

Plantation Homes 1600 - 1714 AD



After the Flight of the Earls in 1607, the English and Scottish settlers brought new styles and new craftsmen to Ireland. The early struggles of these settlers with the native Irish resulted in buildings based on defence. The bawns or defended farms with their walled courtyards, battlements and corner towers recall those of the earlier period in Britain. Some of the largest bawns were built as headquarters for the London Companies in **Co.Londonderry**. Among the best are those of the Fishmongers at **Ballykelly** and of the Skinners at **Dungiven** and **Brackfield**.

The Scottish planters introduced building details like crow-stepped gables, projecting stairs and turrets supported on layers of corbelling. **Monea**, **Castle Balfour** and **Enniskillen castles** in **Co.Fermanagh** display examples of these features. So, too, does **Ballygalley Castle** in **Co.Antrim**.



Above, Tully Castle, Co.Fermanagh



Above, Monea Castle, Co.Fermanagh

The enclosure wall of a bawn could be strengthened at the corners by flankers. These projecting towers could be circular or rectangular and provided good attacking positions. Larger versions could provide accommodation as at **Bellaghy** in **Co.Londonderry**, **Dalways Bawn** in **Co.Antrim**, **Tully Castle** in **Co.Fermanagh** and **Benburb** in **Co.Tyrone**.

At the same time timber frame houses were imported and assembled, but were less easy to defend. In the rebellion of 1641 many of these were burned to the ground and replaced using traditional local materials. Humbler houses of the plantation period were built of rubble, mud, turf, timber and thatch and only excavation provides information today. Some traditional buildings with stone roofs are probably of this period.

THE TOWER MUSEUM IN DERRY CITY AND ENNISKILLEN CASTLE ARE WORTH VISITING, AND BOTH HAVE EDUCATION OFFICERS.



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Above, Killyleagh Castle
Left, Richhill Castle

After the mid 17th century wars, Ulster architecture took on a Classical flavour. The castle at **Richhill in Co. Armagh**, built about 1660, consists of a central block with projecting wings finished with Dutch gables and a classical doorway.

A small group of very grand houses showed the Renaissance tastes of their builders. **Castle Caulfield** and the building at **Dunluce** had three tall bay windows and Renaissance detailing of the door and fireplace, probably reflecting English tastes. **Killyleagh Castle** could be considered as the bridge between the Scottish high house and the Renaissance style.

In Ulster, the plantations led to new urban development as landowners began to appreciate the advantages that could accrue in commerce, trade and rents if town properties were well managed. Plantation towns like **Derry** and **Donegal** developed certain features in common and were frequently laid out on a grid plan with the main streets intersecting at right angles forming a market square or diamond. The **city of Derry** is the same layout today as it was in 1622 with a regular layout of streets and a central square.



Left, Derry Plan