



North Entry: From The GAA grounds
 The aerial photograph, **left**, shows a beautiful and classic village entrance, punctuated by one entrance to a housing area. The continuity of landscape is interrupted, but not severed, as it is an opening onto an attractive mature residential landscape as well as housing area. The image also characterises the outstanding landscape setting of the village: the line of the road follows the Daws river into and through the village.
 This entrance is the most attractive one of Oldtown, its enclosure by mature hedgerow is unspoiled, and continues right up to the pub and Main Street, (see image **below**) a clear distinction between countryside and village.

Guidelines for **North Entry**: From The GAA grounds

- This is a quiet, beautiful entry road, albeit with poor visibility. It has an attractive curve at entry to the village centre, which helps to slow traffic going into the village. The hedgerows and mature trees should be protected to maintain this entry of the highest quality.
- Further speed reduction may be effected with signs and possibly road platforms just before entry into the village.



Below: Entry from GAA grounds; the curve helps to slow traffic as it enters the central area. Derelict overgrown site, left, is critical visually to future quality and conservation of the village.



1.6 Architectural Heritage

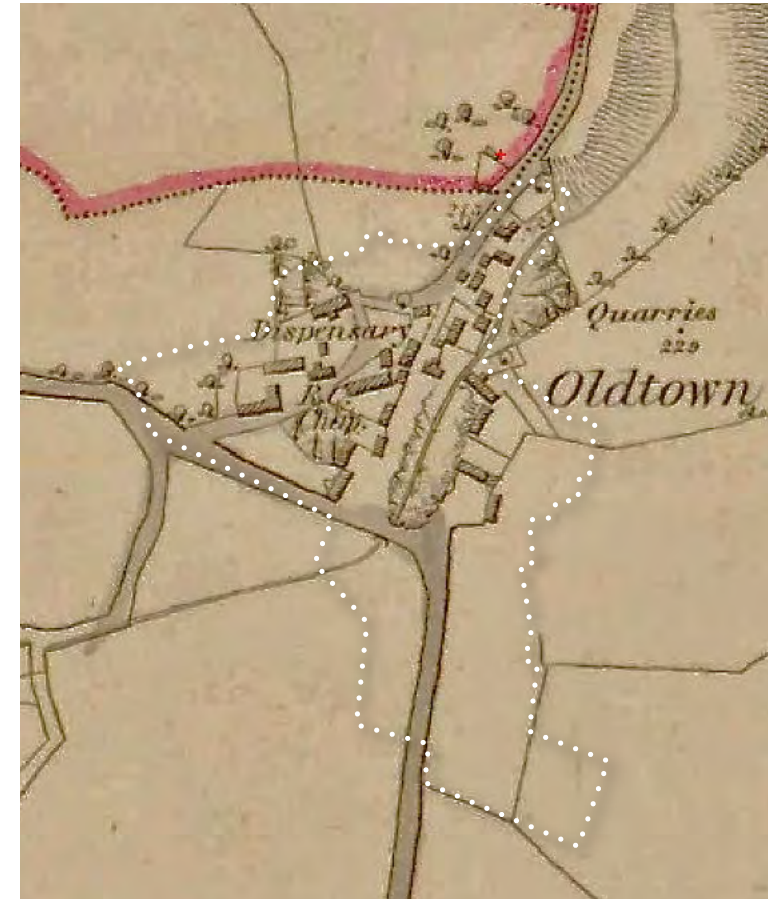
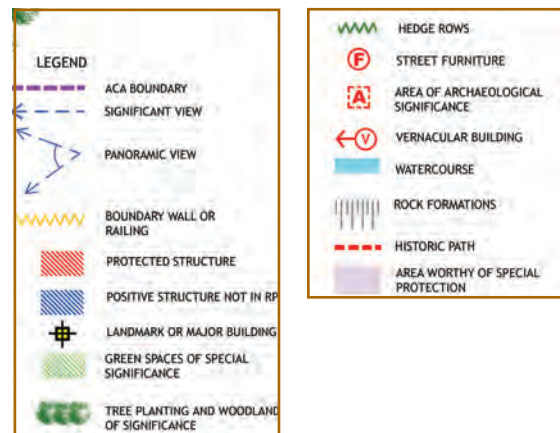
Oldtown has experienced the impact of radical change in recent years with permission for 137 residential units granted since 2004. 62 of these units have been built. Schemes prior to 2004 upscaled the density of the centre of the village, with terraced dwellings within the existing traditional village core. Despite this change, which has displaced the original morphology, (the form and structure), of the village there is still an opportunity to identify and safeguard the heritage by paying particular attention to the remaining traditional buildings. The proposed designation of the centre of the village as an **Architectural Conservation Area** and the **Inventory of Vernacular Buildings** provide for the necessary protection to the vulnerable remaining vernacular buildings

The 1839 map shows two public buildings, both referred to briefly in Lewis Topographical Dictionary, see extract on page 13.

This section characterises, selectively, the qualities of the built heritage which may be observed in the village.

Guidelines for the protection of the architectural heritage

- The traditional village street pattern and structure is still evident, and should not be further eroded by street widening or boundary hedgerow removal.
- Some of the old vernacular structures still remain. The Inventory of Vernacular buildings for Oldtown establishes their heritage significance. Their retention is paramount and will need further expert help to ensure that they may be reused and are not lost by default.
- Mature trees in the centre of the village are an important part of the distinct character of the village, especially along the river. They need to be mapped and listed for protection.



Above, right: Oldtown village plan in 1839. Taken from Ordnance Survey First Edition. The chapel, erected in 1827 is included, also the dispensary. It has been suggested that Oldtown was a chapel village, ie that the population came after the chapel was built, but it seems likely that this one was added to the existing traditional village form. The dotted line on the map is an approximate transposition of the proposed Architectural Conservation Area boundary, showing how the boundary delineates the vernacular village limits, and also an area to the south of the original village to include the Church and Georgian house and mews on the other side of the road.

Above, left: Proposed Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) for Oldtown with legend, **Left.**



Some of the interesting buildings in the village centre.

Top: Handsome Georgian house under repair.

Above: Single storey, well proportioned Georgian gate lodge with modest add-on porch.

Below: Restored and re-thatched cottage; by its location it makes a focal point, Attractive stone building alongside has new dormers and a conservatory which challenge the simple proportions



Extract from Lewis' Topographical Dictionary' 1829

CLONMETHAN, a parish, in the barony of NETHERCKOSS, county of DUBLIN, and province of LEINSTER, 4 miles (E.) from Ashboume; containing 677 inhabitants.

A great quantity of corn is grown in this parish, and it contains a limestone quarry. A cattle fair is held in the demesne of Fieldstown on Whit-Monday.

In the R. C. divisions the parish forms part of the union or district of Rollestown, and has a **chapel at Old Town**, which was erected in 1827, by subscription, and cost nearly £300. Here is a private school, in which are 50 children; and at **Old Town** is a **dispensary**.



Above and right, 1,2,3,4: Traditional, vernacular buildings amount, almost, to a cluster in the oldest part of the village. Parts of the lane are intact (images 2 and 3); even this short remnant of the lane really matters in the appreciation of the village. Buildings shown in these four images are at serious risk of demolition. Information to owners and action within the ACA (Architectural Conservation Area) protection provisions could avoid demolition.



1.7 Cultural Heritage

Community Hall

This is an attractive building, using corrugated iron as a cladding material, familiar in the countryside although unconventional for a public building, extensive exterior repair work and decoration presents a lively image for the place.

Guidelines for the Oldtown Cultural Centre

- Widen pavement on main road in front of the Community Hall.
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- Should development proceed in the area behind the centre, there should be provision for parking and access to the rear of the building. Provide a notice board to advertise activities in the hall.
- There is an opportunity to provide a pedestrian link over the river to the proposed development area to south.





Left:
Centre of the village.
The river is a key visual element with trees following the course of the river.
Relatively new higher density schemes in the village core differ in character to the traditional dispersed patterns of the historic core.

River Daws is marked at ground level by the almost continuous line of mature trees along the river bank. The landscape travels with the river through the village.



Oldtown village core from West:

Aerial photograph (Sept 2009), taken from the West. The National School is in the centre of the picture; to the right is the, then, unfinished housing scheme by Fingal County Council, Clonmethan Green. In the background, Oldtown Avenue development is part-built, retaining a tree screen along Fieldstown Road to the church on the right.

1.8 Spaces and Places

1.80 General

The 'public realm' in Oldtown includes the roads, green spaces, lanes; anywhere where the public may walk or drive freely. Features within the public realm may include trees, seats, planters, public art, traffic signs, railings, steps, water features, advertising hoardings.

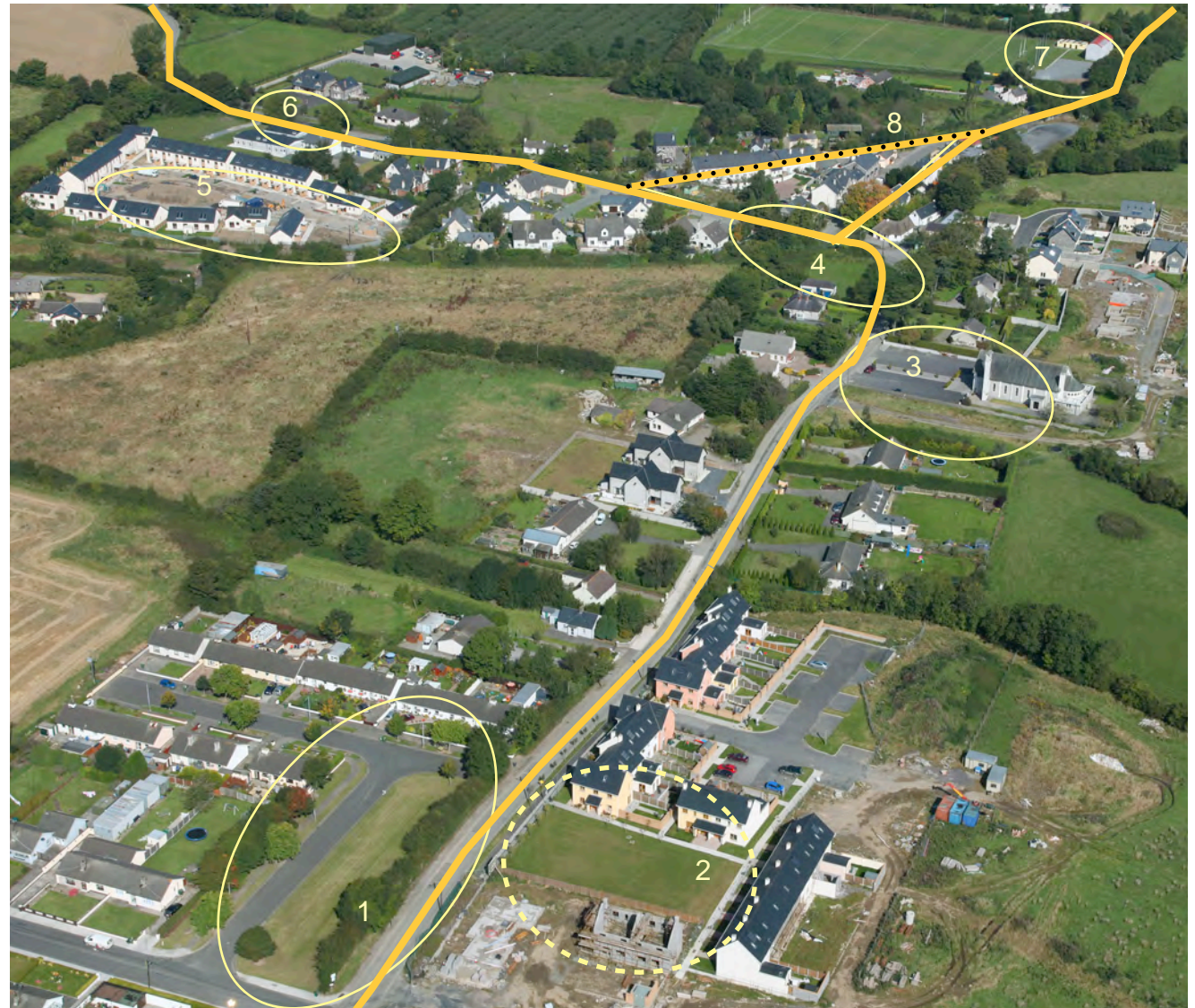
1.81 The Village Core

The most important quality of the public realm of Oldtown is the informal way in which the through roads thread their way through a 'canopy' of trees and vegetation. The village amenities are dispersed around the centre, although distances between school, church, community hall, shop and pub are small.

The original vernacular village core at the heart of the village is now dominated by the new developments facing the road to the pub and the rural lane on the western side of the triangle which meets at a point in front of the pub.

Despite this, there are elements of the old which are evident in the area which should be held in an environment which would be sensitive to their original position. The rural lane is much changed and now supports two-storey infill, yet because it is so narrow and difficult to manoeuvre traffic through, it has some of the old charm of the original village. By making this lane access only and surfacing it for a pedestrian-friendly place it would retain the feel of the old.

The conservation of the vernacular buildings, through the proposed ACA, implementing imaginative reuse, could ensure that the future populations of Oldtown will appreciate the modest rural origins of the village.



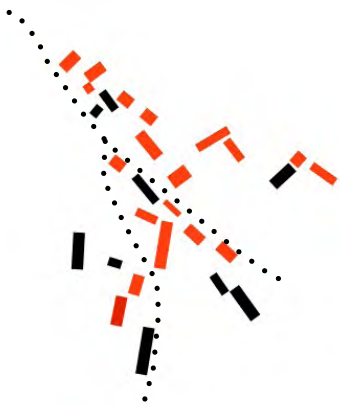
Potential for Improvement around the spaces and places of Oldtown

1, Housing estate at Shamrock Park has well managed, generous open space. **2**, New housing at Weston Park, although not complete includes a new green for that area, which will be visible and appreciated from the road. **3**, The car park in front of the church has good potential for improvement to the approach to the church. **4**, The corner entry to the older part of the village could be the place for a village green for the village as a whole and a good opportunity to reinforce the traffic calming effected by the corner with a raised platform. **5**, Potential for new amenity space at Clonmethan Green to be further landscaped. **6**, Pedestrian friendly space outside the school. **7**, is the existing car park outside handball alley at the GAA grounds. **8**, This is the lane, dotted on the aerial photograph, which is a very pleasant rural remnant of the traditional village centre.

Aerial view, right: The Triangle, the old village centre, **right**, (yellow dotted line), is still an environment where the memory of the rural village remains - but it needs urgent rescue work to sustain the memory of place. For example, the lane which links the roads could be surfaced for shared pedestrian and local car access, and the roads could be raised at the three junctions of the triangle.



Below: Figure - ground diagram of buildings in Oldtown village core in 1839 - an almost 'random' pattern of dispersal around the access roads. This diagram is superimposed on the 1839 map, **below, right**. The red buildings are no longer in existence.



Vernacular and traditional buildings in the village core

- ▬ Buildings identified in red on the 1839 map are no longer in existence
- ▬ Buildings numbered and shown in black are either original or built over the footprint on the 1839 map. (The plans, left, are rotated to make comparison with the aerial photo easier.)

Map, Left: The buildings in **red** are those which no longer exist in the village, although they were identified on the first OS map of 1839. Buildings in **black** and circled in the aerial photo, **above**, are those now existing, although some are enlarged or replaced whilst still occupying the footprint. **1** and **2** are vernacular cottages, **3** is a farmhouse building. There also appears to have been a small square in front of this building when the OS map was made. **4** is a single storey modernised cottage on an earlier footprint, whilst **5** is a cluster of two buildings, which are part of the remaining vernacular, but disused and in disrepair. **6** is the pub, which appears to have been a pair of semi-detached houses, now incorporated into the pub and extended at the rear. **7** has the simplicity of a vernacular building in stone and matches the footprint, whilst **8** is a considerably enlarged plan with repeated gable form at the rear, and the P.Archer shop in much the same position as the secondary building shown on the early map. Nine buildings, including some which are built over the footprint or extended, including the more substantial ones, remain from the original 28.

Section 2

A Vision for the Future

2.1 Opportunities ahead for the Village

Oldtown has several attributes which make it a pleasant and convenient place to live. Situated in an agricultural landscape defined by its surrounding boundary hedging and trees. The physical constraints on development include the river and its banks and the extensive wooded hedgerows. However the social implications of development in a small village relatively close to Swords town, also the northern fringe of the conurbation of Dublin, suggest that growth should be kept within those limitations which are appropriate for sustainable living in a rural area. The rapid growth of the last ten years has been eclipsed by economic factors. Within the village, three substantial housing developments have commenced. The one at Clonmethan Green is fully completed and occupied. At Oldtown Avenue and Weston Park there are some completed houses still unoccupied. The schemes are unfinished, with development sites and partly-built houses in close proximity to occupied new houses.

This advisory Village Development Framework Plan sets the context for the Local Area Plan, but also looks at a longer term framework to ensure that the structure of the village takes into account:

- the landscape context,
- the importance of identifying and maintaining the locally distinctive qualities of place.



‘A Vision for the Future’ includes the visible heritage of Oldtown’s history through conservation of its buildings, walls, hedges, trees - and artefacts such as this old pump - thereby retaining its locally distinctive qualities of place.

2.1 Opportunities ahead for the Village, (continued)

- the need for the local environment to be complemented by development which facilitates recreation and enjoyment of the countryside,
- the provision of resources to deal with the growth of population and changes in demographic structure.

Many of these amenities are long term objectives, yet it is vital to set out the intention behind them so that they are not compromised by unsuitable development, and that the objectives might be achieved in an incremental way, to keep pace with actual growth or stabilisation of population in years to come.

2.21 Village Main Street - Greenway link and Square

The junction at the centre of the village is a natural focal point, perhaps because the combination of three buildings; the old village pump; the river; and the bridge lend character to the place. In addition the trees are mature and significant. The space suggests currently that it is really for vehicles, with a relatively narrow footpath provided for on one side only. Paving this area, at the same level as the footpath should be explored, not only as traffic calming, but primarily to make it pedestrian friendly.

Beside and behind the Community Hall, the river defines a linear opportunity to create a riverside park and walk, a greenway which provides recreational 'green' amenities for the village as development proceeds. Its connectivity to the community hall and the junction is a promising place for an active public 'village green' which may host different activities and games, as well as being a key element in a proposed greenway which follows the river from north to south.



Above, right: The junction in the village. The simplicity of the surface is attractive, but would be so much more pedestrian friendly if it were paved. The merging of footpath surface with road would hint at the 'village' way using shared space for pedestrians and vehicles.

Left: The entrance into the new housing scheme, Oldtown Avenue, is attractive and informal in its treatment and would also benefit from a paved surface at the entrance to integrate the space, which is opposite the proposed village green.

It is important to explore this notion as an integrated design proposal, looking at lighting, paving, parking, planting and managing the spaces as one place: the **Village Square** and the **greenway link**. The **Square** being a new paved area along the road, and the **greenway link** the key green area beside the Square which links into the proposed greenway and major village green space in the southern development area.

Below: The road from Dublin, as it approaches the centre of the village. To the left is the paddock, which it is proposed should become part of the **Village Green**; a space for open air activities, play structures, attractive places to sit and a symbol for the village of its community.



Above: The junction, looking towards the village pump and the community hall. The image shows the substantial height and presence of the trees around the centre, the attractive stone wall which is also the bridge parapet and the large expanse of tarmac which is the junction of the R 122 Naul road with the road leading to the GAA grounds and Keogh's Cross through the village core. This area is poorly defined in traffic terms and could use up much less space, making it available for pedestrians, and safer for traffic. This could be the **Village Square**.

2.22 Village Main Street - The Village Core

The issues surrounding the Village Core, the old village centre, which retains some of the memory of its rural vernacular origins, have been discussed in Sections 1.6 and 1.8.1. The purpose of some further consideration is to examine whether a specific project for the lane may be undertaken to highlight the potential for improvement and to initiate heritage conservation in this area.

The Lane has now dominated by recent housing which has established a new, not quite, compatible scale in the village core. The use of a visually more suitable material on the roadway, such as resin based surfacing system, illustrated **below**, would improve the appearance. Along with a restriction on traffic for local access to premises and parking only, this could be a modern solution which would feel quite appropriate to the place. The number of vernacular buildings remaining in the village core is small. The impact of the stone building, **right**, in the Lane is important to the successful evocation of the village's past.



Right: reserved car parking in the village core is discreet and contained behind gates.

'Resin based' surfacing systems are another comparatively new introduction to the Irish paving markets. Their development has been made possible by significant advances made in polymer and epoxy resins over the past 25 years. The basic premise is that a decorative or coloured gravel is "glued" to an existing solid surface by means of a transparent or coloured resin'. The material is suitable, and has been used for vehicular traffic.



2.3 Housing within the Village Envelope

The recent and new developments in Oldtown are distinctive and make contributions in their own way. There have been attempts to influence materials choice in the centre, favouring stone finishes, but the latest schemes use coloured render (visually very successful), and coloured render with brick.

The three most recent housing schemes have careful design input into their layout and appearance. The two private schemes have stalled, and there are difficulties with unfinished areas on the ground as well as unoccupied houses. Action is needed to steer the sites, their developers and owners, through a difficult time whilst ensuring that they are not unsafe, unsightly or deteriorating unnecessarily.

The long term outlook for these schemes is positive, but their care and management over a protracted period will be challenging, not least for those who have become owners.

Below: Houses at Oldtown Avenue, attractive detached town houses with stone frontages and stone walls, but the estate is unfinished, and needs urgent action to make a satisfactory temporary solution



Above: Good-looking houses, terraced, but each asserting its individuality along Weston Park, on Fieldstown Road, from the airport and Dublin. This scheme has an imaginative layout and rather successful coloured render treatment which is cheerfully chosen, with a brick frontage in the centre of the terrace.

Below: Terrace of townhouses in the village core and close to the pub, with frontages faced in stone. They have a good scale in their own right, but challenge the original, vernacular scale.



Above: Social and affordable housing project by Fingal County Council, finished January 2010. There is provision for older people. The strong linear design is somewhat regimented considering the village's more informal, rural ambience. The central area needs planting to soften the tarmac surfaces.

Below: Houses at the western side of the triangle along the lane in the village core have a good frontage, and have helped to boost the number of people living in the centre.



2.4 Business Opportunities

Business activity in the village appears to be limited to its local service function; although, as there is an increasing tendency towards home-based employment, it is difficult to judge the accuracy of this without survey.

Business units are seen as a generic name for providing suitable accommodation for small commercial or retail activities during the period of initial growth and evolution of such businesses.

Existing permission exists on the site next to the church for a scheme which includes commercial or retail use with enterprise units on the 1st floor. There is also an existing permission for commercial units to the south of the village core. The scale of the village suggests only a modest capacity to occupy such premises.

2.5 Allotments and Community Gardens

There is a renewed interest in allotments, which seem to be particularly suitable for people who live in rural areas where industrial scale production of vegetables is part of the agricultural contribution. Community gardens are an extension of the allotment idea, where an area may be allocated for a shared garden with shared work to provide flowers and vegetables at a community level.



Above and Left: : The promotion of local food production in a rural environment is a promising initiative. Farmer's markets proliferate as outlets for locally grown foods.

The application of this to Oldtown could be in allotments; those illustrated are at **New Earswick**, York. The village was a Quaker Rowntree Trust project in the early 1900s which is still managed and is being progressively modernised by the Trust to meet modern day requirements with greenways, pedestrian routes, parking zones, new housing and housing refurbishment. The allotments in that area are most successful. There is a private allotments scheme near The Naul, and Fingal County Council have allotments at Donabate, Skerries and Powerstown.