



PRESENTS

5 HERITAGE-LED VISION PROJECTS

to put Dún Laoghaire town centre
on the world cruise map

A concept document to celebrate Heritage Week 2023



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Since 2016 @Digital Dún Laoghaire has sought to encourage our town's regeneration through embracing digital. Our social enterprise manages Dún Laoghaire's significant digital footprint, work which has won a number of awards.

To date this volunteer led initiative has created materials (such as the historic walking tour and the Murals walking tour) and reports ('The Digital Transformation of Dún Laoghaire Town', 'Dún Laoghaire to be Dublin's Remote Working Capital' and Ireland's inaugural 'Digital First Communities Benchmark' of Dún Laoghaire Town) to help do our part in enabling our town to deliver on its significant potential.

This report is another step in that journey. It contains a number of ambitious, long term projects that in most cases are vacant or under-utilised sites, which could build on Dún Laoghaire's strengths to create a vibrant, sustainable locality for current and future generations of businesses and residents.

Credits - Thanks to Nada Pupovac for designing this report and to Rachel Doyle, our intern from Trinity, for her research on each proposal.

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERFORD

Introduction

Dún Laoghaire is a lively and picturesque coastal town. It has a vibrant atmosphere and breathtaking views. The town offers old and new, with its mix of Victorian architecture and modern shops, restaurants and cultural events. Dún Laoghaire also has a rich history, in particular being one of the first towns to change its name in 1922 to its original Irish one. While the harbour and the pier walk attract many thousands of people and social media posts on a daily basis, few of these visitors venture the short walk to the commercial heart of the town. Equally the 2023 summer cruise ship season has been the most successful to date for the harbour with thousands of tourists arriving and many leaving for Dublin city centre.

The goal of this report is to propose 5 projects which can help change this pattern. The projects outlined in this document represent examples of ways stakeholders in the town could work in the coming decade to achieve the goal of heritage led regeneration which would lead to many economic, social and cultural benefits for Dún Laoghaire and enable the town to deliver to its full potential.

The intention of this report is to help inspire a new vision for the future of our town by conceiving of what's possible in terms of attractions that could be world class and put our town on the road to being a destination, in and of itself, that will capture the imagination of European and American tourists.

WHY HERITAGE MATTERS

Heritage is an important part of every town for a variety of different reasons. Firstly, it is common that a town with attractions that are well connected to its heritage can be one of the main reasons that visitors are motivated to visit a town. This increase in tourism has great economic and cultural benefits for an area. Heritage also has an influence on the local population's sense of identity. It helps people to feel connected to their roots and brings a sense of community to an area. Heritage also acts as a great educational tool. It allows the community to further understand the development of a town and a deeper connection to its history. Learning about these is important for understanding traditions, building resilience and for helping the future improvement of a town.

'TOWN CENTRES FIRST' GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

The 'Town Centres First' policy, launched in 2022, is one which aims to create town centres that are attractive for people to work and live in as well as being areas that function as social and cultural hubs. This government policy puts an emphasis on heritage-led regeneration which is what the projects outlined in our document aim to achieve. The successes of this type of heritage led approach can be seen through the Heritage Council's publication 'Ballybrilliant' (which documents the heritage-led regeneration of 5 Irish towns) and in towns such as Westport and Clonakilty.

LESSONS FROM DALKEY

A town which Dún Laoghaire can take inspiration from in this 'heritage-led' journey is our neighbour Dalkey. Bord Fáilte set up the Heritage Town Programme in 1991, it is no longer in operation. The programme set out a list of what makes a heritage town. The requirements to reach heritage town status included a conservation plan for historic buildings, use of restored buildings, high quality parking, visitor centres, and a good interpretation of local history and heritage.

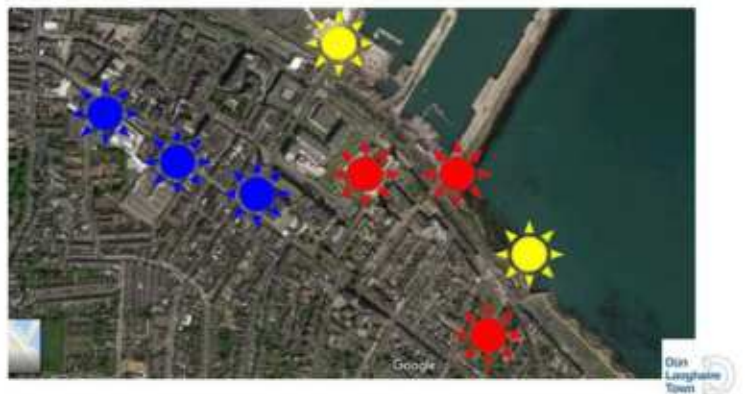
The towns selected for that programme also had a focus on a theme such as an emigration town, market town or a Georgian town. In gaining the designation Dalkey deepened its focus on its heritage-led projects. The Dalkey castle and heritage centre is one of the main attractions in Dalkey which honours its history with its heritage centre, trips to Dalkey island and guided walking tours. The town's deep connection with its history is leveraged as part of its brand and makes it extremely attractive for tourists and large events such as the Dalkey Book Festival.



A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FROM THE RECENT PAST

In 2018 the Dún Laoghaire Business Improvement District (BID) created a proposal for Council officials that highlighted that all the then current 'activity focal points' for visitors were along the sea front. The proposal identified two key initiatives (in blue below) that would draw footfall from the seafront up to the commercial centre of the town, #1 below to activate the dead area adjoining the Church as the EBS as a family themed attraction and #2 to create a public space outside Bloomfields Shopping centre.

We include this information now in this report to illustrate that the Council does listen and that, when one sees the scale of the Myrtle Square public space now nearing completion, ambitious projects can not only be imagined but implemented!



- Attract families into the town centre
- Create vitality
- Increase footfall



TO HELP ACHIEVE THE AIM OF HERITAGE-LED FOOTFALL INCREASES TO THE COMMERCIAL HEART OF OUR TOWN OUR PROPOSALS INCLUDE ONE VISION PROJECT IN EACH QUARTER

DLR County Development Plan 2022 - 2028 divides the town into quarters as follows:

- Town Centre quarter running along the central section of George's Street, the northern part of Patrick Street and the central part of Marine Road. Location of Project 2 - Discovery Centre in St Michael's Church Tower and Project 3 - People's Market and murals at Hardy's lane
- Park End Quarter - George's Street Upper, east of the Town Centre Quarter - Location of Project 4 - Victorian Heritage Garden & Maze in People's Park
- Seafront Quarter - Marine Road to Crofton Road/ Queen's Road - Location of Project 1 - Museum of Industrial Revolution at Dún Laoghaire train station
- Old Town Quarter - George's Street Lower, west of the Town Centre Quarter - Location of Project 5 - Dún Laoghaire Enterprise Campus in Kelly's Hotel & the Wash House



Project 1

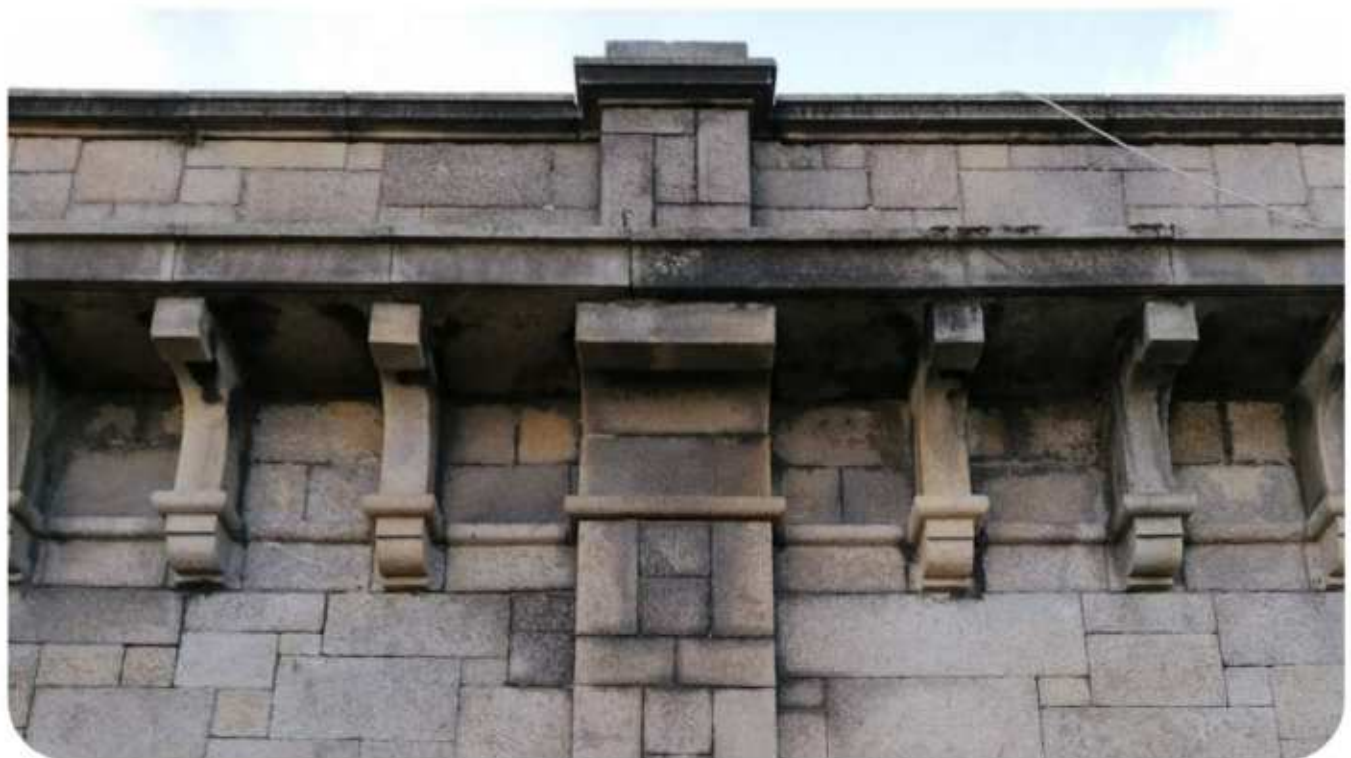
Museum of the Industrial Revolution at Dún Laoghaire train station

Location









What is proposed

We are proposing a Museum of the Industrial Revolution at the original 1840s Kingstown station and waiting room. Dún Laoghaire is an exciting town full of history, which this museum aims to highlight. In 1834, the town was the destination for the country's first railway line, making it a centre for industrial advancements in Ireland.

The museum aims to highlight the history of the town and to create a space for education.



With the location being in the original 1844 waiting room, the museum will have an authentic and immersive experience.

Conveniently situated next to public transport and the harbour, the museum will serve as a central attraction to both cruise ship passengers and visitors travelling from other parts of the country.

The museum will allow visitors to connect with and explore Dún Laoghaire's history as a focal point for some of the major achievements of the industrial revolution in the area, through displays of photographs, documents, and replicas. This project hopes to commemorate and preserve the history and many achievements of the town at this time.

In time it could become the first stop on Failte Ireland's 'Ireland's Ancient East' itinerary.

Context

Dún Laoghaire (or Kingstown as it was named then) in the 1800s was taking advantage of the new industrial age. In 1834, the first railway line in Ireland opened, and this went from Westland Row to Dún Laoghaire. The town benefitted from these advancements in technology. The railway line and the already existing harbour contributed to the economy and increased the prestige of the town. This brought royal visits and tourists to the area. The opening of this railway meant that the town was a centre for industrial advancement in the country and the proposed museum will highlight the town's national and international contributions to industry and science as it can claim a number of national and world firsts as it had –

- The largest asylum harbour in the world for 50 years, an extraordinary achievement of civil engineering.
- The first railway in Ireland and possibly the first suburban railway in the world.
- The first vacuum powered railway in the world from Kingstown to Dalkey.

While the initial location for this museum would be in the old waiting room from 1844 the bigger, more ambitious vision is that a new roof would be built over the original train station to enable the existing train siding to be home to a steam locomotive from the period. At the moment this is Platform 3 in the Dun Laoghaire station. The outer walls of the 1844 station are still there but the roof is gone.

The establishment of such a museum would serve many purposes for the town. Firstly, it would aim to attract visitors from abroad and locally, and mainly those arriving into the town via cruise ships. The museum will highlight the significance of Dún Laoghaire in industrial advancements in Ireland in the 1800s, and hopefully encourage those coming from cruise ships to further explore the town. The museum will also be an opportunity for the town to preserve its engineering history, it will be a place where documents and photographs that relate to historical engineering projects located in the town (harbour, railway, vacuum railway) from the time may be displayed. This preservation will ensure that current and future generations will have easy access to the town's engineering history and the contributions it has made.

There are numerous successful transport and industrial revolution museums throughout the country and abroad that attract visitors from all over the world. These museums display the technological advancements, societal impacts and explain the historical context of the industrial revolution and transportation. One notable example is the Titanic Museum in Belfast, this was a part of the urban waterfront regeneration project of the Titanic Quarter, which opened in 2012. This regeneration has allowed for an immersive and interactive museum about the history of the Titanic. This proposed museum could take inspiration from this and create a significant tourist attraction for our town.



The original roof of the Kingstown station can be seen on the right of this photo to the rear of the station building. Picture courtesy of National Library of Ireland

Details of the proposal

The building will have to undergo significant renovations in a number of stages in order to create the museum. The first renovation would involve restoring the 1844 waiting room. This would include steps to make this room accessible in order to hold a museum, while keeping all original elements from the 1844 waiting room. The second renovation would be the building of a roof over what was the original train platform in the 1830s. The roof could be of a relatively low cost but highly resilient simple pitched roof design using steel trusses and roofing sheets. By using the full area of the original now roofless station the museum could include a steam engine, replica buckets from the building of the harbour, replicas of the atmospheric railway equipment and the Marconi wireless equipment used at the building occupied by the Irish Design Gallery. Other links for the town with the 1850s industrial revolution are that nearby residents included Howard Grub (world leading manufacturer of lenses) and Earl of Rosse that built the Boyle telescope.

This is a very central location, just beside the DART station, bus stops and a short walk from where the cruise ships stop. The original waiting room has significant cultural value as it is a part of the original station. This will provide an authentic setting for visitors to the museum and allow for an immersive experience

The museum will exhibit the contributions that Dún Laoghaire made to technological advancements at the time of the industrial revolution. On display will be replicas of trains, and objects from the 1830s and 1840s. It will also display photographs and documents from the time to allow for a more tangible connection with the history. The information on display will have details on how Ireland's railway network expanded from Dun Laoghaire, the impact it had on the society, and highlighting individuals that made significant contributions at the time.

Project 2

Discovery Centre in St Michael's Church Tower

Location

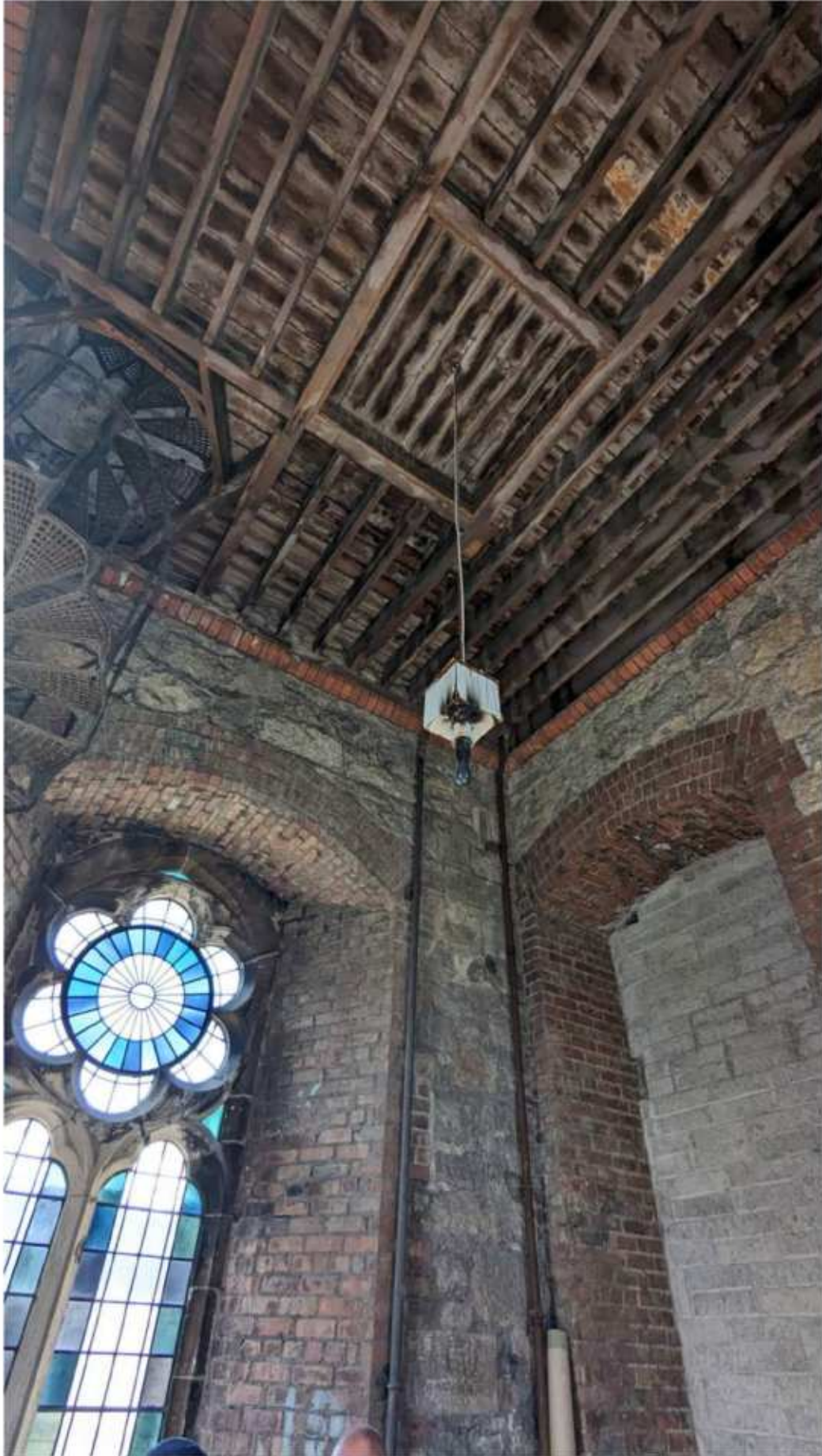


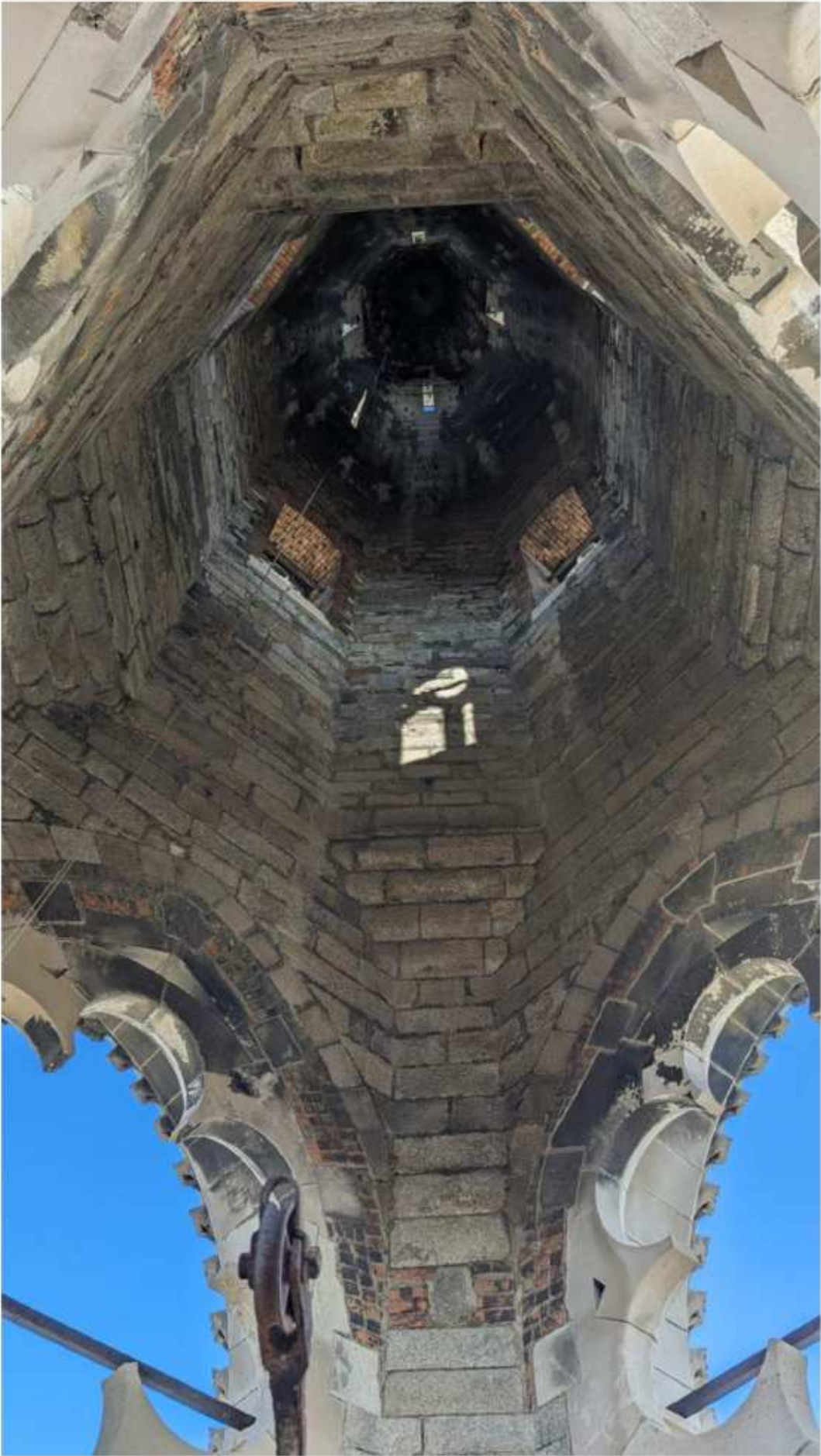














What is proposed

Dún Laoghaire is one of the most written about towns in Ireland and as such occupies a prominent place in Ireland's cultural history as a historically significant location. A Google search for the term "books about or featuring Dún Laoghaire also known as Kingstown" results in at least forty books ranging from Peter Pearson's 'Granite Coast' to mentions by James Joyce's in 'Ulysses' to Tom Conlon's 'Victorian Dún Laoghaire, a town divided'.

We propose a discovery centre on the topic of the town in St Michael's Church Tower. This centre would be based on the interesting and varied history of the area, it's origin as the fort of Laoghaire, its renaming as Kingstown and rapid transition at the formation of the Irish state from colonial outpost to beacon for all things Irish in its change to Dún Laoghaire during the formation of the Irish free state.

We are also proposing that improvement works be done to the staircase to the top of the tower to allow for tours and a viewing area for spectacular views of Dublin Bay.




Context

The suggested discovery centre would seek to offer an immersive experience for both locals and tourists. The discovery centre would highlight the varied history of Dún Laoghaire, through its transformation as a colonial to a post-colonial town. The centre would showcase significant events from the town's past through its exhibitions. Another important part of the centre would be the upgrading of the stairs up to the top of the tower. At the top visitors would have amazing panoramic views of Dublin Bay. This would also allow visitors to view all parts of the town including the seafront and the Victorian architecture.

Dún Laoghaire's history is very closely intertwined with colonialism and it is an interesting town to look at from this historical perspective. Early names for the town date back to 1686 when it was called Dún Lerroy and later in 1728 the name was spelled Dúnlarly or Dúnleary. At this time the town was a small fishing village. In the early 1800s, the harbour was proposed and commenced. In 1821, King George IV came to visit the work and the town's name was changed to Kingstown in honour of him. The town kept this name until 1920 when it returned to the Irish spelling of the name Dún Laoghaire. The name change from Kingstown to Dún Laoghaire was a decision made by the elected officials on the Council in 1920 as part of a broader effort to remove British place names and symbols from Ireland. It was a reflection of the major political and cultural changes taking place in Ireland at that time, particularly the movement towards Irish independence.

The centre would have several uses which Dún Laoghaire can benefit from. Firstly, the centre would put a focus on the town's history and allow for highlighting in a visitor friendly way the heritage of the area.



Subject to the necessary work being done the centre would bring new life to the tower, bringing in many visitors to a currently unused structure. The centre would be a location for culture and education about key points in Irish history which our town was part of, which will create great learning opportunities for local schools and tourists. The museum will also help to contribute to the local economy by creating jobs and attracting many tourists and encouraging cruise ship passengers to explore the town.

The success of attractions such as the Epic museum in the city and the Dom Tower in Utrecht give an idea of how effective and popular these historic sites can be. The Epic Museum shows the history of Irish emigration. This allows visitors to connect with their heritage and Irish history. The museum is interactive and attracts many international visitors each year. The Dom Tower is the tallest church spire in the Netherlands. It allows visitors to see panoramic views of the city by climbing 465 steps to the top. It is an iconic part of the city, with the walk up including a view of the bells and information about the history of the tower and the city.

The internal measurements of the tower are:

Ground 5 m X 6.5

First floor 5m X 5.7 m

Second floor 5m X 4.9m

Details of the proposal

The proposed centre would be put in the current St Michael's church spire. This location takes advantage of the central position of the spire but also the historical significance of the church for the town. This location would also allow for easy access for locals and tourists. Renovations done to the spire could allow for an immersive and engaging discovery centre, with displays of Dún Laoghaire's history. There could also be an addition of a staircase up to the top of the spire, to allow for a spectacular viewing platform.

The centre would showcase an exhibit on the ground floor. The exhibit would be about the history and origins of the town and would allow visitors to explore the evolution of the town. The exhibit could include a different range of displays, depending on what the space allows. This could include videos, interviews, highlighting influential people, and posters. Mainly, the centre hopes to highlight the transformation that the town has gone through from the colonial town to the post-colonial town, especially since it was one of the first towns to return to its original Irish name. The exhibition would showcase the milestones that brought Dún Laoghaire to where it is today.

Project 3

People's Market and murals at Hardy's lane

Location



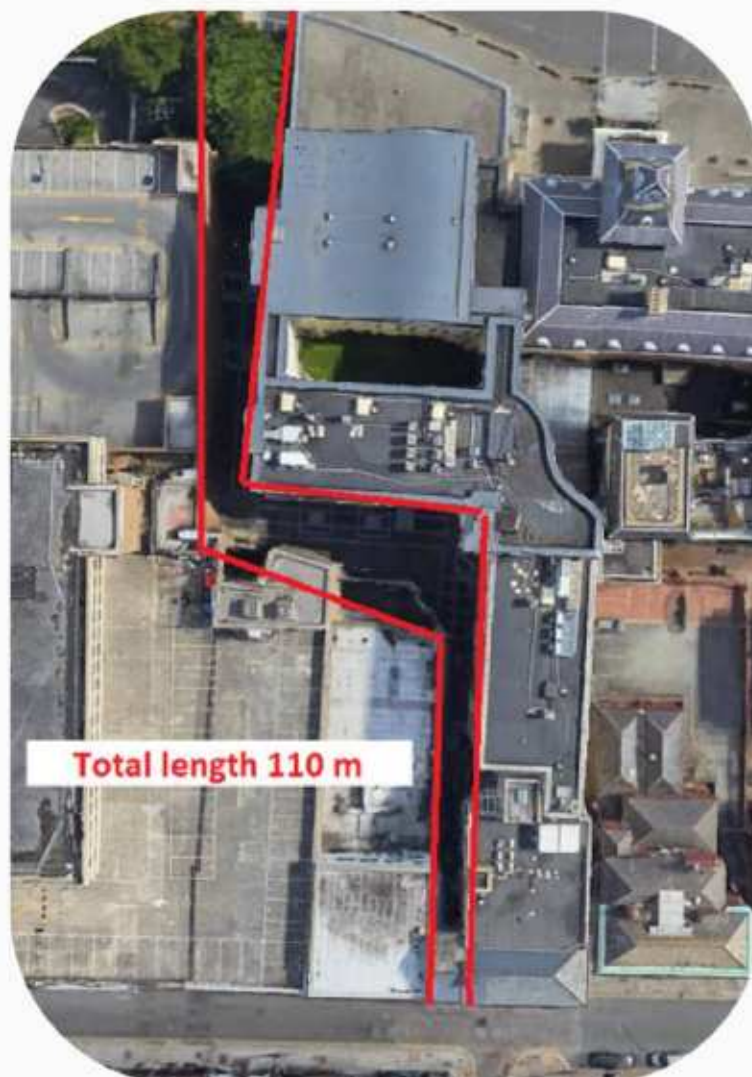


Each alcove could feature a mural of a well known person involved in the development of Dún Laoghaire



What is proposed

We are proposing the possibility of a walk through market being located on Hardy's Lane with murals being created in the alcoves along the lane. Dún Laoghaire is a vibrant and busy town, however this lane is under-utilised or not known to many who visit. We believe this would revitalise the lane and continue to contribute to the lively atmosphere of the town. We believe it would create a space where visitors can appreciate the artwork from the murals, while giving a platform to local and new businesses. This would help transform this lane to attract visitors, especially from the cruise ships, and enhance the town.



Context

The proposed project aims to use certain sections of the space in Hardy's Lane to create a walk through market and add murals to enhance the vibrancy of the lane. The market would serve as the central attraction for this project. The market would be an opportunity to promote more local businesses as well as attracting new ones to the town. There are several alcoves along the lane that could be painted with different murals. These murals will help to beautify the lane and to create a nice atmosphere. The murals could be based on a theme, such as people who have played a significant role in the development of the town. This theme will give greater historical context to those visiting the town.

A market in this area will attract a great number of visitors to this part of the town, especially as many people are unaware of this lane. The vibrant atmosphere created by the murals will allow for a nice walk down the lane, increasing numbers even on days without the market. The increase in knowledge of this lane will also allow for greater permeability in the town. It will give cruise ship passengers easier access to the main section of the town, and may encourage them to stay. As this is such a central location the increased use of this lane will help to contribute to a more lively atmosphere to the lane and the town as a whole.

There are many similar projects where this has worked in Ireland and in the UK. There are many murals already around Dún Laoghaire and projects to promote this such as Dun Laoghaire Anseo. These have allowed similar unused spaces in town to become points of interest and created a nicer ambiance to the area. There are also many popular markets down side lanes, which this project can take inspiration from. One example is the markets on the weekend in Heron Square in Richmond-upon-Thames.

This market has become a busy tourist attraction, bringing in tourists and locals. Another example is the market at Meeting House Square in Temple Bar. This is a market that is down a side street in Temple Bar and has become a great attraction for food and culture. It is also one of Dublin's oldest markets.

OUR NEIGHBOUR'S BLACKROCK MARKET FOLLOWS A SIMILAR NARROW TWISTING PATH



Details of the proposal

The proposed project would be a market set in the areas of Hardy's Lane where space permits. The stalls will be placed along the walls to allow for visitors to walk through the market. Murals would be painted in the alcoves all along the lane.

The location of the market is in a central location, allowing easy access to those staying in the Royal Marine hotel, cruise ship passengers and visitors to the town. It is also close to other parts of the town which will encourage visitors to see what else the town has to offer.

There are many people that could be included in the murals for the suggested theme of significant figures who helped with the development of the town. The people painted could be John Loftus Robinson who designed Dún Laoghaire's town hall, William Dargan who constructed the first railway in Ireland which went through Dún Laoghaire, and many more. There are also other themes that this project could use, such as one around local biodiversity. This would involve each mural depicting a different part of the local biodiversity. This could include native trees and plants to the area, or local animals such as squirrels, foxes and seals. This would act as an educational tool and increase the awareness of what plants and animals are native and living in the area

The suggested murals could be part of the Dun Laoghaire Anseo initiative which puts out a call for artists to suggest designs within the given theme. Local schools or art groups could be involved in creating designs and contributing to the project. This would give a chance to promote local talent and create a sense of community for the town.

Project 4

Victorian Heritage Gardens & Children's Maze in People's Park

What is there now

Image courtesy of Rob Cross, the area we are discussing can be seen in the top left corner of this photo





What is proposed

The DLR County Council Parks Department have done an amazing job with People's Park and it is a jewel in the crown of our town. We are proposing that to complement this great work the creation of a Victorian Heritage Garden & Children's Maze at the People Park in Dún Laoghaire would be a superb addition. This would be an amenity area of refurbished Victorian glasshouses with themed heritage planting, adjoining a box hedge children's maze that would link the heritage garden with the existing children's playground to provide one interlinked amenity for visitors and families.

Purpose of the proposed project could help to:

- Increase amenity value of the park
- Increase the space of the park to public usage by at least 5%
- Provide a training and learning environment for school children to learn about the Dublin Bay Biosphere

We are suggesting that this garden repurposes space occupied by the depot area, memorial garden and the unused Victorian glass house. Our research indicates that the glasshouse and original shed were built at the time of the opening of the park and would be repaired.



The garden could include a hedge maze, native plants and could be used as a way for school children to learn about local biodiversity.

Context

According to the history of People's Park displayed in the park 'early maps show a Gymnasium in the eastern side of the park'. This area is now the playground, council depot and access road and a largely vacant memorial area.

A Victorian heritage garden would function primarily as a functioning tourist and parent/children attraction showcasing plants and horticultural designs from that time for local schools. The garden would have plants from the Victorian times and include a Victorian pattern hedge maze, the restoration of the original 1890s glass house and flower beds to serve as an educational tool to local children.

The addition of this heritage garden would enhance the amenity of the People's Park. By adding this heritage garden, with such a strong historical significance, the park would attract more visitors. The proposal would highlight the rock outcrops in the east of the park to help serve as a reminder of its original use as a quarry.

The creation of a heritage garden and maze would expand the park's total area available as an amenity by approximately 648 square metres, an addition of approximately 5% to the usable space of this high value public amenity. The current area where the glasshouse and shed are located is open to the public however has very little footfall. This proposal would bring the park to return closer to its original size when it opened in 1890.

The restoration of the glass house and the inclusion of designated areas for planting native flora will serve as valuable educational resources. This space would enable children to learn about the local biodiversity, which would allow them to have a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the environment. The original stone shed adjoining the glasshouse would be refurbished as a space to hold workshops for school children.

There are several similar projects that have many of the mentioned features included that are popular elsewhere. One example is the Walled Garden in Sunbury-upon-Thames. This is a smaller scale garden that has used historical events to attract visitors. The gardens were visited by Queen Elizabeth II, and there is an exhibition dedicated to this. Dún Laoghaire already has a rich Victorian history and the proposed Victorian garden aligns perfectly with its history. The park itself is designed in a Victorian style. There is a Victorian garden at Kylemore Abbey in Co. Galway. This is a larger scale garden, however it shows that this type of garden is popular in Ireland. The garden at Kylemore Abbey draws in many tourists each year and emulating parts of this in the People's Park garden could help to create a similar experience in Dún Laoghaire. The hedge maze is a common feature of Victorian gardens. The Iveagh gardens in Dublin is another example of a popular garden, this has the addition of a small scale hedge maze. This is a similar type of hedge maze that could be seen in the proposed heritage garden in the People's Park.

The refurbished historical glasshouses at Malahide castle



Details of the proposal

The Victorian Heritage Garden would be designed to complement and add to the already Victorian inspired People's Park. It would use much of the under-utilised space of the eastern section of the park while incorporating parts of the memorial garden. The Victorian garden would include an expansion to the back section, where the glass house is located and to the left of the garden where the current depot is located. The hedge maze could be placed where the current Council depot and access road are located. The storage area for council equipment and materials would be moved to a new underground storage area located under the proposed maze. There would be an entrance to this maze from the Victorian garden itself, linking it to the playground area.

There would be a number of items on display in the heritage garden. There would be informational signs around the native plants explaining what each plant is. There would be more information by the glasshouse about the biodiversity of the local area. There would be Victorian-style flower beds with seasonal flowers which would allow for displays throughout the year which, like the participative component of the Dun Laoghaire Anseo mural initiative, could encourage local children to participate in planting their favourite Victorian era plants.

The area that has been chosen for this garden would use part of the pre-existing memorial garden, however it would also include an expansion into the section with the glass house and the council depot.

A curated selection of plants would be chosen for the garden. This scheme could be a diverse range of flowers and other types of plants that were popular or introduced during the Victorian era. There would be careful consideration given to incorporating native plants to promote local biodiversity and help to support the local ecosystem.

Sustainability would be a key consideration when developing the heritage garden with a view to serving as a way of informing the public how to minimise water consumption in gardening. Sustainable gardening methods would also be researched and taught to school children through the facility, such as reducing the amount of chemicals used to use compost and other natural products in the garden instead.



Project 5

Dún Laoghaire Enterprise Campus in Kelly's Hotel & the Wash House

Before and After photo

BEFORE



AFTER



What is proposed

In 2022 DigitalHQ produced a strategic report making the case for repurposing three vacant state owned buildings to become engines of economic growth. This report, entitled Dun Laoghaire to be Dublin's remote working capital, estimated that 1,000 direct jobs and 870 indirect jobs would be created in Dún Laoghaire Town if three key Council owned vacant buildings were repurposed as enterprise centres.

We believe that the income to the Council in terms of rent, rates and increased occupancy of adjoining premises would significantly outweigh the costs of refurbishment on a medium term time horizon.

Some commentators describe Dún Laoghaire Town centre as a sleeping giant, great potential but not delivering on this. Post COVID the strategic advantage lies with the suburbs and our town needs to capitalise on this. In the past some feel that the town presented officials at DLR County Council with somewhat of a conundrum, it's not been not clear what pedal to push to boost economic activity in the town centre.

We are strongly suggesting that the pedal to push now is remote work in order to capitalise on current substantial changes in work practices and set the goal of making Dún Laoghaire Dublin's Remote Working capital.

Context

Development in Dún Laoghaire in recent times has been largely focused on increasing residential capacity with a consequent decrease in the amount of small-scale commercial office floor space available for employment uses locally.

This has had a knock on effect of a reduction in both the rates base of the town and the overall number of jobs located within the town. It is important to grow the employment base in the Town in order to retain and grow the mix of uses of space that create economic vibrancy and activity.

Dún Laoghaire Town has benefitted from significant investment in the public realm, in the dlr LexIcon, and in residential development. Dún Laoghaire town and environs saw a sizeable population increase of approximately 1,900 persons in the last census – the strongest rate of growth in decades and a figure that is expected to continue to grow.

Details of the proposal

Thanks to feasibility study funding from Enterprise Ireland DigitalHQ examined the potential of two adjoining buildings in George's Place, Dún Laoghaire to be repurposed on a phased basis to serve as an Enterprise Campus for DLR County.

These buildings are located in a part of the town that has been targeted for improvement. The proposed location – Quarter: Old Town Quarter – No. 9 Georges Place and No. 3 Kellys Avenue, Dún Laoghaire (Formerly Offices and Stores for the Council Depot)

The enterprise campus proposal would focus on Building A, a former hotel (please see pictures below) located at the junction of Kelly's Avenue and Bentley Villas and Building B located on Kelly's Avenue (which is commonly known as The Wash House) with an interconnecting atrium connecting Building 1 and 2.


Location – Junction of Kelly's Avenue and Bentley Villas, Dún Laoghaire.

A – Former Kelly's 'Kingstown Royal Harbour Hotel', built in approximately 1831.

B – Former 'Kingstown Urban District Council' Wash House and Council Stores, built in 1915.

C – For information purposes – Location of the former Dún Laoghaire Enterprise Centre until 2019.

These buildings which are "Protected Structures" in the County Development Plan 2016 to 2022. These buildings are vacant since 2013.



'Dúnlaoire Enterprise Centre' opened approximately 20 years ago in the former fire station which is located beside No 9. It provided 17 individual units of office space and closed in 2019. A further loss of enterprise space in the Old Town Quarter occurred in 2020 when the Harbour Business Centre closed with the loss of 8 offices for small businesses.

In terms of the planning context for these two adjoining buildings in George's Place "the Plan supports the adaptation and reuse of the existing buildings on the site including the sensitive redevelopment of the Protected Structures." Specific Local Objectives - 31 To seek the redevelopment of the obsolete area at the Fire Station in accordance with the objectives of the Interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan and the forthcoming Dún Laoghaire and Environs Local Area Plan.

The building was built by Mr. Les Kelly in approximately 1830 as Kelly's Hotel. The first meeting of the Kingstown Town Commissioners took place there.

Thanks to funding support from Enterprise Ireland DigitalHQ have submitted a detailed proposal for how the two adjoining empty properties in George's Place could be sensitively repurposed as a vibrant enterprise campus giving new life to the listed buildings.

We believe that the proposed Enterprise Campus in George's place would replace the economic activity lost in that locality when the Dún Laoghaire Enterprise Centre closed and will act as an economic engine for the proposed Myrtle Square civic area and what the County Development plan's interim Dún Laoghaire Urban Framework Plan terms the 'Old Town Quarter'. The enterprise campus would cater for a mix of small businesses, social enterprises and digital/creatives.
