By NICOLA TALLANT

IT WAS a fitting playground for the playboy princes of the boom.

From the air, Coldwater Lakes estate still looks every inch the exclusive rich man’s enclave that was the stronghold of the Mansfield dynasty.

But on closer inspection the shadows cast on some of Ireland’s most secretive of celebrities become apparent.

Coldwater was the new playground to the heirs to Jim Mansfield Snr’s property empire, at a time when this slice of west Dublin was a personal playground for them, their pals and their model girlfriends.

Today, a special Sunday World investigation reveals that behind the protective fencing and electronic gates, lie the secrets of some of Ireland’s most publicity-shy millionaires.

And some of those secrets now threaten to destroy Ireland’s once wealthiest dynasty.

As Jim Mansfield Jnr this week denies his family have any involvement in drugs or organised crime, we can reveal that gardaí have targeted a key figure in Ireland’s biggest drug-dealing cartel within a Mansfield-linked property in Coldwater.

And a separate investigation into the murder of traveller crime boss ‘Fat Andy’ Connors, gunned down in his family home located within the Coldwater lands, is believed to be centred on INLA figures, associates of whom have also been sighted in the wealthy enclave.

Busted

Number 10 Coldwater Lakes was last registered with a Mansfield-owned company and extensive land registry searches have failed to find any recent sale.

The house was targeted in the high-profile raid on Mansfield properties by elite gardaí forces on January 13 last.

The stunning mansion, which has been recently fitted out with tens of thousands of euro worth of security equipment, was busted by armed gardaí from the Organised Crime Unit and Criminal Assets Bureau, with back-up from the Garda National Drugs Unit.

It is understood that Christopher Kinahan Jnr, the son and heir of ‘Draper Don’ Christy Kinahan, had been under surveillance on the property in recent months. It was there that the boxer Matthew Macklin – a close friend of the Kinahan mob, but who has no involvement in crime – was discovered during the busts.

It is not known if the house has been rented to Kinahan or if it has been sold, but it was a key target of the gardaí raids, which also included Tassagart House, where Jim Jnr lives with his mother Anne, and the Finnstown House Hotel where his children Ingrid and Samuel are directors, and which he manages.

The connection between a Mansfield-linked property and any member of the Kinahan mob is hugely significant for gardaí.

Jim Mansfield senior was once investigated by the Garda National Drugs Unit for links to a plot to import €7 million worth of drugs into Ireland.

Former champion boxer Matthew Macklin was suspected of running Kinahan’s drugs operation for 12 years for his part in the conspiracy to bring the narcotics in through the Mansfield-owned Weston airport.

At the time, Jim Snr, who was the registered owner of the private plane that had been loaded up in Belgium with the drugs, had to deny he made a fortune from drug dealing. Now that shadow has returned to haunt his son.

It is understood that gardaí put the Coldwater Lakes house under surveillance when they were tipped off that Christopher Kinahan Jnr was spotted directing work being done on No.10.

Set on a golf course, each of the homes of Coldwater stands in jaw-dropping splendour.

Power

Nestled on the edge of Citywest, with its hotel, apartments and sprawling housing estates, Coldwater was once the brick-and-mortar embodiment of the power of the Mansfield family.

While the ownership of No.10 is complex and buried deep in land registry documents, some of its neighbouring properties form part of the complex Mansfield financial web, which the Criminal Assets Bureau and Organised Crime Unit are now coming through.

Number 9 was eventually listed as Jim Jnr’s, after transfers through Mansfield companies, but it is understood that his ex-wife Donna Coagrace lived in it with their children Ingrid and Samuel since the couple split.

She was a close friend of Elaine Baron, wife of the secret cocaine dealer Philip Baron – dubbed the Baron of Straffan – jailed for 18 years for trafficking drugs across Europe.

Bizarrely, No.9 was sold to the controversial visionary Christina Gallagher two years ago, but the deeds only transferred last month.

The house is by far the biggest on Coldwater and Gallagher has upped its security – with sensored cameras and 18ft steel railings. It is understood that she paid more than €1 million for the home.

Number 11 Coldwater is the home of one of Jim Jnr’s best friends, Glen O’Callaghan, who purchased an incredible THREE properties in the development at the height of the boom when each was worth millions. O’Callaghan is not only a personal friend of Jim Jnr, but also a failed business partner.

Incredible

Together, along with two other investors, they borrowed €6 million to develop a property venture in County Meath, which flopped. In the past month, the pals lost an appeal to AIB and were told they have to pay back the money and already a judgement mortgage has been