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11 January 2017

Dear Members of the Moore Street Consultative Group:

By now you've heard from many relatives of the men and women whose heroism during Easter Week 1916, and especially in the desperate evacuation of the Dublin GPO, gave birth to the Republic of Ireland. I am one such relative. I grew up hearing about Gearóid O'Sullivan from my grandfather, Patrick, who was a member of the O'Sullivan clan of West Cork. He didn't get to fight that week; Gearóid was his hero.

I could tell you why I believe the Moore Street Battlefield is sacred ground, and why I believe it desecrates the memory of those who sacrificed the promise of youth for their country to even consider the establishment of a shopping centre along the lines of the Jervis Shopping Centre on this site. And I could also tell you at great length why I believe it should be preserved as Dublin's principal Cultural and Historical Quarter. But I know others have said this before, and better, than I could

But I will tell you about my experience visiting another battlefield where great pains have been taken to preserve and protect the sacred memory of those who suffered and died there. Two years ago I visited Gettysburg National Military Park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., which sits on the border of Pennsylvania and Maryland. The park encompasses the Civil War battlefield (occupying an area of 3.33 by 5.33 miles, or 5.4 km × 8.6 km).

In the course of three days in the summer of 1863 (July 1-3), soldiers from armies of the north and the south fought bitterly in this area. When it was over, 8,900 men lie dead in the fields, to be buried where they fell, and the 22,000 wounded (many who would lose limbs to amputation) awaited medical relief. That November, President Abraham Lincoln delivered his seminal Gettysburg Address at the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery, located within the park.

What strikes you when you first see Gettysburg is its enormity—miles and miles of grassy fields and paved roads, and approximately 1,328 monuments. Gettysburg's caretakers have been removing trees that have since grown on site and rebuilding the farm fences that would have been there, so that it reflects conditions as they existed in 1863.

One must travel by vehicle to view the entire park, but the monuments and gardens encourage you to pause, to park your vehicle and stop and reflect. Visitors, even the smallest of children, are instinctively

quiet. It's a place that demands reverence and reflection and contemplation. A look at the guestbook in the Gettysburg Visitor's Centre indicates also that guests from all over the world have visited here. It is a "tourist" destination. But I suspect it is much more than that.

Moore Street has the same potent force as Gettysburg. And unlike Gettysburg, in terms of scale, it is a battlefield of quite compact—and manageable—proportions.

It has been suggested that Moore Street can be preserved and redeveloped using an "historic infill" building technique to rectify whatever damage was done in previous (recent) decades. You could have a tasteful historic quarter with a modest degree of commercial and recreational use. You would honour the patriots of 1916 and you would create a cultural and historic mecca in the heart of a pulsing city.

There is something in the human spirit that yearns to go back in time. I know, and am sensitive to the disregard of the careless tourists who return to Ireland "looking for their Irish roots." It is certainly tiring, I can imagine. But why cater to those baser instincts? Why not, instead of a Temple Bar or another crass, commercial shopping centre when there is a glut already, provide instead a place of reverence, and of culture, and of historical relevance? A place that forces one to be quiet and to contemplate what went before? What possible reason is there for rejecting that?

The reason cannot be based on economics. Consider these few examples. The U.S. state of Florida studied the economic impact of historic preservation in relation to tourism.ⁱ How much is it worth to Florida to embrace a policy of historic preservation economically in terms of heritage tourism? \$4.2 billion annually! Now, here's a relevant quote from one of the research directors: 'Heritage tourism wouldn't be such a big component if the historic homes and districts didn't exist in the first place. There would be nothing for heritage tourists to see.' Yes, well now that does make sense, doesn't it?

It's not only the United States where you see progressive action to preserve historic and culturally relevant properties. We see similar efforts in Australia (and many other places as well). For example, a study commissioned by the Heritage Council of Western Australia, Heritage Perth, and the City of Perth, in conjunction with Curtin University's Sustainable Tourism Centre, was able to demonstrate that approximately 37% of total visitor spend in Perth is attributable to heritage tourism. When they put that in financial terms, it equated to a \$350 million spent annually—in just that one city!ⁱⁱ

Finally, my comment in regard to razing Moore Street for use as a shopping centre is simply: Really? You need another large shopping centre? Consider this. The last time I visited Dublin (a few months ago), upon booking a hotel through a travel site, I received a tour booklet. It had little tips for tourists, and one of them included this teaser: 'You can **literally shop 'til you drop** in Dublin!' Gee! Do you think perhaps you may have a glut of shopping in Dublin?

I did a very quick inventory tonight focusing only on larger venues, and this is by no means exhaustive, but here's what I came up with in terms of available shopping:

In Dublin (not including specialty shops/weekend markets, etc.):

- Jervis Shopping Centre
- Henry Street/O'Connell Street stores
- Grafton Street
- The Powerscourt Shopping Centre

- Stephen's Green Shopping Centre
- Georges Street Arcade
- Temple Bar tourist shops

Dublin outskirts – approximately 10 km from city centre:

- Frascati Shopping Centre – Blackrock – 7.3 km - shopping (and a trip to sea) – DART line too
- The Square in Tallacht – 160 shops – Luas line 10.1 km
- Kildare Village – over 90 shops – outlet shopping – hour's drive from Dublin city centre
- Stillorgan Village Centre (shopping centres and department stores) – 7.5 km from O'Connell Bridge
- Dun Laoghaire Shopping Centre 10.3 km
- Bloomfields Shopping Centre – 10.1 km - Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin
- Liffey Valley (75 retailers) 8.9 km of O'Connell Bridge
- Blanchardstown Shopping Centre (180 stores) – 10.1 km

If you must have shopping at Moore Street, for goodness sakes, why not make it interesting? Why not have something that stands out as unique—such as tasteful little shops and boutiques scattered in the vicinity of the Moore Street historic preservation district? Those are my thoughts.

Moore Street presents a one-time—and only one-time—opportunity to honour the courageous men and women who sacrificed everything, including their very lives, at a time when it was not popular in the mainstream sense to do so, in order to realise their vision for a free Irish Republic.

Whether for the sake of honour, or for the sake of economics, I do hope you will do what's right. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Joni Scanlon

Cousin to Gearoid O'Sullivan,
(who fought in the GPO and was Aide-de-Camp to Seán Mac Diarmada,
and Adjutant-General, Irish Volunteers, during the War of Independence)

ⁱ <http://www.research.ufl.edu/publications/explore/v08n1/historic.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.perth.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Heritage-Economic-Value.pdf.pdf>