



BAILE STAIRIÚIL

Historic Town



FIODH ÁRD *Fethard*

EOLAS TURASÓIREACHTA *Visitor Information*

6

AUGUSTINIAN FRIARY *Augustinian Friary*

'Fethard Abbey'

In 1305 a house of Augustinian friars was established in Fethard, just outside the town. In 1540, at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, the friary was surrendered by William Burder, the prior, to the Crown. The friary then comprised a church, steeple, dormitory, hall, two chambers, a kitchen, a store, two stables, a cemetery, an orchard, two gardens, twenty-four messuages (houses), nine acres of arable, one acre of meadow, a water-mill and a bakehouse.

The property thus confiscated was granted to Edmund Butler, Lord Dunboyne. The friary suffered many indignities: in 1577, a licence was issued to Thomas O'Shilleagher for the production and sale of whiskey 'in the said abbey.' However, the friars managed to stay on through the succeeding turbulent centuries, officially returning in 1820 and still ministering to the people of Fethard.

The church and eastern range of the friary survive. The Abymill Theatre, a former water-powered flour mill dating from 1791, occupies the site of the southern range (the refectory).

Blessed Fr William Tirry

Fr William Tirry was appointed Prior in 1652. In January the following year a proclamation was published charging 'all priests, friars, bishops and other clergy who derive their authority from the See Apostolic of the Pope of Rome, to depart out of the Kingdom of Ireland under pain of death, within 40 days.' Fr Tirry went into hiding in the ruined friary. He was arrested on Holy Saturday 1654 and executed, wearing his Augustinian habit, in the market place in Clonmel on 12 May 1654. He was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1992. His body is believed to lie within the grounds of the friary.

Monuments

Within the friary church and its grounds is one of the finest collections of 16th and 17th century grave-slabs in Ireland, commemorating the families of O'Meagher, Tobin, Everard, Vinn, O'Kearney, Wall, Purcell, Nugent and Fitzgerald. There is a monument to John Butler, Lord Dunboyne, former Catholic bishop of Cork (1763-1786). Dunboyne later converted to Protestantism in order to inherit and married in the hope of producing an heir, but was reconciled to the Catholic faith on his deathbed.

Masons' marks

Within the friary church, in the archways between the nave and the side-aisle is a remarkable collection of masons' marks – distinctive signatures and perhaps doodles in the stonework – made by the masons during construction in the 14th and 15th centuries.



Fethard Augustinian Abbey and House c.1900

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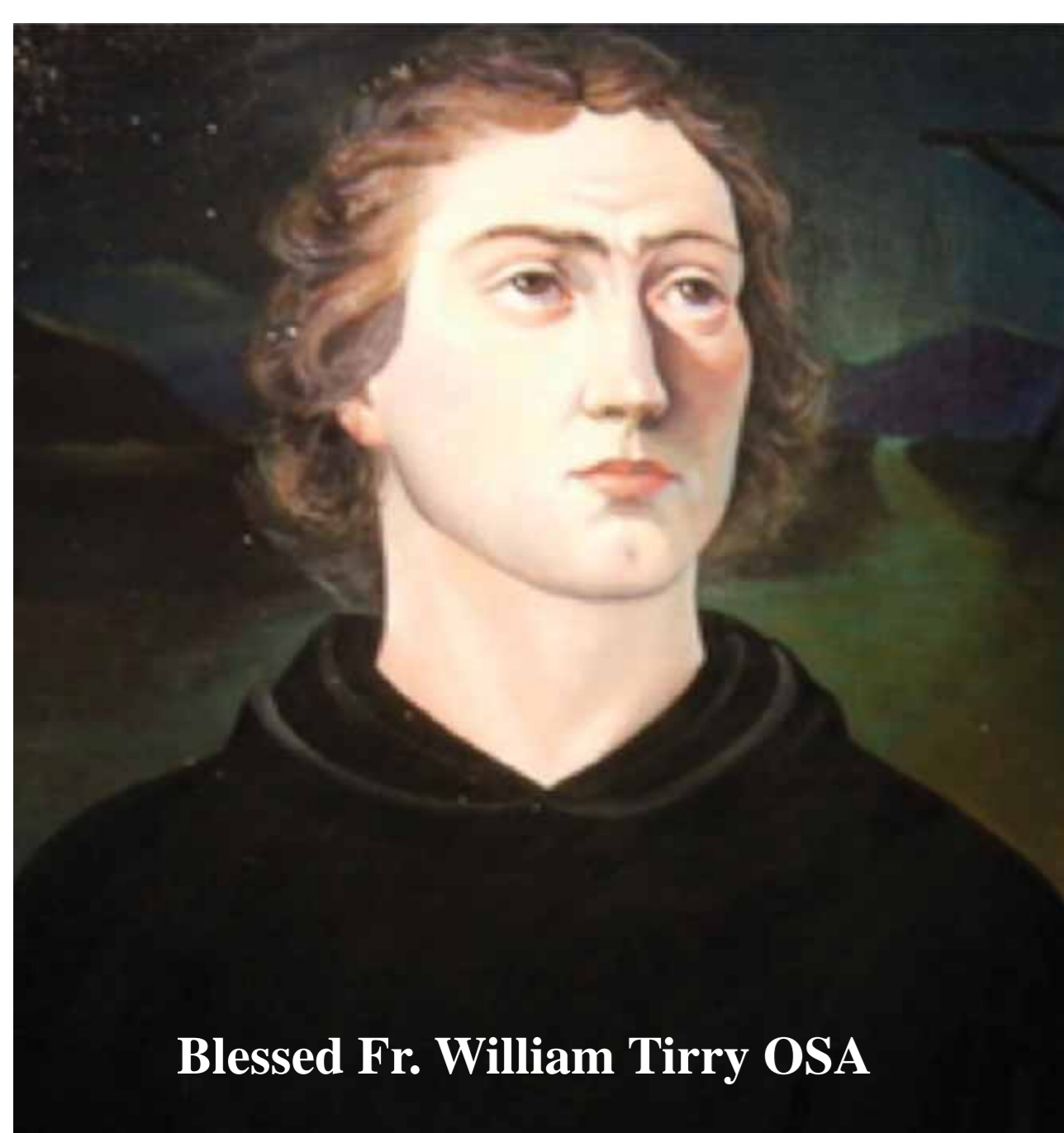
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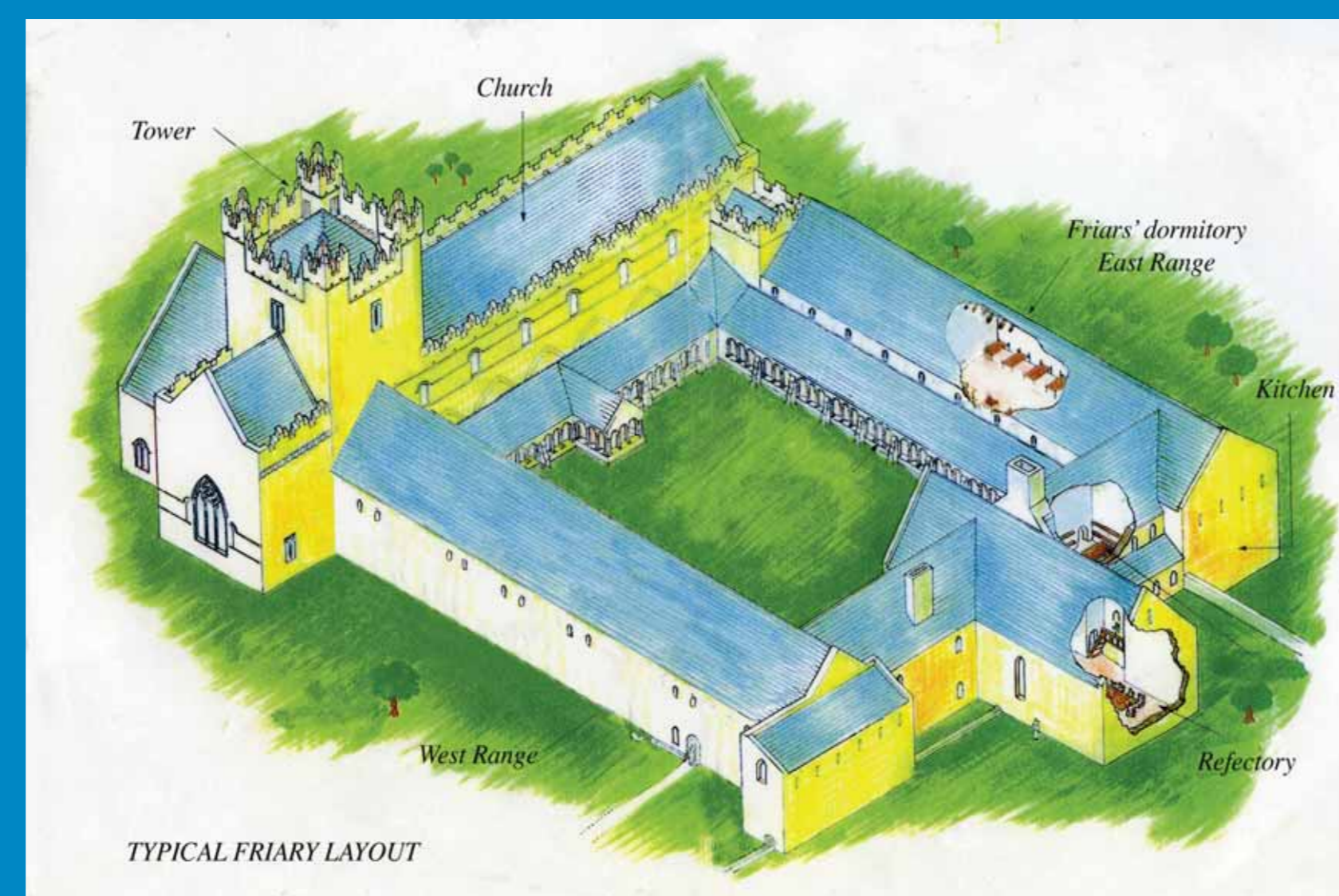
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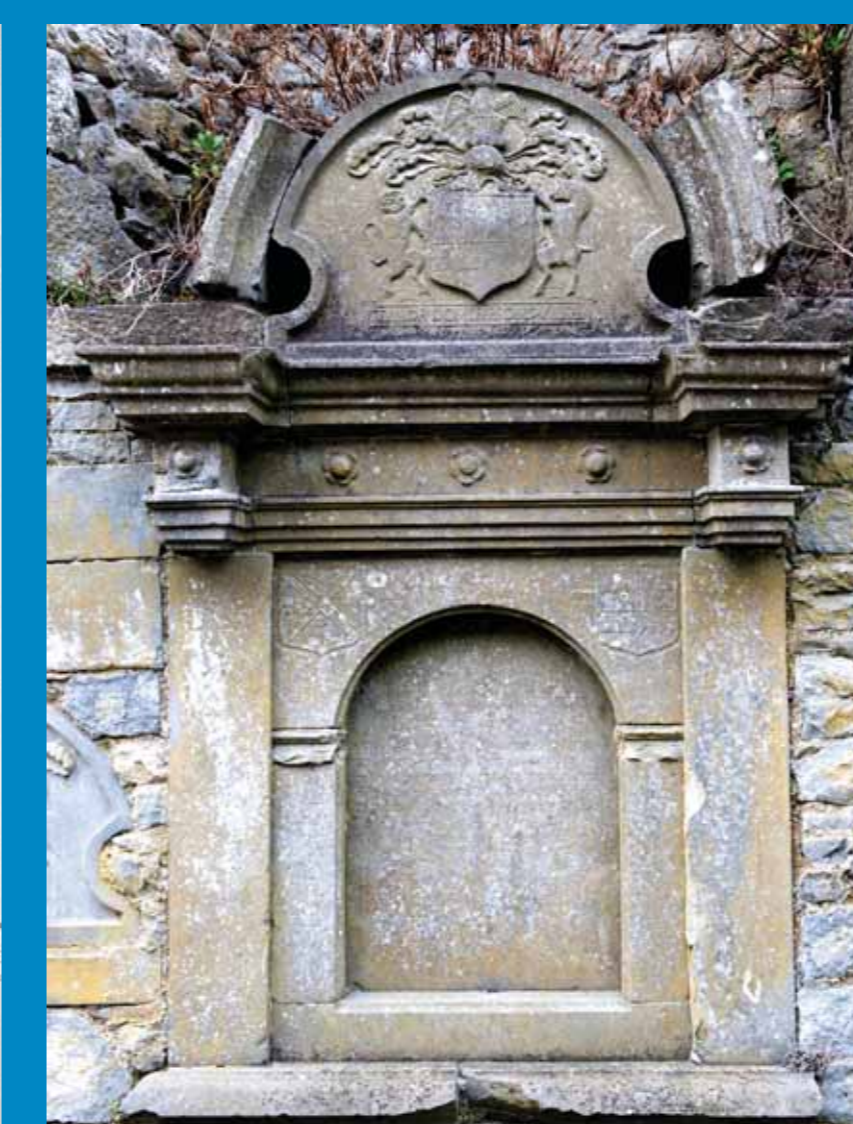
Blessed Fr. William Tirry OSA



Schematic plan of a friary



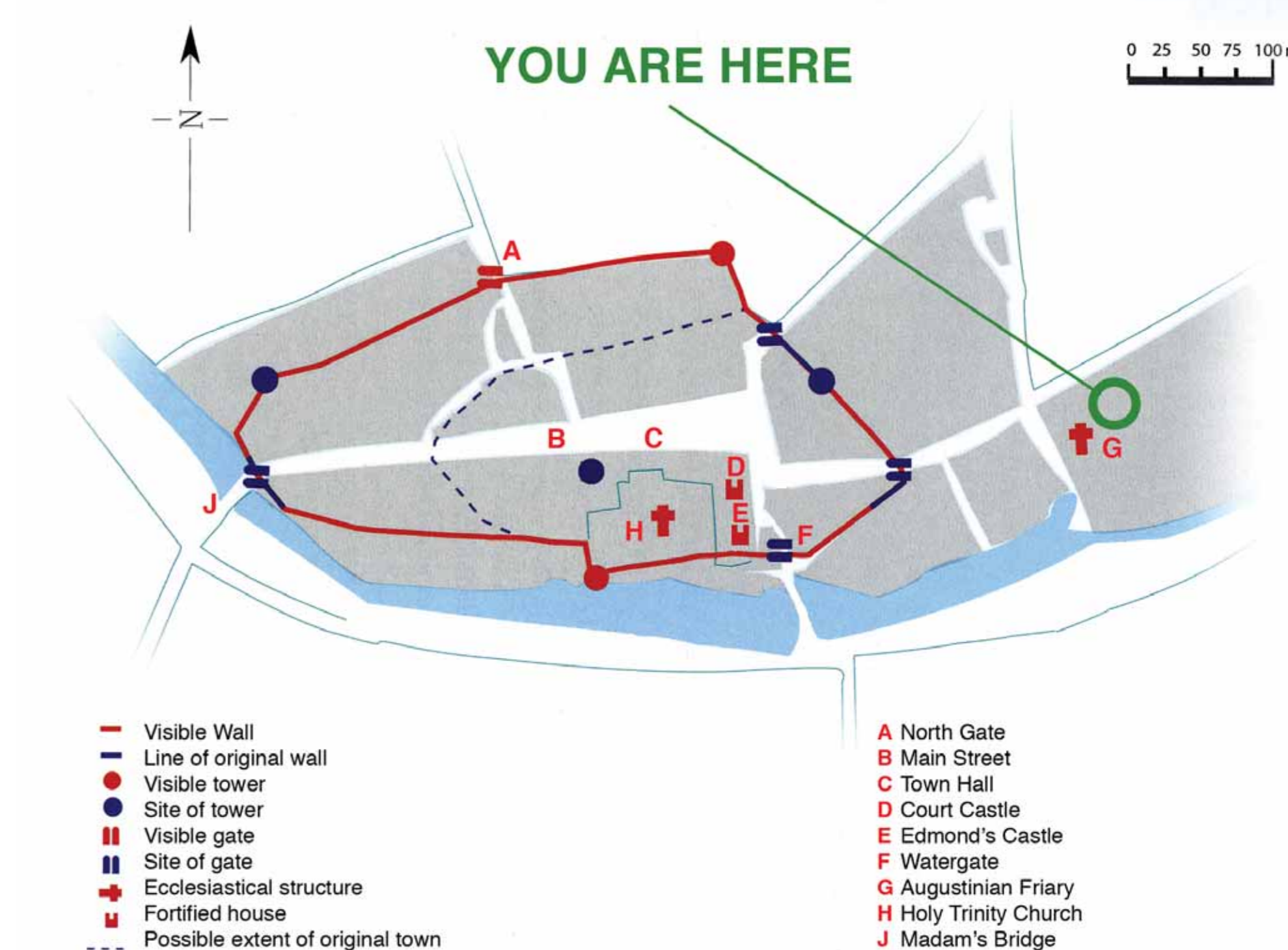
Tobin Memorial



Dunboyne Monument



Our Lady of Fethard



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