

# Architectural Gems



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Northern  
Ireland  
Embrace  
a Giant  
Spirit



## 1 Archbishop's Palace

When Richard Robinson was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1765 one of his first building projects was the construction of the Palace.

The architects Davis Ducart, George Ensor and Thomas Cooley were all involved in its construction. By 1769 it was reported that Archbishop Robinson had 'erected and covered in the shell of a house for himself and his successors'.

The original Palace, consisting of a basement, ground floor and first floor, was completed by 1770. The second and third floors and the front porch were added subsequently by Archbishop Beresford in 1825 to a design by Francis Johnston. The Palace was home to Church of Ireland primates of Armagh from 1770 to 1975, it is now the offices of Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council.



## 2 Primate's Chapel

While dwarfed in size by the Archbishop's Palace, this building outshines it in terms of sheer quality and elegance.

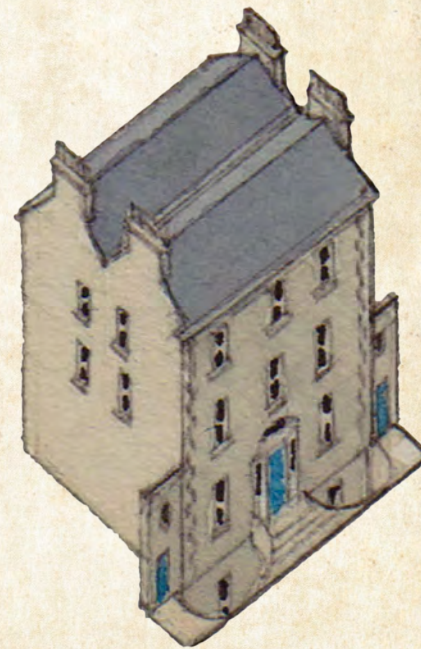
Built in the 1780s, to a design by Thomas Cooley and finished by the famous Armagh architect Francis Johnston, some architectural experts consider this as Armagh's most important building. It has been described as a 'perfect little temple' by one architectural historian, whilst another wrote, it is 'one of the beautiful surviving 18th century ecclesiastical interiors in Ireland'. Built of local ashlar limestone, its design was based on a Greek temple. Inside the finely carved wood panelling and Archbishop's throne create a graceful interior. It is deconsecrated and no longer used as a church.



## 3 Patrick's Fold

The mansion was erected by Leonard Dobbin as his town residence in 1812.

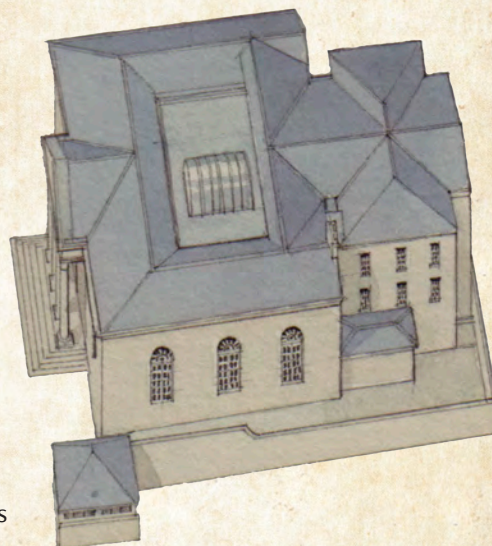
He was a bank agent and when the Bank of Ireland opened a branch in Armagh in 1827 he and his nephew Thomas carried out business from the house until Leonard's death in 1844. It then became the Armagh branch of the Bank of Ireland and continued as such until the 1970s. It was subsequently converted as fold accommodation and is now known as Patrick's Fold because it stands near the site of St. Patrick's first church in Armagh.



## 8 Courthouse

Built at the north end of the Mall in 1809 to a design by the renowned architect Francis Johnston.

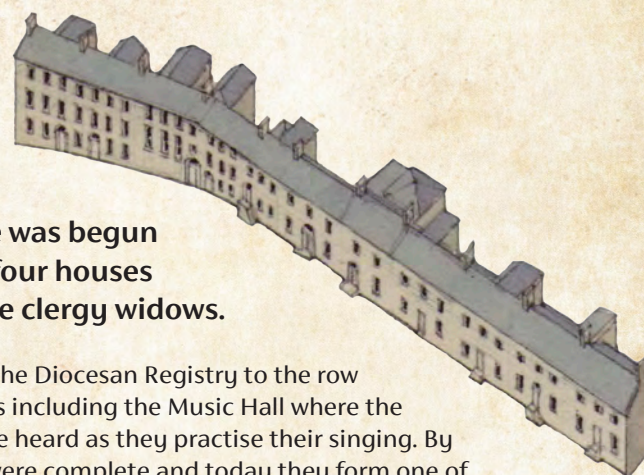
However as a consequence of the construction being unsupervised by Johnston, the completed building was left with disproportionately slender columns which in the architect's own words 'ruined the portico'. Nevertheless it is a landmark building and although altered over the years and completely restored after a bomb attack in 1993 has stood the test of time.



## 9 Vicars' Hill

This beautiful terrace was begun in 1724 with the first four houses built to accommodate clergy widows.

Primate Robinson added the Diocesan Registry to the row in 1772 and other buildings including the Music Hall where the Cathedral Choir can still be heard as they practise their singing. By 1794 all eleven buildings were complete and today they form one of Armagh's most beautiful small streets.



Armagh Robinson Library owns the former Registry at No 5 which is open to the public. It was built in 1772 to hold church and civil records and some examples remain on display today, while the collection is held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. No 5 displays some of the Library's print, gem, medal and coin collections, all of which were donated by Robinson.

## 4 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral

The plan of the Cathedral, as it now stands, is the enlarged design of Archbishop O'Scanlan in 1268.

Although the Church on this hallowed site suffered destruction on at least seventeen occasions, it has always been restored, maintaining an unbroken link with the original foundation attributed to St Patrick in 445. Significant restorations were undertaken during the primacy of Archbishop Hampton (1613), Archbishop Margetson (1660s) and Archbishop Robinson (1780s).

However it was Lewis Nockalls Cottingham under the direction and funding of Primate Lord John George Beresford that the building was completely remodelled between 1834 and 1940. The Cathedral that we see today is largely Cottingham's work with little of the old medieval stone work visible.

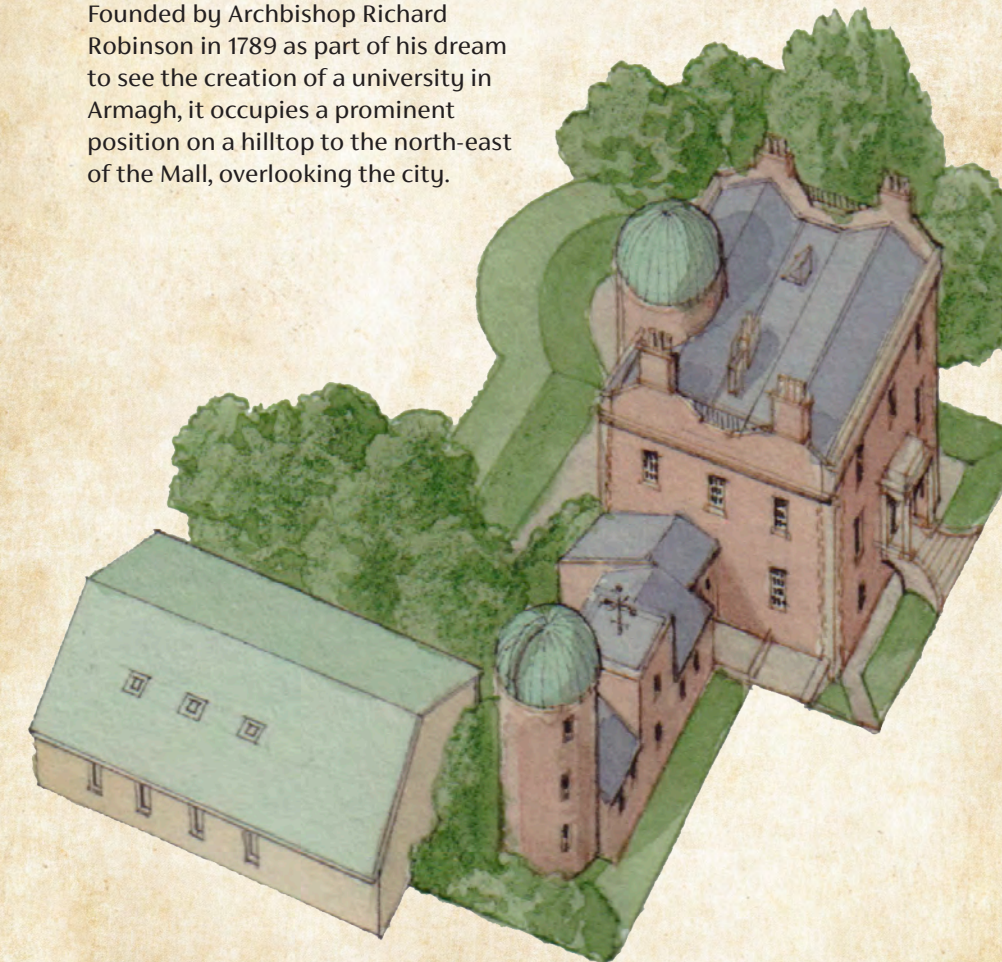


## 10 Armagh Observatory

The second oldest observatory on the island of Ireland and the oldest scientific institution in Northern Ireland, Armagh Observatory remains one of our most important astronomical research institutes.

Founded by Archbishop Richard Robinson in 1789 as part of his dream to see the creation of a university in Armagh, it occupies a prominent position on a hilltop to the north-east of the Mall, overlooking the city.

The Demesne now comprises some 14 acres of attractive, landscaped grounds and parkland known as the Armagh Observatory Grounds and Astropark. Within these grounds can be found the Armagh Planetarium, one of Northern Ireland's leading visitor attractions. The Observatory grounds are open throughout the year.



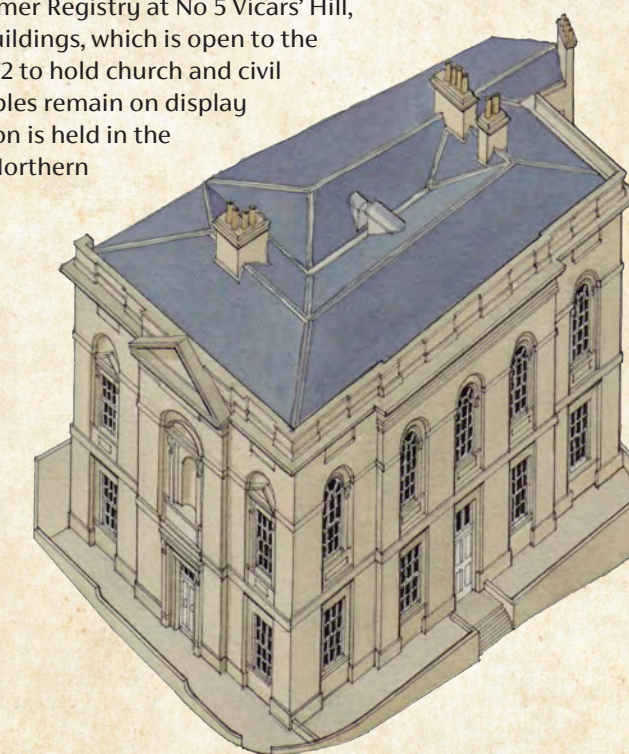
## 5 Armagh Robinson Library

Armagh Robinson Library is located close to the Church of Ireland Cathedral in a distinctive Georgian building originally constructed to the design of Thomas Cooley.

The Greek inscription over the public entrance means, 'The Healing Place of the Soul.' Founded in 1771 by Archbishop Richard Robinson, this is the oldest public library in Northern Ireland. The nucleus of the collection is Archbishop Robinson's personal library, which contains seventeenth and eighteenth century books on theology, philosophy, classic and modern literature, voyages and travels, history, medicine and law. In addition, there is a collection of seventeenth and eighteenth century manuscripts and a unique collection of engravings known as the Rokeby Collection. The collection includes a first edition of Jonathan Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels', with handwritten amendments by the author in the margins.

The Library owns the former Registry at No 5 Vicars' Hill, another of Robinson's buildings, which is open to the public. It was built in 1772 to hold church and civil records and some examples remain on display today, while the collection is held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

No 5 Vicars' Hill displays some of the Library's print, gem, medal and coin collections, all of which were donated by Robinson.

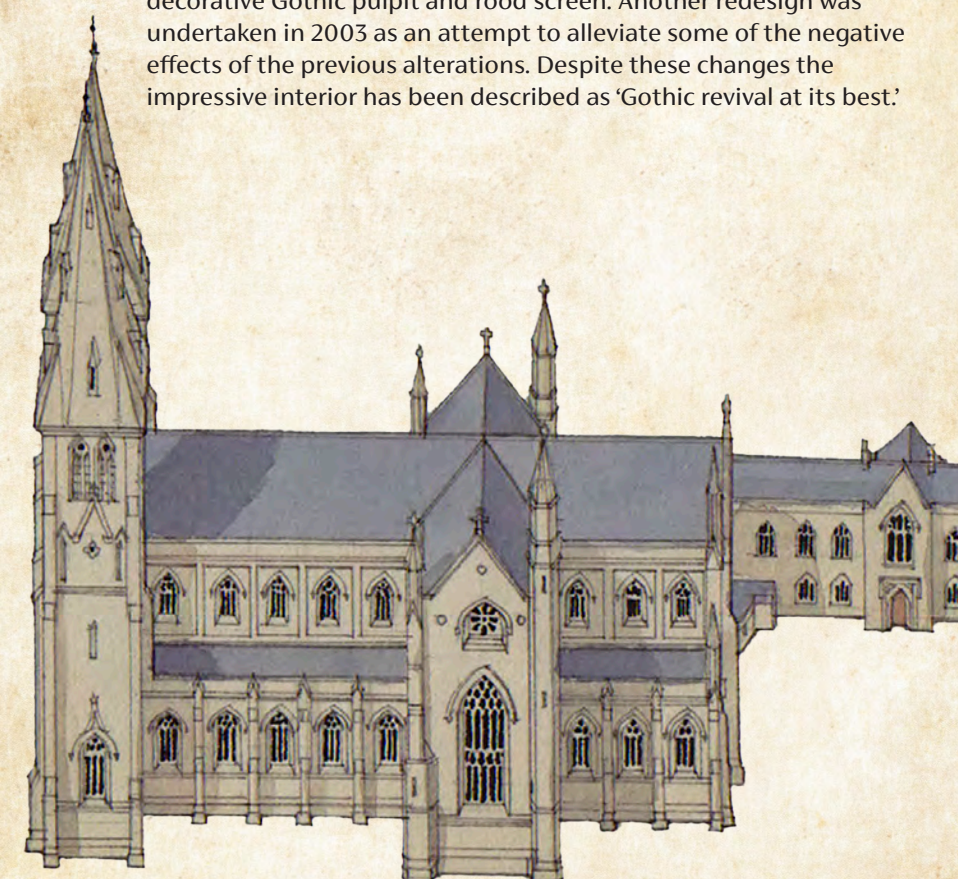


## 11 St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral

The foundation stone was laid on St. Patrick's Day 1840 but the project was dogged with delays caused by funds being diverted during the famine and the architect Thomas Duff's death in 1848.

It would be 1873 before the Cathedral was dedicated and 1904 before the interior mosaic and marble work was completed.

The interior was reordered in 1982 and as a consequence lost its decorative Gothic pulpit and rood screen. Another redesign was undertaken in 2003 as an attempt to alleviate some of the negative effects of the previous alterations. Despite these changes the impressive interior has been described as 'Gothic revival at its best.'





# Architectural Gems

The buildings of greatest importance to Northern Ireland's architectural heritage are listed as 'A' grade and include both outstanding architectural set-pieces and the least altered examples of each representative style, period and type.



Armagh boasts more of these significant buildings than any urban area in Northern Ireland outside Belfast with 24% of the region's A listed buildings within the primatial city. This guide showcases the buildings in Armagh that are listed grade 'A' and can justifiably be classed as architectural gems.

The buildings range from the two cathedrals on their prominent hill-top sites to public institutions like Armagh Robinson Library, Armagh County Museum and Armagh Observatory. However, there are also some that were built as residences, ranging from the grand Dobbin house (Patrick's Fold) in Scotch street and Charlemont Place on the Mall to the unpretentious but elegant Vicars' Hill.

## TOWN TRAIL 'A' LISTED BUILDINGS

- 1 Archbishop's Palace
- 2 Primate's Chapel\*
- 3 Patrick's Fold\*
- 4 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral
- 5 Armagh Robinson Library
- 6 Armagh County Museum
- 7 Charlemont Place
- 8 Courthouse\*
- 9 Vicars' Hill
- 10 Armagh Observatory (Pre-booking required)
- 11 St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral

\*Not accessible to the Public.

Every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the completion of this brochure. All information supplied is accurate at the time of print.



## ARMAGH CITY CENTRE PARKING MAP

Car Park	Free/Pay [Approx]
11 Mall Shopping Centre [Mall West]*	Pay
12 Linenhall Street Car Park*	Pay
13 City Centre Parking	Pay [Free Sunday]
14 Dobbin Street Lane   St Malachy's	Free & Pay
15 Friary Road Car Park*	Free & Pay
16 Court House	Free
17 Lonsdale Road	Free
18 Mall East [on-street]	Free
19 The Shambles Yard	Free

Over 180 on-street parking spaces including 24 disabled spaces also available.  
\*Carparks marked are all FREE after 6.30pm and every Sunday.