

Longwood proposed playground, Co. Meath

PLANNING REF: Not known

Cultural Heritage Review

Longwood townland

Site Area: Approx. 500 sqm

ITM: 671246, 745453

Record of Monuments and Places: None

Record of Protected Structures: None

Architectural Conservation Area: Adjacent to Longwood Architectural Conservation Area

Niall Roycroft
29th November 2024

Non-Technical Summary

Meath County Council is proposing to construct a new playground of c.500 sqm in the Fair Green, Longwood townland at Longwood ITM 671246, 745453. The location is outside, but adjacent to the tree-lined boundary of the Longwood Architectural Conservation Area.

Longwood horse and cattle Fairs have records going back to the medieval period and they were only suspended relatively recently. It is possible / probable that the Fair was held in the area of the present Fair Green.

Nothing is known of Longwood archaeologically as it has not been highlighted as a 'Historic Town' on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. This is not uncommon, but it is a flaw in that survey which does not generally include villages with known medieval history but without any known medieval churches. Without a church, it is difficult to demonstrate medieval settlement. At Longwood, there is the nearby Kilglass graveyard ME047-014 with no record of a church apart from a 1939 Dúchas schools collection reference to a ruin here.

From the very wide main street it would appear that Longwood was substantially rebuilt in the 18th century (like Athboy and Navan etc). The triangular layout of the present Fair Green is also a form often seen in 18th century 'new' town plans and it is assumed that this area was outside whatever 'old town' there was a Longwood, which seems to have been a squared or rectangular form, from the entrance to St Mary's graveyard to the Longwood Garda Station. Map overlay suggests the well-recorded Longwood Castle – perhaps with its own medieval church or chapel - was located in the St Mary's graveyard area – perhaps towards or just beyond the eastern end where there has traditionally been a large house.

There was a an hour long skirmish at the Garda Station on 8th January 1921 with a group of attackers firing numerous weapons from the St Mary's Graveyard end of the town to the Garda Station. Spent bullets and ricochets from this skirmish may be dotted around the Fair Green.

Recommendation

The area of works for the Longwood Playground would benefit from a metal detection survey and archaeological monitoring of the topsoil stripping. The metal detection would best be completed under Consent from the National Monuments Service once the turf has been removed, but before any topsoil is excavated to create the foundation level.

Reason

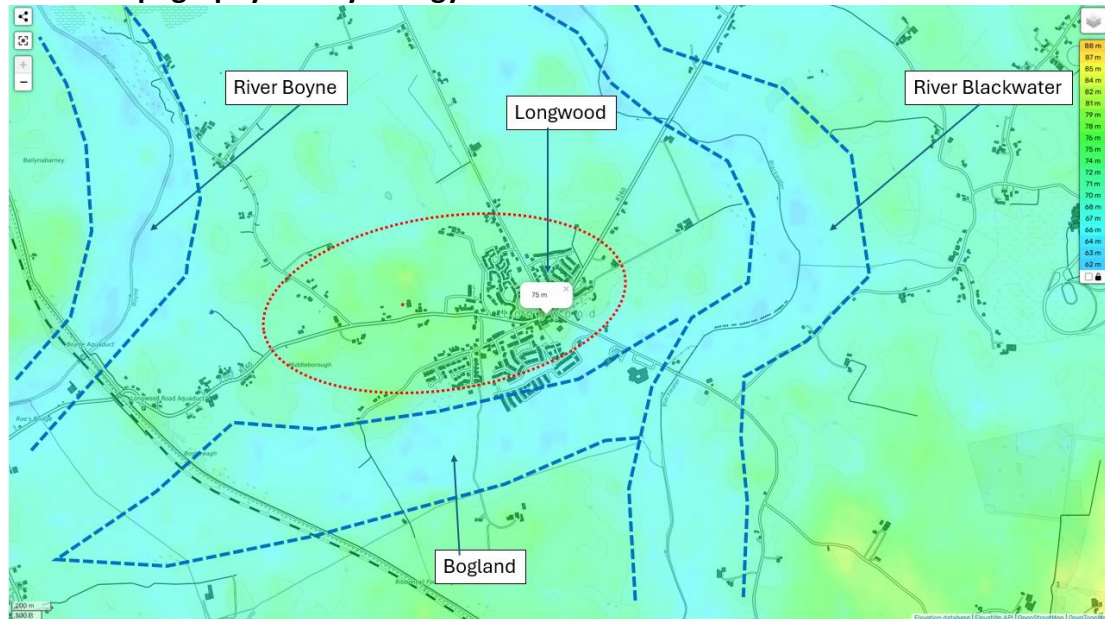
Longwood has a long history of activity in this area and metal or other items may have been lost in the past that could add significantly to the history of the town and local area.

1 INTRODUCTION

Meath County Council is proposing to construct a new playground of c.500 sqm in the Fair Green, Longwood townland at Longwood ITM 671246, 745453. The location is outside, but adjacent to the tree-lined boundary of the Longwood Architectural Conservation Area.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Topography and hydrology



Longwood occupies a low knoll around 1.6km E-W x 800m N-S surrounded by the River Boyne to the west, wetland bog to the south and the River Blackwater to the east. It also overlooks slightly lower ground to the north. As such it is a classic location for past settlement, particularly in the medieval period when river crossing points were seen as vital security points in the landscape. However, such a relatively large area of potential defensible farmland could easily have been occupied in the early medieval period or even earlier. Unfortunately, very little is known about this immediate area archaeologically.

2.2 General History of Longwood¹

Medieval and early modern history. Longwood is recorded as a possession of the Hospital of Crutched Friars of St. John the Baptist, at Newtown Trim, at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1540. The jurors recorded that at Longwood alias Modarvy there was a castle, six houses, 40 acres arable, 60 acres pasture, moor and underwood, valued at 40 shillings sterling.

In 1611-1612 James I granted to Christopher Plunkett, knight, a castle, six houses, 40 acres arable land, 60 acres pasture, bog and underwood in Longwood, otherwise called Mordervie or Moydervy. This grant is remarkably consistent with the description of Longwood some seventy years earlier. As important for the development of Longwood is the fact that James I also granted a fair by patent in 1611. Only the fairs at Athboy, Duleek, Ballyboggan, Kells, Navan, Trim and Ratoath are older, some eighteen in Meath are later in date of grant.

¹ <https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2024-03/Longwood%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

The Down Survey barony map of Moyfenrath outlines the townland of Longwood but does not depict any buildings or features. The Civil Survey, however, mentions a castle, a mill and a wier, and that Longwood is in the possession of Nicholas Plunkett, a Catholic, and presumably a descendent of Christopher Plunkett mentioned above. NR **NR NOTE:** the above researcher did not review the Castlerickard + Longwood Parish map which has Longwood castle shown on it.

2.3 Record of Monuments and Places

Very little is known about this immediate area archaeologically. There are some nearby remains in Clonguiffen townland and at Moyvally in County Kildare to the south. The nearby Kilglass Burial Ground ME047-014 has a rather sceptical entry (below) although the folklore collection says there was once a church or chapel ruin here.



ME047-014---- : Burial ground : MIDDLEBOROUGH

Description: Situated on a rise in a gently undulating landscape, it is known locally as Kilglass burial ground. At the Suppression in 1540 the abbey of Clonard (ME047-007-- --) owned 60 acres at Kyleclass but there is no mention of a church (White 1943, 310). In 1641 110 acres at Longwood were owned by Nichols Plunket of Longwood, and on the premises were a castle, a mill and a wier but, there is no mention of a church (Simington 1940, 192). A graveyard is depicted on Larkin's map (1812) and a rectangular enclosure described as a graveyard is depicted on the 1836 and 1912 editions of the OS 6-inch map. This is a raised rectangular area (dims c. 53m NE-SW; c. 30m NW-SE; H c. 2.4-2.6m) retained by masonry walls (H 1-1.4m). It contains headstones dating from 1724 to the 1950s, including the grave of Tomás O hAllamain, a volunteer who died in Dublin at Easter 1916, but there is no evidence that there was

ever a church here and there is no record of one. Compiled by: Michael Moore Date of upload: 13 August 2019

References: Simington, R.C. (ed.) 1940 The Civil survey, AD 1654-1656. Vol. V: county of Meath. Dublin. Irish Manuscripts Commission. White, N.B. 1943 Extents of Irish monastic possessions, 1540-1541. Dublin. Irish Manuscripts Commission.

Six-Inch First edition: Grave Yard

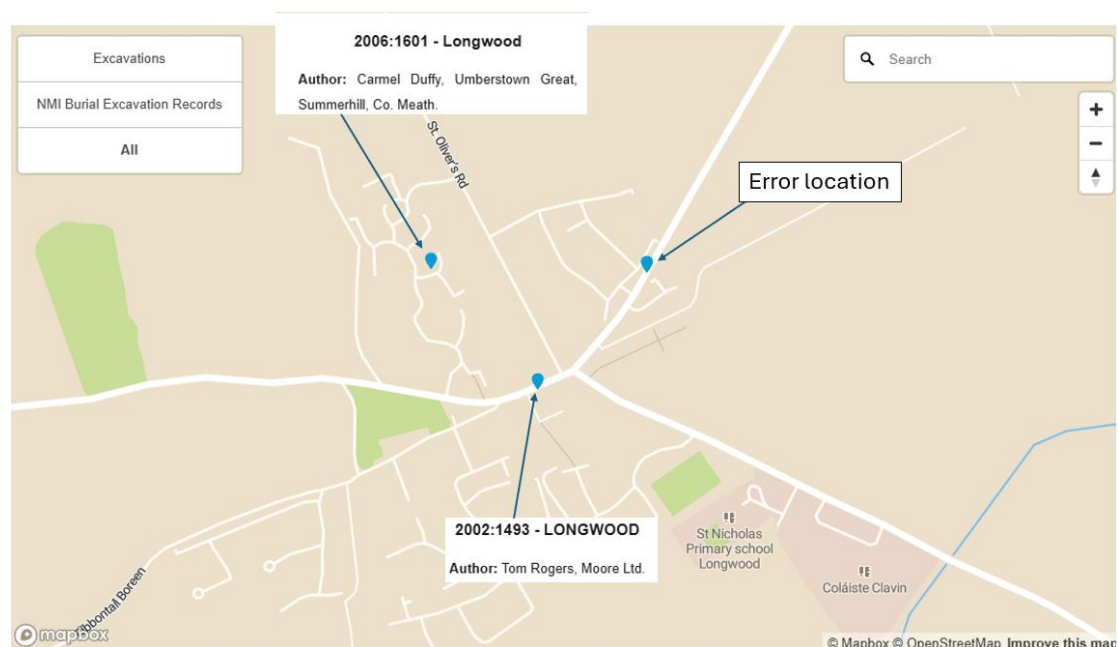
Six-Inch Latest edition: Graveyard

ITM Coordinates: 670331 , 745547

Latitude and Longitude: 53.455289 , -6.941050

2.4 Details of the previous nearby archaeological works

Despite massive expansion in the 1990s and 2000s there have apparently been no significant archaeological works in Longwood. This is probably because there is nothing known to trigger an archaeological condition for Planners. Nevertheless, there is historical evidence for Longwood going back to the medieval period and some physical evidence of past settlement in and around this topographic knoll is very likely. Future developments of over 0.50 ha should trigger an archaeological planning condition.



2006:1601 - LONGWOOD, Meath

County: Meath Site name: LONGWOOD

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 06E0550

Author: Carmel Duffy

Site type: No archaeology found

Period/Dating: N/A

ITM: E 671235m, N 745724m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.456759, -6.927392

Monitoring was conducted during the groundworks associated with the construction of six dwelling houses. The site was situated on the south side of the main street of Longwood village. The monitor disclosed no material of an archaeological nature.

Umberstown Great, Summerhill, Co. Meath

2002:1493 - LONGWOOD, Meath

County: Meath Site name: LONGWOOD

Sites and Monuments Record No.: N/A Licence number: 02E0032

Author: Tom Rogers, Moore Ltd.

Site type: No archaeology found

Period/Dating: N/A

ITM: E 671411m, N 745532m

Latitude, Longitude (decimal degrees): 53.455010, -6.924787

Monitoring was carried out during the construction of the Longwood Water-Supply Scheme in April 2002. The development required excavations for a water pipeline along two roads between the village and a borehole site c. 1.2km to the east.

A small stone-built bridge was uncovered, forming part of a modern bridge 0.5km east of the village on the Kilmurray Road. It was proposed to perforate the bridge in order to pass the pipe through the arch. After consultation with the architectural section of Dúchas, it was decided that the bridge was of fairly modern origin and would not be significantly affected by the work. Nothing else of archaeological significance was noted during the monitoring.

Unit 6, Riveroaks, Claregalway, Co. Galway

2.4 Cultural Heritage

Dúchas folklore Schools Collection extracts:

The greatest horse fairs of the year are Longwood, and Summerhill.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008930/4967551/5108750?HighlightText=longwood&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

In Longwood there are two noted horse-fairs, on the 2nd of February and on the eleventh of December. A great many north men go to them and buy all the good horses. The sellers have to supply a halter with each horse. When a bargain is made the seller has to give back about five shillings or ten shillings according to the price of the animal. This money is called "the luck penny".

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008931/4967659?HighlightText=longwood&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

Longwood. Cattle, sheep, pigs and horses are sold at this fair, which is held on 11th of March and 11th of December.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008937/4968256/5109077?HighlightText=longwood&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

Other references are for Barrel making, William Vaughan's forge, other smithing (*socks for ploughs*), *basket making (from rushes and sallies)* and *coffin-making*.

There was the 'Shamrock Hotel' which was a lodging house for 'tramps' in Longwood.

<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5008937/4968276?HighlightText=shamrock+hotel&Route=stories&SearchLanguage=ga>

The 'Shamrock Hotel' was on the Fair Green

Noel French Meath History Hub extracts:

<https://meathhistoryhub.ie/longwood/#:~:text=Longwood%20evolved%20as%20a%20market,river%20sides%20in%20the%20area.>

Longwood located in south-west part of county Meath, about 50k north-west of Dublin city, 8km south-west of Trim and 10km east of Kinnegad. The river Boyne flows 2km to the east and the Blackwater 1 km to the east. Today four roads converge on the village and in medieval times Longwood was on the route between Clonard and Trim. Longwood evolved as a market town holding a Fair and serving the local rural community.

The Irish name for Longwood, is Maigh Dearmhaí which means the plain of the oak. The English name Longwood also recalls that connection to trees. Oak trees have been recovered from bogs and on river sides in the area. Other tree related names in

the area include: Derringlig – doire an luig meaning the oakwood of the hollow, Ballyclare, the town of the plain; Ballinderry, the town of the oak wood and Moneymore, the great brake or shrubbery.

In 1566 Queen Elizabeth granted the lands of St. Johns including Longwood alias Moydervy to Thomas Plunkett. In 1612, King James granted to Sir Christopher Plunkett, one castle, six houses, forty acres arable, sixty acres pasture, bog, and underwood, in Longwood, otherwise Mordervie, otherwise Moydervy, and the rent of 12s. 3d. for the customs of said lands; parcel of the estate of the hospital of St. John the Baptist of Newtown, near Trim. In the Longwood Killyon Magazine Jimmy Farrell contends that the castle was on the south side of the street of Longwood at Daffy's corner facing St. Oliver's Road and the six messuages or houses were also located on the south side of the street, running up[the current street towards the Green.

NR: I would suggest that the castle on the Down Survey may actually be in the location of the St Mary's Cemetery – perhaps towards or just beyond the eastern end - and facing the western section of the R160 - and that the messuages are the 'Old Town' along this road. St Oliver's Road is an 18th century turnpike.

Fairs

In 1611 Christopher Plunkett was granted the right to hold a Fair at Longwood by King James I. This was one of the early grants of fairs in Meath, most are after this date.

In 1810 the fairs were Fairs held 1 February, 1st July Whit Tuesday, 12 July 11 December. 11 December the Christmas Fair and the Green packed with stall-fed cattle.

In 1910 there was a protest by Longwood ratepayers to a proposal that the local council take over the Green. This move was defeated.

Tolls were paid to the Edgeworth landlords. Eventually the tolls were abolished when men from Athboy and Kildalkey refused to pay them. The Fair Green belonged to the Edgeworth family until 1952 when they gave up possession at no charge to Fr. Clavin who transferred ownership to the Diocese of Meath.

Schools

In 1824 there were two schools in Longwood, one was just outside the village on St. Oliver's road. The schools were in mudwalled thatched houses. The schools were attended by 79 Catholics and 10 Protestants. In 1824 there was a school each in Killyon, Croboy and Clondalee. The first national school in Longwood was what is now the Parish Hall on the Fair Green. It commenced about 1830 and in 1842 Fr. Hackett P.P. applied for recognition as a national school. The school building was erected in 1856 and opened on 8 June 1857. It contained two rooms each measuring 26 ft by 18 feet. The next school building was erected on the Fair green in 1925. It originally operated as two schools, one for boys and one for girls but these schools

were amalgamated in 1937. Glass and timber partitions were installed at that time to create four classrooms.

A flat roof extension was added in the late sixties to accommodate toilets and cloakrooms for the children.

The school was completely refurbished in 1997 due to its age and condition at the time. It reopened in 1998 with 95 pupils and 4 teachers.

In 2008, the school embarked on another phase of development and a 12 classroom school was built on a green field site on the Enfield Road. The old school last operated as a Primary School on Tuesday, June 9th 2009. An extension consisting of four classrooms and two support rooms was added to the new school in 2015/2016 and opened for use in September 2016.

Attack on Police Barracks

An attack was made on the Police Barracks in Longwood on Saturday 8 January 1921. The barracks was one of the few who managed to survive in rural villages as the police came under pressure from the IRA. The barracks while not threatening communication was a thorn in the side of the local rebels. The barracks was in a very exposed position with a good range of vision and fire from all sides. The whole local company mobilised for the attack and armaments consisted of three rifles, ten shotguns and a number of revolvers. The rifles had been captured in a raid on the police station in Ballivor. The shotgun men and the revolver men crept as close as possible while the rifle men occupied positions 50 to 100 yards away. Lar Giles and Jimmy Fagan, started shooting from the graveyard end of the village and gradually retreated further and further from the barracks. All were in very exposed positions some lying on the ground. The attack began soon after 10.00 p.m. and came as a surprise to the police. The building was very well protected with steel shutters on the windows and strong doors and surrounded by a wall of sand bags. About a dozen policemen were stationed in the barracks at the time including six Auxiliaries. Signal flares were set off by the defenders in an attempt to summon help from Trim. After twenty minutes firing the police was called on to surrender but they refused. The firing continued for an hour but the police remained behind their defences. The IRA weapons were collected and dumped in a tunnel. The attack raised the moral of the IRA and damaged the moral of the police. Immediately after the attack the garrison was increased and new defences including a barbed wire barrier were created. Those who took part in the attack included Pat Giles, Larry Giles, Moss Fagin, Jimmy Fagin, William Murray, Patrick Corrigan, C. McEvoy, Michael McEvoy, Thomas Donnelly, John Grogan, Peter Grogan, P. Heavy, Edward Bird, John Costello and Christopher Boylan.

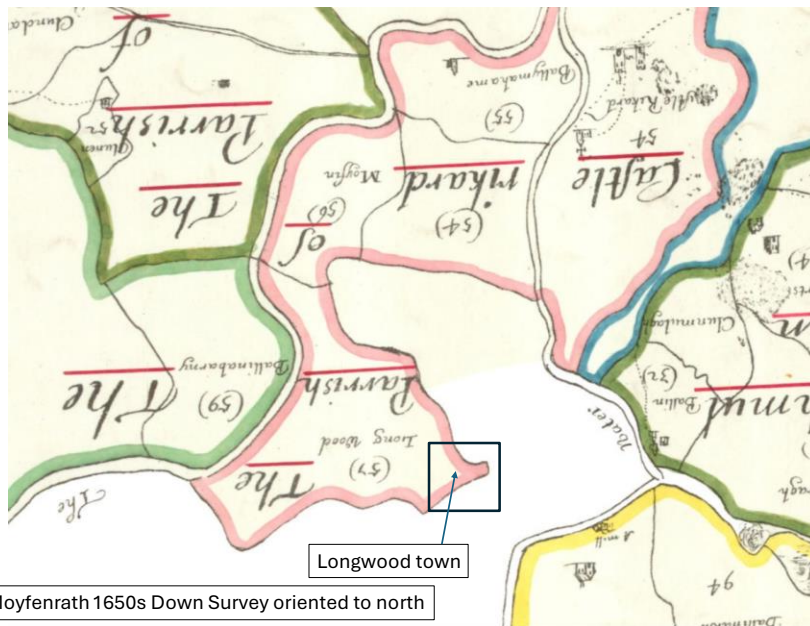
3 MAP REGRESSION

This section focusses on the general historical development of Longwood. See Section 5 for site specific map overlay for the playground.

3.1 1650s Down Survey

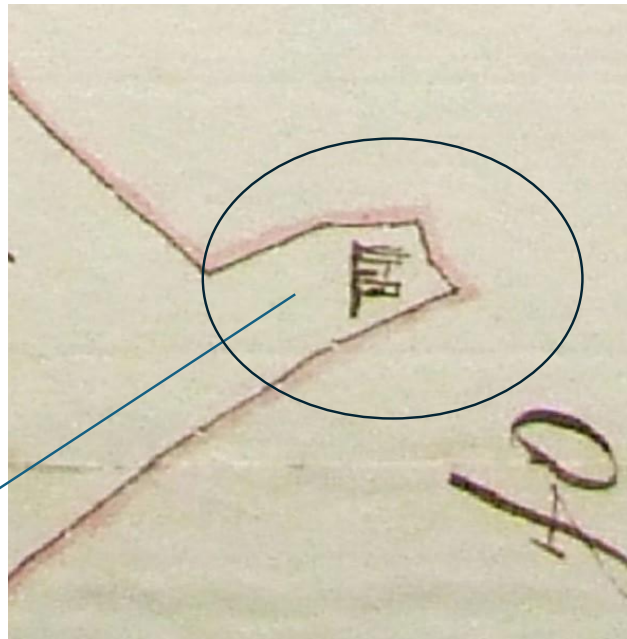
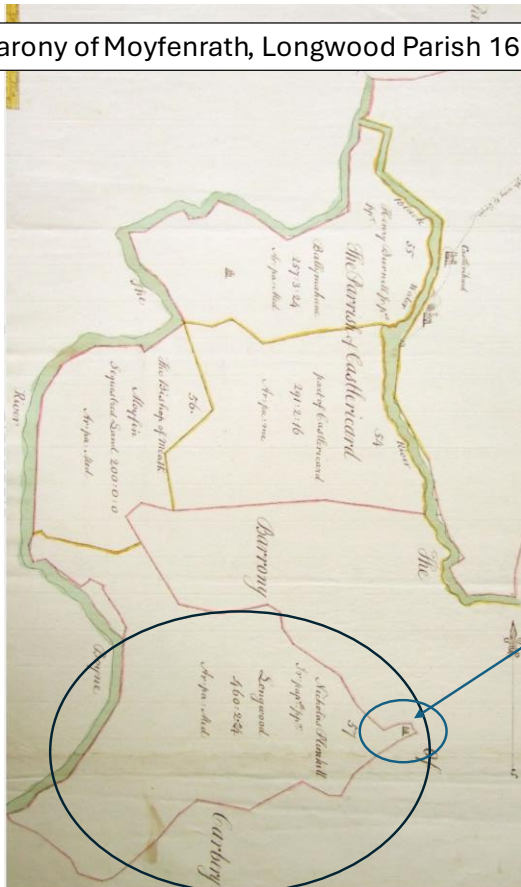


County Meath map detail

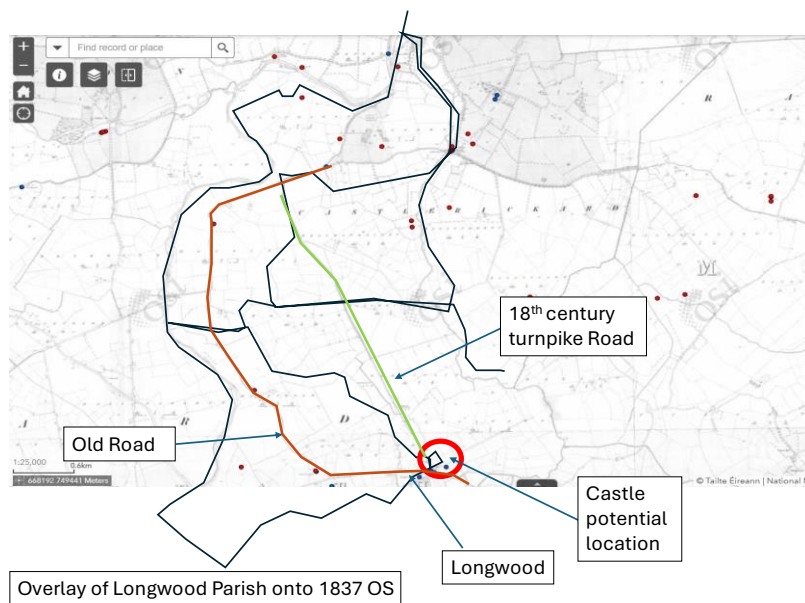


Barony of Moyferath 1650s Down Survey oriented to north

Barony of Moyfenrath, Longwood Parish 1650s Down Survey oriented to north



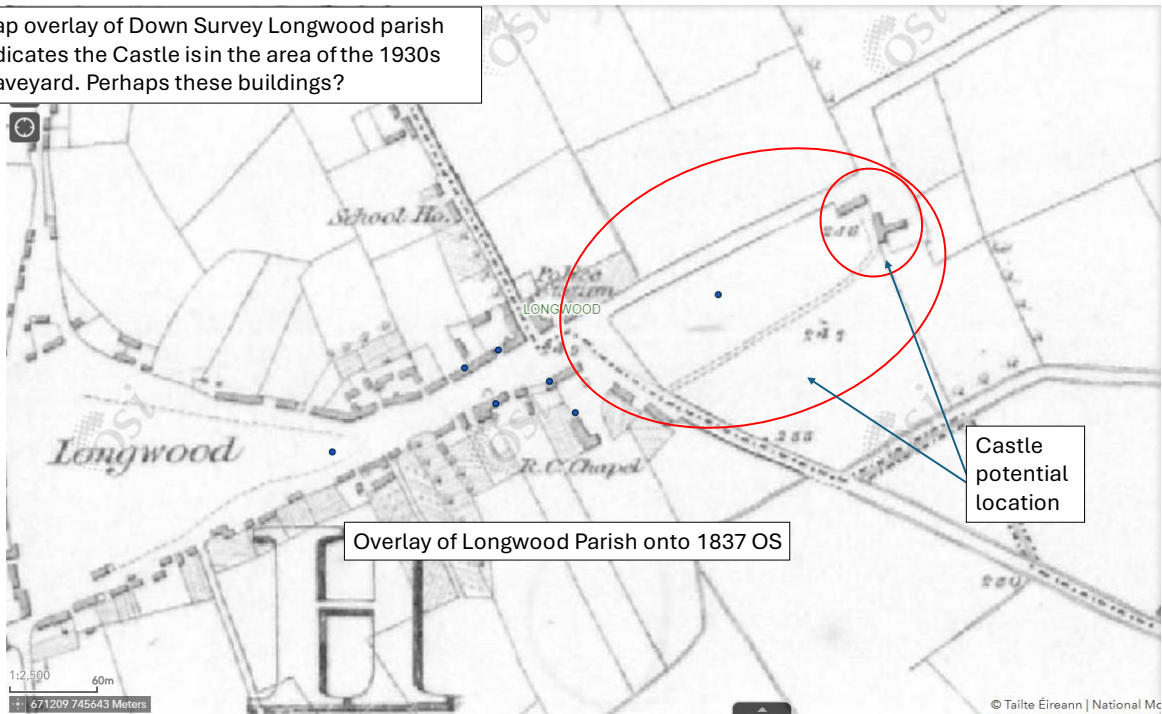
The Longwood Parish map above is the only one that shows anything at the present Longwood town location. This shows the Castle referred to in the civil survey. The Mills of the Civil survey are likely to the east in the general location of those shown on Larkin and 1837 mapping.



The 1837 OS was designed to match the Down survey in terms of many boundaries and the two are easily overlaid with good accuracy (as above). This shows the potential

general location of the Longwood Castle at the eastern end of the present town in a projecting spur.

Map overlay of Down Survey Longwood parish indicates the Castle is in the area of the 1930s graveyard. Perhaps these buildings?

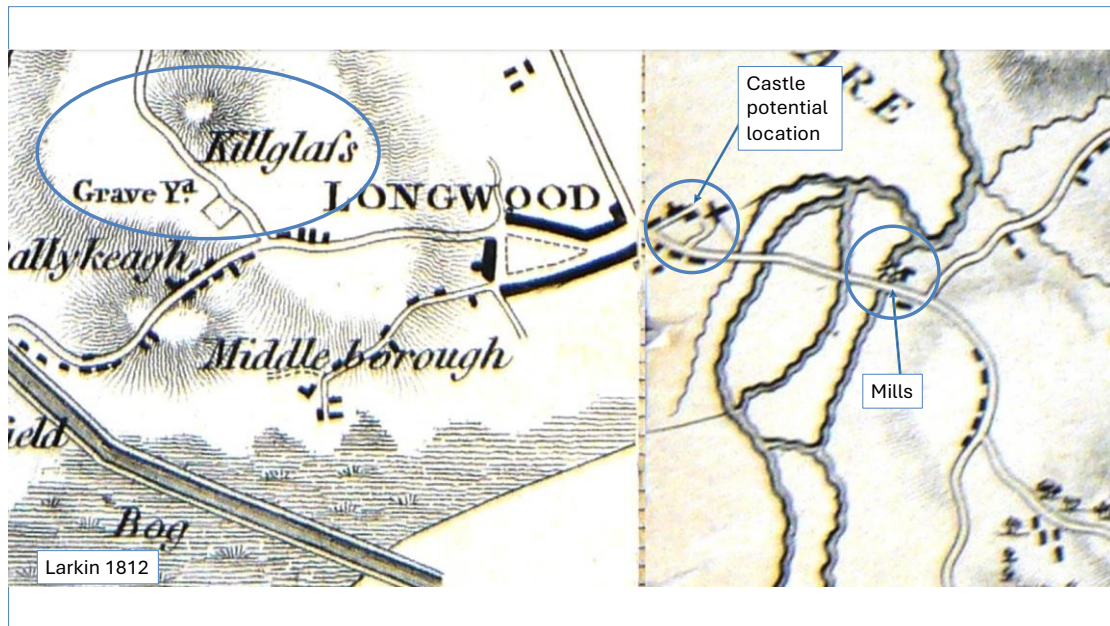


This projecting spur appears to match that of the present St Mary's Graveyard with its large houses at the eastern end with its looped access roads / sweeps. This area is also a marked location which would suit a potential castle on the Larkin map. It is important to note the present St Oliver's Road is an 18th century turnpike and was not there in the 17th century. In reality the castle could be anywhere in or around the larger circle above. It would presumably have had a good view of the Mill and fording zone to the south-east towards Clonguiffen.

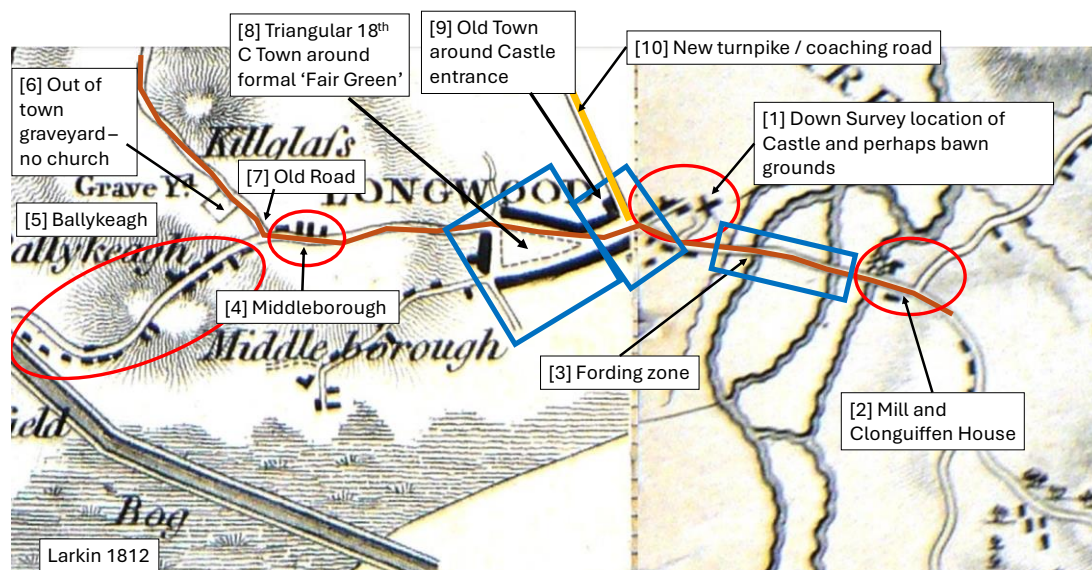
3.2 1777-85 Taylor & Skinner

Not shown

3.3 William Larkin Map 1812-17



Larkin shows Longwood in reasonable detail. The various components are noted below:



[1] Down Survey location of Castle and perhaps bawn grounds

[2] Mill and Clonguiffen House (possible old castle location overlooking the ford)

[3] Fording zone

[4] Middleborough (settlement between Longwood and Ballykeagh)

[5] Ballykeagh settlement

[6] Out of town graveyard – no church on Sites and Monuments record but local tradition says there was a building – perhaps a chapel of ease – was once located here.

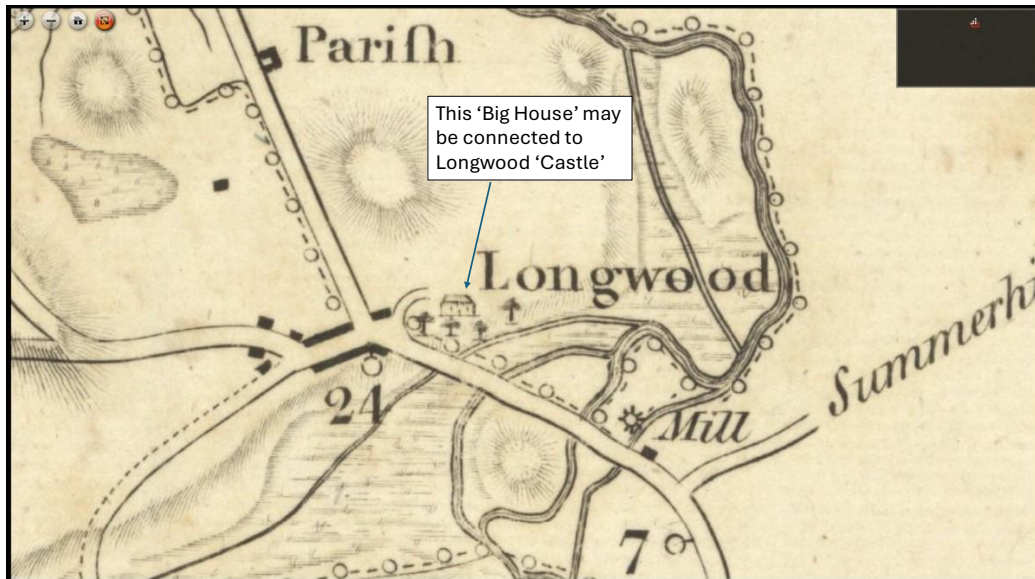
[7] Old Road. It seems that the Stoneyford Road from Middleborough to Stague, Moyfin etc is the old looping road that runs parallel to the River Boyne. This loop was cut off when the St Oliver's Road [10] was built.

[8] Triangular 18th C Town around formal 'Fair Green'. Such triangular village extensions were common in the 18th century town design. At Skerries, Co Dublin the triangular extension is termed 'new town' with the original village as the 'old town'. However, at Longwood the Fair has historical evidence going back to the medieval period and it is likely this fair green zone was used from c.13th – 14th C onwards. So the Fair Green may have been formalized in the 18th century as a regular triangle by the contemporary landlord (much as Navan's Fair Green was).

[9] 'Old Town' around Castle entrance. This area is the focus of the village old and present settlement.

[10] New turnpike / coaching road. This sort of linear road is typical of a 18th C turnpike or an early 19th C coaching road.

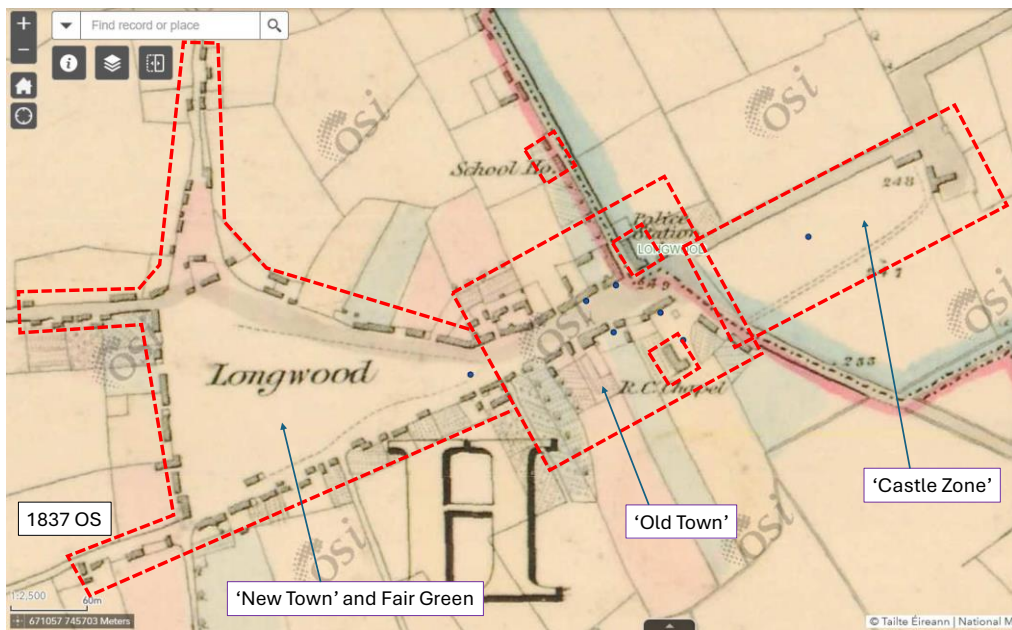
3.4 Alexanders Map of Kildare 1828



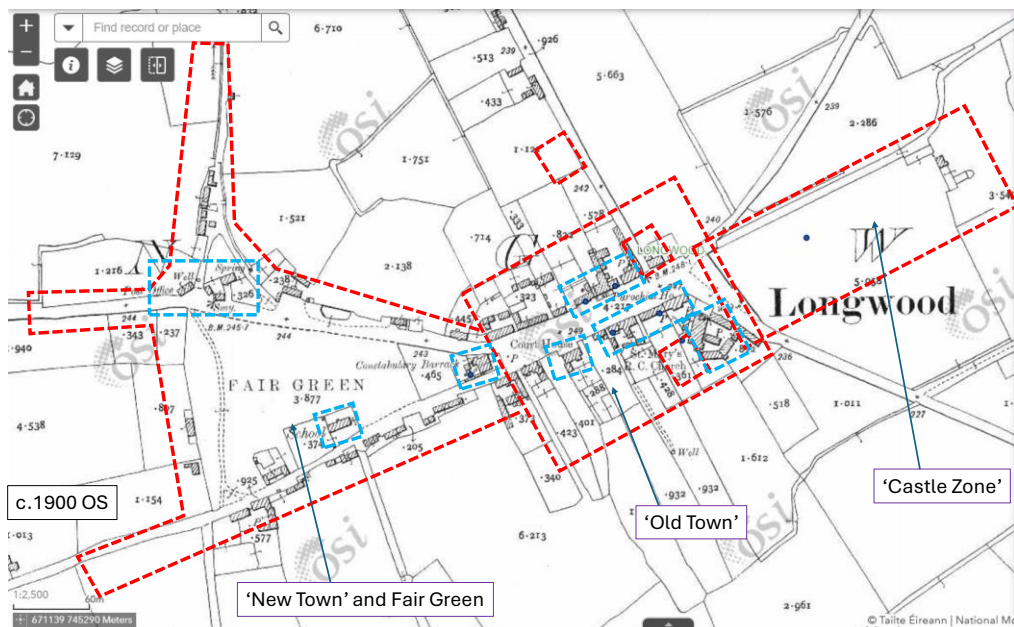
Longwood Village from Alexander's map of Kildare 1828

Note the Big House and the Mill above.

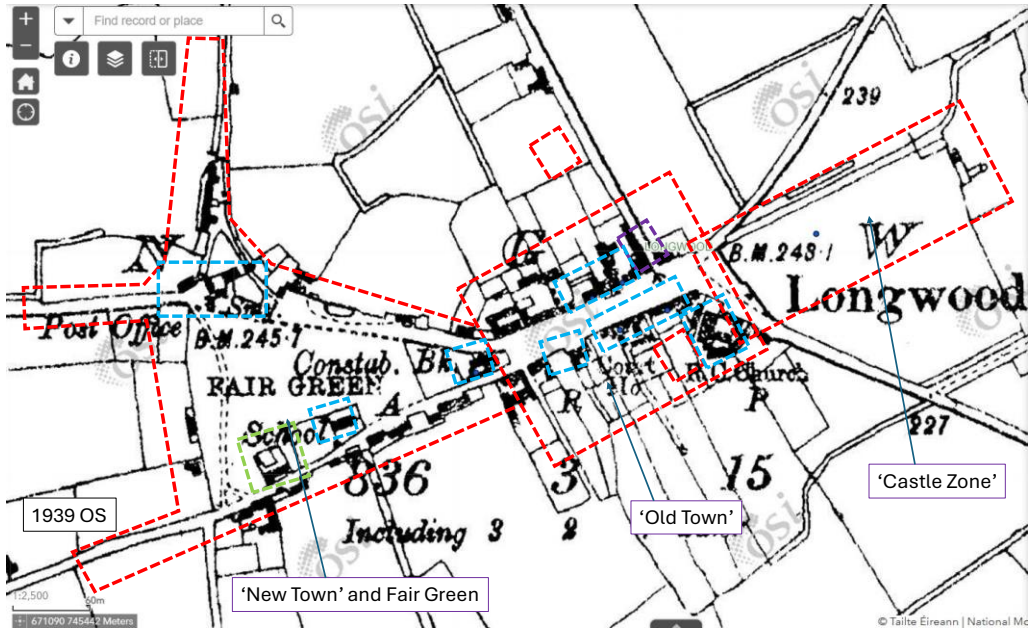
3.5 OS mapping and aerial ortho photos



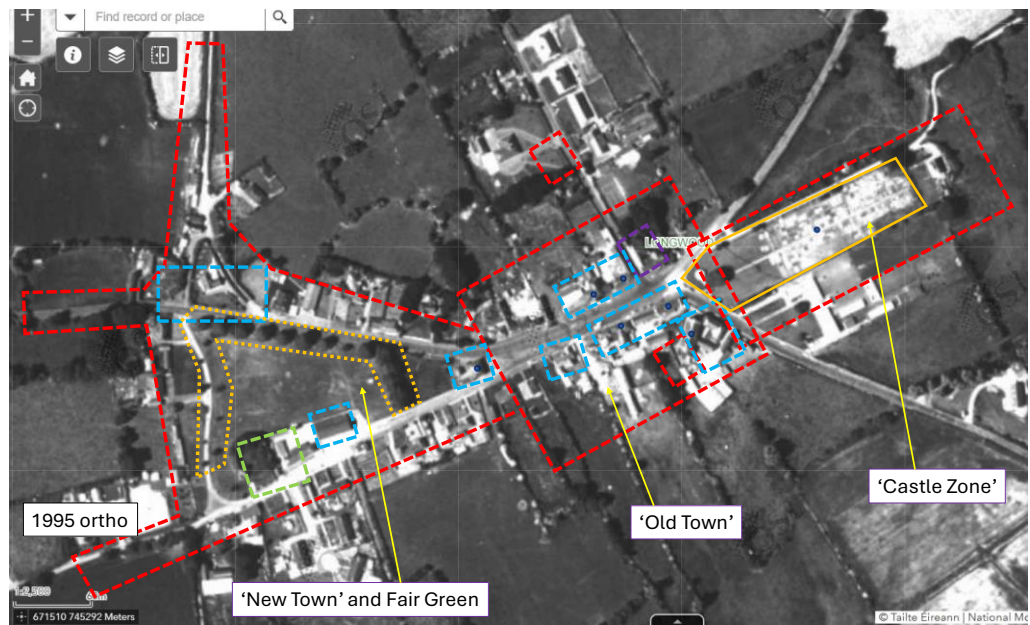
The settlement zones and significant buildings are marked in RED. The exceptionally wide main road in the 'Old Town' area is typical of a market zone where cattle-drawn carts can be swung round in a wide turning circle in one sweep. Again, this might indicate that the town has been substantially rebuilt and redesigned in the 18th century. In such cases, one side or the other is sometimes the edge of any medieval street.



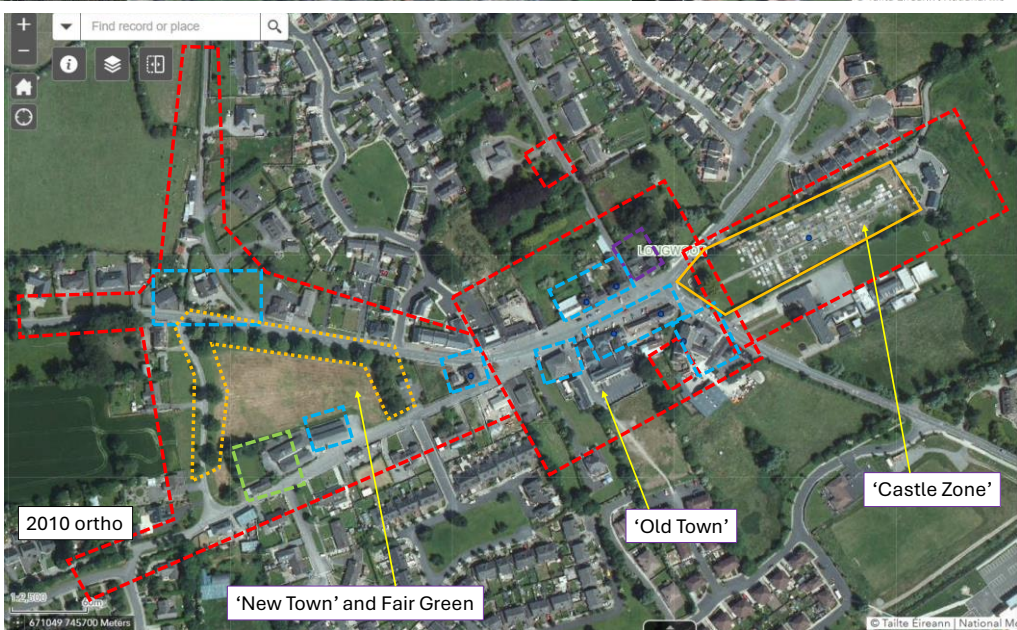
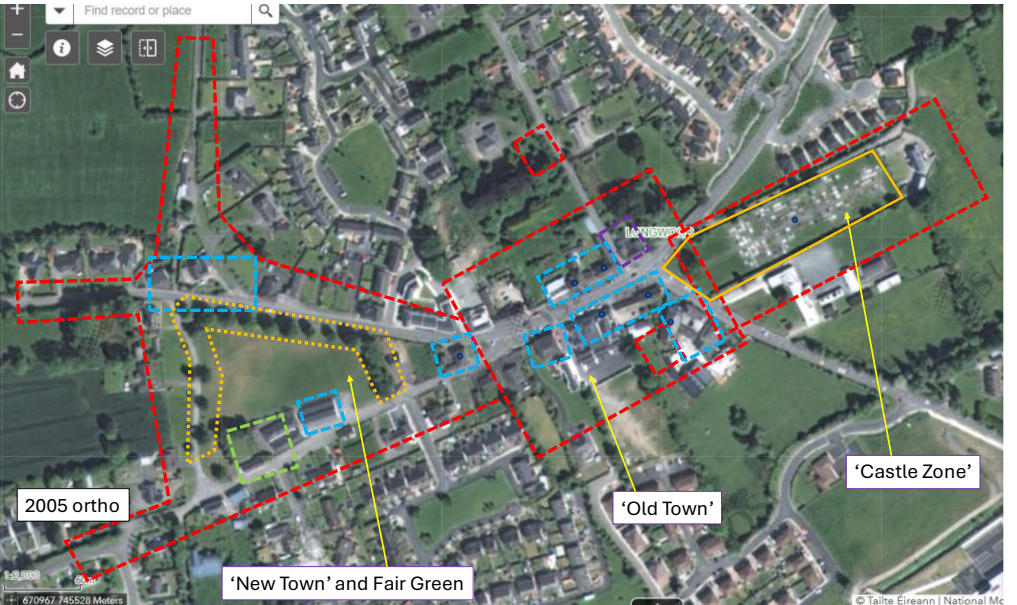
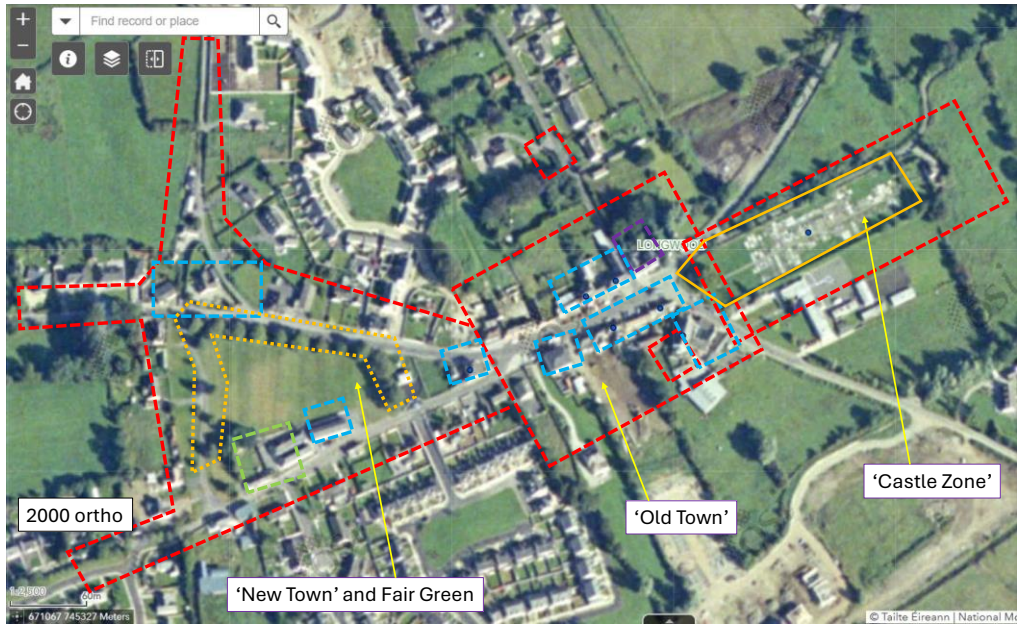
New significant buildings are marked in BLUE. The Court House and Smithy have been demolished but the Post Office building and Fair Green School substantially survive.



New significant buildings are marked in GREEN



New significant additions are marked in ORANGE. The main additions are the beech tree planting on Fair Green and the development of St Mary's Graveyard in the 'Castle Zone'.

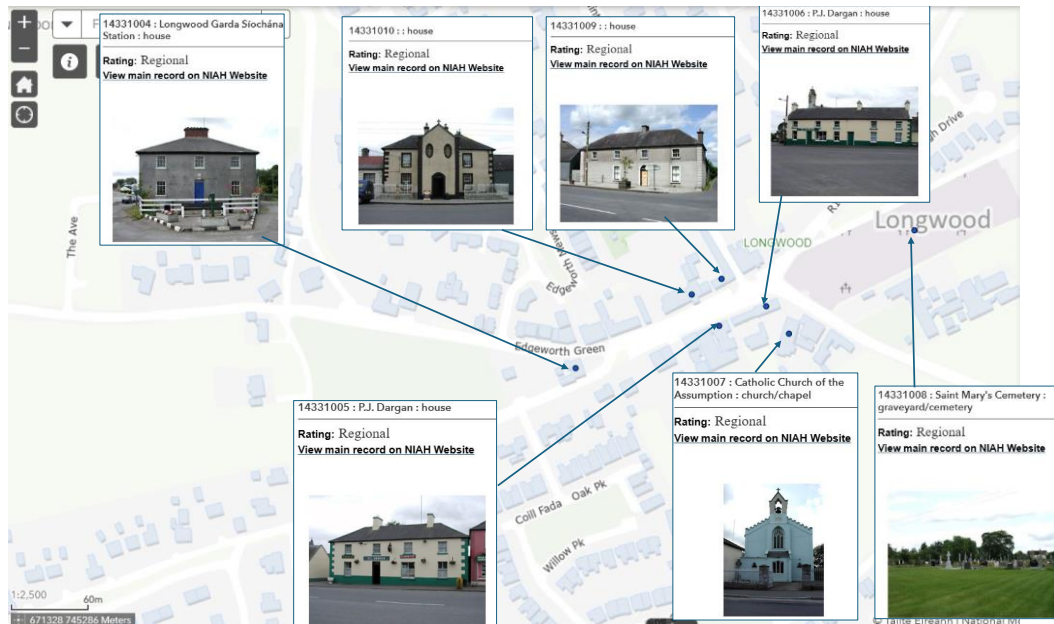




4 ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

4.1 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage:

Proposed playground has no impact on any NIAH / Protected Structure. A list of NIAH buildings is given below.



The noted buildings are all on the 'old town' area and on the eastern edge of Fair Green. Full details of these buildings are available at NIAH website. All are mid- to late- 19th century structures except the Graveyard which is mid-20th century.

P.J. Dargan, LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331006
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Technical
Original Use	House
In Use As	House
Date	1860 - 1900
Coordinates	271533, 245513
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--



Description

Former pair of three- and two-bay two-storey houses, built c.1880, now in use as five-bay detached house and public house. Pitched artificial slate roof with rendered chimneystacks. Rendered walls with render quoins and timber fascia. Timber sash windows and display window with stone sills. Timber battened doors. Single-storey outbuilding with corrugated-iron roof to site.

Appraisal

The modest form of this former pair compliment the streetscape of the village. The plain façade of the building is enhanced by retention of the timber sash windows and timber battened doors. The related outbuildings to the site contribute to the streetscape.

LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331009
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Technical
Original Use	House
In Use As	House
Date	1850 - 1870
Coordinates	271504, 245550
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--

Description

Detached four-bay two-storey house, built c.1860, with two-storey return. Hipped slate roof with rendered chimneystacks. Rendered walls to ground floor, roughcast rendered to first floor, with string course and rendered quoins. Timber sash windows with stone sills and rendered surrounds. Round-arched moulded timber doorcase, with timber architrave supported on console brackets. Two-storey stone outbuilding to rear with pitched slate roof.

Appraisal

This detached house retains many original features and materials, such as the timber sash windows, timber doorcase and internal timber panelled shutters. The regular form of the building is enhanced by the render detailing, which adds textural and decorative interest to the house.

LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331010
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Artistic
Original Use	House
Historical Use	Presbytery/parochial/curate's house
Date	1860 - 1900
Coordinates	271483, 245534
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--



Description

Detached three-bay two-storey house, built c.1880, with two-storey return. Formerly in use as parochial house. Gabled full-height porch addition, c.1920. Hipped artificial slate roof with rendered chimneystacks. Rendered walls with exposed stone quoins. Rendered surrounds to window openings. Oval openings to breakfront with cast-iron windows. Segmental-arched door opening. Polychromatic tiles to porch interior. Two-storey flat-roofed extension. Stone and rendered outbuildings to rear. Cast-iron railings to site.

Appraisal

The house was originally owned by the Edgeworth family and later became the village's parochial house. This building is an unusual feature in the streetscape due to the gabled full-height porch. The traditional form of the main house is altered by this addition. The oval windows are an interesting feature of the breakfront, while the render detailing articulates the form. The related outbuildings to the site, and the cast-iron railings enhance the setting of the house and are clearly the well-executed work of skilled craftsmen.

Longwood Garda Síochána Station, LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331004
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Technical
Previous Name	Longwood Constabulary Barrack
Original Use	House
In Use As	Garda station/constabulary barracks
Date	1900 - 1940
Coordinates	271391, 245468
Date Recorded	20/06/2002

Description

Detached three-bay two-storey former house, built c.1920, now in use as a Garda station. Hipped slate roof with red brick chimneystack. Rendered walls. Timber sash windows with stone sills. Rendered and stone outbuildings with pitched slate roofs to rear.

Appraisal

This house occupies a dominant position in the village streetscape, as it terminates the western end of the main street. The simple form of the building is enhanced by the retention of several original features and materials, such as the timber sash windows and the related outbuildings.

P.J. Dargan, LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331005
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Social, Technical
Original Use	House
In Use As	House
Date	1860 - 1900
Coordinates	271507, 245494
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--

Description

Detached four-bay two-storey house, built c.1880, with two-storey return. Hipped slate roof with rendered chimneystacks. Rendered walls with render quoins. Timber sash windows and timber display window with stone sills. Wrought-iron window guards to ground floor.

Appraisal

This former house makes a positive contribution to the streetscape in Longwood. The regular form of the building is enhanced by the retention of many interesting features and materials, such as the timber sash windows and the wrought-iron windows guards.

Catholic Church of the Assumption, LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331007
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Architectural, Artistic, Social, Technical
Previous Name	Saint Mary's Catholic Church
Original Use	Church/chapel
In Use As	Church/chapel
Date	1840 - 1845
Coordinates	271563, 245514
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--



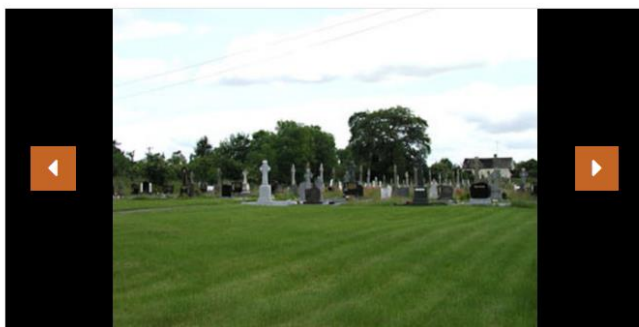
Description

Detached gable-fronted church, built 1841. Three-bay side elevations to nave, with porch to north-east, and canted bay chancel and sacristy to the south-west. Pitched slate roof with ashlar bellcote and castellations to the north-east gable. Rendered walls with date plaque. Pointed arch openings to nave and chancel with stained glass windows. Pointed arch, Tudor arch and trefoil openings to north-eastern gable with tracery and stained glass. Timber double doors set in shoulder-headed opening. Interior is remodelled. Ashlar stone piers with cast-iron double gates and railings.

Appraisal

This Roman Catholic church occupies an unusual position in the streetscape, in a small plot off the main street. The gable-fronted entrance elevation is of apparent architectural form, with the breakfront bellcote, castellations and variety of window openings. The fine cast-iron railings and gates, and ashlar gate piers enhance the setting of the church.

Saint Mary's Cemetery, LONGWOOD, Longwood, MEATH



[View on map](#)

Survey Data

Reg No	14331008
Rating	Regional
Categories of Special Interest	Artistic, Social, Technical
Original Use	Graveyard/cemetery
In Use As	Graveyard/cemetery
Date	1910 - 1930
Coordinates	271648, 245569
Date Recorded	20/06/2002
Date Updated	--/--



Description

Roman Catholic cemetery, established c.1920, with a variety of twentieth-century grave markers. Shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary to south-western end. Cast-iron railings with stone gate piers, cast-iron gates and decorative cast- and wrought-iron arch.

Appraisal

This cemetery holds several interesting examples of earlier twentieth century Celtic revival grave markers. Located at the east end of the main street, it occupies a notable position in the streetscape. The decorative wrought and cast-iron arch over the entrance gates, and the cast-iron railings enhance the site.

4.3 Architectural Conservation Area: Longwood

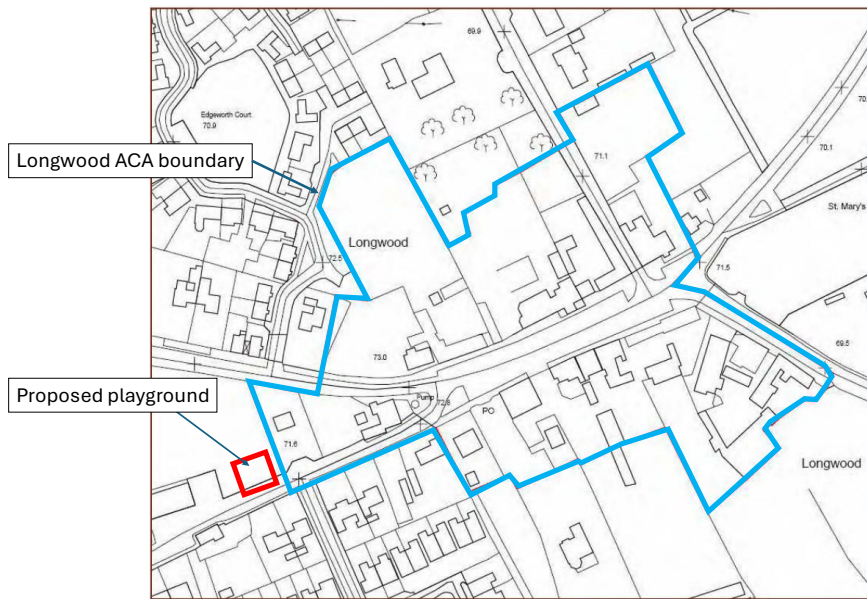


Fig.3: Boundary of Longwood ACA

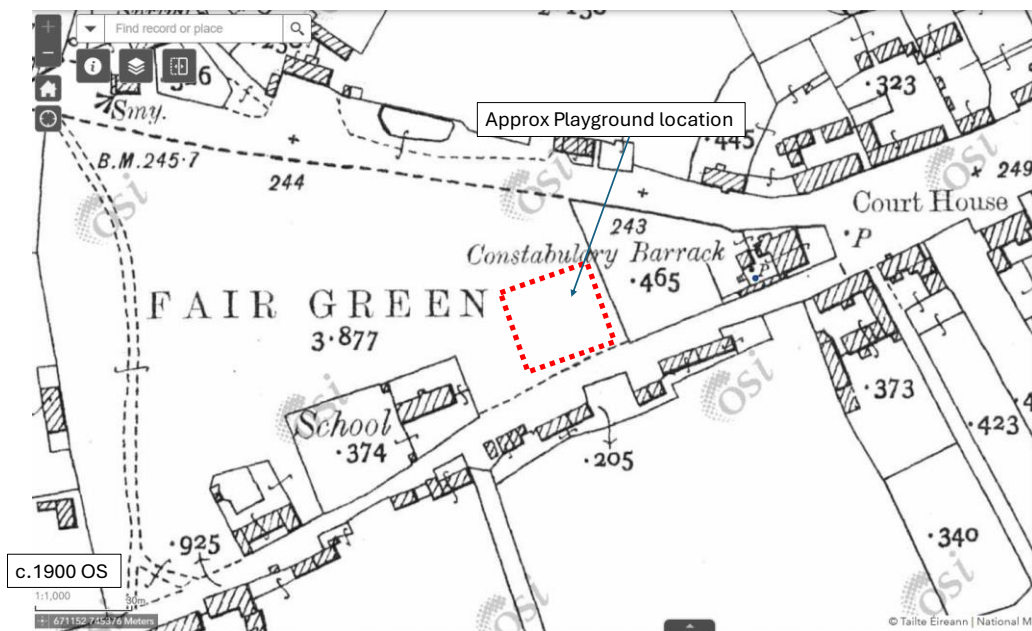
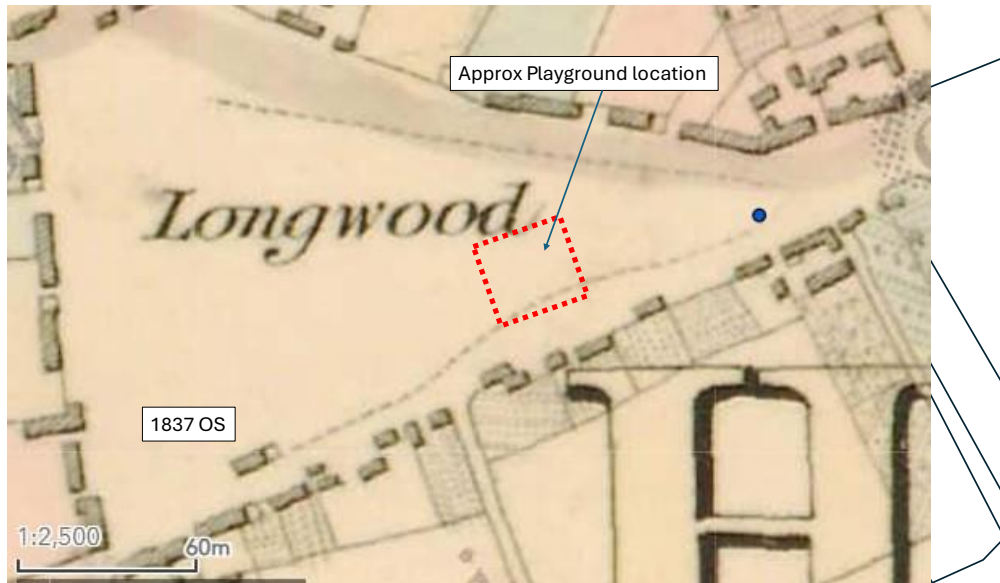
The proposed playground is adjacent to the tree-lined western boundary of the ACA.

See link for ACA Statement:

<https://www.meath.ie/system/files/media/file-uploads/2024-03/Longwood%20Architectural%20Conservation%20Area%20Character%20Statement.pdf>

5 DETAILS AND SITE VISIT

5.1 Detail map overlay



The Constabulary Barrack above is now the Garda Station that was attacked in 1921.

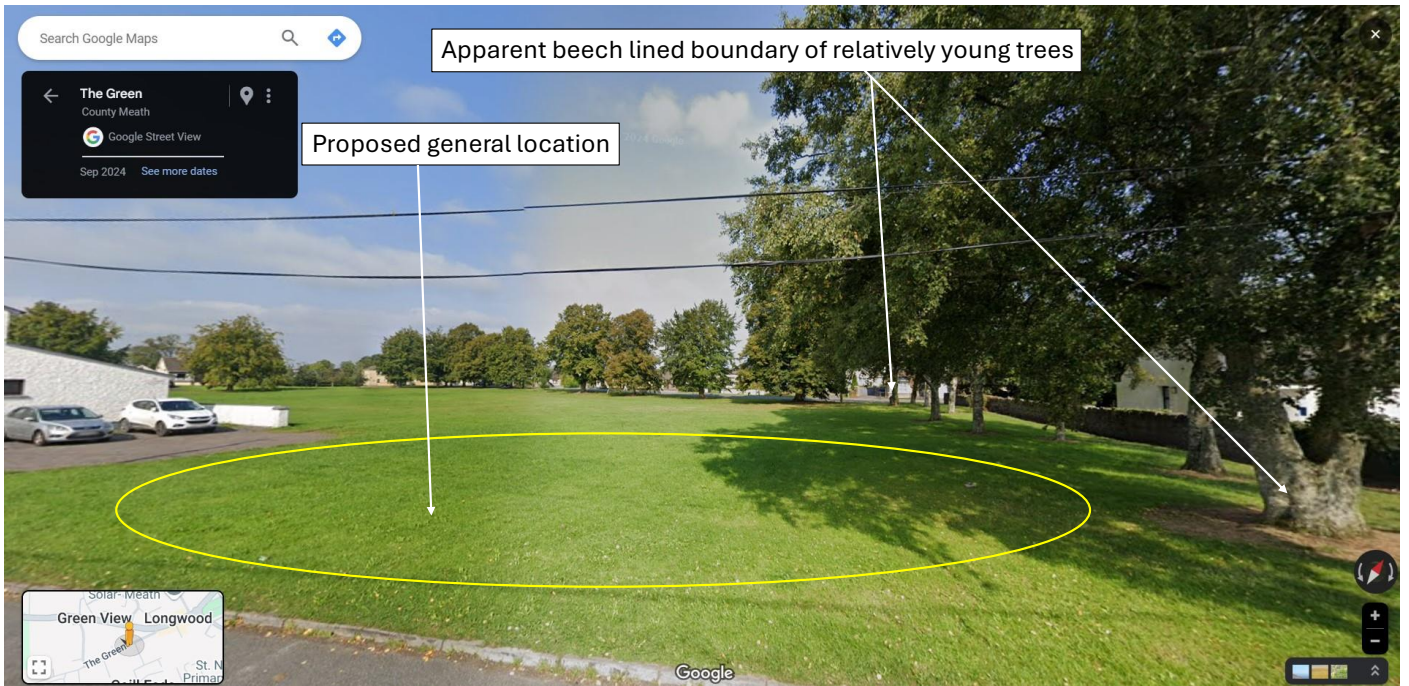


Recent mapping all shows the proposed playground in an open area in Fair Green

5.2 Site visit / Streetview

The site has not been visited but is available for review using Google Streetview.





6 PROPOSED WORKS

A c.500 sqm playground is proposed adjacent to the School building with a nearby existing footpath and carparking on the southern side of Fair Green.



7 DISCUSSION

Meath County Council is proposing to construct a new playground of c.500 sqm in the Fair Green, Longwood townland at Longwood ITM 671246, 745453. The location is outside, but adjacent to the tree-lined boundary of the Longwood Architectural Conservation Area.

Longwood horse and cattle Fairs have records going back to the medieval period and they were only suspended relatively recently. It is possible / probable that the Fair was held in the area of the present Fair Green.

Nothing is known of Longwood archaeologically as it has not been highlighted as a 'Historic Town' on the Archaeological Survey of Ireland. This is not uncommon, but it is a flaw in that survey which does not generally include villages with known medieval history but without any known medieval churches. Without a church, it is difficult to demonstrate medieval settlement. At Longwood, there is the nearby Kilglass graveyard ME047-014 with no record of a church apart from a 1939 Dúchas schools collection reference to a ruin here.

From the very wide main street it would appear that Longwood was substantially rebuilt in the 18th century (like Athboy and Navan etc). The triangular layout of the present Fair Green is also a form often seen in 18th century 'new' town plans and it is assumed that this area was outside whatever 'old town' there was a Longwood, which seems to have been a squared or rectangular form, from the entrance to St Mary's graveyard to the Longwood Garda Station. Map overlay suggests the well-recorded Longwood Castle – perhaps with its own medieval church or chapel - was located in the St Mary's graveyard area – perhaps towards or just beyond the eastern end where there has traditionally been a large house.

There was a an hour long skirmish at the Garda Station on 8th January 1921 with a group of attackers firing numerous weapons from the St Mary's Graveyard end of the town to the Garda Station. Spent bullets and ricochets from this skirmish may be dotted around the Fair Green.

Recommendation

The area of works for the Longwood Playground would benefit from a metal detection survey and archaeological monitoring of the topsoil stripping. The metal detection would best be completed under Consent from the National Monuments Service once the turf has been removed, but before any topsoil is excavated to create the foundation level.

Reason

Longwood has a long history of activity in this area and metal or other items may have been lost in the past that could add significantly to the history of the town and local area.

8 REFERENCES

www.excavations.ie – Summary of archaeological excavation from 1970+.

www.archaeology.ie – National Monuments Service website listing all SMR sites with aerial photographs.

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

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

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

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

Environment Protection Agency website

<https://gis.epa.ie/EPAMaps/>

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

http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/home/index.php?DRIS_ID=LCN14679989_001

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

Heritage Maps

<https://heritagemaps.ie/WebApps/HeritageMaps/index.html>

Google Maps

Bing Maps