



Proposed Redevelopment at the Forbes Lane Depot
Marrowbone Lane
Dublin 87

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Heritage Impact Assessment Report

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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Thomas McGimsey, of MESH Architects, a Grade 1 Conservation practice, to accompany a Part 8 application, for proposals to redevelop the Depot, on Forbes Lane, Dublin 8.

The subject planning application seeks to clear most of the structures and features on the site to accommodate the development of several multi-storey blocks of living accommodation.

The site contains some partial remains of 19th century structures that were part of a large whiskey distillery, that remained in use into the 1920s. The site was largely redeveloped during the late 20th century to serve as a storage and maintenance depot for the Dublin Streets Department, a use that continues to the present time.

The site was inspected for the purposes of preparing this report on 30th June, 2024, on which date most of the photographs included in the report were taken, and the site examined by the author.

2.0 Historical Background:

The Marrowbone Lane distillery was originally founded around 1752, at the western edge of Dublin's Liberties, and was the first of Dublin's whiskey distilleries to open. In 1780, the distillery was purchased by Scottish distiller John Stein, who also operated a distillery on Bow Lane in the north side of Dublin. By 1800, both distilleries were in the ownership of John Jameson, with his son William put in charge of the Marrowbone Lane distillery. Through the 19th century, the Marrowbone Lane distillery was enlarged, until its annual production reached around 900,000 litres per year.

Described in glowing terms by Alfred Barnard, after his 1886 visit to Marrowbone Lane, the Marrowbone Lane facility boasted some of the largest Mash Tuns, Washbacks and the all important Pot Stills in the United Kingdom. In addition to all of the necessary production facilities and machinery, there were nine bonded maturation warehouses in and around the distillery, to store and age the new spirit in oak casks.

Matured whiskey was exported to the United States, Australia, Canada, British India and the West Indies. Financial difficulties plagued the distillery during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, despite a merger with George Roe's Thomas Street distillery and the the Dublin Whiskey Distillery Company's Jones Road Distillery, to form the Dublin Distilleries Company Ltd. After a century and a half of production, the distillery closed in 1923, the victim of US Prohibition, trade disruption with the United Kingdom, the Depression and restrictive regulations in independent Ireland..

During the 1916 Rising in Dublin, the distillery was occupied by a small force of Irish Volunteers, only to surrender at the cessation of the hostilities. A small commemorative plaque can be seen on the stone gate piers facing onto James' Walk, currently serving as the boundary wall to the telecommunications complex.

Over the course of the next half century, virtually all traces of the vast distillery were gradually demolished, leaving only a few remnants of the plant's structures standing as boundary walls around a Dublin City Roads Maintenance Depot. Some of the larger distillery structures were used for a few decades for light manufacturing, but gradually all were demolished.

The various editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show the site of the proposed development in great detail, and illustrate how it has changed over the course of nearly two and a half centuries of use.



Plate No. 1. Extract from Rocque's Map of Dublin, 1756, showing the location of the future Marrowbone Lane distillery as it appeared in 1756. The earliest distillery on the site is reputed to have been established around 1752, and it is possible that the oddly shaped structure to the left of Marrowbone Lane at the left centre, is that distillery. That structure staddles an old stream that would have provided water for brewing and distilling, as well as a source of water for the condensers. The terraces of houses shown in the crank on Marrowbone Lane are mostl likely the houses shown on the later photo showing a few gabled houses beside that crank in the lane.



Plate No. 2. Historic photo, showing the well-known angle in Marrowbone Lane, looking south-west. One of the large brick chimneys at the Marrowbone Lane Distillery can be seen in the distance, towering over one of the distillery buildings in the north-east corner of the complex. Of particular interest are the gable-fronted houses, believed to date from the late-17th or very early 18th century.

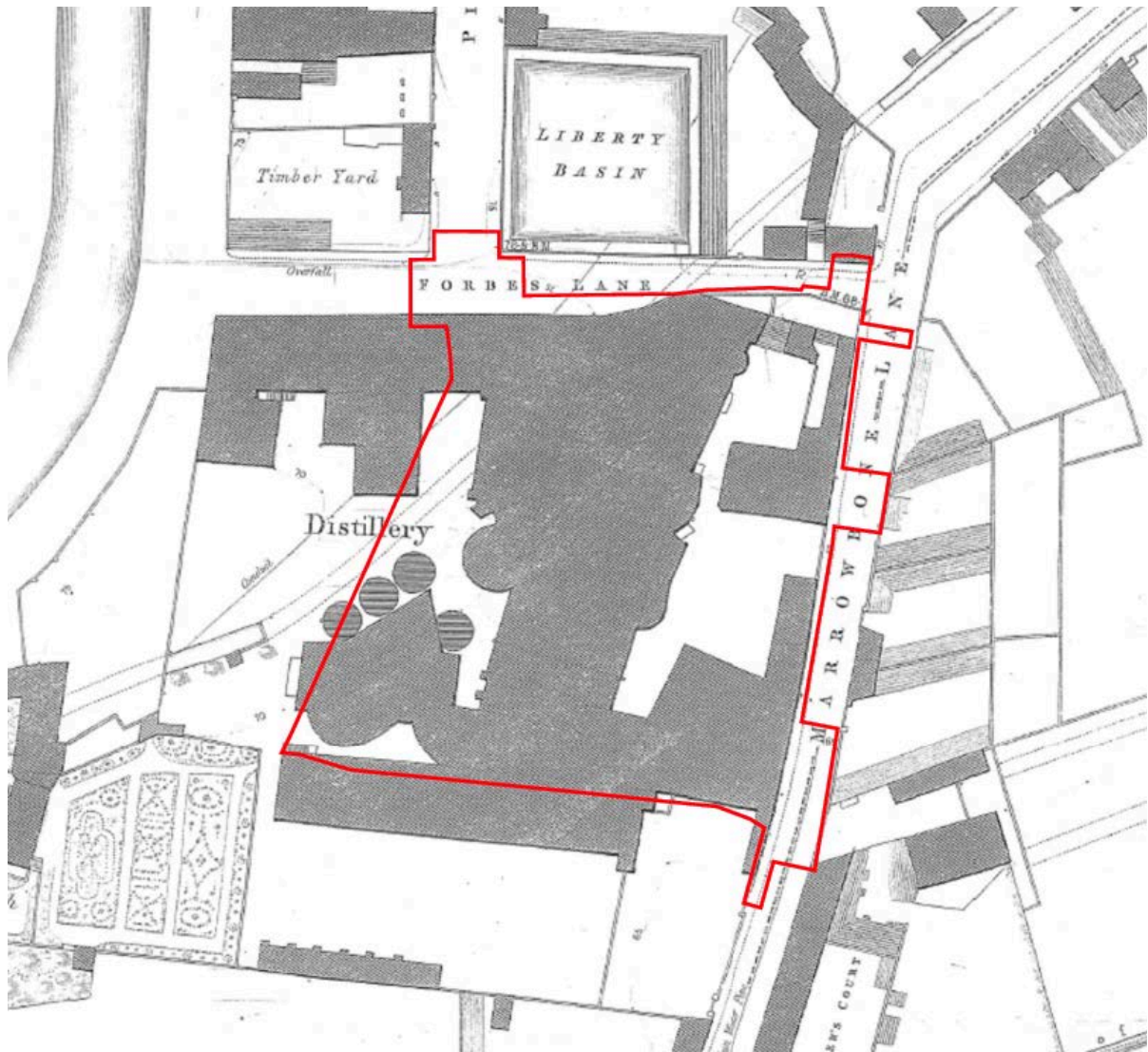


Plate No. 3. Extract from the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland map, showing the distillery as it was re-surveyed in 1847. The pair of gabled houses in the previous photo are likely to be the structures shown in the top right corner of this extract. The distillery, called the William Jameson Distillery, has been well developed by this date. The grain stores are at the northern edge of the complex, adjacent to the canal bank, with the brewing and distilling areas located running north to south. The curving stream can still be seen running through the property, and continuing to the north-east along near the edge of Marrowbone Lane. The two large sections of historic masonry that have survived on the site are running along the centre of the Marrowbone Lane frontage, and along the centre of the Forbes Lane frontage.

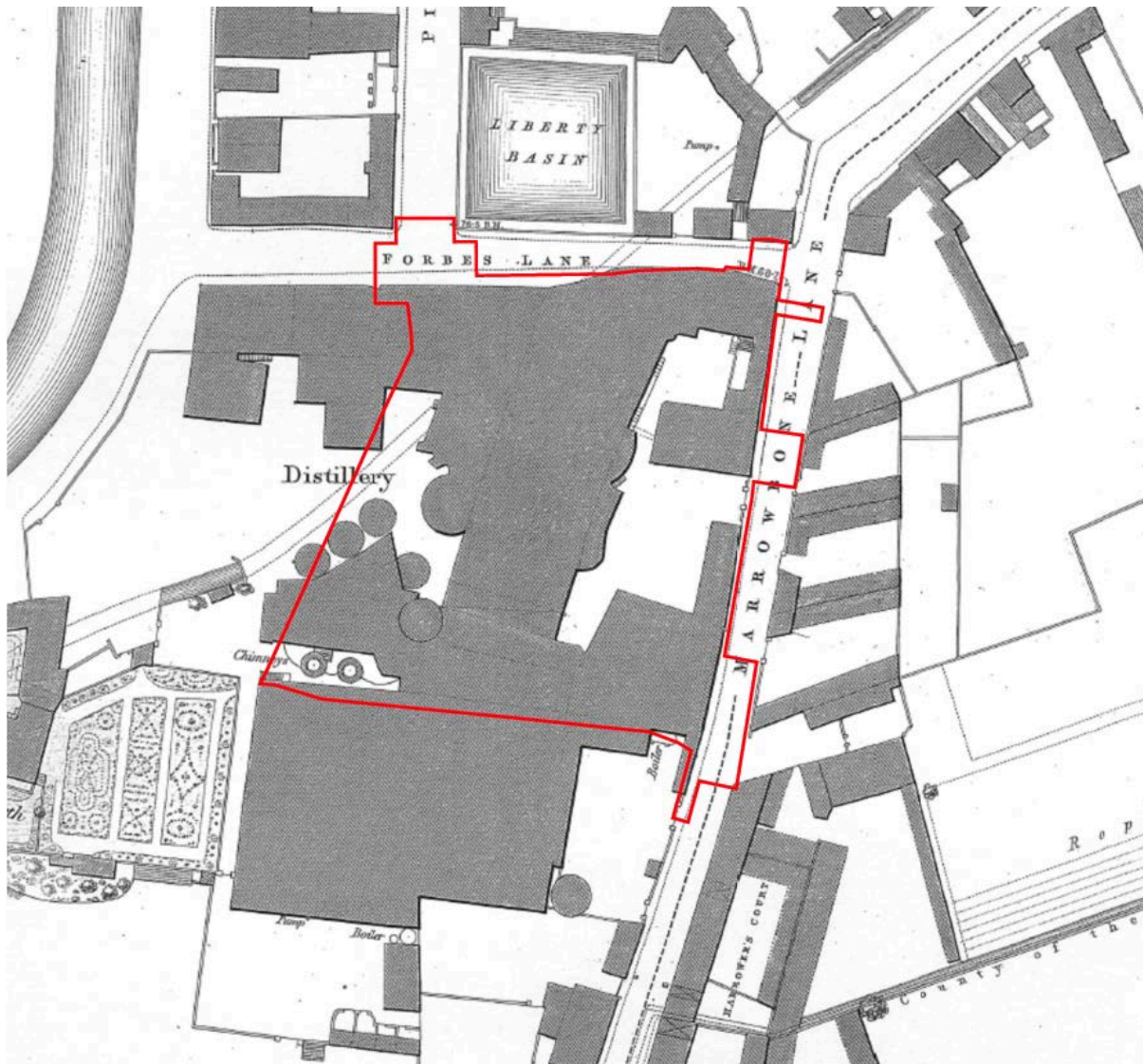


Plate No. 4. Extract from the next edition of the Ordnance Survey, showing the distillery site as surveyed in 1864. Additional cask stores have been added to the southern area in the site.

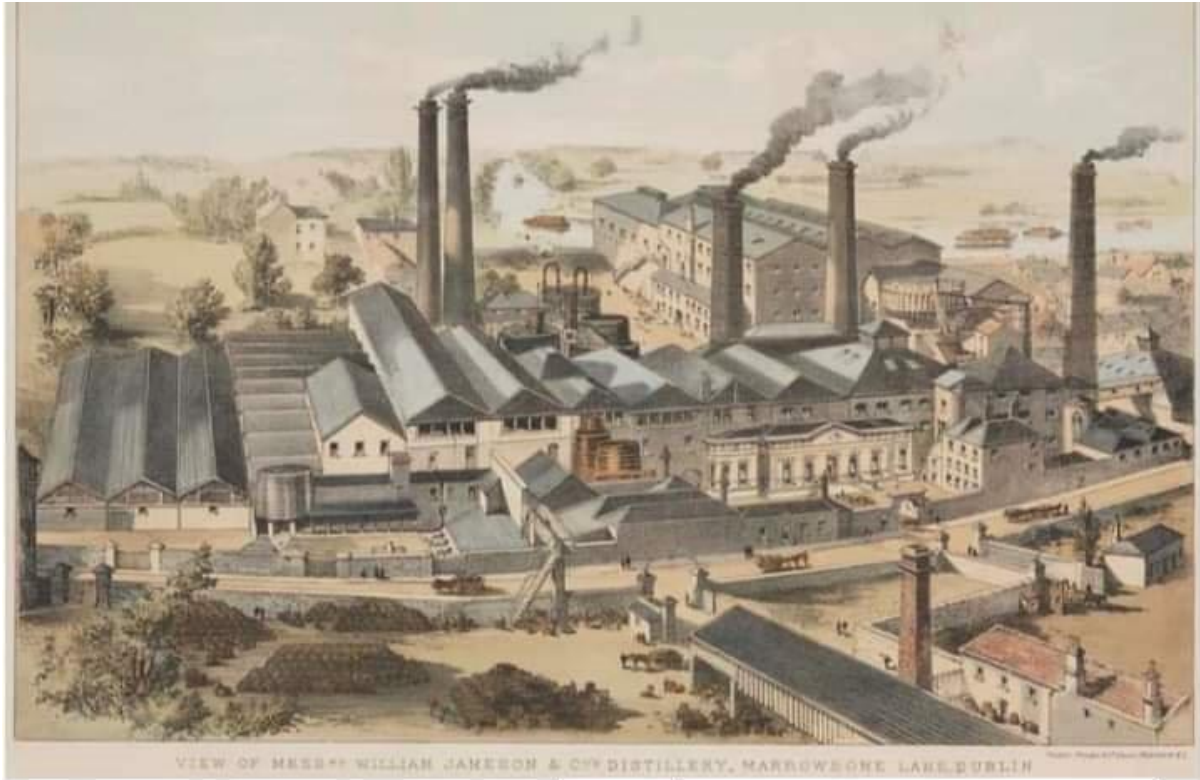


Plate No. 5. Historic colour rendering of the William Jameson distillery on Marrowbone Lane, as it appeared around 1890. The busy canal can be seen in the background. Marrowbone Lane is seen running from left to right in the rendering, with a large cooperage in the yard on the opposite side of the lane at the lower left. At the right of centre can be seen the small single storey gatehouse, with a door and three windows, of which only the east elevation has survived in place. The large multi-storey structure to the rear are the grain stores. The central structure with the multiple roofs and valleys would have contained the mashing, brewing and distilling operations, with casks stored for aging in the single storey structures at the left end of the complex. The tall chimneys would have served boilers for powering steam engines for pumping water and for powering the massive mash tun mixer and the grist mills. Enormous amounts of heat was required to raise the temperature of the water for the mashing and brewing, and to vapourise the alcohol from the fermented wort in the large copper stills.

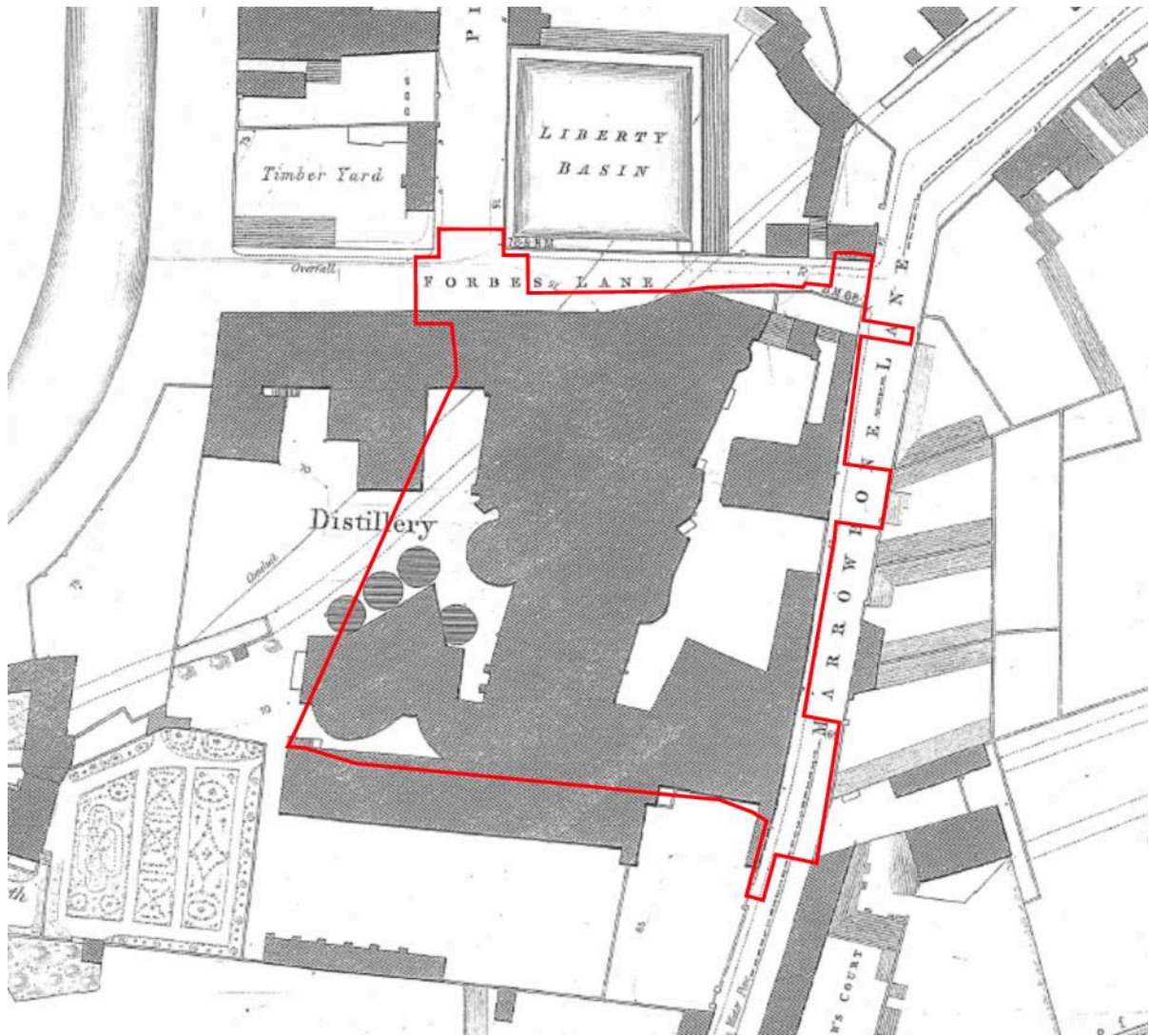


Plate No. 6. Extract from the early 20th Century Edition of the Ordnance Survey, showing the subject area as surveyed in 1907 and published in 1909. Among the changes from the previous map of 1864, the cask stores have been expanded into the south end of the property, and another large structure has been added on the other side of Marrowbone Lane. That structure had a distinctive saw-tooth roof, survived for many decades after the closure of the distillery in 1924, and was converted to a tobacco factory. It was demolished during the second half of the 20th century and there is now a community centre on the site.



Plate No. 7. Recent aerial view of the site of the proposed development, showing all of the structures currently standing in the depot. This image is included in MCORM Architect's Architectural Design Statement, included in the current application. Forbes Lane runs along the northern edge to the site, in the upper left. Marrowbone Lane runs along the eastern boundary to the site, at the right centre of the image. The community centre is the large red brick structure at the centre right, across Marrowbone Lane from the site. Currently most of the area in the depot consists of hard standing. The remnants of old distillery structures remain as perimeter walls along Forbes Lane and Marrowbone Lane. The rest of the structures within the depot consist of mid-20th century stores at the right, large open sheds for materials storage, and staff services housed in porta-cabin structures at the upper left.

In the photo above, it is clear that virtually no historic or otherwise significant structures remain standing in the area around the subject site. A few fragments of the former distillery have survived on the western edge of its original greater site, including a pair of gates that now serve as part of the site boundary to the telecommunications complex, seen at the left side of the above photo. A few 19th century houses and industrial structures remain standing in the general area, including a small group of brick houses on Pim Street, seen running north from Forbes Lane at the upper left corner of the photo. Also, a small brick industrial structure stands on the east side of Marrowbone Lane, about 50m south of the community centre. These structures will be discussed more fully in the following chapters.

3.0 Existing Structures and Heritage Impact Assessment from the Proposed Development

The subject site has been in use as a major repair and stores depot for the Dublin Streets Department for the last half century. In its current configuration, the depot consists of many structures of varying ages and uses, in varying states of repair.

Those structures vary in age but most appear to date from the second half of the 20th century, with some modifications and extensions from the early 21st century. Spread around the depot are several structures of varying ages, including a large open shed the storage of sand grit, assorted garages and storage sheds, and prefabricated units for offices, toilets and staff canteens. None of those structures could be considered to have any particular historical or architectural significance.

The only upstanding elements within the depot site that could be considered to have architectural or historical significance are sections of the perimeter boundary wall. Along the Forbes Lane and Marrowbone Lane boundaries are relatively substantial sections of historic masonry, representing the external walls of some of the 19th century distillery's structures. The most significant of these is the east elevation to the distillery's early 19th century gate house. The main entrance gate to the complex was adjacent to this gate house, and this is believed to have been where the Irish rebels entered the distillery to establish their occupation in 1916. The surviving sections of 19th century masonry are more fully described in the captions to the survey photos, but generally consist of brick or calp limestone masonry. These walls are of varying ages and materials, and have remained in place despite the demolition of the historic buildings they were part of, and they are now the only tangible evidence of the enormous whiskey distillery that stood on the site for over a century and a half.

Within the general vicinity of the depot site are a few 19th and early 20th century structures that have remained standing, and provide a small but tangible link to the history of this part of Dublin. The DCC depot currently occupies approximately one third of the original site of the distillery, with large structures now occupying a large part of the western and southern portions of the original distillery. To the west of the depot is a large telecommunications complex, which has retained a few small fragments of the distillery in its western boundary wall. And to the south, a large block of apartments occupies the rest of the distillery site.

Despite dereliction and large scale redevelopment of the area, a few 19th century terraced houses remain standing on Pim Street, a narrow early 19th century street that runs north from Forbes Lane to Bond Street. A small number of slightly later 19th century houses stand on Long's Place, around the corner.

3.01 Surviving Heritage Structures in the Vicinity of the Development Site:

Several small terraced houses stand on Pim Street, running north from Forbes Lane. Four of the houses on the west side of Pim Street have been included on the RPS for Dublin, along with a large, and heavily altered, former grain store from the early 19th century. Another small industrial structure stands on the east side of Marrowbone Lane, to the south of the modern Community Centre. The houses were recorded by the NIAH, and the records for No. 10 Pim Street, closest to the subject development site, are included below.



Plate No. 8. General view from the NIAH record, showing No. 10 Pim Street and its adjacent terraced houses. This attractive terrace of early 19th century houses provides historical context to the site of the former Marrowbone Lane Distillery, which stood approximately 100 m to the south of these houses. It is likely that some of the distillery's workers lived in these houses during the 19th century.

The NIAH record for No. 10 Pim Street, (Reg No 50080229) rated the house as having Regional Significance, drawing from its Architectural category of special interest. The date of construction was estimated as 1810-1830. The record includes the following description and appraisal of the structure:

Description (From NIAH Record)

End-of-terrace single-bay three-storey house, built c.1820. Pitched slate roof having parapet to front (east) with granite capping. Shared rendered chimneystacks having clay chimneyots. Lines-and-ruled render to front elevations,

rendered wall to south gable. Square-headed window openings having painted granite sills. Six-over-six timber sash windows to ground and first floors, three-over-three sash window to second floor. Round-headed door opening having timber panelled door, spoked fanlight above.

Appraisal (From NIAH Record)

This terraced house retains its early form and character. Its narrow single-bay frontage emphasises its height that, together with numbers 11, 12 and 13, contributes to the urban character of Pim Street. Early fabric remains in the windows and roof structure. Construction of the Grand Canal was completed in 1797 providing a water connection between Dublin and the River Shannon. This appears to have encouraged street development in the area, with Pim Street being laid shortly after, appearing in Wilson's Street Directory listing by 1815.

This structure is not part of the subject development site, nor was it ever specifically connected to the historic activities that were carried out the subject development site. However No. 10 Pim Street and its adjacent terraced houses provide an important link to the scale and typology of houses and streets that were once common in this area of Dublin during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Potential Impacts from the Proposed Development:

Following Policy BHA2(a), as contained in the DCC Development Plan, the proposed development has been designed to prevent any negative impacts on the setting of the protected houses on Pim Street. The proposed new blocks of apartments will be visible when looking south down Pim Street from these houses, but they are approximately 100m away from the development and will suffer no direct impact. The historic streetscape along Pim Street has already been heavily impacted by large developments of flats and apartments, and the proposed development at the Forbes Lane Depot will have less direct impact than any of those developments.

Former Grain Store on Pim Street/ Bond Street Junction

Another Protected Structure stands at the junction of Pim Street and Bond Street, to the north of the previously mentioned houses. That structure is a 19th century former grain store that was heavily altered around 20 years ago with it was redeveloped into a block of apartments. That structure is on the north end of the block of Pim Street where it meets Bond Street, and the proposed development will have no impact on that structure's historical context.

Marrowbone Lane Industrial Structure

Standing on the east side of Marrowbone Lane, approximately 50 m south of the Community Centre, is a compact two storey brick structure. The building appears to date from the around 1925 and has a prominent gable facing onto Marrowbone Lane. This structure is not included on the RPS and it was not recorded by the NIAH, however it has some Local Significance and provides some historical link to the area's former industrial character. The proposed development is on the opposite of Marrowbone Lane, approximately 50 m north of this structure, and is unlikely to have any negative impact on the historical setting of this structure.



Plate No. 9. Recent general view looking north-east, showing the early 20th century industrial structure on the east side of Marrowbone Lane, to the south of the Community Centre.

3.02.3 Structures Within the Maintenance Depot

Around the inside of the north and east boundary to the depot are an assortment of offices, staff services and storage sheds. None of those structures have any connection to the historic distillery operations, and date from no earlier than the second half of the 20th century. None have any level of architectural or historical significance.

Standing at the centre of the large depot site are several large open sided sheds for storing materials used for roads maintenance. These structures date from the late 20th and early 21st century, and have no architectural or historical significance.

In short, none of the structures standing within the boundaries of the current depot are considered to have any particular architectural or historical significance. They were not surveyed by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, and they are not included on the Record of Protected Structures. Their loss will not have a significant impact on the industrial heritage of Dublin.



Plate No. 10. Recent general view looking north across the centre of the depot, showing the range and type of structures and hard standing that make up the depot. The large brick structure in the distance stands on the opposite side of Forbes Lane.

4.0 General Comments on the Proposed Development

The proposed redevelopment of the Dublin Roads Maintenance Depot will have a significant positive impact on the character its immediately surrounding area. It is proposed to demolish all of the currently existing light industrial and office structures that constitute the Depot, and to replace them with a new medium density development apartments, with new vehicular and pedestrian access directly from Marrowbone Lane.

While the proposed development site occupies a large part of a large and important 19th century whiskey distillery, virtually all traces of that large industrial complex have been totally erased from the site. The only tangible links to the distillery are the fragmentary sections of former external building walls that now form parts of the external boundary walls along Marrowbone Lane and Forbes Lane.

In an area where so much of Dublin's historical industrial heritage has already been demolished, the fragmentary remains of the 19th century Marrowbone Lane Distillery provide a tactile link to the area's industrial past. Having originally been the external walls to some of the distillery's distinctive structures, the walls that survive as part of the external site boundary walls now provide only a limited sense of their former identity. However, owing to the high quality of the 19th century stone and brick masonry, and their historical connection to the 1916 Rising, these fragments merit retention, and the design team have managed to weave them into the fabric of the proposed new development.

The current design proposals have been developed to with a view to achieving that delicate balance in the following ways:

- It has been accepted that the 19th century masonry along both Forbes Lane and Marrowbone Lane are historically significant, as fragmentary remnants of Dublin's rich industrial heritage, and for their relevance to the 1916 Rising.
- The rubble stone masonry, and simple window openings along both lanes are examples of robust and good quality stone masonry, as typified by the industrial structures of 19th century Dublin. Those remnants of former elevations are important elements in the local streetscape and should be preserved within the redeveloped site.
- It is unfortunate that at least the former gate house on Marrowbone Lane was not retained in its entirety, as a complete structure. As they now stand, both sections of masonry offer limited opportunity for redevelopment, other than to stand as fragments of previous industrial buildings, in their original locations. Their locations close to the edge of the two narrow city roads must be respected and the new structures and footpaths must accommodate their presence.
- The proposed development should not be incongruent with recent developments in the immediate area, and should not negatively impact on the appearance of the

local streetscape. The provision of new housing units in an area of high population growth, during a national housing crisis, must also be recognised and valued.

The current development proposals, as designed by the project architects, will retain the east elevation of the former gate house, and a portion of the rubble stone walls along Forbes Lane. The brick and rubble stone masonry will be repaired and repointed following conservation best practice, and all interventions to accommodate the new development will carefully detailed and executed, to recognise that those are contemporary interventions to the historic architectural fabric.

In considering the relative merits of the proposed development, the author of this report acknowledges that the none of the upstanding structures or perimeter walls have been considered to have sufficient social, technical, historic or architectural significance to merit its inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures. However, while the remaining single elevations were part of vernacular industrial structures from the mid-to-late 19th century, their exposed calp limestone masonry is of very good quality and provides this heavily redeveloped quarter of inner city Dublin with an attractive and tangible link with its traditional industries and building types.

In making modifications to the existing sections of historic masonry, it would be best practice to use traditional lime mortars to repair or rebuild portions of the masonry where required. The concrete blocks used to fill in the door and window openings should be carefully removed to avoid damaging the original brick reveals, and the mortar joints should be repointed using traditional lime and sand mortar, to closely match the composition and appearance of the remaining mortars.

Appendix A - Annotated Photo Survey of Depot



Plate No. 11. West side elevation of the former Malting House, showing its relationship to Stanley Street at right.



Plate No. 12. Rear north elevation of the former Malting House, showing the characteristic roof forms over the drying kilns, required to dry out the freshly malted barley, to prevent it from continuing to grow. This elevation will continue to be visible from within the proposed

development. The length of limestone rubble masonry behind the red and yellow car is the remaining south wall of the L-shaped single storey structure that was part of the Scavenging Depot.



Plate No. 13. General view looking east across the depot, showing the north side of the former Malting House, as well as the remaining corner of the L-shaped structure in the distance.



Plate No. 14. General view looking east along Forbes Lane, showing the north side of the former Malting and the other structure with its windows and gate infilled with concrete blocks.



Plate No. 15. General view looking south on Forbes Lane, showing the junction between the two demolished distillery structures. The structure at left was clearly added to the gable end of the large structure to the right. The different types of limestone masonry are evident, along with the brick reveals around the blocked window openings to the left hand structure.



Plate No. 16. General view looking



Plate No. 17. General view looking



Plate No. 18. General view showing one of the blocked window opening on the Forbes Lane elevation.



Plate No. 19. General view looking south showing the large arched gate onto Forbes Lane, currently blocked up with concrete blocks.



Plate No. 20. General view looking south, showing the east end of the perimeter wall along Forbes Lane. This masonry survives from a 19th century structure in the distillery and includes a brick arched former entrance gate. The presence of large quoin stones at the left side of the stone masonry shows that the original structure turned the corner at this location. It would make sense to maintain this corner if possible to reduce the cost of cutting back the stone masonry and creating a strong corner.



Plate No. 21. General view looking south-west along Marrowbone Lane, towards the north-east corner of the development site. This is the approximate location of the historic photo that shows early 19th century gabled houses on both sides of Marrowbone Lane, with the distillery chimney in the background.



Plate No. 22. General view looking south-west, showing the north-east corner of the development site, at the junction of Marrowbone Lane and Forbes Lane to the right. Note the range of materials used in the perimeter wall, of varying ages and qualities.



Plate No. 23. General view looking west showing the northern end of the perimeter wall along Marrowbone Lane.



Plate No. 24. General view looking west showing the north side of the entrance gate into the current depot, with a small section of good quality 19th century red brick masonry surviving from the distillery.



Plate No. 25. General view looking west showing the Marrowbone Lane entrance into the depot. This wide vehicular gate replaced the original arched gate that was shown on the 19th century illustration of the distillery.



Plate No. 26. General view looking north-west, showing the norther end of the perimeter wall along Marrowbone Lane.



Plate No. 27. General view looking west, showing the surviving east elevation to the historic structure that stood at the entrance gate to the distillery. This structure is shown on the 19th century illustration of the distillery.



Plate No. 28. General view looking west, showing the rubble stone and brick perimeter wall that stands along Marrowbone Lane, running south from the brick elevation shown in the previous photo.



Plate No. 29. General view looking west, showing the southern end of the Marrowbone Lane perimeter wall. This section of wall is comprised of calp limestone rubble with a brick door surround. Of some historical interest, this is a portion of the perimeter wall from the 19th century distillery.

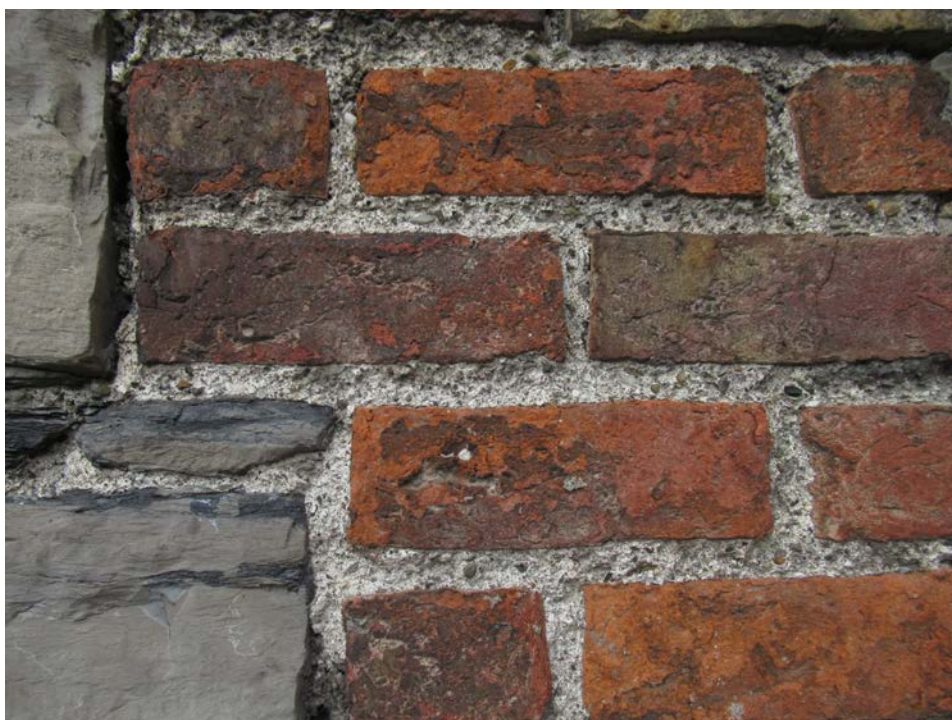


Plate No. 30. Detail view showing the red brick door jamb seen in the previous photo. This masonry shows the use of ordinary red brick, with coarse lime and sand mortar, used to create a door opening through a rubble stone wall.



Plate No. 31. General view looking north-west across the depot site, showing the porta-cabin structures that house staff offices, toilets and break rooms. The two store structure is the telecommunications complex in the adjacent site.



Plate No. 32. General view looking north across the depot site, showing the range of light industrial structure dating from the late 20th and early 21st centuries. None of these structures have any architectural or social significance.



Plate No. 33. General view looking north at the north-west corner of the depot site, showing the inside of the 19th century stone perimeter wall, surviving from the distillery. This wall is a remnant of one of the large distillery buildings that survived into the middle of the 20th century, having been adapted for use as a pottery and other uses prior to its eventual demolition.



Plate No. 34. General view looking east along the northern edge of the depot site, showing the south side of the stone boundary wall. The concrete blocks are filling in the window openings that can be seen on the other side of the wall, where a section of 19th century masonry survives from one of the distillery buildings along Forbes Lane. This section of wall, with infilled window ope and an invilled arched gate, is proposed for retention as a fragment of the distillery, in the proposed development.



Plate No. 35. General view looking east along the northern boundary to the depot. This view is slightly further to the east than the previous photo, and shows the base of the 19th century stone and brick masonry wall, formerly an external wall of one of the distillery structures. The arched gate is seen beyond.



Plate No. 36. Detail view looking west along the inside of the northern boundary to the depot, showing the brick lining to the historic arched gate onto Forbes Lane, currently infilled with concrete block.



Plate No. 37. General view looking east across the depot, showing the eastern boundary wall. The community centre structure on the east side of Marrowbone Lane is seen behind the wall.



Plate No. 38. General view looking south-east across the depot, showing the main entrance into the depot at left, with the community centre structure on the east side of Marrowbone Lane is seen behind the wall. The row of store rooms with the single pitched roof dates from the late 20th century, and is built against the inside of the old masonry perimeter wall on Marrowbone Lane.



Plate No. 39. General view looking south-east, showing the south-east corner of the depot, as it abuts the block of apartments to the south.



Plate No. 40. General view looking west across the depot site, showing the large open storage shed at the south-west corner of the depot.



Plate No. 41. General view looking west across the depot site, showing some of the steel framed garages and storage sheds that date from the late 20th and early 21st century. The large structure in the distance is the telecommunications complex on the adjacent site.



Plate No.42. General view looking north across the depot, showing the range of porta-cabins that contain staff offices and staff facilities, close to the historic stone boundary wall on Forbes Lane.