent to the west



5.2.19 Ardee Demesne

Ardee house, built for the Ruxton family has had an important role in the development of Ardee since the eighteenth century, and a number of physical connections to the town once existed. The large scale of the parkland plays an important visual role as a backdrop to views within the town and emphasises the importance of trees throughout Ardee.
The historic defensive bastion between the former Ardee House and the town, said to date to c. 1690, can be seen from the supermarket car park west of Castle Street.
The demesne centres on the historic 18th century house and also encompasses a 15th century tower house to the south. The demesne walls give important definition to the surrounding areas and streets.

Fig. 92: Western side of shelter belt east of Ardee House



Fig. 93: View of the former Ardee House from the south



Fig. 94: Site of the defensive bastion from the south, said to date to c. 1690



5.2.20 Views

The following views are significant features of the ACA:

- View south along Irish Street
- Views south from Market Street towards Ardee Castle.
- Views south from Castle Street and Bridge Street across the bridge, closed in the far distance by the mature trees set in the elevated grounds of the Convent of Mercy.
- View north from Bridge Street towards Ardee Castle.
- View north from lower part of Castle Street towards Ardee Castle.
- Views north from Castle Street to Market Street.
- Views north from Market Street to Irish Street.
- Views from and towards the Fair Green.
- View from St Mary's Churchyard to Hatch's Castle.
- View from St Mary's Churchyard to the Chantry College.
- Views to the rear of both castles from side and back lanes.

Fig. 95: View to Hatch's Castle from St Mary's churchyard



Fig. 96: View to Chantry College from St Mary's churchyard



Fig. 97: Ardee Castle from Bridge Street



Fig. 98: Rear view of Hatch's castle



Fig. 99: Rear view of Ardee Castle



Fig. 100: View to Hatch Castle from Castle Street



6.0 Summary of Special Character

- Ardee has retained the characteristic charm of a smaller market town. It has a strong setting in the rural landscape, sited in a wider rolling terrain, the relationship between the built and designed landscape environment of the town and the rural landscape beyond remains strong.
- Underlying natural landscape: The River Dee and the rising ground to the south of the town are key defining features of the larger scale natural landscape, which contribute significantly to the special character of the town.
- Archaeological significance: Ardee traces its name back to the pre-historical period, and the foundation of the town to the Norman invasion. As a walled town which has been settled throughout the medieval period it is of great archaeological interest. It contains many standing medieval structures which add great depth to its historical interest and value. The town defences developed further in the seventh century with the addition of a bastion fortification during the Williamite-Jacobite War.
- Morphology of the Town: The historic layout was defined by the walled enclosure with gated entrances to routes from the north, south, east and west. The location of the walls can be traced in the present day layout. The main thoroughfare evolved to lie in a north-south direction. In recent times the town has been restricted in its growth to the west by Ardee demesne and to an extent to the south by the grounds of the Convent of Mercy and other religious institutions.
- Architectural Significance: Ardee contains many significant buildings from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These include infrastructural, defensive, administrative, religious, commercial, industrial and domestic structures of different types, both vernacular and of formal design. The compact urban layout allows for appreciation of these buildings in a richly varied context. The informal mix of functions is significant in forming an intact and historically authentic architectural setting of informal simplicity and differing scales which defines the character of the town.

- Architectural Character: Ardee is a good example of an Irish town in which many houses conform to a simple typology of rendered street architecture with slate roofs and simple sharp detailing. In addition many outbuildings and warehouses have exposed stonework walls. These are interspersed with more elaborate structures with fine detailing and expressive use of stone and brick as building materials. The intrinsic value of the architecture lies in the mix of appealing historic formality and informality, contextual grouping and the survival of early detailing.
- Vernacular Architecture: The informality of the town is reinforced by the survival of many vernacular buildings. These simple buildings reinforce the character of Ardee as a small rural market town.
- Tree planting: Rows and groups of trees in the ACA play a very important role in defining the spatial character of Ardee. These belong to characteristic landscape layouts as in the case of Ardee Demesne to the west, in the grounds of the religious institutions to the south, as well as marking the course of the river through the town. Some street planting remains as do individual specimen trees to rear gardens.
- Built landscape features: Walls, gates and railings give strong boundary definition to properties and add considerable diversity to the streetscape.
- Social and Cultural Heritage: The intact nature of the fabric of the town and the continuity of uses provide valuable insight into the social history of the Ardee.

Fig. 101: Tiling to shop entrance on Castle Street

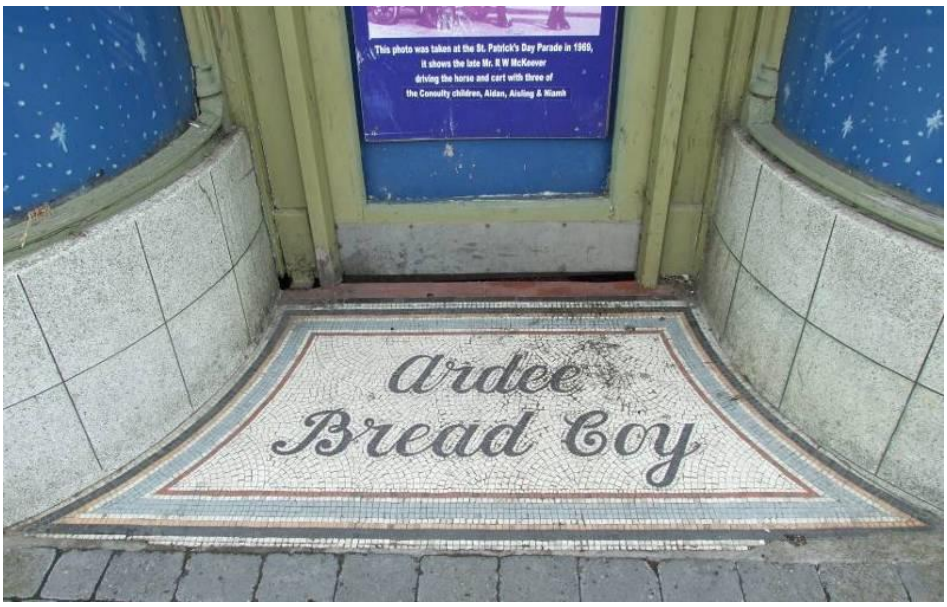


Fig. 102: Decorative stucco bracket to shopfront on Castle Street



7.0 Implications for Planning and Development

7.1 Planning Control

The objective of Architectural Conservation Area designation is to protect the special character of an area through the careful control and positive management of change in the built environment.

7.1.1 Limits to Exempted Development

The Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires that planning permission be obtained for all development works, except for those deemed to be Exempted Development. In Architectural Conservation Areas only works which do not affect the special character are exempt, and many interventions which may otherwise be exempt will require permission. Section 82(1) and (2) of the Act defines exempted development in the context of an ACA:

(1) Notwithstanding section 4 (1)(h), the carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure located in an architectural conservation area shall be exempted development only if those works would not materially affect the character of the area.

(2) In considering an application for permission for development in relation to land situated in an architectural conservation area, a planning authority, or the Board on appeal, shall take into account the material effect (if any) that the proposed development would be likely to have on the character of the architectural conservation area.

Assigning ACA status therefore imposes restrictions on works to the exteriors of structures within the designated boundary. Planning permission is required for any new-build works to visible sides of buildings or for changes to original materials, such as windows, wall finishes, boundary walls, roof coverings etc. New infill development and alterations to existing structures are subject to planning permission, and only proposals which respect or enhance the special character of the area can be granted permission.
More detailed direction is given in the following section on the type of works that will or will not require planning permission.

7.1.2 Protected Structures

Planning permission is required for all works that would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of the structure including its curtilage, which contributes to its special character. Works to a protected structure that constitute essential repairs or maintenance require written agreement from the Conservation Officer. This can be sought in the form of a declaration from Louth County Council under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000. A declaration issued under this section sets out the type of works the Planning Authority considers would or would not affect the character of a structure or any elements which contribute to its special interest.

Fig. 103: Ionic detail to doorcase on William Street



7.1.3 Non-protected Structures

Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within the ACA should be aware that works, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority would materially affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area will require specific grant of planning permission under Section 82(1) of the Planning & Development Act 2000.

7.1.4 Public Domain

Works in the public domain are generally carried out by the Louth County Council and its subcontractors, or by statutory undertakers such as gas, electricity or telecommunication network companies, in consultation with the local authority. Larger scale works will require permission under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations.

Agencies and service-providers carrying out works to the public realm e.g. footpaths, planting, street furniture, parking schemes, public lighting, etc., are required to consider the special character of the area as identified in this document, new infrastructure should not be positioned where it will detract from the special character of Protected Structures or the ACA. Agencies and service-providers should consult with the planning department of Louth County Council and the Conservation Officer for Louth Local Authorities. Only materials appropriate to the character of the ACA should be permitted.

Private sector utilities should employ professional conservation advice to minimise and mitigate the impact of any proposed intervention.

7.2 Works which do not affect the character of the ACA

7.2.1 Maintenance & Repairs

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance and necessary repair works, such as to roofs, rainwater goods or windows within the ACA, as long as original materials are retained, and necessary replacement is strictly limited to damaged fabric, and made on a like-for-like basis.

7.2.2 Internal Alterations

ACA designation for Ardee does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements to those buildings within the area that are not Protected Structures (see list of Protected Structures in Section 3.1 of this document), and as long as these changes do not impact on the exterior of the building.

7.2.3 Restoration of Character

Where original materials have been removed and replaced with modern or inappropriate alternatives, the restoration or reinstatement of these features will not require planning permission where the method, materials and details for the works have been agreed with the Conservation Officer.

Fig. 104: Traditional stone masonry wall on Dundalk Road



7.3 Works which affect the character of the ACA

7.3.1 Roofs

Roofing Materials: The removal of the original roofing material, ridge tiles, chimneys, bargeboards, eaves details, cast-iron gutters and downpipes, and their replacement with modern materials can seriously damage the character of the ACA. Original coverings and elements can generally be repaired and reused and should always be retained as they are essential to the character of the area. Where original roofing materials have been lost, replacement with historically correct materials will be encouraged. Materials used in repairs should also be historically correct to prevent incremental erosion of the character of the ACA.

Fig. 105: Loss of chimneys upsets the proportions of this Georgian house



Chimneys: Chimney stacks are an essential component of the roofscape in a historic urban environment. Removal of stacks will not be deemed acceptable, and any external alteration will require permission.

Roof Lights: The installation of roof lights is only acceptable on hidden roof pitches, as they can fundamentally alter the visual character of the streetscape.

Dormer Windows: There is not a tradition of dormer windows within the Ardee ACA. Dormers would fundamentally change the special character of the town and are therefore only acceptable on hidden pitches.

Eaves Fascias, Soffits and Bargeboards: Most traditional buildings in the ACA were built without timber eaves details, and this historic detail should be retained if roof coverings are renewed. Verge details at gable ends typically have no bargeboards and render extends to the underside of the roof slates, forming a neat junction characteristic of Irish traditional buildings. This detail should always be retained. Projecting eaves or verges should be avoided except in buildings where this was the historic detail. UPVC fascias or bargeboards should never be used within the ACA. A few building have projecting eaves and gable bargeboards. These tend to be used in Gothic Revival or Arts and Crafts influenced buildings. In these cases the detail is an important element in defining the character of the building and should always be retained.

Roof pitch: The alteration of the roof profile affects the character of the building and changes to the angle, ridge height, eaves level or span of roofs would not be deemed acceptable within the ACA.

Fig. 106: Typical slate roof detail without overhang at eaves and verge



Fig. 107: Decorative bargeboards to convent gate lodge



7.3.2 External Walls

Rainwater Goods: Historic gutters, downpipes and hopper-heads, generally of cast-iron, constitute a significant enrichment of the character of the ACA. All intact surviving elements of rainwater goods should be retained, and only individual components which are damaged beyond repair should be replaced. All replacements should be like-for-like to match the surviving elements. Where historic rainwater goods have been inappropriately replaced, the historic type should be reinstated in any associated works.

Fig. 108: Down pipe with decorative fixings, Bridge Street



Alterations to facades: Alterations to historic facades or window openings will affect the character of the exterior and may not be permitted. Previous unsympathetic alterations will be required to be reversed where a proposal affects that part of the historic structure.
Brickwork Elevations: Any proposal to restore historic brick facades must retain the historic patina and character of the façade. Renewal of pointing to facades of exposed brick can substantially alter the appearance of a building. Such work must retain intact historic pointing mortar, and care must be taken to use the correct material and detail. Removal of earlier inappropriate pointing can result in damage to the host brickwork. Pointing work will generally require planning permission, unless carried out in consultation with the Conservation Officer.

Fig. 109: Cut stonework to former Methodist Church



Stonework Elevations: Renewal of pointing to exposed stonework can substantially alter the character of a building. Such work must retain intact historic pointing mortar, and care must be taken to use the correct material and detail. This work will generally require planning permission, unless carried out in consultation with the Conservation Officer.

Fig. 110: Traditional rendered elevation



Removal of Render: The loss of historic external render damages the authentic character of the ACA and removes a water-resisting surface that protects rendered buildings from decay. The removal of render in such cases would be deemed unacceptable. Removal of render from buildings may be acceptable where it can be conclusively demonstrated that the underlying substrate was intended to be exposed. In particular the reinstatement of brick facades may be considered desirable in order to restore the former character of a street. Removal of render in such cases will only be considered acceptable where the historic substrate will not suffer inordinate damage and only where agreed with the Conservation Officer.

Fig. 111: Decorative render detail, Irish Street



Un-rendered elevations: Some structures have traditionally had exposed stone or brick facades. The addition of external render to these houses damages the authentic character of the town and may add a water-resisting surface that hinders the free exit of water from the building. The addition of render in such cases would be deemed unacceptable.

Fig. 112: Exposed brick and rubble stone wall



Unpainted buildings and features: Some structures within the ACA have a render finish that was always intended to remain unpainted. Such renders add to the aged patina of the ACA and should not be painted over. Similarly, structures originally constructed with exposed cut-stone or brick were not intended to be painted and later removal of such paint can damage the external surface of the material.

Painting: Painted finishes are a characteristic feature of the ACA. Repainting of facades, shopfronts, doorcases and other features can alter the character of the ACA and should be undertaken in consultation with the Conservation Officer. Muted colours will be preferred and garish colours or painting of shopfronts or facades for brand identity should be avoided. Modern chemical based paints can have a detrimental effect on historic buildings by trapping moisture in the fabric causing dampness and decay. For this reason external paints used in historic buildings must be breathable.

Fig. 113: The non-historic paint scheme obscures the quality of this doorcase



Cleaning: Abrasive cleaning methods such as sandblasting damage the external surface of natural building materials. They often remove the hand-tooled surface from stonework or the protective fired surface from bricks, leading to porosity and harmful water ingress. Generally sandblasting of external walls is not advised on historic buildings. Other non-abrasive cleaning methods may be appropriate, but these must be non-destructive and must preserve the aged appearance of historic buildings. Cleaning measures will always require planning permission or consultation with the Conservation Officer.

External Cladding: Most historic buildings in Ardee tend to have a rendered finish, outbuildings and warehouses are of exposed stone and a few buildings are of brick. The alteration of the original finish by cladding external walls with stone, tiling or timber is generally not acceptable in the historic buildings of the ACA. Original historic external finishes must always be retained. Any proposal for the alteration of the existing finishes will require planning permission, and changes which affect the special character of the ACA will not be acceptable. However the addition of cladding to more modern structures may be considered, but only in consultation with the conservation officer and area planner.

Rear Elevations: In many instances the rear elevations of buildings play a key role in the character of the group. It is important to note the ACA protection pertains to the rear as well as to the front of buildings in an ACA.

Fig. 114: Rear of house on Bridge Street seen from Moorhall



Satellite antenna, TV aerials and other communications devices: The addition of such installations to the front elevations or roofs of structures within the ACA would be considered to have a negative impact on the character of the area. Satellite dishes should not be visible on the front elevation of buildings. Planning permission is required for the erection of a satellite dish on the front elevation of any property, whether in an ACA or not. Less visible methods of TV reception, such as cable, should be used and where the existing aerials have become redundant they should be removed.



Fig. 115: Proliferation of fittings diminishes the character of the ACA

7.3.3 Windows & Doors

Alteration of Openings: Enlargement of window or door openings or the removal of stone sills or doorsteps can alter the prevailing proportions of the townscape, and result in incremental loss of historic materials on whose texture and authenticity the special character to the village relies. Any proposed change to openings would therefore require planning permission.

Fig. 116: Decorative fanlight on Irish Street



Replacement of Windows or External Doors: Original timber or metal windows, doors and fanlights are key features which enrich the character of the ACA. Examples of authentic historic fenestration and external doors are becoming relatively rare and their retention is therefore crucial to the preservation of the character of the ACA. Decayed timber windows can in most cases be repaired and cannot be accepted as a reason for replacement. Replacement of original windows and doors with modern artificial materials such as uPVC or aluminium has a particularly negative impact and will always be deemed unacceptable.

Where windows and doors have been altered or replaced prior to ACA designation, the reinstatement of windows of correct historic design will be encouraged, and where planning applications are made for the buildings concerned such reinstatement may be made a condition of permission. Any alteration to windows or doors within the ACA requires planning permission.

Fig. 117: Historic windows are perhaps the single most important element of an historic streetscape



Fig. 118: Historic doors, formal and vernacular, add richness to an ACA





Ironwork: Window guards, balconettes, grilles, bootscrapers, and other ironwork fittings are essential to the palette of materials in the ACA, and may not be removed or altered. Repairs should follow best conservation practice using traditional techniques, and welding should be avoided. Any such work must be undertaken in consultation with the planning authority.

Fig. 119: Archway doors are key character features of the historic town



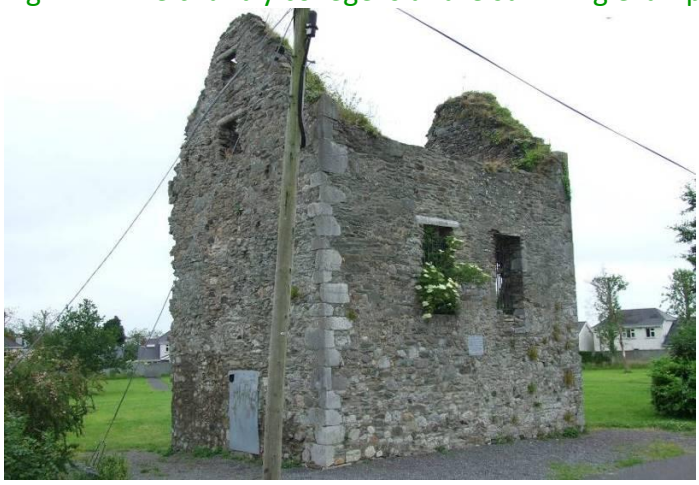
Fig. 120: Ironwork window guard on Castle Street



7.3.4 Medieval Structures

Archaeology: The entire ACA lies within a designated Zone of Archaeological Interest, and any excavation work below ground level may uncover archaeological material.
Standing structures: In addition to below-ground archaeology, all standing structures built before 1700 or containing any pre-1700 fabric are protected under National Monuments legislation. Any works must be carried out in consultation with the National Monuments Section of the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Medieval structures are key to the appreciation of the character of the ACA, and due to their great rarity must be given very careful consideration in any repair or development proposal.

Fig. 121: The chantry college is a rare surviving example of its type



7.3.5 Vernacular Buildings

Vernacular houses and functional buildings built of simple materials in unpretentious style are an important component of the special character of the Ardee ACA and demolition or replacement of vernacular buildings is therefore not acceptable. Raising of eaves levels, alteration of roof pitches or insertion of dormer windows fundamentally change the character of vernacular buildings and are similarly unacceptable. Alterations to provide modern facilities must be carried out in sympathy with the historic value of these buildings. Alterations to increase the size of vernacular houses are not always appropriate and must be confined to the rears of houses. Reinstatement of traditional vernacular features such as lime-washed external walls, timber sheeted doors and sash windows will be encouraged, but must conform to correct historic detail in form, material and technique.

Fig. 122: Vernacular shop on Irish Street adds to the variety of the streetscape



7.3.6 Shopfronts

Historic shopfronts: A considerable number of historic shopfronts survive throughout the ACA, varying from modest to elaborate detail, and contribute strongly to the special character of the Ardee ACA. Alterations to historic shopfronts should be restricted to a minimum and will require planning permission.

Fig. 123: Elaborate shopfront on Castle Street



Fig. 124: Traditional timber shop front on Castle Street



Painting of historic shopfronts: Repainting in the historic colour, or in another appropriate muted tone, may not affect the character of a shopfront, and may be undertaken with the approval of the conservation officer. Paint may not be stripped from historic shopfront elements without approval of the conservation officer, as earlier layers, in particular overpainted traces of former signage, can be of particular interest.

Existing non-historic shopfronts: Alterations to any shopfront in the ACA will require planning permission. Care must always be taken in works to seemingly non-historic shopfronts in historic buildings, as concealed features of earlier frontages may be concealed beneath. Such concealed features as may come to light in works shopfronts must be notified to the conservation officer, even in cases where planning permission has been obtained.

New shopfronts: Insertion of shopfronts in historic buildings where none has previously existed can damage the special character of the ACA and will normally be seen as unacceptable. New shopfronts, whether in contemporary or traditional style should reflect the principle of historic examples and be restricted in size to enclose a display window and entrance door only. New shop fronts should not rise higher than the prevailing height in the street and should not alter or obscure architectural details of the original building such as sills, stringcourses, windows, doorways, etc. New signage boards to shopfronts in the ACA, whether in contemporary or traditional style, must reflect the detail of historic examples. Deep fascias and off-the-shelf brackets should be avoided.

Replacement shopfronts: Shopfronts may only be replaced where the replaced frontage is not historic. Surviving components of historic shopfronts, such as pilasters or vitrolite signage fascias, should always be retained.

Shopfronts of contemporary design: Shopfronts of contemporary design can enhance the layered character of the ACA if properly considered. Where non-traditional designs are proposed, a design statement should be submitted outlining the rationale and concept of the design and demonstrating the intended contribution to the character of the ACA.

Fig. 125: Traditional shopfront on Irish Street



Fig. 126: Both elaborate and simple details add to the character of the town





Fig. 127: Inappropriate alterations obscuring a decorative shopfront



Awnings: Historic awnings are a feature of nineteenth century display windows and should be retained where they survive. Where new canopies or awnings are deemed acceptable, they should be made of heavy-duty cotton material with painted metal or timber hardware. Plastic should not be used.

7.3.7 Signage and External fittings

New signage: Signage may only be permitted on shopfronts. Such signage should be of appropriate design to complement or enhance the structure, and should not be overtly dominant on the streetscape. Internally illuminated and plastic fascia boxes will not be considered acceptable. Standard corporate signage which would detract from the character of the ACA should be adapted in scale, colour or material colour to be more in keeping with the area.

Outdoor Advertising Billboards: Care should be taken that outdoor advertising does not detract from the special character of the ACA. Billboards which conceal historic features or impinge on significant views will not be deemed acceptable.

Shutters: The design of security shutters should complement rather than damage the character of the building and the ACA. Metal roller shutters with visible boxes are not acceptable within the ACA boundaries. Shutter boxes should be positioned discreetly behind the fascia board, or sliding lattice grills be positioned behind the shop window. Security shutters should not cover the whole commercial frontage but only the vulnerable glazed areas. Where appropriate to the type of shop or to the historic interior arrangement, security shutters should be placed behind the window display.

Where external security screens are deemed acceptable they should be of transparent open chain-link grille design rather than solid or perforated shutters, which are not transparent when viewed obliquely. Shutters and grilles should be painted or finished in colour to complement the rest of the exterior.

External Seating and Screening: Planning permission and a Section 254 license are required for external seating. Seats should be of wood, painted metal or other traditional material which enhance the visual appearance of the ACA. Plastic is not an acceptable material for seating. Enclosing ropes and canvas windbreaks can incrementally damage the special character of an ACA and must be carefully considered and assessed as part of the overall level of existing street furniture. Screens to enclose external seating areas should be made of heavy-duty cotton, glazed or metal panels and should not be used for advertising purposes.

Other External Elements to Commercial Premises: Canopies, vending machines, newspaper receptacles, etc. can damage the special character of an ACA, and can only be accepted to a limited degree. Where canopies or awnings are deemed acceptable in the ACA, they should not be made of plastic but of heavy-duty cotton material with painted metal or timber hardware. Planning permission is required for external vending machines, ATMs, newspaper receptacles, storage bays etc. Commercial premises should limit the clutter of temporary external retail furniture, such as external heaters, bins, menu-boards, etc. Such fittings are only acceptable where their design complements or enhances the character of the area.

7.3.8 Boundary Treatments

Alteration or removal of historic railings, boundary walls, piers, gates, etc. always requires planning permission. Loss of such features can be seriously damaging to the character of the ACA and is therefore not acceptable. Reinstatement of lost features such as ironwork details to correct historic detail will be encouraged by the planning authority, or required by condition where appropriate when granting permission for developments within the ACA.

Fig. 128: Railings and steps on Bridge Street



Fig. 129: Decorative ironwork on Dundalk Road



7.3.9 Demolition

Demolition of any building visible within the ACA, whether it is a Protected Structure or not, will require planning permission. Demolition will only be permitted where the structure makes no material contribution to the character or appearance of the area, or does not have the potential to do so through reinstatement of historic features. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining any structure that makes a positive contribution to the character of the ACA to avoid incremental loss or damage to its special character.

Where permission is sought for demolition on the grounds of structural defects or failure, a condition report produced by a suitably qualified and experienced conservation professional, supported by photographs and drawings indicating locations of defects will be required. Justification on structural grounds for any demolition within the ACA must include details of repairs or remedial works normally used in similar circumstances demonstrating why they are not suitable in that instance. A full photographic record and measured survey will be required before any demolition commences.

Façade Retention: Although interiors are not protected within an ACA 'façade retention' will not be considered an acceptable approach, except in cases where only the façade survives.

7.3.10 New Build Interventions

Plot Size: New buildings should follow existing plot boundaries to retain the existing grain which is an important determining factor of the special character of the ACA. In larger developments on sites where former individual boundaries have already been removed, the original plot divisions should be articulated in the volume and composition of the new buildings, both to the front and the rear.

Fig. 130: New buildings which ignore the established building line and plot sizes damage the character of the street space



New and Infill Developments: Designation as an ACA puts an onus on prospective developers to produce a high standard of architectural design, which respects or enhances the particular qualities of the area. New buildings should be designed to blend into the streetscape using the prevailing materials, proportions and massing. Buildings should follow the eaves heights, roof pitches, building lines which predominate in the surrounding context. Chimney stacks should be included where these are a feature of the roofscape. Windows should be of matching proportions and alignments at head and sill, and the window-to-wall ratio should be derived from the historic buildings forming the context of the infill site. Contemporary interpretations and detail which allow the new building to be identified as an addition should be favoured over pastiche styles in order to avoid undermining the authenticity of ACA.

Alternative Design Approach: New buildings which depart from the proportions and façade arrangements typical of the context must be of a very high standard of architectural design and must positively contribute to the character of the area. A design impact statement outlining the concept of the design and providing justification for the proposal, demonstrating a considered response to the scale, materials and grain of the ACA must accompany any such application.

Materials and Features: Only materials of good visual quality and durability may be used in new developments. Features which are not typical of the historic buildings of the village should be avoided. These include roof lights, standard-issue concrete sills or copings, top-hung casement windows, pressed aluminium gutters or uPVC features of any kind. Roofs should be covered with natural slate, lead or other roofing materials which enhance the character of the ACA.

Extensions to Front or Side: All new additions to the front or visible elevations of structures within the ACA will require planning permission. Very careful consideration will be given to applications for extensions to the side or front of a structure within the ACA, as these can be particularly detrimental to the character of the area.

Rear Extensions: Additions to the rears of properties can often be visible from other parts of the ACA and can affect its character. Rear extensions which may otherwise constitute exempted development can materially affect the external appearance of a building within the ACA and would in that case require planning permission. Extensions should be designed to minimise their visibility from any public area in the ACA, they should be subsidiary to the main building, of an appropriate scale, and should follow the guidance for new infill buildings given above.

7.3.11 Amalgamation of Properties or Sites

Amalgamation of Structures: Joining buildings together into one functional unit requires planning permission irrespective of whether located in an ACA or not. Any proposals for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA will be considered with regard to the impact of the change on the special character of the ACA, whether in its visual appearance or characteristic use. Original entrances should therefore remain in use to maintain an active and vibrant street frontage. Treatment of facades to joined buildings should emphasise the individual plot. Paint finishes or shopfronts should not aim to present adjoining buildings which have been joined in the same ownership in a uniform manner.

Amalgamation of Plots: Any proposed development of a group of sites within the ACA, especially at an increased density, must respect the scale, mass, height, and design of adjoining buildings and of the whole streetscape. This does not preclude modern design but should reflect the predominant and historically significant grain of the town, informally arranged buildings of intimate scale and narrow frontage. Developments which span across former individual plot boundaries, should be articulated in their volume and facades to reflect the historic plot divisions, both to the front and the rear, avoiding wide frontages of continuous height. The demolition of buildings that contribute positively to the character of the ACA is not acceptable. All such buildings should be retained and incorporated sensitively into any proposed re-development with respect for their historic and architectural qualities and original plot form.

Fig. 96: left: boundary stone walls



Fig. 97: right: cast iron gates and stone piers



7.3.12 External Lighting

Proposals for the illumination at night of buildings and other features within the ACA requires the consent of Louth County Council. The method of lighting, i.e. type of fitting, fixing method and type of light, must be specified by the applicant in seeking permission and should be designed so that it does not affect public lighting levels, result in light pollution, or negatively impact on other structures in the ACA.

7.3.13 Views

Key views as outlined in this document must be preserved and any works within the ACA should not adversely impact on or block these views. These views will be considered for 'Protected View' status in the next review of the Local Area Plan.

7.4 Works To The Public Realm

7.4.1 Works by the Local Authority

Most works undertaken in the public realm are carried out by Louth County Council, or for it by subcontractors. These works include road opening works for drainage, water supply and metering, road resurfacing, paving works, accessibility improvements, street lighting, street furniture, controls and signage for traffic and pedestrians, parking provision and meters, etc. Larger-scale works will require planning approval under Part 8 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001. The Conservation Officer should always be consulted in this process.

In smaller scale interventions, the relevant engineering department should consult closely with the Conservation Officer to ensure that any unavoidable impact on the character of the ACA is suitably mitigated.

Where subcontractors are used, the tender documents should inform bidding companies of the constraints imposed by working within an ACA. Subcontractors should be carefully overseen or should be required to engage professional conservation advice in any interventions within a historic context.

7.4.2 Works by Statutory Undertakers

Infrastructure for supply of gas, electricity, telecommunications, cable tv, etc. is provided by a range of providers, and all of which can have a damaging impact on the historic built environment.

Utility and service providers are each governed by different legislation, but all must consult to a greater or lesser degree with the local roads authority and obtain permission for any road-opening works.

The road authority as the overseeing body should inform the relevant service provider of the constraints imposed on work within an ACA, and should consult with the Planning Department and the Conservation Officer for Louth Local Authorities before approving interventions.

Private sector utilities should be required to employ professional conservation advice to minimise and mitigate the impact of any proposed intervention in a historic context.

7.4.3 Historic Paving & Street Furniture

Alterations to paving and street furniture should be in keeping with the visual simplicity of the town. Where historic evidence of street furniture does not survive, new elements should be chosen to be high quality and low-key. Conspicuous arrays of litter bins or bollards should be avoided through the use of integrated designs to minimise clutter. The impact of necessary items should be mitigated by careful consideration of their position in the streetscape. The Conservation Officer of Louth Local Authorities should be consulted before any works commence, to ensure that works do not adversely affect, but rather enhance the character of the area.

7.4.4 Drainage

Sewers culverts etc. which are not visible contribute nonetheless to the historic character and civil engineering heritage of the ACA. Works to this infrastructure should be respectful of historic features and should favour repair over replacement.

7.4.5 Street Lighting

The street lighting in parts of the ACA is utilitarian roadway lighting. Consideration should be given to improving the lighting scheme with lower lamp standards to produce a more intimate lighting which would reinforce the town character.

7.4.6 Traffic and Management Signage

The roads in Ardee are in the care of Louth County Council. There is considerable traffic due to the strategic location of the town in the network of national and local roads. It is important that all signage and other traffic management features be carefully sited to cause the minimum impact. Traffic engineers should consult the Conservation Officer regarding any changes or improvements proposed.

7.4.7 Management of Parking

Parking has a generally negative effect on the character of the ACA in the areas where it is provided. Cars detract from the historic character of streets, and impede proper appreciation of historic buildings and spaces. In addition off-street surface car parks also add to the degradation of the character of the town. Parking is provided throughout the ACA in different arrangements. This should be revised when possible to allow structures to regain their historic boundaries or to be free of cluttering vehicles. Site boundaries, understanding of historic plot sizes and landscape features should not be sacrificed to providing parking spaces.

Fig. 131: Civic space devoted to car park use



To enhance the character of the ACA, the exclusion of parking from key positions in the ACA might be considered. The configuration of parking bays in sensitive areas should be designed for the best possible presentation when cars are not present. For disabled-accessible parking spaces alternatives to blue surfacing should be provided.

Fig. 132: Open expanse of car parking causing loss of street definition



Fig. 133: Loss of rear boundary definition



Fig. 134: Loss of front boundary definition



7.4.8 Planting & Landscaping

Good quality landscape design can enhance the setting of historic buildings and improve the appreciation of the urban spaces. Such designs should employ good quality natural materials which are already found in the streetscape, or are in sympathy with its scale and materials.

The quantity and quality of planting and trees within the ACA is an essential contributing element of its special character. Good quality planting maintenance and design can support this in the present and into the future. This also applies to areas in private property that are not in the street space such as front and rear gardens as they can be seen from public routes and are part of the larger landscape makeup of Ardee. The Conservation Officer should be consulted in the design of any such schemes, to ensure that the impact on the historic character of the village is acceptable.

Fig. 135: Rear gardens with hedges and mature native and exotic trees contribute significantly to the less public views in the ACA.



Fig. 136: Need for replacement trees and protection from vehicles



7.4.9 Service Utilities

Where underground services are proposed beneath historic paving, this should be carefully lifted by suitably skilled operatives and laid in the original position and detail. Where cabling on facades is not avoidable, these should be placed neatly in discreet positions using dark coloured cable as approved by the Conservation Officer.

7.4.10 Wires and Distribution Poles

Overhead electricity supply and telephone cables and poles detract significantly from the character of Ardee. The Council should facilitate and support any initiatives to place overhead services underground within the historic ACA. The removal of redundant services and signage from the facades of buildings should also be encouraged.

Fig. 137: Obtrusive overhead cables on Irish Street



NOTE:

Some of the works listed overleaf require planning permission irrespective of whether they are located within an ACA or not, but are included to highlight the need for careful consideration of the design of the proposed works to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the character of the area.

The guidance given above is not in itself a comprehensive list of all works, in all circumstances, that require planning permission, but identifies those works that would impact on the character of the ACA. Development works would still have to adhere to the general provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Planning Regulations. The Area Planner and Conservation Officer of Louth County Council can be consulted if there is any doubt as to whether planning permission is required or not.

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