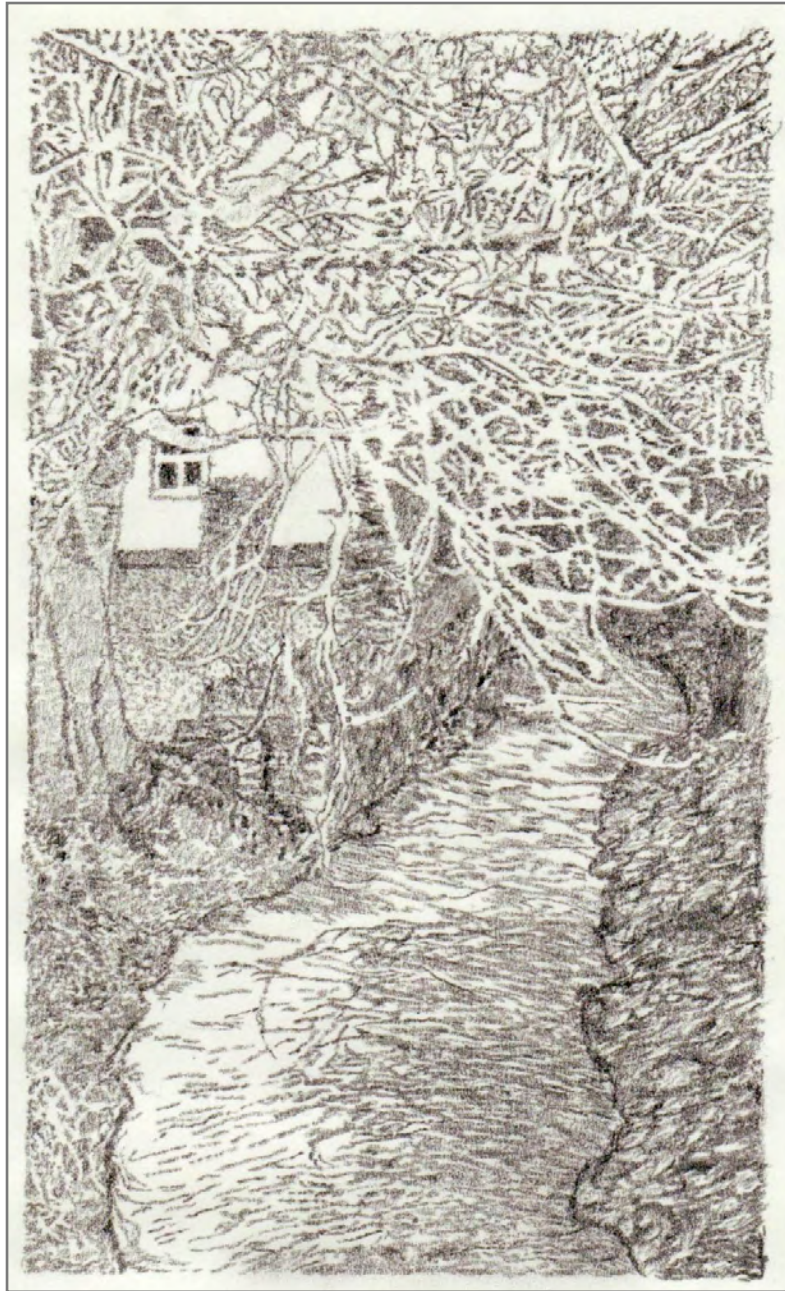




# Oldtown

Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance



Oldtown - - enveloped in the landscape.  
Pencil drawing by Tina Geoghegan

The Oldtown Village Design Framework Plan was assembled by a team of architects and urban designers, Philip and Delphine Geoghegan of iCON Architecture | Urban Design | Conservation, and Bernard Voortman of CUMMINS + VOORTMAN, Sustainable Architecture & Urban Design.

The steering committee for Fingal County Council Planning Department, Imelda Hickey, Patricia Conlon and Peter Byrne compiled and developed the brief and liaised regularly during production of the Plan.

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**Above:** Aerial view of the village.. The circled area indicates the traditional village core. The River Daws flows under the bridge, outlined in yellow, and between the trees. The housing scheme in the foreground is for social and affordable housing. This image was taken in September 2009. The scheme was completed shortly afterwards.

# Oldtown

## Village Development Framework Plan and Design Guidance

### The Character of the Village and A Vision for the Future

Fingal County Council seek to maintain and strengthen the physical character of Oldtown village; to guide careful urban improvement and to plan for appropriate future growth. In setting out these guidelines, The following issues are dealt with;

- Distinctive character of the village,
- Current issues, particularly concerning incomplete housing schemes.
- The need for conservation, sustainable growth, consolidation, and the protection of the quality, character and distinctiveness of important assets.

Creating a strategy for sustainable development should deliver not only solid economic and environmental benefits but will also provide an urban design framework, to guide the development of Oldtown village into the future.

#### Policy Context

The challenge of a successful urban design framework, through the identification of local distinctiveness, is to unlock opportunities and deliver a high quality village environment with improved amenities, a better economic future with potential for further tourism.

The Village Development Framework Plan is an advisory plan with a long term vision for the future. It offers support to the Local Area Plan, within the structure of the Fingal County Development Plan.



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# Section 1

## The Character of Oldtown Village



**Left:** River Daws runs through this village of Oldtown. As a green corridor, it will be protected and used as an amenity.

### 1.1 Introduction and First Impressions

Oldtown village is part of a network of villages in Fingal which function as a small local service centres for their immediate agricultural hinterlands. It has a distinct village character and strong identity with traditional buildings and street network. Oldtown still retains the character of a small rural village, even though it is relatively close to the airport, Swords and the northern fringe of Dublin's conurbation. Substantial building development in the last decade has made an impact on the village centre as well as its approaches. The existing setting, with many mature trees and the permeation of the countryside right into the village, retains the character of a village in its landscape.

The amenities are typical of what might be expected in a small village, rural, yet not far from a substantial concentration of population.

There is a shop, church, primary school, community hall, pub, and an untypical primary care health centre serving the dispersed villages of the north county.

The River Daws runs through the village, contained within steep banks. It helps to define the quality of a place in the larger landscape.

Close to the bridge, the village core is a triangular cluster; see aerial map, **right**; at the junction of the traditional through routes. The insertion into this area of two modest scale housing schemes in the 1990s has changed the character from what was essentially a vernacular form of single storey cottages, each set down on their own piece of land, to a more urbanised idea with town-houses fronting the street. There is still a remnant of the old village on the edges of this development, with some single

storey rural cottages and a few rural buildings, now in poor condition. This area encapsulates the origins of the village. With care and commitment, it could continue to reflect that, by ensuring that future development in this zone is not intrusive and is not undertaken at the expense of the vulnerable small buildings which have survived.

There are grounds for optimism about the future of the village, if the qualities of its mature tree canopy, its river and its banks, its traditional buildings and centre of the village are maintained and improved during a period of change.

**Below:** Aerial map of the village . The superimposed triangle contains the remnants of a cluster of vernacular buildings around more recent terraced housing. With care the vernacular origins of the village may be conserved to capture the memory of the earlier village.



## First Impressions on a winter's day...

**Picture 1:** Entrance to the old village along the Fieldstown Road from St Margaret's and the airport. A recently thatched cottage and a traditional stone farmhouse turn the corner with the road. A paddock to the left is a strong village characteristic, which might be seen as part of a village green in future.

**Picture 2:** Nucleus of original village is evidenced from a grouping of traditional buildings, unfortunately in very poor condition and at risk of disappearing.

**Picture 3:** Simple, attractive modern infill houses located often, apparently, between the trees keep the feeling of the village as quiet and rural.

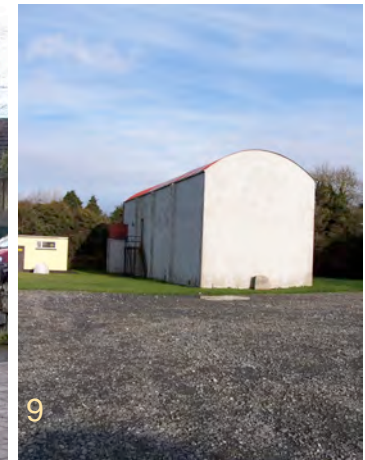
**Picture 4:** The watercourses and their routes through the village, shown here beside the pub car park is a strong yet neglected element in the character of the place.

**Picture 5:** The corrugated iron community hall has been restored by the Council. It is a characterful building in the centre.

**Picture 6:** Quality 19th century domestic architecture with bridge and stream in foreground.

**Picture 7:** New social and affordable housing - a strong scheme recently finished. Landscaping needs to be boosted to soften the appearance and make the environment more compatible with the rest of the village.

**Pictures 8 and 9:** Village shop and the GAA grounds, 'lifeblood' of the village, along with the pub and the community centre.



## 1.2 Village Form

Oldtown is essentially a traditional street village which has grown around the junction of two rural roads. The building of a chapel in 1830 no doubt contributed to its growth, producing a rural cluster, a scattering of small buildings with the chapel and a dispensary, both built during the first half of the nineteenth century. The chapel has been demolished, but closer examination may reveal evidence of the dispensary in an enlarged or changed building.

The central area has been built up at relatively high density, generating a new village form for Oldtown, which now effectively replaces the vernacular form of the earlier buildings. Recent housing by Fingal County Council and two developments at Oldtown Avenue and Weston Park have helped to consolidate the village although the private schemes remain incomplete and pose serious environmental, social and safety questions. Their completion is a priority.

The substantial growth of the village over the last fifty years has occurred along the main roads, typically as ribbon development although the hedgerow and planting have helped to soften and minimise the impact. It will need a landscape strategy to help tie the schemes into the village setting.

**Right:** Aerial view of Oldtown village core, now largely made up of new houses, yet maintaining the street pattern, with the remains of the scattering of vernacular buildings around the edge. The attractive, but, sadly, incomplete housing development of Oldtown Avenue is upper, right in picture.

**Below:** Aerial view of the East side of the main street, the core of the village. Moving left to right, the view picks up the disused vernacular cottages on the far left, then the pub, then a small terrace of new houses, a modern house of village scale, the corner and bridge with many trees, and at the extreme right the Catholic church.

