Conservation Research Analysis

HAGGARDSTOWN OLD CHURCH CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT REPORT

For Blackrock Tidy Towns

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BLACKROCK TIDY TOWNS

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Executive Summary

This report was commissioned by Blackrock Tidy Towns. The purpose of the report is to assess and advise on the condition and vulnerabilities of the ruined medieval church of Haggardstown (an archaeological monument, SMR Ref. No. LH012-014001) and to provide recommendations for immediate and longer-terms repair for stabilization to safeguard the church, without detracting from its archaeological and architectural significance. The specific aims of the work were to provide:

i) a condition report on the site, focussing particularly on the ruined church;
ii) suggestions for essential (short-term) and desirable (medium to longer term) conservation works on the ruined church;
iii) proposals for management, enhancement and interpretation of the site.

Significance of the Site: The site comprises two recorded archaeological monuments (LH012-014001 Church & LH012-014002 Graveyard protected under the National Monuments Acts) listed on the Sites and Monuments Record by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Haggardstown Old Church is a late medieval two-chamber nave-and-chancel masonry building with distinctive architectural features (the double bellcote at the top of the west gable, and opposing nave doorways) identifying it as an exemplar of the late medieval parish churches found in County Louth. These relatively small parish churches would have serviced the needs of the medieval manor. The site is dedicated to a well-known early medieval Irish saint, St. Fursey (died c.650AD) who has associations with the west of Ireland, east Anglia and Normandy and who was renowned during the medieval period for his ecstatic visions.

Haggardstown Old Church served the medieval manor of Stachmanasran, and there are two medieval castles located nearby which are associated with this parish church. The building was recorded as the church of Stamaran or Stachmanasran in the medieval period, and first referred to as 'The Hagard' (an enclosed area for stacking hay, grain or other fodder) in the mid-14th century and becoming known as Haggardstown in the 17th century[1]. Recent archaeological and geophysical investigations in 2018 (License 18E0201) in the three fields immediately to the north-east of Haggardstown Old Church discovered a large enclosure measuring 65x55m; and this enclosure may have a relationship with the medieval ecclesiastical site. The building is an important physical reminder of the medieval heritage of the Blackrock area, and an important local heritage amenity for the growing population of the town.

Care and Maintenance of the Site: The graveyard is well-kept and presented. Maintenance of the graveyard is carried out by Blackrock Tidy Towns using the local Community Employment (CE) Scheme. The information panel provided inside the graveyard was erected by Blackrock Tidy Towns with input from a local historian and drew on previous documented research.

Conservation Works Required: The masonry of Haggardstown Old Church is in urgent need of repair. Unlike many of Ireland's medieval churches which often survive only on maps as 'site of', or as fragmentary remains concealed by vegetation, the medieval church at Haggardstown survives almost to full height and remains an impressive visual expression of the area's medieval heritage. Its retention and conservation would have significant benefits to the local community as a heritage site which forms part of their everyday experience, and adds to local distinctiveness and place-making. The proposed conservation works comprise a series of masonry repairs based on minimal intervention (Table 1, detailed in Section 4) intended to safely preserve the medieval

[1] Alternate spellings and name changes are a common feature of medieval and other historical sources, and is to be expected with an ecclesiastical site which has been recorded since the early medieval period. For example, the place is referred to as both Stamaran and Stamanaran in the 1431 Register; as 'the Hagard' in 1538, and four variants in 1540: 'le Hagarde', 'parish of Haggard' and 'the church of Haggarde …Farmer of the Hagarde". Alternate spellings of the place and of St.Fursey/St.Furse used in the report reflect the source material (details and references provided in the endnotes).

church as a public heritage amenity. These repairs comprise salvaging any fallen or collapsed stone for re-use during repairs; treatment of the invasive vegetation; repair (grouting, stitching, and repointing) of all four walls; laying a protective ground surface inside the church; and providing information for the interpretation of the building (detailed in the report).

Conservation of Haggardstown Old Church	
Salvage Stone	Salvage & retain collapsed stone for re-use in repairs
Vegetation Removal	Remove all vegetation just before approved conservation works to begin
Crack stitching	Insert 'helibar' stiches to structural cracks
Grouting	Lime-based gravity grout to fill voids in walls (without takedown & rebuild)
Repointing & consolidation	Point up and secure all masonry in new shell-lime mortar to match original
Wall tops	Consolidate wall-top & provide new low-profile lime mortar flaunching
Ground surface	Remove vegetation & provide new gravel/other ground surface.
Interpretation	Provide new information board on the significance of the church & showing how it would have appeared in the medieval period
Enhancement	Create heritage links with local historical & archaeological societies, and with the graveyard committees of other graveyard committees (e.g. Faughart) for information- and resource-sharing opportunities.

Table A: Summary of necessary conservation works for Haggardstown Old Church

Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Report

This report was commissioned by Blackrock Tidy Towns. The purpose of the report is to assess and advise on the condition and vulnerabilities of the ruined medieval church within Haggardstown Graveyard (SMR Ref. No. LH012-014001) and to provide recommendations for immediate and longer-terms repair for stabilization to safeguard the church, without detracting from its archaeological and architectural significance. The specific aims of the work were to provide:

iv) a condition report on the site, focussing particularly on the ruined church;
v) suggestions for essential (short-term) and desirable (medium to longer term) conservation works on the ruined church;
vi) proposals for management, enhancement and interpretation of the site

Fig.1: Location of Haggardstown Old Church and Graveyard.

1.1 Methodology & Limitations of Inspection

The site was examined following a standard methodology for the assessment of archaeological monuments and historic buildings drawn from Pavía & Bolton (2000)[1], Pavía & Bolton (2001)[2], Fitzner & Heinrichs (2002)[3], Van Hees *et* al (2004[4]), Ashurst (2007)[5], and Quinlan *et al* (2010)[6], with additional technical references referred to in the body of the report, and while also considering current planning guidelines[7]. Site visits encompassed a walk-around survey from ground level, and photographic recording of key features.

1.2 Nature and Extent of the Site

The graveyard appears as a sub-rectangular enclosure (boundary wall erected in 1880 by Canon Thomas McCrystal) within the townland of Haggardstown on the western outskirts of Blackrock, Co. Louth. The local bedrock is a calcareous red-mica greywacke from the Clontail Formation. The site lies on the north side of Old Golf Links Road with modern housing along the road (particularly to the east and south-east), and with agricultural lands to south-west and north-east (i.e. the rear of the site). An application has been made (Louth County Council Planning Ref. No.181024) for a strategic housing development in the three fields to the north-east of Haggardstown Old Church comprising 166 residential units of 12 two-three storey apartment blocks containing 67 apartments, and 99 two-storey houses with associated landscaping, street networks and link roads; this is noted as a Stage 3 application lodged with An Bord Pleanala[8]. Archaeological investigations in 2018 at this site (License 18E0201) uncovered evidence of a large enclosure measuring 65x55m to the north-east of Haggardstown Old Church, which may have a relationship with Haggardstown Old Church[9].

2. Haggardstown Old Church: Assessment of Significance

Haggardstown Graveyard consists of a sub-rectangular graveyard enclosure containing graveslabs from 1729 onwards, and a ruined nave-and-chancel medieval church with double-bellcote in a site associated with St. Fursey (d.650 AD). The building is a recorded archaeological monument[10] (LH012-014001 Church & LH012-014002 Graveyard) listed on the Sites and Monuments Record by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht[11].

Fig.2: Screengrab from the Historic Environment Viewer showing key archaeological monuments in and around Haggardstown graveyard.

No.	RMP No.	Description
1.	LH012-014001	Church
2.	LH012-014002	Graveyard
3.	LH012-063	Souterrain
4.	LH012-011	Souterrain
5.	LH012-069	Ringfort & Souterrain
6.	LH012-010	Castle - unclassified
7	LH012-056	Midden
8.	LH012-094	Castle - motte

Table 1: Archaeological monuments in and around Haggardstown graveyard.

2.1 Archaeological and Historical Context: County Louth has a rich archaeological heritage dating back to the earliest prehistoric times, with late Mesolithic shell middens at Rockmarshall dating to c.4200BC, and a series of megalithic court tombs ranged around the Cooley peninsula dating from the Neolithic period (C.4000-2500BC). There was relatively dense settlement of Dundalk and environs in the Bronze Age with groups of cist burials, pit burials, standing stones, rock art coupled with the cutting back of woodlands and establishment of grains and cereals suggesting the establishment of a larger population in the area. The Iron Age is characterised by hillforts and the epic poetry of the Ulster Cycle, particularly the *Tain Bo Cualinge.* Most of the archaeological activity in these periods occurs north and west of Dundalk, and not in the marshy wetlands which characterised the Blackrock area in the prehistoric period[12]. However, prehistoric activity has been uncovered in the Haggardstown area including a Neolithic house, Bronze Age enclosure and structures[13], Bronze Age firepits[14]. Excavations at the Xerox technology park uncovered evidence for archaeological settlement and activity in

Haggardstown from the middle Bronze Age to the early medieval period[15]. There is therefore the potential for further archaeological evidence for prehistoric activity at Haggardstown to be uncovered.

Haggardstown Old Church is associated with St. Fursey (died c..650) who was a prominent Irish saint in the early medieval period (c.431-1169[16]). St. Fursey (also known as Fursa, Fursy, Forseus, and Furseus) was an Irish ecclesiastic who was born and active in Connacht and appears in early Irish sources such as the Annals of Ulster as well as contemporary Anglo-Saxon England and Merovingian France[17]. St. Fursey was the subject of a number of hagiographies and well-known for his ecstatic visions. St. Fursey travelled to Normandy in 648 and died c.650 while on a journey[18]. The place is recorded from c.737 and becomes part of the Anglo-Norman manor of Stachmanasran in 1269, and variants of this placename occur in thirteenth and fourteenth century[19]. In 1364, the place is first referred to as 'The Hagard', though the 'Church of Stamaran' is mentioned in 1431. In the sixteenth century, historical documents refer to 'the church of Haggarde...Farmer of the Hagarde', 'the parish of Haggard' and 'the manor of Haggarde'. The place is first named as 'Haggards - towne' in 1629.

The medieval church does not stand alone or in the historical landscape, and can be associated with other archaeological monuments in the area. The medieval parish church would have had some form of relationship with the two known medieval castles (LH012-094 Castle-motte; LH012-010 Castle) which lie a short distance to the east (Fig.2 & Appendix I). There may also be a possible earlier relationship with the large enclosure discovered through archaeological investigations (License No. 18E1201) in 2018 in the field north-east of the site.

2.2 Historical Cartography: Haggardstown Church and settlement in the immediate area is recorded on historic mapping from the mid-seventeenth century onwards including the Down Survey maps (Figs.3-4) and Taylor and Skinner's 1777 map (Fig.5). The first edition Ordnance Survey map c.1840 records the church and graveyard but with little change to the site depicted over successive map editions.

Fig.3: 'Haggardstown' as indicated on the Down Survey map of County Louth[20] c.1656-58.

Fig.4: Detail of 'Great haggardstowne' on Down Survey Dundalk Barony map[21] showing the church, some houses and the bog to the north-west.

Fig.5: 'Haggardstown Old Church in ruins as depicted on Taylor and Skinners map 1777[22].

The later medieval and post-medieval history[23] of Haggardstown is linked with the division of the medieval manor and vill of Staghmacaneren[24] (Haggardstown). By the mid-seventeenth century (Fig.4) the manor was divided into two separate parts: little Haggardstown to the west and Great Haggardstown to the east. The SMR (Table 1) notes two castles in the area – one to the west of the church and known as Caislean Uachtrach, and another to the north-west known as Caislean Iochtrach which are perhaps related to this division of the manor, possibly associated with the division of the De Verdon estate in the fourteenth century of which Haggardstown formed a part. Great Haggardstown appears to have reverted to the Crown by the fifteenth century as freeholders held the lands *in capite*. John Burnell of Balgriffin held half of the manor of Great Haggardstown before 1534 at which point his lands were confiscated following unsuccessful rebellion and subsequently granted in 1525 to John Fitzsimmons of Dublin and Ballybarrack, with the other part of Great Haggardstown held by the Nugent family of Delvin, Co. Meath. The Nugents sold their interest in Haggardstown to Henry Dowdall MP of Athlumney Castle, Co. Meath in 1628; while Thomas Fitzsimmons passed his interest to Sit William Talbot MP of Carstown, Co. Kildare in 1629. The Down Survey c.1656-58 (Figs.3-4) noted that the forfeiting landowners in the 580 acres of Great Haggardstown were Laurence Dowdall of Athlumney, Co. Meath and Garret Talbot of Carstown, Co. Kildare, and the 126 acres of Little Haggardstown were held by Sir Christopher Bellew. Following

the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Talbot was able to recover his lands, while the wife of Laurence Talbot was able to gain a life interest in Haggardstown.

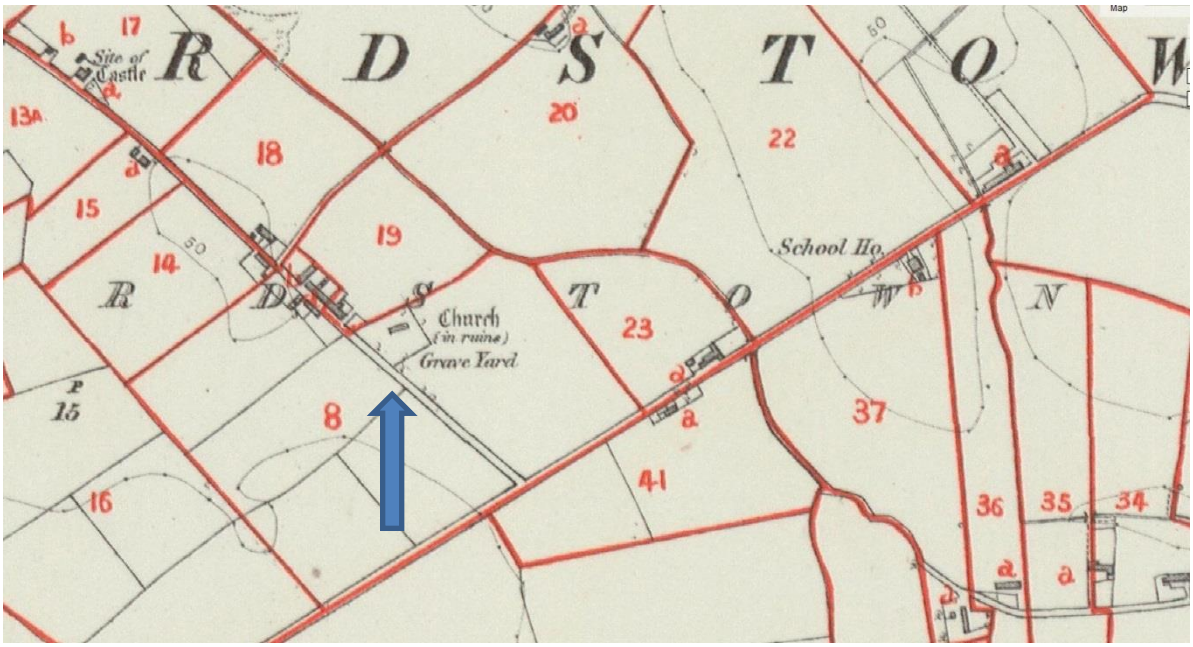

Fig.6: Griffiths valuation annotated first edition Ordnance Survey map showing Haggardstown Old Church.

2.3 Previous Descriptions of Haggardstown Old Church: The topographer Samuel Lewis, writing in 1837, noted 'some remains of the old church and also of an ancient castle' at Haggardstown. The OS Letters (the surveyors notes written between 1834 and 1841) provide the earliest detailed description of the church:

> "In this townland are the ruins of an old church … The E. part is 5 ½ yards long, to where the gable stood inside, and 4 yards broad; about 12 feet in height of E. gable remain; there is on it a window place opened at top and reaching to the ground inside, it is 4 feet broad, the sides of a stone window frame 1 ½ feet broad and 4 ft. high still remain in it. The side-walls in this part of the edifice are about 12 ft. high except in a small part next the E. gable where the S. and N. walls are injured and do not exceed 10 ft. in height. One the S. one next the E. gable is a narrow window place reaching to the ground inside, which is 4 ft. high by 2 ft. broad at bottom, and a pointed one W. of this of the same height and breadth. The W. part of the building is 11 yards long to middle gable and 6 yards broad; side-walls 12 ft. high. On the S. sidewall E. of door is a narrow opening 3 ft. from the ground, which is 4 ft. high by 1 foot broad; the doorway is now a large breach reaching to top, and much shattered on both sides – 5 foot broad. The W. gable is about 30 feet high, having an arched doorway 5 feet high and 4 broad, now closed with stonework; this is said to have been an entrance into the cellar; about 22 feet from the ground there is on it an arched opening about 1 ½ foot high and 10 inches broad. The gable terminates in a square having two openings, arched above, 5 feet high and 3 feet broad; the people say it was a belfry. On the N. sidewalk next this gable is an arched opening much shattered on both sides, 10 ft. high and 8 ft. broad – originally a doorplace. The saint is St. Furce; his festival day … 16th January".

The church was next recorded c.1934 in the County Louth Archaeological Journal which provided a description of the church and records contemporary repair work:

> "The walls are 2' 9" thick. An arched doorway in centre of W. wall has been built up. Above the door in a projecting belfry are two arched windows about 30' above this door [note – this is the double bellcote, not windows]. The entrances in N. and S. walls were 'faced' by Canon McCrystall[25]. There is the space of a large window in E. wall, 2' above present floor level, 2' 4" wide outside, 4' 6" wide inside. The O.S. Letters state that parts of the cut stone window framing were then still in place. In S. wall are three narrow arched windows about 2' 9" high. Along the dotted line AB [see Fig.8] are the remains of a wall as if the eastern portion were separate from the main body of the monastery.
> Mr. Peter Murphy says that in planting ivy round the walls he dug up a slate about 1" thick and 1' square. The graveyard surrounding the monastery was old 100 years ago, because the Name Book says: - The people still bury in the yard around it (the monastery). The headstones date from 1769"[26].

Fig.7: 1934 drawing of Haggardstown Old Church showing the blocked-up west doorway, and damage to the south-west corner where the gable meets the south wall of the nave. The shading may indicate vegetation.

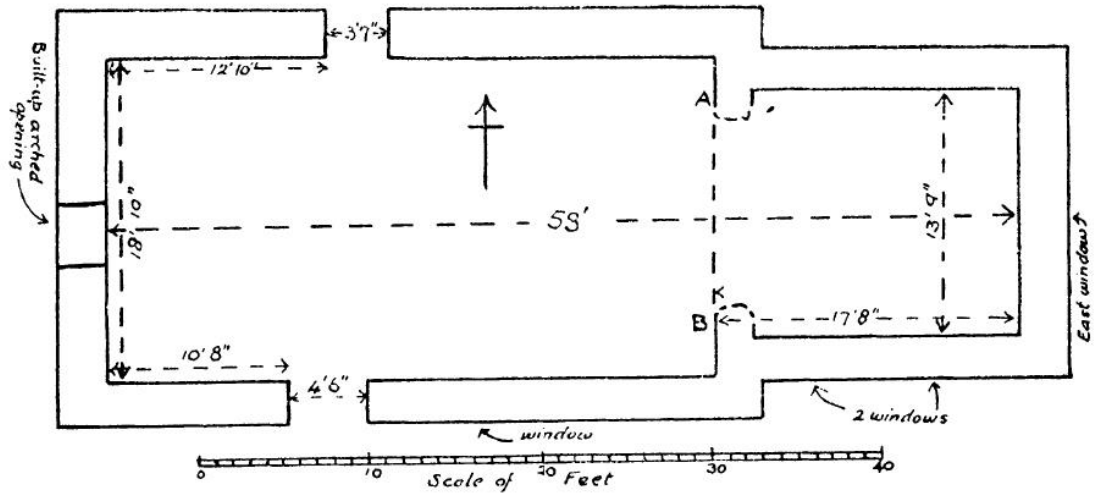

Fig.8: 1934 plan of Haggardstown Old Church, originally drawn to a scale of 1:10.

The church was described again in the County Louth Archaeological Journal in 1941, at which time the ivy planted (then popular for 'romantic ruins') by Peter Murphy prior to 1934 had enveloped the church:

> "HAGGARDSTOWN OLD CHURCH, O.S. Louth 12 3 4, lies at the end of a low ridge in open undulating country affording good pasture. The church is long, with slightly contracting chancel. The walls are fairly preserved but densely ivy-clad, the quoins rough. There are rectangular doors on north and south, of which the latter has lost its slab-lintel; on the west is a blocked round-headed door with rough jambs. There are three slit-windows in the south wall with wide splay and rough internal jambs. Those at the east end of nave and chancel are rectangular, with masonry jambs and rough ashlar sill and lintel. The one at the west of the chancel has roughly chamfered unglazed external jambs and a lop-sided pointed arch; the jambs seem to be composed of older fragments. On the east is a medium-sized window with rough internal jambs and sill, the outer frame has been removed. There is a small belfry on the west gable. The present structure seems to be hardly older than the seventeenth century, but apparently contains older fragments"[27].

A 2.6m^2 burial vault was discovered in October 1977 east of the church by the local graveyard committee and surveyed by Paul Gosling[28]. The Archaeological Survey of County Louth[29], published in 1991, described the church, at that time covered with ivy:

"Undoubtedly the most common ecclesiastical remains in County Louth are the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century parish churches. These appear to be built on a set plan in most cases, and all have a certain number of architectural features in common, such as a bellcote on the W gable, opposing doorways in the nave and the use of hammer-dressed limestone or hard grey sandstone in the windows and doorways. The siting of these churches does not appear to have any set pattern and no preference is shown for a particular type of location, except for a few which are situated close to mottes … Their situation almost certainly reflects political determinants rather than physical constraints.

Church: Chancel narrower than nave (int. dims. Of chancel 4m N-S by 4.4m; nave 10.5m by 5.6m), built of limestone blocks and greywacke and more or less completely covered with ivy. Opposing doorways in nave and double bellcote in W gable. The most westerly window in the S wall of the chancel has a two-centered arch constructed of two rounded punch-dressed blocks, one of sandstone, one of limestone. Its two western jambs and sill stone are granite. The E jamb is limestone, has bar holes and was originally a sill stone. The remaining two windows in the S wall and the E window have been destroyed and there are no surviving remains of cut stone. The doorways are lintelled and featureless. The church was repaired in 1622 and was in ruins in 1692. The opposing doorways, bell-gable and two-centered window arch indicate a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century building".

Fig.9: Photo of Haggardstown Old Church by H. O'Sullivan (2003) showing the ivy enveloping the building.

2.4 Assessment of Significance

Haggardstown Old Church is a late medieval two-chamber nave-and-chancel masonry building with a double bellcote above the west gable, opposing nave doorways and a series of windows surviving along the south elevation. The building is an exemplar of late medieval parish churches found in County Louth and is believed to date to the fifteenth- or sixteenth-century. The site dedicated to the early medieval saint, St. Furse who has associations with the west of Ireland, east Anglia and Normandy and who was renowned in the medieval period for his ecstatic visions. The ruined church building lies in a well-maintained graveyard with graveslabs from the eighteenth century onwards. The church served the medieval manor of Stachmanasran, and there are two medieval castles located nearby which are associated with the parish church. The church was known as the church of Stachmanasran in the medieval period, with the place first referred to as 'The Hagard' (an enclosed area for stacking hay, grain or other fodder[30]) and becoming known as Haggardstown in the seventeenth century. and forms part of the medieval heritage of Blackrock and County Louth.

The site comprises two recorded archaeological monuments (LH012-014001 Church & LH012-014002 Graveyard protected under the National Monuments Acts) listed on the Sites and Monuments Record by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

3. Condition Survey

Haggardstown Old Church is primarily affected by two inter-related deterioration mechanisms – the deterioration of the lime-based mortars bonding and coating the masonry, and penetration by ivy, plants and moisture. These have resulted in the formation of large structural cracks, the dislodgement of large stones (which are at risk of falling from the face of the wall), the collapse of small parts of the wall, and the dislodgement of the outer face of the masonry in some locations which threaten further location collapses. In addition, the northern doorway into the church (repaired c.1880) has a cracked and spalled stone lintel with invasive vegetation and dry joints above. The masonry walls have been greatly affected by penetrating ivy (intentionally planted prior to 1934), shrubs and small tree at wall top level (Fig.9). Stabilisation of the church (see Section 4) will require removal of invasive plants, consolidation, securing of masonry, pinning, grouting and pointing by a specialist contractor experienced in the conservation and repair of historic buildings and archaeological monuments.

Fig.10: GoogleMaps aerial photograph showing Haggardstown Old Church in a well-maintained graveyard. The image shows vegetation growing along the exposed wall-tops, and collapsed masonry in the chancel.

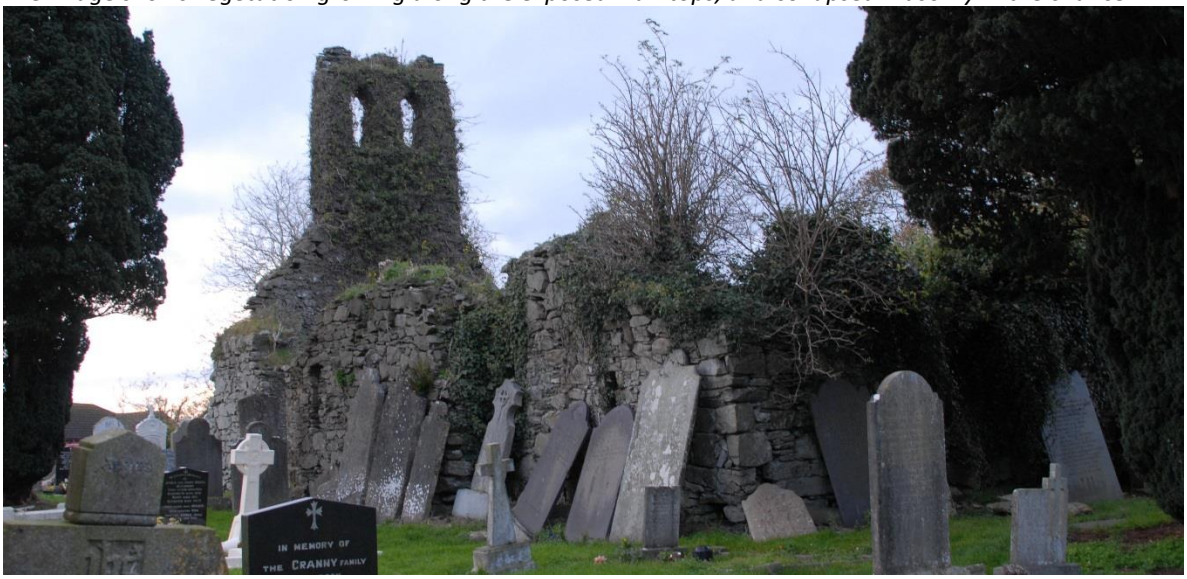

Fig.11: View of Haggardstown Old Church from the south-east showing graveslabs propped against the east and south walls, with ivy and other vegetation at wall-tops and on both internal and external masonry surfaces.

3.1 West Elevation: Gable and bellcote: Much of the gable is coated by ivy, the roots of which have penetrated into the wall fabric. The shoulders of the gable show exposed wall core and loose masonry; both the south-east and north-east corners have lost masonry and there are dry joints and loose stone throughout.

Fig.12: General view of the west elevation showing ivy extending to the head of the bell-cote, and the masonry at the south-west corner broken open exposing the bedding mortars and wall core.

Fig.13: General views of external (left) and internal (right) faces of the bellcote showing the extent of ivy growth. The ivy has been cut in the past in an attempt to kill it off. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the plant rooting within the wall and continuing to thrive.

Fig.14: The ivy extends to the top of the bellcote. The masonry shows dry joints throughout, and further growth of the ivy should be expected to result in dislodgement and falls of masonry.


Fig.15: Both edges of the gable show exposed wall core and loose and dislodged masonry (left) with the south-east corner showing unravelling of the masonry and dry joints throughout.


Fig.16: The ivy was cut close to the ground at some time in the recent past in an attempt to kill the plant. Unfortunately, this resulted in the ivy rooting into the masonry fabric and continuing to grow. Note the strike marks (right) where tools struck the stone.

The key issues at the west elevation are:

- Invasive vegetation penetrating and disrupting the masonry. The ivy (and other plants) have been previously cut, but are alive and continuing to grow;
- Open deep 'dry joints' >200mm in places allowing moisture penetration and dislodgement of masonry
- Lost quoins at the base of the north-east corner;
- Architectural features (door, window, bell-cote etc.) concealed by plant growth;
- Exposed wall-tops along sloping gable;
- Unstable and fallen masonry at south-west (Figs.15,20) and north-west (Fig.33) corners.

Fig.17: The internal face of the west gable wall shows a blocked-up west doorway, with recent burials at the foot of the wall. Traces of a lime-based plaster survive on the face of the wall indicating that the interior of the church was formerly plastered (see north elevation also). Note recent burial.

Fig.18: The north-west corner of the west elevation shows lost quoins, with resultant lack of support for the masonry above. Note the deep dry joints between the stones above. The large quoins show packing of smaller slately stones. However, the exterior of the church would originally have been lime rendered or washed externally and these stones would not have been visible when the parish church was first built.

3.2 South Elevation: nave-and-chancel: The masonry shows deep dry joints, within which is a shell-rich lime-based bedding mortar[31]. Some of the masonry shows well-developed weathering forms but are generally stable and not showing active stone decay[32]. The loss of lime mortar is a key vulnerability of the masonry, allowing the stones to slip, dislodge and detach from the face of the wall. Collapses of masonry can be seen at the south-west corner. The doorway was re-formed c.1880 (see Section 2.3) but the upper part of the western jambs have collapsed. The westernmost window is collapsing, and stresses exerted by invasive vegetation along the eastern half of the wall is exacerbating the dislodgement of the outer face of the wall. Local collapses can be seen at the south-east corners of both the nave and the chancel. The wall core is in very poor condition.

Fig.19: The western portion of the wall shows deep dry joints and partial collapse at the junction with the west gable wall (see Figs.12 & 15). The bedding (c.250mm within the joint) is a shell-rich mortar. The stone surface along this elevation is coated with a thin coat of lichen.

Fig.20: The internal (north face) of the junction between the south elevation and the west gable wall shows a loss of bonding and the dislodgement of stone. There is inadequate bond between the inner face of masonry and the wall core, resulting in large stones moving and detaching from the face of the wall.

Fig.21: View of the south elevation showing the opposing doorways into the nave.

Fig.22: Graveslabs propped against the nave. Note dry joints, stump (arrow) vegetation & failure of SE corner.

Fig.23: Detail of shell-lime mortars in the south-wall of the nave and chancel, used as bedding and plastering mortars (the greenish biofilm is from saturated masonry within a window embrasure.

Fig.24: Graveslabs propped against the chancel, with a large structural crack forming at the wall top (arrowed), shrubs and ivy growing along the head of the wall and dry joints throughout.

Fig.25: The greywacke shows a coating of lichen in places. These are indicators of good air quality and do not currently need to be removed.

Fig.26: The inner face of the south wall of the nave showing remnants of a lime-based plaster, a collapsed chancel arch, and plant growth along the wall-top.

Fig.27: Nave, south elevation: failing window head.

Fig.28: Collapse of the chancel arch showing loss of mortar 'hearting' from the wall-core accompanied by deep dry joints, new ivy growth and the dislodgement of masonry. A pile of collapsed masonry lies at the foot of the wall and within the chancel[33].

Fig.29: The lime plaster within the splayed window in the south wall of the nave has a shell-rich lime plastering mortar (left). The bedding within the exposed wall core of the collapsed chancel arch also contains a shell-rich lime-based mortar (right).

The key issues affecting the south elevation are:

- Deep dry joints and collapse of the south-east corners of the nave (Figs.15,20) and the chancel (Fig.22), with a structural crack developing in the chancel (Fig.24);
- Loss of mortars in the wall core leading to collapse of the chancel arch (Fig.28) and dislodgement of the outer face of the southern chancel wall;
- Failing window head in the nave (Figs.26-27);
- Invasive vegetation along the wall tops and entirely coating the internal face of the chancel. Plants are also beginning to grow from the face of the outer wall (Fig.22);
- A series of graveslabs have been propped against the nave and chancel along the south elevation (Figs.22-23), probably as part of a past graveyard 'clean-up'. These slabs conceal the vulnerable condition of the wall, and are also at risk of breaking and falling[34].

3.3 East Elevation (chancel): The chancel is severely affected by invasive vegetation and water penetrating into the masonry fabric from wall-top level and through deep dry joints in the south and north walls. These joints extend to >150mm in depth in places, with the stones having consequent significant reduction in support and allowing moisture penetration into the wall fabric. Dry joints were found on the east elevation as well as both the north and south elevations of the chancel.

It should be noted that large shrubs or trees are growing in two locations at wall-top level of the chancel – at the head of the east wall, and at the head of the south wall (Figs.11,24 & 30). The root systems of these plants should be expected to have penetrated to some depth into the masonry.

A large open structural crack can be seen at the south end of the east elevation. This appears to be the result of the loss of bond between the outer face of the masonry with the wall core (this process is explained in more detail in Section 4). Some of the stones show cracking from mechanical stress (Fig.32).

Graveslabs have been propped against all three walls of the nave since before 2003 (Fig.9) though the ivy has been removed in recent years from the outer face (Fig.30). The east window has been entirely obscured by dense ivy, as has the internal face of the east chancel wall and the condition of the wall in these areas is unclear.

The key issues affecting the east elevation are:

- Deep dry joints and collapses at the wall top, with a structural crack developing in the south-east corner of the chancel (Figs.31-32);
- Loss of mortars in the wall core leading to dislodgement of the outer face of the southern chancel wall;
- Ivy growth concealing the condition of the masonry on the internal face of the chancel walls and the condition of the east window;
- Invasive vegetation along the wall tops and entirely coating the internal face of the chancel;
- A series of graveslabs have been propped against the nave and chancel along the south elevation (Fig.30), probably as part of a past graveyard 'clean-up'. These slabs conceal the vulnerable condition of the wall, and are also at risk of breaking and falling[35];
- The wall-tops are exposed and allowing significant moisture ingress; with recrystallised lime mortar visible at the north-east corner of the chancel.

Fig.30: A structural crack is opening up on the south side of the chancel as the outer face of the wall detaches from the wall core (arrowed). Graveslabs have been propped against all three sides of the wall. However, these do not offer any support to the masonry, and are themselves at risk of fracturing and breaking should any weight from the masonry pass to them.

Fig.31: Disruption of the south-east corner of the chancel as a result of dry joints and invasive plant growth.

Fig.32: Mechanical stress leading to cracking of quoins at the SE corner of the chancel.

3.4 North Elevation: nave-and-chancel: The north wall of the church shows a series of vertical cracks visible on both sides of the wall; invasive vegetation penetrating and disrupting the masonry; collapses at the north-west and north-east corners of the nave; displacement of the outer face of areas of the nave and chancel; and cracking and displacement of the stone lintels above the doorway.

Fig.33: The western end of the north wall of the nave shows an open structural crack and collapse at the top of the wall (arrowed, see Fig.18 also). The masonry on the inner face of the wall also shows dry jointing, disruption of the wall-top, and the detachment of stones.

Fig.34: This section shows three vertical cracks (arrowed). Corresponding cracks and areas of collapse can be seen on the internal face (Fig.36) with stones at the lower quoins of the north-east corner of the nave showing deep dry joints and cracks caused by mechanical stress (Fig.43).

Fig.35: The ivy has penetrated deeply into the core of the masonry. The ivy was previously cut off above the root. Unfortunately, this allowed the mature plant to root within the wall where it continues to thrive. The wall top is exposed and the joints are dry allowing significant moisture ingress (which in turn accelerates the process of deterioration).

Fig.36: The inner face of the north wall shows opening cracks corresponding with those seen externally (Fig.34). The chancel arch has collapsed (orange arrow) with corresponding disruption seen on the outer face of the nave (Figs.42 & 44).

Fig.37: The inner face of the north elevation retains traces of lime-based plaster (which have assisted in protecting the masonry, see Fig.38). The chancel arch has collapsed exposing the wall core (right). Note that the inner face of the chancel is entirely concealed by invasive vegetation.

Fig.38: Detail of the shell-lime plaster seen on the inner face of the north wall of the nave.

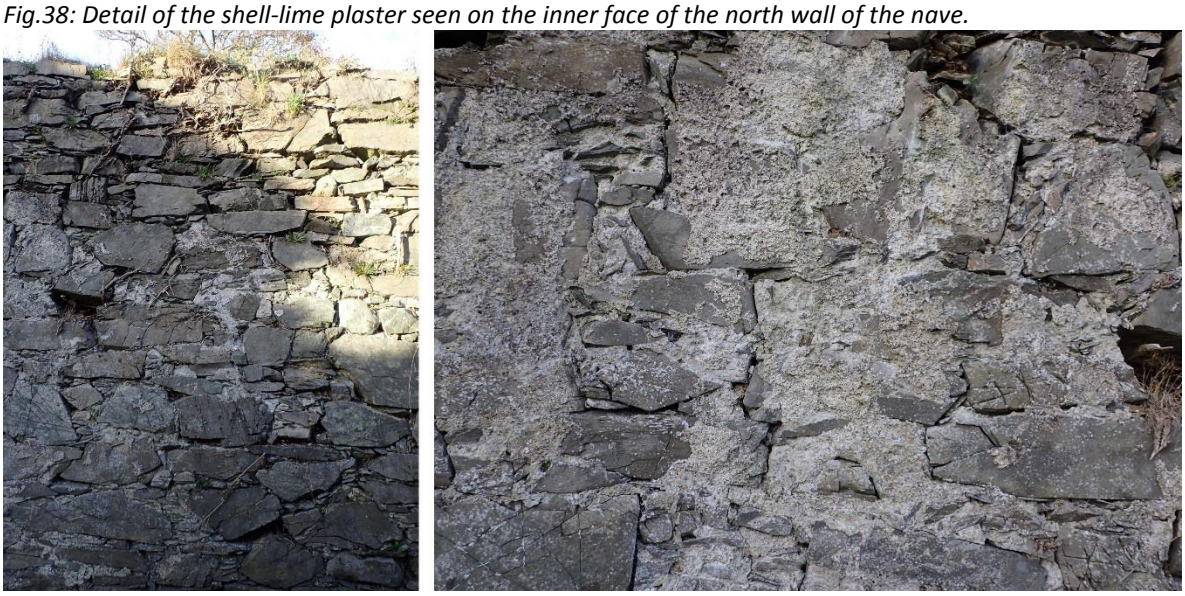

Fig.39: General view of the lime-based plaster basecoat adhering to the inner face of the north wall.

Fig.40: Shell aggregate in the lime-based bedding mortar of the north wall of the nave.

Fig.41: The greywacke masonry blocks show inherent stone decay forms and weathering; but also cracking induced by mechanical stress as the outer face detaches from the wall core.

Fig.42: Cracking can be seen along the north elevation.

Fig.43: The cracks are associated with dry jointing, dislodged stones (left) and cracked stones (right).

Fig.44: Dry joints and cracks caused by mechanical stress (arrowed).

The key issues affecting the north elevation are:

- The walls have lost a significant amount of lime mortar (which bonds the masonry together) resulting in deep dry joints, structural cracks which can be seen on both sides of the wall, and collapses at the wall top;
- The loss of mortars in the wall core is leading to dislodgement of the outer face and mechanical damage to some stones;
- Ivy growth concealing the condition of the masonry on the internal face of the north chancel wall;
- Invasive vegetation along the wall tops and the internal face of the chancel;
- Cracked lintel above the north door (Figs.48-49).

3.5 Memorials and Burials: The burial markers in the graveyard date from the eighteenth century onwards. Loose grave slabs have been repositioned against the walls of the ruined church in an effort to preserve them (Figs.9, 11, 12, 22, 24). These grave markers were probably positioned here in an effort to 'tidy' the graveyard[36] while also allowing the inscriptions to be read. However, this positioning offers no protection to either the masonry walls of the church or to the grave markers. In addition, there are burials located in close proximity to the base of the west, south and east walls of the building (Figs.12,21,30) as well as inside the church (Fig.45). Ground levels inside the church have been disturbed and confused by a combination of successive burials, masonry collapses and plant growth. The markers within the chancel are largely unreadable at present and the iron railed precinct is rusting and should be expected to fail in the short-term if the metal is not treated. A number of the grave markers within the church remain upright, but there are scattered loose markers also. The graveyard remains in active (though limited) use with relatively recent grave markers noted (Figs.12 & 17).

Fig.45: General view of memorials within the nave of Haggardstown Old Church. Care should be taken not to disturb any burials during any necessary repair or stabilisation works.

3.6 Discussion: **The key threats to the fabric of Haggardstown Old Church are the instability of the masonry walls and and the growth of invasive vegetation.** It is important to note that ruined structures behave differently to roofed intact buildings (which are largely weatherproof). Ruined roofless structures are particularly exposed to weathering, with significant amounts of rain falling on all parts of the masonry; with a certain proportion of that moisture penetrating leading to loss of mortar between the stones and in the wall core. While it can be tempting to assume that because a ruined structure has survived for centuries that it will continue to survive in the same state for decades or centuries more, this is unfortunately not true. **Haggardstown Old Church has now reached a point where conservation works are urgently required to protect the structure.**

3.6.1 Vegetation: The ivy and other vegetation which previously enveloped the church (Fig.9) have been removed. The removal with little damage to the masonry and was a necessary step in safeguarding the church. However, the ivy and other plants had developed deep root systems which have penetrated into the masonry fabric; in turn allowing significant water ingress into the masonry, accelerating decay mechanisms. Over decades, the root systems have lifted and opened the joints, disturbing the wall-core. The cutting back of the mature ivy previously found on the buildings resulted in the dying off of much of these roots systems, leaving voids within the masonry. The south wall of the nave has a large stump at wall-top level (with associated root systems likely to extend >1.5m deep into the wall) and with live shrubs growing on the wall-top of the nave**. It will be necessary to carefully treat and remove all of the invasive vegetation as part of the conservation works.**

Lichens are present, particularly on the south elevation of the building (Figs.25,28). These are relatively benign and are not associated with any stone decay. There is **no reason to clean off or remove the existing lichens** and these should be allowed to remain throughout.

3.6.2 Defects in the Walls: The wall tops are generally broken and uneven, with lost mortar resulting in the upper courses of masonry functioning as 'dry-stone' masonry; often disturbed by the continuing growth of invasive vegetation. The walls are exposed to rainfall not only on the external and internal faces, but rainwater also seeps down from the wall-top to saturate the core of the wall. This results in a **poor quality core** (Fig.46) with **extensive mortar loss**, **unstable unsupported facework** and **detaching dislodged stones** (Figs.15,20). The lowermost quoins supporting the masonry above have been lost along the northern side of the church (Figs.18,44) and at the south-east corner (Fig.32) leading to mechanical damage to individual stones and destabilisation of the outer face of the masonry. Large **structural cracks** can be seen along both the north (Figs.34,36,37,42) and south (Figs.22,24), some of which extend fully through the wall; with window heads failing also (Fig.27). Parts of the outer face of the wall have detached and fallen at the south-west (Fig.15), south-east (Fig.22), north-west (Fig.18) and north-east (Fig.42) as well as **collapses** at both sides of the chancel arch (Figs.28,27).

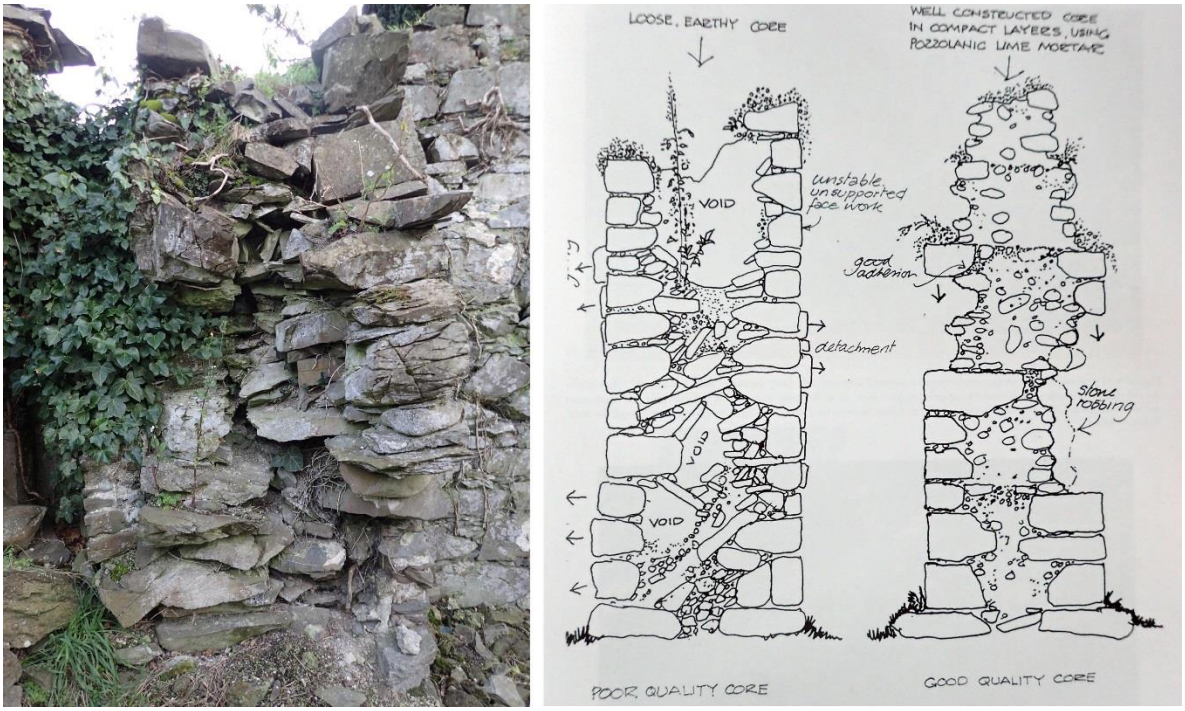

Fig.46: The walls of the church have a poor quality core, allowing displacement and detachment of individual stones, the opening of large structural cracks, the formation of voids within the wall, and unstable unsupported face work which is liable to detach. Source: Ashurst, Conservation of Ruins[37].

The wall tops are in very poor condition. The south wall of the nave shows a broken uneven wall-top with plants including grasses, flowering species (Fig.47) as well as previously cut stumps and ivy (Figs.21-22) with extensive deep dry joints and with the stones at the top of the wall often loose to touch.

Fig.47: Grass and flowering plants on the broken and uneven wall-tops of the south elevation of the nave.

The two opposing doorways in the nave were repaired using a shell-lime mortar in the 1880s (Figs.33,34,36). The lintel of the north doorway is cracked (Figs.48,49) with ivy growing above and invasive roots visible.

Fig.48: 1880 doorway in the north wall of the nave. The lime leaching indicates significant moisture ingress[38].

Fig.49: Detail of the 1880 doorway showing cracked stone lintel and invasive roots.

Weathered mortar is a significant problem at Haggardstown Old Church with dry joints seen on all elevations and all parts of the building. This has probably been exacerbated by water penetration from the open wall-tops and invasive vegetation – but also indicates that the local lime was not particularly strong. The church is built using the local stone, and there are no limestone outcrops in this part of Louth (in the 19th century lime for building in Dundalk was obtained from Faughart and Killeen). The lime for construction is likely to have been sourced as cobbles and shell from the beach, or alternately as stone obtained from limestone outcrops on the north side of Dundalk Bay. The bedding and plastering mortars of the church used a shell-lime (Figs.19.29.38.40) with shell used as aggregate (i.e. part of the sand) and with burnt shell indicating that at least some of the shell was used in the production of quicklime (the cement binder). The surviving lime is well-carbonated but not particularly strong or hydraulic, and would be vulnerable to water-related decay processes. It appears that the medieval church was built with a poor quality core[39] and probably relied on the weatherproofing provided by the roof and the lime render which coated the exterior of the masonry.

The greywacke used to build the stone walls is generally fit for purpose, but has a number of inherent faults (planes of weakness in the stone structure) which render it vulnerable to cracking when the supporting mortar has been lost (Figs.32,44). Fallen greywacke can be found within the chancel, but there is relatively little fallen stone on the outside of the church; it is likely that this was removed during past graveyard 'clean ups'. Any loose greywacke within the graveyard should be retained as this should be made available for any future repair work to the church.

3.6.3 Burials & Ground Conditions: The graveyard contains recent burials and should be assumed to be in active use. There are burials located close to both the external and internal face of the walls to be repaired. The proposed conservation works should not entail any below-ground works and should not disturb any of the burials. However, undertaking any works to repair the masonry ruins will entail a necessary amount of foot traffic, materials and the creation of working areas. It will be necessary to route scaffolding and works around grave markers. It will be necessary to lay temporary ground protection (e.g. timber paths) over the site to protect the burials; and it will be necessary to protect any grave markers (e.g. with plywood casings) in close proximity conservation works.

It will be important to try and make contact with any custodian or users of the graveyard as there have been recent burials at the foot of the wall of the church (Fig.17); and there is a serious risk of further destabilising the walls of the church by digging further graves at the foot of the walls. Earlier grave digging may have removed most of the foundation support for the walls (which would have been shallow for medieval structures) and new excavation may be sufficient for a wall to collapse without warning.

3.6.4 Wildlife: There were no indications of nesting birds or bats at the church (which can sometimes be found in the small cavities typical of ruined masonry structures). Under the Wildlife Acts it is illegal to destroy (e.g. by cutting, burning, grubbing up or spraying) vegetation on uncultivated land during the bird-nesting season (March 1st – August 31st), and this practice is sometimes extended to works on ruined buildings as an example of 'best practice'[40]. However, it is NOT illegal to cut back ivy or other vegetation growing on a wall or other built structure during this season – it is also important to note that this season March-August is also the best season for working with traditional materials to repair and conserve archaeological monuments. There are no indications of nesting birds or roosting bats at Haggardstown Old Church, and conservation works should not be excluded from the March-August period.

4. Recommendations for Conservation, Enhancement & Interpretation

This section provides a summary description of the process of commissioning conservation work (Table 2), the legal and planning status of the church, the requirement for professional advice and engagement with statutory authorities at an early stage in the process, and also outlines the conservation, enhancement and interpretation works proposed for Haggardstown Old Church. **Repairs to the church should be considered as an urgent and immediate priority.** The grounds are well-maintained and while some of the memorials are broken, these are not at urgent risk and may be left until a future time. The church is at risk and repairs should be focused on stabilising the masonry and making the church safe.

Appendix 2 provides a summary of potential sources of funding for conservation and repair works at Haggardstown Old Church, together with a list of useful contacts. Conservation grants are available annually for the conservation and repair of historic structures and are administered through the local authority.

Phases of Work to Conserve Haggardstown Old Church		
Phase 1: Scoping	Desk study of documentary evidence concerning the history and significance of the site Preliminary examination, assessment of overall condition Advice and recommendations on the level of repair and associated works necessary	Complete (this report)
Phase 2: Planning & Fund-raising	Liaising with the appropriate statutory authorities to determine their requirements for the conservation of the site Preparation of a grant application for funding the works Any additional survey (e.g. measured survey/wildlife survey)	
Phase 3: Appointment	Advice on seeking tenders and preparation of tender documentation Administration of a contract for works Preparation of Method Statements, analysis etc.	
Phase 4: Conservation Works	Removal of vegetation Consolidation and stabilisation of the masonry Provision of Interpretation	

Table 2: Summary overview of phases of work typical of conservation projects. More information on procedures including useful links is provided in 'Ruins – The Conservation and Repair of Masonry Ruins[41]'.

4.1 Legal & Planning Status: The ownership of the graveyard is unclear[42]. Old graveyards and ruined churches are generally owned by a local authority, the Church of Ireland, the Office of Public Works, or in some cases may be the property of a private individual. Haggardstown is not listed as one of the 31 burial grounds vested in Louth County Council[43], and the ownership of the graveyard is not registered with the Land Registry[44]. There does not seem to be a local graveyard committee, and while relatively recent burials are found within the graveyard and within the church, there may not be an official custodian. The graveyard is well-maintained, and the lawns and vegetation are kept under control by Blackrock Tidy Towns using the Community Employment (CE) Scheme. It would be worthwhile contacting local churches to inquire about recent use and custodianship of the graveyard.

It would be worthwhile for Blackrock Tidy Towns to seek legal advice on the ownership of the graveyard, and to query whether Blackrock Tidy Towns should seek to establish ownership or custodianship. Alternately, it may be better to request that Louth County Council take Haggardstown graveyard as a burial ground vested into their ownership and/or care and management. It would be good to open communication with the Councillors of Louth County Council for Dundalk South and to contact Mr Brendan McSherry, Heritage Officer of Louth County Council

in this regard. Mr McSherry can be contacted by phone at Louth County Council on 042 9392969 and by email at brendan.mcsherry@louthcoco.ie

4.2 National Monuments Service: The church and graveyard are listed on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as LH012-014001 Church & LH012-014002 Graveyard. They are consequently protected under the National Monuments Acts. Anyone wishing to carry out work to a site or monument listed in the SMR is obliged to notify the National Monuments Service (NMS) of their intentions, and may not initiate work within two months of the date of that notification, without NMS approval. This two-month period is to allow time for the NMS to consider the proposed works. Consultation should be had with the National Monuments Service at an early stage to indicate the level of repairs required to safeguard the monument. The NMS can be contacted (see Table 3) to assist with regard to the status and ownership of the monument.

National Monuments Service	
Address	The Director, National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Custom House, Dublin 1
Phone	01 8882000
Email	nationalmonuments@chg.gov.ie
Website	https://www.archaeology.ie/monument-protection

Table 3: Contact details of the National Monuments Service.

4.3 Provision of Professional Advice: Professional advice will be required in two areas for any future repair works:

a. Protection and repair of the building (engineer, architect, surveyor or other professional)
b. Protection of the archaeological heritage (archaeologist)

Any future repair works will require the input from professionals who will oversee the work, and who will engage and oversee any contractors undertaking repairs. This should be an engineer, architect or surveyor with experience of historic buildings and archaeological monuments. Due to the nature of the works required at Haggardstown Old Church, it is recommended that the conservation and repairs works are undertaken by contractors with experience in the repair of historic buildings.

As the church is an archaeological monument, NMS may request that an archaeologist is in place to safeguard archaeological heritage during the course of any works (for example, any unexpected or accidental finds during the course or repair works require notification to both the NMS and to the Director of the National Museum in Kildare Street, Dublin 2 within four days). None of the proposed repairs at the church will require below-ground disturbance and no archaeological excavation or other invasive work is proposed. The archaeologist would undertake responsibility for archaeological issues including all notifications and liaison with relevant authorities of behalf of Blackrock Tidy Towns.

All conservation and repair work to the church should be carried out under the supervision of a conservation engineer, conservation architect or other professional with suitable skill and experience in the repair of ruined archaeological monuments. Reason: To ensure the safeguarding and appropriate repair of the masonry fabric.

All conservation and repair work to the church should also be carried out under the supervision of a licensed archaeologist who will liase with the National Monuments Service and other stakeholders. Reason: To ensure the protection of the archaeological heritage.

4.4 Conservation of the Church: The masonry of Haggardstown Old Church is in urgent need of repair. The proposed works comprise salvaging any fallen or collapsed stone for re-use during repairs; treatment of the invasive vegetation; repair (grouting, stitching, and repointing) of all four walls; laying a protective ground surface inside the church; and providing information for the interpretation of the building (see Table 4).

Conservation of Haggardstown Old Church	
Salvage Stone	Salvage & retain collapsed stone for re-use in repairs
Vegetation Removal	Remove all vegetation just before approved conservation works to begin
Crack stitching	Insert 'helibar' stiches to structural cracks
Grouting	Lime-based gravity grout to fill voids in walls (without takedown & rebuild)
Repointing & consolidation	Point up and secure all masonry in new shell-lime mortar to match original
Wall tops	Consolidate wall-top & provide new low-profile lime mortar flaunching
Ground surface	Remove vegetation & provide new gravel/other ground surface.

Table 4: Summary of necessary conservation works for Haggardstown Old Church

4.4.1 Salvage of Stone: Fallen greywacke can be found within the chancel, but there is relatively little fallen stone on the outside of the church; it is likely that this was removed during past graveyard 'clean ups'. Any loose local greywacke **stone within the graveyard should be retained as useful building stone for future repair work** at the church – and should be prioritised for the repair of quoins (Figs.18, 32) and windows (Fig.27). There is little fallen stone around the outside edge of the church, and it would be worthwhile to walk the current graveyard boundary wall to identify any suitable fallen stone moved during past 'clean ups' which could be re-used.

Fig.50: Example of collapsed stone (arrowed) at the chancel arch which should be re-used for repair work.

It should be noted that salvage of collapsed stone has the potential to uncover loose carved of dressed stone. These may include window, door and arch elements, effigies, crosses or cross-inscribed slabs. These should be photographed and their location recorded; but should not be moved before contacting NMS. It may be necessary to safely store any carved or dressed stones while considering what to do with them. It is often preferable to retain carved and dressed stone in or near the location in which it was found, but should be fixed in some way to prevent theft or vandalism, protected against decay, and ideally used in some form for the enhancement or interpretation of the site.

4.4.2 Treatment of Vegetation: The graveyard is well-maintained and there are no trees or plants growing close to the church (e.g. at the foot of a wall) which pose a conservation issue. However, there is a significant amount of vegetation including invasive species on all four walls of the building which are damaging the

masonry. **The vegetation growing on and in the walls must be removed to conserve the church**. The work must be well-planned and will include:

- Removal of the ivy;
- Removal of shrubs and other plants;
- Removal of dead stumps and root systems.

Vegetation removal should only proceed when a programme of conservation work to stabilise the church has been approved and is ready to start. In the meantime, the ivy cover can be reduced and other plants maintained – but no roots should be removed or severe cutting back carried out, as this can cause structural instability or collapse of masonry. Removal of ivy roots is best undertaken when the masons undertaking the conservation works are on site and ready to secure the masonry as the roots are removed.

4.4.3 Consolidation of the Walls: The general principle is to **conserve 'as found' without speculative rebuilding;** and to consolidate the masonry 'as found' without extensive taking down and rebuilding; however, it will be necessary to re-set masonry which has been dislodged by vegetation or may be debonding from the poor quality core (Figs.15, 20, 46). It will be necessary to treat and entirely remove all vegetation and any accumulated humus as part of the conservation works. The consolidated walls will retain all fractures, distortions and displacements as found where feasible, but the **key principle is to stabilise the masonry**.

Dismantling & Rebuilding: The general principle is to repair 'as found' with minimal intervention. The decision to dismantle and rebuild a wall, or part of a wall, should only be made where all other options have been explored, and should be done in consultation with NMS. The general principle of the proposed conservation work outlined below is to **conserve 'as found' and to avoid dismantling and rebuilding**.

Voids: There are voids present in the walls of the church with multiple entry and exit points visible as well as large voids seen between joints and adjacent to dislodged stones. However, void patterns are difficult to determine accurately by survey (the distribution system for water penetrating into a traditional masonry wall can be very complex). **To avoid dismantling**, gravity/diaphragm **grouting using a lime-based mortar should be used to fill the voids and consolidate the wall core**[45]. Grout is always introduced slowly from the base of the wall, not from the top (to avoid blocking through air locking and to prevent fine debris clogging voids); with grout introduced in successive 'lifts' until the head of the wall / top part of voids is reached. Grouting is a difficult procedure which must be undertaken carefully and methodically by a suitably experienced contractor with specialised equipment (Fig.51).

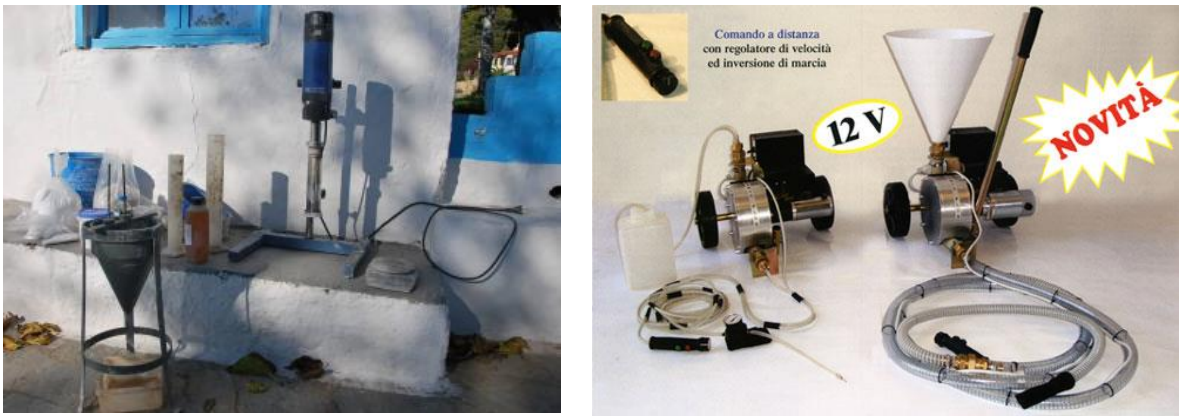

Fig.51: Examples of grouting equipment for the consolidation of historic buildings and monuments.

Fracture & Stitching: Fractures are part of the church's history, and are indicative of the manner in which the building failed or was damaged in the past. The **structural cracks** (e.g. along the north elevation, and at the south-east corner of the nave) will **require stitching** – i.e. tying the damaged areas together using modern

materials. All stiches are intended to prevent further movement in the future. This can be achieved using stainless steel ties (e.g. the helibar system) laid unobtrusively into joints at intervals, which are then concealed during the repointing and consolidation of the masonry – resulting in an 'invisible' repair. The type of stitch needs to be selected for the particular conditions on site, and a variety will be required (as in some cases conditions will only become apparent on removal of the vegetation). Where stitching requires the removal of a facing stone, these stones should be replaced in their original position. Stitching can also be used to secure the window heads (Fig.27). Whether the fracture is fine or wide, it is important to pack or tamp or grout them with lime mortar to prevent further degradation of the wall core by denying water access. The mortar should be kept back from the face to a sufficient depth to create a shadow line in the old fracture, so that the **overall appearance is unchanged after the weakness has been resolved within the core of the wall**.

1880 North Door in Nave: The **stone lintels of this doorway** are cracked (Figs.48-49) and requires repair. It would be preferable to **repair this in situ using stainless steel ties and consolidating the masonry**, rather than a take-down-and-rebuild to protect the character and archaeology of the church. This is a Victorian repair (i.e. not medieval work) but is part of the history of the site. However, there are extensive live and dead ivy plants in the wall above, and the extent of repairs in this area will only become apparent during the course of works. Consultation should be had with NMS at an early stage to note that the principle is to repair *in situ* with minimal disturbance; but there is a possibility that this may not be possible in practice once the wall-top is opened up for repair.

Broken wall ends are present at the chancel arch where the original facing stone has been lost (Fig.50). The **broken wall ends should be consolidated 'as found'** with the north chancel repaired as ramped (i.e. retaining the evidence of progressive collapse) and the south chancel wall left as largely vertical. The core is very poor (Fig.46) and mortar should not be relied on to achieve stability. The collapsed stone at the foot of the chancel arches should be used to consolidate the wall core, with stainless steel stitching used discreetly where necessary.

Repointing: There is no need to rake out as (where it survives) the shell-lime mortar as it is in good condition. Similarly, the areas of plasterwork should be retained as found. However, most of the building shows deep dry joints and areas where the stones are defacing. It should be expected that it will be **necessary to repoint almost all of the interior and exterior of the church using an appropriate lime-based mortar**. The new mortar should be guided by analysis of the original shell-lime mortar (which is a distinctive type of mix found only in a few areas of coastal Ireland). The surviving shell-rich mortars, both original and from the 1880 repairs to the doors, should be retained in situ. The surviving remnants of plaster on the internal walls should be allowed to remain (i.e. these areas should not be repointed).

4.4.4 Treatment of the Wall-tops: The **wall-tops should be retained 'as found' and the general principle should be to only clear the wall-tops of vegetation and to re-set the stones in a lime-based mortar**. The wall-tops of the south and east elevations are uneven, but it is not necessary to introduce new stone to level them off. All vegetation should be treated and removed entirely, as should any accumulated humus. It may be necessary to re-set masonry which has been dislodged by vegetation. The masonry should be consolidated with a lime-based mortar, with a flaunching laid to a fall to shed water (so that it does not penetrate into the wall) but should not be obvious when viewed from ground level. It is not necessary to add a full mortar capping or haunching – as this would be visually obtrusive and would detract from the character of the building.

4.4.5 Ground Protection: The graveyard is open to the public and is an important public heritage amenity in the Blackrock area and should be expected to have regular visitors throughout the year. The graveyard is grassed and well-maintained, and without paths. The interior of the church (Fig.52) has uneven ground levels, and contains numerous burials and grave markers, vegetation and collapsed masonry in the nave, with the chancel largely impassable due to vegetation and the presence of an iron-railed tomb. The vegetation within the church

will redevelop without ongoing management. All vegetation should be removed from within the church during the proposed conservation works, and a new gravel/other floor surface provided to protect the ground.

Fig.52: The interior ground surface is uneven, with gravemarkers, collapsed rubble and vegetation.

4.5 Enhancement & Interpretation of Haggardstown Old Church: The graveyard has already been provided with an information and interpretation board inside the gateway which provides details on the significance of the site, St.Fursey and a plan of graves (including the thirteen graves known within the church building). This provides a good overview of the site.

New Information Board for the Church: It would be useful to consider erecting an additional information board close to the entrance to the church itself explaining the architectural significance of the nave-and-chancel church, that bellcotes and opposing doorways were particularly popular in County Louth, the importance of the medieval parish system and the relationship the church would have had with the nearby castle sites. The church retains little decorative detail, and it would be worthwhile to use a section of the information board to show reconstruction illustrations of how the church would have appeared when it was in use – rendered in lime (sometimes coloured) on the outside, with a stone or oak shingle roof, and having plastered walls and decorative surfaces, fabrics and furniture inside, and to show the layout and use of the church in the medieval period.

Establishing Heritage Links: It would be worthwhile establishing links with local historical and archaeological societies with an interest in medieval churches and St. Furse to highlight awareness of the site. This could lead to useful information coming to light on the history of the church which could feed into the proposed information board. It would also be worth highlighting the church to local schools as a public heritage amenity. If funds were available, a local art competition re-imagining how the church would have looked in the medieval period could be a very effective way of raising interest and awareness in the church.

Contact should be made with other graveyard committees (e.g. at Faughart graveyard) to consider the feasibility of information-and resource- sharing and the creation of heritage networks in the area.

Appendix 1 – Archaeological Monuments in the vicinity of Haggardstown Old Church

LH012-014001 Church

Chancel narrower than nave (int. dims. of chancel 4m N-S by 4.4m; nave 10.5m by 5.6m), built of limestone blocks and greywacke and more or less completely covered with ivy. Opposing doorways in nave and double bellcote in W gable. The most westerly window in the S wall of the chancel has a two-centred arch constructed of two rounded punch-dressed blocks, one of sandstone, the other of limestone. Its two western jambs and sill stone are granite. The E jamb is limestone, has bar holes and was originally a sill stone. The remaining two windows in the S wall and the E window have been destroyed and there are no surviving remains of cut stone. The doorways are lintelled and featureless. The church was repaired in 1622 and was in ruins in 1692. The opposing doorways, bell-gable and two-centred window arch indicate a fifteenth- or sixteenth century building. (CLAJ 1941, 22)

LH012-014002 Graveyard

Sub-rectangular shaped graveyard (map dims. c. 52m x 42m) bounded on W side by roadway with church (LH012-014001-) in N half. Earliest headstone noted dates to 1770.

LH012-063 Souterrain

Local tradition of a souterrain in St. Fursey's graveyard (LH012-014----). (CLAJ 1934, 210-11).

LH012-011 Souterrain

Local tradition of a souterrain. (CLAJ 1934, 210-211)

LH012-069 Ringfort & Souterrain

Ringfort: Discovered as a result of land reduction for development (Excavation Licence No. 95E0126). Prior to arrival of an archaeologist on site, the capstones of a souterrain (LH012-069002-) had been disturbed causing it to collapse in on itself. A number of trenches were excavated around the souterrain to reveal an enclosing ditch with a diam. of c. 30m. The ditch was not evident in the S, leading to the suggestion that this was perhaps the location of the entrance. The fill contained a large quantity of bone and shell. (McConway 1995b)

Souterrain: Situated below ringfort (LH012-069001-). Discovered as a result of land reduction for a development (Excavation Licence No. 95E0126). Prior to the arrival of an archaeologist on site, the capstones had been disturbed causing it to collapse in on itself. A passageway ran E-W for 10m, then it turned S and continued for 11m leading to a collapsed chamber. The walls of the passage were of drystone construction using shale and slate. (McConway 1995b)

LH012-010 Castle - unclassified

Site of castle known as 'Caisleán Uachtrach Baile Sagairt' (Jordan 1934, 210-2). There is no visible surface remains, but excavation in the vicinity recorded four shallow features that might have been associated with it (Murphy 1995, 64).

LH012-056 Midden

Discovered in 1978 during excavation of a house foundation. Deposit of shells, oval in plan (L c. 5m, Wth c. 3m, T c. 0.5m), consisting mainly of cockles (Cordium edule) together with a few mussels (Mytilus edulis). No datable artefacts were recovered. (CLAJ 1978, 143)

LH012-094 Castle - motte

Situated on slight natural rise, immediately to the E of the Fairways hotel. Marked 'fort' on the 1835 'OS 6-inch' map. A flat topped sub-circular shaped mound (basal diam. c. 50m, top c. 10m N-S x 8.5m E-W; H c. 3.5m) heavily overgrown with vegetation and large trees. Base of mound on the S is slightly truncated by road associated with hotel complex. The site of a possible castle known as 'Caisleán Uachtrach Baile Sagairt' (LH012-010----) is c. 160m to the E.

Appendix 2 – Funding & Useful Contacts

Potential Sources of Funding	
The Heritage Council	www.heritagecouncil.ie support a wide range of heritage projects throughout the country through their annual grants programme.
Louth Leader Partnership	Louth LEADER Partnership, Bridge Street, Ardee, A92 X750 Phone: +353 41 6857375 Email: mavis.kelly@cllp.ie https://louthleaderpartnership.ie
Community Grant Scheme	The Community Grant Scheme is available to Groups, Tidy Towns/Village Committees, Residents Associations and other organisations, to assist with actions and projects being undertaken in their local area. The scheme is normally administered through the County Council Community Grant Scheme. The 2020 scheme is now closed. However, for information, the range of grant categories available under the Community Grant Scheme 2020 included Tidy Towns, Festivals & Events and Burial Ground.
Historic Structures Fund 2020 (formerly Structures at Risk Fund)	The primary focus of the Historic Structures Fund is on conservation and enhancement of historic structures and buildings for the benefit of communities and the public. The 2020 scheme is now closed. Stream 1 offers grants between €15,000 and €50,000 for essential repairs and small capital works for the refurbishment and conservation of historic structures. The Scheme is normally administered through the County Council.
Built Heritage Investment Scheme	BHIS Project supports range from a minimum of €2,500 to a maximum of €15,000 per application. This scheme supports small-scale conservation projects and supports the employment of skilled and experienced conservation professionals, craftspeople and tradespersons in the repair of the historic built environment. The 2020 scheme is now closed. The Scheme is normally administered through the County Council.

Louth Heritage Officer	
Name	Mr Brendan McSherry, Heritage Office, Louth County Council, County Hall, Dundalk
Phone	042 9392969
Email	brendan.mcsherry@louthcoco.ie

National Monuments Service	
Address	The Director, National Monuments Service, Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Custom House, Dublin 1
Phone	01 8882000
Email	nationalmonuments@chg.gov.ie
Website	https://www.archaeology.ie/monument-protection

The Heritage Council
The Heritage Council also provides grants for conservation planning and works. Further information on their current schemes and the grant application process is available on their website at www.heritagecouncil.ie The Louth County Council Heritage Office can also be of assistance with these.

Tax Incentives
Tax incentives are available under Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997[46] for expenditure incurred on the repair, maintenance, or restoration of certain buildings of significant scientific, historical, architectural or aesthetic interest or gardens of significant horticultural, scientific, historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest. The building or garden must receive a determination from the Revenue Commissioners who must be satisfied that there is reasonable public access to the property. Application forms can be obtained from the Heritage Policy Unit, Department of Culture, Heritage, and the Gaeltacht.

Endnotes

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[4] Van Hees, R.J., Binda, L., Papayianni, I. & Toumbakari, E. (2004) "Characterisation and damage analysis of old mortars", *Materials and Structures*, Vol. 37, Pp.644-648
[5] Ashurst, J. (2007) *Conservation of Ruins.* Butterworth-Heinemann series on Conservation and Museology. London. Elsevier.
[6] Quinlan, M., Hanna, M. & Kelly, D. (2010) *Ruins - the conservation and repair of masonry ruins.* Dublin. Stationery Office.
[7] Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. (2004) Architectural Heritage Protection: guidelines for planning authorities – guidance on Part IV of the Planning and Development Act 2000.
[8] https://louthco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3ca4a87364a84ff4b011006b3ac87779
[9] License No. 18E0201. Ian Russell. Archaeological assessment of a proposed residential development at Old Golf Links Road, Blackrock, Co. Louth. Unpublished report submitted to Louth County Council to accompany an application for planning permission.
[10] The church, graveyard and associated site is a 'national monument' as defined in Section 2 of the National Monuments Act (1930) 'the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto…'.
[11] Louth County Council does not include a copy of the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) in the current county development plan 2015-2021 or the draft county development plan 2021-2027.
[12] A prehistoric shoreline at Marshes Upper was uncovered in 2001 (L.Clarke, 01E0835).
[13] G. McLoughlin, 06E485
[14] W.Frazer 03E1109 & 03E1509
[15] McLoughlin, C. (2012) "Archaeological Excavations at Xerox Technology Park, Haggardstown, Dundalk, County Louth", Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol. 27, No. 4(2012), pp. 503-535
[16] After Stout, M. (2017) Early Medieval Ireland 431-1169. Dublin. Wordwell.
[17] Cronin, A. (2012) "The Historical Saint Fursey: The Achievements and Legacy of Haggardstown's Patron Saint", Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society Vol. 27, No. 4 (2012), pp. 536-552
[18] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Fursey; https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=3491; https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06324d.htm;
[19] https://www.logainm.ie/en/1709?s=haggardstown
[20]Source:http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#c=Louth&indexOfObjectValue=1&indexOfObject ValueSubstring=-1
[21]Source:http://downsurvey.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#bm=Dundalk&c=Louth&indexOfObjectValue=-1&Index OfObjectValueSubstring=-1
[22] A map of the county of Louth, surveyed by George Taylor and Andrew Skinner (1777)
[23] This is described in detail in O'Sullivan, H. (2003) "The Beginnings of the Catholic Parishes of Dundalk, Haggardstown and Kilkerly in the County of Louth", Seanchas Ardmhacha: Journal of the Armagh Diocesan Historical Society, 2003, Vol. 19, No. 2, Golden Jubilee Issue (2003), pp. 1-52
[24] This has been argued as an anglicisation of 'Teach Mac na nAithechain' and together with the dedication to St. Fursey, a possible indication of a pre-Anglo-Norman settlement.
[25] " The stone wall and gates were commissioned by Canon Thomas McCrystal P.P. in 1880, and completed at a cost of £130. The cross was erected by a group of local people in the 1970s. The graveyard was in regular use until the 1930s, and is still used occasionally. (Source: Noel Sharkey)".https://www.blackrockvillage.ie/the-heritage-of-blackrock/. It is likely that the doorways into the church were also repaired at this time.
[26] Jordan, J. (1934) "Townland Survey of County Louth. (Continued)", Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society, 1934, Vol. 8, No. 2 (1934),pp. 210-215
[27] Davies, O. (1941) "Old Churches in County Louth", Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society, 1941, Vol. 10, No. 1 (1941), pp. 5-23
[28] Gosling, P. (1980) "Burial Vault, Haggardstown, Co. Louth", Journal of the County Louth Archaeological and Historical Society, 1980, Vol. 19, No. 4 (1980), pp. 293-296
[29] Buckley, V.M. & Sweetman, D.M. (1991) Archaeological Survey of County Louth. Dublin. Stationery Office. Pp.218, 232-3

[30] Nineteenth and twentieth century sources considered 'Haggardstown' to be associated with 'colonists'. The term is used in Ireland and the Isle of Man to refer to an enclosure adjacent to a farm in which crops are stored, and variants are found in the south-east of Ireland. The word may derive from the Norse Heygarthr from *hey* hay and *garthr* yard.
[31] Some of the shells are burnt indicating that this is a shell-lime mortar (i.e. shell was burnt to produce quicklime as well as forming the primary aggregate component.
[32] Some of these decay forms are inherent to the stone, others are suggestive of stone exposed in outcrop or as fieldstone prior to use as building stone.
[33] Collapsed stone should be retained on site as it can be used for repair and stabilisation.
[34] The graveslabs are propped against the wall, but do not support the masonry.
[35] The graveslabs are propped against the wall, but do not support the masonry.
[36] This practice was popular during the twentieth century.
[37] Ashurst, J. (2007) Conservation of Ruins. London. Elsevier
[38] The failure of the lintel was probably the result of a combination of factors including the limited load-bearing capacity of the stone, the loss of mortar from the wall above reducing the natural self-arching tendency of the masonry placing excessive loading on the lintel, and invasive vegetation.
[39] Given the paucity of lime sources, it is possible that the core was poorly constructed with insufficient lime binder.
[40] While ivy growth can cause serious problems for masonry ruins, it is very beneficial to wildlife such as birds and bees.
[41] https://www.chg.gov.ie/app/uploads/2015/07/Ruins-The-Conservation-and-Repair-of-Masonary-Ruins-2010.pdf
[42] As with any other property, the owner's permission is required before undertaking work.
[43] https://www.louthcoco.ie/en/louth_county_council/minutes_of_statutory_meetings/2016/april-2016.pdf
[44] Information about the property may be available from the Registry of Deeds.
[45] https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/grouting/grouting.htm for an overview of the process
[46] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1997/act/39/section/482/enacted/en/html