

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
OF
ST NICHOLAS QUARTER PHASE 2,
DUNDALK, COUNTY LOUTH**

ON BEHALF OF: BDP

ITM: 704717, 808029

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APRIL 2026

IAC PROJECT REF.: J4154.1

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

DATE	DOCUMENT TITLE	REV.	PREPARED BY	REVIEWED BY	APPROVED BY
30.04.2026	Archaeological assessment of St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, Dundalk, County Louth	0	J. Small	J. Small	F. Bailey

ABSTRACT

This assessment has been prepared on behalf of Louth County Council, to study the impact, if any, of the proposed St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, Dundalk, County Louth (ITM 704717, 808029) on the archaeological and historical resource. It was carried out by Jonny Small of IAC Archaeology.

There are five recorded archaeological sites within the study area, two of which are located within the proposed development area. These comprise the site of a meeting house (LH007-119004) and the line of the former town wall (LH007-119027), including the site of Blind Gate. The town walls are recorded as a National Monument. The proposed development is also located within the Zone of Notification for the historic core of Dundalk town, which is a recorded monument (LH007-119). A further three archaeological sites are known within 100m of the proposed development.

A review of the Excavations Bulletin has revealed that three previous investigations have been carried out within the proposed scheme. Archaeological monitoring was carried out along Fair Green Road, Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and Northgate Street during Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter Rejuvenation Scheme (Licence No. 24E0878). Features uncovered during monitoring included deposits, stone walls, stone surfaces and cobbled surfaces, with finds including pottery, leather, animal bone and clay pipes. Test excavation was undertaken at 27–28 Bridge Street. A series of occupation layers relating to the medieval period were uncovered, including a paved stone surface that may represent a medieval laneway (Bennett 2008:835, Licence No. 08E0331). Test trenching in advance of the construction of the Linenhall car park did not identify features of archaeological significance (Bennett 2004:1103, Licence No. 04E0385). Medieval and post-medieval features have been uncovered during further archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the proposed development, including structural remains and occupation deposits.

Analysis of cartographic sources has revealed that the proposed development was located within the walled town of Dundalk and may have once contained part of the walls or banks associated with the medieval defences along Linenhall Street. The associated Blind Gate was depicted at Linenhall Street. The town defences were demolished in the 18th century, and it is unknown if any structural remains survive below ground level. Lands to the immediate east including Fairgreen Road were reclaimed from the Castletown River during the late 19th century.

A field inspection has been carried out as part of this assessment and confirmed the results of the aerial photographic analysis in so far that the site is fully developed with road layout remaining unchanged from 1995. No previously unrecorded sites of archaeological potential were noted and no evidence of the town defences (LH007-119027) survive above ground level within the scheme footprint. Despite this, the proposed scheme is located within an area of high archaeological potential due to its location within the medieval settlement of Dundalk and the presence of archaeological deposits uncovered during previous archaeological investigations.

The proposed development includes proposals for the removal of No. 2 Bridge Street and a masonry wall at the end of Meeting House Lane, both of which are likely to be 19th century in date although may incorporate earlier elements. It is recommended that historic buildings and walls that are proposed for removal are subject to a written and photographic record prior to their removal.

Ground disturbances associated with the proposed development have the potential to adversely impact any previously unrecorded archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level, as well as potential sub-surface remains of the medieval settlement (LH007-119), town defences (LH007-119027) and the Presbyterian Meeting House (LK007-119004). The sites of medieval town defences are considered to represent National Monuments.

The line of the medieval town defences and the approximate site of Blind Gate is located within the proposed Peace Park. Areas of hard landscaping (P1 granite paving and P5 SMA surfacing) are proposed over the line of the town defences. It is recommended that these areas of hard landscaping are moved to avoid the potential sub-surface archaeological remains, or are situated within areas of previous hard landscaping, such as the existing pathway.

It is recommended that all ground disturbances associated with the proposed development be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring will require Ministerial Consent from the Minister of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH), due to potential impacts on the medieval town defences. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation *in-situ* or by record. Any further mitigation will require approval from the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL

The following report details an archaeological assessment undertaken in advance of the proposed St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, Dundalk, County Louth (Figure 1; ITM 704717, 808029). It has been carried out to ascertain the potential impact of the proposed development on the archaeological and historical resource that may exist within the area and was undertaken by Jonny Small of IAC Archaeology (IAC), on behalf of BDP.

The archaeological assessment involved a detailed study of the archaeological and historical background of the proposed development site and the surrounding area. This included information from the Record of Monuments and Places of County Louth, the topographical files within the National Museum of Ireland and all available cartographic and documentary sources for the area. A field inspection has also been carried out with the aim to identify any previously unrecorded features of archaeological or historical interest.

1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT

- A. Public Realm space to grounds of St. Nicholas Church.
Demolition of sections of railing. Reconfiguration of existing church garden to facilitate vehicular access. Provision of additional landscaping, hardscaping and all associated ancillary site works.
- B. Demolition of no. 2 & 3 Bridge Street. The construction of a multifunctional Cultural and Community Hub with East West Pedestrian Connection and Public Space. Proposed demolition of no. 2 Bridge Street to facilitate a new East West pedestrian connection from Bridge Street to Linenhall Street. The demolition of no. 3 Bridge Street to facilitate a new 2-story community building consisting of 4 no. multi-use, reception and ancillary spaces at ground floor level. At first floor level, a one-bedroom residential unit facing Bridge Street and a multi-use community space facing Linenhall Street. Public realm provision consisting of 5 no. on-street parking spaces, 1 no. loading bay, bicycle parking, landscaping, hardscaping and all associated siteworks.
- C. 6 no. residential duplex units consisting of 4 no. one bedroom units and 2 no. two bedroom units, construction of bin stores and all associated works.
- D. New East West pedestrian connection at Meeting House Lane consisting of the demolition of no 27 Bridge Street and formation of a new pedestrian only opening in the stone wall at the end of Meeting House Lane. The provision of landscaping, hardscaping and all associated ancillary siteworks.
- E. Completion of rejuvenation of the Peace Park consisting of the installation of children's sensory areas, new pathways, hard landscaping, kerbing, bicycle parking and soft landscaping with all associated site development works and associated services.

(Figures 2a-2b)

2 METHODOLOGY

A study area, defined as 100m from the boundary of the proposed development, was assessed to inform this report. Research was undertaken in two phases. The first phase comprised a paper survey of all available archaeological, historical and cartographic sources. The second phase involved a field inspection of the site.

2.1 PAPER SURVEY

- Record of Monuments and Places for County Louth;
- Sites and Monuments Record for County Louth;
- National Monuments in State Care Database;
- Preservation Orders List;
- Topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland;
- Cartographic and written sources relating to the study area;
- Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027);
- Dundalk Local Area Plan 2025–2031;
- Aerial photographs;
- Excavations Bulletin (1970–2026).

Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) is a list of archaeological sites known to the National Monuments Section, which are afforded legal protection under Section 12 of the 1994 National Monuments Act and are published as a record.

Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) holds documentary evidence and field inspections of all known archaeological sites and monuments. Some information is also held about archaeological sites and monuments whose precise location is not known e.g. only a site type and townland are recorded. These are known to the National Monuments Section as ‘un-located sites’ and cannot be afforded legal protection due to lack of locational information. As a result, these are omitted from the Record of Monuments and Places. SMR sites are also listed on a website maintained by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH) – www.archaeology.ie.

National Monuments in State Care Database is a list of all the National Monuments in State guardianship or ownership. Each is assigned a National Monument number whether in guardianship or ownership and has a brief description of the remains of each Monument.

The Minister for the DoHLGH may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

Preservation Orders List contains information on Preservation Orders and/or Temporary Preservation Orders, which have been assigned to a site or sites. Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

The topographical files of the National Museum of Ireland are the national archive of all known finds recorded by the National Museum. This archive relates primarily to artefacts but also includes references to monuments and unique records of previous excavations. The find spots of artefacts are important sources of information on the discovery of sites of archaeological significance.

Cartographic sources are important in tracing land use development within the development area as well as providing important topographical information on areas of archaeological potential and the development of buildings. Cartographic analysis of all relevant maps has been made to identify any topographical anomalies or structures that no longer remain within the landscape.

Documentary sources were consulted to gain background information on the archaeological and cultural heritage landscape of the proposed development area.

Development Plans contain a catalogue of all the Protected Structures and archaeological sites within the county. The Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027) and the Dundalk Local Area Plan (2025–2031) were consulted to obtain information on cultural heritage sites in and within the immediate vicinity of the proposed scheme.

Aerial photographic coverage is an important source of information regarding the precise location of sites and their extent. It also provides initial information on the terrain and its likely potential for archaeology. A number of sources were consulted including aerial photographs held by the Ordnance Survey and Google Earth.

Excavations Bulletin is a summary publication that has been produced every year since 1970. This summarises every archaeological excavation that has taken place in Ireland during that year up until 2010 and since 1987 has been edited by Isabel Bennett. This information is vital when examining the archaeological content of any area, which may not have been recorded under the SMR and RMP files. This information is also available online (www.excavations.ie) from 1970–2026.

2.2 FIELD INSPECTION

Field inspection is necessary to determine the extent and nature of archaeological and historical remains and can also lead to the identification of previously unrecorded

or suspected sites and portable finds through topographical observation and local information.

The archaeological field inspection entailed -

- Walking the proposed development and its immediate environs.
- Noting and recording the terrain type and land usage.
- Noting and recording the presence of features of archaeological or historical significance.
- Verifying the extent and condition of any recorded sites.
- Visually investigating any suspect landscape anomalies to determine the possibility of their being anthropogenic in origin.

3 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

3.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed development is located within the town of Dundalk, in Townparks townland, Dundalk parish, Upper Dundalk barony in County Louth (Figure 1). The proposed development comprises developed land and green space within Dundalk town. The proposed development is bordered by Bridge Street to the south, by St. Nicholas Church to the south, by Linenhall Street to the east and by the Castletown River and Northgate Street to the north.

There are five recorded archaeological sites within the study area, two of which are located within the proposed development area. These comprise the site of a meeting house (LH007-119004) and the line of the former town wall (LH007-119027), including the site of Blind Gate. The town walls are recorded as a National Monument. The proposed development is also located within the Zone of Notification for the historic core of Dundalk town, which is a recorded monument (LH007-119).

3.1.1 Prehistoric Period

Mesolithic Period (c. 8000–4000 BC)

Recent discoveries may suggest the possibility of a human presence in the southwest of Ireland as early as the Upper Palaeolithic (Dowd and Carden 2016), however; the Mesolithic period is the earliest time for which there is clear evidence for prehistoric human colonisation of the island of Ireland. During this period people hunted, foraged and gathered food and appear to have led a primarily mobile lifestyle. The presence of Mesolithic communities is most commonly evidenced by scatters of worked flint material, a by-product of the production of flint implements.

There is no archaeological evidence of Mesolithic activity within the immediate environs of the proposed development area, although Mesolithic activity was recorded during excavations in Dowdallstown, c. 1.3km to the northeast (O'Neill 2004, Licence No.: 04E1180). Lithics, a shell midden and spreads dated to the Mesolithic period were uncovered. There is further evidence for Mesolithic activity in the wider environs of the proposed development, including the shell middens at Rockmarshall c. 6.6km to the east (LH008-026001 – 3).

Neolithic Period (c. 4000–2500 BC)

During this period communities became less mobile and their economy became based on the rearing of stock and cereal cultivation. The transition to the Neolithic was marked by major social change. Communities expanded and moved to create more permanent settlements. This afforded the development of agriculture which demanded an altering of the physical landscape. Forests were rapidly cleared and field boundaries were constructed. Pottery was also being produced, possibly for the first time. The advent of the Neolithic period also provided the megalithic tomb. There are four types of tomb in Ireland, namely the Court Cairn, Portal tomb, Passage tomb and Wedge tomb; of which the latter style straddles the Neolithic to Bronze Age

transition. The primary evidence for the Neolithic Period in Louth is recorded from megalithic tombs, the majority of which are in the north Louth area at the foot of the Cooley Mountains. There is a concentration of megalithic tombs in the Flurry Valley to the north of the proposed scheme with the nearest examples comprising a portal tomb (LH004-074) and a wedge tomb (LH004-075) located in Proleek, c. 4.5km to the north-northeast.

There is no evidence for Neolithic occupation within the study area, although there is evidence within the wider environs of the proposed development. A possible Neolithic rectangular house was identified c. 1.2km northwest of the proposed development (Licence No.: 09E0156). A Neolithic date was inferred by several fragments of Neolithic pottery found in association with the structural evidence. The structural evidence consisted of a slot trench with post-holes in and alongside it, a slot trench partially dividing the interior and a hearth in the northeast corner of the interior.

A Neolithic house was uncovered c. 2.7km to the west-northwest of the proposed development (LH007-172), during excavations in advance of the M1 Dundalk Western Bypass (Licence No.: 03E0114).

A number of sites of Neolithic date were identified during excavations prior to the construction of the Dundalk Western Bypass. A Neolithic house was uncovered c. 2.7km to the west-northwest of the proposed development (LH007-172; Licence Ref.: 03E0114). Several pits containing early Neolithic pottery were identified at Faughart Lower 5 (LH004-136; Licence No.: 03E1574), c. 3km to the north. A middle Neolithic to late Neolithic/early Bronze Age Beaker habitation site was identified at Donaghmore 1 (Licence No. 02E1330) located c. 2.9km southwest of the proposed development area.

Bronze Age (c. 2500–800 BC)

This period is marked by the use of metal for the first time. As with the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic, the transition into the early Bronze Age was accompanied by changes in society. Megaliths were replaced in favour of individual, subterranean cist or pit burials that were either in isolation or in small cemeteries. These burials contained inhumed or cremated remains and were often, but not always, accompanied by a pottery vessel.

Over 7,000 burnt mounds or fulacht fia sites have been recorded in the country and c. 1,500 examples excavated, making them the most common prehistoric monument in Ireland (Waddell 2022, 164). Although burnt mounds of shattered stone occur as a result of various activities that have been practiced from the Mesolithic to the present day, the Bronze Age has long been believed to have seen the peak of this activity. Dating evidence from a growing number of burnt mounds, suggests activities resulting in burnt mounds were being carried over a span of 3,500 years in Ireland (Hawkes 2018). They are typically located in areas where there is a readily available water source, often in proximity to a river or stream or in places with a high-water table. In the field burnt mounds may be identified as charcoal-rich mounds or spreads of heat

shattered stones, however, in many cases, the sites have been disturbed by later agricultural activity and are no longer visible on the field surface. Nevertheless, even disturbed spreads of burnt mound material often preserve the underlying associated features, such as troughs, pits and gullies, intact. Several burnt mound sites have been uncovered within the wider environs of the proposed development, the closest of which was discovered c. 1.2km to the west during archaeological monitoring (Licence No. 98E0573).

There was a relatively dense Bronze Age settlement in the area of Dundalk and its environs with groups of cist burials, pit burials, standing stones, and rock art coupled with the cutting back of woodlands and establishment of grains and cereals suggesting the establishment of a larger population in the area. A possible henge or ceremonial enclosure (LH007-012) recorded in antiquity and located c. 2km north-northwest of the proposed development area in Carn Beg, was identified from crop marks on an aerial photograph taken in the early 1970s by Dr J. K Joseph of Cambridge University (CUCAP, BGL 40). The photograph shows a crop mark revealing a pattern of concentric features delimited by a large enclosure c. 130m in diameter. The interior features appear to represent two smaller concentric rings.

A henge or ceremonial enclosure was identified in 1758 by Thomas Wright in his *Louthiana* publication. He described the 'ruinous remains of a temple or theatre on the planes (sic) of Ballynahaitinne' near Dundalk enclosed on one side with a rampart and ditch. His drawing shows a massive stone circle outside the earthwork and a double ring of smaller stones in the interior. Archaeological testing of the entrance to the golf course immediately to the east of the possible enclosure was carried out in 1996. No archaeological features were exposed in any of these trenches and only pottery sherds of 19th century date were retrieved (Licence No. 96E0321). This type of monument can date from any time from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, though the majority are believed to be Bronze Age in date.

A ring-barrow was identified during a geophysical survey (Licence No. 09R006) and testing (Licence Ref. 09E0156) in the townland of Lisdoo, c. 1.2km northwest of the proposed development. In addition, 5–6 roundhouses of possible Bronze Age date were discovered as part of the same investigation. At least some of these features showed evidence of intercutting and therefore were not all contemporary. There is also a possibility that these features could date to the early medieval period.

A burial landscape dating to the Bronze Age was recorded c. 2.7km north of the proposed development with the excavation of two ring barrows (LH004-134003 and LH004-134004), an embanked barrow (LH004-134002) and a burial cairn (LH004-134001) located in close proximity to one another. Bronze Age settlement sites were also uncovered during works on the Dundalk Western Bypass Scheme, such as several huts with associated pits (LH004-139) excavated at Carn More 1 under licence 03E0867 located c. 2.7km to the northwest of the proposed development area.

Iron Age (c. 800 BC–AD 500)

There is increasing evidence for Iron Age settlement and activity in recent years as a result of development-led excavations as well as projects such as Late Iron Age and Roman Ireland (Cahill Wilson 2014). Yet this period is distinguishable from the rather rich remains of the preceding Bronze Age and subsequent early medieval period, by a relative paucity within the current archaeological record. The Iron Age in Ireland is problematic for archaeologists as few artefacts dating exclusively to this period have been found and without extensive excavation it cannot be determined whether several monument types, such as ring-barrows or standing stones, date to the late Bronze Age or Iron Age. It is likely that there was significant continuity in the Iron Age, with earlier monuments re-used in many cases.

An Iron Age house was excavated as part of the M1 Motorway Dundalk Western Bypass Scheme c. 2.8km northwest of the proposed development in the townland of Balriggeran (LH004-145).

3.1.2 Early Medieval Period (AD 500–1100)

Before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans in 1185, Dundalk was within the territory of the *Uí Chonaill Mhuirthemne*, which was closely linked with the Ulster kingdoms in Antrim and Down (Gosling 1993). A late prehistoric/early medieval site at Castletown, also known as *Dún Dealgan*, located c. 1.7km to the west, became an Anglo-Norman castle in the 12th century (LH007-118007). There are literary references to *Dún Dealgan* in early medieval texts such as the *Mesca Ulad* ('The Intoxication of the Ulstermen'), where it is described as one of the chief places of assembly in Ulster during the festival of Samhain, second only to *Emain Macha* (Navan Fort, County Armagh).

The early medieval period is depicted in the surviving sources as an almost entirely rural based society. Territorial divisions were based on the *túath*, or petty kingdom, with Byrne (1973) estimating that there may have been at least 150 kings in Ireland at any given time. This period, with a new religious culture and evolving technologies, saw significant woodland clearance and the expansion of grassland. A new type of plough and the horizontal mill were two innovations that improved agriculture and allowed for the population to increase. Consequently, from c. AD 500 onwards, the landscape became well settled, as evidenced by the profuse distribution of ringforts, a dispersed distribution of enclosed settlements, normally associated with various grades of well-to-do farming and aristocratic classes in early medieval Ireland (Stout and Stout 1997, 20).

The occupation of the general area in the early medieval period is well attested to by the large number of souterrains (or underground passages) that have been recorded throughout the vicinity of the proposed scheme. In Louth, over 300 are known, with over 50 per cent of these being found between the Castletown and Fane Rivers. Quite often souterrains are found in association with ringforts and a detailed study of ringforts in Louth indicates that the majority lie beyond the boundary of the Pale. The ringfort or rath is considered to be the most common indicator of settlement during the early medieval period (Stout 1997). One of the most recent studies of early

medieval settlement enclosures has suggested that there is potential for at least 60,000 such sites to have existed on the island (O’Sullivan et al. 2014, 49). Souterrains are generally regarded as having had a defensive or protective function, as evidenced by the complex construction of many of the sites, with narrow winding passages, deliberate obstructions, and small chambers. Raiding was endemic during the early medieval period and souterrains may have served to house portable valuables and non-combatants during a raid. Several potential ringforts, souterrains and areas of early medieval activity have been identified in the landscape surrounding the proposed scheme. The nearest of which is located c. 1.2km to the north in the townland of Lisdoon (LH007-016001). This ringfort is also associated with a souterrain (LH007-016002).

3.1.3 Medieval Period (AD 1100–1600)

Orgial, an independent principality, consisted of a portion of the Province of Meath and the entire of Armagh and Monaghan. The O’Carrolls were Princes of *Orgial* and the Barony of Louth was referred to, particularly as their country. In 1183, John de Courcy conquered *Orgial*, and it was afterwards known by the English variously as Uriel and Oriel. The followers of de Courcy and de Lacy settled the portion of *Orgial*, called it English Oriel and in 1210 the County of Louth was formed from it by King John. Many castles were erected to enable the settlers to hold possession of the region.

The motte and bailey at Castletown (LH007-118007), located c. 1.7km west of the proposed scheme, represents the initial phase of Anglo-Norman activity in the area. Although there are some suggestions that John de Courcy was responsible for this development, it is generally accepted that it represents the initial headquarters of the de Verdon family. The Anglo-Normans were responsible for a network of towns throughout the country, with Louth being the most urbanised county (Orpen 1908).

At this time, Dundalk developed as the major urban centre during this period, which was due to its market centre and port, in addition to its more strategic siting on the major routeway linking Dublin with Ulster. Another factor influencing the movement of the de Verdons may have been the nature of the topography of the general area. The unsatisfactory nature of the river at the Castletown location would have made it inaccessible to shipping even in the late 12th century. The new town also had the advantage of considerable natural defences. The site of the new town, which was to grow into the modern town of Dundalk, was thus better situated than Castletown from a commercial as well as a defensive point.

As Dundalk developed and became the focus of Anglo-Norman settlement in the area, Castletown fell into decline and Dundalk became the economic heart of the Lordship. The precise date for the foundation of the “Newtown” of Dundalk is unclear, but by the late 13th century, surviving property deeds make the distinction between the late 12th century settlement at Castletown and the Newtown or ‘nove ville de Dundalc’ (O’ Sullivan 2006). As a result of the low-lying nature of the surrounding landscape and the form of the gravel ridge on which Newtown (Dundalk) was located, the town developed a markedly north-south linear aspect, which is still apparent today.

By the beginning of the 14th century, an active market town had developed at Dundalk. Several religious communities established themselves within the town, including the Franciscans, who established a friary in 1245 (LH007-119021), c. 680m to the southeast. The Priory of St. Leonard, Fratres Cruciferi (LH007-119018) was founded by Bertram or Nicholas de Verdun in the 12th century and is situated on the grounds of the present county library, c. 530m to the southeast. The discovery of human remains at this location resulted in archaeological investigations during the 1990s (Campbell 1997).

Although the town was growing and becoming an important trade centre for the area, it is possible that completing the walled defences (LH007-119027) was not a high priority due to the inaccessibility of the surrounding boggy terrain, which would have made assault difficult (O' Sullivan 2006). In 1315, Edward Bruce, brother of the Scottish King, on condition that he should aid them in driving the English out, was offered the Kingdom of Ireland by the Ulster Chiefs. Having landed with an army of 6,000 men, he burned and looted Dundalk with the entire community of the Franciscan friary killed during the assault on the town. Toward the close of the following year, he was killed and his army was defeated by the English (Gosling, 1993). It may have been this event and subsequent attacks on the town that lead to the murage grant in 1350 and again in 1409.

During the 13th century, the earliest town defences were called the "wall of the vill" and were situated on the western side of the town (O' Sullivan 2006). In 1458, a law was passed mandating the construction of a sea trench encircling the town. This moat encompassed the western walling, extending from the Castletown River to the immediate north of the scheme, continuing south along De La Salle Terrace and the Long Walk, and finally reaching Clanbrassil Street in the Bachelors Walk junction area. These defensive measures aimed to safeguard the town and its residents from potential threats.

The town's walls underwent further reinforcement during the 16th and 17th centuries. According to Robert Richardson's Map of 1680, the walls featured six gates, one of which is estimated to have been located within the proposed development. This is the Blind Gate at the north end of Linenhall Street, within the existing Peace Garden. The line of the walls passes through the development along Linenhall Street. During the 16th century, the area encompassing Blind Gate was referred to as Newtown, while the region comprising south Clanbrassil Street and Market Street was known as Upper End. In 1748, as part of the town's redevelopment works, the walls and gates were demolished. It is unknown if subsurface structural remains survive within the proposed development area.

In 1429 a subsidy was given to encourage the King's 'liege men' to build towers in Louth, as well as the rest of the Pale, which was so successful that 20 years later a limit was imposed on their construction. In County Louth, as well as Kildare and Meath, the towers were mostly concentrated along the borders of the Pale. The de Verdon estate passed onto the Bellew family upon his death and two tower houses were constructed by that family. The later castle most likely functioned as the centre

of the Bellew manor of Dundalk during the 15th century. Although no study area, several are located within to the south, alongside Church Street/Clanbrassil Street. The closest consists of Dowdall's Castle (LH007-119012), c. 140m to the south of the proposed development. Dowdall's Castle may have been one of the "18 or 20 ruinous remains of small castles or defensive towers" said to have been removed at Lord Limerick's insistence in 1747 (O'Sullivan 1963).

3.1.4 Post-Medieval Period (AD 1600–1800)

The 17th century witnessed the concentrated and systematic reduction of all of Ireland to English authority, largely through conflicts and the forced settlements known as 'The Plantations'. In the Parliamentary War of 1641, some fighting occurred in the northern and southern portions of the county. Cromwell entered from Dublin at the head of 10,000 men in 1649, and having captured Drogheda, after two days' siege, marched through to Dundalk and received its surrender.

In 1642, Sir Henry Tichbourne laid siege to Dundalk, eventually breaching the inner town of Newtown by entering through Warren's Gate. This siege caused significant damage and turmoil. Following the warfare of the 1689-90 period, the town continued to experience a decline, but in the 18th century, the town began to recover and its economic situation improved. As a result, building and renovation work commenced. One notable project was the reconstruction of St. Nicholas Church (LH007-119008), c. 150m to the southeast of the proposed scheme, which had been set on fire during the Williamite wars by the Jacobites. This rebuilding effort contributed to the town's revitalization and restoration after the period of conflict.

Around the year 1700, the Presbyterians established a meeting hall (LH007-119004) on Linenhall Street, within the proposed development. During the early 18th century, the town's walls and gates remained intact and there were 8–10 tower houses present along Church Street and Clanbrassil Street (LH007-119007, LH007-119009, LH007-119011, LH007-119012, LH007-119016, LH007-119022, and LH007-119024). None of these structures remain extant.

In 1725, a new harbour was constructed and the South Marsh area was reclaimed by building a sea rampart using the stones from the demolished medieval buildings. At the southern end of Clanbrassil Street, a new road network was established, connecting to Market Square, and extending to Roden Place and Jocelyn Street in the east.

3.2 SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

A review of the Excavations Bulletin (1970–2026) has revealed that three previous investigations have been carried out within the proposed development footprint to date. A number of further investigations have taken place within the 100m study area. These are summarised below and shown on Figure 1.

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks was carried out along Fair Green Road, Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and Northgate Street during Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter Rejuvenation Scheme (Licence No. 24E0878), within the proposed

development. Features uncovered during monitoring included deposits, stone walls, stone surfaces and cobbled surfaces, with finds including pottery, leather, animal bone and clay pipes.

Test excavation was undertaken at 27–28 Bridge Street, within the proposed development area. A series of occupation layers relating to the medieval period were uncovered, including a paved stone surface that may represent a medieval laneway (Bennett 2008:835, Licence No. 08E0331).

Test trenching in advance of the construction of the Linenhall car park did not identify features of archaeological significance (Bennett 2004:1103, Licence No. 04E0385).

Archaeological test trenching was carried out prior to pipeline insertion along Nicholas Street, Wolfe Tone Terrace, Linenhall Street, Bridge Street and Laurels Road, immediately adjacent to the proposed development area (Bennett 2000:0680, Licence No. 99E0737). Significant archaeological deposits were uncovered at Bridge Street, Linenhall Street, Nicholas Street, Laurels Road and the western end of Wolfe Tone Terrace. Trenches on Bridge Street identified medieval cobbled surfaces and organic deposits at a depth of 0.7m below present ground level. Similarly, on Linenhall Street, archaeological deposits were encountered at 0.7m below present ground level, and included 18th century cobbled surfaces. The remains of a cobbled surface were also encountered at the western end of Wolfe Tone Terrace on the northern side of the existing street.

Archaeological monitoring and excavation were undertaken in 2019 for the public realm improvement works along Clanbrassil Street, Church Street, Bridge Street and Linenhall Street (Bennett 2019:722, Licence No. 19E0431). The medieval street surface was identified on Bridge Street along with several possible medieval structures, comprising large masonry walls. Very rich organic deposits were identified throughout the excavated areas. These were particularly deep around the former medieval market at the junction of Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and Church Street. A medieval wooden structure was identified at this location in the form of several upright stakes surrounded by fragmented wattle and pieces of daub. The dimensions of these remains suggest that they were part of a fence or hurdles (lightweight, portable wicker panels) rather than a larger structure. The excavations uncovered significant amounts of organic deposits containing a large quantity of animal bones and medieval pottery. The pottery discovered, known as Dundalk Ware, was particularly concentrated on Bridge Street, close to the site where a medieval pottery kiln (LH007-119032) was excavated in 1997 (see below). Among the findings were numerous leather shoes, knife sheathes, and a decorated leather scabbard dating from the late 12th to early 13th century. Additional finds included bone and wooden objects, metal artefacts, a decorated slate and tuning pegs. Additionally, on Church Street, near the towerhouse location, a collection of high-status drinking glasses from the 16th to 17th century was found. These glasses included stemmed and unstemmed varieties, such as optic-blown decorated beakers, indicating a certain level of affluence and social status during that period.

Eleven trenches were excavated to the immediate west of Bridge Street, c. 20m to the northwest of the proposed development area (Bennett 2002:1329, Licence No. 03E1011, LH007-119038). This programme of testing, followed by monitoring under the same licence, revealed two medieval rubbish pits. Stray finds included glazed red earthenware, black earthenware, and some medieval pottery.

A series of slit trenches and test pits were excavated under archaeological supervision throughout Dundalk (Bennett 2013:407, Licence No. 12E0299). This included interventions along Bridge Street, immediately to the west of the proposed development. Archaeological layers of probable medieval date and containing animal bone, were identified at Clanbrassil Street and Castle Street.

Four test trenches were excavated at a site c. 10m to the south of the proposed development area (Bennett 1999:608, Licence No. 99E0657). No features, deposits or soils of archaeological potential were uncovered.

Test trenching was carried out at John Street, c. 60m to the west of the proposed development (Bennett 2024:689, Licence No. 24E1142). No features of archaeological significance were uncovered.

Excavations at 78 Bridge Street, c. 30m to the west of the proposed scheme (Bennett 1997:388, Licence No. 97E0362, LH007-119038), uncovered the remains of a pottery kiln, much of which had been destroyed by previous activity on the site. Part of the firing chamber with a flue/stoke-hole was recorded. A total of 386 sherds of pottery were recovered, of which 172 came from the backfill of the firing chamber and the floor of the flue. Based on the fabric and decoration of the ware it was suggested that the kiln was in operation at some time during the period 1250–1350.

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at Bridge Street, c. 40m to the northwest of the proposed development. Phase 1 of the works revealed subsoil at a depth of between 0.15m and 1.64m (Bennett 2000:0667, Licence No. 00E0021). A single sherd of 13th–14th century local ware, was located at a depth of 1.34m. Phase 2 revealed two sherds of black-glazed earthenware and a cobbled surface dated to the late 17th or 18th century (Bennett 2002:1330, Licence No. 02E0354).

Test trenches were excavated on a site of five townhouses at John Street, c. 35m to the west of the proposed scheme (Bennett 1995:211, Licence No. 95E0089). One small sherd of brown-glazed pottery, probably Cistercian-type, was recovered. Four ceramic sherds were also found in the machine spoil including two of Beauvais earthenware and a sherd from a late Valencia lustreware dish, of late 15th/early 16th century date. No structures were uncovered, with the exception of some cobbling.

No archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the excavation of test pits at a site c. 40m to the east of the proposed development area (Bennett 2005:1074, Licence No. 04E0695).

No archaeological features or deposits were exposed during the excavation of three test trenches c. 95m to the south of the proposed development area (Bennett 2003:1257, Licence No. 03E0138).

Monitoring of ground reduction was undertaken at St Nicholas's RC Church, c. 35m southwest of the proposed scheme, revealed masonry wall foundations that may relate to an 18th century building (Bennett 2001:852, Licence No. 01E0507). No finds of archaeological significance were revealed.

3.3 CARTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Down Survey of the Barony of Upper Dundalk, c. 1655

This map shows no detail of individual townlands within the approximate location of the proposed development. The Castletown River is marked as well as the walled 'Dundalk Towne'. The town is depicted as an enclosed settlement, aligned north-south with a gate to the south, which may be Warren's Gate. Several fortifications are depicted along the wall, likely to be wall towers, one of which is marked at the approximate location of the Blind Gate.

Anonymous, Map of Dundalk, 1675 (Figure 3)

The 1675 map of the town of Dundalk shows several key features. The town wall is depicted, extending from Dundalk Bridge as far as the Seatown Gate on the east side, and as far as the extent of the map on the west side (approximately Park Street). Although this map is not accurate, the approximate line of the town wall extends through the proposed development. At this time the lands outside the town wall have not yet been reclaimed from the Castletown River. An approximately north-south road runs along the line of the existing Bridge Street, Church Street and Clanbrassil Street, although these are labelled 'Cow Market', 'Shopstreet' and 'High Street'. Buildings are located alongside this main avenue, with long garden plots stretching back to the rear.

Robert Richardstown's Map of Dundalk and Seatown, 1680 (Figure 3)

This detailed map of the later medieval town of Dundalk shows that the line of the town wall (LH007-119027), including Blind Gate, extends through the northern extent of the proposed development, roughly in line with Linenhall Street. The lands outside the town wall have still not been reclaimed from the river. The 'Dundalk Bridge' is depicted to the northwest of the proposed development, and a road extends from the bridge to the south, running along the line of Bridge Street, Church Street, Clanbrassil Street and Earl Street. A road is also depicted running to the south of Blind Gate, aligning with the existing Linenhall Street. Some of the buildings fronting Bridge Street and Linenhall Street are owned by 'SJB', Sir J. Bellew.

Matthew Wren's Topographical Survey of County Louth, 1766

This map shows the town of Dundalk and the surrounding landscape, although relatively little detail is shown. The approximate location of the proposed development is defined by pattern of roads to the south of the Dundalk Bridge, with

buildings alongside the roads. Bridge Street can be identified along with the main street network, although there is no indication of the town defences. The area to the east has not yet been reclaimed from the river. The Church of St. Nicholas (LH007-119008) is depicted to the south of the proposed development while the development of the demesne to the west of the town has commenced to the southwest.

Taylor and Skinners Map of the County of Louth, 1778

This map shows slightly more detail than Wren's earlier map, but there are no major changes. Bridge Street can be identified, and the Church of St. Nicholas is still marked. A building is located within the market square at the junction of Bridge Street and Linenhall Street. The demesne associated to the west of the town has been expanded and is labelled 'Earl of Clanbrassil's Demesne'.

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1836, scale 1:10,560 (Figure 4)

This is the first detailed depiction of the landscape containing the proposed scheme. At the northern extent of the scheme the Dundalk Bridge is depicted. The town walls and gates have been removed, including Blind Gate. The Castletown River has still not been reclaimed, with the existing Fairgreen Road and Northgate Street within the river. The road previously depicted extending to the south of Blind Gate is still present, now named 'Meeting House Lane'. This name refers to a Presbyterian meeting house (LH007-119004) depicted within the proposed development area. The lands between Bridge Street (now labelled) and Meeting House Lane are developed with several buildings present. A building is located at the site of No. 2 Bridge Street, although due to the scale of the map it is not clear if this is the existing building. The site of the Linenhall Street car park to the north of the Roman Catholic Church (which is not yet present) is largely open, although one building is located in its southern extent. The building previously depicted at the junction of Bridge Street and Linenhall Street is now marked 'Linen Hall'.

Ordnance Survey Map, 1888, scale 1:1,056 (Figure 4)

By the time of the 1888 OS map shows that the townscape containing the proposed scheme has undergone several changes. At the northern extent of the scheme the modern road layout has been established and land has been reclaimed from the Castletown River. This has allowed the development of the 'Fair Green', partially within the proposed development area and to the east. The road formerly named 'Meeting House Lane' is now labelled 'Linenhall Street', and the road extends to meet Bridge Street at the location of the Dundalk Bridge. A 'Gas Works' is marked within the northern extent of the proposed development. A 'Corn Store' is also marked within the proposed development area, and a 'Constabulary Barrack' is located immediately to the north. At the site of the Presbyterian meeting house (LH007-119004), which is no longer present, a small street has been developed named 'Meeting House Lane'. The Roman Catholic Church is depicted, although it is smaller than the existing building. The car park to the north is still largely empty, although a 'Smithy', 'Corn Store' and 'Ruin' are depicted in this area. The existing building at No. 2 Bridge Street is visible. An adjoining building is present at No. 1 Bridge Street, although this is no longer present.

Ordnance Survey Map, 1909, scale 1:2,500

There are relatively few changes by the time of the 1909 OS map, although 'Fairgreen Row' is now depicted within the proposed development.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027) and Dundalk and Environs Development Plan (2009-2015) recognise the statutory protection afforded to all Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites under the National Monuments Legislation (1930–2014). The development plan lists a number of aims and objectives in relation to archaeological heritage (Appendix 2).

The proposed scheme is within the Zone of Archaeological Potential for the historic core of Dundalk town, which is a recorded monument (LH007-119). The line of the town defences (LH007-119027) run through parts of the proposed scheme and the approximate location of Blind Gate at the north end of Linenhall Street is located within the footprint of the proposed development. Additionally, the site of a Presbyterian Meeting House (LH007-119027) is located within the proposed development area. There are a further three archaeological sites within the 100m study area (Table 1; Figure 1; Appendix 1).

Medieval town defences, across the country, are deemed to possess National Monument status under the National Policy on Town Defences (DoEHLG 2008). This relates to both upstanding and buried remains. This designation is applied to the site of the Dundalk town defences, including the site of Blind Gate.

TABLE 1: Recorded archaeological sites in proximity to the study area

RMP NO.	LOCATION	CLASSIFICATION	DISTANCE
LH007-119	Demesne, Marshes Lower, Townparks	Historic town	0m
LH007-119004	Townparks	Presbyterian meeting house	0m
LH007-119027	Townparks	Town defences, including site of Blind Gate	0m
LH007-119038	Townparks	Excavation - miscellaneous	c. 30m northwest
LH007-119032	Townparks	Kiln - pottery	c. 35m west
LH007-119035	Townparks	Font	c. 40m south

3.5 TOPOGRAPHICAL FILES OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF IRELAND

Information on artefact finds from the study area in County Louth has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. Location information relating to these finds is important in establishing prehistoric and historic activity in the study area. A total of 11 stray finds have been recorded within the townlands in the vicinity of the proposed development and are detailed below in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Stray finds in proximity to the study area

MUSEUM NO.	TOWNLAND	FIND PLACE	FIND	DESCRIPTION
1978:275	Townparks	Ploughed field OS sheet no 7, OS west	Slipware body sherd	Decoration is trailed. The glaze is pale yellow in

MUSEUM NO.	TOWNLAND	FIND PLACE	FIND	DESCRIPTION
		32 cm, OS south 19.15cm		colour and the decoration is dark brown. The fabric is fine and hard, buff-orange in colour with small brown and pale yellow grits/inclusions.
1978:276	Townparks	Ploughed field OS sheet no 7, OS west 32 cm, OS south 19.15cm	Clay pipe stem fragment	Surface find.
1987:186-:187	Townparks	Byrne's field	Flint retouched flake	Made on a core fragment. Partial retouch on the right vertical edge and the distal end. Second piece is burnt. Some retouch on the lateral edges.
1987:188	Townparks	Byrne's field OS sheet no 7, OS west 96, OS south 205	Flint secondary blade	Burnt. There is some cortex still evident on the dorsal ridge.
1987:189-:201	Townparks	Byrne's field OS sheet no 7, OS west 96, OS south 206	Flint tertiary flake fragments	
1987:202	Townparks	Byrne's field OS sheet no 7, OS west 96, OS south 207	Flint struck chunk	Heat affected. There are a few negative scars evident. Formerly identified as a "Struck flint flake".
1987:203	Townparks	Byrne's field OS sheet no 7, OS west 96, OS south 208	Flint convex scraper	Burnt formerly identified as a "Flint scraper".
2004:100	Townparks	Site of St John's Prior, Bridge St, Ardee. SMR LH017-10122	Carved architectural fragment	Probable architectural fragment, possibly of window mullion, with later folk-art carvings. The original mullion is rounded in cross-section with a projecting chamfered stop. A crude human face, in false relief, is carved on the flat face of the stop. A similar face is carved on the chamfer, along with a crude cross, also in false relief. Three further crude faces are carved on the rounded part of the mullion.
2009:219	Townparks	La Salle Terrace, Picked up during survey	Clay pipe stem fragment	Stem fragment with small part of bowl. Manufacturer 'Hanley & Co' stamped on one side and 'Waterford' stamped on the other.
2010_57	Townparks	Byrne's field	Clay pipe bowl fragment	Clay pipe bowl fragment.

MUSEUM NO.	TOWNLAND	FIND PLACE	FIND	DESCRIPTION
2010_58	Townparks	Byrne's field during field walking	Clay pipe stem fragment	Part of stem of clay pipe, off-centre perforation.

3.6 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Inspection of the aerial photographic coverage of the proposed scheme held by the Ordnance Survey (1995–2013), Google Earth (2005–2026) and Bing Maps revealed that the proposed scheme remains unchanged since 1995. The road layout has remained unchanged from 1995 to the present day. No previously unrecorded sites of archaeological potential were noted within the coverage due to the urban nature of the environment.

Much of the proposed development area can be seen in an aerial photograph dated 1933, shown in Plate 11 (Britain from Above 1933, XPW042437). This shows that the location of the proposed Peace Park comprises the open field of the Fair Green. Meeting House Lane is present, although the buildings along the south side have not yet been constructed. The location of the Linenhall Street car park is occupied by several buildings, including the buildings labelled 'Corn Store' and 'Smithy' on the 1888 OS map. No. 2 Bridge Street is visible, as is No. 1 Bridge Street which formerly abutted its south elevation.

3.7 FIELD INSPECTION

The field inspection sought to assess the site, its previous and current land use, the topography and any additional information relevant to the report. During the course of the field investigation the proposed development site and its surrounding environs were inspected (Figure 1).

The proposed development is bordered by Bridge Street to the south, by St. Nicholas Church to the south, by Linenhall Street to the east and by the Castletown River and Northgate Street to the north.

The northern extent of the proposed development comprises open greenspace to the east of Linenhall Street, including the Peace Garden (Plate 1). This garden contains a monument erected to commemorate the anniversary of Hiroshima Day in 1986 (Plate 2). Beyond the eastern boundary of the garden, which comprises a metal fence, is a football pitch.

Northgate Street runs between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street and forms part of the northern boundary of the proposed development. A four-storey masonry building is located on the southern side of Northgate Street, correlating with a Corn Store marked on the 1888 OS map (Plate 3).

Meeting House Lane is located to the southwest of the Peace Garden. This comprises a residential cul-de-sac which terminates at a roughly coursed, random rubble masonry wall with lime mortar, measuring c. 4.5m in height (Plate 4). Repairs and alterations can be identified, including cementitious repairs and cement render. A

wall is marked at this location on the 1888 OS map. The footpath along Meeting House Lane has large limestone kerbs, which may be original to the street.

A car park is located c. 65m to the south of Meeting House Lane, to the west of Linenhall Street. The car park has tarmac ground surfaces and a building is located in the southwest corner. This building is derelict and consists of painted brick and masonry walls (Plate 5). The car park is bound by masonry walls to the west and north, which are heavily overgrown in several locations (Plate 6). A door opening is located in the western wall (Plate 7). This opening is blocked by red bricks, and has a red brick segmental arch. The date of the masonry walls is not known, although walls are marked here on the 1836 and 1888 OS maps. A modern cement block wall forms the southern boundary of the car park, beyond which is the Roman Catholic Church (Plate 8). This forms a striking focal point at the junction of Linenhall Street and Bridge Street. The church is clearly visible when travelling down Linenhall Street from the Peace Garden.

The remainder of the proposed development area comprises the previously developed lands between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, consisting of residential and commercial properties. Several of these buildings are 19th century in date and it is possible that earlier remains are present. This includes No. 2 Bridge Street, which is included for removal in the current proposals (Plates 9–10). No. 2 Bridge Street is depicted on the 1888 OS map and comprises a two-storey, three-bay end-terrace house, which has a modern shop-front at ground floor level. A mural of Brigid of Faughart decorates the south elevation.

No evidence of the town defences (LH007-119027) survives above ground level in the vicinity of the proposed development. No previously unknown features of archaeological potential were identified during the field inspection.

4 CONCLUSIONS

This archaeological assessment has been undertaken in order to assess the potential for the survival of archaeological features in advance of the proposed St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2 in Dundalk, County Louth.

There are five recorded archaeological sites within the study area, two of which are located within the proposed development area. These comprise the site of a meeting house (LH007-119004) and the line of the former town wall (LH007-119027), including the site of Blind Gate. The town walls are recorded as a National Monument. The proposed development is also located within the Zone of Notification for the historic core of Dundalk town, which is a recorded monument (LH007-119). A further three archaeological sites are known within 100m of the proposed development.

A review of the Excavations Bulletin has revealed that three previous investigations have been carried out within the proposed scheme. Archaeological monitoring was carried out along Fair Green Road, Bridge Street, Linenhall Street and Northgate Street during Phase 1 of the St. Nicholas Quarter Rejuvenation Scheme (Licence No. 24E0878). Features uncovered during monitoring included deposits, stone walls, stone surfaces and cobbled surfaces, with finds including pottery, leather, animal bone and clay pipes. Test excavation was undertaken at 27–28 Bridge Street. A series of occupation layers relating to the medieval period were uncovered, including a paved stone surface that may represent a medieval laneway (Bennett 2008:835, Licence No. 08E0331). Test trenching in advance of the construction of the Linenhall car park did not identify features of archaeological significance (Bennett 2004:1103, Licence No. 04E0385). Medieval and post-medieval features have been uncovered during further archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the proposed development, including structural remains and occupation deposits.

Analysis of cartographic sources has revealed that the proposed development was located within the walled town of Dundalk and may have once contained part of the walls or banks associated with the medieval defences along Linenhall Street. The associated Blind Gate was depicted at Linenhall Street. The town defences were demolished in the 18th century, and it is unknown if any structural remains survive below ground level. Lands to the immediate east including Fairgreen Road were reclaimed from the Castletown River during the late 19th century.

A field inspection has been carried out as part of this assessment and confirmed the results of the aerial photographic analysis in so far that the site is fully developed with road layout remaining unchanged from 1995. No previously unrecorded sites of archaeological potential were noted and no evidence of the town defences (LH007-119027) survive above ground level within the scheme footprint. Despite this, the proposed scheme is located within an area of high archaeological potential due to its location within the medieval settlement of Dundalk.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION STRATEGY

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected and the range of archaeological resources potentially affected. Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; and burial of sites, limiting access for future archaeological investigation. Upstanding archaeology can be affected adversely by direct damage or destruction arising from development, from inadvertent damage arising from vibration, undermining etc. and also by indirect impacts to a building's visual setting, view or curtilage.

5.1 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- The proposed development lies within the Zone of Notification for Dundalk town (LH007-119); is crossed by the line of the medieval town defences (LH007-119027), potentially contains the site of Blind Gate and contains the site of a Presbyterian Meeting House (LK007-119004). The sites of medieval town defences are considered to represent National Monuments. Areas of hard landscaping (P1 granite paving and P5 SMA surfacing) are proposed over the line of the town defences.
- An historic masonry wall is located at the end of Meeting House Lane. This wall will be removed to facilitate a link between Bridge Street and Linenhall Street, which is a direct, negative impact to the wall.
- The removal of a building at No. 2 Bridge Street is proposed. This building is 19th century in date, although it is possible that it contains earlier elements. This building is not recorded although it has cultural heritage value and will be directly and negatively impacted by the proposed development.
- No above-ground evidence for the medieval settlement was identified during this assessment within the scheme footprint, but previous ground investigations have confirmed that archaeological deposits survive beneath the current ground level. As such the proposed development area is considered to have high archaeological potential.
- Ground disturbances associated with the proposed development have the potential to adversely impact any previously unrecorded archaeological features or deposits that have the potential to survive beneath the current ground level, as well as potential sub-surface remains of the medieval settlement (LH007-119), town defences (LH007-119027) and the Presbyterian Meeting House (LK007-119004).

5.2 MITIGATION

- The line of the medieval town defences and the approximate site of Blind Gate is located within the proposed Peace Park. It is recommended that areas of hard landscaping (P1 granite paving and P5 SMA surfacing) are moved to avoid the potential sub-surface archaeological remains, or are situated within areas of previous hard landscaping, such as the existing pathway.
- It is recommended that historic buildings and walls that are proposed for removal are subject to a written and photographic record prior to their removal. This includes No. 2 Bridge Street and the wall at the end of Meeting House Lane.
- It is recommended that all ground disturbances associated with the proposed development be monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist. Archaeological monitoring will require Ministerial Consent from the Minister of Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DoHLGH), due to potential impacts on the medieval town defences. If any features of archaeological potential are discovered during the course of the works further archaeological mitigation may be required, such as preservation *in-situ* or by record. Any further mitigation will require approval from the National Monuments Service of the DoHLGH.

It is the developer's responsibility to ensure full provision is made available for the resolution of any archaeological remains, both on site and during the post excavation process, should that be deemed the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

Please note that all recommendations are subject to approval by the National Monuments Service of the Heritage and Planning Division, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

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- www.cambridgeairphotos.com - The Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photography (CUCAP) dating from 1947.
- www.excavations.ie – Summary of archaeological excavation from 1970–2026.
- www.geohive.ie– Ordnance Survey Ireland National Townland and Historical Map Viewer (including Aerial imagery 1995, 2000, 2004, 2005 and 2013)
- www.googleearth.com – Satellite imagery (2005–2026).
- www.heritagemaps.ie – The Heritage Council web-based spatial data viewer which focuses on the built, cultural and natural heritage.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 SMR/RMP SITES WITHIN THE STUDY AREA

SMR NO.	LH007-119
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Demesne, Marshes Lower, Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704717 807774
CLASSIFICATION	Historic town
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Zone of Archaeological Potential surrounding the historic town of Dundalk.
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LH007-119027
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704711 808125
CLASSIFICATION	Town defences
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	The town wall of Dundalk enclosed an irregularly shaped elongated area of roughly 19 hectares (48 acres). Town defences investigated by Gosling (1982, 43-6) and Bradley (1984b, 128-30). A small scale excavation on Clanbrassil Street (Excavation Licence 95E0168) revealed a section of the medieval town ditch. This excavation was the first to establish an exact location for the town defences (McConway, 1995a).
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LH007-119004
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704695 808052
CLASSIFICATION	Meeting-house
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	0m
DESCRIPTION	Presbyterian meeting house marked on 1836 OS map.

REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file
SMR NO.	LH007-119038
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704645 808088
CLASSIFICATION	Excavation - miscellaneous
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 30m northwest
DESCRIPTION	Testing and monitoring undertaken in advance of development (Excavation Licence No. 03E1011), uncovered two pits one of which was believed to be a medieval rubbish pit. Only half of this pit was excavated, the rest was preserved in-situ. (O'Carroll 2006, 335)
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LH007-119032
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704636 808004
CLASSIFICATION	Kiln - pottery
DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 35m west
DESCRIPTION	Discovered as a result of a pre-development excavation on Bridge Street (Excavation Licence No. 97E0362). Only a small portion of the kiln survived intact as later activity had cut through a substantial part of it. Evidence was produced for a firing chamber or oven and two opposing flues. 386 pottery sherds together with kiln waste and fired clay were recovered. On the basis of the fabric and decoration of the pottery sherds, a date between 1250AD and 1350AD has been suggested for the use of the kiln. (Campbell 1997)
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

SMR NO.	LH007-119035
RMP STATUS	RMP
TOWNLAND	Townparks
PARISH	Dundalk
BARONY	Upper Dundalk
I.T.M.	704699 807881
CLASSIFICATION	Font

DIST. FROM DEVELOPMENT	c. 40m south
DESCRIPTION	Rests on a large boulder in the grounds of St. Nicholas's Catholic Church. According to tradition it belonged originally to the church of the Franciscan Monastery at Seatown and was later used as a baptismal font in the old chapel in Chapel Lane, which was built in 1750. The font is a large irregular shaped boulder with an uneven cavity forming the basin. (CLAJ 1910, 305-6)
REFERENCE	www.archaeology.ie/ SMR file

APPENDIX 2 LEGISLATION PROTECTING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

The cultural heritage in Ireland is safeguarded through national and international policy designed to secure the protection of the cultural heritage resource to the fullest possible extent (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999, 35). This is undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the *European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage* (Valletta Convention), ratified by Ireland in 1997.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The *National Monuments Act 1930 to 2014* and relevant provisions of the *National Cultural Institutions Act 1997* are the primary means of ensuring the satisfactory protection of archaeological remains, which includes all man-made structures of whatever form or date except buildings habitually used for ecclesiastical purposes. A National Monument is described as ‘a monument or the remains of a monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the historical, architectural, traditional, artistic or archaeological interest attaching thereto’ (National Monuments Act 1930 Section 2). A number of mechanisms under the National Monuments Act are applied to secure the protection of archaeological monuments. These include the Register of Historic Monuments, the Record of Monuments and Places, and the placing of Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders on endangered sites.

OWNERSHIP AND GUARDIANSHIP OF NATIONAL MONUMENTS

The Minister may acquire national monuments by agreement or by compulsory order. The state or local authority may assume guardianship of any national monument (other than dwellings). The owners of national monuments (other than dwellings) may also appoint the Minister or the local authority as guardian of that monument if the state or local authority agrees. Once the site is in ownership or guardianship of the state, it may not be interfered with without the written consent of the Minister.

REGISTER OF HISTORIC MONUMENTS

Section 5 of the 1987 Act requires the Minister to establish and maintain a Register of Historic Monuments. Historic monuments and archaeological areas present on the register are afforded statutory protection under the 1987 Act. Any interference with sites recorded on the register is illegal without the permission of the Minister. Two months’ notice in writing is required prior to any work being undertaken on or in the vicinity of a registered monument. The register also includes sites under Preservation Orders and Temporary Preservation Orders. All registered monuments are included in the Record of Monuments and Places.

PRESERVATION ORDERS AND TEMPORARY PRESERVATION ORDERS

Sites deemed to be in danger of injury or destruction can be allocated Preservation Orders under the 1930 Act. Preservation Orders make any interference with the site

illegal. Temporary Preservation Orders can be attached under the 1954 Act. These perform the same function as a Preservation Order but have a time limit of six months, after which the situation must be reviewed. Work may only be undertaken on or in the vicinity of sites under Preservation Orders with the written consent, and at the discretion, of the Minister.

RECORD OF MONUMENTS AND PLACES

Section 12(1) of the 1994 Act requires the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (now the Minister for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) to establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where the Minister believes that such monuments exist. The record comprises a list of monuments and relevant places and a map/s showing each monument and relevant place in respect of each county in the state. All sites recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places receive statutory protection under the National Monuments Act 1994. All recorded monuments on the proposed development site are represented on the accompanying maps.

Section 12(3) of the 1994 Act provides that ‘where the owner or occupier (other than the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands) of a monument or place included in the Record, or any other person, proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such a monument or place, he or she shall give notice in writing to the Minister of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to carry out work and shall not, except in case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Minister, commence the work until two months after giving of notice’.

Under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, anyone who demolishes or in any way interferes with a recorded site is liable to a fine not exceeding €3,000 or imprisonment for up to 6 months. On summary conviction and on conviction of indictment, a fine not exceeding €10,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years is the penalty. In addition, they are liable for costs for the repair of the damage caused.

In addition to this, under the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989*, Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) are required for various classes and sizes of development project to assess the impact the proposed development will have on the existing environment, which includes the cultural, archaeological and built heritage resources. These document’s recommendations are typically incorporated into the conditions under which the proposed development must proceed, and thus offer an additional layer of protection for monuments which have not been listed on the RMP.

THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

Under planning legislation, each local authority is obliged to draw up a Development Plan setting out their aims and policies with regard to the growth of the area over a five-year period. They cover a range of issues including archaeology and built heritage, setting out their policies and objectives with regard to the protection and enhancement of both. These policies can vary from county to county. The Planning and Development Act 2000 recognises that proper planning and sustainable

development includes the protection of the archaeological heritage. Conditions relating to archaeology may be attached to individual planning permissions.

Louth County Development Plan (2021–2027)

It is a policy of the plan:

BHC 1 To protect and enhance archaeological sites and monuments, underwater archaeology, and archaeological objects listed in the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), and/or the Register of Historic Monuments and seek their preservation (i.e. presumption in favour of preservation in situ or in exceptional cases, at a minimum, preservation by record) through the planning process and having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the principles as set out in the 'Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage' (Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands 1999).

BHC 2 To protect the built heritage assets of the county and ensure they are managed and preserved in a manner that does not adversely impact on the intrinsic value of these assets whilst supporting economic renewal and sustainable development.

BHC 3 To protect known and unknown archaeological areas, sites, monuments, structures and objects, having regard to the advice of the National Monuments Services of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

BHC 4 To promote awareness and knowledge of the archaeological resources of the County and support initiatives where appropriate that provide better access to the historic built environment.

BHC 5 To protect all sites and features of archaeological interest discovered subsequent to the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional circumstances, at a minimum preservation by record) having regard to the advice and recommendations of the National Monuments Section of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

BHC 6 To ensure any development, either above or below ground, adjacent to or in the immediate vicinity of a recorded monument or a Zone of Archaeological Potential (including formerly walled towns) shall not be detrimental to or detract from the character of the archaeological site or its setting and be sited and designed to protect the monument and its setting. Where upstanding remains exist, a visual impact assessment may be required.

BHC 7 To require applicants seeking permission for development within Zones of Archaeological Potential and other sites as listed in the Record of Monuments and Places to include an assessment of the likely archaeological potential as part of the planning application and the Council may require that an on-site archaeological

assessment is carried out by trial work, prior to a decision on a planning application being taken.

BHC 8 To protect and preserve in situ all surviving elements of medieval town defences (both upstanding and buried) and associated features in accordance with the Conservation and Management Plans as applicable and with 'National Policy on Town Defences' (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government 2008).

BHC 9 To retain the surviving medieval street pattern, building lines and burgage plot widths in historic walled towns.

BHC 10 To require, as part of the development management process, archaeological impact assessments, geophysical surveys, test excavations and monitoring, as appropriate, where development proposals involve ground clearance of more than half a hectare or for linear developments over one kilometre in length or for developments in proximity to areas with a density of known archaeological monuments and history of discovery, as identified by a licensed archaeologist.

Dundalk and Environs Development Plan 2009-2015

It is an objective of the councils to secure the preservation in-situ or by record of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 and of sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally.

Policy CH7

Safeguard the archaeological heritage of Dundalk and its environs by protecting designated archaeological sites, Local Archaeological Heritage Site, and Special Archaeological Interest areas and requiring that applicants for planning permission for development in areas known to contain archaeological features, carry out an archaeological assessment of the site.

APPENDIX 3 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL REMAINS

Impacts are defined as ‘the degree of change in an environment resulting from a development’ (Environmental Protection Agency 2022). They are described as profound, significant or slight impacts on archaeological remains. They may be negative, positive or neutral, direct, indirect or cumulative, temporary or permanent.

Impacts can be identified from detailed information about a project, the nature of the area affected and the range of archaeological and historical resources potentially affected. Development can affect the archaeological and historical resource of a given landscape in a number of ways.

- Permanent and temporary land-take, associated structures, landscape mounding, and their construction may result in damage to or loss of archaeological remains and deposits, or physical loss to the setting of historic monuments and to the physical coherence of the landscape.
- Archaeological sites can be affected adversely in a number of ways: disturbance by excavation, topsoil stripping and the passage of heavy machinery; disturbance by vehicles working in unsuitable conditions; or burial of sites, limiting accessibility for future archaeological investigation.
- Hydrological changes in groundwater or surface water levels can result from construction activities such as de-watering and spoil disposal, or longer-term changes in drainage patterns. These may desiccate archaeological remains and associated deposits.
- Visual impacts on the historic landscape sometimes arise from construction traffic and facilities, built earthworks and structures, landscape mounding and planting, noise, fences and associated works. These features can impinge directly on historic monuments and historic landscape elements as well as their visual amenity value.
- Landscape measures such as tree planting can damage sub-surface archaeological features, due to topsoil stripping and through the root action of trees and shrubs as they grow.
- Ground consolidation by construction activities or the weight of permanent embankments can cause damage to buried archaeological remains, especially in colluviums or peat deposits.
- Disruption due to construction also offers in general the potential for adversely affecting archaeological remains. This can include machinery, site offices, and service trenches.

Although not widely appreciated, positive impacts can accrue from developments. These can include positive resource management policies, improved maintenance and access to archaeological monuments, and the increased level of knowledge of a site or historic landscape as a result of archaeological assessment and fieldwork.

PREDICTED IMPACTS

The severity of a given level of land-take or visual intrusion varies with the type of monument, site or landscape features and its existing environment. Severity of impact can be judged taking the following into account:

- The proportion of the feature affected and how far physical characteristics fundamental to the understanding of the feature would be lost;
- Consideration of the type, date, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, rarity, potential and amenity value of the feature affected;
- Assessment of the levels of noise, visual and hydrological impacts, either in general or site-specific terms, as may be provided by other specialists.

APPENDIX 4 MITIGATION MEASURES AND THE CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE

POTENTIAL MITIGATION STRATEGIES FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE REMAINS

Mitigation is defined as features of the design or other measures of the proposed development that can be adopted to avoid, prevent, reduce or offset negative effects.

The best opportunities for avoiding damage to archaeological remains or intrusion on their setting and amenity arise when the site options for the development are being considered. Damage to the archaeological resource immediately adjacent to developments may be prevented by the selection of appropriate construction methods. Reducing adverse effects can be achieved by good design, for example by screening historic buildings or upstanding archaeological monuments or by burying archaeological sites undisturbed rather than destroying them. Offsetting adverse effects is probably best illustrated by the full investigation and recording of archaeological sites that cannot be preserved *in situ*.

DEFINITION OF MITIGATION STRATEGIES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The ideal mitigation for all archaeological sites is preservation *in situ*. This is not always a practical solution, however. Therefore, a series of recommendations are offered to provide ameliorative measures where avoidance and preservation *in situ* are not possible.

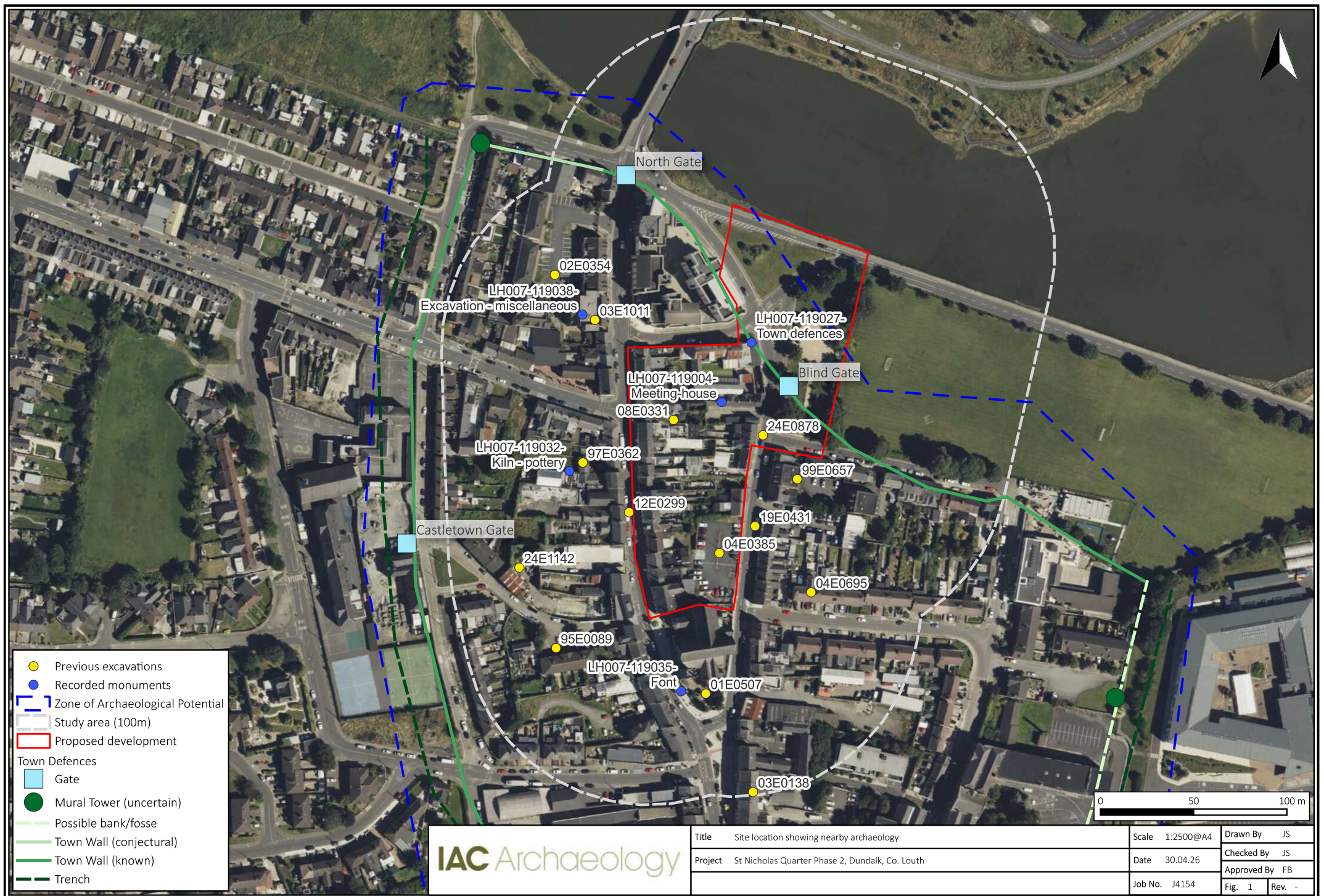
Archaeological Test Trenching can be defined as ‘a limited programme of intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate’ (ClfA 2020a).

Full Archaeological Excavation can be defined as ‘a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features and structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. The records made and objects gathered during fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design’ (ClfA 2020b).

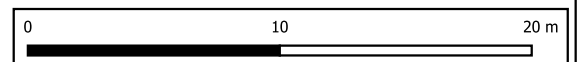
Archaeological Monitoring can be defined as ‘a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be

disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive (ClfA 2020c).

Underwater Archaeological Assessment consists of a programme of works carried out by a specialist underwater archaeologist, which can involve wade surveys, metal detection surveys and the excavation of test pits within the sea or riverbed. These assessments are able to access and assess the potential of an underwater environment to a much higher degree than terrestrial based assessments.







FROM OLD MAP OF DUNDALK, 1675

Cow Market and Shop Street are now Church Street.
Longstaffe gate lane is Yorke Street.

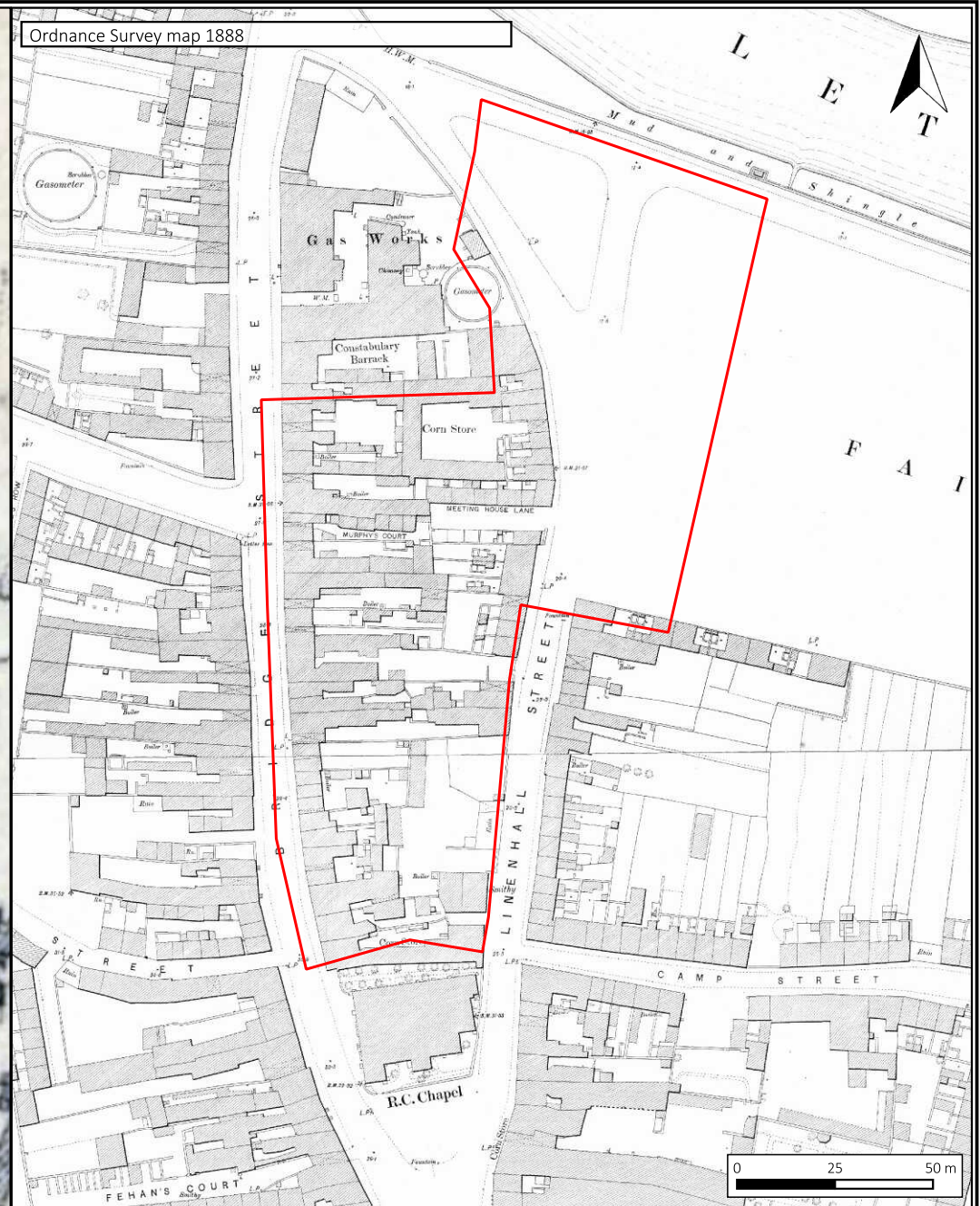
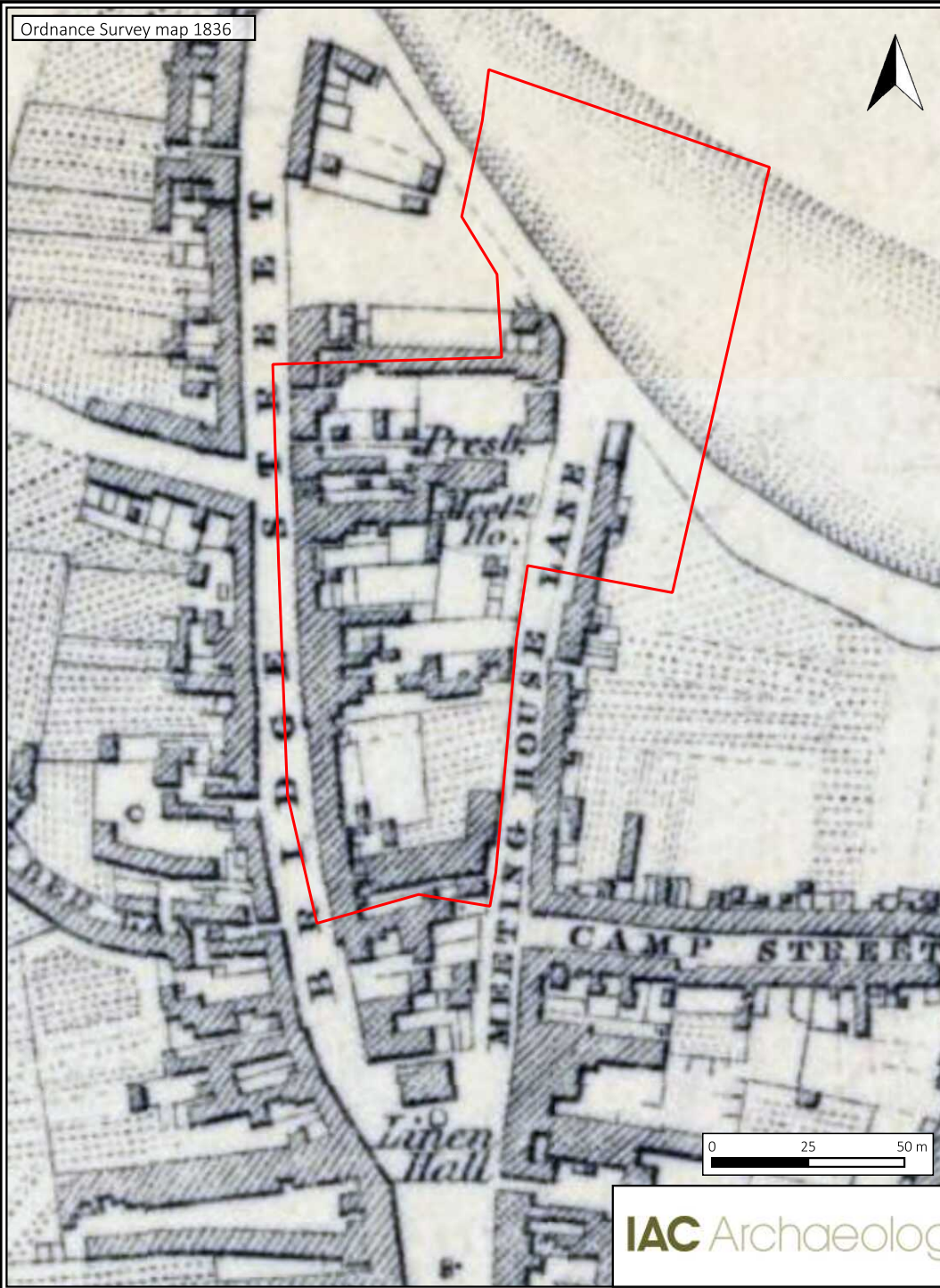
Robert Richardstown's Map of Dundalk and Seatown, 1680

Water gate

Brind gate

IAC Archaeology

Title	Extracts from historic maps (1675 and 1680) showing approximate location of proposed development area	Scale	NTS	Drawn By	JS
Project	St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, Dundalk, Co. Louth	Date	30.04.26	Checked By	JS
				Approved By	FB
		Job No.	J4154	Fig. 3	Rev. -



IAC Archaeology

Title	Extracts from historic OS maps (1836 and 1888) showing the proposed development area	Scale	1:1750@A4	Drawn By	JS
Project	St Nicholas Quarter Phase 2, Dundalk, Co. Louth	Date	30.04.26	Checked By	JS
		Job No.	J4154	Approved By	FB
				Fig. 4	Rev. -



Plate 1: Overview of Peace Garden, facing south



Plate 2: Hiroshima Day monument, facing east



Plate 3: Historic building on Northgate Street, facing south



Plate 4: Masonry wall at end of Meeting House Lane, facing west



Plate 5: Derelict building in car park, facing west



Plate 6: Overview of car park, facing northwest



Plate 7: Blocked door opening, facing west



Plate 8: Roman Catholic Church, facing southwest from car park



Plate 9: Nos. 2 (right) and 3 (left) Bridge Street, facing east



Plate 10: No. 2 Bridge Street with Brigid of Faughart mural, facing north

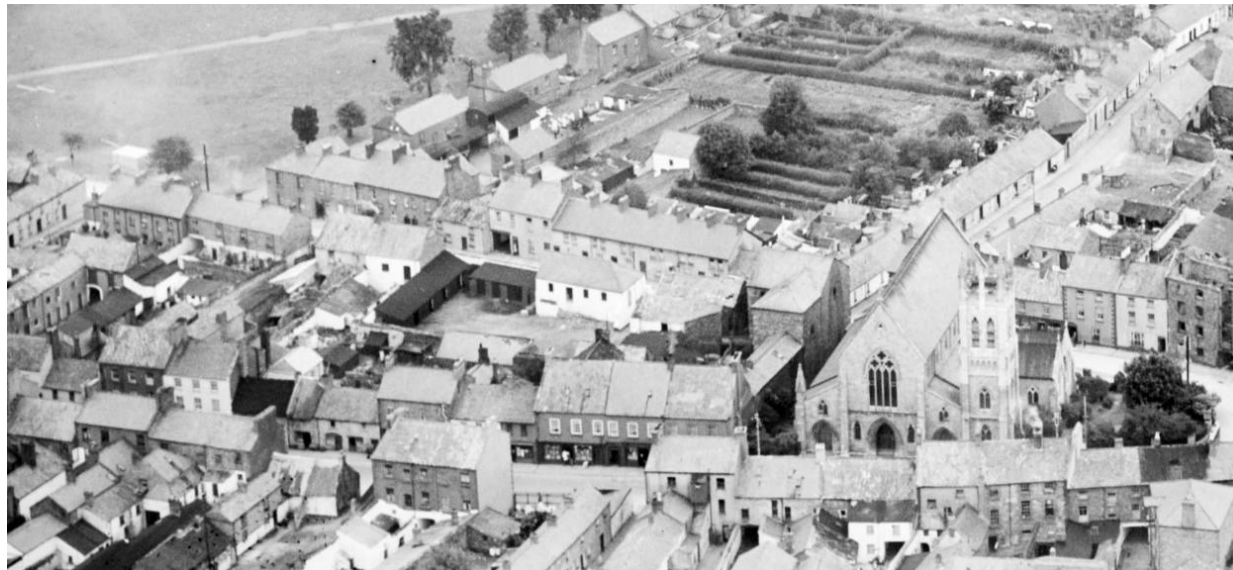


Plate 11: Aerial photograph showing proposed development area, facing east (Britain From Above 1933, XPW042437)