

# FRAMEWOK PLAN

For the lands in Oldcastle, Co. Meath

April 2020



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for Meath County Council  
on behalf of Cogan Properties Ltd  
for lands to the rear of Cogan Street and Cavan Street, Oldcastle, Co. Meath

# Document Control Sheet

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## 1.1 Structure of Plan

This Framework Plan has undertaken an analysis of the national and local policy context which underpins the parameters for development in Oldcastle. An assessment of the existing town context has also been undertaken to inform the development strategy and key development objectives identified for the masterplan area.

These analyses will form the main body of the Framework Plan and will be set out under the following headings:

- ) Introduction
- ) A Contextual Analysis of the Lands
- ) Concept / Vision
- ) Key Development Objectives
- ) Urban Design Strategy
- ) Development Areas

**Appendix A** addresses the development proposed for the lands within the masterplan area under the control of the Applicant, Cogan Properties Ltd, and demonstrates the potential of the development to deliver on the objectives set out for the masterplan area.

## 2. Contextual Analysis of the Subject Lands

This section consists of an analysis of the lands contained in zoning objective **LU OBJ 8** to include its national, regional and local planning policy context, its relationship with Oldcastle town and an analysis of the relevant planning history of the lands.

### 2.1 Policy Context

#### 2.1.1 National and Regional Policy

The Government's National Planning Framework (NPF) for Ireland 2040 sets the targets and the development strategy which informs the preparation of regional and local policy plans. The long-term vision of the NPF aims to balance the provision of quality housing that meets the needs of a diverse population by developing cities, towns and villages as attractive places to live and work.

National Policy Objective 3a of the NPF identifies the need to achieve ambitious targets for compact growth in our urban areas:

**NPO 3a** *Deliver at least 40% of all new homes nationally, within the built-up envelope of existing urban settlements.*

The Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Midlands and Eastern Region states that *“urban regeneration and infill sites can contribute to sustainable compact growth and revitalisation of existing settlements of all scale.”*

Parts of Meath are included in the **‘Gateway Region’** as set out in the RSES for the Midlands and Eastern Regions. A Growth Enabler for areas located within this region include *“Regeneration of small towns and villages, with a focus on the identification of rural town, village and rural regeneration priorities to bring vibrancy to these areas.”*

#### 2.1.2 Local Policy Context - Meath County Development Plan (2013 - 2019)

This section sets out the planning policy pertinent to the lands in **LU OBJ 8** of the current Meath County Development Plan (MCDP) 2013 – 2019.

Core Principles 5 and 6 of the MCDP are as follows:

**Core Principle 5** aims to *“encourage mixed use settlement forms and sustainable centres, in which employment, housing and community services are located in close proximity to each other and to strategic public transport corridors.”*

**Core Principle 6** aims to *“support the creation of a compact urban form in all settlements in Meath.”*

Oldcastle is identified as a **‘Small Town’** within the hierarchy of settlements in the MCDP, which states the following

*“They have developed on a more local, independent and economically active basis under the influence of larger towns in Meath. Meath County Council will continue to encourage them to develop in this manner. Oldcastle in particular has a strong indigenous industrial base. While the town is peripheral to Meath, it is strongly influential in its wider area of influence which extends into Cavan and Westmeath.”*

The settlement hierarchy identifies the settlements at various levels of the hierarchy, particularly those which should be a focus of growth. The MCDP seeks to avoid the expansion of growth centres based on commuter-led development and encourage development based on local growth.

The objectives contained in the MCDP with regards to Small Towns require that they are developed to cater for *“locally generated development and that growth occurs in tandem with local services, infrastructure and demand”* and to ensure that growth occurs in a manner which *“balances, self-sustains and supports a compact urban form and the integration of land use and transport”*.

The area of lands subject to this Framework Plan is dictated by **Land Use Objective no. 8** of the Oldcastle Written Statement (OWS):

#### **LU OBJ 8**

*“To require the preparation of a Framework Plan for the backlands to the north of Cogan Street and west of Cavan Street identified for ‘B1’ land use zoning objective. Any redevelopment of these lands must include for shared car parking, a significant residential component and provide an access road linking the 2 streets. The Planning Authority shall specify the requirements of this Framework Plan through the development management process.”*

Lands zoned under ‘B1 Commercial / Town or Village Centre’ are required to *“protect, provide for and / or improve town and village centre facilities and uses”*.

The context for future development in Oldcastle is predicated on a strategy for locally focused economic growth which seeks to preserve *“the built and natural environment and ensure that development is both sustainable and of a high quality.”* It is required that any development contiguous to the town centre will be carefully integrated.

**Special Policy no. 1** of the OWS seeks to achieve this through:

- a) *Intensification of development at appropriate locations.*
- b) *An emphasis on mixed land uses that are complementary and offer a greater diversity of land uses.*
- c) *Increased accessibility to community, economic and recreational facilities.*
- d) *Prioritising infrastructure provision before considering additional development.*
- e) *High quality design that is innovative rather than repetitive.*
- f) *The protection of amenity levels of adjoining development and the integration of new development with existing development by maximising permeability and connectivity.*
- g) *The orientation of propose buildings towards the street and areas of open space.*

It is an objective of Meath County Council to strengthen the town’s standing as an employment and service centre for North Meath:

**LU OBJ 2** To maintain the successful mixed-use town centre of Oldcastle through a balance of retailing, commercial uses, housing, education and community facilities to serve existing and future residents.

**MA OBJ 7** To facilitate a new street linking Cavan Street and Cogan Street to the west of the town centre to provide appropriate access to development lands.

The Local Authority’s recognition of potential for development of the backlands site is reiterated in the Urban Design Policy of the OWS:

*“Innovative development proposals seeking to consolidate the town centre and create distinct character areas, in particular through the use of backland areas in Oldcastle, will actively be encouraged by the Council.”*

#### 2.1.2.1 Architectural Conversation Area and Protected Structures

The Framework Plan lands are contiguous to / adjoining the Architectural Conversation Area (ACA) of Oldcastle. An ACA is defined in the MCDP as a *“place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. They may also include areas which contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures.”*

**CH OBJ 21** To ensure that any new development within or contiguous to an ACA is sympathetic to the character of the area and that the design is appropriate in terms of scale, height, plot density, layout, materials and finishes.

It is a requirement under the Planning & Development Act 2000 that Local Authorities incorporate objectives for the protection of structures, or parts of structures which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest within the Statutory Development Plan.

The Local Authority requires that any proposed development contiguous to structures included on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) ensures that *“the structure, or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest, is not endangered either through neglect, or by inappropriate works.”*

**CH OBJ 13** To protect all structures (or, where appropriate, parts of structure) within the county which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest and which are included in the RPS.

#### 2.1.3 Lifetime of Current Meath County Development Plan

The existing Meath County Development Plan (2013-2019) was to expire on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019. However, the Planning Authority has extended this period to allow adequate time to prepare the MCDP (2020-2026), following the adoption of the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Eastern and Midlands region and the National Planning Framework (NPF). The Draft MCDP (2020-2026) went on display on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019, and the consultation period finished on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

#### 2.1.4 Emerging Meath County Development Plan (2020 - 2026)

Following all revisions to the Draft MCDP, the Plan is due to be adopted November 2020. It is noted that while the policies and objectives set out in the current MCDP will apply until the formal adoption of the new Plan, it is considered that the provisions of the emerging Plan should be taken into consideration within the context of this Framework Plan.

The Draft plan continues to regard Oldcastle as an important employment and service centre in north-west Meath. It is intended that a specific Local Area Plan will be prepared for Oldcastle within the lifetime of the Plan (2020-2026.) The vision statement for Oldcastle is to *‘maintain and support the function and success of Oldcastle as an established employment and service centre for North Meath and the surrounding rural hinterland, which facilitates indigenous enterprise, and encourages improved quality of life and urban environment’.*

The land-use strategy outlined in the Draft Plan seeks to consolidate and strengthen the existing qualities of the town centre and promote the sensitive redevelopment of strategically located lands surrounding the historic core. The Core Strategy Household Allocation for 2020-2026 in the Plan for Oldcastle provides for 166 no. residential units.



The following objectives of the MCDP are relevant to this Framework Plan:

- OLD OBJ 2** To encourage the re-development of backland infill sites within the town that includes residential uses.
- OLD OBJ 6** To require new residential development to provide safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycling provision, circulation and accessibility through new developments and within the town centre.
- OLD OBJ 9** To provide for new / enhanced pedestrian connectivity and footpaths between playground, the town centre and other neighbourhoods.

#### 2.1.4.1 Draft Public Realm Plan 2020

One component of the emerging MCDP includes the preparation of a significant programme of public realm Plans, which are intended to be implemented over the lifetime of the new Development Plan. A Draft Public Realm Plan has been prepared for Oldcastle and was put out for public consultation on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

The purpose of the Plan is to *'provide a basis for town centre enhancement addressing all publicly accessible spaces between buildings thus including car parking, pedestrian and cycleways, street lighting, road surfaces, etc.'* A key factor in implementing the Public Realm plan will be undertaking an assessment of the way in which people, particularly pedestrians, move throughout the town.

The vision for the public realm plan is to:

*'improve the public realm in Oldcastle through reorganising the heart of the town with the addition of new public spaces, pedestrian crossings and reorganised parking. Links to open amenity areas, heritage and tourism opportunities should be enhanced and celebrated.'*

The plan identifies 9 no. objectives which intend to incorporate the scope of public realm works intended for Oldcastle, of which the following Items (no. 1 and 7) are pertinent:

**1. Improve footpaths and connections to all parts of the town.**

**7. Improve links to north and setting of playground.**

Other elements included within the objectives of the public realm plan include traffic calming measures, re-use of derelict sites / buildings, preservation and enhancement of vegetation in the town centre, improvements to street lighting.

Although the works outlined in the Public Realm Plan create a central focus on the immediate town centre / historic core of Oldcastle, it is considered that the scope of works beyond this immediacy can contribute significantly to the affirmation of these objectives within the lifetime of the MCDP.

The land-use zoning map for Oldcastle in the new Draft MCDP identifies the land as 'B1 Commercial – Town or Village Centre'. This zoning designation allows for mixed-used at the location of the proposed development.

The objectives of the Masterplan, while not directly interlinked with the objectives of the Public Realm Plan, will provide significant improvements to the provision of public realm amenity across Oldcastle Town Centre. The town's standing as a strong employment centre has diminished in recent years, as several closures along Cavan Street (which forms the Main retail Street) of the town and Church Street.

The proposal will comprise primarily a residential component, providing for 45 units. However, a commercial element will be included at the portion of the site within the development which is close to Cogan and Cavan Street.

The 3 no. key principles proposed for the rejuvenation of the Town Square are as follows:

1. A pedestrian friendly environment;
2. Rationalisation of vehicular movement; and
3. A green sustainable square.

The proposed development will provide for a new internal road network provided linking Cogan Street and Cavan St. This new road will help to divert traffic away from the Town Square and will act as a traffic calming measure. The introduction of traffic calming measures at these locations is a helpful tool in diverting traffic from the town square, which currently experiences significant levels of congestion at specific periods of the day.

*'Public open space shall be provided for in residential development at a minimum rate of 15% of total site area. Where residential developments arise close to existing facilities or natural amenities, or where in the opinion of Meath County Council that it would be in the interest of the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, Meath County Council may require a financial contribution towards the provision of public open space or recreational facilities in the wider area in lieu of public open space within the development.'*

The MCDP sets out a requirement for a minimum of 15% open space in residential developments.

## 2.2 Town Context

The town of Oldcastle is located in the north west corner of County Meath, c. 21km from Kells, c. 11km from Virginia and c. 11km from Ballyjamesduff. Historically, the town has developed as a Georgian market town centred on a crossroads which forms the current Town Square. Development has radiated from the Square along the two regional roads, R154 (Athboy to Mountnugent) and R195 (Castlepollard to Virginia) which transverse the town in east to west and north to south directions.

An aerial view of Oldcastle is shown in **Figure 2**.

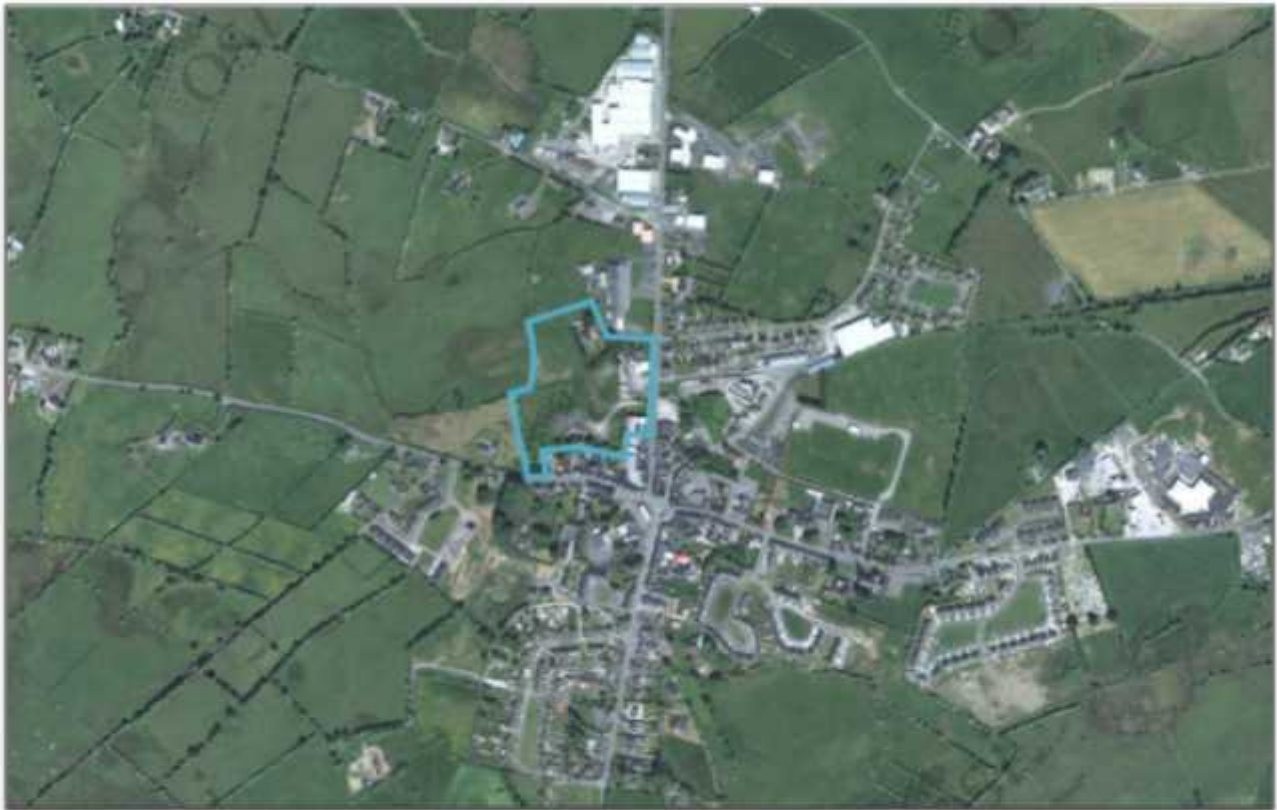


Figure 2 Aerial View of Oldcastle Town outlining Framework Area

The development of Oldcastle has been largely predicated on a pattern of local growth and robust traditional manufacturing. Historically, the town's standing as a manufacturing service was strengthened by the railway line which provided a rail service from Belfast to Dublin via Navan and Oldcastle. The branch line was built in Oldcastle in 1863 and terminated in 1963.

Oldcastle's Level 4 standing in the Retail Hierarchy for County Meath has resulted in smaller, independently driven retail services finding it difficult to compete with larger retail centres located nearby. Deterioration of the town's commercial core in recent years has weakened the town centre's capacity to minimise expenditure leakage to other towns.

It is noted in the current MCDP that the expansion of Oldcastle's residential base has been slow in recent years, in part due to its omission as part of the Dublin Metropolitan Area. In this regard, Oldcastle has not experienced the same level of commuter-led development in comparison to other centres of a similar scale such as Virginia in County Cavan.

Development in the town of Oldcastle has stagnated in recent years, and this is evident by the following:

1. The low number of completions in respect to residential development (excluding one-off housing);
2. The relative low level of development proposals both residential and commercial submitted to the Local Authority in this period; and
3. The level of vacancies within the town's commercial core.

More recently, an application was lodged on 22 November 2019 under MCC Reg. Ref KA/191563 for a development comprising 48 no. residential units and an access centre via the existing Loughcrew Hills development on a site c. 0.55km south west of Oldcastle town centre. Permission was granted in 2005 for a residential development of a similar scale on the lands however construction never commenced. At the time of writing, there is yet to be a decision made on the application.

Excluding the current proposal by the Applicant under MCC Reg. Ref KA/19116 (See **Section 5.1**) and Reg. Ref. KA/191563 in Oldcastle, there has been virtually no proposals since 2011 for comprehensive residential development (excluding one-off housing). The application for 53 no. units was refused by the Local Authority on the basis that the proposed access was insufficient and would endanger public safety, and on the premise that granting permission may set a precedent for residential development on greenfield lands.

The Oldcastle House Hotel is particularly relevant to the lands contained in **LU OBJ 8** and forms a prominent part of the frontage on to Cogan Street. The most recent application made in respect of the hotel was in 2012, largely comprising alterations to the existing structure. The hotel currently has a right of way through the development lands which provides a service access.

### 2.2.1 Demography and Housing Stock

In the intercensal period between 2011 and 2016, Oldcastle's population remained virtually static, and decreased from 1,384 no. people to 1,383 no. people. This is considerably lower than the national 3.7% increase in population recorded during this period.

In the same intercensal period, people aged 25 – 39 years remained virtually unchanged in Oldcastle. This demographic includes first-time buyers, young couples, and families seeking to buy / rent 'starter homes'.

By way of comparison, the population of the nearby settlement of Virginia located in County Cavan c. 11 km from Oldcastle increased from 2,282 no. people to 2,648 no. people in the same intercensal period, marking a c. 16% increase in population.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) provides completion figures for permanent private households. The figures for the settlement of Oldcastle indicate the following since 2001:

- ) Between 2001 and 2005 – 144 no. permanent private households were built;
- ) Between 2006 and 2011 – 47 no. permanent private households were built; and
- ) Between 2011 and 2016 – 4 no. permanent private households were built.

These CSO figures show the sizeable decrease in the number of permanent private households completed between 2001 and 2016.

The MCDP allocated the construction of 319 no. residential units in Oldcastle under the Core Housing Strategy within the lifetime of the development plan (2013-2019). This allocation was based on the number of residential units required to facilitate the town's sustainable growth. Between 2011 and 2016 only 4 no. permanent private households were completed.

Residential development in Oldcastle in recent years has largely been characterised by one-off developments within the hinterlands. There has been no provision of housing at a scale capable of delivering the housing allocation set out by the Core Strategy.

By way of comparison, the CSO figures for Virginia are as follows:

- ) Between 2001 and 2010 – 746 no. permanent private households were built; and
- ) Between 2011 and 2016 – 51 no. permanent private households were built.

The housing completion figures for Virginia are comparatively higher than those recorded for Oldcastle. Despite a decrease in residential development in the years following the economic downturn, figures remained proportionally higher than Oldcastle. This may be attributed largely to the benefits afforded to Virginia by commuter-led development.

### 2.2.2 Services and Amenity

There is a public bus transport service available which connects Oldcastle with Kells Town Centre. Notwithstanding the low frequency of the route, it provides onwards connections from Kells, to include services to and from Dublin. The bus stop for this route is located in the town square at the intersection of R154 and T195 (see **Figure 3**). This stop is located c. 180m south east of the development proposed under MCC Reg. Ref KA191163.

St. Oliver's Post Primary School adjoins the development lands at the northern boundary. This facility is particularly relevant in the development of the subject lands as pedestrian access routes will be provided to link the lands with the Post Primary school. A Primary school, Gilson National School is located east of the town centre on Church Street. The location of these schools is shown in **Figure 3**.

Oldcastle is identified as a Level 4 Retail Centre in the County Retail Hierarchy and comprises primarily smaller, independent retail services. The town's standing as a retail centre for the surrounding, rural hinterland could be greatly improved by the introduction of improved, convenience retail services.

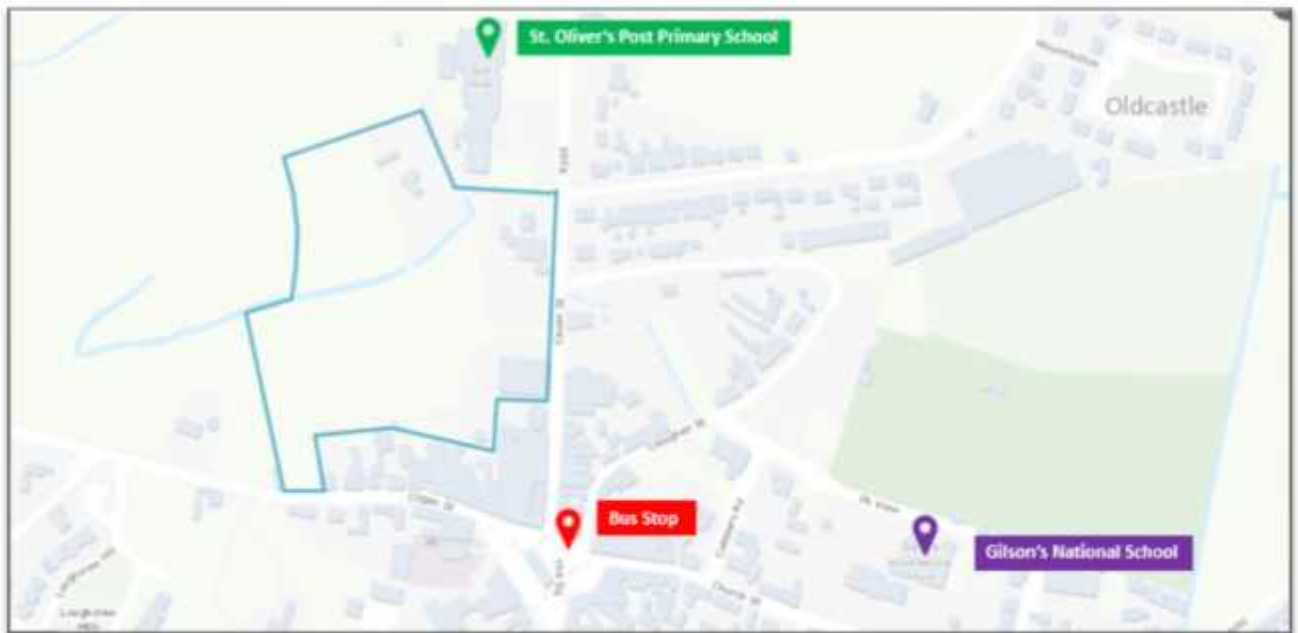


Figure 3 Location of Education Facilities and Bus Stop

## 2.2.3 Architectural Conservation Area

Oldcastle's town centre is identified as an ACA in the MCDP, the boundary of which is shown in **Figure 4**. The MCDP requires that due regard is given to the architectural character and integrity of ACAs in any development proposal directly relating to and or / contiguous to that ACA. It is important to note that only the small portion of land abutting the south western corner of the subject lands constitutes part of the Oldcastle ACA.

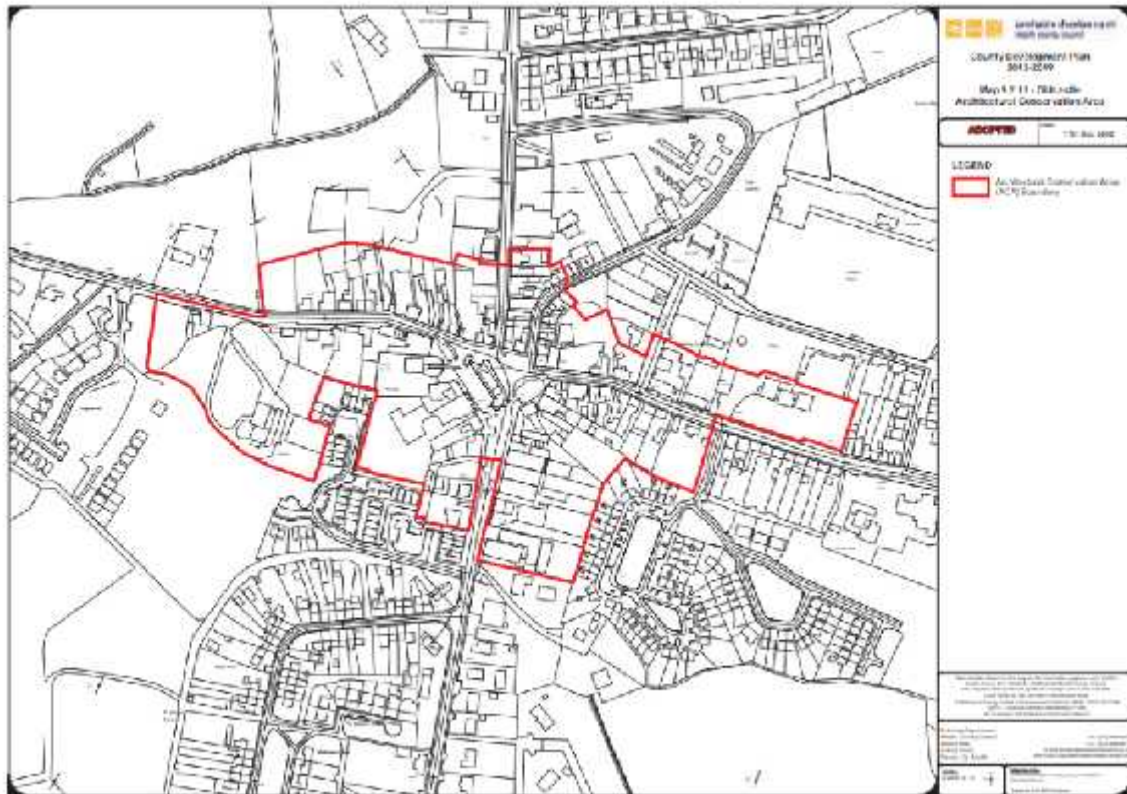


Figure 4 Architectural Conservation Area of Oldcastle extracted from MCDP 2013 - 2019



The architectural character of the town is predominantly late Georgian, with two- and three-storey houses, some with stuccoed Victorian commercial facades. The buildings in the Oldcastle ACA are characterised by a broad range of traditional materials with several quality shopfronts (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5 Example of Street Frontages on to Cavan Street

The central square, of an irregular triangular form, is on an elevated site, particularly evident from the southern and eastern approach roads. The town's streetscape extends along four major roads that radiate from the market square (see **Figure 6**).



Figure 6 View of Town Square from Cogan Street

## 2.2.4 Protected Structures

There are 35 no. Protected Structures identified within the Oldcastle ACA, which is contiguous to the development lands subject to this Framework Plan. Most of these form the frontage of the streets which converge at the town centre.

2 no. Protected Structures have been identified within the lands in zoning objective **LU OBJ 8**. The structures are located adjacent to one another on the western boundary of the subject area.



### **Tuite's | Garage | 1430607 |**

Detached five-bay single storey rendered garage, built c. 1940, with pilasters, pediment and parapet. Square-headed opening with timber-battened doors, and steel pivot windows. See **Figure 7**.

Figure 7 Protected Structure: Tuite's Garage, RPS no. 14306071



### **Forge | Forge | 14306070**

Detached gable-front single-bay, single-storey former forge, built 1864. Horseshoe-shaped opening in gablewall with rock-faced voussoirs. See **Figure 8**.

Figure 8 Protected Structure: Forge, RPS no. 14306070



## 2.2.5 Town Context Summary

- J In the modern context, Oldcastle retains its status as a service centre. However, the town's commercial core has undergone deterioration in recent years, and as such finds it difficult to compete with nearby centres providing more extensive services;
- J 319 no. homes were allocated under the Core Housing Strategy in the lifetime of the current Development Plan. The lack of new residential development has resulted in this allocation not being fulfilled.
- J The planning objectives in the MCDP and the accompanying Written Statement for Oldcastle is predicated on consolidation of the town's centre and incorporating the provision of mixed-use development on the 'backlands' contiguous to the town centre;
- J The intensification of development within the town centre will encourage reinvigoration of the town's commercial core, and help to re-establish its standing as a strong service centre to the surrounding area; and
- J The Oldcastle Architectural Conservation Area incorporates most of the town centre, to include 35 no. Protected Structures. There are 2 no. Protected Structures located within the Framework Plan Area. Any future development of the lands in the Framework Area will be required to have due regard to the architectural and structural integrity of the ACA and Protected Structures.

## 2.3 Site Context

### 2.3.1 Planning History

The subject lands to the rear of Cogan and Cavan Street contained in **LU OBJ 8** have a complex planning history. Following the purchase of a portion of the lands by the Applicant in 2002, several applications were lodged in respect of the lands and were subject to extensive discussion with the Local Authority. These applications were made within the context of the previous MCDP.

A mix of recreational, residential and commercial uses were proposed for the site in the period between 2002 and 2005, none of which were implemented. Initial attempts to develop the lands were constrained by service issues in relation to drainage infrastructure. These were addressed by way of agreement with the landowner of the nearby development proposed at Loughcrew Hills and the use of a waste-water treatment plant.

The most recent application lodged prior to the economic downturn was made in 2005. Subsequent applications to develop the lands were unsuccessful. The current application submitted to the Local Authority by the Applicant under MCC Reg. Ref. KA/191163 is the first application in a decade to seek the development of these long-established and under-utilised lands.

### 2.3.2 Site Description

The Framework Plan lands are located north west of Oldcastle town centre on the 'backlands' to the rear of Cogan Street and Cavan Street. The north west and west of the site are bound by predominantly unzoned, greenfield lands on which a single stand-alone residence is located.

The framework lands have a total site area of c. 4.23 hectares. The site boundary is located on the Masterplan Drawing shown in **Figure 9**. The area is formed by the combination of land under the control of five adjoining landowners. A **Land Ownership Map** has been prepared by Kellarch and included with this Framework Plan as **Appendix B**.

The total land area comprises:

- ) The subject site area measuring c. 1.91 hectares of the total framework lands subject to proposed development under MCC Reg. Ref. KA/191163 (see **Section 5.1**, shown in the 'red-line' boundary in **Figure 9**);
- ) An area measuring c. 0.75 hectares in private housing;
- ) Largely unused agricultural land measuring c. 1.03 hectares;
- ) Commercial Vehicle Garage and Petrol Station measuring c. 0.38 hectares; and
- ) Vacant building formally used for NCT testing measuring c. 0.103 hectares (**See Figure 10**).



Figure 9 Masterplan Drawing prepared for the lands in the Zoning Objective LU OBJ 8



Figure 10 Vacant Structure formerly used for NCT Testing

The site can be accessed from the eastern boundary via the existing access on Cavan Street (See **Figure 11**), but to date there is no southern access from Cogan Street. The site adjoins the Old Castle Architectural Conservation Area (See **Section 2.2.3**) at its southern boundary. Only a small segment of the lands in zoning objective **LU OBJ 8** constitutes part of the ACA, which is the portion at the south western corner which fronts on to Cogan Street. The remainder of the subject lands are outside the boundary of the ACA.



The site predominantly comprises under-utilised agricultural fields, adjoining to the north of the Oldcastle House Hotel which falls sharply to a stream flowing west. The fields comprising most of the site are largely overgrown, with minimal efforts at management in recent years (See **Figure 13**).

FIGURE 11 EXISTING ACCESS TO SITE FROM CAVAN STREET



FIGURE 12 VIEW NO. 1 INTO SITE FROM SOUTHERN BOUNDARY



FIGURE 13 VIEW NO.2 INTO SITE FROM SOUTHERN BOUNDARY

There is a stream which transverses the lands in a westerly direction. The drain forms the northern boundary of the 'red-line' boundary for MCC Reg. Ref 191163.

There is no known history of flooding on the subject lands. Within the context of the county-wide Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plan prepared for the MCDP, Oldcastle is identified as a "Low risk settlement with no historic flood risk".

Figure 14 indicates the location of the Figures no. s 7-14.



FIGURE 14 LOCATION OF FIGURES NO.S 7 - 14.

### 3. Concept / Vision

The vision set out for the development lands in the **LU OBJ 8** zoning objective is informed by the policy direction and objectives set out within the MCDP. The location of the lands to the rear of Cogan Street and Cavan Street, which form two of the central street frontages within the town centre make them an attractive opportunity for development.

Outlined below are the 3 no. key concepts / visions for these lands:

1. To consolidate the town centre through the successful development of the 'backland' area immediately north west of the town centre. The Framework Plan seeks to deliver on the objective for compact development set out in the MCDP. Development will aim to successfully integrate with the existing urban fabric of the town and help to reinvigorate and support the commercial core of Oldcastle;
2. To improve connectivity by the addition of new pedestrian / vehicular access route between the development lands and the town centre. In accordance with objective **MA OBJ 7**, the provision of a new road between Cogan and Cavan Street will help to alleviate pressure on the town centre from heavy traffic flows and on-street car-parking. Additional pedestrian linkages provided between the 'backland' and the town centre will help to improve the currently poor pedestrian permeability in the north western area of the town centre; and
3. To provide for a mixed use development on the subject lands. This will comprise a strong residential component in line with the objective of reducing pressure for one-off houses and compact residential development. It will also comprise a commercial component which will serve existing and new residents of Oldcastle town, and help to strengthen the town's standing as a competitive service centre.

The vision is underpinned by the following Key Development Objectives identified in **Section no. 4**.

### 4. Key Development Objectives

From an assessment of the policy direction provided in the MCDP and in conjunction with a comprehensive site analysis, the following key development objectives have been identified:

- ) To establish a new residential and mixed-use quarter on serviced lands within the town's centre, with a capacity to form its own individual character and identity;
- ) To provide a development which seeks to maintain and support the town centre of Oldcastle through a balance of uses to serve existing and future residents;
- ) To provide a new street linking Cavan and Cogan Street to provide appropriate access and connectivity to the town centre.
- ) To integrate the development with the existing town centre by introducing a higher quality of sustainable and permeable linkages between them;
- ) To provide supporting services which will benefit not only the future residents of the proposed development, but the existing residents of Oldcastle;
- ) To create an inclusive new community which integrates into the existing social fabric of Oldcastle;
- ) To ensure the proposed development does not compromise, and in fact strengthens, the architectural character and integrity of the contiguous Oldcastle ACA; and
- ) To safeguard the 2 no. Protected Structures located on the western boundary of the subject lands and have due regard for the Protected Structures located within the contiguous town centre.

## 5. Urban Design

The purpose of the *Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide (May 2009)* prepared by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local government, is to introduce the core principles of urban design and sustainability insofar as they related to residential development. The twelve criteria contained in the manual have been established to encapsulate the range of design considerations for proposals similar to that now proposed for the Masterplan area in Oldcastle.

This section assesses the design of the indicative, proposed scheme for the overall Masterplan area against the twelve criteria contained in the manual in order to highlight that it has endeavoured to be cognisant of the available guidance in this regard.

### 01 CONTEXT How does the development respond to its surroundings?

It is considered that development of the subject site will constitute the orderly and sequential development of Oldcastle town, having regard for its 'backland' location and proximity to the town centre. The development will contribute positively to the character and identity of Oldcastle and proposes a scheme in which the building form and density are cognisant of the existing urban character of the town centre.

The provision of additional residential accommodation in the centre of Oldcastle will help to facilitate the growth and establishment of a successful neighbourhood and encourage delivery of the principle 'goals' of the overall Masterplan for the development lands.

Existing planted boundaries are to be retained and enhanced where possible. The proposed entrances from Cavan Street and Cogan Street will be framed by a stone-faced entrance. This will reflect similar entrances found throughout the town, such as the entrance to the Railway Yard from Cavan Street, located east of the development area.

### 02 CONNECTIONS How well connected is the new neighbourhood?

Development of the masterplan area will avail of the site's proximity to Oldcastle's town centre and enhance the connectivity and quality of routes between the site and historic town centre. The town is a mixed-use centre which provides a range of services for future residences of this development and who in turn will have easy access to transport services available in the town. Future development will also improve the viability of these existing public transport services.

The proposed masterplan scheme incorporates a link between Cogan Street and Cavan Street which will form a central spine for the overall development of these lands. Such a route would not only be of benefit to the quality of connectivity afforded by the development itself, but for Oldcastle town also. The traffic calming route will provide access for motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, and connect to all existing amenity walkways and pedestrian routes.

### 03 INCLUSIVITY How easily can people use and access the development?

The proposed layout provides for ease of access and complete permeability. A range of public communal and private open spaces and activity facilities envisaged by the overall Masterplan will be included in the layout of the scheme. The range of house types included in the scheme will be a positive contribution to the diversity of house types on offer to the Oldcastle housing market.

## 04 VARIETY

How does the development promote a good mix of activities?

The mixed-use nature of the proposed development will provide a diverse range of houses within its residential use, and varied amenities available for existing and new residents of Oldcastle.

As part of the Applicant's proposal to develop the portion of the Masterplan area under their ownership, it is proposed to include a mixed-use element located immediately to the rear of the existing services / amenities areas located along Cavan and Cogan Street. In this regard, the opportunity has been taken to provide facilities and services which are complimentary to those already offered. It is envisaged that this will form an interface between the existing town centre and the residential component of the overall Masterplan area which can be used by both existing and future residents and will enhance the existing mix of services available.

## 05 EFFICIENCY

How does the development make appropriate use of resources, including land?

It is considered that the very development of the site in itself, constitutes the efficient and appropriate use of the subject lands. Having regard for its backland nature and proximity to Oldcastle town centre, its potential for development has been critically assessed and it is considered that the proposed mixed of uses to include residential at a density deemed appropriate, constitutes a highly effective use of the land. The proposed scheme will ultimately 'activate' this valuable and underutilised site. The proposal will provide for frontage development along the access roads.

## 06 DISTINCTIVENESS

How do the proposals create a sense of place?

Development of the masterplan area will ultimately constitute a positive addition to the locality. The site itself forms a very distinctive site within the context of Oldcastle Town, which is prominent from several viewpoints along Cogan and Cavan Street. Its appropriate development would ultimately help to form a sense of place in the context of Oldcastle Town, as a development which would enhance the vitality of the town centre.

From a design perspective, most units within the proposed scheme will retain views of the central open space area provided. The roofscape formed by the existing elevation of the town centre's buildings will comprise the backdrop for the development.

## 07 LAYOUT

How does the proposal create people friendly streets and spaces?

The proposed layout contains short cul-de-sacs off the proposed access road linking Cavan and Cogan Street which act as effective traffic-calming measures. The layout has been designed such that it is easy and logical to navigate around for both vehicles and pedestrians. The masterplan area will be entirely permeable and provide effective passive surveillance using double-fronted corner houses and / or gable windows as appropriate. Walking distances to the primary circulation routes are short as all units within the scheme will be within c. 100 m of the central open space, and the provision of a linking route between Cavan and Cogan street will provide for pedestrian friendly access to and from Oldcastle town centre.



## 08 PUBLIC REALM

How safe, secure and enjoyable are the public areas?

The Masterplan provides for a central open space area which will incorporate a variety of passive and active amenities, forming the primary public realm of the neighbourhood. This public space will be overlooked by the surrounding residential units which will foster a sense of safety and security.

All roads, footpaths, verges and planted areas will be treated as an integral landscape element and detailed appropriately as a component of the public realm. The design will create an attractive and pedestrian-friendly public space. The public realm will be separated from private open space by c. 2 m high brick-faced screen walls.

## 09 ADAPTABILITY

How will the buildings cope with change?

From a design perspective, it is envisaged that most individual units included in the residential element of the scheme will exceed the minimum size requirements which will allow for future ground-floor extensions. Roof spaces in semi-detached houses will be suitable for future conversion and alteration.

## 10 PRIVACY AND AMENITY

How does the scheme provide a decent standard of amenity?

Each residential unit will be allocated an area of private open space. All proposed rear private gardens will generally exceed the minimum size requirements. It is considered that the nature of the site allows for sufficient design scope to ensure that residential units are configured in such a way which maximises the privacy and afforded to each unit.

## 11 PARKING

How will the parking be secure and attractive?

Each residential unit will be provided with the minimum required with regards to car-parking spaces. Individual houses will be provided with spaces within the curtilage of their private front gardens and duplexes will be allocated parking convenient to their unit. Each space will meet the minimum size requirements for accessible parking. Duplex units will be designed to have designated parking.

## 12 DETAILED DESIGN

How well thought through is the building and landscape design?

The overall layout and design of the masterplan area will facilitate optimum use of public and privately landscaped space.

The detailed design process will ensure that buildings and public space facilitate easy and regular maintenance, and the materials and external design will be cognisant of the existing design context of Oldcastle town and make a positive contribution to the locality.

## 6. Development Areas

This section divides the Masterplan area into 2 no. key development areas, and includes an indicative phasing proposal for each area which is broken down as follows:

- J Current development proposal under MCC Reg. Ref. KA/191163 (lands included in the 'red-line' boundary); and
- J Northern section of the Framework Area lands (all lands outside the 'red-line' but included in the 'blue-line boundary').

### 6.1 Site A - Area of land under Applicant's Ownership

Site comprises the area of land under the Applicant's ownership, which is currently subject to a planning application (MCC Reg. Ref. KA/191163). The area of land comprises c. 1.91 hectares, accounting for c. 45% of the lands in the zoning objective **LU OBJ 8**. The site comprises the southern portion of the development lands.

The site consists largely of unused agricultural land, however there is a vacant building formerly used as an NCT testing facility located on the eastern boundary. The northern boundary of the development area is defined by the stream which transverses the development lands. The proposed development for **Site A** is detailed in **Appendix A** of this Plan. It is envisaged that subject to Council approval, the development will deliver on several of the key objectives identified for the Masterplan area.

**Figure 15** shows an indicative phasing proposal for the proposed development, which identifies 3 no. key development plots (detailed in full in **Appendix A**).



FIGURE 15 KEY DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN SITE A - CURRENT PROPOSAL

- ) **Area 1** – The primary residential component on the eastern portion of Site A;
- ) **Area 2** – The remaining component of the residential development; and
- ) **Area 3** – The triangular portion of the site adjoining Oldcastle’s town centre and Architectural Conservation Area.

The construction of the proposed internal road linking Cogan and Cavan Street is a pre-requisite to the development of **Site A** and will provide access to the development lands. The cost of this infrastructure and other shared infrastructure will be subject to agreement with Meath County Council. Full details of the Transportation Proposals included in the development of Site A are detailed in **Appendix A**.

## 6.2 Site B - Northern Portion of land in Framework Area



FIGURE 16 KEY DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN NORTHERN SECTION OF FRAMEWORK AREA

**Site B** comprises an area measuring 2.38 hectares, accounting for c. 55% of the lands contained in zoning objective **LU OBJ 8**, located in the northern portion of the framework lands. 2 no. key areas (**Area 4 and 5**) have been identified and are shown in **Figure 16**.

Site B is largely made up of unused agricultural land, and no specific development proposals to date have been made in respect of the lands in Site B, however the Masterplan Drawing supporting this Framework Plan outlines a suggested development approach.

A commercial garage and petrol station occupy c. 038 hectares of Site B on the eastern boundary, fronting on to Cavan Street. These are both currently operational.

### 6.2.1 Area 4 - Western Portion

The western portion of Site B will provide for additional residential units and public open space. These residences will be appropriately linked to the remainder of the Framework Area lands. There is an existing private residence in the north eastern corner of Area D, and any future development will have due regard for this.

### 6.2.2 Area 5 - Eastern Portion

The eastern portion of Site B contained the 2 no. Protected Structures identified in **Section 2.2.4**. Both structures are located next to one another and front on to Cavan Street. Any development of this portion of the lands specifically, will require due consideration of its curtilage to Protected Structures.

A second vehicular / pedestrian access route linking Cavan Street to the development lands is proposed, located adjacent to Railway Yard. The new route will form a four-way junction. Development of Area 5 will form a key part of the frontage on to Cavan Street.

Development of the remaining lands will incorporate additional pedestrian links which will connect St. Oliver's Post Primary School to the development lands. This will improve pedestrian connectivity and ease of access to the Post Primary facility for residents of the development.

# Appendix A

Lands under the Ownership of Cogan Properties Ltd



This section of the Framework Plan will provide specific details in relation to the portion of the masterplan area (**Site A**) under the ownership of the Applicant, Cogan Properties Ltd, and the proposed development currently subject to a planning application.

The current development being proposed (MCC Reg. Ref KA/191163) will provide for a mixed-use development on a site area of c. 1.91 hectares, which account for c. 45% of the lands in zoning objective **LU OBJ 8**. Development of the site will form the cornerstone basis of development of the overall masterplan area.

## 1. Applicant's Lands

### 1.1 Proposal

Section 6 of the main body of the Framework Plan shows the indicative breakdown of the areas within 'Site A' of the masterplan area, which is under the control of the Applicant, and is Shown again in **Figure 17**.

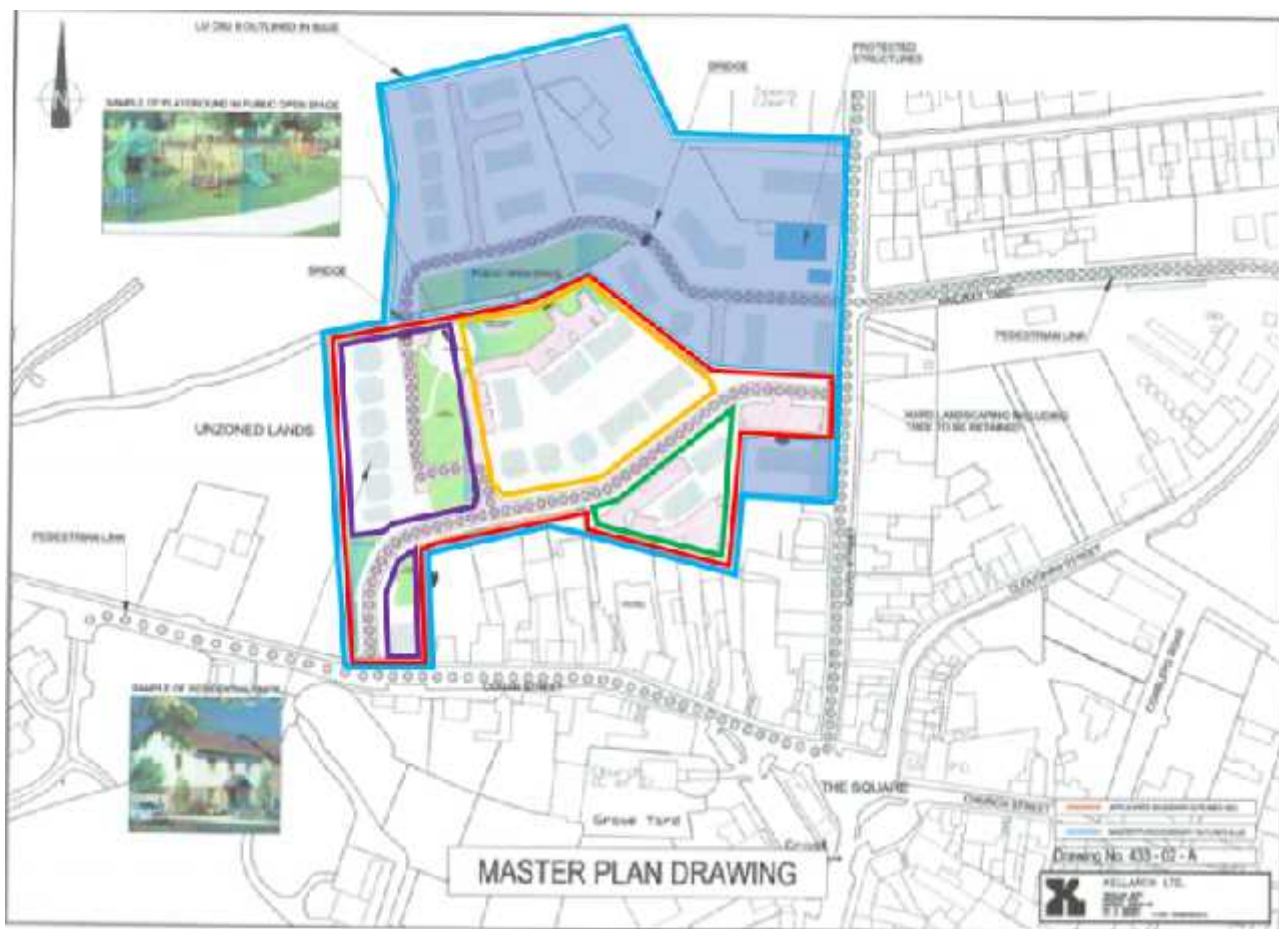


FIGURE 17 KEY DEVELOPMENT AREAS IN SITE A - CURRENT PROPOSAL

**Area 1 and 2** form the largest component of Site A, providing for 39 no. residential units to include two-, three- and four-bedroom dwellings and ancillary private car parking. This will include terraced, semi-detached, detached and duplex houses with the following mix:

- ) 10 no. two-bedroom dwellings;
- ) 26 no. three-bedroom dwellings; and
- ) 3 no. four-bedroom dwellings.

The scheme will provide for a diverse range of house types in order to facilitate a balanced housing market in Oldcastle with the ability to adapt to change family sizes.

The proposal provides for 39 no. units equates to a density of 32.5 units per hectare. This is within the appropriate range of 35 no. units per hectares as set out in the Statutory Development Plan.

**Areas 1 and 2** of the subject site provides for a portion of public open space in addition to the private gardens adjoining each unit. All gardens exceed the minimum requirements for two-, three- & four- bedroom houses. This public open space will incorporate a children's playground.

### 1.1.2 Area 3

**Area 3** comprises a triangular portion of the subject site which adjoins to the rear of the buildings which form part of the street frontage on to Cogan and Cavan Street. This portion will comprise the commercial component of the proposed development to include 4 no. commercial units.

Additionally, there are 6 no. residential units proposed above the commercial units. These will comprise of three-bedroom duplex apartments, providing for a total of 45 no. units overall within the proposed scheme.

This element of the development will integrate closely with the existing commercial fabric of the town centre. This will be achieved by the provision of pedestrian linkages afforded from the rear of the street frontage into the development.

These linkages will encourage interaction between the proposed development of the subject site and the existing commercial core, with the goal of reinvigorating the services provided in the core already by generating increased footfall. Importantly, the provision of a vehicular / pedestrian access via the rear of the Oldcastle House Hotel will help to achieve this.

The gross floor area (GFA) of 4 no. units will be 390 sq.m. The uses for these units have not yet been determined but they will provide services of benefit to existing and new residents in Oldcastle.

### 1.1.3 Phasing and Implementation of Site A

It is considered that the size of the site does not require a detailed phasing mechanism. However, it is anticipated that the development will occur in the following key stages:

- ) Construction of pedestrian and vehicular road linking Cogan Street and the existing access on Cavan Street;
- ) Construction of residential units on the eastern portion of the site;
- ) Construction of remaining units on the western portion of the site; and
- ) Construction of 4 no. commercial units on south eastern corner of the site.

The rationale for this phasing is that the construction of the new access road linking Cogan and Cavan Street is a prerequisite for development the rest of the site as will provide for 2 no. separate access points to the development area.

## 1.2 Transportation Proposal

As previously mentioned, the proposed development for c. 45% of the lands in zoning object **LU OBJ 8** under MCC Reg. Ref. KA/191163 will include the construction of a pedestrian / vehicular access route linking Cogan Street and the existing access on Cavan Street in accordance with **MA OBJ 7**. This development will also provide for a new access from the rear of the existing Oldcastle House Hotel into the development via the southern boundary.

The proposed road link between Cogan and Cavan Street will help to control the speed and volume of traffic currently passing through Oldcastle's Town Centre, which currently impedes pedestrian movement and accessibility. The new route will relieve traffic congestion in the commercial core.

An excess of on-street car parking impedes efficient flow of traffic and access to the town centre. The allocation of additional public car-parking spaces included in the proposal for 'Site A' will help to alleviate pressure on parking in the central area.

The provision of additional pedestrian linkages between the town centre and the development lands seeks to enhance pedestrian connectivity and increase footfall within Oldcastle's commercial core. This Framework Plan ultimately seeks to optimise pedestrian permeability through the provision of these links.

These links will provide for new pedestrian access routes between the development lands and St. Oliver's Primary School located north of the lands. This will facilitate improved connectivity and ease of access between the Primary facility and new residents.

The Masterplan includes a second pedestrian / vehicular access route via Cavan Street adjacent to Railway Yard Street on the eastern boundary. This will form a four-way junction. All proposed vehicular access routes to the development lands are indicated in **Figure 17**.

A detailed **Traffic Impact Assessment** has been prepared to accompany the current proposal for development of the lands at 'Site A'.



FIGURE 18 EXISTING AND PROPOSED ACCESS TO DEVELOPMENT LANDS



### 1.3 Open Space






It is important to note that the provisions of the currently Meath County Development Plan (2013-2019) contains a requirement for a minimum of 10% open space. **Drawing no. 433-06** prepared by Kellarch and included with this plan as **Appendix C** clearly indicates the allocation of open space within the proposed scheme.

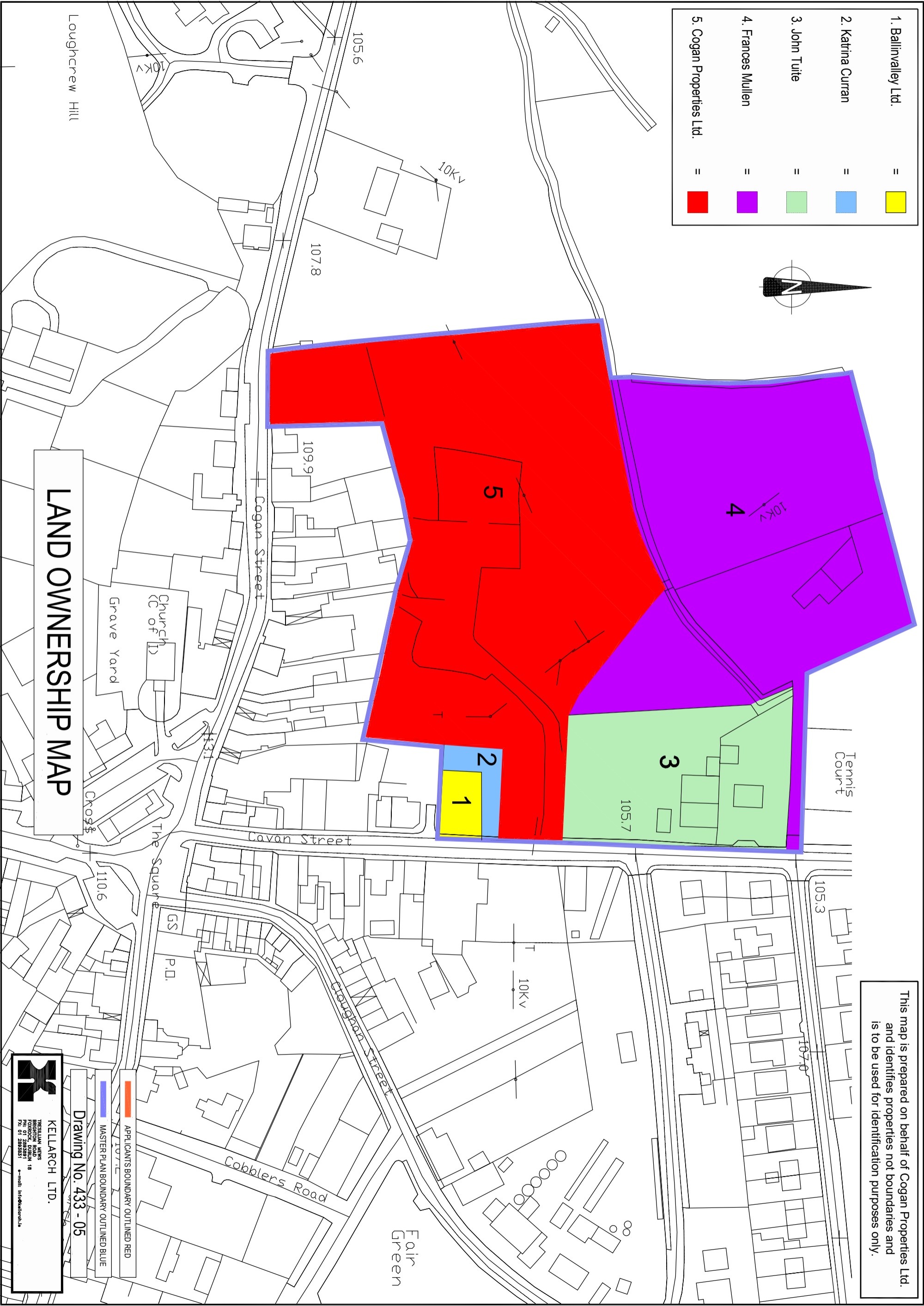
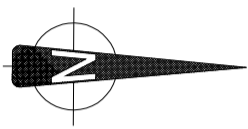
The drawing itemises the areas of public open space included in the scheme from 1 – 4 which will provide for a total of 2,895m<sup>2</sup> of open space throughout the scheme, or 15% of the total site area. In this regard, the Applicant is keen to highlight to the Council their delivery on the policy requirement in this regard.

The public open space will be formed by the 4 no. plots denoted on the map measuring 260m<sup>2</sup>, 200m<sup>2</sup>, 300m<sup>2</sup> and 2,135m<sup>2</sup> respectively across a series of green areas.

# Appendix B

Lands Ownership Map

1. Ballinvalley Ltd.	=	
2. Katrina Curran	=	
3. John Tuite	=	
4. Frances Mullen	=	
5. Cogan Properties Ltd.	=	



# LAND OWNERSHIP MAP

This map is prepared on behalf of Cogan Properties Ltd. and identifies properties not boundaries and is to be used for identification purposes only.

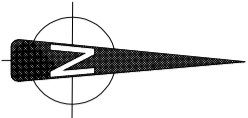
APPLICANTS BOUNDARY OUTLINED RED  
 MASTER PLAN BOUNDARY OUTLINED BLUE

Drawing No. 433 - 05

**KELLARCH LTD.**  
 TRESILIAN HOUSE  
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 PHOENIX PARK  
 DUBLIN 18  
 TEL: 01 2833331  
 \*email: info@kellarch.ie

# Appendix C

Open Space Allocation Map



SAMPLE OF PLAYGROUND IN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE



# OPEN SPACE ALLOCATION

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE SCHEDULE	
OVERALL SITE AREA	19,121 sq.m
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE No.1	260 sq.m
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE No.2	200 sq.m
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE No.3	300 sq.m
PUBLIC OPEN SPACE No.4	2,135 sq.m
<b>TOTAL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE RELATING TO THIS APPLICATION</b>	<b>2,895 sq.m (15%)</b>

APPLICANTS BOUNDARY OUTLINED RED

Drawing No. 433 - 06


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