BAILE STAIRIÚIL
Historic Town

NDP National Development Plan

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Fáilte Ireland
National Tourism Development Authority
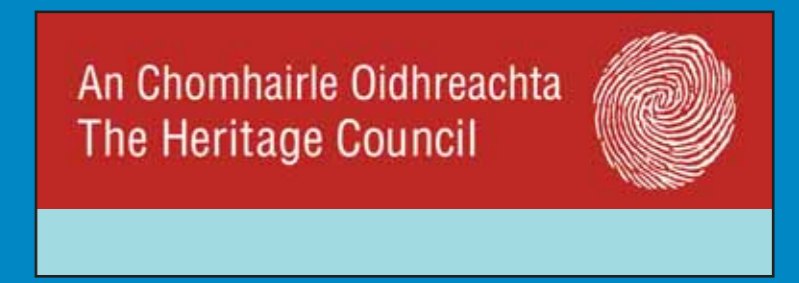
FIODH ÁRD *Fethard* | EOLAS TURASÓIREACHTA *Visitor Information*

3 TOWN HALL *Town Hall*

Town Hall

The building known for over two hundred years as the 'Town Hall' has, over its four centuries, served many functions: an almshouse ('hospital') from c.1605 to the 1750s; after that it was a town hall, courthouse and market-house; later still it was a dance hall, a library and also used for many other purposes.

Fethard's market-place

An essential part of a medieval town was its marketplace. In Fethard the marketplace is trapezoidal, being ten metres wide at its west end and forty at its east end. From the medieval period to the first half of the 18th century a building that was the town's 'tholsel' (seat of Fethard Corporation) stood in the middle of the street outside the 'Town Hall'. Charters of 1552 and 1607/8 relate to this 'tholsel'. That civic building, apparently always in a bad state of repair, had its functions transferred into what is now the Town Hall, some time after 1763.

Hospital of the Holy Trinity

Documentary evidence indicates that the 'Town Hall' was actually built as an almshouse ('hospital'), by Sir John Everard, between 1605 and 1611, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. A charter of 1611/12 incorporated the inhabitants of the hospital. The location, at the north side of the parish churchyard, is typical, as is the access, directly towards the church where the inhabitants prayed daily for their benefactors. The remains of a second almshouse, for widows and part of the same institution, stands at the south side of the Town Wall.
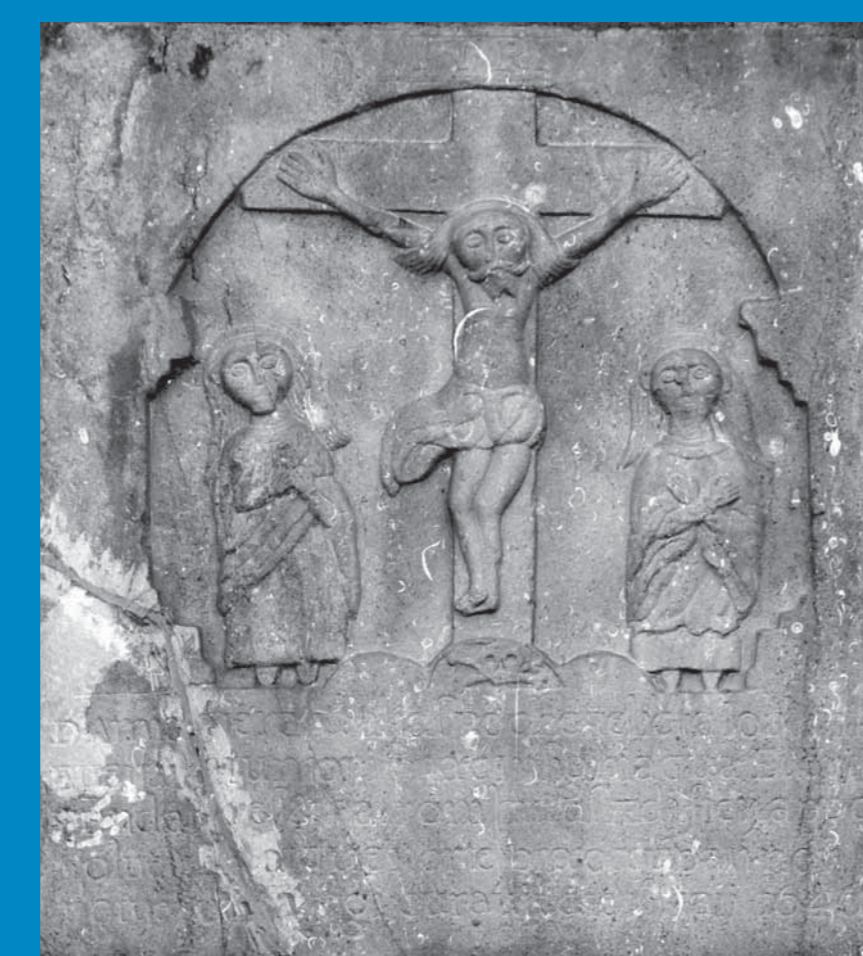
Medieval Features

Original features of the building include two cut limestone doorways at first floor level at the rear, which were accessed by external stairs; windows with 'label-mouldings' above; and the exquisite octagonal chimney pots. The entrance to the ground floor may have been from the street and the west gable.

Coats-of-Arms

These are (1) the Dunboyne Butlers with the motto *'Timor Domini, Fons Vitae'* ('Fear of the Lord is the fountain of life') and (2) the arms of Everard impaling Roche, commemorating the marriage in 1633 of John Everard (junior) to Amy Roche and the motto *'Virtus in actione consistit'* ('Virtue consists in action').

Weighbridge

The cast-iron weighbridge recalls the later market function of the building. Irish Country Markets was founded here in 1947 by Olivia Hughes and others, and a country market still takes place in the building every Friday.

Volunteers photographed outside the Town Hall in the 1920s

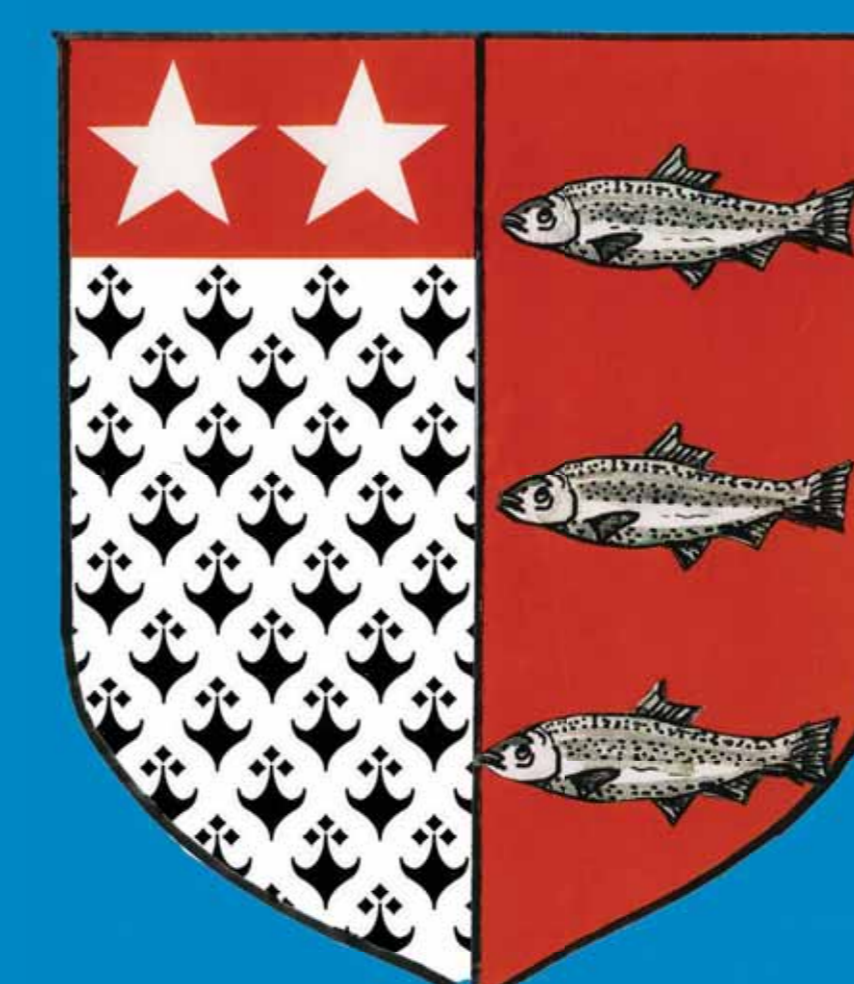Fethard Town Hall photographed during renovations 1989

Crucifixion Panel - This naïve and beautiful depiction of Christ attended by the two Marys was erected by Amy Roche in 1646 to commemorate the foundation of the almshouse.
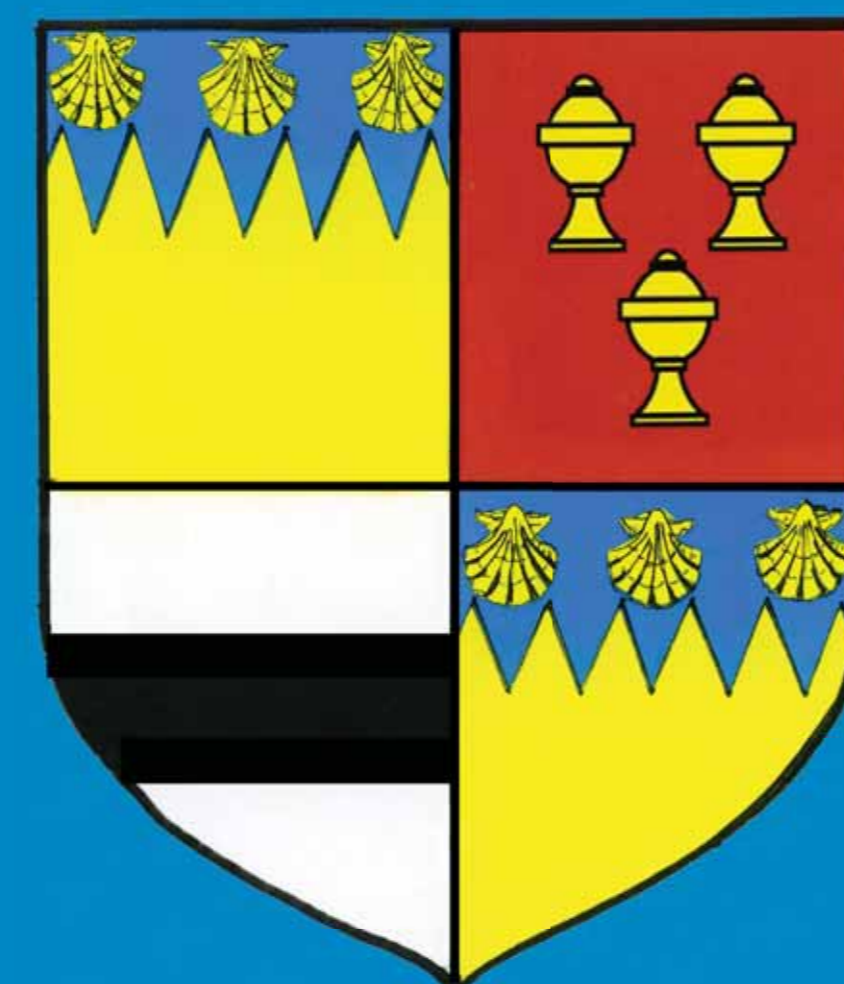
Butler of Dunboyne - Coat of Arms

Padraig Pearse plaque - This plaque, erected in 1980, commemorates Patrick Pearse, leader of the Easter Rising of 1916 against British rule and executed on May 3rd 1916.

Everard - Roche Coat of Arms

YOU ARE HERE

0 25 50 75 100m

- Visible Wall
- Line of original wall
- Visible tower
- Site of tower
- Visible gate
- Site of gate
- Ecclesiastical structure
- Fortified house
- Possible extent of medieval town

A North Gate
B Main Street
C Town Hall
D Court Castle
E Edmond's Castle
F Watergate
G Augustinian Friary
H Holy Trinity Church
J Madam's Bridge