Archaeological Monitoring

Priorsland
Glenamuck Road
Brennanstown townland
Carrickmines
Dublin 18

Ministerial Consent C196
Registration No. E3284

By
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Job No. 08077

For
Laing O'Rourke

On behalf of
Railway Procurement Agency

30th September 2008
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1 Introduction

1.1 This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring carried out at Priorsland, Brennanstown townland, Carrickmines, Co. Dublin. The site, with an approximate centrepoint at National Grid Ref. 32319/22409, is located just off Glenamuck Road, immediately north of the M50 motorway (Figs 1, 2). The monitoring was carried out for Laing O‘Rourke on behalf of the Railway Procurement Agency (RPA), under Ministerial Consent C196 (Registration No. E3284).

1.2 The monitoring related to groundworks for the temporary diversion—for the purposes of culverting—of a canalised watercourse (the narrow Carrickmines River) for the LUAS B1 line. The monitoring encompassed Phase C, and only Phase C, of the works outlined in the Request for Ministerial Consent II (Frazer July 2007). Test trenching (Phases A and B) of the Ministerial Consent has not yet been undertaken and is not encompassed within this report.

1.3 No recorded monuments lie within the boundaries of the development site. However, the site lies immediately east of the RMP constraint area for Carrickmines Castle (DU026-00501-04), a National Monument (Figs 1, 2).

1.4 This report follows on from previous archaeological work on the development site. A desk study (Deery 2004) and a geophysical survey (Harrison 2007) was undertaken at the pre-planning stage. A test excavation (Cryerhall 2005) was also carried out on the site of the proposed LUAS line B Park & Ride facility, within the bounds of the overall Priorsland development site. The testing identified (probably prehistoric) archaeology there. However, no archaeology was identified within the smaller Phase C bounds of the LUAS B1 canalised watercourse (the Carrickmines River) diversion with which this report is concerned.

1.5 Archaeologically monitored stripping of topsoil was carried out in the designated area with machine excavator, equipped with a flat-edged grading bucket (Fig. 4; Plate 2). Topsoil was reduced by approximately 200–400mm, onto subsoil.
1.6 Stripped topsoil was removed for storage nearby, where it was first spread and systematically metal detected for artefacts (in accordance with items 4 and 5 of Ministerial Consent).

1.7 In addition archaeological monitoring/inspection of machine works in the canalised watercourse, the Carrickmines River, was undertaken, as per the request of the Underwater Archaeology Unit, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the RPA Archaeologist. Spoil removed from watercourse works was similarly metal detected, albeit with some restriction due to normal health & safety concerns.

1.8 The work was carried out intermittently from March to June 2008, in accordance with the works programme.

1.9 No significant archaeology was identified during the monitoring. One archaeological artefact was recovered during metal detection: a decorated gilded copper allow buckle/strap end (Artefact No. E3284/1:1; Pl. 4).
2 The proposed development

2.1 Details of the proposed Priorsland mixed-use development are in the process of being finalised pending a Local Area Plan (LAP), but the overall development site is approximately 4.9ha. That development is mixed-use: it will include both residential and commercial space (‘mixed-used’), as well as the LUAS line B1 (Carrickmines Stop) Park & Ride facility and access road.

2.2 At the southwestern corner of the Priorsland development site is the location of the temporary Carrickmines River watercourse diversion works (encompassing a total of approximately 0.15ha). This is the area of monitoring with which this report is concerned.

2.3 The site is presently the landscaped grounds attached to Priorsland House (Plate 1), a building listed on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) in the Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Development Plan. Priorsland House is a detached two-storey house located on Glenamuck Road, immediately south of the old Carrickmines railway station. It is a mid-sized, mainly nineteenth-century, country house with outbuildings. As a group within this setting, the structures have been deemed to be of ‘regional’ architectural significance, with some of the individual buildings attached to the former Carrickmines railway station deemed to be of regional architectural, social, historic, and technical interest (Shaffrey Associates Architects 2006).
3 Historical and archaeological background (after Deery 2006)

3.1 Introduction

The site at Priorsland is situated at the heart of the rich archaeological landscape of south County Dublin. Numerous monuments in the area date from most eras of prehistory and history: particularly the Neolithic, Bronze Age, Early Christian and medieval periods. Figure 1 shows the recorded archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposed development and the location of recent archaeological discoveries uncovered along the South Eastern Motorway (SEM) which are described in detail below.

3.2 Mesolithic Period (7000–4000 BC)

Known archaeology from the Mesolithic is not well represented in south County Dublin, although there is a possible settlement on Dalkey Island dating from the late fourth millennium BC (Liversage 1968). Greater evidence for early settlement in south County Dublin comes from burial sites and stray finds dated to the late Neolithic (c. 2500 BC) and Bronze Age (c. 2400–500 BC). One of the earliest prehistoric finds in the study area is a flint tool (NMI ref. 1967:137), either Mesolithic or Neolithic in date, found in Loughlinstown townland. More recently an early Mesolithic microlith was found in the area as part of the SEM excavations (Seaver 2004).

3.3 Neolithic Period (c. 4000–2400 BC)

Neolithic artefacts were recovered during excavations associated with the SEM motorway, where there was also evidence for Beaker occupation (2460–2200 BC; O’Drisceoil 2002, licence no: 02E0272; Seaver 2004, 02E1133) c. 160 m south of the proposed development area. Approximately c. 20 m southwest of the site (Fig. 1) a prehistoric rock art site consisting of three small boulders with cupmarks (Clinton 2003, 01E0364) was identified during the SEM works.

There is a well preserved portal tomb in Brennanstown (DU026:007, designated a national monument), c. 500 m east of the proposed development area (Fig. 1). Portal tombs, referred to sometimes as cromlech, are a type of megalithic tomb. Dating from the early part of the Neolithic, they are characterised by their massive capstones, balanced on two portals (the ‘door’ feature) and side stones and back stone. They are almost always situated near streams and rivers. The Brennanstown tomb is a particularly well-preserved
example, and is situated in the steep-sided, wooded Carrickmines River valley, facing upstream to the west. It has an additional set of side stones to the rear of the main chamber, which suggests the tomb may have had a second burial chamber. Brennanstown tomb is part of a group of megalithic tombs (portal tombs and wedge tombs) on the lower slopes of the Dublin Mountains referred to by Powell (1941) as the Rathdown Group.

3.4 Bronze Age Period (2400–500 BC)

Early prehistoric evidence was also uncovered during recent excavations of the medieval complex at Carrickmines which lies to the west of the proposed development (Figs 1, 2). This included occupation associated with Grooved Ware and a possible fulacht fiadh (02E0481, Mark Clinton, pers. comm. in Hagen 2003), a Bronze Age flint knapping site with associated settlement evidence (c. 300m south of the proposed development; 02E0700, Conboy, pers. comm. in Deery and Halpin 2004); a prehistoric settlement site with both Neolithic and Bronze Age evidence (c. 160m south, 02E0272, ibid.) and a burnt mound, pits and a roadway (over 500m to the southeast, excavated by Fiona Reilly, ibid.). Pottery found in the trough dates the burnt mound to the Bronze Age. This recent evidence suggests a significant Bronze Age presence on the lower slopes of the Two Rock and Three Rock Mountains.

3.5 Iron Age Period (c. 500 BC–AD 400)

There is no published evidence for Iron Age settlement in the study area, or within 1km of it.

3.6 Early Medieval (Early Christian) Period (AD 400–1200)

A cross base (DU026:018), which is probably early medieval in date, is located c. 600m south east of the proposed development in the townland of Carrickmines Great. The cross base is now located within the garden of a nearby farm. It is said that a cross at this location may have marked a route or a boundary between Tully to the east and Jamestown to the west (Corlett 1999). According to the Schools Survey, organised by the Irish Folklore Commission in 1937, there was a tradition that the cross was buried somewhere in the vicinity. The trackway beside the house is known as the ‘Old Packhorse Road’ (RMP Files; JRSAI 39 [1959]: 207). Recent archaeological testing at the site of the cross
base did not reveal any features and may indicate that the cross did indeed mark an early routeway (Dennehy 2004, 04E114).

There are several pre-Norman ecclesiastical settlements over 1km distant from the proposed development. These are located in Kilgobbin, Tully and Rathmichael; at the latter, the base of a round tower also survives.

3.7 Medieval and early post-medieval periods (AD 1200–1700)

Carrickmines Castle (RMP DU026:005, a National Monument) is located immediately west of Priorsland (Figs 1, 2). Until recently (see below) a fragment of wall, on the right hand side of the Glenamuck Road (extending towards Golden Ball) was all that remained above-ground of the strongly fortified castle that was erected at Carrickmines, probably in the mid thirteenth century.

A watermill site (DU026:080) on the Carrickmines River further downstream from the settlement and associated with it is located c. 64m southeast of the proposed development area, on the same narrow watercourse, the Carrickmines River, that forms the southern boundary of the proposed development area. The mill is present on the mid seventeenth-century Down Survey map.

Archaeological assessment, trial trenching and monitoring took place adjacent to Carrickmines Castle in 1996, in advance of the Carrickmines to Shanganagh Main Drainage Scheme (Connolly in Bennett 1997). Although no medieval features were revealed in the 200m stretch of pipeline, Michael Moore of the DoEHLG identified a series of significant earthworks in a field west of the castle. They appeared to be the remains of a deserted settlement associated with the castle. Accordingly, the RMP designation for Carrickmines Castle was extended to include all of these outlying earthworks. The area of interest of this site (DU026:005) was excavated as part of the SEM (2000–January 2005; licence no. 00E0045, 00E0525, 02E1532).

Excavations at Carrickmines Castle (DU026:005) revealed a medieval landscape which included a revetted fosse, two outer earthen banks and fosse, an earlier ringwork castle
type enclosure featuring a massive fosse, an outer fosse and associated banks, a mill pond and mill race, house sites, industrial features, the main castle entrance and a medieval village (Clinton 2004). Some of these sites were located east of the designated zone of archaeological potential.

The entire wayleave of the SEM in Carrickmines was investigated and it was found that the medieval era activity was concentrated around the castle itself and to the east where the defensive fosse was identified (Conboy 2005; Conboy, pers. comm. in Deery and Halpin 2004). As only the wayleave area of the SEM was investigated there is a possibility that further material associated with the medieval settlement at Carrickmines may lie beyond it.

As noted above, Carrickmines Castle was probably first constructed here after the Anglo-Norman invasion to protect the southern marches of the city of Dublin. The new settlers were exposed to frequent attacks in this area, as it was a convenient point for Irish tribes such as the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes to raid from the mountains. Intermittent historical references indicate garrison forces for the castle from 1360. By the mid fifteenth century at least, a branch of the Walsh family were responsible for provisioning the fortress, and by the sixteenth century the Walshes were either tenants or landholders of a wide extent of south Dublin countryside (after Bolger 2005).

In the mid seventeenth century, the family became involved in the Confederate rising of 1641. The Castle was besieged in the winter of 1641/2, but was captured, razed and a reported 300 of its inhabitants massacred. The aforementioned excavations undertaken as part of the SEM works at Carrickmines unearthed some of those slain in the event (Clinton et al. 2007). As this conflict, among others in the late medieval history of the locality, ranged just without the castle across the surrounding countryside, archaeological remnants of the fighting were identified as a possibility on the Prioryland development site.

A stretch of the Pale Ditch (RMP DU026:115; Fig. 1) survives near Carrickmines and extends over 500m, broken in one or two places by access lanes. It is orientated slightly east southeast–west northwest (Goodbody 1993). The ditch is aligned on Carrickmines Castle to the east, but currently terminates west of Grimes farmhouse (after Bolger 2005).
The Pale boundary partially surrounded Dublin during the medieval period and was a
defensive structure built by the English settlers to alleviate the constant raiding of their
lands by native Irish tribes such as the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes. The term the 'Pale' is
derived from the Latin, and refers to a fence of vertical wooden stakes or poles
(Goodbody 1993). An act of Parliament of 1488–89 required landowners of the time to
construct a defensive boundary along the borders of the Pale. Thus the construction of the
pale earthwork was often undertaken to enclose an individual’s property rather than
following a more regular linear orientation or consistent defensive form (after Bolger

Despite this variation, the construction of such an earthwork often took the form of two
ditches with a flat-topped bank located between them. Often the bank was in excess of 4m
wide—broad enough to be used as a roadway. John Rocque’s 1760 map of Co. Dublin
shows what appears to be a footpath on the line of the ditch extending from Carrickmines
to a farm now known as Greenfield House, not far from Kilgobbin Castle. This section of
the ditch is located well to the west of Carrickmines Castle (Fig. 1). A further possible
section of the Pale Ditch (RMP DU026:122) lies well to the south of the Priorsland
development site, although this section too is likely to have extended northwest towards
Carrickmines (Fig. 1).

4.1 There are no recorded archaeological monuments (RMP sites) within the boundary of the Priorsland lands; however the lands lie immediately west of the RMP constraint area for Carrickmines Castle (DU026:00501:04) (Figs 1, 2), a National Monument which has been extensively assessed and partially excavated as part of the South Eastern Motorway works (as described above). Recorded archaeological monuments within 500m of the proposed development area are listed below and are described in the archaeological background above and are shown in Figure 1. The distance described is the distance from the outer boundary of the proposed development to the outer archaeological constraint area for RMP site as shown in the RMP 1:5000 series map number 3456.

*Carrickmines Great*

<table>
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<th>RMP No</th>
<th>DU026:005 (01-04)</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Site type</td>
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<td>Distance</td>
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*Brennanstown/Carrickmines*

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*Brennanstown*

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<td>Site type</td>
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*Laughanstown*

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<td>Distance</td>
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</tr>
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</table>
Previous Archaeological Assessment within Priorsland (after Deery 2006; Fig. 3)

5.1 As part of the LUAS Line B1 development, a ‘Park and Ride’ facility with an access road to the motorway is planned for the Carrickmines stop. The proposed site incorporates some of Priorsland House gardens and an adjoining field.

5.2 The location of the ‘Park and Ride’ facility was tested in January 2005 (Abi Cryerhall, Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd, Licence no: 05E0010; Cryerhall 2005). A total of nine trenches were mechanically excavated. Eight of these were excavated within the LUAS ‘Park and Ride’ part of the overall Priorsland development site, and one along the associated access road.

5.3 The testing programme uncovered archaeology consisting of two finds of a prehistoric date and one archaeological feature of an unknown date. The two finds, a small pottery sherd and a flint blade/scaper were found in the subsoil layer. There were no features identified within the trenches that were associated with these finds.

5.4 The archaeological cut feature, consisting of a posthole, was located in Trench 8. This posthole is suggestive of prehistoric structural remains and it was sealed by the topsoil layer and cutting the natural layer. While this posthole appears to be an isolated feature of as yet undetermined function, it does suggest the existence of a larger archaeological site. This may only be uncovered during topsoil removal over a larger area. It is worth noting that the posthole and two stray finds were located in close proximity to each other, to the south of the ‘Park and Ride’ area and along the northern part of the access road. The location lies outside of the bounds of the LUAS B1 watercourse diversion and culverting works, however.
6  Archaeological monitoring: methodology and results

6.1  Monitoring of the removal of topsoil was carried out under ministerial consent C196, registration no. E3284 (Plate 2).

6.2  The monitored area consists of the wayleave for the temporary diversion of a culvert in the northwestern corner of the development site (Figs. 4, 5).

6.3  Methodology

6.3.1  The aim of monitoring of topsoil stripping is to identify any archaeology in the path of the development—and to recover any archaeological artefacts found—and to determine the extent and nature (i.e. the degree of its survival, its significance and its age) of that archaeology, in order to minimise the impact of development on such heritage findings. The stripping of topsoil is monitored and the topsoil is inspected for archaeological artefacts. The stripped upper surface of the subsoil is also inspected for archaeological features underneath the topsoil. Margaret Gowen & Company conducts such work according to our ISO 9001 Archaeological Monitoring Standard Operating Procedure No. 006 Rev. 003.

6.3.2  Topsoil was stripped with a mechanical digger equipped with a flat-edged grading bucket (Pl. 2), and then spread out over an area of approximately 10m x 5m in layers no more than 0.10m deep. It was subsequently scanned with metal detector, in accordance with items 4 and 5 of the Ministerial Consent, to retrieve any metal artefacts that may not have been visually identified (see Section 7).

6.3.3  Watercourse works along the Carrickmines River, also undertaken with a mechanical digger equipped with a flat-edged grading bucket, were inspected at regular intervals and relevant parts of the works programme—i.e. those that did not exclusively involved sterile natural subsoil—were archaeologically monitored. When possible, spoil from such work was metal-detected, but the nature of the work within the existing watercourse did not enable the systematic metal detection that was possible with the topsoil stripping.
6.3.4 This report complies with the guidelines of the DoEHLG (DoEHLG 2006) and is produced according to Margaret Gowen & Company’s ISO 9001 Report Production Standard Operating Procedure No. 008 Rev. 001.

6.4 Results

6.4.1 Topsoil consisted of herterogeneous dark brown grey silt clay, containing occasional (less than 4%) small stones (measuring 10–50mm across). Subsoil consisted of mid grey yellow clay, with moderate (5–7%) inclusions of small to medium-sized (10–200mm across) stones.

6.4.2 A shallow east–west linear feature was recorded in the eastern part of the monitored area. It survived to a length of approximately 5m, with a width of 0.7m–0.8m, and a depth of no more than 0.10m. It was filled by mid to dark brown grey silt clay, containing moderate (5–7%) inclusions of small to medium-sized (10mm–200mm across) stones, as well as occasional red brick fragments and charcoal flecks. It was modern (twentieth-century) in date and not archaeologically significant.

6.4.3 Several modern machine-dug rubbish pits were located in the eastern part of the stripped area (Plate 3). These were most likely related to Priorsland House, and filled with modern rubbish, such as glass, tins, late post-medieval and modern pottery, and parts of disused machinery. These pits, sealed by a layer of redeposited subsoil, were not archaeologically significant. The area with of the rubbish pits could be seen as a slight mound in the field, prior to the stripping of topsoil.

6.4.4 A spread of mid grey brown silt clay, containing moderate inclusions of charcoal flecks and occasional mortar and red brick fragments, was recorded directly to the east of the rubbish pits. This spread had a diameter of approximately 5m. It was of a similar date to the pits themselves, and was not archaeologically significant.
6.4.5 Monitoring of the watercourse observed that the southern side of the Carrickmines River watercourse in the southeast portion of the works location, and beyond it downstream to the east, was lined with large, undressed stones (Plate 6). The stones are likely to be of a post-medieval date—perhaps post-dating the origins of Priorsland House and grounds—but could conceivably relate to continued post-medieval use of the mill (DU026-080) downstream. Stones within the perimeter bounds of the works location were left in situ.

6.5 No significant archaeology was identified during monitoring.
7 Scanning of topsoil with metal detection device

7.1 Following removal, the topsoil was spread out over an area of approximately 10m x 5m, in layers no more than 0.10m deep. The topsoil was subsequently scanned with a metal detector (a White’s Quantum XT Deepscan 950), in accordance with the methodology outlined in the Request for Ministerial Consent II (Frazer [July] 2007) and with the conditions of the Ministerial Consent (item 4 and 5 of C196).

7.2 The purpose of scanning the topsoil with metal detector was to retrieve any metal artefacts that had not been visually identified during the removal of topsoil.

7.3 The metal detection did not yield any artefacts that were overtly military in nature, despite the likelihood that the site lay within the zone of conflict around Carrickmines Castle in the late medieval–early post-medieval era (see Section 3.7).

7.4 This metal detection did yield one artefact of significance: a large cast hollow-backed copper alloy buckle (or strap end) with traces of gilding on the surface (Artefact No. E3284:1:1; Pl. 5). The artefact was conserved at Arch Con Labs, Gleanageary, Co. Dublin.

**E3284:1:1. Copper alloy (shoe) buckle/strap end.** Made of mould-cast copper alloy, with traces of gilding on it. The five-sided object measures 65mm in length and 56mm in width, with a thickness of 2mm. The centre of the openwork decoration on the object is occupied by a rosette design consisting of a four-sided rose surrounded by two ribbed concentric circles. The area between these circles contains a sunburst design. The edges of the object are decorated with foliate swags. If the rosette is a Tudor rose, it may suggest a sixteenth–seventeenth-century date for the artefact. In such a case, it may have been lost during military activity around Carrickmines Castle in the seventeenth century. However, a Tudor rose is almost without exception depicted as five-sided. A more likely identification for the object is that it served as a large shoe buckle, of a type in wide use in the late seventeenth–eighteenth centuries. The manufacture of the object is similar to other such buckles, although its shape is slightly unusual. The decorative festoons around the periphery of the object appear especially rococo in character, pointing to a most likely provenance date around the middle of the eighteenth century.
8 Conclusion

8.1 No significant archaeology was identified during monitoring of LUAS line B1 Carrickmines River watercourse diversion and culverting works: Phase C in the Request for Ministerial Consent II (Frazer [July] 2007).

8.2 A single archaeological artefact (Artefact No. E3284:1:1; Pl. 5; see Section 7.4) was recovered during the metal detection of topsoil.

8.3 The absence of significant archaeology may be explained by the fact that the lands in question form part of the gardens belonging to Priorsland House, and have been quite heavily landscaped over the years. Archaeological remains that may once have been present could have been truncated by such landscaping.

8.4 This report encompasses only the monitoring of topsoil stripping (Phase C of the Ministerial Consent) at the southwest corner of the Priorsland development site, and not the excavation of test trenches (Phases A and B) across the remainder of the development site. The latter work is yet to be undertaken.

8.5 Any future construction or development activity within the bounds of the overall Priorsland development site, but outside of the area of works of the LUAS culvert works (see Fig. 4, 5) will require additional archaeological work as per the details of the Ministerial Consent, subject to review by the appropriate heritage authorities.

William O. Frazer and Carina Eriksson

19 September 2008
References


Websites:

www.excavations.ie [Summary accounts of archaeological excavation in Ireland, 1991-2004; I. Bennett (ed.); various authors]
Plate 1  View W of western part of site, prior to removal of topsoil

Plate 2  Removal of topsoil with mechanical digger
Plate 5  Gilded copper alloy buckle/strap end (E3284:1:1)
Before conservation

Plate 5  Gilded copper alloy buckle/strap end (E3284:1:1)
After conservation
Plate 6  View SE of dredged Carrickmines River watercourse (note rock armour along far bank)