

BDP/ DONEGAL COUNTY COUNCIL

Ramelton Public Realm Project

Inventory of Built Heritage & Impact Assessment



Dedalus Architecture

Bath Terrace, Main Street, Moville, Co. Donegal

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Figure 1 – Cover: Quayside wall parapet stones & cast iron crane base

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Introduction & Purpose of the Report

Author of the Study

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Scope & Limitations of the Study

This Audit and Inventory of street side Built Heritage features has been commissioned by BDP in order to inform the development of proposals and a 'Part 8' Planning Application for Public Realm Works and in order further inform the detailed development of design proposals subject to obtaining Planning Permission in due course.

The public realm areas provide the setting for the historic town of Ramelton, and its buildings, many of which are protected structures. There is potential for many of these buildings to be indirectly affected by the proposed public realm works.

Whilst the buildings can be reviewed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS), the streetscapes also contain a quantity of historic features and artefacts that may be directly affected by the proposed works. The initial objective of this study was to record and create a record of these previously unrecorded items.

This study is limited to only those parts of the town that are subject to a planning application for new public realm works. The brief for this scheme was prepared in response to the Ramelton Action Plan - Study of Heritage Led Actions for Renewal & Regeneration, published in 2020 after extensive community consultation. This in turn was informed by a heritage audit of around 450 buildings, undertaken in 2018, and a town Conservation Plan document also prepared in 2020, which highlighted priority areas requiring intervention and repair.

The proposed plans that are subject of this Part 8 application have taken the public realm elements contained within the initial heritage-led Action Plan and these have been developed in detail, evolving into working designs which reflect the detailed design brief, engineering requirements and budget. In order to inform the current plans, a further detailed inventory has been carried out by an RIAI Accredited Grade 1 Conservation Architect of historic street fabric. The Conservation Architect has also undertaken Built Heritage Impact Assessment of the planning application stage designs and their impact on the items contained within the inventory, the historic setting, and the setting of the adjacent protected structures.

As the public realm areas are already devised as part of an overall Heritage Led plan, only issues relating to detailed aspects of the proposals are considered within the Built Heritage Impact Assessment report. Some recommendations for further minor refinements are identified for inclusion at the detailed design prior to the construction phase of development. Recommendations suggest how any impacts identified might be removed or mitigated in the course of the design development and thus is also intended to be treated as a checklist.

The summary background below, under the heading 'The Buildings Site & Context' is extracted and edited from the earlier Conservation Plan to provide some information about the part of the town to which the current proposals relate, where this earlier background may not otherwise be available to the reader.

Consultation

No consultation has been undertaken as part of this study, although the designers have consulted extensively through a series of public engagement workshops as the design proposals have developed.

The Buildings, Site & Context

- Location & Description of Study Area
- Protection Status
- Historical References



Figure 2 – Application site area © BDP/Donegal CoCo

Location & Description of Study Area

The study area comprises the Ramelton town centre. Four separate neighbourhoods, each with a distinct character, were identified in earlier studies. The current proposals are located within parts of two of these which are referred to as: 1) The Mall & Quays; 2) Castle Street & Back Lane. The extent of the application area is shown in the BDP site layout plan above.

The Mall & Quays



Figure 3 – overview view of Ramelton from the air ©2018 Microsoft Corporation

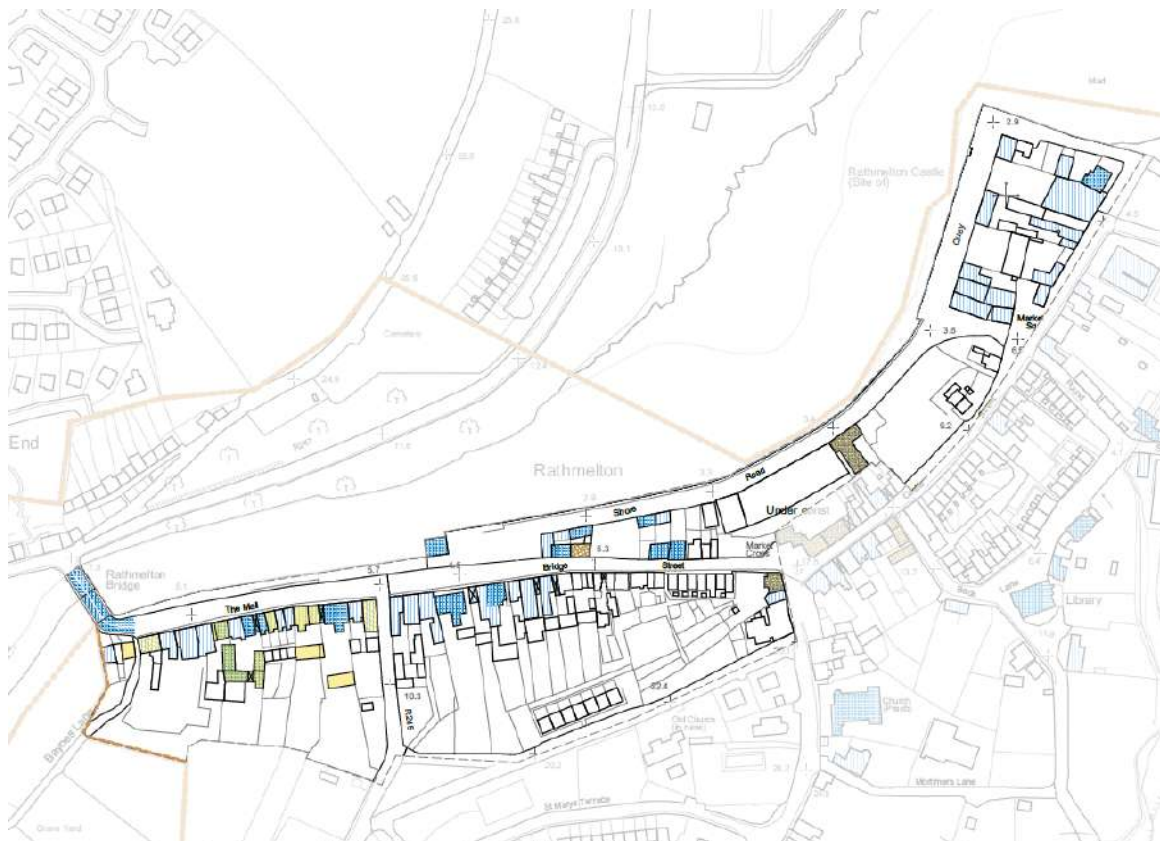


Figure 4 – Area 1) The Mall & Quays – the larger area covered by the 2020 Conservation Plan



Figure 5 – looking east along the Mall towards the Shore Road & quay



Figure 6 – looking east along the Shore Road towards the quay, warehouses and Ramelton Castle Site



Figure 7 – view south across the river to the Mall



Figure 8 – view of the fish quay at the Mall



Figure 9 – **Gamble’s square** looking east along the shore road and quay and towards Bridge Street. The square is not currently identifiable as such and is primarily used for car parking



Figure 10 – Gamble & Co Ltd, shop and emigration agents, after which the square is named



Figure 11 – Bridge Street looking west from the “Old House”



Figure 12 – former Sweeney's bar looking west along Bridge Street



Figure 13 – Shore Road looking west towards the Mall



Figure 14 – open space along the Shore Road separating the Quay and old market area from the remainder of the town centre. Part of this area, adjacent to the quay, was the former Pig Market. This area is to be developed as **The Bing** in the public realm scheme



Figure 15 – view along the Quayside looking east



Figure 16 – former Market Square looking towards the site of the Ramelton Castle; this area is to be developed as the Market Square within the public realm scheme



Figure 17 – former courthouse, market yard, former Guild Hall & Charles Kelly's Grain merchants



Figure 18 – quayside warehouse prior to recent conversion to two dwelling houses



Figure 19 – view from the eastern quayside along Castle Street past Mill House

Castle Street & Back Lane



Figure 20 – Area 2) Castle Street; only the area to the west and north are included in the current public realm scheme



Figure 21 – the former Market Cross, centre point of the 17th century town



Figure 22 – Market Cross; location of Ramelton’s flax market in the 19th century; prior to recent external renovations to the old hotel building



Figure 23 – Castle Street looking west towards the Market Cross prior to recent renewal works to the buildings and covering up of the kerbside cobble paving in this view



Figure 24 – Back Lane looking south from Castle Street; prior to recent renovation of the corner building



Figure 25 – Back Lane looking north towards Castle Street; prior to recent renovation of the corner building

Protection Status

Many buildings within the study area enjoy some level of legal protection and the responsibility for their care belongs to their owners. There are a number of levels of protection.

Under Planning & Development Act 2000 as amended

Protected Structures:

There are currently approximately 34 no. locations listed; many containing several buildings. The NIAH includes 115 no. entries for Ramelton and any that are designated as having a 'Regional' importance rating or higher are likely to be added to the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) incrementally over a number of years. These include a significant portion of the 18th century buildings along the riverside at The Mall and Quay, and also buildings more closely associated with parts of the town developed in the 17th century Plantation period along Castle Street, Back Lane and the Market. Other important features are the church buildings and important industrial heritage sites associated with linen manufacture.

Protected Structures within the current application area are:

The Mall & Quays

40800202 McCloghan Gunn & Co Solicitors

40800203 The Fish House

40800204 Mirabaeu Restaurant

40800206 The Bridge

40800213 Garda Station

40800214 Warehouse

40800215 Guest House

40800401 House on the Brae

40800402 Corner Building

40800410 Warehouse

40800411 Warehouse (7th from e. end)

40800412 Warehouse (8th from e. end)

40800413 House

40800423 A Gamble & Co.

40800424 National Irish Bank

40800506 Mill House

Castle Street & Back Lane

40800418 House (Cooleen)

40800420 Pair of Terraced Houses

40800508 Plantation Corner House

40800509 Old Barracks

40800510 Rubble Stone Buildings (3 No)

Conservation Areas:

There are no designated architectural conservation areas within the study area, although there is potential for a number of future areas to be designated which have a strong architectural character made up of buildings which individually have no particular architectural significance but collectively provide important spaces within the town centre.

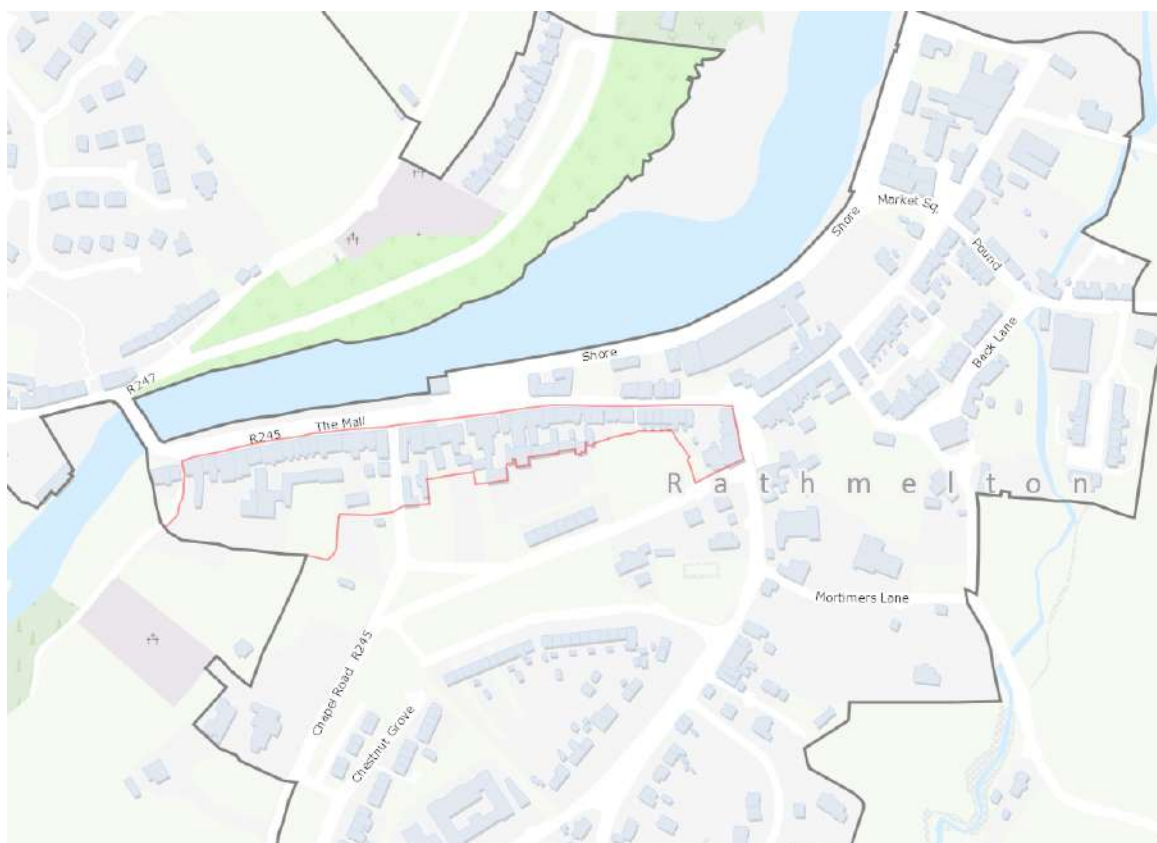


Figure 26 – Extract from Draft land use zoning map for Ramelton town centre. The area bounded in red is reference as the commercial core, although historically, this extended to the east & the earlier core of the town ©DCC

The eastern part of the town centre is included within an area of archaeological potential which corresponds to the centre of the 17th century Plantation town and the castle site. The area currently zoned as town centre excludes a large part of the original town centre and reflects the current commercial core located further to the west. The nature of the commercial centre has changed over the last century so that agricultural markets, which provided a destination for trade, have declined and shops, that have survived, line the principal road through the town. The main route through the town now bypasses the original way through Church Street and Bridge Street and now follows Tank Brae onto the Mall. Whilst this helps to minimise the impact of heavy traffic, the town hall, markets and other important former commercial features are cut off from the rest of the town. Gaps in the continuity of the town centre only emphasise this separation and these are areas of most concern to local people who have participated in consultation in relation to the Conservation Plan.

The exact nature and extent of archaeology is not known, however recorded features include castle and bawn as well as the post medieval town. Any work requiring excavation to be undertaken in these areas must involve the National Monuments Service and, will almost certainly require the involvement of a licensed archaeologist to monitor work or to undertake an excavation. Whilst excavation can provide a unique opportunity to discover valuable information about the town's past, the process itself can be damaging and can also add to the cost of any new development work that is proposed. Placing emphasis on the conservation of the existing urban fabric and limiting the need for excavation within the area of archaeological potential is the preferred means of minimising disturbance to the archaeological heritage. Recommendations for renewal will include proposals the 'repair' gaps in the town fabric which may involve some new development and which will require involvement of an archaeologist

Whilst the area contained within the zone of archaeological potential is protected; the potential for archaeology outside this area must also be considered. At Ramelton these include maritime archaeology; including a small undocumented wreck at the eastern end of the Quay.

Recorded Historic Monuments within the current application site:

The Mall & Quays

Ramelton Castle

- DG046-005001- Castle
- DG046-005007- Bawn

Castle Street & Back Lane

Ramelton Town

- DG046-005---- *Historic Town*

The Quayside warehouses form part of an important Industrial Archaeological legacy. The latter, by virtue of their appearance in a television series in the 1980's, the 'Hanging Gale', are known internationally.



Figure 27 – Area of archaeological potential shown in pink & individual Recorded Monuments in red reflect the approximate extent of the 17th century Plantation period town © OSI

Historical References

The town of Ramelton dates from the 17th century and was formally established by Sir William Stewart during the Ulster Plantation as a means of supplanting and controlling the economy and landscape of the region. Its defensible location was also the site of an O'Donnell Castle which provided accommodation initially whilst a fortified dwelling at Fort Stewart was established.

The town was developed around the castle and was approached by land from three directions: Letterkenny to the West, William Stewart's estates from the south along the shore of Lough Swilly and a river crossing to Kilmacrennan, Milford and Rathmullan to the northwest, north and northeast.

The historic parish area, including the town centre, on the south side south of the Leannan River corresponds to the region overseen by the monastic settlement of Aughnish based on an island at the river mouth where it joins Lough Swilly. Superseded in the 16th century by establishment of the Franciscan Friary at Killydonnell. When the town was established in the 17th century the parish was joined with that of Tullyfern to the north side of the River to form Tullyaughnish. The 'new' 'established', Church of Ireland, church dates from that time and incorporates 12th century elements of the original Aughnish island church.

The location at the mouth of the River Leannan, as well as having strategic significance in controlling the crossing point was also a valuable food source and salmon and trout fishery. In the later medieval period the O'Donnell chieftains controlled the crossing from the site of the castle and the inner

reaches of Lough Swilly located on the southern side of the river towards the deep water port of Lough Swilly at Rathmullan controlled by their McSweeney associates who provided military support.

The River Leannan also provided access to water power which, in addition to supporting agricultural industry, also facilitated development of the linen industry from the 18th century onwards. It is this and its corresponding overseas trade which allowed the town to develop so significantly during the 18th and early 19th century and this buildings form this period characterise the appearance of the town.

The historical development of the town was virtually complete by the time of the first Ordnance Survey map around 1835; the gradual evolution and eventual erosion for that time can be viewed in historical mapping. A selection of the key maps that are referred to in the text are included below.



Figure 28– extract from Richard Bartlett's *A Generale Description of Ulster 1602-3*. The green area marks the O'Donnell territory, and the white area to the north, the MacSweeney Fanad'. Source: logainm.ie



Figure 29 – Down Survey county map; Donegal 1656-1658. The town of Ramelton is indicated by a regularly spaced group of houses between church & castle. An unknown larger house is also shown between © TCD

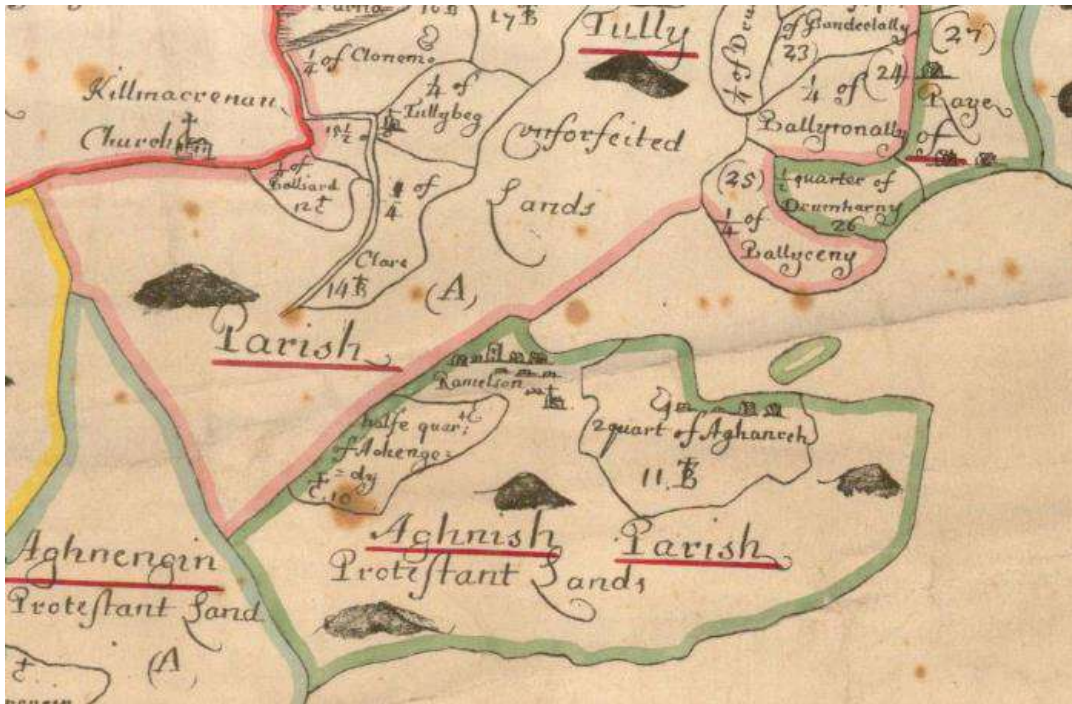


Figure 30 – Down Survey barony map; Kilmacrennan. The town of Ramelton is located in Aughnish parish allocated in the Ulster Plantation as 'Protestant Lands'. Land on the north side of the river is in Tully & Kilmacrennan parish and is noted as 'unforfeited lands' part of which remained in 'native Irish' ownership, however by far the greatest area is controlled by Captain John Stuart, Mr John Rowly & several others. 1656-1658 © TCD



Figure 31– Down Survey parish map; Aughnish. The town of Ramelton is located along the river at the northern edge of the parish where it joins Lough Swilly. Land in the parish is noted as being in church ownership and the greatest area is controlled by Mr William Ray & several other Scottish protestants. 1656-1658 © TCD

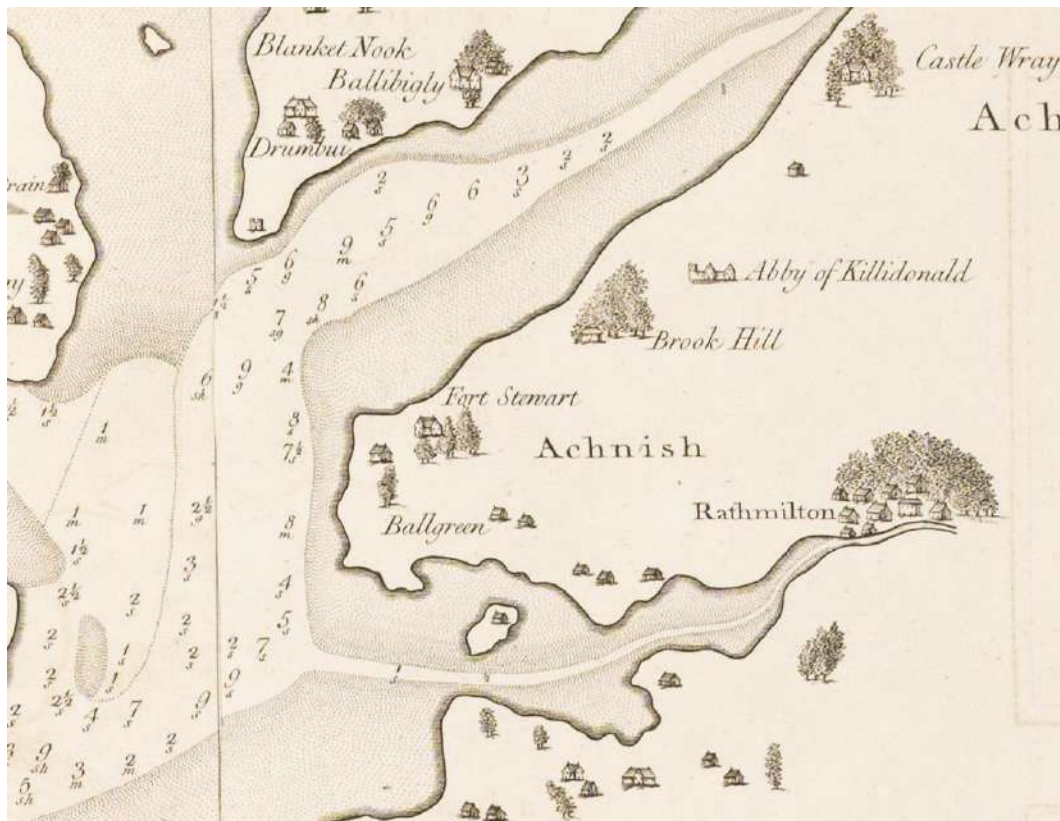


Figure 32 – Maritime map of Lough Swilly showing Aughinish parish, Murdoch MacKenzie 1776 © Logainm

Entry in Samuel Lewis' topographical dictionary of Ireland:

"AUGHNISH, a parish, in the barony of KILMACRENAN, county of DONEGAL, and province of ULSTER, containing, with part of the post-town of Ramelton, 4937 inhabitants. This parish is situated on Lough Swilly, and on the road from Letterkenny to Rathmullen: it comprises, according to the Ordnance survey, 9194½ statute acres, of which 8146 are applotted under the tithe act, and valued at £3954 per annum. The land is principally arable and pasture, with a small quantity of bog; agriculture is improving, and the waste lands are being reclaimed. There are extensive bleach-greens and flour-mills belonging to Mr. Watts; and the parish is benefited by its vicinity to the river Lannon, which is navigable for vessels of 150 tons burden to Ramelton. Fairs are held on the Tuesday after May 20th and Dec. 11th, and on the 17th of July; and petty sessions are held every alternate Thursday at Ramelton. The gentlemen's seats are Fort Stewart, the residence of Sir J. Stewart, Bart., and Shellfield, of N. Stewart, Esq. The living is a rectory, in the diocese of Raphoe, united subsequently to the 15th of Jas. I. to the rectory of Tully or Tullaferne, together forming the union of Aughnish or Tullyaughnish, which is in the patronage of the Provost and Fellows of Trinity College, Dublin. The tithes amount to £509. 7. 4., and the entire tithes of the benefice to £1100. The church, which is at Ramelton, is a plain structure, rebuilt by aid of a gift of £200 and a loan of £800, in 1826, from the late Board of First Fruits, and a donation of £800 from the late Dr. Usher. The glebe-house, in the centre of the parish, one mile from the church, was built in 1828, at an expense of £6000, of which £1384. 12. was a loan from the same Board, and the remainder was either charged on the revenues of the living or contributed by the incumbent. The glebe lands in Aughnish consist of 389 a. 3r., and in Tullaferne, of 512a. Or. 15p., each portion valued at 10s. per acre. The R. C. parish is co-extensive, with that of the Established Church, and is one of those held by the Bishop of Raphoe; the chapel is a spacious building. There is a place of worship for Presbyterians of the Synod of Ulster, of the first class, also for Seceders and Wesleyan Methodists. The parochial school is aided by Col. Robertson's fund; and there are four other public schools: about 200 boys and 250 girls are taught in these schools, besides which there are about 150 boys and 60 girls educated in private schools, and there is a Sunday school at Glenlary. A school-house is in course of erection by the Synod of Ulster. There are also a dispensary, a loan fund, a fund for supplying flax, and a Ladies' Society.—See RAMELTON."

“RAMELTON, a market and post-town, in the parish of AUGHNISH, barony of KILMACRENAN, county of DONEGAL, and province of ULSTER, 19 miles (N. N. W.) from Lifford, and 123½ (N. W. by N.) from Dublin; containing 1783 inhabitants. Sir Wm. Stewart, Knt., who was much in favour with Jas. I., became an undertaker for the plantation of escheated lands, of which he obtained a grant or patent of 1000 acres in this vicinity, and was created a baronet of Ireland in 1623. At the time of Pynnar's Survey he had built a strong bawn here, 80 feet square and 16 feet high, with four flankers and a strong and handsome castle; and contiguous to these he had built the town, then containing 45 houses, inhabited by 57 British families; he had also nearly completed the erection of a church: the place was then considered well situated for military defence. The town stands on the river Lenon, which here empties itself into Lough Swilly, and is navigable for small vessels: it consists of three streets, containing 341 houses, and is admirably adapted for manufactures of every description. Here are extensive corn-mills, a brewery, bleach green, and linen manufactory, and a considerable quantity of linen is made by hand, in the vicinity. A market for provisions is held on Tuesday, and on Thursday and Saturday for corn; and fairs are held on the Tuesday next after May 20th, Nov. 15th, and on the Tuesday after Dec. 11th. A chief constabulary police force is stationed in the town, and petty sessions are held on alternate Thursdays. There is a small salmon fishery, producing about £500 annually; the fish are considered to be in season throughout the year, and are mostly exported to England. In the town are the parochial church, meeting-houses for Presbyterians in connection with the Synod of Ulster (of the first class) and for Methodists, a small fever hospital, and a dispensary. A loan fund has been established; also a ladies' society and a shop for the sale of clothes at reduced prices to the poor. The parochial and Presbyterian schools, noticed in the article on Aughnish, are also in the town. On the shore of Lough Swilly is Fort Stewart, the residence of Sir Jas. Stewart, Bart., surrounded by an extensive and well planted demesne; and at a short distance to the north-east is Fort Stewart Castle, erected by Sir Wm. Stewart, the original patentee of the surrounding lands. Pearls of considerable value are occasionally found in the river Lenon.

Current & Previous uses



Figure 33 – view over Ramelton during the late 19th century. The Quay is located to the left with the Shore Road & Mall extending to the right ©NLI

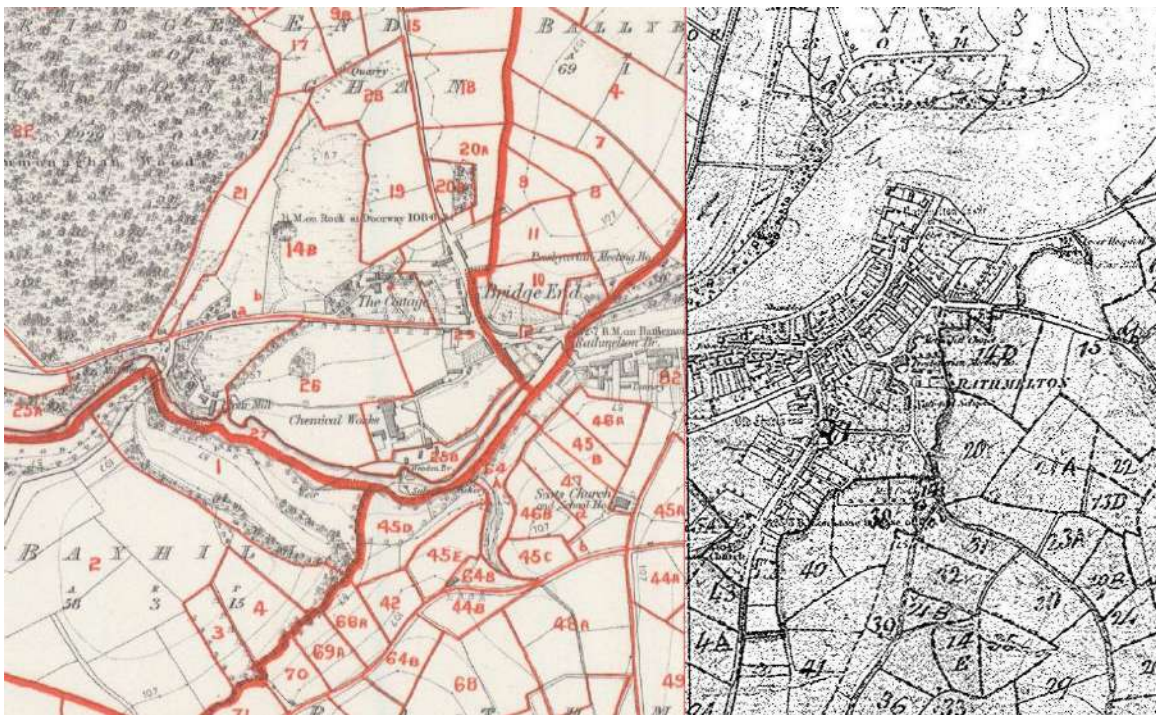


Figure 34 – Griffith Valuation map 1858 showing the entire town centre area ©NLI



Figure 35 – view over Ramelton during the late 19th century ©NLI

1) The Mall & Quays

A popular name for a fashionable walking route in the 18th century, “The Mall” provides a broad promenade along the river’s edge between the bridge and Gamble’s Square to the east. The relatively genteel background of Georgian town houses gave way riverside warehouses and animal markets along the quayside to the east. Tourist guides, prints and drawings of the town are not numerous and it is only photographs from the end of the 19th century which demonstrate the value of the landscape setting of the town to a developing tourism market.

This is the part of the study area with the best quality Georgian period houses. Individually, there is none notable, although together they form a group of immense townscape character and value.

Immediately to the east of the Mall, was also the former commercial core of the town formed by Quayside along Shore Road, Market Street and Castle Street. The buildings here mostly date from the Georgian period and many were built as large warehouses and places to conduct commercial business. Photographs taken in the 19th century show that these premises are largely unchanged since that time.

In recent years the Mall group has been damaged by continuing inappropriate small scale repair and joinery renewal. The quayside have changed very little, partly as a result of being highlighted as a set in the television drama, “The Hanging Gale”. This publicity has given the special character of Ramelton a national audience and attempts repair or renewal seem to have been suffocated rather than encouraged, as a result. Several buildings are in an increasingly dangerous condition. In the past, the unusual preservation of the town has been, in part, due to neglect of its buildings; in many respects poorly repaired building have lost more.

There has been virtually no significant new development in the town for almost 50 years and a substantial part of preventing past erosion has been to address vacant sites which, whilst improving the appearance locally in the short term, has resulted in further separation between the main Quayside to the east and The Mall to the west.

The character of uses is thus remarkably similar to the town overall, although a greater percentage in this area comprises buildings that have a commercial use as well as being places where people might live. Cross referencing this data with government census data would also highlight how much of this resource is actually used, although it would appear that, as also highlighted in the past approach to shop frontages, that the town retains its primarily residential character.



Figure 36 – postcard of the Mall, early 20th century ©Donegal County Library



Figure 37 – Ramelton quayside circa 1900 ©NLI

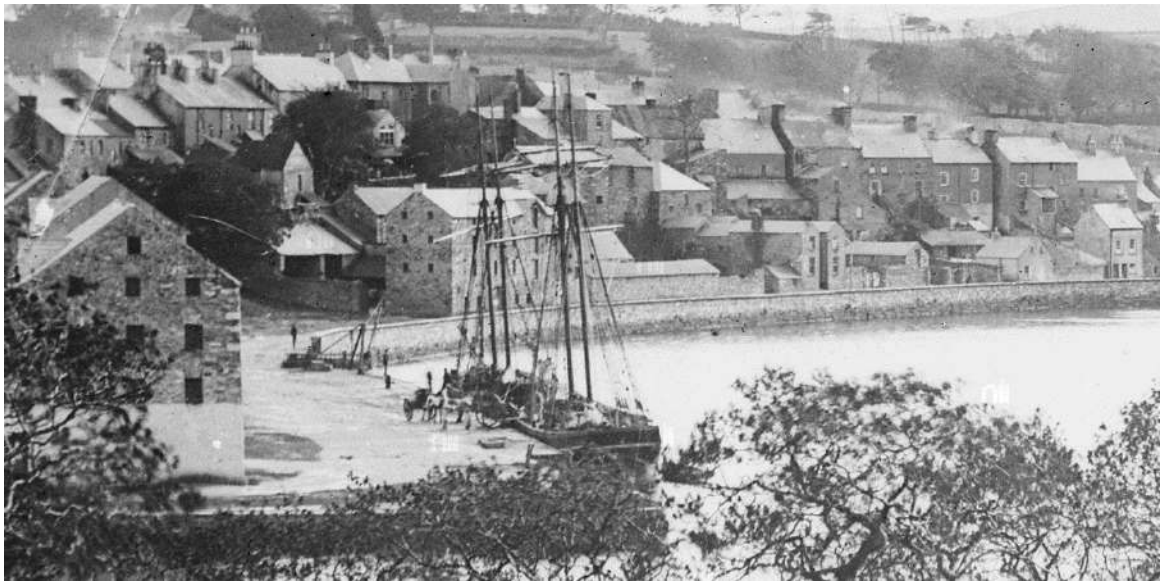


Figure 38 – the Quay circa 1900 ©NLI

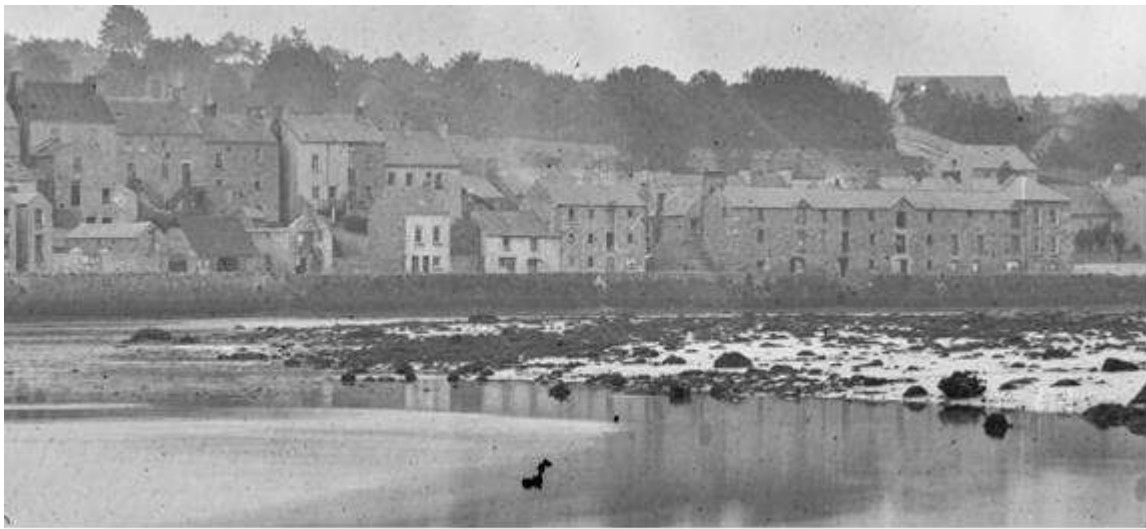


Figure 39 – Ramelton Shore Road circa 1900 ©NLI

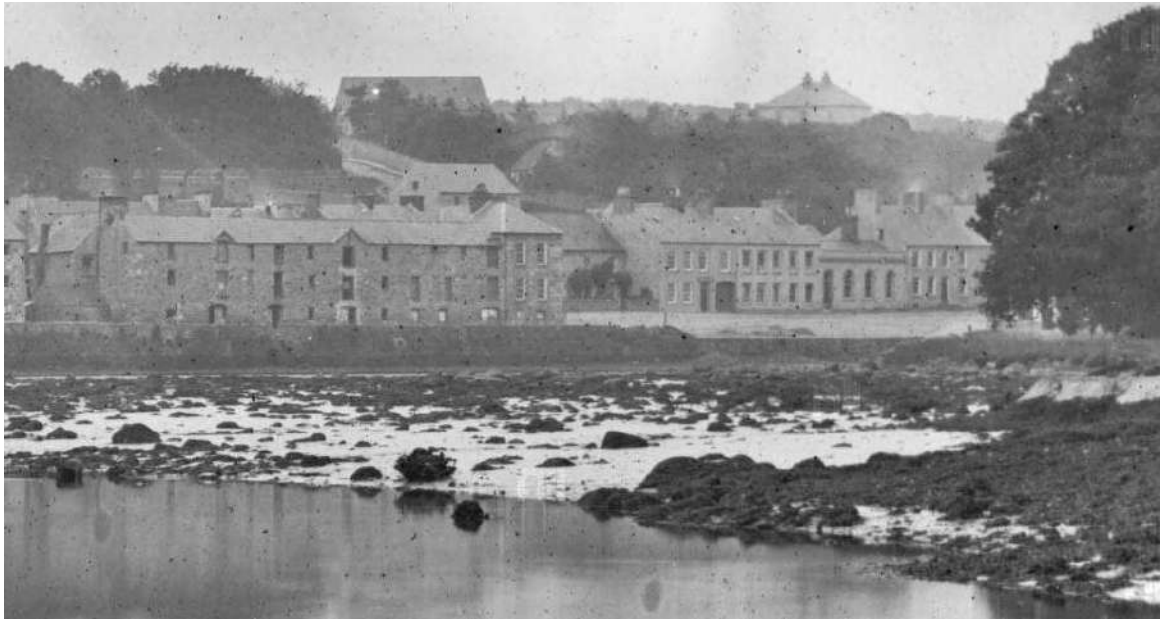


Figure 40 – Shore Road & the Mall circa 1900 ©NLI

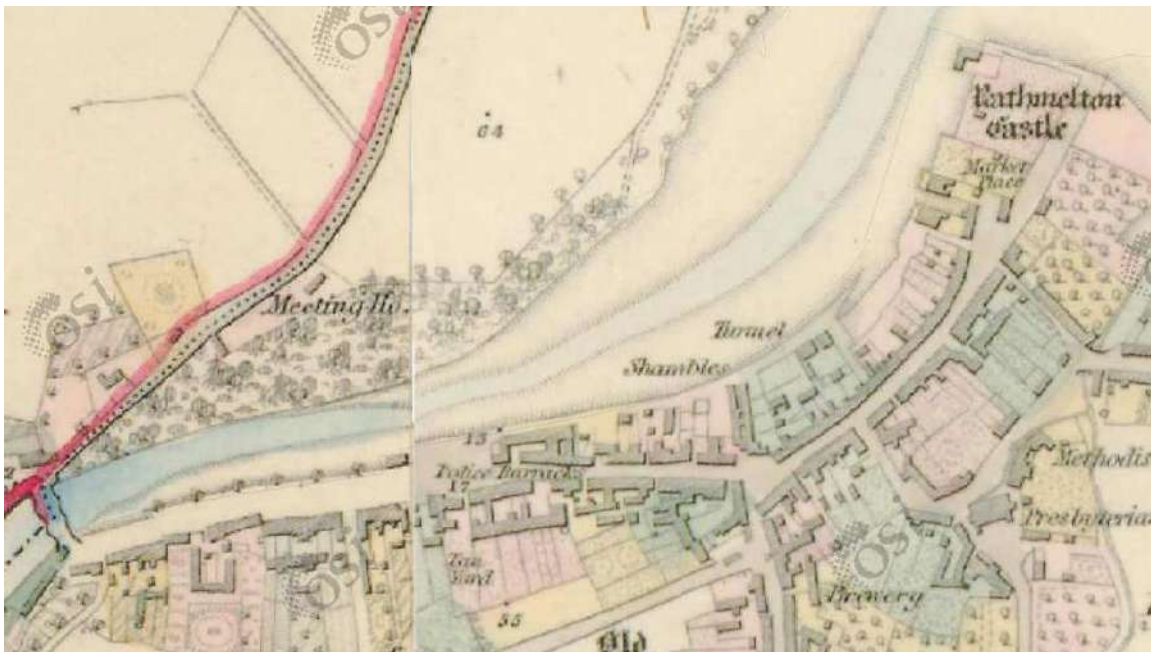


Figure 41 – 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing The Mall & Quay area circa 1835 and a variety of commercial uses currently excluded from the 'commercial core' including: shambles (meat market or slaughterhouse); market place etc ©OSI



Figure 42 – Gamble's Square early c20, at the eastern end of the Mall. Source ramelton.net



Figure 43 – the Mall, early c20. Source ramelton.net



Figure 44 – former commercial premises at the east end of the Mall adjacent to the Tank Brae. Source ramelton.net



Figure 45 – former Gamble’s Northern Warehouse after which the square is named. Source ramelton.net

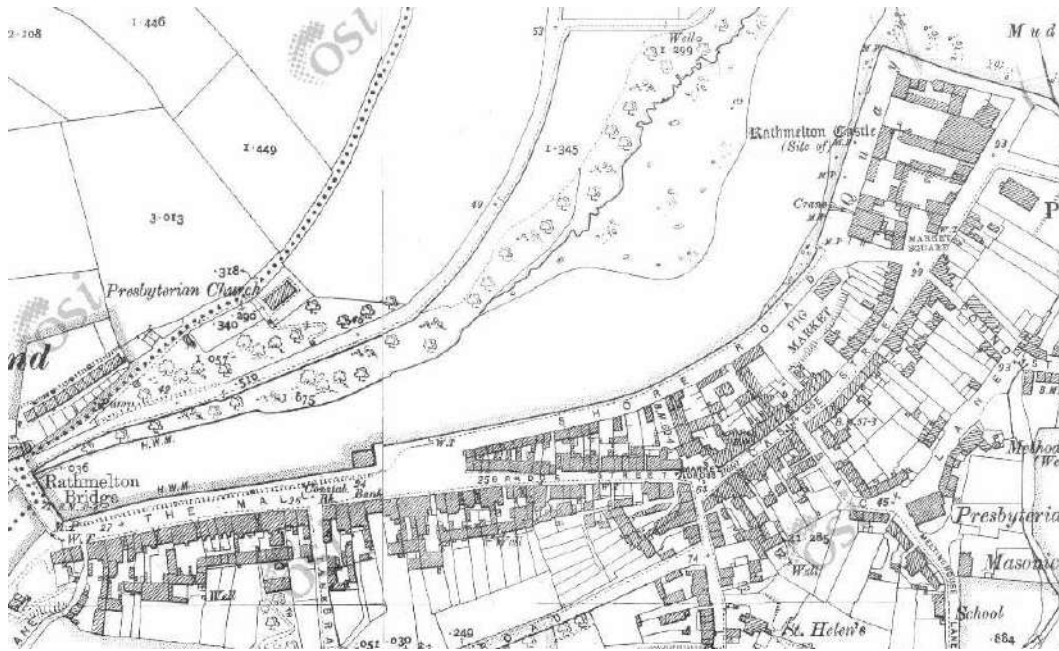


Figure 46 – 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map showing The Mall & Quays area circa 1900; a pig market is shown to the east of where the shambles appeared in 1835 and this seems to coincide with construction of an embankment connecting the Quay ©OSI

2) Castle Street & Back Lane

Immediately to the east along Bridge Street, was also the former commercial core of the town formed by the Market Cross and Castle Street. Whilst the buildings here appear to mostly date from the Georgian period, the “Plantation Corner House” appears to date from the 17th century, and others along Castle Street are likely to contain fabric from this period. Photographs taken in the 19th century show that these premises too, are largely unchanged since that time.

The largest number of these modest buildings are still similar in character, although this has become gradually further eroded through loss of building fabric and some, albeit limited, insensitive development. As elsewhere, there is continuing erosion of historic building fabric which has survived for more than two centuries with inappropriate modern material which is unlikely to survive more than two decades.

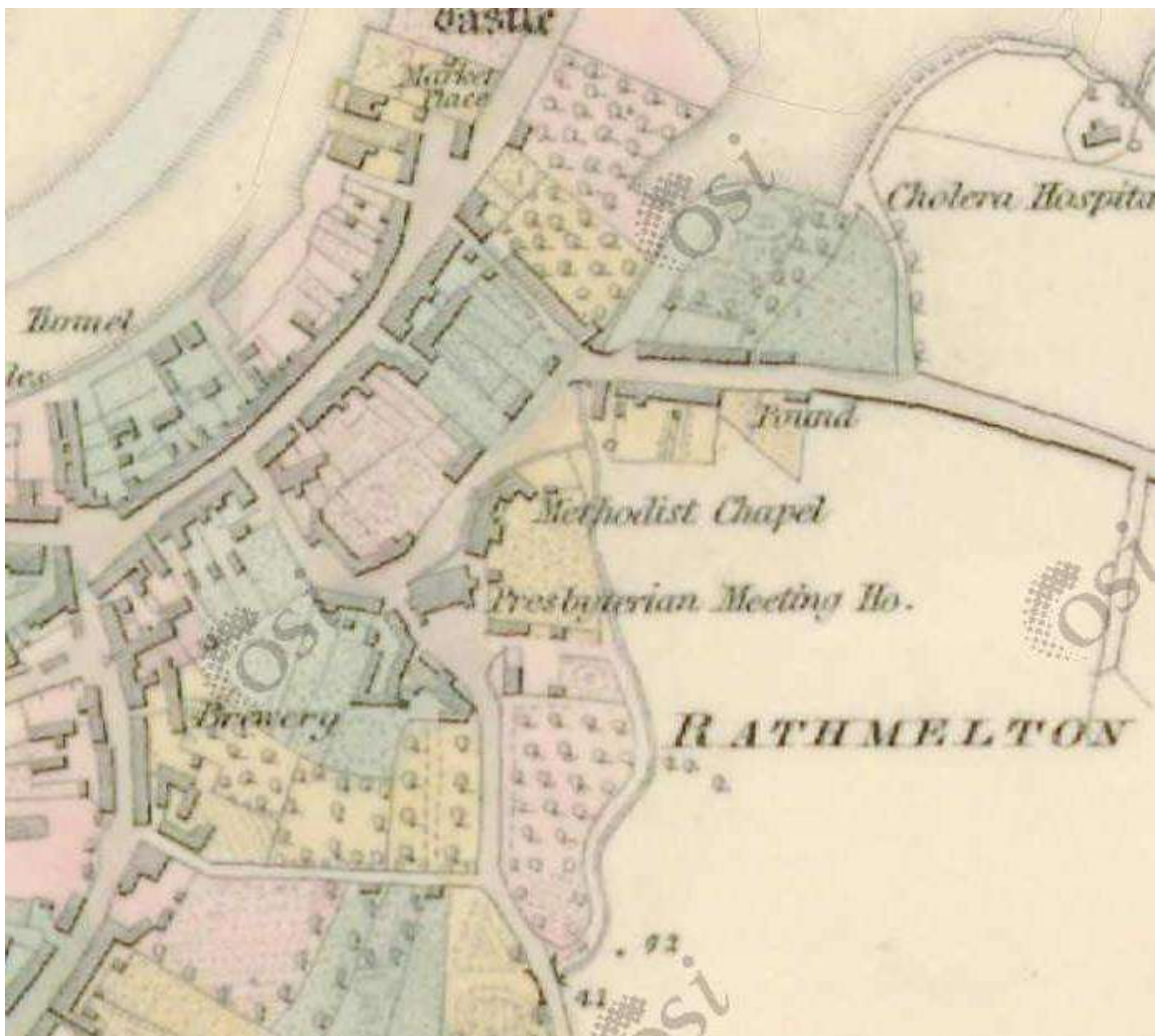


Figure 47– 1st edition Ordnance Survey map showing Castle Street & Back Lane area circa 1835. A small stream forms the eastern extend of the town and a defensible edge along this side ©OSI



Figure 48 – view along Bridge Street towards the Market Cross from Gamble’s Square. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 49 – houses on Castle Street, facing the Market Cross, have converted most of their commercial frontage to residential use. Source: Ramelton.net



Figure 50 – commercial premises adjacent to the Market Cross. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 51 – the building on the left in Castle Street had been abandoned and in a semi-derelict condition for more than a decade. The façade has been recently restored as part of an Historic Towns Initiative Project Source: Ramelton.net



Figure 52 – Castle Street looking towards the Market Place and former castle site. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 53 – thatched buildings on Castle Street. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 54 – the Town Hall. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 55 – former Creamery site looking north towards the Kelly's warehouse and Quays. Source Ramelton.net



Figure 56 – view back towards the town from a point to the east of the former Creamery site. Source Ramelton.net

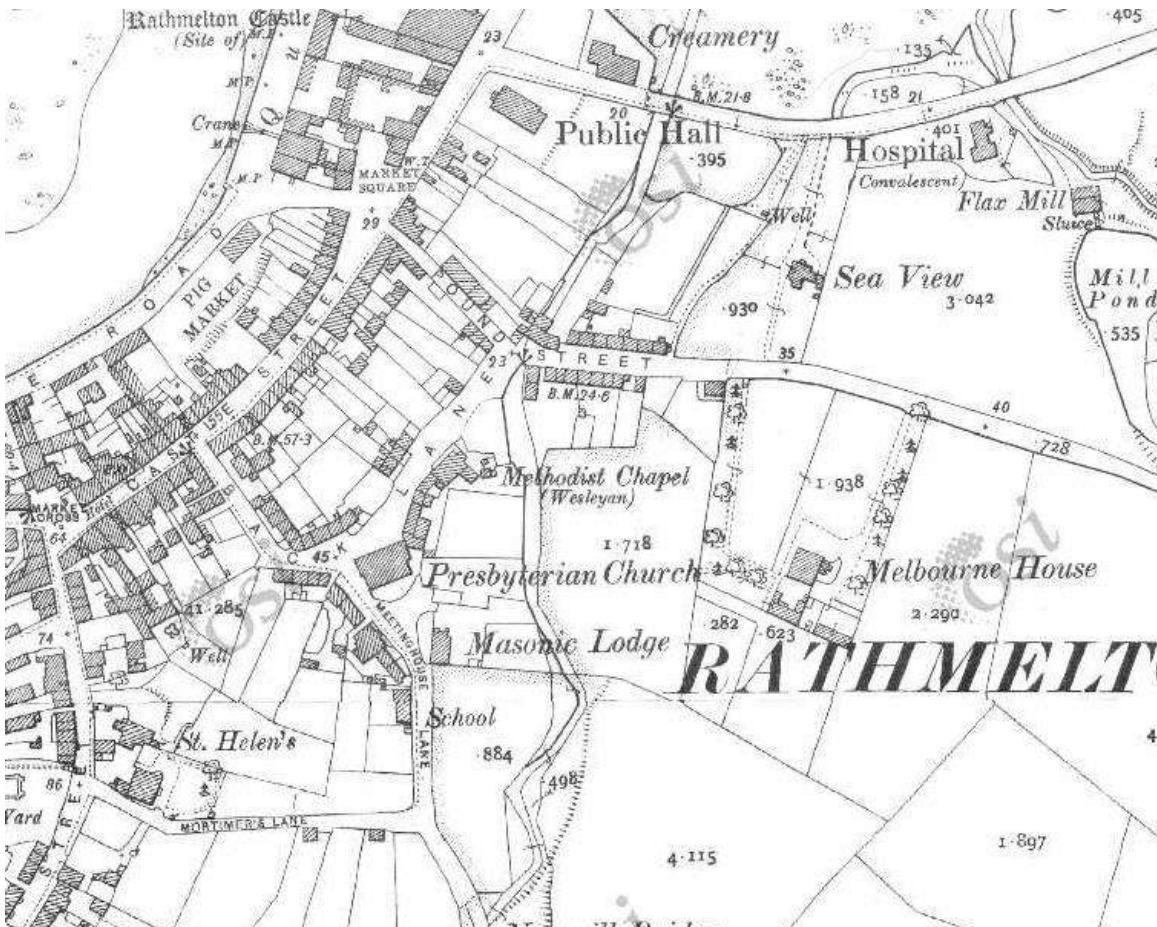


Figure 57 – 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map showing Castle Street & Back Lane area circa 1900 ©OSI

Statement of Significance

The survey associated with the Conservation Plan highlighted in the region of 5% of the building stock that was perceived to be 'at risk'. There was a much greater number of buildings requiring immediate maintenance which, in the case of buildings that were also vacant, would in future also become buildings 'at risk' within a relatively short space of time, if no further action were taken to avoid this.

It was also observed that 44% of the 'at risk' buildings are also Protected Structures. This figure rises to 93% if buildings recorded in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage are included.

'At Risk' has been defined by a number of heritage bodies; the following points from Historic Scotland is particularly clear:

- vacant with no identified new use
- suffering from structural problems
- fire damaged
- unsecured and open to the elements
- threatened with demolition

To be 'at risk' a structure must meet at least one of the above descriptors.

The northwest of Ireland as a whole has a poor record in the protection of its built heritage and clearly there are historical reasons for this, however, there is now an opportunity to reverse this trend. Ramelton, in particular has a disproportionate number of good quality historic buildings, however, the accumulated effects of partition, "the troubles" in Northern Ireland and, more recently, a decade of recession, have been significant. The decline of the Quayside and river frontage are the most notable on account of its visual prominence. This is an area of architectural and archaeological importance which also incorporates the site of the former Ramelton Castle.

The important Georgian buildings in the Mall and warehouse buildings on the Quayside, all Protected Structures, are at risk. The Quayside warehouses were included on the national An Taisce Buildings at Risk list, although one of these appears may have a more promising future. Other industrial heritage buildings such as Kelly's mill and builder's merchants are in danger of future collapse. These, along with other buildings and their settings have been affected by ill-conceived development undertaken in the first decade of the 20th century which have subsequently failed and, because of their scale have blighted the immediate area of influence.

The combined impact of the current dereliction on the character of the town has already been significant. The question arises as to how much of an area can be damaged before its character is irreversibly changed. The historic landmark buildings and their associated houses, associated history, events and shared memories are as much part of the cultural identity as they are of the built heritage. Ramelton is fortunate in that it has a high proportion of important historic buildings; the preservation of these may pose a challenge for the town but also provide a potential solution to its current gradual decline.

Several of the structures that are currently at risk, are recognised as having cultural and unique heritage significance and are also intended to enjoy some level of legal protection. The extent of dereliction heightens the sense of that the bodies responsible for their protection have been powerless, if not complacent, in the past. An essential challenge for the Town Renewal and other

initiatives will be to champion public support for the protection of this unique grouping of built, cultural and industrial heritage buildings, and to ensure that legislation that is already in place is enforced and the future conservation of the town's heritage assets in the long term is not sacrificed to individual short term gain.



Figure 58 – Ramelton Warehouses, image from An Taisce Buildings at Risk Register

Not all efforts to regenerate the town centre have been unfruitful. Businesses along the Mall all continue to do trade in historic buildings, which have evolved over many years and continue to provide useful service. Several important houses and other buildings have been repaired and conserved. An important aspect of earlier studies was to identify and provide focus to further actions that will encourage and facilitate the repair and regeneration of its historic core.

It is recognised that the Ramelton town centre area is significant in a number of respects:

- Urban Significance – the town is located at a strategic site at the mouth of the River Liffey where it enters Lough Swilly. The O'Donnell Castle located here also controlled valuable salmon fishery. Whilst there is no evidence of other medieval settlement here, the shape and outline of the original 17th century Plantation town are clearly visible, as are a small number of original buildings such as the Presbyterian meeting house in Back Lane and the House facing the former market cross. The town centre is largely made up of 18th and 19th century rubblestone-built terraced residential buildings of between 2 and three storeys, within areas continuously in use or occupied since the 17th century. The streets within the area, for the most part, have a strong sense of containment giving each public area the character of an individual urban space created by the enclosing buildings

Whilst the grouping of streets around Market and Castle Street are examples of 17th century town planning, area to the west which combine road infrastructure and engineering, designed commercial and residential terraces, institutional buildings and public buildings which collectively provide a well preserved commercial landscape. To the west, are the important former bleach green and associated industrial heritage buildings which, despite their initial industrial beginnings, provide for an established genteel and designed landscape setting which also has value for recreation.

Development on the north side of the river is limited largely to historic roadways serving Kilmacrennan, Milford & Rathmullan. Many of these buildings still retain some historical character.

Overall the town of Ramelton, whilst modest in scale is one of the best preserved historic towns in the northwest of Ireland.

- Architectural Significance – there are a number of protected historic buildings that are recognised individually for their architectural significance; in addition, several streets are significant for the collective form that the buildings provide. Whilst the importance of these individual buildings and their streetscape settings have been recognised for some time, their formal protection is relatively new and a cultural shift is needed in the short term to begin to respect the buildings and their setting in future plans for regeneration and new development within the town. The character of the town streets and urban spaces not only relates to its form but also the colour and texture of its enclosing material. In those areas closest to the town centre, there is a palette of materials which collectively present a strong 18th & 19th century character comprising dressed local stones, painted render & timber. Individual buildings have been deliberately located to terminate views and provide focal points within the wider urban landscape. In addition to this wider townscape character; there are a small number of individual buildings which, whilst not formally protected, have been identified as being significant for their state of preservation including retention of original joinery features; now quite rare and which should be used to inform the restoration of these features to other buildings as needed in the future.
- Historical & Archaeological Significance – the layout of the study area relates closely to underlying landscape and topography, which in turn relates closely to the historical and archaeological development of the town. The salmon pool and river crossing drew people to settle here as there was a ready supply of food. The current layout of the town is thought to most closely reflect the post Plantation period and later 18th century settlement. Whilst a handful of early buildings within the town centre have survived in part, the settlement formed the focus of a much wider rural community connected to the outside world via the port. Evidence of this wider setting can be seen outside the town at monastic sites at Aughnish and Killydonnell, and remains of the fortified house at old Fort Stewart reflect a dispersed pattern of occupation for more than a millennium.

Closer to the town, the Glebe house and extensive farm and woodland at Aghangaddy provided a living for the Church of Ireland rector. Also close to the town industrial heritage features which included water mills and related structures. Several of these important former industrial

structures survive, although some are now in a ruinous state. They and their functional settings are elements of the town also in urgent need of regeneration.

- Museum & Archive Collections – there is local history and archive material curated by the local history societies, tidy town groups and other community interests. In addition to national information sources referred to in this study, these are a valuable source about the social history and physical appearance of streets in the study area and should be further investigated in the course of developing detailed proposals for the repair of buildings.
- Tourism, Education & Presentation – the existing archive material is an important tourism resource providing valuable interpretative information for the interested visitor that may be made freely accessible. The buildings and streets features in a variety of tourism guides and publications which illustrate the history and development of the town. The conservation of the buildings are potentially of widespread interest both in terms of dissemination of knowledge to other building owners as well as promoting the town as part of its cultural tourism product. The raw data that has been produced as part of the Conservation Plan may be of future interest to an informed audience.
- Community & Social Value – as well as having associations for members of the public who use the town; the study area is also significant to the teachers and students for whom Ramelton is subject of study. Local businesses and the town itself benefit from the cultural tourism resource that the setting and its architectural legacy provides.

Individual buildings are also significant, as they collectively make up the fabric of Ramelton. A number have been identified as being 'at risk' and there is a concern that without intervention these may be lost. Any individual loss, on its own would be significant, however this also has an impact on the setting of the whole area, the value of which has been identified as being in its group importance.

The following pages highlight individual historic features, which do not obviously form part of the fabric of any Protected Structure but which have been identified in the study as being potentially 'at risk' as a consequence of the proposed work and gives initial recommendations as to actions that might be made to either avoid or mitigate the impacts identified.

The importance of the current project is that it will provide the public infrastructure and the necessary repairs to the historic urban environment that will support and promote the regeneration of the privately owned important historic buildings that is already beginning to take place.

Photographic Inventory of Streetscape Features

Photograph numbers refer to locations on maps – photos of significant or historic features are shown enlarged.

THE BING



Fig 2



Fig 3 – concrete wall



Fig 73 – stone wall with concrete coping



Fig 4 – tarmac/concrete



Fig 55- stone wall



Fig 5



Fig 6

EXISTING QUAYS



Fig 8 – granite guard stones



Fig 7 – granite guard stones



Fig 10 – weighbridge visible in the background



Fig 25 – detail on weighbridge in public road



Fig 11



Fig 12



Fig 14 – cast iron mooring bollard



Fig 15 – concrete mooring bollard



Fig 17 – new concrete pavement



Fig 16 – stone steps to river



Fig 18 – stone edge to quay with concrete beyond



Fig 21 – base of former crane



Fig 19 – cast iron mooring bollard – ‘George Green & Co. Londonderry, Engineers & Boiler Makers’



Fig 22 – section of stone edge to quay



Fig 23 – concrete mooring bollard



Fig 24 – Conway Foundries 1961 – access cover



Fig 71 – carved stone



Fig 72 – dressed stone rectangular blocks

MARKET SQUARE



Figs 27 & 28 – road edge in front of the Guild Hall



Fig 31 – steps up to the Guild Hall



Fig 29 – water pump



Fig 32- entrance to Conways' Bar



Fig 30 – stone blocks forming kerbline



Fig 34 – cobbles



Fig 35 – guard stone



Fig 36 – generally in-situ concrete pavements



Figs 37 & 38 – granite guard stone

MARKET CROSS



Fig 39 – opening to basement



Fig 40 – missing step



Fig 42 – blocked opening to basement



Fig 43 – Market Cross base (L) & Victorian post box set into wall



Figs 44 & 48 – generally concrete pavements

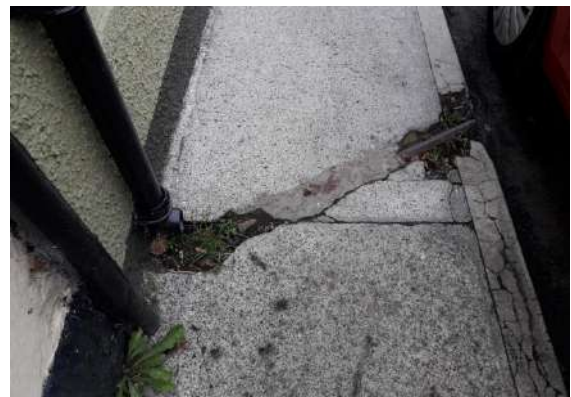


Fig 45 – old pipe under new concrete pavement



Fig 46 – issue with water runoff at threshold



Fig 47 – old hydrant cover



Figs 51 & 53



Figs 49 & 52 – no pavement/concrete pavement



Fig 54 – cast iron sewer vent

GAMBLE'S SQUARE



Fig 56 – stone steps



Fig 58 – stone steps to building entrances



Fig 69 – grating at corner of steps above



Figs 59 & 60 – concrete pavements with services



Fig 57 – flagstone path



Figs 61 & 62 – previous pavement upgrades comprising Liscannor stone slabs and granite kerbs



Fig 63 – modern carved feature at end of river walk



Fig 64 – stone wall along river with stone capping



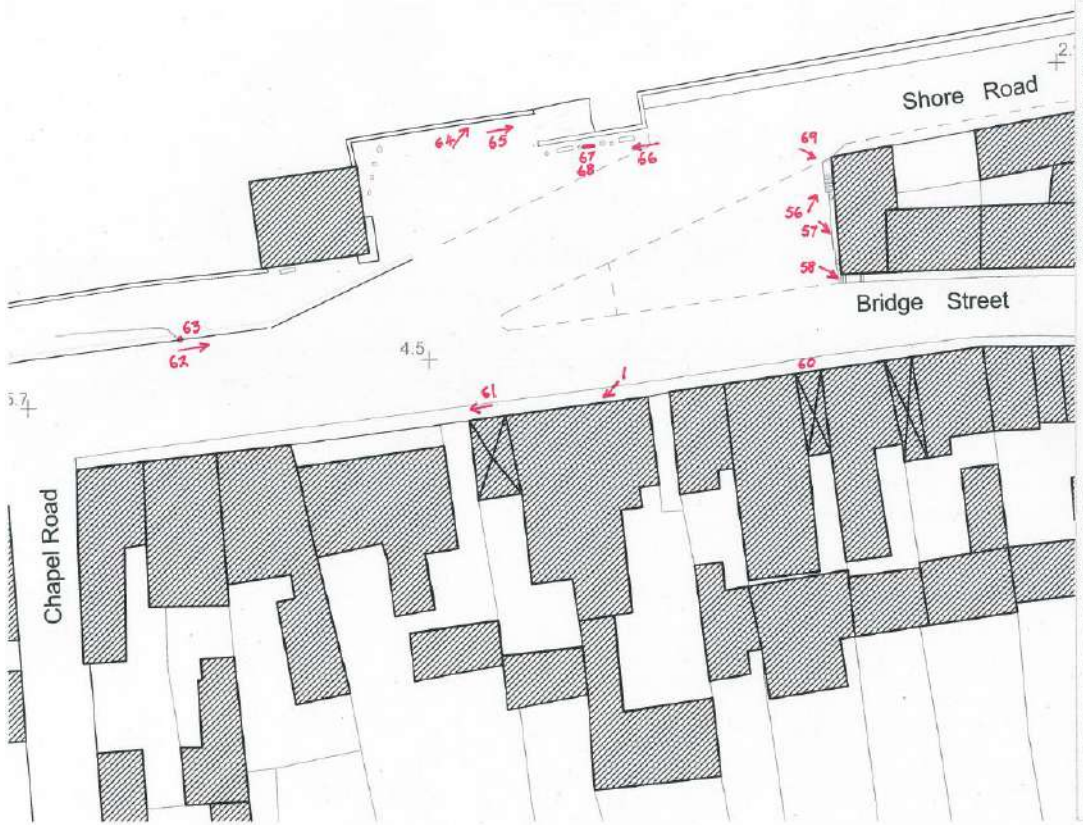
Fig 65 – cobbled slipway



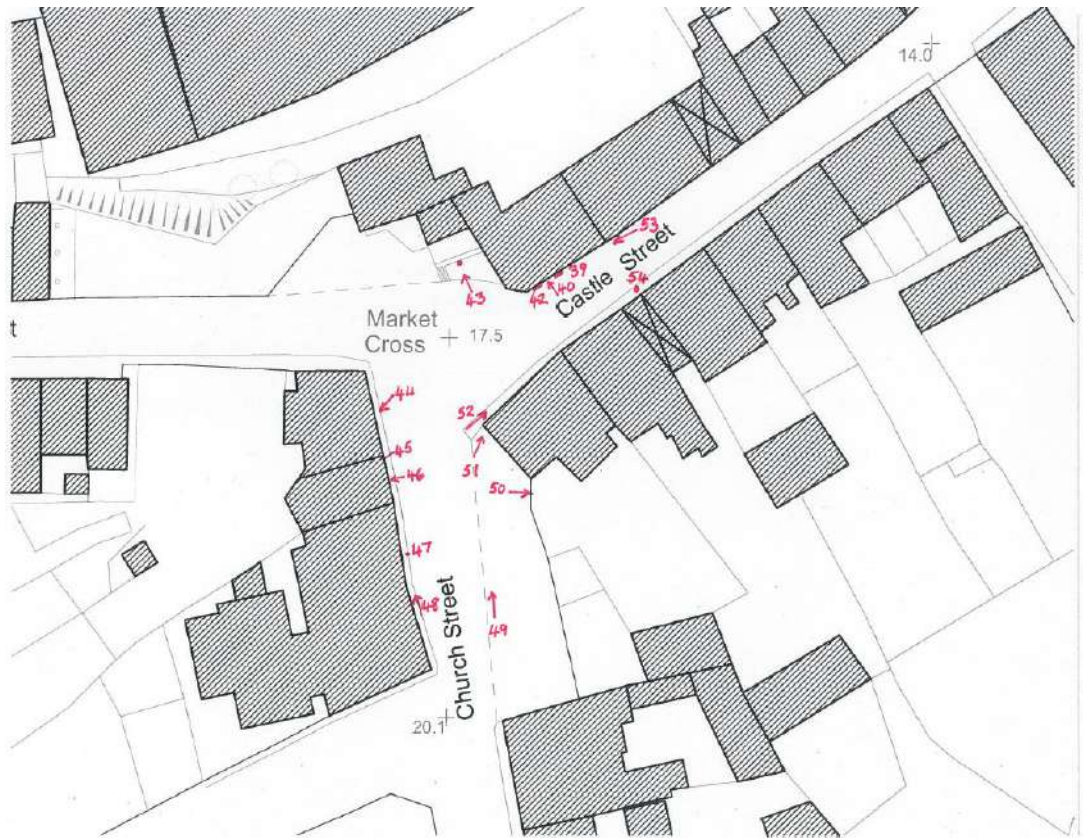
Fig 66 – weighing scale visible behind blue van



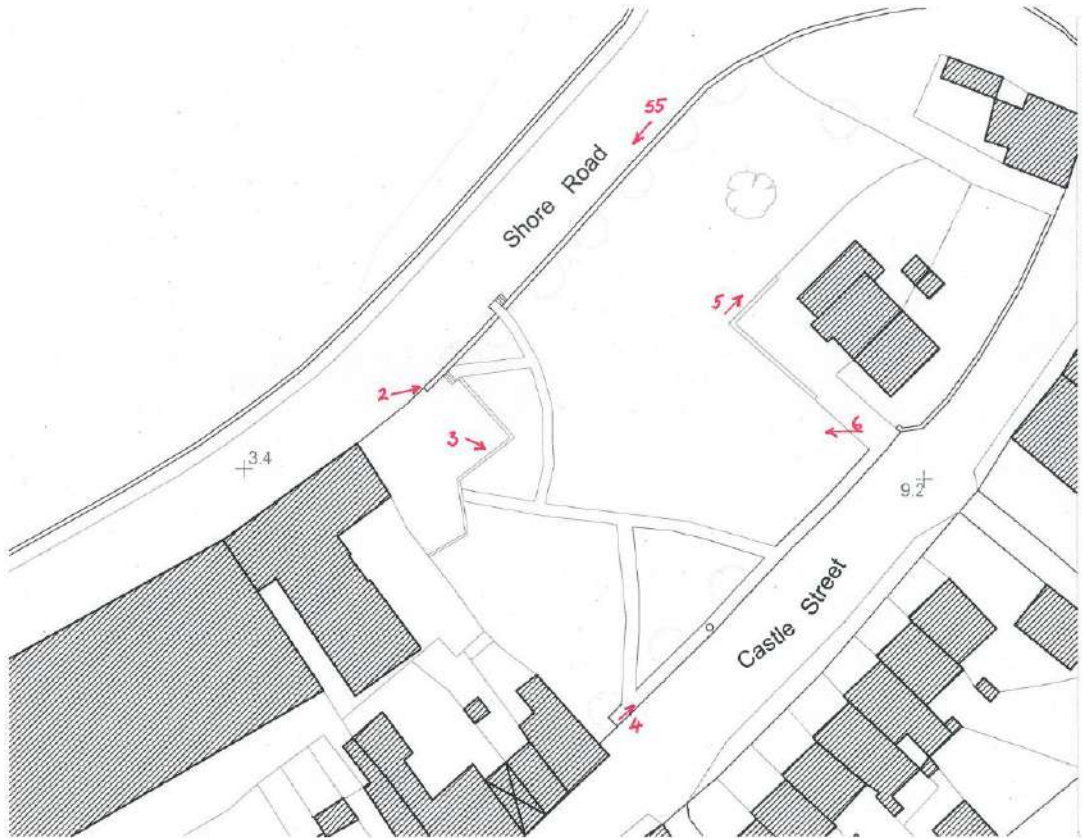
Fig 68- weighing scale – H Pooley & Son, Birmingham



DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Ramelton Public Realm Scheme
 Existing Gamble's Square
S01
 Scale: 1:500
 Date: Sept 2021
 Drawn: JM
 JOB No 10-130
 DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Bath Terrace, Main Street, Moyville, Co. Donegal
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DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Ramelton Public Realm Scheme
 Existing Market Cross
S02
 Scale: 1:500
 Date: Sept 2021
 Drawn: JM
 JOB No 10-130
 DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Bath Terrace, Main Street, Moyville, Co. Donegal
 Tel: +353 (0)745306122 Email: dedalusarchitecture@bt.com

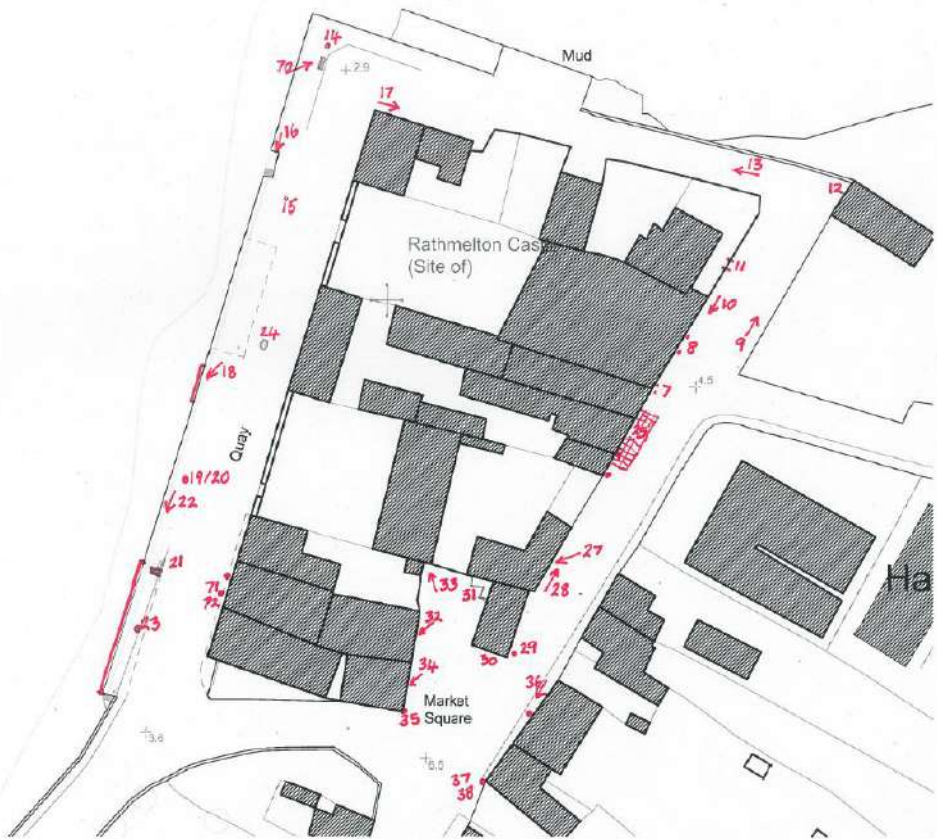


DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Ramelton Public Realm Scheme
 Existing Public Green - The Bing
 Scale: 1:500
 Date: Sept 2021
 Drawn: JM
S03

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JOB No 10-130



DEDALUS ARCHITECTURE
 Ramelton Public Realm Scheme
 Existing Quays & Market Square
 Scale: NTS
 Date: Sept 2021
 Drawn: JM
S04

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JOB No 10-130

Impact Assessment

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
	THE BING		Refer LP204 & 205		
73	Edge of river	Quayside wall	Rubble stone wall with in-situ cast concrete coping – 57pprox.. 0.9m above pavement; substantial height retaining wall on the side facing the river	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to potentially fragile structure	Protect from damage; coordinate with repairs to riverside wall
	THE QUAYS		Refer LP206		
7	Outside Charles Kelly buildings, Castle Street	Guard stones	Rock-faced granite posts with chisel-draughted margins and pyramidal heads - set either side of (broken) downpipe and gully	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to salvaged potentially historically important stones	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
8 & 10	Outside Charles Kelly buildings, Castle Street	Guard stones/posts	Granite wheel guards – larger version of item above - set either side of sliding entrance doors (single storey building) & set either side of arched entrance (2 storey building). Possibly from Rathmelton Castle	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to salvaged potentially historically important stones	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
10 & 25	In road outside Charles Kelly buildings, Castle Street	Weighbridge	Iron pit-mounted weighbridge embossed 'AVERY' & 'BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND'	Loss of important historic fabric – proposed removal of industrial archaeology	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
	North section of The Quay	Marine archaeology	2 wrecked boat keels revealed in mud at low tide	Current proposals not known	No known
14	North corner of The Quay	Mooring bollard	Cast iron mooring bollard, painted yellow	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic cast iron feature	Protect from damage & repaint; itemise on drawings

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
15 & 23	Along west side of The Quay	Mooring bollards	3 no. mooring bollards - concrete cast inside various metal barrels, painted - in same locations as MP marked on OS map c.1895	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic cast iron feature	Protect from damage & repaint; itemise on drawings
19	West side of The Quay	Mooring bollard	Cast iron mooring bollard, painted, head embossed with 'GEORGE GREEN & CO. LONDONDERRY' as outer ring and 'ENGINEERS & BOILER MAKERS' as inner ring	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic cast iron feature	Protect from damage & repaint; itemise on drawings
16	West side of The Quay – north end	Steps	Flight of stone steps from quay to river	Loss of important historic fabric – unclear if removal of industrial archaeology proposed	Show on drawings; Protect from damage and repair top step with stone indent or mortar repair (assess when concrete removed)
18	West side of The Quay – middle section	Quay edge	3 no. stone blocks forming quay edge	Loss of important historic fabric – unclear if removal of industrial archaeology proposed	Show on drawings; Protect and retain in-situ; clean out joints and repoint
21	West side of The Quay – opposite The Blue Goat	Base of former crane	Smooth rectangular iron plate with small circular projection - formerly linked to warehouse behind by iron rails (OS Map c.1895)	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic cast iron feature	Protect from damage & repaint
22	West side of The Quay – south end	Quay edge	Long section of stone blocks forming quay edge	Loss of important historic fabric – unclear if removal of industrial archaeology proposed	Show on drawings; Protect and retain in-situ; clean out joints and repoint
24	In road along west side of Quay	Access cover	Circular iron cover embossed 'CONWAY FOUNDRIES 1961'	Potential loss of historic fabric – cast iron drainage cover within area being repaved	Salvage cover & frame and reuse in new work in same location

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
71	Outside The Blue Goat on The Quay	Carved stones	Decorative carved scrolls/brackets set on pavement either side of entrance – provenance unknown	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to salvaged potentially historically important stones	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
72	Outside The Blue Goat on The Quay	Stone blocks	2 no. rectangular granite blocks with incised line along their full length. Possibly from Rathmelton Castle	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to salvaged potentially historically important stones	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
	MARKET SQUARE				
29	Corner of house on Castle Street/Market Square	Water pump	Cast iron water pump mounted on square stone slab – location marked as WT (water tap) on OS map c.1895	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic water supply	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
30	End of house on Castle Street/Market Square	Stone edging	Stone of type used historically as kerb to pavements in Ramelton. Extends in front of house past water pump.	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic paved edge	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
32	Conway's Bar	Entrance	Large stone slab placed to extend level threshold	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic threshold stone	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact
32 & 34	Corner building adjoining Conway's Bar	Cobbles	Cobbled strip against front of corner building	Loss of important historic fabric – proposed removal of cobbled 'street' under thatched roof eaves	Update proposals to minimise impact. Protect from damage, re-bed loose cobbles in clay sub-soil
35	Corner building adjoining Conway's Bar	Guard stone	Painted low stone post at corner of building	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to corner guard stone	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact

Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
37 & 38	Corner of Castle Street and Pound Street	Guard stone	Rock-faced granite post at corner of building (as outside Charles Kelly buildings)	Loss of important historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to salvaged potentially historically important stones	Show on drawings; record & protect from damage in situ. Update detailed proposals to minimise impact

	MARKET CROSS		Refer LP203		
Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
39	Former Stewart Arms Hotel, Castle Street	Lightwell to basement	Narrow slot at rear of pavement with 2 metal bars and raised strip of in-situ concrete around it	Not known	Assumed existing concrete strip retained
42	Former Stewart Arms Hotel, Castle Street	Former lightwell to basement	Previous opening retains concrete strip around it and is infilled with concrete	Not known	Assumed existing concrete strip retained
43	Wall extending out from former hotel	Post box	Victorian post box overlooking privately owned area of crazy paving	Not known – possible loss of historic fabric	Show on drawing; protect from damage; set out paving to suit height of post box
43	End of wall extending from former hotel	Market Cross base	Square stone plinth to former Market Cross and subsequently used as base for memorial lamp, as detailed on plaque mounted on it. Relocated.	Not known – possible loss of historic fabric	Show on drawing; differentiate from new sculpture; protect from damage
45	Pavement on west side of Market Square	Cast iron covers	Square hydrant cover marked 'TONGE & TAGGART LTD DUBLIN' Circular manhole cover	Not known	Assumed cast iron pipe cover to be retained
54	Pavement on south side of Castle Street	Sewer vent	Plain vertical vent pipe above tapered and fluted cast iron base	Potential damage to historic fabric – Excavation & repaving next to historic cast iron feature	Protect from damage & repaint

	GAMBLE'S SQUARE		Refer LP201		
Photo Ref.	Location	Element	Description	Nature of impact	Comment/ Potential Mitigation
56	Corner of building on Shore Road	Steps	Private stone steps and handrail	Potential loss of historic fabric - Excavation & repaving next to fragile structure	Protect from damage & underpin to avoid undermining – consider repair of steps
69	In road at corner of building on Shore Road	Drainage cover/grille	Large circular decorative drainage grille	Potential loss of historic fabric – cast iron drainage cover within area being repaved	Salvage cover & frame and reuse in new work in same location
57	East side of Gamble's Square	Flagstone	Strip of flagstones against building	Potential loss of historic fabric – excavation & repaving next to historic stone paving	Retain and protect from damage. Use level to set out paving
58	Corner of building on Bridge Street	Steps	3 no. stone steps up to building entrances	Excavation & repaving next to fragile structure	Protect from damage & underpin to avoid undermining – consider repair of steps
64 & 65	North side/north west of Gamble's Square	River wall and slipway	Rubble stone wall with mixture of stone and concrete capping; cobbled slipway	Potential loss of historic fabric - Excavation & repaving next to stone structure. NB Survey shows slipway incorrectly as concrete; cobble surfaces to be retained & protected	Protect from damage; consider localised repointing of river wall
66 & 68	North side of Gamble's Square, backing onto slipway	Weighing scale	Cast iron weighing scale marked 'H POOLEY & SON, BIRMINGHAM'	Potential loss of historic fabric - Excavation & repaving next to cast iron weighing scales	Protect from damage and repaint with historic paint

Recommendations

The project architects have worked in consultation with Duncan McLaren, Grade 1 accredited Conservation Architect and the Conservation Officer, Donegal County Council.

The impact assessment has identified a number of potential risk areas and made recommendations for inclusion in the Stage II Detailed Design Drawings. These are set out in the table above.

There are some further general points below that will also need to be addressed in the detailed stages of the project:

- Memorial Seats/Benches – there are a number of privately donated seats along the quay. Removal of these would obviously be a sensitive issue; It is assumed for the moment that they will be retained and should be shown on the developed drawings.
- Building drainage gullies to downpipes – every building has one or more downpipes, currently discharging to a footpath, channel, or gully. None are currently shown and details for each condition will need to be agreed. It is recommended that a ‘family’ of agreed solutions is developed to satisfy this requirement in due course.
- Protected structures & other historic buildings – entrance thresholds; the level of paving as it affects steps and thresholds will need to be clarified. Levels against external masonry walls should not be raised higher than existing.
- Cast iron drain covers & vents – historic fabric which contributes to the character of the streetscape is to be retained. If necessary, proposals need to be coordinated with Irish Water, ESB, Eircom, e-charging networks and any other proposals for improvements to infrastructure in the town.

The impact of proposals on the historic built environment, in a general sense, has previously been considered in the course of making designs for the heritage-led Action Plan. Any further impacts will arise in relation to detailed design and the selection of specific materials for the work. These will require further review in preparation of the Stage II Detailed Design Drawings

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RIAI Accredited Conservation Architect Grade 1