



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT,  
ABBAY STREET PLATFORM WIDENING WORKS,  
LUAS LINE A  
DUBLIN 1**

**Excavation Licence Number:** 10E224

**Director:** Emer Dennehy

**Townland:** St. Thomas's Ward

**Ordnance Datum:** 3.77m

**NGR:** 316043, 234544

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## **SUMMARY**

Luas Line A (or Luas Red Line) runs for approximately 15.5km from South Dublin to Dublin City Centre. The line which commenced service in September 2004 originally operated from Tallaght to Connolly station, but an extension to The Point (Luas Line C1) opened in 2009.

The Railway Procurement Agency was granted planning permission by Dublin City Council to permanently widen the existing Abbey Street Stop, located on the south side of Abbey Street Lower (Planning Ref. 2145/10). Licenced archaeological monitoring of all sub-surface works associated with the Stop development was a condition of the planning permission. This monitoring condition was imposed due to the location of the proposed works within the constraint zone for historic Dublin (DU018:020). The works area is also located within a Zone of Archaeological Interest as identified in the Dublin City Development Plan (2005-2011).

Licensed archaeological monitoring of ground reduction works associated with the widening of the stop commenced on 28<sup>th</sup> August and was completed on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010. Two demolition deposits of late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century date were exposed in section only, in the southwest of the excavation area. These deposits were preserved *in situ*.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This document is submitted as a report on the licenced archaeological monitoring (Licence Ref. 10E244) of ground reduction works associated with the widening of the existing Abbey Street Stop on the Luas Line A (Luas Red Line), Dublin 1.

The Railway Procurement Agency (RPA) applied to Dublin City Council (DCC) for Planning Permission to permanently widen the existing Luas light rail platform on the northern side of the Luas tracks at the Abbey Street Stop. The widening will consist of the insertion of new paving to a width of approximately 1.2m, moving of lighting and ticketing machines to the newly widened boundary and installation of Luas standard fittings and fixtures and the insertion of a gas pipe. The Abbey Street Stop is located on the south side of Abbey Street Lower, a short distance to the east of O'Connell Street (Figure 1).

Grant of Planning Permission was issued by DCC to RPA in March 2010 subject to seven planning conditions (Planning Ref. 2145/10). Condition 6 included a requirement for "licenced archaeological monitoring of all sub-surface works associated with the development including the breaking and removal of any floor slabs levelling of ground etc".

The proposed works took place within the constraint zone for historic Dublin (DU018:020; Figure 1) and within a Zone of Archaeological Interest as listed in the Dublin City Development Plan 2005-2011.

## **2.0 PROJECT DETAILS**

Luas Line A runs for approximately 15.5km from South Dublin to Dublin City Centre. The line which commenced service in September 2004 originally operated from Tallaght to Connolly station, but an extension to The Point (Luas Line C1) opened in 2009.

The Abbey Street Stop was temporarily widened in 2007 through the erection of semi-permanent traffic barriers and construction of a temporary concrete footpath on the stops northern side. In order to accommodate the permanent extension of the Abbey Street Stop platform, the temporary surfaces were removed and the platform

was widened on its northern side for an average width of 1.2m (Figure 2). A gas pipe was also inserted at this time.

Archaeological monitoring of all demolition and ground disturbance works associated with the permanent widening of the existing Abbey Street Stop, was undertaken by RPA Archaeologist, Emer Dennehy from 28<sup>th</sup> August to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

### **3.0 RECEIVING ENVIRONMENT**

Abbey Street Lower is within the boundaries of the historic city of Dublin which is a Recorded Monument and Place (RMP DU018:020; Figure 1). The proposed works area was located a short distance to the east of the Anglo-Norman settlement of Oxmanstown established in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (Clarke 1995, 7). Examination of Speed's map (1610), the Down Survey (c.1654) and De Gomme's map (1673) of Dublin city, demonstrate that these lands were primarily undeveloped throughout most of the 17th century and for the main part comprised agricultural lands.

Development in Dublin city rapidly increased during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century during which time extensive reclamation of the River Liffey marsh tidal flat was undertaken. Revetment walls, quays and bridges were constructed on the newly reclaimed land, and the city began its eastern extension (RPA 2010).

With the onset of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Dublin and its immediate hinterland experienced rapid growth. The Gardiner family (later Barons and Viscounts Mountjoy) and the Viscounts Fitzwilliam of Merrion were hugely influential in developing large tracts of land to the northeast and southwest of the old city. The Gardiners were responsible for the development of Sackville Street, which was planned as a residential mall and promenade by Luke Gardiner from the 1740s onwards. Sackville Street or "Gardiner's Mall" as it was also known stood on the site of present day O'Connell Street Upper.

As a consequence of this swift growth, the urban landscape comprised settlement clusters and pockets of commerce and trade that were poorly connected due to insufficient transport links. The routeways that did exist were heavily congested. In response to this, a 1757 Act of Parliament provided for the establishment of the Commissioners for the Making of Wide and Convenient Streets and Passages, otherwise known as the Wide Street Commissioners ('WSC'; Sheridan 2001, 69).

This organisation was fundamental in laying the foundations of the physical characteristics of the modern city and aiding in its economic prosperity. The main achievements of the WSC on Dublin's north side were the building of Carlisle Bridge (now O'Connell Bridge) and the expansion of Lower Sackville Street (now O'Connell Street Lower) down to the River Liffey.

The city's growth continued unabated and by 1800, Dublin city was the sixth largest in Western Europe (Cullen 1995, 103). The Act of Union in 1801 had a huge impact on the city however, and many of those whose power and wealth had sought and secured the development and extension of the city moved back to London. Although Dublin's prosperity was curbed to a large degree during this period, there were several improvements made to the infrastructure of the city including improvements to the city's water supply, street lighting and street widening. In addition, the General Post Office was opened in 1818 and in 1870 a tram system was introduced. The introduction of the latter was hugely influential in the increased growth of suburbs that ensued during this time (RPA 2010).

### **3.1 Abbey Street**

Abbey Street (Upper and Middle) is illustrated on Speed's map of 1610 at which point it is shown as a narrow road leading from St. Mary's Abbey to the perimeter wall of the Abbey's two acres of pasture land. On De Gomm's map of 1673 Abbey Street is similarly illustrated within 'Abby Parkes', terminating at the site of present day O'Connell Street.

Abbey Street Lower is first illustrated on Brookings Map of 1728 at which point it is a well defined street densely developed on its north and south sides. At this time Abbey Street defines the southern terminus of Drogheda Street, present day O'Connell Street. On Rocque's Map of 1756 Abbey Street Lower is annotated as an extension of 'Great Abby Street'; the eastern end of the street is annotated as 'Ship Buildings' (Figure 2). It is lined on its north side by approximately 20 property plots and on its southern side by 14 property plots. The latter include a number of ship yards and a slip-way annotated as "North Wall Slip". A "Watch House" stands on the intersection of present day Abbey Street Lower and O'Connell Street. The southern side of Abbey Street is intersected in the west by a street called 'The Lotts', in the centre by 'Union or Ferry Boat Lane' and in the east by the intersection of "The

Strand” (now Beresford Lane) and “Part of the North Wall” (now Custom House Quay).

Abbey Street Lower was significantly widened in the latter years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the activities of the WSC resulting in the demolition of the majority of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings which lined the street. The main purpose of the widening of Abbey Street Lower was to improve the views from O’Connell Street such that the vista was terminated by Custom House, rather than an irregular streetscape.

### **3.2 Recorded Monuments and Places (RMP’s) within the proposed work area**

Abbey Street Lower is located within the constraint zone for Historic Dublin (RMP DU018:020). Three RMP sites are located to the south/south-east of the proposed works comprising a Glasshouse site (DU018:020154), a 17<sup>th</sup> Century Burial site (DU018:129) and a Quay (DU018:020461). These RMP sites are located c.46m, c.75m and c.82.5m from the proposed works respectively (Figure 1; [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)).

Two further RMP sites are located c.104m and c.128m to the northeast of the proposed works and respectively comprise a dwelling site (DU018:020500) and a Glasshouse site (DU018:020499; [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)).

### **3.3 Recent Archaeological investigations**

The site of the widening works was previously extensively developed to accommodate the construction of the existing Luas Line and the Abbey Street Stop. Archaeological monitoring of this work (undertaken in 2001/2002) identified that the stratigraphy at Abbey Street Lower comprised various mixed clay and rubble fill layers to a depth of 5m at which point natural ground levels were encountered. The existing road surface was 0.65m in depth (Myles & Kerrins 2005, 14).

The remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century brick culvert, into which modern utility/service pipes were inserted, was identified at a depth of 4.2-4.8m below ground level on Abbey Street Lower (Myles & Kerrins 2005, 14).

## **4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

The breaking and removal of existing hard surfaces, and all associated ground reduction was subject to archaeological monitoring by the licensee (Figure 3; Plates

1-6). The existing hard landscaping was removed using a con-saw and JCB/mini-digger fitted with a rock breaking bit (Plate 2). The latter was then fitted with a 0.50m bucket and employed to reduce the ground level to the required depth of 0.20m below the level of the existing road surface (Figure 3).

A gas pipe trench was also excavated at this time, parallel to the existing northern limits of the Abbey Street Stop. The trench measured 12m east-west by 1m by 0.80m in depth (Figure 3).

The archaeological stratigraphy recorded on site predominantly comprised 0.40m of temporary and permanent road surfaces (C.1-C.3; see Table 1.0). These road surfaces overlay alternate fill deposits of hardcore and clay (C.4 and C.7) identified at a depth of 0.40-0.80m below current ground level. A demolition deposit (C.5) was noted in the north-facing section of the gas pipe trench at a depth of 0.57/0.69-0.80m below current ground level (Figure 4; Plates 3-6). It underlay the hardcore fill layer C.4 and comprised a 4.21m east-west deposit of loosely compacted mid yellow-brown sand-gravel with inclusions of small stones, red brick fragments and charcoal flecks. Context 5 was truncated at two locations. It is interpreted that this layer is a late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century demolition deposit associated with activities of the WSC.

**Table 1.0: Context Register**

Depth from Current Ground Level	Deposit Type	Context Number	Soil Description
0.00-0.15m	Road Surface	C.1	Context 1: Temporary reinforced concrete footpath.
0.15-0.30m	Road Surface	C.2	Permanent bitumen road surface.
0.30-0.40m	Road Surface	C.3	Concrete road surface
0.40-0.57/0.69m	Fill	C.4	Hardcore deposit identified across the width of the gas trench (12m east-west by 1m). The deposit varied in depth from 0.06m-0.18m.
0.57/0.69-0.80m	Fill	C.5	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> /early 19 <sup>th</sup> century demolition deposit comprising loosely compacted mid yellow-brown sand-gravel layer with inclusions of small stones (15%), red brick fragments (10%) and charcoal flecks (2%). Two distinct ash lenses were also noted. This deposit was identified in section only; it measured 4.21m east-west and varied in depth from 0.12m-

Depth from Current Ground Level	Deposit Type	Context Number	Soil Description
			0.23m.
0.57-0.80m	Fill	C.6	Moderately compact mid-dark grey clay, present at interspersed locations along the excavation area, predominantly located in vicinity of demolition deposit. It contained inclusions of red brick fragments (5%), charcoal flecks (2%) and 1% animal bone.
0.80m	Fill	C.7	Loosely compacted dark grey-brown clay gravel with inclusions of red brick fragments

A secondary post-medieval archaeological deposit C.6 was identified at interspersed locations at the base of north facing section of the gas pipe trench, underlying C.5. It comprised a moderately compact mid-dark grey clay with inclusions of brick fragments, charcoal and animal bone.

As C.5 and C.6 were identified in section only no excavation was required. The trench section face was cleaned and the stratigraphy was recorded, planned and photographed. The *in situ* stratigraphy was covered by a geotextile fabric, prior to the insertion of the gas pipe and the backfilling of the trench.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Licensed archaeological monitoring of all ground reduction works associated with the permanent widening of the Luas Line A, Abbey Street Stop was undertaken from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> August 2010. Two post-medieval deposits relating to the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century demolition activities of the Wide Street Commissioners were identified in section only. These deposits were recorded and preserved *in situ*.

All archaeological works relating to this project have now been completed. No post-excavation work is required. No further archaeological reports are pending.

## 5.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Cullen, L. (1995) "A Story of Growth and Change: Dublin 1560-1800". In: Clarke, H. (Ed.) *Irish Cities*. Dublin: Mercier Press, 96-109.

Dublin City Council (DCC) (2005) *Dublin City Development Plan 2005–2011*. Dublin: Dublin City Council.

Myles, F. & Kerins, P. (2005a) *Luas Archaeological Monitoring Final Report: Line A, Licence No. 01E0733*. Unpublished report prepared by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd for the Railway Procurement Agency.

Railway Procurement Agency, 2010 *Luas Broombridge, St. Stephen's Green to Broombridge (Line BXD), Environmental Impact Statement'*, Volume I, Chapter 23. Material Assets: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Railway Procurement Agency.

Sheridan, E. (2001) "Designing the Capital City: Dublin, c.1660-1810". In: Brady, J. and Simms, A. Eds. *Dublin through Space and Time*. Dublin: Four Courts, 66-136.

### 5.1 Cartographic Sources

1610 John Speed's Map *Dubline*

1654-56 Petty, W. *Dublin City and County* (Down Survey)

1673 Bernard de Gomme *The City and Suburbs of Dublin*

1728 Charles Brooking, *A Map of the City and Suburbs of Dublin*

1756 John Rocque, *An Exact Survey of the City and Suburbs of Dublin*

RMP maps of Dublin, Sheet 18. [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie)

### 5.2 WebPages

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

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



**Plate 1:** View of Abbey Street Stop works area from west, post-removal of temporary surface



**Plate 2:** View from northeast of mechanical excavation of permanent road surface



**Plate 3:** View from east of excavated pipe trench. Note demolition material C.5 in south of trench



**Plate 4:** View of east limits of demolition deposit C.5, from north. Note truncation to east



**Plate 5:** View of central portion of demolition deposit C.5, from north. Note ash lenses and



**Plate 6:** View of western portion of demolition deposit C.5, from north. Note truncation to east and edge of

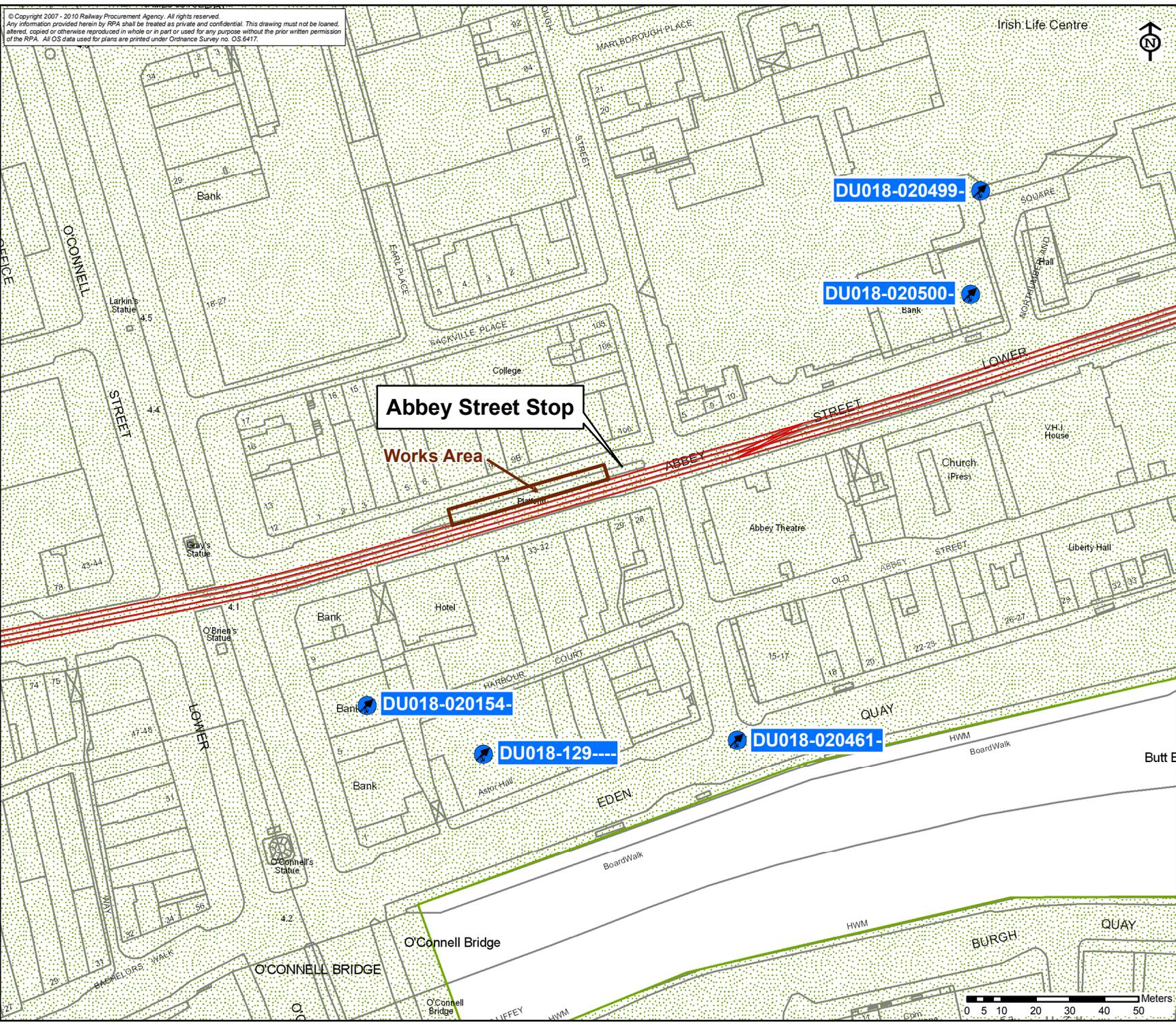
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and west

truncation to east and west

pipe trench excavation to west

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**Legend**

- RMP
- Historic Dublin - RMP DU018:020
- Works Area
- Luas Red Line

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

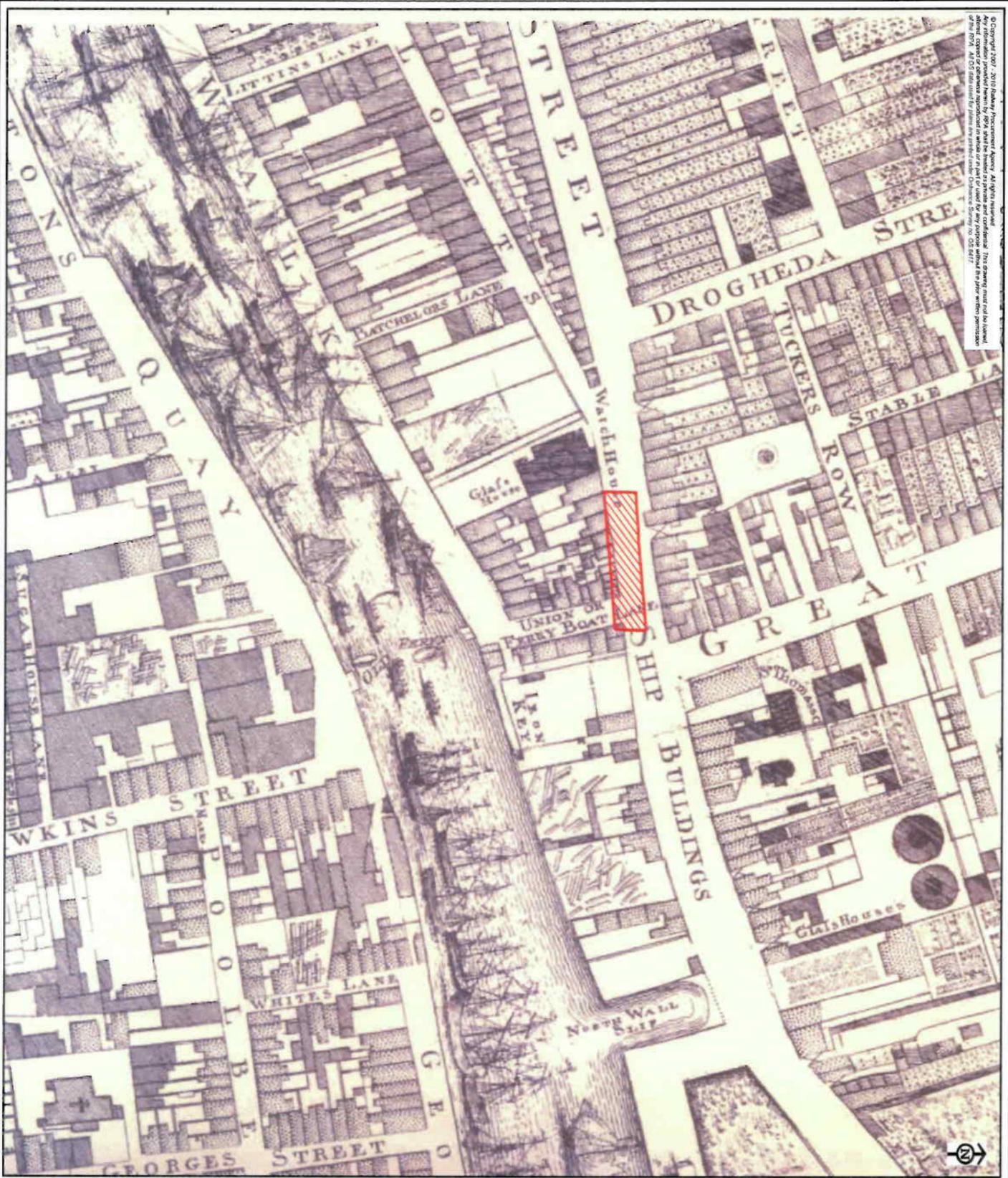
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 www.rpa.ie

<b>MAP TITLE</b>			
Figure 1: Site location map showing RMP's and works area			
<b>LOCATION</b>			
ABBEEY STREET LOWER			
<b>CONTRACT NO</b>			
<b>PREPARED:</b>	<b>COF:</b>	<b>CHECKED:</b>	<b>ED:</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>SCALES:</b>	<b>APPROVED:</b>	<b>MF:</b>
Oct 2010	1:1,500		
<b>SHEET SIZE:</b> A4			

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**Legend**  
 Approximate location of Abbey Street platform

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**



**Map title:** Figure 2: Extract from Rocque's 1756 Map of the City of Dublin. Approximate location of Abbey Street stop highlighted.

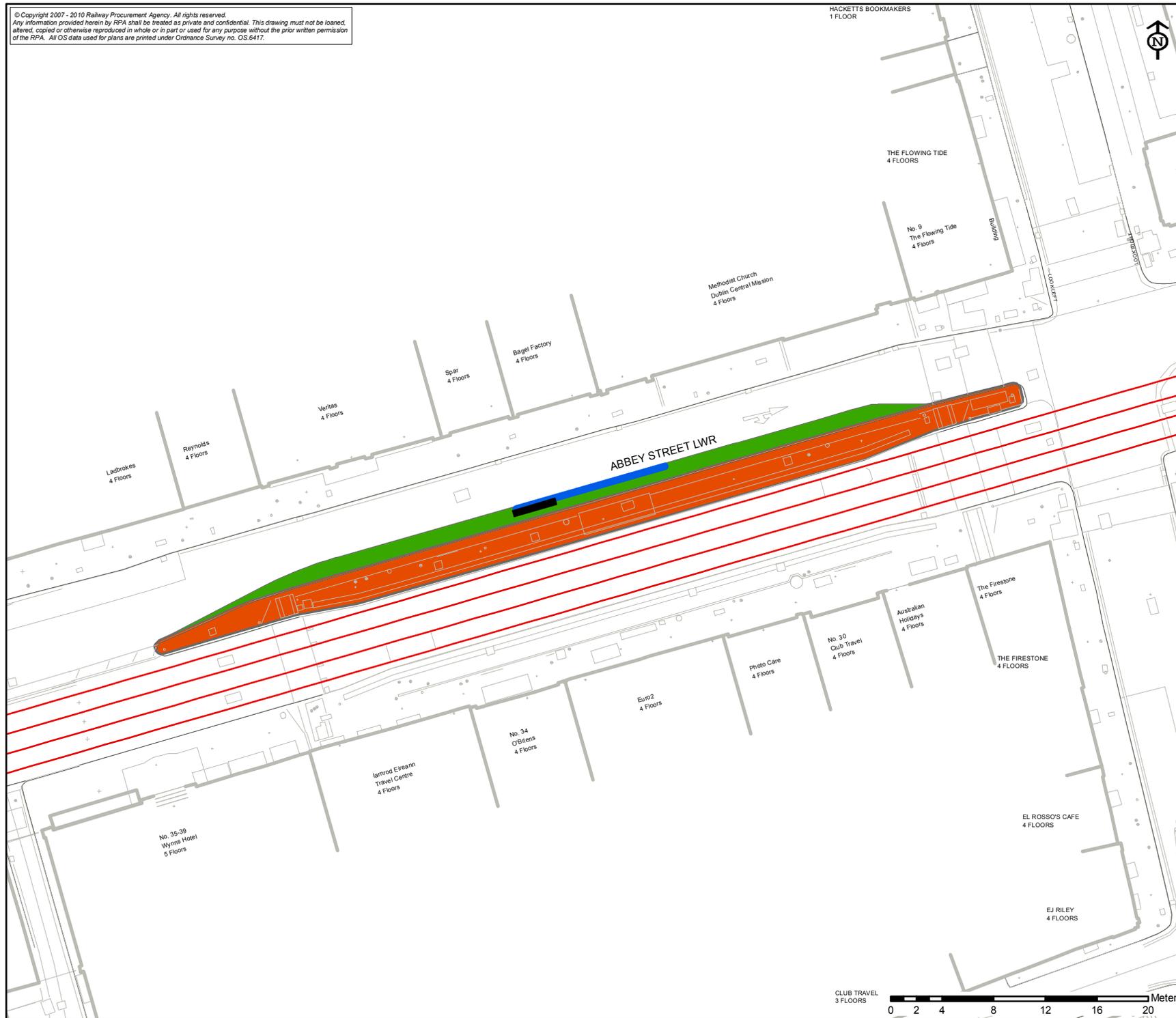
**Location:** ABBEY STREET LOWER

**Contract No.:**

PREPARED BY	CHECKED BY	APPROVED BY
DATE	SCALE	SHEET NO. / TOTAL

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- Legend**
- Existing Platform
  - Platform widening area. Max depth of excavation 0.20m
  - Gas pipe trench. Max depth of excavation 0.80m
  - Location of C5 late 18th/early 19th century demolition material
  - Luas Red Line

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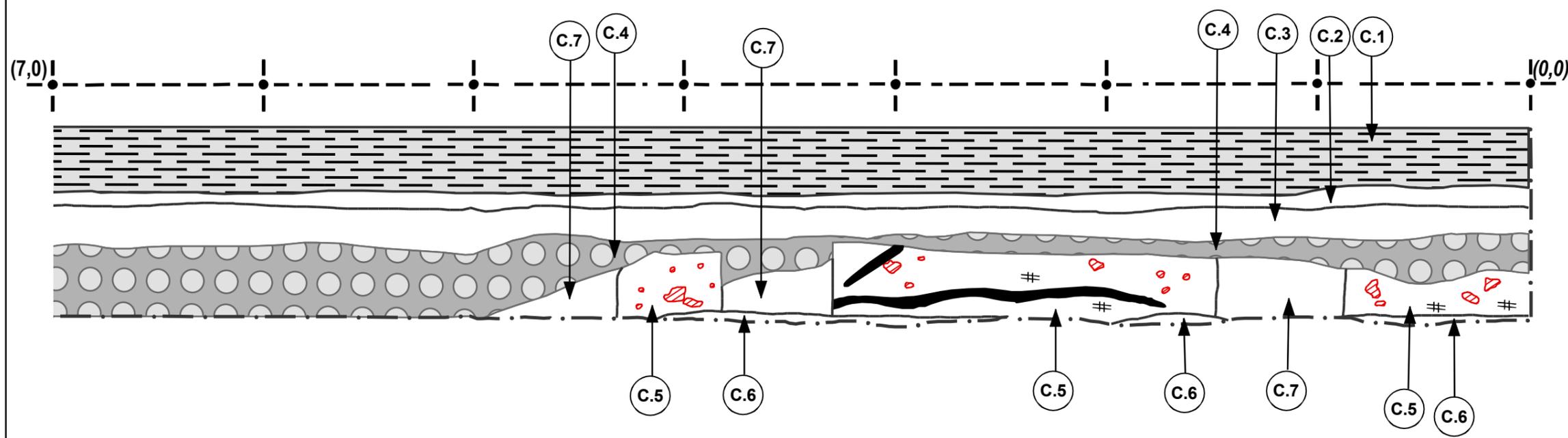
MAP TITLE		
<b>Figure 3: 'As Built' plan of Abbey Street Stop. Location of archaeological deposits highlighted</b>		
LOCATION		
<b>ABBEY STREET LOWER</b>		
CONTRACT NO		
-		
PREPARED:	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
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DATE:	SCALES:	SHEET SIZE:
Oct 2010	1:400	A4

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- Edge of Excavation
-  Red Brick
-  Charcoal
-  Hardcore
-  Concrete
-  Ash/Mortar Deposit

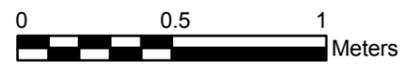


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MAP TITLE		
Figure 4: North facing section of gas pipe trench illustrating location of late 18th/early 19th century demolition deposit		
LOCATION		
Abbey Street		
CONTRACT NO.		
-		
PREPARED: CFL	CHECKED: ED	APPROVED: MF
DATE: Dec 2010	SCALES: -	SHEET SIZE: A3



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