

**C O U R T N E Y • D E E R Y**  
ARCHAEOLOGY & CULTURAL HERITAGE

**Proposed Residential Development**

**Spencer Dock North,**

**Block 2,**

**Spencer Dock,**

**Dublin 1.**

**Archaeological Desk Study**

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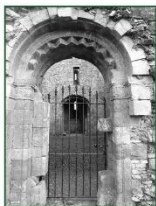
Pre-Planning Assessment

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For Spencer Place Development Co. Ltd

27<sup>th</sup> March 2019





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the archaeological heritage issues with respect to a development site at Spencer Place North, Block 2, Spencer Dock, Dublin 1, located at the junction of Sheriff Street Upper and New Wapping Street.

There are no recorded archaeological monuments located within or in the vicinity of the proposed development site and the site lies outside of the historic core for Dublin City (RMP DU018-020, c. 180m south). A detailed documentary and cartographical review was undertaken, which indicated that until the North Lotts area was reclaimed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the subject site lay within the mudflats on the north side of the Liffey estuary. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards the site formed part of the industrial docklands, though the site itself remained a vacant lot for much of this time, with only a brief period as a timber yard at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There is considerable potential within this area for the discovery of archaeological sites, features or deposits pre-dating the 18<sup>th</sup> century reclamation works. Previous archaeological investigations in the immediate vicinity in 2003 and 2006 yielded significant results, primarily the discovery of Late Mesolithic and Middle Neolithic fish traps preserved beneath the reclamation deposits.

The northern half of the proposed development site has already been subject to archaeological investigation, as a condition of planning permission granted to Treasury Holdings Ltd in 2009 for the development of the North Lotts Pumping Station on the site (as part of the Spencer Dock development; Planning Ref. DD572). The archaeological potential inherent in this area was subsequently proven when waterlogged wooden remains, of possible prehistoric date, were revealed in 2011 during archaeological monitoring of bulk excavations (Licence No. 09E0375). The remains were fully excavated and recorded at the time.

The groundworks phase of works (bulk excavations) is currently being carried out as part of the permitted development (Reg. Ref. DSDZ4279/18). The works commenced in December 2018 and are expected to be finished by the end of July 2019. All of the groundworks have been monitored by an archaeologist (Rubicon Heritage Ltd) under licence number 18E0761, issued by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (a copy of the method statement was also forwarded to the Dublin City Archaeologist). To date, no features of archaeological significance have been encountered (Jean O'Dowd & James Hession, Rubicon Heritage Ltd, *pers. comm.*). Archaeological monitoring is ongoing and will continue until the completion of the groundworks. No additional mitigation is required.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. General**

This archaeological desk study has been prepared for Spencer Place Development Company Limited. It provides an assessment of the archaeological implications for a residential development at a brownfield site at Site Located at the junction of Sherriff Street Upper and New Wapping Street, Spencer Dock, Dublin 1.

### **1.2. Description of Development**

The Block 2 proposed development occupies the corner of Sheriff Street Upper (to the north) and New Wapping Street (to the east), on the north side of the River Liffey. The plot measures approximately 1.1 hectares, with the DART Underground Reservation Strip running along its west side.

The proposed development site lies within the North Lotts and Grand Canal Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The SDZ was designated in 2012 and a planning scheme for the zone was published by Dublin City Council in 2014. The 66-hectare SDZ extends north and south of the River Liffey, with the proposed development site falling within the northern sector, in a strategic location adjoining the National Convention Centre and the Red Luas Line.

Development comprising of an alteration to permitted development Reg. Ref. DSDZ2896/18 and as amended by Reg. Ref. DSDZ4279/18 at Spencer Place North, City Block 2, Spencer Dock, Dublin 1. The proposed development seeks revisions to the permitted Block 1 and 2 to provide for an increase in the number of residential units from 349 no. to 464 no. apartment units and the change of use of the permitted aparthotel development to shared accommodation.

The proposed development will increase the height of the permitted development increasing the maximum height of Block 1 from 7 no. storeys (27.5 m) to a maximum height of 13 no. storeys (46.8m) and increasing the maximum height of Block 2 (27.5m) to 11 no. storeys (40.5m). The proposed development will also include the provision of a link bridge between Block 1 and Block 2 at 6<sup>th</sup> floor level, landscaping, the provision of communal open space, revised undercroft level, provision of roof terraces and all other associated site development works to facilitate the development.

### **1.3. Site Background**

There are no recorded archaeological (RMP) sites located within the proposed development site and the site lies outside of the historic core for Dublin City (RMP 018-020, c. 270m south). The nearest RMP site is North Wall Quay (RMP DU018-020524), which was reconstructed in the 1860s, and is located c. 180m south of the proposed development.

The proposed development will require deep excavations for an undercroft level and stabilisation purposes, with the potential to impact subsurface archaeological feature (including organic deposits) on the site (should they exist). The northern half of the proposed development site has already been subject to archaeological investigation, as a condition of planning permission granted to Treasury Holdings Ltd for the development of the North Lotts Pumping Station on the site (as part of the Spencer Dock development; Planning Ref. DD572). Archaeological monitoring and excavation were carried out in 2011 and 2012 under licence number 09E0375 and the results are discussed in Section 3.4 of this report. The archaeological revealed features in the form of two clusters of horizontal brushwoods (Figure 12.2). These sites were subsequently excavated and preserved by record (McQuade 2012). These features were revealed at a depth of 1.4m OD.

The groundworks phase of works (bulk excavations) is currently being carried out as part of the permitted development (Reg. Ref. DSDZ4279/18). The works commenced in December 2018 and are expected to be finished by the end of July 2019. All of the groundworks have been monitored by an archaeologist (Rubicon Heritage Ltd) under licence number 18E0761, issued by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (a copy of the method statement was also forwarded to the Dublin City Archaeologist). To date, no features of archaeological significance have been encountered (Jean O'Dowd & James Hession, Rubicon Heritage Ltd, *pers. comm.*). Archaeological monitoring is ongoing and will continue until the completion of the groundworks.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The archaeological desk study was based on an examination of published and unpublished documentary and cartographic sources. This report was also informed by the archaeological investigations carried out on the proposed development site (McQuade 2012), as well as those undertaken in advance of construction of the National Convention Centre and adjacent residential buildings as part of the Spencer Dock development, c. 80m west of the proposed site (McQuade, 2003 & 2007; Myles 2007).

### 2.1. Desk Study

The following sources were consulted:

- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP);
- Sites and Monuments Record (SMR);
- National Museum of Ireland (NMI) Topographical Files;
- Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017;
- North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme, Dublin City Council 2014;
- Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record;
- Excavation Bulletin ([www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie));
- Documentary and cartographic sources (see below);

- Cartographic sources consulted include de Gomme (1673), Bolton, (1717), Brooking (1728), Rocque (1757), Taylor (1816), Clarke's map of a conjectural medieval city superimposed on the 1943 edition of the Ordnance Survey (OS) map (not shown) and various editions of the OS Maps;
- Additional documentary and literary references consulted are listed in the bibliography;
- Aerial photographs were examined to confirm current land use and the brownfield nature of the site (www.osi.ie & Google Earth).

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 3.1. Site Location and Context

The site of the proposed development and its environs, in the modern Spencer Dock area, formed part of the mudflats that extended along the Liffey estuary until the large-scale reclamation projects that began in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The historical background (section 3.5) of the study area examines the evidence for settlement on the proposed site from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with archaeological evidence for earlier, prehistoric activity within the estuarine mudflats discussed in section 3.4.

#### 3.2. Recorded Archaeological Sites and Monuments

The entire 'Historic City of Dublin' has one generic reference, DU018-020; the proposed development lies outside of this area c. 180m to the north (Figure 1).

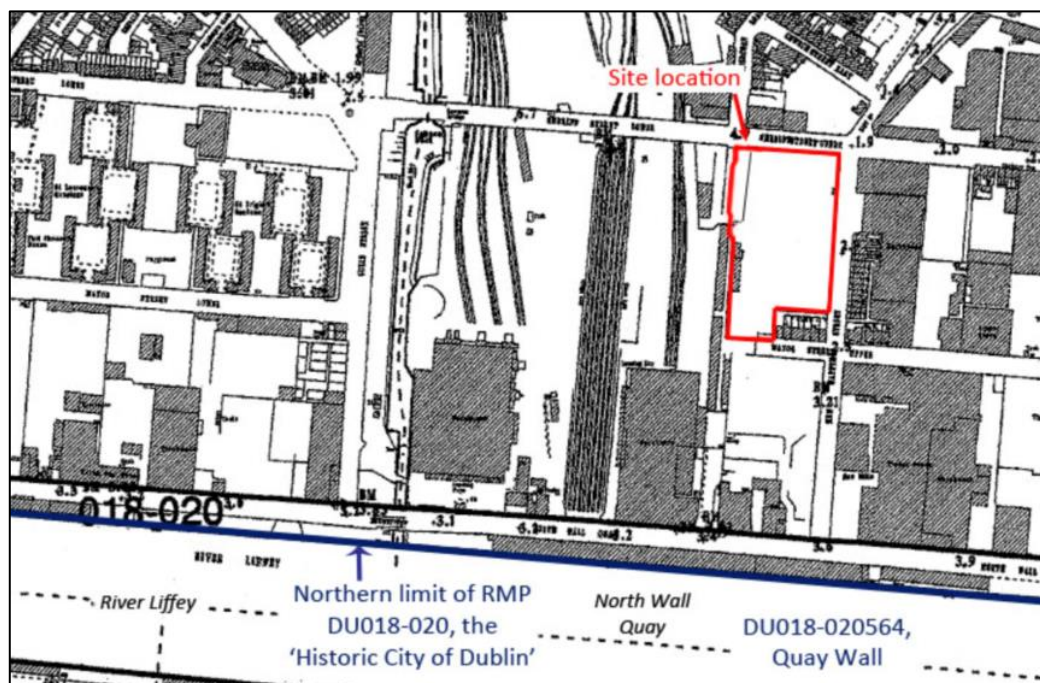


Figure 1 RMP map showing location of proposed development

All sites within the historic core are prefixed with this code and are then given their own unique number. For example, site number 524 within the historic core (the northern quay wall) is listed as DU018-020524.

The quay wall along North Wall Quay (RMP DU018-020524), which was reconstructed in the 1860s, is located c. 180m south of the proposed residential development and will not be impacted. The quay wall is described in the context of the historical development of the area in Section 3.5.

### **3.3. Stray Finds**

Only one stray find is recorded from the North Lotts area. An iron knife-shaped object of unknown date and function was uncovered during the excavation of the foundations for New Church at East Wall Road, at a depth of c. 6 feet or c. 1.8m (NMI Reg. No. 1954:168). According to the NMI record, it was sitting on the gravel bed of the former foreshore of the Liffey and 'the top portion of the excavation was filled-in ground' and during excavations 'shells etc. came to light'.

### **3.4. Prehistoric riverine activity in the Spencer Dock area**

The earliest human activity in Ireland dates from the Mesolithic period (c.8000-4000BC), with the evidence indicating a strong preference for riverine and coastal areas. In the greater Dublin area for example large numbers of Mesolithic tools have been recovered from the Malahide and Rogerstown estuaries. Middens are also recorded at Sutton to the north of Dublin Bay and at Dalkey Island to the south. Evidence for activity in the vicinity of rivers, the sea and indeed lakes probably reflects the importance of fish in the diet of Mesolithic people, a trend observed in other European countries. Furthermore, given the absence of the large mammals hunted in mainland Europe, it is even more likely that fish and fowl were important sources of meat in Mesolithic Ireland. (*After McQuade 2007*).

There is very little evidence for prehistoric activity in the Dublin city area, although a number of artefacts recovered from excavations indicate a prehistoric presence on and around the banks of the Liffey. The most significant evidence for prehistoric activity along the Liffey, however, was revealed during archaeological investigations at the Spencer Dock development site on North Wall Quay in 2004 and 2006-7, c. 160m southwest of the proposed development site (this large block of land now houses the National Convention Centre and adjacent residential buildings; Figure 2). The material uncovered had been sealed beneath 18<sup>th</sup> century reclamation deposits and post-medieval structural remains and was located at the southern end of the site, in an area formerly occupied by the Liffey estuary (McQuade, Excavations 2003:0576, Licence No. 03E0654; Myles & McQuade, Excavations 2006:634 & 2007:494, Licence no. 06E0668; some of the post-medieval remains were located c. 80m west of the proposed development; see section 3.5).

The excavations revealed evidence relating to prehistoric riverine activity in the silts which had accumulated to the south of the former shoreline of the Liffey, c. 13m–16m north of the North Wall Quay. This included the discovery in 2006/7 of Late Mesolithic fish trap remains (radiocarbon dated to 6000-5840 BC) and a mid-



Neolithic wattle fence (which was probably also part of a fish trap structure) and dated to 5980-5760BC (located at depths of -5m OD and c -4.66m OD respectively; McQuade 2007).

The Late Mesolithic fish traps excavated in 2006/7 are similar to the very well-preserved archaeological remains of up to five finely woven wooden fish traps of late Mesolithic date (6100-5720 cal. BC) identified in 2003/4 on the adjacent site to the east. The wooden remains were preserved in the silt deposit, with the activity concentrated c.1.2–1.3m to the south of the early shoreline of the river Liffey and in the estuarine waters to the south at an average depth of -5m OD (McQuade, 2005).

The discovery of the first fish traps in 2003/4 was of international significance as they were the earliest dated examples recorded in either Ireland or the UK. They provided the first definitive evidence for the use of fish traps in Ireland during the Mesolithic period. The subsequent discovery of another Late Mesolithic fish trap nearby illustrates that the Late Mesolithic population of the Dublin area were, over a period of up to 200 years, fishing along a 70m stretch of the Liffey intertidal zone in the area currently known as Spencer Dock. The remains of the large wooden Middle Neolithic fish trap further indicates that several millennia later, the occupants of the surrounding area were once again fishing along this part of the Liffey estuary (McQuade 2007). Although no evidence for prehistoric settlement was uncovered at the site, the people who constructed and used the fish traps must have been living nearby.

There is tantalising evidence of further waterlogged wooden remains of possible prehistoric date on the proposed development site itself, though unfortunately no radiocarbon dates were available at the time of writing. They were uncovered during archaeological monitoring of bulk excavations by Archaeological Development Services (ADS) Ltd in 2011/2012 in advance of the planned North Lotts pumping station on the present proposed development site (Figure 2).

The remains comprised two clusters of horizontal brushwoods that were identified in the sandy silt deposit at levels of between -1.39m and -1.43m OD, which is significantly closer to present ground level than the remains found on the NCC / Spencer Dock site. The arrangement of the surviving wood pieces did not retain the original form of the structures from which they came. In addition, there were no *in situ* pegs and none of the pieces could be described as stakes. Nonetheless, the remains may represent parts of larger structures, possibly fish-traps that had been damaged and displaced by the tide (McQuade 2012; Licence No. 09E0375).

All of the remains were preserved by record by means of archaeological excavation (McQuade 2012), though post-excavation analysis was not completed, due to funding problems on the part of the developer (*Pers. Comm.* Eoin Halpin, ADS Ltd, June 2015).

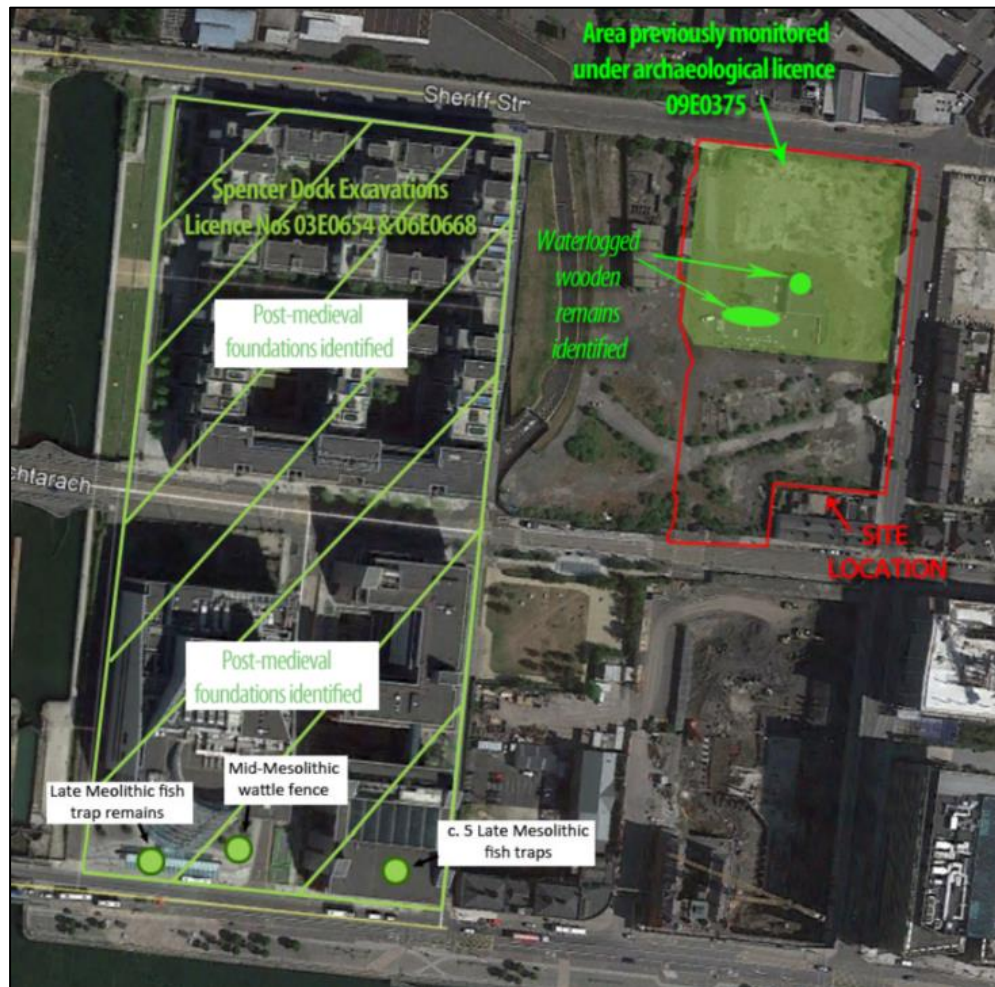


Figure 2 Aerial photograph showing site location and relevant previous archaeological investigations in the immediate vicinity

### 3.5. Historical development of the Spencer Dock area, 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (after Myles 2007)

#### 3.5.1 Introduction

The primary source for the early history of the area is the *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin (CARD)*, the earlier volumes of which were compiled by Sir John Gilbert in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The *CARD* volumes record the activities of the Municipal Corporation of Dublin and, from 1708 onwards, the Ballast Office, which elected its committee of directors from the City Assembly.

The other historical sources used are primarily cartographic in nature. They include the 'Map of the Strand on the North Side of the Channel of the Liffey' of 1717 (known as 'Bolton's Map'; Figure 4), a pictorial representation of the notionally reclaimed area drawn up by J. Macklin during the mayoralty of Thomas Bolton and later maps drawn up for the Wide Streets Commissioners (WSC). Other maps consulted were Bernard de Gomme's *The city and suburbs of Dublin*, 1673 (Figure 3); Charles Brooking's *A map of the city and suburbs of Dublin*, which also contains *A Prospect of the city from the North* (1728, Figures 6, 7); John

Rocque's *Plan of the city of Dublin and the environs* of 1757 (Figure 5; his better-known *Exact survey of the city and suburbs of Dublin* published in 1756 stops a few hundred meters short of the Spencer Dock area); John Taylor's *Map of the Environs of Dublin* (1816, Figure 8); and the *Modern plan of the city and environs of Dublin, including the Grand and Royal Canals, new docks, etc.*, published in *Wilson's Dublin Directory* in 1798 (not shown). Various editions of the Ordnance Survey were consulted for the later period of the site's development (Figures 10-13).

Evidence for post-medieval activities uncovered during archaeological investigations in the Spencer Dock / North Lotts area has also been incorporated into the historical background.

### 3.5.2 Early Reclamation Efforts

The relatively settled state of Ireland after the succession of James II (r. 1685–88) acted as a catalyst to the continued expansion of urban centres beyond the medieval walls. New ground for building was required to ease the accommodation situation within the city of Dublin, and this coincided with the necessity of keeping the harbour open to shipping (the silting up process had always been a problem for the medieval port). Both of these requirements would act as the impetus for the reclamation of lands along the River Liffey in the ensuing centuries.

Two maps produced by Sir Bernard de Gomme in November 1673 depict the city and harbour in the period immediately prior to the reclamation of the slob lands to the northeast of the city. The map of the harbour was produced as a supplement to the better-known city map (Figure 3) and included a contemporary account of the approaches to the port. Of particular interest is the description of the area occupied by today's Gardiner and Lower Abbey Streets as 'marsh ground,' while the slope to the north towards Mountjoy Square and Summerhill is depicted as 'the heights.'

The general area of the proposed development site is located among the tortuous channels of the Liffey, where areas of mud may have been exposed at spring tides (Figure 3). The situation was further complicated by the estuary of the River Tolka, which emerged from the northwest, the confluence of both rivers leaving only one area of high ground, Clontarf Island, exposed at high tides. The shoreline depicted by de Gomme would appear to start from a small promontory in the general area of the Abbey Theatre, continuing along a line which today extends along Amiens Street as far as the Five Lamps before turning slightly to the north between Ballybough Road and North Strand Road to Luke Kelly Bridge (over the Tolka) and on to Fairview Strand (De Courcy 1996, 270).

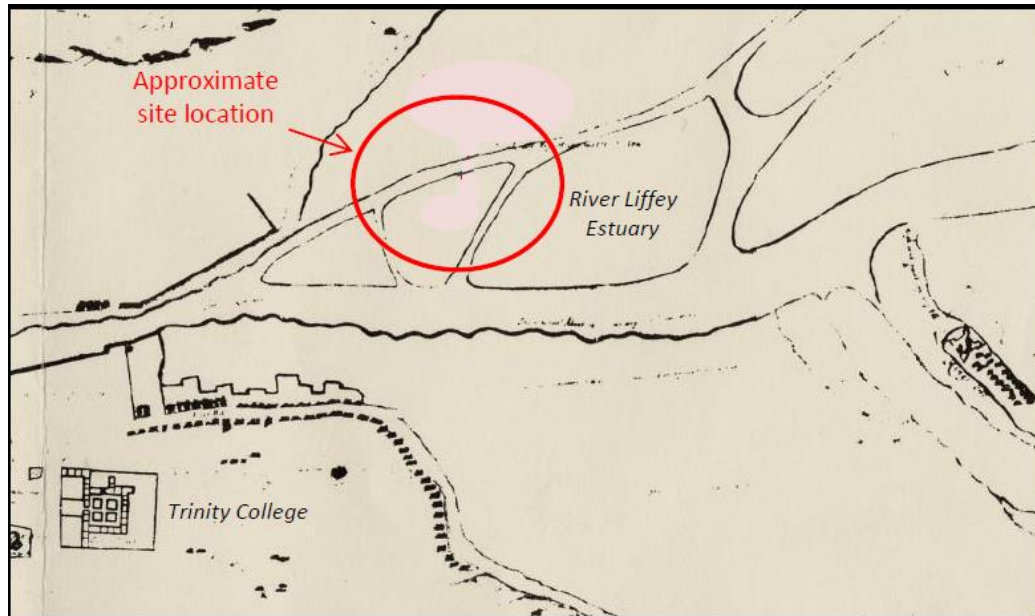


Figure 3 Detail from de Gomme's map of Dublin (1673)

The period leading up to the Confederate Wars of the 1640s saw interest grow in the financial possibilities of reclamation work along the south side of the river. This is reflected in the number of disputes between the City Assembly and prominent property speculators of the day. While reclamation work initially focused on the opening of a direct and secure route to Ringsend, the need for a secure harbour to advance the interest of the city's merchants and traders became paramount. But William Hawkins's construction of a wall along the river as far as the present-day Townsend Street in 1662–63 was to have an adverse effect on the northern side of the river, where the force of the incoming tide would redirect the flow, causing the formation of sand banks and shallow streams that were even more hazardous to shipping (*CARD* vi, 402).

In 1682 the City Assembly commissioned a survey of the area stretching eastwards to the present-day East Wall Road. As the shoreline had been included in the riding of the franchises as early as 1488, any land reclaimed was ostensibly in the hands of the city, though private development would be encouraged with preferential rents and leases. This resulted in the division of a notional area comprising 'the strand between Mabbot's Mill [in the area of Connolly Station] and the Furlong of Clontarf' into 152 lots, which were to be granted to the mayor, recorder, aldermen, sheriffs, sheriffs' peers and remainder of the common council, along with one lot each to the clerk of the Tholsel and the city surveyor. The lots were to be drawn from a hat after the lord mayor and recorder had made their choice, and the rent was set at 12 pence sterling per annum (*CARD* v, 328).

The area was still subject to flooding at high tide and it was a condition of the allocations that each owner would protect his lot against inundation. The obligation 'to take in and improve' the plots does not appear to have secured the new land from the sea, however, as four years later the assembly annulled the granting

of the strand 'forasmuch as there were great disorders in doing the same' (*CARD v*, 383–4). This decision may indicate that such a huge reclamation undertaking was beyond the efforts of the individual leaseholders and that a more systematic effort would be necessary, perhaps backed by municipal authority, in order to save and reclaim the area from the sea. The city would not, however, be in a position to support such an undertaking for another generation and by the close of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it is highly unlikely that any development had taken place in the lands east of the present North Strand Road.

### 3.5.3 Reclamation during the 18<sup>th</sup> century

Jurisdiction over tidal waters had for a long time been a contentious issue in Dublin. Ostensibly vested in the crown and exercised on the crown's behalf by the lord high admiral, the medieval city charters had given the city the right to construct quays and other structures associated with trade along the river's banks. As trade developed in the post-medieval period, there was a growing demand for the city to also take over responsibility for the port and navigation. Private attempts to establish a port authority had, however, been frustrated by the crown's claim to the foreshore and harbour. Finally, in 1707, the city effectively bribed the lord high admiral with an annual payment of 100 yards of Irish sail cloth and an act was passed to establish the Ballast Office.

The reclamation of the area between the city and Ringsend has been well documented in the secondary sources (for example, de Courcy 1996, 333–5). It was accelerated by the assembly's granting of an estate along the south strand in 1713 to Sir John Rogerson, who immediately began to enclose his new land with a massive sea wall, thus relieving the Ballast Office of the responsibility. Plans were soon afoot to extend Rogerson's wall out into the bay to provide safer entry for shipping into the port. The Ballast Office now concentrated its efforts on the northern bank of the river, and as early as May 1712, work commenced along the line of the present-day Eden and Custom House Quays. By October, 686 kiskes (baskets filled with stone) had been laid down, approximately as far as the western end of the North Wall (*CARD vi*, *passim*). A second wall was built to the rear of these kiskes during the 1720s with further filling material added.

The construction of retaining sea walls was necessary not only for land reclamation purposes, but also to vastly improve the river and port for shipping and trade. Prior to this time, anyone trying to enter Dublin had to navigate the treacherous and unpredictable sandbanks at the mouth of the Liffey. These hazards were created by the confluence of the river Dodder on the southside and the Tolka on the northside and untold numbers of vessels had run aground upon these banks. Three huge restraining walls were created on the north (North Wall) and south shores (South Wall), with a third wall to the city's north east that would restrain the Tolka.

As the northern wall began to extend further into the eastern slob lands, the City Assembly ordered that the area between the Tolka and the Liffey, along with the slob lands between the Tolka and Clontarf, be re-

surveyed and this time notionally divided in 132 lots, to be known as the 'North Lots' (CARD vii, 30-34; this spelling also appears on Rocque's map of 1757, but the modern spelling 'Lotts' will henceforth be used throughout the report).

The survey was carried out by J. Macklin in 1717, and the resultant schematic map – known as Bolton's Map after the sitting lord mayor – shows both the plots themselves and the names of the initial lease holders (Figure 4). This makes it possible to ascertain that the plots located within the proposed development site were, at least initially, leased to Alderman George Fforbes, Thomas Burrows and John Holne.

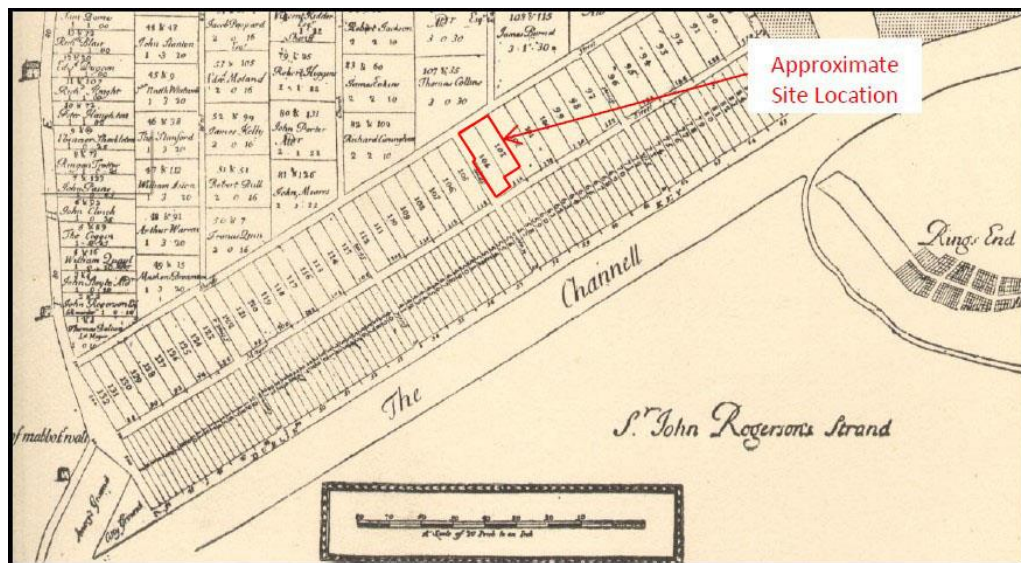


Figure 4 Detail from Bolton's Map (1717)

As well as being a practical survey document, the map demonstrates confidence in the future development of what effectively became a polder, with all of the North Lotts area neatly laid out and apportioned. However, to best appreciate what the City Assembly intended, it is necessary to examine John Rocque's *Plan of the city of Dublin and the environs*, which was published in the city in 1757, just as the reclamation project should have been nearing completion (Figure 5).

Rocque's map names the area as 'The North Lotts' and shows a street pattern laid out in grid form, the uniformity of which contrasts with the sprawling medieval city to the southwest. The great North Wall (depicted by Rocque as having an underlying strand extending eastwards for over half its length) fronted a wide quayside, with Mayor Street running parallel to the north. These two thoroughfares were linked by six streets, spaced at regular intervals: an unnamed street to the west, Commons Street, Guild Street, Wapping Street, Fish Street and the East Wall; the areas in between were divided into long, narrow property plots as indicated on the earlier Bolton's Map.

Further to the north lay Sheriff Street, again linked to the waterfront by connecting streets that terminated along its line. The property plots between Mayor Street and Sheriff Street – where the proposed development is situated – were twice the width of those on the waterfront, possibly to accommodate the larger houses of the new inhabitants (Figure 5). The area north of Sheriff Street is laid out in much bigger plots that were accessed from The Strand to the west and from West Road, Church Road, East Road and the East Quay, all angled northeastwards off Sheriff Street. A pool of water is depicted in the very northeast corner of the polder (not shown), with streams shown flowing through the northern part of the area, indicating the unfinished state of the reclamation work.

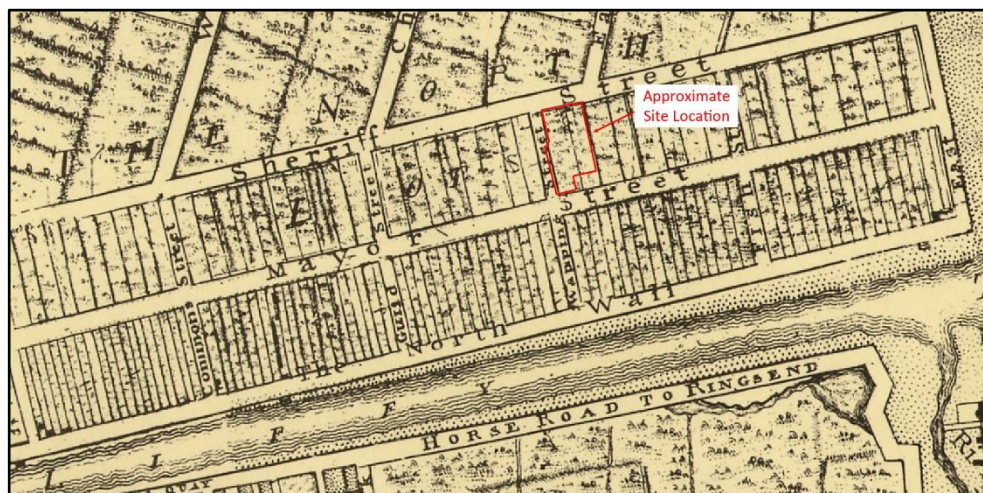


Figure 5 Detail from Rocque's map of Dublin

The majority of the street names shown on Rocque's map were simple descriptive names – The North Wall (now North Wall Quay), East Quay (now East Wall Road) and West Road – or were names associated with city governance (most of the lots were gifted to Corporation members). The latter includes Guild Street (for the Guilds from which the Corporation of Dublin was then composed), Mayor Street and Sheriff Street (both titles of office) and Commons Street (named for the City Commissioners, now Councillors, on the old Municipal Council of Dublin). Wapping Street was probably a nod to the London dock district of the same name. The reason for so-naming Fish Street is unclear: perhaps a reference to its intended use as a fish market; or after a Corporation member (there is a William Ffisher on Bolton's map); or possibly even a sole reference to riverine activities that once took place in this area. The naming of Church Road is remarkably premature, as there was no church on or in its vicinity until sometime in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is either incredibly advanced planning or perhaps a good example of how the best laid plans did not always come to fruition in the North Lotts.

In April 1724, the Ballast Committee informed the City Assembly of its financial difficulties in carrying on projects on both sides of the river simultaneously. A subsequent vote was carried to extend funding to complete the North Wall before moving on to the piling for the South Wall (CARD vii, 257–9). This vote

indicated the importance being placed on northside development at that time by the members of the assembly (many of whom were lot holders).

To a greater extent, the urban project at the North Lots was eclipsed by developments happening elsewhere in the city. From the 1740s onwards, the northside estates of Luke Gardiner had attracted those with sufficient funds to invest in property at the upper end of the market. The focus for such investment was soon to shift to the southside again following the construction of Leinster House and the development of the Fitzwilliam estate a decade later, and this area has remained the most fashionable in Dublin until the present day. The Act of Union and the resultant exodus of the fashionable classes to London emptied many of the large houses, which soon fell prey to speculative landlords, thus becoming tenements. This phenomenon was particularly evident in the Gardiner estates adjacent to the North Lotts.

The slowing demand for accommodation at the upper end of the market was probably detrimental to the development of the North Lotts and perhaps retarded the progress of the works. Charles Brooking's *A Map of the City and Suburbs of Dublin*, which included 'A Prospect of the City of Dublin from the North', purports to show the development in 1728. H. A. Gilligan (1988, 25), an authority on the port of Dublin however, considers this depiction to be premature.

Brooking's map of 1728 shows the North Wall 'Walled in but as yet overflow'd by ye Tide' (Figure 6). Brooking's prospect of the same date shows ships on the river, their reflections evident on the water behind the North Wall (Figure 7); in contrast, the area of high ground south of the Tolka appears to be well established with trees and several houses.

It would seem likely, therefore, that the impetus to reclaim the North Lotts came more from the necessity of providing a safe channel for shipping, rather than as an attempt to provide more building ground for the city. The changing political situation at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century dealt the final blow to any possibility of aristocratic or other major residential settlement on the polder; by the publication of the first edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1837, the industrial nature of the area was becoming increasingly obvious.



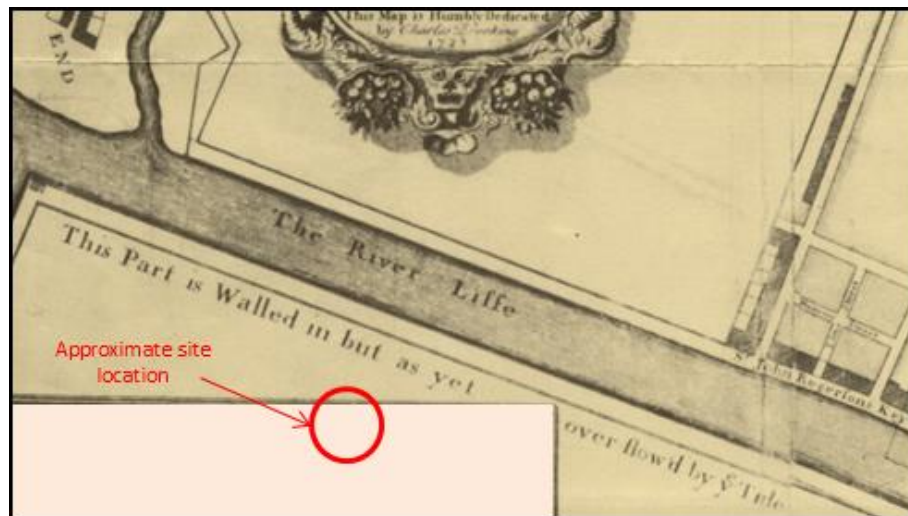


Figure 6 Detail from Brookings map of Dublin (1728)

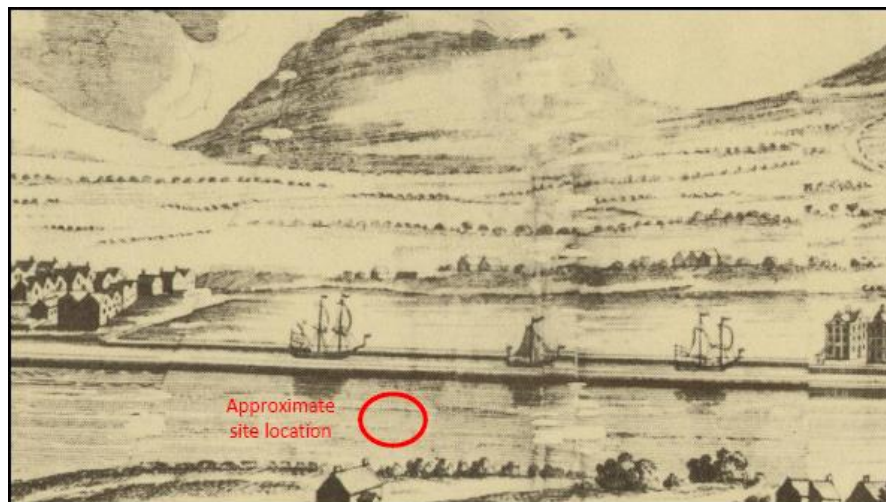


Figure 7 Detail from Brookings's map of Dublin, showing the prospect from the north (1728)

### 3.5.4 Industrial Development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The first recorded industrial activities in the North Lotts area – a windmill and the Royal Canal – are both shown on Taylor’s 1816 map, located in the vicinity (west) of the proposed development (Figure 8).

The windmill depicted on the 1816 map was located some 100m east of the mouth of the Royal Canal and its circular stone foundations were uncovered during archaeological investigations in advance of the National Convention Centre / Spencer Dock (NCC) development in 2003/4 (McQuade Excavations 2003:0576, Licence No. 03E0654).

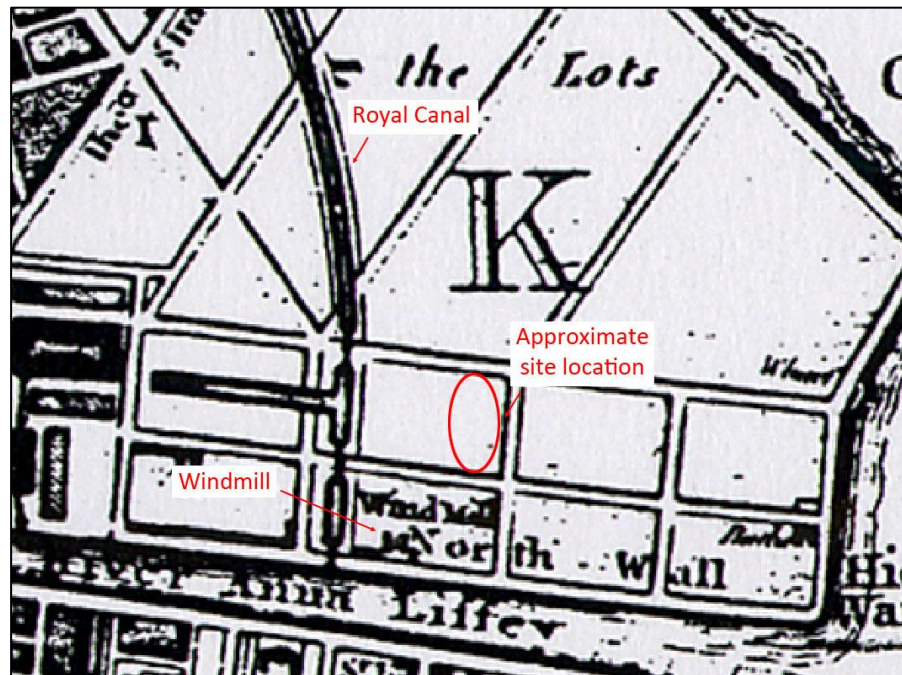
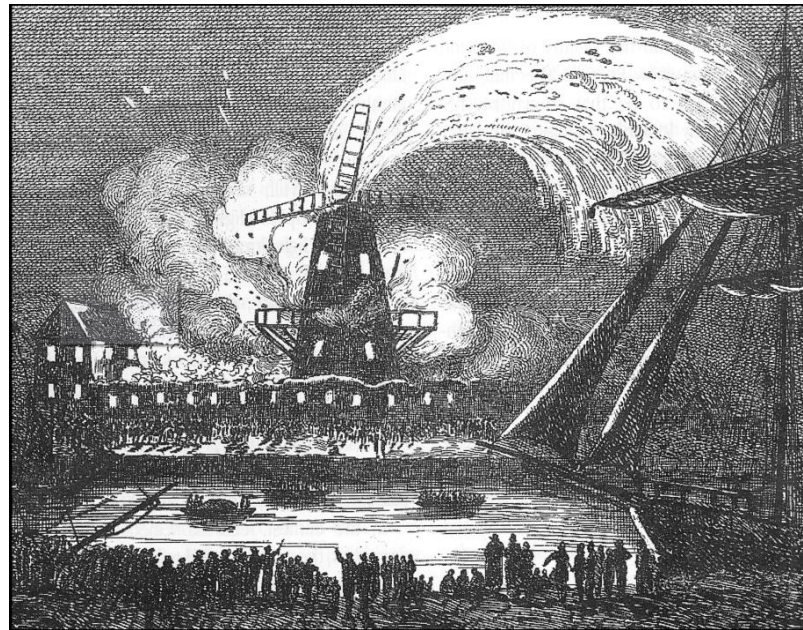


Figure 8 Detail from Taylor's map of Dublin (1816)

In December 1810, *The Times* reported that 'a dreadful fire' had broken out in the North Wall and 'the Windmill and Corn Stores were wholly consumed' within five hours (Bunbury 2009). Although the location of the corn stores is not indicated on the map, a Brocas engraving of a fire at a milling complex on the North Wall Quay of c. 1810 depicts a substantial structure just to the west of the prominent windmill (Figure 9). Further investigations at the NCC site in 2006/7 uncovered the partial remains of a substantial structure beneath the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century railway terminus in this approximate location and although there was no evidence of burning in the area excavated, it is likely that the structure formed part of the corn stores (Myles Excavations 2007:493, Licence No. 06E0668).

It is possible that the apparent discrepancy on Taylor's map (showing the windmill in situ six years after the fire) simply indicates that the survey took place when the windmill was extant and that no adjustments were made to the map prior to its publication in 1816. Alternatively, the windmill may have been reconstructed after the fire. If the latter is true then the windmill was short-lived as it is not shown on the slightly later, more detailed first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1837 (Figure 10); the site later became railway sidings and stores (De Courcy 1996, 421).



**Figure 9 A View of the Late Fire on the North Wall, Brocol (1810)**

Given the lack of detail on Taylor's map, it is instructive to compare the first six-inch edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1837 (Figure 10) to Rocque's map of 1757 (Figure 5). The maps are striking in their similarities – despite the passing of eight decades – most notable and visibly in the uniform grid pattern of the streets and the relative lack of development (this is also evident on Taylor's map). Some areas behind the East Wall are obviously still under reclamation; indeed, as late as 1835, a request was submitted to the Ballast Committee for one thousand tons of river mud to reclaim a 'low North lot' (Gilligan 1988, 19).

This state of affairs appears to have been relatively common and a result of the poor construction of the initial North Wall. The original wall was shoddily built and a constant source of vexation to landowners in the area, a fact noted by Gandon when he began work on the Custom House in the 1780s (Bunbury 2009). In 1786, Francis Tunstall, the Ballast Board's first inspector of works, proposed the demolition and reconstruction of the entire wall east of the Custom House, though nothing was done at that time. In the 1830s, William Cubitt, one of the greatest civil engineers of the day, came to much the same conclusion in a report on the North Wall's deep-water berthage capabilities. By the 1840s, not long after the first Ordnance Survey of the area, the North Wall was described as a dismal swamp and had sunk from 10 to 15 feet below the level of the roadway; the gap was filled with the refuse from the streets and the dredging of the river and there was scarcely a building of any kind left on it (Bunbury 2009).

Unsurprisingly then, little building work had been carried out in the area by 1837 and almost none at all within the proposed development site (Figure 10), a picture that is little changed by the time of the 1864 OS revised edition 5-foot town plan (not shown). The only real indication that any of the 1717 plot holders had developed their land for the intended residential use is evident in the names of two houses, 'Castle

Forbes' on the north side of Sheriff Street and 'Forbes Castle' further north on East Road', both of which are located close to the plot of Ald. George Forbes as shown on the 1717 map. There is also a small terrace of five houses fronting onto Sheriff Street, which extends partly within the proposed development site, on John Holne's plot.

The most significant difference in the area since the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century is the Royal Canal, which bisects the North Lotts and enters the Liffey between Guild and Wapping Streets (as seen on Taylor's 1816 map; Figure 8). The construction of the Royal Canal began after 1789, and the map published in *Wilson's Dublin Directory* in 1798 (not shown) depicts the connection to the Liffey through a system of locks. This work cannot, however, have been undertaken before 1806, when an appeal was made by the Royal Canal Company (RCC) for more funding to bring the canal to the river. Two berthing pools, the Royal Canal Docks, lay between the riverfront and Mayor Street and between Mayor Street and Sheriff Street, while a spur extended to the west from the northern pool (although depicted on Taylor's map of 1816, this was filled-in by 1837).

The gradual growth of industrial activities can be seen on the 1837 map, no doubt influenced by the increased trade and ease of transport at the Royal Canal Docks. This is particularly evident in the cluster of buildings arrayed along the canal banks and in the plots fronting the North Wall quay, including several Vinegar Works and a Vitriol Works (the latter a short distance south of the proposed development site; Figure 10).

The canal enjoyed a relatively short period of success before the advent of the railways in Ireland in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. An association between railway and canal occurred in 1845, when the Midland Great Western Railway Company (MGWR) acquired a majority interest in the RCC with the intention of closing the canal and running the tracks along the bottom, thus saving on land purchase and surveying costs. The RCC had, however, acquired enough land for the railway to run alongside the canal, at least initially, and the MGWR kept it open without investing further in its operation.

As happened elsewhere, however, the development of the railway system eventually rendered the canals practically obsolete. By the 1870s, British coal was heating houses throughout Ireland and although the MGWR were making considerable money from this business, the Royal Canal Docks were simply too small to accommodate the huge new coal ships and the company was losing ground to the Grand Canal Docks on the south (Bunbury 2009).

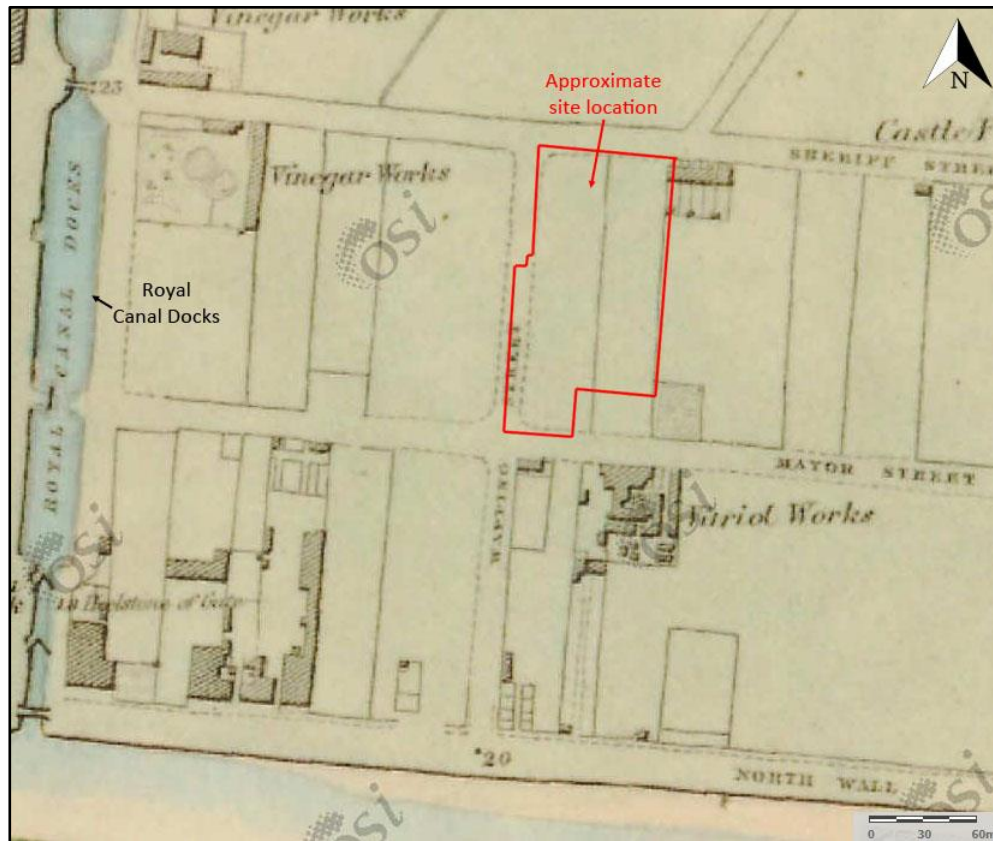


Figure 10 Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey Six-inch map (1837)

The increase in passenger traffic to the North Wall was promoted by the use of larger, faster steam-powered vessels, which required deeper berthage than that provided at the railway terminus. Although the port was to develop deeper berthages down river, the problem of shallow water had been anticipated by 1842, when wooden wharves were constructed against the quay wall for 500 yards (c. 457m) on either side of the opening of the Grand Canal Docks (Gilligan 1988, 125). Increased competition for berthage led to the extension of the timber wharves from the Custom House Dock to the present-day Castleforbes Road by the early 1860s (Gilligan 1988, 125–6), but the problem of berthing at the North Wall at low water remained an issue.

The solution involved the construction of a new masonry quay wall several meters further out into the river. The potential (and real) profits available from the coal trade also undoubtedly acted as an impetus for the rebuilding of the North Wall Quay (RMP DU018-020564; Figure 1), which was finally and formidably rebuilt. By the late 1860s, a section 740 feet (c. 225m) long had been built west of the junction of the North and East Walls for the use of ‘deeply laden vessels from foreign ports with cargoes of grain and timber,’ which required sixteen to eighteen feet at low water (Gilligan 1988, 129).

The new dock was planned and built and in 1872, the canal bank between Sheriff Street and the North Strand Road was developed by the company, which invested £71,961 in the new wharves and cranes (Figure

10). The new facility enabled coasters of up to 500 tons to discharge coal directly into railway wagons. The lord lieutenant, Earl Spencer, performed the opening ceremony on April 15, 1873 and gave his name to the wharves and sidings. That same year, the four major railway companies united to form a general railway centre at the North Wall (i.e. the MGWR, along with the Great South Western, Great Northern and the London and Northwestern Railway Company (LNWR); the LNWR had formerly operated out of Kingstown, now Dun Laoghaire). This was completed more than ten years later when the so-called Loop Line was constructed connecting Westland-Row (Pearse Street) with Amiens Street (Connolly Station).

By the time of the publication of the second edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1876 (Figure 10), the impact of the new railway lines and associated works can be seen in the area. To the immediate west of the proposed development site, extensive railway marshalling yards extend back from the quays, most tracks running alongside the canal and across the north inner city, with a connection along West Road to the Belfast line and a spur extending back to the area now occupied by the Point Depot. Although the proposed development site itself remained unoccupied (except for its western edge, which encroaches slightly into the small residential terrace), the surrounding area was becoming increasingly developed. Much of the North Lotts area south of Sheriff Street housed industrial works, with various Saw Mills, a Vinegar and Charcoal Works, an 'Old Stores'.

A small island of residential terraces and a church (enclosed by the two railway lines, East Road and Sheriff Street) had been constructed immediately north of the proposed development site on the opposite side of the street. Although the church (named St Barnabas' Church on later OS edition maps) was demolished in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its masonry foundations were uncovered during archaeological investigations of the site in 2005 (Dehaene Excavations 2005:477; Licence No. 05E0080).

Among the buildings that had been constructed along the Quay in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century were the LNWR Hotel, the Iarnród Éireann Freight Offices and the Wool Store. The hotel is depicted on the 1907 edition OS map (Figure 11). In 1883, increasing passenger traffic had encouraged the company to purchase the Prince of Wales Hotel on the junction of (old) Wapping Street and North Wall Quay. A new hotel was constructed behind the existing one, which was soon demolished. The new building was extended to the North Wall and renamed the Northwestern Hotel. It stands today as the Former British Rail Hotel, now Coras Iompar Éireann offices. Increased traffic also required increased storage for goods awaiting discharge or loading and new expansive Goods Sheds are depicted along the south side of North Wall Quay.

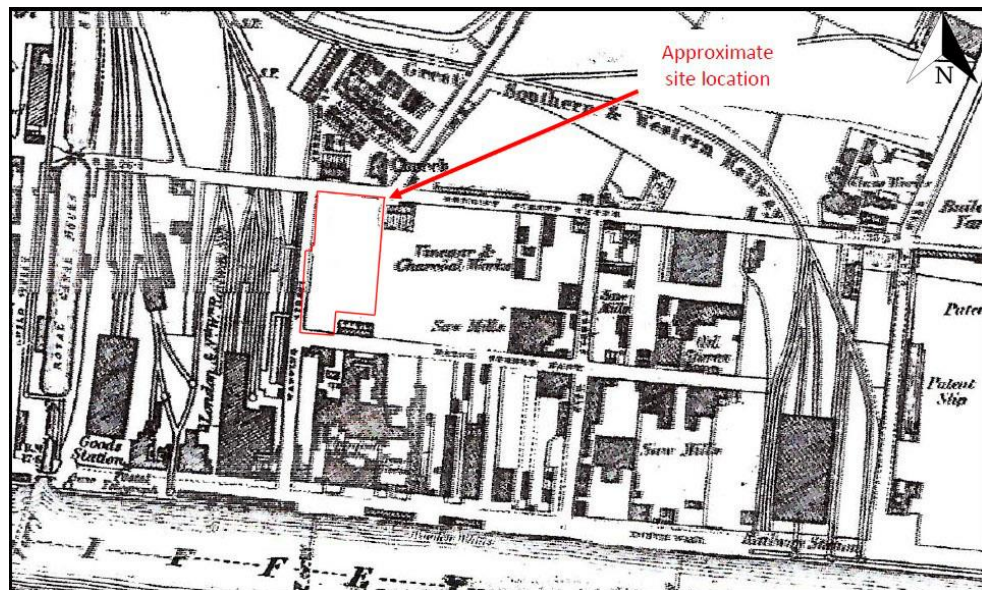


Figure 11 Extract from the revised edition Ordnance Survey Six-inch map (1876)

### 3.5.5 20th-century decline

The expansion of the railway works in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century had resulted in the closure of the original Wapping Street, with New Wapping Street created further east and now aligned with the junction of East Road and Sheriff Street. The line of the street can still be seen on the 1907 edition map (and the north and south ends remain evident today), with the middle section occupied by additional long, narrow sheds. The proposed development site, which lies immediately east of the large railway works, is in use for the first time; it houses a large timber yard, one of several in the area (Figure 12). With the exception of a narrow L-shaped building along the north and west sides and a small structure in the centre, the rest of the plot is open yard. A small terrace of houses is depicted to the southeast of the yard, beyond the proposed development site, with another terrace on the opposite side of New Wapping Street. In the surrounding area, two of the industries named on the map are listed in the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record, a Bonded Stores and a smithy (DCIHR 018-08-089 & 018-08-093; see Section 3.6; Figure 12).

The entire North Lotts area to the east of Spencer Dock is now dominated by the railway works, with a network of railway lines, sidings, goods stations and sheds. The large plots in between are almost entirely given over to industrial activities. In addition to the numerous timber yards, there is an iron works, a slate and tile yard, a coal yard and saw mills. Other structures, such as the cattle pens, post office, corn stores and tanks, are directly connected to the use of this area as a bustling transport hub in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

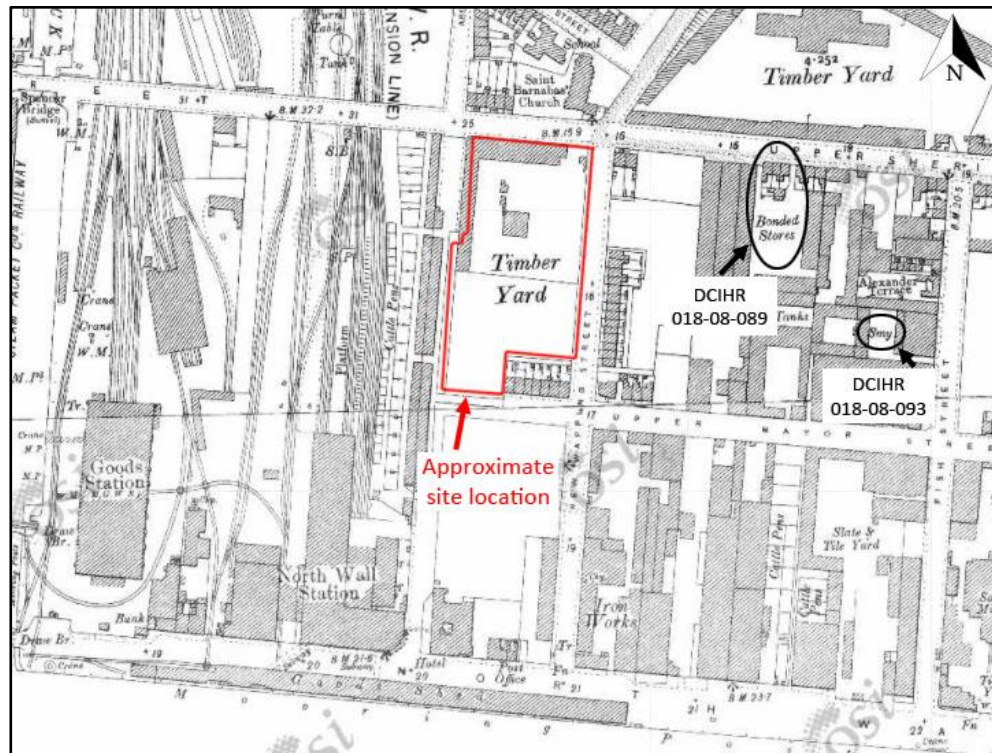


Figure 12 Extract from the revised edition Ordnance Survey 25-inch map (1907-8)

The development of the Alexandra Basin downstream of the North Wall enabled ships of greater tonnage to discharge their cargoes at all stages of the tide, thus restricting the amount of traffic docking at the railway terminus. Coal continued to be discharged along Spencer Dock, primarily to feed the railway locomotives. The outbreak of the First World War brought renewed passenger activity to the immediate area, and the railway yards were used for troop movements. Railway workers still refer to a railway siding alongside Church Road as 'The Dardanelles.'

The political instability at the beginning of the 1920s led to the military zoning of the area, and there is much local folklore concerning IRA activity (little of it substantiated). The Northwestern Hotel on the quays, for example, seems to have been a haunt of British intelligence officers, while the tunnels connecting the passenger station and the quayside were used to surreptitiously evacuate casualties (Myles 2000). Independence saw the passenger terminal and hotel handed back to the LNWR (which had become the London, Midland and Scottish Railway Company in 1921) and the goods station returned to the MGWR, later to be amalgamated into the Great Southern Railway (GSR) Company.



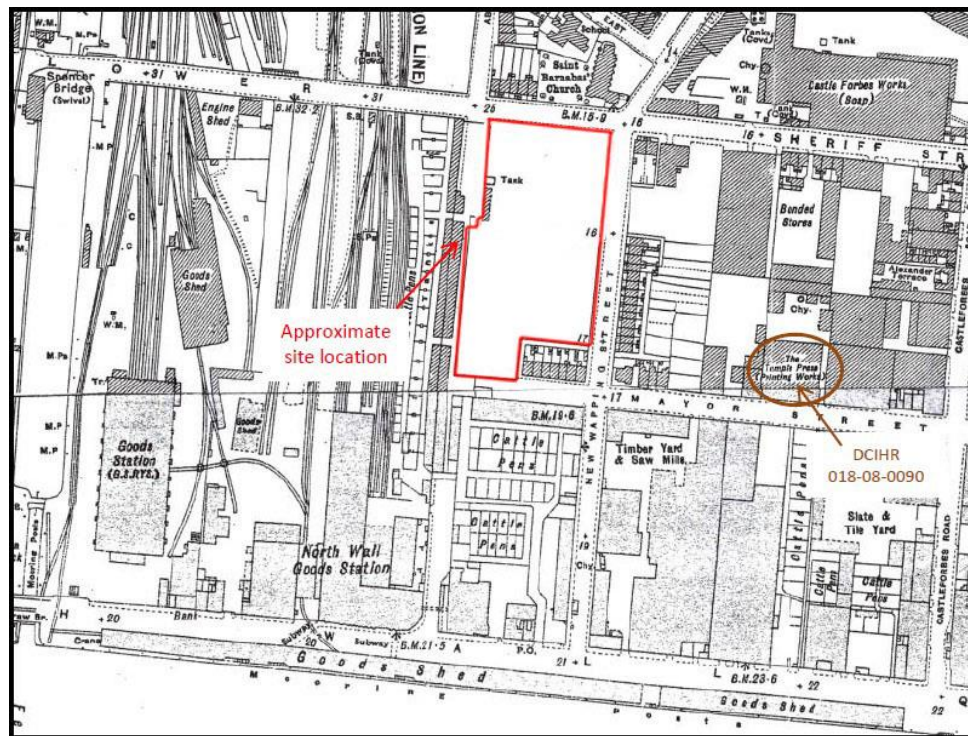


Figure 13 Extract from the revised edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map (1935-6)

As the cattle export trade grew in importance in the 1920s, the LM&S North Wall Station was converted to a freight station and cattle pens were built to the rear (on its eastern side), to the south of the proposed development site. At the site of the proposed development itself there is very little activity. The 1936 edition OS map shows that the timber yard is gone and the plot is once more almost entirely vacant, with only one small structure and a tank stand at the western plot boundary. In the surrounding area, several new factories have opened, including Castle Forbes Works (Soap) and Dublin Granaries (Corn Mill) on the north side of Sheriff Street and a Packing Case Factory and Oil Store further east along the quays. The Temple Press (Printing Works) fronting onto Mayor Street Upper c. 105m east of the proposed development, is listed in the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record (DCIHR 018-08-090; Figure 13), though it is no longer extant.

### 3.6. Industrial Heritage Sites

Three sites are identified in the Dublin City Industrial Heritage Record (DCIHR) in the vicinity of the proposed development (Figures 12, 13), only two of which are extant: a former bonded stores on Sheriff Street Upper (DCIHR Ref. 018-08-089, c. 110m east); and a former smithy on Castleforbes Road / Fish Street (DCIHR Ref. 018-08-093, c. 145m east). Neither of these structures will be affected by the proposed development.

Site	DCIHR Ref.	Description & DCIHR Appraisal
------	------------	-------------------------------

Bonded Stores	018-08-089	Built c. 1880. Now in ruinous state with only the red-brick elevation surviving. Though little survives of this former bonded stores, the attractive surviving window surrounds attest to the detailing employed in the construction of what would have been a purely functional structure. It was built to serve the bustling trade of the docklands in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century and as such is significant within the industrial heritage of the local area.
Smithy	018-08-093	The former smithy is now in use as a furniture repair shop. It is a detached triple-pile multiple bay single-storey building, built c. 1880. The structure, although altered, retains much of its original form and feature, enhanced by the textural variation created by the rubble walls, cut-stone dressings and brick surrounds. Situated in the docklands area, the building's size indicates a more substantial enterprise than the typical smithy and is a memento of an age before automotive transport, when horse power was relied on for the transport of goods and people.

The third site, a former printing works on Mayor Street Upper (DCIHR 018-08-090, c. 105m east) is depicted on the 1935-6 OS map but does not survive.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1. Historical Development of the Site

The reclamation of large areas of mudflats on the north and south sides of the Liffey to create the Docklands, largely took place between 1717 and 1760. By the 1750s, following the construction of the first North Wall, the North Lotts area was fully reclaimed and the distinctive new grid street pattern, which remains today, was laid out. During the 1790s, the Custom House, designed by James Gandon, was completed and the adjoining Custom House Docks opened for trade. The Royal Canal, linking the new docks to the Shannon was completed by 1806. However, the new railway era in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in both the demise of the canal and the expansion of the docks for both freight and passenger trade. From the 1850s onwards, the North Lotts became a busy international port, with its plots occupied by timber yards, saw mills, cattle yards, vinegar works and associated industries.

Many of the more inland plots located away from the river fronts remained undeveloped until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (and in some cases into the later 19<sup>th</sup> century). The cartographic sources indicate that the proposed development site was a vacant lot for much of its existence. Although it did enjoy a brief period as a large timber yard at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the majority of the 'yard' was open, with structures only along its north and west sides and one small structure in the centre.

#### **4.2. Archaeological Potential of the Site**

Although there are no recorded archaeological sites located within or in close proximity to the proposed development site, previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity have yielded significant results, primarily the discovery of Late Mesolithic and Middle Neolithic fish traps on the NCC / Spencer Dock development site, c. 160m southwest of the proposed development. The archaeological potential inherent in this area was proven in 2011 when waterlogged wooden remains, of possible prehistoric date, were revealed during archaeological monitoring of bulk excavations on the northern portion of the proposed Block 2 development site, at a depth of only c. -1.4m OD (McQuade 2012, Licence No. 09E0375).

#### **4.3. Recommendations**

The groundworks phase of works (bulk excavations) is currently being carried out as part of the permitted development (Reg. Ref. DSDZ4279/18). The works commenced in December 2018 and are expected to be finished by the end of July 2019. All of the groundworks have been monitored by an archaeologist (Rubicon Heritage Ltd) under licence number 18E0761, issued by the National Monuments Service of the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (a copy of the method statement was also forwarded to the Dublin City Archaeologist). To date, no features of archaeological significance have been encountered (Jean O'Dowd & James Hession, Rubicon Heritage Ltd, *pers. comm.*). Archaeological monitoring is ongoing and will continue until the completion of the groundworks.

No additional mitigation is required.

The recommendations made in this report are subject to approval of the National Monuments Service (DCHG) and the Dublin City Archaeologist.

Attention is drawn to the relevant portions of national monuments legislation (1930-2004; Appendix 1), which describes the responsibility of the site owners to report the finding of archaeological items if any should be discovered during construction works.

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### **Online Resources**

[www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)

[www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie)

[www.dublincity.ie](http://www.dublincity.ie)

[www.osimaps.ie](http://www.osimaps.ie)

[www.myplan.ie](http://www.myplan.ie)

Google Earth

## Appendix 1 National Monuments Legislation

Archaeological sites have the protection of the national monuments legislation (Principal Act 1930; Amendments 1954, 1987, 1994 and 2004). In the 1987 Amendment of Section 2 of the Principal Act (1930), the definition of a national monument is specified as:

- any artificial or partly artificial building, structure or erection or group of such buildings, structures or erections;
- any artificial cave, stone or natural product, whether forming part of the ground, that has been artificially carved, sculptured or worked upon or which (where it does not form part of the place where it is) appears to have been purposely put or arranged in position;
- any, or any part of any, prehistoric or ancient (i.) tomb, grave or burial deposit, or (ii.) ritual, industrial or habitation site;
- any place comprising the remains or traces of any such building, structure or erection, any cave, stone or natural product or any such tomb, grave, burial deposit or ritual, industrial or habitation site...

Under Section 14 of the Principal Act (1930):

It shall be unlawful...

to demolish or remove wholly or in part or to disfigure, deface, alter, or in any manner injure or interfere with any such national monument without or otherwise than in accordance with the consent hereinafter mentioned (a licence issued by the Office of Public Works National Monuments Branch),

or

to excavate, dig, plough or otherwise disturb the ground within, around, or in the proximity to any such national monument without or otherwise than in accordance...

Under Amendment to Section 23 of the Principal Act (1930),

A person who finds an archaeological object shall, within four days after the finding, make a report of it to a member of the Garda Síochána or the Director of the National Museum...

The latter is of relevance to any finds made during a watching brief. In the 1994 Amendment of Section 12 of the Principal Act (1930), all the sites and 'places' recorded by the Sites and Monuments Record of the Office of Public Works are provided with a new status in law. This new status provides a level of protection to the listed sites that is equivalent to that accorded to 'registered' sites [Section 8(1), National Monuments Amendment Act 1954] as follows:

The Commissioners shall establish and maintain a record of monuments and places where they believe there are monuments and the record shall be comprised of a list of monuments and such places and a map or maps showing each monument and such place in respect of each county in the State.

The Commissioners shall cause to be exhibited in a prescribed manner in each county the list and map or maps of the county drawn up and publish in a prescribed manner information about when and where the lists and maps may be consulted.

In addition, when the owner or occupier (not being the Commissioners) of a monument or place which has been recorded, or any person proposes to carry out, or to cause or permit the carrying out of, any work at or in relation to such monument or place, he shall give notice in writing of his proposal to carry out the work to the Commissioners and shall not, except in the case of urgent necessity and with the consent of the Commissioners, commence the work for a period of two months after having given the notice.





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