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Archaeological Impact Assessment

At Basin View Flats, Dublin 8

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Client: NDFA and DCC

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1 Introduction

John Purcell Archaeological Consultancy undertook a pre-planning archaeological impact assessment to evaluate the potential cultural heritage impact of the proposed development at Basin View Flats, located in Dublin 8. The assessment involved a review of multiple sources, including but not limited to the Record of Monuments and Places, Sites and Monument Records, topographical files archived at the National Museum, the Development Plan, as well as local historical archives, and relevant literary and documentary references. An examination of previous excavations conducted in the immediate vicinity was conducted to gain valuable insights into the archaeological landscape of the area.

This report aims to provide an assessment of the potential cultural heritage implications associated with the proposed development. Utilizing an array of sources and historical data, the report aims to present a detailed understanding of the archaeological importance of the site.



Figure 1: Location of development

2 Receiving Environment and Proposed Development

2.1 Receiving Environment

The study area lies west of the city centre within the Liberties district. In the mid-20th century, it was transformed into the Basin Street Apartments. Situated to the west is St. James Hospital, while Basin View Street bounds it to the north and east. James Street marks its northern limit. The site's original terrain has been extensively modified and now comprises buildings, playing fields, and landscaped areas.

2.2 Proposed Works

It is proposed to demolish four existing residential blocks, ancillary structures and clear the site. One of the existing Basin Street flats block will be renovated. Construction will consist of 171 no. apartment units in three apartment blocks and associated works.

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
- Archaeological and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.
- Archaeology and Development Guidelines Good Practices for Developers (Heritage Council, 2000).

3.1 Study Methodology

This assessment consists of a desktop survey identifying all recorded sites within the vicinity of the proposed development.

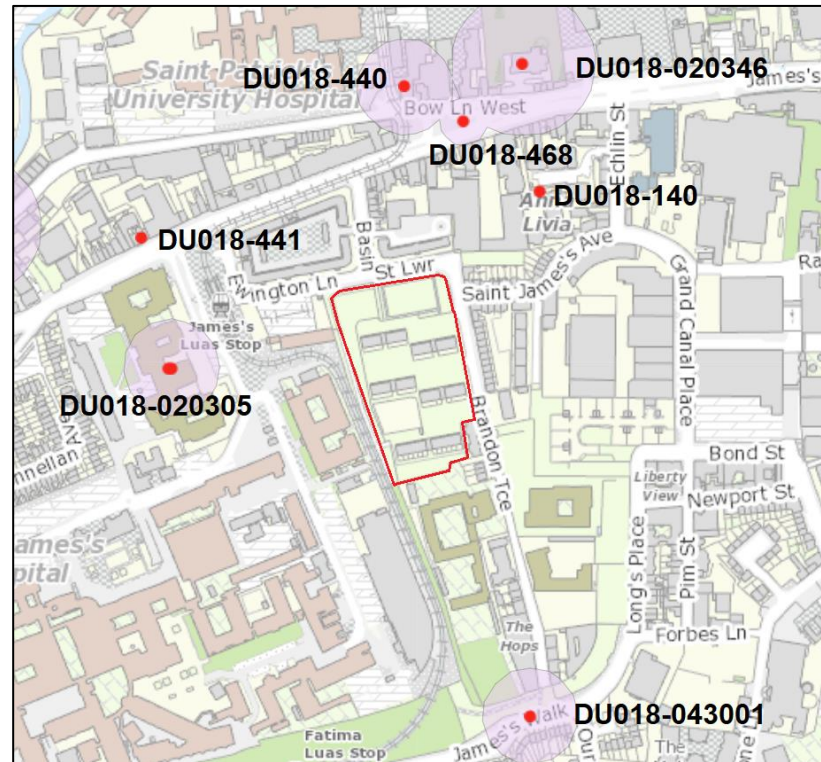
The desktop survey undertaken consisted of a document and cartographic search utilising a number of sources including the following:

- 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.
- 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 Dublin

Dublin city's origins trace back to the 9th century when it was founded by Viking settlers on the banks of the River Liffey. The name "Dublin" is derived from the Irish "Dubh Linn," meaning "black pool," which referred to a dark tidal pool where the River Poddle met the River Liffey. Archaeological excavations have revealed Viking longhouses, burial sites, and artifacts, underscoring Dublin's significance as a Viking trading and military hub. By the late 11th century, there was a suburb of Dublin north of the Liffey centred around Smithfield and Stonybatter.

Following the Norman invasion of Ireland in the late 12th century, Dublin underwent significant transformation. The Normans established Dublin Castle as a seat of power. In 1152, the Bishop of Dublin was made an Archbishop. Between 1172 and

1191, the Cathedral of Christchurch was rebuilt. In 1213, the parish Church of St. Patrick was also made a cathedral. In the early 13th century, a stone wall was constructed to protect the settlement. In 1229, Dublin gained its first mayor. Dublin grew rapidly and may have had a population of 8,000 by the 13th century. The street pattern from this period survives in parts of the city's current layout.

During the late medieval period, Dublin continued to grow as a commercial center. The city saw the establishment of numerous religious institutions, such as monasteries and abbeys, which played vital roles in education and healthcare, extending the city's wealth and influence. The dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII led to the transfer of this wealth to a new ruling elite.

In the 16th century, Dublin expanded outside the walled town. In 1591, Queen Elizabeth granted a charter for a new university, Trinity College. The first students were admitted in 1594. In 1621, a Custom House was built. In 1662, Phoenix Park was laid out as a deer park. The 17th and 18th centuries marked continued expansion of Dublin. The city saw the construction of Georgian buildings, wide streets, and public squares. Developments include the construction of St. Stephen's Green, the Four Courts, and several hospitals. The 17th century also saw an influx of Huguenot settlers expelled from Catholic France. Many of these settled in the Newmarket area of the city.

The 19th century brought industrialization, further urban expansion, and social changes. Dublin's port facilities were modernized, facilitating increased trade. The development of the canal, railway networks, and improved road networks connected Dublin more efficiently with the rest of Ireland.

4.2 Brief Archaeological Background Liberties

The Liberties derives its name from the medieval "liberties," from lands granted to religious institutions which were exempt from certain civil laws and taxes. The area emerged during the medieval period when lands were granted to monasteries and religious orders. The Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr, founded in 1177, played a central role in the area's early development. The lands associated with these religious institutions were exempt from the jurisdiction of the city's civil authorities, thus the name "Liberties". St. Thomas's was supplied with water from the River Poddle. In 1244 this was expanded to supply the city and resulted in the construction of the city basin and a conduit supply. The 'City Conduit' was a network of gravity-fed wooden

troughs which were set into and supplied fountains on the south side of James's Street, Thomas Street and High Street. By the 13th century a new system of lead pipes was built down to Cooke Street in the North and to the city limit in the South. The supply from the City Conduit continued to supply the city throughout the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. By this time, a number of 'City Basons' were being fed by the Conduit. A large new City Basin in James Gate was completed in 1670, this was replaced by a much larger basin at James Street by 1721 due to the growth in population.

Excavations within the Liberties have uncovered numerous medieval structures, including remnants of the old city walls, religious buildings, domestic structures and pipes supplying water to the city. The remains of St. Thomas's Abbey and other religious institutions have provided insights into the monastic life and the area's importance during the medieval period.

During the reformation, many monasteries were dissolved, and their lands were redistributed. The area began to industrialize with the establishment of various crafts and trades, including weaving and tanning, due to the availability of water from the River Poddle. The expulsion of the Huegonots from France aided this expansion as many settled within the area.

In the 18th century it was known for its wool and linen industries, with numerous markets, breweries, and distilleries setting up operations. Guinness Brewery was established in St. James's Gate in 1759, marking the beginning of its long association with the area. This industrial past is evidenced by archaeological finds related to the brewing, distilling, and textile industries. Excavations have revealed the foundations of old breweries, mills, tanneries and Dutch Billy houses built by the Huguenot settlers.

The James Street Basin

Oisín Kelly Park and the Basin Street Flats occupy the site of the former James Street Basin, a large reservoir built to increase the piped water supply of Dublin City. It was constructed by Dublin Corporation in 1721, and fed by the Dodder as were the basins that it replaced. It was designed to improve the water pressure, flow and extended the supply by the increased volume. The water was supplied to the city from

here using a series of elm pipes extending from the basin. These have been identified in a number of excavations across the city. The basin is described as “the pleasantest, most elegant and sequestered place of relaxation the citizens [of Dublin] can boast of; the reservoir, which in part supplies the city with water, is mounded and terraced all round, and planted with quickset hedges, limes and elms, having beautiful green walks between; in a situation which commands a most satisfactory prospect of a vast extent of fine country to the south” by Charles Brooking, who illustrated the basin as such; paying particular attention to the detail its main entrance (which he describes as “elegant” , though with “a lofty iron gate”). By 1775, the Grand Canals construction was complete, and Dublin Corporation had secured it to boost and then replace the supply previously obtained from the Dodder. In 1806 Dublin Corporation entered into 60-year agreements for a supply of water from both the Grand Canal and Royal Canal; after which the water was deemed unsafe to drink (1869) and replaced by the Vartry Reservoir.

4.3 Archaeological Monuments

A number of archaeological monuments are located in the environs of the proposed development. This includes the watercourse that forms part of the city basin. The details of these sites have been taken from archaeology.ie and are outlined below.

DU018-043001-

Class: Watercourse

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: Described as 'The Water that Supplieth Dublin' on the Down Survey (1655-6) parish maps. Shown on the 1837 OS 6-inch map. as 'Millrace' and 'Watercourse'. This is part of the eastern branch of the medieval Dublin watercourse that supplied Deane Street (Joyce 1912, 452-3).

DU018-440----

Class: House - 18th century

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: A two-bay, four-storey-over-basemen end-of-terrace former house with a frontage of c. 9.6m with a widening plot of c. 14m to the rear, and c.14m height to

top of front parapet. The external chimneystack, bowed extension, arched ground floor window, open-well staircase with ramped handrail, and unusual plan form suggest an early date.

DU018-468----

Class: Well

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: The Obelisk Fountain (NIAH Reg. No. 50080307) on the W end of James's Street opposite St James' Church (DU018-020346-) was locally believed to have been built on the site of the medieval St James' Well that was described in 1610 (Branigan 2012, 82). However the fountain stands 320m W of St. James's Gate and this location does not match the description of the well in the 1620 lease to James Veldon which states that the well was around 14m away from the medieval gate. A medieval well (DU018-020055-) to the S of St. James's Gate matches the location described in the 1620 lease. In 1620 the Dublin Assembly Rolls recorded that; 'James Veldon, tanner, shall have a lease for tearme of fourscore and nyneteene yeares uppon a voyd plott of ground without Saint James gate [DU018-020035-], on the north side thereof, bonding from the said gate to a howse which the said James houldeth neere thereunto, contayneing in breadth from the said gate in the east to the said howse in the west twentie three foote [7m], and in the sowth and north end twentie eight foote [8.5m], and in length from the said gate in the sowth to the well called Saint James well in the north fortie five foote [13.7m] at the yearelie rent of twentie shillings, sterling current mony in England (CARD Vol. 3, 127).

The fountain was described by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) as a; 'Freestanding drinking fountain, erected 1790, comprising fluted Portland stone obelisk with projecting block and oval sundials to each face, ball finial to top, set on painted masonry plinth having carved human masks to each elevation, cast-iron wall-fountains to north, south and west elevations, plaque to east elevation. Surrounded by cast-iron bollards. Restored 1995' (www.builginsofireland.ie).

DU018-020346-

Class: Church

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: Present Church built in 1861 on the site of the medieval parish church of St. James on land donated by John Tirel in c. 1190 (Bradley & King, 1, 13; Clarke 2002, 18). The earliest reference to it occurs during the episcopate of John Comyn (1181-1212), when it formed part of the property of St. Thomas Abbey (McNeill 1950, 31-2). The former was described as long, low and narrow (Wheeler & Craig, 1948, 21). It was re-roofed in 1630 but the chancel was down (Ronan, 1941, 62). The graveyard is entirely surrounded by Guinness's Brewery. There is a Sixteenth century gravestone extant (Ní Mharcaigh 1997, 276).

DU018-020305-

Class: Workhouse

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: Somerville-Large (1996, 132) mentions the Dublin Workhouse, founded in 1703.

DU018-441----

Class: House - 18th century

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: No. 172 James's Street is a mid-terrace three-bay two-storey house, c.5m wide and c.9m in height to parapet, with modern shopfront at ground level and a carriageway to the E bay. The steep roof to the rear, running perpendicular to the street, suggests possible early origins.

DU018-043001-

Class: Watercourse

Townland: Dublin South City

Description: Described as 'The Water that Supplieth Dublin' on the Down Survey (1655-6) parish maps. Shown on the 1837 OS 6-inch map. as 'Millrace' and 'Watercourse'. This is part of the eastern branch of the medieval Dublin watercourse that supplied Deane Street (Joyce 1912, 452-3).

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. The database shows 9 entries for the area on James Street and James Hospital. The entries adjacent to the development and within the hospital did not reveal any archaeological remains (information taken from excavations.ie).

Excavation works undertaken by Dublin City Council staff uncovered in March 2023 uncovered part of the network of reservoirs supplied water to the city in the 19th Century to the south of the site.

4.4 Cartographic Evidence

The Brookings Map was the first to record the layout of the City Basin (Figure 3). The Rocque Map of the site illustrates the presence of the City Basin, constructed in 1721 (Figure 4). Housing can be observed to the east and north of the basin. Both the first edition OS map and the 25" map depict the site labeled as the City Basin, which served as a reservoir for drinking water (Figures 5-6). However, by the 20th century, the basin was filled in, and in the 1960s, Dublin City Council Flats were erected on the site (Figure 7).

Figure 3: The City Basin on the 1728 Brookings Map of Dublin City and Suburbs

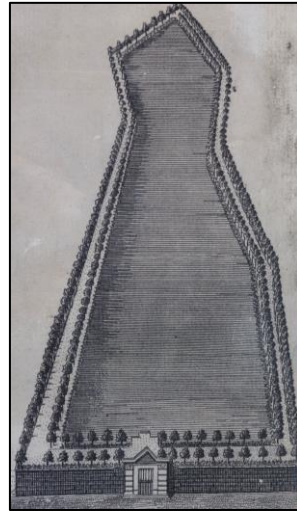


Figure 4: Rocque Map with approximate location of the site marked

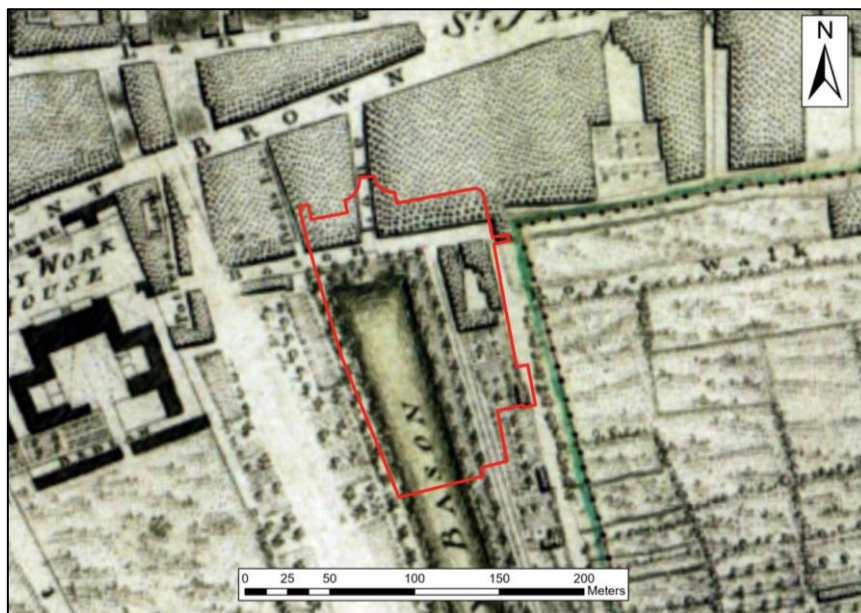


Figure 5: First edition OS map for the site

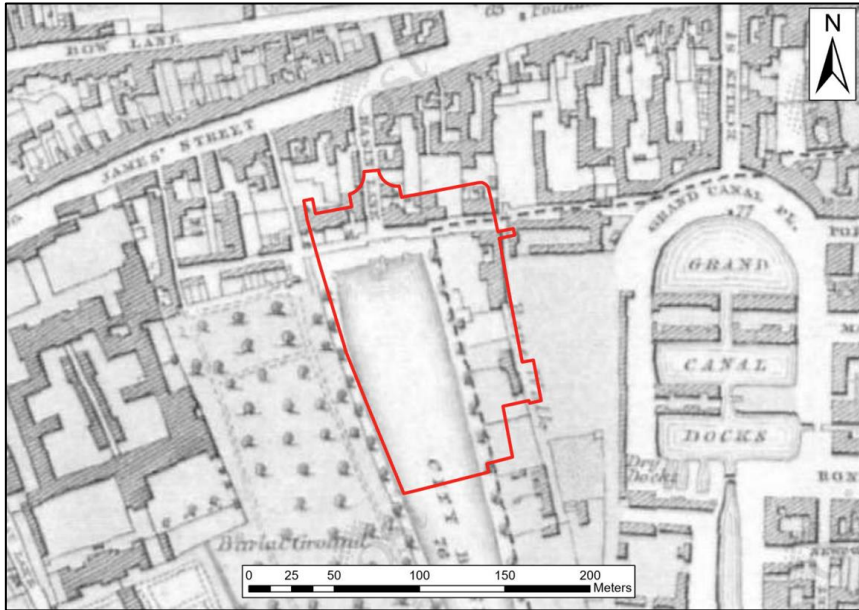


Figure 6: 25" map for the site

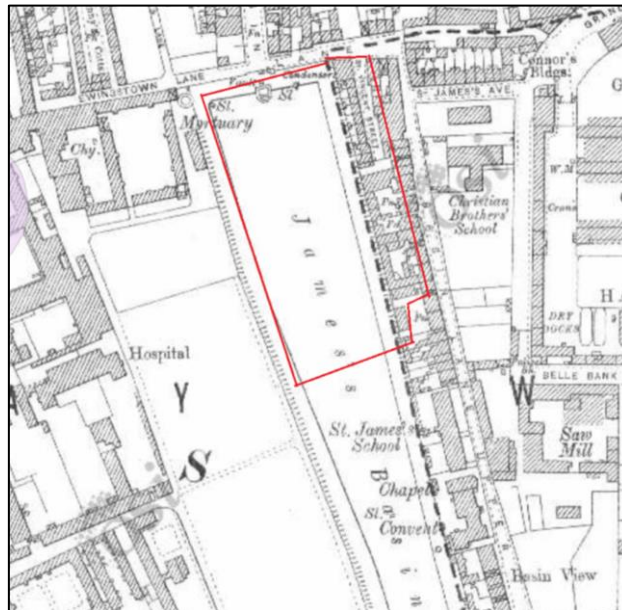
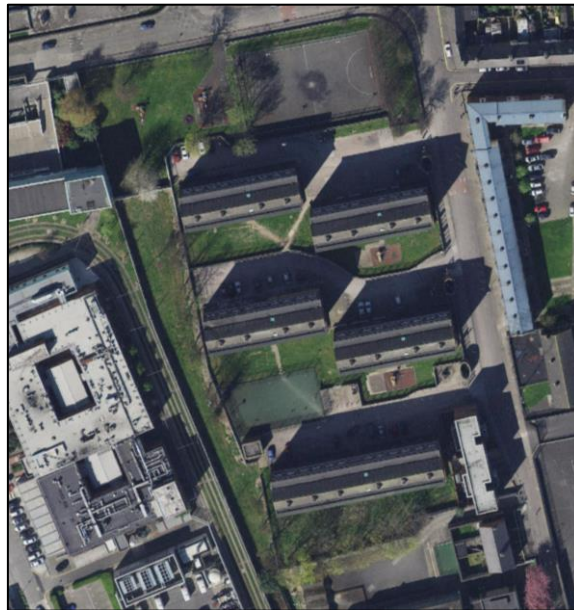


Figure 7: Aerial Photograph for the site (taken from geohive.ie)



4.5 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 revealed on stray artefact for James Street and none for Dublin City South.

Table 1: NMI topographical results

NMIRegis-terNo	SimpleName	Component	Townland	FindPlace	County
1945:19	Pipe	Clay	DUBLIN	James Street	DUBLIN

4.6 Protected Structures

The proposed development site does not include any protected structures. Only one protected structure listed in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage for the immediate environs of the site. This is Mary Aikenhead House, an apartment development constructed between 1935-45. This or its setting will not be impacted on by any development at the site.

4.7 Site Survey

A site visit was undertaken to assess the area for archaeological remains, revealing no early fabric visible at ground floor level. Archaeological inspections, including of the geological testing, were also conducted. Slit trenches were dug to evaluate the ground before development. In three trenches located at the west of the site, random rubble walling was found, leading to the cessation of further excavation in those trenches. This rubble wall was encountered in trenches 4, 7, and 8, approximately 0.4 meters below the current ground level, extending north to south across the three trenches (Plates 1-3). The remains were not removed during the works.



Plate 1: C3 in slit trench 4



Plate 2: C4 in slit trench 7



Plate 3: C5 in slit trench 8.

5 Archaeological Impact Assessment

The proposed development site encompasses the city basin which is recorded in the industrial heritage database (Ref 18-10-061) for Dublin City. The basin supplied water to the city and utilized the earlier medieval pipe networks that extended across Dublin 8, this forms part of an RMP listed as watercourse in the database (DU018-

043001). The basin was developed in 1721 and supplied water to the city. Redeveloped in the mid-20th century, the site now features modern structures, open green spaces, and a playground. During geological testing, stone walls were discovered approximately 0.4m below the ground surface at the western end of the site. Although these remains were not further exposed, they likely represent remnants of the city basin. The area outside of the basin may include earlier fabric. The 18th century mapping for the site also shows earlier structures at the north and north east of the site. Consequently, the proposed works may uncover further remains at the site.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

The assessment of the archaeological evidence at the site indicates significant archaeological potential. Historical maps reveal the existence of an 18th-century reservoir, which served as a water source for the city until the 20th century, before being filled in during the 1960s redevelopment. Geological testing has identified earlier structures, particularly in the western portion, suggesting the presence of subsurface remains related to the city basin.

Given the potential significance of these remains, there is a high likelihood of extensive archaeological material related to the city basin existing on the site. Additionally, early fabric may exist outside the basin area. Therefore, any development work could directly impact these remains. The following recommendations are made to address these concerns:

1. **Archaeological Testing:** It is recommended that comprehensive archaeological testing be conducted at the site to better understand the extent and significance of the remains. The archaeologist should submit their Method Statement for review to the Archaeology Section of the DCC before commencing any work.
2. **Significant Discoveries:** In the event of significant archaeological discoveries, consultations with the City Archaeologist and the National Monuments Service should be initiated. This collaboration will help devise a comprehensive plan for recording all relevant fabric found at the site.
3. **Preservation and Mitigation:** Where archaeological material is identified, preservation in situ through avoidance or redesign should be considered. If

necessary, archaeological excavation should be carried out under license prior to the commencement of development.

4. Foundation Design: The new development will utilize a piled foundation without a basement. The foundations should be designed to ensure minimal impact on the remains of the monument, adhering to national policy for in-situ preservation.
5. Ground Investigations: No further ground investigations should be conducted on site without the approval of the project archaeologist.

Implementing these recommendations will ensure that the archaeological potential of the site is thoroughly investigated and preserved, balancing development needs with the protection of significant historical remains.