Conservation Section, Planning, Property, Enterprise & Economic Development Department,
Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8

An Rannóg Caomhantais, Roinn Pleanála, Maoine, Fiontraíochta & Forbairt Eachnamaíochta
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27th of February 2017

To the Chairperson and Members of the Central Area Committee

Recommendation:

Addition of ESB Substation, Corner of East Wall Road & Alexandra Road, Dublin 3 to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

Recommendation	
Proposed Entry	**ESB Substation, Corner of East Wall Road & Alexandra Road, Dublin 3**

Photo of Structure

Name and Address of Owner: ESB Networks, South Lotts Road, Dublin 4

Introduction & Reason for Amendment/Addition

- The applicant, Mr James Kelleher of the Dublin Port Company, has sought the addition of the ESB Sub-station building on the corner of Alexandra Road and East Wall Road because it *"is*

under the threat of demolition" and *"it is one of the few heritage buildings of significance in the area and DPC are keen to preserve it in view of its landmark position in the Dublin Port estate."*

- Minister for Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs: The substation has been assigned a Regional rating by the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage. It was included in the list of recommendations for inclusion on the RPS of structures deemed as being of 'Regional' significance or higher identified during Phase 1 & 2 of the Dublin Survey.

2017-2022 Development Plan Zoning: Z7:'To provide for the protection and creation of industrial uses and facilitate opportunities for employment creation.'

Planning History: No recent planning history.

Development Plan Zoning & location map: The red brick sub-station building is situated on the corner of Alexandra Road and East Wall Road within the Dublin Port estate. The Dublin Port office building lies to the south.

Summary Description

Corner-sited detached single-bay two-storey electricity transformer sub-station, built c.1922, with entrance elevation to East Wall Road and three-bay side elevation to Alexandra Road.

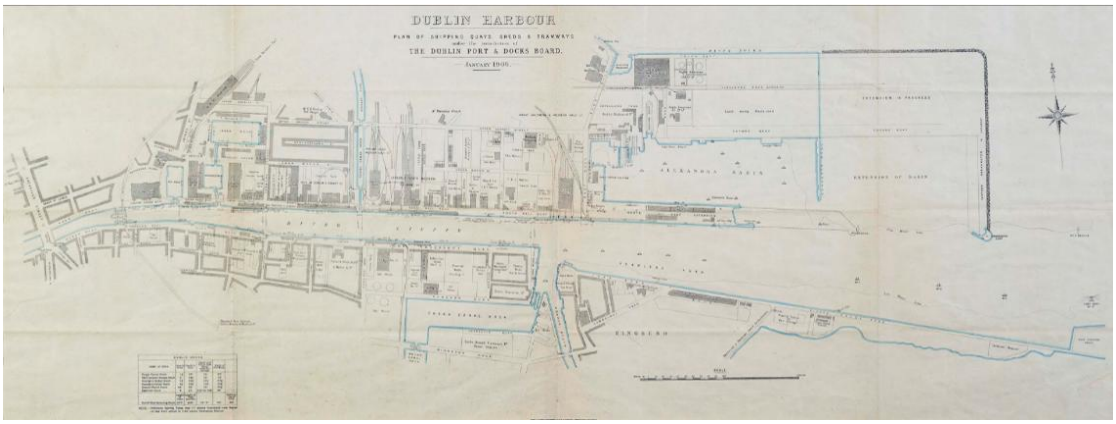
Flat concrete roof, hidden by parapet with moulded granite coping stones. Red brick elevations comprising machine-cut brick, laid in Flemish Bond with flush finish to mortar joints. Brick pilasters having bull-nose bricks corners to each end of building and between bays on north elevation. Moulded string-courses to first floor and to base of parapet. No features to south or east elevations. Large vertical crack to west end of south wall.

Round-arched door entrance, set within a central breakfront to west elevation, with gauged bricks to arch-head and outer archivolt, bull-nose bricks to pilasters, and double-leaf timber battened door. Timber board above door to round-arch opening. Entrance door has granite threshold step and is flanked by circular windows with gauged brick surrounds, pivoting timber frames, cruciform glazing bars and reinforced glass panes. Round-arched blind openings to side with granite sills and plain-glazed fanlights at ground floor. Pair of round-arch window openings to first floor of entrance elevation having continuous granite sill with central pilaster and timber casement windows. Curvilinear red brick gable above with moulded granite coping stones.

Door opens to single-cell interior of ground floor. Concrete to floor. Channel in concrete floor adjacent to staircase with concrete slabs over. Slabs allow access to cables beneath. Brick walls throughout. Concrete floor of first floor is supported by steel girders. Timber flooring to west end of first floor. Steel stairs rises to first floor.

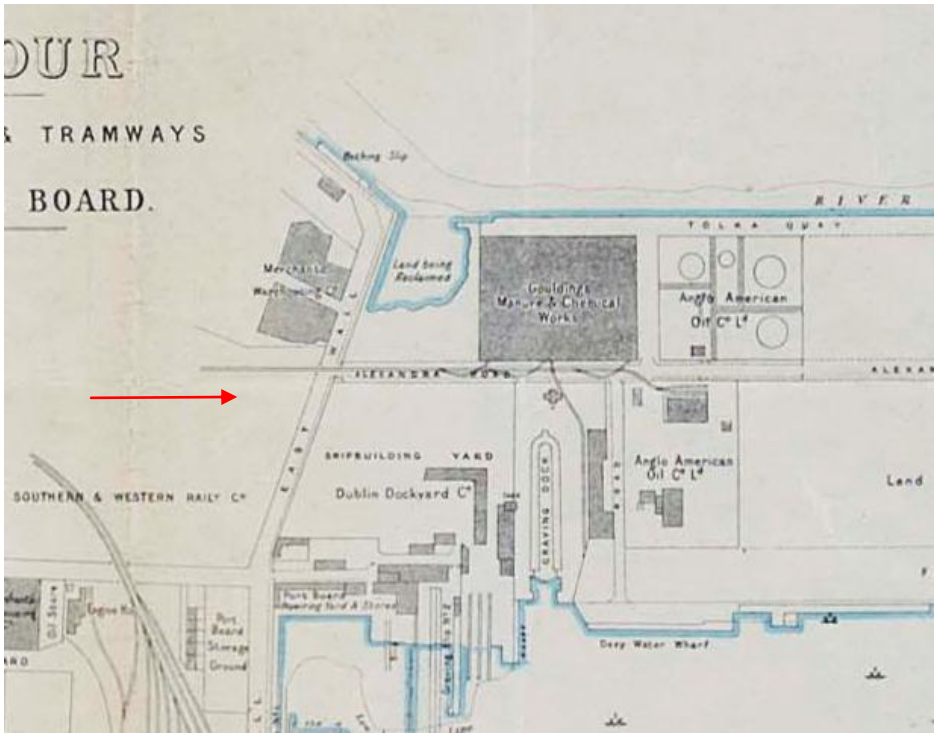
Transformer and switching equipment to ground floor. Switches to first-floor level.

Historical Background:



http://dublinportarchive.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/dublin-harbour-plan-of-shipping-quays-sheds-tramways.jpg

The enlarged extract below of a 1906 plan of Dublin Harbour shows the corner site at East Wall Road and Alexandra Road prior to the construction of the sub-station. At the beginning of the 20th century, the unbuilt site was part of a larger shipbuilding yard, in which buildings of the Dublin Dockyard Company stood.

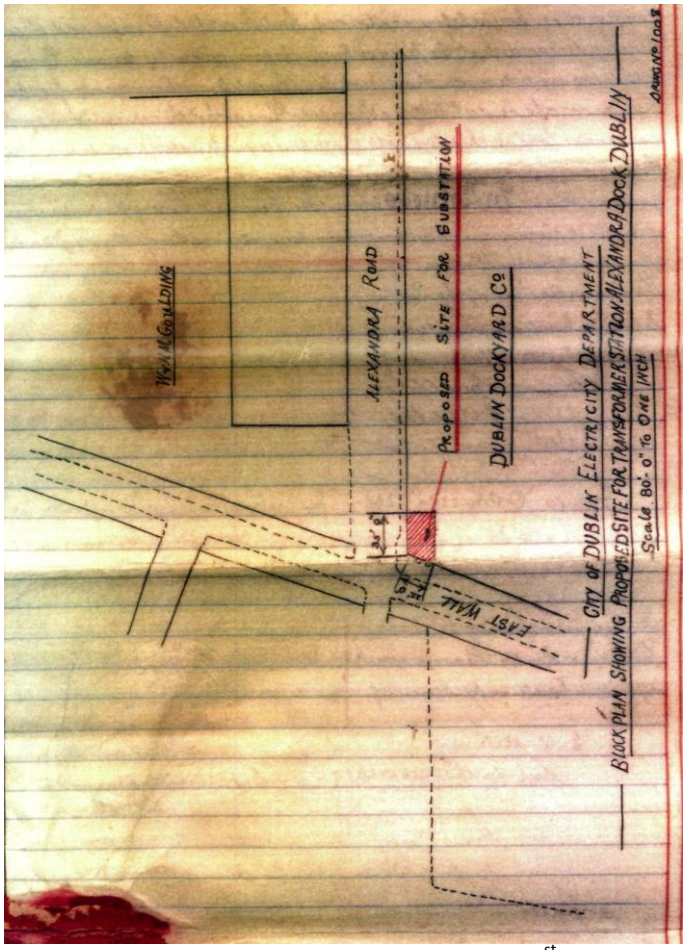


Extract of http://dublinportarchive.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/dublin-harbour-plan-of-shipping-quays-sheds-tramways.jpg.
An arrow indicates the site of the sub-station building.

An indenture[1] made on the 1st of April 1922 – on the same day that the British Government formally transferred power to the Provisional Government of Ireland - records the transfer of the site from the Dublin Dockyard Company Ltd and the Dublin Port and Docks Board to Dublin Corporation. As shown within a plan appended to the lease, it was the intention of the Electricity Supply Department of the Corporation to erect a transformer sub-station on the site.

The indenture stipulated that the proposed building should be used as an *"electric substation with offices*," having: *"a flat concrete roof not exceeding twenty two feet over street level,"* be constructed of *"fire-proof materials,"* and have *"no windows or openings within the walls of the yard premises."* It also recited an earlier indenture of 1903 in which the same site had been leased for a term of 99 years by a Walter Scott, John Smellie and James Lester Clark.

The agreement set out in the lease was referred to in Minute 158 of the Municipal Council of Dublin, dated 1922. The minute recorded the submission of a letter by Mr John Devine of the Electricity Supply Committee requesting that the Council authorise the affixing of the city seal to an agreement with the Dublin Dockyard Co and the Dublin Port and Docks Board for the renting of a transformer sub-station site at the junction of East Wall and Alexandra Road[2].



Extract of plan appended to an indenture dated 1st April 1922.
The plan shows the site of the proposed sub-station marked in red.

The Electricity Supply Board (now ESB Networks), which was established by the Free State Government under the Electricity (Supply) Act of 1927, is presently responsible for the transformer sub-station. According to Mr Liam Mc'Donagh, a supervisor with ESB Networks, the purpose of the

[1] A facsimile of the indenture of lease was provided to the author by Mr Liam Mc'Donagh of ESB Networks.
[2] Dublin City Council Minutes, 1922, Item 158, page 120, held in Dublin City Archive

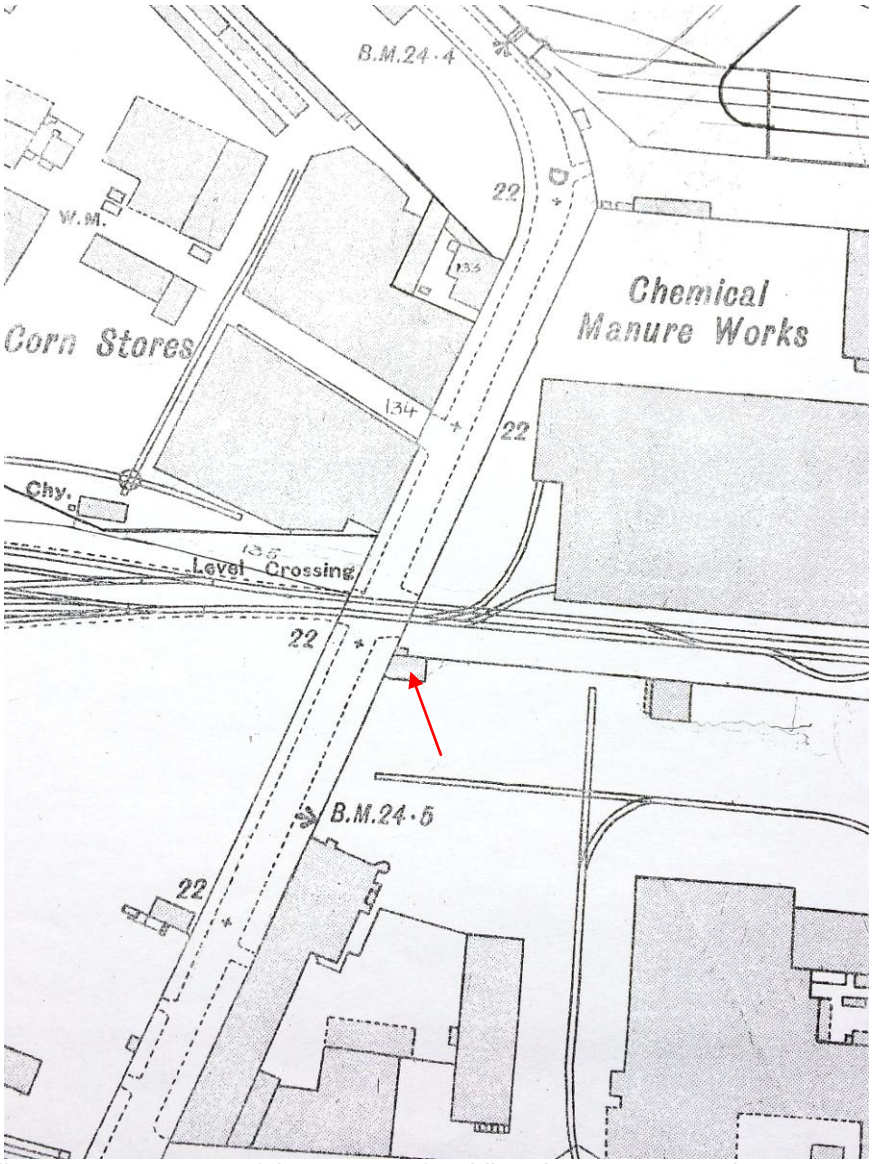
transformer within the sub-station building is to convert the electricity supply from 1000 volts to 380 volts. The lesser voltage current is used for mains' supply.

Historic Maps

Map 1: The site of the future sub-station at the corner of Alexandra Road and East Wall Road is documented on the Ordnance Survey Map, published in 1909. The 1:1,250 plan, which was a 1907 revision of an earlier map, shows that the site was part of a larger shipbuilding yard.

Extract of Ordinance Survey Map of the County of Dublin, Sheet 18-50. Scale 1:1,250, Revised 1907, Published 1909, Source: Trinity College, Dublin.
A red arrow indicates the site of the future transformer sub-station.

Map 2: The OS map below, revised in 1936 and published in 1939, shows the recently constructed sub-station. The plan of the rectangular building follows the angle of East Wall Road and is shown to have a small extension or projection at the west end of the Alexandra Road elevation. The said extension is no longer extant.



Extract of Ordinance Survey Map of the County of Dublin, Sheet 18-80. Scale 1:1,250, Revised 1936, Published 1939, Source: Trinity College, Dublin.
A red arrow indicates the transformer sub-station.

Sources of Information:

Mr James Kelleher, Dublin Port Company
Mr Liam Mc'Donagh, ESB Networks
Indenture of lease, 1st April 1922, Registered on 23rd May 1922, Book 27, Number 231
Minutes of Municipal Council of City of Dublin, 1922, Dublin City Archives
Ordnance Survey Maps, Trinity College, Dublin

Significance/NIAH Rating:
The National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has been carried out for this area. The NIAH identifies five categories of rating in seeking to rank buildings. The NIAH rating values are International, National, Regional, Local and Record Only (I, N, R, L, O). Structures which are considered of International, National, and Regional significance are deemed worthy of inclusion on the RPS.

The NIAH awarded a Regional rating to the ESB sub-station. NIAH reg no.: 50011170. *These are structures or sites that make a significant contribution to the architectural heritage within their region or area.* As a result it is included in the list of recommendations for inclusion on the RPS of structures deemed as being of 'Regional' significance or higher identified during Phase 1 & 2 of the Dublin Survey. They state the following in relation to the structure: *This brick structure was built as a utilitarian piece of electrical infrastructure in the industrial Docklands area. The decorative brick detailing to the principal facades attests to the attention to aesthetic detail that remained so important into the early twentieth century while forming an attractive element on both streetscapes.*

Assessment of Special Interest under the Planning and Development Act 2000.
The Categories of Special Interest are defined in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 as *architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, technical and social.* When assessed under the above categories, it is found that the ESB Sub-station building is of *Architectural, Artistic* and *Technical* interest for the following reasons:

Note: These Categories of Special Interest were also assigned by the NIAH during the survey.

1) The red-brick building is a structure of special architectural interest because of its design and treatment. The arrangement of pilasters and round-headed arched openings references Neoclassical architecture and gives the exterior of the building a visually appealing character. The use of gauged bricks in arch-heads and window openings, and moulded brickwork in the decorative dressings, such as pilasters and string-courses, is of artistic interest.
2) The sub-station is an historic landmark at a busy junction within the Dublin Port area and makes a significant contribution to the streetscape.
3) In an area where development and redevelopment of sites is commonplace, the sub-station is an important part of the locality's architectural heritage.
4) The purpose-built transformer sub-station is of special technical interest as it is one of the earliest industrial heritage buildings constructed by the fledgling state, c.1922, and because of the extant technical equipment including early 20th-century switches and ammeters. Note: Any proposed removal of historic electrical equipment shall be subject to agreement prior to removal to ensure it is adequately recorded and salvaged.

Conclusion & Recommendation:

Dublin City Council Conservation Section has reviewed the NIAH recommendation and is in agreement. In conclusion it is recommended to add the **ESB Sub-station, corner of East Wall Road and Alexandra Road, Dublin 3** to the Record of Protected Structures in accordance with Section 54 and 55 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000.

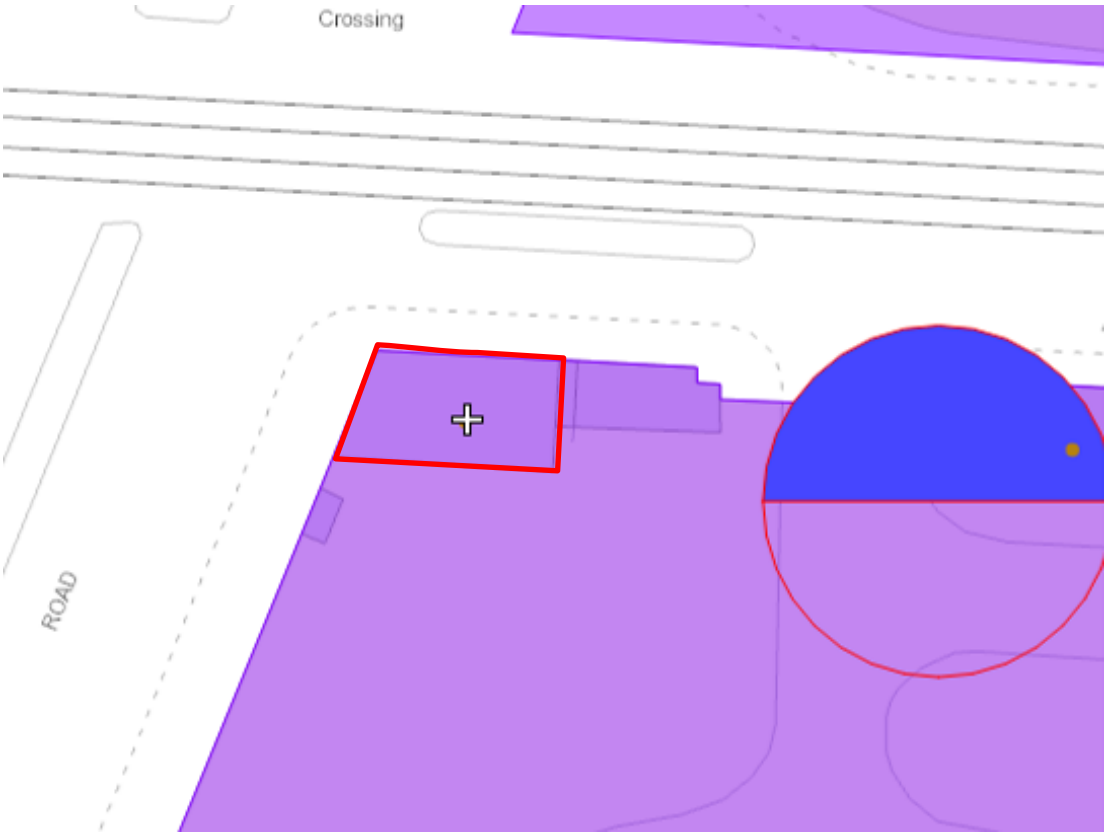
Recommendation	
Proposed Entry	**ESB Sub-station, corner of East Wall Road and Alexandra Road, Dublin 3**

Paraic Fallon
Senior Planner

Date

Extent of Protected Structure Status

The extent of proposed protection for the sub-station is limited to the building only and is shown on the below outlined in red.



Photographic Inventory

The corner-sited ESB sub-station at the junction of East Wall Road and Alexandra Road

Three-bay, two-storey elevation to Alexandra Road

Blank south-facing elevation

East-facing side elevation

West-facing entrance elevation at East Wall Road

Gauged-brick arch-head with outer archivolt springing from pilasters

Detail of round-arched entrance door

Brick pilaster with pedestal and moulded cornice to south of entrance door

Gauged brick surround to circular window at ground-floor level

Paired window with curvilinear gable above to breakfront over entrance door

Blind round-arched opening on north elevation

Interior of ESB transformer sub-station, looking east

Ground-floor level of sub-station, looking west to entrance door

A detail of the 1940’s equipment at ground-floor level

Steel stairs rising from ground floor to first-floor level

Circular window adjacent to entrance door

Detail of the underside of the concrete floor at first-floor level.
The concrete floor is supported by steel joists.

First-floor level of the ESB sub-station, looking east

First-floor level of the ESB sub-station, looking west

Detail of an ammeter at first-floor level.
The ammeter is used to measure the current in a circuit.

Detail of one of the many switches at first floor level

Detail of one of the many switches at first floor level

A vertical crack at the west end of the southern rear wall

Eastern end of first-floor level. Timber floor adjacent to window