

Barbican Gatehouse

This the only surviving part of the gatehouse to Joymount Palace. It was one of four similar structures at the entrance to the palace, giving some idea of how large the palace was.

Sir Arthur Chichester/Joymount Palace

Sir Arthur replaced his brother as Governor of Carrickfergus in the 1590s after the latter was killed by Irish lords. Later Lord Deputy of Ireland, Sir Arthur was instrumental in devising and implementing the Plantation throughout Ulster. He was also responsible for the building of Carrickfergus's town wall, the remnants of which can be traced through the Kids n Castles app, available for download from the App Store/Play Store. The walls included 4 gates, including North Gate—the only one to survive. Sir Arthur built Joymount Palace to reflect his growing importance. Contemporaries commented on its grandeur, including the deer park, formal gardens, and many windows- 'as many as there are days in the year'. These windows can be seen in the image.

Stone tower houses were built in Sir Arthur's time (late 16th/early 17th centuries) in Carrickfergus. They were sturdier than their wooden counterparts (ie, not flammable). This is an example of a tower house window. See also the Mural at the corner of High Street/ Antrim Street.

Dig This!



Manacles used on prisoners' wrists

Padlock for gaol doors

Tile from medieval Woodburn Abbey, now gone

A coin from John de Courcy's time. De Courcy built Carrickfergus Castle.

Barbary Ape skeleton. The ape (originally from Africa/Gibraltar) possibly belonged to one of the friars, but how did he get to Carrick in the first place?

Carrickfergus Gaol

Connected with the courthouse that was built on the site of Joymount Palace, the gaol was used for prisoners from the 18th century. Before then prisoners were held in the Castle. The gaol was replaced in the 1840s when the Crumlin Road gaol was built. The prisoners had to walk all the way there!

The Friary

There may have been a religious house on the Civic Centre's site even before the Normans came. In the 1230s Hugh de Lacy (who replaced de Courcy as the main power in the Castle and thus Ulster in 1205) established the friary, possibly from gratitude that he'd safely returned to Carrickfergus after being exiled in 1210. There are few physical traces of the friary left today, but maps such as the one shown give us some idea of how it looked. At its height it was extensive, including a chapel, cloisters, and mill. Nearby there was also St Bride's (leper) Hospital where St Bride's carpark is today, thus explaining one of the old names for North Gate: Spittal Gate. An additional link with the friary: St Francis established the order in 1209 after being horrified at how lepers were treated. There's also the 'leper window' in St Nicholas's Church that allowed lepers to listen to Mass without 'contaminating' the rest of the town.