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Archaeological Testing at
St. Finians Way, Newcastle South, Co. Dublin

Licence Number 22E0608
Planning Ref. SD22A 0045

Aug 2022

Client: Pavement Homes

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Plate 1: Looking north during excavation of test trenches

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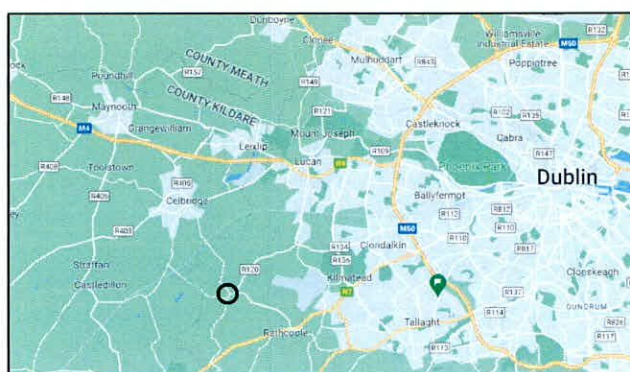
1 Introduction

This report assesses the impact of a proposed development on the archaeology of a site at St. Finians Way, Newcastle South, Co. Dublin. The report has been compiled by John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy it includes a desktop study, archaeological testing and a metal detection survey. The desktop section of the report was compiled using: The Records of Monuments and Places; buildings of Ireland, Excavations Bulletin; historic maps; aerial photographs; place names and historic books and journals.

The recorded and potential cultural heritage resource within the proposed development site was assessed in order to compile a complete cultural heritage context.

Archaeological testing was undertaken in Aug 2022. John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy undertook this report. Field walking was undertaken by John Purcell BA. John Purcell has been excavation licence eligible with the DAHC since 2002 and has worked consistently since then in the area of archaeology.

Figure 1: Location of development Beaverstown, Donabate, Co. Dublin



2 Receiving Environment

The site is located at the western end of the village of Newcastle in west County Dublin. It is located within the townland of Newcastle South. The proposed dwellings are within an existing garden at the rear of a modern dwelling. The development will

continue St. Finian's Way which form the eastern boundary of the site. No archaeological remains were visible during at ground level.

3 Methodology

This report has been prepared having regard to the following guidelines;

- Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government, 2018)
- Environmental Impact Assessment of Projects: Guidance on the preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (European Commission, 2017)
- Guidelines on the Information to be Contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports – Draft (EPA, 2017)
- National Monuments Acts, 1930-2014
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Infrastructure) Bill, 2006
- Heritage Act 1995
- Frameworks and Principles for the protection of Archaeological Heritage 1999
- Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments and the Local Government (Planning and Development) Act 2000

3.1 Study Methodology

This assessment consists of a paper survey identifying all recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed development and a site inspection. The methodology has been conducted based on the guidelines from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG).

The desktop survey undertaken consisted of a document and cartographic search utilising a number of sources including the following:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP); The RMP records known upstanding archaeological monuments, the original location of destroyed monuments and the location of possible sites identified through, documentary, cartographic, photographic research and field inspections.
- The RMP consists of a list, organised by county and subdivided by 6" map sheets showing the location of each site. The RMP data is compiled from the files of the Archaeological Survey.

- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage; The inventory of architectural heritage lists all post 1700 structures and buildings in the country. This includes structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social, scientific or technical importance.
- County Development Plans; The Development plan was consulted to ascertain if any structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and/or any Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs). The Record of Protected Structures lists all protected structures and buildings in Wicklow. This includes structures of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, social, scientific or technical importance.
- Cartographic Sources; The following maps were examined: Down Survey, 1st edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1836-1846) and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1908), Rocque Map and the Cassini Map.
- Literary Sources; Various published sources, including local and national journals, were consulted to establish a historical background for the proposed development site. Literary sources are a valuable means of completing the written record of an area and gaining insight into the history of the environs of the proposed development. Principal archaeological sources include: The Excavations Bulletin; Local Journals; Published archaeological and architectural inventories; Peter Harbison, (1975). Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland; and O'Donovan's Ordnance Survey Letters.
- Previous archaeological assessments and excavations for the area were reviewed.

A comprehensive list of all literary sources consulted is given in the bibliography.

3.2 Site Inspections

An archaeological field inspection survey seeks to verify the location and extent of known archaeological features and to record the location and extent of any newly identified features. A field inspection should also identify any areas of archaeological potential with no above ground visibility. A geophysical survey was undertaken to identify sub surface remains within the development. Further to this archaeological testing was undertaken to verify these results.

3.3 Assessment Criteria

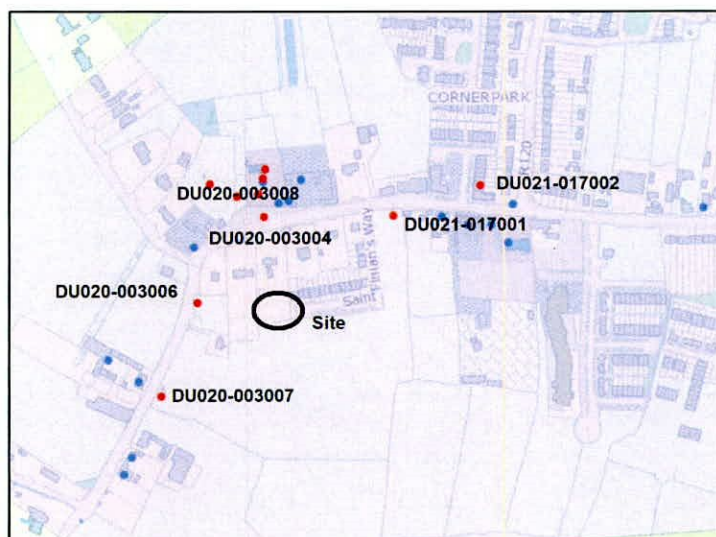
The criteria used to assess the significance of the impact of a development on an archaeological landscape, site, feature, monument or complex are defined as follows:

- **Profound** Applies where mitigation would be unlikely to remove adverse effects. Reserved for adverse, negative effects only. These effects arise where an archaeological site is completely and irreversibly destroyed by a proposed development.
- **Significant** An impact which, by its magnitude, duration or intensity, alters an important aspect of the environment. 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** A moderate direct impact arises where 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 modern-day development without damage and that all procedures used to facilitate this are reversible.
- **Slight** An impact which causes changes in the character of the environment which are not significant or profound and do not directly impact or affect an archaeological feature or monument.
- **Imperceptible** An impact capable of measurement but without noticeable consequences.

3.4 Difficulties Encountered

No difficulties that could hinder the archaeological assessment were encountered,

Figure 2: Site boundary with archaeological monuments marked



4 General Archaeological and Historical Summary

4.1 Brief Archaeological Background

Prehistory

The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) lists a number of prehistoric sites in Co. Dublin. The earliest recorded archaeology in the area dates from the Neolithic (4,200-2,500BC). At this stage communities became more stable with the introduction of agricultural practices. The more permanent settlement allowed communities to construct large ceremonial sites.

The bronze age marks the introduction of metal working to Ireland. This allowed for more efficient farming and hunting techniques. It also allowed for small industry and trade to take place between communities. Barrows are a common form of monument across in this area from this period. These are associated with the Bronze/Iron Age burial tradition (c. 2400 BC - AD 400) and are defined by an artificial mound of earth or earth and stone, normally constructed to contain or conceal burials. These sites vary in shape and scale and can be variously described as bowl-barrow, ditch barrow, embanked barrow, mound barrow, pond barrow, ring-barrow and stepped barrow. The incidence and frequency of these sites in the area attests to the extent of prehistoric settlement in this area from earliest times. Prehistoric settlements sites are generally not visible at ground level and can only be uncovered as a result of ground works.

Iron Age to Early Medieval Period

In late Bronze Age Ireland, the use of the metal reached a high point with the production of high-quality decorated weapons, ornament and instruments, often discovered from hoards or ritual deposits. The Iron Age however is known as a 'dark age' in Irish prehistory. Iron objects are found rarely, but there is no evidence for the warrior culture of the rest of Europe, although the distinctive La Tené style of art with animal motifs and spirals was adopted. Political life in the Iron Age seems to have been defined by continually warring petty kingdoms vying for power. These kingdoms, run on an extended clan system, had their economy rooted in mixed farming and, in particular cattle. Settlement was typically centred on a focal hillfort. Another more domestic site common to the Bronze Age is the *fulachta fiadh*. These are located along the edges of streams or in damp areas. They consist of a mound of charcoal enriched soil with fragmented burnt rocks. They usually are accompanied by a wooden or stone lined trough. These were used seasonally possibly for cooking or may have been used for recreational purposes.

Settlement in the Early Medieval Period is defined by the ringfort. The country was a patchwork of competing kingdoms during this period numbering up to 150. Ringforts were a farmstead surrounded by one or more earthen banks. These are the commonest monument across Co. Meath and have been frequently recorded in the area. These are generally located in areas with commanding views over the countryside to provide security.

The introduction of Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century had a profound impact on Gaelic society, not in the least in terms of land ownership and the development of churches and the development of a large number of religious houses. The earliest churches were constructed of wood and mortar and wattle walls. By the ninth and tenth centuries these were being replaced by stone structures. These settlements became very important around the country and became small towns. Many of these sites were surrounded large earthen enclosures. An ecclesiastical site is located in Kilmartin within the study area (RMP DU 013 002).

Several other early Christian Monuments are located in the vicinity of the site these include Holy Wells and Bullaun stones.

Historic Period

Following the Norman Conquest of the country a series of Castles and boroughs were built across Co. Dublin, the area was intensively settled during this period. A series of medieval parish churches were also constructed across the area to service this growing population.

Post Medieval Ireland

Seventeenth century Ireland saw massive upheaval a result of the Confederate wars, the Cromwellian response and the Wars of the two kings. It is estimated that up to a third of the population was wiped out because of famine, disease and war. Soldiers were given land as payment resulting in further upheaval of the local population and the establishment of large estates. These came to dominate the landscape from this period onwards. Religious intolerance in other parts of Europe resulted in the expulsion of the Huguenot from France which were welcomed by the English Crown into Ireland.

4.2 Archaeological Monuments

The site is within the zone of potential for a number of monuments. These are listed below (details taken from archaeology.ie):

DU020-003006-

Class: Castle - tower house

Townland: NEWCASTLE SOUTH

Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes

Description: In level ground immediately E of bend in Athgoe Road between two other tower houses is the possible site of another marked in 1980s by the foundations of mortared walls (O'Keefe 1986, 55, Fig.4.1:3). Not visible at ground level.

DU020-003007-

Class: Castle - tower house

Townland: NEWCASTLE SOUTH

This is a square, urban tower house with a stair turret at the NW angle. It is two storeys high and is built of coursed regular limestone blocks with dressed quoins. It is entered through a pointed doorway in the W wall which contains a door rebate and bar-bolt holes. There is a vault over ground floor with traces of wicker-work centring. The interior is lit by slit opes on the W and S walls and a large rectangular opening in S wall. Wall presses are present in the S wall and NE corner of interior (dims. L 4.5m; Wth 1.03m; see Anon 1914, 275-6; Mc Dix 1898, 85).

DU020-003004-

Class: Castle - tower house

Townland: GLEBE (Newcastle By., Newcastle ED)

Situated in level ground SE of church yard (DU020-003008-). It is a square tower, which rises to two storeys and is built of coursed limestone blocks with dressed quoins. Formerly entered from the S, now blocked, the present entrance is on E side. There is a vault over the ground floor (int. dims. L 4.7m; Wth 4.55m). The interior has been partitioned in more recent times. The stairwell in the SW corner is entered through a plain pointed doorway and is lit by slit opes. There is a stepped embrasure on the S side before entering the stairs which is an original feature. First floor is totally overgrown. There are remains of chamfered jambs on the E side of the entrance. This is probably the remains of the castle held by the Canons of St. Patrick's in 1547 (Ball 1905, III, 138). According to O'Meara (1903, 63) there is mention made of this castle in a list of ecclesiastical buildings presented to Henry VIII on the dis-establishment of the monasteries. A building attached to the N end of the tower house contains a limestone tablet on which is the inscription T. M. S. Anno 1727. According to Austin Cooper writing around 1780, this building served as a stable attached to the parsonage (Mc Dix 1898, 40, 85; Price 1942, 47).

DU020-003008-

Class: Settlement deserted - medieval

Townland: NEWCASTLE SOUTH,CORNERPARK,GLEBE (Newcastle By., Lucan ED),NEWCASTLE DEMESNE,NEWCASTLE FARM

Newcastle was first mentioned as a royal manor in 1215 and had borough status by the late fifteenth century. The settlement was a linear one based on a single street,

running east-west. The marketplace was located in the roughly sub-triangular space in front of the church.

DU021-017001-

Class: Well

Townland: NEWCASTLE SOUTH

Situated in the NW corner of a long narrow holding opposite the medieval parish church at Newcastle Lyons. It is bounded on the E by a patch of spade cultivation. Traces of mortared wall protruding from beneath the sod were interpreted as a possible site of a tower house (O'Keefe 1986, 55, No. 5). Recent clearance has revealed that the mortared wall was actually a covering for a well.

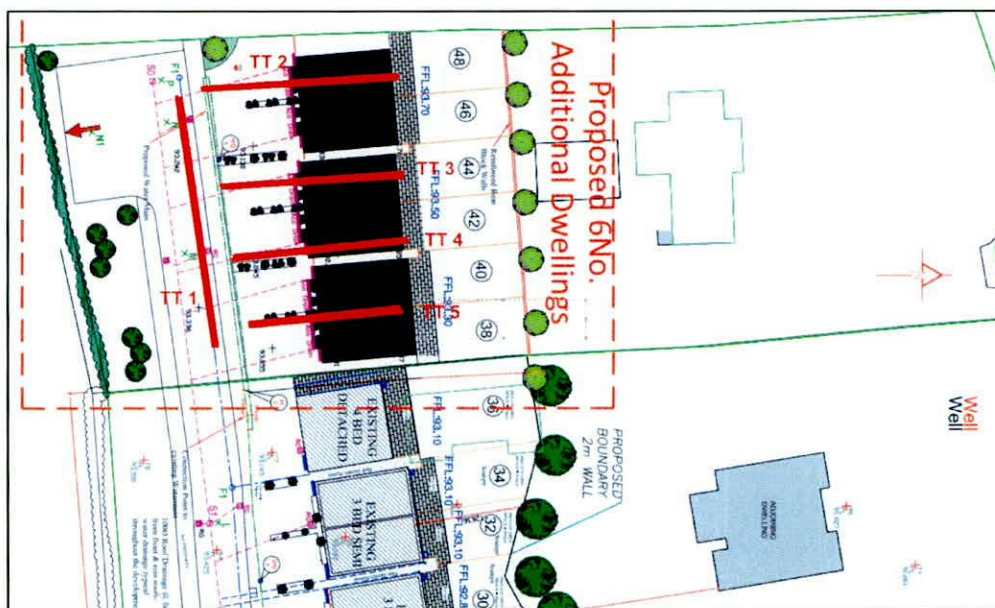
DU021-017002-

Class: Castle - tower house

Townland: NEWCASTLE NORTH

The site is located in a level field of tillage W of the road that leads N to Lucan and opposite the present RC church. According to O'Keefe (1986, 55, No. 6) a tower house was indicated in manuscript form on an old copy of the Ordnance Survey 6 inch sheet of the area held by Mr Paddy Healy, Dublin. There are no visible remains at ground level.

Figure 3: Proposed layout with test trenches marked



4.4 Cartographic Evidence

The Down Survey, shows the settlement at Newcastle with seven castles (Figure 3). Associated structures and/or dwellings may extend into the study area but the detail of the map does not show if this is the case. The first edition OS and 25" maps shows the site as a large open field (Figure 4-5).

Figure 4: Down Survey for the site

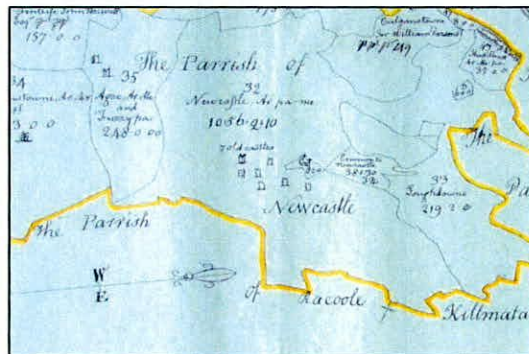


Figure 5: First Edition OS map for the site

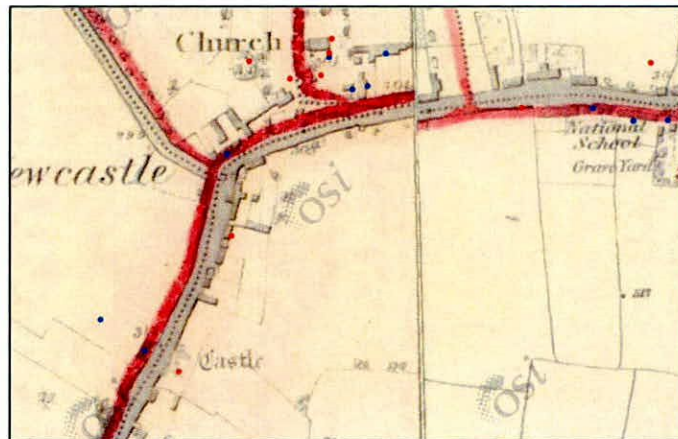


Figure 6: 25 inch map for the site

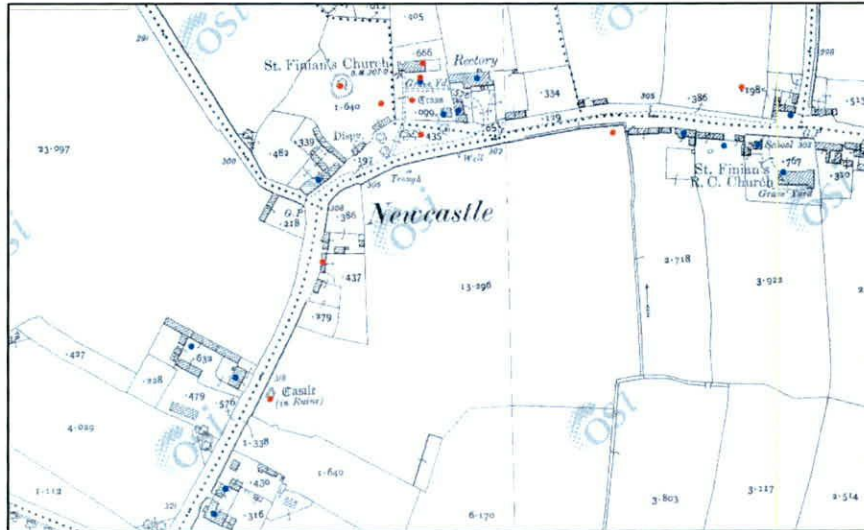


Figure 7: Aerial photograph for the site (taken from geoarchive.ie)



4.5 Topographical Files

An examination of the topographical files housed in the National Museum of Ireland revealed no stray finds for Newcastle South.

5 Archaeological Further Information Request

Figure 8: Request for Further Information

2. (1) The applicant is requested to engage the services of a suitably qualified archaeologist to carry out an archaeological assessment of the development site. No sub-surface developmental work, including geotechnical test pits, should be undertaken until the archaeological assessment has been completed and commented on by this office.
- (2) The archaeologist shall carry out any relevant documentary research and inspect the development site. As part of the assessment a programme of test excavation shall be carried out at locations chosen by the archaeologist (licensed under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004), having consulted the site drawings and the National Monuments Service.
- (3) Having completed the work, the archaeologist shall submit a written report stating their recommendations to the Planning Authority and to the National Monuments Service. Where archaeological material/features are shown to be present, preservation in situ, preservation by record (excavation) or monitoring may be required.

6 Archaeological Testing

6.1 Archaeological Test Trenches

Five test trenches were excavated across the site. These were excavated to assess the entire site for sub surface remains.



Plate 1: Looking northwest during excavation of test trenches

Test Trenches 1

This trench was excavated using a mechanical excavator using a grading bucket. The trench was 30m in length and was orientated east to west (Plates 1-2). The topsoil was between 0.25 and 0.35m in depth. Modern material including 20th century pottery was recorded in the topsoil. No remains were identified in the trench. The subsoil was exposed across the site.



Plate 2: Test trench 1, looking west

Trenches 2-3

These trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator using a grading bucket. The trenches were 25m in length and were orientated north to south, they were excavated at the centre of the site. Disturbance related to the modern structure to the north was recorded in the northwest of the trenches. The topsoil was on average 0.35m in depth. No archaeological remains were identified in the trench. The subsoil was exposed across the site.



Plate 3: Test trench3, looking north

Trenches 4-5

These trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator using a grading bucket at the east of the site. The trenches were 20-25m in length and were orientated north to south. The topsoil was on average 0.35m in depth. Modern spoil was encountered below the topsoil in these trenches. This is associated with dumping from the modern house at the north. No archaeological remains were identified in the trench. The subsoil was exposed across the site.



Plate 4: Test trench 4, during excavation, looking north

7 Metal Detection Survey

A metal detection survey was undertaken at the same time as the archaeological testing. The entire site was assessed using a 'Klondike Metal Detector Professional'. The upturned soil from the testing was also assessed using the detector. There were four positive hits detected, two of these were identified as modern garbage (aluminium can and modern nail). The two remaining positive hits were in the vicinity of the areas of modern dumping within the site and are likely to be modern.

8 Impact on the Cultural Heritage Landscape

8.1 Recorded Monuments

The site is located in the townland of Newcastle South at the west of the village of Newcastle. Although there is a high concentration of medieval archaeological monuments in the area they are at a remove from the proposed development. The study area does not include any recorded archaeological remains. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were identified during the archaeological testing or the metal detection survey.

8.2 Archaeological Potential

Archaeological testing and a metal detection survey was undertaken across the site. This did not identify any archaeological remains at the site. The trenches were excavated to maximise the area tested. No archaeological finds, features or artefacts were identified. The archaeological potential for the site is low and no further archaeological input is required.

9 Conclusions

The proposed development consists of the construction of housing development and associated works in the townland of Newcastle South. The site is within the zone of potential for the medieval settlement at Newcastle. Archaeological testing and a metal detection survey occurred in August 2022, no archaeological remains were identified during the works. No further archaeological input is required.

All recommendations are subject to agreement with the Planning Authority and the Department of Housing, Heritage and Local Government.

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