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Archaeological Impact Assessment

At Cherry Orchard, Co. Dublin Licence Number 23E0794

January 2024

Client DCC

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1 Introduction

A pre planning archaeological impact assessment was undertaken by John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy to assess the cultural heritage impact of a development at Cherryorchard, Co. Dublin. The report has been compiled to assess the impact of the site on the archaeological and historical landscape. Archaeological testing was undertaken in January 2024.

The report is based on documentary and cartographic research from all available sources including but not limited to the Record of Monuments and Places, the Sites and Monument Records, the topographical files of the National Museum, the Development Plan, local sources, and other literary and documentary references. Previous excavation in the immediate vicinity was also reviewed.

This report was compiled by John Purcell of John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy.



Figure 1: Location of development

2 Receiving Environment

The proposed development is located in Cherry Orchard in the west of Co. Dublin. The site is within the townland of Blackditch. It is currently in use as a green area surrounded on all sides by modern development. These consists mainly of housing and St. Ultans School is located to the south.

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 (2022)
- National Monuments Acts, 1930-2014
- Historic and Archaeological Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023
- 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

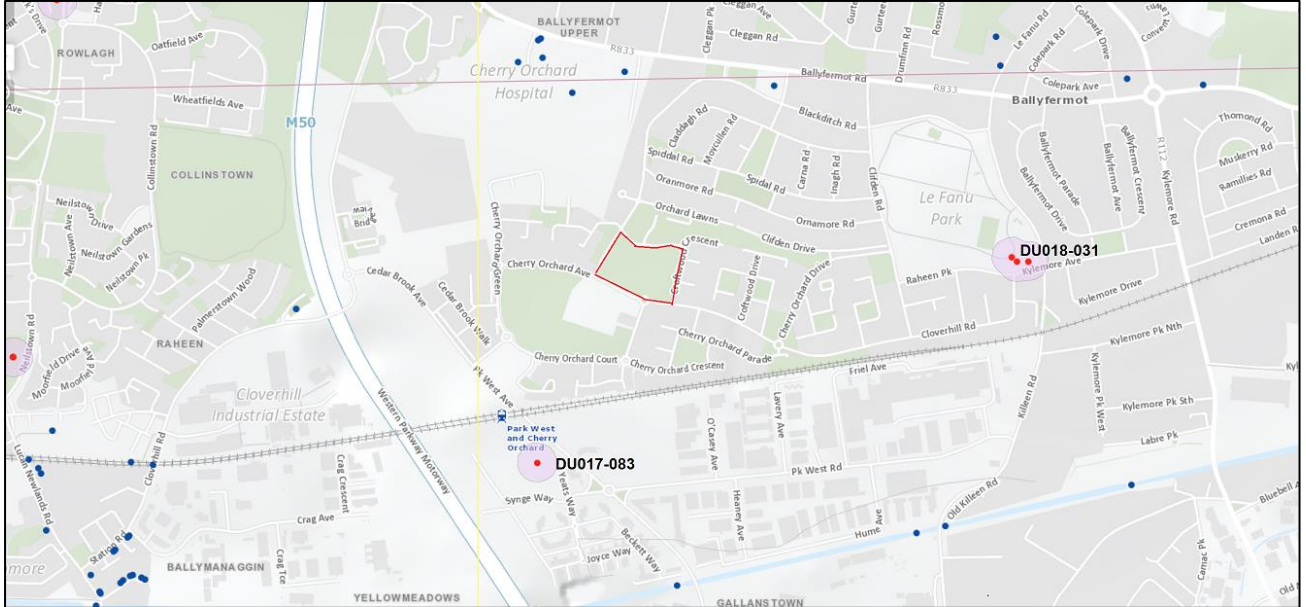
This assessment consists of a paper survey identifying all recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed development, a site inspection and the results of archaeological test trenching.

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 county development plans were consulted to ascertain if any structures listed in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and/or any Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) were to be impact by the proposed development.
- Cherrywood Local Area Plan
- Cartographic Sources; the following maps were examined: Down Survey (1656-1658), 1st edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1836-1846) and 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Maps (1908).
- 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: Local Journals; Published archaeological and architectural inventories; Peter Harbison's Guide to the National Monuments of Ireland; and O'Donovan's Ordnance Survey Letters.
- Previous archaeological assessments and excavations for the area were also reviewed.
- Topographical files are located at the National Museum of Ireland and detail stray finds across the country.

Figure 2: Site boundary with archaeological monuments marked



4 General Archaeological and Historical Summary

4.1 Brief Archaeological Background

Cherry Orchard, a suburb in southwest Dublin, has a historical and archaeological landscape reflective of the broader region's rich past. While detailed archaeological records specific to Cherry Orchard are limited, its proximity to areas with significant findings suggests similar historical developments.

The Mesolithic period (8000-4000 BC) marks the earliest human activity in Ireland, with hunter-gatherer communities settling in coastal and riverine areas. Although specific Mesolithic sites have been documented along the River Liffey Valley. The region's natural resources made it attractive for early settlers.

The Neolithic period (4000-2500 BC) introduced agriculture, leading to more permanent settlements. This era is characterized by the construction of megalithic tombs and other stone structures. While no major Neolithic sites have been reported directly in Cherry Orchard, nearby areas have revealed significant finds.

During the Bronze Age (2500-500 BC), the construction of barrows became common. These burial sites, marked by mounds of earth or stone, indicate complex social and ritual practices.

The Iron Age (500 BC - AD 400) is less documented in specific terms and is generally known as a 'dark age' in Irish prehistory due to scarce archaeological evidence. Nonetheless, the period's artifacts and cultural influences, such as the La Tène art style, suggest that the area was not isolated from broader cultural trends.

In the Early Medieval period (AD 400-1100), the establishment of monastic sites and ringforts marked significant settlement patterns. While Cherry Orchard itself might not have prominent early medieval monuments, nearby areas such as Clondalkin, with its notable round tower and monastic heritage, indicate the region's importance during this period. Burials from this period have been recorded in the locality, specifically the Gallanstown to the southwest.

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1169 introduced new architectural and settlement patterns, with the construction of castles and fortified homesteads. These are visible across west Dublin.

The Post-Medieval period, particularly the 17th century, brought considerable change to the area due to the Confederate Wars, Cromwellian conquest, and the Wars of the Two Kings. This era saw significant population shifts and land redistribution. The establishment of large estates and changes in land ownership during this period shaped the region's social and economic landscape.

Today, Cherry Orchard's historical and archaeological significance is informed by its context within the broader Dublin region. The area's development from prehistoric times to the modern era reflects a microcosm of Ireland's rich and varied history. While specific archaeological sites in Cherry Orchard remain to be extensively documented, its proximity to known historical sites suggests a potentially rich yet under-explored heritage.

4.2 Archaeological Monuments

A number of archaeological monuments are located in the wider environs of the proposed development, these are at a distance from the proposed development. The details of these sites have been taken from archaeology.ie and are outlined below.

DU017-083----

Class: Burial ground

Townland: GALLANSTOWN (Castleknock By.)

Pre-development testing in 1999 revealed a very low mound which covered three east-west oriented skeletons (Purcell 2000, 83). The remains were those of two adult males and one adolescent aged 12-16 years. The site is thought to be an Early Christian burial mound.

DU018-031003-

Class: Church

Townland: BALLYFERMOT LOWER

The remains of the church and graveyard have been completely cleared and landscaped to create Le Fanu Park. This was the medieval parish church of Ballyfermot, described by D'Alton (1838, 639) as being in perfect condition. It was dedicated to St. Laurence and was associated with the Knights Hospitallers of Kilmainham. In 1539 it transferred to John Allen. In 1608 the King granted to Sir Robert Newcomen the ruinous chapel called St. Laurences at Ballyfermot. The Regal Visitations of 1615 reported the church and chancel in ruins (op cit 640). In 1978 when the site was inspected (OPW) there were still foundations of the church and some gravestones of 19th century date.

DU018-031004-

Class: Graveyard

Townland: BALLYFERMOT UPPER

The remains of the graveyard have been completely cleared and landscaped to create Le Fanu Park. This was attached to the medieval parish church of

Ballyfermot, described by D'Alton (1838, 639) as being in perfect condition. In 1978 when the site was inspected (OPW) there were still foundations of the church and some gravestones of 19th century date. Archaeological test excavation was carried during October 1998 at the corner of Le Fanu Road and Raheen Road, Ballyfermot, Co. Dublin. Test excavations carried out in 1998 uncovered the graveyard wall and articulated and disarticulated human remains within the boundary of the graveyard (O'Donovan 2000, 35)

DU018-031001-

Class: Castle - tower house

Townland: BALLYFERMOT UPPER

The site of the former castle at Ballyfermot is on the summit of a natural ridge at Le Fanu Park directly adjacent at the west to the church (DU018-031003) and graveyard (DU018031004). A drawing by Beranger in 1766 shows a tower with diagonally opposed turrets, lit by mullioned windows (Harbison 1998, 54-5).

Ballyfermot manor was held by the Fitzwilliam family in the early 14th century later passing to Robert de Clahull in 1327. By the end of the 14th century the manor was held by Reginald Barnewall. In 1395 Reginald Butler was living there and in 1451 John Barnewall was in residence. It was occupied until the late 16th century when it went into decline. In the 18th century it was used as a school (Mc Dix 1898, Dec 1st, 168, 177). It stood until the early 19th century as a sketch by Wakeman shows an impressive building with a gatehouse and battlemented parapet (Ball 1906, 1001-105). There are no visible remains.

4.3 Previous Archaeological Works

The archaeological excavation database (excavations.ie) was searched for archaeological excavations and reports in the environs of the proposed development. This lists one test excavation for Blackditch from 2009, no archaeological remains were uncovered during these works.

4.4 Cartographic Evidence

The first edition OS map and the 25" map shows the site as an open area consisting of a number of fields (Figure 3-4). The aerial photographs for the site show it

currently in use as a green space (Figure 5). No features indicative of archaeological remains were identified.

Figure 3: First edition OS map for the site



Figure 4: Second edition OS map for the site

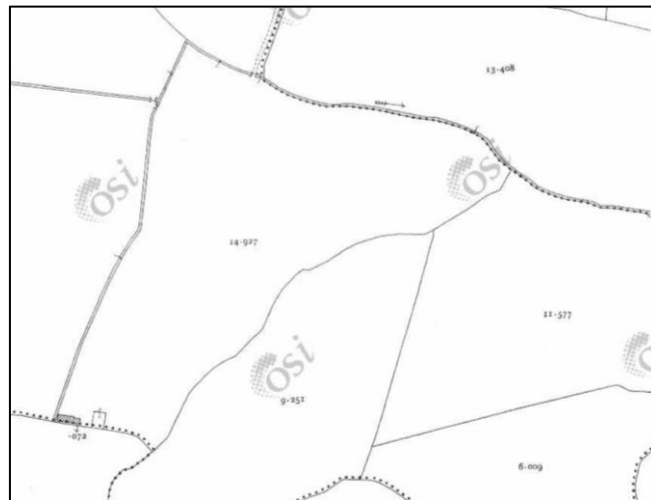


Figure 5: Aerial Photograph for the site (taken from geohive.ie)



4.5 Protected Structures

The site does not include any structures listed on the Record of Protected Structures or the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. The closest protected structures is located over 1km to the west. The closest structure listed in the NIAH and RPS for the area is St. Mathews Church 600m to the north.

4.6 Topographical Files

The topographical files are a record of stray finds and artefacts reported to the National Museum of Ireland. A database is available for research and the artefacts are listed by townland. An examination of the topographical files did not reveal any stray finds for the townlands of Gallstown or Blackditch.

Figure 6: Archaeological Test Trenches



5 Archaeological Testing

All works were undertaken in accordance with Policy Objective BHA26.4. This objective states that development proposals within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994—including sites exceeding 0.5 hectares in size with potential underwater impacts, and sites listed in the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record—are subject to consultation with the City Archaeologist and require archaeological assessment prior to the submission of a planning application.

The pre-Part 8 process facilitates such consultation by allowing relevant technical departments, including the City Archaeologist, to review submitted documentation and plans, and to identify any issues in advance of the formal initiation of the Part 8 procedure. In this context, it is considered that both the pre-Part 8 process and the archaeological assessment submitted during this stage adequately address the requirements set out in BHA26.4 (Section 11.5.5).

As part of the assessment to fulfil these requirements licenced archaeological testing was undertaken in January 2024. This was undertaken on an overcast day. The test trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a grading bucket.

Test trench 1

This was located at the west of the site. The trench was orientated north to south. The trench was excavated to a length of 50m and was 1.5m in width. The topsoil was shallow measuring between 0.2m in depth. Below this the natural boulder clay was recorded areas of modern disturbance was noted across the site. Modern drainage channels were also noted across the site.



Plate 1: Test trench 1, looking North

Test trench 2-3

These were located at the centre and east of the site. The trenches were orientated north to south. The trench was excavated to a length of 30-40m in length and were 1.5m in width. The topsoil was shallow measuring between 0.2-m in depth. Below this the natural was recorded, this consisted of an orange boulder clay. A series of drainage channels were excavated into this boulder clay.



Plate 2: Test trench 2, looking north



Plate 3: Test trench 3, looking south with drainage channel visible

Test trench 4

This was located at the south of the site. The trench was orientated east to west. The trench was excavated to a length of 80m and was 1.5m in width. The topsoil was shallow measuring on average 0.2m in depth. Below this the natural was recorded, this consisted of an orange boulder clay. A series of drainage channels were excavated into this boulder clay. At the east an area of modern disturbance was recorded.



Plate 4: Test trench 4, looking west

6 Cultural Heritage Assessment

The proposed development does not include any recorded archaeological monuments. An examination of the cartographic and aerial photographic evidence did not reveal any potential remains. Testing did not record any archaeological finds, features or deposits. The potential for further remains to be recorded at the site is low.

6 Mitigation And Conclusion

A review of the archaeological evidence for the area has shown that the site does not include any archaeological remains. Archaeological was undertaken across the site. These trenches did not uncover any archaeological finds, features or deposits. The potential for further remains at the site is low. However in accordance with DCC requirements archaeological monitoring of all topsoil stripping is required. Should any archaeological remains be uncovered the NMS and DCC should be contacted immediately and a strategy for the resolution of these remains should be formulated.

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

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