



Oldcastle

Architectural Conservation Area
Statement of Character
December 2009

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Oldcastle

Architectural Conservation Area

Statement of Character

Lotts Architecture and Urbanism
with Stephen Farrell

On behalf of
Meath County Council and
County Meath Heritage Forum

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



An action of the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011
supported by Meath County Council and the Heritage Council

Foreword

In 2007 Meath County Council adopted the County Meath Heritage Plan 2007-2011, prepared by the County Heritage Forum, following extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public. The Heritage Forum is a partnership between local and central government, state agencies, heritage and community groups, NGOs local business and development, the farming sector, educational institutions and heritage professionals. The Heritage plan is a cross-agency strategic plan which aims to identify, promote, enhance and conservation Meath's rich heritage. It is an action of the Heritage Plan to evaluate the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) in the county.

It is an objective of the county Meath Development Plan 2007-2013 to carry out an appraisal of existing and proposed Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) during the lifetime of the plan. This publication describes the special character of Oldcastle ACA and will be a useful guide for the public and local authority. We would sincerely like to thank all those who contributed to this project and to the Heritage Council for providing funding.

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Introduction

1.0 Introduction

Several of the towns and villages of county Meath contain areas of architectural, historical and cultural interest, which have a distinct character and inherent qualities. Their character is derived from the typology of buildings within the area and their setting in the landscape. These areas may develop and change with time but their special character is considered of great value and worthy of protection. Current planning legislation allows a planning authority to include objectives in the County Development Plan to preserve the character of a place, area, group of structures or townscapes (taking account of building lines and heights) that is considered to be of: special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or value, or contributes to the appreciation of protected structures, and whose character it is an objective of a development plan to preserve. These places form Architectural Conservation Areas or as here abbreviated, - ACAs. The legislation governing ACAs is used to protect the following:

- groups of structures of distinctiveness or visual richness or historical importance.
- the setting and exterior appearance of structures that are of special interest, but the interiors of which do not merit protection.
- the setting of a protected structure where this is more extensive than its curtilage.
- designed landscapes where these contain groups of structures as in, for example, urban parks, the former demesnes of country houses and groupings of archaeological or industrial remains.
- groups of structures which form dispersed but unified entities but which are not within the curtilage of a single dominant protected structure.

Therefore an ACA could include a terrace of houses, an entire streetscape, a town centre or

a smaller ensemble related to a specific building type, such as a mill or a country house. The significance of structures within an ACA lies in their positive contribution to the streetscape and the character of an area and their protection relates to the external appearance of such areas or structures. The objective of the ACA designation is to guide change within an area and ensure that future development is carried out in a manner that is sympathetic to the special character of this historic place.

The carrying out of works to the exterior of a structure in an ACA shall only be considered as exempted development as long as the works do not affect the character of the exterior of the structure or that of neighbouring structures or areas. Alterations, extensions and new build are allowed within an ACA but any new development should respect or enhance the special character of the area and should be carried out in consultation with the Planning Department of Meath County Council and the Conservation Officer, following the usual planning application process.

There are currently 18 ACAs designated in County Meath. This document is one in a series which identifies the special character of individual ACAs and gives advice and guidance to those seeking planning permission, such as homeowners, developers and planning professionals, on the type of works that would be acceptable within that particular ACA, to avoid loss or negative impact to its special character.

Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

2.0 Location & Boundary of the Architectural Conservation Area

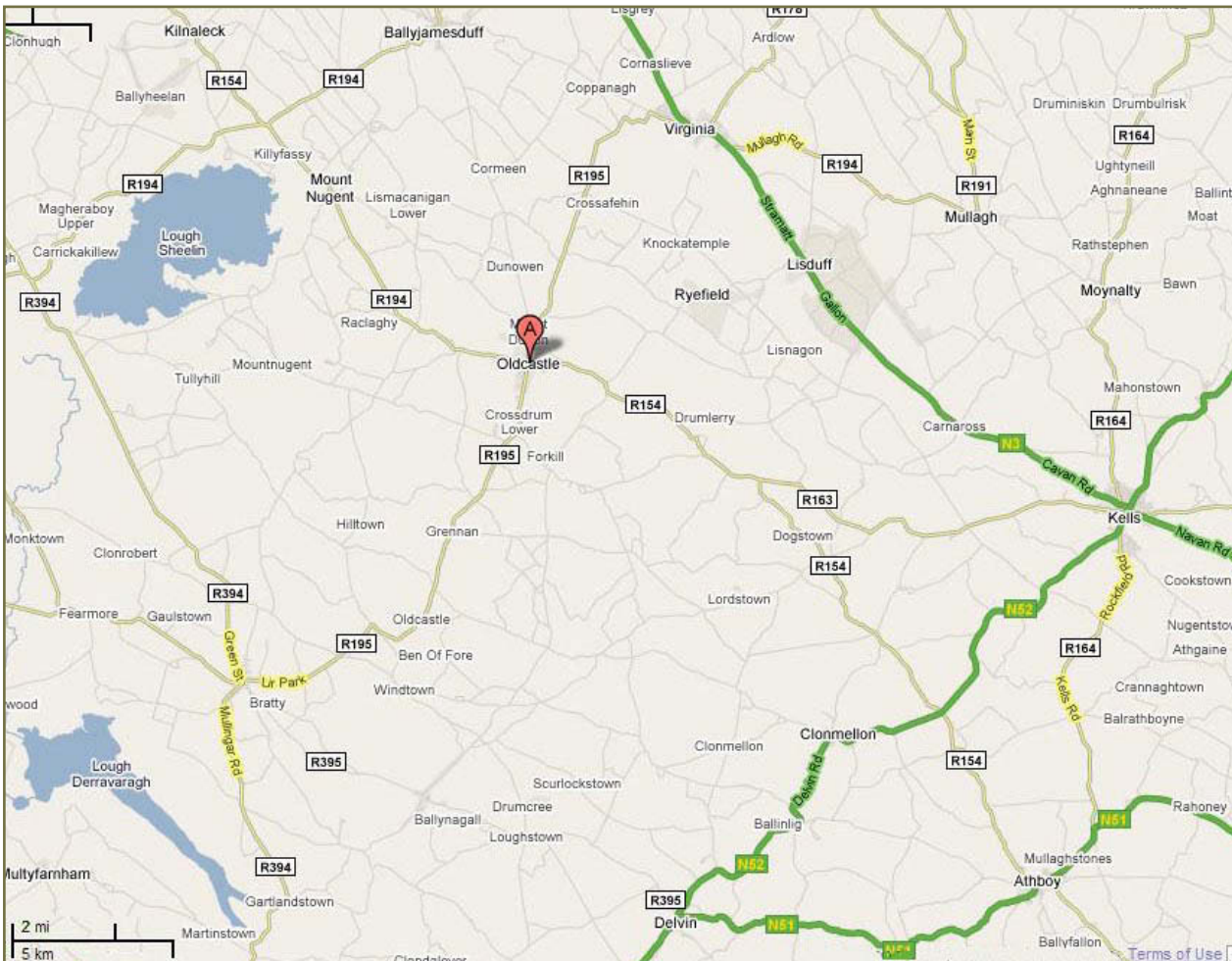


Fig. 1: Location of Oldcastle (from Google Maps)

Oldcastle town is located to the very northwest corner of County Meath close to the border of County Cavan. It is positioned at the crossing of two regional roads, namely the R195 running from north to south between Virginia and Castlepollard, and the R154 running west to east between Killashandra and Kells. Oldcastle is approximately 90 kilometres from Dublin and 30 kilometres north of Mullingar.

Nestled into the hilly landscape of northwest Meath, Oldcastle is just west of the great hill of Loughcrew with its megalithic monuments with Slieve Gullion located close by to the south.

Oldcastle lies on the edge of two areas in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for the area. It is located in a lowland area at the base of the Loughcrew Hills that can be seen from the town to the north and west and it is surrounded by marshy farmland and forestry. The LCA to the west is titled the 'Lough Sheelin Uplands' and the eastern area the 'Loughcrew and Slieve na Calliagh Hills'. The former LCA is designated as having a High Landscape Value, High Landscape Sensitivity and Regional Landscape Importance. The latter is designated as having 'Exceptional Landscape Value, High Landscape Sensitivity and National Landscape Importance.'



Fig. 2: Aerial view of Oldcastle ACA and surrounding areas

2.1 ACA Boundary

The ACA for Oldcastle spans from the central market square at the crossroads, out along five roads which radiate from the square. Incorporating most of the eighteenth and nineteenth century building fabric, the boundaries terminate where post-war twentieth century developments begins except the western portion of Church Street in the east.

To the west, the ACA encompasses the streetscape on both sides of Cogan Street as far as the former RIC Barracks (beside the gates to the former Rectory), this house terminates the view from the village looking west.

To the north, the area includes a short stretch of Cavan Street, and a short stretch of Cloughan Street as it turns northeast.

To the east, the boundary follows Church Street terminating at Cobblers Road on the north side, while extending further east on the south side of the street to include terraced and detached houses as far as the modern housing estate, Loughcrew View, but falling short of the Gilson Endowed School and St. Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church.

To the south, the ACA incorporates a substantial terrace to the east extending south as far as a pair of early twentieth century structures, while much shorter on the west side of the street, the boundary is defined by the beginning of the twentieth century fabric.

ACA Boundary

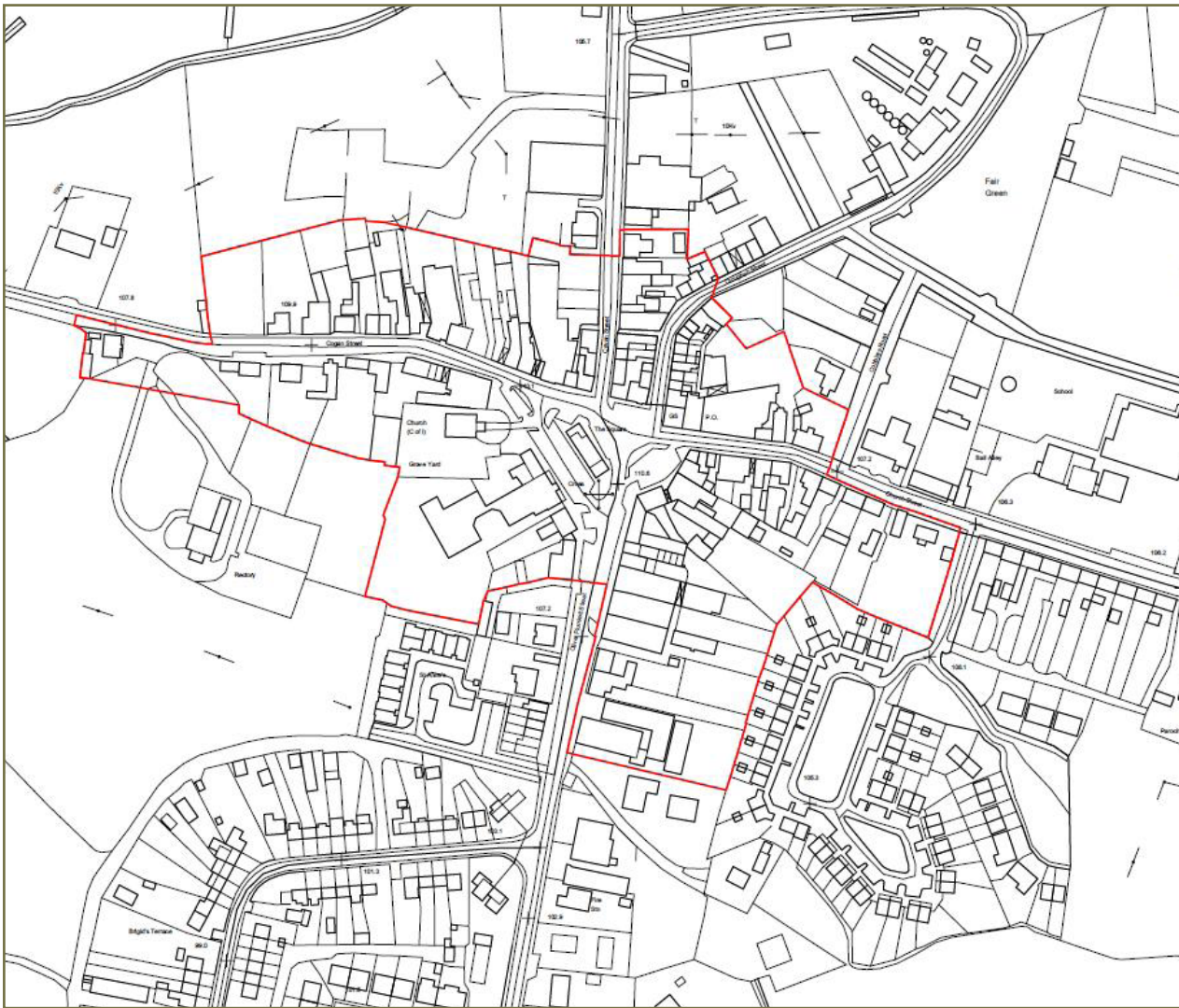


Fig. 3: Boundary of Oldcastle ACA

The following streets and thoroughfares are located partly or wholly within the boundaries of the ACA:

- The Square
- Cogán Street
- Cavan Street
- Cloughan Street
- Church Street
- Oliver Plunkett Street

Protected Structures

3.0 Schedule of Protected Structures & Recorded Monuments

There are a number of protected structures within the boundaries of the Oldcastle ACA that are protected under Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000. A protected structure is a structure or part of a structure that a Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The full extent of a protected structure includes the land lying within the curtilage of the protected structure and other structures within that curtilage and their interiors. The concept of curtilage is not defined by legislation, but is understood to be the parcel of land immediately associated with that structure and which is or was in use for the purposes of the structure. The Record of Protected Structures (RPS) is contained in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013, Appendix V.

The Record of Monuments and Places lists structures and sites of archaeological heritage, which are protected under the National Monuments Acts. The schedule is available to the public at the Planning Office of Meath County Council, Teagasc Offices and Town Councils and on the internet on the website of the National Monuments Service, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government (www.archaeology.ie). A small section of National Monuments are in state ownership and care but there are none within the jurisdiction of Oldcastle ACA.

3.1 Protected Structures

Within the boundary of the Oldcastle ACA there are thirty-three protected structures comprising: landmark 18th and 19th century residences and public buildings; detached 18th and 19th century houses with private gardens; uniform terraces of 18th and 19th century houses of various scale; terraces of 19th century residential and commercial buildings; and a handful of early twentieth century buildings. A number of these structures form focal points for views into and out of the area, with the remainder helping to enhance the overall character of the town:

Protected Structures

• RPS No. MH 009-200	Former R.I.C. Barracks, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-201	House, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-202	House, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-203	St. Bride's Graveyard, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-204	Mc Quaid's Pharmacy, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-205	St. Bride's Church of Ireland Church, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-206	Mullens, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-207	Caffrey's, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-208	Restaurant/Flower Shop, Cogan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-209	House, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-210	Naper Arms Hotel, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-211	Gibneys, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-212	Creans, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-213	Bank of Ireland, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-214	Next Door, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-216	Gibneys, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-218	The Market-house (Gibneys), The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-220	National Irish Bank, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-221	Manager's House, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-222	Stone Cross, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-223	Castle Cinema, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-224	Londis, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-225	Dolce Vita, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-226	Mc Enteggarts, Oliver Plunkett Street
• RPS No. MH 009-227	Herbstreit, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-228	Nu Look, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-229	Historic Street Paving, Cloughan Street
• RPS No. MH 009-230	Garda Station, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-232	The Dublin Bar, The Square
• RPS No. MH 009-234	Farrelly's, Church Street
• RPS No. MH 009-238	Masonic Hall, Church Street
• RPS No. MH 009-242	House, Church Street
• RPS No. MH 009-244	House, Church Street

3.2 Recorded Monuments

There is one archaeological site recorded within the ACA for Oldcastle. This is for a church at the Church of Ireland location and the record number is ME009018. Sliabh na Caillighe at Loughcrew Hill is one of the most important megalithic cemeteries in the country and is located to the east.

Development Plan, Zoning & Objectives

4.0 Development Plan, Zoning & Objectives

The Meath County Development Plan 2001-2007 has been superseded by the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013. The Oldcastle Local Area Plan was adopted on the 24th of July 2009. Detailed policies and objectives are prescribed in the aforementioned plans. In considering new development within this LAP area the policies and objectives prescribed in the Meath County Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Oldcastle Local Area Plan 2009-2015 are of relevance.

Historical Development of the Area

5.0 Historical Development of the Area



Fig. 4: Aerial View of Oldcastle from the West

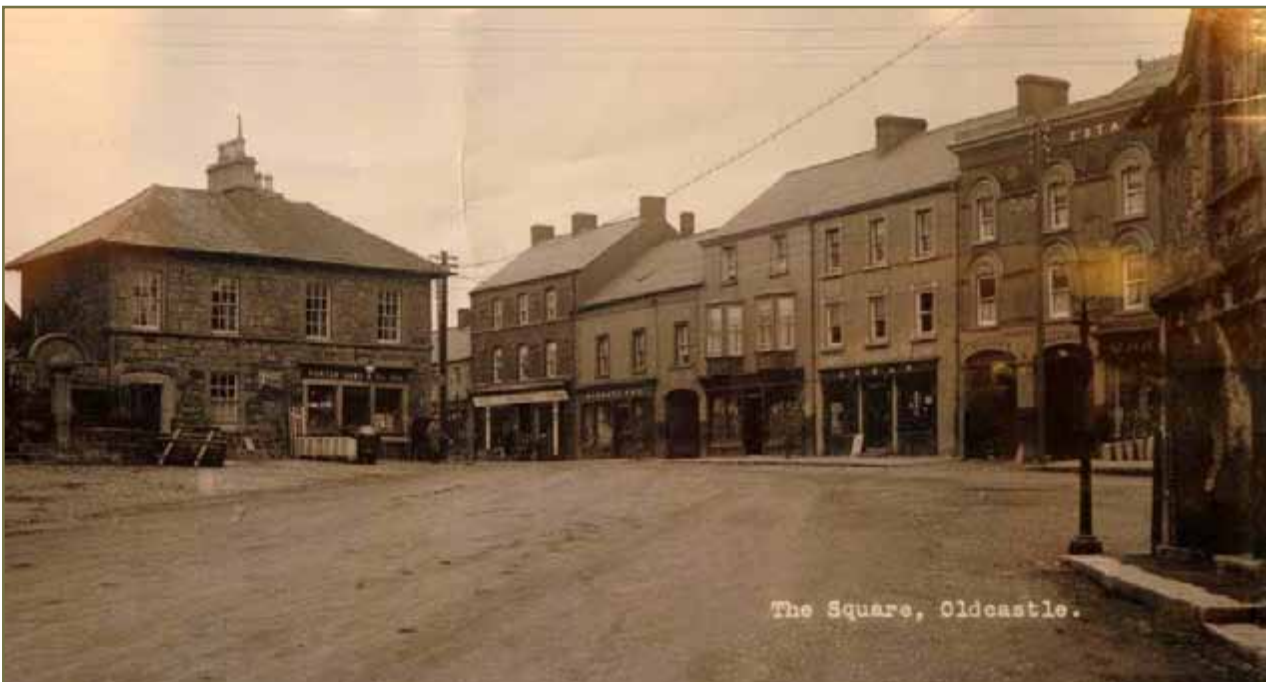


Fig. 5: Historic Photograph of the Square with the Market-House on the right

Historical Development of the Area

Oldcastle is situated in the hills of northwest County Meath near the border of County Cavan, in the barony of Demifore and the parish of Cloyne. The name is thought to have derived from a Norman motte just south of the town established in the 12th Century by the Tuite family. While little evidence remains of this period, the present form of the town was largely developed as a small market town and post town during the 18th century, with the largest yarn market in the country held every Monday. Located at the crossing of two regional roads, namely the R195 running from north to south between Virginia and Castlepollard, and the R154 running west to east between Killashandra and Kells.

The town and its surrounding land was the stronghold of the Plunkett family until the mid seventeenth century, with St. Oliver Plunkett being the most notable family member, as Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. Essentially Georgian in character, the town as it stands today is mostly the creation of the Naper family of Loughcrew. The Naper family descend from Sir Robert Naper, Chief Baron of the Exchequer of Ireland during the latter years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. His grandson William Naper married Dorothy Petty, the sister of Sir William Petty, the English economist who surveyed Ireland on behalf of Oliver Cromwell. W. Petty granted the Loughcrew estate to W. Naper in about 1655 (approx. 180,000 acres), who later took up the post of High Sheriff of County Meath in 1671.

Historical Development of the Area

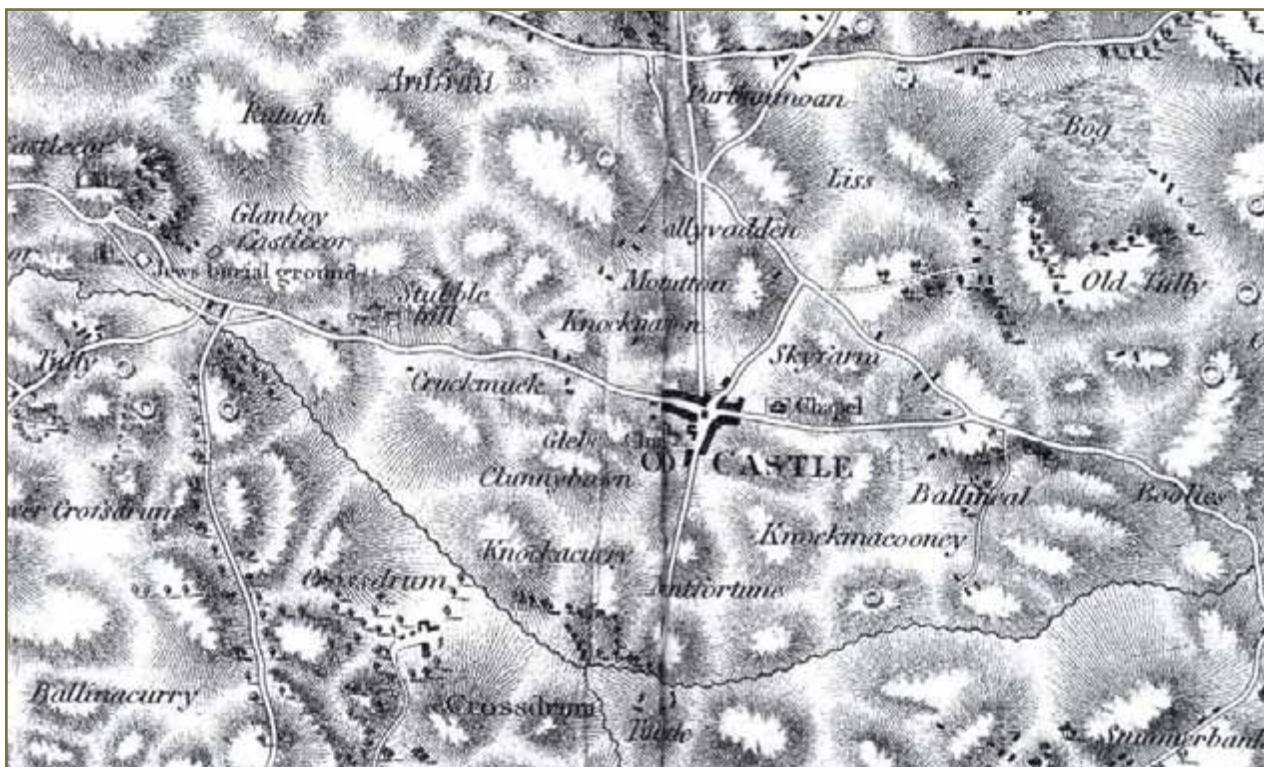


Fig. 6: Extract from the William Larkin map of County Meath, surveyed 1809-12



Fig. 7: Ordnance Survey Map, First Edition

Historical Development of the Area

The Larkin map of Meath indicates the general layout for the town still existing. Interestingly it and the Ordnance Survey First Edition Map mark the position on Church Street of the Roman Catholic Chapel to be north of where the St Oliver Plunket Memorial Church now stands. The latter map also shows the landscape setting of the Glebe house with a formal lawn to the east and an arrangement of trees to the west side of the house. An orchard is located on the north side of Cogan Street and this exists today as a walled garden with a fine stone doorway with mature yew trees.

The Naper family were responsible for the erection of many of Oldcastle's finest buildings, including the Market-house, the Church of Ireland and the Gibson Endowed School (outside the ACA). The economy of Oldcastle has traditionally been strongly rooted in agriculture with its associated activities centred on the central square. Having suffered badly during the Great Famine, the Naper family were earnestly involved in the local relief effort.

Economic stagnation during the latter part of the twentieth century has largely spared the town of rash development decisions, leaving an intact central core, in terms of architectural heritage. The only extensions to the town's built fabric, during this period, focused mainly to the south and to the east, consisting mainly of residential developments. To the north and to the southeast, industrial development took place in an ad hoc fashion.

The economy of the area has been changing over the last few decades, with manufacturing and engineering industries providing much of the area's employment. The most famous of these industries is in the manufacture of beds, giving Oldcastle the name of "the bedding capital of Ireland", while this industry and the engineering firms located nearby in Moylagh and Dromone have recently provided jobs for Eastern European migrant workers. Indeed Oldcastle is recorded to have the highest population of Lithuanians in Ireland. These economic activities and the influx of migrants

have boosted local businesses and service providers, leading to moderate expansion in the town.

Character Overview of Oldcastle ACA

6.0 Character Overview of Oldcastle ACA

This section provides a brief description of the designated ACA under the following headings: street pattern and materials, form and arrangement of public space, socio-economic functions, buildings types and palette of materials.

6.1 Street Pattern & Materials

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 of the five roads that radiate from the market square, with the southern approach road from Castlepollard giving the most dramatic view of its centre.

The street pattern of Oldcastle ACA reflects the pattern of growth since the eighteenth century and is more or less as it was in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Twentieth-century structures have replaced a small number of nineteenth-century residential buildings and added much utilitarian structures to the edges of the village, particularly to the west and north. The village developed at the crossing of two routes as a market town with a market-house set within an irregular triangular-shaped town square. Four roads radiate from this square roughly on a north-south east-west axis, with a further minor road also leading north, northwest. The approaches and exits to and from the village are largely defined by rubble stone walls, framed by mature trees. The town square is the highlight of this settlement and despite the poor appearance of the Market-House, it still retains the overall form and character. The streetscape of the four principal streets is currently made up of commercial and residential street-fronted buildings linked in terraces, two uniform terraces, a pair of early twentieth-century buildings and the two landmark detached structures, the Church of Ireland and the Market-House.

There is no street furniture or historic paving materials remaining in this area of Oldcastle with

the exception of a small stretch of cut limestone kerbing on Cloughan Street, on the east side corresponding to the stone terrace, complete with three carved limestone drains set into the pavement.



Fig. 8: Nineteenth Century Postcard View of The Square

6.2 Form & Arrangement of Public Space

Originally used as a public space, the market square is now no more than a traffic junction, the former market-house giving the space some relief. Other than The Square, which also provides parking, there is no open public space within the ACA area. A public amenity space is located just outside the area, accessed via Cloughan Street and the station road. All the streets have narrow footpaths with street-fronted buildings and congested with traffic, the exception being Oliver Plunkett Street which widens as one approaches the Square, with wide footpaths lending a more formal air to this end of the town.

6.3 Socio-Economic Functions

Although the market function of the square and the town has declined, there is a healthy and varied mix of uses within the ACA, including residential, commercial and ecclesiastical. With no out-of-town shopping area, the town has managed to sustain the business of a traditional group of shops and services one would expect to find in a small town. Most of the buildings are owned by the business on the ground floor, with specialist retailers such

Character Overview of Oldcastle ACA

as grocers, butchers, hardware, clothing stores, newsagents, pharmacies, hairdressers, antiques store etc. alongside a supermarket, banks, cafes, restaurants, churches and a Garda station, all contributing to the vibrant quality of this urban centre. Infill development to the rear of some buildings appears to be specifically built for the rental sector. There is also a rich variety of public houses and hotels which provide the main social focus for the inhabitants of the town and surrounding hinterland.

6.4 Building Types

There are 7 common building typologies found in the Architectural Conservation Area of Oldcastle.

- Eighteenth century market building
- Eighteenth & nineteenth century residential terraces
- Nineteenth century detached residences
- Eighteenth & nineteenth century commercial buildings
- Ecclesiastical buildings
- Twentieth century commercial buildings
- Twentieth century residential buildings

6.5 Palette of Materials

The predominant building materials are natural slate to the roofs with clay ridge tiles and cast-iron rainwater goods, the stucco-fronted Gibney building has a very decorative cast-iron ridge crest. A distinctive chimneystack appears on many of the buildings, comprising a rendered finish with tooled limestone capstone and matching stringcourse below. While limestone ashlar walling makes a noticeable appearance, particularly at the Church of Ireland, the prevailing surface finish would have been lime render, now mostly replaced by painted cement render facades, although limestone sills are the norm and some limestone window surrounds remain extant.

Apart from the usual replacement chimneystack, brick makes a rare appearance on the streetscape, the most attractive exception being Mullen's on Cogan Street, an unusual feature on this varied

terrace with its full redbrick façade and terracotta panels, the other exception is the Bank of Ireland on The Square which retains only its upper floor of polychromatic brickwork.

Decorative stucco facades dating from the late nineteenth century, have made their mark in the town and add decorative sophistication to their terraces, these are usually older structures with a superficial Victorian makeover. Timber sliding sash windows are the standard mode of fenestration, while painted timber panelled doors and timber shop-fronts are still in use. Good cast-iron railings and gates can be observed at the Church of Ireland and at the former Rectory.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.0 Street by Street Appraisal

All of the streets included within the boundary of the ACA contain buildings and other elements that positively contribute to the character of Oldcastle. In general the condition of the built fabric is good, with some individual properties in a poor or derelict condition. This section provides a brief description of each street and open area within the ACA boundary under the following headings:

- **Architectural Character**

An appraisal of various buildings along a street, in a laneway or courtyard and within private grounds. Its character is identified through historical use, design, scale and building materials.

- **Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment**

Spatial quality is defined by the relationship between buildings and the street, how each street relates to each other and the open space within the area. Included in this section is an inventory of extant street furniture and historic street surface treatment.

- **Boundary Treatment**

This refers to the manner in which a site is enclosed; for example, walls, hedges, railings and gates.

- **Land Use**

The uses of the buildings on the street and how they influence the special character of that area.

7.1 The Square

7.1.1 Architectural Character

The central former market square, now known as 'The Square', can be more correctly described as a triangle, situated on an elevated position with all the town's streets radiating from it, forming the nucleus of Oldcastle. It is defined to the north, east and south west by continuous rows of buildings. The north-west corner of the space is defined by the boundary treatment of St Bride's

Church of Ireland, which is set back from the building line of The Square.



Fig. 9: Market-house east side

The Market-house was originally a three-bay two-storey limestone and rendered building flanked by a pair of lower single-bay two-storey wings and an open arcade to the ground floor, the structure was built c.1750 by the Naper family. The hipped and pitched slate roofs have been removed and replaced by a flat roof with a battlemented parapet, and pebbledash walls. Described by Lewis as a 'Handsome oblong building', it was converted into a barracks in the 1790s, serving as a mini-market during the latter part of the twentieth century and is now in use as a clothing store with offices above. It retains stone detailing around the ground floor windows and to the corners of the central portion and wings.

The structure serves to divide The Square into a large triangular space to the east and a narrower space with two parallel sides to the west.

St. Bride's Church of Ireland was built in 1816 on the site of an earlier church, it is a small three-bay hall of coursed rubble limestone with a pinnacle tower and spire to the entrance gable, and was a gift from J.L.W. Naper of Loughcrew. The front green area to the church is enclosed by decorative cast-iron railings on a limestone plinth base with large octagonal limestone ashlar piers and curved iron gates. Occupying the highest point on the square, St. Bride's with its tree-lined cemetery and stone wall boundary, remains the most intact and picturesque element on the square.

Street by Street Appraisal

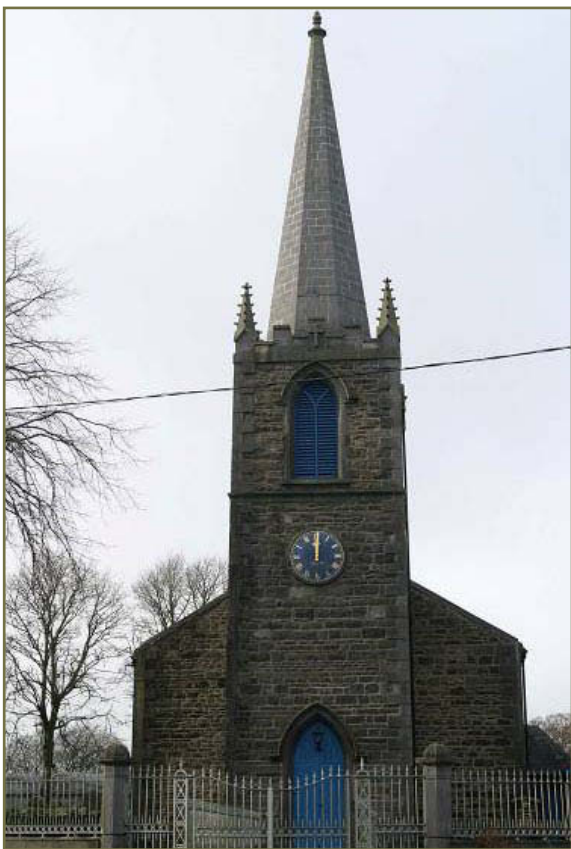
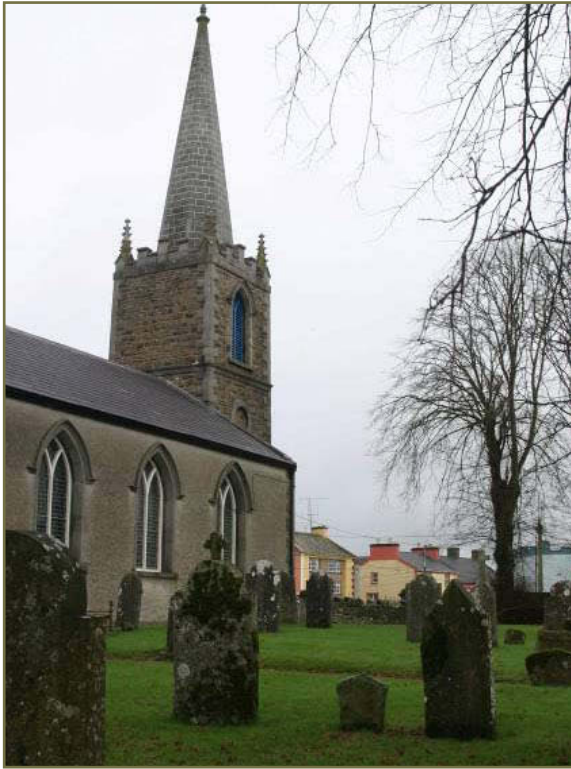


Fig.10,11: St. Bride's Church of Ireland

Naper Arms Hotel is to the west of the square, sitting behind the market-house and is a five-bay three-storey rendered building, built c.1850, with a Tuscan single-storey porch, channel rusticated ground floor, giant pilasters supporting entablature to parapet and moulded window surrounds. A substantial building with a three-storey return, it has lost its original windows, but retains some of its interior features and its strong presence on the square. It plays a significant role in establishing the sense of scale and order to this side of The Square.



Fig. 12: Naper Arms Hotel



Fig. 13: Gibney's of Oldcastle

Gibney's of Oldcastle is a terraced six-bay three-storey stucco-fronted building, dated 1862, and is probably the amalgamation of two earlier terraced houses. Now in use as a hardware shop, the building extends to the rear with no original features visible to the ground floor. It has a decorative cast-iron ridge crest to its roof, shell tympana to the window openings and moulded continuous string-courses to the façade. Retaining its original timber sash windows and raised lettering to the parapet, this highly

Street by Street Appraisal

decorative façade adds Victorian extravagance to the streetscape and stands out on the north side of the square among its more unassuming neighbours.

The two-bay three-storey (lower) building to the east is also Gibney's and has an equally decorative stuccoed façade with unusual lucarne windows rising through the eaves and a moulded door surround.

Herbstreit is a corner-sited four-bay two-storey rendered building with an attractive projecting shopfront bay window to the east, original timber sash windows, intact interior and intact curtilage to the rear fronting onto Cloughan Street. It echoes the decorative qualities of the Gibney's building.

The remainder of the buildings on the square comprise of a series of terraces of buildings of varying height, age and architectural styles, which reflect the varying economic times of the town and region.



Fig. 14,15: Herbstreit Shopfront and window detail



Fig. 16,17: Shop-fronts

Owen Traynor's Bar/Grocery has a distinctive 1930s shop-front and a traditional interior. The Dublin Bar has a good timber shop-front and interior. Both of these support the ornate and urbane character of The Square.

The Garda Station, dated 1862, has a double elevation of squared and coursed limestone ashlar, now covered with cement render. It has a plain façade and simple volume and roof form in contrast to many of the buildings on The Square giving it an institutional character. It plays an important role in giving good definition to the corner of The Square at Coughlan Street and Church Street.

7.1.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

The Square is the centre and the focal point of Oldcastle, and remains the only public space in the town. Originally meant as a market place, it can now be more clearly described as a traffic junction, car park and commercial centre. Given

Street by Street Appraisal

the irregular form of the space, it would appear that the square developed, quite informally, at the crossing of two main rural routes, where trading led to ad hoc settlement, until attempts were made in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to formalise its appearance with the addition of prominent buildings. Set on an elevated site, the south of the square has a gentle descent opening into Oliver Plunkett Street, being unusually wide at this end before tapering off as it leads out of the town to the south. The remainder of the streets are much more modest in scale, fitting in between the varied terraces of the square. The fine market-house, standing alone to the southwest of the square, is the most conspicuous of the square's elements and is highly visible from the three major approach roads, albeit in an unsightly altered state.



Fig. 18: Historic view of North side of The Square



Fig. 19: Historic view of Market-house from the 19th century

7.1.3 Boundary Treatment

All the buildings on the Square are street-fronted except the Naper Arms Hotel which has a replacement steel railed front area. St Bride's Church has fine boundary railings and stone gate posts as described above. The Market-house has a small planting area to either side elevation, though somewhat neglected. A war-of-independence memorial in the form of a high stone cross on a stepped plinth stands south of the Market-house and can be seen on approach along Oliver Plunkett Street.

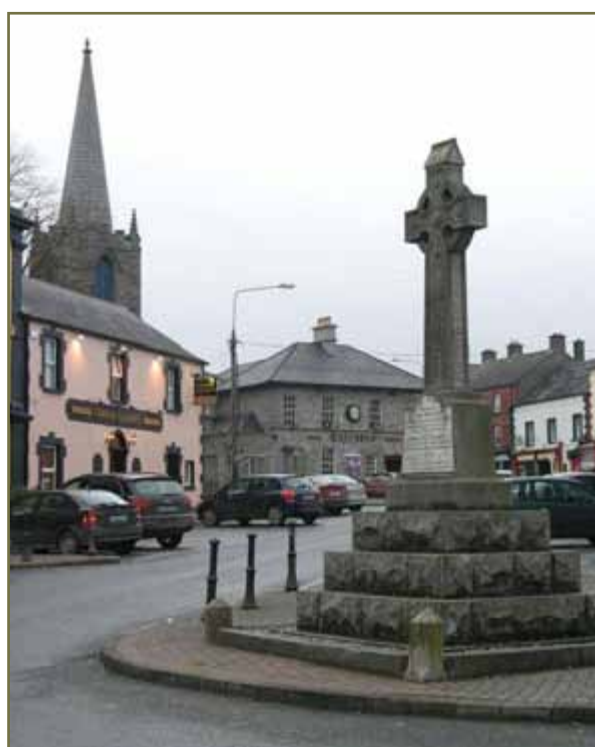


Fig. 20: Memorial at south end of The Square

7.1.4 Land Use

Land use on The Square is predominantly commercial on all three sides, although some residential use may exist on the upper floors.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.2 Cogan Street

7.2.1 Architectural Character

Cogan Street starts from the highest point of The Square as a fairly narrow street with high buildings giving a closed spatial definition. It then widens somewhat to the west with some lower buildings and garden walls. On the approach to the Square a good view is afforded of the Garda Barracks and St. Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church in the distance, from the Square looking west the view is terminated by the former RIC Barracks and many mature beech trees.



Fig. 21: Cogan Street looking west



Fig. 22: Cogan Street looking east

Street by Street Appraisal

The former R.I.C. Barracks is a detached three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1860, with good iron railings to the front, distinctive chimneystacks with limestone string-course and a roofless stone coach-house to the rear. This house terminates the vista looking out of Cogan Street and clearly defines the historic edge of the town as well as the boundary of the ACA.

A modest scale two-bay two-storey stone built house is located closer to the town on the south side of the road and although the later stone-clad porch detracts from the overall composition, this structure warrants further study. A large L-plan stone outhouse is attached to the rear.



Fig. 23,24: Cogan Street; former RIC Barracks, stone house

The remainder of the street is made up of a diverse range of terraces that line the street at the east end; from late nineteenth century terraces to substantial commercial premises. Some recent buildings on Cogan Street disrupt the unity of the street terrace and damage the special character of the street that is made up of a collection of simple and modest buildings that give the town its charm and character.

7.2.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

Cogan Street begins its descent from the northwest corner of The Square between the former Co-op building and Mullen's Antiques, in the direction of Killeshandra in County Cavan. A narrow street of some medieval quality with a mix of commercial and residential uses, the street quickly descends into more open countryside where four similar detached three-bay residences line the south side of the road with cast-iron railings, rubblestone walls and some mature trees. All of these houses have relatively large rear gardens that provide a parkland quality to the rear of the buildings facing the Square.

The former Rectory, while not included within the ACA, is nestled into a wooded valley with views of the rear of St. Bride's Church, and forms part of this more prosperous architectural ensemble. The view is terminated by the former RIC Barracks, set perpendicular to the road, and at the opposite side of the road is a green space belonging to the end house, which also enhances the ACA boundary with its rubblestone wall (not included in ACA).

A group of significant mature trees stands west and east of the former RIC Barracks on the south side of the street and are an important part of the streetscape and defining elements of its special character.

7.2.3 Boundary Treatment

The majority of the buildings on this street front onto the street, except for five detached houses on the south side of the street which have railed front areas. The entrance to the Rectory is defined by stone walls and fine cast iron gates. The treatment of the footpaths is modern and purely functional in character.

7.2.4 Land Use

Land use on this street is predominantly commercial to its eastern end, with a residential character to its western end.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.3 Cavan Street

7.3.1 Architectural Character

Cavan Street is a narrow street that starts from the elevated north side of the Square, flanked by a pair of three-storey terraced buildings, descending on its way to Virginia County Cavan.



Fig. 25: Cavan Street looking south towards The Square

A shop (Trendz Style) is situated on the west of the street this building has good proportions, an intact natural slate roof complete with large limestone ashlar chimneystacks and closer inspection reveals limestone ashlar surrounds to all openings. This house would greatly benefit from a conservation programme which would also enhance the streetscape.



Fig. 26: Entrance to Cavan Street from the Square looking north

Street by Street Appraisal

7.3.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

Cavan Street retains the overall village atmosphere at its southern end towards the Square, but loses definition to the north end of the ACA boundary. An important lane connection exists on the east side of the street and giving access to Cloughan Street.

7.3.3 Boundary Treatment

All the buildings on Cavan Street are street-fronted with functional tarmac road finish, concrete flagged pavement with concrete kerbing.

7.3.4 Land Use

Land use on this street is predominantly commercial within the ACA boundary, and continues as semi-industrial beyond.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.4 Cloughan Street

7.4.1 Architectural Character

A narrow street that departs from the northeast end of The Square flanked to the west by the Herbreit building and to the east by the Garda Station, both give good definition to the end of the street. The street is small in scale and residential in character, distinctly different to the other four streets of Oldcastle.



Fig. 27: Cloughan Street, terrace of houses on the east side

7.4.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

The curved layout of Cloughan Street and sense of spatial enclosure is fundamental to its intimate character which is reinforced by its small scale buildings. The street space widens to the north but a group of mature trees beyond the north-east end of the ACA boundary narrow the street profile and contribute significantly to its enclosed character. The spire of St Bride's Church can be seen above the houses in the street when seen from the north and this contributes to its picturesque quality.



Fig. 28: Cloughan Street, view from north

All the buildings on Cloughan Street are street-fronted with a tarmac road finish, concrete flagged pavement with concrete kerbing. The only historic street furniture in Oldcastle is to be found on this street, comprising; punched limestone kerbing and three carved limestone gulleys and drains running across the concrete paved footpath. This feature corresponds to the terrace of eight stone houses.

7.4.3 Boundary Treatment

All the buildings on Cloughan Street are street-fronted with no boundary treatment.

7.4.4 Land Use

Land use on this street is predominantly residential, formed in modest terraces, with disused ground beyond the boundary of the ACA.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.5 Church Street

7.5.1 Architectural Character

Between The Square and the Catholic Church in the east, Church Street has an interesting mix of architectural expressions and functions along its length. Only the western half of the south side of the street and approximately one quarter of the northern side is within the ACA boundary.



Fig. 29,30: Church Street, Farrelly's pub, elevation and first floor corner window

Farrelly's pub, though altered at ground floor level, echoes the elaborate window detailing of buildings in The Square with a fine chamfered western end corner window. This corner marks the entrance to a short lane that leads to a rear court area behind the buildings on the east side of The Square.

The use of decorative elevation features is repeated in an end of terrace house to the south side of Church Street. It is a plain building embellished with a diamond pattern of quoins to the corners of the elevation.



Fig. 31: Church Street, former Masonic Hall

A former Masonic Hall built in the 1960s stands on the north side of the street. Although modernist in expression and with a flat roof, the building fits in well into the street in terms of scale and choice of elevation materials. It echoes the modern expression of the cinema buildings on Oliver Plunkett Street and adds to the eclectic mix of styles that is an important part of the special character of Oldcastle.

7.5.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment

The street starts at the easternmost corner of The Square with a narrow opening flanked by modest two-storey terraced houses. Commercial at its west end it descends a gentle hill and becomes markedly more residential before leaving the ACA boundary and arriving at the landmarks of the Gilson Endowed School to the north and St. Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church to the south.

The street turns slightly in direction along its length to close the view leading into The Square from the east and this also affords picturesque and oblique views of the street terrace elevations. The almost intact building line is defined by the rhythm of the plot sizes, windows and doors, chimneys and roofscape. The spire and tower of St Bride's church is an important part of the view seen from the east. Looking to the west, terrace rows of houses lead the view to the foreground of the grand Palladian style of the Gilson Endowed School and the Gothic Revival tower and spire of St Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church. The street is

Street by Street Appraisal

a rich collection of building functions and styles, is relatively intact and an important part of the ACA.



Fig. 32: View towards the town centre on Church Street

7.5.3 Boundary Treatment

All the buildings on Church Street within the ACA boundary are street-fronted with a tarmac road finish, concrete flagged pavement with concrete kerbing.

7.5.4 Land Use

Land use on this street is predominantly residential, formed in modest terraces with commercial uses towards the west.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.6 Oliver Plunkett Street

7.6.1 Architectural Character

While only a single nineteenth century terrace on the west side of the street falls into the ACA, the majority of the east side is included. Here a terrace of three storey houses also stands with a fine bank building, a former bank managers house, former garage and former cinema to the south. The collection of architectural styles is eclectic and impressive, giving evidence of the rich historic commercial and social importance of the town. Ornate façade treatment in some of the nineteenth century buildings is contrasted with the simple but elegant treatment of the former cinema and garage that introduce a twentieth century modern aspect to the architectural expression of the town that is strongly echoed in the Masonic Hall on Church Street and Tuite's Garage on Cavan Street (outside the ACA).



Fig. 33, 34: Oliver Plunkett Street, terrace houses (west), National Bank building (east)



Fig. 35, 36: Oliver Plunkett Street, former garage, former cinema (both east)

Street by Street Appraisal

7.6.2 Spatial Quality & Street Surface Treatment



Fig. 37: Oliver Plunkett Street, view from the south looking towards The Square

It is the grandest street within the ACA of Oldcastle, almost acquiring the appearance of a mall, lined with fine buildings of classical proportions, affording the best views of the market square. The three storey terraces of urban character mark the entrance to The Square. The broad space of the street affords good views of the impressive Italianate National Bank, this impressive building is underscored by the former manager's house next door. With the former cinema, these buildings give a large sense of scale and good definition to the street space.

The street is further characterised by a laneway to the east and to the west sides. The former is on the boundary of the ACA and runs north of a stone wall bound green area with mature trees and it offers views of the gable end of the terrace, its rear facades and fine stone outbuildings in courtyards to the rear. The lane on the east side of the street runs north of the former bank manager's house, the rear of the site presents a long rubble stone wall to the lane. Otherwise this leads to recent type structures of no architectural value. The set back to the garage to the north of the cinema is interesting in that it allows the

cinema building to read almost as a free standing structure and appear more important in the street space. The elevation of the cinema to the garage forecourt is architecturally composed to be presented to the viewer on Oliver Plunkett Street looking south. The cinema marks the end of the urban part of the street and this is underscored by a vernacular single storey cottage south of the ACA boundary.

Street by Street Appraisal

7.6.3 Boundary Treatment



Fig. 38, 39: Oliver Plunkett Street, steps to terrace houses, railings and kerbs in front of the National Bank

Limestone kerbing is confined to the footpath in front of the National Irish Bank and the Manager's House. This building has fine cast iron railings set on a stepped and elegantly curved stone plinth. The terrace buildings to the north have limestone steps that project into the footpath. The former cinema presents terrazzo steps to its public entrance. Otherwise the path is finished in a functional manner not in keeping with the architectural quality of the buildings.

7.6.4 Land Use

Land use on this street is a mixture of commercial and residential, while the boundary is defined by a pair of early twentieth century structures, beyond which the road takes on a distinctly industrial air.

Summary of Significant Views & Vistas

8.0 Summary of Significant Views & Vistas

The important views in Oldcastle ACA are along the approach roads into and out of the town. The roads are roughly orientated to the cardinal points but differ in straightness and the sense of enclosure given by their buildings. Cloughan Street breaks this mould with a strong curve and gives another variation to the views into and out of The Square. An important feature of views along the streets is the elevated position of The Square that conceals itself on approach from the lower lying landscape. This elevated position accentuates views of the landscape to the north and the south.

Shorter significant views are in the intimate space of The Square at the focus of the main roads. Laneway views from the main streets offer views to outbuildings and service buildings behind the main structures. These spaces give interesting views to the rear of the main structures.

The significant views and vistas are:

- The view into the town along Cogan Street from the west towards The Square and in reverse towards the former RIC barracks north of the former rectory entrance.
- The view along Cavan Street from the north towards The Square and in reverse out to the open countryside north of Oldcastle.
- The view along Church Street from the east including the view from Church Street at St Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church, this is the point where the relationship of this church and St Bride's Church of Ireland can be seen with the terraces of houses and Gilson Endowed School.
- The view along Oliver Plunkett Street from the south towards The Square and in reverse out to the open countryside south of Oldcastle.
- The view along Cloughan Street from the north-east towards The Square and the view in reverse.

- Views within the space of The Square of the Market-House and of the spaces around it.
- The view to St Oliver Plunkett Memorial Church from The Square, into the graveyard and from the graveyard to the south and west ends of the church.
- Views into the side lanes and ways to rear structures along Cogan Street, Church Street and Oliver Plunkett Street.
- The views along the pedestrian laneway between Cloughan Street and Cavan Street in both directions.

Summary of Special Character

9.0 Summary of Special Character

There are a number of interrelated elements which contribute to the special character of Oldcastle ACA. These are:

1. The topographical setting of the village with The Square located on high ground relative to the surrounding countryside.
2. The roughly orthogonal layout of the four main streets meeting at The Square that are orientated approximately to the north, south, east and west.
3. The irregular and picturesque space of The Square made by the sloping ground, splayed southern sides, projecting corner to the north east (corner of Cloghan and Church streets) and the location of the Market House parallel to the splayed west side of the space.
4. The strong definition given to the public space by terraces of two and three-storey houses.
5. The direct access to most buildings from the public footpath with little or no setbacks.
6. The relatively narrow and long plots stretching from the street front, the frequent plots on the street give a lot of variety and life to the street elevations.
7. The roofscape of pitched slate roofs and chimneystacks.
8. The predominance of rendered and painted elevations with exceptions in brick and stone.
9. The existence of historic functions expressed architecturally such as the Church of Ireland, hotels, cinemas, a garage, a police station, a bank, and retail functions that are evidence of the importance Oldcastle plays in serving the larger region. Other protected structures outside the ACA that support this role are the Catholic Church, Gilson Endowed School and Train Station.
10. The presence of ornate facades with decorative window and door features on hotel, shop and pub elevations that highlight the regional role of the town.
11. The strong presence of quality modern buildings from the mid twentieth century such as a cinema, garages and a Masonic hall that add to the eighteenth and nineteenth century fabric of the town.

Summary of Special Character

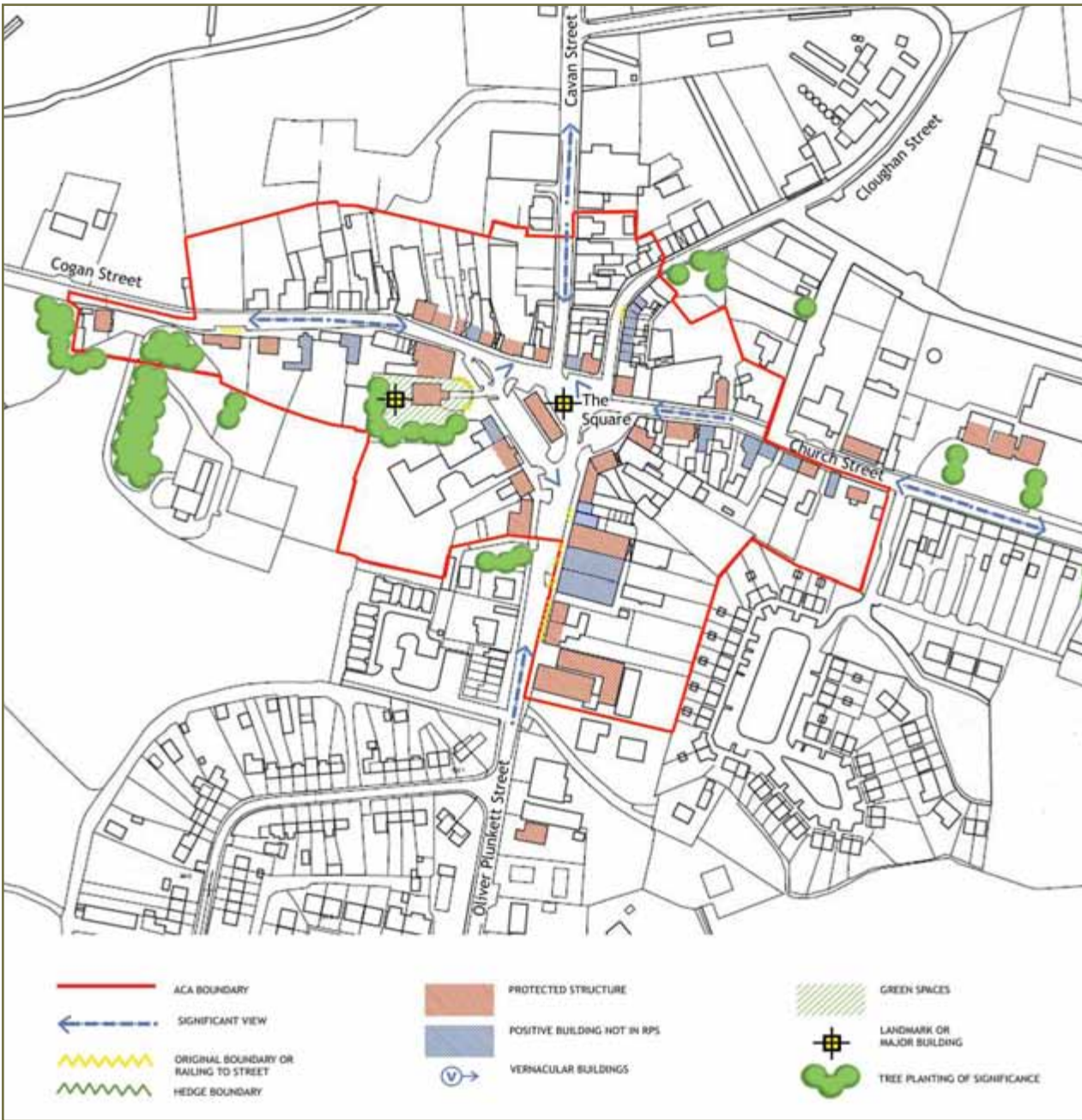


Fig.40: Character Map of Oldcastle

Implications for Planning & Development

10.0 Implications for Planning & Development

The objective of Architectural Conservation Area designation is to protect the special character of an area through rigorous control and positive management of any changes made to the built environment. Under the Planning & Development Act 2000 there is a requirement to obtain planning permission for all development works which do not constitute exempted development. Section 4 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 lists developments which are constituted as exempt, for the purposes of the Act. With regard to Architectural Conservation Areas it is important to take into account Section 4 (1)(h) of the Act which states that the following shall be exempted development:

“Development consisting of the carrying out of works for the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any structure, being works which affect only the interior of the structure or which do not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render the appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or the neighbouring structures.”

Protected Structures:

Planning permission is required for all works that would materially affect the character of a protected structure, or any element of the structure including its curtilage, which contributes to its special character. Under Section 57 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 an owner/occupier may request a declaration from Meath County Council as to whether any works they propose require planning permission. A declaration issued under this section sets out the type of works the Planning Authority considers would or would not affect the character of a structure or any elements thereof, which contributes to its special interest.

Non-Protected Structures:

Owners and occupiers of non-protected structures located within Oldcastle Architectural

Conservation Area should be aware that works, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority would materially affect the character of the Architectural Conservation Area will require specific grant of planning permission under Section 82 (1) of the Planning & Development Act 2000.

10.1 Works Requiring Planning Permission

10.1.1 External Walls

The majority of buildings in Oldcastle are finished in render or stucco, with the exception of the more civic buildings being of limestone or limestone dressings. Most buildings have had their original lime mortar pointing or lime render removed and replaced with cementitious materials. This type of render or repointing would be deemed unacceptable by the Planning Authority and the restoration of suitable render will be encouraged. Other works to external walls which require planning permission include the painting of natural stone, brick or unpainted render finished structures, particularly with modern paints which can be detrimental to the building's fabric, and the sand-blasting of external surfaces which may lead to porosity and water ingress.

10.1.2 Roofs

The roofscape of Oldcastle is an integral part of its special character. Original elements should be retained where possible, and repaired and reused rather than replaced. The following works require planning permission:

- The removal of the original roofing material such as natural slate and ridge tiles. Their replacement with modern materials like fibre-cement tiles will not be deemed suitable by the local authority
- The removal of existing chimneystacks and early terracotta or clay pots or other features of the roofscape such as cast-iron gutters drainpipes or decorative cresting.

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- The removal of timber bargeboards and other eaves details and their replacement in a material other than the original.
- The installation of roof lights or dormer windows on the front or prominent elevation of a structure, visible from the public realm. There is not tradition of dormer windows with Oldcastle, although lucarne windows have been a rare feature (Gibney's RPS MH009-216 & formerly featured on the Markethouse)
- The erection of, or alterations to, externally mounted signs and advertisements at roof level, including banners.
- The provision of awnings, canopies, flags and flagpoles.
- The erection of solar panels, TV satellite dishes, communication antennae or support structures for same. These are considered to have a highly negative impact on the character of the area and should be avoided when visible from the public realm. Where existing aerials have become redundant they should be removed.
- The removal of stone sills and doorsteps and thresholds, and their replacement with modern artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium.
- The removal of fanlights and original timber doors, and their replacement with modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium.

10.1.4 Commercial Frontages

Planning permission is required for the alteration of commercial frontages whether the structure is within an ACA or not. However, alterations within the ACA boundaries will be assessed on the impact of the proposed design on its adjoining and surrounding structures, having regard to scale, proportion, materials and detailing. The overall aim in the design of new shop fronts should be to reinforce the unity and integrity of the whole elevation. The following guidance should be adhered to:

10.1.3 Window & Door Openings

The buildings within the ACA of Oldcastle retain a relatively decent amount of original windows and doors, however a large number of windows have been replaced with uPVC frames or with timber frames having inappropriate glazing bars. Original elements should be retained where possible, and repaired and re-used rather than replaced. The following works require planning permission:

- The alteration of original fenestration and external doors, namely the enlargement of original openings.
- The removal of original timber or metal windows, and their replacement with modern, artificial materials such as uPVC and aluminium.
- High quality, durable materials should be used, such as stone, brick, timber, vitrolite tile and glass, rather than artificial contemporary materials.
- Fascias should be in proportion to the shop front while colours should be complementary to those of the building and adjoining properties.
- New and extended shop fronts should never obscure architectural details of the original structure, such as sills, stringcourses, eaves details, windows and doorways.
- The windows to the main façade of the shop front should be of clear glass and not used as a surface for advertisements or other coloured signage.
- While outdoor advertising is necessary for commercial activity, new signage must not detract from the special character and visual amenity of the ACA. There are a number of fine shop and pub-fronts in Oldcastle,

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Mullen's on Cogan Street, Herbstreit and The Dublin Bar on the Square are particularly good examples of traditional design, while Owen Traynor's and Dolce Vita are two good examples of discreet early twentieth century design. Endeavours have also been made by other owners and occupiers of commercial premises to maintain an appropriate traditional style, which complements the original structures, Brennan's solicitors and Good Choice Mini market on Oliver Plunkett Street are two examples. This practice should continue where possible and hand painted signs will be encouraged. The use of corporate signage will depend on its compatibility with adjoining buildings, but plastic box signs and the use of incompatible colours on shopfronts is strongly discouraged by the Planning Authority. This is most pertinent in the case of certain commercial premises such as fast-food outlets, bookmakers, amusement arcades, phone-call centres and similar establishments.

- Planning permission will be required for external vending machines, ATMs, newspaper receptacles, and storage boxes and bays. All commercial premises should endeavour to limit clutter of temporary external retail furniture such as, external heaters, various bins, menu-boards, seating and tables and ensure that these elements do not detract from the special character of the ACA.
- Awnings should be traditional in style and retractable, and made of heavy duty material rather than plastic.
- While security is an issue, the design of security shutters and grilles should complement the structure, with open mesh designs used in preference to solid screening. Heavy boxed metal roller blinds are not acceptable within ACA boundaries.
- Separate access to the upper floors of the buildings should be maintained where existing and commercial uses that bring vitality to upper floor areas will be encouraged.

10.1.5 New Build

New development within the ACA of Oldcastle constitutes extensions, including porch extensions to the front of buildings, infill sites and all new build that impacts on the street-facing elevations of buildings that are visible from the public realm and that impact on the curtilage of existing protected structures, including those not visible from the public realm. Designation as an ACA puts an obligation on prospective developers to produce a very high standard of design, which should contribute to the visual enhancement of the area while respecting its physical character. The following guidance regarding new development should be adhered to:

- The concept of direct imitation of earlier styles is not always appropriate but if this model is to be followed, the elevation treatment of the new development should be well-proportioned and built with respect for its context. Buildings should follow the eaves heights, roof pitches and building lines which predominate in the respective streets and should employ windows of matching proportions and alignment. Materials should be of good visual quality and durability. Features which have no precedent in the historic buildings of the town should be avoided. These are: projecting eaves, fascia and soffit boards, dormer windows and roof windows, standard-issue concrete sills or copings, top-hung casement windows, pressed aluminium gutters or uPVC features of any kind. Roofs should be covered with natural slate, terracotta decorative elements, lead or other roofing which enhances the character of the ACA.
- High quality contemporary architectural design that is complimentary to the character of the ACA is acceptable, but the development of any infill sites within the ACA, particularly as part of the streetscape will require a very sensitive design approach and should positively contribute to the character of the area. A design impact statement providing

Implications for Planning & Development

justification for the proposal in terms of design concept, scale, materials and proportions should accompany such an application.

- New buildings should take into account existing building lines and plot sizes in order to retain the existing grain and character of the ACA. See also the following section on the amalgamation of sites.
- Extensions should be to the rear of the property and be of an appropriate scale, built with suitable materials and finishes. Extensions to the side or front of street-fronted structures, or to the rear where the side elevation fronts onto another street will not be encouraged by the local authority as these could be particularly detrimental to the character of Oldcastle.

10.1.6 Development within the Grounds of Larger Residences

In the case of buildings with large gardens or attendant grounds, special consideration must be given to the impact of any new development on the buildings, and on their respective existing boundaries. Within the ACA of Oldcastle, this is most relevant to four specific sites, namely:

- St. Bride's Church of Ireland; with its mature trees to the rear and within the graveyard to the south.
- The former Rectory to the rear of St. Bride's Church on Cogan Street, with its avenue, and landscaped grounds (not wholly included in the ACA).
- The street-fronted side garden to the south of Creans with its mature trees and rubblestone wall.
- The grounds to the house on the east side of Cloughan Street, with its mature trees, rubblestone wall (house included in ACA but not the garden).

This limited number of private green spaces

is of crucial importance in defining the limits of the historic fabric of the town, and roughly correspond to the boundaries of the ACA (albeit excluded).

The grounds to the former Rectory are of particular importance in revealing the natural terrain of the town, and in the historic relationship between it and St. Bride's Church directly to the northeast. The rubblestone boundary wall to this house and the line of mature trees behind, soften the western edge of the town and are of great visual amenity.

All of these elements are an integral part of the townscape and enhance the special historical character of the town itself, and must be retained and included within the ACA boundary.

10.1.7 Amalgamation of Structures, Properties & Sites

The amalgamation of structures requires planning permission regardless of whether they are located in an ACA or not, unless it involves reversing the subdivision of what had originally been a single dwelling or premises. Proposals for the amalgamation of properties within the ACA should take into consideration the impact of changing or extending the existing plot sizes on the streetscape. Original entrances should remain in use. The amalgamation of sites within the ACA, especially with an increased density should respect the scale, mass, height and design of the adjoining buildings and the entire streetscape. Sensitive planning and design treatment is required in order to complement the fine grain of the established streetscape. A design impact statement providing justification for the proposal should accompany such applications.

10.1.8 Demolition Works

Proposals to demolish structures of architectural merit within the ACA, whether it is a protected structure or not, will require planning permission. Demolition will normally only be permitted where the structure makes no material contribution to the character or the appearance

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of the area. There will be a presumption in favour of retaining structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Where permission is sought for demolition on the grounds of structural defects or failure, a report containing annotated photographs and drawings will be required. The report is to be produced by a suitably qualified and experienced professional regarding the existing condition. As part of the justification for any demolition within an ACA on structural grounds, details will be required of repairs and remedial works usually carried out in similar circumstances and details of why they are not deemed suitable in this case.

10.1.9 Boundary Treatments

Removal of original railings, gates, gate piers and boundary walls, whether visible from the public realm or not, require planning permission. Most buildings within the Oldcastle ACA are street-fronted, but some structures have cast-iron railings, limestone plinths and piers and rubblestone walls. Where these still exist they should be maintained and retained. In the instance where a section of a boundary wall has been removed in order to provide a new entrance, the breaks should be sensitively repaired and finished.

10.1.10 External Lighting

Proposals for the illumination during night-time hours of certain buildings and landmark features within Oldcastle ACA, should be first agreed with Meath County Council. The method and type of lighting must be specified by the applicant when seeking permission and should be designed so as not to result in light pollution or negatively impact on other structures in the ACA.

10.1.11 Preservation of Views

The most important views outlined in this document are principally those of the approach roads to the town and directed towards the central square. It is vital to the special character of the town that these views are not obstructed by developments within or outside the ACA.

10.2 Works Not Requiring Planning Permission

10.2.1 Internal Alterations

The ACA designation does not prevent internal changes or re-arrangements to structures not listed as protected structures within the ACA, provided that these changes do not impact on the exterior of structure. However, all internal changes must comply with current building regulations.

10.2.2 Works to the Public Realm

In general, works to the public realm will be carried out by Meath County Council or by service and utility providers, and may be exempt from planning permission. However, prior to commencement of the works, consultation with the Conservation office of Meath County Council will be required, to ensure that these works enhance and improve the special character of the ACA and do not negatively impact upon it. The following areas will require careful consideration:

- Works to public footpaths, including the preservation of historical street surfaces such as cobbles or original kerbing. New pavements should not be of poured concrete or tarmacadam with reconstituted stone kerbing, but should reflect the natural materials of the town. When cobble-lock style paving is used, it should be of an appropriate scale and detail to complement the character of the town.

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Fig. 41: Limestone Gutter & Drain on Cloughan Street

- Retention and preservation of all surviving items of street furniture, which contribute to the special character of the ACA, such as original lamp standards, cast-iron water pumps, historic cast-iron man-hole covers and post boxes. New street furniture when installed will be of high quality reflecting the character of the ACA.
- The installation and location of utility boxes, such as ESB meter boxes, should be given careful consideration with regard to their position within the ACA and the impact of colour and massing on the adjoining boundary or structures.
- Changes to traffic management and parking within the ACA. This should take into account its ACA designation and seek to preserve and enhance the character of the area in the design and provision of parking meters, signage, ramps, renewed surface treatment and pavement layout. Suitable design of public signage, in particular tourist information will be encouraged. A traffic study should be considered for The Square, with consideration for the existing vibrancy of this centre. Car parking should be changed to reduce the barrier-like arrangement of vertical parking and the overall fussy kerbing associated with the present system. The return of The Square to being a 'people space' should be advocated.
- New street lighting should be in a traditional style, which enhances the town. The lighting

should not have a negative impact on the roofscape of the town or obstruct views into and out of the ACA.

- The removal of redundant distribution poles, wires and services which hang across the streets or deface commercial frontages and residential terraces should be encouraged. Equally, initiatives to place overhead service underground will be supported and facilitated where possible.
- Other than the planting observed to the edges of the ACA boundary and within the Church grounds, there is very little soft landscaping within Oldcastle ACA, which should be addressed.

10.2.3 Maintenance & Repairs to Non-Protected Structures

Planning permission is not required for regular maintenance works and genuine repairs within the ACA (such as roof, rainwater goods or window & door repairs) provided that original materials are retained where they exist, or where replacement is necessary, that it is on a like-for-like basis.

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Please note:

Some of the works listed in Section 10.0 and all of its subsections above require planning permission irrespective of whether the area is protected or not, but are included to highlight the need for careful consideration of the design of the proposed works. This is to ensure that they do not impact negatively on the special character of the area. The list is not a comprehensive list of all works, in all circumstances that require planning permission, but identifies those works that would impact on the character of Oldcastle ACA. Development works would still have to adhere to the general provision of the Planning & Development Acts 2000-2006 and planning regulations. The area planner and conservation officer of Meath County Council can be consulted on these matters.

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council