

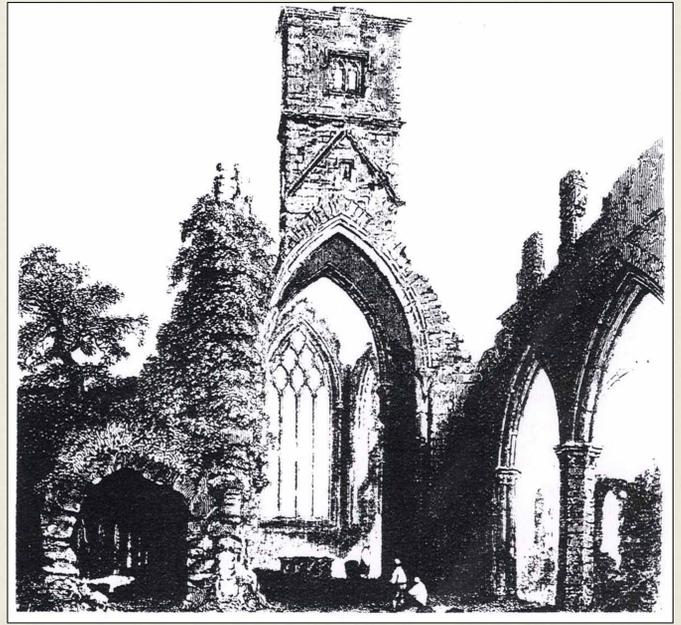
RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

Sligo Abbey

This ancient edifice, which dates from Norman times, was built in 1252 by Maurice Fitzgerald and dedicated to the Holy Cross. It was accidentally damaged by fire in 1414 and subsequently restored to its original style.

The surviving remains contain a choir or chancel with a high altar of cut stone beneath a large Gothic window, the arch of which is filled with graceful tracings. The south side wall has a number of lancet windows one of which is covered by the distinctive mural monument of O'Conor-Sligo. The Nave contains the imposing canopied O'Creehan monument and the cloisters, only three sides of which have survived, contain some widely acclaimed artistic pieces of workmanship. Both the building and the Dominican friars were subjected to many vicissitudes in Penal times.

After the Dissolution, the Abbey became part of the Palmerston estate, was walled in and placed under the care of the National Monuments. This venerable ruin is Sligo's only tangible link with Norman times.



Sligo Abbey from an 18th century drawing

St John's Cathedral

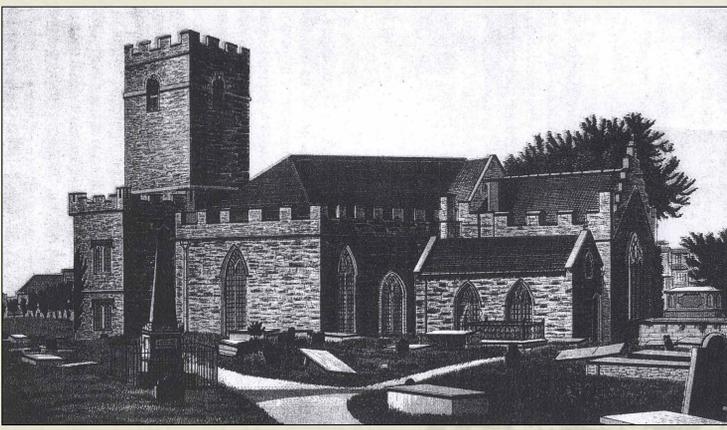
St. John's Cathedral stands on the site of an ancient church or hospital dating from Norman times and denotes a site that has been in continuous use for over seven hundred years.

Built in 1730 to the design of the German architect, Richard Cassels, it takes the form of a cross with galleries at each end except the east.

In 1812, the church was remodelled and transformed into a Gothic style edifice. The Romanesque windows were replaced, the apse was demolished and a new chancel built. In the 1830's Samuel Lewis described it as "an old cruciform building in excellent repair in the latter style of English architecture with a massive square tower on the west side".

Further alterations were undertaken in 1883 and a handsome east window of Gothic design was added.

In 1961 St John's was raised to the status of a Cathedral serving the amalgamated dioceses of Elphin, Ardagh and Kilmore.



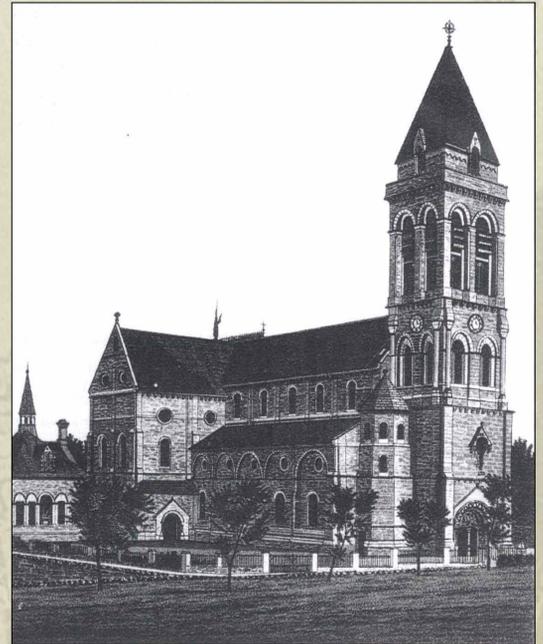
St. John's Cathedral

Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception

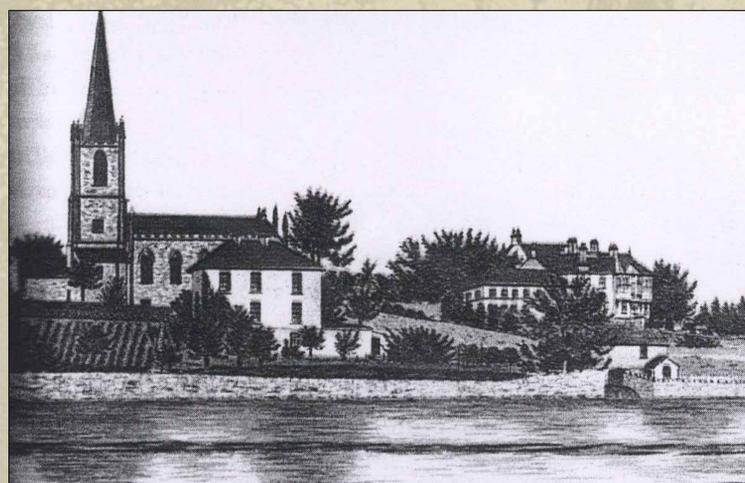
The Cathedral was designed by the eminent London architect, George Goldie, and has been described as "a kind of Romanesque combination of the Norman and Byzantine styles". The building contract was awarded to Charles Kilgallin of Sligo, and was opened for divine service as the principal church of the Diocese of Elphin with great pomp and ceremony on July 26th, 1875.

The main entrance is through a graceful arch under the lofty tower and is surmounted with a series of scriptural figures in *alto relievo*. The nave and aisles are connected by arches supported by eighteen limestone pillars which are surmounted by caps and ornamental arches. One of the principal attractions of this imposing edifice are the colourful stained glass windows, some of which have simple ecclesiastical designs and the remainder depict representative scenes from Holy Writ.

The lofty tower at the southern end has a distinctive clock and a peal of nine bells donated in 1876 by Peter O'Connor of Cairnsfort House.



Sligo Cathedral 1890



Calry Church with the rectory in the foreground

Calry Church

Dating from the early 19th century, Calry church was built as a chapel of ease for St. John's Parish due to an increase in the Protestant population of the greater Sligo area. A grant of £900 was negotiated with the Board of First Fruits towards the cost of building the church and the adjoining Glebe house. The contract was awarded to John Lynn, a noted Sligo builder and construction work commenced in 1824. The estimated cost of this handsome edifice in the Gothic style was £3,000, but the actual figure is thought to have exceeded that by at least a half after allowing for the fact that the stones used were quarried on the site. Its graceful tower surrounded by a well proportioned spire crowned with a gilded vane is a well known local landmark.

A number of vaults beneath the building were originally intended as burial crypts, a plan that never materialised. This space has recently been converted into a crèche and a meeting area for parishioners.

