

# St Anne's Architecture

## Thornhill House

**1814** A newspaper article stated that Sergeant John Ball had recently built Thornhill house 'a mansion house, offices, garden and demesne', in the townland of Blackbush, Clontarf.

**1835** Brothers Benjamin Lee and Arthur Lee Guinness purchased Thornhill House with 29 acres for the sum of £500.

## The development of St Anne's house and estate

**1837** The house was rebuilt in an Italianate style with a Roman tower, and renamed St Anne's after the local holy well.

**1838** Benjamin Lee Guinness purchased his brother's share of the house.

## Redevelopment of St Anne's house and estate

**1868** Benjamin Lee Guinness died leaving the estate to his son Arthur Edward (Lord Ardilaun).

**1873** Lord and Lady Ardilaun commissioned architect James Franklin Fuller to remodel the house, subsequently completed by George Coppinger Ashlin.

**1870-76** The estate expanded to over 500 acres with land acquisitions from the Vernons of Clontarf and the Lawrences of Howth.

**1885** Lord Ardilaun commissioned architect George Coppinger Ashlin to design the Red Stables.

## *The most palatial house built in Ireland during the second half of the nineteenth century*

The two-storey Italianate style house took seven years to complete. Built with Bath and Portland stone, the exterior incorporated balusters, perforated parapets, projecting eaves, corbels, and imposing cornices.

The interior was furnished with marble columns and floors, decorative carved wood panels, Neoclassical plasterwork and coved ceilings. Interior mouldings, namely plaster cornicing and coving, were found in the more public areas of the house.

Inside, a top-lit two-storey entrance hall led to a Renaissance style double staircase. The Dining Room featured a large carved wood mantelpiece. This area progressed to a south-facing conservatory designed by Richard Turner. An ornate Picture Gallery and Statue Room housed a vast collection of art and antiques. The Drawing Room featured a coved ceiling and housed an organ in an apse. At the centre of the house, a glass roofed Palm Garden held exotic plants. Upstairs, a lavish boudoir led to a south-facing balcony overlooking Dublin Bay.

