

Submission from :

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I first would like to point out that I am a museum professional at the Réunion des Musées Nationaux-Grand Palais, working in several major museums in Paris, including the Louvre and the Musée d'Orsay. I have been trained in both art history and archeology and am thus no stranger to matters related to heritage conservation. I have also travelled extensively in Europe and Asia and have witnessed first hand some specific examples of (good and bad) heritage preservation in many countries. I have been following the situation on Moore Street for the last 13 years.

As regard my vision for the development of Moore Street.

The backbone of the reflexion should be :

The outstanding educational value of the area in the interest of the present and forthcoming generations. First and foremost.

That district of Dublin has been described many times as « the laneways of history ». Isn't it so much more interesting to learn history from the real places, putting literally your feet in the steps of those who made history, than just having books written by historians as the sole source ?

The society the next generations are going to live in, will be increasingly multicultural. It is vital that strong connexions with the past are preserved in the interest of all. Moore Street provides one such connexion.

The advice of international experts in the matter (National Museum of Ireland, Imperial War museum, London ; experts involved in the preservation of Civil War battlefields in America) **should not be ignored : all agree that Moore street is the last surviving exemple of a urban battlefield in Europe if not in the world. A**

destruction of the area that would only save the four houses that are now a National Monument, would be an irreparable loss for World History.

Historically, seminal events took place all over the area—streets, back lanes, houses, yards, sheds.....—, and not just in the National Monument's four houses.

There is no denying that the area, which was left to go derelict for years, is in dire need of a development.

But that should not be an excuse to give in to private interests. Neither should it be a pretext to rush and botch the job. Anyway, 2016 is nearly gone by now and the commemorations are behind us, it is not any longer urgent to do something that should be finished on time for the centenary.

This development must be a sensible and sustainable one, respectful of both the architectural and historical heritage and of the interest of the people of Ireland, present and future.

The key elements of a sensible redevelopment should be as follows :

- 1) **All that remain today of Moore street and the back lanes must be preserved and renovated as a whole.** No more destruction of any of the buildings still extent. Think in terms of a revitalised historical district with shops... with a distinctive Dublin flavour.
- 2) **Any work undertaken in and around the National Monument must remain under close INDEPENDENT supervision.** My experience in heritage preservation taught me how often listed buildings were irreparably damaged—even destroyed—during works that were meant to give them a new lease of life.
- 3) **The National Monument must be turned into an interpretative centre, respectful of the structures inside** —the « museum » that is part of the project on offer from the present owner of the site does not respect the integrity of the buildings and from my information, it appears that, unfortunately, irreparable damages have already occurred, partly because of the complete dereliction the National Monument was left in, and partly by work undertaken recently without any proper supervision. Advice must be sought from INDEPENDENT heritage professionals, museum professionals in Ireland and abroad if necessary. And

INDEPENDENT companies must be selected. I believe that there must be a new start and that no one having the tiniest connexion with the various developers' project should be associated with the area now.

- 4) Be aware, in naming the interpretative centre, that foreign visitors—specially from Latin countries such as France or Italy— may feel they have been misled if the word « museum » is used for a place that does not deal with fine arts. Visitors' Centre or Interpretative Centre would be more appropriate. The centre should include audio-visual interactive presentations, a display of authentic artifacts (the possibility of loans from the National Museum and other institutions should be discussed). Guided tours of the area should be organised and start from the interpretative centre and that could include reenactments on specific occasions.
- 5) The other houses along the street should be renovated. Then returned to business as long as the said business remain in keeping with the specificity of the area which should ideally become a historical district of Dublin city centre, where visitors could follow in the footsteps of those who made history in the early XXth century.
- 6) I think that it might be time to get people back to live in this part of Dublin city centre. The redevelopped Moore street area should also be a residential area.
- 7) The stall holders activity should also be continued, they are part of the life and soul of Dublin.
- 8) The hideous ILAC centre must be redevelopped. Damage has been done years ago when destroyin the buildings that were standing at tha very place. But at least, the outer facades should be redesigned to camouflage this architectural monstrosity.

For the sustainable part of my vision : tourism.

Far more than a shopping mall with no soul and the like of which one could find anywhere else in the world, a rejuvenated and lively historical district will no doubt provide a steadier stream of income in the long term.

In that regard I suggest Dublin learns from the failure of les Halles in Paris. What could have been done—a fantastic and lively cultural hub— if the iconic 19th century pavillions had been skillfully and wisely converted... ... What was actually done against

all experts advice, against the public opinion —a giant partly underground shopping mall, a dehumanised maze, that is presently being totally revamped (and it costs a fortune) so outdated and unsafe it had already become, not even 40 years after it was opened.

I also suggest that Dublin learns from the mistakes made in China, where whole historical areas were destroyed, till the day the authorities realised that the tourists didn't come to the country to find Starbucks, and Mc Donalds, and Nikes..... That day, they decided in various cities—specially in the South of the country—to build, from scratch, mock old Shanghai, mock old-Nanjing areas, for tourism. Wouldn't it have been better to keep the real ones ? That is now what is done..... in Suzhou for instance.

I am a museum professional, not an expert in economic, political and financial matters. But I would say that one thing is certain, if we want to take the Moore Street historical district to the right direction, there should not be any private corporate interest involved. And this part of Dublin city should be returned to the hands of the Irish people. Furthermore, this is history and education that we are dealing with, not politics. Consequently that would be a grave mistake to make the decision to go ahead with destruction just because the preservation of the area may have been supported by opposition parties. Common sense and the interest of the people and of the nation should prevail.

