



**Archaeology  
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L I M I T E D

Archaeological Impact Assessment and Method Statement  
for a proposed development at  
Greenhills Road/Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24

**Planning application**

Prepared by Archaeology and Heritage Consultancy Ltd  
for

**O'Mahony Holdings SPRL**



# Archaeological Impact Assessment and Method Statement for a proposed development at Greenhills Road/Main Street, Tallaght, Dublin 24

## Introduction

The proposed development area consists is an infill urban site located to the east of Tallaght in Dublin (Fig. 1). It is approximately 0.23 ha and forms part of a larger triangular land bank bounded by Old Greenhills Road to the west, Main Road to the south and Greenhills Road to the east (Fig. 2). It has frontage onto Greenhills Road to the east and Old Greenhills Road (cul-de-sac) to the west, where primary access is obtained. It is abutted at its south-eastern by a brown field site (the subject to a refused planning application Reg. Ref. SD20A/0250), to the west by a row of three cottages and to the north by St. Basil's Training Centre, a building recorded of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH), Ref: 11215003 and is also listed on South Dublin Council's Record of Protected Structures Ref 268 (Plate 1).

The subject site is currently developed with a residential scheme known as Greenhill's Court and comprises four linked apartment blocks ranging in height from 2 to 4 storey, including underground car parking accessed from Old Greenhills Road. The proposal will seek to redevelop the remainder of the site with the demolition of 3 no existing apartments and the construction of 26 no new apartments and a café at ground floor level (Fig. 3).

## Historical background

The proposed development area is located to the east of Tallagh Village, within the townland and parish of Tallaght and the Barony of Uppercross. The name Tallaght or *Taimleacht* means a burial place. Tradition claims that the area was the burial place of the People of Parthalon who all died of plague after Parthalon the Greek led them to settle in Ireland after Noah's Flood (Lewis 1837). However, it more likely relates to the large graveyard (DU021-037004) associated with the ecclesiastical enclosure and church (DU021-037002 and 003) located some 400 m to the west of the proposed development. While there are no known sites of archaeological interest within the boundaries of the site, the development lies within the Zone of Archaeological Potential associated with the historic settlement of Tallagh (DU021-037---)

Evidence for early occupation of the area consists of extensive Bronze Age burials from the surrounding townlands of Greenhills, Kiltalown, Aghfarrel and Ballinascorney Lower, and stray prehistoric finds from the Bancroft and Dodder river areas of Tallaght Village. However the settlement now known as Tallaght village evolved during the early Medieval period. In the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, St. Maelruain established a monastery here, which became the head house of the *Ceile De* monastic reform movement. The *Martyrology of Tallaght*, and later the *Feilire Oenguso*, literary works which provide important sources of information on the Irish Saints are linked to St. Maelruain's monastery. The monastery flourished throughout the early medieval period until the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, when the church and lands were granted to the Archbishop of Dublin by King John (Gwynn and Hadcock p 45).

Situated on the edge of the Pale, Tallaght was subject to numerous raids from the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes in the later medieval period. Due to its strategic importance the borough of Tallaght was

founded in the 14th Century. In 1310 the inhabitants received a grant to enclose the town with walls, and the following year, they were granted the right to collect murage for three years. The area formed part of the important ecclesiastical manor lands in the later medieval period. In 1324, the Archbishop of Dublin received the right to build an Archiepiscopal Residence in the town and by the 16th Century Tallaght had become the main residence for the Archbishop of Dublin outside the city. However, by the seventeenth Century, the once important Borough of Tallaght had been reduced to its modern role as a village.

The Archbishop's residence was completely rebuilt in the 18th Century, after a period of neglect, with only a tower house from the original medieval building incorporated into the new Palace. The site was taken over by the Dominican Priory, built in 1863, which now stands in its place.

### **Sites and Monuments Record**

There are four known sites of archaeological interest within the vicinity of the subject site (apart from the above mentioned historic settlement of Tallaght DU021-037---). The closest site lies immediately across the Greenhills Road, to the east of the proposed development area (Fig. 2). Demolished in 1952, it consisted of a small tower house (DU022-018001) recorded as 'Castle' on Taylor's map of 1816 (Fig. 7) and 'Bancroft's Castle' on the OS 3<sup>rd</sup> edition map (Fig. 10). It was located on the former entrance to the village of Tallaght from Dublin. In 1898 the lower half of the tower was still standing measuring 4.1 m by 3.6 m and standing at best 1.05 m tall, with the entrance in the south east led into a partly vaulted ground floor. The base of the tower was all that remained in 1905 (Ball 1905, 3), however there are now no above ground remains visible in the area.

The other three sites are located to the west, in the grounds of St Mary's Dominican Priory and Church. The first consists of the remains of a castle (DU021-037020). Monk Mason's drawing of the site in shows a much more extensive castle complex (Fig. 4). Handcock states that the parts of this more extensive castle's foundations have been found on occasion, and that there appears to have been an enclosing fosse (Handcock 1899, 29, 35;). The original castle was constructed in the first half of the early fourteenth century. Ball states that the castle was used as a garrison in the time of the Geraldine Rebellion (Ball 1905, 8).

The second site consists of a Gatehouse (DU021-037010) associated with the castle. It is incorporated into the present Dominican Priory and is all that survives of the Archbishop's palace of the later medieval period is this gate house. It is rectangular in plan, rising to four storeys with a stair turret in northwest angle and an external base batter visible on the east side. It is built of coursed limestone blocks with hammer dressing on the quoins and windows and was considerably altered in the 19th and 20th centuries. There is a vault over the ground floor, which has been converted into a chapel with Gothic windows inserted. Access to upper floors is from a stair turret, which is entered at ground level on S side and is lit by single slit opes. A fireplace has been inserted into north wall of the first floor. The interior is lit by round-headed windows in the four walls, that in the west serves as a doorway. The third floor has a vaulted roof running on an east-west axis, which is probably modern (Ball 1899, 100; Price 1942, 39-41). A stone head was found reused in one of the walls of the stone stair by Sir John Lentine (O'Curry 1837, 31; Ball 1899, 101). The tooling evidence helps assign a sixteenth century date to the tower although this may just be evidence of later insertions into an earlier building.

The final site takes the form of a holy tree (DU021-037012) which consists of a mature walnut on the grounds of the present Dominican Priory in Tallaght village on the site of the Archbishop's palace. It is associated with St. Maelruain (Handcock 34-5).

### **Cartographic evidence**

#### *Down Survey Map, Barony of Newcastle, c. 1655*

The Down Survey maps were compiled at a scale of 40 perches to one inch (the modern equivalent of 1:50,000) and represent the first systematic mapping of a large area on such a scale attempted anywhere. On Petty's map (Fig. 5), the town of Tallaght is depicted as containing Tallaght Church, St Maelruan's (DU021-037003), with six houses to its east. Two roads meet in the town, one travels north-south through the town and the other joins it from the west. The exact location of the proposed development is not possible to identify, though it is likely to the northeast of the T-junction.

#### *John Rocque's Map of the County of Dublin, 1760*

The road system around the small town of Tallaght and the Archbishop's Palace (DU021-037010) are depicted (Fig. 6), as are the structures of St Maelruan's (DU021-037003). A structure is depicted in the approximate location of the proposed development to the northeast of the crossroads on the eastern extent of Tallaght. A paper mill is depicted along the River Dodder to the east-southeast of the proposed development.

#### *John Taylor's Map of the Environs of Dublin, 1816*

The structure on the eastern part of the site from Rocque's map is still shown, with a small structure now located on the western side of Greenhill Road, possibly within the western part of the site (Fig. 7). The Archbishop of Dublin's Palace (DU021-037010) is depicted in greater detail than on Rocque's map. A castle (DU022-018001) is annotated to the north of the proposed development, though it is unclear which of the buildings in the area represents the castle. A mill is located to the southeast of the proposed development area, with a possible millrace (part of the Jobstown Stream) running south, through the proposed development area, towards the mill. The paper mill east-southeast of the site is now depicted beside a building annotated as Bowlbrook. The Harlem Mills complex are also shown to the south-southeast of the proposed development.

#### *William Duncan's Map of the County of Dublin, 1821*

By the time of this map (Fig. 8) the castle is no longer annotated to the north of the proposed development, the mill to the east-southeast is annotated as Boldbrook Paper Mill, and the Harlem mill complex now contains a paper mill. There are no other significant changes of note.

#### *First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1843, scale 1:10,560*

This is the first accurate historic mapping coverage of the area containing the proposed development. The site contains one structure and a portion of an open field to the immediate east of the Old Greenhills Road (Fig. 9). The most southern portion of the site contains a curving watercourse which appears to flow under Tallaght Road in to the mill pond of a corn mill located c.95m to the southeast. This is a likely millrace which forms part of Jobstown Stream and shown on previous mapping. No structures are shown within the western part of the site, however the mill race shown on the eastern side of the site continues through the western extent of the site. A number of other structures are located to the north of the site. An 'old castle' is depicted in Tallaght, at the location of the old building and grounds of the Archbishop's Palace (DU021-037010). Tallaght House is depicted to the north east of this.

The church (DU021-037003) first seen on the Down Survey is depicted with an associated graveyard (DU021-037004) while the houses on the south side of the Main Street are depicted with burgage plots at the rear. Boldbrook is now annotated as Boldbrook Paper Mill and at the Harlem Mill Complex a woolen cloth mill and two flour mills are depicted.

*Ordnance Survey Map, 1906-9, scale 1:2,500*

There are no changes within the site boundary by the time of this map. A court house has been constructed to the north of the proposed development. Bancroft's Castle (in Ruins; DU022-018001) is shown to the east of the site. St Mary's Priory (Dominican) and R.C. Church have been established at the site of the old Archbishop's Palace incorporating some of its elements. The gatehouse of the palace is annotated as a tower (DU021-037010). The corn mill to the southeast, as shown on mapping from 1816 onwards, is no longer depicted, however the millrace at the southern end of the site is still present

*Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1935, scale 1:10,560*

An additional structure has been constructed within the eastern side of the site since the 25-inch OS map, while the watercourse is still in existence (Fig. 10). The school to the north has become a library and the court house has been replaced by two structures annotated as St Mary's School (Boys & Girls). The remains of a cross (DU021-037006) are annotated in the graveyard (DU021-037004) at the west end of the town. The Bolbrook Paper Mills are no longer depicted; however, the Haarlem Mill Complex appears to have slightly expanded. Further signs of industry in Tallaght is the presence of Urney Chocolate Factory to the northwest of the town.

**Summary of previous archaeological fieldwork**

The most relevant investigations are two which took place to the east of the subject site, along the line of the realignment of the Greenhills Road. The route of the realigned road was tested as it had the potential to impact upon a tower house (DU022-018001) to the east of the site. The tower house location was not investigated and only evidence of a post-medieval pond and culvert were uncovered to the north of the site (License 00E0464, Bolger 2000). A second programme of archaeological testing was undertaken in the area of the tower house in 2003 (License 03E0131, Coughlan 2003). However neither remains of the tower house nor anything of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Testing for a residential development some 50 m south of the subject site identified two features of archaeological significance {License 04E0569, Flanagan and Opie). These comprised an undated, 3 m-wide, north-south linear feature containing animal bone and charcoal and an undated, 8 m-wide, north-south linear feature. Additional testing c. 30 m south of the proposed development area revealed a medieval drain containing animal bone, seven sherds of cooking ware pot, and nine sherds of glazed ware, all dating to the 12th-14th century (License 04E0569 ext *ibid*). It was truncated by a modern feature. A medieval, sub rectangular, stone-lined pit was also revealed which contained two layers which may have been sealed by a capstone, the upper layer contained 12-14th-century pottery. An 18th/19th-century well was located on the site. No further archaeological deposits or features were encountered in the final phase of monitoring for the residential development; however, it was stated that the removal of an area previously in use as a surface carpark and an industrial yard would have heavily disturbed any possible archaeological deposits.

**Potential archaeological impacts.**

It is proposed to retain a large part of the existing development (Plate 2), specifically that part of the subject site fronting out onto Greenhills Road. However it is proposed to demolish the southernmost block of apartments here (Plate 3) and extend the development to the south, across a brown field area, as far as the junction with Main Road. It is also proposed to extend the existing basement (Plate 4) some 5 m to the west as far as the north south running line of the subject's boundary with



Old Greenhills Road. As the remainder of the site will be largely untouched, the potential impacts are limited to these two areas.

Access in and out of the original excavations for the basement would have been up a temporary ramp which would have existed out onto Old Greenhills Road. It is therefore highly likely that this original construction of the basement effectively removed any *in situ* archaeological deposits in the area of the proposed basement extension.

This leaves the triangle of relatively untouched ground in the southeast corner of the site as the only area where possible archaeological deposits might survive *in situ* (Plate 5). This roughly triangular area measuring some 8 m wide and a maximum of 25 m long is currently under concrete, being used as an open space for the adjacent apartment complex. Its location, however is directly opposite the site of 'Bancroft's Castle' the late medieval tower house (DU022-018001), which was noted to have some upstanding remains until its final removal in the 1950s. Although archaeological monitoring of the construction of the new line of Greenhills Road did not uncover anything of archaeological interest, it is possible that some related archaeology might still survive in the area. The construction of the proposed retail block in the area along with its associated foundations and services would have a significantly negative impact on any surviving archaeological features or deposits.

#### **Archaeological mitigation strategy / method statement.**

The only area of the subject site which may have any archaeological features or deposits surviving *in situ* is the roughly triangular area in the south east corner of the site, close to the junction of Greenhills Road and Main Road (Fig. 3).

It is proposed to archaeologically test the area via two, 1.5 m wide, machine dug test trenches, set 5 m apart and running north south across the area. Trench 1 will be 20 m in length and trench 2 15 m long, with the locations precisely located within the development project through either GPS or Total station and tied into OS grid.

The testing will be carried out using machine equipped with a 1.5 m wide toothless bucket which is under the constant supervision of a suitably qualified and licensed archaeologist. The archaeologist will monitor the trenching until either the surface of glacial subsoil, formation level or the surface of significant archaeological remains or deposits are uncovered, whichever is encountered first. It should be noted that this testing may only constitute the first phase of archaeological mitigation with the possibility of further excavation works, if required.

It is proposed that all archaeological deposits uncovered during testing be recorded and investigated to best archaeological practice. They will in the first instant be cordoned off using high visibility tape and access to these areas by machinery and personnel denied until the deposits have been resolved. The licensed archaeologist on site is responsible, on behalf of the developer, for the identification and appropriate treatment (e.g. excavation and recording) of all archaeological remains encountered. In order to fulfill the responsibilities of the developer therefore, the licensed archaeologist will have the authority to temporarily stop machining where potential archaeological material has been identified, in order to evaluate the character of said remains. It should be possible for work to continue (under archaeological supervision) in areas where no archaeological deposits have been encountered. Should archaeological remains be present, the licensed archaeologist will be responsible for communicating this to the client or appointed representative, as well as to the relevant Heritage authorities.

In the event of the discovery of any archaeological remains during the testing, the deposits will be hand excavated to assess their nature date and extent and time will be allowed for the archaeologist

to undertake the appropriate level of recording. The level of recording will depend on the complexity of the archaeological remains encountered and in all cases sufficient time will be allowed by the developer for this purpose.

If human remains, or any suspected grave cuts, are observed, machine excavation will cease, the Department, development sponsor and, in the case of human remains uncovered, the Garda and the National Museum of Ireland will be informed immediately and a suitable methodology for dealing with the human remains or grave cuts will be agreed in writing with the appropriate authorities. Work will not recommence in the area containing the human remains until such a methodology has been agreed, and all works subsequently undertaken in this area will be in accordance with this methodology.

If the archaeological deposits are extensive an interim report will be compiled, outlining the nature of the archaeological deposits uncovered and the impacts of the proposed development on these remains. The report will also recommend a mitigation strategy for further archaeological works on site, which could consist of preservation of the remains in situ and/or archaeological excavation. During the testing phase, recording will be by means of the standard methods employed during archaeological fieldwork. A day book will be maintained while all archaeological features will be recorded in writing utilising pro forma context sheets by means of scaled field illustrations and by appropriate photography.

It is recommended that the developer allow enough time in the development programme for a possible archaeological excavation. It should be noted that the results of all excavation including site evaluation and monitoring, must be compiled into a fully illustrated report.

*Finds strategy.* In the course of the testing all finds will be logged according to context, washed (if appropriate), bagged and catalogued prior to dispatching to the various specialists. A contract conservator will be on hand if necessary. All finds will initially be housed in our post excavation store in Drogheda and will ultimately be stored in whatever facility the State will provide.

All artefacts will be numbered and treated in accordance with NMI guidelines.

*Timescale.* It is expected that the testing will take place over 5 days, from April 2021 and will be carried out by the license holder.

*Archive.* The archive will be stored at AHC Ltd, post-excavation store in Drogheda. Ultimately it will be stored in whatever permanent facility the State may provide.

*Report.* A report will be compiled that will set out the results of the archaeological testing in accordance with the terms of the National Monuments Acts and best professional practice. It will address the archaeological & historical background of the site. The location and levels (corrected to Ordnance Datum) of any archaeological deposits found will be clearly shown, an impact statement and mitigation strategy will also be given. Relevant ground plans and cross sectional drawings of the site and the proposed development will be included.

#### **References:**

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Fig. 1 Site location

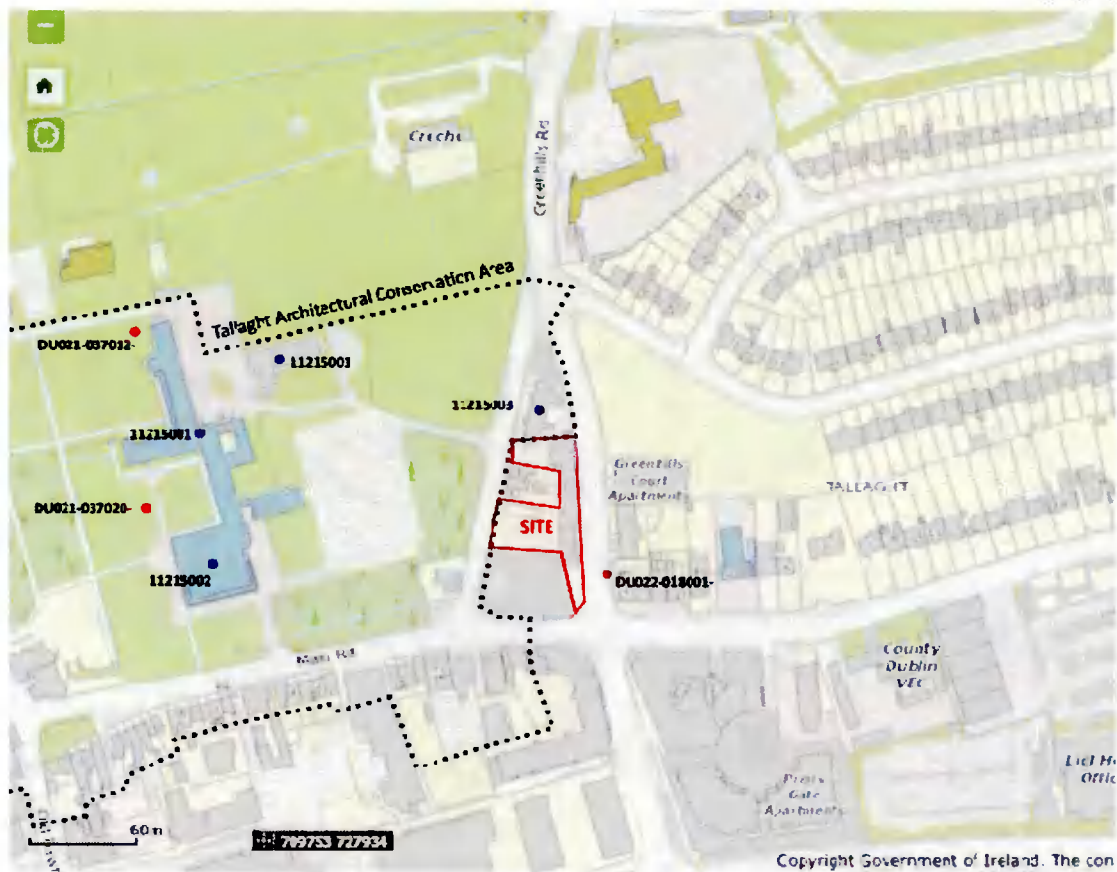


Fig. 2 Detailed site location with sites of Cultural heritage interest in the vicinity

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Fig. 3 Proposed ground floor layout



Fig. 3 detail of proposed ground floor plan showing extent of existing basement area of new retail unit extension to the south – with proposed test trench layout.





Fig 4 Castle complex Monck mason drawing 1818.



Fig. 5 Area of site on Down Survey map of 1655





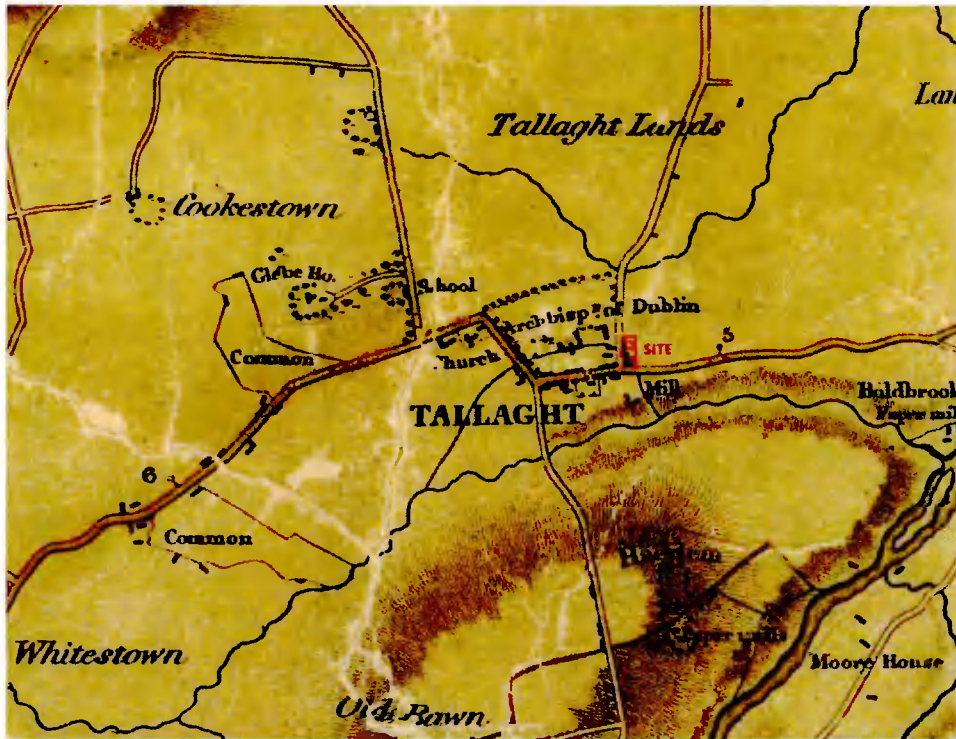


Fig. 8 Site on Duncan's map of 1821



Fig. 9 Site on Ordnance Survey map of 1843



Fig. 10 Site on Ordnance Survey map of 1935



Plate 1. St. Basil's Training Centre, NIAH Ref: 11215003; South Dublin Council's RPS Ref 268.



Plate 2 Existing development from the north, to be retained



Plate 3. South end of development showing porting to be demolished and area of extension





Plate 4 Entrance to existing carpark from west



Plate 5 Area of proposed extension from the south