

WONDER WANDER GALWAY CITY CORE



NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe Galway City Council

INSTRUCTIONS

TAKE A 'WONDER WANDER' THROUGH GALWAY CITY CORE:

- 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 features in our architectural scavenger hunt, or simply relax and enjoy our carefully curated self-guided tour of Galway City Core.
- Always remember to glance up, peer down, and never cease to WONDER!

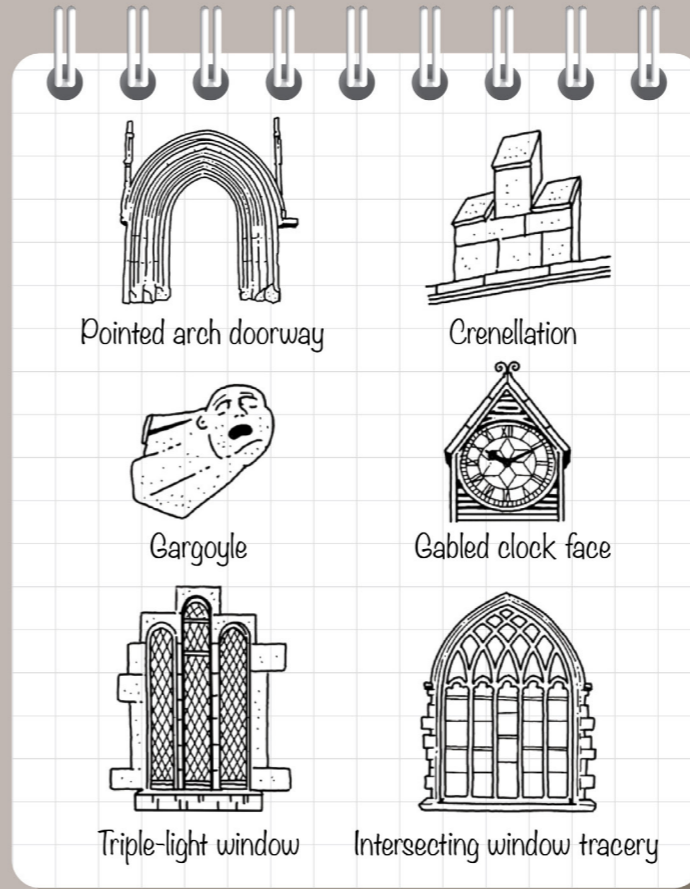


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SCAVENGER HUNT

HOW MANY OF THESE FEATURES CAN YOU SPOT ON ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH?



THE STORY OF GALWAY CITY CORE

Galway developed as a fishing settlement at the mouth of the River Corrib. Arrival of the Anglo-Normans saw the settlement transform, during the 13th century, into a thriving port encircled by defensive walls. From the 14th to the 17th century the city experienced a golden age, when trade and commerce were dominated by fourteen merchant families, earning it the name the 'City of Tribes'. The surrender to Cromwellian forces in 1652 and the political upheaval that ensued, saw the city's wealth severely diminished.

By the 18th century Galway had once again emerged as a thriving commercial centre, with industrial expansion centred on the fast flowing Corrib. It was during this period that the old city walls were largely pulled down, allowing for expansion beyond its medieval footprint. The 19th century was marked by further growth supported by the development of industry, infrastructure and the foundation of Queen's College (now the University of Galway).

The 20th century saw construction of a new cathedral, marking a bold addition to the city's skyline. Today the city core remains a bustling thriving centre characterised by streets, laneways and buildings that reflect century old patterns of adaptation and renewal.

In recognition of the special character of Galway's historic city core, Galway City 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. It is hoped that this much loved part of the city will continue to be valued, cherished and enjoyed by future generations.

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



TICK THE BOX AS YOU WONDER

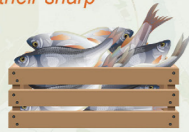
1. THE SPANISH ARCH

Dating to the late 16th century, the Spanish Arch was built as part of a defensive wall to protect the quayside. The adjoining building was previously home to the Shea Family who were local pig dealers. It's said that pigs were once driven up onto the arch to graze grass that had been growing on top!



In the early 1950s the celebrated sculptor, Clare Sheridan, lived in the house. It's thought that the ornate limestone pillars were moved here around this time from Ardfrý House, near Oranmore.

A bustling fish market was once held on the quayside where women from Claddagh dominated the trade. Famed for their sharp negotiating skills, it's said their apron pockets were safer than any bank!



2. BLAKE'S CASTLE

Look overhead to the machicolation that projects directly above the doorway of this medieval merchant's house. Reinstated as part of works undertaken in the early 1990s, the machicolation allowed defenders to throw stones onto attackers below.

Derived from the French term mâchicoulis the word translates to 'neck-breaker'. Can you think why?

3. KIRWAN'S LANE

This narrow lane formed part of a busy network of medieval streets. Along its length are buildings that have stood for centuries, characterised by stone arches and carved window openings. High taxation in the 18th century resulted in illicit trade and the smuggling of goods through the laneway after dark.

As you emerge from the lane, look back to a handsome pair of historic rendered and tiled shopfronts, on the corner of Cross Street Upper.

4. TIGH NEACHTAIN

This medieval former townhouse was once home to Richard Martin, M.P for Galway. As a pioneering 19th century campaigner against cruelty to animals, Martin earned the nickname of 'Humanity Dick'. Glance up at the oriel window which projects from the corner of the building, affording those with a curious disposition views along four streets!

5. NO.12 HIGH STREET

The oversized lintel above the doorway of this 19th century building is actually part of a fireplace dated to 1615.

It bears the Ffrench family coat of arms, one of the Tribes of Galway. Can you spot a small limestone plaque representing one of the other fourteen tribes, located between this building and No.11?

The crest of a lion standing on its hind legs belonged to the Anglo-Norman Ffront family.



6. ST NICHOLAS' CHURCH

Founded in 1320 the church is dedicated to the patron saint of seafarers, reflecting Galway's place as a bustling medieval port. Can you spot the mermaid below a window in the church's unusual triple-gabled front? Why not continue the search at St Nick's with our scavenger hunt?



7. LYNCH MEMORIAL WINDOW

This monument recalls the legend of James Lynch Fitzstephen, elected Mayor of Galway in 1493. In the unbending pursuit of justice, Lynch is said to have hanged his own son from the window of a house that stood on this spot. Much of the monument is made up of fragments from older structures including the macabre plaque bearing a skull and crossbones.



Nora Barnacle, wife and muse of James Joyce grew up only a stone's throw away on Bowling Green. In the 1980s her home at No.8 was purchased by two Galway sisters as a museum house.

8. NO.50 ABBEGATE STREET UPPER

This handsome 19th century building was home to Heaney's butchers. Can you spot the letter 'H' on the brackets that frame the rendered shopfront? The round-headed doorway gave access to the upper floors where the Heaney family, like many shopkeepers, lived above their business.



Check out the junction ahead. The corner of the building, on the turn with Mary Street, has been cleverly splayed to provide additional space to walk. This type of splay is sometimes known as a 'lambstongue'. The rounding of the opposite corner with Newtownsmith is known as a 'bullnose' and serves a similar practical purpose.

9. NO.15 MARY STREET

The doorcase of this building reflects the restrained classical style of architecture prominent during the Georgian period, with the central 'dropped' keystone forming an intentional design feature.

While it may look like it might drop out, it is securely locked in place by the surrounding stones. Look out for the date and initials carved into the limestone.

Turning the corner onto Eglinton Street, you will notice a significant change in scale. First laid out as a new thoroughfare in the 1850s, its wide, generous proportions contrast with the narrow network of streets and laneways which are characteristic of the medieval core.

10. FORMER SAVOY CINEMA

Designed in a striking Art Deco-style, the Savoy brought Hollywood glamour to Galway. Opened in 1934, the first picture to be screened was 'Flying Down to Rio', starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. Unusually, the Savoy was one of the few cinemas in the country where the seating sloped upward towards the screen. After it closed as a cinema in 1976 the building continued in use as a roller-skating venue into the 1980s.



11. MOON'S CORNER

Initially trading under the partnership of Farquharson and Moon, and later under Alexander Moon Ltd., this much-loved 19th century department store is one the city's best-known retail landmarks.



Though businesses have come and gone, the building's distinctive curved façade is fondly remembered by Galwegians as 'Moon's Corner'.

12. DILLON'S CORNER

Look up to the Claddagh rings above your head. This building was once home to Dillon's Jewellers, who have been making the famous ring since 1750. Symbolising love, loyalty and friendship, even Queen Victoria is said to have worn a Claddagh ring made by Dillon's.



The clock originally told 'Dublin Time', which, before standardisation, was typically twenty-five minutes behind London and eleven minutes ahead of Galway.

13. LYNCH'S CASTLE

This richly decorated medieval tower house was extended to almost double its size during the early 1800s. The castle was further altered in the early 20th century when new ground floor openings were inserted by the Munster and Leinster Bank. A small museum inside reveals more of its remarkable past.

As you wander along Abbeygate Street Lower, pause at the former Pro-Cathedral. Can you spot the ornate carvings of animals? The building emerged from a remarkable moment of civic unity, when both Protestants and Catholics gathered in 1816 to lay its foundation stone.

14. FORMER GRAIN STORE

Located close to the docks, this former grain store is one of a number of warehouses that were built in the area during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Construction of the city's new Commercial Dock in 1832 significantly enhanced the port's capacity and the city's bustling maritime trade.



15. NO.11 AND 13 ST AUGUSTINE STREET

These Georgian townhouses have distinctive scooped door surrounds, similar to those found on the western side of Eyre Square. The delicate fanlight to No.13, in the shape of a spider's cobweb, is typical of the period. No.11 once housed the offices of the short-lived Bank of Galway. Established as a private bank in 1802, by 1814 the bank had failed.



16. AN TAIBHDHEARC

Founded in 1928, An Taibhdhearc is Ireland's National Irish-Language Theatre and a cornerstone of Galway's cultural life. The auditorium includes a bespoke stage curtain featuring golden peacocks, designed by the legendary actor, playwright and co-founder of the theatre, Micheál Mac Liammóir.

As you turn the corner onto Lower Cross Street, Mayoralty House will come into view. Positioned as a focal point at the end of the street, views such as this make an important contribution to the area's historic character.

17. MAYORALTY HOUSE

This Palladian-style townhouse was built in 1793 for the powerful Daly family, who dominated the mayor's office in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Have you noticed that the first floor windows are slightly larger than the rest? The first floor served as the main entertaining floor, or 'piano nobile', and is distinguished by larger windows, higher ceilings and grand reception rooms.



18. NO.1 FLOOD STREET

Look closely to spot three carvings, including the coats of arms of families united by marriage, and fragments of a deer and sea monster. The practice of reusing older building elements in later construction is a characteristic of the city.



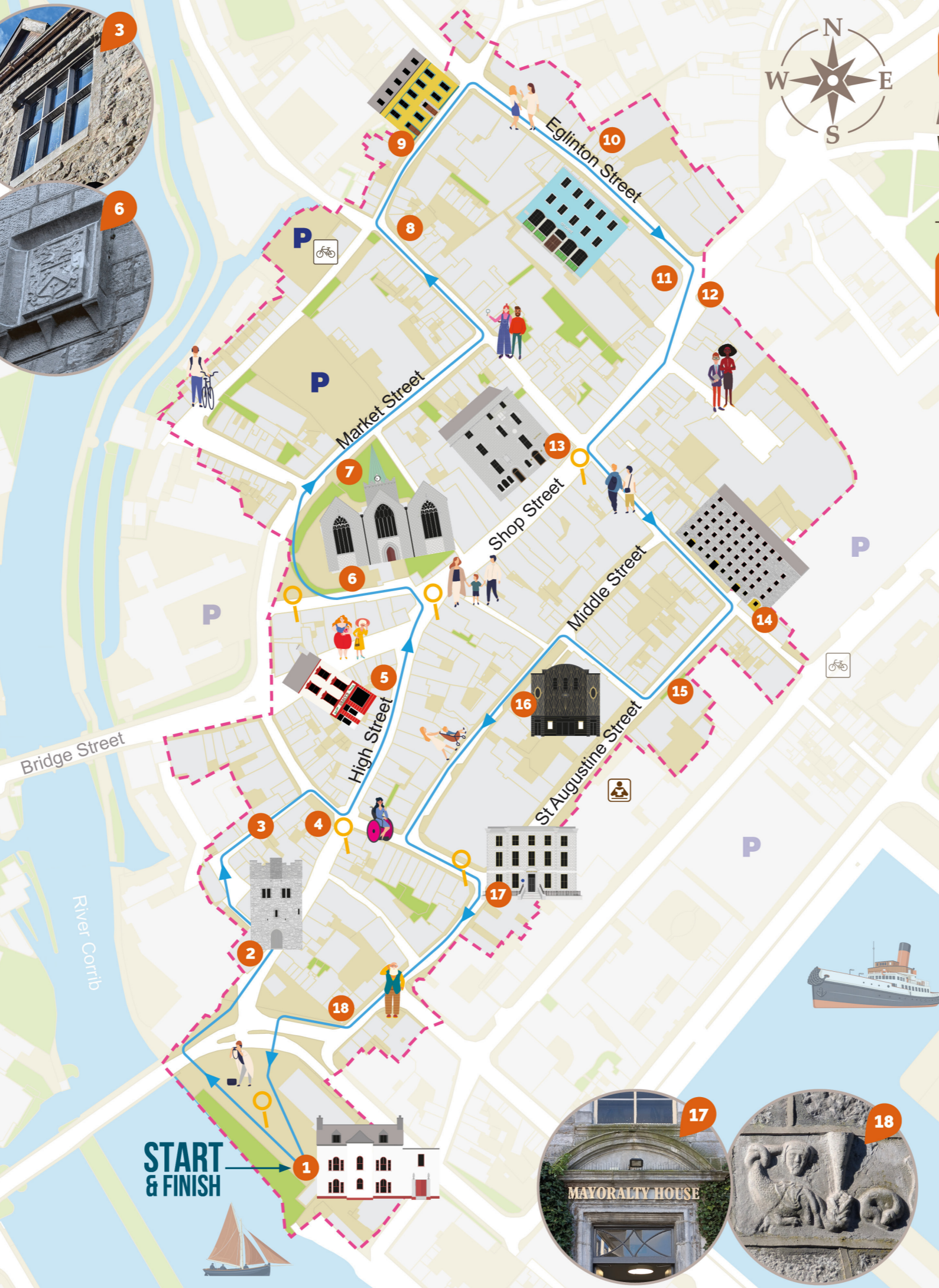
GALWAY CITY CORE

ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION AREA

WALKING TRAIL

— CROÍLÁR CHATHAIR NA GAILLIMHE —

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



SRÁID EGLINTON EGLINTON STREET

Where do streets get their name?
Eglinton Street is named after the Earl of Eglinton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He visited Galway in 1852 to open a short section of canal, connecting Lough Corrib to the sea at Galway Bay. The city marked the occasion by naming all manner of places after him....hotels, sports clubs, swimming baths and streets!

MAP LEGEND

- Architectural Conservation Area
- Walking Route, 1.7km
- 1 Trail Number
- 1 Picture Clue Number
- P Parking
- TFI Bikes
- Scenic View
- Library

