

DUBLIN CITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVE

Reference Code	DCAA.01.05
Title	Smithfield, Dublin 7 (00E0272)
Creation Dates	2002-2003
Level of Description	Collection
Extent and Medium	9 boxes and 4 outsize folders
Creators	Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.
Administrative/Biographical History	Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd., Rath House, Ferndale Road, Rathmichael, Co. Dublin, is a professional archaeological company founded in the early 1980s. The company has carried out numbers of archaeological excavations and development-led investigations arising from the requirements of development control and planning process, in line with legal provisions of the Planning and Development Acts (2000) and the National Monuments Acts (1930-2004) and Amendments Acts. The Smithfield Collection is one of many site archives that has been generated through these development-led excavations.

The excavation of this 1.6ha site bounded by Smithfield, North King Street, Queen Street and Haymarket began in early March 2002 and was completed in March 2003. The focus of the excavation was the City Council's development of Oxmantown Green in 1664–5 and subsequent activities across the site. The site was excavated in three phases.

In 1664 the City Council decreed 'that Oxmantown Green be taken and set by lots in fee farm, reserving a highway and large market place [with] staking out the lots to be disposed of by lottery'. 'The large market place' became Smithfield Market, and the 'highway' became Queen Street. There were 96 plots acquired by the drawing of lots. The 1660s houses were mostly removed after their leases expired, and limestone and brick houses with deep basements replaced them. Some of these houses, however, survived until quite recently. The glasshouse established in 1675 by John Odacio Formica remains to be found at the southern end of the site. The Smithfield side of the development went downhill from the start of the 18th century, as larger urban estates were constructed to facilitate the growth of the city to the east.

The most striking aspect of the excavation was the close spatial correlation of the plots and structures recorded with those depicted on John Rocque's 1756 Exact Survey of the City of Dublin, following through to those on the first edition of the OS.

A second important aspect is the remarkable sequence of dung-houses recorded, from the 1660s to the introduction of a piped water supply barely a century later. The Smithfield dung-houses were outdoor latrines, at least one of which appeared within every plot to the rear of the houses. There were four main types. Type I and I(a) (1665 onwards) contained substantial amounts of organic material and a range of clay pipes and chamber pots of the period, including two almost intact examples from the Westerwald potteries.

Chamber pots were recovered including examples of sgraffito from the potteries of Barnstable in North Devon in Type II (1682 onwards).

In the Type III structures (first decades of the 18th century) black earthenware chamber pots were the dominant artefact recovered, but the upper deposits were composed of household rubbish dumped there after indoor facilities were introduced toward the end of the 18th century.

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Examples from Types II and III did not contain any organic matter.

The Type IV dung-houses date from after this period. Three were grouped together around a small lane that appears to have been built specially to service them.

Water wells on the site are typical of similar structures recorded elsewhere in the city and probably went out of use as piped water was introduced toward the middle of the 18th century. Three large cobble-lined pits appear to be cisterns that collected water for use in the small industries that developed after 1700.

The excavation produced 27 burials from the sod, which pre-dated the 1665 development. They may have come from the nearby gallows but were more likely the victims of one of the many skirmishes recorded on The Green during the 16th and 17th centuries. They were randomly buried, two to a grave.

A roof-tile kiln was situated at the northern end of the site, with a large cobbled pit full of wasters.

The second phase of the excavation examined the evidence of Bective House, a large mansion constructed on the west side of Smithfield. After 1790 the bulk of the building was demolished. Part of the façade survived until recently on the site, and an extensive network of cellars was recorded as part of the excavation.

The third phase examined the southern end of the development, on the Haymarket frontage. The earliest deposits were interpreted as the sod layer and late medieval occupation strata associated with Oxmantown Green. The recovery of merchants' tokens and of several Nuremberg jettons, minted by Hans Krawwinckel and dating from between 1562 and 1586, attest to significant commercial activity on the site prior to the formal establishment of the market c. 1665. A single burial, disturbed by 18th-century building activity, cut the sod to the rear of the Haymarket plots.

The most significant finding during this phase was evidence for the first flint glassworks in Dublin, established in 1675 by John Odacio Formica. The evidence was recovered from a latrine, which in addition yielded a gold two-livre piece of Louis XIV. The glassworks debris consisted of crucible fragments (one with a sixteen-inch rim diameter), glass cullet and frit, fragments of two furnace doors and an example of an 'end of day piece'.

Evidence for the 17th-century occupation of the site consisted of several latrines, with associated occupation surfaces and walls.

A layer of redeposited subsoil conveniently sealed the late 17th- and early 18th-century deposits. This probably came from the digging of Dutch Billy cellars on the Haymarket frontage.

Twentieth-century demolition removed the evidence for the houses fronting onto Smithfield itself, but it is unlikely that any fabric from the primary 17th-century structures had survived 18th- and 19th-century development.

Evidence for the 18th century was recovered from occupation strata and the fills of latrines. By the end of the 18th century the market was prospering and, with it, ancillary industries such as farm equipment manufactures, grain, seed and feed merchants, smithies, tanneries and distilleries. The general area later developed a parallel function as a military, hospital and penitentiary quarter. Queen Street, separated from the main market but directly connected to the Haymarket, retained

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something of its middle-class population until the middle of the 19th century.

The redevelopment scheme presently under way will obliterate the 17th-century passage, Thundercut Alley.

The Smithfield project has produced the largest range of post-medieval ceramics and artefacts from any site on the island. Included are several examples of almost intact Frechen jugs and a full range of both local and European types. The quality of the imports decreases dramatically from the first decades of the 18th century, as the area became less residential. An important assemblage of merchants' tokens from the period was also recovered from the lower levels."

Archival History

Transferred by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. To Dublin City Archives, 18 September 2009

Scope and Content

This collection contains archaeological excavation records from the site Smithfield, Dublin 7, by Franc Myles. Includes: notebooks, levels books, registers, catalogues, feature sheets, skeleton sheets, finds sheets, timber sheets, reports, health and safety material, administrative material, correspondence, maps, plans, drawings, matrices, photographs, floppy discs and CDs

Appraisal destruction and scheduling information

Accruals

Arrangement

Collection processed and box lists created by Niamh Collins.

Access Conditions

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Language

English

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Floppy disc drive required

Finding Aid

Box list in reading room and below

Existence of copies/originals

Related Material

DCAA

Publication Note

Database of Irish excavations reports, www.excavations.ie

Notes

Archivist's Note

Niamh Collins

Rules or Conventions

ISAD(G): General International Standards Archival Description. 2nd ed.
Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 2000

Dates of Description

08-16/10/2010