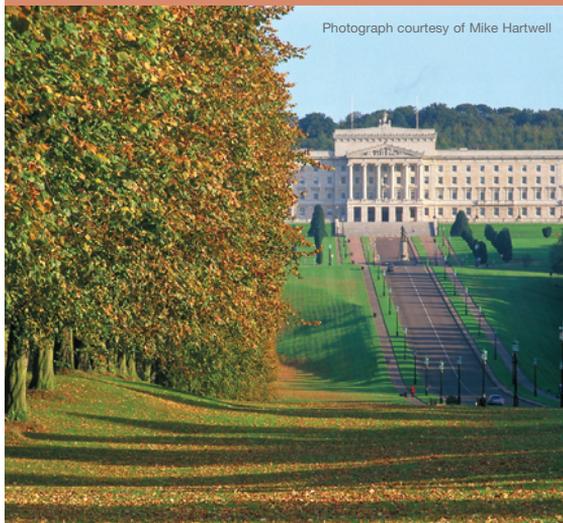


Stormont Estate



Photograph courtesy of Mike Hartwell

Route description

A walk through attractive woodland and parkland with many interesting features, following both surfaced and unsurfaced paths with some hills.

Distance

2.5miles 4 km.

Average Time

1hr 45 mins – 2hrs.

Access

By bus - Metro Services; 4, 20, 20A.

By car - Car park off the Upper Newtownards Road past the main gates near the sports pitches.

Trail Route

This route follows the waymarked “Long Woodland Walk” through the grounds of the estate. Follow the orange coloured arrows around the grounds.

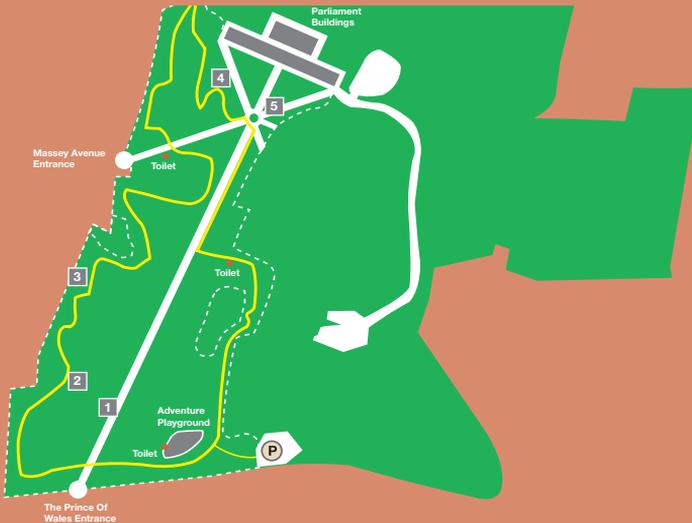
Follow the gravel path from the car park past the playground, keeping left. Cross the Prince of Wales Avenue **(1)** and continue through the woodland **(2)**, skirting the Stormont Estate **(3)** boundary.

Turn left up the hill, then left again and cross the bridge. Follow the path until it reaches open parkland. Go round the base of the bank and cross Massey Avenue. At the Gleaner sculpture turn right and follow this path up through the glen. Before turning right to return down the glen, you

may wish to make a short diversion to the top to admire the views down into the steep ravine.

Follow the path round to the Reconciliation sculpture **(4)** then across the grass to Massey Avenue. After pausing to admire the Carson statue and Parliament Buildings **(5)** walk about half way down the Prince of Wales Avenue before turning left. Follow the path around the wildlife refuge and sports pitches back to the car park.

Trail 17



History

Parliament buildings and the processional avenue were designed by the architect Arnold Thornley. The interior layout follows that of Parliament Building in Westminster.

The estate also holds Stormont Castle, known as the Plain House. Construction was undertaken by Reverend John Cleland in 1830. The house was enlarged and altered in 1850 using stone from Scrabo, and towers, battlements and turrets were added later.

Things of Interest

Prince of Wales Avenue (1)

Planted in the 1930s, with double rows of red twigged limes, the avenue was designed by WJ Bean, former curator of the London Kew Gardens.

Woodland (2)

The estate supports an interesting mix of woodland some of which dates back to the 1800s.

Stormont Estate (3)

Most of the estate, consisting of 235 acres and Stormont Castle was purchased by the government in 1921 for £21,000.

Reconciliation Sculpture (4)

Depicts young man and woman kneeling to embrace across a divide.

Parliament Buildings (5)

The buildings were designed in Greek classical tradition and built from Portland stone. They opened in 1932 to serve the Northern Ireland Parliament.

Look out for

- fitness stations which provide an outdoor gym.
- habitat piles which are home to many insects.