

**Final Project Report**  
**St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Project 2025**

By

**Caitriona Moore MA PGDip MIAI**  
**&**  
**James Kyle BSC HDip MIAI**

Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd  
Spade Enterprise Centre  
St. Paul's Smithfield  
North King Street  
Dublin 7

19<sup>th</sup> November 2025

Archaeology  
and Built Heritage

## Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Rose Festival.....	1
3	Community excavation.....	8
3.1	Staffing and management.....	8
3.2	Volunteer recruitment.....	9
3.3	Excavation methodology.....	11
3.4	Excavation results.....	11
3.4.1	<i>The Picture Gallery</i> .....	12
3.4.2	<i>The porch</i> .....	12
3.4.3	<i>The Main Hall</i> .....	13
3.4.4	<i>The secretary's office and study</i> .....	15
3.4.5	<i>Façade</i> .....	16
3.4.6	<i>Artefact assemblage</i> .....	16
3.5	Post excavation.....	19
4	Public engagement and outreach.....	20
4.1	Community excavation.....	20
4.2	Lord Mayor's visit.....	22
4.3	Inclusion and integration.....	24
4.4	Press coverage.....	26
4.5	Social media.....	26
4.6	2025 Archaeological Achievement Awards.....	28
5	Education programme.....	29
5.1	TY Tuesdays.....	29
5.2	School tours.....	30
5.3	Tour guide training.....	32
6	Conclusions.....	32
6.1	Summary of delivered programme.....	33

## 1 Introduction

This report details the activities of the St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme 2025. The programme has been delivered by Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd (ABH), funded by the Dublin City Council Heritage Office, Archaeology Office and Parks and Landscape Services with grant funding from the Heritage Council County Heritage Plan Grant Scheme and the Creative Ireland Programme. The 2025 season was launched in July with an exhibition at the annual St Anne's Park Rose Festival, followed by a five week community excavation which started in Heritage Week. The excavation included a dedicated programme for transition year students, an educational programme for primary and secondary schools and a tour guiding programme for trainee guides. Community-led post excavation work is ongoing and public outreach since the excavation has included a talk at St. Gabriel's Parish Centre in Clontarf. The programme has been shortlisted in the 2025 Archaeological Achievement Awards in the category of Public dissemination or Presentation.

## 2 Rose Festival

The 2025 St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme was launched at the annual Rose Festival on July 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. Archaeological walking tours of the park were offered four times per day, bookable via Eventbrite with all tours fully booked. Within the main festival area was an exhibition of four A0 panels detailing the history and development of the park and St Anne's mansion, and promoting the community archaeology programme. Three of the panels were those developed and used previously, the fourth was revised and updated to include the excavation results to date. English and Irish language versions of the panels were available (Figures 1–4).

The production of the panels was a collaborative process between the Dublin City Council Heritage Office, ABH and graphic designer Paul Bokslag.

- Panel 1 titled 'St Anne's Park follies', introduced the 11 follies in the park and included an image and short overview of each, overlaid on the historic OSI 25" map of the area.
- Panel 2 titled 'St Anne's Architecture', comprised a timeline of the architectural development of the former mansion, accompanied by a short description of the house and furnishings and historic photographs of both the interior and exterior.
- Panel 3 titled 'Beginning of the End', continued the timeline detailing the decline of the estate and final years of the mansion's existence. An account of the fire which destroyed the house was accompanied by historic photographs, newspaper clippings and images of the final demolition.
- Panel 4 titled 'Archaeological Investigations' detailed the archaeological investigations completed to date including the investigation and community excavation in 2021–2022 and the 2023 and 2024 community excavations.

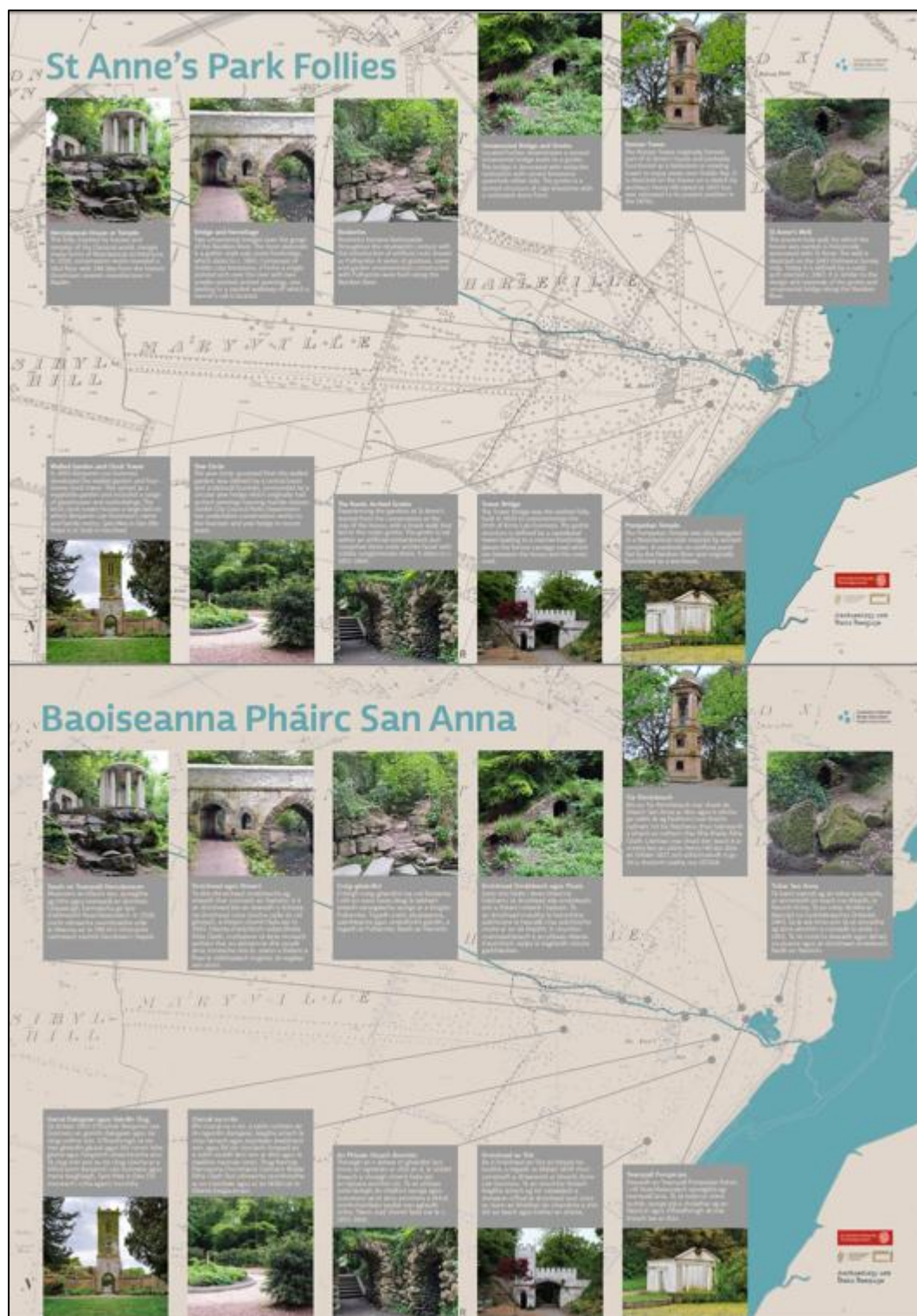


Figure 1 Panel 1 overview of the St Anne's Park Follies on the OSI 25" map

## 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 Blackboob, Clontarf'

1815 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**

1817 The house was rebuilt in an Italianate style with a Roman tower, and renamed St Anne's after the local holy well.

1818 Benjamin Lee Guinness purchased his brother's share of the house.

**Redevelopment of St Anne's house and estate**

1848 Benjamin Lee Guinness died leaving the estate to his son Arthur Edward (Lord Ardlauan)

1873 Lord and Lady Ardlauan 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 Laurences of Howth.

1885 Lord Ardlauan 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 balustrades, perforated parapets, projecting eaves, cornices, and imposing cornices.

The interior was furnished with marble columns and floors, decorative carved wood panelling, Neoclassical plasterwork and coffered 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 coffered ceiling and housed an organ in an apse. At the centre of the house, a glass-roofed Palm Garden held exotic plants. Upstairs, a lawn boudoir led to a south-facing balcony overlooking Dublin Bay.

---

## Ailtireacht San Anna

**Teach Chnoc na Scoilche**

1814 Dúradh in ailt muachtáir gur thóg an Séainín, John Ball teach Chnoc na Scoilche le déanam 'teach mór, oifigí, garden agus demesne', ar an Sboob Dubh, Cluan Tarbh.

1815 Cheannuigh na deartháireacha Benjamin Lee agus Arthur Lee Guinness teach Chnoc na Scoilche le 29 acra ar £500.

**Foibairt theach agus easáid San Anna**

1817 Aógadh an teach sa stíl Iodáilach le tair Roinnárach, agus aithrinneadh é mar Naomh Anna in áineas an tobair beannaíthe áitiúil.

1818 Cheannuigh Benjamin Lee Guinness sciar a dheartháireacha den teach.

**Aithrinneadh theach agus easáid San Anna**

1848 Fuair Benjamin Lee Guinness bás agus é thóg sé a easáid chug a mhac Arthur Edward len Tiarna Ardlauan.

1873 Chomisiúnigh an Tiarna agus an Shrianta Ardlauan an t-ailtire James Franklin Fuller chun an teach a aithrinne, a chríochnaigh George Coppinger Ashlin ina dhiaidh sin.

1870-76 Leathnadh an t-easáid go dtí os cionn 500 acra le stadálacha talún ó dháirí Vernon i gCluan Tarbh agus dháirí San Láirínis ó Chaisleán Bhom Éadan.

1885 Chomisiúnigh an Tiarna Ardlauan an t-ailtire George Coppinger Ashlin chun na Stáblaí George a dheanamh.

*An teach ba pháilíosa a tógadh in Éirinn le tair an dara leath den naoú haois déag*

Thóg an teach dhá eile sa stíl Iodáilach seacht bliain ina tréimh. Tógtha le cloch Bath agus Portland, bhí balatair, scríbhneáil polta, scimeáil stáirach, coirbéil, agus cornici reargra i gceolraí len an teach amuigh.

Bhí an teach tógtha le cloch agus uirlín marmair, painní adhmaid sniota maoltha, vobair phléistair Nuachtánaiceach agus shéilíochas cuasáilte. Fuair thas móraí taobh istigh, le á sin cornici agus zueasáil réanta as plástar, i meastóir mao pobhl an tí.

Ar an taobh istigh, bhí halla iontrála dhá stair, a rabh soláthar ón shéad, chomh fada le stáighne ábhaite i stíl na hIodáilíochana. Bhí meastóir adhmaid sniota sa Seomra Bíla. Dhín an ceantar sin ar aghaidh chug griánán a rabh a aghaidh ó dheas agus a dhear Richard Turner. Bhí balláirín réimhír ealaíne agus seandachtai i nGáilearai Pictoir agus Seomra Deirbhí ornáidíoch. Bhí séadai chausáilte snáidhíoch sa Bhuarán agus ina rabh orgán sa chéilíne. Ag tair an tí, bhí pléandai cormhíochca i nGáilíní Palm faoi dhóin gloise. Thuas stáighne, bhí boudoir rabhseach a fhad le ballóin a rabh a aghaidh ó dheas ag breathnó amach ar Chuan Éilíní Átha Cliath.

Figure 2 Panel 2 summary account of the rich architectural heritage of the mansion

## Beginning of the End

1925 Following the death of Lord Ardilaun in 1915 and Lady Ardilaun in 1925, the estate was inherited by their nephew Bishop Plunket.

1929 Following the sale of the house to Dublin Corporation for £55,000, a fire art auction of the contents was held.

1943 A fire broke out turning the building to ruin.

1948 The house was demolished by a wrecking ball.

*Almost at once, flames shot out of the top windows of the east wing, in which the fire began.*

On Christmas Eve 1943, the mansion was engulfed and brought to ruin by a large fire. The house had been unoccupied for several decades and was in the ownership of Dublin Corporation. The blaze was discovered around midnight by the caretaker Mr. Hugh Savage who summoned the fire brigade. The fire raged through the east wing and by 4.30am much of the building was engulfed. A.R.P. equipment including gas masks, hoods and highly flammable chemicals stored in the building throughout the Emergency were destroyed. Despite the great efforts of the local fire services, the fire burned for three days.

The ruined shell survived for 25 years before a wrecking ball was employed to finally demolish what remained of the house. Many locals still have fond childhood memories of the ruins.

The story of St Anne's survives through these people with a new generation of volunteer archaeologists helping to unearth and restore the story of a local palatial mansion.
















---

## Ré ag Teacht Chun Deireadh

1925 Tar éis bháis an Tiarna Ardilaun in 1915 agus an Shantarna Ardilaun in 1925, fuair a nia Bishop Plunket an t-árasáil le baintreacht.

1929 Tar éis an teach a dhíol le Bardsas Bhaile Átha Cliath ar £55,000, nacheiláilbh coart breá eoláire den ábhar a bhí sa teach.

1943 Chaigh an teach le tine agus fágadh an foirgneamh ina bhallóga.

1948 Leagadh an teach le meall ráiteála.

*Gaibneáil, bhí leisce aig an t-árasáil seo ar an tfoirgneamh áfach an scéalaibh dhéan. áir ar fhoirgneamh an tíre.*

Oíche Nollag 1943, púillíbh tine an teach mír agus fágadh an teach ina bhallóga. Ní nacheiláilbh ann sa teach le ríocht bíláirta anuas agus bhí sa fáil úinéireacht Bardsas Bhaile Átha Cliath. Tháinigheas ar an dáblaibh thair ar mhéad oíche aig an árasáil, an tUasal Hugh Savage, a thair féis ar an mbuogáil dáblaibh. Bhí an scéalaibh thair ina charr thine agus fáil 4,300 n. bhí an mhéadú den foirgneamh glácha. Scriosadh breábháir A.R.P. lena n-áirítear meic gháis, hoodáil, agus ceimiceáil flú-úilasta a bhí á stóráil san foirgneamh i rith na hÉagandála. In áineas lemacháil mára na seirbhéil dáblaibh áiríola, dhéigh an tine ar feadh trí lá.

Bhí an creatach voríorta ann ar feadh 25 bliain sular fehoilíbh meall ráiteála thair an méil a bhí fágáil den teach a scartáil ar domhadh. Tá cúlneáil gaila na hólga aig ga leor de mhéadú na bíláir ar na fóirneáil ar fáil.

Tagann scéal San Anna stáin trí na dáblaibh seo agus glóir naas scandálaibh dhóirneáil aig cabháir le eoláir de pháiláir de theacht áiríola a rochlaibh agus é a áirítheorcha.
















Figure 3 Panel 3 summary account of the decline of the mansion

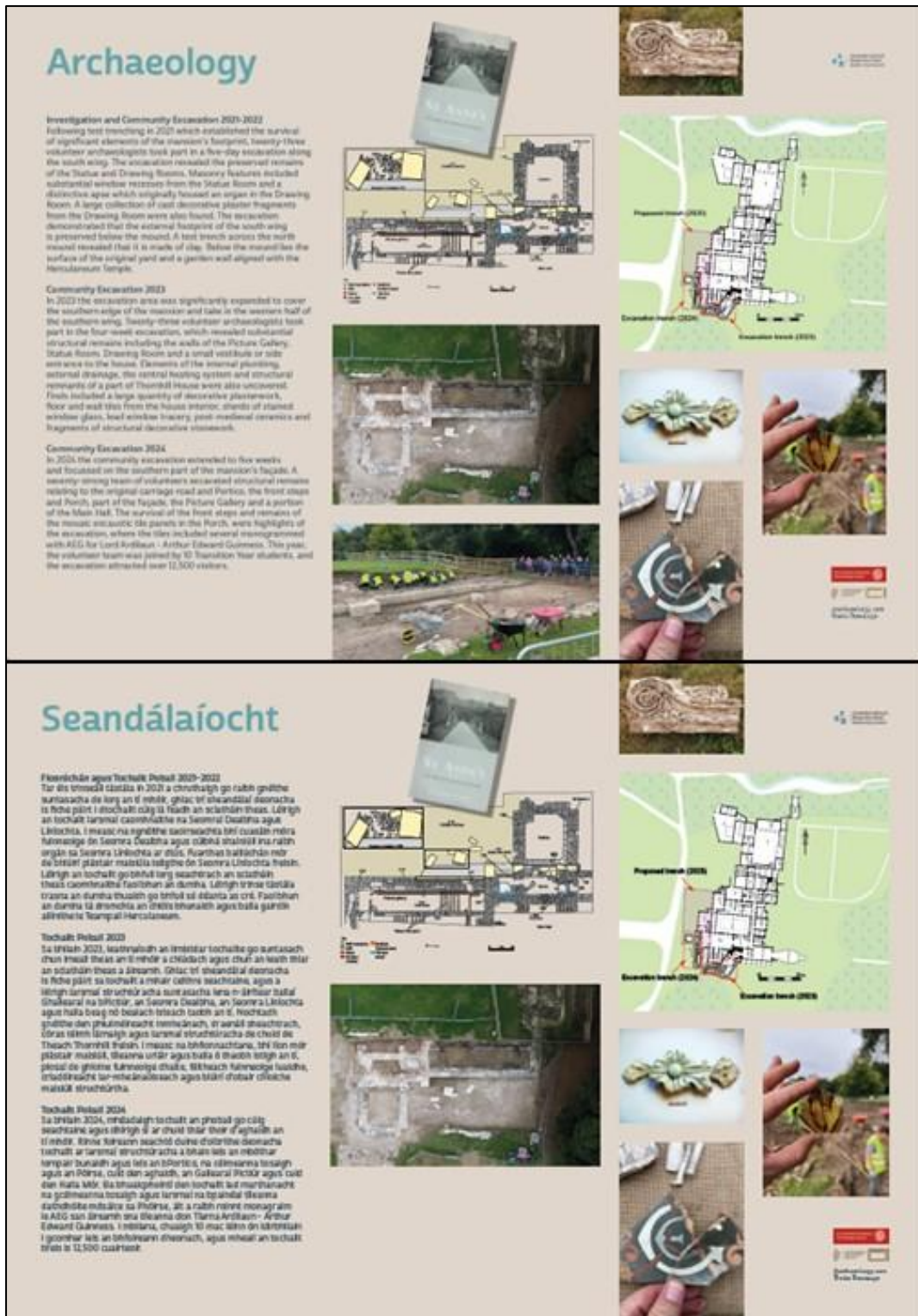


Figure 4 Panel 4 Account of previous archaeological investigations

The exhibition was installed around a small marquee where it was accompanied by a display of artefacts from the previous seasons of excavation (Plate 1–4). These included pieces of decorative plasterwork from the house interior, sherds of stained glass, domestic ceramics and ARP materials. The exhibition was staffed by 2–3 archaeologists from ABH. Public engagement was high with an estimated 1500

visitors who provided very positive feedback. The event was also used to recruit volunteers for the 2025 community excavation.



Plate 1 Exhibition panels and artefact display Rose Festival 2025



Plate 2 Visitors to the exhibition Rose Festival 2025



Plate 3 Artefacts and architectural fragments on display at the Rose Festival



Plate 4 Artefact display Rose Festival 2025

### 3 Community excavation

The 2025 community excavation commenced in Heritage Week, starting Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August and ran for 21 days Tuesdays to Saturdays inclusive, until Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September, just one day was lost due to poor weather. The discovery of potential contaminants in an imported sealing layer which was introduced into the mansion's demolished remains in the early 1980s, led to the premature curtailment of the excavation on health and safety grounds, and volunteer participation was not possible for the final three days. The excavation was completed under licence 22E0688 ext., an extension of that obtained in 2022.

#### 3.1 Staffing and management

The excavation was staffed by a director and between 3–5 professional and/or community archaeologists who accompanied 10 community volunteers per day. A professional tour guide was present every day and provided tours and information to visitors. Volunteer trainee tour guides were also in attendance 10 days. The team comprised the following members:

**Project Manager** – Cathy Moore (ABH)

**Excavation Director** – James Kyle (ABH)

**Supervisor** – Wayne Malone (ABH)

**Archaeologist** – Molly O'Connell (ABH)

**Archaeologist** – Fionn McDonnell (ABH)

**Community archaeologist** – Aidan Giblin (Resurrecting Monuments)

**Community archaeologist** – Mick Mongey (Resurrecting Monuments)

**Tour guide, volunteer and education coordinator** – Kerrie Clarke

### 3.2 Volunteer recruitment

A total of 200 adult volunteer spaces were available during the project. Volunteers were recruited at the Rose Festival and via social media posts on Facebook, X/Twitter and Instagram. Individuals who had volunteered previously or who had contacted the project during the year to express an interest were also emailed directly and invited to participate. All volunteer spaces were filled within one day. Applications from potential volunteers continued throughout the project and any vacancies that arose were filled from this list. Volunteer numbers were restricted to a maximum of 10 per day to ensure availability of adequate site accommodation and to maintain a high staff to volunteer ratio. Volunteers generally gave four days of their time, with most individuals volunteering for a minimum of two days, but some for up to 12 days. The volunteer numbers per day/week were as follows:

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Total
<b>Week 1</b>	11	9	10	8	10	48
<b>Week 2</b>	10	10	8	11	9	48
<b>Week 3</b>	10	10*	10	10	10	50
<b>Week 4</b>	8	10	9	9	10	46
<b>Week 5**</b>	9	12	7	12	11	51
<b>Total</b>						<b>243</b>

Table 1 Volunteer numbers per day

\*Excavation on this day cancelled due to bad weather

\*\* Volunteer participation cancelled on these days

Volunteer attendance was generally good with an average of two volunteers failing to show up each week. These individuals were contacted to ascertain their reason for non-attendance and if deemed non-legitimate i.e. general disinterest, their future booked spaces were allocated to those on the waiting list. 'No shows' were greatly reduced this year and plenty of notice was given via email so places could be filled in advance of days. The majority of volunteers were from the locality and were returnees, familiar with the park, its history and the community excavation. Four volunteers were archaeology students seeking to gain practical on-site experience and knowledge of excavation techniques. Feedback from volunteers was overwhelmingly positive with many expressing their wish to return for another season.



Plate 5 Community volunteers

### 3.3 Excavation methodology

Prior to the volunteers commencing on site the trench was mechanically de-sodded and the overburden excavated to the upper level of the structural remains. This was for reasons of health and safety and to reduce the deep overburden of modern soil.

Each day the volunteers were greeted by the site director, introduced to the staff, and given a health and safety briefing. This was followed by an informal talk and pictorial history of the house, and an introduction to the project including previous excavation results. The volunteers were also shown the artefacts uncovered to date, with an explanation of their significance along with other artefacts they could expect to encounter. Training in techniques of archaeological excavation and recording was also provided. All excavation was undertaken by hand and recording of features was completed on industry standard Site Record Sheets, with drawings made on drafting film.

The identification of potential contaminants in the modern overburden led to the early closure of the excavation for volunteers, and resulted in a small area in the northeastern corner of the trench remaining unexcavated. It is worth noting that this was the first time since 2021 that any such material has been encountered on the site, and there may be a small concentration in this area only. Although excavation with volunteers ceased the professional team continued to work until Friday 20<sup>th</sup> September completing sites plans, instrument survey and final recording.

For the duration of the excavation an artefact display and the Rose Festival information panels were present on site. A fulltime tour guide was on-hand to engage with interested members of the public, school tours and casual visitors. Trainee tour guides were also present (see 5.3).

### 3.4 Excavation results

An area totalling 220 m<sup>2</sup> was excavated during the 2025 season. In agreement with Dublin City Council Parks Department the trench was not backfilled and has been left open with the excavated remains of the walls exposed.

The roughly rectangular trench adjoined that of the previous year and 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 (Plate 6). As demonstrated by archaeological testing (J. Ryan under licence ref. 21E0375), and previous years of the community excavation, the south mound comprises an extensive accumulation of building debris deriving from the demolition of the house and topsoil which was imported onto the site. The 2025 area covered the western edge of the mansion, including the façade, parts of the Picture Gallery, the porch, the Main Hall and a room not identified on the Irish Army's 1940 plan, but which has been designated as the secretary's office and Lord Ardilaun's study.



Plate 6 Aerial view of the 2025 (and 2024) excavation area

#### 3.4.1 *The Picture Gallery*

The excavation of the Picture Gallery continued on from the portion exposed during the 2024 excavation and saw the exposure of the collapsed timbers of the upper storey flooring, overlying the compressed floorboards and partially burnt floor joists. These were contained in a charcoal-rich horizon derived from the 1943 fire and the associated internal structural collapse. This area of the excavation saw the 2024 baulk removed and the limit of excavation extended 4m east, towards the centre of the south mound, to encompass the entirety of the gallery. In so doing the rear (eastern) wall of the Picture Gallery was uncovered by the volunteers. The excavation of the full extent of this room revealed the remains of the fireplace setting, which was off-centre to the west, along the room's northern wall (Plate 7). The extension of the trench also uncovered a second fireplace setting at this level, which opened onto the Main Hall, and shared a chimney breast with its counterpart in the Picture Gallery. Both fireplaces contained exemplars of very dark brown/black, green-tinged reflective ceramic hearth tiles, with the manufacturer's name Hamilton. These are suggested (although not yet proven), to be from the Hamilton Tile Company of Hamilton, Ohio who manufactured encaustic tiles in the U.S. between 1884–1897.

#### 3.4.2 *The porch*

A portion of the porch which remained unexcavated from the 2024 season, was fully excavated in 2025. This revealed the entirety as measuring 9.15m in length and 1.8m in internal width. While no further encaustic floor tiles remained *in situ*, those dimensions coupled with the intact tiling found in 2024, confirm an original arrangement of five panels of encaustic tiles in a quatrefoil pattern, with the AEG monogrammed tiles presumably employed in the central panel. The *in situ* mosaic panel fragments uncovered in 2024 remain in place, protected beneath a plastic cover and spoil.



Plate 7 Aerial view showing the remains of charred timbers and off-centred fireplace setting in the picture gallery, to the right are the unburnt joists of the main hall

### 3.4.3 *The Main Hall*

In a similar fashion to the Picture Gallery, extension of the eastern limit of excavation enabled exposure of a further portion of the Main Hall. This uncovered the fireplace discussed above in the southern wall. Beneath the preserved floor board runners, a small H-shaped brick vaulted culvert was revealed. This would have been inserted at a sub-floor level during the Arthur Edward Guinness refurbishment of the house, to conduct the cast iron piping of the central heating system around the mansion in a fireproof fashion, beneath the wooden floors. Of great interest was the exposure of several elements of the decorative marble columns which originally adorned this space. Several fragments of the highly ornate composite column capitals were uncovered in the demolition rubble (Plate 8), in addition to pieces of the Connemara marble columns. These and fragments of Cork red marble, were part of the arrangement of columns at first floor level, above the hall. The excavation also uncovered the further evidence for the limestone foundations of the pillars (Plate 9 & Plate 10) in addition to a near complete decorative Portland stone pediment.



Plate 8 Composite capital of a marble column that stood in the main hall, decorated with egg-and-dart motif



Plate 9 The main hall under excavation, in the foreground to the left is the surviving column plinth



Plate 10 The main hall of St Anne's note the column plinths also seen in Plate 9



Plate 11 Volunteer community archaeologists recording features in the main hall

#### 3.4.4 *The secretary's office and study*

Whilst the mapping exercise completed by Irish Army when they took occupation of St. Anne's in 1940 has provided a scaled floorplan of mansion, the labelling of several rooms on the plan is perhaps questionable. It is doubtful that the Ardilaun's possessed their own still, let alone had a room devoted to one, and the room labelled as such is perhaps an error. Other rooms on that plan were unlabelled or unnamed, however, the evidence from excavation suggests that the small anteroom, which led south from the southern wall of the Main Hall through to the 'Study', was the office of Lord Ardilaun's personal secretary, with finds from this area including a dial from an early-twentieth century Bakelite telephone. The study itself was where the concentration of potential contaminants was at its greatest and the so excavation in this area was limited.

### 3.4.5 Façade

The majority of the northern side of the former mansion's façade was uncovered, except for the final 1.5m where the corner of the is located. Elements of the Portland stone ashlar masonry was uncovered in addition to further remains of the central heating system, at a commensurate extent to that which was observed in the Picture Gallery. Finds from this area included the memorial tile described below, several fragments of a black Kilkenny marble carved mantelpiece and decorative hearth tile fragments which would appear to have come from the first floor bedroom above the study.

### 3.4.6 Artefact assemblage

The artefact assemblage recovered in 2025 includes significant quantities of encaustic floor tiles which formerly occupied the porch and the mansion's fireplaces, an intact early-nineteenth century medicine flask, a copper alloy cinquefoil mount, probably from an item of furniture, nineteenth and twentieth century ceramics, stained glass, and Bronze Age flint debitage (Plate 12–Plate 14). A fragment of a memorial tablet with a French inscription, is presumed to be Napoleonic in origin given Lord Ardilaun's fascination with Napoleon Bonaparte, the Emperor of France. A Tayto crisp packet from 1970s proved to be one of the most popular finds with visitors!



Plate 12 L-R, a Tayto crisp packet from the 1970s, copper alloy mount, stained glass



Plate 13 Early-nineteenth century medicine flask



Plate 14

Fragment of a memorial tablet with a French inscription

### 3.5 Post excavation

A programme of community post excavation work is taking place every Friday for six weeks. Based in the Red Stables it is being led by ABH Post Excavation Manager Wayne Malone, assisted by a team of seven volunteers, all of whom took part in this year's excavation. To date over 1500 artefacts from the 2023 and 2024 seasons of excavation have been processed. These include 908 tile fragments, 426 pieces of stained glass and 222 plaster mouldings. Fragments of dressed stone, pottery sherds, glass and metal objects are yet to be quantified and catalogued. In consultation with the National Museum of Ireland, the team are assigning find numbers, washing, cataloguing, measuring and photographing finds (Plate 15 & Plate 16).

Additional post excavation work to digitise the site archive and plans is underway. This will inform the preliminary excavation report for submission to the National Monuments Service (NMS). In agreement with the NMS with the production of a final report has been deferred until the project end.



Plate 15 Community volunteers cataloguing finds in the Red Stables



Plate 16 Community volunteers washing and cataloguing finds in the Red Stables

## 4 Public engagement and outreach

### 4.1 Community excavation

Public interest in the excavation remains high and the excavation had a constant flow of visitors. Most were regular park users, however, many returned specifically to the excavation on multiple occasions throughout its course. A fulltime professional tour guide was employed to engage with the public and provide information on the project. The guide was assisted by a volunteer trainee guide (see 5.3), and on occasion when visitor numbers were particularly high, a member of the excavation team or a volunteer. Visitor numbers were recorded using a clicker and are detailed in Table 2 below. No numbers were recorded for Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September as bad weather saw the excavation cancelled for the day.

Day	No. of visitors
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> August	233
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> August	290
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> August	192
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> August	204
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> August	415
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> August	165
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> August	237
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> August	83
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> August	150
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	287
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	127
Wednesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September	0
Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	127
Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> September	147
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> September	465
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> September	95
Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	24
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> September	62
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> September	129
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	706
Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> September	110
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> September	84
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> September	0
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	0
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4332</b>

Table 2 Visitor numbers per day

The number of visitors to the excavation was lower than in previous years. This appears to be due to several factors, some inclement weather saw very low visitors to the park in general, but it was also

noted that park users are now very aware of the excavation, and as the trench is formally fenced off but remains open all year, see it as just another element of the park. The cancellation of the final three days of the excavation also impacted on visitor numbers, particularly the loss of school tours and Saturday visitors.

In addition to viewing the ongoing excavation visitors could examine the exhibition panels created for the Rose Festival, which were on display at the fencing around the excavation trench. A finds table showcasing a range of recovered artefacts was also in place each day. Audience engagement with both exhibits was high and all visitors expressed interest in the remains of the house being left on display. The most prominent feedback was a request for the introduction of signage detailing the history of the site. In addition to park users the excavation was visited by school groups as part of the education programme (see 5.2), by scout troops and by residents of the Baleskin Reception Centre. Specific tour groups with members of the deaf and visually impaired communities were also hosted (see 4.3).

Additional public engagement has included a talk by Excavation Director James Kyle at the St. Gabriel's Parish Centre in Clontarf on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025. A second talk for residents of Killester is awaiting confirmation of date.

The excavation has become a source of inspiration to local artist Barry McAdam (Naniken Studios), who has been researching the mansion and in 2023 created a hand built 3D model of the house (see Final Project Report 2023). In 2025 Barry presented the team with a wooden laser cut of the façade of the mansion (Plate 17).

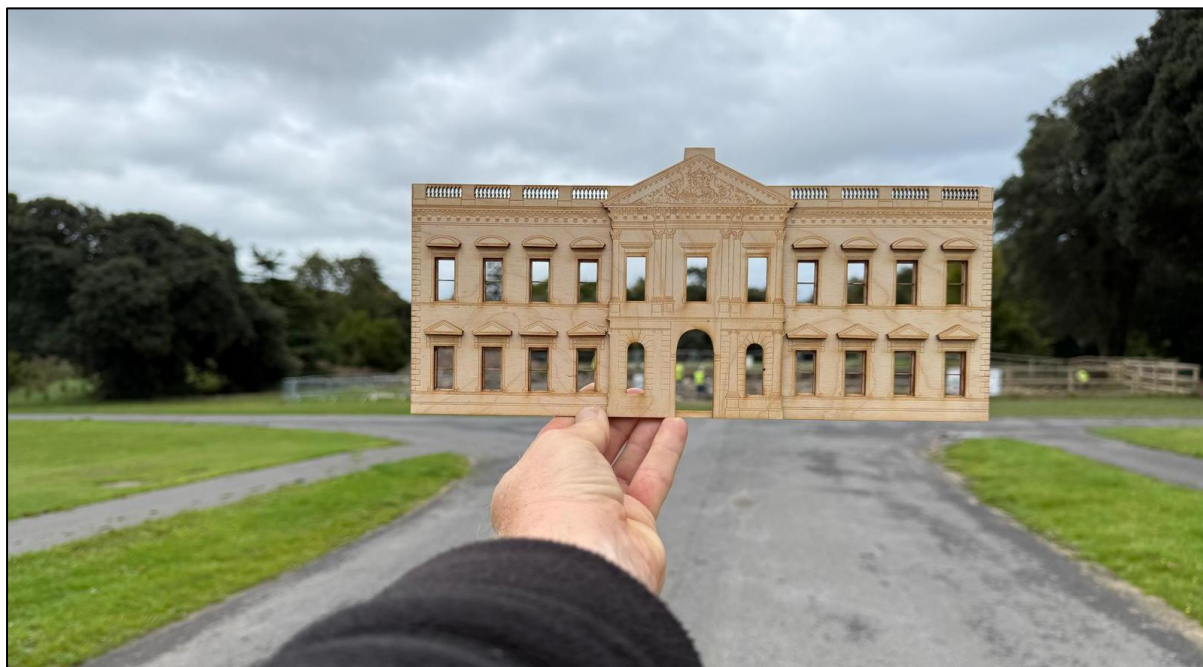


Plate 17      Wooden laser cut of the façade of St Anne's by Barry McAdam

#### 4.2 Lord Mayor's visit

On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> of September the excavation was visited by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Ray McAdam, along with representatives from DCC Parks, Heritage, Archaeology and Planning sections, and the Heritage Council's Heritage in Education Policy Development Officer. The visit coincided with TY Tuesday and a primary school tour, and participants of both met with the Mayor. The Mayor was given a full tour of the excavation and finds table (Plate 18 & Plate 19) and the visit was covered in the Irish Times and Irish Independent newspapers (see 4.4). As a result of this the Lord Mayor has invited members of the project team and the transition year students to an event in the Oak Room of the Mansion House on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November.



Plate 18 The Lord Mayor meeting participants of TY Tuesday



Plate 19 The Lord Mayor and excavation director James Kyle

#### 4.3 Inclusion and integration

The excavation was visited on September 12<sup>th</sup> by residents of the Baleskin Reception Centre who are partaking in a cultural heritage education programme led by ABH archaeologist Wayne Malone. The group visited the site and had a short tour of the park (Plate 20 & Plate 21).



Plate 20 Residents of the Baleskin Reception Centre visit to the excavation



Plate 21 Residents of the Baleskin Reception Centre tour of historic features in the park

An Irish Sign Language tour of the excavation was hosted on September 13<sup>th</sup> (Plate 22), a second scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup> was cancelled. These tours were booked via Eventbrite and had up to 10 attendees. This element of the project received additional support from Dublin City Council who liaised with and funded the ISL interpreter. A group of visually impaired visitors visited the excavation on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> September. In addition to a guided tour they were provided with large print format and braille versions of the exhibition panel texts (Plate 23), and the finds table was fitted with a black tablecloth to provide a high contrast display.



Plate 22 ISL tour of the excavation on September 13<sup>th</sup>

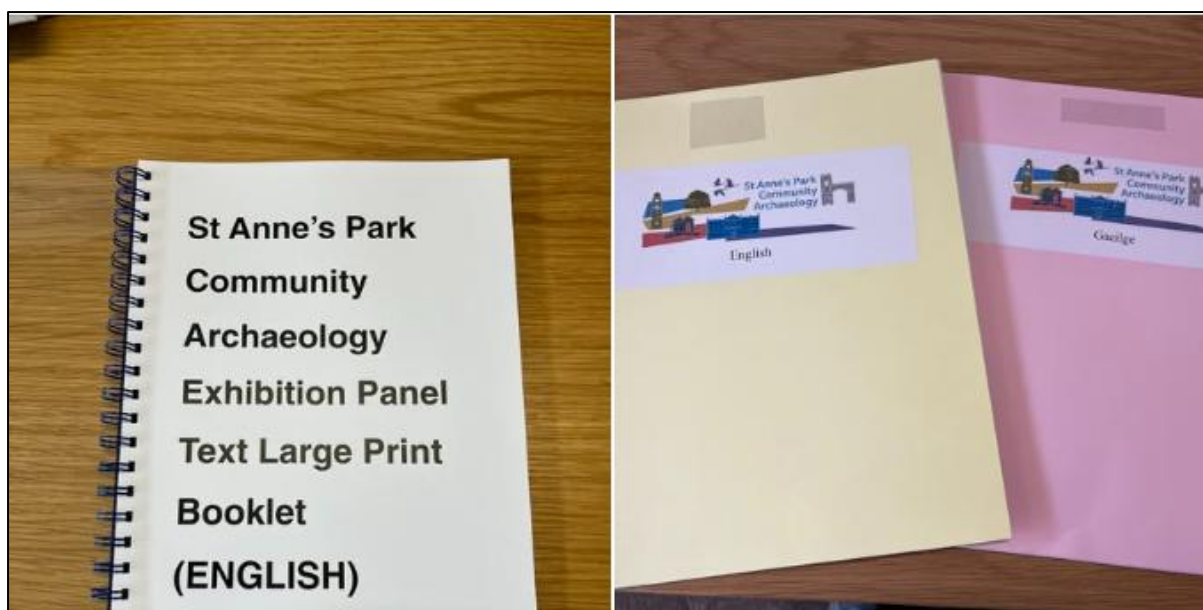


Plate 23 Braille and large print copies of the exhibition panel texts for visually impaired visitors

#### 4.4 Press coverage

The project received favourable press coverage centred on the visit of the Lord Mayor. Both the Irish Times and Irish Independent ran online articles covering the visit, but also providing a good overview of the entire programme with photographs of transition year pupils and direct quotes from the excavation director James Kyle and DCC Heritage Officer Charles Duggan <https://www.irishtimes.com/StAnnes> and <https://www.independent.ie/StAnnes>.

#### 4.5 Social media

The project was promoted on social media (Facebook, X/Twitter and Instagram), to recruit volunteers, advertise the education programme and publicise the progress of the excavation (Plate 24–Plate 26). Engagement on Facebook was highest, reflecting the age profile of followers and that the platform is used by large communities specifically interested in history and archaeology. Engagement on X/Twitter has seen a noticeable decrease, which follows a general trend across the platform where many Irish heritage organisations are no longer active. Instagram remains a platform with limited engagement. Posts were replicated across all platforms with some variation for text and image limits. A reel promoting the community post excavation #FindsFriday, created by DCC Heritage Office, was posted across all platforms <https://www.instagram.com/reel/FindsFriday>.



Plate 24 X/Twitter post advertising school tours



Plate 25 This year's most viewed X/Twitter post



Plate 26 Facebook post showcasing excavation progress and volunteer contribution

#### 4.6 2025 Archaeological Achievement Awards

The project has been shortlisted in the 2025 Archaeological Achievement Awards in the category of Public dissemination or Presentation. The awards are overseen by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) and are a showcase for the best in UK and Irish archaeology. Their purpose is to advance public education in the study and practice of archaeology in all its aspects. They are committed to recognising significant contributions to the knowledge and importance of research, the effective dissemination and presentation of archaeological knowledge and a focus on more sustainable practices. The awards have

a number of cross-cutting themes on which nominations are judged. All nominated projects must address the theme of 'Equality, diversity and inclusion' after which the remaining themes are optional. The themes are as follows;

- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Health and well-being
- Collaboration – commercial/academic/public
- Placeshaping/placemaking
- Innovation

The category of Public dissemination or Presentation can include books, publications, exhibitions, film, social media or presentation. It can relate to a specific site, artefact, place or wider landscape. Nominated project must demonstrate how they meet the following criteria;

- Accessibility to diverse audiences
- Enhances public understanding
- Creativity and innovative design and production
- Multi-format outputs where appropriate

The awards will be announced at an event in Belfast on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

## **5 Education programme**

This year's education programme comprised formal tours of the excavation and finds table for primary and post primary schools, a dedicated programme 'TY Tuesdays' for transition year students and a training opportunity for trainee tour guides.

### **5.1 TY Tuesdays**

TY Tuesdays was advertised on social media and through direct emails to local second level schools. The programme commenced on August 19<sup>th</sup> with 10 pupils most of whom attended for the full five weeks. Students were introduced to the history and archaeology of the park and trained in techniques of archaeological excavation and recording (Plate 27). On the final week they were also invited to manage the finds table and provide information to visitors and school tours. The programme was hugely successful with very positive feedback received from participants, teachers and parents.



Plate 27 TY students receive a short geology lesson from community archaeologist Aidan Giblin

## 5.2 School tours

School tours were offered Tuesdays to Fridays at 10am, 11.30am, 1pm and 2.30pm. The tours were promoted via social media and direct emails to local schools. Unlike in previous years many of teachers booked places while still on their summer holidays. The earlier weeks of the excavation, prior to commencement of the school year, were used to reach out to groups that had contacted the programme during the year looking for tours; groups from Fairview Scouts came twice, local Men's Sheds were contacted but did not avail of any spaces. From Week 3 onwards there was a high uptake of school tours, however, there were a higher number of cancellations and no shows than in previous years (11 in total – in Weeks 1 to 4). Tours were 45 minutes long and the attending groups averaged 25 pupils and two adults.

In total 11 classes and 263 pupils visited the excavation (Plate 28 & Plate 29). These were from seven primary schools and four secondary schools, an increase of the latter this year due to availability of more weekday options. A further six primary and six secondary schools booked in for the final week were cancelled.



Plate 28 Primary school tour group examining the finds table



Plate 29 Primary school tour group watching the excavation

### 5.3 Tour guide training

In expansion of the project volunteer ethos the 2025 programme invited trainee tour guides to volunteer for work experience on both tours of the excavation and as find table attendants. All Dublin-based Further Education centres of Cultural & Heritage Studies QQI Level 5 and National and Regional Badges at QQI Level 6 were contacted. The main uptake was from The Print Museum and Liberties College and in total 12 students engaged with the online training from lead guide Kerrie Clarke. This outlined the community archaeology project, the history and archaeology of St Anne's and the expected nature of their duties while volunteering. Spaces were allocated for two trainees per week (Wednesday to Saturday), but unfortunately attendance was very poor. Cancellations, no shows and some sick days resulted in only 15 work experience days being completed out of a possible 32. The programme has, however, proven fruitful for one guide who after this experience has gained employment guiding in St. Patricks Cathedral.

## 6 Conclusions

The 2025 St Anne's Park Community Archaeology Programme was highly successful and the excavation uncovered significant remains of the mansion along with a substantial and rich artefact assemblage. This was achieved with a team of professional and community archaeologists working alongside community volunteers, TY students and volunteer tour guides. Both professional staff and volunteers expressed their satisfaction and enjoyment of the excavation. The visit from residents of the Baleskin Reception Centre and extension of outreach to hearing and visually impaired groups were also hugely positive additions, and the principal of integration and inclusion should be maintained.

Although visitor numbers were down on previous years, public engagement throughout the programme was constant. The Rose Festival saw significant interest and proved to be an excellent platform for volunteer recruitment. The excavation saw large visitor numbers from both the general public and schools with a total of 4,595 visitors recorded. Both the finds table and exhibition panels were extremely popular and many visitors expressed a desire to see the exposed walls left uncovered and for heritage signage.

The discovery of potential contaminants in the modern overburden was unexpected and resulted in the premature closure of the excavation and a loss of three days. While the level of contamination is believed to be low, it remains to be seen whether future seasons of community excavation can be conducted safely.

## 6.1 Summary of delivered programme

### *Community archaeology*

- Community excavation x 21 days, August 19<sup>th</sup> – September 16<sup>th</sup> 2025
- Community post excavation and processing of c. 1500 finds
- Preliminary post excavation archiving
- Preliminary excavation report

### *Inclusion and integration*

- Tour group from the Baleskin Reception Centre
- One tour provided in ISL
- One tour provided for visually impaired visitors, provision of information in large print format and braille

### *Public engagement and outreach*

- Rose Festival exhibition and programme launch
- 4,595 visitors to excavation
- Visit by the Lord Mayor
- Articles in Irish Times and Irish Independent
- Management of Facebook, X/Twitter and Instagram
- Short-listed for Archaeological Achievement Awards

### *Education programme*

- 11 school tours, 263 pupils
- TY programme for 11 pupils x 5 weeks
- Training and experience for 5 trainee tour guides

