

Archaeological Impact assessment and method statement for a proposed Strategic Housing Development at The Firhouse Inn, Firhouse Road Dublin 24

Submitted by Eoin Halpin MIAI MCIFA - Archaeology and Heritage Consultancy ltd

Bluemont Developments (Firhouse) Ltd

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1. Introduction

The author, Eoin Halpin MIAI MICFA, is the Operations Manager with Archaeology and Heritage Consultancy Ltd a company founded in 2014. For the previous 25 years he worked with Archaeological Development Services Ltd. He has worked on all aspects of development led archaeological projects and has extensive experience in both the planning phase and the archaeological resolution phases. He has represented clients in numerous public enquiries, he has carried out baseline studies, site assessments, EIA's, archaeological testing, archaeological monitoring and site resolutions involving full archaeological excavations and has project managed numerous large infra-structural schemes. He is a member of the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists and a member of the Institute of Archaeologist of Ireland, for which he has acted as chairperson. His work has appeared in numerous publications in academic journals, historic society journals and monographs.

2. The proposed development

The proposed development is located in Firhouse, in Southwest Dublin (Figs 1 and 2). It is bounded to the south by Firhouse Road, to the east by Mount Carmel Park and to the north and west by green fields. The existing site consists of the Firhouse Inn building (Plate 1) and associated car park (Plates 2 and 3), with a number of smaller, single story buildings located to the west of the old Firhouse Inn building, fronting out onto Firhouse Road.

Bluemont Developments (Firhouse) Limitedintend to apply to An Bord Pleanála (the Board) for a Strategic Housing Development with a total site area of c.0.46 ha, on lands located at No. 2 Firhouse Road and the former 'Morton's The Firhouse Inn', Firhouse Road, Dublin 24.

The development will consist of the demolition of all existing structures (c. 1,326sq m) on site.

The development with a total gross floor area of c. 11,638 sq m, will consist of 100 no. residential units arranged in 2 blocks (Blocks 01 and 02) ranging between 3 and 5storeys in height, over lower ground floor and basement levels, comprising:

- 96 no. apartments (consisting of 2 no. studio units; 45 no. one bedroom units; 10 no. two bedroom (3 person) units; 34 no. two bedroom (4 person) units; and 5 no. three bedroom units), together with private (balconies and private terraces) and communal amenity open space provision at podium and roof levels; and
- 4 no. duplex apartments (consisting of 2 no. one bedroom units and 2 no. two bedroom units (4 person) located within Block B01, together with private balconies and terraces.

The development will also consist of non-residential uses (c. 354sq m), including:

- 1 no. café(c. 52 sq m) and 1 no. office(c. 36 sq m) located at ground floor level of Block B01;
- 1 no. medical unit (c. 57 sq m) and 1 no. betting office(c. 66 sq m) located at ground floor level of Block BO2;
- 1 no barber shop(c. 27 sq m) located at ground floor level between Blocks01 and 02; and
- 1 no. crèche (c. 116 sq m) located at lower ground floor level of Block B01 and associated outdoor play area to the rear.

Vehicular access to the site will be from the existing access off Firhouse Road. The proposal includes minor alterations to the existing access, including the provision of new and enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

The development will also consist of the provision of public open space and related play areas; hard and soft landscaping including internal roads, cycle and pedestrian routes, pathways and boundary treatments, street furniture, basement car parking (80 no. spaces in total, including car sharing and accessible spaces); motorcycle parking; electric vehicle charging points; bicycle parking (long and short stay spaces including stands); ESB substations, piped infrastructural services and connections to existing public services, (including relocation of existing surface water sewer and water main from within the application site onto the public roads area along Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park); ducting; plant; waste management provision; SuDS measures; stormwater management and attenuation; sustainability measures; signage; public lighting; and all ancillary site development and excavation works above and below ground.

3. Historical background

Although there is no significant prehistoric evidence from the area of Firhouse, there are Neolithic ritual monuments within the surrounding landscape. Two passage tombs are known from Montpelier Hill and other such tombs are spread along the ridge of mountains overlooking Dublin including Saggart Hill, Seefin, Seehan etc. Bronze Age burials are known from the Barony of Uppercross in the townlands of Greenhills, Kiltalown, Aghfarrel and Ballinascorney Lower. Stray finds are also known from the Dodder close to Tallaght village.

Firhouse was not a civil parish, townland or Catholic parish and does not appear as such in early documentation or land valuations (O' Neill, 7). It was originally included in the Barony of Uppercross and is part of the civil parish of Tallaght. This parish dates back to the 12th century and contains forty nine townlands. Townlands are the smallest unit of land for administrative purposes and their names usually refer to items of local or historic significance. Firhouse Parish includes all of the townland of Tymon South and part of the townlands of Knocklyon, Tallaght, Ballycragh, Killininny and Templeogue.

The names of these townlands have changed over the years from their original forms. The name Firhouse has undergone a number of changes over the years, appearing at various times as 'The Fir House', 'Furhouse', 'Firrhouse' and 'Fir House'. In Rocque's map of Co. Dublin 1760, a place called 'The Fur House' is visible. However, ordnance survey maps from circa 1850 onwards have used the spelling 'Firhouse' and this has remained to the present day. The name of the area can be found on a tombstone in Tallaght Churchyard dedicated to Patrick Fieragh of Furhouse who died 2nd April 1715; William his son who died 28th August 1736; and Maurice who died 3rd November 1743 aged 64. F. E. Ball in his book, *A History of County Dublin*, states that:

'At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the name of Fir House then written Fur House, first appears as the residence of a family called Fieragh, some of whom were employed in the timber trade with Norway. It has been suggested that the name Fir House is a corruption of their name, and also that it had its origins in an inn, bearing the sign of a tree, which formerly stood in the village, but it seems more probable that the name arose from the connection of the Fieragh family with the timber trade.'

The residence of the Fieragh family, mentioned by Ball, is now used as a Carmelite Convent. Evidence of the name Fieragh in the area can be traced back to 1474 when a Patrick Laweles of the parish of Tallaght owed a Richard Feragh the sum of 10s.4d.

Through the centuries the lands around Firhouse have had several owners. Before the Norman invasion, the whole area was under the rule of a Celtic Chief called MacGillamocholmog. After the Anglo-Norman conquest, the lands were divided between the Crown, the Church and Walter de Ridelford, a powerful Anglo-Norman. De Ridelford passed on the lands stretching from Knocklyon to Killininny to his descendants. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, Killininny was held by Christiana de Marisco. She subsequently transferred her Irish property to the Crown. Later occupants included Walter de Islip, Elias de Ashbourne, Sir Thomas Newcomen, Gabriel Brisco and about the middle of the eighteenth century, Sir Timothy Allen.

Subsequent to Walter de Ridelford, owners of Knocklyon included the Burnells of Balgriffin, the Bathes of Drumcondra, the Nugents of Westmeath, the Talbots of Belgard, Anthony Deerin g and Sir Dudley Loftus of Rathfarnham. In the eighteenth century the lands of Tymon were sold by the Duke of Wharton, a descendant of Loftus, to Speaker Conolly.

4. Sites and Monuments in the locality

There is only one site recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record within the vicinity of the subject site (Fig. 1), and that consists of Sally Park House (DU022-103----) which is also recorded on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) Ref 11215010 and is located some 70 m to the southwest of the proposed development. Sally Park was once the residence of W. D. Handcock, author of *The History and Antiquities of Tallaght*. It was purchased by his grandfather in 1796 from the Earl of Clanacarty. Subsequent owners to the Handcocks included the Knox, Cullen and Blake families. The Knox family had strong connections with the Irish Times Newspaper. T. J. Cullen was a famous architect, noted especially for his church design. He was a personal friend of Sean T.O'Ceallaigh, President of Ireland who visited Sally Park on a number of occasions.

The original entrance to the grounds was at the junction of Knocklyon and Ballycullen Roads. The gateway is close to the gate lodge which has recently been renovated. The grounds of Sally Park were beautifully wooded. Over 7,000 trees were planted and a great deal of money was spent on trout ponds, gardens and conservatories. A number of grottos and small summer houses were built in the grounds, creating a a beautiful haven for the residents. Many of the beautiful walks in the gardens had special names. The line of trees on one's right as one enters the present-day Monalea Park Estate was 'The Primrose Walk' and the two fields near the house were known as 'The Nine Acres'. Goldfish were kept in the ornamental ponds and at one stage some of the other ponds were stocked with trout.

Early census reports provide us with details of a remarkable list of outhouses at Sally Park. Serving the needs of the residents were two stables, a coach house, a harness room, a dairy, a fowl house, a boiling house, a barn, a workshop, a shed and a laundry. Sally Park provided employment for a

number of local men and women as coachmen, gardeners and house keepers. Sally Park is currently in use as a comfortable nursing home.

The other sites in the general vicinity of the subject site are all buildings listed on the NIAH. These consist of three cottages located some 170 m to the southeast all of which date to the 1820s (NIAH Regs: 11215015, -16 and -17), Knocklyon Cross (NIAH Reg: 11215009) erected in 1867 located some 270 m to the west and finally the Carmelite Monastery of the Assumption (NIAH Reg. No. 11215014), located some 290 m to the southwest.

None of these sites will be directly affected by any aspect of the proposed development

5. List of Stray Find s in the Surrounding Area

Information on artefactual finds from the study area in County Dublin has been recorded by the National Museum of Ireland since the late 18th century. Locational information relating to these finds is important in establishing prehistoric and historic activity in the study area.

Museum No: 1977:2200-1
Townland: Templeogue
Parish: Tallaght
Barony: Uppercross
County: Dublin

Find: Perforated stone disc and perforated shell

Findplace: Surface of ploughed field

Ref:

Museum No: I A/185/84
Townland: Balrothery
Parish: Tallaght
Barony: Uppercross
County: Dublin

Find: Various excavated finds, including Victorian sluice gates

Findplace: Weir/medieval watercourse

Ref: Excavation report, VJ Keeley 1984. Healy, P. Report on the History and

Present Condition of the Old City Watercourse, City Weir and Sluices, An

Foras Forbatha Teoranta, September 1982.

6. Archaeological investigations in the vicinity

Only one archaeological investigation is recorded in the vicinity of the proposed development. This took place in 2008, some 225 m to the north, at The Weir, Firhouse under license no 08E0858. Monitoring was undertaken following the discovery of timber pipes during the extraction of silts from above the weir, which although much remodelled during the Victorian period, it owes its origins to a 13th-century structure. During the unsupervised removal of materials above the weir, eight hollowed-out tree trunks were recovered from the riverbed running alongside the south-western revetment wall. These were not identified from a secure context and have been assigned an 18th-century date on the basis of similar historical water pipes recovered in Dublin City. The results of the monitoring and the metal detection (License ref: 01R076) failed to produce anything of archaeological significance as the weir was systematically cleared of river gravels for use as building material up until the 19th century

7. Cartographic evidence.

The approximate location of the development is recorded on Rocque's map of 1760 (Fig. 3), where the junction of Firhouse Road and what was later to become Mount Carmel Park, is clearly visible. The area is recorded as *The Fur House* with the proposed development area consisting of open agricultural fields.

The OS survey map of c. 1830 (Fig. 4) shows the site now developed along the Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park frontages, with the area to the rear, the northwest, largely open. The area is now recorded as Firhouse and Sally Park has been constructed across the Firhouse Road to the southwest. The northern boundary to the proposed development is recorded as the townland boundary dividing the townlands of Knocklyon to the east and Tymony South to the west. There was relatively little development in the area as recorded on the OS map of the early 20th century (Fig. 5). One of the smaller buildings within the proposed development has been recorded as 'Smithy', apart from that there was little development in the surrounding area.

8. Archaeological impacts.

The proposed development area falls within the Zone of Archaeological Potential associated with Sally Park House (DU022-103----) as recorded on the Record of Monuments and Places (Fig. 6). However as the site is recorded as 'House - 18th/19th century' on the Sites and Monuments Record, the possibility of any physical elements of the RMP site extending into the proposed development area are negligible.

Any impacts on Sally Park house are therefore deemed to be indirect, in the form of impacts on the visual amenity. The proposed development will not be visible from the grounds on the south side of the house (Plate 4). The development will be visible from the north side of the house (Plate 5), however as this is the rear of Sally Park, with the main façade, south facing, any impacts on the house are deemed only slightly negative.

There are no known archaeological sites within the red line boundary of the development. However, the townland boundary which runs along the northern side of the site, is noteworthy (Plate 6). It takes the form of a well constructed and well maintained rubble and cement built wall. Twelfth-century charters provide the earliest documentary evidence for the existence in Ireland of small land units although, the *seisreach*, is given as 120 acres and seems to have been approximately that of a modern townland. In most of Ulster the ballyboe ('land providing one cow as rent') and its subdivisions are the precursors of the modern townlands, and were referred to in Latin sources as villa or carucata, and in English as 'town' or 'ploughland'. The Irish term *baile* seems to have been treated as equivalent to English 'town', which had originally meant 'settlement (and lands appertaining)'; and the compound term 'townland' seems to have been adopted to make the intended meaning clear. It is proposed to maintain this boundary largely untouched and consequently the impacts here will be negligible.

The other site of potential interest on the development area is the 'Smithy' recorded on the OS 4th ed of c. 1900. It appears on the map to be a small rectangular building, located at the western end of the line of buildings fronting out onto Firhouse Road. There is a building surviving fronting out onto Firhouse Road (Plate 7). However an examination of this structure by MESH Architects (see Appendix one) noted that the architectural design and materials used were consistent with a small artisanal domestic cottage, dating from the early decades of the 20th century and that it was very unlikely that the extant structure was originally built as, or used as, a smithy. Close examination of the

cartographic evidence suggests that the pub at the corner of Firhouse Road and Mount Carmel Park was originally only half as large as it currently stands. The 'Smithy' may therefore have been demolished in the expansion of the pub along the Firhouse Road frontage. MESH Architects are of the opinion that the surviving building is a domestic cottage and there is nothing about the building that would make it significant enough to warrant protection from demolition.

9. Archaeological method statement

It is proposed to archaeologically test the available open spaces around the existing Firhouse Inn building, via seven 1.5 m wide, machine dug test trenches, set 10 m apart, six running east-west across the area and one, on the western side running northwest-southeast (Fig. 7). The lengths of the trenches will range from 15 m to 40 m (see table 1) with the locations precisely located within the development project through either GPS or Total station and tied into OS grid.

The testing will be carried out using machine equipped with a 1.5 m wide toothless bucket which is under the constant supervision of a suitably qualified and licensed archaeologist. The archaeologist will monitor the trenching until either the surface of glacial subsoil, formation level or the surface of significant archaeological remains or deposits are uncovered, whichever is encountered first. It should be noted that this testing may only constitute the first phase of archaeological mitigation with the possibility of further excavation works, if required.

Trench No	Length	
1	15m	
2	25m	
3	40m	
4	20m	
5	20m	
6	20m	
7	20m	

Table 1. test trench details

It is proposed that all archaeological deposits uncovered during testing be recorded and investigated to best archaeological practice. They will in the first instant be cordoned off using high visibility tape and access to these areas by machinery and personnel denied until the deposits have been resolved. The licensed archaeologist on site is responsible, on behalf of the developer, for the identification and appropriate treatment (e.g. excavation and recording) of all archaeological remains encountered. In order to fulfill the responsibilities of the developer therefore, the licensed archaeologist will have the authority to temporarily stop machining where potential archaeological material has been identified, in order to evaluate the character of said remains. It should be possible for work to continue (under archaeological supervision) in areas where no archaeological deposits have been encountered. Should archaeological remains be present, the licensed archaeologist will be responsible for communicating this to the client or appointed representative, as well as to the relevant Heritage authorities.

In the event of the discovery of any archaeological remains during the testing, the deposits will be hand excavated to assess their nature date and extent and time will be allowed for the archaeologist to undertake the appropriate level of recording. The level of recording will depend on the complexity of the archaeological remains encountered and in all cases sufficient time will be allowed by the developer for this purpose.

If human remains, or any suspected grave cuts, are observed, machine excavation will cease, the Department, development sponsor and, in the case of humans remains uncovered, the Garda and the National Museum of Ireland will be informed immediately and a suitable methodology for dealing with the human remains or grave cuts will be agreed in writing with the appropriate authorities. Work will not recommence in the area containing the human remains until such a methodology has been agreed, and all works subsequently undertaken in this area will be in accordance with this methodology.

If the archaeological deposits are extensive an interim report will be compiled, outlining the nature of the archaeological deposits uncovered and the impacts of the proposed development on these remains. The report will also recommend a mitigation strategy for further archaeological works on site, which could consist of preservation of the remains in situ and/or archaeological excavation. During the testing phase, recording will be by means of the standard methods employed during archaeological fieldwork. A day book will be maintained while all archaeological features will be recorded in writing utilising pro forma context sheets by means of scaled field illustrations and by appropriate photography.

It is recommended that the developer allow enough time in the development programme for a possible archaeological excavation. It should be noted that the results of all excavation including site evaluation and monitoring, must be compiled into a fully illustrated report.

Finds strategy. In the course of the testing all finds will be logged according to context, washed (if appropriate), bagged and catalogued prior to dispatching to the various specialists. A contract conservator will be on hand if necessary. All finds will initially be housed in our post excavation store in Drogheda and will ultimately be stored in whatever facility the State will provide.

All artefacts will be numbered and treated in accordance with NMI guidelines.

Archive. The archive will be stored at AHC Ltd, post-excavation store in Drogheda. Ultimately it will be stored in whatever permanent facility the State may provide.

Report. A report will be compiled that will set out the results of the archaeological testing in accordance with the terms of the National Monuments Acts and best professional practice. It will address the archaeological & historical background of the site. The location and levels (corrected to Ordnance Datum) of any archaeological deposits found will be clearly shown, an impact statement and mitigation strategy will also be given. Relevant ground plans and cross sectional drawings of the site and the proposed development will be included.

10. References

Ball, F. E. 1902 A history of the County Dublin

O'Neill, S 1992 Firhouse: History, Legends People, Places Scoil Treasa Publications Firhouse



Fig. 1 Site location and location of sites of Cultural heritage interest in the vicinity



Fig. 2 Proposed development



Fig. 3 Site location (approximate) on Rocque's map of 1760

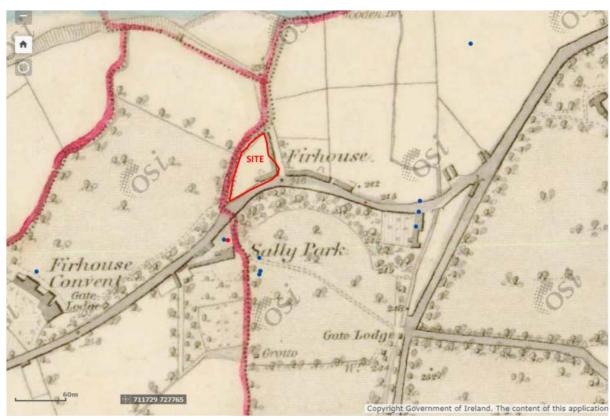


Fig. 4 Site location on 1st ed OS map

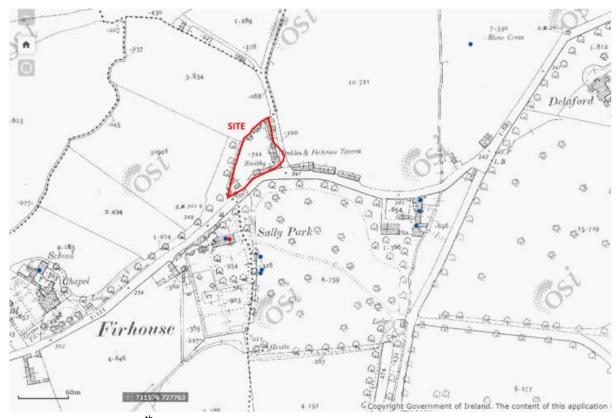


Fig. 5 Site location on 4th ed OS map

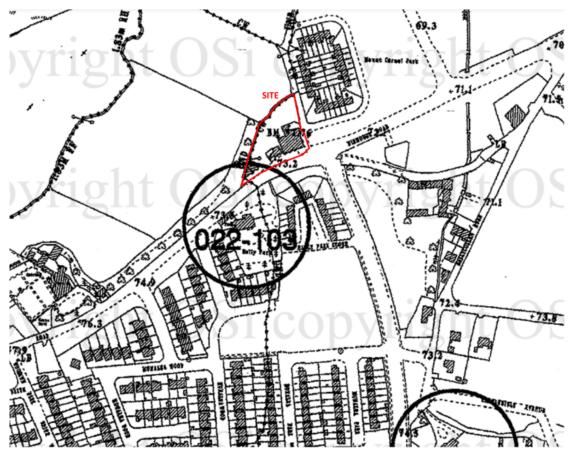


Fig. 6 Zone of archaeological potential on RMP in relation of proposed development site

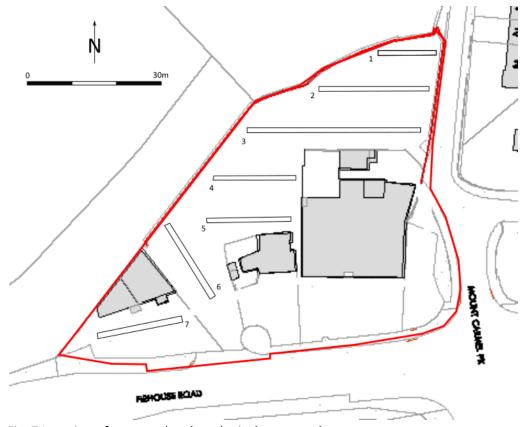


Fig. 7 Location of proposed archaeological test trenches



Plate 1 View of site from south east



Plate 2 View of site from northwest



Plate 3. View of site from northeast



Plate 4 South facing façade of Sally Park (DU022-103---)



Plate 5 View looking east along Firhouse Road, Sally Park on right, development in background on far left



Plate 6 View of townland boundary running along north side of site



Plate 7. Building to the west of the Firhouse Inn.

APPENDIX ONE

Former Cottage at the Firhouse Inn Firhouse Road, Dublin 24 Initial Heritage Assessment September 2021

MESH Architects







Former Cottage at the Firhouse Inn Firhouse Road, Dublin 24

ARCHITECTURE

CONSERVATION ARCHITECTS

Initial Heritage Assessment

September 2021

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Tom McGimsey MRIAI BArch(Hons) MSc.

Introduction:

A thoroughly researched and well-written Archaeological Impact Assessment report was prepared for the proposed development of the site by Archaeology & Heritage Consultancy Limited. In this document, it was suggested that a small single storey structure adjacent to the pub was the same structure that was labelled as a Smithy in the 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey Maps. The report suggested that this structure warranted further documentation prior to its removal under the proposed development.

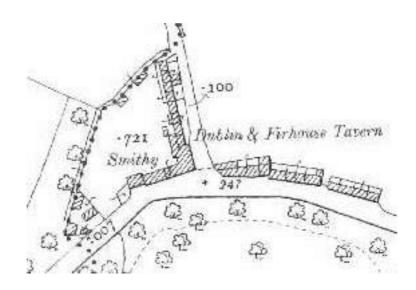


Plate No. 1. Detail from the Ordnance Survey of Ireland showing the proposed development site around the start of the 20th century. The word Smithy appears above the row of structures at the south-east corner of the triangular development site. It is unclear exactly which structure was the Smithy at the time this map was drawn.

Tom McGimsey, RIAI Grade 1 Accredited Conservation Architect, was asked to visit the site of the proposed development and comment on the existing structures on the site. In particular, the development's professional advisors sought clarification on the heritage value of the single storey structure adjacent to the existing pub structure, referred to in the Archaeological Impact Assessment report as a 19th Century Smithy. The site was visited and photographed on the morning of Wednesday, the first of September, 2021. The single storey structure was opened up for full access, and all rooms were examined.

Description of the Former Cottage

The subject cottage stands approximately at the centre of the proposed development site, adjacent to the west end of the Firhouse Inn structure. The principal cottage structure consists of a two-roomed single storey cottage, built of brick and rubble stone masonry, and covered with a dashed render. The double-pitched roof has a single central chimney stack, and is covered with Welsh slates. Behind the cottage is a small extension with a doubled pitched roof, forming a valley with the cottage roof. A second extension stands against the west gable end of the cottage, in a small garden enclosed by a rubble stone boundary wall.

The main cottage has a central door and two windows facing south. The doors provides access into a small lobby, with a pair of small domestic rooms flanking a central chimney mass. The walls are of painted plaster, and the ceiling is lined with painted V-groove timber cladding. The narrow chimney breast in each room has a small fireplace. A small former bedroom and bathroom occupy the rear extension, and the room to the west contains a commercial kitchen.

The architectural design and materials are consistent with a small artisanal domestic cottage, dating from the early decades of the 20th century. It is very unlikely that this structure was originally built as, or used as, a smithy. The typical rural smithy, or forge, in Ireland was a simple and robust structure used to shape wrought iron and other metals for use as horse shoes, cart wheel rims, and countless other everyday implements. They typically have wide doors to the front, to allow of fresh air circulation through the hot interior, and to allow for the entry of horses, cart, materials and fuel into the work area. While they were commonly of similar scale to the Firhouse Cottage, they would not have been built with the same domestic features or plan as can be seen in the cottage.

A comparison of historic photographs and at the series of Ordnance Survey maps of the area shows that the pub structure on the corner of the site was originally only half as large as it currently stands. It is most likely that the Smithy was actually the structure that stood between the pub and the remaining cottage.

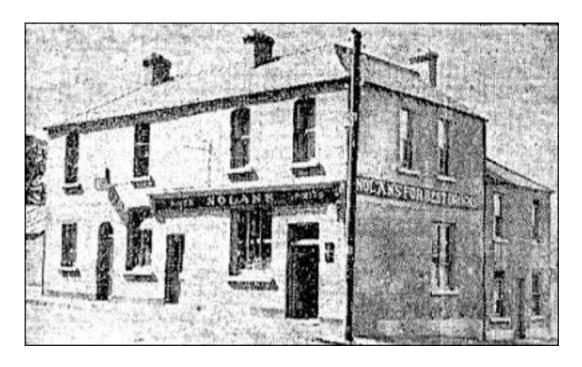


Plate No. 2. Historic photo showing Nolan's Bar, later known as the Firhouse Inn. At that time, the bar was only half as long along its primary elevation as it currently exists. A small single storey structure is barely visible to the left of the bar. Presumably this was the Smithy, or Forge, later to be demolished when the two-storey structure was extended to the west.

Another pertinent document is the attached advertisement from 1945, announcing the imminent sale of the Firhouse pub, along with the adjacent forge and cottage. The fact that there was a cottage, as well as a forge, supports the theory that the surviving single storey structure was not the Smithy noted on the OS maps.

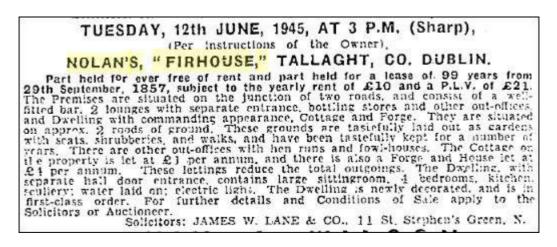


Plate No. 3. Newspaper clipping advertising the upcoming sale of Nolan's "Firhouse", Tallaght, Co. Dublin. (From 12 June, 1945).

Summary

As noted in the Archaeological Assessment report, the single storey cottage is not on the Record of Protected Structures. It is also very doubtful that it was the Smithy that was noted in the group of structures on the 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps. In my opinion, there is nothing significant about the cottage that would make it significant enough to warrant protection from demolition.

Annotated Photo Survey of the Cottage



Plate No. 4. South facing front elevation of the Firhouse Inn. The original structure is the green painted portion to the right. The forge was located in the location of the yellow painted portion of the inn.



Plate No. 5. Primary south elevation of the cottage and its yard.



Plate No. 6. General view showing the non-historical commercial structure at the south-west corner of the development site.



Plate No. 7. General view showing the rubble stone boundary wall at the west side of the development site.



Plate No. 8. General view looking south showing the rear extension to the cottage.



Plate No. 9. General view looking east towards the west end of the cottage.

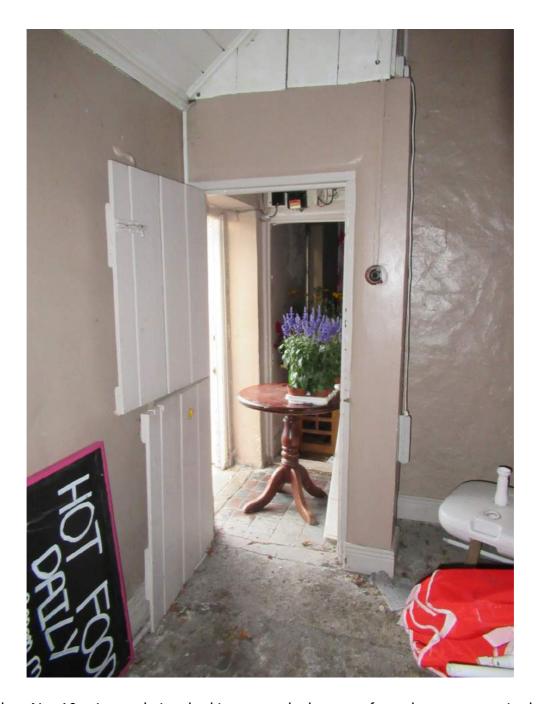


Plate No. 10. Internal view looking towards the entry from the east room in the cottage. The entry is paved with red and black terra cotta tiles, commonly used during the late 19^{th} and early 20^{th} centuries.

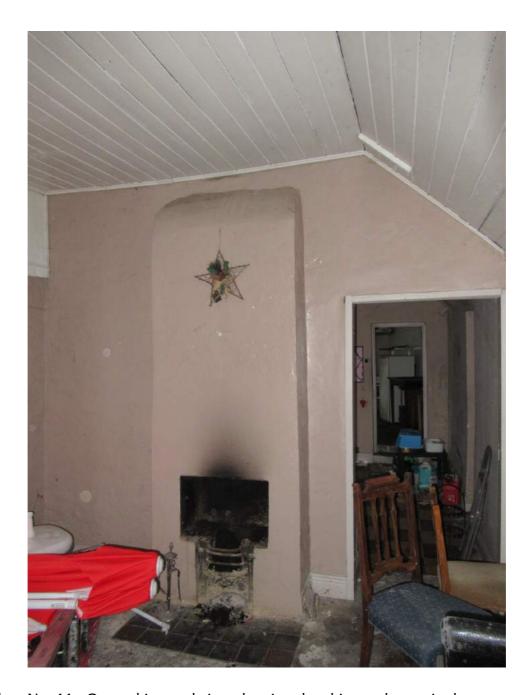


Plate No. 11. General internal view showing the chimney breast in the east room in the cottage. Note the timber-sheeted ceiling, with the collar ties raised above the wall heads.

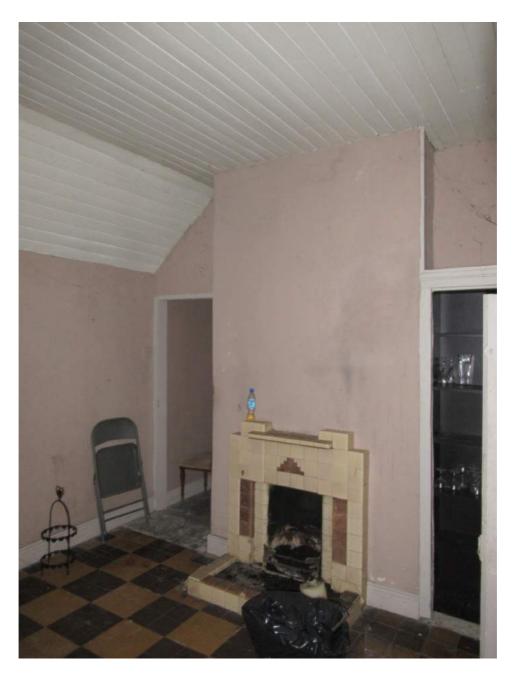


Plate No. 12. General internal view showing the fireplace in the west room in the cottage.



Plate No. 13. General internal view showing the commercial kitchen in the west side extension to the cottage.



Plate No. 14. General internal view showing the rear wall in the rear extension to the cottage.