

Archaeological Monitoring of Metro North Utility Slit Trenching, O'Connell Street, Dublin.

Ministerial Consent Registration Number: E3965

Project code: RPUT09 **Director:** Tara Doyle

Client: RPA

Date: October 2009



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Executive Summary

Archaeological monitoring of 43 slit trenches was undertaken between 18 May 2009 and July 2009. The excavation of these trenches was necessary to identify the location, size and level gradient of all existing utilities and associated features including underground culverts and basements. This investigation was carried out on behalf of the Railway Procurement Agency as part of the design and construction of the proposed Metro North light rail project. These trenches were situated at several locations across Dublin City centre from the North Circular Road/Mater Hospital in the north, to St Stephens Green in the south. A total of 14 slit trenches were located in close proximity to three National Monuments. Under Section 14 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004, these trenches required Ministerial Consent prior to excavation. They included the Daniel O'Connell Monument (E3964), the William Smith O'Brien Monument (E3965) and St. Stephens Green Park Monument (E3963). The remaining 29 slit trenches were excavated in accordance with the conditions of Section 26 of the National Monuments Act (as amended).

This report is concerned with four trenches excavated on the central reserve on O'Connell Street. These were situated in close proximity to William Smith O'Brien Monument and were known as ST 709, ST 710, ST 711 and ST 712. In accordance with the conditions set out in the consent issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, a metal detection device was employed to assist with finds retrieval (Metal Detection Consent Number R141). The spoil excavated from both trenches was spread by hand and all identified finds were collected.

Excavation of the four trenches resulted in the temporary removal of pavement to the south of the William Smith O'Brien Monument. The permanent granite slab surface was removed and backfilled with tarmac by Dublin City Council prior to our investigations. This prevented any permanent damage to the granite slabs. Each trench was subsequently hand dug. On completion of utility surveying, the trenches were backfilled and the appropriate surface reinstated.

Several archaeological deposits, possible cobble surfaces and a stone and red brick culvert were identified within ST 709. No artefacts were recovered from all four trenches.

Based on the results of archaeological monitoring, it is recommended that any future ground works or investigations to be carried out in the vicinity of the O'Connell Monument be monitored by a qualified archaeologist under the terms and conditions set down by Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring of four trenches located to the immediate north of The William Smith O'Brien Monument on O'Connell Street. Initially, the licence for the works was issued to RPA Archaeologist Eimear Dennehy. Responsibility for this was later transferred to Tara Doyle of Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd.

Consent for utility silt trench investigation in the vicinity of The William Smith O'Brien Monument on O'Connell Street was issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930 as amended by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004. The relevant sections are quoted below:

Whereas

- 1. The William Smith O'Brien Monument, O'Connell Street, Dublin, part of the historic city of Dublin (DU018-020), is a national monument in the ownership of Dublin City Council.
- 2. Mr. R Leech, Project Manager, Metro North, Railway Procurement Agency (RPA), Parkgate Business Centre, Parkgate Street, Dublin 8, has requested the consent of the Minister to carry out trenching in proximity to the national monument and to archaeologically monitor the same. The purpose of the trenching is to establish the location of sub-surface utilities in connection with the installation of Metro North.
- 3. A method statement and details of the works have been submitted by Ms E Dennehy, Archaeological Consultant, and the RPA.

The consent of the Minister under Section 14 of the National Monuments Act 1930, as amended by Section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 2004 is hereby granted to the RPA and Ms Dennehy to carry out the proposed works and to archaeologically monitor same, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1 and the following further conditions:

- (a) Works to be carried out as per the method statement:
- (b) The soil from the trenches to be spread in order to ascertain the artefact-bearing potential of the soil:
- (c) Any archaeological features encountered during trenching to be excavated by hand:
- (d) Should significant archaeological remains be encountered archaeological works shall cease pending consultation with National Monuments Service:
- (e) A metal detection device to be employed to assist in finds retrieval;
- (f) The services of an osteo-archaeologist to be available in the event of the recovery of human remains.

2. Background

O'Connell Street or Sráid Uí Chonaill is Dublin's main thoroughfare. It is one of Europe's widest streets and measures 49 m in width at its southern end, 46 m at the north, and is 500 m in length.

O'Connell Street has its origins in a street named Drogheda Street dating from the 17th century. It was laid out by Henry Moore, Earl of Drogheda and was a third of the width of the present-day O'Connell Street. It was located on the site of the modern eastern carriageway and extending from Parnell Street to the junction with Abbey Street. In the 1740s, a wealthy banker and property speculator by the name of Luke Gardiner acquired the upper part of Drogheda Street extending down to Henry Street as part of a much larger land deal. He demolished the western side of Drogheda Street creating an exclusive elongated residential square, thus establishing the scale of the modern-day thoroughfare. Gardiner also laid out a mall down the central section of the street, lined with low granite walls and obelisks topped with oil-fuelled lamp globes. It was planted with trees a few years later. He titled the new development 'Sackville Street' after the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lionel Cranfield Sackville, Duke of Dorset. It was also known as 'Sackville Mall', 'Gardiner's Mall' or simply 'The Mall'.

It was not until 1777 that the planning body in the city, the Wide Streets Commission, obtained a financial grant from Parliament and work could begin to realise Gardiner's plan. For the next 10 years work progressed in demolishing a myriad of dwellings and other buildings, laying out the new roadway and building new terraces. Upon completion c. 1785-90, one of the finest streets in Europe had been created. The street became a commercial success upon the opening of Carlisle Bridge, designed by James Gandon, in 1793 for pedestrians and 1795 for all traffic.

During the 19th century further changes took place on Sackville Street, resulting in the gradual erosion of the unified classical street created by the Wide Streets Commission and its replacement with an ostentatious high-Victorian boulevard, comprised of elaborate individual buildings. One of the world's first purpose-built department stores was such a building: Delany's New Mart 'Monster Store' built in time for the Dublin Exhibition of 1853 and later to be purchased by the Clery family in the 1880s. It also housed the Imperial Hotel. Across the road, another elaborate hotel was built next to the GPO: the Hotel Metropole, in a high-French style. Similarly the Gresham Hotel opened in 1817 to the north of the street in adjoining Georgian townhouses and was later remodeled, as it became more successful. By 1900 Sackville Street became a well known shopping and business location and a highly successful city centre thoroughfare that earned the title of 'Ireland's Main Street'.

The Easter Rising of 1916 led to the street's bombardment for a number of days by the gunboat *Helga* of the Royal Navy and several other artillery pieces which were brought up the Liffey to fire on the north of O'Connell Street. In 1924, Dublin Corporation renamed the street in honor of Daniel O'Connell, a nationalist leader of the early nineteenth century whose statue stands at the lower end of the street, facing O'Connell Bridge. The William Smith O'Brien Statue was designed and sculpted by Thomas Farrell. It was originally erected in 1870 and stood on an island at the O'Connell Bridge entrance to D' Olier Street, it was later moved to O'Connell Street in 1929.

The four trenches reported on here, ST 709, ST 710, ST 711 and ST 712, were located to the north of the William Smith O'Brien Monument (Figure 1). All of the trenches were located on the pavement and situated along the central reserve of O'Connell Street to the east of Eason's Bookstore.

The statue dedicated to William Smith O'Brien (1803-1864) a leader of the doomed rebellion of 1848, was the first monument erected in Dublin to commemorate an individual who had stood for armed resistance to British rule. O'Brien was also a descendant of the Protestant nobility who traced his lineage back to Brian Boru.

The date chosen for the unveiling of his monument was 26 December 1870. As he had been a revolutionary nationalist, the statue of Smith O'Brien broke the sculptural mould in the capital. The occasion was a significant one for it marked:

"the first time for 70 years that a monument had been erected in a public place in Dublin to hour an Irishman whose title to that honour was that he devoted his life to the Irishnational cause (cheers). In other countries it is such men only that received the honour of a public monument, but in this city there were statues to the men who had served and loved England, and did not care for Ireland. As to this country, it had been held that it was treason to love her, and death to defend her. The monuments which had been erected till now have been rather monuments of this haughty mastery of the English people and our servility and helplessness. A favourable change took place recently. Ireland had ventured to erect statues to Moore, Goldsmith and Burke, whose genius was Irish and whose sympathies also were mainly Irish. Though these men loved Ireland, and their memories were thus commemorated, none of them ever exposed themselves to the danger of imprisonment or transportation for life for Ireland. There stood the statue of a man who 22 years ago, was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered for his love of Ireland. (Cheers)

O'Brien had been sentenced to death for high treason resulting from his part in the insurrection of 1848. After his death in 1868 a committee was formed to gather subscriptions and organise the erection of a monument in his honour and,

"To this undertaking men widely differing in their political and religious sentiments have subscribed, desiring to testify their respect for the noble and honourable character of our distinguished country man, whose unselfish devotion to, and sacrifices for, Ireland had never been questioned even by the sternest critics or severest censors."

The committee was led by John Martin and John Blake Dillon, both of whom had been caught up in the radical politics of the mid-nineteenth century and shared O'Brien's belief in physical force. Dublin Corporation granted permission for the site at the junction of Sackville Street and D'Olier Street in 1867. The committee commissioned one of the most prominent sculptors of the day, Thomas Farrell RHA of Lower Gloucester Street, to sculpt the figure of O'Brien. He sculpted the figure in marble in an 'ordinary frock coat, high buttoned waistcoat and pantaloons, all of which are treated with the most commendable taste and skill. There is not the slightest approach to stiffness in the pose which is most easy and natural.'

O'Brien is depicted in a resolute stance, arms folded, weight borne on one leg in a manner of a man at ease with his leadership. The statue was unveiled on 27 December 1870 with this inscription:

William Smith O'Brien born 17th October 1803, sentenced to death for high treason on the 9th October 1848. Died 16th June 1864.

Processions were prohibited by the authorities, because of O'Brien's politics. It did not deter the masses from assembling and from bands taking up their positions and playing through the proceedings. These displays of nationalism signalled a change in the sculptural composition of the city which would be further reinforced with the monument to Henry Grattan at College Green in 1876. By 1929 traffic congestion on O'Connell Bridge was such that it was recommended by the Streets Section of Dublin Corporation that the O'Brien statue be removed from its location to a site near the centre of O'Connell Street approximately twenty feet south of the junction with Lwr. Abbey Street.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the archaeological monitoring were to record and determine the character of any previously unknown archaeology within each trench and to recover artefacts according to the conditions stated in the Ministerial Consent (see above). This involved monitoring the excavation of slit trenches, necessary to identify the location, size and level gradient of all existing sub-surface utilities and associated features.

4. Methods

Excavation resulted in the temporary removal of pavement to the south of the William Smith O'Brien Monument. The trenches were fenced off and a traffic/pedestrian management plan was set in place by GMC Ltd. The permanent surfaces were removed prior to excavation by Dublin City Council. Each trench was subsequently hand dug to a depth where utilities/archaeological features or deposits were encountered. Within ST 709 post-medieval archaeology was encountered. All deposits and

spoil were inspected by hand for artefacts. This also involved the use of a metal detector. On completion of archaeological and utility recording and survey, the trenches were backfilled and the appropriate surface immediately reinstated.

5. Results

A total of 11 trenches were excavated on O'Connell St. As mentioned above, four trenches, ST 709, ST 710, ST 711, ST 712, were situated in close proximity to the William Smith O'Brien Monument and required Ministerial Consent (C315) for excavation (Figure 2). Further south on O'Connell Street, two trenches, ST 719 and ST 715, lay within close proximity to the Daniel O'Connell Monument. The results of archaeological monitoring of these trenches are detailed in a separate report. The remaining five trenches were located on the western pavement on O'Connell Street and were excavated under Section 26a licence number 08E956. These results are also detailed in a separate report.

ST709

ST709 was situated along the central pedestrian reserve of O'Connell St, east of Eason's Bookstore (Plate 1). It was orientated in a northeast-southwest direction and measured approximately 7 m long by 0.60 m wide and reached a maximum depth of 1.25 m. A possible culvert was identified at the base of the trench (Figure 3). It was located in the centre of the trench and comprised of a lower double coursed red brick wall (012) to the east and a large mudstone flagstone (011) to the west. The wall (012) measured 0.60 m long by 0.10 m wide with unknown depth. The flagstone (011) measured 0.60 m long by 0.20 m wide. Stepped approximately 0.20 m above this to the east was an upper single course of a red brick wall (013). A further single course of red brick wall (010) was identified to the west. Both walls measured 0.60 m long by 0.10 m wide with unknown depth. The three walls and the flagstone appeared to form the culvert structure. A metalled surface (008) was identified adjacent to the eastern upper wall (013). It comprised of sub-angular small stones that were set into dark brown black silty clay. The surface sloped from east to west at a depth of 0.52 m - 0.88 m from the surface. The lower part of the culvert was filled with loosely compact dark black brown silty clay (014) with rubble, mortar and red brick inclusions. It measured 0.77 m long by 0.60 m wide with unknown thickness. Directly over it was moderately compact black brown silty (009) clay with rubble, mortar, red brick and oyster shell inclusions. It measured 2.70 m long by 0.60 m wide with a maximum thickness of 0.30 m. Above this was firmly compact medium brown clay (007) with frequent tree root inclusions. It measured 0.80 m long by 0.60 m wide with a maximum thickness of 0.30 m. Above this deposit to the west was moderately compact medium to dark brown silty clay (006) with stone and red brick inclusions. It measured approximately 1 m long by 0.60 m wide with a maximum thickness of 0.15 m. A small metalled surface (005) was identified to the west of this deposit. It measured approximately 0.50 m long by 0.60 m wide and was 0.05 m thick. It was located at a depth of 0.75 m from the surface (Plate 2).

Above the previously described deposit (006) and the metalled surface (005) a number of utility pipes were located to the extreme east and west of the trench. The remaining deposits above these utilities were modern and comprised of moderately compact medium brown rubble mix (004), a layer of hardcore (003) and a layer of cement (002). Above this were the surface granite flagstones (001).

ST 710

This slit trench was located approximately 4 m south of ST 709. It was linear in plan and orientated in a northeast-southwest direction. It measured 4.10 m long by 0.60 m wide with a maximum depth of 0.86 m. A total of three red plastic utility pipes were identified within this trench. No archaeological features were encountered (Plate 3).

ST 711 and ST 712

ST711 and ST712 comprised of an L-shaped trench situated to the south of ST 710. ST 711 was orientated in a northeast-southwest direction and measured approximately 3 m long by 0.60 m wide and was 0.30 m deep (Plate 4). A red plastic pipe and a copper pipe were identified within this trench. No archaeological features or artefacts were encountered. ST 712 was orientated in a northeast-southwest direction and measured approximately 7.50 m long by 0.60 m wide and was 0.30 – 0.50 m deep. A water pipe and a red utility pipe were identified. No archaeological features or artefacts were identified within this trench.

6. Discussion

In general, all four trenches contained a number of modern utilities. Post-medieval archaeological deposits, a culvert and possible cobble surfaces were identified in ST 709. Unlike the deposits found in ST 715 and ST 719 further south near the O'Connell Monument (Doyle 2009) the post-medieval culvert and related deposits within this trench appeared to be *in situ* and not disturbed. No artefacts were recovered. The remaining three trenches encountered utilities relatively close to the surface, therefore deeper excavation was not required and the chances of encountering archaeology at such a shallow depth was extremely unlikely. Given the nature of other trenches excavated on O'Connell Street, archaeological deposits may lie at a greater depth.

7. Recommendations

Based on the results of archaeological monitoring, it is recommended that any further investigations to be carried out in the vicinity of the William Smith O'Brien Monument be monitored by a qualified archaeologist under the terms and conditions set down by Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

References

Doyle, T. 2009. *Archaeological Monitoring of Metro North Utility Slit Trenching, O'Connell Street, Dublin, E3964*. Headland Archaeology (Ireland) Ltd. Unpublished Report.

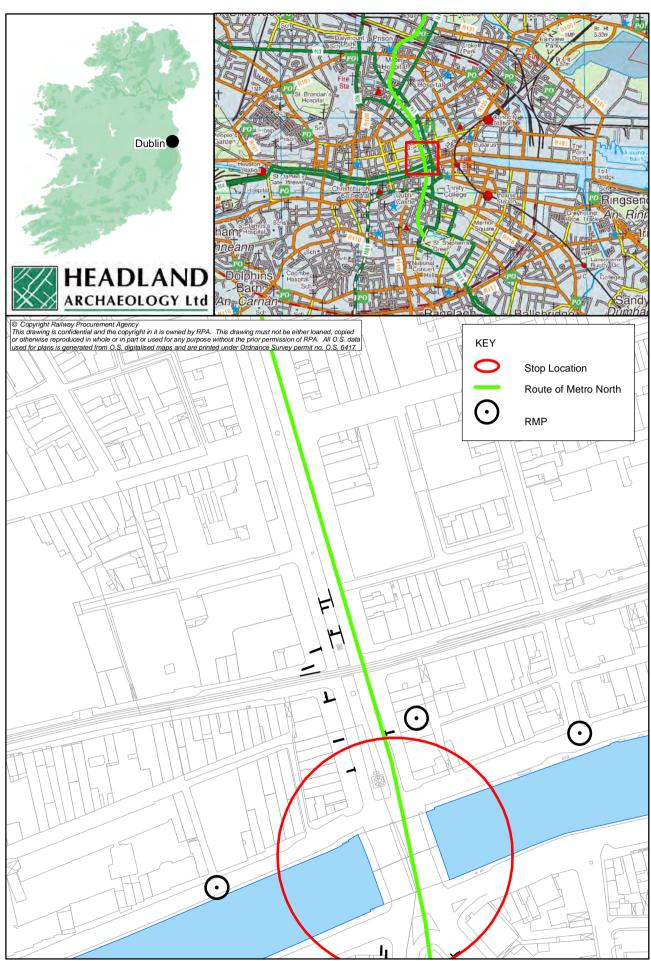
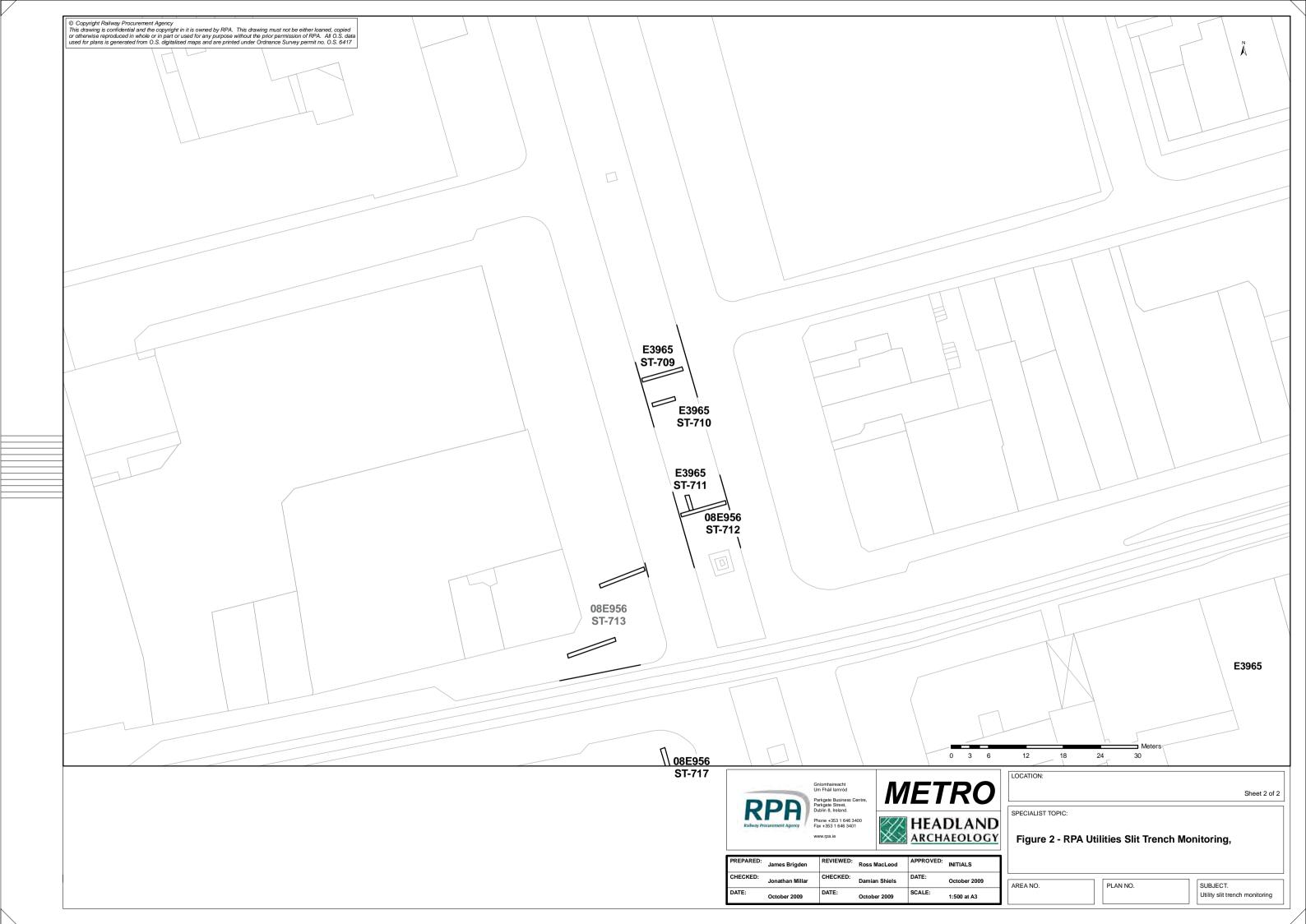
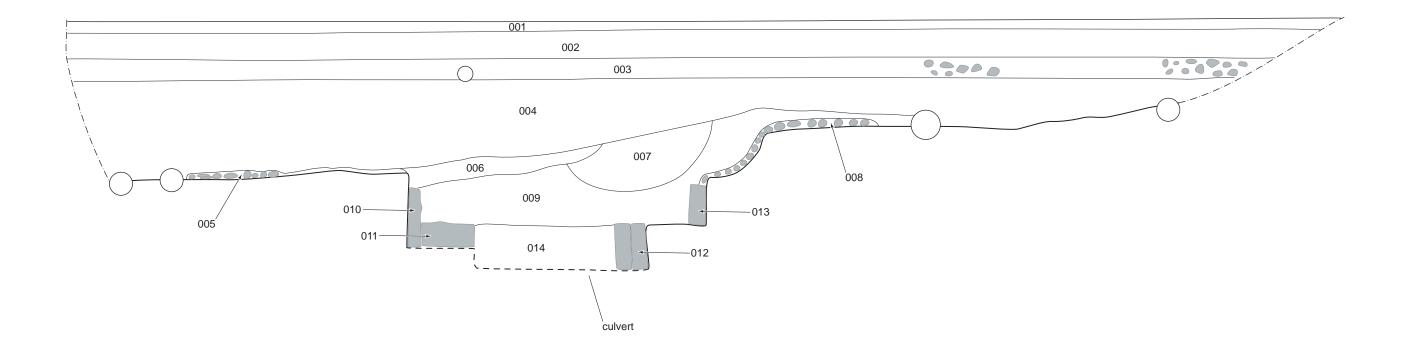


Figure 1 - RPA Utilities Slit Trench Monitoring: E3965, Location Map





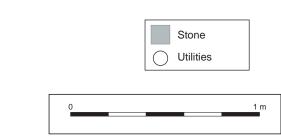


Figure 3 - RPA Slit Trench Monitoring: E3965, South-facing section of slit trench 709.



Plate 1 - Pre-excavation of ST709, O'Connell St., west-facing.



Plate 3 - Mid-excavation of ST710, east-facing.



Plate 2 - Mid-excavation of ST709, showing possible culvert or structure, north-facing.



Plate 4 - Mid-excavation of ST711 and ST712, north-facing.

Appendix 1: Context Register

001	Surface	Modern naviement granite stans slab	Modern surface
001	Surrace	Modern pavement granite stone slab surface associated with most trenches	
			slabs
002	Donosit	excavated on pavements Modern cement hardcore mix found	Comont domasit
002	Deposit		Cement deposit
002	Dominist	under surface layer in all trenches.	II-nda
003	Deposit	Modern black hardcore deposit	Hardcore deposit found in ST 709
004	Deposit	Modern medium to brown clay silt rubble	Modern deposit in
		mix. It measured approximately 6 m long	ST 709
		by 0.60 m wide and was 0.45 m thick	
005	Surface	Small area of stone cobbling or metalled	Cobbled or
		surface located to the west of the trench. It	metalled surface
		measured approximately 0.50 m long by	in ST 709
		0.60 m wide and was 0.05 m deep.	
006	Deposit	Moderately compact medium to dark	Deposit in ST 709
		brown silty clay with stone and red brick	
		inclusions It measured approximately 1 m	
		long by 0.60 m wide and had a maximum	
	1	thickness of 0.15 m.	
007	Deposit	Firmly compact medium brown clay with	Deposit in ST 709,
		frequent root inclusions. It measured	non
		approximately 0.80 m long by 0.60 m	archaeological
		wide with a maximum thickness of 0.30	
		m.	
008	Surface	Small metalled surface located to the east	Cobbled or
		of the trench. It was set into dark brown	metalled surface
		black silty clay and sloped 0.52 m – 0.88	in ST 709
		from the surface. It measured	
		approximately 1 m long by 0.60 m wide.	
009	Deposit	Moderately compact black brown silty	Post-medieval
		clay with a rubble, mortar, red brick,	deposit in ST 709
		oyster shell inclusions. It measured	
		approximately 2.70 m long by 0.60 m	
		wide and had a maximum thickness of	
040	TA7 11	0.30 m	D 111
010	Wall	Single course of a red brick mortared	Possible upper
		linear located to the west of the culvert. It	culvert wall in ST
		was 0.60 m long by 0.10 m wide with	709
011	CLar	unknown depth.	Claus 1.1
011	Stone	Large stone (mudstone?) slab that	Stone slab
		measured 0.60 m long and 0.30 m wide. It	associated with
		appeared to abut a red brick wall (013)	interior of possible
		and was situated approximately 0.15 m	
010	TA7-11	lower that the wall.	Događala 1
012	Wall	Double course of a red brick mortared	Possible lower
		linear wall located to the east of the	culvert wall in ST
		culvert. It was 0.60 m long by 0.20 m wide	709
012	TA7 11	with unknown depth.	D '11
013	Wall	Single course of a red brick mortared	Possible upper

		linear located to the east of the culvert. It was 0.60 m long by 0.10 m wide with	culvert wall in ST 709	
		unknown depth.		
014	Fill	Loosely compact black brown silty clay Fill within lower		
		with rubble, mortar and red brick	part of a culvert in	
		inclusions. It measured 0.77 m long by	ST 709	
		0.60 m wide with unknown depth.		

Appendix 2: Photographic Register

E3965:001	O'Connell St	North	Pre-excavation of ST 709
E3965:002	O'Connell St	North	Pre-excavation of ST 709
E3965:003	O'Connell St	North	Pre-excavation of ST 709
E3965:004	O'Connell St	West	Pre-excavation of ST 709
E3965:005	O'Connell St	North	Pre-excavation of ST 709
E3965:006	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:007	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:008	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:009	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:010	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:011	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:012	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:013	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:014	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:015	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:016	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:017	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:018	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:019	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, showing possible culvert or wall
E3965:020	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation working shot of ST 709
E3965:021	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 709, section wall
E3965:022	O'Connell St	East	Mid-excavation of ST 710
E3965:023	O'Connell St	East	Mid-excavation of ST 710
E3965:024	O'Connell St	East	Mid-excavation of ST 710

E3965:025	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 711 and ST 712
E3965:026	O'Connell St	North	Mid-excavation of ST 711 and ST 712
E3965:027	O'Connell St	Southwest	Mid-excavation of ST 711 and ST712
E3965:028	O'Connell St	North	Post-excavation of ST 710
E3965:029	O'Connell St	Northwest	Post-excavation of ST710 and ST 709
E3965:030	O'Connell St	East	Mid-excavation of ST 711 and ST 712

Appendix 3: Drawing Register

Draw No.	Sheet No.	Section	Plan	Scale	Description
1	1	Yes	N/A	1:20	Mid-excavation of ST 709

Appendix 4: Slit Trench Register

ST 709	O'Connell St.	Length: 7 m	Northeast-southwest direction. Several plastic piped
		Width: 0.65 m	utilities were encountered within the upper part of the
		Depth: 0.50 m -	trench. A possible post-medieval culvert, a cobble or
		1.25	metalled surface and several archaeological deposits
			were identified at a depth of 0.52 m – 1.25 m.
ST 710	O'Connell St.	Length: 4.10 m	Northeast-southwest direction. Three red plastic pipe
		Width: 0.60 m	utilities were encountered within this trench. No
		Depth: 0.86 m	archaeological features or deposits were encountered.
ST 711	O'Connell St.	Length: 3 m	Northwest-Southeast direction. Utilities found in this
		Width: 0.60 m	trench. No archaeological features or deposits were
		Depth: 0.30 m	encountered within this trench.
ST712	O'Connell St.	Length: 7.50 m	Northeast-southwest direction. Utilities found in this
		Width: 0.60 m	trench. No archaeological features or deposits were
		Depth: 0.50 m	encountered within this trench.

Appendices