

# JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES

ARCHAEOLOGY | CONSERVATION | HERITAGE | PLANNING

## Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

### Proposed Lidl Store, Main Street, Newcastle, County Dublin



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# 1. Introduction

John Cronin & Associates have been commissioned by **Lidl Ireland GmbH** to prepare an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment of the proposed development of a new Lidl store on the south side of Main Street, Newcastle, County Dublin.

The subject site is located on generally level plot of land in the townland of Newcastle South and forms a long-established linear plot perpendicular to the main street and typical of a number of properties in the centre of this south County Dublin town. Although the site is located in the historic central area of Newcastle, it is bounded to the west by a strip of open farmland while there is a private access road on the east boundary leading to an architectural salvage yard. A new residential and road development is under construction on open farmland to the south of the subject site as part of significant emerging growth of the area.



*Figure 1: Location of subject site on south side of R405 in Newcastle, Co. Dublin within yellow shaded area.  
(Source: Google)*

The proposed development will comprise clearance of some modern structures behind the protected Kelly Estates premises, to accommodate construction of a new single-storey Lidl store with associated parking areas and services on the site. The main entrance to the site will be through the existing gated opening onto the R405 which will be enlarged, while the rest of the street-frontage on this northern part of the site is proposed to be conserved to maintain the existing street edge while incorporating it into a new café and public plaza. The upstanding masonry walls of the historic dwelling to the north-west corner of the site will be conserved and the building extended and converted to a new retail premises.

This report was prepared by Eamonn Hunter and is based on a site inspection in May 2022 during which a visual assessment was made of upstanding structures and boundaries and a photographic record compiled. Site images are presented in an appendix to the present document.

## 2. Context

### Location

The subject site is located on a generally level site in the townland of Newcastle South on the south side of the Main Street in Newcastle, Co. Dublin. It comprises an open, linear site with mostly hedgerow boundaries perpendicular to the R405. The street-fronting northern edge comprises the historic premises of Kelly Estates with the front (north) masonry walls of three former dwelling houses forming the rest of the northern boundary onto wide footpath in front of the site. A new residential and road development is under construction to the south of the subject site.



**Figure 2:** Existing plan of proposed development within historic linear site on south side of R405 in Newcastle to west of St Finian's RC Church and graveyard. (Source: OSI)

### Legal & Policy Framework

The Heritage Act (1995) (as amended) defines architectural heritage as including: *all structures, buildings, traditional and designed, and groups of buildings including streetscapes and urban vistas, which are of historical, archaeological, artistic, engineering, scientific, social or technical interest, together with their setting, attendant grounds, fixtures, fittings and contents.*

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) was established under the Architectural Heritage Act (1999), to record architectural heritage structures within the State and to advise local authorities in relation to structures of architectural heritage significance within their

administrative areas. The conservation principles of care and protection of architectural heritage and the facilitation of the listing of significant buildings of architectural merit are set out in Part IV of the Planning and Development Act (2000). This requires Local Authorities to maintain a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) of structures with special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, to be included in City/County Development Plans. In addition, Local Authorities must provide for the preservation of townscapes etc. through designation of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). Any changes that materially affect the character of a protected structure require planning permission.

The detached five-bay, two-storey stone-built premises of “Kelly Estates” at the front north-eastern corner of the subject site is a protected structure (**RPS ref. 229**) within the current South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 (**RPS ref. 229** within adopted SDCC Development Plan 2022-2028 (not in force at time of writing)), and is recorded by the NIAH (**reg no. 11212005**) as being regionally significant with special architectural interest. The proposed development involves no changes to the historic portions of the protected building but will see removal of extraneous modern detached structures behind the street-fronting premises as well as truncation of the existing modern extension to the rear of the building. The boundary delimited by South Dublin County Council for the **Newcastle Village ACA** includes the subject site which occupies one of the distinctive linear plots associated with the historic development of the settlement from the medieval period.

The current South Dublin County Council Development Plan presents a number of objectives and policies in relation to protection of archaeological heritage, protected structures and architectural conservation areas as well as maintaining and enhancing streetscapes and landscapes of special interest and character. These include the following:

*It is the policy of the Council to conserve and protect buildings, structures and sites contained in the Record of Protected Structures and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the (setting\*) special character or appearance of a Protected Structure including its historic curtilage, both directly and indirectly.*

*\*inclusion of “setting” of a protected structure is only change from existing 2016-2022 Development Plan to 2022-2028 development plan due to come into force in August 2022*

*It is the policy of the Council to preserve and enhance the historic character and visual setting of Architectural Conservation Areas and to carefully consider any proposals for development that would affect the special value of such areas.*

## **Historical background**

The arrival and conquest of large parts of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans in the late twelfth-century broadly marks the advent of the Irish late medieval period, which continued up until the beginning of the post-medieval period in c.1550. The arrival and conquest of large parts of Ireland by the Anglo-Normans in AD 1169 marks the advent of the late medieval period which continued until approx. AD 1550. This period saw the continuing expansion of Irish urbanisation as many of the port cities developed into international trading centres and numerous villages and towns developed as local or regional market centres.

At the time of the Anglo-Norman conquest in 1169, Mac Giolla Mo-Cholmóc of Uí Briúin Chualann was in possession of Newcastle. He succeeded in retaining the district of Liamhain until 1215,

when Henry II took the demesne manor for himself (Sweetman 1875, 88). In 1228, the King bestowed a grant upon 'mother church of the King's manor of Newcastle de Leuan' (ibid., 241), which survives as the local Church of Ireland, dedicated to St. Finian (National Monuments Service ref. no.: DU020-002002-). It was one of the prebends of St. Patrick's Dublin until 1469, when it merged with the parish of Glendalough (Ball 1905, 137). A well (DU021-017001-), close to the subject site, is associated with this church.

The motte and castle (DU020-003001-), dated c. 1200 AD (O'Keefe 1986, 44-5), is evidence of the first stages of Norman settlement in the town. However, in 1294, King Edward I granted an armed force to Saggart and Newcastle to ward off attacks by 'the Irish of the mountains, felons and rebels' (Sweetman 1881, 83). The skirmishes did not relent, as the town possessed six castles by the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Ball op. cit., 130), including DU020-003004-, DU020-003006-, DU021-017002- within the study area.

The post-medieval period (1550+) saw the development of high and low status stone houses throughout the Irish countryside. During this period any given settlement cluster is likely to have consisted primarily of single-storey thatched cottages with associated farm buildings while two-storey farmhouses became more common in the nineteenth century. In the latter half of the twentieth century, there was a radical change in the nature and character of Irish domestic architecture manifested by the replacement of older stone-built structures with modern dwellings of concrete blockwork construction.

In 1613, James I granted a charter to Newcastle, elevating it into a parliamentary borough, with a market, twelve burgesses and a chief magistrate (Edwards *et al* 1983, 358). The 1654-6 Civil Survey of Dublin (Simington 1945, 292) described: "seven old Castles on New Castle Lands and the Ruins of a Church on the parcel of Glebe" (**Figure 3**).

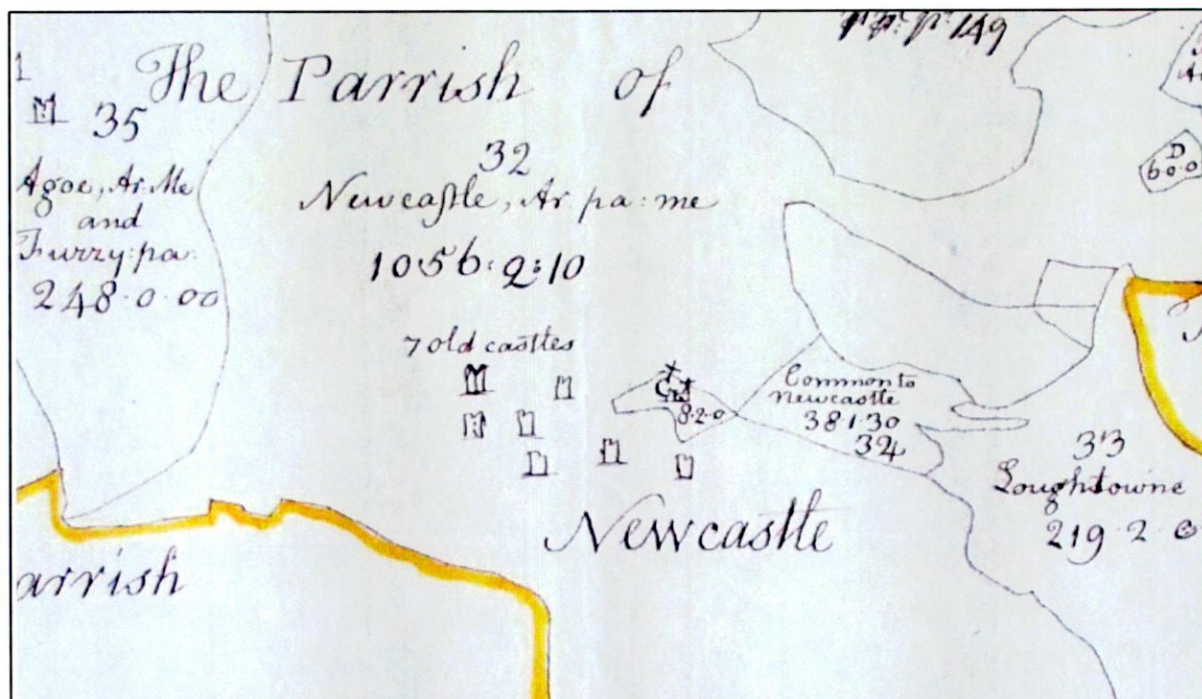
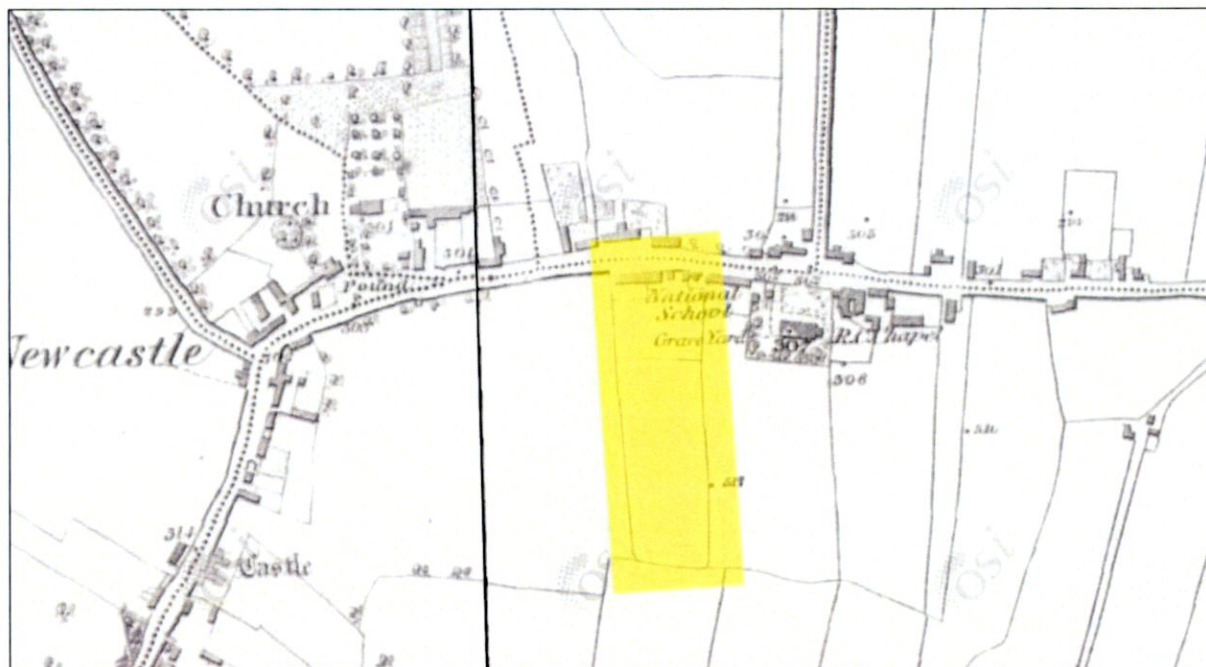


Figure 3: Segment of William Petty's Down Survey map of Newcastle Parish circa 1654-6 (Source: Down Survey)

Lewis (1837, 425) described Newcastle as follows:

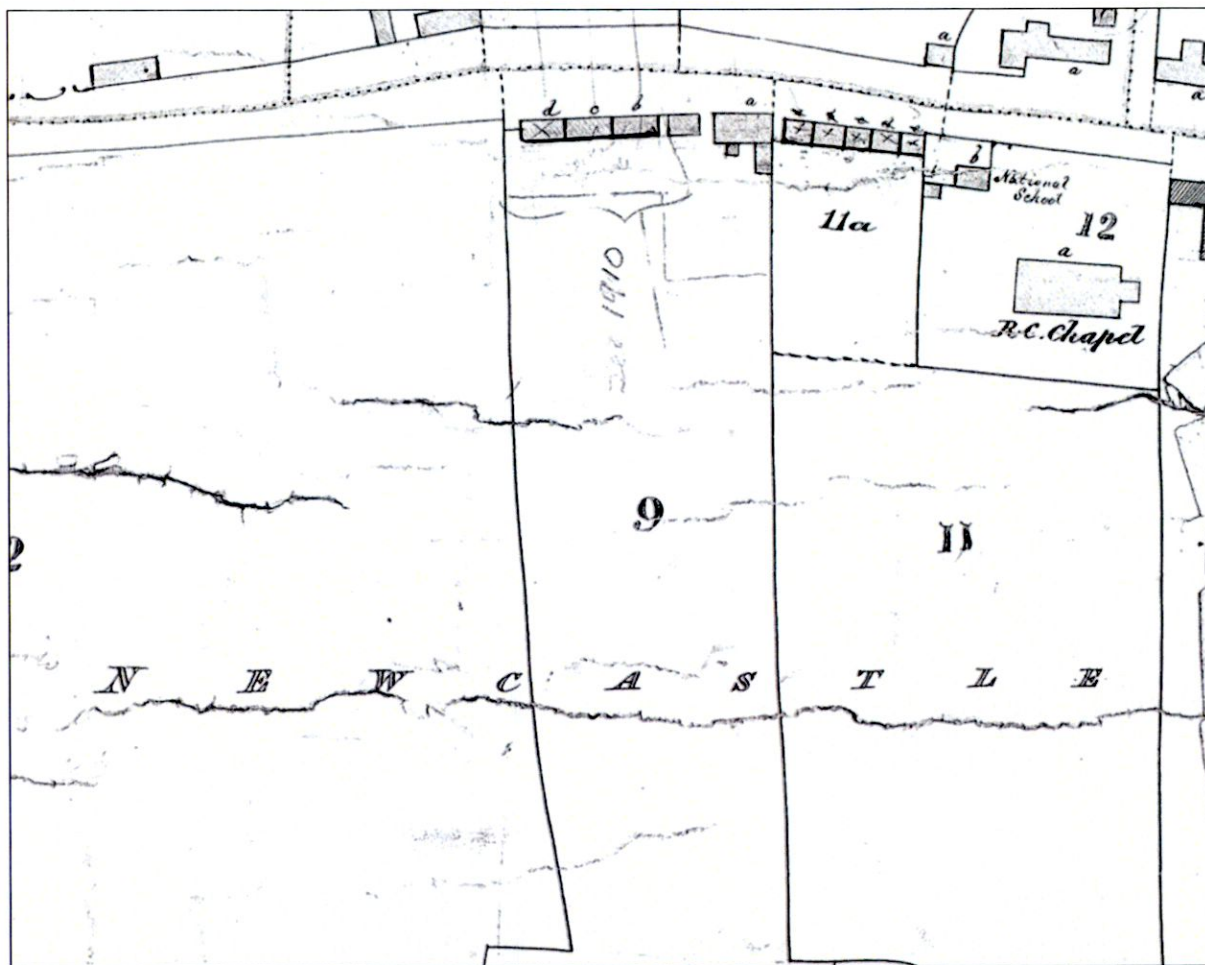
*A charter, dated March 30th, 1613, was granted to this place by Jas. I. whereby it was erected into a corporation, consisting of a portreeve, 12 free burgesses, and a commonalty, with power to appoint inferior officers; to hold a court of record for pleas to the amount of five marks, and to be a guild mercatory and the portreeve to be clerk of the market. In 1608, a grant was made to Jas. Hamilton, Esq., to hold a market here on Thursdays, and fairs on the feasts of St. Swithin and All Saints, and the day after each; and in 1762 the portreeve and burgesses obtained a grant of a market on Mondays, and fairs on May 9th and Oct. 8th. All of these markets and fairs are discontinued. The borough also sent two members to the Irish parliament, but it was disfranchised at the Union. There is a dispensary in the village, and it is a constabulary police station, Agriculture is in a high state of improvement: the principal crops are wheat, oats, and potatoes. There are good quarries, the stone of which is used for building and repairing the roads. The Grand Canal passes through the parish...*



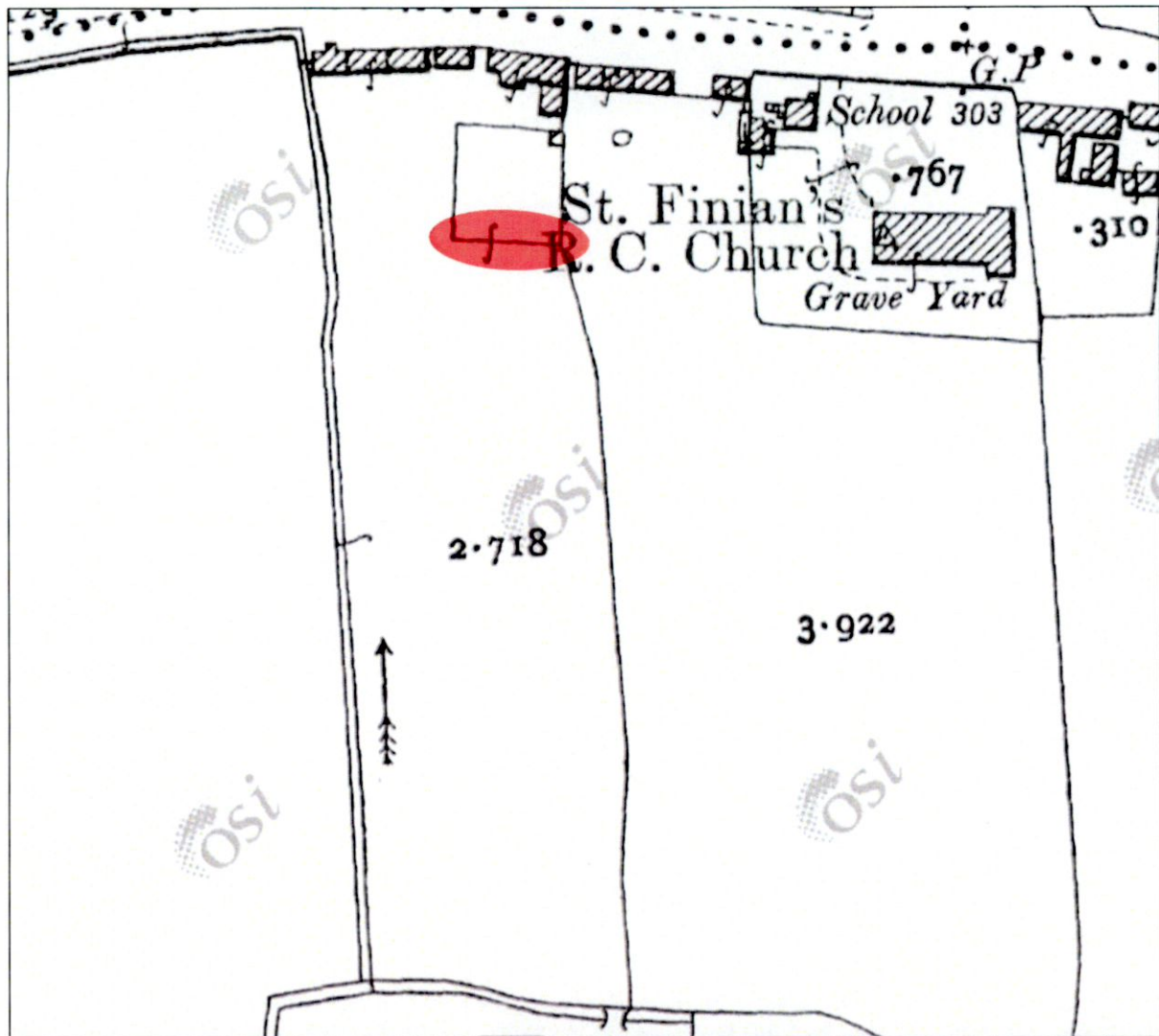
**Figure 4:** Extract from 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1837; published 1839) with subject site within yellow-shaded area. (Source: Government of Ireland, Historic Environment Viewer)

The first edition Ordnance Survey map (see **Figure 4**) shows the site prior to the extension of the north-east corner building (now Kelly Estates) to the rear. The row of three dwellings on the north-western corner of the site were extant at this time with only the re-roofed and repaired walls of the westernmost structure remaining on the site presently. Front wall masonry of the other buildings here also survives to form the northern boundary of the site.





**Figure 5:** Extract from map accompanying 1847 Griffith's Valuation Record for property of Lord Cloncurry (no. 9 on above map) leased to Thomas Kelly along with three other separate tenants in houses marked b, c and d above. Property d is proposed to be refurbished and extended as part of proposed development. See plate 6 within appended photographic record for surviving arrangement of street-front walls to eastern side of north boundary to site including small section of infill between outbuilding of Kelly Estates building and east gable of house b shown above. (Source: griffiths.askaboutireland.ie)



**Figure 6:** 1910 25" OS map. Heavily overgrown brick wall visible on site (see **plate 13** in appended photographic record) may be remains of shaded former late nineteenth or very early twentieth-century wall here or it may be a modern reconstruction. No visible drainage channel or structures at southern extent of site as depicted on this map, with ground now level through to residential development site to south.

### 3. Description of site & proposed development

The subject site occupies a long-established linear plot bounded to the west by an earthen bank with mature mixed native hedgerow species and a drainage channel, recently scraped-out to the southern portion of the site (**plate 19**) while the northern portion of the channel was piped and covered (**plate 17**) in recent years. To the east, the existing earthen bank and mature hedgerow of the southern portion of this boundary (**plate 21**) is replaced by planted leylandii cypress and portions of modern concrete-block walls to the northern portion of the site (**plate 15**).

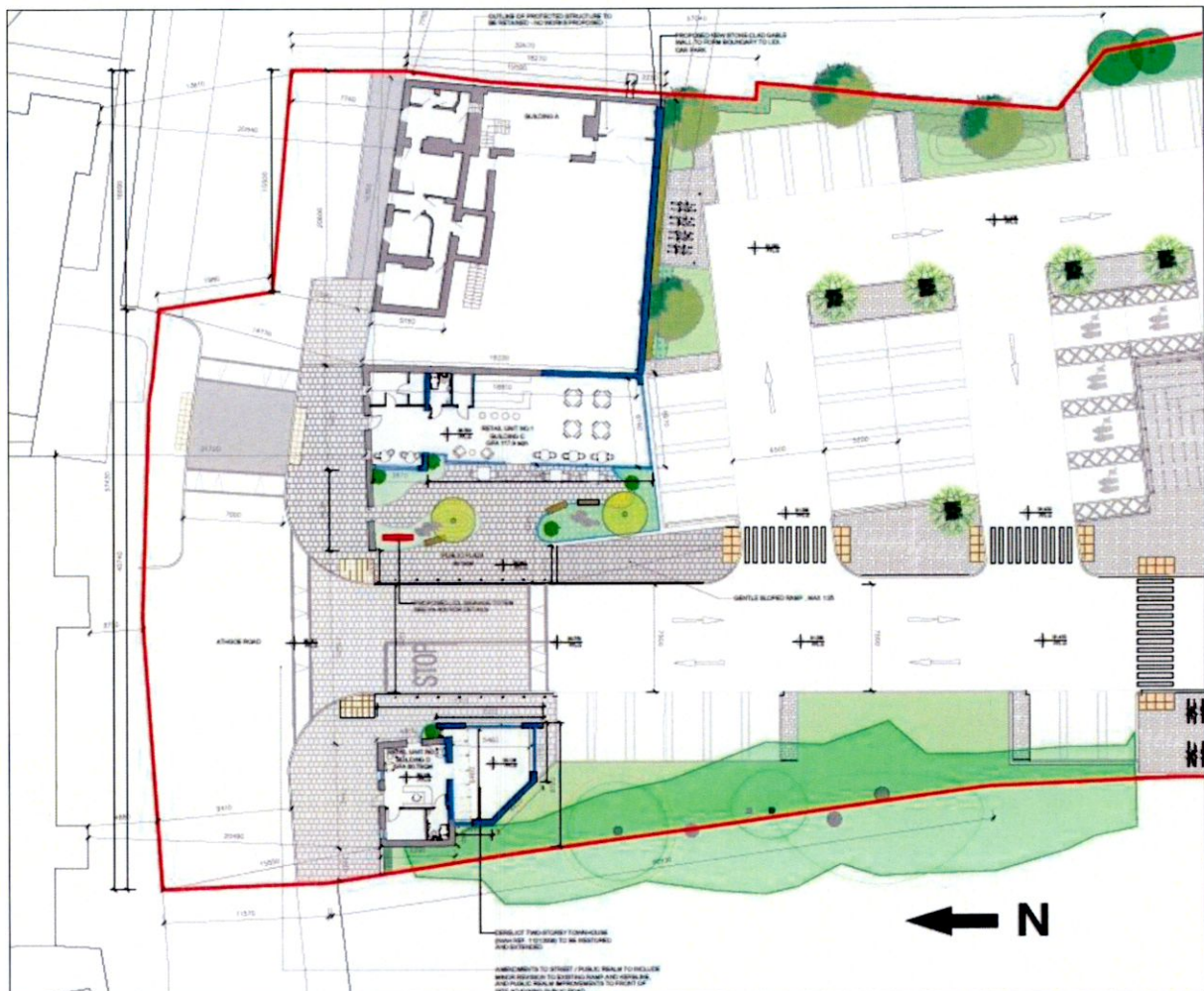


Figure 7: Proposed site layout at main street-fronting entrance to site after Darmody Architecture

At the northern end of the site, the existing Kelly Estates building (a protected structure **plate 7**) is not proposed to be changed, although a 29m<sup>2</sup> portion of the southern end of a modern rear extension to this building (**plates 10 & 11**) is proposed to be truncated and a new southern gable wall formed. A new southern boundary wall will be constructed in line with this new gable wall to enclose the protected structure in its own grounds separate to those of the Lidl development. The L-shaped early 2000s dwelling (**plate 12**) south of the Kelly Estates structure is proposed to be demolished and the southern (**plate 13**) and eastern boundaries of its associated garden to be removed and the area incorporated in landscaped car-parking for the Lidl store.

The proposed new Lidl store premises will be constructed along the eastern boundary of the site with car and cycle-parking and other ancillary facilities within landscaped grounds around the main store building. A new café is proposed within a structure that will utilise the existing masonry front wall (*plate 6*) and footprint of a previous historic building (*plate 9*) west of the access gateway to the protected Kelly Estates premises, all historic elements of which will be unchanged by proposed works. The surviving remains of a masonry structure at the north-west corner of the site (*plates 3, 4 & 5*) will be refurbished and extended to provide a retail space with a new vehicular and pedestrian entrance will be formed onto the R405 retaining much of the existing masonry street-frontage of the site to either side. An internal roadway will provide access from this main entrance from the R405 at the north, along the western portion of the site to parking and delivery points as well as facilitating future pedestrian links to permitted and potential residential developments south and west of the subject site.

## 4. Assessment of impact

The proposed works are essentially to facilitate a commercial development within the linear plot of land associated with the building that currently houses the Kelly Estates premises and three former terraced dwellings, of which only the fragmentary remaining walls of one remain at the north-western corner of the site. The surviving earthen banks and long-established native hedge species of the east and western boundaries will be unaffected by the proposed works which will maintain a landscaped buffer between all buildings and car-parking spaces and the long-established plot boundaries. This will safeguard the historic linear plot boundaries perpendicular to the R405 as well as ensuring that screening of the site from outside will continue to be provided by existing maintained trees. These will also be complimented by planting within the landscaped carpark to facilitate visual relief of the proposed modern structures, which will represent an improvement on the existing, mostly underutilised, hard-surfaced ground surface of the site between the east and west boundaries.

The Kelly Estates building is a protected structure but as the historic elements of the building are not proposed to be altered, it is considered that there will be no material impact on its cogent fabric or character as a result of the proposed works. Truncation of the southern end of its rear extension will not result in loss of any fabric of historic or architectural significance and will facilitate the consolidation of an appropriate curtilage to the rear of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century building. Its associated outbuilding and garden boundaries have been irrecoverably undermined by changes to the site throughout the twentieth-century and no longer contribute to understanding of the site's historic origin and development. The setting of the protected building will not be further diminished by the proposed works and will in fact be consolidated in an appropriate manner.



**Figure 8:** 3D visualisation of view to south-east into proposed development from R405 (Source: Darmody Architecture)

Removal of the L-shaped building south of Kelly Estates will enhance the site through removal of an ill-designed structure of the early 2000s and will facilitate the required landscaped parking for

the proposed Lidl store which enables creation of a public plaza on space in front of a proposed new café. This café will occupy the former footprint of the outbuilding that was situated west of the Kelly Estates building and will incorporate the surviving front elevation of the building, thereby maintaining its contribution to the streetscape here and preserving the historic street-edge with an appropriate new pitched roof presenting onto the R405. The rear part of the proposed new café will be of a contemporary design reflecting a measured transition from the historic fabric of the main street to the re-developed linear plot. The public plaza formed in front of the proposed café's western elevation will provide a suitable node between the existing public thoroughfare of Newcastle to new pedestrian linkages that respect the historic overlay of plot boundaries associated with the medieval settlement and access the emerging residential parts of the modern town.



*Figure 8: 3D visualisation of proposed site entrance from D405 with re-roofed and extended former dwelling to north-west corner of site refurbished as retail premises (Source: Darmody Architecture)*

As much of the existing street-front masonry as possible will be retained and conserved for its ongoing contribution to the historic main street of Newcastle and to preserve the historic street edge here. Refurbishment and all necessary structural consolidation of the upstanding masonry structure to the north-west of the site will conserve the historic fabric and contribution of this modest historic building to the streetscape and the subject site. As such, the proposal to convert this structure into a modern retail premises is considered to be a positive development. All works to the historic masonry will be undertaken in accordance with conservation best practice.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

The proposed development of this street-fronting site within the historic core of Newcastle represents a well-considered and proportionate re-purposing of a heretofore underutilised plot. The stimulation of new pedestrian-focused activity with a public plaza, associated café and retail facilities that incorporate the cogent elements of the existing street-edge will help to enliven the historic streetscape here and will reverse the dilapidation evident to much of the surviving historic masonry fabric. Proposed retention of this stonework, with appropriate conservation works undertaken in accordance with best practice, will preserve the original late eighteenth or early nineteenth-century street-edge that provides the proper context to view and appreciate the protected Kelly Estates building, national school site and St Finian's R.C. Church from the road junction which forms the modern focus of the village (see *plate 22* within appended photographic record).

While the proposed new structures and landscaping do represent a modern alteration and a permanent change of use for the historic linear plot on the site to a retail outlet with parking and pedestrian facilities, the planned works will not give rise to any significant negative impacts on the protected structure (Kelly Estates) or the overall historic character of the site. Changes to the rear of the property surrounding the Kelly Estates building all involve removal of poor-quality modern structures and this will provide for consolidation of a meaningful curtilage and setting around the protected building, which will be a positive outcome of the proposed development.

Because they are distinctive features and are historically significant in understanding the form and development of the medieval origins of Newcastle, the east and west boundaries of the linear plot are proposed to be incorporated in the development and will be retained in their present form. A landscaped buffer will separate the earthen banks and largely natural hedgerows, from the proposed new buildings or hard surfaces. There has been an ongoing evolution of the subject site from a feature of the feudal layout of the historic village here, to a strip of subsistence farmland serving four dwellings in the nineteenth-century, to the amalgamation of the site for limited commercial storage use in recent decades. The proposed development will preserve the upstanding landscape elements of the site which contribute most to understanding the origin and development of the village, namely the east and west boundaries. It will also conserve and reinstate a useful role to the fragmentary historic masonry elements at the front, northern portion of the site, incorporating these in a new access point that engages with the main street and facilitates permeability for pedestrians through to emerging residential areas beyond the original town core.

The proposed works will not impact negatively on views towards and beyond the site from the surrounding historic streetscape which is composed of a generally historic grain with low-density modern development interspersed with distinctive ecclesiastical, dwelling and commercial structures. The low ridge-height and understated, modern form of the proposed Lidl store building, its generous set-back from the main street and retention of boundary fabric on the east, west and northern edges of the site will mitigate any alteration of the landscape within the site which could affect the historic character of the adjoining ACA. The reinstatement of traditional roof forms on the street-edge over the existing north-facing masonry façades will affect the modern streetscape slightly but will not totally obscure views to key structures such as the Catholic Church tower (*plate 23*). Conservation of the existing street edge along the northern

boundary of the subject site and the reinstatement of an active frontage here after over half a century of decline here represents a positive element of the proposed development.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that works to the historic building fragments (*plates 1-6*) should be supervised by a specialised conservation consultant to ensure that the repairs and new works are sympathetic to the original masonry and that all works to historic fabric are undertaken in accordance with conservation best practice. Any stone necessary to be removed to form the required main entrance should be salvaged and used for repairs to retained portions of masonry and to form appropriate piers to reinforce truncated historic walls where necessary.

In addition, the apparently brick-built boundary wall (*plate 13*) south of the L-shaped modern building to be demolished should be cleared of vegetation and assessed by an experienced historic masonry specialist. Photographic recording and measured survey of the wall should be undertaken prior to its removal if it is judged to be of historic significance. If this wall consists of historic masonry material, this too should be salvaged and re-used for repair and refurbishment of stone structures at the northern street-front of the site.



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## Appendix | Photographic record



*Plate 1: View of site exterior from Main Street looking south. Proposed new site entrance will enlarge existing steel gateway to left of photograph from east gable of two-storey building to west to position just right of existing pedestrian doorway visible just right of centre of photograph.*



*Figure 2: View of site exterior from Main Street looking towards south-east.*



*Plate 3: North façade and east elevation of former two-storey townhouse proposed to be refurbished and extended as a retail premises.*



*Plate 4: Site interior looking north-west centred on building proposed to be retained and extended*



*Plate 5: Interior of building proposed to be retained and extended at north-west corner of site*



*Plate 6: North street-front wall of former outbuilding associated with Kelly Estates building. This façade is proposed to be incorporated in new café structure fronted by public plaza area within new development.*



*Plate 7: North street-fronting façade and west gable of Kelly Estates, a protected structure not proposed to undergo any changes as part of planned development.*



*Plate 8: Site interior looking north towards proposed Main Street entrance and public plaza with new café in place of existing modern concrete stable building to right side of parked car visible here.*



*Plate 9: Site interior looking north-east towards Kelly Estates building to be retained.*



*Plate 10: West elevation of existing rear extension to Kelly Estates building to be truncated approximately along right edge of photograph.*



**Plate 11:** Modern south end of rear extension to Kelly Estates proposed to be truncated back approximately to where existing timber fence is located. Fence to be replaced with new 2m boundary wall.



**Plate 12:** Post-2000, L-shaped dwelling to rear of Kelly Estates proposed to be demolished.



**Plate 13:** Heavily overgrown boundary wall to rear (south) of garden behind modern L-shaped dwelling which may be remnant of historic brick boundary wall depicted on 25" OS map here. Wall here proposed to be demolished.



**Plate 14:** Entirely modern east boundary treatments to north end of site behind Kelly Estates building (east gable of which to right side of photograph). No changes to any existing fabric here as part of present proposals.





**Plate 15:** Interior of southern end of eastern boundary with mostly modern planted trees on roughly discernible earthen bank. No historic built structures or masonry banks visible.



**Plate 16:** Middle portion of site looking south-east towards site of proposed new store building from centre of west boundary. Southern boundary of site contains no features of historic nature. Interior ground surface of northern half of subject site is entirely devoid of topsoil with rough hard-standing throughout. Overgrown topsoil bund seen here bisects site in two roughly equal areas.



*Plate 17: View to north along northern end of western boundary with manhole over confluence of culverted streams flowing from south and east before heading north along western boundary of site.*



*Plate 18: Detail of north end of western boundary with mature, apparently natural tree-growth on rough earth bank and no visible built form or masonry reinforcement to bank.*



**Plate 19:** View south along west boundary of subject site. Drainage channel along here appears to have been scraped out in recent years but is piped and covered north of here on subject site.



**Plate 20:** View to south-south-east with southern extent of proposed development site approximately in front of electricity supply poles. Southern third of site comprises fairly level, dry grassland between two long-established hedgerow boundaries to east (left) and west (right).



*Plate 21: View to south-south-east towards eastern boundary of subject site*



*Plate 22: View west along R405 (Kelly Estates building right of centre of photograph) illustrating essentially historic character of streetscape here with strong masonry edge and variety of traditional building forms to south side of street.*



*Plate 23: View to east along R405 where no existing views are proposed to be altered except through reinstatement of pitched roof to street-fronting buildings either side of proposed new entrance to planned Lidl store.*

