

Final archaeological report for testing at

**St Anne's Mansion (formerly Thornhill)
St Anne's Park
Raheny
Dublin 5**

Licence Number: 21E0375

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For

Parks, Biodiversity & Landscape Services, Community,
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Civic Offices
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Archaeology
and Built Heritage



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report relates to the testing of the site of St Anne's Mansion (formerly Thornhill) in St Anne's Park, Raheny, Dublin 5 (Figure 1). The aim of the testing was to ascertain the extent to which subsurface remains of the house survive.
- 1.2 The reason for understanding the subsurface remains is that Dublin City Council Parks Division aim to mark the presence of the mansion with a view to conserving the ruin as an amenity in the park.

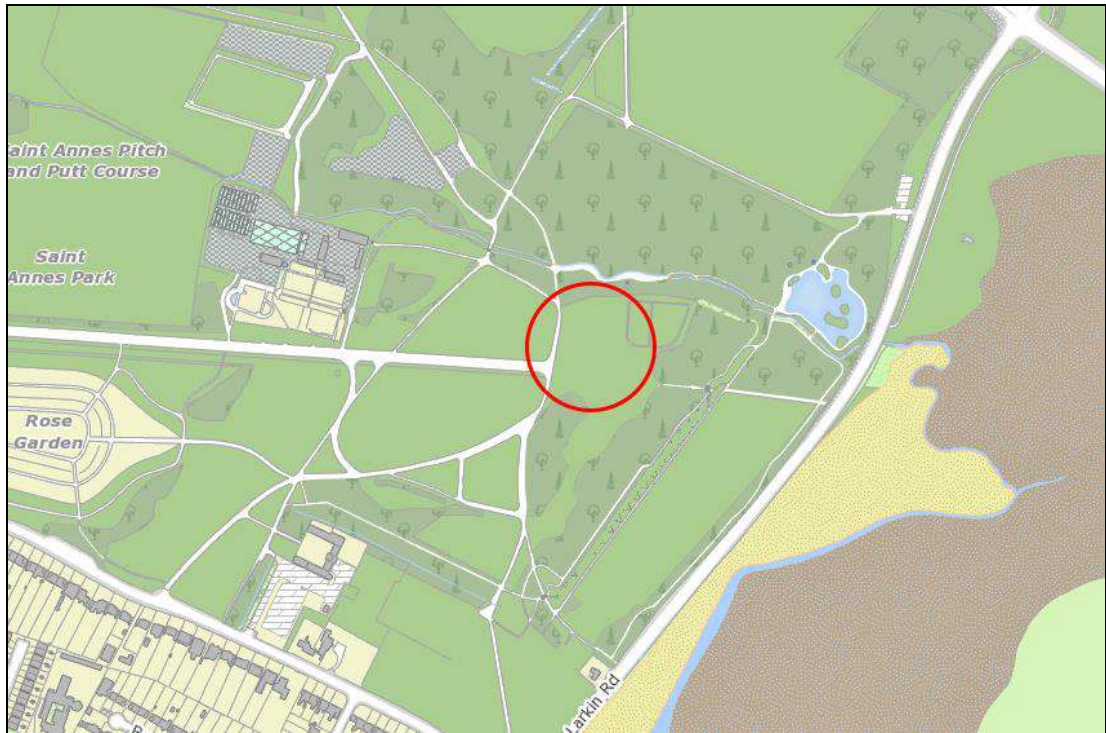


Figure 1 Site location (ASI)

2 Archaeological and historical contexts

- 2.1 The name St Anne's Park was given to this estate by Benjamin Lee Guinness in honour of St Ann's holy well (Reg. No. 50030022) that lies approximately 225m to the northeast of the study area (Dawson, 1976, 127). The estate was formerly known as Thornhill estate, but was renamed after it was acquired by the brothers Arthur and Benjamin Lee Guinness in 1835. The holding included 29 acres of land. By 1878, the estate would have grown to over 500 acres.

The study area is bounded to the north by the Naniken River or *Abhann na gCian* a derivative of the Ciannacht clan which occupied the coastal area between Annagassan and Dublin in the early medieval period.

- 2.2 St Anne's Mansion was originally built during the Georgian period and was called Thornhill. After the estate was taken over by Elizabeth and Benjamin Lee Guinness the house underwent a series of expansions and developments and a large Italianate-style residence was built and modified over several generations.

Thornhill was built in 1814 by Sergeant John Ball. It was previously occupied by Hugh O'Reilly Esquire, before the lease was sold to Lord Ardilaun and his brother Arthur Lee Guinness.

In 1873, Lord Ardilaun commissioned James Franklin to redesign Thornhill. The building work was carried out by Thomas Millard and the result of the remodelling was to almost double the size of the original house.

James Franklin was born in Kerry to minor landed gentry in 1835. IN 1850 he moved to England serving apprenticeships in various firms including Summers, Day and Baldock mechanical engineers and then in the offices Frederick William Porter in London. He worked for a number of other architects in London, Manchester and Sheffield. In 1861 he returned to Kerry. In 1862 he started in the role of district architect under the Irish ecclesiastical commissioners in charge of the North Western Division. In 1869, after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, he set up his own office at 179 Great Brunswick Street, Dublin.

Thomas Millard was born circa 1811 and originally worked as a cabinet maker in Cheltenham before arriving in Dublin in 1838, taking up a role with the Board of National Education. He had set up his own cabinet-making and upholstery business on Mary Street in Dublin. By 1853 his business was complete dominated by building carrying out jobs for the Board of Public Works, while also specialising in the erection of residential mansions for the nobility and gentry.

- 2.3 The Down Survey from 1654-56 shows the area where St Anne's Park currently lies as being in the Lord of Howth's Land. The mouth of both the Nanikan River and the Santry River are clearly marked to the north of the approximate location of St Anne's mansion (Figure 2).

A more detailed map of the area was carried out by John Rocque in 1757 as part of his Survey of the City, Harbour, Bay and Environs of Dublin. The area is dominated by field systems, with no buildings in the study area. Two buildings can be seen lying to the east of the future site of Thornhill, which would become St Anne's mansion.

An estate map by Brassington and Gale from 1835 shows Thornhill House and the surrounding walled garden and access routes (Figure 4). The first detailed survey of the area was the 6-inch Ordnance Survey; carried out in 1836 and published in 1843. The revision of this map in 1868 shows St Anne's mansion (St Ann's) after its' expansion from the more modest, yet still substantial, house that was depicted by Brassington and Gale.

The 25-inch Ordnance Survey of this area was carried out in 1907 and published in 1910 shows the extent of St Anne's Mansion after it was completely remodelled. St Anne's Estate was acquired by Dublin Corporation in 1939 for approximately £55,000, after which it was used as a store by the Defence Forces. In December 1943 it was gutted by a fire. The shell of the house remained upstanding until it was demolished in 1968. It is believed that the two mounds that now stand over the footprint of the house were only added in the 1980's.

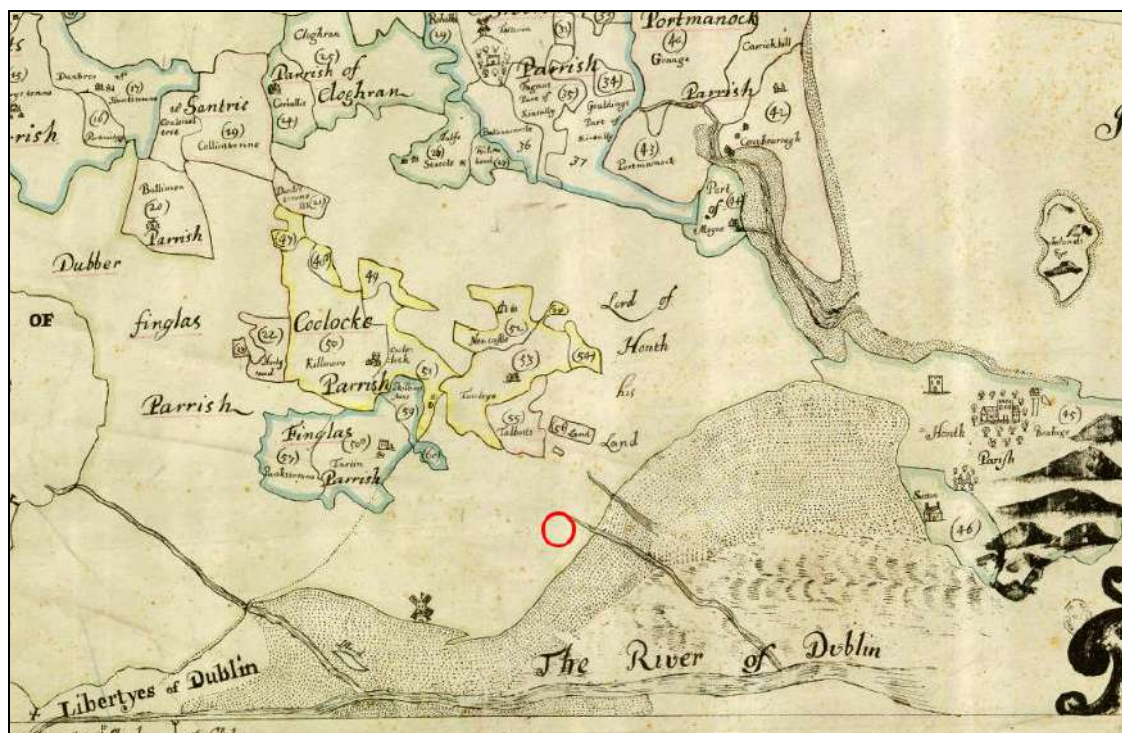


Figure 2 Down Survey 1654-56



Figure 3 Extract from John Rocque's 1757 survey showing the location of the study area



Figure 4 Extract from Brassington and Gale's Map of Thornhill House and Estate (Dublin City Council)

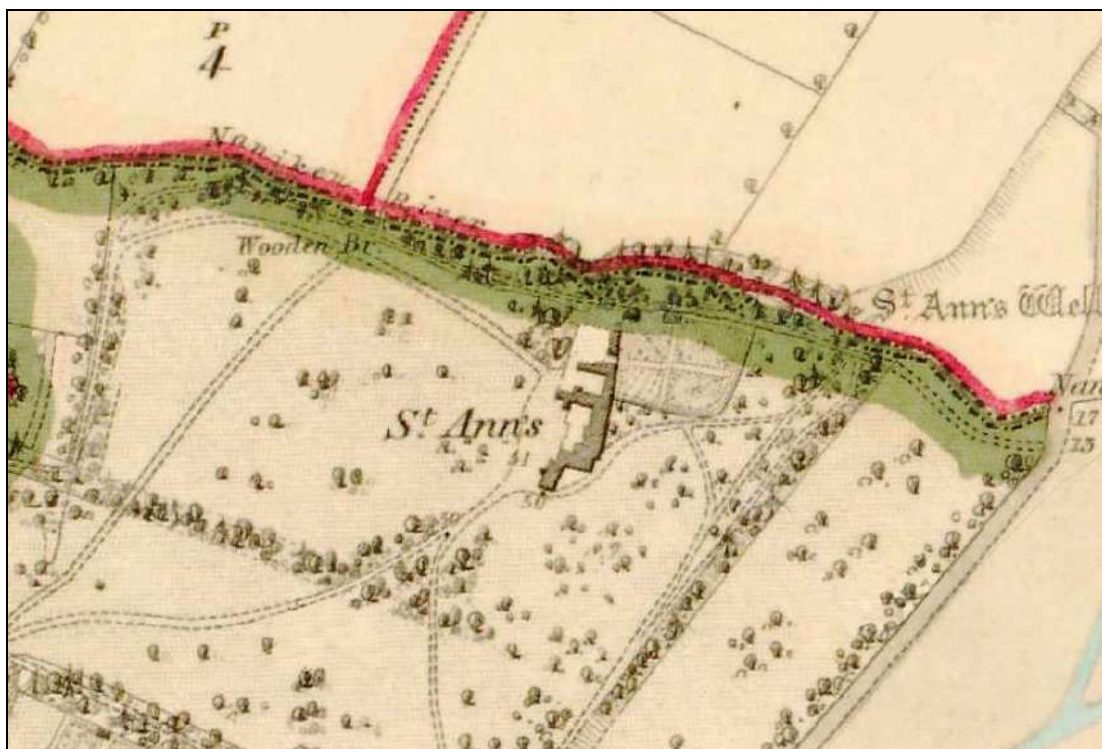


Figure 5 1st edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheet DN019)

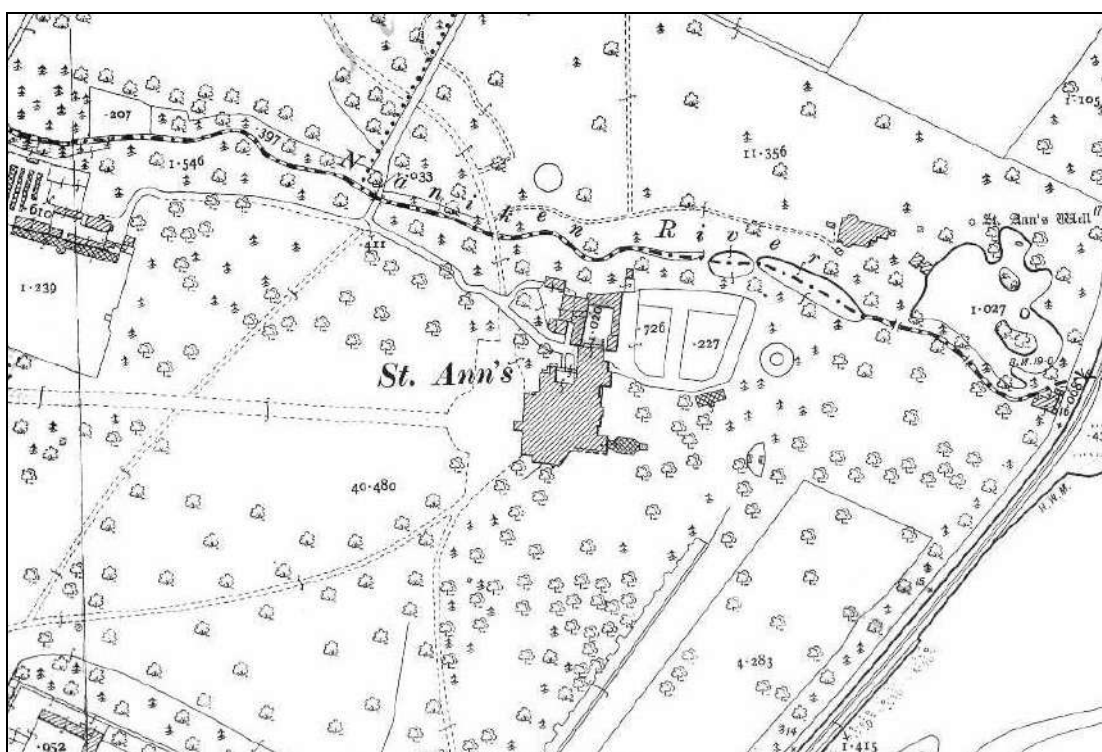


Figure 6 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheets DN019-01 and DN019-02)

3 Previous archaeological investigations

- 3.1 The archaeological constraint maps in conjunction with the county 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 comprise 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. 004); (iii) A three, four or five digit number indicating the dedicated number of the individual site or monument.

The proposed development area contains no known monuments. There are five known monumenets located within 800m of the site.

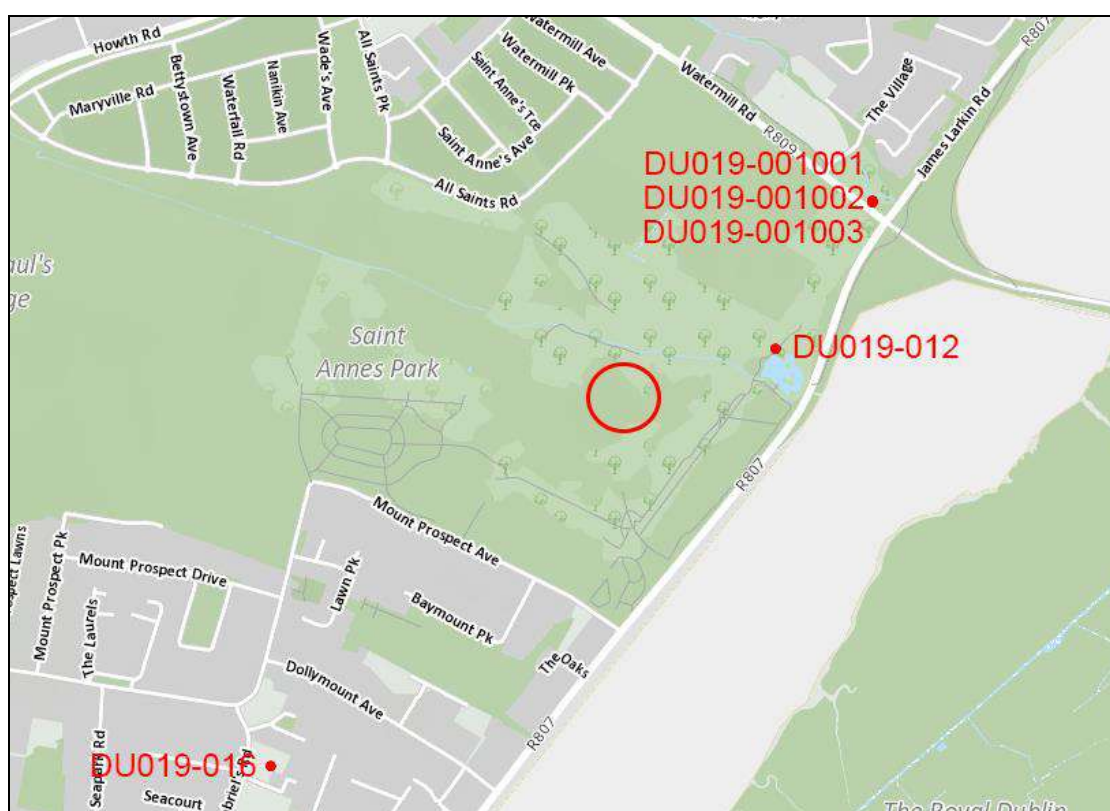


Figure 7 Location of recorded monuments within an 800m radius of the site (ASI, Historical Environment Viewer)

SMR No.	Class	Townland
DU019-001001	House - 16th/17th century	Dublin North City
DU019-001002	Armorial plaque	BETTYVILLE (Coolock By.), Dublin North City
DU019-001003	Water mill - unclassified	Dublin North City
DU019-012	Ritual site - holy well	Dublin North City
DU019-016	Mound	Dublin North City

Table 1 List of the recorded monuments within 800m of the site

- 3.2 To date there have been no previous archaeological investigations carried out within the boundaries of St Anne's Park. Four licensed investigations were carried out approximately 0.8km to the south of the Red Stables (Table 2, Figure 7). Nothing of archaeological significance was identified during these investigations.

License No.	License Holder	Investigation Type	Archaeology Found
94E0011	Mary McMahon	Assessment	No
03E0970	Angela Wallace	Monitoring	No
06E1115	Rob Lynch	Monitoring	No
09E0354	Dáire Leahy	Monitoring	No

Table 2 List of the licensed investigations within 500m of the site

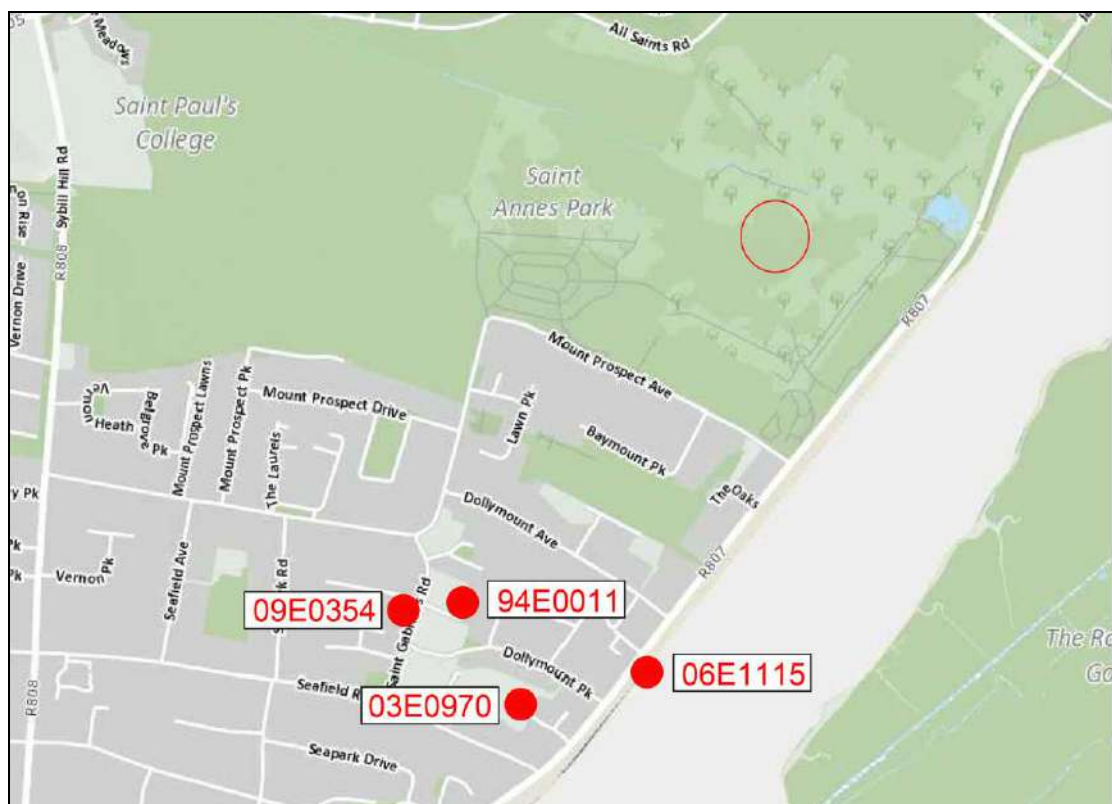


Figure 8 Previous licenced investigations within a 800m radius of the site (ASI, Historical Environment Viewer)

- 3.3 The files in the National Museum of Ireland have been consulted. Collectively known as the Topographical Files, they provide information on artefacts, their find spots and any field monuments, which have been notified to the National Museum.

Only one artefact has been found within a 1km vicinity of the development area which was believed to have been a 19th century belt clasp (IA/56/83) and returned to the finder.

4 Testing Programme

- 4.1 The primary aim of the testing was to ascertain the extent to which subsurface remains of St Anne's Mansion (formerly Thornhill) survive in-situ, in particular the cellars (Figure 9).

As St Anne's house is a remodelling of an older house and it is believed that the footprint will contain elements of the original Thornhill house. The eastern area of the cellars is most likely related to this earlier build and it was hoped that the earliest elements would have been identified through testing, however, the depth of the cellars and the makeup of the backfilled material made it too difficult to reach the lowest level of the structure during the testing programme.

The testing programme took place from the 27th to the 29th of August, 2021.

Test Trench	Orientation	Length	Depth	Archaeology Found
1	E/W and N/S	21m	0.4m-3.1m	Yes
2	E/W and N/S	16m	1.2m-2.5m	Yes
3	E/W	19m	1.5m	Yes
4	E/W	3m	0.5m	No

Table 3 List of test trenches opened during the testing programme

- 4.2 In total, 3 test trenches were opened across the footprint of the house. An additional test pit was opened in the area of the western porch of the building in order to try and locate any sub-surface remains of the portico.

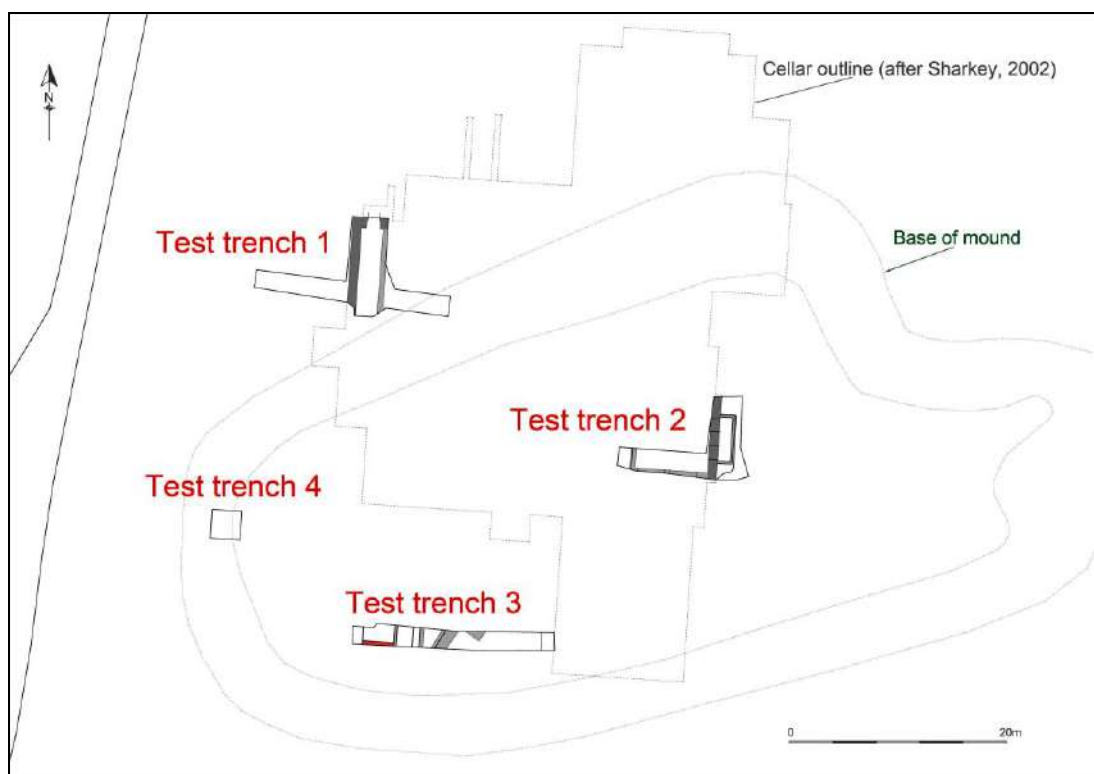


Figure 9 Location of Test Trenches

Test Trench 1

Test Trench 1 was an L-shaped trench located in the northwest corner of the cellars, to the northwest of the southern mound.

The western exterior wall, F1, was identified at the western extent of this trench along with the northeast corner of the original St Anne' mansion and was constructed of limestone blocks. An internal limestone wall located 2m to the east of F1 formed a passageway along the western end of the house and to the east of the wall, the boiler room.

The northwest corner contained an entrance that was not recorded on the plan of the cellars contained in Sharkey's book. The exact nature of this entrance was not completely exposed due to the presence of two large trees in the immediate vicinity. To excavate further would have risked damaging the roots of these trees and so the test trench was terminated at this point.

It proved impossible to reach the floor surface of the cellars without the sides of the trenches collapsing. Material was excavated to 3.4m below the current ground level.

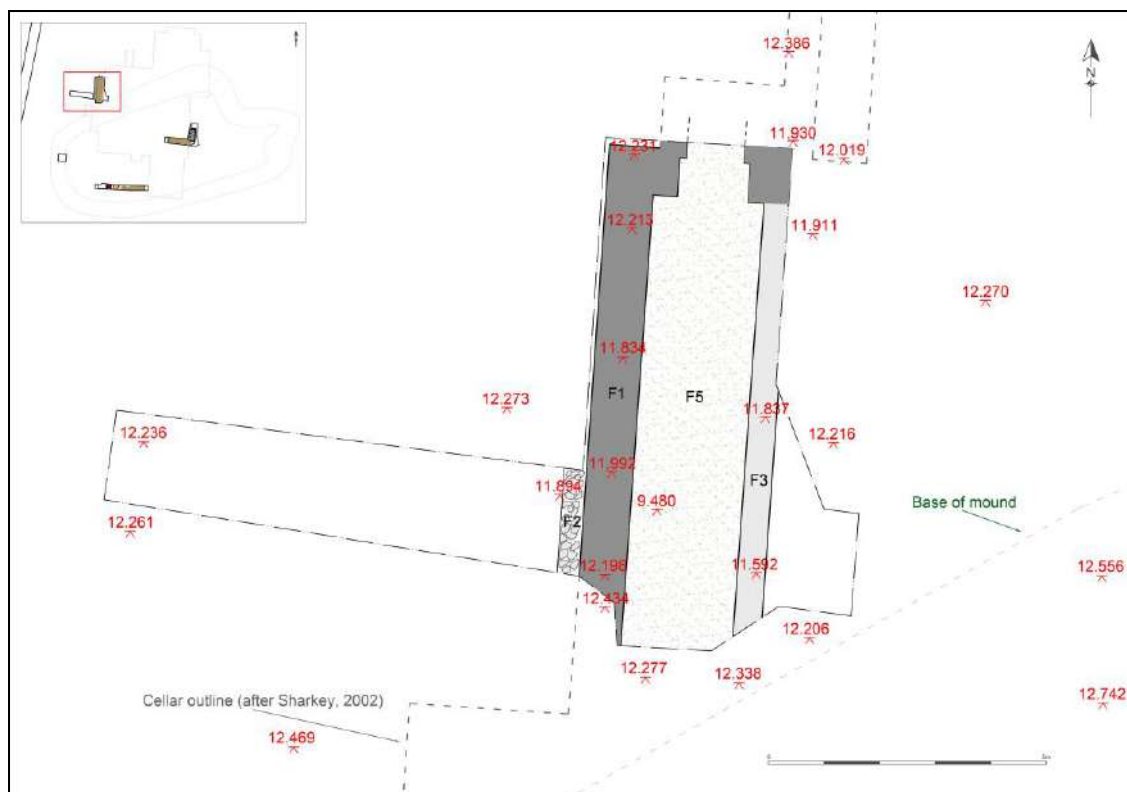


Figure 10 Test Trench 1

Test Trench 2

Test Trench 2 was an L-shaped trench located over the central area of the eastern external wall and Room 10.

The internal western limestone wall of Room 10, F6, was identified running north-south across the trench. F7 was a wall running east-west adjoining the internal wall F7 and the external

wall F9, to the east. F7 contained two arches providing passage between Room 10 and Room 11. F8 was a brick wall that sat immediately above F7. This wall was extremely brittle. There is evidence for the remnants of floor timbers in the form of notches in this yellow brick wall.

The external wall was similar in width to F1, 0.85m. The east facing façade exhibited dressed Portland stone. Two windows, sealed by rusted iron bars, punctuated this wall and opened into a slanted light well that retained many of the original white tiles which would have assisted the light entering the cellar.

As with Test Trench 1, it proved impossible to reach the floor surface of the cellars without the sides of the trenches collapsing. Material was excavated to 3m below the current ground level.

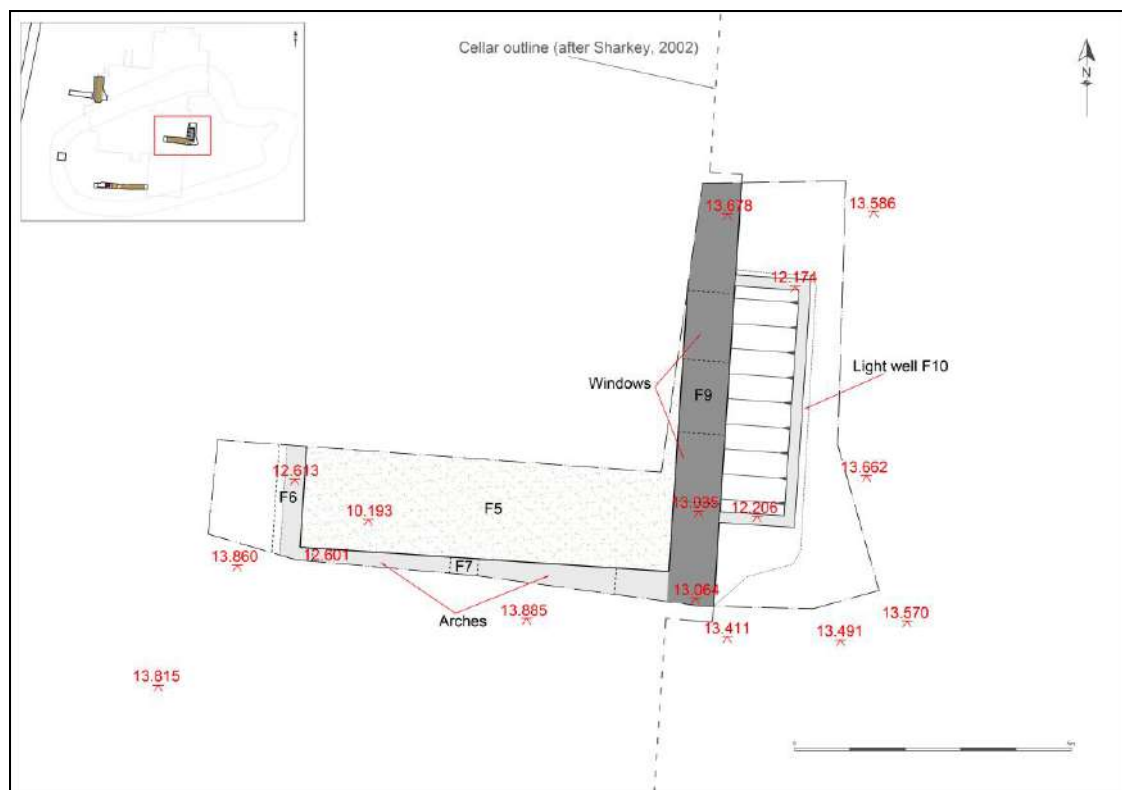


Figure 11 Test Trench 2

Test Trench 3

Unlike Test Trenches 1 and 2, Test Trench 3 revealed only features that were associated with the ground floor level. This is due to the fact that the trench was located outside of the footprint of the cellars. The target of this trench was the 'Circular Room', the stairwell on the ground floor level and the possible ice house at basement level.

The original stairs appears to have been completely removed, with only foundation walls, F11 and F12, in the area of where it would have once stood. A small outcrop of wall adjoining F11 may have formed some part of the foundation of the stairs as it appears to be in the vicinity of the stairwell, to the west of the triangular closet with the tiled floor F15.

In between the triangular closet and wall F12, the crown of a vaulted passageway was identified, F13. This is most likely the passageway to what may have been the ice house associated with St Anne's Mansion.

While the 'Circular Room' was not readily visible during testing, it is likely that remnants of this room survive beyond the extent of the trench. The limestone wall, F17 is most likely the western extent of this. F17 adjoins F16 and both form part of a closeted room that would have stood in the passageway from the 'Circular Room' to the 'Drawing Room'. Lying opposite this closet would have been a 'Water Closet'.

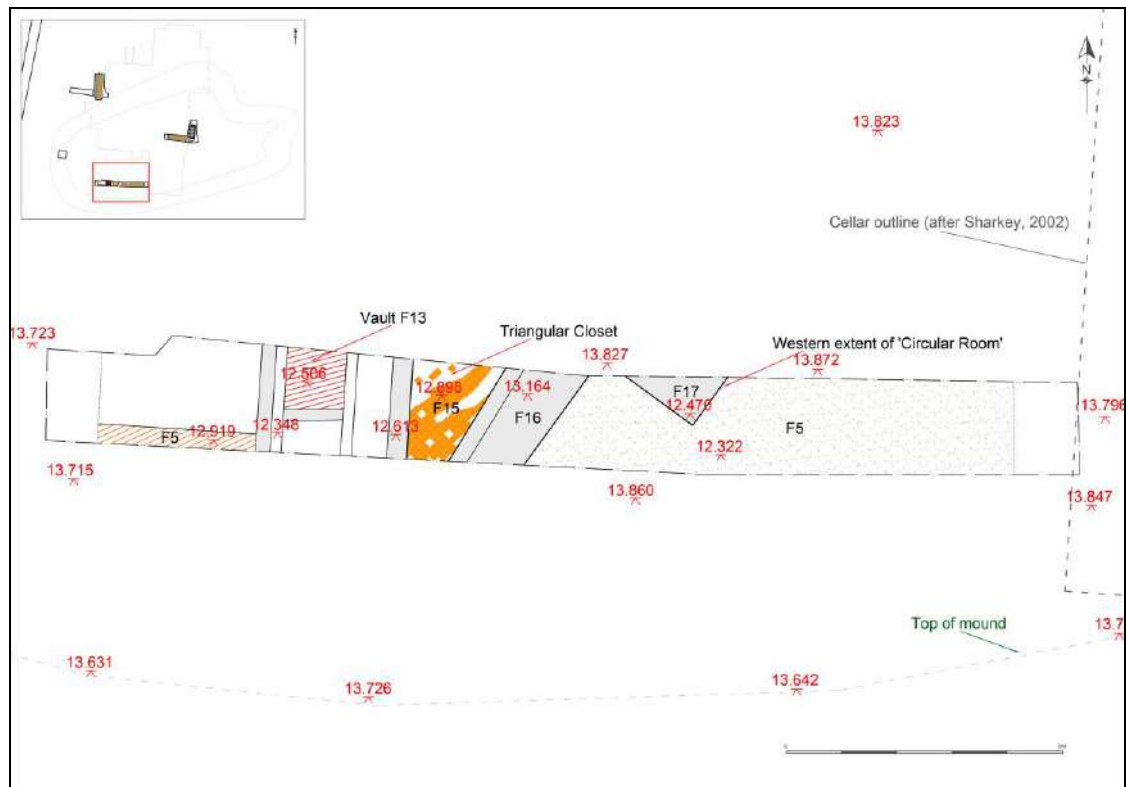


Figure 12 Test Trench 3

Test Trench 4

Test Trench 4 was opened in order to identify any sub-surface remains of the porch feature associated with St Anne's mansion. The test trench was square in plan measuring 2.5m by 2.5m. There was no evidence in this trench that porch survived demolition.

Feature No.	Description	Date	Test Trench
1	External western wall, running N/S	27.08.2021	1
2	Drainage feature running adjacent to F1	27.08.2021	1
3	Interior N/S orientated wall	27.08.2021	1
4	Return of F1 in the northwest corner	27.08.2021	1
5	Rubble Infill	27.08.2021	1
6	N/S internal western wall of Room 10	28.08.2021	2
7	East/west wall containing two arches in Room 10	28.08.2021	2
8	Brick wall over F7, related to the ground floor	28.08.2021	2
9	External rear wall of the house	28.08.2021	2
10	Light well	28.08.2021	2
11	E/W brick wall	29.08.2021	3
12	N/S internal wall adjoining F11	29.08.2021	3
13	Vaulted cellar/passageway	29.08.2021	3
14	N/S wall and possible foundation for stairs	29.08.2021	3
15	Floor tiled surface	29.08.2021	3
16	Angular wall to the west of Circular Room	29.08.2021	3
17	Western wall of Circular Room	29.08.2021	3
18	Topsoil	27.08.2021	All

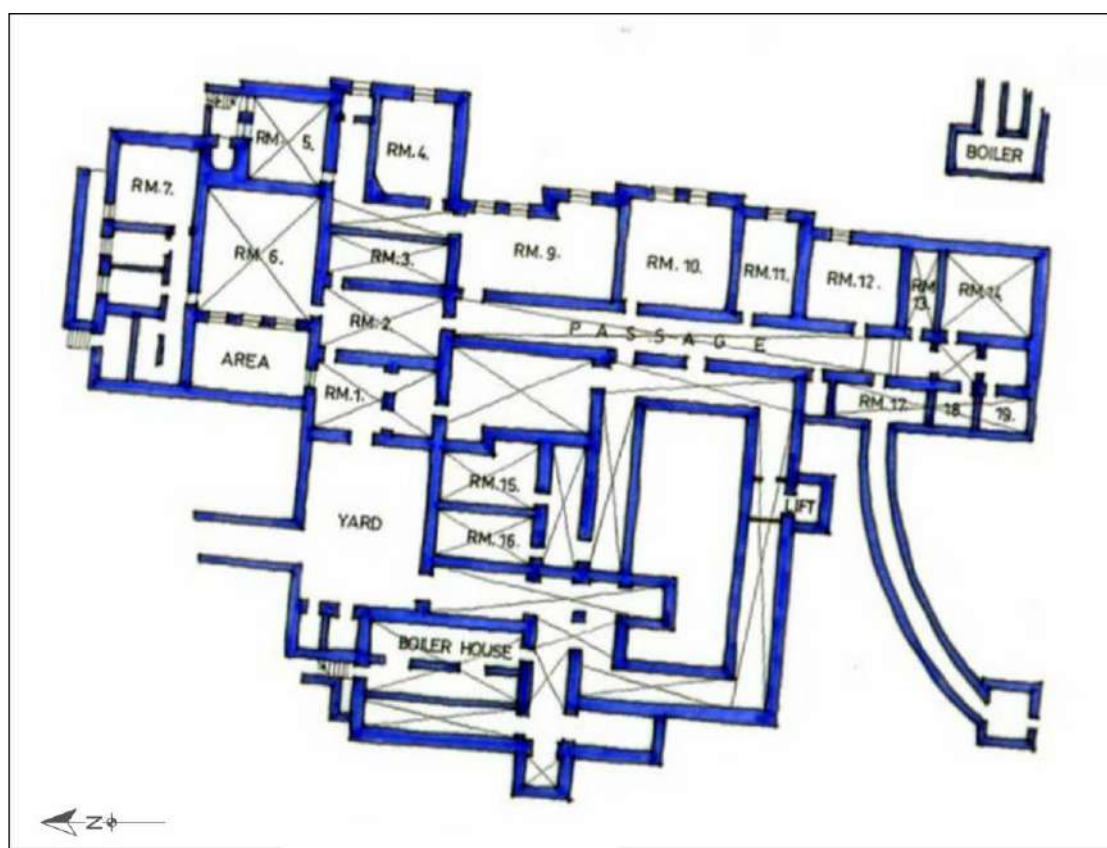


Figure 13

Basement plan of St Anne's Mansion (Sharkey)



Figure 14 Ground floor plan of St Anne's Mansion with the outline of the two mounds (ASI and Sharkey)

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 While only three test trenches were opened and one smaller test pit, it is clear that the cellar of St Anne's Mansion survives intact beneath the mounds in St Anne's Park. No trenches were opened up in the location of the northern mound, with the focus instead being on the footprint of the cellar and the main house rather than the outbuildings and coach houses.
- 5.2 Partial remains of the ground floor level were identified beneath the southern mound and would indicate that many of the rooms on this level may partially survive.
- 5.3 While a small test trench or test pit was opened in the vicinity of where the western porch of the house would have once stood, no evidence for the feature were uncovered. However, this is not to say that nothing of the portico survives. It may have been a case of the test trench/pit being located in the wrong area and so any further works should be cognisant of the possibility that some partial elements may survive.
- 5.4 The backfilled material contained within and over the cellars is made of the demolition material from St Anne's mansion and so much of the original Portland stone survives on site along with many ornately decorated architectural fragments.
- 5.5 The geophysical survey of the area carried out by *Earthsound* at the beginning of 2019 revealed a series of potential features at the lowest level. While there is a question as to whether or not this might be the original Thornhill House, the orientation of these lines seem unlikely to be the original house as the sources indicate that the house was refurbished and extended, rather than rebuilt. During the testing programme, we were unable to reach the lowest levels of the house due to the instability of the backfilled ground, but these potential structural features should be investigated during any further works on the site.

Plates



Plate 1 Wall F1, looking west



Plate 2

Wall F1 and drain F2 in Test Trench 1, looking north



Plate 3 Northwest corner of the house, looking northwest



Plate 4 Wall F6 in Test Trench 2, looking northwest



Plate 5 Western arch in F7, below F8, looking south



Plate 6 Test Trench 2, looking west



Plate 7 Eastern external wall F9 and Light Well F10



Plate 8 Vault F13, looking east



Plate 9 Tiled Floor F15 of the 'Triangular Closet', looking north



Plate 10 Test Trench 3, looking east



Plate 11 Architectural fragments that have been retained and stored in the depot



Plate 12 Stone exhibiting graffiti from Test Trench 3

6 References

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