

SECTION 1: Introduction

1.1 Objective of AAP

This Plan is being prepared in accordance with the provision of the Celbridge Development Plan, (paragraph 3.14) - "To prepare an Action Area Plan for the town centre area in the vicinity of Main St. and the east side of the Liffey in Donaghcumper in accordance with the policy set out in paragraph 2.7.4...No development shall take place on the lands zoned in Donaghcumper before the preparation by Kildare County Council of the Action Area Plan and any development proposals thereafter shall accord with the Plan".

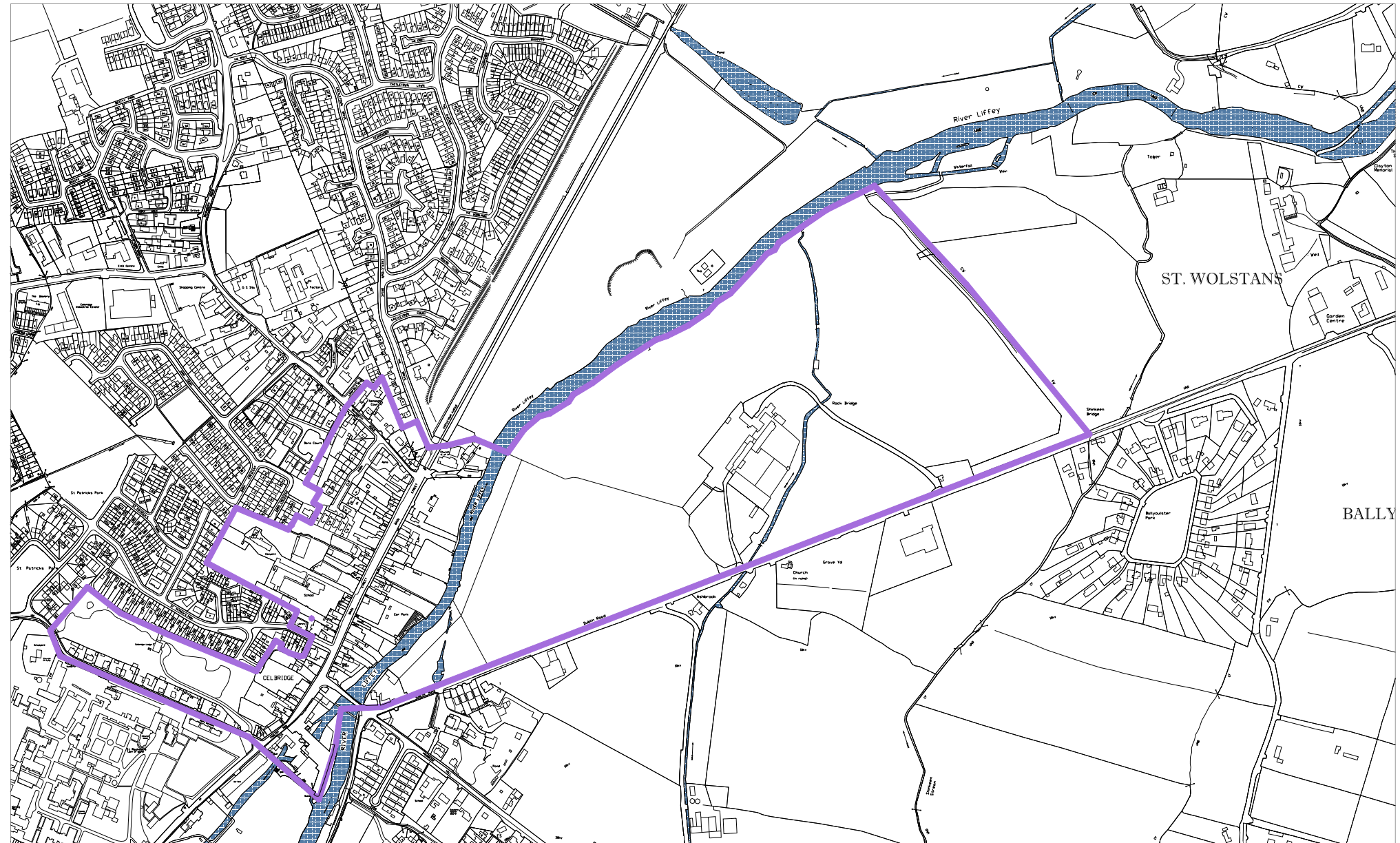
The Action Area Plan for the Main Street/Donaghcumper area is considered a major objective in the Celbridge Development Plan. It is referred to a number of times in the context of town centre policy, amenity use, protection of the river and conservation policies generally. No planning applications shall be considered for the relevant lands prior to the adoption of the AAP. It is recommended, in addition to consultation taking place with Kildare County Council before the submission of any such application, that a structure is put in place for ongoing consultation and review with Kildare County Council for the implementation phase of planning permissions relating to the development of the lands in the AAP area and, in particular those lands within the Donaghcumper lands.

Given the proximity of the Donaghcumper lands to Celbridge Main St., its future development represents a significant opportunity to expand the town centre in a cohesive way utilising a high standard of urban design. A key element of this development will be the manner in which it links with the existing town.

(Ref Map 1: Site Area Map)



Fig 1.1: The Dublin Road looking towards Celbridge with Donaghcumper on the right enclosed by a stone wall and mature trees.



Map 1: Area of Action Area Plan outlined in purple

1.2 Location of Lands

The AAP area includes the historic/existing centre of Celbridge, extending from the junction between English Row and Church Road to the south, to the entrance to Castletown House to the north and including Main Street and its backlands to the west and east. The AAP area also includes the lands of Celbridge Lodge—a former miller's house and a protected structure—and the Catholic Church, school and convent buildings and lands off Main Street and also containing protected structures. To the east of Main Street, the AAP includes the lands of Donaghcumper House which occupy a sensitive location within the town of Celbridge. These are immediately adjacent to the historic centre, on the opposite bank of the River Liffey commanding an important stretch of the river as it passes through the town. The Dublin Road forms the eastern boundary of the plan area with a long straight stone wall enclosing a belt of mature trees. To the north-east the plan area is bounded by the grounds of St. Wolstan's. The AAP lies within the general ambience of Castletown—which comprises the internationally significant Castletown House and Demesne — and the extent and value of the designed landscape of Castletown will exert and influence on the nature of development within the AAP area.

Ref Map 2: Area Context Map—pg. 6)



Fig. 1.2: Castletown House in the distance viewed from the Dublin Road.

1.3 Context in the Town Development Plan

The Celbridge Development Plan 2002 provides the context into which the Existing Town Centre and the Donaghcumper Lands Area fits. The zoning, general policies and objectives of the Plan in as far as they can be related to the area form the basis of future development. The area includes a diversity of zonings:

- A) Retail/Commercial
- B) Existing Residential/Infill
- C) New Residential
- E) Amenity/Open Space
- F) Community / Education
- H) Agricultural

(Ref Map 3: Zoning Objectives Map—pg. 7)

Existing Town Centre

The zoning here reflects existing uses with the historic Main Street area zoned for retail / commercial uses—traditional town centre uses. This zoning also extends to the southern end of the AAP around the historic Mill complex on English Row. The institutional complex located centrally on the west side of Main Street and comprising the Catholic Church, convent and school, is zoned for Community/Educational and the other lands west of Main Street are zoned existing residential/infill, reflecting their existing land use character. These residential areas comprise early 20th century housing along Church Road, later 20th century housing within Elm Park and the protected structure and grounds at Celbridge Lodge. It should be noted that, while Celbridge Lodge is zoned for existing residential, as a protected structure, only development which will not materially affect the architectural significance of the protected structure should be permitted. In the context of any development of these lands, it would be an objective to improve pedestrian/cycle links between the existing town centre/Main Street and the residential areas to the west of Celbridge Lodge.

Donaghcumper Lands

The area to the west of Donaghcumper House is zoned for retail/commercial uses, with a strip zoned for amenity uses acting as a buffer along the river bank. This town centre zoning allows for retail, commercial, office, cultural, residential and other uses appropriate to Celbridge town. The objective is to enhance the existing town centre while retaining its character by allowing a suitable mix of uses and encouraging full use of upper floors and backlands of premises.

The buffer zoned for amenity uses is intended to protect the river bank for the public but under certain circumstances it may be appropriate to locate some commercial activity here, for instance, in order to connect any new development to the existing Main Street.

The land north of Donaghcumper House extending to the riverbank is zoned amenity/open space and has recently been transferred to the ownership of Kildare County Council. This zoning is to protect, provide for and improve open spaces for amenity or recreational purposes. Given the importance of this area in relation to the designed landscape of Castletown House, as identified in the study commissioned by Kildare County Council and undertaken by Dr. Finola O’Kane Crimmins & Dr. John Olley - “*Designed Landscape of Castletown Celbridge and Adjacent Demesnes*”, it is an objective of this plan that the surviving original 18th century designed landscape is conserved. Kildare County Council is working closely with the OPW to formulate a policy on the maintenance and management of the landscape on both sides of the river.

To the east of Donaghcumper House is an area zoned for new residential use. This zoning is to provide for and improve new residential areas and for associated local shopping and other services incidental to new residential development. Recreation, education, crèche, clinic/surgery and home-based business uses are also envisaged. In accordance with the Celbridge Development Plan, this area is deemed to be suitable for low-density - *maximum 4no. houses per acre* — development as it is a urban-rural transition area at the edge of the town. A high standard of design and layout will be essential and should take cognisance of its relationship to Castletown House.



Fig 1.3: The River Liffey as it flows through Celbridge town centre.



Fig. 1.4: Lands zoned for town centre use viewed from opposite bank near entrance to Castletown House.



Fig. 1.5 Main Street looking towards gates to Castletown House



Fig. 1.6 Kildought House—an architecturally important house set back from the main street with fine rear garden onto the river

The land zoned amenity/open space referred to above extends across the area to the north of this residential zone, stretching along the riverbank. This buffer zone protects the river as a public amenity and acts as a visual break between Castletown House and any new development



Fig. 1.7 Catholic church which is located in the centre of the main street and set back—potential civic space



Fig. 1.8: Left—Celbridge Lodge: A fine three bay, two storey house, circa 1880, on mature grounds.

Below left—entrance gates to Celbridge Lodge on Church Road
The mature planting in the grounds makes an important environmental contribution to the area and should be protected.



Fig. 1.9: Church Road—a settled housing street with stone boundary walls and mature planting. New infill construction underway.



Fig. 1.10: Elm Park Housing—settled residential cul-de-sac backing onto the main street. Opportunity to develop back areas of Main Street properties, however any such development should respect existing character and scale of Elm Park

The land immediately surrounding Donaghcumper House, including the walled garden, outbuildings and stables is zoned for agricultural use. The policies and general land use zoning as laid down in the Development Plan will be adhered to unless, following more detailed considered, specific changes are proposed

1.4 Summary of written submissions

There were ten written submissions in relation to the Donaghcumper lands. While their contents vary, the submissions can be broadly categorised as follows;

1. Those primarily concerned with the impact of any development on the historical fabric of Celbridge town, particularly Castletown House and Demesne. Submissions by the Office of Public Works (formerly Dúchas, The Heritage Service), An Taisce, The Irish Georgian Society, The Castletown Foundation and June Stuart of Kildrough House lie within this category.
2. Those focusing mainly on the future growth of Celbridge town and the need to address its current problems, particularly that of traffic congestion. Submissions by F.M. Contracts Ltd., Fergal Reidy, Liam Tobin on behalf of the McGonnells of Donaghcumper House, Tiros Resources Ltd. and Celbridge Community Council lie within this category.

All submissions recognise the significance of this opportunity to develop and expand Celbridge town centre to meet its current and future needs in a coherent manner while addressing the importance of its historic fabric.



Fig 1.12: Views across lands zoned for amenity uses.



Fig. 11 (a—top, b—bottom left, & c—bottom right): Celbridge Mills Complex: An impressive architectural complex in a prominent location—fronting onto the river and bridge and forming the east side of English Row. Celbridge Mills is also important historically and has connections with Castletown House, being owned by the Connolly family. The complex, which was extended and adapted in the 1970's accommodates a number of community uses and makes an important social and cultural contribution to the town. However, the open public spaces should be upgraded to provide greater public realm amenity and better connection with the river area. It is also recommended that a programme of sensitive repair and upgrading works be carried out to the buildings. Cumulatively, such projects would ensure Celbridge Mills maximises its potential contribution to the town's townscape and vitality.



Fig. 1.13: Area zoned for new residential use.

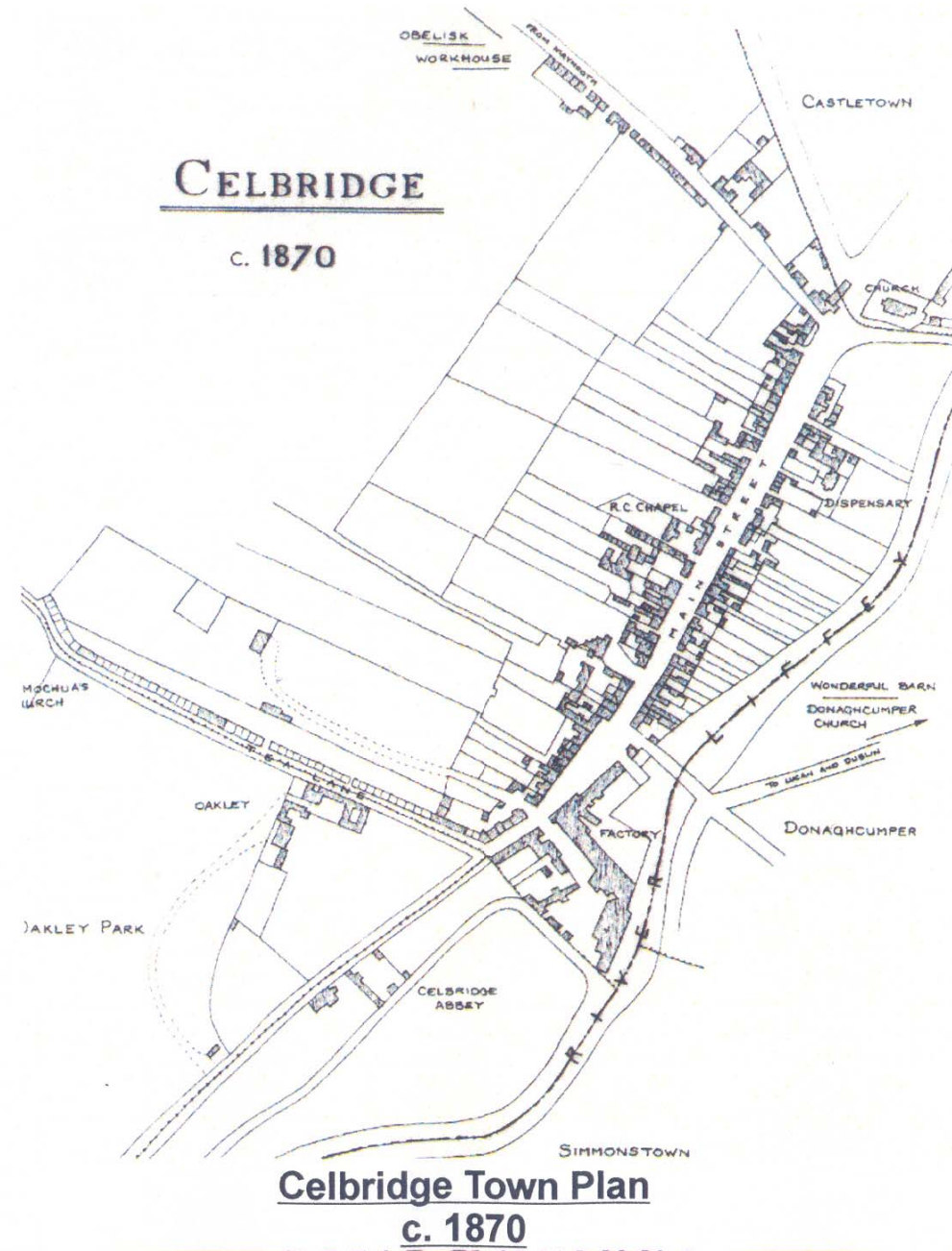


Fig 1.16: Early 20th-century view of the Main Street, Celbridge. Today the architectural character is substantially the same.

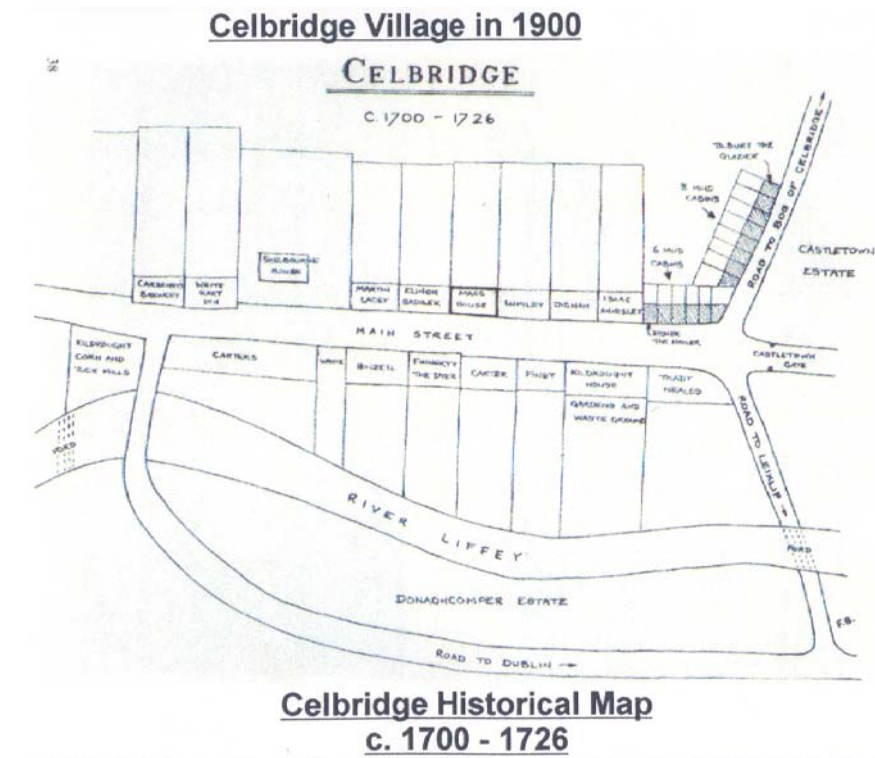


Fig 1.17: Circa 1700—1726 lease map of Main Street Celbridge which indicates general occupation of buildings. Note the forded river crossing to Donaghcumper Estate marked as 'road to Leixlip'.

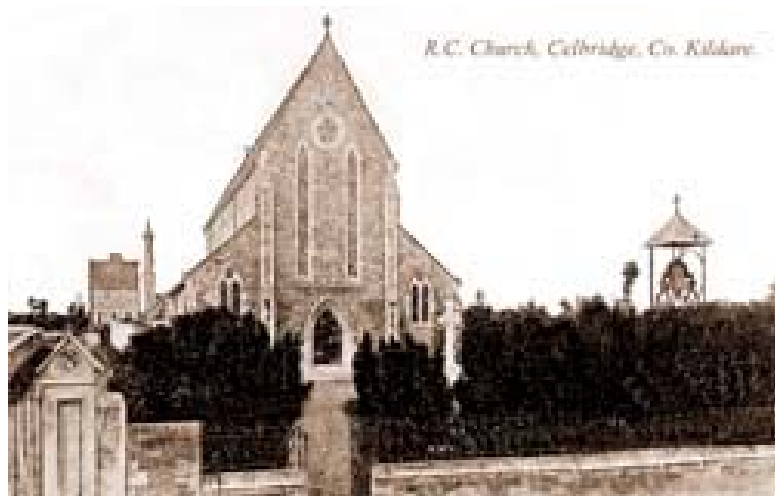


Fig 1.14 (above): Circa 1870 plan of Celbridge showing the broad main street widening towards the entrance to Castletown House, a distinctive form which survives today.

Fig. 1.15 (left) Early-20th century view of the Catholic Church