WONDER WANDER WATERFORD

NATIONAL INVENTORY of ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Waterford City & County Council
Comhairle Cathrach & Contae Phort Láirge

INSTRUCTIONS

TAKE A 'WONDER WANDER' THROUGH WATERFORD CITY:

- Wander through our streets, find the picture clues and delve into the stories that our city tells through its rich architectural heritage.
- Take ten minutes to spot the buildings and features on our quayside scavenger hunt, or simply relax and enjoy our carefully curated self-guided tour of Waterford.
- Always remember to glance up, peer down, and never cease to WONDER!

Download more FREE WALKING TRAILS

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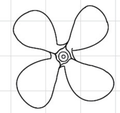
QUAYSIDE SCAVENGER HUNT

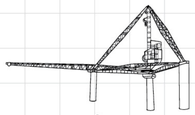
HOW MANY OF THESE STRUCTURES CAN YOU SPOT ON THE QUAYS?

Harbour Masters Offices 19th Cent.

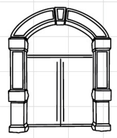


Propeller from SS Port Lairge Commissioned c.1910

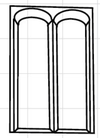
Central Methodist Hall, c.1810



Crane Commissioned c.1910



The Granary, 1872



Merchant House, c. 1650

THE STORY OF WATERFORD

Waterford, or in Irish "Port Láirge", is thought to have been found in 914 CE by Viking leader Ragnall. The arrival of the Normans in the 12th century heralded a key period in Waterford's history. Anglo Norman lord, Richard de Clare, who is perhaps better known as Strongbow, married Aoife, daughter of Diarmait Mac Murchadha, King of Leinster, in the city in 1171. Soon after, King Henry II of England designated Waterford a Royal City.

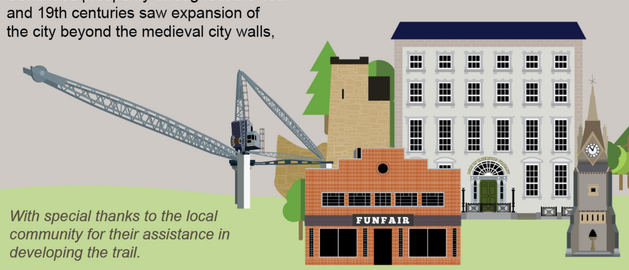
By the late 1500s maritime trade was thriving and Waterford was Ireland's second richest city. Commerce was further bolstered in the late 17th century with the arrival of Huguenots and Quakers, who were fleeing persecution in France. Credited with bringing sail making, among other skills, to the area, their industrious spirit left an indelible mark on the city. Many of the merchants built fine townhouses on Lady Lane, Georges Street and Catherine Street. Notable Quaker families include Penrose of Waterford Crystal and Jacobs of the famous cream cracker.

Continued prosperity throughout the 18th and 19th centuries saw expansion of the city beyond the medieval city walls, initially along O'Connell Street and the Mall, and later into the Lower Newton.

Waterford's urban population continued to grow during the 20th century, despite the economic hardships of the 1930s when the trade war between the fledgling Irish State and Britain saw some industries decline. Today, the city is a thriving cultural destination, with a fascinating collection of outstanding museums.

In recognition of the special historical, social, artistic and architectural character of Waterford City, Waterford City and County Council has designated an Architectural Conservation Area. Together with the diligent efforts of the local community, this designation helps in the management and enhancement of its unique social history and wealth of architectural treasures.

Want to learn more about Waterford City Architectural Conservation Area and other Architectural Conservation Areas in the city and county? Contact Waterford City and County Council's Architectural Conservation Officer.



With special thanks to the local community for their assistance in developing the trail.

TICK THE BOX AS YOU WONDER

1. REGINALD'S TOWER ☐

A Waterford landmark for some 800 years, Reginald's Tower was built by the Anglo-Normans on the site of an earlier Viking fort. Having served as a fortress, mint, and prison, it is considered Ireland's oldest civic building. The tower's spiral staircase includes steps of differing heights to make it difficult for intruders to climb.

In July 1922, during the Civil War, Reginald's Tower was taken over by anti-Treaty forces during a four-day battle across the city which resulted in their defeat by the Free State Army.

2. CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL ☐

Designed by the eminent Waterford born architect, John Roberts, this 18th century Church of Ireland Cathedral marks the site of the medieval church where Strongbow is said to have married Aoife.

Look inside to see the gruesome tomb of James Rice, eleven-time mayor of Waterford, who is vividly portrayed as a decaying corpse.

While here why not check out the nearby Irish Wake Museum which incorporates part of a timber cagework house dating back to the 1460s.

3. CITY HALL AND THEATRE ROYAL ☐

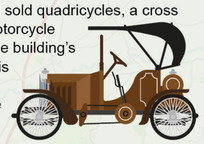
The city assembly rooms and play house were built during the late 18th century by the celebrated local architect, John Roberts. The building's magnificent council chamber has hosted key political figures including John Redmond, Member of Parliament for Waterford City, who tirelessly campaigned for Home Rule.

Look out for the foundry markings of 'Sun Foundry, Glasgow' to the base of the four lamp standards to the front of city hall.

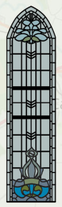
While here look across to No.33, The Mall. In 1848 local man Thomas Francis Meagher unveiled a tricolour here. The flag would later be adopted as the Irish flag.

4. FORMER PEARE'S MOTOR WORKS ☐

Built in 1901 and originally trading as Peare's Motor Works, this is one of the first purpose-built commercial garages in the country. The business initially produced and sold quadricycles, a cross between a motorcycle and a car. The building's rooftop clock is a landmark feature on the street.



5. BAPTIST CHAPEL ☐



Nestled into the streetscape, the Baptist Chapel of 1910 showcases contrasting colour and texture with redbrick walls, limestone detailing, and decorative terracotta tiles. The stained glass windows display an Art Nouveau flair, inspired by the natural forms of curving plants and flowers. Art Nouveau was an international style of art and architecture, popular between 1890 and 1910.

Further down this street are the red brick Italianate-style towers of St. Catherine's Hall. Can you spot them?

6. COURTHOUSE ☐

Built in 1849, this neo-classical courthouse was designed by J.B. Keane. The temple front with crowning pediment conveys a sense of law and order. The 2017 extension is a sensitive contemporary addition.

7. PEOPLE'S PARK ☐

The People's Park dates to the mid-19th century, a period committed to the provision of public open space to combat against overcrowding in our towns and cities. Locals note that a cycle race track was established here in the 1890s, allegedly one of the fastest in Ireland and Britain. The park is carefully landscaped and is embellished with two notable cast-iron structures, the octagonal bandstand and Carlisle Bridge.

As you make your way to the next location, keep your eyes peeled for a second cast-iron bridge which marks the site of the city's old ironworks.

8. OTTERAN PLACE ☐

One of several Victorian terraces found in the city, the houses of Otteran Place incorporate characteristic features of the period, including red brick walls and canted bay windows. Note the exposed chimney breast on the gable wall of No.19, this suggests that the terrace may originally have been intended to be longer.

9. ST JOHN'S BRIDGE ☐

St John's Bridge marks one of the historic routes into the city. Though the plaque on the bridge dates to 1765, the pointed arches under which St. John's Pill flows suggest the bridge may incorporate part of a medieval bridge.

A 'pill' is a term given to a small tidal river in parts of the south-east of Ireland and also in Wales.

10. CITY WALLS ☐

Originally constructed to protect the early Viking settlement, Waterford's defenses were strengthened during the Anglo-Norman period to include a total of seventeen towers and gate-houses. Today, six towers and an impressive 1.2 km circuit of the medieval wall still remain. As the city grew many houses were built cheek by jowl against the walls. The trace remains of some of these buildings can still be seen today.

11. FORMER BURTONS STORE ☐

Built in the 1920s for tailoring business Burtons, this purpose-built Art Deco shop conforms to the company's distinctive brand identify. The building is a fine example of early 20th century retail architecture with expansive glazing, terracotta-clad walls, and a decorative Greek-key pattern frieze. Look out for the company logo at roof level and over the doorway to the side elevation.

Popular during the 1920s and 30s, Art Deco architecture is characterized by stylized geometric shapes and the use of man-made materials.

12. J&K WALSH'S PUBLIC HOUSE AND GROCERS ☐

Stepping into Walsh's evokes an era of Victorian shop design and craftsmanship. Many public houses in the 19th and early 20th centuries were combined with a retail business. This was usually a grocery or hardware but sometimes even included an undertaker's. The premises has a rich interior with shelving, mirrors, and a traditional snug.

13. MORRIS HOUSE/PORT OF WATERFORD OFFICES ☐

The Morris House, built in 1795, is one of four buildings on the trail by the Waterford architect, John Roberts. Built as the family residence of the shipping merchant William Morris, this grand townhouse showcases Georgian design. The building boasts a decorative doorcase, typical of the period, and an elegant oval staircase within. The building later served as the Port of Waterford's offices and currently hosts the Chamber of Commerce.

14. FORMER NATIONAL IRISH BANK BUILDING ☐

Established in 1835, the National Bank of Ireland aimed to counter the exclusivity of the established banks by supporting Irish traders and farmers. The lavish architectural detailing of the entrance front with limestone ground floor and contrasting red brick to upper floors suggests prosperity and confidence.

A number of other prominent bank buildings can be spotted as you wander Great Georges Street and O' Connell Street, including the former Munster and Leinster Bank on the corner of Gladstone Street and the former Waterford Savings Bank at No.31-32 O'Connell Street.

15. HOLY TRINITY CATHEDRAL ☐

Designed by John Roberts in 1793, Holy Trinity is Ireland's oldest Roman Catholic cathedral. The facade exemplifies the classical influence of ancient Greek and Roman architecture. Roberts, a native of Waterford, is also responsible for the Church of Ireland cathedral (map location 2).

On your way to the next location look out for the propeller of the SS Port Láirge. Known affectionately to locals as the 'Mud Boat', this was the last surviving steam dredger to operate in the port of Waterford.

16. CLOCK TOWER AND FOUNTAIN ☐

This clock tower, built in 1864, doubled up as a water fountain for both human and animal consumption. The monument is a reminder of the now-vanished presence of horses in the city and along the quayside.

17. CUSTOMS HOUSE AND GENERAL POST OFFICE ☐

Designed by James Ryan in 1876, this highly ornate Venetian Gothic-style building was built as a Customs House and General Post Office. The building includes decorative carvings by J O'Reilly who was also responsible for the carvings on the former National Irish Bank (map location 14). Can you spot O'Reilly's signature in the carving over the principal door?

Further along the quays, a steel crane dating to the early 1900s stands as an iconic reminder of Waterford's proud maritime history.

18. CLYDE BUILDING ☐

This late 19th century gem once housed the Clyde Shipping Company. Notably ornate, the building was the port offices of a thriving business that was involved in the transportation of goods, livestock, and passengers.

WATERFORD CITY
ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA
WALKING TRAIL
PORT LÁIRGE

WANDER THE ROUTE USING THE PICTURE CLUES OR BREAK IT UP AND WONDER...