

DUBLIN CITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARCHIVE

Reference Code	DCAA.01.20
Title	Spencer Dock, Dublin 1 (06E0668)
Creation Dates	2006-2007
Level of Description	Collection
Extent and Medium	1 box, 1 outsize folder
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 Spencer Dock Collection is one of many site archives that has been generated through these development-led excavations.

The excavation of the site under the licence 06E0668 was carried out in advance of the development of the National Conference Centre. A programme of monitoring throughout the winter of 2006–7 resulted in the discovery of masonry foundations at the Liffey end of this development site. The first phase of excavation was undertaken by Franc Myles

The structures recorded were F5, which mainly comprised F28, a substantial masonry and brick wall, constructed with several interior compartments, and F33, which was identified as the foundation of the southern façade of the Midland Great Western Railway terminus, constructed immediately prior to 1864. The significance of the structures lies in the way their foundations were constructed through the soft waterlogged deposits directly underneath and the different means by which their structural stability was maintained.

The greater picture of the development of the site involves the transformation of the North Wall polder from the initial concept of a residential quarter into what it became, effectively a light industrial area with some residential and commercial functions.

As bulk excavation progressed to deeper levels, worked wood and the remains of fish trap structures were identified in the estuarine silt and the licence was transferred to the Melanie McQuade, who directed the archaeological excavation of this material.

Excavation uncovered the remains of two stationary fishing structures or fish traps constructed of wood and several pieces of worked wood. These structures were generally V-shaped and were constructed of large wooden fences or stone walls. They were erected in tidal zones and caught fish that drifted with the falling tide. There was often a basket at the junction of the fences.

Two distinct phases of prehistoric activity were identified on the southern end of the site, within the area previously occupied by the Liffey estuary.

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Phase 1 was represented by the in situ remains of a fish trap. The remains of this trap were dated to the Late Mesolithic period (6000–5760 cal bc).

Phase 2 was characterised by the remains of a wattle panel which was probably part of the fence of a much larger ebb weir. The wattle panel was not in situ but was found washed up against what was then the shoreline of the Liffey estuary. It was dated to the Middle Neolithic period (3630–3370 cal bc).

Late Mesolithic

The Late Mesolithic remains were defined by two linear stake rows (F300 and F301), which probably represent the remains of a single fish trap. The majority of stakes were identified as hazel, but there were a few pomaceous fruitwoods. Several stakes had worked ends.

Middle Neolithic

A second phase of activity was identified at a higher level, where the remains of another fish trap were uncovered on the east end of the site. This trap comprised the remains of a wattle fence, which was beautifully preserved. The wattle panel was woven from a series of rods and sails that were originally supported by four upright stakes. The panel was secured to the stakes by a series of hazel withies, some of which were incorporated into the weave. The stakes were all made of hazel pieces. Seven horizontal rods were woven into the structure of the fish fence. The rods were secured to the stakes and to some of the sails by a series of knots. A total of sixteen knots had been tied at a number of key points within the structure, where they were bound around stakes and sails.

No finds or fish bones were recovered during excavation.

Archival History

Transferred by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. To Dublin City Archives, 25 September 2009

Scope and Content

This collection contains archaeological excavation records from the site Spencer Dock, Dublin 1, by Melanie McQuade and Franc Myles. Includes, registers, feature sheets, context masonry sheets, masonry sheets, administrative material, plans, drawings, photographs and CDs

Appraisal destruction and scheduling information

No finds or fish bones were recovered during excavation.

Accruals

Arrangement

Collection processed and box lists created by Niamh Collins. Arranged according to document type.

Access Conditions

Available for public research 25 September 2012. During closure period available for research to Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd.

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Language	English
Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements	
Finding Aid	Box list in reading room and below
Existence of copies/originals	
Related Material	DCAA, particularly DCAA.01.09 (also Spencer Dock Material)
Publication Note	Database of Irish excavations reports, www.excavations.ie
Notes	This collection is 1 of 2 collections of Spencer Dock material. The other collection is DCAA.01.09
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	07/10/2010