

Conservation Management Plan

**Mulhuddart Church (St. Mary's)
Church Road
Buzzardstown
Dublin 15**

Community Monuments Fund CMF23-2-DF001

Church- DU013-010001, RPS No.670

&

Graveyard- DU013-010003, NIAH No.11346003

By

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1 Introduction, statutory protections and CMP structure

- 1.1 The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Mulhuddart Church (St. Mary's) (DU013-01001) and graveyard (DU013-01003) has been prepared on behalf of Fingal County Council by James Kyle of Archaeology and Built Heritage Ltd., as lead author, with thanks to the contributions of a multidisciplinary project team comprising Archer Heritage Planning Ltd., CORA Consultant Engineers and Fingal County Council. This CMP aims to place the church in its archaeological and historical contexts, in order to assess its significance and define and address any potential management issues. The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is intended to inform any future conservation works at the site and it has been compiled with thanks to a grant of funding under Stream 2 of the Community Monuments Fund 2023 (CMF23-2-DF001).



Figure 1 Site location (ASI)

- 1.2 This conservation management plan has been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Community Monuments Fund Handbook (2023) and with due heed to the principles set out by the Burra Charter (2013), as published by ICOMOS, which provides a model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance. A fundamental principle of the charter is that places of cultural significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations.

“Places of cultural significance enrich people’s lives, often providing a deep and inspirational sense of connection to community and landscape, to the past and lived experiences” (Burra Charter 2013).

1.3 The monuments which this conservation management plan pertains are St. Mary's Church (DU013-01001) and graveyard (DU013-01003), comprising historic built fabric, archaeology, and natural heritage and those elements are given protection under the following legislation:

- National Monuments Acts, 1930–2004, and the Record of Monuments & Places, established under Section 12 of the 1994 Act.
- Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, and the Fingal County Council Development Plan 2023-2029. The creation and maintenance of a Record of Protected Structures within this Plan is set out in section 51 of the 2000 Act.
- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC)
- Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)

Statutory protection is afforded by the Record of Protected Structures, and the Sites & Monuments Records. Monuments included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) prepared by each local authority, or the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) prepared by the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, are referred to as recorded monuments and are protected under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004.

St. Mary's Church (DU013-01001) and graveyard (DU013-01003) are in the ownership of the local authority, in this case Fingal County Council. Both are recorded by the Register of Monuments and Places (RMP) and are therefore accorded statutory protection under the National Monuments Acts 1930 to 2014 (as amended). Additionally, The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires each planning authority to compile and maintain a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) to protect structures, or parts of structures which form part of the architectural heritage, and which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. The RPS is a mechanism for the statutory protection of the architectural heritage and forms part of each planning authority's development plan and St. Mary's Church is recorded by Fingal County Council's Record of Protected Structures as RPS No. 670.

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) is a state initiative under the administration of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and established on a statutory basis under the provisions of the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) and Historic Monuments (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1999. The purpose of the NIAH is to identify, record, and evaluate the post-1700 architectural heritage of Ireland, uniformly and consistently, as an aid in the protection and conservation of the built heritage. Mulhuddart graveyard is listed on the NIAH (Reg. No. 11346003), where it has been afforded a national rating.

1.4 The church and graveyard are located on rising ground, 600m north of the river Tolka and were it not for the surrounding tree cover, the raised mound which the church and the oldest section

of the graveyard occupy would afford expansive views to the southeast comprising Dublin City, the Dublin Mountains and to the southwest up the Tolka River valley onward to north County Kildare and south County Meath.



Figure 2 Aerial view of Mulhuddart church (DU013-01001) and graveyard (DU013-01003) (Google Earth)

- 1.5** The church (DU013-01001) has been suggested (Baker 2008) to be located within its primary early medieval enclosure on the basis of the raised mound which it occupies. The curve of that possible enclosure is fossilized by a corresponding curve to the west in Church Road and to the north by an internal path within the graveyard. That path also delineates a section of the townland boundary between Buzzardstown and Tyrelstown, with the modern, more recent graves all to the north of that boundary, in the latter townland. Whilst there is no confusion over the church's dedication to the Virgin Mary, nor indeed over the origins of the townland name of Buzzardstown, there is some conflict over the origins of the name Mulhuddart. The simplest etymology of the name is proffered by Stubbs (1897, 444) where *Mullaghiddart* is taken to simply mean the hill of Hiddart. The strongest alternate etymology is suggested by Ronan (1940) where the ancient name is suggested to be *Mullach-Chuidbert* meaning Cuthbert's Hill, after none other than St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne.

The church (DU013-01001), in its present form dates to the fourteenth century whilst the later residential tower at the western end dates to the fifteenth century.



Figure 3 *A view of the ruins of Mallahidert (Mulhuddart) Church, on the road to Navan, at about 5 miles from Dublin by Gabriel Beranger c. 1777*

The structure has possibly been roofless since the mid-seventeenth century and the walls of the eastern end, southern side and part of the northern side are today scantily present. The remains of walling, the apparent subsurface linear features extending east from the current eastern gable and the depiction of the church by the antiquarian Gabriel Beranger (Figure 3) all suggest that either a structure, possibly a further gallery, or indeed an earlier church once existed to the east of the church or that the current reconstructed east wall of the church has been erroneously placed, within the structure.

The graveyard was surveyed in 2008, as part of the Fingal Historic Graveyards Project (FHG 8) and the active element of the overall graveyard is confined to the modern extension, 130m north of the church, with the graveyard itself being divided into three main sections; the oldest section of which is the mound/raised area surrounding the church which is located on high ground at the southern end of the graveyard. The latter is bounded on its western side by a curving, squared rubble wall with later stone crenelations and a recently uncovered cast-iron pedestrian gate in the northwest curve of the arc. It is the mounded element of the site which possibly represents the remains of an early medieval ecclesiastical enclosure.

Located in the immediate environs of the church and graveyard, 240m to the southwest, along Church Road, was the Holywell (DU013-009), known as Lady's Well, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and also listed on the NIAH (Reg. No. 11346010). The holywell, which is not included as part of this CMP, has also been afforded a rating of national importance by the NIAH.

2 Historical, cartographic and archaeological background

2.1 Introduction

As with many placenames in Ireland the origins of the name Mulhuddart or in modern Gaelic '*Mullach Eadrad*' are by no means clear. Multiple explanations are proffered by different sources and whilst all agree on the '*Mullach*' part of the placename being a hilltop, the suffix is the cause for the differing interpretations. There are a total of twenty-six historical mentions of the placename from 1229 AD to 1969 listed by logainm.ie and only two of that number are spelt the same, obfuscating the issue further. Indeed, the great Irish scholar John O'Donovan, writing in 1840 during his work on the parish name books of the first edition Ordnance Survey could only proffer "*mala, the brow of a hill, huddart or hiddert uncertain.*" Perhaps the simplest translation was proffered by Stubbs (1897) who stated that *Mullaghiddart* is taken to mean the hill of Hiddart. An alternate personal name translation for Mullhuddart is offered by a record in the Duchas Folklore in Schools Collection, which details that "*It is still called by the old inhabitants "Mulla Heather". Some people say that the right name of the village is Mullac Eadairne.*". Room (1986) muddies those waters further when he takes an alternate, unprovenanced Gaelic version '*Maol Eadraid*', as meaning '*Eiderne's hilltop*'.

Writing in response to the issue in 1940, the usually reliable Reverend Myles V. Ronan states that "*Dr. Foley thinks the ancient form is Mullach-Chuidbert*" meaning Cuthbert's hill or mound. St Cuthbert is suggested to have founded the church at Kilmahuddrick, 1.5km northwest of Clondalkin and the annals of St. Mary's Abbey record that in A.D. 684 Cuthbert was '*a native of Ireland born in the village of Kilmocodrick*' (Trehy 2008), this is the same Cuthbert who has been identified by Ball (1906) as none other than St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne. When one delves a little deeper into the background of St. Cuthbert this suggestion for the etymology of Mulhuddart makes the most sense, with sources suggesting that Cuthbert was formerly a man named Mulloche, the great-grandson of Muircertagh, the High King of Ireland.

The etymology which is the least likely, in the opinion of the author, is proffered by modern sources (Wikipedia), where without any reference or provenance the name is translated as the 'hill or mound of the milking'. The Gaelic for milking is *bleáin* and none of the historical texts or reliable sources back this version up. According to Ball (1906) the townland names for Buzzardstown, Cruiserath and Tyrelstown thankfully, have a more straightforward origin- they were named after the various Anglo-Norman families who were recorded as being the resident landowners in the area from the fourteenth century onwards.

2.2 Prehistoric Period

2.2.1 Mesolithic Period c. 9000-4000 BC

Although the courses of the rivers and streams in the area of the site will have altered considerably over the intervening timespan, their paths would have served as routeways via which the interior of the land could be accessed from the coastline, providing freshwater above

their tidal reaches just as they would have provided a direct food source in their freshwater, brackish and saltwater reaches and indirectly so, via their attraction of the native fauna of the area. North County Dublin has proved particularly informative in relation to this period, thanks in no small part to the identification of flint artefacts and stone tools in close proximity to their parent raw materials along a narrow coastal strip, with both of the estuaries at Malahide and Rogerstown proving particularly abundant (Nolan 1981).

Furthermore, waterways, such as the nearby river Tolka, located 0.6km south of the subject site, would have attracted fish, fowl and predator species which would have been exploited by the early human occupants of this rich landscape. Additionally, the proliferation of naturally occurring flint along the beaches of Fingal would have ably served the human population by providing ample quantities of the essential raw material of human life in Irish prehistory, flint. Whilst there have been no sites, artefacts or archaeological remains of any kind relating to the Mesolithic Period identified in Buzzardstown townland or in close proximity to the subject site a lack of evidence should not be taken as a complete absence.

The closest evidence dating to the Mesolithic period was the located 9km southwest of the subject site at Spencer Dock, Dublin 1, where wooden fish traps dating to a period of the late Mesolithic (6100-5760 cal BC) were excavated by Melanie McQuaid (McQuade 2008). A number of shell middens and flint scatters dating to this period have been uncovered further along the coast of North Dublin at Sutton (DU015-024), northwards along the coast at Malahide and Balbriggan and most notably on Lambay Island (Baker 2010). Additionally, series of four wooden fish traps were discovered at Clowanstown, County Meath, 20km to the northwest of the subject site in 2004. Occupation at the lakeside site was radiocarbon dated to 5320–4990 cal. BC and 5000–4720 cal. BC and the site itself comprised a range of wooden features, a consolidated platform and diagnostically late Mesolithic microliths (Mossop 2009).

2.2.2 Neolithic period c. 4000-2800 BC

The subsequent radical shift in subsistence strategies from hunting and gathering to farming and fixed settlement during the Neolithic (*New Stone Age*) led to a significant transformation of both the physical and social landscapes across Ireland. There have been no sites or monuments identified in Buzzardstown townland or indeed within the immediate proximity of the subject site which have been firmly dated to this period. However, evidence from an excavation carried out in Portan townland, County Meath, 2.5km west of the subject site, by David Bayley of IAC Ltd. under licence ref. 16E0117 (ME051-069) uncovered an isolated spread (dims 0.6m x 0.4m; T 0.03m) of a silty clay with inclusions of charcoal in which a small amount of undiagnostic burnt bone was recorded, additionally a flint scraper and a piece of debitage was found on the surface of the pit. A sample of alder charcoal provided a C14 date of 3521-3371 cal. BC. Similarly, the same archaeologist at Site 18 (16E0196) excavated three pits and whilst no artefacts were recovered from these, a piece of oak charcoal from one yielding a C14 date of 3315-2919 cal. BC. The emerging recently excavated evidence is starting to contradict the previous analysis of the settlement pattern of Fingal during the Neolithic, which

was suggested by Stout (1992) to be a predominantly coastal pattern, an analysis which was based on the evidence of tomb survival, limited excavation results and identification of dateable artefacts by field collectors.

2.2.3 Chalcolithic 2800-2500 BC & Bronze Age c. 2500-500 BC

Numerous other excavations carried out in Portan townland by IAC Ltd., 2.5km west of the subject site which uncovered evidence of prehistoric activity and occupation of the immediate landscape surrounding the subject site; at Site 20 two small pits were excavated (16E0227) and although these were devoid of artefacts a single charred hazelnut provided a C14 date of 2200-1985 cal. BC, placing them in the early Bronze Age. Likewise at Site 27 (16E0373) two small intercutting pits were uncovered, the larger pit of which produced rim and body sherds of a single bucket-shaped domestic vessel that can be dated stylistically to c. 900-800 BC, placing it in the late Bronze Age (1200-500 BC).

2.2.4 Iron Age c.500 BC-500 AD

The Irish Iron Age yet remains the poorer relation of the other periods in our country's archaeological record and although some evidence is emerging from recent excavated evidence elsewhere on the island, none of the 37 possible archaeological sites identified by IAC Ltd. in Portan townland were successfully dated to this period, which serves to only reinforce the *status quo*.

2.3 Historic period

2.3.1 Early Medieval Period c. 500-1100 AD

At the start of the early Medieval period, the plains of North County Dublin, which the subject site is part of, would have formed part of the ancient Kingdom of Brega, with the area being known initially as the Saithne (a geographical area roughly equivalent to modern Fingal), which was described in various texts as that part of County Dublin north of the river Liffey, with the ruling dynasty at the time being the Ua Caitheasaigh (O' Casey) who were the chiefs of Saithne Brega. Reeves and O'Donovan give Saithne to be in or centred on the barony of Balrothery West in modern Fingal.

The kingship of the area was subsequently dominated from the seventh to the eleventh centuries by the Sil nÁedo Sláine, the descendants of Áed Sláine, who was the son of Diarmait mac Cerbaill. They were a part of the Southern Uí Néill, the ruling dynasty of Brega and claimed descent from Niall Noígiallach (Niall of the Nine Hostages) and his son Conall Cremthainne. (Byrne 1973).

The most readily identifiable secular site type in the Irish rural landscape are Ringforts, enclosed spaces in the landscape, delineated by one or more ditches often with an internal bank. These enclosures have traditionally been seen to represent defensive fortifications but more so recently many excavated examples have proven to be basic domestic farms, with circular houses, small internal fields/garden plots or with a specific livestock function. Often

surviving in record only on the earliest edition of the Ordnance Survey mapping, if these monuments have been removed from the landscape the name of the townland which they are located in often hints at their presence; the use of Ráth, Líos or Dún in the name of a townland can all suggest the presence of enclosures dating to this period. The closest example of such a townland to the subject site is Cruiserath, 400m northwest of the subject site, with the example 1.5km southeast of the subject site in Corduff townland (DU013-015) being a fine extant example of a 'platform' ringfort. Multi-fold evidence of activity dating to this period, namely charcoal production, was uncovered 2.5km west of the subject site in Portran (ME051-034) and Gunnocks townlands, with ME051-048 producing a date of 665-775 cal. AD in the former and ME051-058001 dating to 658-775 cal. AD in the latter.

Regarding the ecclesiastical aspect of early Medieval life in Ireland, Ronan (1940) states that the *cill* at Mulhuddart was a seventh century foundation by "*Cuthbert bishop, 685*", but in the years following its founder's retirement the *cill* was transferred two miles east to *Clocharan* (Cloghran, see below), which was adjacent to the ancient road from the monastery at Finglas to Rathoath and by extension Tara. Ronan states that latter church ministered until about 1300, prior to the parish church's return to Mulhuddart in the fourteenth century. Thus, Cuthbert's church on the mound is suggested to have been short lived, with the subsequent fourteenth century church discussed below.

2.3.2 Medieval Period c. 1100-1600 AD

The arrival of the Anglo-Normans in AD1169 produced a massive shift in landscape use, settlement pattern, agricultural practices and the habitation of the Irish landscape. Their initial occupation of the rural landscape was through earth and timber Motte and Bailey fortifications, a type which could be reasonably rapidly constructed (O'Keefe 1992). Whilst a single Motte on its own could not necessarily defend a specific territory, these functioned as part of a network of this site type, regularly spaced throughout the occupied landscape on elevated positions, close to routeways and often on pre-existing site/fortification locations. The subject site would appear to have occupied a position in the hinterland at some distance from the c.1200 stone castle foundation of Castleknock by Hugh Tyrel, but close to the nearest Motte, DU013-012 at Corduff, 1Km to the southeast of the subject site, with the subject site being part of the Barony of Castleknock.

The grant of that Barony to Hugh Tyrel by Hugh de Lacy was effectively royally rubberstamped by Henry II's grant of Castleknock to "*de Lacy's man*" Hugh Tyrel in 1177 AD (St. John Brooks 1933), with the grant including the modern area of Tyrrelstown and portions of Clonsilla and Mulhuddart. Ronan (1940) states the general area of the River Tolka and the road between Dublin and Clonee had grown in importance during Anglo-Norman times, with a growing populace in the area requiring its own place of worship, something that the small, early foundation in Cloghran couldn't accommodate and so around AD1300 '*Cuidbert's mound*' was (re)selected as a suitable church site, helped by its proximity to the holywell and "*a splendid*

church of nave and chancel was built", with Ronan noting that it was not until the fifteenth century that the square residential tower was added. The church, our subject site, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and the holywell became known as Our Lady's Well. These dedications effectively erased the traces of the earlier foundation and St. Cuthbert's association with the site.

Later historical records pertaining to the church, during the reign of Pope Eugene IV in 1434, state that the Abbot of St. Mary's Abbey was given a papal mandate to remove one Thomas Warley from the prebend of "*Mollaghyddryd*", which the latter had claimed without proper dispensation. Additionally, the Pope directed the abbot to install Phillip Norry "*perpetual vicar of Dundalk*" as the prebend (Archivium Hibernicum 1913).

Around the same period, under the reign of Henry VI, who was the King of England from 1422 to 1461 and again from 1470-1471 'the guild and fraternity of our Lady of St. Mary of the Church of Mulhuddart', was royally established, as noted by Ball (1906). The terms of establishment for the guild included a provision for a minimum of two chaplains, for whom the residential tower may have been built as accommodation (Ronan 1940). Subsequently, in 1532, Henry VIII granted a licence to allow the foundation of a religious guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Mulhuddart. The guild, which continued until 1572, made provision for a master and two wardens, with power to erect a chantry for two or more chaplains serving in the church (Gwynn and Hadcock 1988).

2.3.3 Post-Medieval Period c. AD1600-present

According to the church returns of 1613, St. Mary's church was described as being in good repair, and although Archbishop Bulkeley states that at the time of his '*Visitation of the Archdioceses of Dublin*' in 1630, both the chancel and nave were in ruins, the church is suggested by Ball to have remained probably at least partly roofed until the close of the seventeenth century. The Down Survey (1654-1658) map of the Barony of Castleknock depicts two structures as being present in Buzzardstown townland in Mulhuddart Parish, a church and a house, whilst the parish map¹ depicts the same structures in '*Buckrardstowne*' (Buzzardstown) townland and it details the lands as being under the ownership of Sir Henry Bealling, whom it lists as being an 'Irish Papist' (Figure 4).

Ball states that the Bealing, Bellings or Bellyngs family had a long association with the area, and they were a prominent family in the Anglo-Irish gentry of the Pale. Sir Richard Bealing, Sir Henry's father, was Solicitor General for Ireland from 1574 to 1584 and Henry's eldest son Richard was a leader during the Confederate Wars with Henry's grandson Richard serving as Knight secretary to Queen Catherine of Braganza, wife of Charles II.

Sir Henry Bealing became Provost Marshal and High Sheriff of Kildare; despite a reputation for corruption, (including the notorious case of the aged English-born farmer Philip Bushen, who

¹ <http://downsurvey.tchpc.tcd.ie/down-survey-maps.php#bm=Castleknock&c=Dublin&p=Mallahudert+and+Ward>

was hanged in 1625, as part of the Leinster Assize, for the murder of his wife, a crime which he almost certainly did not commit) and in spite of several clashes with the Crown, he had a largely successful career and extended the family estates. Sir Henry died before the establishment of the Commonwealth, and his son Richard was a royalist who remained abroad during the Commonwealth, returning to Ireland only after the Restoration. On his return he appears to have resided in Dublin and according to Ball (1906) after his death in September 1677, his body was carried to Mulhuddart to be interred in a tomb, which was enclosed by a wall.

The parish of Mulhuddart features repeatedly during the Irish Confederate Wars (1641-1653) and Ball (1906) records that a year and a half after the rebellion, in April 1643, a party of horse sent out from Dublin by Ormond had a skirmish there with some of the Irish forces, and in following July 1644 the Earl of Cavan was encamped there with a large number of troops for several days. He was in great need of equipment and provisions and addressed more than one urgent appeal for them to Ormond from Mulhuddart church, in which the Earl had taken up quarters. In the autumn of 1647, Owen Roe O'Neill passed through the parish on his devastating march, and in the following year Mulhuddart was garrisoned with seventy-two men and seven non-commissioned officers under the command of Sir Francis Willoughby, with John Bradshaw as lieutenant and Thomas Barnes as ensign.

Conflict did not depart the parish following the end of the Confederate Wars and following the events of the Battle of the Boyne, in 1690, a company of Williamite soldiers were murdered while seeking shelter in the church. In September of 1690, the company of soldiers under the command of a Colonel Foulkes, whilst marching to Dublin, took shelter from stormy weather in the ruin of Mulhuddart church. During the night they were attacked by local forces loyal to King James. The whole company, upwards of eighty men, were massacred, whilst some of the men involved in the attack were later executed in Thomas Street².

The visit of Isaac Butler to St. Mary's in 1741 is described in his "*Journey from Dublin to the shores of Lough Dergh*" as set out by St. John Joyce (1912), with the former describing St. Mary's thus '*Ye Church, at present in ruins, is situated on a hill and dedicated to ye Virgin Mary; from it appears a most extensive and delightful prospect of ye County of Meath and Dublin*'. With regard to the church, Butler also recants the events of 1690 '*In it was committed a most barbarous and infamous action by some of ye neighbouring inhabitants in September 1690, a company of Colonel Foulkes men in their march to Dublin by stormy and rainy weather retreated into ye church for shelter, but were all of them murdered in cold blood, before ye morning.*'

Holywell

Due to its obvious separation from the church and graveyard the holywell (RMP DU013-009, NIAH Reg. No. 11353010) termed variously Lady Well/ Lady's Well/St. Mary's Well has not been included as part of these CMF works, although it is arguably an intrinsic part of the site.

² [History of Mulhuddart by Brian Daly \(eircom.net\)](http://www.eircom.net)

As stated above, the Pattern Day of the well became the 8th of September in Medieval times, but curiously that date may have merely been a subtle shift from one which was perhaps previously observed; the 4th of September is celebrated as St. Cuthbert's Feast Day in the Roman Catholic faith.

Butler (1741) describes the well thus "about midway ascending to ye church is an excellent well, it is carefully walled and several large trees about it. Here on 8 September a great patron is kept with a vast concourse of all sexes and ages from many miles, upward of eighty tents are pitched here furnished with all kinds of liquors and provisions for ye refreshment of ye company"

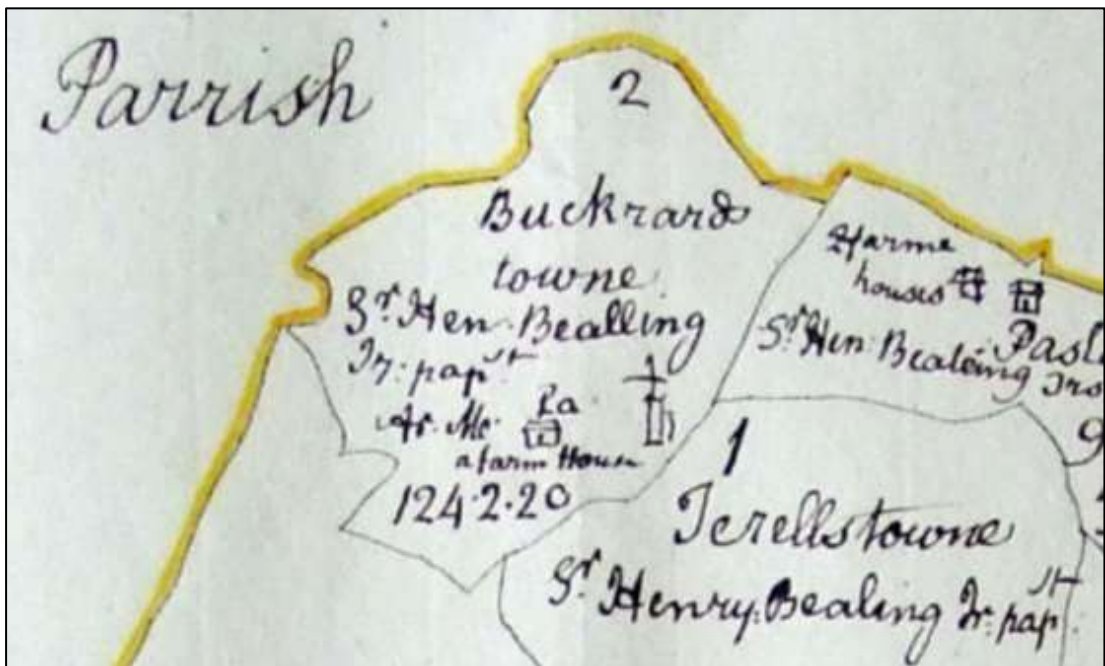


Figure 4 Extract from the Down Survey Map of 'The parrishes of Ward and Mallahidert in the Barony of Castleknock'



Figure 5 Extract from Rocque's 'Exact Survey of the County of Dublin' 1760, north to right

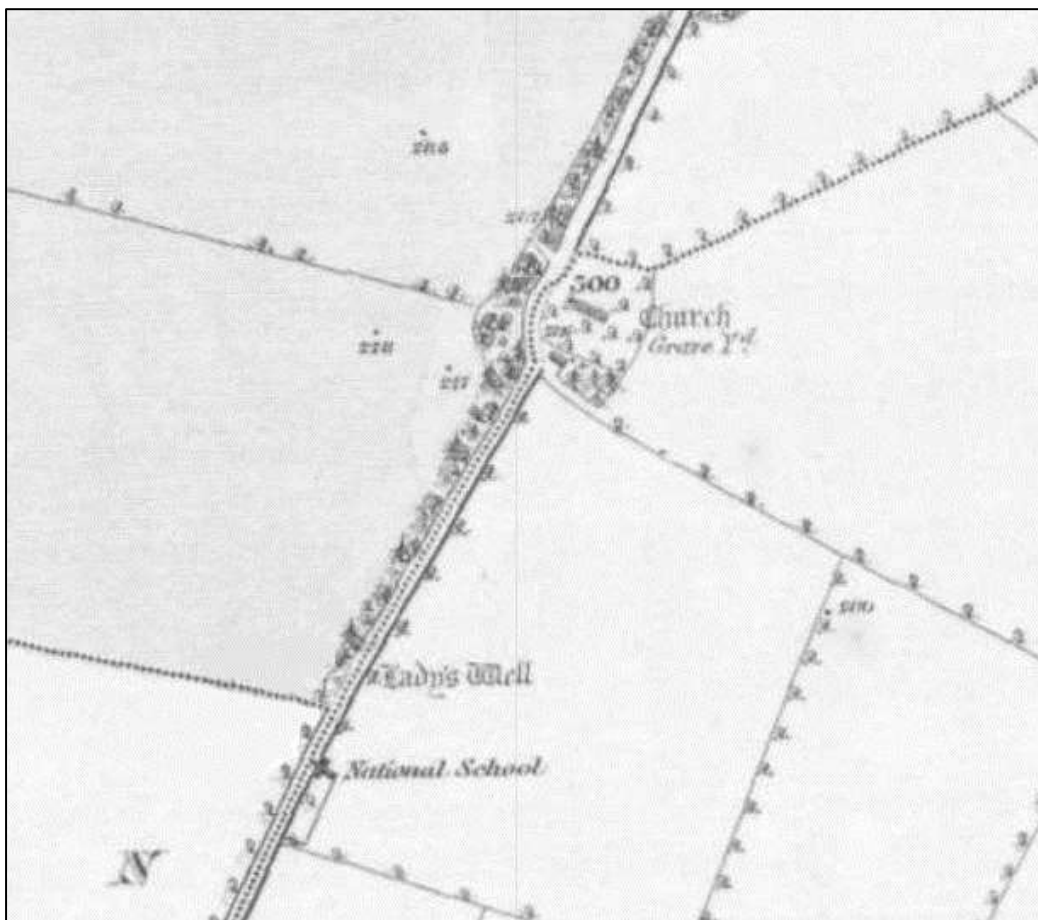


Figure 6 Extract of 1st-edition OS map 1837, showing church and graveyard (ASI)

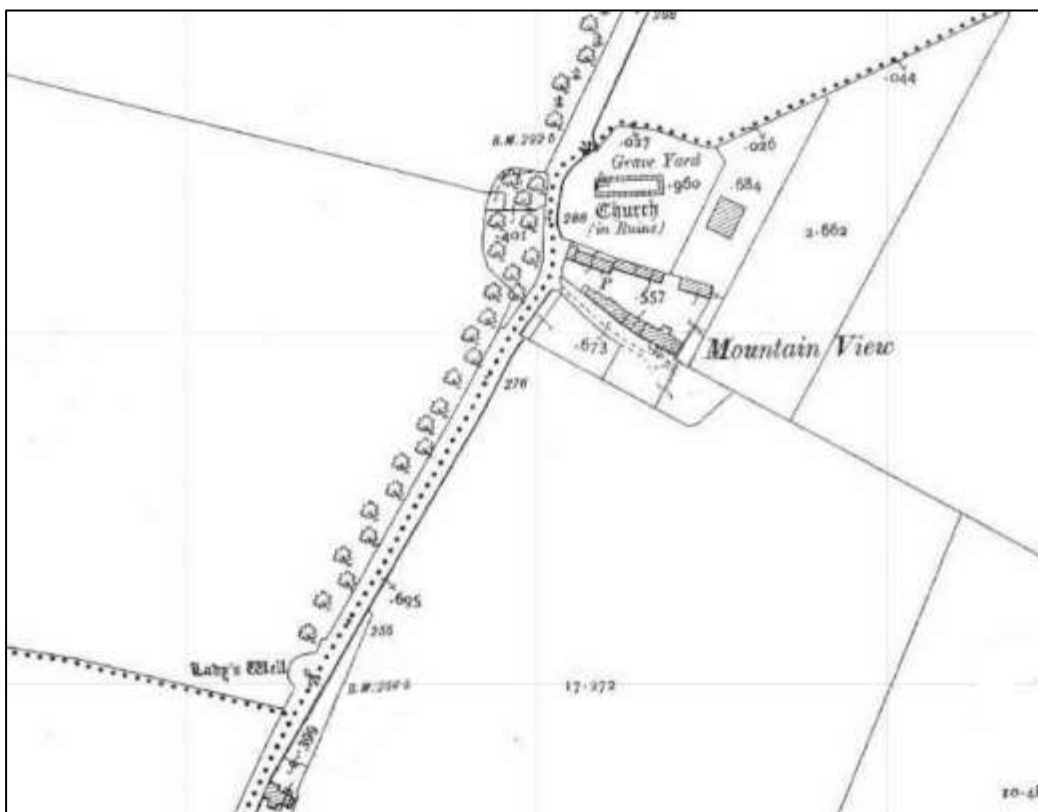


Figure 7 Ordnance survey 25-inch map of the site 1910, proposed site outline in red (ASI)

2.4 Cartographic analysis

The earliest illustration of the church is present on the Down Survey (1654-1658) mapping which depicts two structures as being present in 'Burrardstone' (Buzzardstown) townland in 'Mallahidert' (Mulhuddart), namely a church and a house (Figure 4). However, with Rocque's 1760 'Exact Survey of the County of Dublin' (Figure 5) we see the first reasonably accurate depiction of the subject site. The church and graveyard are illustrated on a hilltop, surrounded by fields, in a sub-oval enclosure, with a small building/tomb to the west, adjacent to the road. To the south, along a not so straight road, Lady Well is annotated and there would appear to be some trees/structures at that location. The shape of the graveyard enclosure hints at the possible early Medieval foundation of the site but on this source the church is depicted as being cruciform in shape, with no obvious demarcation of the tower. Additional detail of note on this source is the small structure to the southwest of the church, within the graveyard, which might be a tomb, possibly that of Richard Bealing, and a path leading northwestwards to 'Terrelstown House' from the side of church road opposite the graveyard. The latter element is suggested to be the reason for the location of the wrought iron gate in the older encircling wall to the northwest of the church, which would have afforded direct access to and from the path and church road.

The 1st-edition Ordnance Survey map of 1837 (Figure 6) depicts the church as rectangular, located within the earliest part of the graveyard, with the site encircled by trees on all sides and surrounded by fields. Traces of the original curved graveyard boundary are present to the east and west, the curve of which is mirrored by the line of the now otherwise straight north-south road to the west of the graveyard. At this point in time the field boundary with trees to the north of the church has the suggestion of a curve at its western end and this may well represent the line of the site's enclosure. The curve of the possible enclosure is further mirrored to the west of church road by a small coppice of trees and field boundary, something which might suggest the presence of an (outer) enclosure ditch, a detail which further hints at the possible early Medieval foundation of the site. Again, a break is illustrated in that coppice, a point which continues to represent the path northwestward from the church and graveyard to Tyrrelstown House which was illustrated by Rocque. To the south along the road, Lady's Well is illustrated at a wide spot in the road. To the immediate south of the graveyard is a small structure, possibly an early incarnation of 'Mountain View' house.

The subsequent 25-inch mapping of 1910 (Figure 7) adds greater details to the graveyard, church site and location of the holywell, the arrangement of those monuments is unchanged, although by this point in time the trees on the boundary to the immediate north of the graveyard appear to have been removed. What is mainly evidenced by this later source is the encroaching development of 'Mountain View' house and farmyard to the south and east of the graveyard, with a number of buildings to the south, presumably a farmyard and a large square structure to the east, which is presumably a house. Comparison with the modern graveyard layout (Figure 2) evidences the extent of both twentieth century extensions of the graveyard to the north.

2.5 Photographic analysis

The available National Library of Ireland photographs of the site (undated) and the RSAI lantern slide of 1897 depict the site at the end of the nineteenth century, with the available images all captured from the south and southwestern corner of the tower and focussed northward on that structure, thus the church is not present in these images, which are discussed below in direct comparison to images of the structure as it is today.

Southern elevation (Figure 8, Plate 10)

The extent of the modern repair is abundantly clear from a comparison of the available images; where a view of the interior of the tower was possible c.1900, that is no longer the case (Plate 10). The string courses which are present in the earlier image are likewise not present today and the modern repairs have served to obscure the location of the entrance doorway which is present in the historic photographs of the tower (Figures 7 & 8). Likewise, the extent of the modern repairs mask where the southern elevation of the tower would have met the western wall of the church, to the point where the relationship between the two is no longer apparent. The blocked window ope at waist height in the southern elevation is partially obscured by brambles in the earlier image, but it is possible to discern that it was not blocked at that point in time and that it was bordered by the same chamfered cut stone blocks as it is today, blocks which were poorly reinserted to the point where the glazing bar holes now face in an implausible direction (Plate 11). Also present, in both the historical and modern images, above this ope are a number of stone voussoirs above the lintel.

Today no trace remains of the doorway which was present on the early images (Figures 8 & 9), the modern repairs have been too thorough in that respect and the location of that ope is completely without evidence on the southern elevation of the tower at present. The access to the interior of the tower would have been through that door, with a doorway immediately on the left upon entry which would have accessed the stairs to the upper floors. The basic massing of the structure suggests the former possible location of this staircase (Plate 19), with the massing of the western wall (Plate 20) also suggesting it may have accommodated a stair of its own, possibly starting from a higher floor or from the end of the southern wall staircase. Something which was documented by Austin Cooper in his 1781 account which noted the remains of a staircase in the southwest corner of the tower.

The lack of contemporaneity between the tower and the church are underlined by their respective orientation (Plate 5), however the extent of the modern repairs to the tower do not permit a reading of the phases of either structure as they serve to obscure the elements which would permit any such attempts.

Western elevation (Figure 9, Plates 12 & 16)

A comparison of the 1897 lantern slide (Figure 9) and the modern images (Plates 12 & 16) of the western elevation is interesting in that they again evidence the extent of the previous modern interventions to the tower. The 18th century mural tablet on the exterior of the west wall

of the tower was at shoulder height, judging by the gentleman pictured beside it in 1897. Today it is sadly illegible from ground level as the modern interventions appear to have moved it to a higher location on this elevation, rendering the script indecipherable from ground level, although some of the inscription was recorded previously, during the Fingal Historic Graveyard Survey. The mural tablet and its smaller companion (Plate 13), which is located above it, are today both surrounded to either side and above by a rolled moulding, which would appear to be original to the larger mural tablet, but from the historic photos, is not original to its smaller neighbour above. On the current height of the wall is the base of a rectangular window ope, which would have been at first floor level and curiously at ground level a further, semi concealed, window ope type feature is present in the wall, something which suggests that the surrounding ground level and indeed that on the interior of the tower is higher than it formerly was, presumably thanks to the extensive collapse from the upper levels. The western elevation again exhibits the extensive modern repair with the late twentieth century strap pointing which afflicts much of the tower and church.

The presence of trees in the background of the images suggests that all of them were captured prior to the removal of trees along the boundary to the immediate north of the graveyard, something which appears to have occurred by the time of the 25-inch mapping in 1910.



Figure 8 Image of tower from north c.1900 (NLI)



Plate 10 Image of tower from north (present day)



Figure 9 Lantern slide of tower from northwest, 1897 (RSAI)



Plate 16 View of tower from northwest, present day

2.6 Folklore

The Duchas Schools Collection is a rich resource for folklore associated with historic sites, and St. Mary's Church and holywell are no exception. One record states that "*Saint Mary's well... cures cuts bruises and sprains if the water is rubbed to them. A Convent stood there where it is built and people get relics there at certain times of the year. People have to walk round the well twice to get cured.*" Regarding the church itself "*There are the ruins of an old Chaple in the graveyard beside it (the well) and if you get some of the stones out of the walls they cure a lot of pains and aches.*"³ One record in the collection also documents the massacre described above as having occurred in the church⁴ following the Battle of the Boyne and the record in question refers to the church as "St. Mary's Abbey". The same record also refers to the presence of a "tunnel" running from the church to Ashtown, something which it says was confirmed when it was discovered by a Mr. Hoey, a farmer in Buzzardstown, who was putting a pole into his yard. The same record also suggests that the principal grave in the old graveyard which "*is surrounded with an iron railing. It is in that grave Tyrrell is buried. It was he who left his name to Tyrrellstown.*" The association of tunnels or "caves" with the churchyard was further reinforced by Fennessy (2001), who documents the early-19th century pilgrimage to Jerusalem of one James MacNamara, who before setting out had tried to live near his brother's grave '*in a cave*' at Mulhuddart churchyard.

A further record of the 1690 massacre is afforded by Paddy Byrne of Damastown in the School's Collection⁵ "*In the legends of Mulhuddart we are told that there were some soldiers murdered in the Old Church. There had been a battle and the pursued soldiers took refuge in the church. The people of the village came upon them and murdered the soldiers. Among the murderers was a man named Cummins whose descendants are still plentiful around the village.*"

2.7 National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)

The church is not listed by the NIAH, but the graveyard (Reg No. 11346003) is listed and described simply as a "*graveyard with various cut stone grave markers from c.1300 to present. Rubble stone church, c.1700, now in ruins.*"

³ [Holy Wells · Oldtown · The Schools' Collection | dúchas.ie \(duchas.ie\)](#)

⁴ [Mulhuddart · The Schools' Collection | dúchas.ie \(duchas.ie\)](#)

⁵ [Legends - The Murdering in the Old Church · Mulhuddart · The Schools' Collection | dúchas.ie \(duchas.ie\)](#)

2.8 Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) sites

The archaeological constraint maps in conjunction with the Record of Monuments and Places, provide an initial database for planning authorities, state agencies and other bodies involved in environmental change.

The Record of Monuments and Places comprises the following elements: (i) Letter or Letters indicating County (DU =Dublin); (ii) A three-digit number indicating the relevant Ordnance Survey Sheet Number (e.g. 004); (iii) A three, four or five-digit number indicating the dedicated number of the individual site or monument.

There is a total of seven recorded sites and monuments within 1km of the subject:

RMP No	Classification	Townland	Description
DU013-010001	Church	Buzzardstown	<p>Located in a prominent position with land falling gently to W and steeply to S. Church 1st mentioned in early 15th century on the incorporation of a guild 'the guild of the fraternity of Our Lady St Mary of the Church of Mulhuddart (Ball 1920, 44-46). Civil Survey 'walls of a church' at Buzzardstown (Simington 1945, 227). Church situated in a raised graveyard which curves alongside W side. Undivided nave and chancel (int. dims. 20.22m wt. 8.73m, h. 0.5m, th. 0.97m-1.2m with residential W tower that survives to the first floor level. Rough coursed shaley limestone with dressed quoins. Vault over ground floor shows traces of wickerwork centering, ext. dimes. 1.745 wt. 4.9m. 1st floor has projecting turret on S side, a window in W and 2 wall recesses in N. Nave is entered through segmental arched opening in N wall.</p> <p>The exterior of the western gable has two mouldings for plaques. The upper is empty, the lower contains an 18th century mural tablet inscribed to Denis Commins & Mary Warren 1675-1740s. Window in south facade of tower appears to have been reinstated. Arch of residential tower subject to burning and graffiti. Gravestones present in interior of church.</p>

DU013-010003	Graveyard	Buzzardstown	Graveyard walled and curved along western side at some height above the road. The oldest section of the graveyard is the raised area that surrounds the church (DU013-010001-). It contains 18th, 19th century and modern gravestones as well as a number of re-used architectural fragments. The graveyard has been extended to the north twice. The graveyard was previously surveyed by Egan in 1993 (Fingal Historic Graveyards project 2008).
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<p>DU013-009</p>	<p>Holywell</p>	<p>Tyrelstown</p>	<p>Annotated 'Lady's Well' on the 1837 ed. OSi 6-inch map, Mulhuddart church ruins (DU013-010001-) and graveyard (DU013-010001-) 240m to SSW. Dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This vaulted well-house stands by the roadside which marks the townland boundary with Buzzardstown to the E. The well is approached by stone steps. On the roof are two finials, one a stone carved with a cross in relief and the other a stone niche with an inscription. It is still venerated. Formerly a pattern day was held on the 8th of September (Ó Danachair 1958-60, 76; Daly 1957, 19). The water is traditionally reputed to cure sprains, cuts, bruises and rheumatism. The well is recognised by Fingal County Council as a 'County Geological Site' (Parkes 2012, 52).</p> <p>Around 1740 Isaac Butler wrote the following description of this holy well in his account of 'A Journey from Dublin to the Shores of Lough Derg'; 'About midway, ascending to ye church, is an excellent well. It is carefully walled in, and several large trees about it. Here, on the 8th September, a great pattern is kept with a vast concourse of all sexes and ages from many miles, upwards of eighty tents being pitched here, furnished with all kinds of liquors and provisions for ye refreshment of ye company'. The vaulted structure was described in 1897 as; 'On the north is a square-headed opening, which gives light to the interior of the back, and over it is a niche and cross cut in relief on a square block of stone; in the south gable there is also a niche' (Anon. 1897, 448).</p> <p>Folklore collected from Mulhuddart School recorded the following traditions about 'The Lady Well'; 'Situated about a half mile north of the village and about three hundred yards south of the old church. Over the well there is an erection made of stone in shape of a little chapel. There are several cures in the waters of the well. Rheumatism and sore eyes are the principal sicknesses which is cured with the waters. I have been in conversation with a man who has been cured from blindness with the water. He visited the well nine times each being on the first friday of the month. At each visit he recited the rosary and washed</p>
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		<p>his eyes with the water. During the time his sight was gradually restored to him. When he had completed his visits he could see again. This man had great belief in the waters of the well. When he had been cured he placed a statue of Our Blessed lady and a small oil lamp there.</p> <p>Another man named Mr Lyster of Stoneybatter was cured with the waters. He was suffering from Rheumatism. He took home some water from the well and rubbed a portion of the water on the aching spot one a day. During the time he prayed to the Blessed Virgin. After some time the Rheumatism was cured.</p> <p>On some sunday evenings people come and visit the well.</p> <p>One sunday evening Mr Delaney and his family paid a visit to the well. There was broken glass strewn around the well and the visitors walked around the well barefooted. During the rounds they were reciting the rosary. Sometimes one of them would kneel in front of the well for a time. It is said that Miss Ellen Carr told Mr Delaney to do this and it would cure his pains which he frequently suffered from. Some people come to the well and drink the waters for the good of their health.</p> <p>Long ago there was a pattern held at the well. Priests and monks used to visit the well on Pattern Day and devotions were held. Dealers erected camp in the fields around the well land sold drink and refreshments there. Owing to the conduct carried on there by the people the pattern had to be stopped.</p> <p>The late Mr Byrne of Powerstown returning home one night looked behind him after he had passed the well. On the centre of the road right opposite the well he saw a vision kneeling down. He turned round and travelled home as fast as he could.</p> <p>There is a legend concerning the well. It is said that the Blessed Well once stood on the opposite side of the road to where it is now. But there were some men returning from work and filled it in. Immediately they had finished the work the well sprung up on the opposite side of the road.</p>
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			<p>Prayer on Lady Well.</p> <p>The prayer inscribed on the Lady Well is as follows;</p> <p>O Blessed Mother and Ever Virgin</p> <p>Glorious Queen of the World</p> <p>Make Into mo mon For -----</p> <p>Vouch safe that I may</p> <p>Praise Thee O Sacred Virgin</p> <p>O Bl in for me [?]</p> <p>A gain thy Ever.</p> <p>On the top of the stone section there is a stone water font and the prayer is inscribed on each side of the little erection. Some of the stone has been weather-beaten and the part of the prayer is difficult to read' (The Schools' Collection, Volume 0790, Pages 68-71; https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/4498605/4385353).</p>
DU013-023	House - 16th/17th century	Buzzardstown	<p>The Down Survey (1655-6) map shows a dwelling at Buzzardstown near Buzzardstown House. In the second half of the 18th century the family of Flood owned Buzzardstown House-on a winter's night in 1761 it is recorded that the gable-end of Mr Flood's house at Mulhuddart suddenly gave way, whereby Mrs Flood and her daughter were killed. Test excavation (Licence no. 06E0184) was undertaken at the site of Buzzardstown House but archaeological remains were not located.</p>
DU013-012	Mound	Corduff (Castleknock By.)	<p>Located at eastern end of open space for Warrenstown housing estate, close to a stream that runs into the Tolka. The mound (diam.28m; H 2m) is completely overgrown with brambles and the area appears to have been used for construction scarping and dumping as well as domestic dumping. The mound is within an area designated as a flood plain.</p>

DU013-011	Designed landscape tree-ring	-	Coolmine (Castleknock By.)	This site is marked as a tree-covered mound in the 1837 OS 6 inch map, one of a line of such mounds which bordered the northern end of Coolmine estate. It was removed during land reclamation in the late 1950s and appears as a continuous circular cropmark on Cambridge photography (CUCAP AP1 27). Excavations in advance of the Navan Road Improvement Scheme in 1989 identified an enclosure (26m diam.). It consisted of a ditch (3m w. x 1m d.) that contained post medieval delft and clay pipe and was interpreted as a tree ring.
DU013-006	House 16th/17th century	-	Tyrelstown	Tyrelstown House occupies the site of a mid-17th century house built by the Bellings family (Ronan 1937, 159-160). Named on the Down Survey (1655-6) map and described in the Civil survey (1654-6) as 'the walls of a great stonehouse' (Simington 1945, 227). It had been damaged in the 1641 Rebellion leaving only walls remaining. Detached five-bay two-storey house, c.1820, attached to earlier two-storey house, c.1720, to rear. Farmyard complex, c.1820 to rear.

Table 1 List of RMP's within 1 km of subject site (archaeology.ie)

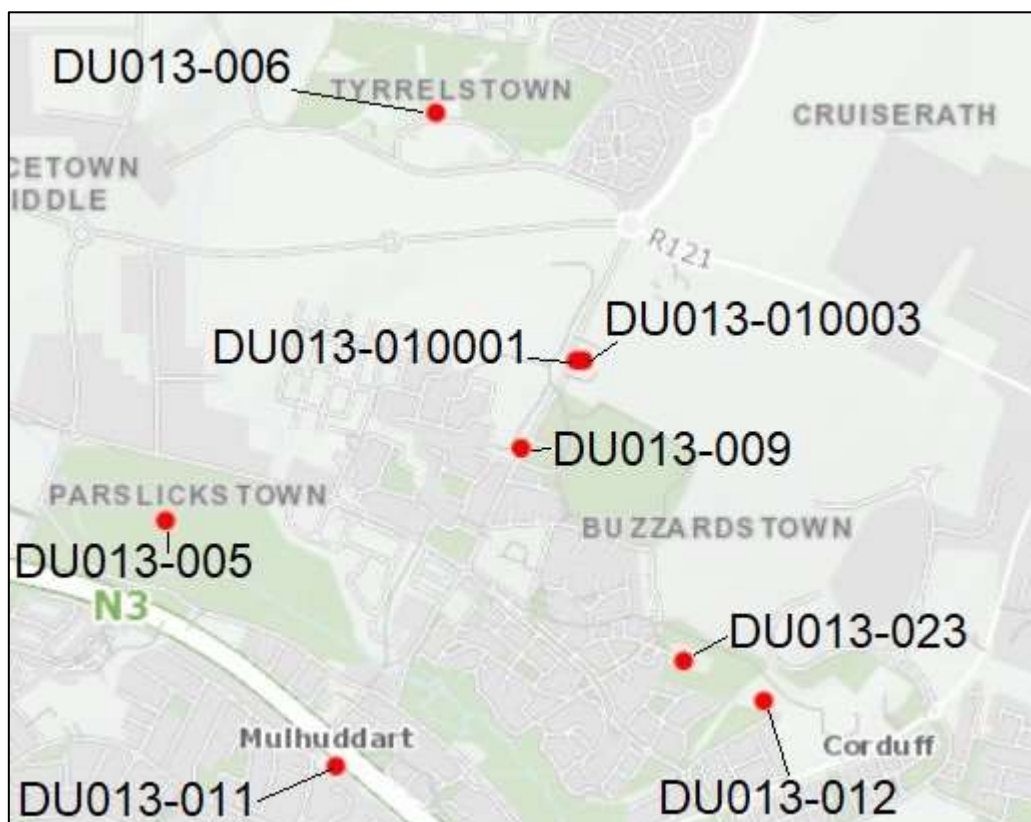


Figure 10 RMP sites within 1km of proposed subject site (ASI)

2.9 Archaeological excavations

A search of the online database, www.excavations.ie, which is the online repository of summaries of all excavation licences issued (1970-2018), records that a total of nine archaeological excavations/investigations have been carried out within 1km of the subject site:

Licence No.	Location	Site Type	Author
1989	DU013-011, 1km southwest of subject site, Coolmine Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	V.J.Keeley
06E0184	900m southwest of subject site, Buzzardstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	J.Carroll
07E0273	100m east of subject site, Buzzardstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	J.Carroll
07E0848	600m southwest of subject site, Buzzardstown/Coolimine/Parslickstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	A.Johnston
14E0141 ext.	400m northeast of subject site, Buzzardstown Townland	Early medieval pit	M.Moraghan
15E0263	500m northeast of subject site, Buzzardstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	P.Clancy
15E0510	700m north of subject site, Tyrellstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	A.Giacometti
17E0595	700m northwest of subject site, Tyrellstown Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	J.O'Dowd
19E0483	700m northeast of subject site, Cruiserath Townland	Nothing of archaeological significance	J.O'Dowd

A total of nine archaeological investigations⁶ have been carried out within 1km of the subject site, however the evidence for the presence of archaeological contexts identified as a result of those investigations can only be described as poor. Additionally, a number of archaeological assessments have been carried out on the site on the opposite side of Church Road as part of the Linear Park (McGlade 2021) and Churchfields (CourtneyDeery 2021, McGlade 2021) housing developments, however nothing of archaeological or historical relevance to the church and graveyard was elucidated by those studies.

2.10 Topographical Files

The National Museum of Ireland is the repository for the archive records of all known antiquities recorded by that institution, the files relate primarily to artefacts but also contain references to monuments and in some cases previous archaeological excavations. There is no information recorded by the Topographical files on or in close proximity to the subject site.

2.11 Aerial Photography

The available satellite imagery from 1995 through to 2018 depicts the site in a broad overview, sadly without enough detail on any of the images to discern any specifics. As such it is not included here as it serves only to showcase the lack of change experienced by the site during that 23-year period. The Google Maps image represents perhaps the most accurate and detailed satellite view of the site, and it is tempting to suggest details such as some of the surrounding curvilinear boundaries whose longevity and presence on the historical mapping might indicate the possible remains of an early medieval enclosing element or elements (Figure 11).



Figure 11 Suggested lines of possible outer ditch (red) and inner ditch (green) (Google Earth)

⁶ N.B. The listing for 04E209 ext. Barnageeragh on the excavations.ie mapping is in the wrong location and has been discounted from the above information.

3 Site visit and discussion

3.1 Mulhuddart Church (St. Mary's) and Graveyard were visited repeatedly between the months of August and November 2023 by the author. Topographically the land which the monuments occupy is part of the rising ground, 600m north of the river Tolka. Were it not for the surrounding tree cover, the raised mound which the church and the oldest section of the graveyard occupy would enjoy expansive views to the southeast comprising Dublin City, the Dublin Mountains and to the southwest up the Tolka River valley onward to north County Kildare and south County Meath.

3.2 The Graveyard

The nearest current pedestrian access point to the monuments under discussion is via the turnstile (Plate 1) leading into the middle section (modern) of the graveyard. The turnstile is located in the northwest corner of this section of the graveyard and upon entry further access is possible to the north, via a removed section of the east-west oriented squared rubble-built wall which separates the middle section of the graveyard from the most recent extension to the north. The latter is the currently active section of the graveyard with fresh graves, which has its own, separate, vehicular and pedestrian access points, 100m north of the turnstile. In this section the gravestones have mixed east and west orientation in equal numbers. A concrete block-built wall defines most of the western perimeter of the various sections of graveyard, along church road and our turnstile is 40m north of the older vehicular access to the middle section of the cemetery. The latter feature comprises square, squat, capped, rendered pillars and a mid to late twentieth century galvanised wrought iron gate which facilitates the entry of funeral and maintenance vehicles alike into the middle portion of the graveyard.

By accessing the graveyard via the turnstile one can follow the internal perimeter path southward towards the mound, passing through the middle section of the graveyard which comprises well organised, tightly packed rows and columns of mainly east, and less so west, facing headstones and memorials with some free-standing Celtic crosses, all of which appear to date to the twentieth century. The north-south oriented eastern wall of the graveyard is of similar build composition to the north wall and although partially obscured by vegetation this feature would again appear to be predominantly straight and it turns to run westward at the southwestern corner of the mound, prior to turning north again and mirroring the curve along the western wall of the mound, with the recently uncovered cast iron access gate (Plate 2) located in the northwestern quarter of that arc. An interesting element of the curved wall is the modern addition of crenelated cut, squared stone which would appear to have been originally part of a structure, the tower and church being the most likely originators.

Located immediately at the base of the rising ground of the mound slope is modern a curvilinear path at approximately 85m OD, which mirrors the curving line of the edge of the mound (Plate 3) and it is suggested that this feature may inadvertently represent the line of a possible former enclosing element to the mound/church site (Figure 13).

The mound slopes up notably southwards from that path, with the contour rapidly rising to 89m OD, whilst the ground rises sharply southwards but more gradually to the east and west, with the slope on the opposite (southern) side of the church falling away in a more gradual fashion again. The church and tower are located on the highest point of the mound (Plate 4), and from above they appear off centre, to the northwest on the mound, thanks to the various elements which today enclose the site, although it is an assumption that the church may have been more central within the confines of original enclosure. Very few grave markers are currently visible on the northern slopes of the mound today and indeed this was the case at the time of Egan's survey in 1991. Judging from the historic cartographic and photographic images of the site (Figures 6-10) the low number of burials in the area may be as a result of the removal of the trees and field boundary from this location, which once enclosed the site. Thus, in modern times at least, the summit of the mound is where the greatest number of memorials survives in the oldest section of the graveyard. This section of the graveyard has memorials on all sides of the church with the greatest concentrations of markers being to the southwest (where some formal row and column arrangement remains present) and to the east of the church, whereas the lowest concentrations of memorials are to the west and north of the church. Additionally, a number of memorials are present within the confines of the church, but specifically none appear present today within the confines of the tower. In contrast to the other sections of the graveyard all of the headstones which remain upright faced east, with no burials observed herewhich were more recent than 1940.

As mentioned above, the graveyard was surveyed as part of the Fingal Historic Graveyards Project in 2008 (FHG 8) and whilst the survey identified a number of different grave marker types, the most notable were the unusual T-shaped cross dedicated to Mary Mears dating to 1764, to the east of the church and the mural tablet on the western exterior wall of the residential tower. That inscription on that tablet was read as follows "*Here let the bodies of Denis Comins and Mary Warren and of Margaret Comins, their daughter deceased the of July 1675. Likewise the bodies of Denis Comins of Godamendy, son of ye above Denis and Mary who departed this life the 9th of May 1709 aged 60 and of his wife Margaret Comins alias Lynch....to ye age of 90 and died ye 30th Feb....(d) ye bodies of four of their sons Bartho....ye age of 17 in 1707, Patrick he died....after he had lived 52 years...of December 1748 being their....ye... and Jane his wife.*"

3.3 The Church

The church (Figure 12 & 13) is located at approximately 89m OD and the overall plan of the church (Plate 5) is that of an undivided rectangle, with the later constructed residential tower present externally and off centre at the western end of the church. All of the present church walls were constructed using small to medium sized stones held together poorly by a modern cementitious mortar, with late twentieth century strap pointing throughout and occasional larger pieces of cut dimension stone present in a sporadic fashion, none of which can be conclusively stated to be of historic construction.

Today the southern wall of the church extends westward from the eastern gable at a maximum height of 1.6m for a 10m length, at which point there is a break in the wall of 6m in length. The wall appears to terminate at the tower and is represented by a poor, recently reconstructed batter of 1m length on the southwestern outshot of that structure. This may have been an attempt at a partial reconstruction of the southern wall but an examination of the alignment using the drone photography (Plate 5) suggests that batter to be off alignment with the south wall.

The eastern gable wall of the church is scantily apparent (Plate 7) above the surrounding surface despite the recent reconstruction attempts, with the northern and southern corners representing the most intact portion to a maximum height of 1.6m, with collapsed material present subsurface on the immediate interior and exterior of the wall. Abutting the eastern side of this wall of the church were two short lengths of walling, which on first inspection might have been small batters, but these might be an attempted reconstruction of a possible ruined structure/gallery extension illustrated by Beranger. An alternate explanation could be that these are the only above ground remains of an earlier or no longer extant contemporary structure, something which was further underlined by the denuded grass above the possible subsurface walling observed on the site visit (Plate 6). It is also a possibility that the current upstanding church remains were constructed abutting the remains of an earlier church and although it is unproven, that could be an element of the site's phasing which would tie in with the possible early medieval foundation on the site (see below).

The northern wall of the church is the most intact of the walls, thanks to a modern reconstruction/restoration effort. Where a gap is present between the thicker (0.9m wide), reconstructed sections a section of possible original masonry (0.5m in width) provides access to the interior via a relatively simple arch headed doorway, with simple stone voussoirs, 1.7m in height and 1.4m in width (Plate 8). The western wall of the church cannot be differentiated from the eastern wall of the tower due to the modern interventions (Plate 9), although it would appear that an attempt may have been made on the northern external elevation of the tower. As a result, it is difficult to categorically state if the original western gable was removed wholly or only on part, historically, in order to insert the tower. Either way nothing which one might term as being original fabric was immediately obvious at the time of the site visit.

The only currently visible remaining, possibly original, structural feature on the interior of the church was a small triangular niche to the immediate west of the doorway. The burials on the interior of the church are mentioned above and several of them are either partially or wholly covered by a large quantity of collapsed material internal to the walls which serves to mask the original floor level of the interior, giving it an uneven, undulating appearance. Furthermore, the eastern end of the chancel is much covered by ground ivy and bramble foliage. Of additional note is how far off square the tower appears today in relation to the church, underlining the differing build dates of the two structures.

The subsurface remains (Plate 6), leading east from the current eastern gable of the church are intriguing; although it has not been confirmed, the aerial photos and evidence on the ground appear to point to the foundations of the north and south walls of a slightly smaller structure extending eastwards from the current location of the eastern gable of the church, possibly suggesting that the full footprint of the church may have been adjusted over time (Plate 21). The subsurface remains enclose a rectangular area 11.5m east-west and 6.5m north-south, which would represent a stone built structure of considerable size. One interpretation of these remains might be the former presence of the nave/chancel arrangement mentioned by Ronan (1940), of which only the chancel remains upstanding today. Whilst the elements of upstanding masonry (Plate 22) present close the southern end of the eastern gable's exterior elevation might be construed as the remains of a batter, the fact that it is present on the shorter, and therefore generally more stable gable wall would seem to rule that interpretation out. An alternative interpretation could be that the feature represents an *Anta*; such features are described by Ó'Carragáin (2005) as "*pilaster-like projections of the side walls beyond the gables that, most authors agree, are translations into stone of the corner posts of timber prototypes*" in other words the stone mimic of a timber feature or skeuomorph. Ó'Carragáin states that most of the Pre-Romanesque churches with *antae* are located in the east of Ireland and whilst the presence of such a feature is not in keeping with the late 13th/early-14th century construction date of the upstanding remains, it is tempting to suggest that there may have been an attempt by the medieval builders of St. Mary's to recreate a feature of the early church in their later build. That suggestion might be scoffed at but when one considers Ó'Carragáin's statement that East Munster & West Leinster were the only substantial areas where *antae* remained ubiquitous until well into the twelfth century, knowledge of this type of feature might not be that farfetched. However, it is suggested by the author that the most likely interpretation of this piece of masonry is that it is the only above ground manifestation of the below ground remains of the walls of the former nave of St. Mary's.

Beranger's watercolour of the church is suggested to date from between 1763 and 1781 (Wilde 1880) and it is invaluable as a gauge as to how much of the church and tower were present at that point in time. The church, as depicted by Beranger, would appear to have retained some of the dressed stone around two openings in the northern wall, with a further opening to the west of those which retained no dressed stone, whilst the southern wall is depicted as retaining a single complete dressed stone opening at that point in time. At the eastern end of the chancel, the remains of the batters or possibly the remnants of the nave noted above are evident, as is a lump or raised area which is suggestive of the subsurface walling at that location. At the western end of the church, the tower whilst ruinous, appears to be complete to second floor level (Figure 3).

3.4 The Tower

The residential tower (Figure 12), which today survives to a height of 5m above the surrounding ground level at its western end, is constructed of roughly coursed limestone with some dressed

alternating quoins at the western end to first floor level. The ground floor of the tower is vaulted, with the interior of the space and underside of the vault bearing a build-up of carbon and soot from fires and graffiti that points to the use of this structure as a focal point for antisocial behaviour. On first inspection the tower appears to be the most structurally sound element of the church, aided by batters, externally on the northwestern corner and internally at the western end of the chancel, however under closer scrutiny a number of cracks are evident externally on the southern, western and northern elevations of the tower. The most serious of these cracks runs in a zigzag fashion from the height of the southern elevation to ground level, passing the recently and haphazardly inserted blocked window.

Southern elevation (Plate 10)- the extent of the modern repair with the late twentieth century strap pointing which afflicts much of the tower and church has served to obscure the location of the entrance doorway which is present in the historic photographs of the tower (Figures 8-10) and additionally it masks where the southern wall of the tower would have met the western wall of the church, to the point where the relationship between the two is no longer apparent. A blocked window ope at waist height in the southern elevation is bordered by some chamfered cut stone blocks, which have been poorly reinserted to the point where the glazing bar holes are facing in an implausible direction (Plate 11), this ope may have illuminated the start of the staircase, which was possibly contained within a mural gallery in this wall, as suggested by the massing (Plate 19).

Western elevation (Plate 12)- the 18th century mural tablet on the exterior of the west wall of the tower is sadly illegible from ground level, although some of the inscription was recorded previously, during the Fingal Historic Graveyard Survey. The mural tablet and its smaller alleged companion (Plate 13), which is located above it, are both surrounded to either side and above by a rolled moulding, which would appear to be original to the larger mural tablet, but from the historic photos, is not original to its smaller neighbour. On the current top of the wall is the base of a rectangular window ope, which would have been at first floor level and curiously at ground level a further, semi concealed, window ope type feature is present in this wall. The western elevation shows definite signs of modern repair with the late twentieth century strap pointing which afflicts much of the tower and church.

Northern elevation (Plate 14)- No obvious features were discernible in the northern elevation of the residential tower, other than the alternating quoins at the northwestern corner. Again, the elevation shows signs of modern repair with strap pointing, something which serves to mask where the northern wall of the tower meets the western wall of the church.

Today the ground floor of the tower potentially acts as the chancel of the church, which is accessed directly from the western end of the nave (Plate 9). Formerly access to the upper floors of the tower would have been afforded via the external doorway which was formerly present adjacent to the southeastern corner outshot. No trace of that feature remains obvious today, thanks either to the march of time since the capture of those early images (Figure 8 & 9) and/or the modern reconstruction efforts and ubiquitous strap pointing. The ground level of the

tower (Plate 15) would appear to be artificially high, probably as a result of internal collapse, as attested by the partially concealed opening in the western elevation. Above it is the arched vault, which would have supported the first-floor accommodations, but which now survives only partially. The vaulted ceiling, western gable internally at ground level and the northern gable internally are the focal points for the graffiti on the interior of the tower, due to the sheltering aspect of the surrounding walls and the lack of visibility from outside of those walls. Additionally, the same walls and vault bear the carbon build-up from generations of fires being lit at this location, presumably by the same would-be artists.

As mentioned above, Beranger's depiction of the tower (Figure 3) suggests that by the time of his visit the structure, whilst roofless, at a minimum still retained its second-floor level, where two, east facing, semicircular headed openings are evident, with the suggestion of alternating quoins present on the visible northwestern, northeastern and southeastern corners of the structure. The subsequent structural deterioration of the tower over an approximate 120-year timespan is evidenced by the 1897 RSAI lantern slide and the NLI photos (Figures 8-10) which depict how much the tower had further declined structurally. These historic images show a view of the tower from the north and northwest and of note are the largely intact alternating quoins at each of the visible corners, the large mural tablet, which is surrounded by its rolled moulding, with its smaller tablet above it which isn't similarly surrounded at that point in time. Where elements of the external elevations and their outer facing stones have collapsed the interior of the tower is visible in the images. The structure evidently appears to have risen to at least three floors above ground level originally, with the remains of an arched vault internally over the first floor, in addition to the remaining vault of the ground floor. Externally, a decorative string course of square blockwork is visible at the third-floor level and despite the somewhat skewed depth perspective of the early images, a wooden door is evident in a partially intact doorway/entrance to the tower beside the outshot at the southeastern corner of the tower, an element of the structure which at one time would have housed the staircase to the upper floors.

4 ECOLOGY

As noted at 1.3 above, natural heritage is given protection under the following legislation:

- EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)
- EU Birds Directive (79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC)
- Wildlife Amendment Act (2000)

An ecological assessments of St. Mary's Church, Mulhuddart will inform the wider Conservation Management Plan for the historic buildings, archaeology, and site, as they are identified and developed.

4.1 Ecological Appraisal

The head of Fingal's Biodiversity Unit has visited the site and recommended the following;

1. Undertake a one day flora, breeding bird and bat survey of the historic structure in May 2024.
2. Prepare a report with recommendations on how the presence of birds and bats are to be addressed during the repair works if they are encountered. The report shall also include measures that will make this historic structure more suitable as a nesting site birds and bats than currently provided for.
3. Appoint an Ecological Clerk of Works for the duration of the repair works if required, to prepare a report on the measures to be carried out by the contractor.

4.2 AA

Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening (Stage 1) will be commissioned as the conservation repairs are developed.

5 Summary of Conservation Engineer's Report (Appendix 1)

5.1 Description of the Structures

The church and its enclosure are situated in what was open countryside but is now becoming increasingly encroached by industrial and housing development. There is an extensive modern graveyard to the north; farmyard - now delivery yard wrapping the graveyard enclosure to the east and south and Church Road to the west.

The ruins are situated on an area of raised ground and originally would have held commanding views over the adjoining countryside. This site and setting represent an important oasis in the encroaching development. The Church is designated as: Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) no. DU013-010001 and is listed in Fingal CoCo record of protected Structures RPS No.0670. The graveyard is designated RMP No. DU013-010003. The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage listing No.11346003 describes this Graveyard as of Regional importance and containing Archaeological, Architectural, and Artistic interest. The only substantial remnant of the church is the west end of the residential / Bell tower. and its first-floor vault. Otherwise just remnants of the north, east and south walls of the Nave remain. The graveyard boundary enclosure is well defined but appears to have been substantially renewed. The Road and egress onto it have poor sightlines in the southerly direction.



Church and Graveyard located in encroaching development-google Earth 2022

5.2 Observations

The graveyard enclosure

The Graveyard is defined by masonry walls to its east, south and west perimeter. The wall to the north has now gone – likely with the extension to the cemetery to the north. The enclosure is sub rectangular and likely follows an earlier medieval enclosure.

The ground within the graveyard slopes downwards to the east and south

Archaeology.ie with

OSI Map Genie 2013-2018 underlay



Boundary Wall

The boundary condition to the north is open where it now forms part of the larger cemetery; the east, south and west boundaries exist as low-level masonry walls. All these walls are much covered in vegetation. Some of the west wall was specifically cleared for the purposes of this survey Autumn 2023.

West wall is formed of approx 50m length of random rubble stonework with an additional section at the north end approx 12m long in blockwork. The boundary wall varies in height above adjacent ground between 1000mm and 2000mm depending on the ground contours. The condition of the wall is hard to currently discern and further vegetation control is required.

The north blockwork section is fragile and at risk of falling. The metal gate is serviceable with some repairs and repainting. However, because of the presence of the road and lack of good sightlines reuse of such would need to be carefully considered.

It should be noted that the boundary condition to the west and possibly north side was very different at the turn of the end of the nineteenth century and was formed of wrought iron estate railings type boundary fencing as can be seen in the photo of the tower from the NLI photographic prints by "E.R. McC. Dix Esq". Circa 1880-1900 - ref Fig 17 below.



West wall, partially cleared Autumn 2023. Note poor sightlines to south.



West wall contains a mix of stone and block.



Gate through west wall.

The east and south walls are approximately 60m and 56m long respectively and formed of low rising masonry in a combination of random rubble and later block and brickwork the majority with cement top flaunching. These elevations are also secured with galvanised steel palisade fencing to separate the graveyard from the yard beyond



East and South walls are low rise masonry with palisade above. much overgrown

The Church

The upstanding remains include a substantial tower to the west end, described later in this report, and the main church of a significant size of external dimensions over 20m long x 8.8m wide and walls typically 960-1000mm thick. There were possibly further structures to the east indicated by mounding of the ground and discoloration during dry spells. This does not form part of the remit of this report which is to consider the upstanding remains.

The large nave is long roofless, likely from the mid 17th century and most of the walls are now quite insubstantial excepting the west end of the north wall which rises to approximately 2.2m for an 8.0m length. This section seems relatively robust and has received repairs albeit cementitious pointing in the recent past. There is also a stub of the south wall attached to the residential tower that has been repaired as part of previous repair works to the tower.

The rest of the nave walls are in a very poor state and have attracted some poorly conceived repair attempts which are now failing.



Footprint of the upstanding remains – Archer 2023



Nave looking east. Note poor definition of the walls excepting the west end of the north wall seen to the left-hand side of the picture.



Northeast corner of nave in urgent need of stabilisation.

A total of approximately 30m length of wall is of loose falling masonry. There is approximately 5m below ground to the west end of the north wall. There are the remains of two buttresses to the east end, these can be seen on the Berangerer drg from 1777 ref fig 15. They are in a similar condition to the adjoining nave walls.



East end of south wall lacks definition and there are no upstanding remains to the western end.



Poorly conceived repairs to southeast corner. Note buttressing stonework to right hand side in fragile condition.



West end of north wall of nave in relatively stable condition.

The Residential Tower

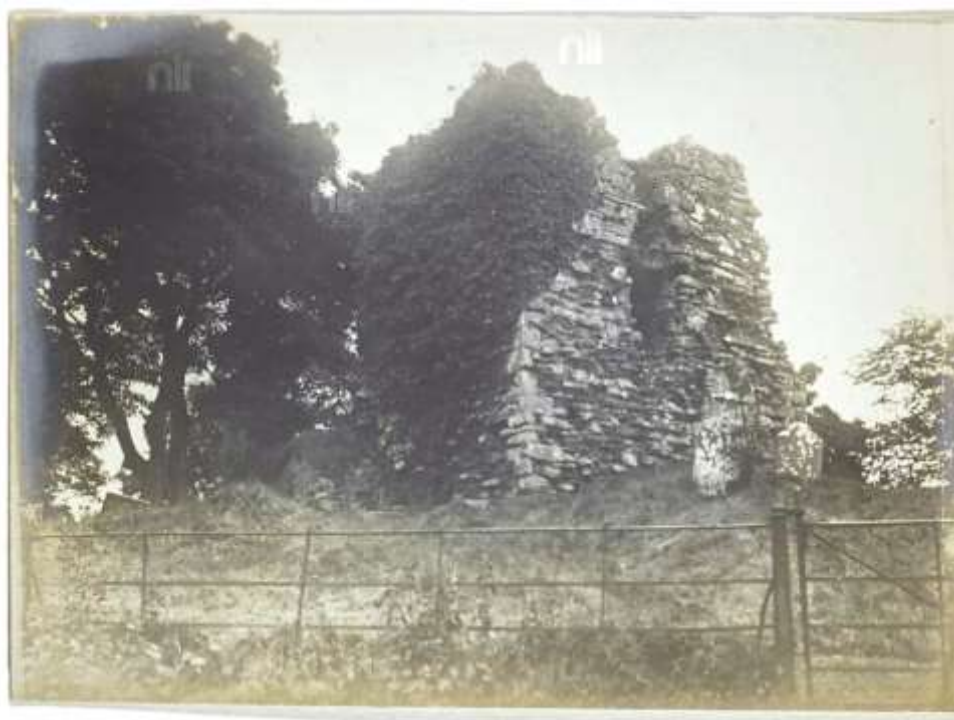
The tower is approximately 8m wide N-S and 6m long E-W and currently rises to a maximum 4.6m height. The first-floor vault remains in part.

Gabriel Beranger c. 1777. Note Tower at least three storeys high.



The tower was once much more substantial as can be discerned from the Beranger picture above and photographs from RSAI and NLI Libraries. It appears to have contained at least one stair and subdivisions along with intramural spaces.

Southwest corner of tower. Photograph 1897 credit RSAI

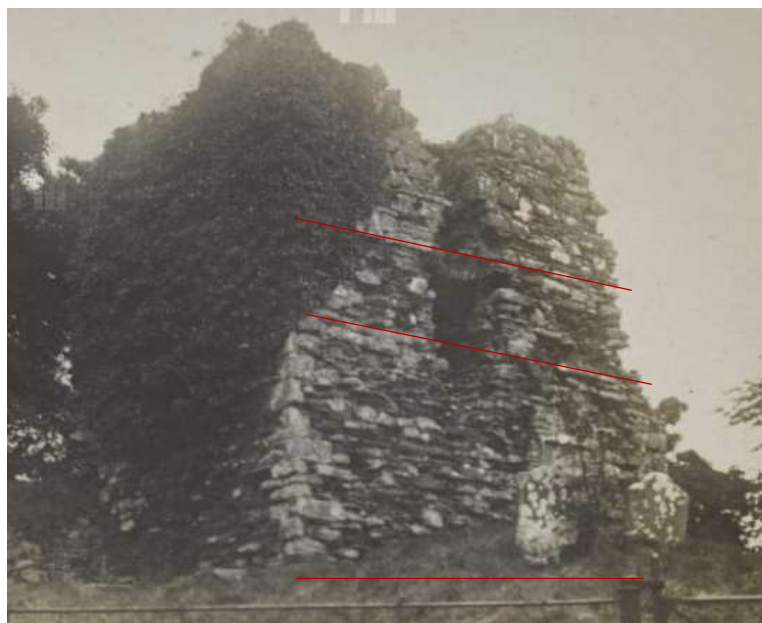


National Library of Ireland Antiquities 1880-1900 - likely 1896. Photographic prints by "E.R. McC. Dix Esq". View of north and west elevations. Note previous estate railings type boundary fencing.



View of Mulhuddart Church C. Dublin

South elevation of Tower. Comparison between photograph 2023 and 1890-1900 National Library of Ireland "E.R. McC. Dix Esq".



North and west elevations. Comparison between photograph 2023 and 1880-1900 National Library of Ireland "E.R. McC. Dix Esq". Note raised ground to Southwest corner in historic photo meaning the Conin plaque was at average eye height previously.

Tower top and vault

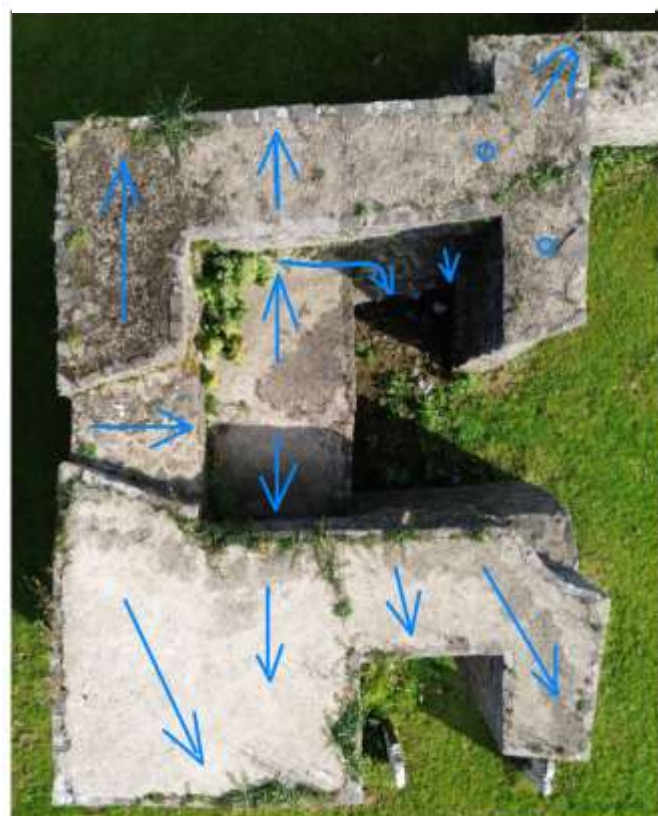
The top of the tower, now at its truncated height is variable.

The northern side has poor flaunching with little slope in places and the walls immediately beneath are unravelling and presenting opportunities for significant plant growth.

The southern section appears to better flaunch and is showing less signs of water migration through the stonework. The first-floor arch only survives in part. The maintenance of the top surface of this is crucial for the long-term survival of the arch masonry below.



Tower vault top looking north.



Top of Tower showing falls in flaunching.



Southwest internal corner above vault.



South side of tower top, flaunching generally intact and to outward falls but cracks + edges need attention.

The Tower Walls

The condition of the tower walls is enigmatic. There are many vertical cracks that appear to tell the storey of the previous iterations. The infill stonework now appears to be unravelling. Picking this apart might lead to a substantial tranche of work and therefore restraining the tower as is should be considered as perhaps a more pragmatic approach.

There is much recent cementitious pointing, and it appears as if this may be leading to issues with moisture movement through individual stones and erosion of the stones.



South elevation of Tower.



Vertical cracks to the east side of South elevation.



Vertical cracks to west side of south elevation.



Corroding steel or wrought iron plate embedded in wall.

Tower Windows & Plaques

The plaque in the west wall consists of an upper empty surround and the lower contains an 18th century mural tablet inscribed to Denis Commins & Mary Warren 1675-1740s.

This plaque is present in the 1880-1900's photographs, ref above, with much falling eroding masonry around them.

The erosion to this plaque is significant and needs addressing.

There is a defensive loop lower down to this same west elevation, and possibly similar to the north elevation albeit not visible externally. The head detail to both is nondescript and contains corroding ferrous elements such as rusting steel angles fire damaged to the stonework internally. Both openings need their head details addressing through much of the wall thickness.

The previous window opening to the south elevation is now blocked up and although having to do little structural work the well-being of these carved stone elements needs addressing.



Commins Plaque



Ground level defensive loop.



Window south elevation of Tower.

5.3. Recommendations for works in next five years

The repair works required have been listed in order of priority. They have been split into possible phasing, this phasing could be pushed and pulled to suit funding:

Drawings and specifications for the most immediate works are listed in section 4.

This is because further discovery should be planned within next year's tasks that will go to inform future works packages and therefore funding applications. To detail out such works where there is insufficient information now is counterproductive so for instance if extensive works were proposed to unravel and discover the inners of the tower this will need to be expanded after further exploratory work.

Immediate works – 2024

Church and Tower

- i) Vegetation control to all plants particularly woody stemmed plants growing from top of the tower vault and nave walls. This should include rigorous clipping back and treatment of all stems.
- ii) Repair of all the internal faces of the upper-level walls above the tower vault.
- iii) Re-flaunching of the tower walls tops and repairs to the vault flaunching.
- iv) Stitching of south Tower walls
- v) Possible exploration in part of tower to discover previous door etc.
- vi) Repointing of north, west and south tower walls, or at minimum repointing around plaque and window with very soft mortars.
- vii) Stabilisation works to approximately 30m length of 1m thick nave walls. This will involve exploration of ground immediately to base of walls to retrieve all loose fallen stone and allow discovery at wall bases. Works to walls themselves will require digging out of any plant root systems; local dismantling and rebuilding; deep repointing and re-flaunching 30m length.

Boundary Walls

- viii) Stabilisation or replacement of 12m long section of blockwork wall to the north end of the west boundary where at risk of falling. This could potentially be replaced with a fence. Note this is likely outside of the works package to the monument.
- ix) Repairs to approximately 16m length of west boundary wall to form exemplar for rest of boundary wall works.
- x) Control of all vegetation growing out of and at the base of the rest of the boundary walls (approx 150m) to be carried out winter 2023-24 and again winter 2024-2025. Any vegetation that is entrenched in the wall should be cut to the face of the wall and then the cut stem treated or if greater diameter than 30mm drilled and plugged with EcoPlug.

Graveyard

- xi) Non-invasive Geo Physical survey of east end of church where previous mounding and dry spell drying out shows liner form – refer to Archaeologist.
- xii) Selective management of trees along with vegetation clearance around all grave markers and tombs – outside the scope of this report.

Mid-term – 2025 onwards:

Church and Tower and possible eastern structures

- i) Re-flaunching; repointing and localised repairs to west end of north nave wall.
- ii) Soft capping to parts of Nave walls if desired depending on appreciation of the walls and longer-term management philosophy.
- iii) Surface interpretation of the nave floor depending on findings from 2024. This could be a gravel surface on geotextile or left to grass.
- iv) Tower walls - depending on findings of any investigation through tower wall surfaces in phase 1 works this structure could be re-interpreted. This is likely to require further reporting and detailed specification coming out of those findings and is beyond the remit of this reporting.
- v) Repointing to the tower north, west and south walls if not carried out Phase I.
- vi) Repointing of east wall of tower and all internal walls under vault.

Boundary Walls

- vii) Stabilisation of all the boundary walls approximately 150m depending on findings when vegetation removed. And exemplar work carried out phase I to section of west boundary wall.

Sections of boundary walls should be identified on a priority basis and can then be added into different phases of works. Additional sections can be added should additional funding become available. There are sections that should attract early attention such as the rest of the west boundary wall as the re-interpretation of this boundary line has an immediate visual impact to the public.

The typical process per section should follow these guidelines:

- a. Identify section of wall to be repaired and agree extent of works with CA.
- b. If part to be rebuilt number and record all stonework to be dismantled
- c. Dismantle and lay out stones in order.
- d. Confirm good base to start repair with Engineer. Where good base not found above ground level allow for Archaeological monitoring
- e. Commence rebuilding.
- f. Install capping detail – note this may well be different in along the various sides of the graveyard.

Graveyard and possible Eastern Structures

- viii) Spray any vegetation still growing from grave slabs and tombs not tackled as part of phase I works. This is outside of the remit of this report.
- ix) Eastern Structures – if sub surface structures are indicated in the Geo-physical investigation carried out phase I, then excavations to confirm may be required and should form part of this Phase II to form the interpretation of such in future development.

6 Statement of significance and assessment

The overall significance of the site has been assessed using the established set of heritage value criteria, with the results of that assessment being set out in relation to their respective headings:

Architectural

The fact that the church does not enjoy its own discrete listing in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage perhaps tells its own story, in comparison to the graveyard (NIAH Reg. No. 11346003), which has been afforded a rating of national importance, something the author is in agreement with. It is suggested that the church and tower should enjoy a similar rating, despite the obviously poor modern reconstructed elements; whilst scarce, there are some examples of cut, dressed stones which possibly represent surviving remnants of original features, such as the poorly positioned chamfered stone with glazing bar holes on the southern elevation and other aspects of the structure which reflect the original edifice.

Historical

The historical significance of the church, tower and graveyard has been perhaps understated by previous examinations of the site. The site possibly represents the location of a seventh century church founded by St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, but it definitely represents the medieval history of this area of northwest Dublin, in addition to events of the Confederate and Williamite Wars. The site has perhaps suffered from a deficit of historical research in favour of other early Medieval and later Medieval church sites in the Dublin area.

Archaeological

The archaeological significance of the site is similar to that stated above in the historical significance, where the presence of archaeological features, subsurface, such as an enclosure ditch or early Medieval timber or stone church foundations may elevate the overall significance of the site in this and other aspects of the heritage value criteria. The site has perhaps suffered from a deficit of archaeological research in favour of other early Medieval and later Medieval church sites in the Dublin area.

Artistic

The artistic significance of the site is arguably what drew Beranger to produce his watercolour of the site but also the production of the subsequent historic photographs and the lantern slide, all of which sought to capture the nature of the ruin.

Cultural

The site of the church and graveyard form an integral part of the cultural identity of the people of this part of Fingal; the site has perhaps suffered from being overlooked in favour of other early Medieval and later Medieval church sites in the Dublin area, its importance to the locality should not be similarly overlooked.

Ecological

The ecological significance of the site will be assessed through ecological assessments which are scheduled to be carried out throughout 2024 on the site.

Social

The social significance of the site is apparent, not just in the living visiting their loved ones and interacting with other bereaved people, but also through the use of the site as a focal point for community interaction. The site has the capability to contribute massively to placemaking and place shaping in the growing local community.

7 Current management issues

The following list of current management issues at the site of St. Mary's church and graveyard takes into account those issues highlighted in the contemporary 'Fingal Historic Tombs' report, produced by 7L architects and it also aims to be as exhaustive as possible with regard to further current management issues;

1. The Comins mural tablet (Plate 13) on the western side of the tower is currently suffering from its exposure to the elements. As highlighted by 7L architects (2023) it is stable but its removal for repair would risk further damage.
2. The oldest section of the graveyard is suffering from the rampant growth of creeping ivy and other vegetation types, particularly in the southwest corner, to the south of the church and to the southeast & southeastern corner of the graveyard. Many monuments in those locations are completely obscured (Plate 17) and areas such as the southwestern corner where a mature willow tree is present (Plate 17) and likewise the southeastern corner (Plate 18). Particularly of note are the two railed enclosures to the south of the church which are completely engulfed by ivy (7L architects 2023). Conversely there is evidence of abrasive cleaning on some headstones, which can damage stone surfaces and destroy biodiversity.
3. The undulating ground surface of the mound and indeed the presence of masonry which has fallen from the church & tower and collapsed gravestones represents an issue for visitors to the site and for the maintenance of the site using mechanical means (mowers etc).
4. The removal of excessive bramble and ivy growth from both the concrete block-built boundary wall and the curving boundary wall along church road has been undertaken this year, however ivy and bramble regrowth are occurring at the time of writing.
5. The graffiti, fire setting and antisocial behaviour that the site has been subject to would not appear to the current, however the presence of paint, rubbish and the fire settings could serve to attract a new wave of such behaviours to the monuments.
6. The possible presence of any enclosing elements to the site and indeed the subsurface walling to the east of the current eastern gable are elements which present current management issues; in the case of the former element, the possible presence of an enclosing element to the site, such as a ditch, is unproven. The only area where a geophysical survey would be possible is along the northern edge of the mound, but the presence of a field boundary at this location on the historic mapping could yield a false positive; any traces of a ditch or bank shown to be present by a geophysical survey at this location could simply relate to the field boundary.
7. The possible extension of the walls beyond the reconstructed eastern gable/ subsurface structural remains are indisputably present, the denudation of the sod by

close mowing and the differential ground levels & grass growth evidence their presence.

8. The rapid pace of development in immediate area the surrounding these monuments, namely the Linear Park on the opposite side of Church Road, the Churchfields housing development and the light industrial units to the south and east, represents an increasing threat to their conservation and preservation.

8 Future management policies

The following list of future management policies at the site of St. Mary's church and graveyard is a direct response to the various current management issues at the site;

8.1 *Policy 1: Protection of the Monuments*

Policy 1.1

Acknowledge the protected status of the site which is listed in the Record of Monuments and places and is protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014. The church is also a Protected Structure of the Fingal Record of Protected Structures.

Policy 1:2

Ensure the immediate context of the site is given consideration and protection.

Policy 1.3

Encourage continued collaboration between key stakeholders to ensure the protection and preservation of the site.

Policy 1.4

A program of biannual inspection by the local authority should be instituted and the continued collaboration between key stakeholders and local actors should be undertaken to ensure the ongoing protection and preservation of the site.

8.2 *Policy 2: Conservation and Maintenance*

Policy 2.1

No works shall be undertaken on or in the vicinity of the monuments without prior notification to the National Monuments Service, as per the National Monuments Acts 1930-2014.

Policy 2.2.

Undertake the recommendations made for the stabilisation of the upstanding structures of the church and boundary wall as outlined in Edden 2024, *Report on Structural Condition and outline recommendations for stabilisation* (Appendix 1), as appropriate.

Policy 2.3.

The treatment of the Comins Mural tablet with suitable silane-based chemical preservative should be undertaken in order to consolidate and preserve the existing surface of the tablet. Furthermore, a 3D laser scan of the tablet should be undertaken in case of further damage or decay.

Policy 2.4.

The issue of the mature trees on the mound, their accompanying sub-arboreal species and the growth of ivy on the monuments highlighted above requires an approach which seeks to maintain the biodiversity of the site, whilst also maintaining the archaeological integrity and enjoyment of the monuments. It is suggested that the removal of the mature trees is not attempted, but the removal of the sub-arboreal species should be undertaken, by hand, not by using chemical herbicides. This in turn would permit access to the gravestones and tombs in those locations, which are currently hidden.

Policy 2.5.

The maintenance of the site using a higher mower setting than that currently employed is suggested.

Policy 2.6.

The manual/mechanical or chemical removal of the regrowth of ivy and brambles along the concrete block-built boundary wall and the curving boundary wall along church road should be undertaken annually.

8.3 *Policy 3: Access and Presentation****Policy 3.1.***

The restoration of pedestrian access (Plate 2) via the recently uncovered gate is **not** advised due to health and safety concerns, this gate should remain locked at all times.

Policy 3.2

Removal of graffiti be professionally undertaken from any of the surfaces of the church and graveyard that it currently occupies.

Policy 3.3

The installation of warning signage relating to the uneven ground surface on the mound should be undertaken, at a low level and external to the curving path on the northern side of the mound.

8.4 *Policy 4: Interpretation and community involvement****Policy 4.1.***

Undertake a community heritage project at the site. This could involve community gravestone survey; locally recorded audio or video stories, research and local knowledge.

Policy 4.2

Examine the use of non-invasive survey techniques, such as geophysical survey and Lidar, to investigate the presence of enclosing elements and sub surface building remains.

Policy 4.3

Develop interpretative strategies appropriate to the monument and its setting within a functional graveyard. Ensure physical interpretation is located external to the curving path on the northern side of the mound and is considerate of visible impact. Consider the use of QR codes and digital or audio and foster links with existing or developing heritage trails and initiatives. Any interpretative interventions must be guided by the Fingal Heritage Signage and Heritage Trail Guidance document, see: <https://www.fingal.ie/news/heritage-signage-heritage-trail-guidancefingal-county-council>

Policy 4.4

Ensure that information on the impact of climate change on the structural remains, burials, subsurface archaeological remains and natural heritage is as widely understood, communicated and appreciated as far as possible.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 This Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for Mulhuddart Church (St. Mary's) (DU013-01001) and graveyard (DU013-01003) is the product of a multidisciplinary project team which comprises the various disciplines which have been deemed of relevance to the subject site and its future management by the local authority in question, Fingal County Council.
- 9.2 The future management policies set out in this document seek to benefit the church, tower and graveyard in the short term but also the long term and it is hoped through involving the growing local community that the consciousness, care and preservation of the site will be adopted by the expanding population of the area.

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Plates



Plate 1 Current pedestrian access to middle section of graveyard, facing east



Plate 2 Former pedestrian access gate in curvilinear wall surrounding mound, facing southeast



Plate 3 Curvilinear path on north side of mound, facing west



Plate 4 Summit of mound showing location of church, tower and surrounding graves, view from above



Plate 5 Aerial view of church and tower in plan



Plate 6 Aerial view of possible gallery extension, east from the church



Plate 7 East wall of church, facing south



Plate 8 View of doorway, facing south



Plate 9 View of western gable end of church, internally



Plate 10 View of southern elevation of tower, facing north



Plate 11 Blocked window opening on southern elevation, facing north



Plate 12 Western elevation of residential tower, facing east



Plate 13 Close up of eighteenth century mural tablet, facing east



Plate 14 Northern elevation of residential tower, facing south



Plate 15 View of nave/ground level of tower, facing west



Plate 17 Vegetation overgrowth in southwest corner of graveyard



Plate 18 Vegetation overgrowth in southeast corner of graveyard



Plate 19 South to North section through tower, showing massing (Archer Heritage Planning)



Plate 20 West to East section through tower, showing massing (Archer Heritage Planning)



Plate 21 Approximate lines of possible former nave/earlier church outlined in yellow



Plate 22 Aerial view of eastern gable, with masonry remains circled in red

