

Archbishop Robinson Trail

In the footsteps of a Visionary



www.visitarmagh.com
www.armaghcityth.com



1 The Royal School

Archbishop Robinson was determined to re-establish Armagh as a seat of learning.

Although the Royal School was founded in 1608, it wasn't established at its present location until 1774, a move prompted by Archbishop Robinson under the leadership of its Headmaster Dr Arthur Grueber. The new school was largely designed by Robinson, and built on his land, for which he asked a rent of a 'few peppercorns'.

The Archbishop himself loaned most of the money for the construction of the new building, with the remainder of the loan coming from Dr Grueber.

The school followed a design which is believed to be modelled on the 'Canterbury Quadrangle' which Archbishop Robinson had endowed to Christ Church College, Oxford. It consisted of three buildings, making three sides of a square, the fourth side consisting of an open cloister, thus enclosing a quadrangle. In 2008, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh attended a reception at the school to commemorate its 400th anniversary. Please note that the school is private and is not normally accessible to visitors.

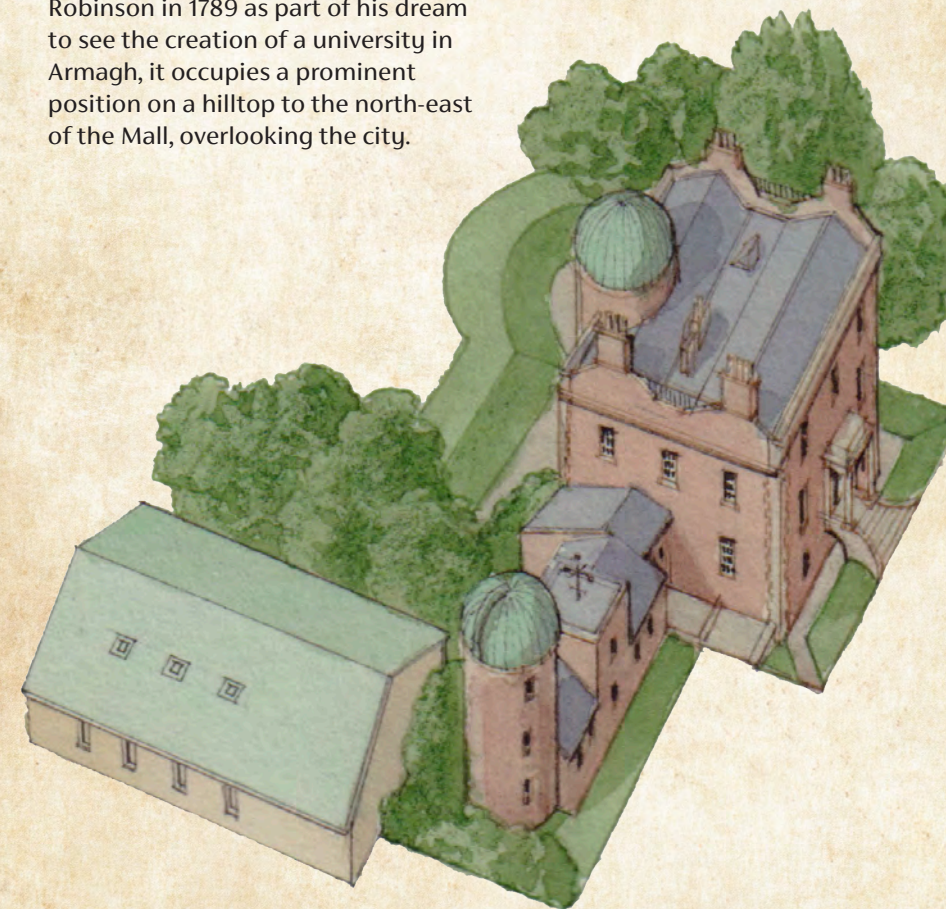


2 Armagh Observatory

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.



3 The Mall

Located close to the centre of the city of Armagh, the Mall has played a major role in the leisure activities of the people of Armagh for more than 200 years.

The arrival in 1765 of Archbishop Robinson led to a great change in Armagh as he began to redevelop the city as a place to rival Dublin.

In 1773 he appropriated the land originally known as 'The Commons' for the benefit of the citizens of Armagh. In 1797 his successor, Archbishop Newcome, leased the land as a public park after which tree-lined public walks were laid out.

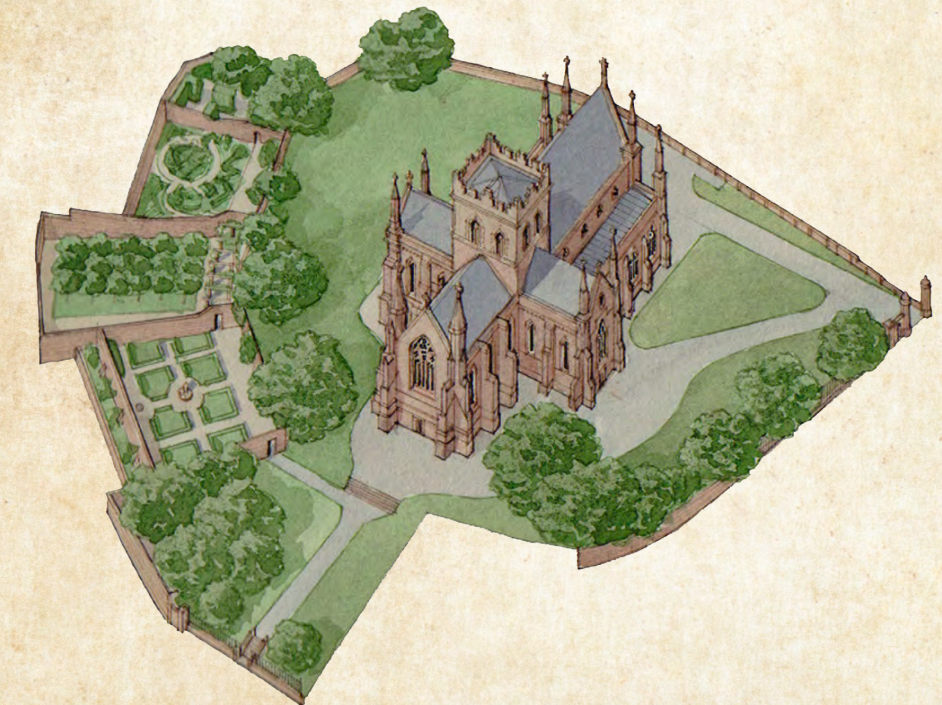


4 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral

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.

Archbishop Robinson served as Primate of All Ireland from 1765 to 1794. During his primacy, Robinson helped to fund repairs and changes to the Cathedral's building. He gave the Cathedral a fine organ, built by John Snetzler of London, and commissioned Francis Johnston to repair and improve its fabric. Robinson is buried in the crypt of the Cathedral. A marble bust by Nollekens commemorates him in the south aisle.

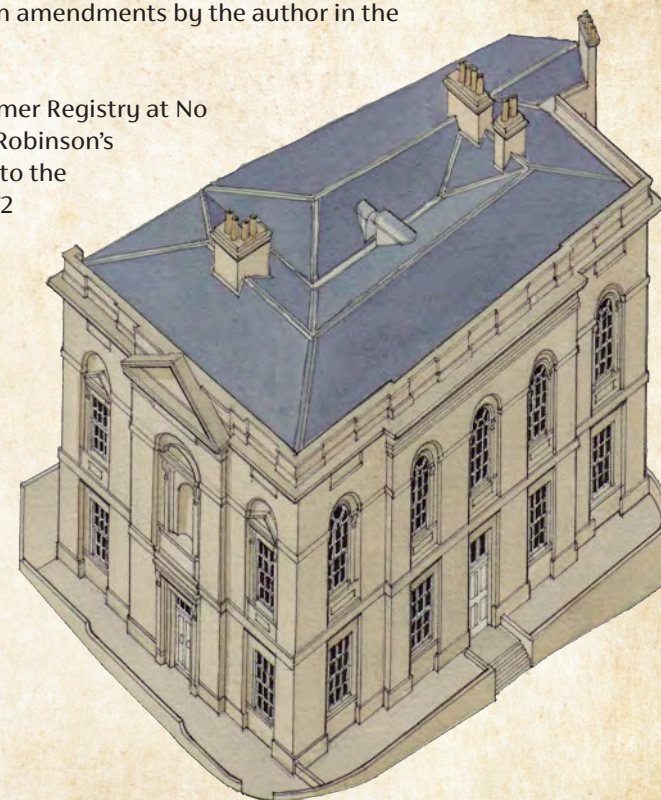


5 Armagh Robinson Library & No 5 Vicars' Hill

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.

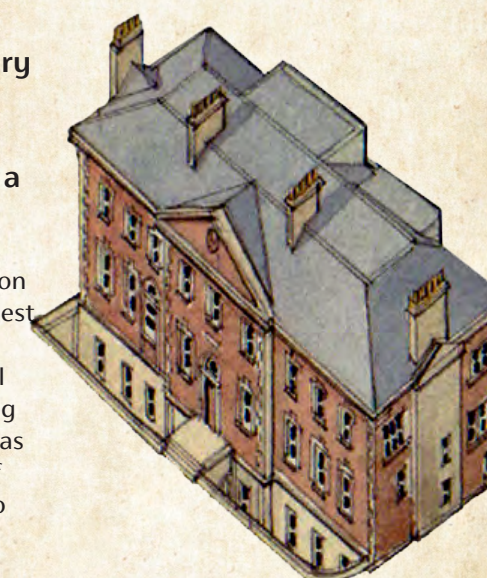
The Library owns the former Registry at No 5 Vicars' Hill, another of Robinson's buildings, which is open to the public. It was built in 1772 to hold church and civil records and some examples remain on display today, while the collection is held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. No 5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



6 Armagh County Infirmary

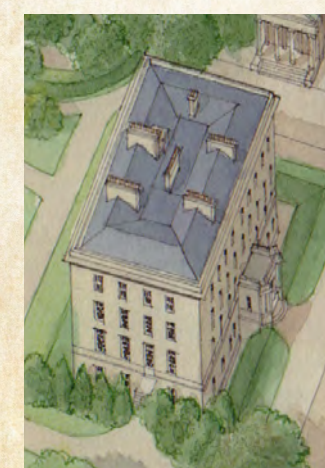
Built in 1774, the Armagh Infirmary was designed by George Ensor and consisted of two principal wards with a large entrance hall, a boardroom and a surgery.

New wards were added when an extension was built in 1843 funded by the Lill bequest. Further alterations were made from a public subscription after the Armagh rail disaster in 1889. It ceased to be a working hospital in 1991. Archbishop Robinson was one of the subscribers to the building of the Infirmary, contributing some £105 to the overall cost.



7 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.



It was designed by Thomas Cooley and it is likely that George Ensor was the builder. 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. 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.

8 Palace Demesne

For over two hundred years, the undulating parkland of the Palace Demesne has been one of the glories of Armagh.

The 300-acre demesne was created by Archbishop Robinson as a backdrop to the Archbishop's Palace.

72 acres are accessible with a variety of walks to enjoy, taking you into the back meadows and around the more formal Palace Gardens and the 'Garden of the Senses'.



9 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.

10 Rokeby Obelisk

Like the Primate's chapel, the Rokeby Obelisk in the Palace Demesne is said to have been begun by Thomas Cooley and completed by Francis Johnston in 1784.

Towering over Knox's Hill (now part of Armagh's golf course) it commemorates the friendship between Archbishop Robinson and the 1st Duke of Northumberland. Although one of the most inaccessible structures built by Robinson, it remains one of the most imposing.



11 Armagh Gaol

Several fine buildings were constructed in Armagh as a result of the climate of entrepreneurship Archbishop Robinson encouraged, even if he didn't contribute financially to them himself.

One of these was Armagh Gaol, built in 1780 on the site of the old barracks. It was designed by Thomas Cooley and consists of a formidable three storey, fourteen bay building of coursed stone. It was extended when William Murray designed radial wings in the style of Pentonville Prison during the 1840s and 1850s. Originally The Gaol consisted of three prisons – one for women, one for debtors and one for felons. Executions originally took place in the Gaol Square, but were later moved behind the prison walls.



Celebrating *Robinson's* Vision

The Armagh we know today owes much to the vision of Richard Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh from 1765 to 1794. His ambition to make Armagh, one of Europe's oldest cities, worthy of being Ireland's Christian capital, saw him establish some of the country's most significant 18th century buildings.



These include Armagh Observatory, Armagh Robinson Library, the Infirmary, the Palace and Chapel, the Royal School and the famous parklands known as the Mall and the Palace Demesne. He also commissioned restoration work on St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral and donated its magnificent organ.

Archbishop Robinson also engendered a spirit of entrepreneurship, encouraging others to contribute to his vision amidst this era of great change in the city. Thus buildings such as the Courthouse, Gaol and Barracks were also constructed at this time.

Robinson's role was not only clerical as he also exerted considerable political power and influence in Ireland. As the Church of Ireland Primate, he had a seat in the House of Lords and became one of the three Lord Justices of Ireland.

Richard Robinson was born into a landed family in Yorkshire, England in 1708 and became a clergyman in the Church of England. He arrived in Ireland in 1751, as Chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Dorset. He was appointed Archbishop of Armagh in 1765 and was made Baron Rokeby of Armagh in 1777.

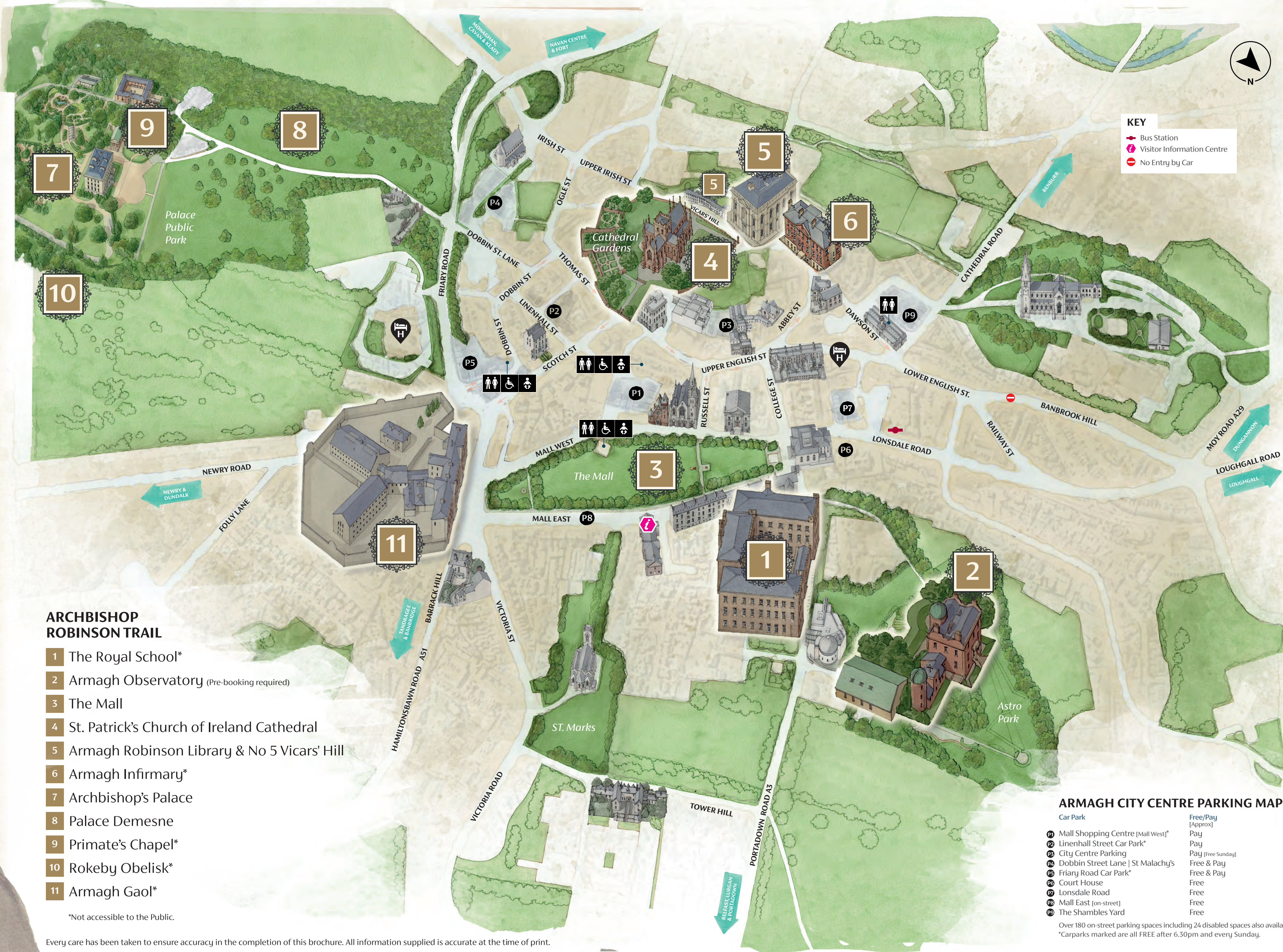
His commitment to Armagh was considerable. He became the first Primate since medieval times to reside in the city, building the Archbishop's Palace as his official residence. He was determined to re-establish the city as a place of learning, as it had been in the centuries following St Patrick's establishment of Armagh as the centre of Irish Christianity. He moved and enhanced the Royal School and built the Observatory and Public Library. Following his death in 1794, Archbishop Robinson was buried in the crypt in St Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

ARCHBISHOP ROBINSON TRAIL

- 1 The Royal School*
- 2 Armagh Observatory (Pre-booking required)
- 3 The Mall
- 4 St. Patrick's Church of Ireland Cathedral
- 5 Armagh Robinson Library & No 5 Vicars' Hill
- 6 Armagh Infirmary*
- 7 Archbishop's Palace
- 8 Palace Demesne
- 9 Primate's Chapel*
- 10 Rokeby Obelisk*
- 11 Armagh Gaol*

*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.