

BACKGROUND

Archaeological investigations, which were undertaken as part of the construction of the Red and Green Luas Lines, provided a unique opportunity to retrieve evidence for the urban expansion of the city in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

All of the archaeological investigations and architectural recording was carried out by Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. prior to and during the construction of the two Luas Lines. Thanks are due in particular to Franc Myles of Margaret Gowen & Co. Ltd. whose reports formed the basis for this brochure.

The Red Line - Tallaght to Connolly 14 km in length

This line runs for the most part on existing city roads through the heavily built up city centre and suburbs. It extends as far as the early Christian centre of Tallaght. (5th century AD - 8th century AD).

Main Archaeological sites discovered:

Ballymount – Prehistoric complex.

- Bronze Age (*circa* 2200 - 600BC). Burnt mound and possible enclosure. Finds included two Bronze Age Pins.
- Enclosure and bank and associated activity from Iron Age or Early Christian Period (*circa* 600BC to 700AD).
- A portion of a souterrain (an underground storage/escape passage) was one of the earliest archaeological features excavated from the Early Christian period.
- Medieval period, ditches, pits and a lintel drain. Several hundred sherds of medieval pottery, dating from 12th-14th century.

Tram Street and Phoenix Street –

- paved street 17th century.
- 18th century artefacts from well – tankard, wine bottle, imported tableware and wall tile.
- Skeleton buried in 18th century.
- 19th century foundry discovered.

O’Connell Street -

- 17th century quay wall and possible jetty.
- 18th century cobbled yard and latrine.

The Green Line – St. Stephen’s Green to Sandyford 9km in length

Although much of the length of this scheme was significantly disturbed by the works associated with the Old Harcourt Street Line, which was constructed in 1854, the present day works took place within the city centre Zone of Archaeological Potential in the St. Stephen’s Green West and Harcourt Street area. Outside the city this route runs close to the Early Christian church at Dundrum.

There were no main archaeological sites revealed on this route. But routine monitoring revealed such features as stone culverts, post-medieval refuse pits, basements and coal cellars associated with 18th/19th century houses.



Site clearance at Ballymount



Excavation at Ballymount

LUAS RED LINE - TALLAGHT TO CONNOLLY STATION

PREHISTORIC REMAINS

Luas Red Line runs through a large archaeological site at Ballymount near the Red Cow Roundabout (See photo Number 1). This archaeological complex contains evidence of prehistoric, early Christian, medieval and post medieval activity of some significance.

Prior to construction excavations took place here to the north of the manor house revealing a portion of an enclosure, which is thought to have dated from the Iron Age (600BC to 400AD). The name of the townland Ballymount (the town of the mount) reflects this ancient monument. Bronze Age activity *circa* 2200 to 600BC, was also evident on the site, with two Bronze Age Pins recovered during the excavations. A portion of a souterrain (a possible underground storage space and/or hiding place) was also discovered. This stone lined passage may date to the Early Christian Period (400-790AD) (See photo Number 2)).

POST-MEDIEVAL REMAINS (16TH CENTURY onwards)

In the heart of Dublin City, just south of the junction with Liffey Street, between the statues of Daniel O’Connell and William Smith O’Brien, archaeological excavations revealed the remains of a seventeenth century quay wall, together with a number of structures and a well, which would have been located north of the city wall. Decorated pottery was also recovered from this site together with twenty-two glass objects. One of the more interesting artefacts is a circular bottle seal, which reads “David Haoerd 1711”. During the 17th and 18th centuries glass bottles were ordered by the wealthy people of the city. The glass bottles were seen as a status symbol, and the seal or mark identified the owner when they were sent to the wine merchant to be filled up (See photos Number 3).

Archaeological excavations in Tram Street and Phoenix Street revealed an area which had been originally used as commonage or open ground for grazing animals. This area was known as Oxmantown Green up to the mid 17th century.



Ballymount Castle



Souterrain at Ballymount



O’Connell Street



Wall Tile at Bow Street

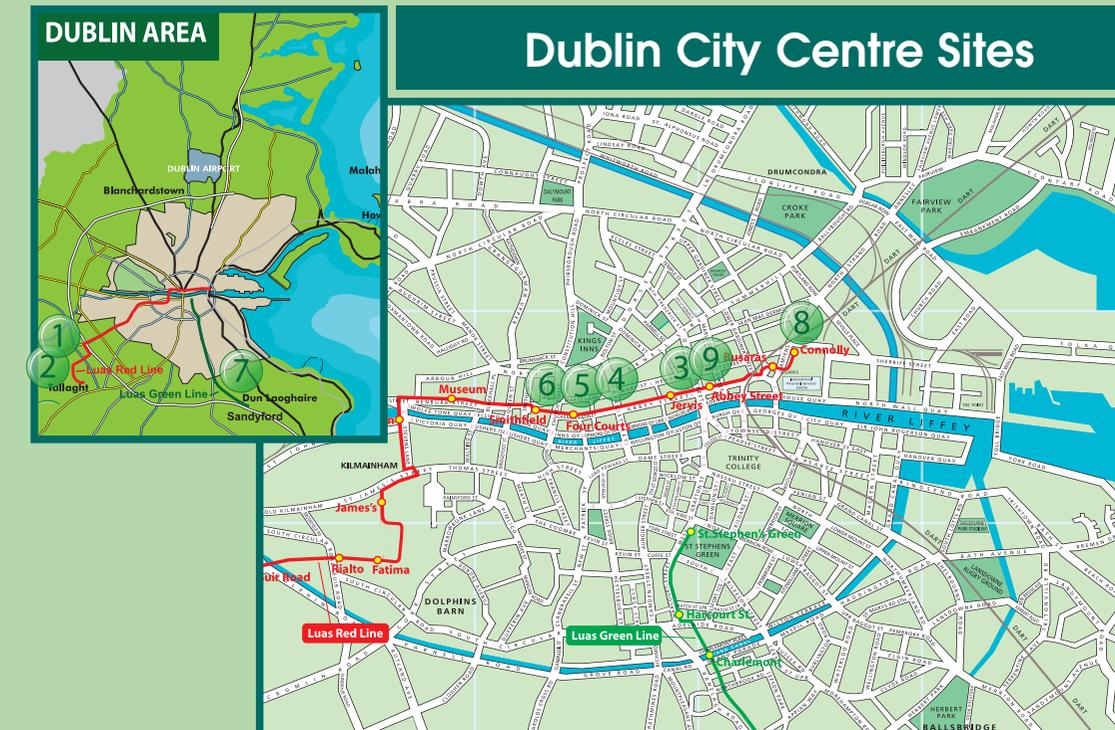
Excavations to the rear of a property which would have fronted onto Bow Lane revealed a backfilled well. A large array of archaeological artefacts were recovered from this general location (See photos Numbers 5 & 6). Amongst the archaeological artefacts recovered from this well was a fragment of what appears to be a highly decorated wall tile (See photo Number 4).



Artefacts at Phoenix Street



Artefacts at Phoenix Street



GREEN LINE ST. STEPHEN'S GREEN TO SANDYFORD

There were no archaeological discoveries of great significance along this route. The majority of the works ran through areas of ground which were very disturbed. The only artefact recovered from the works was a copper coin, discovered by an engineer between Dundrum and Balally, and which had been flattened.

OLD HARCOURT STREET LINE

Features of interest were uncovered at various locations along Harcourt street, which was laid out in the 1770's. These features consisted mainly of basements, which were for the most part intact. A survey of all basements was carried out prior to construction. The viaduct at Milltown, a key feature of the Old Harcourt Street Line, was re-instated to its original function (Photos Number 7).

ARCHITECTURAL RECORDING

In conjunction with pre-construction testing, archaeological investigations and excavations, a detailed architectural survey was carried out on all buildings impacted by the works. One of the most interesting areas surveyed was under the present day ramp for vehicles located at Connolly Station. The interior of this ramp consisted of a series of interconnecting vaults. Vault 14 shows the fine workmanship and care with which these vaults were constructed (See photo Number 8).



Milltown Viaduct



Milltown Viaduct



Vault 14 at Connolly Station



Work at O'Connell Street

RPA Projects

Luas

A1 - Citywest Link Belgard to Saggart
B1 - Sandyford to Cherrywood
B2 - Cherrywood to Bray
BX - Link with Red and Green Lines
C1 - Connolly Station to the Point
F - Lucan to City Centre

Metro

Metro North - Lissenhall to St. Stephen's Green
Metro West - Tallaght to Airport

NEXT STEPS

CODE OF PRACTICE

As the Agency responsible for the implementation of Light Rail and Metro projects the Railway Procurement Agency and the Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government have published a Code of Practice for the protection and conservation of our archaeological heritage. This is available to download from our website www.rpa.ie

How to obtain further information

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Images courtesy:
Margaret Gowen & Co Ltd.
and
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UNDER THE TRACKS

A slice through Dublin's past
Archaeological discoveries during the
construction of the Luas light rail network.

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