

## Oldcastle Public Realm 2023, Co. Meath

### Heritage Assessment

**Site Area: Triangular area of *The Square* roughly 4,000 sqm  
plus separate parking area of approx. 1,200 sqm**

ITM: 655200, 780276 (centre)

Townland: Oldcastle

RMP: ME009-018 (Church), ME009-018001 (Graveyard),  
ME009-018002 (Cross),  
ME009-018003 (Graveslab – present location)

Oldcastle Architectural Conservation Area containing over 50 Protected Structures

Niall Roycroft  
June 2023

## **Non-Technical Summary**

Meath County Council proposes to construct a Public Realm scheme produced by BDP (Dublin) in the central, triangular 'Square' of Oldcastle Co. Meath ITM 655200, 780276. The Square is around 4,000 sqm, but the central Market Building / Old Court House is being retained unaltered. A separate area for parking of around 1,200 sqm is proposed in the present Playing Fields outside the town.

The history of Oldcastle is not known in any great detail past the last 200 years or so. The town is marked with a large Castle with lesser stone buildings on the 1650 Down Survey Maps and the present Cogan Street was previously named 'Castle Street'. Lewis *Topographical Dictionary* 1837 also notes that the Castle at Oldcastle was lost. Possible locations for this castle are perhaps the present Garda Station, the R154/R195 junction or even the Market Square building. The present St Bride's Church on The Square is a 19<sup>th</sup> century building, but there are references to a Church 'at Oldcastle' dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. RMP Church ME009-018 may or may not be on the site of St Bride's. St Bride's graveyard (ME009-018002) contains some 17<sup>th</sup> century gravestones (ME009-018002 and ME009-018003).

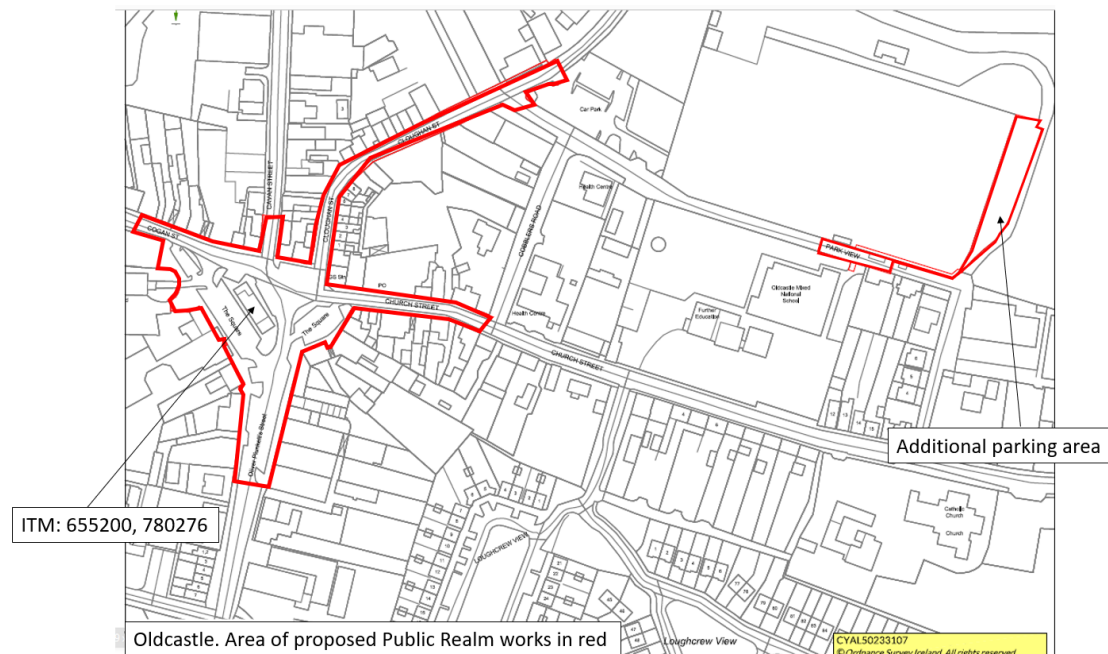
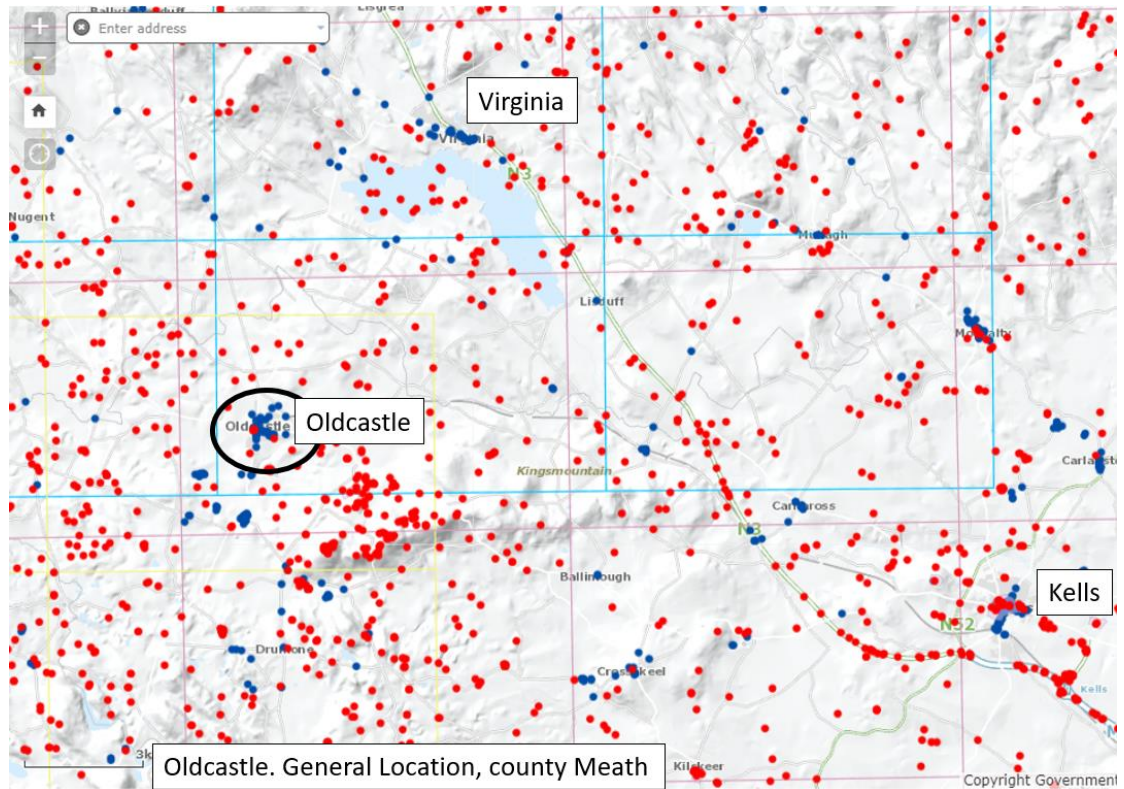
The present R195 Cavan Street was constructed c.1820 and before this there was a standard crossroads in the centre of the town. The original market area was perhaps limited to the present triangular area on the NE side of the Market Building, which may mean the SW zone of the present 'Square' was perhaps previously used for settlement. Furthermore, recent works in Navan and Kells indicates that the earliest medieval towns in Meath are often oval or D-shaped in plan. Given Oldcastle's location on a broad hilltop, an original oval shape is a possibility. In any case, The Square appears to be the centre of any medieval (or later medieval) town, and it is very likely that the present Square is larger than any medieval 'open area' market.

Therefore, there is significant archaeological potential. The proposed works appear to include upgraded services, tree plantings, new pavements etc with a depth impact of at least 0.50m across the Square. This would probably impact on any archaeological remains, should they exist.

It is recommended that sufficient archaeological test excavation work is completed as early as possible following any planning permission to determine the location, date, nature and extent of any archaeological deposits or features. Ideally, significant archaeological deposits or features would be preserved in situ or by record before construction works begin, so as not to cause potential delay and disruption to the construction works. The test excavations may determine that archaeological monitoring of construction works is a suitable response, but monitoring without test excavation could be a significant risk to project delivery.

This area is also within the Oldcastle Architectural Conservation Area, which includes over 50 Protected Structures in and around The Square. Designs should be compatible with the Oldcastle ACA Character Statement <https://www.meath.ie/system/files/upload/Oldcastle%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

# 1 Introduction



Meath County Council proposes to construct a Public Realm scheme produced by BDP (Dublin) in the central, triangular ‘Square’ of Oldcastle Co. Meath ITM 655200, 780276. The Square is around 4,000 sqm, but the central Market Building / Old Court House is being retained unaltered. A separate area for parking of around 1,200 sqm is proposed in the present Playing Fields outside the town.



Oldcastle is defined as a 'Small Town' in the Meath County Development Plan (CDP).

The Square is a triangular space containing the old Market and Court House and the Church and graveyard ME009-018 and ME009-018001 are adjacent to the west. The Square is the heart of the 18<sup>th</sup> century market town of Oldcastle and is probably a medieval crossroads with associated medieval settlement. St Bride's Church ME009-018 is supposedly on the site of the medieval parish church of Cloyle and as such, associated burials may extend into the area of The Square.



Oldcastle centre is also a relatively large Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). This large ACA reflects the very well preserved and characterful nature of the buildings in Oldcastle, which focus on the middle of Oldcastle: the Town centre.

There are 56 Buildings or structures recorded on the NIAH for Oldcastle, and 54 of these are listed on the Meath County Development Plan (CDP) and Oldcastle LAP Record of Protected Structures. These include almost all the buildings facing onto The Square and the adjacent ends of Oliver Plunkett Street, Church Street and Cogan Street. This all shows the well-preserved nature of the town centre in terms of architectural heritage. A series of buildings on Stoney Street and Ex-railway buildings on Railway Yard make up the bulk of the remaining buildings.

However, all the footpaths around The Square have recently (prior to 2014) been relaid with orange-red cobblelock footpath surfacing with an associated modern, concrete kerbing. This footpath style extends down Church Street, Cogan Street at Oliver Plunkett Street. This work involved removing most of any remaining original

cut limestone kerbing and now very little of this is left. A small patch survived on Cloughan Street to be noted by NIAH (Reg No. 14306049) but this was removed prior to 2014. Another piece on Oliver Plunkett Street (outside the Ex-National Irish Bank / Veterinary Clinic) still survives. Consideration to the original limestone kerbing replacement might be appropriate in the Public Realm design.

The Square is probably cut through with numerous modern services that will have truncated potential archaeological remains within their construction trenches. However, further discussion of services will need to wait for ground investigations post-planning permission. Nearby monitoring works 03E0105 opposite the Church at Castle Street (where a large well containing red brick was found) noted natural being 0.50m - 0.60m below present ground level in that location.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Topography and general background

Oldcastle is located on a hilltop location with substantial wetlands and streams around the town from the north-west to the south-west. There are also streams along the north-eastern to south-eastern sides and a more hilly zone just beyond them (townland of Knockmacoony).

The town centre, focussed on St Bride's Church and The Square occupies a small, local high spot. The highest point seems to be that of St Bride's and the sloping Market Square would have been useful for Market drainage and some significant outflow drains would be presumed.

#### *Oldcastle: General history*

☐ **Barony of Foore / Fore**, County Meath - The territory of the Delbna Bec was noted here from the 8th century. Ua hAonghusa (O'Hennessy) are noted as chiefs here in the 12th century.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~irlkik/ihtm/baronie3.htm>

Fore, Fobhar is the anglicised version of the Irish name that signifies "the town of the water-springs" and was given to the area after Saint Feichin's spring or well, which is next to the old church a short distance from where the ruined monastery still stands at Fore in County Westmeath. It was St. Feichin who founded the ancient Fore Abbey around 630 and by 665 there were apparently 300 monks living in the community.

In the 13th century Hugh de Lacy, the Count of Meath and part of Westmeath built a Benedictine priory in the valley at Fore / Foore. Many of the buildings that remain today (in ruins) date from the 15th century and represent one of or the largest Benedictine communities to have been established in Ireland. The priory was dedicated to both St Feichin and to St Taurin after the Évreux (Normandy) abbot of the parent monastery.

Medieval 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century control is seen by the construction of earthen castles or motte and baileys in the area of Oldcastle. The two most relevant mottes are that of Mount Fortune (named after a local landowner) just to the south of Oldcastle and another on the Lough Crew estate further to the south.

Medieval mottes are typically constructed at junctions along the communications network and it can be assumed that they linked to each other by medieval routeways. The Mount Fortune motte can be assumed to oversee two areas: the north-south routeway that is now the R195 and the east-west routeway of the R154. The motte is located some distance south from this junction in order to also oversee the now realigned and straightened 'unnamed' river that flows south-east to north-west between Tubride Bridge and Jobson's Bridge. Although this river is small and in

a wide, boggy area of low ground, the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Down Survey shows 'An Old Mill Out Of Repair' on it and there may also have been medieval mills on it.

The Barony of Fore is split between Counties Westmeath and Meath as half-baronies, as marked on the Down Survey. In Meath the barony of demifore is marked as '½ Foore'.

The main 16th century family in the area of Oldcastle were the Plunketts, who were connected to Lords of Dunsany at Killeen. Around 1600, John Plunkett was the Baron of Loughcrew and his estate comprised over 250 hectares of fine land in and around Loughcrew, along with a tower house, adjoining church and a corn mill. There appears to be some confusion between the Motte, Church, 'Castle' in Oldcastle and the motte, Church and Tower House 'Castle' in Loughcrew estate.

The Oldcastle Church of St Bride's is considered by many to have a late medieval origin, Dopping's visitation book of 1682-5 notes that the church was 'in ruins since 1641'. The church was the Parish church of Clolyne (Lewis), Cloyle (Archaeological Inventory of Meath) and also referred to as the Parish of Oldcastle on the Down Survey

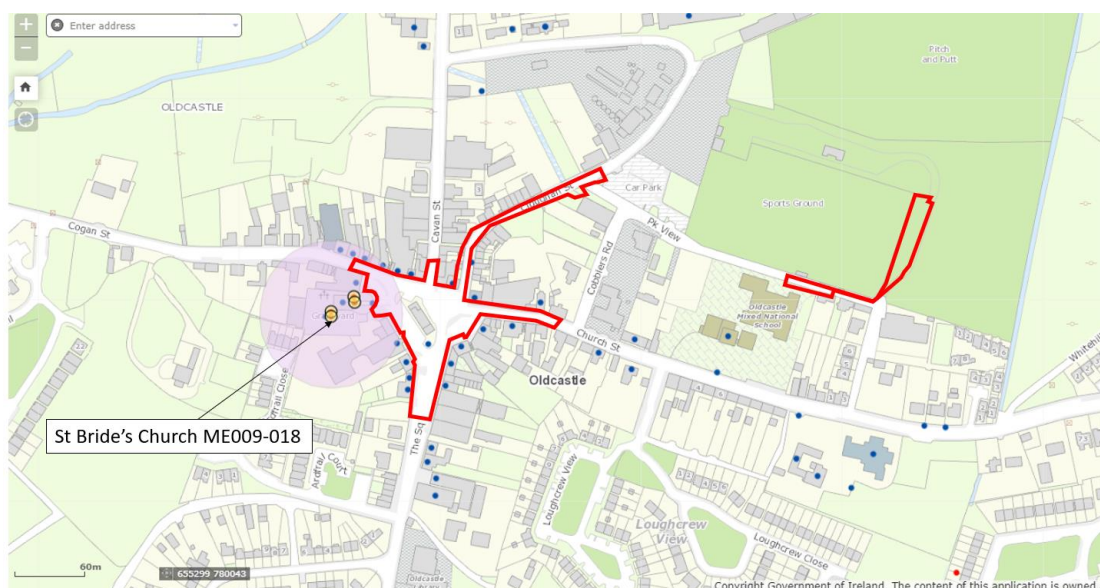
The Down Survey Oldcastle Parish Map lists various properties of John Plunkett but the townland and location of Oldcastle was the property of Lord Dunsanie (Dunsany) of Meath and Killeen castle. These lands were all confiscated.

Colonel James Naper took possession of half the barony of Fore in 1653 for £800, or 16/- per acre "for his services to the Crown" and then Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell. The Naper estates would grow to 180,000 acres in north Meath, Westmeath and Cavan, helped by the Colonel's marriage to the sister of Sir William Petty, a senior Dublin Castle official.

The Origin of the name 'Oldcastle' is not known. It is the 'old castle' in relation to nearby 'New Castle' on the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century Down Survey. It could relate to the earthen motte now lying to the south of the town, but the Down Survey shows several stone castles or tower houses in Oldcastle town itself. It is therefore possible there was an 'Old Castle' near the Square where there is a clear road intersection – a favourite place for medieval castles to be built.

It was through Oliver's mother Thomasina and the Dillon family, that the Plunkett's of Loughcrew had a closer bond with the more senior branches of the aristocratic Plunkett clan in Co. Meath, notably the Earl of Fingal at Killeen castle or the Plunkett's of Dunsany.

## 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 Míidhe*, 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 Míidhe* 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. ffollott, R. and Jones, H. E. 1968 Monumental inscriptions from Oldcastle, Co. Meath, *Ríocht na Mídhe* 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 have been in the rural lands around Oldcastle. In the town, a well was found at Cogan Street and outside there are occasional burnt mounds in the fields. However, the works have not yet shed a great deal of information on the history of the town.

## 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.

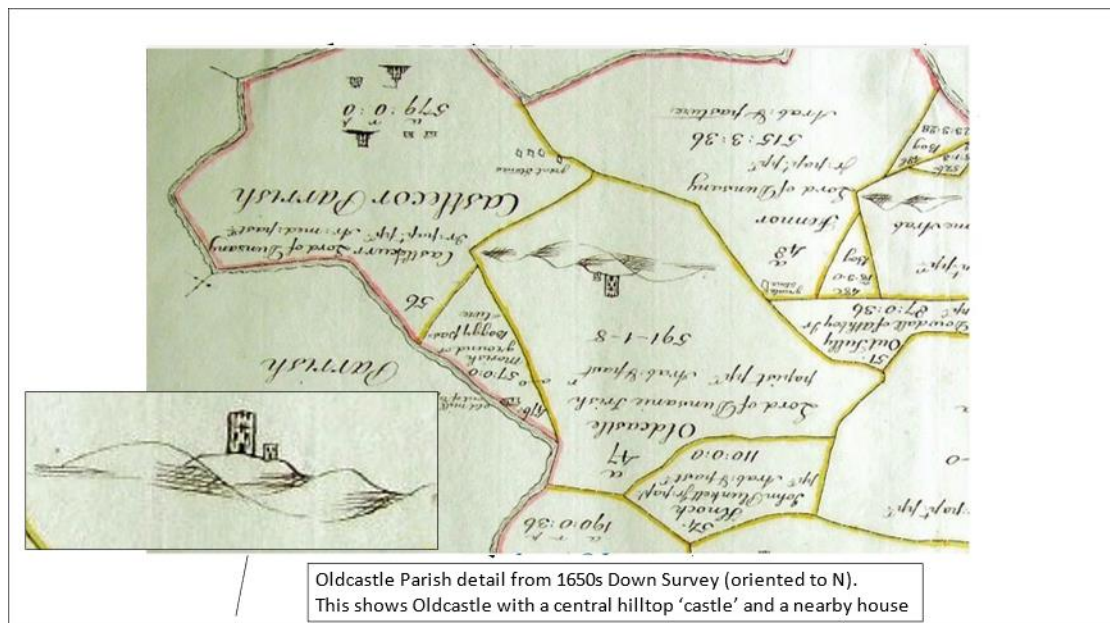
The works involved machine stripping soils with a flat-bladed ditching bucket to a formation layer. In order to clarify the relationships between surface soils and glacial till, several test-pits were dug and the foundation trench excavations to the houses were monitored. In the compound area only the 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**

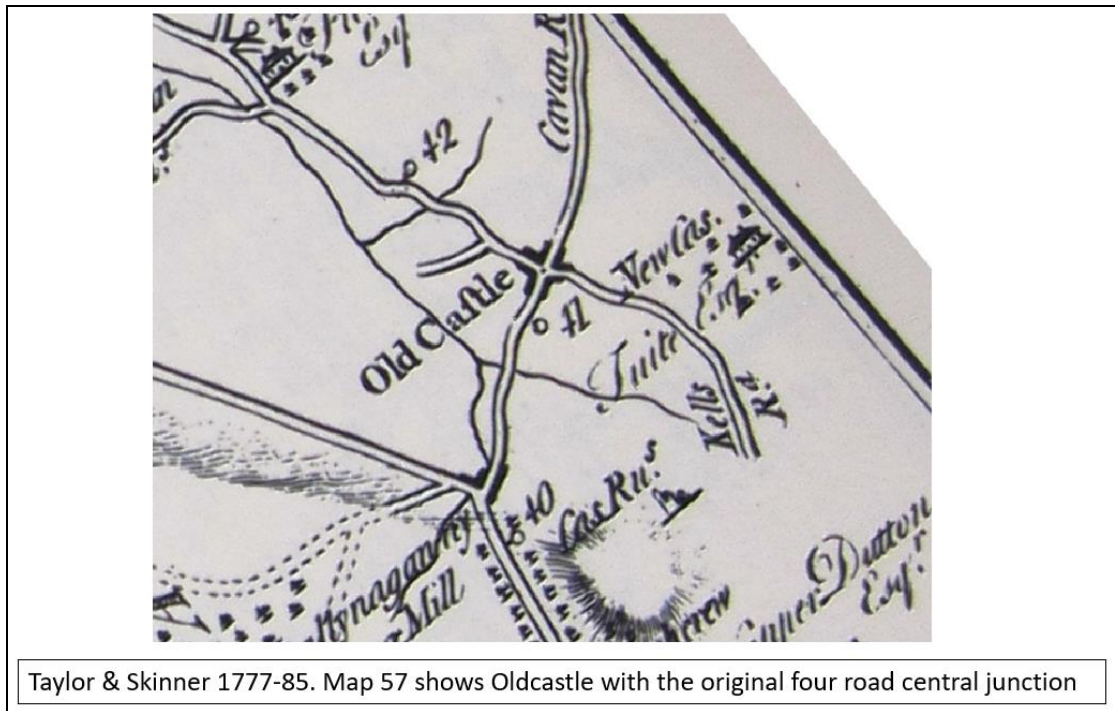
## 2.4 Map regression

### 1650s Down Survey

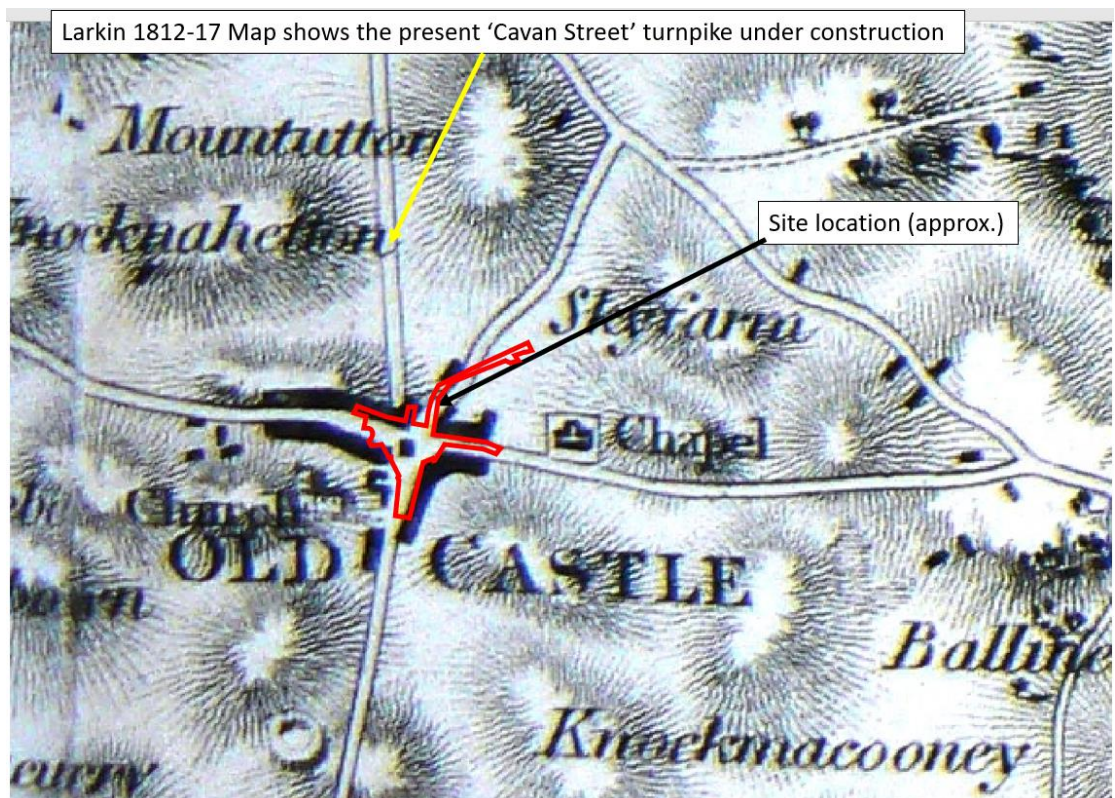


Note Oldcastle is marked with a Castle and other stone buildings.

1777-85 Taylor & Skinner



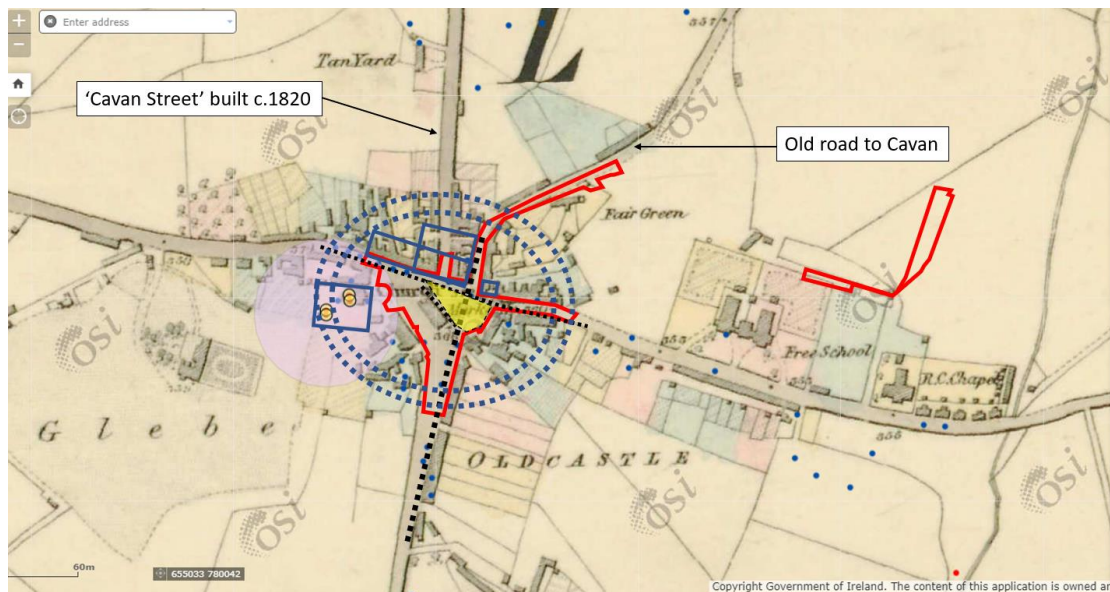
William Larkin Map 1812-17



Larkin appears to show the present Cavan Street under construction as a 'Coaching Road'

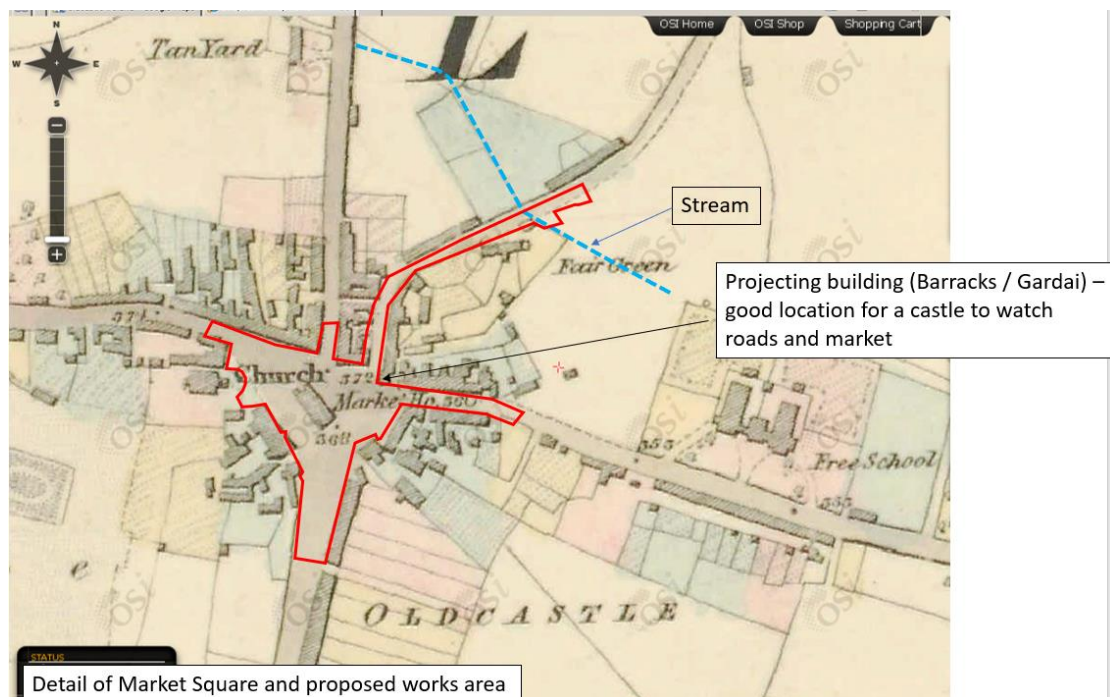


## 1837 OS



The 1837 image above is annotated with an oval shape to reflect the Oldcastle hilltop; as well as a series of radiating and curving property boundaries on the E side of town. Where medieval roads go through town defences they typically have a kink in them and the oval also reflects these kinks. There is no evidence for this oval as an early town boundary, but it is a working hypothesis. The potential original, smaller, market area is suggested above in yellow.

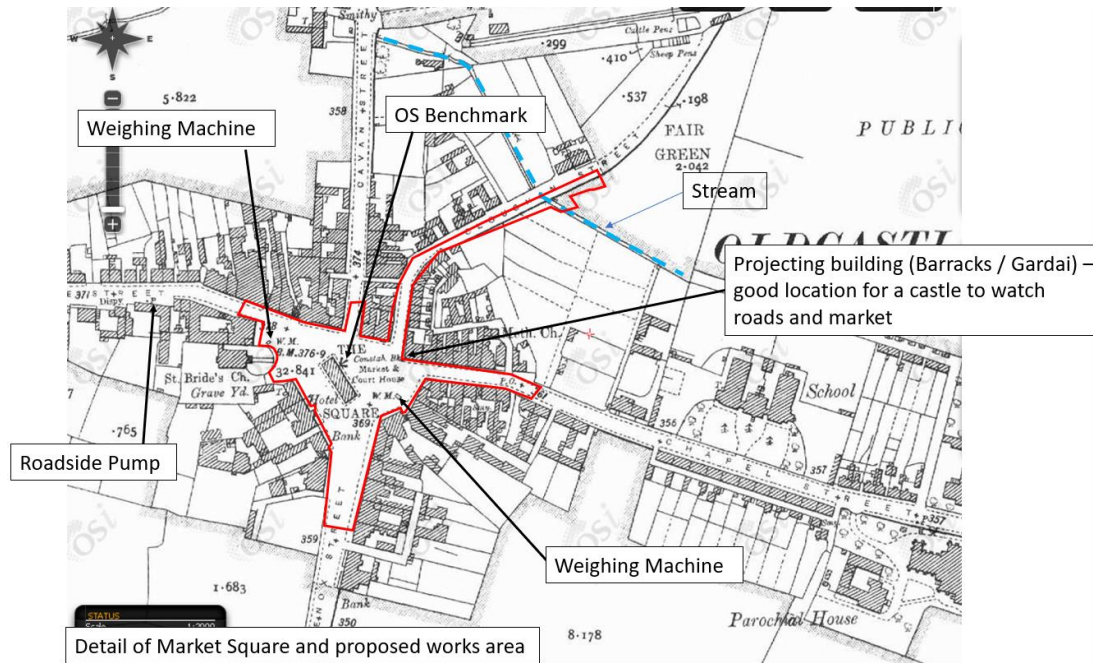
Recent work in Navan 19E0519. Ext for 2021 suggests that the original Navan Town was oval shaped with a large, possibly triangular market area. The Navan market area and medieval town boundary was defined by a large, moat-like ditch 6m wide x 1m deep that also doubled for town drainage and waste disposal.



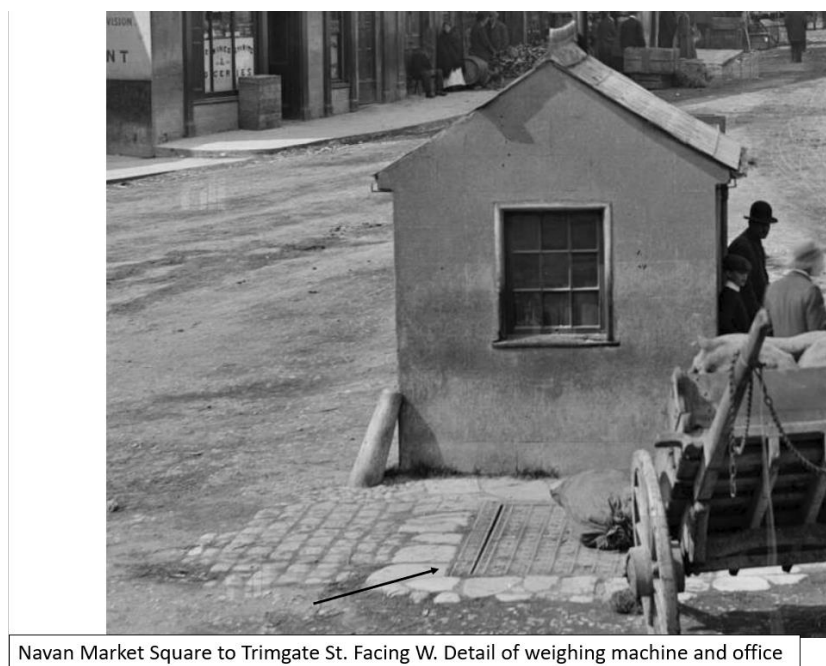


There is not much detail in the Market Square area on the 1837 OS above. The curving entrance to St Bride's is not marked, and is a later 19<sup>th</sup> C addition.

1909 OS



The 25 inch map shows The Square containing the Market & Court House. Also two Weighing Machines (W.M.). Weighing machines consist of a sunken rectangular chamber and a weigh-plate at ground level. An image of the one in Navan is below:



Also, where there is a market there is usually a water supply – either as pumps or fountains. Although Oldcastle was mainly a Yarn market, water for draught animals would be required. There is a Pump noted on Castle (Cogan St) on the map above. A typical market pump arrangement is given from Navan below. This image also notes that gas supplies and lamps may have once been in The Square at Oldcastle.



Navan Market Square to Watergate St. Facing NE. Weigh house removed. New Gas Lamp

Modern



Detail of Market Square and proposed works area

The present Garda Station has plaques dating it to 1882, but its square form and projecting nature gives it a good location to oversee Cloughan Street (the original road to Cavan), Cogan Street (originally Castle Street) and Oliver Plunkett Street, as well as the Market Area and Court House. The present building may have reused foundations from an earlier 'castle'.

The existing layout of The Square is taken from the BDP masterplan below:

#### 1.4 The Existing Situation - The Square

The Square is a significant space in Oldcastle. The current layout of the Square is focused on vehicular movements and on the provision of car parking. It offers little opportunities for pedestrians to move around and doesn't emphasise the cultural and historical heritage.

- ① Carriageway.
- ② Secondary one way access roads to parking pocket.
- ③ Existing 78 parking bays, including 5 disabled bays.
- ④ Pedestrian space.
- ⑤ Monument (Celtic cross).
- ⑥ Existing trees.



### **3 NATIONAL INVENTORY OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE (NIAH) / RECORD OF PROTECTED STRUCTURES (RPS) SUMMARIES**

Oldcastle ACA Character Statement

<https://www.meath.ie/system/files/upload/Oldcastle%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

*Extracts from Oldcastle Local Area Plan in 2014:*

#### **“6.2 Protected Structures**

The Meath County Development Plan, 2007-2013, places 58 no. structures within the Development Boundary of Oldcastle on the Record of Protected Structures. Unless otherwise stated a protected structure on the Record of Protected Structures (hereinafter RPS) includes the interior of the structure, the land lying within the curtilage of the structure and any other structures and their interiors lying within the curtilage, in addition to all fixtures and fittings which form part of the interior or exterior of such structures.

A review of the Record of Protected Structures as detailed in the County development Plan was undertaken including a review of the NIAH Survey of Oldcastle. The structures on the RPS have been re-assessed in the context of the review of the Oldcastle LAP to ensure that the strategy outlined above in respect of the built heritage and archaeology can be achieved over the lifetime of the LAP. It is not proposed to increase the current number of protected structures within Oldcastle but it is recommended that the following structures are altered or removed from the RPS:

#### **1. Oldcastle Fire Station (MH009-215)**

It is considered that this structure is of limited architectural merit and does not rate strongly enough in any of the special categories of interest as set down in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). It is a typical 1960's fire station of limited scale and technical interest and affording protective status to it may inhibit the future development of critical community facilities.

#### **2. Castle Cinema (MH009-223)**

The social interest of the structure as a former entertainment venue is noted, however, only the front façade of Castle Cinema makes a contribution to the streetscape of Oldcastle and requires protection. The remaining façades of the structure are of minimal architectural interest and it would be inappropriate to continue to conserve the site and its environs.

#### **3. Masonic Hall (MH009-238)**

In proposing to remove Masonic Hall from the RPS, it was considered that this modest building had limited architectural interest and that the carved stone wall plaque was the only significant feature of the main façade, excepting the simple proportions of the structure.



#### **4. Clarke's Cash and Carry (MH009-226)**

A similar assessment to the Castle Cinema applies in respect of Clarke's Cash and Carry. It would be inappropriate to maintain the structure on the RPS on the basis of the front façade alone, which was a typical garage design constructed in 1950. There are no fixtures or fittings, or any significant special interest to afford the building protective status.

#### **5. Oldcastle Medical Hall (MH009-204) Terraced House**

This structure has been significantly modified after the completion of the NIAH Survey in 2002 under Reg. Ref. KA20246. The implementation of this planning application resulted in an altered façade and internal works and it can no longer be held that the structure merits inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures.

All of the above structures are located within Oldcastle ACA as indicated in Meath County Development Plan, 2007. Planning Permission is required for all development within an ACA which would materially alter the external appearance of a structure. In order to achieve a balance between conserving the architectural heritage and facilitating economic growth and development within Oldcastle, the structures detailed above are altered or removed from the Record of Protected Structures.

This measure will ensure that the requirement to provide for new uses/redeveloped sites located within the existing fabric of the Town can be delivered over the lifetime of the LAP while maintaining the overall heritage value of Oldcastle.

The amended structures on the Record of Protected Structures in respect of Oldcastle are illustrated below in LAP Appendix C. The modifications to the Record of Protected Structures results in a reduction in the number of listings from 58 to 54.

NOTE: The Record of Protected Structures as listed in the County Development Plan remains in place unless altered under S.54 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)."

#### **"6.3 Oldcastle Architectural Conservation Area**

Meath County Development Plan, 2007, designates an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) in Oldcastle Town Centre, which includes the principal streets of Cavan Street, Cogan Street, Church Street and Oliver Plunkett Street and incorporates most of the eighteenth and nineteenth century building fabric, the boundaries terminate where post-war twentieth century development begins. 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 Oldcastle Town Centre.



The geographical extent of the ACA was agreed and adopted by the Planning Authority in March 2007 and the LAP has adopted the same ACA boundary. The extent of the ACA is defined as follows and illustrated on the Oldcastle Heritage Map:

- 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 Town looking west.
- To the north, the area includes a short stretch of Cavan Street, and a short stretch of Cloughan Street as it turns north-east.
- 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 south-east as far as a pair of early twentieth century structures. The boundary is shorter at its south western boundary: this area of the boundary is defined by the beginning of the twentieth century fabric.”

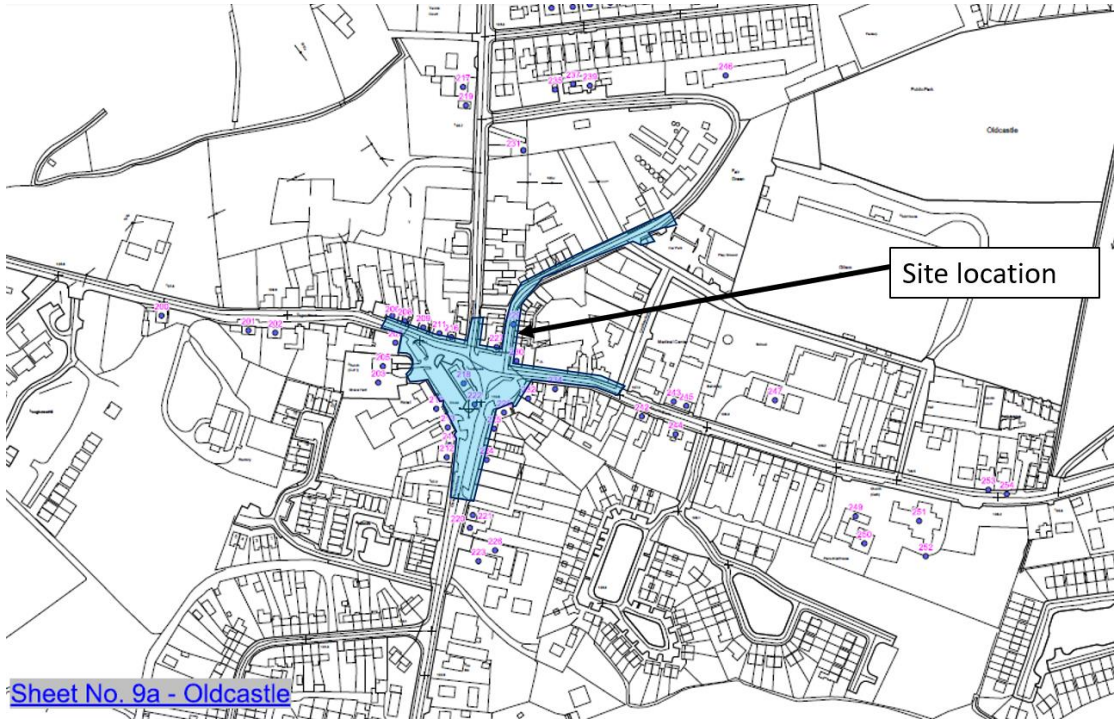
As there are 56 NIAH listed buildings and structures, the 31 associated with The Square are presented first below. Of these, the length of cut limestone paving on Cloughan Street 14306049 has already been removed. A surviving section of limestone kerbing is located on Oliver Plunkett St outside the Veterinary Clinic.

Other street furniture that is NIAH listed in Oldcastle and may occur elsewhere in the town include a cast iron Vent Pipe (14306036), concrete streetlight standards (14306037 of 1935), a hand pump (14306083), gates etc. There do not appear to be any listed letterboxes.

**NOTE 1:** Although **Church Street** is named on OS mapping and Google maps, NIAH refer to this street as **Chapel Street**.

**NOTE 2:** Although **Cogan Street** is named on OS mapping and Google maps, NIAH refer to this street as **Castle Street**

RPS Map below:



NIAH Mapping



Reg. No	Name	Townland	Reg. No	Name	Townland	Reg. No	Name	Townland
14306002	Cogan and McDonnell Monument	OLDCASTLE	14306013	Castle Cinema	OLDCASTLE	14306049		OLDCASTLE
			14306014		OLDCASTLE	14306050		OLDCASTLE
14306003		OLDCASTLE	14306015		OLDCASTLE	14306051		OLDCASTLE
14306004	Saint Bride's Church (Oldcastle)	OLDCASTLE	14306016		OLDCASTLE	14306052		OLDCASTLE
14306005	Saint Bride's Church (Oldcastle)	OLDCASTLE	14306018		OLDCASTLE	14306053		OLDCASTLE
			14306020	Clarke	OLDCASTLE	14306054		OLDCASTLE
14306006	Saint Bride's Church (Oldcastle)	OLDCASTLE	14306021		OLDCASTLE	14306055		OLDCASTLE
			14306022		OLDCASTLE	14306056	The Oldcastle Medical Hall	OLDCASTLE
14306007	Naper Arms Hotel	OLDCASTLE	14306023		OLDCASTLE			
14306008	Bank of Ireland	OLDCASTLE	14306026		OLDCASTLE			
14306009		OLDCASTLE	14306028		OLDCASTLE			
14306010		OLDCASTLE	14306044		OLDCASTLE			
			14306047	Oldcastle Masonic Hall	OLDCASTLE			
			14306048	Oldcastle Garda Siochána Station	OLDCASTLE			

### The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath

14306002



Freestanding carved limestone high cross, erected 1961, with interlace, bosses, and house shrine shaped cap. Marble inlay to southern side with Irish inscription. English translation to northern side. Rock-faced stepped plinth.

### The Square, Castle Street, Oldcastle, County Meath

14306003



Pair of semi-detached two-bay two-storey houses, built c.1830. One of pair now also in use as shop. Hipped slate roof with carved timber eaves dentils and stone chimneystack.

### Saint Bride's Church of Ireland Church, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath

14306004



Detached Board of First Fruits church, built in 1816, with three-bay side elevations to nave and three-stage tower to east gable. Vestry attached to north-west corner. Pitched slate roof to nave, castellations and pinnacles to tower.

**Saint Bride's Graveyard, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306005**



Graveyard with marked interments from c.1725, with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stone grave markers to graveyard. The church is built on the site of a medieval church.

**Saint Bride's Church of Ireland Church, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306006**



Pair of octagonal limestone gate piers, erected c.1816, with cast- and wrought-iron spear-headed railings set on moulded plinths. Piers with carved rosettes and fluted moulded caps. Railings enclose the semi-circular site in front of Saint Bride's.

**Naper Arms, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306007**



End-of-terrace five-bay three-storey rendered hotel, built c.1860, with single-storey Tuscan porch, and three-storey return to rear. Channelled render to ground floor, with render pilaster quoins to all floors and entrance porch.

**Oldcastle Bank of Ireland, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306008**



End-of-terrace five-bay two-storey former house, built c.1900, with recessed roughcast rendered two-storey bay to south. Hipped and pitched tile roofs with red brick chimney. Machine-cut red and yellow brick with decorative cornice and limestone quoins.

**Next Door, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306009**



Terraced two-bay three-storey rendered house, built c.1840, now also in use as shop. Limestone ashlar to ground floor, with string course above. Round-arched door opening with petal fanlight and timber panelled door.

**Creans, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306010**



End-of-terrace double-pile four-bay three-storey rendered house, built c.1840, now also in use as public house. Limestone ashlar to ground floor with pair of carved pilasters, and string course above. Timber shopfront with fluted pilasters.

**Eileen A. Brennan Solicitors, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306018**



Terraced two-bay two-storey rendered former house, built c.1900, now in use as offices. Segmental-arched doorcase with moulded pilasters, console brackets, timber panelled door and Art Nouveau fanlight.

**Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306020**



End-of-terrace seven-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1830, with vacant shop to ground floor. Render shopfront, round-arched door opening, square-headed door opening and integral carriage arch, all to ground floor. Cast-iron security railings.

**The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306021**



End-of-terraced five-bay two-storey house, built c.1875, with vacant shop units to ground floor. Recessed bay to east with integral carriage arch having cut stone voussoirs. Channelled render and remains of original shopfront to ground floor.



**The Dublin Bar, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306022**



Terraced four-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1920, also in use as public house. Decorative timber shopfront retaining stone threshold, fluted pilasters, moulded timber frames, and mullions. Ruled-and-lined render to first floor.

**Farrelly's, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306023**



Pair of former houses, built c.1900, now in use as seven-bay two-storey house and public house. Segmental-arched integral carriage arch to ground floor. First floor openings have stone sills and timber sash windows.

**Masonic Hall, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306047**



End-of-terrace single-bay two-storey rendered former Masonic hall, built c.1960, with recessed porch having timber double doors, tiling to step and cast-iron railings. Three windows, divided by brick panels, with a continuous sill to first floor

**Oldcastle Garda Station, The Square, Cloughan Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306048**



Corner-sited end-of-terrace three-bay two-storey rendered former house, built in 1882, now in use as Garda station. Round-arched door openings with replacement spoked fanlights and doors. Square-headed openings with replacement timber sash windows.

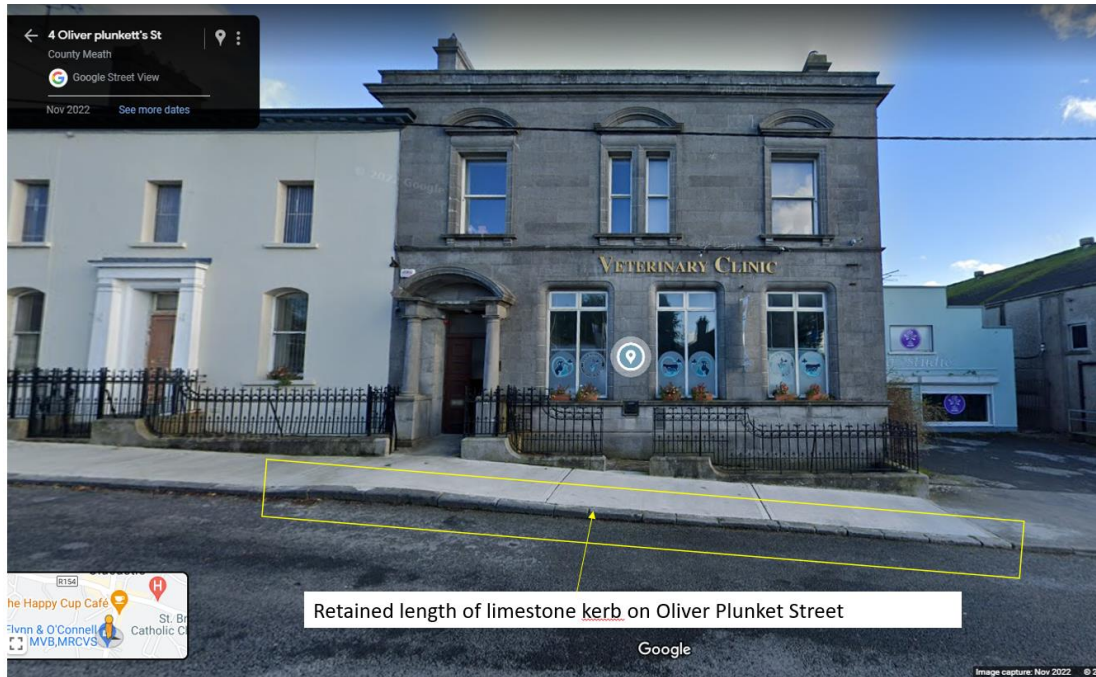
**Cloughan Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306049**



**Tooled limestone kerbs, gutters and drains, c.1830.**

*Removed prior to 2014. Other sections of Limestone kerbing (see below) should be treated as 'Protected'*



**In situ kerbing to be retained in Oliver Plunkett St above**

**Herbstreit, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306050**



Corner-sited end-of-terrace four-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1890. Shopfront, c. 1910, comprising of panelled concrete stallriser, segmental-arched display windows with timber mullions, and timber fascia and cornice. Frieze with lettering.

**Gibneys, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306051**



Terraced two-bay three-storey house, built c.1870, with elaborate render surrounds to timber sash windows, and to timber panelled door. Rendered walls with string course at sill level first floor and render pilaster quoins. Pitched slate roof.

**Gibneys of Oldcastle, The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306052**



Terraced six-bay three-storey building, built 1862. Decorative render surrounds with shell tympana to openings. Rendered façade with string courses, continuous hood mouldings and frieze with lettering. Pair of segmental-arched integral carriage arches.

**The Square, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306053**



Terraced three-bay three-storey rendered house, built c.1900, now also in use as shop. Square-headed openings with moulded architraves, stone sills and uPVC windows. Pitched slate roof with brick eaves course and rendered chimneystacks.

**Chinese and European Take Away, Castle Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306054**



Terraced three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1870, with segmental-arched integral carriage arch and render quoins. Moulded architraves and stone sills to timber sash windows. Pitched slate roof with cast-iron sky-lights. Modern shopfront.

**Mullens, Castle Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306055**



Terraced three-bay three-storey house, built c.1910, now also in use as shop. Pitched tile roof with replacement red brick chimneys. Red brick façade with terracotta panels, brick quoins, continuous limestone sills and cast-iron tie-plates.

**The Oldcastle Medical Hall, Castle Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306056**



Terraced four-bay two-storey house, built c.1899, now also in use as shop. Shopfront with glazed timber fascia, acanthus console brackets and awnings. Replacement display window and door. Mosaic to threshold bears first occupant's name 'W.J. Wade.

**Knockmaroon House, Millbrook Road, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306011**



Detached irregular-plan two-storey rendered house, built c.1930, with single- and two-storey porches and return. Cantilevered-bay windows to south-facing elevation with uPVC windows. Steel casement windows with concrete sills. Hipped tile roof.

**Oldcastle Fire Station, Millbrook Road, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306012**



Detached two-bay single-storey brick and roughcast rendered fire station, built c.1985, with square-profiled tower to rear. Projecting brick faced office bay to south, roughcast rendered garage bay to north. Pitched pantiles roofs.

**Castle Cinema, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306013**



Detached two-bay two-storey cinema entrance block, attached to gable-fronted double-height auditorium, built c.1940, now used as a storage building. Two recessed doors with terrazzo steps, with concrete canopy above.

**Clarkes Cash and Carry, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** 14306014



Detached L-plan two-storey gable-fronted former garage, built c.1950, now in use as wholesale outlet. Cement rendered stepped-gable to front elevation, with concrete canopy. Pitched corrugated-iron roof. Roughcast rendered side elevations.

**Oldcastle National Irish Bank, Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** 14306015



Semi-detached three-bay two-storey Italianate style ashlar bank, built c.1880, with two-storey brick return to rear. Segmental pedimented porch with Tuscan columns and timber-panelled door. Openings have decorative stone surrounds with bullnosed decorations.

**Oliver Plunkett Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** 14306016



Semi-detached three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1880. Timber-panelled door with plain glass overlight, flanked by tapered pilasters with entablature above, and approached by limestone steps. Segmental-arched and square-headed openings windows.

**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** 14306026



End-of-terrace three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1840, with tooled stone dressings to openings. Square-headed windows have stone sills and timber single-sash windows. Diamond-pointed quoins to front elevation.



**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306028**



Detached three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1920. Segmental-arched openings with moulded architraves, stone sills, and replacement timber sash windows. Timber panelled door. Hipped tile roof with rendered chimneystacks.

**Saint Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306029**



Square-profiled cut stone entrance piers, built c.1899, with cast- and wrought-iron double gates. Set in rubble stone walls, which bound the front of the church site. Modern pedestrian entrance to east.

**Saint Brigid's Parochial House, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306030**



Detached L-plan two-storey building, built c.1900, with flanking single storey blocks. Hipped slate roofs. Roughcast rendered walls with ashlar limestone quoins. Timber sash windows with red brick dressings. Timber battened doors.

**Saint Brigid's Parochial House, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306031**



Detached three-bay two-storey rendered parochial house, built c.1900, with projecting single-storey porch and two-storey return. Ashlar entrance porch with stone steps, cast-iron railings and bootscraper. Segmental-arched door opening with moulded...

**Saint Brigid's Roman Catholic Church, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** **14306032**



Detached cruciform-plan church, built in 1899. Three-stage bell tower and broach spire, c.1930, to north-west corner. Sacristy to south-east corner. Rock-faced limestone walls with buttresses, quoins and string courses.

**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** **14306033**



Two pairs of cast-iron piers with wrought-iron single and double gates, erected c.1900.

**Oldcastle Cemetery, Oldcastle, County Meath** **14306035**



Cemetery, established c.1895, with Celtic Revival high crosses and later polished grave markers. Rubble stone boundary walls with ashlar piers and cast-iron gates.

**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** **14306036**



Cast-iron vent pipe, erected c.1870, with fluted base, plain shaft and crown-shaped head.

**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath** **14306037**



Pair of concrete lamp standards, erected c.1935, with over-hanging heads and cross bars.

**Gilson Endowed School, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306040**



Square-profiled limestone ashlar piers, erected c.1826, with cast-iron double gates and railings on limestone plinths.

**Gilson Endowed School, Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306041**



Detached five-bay two-storey over raised basement Palladian style school, built 1826, with links and wings to east and west. Three-bay pedimented breakfront, with projecting porch having carved detailing, approached by stone steps and railings.

**Chapel Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306044**



Pair of semi-detached four- and three-bay two-storey roughcast-rendered houses, built c.1840, with segmental-arched door openings. Square-arched window openings with stone sills. Replacement doors and uPVC windows. Pitched tile roof.

**Oldcastle, County Meath 14306069**



Disused tapered chimney, built c.1880, with rock-faced ashlar and tooled coping.

**Cavan Street, Oldcastle, County Meath 14306070**



Detached gable-fronted single-bay single-storey former forge, built 1864. Horseshoe-shaped opening in gable wall with rock-faced voussoirs. Rubble stone walls with strap pointing and rock-faced quoins. Square-headed openings to side elevations.

**Tuite's, Cavan Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306071**



Detached five-bay single-storey rendered garage, built c.1940, with pilasters, pediment and parapet. Square-headed openings with timber-battened doors, and steel pivot windows. Roof hidden by parapet. Modern extension to rear. Wheel guard to site.

**Cavan Street, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306072**



Pair of handball alleys, built c.1935, with rendered dividing wall and buttresses to exterior elevations.

**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306073**



Group of four detached three-bay single-storey roughcast houses, built c.1940. Central recessed porches with curved concrete canopies, flanked by bow windows. Hipped tile roofs and rendered chimneystacks. Cement rendered piers and plinths

**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306074**



Detached two-bay single-storey former railway station outbuilding, built c.1900, now used as domestic outbuilding. Red brick walls with yellow and vitrified brick courses and mouldings. Segmental-arched openings with timber sash windows

**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306075**



Detached three-bay two-storey former railway station, built c.1880, now in use as a house. Hipped roof with oversailing eaves and ashlar chimneystacks. Snecked limestone walls with quoins and string courses. Moulded lugged opening surrounds.

**Oldcastle Railway Station (former), Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306076**



L-plan five-bay single-storey railway station, built c.1880, with projecting terminating bay to west. Pitched and hipped roofs with red brick chimney. Timber porch canopy to four-bays, with cast-iron brackets. Ashlar limestone walls with quoins.

**Oldcastle CO-OP Creamery Ltd., Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306077**



Detached four-bay single-storey former railway warehouse, built c.1880, now in use as shop. Snecked limestone façade with brick dressings. Replacement doors and windows to segmental arched openings. Two-bay single-storey snecked limestone additions.

**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306083**



Cast-iron water pump with timber casing, erected c.1870, with nozzle and handle. Casing is hewn from a single piece of timber. Now disused.



**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306085**



Detached three-bay two-storey rendered house, built c.1910, with full height canted bay windows. Projecting porch with flanking pilasters, open pediment, replacement door, and sidelights. Hipped slate roof with rendered chimneystacks.

**Liss Cottage, Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306086**



Four-bay single-storey stone farm outbuilding, built c.1860, with segmental-arched chamfered limestone integral carriage arches, ventilation loops, and pitched slate roof. Three-bay single storey stone outbuilding to site.

**Oldcastle, County Meath**

**14306087**



Single-arch rock-faced limestone railway bridge with string courses and copings, built c.1880, carrying the road over the former railway track which is now disused.

## 4 PROPOSED WORKS

### 4.3 New Town Square

The proposal for the Square aims to create a legible, pedestrian friendly environment, whilst allowing a calmed traffic to run through the Square and accommodating car parking.

The key principles of the proposal are the following:

- **A pedestrian friendly environment:** widen pavements, safe crossing points and creation of defined pedestrian spaces;
- **Rationalisation of vehicular movement:** tightening of junctions where possible, reorganisation and rationalisation of car parking, raised tables to the central portion of the carriageway;
- **A green and sustainable square:** introduction of rain gardens and tree planting.

- ① Reorganised road layout
- ② New pedestrian crossings
- ③ Raised tables (traffic calming measure)
- ④ Resurfaced access roads to reorganised parking areas
- ⑤ New & resurfaced pedestrian spaces
- ⑥ Widened pavements for pedestrian movement
- ⑦ Rain gardens
- ⑧ New tree planting
- ⑨ Potential relocated monument (Celtic cross)
- ⑩ Introduction of public art



The BDP Proposal is to create a pedestrian-friendly environment and this generally involves resurfacing existing footpaths and road pavements, as well as introducing new trees and planting.

The existing footpath and pavement surfaces in Oldcastle have been monitored for several years by Meath County Council. This monitoring has observed that the surfaces appear to be firm so that the county council has not been called in for soft spot repairs and rebuilds. It may be that any previous 'made ground' (ie archaeology) has been dug out when the present Square was first constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (something like this seems to have occurred in parts of Navan at this time).

While the proposals appear to be 'vertically' rather superficial, they may well be taken as a suitable opportunity to upgrade the surface and other drainage, water supplies and other services etc. All of these will be at least 0.60m below present ground level and are likely to truncate any potential archaeological remains – should they exist. If archaeological remains do exist here, then they could be extensive and sensitive to construction works. However, the designs have not been developed in detail.

## 5 DISCUSSION

Meath County Council proposes to construct a Public Realm scheme produced by BDP (Dublin) in the central, triangular 'Square' of Oldcastle Co. Meath ITM 655200, 780276. The Square is around 4,000 sqm, but the central Market Building / Old Court House is being retained unaltered. A separate area for parking of around 1,200 sqm is proposed in the present Playing Fields outside the town.

The history of Oldcastle is not known in any great detail past the last 200 years or so. The town is marked with a large Castle with lesser stone buildings on the 1650 Down Survey Maps and the present Cogan Street was previously named 'Castle Street'. Lewis *Topographical Dictionary* 1837 also notes that the Castle at Oldcastle was lost. Possible locations for this castle are perhaps the present Garda Station, the R154/R195 junction or even the Market Square building. The present St Bride's Church on The Square is a 19<sup>th</sup> century building, but there are references to a Church 'at Oldcastle' dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. RMP Church ME009-018 may or may not be on the site of St Bride's. St Bride's graveyard (ME009-018002) contains some 17<sup>th</sup> century gravestones (ME009-018002 and ME009-018003).

The present R195 Cavan Street was constructed c.1820 and before this there was a standard crossroads in the centre of the town. The original market area was perhaps limited to the present triangular area on the NE side of the Market Building, which may mean the SW zone of the present 'Square' was perhaps previously used for settlement. Furthermore, recent works in Navan and Kells indicates that the earliest medieval towns in Meath are often oval or D-shaped in plan. Given Oldcastle's location on a broad hilltop, an original oval shape is a possibility. In any case, The Square appears to be the centre of any medieval (or later medieval) town, and it is very likely that the present Square is larger than any medieval 'open area' market.

Therefore, there is significant archaeological potential. The proposed works appear to include upgraded services, tree plantings, new pavements etc with a depth impact of at least 0.50m across the Square. This would probably impact on any archaeological remains, should they exist.

It is recommended that sufficient archaeological test excavation work is completed as early as possible following any planning permission to determine the location, date, nature and extent of any archaeological deposits or features. Ideally, significant archaeological deposits or features would be preserved in situ or by record before construction works begin, so as not to cause potential delay and disruption to the construction works. The test excavations may determine that archaeological monitoring of construction works is a suitable response, but monitoring without test excavation could be a significant risk to project delivery.

This area is also within the Oldcastle Architectural Conservation Area, which includes over 50 Protected Structures in and around The Square. Designs should be compatible with the Oldcastle ACA Character Statement <https://www.meath.ie/system/files/upload/Oldcastle%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

## 6 REFERENCES

Lewis S, 1837, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland*

National Roads Authority. 2006 Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Impact of National Road Schemes.

OPW 1987, *Archaeological Inventory of County Meath* Dublin: The Stationary Office

### Electronic Sources

[www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie) – Summary of archaeological excavation from c.1970 onwards

[www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) – DAHG website listing all SMR sites with aerial photographs.

<https://webapps.geohive.ie/mapviewer/index.html>

Ordnance Survey aerial photographs (1995, 2000 & 2005) and historic OS mapping (first edition 6" and 25").

<http://www.logainm.ie/> - Placename index

<http://www.buildingsofireland.ie/> -National Inventory of Architectural Heritage

<http://countydevelopmentplan.meath.ie/adoptedplan/> - Meath County Council 2013, Meath County Council County Development Plan 2013-2019

<http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php> Down Survey mapping

<https://maps.google.com/> Google mapping and Street View

<https://maps.archaeology.ie/HistoricEnvironment/>

National Monuments Service RMP mapping

BDP, July 2021 'Oldcastle Public Realm Plan' for Meath County Council