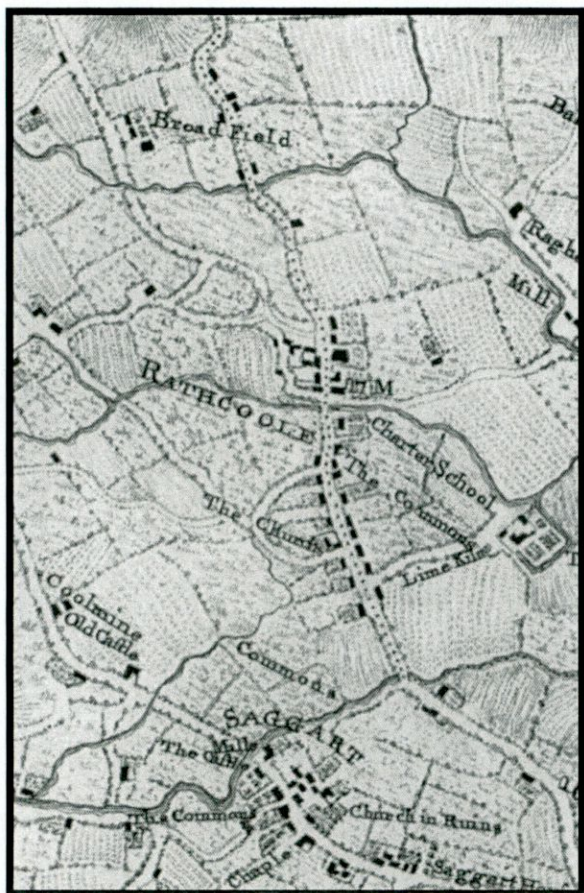


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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT REPORT ON PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENT AT TAY LANE, RATHCOOLE.
CO. DUBLIN**

Author: Colm Flynn, Archaeological Consultant

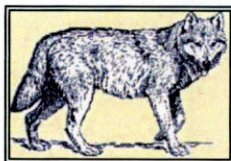
Client: Riverside Projects Ltd

Archaeological Licence: N/A

Date: Aug 2022

ABSTRACT

This report details the results of an archaeological desk based assessment for a proposed residential development at Tay Lane, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin.



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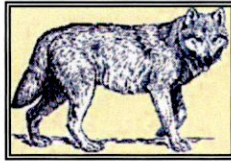
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1.0 Introduction

This Archaeological Desk Based Assessment Report has been completed by Colm Flynn of Colm Flynn Archaeology in relation to a proposed residential development at a site off Tay Lane, Rathcoole, County Dublin. The proposed development site is within the zone of notification for a known archaeological site identified as a holy well, which is contained in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP DU021-030004). The proposed development is situated in proximity to the zone of notification for a known archaeological site identified as settlement cluster (RMP DU021-030008) and the extent of this settlement is unknown. By inclusion in the RMP the sites and their environs are protected by law under the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004). Any proposed works that impact on an RMP must be notified to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, prior to the commencement of any works.

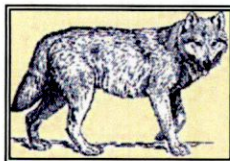
This report examines the proposed construction effects of a residential housing development, based on desktop research (non-invasive methods). The report assesses the existing archaeological and historical background of the receiving environment, and examines the proposed construction, and establishes if this activity will likely result in any impact on known or unknown (subterranean) archaeology.

The archaeological work outlined in this Desktop Assessment report has been completed in response to a pre planning request from Riverside Projects Ltd (RP) regarding this project, through their agents PAC Architects (PAC).

This report has been prepared according to the following documents:

- Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (DAHG, 1999).
- Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements (EPA 2002, 2003, 2016).

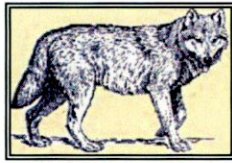
Any impacts that the proposed development at the site off Tay Lane may have on the existing archaeology were assessed as direct or indirect, and positive or negative in nature. The significance of any impact was judged depending on whether the impact was to the entirety or a portion of an archaeological site, or archaeological feature. Each impact was classified according to Environmental Protection Agency guidelines (2016) as set out below:



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- Profound: this applies where mitigation would be unlikely to remove the adverse effects. These profound impacts arise where an archaeological site is completely and irreversibly destroyed by a proposed development.
- Significant: this applies when an impact which, by its magnitude, duration or intensity, alters an important aspect of the archaeological feature/site. An impact like this would be where part of a site would be permanently impacted upon, leading to a loss of character, integrity and data about the archaeological feature/site.
- Moderate: this applies when a change to the site is proposed which though noticeable, is not such that the archaeological integrity of the site is compromised, and which is reversible. This arises where an archaeological feature can be incorporated into a development without damage and that all procedures used to facilitate this are reversible.
- Slight: this applies when the proposed works will result in an impact which causes changes in the character of the archaeology which are not significant or profound and do not directly impact or affect an archaeological feature or monument.
- Imperceptible: this applies when the proposed development will have an impact on the archaeology capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.
- Uncertain: this applies when the extent or nature of possible impacts on archaeological is unknown. This is particularly relevant where the extent of the known archaeology within the proposed development area has not been established.

This desktop archaeological assessment concludes that the proposed development will directly impact on known archaeology. This archaeology is a known and legally protected archaeological site identified as St. Bridget's holy well. However, the extent and significance of the archaeology within the development location remains unknown. Consequently, archaeological mitigation measures are recommended for this project.



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2.0 The Proposed Development

The proposed development at a site off Tay Lane, Rathcoole, County Dublin, will see the construction of 58 apartments over 4 storeys including ground. 20 – 1 bed and 38 – 2 beds in a single block with a north and south wing off a central circulation area with communal areas over the entrance lobby to the east. Outside the main apartment block a single storey building will contain, bike store, bin store, a community facility and wrapping around site boundary to north the switch room, sub-station, and plant room. All of the groundworks for the proposed development including new site access and circulation road-way with related footpaths and parking, storm and surface water sewers including attenuation system, public lighting, boundary walls, footpaths, open spaces and related hard and soft landscaping, together with all other ancillary site works, risk impacting on any subterranean archaeology.

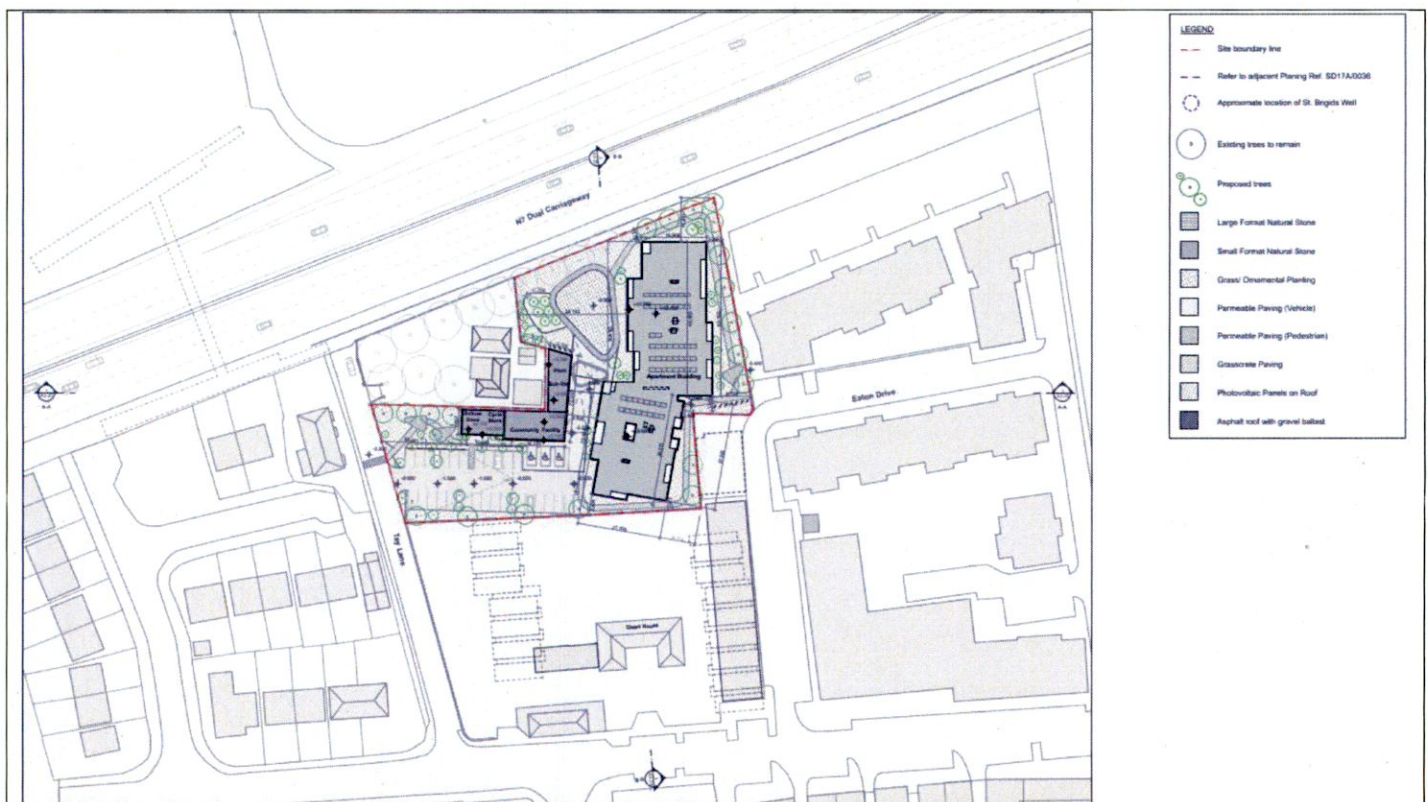
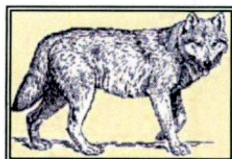


Figure 1 Showing proposed development layout at a site off Tay Lane, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin

3.0 Location

The proposed development will take place at a site off Tay Lane (NGR 701944E, 726829N), Rathcoole townland, in the Barony of Newcastle, County Dublin. The development is an L-



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shaped plot of land that presents as a disused brownfield site with extant twentieth century bungalow (in ruins), and an overgrown heavily forested area. The entire site was formerly the gardens and grounds of Rathcoole Charter School, an eighteenth-century educational establishment.

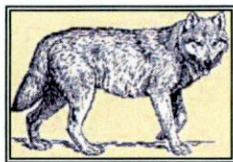


Figure 2 Showing site location at Tay Lane, Rathcoole on Ordnance Survey Discovery map.

4.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

Rathcoole is situated beside a tributary of Griffeen River, in the southwest of County Dublin, near the foothills of the Dublin/Wicklow mountain range. These mountains provide evidence through archaeological sites of human activity from the Neolithic Period (4000-2200 BC) onwards. Several megalithic tombs that likely date to the Neolithic Period are situated 2km to the south of Rathcoole on the northern slopes of Saggart Hill overlooking this part of southwest Dublin.

Evidence for human activity dating to the Bronze Age (2200-600 BC) is found in the landscape around Rathcoole. A fulacht fia (DU021-094) is situated to the south of Saggart Village, 1km to the east of the proposed development. Two standing stones (DU021-044 and DU021-45) are situated in Boherboy near Saggart, 1km to the southeast of the development off Tay Lane, Rathcoole. A stone lined cist burial (DU021-028) is situated in Greenoge townland 0.5km to the north of the proposed development. A ring-ditch (DU021-103) is situated in Collegeland

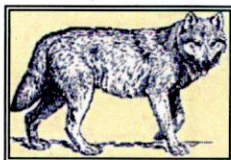


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0.5km to the northeast of the development. Although scientific dating of these sites has not been completed, based on typological comparisons it is likely that these sites date to the Bronze Age, and demonstrate that the area around modern-day Rathcoole was inhabited during this period.

Like much of Ireland, human activity during the Iron Age (600 BC – 400 AD) has not left much evidence in the area around Rathcoole. The name Rathcoole is an Anglicisation of the Gaelic placename Rath Cumhaill, which translates as the Fort of Cumhaill and is referred to in Irish mythology as being the place where the father of the Irish mythological hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill established a fort. Several undated ringforts and enclosures are situated in the landscape around Rathcoole. An enclosure (DU021-029) is situated in Commons townland, 0.4km to the north of the proposed development, and a second (DU021-105) is situated in Ballynakelly 1.2km to the northwest of the development area. Undoubtedly some ringforts and enclosures date to the Iron Age, although most of these sites likely date to the early medieval period (400-1169AD). During the early medieval period the area of Rathcoole and its environs were part of the Kingdom of Leinster, which was often in conflict with the northern Úi Néill Gaelic dynasty who controlled much of the northern half of Ireland. The early pseudo history of Ireland tells us that the northern kings based at Tara imposed a tribute (tax) or 'bóroma' on the kingdom of Leinster in the form of 5000 head of cattle. If the tribute was not paid, the men of northern Úi Néill would attack Leinster. According to the Annals of the Four Masters in 458 AD when the tribute was not paid to King Laoighaire (Lóegaire) of the Úi Néill, he invaded Leinster, forcibly collected the tribute and pursued the men of Leinster into the foothills of the Dublin mountains. Slade Valley 1.5km to the southeast of the development site is the site of a famous battle during this time. King Laoighaire drove their cattle up through the valley to stampede the Leinstermen, who had camped there.

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 AD accelerated the transfer of power and people from rural areas to urban centres. The Anglo-Normans established their society around shires, manors, villages, castles and churches. The first known settlement at Rathcoole dates to the medieval period (1169-1550 AD). This nascent village was an Anglo-Norman borough (DU021-030008), established by the Archbishops of Dublin around 1242 AD. Surviving taxation records from the fourteenth century outline that the settlement at Rathcoole comprised 66 burgesses. It is known that these medieval boroughs were generally organised along a main street, with individual property holdings (or burgesses) at a right angle to the main street. The main buildings of the settlement were often situated at either end of the main



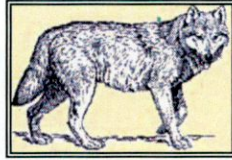
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street. It is likely that the linear east x west orientation of Rathcoole has survived from medieval times, which still has a church (DU021-030001) at the east end of the village.

A holy well (DU021-030004) dedicated to St. Bridget is situated within the development area, off Tay Lane. This archaeological site likely dates to the medieval period. The local history for this holy well relates that St. Bridget passed by here and drank from the well, on her way from Louth to establish the monastery at Kildare, and by drinking from the well, bestowed her healing powers on the water from the well. The site is depicted on nineteenth century Ordnance Survey maps of the area. The holy well was covered over by the local authority in the 1970's, and is not identifiable at ground level.

Rathcoole developed during the medieval period, and several fortified houses and tower-houses were constructed in the vicinity of the village during the fourteenth and fifteenth century. The late sixteenth century Desmond Rebellion inspired the rebellion in Wicklow of James FitzEustace of Harristown, 3rd Viscount Baltinglass. His supporters attacked and destroyed several villages in south and west Dublin including the village of Rathcoole, where they killed the inhabitants.

The Confederate Wars (1640s) and the Cromwellian Campaign (1649-51) saw huge upheaval in County Dublin with great loss of life and property. The Down Survey Map and Civil Survey of the 17th century depicts the village of Rathcoole as a number of dwellings and a church (see Figure 3). The Civil Survey records Rathcoole has having 'many good houses'. The Poitín Stíl (DU021-030007) is believed to date to the seventeenth century and could be depicted on the Down Survey map. The Poitín Stíl is 150m to the west of the proposed development. The Down Survey map is not to scale.



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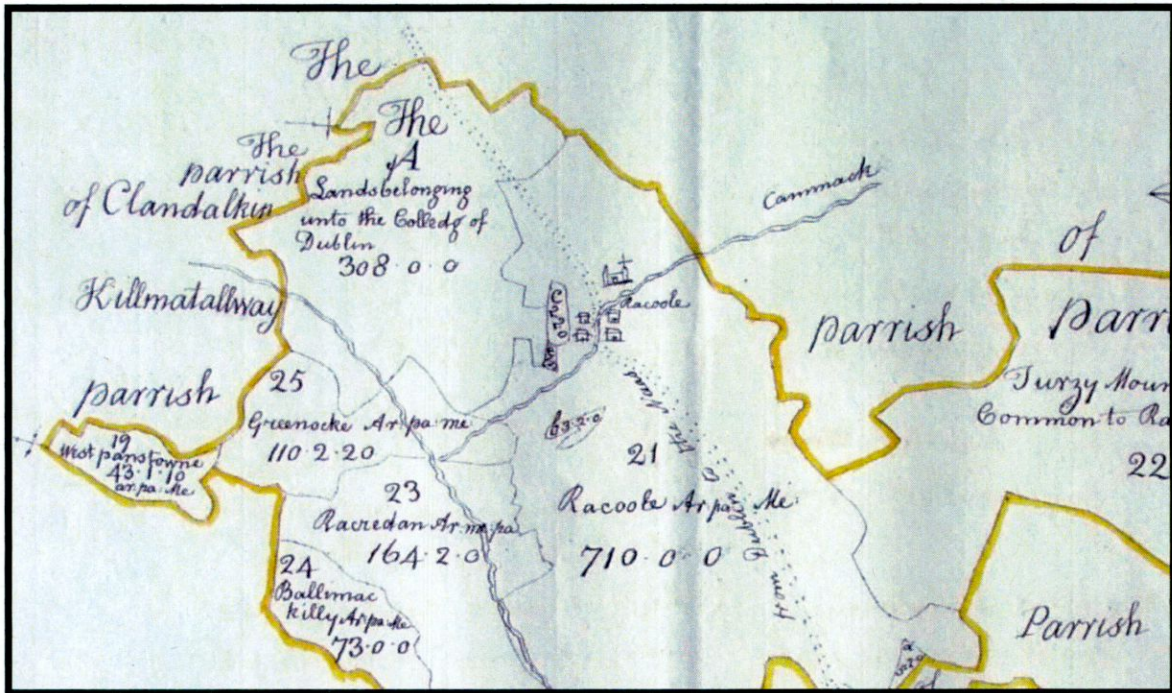
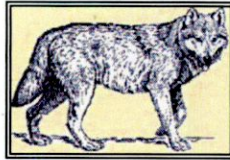


Figure 3 Extract from Down Survey 1650s map showing Parish of Rathcoole.

The mid eighteenth-century map of the barony of Newcastle by the French cartographer Jean Rocque depicts the village of Rathcoole (see figure 4 below). This map depicts the Charter School to the south of the proposed development area. The Charter School Rathcoole had been constructed by the Mary Mercer Trust as a school for girls in 1744. Mary Mercer had inherited wealth from her father who was a fellow of Trinity college. Mary Mercer had previously established a school for poor children in Stephens Street which later became Mercer hospital. Following her death her wealth was to be used for assisting the poor of Dublin. Consequently, the Mary Mercer Trust established the school at Rathcoole for the education of the poor girls of Dublin in the Protestant religion.



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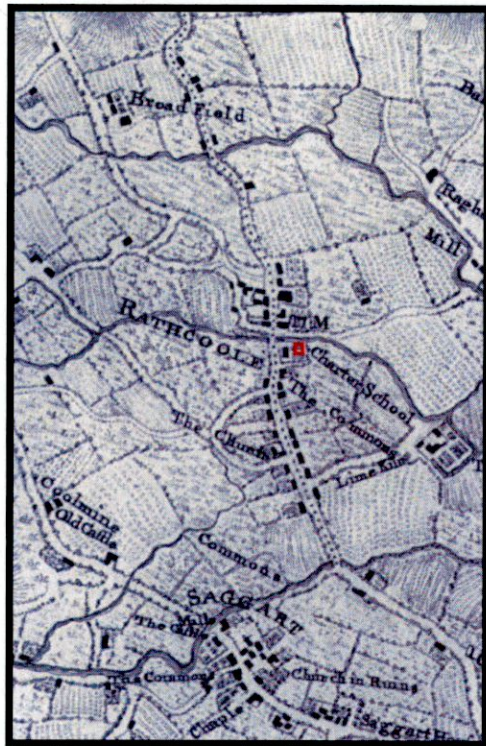
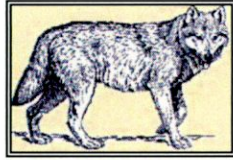


Figure 4 Extract from Rocques map of the barony of Newcastle (c. 1756) showing location of development in Rathcoole.

The mid nineteenth century 1st edition 6" to a mile scale Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area depicts the proposed development location at the site off Tay Lane as being garden or orchard ground, possibly enclosed by walls. The holy well DU021-030004 is depicted within the proposed development area on the 1st ed OS map, and is annotated 'St. Bridget's Well'. The Charter School is depicted to the south of the development area. A police station is situated to the south of the development area.



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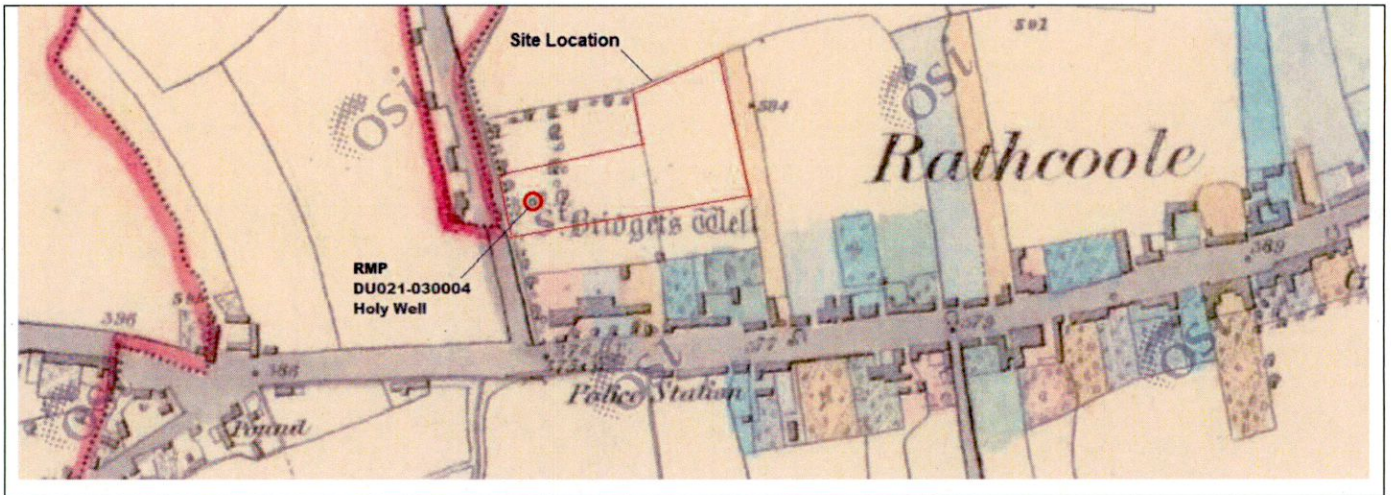


Figure 5 Extract from 1st ed OS map showing Location of development in Rathcoole.

The early twentieth century 25" to a mile scale Ordnance Survey (OS) map of the area, depicts the proposed development location off Tay Lane, Rathcoole as gardens or enclosed fields. St. Bridget's Well is depicted at the west end of the development site near Tay Lane. An internal field or garden division is depicted in the centre of the proposed development site. The Mercer Charter School had moved to Castleknock in 1826 and the former school building is depicted as a rectory.

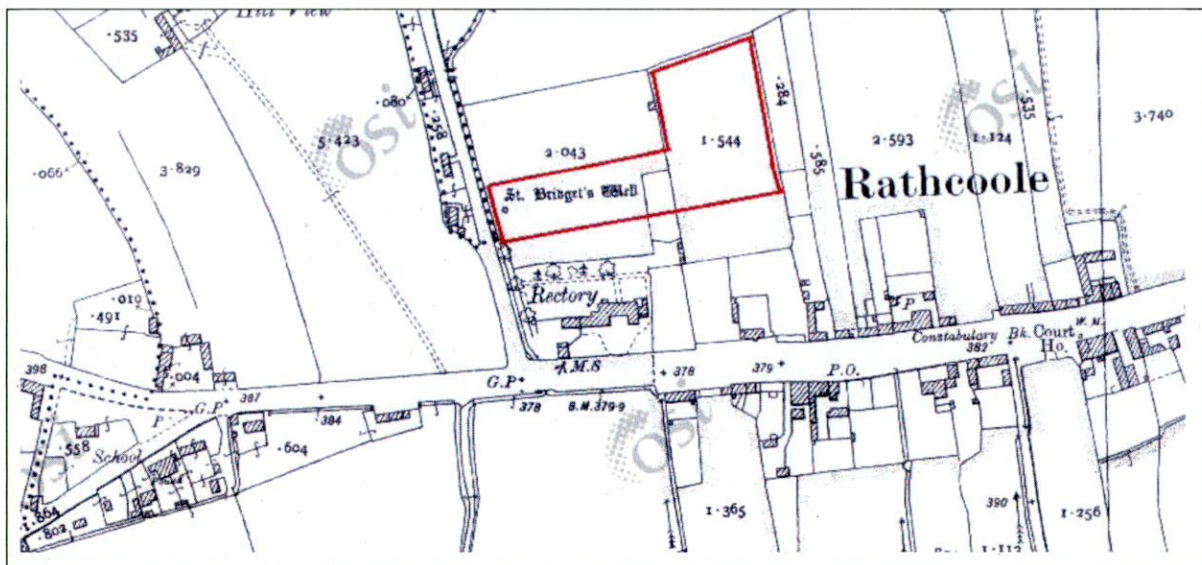
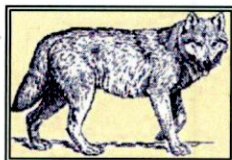


Figure 5 Extract from 25" to a mile scale OS map of area (circa 1905).

Griffiths Valuation records and maps from 1850 for the area outline that proposed development site was leased by Gilbert Kearns from the Trustees of Mercer's Charity.

Known Archaeological Sites



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The proposed development at a site off Tay Lane includes the location of a known and legally protected archaeological site (DU021-030004). Several other known archaeological sites are within the vicinity of the development as shown on the departmental website (www.archaeology.ie). These monuments are listed in Table 1.

RMP No	Townland	Type	Distance From Site
DU021-030004	Rathcoole	Holy Well	Within development extent
DU021-030007	Rathcoole	16/17 th century house	150m W of site
DU021-030008	Rathcoole	Settlement cluster	Unknown location in Rathcoole townland
DU021-030001	Rathcoole	Church	500m east of site
DU021-030001	Rathcoole	Graveyard	500m east of site

Table 1: Record of Monuments and Places monuments in the vicinity of the scheme.

Previous Archaeological Investigations

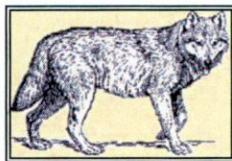
Examination of previously completed archaeological site works can be useful in identifying whether archaeology is likely to be present within the development location. Several archaeological investigations that are included in the online excavations database www.excavations.ie are listed for the townland of Rathcoole, County Dublin. Only one of these excavations is relevant to the development examined in this report. Pre-construction archaeological test trenching was carried out in 2002 by John Kavanagh under archaeological licence 02E1314 at a proposed development site at the junction of Main Street and Tay Lane, Rathcoole, 70m to the south of the development. No archaeology was identified during this work.

Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland

The Topographical Files does not contain any entries for the townland of Rathcoole. Nearby Saggart contains several entries including a bronze axe head. The precise location of these artefacts in Saggart is not listed.

Site Inspection

A site inspection of the proposed development location at the site off Tay Lane took place on 01 October 2021 in warm dry, bright conditions. The proposed development area is the former



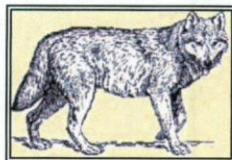
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grounds of the Rathcoole Charter School. The site was accessed via a gated entrance at the west of the properties, off Tay Lane (see Plate 1).



Plate 1 Showing site entrance off Tay Lane, Rathcoole, facing northeast.

The proposed development site is roughly L-shaped in plan with an east x west section, and a north x south section situated at the eastern extent of the development site. The east x west section presents as an overgrown brownfield site, with nature retaking the extant stone chipping ground material (see Plate 3). A ruined modern twentieth century dwelling is at the east end of the site and the ground material is concrete at this part of the site. A high stone wall delineates the site boundaries to the east and south. The west boundary is delineated by a concrete block wall and bushes. The northern boundary is delineated by a mature tall tree-line and bushes.

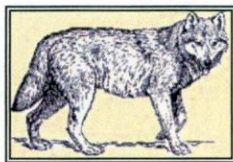


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Plate 2 Showing overgrown east x west part of development site, facing east.

A stream runs along the western extent of the site and along the eastern side of Tay Lane and is partly culverted. This stream is a tributary of the Griffeen River and was the source of water for the holy well (DU021-030004) known as St. Bridget's Well. St. Bridget's Well is not visible at ground level but is believed to have been located in the northwest end of the site near Tay Lane (NGR 701902E, 726825N). This part of the proposed development site is very overgrown with bushes and grasses (see Plate 3). According to the file data for the archaeological site of the holy well (DU021-030004), the water from the well was fed via a pipe to a stone mortar basin at the roadside on Tay Lane, below road level. This basin was accessed via some stone steps, and a niche beside the basin featured a statue, presumably of St. Bridget. The file data also states that the holy well (DU021-030004) had been subsequently filled-in by the local authority, leaving no visible surface evidence of the site. The proposed development will see the establishment of a landscaped public open space at the location of St. Bridget's Well (DU021-030004), (see Figure 1 for details). This landscaped space has been designed sensitively, with the intention of enhancing the visual setting of the archaeological site, and positively contributing to accessibility to the archaeology.

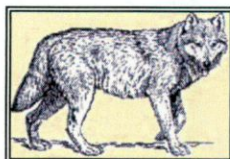


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Plate 3 Showing overgrown location of St. Bridget's Well (DU021-030004), facing north.

The north x south area of the proposed development site is situated at the east end of the project area and extends northwards to the N7 road. The existing Eaton housing development is situated to the east and a high stone wall marks the boundary. This part of the development is heavily forested. No features of note were identified in this part of the development during the site inspection.



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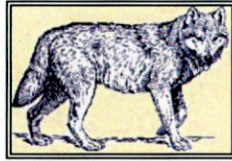


Plate 4 Showing mature forested north x south part of the proposed development site.

5.0 Archaeological Impact Assessment Results

The proposed construction of a housing development at a site off Tay Lane, Rathcoole townland, County Dublin will take place at a brownfield area that includes the location of a holy well (DU021-030004) identified as St. Bridget's Well. The development site was formerly part of the grounds of Rathcoole Charter School. Historic Ordnance Survey maps of the area identify the location of St. Bridget's Well within the proposed development site.

The layout of the proposed development has finalised with the intention of avoiding any impacts on St. Bridget's Well (DU021-030004) through minimising the ground disturbance works near the location of the well. The proposed landscaped open space at the location of the well will involve minimal ground impacts, and will see the importing and depositing of new soil for sensitive planting. This landscaping work will positively impact on the setting of the archaeology. In the absence of information regarding the extent of the archaeology below the



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extant ground surface, the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological heritage of the receiving environment is uncertain.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The proposed housing development at 1a site off Tay Lane, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin will see ground disturbance activities within the zone of notification for a known archaeological site, and in the environs of several other legally protected archaeological sites that are contained in the Record of Monuments and Places.

Consequently, the proposed housing development poses a risk of directly impacting on the archaeological heritage of the area.

Recommendations

- Preservation in situ is the preferred outcome regarding known archaeology. Therefore, avoidance of any direct impacts on archaeology is recommended.
- Pre-construction archaeological test trenches should be excavated within the proposed development area. These test trenches should examine the nature and extent of the known archaeology, and establish if any other archaeology is within the development site.

