

Fair Green Development, Oldcastle, Co. Meath

Oldcastle townland

Site Area: Approx. 5,800 sqm

ITM: 655429, 780443

Record of Monuments and Places: None

Record of Protected Structures: None

Architectural Conservation Area: None

Desk Based Review and Assessment

Niall Roycroft

27th June 2023

Non-Technical Summary

Meath County Council is proposing to develop a c. 5,800 sqm land portion titled 'Fair Green Development, Oldcastle, Co Meath' in Oldcastle townland 655429, 780443. The lands have been part of the Fair Green area of Oldcastle since the 1837 OS (at least). The lands are unlikely to have formed part of the old town of Oldcastle, which was probably focussed around the Market Square, St Bride's Church and 'Castle Street' (now Cogan Street) area (around 150-180m to the south-west).

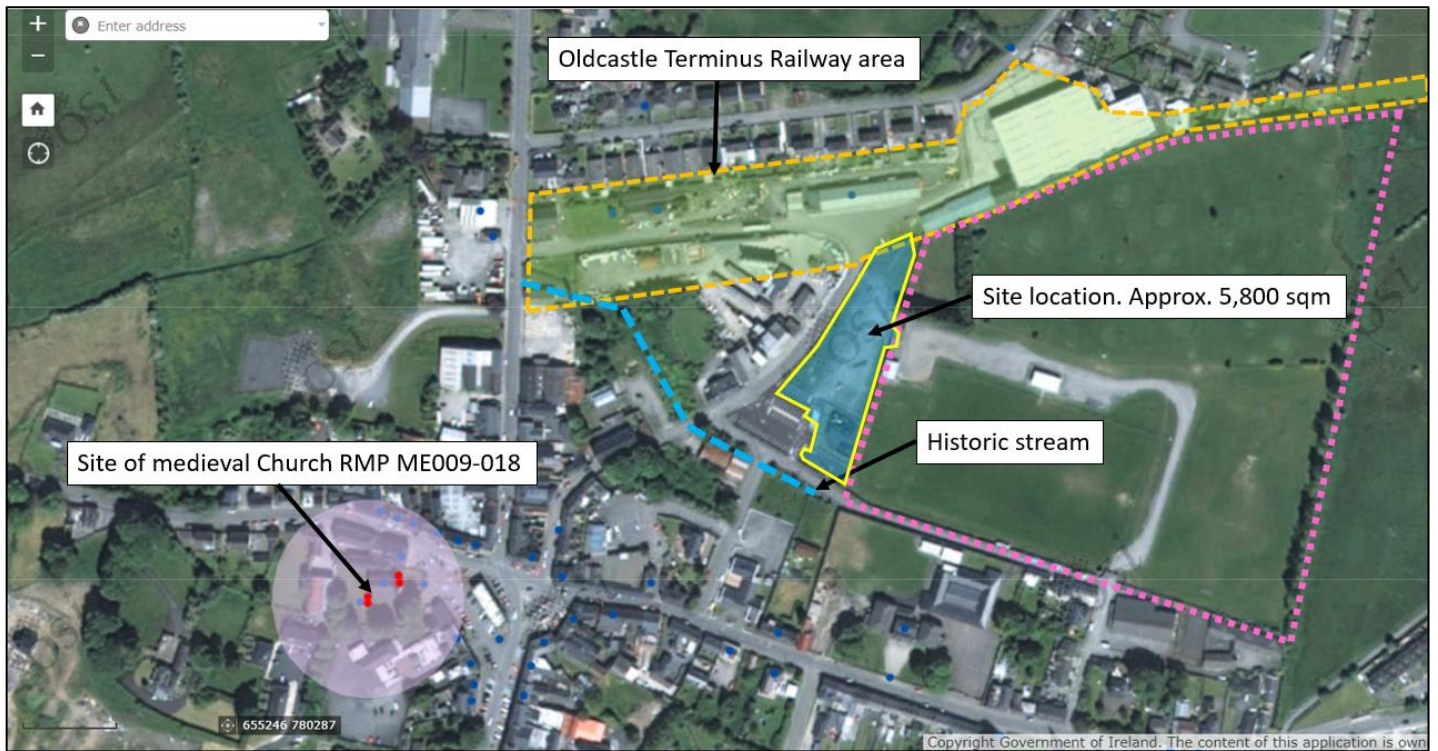
Oldcastle is not a recorded historic town, but the present Church of St Bride (built 1816) sits on the site of the medieval church ME009-018 (linked to Fore Abbey in Westmeath). Furthermore, the R154 west of the Market Square is referenced as 'Castle Street' on old OS maps and Oldcastle is shown as a 'Castle' on the 1650s Down Survey maps. So some medieval settlement in and around the Market Square hilltop location is likely. The nearby medieval motte ME009-024 on the southern side of town protected the approaches to this medieval settlement.

The original form of Oldcastle was a four-road crossroads with a junction at Market Square. The R195 'Cavan Street' was built around 1800 and previously Cloughan Street-Railway Yard was the road to Cavan. Fair Green is located on the NE side of the town and originally focussed around a spring or water source that still feeds a small stream today. The triangular Fair Green site was formally laid out when the Oldcastle branch line terminus was constructed around 1863. The Fair Green was linked to a series of cattle and sheep pens for loading animals onto trains. When the railway was left to deteriorate after 1963, the Fair Green market area continued in use and the proposed development area is paved with tarmac and there is a large central gutter and underground drain. The southernmost part of the original Fair Green area is now a children's playground, a car park and there are recycling banks. The children's playground is due to be upgraded as part of the Fair Green project.

The proposed development area is bounded by a masonry wall that includes a recently rebuilt vehicle gate on Cloughan Street-Railway Yard as well as a pedestrian stile near the SW end. The pointed, northern end of the proposed site includes a very fine pedestrian stile, which will be retained. In order to be able to lock the perimeter however, these stiles will be set behind new railings to close their access. The northern stile leads to the Oldcastle Tidy Towns Garden with plaques in commemoration of Oldcastle Railway. Nearby, the stations. old crane has been restored and placed in the garden. The crane will be protected during works.

The proposed development probably has a fairly limited archaeological potential: but should planning permission be granted, a programme of archaeological trial trenching would clarify this. If this test trenching finds archaeological remains that cannot be preserved in situ, then they should be preserved by record before construction begins.

1 Introduction



Meath County Council is proposing to develop a c.5,800 sqm land portion titled 'Fair Green Development, Oldcastle, Co Meath' in Oldcastle townland 655429, 780443. The lands have been part of the Fair Green area of Oldcastle since the 1837 OS (at least). The lands are unlikely to have formed part of the old town of Oldcastle, which was probably focussed around the Market Square, Church and 'Castle Street' area around 150-180m to the south-west.

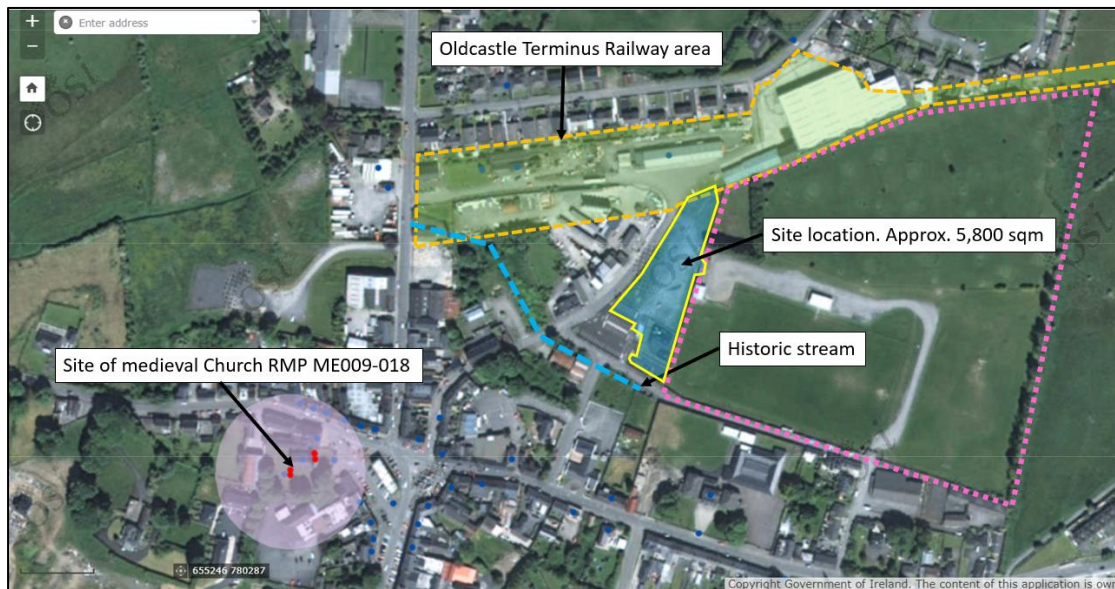
The proposal is to develop the Fair Ground into a vibrant outdoor civic space. These facilities are outlined in the Parkhood design image below.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography

Oldcastle is built on a broad hilltop now occupied by Market Square and St Bride's Church. The hill is basically surrounded by lower, wetter ground that is drained by streams.

2.2 Record of Monuments and Places



ME009-018-----

[Scope note](#)

Class: Church

Townland: OLDCASTLE

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Situated on top of a broad hill within the town of Oldcastle. The church of Coul is listed in the ecclesiastical taxation (1302-06) of Pope Nicholas IV (Cal. doc. Ire. 5, 260). Ussher (1622) lists a church at Oldcastle but provides no information (Erlington 1847-64, 1, cxviii). At the Suppression (1540) the church of Oldcastell was worth £6 to the abbey of Fore, Co. Westmeath (White 1943, 273). According to the Civil Survey (1654-6) Lord Dunsany owned 360 acres at Oldcastle in 1640 where the old castle and church are listed (Simington 1940, 268). Dopping's Visitation Book 1682- 5 notes that St, Bridget's church of Oldcastle or Clotyn was in ruins since 1641 (O'Connell 1965, 171 2), but it was enclosed (Ellison 1975, 8). The present Church of Ireland church was built in 1816 (Lewis 1837, vol. 2, 448) and is on the on the site of the medieval parish church of Oldcastle or Clolyne.

The church site is within a rectangular graveyard (dims c. 45m E-W; c. 38m N-S) defined

by masonry walls. Almost 60 memorials from the church and graveyard have been published, about half of which date from the 18th century (ffolliott and Jones (1968). Outside the church there is an unfinished disc-headed cross (H 0.5m; Wth 0.72m; T 0.14m) with the top part of the shaft missing, which probably led to the work being abandoned. The arms are short (L 0.1-0.14m; H c. 0.2m) and a large boss was being excavated on one face of the stone. The cross has a collar (Wth 0.4m; H 0.1m) and a shaft (dims 0.25m x 0.17m; visible H 0.36m) below. It may be 17th century in date. The memorial of Philip Tuite from Drumsawry dated 1692 (Ball-Wright 1908-09), which was in the church at Lough Crew (ME015-027003-), is now set into the inside of the N wall of the tower at the ground floor. It is a sandstone slab (H 1.88m; Wth 0.8-0.9m) with the Latin inscription incised in roman lettering under a shield in relief that is quartered and retains traces of blue and red colours.

The above description is derived from the published 'Archaeological Inventory of County Meath' (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1987). In certain instances the entries have been revised and updated in the light of recent research.

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of revision: 10 December, 2014

References:

- 1. Ball-Wright, Rev. W. 1908-09 Loughcrew Church. *Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland*, 7, 651.
- 2. Cal. doc. Ire. - Calendar of documents relating to Ireland 1171-1307, ed. H.S. Sweetman (5 vols., London, 1875-86).
- 3. Ellison, Rev. C. C. 1971-5 Bishop Dopping's Visitation Book 1682-5, *Ríocht na Míde*, 5, 1, 28-39; 5, 2, 3-13; 5, 3, 3-11; 5, 4, 98-103; 6, 1, 3-13.
- 4. Erlington, C. R. (ed.) 1847-64 *The whole works of the most Reverend James Ussher*. 17 vols. Hodges and Smith, Dublin
- 5. ffolliott, R. and Jones, H. E. 1968 *Monumental inscriptions form Oldcastle, Co. Meath*, *Ríocht na Míde* 4, 2, 11-19.
- 6. Lewis, S. 1837 *A topographical dictionary of Ireland*, 2 vols. London. Lewis and Co.
- 7. O'Connell, P. 1965 *The parish and district of Kilbride. Part 4 - Oldcastle*. *Ríocht na Midhe*, Vol. 3, 3, 171-180.
- 8. Simington, R.C. (ed.) 1940 *The Civil survey, AD 1654-1656. Vol. V: county of Meath*. Dublin. Irish Manuscripts Commission.

ME009-018001-

[Scope note](#)

Class: Graveyard

Townland: OLDCASTLE

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: The site of the medieval parish church of Oldcastle or Cloyle (ME009-018----) is within a rectangular graveyard (dims c. 45m E-W; c. 38m N-S) defined by masonry walls. Almost 60 memorials from the church and graveyard have been published, about half of which date from the 18th century (ffolliott and Jones (1968). The disc-headed cross (ME009-018002-) is outside the church on the E side. Archaeological testing (05E0165) by P. D. Sweetman immediately S of the graveyard produced no evidence that burial ever extended outside the graveyard in this direction (excavation.ie 2005:1228).

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 21 May, 2014

Amended: 7 August, 2014, 22 January 2021

References:

- 1. ffolliott, R. and Jones, H. E. 1968 Monumental inscriptions from Oldcastle, Co. Meath, *Ríocht na Míche* 4, 2, 11-19.

[Zoom to](#)

ME009-018002-

[Scope note](#)

Class: Cross

Townland: OLDCASTLE

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: Outside the church of St. Bride in Oldcastle there is an unfinished disc-headed cross (H 0.5m; Wth 0.72m; T 0.14m) with the top part of the shaft missing, which probably led to the work being abandoned. The arms are short (L 0.1-0.14m; H c. 0.2m) and a large boss was being excavated on one face of the stone. The cross has a collar (Wth 0.4m; H 0.1m) and a shaft (dims 0.25m x 0.17m; visible H 0.36m) below. It may be 17th century in date.

Compiled by Michael Moore

Date of upload: 7 August, 2014

[Zoom to](#)

ME009-018003-

[Scope note](#)

Class: Graveslab (present location)

Townland: OLDCASTLE

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: The memorial of Philip Tuite from Drumsawry dated 1692 (Ball-Wright 1908-09), which was in the church at Lough Crew (ME015-027003-), is now set into the inside of the N wall of the tower at the ground floor. It is a sandstone slab (H 1.88m; Wth 0.8-0.9m) with the Latin inscription incised in roman lettering under a shield in relief that is quartered and retains traces of blue and red colours.

From Ball-Wright (1908-09): Monumentum Philippi Tuite, Dni de Fermor / & Newcastle quod in aeternam Patris sui / Memoriam Jacobus Tuite defuncti filius / proprio sumptu construxit et hoc carmine / inscribendum curavit. Anno Domini 1692

Hic jacet indigna consumptus morte Philippus / quem nimis ante diem sors inimica tulit, / quem vulgi obscuros virtus superextulit orbes / virtutisque comes non inhonora fides / quem labor et constans cunetis vigilantia rebus / principibus similem saepe dedere viris. / Filius Is tanti patris post fata superstes / struxerat impensis ista sepulchra suis / obit ... 1688 aetatis suae 48.

Translation (by the late Sir Edmund T. Bewley) The monument of Sir Philip Tuite, lord of Fermor and Newcastle, which James Tuite, son of the deceased, erected at his own expense in perpetual memory of his father, and caused to be inscribed with the following lines. AD 1692.

Here lies Philip, cast down by cruel death, whom too unfriendly fate carried off before is time: whom valour exalted above the obscure realms of the common herd, and faith, the not unworthy associate of valour: whom labour and never ceasing watchfulness in all things oftentimes put on a par with the highest in the land. He, the son of so great a father, and the survivor of this calamity, erected this tomb at his own expense. He died ... 1688, aged 48 years.

Compiled by: Michael Moore

Date of upload: 10 December, 2014

References:

- 1. Ball-Wright, Rev. W. 1908-09 Loughcrew Church. Journal of the Association for the Preservation of the Memorials of the Dead, Ireland, 7, 651.

[Zoom to](#)

2.3 Details of the Excavations.ie entries

There have been several archaeological works in Oldcastle and others that have been in the rural lands around Oldcastle. In the town, a well was found and outside there are occasional burnt mounds in the fields.

2003:1443 - Castle Street, Oldcastle, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** Castle Street, Oldcastle

Sites and Monuments Record No.: SMR 9:18 **Licence number:** 03E0105

Author: Christopher Read, North West Archaeological Services Ltd, Cloonfad Cottage, Cloonfad, Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim.

Site type: Well

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 655149m, N 780287m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.769252, -7.163458

The proposed development site, located on Castle Street in the centre of Oldcastle, Co. Meath, is to include the refurbishment of an existing pub and the construction of two new buildings, one to the rear of the pub, the other facing onto Castle Street. Monitoring of excavation works associated with the proposed new buildings was carried out between 3 and 7 February. The site is located within the zone of archaeological potential for a medieval church and graveyard located immediately south of the site.

All excavation work was carried out by machine. The excavation comprised four trenches, 1.2-1.4m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.2m. The natural, a mottled orange compact clay, was revealed at a depth of 0.5-0.6m below the existing ground surface. This was sealed by a mixed deposit of rubble, red brick and a gritty grey clay. Roughly in the centre of the proposed development site, the remains of a large, well-preserved well were revealed at a depth of 0.6m below the existing ground surface. The well is keyhole-shaped and constructed of stone and red brick with large timber beams providing structural support to the main chamber. The main chamber is circular, 1.6m in diameter and at least 15m deep. A rectangular 'entrance' to the well, measuring 0.7m wide, 2.1m long and 3.5m deep, projects to the south from the main chamber.

Attempts were made to date the well through documentary research. While general information on the history of Oldcastle was obtained, including a few references to the adjacent church, no information on the well was found. The existing Church of Ireland church was built in 1816 and it is situated on the site of an earlier church dedicated to St Bridget. No date for the earlier church could be found. The first-edition OS map could not be accessed, although this would simply have confirmed that the well was built prior to the 1830s. Based upon the construction of the well and the red-brick insertions, it is likely the well is comparable in date to the adjacent church and its proximity suggests a relationship.

All excavation works associated with the proposed development were monitored. There was no evidence of any archaeological activity on the site, beyond the well described above.

2009:660 - OLDCASTLE, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** OLDCASTLE

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** 09E0252

Author: Dominic Delany, Dominic Delany & Associates, Unit 3, Howley Court, Oranmore, Co. Galway.

Site type: No archaeological significance

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 655217m, N 780373m

Test excavations took place at the site of a proposed wastewater-treatment plant in Oldcastle, Co. Meath, on 24 July 2009. Monitoring of geotechnical investigations took place at the same site on 8 May 2009. The proposed development consists of the upgrading of the Oldcastle sewerage system. This scheme involves upgrading of the existing pipeline network as well as laying new pipelines in greenfield sites and the construction of a new treatment plant on a greenfield site to the south-west of the town. A tracked excavator fitted with a 5ft grading bucket opened five test-trenches across the site of the proposed treatment plant. Nothing of archaeological interest was found.

2013:116 - Oldcastle, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** Oldcastle

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** 12E387

Author: Brian O'Hara

Site type: Burnt mound

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 0m, N 0m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.770018, -7.162412

The proposed development at Oldcastle, Co. Meath entails the construction of a 3,500P.E. Wastewater Treatment Works (WWTW). These works were undertaken for Coffey Group on behalf of Meath County Council.

An impact assessment of the proposed development undertaken by Ronan Jones in April 2009 recommended that all topsoil stripping in greenfield areas should be subject to

continuous monitoring while other ground breaking works associated with the scheme should be subject to intermittent monitoring.

Test excavation at the site of the proposed Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and monitoring of geotechnical trenches at the same location by Jones and Delany (Licence No. 09E252?) did not uncover any features, finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

Monitoring of topsoil stripping commenced on 25 October 2012 and continued for a total of 30 days until 10 January 2013.

During the course of this work three separate archaeological sites were uncovered within the footprint of the proposed development. Sites A and B were both excavated on 8 November 2012. Site C was excavated between 8-10 January 2013.

Site A consisted of a thin, irregular-shaped burnt spread of dark greyish, brown sandy clay with inclusions of heat-shattered sandstone and charcoal. This deposit measured 1.4m x 1.96m and was 0.23m deep and was located directly beneath the topsoil and over the 'natural' subsoil. No other archaeological features, finds or deposits were uncovered in the immediate vicinity of Site A.

Site B consisted of an isolated pit/possible trough excavated into the subsoil and was oval in plan, measuring 2.01m (east-west) x 1.25m and had an overall depth of 0.24m. It contained three fills of archetypal burnt spread material containing frequent inclusions of heat-shattered stone and charcoal.

Site C consisted of a burnt spread of black silty clay with frequent inclusions of heat-shattered stone and charcoal. This deposit was partially covered by both the topsoil/overburden and by a deposit of mid-brown sandy silt palaeo-channel material and brownish grey clayey silt palaeo-channel material. Following the removal of the topsoil/overburden and palaeo-channel deposits the burnt spread measured 6.6m (north-west/south-east) x 6.72m and had an average depth of 0.49m

Following excavation of the burnt spread, two troughs which were excavated into the subsoil were identified. Trough (011) was sub-oval in plan (2m x 1.6m) with steeply sloping sides and a flat base (depth 0.25m). The trough contained two fills; a basal fill of black silty clay containing frequent inclusions of heat-shattered stone and charcoal and an upper fill of mid grey sandy silt with frequent inclusions of heat-shattered stone and charcoal.

The second trough (015) was oval in plan (1.5m x 1.77m) with moderately sloping sides and a concave base, having an overall depth of 0.32m. It contained a single fill which consisted of orangey grey silty clay with frequent inclusions of heat-shattered stone and

charcoal. Two large, flat stones were noted at the base, possibly the remains of a stone lining. The stones were similar in size (0.7m x 0.55m x 0.15m) and were positioned beside one another.

Further analysis of the results of the excavation is required to refine the interpretation of the sites.

Delaney, D. and Jones, R (2009) *Pre-development archaeological testing and monitoring of geotechnical trial pits at Oldcastle Sewerage Scheme Co. Meath*. Unpublished report by Dominic Delaney & Associates for Jennings O'Donovan Consultant Engineers.

Rubicon Heritage Services Ltd, Unit 2, Europa Enterprise Park, Midleton, Co. Cork.

2012:472 - Oldcastle, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** Oldcastle

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A **Licence number:** 12E023

Author: Mick Ó Droma

Site type: Fulacht Fiadh/burnt mounds, pits, post-holes and post-medieval drainage and boundary ditches

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 655373m, N 780781m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.773670, -7.159976

Assessment and predevelopment testing was carried out in February 2012. The proposed development comprising of 53 units housing units, crèche and all associated site works is situated on the outskirts of Oldcastle and accessed from the Cavan Road. The site measured 1.9ha and an extensive programme of test trenching was carried out. No surface trace of any archaeological remains were noted in the field prior to the testing works. Topsoil cover measured between 0.1m and 0.6m deep. Surface outcrops of limestone bedrock were noted and in several locations throughout the site topsoil directly overlay near-surface limestone bedrock. Elsewhere subsoil ranging from compact yellow grey boulder clay to orange sandy clay was noted.

The testing revealed the presence numerous subsoil-cut features throughout the investigated area. The majority of the features comprised of linear boundary and drainage features. Multiple features of possible archaeological significance comprising of pits, post-holes and linear features were noted in the test trenches. In Area 1 a dense concentration of features was noted in an area measuring 30m long by 20m wide. Here the remains of a ploughed out fulacht fiadh, F.3, comprised of a denuded horseshoe-shaped mound of

charcoal and heat-shattered stone measuring 13m long x 6m wide and a min of 0.1m deep, were identified. A rectangular depression measuring 3m long by 1m wide filled with peat and heat-affected stone was located between the “horns” of the mound and is interpreted as the remains of a trough. Several subsoil-cut pits, also filled with heat-affected stone, were located in the vicinity of the fulacht fiadh/F.3. Pit F.4, located 4m west of F.3, was circular in plan, measured 0.6m in diameter and contained black charcoal-enriched silt with 60% heat-shattered stone. Pit F.1, located 5m east of F.3, measured 0.7m in diameter and contained 60% heat-shattered stone and charcoal. Pit F.2 located 1m north of F.3 measured 0.6m in diameter and contained 60% heat-shattered stone and charcoal. A spread of burnt stone and charcoal, F.5, measuring 7m by 4m, was located 9m west-north-west of F.3. Pit F.8 was located 3m west of F.5, was circular in plan, measured 1m in diameter and contained a black charcoal silt fill with 60% heat-affected stone. Three finds were retrieved from the topsoil in Area 1. Two small pieces of flint debitage, a possible chert core and a possible saddle quern were retrieved from Area 1. Over 30 subsoil-cut features including pits and post-holes, including several examples with charcoal and heat-affected stone fills, were identified in the test trenches elsewhere in the site.

Wolfhound Archaeology, Killag, Duncormick, Co. Wexford

2019:833 - LOUGHCREW VIEW, OLDCASTLE, Meath

County: Meath **Site name:** LOUGHCREW VIEW, OLDCASTLE

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N A **Licence number:** Unlicensed

Author: Niall Roycroft

Site type: Monitoring

Period/Dating: —

ITM: E 655514m, N 780104m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.767572, -7.157959

Unlicensed archaeological monitoring was carried out at a small housing development at Loughcrew View, Oldcastle as a desk-based assessment (January 2019 – post planning) demonstrated the site had already formed part of a previous housing estate development and the soils had been extensively moved around in the recent past. The monitoring was required as a planning condition. The site area is c. 6,434sq m (including the compound) and approximately 5,520sq m was topsoil stripped. There was nothing known or presumed on the site and the site was outside any limit of the medieval and post-medieval town of Oldcastle in a fairly wet area adjacent to a nearby stream.

Monitoring was undertaken in two areas: the area for housing and the area of the construction compound. Adjacent to the north of both is St Brigid's RC church (NIAH 14306032/RPS MH009-251), St Brigid's Parochial House (NIAH 14306030 and 14306031/RPS MH009-249 and MH009-250) with its gardens and boundary including wrought iron gates (NIAH 14306033/RPS MH009-252). The intention is to build a new boundary adjacent and to the south of the Church and Parochial House boundary – and so leave the protected structures' curtilage, consisting of a tree-rich hedge and a chain-link fence with concrete posts, intact.

The monitoring works uncovered no finds or features of archaeological significance. The site had been previously stripped of sod and some topsoil and then used to dispose of extra soils from the previous housing estate works. In the middle of the housing area, there was a fair amount of original topsoil left in situ and the topsoil heaps were inspected for finds. A moderate amount of 19th–20th-century pottery, clay tobacco pipe and some glass, slate and red brick were noted showing the area was manured with domestic waste at that time. The western end of the site was the compound area for the previous housing estate works. This had been stripped into subsoil previously and still had many chippings pressed into the glacial till.

The works involved machine stripping soils with a flat-bladed ditching bucket to a formation layer. In order to clarify the relationships between surface soils and glacial till, several test-pits were dug and the foundation trench excavations to the houses were monitored. In the compound area only the grass sod was stripped and this revealed layers of imported gravels and excess soils from the previous housing estate works. This was used as a formation level for the compound in much of the area, but in some zones it was removed and several large, glacial boulders were uncovered.

In general, glacial till comprised fairly dark orange brown gritty sandy silt with occasional large boulders. There were large lenses of a more grey-brown colour possibly produced by water staining, but it was still glacial till. Lower into the glacial till it became more clean and yellow orange in colour. No bedrock was exposed.

c/o Meath County Council

3 MAP REGRESSION

3.1 1650s Down Survey

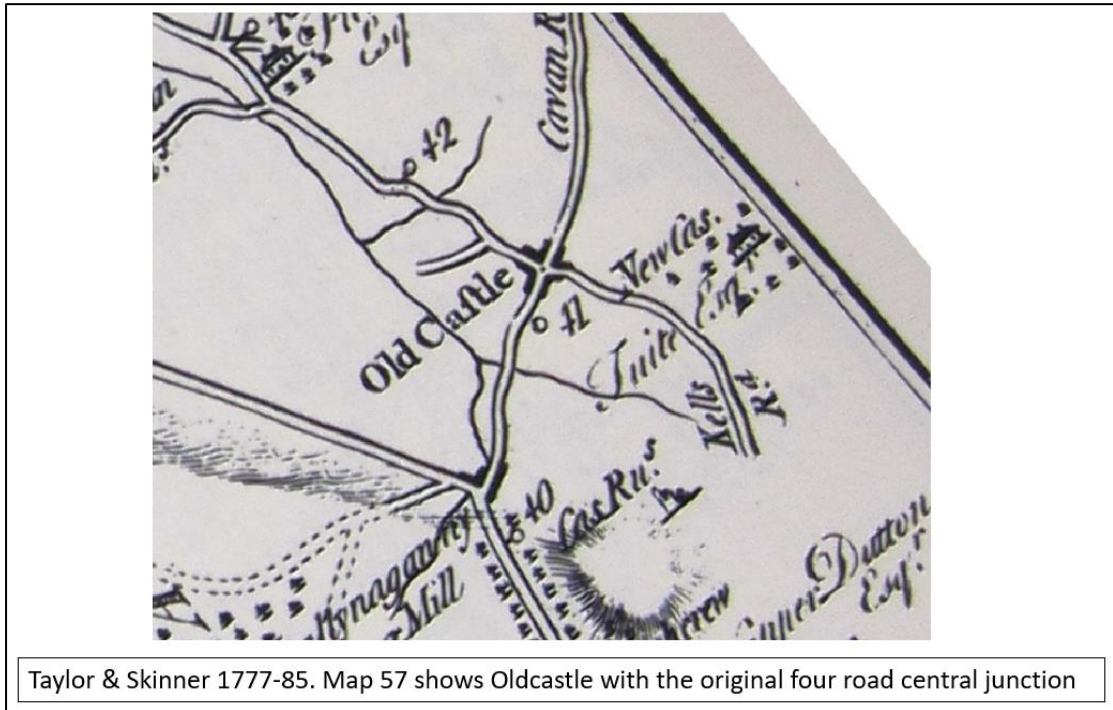


Fore Barony detail from 1650s Down Survey. This shows Oldcastle with a central hilltop 'castle' and nearby houses

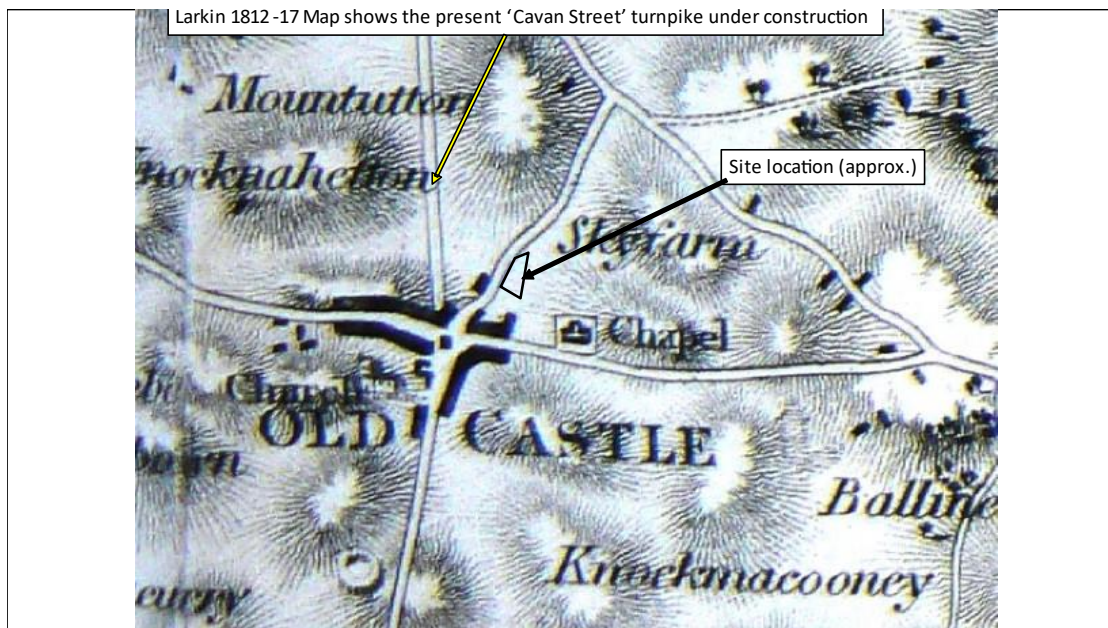


Oldcastle Parish detail from 1650s Down Survey (oriented to N). This shows Oldcastle with a central hilltop 'castle' and a nearby house

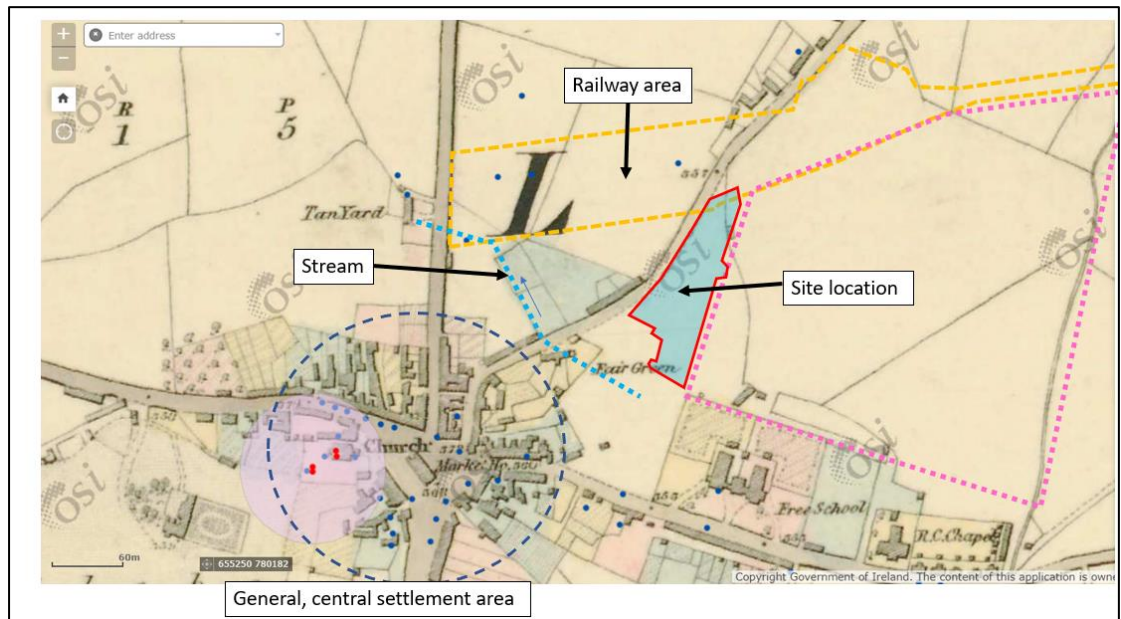
3.2 1777-85 Taylor & Skinner



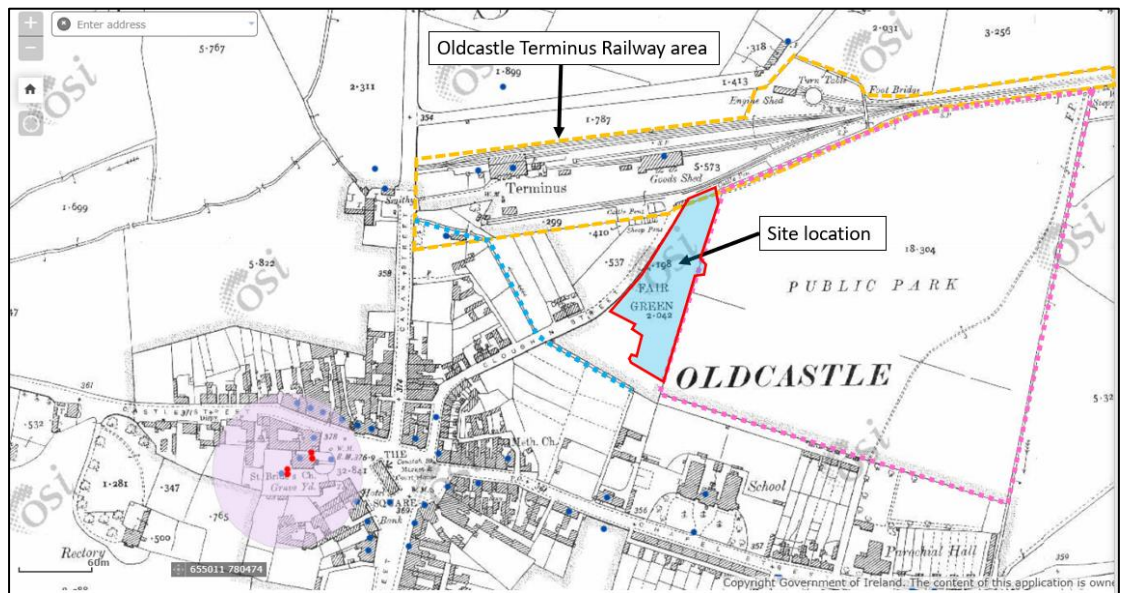
3.3 William Larkin Map 1812-17



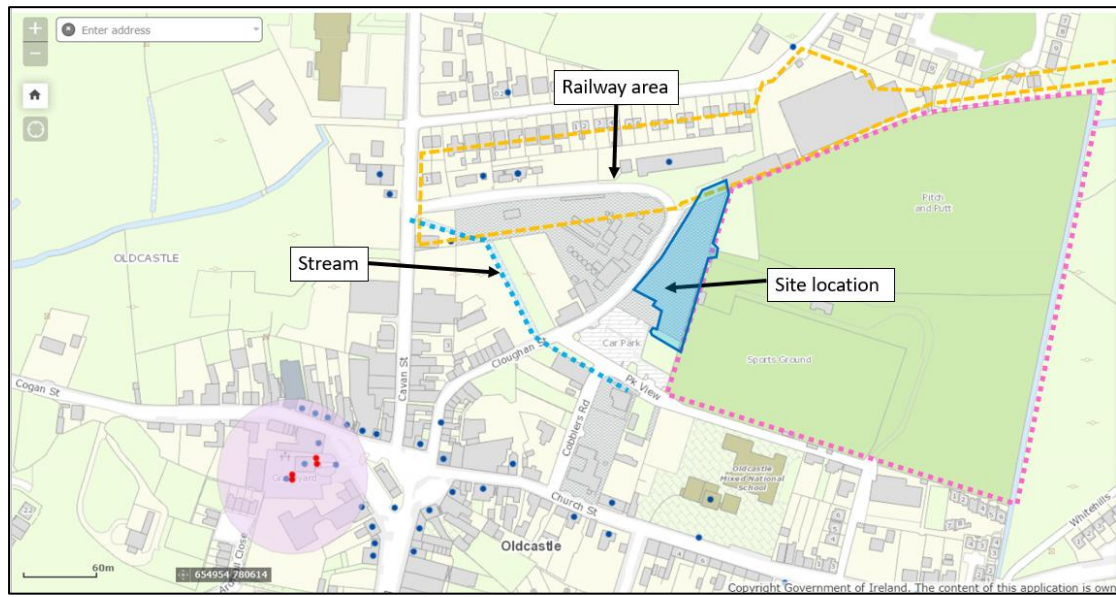
3.4 1837 OS



3.5 1888-1913 OS

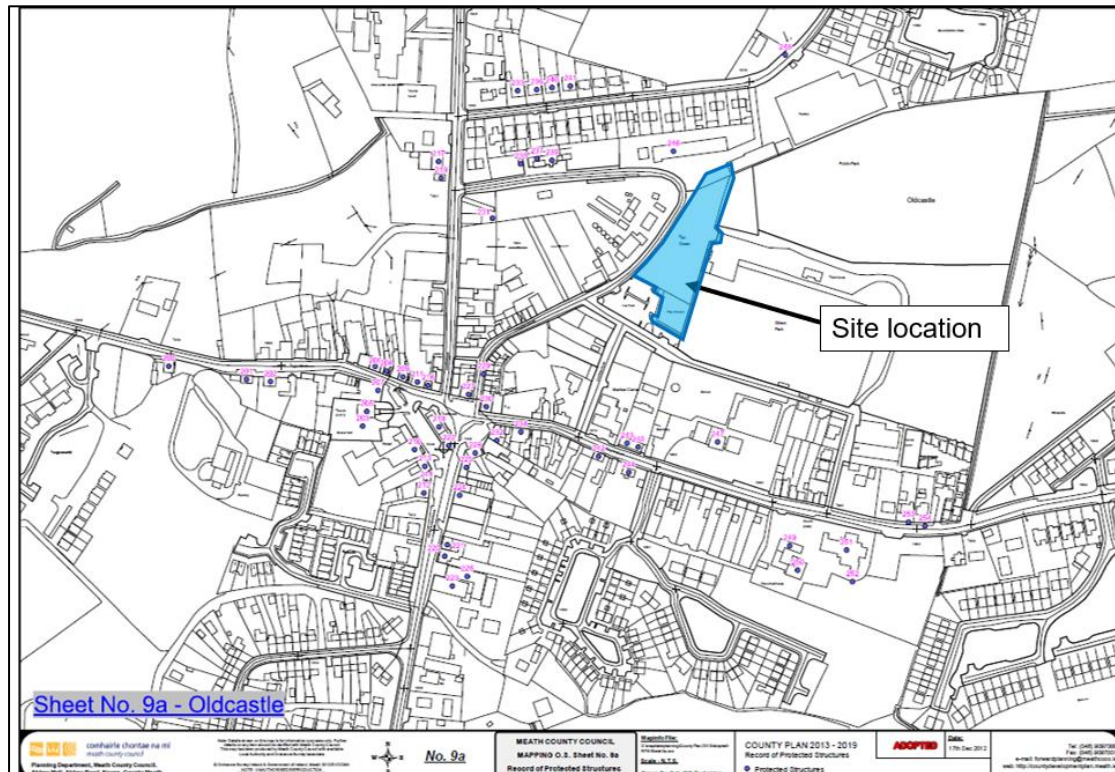


3.6 Modern mapping



4 ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

4.1 Record of Protected Structures

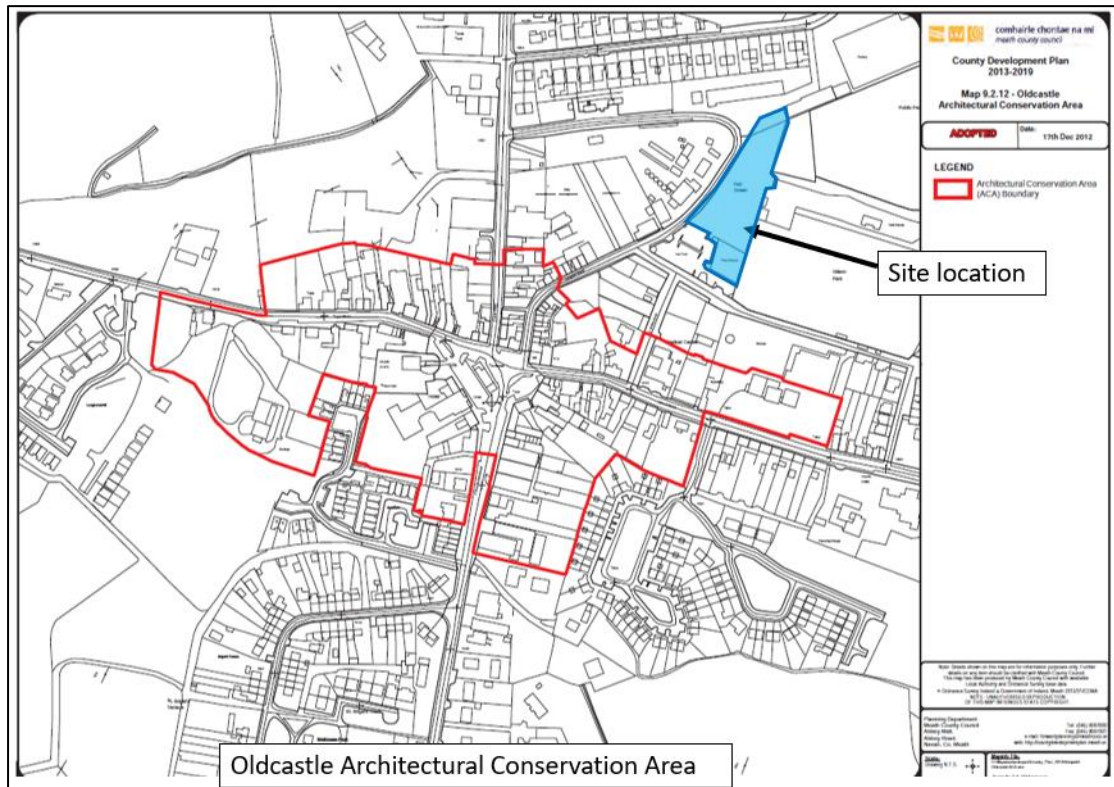


There are many Protected Structures in the area but none in the vicinity of the site except for some previous Railway buildings converted into the Oldcastle Co-Op. The old Railway Crane outside the northern boundary of the site will require attention.

4.2 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage: Buildings and Gardens

As above, there are many NIAH buildings in Oldcastle.

4.3 Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)



There is a large ACA for Oldcastle and the character statement can be viewed at: <https://www.meath.ie/system/files/upload/Oldcastle%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

5 SITE VISIT

The site was visited on 8th February 2023. In summary:

Railway Yard (western boundary)

The boundary to the site and Cloughan Street-Railway Yard is a masonry wall with a pedestrian stile towards the southern end. The coping to this wall is basic soldier course at the northern and southern ends; but is an unusual triangular form in the middle. There is a recently rebuilt vehicle gate. The wall is notably higher on the internal (east) face and this is probably due to recent raising of the Railway Yard footpath.

Railway Garden (northern boundary)

The northern boundary has a higher section of wall with a soldier course top. This ends in a fine pedestrian stile that has a high architectural value. Nearby is a pair of high, circular gate piers into the Public Park. The stile should be retained and was captured with Polycam:

<https://poly.cam/capture/3381EA7D-6456-4650-A53A-057D15DF4ED7>

Southern Boundary

Modern wall with stone facing.

Eastern boundary

Fairly high boundary wall to adjacent public playing fields with a soldier course capping. Numerous rebuilds and modern stone facing gates and piers.

Central area

The whole site is paved in tarmac and there is a central guttering and drain.

Western Boundary / Railway Yard



N end. Modern gate. Facing S



Wall top



Middle. Facing S



S end. Facing S

Western Boundary / Railway Yard



Western Boundary / Railway Yard
Pedestrian stile facing W



Western Boundary / Railway Yard
Pedestrian stile facing E



Modern southern boundary wall



Modern southern boundary wall



Eastern boundary wall. Southern end



Eastern boundary wall gates



Northern boundary on left. Eastern boundary on right



Eastern boundary wall. Northern end

Northern boundary stile to Railway Garden area



IMG_8892



IMG_8893



IMG_8894



Garden and crane



IMG_8899



IMG_8901



IMG_8896



IMG_8897

Internal paved area with central drain



Facing NE



Facing N



Facing N



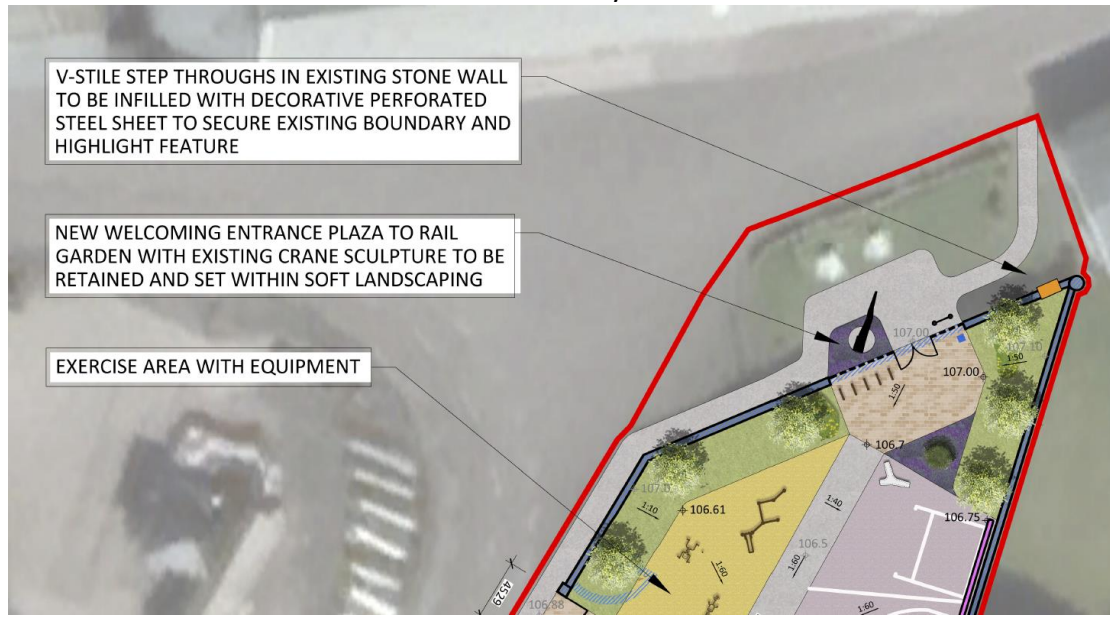
Facing S

6 Proposed Works

The proposal is to develop the Fair Green into a vibrant outdoor civic space as outlined in the Parkhood design below.



Detail of northern area with V-stile and Railway Crane:



7 DISCUSSION

Meath County Council is proposing to develop a c. 5,800 sqm land portion titled 'Fair Green Development, Oldcastle, Co Meath' in Oldcastle townland 655429, 780443. The lands have been part of the Fair Green area of Oldcastle since the 1837 OS (at least). The lands are unlikely to have formed part of the old town of Oldcastle, which was probably focussed around the Market Square, St Bride's Church and 'Castle Street' (now Cogan Street) area (around 150-180m to the south-west).

Oldcastle is not a recorded historic town, but the present Church of St Bride (built 1816) sits on the site of the medieval church ME009-018 (linked to Fore Abbey in Westmeath). Furthermore, the R154 west of the Market Square is referenced as 'Castle Street' on old OS maps and Oldcastle is shown as a 'Castle' on the 1650s Down Survey maps. So some medieval settlement in and around the Market Square hilltop location is likely. The nearby medieval motte ME009-024 on the southern side of town protected the approaches to this medieval settlement.

The original form of Oldcastle was a four-road crossroads with a junction at Market Square. The R195 'Cavan Street' was built around 1800 and previously Cloughan Street-Railway Yard was the road to Cavan. Fair Green is located on the NE side of the town and originally focussed around a spring or water source that still feeds a small stream today. The triangular Fair Green site was formally laid out when the Oldcastle branch line terminus was constructed around 1863. The Fair Green was linked to a series of cattle and sheep pens for loading animals onto trains. When the railway was left to deteriorate after 1963, the Fair Green market area continued in use and the proposed development area is paved with tarmac and there is a large central gutter and underground drain. The southernmost part of the original Fair Green area is now a children's playground, a car park and there are recycling banks. The children's playground is due to be upgraded as part of the Fair Green project.

The proposed development area is bounded by a masonry wall that includes a recently rebuilt vehicle gate on Cloughan Street-Railway Yard as well as a pedestrian stile near the SW end. The pointed, northern end of the proposed site includes a very fine pedestrian stile, which will be retained. In order to be able to lock the perimeter however, these stiles will be set behind new railings to close their access. The northern stile leads to the Oldcastle Tidy Towns Garden with plaques in commemoration of Oldcastle Railway. Nearby, the stations. old crane has been restored and placed in the garden. The crane will be protected during works.

The proposed development probably has a fairly limited archaeological potential: but should planning permission be granted, a programme of archaeological trial trenching would clarify this. If this test trenching finds archaeological remains that cannot be preserved in situ, then they should be preserved by record before construction begins.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thomas Lynch, Executive Engineer, Meath County Council

9 REFERENCES

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Taylor & Skinner 1777-85 Maps of the Roads of Ireland

Google Maps

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