



# John Purcell

Archaeological Consultancy

jparch.ie **Mob.** 086 2506506

Archaeological Impact Assessment

At Ballymun, Co. Dublin

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**Client:** DCC

## **Table of Contents**

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Receiving Environment**
- 3 Methodology**
  - 3.1 Study Methodology
- 4 General Archaeological and Historical Summary**
  - 4.1 Brief Archaeological Background
  - 4.2 Archaeological Monuments
  - 4.3 Ballymun Background
  - 4.4 Previous Archaeological Works
  - 4.5 Cartographic Evidence
  - 4.6 Protected Structures
  - 4.7 Topographical Files
- 5 Cultural Heritage Assessment**
- 6 Mitigation and Conclusion**

### **List of Figures:**

- Figure 1:** Location of development
- Figure 2:** Site boundary with archaeological monuments marked
- Figure 3:** First edition OS map with the site boundary marked
- Figure 4:** Second edition OS map with the site boundary marked
- Figure 5:** Aerial Photograph of the site 1995
- Figure 6:** Aerial Photograph of the site 2005

## **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 the Ballymun, Co. Dublin. This report is being undertaken on behalf of DCC. The report has been compiled to assess the impact of the site on the archaeological and historical landscape.

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 should also be reviewed.

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



**Figure 1: Location of development**

## **2 Receiving Environment**

The study area is located in Ballymun to the north of Dublin City. The site is within the townland of Stormanstown. The R108 forms the eastern boundary of the site and

the R104 forms the northern boundary. The site has been extensively excavated in the past.

### **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)
- 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.

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 P
- 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**

Ballymun is located to the north of Dublin City. 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 Stonybattery.

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.

A number of archaeological monuments are located in the environs of the proposed development. The details of these sites have been taken from [archaeology.ie](http://archaeology.ie) and are outlined below.

DU014-067002-

Class: House - 16th/17th century

Townland: STORMANSTOWN

There are 17th century references to a sizeable dwelling and cottages. These may be on the site of Stormanstowne House. There are playing fields on the site. No visible surface trace.

DU014-065----

Class: Well

Townland: JAMESTOWN GREAT

Named 'Jamestown Well' on the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (1843) . It is a natural spring well of uncertain date. No longer venerated. There are no known associations.

DU014-061002-

Class: Enclosure

Townland: BALCURRIS

On relatively level ground with a stream running along to the west of the site. An aerial photograph taken in 1970 shows a cropmark of a roughly circular enclosure

(diam. c. 40m) with traces of an outer enclosure and a rectangular feature to the SE. These sites have had a housing estate and wholesale outlet built over them. No visible surface trace.

### **4.3 Ballymun Background**

Ballymun, located in the northern part of Dublin, has a history and archaeological heritage that reflect its transformation from rural farmlands to a modern urban area. Originally, Ballymun was characterized by agricultural activities. Archaeological evidence indicates the presence of early medieval settlements, with remnants such as ringforts and souterrains hinting at its early habitation. The most significant shift in Ballymun's history occurred in the 1960s, when it was developed as a high-rise housing project to address Dublin's housing crisis. This development included the construction of seven towers, which became a distinctive feature of Ballymun's skyline. The original towers have since been demolished and replaced with new housing and community facilities.

### **4.4 Previous Archaeological Works**

The archaeological excavation database ([excavations.ie](http://excavations.ie)) was searched for archaeological excavations and reports in the environs of the proposed development. No entries are listed for Stormanstown. Seven entries are listed for Balcurris (an adjoining townland to the north and west) none of these uncovered archaeological remains.

### **4.5 Cartographic Evidence**

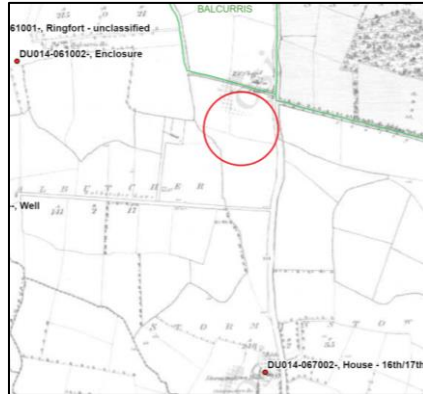
The first edition OS map and the 25" map shows the site as agricultural land. By the 25" map a number of earlier field boundaries had been removed. (Figure 3-4). No features indicative of archaeological remains were identified.

An examination of aerial photographs for the site reveals that the site was occupied by high rise towers that were demolished in the early 2000's (Figure 5). Following the demolition of these structures widespread groundworks have occurred across the



study area (Figure 6). These activities were part of the Ballymun regeneration scheme. The photographs indicate extensive excavations have occurred at the site .

**Figure 3: First edition OS map for the site**



**Figure 4: 25" map for the site**



**Figure 5: Aerial Photograph for the site 1995 (taken from geohive.ie)**



**Figure 6: Aerial Photograph for the site 2005 (taken from geohive.ie)**



#### **4.5 Protected Structures**

The study area does not include any structures listed in the RPS or the NIAH. The closest protected structures are located 90m to the east (Reg. No. 50130114). These will not be affected by any works at the study area.

#### **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 Stormanstown.

### **5 Cultural Heritage Assessment**

The proposed development site does not contain any recorded archaeological monuments, nor are there any sites located within the immediate vicinity. The nearest recorded monument (DU014-067002) is situated over 850 meters to the south. There are no protected structures within the site or its immediate environs.

Historically, the site has undergone extensive excavation and was previously occupied by high-rise tower blocks and landscaped grounds until the early 2000s. After the demolition of these towers, additional excavation and landscaping were carried out. Ground investigations have confirmed that the site is covered in modern fill to a depth of 1 meter. This significant disturbance has greatly reduced the likelihood of discovering any unrecorded subsurface remains at the site. Therefore, the potential for encountering such remains is considered low.

### **6 Mitigation and Conclusion**

A review of the archaeological evidence for the area indicates that the site does not contain any historic structures or archaeological remains. The site has undergone significant disturbance, including topsoil removal and possibly deeper excavations, as evident from aerial photographs. Consequently, the potential for historic remains at the site is low. However there is potential for remains to exist within the site or for stray artefacts to be uncovered. As a result, if, during the course of site works any archaeological material is discovered, the City Archaeologist should be notified immediately. Further, it is obligatory under the National Monuments Act that the National Monuments Service, Dept. of Housing, Heritage and Local Government and the National Museum of Ireland are notified.