

Conservation Appraisal

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS AT MEATH STREET & ENVIRONS



lotts architecture and urbanism

APRIL 2021

Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION	3
1.1	Summary Description	3
1.2	Purpose of Report.....	3
1.3	Historic Significance	3
2.0	STREET INVENTORY	6
3.0	APPRAISAL.....	8
3.1	Existing Fabric and Layout.....	8
3.2	Proposed Scheme	8
3.3	Conservation Appraisal of Proposals	8
4.0	Photographic Survey	9

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, Crostlick 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.



Figure 1: Extract from Rocque map, 1756

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.

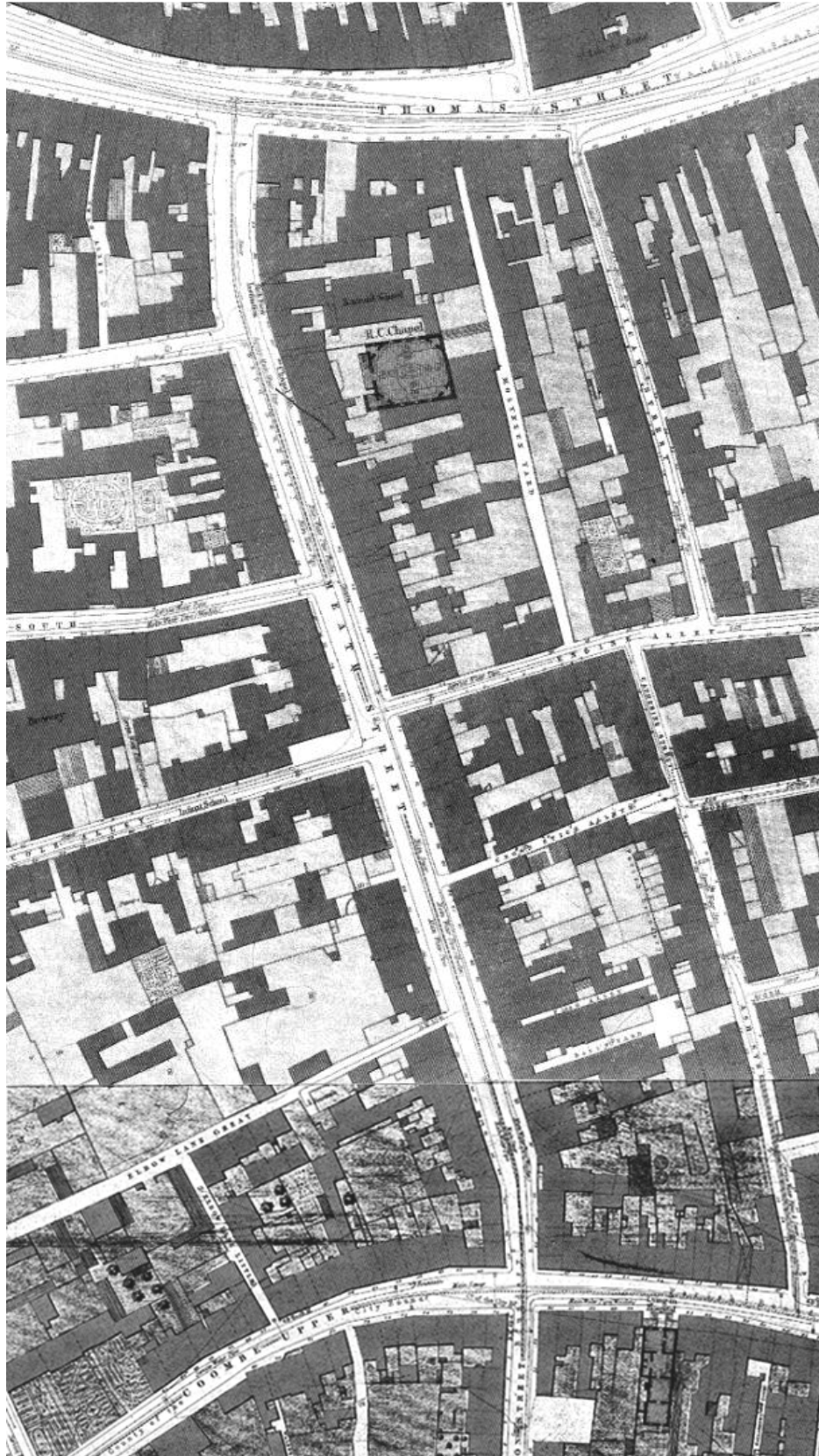


Figure 2: Extract from 1847 OS 5' map

Historic maps show that the street was not to change much from the layout shown in John Rocques map of 1756 from maps made in the nineteenth century. The Ordnance Survey five foot map from 1847 is the first to show 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.



Figure 3: Historic photograph of Engine Alley facing towards Meath Street (source unknown)

2.0 STREET INVENTORY



Figure 4: Plan of street with DCC/Haslam proposed interventions

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 shown 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 Crosttick 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 Crosttick 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 Crostic 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