

MMIAH Project:

Recovery and Valorisation of the Maritime, Military and Industrial Atlantic Heritage of the Coastal Edge

April 2018-04-24

Cork City Council

## **STATIO BENE FIDIS CARINIS – A SAFE HARBOUR FOR SHIPS**

Cork is Ireland's second city, located in the south west of the country at the western edge of the second deepest natural harbour in the world. While a settlement and ecclesiastic foundation are known at Cork since early Christian times, the Vikings fully recognized and capitalized on Cork's favourable location as a '*safe harbour for ships*' over a thousand years ago. They built a town on an island in the estuarine marsh at the lowest bridging point on the broad river Lee. The town connected land routes from the north to the wider world via the river Lee and Cork harbour to the south, and as such occupied a strategic location in the surrounding topography. As the town prospered through time, new land for its expansion was eked out through reclamation of the surrounding marsh, and its urban form changed from an island settlement to a significant medieval walled town following the Norman Conquest. From the early modern era, Cork was often the last port called to before ships left Europe, and since the 17<sup>th</sup> century Cork city and harbour served as a provisioning port for ships heading west into the open Atlantic and to the new world.

The construction of many military fortifications around Cork Harbour since the 16<sup>th</sup> century reflect British interest in Cork's geographic and strategic advantages as a naval port, its proximity to a natural deep harbour, and its rich agricultural hinterlands. At the western side of the harbour, Elizabeth Fort and Blackrock castle guarded the expanded walled city, while the entrance to the harbour was defended by Camden, Carlisle and Westmoreland forts (now known as Davis, Meaghar and Mitchell). Five Martello towers and the British Royal Navy base were dotted around the harbour; gunpowder mills, a magazine fort and ordnance grounds were constructed around the city also.

Documentary sources and records attest to Cork's post-medieval history as a significant port of provisions for the many ships embarking on international voyages. Port of Cork workshops, building and bonded warehouse; the harbourmasters house; graving dock and ship grid; the city quay walls; the butter market and lines of the 'butter roads'; the Firkin Crane; the old Custom House and many extant structures surviving in the modern city bear testament to the significant economic and social history of the city. Mercantile activity and the prosperity of Cork is reflected in the number of different dissenter religious meeting houses established in Cork, with trade routes and networks developed through their work. Many fine houses and villas of these wealthy merchants line the approach to Cork along the banks of the Lee, while the 4-storey terraced houses which served as lodgings for ship passengers still survive within the modern fabric of the city.

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century many emigrant adventurers as well as prison convicts for transportation departed from Cork city and adjacent towns around the harbour. The prisons at Spike Island (Westmoreland / Fort Mitchell), and Elizabeth Fort were two significant locations at which thousands of Irish women and men were held (often for petty crime) before enforced voyage during the Famine years. The *Burning of Cork* in 1920 during the Irish War of Independence resulted in the rebuilding and modernization of large portions of the city centre, however, the port and harbour of Cork manages to maintain many features and much of its character reflecting its maritime, military and industrial heritage.

Cork City Council recognizes that a crucial element of Cork's modern identity is attributable its culture and heritage, and is committed to the protection and enhancement of the many elements which reflect its important development history. It acknowledges that in so doing, social cohesion and the growth of its tourism industry with associated economic benefits can be achieved in a viable and sustainable manner going forward.

Three selected '*Good Practice*' examples which typify recovery and valorisation of aspects of the maritime, military and industrial heritage of the city have been selected for this study:

1. Elizabeth Fort – building sustainable tourism within Cork city

2. Cork's medieval town walls - valorization of an 'unseen' monument
3. Blackrock castle - modern reuse of a 16<sup>th</sup> century military fortification for social, educational and tourism.

## 1: CORK'S MEDIEVAL TOWN WALLS

Location	Cork City.
UTM Coordinates	Centred on 567158 - 571845
Identification Code according to RMP Status:	C0074-034002 Town Defences
Transfer Agreement:	National Monument; under Local Authority guardianship
Ownership regime:	Municipal with public domain character of social and cultural use

The medieval town defences / town wall is recorded in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>) as follows:

*Description: City walled before end of 12<sup>th</sup> century (Bradley et al. 1985, 46-52; Thomas 1992, vol.2, 62). Record of repairs numerous up to late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Besieged by Williamites under Marlborough, in 1690 causing serious damage (O'Murchadha 1990). Survey carried out in 1733 shows stretches broken down and built over. Medieval walls enclosed sub-rectangular area (c.645, N-S; c. 225m E-W). Sixteen mural towers existed along wall and at least two major gate ways (C0074-03002-; C0074-03412-). According to MacCarthy (1982) 'substantial fragments of wall still exist' on S side of Hanover Street. Recent excavations have uncovered parts of wall at St. Peter's Market (Hurley 1986); Christ Church Lane (Twohig 1978,21; Twohig 1974; Twohig 1977), Bishop Lucey Park (Hurley 1985; Hurley 1989; Hurley 1990), Tuckey Street (Hurley and Power 1981); Grand Parade Hotel (Hurley and Power 1981); 81-83 Grand Parade (Wren 1992); Grattan Street (Power 1982); Beamish and Crawford brewery (Cleary 1988) & Kyril's Quay (Hurley 1992).*

*The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Cork. Volume 2: East and South Cork' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1994). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research.*

*Date of upload/revision: 14 January 2009*

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Over the past thirty years archaeological excavations have provided invaluable evidence for the layout and morphology of the medieval town defences, which initially enclosed the island and later reclaimed marsh on which the town of Cork was built. It is understood that the prosperous Hiberno-Norse settlement of the tenth and eleventh centuries was a prize to be conquered by the Normans in 1177, and from that point the Norman and English influence on the development of the city defences is evidenced. The matter of defending the settlement was of critical importance, both as a means of protecting the inhabitants from Irish and foreign attack, but also as a symbol of the status of the residents enclosed within the early defences and later high stone walls in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century. The prosperity and significance of the settlement is indicated through the construction of the 'Kings Castle', from which the administration of the English monarch was centred. Controlled access to the city was via a sea-gate, through which ships could enter from the river Lee and enjoy safe harbour within the city walls. Landward access was provided via gates at the northern and southern extents of the town which connected the island city by (initially) wooden

bridges over the Lee to the neighbouring land. Murage grants are documented from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries for construction and repair work to the walls, and from the late sixteenth century, documentary and cartographic sources show the city '*enclosed within a circuit of walls in the form of an egg with the river flowing round about it and running between, not passable through but by bridges lying out in length, as it were, in one direct broad street*' (Camden in Maxwell 1940, 252).

The repair and maintenance of the medieval walls continued into the seventeenth century, but as the city prospered and the need for new city infrastructure (quay walls, navigation wall etc) increased the defensive medieval city walls gradually fell into decline. Coupled with improvements in artillery and the construction of new fortifications around the harbour, and the siege of the city in 1690, the medieval walls became redundant. The walls for the most part fell into disrepair, or were dismantled to the contemporary ground level to make way for eighteenth century buildings; but below ground, the town wall survives up to 3 metres deep in places along its original circuit. Surviving extant sections of the town wall and plot boundaries which maintain the line of the medieval defences can be seen in the modern city to the present day.

## **LEGAL STATUS**

Archaeological sites are legally protected by the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The legal status of the medieval town defenses of Cork was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, and as such the town defenses are afforded statutory protection. Any development works conducted on the line or in the vicinity of the monument must be conducted with an archaeological condition of planning in place, and an automatic presumption in favour of preservation in situ of the monument is accepted.

The legal guardian of the city walls is Cork City Council, and the Council is committed to the protection of the monument. A Management Plan for the City Walls of Cork was developed in 2008 as an action of the Cork City Heritage Plan 2007-2012. This was produced in tandem with the Heritage Council through the Irish Walled Towns Network (IWTN); the Department of Archaeology University College Cork, and Maurice F. Hurley. The Management Plan was intended to be used by practitioners in both the public and private sectors; Local Authority (Cork City Council) Officials, State Departments (DoEHLG and OPW) and other heritage bodies (Heritage Council and organisations such as IWTN), planning consultants, engineers, architects, archaeologists, property owners, developers as well as the general public.

Under the current Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (chapter 9; Built Heritage and Archaeology), the protection and promotion of the city walls is outlined in specific policies and objectives as follows:

### *Objective 9.13: Protection of Cork's Medieval City Walls*

*Cork City Council will secure preservation in-situ of the medieval city defences and will have regard to the preservation and enhancement of the line of the city wall when considering development proposals in its vicinity. Disturbance, removal and alteration of the line of the city wall will not be permitted. An appropriate buffer zone between the city wall and the development will also be required.*

### *Objective 9.14: Promotion of Cork's Medieval City Walls*

*Cork City Council will seek to improve public awareness and increase knowledge and appreciation of the medieval city walls. This will be achieved through the implementation of the recommendations of the Management Plan for the City Walls.*

## **GENERATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE**

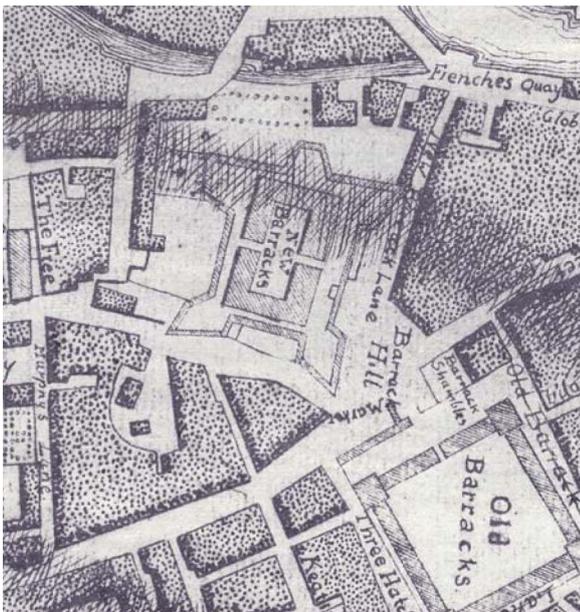
Cork City Council is actively seeking to promote public awareness and increase knowledge of the medieval city walls.

Two sections of the medieval town wall remain exposed and visible to the public, at Bishop Lucey Park in the centre of the city, and in the basement of City Car Park at North Main Street. The maintenance of the exposed sections of wall at these locations is managed by the City Council, and access is managed by same. Guided walking tours of the historic core of Cork city are a frequent feature of the annual events calendar in Cork, and Cork City Archaeologist often presents talks to schools, societies and interested stakeholder groups in relation to the medieval town defences.

In association with the Irish Walled Towns Network division of the Heritage Council, annual funding is provided which allows for a public celebratory event to take place to address and promote same. This event has taken place annually within the city at different locations over the past 10 years, including at an exposed section of the town wall at Bishop Lucey Park in the city centre and more recently at Elizabeth Fort, where this event has found a permanent home. The day of town wall celebration includes historical medieval battles, displays of medieval weaponry, everyday items and games, face painters, balloon makers and archaeological dig-in-a-box workshops. In addition, at Elizabeth fort medieval style stocks are set up and experts are on hand to provide information on and answer queries in relation to archaeological findings from current and past archaeological projects in Cork. The Heritage Council measure visitor satisfaction with the event via surveys of attendees; in 2017 there was overwhelmingly positive feedback on the event, with an expressed desire to see more events of this nature taking place in the city throughout the year.

# ELIZABETH FORT

Location	Barrack Street, Cork City. Town land: Cork City
UTM Coordinates	567079 571487
Identification Code according to RMP Status:	CO074-039001- Class: Bastioned Fort
Transfer Agreement:	from OPW to Cork City Council in 2014
Ownership regime:	Municipal with public domain character of social and cultural use



Detail from John Rocques Map 1773

Elizabeth Fort is recorded in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places

(<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>) as follows:

*'Original fort constructed c. 1601, consisted of large irregular earthen structure, built around pre-existing church (CO074-03902-). Replaced by stronger more regular fortification c. 1624; Cromwell said to have raised the walls in 1649; in decayed condition by 1677; new barrack built inside fort in 1719. Irregular quadrilateral with two pentangular bastions on S corners and two sub-rectangular bastions on N corners; built of regular coursed limestone blocks lying in places on underlying bedrock. Demi-oval shaped bastion projects from centre of N wall. S curtain wall removed; new wall constructed between S bastions. Walls, battered externally, survive to internal height of 4-5m, 2m above this appears rebuilt. Addition with entrance gateway added outside original curtain wall to E. L-shaped building along S and W sides of interior accommodates modern Garda barracks.(Mulcahy, MacNamara & O'Brien, 1960).*

*The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Cork.*

Volume 2: East and South Cork' (Dublin; Stationery Office, 1994). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in light of recent research.

Date of upload/revision: 14 January 2009'



Lee in 1790 (John Fitzgerald's nineteenth century watercolour of Cork)

#### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT:**

The 'Plantation' of Munster from the end of the sixteenth century, sanctioned by Queen Elizabeth 1, saw the arrival of thousands of English settlers, soldiers and new inhabitants to the prosperous city of Cork and its rich agricultural hinterland. The threat of a Spanish invasion, coupled with the often rebellious nature of the native Irish deemed the fortification and protection of English interests around the settlement and harbour of Cork necessary. For these reasons in 1590 Elizabeth I sanctioned the construction of star-shaped forts around the Irish coast, but it was not until after the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 that the defence of Cork Harbour began in earnest.

The earliest construction phase and occupation of at Elizabeth Fort occurred between 1601 - 1602 under the Lord President of Munster, Sir George Carew, on the site of the medieval church of St. Mary del Nard. The Fort was designed to defend the city of Cork from its southern side, and was accessible directly from the southern gate of the walled city, on a limestone promontory, which overlooked the main approach to the city from the south. However, the Fort was itself overlooked by higher ground to the south, and with seventeenth century advancements in artillery it became weakened in terms of its defensive potential for the city. The need for defence was evidenced by an attack by Irish rebels in 1603; the might of English enforcement was shown by Carew's order for city residents to rebuild the fortification at their own expense.

In the following years, the continued English military presence in Cork city necessitated the construction of a barracks, and in 1719 one of two barracks at this part of the city was constructed within the walls of the fort; this was later converted into a women's prison, and from the eighteenth century, a place from which the enforced transportation of many Irish female convicts to the southern hemisphere was seen. During the Great Famine of the mid nineteenth century the high walls of the Fort allowed for its use as a food depot from which thousands of starving people were fed daily. It also functioned as a hospital, and housed the Cork City Artillery Militia before it became property of the Irish state in 1920-21.

## LEGAL STATUS

Archaeological sites are legally protected by the provisions of the National Monuments Acts, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning Acts. The legal status of The Elizabeth Fort was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994, and as such is afforded statutory protection. Any development works conducted on, or in the vicinity of the monument must be conducted with an archaeological condition of planning in place, and an automatic presumption in favour of preservation in situ of the monument is accepted.

The legal guardian of the Elizabeth Fort is Cork City Council and the Council are committed to the protection of the monument. An Historical Evolution and Appraisal Conservation Assessment Plan for Elizabeth Fort was developed in 2017. This was produced in tandem with David Kelly Partnership with Margaret Quinlan Architects. The Plan is intended to be used by practitioners in both the public and private sectors; Local Authority (Cork City Council) Officials, State Departments (DoEHLG and OPW) and other heritage bodies (Heritage Council and organisations such as IWTN), planning consultants, engineers, architects, archaeologists, property owners, developers as well as the general public.

Under the current Cork City Development Plan 2015-2021 (chapters 8: Arts, Cultural Heritage and Tourism and 9; Built Heritage and Archaeology), the protection and promotion of the Elizabeth Fort is outlined in specific policies and objectives as follows:

### *Objective 8.6: Medieval Spine and Cultural Quarters*

*It is an objective to promote the development of attractiveness of the Medieval Spine and adjoining cultural quarters by:*

*(a) Supporting or encouraging the development of heritage, culture or tourist venues, and the promotion of cultural events within these areas in key sites such as Elizabeth Fort,....*

*(c) Improving permeability through the Medieval Spine by developing public realm improvements at key points along the Medieval Spine ( the Medieval Gateways of North and South Gate Bridges) and at key city vantage points to the north and south of the Medieval Spine (Shandon and St. Patrick's Hill/ Bell's Field to the North; Elizabeth Fort to the south)*

### *Objective 9.22: Reuse and Refurbishment of Historic Buildings and Protection of Archaeological Resource*

*The City Council will positively encourage and facilitate the careful refurbishment of the historic built environment for sustainable and economically viable uses. In addition, it is recognized that the protection and retention of historic buildings within the medieval city, has the dual advantage of protecting the rich archaeological resource and the Recorded Monument of the Medieval Wall*

## GENERATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

Ownership and guardianship of the Elizabeth Fort was officially transferred from the Office of Public Works to Cork City Council in 2014, however, a number of activities of social and economic value had been initiated prior to and since that time by the Council with the promotion and development of the Fort in mind:

- The Cork *Historic Centre Action Plan* was prepared in 1994 and proposed upgrading the Historic Centre of Cork. The plan included proposals for the area around Elizabeth Fort, including: the creation of a new public square (“Fort Square”) on Barrack Street to the front of Elizabeth Fort; and the development and re-use of Elizabeth Fort as a visitor attraction.
- Following the adoption of the Historic Centre Action Plan, in 1997 an *Elizabeth Fort & Heritage Area Precinct Feasibility Study* was commissioned by the City Council. This report recommended a number of concepts, including the retention of buildings within the fortification for the continued use as residences of An Garda Síochána. Suggested visitor uses included the development of a National Museum, or a museum of Cork.
- The Office of Public Works, prior to the transfer of the monument to the City Council, completed conservation and repair works between 2003 – 2006, and an elevated walkway along the internal eastern, northern and western sides of the fort walls was installed for maximising the views over the city of Cork from these vantage points. However, general public access to the fort was not permitted at this time.
- One-off public events were hosted at Elizabeth Fort on a number of occasions, including performance events as part of Cork Capital of Culture 2005; Cork City Heritage Open Days 2005 and 2008. These events indicated the significant level of public interest in the monument
- Cork City Council upgraded the access to the Fort to help create an attractive space on Barrack Street that frames the setting to the Fort (costing approximately €150,000)
- While the monument was still under the remit of the OPW, a set of interpretive panels at the entrance to the Fort were erected in 2008. However, the ramparts still remained inaccessible to the public. The need for a concept for the overall development of the visitor attraction potential of the monument was acknowledged.
- In 2009 the Planning Policy Section Planning & Development Directorate of Cork City Council produced an *Elizabeth Fort Briefing* to examine proposals to maximise the potential of the Heritage Asset. This report was intended to stimulate discussions on the future of the Fort and its potential for development as a visitor attraction. This briefing was initiated as part of the development of a wider South Parish Local Area Plan, focused on the south bank of the River Lee’s southern channel and included the historic precinct around St. Fin Barre’s Cathedral and Elizabeth Fort to the west of the area. One of the key elements of the plan was a focus on tourism and improvement of tourist facilities in the area, including Elizabeth Fort as well as improving public spaces and the public realm.
- An *Historical Evolution and Appraisal Conservation Assessment Plan for Elizabeth Fort* was commissioned by Cork City Council, and was finalized in 2017 (David Kelly Partnership with

Margaret Quinlan Architects). This Plan outlines the current physical condition of the monument, provides a concise history of the monument and provides a statement of significance of the monument. The Plan forms the basis for the development of the monument going forward, and allows for the sustainable development and reuse of the Fort in a considered and measured way.

- In 2014, once ownership of the monument was transferred to Cork City Council, the monument was opened to the public on a daily basis, and a free guided tour service was established at the Fort, funded by the City Council. The success of this attraction in terms of visitor numbers has grown annually, and in 2017 visitor numbers were in excess of 40,000. A €3 fee for the provision of guided tours was introduced in 2018, but entry to the monument with its exceptional elevated views of the city centre remains free. A total of 2 permanent and 3 seasonal jobs are now supported in the provision of guided tours and the day-to-day management of visitor services at Elizabeth Fort.
- In 2017, in order to ensure to prevent dereliction of the former Garda houses within the Fort walls, Cork City Council made provisions for the adaptive reuse of same. Two of the former houses were converted to office accommodation, and early in 2018 *Visit Cork* (<http://www.cork.ie/>), the agency responsible for the promotion of Cork as a tourist destination, took up residence at Elizabeth Fort.
- In 2017 proposals were approved for two more of the former Garda houses within the Fort to be restored in keeping with their 1950's appearance, and a planning for their adaptive reuse as *Irish Landmark Trust* (<https://www.irishlandmark.com/>) visitor accommodation was granted. It is anticipated that these properties will be available for rental in August 2018.

### 3: Blackrock Castle and Observatory

Location	Mahon Town land; Cork City.
UTM Coordinates	172347, 720055
Identification Code according to NIAH Status:	20864028
Identification Code according to RMP Status:	CO074-052----: Tower House
Transfer Agreement:	National Monument protected under national monuments legislation, planning & development acts
Ownership regime:	Municipal; with public domain character of social, educational, scientific and cultural use

Blackrock Castle and Observatory is recorded in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places

(<http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/>) as follows:

*..circular tower (diam. c. 10.5m), now surviving to two storeys; built directly on rock outcrop and now at N end of complex built 1828-9 (Coleman 1914, 175). Exterior face not visible ENE->WSW where later building abuts tower. round floor (int. diam. 6m) entered from base of spiral stairs through intelled doorway to S; now used as store. Evenly spaced, double-splayed embrasures to NE, N, NW, W and SW; latter ope smaller than other four which appear similar; all now blocked up at narrowest point (c. 0.85 from outside edge; c. 1.5m from inside edge; with c. 0.6m). Inside of embrasures (wth1.75m) covered by plank-centred segmental arch (H c. 1.85m), base at floor level; outside covered by upward inclined lintels with downward inclined sill and splayed sides (max. H c. 0.75m; max. wth 1.2m). Recent roof now covers ground floor, but stone corbels indicate lower level of original wooden roof.*

*First floor chamber now part of bar/restraint. Door from spiral stairs blocked and room now entered through recent doorway to S. Five evenly-spaced embrasures, off-set with ground floor opes, covered by segmental arches. Three central embrasures adopted to take window frames; embrasure to E has outer half blocked; embrasure to W has front part divided by horizontal slab, below is splayed ope similar to those at ground level, now blocked; above is squat round-headed light. Stone corbels indicate level of original wooden roof.*

*Ground floor embrasures purpose-built gun ports; opes at first floor probably had similar function. Original tower ends at this height with plain cornice course but 18th century paintings show it standing at least two stories higher (Coleman 1914, facing 168; Coleman 1915, facing 1); these show 'handsome octagon room' (Smith 1750, vol 1, 358) atop tower and abutting tower to S gable-ended two-storey house, both of 18th century appearance. Present complex entered through embattled gateway to S, with stone plaque recording 1828-9 rebuilding of entire complex to design of James and G.R. Pain, in neo-Gothic style; courtyard flanked by further embattled buildings to W and S with stone wall to E; to S original circular tower, now surmounted by slimmer tower rising a further three storeys with slender turret attached containing spiral stairs (presumably rebuilt upwards from first floor level in 19th century); on E side of tower elaborate water-gate leading to slipway.*

*Built c. 1582 by citizens of Cork 'with artillery to resist pirates and other invaders' (Flood 1915, 102;*

Hayes-McCoy 1964, 32); sometimes mistakenly ascribed to Mountjoy (Smith 1750, vol 1, 358; Lewis 1837, vol. 1, 208 (Lewis gives date 1604); Coleman 1914, 169). Rare Irish example of circular tower built for cannon. Used throughout 18th and 19th centuries by Cork Corporation for entertaining and functions.

Built into external 1st floor wall of circular tower, in foyer of bar/restraunt, is fireplace removed here from Ronayn's Court (CO074-059---); large lintel with shallow elliptical arch cut on underside and edge roll moulding carried down jambs, topped by projecting cornice. Lintel bears the inscription "Morris Ronayn and Margaret Gould builded this house in the yeare of oure lorde 1627 and in the 3 yeare of Kinge Charles. Love god and neighbors"; centrally placed monogram "IHS", flanked by family armorial shields; also fleurs-de-lis and tudor rose (rubbing of inscription JCHAS 1912, facing 81).

The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Cork. Volume 2: East and South Cork' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1994). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT:**

Situated at the narrowest point of entry to the western side of Cork Harbour, Blackrock castle was constructed in c. 1582 to protect the city of Cork from pirates and from attack by sea. Fear of a Spanish attack had encouraged Elizabeth I to sanction a series of fortifications as part of the outer defence of Cork city, and the Spanish actions in the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 justified the defensive action. A portion of the circular tower with 2.2m thick walls survives on the site from this period, and although a fire in 1722 destroyed many other elements of contemporary architecture, the site was rebuilt and continued to be reused into the following centuries. Throughout its long and varied history the castle was used for numerous purposes, including its original defensive function, as a gun battery, a lighthouse, an Admiralty Court and a signalling station.

A second fire in 1827 saw the addition of new buildings in the neo-gothic style and renovation of the older original structures ordered by Mayor Thomas Dunscombe, with the castle in its current form resulting from this work. Since 2001 the final phase of redevelopment of the complex as an observatory and visitor attraction was initiated under Cork Corporation; in tandem with Cork Institute of Technology, Cork City Council continues to support this venture on an annual basis.

## **GENERATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE**

As a joint venture project, proposals for the twenty first-century redevelopment of Blackrock Castle between Cork City Council and the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) were initiated in the early 2000s. The CIT Blackrock Castle and Observatory was redeveloped as an educational and tourist facility, which comprises exhibitions and interpretation of the story of Cork's maritime history (*Journeys of Exploration*) and position on the edge of Europe; the Observatory houses *Cosmos at the Castle*, which is an award winning exhibition designed to engage and encourage children and adults to learn about the Universe. As part of this exhibition, children are enabled to compose messages which are beamed into space via radio telescope. In addition, gallery space is open to artists who wish to display artworks of a scientific or astronomical nature. Its status as a centre for scientific research is evidenced in the on-site labs with researchers in astronomy from the Cork Institute of Technology. It is open to the public, with significant tourist footfall on an annual basis.

