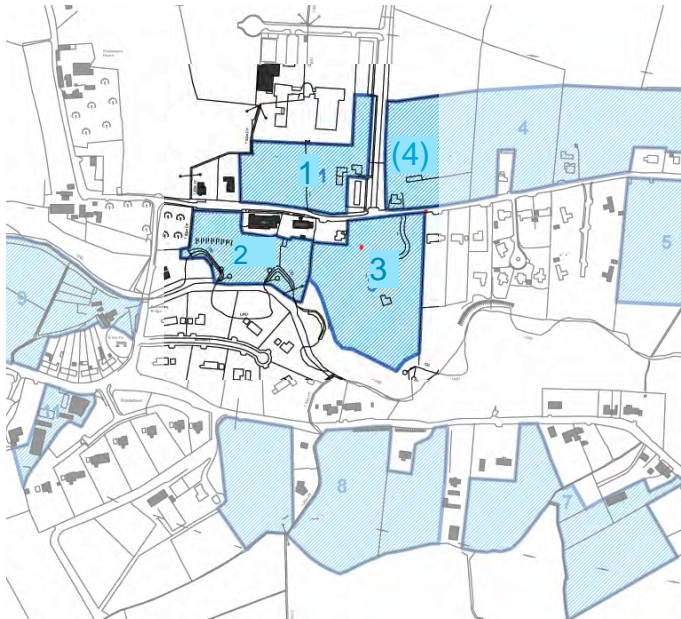


2.2 Projects to Strengthen the Village Centre

- Church, Community Centre and New School and Development Areas 1,2 and 3



2.21 Making a Village Square

It is a key aspiration of this study to create a village centre, to act as a symbol for the Rowlestown community and reinforce the existing components for a centre; the school, community centre and church. There are three development zones which contribute to this objective, (1,2,3 shown above) and the western end of zone 4.

Positioning the Square

There is an existing convergence for people and cars alongside the church and community centre. The road is relatively wide along this stretch and accommodates

parking in an informal way. The site immediately north of the church and community centre is Council owned. It is bounded on the North by the new National School, although there is no access from this side. Positioning the Square on this site offers potential to make a 'place' for the village.

Characterising the space

The edges of the space will benefit from activity with shopfront-type visibility and ease of access. If there is a route through the space it will help to establish its familiarity. Thus two proposals are incorporated in the plan; a pedestrian and cycle route which leads up to the school for parents and children who would choose not to use a car; and two modest scale commercial / retail buildings which could provide a convenience shop for the area, and services such as doctor, hairdressing, beauty treatment, possibly a cafe, and so on. The space is surrounded with village scale housing clusters, and is attached to a linear open space incorporating a footpath and cycle route leading to the school from a drop off point outside the church.



A close up view of the plan (**left**) allows for a more detailed description of the proposed surfaces of the street and the Square. The street surface is overlaid with paving and lifted to the level of the Square, approximately 200 mm above existing level. The platform is gently ramped until it meets the footpath and Square level. The drop off point and daytime parking zone is defined by different paving rather than levels. Retention of the mature trees on site is desirable, especially in the Square.

The North-South pedestrian and cycle route (**Dark Red dotted line**) exits the square between buildings to the landscaped area to the north and the proposed additional entrance to the school.

A second, East-West shared surface cycle route passes (**White dotted line** on both maps of the area) through the cluster to the east of the landscaped area, and continues eastwards to cross Rowlestown Drive and travel through Development Area 4.

The image (**right**) illustrates the possibilities for the new Village Square facing the church. In time the Square would be equipped with seating and perhaps a community notice board, bicycle parking and so on. For the moment it is an open space, awaiting activity, country markets and furnishings...

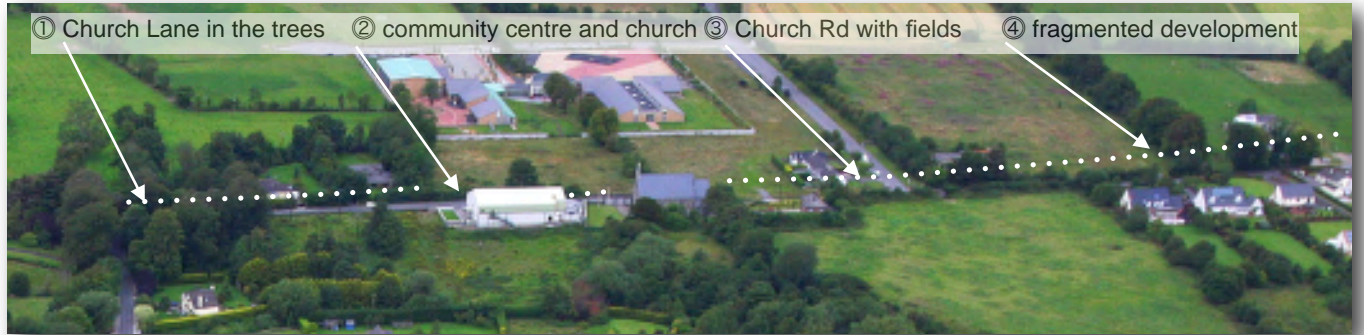


2.22 Improving Church Road

Church Road is already a pleasant route along its length, starting with trees on all sides at the western end. It opens out with community centre and church on the right side and continuing frontage of vegetation on the left, giving way to open countryside on both sides after the church. The challenge is to ensure that existing trees should be maintained whilst increasing the activity and interest along the road.

The prime component of this depends on the making of the Village Square, described earlier. The creation of what is in effect an extension of the proposed village square across the road to the church gates and railings is achieved by making a 'platform' with the same surface as the Square, ramped gently at either end and designated as a pedestrian priority portion of the road.

The proposed mixed housing clusters around the Village Square would enliven the street and offer passive surveillance. Housing clusters are used as frontages in Development Areas 1,3 and the western end of 4. A new footpath is proposed on the north side of the road, (See transportation map) to supplement the existing footpath on the church side. The provision of a new parking space proposed alongside the community centre would lessen the likelihood of congestion on the street. None of these provisions would materially alter the existing character and quality of the street but would help to make it safer, more convenient, lively and attractive.



Above : aerial photograph shows Church Road along its length (dotted line). The numbered key at the top of the picture shows the progression, starting with the junction in the trees in front of the avenue entrance to Rowlestown House, ①, continuing past the community centre with a hedgerow of shrubs and trees opposite ②. After the church it is more open to the fields; ③ and ④.

Development with defined frontages to these edges is suggested, to consolidate the street with built frontage, as part of the making of a renewed village centre.

Below: another aerial view of Church Road emerging from trees at the top and with community centre which has land behind it but with a steep slope to the river. The proposed zone for parking, circled, is between the centre and the trees. The image, **left**, is an idea of how the children's play area will fit between parking and the (newly refurbished) community centre with the zigzag footpath and cycleway leading down to one of the pavilion 'healthy hubs'

