

DUBLIN CITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVE

Reference Code	DCAA.01.31
Title	Railway Street/James Joyce Street/Mabbot Lane (03E0879) Collection
Creation Dates	2002-2006
Level of Description	Collection
Extent and Medium	2 boxes, 1 slide box & a CD
Creators	Margaret Gowen and 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 Railway Street/James Joyce Street/Mabbot Lane Collection is one of many site archives that has been generated through these development-led excavations.

Key words:

Railway Street/James Joyce Street/Mabbot Lane
Urban post-medieval
Excavation Licence No. 03E0879

An assessment and detailed impact statement, in advance of construction, were required in relation to a development at Railway Street/James Joyce Street/Mabbot Lane, Dublin 1. This report included the results of a test excavation carried out at the site in June 2003. Three trenches were excavated across the footprint of the proposed development. The assessment established that the partial remains of terraces of houses fronting onto Railway Street and James Joyce Street survived in the north-east corner of the site and also, to a more limited degree, in the north-west corner. The majority of the structural remains associated with these terraces appear to have been removed by later buildings at the site. However, features (mainly cesspits) associated with the rear plots of the terrace fronting onto James Joyce Street were identified across the western side of the site.

As the proposed development would involve the removal of all the archaeological material identified by the assessment, it was recommended that an area measuring c. 50m north-south from the southern site boundary and extending a minimum of 15m from the Mabbot Lane frontage (hence Area 1) be the subject of full excavation prior to the commencement of any construction works. It was further recommended that a sample of the surviving structures in the north-east corner of the site (hence Area 2) should be investigated and recorded. This would supplement the existing cartographic and historical data on the development of the terraces. As these structural remains survived at depth, it was recommended that this should only take place once the secant pile wall was in place in that part of the site. The excavation of Area 1 was carried out between 7 July and 20 August 2003 and the excavation of Area 2 between 1 December and 10 December 2003.

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The historical and cartographic sources indicate that the site was suburban greenfield during the medieval period and for the earlier part of the post-medieval period. This is supported by the evidence from the excavation.

Only a single sherd of medieval pottery has been identified from the site. Though examples of 17th-century pottery were also identified, they were relatively infrequent and occurred in association with assemblages of pottery of 18th-century date. This residual evidence would suggest, at most, very limited activity at the site prior to 1700, probably of a mainly agricultural or agrarian nature.

Analysis of the results to date suggests four phases of activity, though only Phases III and IV could be identified in Area 2. The earliest definite evidence for activity at the site is associated with Phase I. It is comprised mainly of very localised intercut pits and also a possible hearth. The nature of the material filling the pits appears to be more consistent with refuse from an industrial process rather than domestic occupation or cultivation. Few finds were recovered from this phase, though these do suggest a date post-1700. It is possible that the site, or at least this area of it, was used as a dumping ground for refuse from local industry.

The second phase of activity appears to represent development and extension of that noted from Phase I. A further series of pits was recorded and activity associated with Phase II appears to occur over a greater area of the site. Again the material backfilling the various pits appears to be more consistent with industrial refuse rather than domestic occupation or cultivation – samples of both ferrous and glass slag were identified from contexts associated with this phase of activity. Pits associated with both Phases I and II appeared to extend west beyond the limit of the excavation. This would suggest that this industrial activity originally extended further west, through the present Mabbot Lane in the direction of Gardiner Street. Unlike Phase I, the contexts associated with Phase II produced a wide range of finds, including a large assemblage of post-medieval pottery suggesting a general 18th-century date. The most significant aspects of this assemblage were the collection of crucible sherds and the collection of unglazed white ware. These serve to emphasise the industrial character of the activity occurring at the site. In particular, the unglazed white ware suggests an association between the activity at the site and the Dublin delft manufactory, approximately 250m to the south at the junction of Mabbot Street and The Strand. There is at least one known reference to the proprietor of the manufactory, Henry Delamain, leasing additional property close to the works. However, it should be noted that at least one cesspit (C21) is associated with this phase of activity at the site, suggesting the possibility, at least, of domestic activity or occupation at the site. Phase II also produced the earliest evidence for structural remains at the site. Though these were mainly characterised by ambiguous short sections of walling, C8 (which extended for 24m along the Mabbot Lane frontage), at least, appears to be the remains of a boundary wall enclosing a section of the site. This wall cuts through pits associated with both Phases I and II, indicating that it is relatively late in the sequence of activity.

The third phase of activity at the site is associated with the applotment and development of the site by the Gardiner estate. There is a clear correlation between the features and structural remains associated with this phase of activity and the structures and plot boundaries illustrated by the first edition of the OS. The remains of Nos 9–11 Mecklinburgh Street and Nos 36–37 Mabbot Street were recorded in Area 2. Features associated with the rear plots of Nos 41–48 Mabbot Street were recorded in Area 1. Gardiner Street, to the west, was developed by the estate from the 1780s and it would appear that the applotment and development of the present site is contemporary with that.

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Certainly an examination of the developed street layout and applotment as recorded by the first edition of the OS would indicate that this site was developed in a block with the corresponding section of Gardiner Street. This would indicate a date post-1780 for all features and structures associated with Phase III and the applotment of the site. The applotment of the site appears to remain consistent on all 19th-century editions of the OS.

The final phase is associated with modern activity at the site, in particular structural remains dating to c. 1900 and later. The 1909 edition of the OS map shows a much-altered plot layout. The rear plots of the terrace fronting onto James Joyce Street have been truncated and replaced with a series of larger structures which would appear to front onto Mabbot Lane. This may reflect lower-class domestic occupation and increased industrialisation in the area. The structure C170 can be clearly identified on this map and the position of the wall C93 also appears to reflect the new plot boundaries. Later editions of the OS show that the terraces of houses are largely gone, either replaced or incorporated into a series of larger structures. The presence of concrete ground-beams in Area 2 clearly reflects this activity.

There is very little evidence to suggest that any further archaeological material of significance survives at the site outside of those areas investigated.

Archival History

Scope and Content

The collection contains archaeological excavation records from a site at Railway Street/James Joyce Street/Mabbot Lane, directed by archaeologist Teresa Bolger of Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. Includes feature sheets, masonry sheets, a notebook, registers, plans, conservation records, administrative material, reports, correspondence, photographs, slides and a CD.

Appraisal destruction and

Accruals

Arrangement

Collection processed and box lists created by Noelle Mitchell.
Arranged according to document type.

Access Conditions

Reproduction

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Language

English

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Slide viewer required

Finding Aid

Box list in reading room and below

Existence of copies/originals

Related Material

DCAA.01.16

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ARCHIVE**

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