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CONTEXT

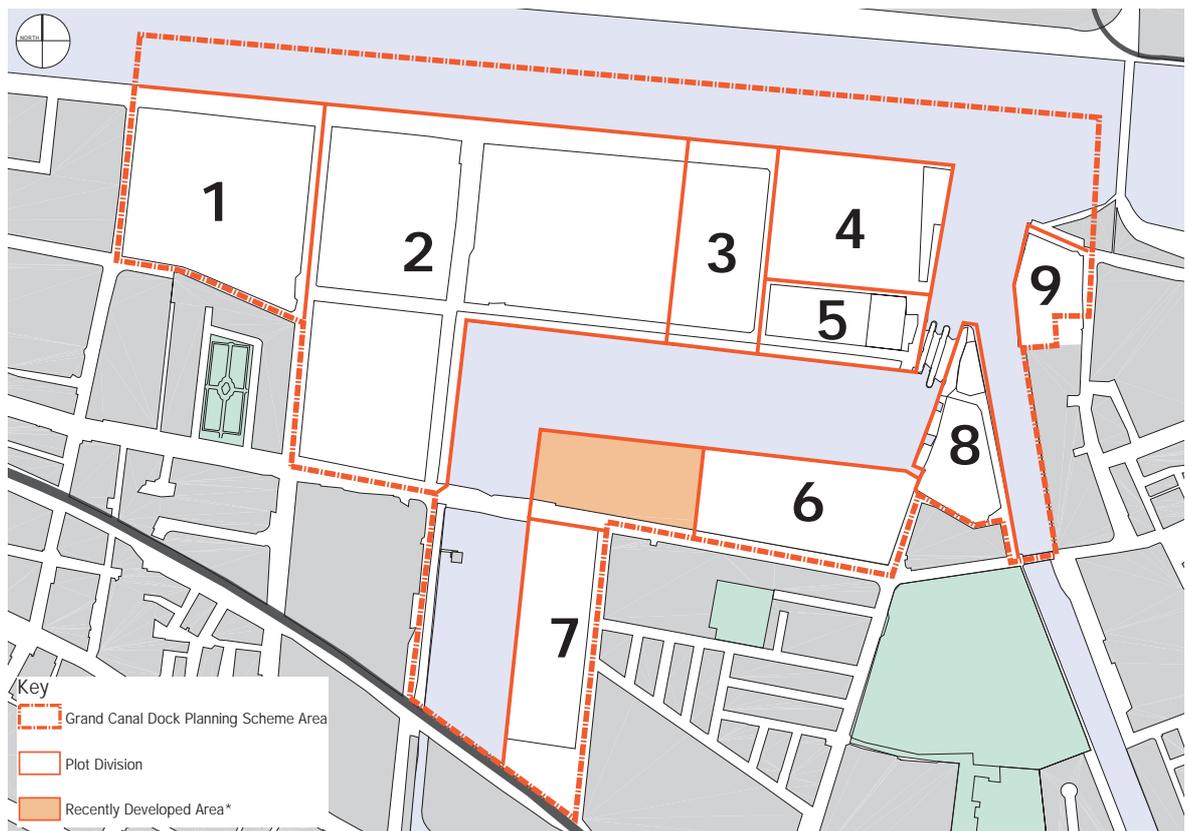
2.1 THE AREA

The Grand Canal Dock Planning Scheme Area (Area) comprises the lands framing the inner and outer basins of the GCD. The land covers 29.2 hectares (72.1 acres) and the inner and outer basins cover an additional 9 hectares (22.3 acres). A large proportion of the Area fronts either the River Liffey, the basins or the River Dodder.

Strategically, the Area is well connected to the city, being on the south side of the Liffey. The DART line linking Bray to Howth via the city centre runs through the southern part of the area. The nearest station is Grand Canal Dock Station to the south of the Area on Barrow Street. Pearse Street and Grand Canal Street both provide strong east west links into and out of the city. The proposed Macken Street Bridge across the Liffey will improve access to the Area.

The predominant land use is industrial with a number of warehouses, grain silos and stores located on the dockside. The established residential communities of Ringsend and Pearse Street adjoin the area to the east and west respectively. The dominant image of the Area is the openness created by the two basins, particularly the outer basin.

The Area has been divided into specific development zones with different characteristics and ownership patterns. These are identified on Diagram 1.



* The Planning Scheme does not propose any substantive changes to the existing nature and extent of development of this area which has been the subject of comprehensive redevelopment.

Diagram 1

2.2 DEVELOPMENT ZONES



Zone 1

2.2.1 Zone 1

Zone 1 is in multiple ownership. It includes four protected structures which are to be retained and the An Post Sorting Office which is unlikely to re-locate in the near future. New development on this zone will be required to respond sensitively to these elements in order to maintain the historical character of the Area. This zone has a high profile since it fronts onto the River Liffey, Cardiff Lane and Hanover Street East. It also has the advantage of good accessibility to public transport.



Zone 2

2.2.2 Zone 2

This zone is predominantly the redundant former Dublin Gas production site, now in the Authority's ownership. The remainder of this zone is occupied by the Kilsaran Concrete Plant. This zone forms the single largest land mass within the site and is crucial in terms of regenerating the entire area to achieve its maximum potential.

The former Dublin Gas production site is contaminated by the by-products of the gas industry. The hazards relating to this site include cyanides, free sulphur, coal and coke, phenols, tars, sulphides and sulphates. Following the receipt of the necessary statutory consents from the Environment Protection Agency and the Planning Authority, the remediation process has begun.

The large brick chimney is being conserved in situ and the former pressure station will be reconstructed or removed to a new position to facilitate the remediation works.

This zone has the advantage of fronting both the River Liffey and the GCD which create a high profile and wonderful views. Additionally, a portion of the site fronts Cardiff Lane/Macken Street with good accessibility.



Chimney within Zone 2

2.2.3 Zone 3

This zone has short frontages onto the River Liffey and the GCD. It is owned by three parties, comprises two warehouses and is in active use. None of the structures on this zone are of architectural or heritage value and therefore do not merit preservation or retention in conservational terms.



Zones 3 and 4

2.2.4 Zone 4

Zone 4 is owned by three parties. It occupies a predominant position fronting the River Liffey and the locks. Improved linkages to Ringsend would enhance this zone's accessibility.

2.2.5 Zone 5

This zone is in multiple ownership and comprises warehousing, storage, industrial uses and the former lock-keepers cottage. It includes a protected structure and another warehouse which is in fair to good repair. A number of buildings are protected structures and should be conserved. The former lock-keepers cottage is vacant and falling into disrepair. However, if feasible it may be relocated. Zone 5 fronts the GCD and the warehouses form an important part of the historic character of the area, although they will inevitably restrict development.

2.2.6 Zone 6

This zone fronts the outer basin of GCD and Ringsend Road. One protected structure is located within this zone and is to be retained. The zone is currently in dual ownership and in active use. The surrounding area is primarily residential.

2.2.7 Zone 7

Zone 7 is currently in multiple ownership, part of which is a section of the water body. This zone fronts the inner basin, which has the advantage of capturing the afternoon and evening sun. It is bounded to the south by the mainline railway and Grand Canal Dock Station. The area to the east of Barrow Street is predominantly low rise residential.

This zone is defined by the predominantly industrial use of the site over time. The zone comprises a collection of mill and storage buildings a number of which are protected structures worthy of conserving.

The west facing elevation of this zone is the most characteristic element of the collection of buildings. The stone and brick façades form a single plane which descends directly into the water, causing a corresponding reflection which is unique in the area.

2.2.8 Zone 8

This triangular zone lies at the eastern end of the outer basin. It is situated at the confluence of the Rivers Liffey and Dodder, and the mouth of the GCD. Due to the lack of appropriate bridges this zone has a poor level of pedestrian access.

A large portion of this zone comprises three graving docks which have been filled in. This section of the zone is owned by the Authority and is currently unoccupied. The northern tip of the zone currently houses a two storey lock keepers cottage and the southern section of the zone is currently occupied by boat repair facilities and storage operation. This zone has the advantage of largely being in public ownership.

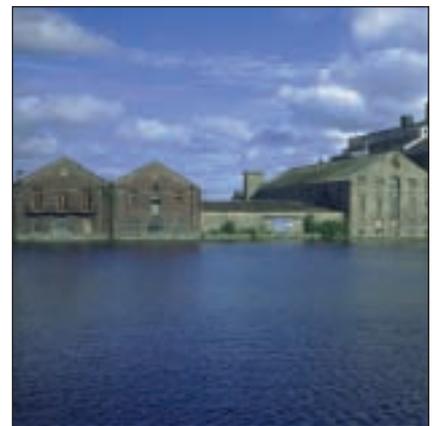
2.2.9 Zone 9

This zone is located in a very prominent position on the eastern side of the confluence of the Rivers Liffey and Dodder. It is not accessible from the peninsula although it forms part of the gateway to the GCD.

The zone is currently in dual ownership. A low rise Ringsend Community Centre is situated in the southern part of the site. The northern section of this zone is suitable for redevelopment.



Locks and warehouse - protected structures within Zone 5



Warehouses within Zone 7



Zone 8



Zone 9



Diagram 2

2.3 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CONSERVATION ISSUES

The land comprising the GCD area was reclaimed following the construction of a one kilometre river wall from the town to the River Dodder by Sir John Rogerson between 1717 and 1727. Between that time and 1760 a bank was constructed along the line of the present South Lotts Road. The area contained by these banks was gradually reclaimed together with adjoining areas of the Dodder Estuary. The GCD was opened in 1796.

To encourage stores around the docks the Grand Canal Company offered subsidies, however, there was little response to these initiatives. The lack of success of the docks was partly due to the heavy silting which occurred at the mouth of the Dodder, hindering the use of the outer harbour. In 1918 the large dry dock was filled in and the ground leased to Heitons as a coalyard and subsequently the two other graving docks were filled in and taken over by the Gas Company. The docks area became largely used by two industries—flour-milling and gas production. This was followed by the arrival of three further industries, bottle-making, sugar refining and chemical fertiliser manufacture.

The only Conservation areas, identified in the Master Plan, within the Area are those specifically related to the water bodies—the inner and outer docks, the Liffey and the Dodder. These areas also include the immediate areas fronting the rivers and docks.



Recently restored Sea Locks



Protected structure on the quay of the outer basin

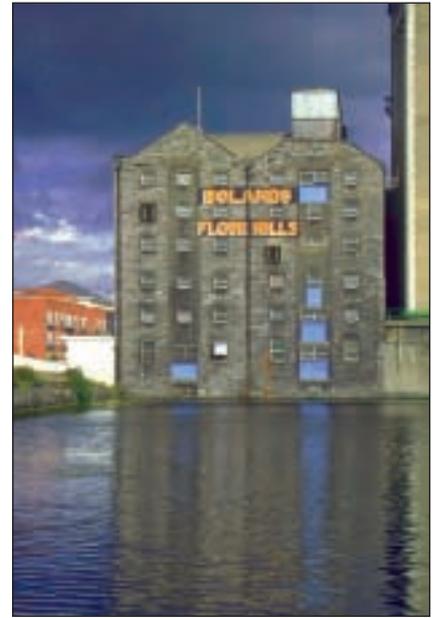
The Area contains a number of buildings and structures of architectural interest, which are protected structures. They are predominantly remnants of industrial and dockside activities. The recently restored sea locks and the graving docks (currently infilled) are also of interest. Several dockside warehouses which are protected structures offer opportunities for conversion, as has already occurred with the increase in residential/office demand in the area.

2.4 WATER BODIES

The GCD is L-shaped and is divided by a lifting bridge into two water bodies of 6.2 ha and 3 ha. The dock has significant presence but, with the area's decline, lacks movement and purpose. The long dockside perspectives often seen along the quaysides are missing. Such views do occur along Sir John Rogerson's Quay but are limited along the GCD quays due to dockside developments.

The outer water body does have an atmosphere of its own. It is surrounded by relatively low buildings, except for the newer developments along Charlotte Quay. The Millennium Tower Building at the Charlotte Quay Dock development, at the intersection of the two water bodies, provides a prominent landmark in the area.

The lack of access to the waterside around the inner water body reduces its impact on the area. The Waterways Visitor Centre is located on this inner water body and is accessed via Grand Canal Quay. The contemporary building is on stilts and appears to float above the water.



Bolands Flour Mills - a protected structure within Zone 7



Aerial view of the Grand Canal Dock

2.5 URBAN ANALYSIS



St Patrick's Church



Pearse Square

The grain of the Area is quite different from its surrounds. The larger more impermeable blocks adjoining the dock stand out in contrast to the finer grain of Pearse Street and the South Dock Street area.

There are three distinctive character areas, as indicated on Diagram 3. Pearse Square, although outside the area, is a conservation area with fine grain housing. Secondly, the locks and warehouse, which are both protected structures, along with the quayside have a unique character. Thirdly, the dominant warehouse zone that fronts Barrow Street and the inner water body is unique due to the façades descending directly into the water.

Strong east-west links exist but they end abruptly at the mouth of the River Dodder and GCD. Links to the north terminate at the River Liffey, but would be extended via the proposed Macken Street Bridge. Existing links to the south are restricted by the low arched bridges of the railway.

Physical and visual gateways are identified on Diagram 3, all of which could be enhanced. These include the low railway bridges, Ringsend Bridge and the proposed location of Macken Street Bridge. The area at the mouth of the River Dodder and docks provides an opportunity to create a city gateway.

Nodes of activity exist around Pearse Street and Ringsend Road but within the site there is little in the way of activity along street fronts. This is clearly a result of the area's history and the decline of the area's importance within the city economy.

Views around the docks are currently limited due to dockside developments. However, landmarks such as the recent 16 storey Millennium Tower development at Charlotte Quay Dock, the St Patrick's Church spire, Bolands Mill and the chimney provide landmarks that aid orientation. These act as both local and strategic landmarks.

A large percentage of the Area fronts either the River Liffey or the Dock, having the advantage of wonderful views. The River Liffey forms strategic physical and visual links to the city centre.

Certain plots within the Area carry more prestige than others. This is a consequence of their accessibility and the views from and of the plot.

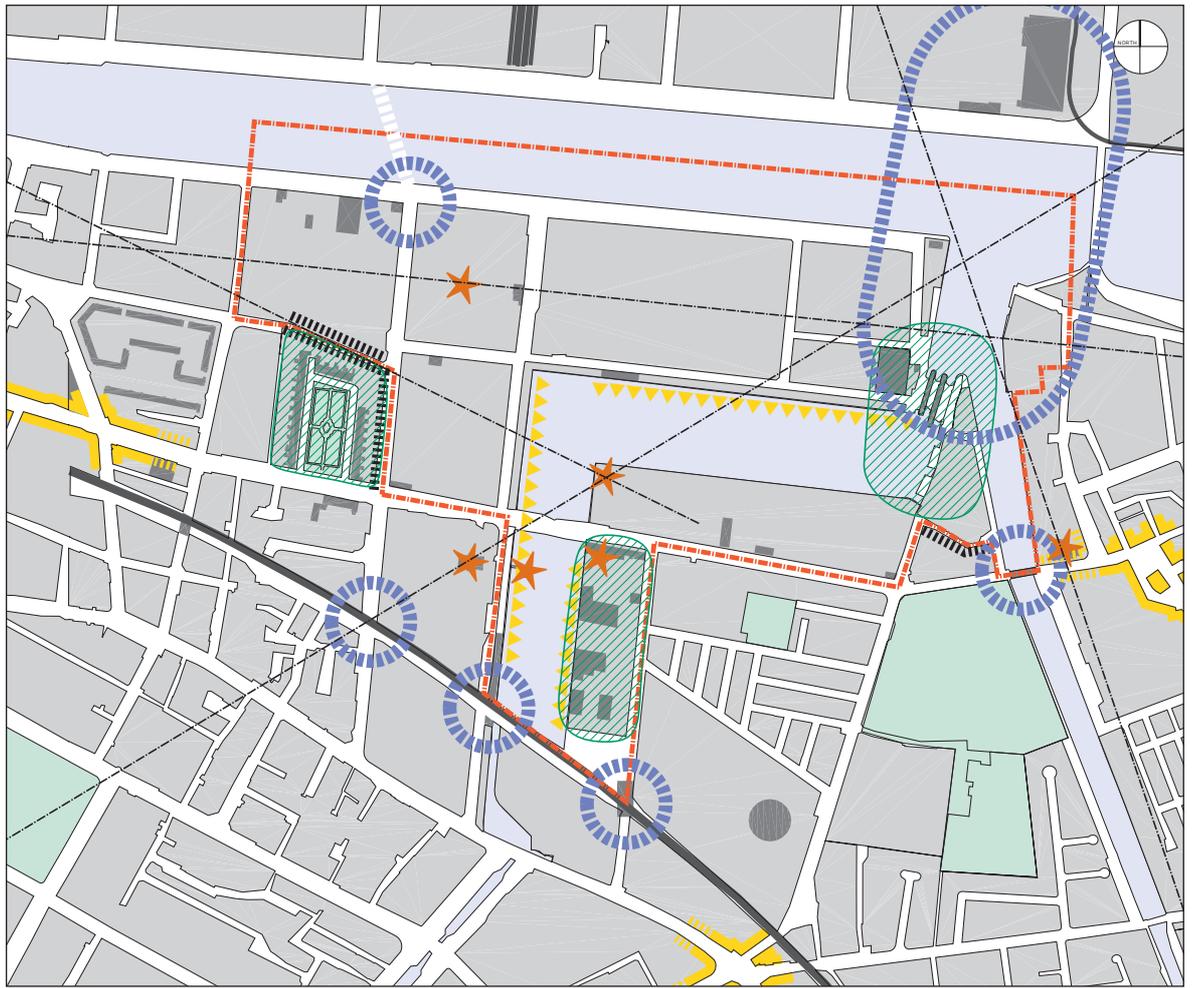


Diagram 3

- Key
-  The Area
 -  Character Areas
 -  Gateways
 -  Nodes
 -  Existing Landmarks
 -  Sunny Aspects
 -  Frontage Issue
 -  Views

2.6 MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

2.6.1 Existing Bus Services

The Area is currently served by bus Routes 1 and 3, which run between Ringsend and the city centre on the Pearse Street/Ringsend Road corridor, at a combined one-way peak frequency of 9 buses/hour (bph). A variety of bus routes running on Mount Street Lower also serve the southern fringe of the Area.

The Area effectively east of Forbes Street and north of Hanover Quay is currently located no further than 400 metres walking distance from any form of public transport. This criterion (equivalent to approximately 5 minutes walking time) is considered the maximum desirable access distance to bus services in an urban area. This is illustrated on Diagram 4.

2.6.2 Existing/Proposed Rail

The DART line linking Bray to Howth via the city centre runs through the southern part of the area. Grand Canal Dock Station is located on Barrow Street at the southern boundary of the Area. This station places the entire Area within 10 minutes walking distance of rail services, with the exception of the peninsula east of Forbes Street and north of Hanover Quay. Lansdowne Station, to the east, is more convenient for trips to destinations in the area east of the Grand Canal, albeit at walking distances greater than 800 metres. This criterion (equivalent to approximately 10 minutes walking time) is considered the maximum desirable access distance to rail services in an urban area. Existing service frequencies are 8 trains per hour at peak times and 4 trains per hour at off-peak times.

2.6.3 Current Public Transport Proposals

The Dublin Docklands Area Master Plan recognises the importance of providing good quality public transport at the outset of the regeneration process and Phase 1 of the Master Plan anticipated provision of new high quality midi-bus routes linking the city centre with the Docklands areas, known as the Docklands Area Bus System (DABS). Such a service will initially be provided by extending existing routes from the city centre to the GCD area. These routes should be operated as high frequency services, using state-of-the-art vehicles and be accompanied by integrated ticketing and comprehensive passenger information systems, including real time information. Furthermore, the routes should be designed to place the entire Area within 5 minutes walk of a bus service and to provide direct interchange with DART, mainline rail and proposed LUAS services at Connolly Station and with other bus and LUAS services on O'Connell Street.

The proposed Macken Street Bridge (see later section on highways proposals), would provide scope to recast the initial services, in particular to provide for more direct routings between Connolly Station and the GCD area. There would also be the potential to develop Pearse Street and Macken Street as Quality Bus Corridors, to reduce journey times and improve service reliability.



Diagram 4

The Master Plan also recognises the long-term potential to extend the LUAS route beyond Connolly into the Docklands area. The Planning Scheme takes account of the need to safeguard potential alignments through the Area.

The recently published Strategic Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area proposes additional rail capacity in the city centre through the provision of additional links, including one east of the existing loop line bridge across the river to the Barrow Street area. Recent more detailed studies suggest that more practical and cost effective alternative solutions are available. However, should any such line be considered it is essential that it be underground in order to ensure that neither side of the river is blighted by uncertainties so that development can proceed expeditiously.

Key

- Existing Bus Corridors
- Potential Bus Corridors
- Potential LUAS/Bus Corridor
- Existing Rail
- 5 minute walk from Grand Canal Dock Station with access from Barrow Street only
- 10 minute walk from Grand Canal Dock Station with access from Barrow Street only
- 5 minute walk from Grand Canal Dock Station with additional pedestrian routes
- 10 minute walk from Grand Canal Dock Station with additional pedestrian routes
- 5 minute walk from Pearse Station
- 10 minute walk from Pearse Station



Restricted access under railway bridge

2.6.4 Existing Highway Access

The GCD area is bisected by Pearse Street and Ringsend Road, which provide the major east-west links. Grand Canal Street provides a subsidiary east-west link along its southern fringe.

North-south movement within the GCD area occurs principally on Cardiff Lane and Macken Street along the western fringe of the area. Grand Canal Quay, Barrow Street and South Lotts Road provide for more localised north-south movements.

2.6.5 Current Highway Proposals

Phase I of the Master Plan proposes to restore Misery Hill as a public transport-only link and to introduce environmental traffic cells throughout the Docklands area.

As part of its Road Scheme Strategy, the DTO has proposed a new bridge across the River Liffey linking Cardiff Lane/Macken Street with Guild Street. This facility would provide the missing link between the northern and southern sections of the Inner Ring Road east of the city centre. It would now appear likely that since Dublin Corporation has adopted the Draft Dublin City Development Plan the proposed Macken Street Bridge may be constructed in Phase 1.

Details, including its exact line across the River Liffey, are currently unclear, however provision of the Macken Street Bridge would require modifications to the City Quay/Cardiff Lane junction and may require further amendments at key junctions within the Cardiff Lane/Macken Street corridor. In discussions with local resident groups concern was expressed regarding this bridge on the premise that it would create more traffic through the area.

The Master Plan also notes that many of the railway bridges in the Docklands do not meet current height standards and that it may be appropriate to improve their height clearance at locations where this would not encourage HGV traffic to use environmentally sensitive streets.



Limited pedestrian link across the locks

2.6.6 Pedestrian and Cycling Facilities

The Master Plan has identified a comprehensive network of pedestrian and cycling facilities to link in with the Dublin Corporation Strategic Cycle Network and with the DTI cycleway proposals.

Within the GCD area, Phase 1 of the Master Plan anticipates the provision of measures to assist cyclists on most major roads within the GCD area. Provision of pedestrian paths alongside most waterfronts is also anticipated, including a link from Grand Canal Dock DART Station. During Phase II, measures to assist cyclists using the proposed Macken Street Bridge are planned, including the Guild Street and Cardiff Lane/Macken Street approaches.

The Master Plan also seeks to encourage pedestrian movement in general, through the provision of further crossings and the installation of tactile paving and dropped kerbs. Cycle parking should also be provided at key locations.

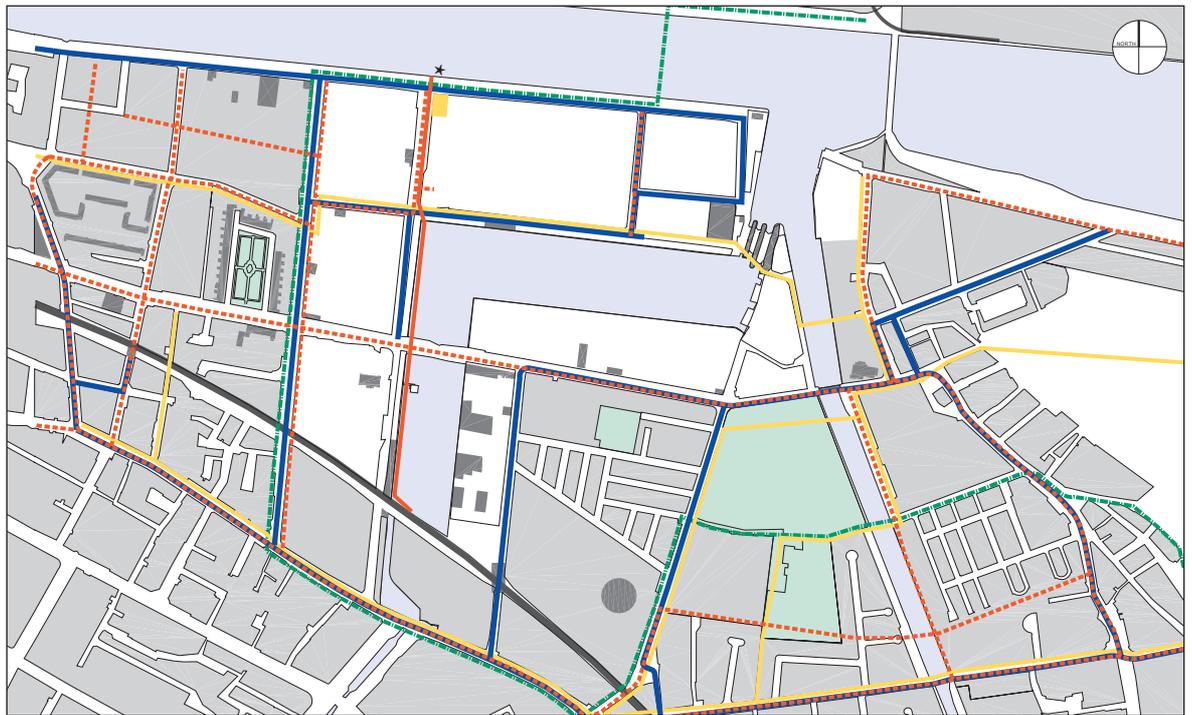


Diagram 5

2.7 SERVICES AND UTILITIES

The existing services infrastructure follows the street pattern, as indicated on Diagram 5. Where necessary this network is to be extended. The electrical distribution network will require significant upgrading, including a 110Kv substation.

Water quality in the GCD is adversely affected by the outfall from the Greater Dublin Drainage Scheme which discharges into the basin at the southern end. A proposed scheme to divert the outfall into the River Liffey is currently under consideration by Dublin Corporation and DoELG as has been indicated on Diagram 5.

The gas pressure reduction and metering plant is located at the intersection of Forbes Street and Sir John Rogerson's Quay. Re-location should be investigated and every effort should be made to enable it to be successfully integrated into the development. Efforts should be made to incorporate utility facilities within developments in an imaginative way to avoid sterilizing land or creating visual blight.

Key

-  Electricity
-  Gas
-  Gas Depot
-  Water Distribution
-  Main Sewers
-  Preferred Outfall Route
-  PIG (Pipeline Intelligence Gauge)

2.8 CONTAMINATED LAND

A desktop study of former land uses within the Area would suggest that a number of sites may be contaminated (aside from the former Dublin Gas production site). These lands will require remediation and are likely in a number of cases to require a licence under the Waste Management Act 1996.