



Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: CRK-C155-DEV21-272

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Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht: Architectural Heritage

Comhairliúchán:

Draft Cork City Development Plan 2022-2028

Built Heritage at Risk

Caibidil: Volume 1 - Written Statement» 8. Heritage, Arts & Culture

Ábhair: Built Heritage

The new development plan has much to be commended with regard to the protection of the built heritage of the city and the vision for a future of a living and vibrant city which accommodates the historic buildings and sites within a busy urban environment. However, there are a number of areas which remain vulnerable despite the increase in the number of architectural conservation areas and the strong policies for the protection of the historic built environment.

Firstly, the architectural conservation areas are located primarily around the periphery of the city centre. While some important streets such as Patrick's Hill and the Main Street are included as ACAs, much of the city centre, where large amounts of important historic building stock survives, is not covered by protection afforded by an ACA designation. Such streets include most of Patrick Street, the Grand Parade, South Mall, Oliver Plunkett St and Morrison's Island which form the commercial core of the later 18th and 19th century city. While the recognition of a Protected Structure or the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage recorded buildings in the plan affords special consideration towards some of the buildings on these streets, many structures in these areas are not included on either the RPS or the NIAH, and when also not included in an ACA are vulnerable to inappropriate development.

The lack of ACAs in the city centre also puts at risk the special character of these streets and neighbourhoods which includes their streetscape value as much as their individual architectural character. These streets do have individual architectural styles - for example the formal Georgian facades of the South Mall (with a number retaining first floor level entry) in comparison to the more provincial and simple buildings on Oliver Plunkett St. Inappropriate fenestration and shopfront interventions continue to erode the character of these streets and given their central location I would like to see stronger policies for the built heritage of the city centre. It is hard to see how the built heritage as described in 8.18 - Written Objectives can be protected in the city centre in the absence of specific designations for these central locations.

Section 8.38 discusses Historic Street Character Areas but states that these are residential areas outside of the city centre. It would be positive to see recognition of some central areas of the city also included in this category and to apply objective 8.26 to central areas of the city also. I was unable to find information on where these Historic Street Character Areas are located (this section states that 'these are identified in the Appendices of this Plan' but I was unable to locate any information in the Mapped Objectives section).

Another very important element of the built environment in the city is the non-structural elements as identified in 8.40, which as stated 'form an integral part of the historic landscape'. As only a small portion of these are identified on the RPS, it would be a positive objective to make a comprehensive list of such elements including street paving, railings, boot scrapers, gateways, stone steps, historic quay walls, steps and railings etc. to be cross referenced with objective 8.28 (Note: this objective is very vague and general, but I think applies to the elements noted in section 8.40 (page 265)).

Finally, while the increase in the number of ACAs will afford some protection to important built heritage, inclusion in an ACA does not provide the same level of protection to significant historic buildings as inclusion on the RPS. There are many very significant historic buildings, including 18th century buildings, which are still not included on the RPS, even in the city centre. It is an objective of the Development Plan (Objective 8.17) to 'ensure the conservation of Cork City's built heritage' and in order to fulfill this comprehensively it is important to continue to identify structures for inclusion on the RPS. I would like to see a commitment to a continuous review of the RPS in the relevant objective (Objective 8.19) rather than the current wording which is simply 'to maintain' an RPS.

Main opinion:

While the proposed Development Plan includes strong and positive written statements regarding the conservation and enhancement of the built heritage in the city, the mechanisms to fulfill these statements and objectives do not appear to be available in many cases, particularly with regard to the city centre. Here large areas of the historic core are not included in ACAs and many significant historic structures are not included on the RPS. The identification of significant historic buildings and streetscapes must include the city centre which is currently very vulnerable due to lack of inclusion of the historic structures either on the RPS or as part of an ACA.

Main requests:

Consider more Architectural Conservation Areas for the city centre.

Consider Historic Street Character Areas in the city centre.

Commit to a continuous review of the RPS with focus on the addition of 18th century buildings/significant city centre buildings to the RPS.

Record non structural elements of the city centre to help with the objective to protect the historic landscape of the city.

Main reasons:

To protect both the most significant buildings and the historic streetscape and character of the city centre.

Documents Attached: Níl