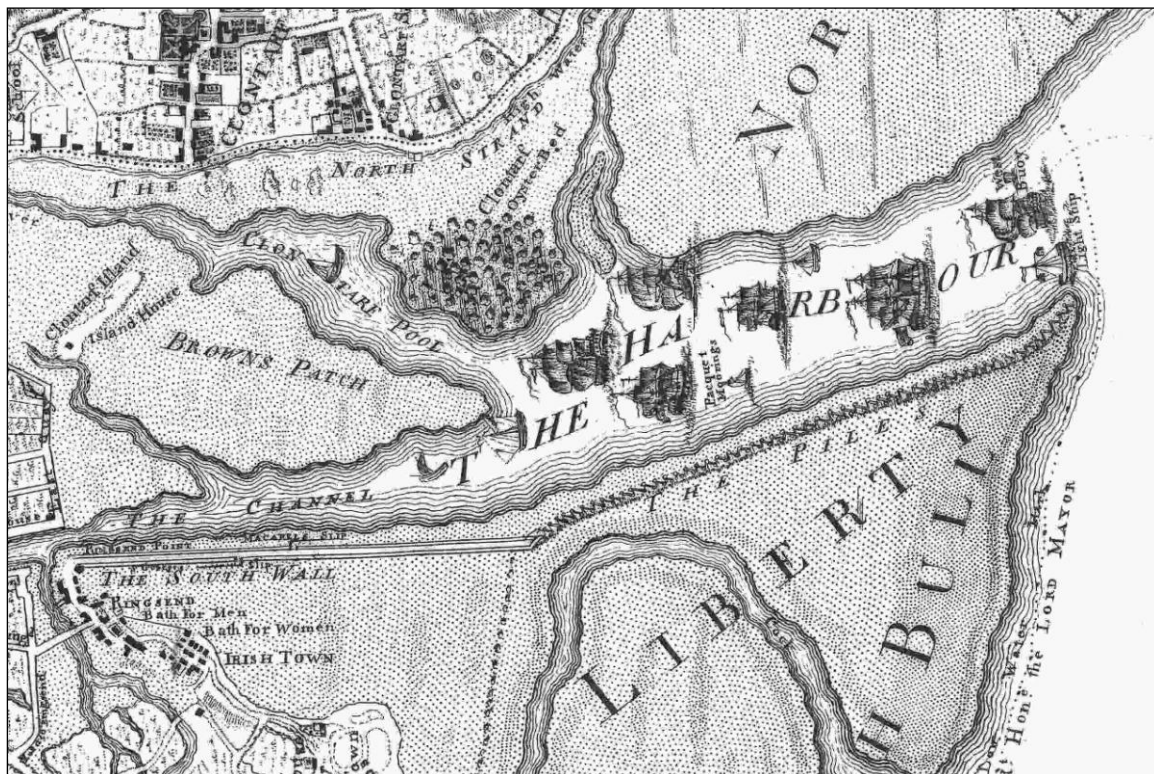


History of the Area

Early Poolbeg

The earliest references to the Poolbeg area date to the later part of the medieval era and it was known by that name (which means 'Little Pool') from at least 1488. Poolbeg is known to have been part of the lands of Thorncastle in 1306, but is not named specifically in the documents at this time. The 1673 map of Dublin by De Gomme depicts 'Poole Beg' as the channel between the North and South Bulls indicating that it was defined as a smaller area than it was in the 19th century when it stretched from the lighthouse all the way to the Pigeon House precinct.

In the 16th and 17th centuries development was concentrated at Ringsend to the west of the proposed site. Areas of deepwater off Ringsend Point were used as staging places where goods were trans-shipped for transport by light boat from here to the city (In 1640 the first bridge over the Dodder was built so that Ringsend and Dublin were linked by road and goods could be transported by packhorse to the city. While Brooking's map of 1728 and Rocque's map of 1760 both show the tide washing up on to the houses located on what is now Thorncastle Street for most of the 17th and 18th centuries Ringsend was a thriving and busy village.



Extract from Rocque's Actual Survey of the City of Dublin, 1760.

Breakwater Construction

The Pigeon House precinct, was known at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century as the Green Patch and was a small, isolated area used as an early staging place for ships unloading in the estuary. At this time the River Liffey ran in an irregular channel, shallow in places and with few quay walls. From early in the 18th century it was decided to construct a breakwater running eastwards from Ringsend which would contain the river and allow the channel to be deepened. The earliest breakwater consisted of a double row of timber piles, known as 'the Piles', driven into the sandbanks. Stones, gravel and shingle were then laid along the line of the timbers. Construction began at the mid-point of the piles and progressed eastwards and westwards

from there. By 1731 the piles ran for a distance of over 3000m. They are shown on Rocque's Actual Survey of the City of Dublin, 1760.

Ballast Office Wall

By the mid-18th century the Ballast office suggested constructing a stone river wall to bridge the gap between Ringsend Point and the west end of the Piles. The construction of a double wall, 'the Ballast Office Wall' was completed by 1759. The double wall was between 11 and 14m in width and the core was filled with sand. Upstanding sections of the Ballast Office Wall are visible at the west end of Pigeon House Road. The construction of a stone river wall along the line of 'the Piles' began soon after and was completed between 1792 and 1795. It was approximately 8m wide at the top and 9m wide at the base. The surface consisted of large granite blocks. This section of the wall projects eastwards from the NORA oil storage terminal as far as Poolbeg Lighthouse. Land reclamation in the second half of the 20th century has hidden the line of the wall in other areas.

Pigeon House

Between 1791 and 1793 a small basin or harbour was constructed mid-way along the wall under the auspices of the Ballast Board. It used the Great South Wall as its southern and eastern quays and a new wall in the channel of the Liffey as its northern and western sides. Part of this project saw the construction of a blockhouse. This building was used as a storehouse and became known as the Pigeon House, after John Pigeon became its resident supervisor and caretaker in 1761. His name was also lent to the part of the Salmon Pool 'the Pigeon House Hole' which was used as a mooring place for cross-channel boats. Many of the people passing through here would stop for refreshments at the resting place established by Pigeon and his family. Development continued in the 18th century, as further wharfs, accommodation, a Revenue Barracks, a Storehouse and a wall protecting the south shore of the precinct from waves were added. Between 1793 and 1795 the Pigeon House Hotel was constructed to accommodate the increasing cross-channel passenger traffic.



[Pigeon House Hotel](#)

Pigeon House Fort

As a result of the 1798 uprising and the threat of the French invasion in the late 18th century the Pigeon House precinct was requisitioned for use by the military and the site was henceforth known as the Pigeon House Fort. Cartographic sources depict a barracks, officers quarters (the former Hotel), a hospital and other unnamed buildings which included soldier's quarters, stores, magazines, a canteen, a handball alley, a prison and water tanks. It was bounded by a high stone wall parts of which still stand immediately along the northern boundary of the Ringsend Water Treatment Works. The fort was protected by a gate at the west end and a rampart and draw bridge at the east end. The east end of the Great South Wall was further defended by a half-moon or five-gun battery.



Upstanding remains of Pigeon House Fort

Residential Development

In the early 19th century residential development was limited to the area around Ringsend, west of the Rope Walk. By the late 19th century Pigeon House Road had been laid along the west end of the wall and Cambridge Road linked it and Ringsend. Late 19th century and early 20th century buildings consisted of terraces of single storey cottages along Pigeon House Road and Ringsend Park and larger two-bay, two-storey houses around Cambridge Avenue. A coastguard station, consisting of a terrace of two-bay, two-storey keeper's house and a boat house were constructed on the south side of Pigeon House Road.

Late 19th Century and 20th Century

In the late 19th century military occupation of the area was no longer deemed necessary and it was sold to the Dublin Corporation. It became an area of service and an industrial hub of the city. The metropolitan sewerage system was installed and Pigeon House Harbour was partially covered with sludge beds. Subsequently the foundation stone for the Dublin Corporation Electricity works at Pigeon House was laid on 10th February 1902 and the new generating station began supply in July 1903. Following its inception in 1927, the Electricity Supply Board took over the running of the power station. The original brick building was extended to the east

during the later 20th century. The boiler house is located at the west end of the building and has a brick built chimney at the south end. The precinct has continued to play a role as a site of modern industry and services associated with the production of energy and the disposal of sewerage and waste and bears the material imprint of its function in the form of the various plants, quays and industrial buildings which can be still be seen.



Pigeon House Power Station