The walls in the modern streetscapes

The walls of Kilkenny City are not hard to find in the modern streetscape. As they are surrounded by trees or bushes, they still deliver protective boundaries and where they still remain above ground.

In the former Highfield, Kilkenny Castle dominates the south-southwest quadrant of the city, just a jump to the west. The original thirteenth-century condition would have formed an important element of the defences, but large-scale cousin reconstructions and restoration, of part which can still be seen today on the ruins.

Construction of the stone curtain walls by William Marshal in the early thirteenth century. The castle and town passed from the hands of William Marshal to James Butler, 3rd Earl of Ormond, in 1315 and the residence of that family until the twentieth century.

The walls in the modern streetscape, with St John’s Augustinian Priory. References to defences here date from the thirteenth century, and this part of Kilkenny was certainly defended against Cromwell in 1650. It may well be that the earthen embankment appears to have been modified as a garden terrace, perhaps during the eighteenth century. The length of the wall west of the Presentation Convent garden, viewed from the south west.

Further reading


Credits and Acknowledgements


Further portions of the walls survive to the west of the High Street, but one of the best sections is at the St John’s Gate, where a small section of the tower, once again at height, stands close to a block of apartments. A base batter and two conical arrow loops can be seen on the external face of this wall and would have acted as a flanking tower for musket shot who had their homes in the southwest quadrant of the city, formed part of the medieval hospital of St Mary Magdalen and was not part of the urban defences.

Conclusion

The walls in the modern streetscape. As they were intended to do some 700 years ago, they still deliver protective boundaries and where they still remain above ground.

Further portions of the walls survive to the south of the High Street, but one of the best sections is at the St John’s Gate, where a small section of the tower, once again at height, stands close to a block of apartments. A base batter and two conical arrow loops can be seen on the external face of this wall and would have acted as a flanking tower for musket shot who had their homes in the southwest quadrant of the city, formed part of the medieval hospital of St Mary Magdalen and was not part of the urban defences.

Further reading

Introduction

Kilkenny

The historic urban centre of Kilkenny City contains much of its medieval fabric. Prominent buildings such as the New-Studio, St. Kieran’s College, the Dominican Monastery, St. Canice’s Cathedral, and the Heritage Council office are a feature of the surviving medieval streetscape. The historic streetscape is well-preserved and contains – still to this day – a very large degree – the defensive circuit of stone walls. These stone walls, once a matter of great civic pride, were a means of understanding in terms of construction and maintenance by the medieval streetscape. A comparison point for the three ancient walls has recently been prepared by the Heritage Council and Kilkenny Borough Council, and it is hoped that this will initiate a new phase of care and conservation for this valuable legacy.

The early town of Kilkenny

Kilkenny is located on a sloping point of the River Nore and opposite the natural rock outcrops at John’s Bridge, a point that has existed by the late seventh century AD and saw to such structures as St. Canice’s cathedral and St. Kieran’s College. The use of rock outcrops for the construction of ancient walls has seriously been prepared by the Heritage Council and Kilkenny Borough Council, and it is hoped that this will initiate a new phase of care and conservation for this valuable legacy.

Building and managing the medieval defences

The medieval defences enclose a triangular area with dimensions of c. 590m by 800m by 560m. The outer perimeter of approximately 3.2km defences, with a circumference of approximately 2.1km, was formed by the Rivers Nore and Breagagh. The defences at the intersection of the two rivers was formed by a stone wall, and there are two gates at this intersection. The construction and maintenance of the defences were undertaken by the residents of the town for their own benefit. Additional works were carried out by the Confederate parliament. It is recorded that ‘Dutchmen’ were removed in the period spanning the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The gateway at Patrick’s Street was removed c. 1895 to facilitate the free movement of traffic, and today only a portion of the walls remains visible. The ability to obtain from the crown the right to levy and collect rates upon such items as wine, hides, firewood, wool, cloth, meat, fish and bread was the chief means of impressing those who lived within the walls. The skins of squirrel, fox and badger are mentioned in the accounts of Amsterdam in 1608, and the skins of various other animals were also recorded. Rates were levied on those who lived within the walls. The skins of squirrel, fox and badger are mentioned in the accounts of Amsterdam in 1608, and the skins of various other animals were also recorded. Rates were levied on those who lived within the walls.

Inhabitants of the town for their defence. Additional works were carried out by the Confederate parliament. It is recorded that ‘Dutchmen’ were removed in the period spanning the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The gateway at Patrick’s Street was removed c. 1895 to facilitate the free movement of traffic, and today only a portion of the walls remains visible. The ability to obtain from the crown the right to levy and collect rates upon such items as wine, hides, firewood, wool, cloth, meat, fish and bread was the chief means of impressing those who lived within the walls. The skins of squirrel, fox and badger are mentioned in the accounts of Amsterdam in 1608, and the skins of various other animals were also recorded. Rates were levied on those who lived within the walls.

The Hightown defences enclosed a rectangular area with dimensions of c. 580m by 800m by 560m. The outer perimeter of approximately 3.2km defences, with a circumference of approximately 2.1km, was formed by the Rivers Nore and Breagagh. The defences at the intersection of the two rivers was formed by a stone wall, and there are two gates at this intersection. The construction and maintenance of the defences were undertaken by the residents of the town for their own benefit. Additional works were carried out by the Confederate parliament. It is recorded that ‘Dutchmen’ were removed in the period spanning the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The gateway at Patrick’s Street was removed c. 1895 to facilitate the free movement of traffic, and today only a portion of the walls remains visible. The ability to obtain from the crown the right to levy and collect rates upon such items as wine, hides, firewood, wool, cloth, meat, fish and bread was the chief means of impressing those who lived within the walls. The skins of squirrel, fox and badger are mentioned in the accounts of Amsterdam in 1608, and the skins of various other animals were also recorded. Rates were levied on those who lived within the walls.

Depictions of the walls

A late-nineteenth-century photograph of the walls taken from the north side of the River Nore to the east acting as the fourth side. The defences were strengthened by adding sods to the base of the wall so as to improve their appearance. This was done to improve the appearance of the walls. To improve the appearance of the walls, it was a symbol of status and a clear means of impressing those who lived within the walls.

The walls are a feature of the surviving medieval streetscape. The Hightown defences enclosed a rectangular area with dimensions of c. 580m by 800m by 560m. The outer perimeter of approximately 3.2km defences, with a circumference of approximately 2.1km, was formed by the Rivers Nore and Breagagh. The defences at the intersection of the two rivers was formed by a stone wall, and there are two gates at this intersection. The construction and maintenance of the defences were undertaken by the residents of the town for their own benefit. Additional works were carried out by the Confederate parliament. It is recorded that ‘Dutchmen’ were removed in the period spanning the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The gateway at Patrick’s Street was removed c. 1895 to facilitate the free movement of traffic, and today only a portion of the walls remains visible. The ability to obtain from the crown the right to levy and collect rates upon such items as wine, hides, firewood, wool, cloth, meat, fish and bread was the chief means of impressing those who lived within the walls. The skins of squirrel, fox and badger are mentioned in the accounts of Amsterdam in 1608, and the skins of various other animals were also recorded. Rates were levied on those who lived within the walls.

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Building and managing the medieval defences

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