***C o n s e r v a t i o n A p p r a i s a l***

***PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS***

***AT MEATH STREET & ENVIRONS***

**lotts** architecture and urbanism ltd

***APRIL 2021***

MEATH STREET & ENVIRONS PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT PLAN APRIL 2021

**CONSERVATION APPRAISAL**

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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Summary Description**

Meath Street is located in the heart of the Liberties, in the southwest of the city centre.

It is populated with small shops and pubs and is dominated by St. Catherine’s Church to

the north end of the street. It runs north-south, is approximately 330m long and 12m

wide. To the north it connects with Thomas Street and to the south with The Coombe.

A number smaller streets and lanes connect to it from the east (Engine Alley, Crostick

Alley, Carman’s Hall) and the west (Hanbury Lane, Earl Street South, Meath Place, Gray

Street).

**1.2 Purpose of Report**

A scheme to improve the public realm in Meath Street is being prepared by DCC Road

Design and Construction Division in collaboration with Haslam Architects. This report

provides an appraisal of the provenance and extant kerbing, kerb lines and corners.

**1.3 Historic Significance**

The Liberties trace their origins to the medieval period. The Meath Street area had

known prosperity in the 17th century due to the weaving industry introduced by

Heugenots.

The weaving industry declined in the early nineteenth century and this part of the city

became impoverished. Improvement schemes were carried out nearby by the Iveagh

Trust, Dublin Artisans Dwellings and City Council in the nineteenth and twentieth

centuries, but with no direct presence in Meath Street. The street today still retains a

traditionally working class atmosphere.

Historic maps show that the street was not to change much from the layout shown in

John Rocques map of 1756 form maps made in the nineteenth century. The Ordnance

Survey five foot map from 1847 is the first to shows the pavement line in detail. In this

map the original St. Catherine’s church, dating from 1782, is shown set behind a line of

buildings on the street (Fig. 9). It was to be replaced by a structure, opened in 1858 and

remaining today, that stands open to the street, and historic retains granite paving

behind the line of the footpath. The 1847 maps shows a layout of pavements of more

or less even width to both sides of the street that run parallel to the line of the

buildings. Corners are shown with tight radii.

Pavements from this time were likely to have been of stone flags with granite kerbs and

carriageways of setts and cobbles. These may have remained in place until the

twentieth century and like most streets in Dublin, were removed and replaced with

concrete paths and tarmacadam carriageways.

**2.0 STREET INVENTORY**

A detailed inspection of the street found that historic paving slabs, kerbs and

carriageway setts are no longer extant (see appendix images).

−Some historic granite surrounds remain to cellar openings (Fig. 16 & Fig. 22)

−A historic stone threshold remains at the entrance to the Lamplighter Guest

House, at the south-west corner of The Coombe and Brabazon Street.

−Narrow historic granite kerbstones align The Coombe at the eastern junction

with Meath Street (Fig. 28)

**3.0 APPRAISAL**

**3.1 Existing Fabric and Layout**

The paving, kerb lines and parking bays now found in Meath Street are the result of a

scheme carried out in recent decades.

−Little or no historic paving remains to the pedestrian paths or carriageway

−The kerb lines of the existing scheme are straight and parallel with the building

line and mark pedestrian paths of uniform depth. The layout is probably close to

the historic layout show in the 1847 map (Fig. 2). An exception is found to the

north-east end of the street where the path is widened and frame bicycle racks

and a loading bay.

**3.2 Proposed Scheme**

The proposed Meath Street and Environs Public Realm Improvement Plan, prepared by

DCC Road Design and Construction Division in collaboration with Haslam Architects,

proposes a number of changes, including:

−New path and kerbs integrating recent stone paving and kerb stones

−A new kerb layout that provides for wider footpaths

−Reduced provision of on-street parking

−Provision of tree planting in pavements

−New lighting and signage

**3.3 Conservation Appraisal of Proposals**

−As there is almost no historic paving the proposed scheme will have very little

impact on the remaining historic fabric

−The existing kerb line was recently installed but its position is likely to be close

to the historic layout. The proposed kerb line will be quite different but will have

the advantage of reducing the space given to car parking. This will enhance the

street space and allow for better appreciation of the historic structures.

−The proposed scheme allows for tree planting and planters. These do not

restrict views of St. Catherine’s Church, and will do much to enhance the quality

of the street space and its Green Infrastructure. Their presence will not have a

negative impact on the historic paving or street space.

**4.0 Photographic Survey**

**Figure 5: View from Thomas Street looking south into Meath Street**

**Figure 6: North-east junction with Thomas Street looking south**

**Figure 7: West pavement between Thomas Street and Hanbury Lane looking north**

**Figure 8: East pavement between St. Catherine’s Church and Thomas Street looking north**

**Figure 9: Paving in front of St. Catherine’s Church looking south**

**Figure 10: Paving on west side of street opposite St. Catherine’s Church looking south**

**Figure 11: View from junction with Earl Street South looking north towards St. Catherine’s Church**

**Figure 12: Pavement on east side of street south of St. Catherine’s Church**

**Figure 13: West side of street at junction with Earl Street South, looking south**

**Figure 14: East side of street between Engine Alley and Crostick Alley, looking south**

**Figure 15: West pavement between Earl Street South and Meath Place looking south**

**Figure 16: Junction of Engine Alley and Meath Street with stone surround to cellar opening**

**Figure 17: Junction with Engine Alley looking south along east pavement**

**Figure 18: Pavement on east side of street between Engine Alley and Crostick Alley looking south**

**Figure 19: Junction with Meath Place on west side of street looking north**

**Figure 20: Junction with Meath Place on west side of street looking south**

**Figure 21: West side of street between Gray Street and Meath Place looking north**

**Figure 22: East pavement between Carman’s Hall and Crostick Alley looking north**

**Figure 23: Junction with Gray Street looking north**

**Figure 24: Junction with Gray Street looking south**

**Figure 25: Junction with Carman’s Hall on east side of street looking north**

**Figure 26: Junction with Carman’s Hall on east side of street looking south**

**Figure 27: West junction with The Coombe looking north**

**Figure 28: East junction with The Coombe looking north**

**Figure 29: Corner to south-west of junction with The Coombe with stone threshold to pub**