

**St Anne's House (formerly Thornhill)  
Blackbush or Heronstown  
St Anne's Park  
Raheny  
Dublin 5**

**Licence ref. 22E0688 ext  
Preliminary archaeological excavation report**

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## Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Historical and archaeological contexts	3
3	Recorded monuments and previous archaeological investigations	8
4	Stratigraphic discussion	12
5	Conclusion	18
6	References	20

## Figures

- Figure 1 Site location within St. Anne's Park (ASI)
- Figure 2 Down Survey map of the area 1654-56
- Figure 3 Extract from John Rocque's 1757 survey showing the approximate location of the mansion
- Figure 4 Extract from Brassington and Gale's Map of Thornhill House and Estate c.1832 (Dublin City Council)
- Figure 5 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheet DN019)
- Figure 6 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheets DN019-01 and DN019-02)
- Figure 7 Location of recorded monuments within an 800m radius of the site (ASI, Historical Environment Viewer)
- Figure 8 Plan of 2024 community excavation trench (ABH Ltd.)

## Plates

- Plate 1 Aerial view of excavated mansion remains 2024, north to left
- Plate 2 Aerial view of 2024 Community Excavation area, north to left
- Plate 3 Aerial view of carriage road leading to Portico, north to left
- Plate 4 Aerial view of Portico and front step remains, north to left
- Plate 5 Front entrance remains with jostle stone positions, facing east
- Plate 6 Aerial view of Porch, showing *in situ* tile panels, north to left
- Plate 7 Southern tile panel remains, facing west
- Plate 8 Northern tile panel remains from above, north to left
- Plate 9 Aerial view of excavated portion of Main Hall, north to left
- Plate 10 Aerial view of excavated portion of Picture Gallery, north to left
- Plate 11 Early 20th-century photograph of Portico
- Plate 12 Composite of two fragments of monogrammed AEG tiles
- Plate 13 Fragment of ornate internal doorcase
- Plate 14 Early 20th-century photograph of the Main Hall, facing west
- Plate 15 Early 20th-century photograph of the Main Hall, facing east
- Plate 16 Scagliola mantelpiece attributed to Pietro Bossi (Hugh Lane Gallery)
- Plate 17 .22 brass casings from excavation

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This preliminary report has been prepared by James Kyle and Wayne Malone of Archaeology & Built Heritage Ltd. to detail the results of the third season of the community excavation which was undertaken on part of the site of St Anne's House (formerly Thornhill) in St Anne's Park, Raheny, Dublin 5 (Figure 1). The aim of the excavation was twofold; to expand on the success of the two previous seasons of excavation and to further address the development of a significant Victorian palatial house. The preservation of in-situ architectural features and deposits relating to the occupation, fire and demolition of the structure ensures the continuing opportunity for volunteer archaeologists to excavate and engage with tangible archaeological material as well as assess the phases of the structural development and ultimate demise of the house. The 2024 excavation ran from 23<sup>rd</sup> August to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024, and it was conducted by the site director James Kyle under licence ref. 22E0688 (ext), with thanks to the volunteer archaeologists with the assistance of site supervisor Wayne Malone and archaeologists Rory Blount, Mick Mongey, Aidan Giblin and Molly O'Connell.
- 1.2 This excavation formed part of the St. Anne's Community Archaeology Project for 2024, now in its fourth year, the Saint Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme (STACAP) was launched in 2021 as a partnership project under the Dublin City Strategic Heritage Plan. It is a collaboration between DCC Parks Biodiversity and Landscape Services and the Archaeology and Heritage Sections of the Planning and Property Development Department. The programme is partially funded by the Heritage Council and the Creative Ireland Programme. STACAP seeks to establish St Anne's Park as a campus for practical archaeology and training for a broad range of participants in addition to promoting the park as a designed landscape with significant historic, architectural and natural features. These objectives hope to encourage communities to connect with the park and actively engage in the promotion and protection of its unique heritage and to provide volunteers with the skills to actively and independently participate in archaeology in St Anne's Park and beyond. These actions will in turn contribute to community well-being, generate and disseminate knowledge about archaeology in St Anne's Park and the surrounding area. Additionally, the project aims to improve accessibility to the heritage of St Anne's Park through a range of media.
- 1.3 This report has been prepared by the author on behalf of Dublin City Council in order to satisfy the terms of the archaeological licence as granted by the National Monuments Service, part of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This document outlines the results of the 2024 season of archaeological excavations at the site which was centred on the southern portion of the mansion's former façade, including the portico, picture gallery, porch and part of the former main hall. All archaeological features were excavated and recorded in accordance with the former DoEHLG's '*Policy and Guidelines on Archaeological Excavation*'. The excavation produced a moderate range of materials including a large quantity of encaustic floor tile fragments dating to the latter half of the nineteenth century, clay tobacco pipes of similar date, plaster mouldings and artefacts relating to the ultimate use of

the house as a depot for Air Raid Protection (A.R.P.) supplies during the period in Irish history known as 'The Emergency' but known to the rest of the world as World War II. All artefacts will be registered in a National Museum of Ireland standard database, conservation and specialist analysis will be undertaken where necessary.



Figure 1 Site location within St. Anne's Park (ASI)

## 2 Historical and archaeological contexts

- 2.1 The name St Anne's was adopted from the nearby St Anne's holy well (RMP DU019-012, NIAH Reg. No. 50030022) that lies approximately 225m to the southeast of the site of the former mansion (Dawson, 1976, 127). The estate was formerly known as Thornhill house but was renamed after it was acquired by the brothers Arthur and Benjamin Lee Guinness in 1835, grandsons of the Arthur Guinness. Dillon (1932) notes that the demesne also bore the names Blackbush and Heronstown, something which is reflected in the townland which the site is located in, that of *Blackbush or Heronstown*.

The Naniken River flows through the park, 80m to the north of the site of the former house, with the name Naniken or *Abhann na gCian* suggested by Byrnes (2000) to be a derivative of the name of the local clan, the Ciannachta, which occupied the coastal area between Annagassan and Dublin, at the start of the early medieval period between 600-800 AD, although there appears to equally be a suggestion that the Naniken name is a diminutive of the larger River Nanny, located further north on the border between counties Dublin and Meath.

- 2.2 The Down Survey mapping from 1654-56 shows the area which St Anne's Park currently occupies as being part of the Lord of Howth's lands. The mouth of both the Nanikan River and the Santry River are clearly marked to the southeast 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. That source depicts an area dominated by field systems, with no buildings marked on the present site. Two buildings can be seen lying to the east of the future site of Thornhill/St Anne's.

An estate map by Brassington and Gale from 1835 shows Thornhill House, the surrounding walled garden and the access routes (Figure 4), whilst the names of Blackbush or Heronstown are also proffered by Cosgrave (1932) for the Demesne in addition to their more familiar use as the townland name. However, the first highly detailed survey of the area was the 6-inch Ordnance Survey; carried out the following year, in 1836 and published in 1843, which evidences the renaming of Thornhill in 1836 by the brothers Guinness to become St. Anne's. 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, carried out in 1907 and published in 1910, shows the final, enlarged extent of St Anne's house after it was remodelled by Arthur Edward Guinness commencing in 1873. St Anne's Estate was acquired by Dublin Corporation in 1939 for approximately £55,000, after which it was used 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 soil of the two mounds that now stand over the footprint of the house and yards were only added in the 1980's and further archaeological test trenching conducted by the author under licence ref. 21E0375 in late October 2022 evidenced the truth of that belief.

- 2.3 Thornhill House is suggested to have been built at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the precise date is unknown, with land deeds dating to 1747 (Sharkey 2002). It was occupied by the H. O'Reilly Esquire, immediately before its sale to the brothers Benjamin Lee and Arthur Lee Guinness in 1835. After his marriage to his first cousin Elizabeth 'Bessie' Guinness in 1837, Benjamin Lee bought his brother out of the estate in 1838, with the house immediately undergoing a series of expansions and developments, and a large Italianate-style residence was built and modified over two generations by the Guinness family.

In 1873, Benjamin Lee's son, Sir Arthur Guinness commissioned James Franklin-Fuller to redesign St. Anne's. 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-Fuller was born in Kerry to minor landed gentry in 1835, and 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 Northwestern Division and in 1869, after the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, he set up his own office at 179 Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse 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 set up his own cabinetmaking and upholstery business on Mary Street in Dublin and by 1853 his business was completely 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.

Writing in 1932 Dillon stated that there was "*no finer demesne within equal distance of the metropolis, whether as regards extent or beauty*", with older names of the area such as Blackbush Lane being renamed to the more familiar Mount Prospect Avenue.



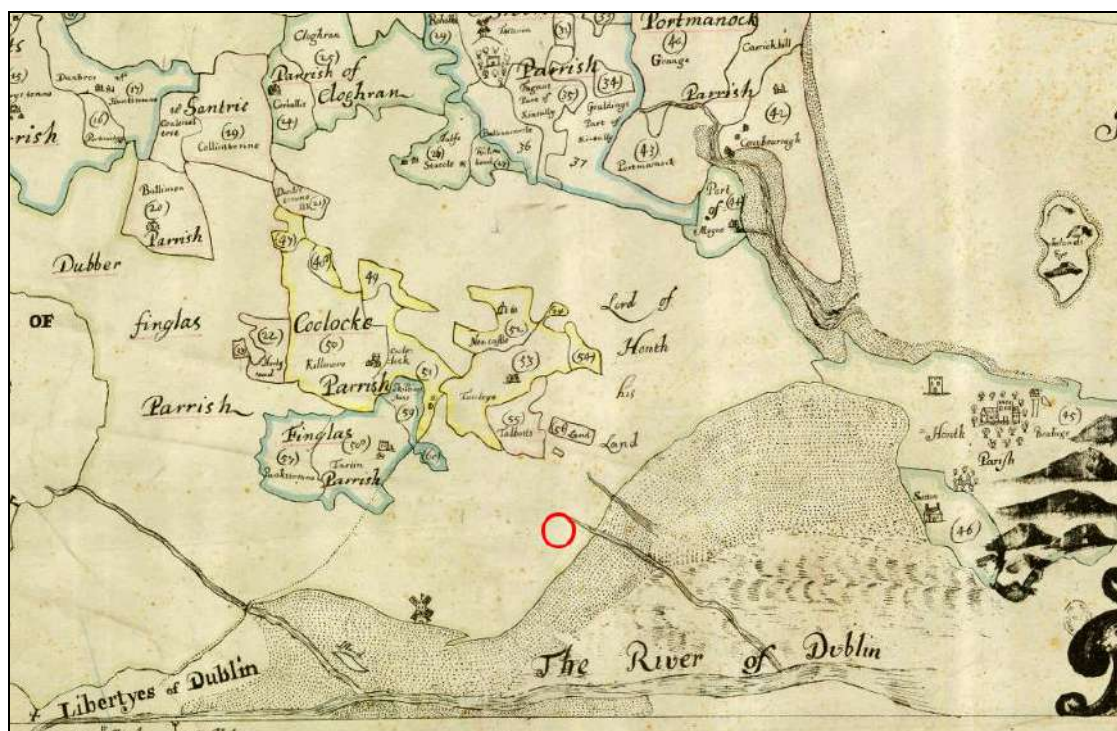


Figure 2 Down Survey map of the area 1654-56



Figure 3 Extract from John Rocque's 1757 survey showing the approximate location of the mansion





Figure 4 Extract from Brassington and Gale's Map of Thornhill House and Estate c.1832 (Dublin City Council)

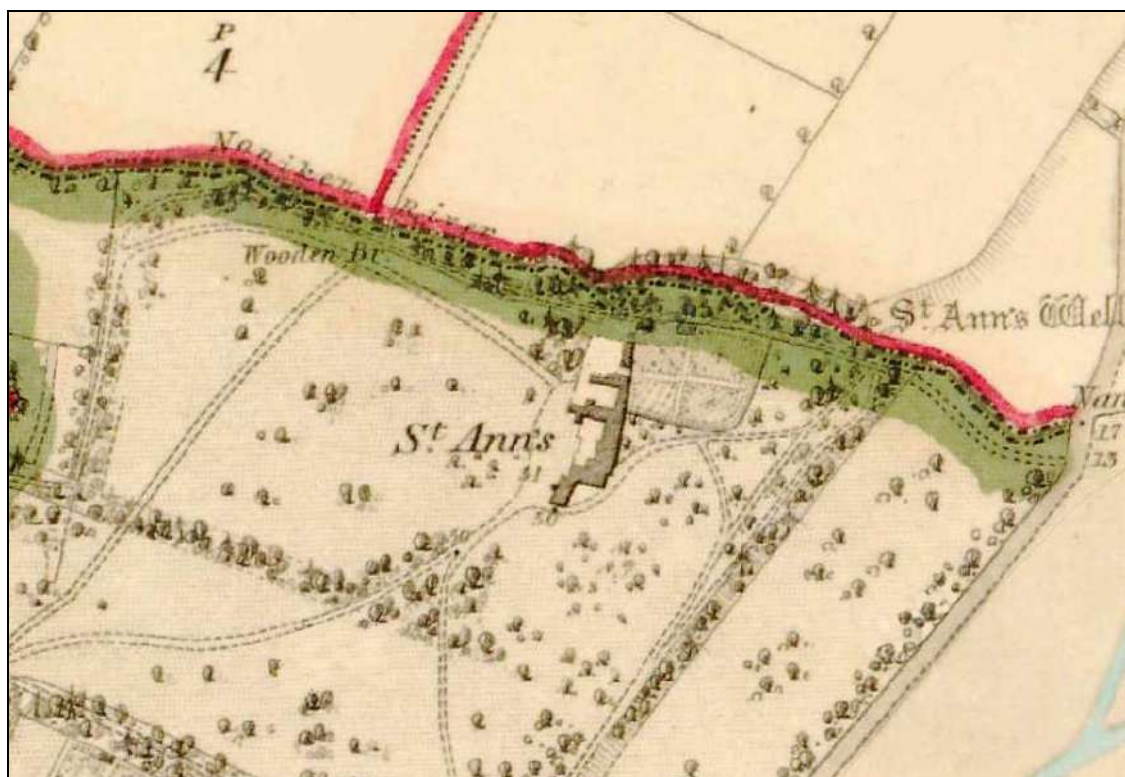


Figure 5 1<sup>st</sup> edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheet DN019)

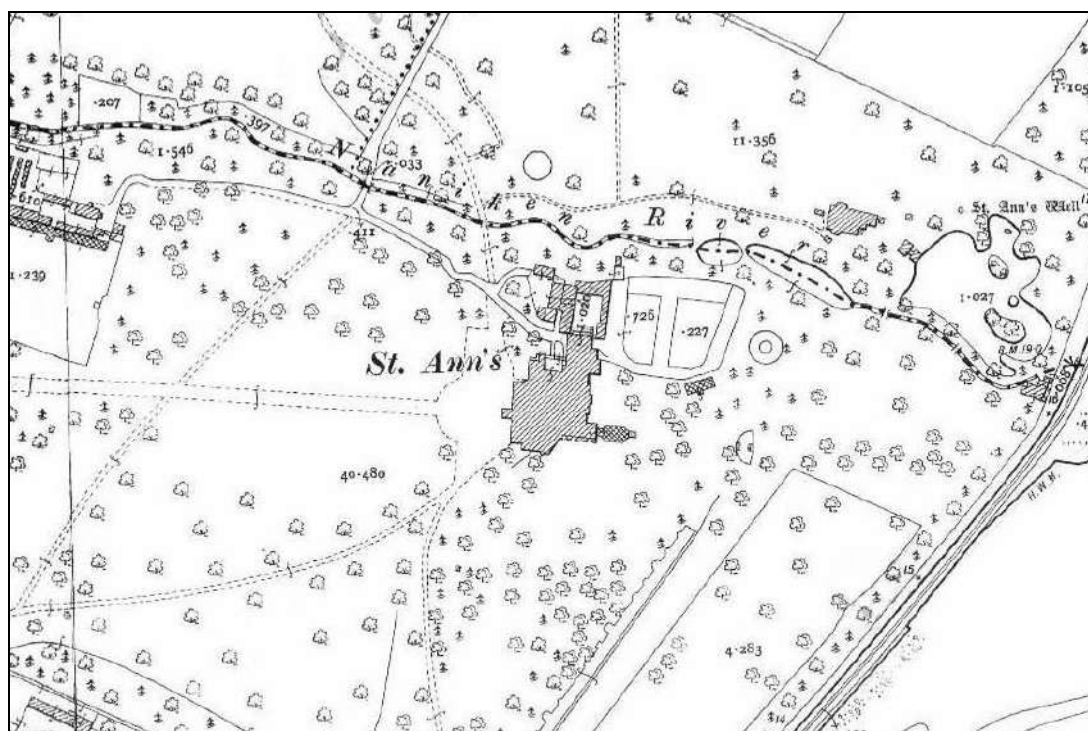


Figure 6 25-inch Ordnance Survey map (Sheets DN019-01 and DN019-02)

### 3 Recorded monuments and previous archaeological investigations

- 3.1 The archaeological constraint maps in conjunction with the county Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) provides 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.

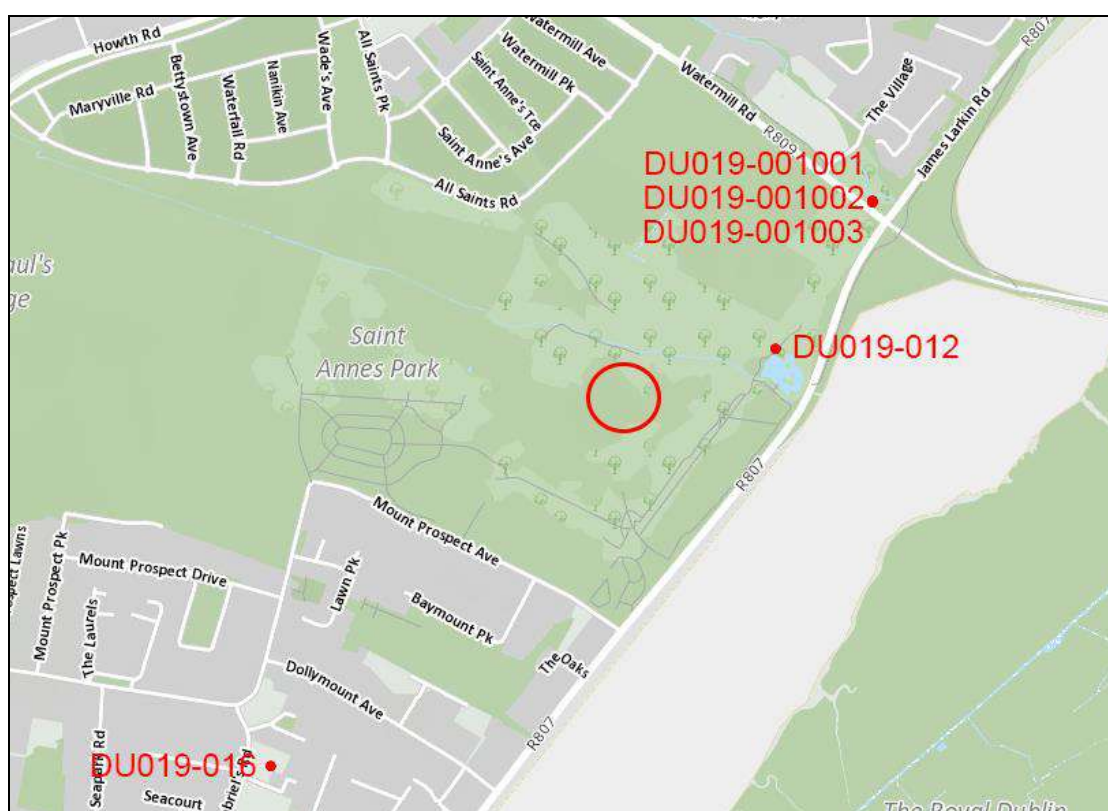


Figure 7 Location of recorded monuments within an 800m radius of the site (ASI, Historical Environment Viewer)

SMR No.	Class	Townland
DU019-001001	House - 16th/17th century	Dublin North City
DU019-001002	Armorial plaque	BETTYVILLE (Coolock) 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 Three previous archaeological investigations have been carried out within the boundaries of St Anne's Park, which is Dublin city's second largest municipal park, these were:

*Licence Ref. 16E0164*

Archaeological monitoring was conducted by Helen Kehoe on cleaning works at St. Anne's Well from which the park derives its name, (RMP -DU019012). This was part of an overall project to clean and sensitively repair many of the follies within the park. St. Anne's Well was carefully cleared of vegetation and built-up of organic matter, however nothing of archaeological significance was encountered.

*Licence Ref. 21E0375*

The aim of the 2021 program of archaeological testing conducted by Johnny Ryan of Archaeology & Built Heritage Ltd. on the site of St. Anne's House was to ascertain the extent to which subsurface remains of the former structure survived *in-situ*, in particular the cellars. The make-up of the two mounds which now stand on the site was determined through testing to be the demolished remains of the upper floors of the structure, with the ground floor of the structure found to be reasonably intact to a height of 0.4m above PGL, additionally the survival of the extensive cellars was also confirmed at basement level. That licence was re-activated in October 2022 and transferred to the author in order to assess the archaeological potential of the north mound and to examine for the presence of a structural link between the house & yard and the Herculeum Temple folly. Those investigations indicated that the north mound comprised at its deepest point 4.2m of fill material deposited in two distinct episodes of deposition, both late 1970's/ early 1980's in date. Additionally, the investigation uncovered the line of a foundation running from the rear of the House/Yard to the folly.

*Licence Ref. 22E0688*

A community pilot excavation was undertaken by the author, with volunteer archaeologists to investigate the extent of preservation of the Drawing Room and the Statue Room over five days in September 2022, with a trench which was excavated by hand measuring 2m east-west by 25m north-south. A number of in-situ masonry features corresponding with the plan of the former house were revealed, with the features including both external and internal walls, surfaces, and architectural features such as window recesses.

- 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 site area which was believed to have been a 19<sup>th</sup> century belt clasp (IA/56/83) and returned to the finder, the find spot was located 500m northeast of the location of this site and external to St. Anne's Park.



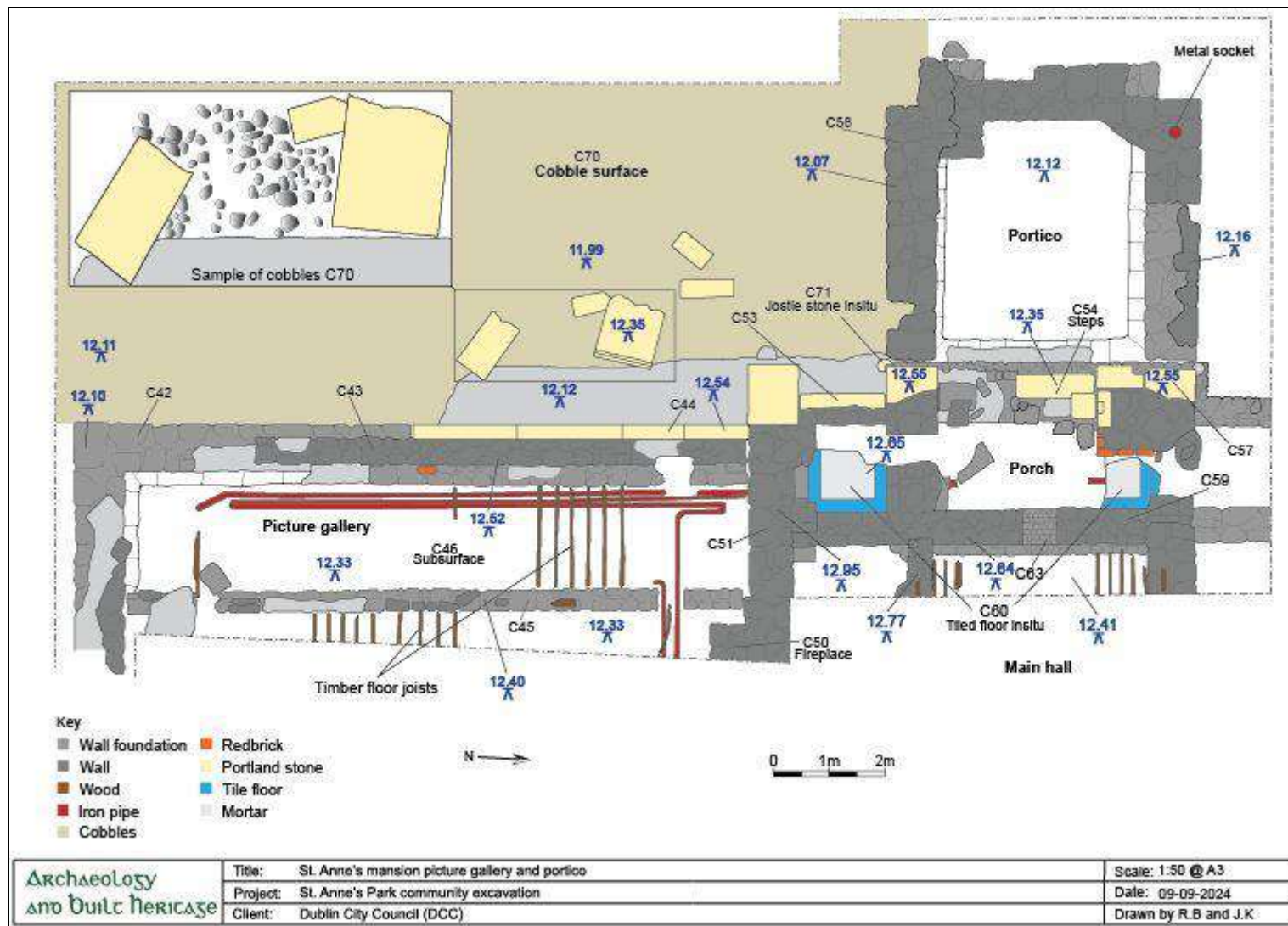


Figure 8 Plan of 2024 community excavation trench (ABH Ltd.)

## 4 Stratigraphic discussion

- 4.1 An area totalling 450 sq.m<sup>2</sup> (Figure 8), covering the central and southern extent of the former mansion's facade was excavated during the 2024 season of the St. Anne's Park Community Archaeology Project. The roughly rectangular trench cutting adjoined the previous year's community excavation area, and as such it was situated on the southwestern edge of the south mound, a topographical feature overlying the rubble remains of the demolished former St Anne's House. As demonstrated by archaeological testing (J. Ryan under licence ref. 21E0375) and both previous years of the community excavation conducted by the author under licence ref. 22E0688, the south mound comprises an extensive accumulation of building debris deriving from the demolition of the fire (1943), the demolition rubble from 1968 and topsoil which was imported onto the site in the 1980s.

The 2022 pilot excavation investigated and established the extent of the preservation of parts of the Drawing Room and the Statue Room which comprised much of the building's southern wing. That excavation revealed a number of intact and *in-situ* masonry features corresponding with the plan of the former house, including both external and internal walls, surfaces, and architectural features such as window recesses. The 2023 programme expanded on the previous excavation enabling a more complete investigation & recording of the Drawing Room, Picture Gallery and Statue Room, as well as a Vestibule, which would have functioned as a side access to the mansion, which was located at the western corner of the south wing between the Statue Room and the Picture Gallery, at a set back from the main façade. As stated above, the area excavated in 2024 continued directly from last season's area, delineating much of the southern and western elevations and interior of the former mansion (Plate 1). The 2024 area encompassed the central and southern extent of the mansion's footprint, including the front half of the Picture Gallery, the Portico, the Porch and the western end of the Main Hall (Plate 2).

The preservation of the features and stratigraphy facilitated the teaching and training of the community volunteers, the Transition Year students as well as providing a highly visual demonstration for public outreach and interaction with visitor groups and park goers.

- 4.2 The stratigraphic sequence of the excavation's baulks again served as a very visual and tangible exhibit of the final events in the life of the former mansion; the 0.2m in depth sod/topsoil layer (C.1) which was imported onto the rubble pile in the 1980's serving to mask the demolition layer, C.2 which dated to 1968, and which immediately overlay the structural remains, which in turn showed evidence relating to the 1943 fire. The demolition infill varied between 0.4m and 0.7m in depth, comprising a dense deposit of mortar, dressed stone, brick, corroded metal and decaying wood. In terms of artefacts, the deposit C.2 yielded materials that predominately comprised a variety of finds which related to various periods of the occupation of the former mansion. The topsoil C.1 consisted of a well-drained, sterile, and loose, brown silty clay, which was imported to the site in the 1980's to cover the demolished



remains, something which was attested to by eyewitness accounts and the cultural materials it contained.

#### 4.3 The Carriage Road

The Carriage Road (Plate 3), was located to the west of the former mansion's façade, leading to the foundations of the Portico. The rough metaled/cobbled surface, C.70, ran 15m north from the southern baulk of the excavated area to the Portico, whilst the surface measured more than 6.5m east-west, as it also extended outside the confines of the trench to the west. At ground level the surface had an undulating and uneven appearance however, aerially (Plate 4) the plan and nature of the road was clearer, as was the concentration of the stones themselves. Several large pieces of the former mansion's Portland stone façade were revealed by excavation as being impacted into and onto the surface, perhaps explaining its current uneven nature, where it would have formerly been a flat and even surface. The early photographs taken of the front of the mansion show this area as flat and probably gravel covered, so it is entirely possible that C.70 was a bedding layer or the remains of a cobble road, which was repurposed as bedding layer for later developments. Certainly, from viewing the post-1830's historical mapping (Figures 4-6) the suggestion of encountering an expansive area of cobbles, gravel or hard standing at the front of the mansion and a carriage road leading approximately from the southwestern corner of the modern-day park to the front of the former house was to be expected, but not certain, until the excavation revealed it. This would have been the carriage road which brought Queen Victoria to the Ardilaun's door in 1900, as she departed after her visit via the main avenue (Sharkey 2002).

#### 4.4 The Portico

The excavation of the Portico foundation C.58, revealed it to be constructed from well mortared, large, sub rectangular, flattened blocks of black-grey Dublin calp limestone, to a reasonably uniform 1m in width (Plate 4). The feature's foundations measured 5-5.6m in length east-west x 5.6m in width north-south externally, with the differing length arising from the arrangement of the antae at the front of the feature, which would have accommodated four columns and their respective pediments, a pair on each corner with one projecting and one setback, supporting the front of the portico roof, with the resulting enclosed internal space measuring 4.4m x 3.7m. Although no form of metalling/cobbling or hard standing of any kind remained internally to the foundation it was clear through the extreme compaction of the internal surface that such an arrangement had been present previously. Additionally, the remains of a ceramic drainpipe were uncovered in the northwestern corner of the foundation, something which suggested that the rough of the Portico originally possessed an internal gutter, so as not to ruin the aesthetic of such a fine architectural feature. The excavation revealed that the portico foundation centrally abutted that of the mansion's façade (C.42) and in the absence of any images or proof to the contrary this would appear to evidence the addition of this feature post-1873 or at least during that phase of the mansion's remodelling.

#### 4.5 The Front steps

Although the front steps were badly damaged in 1968, with the centre of the mansion, the front door and portico being an obvious target for the demolition teams, their overall plan and measurements were discernible. The Portland stone blockwork (C.53) of this aspect of the house (Plate 5) protruded, in an antae-like fashion, a uniform 0.9m from the rest of the façade, which, from postulation, would have originally been 9.6m in width, but only 8m was present in this excavation trench, with the remainder hopefully being captured next year. The projecting aspects of the façade would have originally served as a pediment for a further four antae/columns, a pair on either side, flanking the front door and ostensibly supporting the rear of the portico roof. This arrangement would have also supported the decorative cut stone segmented arch round headed windows which further flanked the front door in photographs of the house (Plate 11).

At ground level the projecting antae from the façade would have originally been protected by an arrangement of four jostle stones, only the southernmost of which (C.71) survived in-situ, with the position of the other three being apparent either through traces on the Portland stone façade (Plate 5), or in the case of the northernmost of the four, its concrete slot. The evidence of the four jostle stones uncovered by the excavation represents at least half of the total number of jostle stones which would have protected the Portico. When one refers to the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photograph of Lady Ardilaun, with her dog and motor car at the front of the house, a further four jostle stones are discernible protecting the front of the portico (Plate 11) and it is possible further jostle stones were present on the internal corners of that feature, yet invisible in the photo.

At the centre of this arrangement would have been three Portland stone steps, leading to the front door of the mansion, of which two partial remnants survived to excavation, with the only remaining trace of the wooden, round headed front door being a recess in the Portland stone on the northern side of the doorway which would have housed its wooden doorframe.

#### 4.6 The Porch

An estimated 15% of this room remains (1-2m of an original 10m/30ft) to be excavated next year but this year the investigation of the available remaining elements of the porch revealed much of its arrangement and various design elements which had hereto never been elucidated by photographic or documentary sources. The solid floor would have originally displayed as many as six separate design panels of encaustic floor tiles, with partial remnants of three surviving to excavation. The southernmost (Plate 7) panel was intact enough (45% approx.) to reveal its original width & length as being 1.5m/5ft, comprising a black surround tile border, an inner band of thinner 1 inch square tiles which were burgundy in colour, internal to which were an emerald green band of tiles of equal size, whose arrangement enclosed a central square of patterned 5 inch green white and gold tiles, with each corner displaying a single 5 inch tile of a different design to the main panel and which was separate to a border of 5-inch blue, gold foliate patterned tiles, with white anthemion.

To the north, the pattern of the remaining *in situ* tiles was more fragmentary by comparison in its survival (<10% approx.) but enough was present to discern that there were elements of two distinct and differing panels (Plate 8) to that described above, divided by a line of black border tiles. To the north of that division was a thin internal band of grey tiles, with a band of thicker (2" x 6") yellow and red tiles with a leaf motif, which had a thicker grey tile band, sandwiched by thin bands or burgundy tiles internal to it. Internally four fragmentary tiles were uncovered, which presumably represented remnants of the central part of this panel. These bore a pattern which was halved diagonally by a red and yellow band. The outside of the band had a golden coloured rose, flanked by a golden dot on a dark green background, while on the inside of the band cobalt blue and gold patterned foliage surrounded a white quatrefoil flower, one quarter of which was on each of the four tiles.

The pattern, internally and to the south of the line of dividing black tiles mentioned above was distinctly different; a line of the blue, gold and white foliate tiles was present, sandwiched between thin strips of red and yellow leaf patterned tiles, internally to which were bands of thinner green, orange and burgundy tiles, which diminished towards an unknown centrepiece.

Postulating from the symmetrical nature of the building, the porch would have originally accommodated several tile panels and if one assumes a symmetrical layout to these panels the southern panel would have a twin to the north, which might yet survive wholly or in part, to be excavated next year. By extension, the remains of the remains of the two northern panels possibly represent central parts of the pattern, extending across the centre of the porch to the southern panel, with most of the remaining central panels being sadly absent at the time of the excavation. The centre of the porch had clearly suffered a direct hit from the wrecking ball, but the excavation of that impact crater uncovered the partial remains of three monogrammed encaustic tiles. These triangular tiles, bearing the initials AEG, for Arthur Edward Guinness (Plate 12), presumably formed part of the central panels of the porch, either as corners to those panels or as a central device/focal point within them. All of the uncovered porch tiles bore the name of 'The Campbell Brick & Tile Company' of Stoke-on-Trent, with the latter's compass points trademark, dating the manufacture of these tiles to the period of 1875-1882.

Little of the porch structure remained above ground, but what was present showed that it was internally constructed of ornately carved cut stone, with pediments for pillars flanking either side of the interior of the front door case and either side of the entrance to the Main Hall proper.

#### 4.6 The Main Hall

The main hall would have been accessed from the porch, via a decorative cut stone doorcase of which only a fragment remained (Plate 13) with an arrangement of pillars and internal windows either side of that door separating the porch from the main hall. Only the most western 1.5m of the main hall was present in the trench, with the remaining c.28m *in situ* to the east, under the baulk, unexcavated at the time of writing. Even with such a small percentage of such a large room available to excavate, there were enough features which

had survived the fire and the subsequent demolition to provide information about the original layout of the hall; the basement/cellars clearly did not extend this far beneath the hall and additionally the regularly spaced hardwood floorboard runners extended as far as the pediment foundations, where they were present and as far as the foundation dividing the hall and the porch, where the pediment foundations were not present. It is those hardwood floorboard runners which would have supported what appears from the photographs of the interior (Plates 14 & 15) to be a geometrically patterned parquet floor in the main hall and although there is a large Persian-style rug present on the parquet floor in the same photo, one can surmise that this would have been removed so that the room could function as the ballroom of the mansion, as documented by Sharkey (2002). Additionally, the remains of a brick-built culvert (C.64) were uncovered, which conducted cast iron pipes belonging to the mansion's central heating system, beneath the floor.

#### 4.7 The Picture Gallery

The community excavation uncovered the western half of the footprint of the Picture Gallery, the eastern wall of which was not present in this year's trench, with only a small piece of it being uncovered by last year's community excavation. Given the lack of survival of the southern door from the statue room into the picture gallery, evidenced by last year's excavation, the survival of original features was questionable leading up to this year's excavation. What was revealed was that the first course of the Portland stone façade (of the western wall survived *in situ*, partially intact (Plate 10) along the façade of this room, in addition to the somewhat less glamorous foundation and mortared stone core of the front wall of the house, beneath and behind the Portland stone. The Portland stone façade of the mansion (C.44) did not span the complete width of the front wall foundation (C.42), but instead it was backed by a well mortared stone core (C.43) and there was no evidence to suggest that this was a refacing of any earlier structure, quite the opposite, this was an entirely newly constructed front wall/façade. After the excavation by hand of the demolition rubble and its removal, the remains of the room's fireplace (C.50), comprising a hearth, thin chimney breast and setting for a mantelpiece were partially evident, extending west from the beneath the eastern baulk of the site. Positionally this fireplace would have sat centrally in the room's northern wall, with its respective chimney pot visible to the immediate right of the centre of the mansion, at a slight setback from the front and it is this fireplace which would have held the Bossi mentioned by Sharkey (2002) as being present in this room. Pietro Bossi is described as the "Master of Scagliola", 'Scagliola' (from the Italian for 'chips') is a technique that involves manipulating pigmented plaster, modified with animal glue, to resemble inlays in marble and ornamental hard stones. The exact mantelpiece, which formerly would have occupied this fireplace (Plate 16) has been provenanced by ABH Ltd. to currently reside on the first-floor landing of Charlemont House, or as its more commonly known today, the Hugh Lane Gallery on Parnell Square in Dublin City.

At a slightly lower level in the picture gallery were the remains of the hardwood, partially burnt floor runners, in a charcoal-rich horizon, which further evidenced the 1943 fire. The timbers were preserved by record by this excavation, prior to their removal by hand along with a layer of loose, collapsed materials. That process revealed more detail of the original layout of this room, which would have originally measured 11m North-South and 5.5m East-West, with an extensive network of cast iron heating ducts with four radiator settings, one for each of the four large sash windows which once occupied the façade of this aspect of the mansion at ground floor level. As with last year's community excavation, these ducts abutted the sub-floor infrastructure, such as the floor joist supporting wall C.45, demonstrating the later imposition of this type of central heating system on the mansion, subsequent to its invention by Franz San Galli c.1855.

## 5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The archaeological remains uncovered during the 2024 Community Excavation enhanced the findings of the two previous seasons of excavation and assisted in determining how much of the footprint of the south wing of the former mansion survived and delineating the surviving remains. The extent to which the structural remains of the former mansion were preserved *in-situ* was evident, as was the ability of the excavated material to add to and augment many of the details of the structure, both in its heyday and its final incarnation. The small number of encaustic floor and wall tiles uncovered during the course of last year's excavation proved to be the first few flurries of what turned out to be a veritable blizzard of encaustic floor tiles, both *in situ* and *ex situ*, which were uncovered during this year's excavation. With the exception of a relatively small number of wall tiles, which were again the product of the Minton Hollins tile company, the excavated tiles were floor tiles, specifically those manufactured by the Campbell Brick & Tile Company of Stoke-on-Trent, dating them to the specific 1875-1882 period in that company's long and illustrious history.

Again, many of the physical remains which were shown through this year's community excavation to present at the site closely mirrored any available contemporary photographs of the exterior of the mansion, such as the Carriageway, the Portland stone façade, the Portico, front steps and doorcase. Equally, the physical remains which were shown to be present in the interior of the Porch, the excavated portion of the Main Hall and the Picture Gallery add a depth of colour and richness to any available black and white photographs of those rooms and their furnishings.

Additional elements of the site's material culture were uncovered during this year's excavation and in many ways, these were an unexpected yet very welcome additional source of information regarding various phases in the life of the site. The oldest such element was a fragment of an early, mouth blown glass bottle neck which was intact enough to be dated to the period 1680-1720, an artefact which suggested perhaps an antique was broken within the house or even the possibility of a dwelling or occupation of the site, prior to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Of relevance to the occupation of the mansion by the Guinness family was a decorative ink bottle, c.1880 in date, which evidenced that fragile elements of portable material culture contemporary with the family's occupation could survive the trifecta of fire, demolition and the occupation of the house by the Free State Army. The final elements of material culture which were uncovered this year were possibly representative of a more sinister use of the house. A number of spent .22mm Caliber brass casings (Plate 17) were uncovered to the immediate exterior of façade, between where the third and fourth windows to the south of the door would have been. Stratigraphically the casings were introduced to the site between the fire of 1943 and the subsequent demolition of the house in 1968. It is entirely possible that a person was present in the park, possibly shooting pigeons or the like, however, there are multiple associations between the park and indeed the house, as related through folklore and by eyewitness accounts, with the Irish Republican Army. The presence of



these casings suggests the use of the mansion between the years of 1943 and 1968 by that organisation, with the location of the casings suggesting the use of the open windows of the façade to discretely fire a rifle or other from, with the avenue leading from the house possibly presenting an ideal opportunity for target practice using varying distances. This type of ammunition is by far the most common type used in the world today, with its use in a wide range of firearms including rifles, pistols, revolvers, and submachine guns<sup>1</sup> underlining its utilitarian nature. All of the uncovered casings were brought An Garda Síochána at Raheny Garda Station.

- 5.2 The author wishes to extend his heartfelt thanks to the 70 strong team of community archaeologists, for their enthusiasm, hard work and love for our shared heritage. Thank you to Dannie Fleming, Tony Cleary, Gerard Stanley, John Kenna, Alan Keogh, Berni Gaynor, Olivia Battault, Marc Edison, Berni Gaynor, Karen Smith, Jason Shoebridge, Danny O'Sullivan, Brian McCabe, Caroline Briscoe Kelly, Monika Metera, Dylan Harold, Margaret Quinn, Angela Nolan, Alex Shoebridge, Brian Madigan, John Kenna, Vadym Radkov, Eva Houroung, Olwen Grindley, Elaine Harris, Kevin Finnan, Gillian O'Sullivan, John Kenna, Michelle Merrigan, Liz Dolan, Gerard Byrne, Michelle Brady, Pat Nally, Lynda Devenney, Robert Green, Caitlin Leach, Siobhan Larkin, Jessica Cullinan, Lorraine Collier, Abbey Connolly, Peter McGovern, Becca Magee, Liz Dolan, Miriam McGuirk, John Kehoe, Peter McGovern, Clíodhna Nolan, Stephanie Peat, Xana Irigoien-Galiana, Anne O'Sullivan, Orla Brennan, Amber Sammon, Caroline Kavanagh, Siobhan Larkin, Kate Carroll, Lamine Yemal, Brad Bannon, Grainne Ryan, Deirdre Kinlay, Valentina Degener, Patricia O'Malley, Mags Curley, John Kenna, Therease Stears, Brad Bannon, Patricia O'Malley and Susan Cummins.

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I'd also like to say an additional thank you to all of the nearly thirteen thousand people and school children who came to see us this year in the park.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.22\\_Long\\_Rifle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/.22_Long_Rifle)

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Kyle', written over a horizontal line.

James Kyle BSc HDip MIAI

*Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd.*

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## Plates



Plate 1 Aerial view of excavated mansion remains 2024, north to left



Plate 2 Aerial view of 2024 Community Excavation area, north to left





Plate 3 Aerial view of carriage road leading to Portico, north to left



Plate 4 Aerial view of Portico and front step remains, north to left





Plate 5      Front entrance remains with jostle stone positions, facing east



Plate 6      Aerial view of Porch, showing *in situ* tile panels, north to left





Plate 7 Southern tile panel remains, facing west



Plate 8 Northern tile panels from above, north to left





Plate 9      Aerial view of excavated portion of Main Hall, north to left



Plate 10      Aerial view of excavated portion of Picture Gallery, north to left



Plate 11      Early 20<sup>th</sup>-century photograph of Portico





Plate 12

Composite of two fragments of monogrammed AEG tiles



Plate 13

Fragment of ornate internal doorcase



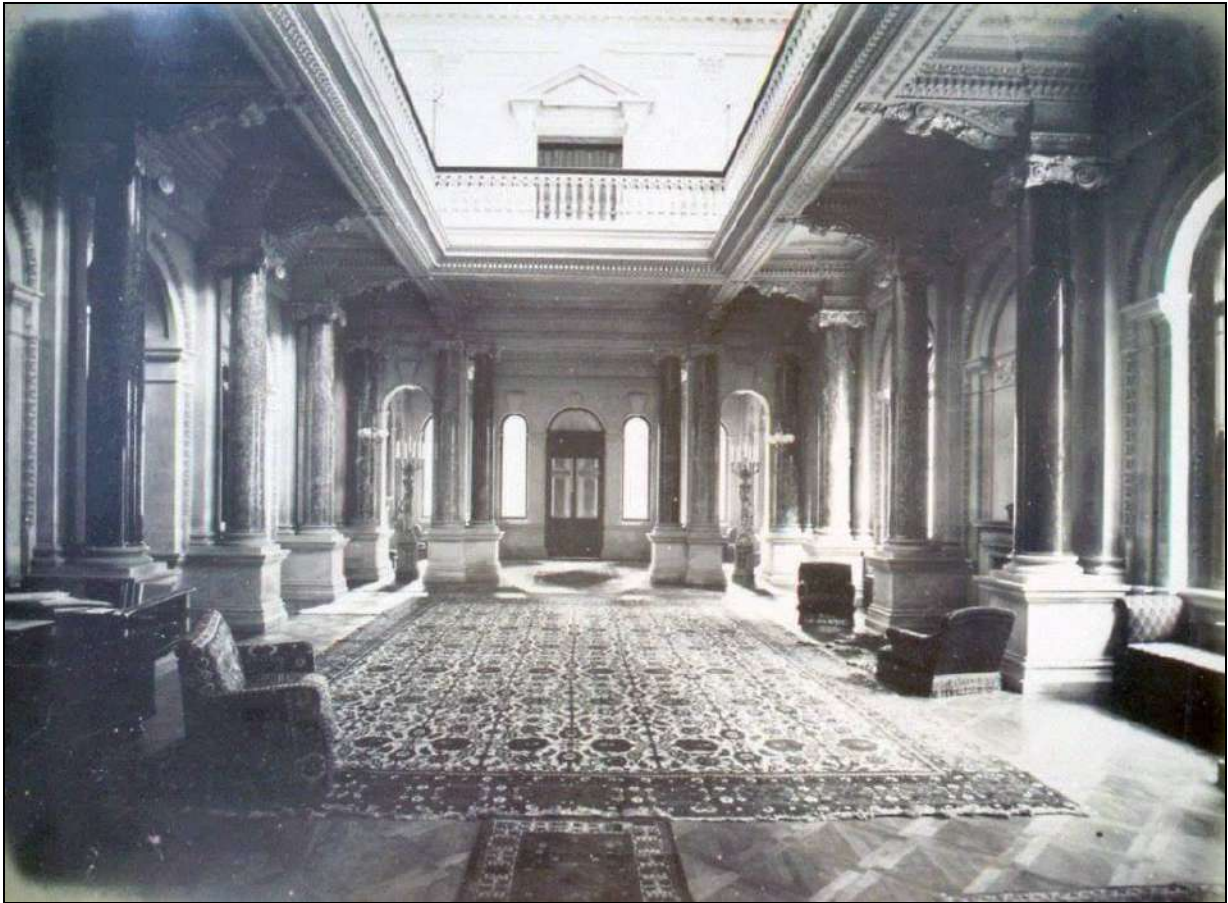


Plate 14 Early 20th-century photograph of the Main Hall, facing west



Plate 15 Early 20th-century photograph of the Main Hall, facing east





Plate 16 *Scagliola* mantelpiece attributed to Pietro Bossi (Hugh Lane Gallery)



Plate 17 .22 brass casings from excavation.

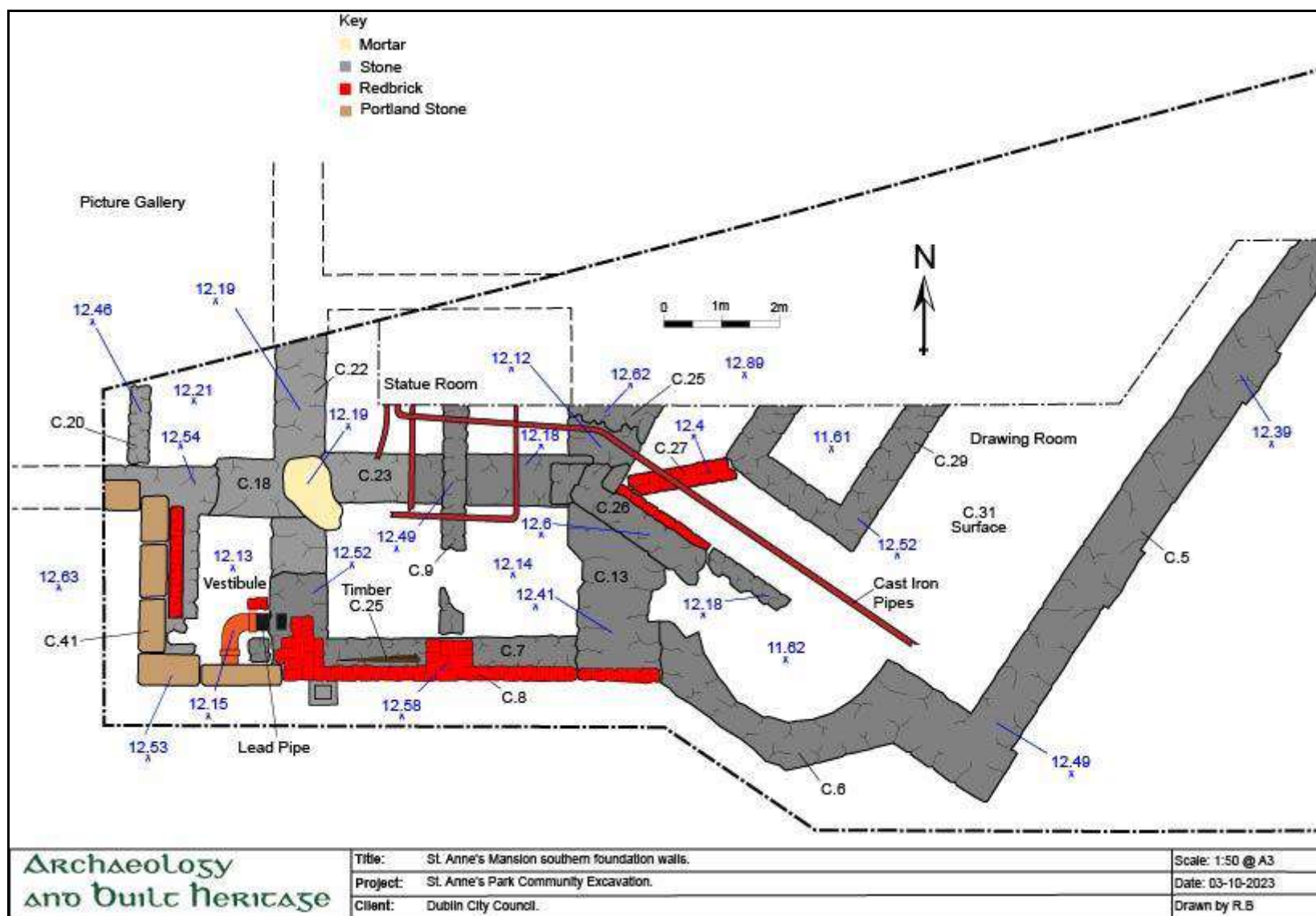


Figure 9 Post excavation plan of area 1:50 scale

