Archaeological Assessment (Test Trenching) of proposed development at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin

Client:
Ballymore Property Developments Ltd,
One Royal Canal House,
Royal Canal Park, Dublin 15 D15DKW4

ITM: 723069, 745369
RMP No.: N/A
Planning Ref.: Pre-planning
Excavation Licence No.: 19E0649

Magda Lyne & Donald Murphy

13th November 2019
Report Status: Final

ACSU Ref.: 1782
# PART A - PROJECT DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Licence No.</strong></td>
<td>19E0649</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Townland(s)</strong></td>
<td>Malahide (Coolock By.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RMP</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>ITM</strong></td>
<td>723069, 745369</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consultant</strong></td>
<td>Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, 21 Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, County Louth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excavation Director</strong></td>
<td>Donald Murphy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Report Author</strong></td>
<td>Magda Lyne &amp; Donald Murphy</td>
</tr>
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<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Report Date</strong></td>
<td>13&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; November 2019</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A program of archaeological testing was carried out at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369, Figures 1-2). The site is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.). A Desktop Assessment was carried out by Ed Lyne of ACSU in April 2019 at the request of the client at pre-planning stage. This assessment concluded by recommending that an archaeological assessment in the form of archaeological test-trenching of the site should be carried out prior to any development. As a result, test trenching was carried out at the site from 3rd to 7th October 2019.

The site of the proposed development contains no Recorded Monuments listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), while the nearest Recorded Monument to the site (DU012-032 — earthwork) is located c. 0.3 km to the east and will not be directly affected by the proposed development. The site contains no protected structures, while the nearest protected structure (Seamount House – gate lodge - Reg. No. 11344032, RPS no. 440) is located c. 0.2 km to the east and also will not be directly affected by the proposed development (Figure 2).

An assessment of the available cartographic sources revealed that the proposed development area has previously contained a quarry in the southeast part of the site (Figure 6-8), and a golf course across much of the rest of the area (Figure 8). No features of historical or archaeological interest are apparent from an examination of the cartographic sources for the study area.

A licence was issued for archaeological testing and monitoring within the current study area in 2017 (17E0662), in connection with a separate planning application F14A/0106 (Fingal County Council). This work did not proceed however, and the test trenching and monitoring were not carried out.

The following report describes the results of archaeological fieldwork at the site at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Fingal (ITM 723069, 745369, Figures 1-2). The area was tested by Donald Murphy under licence 19E0649. The fieldwork (test trenching) took place on the 3rd to 7th of October 2019 using a 15 tonne tracked excavator. A total of 16 test trenches (Plates 1-17) were excavated across the footprint of the proposed development as outlined on Figure 11. Each trench measured 1.8 m in width. In total 831m of linear trenches were excavated. In general, the trenches revealed topsoil and sod at a depth ranging between 0.1 m – 0.75 m, due to variations in the landscape. The natural subsoil varied greatly across the site. In Trench 1 agricultural furrows running east-west were registered and in Trench 3 and Trench 4 modern ditches (C100, C101, C102) were found and are likely to represent historic field boundaries as they correspond to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8).

The site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades; it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. As a result, some areas could not be tested due to large mounds of soil but also the presence of services. That said, it was still possible to undertake targeted test trenching within the footprint of much of the proposed development (Figure 11). The
northeastern adjacent part of the proposed development is, however, owned by Fingal County Council and could not be tested. Where test trenching was undertaken, the investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits. Due to the constraints that prevented full testing of the site, and the fact that the general landscape area has the potential to contain unrecorded sub-surface features or deposits of an archaeological nature, it is recommended that archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping in advance of construction should be carried out in the event of a successful planning application.
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1. **INTRODUCTION**

This test trenching report details the results of an archaeological assessment carried out in advance of a proposed development at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369 Figure 1-2). The site is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.). The site of the proposed development contains no Recorded Monuments listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), while the nearest Recorded Monument to the site (DU012-032 — earthwork) is located c. 0.3 km to the east and will not be directly affected by the proposed development. The site contains no protected structures, while the nearest protected structure (Seamount House – gate lodge - Reg. No. 11344032, RPS no. 440) is located c. 0.2 km to the east and also will not be directly affected by the proposed development.

Test trenching was carried out at the request of the client and at a pre-planning stage.

1.1 **Project background**

This assessment was carried out in advance of a proposed development at pre-planning stage in order to determine whether any archaeological constraints existed on the site.

1.2 **Site location**

The site of proposed development is located at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369). The site is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.). This site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades, it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as is evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. There are no recorded monuments located in close proximity to the proposed development site.

2. **NATURAL & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE**

2.1 **Topography**

The site at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369) is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.) and has an elevation of c. 40 - 50 m OD. The underlying geology consists of argillaceous bioclastic limestone, shale.

2.2 **Cultural landscape**

An examination of the pre-Ordnance Survey mapping reveals little about the study area, due to a lack of detail (Figures 3–5). The Davies’ map of County Dublin (1837) does depict the east–west oriented Seamount Road, which was possibly first constructed to service Seamount House.
An examination of the 1st edition OS 6-inch map (1843) and the 25-inch OS map (1906–9) show the proposed development site as encompassing parts of two fields between the 1830s and the early 1900s (Figures 6 and 7). The southwest and southeast boundaries of the study area have changed little in layout since the 1830s, and it is apparent that the study area has not previously been developed for housing since detailed mapping began. It is apparent from 20th century mapping, however, that the larger northwest part (and quite possibly the northeast part) of the study area was previously used as part of a golf course, which also stretched off to the north (Figure 8). Aerial imagery suggests that this may have been in use up until the 1990s, or at least the kind of landscaping and tree-planting associated with golf courses is in evidence. Such landscaping may well have impacted on any possible archaeological features that may have existed in this part of the proposed development area.

Part of the southeast area of the development site was previously used as a quarry, as depicted on the 25-inch map and labelled as such on the 1st edition map. This may suggest that the quarry had gone out of use by the time of the 25-inch map (1906–9), as it is indicated as a hachured scarp in the landscape, but no longer labelled ‘quarry’. The quarried area is almost certain to be void of archaeological features as they would have been dug away during quarrying.

No features of historical or archaeological interest are apparent from an examination of the cartographic sources for the study area.

2.3 Archaeological background

The modern name Malahide may come from the Irish, *Mullach Êde*, meaning ‘the hill of Êde’ or ‘Êde's sand-hill’. It could also mean ‘Sand-hills of the Hydes’ (from Mullac h-Êde) probably referring to a Norman family from the Donabate area. According to the Placenames Database of Ireland, however, the name Malahide is possibly derived from the Irish *Baile Átha Thíd*, meaning ‘the town of the ford of Thíd’. Malahide Bay was anciently called *Inber Domnann*, the ‘river-mouth of the Fir Domnann’.

While there are some remnants of prehistoric activity, Malahide is best known as having become a place of persistent settlement from the coming of the Vikings, who landed in AD 795, and used Malahide Estuary (along with Baldoyle) as a convenient base. With the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, the last Danish King of Dublin retired to the area in 1171. From the 1180s, the history of the area is tied to that of the Talbot family of Malahide Castle (DU012-030), who were granted extensive lands in the area and, over the centuries following, developed their estate and the small harbour settlement.

There is an ancient covered well (DU012-023001), St. Sylvester's, on the old main street (Old Street, previously Chapel Street), which used to have a ‘pattern’ to Our Lady each 15 August.

The Talbots and Malahide Castle

The estate was established in 1185, when Richard Talbot, a knight who accompanied Henry II to Ireland in 1174, was granted the ‘lands and harbour of Malahide’. When Richard Talbot came to Malahide, his family were also lords of Shrewsbury in England. Also given to Richard was the Advowson for the Church of Malahide
and on his death in 1193, he presented his brother, Walter Talbot, with that benefice. A motte and bailey (DU012-034) located in the townland of Sainthelens to the south of the town, may represent the original base of the Talbots when they first established themselves in the area.

In 1475 Thomas Talbot, head of the Talbot family of Malahide Castle, was granted the title Admiral of the port of Malahide by King Edward IV, with power to hold admiralty courts and levy customs duties on all merchandise coming into the port. The office was hereditary, and the family's right to act as Admiral was confirmed by the Court of Exchequer (Ireland) in 1639.

The oldest parts of Malahide Castle date back to the 12th century and it was home to the Talbot family for 791 years, from 1185 until 1976, the only exception being the period from 1649–60, when Oliver Cromwell granted it to Miles Corbet after the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland; Corbet was hanged following the demise of Cromwell and the castle was restored to the Talbots. The building was notably enlarged in the reign of Edward IV, and the towers added in 1765.

The estate survived such losses as the Battle of the Boyne, when fourteen members of the owner’s family sat down to breakfast in the Great Hall, and all were dead by evening, and the Penal Laws, even though the family remained Roman Catholic until 1774.

In 1918, during the First World War, a mooring-out base for airships was established in the grounds of the castle, used by airships from RNAS Anglesey in Wales, which conducted anti-submarine operations in the Irish Sea. There were plans to base airships here from 1919, but these were abandoned at the end of the war. In the 1920s, the private papers of James Boswell (Scottish biographer and diarist) were discovered in the castle and sold to American collector, Ralph H. Isham, by Boswell's great-great-grandson, Lord Talbot de Malahide.

Malahide Castle and Demesne was eventually inherited by the 7th Baron Talbot and on his death in 1973, passed to his sister, Rose. In 1975, Rose sold the castle to the Irish State, partly to fund inheritance taxes. Many of the contents, notably furnishings, had been sold in advance, leading to considerable public controversy, but private and governmental parties were able to retrieve some.

### 2.4 Previous archaeological investigations

There have been a number of previous archaeological assessments carried out around the village and townland of Malahide (Figure 2) and while significant archaeological sites have been identified within the surrounding landscape, the archaeological assessments carried out within the village have generally failed to identify any previously unrecorded archaeological features and deposits with the exception of test trenching that was carried out within the site of Malahide Castle. A licence was issued for archaeological testing and monitoring within the current study area in 2017 (17E0662), in connection with a separate planning application F14A/0106 (Fingal County Council). This work did not proceed, however, and the test trenching and monitoring were not carried out. The following table lists the nearest archaeological assessments and excavations:
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Excavation Number</th>
<th>Site Address</th>
<th>Licensee</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>14E0161</td>
<td>Seamount, Seamount Road, Malahide</td>
<td>Antoine Giacometti</td>
<td>Archaeological Excavation – see below for details.</td>
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<td>10E0426</td>
<td>St. Sylvester's Church, Malahide, Dublin</td>
<td>Melanie McQuade</td>
<td>Archaeological assessment, archaeology found - yes</td>
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<td>11E0326</td>
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<td>Melanie McQuade</td>
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<td>08E0021</td>
<td>St. Sylvester's Church, Malahide Village, Dublin</td>
<td>Johnny Ryan</td>
<td>Archaeological assessment, archaeology found - none</td>
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<td>06E0453</td>
<td>Robswalls, Malahide, Dublin</td>
<td>John O'Connor</td>
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<td>06E0661</td>
<td>Malahide Castle Demesne, Malahide, Dublin</td>
<td>John O’Connor</td>
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<td>04E1528</td>
<td>Barbican Tower, Talbot Botanical Gardens, Malahide Castle, Malahide, Dublin</td>
<td>Ruairí Ó Baoill</td>
<td>Archaeological Monitoring, archaeology found – none</td>
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<tr>
<td>03E0415</td>
<td>Casino Lands, Malahide, Dublin.</td>
<td>Emer Dennehy</td>
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<td>02E0031</td>
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<tr>
<td>01E0421</td>
<td>Railway Avenue, Malahide, Dublin</td>
<td>Emmet Stafford</td>
<td>Archaeological assessment, archaeology found – yes</td>
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Of the excavations and assessments outlined above, the most relevant due to its proximity and significance is the site at Seamount (14E0161), located c. 0.4 km east of the proposed development site (Figure 2.9). A summary account of this excavation from www.excavations.ie is outlined here:

**Site name:** Seamount, Seamount Road, Malahide  
**Sites and Monuments Record No.:** DU012-032  
**Licence number:** 14E0161  
**Author:** Antoine Giacometti  
**Site type:** Early medieval and prehistoric landscape  
**ITM:** E 723616m, N 745220m  
**Description:** An archaeological site, identified during topsoil stripping following assessment and geophysics (Licence No. 08R0289), was excavated between August and September 2014. The 11.5ha site was situated on the former lands of Seamount House, Seamount Road, Malahide, Co. Dublin, and was bounded to the north and east by the townland boundary between Malahide and Robswall.

The site is situated in an elevated location just to the south of the crest of Malahide Hill with spectacular views overlooking the entire coast of North Dublin. The panoramic views encompass Lusk, the seafront at Rush and Donabate, and Lambay Island to the North, Howth, Sutton and Ireland's Eye to the southeast, and into Dublin Bay with Dalkey headland, Dalkey Island and the Wicklow Mountains visible to the south. A line of archaeological monuments ran along the crest of the hill down towards the sea. Two are situated on the site: a circular mound shown on the first and second OS 6-inch maps near the highest point of the hill (DU012-032), which no longer survives, and a ring-ditch 50m south-west of the mound along the ridge. A dozen other prehistoric monuments and sites have been identified along this crest to the west (information from RMP files; Excavations.ie records; Duncan’s map 1821, etc.).
The ring ditch is best interpreted as a prehistoric monument, part of the wider ceremonial landscape along the crest of Malahide Hill. Part of the arc of the circular ditch, which measured 2m in width and just over 1m in depth, was found and excavated. The ditch appears to have enclosed a small area c. 9m in diameter on the crest of the ridge. No features were identified in the internal area, however this had been mostly truncated away. Large flat stones in the lowest fills of the ditch probably fell inside from above, and may once have formed part of a revetment to the earthen mound or bank. Radiocarbon dating returned a Late Bronze Age date (997-839 BC at 2 sigma Poz 93590) from cherry charcoal from the basal fill of the barrow ditch. This ring ditch showed evidence for re-cutting after it had fallen out of use, which must represent its rededication as a ritual monument. Birch charcoal from this second phase returned a Final Bronze Age or Iron Age radiocarbon date (751-406 BC at 2 sigma Poz 93589). The partial cremated remains of a human adult (only the hand was identified) (C24) was found at the base of the re-cut ditch. A third phase was also identified in the uppermost fill of the barrow ditch, which contained a large amount of animal bone representing well-preserved primary butchery waste. The faunal assemblage was dominated by cattle, pig, horse and deer, and was very similar to the animal bone remains of the early medieval settlement to the south. The upper fill also contained an unburnt adult left and right femur, interpreted as charnel from a possible early medieval burial nearby.

The interpretation of the excavation results suggested this site may provide evidence for the persistence of pre-Christian (pagan) ritual during the early medieval period, and explored possible mechanisms and reasons for this, linking the monuments and the farmstead with the local placename of Seamount (possibly from Sidhe Manannan, Manannan being a mythological sea god, and sidhe meaning a mound that formed a connection to the underworld).

A heavily truncated Late Bronze Age penannular enclosure 24m in internal diameter was excavated further down the hill, with an undug opening to the northeast providing an entrance. Radiocarbon dating of wild cherry charcoal from the enclosure fill returned a date of 841-1050 BC (Sigma 2; Poz 93370). Fragments from a Late Bronze Age large domestic vessel and a cremated human leg bone (possibly representing a token cremation burial) were identified nearby in the upper fill of a nearby probable early medieval charcoal manufacturing pit kiln, and may have originally been associated with the penannular enclosure.

A complex of archaeological features was situated between the penannular enclosure and the prehistoric monuments on the hill. Charcoal from various features in this complex returned radiocarbon dates of 659-772 (2 Sigma; Poz-93358), 656-853 (2 Sigma; Poz-93369), 694-889 (2 Sigma; Poz-93368) and 772-967 (2 sigma; Poz-93346) and 720-941 AD (2 Sigma; Poz-93358). A sixth date from the complex which returned a date of 1664-1914 & later (2 sigma; Poz-93692) from willow charcoal reflects later post-medieval and modern agricultural activity. The dates suggest occupation in the early medieval period centred on the 8th century AD, with two non-overlapping concentrations of activity spread across an early phase c. 670-760 (two dates; 1 Sigma) and a later phase c.775-875 (three dates; 1 Sigma).
Unlike the other two archaeological features on the site, this complex was not defined by a circular shape. Instead, ditches defined irregular spaces with a wide range of functions, and were themselves used for resource processing. This contrasts with the barrow and circular enclosure, which were sharply and carefully defined by their circular forms. The complex was centred on a stony natural outcrop situated on a shelf along the hillside slope. A curving ditch partially encircled this stony outcrop, then extended straight up the hillslope to one of the prehistoric monuments (DU012-032). The linear part of this ditch may have defined a property or field boundary using the prehistoric barrow as a topographical landmark. Where the ditch curved around the stony outcrop, it changed its shape and incorporated a small access point to allow for a person to climb down into the ditch along a gently-sloping ramp. A crude stone wall or sluice gate was constructed within the ditch at this point. A number of internal slot trenches, pits, keyhole-shaped corn-drying kilns, a charcoal-manufacturing kiln, and a defined entrance were also identified. The corn-drying kilns, charcoal kiln, animal remains processing and shell processing all suggest small-scale resource processing activities consistent with what would be required for a single self-sufficient farmstead. A particularly high concentration of marine shell was identified in the early medieval features, particularly around the ditch’s sluice gate and series of sunken pits. The economic well-being of the early medieval farmers appeared to have been primarily dependent on sea-based resources.

The animal bone assemblage recovered from this arcing ditch area comprised well-preserved primary butchery waste. The assemblage was dominated by cattle and sheep/goat, as well as pig, horse and dog. These are all domesticated species which would have formed part of a typical diet in an early medieval settlement or, in the cases of the horse and dog, would have been domesticated within the settlement.

Environmental analysis of the grains identified in the early medieval corn-drying kilns showed cultivated varieties of barley and oat, and a small amount of wheat, though one kiln had a lower proportion of oats. The high incidence of oat and barley in contrast to wheat in the kilns has been identified at other Irish early medieval sites. The charcoal from the kilns comprised a mixed wood assemblage comprising hazel, wild cherry/cherry, ash, willow and pomaceous woods, which is in keeping with charcoal results from medieval kiln deposits (though a slightly different wood proportion was noted in the kiln with less oats).

A house named ‘Seamount’ appears at this location on cartographic sources from the early 19th century. The layout of the grounds of Seamount House reflects the archaeological features found during the 2014 excavation in a number of surprising ways. Prehistoric, early medieval and medieval features were all echoed by the 18th- and 19th-century landscape. The archaeologists interpreted this through the prism of changing attitudes to gardens in the 18th and 19th centuries. The preservation of the archaeological monuments in the post-medieval landscape at Seamount House is seen as a process of cultural repossession and appropriation by successive generations. This is directly comparable to the same processes described above by which the prehistoric monuments were reinterpreted by early medieval farmers.

The final report can be downloaded from www.archaeologyplan.com/projects
2.5 Recorded Monuments and Places

The site contains no Recorded Monuments listed within the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) or Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), while the nearest Recorded Monument to the site is an earthwork (DU012-032), located 0.3 km to the east (Figure 2). The following is a list of the nearest recorded monuments that demonstrate the overall archaeological potential of the site of the proposed development and its surrounding townlands. These descriptions are derived from the National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey Database (http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/).

DU012-032
Class: Earthwork
Townland: Malahide, Robswalls
Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes
Description: There is a mound marked on the OS 6-inch map (1827 edition). The site was on a hill overlooking Seamount House and the sea. Test excavation (Licence no. 06E0609) was undertaken in the vicinity of the mound site in advance of drainage insertion. The area had been disturbed by quarrying works and subsequent back-filling. The mound site was not discovered during the course of testing. Local informants indicated that the area had been dug out some time in the past. No visible remains.

DU012-030
Class: Castle - tower house
Townland: Malahide Demesne
Scheduled for inclusion in the next revision of the RMP: Yes
Description: Malahide Castle erected on an elevated situation in the present grounds of the Demesne is associated with the Talbot family who were granted these lands by Henry II in 1174. The family remained here until 1973, except for a short period in 1653 when Talbot was outlawed and the castle and lands were given to Miles Corbet but later restored in 1665. It is large, irregular, and unequal in its height. The late medieval core of the castle is largely masked by a re-build c. 1760, which involved the construction of a long symmetrical wing with corner towers that enclosed the earlier castle thus creating a castellated structure. Externally this is of Georgian Gothic style. The castle was re-roofed and renovated in the 19th-century. The ground floor of the late medieval core is vaulted and entered by a Gothic doorway, the upper chambers are approached by a spiral staircase in a SE angle tower which projects in the E. On the first floor adjoining the hall in the medieval core of the castle is the Oak Room. This has a vaulted undercroft and corbel heads of Edward IV, which are original (Dims L10.75m, Wth 7.15m, T 1.30m). It's walls are covered with carved panelling of 16th-century date. There is a 16th-century Flemish carving over the fireplace depicting the Assumption of the Virgin.

Fingal County Council undertook an extensive restoration and conservation project in 2010/2011. Archaeological testing and excavation (Consent no. C451) in advance of wheelchair access insertion uncovered
a set of steps at the north-west corner of the older part of the castle, an early possible enclosing wall identified below the Butler’s House as well as a substantial ditch (1.7m in width), which was sealed by the likely late medieval courtyard and probably originally enclosed the 15th-century tower house.

DU012-031001-005

Class: Church, Architectural Fragments, Sheela-na-gigs

Townland: Malahide Demesne

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

Description: Located in the grounds of Malahide Castle (DU012-030----). The church contains a nave (int. dims. L 16.9m, Wth 6.8m) and chancel (int. dims. L 8.8m, Wth 5.6m) with a sacristy attached to south-eastern corner. There are stepped battlements on the side walls of the nave. Built of coursed, well mortared limestone masonry. There are buttresses against the west gable either side of the window and a batter or buttress in the southwest corner. The church is entered towards the west end of the nave through opposed doorways with pointed arches, chamfered jambs and a hood moulding. Apex on the exterior of the south door contains a ‘mitred head’ and a zoomorphic figure on the moulding stop (DU012-031004-). In the interior there is a red sandstone stoup secured to south wall. There are fine triple light, ogee-headed W window of 15th-century date and two double-light tracery windows in the east end.

Above the west gable is a triple bellcote with steps leading up to it. The chancel is entered through a pointed, segmental chancel arch. (Int. dims. L 8.80m, W 5.60m). Interior is lit by wide, flat-arched windows in the south wall. The east window is a large, limestone, triple-light, tracery window. Corbels project from the east wall at altar level. The sacristy is entered off the chancel by stepping down into a vaulted ground floor with wall presses. There is an external stairs to first floor which contains a fireplace and wall presses in the in the east wall. At the exterior east gable wall there is a sheela-na gig (DU012-031003-). It comprises a carved head and neck in red sandstone, the lower portion is damaged. The facial features are well pronounced. Described by Hartnett (1954, 179–180) as ‘the facial features are better defined. The mouth is open, the tongue protruding slightly and the jaw sharply defined. The stone appears to have been broken off at the junction of neck and body’. Another sheela-na-gig (DU012-031002-) is built into quoin at the northeast angle of the chancel of the medieval church. According to Freitag (2004, 137–8) this sheela-na-gig is not in its original location and is described as a ‘figure carved in false relief on red sandstone and set within frame. Big, earless head, flat face with downcast eyes, drooping gash of a mouth; short neck; squat body. No ribs or breasts, but navel clearly indicated. Only left arm discernible, held straight with hand resting on thigh. Long vertical slit-vulva hanging between straight legs. No feet, presumably cut off together with lower edge’.

The interior of the church has been used for burial and contains an altar tomb dedicated to Maud Plunkett (d. 1494) with a recumbent effigy of a female figure in a horned cap (DU012-031005-). The fashion elements date to c.1440 and it is suggested that the effigy was carved when Maud was married to her second husband Richard Talbot. The tomb is surrounded by a decorative iron railing. Base decorated with Plunkett shields. There is a
19th century box tomb at the east end of the chancel. In 2010 the tree and vegetation growth which dominated the south of the church was removed opening up the entire southern facade of the church.

**DU012-031006**

**Class:** Graveyard

**Townland:** Malahide Demesne

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

**Description:** Located in the grounds of Malahide Castle (DU012-030) opposite the recently renovated Courtyard. This is a relatively small sub-circular graveyard enclosed by a battlemented wall (E-W c. 40m, N-S c. 45m) and curving hedgerow. It is raised in the centre and dominated by the church (DU012-031001-) the interior of which has been used for internment. The graveyard contains a number of inscribed 18th, 19th and early to mid-20th century gravestones. There are also undecorated grave markers and possibly reused architectural fragments. At least two examples of fallen slabs (one external and one internal to church) have been replaced by modern stones with original inscriptions e.g. Lambs-1789 Peter 109 years, his wife died 1791 100 years, they lived together for 80 years.

Monitoring (Licence no. C451; E4381) of the insertion of services during the redevelopment of the Malahide Castle & Gardens uncovered skeletal remains on the curving path 1m externally to the graveyard. These remains were uncovered at a depth of approximately 0.5m below the surface and were aligned east to west. All four individuals were truncated at the west by a modern service trench.

**DU012-034**

**Class:** Castle - motte and bailey

**Townland:** Sainthelens

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

**Description:** Located in level ground this is a flat-topped elongated mound (Top: L 10m; Wth 7.5m; Base: L 22m) with a flat-bottomed fosse (Wth 5.7m; D 1.25-1.5m) enclosing the north side. There are indications of an intervening berm (Wth 2m). The fosse stops abruptly in the S where the ground is uneven indicating the possible presence of a bailey. Geophysical survey (Licence no. 12R0028) was undertaken to define the limits of the motte and bailey. Three potential structures, possible pit-type features and burnt/fired remains were identified to the south of the motte.
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 Site description

The site is located at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369, Figure 1-2) in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.) This site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades, it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. There are no recorded monuments located in close proximity to the proposed development site.

3.2 Methodology

Test excavation was carried out in accordance with the *IAI Code of Conduct for Archaeological Excavation* (IAI 2006). The excavation included the creation of a written and photographic record of the archaeology on a feature-by-feature basis using pro-forma record sheets; maintaining daily logs of excavations; and recording stratigraphic relationships and the position and depth of archaeology.

The test trenches were excavated to natural subsoil or the top of archaeological deposits. Where features were uncovered during testing, a small sample of the features was excavated in order to determine their depth and extent. The features were cleaned, recorded (by plan, photographs, levels, feature sheets etc.). Any finds recovered during the course of the test trenching would be washed, treated, catalogued, stored and left ready for post excavation analysis. Had items been recovered during this assessment that required urgent conservation, these would have been treated immediately by a professional conservator. All appropriate environmental samples and dating samples were taken and may be sent for further analysis. Animal bone (if recovered) would also be cleaned, labelled accordingly, bagged and sent for further analysis. All features were recorded on plan, normally at 1:20 scale, and on section drawing, at 1:10 scale. A complete post-excitation plan of the site was prepared. All drawings include coordinate data for the accurate location of the area planned or the section drawn and spot-heights related to the Ordnance Survey Datum and accurate to two decimal places.

All excavated features and deposits were recorded photographically using digital photography. Digital photography images were taken using a high-resolution digital camera with a minimum resolution of 10 Megapixels.

All processing, recording, cleaning, storage and conservation of finds and samples was in accordance with National Museum of Ireland guidelines (NMI 2010). Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit (ACSU) retained the services of a qualified osteoarchaeologist (Dr Denise Keating) to advise if required. ACSU also has a conservator (Susannah Kelly) on call for any emergency conservation required and she was available to attend on site, if necessary.
3.2.1  
**Finds retrieval**

No archaeological finds were recovered.

3.2.2  
**Sampling strategy**

No samples were taken during the test excavations.

3.3  
**Results**

3.3.1  
**Testing results**

Archaeological assessment (test trenching) was carried out by Donald Murphy under licence 19E0649. The fieldwork was carried out at the site from 3rd to 7th October 2019 using a 15 tonne tracked excavator. A total of 16 test trenches (Plates 1-17) were excavated across the footprint of the proposed development as outlined on Figure 11. Each trench measured 1.8 m in width. In total 831 m of linear trenches were excavated. In general, the trenches revealed topsoil and sod at a depth ranging between 0.1 m – 0.75 m, due to variations in the landscape. The natural subsoil varied greatly across the site.

In Trench 1 agricultural furrows running east-west were registered and in Trench 3 and Trench 4 modern ditches (C100, C101, C102) were found and are likely to represent historic field boundaries as they correspond to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8).

This site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades; it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. As a result, some areas could not be tested due to large mounds of soil and the presence of services. Furthermore, the northeastern adjacent part of the proposed development is owned by Fingal County Council and could not be tested. Where it was possible to test, the investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits. Due to constraints which prevented full testing of the site, and the fact that the area has some potential to contain unrecorded sub-surface features or deposits of an archaeological nature, it is recommended that archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping should be conducted during the construction phase of the proposed development.

3.3.2  
**Excavation Results**

Sixteen test trenches were excavated within the site of the proposed development. The trenches were excavated as detailed within the method statement. The trenches were each 1.8 m wide and measured 831 m in total.

In Trench 1 agricultural furrows running east-west were registered and in Trench 3 and Trench 4 modern ditches (C100, C101, C102) were found and are likely to represent historic field boundaries as they correspond to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8). The investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trench Number</th>
<th>Length (m)</th>
<th>Depth (m)</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.4-0.6</td>
<td>North-south running trench, in area adjacent to Seamount Road. Agricultural furrows running east-west registered in trench. Natural was light yellow brown silty clay and fragmentary grey stone. (Plate 1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.25-0.6</td>
<td>North-south running trench, in area adjacent to Seamount Road. Natural was stone and dark brown silty clay, with pockets of grey sand. (Plate 2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0.45-0.65</td>
<td>East-west running trench, south area of proposed development, adjacent to Seamount Park road. Natural was stone and dark brown silty clay, with pockets of grey sand. Spoil heaps and underground services reduced length of the trench. Modern ditch C100, C101, C102. (Plate 3,15,17).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.45-0.65</td>
<td>East-west running trench, south area of proposed development, adjacent to Seamount Park road. Natural was stone and dark brown silty clay, with pockets of grey sand. Spoil heaps and underground services reduced length of the trench. Modern field ditch C100 and C102. (Plate 4,15).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.1-0.75</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near western boundary of proposed development. Natural was stone and dark brown silty clay, with pockets of grey sand. South end of trench had disturbed ground. Lots of fill and modern drains. (Plate 5, 13,14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.1-0.75</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near western boundary of proposed development. Natural was stone and dark brown silty clay, with pockets of grey sand. South end of trench had disturbed ground. Lots of fill and modern drains. (Plate 13,14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.5-0.65</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near western boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Split underground services of water and ESB. (Plate 6,13,14).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6a</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.5-0.65</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near western boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Split underground services of water and ESB. (Plate 13,14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trench Number</td>
<td>Length (m)</td>
<td>Depth (m)</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located in the centre of the proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Lots of tree roots. (Plate 7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located in the centre of the proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Lots of tree roots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located in the centre of the proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Lots of tree roots. (Plate 8).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Southwest – northeast running trench, located near north-western boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. (Plate 9).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Southwest – northeast running trench, located near north-western boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. (Plate 10).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near north-eastern boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Top end of slope. Lots of tree roots. (Plate 11).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near north-eastern boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Lots of tree roots. (Plate 12,16).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12a</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.4-0.7</td>
<td>Northwest - southeast running trench, located near north-eastern boundary of proposed development. Natural subsoil was light to mid orangey brown silty clay with pockets of light brown sand, infrequent flint pebble inclusions. Lots of tree roots. Plate 16.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context Descriptions:

<table>
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<th>Context</th>
<th>L(m)</th>
<th>W(m)</th>
<th>D(m)</th>
<th>Basic Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Natural subsoil, varied greatly across site, see table above for details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.1-0.75</td>
<td>Topsoil, topsoil and sods, reddish brown sandy clay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern ditch, registered in Trench 3 and Trench 4, likely to represent historic field boundary as it corresponds to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C101</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern ditch, registered in Trench 3, likely to represent historic field boundary as it corresponds to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C102</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Modern ditch, registered in Trench 3 and Trench 4, likely to represent historic field boundary as it corresponds to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. MATERIAL CULTURE

4.1 Artefacts

No archaeological finds were recovered.

4.2 Palaeoenvironmental samples

No samples were taken during the program of test trenching on site.

4.3 Animal bone

No animal bone was recovered during the program of test trenching on site.

4.4 Human bone

No human bone was recovered during the program of test trenching on site.

5. DATING

No samples were taken for analysis or dating during the program of test trenching on site, as no archaeological material was encountered.
6. DISCUSSION

Archaeological testing was carried out at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369, Figure 1-2). The site is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.) The area was tested by Donald Murphy from 3rd to 7th October 2019 under licence 19E0649, using a 15 tonne tracked excavator. A total of 16 test trenches (Plates 1-17) were excavated across the footprint of the proposed development as outlined on Figure 11. Each trench measured 1.8 m in width. In total 831m m of linear trenches were excavated. In general, the trenches revealed topsoil and sod at a depth ranging between 0.1 m – 0.75 m, due to variations in the landscape. The natural subsoil varied greatly across the site. In Trench 1 agricultural furrows running east-west were registered and in Trench 3 and Trench 4 modern ditches (C100, C101, C102) were found and are likely to represent historic field boundaries as they correspond to boundaries seen on the historic mapping (Figure 6 – 8).

This site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades, it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as is evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. As a result, some areas could not be tested due to large mounds of soil and the presence of services. Furthermore, the north-eastern adjacent part of the proposed development is owned by Fingal County Council and could not be tested. Where it was possible to test, the investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits. Due to constraints which prevented full testing of the site, and the fact that the landscape area in general has some potential to contain unrecorded sub-surface features or deposits of an archaeological nature, it is recommended that archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping should be conducted during the construction phase of the proposed development.

7. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Test trenching at the site at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Dublin (ITM 723069, 745369) revealed no archaeological features. The site has been greatly disturbed in recent decades; it is partially overgrown and has mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as evident from both aerial imagery (Figure 10) and the site inspection. As a result, some areas could not be tested due to large mounds of soil but also the presence of services. That said, it was still possible to undertake targeted test trenching within the footprint of much of the proposed development (Figure 11). Furthermore, the northeastern adjacent part of the proposed development is owned by Fingal County Council and we did not have permission to test that area. Where test trenching was undertaken, the investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits. Due to the constraints that prevented full testing of the site, and the fact that the general landscape area has the potential to contain unrecorded sub-surface features or deposits of an archaeological nature, it is recommended that archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping should be conducted during the construction phase of the proposed development.
8. POST-EXCAVATION PROGRAMME

The post-excavation work related to testing is now complete. Archaeological monitoring will be required if development goes ahead.

9. EXCAVATION BULLETIN

Seamount, Malahide, Co. Fingal
19E0649
I.T.M. 723069, 745369
Testing

Archaeological testing was carried out at Seamount, Malahide, Co. Fingal. The site is located in the townland of Malahide (Coolock By.). The area was tested by Donald Murphy from 3rd to 7th of October 2019 using a 15-tonne tracked excavator. A total of 16 test trenches were excavated across the footprint of the proposed development. Each trench measured 1.8 m in width. In total 831m of linear trenches were excavated. In general, the trenches revealed topsoil and sod at a depth ranging between 0.1 m – 0.75 m, due to variations in the landscape. The natural subsoil varied greatly across the site. In Trench 1 agricultural furrows running east-west were registered and in Trench 3 and Trench 4 modern ditches (C100, C101, C102) were found and are likely to represent historic field boundaries as they correspond to boundaries seen on the historic mapping.

This site had been greatly disturbed in recent decades; it was partially overgrown and had mounds of stockpiled topsoil within it, as evident from both aerial imagery and the site inspection. As a result, some areas could not be tested due to large mounds of soil and the presence of services. Furthermore, the northeastern adjacent part of the proposed development is owned by Fingal County Council and we did not have permission to test that area. Where test trenching was undertaken, the investigation exposed no archaeological features, structures or deposits.

Donald Murphy, Archaeological Consultancy Services Unit, Unit 21, Boyne Business Park, Greenhills, Drogheda, Co Louth.

10. PUBLICATION PLAN

A summary account of this excavation and its results will be published online as an excavation bulletin on www.excavations.ie (see Section 9).
11. REFERENCES

D'Alton, J. (1838) The history of the county of Dublin. Dublin, Hodges and Smith

Other Sources

National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (http://www.buildingofireland.ie/).
Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), the Heritage Service, 7 Ely Place, Dublin 2.
Summary Accounts of Archaeological Excavations in Ireland (www.excavations.ie).
Topographical Files of the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Cartographic References

Down Survey of County Dublin, Barony of Coolock (1654-56)
An actual survey of the County of Dublin, Rocque (1760)
Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the Roads of Ireland (1777)
Davies’ map of County Dublin (1837)
First edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (1843).
Cassini edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (1935-38).
Figure 1: Location of site
Previous Archaeological Excavations

Figure 2: Location of site, previous excavations and nearby Sites and Monuments Record sites
Figure 3: Extract from Down Survey of County Dublin, Barony of Coolock (1654-56), showing approximate location of site
Figure 4: Extract from An actual survey of the County of Dublin, Rocque (1760) northeast sheet, showing approximate location of site
Figure 5: Extract from Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* - Route 1 from Dublin to Donaghadee (1777), showing approximate location of site
Figure 6: Extract from 1st edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (1843), showing location of site
Figure 7: Extract from 3rd edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 25-inch map (1906-9), showing location of site
Figure 8: Extract from Cassini edition Ordnance Survey (OS) 6-inch map (1935-8), showing location of site
Figure 9: Overall plan of archaeological excavation undertaken by Antoine Giacometti in proximity of the site, Licence No. 14E0161
Figure 10: Excavated test trenches overlaid on aerial image of site
Figure 11: Details of site development, showing location of excavated test trenches
Plate 1: Trench 1, looking north

Plate 2: Trench 2, looking south

Plate 3: Trench 3 with ditch C101, looking east

Plate 4: Trench 4 with ditch C102, looking east
Plate 9: Trench 9, looking east

Plate 10: Trench 10, looking east

Plate 11: Trench 11, tree root disturbance in near side, looking north

Plate 12: Trench 12, looking north
Plate 13: ESB & Water services between trenches 5 & 6, looking west

Plate 14: Disturbed ground in Trench 5 also seen in Trench 6, looking south

Plate 15: East side of Trenches 3 & 4, disturbed ground, looking south

Plate 16: Trench 12, tree roots
Plate 17: Trench 3, modern ditch C100, looking west