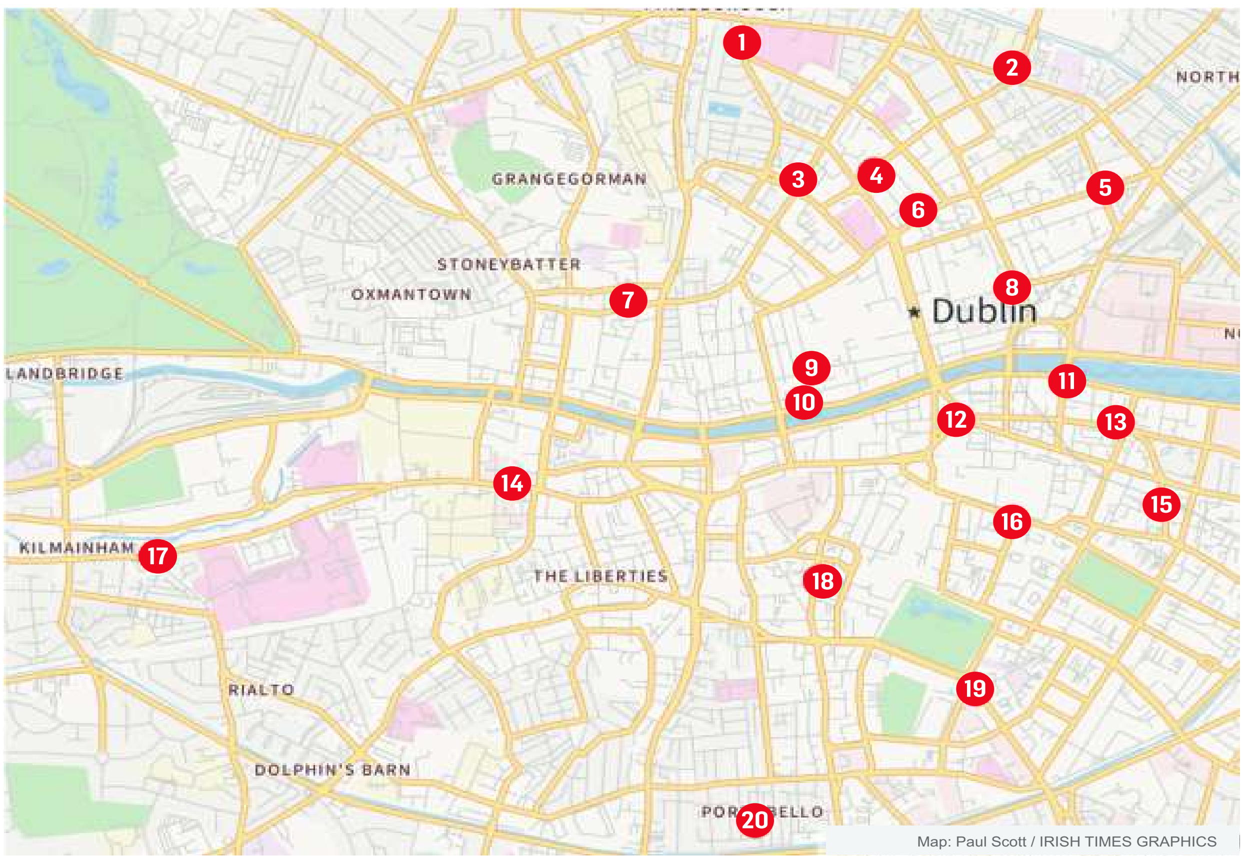
Derelict Dublin

20 BUILDINGS AND SITES THAT TELL THE STORY OF DERELICT DUBLIN

WORDS: OLIVIA KELLY, COLM KEENA, JACK WHITE & RONAN McGREEVY

PHOTOGRAPHS: DARA Mac DÓNAILL, ALAN BETSON & BRYAN O'BRIEN



Map: Paul Scott / IRISH TIMES GRAPHICS

1 22a Berkeley Road

An old image of this property from 2009 shows a large plastic ice cream cone sitting in front of a vibrant teal shopfront located at 22a Berkeley Road in Phibsborough. This summer scene captured on Google Street View is of newsagents Selections. This is a building that has long been used as retail premises, with 1911 census records showing it was then occupied by a shopkeeper and his family, who lived overhead. More than a century later, the property, which is covered with graffiti, has lain vacant for a decade or so, falling into a state of disrepair, with decaying signage and overgrown weeds emerging from the upper level.

The building was first brought to the attention of Dublin City Council in 2021 upon receipt of a complaint. Notices of intention to add the property to the Derelict Sites Register were served in May 2022 on owners Brian Farren, Niall Farren and Conor Farren, addressed to O'Shea Farren Solicitors in Ballsbridge.

The property was added to the register on March 1st, 2023. A valuation of the site that same year carried out by the council put the property's worth at €500,000. The building, which has a two-bedroom apartment on the upper floor and is situated directly across from a proposed MetroLink station, was subsequently put on the market last year at a guide price of €475,000, though it has not yet sold. – JACK WHITE

2 18 Russell Street

The site at the corner of North Circular Road and Russell Street, opposite Gill's pub and close to Croke Park, has been an eyesore for decades.

In 2004, the council submitted plans for a 22-unit social housing development on two blocks, even though part of the site for the intended development, number 18 Russell Street, was not in its possession. That planning application was ultimately withdrawn, and number 18 remains outside the council's possession. Publicly available property records do not reveal who owns it. The last available public record is of AIB registering a charge against the building in January 1999.

It has been identified by the council as a "strategic site for redevelopment", but efforts to acquire the site in full have been continuing for years. The buildings have either collapsed or are in an advanced state of decay.

"In order to enhance the site and maximise development potential, the council has in recent years endeavoured to acquire lands adjacent to land already in its ownership," a spokeswoman for the council said. "It has now acquired by agreement the site at 553 North Circular Road/19 Russell Street and number 18A Russell Street and is endeavouring to acquire number 18 Russell Street," she said. "Consideration is being given to acquisition by way of compulsory purchase order and [the council] is determining next steps." – COLM KEENA

3 118-121 Dorset Street Upper

While development of the surrounding area of Dorset Street Upper continues, numbers 118-121 have remained largely unchanged. Located directly across from the Maldron Hotel, the row of three-storey dilapidated buildings are all being investigated by Dublin City Council for inclusion to its Derelict Sites Register.

Census records dating back to 1911 show their historical use as family-run businesses with living quarters above. However, over the last 30 years or so, the buildings have largely fallen into vacancy and disrepair. Number 118, for example, which previously contained a grocery shop on the ground floor, appears to have been vacant since 2019. While some of the ground floor of number 119 was previously an optician's in the 1990s, directories dating back to 1993 suggest the other half appears to have been vacant for at least three decades.

In 2005, planning permission was granted to its owner, John Meagher, to redevelop number 119, which would have included the construction of a new penthouse apartment. However, the site remains undeveloped and unused. Number 120, meanwhile, which was previously a typewriter shop until it closed within the last decade, appears to have been vacant since.

Land Registry records show that numbers 118, 119 and 120 are owned by Wing On, a small private company, the director of which was Meagher in 2023. Following site inspections, the council's derelict sites section issued letters to the owner asking him to take action to ensure they do not fall into "further disrepair". Dublin City Council said it is awaiting a response.

Number 121, which has had a pizzeria on its ground floor for almost two decades, is owned by Abifresh Property Rentals. In December, the council issued a notice of intention to add the building to its Derelict Sites Register, before Abifresh advised that it was occupied and in use. As a result, the building's addition to the register has been deferred and the owners have been asked to paint the facade of the building. – JACK WHITE

4 23-28 Parnell Square North

The students at Coláiste Mhuire did not return to the buildings that used to house their Gaelscoil on Parnell Square North after the Christmas break in 2002 because an inspector raised concerns about the poor state of the listed structures, which date from the 1700s. They have remained empty ever since.

At first, the Christian Brothers, who owned the buildings, entered negotiations with the Department of Education about renovation financing, but then they gifted the buildings to the Office of Public Works (OPW) as part of the order's contribution to the redress scheme that arose from inquiries into historic abuse in State-owned institutions. The State considered using the buildings to house the Abbey Theatre, which would have moved from Lower Abbey Street. Then those plans were shelved and the OPW and Dublin City Council did a land swap: the Parnell Square buildings went to the council in return for land in Finglas and Inchicore.

The council drew up a plan for a cultural and entertainment hub on Parnell Square, with the former school becoming a luxury hotel and the old Ambassador cinema, on the southern end of the square, a cabaret venue.

Then the former cinema was to become the new city library, replacing the one in the Ilac Centre. Then it was decided the library should be in the Coláiste Mhuire buildings, as part of a "cultural cluster" stretching to both sides of the Hugh Lane Gallery. There were delays in submitting the application to An Bord Pleanála.

Meanwhile, discussions continued about funding models. All the time, the envisaged cost of the project increased. By 2018, it was envisaged the project would cost €130 million. Soon afterwards, it was decided the development should be introduced in phases. Negotiations about finance continued as the pandemic hit, Russia invaded Ukraine and, globally, construction costs climbed. Asked about the current status of the project, a spokeswoman for the council said it was "progressing well" with phase one, which involves numbers 23-28 Parnell Square North and the Hugh Lane Gallery. "The publicly procured tender process has commenced and it is envisaged that a contractor will be on site by Q4 2025," she said. – COLM KEENA

5 19 Lower Buckingham St

Passersby might wonder why murals of vampires in coffins, bats and lengthy quotes adorn the walls of 19 Buckingham Street Lower in Dublin's north inner city. Located at the corner of Killarney Street, the three-storey residential redbrick is a shrine of sorts to Dracula author Bram Stoker.

Other Stoker residences are better known, including Stoker's birthplace at 15 Marino Crescent in Clontarf, or 30 Kildare Street, where he lived before his move to London. It was discovered in recent years, however, that Buckingham Street Upper was the site of a house that Stoker lived in from his childhood years to his adolescence. The author lived at number 17 from 1858 to 1864.

Number 17, however, was one of several buildings demolished to make way for the Seán Treacy House apartment complex and so a plaque to Stoker was instead erected at 19 Buckingham Street Lower to mark his time in the area. Despite celebrating the author, the building has fallen into disrepair and is vacant since 2017, according to Dublin City Council, which said it has used the property in the past for "various needs of the local area".

The council said it has tried to engage with the owner of number 19 "but attempts have proved unsuccessful" and it is now considering options including a compulsory purchase order to acquire the property. However, Land Registry records show the council has been the full owner of the property since 2014. The council has been contacted for further comment. – JACK WHITE

6 148 Parnell Street

The newsagents at 148 Parnell Street was reputedly the oldest in Dublin when it closed in December 2013 after more than a century in business.

Not only was Lucky Duffy's a local institution, the narrow, early 19th-century Georgian building had been home to the same family for more than a century, until the late Patty Duffy sold up just 12 years ago. It was a late surviving example of a merchant house designed for living over the shop which was still being used as originally envisaged.

It was acquired by Alan Matthews and Rachel Cadden, who have an address on Mountjoy Square, in August 2015, and the new owners soon submitted a plan to restore and extend the building and convert each of the upper floors into one-bed apartments.

A successful planning application in January 2016 was appealed and a June 2016 inspection report for An Bord Pleanála indicates the building was in need of extensive work. It said: "The upper floors of the building would appear to have been last in use as residential; however, the upper floors are dilapidated."

The "interior at several locations is in an advanced state of dilapidation", the report said. "The deterioration is such that for health and safety reasons it was not possible to access the top floor for inspection. While some of the original fittings still exist, many have been changed or removed over time. The upper floors appear abandoned for some time; they cannot be considered habitable in the current state, nor can the basement level."

Planning permission was granted; however, development did not take place. In November 2022, the building was acquired by JIHE Ltd, 2/2A Talbot Street, a company owned by four shareholders: Jie Zhou, with an address on Parnell Street; Yunqin and Weian Zhou, with an address in Fuqing City, China; and Binghe Liu, also with an address in Fuqing City. The building currently remains undeveloped.

Attempts to secure a comment from JIHE met with no response. – COLM KEENA

7 60-61 North King Street

North King Street is bisected by Church Street. East, it is a four-lane highway; west, it is a narrow two-lane road.

While there are some fine historic buildings, it also has some of the most notorious derelict sites in the city, typified by numbers 60-61. The dilapidated state of these former houses reflects the dichotomy of the two halves of North King Street.

Dublin Corporation, the council's predecessor, bought the houses in the 1940s for a road-widening scheme. It granted a 20-year licence to the previous owners to stay, with the proviso it would terminate if road widening went ahead. The road was widened to the east, but not to the west, but the corporation did not repossess numbers 60-61 following the end of the lease in 1969.

In 2004, the council conducted a title search and found the owner of land to the rear of numbers 60-61 had in 1981 granted a 35-year lease of the council properties to a car-parts business. In 2007, that rear site owner claimed title under adverse possession, also known as "squatter's rights".

The council entered into negotiations with the claimant, but these were complicated by another party claiming they had used the site as a stables. Discussions ceased in 2015.

In 2019, Isle of Man-registered company Yellowline Limited, which owns 62-65 North King Street (also derelict), said it was now the owner of the site to the rear of numbers 60-61 and wanted to buy out the council.

In 2021, councillors were asked to approve the sale to Yellowline for €35,000. They balked at the low sum and instead asked for negotiations to be opened to acquire some of the apartments Yellowline planned to build.

The council said no negotiations have taken place since and the lands remain undeveloped. Attempts to contact Yellowline proved unsuccessful. – OLIVIA KELLY

8 79/80 Talbot Street

Located just 350m from O'Connell Street, the former premises of Guineys department store at 79/80 Talbot Street has been vacant since it closed its doors in 2012. A sister shop of Clerys on O'Connell Street, the department store's origins stretch back to 1921 when it was opened at number 79 by Denis Guiney, who later expanded into number 80.

The store was destroyed during the Civil War in 1922 and reopened a year later. It suffered further damage in the 1974 Dublin bombings when one of three car bombs across the city centre exploded outside, killing 14 people.

Following its closure in 2012 after it was placed into liquidation, the four-storey building was put on the market for €850,000 before being purchased by Noel Tynan, owner of the neighbouring Celt Bar. Planning permission, lodged by his wife Clare Tynan, to demolish the property and develop a 44-bedroom hotel was granted in 2017.

However, the project never went ahead, and the Tynans put the property on the market in 2019 seeking €4.25 million. The property is still owned by the couple, who sought planning permission last summer for a restaurant and bar on the ground floor of the building.

This planning permission was granted last month, despite a planner's report outlining concerns about the creation of a "superpub", saying its relationship with the adjoining Celt Pub was "unclear". It noted that the plans appear to show the two premises sharing toilets and a smoking area to the rear. "This is notwithstanding the fact that numbers 81-82 are not shown to be in the applicant's ownership, although it was previously shown as being in the applicant's ownership," the report said. – JACK WHITE

9 19 Abbey Street Upper

This three-storey mid-19th century building on this street on the northside of Dublin is something of a curiosity in a block largely levelled and rebuilt by prolific Dublin apartment developer the late Liam Carroll. Previously a ground-floor shop with two storeys of accommodation above, number 19 faces the Luas line and adjoins TP Smith's pub, a protected structure dating back to the 1750s. Though not itself a protected structure, number 19 may internally be just as old; Rocque's 1766 map of Dublin shows the pub and 19 as a single house. While the pub thrives, the building has been vacant for more than two decades and is in a dilapidated state, with the ground-floor shop rendered over and window braces securing the upper facade. In 1999, Carroll's company Fabrizia applied to demolish the block surrounding the pub and number 19 for an apartment and commercial scheme on a site he had assembled stretching from Abbey Street to Great Strand Street and Jervis Street to become the Millennium Walkway.

One month after he secured permission in 2000, another Carroll company, Danninger, became the owner of number 19, with records showing a deed of transfer from the Very Rev William McGonagle of the Oblate order. However, despite applying for several amendments to his 2000 permission, before and during its construction, Carroll never included the building in his scheme. In 2010, the property was among several to which AIB appointed receivers, though it was not immediately offered for sale due to the property crash.

In 2018, it appeared its prospects were about to improve with a new owner, Shichao Wang, securing planning permission, for its renovation and restoration. A cafe was planned at ground -floor level, with apartments above. This development never went ahead and in 2022 the building was offered for sale with a guide price of €300,000. In November 2024, a new company, Laoye Ltd, with directors Changrong Ye and Li Chang Chen, submitted a new application to Dublin City Council to renovate the building, with a shop on the ground floor, accommodation above and some extensions to the rear. This application is due to be determined shortly. – OLIVIA KELLY

10 11 Lower Ormond Quay

In August 2024, 11 Lower Ormond Quay, Dublin 1, was the scene of an outbreak of violence as squatters in the building were apparently attacked by an anti-immigration gang. The Garda Armed Support and Public Order units were called, such was the violence.

The four-storey-over-basement building between Capel Street Bridge and the Millennium Bridge dates to the 1670s and was originally a pair of houses, accounting for the two front doors. It is on a quayside that, according to the National Built Heritage Service, remains one of capital's best-preserved river frontages.

For many years, number 11 hosted offices and an apartment on the top floor (this reporter lived there in the 1980s and 1990s), but it had lain vacant for some time when architects Douglas Wallace, according to their website, were engaged and developed a plan for it being used for residential purposes.

The owners at the time were Collen Investments Ltd, an Irish company

12 6 College Street

A rare surviving relic of Dublin's 19th-century retail history, the old Yeast Company building at 6 College Street served the city's bakers and brewers from 1894 until its closure in 2016. It was one of the oldest businesses in the city. The four-storey brick building, which faces Trinity College, dates from around 1820. It retains its historic shopfront with carved wooden detailing. John Moreland, whose family acquired the Irish Yeast Company in the 1930s, worked and lived above the shop until his death in 2017.

In 2018, the building was sold to a company owned by David Doyle, the brother of Declan Doyle who owns the neighbouring pubs Doyles and Bowes on Fleet Street. David Doyle's Capital Estate Management sought permission in 2018 to extend Bowes, one of Dublin's last remaining intact Victorian pubs, into the Irish Yeast Company building's ground floor, and to extend the Times Hostel into the upper storeys. This was refused by Dublin City Council in 2019.

In 2021, a new application was made to turn the old shop in to a cafe/bar and reception area, with three apartments above. This was rejected by the council, as was a similar application in 2022 on the grounds it would "irreversibly" damage the historic premises.

However, in January of last year, An Bord Pleanála reversed this decision, granting permission. Work on the development has yet to start and the council has raised concerns about the condition of the building, both internally and externally, and the risk to its historic fabric. Last September, it added 6 College Street to the Derelict Sites Register. It is understood that Doyle is considering submitting a revised application for the building.

– OLIVIA KELLY

ultimately controlled by a Dublin-resident Chinese property investor named Yong Wu. Public records show Collen bought the property in 2018. Dublin City Council wanted the property used for long-term residential but the architects successfully secured planning permission for eight short-stay studio apartments while restoring the building's "historic fabric and structure".

Planning permission was granted in November 2021. But the development never went ahead and in March 2023 the building was acquired by Barry's Hotel Ltd, part of the hospitality and property group owned by Irish resident Chinese national Colm, or Guoqing, Wu. Among other businesses, Wu owns the Mulligan & Haines gastropub on Dame Street.

In May of last year, receivers were appointed to properties he owns worth about €6 million. Liquidators appointed to three of his companies, including the company behind the Dame Street pub, have brought High Court proceedings against Wu and the companies.

The claims against Wu, which he is contesting, include allegations that he oversaw multiple transactions between his various trading and investment companies that were apparently designed to defraud their creditors, including the Revenue Commissioners.

The building on Ormond Quay has been on the market for the past year and is currently sale agreed with Robert Colleran property consultants at €1.25 million.

– COLM KEENA

11 1 City Quay

The now decaying building at the junction of Moss Street and City Quay on Dublin's south quays once hosted a thriving cultural space when it was the City Arts Centre. However, the centre, which opened in the late 1980s, has lain vacant for more than two decades since it was sold in 2003 for €4.2 million.

It was sold to a consortium of developers including Paddy Kelly and the Dublin-based McCormack family's investment vehicle Alanis Capital, after which the property remained unused until it was sold again in 2021 for more than the €35 million guide price.

This time, the property was purchased by Ventaway, a company headed up by David Kennan and Winthrop Engineering Group founder Barry English. Since then, multiple attempts have been made by Ventaway to develop the 0.22-hectare (0.55-acre) site, including plans to transform it into what would have been Dublin city's tallest structure, a proposed 24-storey, 108m tall building.

An Bord Pleanála upheld an October 2022 city council refusal saying the scale, bulk and height of the development would "seriously detract from the setting and character of the Custom House and environs". It added that the building, which would have primarily been office space, would "stand apart as an overly assertive solo building which would not form part of a coherent cluster".

Last December, Ventaway lodged new plans with the city council, this time for a 14-storey structure that would be 61m tall. The scaled-down project has since attracted a number of objections, including from the Office of Public Works, which said the construction of a building at this scale had "the potential to adversely impact the historic and architectural character of the Custom House".

– JACK WHITE

13 112-114 Townsend St

At the corner of Townsend Street and Lombard Street in Dublin's south inner city is a stretch of three properties in various states of decay.

Number 114 still has its Guinness sign, the only remaining indication it was a pub, the Countess Markievicz; number 113 was a chipper, the Seashell Fish Bar, with flats above. Both closed decades ago but the premises are still largely intact. All that remains of number 112 is an impressive-looking stone doorway with the number etched into the pediment. This too was a pub, the Grand, and it was indeed once a grand three-storey 19th century building. In 1999, when it was already long closed, an application was made to Dublin City Council to demolish it and the chipper, and build a six-storey apartment block, but it was later withdrawn. In 2001 another application came along to demolish the upper floors of the Grand and "secure" the ground floor. It was refused on the grounds that the partial demolition would cause "visual blight on a prominent inner-city corner".

In 2004, permission was granted for the demolition of numbers 112 and 113 for another six-storey apartment scheme. The demolition of the Grand went ahead; the rest of the development did not. At number 114, planning permission was granted in 2000 for a four-storey building with pub and student accommodation above. It didn't proceed and in 2005 another application for an apartments only was refused.

In 2008, the three properties finally came together in one application from a new owner named Willowbridge; it was for a six-storey office and retail scheme, granted on appeal to An Bord Pleanála. It didn't proceed and in 2010 another application was made for a six-storey student complex, with retail, but no pub, at ground level.

That's the last application that made for this site. In 2015, it was acquired by student accommodation developer Ziggurat. At the time, the area was being enthusiastically marketed by estate agents as "Sobo" (south of the Beckett and O'Casey bridges) – a moniker which seems to have died quietly. The site has been on and off the market since, most recently last year with a guide of €5.5 million. Agents JLL said it is recently "sale agreed", subject to a grant of planning permission.

– OLIVIA KELLY

14 23-27 Thomas Street

Each year, the Guinness Storehouse attracts 1.5 million visitors to Dublin's Liberties. Those visitors who make the journey on foot from Dublin city centre will pass through row after row of vacant or derelict buildings along the way. Buildings don't come more derelict than the site at 23-27 Thomas Street, which is bordered by Arthur's pub on one side and the Digital Hub on the other.

After years of delays and false starts, it finally looks like the whole area will be redeveloped and numbers 23-27 Thomas Street along with it. The Land Development Agency (LDA), established in 2018 to develop public lands for housing, has acquired a large chunk of land from the Digital Hub Development Agency on both sides of Thomas Street including numbers 23-27.

The Pear Tree Crossing is one of the most ambitious city centre developments which the LDA is proposing to develop, with 550 homes envisaged in an area that has long been problematic. The 3.7-hectare development consists of sites on either side of Thomas Street.

Numbers 23-27 Thomas Street will be part of the Vathouse 7 development, so-called after a vathouse on the site owned by the Guinness Brewery.

The centre of this development will be the use of the existing vathouse for commercial and cultural uses with housing being built around it.

The master plan envisages the facades of numbers 23, 26 and 27 being kept and developed as office space, with a new building in the gap at number 24. In December last year the LDA submitted an enabling planning application for site clearance works and enhanced hoarding for this part of Thomas Street. Further down the street, Guinness owner Diageo has successfully applied for planning permission to redevelop 12 acres of now disused brewery land for housing.

– RONAN McGREEVY

15 1-3 Sandwith Street Upper

There can be few more rundown residential stretches in Dublin 2 than the two-storey, late-Victorian redbrick houses at numbers 1-3 Sandwith Street. However, these buildings are just the most visible facade of a block of dereliction stretching from Fenian Street to Bass Place.

The three houses on Sandwith Street have largely been in commercial use for more than 40 years, with a glass and mirror supplier and a financial adviser the most recent occupants, but these businesses left between 10 and 15 years ago. Behind the buildings, in what were once gardens, is a jumble of industrial units. Behind that again are six more derelict houses on Bass Place.

For several years, the O'Callaghan Hotel Group has been buying properties in the block and, five years ago, sought to acquire a block of 14 dilapidated senior citizens flats at the corner of Fenian Street and Sandwith Street to include in its development plan. In exchange, the council would get 28 new apartments in a separate block developed by the hotel, but councillors refused to approve the deal.

The hotel decided to press ahead without the council complex. In 2020, its development company Gold Run Properties sought to demolish five of the Bass Place houses, but this was refused due to the "loss of the original historic fabric" without any replacement homes. It then lodged a plan for a large-scale demolition and apartment development on the site and in recent months has been granted permission for 82 apartments from three to 10 storeys.

At the Sandwith Street frontage, the facades of the three houses will be retained, but an extra one to two storeys will be built on top. Separately, the council plans to demolish its own block, St Andrew's Court, and build 33 new homes.

– OLIVIA KELLY

16 47-49 Kildare Street

An unsuccessful 2019 planning application to demolish numbers 47-49 Kildare Street was described by heritage protection group An Taisce at the time as a "bad-old-days" application.

The proposed replacement of the Georgian terrace with a new office building, it said, recalled "the 1960s to '80s office boom in Dublin when large chunks of historic streetscape on Kildare Street, Nassau Street, Molesworth Street, Dawson Street and St Stephen's Green would routinely disappear" and be replaced by office developments.

The proposal for the five-storey, over-basement office building came from Ternary Ltd, a company ultimately owned by a trust associated with Co Louth businessman Larry Goodman and his family.

The family trust bought the Kildare Street buildings, which then housed the Earl of Kildare Hotel, in 2007.

In 2023, the council approved a renewed plan for an office scheme that would involve numbers 47-48 Kildare Street and 2 Nassau Street being retained, and the demolition of number 1 Nassau Street. The site remains hoarded and there is little sign of redevelopment work. A request for a statement from representatives of the Goodman family met with no response.

There had been a hotel in the Kildare Street buildings for many years, with previous incarnations known as Powers Hotel and the Kildare Street Hotel.

The Goodman trust also owns the Setanta Centre which stretches from Nassau Street South to Setanta Place and is at the rear of the buildings on Kildare Street. Most of the centre, which was built in the 1970s, has been closed for some time, with permission granted in 2018 to demolish it and replace it with an eight-storey office development.

Some demolition work has already taken place. The Kilkenny Design shop and restaurant, which is in the Setanta Centre building, remains open. An extension to the planning permission was granted by Dublin City Council in July of last year.

– COLM KEENA

17 73-74 Old Kilmainham

At one end of Brookfield Road is the most expensive and controversial construction project in the history of the State: the National Children's Hospital.

At the other end, fronting on to Old Kilmainham, is Carrigans pub. The fading sign outside indicates it has been a pub since 1837 but it has been closed for many years.

The pub and the adjacent properties, one of which used to be a chipper, are in a dilapidated state, and the roofs of all three are exposed. A fire during Covid lockdown extensively damaged the site further.

There is a long trail of planning permissions associated with the site going back to 2007 when permission was granted for the demolition of the existing buildings to be replaced by a mixed retail and residential development, but it was not acted upon.

The site was put up for sale for €2.5 million in February 2020. In February 2021, the council refused planning permission to Pertan Construction Services Ltd to build a co-living development comprising 62 units with a cinema/games room and gym. The council believed it would constitute overdevelopment of the site.

Pertan appealed the decision to An Bord Pleanála and was successful a year later. Co-living developments were banned by the government because it was feared they were becoming too prevalent, but that ban only extended to new developments and the Carrigans site retains its planning permission.

In September last year, the site was listed on the council's Derelict Site Register, but a valuation has yet to be agreed. The major shareholder is Richard Fenelon, who is based in the UK. The original sale did not go through because of a disagreement among the owners, but it is about to be relaunched on to the market with planning permission for the co-living scheme.

Agent Robert Colleran says the children's hospital should be completed by the end of the year with a staff of 2,000 on site and he is confident that the Old Kilmainham site will be attractive to developers. "You'd hope that you would have a steady rental market there," he said.

– RONAN McGREEVY

18 25 Aungier Street

Aungier Street has had a problem with derelict and vacant properties for decades. The good news is one of the largest derelict sites, 22-24 Aungier Street, is being redeveloped by the UK-based, Irish-owned Marlin Group into 20 serviced apartments and a bar and restaurant which will bring the protected three-storey structures back into use.

The bad news is 25 Aungier Street next door remains derelict. The building dates back to 1740 and is also a protected structure. In 2009, there was a bridal design shop in the building, but it is long since gone.

Number 25 Aungier Street is owned by John Winston who was recently visited by Dublin City Council's structural engineers. "I am 15 years trying to get it done. As far as I'm concerned, this should have been done 14 years ago," he said.

In 2015, he applied for emergency structural steelwork around the building to be removed so he could develop it as a retail unit on the first floor with apartments upstairs, but the application was declared invalid by the city council on the basis that the information provided was insufficient.

Number 25 was put on the Derelict Sites Register in November 2023 with a valuation of €150,000, making its owner liable for 7 per cent of the value of the site or €10,500 annually in levies for each year it remains vacant.

The city council says its conservation section is engaging with Winston about remediation works on the property, which he will have to carry out. It is also considering a compulsory purchase order for the site, but has no plans itself to bring it back into use.

– RONAN McGREEVY

19 7 Lower Leeson Street

Houricans pub at the top of Lower Leeson Street, just off St Stephen's Green, was once a favourite pub of UCD students when the university was based in Earlsfort Terrace. In latter years, it was a big attraction for after-work drinkers and revellers when Leeson Street was the epicentre of the city's nightclub scene.

At the height of the boom in 2007, owners Patrick and Mary Hourican successfully applied for planning permission to demolish the pub and a vacant building next door at number 6 to be replaced with an expanded pub and four floors of office space. Then came the economic crash and the plans went into abeyance.

Number 6 has been vacant since 1998 and was put on the Derelict Sites Register in 2019. The building's registered owner is Coindale Limited, which is based in Citywest. The company's director is listed as Peter Shubotham who works for the Stepstone Group, an asset management agency.

Houricans pub, along with number 6 and number 5, have now gone on the market at a price of €1.25 million through estate agents Lisney. An architectural plan that would turn the site into a residential development with four two-bedroom apartments and three one-bedroom apartments came to nothing when the council changed its zoning from residential to Z6, a zoning that aims to create employment and protect enterprise under the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028.

It will now be suitable for a hotel or a mixed retail/office development, according to Lisney's Shane O'Connor who is handling the sale.

– RONAN McGREEVY

20 5 Walworth Street

Number 5 Walworth Street is next door to the Irish Jewish Museum in Portobello. This street was the epicentre of a thriving Jewish community in Dublin and the museum was opened in 1985 by Irish-born Chaim Herzog, the first president of Israel. His son Isaac is the country's current president.

In 2011, the Irish Jewish Museum, which is based on the site of the old synagogue at numbers 3-4 Walworth Road, announced ambitious plans to demolish the existing two houses and three adjacent terraced houses and replace them with a two-storey museum. In 2013, An Bord Pleanála gave planning permission for the development against the objection of locals who feared it would ruin the streetscape and attract large volumes of traffic.

Despite having successfully navigated the planning process, the development ran into immediate trouble. The museum could not fund its ambitious programme, permission to use two of the houses gifted to the museum was withdrawn and the planning lapsed after five years.

Number 5 Walworth Road was placed on the council's Derelict Site register in June 2023 with a valuation of €400,000. As derelict sites go, it is not in a bad condition and the museum has painted on fake windows and doors to give the impression that it is being maintained.

The museum is showing its age. It is not big enough to house the Irish Jewish community's extensive archive and artefacts. Its trustees have not given up on plans to redevelop it and plan to unveil a smaller development than what had been proposed before incorporating three not five houses.

"The original plan is dead in the water, but it is still our full-on intention to develop the museum," said a museum spokesman. "It does not have the necessary standards that a modern museum should have. Architectural plans are in progress."

The plan will be to retain the existing facades as far as possible.

– RONAN McGREEVY

→ **Too often Dublin feels like a place designed by people who despise its inhabitants:** Hugh Linehan, Opinion, page 15