

Clondalkin: Data Centres and Energy Infrastructures - A Self-Guided Tour

This self-guided tour should be done by car and/or bicycle due to the distance between sites, and size of the Grange Castle Business Park. You will travel on public and private roads. It should take approximately 30 minutes. You can visit the stops in any order. Input from Treasa De Loughry, Pat Brodie, and Sinéad Curran.

Full Route: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/QQTn7tL2f7ehi4FEA> or scan the QR code below.



Stop 1: Grange Castle Business Park

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/SzJD3sDhxwftxTH38>

Grange Castle Business Park's major clients include some of Ireland's biggest multinational firms, such as Pfizer, Google and Microsoft. Developed from the mid-1990s, the park includes over 500 acres and includes a major road, paths, and cycleways; water and electrical infrastructure; and manmade lakes. It has numerous data centres on site, and advanced infrastructure - including electrical sub-stations - to continue powering the site. It is a large, privatised site, on the edge of Clondalkin, bordered by housing estates and a golf course to the east, Grand Canal to the north, farmland to the west, and Peamount Hospital and Baldonnell Airport to the south. Have you ever visited this business park before? What are your first impressions? Is it accessible to locals - why yes or no? Do you feel encouraged to spend time here?

Stop 2: Profile Park, "Where Data Lives"

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/8pNtPinwaxPF5FY76>

On your way back to Grange Castle Business Park, stop at the entrance to Profile Park (and perhaps drive in, as far as the road will allow you). This industrial park once advertised itself as "where data lives," promising exceptional infrastructure and connectivity to plug in new data centres. Now, it is home to the multinational data centre providers Digital Realty and Vantage, both of whom operate part of their Dublin operations here.

As you drive around this half of the campus consider the scale of the architecture and the development, and the "inhuman" nature of the buildings (how do they differ from regular office buildings? Look around, and notice how clustered things are, from the buildings themselves to electrical substations, drainage ponds, and roads. Reflect on the scale, and the feeling, of being in such a planned space. What would it be like to walk this site? Are there any other people, shops, stops? It is worth considering why companies concentrate in one place over time, and the role that these spatial planning strategies play in making these industrial spaces.

Stop 3: Grange Castle and Pocket Park

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/9zx9LxUKM7rcEFZQ6>

The original 16th century Grange Castle is now surrounded by a "pocket park." The Grange Castle Business Park says that it "offers a peaceful space to sit and take in the heritage of the area and observe the juxtaposition of old and new." ¹

Did you know about the Castle's ancient and recent history? What is the interaction between the Castle and the surrounding industrial estate? What do you make of the use of local history in the Business Park's promotional material? How does it connect to the Park's contemporary function? Consider the local efforts of the Clondalkin Tree Planting Project across the wider Clondalkin area (maps below).

Stop 4: Grand Canal, 12th Lock

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/k8mMXYZKDL1aFZZc7>

The Grand Canal was built 250 years ago, and was a central artery connecting Ireland with the British empire, as agricultural goods were transported up the canal and out through Dublin Port - now these "goods" are digital products. Waterways have been crucial to Clondalkin's development and spiritual life. The river Camac which goes through the village - although now largely underground - is a tributary of the River Liffey, and was important to the development of the village's early-medieval monastery and round tower. And near Newland's Cross is the revered ancient St Brigid's well, with its curative fresh water.²

The Grange Castle Business Park has several manmade lakes - and ready access to water is crucial to the cooling of the Park's data centres, and the running of the Pfizer pharmaceutical plant. Did you notice the abundance of water on the site? What do you think of water's use as a resource, and/or as a site of leisure? What are your impressions of the Lock (ecological, social, sensory)? What do you think of the Business Park's account of the Canal as being "poised to be transformed into a bustling recreational centre featuring cafes, bars, restaurants, water sports facilities, creche, and a park"? How does this serve the Business Park and/or the local environment/ community?

Further Reading

- Clondalkin Heritage Trail Audio Guide: <https://www.abartaheritage.ie/clondalkin-heritage-trail-audio-guide/>
- Grange Castle Business Park: <https://grangecastle.ie/>
- Grange Castle History: <https://localstudies.wordpress.com/2020/03/09/grange-castle/>
- Historical Maps of West Dublin <https://source.southdublinlibraries.ie/>
- Local Studies Website by South Dublin Library: <https://localstudies.wordpress.com/>
- Local Studies Youtube Page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi6QNrePpU_69cp76z2OMbQ/videos
- St Brigid's Well: <https://www.megalithicireland.com/St%20Brigid's%20Well,%20Clondalkin.html>
- St Brigid's Well Imbolc Pilgrimage: <https://dublin.ie/whats-on/listings/brigids-way-imbolc-pilgrimage-dublin/>

¹ <https://grangecastle.ie/>

² <https://www.megalithicireland.com/St%20Brigid's%20Well,%20Clondalkin.html>

Clondalkin Tree Planting Project, by Sinéad Curran

The Clondalkin community have come together to act, and to work in partnership with South Dublin County Council; Clondalkin Tidy Towns, Round Towers GAA Green Club committee, Friends of the Camac, Clondalkin Men's Shed, Clondalkin Global Garden, and active resident associations, and the local community; along with support from the charity Trees on the Land, and Stepping Stones forest; to see the planting of approximately 12,000+ trees, from 2025-26, in a variety of planting types and methods. This includes native woodland, pocket forests (using Miyawaki style planting), hedgerows, shelterbelts, and edible woodlands (orchard and forest garden).

Thanks to Sinéad Curran for this information - please speak to her on the day to learn more about the project.

Further Links:

<https://roundtower.ie/>

<https://www.treesontheland.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/clondalkintidytowns/>

<https://steppingstoneforests.org/>

<https://fotc.ie/>



