Kilkenny City’s Medieval Walls:
Talbots Tower
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This project is an action of the County Kilkenny Heritage Plan
Foreword

The City Walls of Kilkenny are of great importance both locally and nationally. The history of Kilkenny City is a major reason for our attraction as a tourism destination and is also a key driver of the local economy. The City Walls define the extent, layout and status of the medieval city.

Local democratic processes have ensured that concerns to ensure the long-term survival of the City Walls are to the forefront of local policy development and implementation. In particular the collaboration between Kilkenny Borough Council, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, An Taisce, the Kilkenny Archaeological Society and the Heritage Council to produce and publish the Kilkenny City Walls Heritage Conservation Plan (2006) was key. That Conservation Plan provides an impetus and a foundation on which a better understanding of the City Walls can be communicated, provides guidance and prioritisation as to the ongoing protection, conservation and restoration of the Walls and outlines how access to and interpretation of the Walls can be better communicated.

Talbot's Tower is the only surviving complete defensive tower of the City Wall Circuit. The walls of the High Town were begun in the mid 13th century and this corner would have been part of the main circuit forming the south-west angle of the City’s defensive wall.

Building on the provisions of the 2006 City Walls Conservation Plan Kilkenny Borough Council, largely via the City Walls Steering Committee, with significant support from the Heritage Council, the Irish Walled Towns Network and the Kilkenny VEC, set about restoring, conserving and interpreting this part of the City Wall Circuit.

Huge numbers of Council staff, consent authorities, funding authorities, consultants and contractors have, over the past 12 years, ensured that Talbot’s Tower has been suitably redeveloped and will be available as a public space to future generations. The huge efforts of all of these people and agencies must be acknowledged at this point in time.

And so it is with great delight that the time has finally arrived to open Talbot’s Tower to the public. Ex Chairwoman of the City Walls Steering Committee, Betty Manning, in promoting the redevelopment of Talbot’s Tower to her Committee, once quoted archaeologist and historian John Bradley who said that Talbot’s Tower was ‘the finest piece of military history in these islands.’ We know that the people of Kilkenny and beyond will now enjoy and respect this significant addition to the City’s public realm.

Cllr. David Fitzgerald,
Cathaoirleach,
Kilkenny County Council

Cllr. Michael Doyle,
Mayor,
Kilkenny City Municipal District

Colette Byrne,
Chief Executive,
Kilkenny County Council
Acknowledgments

The repair and conservation of Talbots Tower would not have been possible without the contribution and support of a vast number of people over a number of years.

Thanks to Kilkenny County Council, the Heritage Council and the Irish Walled Towns network for jointly funding the project, in particular to the members of the Kilkenny City Walls Steering Committee.

Thanks to the Carlow Kilkenny Education Training Board and Coláiste Pobail Osraí.

Many people have worked on, and contributed to this project. With gratitude we would like to thank: Philip Armstrong, Michael Brennan, James Cahill, Eamon Cody, Francis Coady, Joe Costello, Tommy Dowling, Aine Doyle, Ian Doyle, Nikolah Gilligan, Claire Goodwin, Evelyn Graham, Kieran Fitzgerald, Richard Jennings, Philip Kavanagh, Philip Kenny, Kilkenny County Council Gardening Crew, Dearbhala Ledwidge, Seamus Loughlin, Ivor McElveen, Con Manning, Phelim Manning, Liam Mannix, Paddy Mathews, Alé Mercado, Fred Morton, Una ní Mhearain, Colm Murray, Ben Murtagh, Noreside Construction, Maeve O’Callaghan, Coilín O’Drisceoil, George O’Malley, Cormac O’Sullivan, Nessa Roche, Emir Slattery, Tallis Construction, Simon Walton.

We would also like to thank the neighbours of Talbots Tower who have supported the project, and endured the on-going works, including Clare Costello, David and Grace Smyth, Margaret Hyland and the late Lily and Vera O’Connell.

To anyone we have omitted unintentionally, we offer our sincere apologies.
Introduction

Kilkenny City was a centre of political and ecclesiastical power in Ireland between the 9th and 17th centuries. In 1300 it was the country's largest inland town, bounded by city walls built by the Anglo Norman invaders. The walls were a symbol of power and a defence against attack. Talbots Tower was one of nine towers on the city walls.

During the 500 years of the turbulent middle-ages soldiers were stationed at Talbots Tower to defend the city. Oliver Cromwell successfully breached the walls, after a brief siege, in 1650. From 1700's onward Kilkenny enjoyed a sustained period of relative peace and the walls fell into disrepair. In the 19th century a pleasure garden was created at the top of the tower for a nearby dwelling house. By the 20th century the tower and adjacent walls were in ruins.

In 2005, Kilkenny Borough Council, in partnership with the Heritage Council, produced the Kilkenny City Walls Conservation Plan, in order to provide a strategy for the long term survival of the city's walls.

The rebuilding and conservation of Talbots Tower, the most intact tower in the city walls, began in 2006. It was a massive undertaking involving many professionals including engineers, architects, archaeologists, building historians, stone masons, illustrators, landscape architects, gardeners and grounds staff. The project was managed by Kilkenny County Council, with support from the Heritage Council and Government Departments. It was co-funded by Kilkenny County Council, the Heritage Council and the Irish Walled Towns Network.

Each of the beautifully illustrated interpretive panels at Talbots Tower, reproduced in this brochure, tell the story of Kilkenny's City Walls and Talbots Tower. It is intended that they will be a useful educational resource for schools in County Kilkenny, and that they will encourage locals and visitors to explore our rich medieval heritage.
Kilkenny's Medieval Walls

Kilkenny's city walls were built during the 13th century. The walls offered protection from attack and were a symbol of power.

The Anglo-Norman lord William Marshal built the first city walls in Kilkenny in approximately 1210 for colonists from England, Wales and Flanders. The first wall was built from oak timbers set on top of an earthen rampart, outside of which ran a ditch.

Sixty years later, William's grandson Gilbert De Clare replaced the earth-and-timber defences with a stone wall. The tower in front of you, built around 1270 and renamed after the 15th century Mayor of Kilkenny Robert Talbot, was part of this circuit of city wall. The city wall enclosed three separate boroughs: Hightown, Irishtown and St. John's on the opposite side of the River Nore. Measuring more than two miles in length, the walls were the longest in Ireland at that time.

Whilst the main purpose of the city walls was to defend the colonists living inside from attack, they were also used to collect taxes. People living outside the city walls who wished to sell their goods in the marketplace had to pay a toll as they went through any of the seven city gates. The walls were also a statement of Anglo-Norman power and authority over the native Irish, who were kept under constant surveillance from the nine towers on the city walls, one of which was Talbot's Tower.

Ballaí Meánaoiseacha Chill Chainnigh

Tógadh ballaí Chill Chainnigh le linn an 13ú haois. Ba chosaint ar ionsaí agus siombail chumhachtara ar an iad.

Rinne an tíarna Angla-Normanach William Marshal na ballaí cathrach bunaíodh i gCill Chainnigh a thógáil thart ar 1210 le haghaidh collnigh ó Shasana, ón mbreatain Bheag agus ó Fhílindras. Tógadh an balla bunaíodh seo as adhmad darach a leagadh ar bharr rampair chré nó ar mhullóg a raibh cláit lasmhúigh de.

Seasca bilain ina dhaihdi sin, chuir Gilbert De Clare, garmhaic William, balla cloiche in áit na gcotharta cosanta a bhí déanta as cré agus as adhmad. Ba chuid de chuid bhaili na cathrach é an t-aithne do chomhair amach, a tógadh thart ar 1270, tür arbh é Robert Talbot, méara ar Chill Chainnigh le linn an 15ú haois, a thug ainm air. D'fhóraigh na ballaí trí bhúirgí ar leith: An Baile Ard, An Baile Gaeiligh agus bhiúr San Eoin ar an taobh thall d'abhainn na Feoire. Shín siad fad dha mhlí agus tuilleadh agus ní raibh cuid a shearmaid mhírtha ab haidh i leis an linn.

Ba í tríomh-aidhm bhaili na cathrach ná na collnigh taobh istigh a chosaint ar ionsaí ón taobh amuigh ach baineadh leas astu chomh maith le cain a ghearradh. Dá mha híoch ó thuathnaigh earrá a dhiol ar áit an mhargaigh ghearrfad dothu agus iad ag dul trí cheann ar bith de sheachta nigheata na cathrach. Ina theannta sin dhearbhaigh na ballaí forlaighnas agus údarás na nAngla-Normanach ar na Gaeil: bhí ag faire orthu de shfor ó na naoi dtúr a bhí ar bhaili na cathrach, ceann acu Túr an Talbóidigh.
Kilkenny City Walls, circa 1450, with Talbots Tower in the foreground and Kilkenny Castle in the background.

Ballú Chaithair Chill Chainnigh, circa 1450, le Túr an Talbóidigh chun tosaigh agus Caisleán Chill Chainnigh ar an gcúl.
Taxes and Tolls

The construction of the city walls in the 13th century was the largest civic project ever undertaken in Kilkenny. Taxes were imposed to raise funds to build the walls.

The walls were owned by the city community and they were responsible for their construction and maintenance. To pay for this, a tax called ‘murage’ was levied on all goods that were brought through the gates of the city for sale. Nothing escaped the tax collector, who was called the ‘keeper of murage’. Meat, fish, wine, building materials, wool and cloth were all taxed, as were more unusual items such as badger skins, squirrel skins, coloured glass, gold cloth, almonds, cumin, figs, raisins, saffron, ginger and olive oil.

From the 14th century many of the gates and towers were converted into residences by the city authorities and rented out as a source of revenue. However, Talbot’s Tower was never inhabited, which is why it has remained largely unchanged since the 1400s.

In the medieval period the ordinary person living in the countryside around Kilkenny had very few rights and could be bought and sold with the land by their lord. However, people living inside the city walls, known as ‘burgesses’ of the city, had many more freedoms. The city walls were an important symbol of the burgesses independence from the lord of the city.

Cánacha agus Dolaí

Ní for tugadh riamh i gCill Chainnigh faoi thionscadal sibhialta chomh huailmhanach le tógáil bhallaí na cathrach sa 13ú haois. Gearradh cánacha le ciste tógála a chruthú.

Ba le pobal na cathrach iad na balloí agus is orthu a thit freagraacht na tógála agus na cothabhála. Gearradh cán - ar a ngiaoi - ‘cán mhúrtha’ - ar earráil a d’iompaíodh thar gheataí na cathrach isteach lena reic. Ní bhíodh rud ar bith ag dul ón mbailitheoir cánach ar a dtugtaí ‘coimeádaí na cánach mhúrtha’. Gearradh cán ar fheoil, iasc, fionn, earráil tógála, olann agus éadach chomh maith le hearráil thar an gcoiltiantacht, leithéidí criochte, broic agus iora rua, głoine dhaite, éadach óir, almóin, cumin, figí, risíní, cróch, sínseá agus ola olice.

Ón 14ú haois ar aghaidh bhíodh údarásí na cathrach ag ligeann na ngeataí agus na dtúr ar cíos go tráththaoltar mar árais chónaithe fhorbhdóireachta. Ach níor mhair duine ar bith riamh i dtúr an Talbodóidigh, rud a d’fhág beagnach neamh-atraithte e ón gcúigí haois déag go dtí an lá inniu.

Le linn na meánaoiseanna ba bheag ceart a bhí ag an ngnáth-thuatháinach a mhíre gard do Chill Chainnigh agus bhí sé incheadaíthe a cheannach nó a reic i dteannta thalamh a thiar. Ach bhí cuid mhíre cearta breise ag cónaitheoirí na cathrach, ‘buigéisigh na cathrach’, mar a tugadh orthu. Comharthaí sóirt ar an neamhspleáchas ó smacht an tiarna a bhí ag buigéisigh na cathrach ab ea balloí na cathrach agus níor bheag é a dtábhacht shiombailach.
Defending the City

For the 500 years of the turbulent Middle Ages soldiers kept watch at each of the towers on the city walls, defending the city from attack.

One purpose of the tower was to make it very difficult for enemies attacking the city to breach the walls. Imagine that you were attacking the city. Soldiers on the walls shoot a hail of arrows and crossbow bolts at you. If you manage to survive this you still have the rubbish-filled ditch to wade through and a 25-foot high wall to climb. Tunnelling beneath the wall is impossible because of the stone wall that slopes down to the base of the ditch.

The tower’s other purpose was as a watch tower. It was one of nine such towers on the city walls and was deliberately placed on a height to command the view over the surrounding countryside.

With such strong defences it is not surprising that the city walls were only breached twice: by the Earl of Desmond in 1461 and by Oliver Cromwell in 1650. Evidence of these fierce battles has been discovered during archaeological excavations at the tower. A medieval cannon, which is thought to have been mounted on the roof, was found hidden in the clay rampart at the foot of the tower, and lead musket balls and shrapnel from an early form of grenade were discovered in the town ditch.

With the introduction of gunpowder in the 16th century, town walls could no longer stand up to attack and they lost some of their importance. From the 1700s onwards Kilkenny enjoyed a sustained period of relative peace, and because the walls were no longer needed many sections were pulled down or fell into disrepair.

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Ag Cosaint na Cathrach

Le linn chúig chéad bliain na meánaoiseanna ceannairceacha bhí saighdiúirí ar faire ag gach aon cheann de thuir bhallaí na cathrach, ag cosaint na cathrach ar ionsaí.

Ceann de chuspóirí na dtúr ná é a bheith deacair d’ionsaitheoirí bearna a dhéanamh i mbailiú na cathrach. Cuir i gcás go bhfuil an chathair á cur faoi ionsaí agat féin. Déanann saighdiúirí ar na ballaí cith saighhead agus boltaí croshbhotha a radadh chugat. Má thagann tú slán as seo beidh ort ina dhiaidh sin clá draimhlaí a spághádhas agus balla 25 troigh ar aird a dhrearadh. Dheasca balla cloiche a bheith le fána anuas go bun an cláí nó bheidh ar do chumas dul ag tochailt tolláin.

Cuspóir eile ná é a bheith ina thuir faire. Ba cheann é de náisiúint den chineál ceanna a bhí ar bhallaí na cathrach agus bhí sé suite sa chois is go mbeadh léargas uaidh ar an tuath mágaird.

Agus an chosaint seo aige, ní haon ionadh é nár éirigh ach le beirt rithm bearna a chur ann: irla Deasumhan in 1461 agus Ollibhéar Cromail in 1650. Thángthas ar dhianaise ar na cathanna fiochmhara seo le linn tochaíití seandálaíochta ag an tÚr. Fuairhas canún mhéadnaioiseach, a mbíth, silear, a chur ar an dion, faoi cheilt i rampar crí ag bun an tÚr agus i gclochaí na cathrach fuairhas an lathróidí muscaideach chomh maith leis an srapnál ó bhunleagan den ghráinid.

Le teacht chuim cinn am phúdar ghuinna san 16ú haois níorbh fhéidir le ballaí cathrach ionsaí a sheasamh feasta agus thit a dtéadhacht i lèig cuid mhaithe. Ba ghnách don tsiocháin a bheith i réim go leánúnaích i gCill Chaimligh ó 1700 ar aghaidh agus ó tharla nár ghló na ballá naíos mó leagadh cuid dlóbh, é sin ní chuaídar chu raice.
The attack on Kilkenny City by Oliver Cromwell's army, 1650
Fogha thrúpaí Ollibhéir Cromail faoi Chill Chainnigh, 1650
A Soldier’s Life

Defending the city, avoiding getting shot and getting out of the weather were the main preoccupations for the soldiers who guarded the city walls for over 500 years.

In quiet times the inside of the tower was a sheltered place in which to take a break during long watches. When under attack it offered the safety of good thick walls and a strong stone roof.

The original 13th century tower was approximately three-quarters of its current size and had a timber roof. In the 1400s its height was raised by placing a stone-vaulted roof over the old battlements. If you look up at the ceiling you can see the hazel basketwork panels, called ‘wickerwork centring’, which were left behind from the timbers used to support the stone vault during its construction. Usually the twigs from these panels rot away, but here they have survived.

The square holes in the wall are called ‘put-logs’. These holes held timber beams that acted as scaffolding during the construction of the tower. The three narrow windows are arrow loops. A soldier with a bow or a musket could shoot out of these whilst being protected from return fire. If you look out through the loops you can see they are positioned to allow the soldiers to shoot all around the tower and especially into the ditch.

Outside, the parapets at the top of the walls gave some protection from attack to the defenders.

Saol Saighdiúra

Ba iad na cúramí ba mhó a bhíodh ag déanamh scime do na saighdiúirí - a chaith os cionn 500 bliain ag gardaíl na cathrach - ná í a chosaint, fanacht ó bhaol lámhaisigh agus dul ón tsíon.

Nuair a bhíodh an tsíocháin i réim d’fhéadfadh sos cluthar a ghluadh ar an taobh istigh den túr le linn faire fhada. Dá bhfuil faoi ionsaí d’fhágadh na ballaí tiubhais agus an díon tréan cloichce go mbéifin ann a bheith sábháilte taobh istigh ann.

Bhí thart ar thir cheathrú de mhéid Úir an lae inniu i dtús bunaídh an 13ú haois agus is díonadh a bhí air. Sa 15ú haois ardaíodh é tríd dhion boghtach cloiche a chur os cionn na sean-thorpbhallá. Is líorach a bhíodh air an tsíleáil go bhfuil na painéis de chaoadaóireachta choilli ar a dtugtar ‘láirú caoladaóireachta’ fágtha ann ón adhomhán a bhí mar thaca leis an mboghta le linn a thógála. Is gnách is mó leis na painéil seo crónadhach. Ach tá aithne siad sin anseo.

‘Pulteoga’ a thugtar ar na pobl bheaga sa bhalla. Bhíodh saileanna scafaíraí i bhfostó iomlú le linn thógáil an tÚir. Is léir saighde iad na trí fhúinteog chaola. D’fhéadfaigh saighdiúir le chogha nó micasaí a bhrith ag scoileadh tríothu seo agus san am céanna cosaint a bhíte aige ó ais-scoileadh. Má tháigh an chú trí na lóibh feicfaigh tú go bhfuil siad leagtha amach le ligean do shaighdiúir scoileadh ar fud an tÚir agus, thar aon fhí eile, isteach sa cheola.

Ar an imeall, bhí na huchtbhallaí lasmuigh ag tabhairt cosaint áirithe do na cosántóirí ó ionsaitheoirí.
A view inside the 15th century tower

Radharc ar thaobh istigh thur an 15ú haois.
The Seeds of History

Analysis of ancient seeds found during archaeological excavations at Talbot’s Tower show us how the landscape around the tower looked before and after the city walls were built.

Studies of the seeds found during archaeological excavations show that 400 years before the Anglo-Normans built the city walls this area was laid out in fields bounded by hedgerows or small open woodlands of cherry, sloe and hazel trees and lined with a variety of weeds such as fat hen, dock and daisy. The fields probably belonged to the nearby monastery of Domhnach Mór, now the site of St. Patrick’s graveyard, and were used to graze cattle and to grow barley, oats and wheat. One of these grains was radiocarbon dated to 710 – 890 AD.

Once the city walls were built, the area immediately outside the walls was no longer used for cultivation and became a ‘no-man’s land’ where only weeds grew. In the wider countryside the cereals that fed the Anglo-Norman colonists were grown in abundance. The Anglo-Normans brought great agricultural improvements, including the introduction of the plough-horse.

Large quantities of grain excavated amongst the rubbish thrown into the town ditch came from the brewing of beer. The Anglo-Norman monks in Kilkenny were given an allowance of eight pints of beer a day!

Síolta na Staire

Nochtar trí anailís ar shíolta ársa a fuarhas le linn thochailt seandálaíochta ag Túr an Talbóidigh deibh an tírdhreacha roimh thógáil bhallaí na cathrach agus ina dhiaidh sin.

Léiríonn staidéar ar na síolta a fuarhas le linn thochailt seandálaíochta go raibh 400 bliain ann – an tríomphe sular thóg na hAngla-Normanach ballaí na cathrach - ina mbíodh an limistéar leagtha amach ina phairceanna a bhí forlaí ag fáta sceach nó ina choilíeoga oscailte sillín, aíme agus coll agus an blonagán bán, an chopóg, an nóinin agus fiallí eile ar a mbrach.

Gach seans gur bhain na páirceanna le Domhnach Mór, mainistir Ailtíuil a bhí mar a bhfuil Eaglais agus Reilig Phádraig inniu agus bhain in leas astu mar fhéarach ealach agus le hóma, coirce agus cruthchneacht a fhás. Tugadh dáta radacarbónach 710-890AD do cheann de na gráinní sin.

Ón uair a tógadh ballaí na cathrach níor baineadh tuilleadh leasa as an limistéar taobh amaigh de na ballaí le haghaidh curaíochta agus is fiallí a bhíodh ag fás ann: is idirthalamh a bhíodh ann. Faoin tuath, níos faide ó láthair, bhíodh fás ar an raidhse ghránnach a bheathalódh na colláinigh Angla-Normanach. Tháinig forás suntasach ar an talmhalocht faoi thionchar na nAngla-Normanach, cuir i gcás teacht an treafaí.

Is ó ghrúdú beorach a tháinig lear móir gráin a tochlaíodh ón dramhail a bhí caite i ndíog an bhaille. Ceadaíodh liúntas ocht bpionta beorach in aghaidh an lae do mhanaigh Angla-Normanacha Chill Chainnigh!
Ploughing the land and reaping the corn outside Kilkenny’s walls

Ag treabhadh na talún agus ag baint an arbhair taobh amuigh de bhalla Chill Chainnigh
From Watchtower to Garden Tower

By the 19th century Talbot’s Tower had become a relic of a more violent past. The once intimidating tower was now crowned with a small pleasure garden for the nearby dwelling house ‘Rose cottage’.

As the city walls were no longer needed for defensive purposes the town ditch was built over with sheds and outhouses which formed part of an ornamental garden at the rear of the adjacent ‘Rose Cottage’.

In the 19th century several tonnes of soil were carried up the tower’s steps to create a secluded garden high above the city streets. Fragments of wine bottles, clay tobacco-pipes, buttons and hairpins found in the garden during excavations show that it was well-used. A pet cat was also buried amongst the flowers.

A number of 303 bullets and cases found on the roof of the tower during excavations suggest that the tower was used by snipers firing at Kilkenny Castle, a short distance to the North East, which was occupied by Republican soldiers directly before the Irish Civil War (1922-1923).

Ó Thúr Faire go Túr Gairdín

Faoi ní raibh i dTúr an Talbóidigh ach iarsma ó thréimhse fhoréigneach a bhí caite. In áit a bheith scanrúil is amhlaídh a bhí an tÚr anois ina ghairdín aeraíochta don teach cónaithe in aice láimhe, ‘lostán an Róis’.

Ó tharla nach mbeadh feidhm chosanta feasta ag ballaí na cathrach tógadh bothán agus cróitíní thar dhíog an bhaile agus ba chuid ladh seo de ghairdín maiseach a bhí ar chul ‘lostán an Róis’.

Sa 19ú haois iompaíodh na tonnaí méadracha de chré suas céimeanna an tÚir le gairdín cúlanta a chruthú go hard os cionn shráideanna na cathrach. Is léir ó bhliúirí de bhuidíéal fhíona, de phíopaí cré tobac, de chnáipí agus de bhioráin a fuarthas sa ghairdín le linn tochailtí gur baineadh déa-úsáid as. Fuarthas cat baile curtha i measc na mbláthanna.

Is léir ar roinnt cásanna agus piléar 303 a fuarthas ar dhíon an tÚir le linn tochailte go raibh an tÚr á úsáid ag naoscairí a bhí ag lámhach faoi Chaisleán Chill Chainnigh tamall gearr soin ó thuidh, áit a raibh seisbh ag saighdiúirlí Pobalachtach a díreach roimh Chogadh Cathartha na hÉireann (1922-1923).
The roof-top garden at Talbot's Tower, and adjacent ornamental garden, c.1850

An gairdín ar leibhéal din ag Túr an Tábhaidh agus gairdín maiséach in aice láimhe, 1850
1. Blackrath castle (13th century)
2. St. Canice’s Cathedral (13th century)
3. The Bishop’s Palace (Heritage Council) (14th century)
4. Green’s Bridge (1766 AD)
5. Evans’s Tower (13th century)
6. Black Abbey (1225 AD)
7. Black Frenen Gate and City Wall (16th century)
8. Rothe House and Garden (1594)
9. Watergate Bridge (13th century)
10. Grace’s Castle (Court House) (16th century)
11. St. Francis’s Abbey (13th century)
12. City Wall, Chapel Lane (13th century)
13. Market Slip
14. Kytelet’s Inn (14th century)
15. The Tholsel (1762)
16. Hole in the Wall Inn (1582)
17. Butter Slip
18. St. Mary’s Parish Church (Medieval Mile Museum) (13th century)
19. Shee Alms House (1582)
20. John’s Bridge (1910)
21. St. John’s Priory (13th century)
22. City Wall tower (13th century)
23. Maudlin castle (16th century)
24. Kilkenny Castle (13th century)
25. Myles Tower and City Wall (13th century)
26. City Wall Design Centre (13th century)
27. St. Patrick’s graveyard (5th century)
28. Talbot’s Tower (13th century)

= standing City Wall
= line of City Wall

Please note that some sections of the city walls are on land which is in private ownership and permission should be sought from landowners before entering.
Much of the city’s past is visible in its buildings and the streets of the city.

Between the 12th and 15th centuries Kilkenny was a centre of power and wealth.
By 1300 it was the seat of a bishop and the city was bounded by walls.

Today, Kilkenny’s historical buildings and streets date back to before 1650. Places like the Castle, King’s Tower, Kilkenney Castle, and townhouses demonstrate the city’s past. From the 4th century onwards, monastic abbeys and cloisters flourished; their traces can still be seen in some of the street patterns and in the names of the city’s streets and buildings.

A quarter of a millennium later, the city’s medieval past is still very much visible today; the river Nore and the castle serve as a reminder of some stretches of the original medieval walls. In some areas, red paving stones can still be seen: an attempt by the 19th century to explore the city’s history and present it to the public – often called a 'living museum'.

Exploiting Kilkenny's Medieval Streets and Buildings
Kilkenny’s medieval streets and buildings

of Kilkenny’s medieval still to be seen in the buildings and streetscapes of city.

The 9th and 17th centuries Kilkenny City was political and ecclesiastical power in Ireland. was the country’s largest inland town, city walls.

Kilkenny is rich with evidence of the past. 40  and structures built in the medieval period,  stood, still stand in the city, including Talbots Kilkenny Castle, St. Canice’s Cathedral, the  of wealthy merchants, burgage plots,  St. Mary’s parish church. The medieval town also remains, as shown by the curved  small laneways. These are all enclosed by city walls.

If the city walls still stand above ground  best remain as archaeology below ground –  houses of which are marked with different show their location. You are invited to medieval streets and buildings of the city and “Ireland’s Medieval City”.

Bí ag Fámaireacht thatar ar Sráideanna agus ar Fhoirgnimh Mheánaoiseacha Chill Chainnigh

Is féidir cuid mhaith de Chill Chainnigh mar a bhí fadó a fheiceáil fós i bhfoirgnimh agus i sráid-dreach na cathrach.

Idir an 9ú haois agus an 17ú haois ba láthair chumhachta i saol polaitiúil agus easglasta na hÉireann i cathair Chill Chainnigh. Faoin mbliain 1300 ní raibh baile intire ba mhó ná í sa t år ar fad agus bhí ballaí cathrach á thhoriamh.

Tá aon am a caiteadh le feiceáil go tréan ar Chill Chainnigh an lae inniu. Fós féin seasann 40 foirgneamh meánaoiseach, ón tréimhse roimh 1650, sa chathair ina measc Tur an Tablóidigh, Caisleán Chill Chainnigh, Eaglais Chainnigh, tithe baile mhóir na gceannaithe, ceapaí burgáiste, mainistreacha agus Eaglais Pharóiste Mhuire. Maireann gréasán meánaoiseach na sráideanna chomh maith, mar is léir ar na sráideanna cuartha agus ar na lánaí. Tá iarbhallaí na cathrach á thhoriamh.

Fós féin maireann an ceadhru cuid de bhallaí na cathrach os cionn talún; maireann an chuid eile mar sheandálaíocht faoi bhun talún agus tá stráicí de seo curtha in iúl le pábháil ar leith. larrtar ort dul ag fámaireacht thatar ar sráideanna meánaoiseacha agus ar fhoirgnimh na cathrach – a bhfuil ‘Cathair Mheánaoiseach na hÉireann’ baiste air go coitianta.
Kilkenny City's Medieval Walls: Talbots Tower
Kilkenny City's Medieval Walls: Talbots Tower