

O'Connell Street Enhancement Project, Sligo

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INTRODUCTION

Works are progressing this month on the O'Connell Street Enhancement Project, with Main Contractors, ShareRidge Limited, making great strides in the refurbishment of Sligo's busiest commercial zone and pedestrian thoroughfare.

The O'Connell Street Enhancement Project is the initial step in the provision of the Global Public Realm Strategy for Sligo City. This is considered the flagship project on which the design ethos and rationale for other projects will be based.

The Project includes works on O'Connell Street, at the northern end with its junction with Wine Street / Fish Quay and Lower Knox Street; along Lower Knox Street to Hyde Bridge; on O'Connell Street at the southern end with its junction with Grattan Street and John Street; and on the main body of O'Connell Street itself.

One of the key goals is to deliver an attractive urban space, with enhanced linkages to other pedestrian areas within Sligo, such as Tobergal Lane and the flourishing Rockwood Parade precinct, with its multitude of shops, bars and restaurants.

In addition to the enhanced streetscape, the Project will incorporate the construction of a new surface water drainage network and new ducting infrastructure for utility services.

The Project is being funded by the European Regional Development Fund, through the North West Regional Assembly; the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; and with grant aid from the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

DESIGNING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR SLIGO

In order to progress plans for the O'Connell Street Enhancement Project, one of the main priorities for Sligo County Council was the future-proofing of the Public Realm Improvement Scheme in respect of services. The Council was focused on designing a brighter future for Sligo through the delivery of a new and attractive urban space, while at the same time concentrating on the protection of the works into the future.

In October 2017, Sligo County Council procured O'Connor Sutton Cronin (OCSC) Multidisciplinary Consulting Engineers to progress the design and tender of the Project. OCSC carried out extensive services condition assessments to pre-empt any future excavations of the completed street scheme. As a result of this work, extensive rehabilitation was recommended for watermains and culvert sewers along the street to provide an appropriate lifetime for the completed Project.

Extensive liaison between OCSC and the Architect's Section of Sligo County Council was necessary to progress plans for the O'Connell Street Project, as well as detailed third-party and public consultation during the course of the design process. On the whole, OCSC provided design, contract documentation and contract administration supervision services for the Project.

Headquartered in Dublin, with five offices throughout the UK and Ireland, OCSC prides itself on partnering international experience with local knowledge to provide the best of both to their clients.

The company offers total consultancy service capability across civil, transport, structural, mechanical, electrical and sustainability engineering.

Recent notable projects include:

- Luas Cross City
- The New Children's Hospital
- The Central Bank of Ireland
- Dublin Institute of Technology, Grangegorman
- The Point Village
- Royal Canal Cycleway





STEPPING BACK IN TIME

ShareRidge Limited has engaged the services of Tamlyn McHugh from Sligo-based Fadó Archaeology for the O'Connell Street Enhancement Project. Tamlyn is working alongside the team in Sligo and will be available throughout the Project, should the need arise, to provide archaeological guidance and advice.

To date, there have been no discoveries on this Project but Tamlyn is no stranger to the area and its history. In 2016, Fadó Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a programme of archaeological monitoring for the upgrading of watermains on O'Connell Street, Wine Street, John Street, Grattan Street, Fish Quay Street and Lower Knox Street.

Archaeological deposits, features and artefacts discovered in 2016 indicated a broad post-medieval date, while the most notable find was a black humic layer with moderate shell and animal bone inclusions on O'Connell Street, John Street, Lower Knox Street and Wine Street. Radiocarbon dating of a fragment of mammal bone found on O'Connell Street suggested a broad post-medieval date (CAL AD 1679-1764, 1800-1939).

A cobbled surface was encountered on O'Connell Street and also at the junction of Wine Street/Fish Quay Street and Lower Knox Street - possibly representing the remains of former streets of Sligo.

Amongst the artefacts uncovered was a late 17th/18th-Century Pipkin Vessel of glazed red earthenware and consisting of a fragment of a projecting handle. These small ceramic vessels were used for cooking, as a type of sauce pot. Other finds of note were two base fragments of wine bottles, likely dating to the early 18th Century. The wine bottles, coincidentally, were found on Wine Street where the De Butt Wine Merchants reputedly had wine vaults. However, no trace of these vaults was found during monitoring works.

A small assemblage of animal bone was also found on O'Connell Street and Wine Street in 2016, suggesting food production in the area. The faunal remains suggest that primary butchery and carcass processing were taking place in the area and, with a juvenile goat horn core being found, these processes were potentially also being carried out on Wine Street.

Amongst the bone was the presence of cattle, sheep, goat and horse bones, as well as an inference of the presence of dogs in the town. These are typical of urban assemblages. The inclusion of the mandible from a young calf would suggest some evidence of specialised foods in the assemblage.

Another source of food during the post-medieval period in Sligo town was shellfish, as evidenced by the occurrences of oyster shells on O'Connell Street, Wine Street and John Street.

Tamlyn can be contacted on 086 8706529 or via email at info@fadoarchaeology.com



A section of the cobbled surface discovered in 2016 at Lower Knox Street and Fish Quay Street



Post-medieval Pipkin Vessel fragment found during monitoring works in 2016

WORKS TO DATE

All construction works are now complete from the corner of Harmony Hill, down the right-hand side of O'Connell Street from Grattan Street to Tobergal Lane.

This includes the installation of all ducting and storm drains, as well as footpaths, kerbing, loading bays and disabled parking.

Works are now progressing down the left-hand side of O'Connell Street.



UPCOMING WORKS

Junction of Harmony Hill and John Street (Source):

- Excavation works are ongoing, with radius kerbs being laid to the pedestrian crossing
- Paving works are due to commence at this location on Monday, September 9th

Mullaney's Pedestrian Crossing - Hargadon's Pub

- Excavation works in the layby area are ongoing
- Kerb installation on the external line of layby is ongoing
- Ducting in this area will follow
- Paving works to be scheduled early next week
- Work will continue to progress towards John Street

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