

JOHN CRONIN & ASSOCIATES

ARCHAEOLOGY | CONSERVATION | HERITAGE | PLANNING

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed Nursing Home and Independent Living Units for Older People, Greenhills Road, Tallaght, County Dublin



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1. Introduction

St. Mary's Medical (Tallaght) Ltd. intends to apply for planning permission for development at lands to the east (and within the curtilage of) St. Mary's Priory, Old Greenhills Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24 (a Protected Structure). The proposed development will comprise:

(a) construction of a 4 storey nursing home building consisting of (i) 106 no. bedrooms (with ensuite); (ii) associated resident's welfare facilities; (iii) administration areas and staff facilities; (iv) with multi-function space; and pharmacy proposed at ground floor level; (b) construction of 60 no. one bed independent living units in 3 no blocks as follows: (1) Block A, a 4 story building comprising 11 no. one-bed units; (2) Block B, a part 4/part 5 storey building comprising 35 no. one-bed units; and (3) Block C, a 5 storey building comprising 14 no. one-bed units. Each unit will be provided with private open space in the form of a balcony/terrace (6sq.m). (c) The development will include communal open space and landscaping (including new tree planting and tree retention), 30 no. car parking spaces (including 3 no. limited mobility parking spaces; 3 no. EV parking spaces and 1 no. car sharing spaces); and 52 no. bicycle parking spaces. (d) The development will be served by a new pedestrian and vehicular access from Old Greenhills Road through existing boundary wall. Material from the removed wall will be repurposed within the landscape areas; and (e) The development includes landscaping, boundary treatments (including walls and railings to southern and western boundaries), an ESB Substation, SuDS drainage road infrastructure and all ancillary site works necessary to facilitate the development.

This report represents an assessment of architectural heritage impacts and was compiled following desktop research and a site inspection by John Cronin, a conservation consultant with over 25 years' experience.

A previous planning application for this site was submitted by the same Applicant (Ref. SD21A/0136) in 2021 and was refused for a number of reasons. The project architects have revised proposals to take account of the refusal reasons (a summary of these changes is summarised in a "Design Statement" prepared by JNP Architects; the design statement accompanies the current planning application). Furthermore, there has been significant consultation between the design team and the Planning Authority to ensure that the revised development proposals address the various points raised in the refusal for the previous application. This report should be read in conjunction with the Design Statement prepared by JNP Architects. In advance of the submission of a fresh planning application, a Conservation Plan has been prepared for the overall Priory lands (including the proposed development site). The contents of which have been discussed with SDCC and inputs to the preparation has involved the representatives of the Priory. This Conservation Plan has informed the designs for the proposed development.

Please note that John Cronin & Associates have also prepared a separate archaeological assessment of the proposed development site; that assessment report accompanies the planning application for this development proposal.

2. Context

Location

The subject site consists of an area of vacant land in the northeast corner of the grounds of St. Mary's Priory. St. Mary's Priory is located on the northern side of the Main Street of Tallaght village. The subject site is currently partly surrounded by a high rubble-stone wall to the east (bounding Old Greenhills Road), concrete blockwork wall to the north (bounding the grounds of the Tallaght Campus of Technological University of Dublin (TUD)) and low metal amenity fencing to its west and south. The subject site is located within an Architectural Conservation Area.

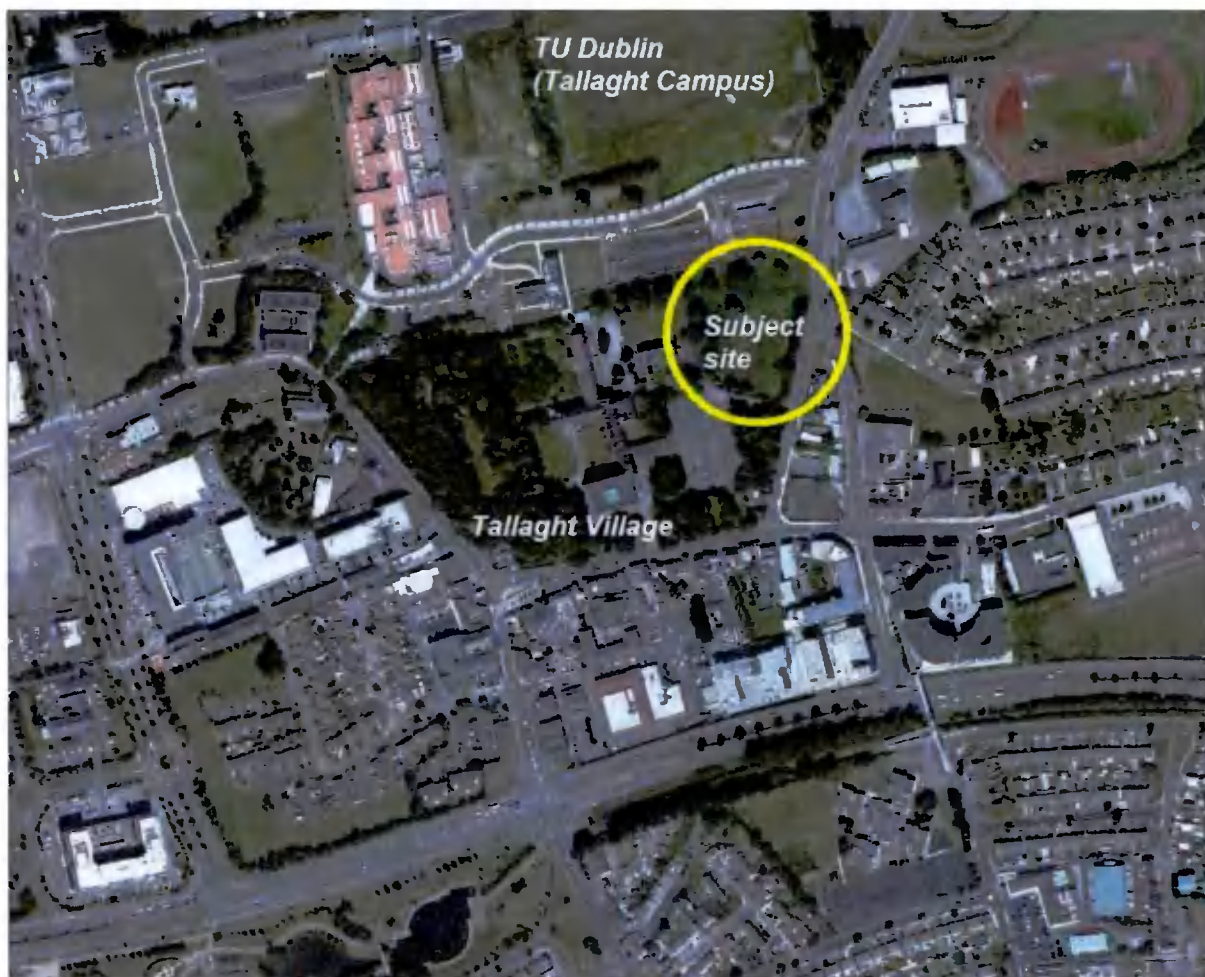


Figure 1: Approximate location of proposed development site (encircled in yellow)

Historical background

The village of Tallaght owes its origins to early Christian period and the placename derives from *támh leacht* which translates to mean 'a plague burial place'. In the *Annals of the Four Masters*, it is noted that Parthalon invaded Ireland only to have 9000 of his army killed by plague within a week of their arrival. The men were buried in the area of Tallaght giving it the name '*Taimleach Muintire Parthalon*' (O'Donovan 1854, 9). However, there is no archaeological evidence in the surrounding landscape which supports this account. In 769AD the monastery of Tallaght was

established by St. Maelruain, whose death is recorded as 792AD (Handcock 1899, 5). The *Annals of the Four Masters* records the death of 'Airfhindan, Abbot of Tamhlacht Maeleruain' in the year 798AD (O'Donovan 1854, 407). Tallaght appears to have been an important ecclesiastical site in North Leinster in the latter part of the first millennium AD. The *Annals of the Four Masters* further record the 'violation of the Termon of Tamhlacht-Maelruain' by the O'Neills in 811AD (*ibid*, 417). After the Anglo-Norman invasion, the abbey became the property of the Archbishop and the See of Dublin (<http://www.southdublinhistory.ie/content.aspx?area=tallaght&type=history>). The Annals contain no further records of the abbey, which appears to have fallen into ruin in the succeeding centuries. The site was later the residence of the Archbishop of Dublin. Archbishop Bulkeley wrote the following in relation to Tallaght in 1630 'The Church and chancel are in good repair and decency' (Handcock 1899, 12).

Lewis (1837, 587) provides a note on the later history of the site:

A castle was built here by Alexander de Bicknor, Archbishop of Dublin, as his residence, which continued to be the seat of his successors until a late period; in 1324, he obtained a remission of money in consideration of his expenses in its erection. In 1331, O'Toole, the chieftain of Imaal, at the head of a numerous band, plundered the castle and demesne, slew many of the Archbishop's people, and defeated Sir Philip Britt and a body of Dublin men who had been sent against him. A very large mansion-house was subsequently erected, to which was attached an extensive and well-stocked garden, laid out in the Dutch style, and a demesne of upwards of 200 acres. Dr Fowler, who died in 1803, was the last archbishop who resided here. Lord John G. Beresford, who was translated to the see of Dublin in 1819, obtained an act of parliament to sell the buildings and lands, and his successor, Dr. Magee, sold them to. Major Palmer, who, after having taken down the buildings, with the materials of which he erected Tallaght House, a handsome modern residence, disposed of his interest in them to John Lentaigne, Esq., the present proprietor.

Today, St. Maelruain's Church of Ireland, a Gothic Revival church, built 1829, restored and remodelled in 1891 stands on the original site of St. Maelruain's Abbey (<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/11215004/st-maelruains-c-of-i-church-main-street-tallaght-dublin-dublin>). St. Mary's Priory continues to retain many of its historic features such as the Archbishop's bathhouse and Friar's Walk as well as St. Maelruain's Tree. All sources state that Tallaght house was incorporated or enclosed by the new retreat house built at the priory in 1955. Tallaght house became St. Joseph's, the first Priory.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Tallaght saw the mass construction of mills along the River Dodder and in 1888 the Dublin to Blessington Steam Tramway was opened, increasing accessibility in and out of Tallaght, increasing trade and facilitating day visitors (<http://www.southdublinhistory.ie/content.aspx?area=tallaght&type=history>). From the 1960s Tallaght grew significantly from a rural village to an extension of the rapidly expanding urban area of Dublin. The establishment of significant shopping outlets (such as The Square), Tallaght Hospital and Tallaght Institute of Technology (now the Tallaght Campus of the Technological University of Dublin (TUD)) in the latter part of the 20th century have continued the growth of Tallaght, leaving the village barely distinguishable within suburban west Dublin.

The subject site

St. Mary's Priory was founded in 1855 and acted as a centre for learning. It was built close to the site of Tallaght Castle (and to the southwest of the now-demolished Tallaght House). The Castle of Tallaght commissioned by Archbishop Alexander de Bicknor. There was a long building attached to the castle, over time its use varied, originally used as a brewery for the Archbishop and later used as a granary and stables. The Dominicans converted this long building into a chapel which was used up to 1883. This saw the construction of the new Priory church. This long building was then demolished to allow for the construction of a new wing which connected the Priory to the church, this was established in 1901.

Tallaght House was originally built for Major Palmer who was an inspector of Prisons, c. 1824. It was built on the site of the Archbishops Palace which had fallen into disrepair. The schoolhouses and cottages were built contemporaneously, he also repaired the surrounding roads. Major Palmer sold Tallaght House in the 1820's to Sir John Letaigne, Letaigne developed the gardens which somewhat remain today. In 1842 part of the demesne was leased to the Dominican and a Priory was built. Healy describes that Tallaght House was sold to the Dominicans in 1856 and its use as a Priory continued until 1864 when the new one was constructed. From then, its use varied as a novitiate, laundry, and a retreat house. A new retreat house was built around the old Tallaght House in 1955, and Healy states that it was done as such so that it would not be recognisable (Healy 2004, 62). The tower house of the castle was incorporated into the Dominican Priory.

The Priory grounds were originally watered by a small stream which ran in front of the front boundary wall. Some features still remain which show evidence of this stream. During the development of the area over time, the stream was diverted, and the priory grounds are no longer watered by it. The pond to the north of the carpark on Greenhill Road was previously used by the locals as a swimming pool, it since dried up and was filled in for agricultural use, (*ibid*, 64).

The 1882 the church was outgrown by the rapidly increasing population and in the 1970's it was extended and 'adapted to the new liturgical reforms' (*ibid*, 64). In 1972 Tallaght appointed as a parish and the subsequent addition of three more churches, St. Dominic's, St. Aengus, St. Martin's. These were divided into four parishes in 1985.

Cartographic Review

The 1st edition OS map (see **Figure 2**) shows the primarily rural setting of Tallaght in the 19th century. The village of Tallaght is surrounded by regular agricultural fields. The area within the proposed development site is an undeveloped greenfield site, with evidence for a pond feature in the northern section where the land is also divided between two field boundaries. The pond, a common feature of 18th century formal gardens feeds a straight linear water feature that runs from north-northwest to south-southeast along the eastern side of the house. Though long since out of fashion, the pond has been retained into the middle of the 20th century as evidenced by later cartographic sources and was used by locals for swimming. The water features as well as providing a pleasant view was used to water the gardens. The northern section is also forested by mixed woodland. The southern portion of the proposed development is uninterrupted and not forested. Tallaght House is labelled to the west of the proposed development site. There are areas indicative of streams and ponds to the north east of the house, running adjacent to the house and to the south. These were used to water the area and were also used by locals as swimming pools.

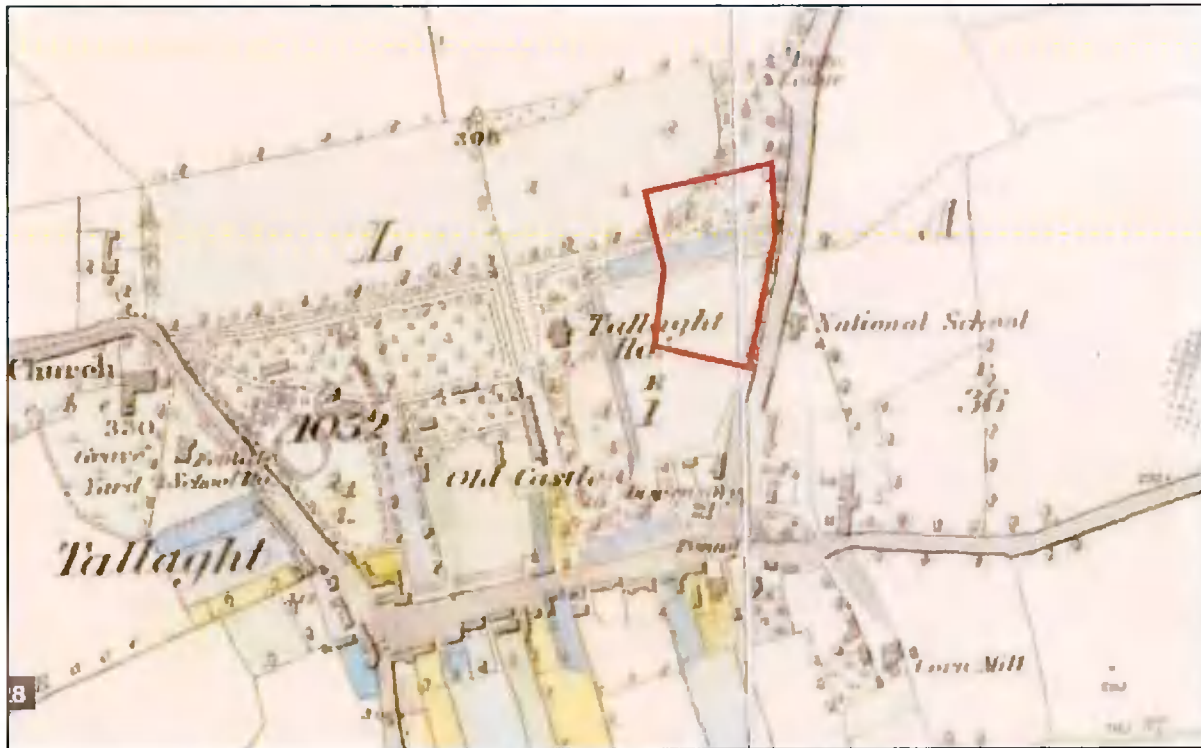


Figure 2: Extract from the 1st edition 6-inch OS map showing the approximate site boundary (blue) and the area surrounding the subject lands (Reproduced under Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. SU 0003321)

Tallaght House was originally built for Major John Palmer c.1824 on the site of the Archbishops Palace which had fallen into disrepair. Gardens were also developed surrounding the house which somewhat remain today and can be seen surrounding the building on the 1st edition OS Map. East of the proposed development site, a 'National School' is marked, this was established contemporaneously with the construction of Tallaght House. There are several regular rectangular land parcels south of the school, which is most likely evidence of regular housing. A 'Corn Mill' is depicted to the south, with the 'Old Castle' labelled to the southwest of the subject site. The Church of Ireland church, erected in 1829 and its accompanying graveyard are depicted to the west of Tallaght House.

The 25-inch edition OS map shows a changed landscape with an increase in construction (see **Figure 3** below). There are few changes to the subject site from what was depicted on the 1st edition OS map. The land surrounding Tallaght remains relatively unchanged and continues to be presented as regular fields for agricultural use. The 25-inch OS map shows a noticeably more populated village with the addition of labels and buildings compared to the 1st edition such as the establishment of St. Mary's Priory (Dominican) and St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church to the south west of the proposed development site. The Priory was established c.1855 when part of the Tallaght House demesne was leased. Tallaght house is still labelled with the pond to the northeast still marked. The stream was diverted during the development of the Priory and no longer waters the area. A lodge has also been added to the south of the priory. The addition of Tallaght Cottage and Lodge can be seen north of Maelruen's Church. The courthouse and school to the east of Tallaght House are still labelled and Bancroft's Castle is now marked as being 'in ruins'. The corn mill's label has changed and is now marked as St. Dominic's dispensary.

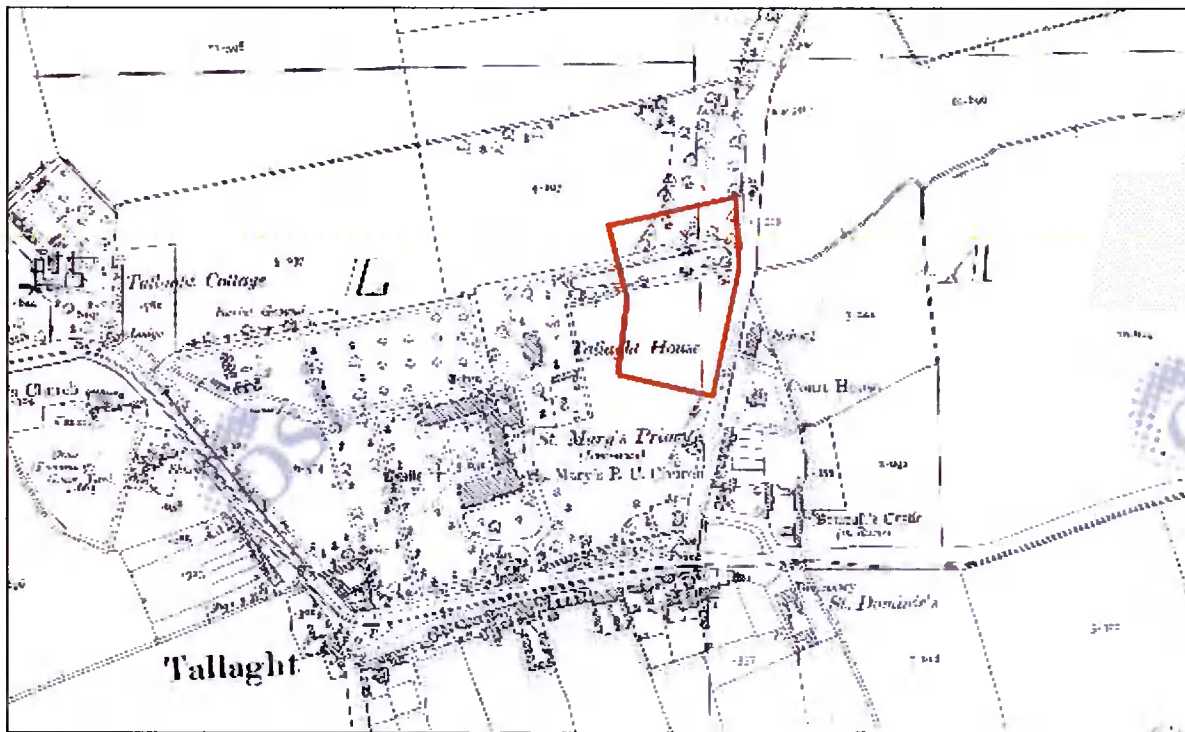


Figure 3: Extract from the 25-inch OS map showing the approximate site boundary (red) (Reproduced under Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. SU 0003321)

The mid-20th-century six-inch map (see **Figure 4** below), demonstrates a further changing Tallaght. The area within the subject site remains unchanged and unaltered with the surrounding lands seeing some alterations. Tallaght House is no longer labelled as the attention turns to St. Mary's Priory (Dominican) and the wing on the south side of the building is shaded in black possibly to highlight how the wing was demolished and rebuilt to connect the wing to the new church in 1901. Tallaght House was sold to the Dominican in 1856 where it was used as a novitiate, laundry and finally a retreat house. Bancroft's Castle (in ruins) continues to be labelled with the dispensary to its south. A library is now labelled to the north of St. Mary's School (boys & girls). St. Maelruen's Church is now labelled as Church Tower with the school's label remaining. Tallaght Cottage, Lodge and burial grounds are still labelled. The general layout of the towns roads remains the same with the lands associated with the housing to the south of the proposed development site being divided into smaller fields. From the 1960's, Dublin County Council directed significant amounts of new housing to Tallaght. Between the 60's to the 90's several developments were added such as a shopping centre, hospital and IT Tallaght which rapidly urbanised what had been long a rural settlement.

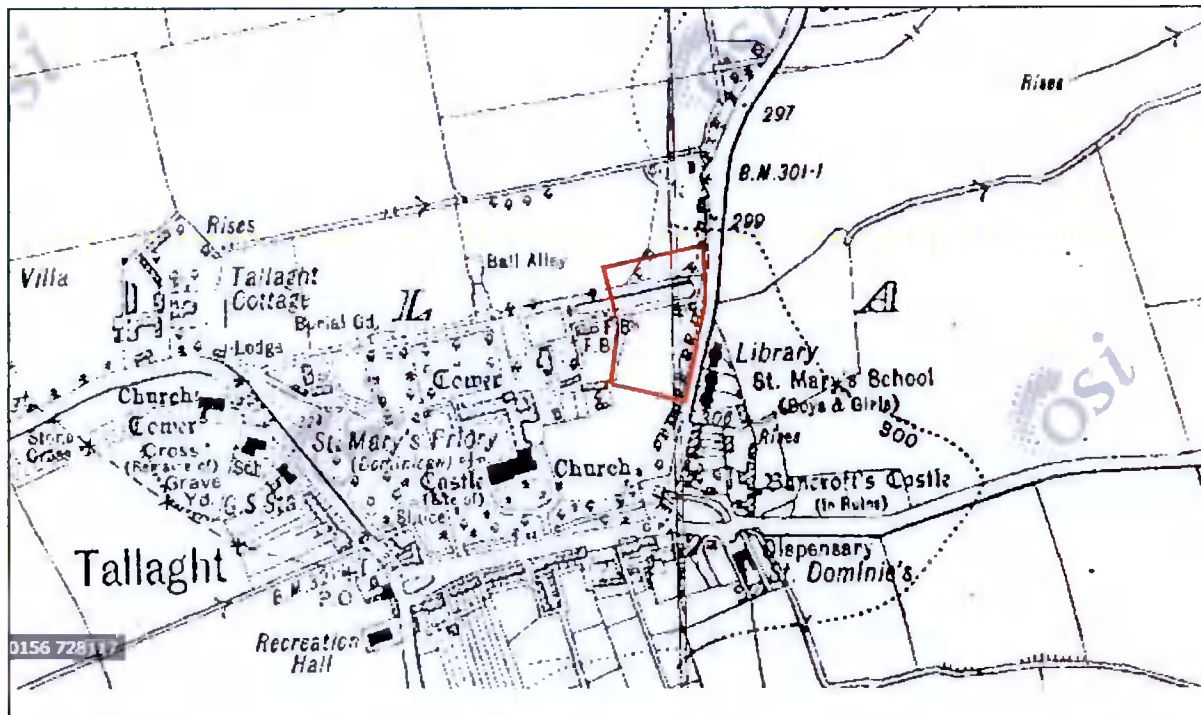


Figure 4: Mid-20th-century six-inch OS map showing the approximate site boundary (red) and the area surrounding the subject lands (Reproduced under Ordnance Survey Ireland Licence No. SU 0003321)

The modern cartographic representation of Tallaght (see **Figure 5** below) depicts an increasingly urbanised area with numerous housing estates, and the establishment of a third level institution, IT Tallaght (now TUD) located to the northwest of St. Mary's Priory. While the town has been heavily urbanised it still retains several greenfield sites. The subject site today is a greenfield site that is largely undisturbed by modern developments. A creche is located north of the proposed development site and east of Greenhills Road there is a substantial housing estate. St. Mary's Dominican Retreat Centre remains on the original site of Tallaght House. The addition of a large carpark can be seen to the south of the subject site. The land surrounding the land parcel has been urbanised in recent decades.



Figure 5: OSI Map view of Tallaght. Historic Environment Viewer, Archaeological Survey of Ireland.

Designated architectural heritage sites and areas

Protection of architectural or built heritage is provided for through a range of legal instruments that include the Heritage Act, 1995, the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and National Monuments (Misc. Provisions) Act, 1999, and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000. Part IV of the 2000 Act deals with architectural heritage and incorporates the provisions of the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 1999. Section 2.1 of the Heritage Act, 1995, describes architectural heritage as *'all structures, buildings, traditional and designed, and groups of buildings including streetscapes and urban vistas, which are of historical, archaeological, artistic, engineering, scientific, social or technical interest, together with their setting, attendant grounds, fixtures, fittings and contents, and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, includes railways and related buildings and structures and any place comprising the remains or traces of any such railway, building or structure'*.

Protected Structures

Under the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act, 2000, all Planning Authorities are obliged to keep a *'Record of Protected Structures'* (RPS) which lists structures deemed to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. A *protected structure*, unless otherwise stated in the RPS, includes the interior of the structure, land lying within the curtilage, any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, plus all fixtures and features which form a part of the interior or exterior of any of these structures. Works which, in the opinion of the planning authority, would have a material effect on the character of the protected structure require planning permission. South Dublin County Council (SDCC) have designated a number of protected structures within the environs of the subject site; the relevant buildings are:

- The Priory, Tallaght (SDCC Ref 269)
- St. Mary's Dominican Priory, Tallaght (Ref 270)
- St. Maelruan's Church, Tallaght & Monastic Enclosure (Ref 271)
- St. Mary's Dominican Church, Tallaght (Ref 273)
- St. Basil's Training Centre, Greenhills Road, Tallaght (Ref 268)

NIAH structures

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has recorded five buildings of architectural merit within 500 metres of the proposed development site (all within the townland of Tallaght). These are catalogued in **Table 1** below. (Four of these five buildings are protected structures in their own right.)

Table 1: NIAH-registered buildings within 500 metres of the proposed development site (PDS)

NIAH Reg.	Class	Description	Distance from PDS
11215003	Engine Shed	Detached ten-bay single-storey training centre, c.1940, with two projecting porches. Rough-cast walls with brick base. Timber sash windows in plain openings with internal railings. Hipped slate roof with various skylights and two large Art Deco style chimney stacks. Two symmetrical flat-roofed extensions to rear. Brick and roughcast boundary wall with railings.	17.7m south east

<i>NIAH Reg.</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Distance from PDS</i>
11215002	Church/chapel (St. Mary's Dominican Church)	Detached gable-fronted Gothic Revival church, built 1886. Seven-bay nave with plain lancets separated by prominent stepped buttresses to ashlar walls. Aisle to north. Polygonal apsidal east end with stair turret. Angle buttresses. Three lancet windows above central timber double-leaf door with iron strapwork and cut stone surround. Arcaded seventeen-bay portico and aisle to south, built 1969. Slender paired concrete piers to arcade, creates T-plan church with central altar and monastic choir. Church abuts priory to north.	112m south west
11215001	Priory (St. Mary's Dominican Priory)	Detached multiple-bay three-storey with attic Gothic Revival priory, built 1863, on L-plan. Internal court to east, single-storey wing to north. Ashlar walls with pointed, segmental- and flat-headed window openings housing timber sash windows. Gabled dormers with carved bargeboards to pitched slate roof having stone chimney stacks. Medieval five-stage tower of Tallaght Castle incorporated into priory fabric at junction of wings. Detached three-storey over arcaded basement modern retreat centre to east. Chapel later addition.	47m west
11215005	Presbytery/Parochial/ Curate's House	Pair of semi-detached single-storey with attic houses, c. 1825. Roughcast walls with quoins. Two segmental-headed door openings with drip moulding above each. Square-headed window openings with stone sills and timber sash windows. Two small sash windows in gables of attic storey, some sash windows remaining to rere. Pitched slate roof with central attic dormer window, perforated crested terracotta ridge tiles and four brick chimney stacks. Projecting timber-bracketed eaves. Shared extension to rere. Large flat-roofed extension to rere of right-hand house.	320m west
11215004	Church/chapel (St. Maelruain's C of I Church)	Detached gable-fronted Gothic Revival church, built 1829, restored and remodelled in 1891. Seven-bay nave with slender Y-tracery lancets under drip moulding and gabled parapet to each separated by single-stepped buttresses with exaggerated spiked pinnacles. Clasp corner buttresses with multiple mouldings rising to ornately carved pinnacles. Triple lancet windows with	340m west

NIAH Reg.	Class	Description	Distance from PDS
		drip moulding under projecting multiple string course following eaves line to east and west facades. Entrance porch with Tudor-arched double-leaf timber door joins west tower of medieval church to present building to its north. Rough-dressed coursed rubble walls. Pitched slate roof. Four-stage bell tower, irregular part-crenellated parapet and polygonal projecting corbelled stair turret to south-east corner. Monolithic early Christian stone font in graveyard. Three-bay cottage inside dressed stone gate piers and cast-iron gates to graveyard.	

Architectural Conservation Area

In addition to listing individual structures, local authorities also have the power to identify *Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)* within their functional areas. An ACA is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, taking account of building lines and heights, that is deemed to be of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or that contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure, and whose character it is an objective of the development plan to preserve.

The subject site is located partially within the *Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)* (see **Figure 6**). The boundary of Tallaght ACA extends from St. Maelruan’s church and graveyard on the Blessington Road to the Old Greenhills Road, and includes the Priory and the properties along the southern side of Main Street between the junctions of the Blessington Road and Greenhills Road.

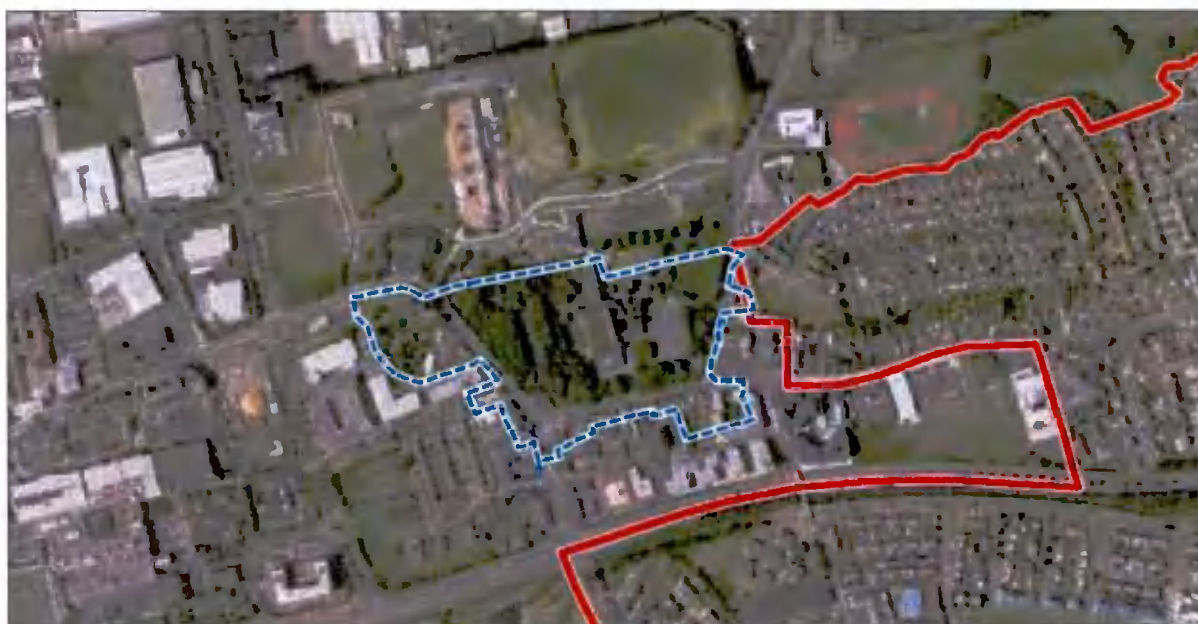


Figure 6: Extent of Tallaght ACA (broken blue outline)

It is the policy of the Council “to preserve and enhance the historic character and visual setting of Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area and to carefully consider any proposal for development that would affect the special value of such areas.” In assessing new development proposals within Architectural Conservation Area, the Tallaght Town Centre Local Area Plan 2020 states the following:

To ensure that new development, including infill development, extensions and renovation works within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) preserves or enhances the special character and visual setting of the ACA including vistas, streetscapes and roofscapes

3. Description of the subject site

The subject site has remained undeveloped, though partially landscaped over the past few centuries, as evidenced by cartographic regression (as outlined in the previous section). It is very much part and parcel of a campus that has evolved and expanded over time, most especially since the establishment of St Mary's Priory by the Dominican Order in 1855. The subject site as evolved from being a garden area to the rear (east) of Tallaght House to now being a somewhat isolated and underused parcel of ground. The northern boundary of the land parcel consists of a concrete wall that severs the site from what would have been the original entrance (and gate lodge) of Tallaght House.

The photographs below confirm that the subject site contributes little to the Architectural Conservation Area (indeed the northernmost section of the subject site is not within the ACA). However, the Priory campus is visible from the Main Street due to the low boundary wall and lightweight metal fence which allows for visual surveillance from Main Street (see **Plates 1 and 2**) whilst maintaining a separateness and a distinct sense of place.

The Priory campus has a number of buildings that are protected structures in their own right and these are of undoubted architectural heritage significance. The buildings of note include the detached gable-fronted Gothic Revival church (built 1886) (see **Plate 1** below) which has an elegant, arcaded extension to its southern site along with the detached multiple-bay three-storey-with-attic Gothic Revival priory itself (see **Plate 2**).



Plate 1: View of street frontage of St. Mary's Dominican Priory to the Main Street of Tallaght Village – note the low stone wall with lightweight metal fence which allows pleasant views into the campus of the priory



Plate 2: View of the Priory church from Main Street – the subject site is not visible from Main Street due to intervening built form and mature trees



Plate 3: View of the principal (western) elevation of the Priory – the subject site is not visible from this location

Other buildings within the campus include the library block (**Plate 4**) which was built in 1950s and the Dominican Retreat Centre (**Plate 5**) which incorporates the shell of the former Tallaght House.



Plate 4: View of the library block built c. 1958



Plate 5: View of the Dominican Retreat Centre – this four-storey building incorporates the shell of the former Tallaght House at its western end (obscured by coniferous trees in this photograph)

One of the most significant extant heritage features on site is the late medieval tower (see **Plate 6** below). It is rectangular in plan, rising to four storeys with a stair turret in the north-west angle and an external base batter visible on the eastern side. It has been incorporated in the later priory building. It is a recorded monument (RMP Ref. DU021-037010). Due to its location, this medieval structure is not visible from the subject site.



Plate 6: View of the late-medieval gate lodge set into the rear of Saint Dominic's Priory. This building is a recorded monument (RMP Ref. DU021-037010)



Plate 7: The late medieval tower is very much shielded from view due to its location at the “back of house” of the Priory and localised tree planting.



Plate 8: View towards the subject site (from the SW)

The subject site sits in the northeast corner of the Priory campus. It is open on its western side to a garden area to the north of the Dominican Retreat Centre. To the south-east and south, the plot is enclosed by a low metal fence (see **Plate 8**). The land is generally level and covered with high grass. The northern boundary consists of a modern concrete wall that abuts the campus of TUD Tallaght. A number of mature trees are present within the north-west section of the land parcel.

On the eastern side of the land parcel is a line of tall poplar trees (**Plates 9 -11**) that appear to be of relatively recent origin (less than 50 years old). These were planted very close to the rubble stone wall that defines the eastern edge of the site (as it presents to the Old Greenhills Road).

The high boundary wall is leaning inwards (see **Plate 12**) with the “hinge-point” at less than one-metre height above the external pavement. It is likely that the wall will be liable to localised collapse in the coming decades. It would be possible to take the leaning section down and retain the lower section in a manner similar to that of the Priory’s boundary to Main Street (see **Plate 1** above).



Plate 9: View of the subject site (looking north)



Plate 10: View of row of poplar trees that line the eastern roadside boundary



Plate 11: View of the exterior face of the boundary – the poplar trees are planted very close to the wall and appear to have led to significant distortion in the wall itself.



Plate 12: View (north-east) along the outer face of the boundary wall – note the pronounced inward lean at less than one-metre above pavement level

4. Assessment of impact

The subject site is a self-contained land parcel quite separate from St. Mary's Priory and hidden from view from the Main Street of Tallaght Village. It is bounded to the north by a modern concrete blockwork wall associated with TUD Tallaght, to the south by a low metal fence with some mature hedging and shrubs, to the east by a tree-lined rubblestone wall, which bounds Greenhill Road and partially to the west by a boundary hedge and low metal fence. Views towards the subject site from St. Mary's Priory are screened by the tall mixed species trees of the boundary hedge (see **Plate 8** above). The subject site contains a small number of mature deciduous trees near the northern end. The land parcel is unused and somewhat overgrown. Overall, the land parcel is peripheral and separate to the wider Priory campus.

Although the subject site is partly within Tallaght Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), development within this discrete site **will not directly impact** on the built environment of the ACA or its setting. The wider lands and environs have been in a continual state of building and rebuilding over a number of centuries and has been encroached upon by the extending suburban area of Dublin since the latter part of the 20th century. The wider Priory lands already contains buildings from the medieval, Victorian, and modern period. The site has the capacity to accommodate new development given the campus-like nature of the wider Priory site.

Designs for the proposed development have been significantly changed, responding to the Planning Authority's reasons for refusal for the previous planning application for the subject site. The design has been informed by a completed Conservation Plan. The proposed Nursing Home has been reduced in height to four storeys with the floor plan now designed as a T-shape and located in the northern part of the site. It has also been reduced in floor area/footprint size with a reduction in bedroom numbers to 106no. This redesign reduces the overall height, massing and scale of the building whilst the shape creates separate communal and private (secure) external amenity spaces and increases the distance of the building from the eastern boundary wall. Proposed external materials are of high quality and reflect those in the Priory buildings whilst providing architectural interest.

The number of Independent Living Units has been reduced from 108 to 60 and are now arranged in three separate blocks the heights of which have been reduced to four and five-storeys. This redesign, coupled with associated elevational treatment and use of high-quality materials reduces the overall height, massing and scale of the buildings overall whilst ensuring a high degree of visual interest. The use of individual blocks allows views of the Priory buildings/lands beyond. The arrangement and shape of the blocks (using the same axis as those buildings within the Priory campus) creates appropriate separation distances from the eastern boundary wall.

The proposed buildings have been re-designed and repositioned to provide greater distances and setbacks from the eastern boundary wall. The proposed development of the subject site is a continuation of current usage within the wider lands. Designs respond to the environs but are clearly legible as high-quality contemporary additions. The proposed function of the new development is wholly appropriate and will reinforce the continuing use of the wider campus, particularly the use of the church by residents of the nursing home and sheltered accommodation/apartments. The proposed development seeks to create a self-contained, village style, community campus in keeping with the campus style layout that already exists within the adjacent Priory lands. The designs have taken careful account of the presence of mature

deciduous trees present in the north-west of the site and a detailed landscape plan has been developed.

It is noted that there is no other access available to the development site that what is now proposed. The new opening has been kept to a minimum width and the design is a very simple opening thus being subservient to the existing curved access to the Priory carpark. The new opening will provide good views to the development and Priory beyond and with the designs for the Independent Living Units located near to the new entrance will provide a high quality and visually interesting view from the public footpath thus increasing the quality of the public realm. The creation of this new entrance will not lead to a proliferation of new openings in the eastern boundary wall as the circumstances for this opening are unique to this location. A new entrance to the site from Greenhill Road is located at a point along the existing boundary where the wall fabric is in poor condition (see **Plates 11 & 12** above).

Finally, the development will not give rise to significant impacts on the setting of St. Basil's Training Centre (SDCC RPS Ref. 268) which is located opposite the site, on the eastern side of Greenhills Road.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The proposed development will comprise new residential, welfare and wellbeing facilities for the growing elderly population in the Tallaght area to provide suitable, purpose built accommodation for people who are able to live independently and those who require nursing care. The development will not lead to a loss of architectural heritage significance for any of the Protected Structures in the environs of the subject site. In relation to the Architectural Conservation Area, the impacts of the proposed development are slight in that they alter the character of the environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging patterns of development in Tallaght. This within acceptable limits given the precedence established by the existing permission and the emerging pattern of development in the area.

The proposals have taken full account of the reasons of refusal for a previous development proposal for the subject site. The new buildings' scale and massing are reflective of the scale and mass associated with the nearby Priory buildings however the designs for the new buildings are clearly of a more contemporary nature to distinguish between old and new whilst utilising a mix of modern and traditional materials to reflect and compliment those used in the Priory buildings (i.e. stone, render, metal and glass). The layout of the proposed new development continues the campus style arrangement of the Priory site overall thus achieving a suitable and appropriate pattern of development for the town centre location.

Recommendations

It is recommended that works associated with the creation of a new vehicular entrance to the site from Greenhills Road should be supervised by a conservation consultant/architect. The contractors responsible for works to the rubble boundary wall should have proven and demonstrable experience in the conservation of rubble masonry and the use of lime mortars.

6. References/sources

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