RYAN+LAMB

ARCHITECTS

CONSERVATION REPORT

PREPARED BY

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CONSERVATION ARCHITECT ACCREDITED AT GRADE III

PROPOSED 110 KV SUBSTATION

STEEVEN'S LANE, DUBLIN 8

Contents

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1.0 Introduction

This Conservation Report has been prepared by Ryan+Lamb Architects, on behalf of ESB Networks, to form part of the Planning Application for the development of a 110kV Substation within the Diageo/Guinness Complex in Dublin 8, fronting Steeven's Lane. The report examines the site's history, character, architectural significance, and conservation sensitivities pertinent to the area, and sets out the design approach adopted in response to this context.

Figure 1 - Street view looking towards site from Steeven's Lane

2.0 Site Location and Context

The subject site is adjacent to the Guinness / Diageo Complex, occupying an irregular parcel of land bounded by Steeven's Lane to the west, the River Liffey to the north, the Pearse Lyons Whiskey Distillery to the east, and the Guinness Storehouse to the south.

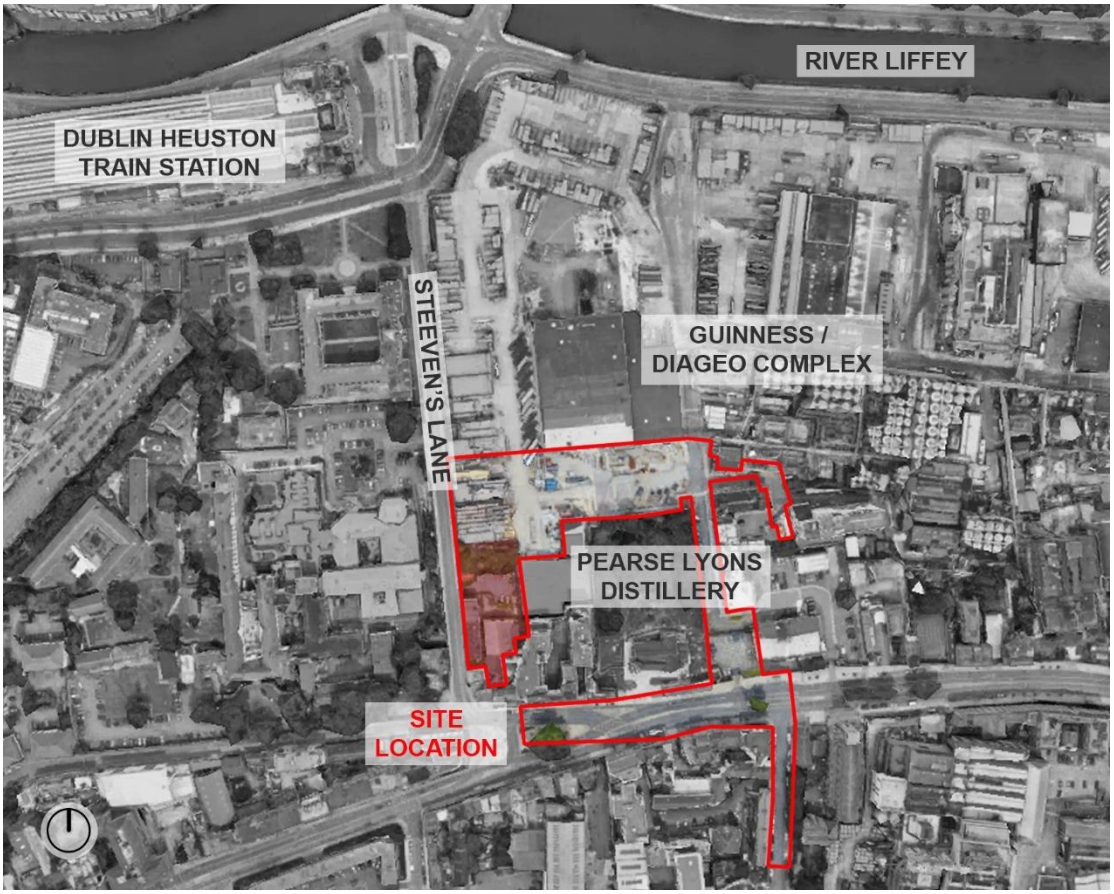

Figure 2 - Site Map highlighting the location of the proposed 110kV Substation in red

The site is located within a historically significant area of Dublin 8, in close proximity to a number of protected structures, though it does not lie within a designated Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). In its current form, the subject site comprises of two main buildings with some open yard areas, at the rear of the Guinness/Diageo complex. The building to the front is a former textile house and the building to the rear is primarily offices with some light industrial uses. Both buildings are derelict and unused for some time. The yards, outbuildings and open space are overgrown and disused.

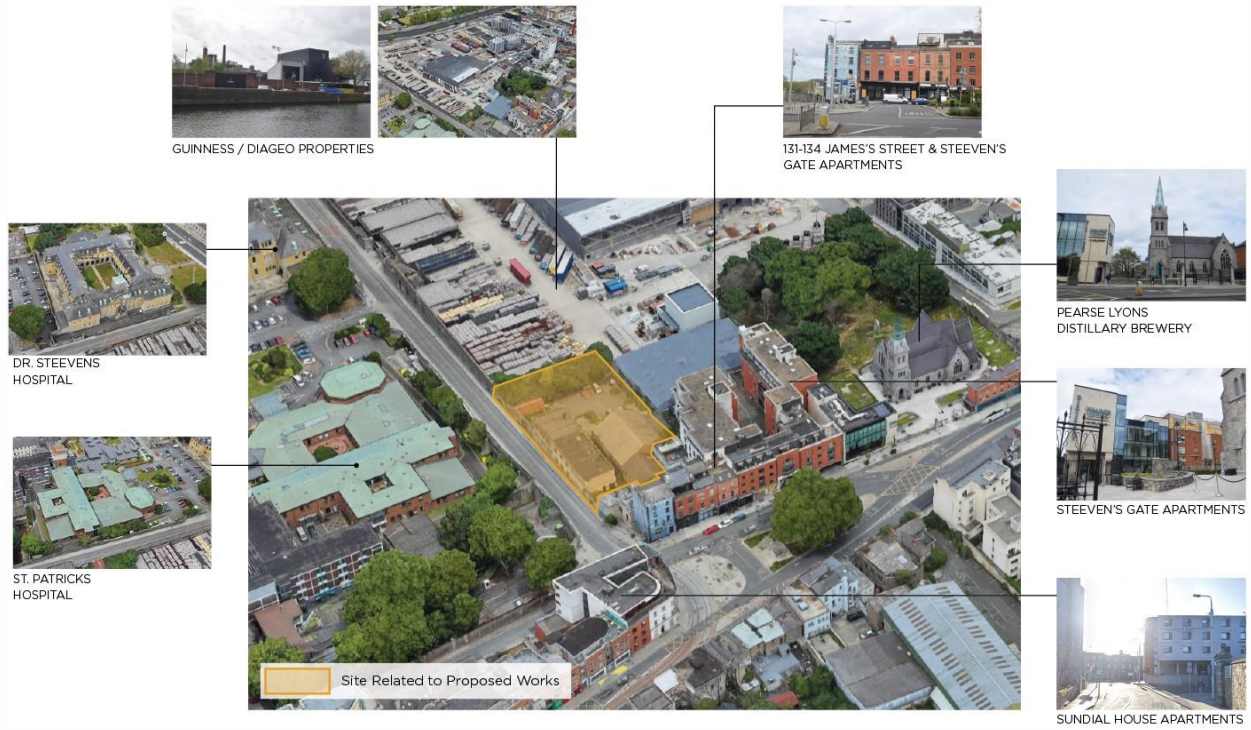

Figure 3 - Site Map highlighting Surrounding Context

Steeven's Lane functions primarily as a transport corridor, accommodating the Luas Red Line connecting the city centre to Tallaght and Saggart. The lane is characterised by this transit infrastructure, with regular pedestrian activity and a predominantly industrial and institutional built environment to either side, reflecting its historic role as a secondary service route on the western edge of the city.

3.0 Historical Background

The site is located in the historic Liberties area of Dublin 8, one of the oldest and most historically significant quarters of the city. The Liberties developed as an important centre of trade and industry from the medieval period onwards, situated just beyond the jurisdiction of the medieval city walls. Its industrial character was shaped over centuries by a concentration of textile, brewing, and distilling enterprises, many of which left a lasting imprint on the built fabric of the locality.

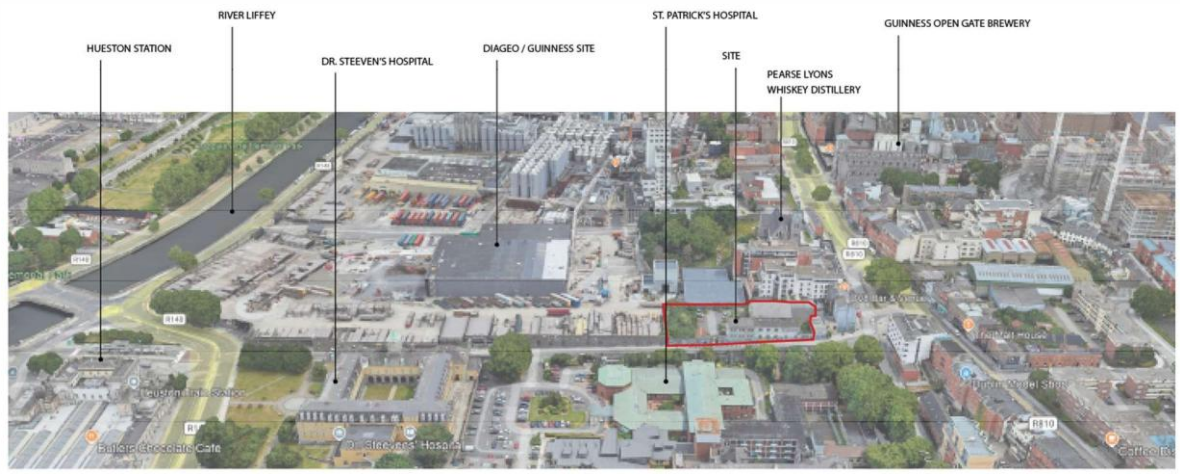

Figure 4 - Surrounding Buildings of Interest

3.1 St. James's Gate and the Guinness Brewery

The Guinness Brewery at St. James's Gate has been a defining presence in this part of the city since Arthur Guinness signed his 9,000-year lease on the original four-acre site in 1759. Over the following two centuries, the brewery expanded substantially, absorbing surrounding lands and transforming the urban landscape of the area. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Guinness complex had become one of the largest breweries in the world, its infrastructure - including internal railway lines, cooperages, and ancillary industrial buildings - shaping the character of the wider streetscape. Steeven's Lane developed in close relationship with these industrial lands, forming the western boundary of the complex.

3.2 Dr. Steevens' Hospital and the Institutional Corridor

Steeven's Lane takes its name from Dr. Steevens' Hospital, one of the oldest public hospitals in Ireland, founded in 1720 and constructed to a design attributed to Thomas Burgh. The hospital, now in alternative use, is a Protected Structure (RPS Ref. No. 7840) of considerable architectural and historical significance. Together with St. Patrick's Hospital, founded by Jonathan Swift in 1745, and the former Royal Hospital Kilmainham, the area formed an important institutional corridor on the western approaches to the city, lending the locality a civic and philanthropic character that complemented its industrial identity.

Figure 5 - Dr. Steevens' Hospital Aerial View

3.3 Cartographic and Archaeological Record

Historic Ordnance Survey maps from the mid-nineteenth century onwards illustrate the gradual intensification of development along Steeven's Lane and the surrounding lands, reflecting the expansion of the Guinness complex and ancillary industrial and residential uses. The area falls within a zone of archaeological potential as identified in the Dublin City Council Development Plan 2022-2028, given its proximity to historically significant lands and early post-medieval development patterns.

Figure 6 - Site Map (1829-1841)

Figure 7- Site Map (1995)

Figure 8 - Site Map (2011-2013)

Figure 9 - Site Map (2022)

3.4 Protected Structures

There are a number of Protected Structures within the vicinity of the proposal, including:

Heuston Station (RPS Ref. No. 7576)

Figure 10 - Aerial View of Heuston Station

Dr. Steevens' Hospital (RPS Ref. No. 7840)

Figure 11 - Dr. Steevens' Hospital

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Pearse Lyons Whiskey Distillery (RPS Ref. No. 4053)

Figure 12 - Pearse Lyons Whiskey Distillery, Former St. James's Church of Ireland

No. 132-134 Commercial / Licenced Premises (RPS Ref. No. 4055/4056)

Figure 13 - No. 132-134 Commercial / Licenced Premises

3.5 Summary

The subject site sits within a layered historical landscape shaped by centuries of industrial, institutional, and civic development. This accumulated heritage forms the essential context for the assessment of conservation sensitivities pertinent to the proposed works and underlines the importance of a carefully considered approach to development within this historically significant area.

4.0 Architectural Description of the Proposed 110kV Substation

4.1 General Form and Character

The architectural design has been developed and is illustrated in the Design Statement, Drawings, Photomontages and LVIA Report. These documents should be read in conjunction with this Conservation Report. The proposed 110kV substation presents as a robust and purposeful utility structure of substantial scale, designed to serve the electrical infrastructure needs of the surrounding area. The development comprises a large-format, rectilinear building form set behind a continuous boundary wall, creating a coherent and unified composition that reads as a single consolidated mass from the public realm. The proposal adopts a restrained architectural language appropriate to its industrial utility function, while demonstrating considered design ambition through the articulation of its elevations and the careful selection of materials. Situated to the rear of the Guinness and Diageo complex, the development responds sensitively to its historic industrial context, reinforcing the established character of this significant Dublin streetscape.

4.2 Western Façade (Primary Visible Façade)

The western facade, forming the primary publicly visible elevation fronting onto Steeven's Lane, is composed of a continuous red brick boundary wall of considerable height, across which a conceptually driven geometric pattern is expressed through a series of incised triangular motifs of diminishing scale. The triangular patterning draws direct conceptual inspiration from the function of the substation itself, representing the transformation and stepping down of electrical power from high voltage to a usable lower voltage supply - a process fundamental to the operation of the facility. Just as a substation receives power at 110kV and reduces it progressively for distribution, the triangular forms cascade and reduce across the facade in a rhythmic, sequential manner, giving visual expression to this invisible but essential technical process. This patterning introduces strong visual rhythm and relief to the elevation, casting dynamic shadow lines across the brickwork that shift and animate throughout the course of the day, whilst simultaneously embedding a layer of conceptual meaning that connects the architecture directly and deliberately to the infrastructure it contains.

A secure vehicular access gate provides the sole point of entry, detailed in dark metal to complement the broader material palette. Rising above and behind the boundary wall, the main substation building presents as a dark, near-black metal composite panel clad volume of considerable height, its horizontal panel coursing and vertical expressed columns lending a refined industrial quality to the upper structure.

4.3 Materials

The Design Report sets out the entire basis for the architectural design and how materials are considered. It should be read in conjunction with this conservation report. The primary material proposed for the boundary wall and lower building elements is a rich red brick, selected to acknowledge and respond to the deep-rooted tradition of brick construction within the Guinness and Diageo industrial complex and the wider Liberties area. The brick is laid in a regular coursed bond, exhibiting a warm, textured quality that grounds the development within its historic context, while the scale and robustness of the brickwork conveys the permanence and solidity appropriate to a critical national infrastructure facility. The incised triangular patterning is expressed intrinsically within the brick fabric itself, achieved through the careful setting out of recessed courses or expressed mortar detailing, ensuring the conceptual design language is integral to the masonry construction rather than applied as a superficial finish.

The upper volume of the substation building, and the transformer compound is clad in a dark anthracite or near-black composite metal panel system, providing a deliberate material contrast with the warmth of the brick below and reflecting the functional, technical character of the electrical infrastructure housed within. Together, the combination of red brick and dark metal cladding creates a coherent material palette that is both contextually responsive and architecturally resolved.

Figure 14 - View towards Proposal from Steeven's Lane including approved proposal for development at 134 James Street in white (Planning Ref. 3912/23)

5.0 Significance Assessment

5.1 Architectural Significance

The proposed substation occupies a site of considerable historic and architectural sensitivity, positioned in close proximity to a number of protected structures that collectively define this part of Dublin's built heritage. Within this context, the architectural ambition of the proposal extends beyond the purely functional, recognising that even infrastructure of an inherently utilitarian nature carries a civic responsibility when inserted into a streetscape of such historic resonance. The decision to engage seriously with materiality, surface articulation and conceptual design narrative elevates the proposal above the standard treatment of utility infrastructure, which too frequently defaults to anonymity and visual indifference to its surroundings. By drawing on the rich brick tradition of the Guinness complex and the wider industrial heritage of the area, whilst simultaneously embedding a contemporary design language that speaks directly to the building's function, the proposal strikes a meaningful balance between contextual deference and architectural integrity.

5.2 Urban Significance

The proposed substation carries an urban significance that extends beyond its immediate site boundary, situated at a pivotal transitional point where several distinct urban characters converge. Steeven's Lane functions as an important connective corridor linking the civic and institutional quarter around Heuston Station and the National Museum of Ireland at Collins Barracks to the north and west, with the dense historic urban grain of the Liberties and the emerging Guinness Quarter to the east.

The proposal sits at a meaningful urban seam, and the manner in which it addresses the public realm along this corridor carries consequence for the legibility and quality of the wider streetscape. The continuous brick boundary wall, rather than functioning purely as a security envelope, is treated as an active urban facade, its considered height, material warmth and articulated surface ensuring a positive contribution to the pedestrian experience along Steeven's Lane. In a broader urban context, the development reflects the growing imperative to integrate critical energy infrastructure sensitively within the dense fabric of the existing city, as Dublin's expanding population and increasing electrification demands require substations and similar utilities to be located ever closer to the urban core. The Steeven's Lane proposal can be read as an exemplar of how such infrastructure, when approached with genuine architectural ambition and contextual awareness, can reinforce and enrich the urban environment rather than compromise it.

6.0 Potential Impacts

6.1 Physical Impact

The physical impact of the proposed substation is largely defined by the scale and massing of the development relative to its immediate urban context. The continuous boundary wall along the Steeven's Lane frontage represents the most immediate physical intervention within the public realm, and its considerable height and linear extent will alter the spatial experience of the street for pedestrians and passing traffic. However, the wall's alignment with the existing building line and its consistent material treatment ensures that it reinforces rather than disrupts the established rhythm and enclosure of the streetscape. The principal building mass, rising above the boundary wall to the rear of the site, introduces a significant built volume into this part of the city, though its setback from the public footpath ensures that its physical presence is mediated by the boundary wall in the foreground. It is notable that Planning Permission has been granted for a residential development to the rear of No. 134 James' Street. The scale and mass of that building is illustrated on the Architectural Elevation and Sectional drawings. Additionally, the Steeven's Gate Apartment development is a medium rise building which is already constructed. The local context is such that the proposed building will not have an overbearing impact on its surroundings and when taken with the surrounding context is a reasonably modest structure. The absence of significant vehicular trip generation beyond occasional maintenance access further limits the physical impact on the surrounding road network, and the consolidated, single-site nature of the development ensures that disruption to the broader urban fabric remains contained and clearly defined.

6.2 Visual Impact

The visual impact of the proposed development has been assessed in detail within the accompanying Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), supported by verified photomontages prepared from representative public viewpoints. These assessments demonstrate that, whilst the proposal introduces a substantial new building into the streetscape of Steeven's Lane, its visual effects are moderated by its urban context, the existing industrial character of the area and the careful architectural treatment of the development.

The principal public views of the proposal occur along Steeven's Lane, where the continuous brick boundary wall forms the dominant visible element. From these viewpoints (refer to LVIA Appendix 7 Viewpoints 2, 3), the development presents as a continuation of the established enclosure of the street rather than an isolated building. The use of high-quality red brick, together with the articulated triangular relief pattern, provides visual interest and reflects the robust masonry character associated with the historic Guinness industrial complex. The upper metal-clad volume is intentionally recessed behind the boundary wall and finished in a dark anthracite colour, reducing its visual prominence when viewed from street level – this is illustrated in Photomontage Views 2 & 3.

Longer-distance views from the north, including viewpoints across the River Liffey (refer LVIA Appendix 7 Viewpoints 5 and 6), demonstrate that the proposal will be perceived within an established urban skyline characterised by a varied collection of industrial, commercial and residential buildings of differing heights. The proposed substation does not interrupt any recognised protected vista or strategic view and reads as part of the evolving industrial townscape associated with the Guinness lands.

Particular consideration has been given to the relationship between the proposal and nearby Protected Structures, including Dr. Steevens' Hospital, the Pearse Lyons Distillery (former St. James's Church), Heuston Station and Nos. 132-134 James's Street. The verified photomontages demonstrate that, whilst the proposal will be visible in the wider setting of these structures, it does not obscure principal elevations, compete with significant architectural features or diminish the ability to appreciate their architectural or historic significance. In particular, views towards Dr. Steevens' Hospital remain dominated by that building's formal composition and landscaped setting, whilst the proposal remains visually subordinate within the broader urban context.

The relationship with the Protected Structure at Nos. 132-134 James's Street has also been carefully considered. The approved redevelopment immediately adjoining these buildings establishes a significantly altered urban context within which the proposed substation will be experienced. As illustrated on the submitted architectural drawings and photomontages, the scale, height and massing of the proposed development are comparable with other recently approved and existing development in the vicinity and do not introduce an incongruous form into the streetscape.

Whilst the development will alter the visual character of Steeven’s Lane, the quality of its architectural treatment and massing strategy ensure that this represents a positive contribution to the visual environment.

7.0 Conservation Approach and Recommendations

7.1 General Principles

The conservation approach underpinning the proposal is guided by the principles of minimum intervention, contextual sensitivity and material authenticity, and has been developed with close regard to the conservation policies set out in the Dublin City Development Plan and the guidelines issued by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Central to the conservation philosophy is the principle that new development within or adjacent to areas of historic significance should be clearly legible as of its own time - neither mimicking historic forms in a pastiche manner nor imposing an architectural language wholly indifferent to its surroundings - but instead seeking a considered dialogue between the new and the existing. The selection of red brick as the primary material directly reflects this principle, drawing on the dominant material of the historic industrial context without replicating it superficially. It is recommended that the precise brick specification, including colour, texture, coursing and mortar joint profile, be agreed with the local Conservation Officer prior to construction commencement, to ensure alignment with the historic brick palette of the Guinness complex and the wider Steeven's Lane streetscape. Ongoing engagement with Dublin City Council's Conservation Officer throughout the design development and construction process is strongly advised.

7.2 Recommended Design Approach

As detailed in the accompanying Architectural Design Statement, the design approach is one that maintains and strengthens the architectural ambition already established at this stage of the design process, whilst ensuring that detail and specification are developed with the rigour that a site of this historic sensitivity demands. The conceptual design narrative underpinning the triangular facade patterning should be carried through consistently into the detailed design stage, resolved with craft and technical precision. The transition between the warm red brick of the lower elements and the dark metal cladding of the upper volume must be detailed as a clean, deliberate and architecturally considered junction. The metal composite cladding specification should ensure a consistency of tone, texture and reflectivity that complements the material quality of the brick below, with a dark anthracite or graphite finish considered most appropriate. The vehicular access gate should be developed as an integral component of the overall architectural composition, specified in a material and finish consistent with the broader palette of the scheme. It is strongly recommended that the design team maintains close and continuous engagement with Dublin City Council's Planning and Conservation departments throughout the detailed design.

8.0 Construction Conservation Method Statement

8.1 Purpose

This Construction Conservation Method Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application for the proposed ESB 110kV Substation within the Diageo/Guinness lands at Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8. The proposed development is located within the curtilage of a number of Protected Structures (including 132, 133 & 134 James' Street) and has therefore been prepared to demonstrate the measures that will be implemented during construction to safeguard the architectural and historic significance of those structures and their setting.

The proposed development does not involve any direct alteration, demolition or intervention to the Protected Structures themselves. The purpose of this Method Statement is to ensure that construction activities are carefully managed to avoid inadvertent damage to adjacent historic fabric and to preserve the character and integrity of the surrounding historic environment throughout the construction period.

8.2 Conservation Principles

The construction works shall be undertaken in accordance with recognised conservation principles, including the philosophy of minimum intervention and the protection of historic fabric. Throughout the construction period:

- Where required, the developer will engage with the Conservation Officer
- No works shall be carried out to any Protected Structure unless separately authorised.
- Existing historic boundary walls and other historic features adjoining the development shall be retained and protected throughout the works.
- Temporary works shall be designed to avoid unnecessary intervention in historic fabric.
- Any accidental damage shall be immediately reported and repaired using appropriate conservation techniques and materials.
- Should previously concealed historic fabric or archaeological remains be uncovered during construction, works within the affected area shall cease immediately pending appropriate assessment and agreement with the relevant statutory authorities.

8.3 Areas of Conservation Sensitivity

The principal conservation sensitivities associated with the proposed development comprise the boundary walls and masonry structures which define the curtilage of the surrounding Protected Structures. The proposed substation is physically separated from the principal Protected Structures and their boundaries.

Potential impacts are primarily associated with construction activities, including excavation works, operation of heavy plant, temporary loading adjacent to boundaries, vibration, accidental impact and general site operations.

8.4 Protection Measures During Construction

Prior to commencement of construction, any historic boundary walls and other identified heritage features adjacent to the works shall be inspected and their existing condition recorded.

During construction:

- Temporary protective fencing shall be erected where necessary to establish exclusion zones adjacent to any historic masonry.
- No materials, plant, spoil or site compounds shall be stored against or immediately adjacent to to boundary walls.
- Temporary works shall not be fixed into any historic masonry.
- Heavy plant shall operate under the supervision of suitably experienced personnel when working adjacent to conservation-sensitive areas.
- Dust suppression measures shall be employed throughout the construction period to minimise soiling of adjacent historic masonry.
- Cement washout, fuel storage and chemical storage shall be located away from historic structures and appropriate pollution prevention measures implemented.

8.5 Vibration Management

Construction activities shall be planned to minimise vibration affecting adjacent Protected Structures and historic boundary walls.

Where practicable:

- Low vibration construction techniques shall be adopted in preference to percussive methods.
- Saw cutting shall be used in place of impact breaking wherever feasible.
- Heavy compaction adjacent to historic boundaries shall be avoided.
- Appropriately sized construction plant shall be selected having regard to the proximity of heritage assets.
- Construction activities shall be continuously monitored by the Contractor, and where works occur in close proximity to historic masonry, vibration monitoring shall be undertaken where considered necessary by the Project Engineer.

Should evidence of movement, cracking or distress be observed, works shall cease immediately within the affected area until the cause has been investigated and appropriate mitigation measures implemented.

8.6 Existing Condition Surveys and Monitoring

Prior to commencement of construction, a comprehensive photographic condition survey shall be undertaken of all adjacent historic boundary walls and conservation-sensitive structures.

The survey shall include:

- General photographic record.
- Existing defects, cracking and areas of weathering.
- Existing structural condition where visible.

Regular inspections shall be undertaken throughout the construction period, particularly following excavation works or other significant construction activities adjacent to conservation-sensitive areas. Any changes in condition shall be recorded and investigated as necessary.

Upon completion of the works, a final inspection shall be undertaken to confirm that no adverse impacts have occurred.

8.7 Installation of Underground ESB Infrastructure

The proposed development includes the installation of underground ESB cable infrastructure within areas adjoining the curtilage of Protected Structures. The proposed ESB cable trench extends into the zone of notification for RMP DU018-474 (St James's Church) and the associated National Monument, St James's Graveyard (DU018-020346), which originated in the 12th century. It is noted that the recommendations of Section 9 of the Archaeology Report shall be implemented along with any recommendations relating to conservation.

Installation of these services shall be carefully managed to ensure that excavation works do not adversely affect adjacent historic fabric. Excavation adjacent to historic boundary walls shall be undertaken in a controlled manner using appropriately sized plant, with excavation lengths limited where necessary to maintain ground stability.

Where excavations occur in close proximity to historic masonry or existing boundary structures, the need for temporary support, shoring or other protective measures shall be assessed by the Project Engineer prior to commencement of works.

The location of underground services shall be accurately coordinated in advance of construction to minimise unnecessary excavation and disturbance. On completion of the installation works, all disturbed areas shall be reinstated to match existing finishes and levels, ensuring that the historic setting and character of the surrounding Protected Structures is fully maintained.

8.8 Completion of Works

Upon completion of construction, all temporary protection measures shall be carefully removed and all conservation-sensitive boundaries inspected.

Any accidental damage arising during the works shall be repaired using materials and workmanship appropriate to the historic character of the affected structure. The completed development shall preserve the architectural significance and setting of the adjoining Protected Structures while allowing the continued evolution and operation of this important strategic infrastructure within the historic Diageo complex.

9.0 Conclusion

The proposed 110kV Substation at Steeven's Lane, Dublin 8, represents a carefully considered response to one of the city's most historically layered and architecturally significant urban landscapes. The proposal draws on the rich industrial heritage of the Guinness and Diageo complex, the institutional significance of Dr. Steevens' Hospital, and the broader historic character of the Liberties and Kilmainham area, to inform an architectural approach that is both contextually grounded and functionally resolved. The development's primary material of red brick, its conceptually driven triangular facade patterning referencing the transformation and stepping down of electrical power, and its considered massing strategy collectively demonstrate that infrastructure of a critical and inherently utilitarian nature can nonetheless achieve a meaningful standard of architectural and urban quality. The physical and visual impacts of the proposal have been assessed and found to be acceptable within the context of the site's historic setting, with the treatment of the western facade making a positive contribution to the public realm along Steeven's Lane. The conservation approach is consistent with the principles of minimum intervention, material authenticity and contextual sensitivity, and aligns with the policies of the Dublin City Development Plan and the guidelines of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Subject to engagement with Dublin City Council's Conservation Officer and the careful development of the detailed design in accordance with the recommendations set out in this report, it is considered that the proposed substation represents an exemplary approach to the integration of critical energy infrastructure within a sensitive historic urban context, and that the proposal merits the support of the relevant statutory authorities in the granting of planning permission.