

8th June 2021

To the Chairperson and Members of the North Central Area Committee

Initiation of the Statutory Process for the Proposed Addition of Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9, to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

PHOTOGRAPH OF STRUCTURE



Introduction

It is proposed to initiate procedures under Section 54 and Section 55 of the Planning & Development Act 2000 (as amended) to add 'Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9' to Dublin City Council's Record of Protected Structures.

Request for Addition

- Conservation Section, Planning and Development Department, Dublin City Council dated 20/08/2001 and 02/04/2008.

Summary of Reasons for Seeking Addition

- A Section 57 Declaration for Beaumont Convalescent Home, Beaumont Road, Dublin 9 (Declaration ref: D0222-01), dated August 2001 recommended that the 20th century chapel and convent (known as Beaumont Convent) should be considered for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures. A further assessment of Beaumont Convalescent Home, undertaken by Dublin City Councils Conservation Section in April 2008 made

a further recommendation that Beaumont Convent should be considered for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures (Conservation Section File Reference Del276).

Methodology for Assessing 20th Century Structures

In November 2019, the Planning & Property Development SPC agreed a methodology to expedite the proposed additions/deletions to the RPS in a systematic manner, based on the Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011 and NIAH/Ministerial Recommendations under Section 53(1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The methodology agreed to prioritise 20th century structures in addition to industrial sites, early buildings and underrepresented typologies. On foot of this the Conservation Section carried out a screening process for 20th century structures. Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9 was identified as an early 20th century structure and was recommended for assessment.

Site Location & Zoning Map

Beaumont Convent is located to the north of Beaumont Road on a mature landscaped site to the east of Beaumont House (formerly known as Beaumont Convalescent Home) and to the north of Catherine McAuley Park, Beaumont Woods. The subject site is zoned Z1 in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, with an objective “to provide for sustainable residential neighbourhoods”. The land uses in the area are principally residential and institutional.

The adjacent former Beaumont Convalescent Home is on the current Record of Protected Structures (Volume 4 of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022). The RPS reference number for the property is ‘497’ and the description reads ‘*Beaumont Convalescent Home: Georgian house, including granite entrance gate piers, gates and curved entrance wall*’. Note, the RPS GIS map locator symbol for the ‘granite entrance gate piers, gates and curved entrance wall’ as included under RPS reference ‘497’ has been incorrectly plotted on Zoning Map B of the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022.



Fig.1: Site location and zoning map for Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9 (arrowed red). The subject site is zoned Z1 in the Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, with an objective “to provide for sustainable residential neighbourhoods”. The former Beaumont Convalescent Home is arrowed blue, this is on the current Record of Protected Structures under RPS ref: 497. Note: The current GIS and Ordnance Survey mapping does not reflect the removal of link corridors and erection of a new boundary separating Beaumont Convent from the former Beaumont Convalescent Home as granted under planning permission reference 3248/11.

Recent Planning History:

A number of planning applications are recorded in relation to the Beaumont Convalescent Home complex, however only those with immediate relevance to the subject property have been listed in the table below.

Planning Ref:	Description:	Decision:
1631/96	Development comprising of 325 houses; 2 no. four storey apartment blocks; 3 no. three storey apartment blocks; a two storey crèche; and a two storey medical practice to include the taking down and rebuilding of granite entrance gate piers, gates and curved entrance wall forming the entrance to Beaumont Convalescent Home and demolition of a habitable house, 'The Lodge'.	GRANT PERMISSION 25-Oct-1996
3248/11	Sub-division of the Beaumont Convalescent Home site into three distinct properties to include the demolition of link corridors on the western side of site connecting Beaumont Convent to Beaumont Convalescent Home.	GRANT PERMISSION 28-Mar-2012

Recent Enforcement History:

A number of enforcement cases have been raised in relation to the Beaumont Convalescent Home complex however none are of immediate relevance to the subject property.

Site Access

An internal and external site inspection was carried out by Dublin City Council's Conservation Section on 12th May 2021.

Summary Description

Composition:

Neoclassical convent comprising double-height gable-ended chapel built c.1926-27 stepping forward of adjoining ten-bay three-storey residence completed 1928. Semi-circular apse to chapel with single-storey flanking sacristies and single-storey entrance porch to north. A single-storey flat roofed corridor bounding the north and west of the chapel provides a covered link between ranges. Projecting stair core to the west of residence with projecting lift core to north c.1980.

Exterior:

Pitched Welsh slate roof with overhanging eaves to chapel having granite acroteria and apex cross finials to gables and copper-clad ventilator/lantern to centre ridge. Copper-clad roof to apse. Flat roofs to sacristies, porch and link corridor. Double-pile hipped Welsh slate roof with central valley and overhanging eaves to residence. Rendered chimney stacks with stepped crown (now capped). The most easterly of the stacks incorporates an arched bellcote, housing a bronze bell with bell wheel. The most westerly and prominent of the stacks is embellished with sweeping granite shoulders. Cast-iron rainwater goods with some replacement extruded aluminium and uPVC sections. Smooth cement-rendered walls throughout with rendered impost course to chapel and granite cill course to second floor of residence. Giant order of Doric pilasters to apse framing decorative panels incorporating swagged embellishments and the metaphorical keys of Saint Peter. Round-headed clerestory windows to chapel having granite cills and coloured leaded lights with geared pivot windows (now with uPVC secondary glazing). Square-headed window openings with granite cills to residence arranged in diminishing scale to second floor, now with replacement uPVC windows. Two-over-two sliding sash windows having ogee horns to single-storey link corridor to north and west of chapel. Canted oriel window having copper-clad roof and coloured leaded lights to north elevation of residence. Painted stone portico (Portland limestone) to residence with lotus leaf capitals formerly with statue of Christ to apex. Modern glazed porch inserted to portico. Square-headed

varnished timber panelled door with glazed overlight and sidelights. Square-headed and round-headed doorways to chapel with timber panelled doors.

Interior:

Single cell nave to chapel with shallow apse to south flanked by former statue niches. Organ gallery to north over confessionals. An arched opening at high-level to the west wall gives onto a private viewing gallery located to the first floor of the adjoining residence. This opening carries a bi-partite folding leaded and stained glass light having inner sound proofing timber shutters. The chapel interior has painted plaster finishes to include a deeply coved ceiling to the nave, rib-vaulting to the apse and decorative cill coursing. Floor finishes comprise timber parquet, with a raised sanctuary to the south. Joinery items include varnished timber panelled doors and architraves, stepped gallery and confessionals. An encaustic tiled floor finish with decorative wall tiling is recorded to the north entrance porch and to the link corridor bounding the west and north of the chapel. The sacristy retains parquet flooring, built-in presses, decorative plasterwork, a marble sacrarium and a built-in safe.

The interior of the residence is laid out with well-proportioned rooms on three floors accessed off a central spine corridor. An open-well timber staircase rises through all floors having an urn finial newel post and slender turned balusters. A secondary stairwell is located to the southeast corner of the floor plan, rising from ground to first floor only. The layout conforms to a standard model of 19th and 20th century convents. This comprises segregated reception rooms, a refectory and sizable kitchen at ground level, with a large common room and bedroom cells to first and second floors. Interior features survive largely intact with decorative treatment reserved for principal rooms and common areas to include timber parquet; encaustic floor tiling; oak wall panelling; timber skirting; a glazed screen wall (to entrance hall); timber and cast-iron fireplaces having Art Nouveau inspired detailing; timber panelled doors; timber panelled window joinery; and decorative plasterwork. Decorative treatment to the bedroom cells is sparing. Despite the addition of some modern surface finishes, these spaces largely retain timber floor boards, timber skirting, timber panelled doors (some retaining pivot overlights); and window joinery incorporating built-in presses. Glazed wall tiling (rising to three quarter height) survives to some W.C and service areas with historic cast-iron column radiators throughout.

Setting:

Set in mature landscaped grounds with grassed lawns and specimen trees. A semi-enclosed rear garden includes a detached late 20th century garage. Modern boundary railings set on a brick plinth wall to north, south and west having brick entrance piers giving access off 'The Park' and 'The Close'. Beaumont House (former Convalescent Home – a protected structure) to immediate east separated by modern palisade fencing.

Historical Background

Beaumont Convent is situated within the historic demesne of Beaumont House, to the north of Dublin city. The demesne, which dates to the mid-18th century had served as the country seat of the famed brewer, Arthur Guinness, whose family remained at Beaumont until the late 1800s. The 1837 Ordnance Survey map depicts Beaumont as a substantial residence supported by outbuildings and yards as well as an enclosed walled garden and an icehouse. The estate of 56 acres was laid out in an idealised 'natural' manner with wooded groves of specimen trees and an ornamental lake. The name given to the estate translates from old French to mean 'fair' or 'beautiful hill' with the house occupying a slightly elevated position, offering views over the city and the Dublin Mountains beyond.

By the turn of the 20th century Beaumont House and lands had been sold to the Sisters of Mercy, a female religious order founded by Catherine McAuley in 1831, with a mission to care for the sick and the infirm. The order established a convalescent home on the site offering care provision for recovering patients. The new facility was affiliated to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital (also managed by the order). Beaumont's landscape setting on the northern fringes of the city offered clean air and fine views which, at the time were considered restorative and an important aid to recovery.

Beaumont expanded considerably during the 1920s with the lands to the immediate west of Beaumont House chosen as the site for a new convent built c.1926 – 1928 (fig.12). At the same time new ward ranges connected by link corridors were developed to the rear and east of Beaumont House to include St. Catherine's Ward, St. John's Ward and St Anne's Ward. Although works are known to have been undertaken at Beaumont Convalescent Home as early as 1905, under the architect Patrick Harnett McCarthy (DIA), it is understood that construction of the chapel in c.1926-27 represented one of the first purpose built structures to have been commissioned by the Sisters. This reflected an obvious emphasis on the importance of spiritual wellbeing in a patient's recovery, in addition to serving the spiritual needs of the religious community itself.

The chapel was built to a largely standardised design with a longitudinal plan comprising nave, apse and organ gallery. Only the provision of a separate viewing gallery at high level on the west wall distinguished this from a parish church of the same period (the viewing gallery facilitated direct private viewing for the community of Sisters from the first floor of the adjoining accommodation range). The attached residential block is set perpendicular to the chapel and was completed in 1928. This is known to have been built to the designs of W.H Byrne, a practice who were prolific during the late 19th century and who had remained the architect of choice for many of Ireland's religious orders. The interior was functional, befitting its use, with a refectory and kitchen to ground floor and a common room with bedroom cells to first and second floors. Two parlours located close to the main entrance door provided meeting spaces for visiting lay people. These were separated from the inner sanctum of the convent by a glazed screen door.

The building embraced the relatively new construction method of 'mass concrete' however the architectural design reflected the conservative outlook of 1920's organised religion. This favoured a traditional style over a modernist aesthetic in clear reference to the restrained neo-classical architecture of the adjacent 18th century Beaumont House (fig.11). A semi-enclosed garden to the immediate rear of the convent, laid out with paths and borders, provided a private contemplative space for the community of nuns, separate from the extensive parkland grounds.

Further additions were made to the campus during the mid-to-late 20th century. Despite this, and in addition to the ceding of lands for the construction of the Our Lady of Mercy College in 1957, and latterly for the construction of Beaumont Hospital in 1987, a significant proportion of the former parkland (amounting to approx. 40 acres) remained in private pasture. By the late 20th century the surrounding area had firmly established itself as a residential suburb and in 1996 planning permission was granted for the construction of an extensive housing development within the historic demesne at Beaumont, (planning ref: 1631/96). The property boundary to Beaumont Convalescent Home was much reduced at this time though the 18th century house and the convent continued to address a vestige of the former landscaped setting. Eight acres of the former parkland was preserved to the immediate south of the site

as a public park, named in commemoration of Catherine McAuley the founder of the Sisters of Mercy. A number of significant specimen trees identified as a 'dominant landscape feature' were retained under condition of planning, to include a group of 'predominantly ash, beech, macrocarpa, pine and sycamore trees' to the immediate west and south of Beaumont Convent.

In c.2010 the Sisters of Mercy commissioned a review of their property portfolio at Beaumont. On foot of this the Convalescent Home site was sub-divided into a number of distinct property portfolios under planning permission reference 3248/11. The convent was separated from the remainder of the site to include the erection of new boundary treatments and the removal of link corridors. Beaumont House was transferred to the Health Service Executive (H.S.E.) with new access provided from the adjoining grounds of Beaumont Hospital. The convent had initially remained in use by the order however less than ten years later, faced with a declining community of much reduced numbers, the order sold the convent to the H.S.E in 2020. Fixtures and fittings, identified as being of liturgical or devotional importance were removed by the religious order as part of the sale agreement and have been relocated to various parish churches within the archdiocese of Dublin.

References:

- Irish Architectural Archive.
- Dictionary of Irish Architects.
- Dublin City Archive.
- Ordnance Survey Mapping.
- Aerial and satellite photography provided by google maps.
- REA Brophy Farrell Estate Agents, (2020). Sales Brochure for Beaumont Convent, Available at: <http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/mediamaster-s3eu/8/6/864bf536c58ed592b5358ab9b0c5064e.pdf> (Last accessed: 26th March 2021).
- Floor plan drawings dated 2004 which form part of internal DCC files in relation to Del276.
- Irish Times Article dated 15th November, Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1928/1115/Pg003.html> (Last accessed: 26th March 2021).
- McHugh Consultants, (1996). *Environmental Impact Statement* to support Planning application no 1631/96, Unpublished Report.
- Jack Coughlan Associates, (2011). *Sisters of Mercy, Beaumont, Dublin Assessment of Significance of Existing Buildings*, Unpublished Report.

NIAH Significance/Rating

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has been carried out for this area. The NIAH uses eight categories of special interest (architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical & social) and identifies five categories of rating in seeking to rank buildings. The NIAH rating values are International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only (I, N, R, L, O). Structures which are considered of International, National, and Regional significance are deemed worthy of inclusion on the RPS.

The NIAH record provided in Appendix 2 of this report has assigned the Convent of Mercy, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9 a 'Regional' rating. These are structures or sites that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage within their region or area.

Assessment of Special Interest under the Planning & Development Act 2000

The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage assigned this building ARCHITECTURAL; ARTISTIC and SOCIAL interest.

The Conservation Section, following an inspection of the site on 12th May 2021, has considered the opinion of the NIAH and considers that Beaumont Convent, to include both the residential block and chapel, is of special interest under the following three categories:

- ARCHITECTURAL:
 - The convent is considered to form part of distinct ecclesiastical grouping with Beaumont House (a protected structure) which both individually and collectively makes an important contribution to its setting. An architectural heritage impact assessment of the site commissioned by the Sisters of Mercy in 2011 and prepared by Jack Coughlan Associates, Architects and Conservation Consultants identified the Convent (residence and chapel), in addition to Beaumont House, as being of 'high' significance (*refer to planning permission reference 3248/11*).
 - Though the nucleolus of Beaumont Convalescent Home is centred on the 18th century private residence, which had been adapted by the Sisters of Mercy c.1900 for use as a convalescent facility, the construction of the convent c.1926-28 represents the orders first purpose built structure on the site. This reflected an obvious emphasis on the importance of spiritual wellbeing in a patient's recovery, in addition to serving the spiritual needs of the religious community itself.
 - The convent is attributed to the work of W.H Byrne who was the favoured architect for many religious orders during the late 19th century. It is a late example of institutional convent architecture which despite being built of mass concrete, (a relatively modern construction technique for the day), displays a conservative architectural language which clearly references the 18th century Beaumont House to the immediate east.
 - The convents asymmetrical arrangement, with the chapel set perpendicular to both the residence and the adjacent Beaumont House reflects a considered approach to the site. Here, the projecting gable-front with semi-circular apse serves to manifest its ecclesiastical credentials while also providing punctuation. This is particularly evident when viewed from the principal approach avenue to the southwest.
 - The convent interior is well appointed having a distinct plan form and layout which conforms to the established model of religious orders, having common rooms, a refectory and bedroom cells. Two reception rooms at ground floor were appointed for use by visiting lay people with a glazed screen wall and door marking a symbolic and tangible division between the sacred and secular space. A room at first floor level allowed the religious community to attend mass from the privacy of the residence.
 - The property is enhanced by the survival of good quality and little altered interior features, including timber parquet flooring; encaustic floor tiling; oak wall panelling; decorative wall tiling; timber skirting; a glazed screen wall (to entrance hall); timber and cast-iron fireplaces having Art Nouveau inspired detailing; timber panelled doors; timber panelled window joinery and finely crafted staircases.
 - The site addresses Catherine McAuley Park to the immediate south which together with the mature shelter belts and veteran specimen trees maintains an impression of its original Parkland setting. At the time pleasure grounds were considered to be of therapeutic benefit for the patients while the semi-enclosed garden to the immediate north of the

convent provided for the solitary contemplation and private reflection of the religious community.

- **ARTISTIC:**
 - The decorative carving to the Portland limestone entrance portico complete with lotus leaf capital demonstrates skilled competency and craftsmanship which together with the granite dressings (apex finials and volute shoulders to chimney stacks) and the rendered relief panels to the chapels' apse add artistic interest to the structure.
 - The interior reflects high quality craftsmanship and materials. The most elaborate treatment was reserved for the chapel and the principal rooms within the residence. These received decorative plasterwork, finely crafted joinery items (staircases, gallery and confessionals), parquet flooring, oak wall panelling, decorative encaustic floor tiles and glazed wall tiling.

- **SOCIAL:**
 - The former convent is of social importance recording the role of religious orders in the development of health care provision and nursing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Conclusion

Dublin City Council's Conservation Section has carried out an assessment of 'Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9', and has also considered the NIAH record for the site (see Appendix 2). The Conservation Section concludes that Beaumont Convent, to include both the residential block and chapel, merits inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures.

The extent of the proposed Protected Structure status and curtilage is outlined in Fig.2 of this document (below).

It is now proposed to initiate the statutory process for the proposed addition of this structure to the Record of Protected Structures. This includes undertaking a statutory public consultation process in accordance with Section 55 of the Act. Following the statutory consultation process, a further report will be prepared taking any submissions and observations received into consideration, with a recommendation to the City Council to proceed or not with the proposed addition, or with a recommendation including amendments to the proposed addition.

Recommendation

It is recommended that 'Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9' be added to the Record of Protected Structures, in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), be noted.

Recommendation	
Address	Description (to appear on RPS)
Beaumont Convent, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9	Beaumont Convent, comprising 20 th century chapel and residence

Deirdre Scully

09/06/2021

Deirdre Scully
Deputy City Planner

Date

Extent of Protected Structure Status

The extent of protected structure status & curtilage is shown on the map below in red.

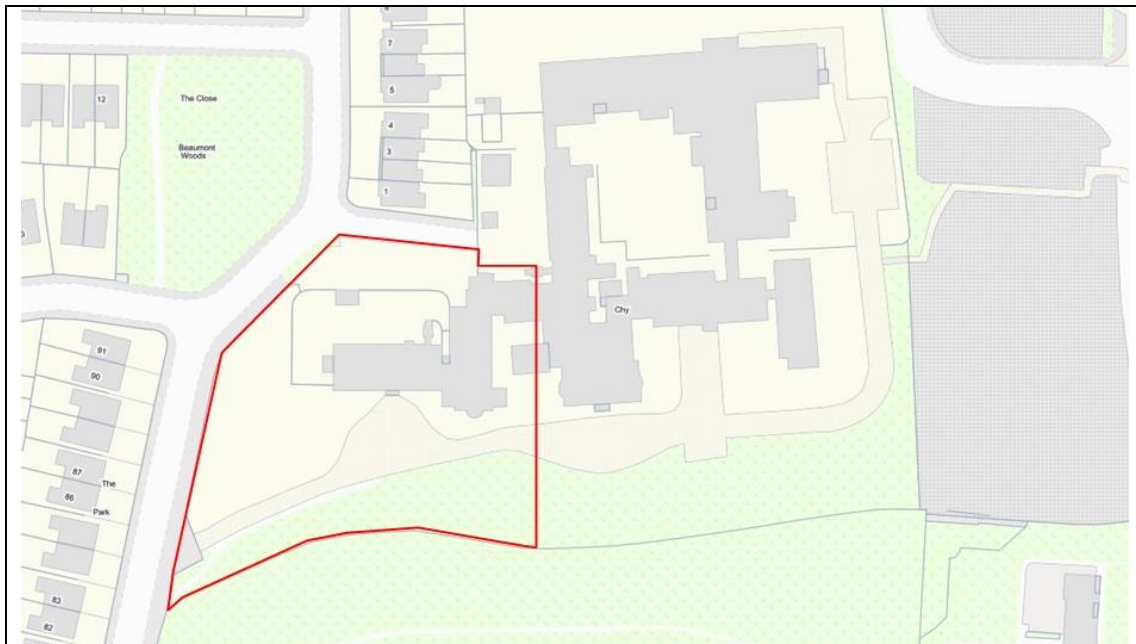


Fig.2: Extent of the protected structure status. Note: The current GIS and Ordnance Survey mapping does not reflect the removal of link corridors and erection of a new boundary separating Beaumont Convent from the former Beaumont Convalescent Home under planning permission reference 3248/11. The extent of the protected structure status and curtilage as outlined above accords with the parcel of land apportioned to Beaumont Convent as granted under planning permission reference 3248/11.

Appendix 1: Short Photographic Record & Historical Maps



Fig.3: Principal elevation of convent with chapel to right of image.



Fig.4: Semi-circular apse to chapel with copper-clad roof and giant order of Doric pilasters.



Fig.5: Granite cross finial to gable apex of chapel.



Fig.6: Copper-clad lantern surmounted by cross finial to centre ridge of chapel.



Fig.7: East chimney stack incorporating bellcote, housing a bronze bell with bell wheel.



Fig.8: Decorative render panels incorporating swaged embellishments and the keys of Saint Peter.



Fig.9: Two-over-two sliding sash window having ogee horns to link corridor to north and west of chapel representing surviving historic timber sashes.



Fig.10: Painted stone portico (Portland limestone) with lotus leaf capitals, now with glazed porch inserted.



Fig.11: Beaumont Convent depicted shortly after completion as published in the Irish Times on the 15th November 1928 (Image courtesy of the Irish Times Archive). Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/archive/1928/1115/Pg003.html> (Last accessed: 26th March 2021).

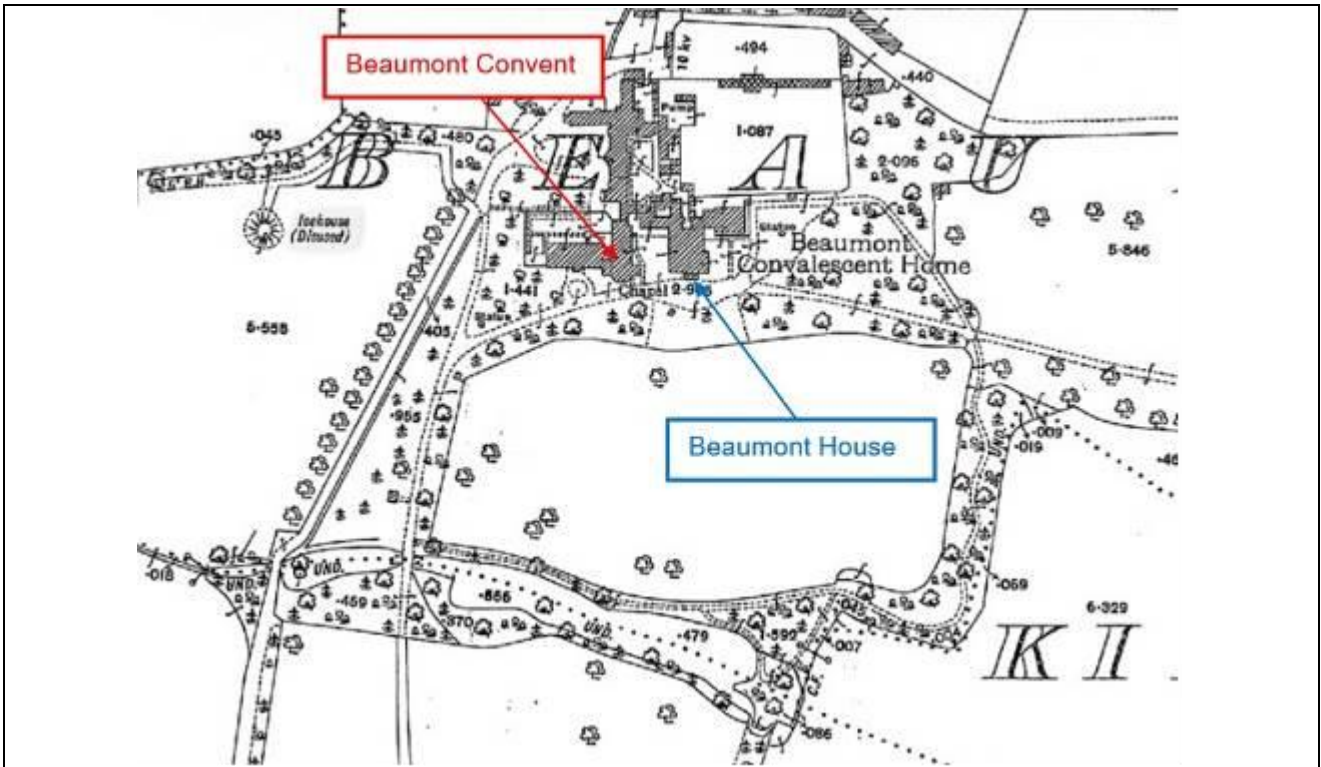



Fig.12: 1938 Ordnance Survey map recording Beaumont Convalescent Home with the convent marked chapel (arrowed red) nestled amid trees to the immediate west of Beaumont House (arrowed blue).

Appendix 2: NIAH Record

NIAH Assessment for Convent of Mercy, The Park, Beaumont Woods, Dublin 9.

	<p>Reg. No. 50130234 Date 1910-1930 Previous Name Townland County Dublin City Coordinates Categories of Special Interest Architectural, Artistic, Social Rating Regional Original Use Church/chapel, Roman Catholic ecclesiastical complex, religious/funerary/ritual In Use As Church/chapel, Roman Catholic ecclesiastical complex, religious/funerary/ritual</p>
<p><i>Description:</i> Attached seven-bay neoclassical convent chapel, built c.1920, with truncated-cruciform plan having three-bay south apse, north porch and flanking sacristies. Pitched slate roof, having central square-plan copper-sheeted lantern with tent roof surmounted by orb and cross and supported on corner piers, with louvers to sides, and granite acroteria to gables with cross and volutes; cast-iron rainwater goods with concealed gutters to flat-roofed sacristies and porch; copper-clad apse half-conical roof. Cement-rendered walls with string courses and pediment cornicing, having frieze, pilasters and swags to apsidal end, latter flanked by render Doric pilasters and having three blind bays separated by similar pilasters. Round-headed window openings to nave walls, with recessed surrounds, granite sills and margined leaded lattice lights with uPVC secondary glazing. Square-headed doorway to east sacristy with simple surround and six-panel timber door; round-headed doorways to north porch, blocked and replaced to east and with replacement timber door and fanlight to west. Chapel adjoins contemporary Convent of Mercy, set in planted grounds with grass lawns and trees, giving onto courtyard of Beaumont Convalescent Home to north. Bright interior, with coved ceiling and sculpted plaster rib-vaults to apse, cornices and string courses to walls. Raised carpeted sanctuary with marble high altar and freestanding altar having Italianate details, flanked by niches containing statues of Virgin Mary and St Joseph. Primary entrance through internal square-headed doorway from convent with timber architrave and timber double-leaf door. Interior has timber parquet floor, timber pews and Stations of the Cross panels; cantilevered organ gallery accessed from vestibule with plain frieze, above recessed timber screen with pilasters containing confessional and central double-leaf door; north porch has tiled floor, marble steps, glazed tiling below dado rail, and square-headed doorway with timber architrave and double-leaf six panel timber door to chapel vestibule.</p>	
<p><i>Appraisal:</i> A pleasant convent chapel that was built along with the adjoining convent for the Sisters of Mercy, who bought the nearby Beaumont House about 1900 to develop a convalescent home that is still in operation nearby. Although of simple design, the chapel is given character by the external neoclassical decoration of the apse which is a distinguishing feature of the convent's south façade. The apse is similarly the highlight of the chapel's interior and the original high altar has been retained, along with a freestanding altar, although other internal rearrangements have been made. The building contributes to the convent grouping and to the ecclesiastical heritage of north Dublin.</p>	