Archaeological impact assessment

Lands known as the 'Spine Site'
Darndale
Dublin 17

By

James Kyle **BSc HDip MIAI**
Archaeology and Built Heritage
Spade Enterprise Centre
St. Paul's Smithfield
North King Street
Dublin 7

On behalf of

Respond Housing Association in Partnership with Dublin City Council
High Park
Grace Park Road
Drumcondra
Dublin 9

21st July 2026

Archaeology and Built Heritage

Contents

1. Introduction 1
2. Archaeological impact assessment 3
3. Proposed development 7
4. Historical and archaeological background 11
5. Site inspection/Field survey 21
6. Impact assessment, suggested mitigation and conclusion 22
7. Bibliography 24

Figures

Figure 1 Location of proposed development in red(ASI)

Figure 2 Site outline in red on ASI aerial map (ASI)

Figure 3 Site location map (Paul Koegh Architects)

Figure 4 Proposed development ground floor plan (Paul Keogh Architects)

Figure 5 Approximate location of subject site in red on John Rocque's Map of the County of Dublin… (1760) north to the right

Figure 6 Approximate site location in red, John Taylor's Map of 1816

Figure 7 Approximate site location in red, John Taylor's Map of 1816

Figure 8 25-inch Ordnance Survey map 1909, outline of proposed development in red (ASI)

Figure 9 Outline of subject site on aerial mapping 2001-2005 (ASI)

Tables

Table 1 RMP sites within 1km of proposed development (www.archaeology.ie)

Table 2 List of excavations within 1km of proposed development (www.excavations.ie)

Plates

Plate 1 Western end of proposed site, looking towards Our Lady Immaculate church, facing west

Plate 2 Proposed development site, facing east

Plate 3 Proposed development site, facing west

Plate 4 Eastern end of proposed development with concrete retaining wall/curb, facing east

Plate 5 Northern perimeter of site, facing east

Plate 6 Proposed development lands with former building location, facing northeast

Plate 7 Recent bonfire site at proposed development lands facing northwest

Plate 8 Path across central area of site, facing south

1 Introduction

1.1 This archaeological impact assessment has been prepared by James Kyle of Archaeology & Built Heritage Ltd. in order to assess the potential impact to the archaeological resource at the c. 1.49ha site of a proposed residential development on lands known as the 'Spine Site', located at Darndale, Dublin 17.

Figure 1 Location of proposed development in red (ASI)

1.2 The proposed development site (Figure 2) is located in Darndale townland, where it is surrounded by housing which was predominantly constructed in the early-1970s. The boundaries of the subject site comprise a series of roads (Primrose Grove, Buttercup Avenue, Marigold Avenue & Marigold Park) with concrete paths in between those roads delineating the remainder of the site's outline. As such the site area presents as an irregular, rectangular parcel of ground which is predominantly under grass, some of which is currently being grazed by horses. The proposed development site is located 700m south of the Belcamp River and 800m Northeast of the Santry River at its closest point to those water courses.

1.3 No archaeological investigations have been conducted at the subject site, furthermore the development of Darndale as a whole took place before modern planning regulations with due regard to archaeology. The nature of the surrounding sites recorded by the statutory Register

of Monument and Places (RMP) evidences a diffuse occupation of the surrounding landscape from the early medieval period beginning (c.400AD) onwards.

Figure 2 Site outline in red on ASI aerial map (ASI)

2 Archaeological impact assessment

2.1 Introduction

Archaeological heritage is a finite non-renewable physical and material resource, where archaeology is defined as the study of past human societies through their material remains and artefactual assemblages. The study of archaeological remains increases our understanding of the structure and culture of past societies that are not recorded by any other means. Each monument or site possesses a unique and, as such, invaluable record of the individual site, as well as providing evidence for its context in a wider cultural framework. Collectively, archaeological monuments contribute to charting cultural evolution and societal change throughout human history. Archaeological heritage includes all remains and objects and any other traces of humankind from the past, the preservation and study of which helps to retrace the history of humankind and our relationship with the natural environment. The archaeological heritage includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, moveable objects and monuments of all kinds as well as their context, whether situated on land or under water that generally pre-date AD1700 (based on the Valetta Convention 1992).

Archaeological Impact Assessment is the process which leads to a systematic documentation of the cultural and archaeological heritage receptors that may be affected directly or indirectly by any given project or development; this process aims to assess the likely impacts on the receptors, the significance of the effects of those impacts; and the necessary measures to mitigate any potentially significant adverse effects on those receptors. The purpose of archaeological impact assessment is therefore to understand the consequences of change to the archaeological resource so that informed decisions can be made about their sustainable management.

2.2 Study Methodology

The methodology has been undertaken in line with best practice and therefore it includes a desk-based assessment of the known archaeological and settlement history of the immediate site area (1km), assessment of relevant previous planning applications, a walk-over site inspection and extensive research of the relevant sources pertaining to the proposed development site and its environs.

2.2.1 Desk-based assessment

The desk-based assessment made use of the following sources:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland
- Documentary sources (as listed in the bibliography)
- Cartographic sources
- OSI Historic Mapping Archive and other historical mapping

- Aerial photographs
- Excavations Bulletin and Excavations Database (1970-2026)
- Fingal Development Plan 2023-2029
- Previous planning applications pertaining to the subject site

2.2.2 Site inspection/field inspection

A walk-over inspection of the site was conducted on 10th July 2026. The purpose of the site inspection was to identify potential archaeological sites and features which might be subject to direct or indirect impacts as a result of the proposed development.

2.2.3 Guidelines, Legislation and Standards

For the purposes of this report the following guidelines, legislation and standards were consulted:

- The European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised), otherwise known as 'The Valletta Convention'. European Treaty Series no. 143.
- National Monuments Act, 1930 (as amended in 1954, 1987, 1994, 2004 and 2012 - S.I. 249 of 2012)
- The Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1999
- Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)
- The Heritage Act, 1995
- Environmental Protection Agency, 2015, Revised Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements, Draft September 2015
- Environmental Protection Agency, 2015, Advice Notes for preparing Environmental Impact Statements. Draft September 2015
- The Heritage Council, 2013, Historic Landscape Characterisation in Ireland: Best Practice Guidance
- Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2011, Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities
- National Roads Authority, 2010, Project Management Guidelines
- The Heritage Council, 2010, Proposals for Ireland's Landscapes
- National Roads Authority, 2006, Guidelines for the Assessment of Archaeological Heritage Impacts of National Road Schemes
- National Roads Authority, 2006, Guidelines for the Assessment of Architectural Heritage Impacts of National Road Schemes
- Environmental Protection Agency, 2003, Advice Notes on Current Practice (in preparation of Environmental Impact Statements)
- Environmental Protection Agency, 2002, Guidelines on the information to be contained in Environmental Impact Statements

- Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and Islands, 1999, Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage
- Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and Islands, 1999, Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, 2015, National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025.

2.2.4 Assessment criteria

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

Table 11-1 Describing the significance of effects (based on EPA, 2017)

Impact	Definition
Imperceptible	An effect capable of measurement but without significant consequences
Not Significant	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the Cultural Heritage environment but without significant consequences
Slight	An effect which causes noticeable changes in the character of the Cultural Heritage environment without affecting its importance.
Moderate	An effect that alters the character of the Cultural Heritage environment in a manner that is consistent with existing and emerging baseline trends.
Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity alters an important aspect of the Cultural Heritage environment
Very Significant	An effect which, by its character, magnitude, duration or intensity significantly alters most of the important aspects of the Cultural Heritage environment.
Profound	An effect which obliterates important characteristics.

Factors that are considered in relation to assessing the potential impact of a proposed development on every site of archaeological heritage are its existing status/level of protection; its condition/preservation; its historic significance or attributed documentation; its group value; its rarity; its visibility in the landscape; its vulnerability and its amenity value. In accordance with the guidelines set out by the EPA, each site, monument or complex is assessed on the basis of its context, character, significance and sensitivity/vulnerability. Any direct impact on a

recorded archaeological monument or site is regarded at the very least as being a significant negative impact.

3 Proposed development details

3.1 Applicant and location

Dublin City Council, Housing and Community Services in partnership with Respond Housing Association (an Approved Housing Body) intend to apply under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and the Planning and Part 8 of the Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) for permission to carry out the construction of the proposed development, as set out below on the c. 1.49ha lands known as the 'Spine Site' at Darndale, Dublin 17. The site is generally bound by Primrose Grove & Snowdrop Walk to the North, Buttercup Avenue to the East, Buttercup Avenue, Marigold Avenue & Marigold Park to the South and Our Lady Immaculate Church to the West.

3.2 Proposed development

The proposed development will comprise of the following:

- Construction of a 2-3 storey residential development comprising 84 no. new units arranged across 4 no. blocks on the site (1 apartment block and 3 no. terraced housing blocks). The proposed units include 45 no. 1 bed apartment units and 5 no. 2 bed apartment units in a 3 storey block and 34no. 2 storey houses (14no. 2 bed, 19, no. 3 bed, 1no. 4 bed). A community facility (c. 86 sq.m) is provided at ground floor level of apartment Block A.
- All apartment units and houses are provided with private open space in the form of balconies/ terraces and gardens.
- The development includes the provision of public realm upgrade works to footpaths and roads, including the provision of new through roads connecting Marigold Crescent, Marigold Park and Buttercup terrace to the south of the site to Primrose Grove, and Snowdrop Walk to the north of the site.
- The proposal includes the provision of 79 no. onstreet car parking spaces and 102 no. cycle parking spaces throughout.
- c.337 sq.m of communal amenity open space is provided in the form of a landscaped courtyard area within the proposed apartment block.
- The proposed development will include the provision of all associated public lighting, provision of plant and PV panels and blue/ green roofs for the apartment blocks, hard and soft landscaping and boundary treatments, attenuation proposals, all associated infrastructural and site development works above and below ground and associated connections to services (foul and surface water drainage and water supply) on a site of c. 1.49ha.

The proposal has undergone Appropriate Assessment Screening in accordance with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) and screening for Environmental Impact Assessment under the EIA Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU.

In accordance with Article 81 of the Planning & Development Regulations 2001, as amended, the Planning Authority has made a determination and concluded that:

(a) The proposed development, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, is not likely to have a significant effect on any European site(s) and therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment is not required.

(b) There is no real likelihood of significant effects on the environment arising from the proposed development and that the proposed development is not of a class set out under Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended, and therefore does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

Any person may, within 4 weeks from the date of publication of this notice, apply to An Coimisiún Pleanála for a screening determination as to whether the development would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Plans and Particulars of the proposed development may be inspected or purchased at a fee not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy for a period of 4 weeks from **24.07.2026**, during public opening hours at the offices of Dublin City Council, Public Counter, Planning and Property Development Department, Block 4, Ground Floor, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8, Monday - Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm. The plans and particulars are also available for inspection online: https://engage.dublincity.ie/en-IE/ on the City Council's website www.dublincity.ie

A submission or observation in relation to the proposed development, dealing with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in which the development would be situated, may be made, in writing, to the Executive Manager, Planning and Property Development Department, Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8, before 4.30pm on **07.09.2026**.

Submissions or observations may also be made online https://engage.dublincity.ie/en-IE/ on the City Council's website www.dublincity.ie before 23.59hrs on **07.09.2026**.

Figure 3 Site location map (Paul Koegh Architects)

Figure 4 Proposed development ground floor plan (Paul Keogh Architects)

3 Archaeological, cartographic and historical background

3.1 The proposed site is located in Darndale townland, *Darndál* in Gaelic, which translates as Daffodil. Darndale is located in the Civil Parish of Coolock, Barony of Coolock, County Dublin approximately 7.5km northeast of the GPO and 4km due west of the coastline at Baldoyle. Modern historians have attributed the name of the townland to the 18th/19th century house of the same name DU015-065001), however that itself overlooks the Civil survey (1654-6) which describes an old thatched house at Darndale (Simington 1945, 194), thus at the very least it would appear that the latter took its name from the townland. Logainm.ie lists various versions of Darndale[1] name extending as far back as '*De Derndale'* in the 12th century.

3.2 Prehistoric Period

3.2.1 Palaeolithic Period c.3,300,000-9,000 BC

The Palaeolithic (*Old Stone Age*) period is represented by perhaps the poorest quantum of material remains pertaining to any period of human history on the island of Ireland. That dearth serves to undermine the potential importance of some of the material that potentially pertains to the period such as the recent discoveries by Dowd and Carden 2016. Therefore, the possibility of archaeological remains relating to this period being present on the subject site, however unlikely, cannot be ruled out.

3.2.2 Mesolithic Period c. 9000-4000 BC

The Mesolithic (*Middle Stone Age*) period currently represents the earliest and most widespread definitively established period of human occupation across the island of Ireland. A moderate number of ephemeral sites illustrating hunting and gathering subsistence strategies have been identified within the catchment of freshwater sources across the island. The northern part of County Dublin has proved particularly informative in relation to this period, thanks in no small part to the identification of flint artefacts and stone tools in close proximity to their parent raw materials along a narrow coastal strip; with the estuary at Malahide (6km to the north) proving to be relatively abundant in materials dating to this period (Nolan 1981). Furthermore, the shell midden (DU015-024) at Sutton, 5.2km southeast of the subject site and the late Mesolithic (6100-5760 cal BC) fish traps which were excavated by Melanie McQuaid at Spencer Dock, 6.5km south of the subject site (McQuade 2008, pg. 8–11) at the very least highlight the coastal occupation of Dublin Bay during this period. The contemporary densely wooded interior would have been accessible along the rivers and streams from that coastline and as such the lands around the Mayne, Belcamp and Santry rivers could have facilitated such access to the general area of the subject site.

[1] https://www.logainm.ie/en/17284

3.2.3 Neolithic period c. 4000-2800 BC

The subsequent radical shift in subsistence strategies from hunting and gathering to farming and fixed settlement during the Neolithic (*New Stone Age*) led to a significant transformation of both the physical and social landscapes across Ireland. The emerging recently excavated evidence is starting to contradict the previous analysis of the settlement pattern of Fingal during the Neolithic, which was suggested by Stout (1992) to be a predominantly coastal pattern, an analysis which was based on the evidence of tomb survival, limited excavation results and identification of dateable artefacts by field collectors. Certainly, the RMP backs up Stoute's hypothesis, however the presence of the various tombs/mounds along the coast and inland implies the existence of a stable enough local population with enough resources to facilitate the construction of such monuments.

Indeed Morris (1939) noted that there were *'several tumuli between Feltrim and the Tolka* [River]' in north Dublin, with *'the most probable is the small one on the edge of a stream at Coolock bridge*'. The latter monument is the mound DU015-074, located 1km south of the subject site in the grounds of the Cadbury's Chocolate Factory just above the southern banks of the Santry River. In reference to DU015-066, the earthwork which was located 150m southwest of the subject site, Morris stated that the '*tumulus seems to have been partially demolished but is still 10 or 12 feet high and 22 feet in diameter*'.

Whilst both of the latter features were labelled as a 'Moat' by the historic O.S. Maps editions they are both possibly too small to be a 'Motte' (see below) and whilst both features might have been earthen follies constructed as part of the landscaping of their associated houses (Moatfield and Darndale respectively) the possibility remains that they might represent Neolithic or later prehistoric burial mounds.

Examples of lithics dating to this period were among the artefacts recovered from the spoil of quarrying activity at Feltrim Hill, 4km to the north (Hartnett and Eogan 1964). Following the identification of a possible hillfort, archaeological excavation recovered 147 flint implements including knives, arrowheads, scrapers, polished stone axe heads and debitage suggesting that flint was being knapped on site. A sizeable prehistoric ceramic assemblage was recovered including at least 35 Neolithic A-ware vessels and several examples of later Neolithic Coarseware vessels.

3.2.4 Later prehistory 2800 BC - 400 AD

As noted above the various mounds/tumuli in the immediate and general area of the subject site could represent monuments dating to later prehistoric period, in the form of the tail end of the megalithic tomb construction tradition (wedge tombs). A reasonably close example was the early Bronze Age burial mound, the 'Knock of Howth', which was located south of Sutton village on the Strand Road (DU015-019). This survived until the development of that area in the 1930s and comprised a round-topped mound (H 1.7m, diam. c. 18m). It was built up of two layers, a

stone core and an upper layer of sandy soil. A human skull and large white boulder were found in the upper strata of the mound (Gogan, Irish Independent, 14 August 1933).

Equally there is a possibility that some of these mounds could represent part of the Ring Barrow burial phenomenon which spans both the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Indeed, the mound DU015-071 which was located 1km southwest of the subject site in Artaine townland, from which burials and an iron stirrup were retrieved might be further evidence of such. Another example is located in St. Doolagh's townland (DU015-011) 1.8km northeast of the proposed development site. Such burial monuments generally consist of a circular central area which may comprise a raised mound enclosed by a circular ditch and occasionally an external bank.

The site excavated by Ellen O'Carroll under licence ref. 03E1496, 2.5km northeast of the subject site represents one of the most common monument types in Irish archaeology, a burnt mound/Fulacht Fia. Such sites typically date to the later Bronze Age (1200-800 BC) however examples of the use of this type of pyrolithic technology have been dated from the Mesolithic through to the post-medieval period, comprising mounds or spreads of charcoal rich soil replete with heat shattered stone which are generally associated with a nearby source of freshwater, often in conjunction with some form of a wood/stone or clay lined trough.

3.3 Historic period

3.3.1 Early medieval Period c. 400-1100 AD

During the early medieval period the area of County Dublin, from the River Tolka to the River Delvin would have formed part of the kingdom of Brega, under the overall rule of the *Síl nÁedo Sláine*, a dynasty of the Southern Uí Néill (Byrne, 1973), between the seventh and the eleventh centuries. The tribe claimed to be the descendants of Áed Sláine, who was the son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill, with the area being further subdivided into smaller kingdoms, each ruled over by its own local clan or dynasty. Today the Naniken River, 2.5km to the south of the subject site, is the only representative of the name of the local clan the *Ciannachta*, which occupied the coastal area between Annagassan and Dublin at the start of the early medieval period between 600-800 AD, with the name Naniken or Abhann na gCian suggested by Byrnes (2000) to be a derivative of the name of that tribe. In Ireland during the Early Medieval period the basic political and jurisdictional territorial unit was known as a Túath (meaning and referring to a territory and/or a tribe) and these units are suggested by Stout (2017) to be a roughly equivalent territorial unit to the modern-day Barony/Civil Parish and in that respect the subject site is relatively central within the Civil Parish of Coolock, but not at its erstwhile control centre which presumably was in proximity to the settlement/early church site of Coolock itself.

The most readily identifiable secular site type dating to this period in the Irish landscape are Ringforts, enclosed spaces in the landscape, delineated by one or more ditches often with an internal bank. These enclosures have traditionally been seen to represent defensive fortifications, but many recently excavated examples have proven to be enclosed domestic farms, with circular houses, small internal fields/garden plots or with a specific livestock

function. Whilst placename evidence for this type of site, dating to the period, is scarce in the landscape surrounding the subject site, it is possible that the RMP DU015-066 might have represented the remains of one of these sites. Definitive evidence in proximity to the proposed development for this type of monument is the ringfort DU015-033, 900m north of the subject site in Belcamp townland and the multiple enclosures in that area certainly evidence a healthy local population in the immediate area during this period. Likewise, the number of significant ecclesiastical foundations in the immediate area of the subject site suggests the presence of a healthy number of parishioners in the locality. The sites of the holywell and church of St. Brendan of Clonfert (DU015-076003) at Coolock, which is suggested to have been founded in the 6th-century AD lies 1.1km due south along the Malahide Road and in the opposite direction 1.7km to the northeast along that route is St. Doulagh's church, a 9th-Century foundation, with its associated holywell and enclosure.

It is perhaps unsurprising given the status of these foundations that they would have attracted the attention of the Vikings, and whilst their earliest raid in an Irish context is recorded by the annals as occurring in AD 795 on *Rechru*, which has been argued by some to be nearby Lambay Island rather than Rathlin Island, Viking activity along the Irish Sea coastline north of Dublin is indisputable, with a raid on *Inis Phatraic* of the coast of Skerries recorded by the Annals of Ulster as occurring two years later in AD 797; "*the burning of Inis Phatraic by the heathens, and they took the cattle-tribute of the territories, and broke the shrine of Do-Chonna*" (St. Mochonna). The raiding and occasional overwintering turned to permanent settlement, and the territories in the Darndale area would fallen within the Norse-controlled hinterland of the Viking town of Dublin, the *Dyflinaskiri*. The good quality farmland and favourable climate in North Dublin meant that the area obviously became a key supplier of agricultural produce, raw materials, fish and shellfish to the ever-expanding Viking town of Dublin (Baker 2018) and the presence of various placenames in the surrounding landscape (Fingal, Baldoyle, Howth etc.) underlines the sustained presence of the Norse and the resulting Hiberno-Norse in the area. Thus, by the ninth century much of the general area would have settled by the Hiberno-Norse, with Kinsaley, 2.8km north of the subject site being the heart of extensive lands which were ruled by the MacTorcaills, literally 'the sons of Thorgill', a notable Hiberno-Norse clan.

3.3.2 **Medieval Period c. 1100-1600 AD**

The Medieval period brought with it further change to settlement patterns and use of the countryside; firstly, thanks to the reorganization of Irish monasticism that occurred subsequent to the changes to the diocesan system at the Synod of Rathbreasail in AD 1111 and secondly due to the arrival of the Anglo-Normans to these shores in 1169AD. The latter produced a massive shift in landscape use, settlement pattern, agricultural practices and the habitation of the Irish landscape. The use of the term 'Moat' for DU015-066 has led to the suggestion that the latter earthwork may have been a Motte. Mottes were large, man-made earthen mounds with steep sides and a flat top, originally crowned with a wooden tower and palisade, often in association with a bailey, with the arrangement functioning as a forerunner to later stone castles

in terms of providing a safe base for the invading troops to exercise dominion and control over the local populace. In relation to those invaders Adam De Hereford was granted the lands of Darndale (amongst others) by Strongbow with that grant being subsequently reaffirmed by Hugh De Lacy, Henry II's *de facto* viceroy of Ireland. Only a short time later *De Derndale* (Darndale) was part of a parcel of the lands of Coolock parish which were granted by De Hereford to the Priory of Llanthony Secunda along with other substantial tracts of land in Ireland and the lands of the subject site remained in the hands of that priory until the dissolution of the monasteries. At that point Darndale came into the possession of Sir Wiliam Darcy. During the reign of Elizabeth I '*Derrindall*' is noted as being amongst the lands subsequently leased to a Francis Agard in 1569 and following that '*Derndall*' was cited as being amongst the lands leased to an Anthony Deeringe in 1584-5.

Figure 5 Approximate location of subject site in red on John Rocque's Map of the County of Dublin… (1760), north to the right

3.3.3 Post-Medieval Period c. AD1600-present

The continued mention of Darndale as an appendage to land leases in connection with Coolock implies a rural nature to these lands during the medieval period and little would appear to change during the subsequent post-medieval period, with three successive grants 1605, 1612

and 1620 seeing a Garrett Moore possessing '*Dernedale*' before the 1641 Civil Survey lists the 60 acres of '*Darnedalle*' (3 Meadow, 50 Arable and 7 Pasture) as being in the possession of Nicholas Browne (Protestant), with the only buildings being listed as an old thatched house and a similarly roofed barn, with the former being suggested as the forerunner to Darndale House (DU015-065001) (Simington 1956, 194). The site location is not illustrated by the Down Survey mapping of 1656-1658 but the 1659 Census again underlines the lowly populated, rural nature of '*Dernedall*' by recording 8 inhabitants, 6 English and 2 Irish, with John Barker, gentleman, being listed as a person of note and presumably the occupier of the old thatched house. John Rocque's '*Map of the of County Dublin..*' 1760 (Figure 5) does not specifically label Darndale House, but the location of the subject site can be discerned as being agricultural lands and there is no noteworthy change by the time of John Taylor's map of 1816 (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Approximate site location in red, John Taylor's Map of 1816

According to D'Alton, in 1787 the estate at Darndale was bequeathed by the Rev. John Jackson of Clonshaugh, subject to the life interest to his grand-nephew, Edward Bever Esq., to the Incorporated Society for founding Protestant Schools. D'Alton likewise makes mention of the Earthwork, DU015-066- "*In the neighbourhood of the village* (Coolock) *were several raths, or moats, of which some are yet discernible, but now much cut down*…a third, at Darndale, Mr. Gogarty's' (D'alton 1838 pp.232), with a Mr. F. Gogarty also being listed as being resident at Darndale by Lewis (1837).

The subsequent depiction of the subject site and its environs has changed little by the time of the 25-inch OS mapping of 1909 (Figure 8) and likewise the mid-20th century 'Popular edition' (1952, not shown here) shows a network of fields as being present to the northeast of Darndale House, with the same picture again by the time of the 1972 iteration of that cartographic source, immediately before the modern development of the area occurs.

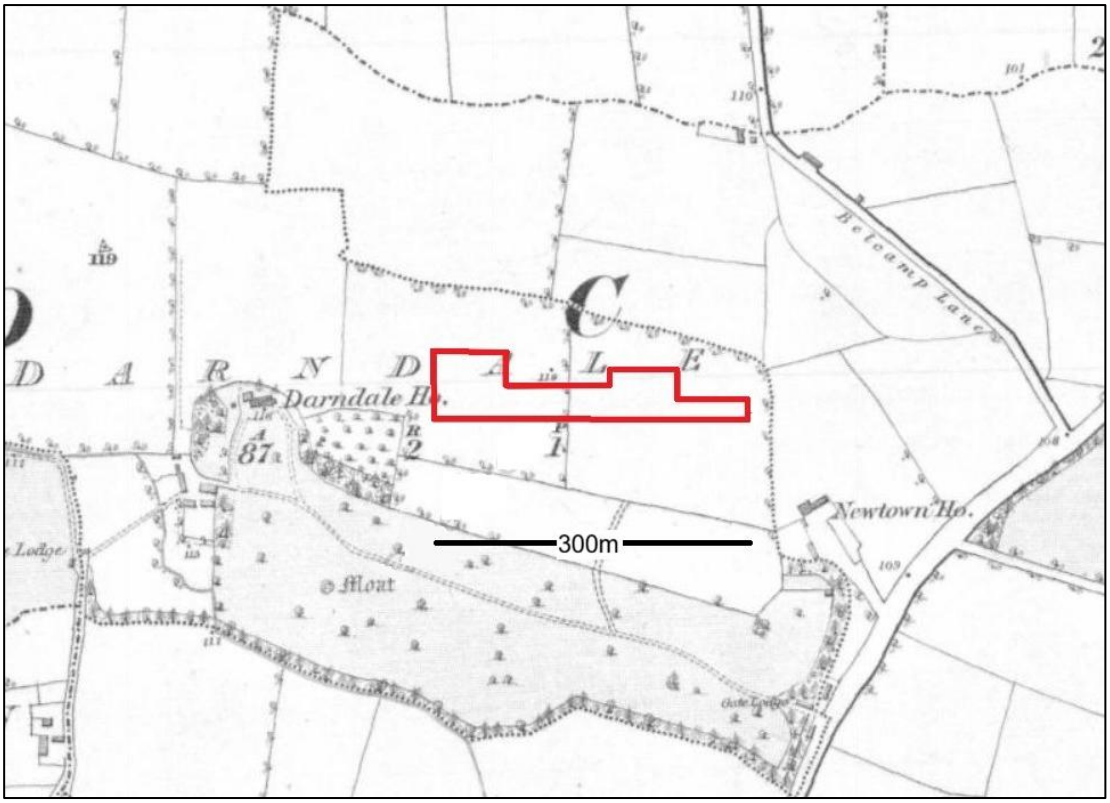

Figure 7 1st-edition Ordnance Survey Map 1837, outline of the proposed development in red (ASI)

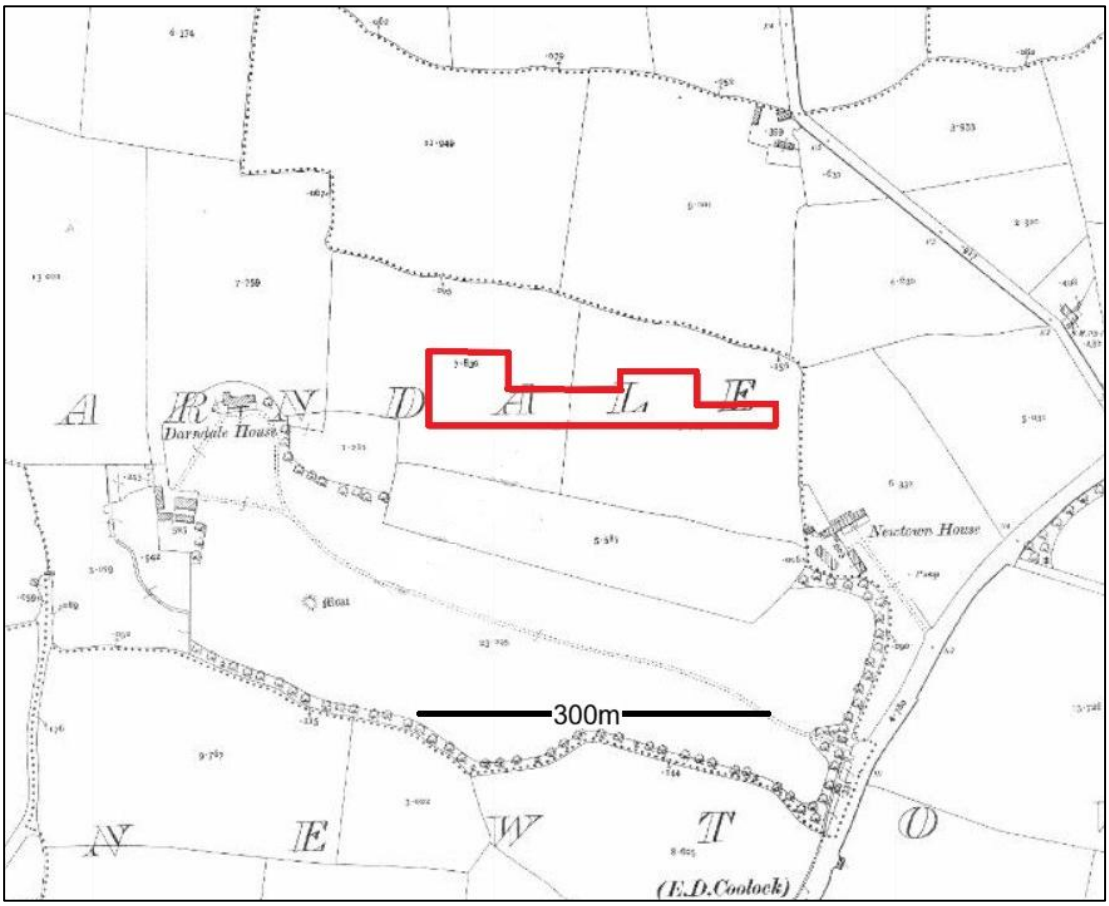

Figure 8 25-inch Ordnance Survey map 1909, outline of the proposed development in red (ASI)

From 1960 onwards the surrounding areas were subject to successive Dublin County Development Plans, the main recommendations of which were those areas such as Coolock, Finglas, Ballymun, Belcamp were to become satellite centres for high-density low-cost housing with small light to medium industrial estates. Meanwhile, Dublin Corporation embarked on a phased program of compulsory inner city slum clearance in order to relocate tenants north to these areas, in addition to south to Tallaght and west to the Lucan area. Coolock itself had nine separate districts including Belcamp; an area defined as being located north of Darndale (Coyle 2010[2]).

The first family took up residence in Darndale in 1975, with the area originally consisting of just over 900 housing units, in keeping with the floral nature of its Gaelic name, Darndale was divided into five areas known as Buttercup, Marigold, Primrose, Snowdrop and Tulip.

3.4 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites

The archaeological constraint maps in conjunction with the Record of Monuments and Places, provide an initial database for planning authorities, state agencies and other bodies involved in environmental change.

The Record of Monuments and Places comprises the following elements: (i) Letter or Letters indicating County (DU=Dublin); (ii) A three-digit number indicating the relevant Ordnance Survey Sheet Number (e.g. 015); (iii) A three, four or five-digit number indicating the dedicated number of the individual site or monument.

There is a total of five recorded sites and monuments within 1km of the proposed development:

RMP No	Classification	Townland	Description
DU015-033	Ringfort	Belcamp	Situated in the northwest corner of an open field under tillage that was formerly the playing pitches of Belcamp College. The site appears as a crop mark (c.12m diam.) on Bing aerial (viewed 27/01/2015) and is c.145m northwest of ringfort (DU015-116----). Not visible at ground level.
DU015-065001	House - 18th/19th century	Darndale	The Civil survey (1654-6) describes an old, thatched house at Darndale (Simington 1945, 194). The present 'Darndale House', an 18th-century mansion probably occupies the site.
DU015-066	Earthwork	Darndale	On a low summit in what is a housing scheme. Named as 'moat' on the 1843 and 1937 editions of the OS 6-inch map. Listed in the 1991 Dublin City Development plan (No. 45). Not visible at ground level.

[2] https://www.jstor.org/stable/41429569

DU015-067	House - 16th/17th century	Darndale	The Down Survey (1655-6) map shows a gabled house at the location shown as 'Cappa House' on the 1937 OS 6-inch map. Described in the Civil survey (1654-6) as a thatched house (Simington 1945, 193). This area forms part of Darndale housing estate. Not visible at ground level.
DU015-116	Ring ditch	Belcamp	A circular ring-ditch visible as a crop mark on an aerial photograph (SMR file; pers. comm. T. Condit). Situated within an open field of tillage on what was once one of Belcamp College's playing pitches jc.70m north of a steep scarp which descends to a stream known as Belcamp River (Mac Shamhráin 1984, 141). There is a tradition of a ringfort on the grounds of the Oblate College at Belcamp Hall. It appears as a cropmark on an aerial photograph (OS 5092) and is visible on Bing aerial (viewed 27/01/2015). The cropmark is almost circular in plan (diam. c. 25m). Not visible at ground level.

Table 1 RMP sites within 1km of proposed development (www.archaeology.ie)

The RMP sites within 1km of the proposed development evidence human occupation in the general area of the subject site from at least the early medieval period onwards.

3.5 Archaeological excavations

A search of the online database, www.excavations.ie, revealed two archaeological investigations have been undertaken within 1km of the proposed site, these are:

Licence No.	Townland/Location	Site/Survey Type	Licensee
04E0886	Various (Dublin North Fringe Water Supply Scheme, Contract 7)	Non archaeological	D. Moore
21E0787	Belcamp & Balgriffen	Non archaeological	M. McCormack

Table 2 List of excavations within 1km of proposed development (www.excavations.ie)

3.6 Record of Protected Structures (RPS)

There are no protected structures located within the proposed development lands noted by the Record of Protected Structures which is contained in Volume 4 of the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2022-2028.

3.7 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

There are no structures noted by the NIAH within the curtilage or the immediate surround of the proposed development site, where the closest listing (NIAH Reg. Ref. 50130216) is the c.1890 milestone located 350m to the west on the Malahide Road.

3.8 Aerial photography

An examination of the available aerial photography (Figure 9) which pertains to the proposed development area shows the presence of modern structures in the form of the former village shop on the western third of the site from 1995-2005 and a possible builder's yard at the eastern end of the site from 2001-2005. Both of areas are vacant and grass covered by the time of the subsequent imagery 2006-2012 and they remain so to the present day.

Figure 9 Outline of subject site on aerial mapping 2001-2005 (ASI)

3.9 Topographical Files

The National Museum of Ireland is the repository for the archive records of all known antiquities recorded by that institution; the files relate primarily to artefacts but also contain references to monuments and in some cases previous archaeological excavations. There are no finds currently noted in the townlands of Darndale, Priorswood, Belcamp, Newtown, Balgriffen and Fairfield in NMI Collections topographical files database.

4 Site inspection/Field survey

4.1 The location of the proposed development was visited by the author 10th July 2026 in dry, bright conditions. The site was accessed from the northwestern corner of the proposed development lands at Primrose Grove (Plate 1). The proposed development site (Plate 2 & 3) is separated from the surrounding houses, which were predominantly constructed in the early-1970s, by a series of roads (Primrose Grove, Buttercup Avenue, Marigold Avenue & Marigold Park) with concrete paths in between those roads delineating the remainder of the site's outline. As such the site area presents as an irregular, rectangular parcel of ground which is predominantly under grass, some of which at the western end of the proposed site area had recently been mowed, adjacent to Our Lady Immaculate Church (Plate 1) which is currently celebrating its 50th anniversary, at the western end of the site area.

The proposed site area is further demarcated in areas where it is at a raised height relative to the surrounding roads and paths, thanks to a low (0.2m in height) concrete retaining wall (Plate 4). Where the lands of the proposed development are level relative to the surrounding roads and paths, the separation is maintained by heavy, precast concrete 'Kelly' Blocks and concrete barriers (Plate 5) in an overall attempt to prevent vehicular access.

4.2 The land which comprises the subject site presents as an open green area within the surrounding suburban landscape, with the elongated rectangular shape of the subject site apparently owing more to accident rather than design by virtue of the various phases of housing which were constructed around it during the final quarter of the 20th -century. The surface of the green area undulates to a greater extent at its western end where landscaping and deposition have clearly taken place, however an area of tarmac in front of the location of the former village shop remains discernible along the southern perimeter close to the western end of the site (Plate 6), which is all that remains above ground of the buildings which occupied this location until c.2006. The eastern end of the proposed development is somewhat flatter in its appearance, however it still appears raised above the surrounding ground level and at various locations the grassy surface of the proposed development site bears the scars of recent bonfires (Plate 7), otherwise the surface of the proposed development bears a criss-cross network of paths (Plate 8). Nothing of archaeological significance was revealed by the site visit.

.

5 Impact assessment, suggested mitigation and conclusion

5.1 Impact assessment

The various strands of desk-based survey, documentary research, archaeological background and site inspection which have been conducted as part of this archaeological impact assessment posit the proposed development site within a diffuse archaeological landscape, one which had been rural before it became the subject of significant development during the latter part of the of the last century. Unfortunately, the latter was conducted prior to the introduction of modern planning laws and any statutory archaeological mandates, as such the Darndale area as a whole could be argued to represent something of an archaeological unknown. By contrast the diffuse nature of the surrounding RMP sites and the potential disturbance to the subject site during and subsequent to the construction of the surrounding housing estates during the latter part of the 20th century may have potentially significantly impacted any sub surface elements of the archaeological resource if they were present at this site.

Therefore, the potential risk of encountering archaeological deposits, finds or features at the subject site is considered to be low but in the absence of further information the potential impact of the proposed development must currently be classified as unknown.

5.2 Suggested mitigation

In order to determine the possible presence, nature and extent of any elements of the archaeological resource which might be present at the proposed development site, the following mitigation measures are recommended. These are subject to approval/alteration by the National Monuments Service, part of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the office of the Dublin City Archaeologist:

a) A programme of archaeological test trenching should be conducted by a suitably qualified, licenced archaeologist at the subject site, in order to further assess and quantify the subject site's archaeological potential. That programme should aim to identify the presence, nature, form and extent any subsurface archaeological remains.
b) Any programme of test trenching should take place in advance of construction, following the fencing and securing of the subject site, due to the possibility of the attraction of antisocial behaviour and furthermore the issue of safety for the local community and their horses.
c) A report detailing the results of the archaeological test trenching programme should be submitted to the City Archaeologist and the National Monuments Service following the completion of those works for further consultation. The latter recommendation is subject to the approval of the Dublin City Archaeologist and the National Monuments Service.

5.3 Conclusion

This archaeological assessment has not identified any issue which might prevent a successful grant of planning for the proposed development, subject to the successful and conditional application of the mitigatory measures outlined above, if such are deemed appropriate by the regulatory authorities.

James Kyle BSc HDip MIAI

Archaeology and Built Heritage
Spade Enterprise Centre
St. Paul's Smithfield
North King Street
Dublin

Tel: 083 1509070

6 Bibliography

Aalen, F.H.A 1997 Components of the Irish Landscape: Buildings, in Aalen, F.H.A et al 1997 *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*. Cork: Cork University Press.

Baker, C. 2010 Antiquities of Old Fingal- the archaeology of north County Dublin. Wordwell. Dublin.

Ball, F.E. 1917 *A History of the County of Dublin; The people, places and antiquities from the earliest times to the close of the 18th century*, Part V. Dublin

D'Alton, J. 1838 A history of the County of Dublin. Hodges and Smith. Dublin

Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. 1999a Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage. Dublin. Government Publications Office.

Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. 1999b Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation. Dublin. Government Publications Office.

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government – The National Monuments Service. Sites and Monuments Record, County Dublin.

Duffy S, 2004 'The 1169 invasion as a turning point in Irish-Welsh relations' in Britain and Ireland, 900-1300: Insular Responses to Medieval European Change. Cambridge University Press

Hogan, A. 2008 The priory of Llanthony Prima and Secunda in Ireland, 1172–1541: lands, patronage and politics. Fourt Courts Press. Dublin

Lewis, S. 1837. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, Volume 1*. London

Morris, H. 1938 The Slighe Cualann. Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland 8, 113-29

Morris, H. 1939 Some places in the Metrical Dinsenchus. Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland 69, 179-89

Simington, R.C. (ed.) 1945 The Civil survey, AD 1654-1656. Vol. VII: county of Dublin. Dublin. Irish Manuscripts Commission.

Internet resources

www.archaeology.ie accessed 9th July 2026

www.excavatione.ie accessed 9th July 2026

www.heritagemaps.ie accessed 9th July 2026

Plates

Plate 1 Western end of proposed site, looking towards Our Lady Immaculate church, facing west

Plate 2 Proposed development site, facing east

Plate 3 Proposed development site, facing west

Plate 4 Eastern end of proposed development with concrete retaining wall/curb, facing east

Plate 5 Northern perimeter of site, facing east

Plate 6 Proposed development lands with former building location, facing northeast

Plate 7 Recent bonfire site at proposed development lands facing northwest

Plate 8 Path across central area of site, facing south

© Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd. 2026