

The Destruction and Reconstruction of a City Street: The Cork Street Corridor



New Weaver Park on Cork Street

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1. Overview

*'There is a growing appreciation that streets should not just be transport corridors, but rather should be places in which people want to live and spend time.'*¹

The Cork Street corridor, building on its great assets, has the potential to be a high quality urban place with good residential amenities, one of the most attractive streets in the inner city. However, while there have been significant recent improvements such as Weaver Park and at St Lukes, it needs significant further environmental improvements as it is grey and grim in places with little street tree planting and is pedestrian unfriendly. The Cork Street corridor is a major gateway to the city and currently does not present a positive image for the city.

There should be substantial environmental improvements including tree planting and other 'greening' with the aim of creating a green pedestrian-friendly boulevard. Consideration should be given to taking out at least one lane of traffic, undoing the damage caused by road construction, as other cities have done internationally.

The Cork Street corridor was in decline since road widening plans were put in place in 1941 causing 'planning blight' and dereliction. The completion of the road construction project in 2003 allowed for rapid redevelopment of the many derelict and vacant sites. This reconstruction process ceased with the economic downturn; but has now recommenced in a major way, making the corridor one of the more significant development areas in the city. To optimise the huge investment in the medical facilities in the James Hospital campus the Dublin 8 area has been designated as the D8 Healthcare Innovation District and this gives even greater importance to the Cork Street corridor.

2. The Destruction of the Street

The proposals to widen Cork Street go back to 1941 (Abercombie plans) and caused great damage and 'planning blight' to the area over the next half century. There were campaigns by locals and environmental activists to stop or modify the road widening and new road construction proposals. At one stage a proposed road alignment would have resulted in the demolition of No 10 Ardee Street (c1820), one of the finest historic buildings in the area. The old St Brigid's school was also saved from demolition, and is now occupied by BIMM Music College and Pallas Projects.

The Liberties was particularly badly affected by the road widening schemes of the last century, including High Street, a 6 lane urban motorway through the heart of the Medieval city, Bridgefoot Street, Bridge Street, Winetavern Street and Clanbrassil Street. Frank

¹ Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, <http://www.dttas.ie/corporate/publications/english/design-manual-urban-roads-and-streets>

McDonald has well documented the campaigns against these road widening schemes especially in 'Saving the city: How to halt the destruction of Dublin' (1989).

Two environmental impact statements for Cork Street were prepared in 1994 and 1998 giving useful background information on various road alignments, some proposals were quite bizarre in the scale of demolition required.



Cork Street 1956 Dublin City Archives, looking towards No 10 Ardee Street

In 2003 in the aftermath of the road widening the City Council commissioned Mitchell and Associates to prepare an environmental improvement plan for the corridor. Their comments on the urban quality are devastating;

"extremely poor quality"

"visually dysfunctional"

"disintegration of the built fabric"

"is marked by a total disintegration of the street enclosure"

"the combination of derelict sites and left over areas creates an impression of a street running through a backland area of the city"

The Mitchell study made various proposals for public domain improvements or "environmental rehabilitation" as it was described. Some street tree planting was provided after the street was widened but other improvements were not implemented because of cut backs during the recession.

There were c14 vacant sites about half owned by DCC. These were all developed over the next few years post-2003.

https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/cork-street-environmental-improvement-strategy-2003-93947772?qid=5af2166a-b57f-42fc-b672-cea6fe00cc01&v=&b=&from_search=1

https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/cork-street-100-concept-masterplan-rev-b-a0-landscape-1050c-1?qid=0fbc866e-c374-41d2-bf1a-c6bf07d25f6e&v=&b=&from_search=7

The fact that there were 145 Compulsory Purchase Orders in 1998 (with others at Dolphins Barn) shows the scale of the destruction;

<https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/Documents/CPO%20ADDRESSES%20.pdf>



Project:	Proposed Development at Cork St. / Ardee St.	Visual Assessment:	View 3	Date:	15/07/02
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Cork Stre during road widening revealing extensive dereliction. The three Georgian buildings on Ardee Street in background were conserved as a City Council requirement for the sale of a larger site. No 4 was built c1770, a Protected Structure, Nos 5 and 6 were in a ruinous condition, not Protected Structures.



Proposed Development at Cork St. / Ardee St.	Visual Assessment:	View 2	Date:	15/07/02
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Much of the street was in this ruinous condition in early 2000s

3. The Reconstruction of the Street: Phase One

After the road was widened, Dublin City Council set up a working group to encourage and guide the reconstruction of the street, and to promote and revalue the area. In 2004 we published 'Imaging the Street: Recreating a City Street: Cork Street Corridor'; designed by ARC consultants. The introduction set out that the objective was 'to create a lively, high quality, European-style, mixed-use city street'. Development was underway or completed on fourteen sites providing approx 800 housing units, approx 16,000m² of commercial as well as community space etc. It stated that a 'high quality of contemporary architecture and residential amenity is required' with generous apartment floor areas, above minimum floor to ceiling heights and spacious balconies and communal spaces. An updated version was produced in 2005.

These good quality apartment standards were in 2007 incorporated into the Development Plan in a section entitled; 'Achieving Liveable Sustainable New Apartment Homes' which stated that "Achieving family friendly apartment housing quality and attractive new neighbourhoods are key challenges for the future success of the City."

<https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/DublinCityDevelopmentPlan/Dev0511/VariationstotheDevelopmentPlan/Documents/AdoptedVariationNo21Spec.pdf>



https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/imaging-the-street-recreating-a-city-street-the-cork-street-corridor?qid=b701148f-6b21-4a2b-a9bf-75cf7a4c2636&v=&b=&from_search=1

<https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/of-imaging-the-street-recreating-a-city-street-the-cork-street-corridor/cork-street-scan>

Again as part of the objective of promoting and revaluing the area we asked Frank McDonald to write an article about developments along the street corridor and in 2006 it was published in the Irish Times with the following introduction:

‘After a grim past, Dublin's Cork Street, from Dolphin's Barn to the Coombe, is being sensitively redeveloped - although not all of the buildings are beautiful. Environment Editor Frank McDonald takes an architectural tour’.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/homes-and-property/new-buildings-are-the-pride-of-the-coombe-1.1026033>

We asked *Architecture Ireland* to do a feature on the street and I wrote an article for the October 2006 edition of *Architecture Ireland* on the street project setting out how the briefs for the sale of the many City Council sites stressed quality issues such as spacious apartments, mixed uses, no apartments at ground floor street level, and high quality contemporary architecture.

The article referred to the debate there had been about the appropriate height for new buildings on the street as follows: “The height of buildings became a contested issue. Dublin City Council took the strong view that it was vital for new buildings to be of a sufficient height

to contain the considerable width (c23m) of the new street. This also allowed for greater residential amenity, more spacious apartments, with better views and more generous provision of open space.” At a minimum 1:1 ratio this would give a commercial ground floor of c4.5m and 6 floors of apartments with above minimum floor to ceiling heights, others made the case for 4 storeys maximum, although Clanbrassil Street is not a good exemplar in that regard. Part of the character and heritage of the Liberties is great disparities in scale, with tall Georgian buildings, one and two storey dwellings of nineteenth century and towering industrial buildings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, often side by side.

“The first phase of the project is coming to an end with some developments occupied and others almost complete; given that many applications were submitted in 2003 that is a formidable pace of progress”.

The City Council had designated a site on the corner of Dolphins Barn and Reuben Street for a landmark building and this building designed by FKL Architects (with a light installation by Corbyn Walker) was reviewed in that issue. There was also an article on the McGovern’s Corner building on the corner of Marrowbone Lane. “www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/cork-street-recreating-a-city-street-architecture-ireland-2006?qid=0b016266-e55e-41c2-90ba-d9283b51d3c0&v=&b=&from_search=28

The award winning Timberyard City Council social housing scheme by O’Donnell Tuomey was developed around 2008. ‘Dublin City Council were anxious to produce an exemplar residential development in the area’ and in 2001 engaged the Architects in prepare a masterplan for what is now Ardee Court and the Timberyard. O’Donnell Tuomey came up with the idea of indents into the site to provide more generous space for pedestrians and opportunities for tree planting (see Ardee Court image below)

<http://www.irisharchitectureawards.ie/annual-awards/2009/timberyard-social-housing>



Ardee Court: an example of the required public or planning gain with high quality paving, widened footpath, entrance gates designed by NCAD student, and mature tree, all providing visual relief on a bleak St Lukes Avenue

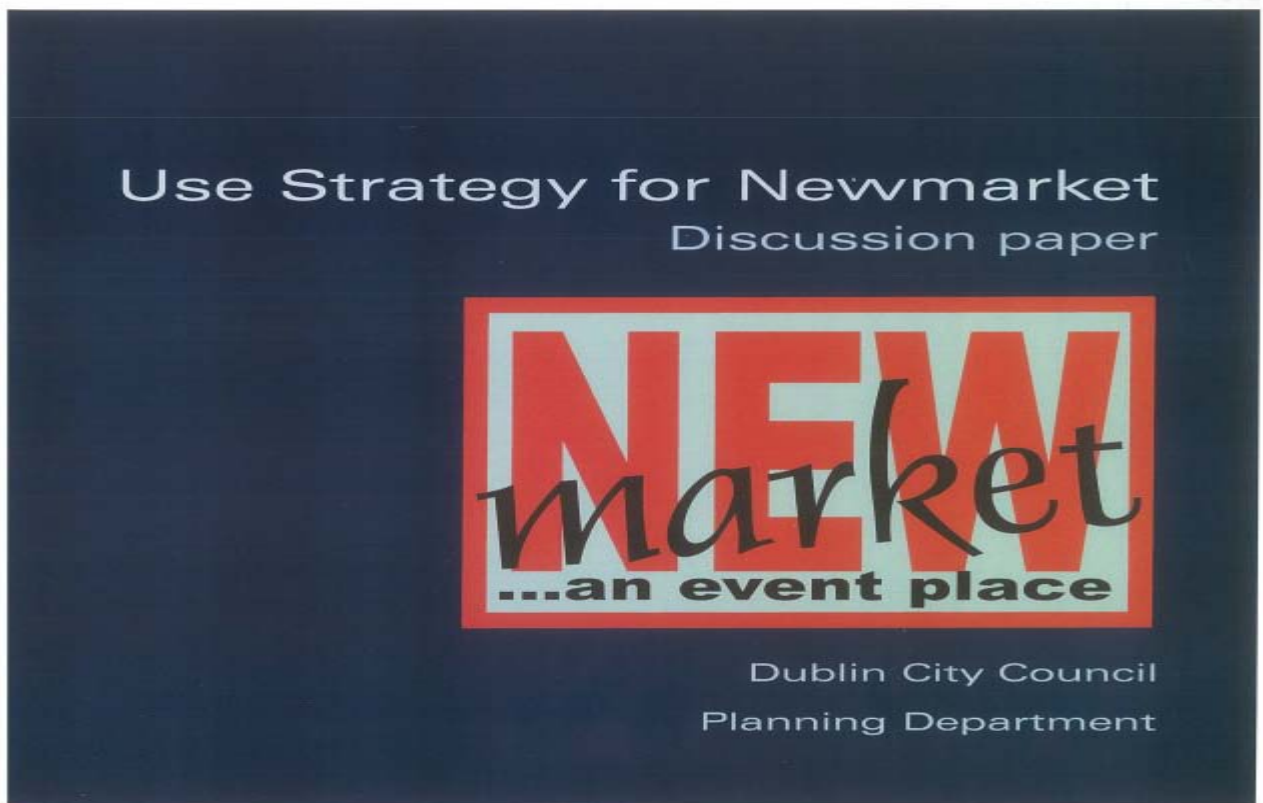
A new St Brigids primary school designed by McCullough Mulvin were also constructed around this time. <http://mcculloughmulvin.com/coombe-school>



Another example of the required public or planning gain elements of the first phase of reconstruction, a pocket public space with seating and tree planting, being used here by the Liberties Cultural Association as a meeting place for one of their walking tours. The public domain as a physical space, and a social place for people to meet and interact. Felim Egan sculpture 'Dance of Sli na Dala' is on the gable.



Communal open space for apartment scheme developed in first phase of reconstruction; at podium level over Lidl, with offices alongside (OMP Architects)



Promoting Newmarket as a 'grand civic space': A Use Strategy for Newmarket (2003)

In his great study 'Dublin: An Urban History' (1989) Niall McCullough describes Newmarket as a 'grand civic space' dating from 1673 and he compares it to Smithfield. Even in the early 2000s Newmarket was a hidden and dead space and its potential importance had almost no presence in the public consciousness or planning policy. We had a student, George Werdermann, from the Bauhaus University in Weimar working with us at the time and we worked on producing a short booklet that would promote Newmarket in the consciousness of the city and inform decision-makers, and focus on the use of the space for events. Published in 2003, it resulted in Newmarket's importance as a major civic space being recognised in subsequent Development Plans and the Liberties Local Area Plan, and generally raised the profile of the space.

Subsequently Mc Cullough Mulvin were commissioned to do an urban design framework for the Newmarket area. <http://mcculloughmulvin.com/newmarket-masterplan/2016/7/4/newmarket-masterplan>. Murray O'Laoire Architects prepared a Coombe-Newmarket Draft Study (2000, 61 pages).

The Dublin Food Coop opened on the square in 2007 followed by the Green Door Market and indoor/outdoor markets at the weekends². Unfortunately the indoor markets have to relocate as part of the redevelopment process but a new indoor market is included in one of the planning permissions for the square.

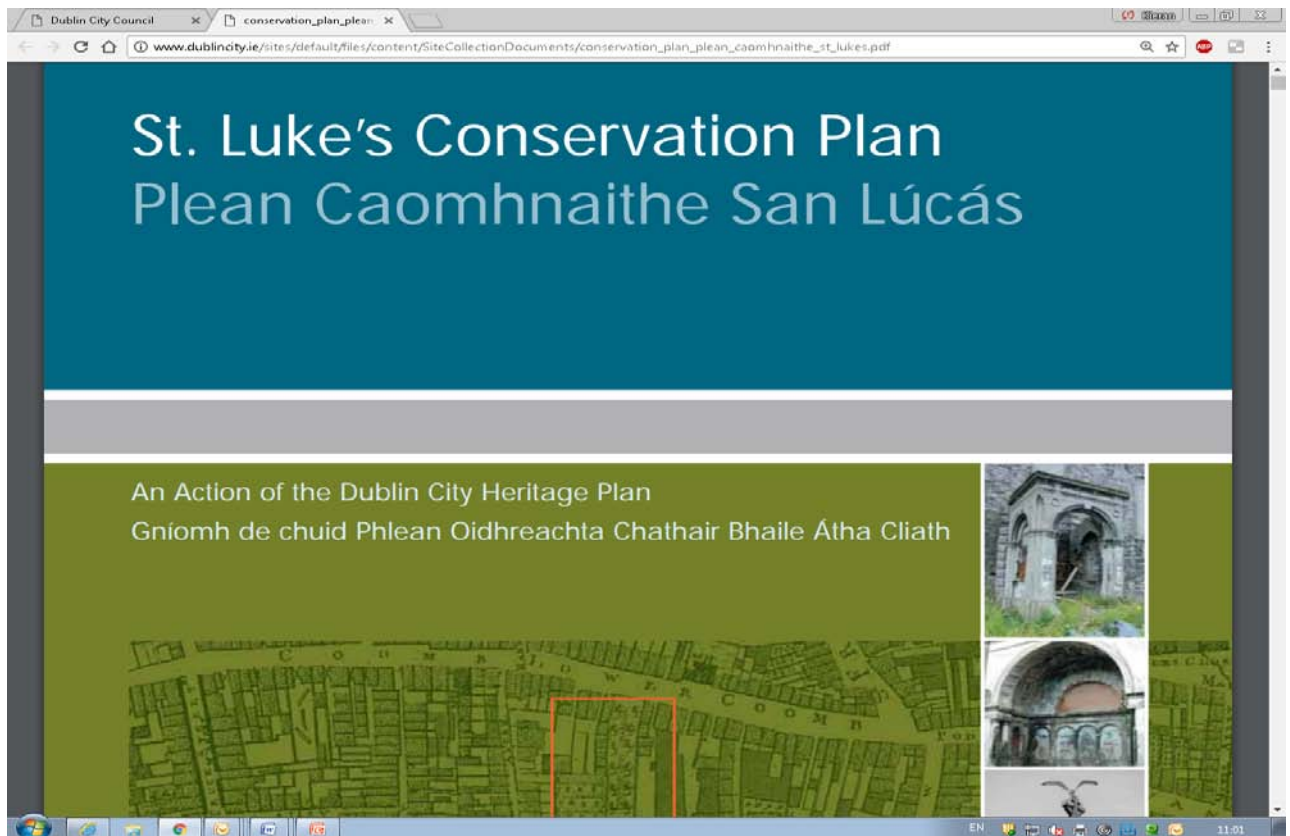
<https://www.slideshare.net/kieranrose/use-strategy-for-newmarket-51379813>

The Conservation Plan for St Lukes was commissioned in 2003 as part of the process of regenerating and revaluing the area.

http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/SiteCollectionDocuments/conservation_plan_plean_caomhnaithe_st_lukes.pdf

The City Council funded NCAD students to do art projects along the street corridor.

² Fusion Sundays, Brocante, Pure Vintage Fair, Dublin Flea Market and Newmarket Collective



The reconstruction of Cork Street featured in a 2004 interview with John O'Mahony of OMP Architects in 'Reflecting City: Dublin'; and Cyril O'Neill spoke on the design for Mill Street schemes <http://www.reflectingcity.com/south-west/video-vault/>.

4. Cork Street Civic and Commercial Hub



A busy focal point on the street providing many retail and other services and deserves environmental improvements and better pedestrian convenience

The Cork Street/Marrowbone Lane/Donore Avenue junction and environs is the key commercial, residential, and community hub for Cork Street, the vast majority of this space was provided in the first phase of reconstruction. Despite its heavy pedestrian traffic it is pedestrian unfriendly and needs greening.

According to the Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS): “To encourage more sustainable travel patterns and safer streets, designers must place pedestrians at the top of the user hierarchy. Walking is the most sustainable form of transport. The need for more walkable communities is also an issue of social equity as it is the poorest and most vulnerable in society, including children, the elderly and the disabled for whom car travel is less of an option. Research from the UK has shown that it is these groups who are disproportionately affected by the threat of accident, community severance and the loss of social cohesion.” <http://www.dttas.ie/corporate/publications/english/design-manual-urban-roads-and-streets> p28



Despite its heavy pedestrian traffic, the junction is pedestrian unfriendly and needs greening. These galvanised steel pedestrian guardrails are ugly and contrary to national policy.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (DMURS) states; ‘Guardrails can create a hazard for cyclists, reduce footpath widths and give rise to feelings of constraint and restriction to pedestrians.’ and ‘Block intervisibility between drivers and children.’ There is one primary school and three child care facilities directly on to the street with many others in the hinterland.

This junction area has a significant existing residential element with eight large apartment schemes with permission for apartments on the Hanlons site and a c400 bed student accommodation scheme permission on the Donnelly site.

Adjoining is a focal point along the street corridor with the great architectural set-piece of Bru Chaoimhin (1804) and its lawn, the Weir Home (1900) and adjoining Quaker Burial Ground (c1698). It is a green oasis in what is a grey/grim environment. The Mitchell 2003 report described these set-pieces as follows and recommended that they be public open spaces³:

“The open spaces with mature tree planting which flank Cork Street to the north and south of the nurses home and Bru Chaoimhin respectively create a green pocket in this hard urban landscape and bring a sense of history and calm to this section of the street corridor”.

³ later reflected in the Liberties LAP proposals for the street corridor including a pedestrian link <http://www.dublincity.ie/main-menu-services-planning-urban-development-plans-local-area-plans/liberties-local-area-plan>



Bru Chaoimhin '... a sense of history and calm (on) this section of the street corridor'



View from the Quaker Burial ground showing relationship with Bru Chaoimhin



One of the many pocket spaces that could be transformed into very attractive public spaces with landscaping and seating. This one on the corner of Donore Avenue and if the wall was taken down there would be very attractive views into the grounds of Bru Chaoimhin.

The Coombe Hospital with its mature trees and hedging is also a strong green presence on the street.



Coombe Hospital: a green oasis on the street

5. The Reconstruction of the Street: Phase Two

5.1 Teelings Craft Distillery and Visitors Centre



The opening of Teelings Craft Distillery and Visitors Centre with its public café in 2015 in Newmarket was a 'game changer' for the area, with more than 300,000 visitors to date. Teelings also host events such as craft food fairs, generally making the area more vibrant and attractive. All the tourist buses now stop in Newmarket and some go via Cork Street and Marrowbone Lane to Guinness Storehouse. This was the first development along the corridor since the recession and boosted confidence in the area contributing to significant new investment. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/whiskey-galore-teeling-reels-in-the-visitors-1.3529532?mode=amp>



Newmarket, hopefully these markets will continue in the future



A 400 bed student accommodation scheme opened on Mill Street in 2017, three other large sites are under construction nearby as well as Liberties Whiskey Craft Distillery and Visitor Centre

5.2 Current Developments



Hodson Bay/Hyatt Hotel under construction at Coombe near St Patricks Cathedral on what was a high profile derelict site, also shows difficult junction conditions for pedestrians.

These major sites are under construction in June 2018;

- Hodson Bay/Hyatt Hotel on Coombe
- Aloft hotel on corner of Mill Street and Blackpitts
- Student accommodation scheme and other uses adjoining on Blackpitts
- Site on corner of New Row and Blackpitts; mixed use development, residential, offices in Protected Structure, restaurant
- Dalata/Maldron hotel on corner of Kevin Street and New Street, a gateway to the Liberties and the Cork Street corridor
- Liberties Whiskey Craft Distillery and Visitor Centre on Mill Street
- Teresa's Gardens development has commenced including new direct route to Cork Street via Cameron Street
- Dolphin House redevelopment is ongoing
- Infill site 82-83 Cork Street almost complete
- Ongoing developments on James Hospital campus with new links to be opened up to Reuben Street and Cork Street
- Demolition is underway on the Donnelly Centre to provide student accommodation
- Construction has commenced on the Brickfield Lane student accommodation scheme



High quality renewal of Dolphin House, between South Circular Road and the Grand Canal

In addition to sites under construction there is significant other development potential along the corridor (see appendix for list of planning applications/permissions).



Former Donnelly Centre being demolished June 2018, see image below for permitted scheme



Permitted student accommodation scheme with public café with an ancillary outdoor terrace on former Donnelly Centre site



Decision to grant permission for this scheme (apartments, hotel, retail, offices) facing on to St Lukes Avenue and Newmarket now on appeal. See flight of steps recreating Newmarket Street link into Newmarket. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/commercial-property/development-plan-for-dublin-s-liberties-announced-1.3141821>

Recently opened on the street and according to its website 'Cork St Studios is a vibrant community of start-ups, freelancers and small companies from the tech and creative industries.' 'Based in a newly renovated building in the heart of Dublin 8, Cork St Studios is

only a 3 minute walk to Newmarket Square and a five minute cycle to Stephens Green. The building is across the road from **Weaver Park** and minutes away from cafes, yoga studios and a gym.' <http://corkststudios.com/>. The Cork Street Corridor has great contribution to make to the realisation of the Liberties Innovation District project⁴

Also recently opened is the HQ for Staycity the international aparthotel company: 'while Tom has recently moved the team into suitably hipster premises in a historic building in the Liberties' on Mill Street'

<https://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/staying-the-distance-in-the-aparthotel-business-1.3512644>



Recently opened; Cork Street Studios. No. 116 to right dates from c1770 is a Protected Structure and was renovated as part of an apartment scheme.

⁴ for a discussion of Innovation Districts, see the economic chapter of the Development Plan and <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2015/06/24-one-year-innovation-districts-katz-vey-wagner#.VZTfJW3L4Qs.mailto>



Another green oasis on the street: Urban Plantlife garden centre; <http://libertiesdublin.ie/site/urban-plant-life/>

Three new cafe/restaurants have opened recently; Café du Jour, Moroccan Gate, and Electric Vegan. <https://www.dublininquirer.com/2018/05/22/irish-moroccan-fusion-comes-to-cork-street/>

Newly constructed commercial units do not pay Rates until they get a Rateable Valuation and they only get that when they are first occupied. This is an incentive to landlords to leave a commercial unit vacant until they get a 'gold standard' tenant and at a high 'hope value' rent. It is a disincentive to let their premises as soon as possible, and would seem to explain why a number of ground floor units along the street have never been let. This is a barrier to entry for start-ups as they may not be considered secure enough for some landlords. A reform should be introduced so that Rates are payable 12 months after construction, a disincentive to vacancy similar to the Vacant Land Levy⁵. As one economist said during the debate about the vacant land levy: "A price causing a behavioural change – basic economics."

5.3 Parks and Public Domain Improvements

Weaver Park on Cork Street opened last year and is intensively used. 'The Liberties area is extremely deficient in quality green space' according to the City Council 'Liberties Greening Strategy' (2015) and the provision of this park was one of its recommendations. There was a

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<https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/Planning/Documents/Vacant%20Land%20Memorandum.pdf>

dynamic campaign by residents, Councillors and a skateboard group to have the park developed.

The Liberties is a diverse place, significant numbers of people from other countries live in the area, about 30% overall. The area is also diverse in economic status, for example, more than 60% of residents in one DED have a third level education, but this is alongside significant problems of educational and other disadvantage. Good quality public domain provides spaces for integration, diverse people sharing public spaces fostering social coherence and inter-cultural understanding, and you can see this happening in Weaver Park daily.

The public space area in front of St Lukes is almost complete and will greatly improve St Lukes Avenue

Significant other public domain improvements are planned along the street corridor including for Newmarket, Francis Street and Dolphins Barn.

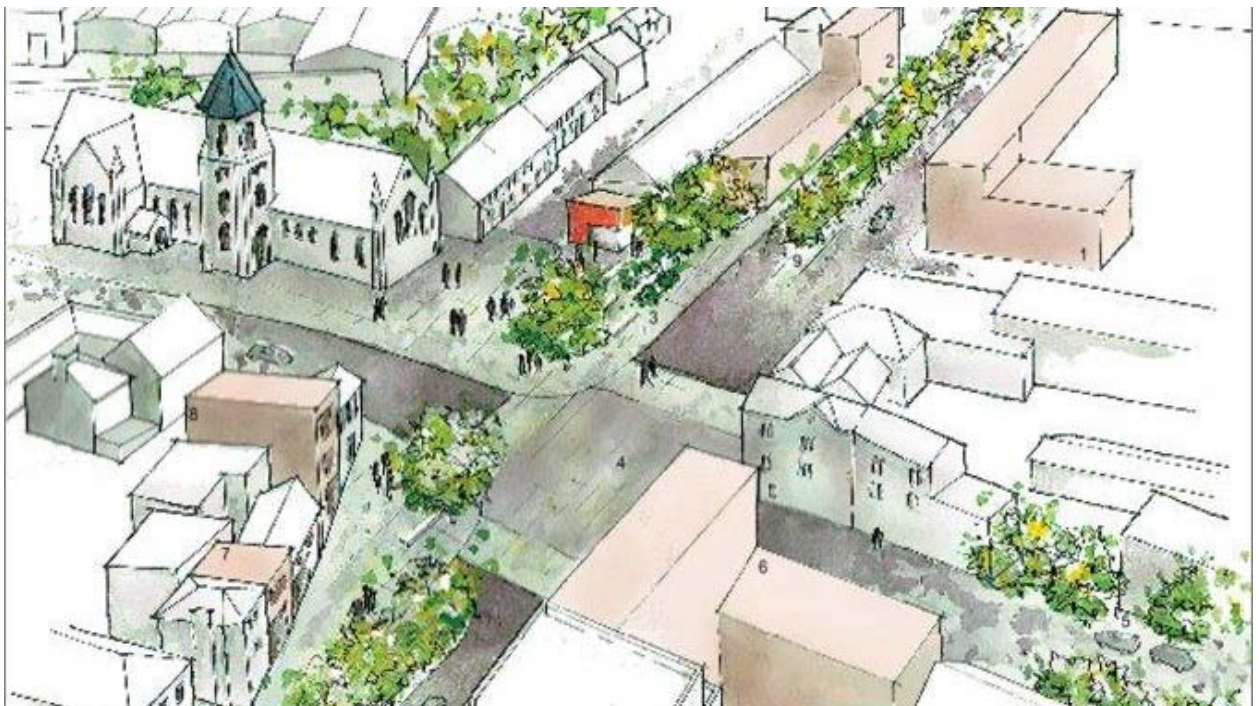
There are many more such placemaking initiatives in the Liberties area and these can be seen on the website of the Liberties Business Area Improvement project, an initiative of Dublin City Council. A row of derelict structures at Dolphins Barn was demolished and an attractive landscaped area provided. <http://libertiesdublin.ie/> .



Weaver Park nominated for European park prize: <http://www.thejournal.ie/weaver-park-european-award-3841333-Feb2018/>



Part 8 planning permission for public domain improvements to Newmarket



Proposed environmental improvements for Dolphins Barn moving to planning application stage

According to the Liberties Greening Strategy (2015); 'Large parts of the Liberties Area are of low urban landscape quality.The widening of roads also had a detrimental impact.Tree coverage in The Liberties is sparse and good quality street trees are only found in a few small areasThere are approximately 1200 trees in The Liberties area equating to a canopy coverage of less than 5% of the plan area.'



For the most part St Lukes Avenue is particularly bleak although the renovated St Lukes and the public space in front will be a huge improvement. It could be significantly improved with significant 'greening' such as median planting with London Planes (see photo below). Two major development sites to left. Photo taken c9am weekday, the street corridor often has more pedestrians and cyclists than cars.



James Street with London Planes in the median, a model for the Cork Street corridor

5.4 Conservation, Archaeological, Heritage

St Lukes Church was recently renovated to an innovative design by Derek Tynan Architects and others⁶ and is now Dublin HQ for JJ Rhatigan. Conservation works were carried out on the graveyard to the south of St Lukes. No 10 Mill Street was renovated as part of a student accommodation scheme and is now HQ for Teelings. There are ongoing conservation works to Bru Chaoimhin most recently to the Clock Tower. "Archaeologist hails 'extraordinary' Viking village find in Dublin. Terrace of houses from 11th century reveals treasure trove of artefacts", according to an Irish Times report on the hotel site at the Coombe.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/archaeologist-hails-extraordinary-viking-village-find-in-dublin-1.3437108>

⁶ Based on the 2005 Conservation Plan for St Lukes

http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/SiteCollectionDocuments/conservation_plan_plean_caomhna_ihe_st_lukes.pdf



St Lukes Church (c1715) restored for office use and new public space in front almost complete



No. 10 Mill Street (c1720) was in a ruinous condition, recently renovated as part of a student accommodation scheme and now HQ for Teelings Whiskey

Niall McCullough; in "Dublin: An Urban History" (2007 edition), writes;

“..... all-Ireland routes linking the power centres of the pre-Christian polity appear to have had an important nexus at Dublin. Tentatively located, they were of incalculable importance in the city structure and remain important streets to the present day The Slige Dala has been identified with Cork Street, Ardee Street and the Coombe, the Slige Chualann with New Street and Francis Street, the Slige Mhor with Thomas Street and James Street and the Slige Midluachra with the line of St Augustine Street extending across the river to Bow Lane behind Smithfield.

They are the real skeleton of the city structure and they meet, not on the hill or the Liffey, but at the crossing of the Poddle or Cross Poddle, roughly the junction of present day Patrick Street, Kevin Street, the Coombe and Clanbrassil Street.

Roque's map displays this nexus as it stood in the mid-18th century, the urban block defining the independence of each route later excised by the Wide Street Commissioners to create the leafy square

5.5 Dilapidated Sites

The hotel site on the Coombe and St Lukes were high profile dilapidated sites but through 'active land management' by the City Council they are now being redeveloped and will be high profile attractive features in the area. There are a number of other high profile dilapidated sites that could be targeted for redevelopment.



One of a number of prominent dilapidated sites along the street corridor, this one on corner of Cork Street and No. 10 Ardee Street (a Protected Structure), on tourist bus route Teelings in Newmarket to Guinness Storehouse.



Vacant dilapidated sites, Cork Street 2018

5.6 Human Rights, Equality, and Environmental Quality

One of the reasons why the Liberties was so badly damaged by the road widening plans was because it is a disadvantaged area where many residents did not have the financial and other resources to challenge such road plans, the resulting dereliction and all its associated problems compounding that disadvantage.

‘The Liberties remains an urban area with many physical place making and quality of life problems’, according to The Liberties Greening Strategy (Dublin City Council, 2015). The Strategy states that the area is “extremely deficient in quality green space” with provision at a rate of 0.7m² compared to 15m² per person for the south east quadrant of the Canal ring. A very high percentage (c70%) of residents live in apartments, or in terrace housing with little or no private green space, and with many residents living in disadvantage, there is even a greater need for quality public open space.

Tree coverage in the Liberties is sparse and good quality street trees are only found in a few small areas notably: Gray St. and Reginald St., along the South Quays, Cornmarket and the fountain at James St. There are approximately 1200 trees in The Liberties area equating to a canopy coverage of less than 5% of the plan area.

The Greening Strategy then sets out a vision for a network of new urban parks, heritage green spaces, improved play areas and street tree planting, providing a road map for improved placemaking.

<http://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/content/RecreationandCulture/DublinCityParks/Documents/liberties%20greening%20strategy.pdf>

A recent study, 'Mapping Beauty' found that the 'ugliest' parts of the city are Cork Street and the Coombe, Dolphins Barn, the Usher's Island-Bridgefoot Street area, all in Dublin 8. Five criteria were used: the amount of vehicular traffic; the percentage of land zoned as open space; the amount of vacant/derelict land in the area; the number of protected structures; and the number of street trees. 'The analysis by architect Motti Ruimy and urban planner Paul Kearns, authors of *Redrawing Dublin*, is part of the Mapping Beauty project in collaboration with the School of Geography UCD, which aims to determine how Dublin streets can be made more beautiful and more desirable places to live.'

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/environment/usher-s-island-dublin-s-ugliest-area-says-study-1.2774745>

<https://redrawingproject.com/2016/03/28/mapping-beauty/>

These issues of spatial and environmental justice were given a boost by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 which puts a **statutory duty on public bodies** to have regard to human rights and equality in the carrying out of their functions. The Dublin City Development Plan sets out policy: 'to have regard to equality and human rights in the carrying out of planning functions as required under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014.'

Section 42 of the IHREC Act sets out a very simple schema for implementation of the positive duty:

"A public body shall (a) set out in a manner that is accessible to the public, an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues" (b) report in a manner that is accessible to the public on developments and achievements in that regard"

The positive duty has great potential to achieve greater environmental justice and equality in the city. The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission has a statutory role in the implementation of the positive duty and hopefully it will work on this issue of how it can be implemented in relation to the physical environment <https://www.ihrec.ie/our-work/public-sector-duty/>.

Particularly relevant is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which in Article 31 explicitly recognises the right of the child to play and independent mobility. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in a 2013 report on Article 31 (<http://www.iccp-play.org/documents/news/UNGC17.pdf>) stated that; 'Children need access to inclusive spaces .. and close to their own homes, as well as with measures to promote safe, independent mobility as their capacities evolve'. 'Municipal authorities must recognize the importance of

parks and playgrounds for the realization of the rights provided for under article 31 by children living in poverty and engage in dialogue with them in respect of policing, planning and development initiatives'. Children required an environment sufficiently free from traffic 'to allow them to circulate freely and safely within their local neighbourhood'. They called for the 'creation of a safe living environment for free play, including design of zones in which players, pedestrians and bikers have priority'.

Kieran Rose

July 2018

Appendix

Planning Permissions/Applications

There are other significant development sites along the street corridor, and below are some of these.

43-50 Dolphins Barn Street mixed-use scheme, apartments above ground floor commercial (3853/17)

Newmarket and Mill Street, offices, **indoor market** (3321/17)

Newmarket and Mill Street, micro-brewery, café, offices (3322/17)

Newmarket and St Lukes Avenue, apartments, hotel, retail (3323/17)

Hanlons, Cork Street, mixed-use scheme, apartments above commercial ground floor (3086/17)

Old Watkins Brewery site, Student Accommodation etc, Newmarket, St Lukes Avenue, Ardee Street (2812/17)

Nursing home, Mill Street, (4313/09)

Corner of Dolphins Barn and South Circular, mixed-use scheme, apartments and ground floor commercial (3618/15)

The Player Wills and Bailey Gibson lands on the South Circular Road, on the Vacant Sites Register and in NAMA, had permissions for c750 housing units and c18,000 other space, their early redevelopment would be a 'game changer' for Dublin 8.

