

Oldcastle Written Statement

Settlement	Oldcastle
Position in Settlement Hierarchy	Small Town - developed on a local, independent and economically active basis under the influence of large towns in Meath and has a strong tradition serving a large rural hinterland. The broad approach of the Development Plan for Small Towns is to manage growth in line with the ability of local services to cater for growth and respond to local demand.
Position in Retail Strategy	Level 4 Retail Centre
Population (2011) Census	1,384
Committed Housing Units (Not built)	9 No. Units
Household Allocation (Core Strategy)	319 No. Units
Education	National School, Secondary School
Community Facilities	2 no. churches, community centre, 2 community halls, health centre, library & fire station.
Natura 2000 sites	None within the development boundary
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Meath County Development Plan 2013 – 2019)	No SFRA Required Implement Flood Risk Management policies from CDP

Goal

To capitalise on Oldcastle's position as a employment and service centre for North Meath by providing a positive policy framework for continued economic growth and community development whilst preserving the built and natural environment and ensuring that development is both sustainable and of a high quality.

01 Town Context

Oldcastle is located to the north west of County Meath approximately 21 km from Kells, 11 km from Virginia and 11 km from Ballyjamesduff. The town developed as a Georgian market town centred on a crossroads which forms the current Town Square. Development has radiated from the Square along the two regional roads, R154 (Athboy to Mountnugent) and R195 (Castlepollard to Virginia) which transverse the town in east to west and north to south directions respectively.

Oldcastle has developed on a more sustainable basis than most other towns and villages in the County, predicated on a robust traditional manufacturing basis (furniture and engineering) but also with a strong service sector employment. Oldcastle acts as a services centre for those residing in the town and its extensive rural hinterland which extends across the county boundary into both counties Cavan and Westmeath. Commercial activity in the town has developed around, and remains focused on, the Square and the entrance roads approaching same.

By virtue of its location removed from the Dublin Metropolitan Area and the water services infrastructural constraints which prevailed during the Celtic Tiger years, the town has not expanded its residential base by comparison to the towns of the east and south east of the

County. The potential of the considerable backlands areas of the town to accommodate mixed use developments should be afforded a priority over green field sites removed from the town centre and the main educational and recreational facilities of the town. The resolution of the water and waste water infrastructure deficiencies will continue to act as a constraint on development in the immediate short term.

The traditional town centre must be maintained in conjunction with Oldcastle's strategic role as a location for businesses, shopping, services, culture, leisure, community and civic facilities. It is important that this range of services and facilities is provided in the town to reinforce its designation as a Small Town in the county settlement hierarchy (Table 2.1 of Core Strategy, Volume I). In order to fulfil this role, a vibrant mix of uses must be promoted in the town centre which endorses the objectives of sustainable development as outlined by government policy, promotes vitality and diversity and reduces the need to travel significant distances by private motor car.

In order to facilitate the delivery of the vision for Oldcastle, land use, movement and access and natural and built heritage strategies have been identified. The land use strategy for Oldcastle seeks to provide for a compact town centre which supports the existing economic base whilst seeking to diversify and encourage inward investment and employment growth. Moderate population growth relative to the size of the town will be provided for in accordance with Table 2.4 (Core Strategy) of the County Development Plan and the provision of essential local commercial and community facilities to serve existing and future residents will also be a priority of the overall strategy.

02 Water and Wastewater Services

The public water supply currently serving Oldcastle is sourced primarily from Lough Bane and is augmented by extraction at Clavin's Bridge, Kells off the River Blackwater. It is operating as a joint Kells/Oldcastle water supply and serves an extensive geographical area. The total combined capacity is 27,000 Population Equivalent (PE), of which 2,500 PE remains available. Currently, however, there are limitations to the levels of water supply to Oldcastle. A new joint scheme is currently being proposed that will serve Kells and reduce demand from Lough Bane.

Wastewater is currently collected and directed towards the existing treatment plant, situated to the south west of the town, before discharging to the Inny River. Operational works have been implemented as an interim measure in order to ensure an adequate level of service for the existing population. These include optimisation works for the day-to-day operation of the existing treatment plant and the construction of a storm water holding tank. Due to insufficient capacity (1,500 PE) the existing treatment plant is incapable of effectively treating any significant additional waste water. A new wastewater treatment plant is currently under construction with an expected opening date in 2014. The new wastewater treatment plant will initially have a capacity for a PE of 3,500 with a possible stage 2 development to increase future capacity to 5,250 PE.

As part of this upgrade, new sewerage infrastructure will be laid throughout the town to serve the new treatment plant and development lands. These improvements will be sufficient to cater for any future growth in residential and commercial activities within the Development Plan period.

All development proposals shall be considered in the context of the available waste water and water supply capacity.

03 Land Use

The principal land uses in Oldcastle comprise of local services, retail, manufacturing and employment uses, educational and residential development. Distinct uses organised on a geographical basis have developed in Oldcastle including an industry cluster to the north and

primarily residential areas to the south. The Town Square and streets which radiate from same define the commercial core of the town with the primary educational, health care and ecclesiastical uses located to the east with other civic uses (library, Credit Union and fire station located to the south on the Millbrook approach to the Square. The town has accommodated a range of new uses while also retaining many of its original land uses and has maintained its compact form.

The core aims of the land use strategy will be:

1. To continue to provide for a compact town centre and encouraging the clustering of uses will be encouraged as part of this Development Framework. The redevelopment of derelict or underutilised properties and identified Opportunity Sites will be promoted in this regard;
2. To provide for the release of residentially zoned lands in accordance with Table 2.4 of the Core Strategy of this Development Plan. The land use zoning objectives map has identified the locations which are being promoted for future residential development on the basis of the sequential approach from the Town Square and proximity to key community facilities on the Kells Road and Virginia Road;
3. To support and protect the existing economic base whilst seeking to diversify and encourage inward investment. The continued promotion and protection of the existing cluster of economic development and employment opportunities to the north of the town is a central aim of this Development Framework, and;
4. To make appropriate provision for community and recreational development and encourage linkages between existing and new facilities.

04 Residential Development

Oldcastle has experienced a moderate level of development in recent years and whilst it has maintained its historic building lines, the core has experienced some deterioration which is evident at various locations throughout the town. As experienced in most Meath urban centres, more recent residential development has taken the form of suburban type detached and semi-detached dwellings. With the expectation of the Loughcrew Hills development, pedestrian connectivity with the town centre is relatively well provided for. However, permeability in the backland areas of the town is poor and is in need of improvement as outlined in Section 9.0. This Development Framework will endeavour to improve accessibility to these developments and any future development in the village in terms of pedestrian / cycle linkages.

The Core Strategy of the County Development Plan (Table 2.4 refers) provides a housing allocation of 319 units to Oldcastle over the 2013 – 2019 period. In addition, Table 2.5 indicates that there are a further 9 units committed to in the form of extant planning permissions. The site with the benefit of extant planning permission (Loughcrew Hills) is identified on the accompanying land use zoning objectives map.

The land use zoning objectives map has identified the lands required to accommodate the allocation of 319 no. units provided for under the Core Strategy. This followed the carrying out of an examination of the lands previously identified for residential land use in the 2009 Oldcastle Local Area Plan and still available for development. The lands which have been identified for residential land use arising from this evaluation largely arise following the application of the sequential approach from the Square outwards. Priority was afforded to the completion of the Loughcrew Hills development on the Mount Nugent Road (25 no. units) and Loughcrew View development on the Kells Road (13 no. units). A total of 8.95 hectares of lands have been identified for A2 residential land use which have the capacity to provide 225 no. units at an assumed density of 25 units per hectare. In addition, a large site (1.5 hectares) has been identified for town centre facilities and uses to the rear of Cogan Street and Cavan Street which will include a residential component (assumed 50 no. units). There are other pockets of lands identified which have an A1 residential land use zoning objective which also have the potential to provide housing units over the life of the County

Development Plan. The Planning Authority is satisfied that sufficient lands have been identified to accommodate the household allocation of 319 no. units. All other lands are identified as a Phase II and are not intended for release within the life of this County Development Plan.

The other sites which were previously identified for residential development in the 2009 Local Area Plan (now identified as Phase II) were considered less favourable on the basis of their peripheral location relative to the town centre or lands being land locked with no obvious or deliverable access available in the short term. In particular, the lands previously identified off the "Harvest Mile" were discounted on the basis of their relative remove from the town centre and the substandard nature of the existing road infrastructure to accommodate residential development. The large site off Stoney Road was considered in preference to the large site off the Millbrook Road on the basis of unrestricted access and proximity to secondary school and sporting facilities. The Development Framework seeks to ensure that in any redevelopment proposal of the lands adjoining the former cinema at Oliver Plunkett Street, that the identified access to the lands to the rear of Millbrook Road are protected.

The Core Strategy of this County Development Plan seeks to permit a moderate rate of residential expansion in the town over the Plan period. Future development and growth will need to take account of the town's ability to grow in a sustainable manner without causing unacceptable impacts upon the surrounding environment. This Development Framework endeavours to facilitate the continued growth of well designed, sustainable new residential communities, which are integrated with the existing town's built environment in order to promote the efficient use of land and of energy, to reduce pressure for one-off housing on rural lands, to minimise unnecessary transport demand, encourage walking and cycling and to enhance the existing built environment; and to enhance the character of Oldcastle and make provision for future community infrastructure for the town.

05 Commercial, Economic and Retail Uses

Oldcastle is identified as a Level 4 retail centre in the County Retail Hierarchy. Oldcastle acts as a service centre for those residing in the town and its extensive rural hinterland. The Square continues to form the commercial core of the town supporting a wide range of retail, commercial and professional services, catering for the resident population, surrounding hinterland and passing trade. The town is also uniquely vibrant in the County from a commercial perspective due to a robust traditional manufacturing base (furniture and engineering) and strong service sector employment.

There has been relatively little modern retail development in Oldcastle, when compared to other towns in Meath, reflecting its relatively small size. The Retail Analysis undertaken to inform the 2009 Oldcastle Local Area Plan indicated that Oldcastle primarily caters for top-up shopping with main food shopping carried out in larger centres. Oldcastle is predominantly a comparison centre (c. 66% of trading floorspace), comprising mainly independents, and would benefit from an additional range of retail services and some modern retail formats.

In order to reinforce the role of the town centre, retail led regeneration will be encouraged, particularly where it also provides for the promotion of tourism. In order to achieve this, the 'convenience' element and attractiveness of shopping will need to be enhanced, including improvements to parking and traffic calming measures. This will be necessary to ensure that expenditure leakage from Oldcastle does not increase, particularly for top-up shopping and lower/middle order comparison goods. The Planning Authority has identified a large site (1.5 hectares) for town centre facilities and uses to the rear of Cogan Street and Cavan Street. The Planning Authority has indicated their intended access points off both roads and it would be the intention that a link road would develop between both sites. It is considered that this land bank is sufficient to cater for the modern requirements of convenience retailers. A Framework Plan is required to be prepared and agreed with the Planning Authority as part of the development of this backland site.

Oldcastle has a proud history of employment focused on the manufacturing industry as evident from the quantum of land developed for industrial or related uses. The majority of these lands are located north of the town (Virginia Road) in close proximity to the existing industrial cluster. A business park has also been developed in this area although the interest shown to date has been disappointing. This shall be the focus for employment creation over the life of this Development Plan in addition to finding new uses for the vacant or redundant premises in the town. Having regard to the nature of the main manufacturing industries in Oldcastle, the current economic climate and the modest rate of growth experienced since 2006, the quantity of industrially zoned land identified for the town is deemed sufficient to meet the anticipated needs of Oldcastle over the life of this Development Framework.

06 Community Facilities and Open Spaces

Oldcastle provides a range of educational facilities from crèche level to post primary schooling. The town is catered for in terms of educational facilities by Gilson National School and St. Oliver's Post Primary School. The post primary school is a relatively new and modern school having been rebuilt in 2000 and has since been extended in the form of 4 additional classrooms. St. Oliver's Post Primary School also offers a range of adult education courses outside of school hours. The provision of educational facilities plays a central role in supporting sustainable communities, the protection and creation of which is an integral part of this Development Framework.

To accommodate the projected increase in population over the life of this Development Plan, there is the potential requirement for a new single stream national school. Having regard to the location of the existing national school within the curtilage of a Protected Structure, the additional land required to accommodate a new school is not available at this location. Lands have thus been zoned to the north east of the existing school which can accommodate a new school of the required size and which also allows for future expansion. This land is adjacent to community and recreational facilities thus encouraging multi-campus use. Access to this site is difficult and will require some site assembly off the Kells Road to facilitate same. The proposed means of access is identified on the land use zoning objectives map.

The town is also served by a health care centre located on Church St, two community halls: the Show Hall and the Masonic Hall, a modern library, a Credit Union inclusive of gym for members, a fire station, churches and a number of clubs which include:

- Oldcastle GAA Clubs including ladies and juvenile clubs;
- St Brigids Athletic Club;
- Oldcastle United Football Club;
- Oldcastle Basketball Club;
- Oldcastle Community Games, and;
- Oldcastle Tidy Towns Committee.

In addition to these venues and clubs, amenity areas such as the Fairgreen Playground and the Oldcastle Pitch and Putt Course are also important resources and contribute to the overall community infrastructure of Oldcastle.

There are two bring banks in Oldcastle one located at Curran's Filling Station on the Dublin Road and the other at the Fire Station on the Millbrook Road.

Oldcastle town centre is currently deficient in passive recreational public open space. The Square represents a key open space area in the town centre which is under utilised and currently used for parking. The parking provision reduces permeability through this open space, thereby inhibiting the movement of pedestrians in the area and detracting from the visual prominence of the Square itself. Gilson Park to the east of the town centre represents the largest area of open space in the Development Framework area. The park forms part of a group of amenities at this location including a pitch and putt course and children's play area. These local amenities are well sign-posted from the Square; they are, however, somewhat

removed from the town centre and not well served by pedestrian links. The architectural heritage of Oldcastle in conjunction with its archaeological potential and existing vistas contributes to the town's special interest and enhances its tourist function.

A core aim of this Development Framework is to identify and make provision for high quality community facilities at appropriate locations and to encourage linkages between these new facilities and existing facilities. It is considered that the improvement of the existing connectivity between Gilson Park and adjoining pitch and putt course will be facilitated by the redevelopment of Opportunity Site No. 4 (see Urban Design Section). This proposal would result in the formation of a new street and provide a linkage between the existing educational area to the west through to Gilson Park and to the community, recreational and open space zoned lands to the east. This will not only allow for multi-campus use but will also aid in the regeneration of the Cloughan Street area.

It will be an objective of this Development Framework to identify and facilitate the provision of open spaces in Oldcastle as part of any new development as well as improve connectivity to the existing amenities from the town centre and surrounding residential areas.

6.1 Renaissance Community Plan

The Economic Development Strategy contained in Volume I of the County Development Plan acknowledges that the proposed Village Renaissance Programme being developed by Meath Partnership under the Rural Development Programme will further enhance the physical appearance of a number of towns and villages across the County and is generally welcomed. The Council will include a policy to work closely with local communities in implementing village design plans that have been prepared in a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans and development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

Policy ED POL 41 seeks to facilitate and support the implementation of Village Design Plans and other community led projects to enhance village environments that have been prepared through a public consultation process whilst ensuring that such plans are consistent with adopted Local Area Plans for such centres and town/village development objectives contained in the County Development Plan.

A Community Plan for Oldcastle has been prepared by Meath Partnership in January 2013. The Development Framework for Oldcastle is supportive of the proposals contained in the Village Plan as they relate to the development boundary of same. The projects which have been identified as "highest priority projects" in the Community Plan are complementary to the land use strategy put forward in this Development Framework.

07 Urban Design

Oldcastle developed as a market town at the intersection of key transport routes. The central Square forms the focus of the urban fabric and although there has been a proliferation of modern development in the fringe areas over the past two decades, much of the original fabric of the town remains.

The town evolved organically over time resulting in a disordered street layout and a proliferation of laneways. Notwithstanding this, the urban framework of Oldcastle is orientated around the Square, which is located on an elevated position and is visually prominent and offers views over the town. Although the Square acts as junction for numerous vehicular routes, a sense of enclosure is created by the buildings that surround it, which define the area as a key functional space in the town.

The urban form of the town, which focuses on the central Square and the convergence of regional road arteries, has resulted in vacant backland sites in close proximity to the town centre. These backland sites and the concentration of commercial uses in the town centre have led to a fragmentation of the urban form of the town towards the fringes, resulting in a

noticeable transition between urban and rural at the town boundary. The landownership pattern in Oldcastle may make it difficult to consolidate backland sites, the development of which is a key aim of this Development Framework. In order to address this issue, 5 no. Opportunity Sites in the town centre have been identified. Detailed development briefs have been prepared for each site which outlines the type of development permissible on each site. These development briefs which are contained in Appendix 1 have regard to the existing land ownership patterns and encourage the consolidation or cooperation of land owners to develop these sites.

This Development Framework aims to promote the development of a high quality, well designed, well landscaped and appropriately scaled environment that is in keeping with the existing character, amenity, environment, heritage and landscape of the town. The design of new development should be responsive to its contextual surroundings and interact appropriately between settlement and landscape always aiming to enrich the existing qualities of the town. High quality design, appropriate use of materials and quality layout will be essential in order to ensure that new development contributes positively to Oldcastle and helps to create an attractive and sustainable settlement.

All designers of multiple residential developments within the Development Framework boundary are requested to submit a Design Statement to the Planning Authority with their planning applications in accordance with the requirements of Section 11.2 Residential Development of Volume I. A Design Statement is an appraisal of the distinctive character of the area adjoining the proposed development site and must consider how the design and layout of the proposed development responds to, and preferably enriches that character.

08 Heritage

The rich archaeological, built and natural heritage of the area both comprising of and surrounding Oldcastle are important resources that must be protected and enhanced to add to the local sense of place and belonging, and also to increase the attractiveness of the area to tourists and visitors. The protection of these resources and presentation of their heritage value are key considerations in this Development Framework. All development objectives and planning policies have been formulated with a view to improving the overall quality of their context and setting.

This Development Framework seeks to protect and enhance the existing built and natural heritage of the town and will seek to ensure that all Government Guidelines are adhered to when considering new forms of development.

8.1 Built Heritage

Oldcastle is of historical, architectural and cultural importance. This is evidenced by its distinct character and inherent qualities arising principally from the built heritage of the settlement and remaining archaeological features. The importance of this Built Heritage is reflected in the designation of the town centre as an Architectural Conservation Area. The built environment of Oldcastle demonstrates the evolution of its residential, commercial and social development over time and shows the different building techniques and materials employed and the designs and styles of previous generations. A number of examples of traditional building forms remain including Gibney's shop and the Naper Arms hotel in addition to several traditional shop fronts e.g. McQuaids Pharmacy and Mullens Auction Room.

Development has influenced the current form of the town and the relationship of buildings to the street edge illustrating how the town has developed physically and economically. While there are a number of examples of modern interventions limited opportunity remains for further infill development along the principal streets due to the narrow plot widths and the requirement to retain a cohesive character. Development can have a positive impact and can conserve, enhance and provide a new use for older structures; however, unsuitable uses or

developments which detract from the traditional streetscape may threaten the character of Oldcastle, particularly inappropriate alterations or demolition of existing structures. The cumulative impact of such proposals would have a negative impact on the character of the streetscape and undermine the role of Oldcastle as a historic service centre.

This Development Framework seeks to achieve a balance between facilitating further sustainable growth and development in Oldcastle while ensuring that the existing heritage and tourist value of the town is both maintained and enhanced.

Oldcastle contains several natural and built features worthy of protection. These features include those contained on the Record of Protected Structures and the Record of Monuments and Places and those identified in the Meath County Landscape Character Assessment.

Two sites of archaeological potential that are also listed on the Record of Protected Monuments include St. Brides Church of Ireland (ME00376) and the Motte & Bailey to the south of the town (ME00376). Particular care is required in the assessment of development proposals in the vicinity of these Recorded Monuments.

8.1 Architectural Conservation Areas

Oldcastle contains an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) encompassing the majority of the centre of the town (See Map 9.2.12 of the Meath County Development Plan 2013-19). The ACA extends from the Square to Oliver Plunket Street, Cogan Street, Cavan Street, Barrack Street & Church Street. This designation recognises the special significance of the built heritage which characterises Oldcastle and that care must be taken with regard to any future proposals in this area. The Planning Authority will continue to ensure that all future changes will enhance, rather than detract from, the character of this area and its setting.

Information on ACAs is set down in Section 9.6.12 of this County Development Plan. Further information on Oldcastle ACA is detailed in the Character Statement which is available on the Council's website (www.meath.ie)

8.3 Natural Heritage

There are no Candidate Special Conservation Areas (c.SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or proposed Natural Heritage Areas within the development boundary of Oldcastle. However Lough Sheelin SPA is located circa 9km to the north west of Oldcastle and Lough Bane c.SAC is located circa 10km south of Oldcastle. Oldcastle derives its water supply primarily from Lough Bane.

Oldcastle also possesses other unprotected natural heritage features which include the public park, trees, hedgerows and uncultivated grassland. Of particular note are the groupings of trees that mark the southern, western and eastern approaches to the town. These tree groups create 'green gateways' to the town that contribute positively to the ambience of the town.

There are also significant groupings of trees around the Gilson National School and St. Bride's Church adjacent to the Square. These trees function as a wildlife habitat, provide visual relief and are an important visual amenity for the town.

The public park, located in the east of the town, is an important local amenity that adds significantly to the quality of life of Oldcastle.

09 Movement & Access

Oldcastle is served solely by regional roads, the R154 and R195, with the N3 / M3 directly accessible via Virginia to the north east and Drumbaragh to the south east. The road network in the town is dominated by the regional routes R195 and R154 that meet at the cross roads in the town centre. The R195, running north to south through the town, is the busier of the two roads. The flow of traffic moving along these roads is often hampered by cars making parking manoeuvres in the town centre. It is important to find a compromise between the free flow of traffic along these regional roads and the safety and convenience of town centre users. This can be best achieved through the control of the speed of traffic through the town, the provision of convenient pedestrian crossings and the proper management of parking in the town centre.

Due to the historic layout of Oldcastle, the town is not particularly pedestrian or cycle friendly. In the most part the streets of Oldcastle are sufficiently lit to provide for safe pedestrian and cycle movement. The exception to this is Cobbler's Road where there is no street lighting. The improvement of the pedestrian and cycle network in the town, making it attractive, convenient and safe to use, will encourage a shift from car journeys to pedestrian or cycle journeys. Improvements would include the provision of a well laid out and comprehensive footpath network, convenient pedestrian crossings, improved street lighting, cycle lanes and bicycle racks. The objectives included in this Development Framework have identified the locations where improvements are required.

There are currently no pedestrian crossings or cycle lanes in the town.

Oldcastle is currently served by a public transport service to Kells via Virginia (no. 188 service). This includes a once daily onward service to and from Navan. A large number of onward services can also be availed of in Kells including services to and from Dublin. Improvement in this service could have the effect of encouraging the use of public transport for some journeys.

Car parking remains an ongoing problem in Oldcastle. Excessive on-street parking is disrupting the flow of traffic through the town and is inhibiting access to the town centre whilst existing car parks remain underutilised. Improving the pedestrian links between the Town Square and the car parks, particularly the Fair Green car park, would help to encourage usage of this car park and alleviate pressure for parking from the town centre. In conjunction with better organised on street parking, this would ensure that traffic can pass easily through Oldcastle, whilst shoppers can easily access the town centre.

The transport vision for Oldcastle is to ensure that, where necessary, the use of private vehicles is facilitated in an efficient and equitable manner whilst encouraging the use of more sustainable modes of transport including pedestrian and cycle movement and enhancement of pedestrian permeability. In order to achieve this vision, it will be necessary to provide for the improvement in parking and traffic movement in Oldcastle town centre. On-street parking, particularly long-stay parking, should be restricted where appropriate and directed toward existing car parks near the town centre.

Strategic Policies

SP 1 To encourage the establishment of a high quality urban grain throughout the Development Framework area and the seamless integration of existing development into a unified urban form that supports sustainable communities.

This will be achieved through seeking:

- a) Intensification of development at appropriate locations.

- b) An emphasis on mixed land uses that are complementary and offer a greater diversity of land uses.
- c) Increased accessibility to community, economic and recreational facilities.
- d) Prioritising infrastructure provision before considering additional development.
- e) High quality design that is innovative rather than repetitive.
- f) The protection of amenity levels of adjoining development and the integration of new development with existing development by maximising permeability and connectivity.
- g) The orientation of proposed buildings towards the street and areas of open space.

SP 2 To operate an Order of Priority for the release of residential lands in compliance with the requirements of CS OBJ 6 of the County Development Plan as follows:

i) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective corresponds with the requirements of Table 2.4 Housing Allocation & Zoned Land Requirements in Volume I of this County Development Plan and are available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan.

ii) The lands identified with an A2 "New Residential" land use zoning objective but qualified as "Residential Phase II (Post 2019)" are not available for residential development within the life of this Development Plan.

SP 3 To operate an Order of Priority for release of lands identified for E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" in compliance with the requirements of ED OBJ 2 as follows:

i) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" land use zoning objective are available for development within the life of this Development Plan.

ii) The lands identified with an E2 "General Enterprise & Employment" land use zoning objective but qualified as "Phase II" will only be available for development when all of the Phase I lands have been developed or being developed (i.e. permission granted and development substantially completed) and may be available within the life of this Development Plan.

iii) The only exception is where a significant development is proposed which could not be accommodated within the lands identified as Phase I, for reasons of scale, lack of availability of unsuitability of the relevant Phase I lands, lands within Phase II may be considered in this regard. The development of the lands identified as Phase II will be subject to the preparation and agreement of a Framework Plan with the Planning Authority prior to the submission of any planning application on said lands.

Policies

Flood Risk

FR POL To manage flood risk and development in Oldcastle in line with policies WS 29 – WS 36 inclusive in Volume I of this County Development Plan.

Land Use

LU POL 1 To encourage the maintenance of a compact mixed-use town centre in Oldcastle, with a balance of uses that promotes movement and activity throughout the day and evening.

LU POL 2 To maintain existing commercial and retail development in the town centre and encourage the upgrading and expansion of such facilities to meet local need.

LU POL 3 To encourage the active use of first floors in the town centre for commercial and retail uses in addition to residential uses.

LU POL 4 To discourage non-commercial uses at ground floor level in the town centre and uses which detract from the historical character of the town centre (except where otherwise specified).

LU POL 5 To encourage environmental improvements to the public realm of the town centre in the form of convenient and safe pedestrian crossings and route ways, landscaping developments and high standards of design and finish in commercial developments.

LU POL 6 To protect existing industries while seeking to diversify the range of employment offer in Oldcastle.

LU POL 7 To ensure that industrial and manufacturing development is undertaken in line with the provision of infrastructure.

Residential Development

RD POL 1 To provide for the expansion of Oldcastle on lands close to the town centre, which may be developed with the least infrastructural expenditure and which provide good access to the range of social, educational and economic facilities available in the town.

RD POL 2 To encourage in-fill housing developments where appropriate, the use of underutilised and vacant sites and vacant upper floors for accommodation purposes and facilitate higher residential densities at appropriate locations, subject to a high standard of design, layout and finish.

RD POL 3 Overall, residential densities should reflect individual site characteristics, conform to the surrounding character of Oldcastle and protect the amenity of adjoining residential development. Residential densities of up to 35 no. units per hectare can be achieved in Oldcastle town centre and 25 no. residential units per hectare in the rest of the Development Framework area, subject to good design and site constraints. With regard to housing proposals comprising 15 or more units, a mix of house types and sizes should be provided with variety in design within a unified concept.

Community Facilities and Open Spaces

CF POL To ensure that community and recreational facilities, including the Upper River Inny to the south of the town, are linked into the surrounding environment through the provision of safe and high quality pedestrian and cycle links.

Renaissance Community Plan

REN POL To facilitate and support the implementation of Oldcastle Community Plan and other community led projects to generally enhance the village whilst ensuring that the projects which emanate from same are consistent with the development objectives contained in this Written Statement for the village.

Urban Design

UD POL Innovative development proposals seeking to consolidate the town centre and create distinct character areas, in particular through the use of backland areas in Oldcastle, will actively be encouraged by the Council.

Heritage

HER POL 1 Where replacement buildings are deemed acceptable to the Planning Authority, new buildings should take into account existing plots, where possible, in order to retain the existing grain, character and vibrancy of the town centre.

HER POL 2 While not generally encouraged, where breaking through internally between adjacent buildings is required in the ACA, both fronts are to maintain an active function. Clear vertical distinction is required between distinct buildings.

HER POL 3 Alteration to the existing opening sizes and proportions or for additional openings in traditional buildings in ACAs will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and where they do not detract from the character of the area.

HER POL 4 To protect historical burial grounds in Oldcastle and encourage their maintenance in accordance with conservation principles.

Movement and Access

MA POL 1 To promote pedestrian movement in Oldcastle through the improvement of the footpath network and the provision of pedestrian crossings at convenient locations.

MA POL 2 To ensure that traffic is reduced to a safe speed before entering Oldcastle.

MA POL 3 To adopt and implement a parking plan for Oldcastle that would promote use of the existing car parks and ordered on-street parking where appropriate.

MA POL 4 To provide for the upgrading of regional roads in the Development Framework area.

MA POL 5 To ensure that a suitable road network is provided to allow for ease of movement of traffic in Oldcastle both now and in the future.

Objectives

Land Use

LU OBJ 1 To protect, while also offering opportunities to expand, the existing employment base of Oldcastle through the zoning of an adequate quantity and range of land and the provision of necessary infrastructure.

LU OBJ 2 To maintain the successful mixed-use town centre of Oldcastle through a balance of retailing, commercial uses, housing, education and community facilities to serve existing and future residents.

LU OBJ 3 To resolve the infrastructural issues in the town and to give priority to employment generating uses as services become available.

LU OBJ 4 To maintain and encourage independent access to the upper floors of buildings in the town centre.

LU OBJ 5 To encourage retail and commercial uses at ground floor level in premises fronting the Square.

LU OBJ 6 To encourage a wide range of employment uses on lands zoned E2 north of the town.

LU OBJ 7 To discourage the locating of any further employment uses to the south of the town immediately adjacent to established residential areas.

LU OBJ 8 To require the preparation a Framework Plan for the backlands to the north of Cogan Street and west of Cavan Street identified for 'B1' land use zoning objective. Any redevelopment of these lands must include for shared car parking, a significant residential component and provide an access road linking the 2 streets. The Planning Authority shall specify the requirements of this Framework Plan through the development management process.

Community Facilities and Open Spaces

CF OBJ 1 To co-operate with the Department of Education and Science in relation to matters relating to the future expansion of St Oliver's Post Primary School and the siting and development of a new National School. An access road to serve the proposed new national school site from Church Street shall be provided as part of the residential development proposals on the adjoining lands or by the Department of Education and Science should they proceed with site development works first.

CF OBJ 2 To support the provision of a playing pitch on lands zoned for educational purposes adjacent to St. Oliver's Post Primary School.

CF OBJ 3 To ensure the preservation and protection of Gilson Park and to integrate Gilson Park and other open spaces in Oldcastle through an emphasis on pedestrian links.

CF OBJ 4 To ensure the safety and security of the Fair Green Playground.

CF OBJ 5 To improve links between the town centre and surrounding public open space areas.

CF OBJ 6 To protect and encourage more intensive use of Gilson Park and other open spaces.

CF OBJ 7 To maintain and protect existing trees and hedgerows where possible and facilitate a fourth "green gateway" to the north of the town.

CF OBJ 8 To co-operate with the relevant statutory, voluntary and community groups in the provision of a multi-purpose community centre and an active recreational space at an appropriate location in the town.

Heritage

HER OBJ 1 It is a specific objective of the Council to maintain the identified views and vistas in Oldcastle whilst also allowing for proper planning and orderly development.

HER OBJ 2 To maintain important views and landmarks in Oldcastle.

Movement and Access

MA OBJ 1 To provide for footpaths and street lighting on Cobblers Road.

MA OBJ 2 To provide for footpaths leading from Cloughan Street to Gilson Park, via the entrance to Fair Green Car Park.

MA OBJ 3 To provide for additional street lighting at the Southern end of Cloughan Street.

MA OBJ 4 To facilitate a new street linking Cavan Street, Cloughan Street and the Fair Green.

MA OBJ 5 To provide for footpath improvement and additional street lighting at the Northern end of Cloughan Street.

MA OBJ 6 To provide for a footpath and additional street lighting to connect Mount Dutton Close to Cavan Street.

MA OBJ 7 To facilitate a new street linking Cavan Street and Cogan Street to the west of the town centre to provide appropriate access to development lands.

MA OBJ 8 To extend the footpath on the southern side of Cogan Street to connect Loughcrew residential estate to the footpath network.

MA OBJ 9 To provide pedestrian crossings points in the town centre.

MA OBJ 10 To provide a walking route to the north-east of Oldcastle as specified on the land use zoning objectives map.

MA OBJ 11 To facilitate additional footpath and public lighting provision on the Kells Road over the life of the Development Plan.

MA OBJ 12 To provide cycle routes where possible.

MA OBJ 13 To provide cycle stands at appropriate locations in the town.

Appendix to Oldcastle Written Statement: Urban Design Framework for Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Sites in Oldcastle

This Development Framework recognises the need to capitalise on the physical assets of the town centre, including its historic environment and to encourage the high quality redevelopment of underutilised opportunity sites. The development of opportunity sites will enhance neighbouring premises and provide a new commercial impetus for the town, whilst expanding on the range of attractions that the town centre has to offer. In addition, the redevelopment of the identified opportunity sites would allow for the enhancement and improvement on the existing urban grain of the town, clustered around the central Square. It will be essential that "*best practice*" urban design and sustainable development principles are incorporated into the proposed redevelopment of the identified opportunity sites.

The 5 no. opportunity sites are illustrated on Figure 1 below and were identified owing to their location within the town centre and their potential for redevelopment to cater for additional town centre uses. The 5 no. opportunity sites, should they be developed, will contribute to maintaining a compact town centre whilst also enhancing the economic vitality and viability of Oldcastle. The redevelopment of these sites is, however, key to the realisation of the strategy set out in this Written Statement. Individual design briefs have been formulated for each site with a view to providing guidance for proposed development. Overall, these opportunity sites possess potential for major new shopping and mixed-use developments that connect seamlessly with the existing streets and town centre while also increasing permeability within the town.

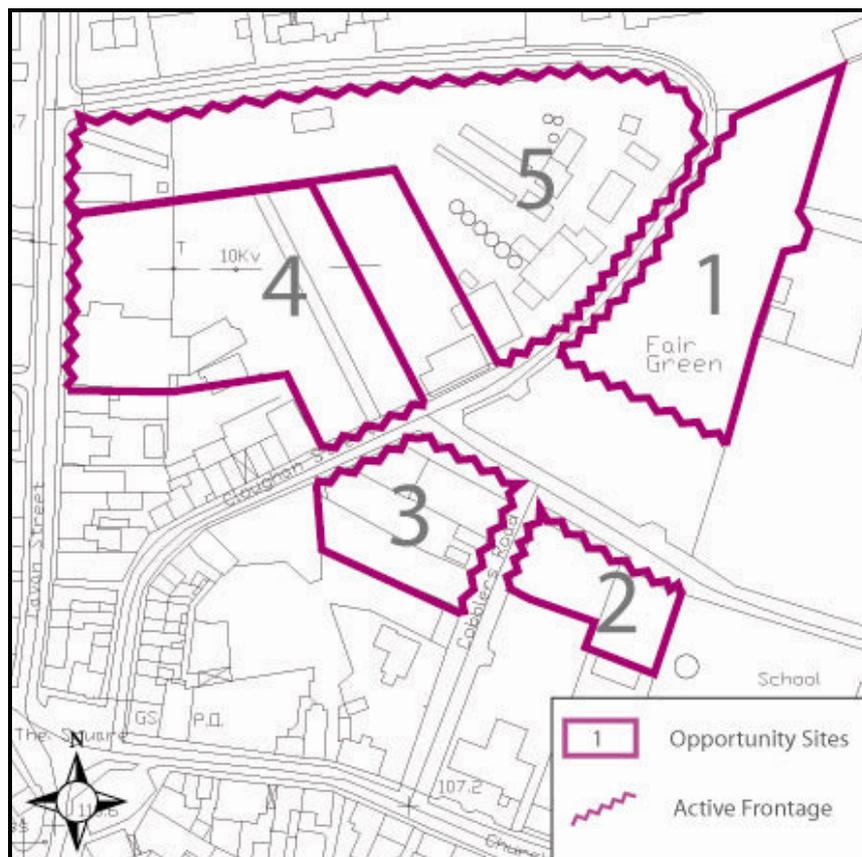


Figure 1 : Opportunity Sites in Oldcastle

Design Brief Site No. 1

Site No.1 fronts onto Cloughan Street and is located immediately to the north of the public car park at Fair Green. The site is currently vacant but has the potential to be developed for leisure and retail uses with residential units on the upper floors.

Site Development Objectives

- A built environment that provides edge definition will be considered where it contributes to and enhances the existing open space provision;
- The redevelopment of this site necessitates the provision of high quality pedestrian linkages to the town centre;
- Any redevelopment of this site must embrace the amenity of Gilson Park while also creating an active street frontage.

Land Uses

Retail/ leisure/ residential uses are the primary uses that have been identified for the subject site. The commercial element should be concentrated along the street frontage adjoining the southern and western boundaries of the site, with an active frontage adjoining Gilson Park. It is envisaged that dual-aspect residential units will be accommodated in the upper floors providing passive surveillance into Gilson Park.

Height

Building heights on the subject site should not exceed 3 no. storeys in height in line with County Development Plan standards.

Urban Design

It is essential that any development proposed on this site appropriately addresses the street and creates an active frontage which will enhance the area and strengthen links to the town centre. Development on the site must also address Gilson Park while respecting its amenity.

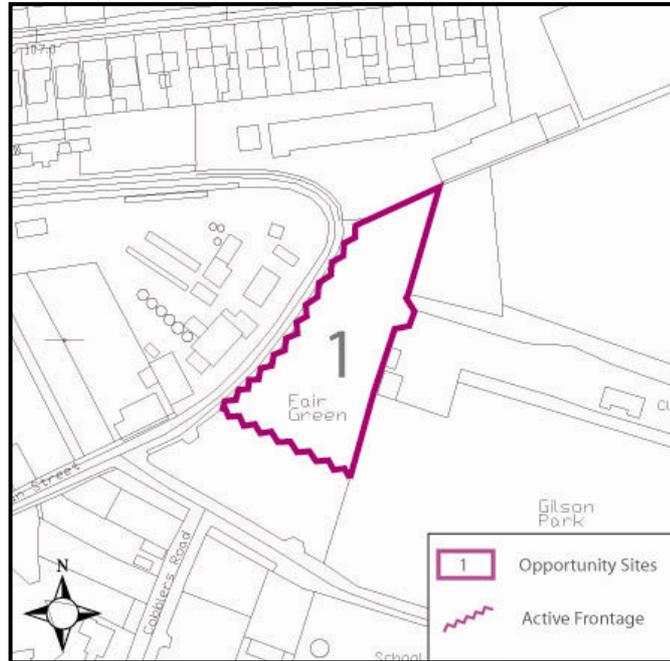


Figure 2 : Opportunity Site No. 1

Design Brief Site No. 2

This site is located to the rear of the HSE Health Centre, adjoins Gilson National School and fronts onto the Fair Green and Gilson Park. This is a corner site and therefore any redevelopment proposals will be required to address Gilson Park and Cobblers Road. It is proposed to redevelop this site for residential uses such as town houses or similar that will overlook the Fair Green (including the designated children's play area) and Gilson Park, thereby increasing passive surveillance of these public open spaces.

Site Development Objectives

- It is essential that any building successfully addresses the Fair Green and Gilson Park by comprising an active frontage onto these areas of open space;
- Residential dwellings, such as townhouses or similar, on this site should be designed to overlook Gilson Park with own door access;
- Residential dwellings on this site should respect the residential amenity of adjoining properties.

Land Uses

Residential use is the principal use that has been identified for the subject site. Other land uses may be considered where they respect the scale and grain of the design brief.

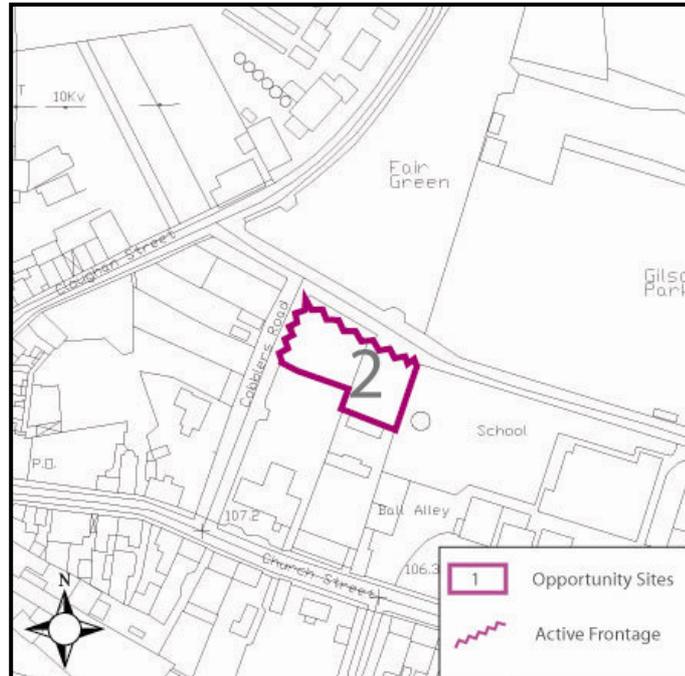


Figure 3 : Opportunity Site No. 2

Density

The site is strategically located within the town centre and is therefore suitable for higher density development such as townhouses or similar. All development proposals on this site will be subject to design considerations.

Height

The site's proximity to the Town Centre facilitates the provision of 2-3 storey own door access dwellings on this site or similar.

Urban Design

Any proposed redevelopment of the subject site must ensure that an adequate design response to the site's location opposite Oldcastle's principal areas of public open space is adopted.

Design Brief Site No. 3

This corner site which fronts onto Cloughan Street and Cobblers Road is located adjacent to the existing town centre and opposite the Fair Green. The redevelopment of this site is pivotal to the overall regeneration of this area. The design of any proposed development must thus acknowledge the corner status of the site and seek to address the street frontage in an appropriate manner that will result in the enlivening of this area of the town centre.

Site Development Objectives

- Any proposed development will be expected to embrace the site's frontage onto the Fair Green and therefore active frontage shall be provided fronting this key area of open space in order to achieve passive surveillance of the children's playground and the public car park.
- Retail uses at ground floor level will create an active frontage that will encourage activity and subsequent passive surveillance of the community infrastructure.

Land Uses

Commercial and residential uses are identified for the subject site.

Density

The site is strategically located within the town centre and is therefore suitable for higher density development subject to design considerations.

Height

The site's proximity to the town centre facilitates the provision of 2-3 storey structures on the site.

Urban Design

A fine urban grain comprising retail/commercial units will be encouraged on the site owing to its location within the town centre and in order to correspond with the prevailing urban fabric surrounding the site.

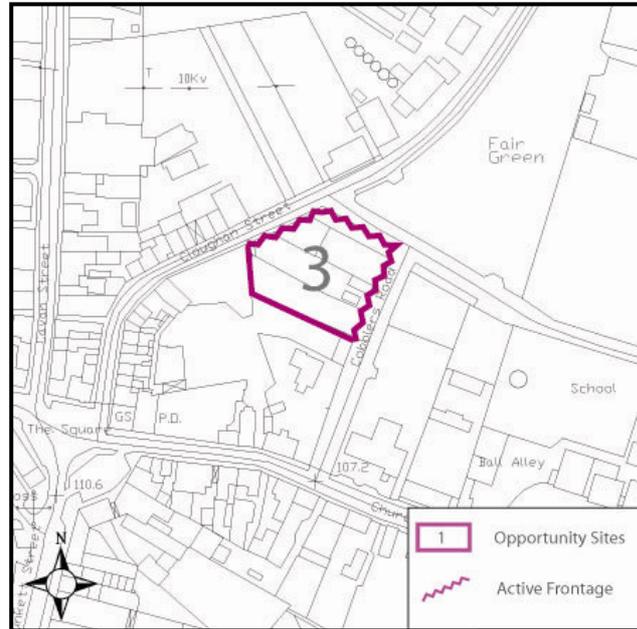


Figure 4 : Opportunity Site No. 3

Design Brief Site No. 4

This site currently comprises dual frontage onto Cavan Street and Cloughan Street. At present vacant retail units front onto Cavan Street with undeveloped backlands located adjoining Cloughan Street. Meath County Council will work with the land and property owners and developers to secure the comprehensive redevelopment of this site to provide a mixed-use development that will form an extension of the town centre uses. The development of this site is central to expanding Oldcastle's town centre to create a more attractive, vibrant town that meets the needs of residents, commercial interests and visitors. Furthermore, the planned redevelopment of the site, in particular the provision of a new street, is key to the success of both the regeneration of this area and to the community and recreation strategy as it will link the town centre to the existing community infrastructure.

Site Development Objectives

- The provision of greater levels of permeability that facilitate improved access to the Fair Green and Gilson Park from the town centre;
- Any proposed development must seek to provide for a new internal street through the site with commercial and office ground floor units fronting onto this new internal route. The provision of a new street will create an integral linkage between Cavan Street and the range of community facilities at the Fair Green and Gilson Park, thereby enhancing permeability within the town centre and increasing the quality of life for inhabitants;
- Active frontages onto both Cavan Street and Cloughan Street;
- A predominance of retail related uses and office development on the ground floors of any development proposal;
- The provision of residential units in the upper floors of the proposed development;
- Measures will be required to protect existing residential amenity;

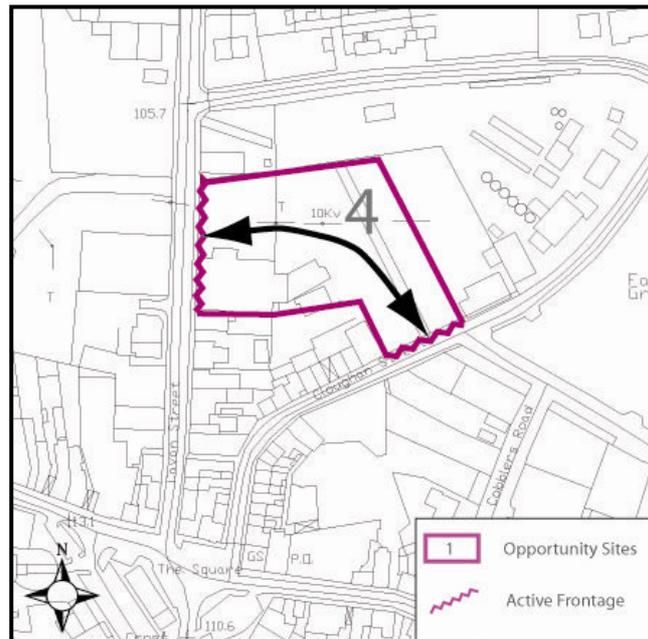


Figure 5 : Opportunity Site No. 4

Land Uses

Retail, commercial and residential uses are the primary uses that have been identified for the subject site. The commercial development should be concentrated along the proposed internal street frontage between Cavan Street and Cloughan Street. The predominant use will be retail with own door office units encouraged to a lesser extent.

Density

The site is strategically located within the town centre and is therefore suitable for higher density development subject to design considerations and the protection of the existing residential amenity of residential properties located on Cloughan Street.

Height

The site's proximity to the town centre facilitates the provision of 2-3 storey buildings on the site with taller buildings close to the centre of the site subject to design and visual impacts.

Urban Design

It is essential that an internal pedestrian street is provided through the site as part of any development proposal. In addition, the utilisation of varying building heights will ensure that the development integrates with existing residential units on Cloughan Street and creates a

coherent streetscape. A fine urban grain will integrate the new street into the existing townscape.

Design Brief Site No. 5

This site is distinct as it comprises of the Oldcastle Creamery which it is recognised is still operational. However, in order to protect the future development of this key area of Oldcastle, it is necessary to provide a brief for its comprehensive redevelopment should the opportunity arise within the life-time of this County Development Plan. The brief will ensure that this strategic site is developed in a planned and appropriate manner.

The site has the potential to accommodate an extension of town centre uses, including large floorplate retailing, thereby not only maintaining the compact form of the town centre but also providing for future growth proximate to it.

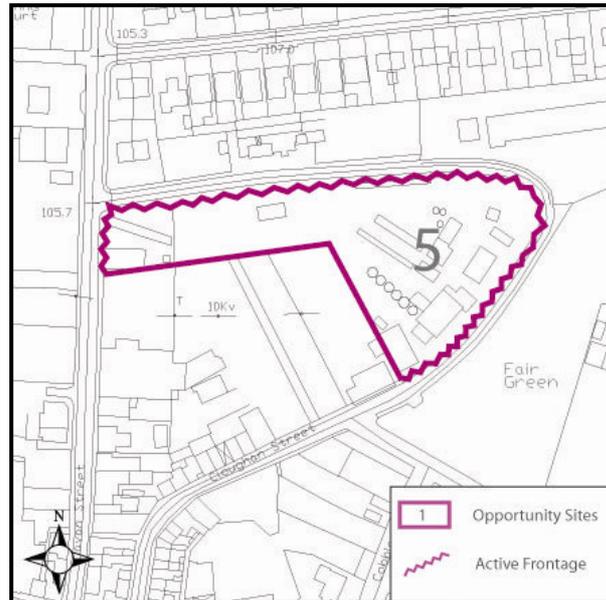


Figure 6 : Opportunity Site No. 5

Site Development Objectives

- The redevelopment of the site should act as a high quality expansion of the town centre facilitating the maintenance of a compact centre;
- The site has the potential to provide a mix of retail and residential uses or large floorplate retailing that would accord with the sequential test;
- Any development on the subject site must be primarily orientated towards Cloughan Street whilst also acknowledging the dual nature of this corner site. Parking must be located behind the building line and any redevelopment proposed should demonstrate how it addresses and contributes to the street and represents the optimal upgrading of the area.

Land Uses

Retail and commercial uses are the primary uses that have been identified for the subject site. The commercial development should be concentrated along the street frontage adjoining the northern boundary of the site and at the Cloughan Street frontage.

Height

The site's proximity to the town centre facilitates the provision of 2-3 storey buildings on the site with taller buildings close to the centre of the site subject to design and visual impacts.

Urban Design

It is envisaged that this site could accommodate a large floorplate retail unit given its existing use and layout. It is integral, however, that any development proposal addresses both Cloughan Street and the street forming its northern boundary while integrating with surrounding developments.