

Tracing the History of Your House

You will probably want to find out both the date of the building of the house and of later rebuildings or alterations, and the names of the owners and occupiers and how they lived.

- Read any **printed histories** of the area in your local library and look at any **topographical indexes**
- Establish whether you, your solicitor or mortgage company hold the **title deeds** of the house. The modern deeds and abstracts will give a short description of the house, its position, dimensions of the plot and names of the recent previous owners.
- Check the land register/registry of deeds at Land Registry Central Office, Chancery Street, Dublin 7, Tel: 01-6707500, website: www.landregistry.ie
- For older period houses, **architectural evidence** may provide the only clue to its dating. Examine the architectural evidence to obtain a rough idea of the period and style of the house.
- Look for **photographs** of the house, or if it is an old one, sketches or prints.
- **Louth County Archives Service** holds **housing construction scheme files and plans** constructed by Drogheda Borough Corporation (reference code DBC/HSG/001/). Search our **online archive catalogue** available at www.louthcoco.ie (you can search for any word under the 'simple search' or you can enter the reference codes provided in this document into the reference field of the advanced search).
- **Louth County Archives Service** also holds the **pre-1963 planning files** for Louth County Council (reference code LCC/PLA/001/), Dundalk Urban District Council (reference code DUDC/PLA/001/), and Drogheda Borough Corporation (Reference code DBC/PLA/001/). These files relate to all types of development such as schools, private houses, shops, banks, etc, and may contain plans, site map, correspondence, specifications, engineer's report, or a manager's order granting/refusing permission. However, please note that not all property is included as there was smaller planning legislation prior to 1963 and sometimes files contain very little information. There are some planning files dating to the 19thC for Dundalk.
- Consult the large scale **Ordnance Survey maps** at 25 inches and 6 inches to the mile. The earliest 6 inch date from 1835, 25 inch are early 20th century. There is an Ordnance Survey maps collection held in **Louth County Archives Service** (reference code GJ/OS/), however, it is in course of being re-catalogued due to accruals. See also the [Ordnance Survey](#) office in Dublin.
- **Legal documents** sometimes contain plans, descriptions of property, or ownership history details, particularly abstracts of title. **Louth County Archives Service** hold some legal documents in private collections, however, you will probably have to contact your solicitor. See also NA, NLI, PRONI (see last point for abbreviations).
- **Estate papers** may be useful, particularly surveys of land which show land occupation and use, and tenants' names. Rentals which show the rental value may reflect alterations or additions to the house. Other records of use, if they survive, may include records of estate management, valuations and sale particulars. See the [Archive Collections](#) and online archive catalogue (scroll down introduction page on latter for a more complete list) of **Louth County Archives Service**, and see also NA, NLI, PRONI.

- For an early 20th Century terrace house for which there is no surviving planning file, a **building bye-law** plan may provide a date and possibly name the architect. See the online archive catalogue of [Louth County Archives Service](#) and also check Council minute books.
- If the house is of special architectural or historical interest it may have been 'listed' by your local authority. Lists are available in each local authority's **Development Plan** (see www.louthcoco.ie). You may contact either your local authority's conservation officer or the OPW for advice on conservation methods – www.opw.ie, Tel: 01-6476000.
- Check the Royal Irish Academy's Historic Atlases of Dundalk, Carlingford or Drogheda (available in [Louth County Archives Service](#) or Co Library): provides changes in street names – may assist in determining when a house was built.

Owners and Tenants

- From a series of **title deeds** you should discover successive owners. They may also name tenants, former owners and occupiers, and sometimes adjoining neighbours as well, which is useful when trying to identify property in early rate books.
- Griffith's Valuation, 1854, available [online](#) showing names of occupiers of land or buildings, the names of persons from whom these were leased, and the amount and value of property held.
- **Rate books and valuation books** held in [Louth County Archives](#) list occupiers and owners of property, size of holdings, description, and value. Almost a complete series exists for Dundalk urban from the mid-19th Century – 1960s, a few dating to the 19th Century for the rural areas, with the majority dating from 1919 – 1960s. When using rate books, the number is the plot number and not the house number so the valuation maps that relate to these in the [Valuation Office](#) may need to be consulted. A change in value may reflect alterations or additions to the house. Reference codes include DTC/RB/, DUDC/RB/ DUDC/VB/, LCC/RB/, LCC/VB, BG/ARD/RB/, BG/ARD/VB/.
- **Electoral registers** will list occupants, but these lists should be used with care, remembering also that occupiers, house names and numbers are not always noted. [Louth County Archives Service](#) hold those that survive for County Louth (reference code LCC/ADM/008/).
- **Census returns** give details of families and their origins (NB census returns less than 100 years old are closed for public inspection). The National Archives provide [online access to the 1901 and 1911 censuses](#) for all thirty-two counties of Ireland as they hold the original census manuscript returns for each household. The returns are arranged by townland or, in urban areas, by street.
- The Local Reference Section in the County Library holds the following:
 - Tithe Applotment Books, 1820's, available on microfilm, showing names of occupiers of land, size of holdings, and the sums to be paid in tithes, for the purpose of maintaining the Church of Ireland, which was the church of the state at the time. The National Archives provide this [online](#).
 - Freeholders Lists, 1820's, showing names of occupiers of land, and landowners' names is [online](#).
 - Griffith's Valuation, 1854, showing names of occupiers of land or buildings, the names of persons from whom these were leased, and the amount and value of property held. Also available [online](#).
 - Index to surnames in the Tithe Applotment Books; a CD Index to surnames in Griffith's Valuation.
 - Trade and street directories. See also the NLI.
- Check the archives of the National Archives (NA), www.nationalarchives.ie, the Irish Architectural Archive (IAA) www.iarc.ie, the National Library (NLI), www.nli.ie, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), www.proni.gov.uk, and the UK's National Archives (NA-UK), www.nationalarchives.gov.uk who all may hold archives relating to Louth. The OPW's archives are held in the National Archives.