

Athenry Town Walls



Conservation and Management Plan



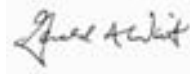


An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



ATHENRY TOWN WALLS
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

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ATHENRY TOWN WALLS
CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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FOREWORD



Message from Cllr. Peter Feeney, Mayor of County Galway

Athenry's medieval Town Walls, which date back to the 14th century, are a National Monument. They are of local, regional, national and international importance and are a source of immense county and local 'civic pride'. The Town Walls contribute greatly to the overall 'quality of life' and 'sense of place' for residents in, and visitors to this historic town. The historic Town Walls are among the best preserved Town Walls that survive in the island of Ireland.

As a native of Athenry, an Elected Member of Galway County Council and as Mayor of County Galway for 2008 I am delighted to see this Athenry Town Walls Conservation and Management Plan brought into the public domain. The stimulus for this Plan arose from the concern of the people of Athenry to ensure the long-term survival of their Town's unique Walls.

This Plan is the result of the work and collaboration of a Steering Group Committee made up of various interested parties including representatives from Galway County Council, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, The Heritage Council, Community Groups and landowners / occupier representatives. It was this partnership approach coupled with the extensive consultation process with the local community, particularly landowners and occupiers that has made this a document that everyone has bought into. The development and agreement of the Plan demonstrates the ability of local communities to work with State agencies, Government departments and local authorities in planning for the future. Thanks to all involved in the Steering Committee - your time and efforts have brought this Plan to fruition.

The overall aim of this project is to assist the various agencies and groups responsible for the Conservation and Management of the Athenry Town Walls in formulating, planning and implementing a successful Conservation and Management Programme. Thanks are due to the staff of Galway County Council for their support and assistance in ensuring this Plan has fulfilled its objectives.

I would like to pay tribute to our partner organisation The Irish Walled Towns Network section of The Heritage Council, in particular for jointly funding this Plan with Galway County Council. They have united and co-ordinated strategic efforts of Local Authorities involved in management, conservation and enhancement of historic walled towns in Ireland, both North and South. I would like to pay particular tribute to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. John Gormley, for his interest and support in the area of Heritage which allows us to advance projects like this Plan.

I hope that the Athenry Town Walls Conservation and Management Plan will be used to inform and guide development in Athenry and that its implementation will see the continued co-operation of all involved.



Message from Ms. Martina Moloney, County Manager

The architectural heritage of County Galway is a unique and special resource. Our architectural heritage consists not only of great artistic achievements of the past, but also the everyday works of craftsmanship of the past. Structures and places have over time acquired character and special interest through their continued existence and familiarity. In a changing world, they provide an anchor. All of their parts have been tested by our climate, and those that have survived the ravages of time and of constant use or sometimes abuse, have acquired value.

If we enjoy the fruits of this inheritance, we have a duty to ensure that it is conserved and passed on to our successors. Sympathetic use can allow the architectural heritage to continue to be enjoyed and incorporated in to the life of the citizens of Athenry and of County Galway into the future.

Galway County Council and Galway County Heritage Forum in partnership with the Irish Walled Towns Network of the Heritage Council developed this Conservation and Management Plan for the Athenry Town Walls under the auspices of Galway County Heritage Plan 2004-2008. The County Development Plan 2003 – 2009 and the Athenry Local Area Plan 2005 also contain objectives to produce a Conservation and Management Plan for the Athenry Town Walls.

In relation to the built heritage, protection can be defined as a method of managing change in order to ensure that what is of special interest is retained and that its future is secured for the benefit of current and future generations. This current Athenry Conservation and Management Plan for the Athenry Town Walls will further this aim.

Protection in relation to a protected structure includes conservation, preservation and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure.

The conservation work to be undertaken on the Athenry Town Walls will foster traditional construction skills that will continue to contribute to the economy, and can enhance the material and developmental value of the unique town of Athenry.

The existing character of the towns and villages throughout the county is an amalgam of the various layers of development from earliest times to the present. The architectural and archaeological heritage is very visible in the streets and walls of Athenry.

The preservation of the elements of our heritage, which contribute to the present, is important, as is the need to maintain the qualities of the historical context or setting. The retention of the character of the historic town and village core is recognised as being a major attraction in towns and villages. This is important in maintaining local distinctiveness for the inhabitant and visitor alike.

The walls of Athenry are an integral part of the history of Athenry.

Acknowledgements

The authors of this conservation and management plan would like to gratefully note the assistance given to them by the people of Athenry, both with regard to access to the Town Walls, but also in their willing participation in the consultation process. The members of the Steering Group provided support and guidance throughout the preparation of this document and in particular we appreciate the help of Marie Mannion and Brid Higgins (Heritage Officer, Galway County Council), Professor Etienne Rynne and Dominic Monaghan (who gave much time to correct the draft version of this report) , Hugh Carey (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government who kindly sourced information from National Monument Service files), Councillor Peter Feeney, Madelyn Brody, Alan Burgess (Athenry Heritage Centre), Finbarr O'Regan, Charles Taylor and Tadhg Costello. Special thanks go to Gerry Ahern, Ned Waldron and Tommy Quinn and the other members of the Athenry Parish Project Society Co. Ltd for the land/property ownership details, access to documents, information on possible heritage and funding initiatives, vital feedback and for undertaking specific consultation with parish and community groups.

OS maps are reproduced © Ordnance Survey Ireland, All rights reserved. Licence number 2003/08CCMA/Galway County Council We are grateful to Brídín Feeney (GIS Support, Galway County Council) for assisting with the provision of maps for use in this report and to all the other individuals and organisations listed in Appendix E for their time in meeting us or completing questionnaires.

The Conservation and Management Plan team comprised Gifford - Gerry Wait, Anne Thompson, Rosey Wheeler and Gill Reaney (cultural heritage), Fay Newham (condition survey) and Jeff Turner (ecological survey) - with PLB (Carolyn Lloyd Brown), who contributed to the consultation process, planning review, presentation and interpretation analysis, and policies - and Donald Insall Associates (John Simons) who also assisted with consultations, planning review, and architectural/setting analysis.

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Glossary

For the purposes of this conservation and management plan the definitions of the following terms are as given in the Burra Charter, Article 1 (1999), an international guidance document on the conservation and management of places of cultural heritage significance. Therefore:

Place means site, area, land, landscape, building or other work, group of buildings or other works, and may include components, contents, spaces and views.

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its *fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings*, records, *related places and related objects*. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups.

Fabric means the all the physical material of the *place* including components, fixtures, contents and objects.

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its *cultural significance*.

Maintenance means the continuous protective care of the *fabric* and *setting* of a *place*, and is to be distinguished from repair. Repair involves restoration or reconstruction.

Preservation means maintaining the *fabric* of a *place* in its existing state and retarding deterioration.

Restoration means returning the existing *fabric* of a *place* to a known earlier state by removing accretions or by reassembling existing components without the introduction of new material.

Reconstruction means returning a *place* to a known earlier state and is distinguished from *restoration* by the introduction of new material into the *fabric*.

Adaptation means modifying a *place* to suit the existing use or a proposed use.

Use means the functions of a place, as well as the activities and practices that may occur at the place.

Compatible use means a use which respects the *cultural significance* of a *place*. Such a use involves no, or minimal, impact on cultural significance.

Setting means the area around a *place*, which may include the visual catchment.

Related place means a place that contributes to the *cultural significance* of another place.

Related object means an object that contributes to the *cultural significance* of a *place* but is not at the place.

Associations mean the special connections that exist between people and a *place*.

Meanings denote what a *place* signifies, indicates, evokes or expresses.

Interpretation means all the ways of presenting the *cultural significance* of a *place*.

In addition to the Burra Charter definitions the following terms have been included to assist readers of this plan:

Ashlar – blocks of smooth, squared stone.

Batter – a sloping part of a curtain wall; the angle at the base of walls and towers along their exterior face.

Crenelation – battlements or castellation - distinctive pattern along the tops of walls formed by notches/open spaces between solid walling.

Curtain wall – a high wall surrounding a defensive site often with towers at intervals, such as the baun around a castle.

Dovecot – a pigeon house, normally circular in form.

Fosse – a ditch or a moat when originally filled with water.

Galleting (or pinning) – the placing of small pieces of stone, flint or clinker between mortar joints – at Athenry stone is used.

Gate house – a tower, bridge or other barrier built to protect an entrance through a castle or town wall.

Keep – a main tower; the inner stronghold of a castle.

Loop hole – a narrow, tall opening; a slit in a wall for light, air or shooting through.

Motte – a mound of earth on which a tower/castle was built.

Murage grants – tax levied for building or repairing the walls of a town.

Murder hole – a section between the main gate and inner portcullis where arrows, rocks and hot oil could be dropped through from the roof.

National Monument - a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic, or archaeological interest attached thereto.

Palisade – a wooden fence built to enclose a site until a permanent stone wall could be constructed.

Parapet – a protective low wall on the outer side of a main wall.

Portcullis – a sliding door (in the form of a grid with points along the lower edge) that stood above a gate and was lowered for protection.

Protection - the conservation, preservation and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure.

Putlog – beams placed in holes to support a hoarding; horizontal scaffold beam.

Pulog hole – a hole intentionally left in the surface of a wall for the insertion of a horizontal pole.

Quoin – dressed stone at an angle of a building.

Rath – a low, circular, ringwork of bank and ditch.

Rampart – a defensive stone or earth mound or wall surrounding a fortified place.

Revetment – a retaining wall to prevent erosion.

Sill – the lower horizontal face of an opening.

Voussoir – wedge-shaped stone in an arch.

Wall walk – a passage behind the parapet of a castle wall.

Abbreviations

ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
c.	Circa
DoEHLG	Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
DPC	Damp proof course
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GCC	Galway County Council
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICOMOS	International Council of Monuments and Sites
IWTN	Irish Walled Town Network
JGAHS	Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society
JRSAI	Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland
NA	Not applicable
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NMS	National Monuments Service
OPW	Office of Public Works

OS	Ordnance Survey
RMP	Record of Monuments and Places
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Executive Summary

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

The Piran Declaration, 1998.

In March 2008 a conservation and management plan for the Town Walls of Athenry was completed on behalf of Galway County Council by Gifford in association with PLB and Donald Insall Associates. The Town Walls are of national importance and are one of the town's major assets.

The Town Walls were built in the 14th century and have been fundamental in maintaining the plan of the town. Indeed it is the combination of the Town Walls and the medieval streetscape within the walled circuit that gives Athenry a strong sense of times long past. Allied to this are the other surviving legacies of the medieval period in the town – the Castle, Priory, Collegiate Church and Market Square with Cross – which further add to the rich heritage of this fascinating town.

Recognising that the Walls were an under-exploited resource for Athenry, Galway County Council provided funding, in partnership with the Heritage Council, for the conservation and management plan, which has been prepared in consultation with many organisations and the community in order to present as broad a consensus on the way forward as possible.

The conservation and management plan provides a framework to guide all stakeholders involved with the Town Walls in developing a long term management strategy for the Walls. An Action Plan for the implementation of the policies proposed to manage, preserve and enhance the Walls is provided, outlining short, medium and long-term actions.



Plate 1: South Wall

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Gifford Ltd, in partnership with PLB and Donald Insall Associates were commissioned by Galway County Council in July 2007 to undertake a conservation and management plan for the Athenry Town Walls, Towers, Gates and Defences of Earthen Ramparts, Moat and Trench (hereafter referred to as 'Athenry Town Walls' – Figures 1 and 2). Of medieval origin the Town Walls at Athenry define the town and comprise an essential part of the town's unique character – the majority of the Walls remain standing and visible, although less than one fifth are within public access. The Town Walls are a national monument, with a duty of care on Galway County Council and the conservation and management plan was identified as necessary to help assess their importance and so enable their future management, maintenance and development.

1.2 Aims of the Conservation and Management Plan

By providing an understanding of the Town Walls and their setting, an assessment of why they are significant, and how they are vulnerable to change now and in the future, this plan defines policies to protect and manage the Town Walls. The plan therefore is to be used as a guide for:

- improving public awareness, knowledge and appreciation of the Walls
- day to day and long term management of the Walls
- defining clear guiding principles against which any new development proposals or new ways of using the Walls can be evaluated
- identification, following a condition survey, of areas of the Walls in need of attention (with recommendations for the repair, conservation and protection of the Walls within a phased programme)
- the preparation of initiatives for access, interpretation and education related to the Walls and their setting.

1.3 Methodology

The structure of this plan follows the sequence of analytical steps presented by James Semple Kerr (in the 1996 publication *The Conservation Plan – A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance*):

- Understanding - including archaeological, historical, ecological, planning, structural and maintenance perspectives.
- Significance – encompassing both the overall importance of the Walls as well as the individual importance of elements of the Walls.
- Issues – identifying the factors that could impact upon the significance of the Walls.
- Policies – defining the principles to protect and enhance the Walls and their setting.
- Implementation – setting out a prioritised action plan.

Throughout the preparation of this plan the results of both stakeholder and public consultation are included as these provide a vital means of understanding how the Town Walls are currently valued and used, as well as ideas and concerns for the future of the Walls.

The plan has therefore been produced following documentary (primarily secondary sources) research, site inspections – including the preparation of a photographic record of the entire Town Walls circuit (internally and externally), a condition survey, and an ecological assessment - and consultation of relevant individuals, organisations, and the public. This plan includes a copy of the information on the ownership of the Town Walls (Appendix A), a copy of the National

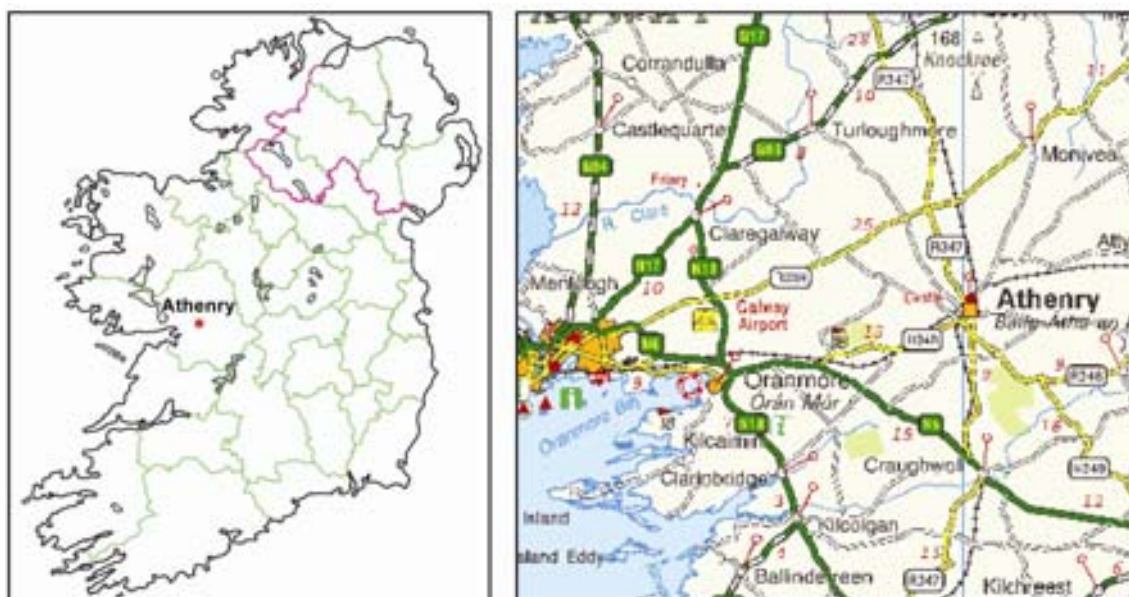


Figure 1: Location

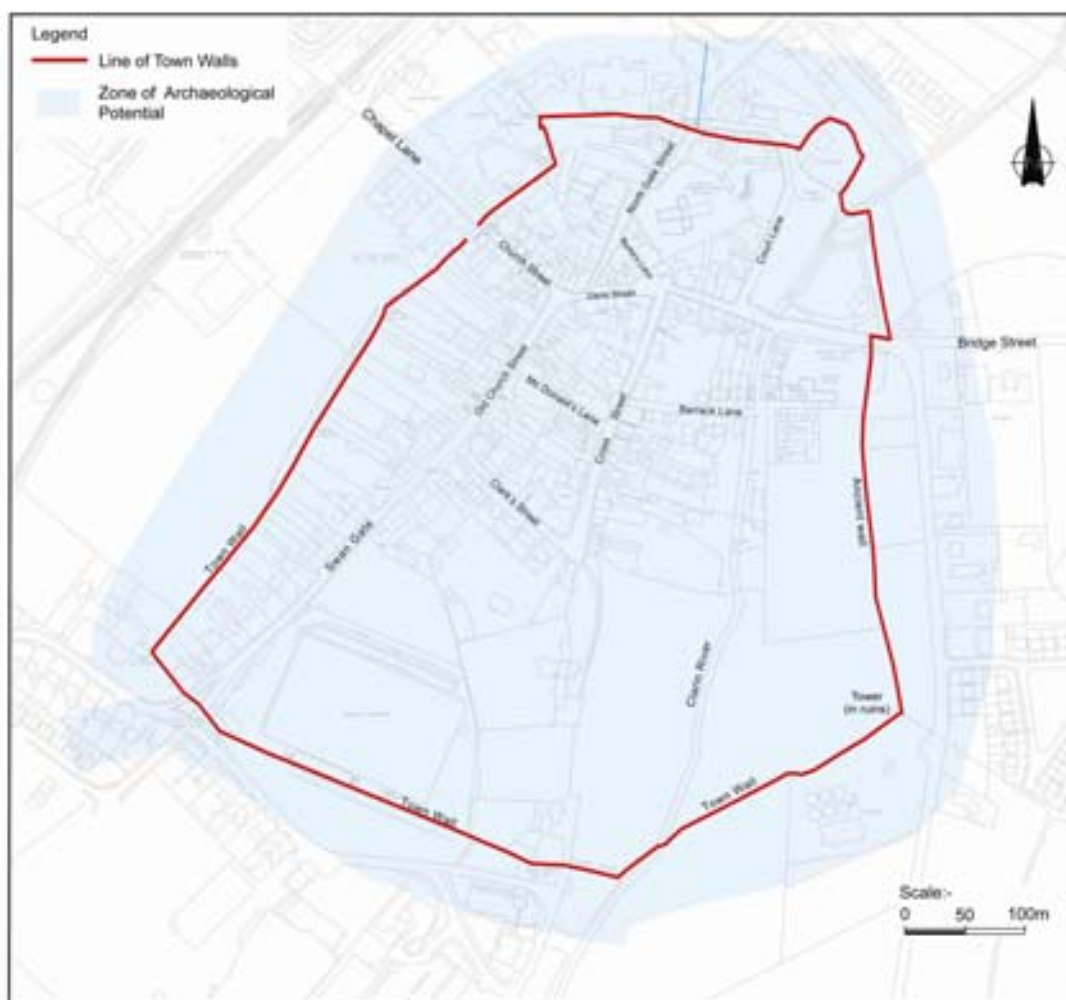


Figure 2: Circuit of Athenry Town Walls, including Zone of Archaeological Potential

Monument designation (Appendix B), a research agenda for future investigation (Appendix C), the results of the photographic record of the Walls (Appendix D), the consultation data/analysis (Appendix E) and further detail on the strategic review (Appendix F).

To assist with the referencing of specific parts of the Town Walls the circuit was divided into four basic zones using the general cardinal directions (north, east, south and west) - and then into distinct sections, with each defined stretch of wall or structure given a separate reference (gazetteer) number. Associated structures were also given a unique gazetteer reference number to enable referencing as their inclusion enables a better understanding of the setting of the Walls and assists with the identification of issues and policies that link the Walls with the wider townscape. Many of these associated structures lie within the town and so are given the allocation of 'central' for zone location within the gazetteer. The full gazetteer is provided in a separate section at the end of this report, with the plan identifying the elements that form the gazetteer given in Figure 3. Date ranges have been applied to each gazetteer reference (phasing) based on documentary and mapping information, materials present and architectural styles. A condition survey record follows each applicable gazetteer record.

On completion of each of the key stages of the plan a workshop was held with the Steering Group to share knowledge and discuss and agree the results arising. The members of the Steering Group included representatives from Galway County Council, the Heritage Council, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG), Galway East Tourism, the Athenry Heritage Centre, Fáilte Ireland, the Athenry Parish Project Society Co. Ltd and other members of the community – the full list is included in Appendix E1.

It should be noted that the information given in this report on specific monuments/structures is current at the time of writing and the DoEHLG should be consulted for the most up to date information.

1.4 Ownership

Responsibility for the implementation of this plan lies with Galway County Council, who also have a duty of care for the Town Walls, a national monument and part of the Athenry town RMP.

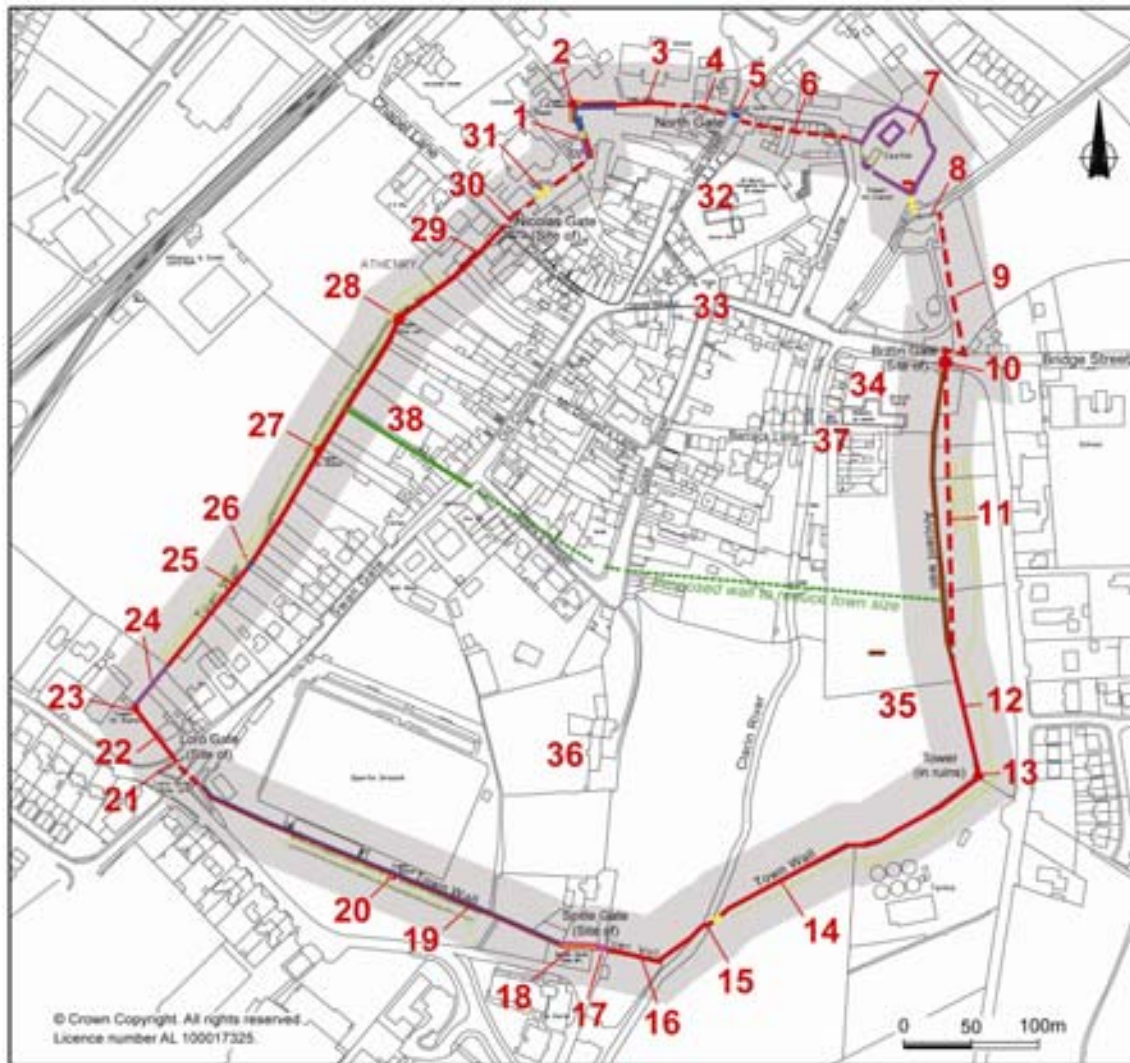
The National Monument Service files record that the State does not own the Town Walls of Athenry, whilst a plan dated to 1977 shows parts of the Town Walls 'vested in Galway County Council in 1909' (Appendix A). This sketch plan indicates therefore that the following three parts of the walled circuit are owned by Galway County Council:

- From the North-West Tower to the Castle (Gazetteer nos. 2-6)
- From the eastern bank of the River Clarin to Spittle Gate (Gazetteer nos. 15-16)
- From south of the West Tower northwards to south of the North-West Tower (part of Gazetteer no. 25 and Gazetteer no. 28).

North Gate is also considered to be under Galway County Council ownership as it straddles a public roadway (letter dated 11.08.77 from County Galway National Monuments Advisory Council).

A memo dated 24 November 1981 of a meeting between representatives of OPW, Bord Fáilte and Galway County Council states "it was agreed that Galway County Council had the main role to play in the protection, presentation and development of the walls as an amenity but that OPW would provide technical advice on conservation if required".

A number of private and public organisations and individuals own property that abuts either the internal or external faces of the Town Walls and so have an interest in the current and future management of the Walls. Figure 4 locates the land/property owners surrounding the Walls and is accompanied by Table 1 detailing those owners.



Legend

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 10 | Gazetteer Reference Nos. | 20th century rebuild of wall using original stone (Phase 7) |
| 13th century Earthworks (Phase 1) | | 20th century rebuild of wall using new materials (Phase 7) |
| 14th century Town Wall (Phase 2) | | 13-16th century Priory wall |
| Line of Town Wall (Phase 2) | | 1583 map evidence of dividing wall |
| 16th century (Phase 3) | | Buffer Zone |
| 17th century (Phase 4) | | |
| 18th century (Phase 5) | | |
| 19th century (Phase 6) | | |

Figure 3: Gazetteer Numbers and Phases

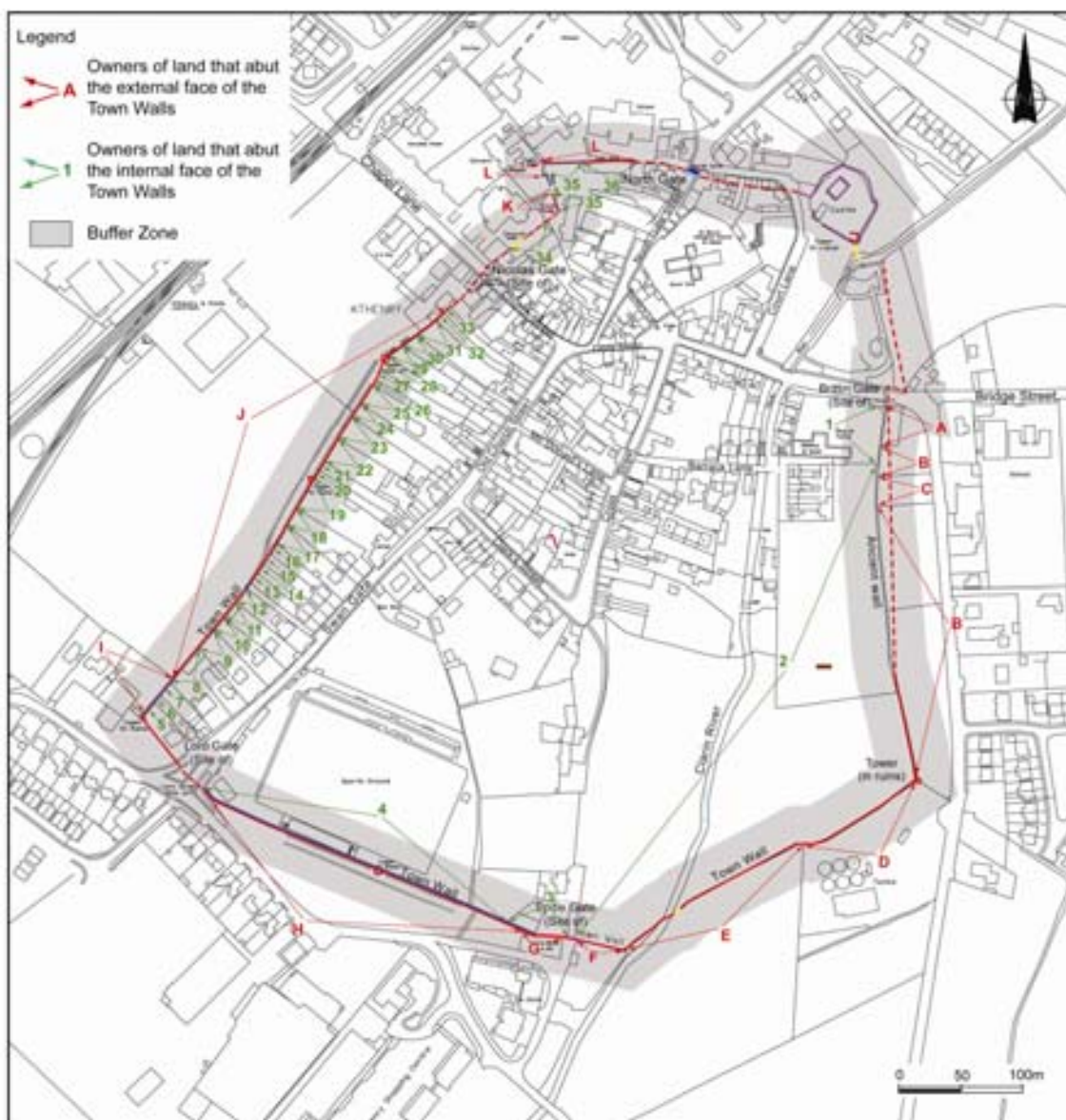


Figure 4: Land Ownership Plan

ATHENRY TOWN WALLS: EXTERNAL LAND OWNERSHIP ABUTTING THE TOWN WALLS (SEPTEMBER 2007)		
A	Alan Lynch	Boyhill, Athenry
B	Gerry McNamara	Mountain North, Athenry
C	Gerry Somers	Newford, Athenry
D	Mid-West Co-Op	Cross Street, Athenry
E	Nora Monaghan	Riversdale House, Athenry
F	Charles Taylor	20 The Glade, Athenry
G	Galway County Council Environmental Section	Aras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway
H	Mary Curran	Pollnagroagh, Athenry
I	Frank and Madelyn Brody	Prospect House, Athenry
J	John Joe Brady	Church Street, Athenry
K	Rev Fr T King	St Mary's, Church Street, Athenry
L	Presentation Sisters	Church Street, Athenry

Table 1: Details of Land Ownership Surrounding the Town Walls

ATHENRY TOWN WALLS: INTERNAL LAND OWNERSHIP ABUTTING THE TOWN WALLS (SEPTEMBER 2007)		
1	OPW Head Office	51 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2
2	Oyster Homes	Galway Technology Park, Parkmore, Galway
3	Nora Monaghan	Riversdale House, Athenry
4	Galway County GAA Board	Dominic Street, Galway
5	Paul Thompson	Swangate, Athenry
6	James Corbett	Swangate, Athenry
7	Annie Morrissey	Swangate, Athenry
8	Eamon Brody	Swangate, Athenry
9	Thomas Coffey	Swangate, Athenry
10	Tadhg Costello	Swangate, Athenry
11	Finbarr O'Regan	Swangate, Athenry
12	Enda Somers	Swangate House, Athenry
13	Emily Kelly	1 Swangate, Athenry
14	Mr & Mrs John Leahy	2 Swangate, Athenry
15	Ann Gardner	3 Swangate, Athenry
16	Estate of the late Phil Kinneen c/o Mrs B Greaney	Knockaunglas, Athenry
17	Tim Collins	5 Swangate, Athenry
18	Gerry & Claire Cannon	7 Swangate, Athenry
19	Lily O'Beirne	Old Church Street, Athenry
20	Catherine Somers	Old Church Street, Athenry
21	Monsie Kennedy	Old Church Street, Athenry
22	Jarlath Somers	Old Church Street, Athenry
23	Mary Whelan	Old Church Street, Athenry
24	Martin Caulfield	Cregmore, Co Galway
24	Enda & Mary Somers	Swangate, Athenry
25	Albert Conneely	Moorepark House, Moorepark, Athenry
26	Ms Coirle Forde Company Secretary	Athenry Taverns Ltd, c/o O'Hara Solicitors, Cross Street, Athenry
27	John Hardiman	Old Church Street, Athenry
28	Pat & Eileen Callanan	Old Church Street, Athenry
29	Mary & Kathleen Gardner	Old Church Street, Athenry
30	Brian Melia	Mortgage Options, Old Church Street, Athenry
31	Maire O'Neill c/o Maura O'Flaherty	The Grotto, Caherdavin, Ennis Road, Limerick
32	Mrs M Quinton	Old Church Street, Athenry
33	Mary Ruane	Swangate House, Athenry
34	Rev Fr T King	PP St Mary's, Church Street, Athenry
35	Paddy Coffey	Moonbaun, Athenry
36	Paddy Coffey	Moonbaun, Athenry

Table 1: Details of Land Ownership Surrounding the Town Walls

1.5 Legislative and Planning Background

There are a number of international guidance documents on heritage, all of which emphasise the importance of protection and the necessity for understanding a monument as a basis for decision-making (UNESCO, 1976; Kerr, 1996; and ICOMOS, 1999). In terms of Irish legislation the following are the key statutes:

- The *National Monuments Act* (1930 – 2004) – under the various provisions of this legislation, there are different classes of National Monument. The strongest level of protection is afforded to National Monuments owned outright by the state or held in guardianship. The latter gives the state access to a monument for maintenance but the monument remains the property of the landowner. Certain types of monument that are adjudged to satisfy criteria laid down in the National Monuments Act 1930, can be declared National Monuments without the need for any transfer of lands or ownership rights. These monuments remain the property of individual landowners. Town walls fit into this category and are regarded as National Monuments. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government can place a Preservation Order on any monument of national importance that is in imminent danger of damage or destruction. Any works to be carried out to any of

these classes of monument, require consent from the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In addition, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government must be notified in advance of any works that might impact on monuments included on the Register of Historic Monuments or the Record of Monuments and Places. On notification the Department can decide whether or not a higher level of legal protection or other mitigation should be applied.

- The *Heritage Act* (1995) - which provides for the establishment of a statutory Heritage Council to be appointed by the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.
- The *Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act* (1999) - which provides legislation for the formation of a National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.
- The *Planning and Development Act* (2000 - 2002) - contains guidance on development, the formulation of Development Plans and Local Area Plans (to include a 'Record of Protected Structures' – RPS) and Regional Planning Guidelines

In addition to legislation, planning policies provide further guidance on the preservation and promotion of historic monuments and their settings. Such policy documents include:

- The *National Heritage Plan* - Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (2002) – which includes policies on the protection, promotion and appreciation of heritage.
- The *Irish Walled Towns Network 3-Year Action Plan (Draft) 2006 – 2008* - The Heritage Council (2005) - directly concerned with walled towns, their promotion and resources required for their care.
- The *National Development Plan (2007-2013)* – which sets out a blueprint for economic and social development with detail on spatial planning, support infrastructure, environmental sustainability and economic growth.
- The *County Development Plan (2003-2009)*, Galway County Council – which sets out a planned approach to land use and infrastructure provision so as to facilitate social, economic and physical development within the county. Sustainable development is of primary concern and the County Council is committed to:
 - Ensure that heritage protection is an integral part of coherent policies of economic and social development of urban and rural planning (Policy 121).
 - Respect the character or existing building, important views and spaces and the historic settlement pattern in terms of scale, height, grouping, density, design and materials (Policy 126).
 - Support the preservation, conservation and maintenance of archaeological sites, together with the integrity of the setting of these monuments and sites (Policy 131).

As part of a landscape characterisation the County Development Plan records that Athenry lies within a landscape area (East Central Galway) which has been given an overall rating as low for cultural, socio-economic and environmental sensitivity. This characterisation noted that the:

- Landscape is flat so height restrictions should apply to built development to avoid long distant visual intrusion (section 3.7)
- Due to the rural nature of the area, scattered development with natural stone sympathetic to the colours of the landscape is recommended. Stonewalls are a distinct element of the character of the area and should be constructed to match traditional style around new development (section 3.9).

It is the *Athenry Local Area Plan* (adopted by Galway County Council in December 2005) that sets out specific policies to guide development in relation to the town and its heritage assets. These archaeological and architectural assets form 26 entries in the Record of Monuments

and Places (RMP) and 34 entries in the Record of Protected Structures for Athenry (RPS) – within the development plan boundary (Local Area Plan, 2005: Map 1). As a consequence of the density and significance of this rich heritage resource a ‘zone of archaeological potential’ containing the town was defined – the perimeter of the zone following the approximate line of the Town Walls but lying 50-80m outside the Walls (as shown on Figure 2). The purpose of the zone is given that ‘Galway County Council will have regard to the impact of development within the area on archaeological heritage’ – in effect the zone/town RMP protects any known or potential above and below ground features of heritage interest. In this way the fosse, ramparts and any other features/remains related to the history, development, and use of the Walls and adjacent areas from the first settlement at Athenry are protected. The Local Area Plan also identifies a buffer zone, extending 30m internally and externally from the line of the Town Walls in which no development is permitted (as shown on Figure 3) further, the Local Area Plan identifies an Architectural Conservation Area (Figure 5) to protect built heritage features/structures related to the town.

Policies in the Local Area Plan that relate to the Town Walls include policies associated with natural heritage, archaeological heritage, architectural heritage and tourism. Particular policies include:

- To protect and enhance the condition and context of the town walls and the remaining North Gate as items of archaeological significance. All development proposals must recognise the status of these items and should not due to their size, form, scale or design diminish the scale and setting of the walls or North Gate as the dominant characteristics of the townscape of Athenry (P-AH9).
- To undertake and implement a Conservation Plan for the town walls (AHC-3).

A number of strategic documents designed to assist the promotion and protection of heritage have also been consulted as part of the preparation of this plan, including:

- Heritage Council *Strategic Plan 2007-2011*
- Fáilte Ireland *Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2013*
- Galway County Council and Galway County Heritage Forum, *Heritage Plan 2004-2008*
- Galway County Development Board *Working Together: Shaping our Future – Galway County Strategy for Economic, Social, and Cultural Development 2002-2012*.
- Galway City and County Tourism Committee *Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway - A Framework for Action 2003-2012*.
- Galway East Tourism Marketing Ltd *Business Plan 2007-2009*.

These strategies present some of the key issues and priorities for heritage and tourism in Ireland – which can be summarised as follows (detail on the content of these documents is provided in Appendix F):

- Identification and protection of national heritage including physical and natural environment and scenic landscapes
- Promotion of local, national and international interest, education, knowledge and understanding of Ireland's national and local heritage
- Maximising access to and enjoyment of national and cultural heritage
- Undertaking research into new areas of heritage and support of ongoing research
- Reviewing legislation that protects Ireland's heritage
- Building on the development of heritage infrastructure
- Developing sustainable management of heritage assets
- Encouraging and building community involvement in heritage
- Developing partnerships with national and international organisations and joining networks to promote best practice and sustainable management of tourism
- Developing the experiential tourism offer

- Developing the role of towns and cities for tourism - especially those with good transport links – as increasingly important for short breaks.

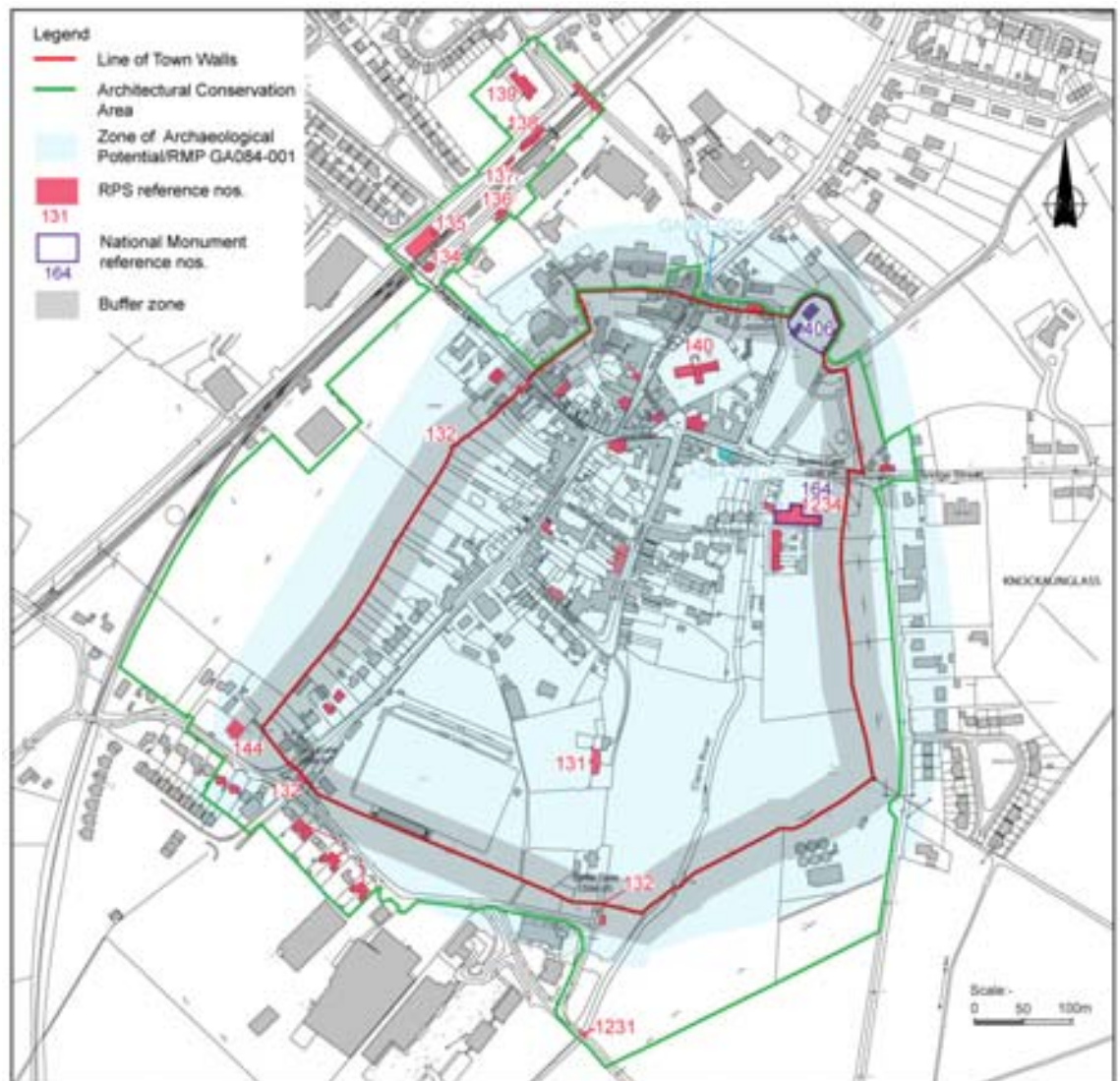


Figure 5: Designations

2. UNDERSTANDING – LOCATION, DESIGNATIONS AND HISTORY

2.1 Topography and Setting

Athenry is a small town in County Galway, 15 miles east of Galway City (Figure 1) and lies in a predominantly rural, agricultural area with low-lying open fields enclosed by stone walls. The town is located in a flat plain on a minor river – the Clarin or Clareen (Plate 2) leading to the Clarinbridge downstream on its way to Galway Bay. It is the fording place on this river that gives the town its name – the name translates from Irish *Baile Atha an Ríogha/Baile Atha an Rí* as 'the town of the river ford'. The name reflects the importance of the town's strategic position from earliest times – as well as its location by a river ford the town also lies on a long east-west ridge of gravel and sediment (Esker Riada) that formed an easy land route linking Galway to the midlands and Dublin. Athenry is located on the most westerly north-south route in Ireland – it was a regional crossroads between Limerick and Sligo.



Plate 2: River Clarin

Later the town's strategic importance related to its rail location - on the junction of the Galway-Dublin main line and the currently disused Western railway corridor (which is to be restored – the Ennis-Athenry section is due to reopen in 2008 and Athenry-Tuam in 2011). Together with its proximity to Shannon and Galway airports Athenry today provides a base for visitor access to Connemara and the Burren, with golf, angling and the Galway races attracting visitors, as well as the numerous and varied natural and historic heritage assets of the region.

2.2 Current Designations

The National Monuments Service/DoEHLG are responsible for the inclusion of monuments on both the Register of Historic Monuments and the RMP. Planning Authorities (in this instance Galway County Council) are responsible for the inclusion of structures on the RPS.

Only one section of the Town Walls at Gazetteer no.1 is included on the Register of Historic Monuments (Appendix B) which was a result of the creation of a new opening through the walls at this point in 1995. Two other monuments on this register of nationally important monuments lie in the immediate vicinity of the Town Walls - the Castle (national monument no. 406; Gazetteer no. 7) and the Dominican Priory (national monument no. 164; Gazetteer no. 34).

The Town Walls (including the gates, towers and associated earthwork features - fosse/moat and ramparts) do have national monument recognition under the terms of the National Monuments Act (1930 - 2004).

Within the overall town RMP (GA-084-001; Figure 5) specific sites have been given the following RMP reference nos:

- GA-084-001-2 North Gate (Figure 3; Gazetteer no. 5)
- GA-084-001-3 Tower (North-West Tower; Figure 3; Gazetteer no. 2)
- GA-084-001-4 Site of Nicholas Gate (Gazetteer no. 30)
- GA-084-001-5 North Gate, adjacent shop to east (Figure 5)
- GA-084-001-6 Castle (Gazetteer no. 7)
- GA-084-001-7 Tower (West Tower; Gazetteer no. 27)
- GA-084-001-8 Tower (Site of North-West Tower; Gazetteer no. 28)
- GA-084-001-9 Site of Britten Gate (Gazetteer no. 10)
- GA-084-001-10 Tower (South-East Tower; Gazetteer no. 13)
- GA-084-001-11 Site of Spittle Gate (Gazetteer no. 17)
- GA-084-001-12 Tower (South Tower; Gazetteer no. 20)
- GA-084-001-13 Site of Loro Gate (Gazetteer no. 21)
- GA-084-001-14 Dominican priory (Gazetteer no. 34)
- GA-084-001-15 Franciscan friary (Collegiate and Parish Church of St Mary) (Figure 8; Gazetteer no. 32) Note: this was not a Franciscan Friary site and this RPS entry requires amendment – the error arose from a mistranslation of Latin confusing Adare with Athenry.
- GA-084-001-16 Spa well (Chalybeate) (Figure 9)
- GA-084-001-17 Moor well (Figure 9)
- GA-084-001-18 Leper Compound (Figure 9)
- GA-084-001-19 Corn and saw mill (Figure 9)
- GA-084-001-20 Market cross (Gazetteer no. 33)
- GA-084-001-21 Dovecot (in grounds of Athenry House; Gazetteer no. 36)
- GA-084-001-22 Stone Head (set in lintel opposite Post Office) (Figure 5)
- GA-084-001-23 Church marked in graveyard (GA084-001-24; Church of Ireland Gazetteer no. 32)
- GA-084-001-24 Graveyard (St Mary's Collegiate Church; Gazetteer no. 32)
- GA-084-001-25 Graveyard of priory (GA084-001-14; Gazetteer no. 34)
- GA-084-001-26 Athenry Town

There are also a number of other RMPs within the County Development Plan development plan boundary for Athenry which further illustrate the diverse range of heritage features in the immediate locale. These include a bridge over the River Clarin to the south of the town (GA-084-024), St Brigid's Church, a possible medieval or earlier site (GA-084-021), earthworks (GA-084-133) and the remains of a cashel (GA-084-120).

There are 34 RPS designations within Athenry/vicinity, a selection of which are plotted on Figure 5 (with details given on the accompanying Table 2). The RPS designations largely relate to built heritage features within the town, such as Athenry House, but the Town Walls and associated towers, gates and earthworks have been given RPS 132 as a single reference number.

In 1996 one section of the Town Walls was made the subject of a Preservation Order (reference PO5/96) following a planning proposal to build adjacent to the east wall (Gazetteer no. 11).

NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION/FEATURES
131	Athenry House	Ruins of detached five bay two storey gable ended house with round headed stone door case with sidelights, c.1780. The façade is rough dash rendered. Single bay two storey extensions added at either end c.1820. The interior had an oval hall. Entrance gateway with quadrant walls, ashlar piers with ball finials and iron gates. Set within its own grounds in centre of the town.
132	Town Walls, flanking towers, linear banks and	Early 14 th century defences with later modifications

NUMBER	ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION/FEATURES
	fosses, sites of Britten Gate,	
134	Crossing Keepers House	Single storey, tudor style lodge
135	Former Goods Shed at railway station	Detached 10 bay single storey former goods shed, c.1860, now derelict
136	Station Masters House	Detached three bay, two storey L-Plan stone station master's house, c.1870, re-fenestrated c.1985.
137	Railway Station	Brick and cut stone, Tudor style Lodge
138	Galway Rural Development	Detached five bay single storey former railway station, c.1860, with pavilions to sides. Now houses rural development offices
139	Railway Hotel	Detached four bay two storey former hotel with basement, gable fronted projection and veranda c.1880. Built of random squared sandstone, now housing educational facility and extended to rear, c1975. Set on corner site
140	St Mary's Collegiate Church	Ruins of 13 th century church and 1828 church with tower and spire in limestone ashlar
144	Ruane's House (Prospect House)	Five bay, two storey late 18 th century house, with half hexagonal bay on its own grounds
1231	Medieval Bridge at Prospect/Bawnmore	Four Arch Bridge (14 th -18 th century)
1234	Dominican Priory	13 th century Abbey

Table 2: RPS Details

2.3 History

2.3.1 Introduction

This section sets out the information collated to date as an archaeological and historical summary of the beginnings and subsequent development of Athenry and its Town Walls. The information relies in particular on the work of Professor Etienne Rynne, who kindly provided copies of published and unpublished articles prepared on Athenry, Bradley (1992), Healy (1989) and Thomas (1992) – these and the other sources of information are given in the bibliography. Table 3 sets out a summary of the key events in Athenry in relation to the rest of Ireland and the wider world whilst the Gazetteer presents a record of each of the elements that comprise the Town Walls (Gazetteer nos. 1-31), together with associated monuments/features that contribute to the understanding of the history and development of Athenry and its Town Walls (Gazetteer nos. 32-38).

2.3.2 Prehistoric period

The first known human settlement in Ireland dates to c. 8000 BC, these early inhabitants living as hunter-gatherers. By the Neolithic period (c. 4000 BC) settlement in purpose built houses/villages accompanied land management with crop and animal husbandry, as well as evidence of funerary practices (such as communal 'megalithic' tombs and individual cist burials). The Bronze Age (c. 2000 BC) saw the introduction of metal for weapons, tools and ornaments and later cremation replaced inhumation as the favoured form of burial. By the beginning of the historic period (AD 431) the inhabitants of Ireland lived in kingdoms, led by aristocratic warriors and learned people.

There are no documentary references to Athenry before the Normans in the twelfth century, but archaeological evidence (Bradley 1992, 9) suggests that there was certainly earlier settlement/activity in the area - including:

- A fort at Newford
- Prehistoric graves to the west of the town – including an earthenware urn
- Polished stone axe heads
- Copper halberd of Breaghwy type NMI 1936 (Harbison 1969, 46 no 295)
- Bronze winged axe/palstave (Cat Day Coll (1913) 30, lot 227)
- Bronze basal-looped spearhead (Cat Day Coll (1913) 47, 331)
- Bronze spearhead and sword (JRSAI volume 99:27-30)
- Bronze shield, late Bronze Age (BM 1886, 7-19.1; JRSAI 112: 1982, volume 10-17)
- Bronze scabbard chape of La Tene style (BM 1868.7-9.3; Raftery 1983, 105)
- Bronze chape from an early Iron Age sword scabbard.

2.3.3 Early Christian period (AD 400 - 800) and early medieval period (800 – 1166)

Tradition suggests that St Patrick brought Christianity to Ireland in AD 432 – certainly the new religion saw the development of a monastic culture within the regional tribal groups/kingdoms. From 795 AD Ireland faced 200 years of Viking raids and later settlements, the Battle of Clontarf in 1014 marking the beginning of the end of Viking power in Ireland.

There are a number of indications of settlement/activity in and around Athenry during this period. The site of Tysaxon (Tech Sachsen, meaning the ‘Saxon’s House’) is thought to be where Balan founded a monastery and Athenry Castle is also thought to have been built on a rath/dun (a defended settlement). There are records that three Irish principalities met at the ford at Athenry – the Aidhne (territory of O’Heyne and O’Shaughnessy), Hy-Many (territory of O’Kelly) and Moyseola (territory of O’Flaherty) (Healy 1989, 7).

2.3.4 Medieval period

By the twelfth century Ireland comprised a number of rival kingdoms with several regional dynasties vying for supremacy over the whole island. When King Diarmait Mac Murchada of Leinster was exiled by the new High King, Ruaidrí mac Tairrdelbach, Diarmait obtained permission from Henry II of England to use Norman forces to regain his kingdom. The Norman forces duly arrived in Ireland and soon took control of a number of areas – so much so that throughout the 13th century it was the policy of English kings to weaken the Norman Lords in Ireland, lest they sought to extend their influence and power and challenge the English King.

In 1178 the title ‘Baron of Athenry’ was created for Piers de Bermingham, although it was Richard de Burgh (also called de Burgo, later anglicised as Burke - who had been given the kingdom of Connacht) who granted a charter to Meiler de Bermingham (the 2nd Baron of Athenry) - he then took control of Athenry from the O’Heyne clan and established a castle (Plate 3). The earliest defences around the castle/settlement are likely to have comprised earth ramparts and a fosse (Bradley 1992, 10). Given the town’s position at a river ford and on the esker riada it clearly had a strategic importance and so it probably functioned as a Norman frontier outpost in an area of contested territory (Givens 2008, 23). At Ballydavid and Carnaun the remains of outlying defence posts have been identified – these were probably outposts to support the garrison within Athenry during any attack, of which a number are recorded (Table 3). These attacks included the 1249 O’Connor attack (defeated by the Norman cavalry) and the 1316 Battle of Athenry (when de Burgo and de Bermingham forces defeated the Irish led by Felim O’Connor, King of Connacht) which resulted in Norman supremacy in Connacht. At Galway the town had been captured by the de Burghs in 1232, but in 1396 the town achieved independence from the feuding Clanricard Burkes and thereafter faced uneasy relations with its Irish/Irish-Norman neighbours, particularly those to the east, such as at Athenry.

By the 14th century Athenry was surrounded with a curtain wall and 8m wide fosse (moat), guarding the river ford (Bradley 1992, 9). From the outset the Town Walls enclosed a large area (28 hectares) which would appear to be the result of a deliberate attempt by de Bermingham to impress, rather than for any particular strategic/defensive reason. Thomas (1992) suggests that the size of Athenry could also suggest a competition between de Bermingham and his overlord de Burgh. Certainly the extent and size of the Town Walls signified high status as well as providing protection.

Whilst the first recorded murage charter related to Athenry dates to 1310 there are no accurate records for the building of the Town Walls and it is possible that attacks, such as the 1316 Battle of Athenry led to the strengthening of the Town Walls/addition of towers.



Plate 3: Athenry Castle

In addition to the Town Walls and Castle (Gazetteer no. 7) Athenry possesses other surviving medieval structures – the Dominican Priory of SS Peter and Paul (Plate 4) begun 1241 and completed in 1261 (Gazetteer no. 34), the Collegiate and Parish Church of St Mary (Plate 5) founded in the 13th century and made collegiate in 1484 (Gazetteer no. 32) and the market cross (Gazetteer no. 33) which dates from the 15th century and is a very rare survival of the tabernacle form of cross (Plate 6). Moreover the existing street plan shows the survival of a 13th century chequer street plan (Bradley 1992, 14) with two main north-south streets (Chapel Street, which continues to Loro Gate and Cross Street, which continues to Spittle Gate).

Added to this is the survival of unique artefacts related to the history of Athenry - dating from the 14th century there is the mace and seal of the ancient Corporation of Athenry– the mace comprising a bronze clenched fist that is thought to be oldest civic mace in Ireland and the bronze seal depicting two heads on spikes above the town gate and showing the reliquary contemporary Irish mode of wearing hair and beard on the obverse with the de Bermingham coat of arms on the reverse (Rynne, undated) (Figure 6). There is also a silver purse-shaped commissioned by Thomas de Bermingham in the 14th century to hold a tooth of Saint Patrick (National Museum, Dublin) and the Athenry Corporation Book covering records from 1781-1840 that includes a copy of the 1833 Charter of Athenry (Healy 1989, 27).



Plate 4: Dominican Priory



Plate 5: Collegiate Church of St Mary



Plate 6: Market Cross



Figure 6: Mace and Seal (Rynne, undated)

In the 14th and 15th centuries Athenry was a prosperous town, returning a member to the Irish parliament and the de Berminghams ('Lord Athenry') were the premier barons of Ireland (Healy 1989, 26). However there was on-going Irish resistance to the Norman landlords and in 1574 the sons of the Earl of Clanricard (Ulick and John) captured Athenry - as recorded in the *Annals of the Four Masters* - 'They destroyed the walls of the town of Athenry and also its stone houses and its castle and they so damaged the town that it was not easy to repair it for a long time after them'.

In 1576 Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy, planned to 'cut the towne into two equal partes' (Hardiman 1846, 268-9), clearly as a means of reducing the size of the town to be protected and improving the ability to withstand attacks on the settlement. The proposed division of the town is illustrated on a plan dating from 1583 by John Brown which shows the wall partly finished (Figure 7). As no confirmed remains have been found of the dividing wall it is suggested that this later wall was of earthen construction (Bradley 1992, 17) or that surface/below-ground remains of the wall have not yet been identified - and there are certainly features in that area of the town (Gazetteer no. 35) which could be investigated to check if they relate to the proposed

1576 wall. Whilst Sidney had begun repairs immediately after the 1574 attack in 1577 the Clanricards captured the town again (whereupon the plans for a wall to reduce the town size appear to have been abandoned) and in 1597 Red Hugh O'Donnell also sacked and burnt the town. The *Annals of the Four Masters* records this attack on the town and that the attackers 'ascended to the parapets of the wall....leaped from the parapets and gained the streets of the town and opened the gates for those who were outside'. It is following this attack that the medieval town/street plan of Athenry appears to have become fossilised with little change to the present day in the core town plan.

2.3.5 Later History

The 17th century in Ireland was marked by Scottish and English Protestants sent as colonists, Penal Laws designed to discriminate against all faiths other than established Anglican and rebellion. Cromwell reconquered Ireland in 1649-1653 and dispossessed the Irish Catholic landowners, the fighting culminating in the defeat of James II by William III.

In Athenry during the 17th century a possible guard house was constructed at the North-West Tower (Gazetteer no. 2) and in 1643 a garrison was placed in the town by General Burke, probably as a means of controlling the Earl of Clanricard (Bradley 1992, 13). Cromwell's soldiers however destroyed much of the Priory in 1652, which was formally closed by penal laws in 1698 - although in the mid-18th century English soldiers built barracks inside the Priory and possibly added openings to the west side of Spittle Gate.

The 18th century in Ireland was relatively peaceful, although the Great Irish Famine of 1740-1741 claimed c. 400,000 lives. By the 19th century Athenry was a poor town, it lost its corporation status in 1840, it lacked a public water supply, the streets were narrow and unpaved and some of the town's inhabitants lived in single room hovels sunk below the street (Healy 1989, 28). Certainly the abolition of the corporation has a direct impact on the issue of ownership of the Town Walls in Athenry as it was a responsibility/function of a corporation to repair and maintain public buildings such as Town Walls.

However, from 1879 with the advent of the Land League, the economy improved and by the turn of the century there was a building boom in Athenry – Abbey Row was built in the 1890s and the houses in Cross Street in 1902 (Healy 1989, 31). The railway line reached Athenry in 1851 and by 1875 it was a railway junction where the Great Western and Midland Railway lines crossed, giving a further economic boost to the town as it became a distribution/transport centre. Many of the current buildings within the town centre date to the 19th/20th century although they have followed the medieval pattern, radiating from the compact centre at Market Square along the narrow streets that lead to one of six medieval gates.

Cartographically the earliest detailed plan of the town is the first edition OS map of 1838 (Figure 8). This map illustrates the former names of some of the gates – Spittle Gate was 'Spiddle Gate', Loro Gate was 'Swan Gate' and Britten Gate was 'Laragh Gate'. The layout of the medieval form of the town can be seen clearly in the streetscape and there is detail on the extent of house building along the streets, as well as on the form of the garden plots attached to those properties. Athenry House and associated demesne are detailed and the police barracks within the Priory grounds are located, together with two corn mills – one at the Castle and the other just south of the walled circuit at Spittle Gate. A subsequent OS map of 1931 (Figure 9) shows a number of changes – including the clear line of the Town Walls, indications of the associated earthworks, Britten, Spittle, Loro and Nicholas Gates all removed (since the 1838 survey) the railway, Abbey Row replacing the police barracks and increased building of private properties along Chapel Street and within the town centre, as well as the enclosure of the Agricultural Show Ground on land that was to become Kenny Park.

Today Athenry is a small town with a growing population and can claim association with some famous people – Liam Mellows (who commanded the Western Division of the IRA during the Easter Rising and took over Athenry for a week), Sir William Carson (founder of the Ulster Volunteers who spent holidays as a boy at Castle Ellen) and Padraic Fallon (poet, who was born in Athenry in 1905 and whose writings reflect features of the town, including the Town Walls).

The conservation of the town's historic assets has clearly been an issue for the townspeople of Athenry over time – Duffy's *Hibernian Magazine* (volume 1: 463-464) in 1860 recorded that it was the intervention of William Vesey Fitzgerald Hickman of Athenry House that saved from demolition "the fine municipal gateway which stands upon the wall of the town of Athenry" (probably referring to the North Gate) whilst another individual argued that "any antiquity it possessed had gone long ago".

Today the increasing population of the town places demands for housing, business and recreation with associated infrastructure on the town and it is vital that the heritage assets contribute to the future of the town. It is the combination of heritage features - such as the Town Walls, Castle, Priory, Collegiate Church, and the town centre, together with the open spaces within and around the Town Walls – which provides the town with a unique character and identity.

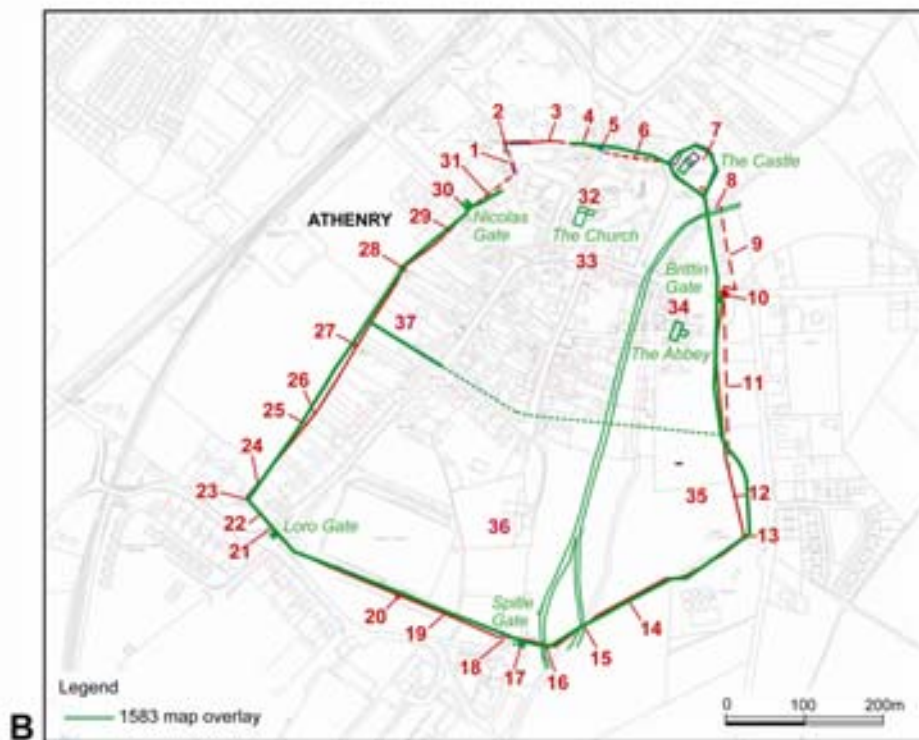
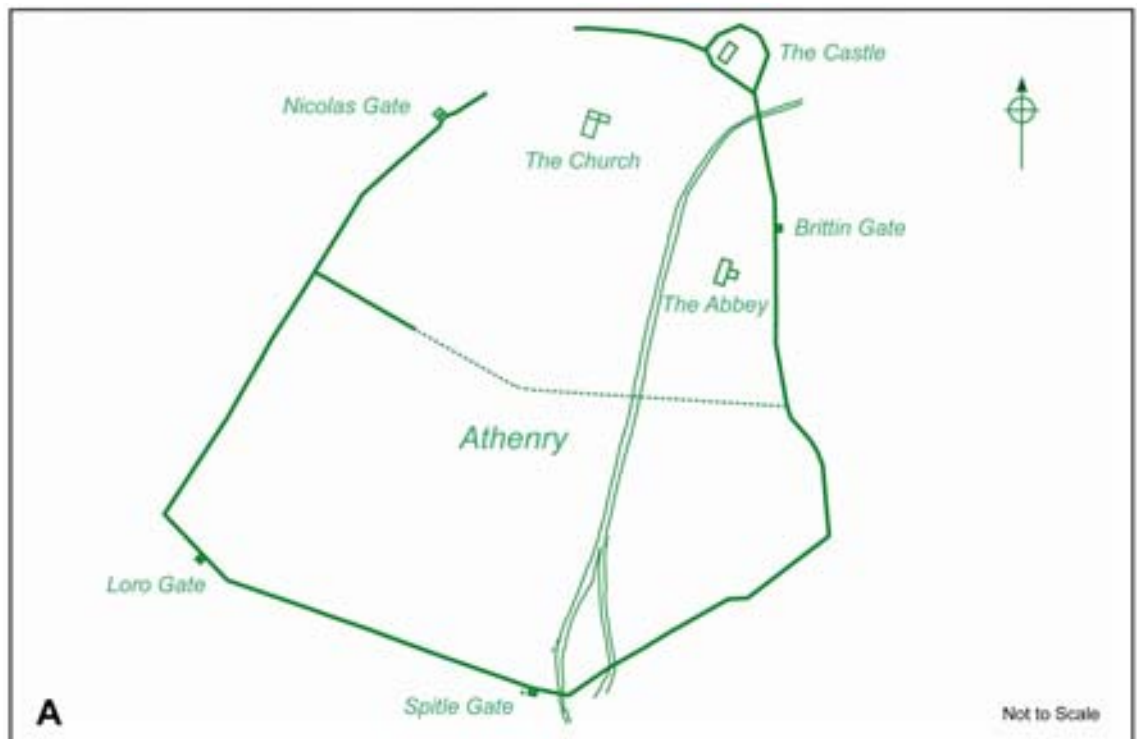


Figure 7: Map of 1583 (A) overlaid on Gazetteer Plan (B)



Figure 8: First Edition OS Map of 1838

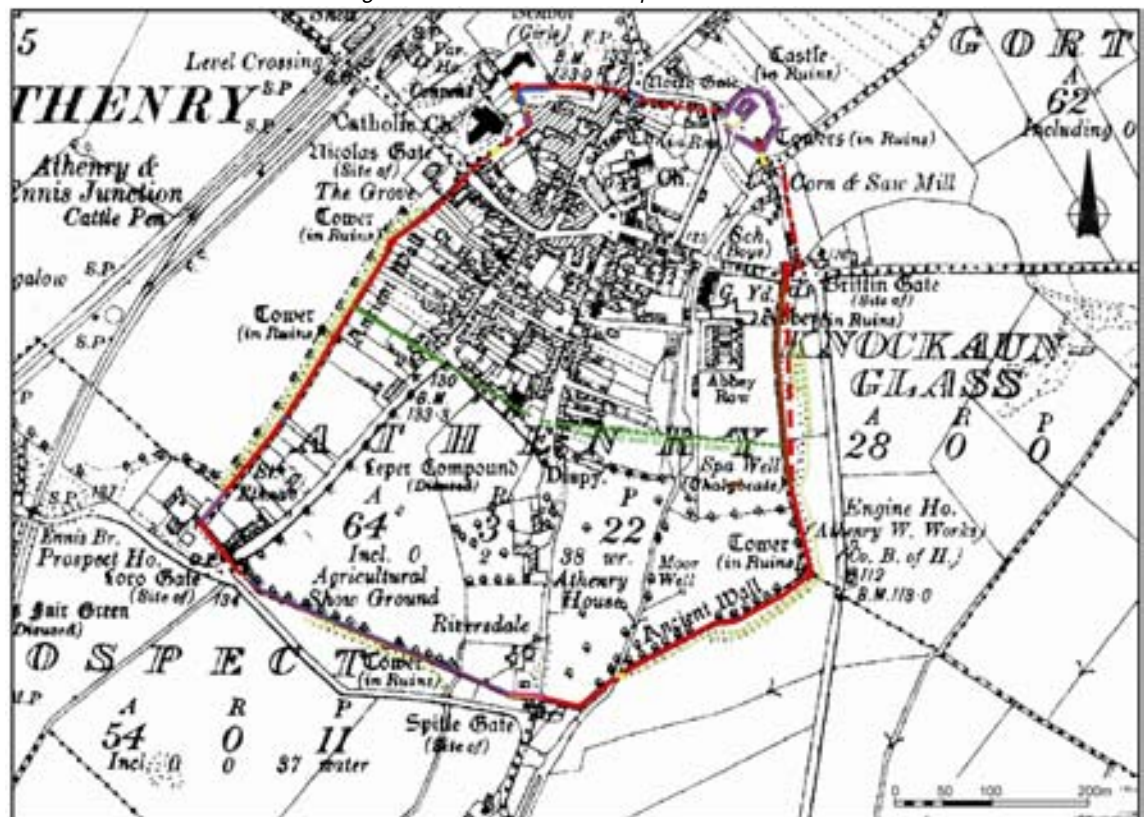


Figure 9: 1931 OS Map

DATE	EVENTS IN ATHENRY	EVENTS IN IRELAND	INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
795		First Viking raids in Ireland. Book of Kells.	
1014		High King Brian Boru killed at Battle of Clontarf – Irish defeat Vikings	
1066			Normans defeat Saxons in England – William of Normandy becomes King of England
1096			First Crusade begins
1166-75		Reign of Rory O'Connor, last native High King of Ireland	
1167-9		Arrival of Normans at Baginburn, Co. Wexford	
1171		Arrival of Henry II and beginning of English political involvement in Ireland	
1178	Title Baron of Athenry created for Piers de Bermingham		
1227		Richard de Burgo awarded lordship of Connacht	
1235	Athenry founded by Meiler de Bermingham following charter from Richard de Burgo - construction begins on the castle		
c1240	St Mary's Collegiate Church founded		
1241	Dominican Priory of SS Peter and Paul founded		
1244	Right to hold annual fair/weekly market granted to town		
1249	O'Conors attack town		Cologne Cathedral started
c1250	Castle second level added		
1252	Meiler de Bermingham's son Piers succeeds him		
1261	Priory completed		
1264		Walter de Burgo made Earl of Ulster	
1272		English control Ulster east of Lough Neagh, Meath, much of Connacht and Munster	Eighth and last Crusade
1283			Annexation of Wales to England by Edward I
1296			Annexation of Scotland by England
1310	Murgage charter granted for 3 years – funds for maintenance and repair of town walls		
1315		Edward Bruce, son of Robert, King of Scotland led army of Scots into Ulster. Repair of walls and gates of Anglo-Norman strongholds throughout Ireland	
1316	Battle of Athenry – 10 August William de Burgo and Richard de Bermingham's forces defeat King of Connacht Felim O'Connor		
1318		Battle of Faughart – Edward Bruce killed, Scots incursion	

DATE	EVENTS IN ATHENRY	EVENTS IN IRELAND	INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
		ended	
1324	De Burgo family fund rebuild of priory church		
	Castle – two further levels added, gables and battlements		
1338			Edward III asserts claim to French throne – Hundred Years War until 1453
1346 - 1351			Black Death in Europe
1366		Statutes of Kilkenny	
1380	Athenry one of 11 towns represented at parliaments		
15 th century	Market cross – only example in Ireland of late medieval Gothic cross of 'tabernacle' or 'lantern' type		
1400	Pope Boniface IX granted bull of indulgence to those who visited priory in Athenry and contributed to its upkeep.	1400-1450 – English lose control of Ireland except for Pale	Owain Glendwyr declared Prince of Wales and starts rebellion against Henry IV
1423	Priory burnt accidentally. Pope Martin V granted bull of indulgence to those who contributed to repair of Athenry priory		
1480			Spanish Inquisition begins
1484	St Mary's Church made collegiate by Archbishop Donat O'Murray of Tuam.		
1492			Christopher Columbus discovers West Indies
1517			Start of Reformation
1529-36			Henry VIII breaks with Rome and becomes head of Church of England 1536-40– Dissolution of Monasteries
1541			Henry VIII declares himself King of Ireland
1562		Elizabethan Wars in Ireland	
1574	Sons of Earl of Clanricard capture and burn town/destroy St Mary's Church. Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy, begins repairs, including North Gate. Queen Elizabeth I gave priory/lands to provost and burgesses of Athenry for 26s 6d a year.		
1576	Henry Sidney proposes construction of inner wall to reduce town size		
1577	Town captured and burnt again by sons of Earl of Clanricard – proposed inner wall abandoned		
1583	Map of town shows dividing wall less than half finished		Raleigh establishes first English colony in New World
1597	Red Hugh O'Donnell sacks and burns town	Hugh O'Neill leads rebellion against English rule	
17 th century+	Possible guardhouse by North-West Tower (Gazetteer no. 2)	Plantation of Ulster	Invention of telescope. Coffee and tea introduced to Britain. Dodo extinct
1607		'Flight of the Earls' to Spain	Jamestown, Virginia first permanent British colony in North America
1622	Dominicans evicted		

DATE	EVENTS IN ATHENRY	EVENTS IN IRELAND	INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
1627	Charles I granted Priory to 4 Galway merchants to hold it for King but Dominicans allowed to re-establish in 1638.		
1629	Sir William Parsons grants Athenry a regular market and October fair		1630-1750 – Baroque/Renaissance period
1642-9	1643 – garrison placed in town by General Burke		Civil War in England
1644	Priory a university for Dominican order by decree of general order from Rome		
1649		Cromwell arrives in Dublin – land in Munster, Leinster and Ulster confiscated and given to English soldiers – Catholic landowners exiled to Connaught	King Charles I executed. King Charles II proclaimed King of Scots and England in Scotland
1652	Cromwells' soldiers destroy much of Priory		
1658		Population in Ireland reduced by two-thirds to 500,000 by Cromwell's death in 1658 – many sent as slaves to Caribbean	1660 – Restoration period
1685	Dominicans return to Priory		Accession of James II
1689-91		Siege and relief of Derry. William III defeats James II at Battle of Boyne. Battle of Aughrim and Siege of Limerick	
1698	Priory formally closed by penal laws.		Invention of steam engine
18 th century	Openings added to west side of Spittle Gate - possibly by English military. Similar openings in curtain wall to east of Castle entrance		Handel – The Messiah and Water Music. Gregorian Calendar replaced Julian. Cook lands in Australia.
1750s	English soldiers build barracks inside Priory, demolishing buildings	Guinness first brewed in Ireland	1750-1770 – Gothic Revival period 1750-1805 – Neo-Classical period
1782		Legislative Independence won from Britain	
19 th century	Rebuilding/repointing of sections of wall		Napoleon. Electric light. Crimean War. Ordnance Survey
1800-1		Act of Union	
1819	Police militia, later RIC, replace soldiers in Priory		Singapore founded
1828	Church of Ireland built in chancel of St Mary's Collegiate Church		
1829	Athenry House built 1830	Catholic emancipation passed. Tithe War began	Invention of Braille
1840	Town loses corporation status		
1845	Priory bell tower collapses – beneath which lies a roodscreen (one of 4 in Ireland)	Famine. Worst years 1848-9. Population decreased through emigration and death by 2 million	
1847	Castle moat filled as part of drainage scheme that created mill-course		Charlotte Bronte publishes Jane Eyre
1851	Midland Great Western Railway reaches Athenry		American Civil War
1867		Fenian rising	Nobel produces dynamite

DATE	EVENTS IN ATHENRY	EVENTS IN IRELAND	INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
1874	Smallpox epidemic. River Clarin diverted to make mill race		1870-1900 Arts and Crafts period
1879-82		Land War. James Joyce born	Anglo-Zulu war
1884	1885 – Patrick Kelly forms Athenry GAA club	Gaelic Athletic Association founded	Art Nouveau period (1884-1918)
1892	Priory given state protection as National Monument (no.164)		Electric oven invented
1914-8			First World War
1916	Larry Lardner takes over Athenry under the command of Liam Mellows, commander of the Western Division of the IRA	Easter Rising	
1919-21		War of Independence against Britain/ Ireland partitioned	1918-1939 – Art Deco period
1922-3		Civil War. Yeats wins Nobel prize for Literature	Mussolini dictator in Italy
1938	Athenry joined to national electricity grid		
1939-45	1943 – US Airforce Flying Fortress bomber crash lands in Mellows College with top US generals on board	1937 Constitution of Eire	Second World War
1949		Republic of Ireland Act	NATO
1953	Kenny Park GAA ground opened		
1955		Ireland joins United Nations	
1961		RTE begins broadcasting	Gagarin first man in space
1972		Ireland joins EEC	Ceylon becomes Sri Lanka
1976	Rebuilding of sections of the top of the Town Walls with concrete and stone settings		
1977	North Gate restored by Galway County Council		
1979	Erection of 8 grain silos next to walls. New handball alley opened.	Pope visits Ireland	
1982	Section of Town Walls demolished and rebuilt beside River Clarin and Spittle Gate during construction of town sewer		
1986	Church of Ireland building used by scouts		
1989-1990	Castle and ground excavated and restored by OPW		
1990s	1993 Athenry gets 24-hour water supply.	Economic growth – Celtic Tiger	
1995	Removal of part of north wall to create a new opening by St Mary's Catholic Church		
1997	Athenry GAA club wins its first All-Ireland Senior Hurling Club		
1999	Athenry Heritage Centre opened. 14 th century mace and seal given by Anthony Blishen to Athenry. Lady Well Millennium Park opened.		
2004	Oyster Homes Ltd apply for Planning Permission to develop on the grounds of Athenry House (c. a quarter of the total land area within the Town Walls)		
2007	Loro Gate foundations discovered during road development works		

Table 3: Chronology

2.4 Phasing of the Town Walls

The following phases of construction have been identified in relation to the Town Walls (illustrated on Figure 3):

Phase 1: 13th century

Construction of the Castle by the Normans with probable initial demarcation of the Town Walls by fosse, earth ramparts and wooden palisade.

Phase 2: 14th century

Following the three-year murage grant of 1310, stone walls replaced the probable earlier wooden palisade construction, but retained and enhanced the fosse and ramparts on the exterior. The grants were only for three years, but the Town Walls are thought to have been completed c. 1321. The Town Walls included round and D-shaped towers and gates at the east, south, south-west and west. The Town Walls would have joined to the curtain walls of the Castle, forming an entire closed circuit around Athenry. Some of the towers may have been a later addition to improve the defences at certain key points.

Phase 3: 16th century

The only upstanding town gate – the North Gate - dates from the 16th century and was an addition, possibly instructed by Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy to Queen Elizabeth I. Sidney also started an inner wall to reduce the size of the town in 1574.

Phase 4: 17th century

The guard house by the North-West Tower is thought to date to this period, based on the style of the splayed window.

Phase 5: 18th century

The section of Town Wall to the west of the site of the Spittle Gate includes a series of openings which formed part of a defensive post. The larger splayed slit windows match those found in the southern curtain wall of the Castle and may be contemporary. The smaller openings may be a Cromwellian (17th century) or a later addition to support a roof structure.

Phase 6: 19th century

Sections of the Town Walls were consolidated during the 19th century, including rebuilding and repointing.

Phase 7: 20th century

- Rebuild of sections of the Walls in private gardens, not necessarily using the same construction techniques.
- c.1976 – rebuilding of large sections of the top of the Town Walls with concrete and stone settings.
- 1977 – North Gate restored by Galway County Council.
- 1982 – Section of Town Walls demolished and rebuilt beside River Clarin and Spittle Gate during construction of town sewer.
- 1995 - The removal of a section of the north wall to create a new opening by St Mary's Church.

3. UNDERSTANDING - STRUCTURE AND CONDITION OF THE TOWN WALLS

3.1 Introduction

A visual inspection of the Town Walls was carried out 30th July – 30th August 2007 by a structural engineer and archaeologist. The purpose of the inspection was to ascertain the physical condition of the Town Walls and the inspection was from ground level - access was available to the foot of the wall for the majority of locations and where access was not available, was physically impossible, or the walls were obscured, the relevant areas are noted in the condition survey records (section 11). Measurements were only taken to provide indications of height, and width or to record specific features in the gazetteer. No opening up, non-destructive surveying techniques or sampling was carried out. Photographs were taken of all visible parts of the walls (the full photographic record of the internal and external faces of the Town Walls is given in Appendix D) and of particular defects or areas of interest (included on the condition survey records in section 11).

3.2 Construction

As far as could be ascertained from the visual inspection, the surviving Town Walls were all built in carboniferous limestone (the predominant stone of the area) and are of solid mortar-jointed masonry construction, comprising internal and external faces, with rubble corework. The facework is variable in style; with some areas exhibiting clear (random) coursing (Plate 7), whilst other areas appear less uniform. The joints contain smaller packing stones (galleting) in some areas, an original detail, but these have been lost in many sections of the walls, particularly close to the base.



Plate 7: Typical elevation showing random coursing, galleting and open joints near the base

The corework appears to have been well constructed of mortared rubble with no loose material, earth or voids visible. The mortar would have been a lime mortar and sampling from within the joints and the core of the wall would give an indication of the mix. The pointing style cannot be ascertained, since any original pointing has weathered back from the face and there are traces of render (coarse lime 'wet dash') to some wall faces and towers, although it is not known whether this is original.

From the remaining evidence, the walls are likely to have had vertical internal and external faces, except at the base, where the width widens and has a sloped external face (batter). A defensive fosse and rampart are present in a number of locations, but how the external face met the ditch is not known, due to the build-up of materials over time. Rynne (1981) records from the 1980 survey of the walls that:

'The defences were further strengthened by a wide, apparently flat-bottomed fosse with low outer bank. This fosse was almost certainly filled originally by water diverted from the River Clarin; it averages 8m in width, its outer bank being about 1m high.'

The internal ground level is generally significantly higher than the external ground level, and although some of this can be attributed to the deposition of material over time, it is thought that this difference is an original feature of the walls – it is probable that material excavated for the fosse and foundations were deposited on the inside of the walls rather than taken away. The walls are generally 1.1m wide where they are thought to be original and it is likely that they varied in height depending on the ground level, but are still standing to approximately 5m in some locations (Gazetteer no.1). There is some evidence that there may have been a parapet on the external face, for at least part of the wall (Gazetteer no.2) - any parapet is likely to have been at least 200mm thick, leaving a wall walk, c.900mm wide.

There were originally at least six strategically placed towers along the walls, none of which appear to have been incorporated fully within the walls, suggesting that they were later additions. These towers on the outside of the walls all differ slightly, but the general construction is likely to have been a circular or D-shaped solid masonry structure, up to 4m in diameter, with vertical walls (approximately 600mm thick) housing a single chamber. This chamber appears to be at, or above, wall walk level and is sat on a solid base, widening towards the bottom. The arrangement of window and door openings appears to vary from tower to tower. The roof structure is likely to have been of solid stonework, vaulted internally and flat externally. There is evidence of a parapet to the circumference of one tower (South-East Tower, Gazetteer no. 13), where a spiral stair inside the tower gives access to the roof. The North Gate is probably of a later date than the towers and although rectangular in plan is of similar basic construction.

3.3 Historic repairs and changes

The visible evidence for repairs is very limited, due to the type of stone - the limestone is very durable and dense and weathers very slowly under normal exposure. The faces of the stones are generally roughly dressed and there is likely to have been limited atmospheric pollution in Athenry (given light industry and development). These factors combine to make it quite difficult to ascertain any changes. There are several stretches of wall which are known to have been rebuilt (Figure 3) and in some areas the newer wall has been rebuilt purely as a boundary wall and is approximately 600mm wide. Other evidence for rebuilding/repairs includes a change of style in coursing - where there has been a collapse of the wall or it has been breached locally, it has generally been rebuilt with the same stones but in a very rough, dry-stone construction and often to a lesser thickness (Plate 8).

The wall tops along the south wall and other areas have been protected with a mortar capping, of c.1976 origin. In some areas this mortar capping has been studded with stones inserted densely, as if to create a barrier to climbing the wall – and around Kenny Park broken glass has been used to deter climbers. No comment can be made about historic repairs to the towers due to the lack of high level access and the presence of ivy; however some repairs or rebuilding are likely to have been undertaken. The North Gate is known to have been substantially reconstructed in 1977 by Galway County Council (Gazetteer no. 5); the Castle keep has been



Plate 8: Breach rebuilt in stone, but to a lesser thickness

substantially reconstructed from a roofless ruin to a complete roofed building with internal floors, for public access (Gazetteer no. 7); whilst sections of the Town Wall circuit have been substantially reconstructed (Gazetteer nos. 24 and 29).

3.4 Condition

The stone is generally in very good condition and external faces of walls have not weathered significantly. Dressed stone present in a few locations (at the North Gate (Gazetteer no. 5) the Castle (Gazetteer no. 7) and east wall (Gazetteer no. 12) has lost its crispness, but is generally still in a reasonable condition. Where collapse has occurred, the tumbled stone is often present at the base of the wall and so is available for salvage/reuse.

Stone lintels have fared worse than the stone forming the walls generally; the stone does not perform well in bending, it fissures and disintegrates. In the curtain wall to the Castle, a number of lintels have been replaced, some have been lost and others will need replacing in the future. Limestone can be affected by pollution, so sites such as the North Gate may be particularly vulnerable in the future. It is believed that the original stone used would have been excavated from quarries located around Athenry – whilst there are currently no working quarries/field stones very close to Athenry, it should not prove too difficult to find a suitable matching stone, if required for repairs, to supplement salvaged stone.

Much of the original mortar has been lost and the joints are deeply eroded in places, with the resultant loss of small packing stones (galleting) and loosening of the face stones. In areas the whole face has collapsed, leaving the corework visible (Plate 9).

Substantial areas of wall have been repointed in a hard mortar. It is likely that this contains cement, which would normally be considered disastrous for a damp stone structure, as the cement prevents the joints from acting as the easiest route for water to travel through the wall. The water would usually then try and travel through the stone, leading to crystallisation of salts and spalling of the faces and over time the hard mortar is left proud of the face. However, in this particular case it is not considered too detrimental in the short to medium term, due to the denseness of the stone and the fact that there is no evidence of the stone weathering in favour of the mortar. The use of cement is not recommended however, since water may be building up in the core (see comments below) and a suitable lime mortar mix should be used for all future



Plate 9: Collapse of wall face

repair work. Around the Castle there are areas where lime/salts (probably) are leaching out of the joints and causing unsightly runs down the face of the stone, which may be due to inappropriate material or lack of adhesion to the stone (poor preparation).

Rubble filled cores are vulnerable to attack from water and freeze-thaw activity – if water is allowed into the core it can wash away the fines and materials within the mortar mix, resulting in a breakdown in the bond. If significant volumes of water are present and freeze, this can result in the collapse of the facing stonework and further damage to the core can then occur through the direct action of weathering. At a number of locations along the length of the walls the facing stonework has collapsed exposing the softer core within - where visible, the core work appears of sound construction. Some areas have been consolidated previously, but are reaching the point when further consolidation and removal of vegetation is necessary, other areas (generally less accessible/visible stretches of the wall), have suffered collapse of the face (generally the internal face) and the rubble is loose and in need of consolidation. If no action is taken the loss of further material is certain - the loss of a face makes the wall more slender and the possibility of overall instability and collapse increases.

The condition of the wall tops varies greatly with some areas regularised and protected by a mortar capping. The presence of vegetation growing from these wall tops indicates that moisture penetration is occurring and that some areas of capping may need replacement. The studding of the capping with stones set into the mortar is considered inappropriate. In other areas, the wall tops are ragged and unprotected (Plate 10) upper stones are loose and some recent tumble was noted - these areas are very vulnerable and need protection. The damage to capping stonework along the length of the wall and subsequent loss is resulting in further water penetration into the rubble core, which will eventually result in facing stonework falling away (as noted above).

3.5 Vegetation

Much of the walls and towers are covered with ivy, preventing close inspection. The ivy growth tends to affect the wall top, but there are locations where it is also growing from the face. The thick stems indicate that this is not a new problem and that it has been left to grow unchecked for many years and the root systems therefore must be very extensive within the wall core (Plate 11).



Plate 10: Unprotected wall tops



Plate 11: Root growth deep inside the wall

The action of these root systems is contributing significantly to structural damage. Roots or plants within the stone joints is resulting in numerous small sections of stonework becoming loose and detached from the core. Growth at the wall top loosens any previous protection and hastens the progress of water into the core (as noted above). Where ivy grows from the wall top it also tends to grow predominantly in one direction, thereby increasing the eccentric loading on the wall, as well as increasing the area affected by wind pressure and so reducing the overall stability of the wall. Where the facing joints have weathered back, vegetation is growing in the joints – at present, most of this vegetation is minor and could be picked off/treated without too much damage. However, some shrubs and tree saplings are starting to grow in some areas, indicating the presence of significant dampness within the wall.

3.6 Overall Stability

The condition of the walls varies greatly and it is difficult to generalise. As a freestanding wall of up to 5m in height and 1.1m in width, they are not considered “slender” by today’s standards.

However, where they have lost all the facing stone to one side, they become more slender at only 900mm wide and therefore more vulnerable.

The depth of the walls' footings and ground conditions in the vicinity of the walls are not known, but there do not appear to be signs of ground movement. During archaeological investigations at Kenny Park in 1984 Sheehan (1984) noted that the Walls in that location had been built with the minimum of foundations and possibly none at all in places.

In some locations the walls appear vertical with no signs of instability; this is predominantly where the wall is of full width and has been maintained in good condition. However, in other locations there are distinct bulges (Plate 12) or they visibly lean (both inwards and outwards) and one area in particular appears to be in imminent danger of collapse (Gazetteer no. 25).



Plate 12: Bulging

In some areas visible minor collapses have taken place. In areas where the Town Walls are not visible above ground level, but clearly did exist in the past, it would require archaeological investigation to confirm if the walls have been demolished or collapsed at some point earlier in time.

A further problem affecting the walls' stability is the result of the build up in the ground level internally against the wall (Plate 13). Although the internal ground levels around the walls are generally higher than external ground levels (even where there has been little or no development) and this can be assumed to have been the case at construction, the gradual accretion of material increases the outward pressure on the structure and the migration of water into the core. Open joints at low level and bulging were noted in several places, particularly where the wall is acting inadvertently as a retaining structure. Unless the ground levels can be reduced, it is inevitable that further loss of fabric and decay of the walls core will take place, eventually resulting in localised or even total collapse of large sections of walling. This is most in evidence along the south-western section of the Town Walls where as much as 3m of ground is being retained, which appears to be the result of remodelling of the ground levels around Kenny Park. Elsewhere this situation occurs to a lesser degree where landowners pile vegetation/rubbish against the wall.



Plate 13: Raised ground levels

The remains of the towers appear to have reasonable overall stability, due in part to their wide solid base and circular/sub-circular form. Extensive ivy growth however threatens local stability, as discussed above. The Castle keep/curtain wall and North Gate show no signs of overall instability.

4. UNDERSTANDING - ECOLOGY AND GREEN SPACES

4.1 Introduction

An initial ecological site walkover was undertaken by an environmental scientist in September 2007 to gain an understanding of the ecological potential of the Town Walls and their immediate surroundings. Consultation was also undertaken with the following organisations who confirmed that there are no records of protected flora, fauna or habitats related to the Town Walls and their immediate vicinity:

- Galway County Council Biodiversity Officer;
- Galway County Council Planning Department;
- Galway Bat Group;
- Western Regional Fisheries Board; and
- National Parks and Wildlife Service.

As well as the Town Walls Athenry provides mainly urban habitats - buildings and hard landscaping. However, there are also areas of green open space - such as the formal gardens and park associated with the Castle, around the Priory and the GAA ground, as well agricultural fields within and around the walls. The River Clarin traverses the town on a north/south course.

No environmentally designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) are located in Athenry or within 5km of the town. The *Local Area Plan for Athenry* (2005) lists five specific actions/objectives with regard to nature conservation, supported by a range of policies. These aim:

- To protect and enhance the views of the Town Walls from Prospect, Baunmore and Knockaunglass (NH4)
- To work with all agencies in improving the understanding and appreciation of the local heritage through information boards, signage and heritage/tourist information points (NH2).
- To improve the overall quality of the green areas in the Town with the key objective of creating and enhancing green corridors and sustaining the local ecological network (NH3).
- To ensure that all trees planted adjacent to the Town Walls are appropriately selected to avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of that structure arising from damage due to root or tree growth (P-NH13).

4.2 Walls

No records of rare or protected species have been noted on the Town Walls. A large proportion of the walls are covered in large, dense swathes of ivy (*Hedera helix*) (Plate 14). Where ivy is not the dominant species, lower plants such as ferns, mosses and lichens are present (Plate 15). Fern species noted included Rustyback (*Ceterach officinarum*) (Plate 16), Maidenhair Spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*), Wall Rue (*A. ruta-muraria*), Common Polypody (*Polypodium virginarium*) (Plate 17) and Lady Fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*). These species are common throughout Ireland and none are considered to be of significant ecological value in their own right. A number of locations, such as the North-West Tower, higher plants had established on the wall such as butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) Ivy Leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*) (Plate 18) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*). Grass species were also noted. The habitat of the walls are considered to be classed as 'stone walls and other stonework' and 'buildings and artificial surfaces' when compared to the habitat guidelines for Ireland (Fossitt, 2000).



Plate 14: Ivy (*Hedera helix*)



Plate 17: Common Polypody (*Polypodium virginianum*)



Plate 16: Rustyback (*Ceterach officinarum*)



Plate 15: Lichen



Plate 18: Ivy Leaved Toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*)



Plate 19: Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

4.3 Trees

Trees are an important feature in the natural landscape providing habitat for flora and fauna, providing shelter and filtering pollutants from the environment. Several mature trees are located in the immediate area of the Town Walls and some small examples have been noted growing on the walls. The tree planting is largely ornamental or are naturally established and are mainly isolated specimens or in small groups. No significant stands of woodland are present and as a

result there is little or no understorey vegetation. The structure of mature trees provides shelter, food and protection for invertebrates, birds and bats and are therefore a valuable element of the local ecology. Native trees support higher numbers of species than non-native trees and are therefore considered to be of higher value. Tree species noted along the Town Walls included alder (*alnus glutinosa*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), beech, (*Fagus sylvatica*) (Plate 19), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) oak (*Quercus* spp), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) (Plate 20) and willow (*Salix* spp).



Plate 20: Sycamore (*Acer Pseudoplatanus*)



Plate 21: River Clarin



Plate 22: Kenny Park



Plate 23: Open grassland to the south of the Priory

4.4 Gardens

A large number of gardens back onto the western Town Wall, predominantly orientated west to east. These gardens potentially provide an ecological resource supporting bird species, invertebrates and small mammals, therefore improving biodiversity - through the diversity of habitats found within the gardens such as flower beds, vegetable patches, ponds and compost heaps.

4.5 Parks and Open Spaces

A park is located beside the River Clarin/Castle in Athenry (Plates 21 and 25). This area comprises amenity/recreational grassland habitat and areas used for ornamental horticulture. The ecological value of this area is low, but it does provide suitable opportunities for invertebrates, small mammals and birds. The GAA ground (Kenny Park) (Plate 22) adjacent to the southern stretch of town wall has amenity grassland used for recreation. A large area of

open grassland is located within the walled circuit to the south of the Priory (Plate 23) and a review of the environmental submission for the Oyster Homes development in part of that area stated that the Western Regional Fisheries Board requested that a riparian zone/green corridor be maintained along the River Clarin.



Plate 24: North Gate



Plate 25: Views of the park beside the Castle

4.6 Fauna

The walls, towers and vegetation on the walls have the potential to provide suitable roosting sites for bats. All bat species in Ireland are protected under the *National Wildlife (Amendment) Act* (2000) and are classified as European protected species under the *Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations* (1994). However, following consultation with the Galway Biodiversity Officer and the Galway Bat Group it was noted that no records were available for Athenry. There is also potential for trees located close to the walls to be used as roosting sites. Given the habitats located in the town it is likely that bats are present - the walls, tree lines and buildings are important to bats as they are likely to be used as 'flyways' to assist bats commuting and foraging. Bat surveys have been undertaken as part of the Oyster Homes development in the southern part of Athenry and have shown that no roosts were located in the buildings in that part of the town - including the South-East Tower (Gazetteer no. 13). However,

the common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) was noted feeding close to the River Clarin during this walkover/appraisal.

The vegetation and trees on and around the Town Walls also provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. Bird species noted during the walkover survey included jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*), robin (*Erithacus rubecula*), crow (*Corvus commix*), magpie (*Pica pica*) and starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*). It is also considered that raptors and barn owl (*Tyto alba*) to be present at Athenry given the habitats present. The report 'Proposed Mixed Use Commercial and Residential Development' (TPA, 2004) undertaken for the Oyster Homes development in the southern part of Athenry states that barn owl is present - Barn owl is a red list species and is protected under the Wildlife Act and Bern Convention. There is potential that the Town Walls provide ledges for use by these species for foraging and nesting.

Feral pigeons were noted entering the North Gate (Plate 24). If this gate is occupied by this species in large numbers there is potential for damage to the masonry from guano.

Although not recorded during the survey it is likely that species such as fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*), rabbit and small mammals (such as shrews) are present in Athenry - these are common species in Ireland and have no conservation protection.

The River Clarin forms part of the catchment of the nearby River Graigueabbey. The Clarin is primarily a salmonid river and supports salmon (*Salmo salar*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), eel, stone loach, pike, minnow and stickleback. The Clarin also has the potential to support white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), a species protected under the European Habitats Directive. The Western Regional Fisheries Board has stated the river is in a "polluted condition downstream of Athenry" and that it "has limited ability to assimilate pollution due to the fact that a significant section between Cahernafisker and Clarinbridge dries out annually".

5. UNDERSTANDING - SETTING

5.1 Distant Views

Currently there are few opportunities to recapture the original/earlier views of Athenry as a walled town set within a rural landscape - the impact of the solid, extensive light coloured stone walls rising from the greenery or above the bog would have been impressive. If, as seems probable, the walls were rendered externally and also painted the effect would have been heightened. The walls were a deliberate statement about domination and the arrival of a different kind of socio-ethnic group.

For walled towns set on rising ground, more modern developments are generally set on the lower level surrounding ground and so do not hide the walls and reduce their impact - the approach to Carcassonne (France) remains striking in this way (Plate 26). However in the case of Athenry, as with many others, the extra-mural developments lie on land at the same level and so are as high, if not higher, than the walls themselves – which has the effect of obscuring or denying those first dramatic prospects.



Plate 26: Carcassonne (courtesy of B Meeson)

However, the best views of Athenry's Town Walls are obtained from the southern approach to the town – with the other external views obtainable from Dublin Road, from outer Bridge Street where the sight is of the Castle, and from Chapel Lane just south-east of the railway bridge. These first views are of great importance as modest survivors of the original impact experience, as providing a sense of arrival and as indicators of good things to follow.

5.2 Views from the outside streets

There are a number of locations when walking or driving around outside the town centre where it is possible to get a sense of the length and completeness of the Town Walls. This is particularly so from Prospect and Dublin Road (Plate 27). In these views the walls rise above the setting of the adjacent fields and grazing land – and so there is a sense of questioning – what is on the other side? and a sense of something ancient and purposeful. However where the walls are low and rebuilt it is not so clear that these are the Town Walls. Ideally it would be helpful if opportunities for the views from streets or paths parallel to the Town Walls were extended and if possible given greater continuity as this would reinforce the idea of a continuous closed wall circuit with only limited entry points.



Plate 27: Southern approach view of the Town Walls

5.3 Entering the town

It is arguable that the entry points or gates are the most significant elements of the walls as they were:

- the physical transition from rural to urban
- the points of defence and control
- the point of change from the legal regimes of the country to those of the town or city, with differing administration, taxation and privileges.

It is vital therefore that the sites of the gates are marked, readily visible and interpreted. There needs to be a visual sense of approach from both sides and a way of marking the line of the gates. The visual aspects of the gates (or sites thereof) and their settings are considered individually below:

Site of Nicholas Gate (Gazetteer no. 30)

The site of this gate lies within a fairly enclosed town street and the line of the walls immediately to either side is not visible. There appears to be change in name from Chapel Lane (external) to Church Street (internal). The density of development on the approach to the site of the gate from outside on Chapel Lane (Plate 28) is less than that internally on Church Street. It would be helpful to retain this as a reflection of this historic situation. Other ways of emphasising the difference between the two zones would be desirable.



Plate 28: Approach to Nicholas Gate, looking east

North Gate (Gazetteer no. 5)

The physical presence of this gate (locally known as 'The Arch') is strong and it has huge significance as the sole remaining standing gate and as a reminder of the experience of entering the town (Plates 29 and 30). Ways of 'remembering' functions of the gate should be reinforced where possible. In present day visual and townscape terms there are detrimental factors which should be resolved:

- removal of inappropriate signage on adjacent buildings
- removal of highways signage; it is evident that traffic becomes self regulating without signage, which is in some cases a means of enforcing legislation
- removal of parking from the vicinity of the gate
- use of different pavings to denote the spaces within and outside the gate, giving it a better setting.



Plate 29: North Gate, looking north-east



Plate 30: North Gate, looking south-west

Site of Britten Gate (Gazetteer no. 10)

This is presently the least obvious gate location (Plates 31 and 32) with no visible above-ground remains of the gate structure. The street (Bridge Street) is of equal width inside and outside the gate position and there is no change in the development density either side. There is a strong element of green inside the wall line – parkland, fields, trees and shrubs which give the internal spaces a more rural character thus suggesting, in visual terms, that the gate location ought to be further in. For these reasons this may be the hardest of the locations to mark convincingly.



Plate 31: Site of Britten Gate, looking west



Plate 32: Detail of Britten Gate site

Site of Spittle Gate (Gazetteer no. 17)

This was the original south gate to the town. Presently no above ground remains of Spittle Gate are visible and the site contains two 19th century ashlar gate pillars, either side of which are two contemporary lintelled pedestrian entrances, currently not in use (Plate 33). The gate pillars form the private entrance to a dwelling (Riverside House) within the Town Walls. Whilst a private entrance, the gate pillars do continue the identification of a gateway function at this location and so their retention/preservation would be desirable. If access was agreed with the relevant landowners this gate position could provide a means of crossing from the external to internal walled areas, at a point of original access to/from the town.



Plate 33: Site of Spittle Gate, looking north

Loro Gate (Gazetteer no. 21)

The site of Loro Gate is a wider and less visually contained breach in the Walls and so the visual/spatial experience of entry into the town at this point is weak. The main approach roads are in fact parallel to the walls and so for motorists and pedestrians the experience of entering the town is confused by the need to negotiate a busy right-angled road junction. In 2007 remains of the Loro Gate were discovered during road works (Plate 34) and it has still to be decided if these could be incorporated as a feature within the proposed road scheme. The contrast between green-ness outside the Walls and tighter urban development within could be improved by the provision of a tree zone from the land adjacent to Prospect, into and across the private garden of the house on the west side of the gate position.



Plate 34: Loro Gate

5.4 Looking at the walls from inside

Historically the internal face was not regarded as particularly significant as it did not have the same visual symbolism as the external face - it just performed a utilitarian function as part of the structure. Given this lesser importance there would have been a gradual accretion of lean-to structures along the internal face. The internal wall faces are not now especially visually significant and indeed for the majority of their length they are not publicly visible. On the west side the Walls enclose the rear part of the long plots abutting Loro Gate and Old Church Street. Similarly around the north side the line of the Walls is absorbed within the buildings and structures of houses and commercial premises and so the visual continuity is completely lost. The line of the Walls around the Castle areas is unclear, but on the east side, in the vicinity of the Priory there is a long length of reconstructed wall, which represents the Priory eastern boundary rather than the Town Wall (which lies further to the east) as well as a stretch immediately north of the South-East Tower that is Town Wall. Within the privately owned and

current development land in the southern part of the walled town the walls are higher and have more visual presence - there are few internal obstructions here and so the walls can be appreciated for their enclosing and protecting qualities. Any open, wide views of the internal face of the Town Walls should be retained.

5.5 Key Views

Figure 10 illustrates a number of vantage points that provide optimum views:

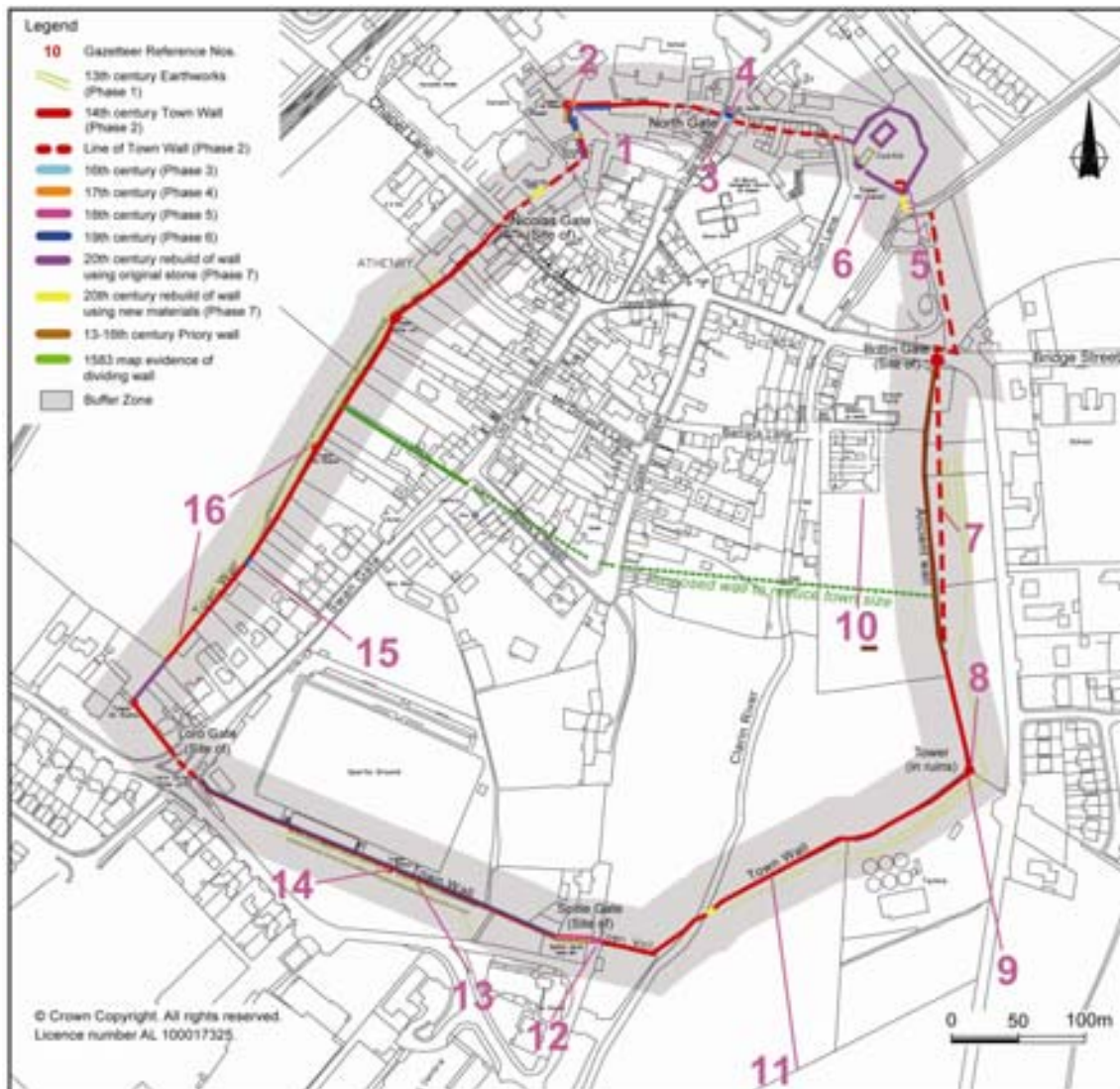


Figure 10: Key Views

- 1 and 2 – for views of the North-West Tower and wall walk (Plates 35 and 36)
- 3 and 4 – for views of the North Gate, an iconic structure for the town (Plates 29 and 30)
- 5 and 6 – for views of the Castle (Plates 37 and 38)
- 7 – for a view of the earthworks related to the Town Walls (fosse and ramparts (Plate 39)
- 8 and 9 – for views of the South-East Tower, the best surviving tower (Plate 41)
- 10 – for a view of the Priory and the Castle in the background (Plate 40)
- 11 – 14 – for views of the highest and longest surviving length of Town Walls (Plate 42 and front cover, upper photograph)
- 15 – for an internal view of the Town Wall and view through the west gateway (Plate 43)

16 – for views along a substantial stretch of Town Wall together with associated fosse and ramparts (front cover, lower photograph).



Plate 35: North-West Tower (external)



Plate 36: North-West Tower with wall walk (internal)



Plate 37: Castle from Court Lane



Plate 38: Castle from the park



Plate 39: Town Wall earthworks with Priory



Plate 41: South-East Tower, looking south



Plate 40: Priors and Castle looking north



Plate 42: South Wall



Plate 43: West Gateway, looking west

5.6 Presentation of the Town Walls – Interpretive Audit and Review

Interpretation of Athenry's outstanding heritage assets is currently limited. Specifically, for the Town Walls circuit there is nothing on site except a sculptural piece (Plate 44) in the car park near to North Gate. This piece unfortunately has a visual impact on the view from the car park to the gate (Plate 44). There is also a graphic panel in the market place near the market cross.



Plate 44: Public Art at North Gate

The Heritage Centre was established in 1999 and is situated in the remains of the medieval St Mary's Church. It is the primary starting point for the interpretation of Athenry and their website (<http://www.athenryheritagecentre.com>) lists the offer:

- Tours for schools, coach parties and a virtual tour of the town
- Activities including archery, puppet shows, medieval costumes, craft fairs and seasonal activities
- Local Arts Centre
- Local Genealogy Centre
- History of Athenry
- Information on eating out and entertainment
- Information on accommodation.

A free leaflet is provided by the Heritage Centre entitled '*Athenry Arts and Heritage Activity Centre*', which gives a simple visual illustrated map of the town and a suggested trail for exploring the walls, towers, gates and other heritage sites. However, the leaflet is targeted at education groups, especially primary and secondary school groups and therefore it is quite limited in scope. There are access issues, sensory access in particular, that need to be considered, both for the leaflet and the website. The Heritage Centre is a well-used, family-friendly community and visitor focal point with three-dimensional displays, an audio visual presentation, a model of the town, interactive elements, such as dressing up clothes and handling items and a small shop selling souvenir items (Plate 45). The Heritage Centre would benefit from improved location signage, especially to direct people to its front entrance.



Plate 45: Models in the Heritage Centre

There is a virtual tour listed on the Heritage Centre website, which consists of a short sequence of images with brief text showing the town highlights and heritage aspects. There is considerable scope for developing virtual access to Athenry's heritage and for including web cams around the town in the future.

The Castle is an established destination and a venue for wedding photographs and other events. It uses on-site graphics, an audiovisual presentation, guidebook and excellent guides (capacity permitting) to engage audiences with the Castle. However, little is made of its relationship to the Town Walls and the walled circuit. The adjacent 'park' area has been improved with landscaping and may benefit from further interpretive media to enhance the links and educational value of the site on the edge of the town (Plate 46). There are evident issues with maintenance of the park and popular Athenry Community Playground. The Castle is impressive and visually dominant in Athenry, but more could be done to achieve physical and promotional links between the Castle (managed by the OPW) and the Heritage Centre and other places in the town.

North Gate has no on site interpretation and is very confined physically, making interpretation problematic. However, it is an attractive feature of iconic status within the town and would greatly benefit from townscape improvements and de-cluttering of street furniture (Plate 47), coupled with interpretation from the car park that has views across the street to the Gate. A tactile exterior model could be beneficial.



Plate 46: Park beside the Castle



Plate 47: North Gate

The Priory is managed and interpreted by the OPW, but sadly shows evidence of neglect and some vandalism. Interpretation is limited to densely worded exterior graphic panels that lack both visual and content appeal. Earthworks in the surrounding field and the lost elements of the walled circuit, all present excellent opportunities for interpretation through public realm enhancement, public and community arts and a range of other media. The Priory is also an example of where in the town overhead wires detract from a view/visual appreciation of an historic site (Plate 48).



Plate 48: Overhead wires to the south of the Priory

The extent and richness of the remains is excellent but currently these lack coherence and require some work to explore and engage with. All of these aspects could be easily addressed. Traffic dominates the townscape and the narrow streets are not accommodating of pedestrian and vehicular movement, let alone enabling appreciation of the historic environment (Plate 49).

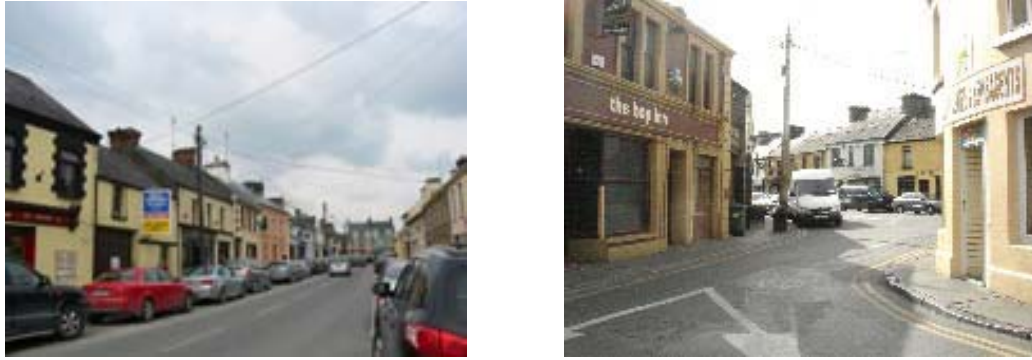


Plate 49: Street Scenes

5.7 Comparator Review

Table 4 below presents a brief comparison of Athenry with other towns/cities in Ireland, England, Wales and Europe that have surviving medieval walls. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but is included to show how Athenry compares with other walled settlements.

The level of information available about the survival, current condition, the bodies responsible for the walls, their conservation and management is limited and scattered across different sources of information. However, it can be noted that:

- several walled towns have sections of walls that are either in private ownership (e.g. Chester, England) or that are incorporated into property boundaries (e.g. Kilmallock, County Limerick).
- most towns have either very limited information or no information available for people to gain an understanding of the relationship between the walls and the rest of the town and associated historic structures.
- there is very limited information available about access to the walls – with only a few of the walled towns reviewed providing virtual tours or downloadable walled tour information
- Athenry is one of the largest walled towns and the most complete medieval town in Ireland.

LOCATION	LENGTH OF WALL SURVIVING	MAIN SURVIVING COMPONENTS	PRINCIPAL PERIODS OF WALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Athenry	1.25 km survives of 2 km circuit	Castle 2 gates 6 towers Moat / fosse and ramparts	Medieval	Wall reduced and rather overgrown North Gate through wall into town is sufficient only for single traffic Events held during Irish Walled Towns Day Archaeological discovery of Loro Gate in August 2007 Heritage Centre located in a church Wall incorporated into property boundaries Layout of medieval streets still relatively intact
Caernarfon (Wales)	0.8 km of complete circuit survives	7 bastions 1 round tower 2 towered gateways Castle Complete walled circuit	Medieval	Only a small length of wall is accessible at present Ownership for walls differ for different sections, but responsibility for care is predominantly Cadw A Management Plan was drawn up by Cadw in 2004 The Castles and Town Walls of Edward the First in North Wales - Conwy, Caernarfon, Beaumaris and Harlech

LOCATION	LENGTH OF WALL SURVIVING	MAIN SURVIVING COMPONENTS	PRINCIPAL PERIODS OF WALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
				were designated as a World Heritage Site in 1986
Cashel	100-200m survives of 1.5 km	4 isolated stretches of wall	Medieval	The Rock of Cashel is the primary heritage visitor attraction in Cashel and it is also promoted as part of Tipperary Heritage Way (a walking route) There is a national cultural centre at the foot of the Rock of Cashel Online information about the town makes no reference to the town walls
Chester (England)	3.2 km of circuit survives	6 towers 9 gates Wall circuit Castle	Roman Medieval Post Medieval	Walls heritage tours Tactile Information panels at strategic points around the walls Virtual tour of the walls
Chichester (England)	2.4 km of circuit survives	Walls Bastions (no gates survive – destroyed in 17 th /18 th century)	Roman Saxon Medieval 18th century	Surviving wall is a flint-faced core of Roman civitas wall, with unusual late Roman bastions Norman castle in corner reduced to earthworks Interpretation/access and audience development strategies agreed and in process of implementation Virtual tour of walls
Cittadella (Italy)	1.5 km of circuit survives	4 gates 12 towers	Medieval	Following restoration of some of the wall a parapet walk can be reached between Porta Padova to Porta Bassano gates. There are plans for this to be extended around the whole wall
Clonmel	c. 400m survives of 1 km circuit	1 gate (restored in 18 th century) 7 towers	Medieval	The walls encompassed three sides of the town and one side ran along the river for 450m Walls survive in short sections with many stretches incorporated in buildings The remaining section of the walls was restored in 1980 and has been railed off as part of a public walkway The walls are publicised on the Clonmel community website
Conwy (Wales)	1.2 km of complete circuit survives	21 towers 3 gateways Complete wall circuit Castle	Medieval	One of the most complete wall circuits in Europe The Castles and Town Walls of Edward the First in North Wales - Conwy, Caernarfon, Beaumaris and Harlech were designated as a World Heritage Site in 1986 Medieval entertainment event Footpath around outside of walls for nearly entire circuit Access to walk along top of north wall
Derry	1.3 km survives of 1.3 km circuit	7 gates 5 bastions 2 watchtowers	17 th century	Owned by The Honourable The Irish Society, but are in the care of the N. Ireland Environment and Heritage Service They are designated as an ancient monument Visitor access is possible for walks around the walls
Fethard	c.1 km survives of 1.1 km circuit	1 gate 2 towers	Medieval	There is only one break in the circuit of 50m The Local Area Plan for Fethard is available on the community website and references the town walls e.g. specifying

LOCATION	LENGTH OF WALL SURVIVING	MAIN SURVIVING COMPONENTS	PRINCIPAL PERIODS OF WALL	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
				the need to continue to open up access to them The local history society in Fethard present the history of the town and its walls on the town's website
Kilkenny	1.45 km of circuit survives (original length)	1 gateway External ditch Earthen rampart Castle 1 bastion 3 towers	Medieval	<i>Kilkenny City Walls Conservation Plan</i> published 2005 by the Heritage Council.
Kilmallock	c.700 m survives of 1.7 km circuit	2 gates Earthworks/fosse Bastion		Interpretation of heritage themes in Ballyhoura region through art Layout of medieval streets still relatively intact Heritage Centre located in a church Gate archway through wall into town is sufficient only for single traffic Wall incorporated into property boundaries Annual Medieval festival
Limerick	c.250m of English Town Walls survive and c.400m of Irish Town Walls survive (with other sections incorporated in buildings)	2 towers (remains) Postern gate? Square tower? Moat / fosse Castle	Norman	There is no on line information about the walls, and tourism information about the town does not reference the walls The walls of Limerick are divided into two sections joined by a bridge - English Town and Irish Town. The English Town wall was 1.6 km total circuit; The Irish Town was 1.3 km total circuit
Nordlingen (Germany)	2.6 km of circuit survives	15 towers	Medieval	Nordlingen is a town along the 'Romantic Road' and the town is promoted along with other walled towns along this road There is a 15 minute walk around the walls that is promoted on tourism websites for the town
Vouvant (France)		Ramparts Posterns Bridge Castle	Medieval	The walls are marketed as part of the tourism offer for the town
York (England)	3.4 km	6 gates 9 principal towers 26 additional towers Postern gates 2 castles Stretches of stone wall and earth ramparts	Roman Early medieval Post medieval	Walk around the walls Footpath around outside of walls Interpretive panels at gates, towers and other significant features Interactive interpretation in 1 tower Downloadable guides to the wall walk
Youghal	The landward wall survives almost intact from close to the North Gate as far as the SW corner. 250m survives along the N side. 475m survives along the W side. Original 1.7 km total circuit	3 towers Moat / fosse	Medieval	An online version of 'Historic Walled Port', a history of Youghal is available

Table 4: Comparator Review

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Introduction

A thorough consultation process was undertaken as this is vital in ensuring understanding and ownership of a conservation and management plan and likewise the adoption and implementation of recommended policies by all stakeholders. The Steering Group (as listed in Appendix E.1) provided information as stakeholders and further consultation was undertaken with individuals and representatives of organisations who are in some way engaged with Athenry. These consultations took the form of telephone interviews, or an exchange of letter/email, with the consultees responding to the following key questions:

- What do you consider are the special qualities of Athenry and its Town Walls?
- What in your view are the key issues regarding the Town Walls?
- What do you consider are the key opportunities for Athenry and its Town Walls?
- What are your thoughts on the future management of the Town Walls?

Other questions arose from some of the consultations and involved exploration of priorities for development, potential threats to optimising development and learning and potential key funding streams available to deliver opportunities for the Town Walls.

Those with ownership of property abutting the Town Walls (Table 1) were invited to meet with the conservation plan team to discuss their particular concerns and ideas.

To ensure the consultation process was as inclusive as possible a public meeting was also held on 3 October 2007 and a questionnaire was distributed in the town. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix E2., with an analysis of the responses provided in Appendix E3 and a summary of the public meeting in E6.

The information obtained from all these consultations fed into the preparation of the understanding, issues and policy sections of the plan. A summary of the overall information is given below. More detailed results from the consultation process are given in Appendix E4 with comments presented under various section headings (the source of individual comments is not identified and the comments are not direct quotations, but instead aim to describe a point within the context in which it was made).

6.2 Summary of the Consultation Results

The Town Walls are recognised as an important feature that help to define Athenry, give the town a special identity and a link to the past. The compactness of the town/streetscape added to the Walls give a unique medieval feel to the town, but this presents issues with access around town and safety for pedestrians. Other issues raised involved the amount of new development, the lack of supporting infrastructure, such development obscuring the Walls/heritage features and not respecting the heritage feel of the town. Dissatisfaction with the neglected and vandalised state of the Priory and the usage/presentation of Market Square is strong and there were also concerns that Athenry is losing its identity as it becomes a commuter/dormitory town for Galway. There is a clear desire for greater appreciation, understanding and presentation/interpretation of the Walls and the history of Athenry, as well as access to the Walls and the other heritage features in the town – particularly by way of walks around the Walls, with appropriate lighting, seating, bins and signage. Whilst there is concern for the condition of the Walls - especially loose stonework and vegetation overgrowth – there is also an aspiration for improved management of the Walls through a single point of contact.

7. ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

7.1 Introduction

Assessing the significance of a heritage asset, such as the Town Walls, lies at the very heart of the conservation planning process. The assessment approach used in this study derives from the *Burra Charter* (1999) and essentially involves making value judgements about how and why the Town Walls are significant. Understanding the importance of the Walls defines the way in which decisions can be made about everything related to the monument, from current management to future usage. Consideration is given to both the overall monument as well as the individual elements which form or affect the monument and it should be noted that heritage assets are often important for more than one reason and defining the attributes and values can highlight interrelationships (and sometimes conflicts) between attributes.

7.2 Criteria

Selecting criteria to assist determining why any heritage asset is significant is not a definitive and prescriptive exercise and for this study the following broad categories have been utilised (Table 5). These categories are derived from the understanding of the nature of the monument and are considered the most appropriate for the Town Walls.

CRITERIA	DEFINITION
Archaeological/Historical	Importance derived from the evidence provided, or potentially able to be provided, on the understanding of the past history and development of the Walls. This includes elements that were important in or affected the course of history; are representative of an important historic event; or are associated with an important historic figure, event and/or place.
Structural	This involves the authenticity of the fabric and any technological or architectural accomplishments.
Aesthetic/Setting	The visual appearance and character of the walled circuit and the individual elements that comprise the whole. The characteristics of the town as defined/influenced by the Town Walls and the views from and to the Walls.
Community/Social	Community regard/value for the Walls and the value of the Walls as a recreational attraction.
Educational and Visitor/Presentation	Potential for education (schools/adult education/intellectual access/community and visitor needs) as well as interpretation/presentation of the Town Walls as a focal point for leisure/pleasure/tourism.
Ecology and Green Spaces	Importance of the Town Walls for habitats, plant species, and wildlife.

Table 5: Criteria to Assess Significance

7.3 Levels of Significance

Whilst assessing significance will always be a subjective process based on current professional knowledge and judgement it is helpful to use some form of relative hierarchy as a means of clarifying issues. It should be recognised that the basis on which judgements are made can change over time as more information is uncovered about a monument, but this simply reinforces the need to review and update a conservation and management plan at regular intervals.

For this study the following six levels of significance have been used:

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE	DEFINITION
International	Sites/features of exceptional/international significance or which contain elements with a significance beyond national boundaries. The only, or among the best, example of its kind
National	Sites/features of considerable/national significance - representing good examples of a type of feature/or the only local example. Includes significance through association
Regional	Sites/features of moderate/regional significance - representing the character and understanding of the site/feature
Local	Sites/features of some/local significance – individual low value in enabling understanding

Detrimental	Sites/features of negative/intrusive impact – obscure understanding of the site/feature
Unknown	Sites/features of unknown significance - due to a lack of available information

Table 6: Levels of Significance

The Gazetteer records the significance of each element of the Town Walls and a summary of the key points for each significance criteria is given below.

7.3.1 Archaeological/Historical Significance:

- The Walls have an overall historical and geographical significance for the demarcation of Athenry as a medieval town and provide a strong sense of enclosure.
- The almost complete circuit of walls is a rare, authentic and special survival of an upstanding urban defensive feature containing much archaeological evidence given the association of walls, gates, towers, fosse, ramparts and earthworks.
- Sections of the Town Walls have survived well and have a greater significance as closer representations of the original.
- The sites and remains of the gates are crucial for illustrating the circulation into and out of the town, as well as being breach points that may have been targeted for attack.
- The towers formed outposts sited at strategic points along the Town Walls, as well as adding to the appearance of the defences.
- Sections of the parapet of the wall-walk survive along the circumference of the Walls, adding to the understanding of how the defences were used.
- The walled circuit encloses a large area (28 hectares) - one of the largest circuits in Ireland.
- The Walls link to other medieval monuments in the town – the Castle, Priory and Market Square with Cross – providing a rare and unique combination of features – and the town has a medieval feel (with the preservation of the original streetplan/burage plots) and is recognised as the most complete medieval town in Ireland (Bradley 1989, 43).

In summary - the Town Walls are already recognised as a monument of national importance and that status is certainly supported by this review of the aspects of the archaeological/historical significance criteria. Moreover the Walls have a high potential for further study and so provide additional information on the history and development of the town and its defences (as research agenda is suggested in Appendix B).

7.3.2 Structural Significance:

- The walls provide evidence of reconstruction and repair from the medieval period to the present day
- The walls have a solid stone core and are generally in a fair condition having been constructed in a durable stone (carboniferous limestone)
- The walls comprise an almost complete circuit of a walled town, the extent of survival is rare and Athenry is one of the most complete walled towns in Ireland
- The walls provide a rare opportunity to examine medieval construction techniques
- Parts of the associated fosse and earthen bank (though reduced in height) are clearly visible outside the walls (especially the west and east walls) and illustrate how the town's defences developed and functioned.

In summary – the structural merits of the Town Walls are sufficient to provide a national significance for this criteria and further survey/study of the Walls has a potential for contributing further to the understanding of the construction, additions and repairs that comprise the Walls today..

7.3.3 Aesthetic/Setting Significance:

- Dramatic views of the Town Walls are available
- Open and pastoral views are also available, including green spaces within the walled circuit
- The Town Walls provide a strong sense of enclosure

- There are visual links with other medieval features in the town – the Castle, Priory, and market cross creating an attractive combination
- The town has a strong medieval ‘feel’ given the survival of the Norman street plan/burghage plots – narrow streets giving a compact and cluttered aspect and a sense of exploration
- The close proximity of the buildings to the Town Walls, at times sharing boundaries, adds to the walled town feel
- The medieval legacy defines the layout and usage of the current town centre – and development potential
- North Gate provides a defined sense of entry to the town
- Powerful imagery with the green fields and grey stones – the Town Walls are part of a complementary broader landscape setting.

In summary – the aesthetic/setting of the Town Walls is assessed to be of national significance as Athenry represents one of the most complete walled towns in Ireland and has retained a medieval streetscape that provides a unique and invaluable setting for the Walls.

7.3.4 Community/Social Significance:

- Where residents are aware of the Town Walls there is a strong community pride
- Where residents have a portion of the walled circuit as a boundary to their property there is a strong sense of responsibility for the Walls
- There is a desire for greater access to the Walls as well as walks around the Walls
- Community involvement in the future of the Walls is sought.

In summary – the community/social value placed on the Town Walls is considered to be of high local significance given the identity and sense of history afforded the townspeople by the Walls.

7.3.5 Educational/Interpretation/Presentation Significance:

- The Town Walls provide opportunities for formal and informal learning
- Athenry Heritage Centre is an established information/interpretation point with links to the Castle and the potential for extending such links to other heritage sites and features within the town
- The Walls provide a means of sharing cultural understanding (and so foster links in a multi-cultural society), involvement and ownership of Ireland’s heritage
- However there is currently no defined wall circuit, a lack of signage, lighting and on-site interpretation, a lack of a town brand, as well as a limited destination presence. There is a high potential for improvement in public and visitor understanding, access and appreciation of the Town Walls and associated monuments.
- There is considerable scope for operational and promotional partnership between the public and private sectors, for the benefit of the historic environment and the townspeople.
- There is also scope for regional links on a medieval theme – Athenry providing an example of a Norman walled town which could complement other ecclesiastical sites.

In summary – the educational/interpretation and presentation aspects are assessed as currently of local significance, but have the potential to be of regional significance.

7.3.6 Ecology and Green Spaces Significance:

- No environmentally designated sites are located within 7km of the town.

- No rare or protected flora has been noted on or close to the Town Walls. The flora at and around the walls provides suitable habitat for invertebrates and birds and is also of visual importance through softening the appearance of the walls and towers.
- A number of trees are located close to the walls which are of varying ages and size. Some of the trees are classified as mature. The trees provide suitable habitat for invertebrates and birds and potentially bats and they are also a recreational and aesthetic asset to the town.
- Although no bats or their roosts were identified there is a potential for them to be present given the current condition of the walls and the presence of towers and large mature trees nearby.
- The residential gardens located along the west Town Wall provide both amenity use for the local residents whose houses back onto the walls and an ecological resource.
- A large area of amenity/managed grassland is located in the area adjacent to the south of the Castle. To the south-west of the town Kenny Park GAA ground is used for hurling and Gaelic football. These areas are managed and of limited ecological value, although they have an aesthetic value and are of potential recreational value.
- There is a potential to develop a 'linear park' in Athenry using the green spaces along the external face of the Walls.

In summary – the Town Walls are considered to be of local significance with regard to ecology and green spaces - although there is a potential that bat species may use the walls for roosting and bats and their roosts are considered to be international importance.

7.3.7 Overall Significance

The extent and degree of survival of the Town Walls give Athenry the accolade of one of the most complete walled towns in Ireland. In terms of land area within the Walls (28 hectares), it is also one of the largest walled towns. Both these points would suggest that the Walls are of national significance. The town has been attributed an international significance by Galway County Council (*Local Area Plan for Athenry*, 2005) through the combination of its various heritage and natural features within a defined medieval townscape –

'Not only does the town exhibit one of the outstanding Anglo-Norman medieval settlement form and features, but the overall structure and heritage value is far more than the sum of the component parts. Few towns in Western Europe exhibit such a remarkably intact.... juxtaposition of walls, towers, fosse, ramparts, priory, market place, street layout, mature trees and open spaces.'

The attribution of international significance, as utilised in this report, includes those sites which are among the best example of its kind. Athenry is certainly one of the best examples of a walled town in Ireland/ Europe given the extent of survival, the association of the Walls with the fosse earthworks and the combination of heritage features that form an invaluable legacy within the town and create a strong sense of the medieval period.

8. VULNERABILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 Introduction

The conservation planning process suggests that having established what elements of a place are significant, the next step is then to determine which of the significant elements are either threatened by a vulnerability, or offer an opportunity for enhancement. The criteria used in assessing significance are utilised for this section too (with the addition of a category on ownership and management) as this allows easier cross-referencing of issues.

8.2 Ownership and Management

Ownership of the Town Walls has been defined (section 1.4) and Galway County Council have a duty of care for the Town Walls as a national monument which is included in the RMP and RPS designations. Not only are the Town Walls protected as a national monument through the National Monuments Act (1930-2004), but also through the Planning and Development Act (2000) and the designation of a buffer zone of no development either side of the Town Walls. Owners of land/property abutting the Town Walls (within the buffer zone) therefore also have an involvement in the conservation and management of the Town Walls.

Vulnerabilities:

- There is a desire for a single point of contact for landowners with property that abuts the Town Walls concerning maintenance issues – there is currently public confusion on whether to contact DoEHLG, Galway County Council or OPW – clarification on responsibilities could help to address this.
- The lack of a conservation/maintenance programme leaves the Town Walls vulnerable to deterioration and the potential loss of a heritage asset.
- There is a current lack of identifiable funding for conservation/management/future development of the Town Walls as a heritage resource.
- Some funding streams are only available to owners or require clarification of ownership –so future funding that could assist works in relation to the Town Walls could be unavailable if this issue is not resolved.
- There is a need for a strategic and creative vision that covers management and investment needs, as well as physical infrastructure and improvement.

Opportunities:

- The identification of clear responsibility for the Town Walls would assist in improving the public perception on the importance of care to safeguard a valuable heritage asset for the town.
- A single point of contact would reassure owners of property that abuts the Town Walls - particularly if proposals to improve access to the Walls by way of walks are brought to fruition.
- The identification of recommendations in both a conservation and management plan and a public realm plan would deliver a strategy to enable Athenry to maximise its potential as a unique and eminent historic walled town.
- Community involvement in the management of the Walls would foster a sense of shared ownership of the heritage of the town.

8.3 Archaeological/Historical

The Town Walls are a recognised monument of national importance with a high potential for further study and the provision of additional information on the history and development of the town and its defences.

Vulnerabilities:

- The potential irrecoverable loss of evidence from above and below ground through lack of enforcement of planning control (particularly in relation to the zone of archaeological potential).
- Similarly a potential loss through lack of defined and integrated management of the Walls to safeguard against inappropriate activities taking place adjacent to, or within the setting of, the Walls (such as - unrestrained development within the zone of archaeological potential, interventions from public works, for instance drainage, sewerage and utilities and new tree/shrub planting).
- A negative impact from piecemeal archaeological investigation on the archaeological resource without reference to a Research Agenda.

Opportunities:

- The creation of a research framework. The archaeology of the Walls has considerable potential for the development of research links and collaborative work (archaeological excavation and recording, archival research, public presentation, preservation, conservation and reconstruction) to provide a greater understanding of the Walls and Athenry on a national and international level – especially to clarify the original wall-line along the eastern section and the original gates, as well as the extent of original/later walls within properties along Court Lane.
- The Walls and associated features (fosse and ramparts) present an excellent opportunity for the application of modern non-intrusive analytical techniques in support of archaeological analyses and interpretation.
- Research excavations using community volunteers and led by professionals would potentially obtain new information on the Walls and at the same time encourage local involvement and ownership of the heritage of the town.
- The survival of the Town Walls with the original fosse and ramparts in places along the wall circuit provide a rare opportunity to reconstruct a section to show the wall, fosse and rampart and how these elements interrelate.
- The provision of a single source of coherent information on the history and development of the Walls/town. Much of the information available is from secondary sources with an inevitable element of inaccuracy/conflicting records.
- A popular publication of the origin and development of Athenry/the Town Walls.

8.4 Structural

Considering the age of the Town Walls it is remarkable that so much survives in a stable and good condition, although it should be recognised that this has probably been due to a lack of development within the town from the 17th-20th centuries and the current period of redevelopment leads to the nationally significant Walls becoming increasingly vulnerable.

Vulnerabilities:

- Loss of fabric has occurred due to the long term effects of water penetration, vegetation growth, frost action, lack of protection and inappropriate physical intervention. The lack of a regular maintenance programme could lead to deterioration in the overall condition of the Walls, and in turn this could lead to structural failure and the irrecoverable partial or complete loss of sections of the Walls.
- One of the key items hindering the preservation of the Walls is the lack of access, or poor access, to much of the circuit. Although the Walls appear accessible on a plan, many areas can only be approached through heavy undergrowth or by prior arrangement with a number of landowners. This needs to be tackled as a priority, since it prevents even proper inspection of the asset. Furthermore the difficulty of getting materials and operatives to the Walls will inevitably be reflected in repair costs.

- There is a lack of surviving above ground structures at most of the points of entry to the town – the gates in the walled circuit – so an absence of the sense of arrival to an historic, let alone a walled town.
- The application of inappropriate conservation techniques and materials could diminish the authenticity of the Walls.
- There is no clear guidance or expectation for landowners who own property that abuts the Walls to act in the best interest of the historic fabric.

Opportunities:

- Conservation work would provide opportunities for archaeological investigation and interpretation.
- There is a potential to redefine the lost gates with architectural features that reinstate the sense of arrival.
- Two towers (North-West and South-East) are potentially accessible and so could provide visitors with a unique viewpoint
- A commitment to the action plan proposed in this conservation and management plan would demonstrate a commitment to the rich heritage represented by the Town Walls.

8.5 Setting

The setting is a vital element of the understanding and appreciation of the Town Walls.

Vulnerabilities:

- Any lack of Development Management could irrevocably alter and diminish the visibility and appreciation of the Town Walls and in turn the character and quality of the town.
- A lack of an appropriate and unified style of street furniture/signage (Plate 50) detracts from the presentation of the heritage town and the experience of elements such as the Walls.
- The Walls are obscured by vegetation (overgrowth and undergrowth) and in places modern facilities (overhead wires and storage or service facilities – Plates 48, 51 and 52) detract from the visual appreciation of the heritage assets.
- There are poor links between the heritage assets, specifically between the Town Walls, Castle, Priory and Market Cross which diminishes the understanding and enjoyment of the whole medieval town experience.
- Aside from the North Gate the other entry points to the historic town lack any visible features that indicate the original gateways so there is little sense of arrival to a medieval town. The discovery of part of Loro Gate in August 2007 has provided physical remains and an opportunity to address the 'sense of arrival' at that location. It is possible that remains of the other gateways to the town survive below ground (such as Spittle Gate to the east of the present gate entrance to Riversdale House).



Plate 50: Street furniture – North Gate Street, looking north; Court Lane, looking north



Plate 51: South-East Tower with hut



Plate 52: Silos at South-East Tower

Opportunities:

- Views of the Town Walls could be improved, especially from the walls and towers.
- Visibility of sections of the walls through appropriate architectural lighting could improve the dramatic impact of the appearance of the Walls, but this needs to respect the privacy of those living/working next to the Walls and consider environmental impact.
- Through a Public Realm Plan the design of appropriate street furniture, lighting and signage, sympathetic to the heritage nature of the town, could improve the presentation of the Walls and the town.
- The original gateways could all benefit from the provision of features and interpretation to aid understanding of the history of the Walls, but also to restore the sense of arrival at an important town.
- The proposed road network to the south of the town will also provide new views of the town.

8.6 Community/Social

There is a strong community pride in the Town Walls and in their provision of a sense of identity for the town. Allied to how positive the community feel about the heritage of Athenry is a desire for greater access to that heritage.

Vulnerabilities:

- Some sections of the community may feel that the Walls are 'not for them' and so not make use of or care for them.
- The Walls are not lit so present hazards after dark which discourages physical access.
- With no access to the Walls readily available anti-social behaviour could go undetected, the results of which could be detrimental to the presentation and appreciation of the Walls.

Opportunities:

- The Walls have the potential to be a focal point for an increase in visitors/tourism in the area
- Several walks around the Walls have been identified as possible, each of a different length so as to meet varying user needs (Figure 11). The shortest walk involves the 'heritage hub' in the town – the Heritage Centre, Castle, North Gate, North-West Tower (wall and wall walk) and the Market Square and Cross. A second walk could involve the heritage hub as well as the Priory and east wall of the wall-circuit to the South-East Tower. Further walks could be possible along the external wall circuit with the agreement of the relevant landowners.
- The promotion and provision of designated walks around the town/Town Walls would require the provision of supporting facilities - appropriate lighting, seating, litter facilities, toilets, as well as interpretation.

- Greater access to the Walls/community involvement could provide an opportunity to encourage a greater community sense of ownership and value of the Walls.
- The community could provide guides for training on the special nature of the Walls.

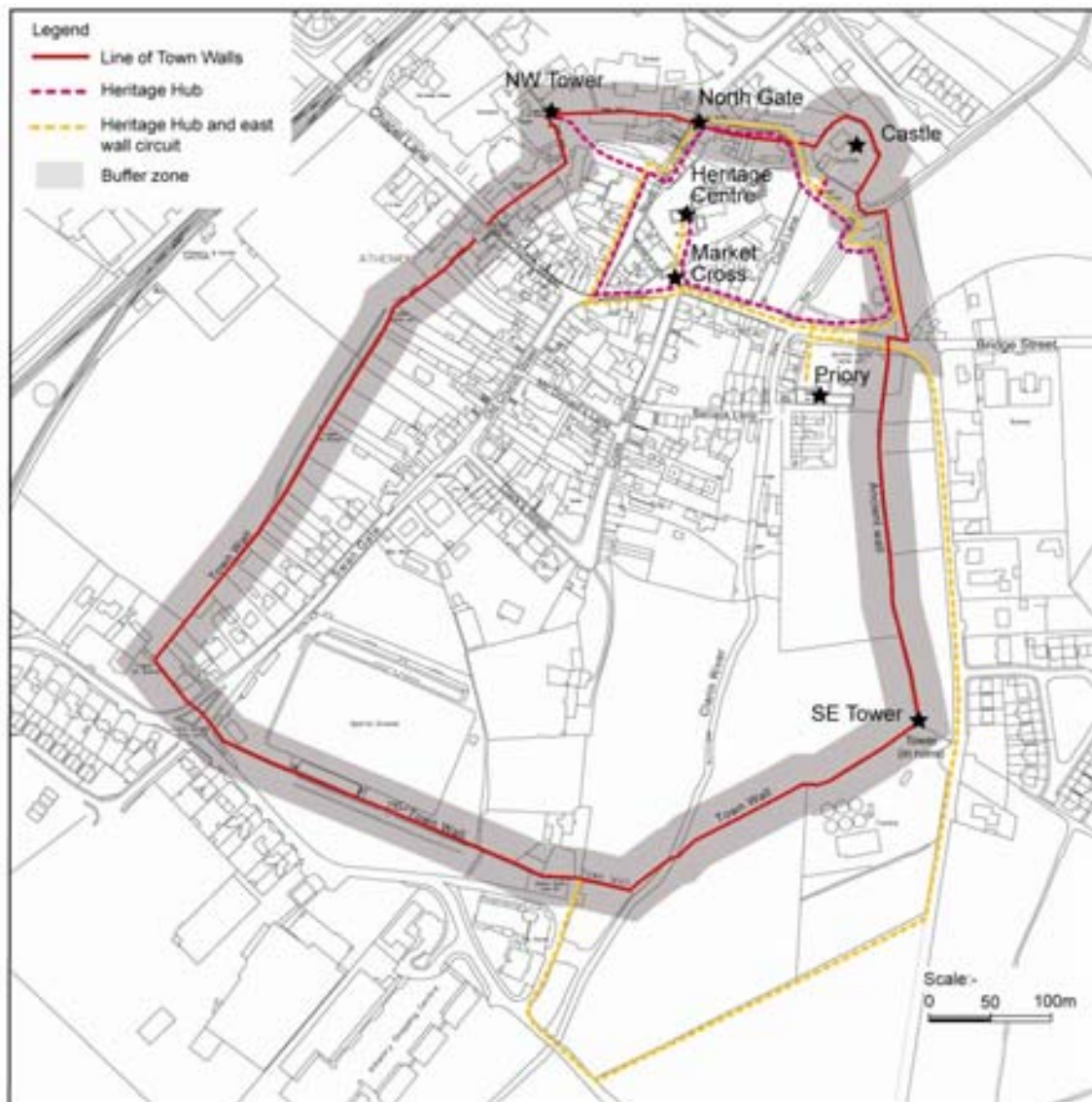


Figure 11: Suggested Walks around the Walls/Town (after Athery Parish Project Society Co. Ltd)

8.7 Educational, Interpretation and Presentation

The Town Walls offer unique opportunities for formal and informal learning as well as presentation and interpretation.

Vulnerabilities:

- A lack of public profile indicates a lack of understanding of the Town Walls which affects all the criteria and could detrimentally affect the appreciation and use of the Town Walls and in turn detract from the town's heritage value.

- The current lack of access to the Walls, physically and intellectually, accompanied by a lack of signage, on-site interpretation and toilet facilities, as well as a lack of linkage to the other fascinating heritage assets in the town, limits the understanding of the importance of the Walls.

Opportunities:

- The archaeology and history of the Walls offers the opportunity for schools, the general public, community groups and visitors/tourists to learn about and appreciate the Walls.
- The Walls are an under-exploited visitor attraction and improved access is both possible and vital. Walks around the walls would give physical access, accompanied with signage and interpretation facilities and the gateways could be redefined to create a sense of arrival.
- The archaeology/history represented by the Walls is suited to the application of virtual reality techniques to provide user-friendly access.
- A town brand could be developed to reflect the walled town nature of Athenry, which in turn could assist with linkages to other walled towns and promotional/marketing activities and be utilised on any signage/interpretation provision within the town.
- The Athenry Heritage Centre provides a starting point for accessing information on the history of the Town Walls and has the potential to become the essential element of a heritage hub, possibly in conjunction with the Castle.
- An integrated strategy for the interpretation of all the heritage assets in Athenry would be essential to ensure the understanding and value of each element and the town in its entirety.
- Specific events could be developed or added to that are appropriate and complementary to the heritage of the Town Walls/town.
- Greater links with IWTN and the Walled Towns Friendship Circle could increase the profile of Athenry.
- Any information/interpretation facilities would need to include foreign languages.
- A Heritage Pack for residents could promote knowledge of and interest in the Town Walls.
- An Information Pack for visitors could similarly promote knowledge of interest in the Walls/town and give visitors access to all available features/assets.

8.8 Ecology/Green Spaces

Whilst of low significance (given a lack of designated sites and no rare or protected species) the flora on the Walls is visually important to soften the appearance of the walls – although a balance needs to be achieved that softens the visual appearance without affecting the stability of the Walls.

Vulnerabilities:

- The growth of deep-rooting vegetation or weeds either on/in the Walls, or near the base of the Walls presents a threat to the stability of the Walls, particularly the wall-facing.
- Limited green space/associated facilities (such as toilets and seating) exist in Athenry so it is vital to preserve the spaces beside the Castle and the Priory.

Opportunities:

- The zone of archaeological potential/setting of the Town Walls has been largely retained and could be managed for both defined access to the Walls/walks around the Walls, for increased provision of green space and for habitat maintenance.
- The Walls are potentially bat roosts and this possibility could be further explored, perhaps through local interest groups.
- Owners of land abutting the Walls could be given guidance on the prevention of weeds with detail on how to care for the Walls. This could assist the maintenance of the Walls and also involve the community and so encourage local responsibility for the Walls.

9. POLICIES

9.1 Introduction

The primary objectives of the policies are to:

- To maintain and enhance the historical, cultural and environmental significance and values of the Town Walls
- To provide for the security, maintenance, access to and interpretation of the Walls
- To ensure that any work is based on a full understanding of the impact of proposals on the significance and historic character of the Walls
- To improve public appreciation of the Walls without diminishing their significance
- To enhance the economy and social well-being of Athenry and the wider community
- To form part of the wider national and international walled town heritage, sharing good practice, skills and expertise

The objectives and policies have been categorised under specific themes and include general recommendations and others that are feature specific. The themes are:

- Ownership, Protection and Management
- Setting
- Inspection, Maintenance and Repair
- Natural Environment
- Research and Resources
- Access, Interpretation and Learning
- Health and Safety.

9.2 Conservation Philosophy

The basic philosophical principle for this conservation and management plan is that the Town Walls should benefit from a conservation programme designed to secure their future stability. This means that the Town Walls should be managed to maximise local and visitor enjoyment with increased understanding and appreciation of the value of the Walls; that preservation and conservation of the historic fabric of the Walls is of paramount importance; with local community involvement and visitor awareness fundamental to providing a sense of ownership and increasing the usage of the Walls.

Whilst it is recognised that the preservation of the existing walls is immense and costly, it is the aim of this plan to address how any funds should best be spent, to prioritise particular areas or types of repair/maintenance and to adopt a strategic approach to repairs. The amount of funding available will probably be the driving force behind many decisions, but it is recommended that any work commissioned is carried out to best practice conservation standards, even if this limits the extent achieved, rather than attempting to tackle all areas simultaneously with a resultant loss of quality. The maximum effort should be made to raise funds and carry out repairs now, since the cost will inevitably increase exponentially with time, as the defects increase in size and become more difficult to rectify.

A thorough understanding of the context, construction, materials, defects, vulnerability and significance of the Town Walls is required of those leading any conservation works and also that this is passed on in a relevant way to those carrying out the work.

Key policies should involve regular inspection, timely maintenance and appropriate repair and include.

- All professionals employed should be familiar with the causes of decay, so that this is remedied by an appropriate method of repair, rather than just treating the symptoms. All repairs should be undertaken and supervised by those with appropriate expertise, craftsmanship, skills and respect for the historic fabric.
- Minimum intervention and disruption to the historic fabric of the Walls including the core and facework is considered good conservation practice. However, the overall stability of the Walls and safety to the public and those working on the Walls should always be considered.
- Good conservation practice deems that, where possible, repairs should be reversible. All modifications should be thoroughly recorded, before and during the works.
- Where possible all repairs should be carried out on a like-for-like basis; materials should, where possible, closely match the existing materials to preserve appearance and information on how the structure was originally constructed. Stone can be matched by petrographic testing to that currently available from working quarries.
- The sampling of existing mortar is generally used to form the basis of the specification of mortar for repointing and repairs. The existing mortar mix is likely to be very variable in content/properties, so sampling needs to be carried out in a number of locations and positions along the Walls, to be useful.
- The priority for repair work should be areas which are in danger of collapse, but it is also important to prevent further damage from ongoing problems, such as ivy and water ingress. Other factors, such as visibility and significance should also determine the priority of repairs.

9.3 Ownership, Protection and Management

Key Issues:

- Lack of clarity on legal ownership of the physical fabric of the Walls
- Lack of clarity on who is responsible for the care and maintenance of the Walls
- Need for a single point of contact related to the protection and management of the Walls.

Objectives:

- To define responsibility for the Walls
- To define the care, maintenance and management of the Walls
- To provide a framework within which all bodies with responsibility can operate
- To ensure the survival and authenticity of the built and archaeological heritage of the Walls
- To conserve, enhance and record the built and archaeological heritage within current international and national conservation guidelines.
- To ensure the appropriate and sustainable use and adaptation of structures and areas that form part of the historic environment which contribute to the overall significance of Athenry
- To facilitate the understanding of the historic environment, setting and context of the Walls
- To ensure the survival of *in situ* archaeological deposits.

Policies:

POLICY MAN01: Ownership of the physical fabric of the Town Walls will be defined and a management plan agreed with the owners of the land on either side of the Walls (including the zone of archaeological protection) to enable an effective regime for maintenance, inspection and repair of the Walls.

POLICY MAN02: An agreed strategic vision for the Walls between all partners and stakeholders will be developed.

POLICY MAN03: An appropriately qualified and experienced 'Walls Project Manager' or single point of contact will be appointed to ensure sustainable resources are available for the management of the Town Walls. This person will have responsibility for managing the Walls, undertaking and co-ordinating projects directly relating to the Walls including all aspects of use, conservation, interpretation, development, consultation and community involvement to achieve the strategic vision. This person will also ensure that the best interests of the monument are taken into account at all times and that the protection and enhancement of its cultural significances are adequately provided for.

POLICY MAN04: All decision makers will have regard for any impact to the Town Walls, their context and setting in respect to all development and planning initiatives. All decision makers will adopt and implement a strong, cohesive role to achieve this objective. Any proposals for works associated with the Town Walls require Ministerial Consent from the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

POLICY MAN05: A programme of community involvement will be developed which will further strengthen links with the community to ensure that the value of the Walls and the benefits from the use and potential development of the Walls are recognised, supported and enjoyed by local people, engendering a sense of local ownership and pride.

POLICY MAN06: Develop a programme of training for local volunteers to develop and learn appropriate skills in order that they can assist with the management, maintenance and use of the Town Walls, especially where they already have experience in a specific area.

POLICY MAN07: Parties involved with the management of the Walls will strive for the inclusion of all stakeholder and community voices in the use, management and conservation of the Walls.

POLICY MAN08: Promote a close working relationship between all professionals involved with the Town Walls to foster an integrated approach to site management, use and development that includes research, conservation, archaeology, management, interpretation of the Town Walls and associated features.

POLICY MAN09: Recognise and support the continuing need for resources to ensure the appropriate management, use and development of the Town Walls, including:

- Skills and training
- Facilities
- Time
- Financial

POLICY MAN10: During and following any development process develop a range of mitigation strategies to combat current and potential issues relating to anti-social behaviour in conjunction with initiatives for the town, looking to combine physical measures and community initiatives.

POLICY MAN11: Where parts of the Town Walls, associated structures and setting, are not in public ownership, Galway County Council will work towards achieving a co-ordinated approach to management and the adoption of the Conservation Plan by all parties, supported by the DoEHLG.

POLICY MAN12: Where the Town Walls are in public ownership (for instance the North Gate), there will be a presumption against the disposal or sale of any land parcels or structures related to the Town Walls.

POLICY MAN13: There will be a presumption in favour of retaining and conserving *in situ* all buildings, historic structures and archaeological sites where they are of significance or value and contribute to the character of the Town Walls. There will be a presumption against demolition of any of the structures or features on site, including the creation of new openings in the Town Walls.

POLICY MAN14: All works to the site will be based on a sound understanding of the site and its significance. Prior to any works being undertaken a full understanding of the setting, views, features and structures to be affected will be achieved through a comprehensive programme of research and recording.

POLICY MAN15: The protection of the Town Walls' invaluable archaeological and historical resource will be ensured by allowing archaeological investigation only where this is deemed to be necessary, justifiable and appropriate and where such work will contribute to a better understanding of the monument and/or the town. Any work must be in accordance with an explicit research framework.

POLICY MAN16: In no circumstances shall any archaeological work be allowed without agreed and approved provision for research, recording, analysis, publication and archiving. Copies will be stored with the National Monuments Service.

POLICY MAN17: Any intrusion to the historic fabric will pay particular attention to preserving pieces of archaeological evidence relating to the Town Walls and associated townscape setting. This should help prevent the cumulative loss of features and retain the character and setting of the Town Walls and historic Athenry.

POLICY MAN18: Reconstruction *in situ* is appropriate only where a feature is incomplete through damage or modern alteration, and only where there is sufficient documentary evidence to reproduce an earlier state of the fabric. Reconstruction will only be considered in order to stabilise a feature, or if there is a clear case that understanding, interpretation and safety will be significantly enhanced. Any such reconstruction work will be fully documented.

POLICY MAN19: There is a presumption against removal of materials from their historic location. This requires consideration in favour of repair rather than replacement.

POLICY MAN20: New uses for historic structures (for example, towers and gates) will be encouraged only where they respect the authenticity, cultural values, values relating to the natural environment, associations, meaning and sustainability of the Town Walls and historic Athenry. Such uses will require minimal alteration to the fabric and ensure a sustainable future for the structures. The character of the Town Walls and historic Athenry should be reflected or acknowledged in the future use of the structures. Preference will be given to uses that:

- are sympathetic to the public enjoyment of the Town Walls;
- provide demonstrable economic and social benefits to the site and local community;
- and contribute to the cultural or natural significance of historic Athenry.

POLICY MAN21: Existing and future occupiers (owners and leasees) will be obliged to adopt the conservation management plan and its policies in full. It is recommended that an illustrated, non-technical summary of key aspects, constraints, responsibilities and benefits be produced and provided to all owners and occupiers.

POLICY MAN22: Full support will be given where opportunities are identified for the minimisation of the physical impact and pollution of traffic on the monument and all options explored to mitigate any perceived negative outcomes of these opportunities in order to achieve implementation.

POLICY MAN23: During any site works including research, repairs and development, information and interpretation will be provided to explain what is happening and to increase understanding and promote interest in the Town Walls.

POLICY MAN24: The Implementation of the Wall maintenance plan will take into account ecological factors.

9.4 Setting

Key Issues:

- Obstruction or compromise of key views of the Town Walls from outside and within.
- Lack of clarity of line of walls and gates.
- Little sense of entering through former gates and loss of distinction in character between outside and within the Walls.
- Inappropriate scale and character of some buildings in the vicinity of the Walls.
- Insensitive signage and visual clutter compromising the setting of the Walls.
- Lack of green spaces.

Objectives:

- To modify or remove inappropriate features or structures which compromise the setting of the Walls.
- To protect the environs of the Walls from inappropriate further development.
- To reveal the line of the Walls where this has been obscured or lost.
- To mark the positions of the former gates and to strengthen the character difference on entry into the town.
- To remove or ameliorate unnecessary 'visual clutter' from the setting of the Walls
- To define and provide increased green spaces for quiet recreation.

Policies:

POLICY SET01: The visual setting of the Town Walls will be presented to the highest possible standard, commensurate with the historic importance of the Town Walls themselves. This will involve:

- Reaffirmation of the zone of archaeological potential and the buffer zone associated with the Walls so that the visual setting, archaeological and structural sensitivity of the Walls are protected.
- Through the Development Management process and otherwise, encourage development adjacent to the buffer zone of appropriate character in relation to height, form, materials and location.
- Encouragement of the removal of detrimental elements – such as the silos adjacent to the South-East Tower, overhead wires, and signs or features which may be superfluous / over-large / or of inappropriate character.
- Negotiation with appropriate statutory authorities, service providers, companies or individuals to secure removal, relocation or modification of detrimental elements in relation to the Walls – such as the removal of the modern concrete wall to the west of Spittle Gate and restoration of the original Town Wall in this location.
- Provision of unified, well designed, quality, street furniture, signage, lighting etc (Public Realm Plan).

POLICY SET02: Distant views of the Town Walls (from the approaches to the town) will be preserved clear of obstruction and opportunity sought to increase or enhance these views.

- The key views identified in this conservation and management plan relate to the approach to the Town Walls, and when travelling around the walls the sight lines and areas of sensitivity in relation to views.
- Through planning policy and the Development Management process prevent development within these identified areas.
- Encourage removal or amelioration of the effects of existing detrimental features and vegetation within the areas of sensitivity.

POLICY SET03: As opportunities arise the line of the Town Walls and gates will be further revealed or marked.

- Design and install a paving layout to mark the locations of the former gates (this might consist of a raised band of setts across the road/street corresponding to the wall line with a broader band of complementary but differing stone paving either side.)
- Through planning policy and the Development Management process, encourage the creation of a greater sense of street enclosure on the town side of the gate positions to emphasise the transition from outside to within the Town Walls.
- Develop and implement appropriate ways of marking the line of the Town Wall where it is no longer extant (e.g. in the vicinity of the castle).
- Where the wall structure remains concealed within existing structures (particularly the external face) through Development Management and otherwise seek to enable such wall faces to be revealed (with appropriate conservation work) so as to improve visibility and appreciation of the Town Walls.

POLICY SET04: Publicly accessible green spaces will be developed in order to provide enhanced quiet recreational opportunities and greater appreciation of the Town Walls and their setting. Public ownership or lease of the external areas along the eastern (Gazetteer nos. 11 – 13) and southern (Gazetteer nos. 19 and 20) Town Walls will be sought to improve accessibility to the Walls, protect their setting and the views to and from the Walls.

9.5 Inspection, Maintenance and Repair

Key Issues:

- Lack of regular inspection to identify conservation/repair works required
- Lack of a perceived, identified and clearly promoted point of contact to report damage/repair/conservation needs related to the Town Walls
- Lack of suitable access for inspection, maintenance and repair
- Need to ensure appropriate and sensitive repairs and conservation of the Town Walls.

Objectives:

- To implement an agreed action plan for ongoing maintenance, inspection and repair works
- To develop partnership management of Town Walls and a single, accessible contact point
- To encourage and maintain community involvement, support and interest for the Town Walls
- To utilise skilled personnel and train local people.

Policies:

POLICY REP01: An agreement for access to all areas for inspection, maintenance and repairs will be established, including access across adjacent private land and a procedure for notifying all relevant bodies (including tenants) of the intention to undertake inspections or work. This may include vehicular access where necessary/possible.

POLICY REP02: The implementation of enabling works to provide access, to stabilise or close off any areas deemed unsafe and to remove vegetation to allow initial inspection will be completed. Where areas are considered to be in imminent danger of collapse, a risk assessment will be undertaken. Mitigation may involve either fencing off the area, or installing shoring, or recording and taking down sufficient stone carefully to reduce the risk. Any such stone removed will be stored for reuse. A basic topographic survey will be undertaken to form the basis of repair contracts and a rolling maintenance schedule. The photographic record of the Walls will be completed after removal of vegetation so that annotated views can be used to specify areas for repair.

POLICY REP03: Vegetation and debris will be cleared away from the foot of the walls to facilitate access and inspection, and householders/landowners encouraged to remove materials piled against the foot of the Walls.

POLICY REP04: A regular programme of inspection will be carried out for all the structures that make up the Town Walls - this inspection will consider structural, health and safety, and conservation issues. After the initial inspection of areas previously obscured, it is recommended that this inspection is undertaken on an annual basis for the first three years and quinquennially thereafter.

POLICY REP05: A repair strategy, with priorities based on significance, vulnerability and other relevant factors (such as public access or visibility) will be prepared to ensure an integrated approach between interested disciplines (archaeology, ecology, access, tourism, health and safety etc.)

POLICY REP06: Agreement will be reached on a policy for maintaining existing walls on the line of the Town Walls which are known to be more modern, but which serve to delineate the monument or as a physical barrier (e.g. field boundary)

POLICY REP07: A rolling maintenance plan and regular consultation with stakeholders will be undertaken.

POLICY REP08: Work will be coordinated with and carried out to the same standard / conservation principles as other significant monuments within the area (e.g. Castle and Priory) to ensure an integrated approach.

POLICY REP09: Appropriate craftspeople and professionals will be utilised to carry out / supervise all work. Appropriate professional training will be provided to local volunteers and trainee maintenance staff to ensure their competence in using and working with historic materials. An experienced, competent individual or organisation will be appointed by the Walls Project Manager to supervise any works to the site. A thorough understanding of the context, construction, materials, defects, vulnerability and significance will be demonstrated by those leading the proposed conservation works and this will be passed on in a relevant way to those carrying out the work.

POLICY REP10: Where possible all repairs will be carried out on a like-for-like basis; materials will where possible closely match the existing materials to preserve the appearance and information on how the Walls were originally constructed. Where materials cannot be salvaged from the site and re-used, new materials made in a traditional way will be sourced. Salvaged materials from other sites will not be utilised except when the materials stated above are unavailable. Salvaged materials will only be considered from other sites due for re-development if the use and provenance of such materials is known and recorded. It is recommended that a secure materials store is located and maintained within easy access of the town.

POLICY REP11: Signs of movement in structures will be monitored carefully over at least 12 months to establish whether movement is 'historic' or current. Where movement is confirmed as a structural problem, the cause of the movement will be remedied before carrying out remedial action.

POLICY REP12: All minor vegetation on or near to the Walls will continue to be removed as part of the regular maintenance programme. Such removal will be carried out by hand picking without disturbing the masonry. A cut back and programme of eradication of the ivy and any other vegetation with root systems inside the Walls using suitable herbicide treatments will be commenced. If necessary sections of the walls will be dismantled to remove large root systems within the wall core and the wall then reinstated using appropriate mortar.

POLICY REP13: Appropriate mortar mixes and other materials will be used for all works relating to the Walls. Mortar will be sampled to enable better specification of mortar mix for repairs. Where hard cement mortar exists it will be removed during repair works only where it can be removed without damage to the Walls. Where pinning or other structural intervention is used, only non ferrous materials will be used.

POLICY REP14: Minimum intervention and disruption to the historic fabric of the walls including the core and facework is considered good conservation practice. However, the overall stability of the wall and safety to the public and those working on the Walls should always be considered. Carefully consolidate all exposed areas of corework in situ, unless the wall's overall stability requires rebuilding of facework. Repair in full any areas recently collapsed or taken down. Where possible, repairs should be reversible. All modifications should be thoroughly recorded, before and during the works.

POLICY REP15: A programme of protection to the wall tops, replacing existing mortared capping and capping unprotected areas will be implemented.

POLICY REP16: Reduction of ground levels, where these have been artificially raised in recent years, will be sought and water encouraged to drain away from the Walls. The fosse will be cleared of debris and dumped material, under archaeological supervision.

POLICY REP17: A programme of repointing and galleting, to improve stability, reduce fabric loss and reduce climbing on the walls will be implemented.

9.6 Natural Environment

Key Issues:

- Lack of accessible information on fauna/floral related to the Town Walls
- Lack of awareness and understanding of the natural environment associated with Athenry and the Town Walls.

Objectives:

- To ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, context and setting of the Town Walls
- To manage the landscape in a way that sustains the natural environmental significance of the Town Walls and environs
- To document and understand the natural environment of the Town Walls and environs
- To encourage awareness of the environment of the Town Walls and environs.

Policies:

POLICY ENV01: All environmental criteria will be given full consideration in the design and implementation of future works and projects.

POLICY ENV02: Any proposed development adjacent to the Town Walls and other historic structures in Athenry will consider the potential for bats and undertake appropriate surveys in advance of any development.

POLICY ENV03: Opportunities for appropriate pruning of existing trees and cutting back plant growth on and adjacent to the Town Walls will be undertaken to increase public views and appreciation of the Walls.

POLICY ENV04: All employees, suppliers, contractors and tenants will meet national standards of environmental awareness and performance.

POLICY ENV05: Projects will be supported and implemented to achieve the enhancement of the environmental aspects and biodiversity of the Town Walls and their setting.

POLICY ENV06: Visitor management techniques will be employed to combat any visitor erosion issues and those arising from increased future visitor numbers.

POLICY ENV07: Any alterations or development that will impact on the context or setting of the Town Walls, including impacts on views of and from the Town Walls will be in accordance with the policies set out in this conservation and management plan and will be considered only where they are appropriate in terms of scale, character, materials, quality of design and impact on the significance of the Town Walls. The desire to open up views and create new links will be equally carefully considered.

POLICY ENV08: Vegetation clearance and tree works (cutting, grubbing and burning or other vegetation removal) will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (1st March -31st August).

POLICY ENV09: Any maintenance works should take into account the sensitivity of the River Clarin. Environmental best practice will be used to minimise the erosion of the river banks.

9.7 Research and Resources

Key Issues:

- Public not fully aware of the heritage resource associated with the Town Walls that would aid their understanding and appreciation of the importance of the town
- Lack of use of existing heritage assets
- Lack of display related to existing heritage resources
- Lack of research facility

Objectives:

- To develop and maintain a single, comprehensive database of research associated with the Town Walls and the town
- To care, store, document and, where appropriate, display any artefacts and archives related to the Town Walls and Athenry
- To increase public access, understanding and appreciation of the collections, archives, artefacts and research associated with the site and its wider context
- To enable a full understanding of all aspects of Athenry Town Walls and their significance

Policies:

POLICY RES01: A comprehensive catalogue or inventory of primary sources relating to the Town Walls will be produced and made publicly accessible in order to increase public awareness, provide educational opportunities and encourage further research.

POLICY RES02: A co-ordinated and prioritised approach to future research will be facilitated through the development of an explicit research framework and agenda, to be developed and approved in association with the Heritage Council, the Irish Walled Towns Network, the Heritage Officer and Conservation Officer at Galway County Council, and other relevant organisations (such as National Monuments Service and Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit of the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government) and individuals.

POLICY RES03: Encouragement, resources and support will be provided for nationwide research regarding historical engineering techniques and practices relating to the construction and adaptation of historic walled circuits and associated structures.

POLICY RES04: Any excavation reports and other research undertaken regarding the Town Walls will be fully published and archived. It is recommended that summary reports are available on the World Wide Web at a suitable portal, for example, the Irish Walled Towns Network and the International Walled Towns Circle.

POLICY RES05: Public access will be provided to information, archives and research relating to the Town Walls. This will include investigating the potential of increasing access through a range of media and technologies.

9.8 Access, Interpretation and Learning

Key Issues:

- Lack of understanding and presentation of the history, environment, development and use of the Town Walls and associated structures and townscape
- Lack of accessibility to Town Walls and other heritage assets individually or as part of a co-ordinated experience

Objectives:

- To provide a comprehensive interpretation plan for the Town Walls and Athenry
- To develop and enhance physical, sensory and intellectual access opportunities in line with local and national policies and good practice
- To enable greater understanding of the history, environment, historical development and use of the Town Walls and associated structures and townscape
- To improve the information provision, orientation and welcome to the site in order to encourage exploration and appreciation
- To ensure a quality experience for all and contribute to Athenry as a special and distinctive place to live, work and visit

Access Policies:

POLICY ACC01: To establish a forward-looking access strategy that considers both physical and intellectual access to the Town Walls and with regard to physical access, to ensure that such access is allowed to publicly accessible structures in accordance with any relevant legislation.

POLICY ACC02: Facilitate the use of sustainable forms of transport (rail, bus, cycling and walking) by providing information regarding using sustainable forms of transport, secure storage, benefits, and links to the public transport system to encourage volunteers, residents, and visitors to use sustainable forms of transport for access to the site and within the town.

POLICY ACC03: Retain and enhance visitor satisfaction with the perception of place, the sense of arrival, welcome and means of circulation around the Town Walls and town, for example by increasing the quantity and quality of orientation and interpretation.

POLICY ACC04: The access to and around the Town Walls will be improved by way of designated walks/trails, signage and appropriate lighting (on and off site). Any lighting provision will consider the issues of environmental impact, privacy and possible encouragement of anti-social behaviour.

POLICY ACC05: The provision of any physical barriers, such as railings, gates will be guided by principles set out in the conservation philosophy and will be implemented in accordance with the policies in this section and the Equality Act (2004).

POLICY ACC06: To provide new views of the Town Walls and town from high points such as the South-East Tower.

POLICY ACC07: To consider the research excavation of a section of the fosse and ramparts to enable a permanent display of how the Town Walls were built and the relationship between the fosse and Town Walls. This will require Ministerial consent and consultation with the DoEHLG. Possible site could be selected along the east/south wall.

POLICY ACC08: To consider the provision of new pedestrian walking circuits around the Town Walls. There are opportunities to develop:

- a central town walk encompassing the northern stretch of wall, castle, priory, heritage centre and market square
- the central town walk and the eastern wall to the South-East Tower
- a complete circuit of the outside of the walls.

Interpretive and Learning Policies:

POLICY ED01: A comprehensive interpretation plan will be prepared that will interpret the Town Walls and the history and development of the town.

POLICY ED02: Interpretive provision will be holistic, through inclusion of the history, natural history, social and cultural histories of the Town Walls and extend beyond the formal site 'boundary' to provide insight into the wider context of the Walls, town and setting.

POLICY ED03: Initiatives will be developed to enable and encourage access for all and lifelong learning.

POLICY ED04: Intrusive development relating to interpretation, outreach or education, permanent public art and fixed on site interpretive media such as graphic panels will be kept to a minimum except where they enhance the character or understanding of the Town Walls and are introduced under guidance of the policies set out in this section.

POLICY ED05: Schemes will be implemented to develop new audiences and links with local groups and schools. Resource packs could be provided giving information as a teaching aid for both teachers and families.

POLICY ED06: A wide range of interpretive and communication media will be considered in order to appeal to and reach a wide range of audiences and their needs. Such media and methods might include: the provision of an interpretation facility, events, printed materials, audio guides and other sensory media.

POLICY ED07: There will be a training scheme for local guides to build local skills and capacity and increase understanding of the Town Walls and their setting.

POLICY ED08: Interpretation will be provided at the entry points to the town and at key locations along walks/trails that interpret the Town Walls and the townscape. The route(s) of trails will be clearly signposted.

POLICY ED09: Interpretative media will recognise the importance of and utilise any brand guidelines which may be established to promote the special qualities of historic Athenry.

POLICY ED10: Partnerships will be encouraged between individuals and organisations in order to facilitate greater effectiveness and integration of promotion of the special qualities of Athenry.

9.9 Health and Safety

Key Issues:

- Any improved access to the Town Walls needs to incorporate Health and Safety considerations Galway County Council's Health and Safety Policy for public open spaces, bearing in mind the special character of the Walls and the hazards they present.

Policies:

POLICY HS01: A Health and Safety risk assessment will be carried out by a competent person, taking into account varying lighting conditions, weather conditions and the abilities of users. The survey will then be updated at regular intervals and particularly following any changes to any of the key factors influencing risk.

POLICY HS02: Any remedial works will be undertaken to mitigate risk in accordance with recognised Health and Safety legislation.

9.10 Discussion Relating to Policies

9.10.1 Use of Professionals and Craftspeople

Appropriate professional consultation will be necessary for individual projects and to develop detailed schedules of work. Relevant bodies and organisations that must be consulted include: DoEHLG, Galway County Council (the Heritage Officer, the Conservation Officer, etc.) The Heritage Council and the Irish Walled Towns Network.

All archaeological works, buildings conservation and ecological works should be undertaken by suitably qualified professionals with demonstrable previous experience in all aspects of the required on-site investigation, conservation and recording. The use of inexperienced or amateur workers can cause irreversible damage to the historic fabric, as can well intentioned restoration. Well meaning restoration can contribute to increasing damage to the site and can only be undertaken if DoEHLG approval has been sought and guidelines followed.

Any person who undertakes or commissions work on the Town Walls must have Ministerial Consent understand the difference between conservation and restoration and always aim to achieve conservation of the asset. Appropriate crafts and professional workers / training will include:

- A conservation architect to design and specify the use of lime mortars, lime wash and plaster where appropriate
- An archaeologist for all intrusive work to structures or below ground
- A structural surveyor, with training in building conservation, for monitoring cracks and other structural issues
- A stone mason experienced in dealing with historic buildings for selecting, cutting and piecing in new stonework
- Environmental experts for issues relating to the natural heritage of the Walls.

The training and development of local people in support of works to the Walls is to be encouraged and supported provided this is under close professional direction.

9.10.2 Research and Understanding

It will be necessary to continue to work towards detailed archaeological/historical/architectural survey and a history of the structures to firmly establish an understanding of the use and chronology of the Town Walls. This will influence future significance assessments, interpretation policies and management strategies and works. DoEHLG, The Heritage Council, OPW, the Galway County Council Heritage and Conservation Offices and other archaeological stakeholders will be able to assist with the development and approval of a research framework in advance of any archaeological works.

9.10.3 Nature Conservation

The commissioning of bat surveys in advance of works avoids inadvertent committing of an offence and minimise the risk of delays should bats be discovered during works.

The maintenance and vegetation clearance works should be undertaken at the times of year that will not impact upon the flora/fauna (such as the bird nesting season).

The management and enhancement of the environmental aspects of the Walls and their setting might include:

- Introducing locally native / locally sourced wildflower and grass mix to add colour and increase invertebrate diversity with scope for involving community groups in the project. This should be complemented with mowing and maintenance programmes that would promote biodiversity and succession (eg. mowing of wildflower areas once a year after flowering in the autumn).
- Protection of areas where locally or nationally rare species occur.
- Vegetation on walls retained where practicable.
- Erection of bird and bat boxes in suitable locations by competent persons.
- Creation of areas to improve local biodiversity such as log piles, areas of rank grassland and nettles, where appropriate.
- Trees should be retained where practicable with a balance achieved between nature conservation and conservation of the Walls.

9.10.4 Visitor and Site Management

In relation to visitor management and increasing access some physical development may be appropriate, provided that any development is planned and implemented in accordance with the policies in this Plan.

Mitigation strategies that combat anti-social behaviour may include: monitoring and identification; 'wall wardens'; employment and training opportunities; social inclusion initiatives and lighting.

Salvaged materials from other sites will not be utilised as this can encourage the unnecessary stripping or demolition of historic structures in order to supply the architectural salvage market. Exceptionally, salvaged materials could be considered from other sites due for re-development, provided that the use and provenance of such materials is known and recorded.

9.10.5 Involvement of Local Communities

There are many opportunities for engaging local communities with the maintenance, management and use of the Walls. Appropriate training can be provided to increase the skill sets available from volunteer workers. For example:

- Recording prior to works could provide opportunities for the involvement of local community groups under the supervision of an experienced archaeologist or buildings conservator
- The provision of information and interpretation during any site works and development, to explain what is happening and increase understanding. These works, especially archaeological investigation, can often provide unexpected benefits with regard to increased awareness and community support
- Management, conservation works and maintenance of the Walls and their setting under the supervision of an appropriately qualified person.

9.10.6 Physical Barriers

The provision of physical barriers or items relating to physical safety in relation to the use of the Walls, would, in an ideal world, be restricted to the provision of warning notices and reliance on common sense. However, the current compensation culture dictates that these issues must be explored and guidance provided for best practice. Consideration of the design and development of physical barriers, in consultation with local disability groups should be undertaken.

10. IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

10.1 Introduction

This plan has summarised an understanding of the Town Walls, their significance, issues of vulnerability and has outlined a management framework to ensure the conservation of the significant and vulnerable elements of the Walls with the aim securing the future of the Walls and promoting their understanding and appreciation by both the local community and visitors.

The completion of this plan however is only the first step in a long-term process and successful implementation will depend on:

- Acceptance by stakeholders of a common understanding of the Walls, their significance, vulnerabilities, potential opportunities and suitable policies
- Undertaking of actions as required
- Allocation/determination of resources to implement the plan
- Periodic review of the plan and implementation process.

10.2 Adoption

The conservation and management plan will be formally accepted by Galway County Council and endorsed by the Heritage Council and it should be accepted in its entirety. Methods of implementation to achieve the objectives of the plan may vary in detail from this document but will be undertaken in line with the policies and with the prior agreement of the stakeholders.

10.3 Action Plan

In order to provide an action plan for the implementation of the conservation and management plan the following table sets out the actions, related to the policies they action, and prioritised into three categories:

- Category A : Policies to be implemented in the next year
- Category B: Policies to be implemented in the following 2-4 years
- Category C: Policies to be implemented 5 years and beyond.

Priority	Policy	Action	Responsible Body
A	MAN01	Develop a management plan. This will involve stakeholders and by establishing a regime for maintenance, inspection and repair of the Town Walls, will safeguard the Walls for the future.	Galway County Council
A	MAN02	Develop a strategic vision, integrating the management plan with maintenance and interpretation plans.	Galway County Council
A	MAN03	Appoint a Walls Project Manager as a single point of contact and to ensure sustainable resources are available for the management of the Walls.	Galway County Council
A	MAN21	Develop Information/Heritage Packs for residents and businesses/visitors	Galway County Council
A	SET01	Improve the presentation of the setting of the Walls with the removal of detrimental elements. Liaise with E.S.B. to remove overhead wires.	Galway County Council
A	SET01	Provide a unified design for street furniture, signage, interpretation, bins, lighting etc (by way of a Public Realm Plan)	Galway County Council Galway County Council
A	ENV03	Cut back plant growth to increase views and the appreciation of the Walls	Galway County Council

Priority	Policy	Action	Responsible Body
A	REP05	Develop a repair strategy	Galway Council County
A	REP07	Develop a rolling maintenance plan	Galway Council County
A	REP03	Clear vegetation and debris away from the foot of the Walls to facilitate access and inspection	Galway Council County and property/landowners
A	REP12	Remove any minor vegetation (e.g. ferns, grasses) on the Walls that can be carried out by hand picking and without disturbing the masonry. Cut back ivy and other vegetation (e.g. tree saplings) with root systems inside the Walls and commence a programme of eradication	Galway Council County
A	REP02	Carry out a visual inspection of all areas previously hidden by vegetation and complete the photographic record	Galway Council County
A	REP02	Carry out a topographical survey of the walls	Galway Council County
A	REP02	Where areas of Wall are considered to be in imminent danger of collapse (see condition survey records, Appendix C), carry out a risk assessment. Mitigation may be to fence off the area, or install shoring, or record and carefully take down sufficient wall to reduce the risk, storing the stone for reuse	Galway Council County
A	REP11	Where areas are leaning or bulging significantly, but not considered in danger of collapse, set up monitoring points which can be recorded and monitored over at least one year to confirm movement	Galway Council County
A	REP02	Where individual stones are considered in imminent danger of tumbling, record and carefully take down sufficient stone to reduce the risk and store the stone for reuse	Galway Council County
A	REP13	Sample existing mortar mixes and test	Galway Council County
A	REP08	Sample existing stone, test and locate suitable source	Galway Council County
A	REP07	Identify skills required and any training needed for conservation and repair works	Galway Council County
A	RES02	Develop a research agenda	Galway Council County
A	ED01	Develop an interpretation plan	Galway Council County
B	SET03	Design a demarcation of the position of gateways and the line of the Walls	Galway Council County
B	SET04	Develop green spaces within and around the walled town – the linear park	Galway Council County
B	REP07	Commence training for conservation and repair	Galway Council County
B	REP12	Continue the programme of eradication of ivy and other deep rooted vegetation	Galway Council County
B	REP13	Agree mortar mix and prepare reference sample panels	Galway Council County
B	REP14	Carefully consolidate all exposed areas of corework	Galway Council County
B	REP14	Repair any areas recently collapsed or previously taken down to prevent collapse or damage, as necessary	Galway Council County
B	REP15	Commence a programme of protection to the wall tops, replacing existing mortared capping and capping unprotected areas	Galway Council County
B	REP04	Carry out regular inspections (annually for the first 3 years)	Galway Council County

Priority	Policy	Action	Responsible Body	
B	REP16	Reduce ground levels where these have been artificially raised, and encourage water to drain away from the walls	Galway Council	County
B	RES01	Develop a research database for public access	Galway Council	County
B	ACC04 ACC08	Improve access to and around the Town Walls through designated walks around the walls, signage, interpretation and lighting	Galway Council	County
B	ACC06	Provide new views from and of the Walls and town from high points – such as the South-East Tower	Galway Council	County
B	ED07	Establish a training scheme for local guides	Galway Council	County
C	REP07	Commence a programme of long term cyclic maintenance for items such as inspection, vegetation clearance, repointing, capping and repair	Galway Council	County
C	REP04	Carry out quinquennial inspections and review effectiveness of the maintenance and repair policies	Galway Council	County
C	ACC07	Provide a display of an excavated section of fosse/ramparts demonstrating the association with the Wall	Galway Council/DoEHLG	County

Table 7: Action Plan

10.4 Review periods

The conservation and management plan, together with its implementation, should be reviewed on an annual basis by Galway County Council for the first three years and thereafter every three years.

11. GAZETTEER

The following gazetteer has been designed to form the basis of a database to which further information can be added as more discoveries are made related to the Town Walls and associated sites and features at Atherry.

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National Wildlife (Amendment) Act (2000)

Planning and Development Act (2000-2002)

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www.athenry.galway-ireland.ie

www.athenryheritagecentre.com

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www.environ.ie

www.galway.ie

www.galwaylibrary.ie

www.heritagecouncil.ie

www.heritagedata.ie

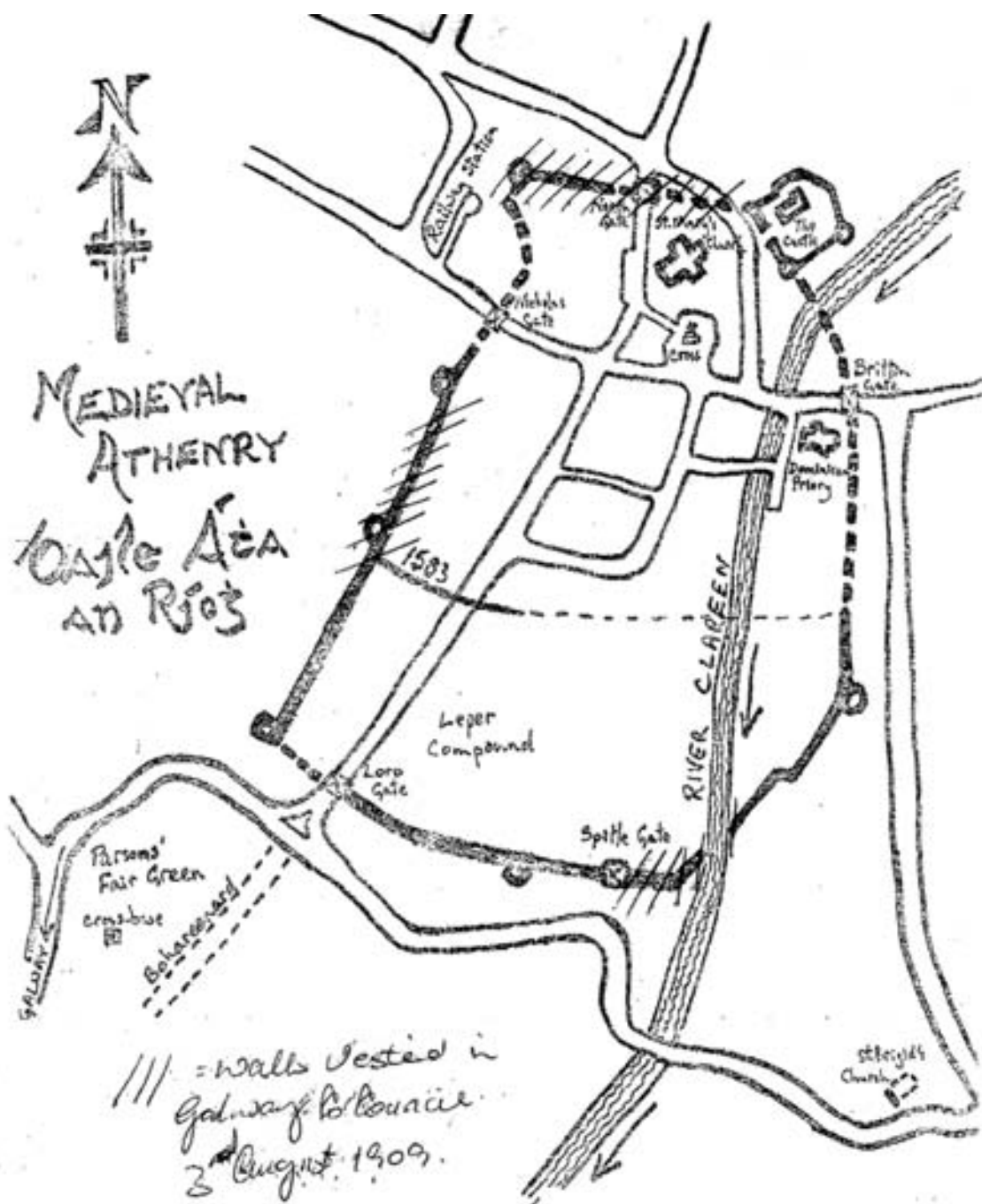
www.heritageofireland.ie

www.homepage.eircom.net/-oreganathenry/history/references.html

APPENDICES

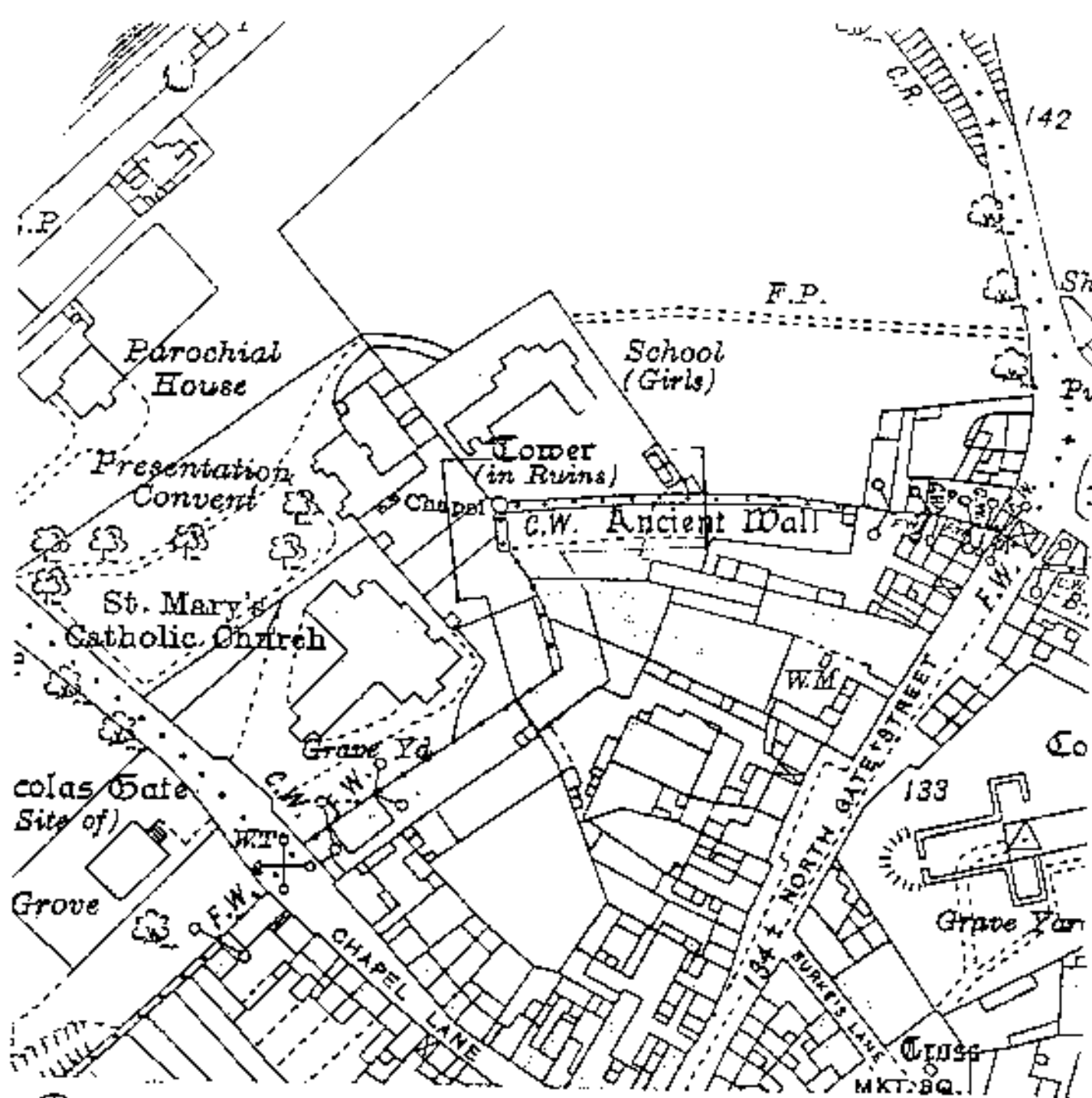
APPENDIX A

Galway County Council Ownership of the Town Walls, 1909



APPENDIX B

National Monument Designation Record



National Monuments and Historic Properties Service

The Office of Public Works

Name TOWN WALL	6" 84	25" 10	Ti 6	414 mmE. 195 mmN
Townland ATHENRY	1/2" 14	Scale 1:1250	Nat. Grid 150187 E 228011 N	
County GALWAY	Area 0.225 ha		Status REGISTRATION	
Note: Coordinates give the central location of the monument. The red line indicates the boundary of the area defined by this map.			Signed J. Woods	Date 20-2-91

(Extract from *Iris Oifigiúil*, 14th July, 1995)

ACHTA NA SEADCHOMHARTHA I NAISÍNTA, 1930 GO 1987
(NATIONAL MONUMENTS ACTS, 1930 TO 1987)

Pursuant to subsection (3) of Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987, the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland hereby GIVE NOTICE that the Monuments specified in the Schedule hereto have been entered in the Register of Historic Monuments.

SCHEDULE
Serial Number 695

Monument	SITUATION		MAP REFERENCES			
	Townland	Parish	County	O.S. 6" County Series Sheet & Plan No.	Eastings (meters)	Northings (meters)
Town Wall	Athenry	Athenry	Galway	B4:10	434	195
						National Grid Co-Ordinates E50187.239011

GIVEN under the common Seal of the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland this 13th day of April, 1995

(L.S.)

PIERCE KENNY
(17)

DUBLIN:

PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE
Wt.—12635.30.7/95 Smurfit Print(59661).G.18.

APPENDIX C
Research Agenda

RESEARCH AGENDA

The following are suggested as a basis for a research agenda related to the Town Walls, Athenry:

1. To explore, through a programme of archaeological investigation, the pre-Anglo-Norman settlement at Athenry. To bring together the evidence from the town and its environs to present a coherent picture of the early settlement form and development and the way of life represented by any artefacts/ecofacts.
2. To clarify the origins of the town and the original line of the Town Walls (especially the northern elements within building lines and the eastern wall to the east of the Priory eastern boundary wall). In so doing to explore how the location of the Walls was determined.
3. To determine the location and extent/survival of below ground remains related to the Town Walls through topographic/radar survey. This includes the external features such as the fosse and ramparts, as well as the gateways and the towers.
4. To determine the degree of survival and quality of any features located through the topographic/radar survey by way of archaeological evaluation/excavation and recording.
5. To undertake a study on the nature of the past environment using topographical and palaeoenvironmental information.
6. To explore further the nature of the interrelationships of the Walls, Castle, Priory and Collegiate Church for additional information on their shared history and the way in which each developed over time.
7. To explore any potential Cromwellian features and to determine the origin and function of the supposed 17th century additions to the Walls at Gazetteer no. 18.
8. To create a single source of information on the Walls/town - including documentary, cartographic and illustrative sources, artefacts and photographs – with digital copies available to all from an access point within a suitable local centre, such as the Athenry Heritage Centre.
9. To identify close parallels in other walled towns and so enable the development of specific links.

The archaeology and history of the Walls has a considerable potential for the development of research links and collaborative work involving universities/colleges/schools and the local community. Indeed much could be achieved using professional direction/supervision of students (through projects/theses) and community groups. The types of research could involve:

- excavation and recording which is research/planning led
- non-invasive surveys
- archival research
- oral history research
- collation of local photographic archive on a database
- presentation/preservation/conservation and recreation of features to provide a fuller understanding of the Walls (for example a section of the Walls with restored fosse and ramparts).

APPENDIX D
Photographic Record

APPENDIX E
Consultation Records

Appendix E1
Steering Group

Appendix E1: Steering Group

1. Ms. Mairin Doddy, (Ms Mairead Ni Chonghaile – acting until end of October 2007) Architectural Conservation Officer, Forward Planning, Galway County Council.
2. Ms. Mary Flynn, Community Planner, Forward Planning, Galway County Council.
3. Ms. Catherine McConnell, Senior Planner, Galway County Council.
4. Mr. Adrian Raftery, Area Engineer, Loughrea Office, Galway County Council.
5. Mr. Michael Sheil Acting Senior Executive Engineer Loughrea Office, Galway County Council.
6. Cllr. Peter Feeney, Ballydavid, Athenry, Co. Galway.
7. Mr. Brian Duffy, Chief Archaeologist, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin.
8. Mr. Hugh Carey, Archaeologist, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Third Floor, The Plaza Offices, Headford Road, Galway.
9. Ms. Heather King, Archaeologist, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin.
10. Ms. Jacqui Donnelly, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin.
11. Mr. Paul McMahon, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin.
12. Mr. Finbarr O'Regan, Carnaune, Swangate, Athenry.
13. Mr. Alan Burgess, Athenry Heritage Centre, Athenry.
14. Ms. Madeline Brody Galway East Tourism/ Athenry Arts and Heritage Centre, Athenry.
15. Professor Etienne Rynne, New Line, Athenry.
16. Mr. Neil Campbell, Galway East Tourism, Old Church Street, Athenry.
17. Ms. Camilla Browne, Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry.
18. Ms. Alison Harvey, The Heritage Council, Kilkenny.
19. Mr. Gerry Ahern, 1 Clarin Crescent, Athenry.
20. Mr. Dermot Monaghan, Ivy Mount, Athenry, Co. Galway.
21. Mr. Paddy Matthews, Fáilte Ireland.
22. Ms. Pauline Gleeson, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dún Scéine, Harcourt Lane, Dublin.
23. Mr. Charles Taylor, Swangate, Athenry.
24. Mr. Tadhg Costello, Swangate, Athenry.
25. Ms. Marie Mannion, (Ms Brid Higgins – acting till end of August 2007 and from January-July 2008) Heritage Officer, Forward Planning, Galway County Council.

Appendix E2
Questionnaire

ATHENRY TOWN WALLS

QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of a study to help protect and care for the historic Town Walls of Athenry a team of heritage consultants led by Gifford need to know your ideas and any concerns. On behalf of Galway County Council, the Heritage Council and the Athenry Walled Town Steering Group these consultants would be very grateful if you would spend a few minutes completing this questionnaire - many of the questions simply require a tick or number in the relevant box.

To include the information you provide in the project we need your response by **26th September 2007**. Please return your completed questionnaire by post or by hand to the Athenry Heritage Centre, The Square, Athenry - a box will be left inside the entrance. If you prefer to respond by e-mail please contact athenry@gifford.uk.com asking for a copy of the questionnaire. If you would like to request a copy of the questionnaire in Irish, Polish or Portuguese then please call at the Heritage Centre.

Section 1: About You - this information will help us gauge the possible markets for ideas related to the use of the walls

Do you live in Athenry? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you have a business/work in Athenry? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you live/work within the Town Walls? Yes ☐ No ☐

Are you an owner ☐ or occupier ☐ of property next to the Walls?

How long have you lived/worked in Athenry (please insert the number of years in the relevant box)?

Lived Worked

For residents - How many people live in your household?

How many in your household belong to each of the following age brackets (please insert the number in each relevant box)?

1-12	<input type="text"/>		
13-17	<input type="text"/>	36-65	<input type="text"/>
18-35	<input type="text"/>	over 65	<input type="text"/>

For businesses/employees –How many days a week do you spend in Athenry?

How many of these days are full days (at least 7 hours)?

Section 2: Your Ideas

Do you know Athenry is a walled town?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know where the Town Walls are?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel you know the history of the Walls?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think the Town Walls make Athenry special?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, why?

.....

Would you like to be able to walk around part of the Town Walls?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Would you like to see the Town Walls preserved?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think that the Town Walls and buffer zone should be in public ownership?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use the Town Walls in any way?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, how?

.....

Below is a list of suggestions used by other towns to learn about and enjoy historic Town Walls - please tick the **3** that would be the most important to you and put an **X** in the box of any that you feel would not be suitable for Athenry.

•	A Town Walls / Town Trail – possibly in the form of a leaflet, signposts, illustrated panels, a sound guide, a mobile phone guide and so on	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	A Town Walls /Town illustrated Souvenir Guidebook to buy	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Guided walks and training of local volunteers to lead walks	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	An annual Town Walls celebration day / weekend or week of events	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Regular schools linked events and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	An improved local history display	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	A Town Walls website with images, downloadable information, a short film and quizzes and games related to the town and its history	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Community arts projects, focusing on the Town Walls and the town's history (aimed at ALL ages)	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Careful lighting of selected and suitable parts of the Town Walls to enhance them at night and for special events	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Seating and picnic areas in sites around the Town Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>

•	Theatrical events in and around the Town Walls using them as a backdrop for productions	<input type="checkbox"/>
•	Other events and activities (such as country markets / antique fairs / book fairs) at sites close to the Town Walls	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please list any other ideas you have for enjoying or improving the Town Walls

.....

.....

Are there any community or visitor facilities you feel would benefit Athenry?

.....

.....

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire, your help is greatly appreciated.

Appendix E3

Analysis of Questionnaire results

Athenry

Question	Yes	No	Unanswered
1	79	17	0
2	40	55	1
3	34	58	4
4*	31	10	62
5	90	6	0
6	87	6	3
7	63	30	3
8	81	13	3
9	82	8	6
10	86	6	6
11	72	16	7
12	17	72	7

Question %	Yes	No	Unanswered
1	82	18	0
2	42	57	1
3	35	60	4
4*	32	10	65
5	94	6	0
6	91	6	3
7	66	31	3
8	84	14	3
9	85	8	6
10	90	6	6
11	75	17	7
12	18	75	7

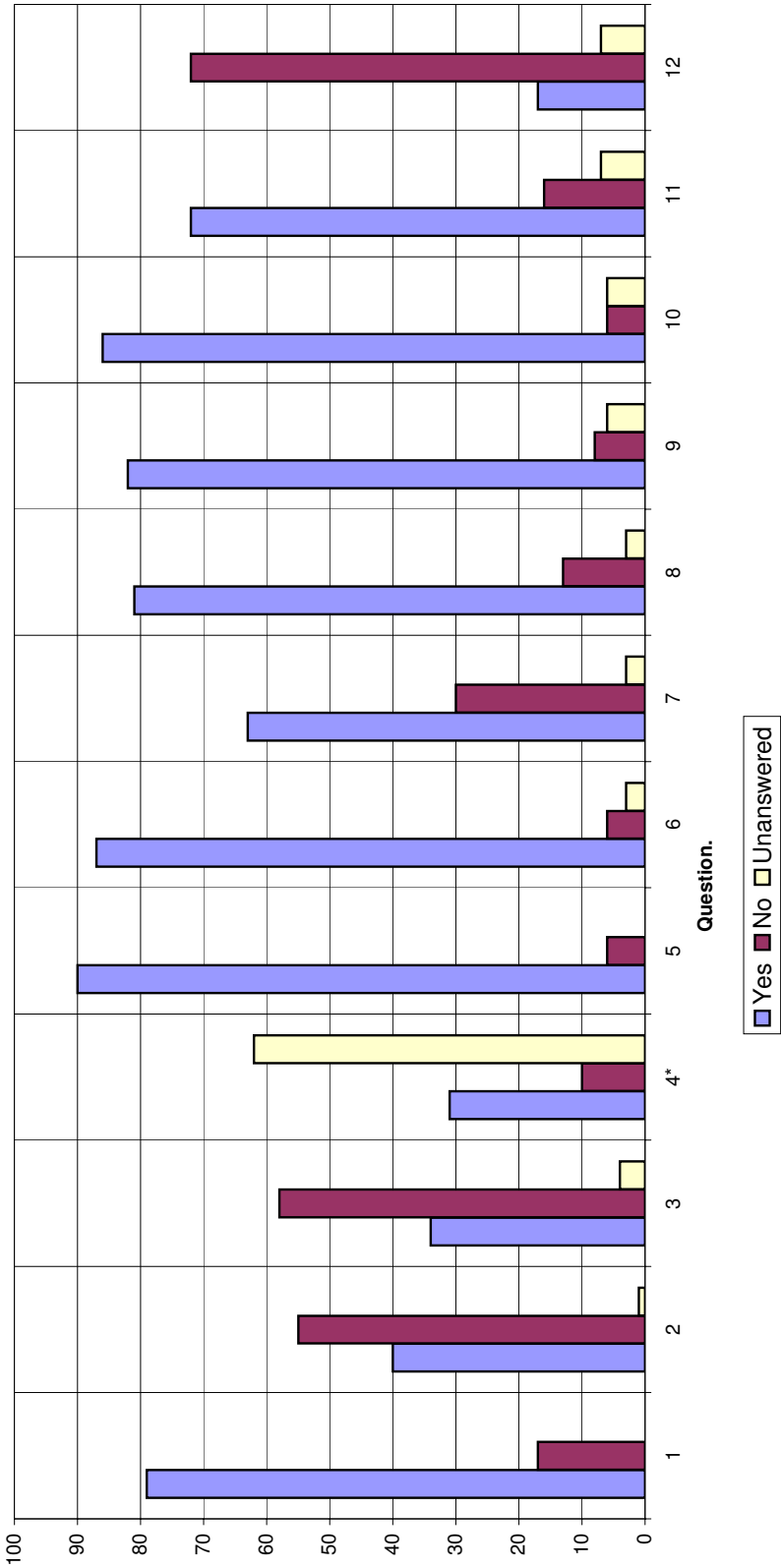
*Insert 'owner' 'occupier' 'Neither' for 'yes' 'no' 'unanswered'

List of suggestions

Suggestion	Tick	Cross
1	42	8
2	24	9
3	35	6
4	19	7
5	22	6
6	17	5
7	14	0
8	4	0
9	37	3
10	19	6
11	8	7
12	14	6

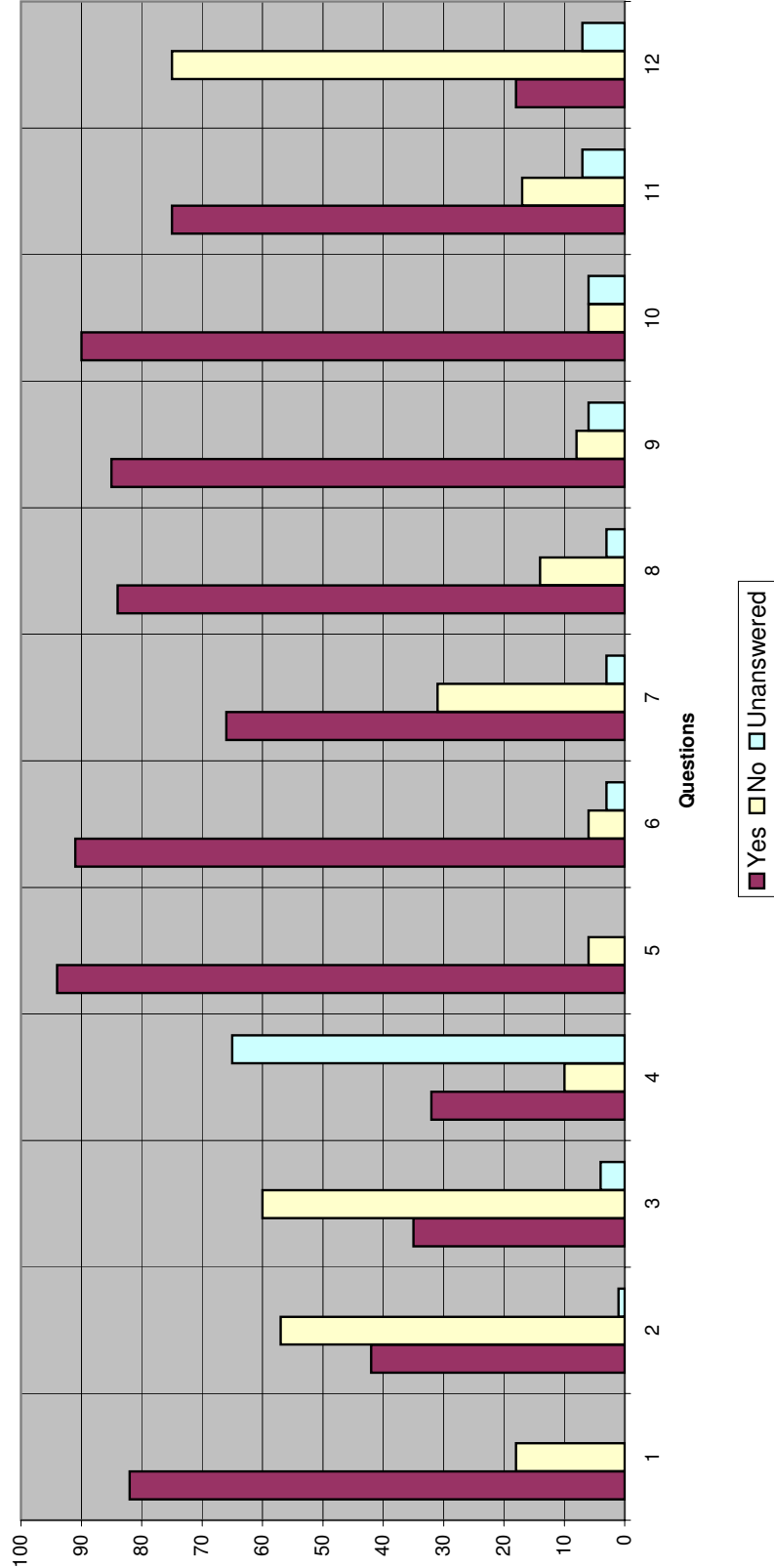
Suggestion %	Tick (109)	Cross (38)
1	16	13
2	9	14
3	14	10
4	7	11
5	9	10
6	7	8
7	5	0
8	2	0
9	15	5
10	7	10
11	3	11
12	5	10

Question Feedback



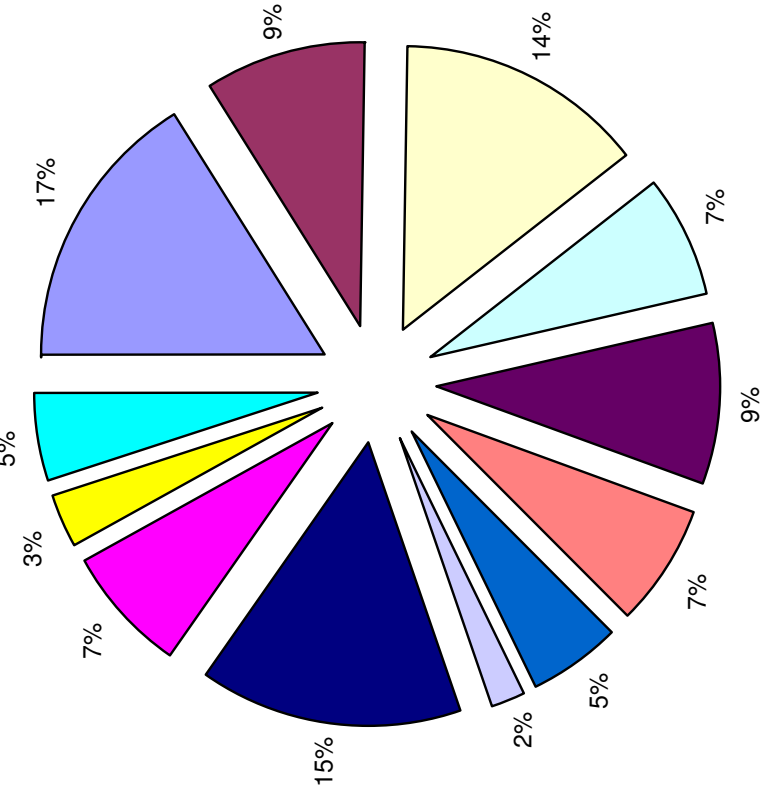
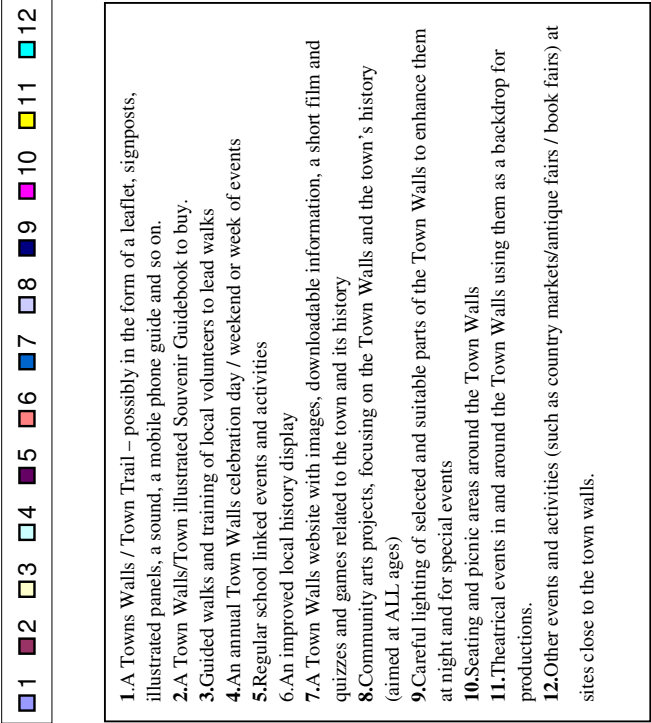
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Question Feedback - Percentage / 40

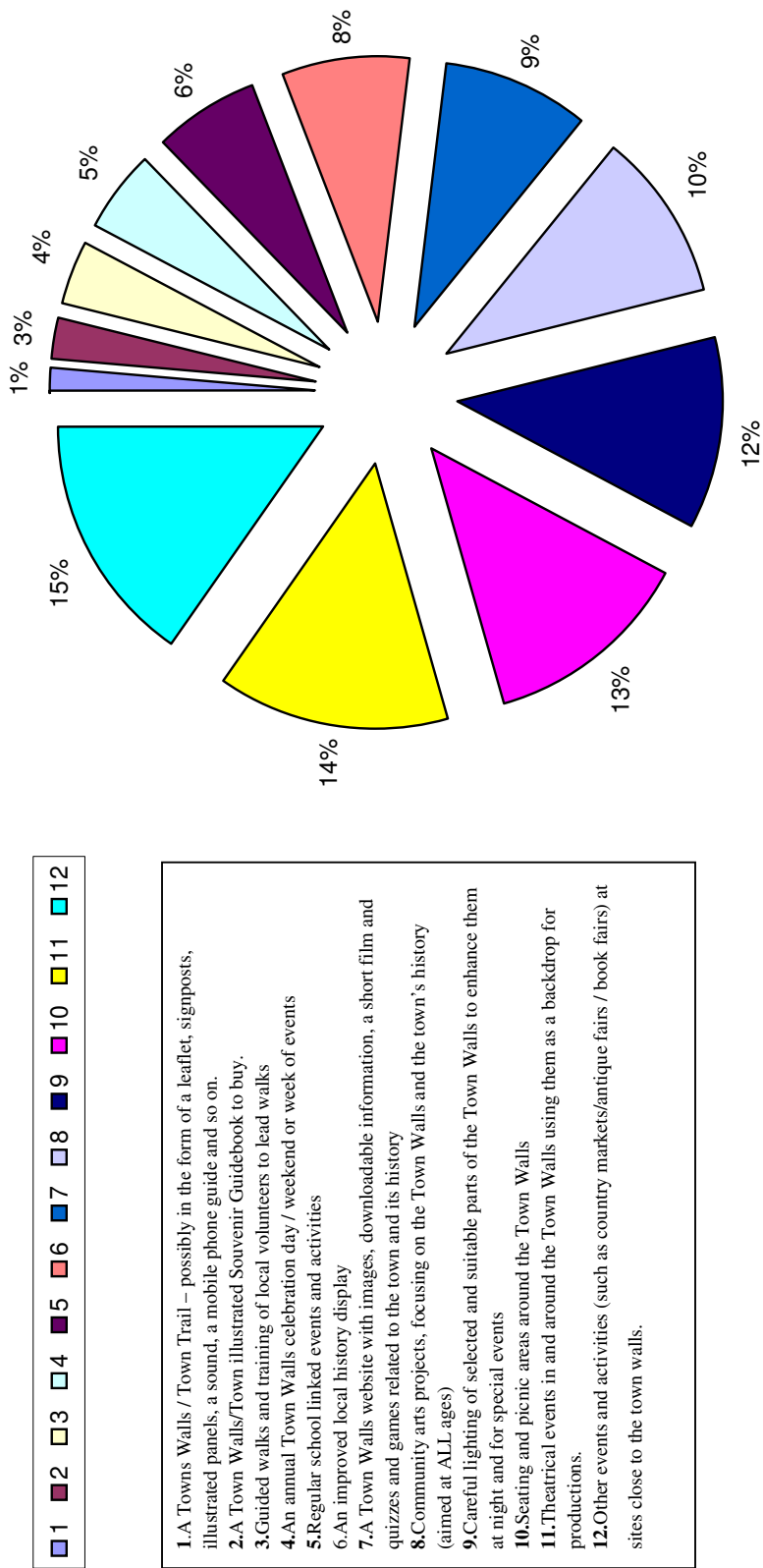


*Insert 'owner' 'occupier' 'Neither' for 'yes' 'no' 'unanswered'

List of Suggestions Percentages - Ticks / 109



List of Suggestions Percentage - Crosses / 38



Appendix E4

Respondants

E.4 Respondants

E.4.1 Consultees

In addition to the Steering Group (given in Appendix E.1) the following contributed to this plan:

- Frank Corby, General Manager, Raheen Woods Hotel
- Paul Gosling, Lecturer in Heritage Studies, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
- Mike Gormley, Dept of Environmental Sciences, Galway County Council
- Elaine O’Riordain, Biodiversity Officer, Galway County Council
- Kevin Rogers – Western Region Fisheries
- Elizabeth Byrne, Galway Bat Group

E.4.2 Questionnaire Respondants (where names given)

- Athenry Vocational School
- Athenry Civil Defence
- Athenry Fire Service
- Cullairbaun Residential Association
- Fahy’s Supermarket, Athenry
- Athenry L.F.A.
- Athenry Agricultural Show
- Canon T. King
- The Gift Centre, Athenry
- Frank Sweeney & Co. Cross Street, Athenry
- Athenry Athletic Club
- Ard Aoibhinn Residential Association
- Athenry Community Council
- Athenry Musical Society
- Athenry Boys’ National School
- Scoil Chroi Naofa, Athenry

Appendix E5
Consultation Summary

E.5 Consultation Summary

1. What is considered special about Athenry and the Town Walls

The Walls - Architectural

- Close-ups of the walls help people to get an idea of the scale of the walls and shows the strength of them too.
- There were wall ramparts prior to the existing walls.
- The walls represent the importance of the town itself.
- Walking the inside of the walls provides an overview of the town and its layout. It also provides a close-up of the walls where the workmanship of the people that built them can be seen.
- The walls encompass more land than most medieval walls.
- The walls of Athenry are not unique - there are other walls like it.
- Stone wall workshops are very popular.

The Walls - Archaeological

- 4 gates were built initially. The 5th was built later. A 6th was discovered last week during the building of a roundabout! There was a small piece in the Irish Times.

The Walls - Landscape

- Contrast of the greenness with the greyness of the stone - builds up a sense of unusual unity.
- The stone walls are part of the landscape - they have a broader setting. This broader setting is a positive thing.

The Walls - Literary

- Local poet Padraic Fallon references the walls in his poems.

The Walls - Local community

- Many town residents have sections of wall attached to their property - like they own a little bit of the wall.
- Local people, especially children, walk on the walls to get around the town.
- Children sit up in the tower at Kenny Park and watch the hurling.
- The walls are still an eminent feature in the town and people can still approach them.
- Athenry, due to its location, has a symbiotic relationship with Galway, which is seen as the kick off point for visits in the area etc. The walls of Athenry are important because of this for defining identity.

The Town - Historical and Geographical

- It is a strategic location as it was the place where people could cross the river.
- It is a crossroads for trade / transport links e.g. railways.
- Significant Norman town.
- In 1235 the walls were built to encompass 69 acres.
- Streetscapes back up to the walls especially on the NW side of the walls - these streetscapes have not changed very much.
- In Athenry different periods of history are still visible - the street layout and size has not changed.
- Compactness of town and streetscape; closeness; unique feel of going back in time - even without the walls.

The Town - Educational

- School groups used to go to the wall by Hanberry's hotel for the best view of the moat and tower from there (the wall is now not structurally safe enough to do this).

2. Current issues regarding the town and its historic walls

Access

- Walls are not accessible currently, for example through set walks.
- There are concerns about the walls being obscured by new developments.
- Most people at present cannot get close to the walls.
- A lot of the walls and historic buildings are not very visible e.g. ivy is concealing them.
- Athenry's greatest asset is its narrow streets. However, these present logistical problems for movement around the town and there are very few street crossings - which creates problems with pedestrians using the streets along with vehicles.
- There are a lot of electric wires in the area outside the walls and these restrict and impair views of the walls.

Marketing

- The walls are not really promoted.
- There is no reference to the walls on tourism web sites.
- Two major events should not be held on the same weekend - the Motor Rally and the Walled Towns celebration..

Development

- There is a necklace of homes around the town and this is strangling it.
- There are not many fields left.
- There is concern that Athenry and smaller satellite towns will be swallowed up by bigger places and will lose their identity e.g. Oranmore.
- New developments that are not respecting the heritage of the town.
- There is a lot of pressure on land use.
- There is a lot of development that is being carried out around Ireland and there are increasing populations in towns - there are 23 new housing estates in Athenry. People need to get access to the town.
- There is a clear area around the outside of the walls, but not on the inside - there is a lot of pressure to develop the area on the outside.
- The Abbey has two town houses built up against the bottom of it because locals lost the battle to prevent this from going ahead. The OPW owns the Abbey, but it is neglected and the gates are left open and it gets vandalised.
- The Council appear to support developers.
- Athenry is off a small road at present. There are plans to enlarge this which will require a ring road around the town, and it feels like there is not a choice about this. If this road development plan doesn't happen then nothing will happen for ages.
- Urban design is all centred around city design and the principles of this are inappropriately applied to smaller towns like Athenry.
- Athenry is becoming a commuter town and it is becoming difficult for it to retain its identity. The development of business parks is exacerbating this.
- Lighting is a problem - Derry has done a good job with their lighting.
- Money has been misdirected and cars and PVC have ruined towns.
- Athenry has not benefited from tourism down the years and it is never going to be a mass tourism destination.

Local Community

- Athenry has developed dramatically over the last 6 years. People that have lived in Athenry for a long time understand the town, but newcomers take the way it is for granted.
- There are a lot of new people living in Athenry who do not know about the history of the town.
- Local people living in Athenry are losing valuable public spaces and resources to new developments.
- Locals with sections of the wall on their land are told not to touch the walls.
- Lack of awareness/ appreciation of walls from locals.

Management

- It feels that heritage in the town is less respected now that it has been in the last 20 years.
- The state of the Abbey is very upsetting - it is neglected.

- Locals did not feel supported when they expressed the need to change plans and developments to protect the newly discovered Loro gate.
- The walls frustrate developers and plans as they get in the way.
- The Community Council only have 11 people on it. The County Council is not representative of the community and yet they make huge decisions about selling off land e.g selling off the community spaces hoping that they will be able to get a new ones built at a later date.
- The OPW were seen as the watchdog for heritage, but this has changed over last 3 years and they appear less concerned with heritage.
- In 1998/99 the County Council attempted to put a road inside the walls. This was fought by the community and they got European groups involved.
- The square in the centre of town was cobbled last year, but now they also have car parking on it. 4th bookies in the town was allowed to take a shop on the square beside the heritage centre and a funeral parlour - it has a bright shop front and often has lots of people smoking outside it, with children going to the heritage centre having to walk through the smoke.
- There is a need to get planning to respect the heritage.
- A concern that there will not be funds to develop public access to outside and inside the walls.
- Only certain areas of the wall should be developed for public access - due to limited funds and because the wall runs past private property and public access could create problems for privacy and liability for landowners.
- The development of the paved square in Athenry was a great opportunity to open up public spaces - those working on it did not want cars parking on top of it, but priorities are given to parking spaces in the town.
- Apparent lack of awareness/ appreciation of the walls from the authorities.
- Collective ownership and shared responsibility is very important - leading to protection.
- Work together in partnership - not just council and not devolving responsibilities.
- Partnership approach needs to be ingrained.

Interpretation

- There is very little remote information about the walls.
- There are very few places for coaches to park and some groups have actively stopped coming because of this.
- There used to be a medieval festival in the town (on the 15th August for 9 + years). This was run by the Women's group with battles, horses, jousting, and catapults. But there was not enough funding and human resources to continue it.
- Connectivity between the walls and town could be lost/ not easily assimilated.

3. Key opportunities regarding the Town Walls

Access /awareness

- Raising awareness of the walls - a practical way of doing this would be to light up the walls.
- Make the walls more visible for both locals and visitors.
- For local people / organisations to buy up green spaces or to be assured that green spaces and public spaces around the town are safeguarded for public use.
- There is no tourist map at the railway station.
- Athenry has no easy access for international visitors. This is changing with increased flights to Shannon which open up opportunities for weekend breaks etc.
- Change the perception of the significances of Athenry e.g. encourage people to see that the walls are comparable to York, Derry, Dubrovnik and Chester.
- Showcasing Athenry as a quality destination - build on brand strengths.
- Capacity buildings of promotion/ marketing and destination.
- Build on the Heritage Centre investment and on the good will and trust that has build up from projects run by the Centre.

Conservation

- The preservation of the walls - there are hopes that the CMP and Public Realm Plan will address this.
- East Galway Tourism would like to see the restoration and conservation of the walls.

Interpretation

- There needs to be signage about the walls for people to have access to them.
- Tourists are interested in the walls and the history of the town if they can find out about it.
- There are models of the walls in the Heritage Centre - there could be other models around the town for visitors, particularly to demonstrate the moat and internal walkway.
- Build up / reconstruct a section of wall to demonstrate size, internal walkway etc.
- East Galway Tourism are looking at developing walking tours of Athenry and the surrounding area as the walls tell the story of the town - they are part of the history and link up with other buildings in the town. The tours and presentation of the walls could include historical records.
- Develop distinctive signage and interpretation around the town - set up an international competition for this.
- Develop walking tours of Galway.

Education

- Develop the educational use of the town - the wall and other historical buildings demonstrate evidence of change in the town.
- Set up a conservation course for the walls and tie this in with the European network to develop communications and opportunities for working together.
- Educational resource/ value of the walls goes beyond schools - life long learning.
- Run best practice built heritage courses in Athenry.

4. Future Management of the Town Walls

- The town needs to cater for an increasingly multicultural audience e.g. Brazilians, Lithuanians and Polish communities.
- There is a need for greater interpretation around the town -this is particularly important if you are intending to bring more people into the town. However, bringing more people into town will require more parking places, signs and information, which at present is lacking.
- There needs to be greater support from CIE (transport providers). There is a new train link planned for 2008.
- Who owns the walls? There is confusion among people that have the wall on their land about ownership and responsibility towards maintenance of the wall. There are places where the wall is weak, but there is no guide about who should respond to this.
- There are plans to do up the tower by the supermarket.
- There is a walking trail around the town, but the length of the wall is too long for most people who only have around an hour to walk and want to be central to the town - therefore, the route needs some further planning.
- Need to have interpretation around the town, not just printed material from the Heritage Centre.
- The basics need to be sorted out now. Increasing sense that the people that make decisions about the town are not interested in the heritage - they are just hoping that the walls will not crumble away and that the green spaces will be protected.
- When the Heritage Centre was set up it was realised that East Galway was not marketed at all and so Galway East was set up -they have developed walking tours around the area and Athenry's is currently being developed.
- East Galway's selling point is providing a snapshot of Ireland of old. It is important to preserve this.
- There is not much to hold people in the town at the moment - there is a need to develop and support smaller community projects to provide a modern view of area.
- There is a need to develop a clear product for the town and to market this.
- The Raheen Woods Hotel would like to work in partnership with other organisations to promote and support the heritage in the town and raise their profile as part of the tourism offer.
- The network of walled towns is very important for Athenry to be part of, both in Ireland and also the European network, because it gives a wider understanding and support for walled towns and a wider range of towns and cities to compare with.
- Street furniture needs to be unified throughout the town.
- Rural hinterland is a very important consideration when developing plans for Athenry, as the town serves this. Decision making should include the communities in this hinterland.
- Athenry is seen as a dormitory town for Galway. New people are coming into the town and there needs to be encouragement for newcomers to get out into the town.

- Development of East Galway and the ecclesiastical heritage trail would take the pressure off the honeypots.
- There are issues surrounding the roles, responsibilities in this heritage sector e.g. conservation officer. They are demanding jobs and there is little career progression. Therefore it is hard to get people to work and then to stay in the sector.
- Employ a full time person who is responsible for developing and maintaining the walls.

Funding

- Funders include LEADER who support community initiated projects.
- Other funders are Culture Ireland and Galway County Council.
- Hubs and Satellites are the priorities for funding - there is only one satellite in County Galway (Tuam).
- National Walled Town Network and international linkages create funding opportunities.

APPENDIX E6

Public Meeting Summary

Notes from public meeting at Raheen Woods Hotel, 3 October 2007

Market Square

- is a carpark with noise and pollution in the centre of town
- should be the central/focal point
- the entrance to the Heritage Centre is not attractive as a result of the use of the market square
- should be bistro/coffee shops in the square
- needs seating/space
- needs contemporary art

Traffic

- a problem for town
- pedestrianisation needed
- too much parking in town
- too many articulated lorries going through town
- road improvements appear to be for facilitating more lorries
- traffic needs to be encouraged out of town
- Tuam road bridge – safety issues/poor aesthetics
- school bus congestion at the Arch- dangerous/no controlled crossings

Development

- encroachment on the Walls – needs policies from local/county implemented and enforced
- demolition losing character of town
- railway station good
- irregular enforcement of buffer zone
- housing estates – not being finished – so loss of character
- PPP – private developer doing roads in order to access estates
- lack links from the estates to town
- sewage/infrastructure lacking to support new housing/development
- new footpaths should have heritage considerations in design – current lack character – used to have limestone kerbs
- park needed – lack green spaces/sports facilities in town and estates
- need heritage streetscape
- vernacular buildings but with inappropriate windows etc
- need to marry old and new
- how appropriate are apartment blocks to a heritage townscape?
- town identity not well developed – lacks schools/health centres/community centre (though plans in hand)
- make more use of Community Council to further ideas

Recycling

- Needs thought to location of so as to avoid negative impact on heritage townscape

Walls

- a walk around walls would be good
- poor PR for walls
- dirt – lack of sense of respect for Walls - unkempt
- who is responsible for repairs?
- signage poor/confusing – need information boards
- not joined up/lack of heritage atmosphere
- silos destroyed prime vista of walls
- restore views inside and out
- buffer zone green space – ownership uncertain/not maintained/safety concerns
- retain southern wall green space
- do not sterilise walls by removing all greenery – as long as not affecting condition
- supermarket car park with walls/tower – ideal location for reconstruction/

restoration/display/tour and guides

- restore a 50m length
- lack of public toilets/facilities along walls
- walls topped by glass – hostile
- council to remove ambiguity on maintenance etc
- celebrate/mark entrances to the walled town

Heritage centre

- would be good to be used for concerts
- no real feeling for contents/concern for condition of structure

Priory

- could it be developed? or more value as a ruin/green space?
- better access (physical and intellectual) needed.

APPENDIX F
Strategic Review

Appendix F: Strategic Review

The Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2007-2011

The statutory functions of the Heritage Council are to:

- Propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection and enhancement of the national heritage
- Promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage
- Cooperate with public authorities, educational bodies and other organisations and persons in the promotion of the functions of Council
- Promote the coordination of all activities relating to the functions of Council

The Heritage Council recognises that heritage involves people, first and foremost and see that accessibility to, and enjoyment of our heritage by everyone will be key to achieving success.

The Vision for this strategy is to:

'Work in partnership for the conservation of our national heritage through encouraging its accessibility and enjoyment by everyone.'

The Council has developed the following strategic themes:

Strategic Theme 1: Raising Awareness and Appreciation

Policies include:

- To raise appreciation of heritage and participation in heritage-related activities, including promoting awareness of lesser known aspects of history, increasing awareness and participation in Heritage Week and related theme days
- To facilitate access to information on heritage through appropriate media including ICT
- To promote the study of heritage and the use of heritage as a learning tool

Strategic Theme 2: Heritage Research / Surveys, Analysis and Evaluation

Policies include:

- To initiate research in new areas, including reviewing archaeology research needs on a national, regional, county and local level and reviewing the effectiveness of the planning and heritage legislation in protecting the national heritage
- To support ongoing national research and the development of national baselines, including encouraging research initiatives on architectural heritage

Strategic Theme 3: Evidence-Based Policy Advice

- To assess the impacts of conserving and managing heritage
- To develop priorities on heritage management with other bodies and agencies

Strategic Theme 4: Encourage the development of heritage infrastructure at national, regional, county and local level

- To encourage the development of heritage infrastructure at national, regional, county and local levels
- To support initiatives from national, EU, or other international bodies that assist in the creation of heritage infrastructure in Ireland

Strategic Theme 5: Best practice in Conservation and Sustainable Heritage Management

- To promote the sustainable management of our heritage assets
- To promote community involvement in the management of heritage

- To support the organisations, networks and professional institutes that promote best practice and sustainable management of heritage
- To continue to work with international bodies that promote best practice and sustainable management of heritage

Fáilte Ireland Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2013

Tourism in Ireland grew in the 1990s, but since 2001 it has become less competitive. Priorities to ensure that Ireland continues to contribute towards Ireland's economy are:

- To focus on the needs of future consumers
- To respond to the actions of international competitors
- To be in line with market dynamics

This document specifies that support for the tourism product development should be market driven. More investment is needed in tourism infrastructure, and major new events and other tourism products need to be developed, along with integrating existing tourism products. In addition these tourist products need to be communicated and presented to consumers in an easily accessible way.

The vision for Irish tourism is:

'That Ireland will be a destination of choice for international and domestic tourists'

Fulfilling this vision will lead to the Irish tourism industry:

- Achieving growth in market share with a higher yield
- Having a pristine physical environment
- Offering and accommodation product which is diverse in its character
- Having key attractions which entice visitors to Ireland. Delivering a range of authentic experience in a friendly engaging environment
- Attracting investors and staff of the highest quality
- Demonstrating and delivering continuous product innovation
- Making a sustained contribution to the development of the economy
- Respecting and supporting Irish culture in all its diversity
- Providing positive international profile of Ireland

The outcome of this document fall into two areas:

Actions around a broader tourism agenda including:

- Protecting and managing the physical environment including reviewing protected scenic landscapes
- Improving access to cultural heritage.

A series of funding supports including:

- A fund for tourism infrastructure including developing leisure route development (walking and cycling particularly), signposting and controlled access to environmentally sensitive areas
- A fund for a small number of new major annual events
- A fund to create attractions of international class
- A fund to improve communication with visitors. This would also support things like dramatisations of local history.

Ireland's target markets that offer the greatest potential for Ireland are:

Overseas tourism potential

- Sightseers and Culture Seekers
- Family and loved ones
- Relaxers

Domestic tourism

- Child focused
- Nightlifers
- Food and luxury seekers
- Country ramblers

Providing for these target markets will require developing experiential tourism that incorporates active involvement and participation opportunities. One of the priorities for future emphasis is to deliver tourism experiences that are tailored to the needs of the consumer.

Nine main themes have been identified to support this and these include:

- Urban culture including historical attractions, heritage towns and clusters of cultural centres
- Heritage including historic buildings and sites and Irish language and culture. Ireland's historic cities and towns will become increasingly important to tourism as visitors continue to travel to urban areas for short breaks. As well as having high heritage values and providing a popular attraction in themselves, historic quarters (such as medieval quarters) also provide a backdrop for other activities and events. A strong tourism product is Ireland's cultural and historical heritage. A priority for developing attractions is to disperse visitors to other less well known, less 'iconic' attractions. There is also a focus on developing centres with a critical mass of products, like Galway, and creating other attractions there.
- The action plan to direct the implementation of this strategy includes:
- Maximising the tourism potential of historic towns, such as increasing physical and intellectual access to the built and cultural heritage
- Improve access to cultural heritage, including providing supports at a local level to improve standard and quality of cultural tourism product. This would include grants to develop self-guided walking routes and to develop appropriate on-site interpretation at historic sites
- Funding work on key heritage buildings
- Creating events to attract overseas visitors
- Expanding themed trails and routes, and urban walking routes and city signage could be included in this scheme
- Developing online maps and itineraries
- Setting up co-operative forums.

The Heritage Council (2005) Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN) 3-Year Action Plan (Draft) 2006-2007

The key aim of the Irish Walled Towns Network is:

'To ensure that Ireland's unique cultural and archaeological heritage in relation to its walled and fortified towns and cities is protected and managed in a sustainable and appropriate manner in the long-term.'

It seeks to liaise with other historic Walled and Fortified Towns in Europe to improve networks and links. The aims of developing these links are to ensure quality management and effective conservation plans and systems to protect and conserve historic Walled Towns.

Walled Towns and Cities in Ireland are important because they:

- Link communities to the past, whilst shaping the currently and future urban form and fabric of modern settlements
- Create a unique sense of place, belonging and identity
- Provide a source of civic pride and focus for tourism, cultural and economic development
- Enhance quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

Proposed actions within the draft Action Plan include:

- Preparation of National Guidelines for the Effective Management, Conservation and Enhancement of Walled Towns in Ireland
- Formulate a national programme for the preparation and implementation of Conservation and Management Plans (including signage strategies) for Walled Towns - to include the walls and environs
- Development and implementation of an Education Awareness Programme
- Establishing an Irish Walled Towns Public Awareness Campaign.

Galway County Council & Galway County Heritage Forum, Heritage plan 2004-2008

Some of the primary objectives of this plan are:

'to facilitate a better understanding and to raise awareness, knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of our heritage, thereby leading to better protection and management of that heritage.'

The overall guiding aim of the County Heritage Plan is:

'To place heritage at the heart of the life of the County through increasing awareness, enjoyment, knowledge and understanding of our shared heritage thereby leading to its proper management and protection and safeguarding it for future generations'.

There are three key performance areas, under which there are area specific objectives and actions:

Promoting awareness and enjoyment of our heritage

Objectives include:

- Placing heritage at the heart of public life in County Galway
- Increasing access to heritage information
- Encouraging widespread participation in the care of archaeological and architectural heritage
- Supporting the integration of heritage awareness in the education system
- Supporting the collection of folklore in the county to best practice standards
- Supporting the development of heritage programmes for all sectors of the community, to include the elderly, children and people with disabilities

Acquiring knowledge

Objectives include:

- Increasing knowledge and understanding of all aspects of County Galway's Heritage
- Providing a series of training courses for people interested in and working with Heritage
- Developing heritage education programmes
- Undertaking research on the natural and cultural heritage

Protecting our heritage

Objectives include:

- Promoting best practice standards for heritage management and conservation
- Seeking further funding to protect our heritage
- Providing training and advice regarding heritage management and conservation
- Developing models and pilot schemes of heritage best practice

Galway County Development Board (2002) Working together: shaping our future - Galway County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012

The Galway County Development Board (GCBD) was set up in 2000 as part of a national strategy to reform local governance.

The vision statement, which underpins the County Strategy, is:

'Galway county - a beautiful and cherished landscape where self-reliant, healthy, well educated citizens live in vibrant communities; where cultural difference is a valued and encouraged, where everyone can be actively in economic, social and cultural life, and where people can have equality of access to a reasonable level of services and infrastructure.'

Athenry, along with Gort, Portumna, Clifden and Headford are market towns that act as local centres for rural populations surrounding them, and these towns have begun to expand in recent years.

The cultural and heritage identity of Galway is diverse and this must be valued through recognition and conservation for future generations. They are also a unique economic asset, and offer employment and cultural tourism potential for the County.

The County also has a significant Traveller population, a strong Irish-speaking community, and a growing number of non-nationals.

There are eight key development themes, which are:

1. A Strong Economic Base

- To create a range of employment opportunities and spread economic development throughout the County

2. Managing our Wealth of physical and natural resources

- To protect the environment and raise public awareness about the environment
- To prepare a County Heritage Plan to conserve and manage our heritage resources for the benefit of all

3. Opportunities for work and learning

- To provide access to lifelong learning and employment opportunities, particularly removing barriers to access for marginalised groups
- To develop community-based learning opportunities

4. Investing in communities

- To build skills, capacity and resources of local community and voluntary groups

5. Access to services

- To improve access to services, especially for disadvantaged groups

6. A Living Gaeltacht

- To preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht
- To advance the economic development facilities and local governance of Irish-speaking areas

7. Vibrant island communities

8. Celebrating culture diversity

- To preserve the Irish language and culture
- To preserve our wealth of historic buildings and other cultural assets both for the enjoyment of the citizens and as an economic resource

***Galway City and County Tourism Committee (2003) Developing sustainable tourism in Galway
- A framework for action 2003-2012***

This document was produced in response to the Galway City and County Tourism Committee recognising the need to increase integration and co-ordination between various groups.

The vision for the future is:

'To further develop Galway as a vibrantly unique destination centred on its cultural identity and built on a foundation of co-operation and integration.'

Key challenges facing Galway include:

- . Changing market trends
- . Lack of market co-ordination
- . Traffic congestion
- . Transport development - air, rail and road
- . New innovative ideas
- . Festivals and events
- . Planning issues

This framework identifies four success factors that are critical to the achievement of the vision and these are:

Marketing

Key objectives include:

- To increase year-round tourism dispersal and average length of stay
- To promote Galway's existing product base through increased co-ordination

Access

Key objectives include:

- To facilitate increased international and domestic air access to the West and enhance transport links to key tourism locations within Galway

Product Development

Key objectives include:

- To co-ordinate public, private and community resources to create a National 'flagship' attraction or series of attractions for Galway City and County
- To provide visitors and residents with a choice of quality special interest products based on our natural and cultural resources

Servicing the Visitor

Key objectives include:

- To promote and develop Galway as a distinctive, unique, cultural destination by emphasising its Irish Celtic tradition

Galway East Tourism Marketing Ltd (2007) Business Plan 2007-2009

Galway East is defined as the rural area east of Galway city and Lough Corrib and the National Develop Plan (NDP) has identified this region as seriously underdeveloped from a tourism point of view. Galway East Tourism Marketing Ltd was set up in 2001 by community rural tourism groups and the objective of this company is:

'To promote, market and develop the tourism products of Galway East, in accordance with the Rural Development program and the National Development Plan objectives, thereby creating revenue and increased employment for product providers as well as ensuring the viability of the company through commissions and other income sources.'

The overall aim of the company is:

'To create awareness and increase interest levels in East Galway therefore benefiting all product and accommodation providers in our region.'

Working alongside partners there have been successes including: tourism business improving, the setting up of Galway East Visitor Guide and new hotels being constructed. To support these successes the following priorities have been devised:

- Identifying and developing new visitor activities and attractions, as well as enhancing existing in conjunction with the NDP program Supporting the 'Galway East Wayfinding Project' Supporting the 'Athenry Walled Town Conservation and Management Plan'
- Continuing to market the region
- The following packages have been proposed for development to attract tour operators: Historical / Ecclesiastical
- Walking / Cycling
- 'A taste of Galway' - this will include combining different types of accommodation in to one holiday
- Tailor-made packages

Strategic objectives for 2007 and beyond include:

Website Development including developing and enhancing the Galway East website and investigating the use of downloadable pod cast walks

Ongoing product research and development in East Galway including developing products that enhance and sustain the long-term viability of tourism in East Galway in sectors that include:

- Archaeological heritage
- Architectural heritage
- Conservation
- Corporate and Event
- Guided walks and Loop walks
- Performing and visual walks
- Cycling tours

Familiarisation Trips / Educational Programmes including promoting educational visits for overseas and Irish based Event Managers, Tour Operators, Tourism and Fáilte Ireland Staff Members and other relevant groups.

Continued Development of Tours in Galway East. These were launched in June 2005 and are aiming to research and develop possible additional tour opportunities in East Galway that features some of the other excellent attractions and regions on offer to the tourist

Photographic Bank, building on the existing bank of photographs of the region and making these available to, for example, Tourism Ireland offices overseas, travel magazines and so on.



The Town Walls of Athenry.

Photograph courtesy of Galway County Council



Athenry - 'The School Shed Tower'

Photograph courtesy of Finnian Varden-Kenny 2006 (National Winner of the Irish Walled Towns Network Photographic Competition 2006 - Childrens Category).

Gifford
Cultural Heritage



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