



## TENTATIVE LIST SUBMISSION FORMAT



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**STATE PARTY: Ireland**

**Submission prepared by:**

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**NAME OF PROPERTY:** The Historic City of Dublin

**State, Province or Region:** County Dublin

Latitude and Longitude:

53° 20' 38.7594" North; 6° 16' 3" West (Henrietta Street)

**DESCRIPTION:**

Following the Restoration (1660) Dublin became the second city, after London, of the British Empire, with major development and expansion in the Georgian period (1714-1830) - providing the institutional buildings and infrastructure, and setting out the city plan substantially as it survives today. Reflecting the political and social ambitions of their patrons, the institutions built are of high architectural quality. Critical to this was the city's importance as the location of Parliament which attracted wealthy aristocratic patrons, and in turn architects and craftsmen. Although most of the peers were content to buy ready built townhouses which they fitted to their taste, a number of important ducal, Palladian or Neoclassical style, town houses were also built.

Much of the Georgian fabric was the result of an explosion of speculative development by the aristocratic great estates. Master plans were prepared and plots leased to artisan builders / developers for usually two to four houses. The leases specified the parapet height and materials to be used which, when constructed, created the effect of a uniform terrace. Externally each house is quite simple; three or four storeys over basement, with three, four or five bay brick fronts, with the doorcase and its fanlight, of varying designs, being the most decorative feature. The surprise is in the interiors which often have stuccowork of particularly high quality, executed by both foreign and Irish craftsmen.

The Wide Streets Commissioners, Europe's first official town planning authority established in 1757, made the necessary urban interventions and improvements that linked the medieval core and the new Georgian developments on the north and south of the river Liffey which bisects the city. The architectural language developed in the Georgian period continued, on a diminished scale, to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century - from four storeys over basement townhouse to single storey cottage.

Following the Act of Union in 1800 much of the city was abandoned by its original aristocratic patrons. Although development continued to the 1830s, significant areas, particularly to the north of the Liffey, went into decline with some of it becoming, by the end of the century, the tenement slums which provided the inspiration and setting for the plays by the writer Sean O'Casey. The contested political atmosphere of the city, from aristocratic capital to the first city of the post-colonial world, was both a direct and indirect influence on a vibrant literary culture, producing works of international significance. The city has provided both a setting and an inspiration to writers, in expressing the moral and cultural challenges of their age.

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### **Justification of Outstanding Universal Value:**

(Preliminary identification of the values of the property which merit inscription on the World Heritage List)

The development of Georgian Dublin was a significant moment in the history of the Age of Enlightenment with the establishment of the Wide Streets Commissioners and the founding of many charitable and public institutions, in buildings of high architectural quality. The Wide Street Commissioners, Europe's first official town planning authority, was established to make 'wide and convenient streets' through the congested quarters of the city. Their remit, vision and interventions to improve the city, in a world where such functions were usually the preserve of royalty, by the rational application of scientific and aesthetic principles were exceptional - and were later copied in other cities. A building typology was developed of terraced, unadorned brick facades but often with high quality interiors.

The city has made an extraordinary contribution to world literature. Including Swift, Sheridan, Goldsmith, Burke and Moore in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries; Wilde, Stoker in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century; the Irish Literary Revival of the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with Yeats, Gregory and the Abbey Theatre, Synge, O'Casey and Joyce; continuing with Shaw, Beckett and Flann O'Brien to the present.

Three of the four Irish Nobel laureates for Literature - Yeats (1923), Shaw (1925) and Beckett (1969), were from Dublin.

**Criteria met** [see Paragraph 77 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

**Criterion (ii):** *The Site should exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*

### **A model of Georgian city development**

The long eighteenth century (1700-1830) saw the development of a system of patronage, a pattern of building and an architectural language specific to Irish historical circumstances, which is at its most developed in Dublin city. The interiors include stuccowork of international quality by both foreign and native craftsmen. As part of the development of the city, an important collection of Classical and Neo-classical civic buildings of high quality was commissioned and built by noted architects including Sir Edward Lovett Pearce, Sir William Chambers, James Gandon and Francis Johnston.

**Criterion (iv):** *The Site should be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*

### **The Georgian period / Age of Enlightenment**

Georgian Dublin represents a significant moment in the history of the Age of Enlightenment. The establishment of the Wide Streets Commissioners and the founding of many charitable and public

institutions, in buildings of high architectural quality, were high points of that period in Europe. The Wide Street Commissioners, Europe's first official town planning authority, was established to make 'wide and convenient streets' through the congested quarters of the city. Their interventions moulded the city as it stands today.

Public and charitable institutions were founded and built by both public authorities and private patrons – including the Royal Hospital, Marsh's Library, Dr. Steevens's, Mosse's and St Patrick's Hospitals, and Kilmainham Gaol – some of which still continue in their original use. Trinity College, founded in 1592, also undertook a major building programme, making it the largest group of monumental 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings in the city. The Phoenix Park, one of the largest enclosed city parks in Europe, was opened to the public in 1747, a further example of the strength of Enlightenment ideas in the city.

**Criterion (vi):** *The Site should be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance;* (The committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

### **Literary Dublin**

Walking around Dublin's historic core it is still possible to follow in the footsteps of the writers that were both inspired and repelled by it. No part of the city is untouched by the ghost of some writer. The city was important both as formative influence and as a setting. The city plan and much of the fabric which provides the setting for texts of international significance, such as O'Casey's dramatic trilogy and Joyce's *Ulysses*, survive. It could be argued that in *Ulysses*, a high point of modernist literature, Dublin is in fact a participant, rather than just a setting.

**Statements of authenticity and/or integrity** [see Paragraphs 78-95 of the *Operational Guidelines*]:

#### Authenticity:

The Georgian city plan within the area bounded to the north and south by the canals, to the west by the Phoenix Park and the east by the sea still survives largely intact. Also surviving, many still in original use, are most of the significant public buildings and institutions built in the period. A number, damaged during the Revolutionary period and Civil War, 1916-23 (Custom House, Four Courts and General Post Office), were restored after Independence.

Over the last twenty years, major conservation projects have been undertaken, by both the state and city authorities on important public buildings including the Royal Hospital (1684), Dublin Castle, Collins (Royal) Barracks (1709), Dr Steevens's Hospital (1719), Custom House (1791), Kilmainham Gaol (1792) and City Hall (Royal Exchange) (1769). An ongoing programme of works has been undertaken in the Phoenix Park including the reinstatement of the main entrance gates and the return of the Phoenix Monument (1747) to its original position on the main axis of the park. Works have also been undertaken and new uses found for the former Bluecoat School (1773) and the churches of St George (1802) and St Catherine (1760).

The level of survival and conservation of the Georgian domestic building fabric is more mixed, directly reflecting the changing social dynamics of the city, the conflicts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and modern redevelopment. Some surviving properties, particularly on the north side of the city, lost original fabric and detail when they were converted to tenement occupation. But, at this remove, this now is an important part of their history. However significant conservation works have been undertaken by private individuals and bodies, particularly in the north city; North Great George's

Street being an important example, of conservation works and new interventions to replace missing historical fabric, which have revitalised and re-established the integrity of the street. Dublin City Council has published a conservation plan for Henrietta Street and recently started a programme of urgent conservation works on a number of properties in the street.

### Integrity:

The architectural integrity of Mountjoy Square is intact but with about twenty-five per cent of the fabric new-build reproduction. The south side of the city, centred on the two squares, Merrion and Fitzwilliam, survives the most intact and in a good repair, although with the 1960s ESB offices on Fitzwilliam Street. Dublin City Council has been preparing a plan of works to re-establish the integrity of Parnell (former Rutland) Square. The first phase, opening the Garden of Remembrance to Charlemont House, has been completed.

### **Comparison with other similar properties:**

(The comparison should outline similarities with other properties on the World Heritage List or not, and the reasons that make the property stand out)

The eighteenth century is a period of significant city building in Europe. World Heritage cities with which Dublin might be compared, include:- *Edinburgh and St Petersburg, and on a smaller scale, Bath, Liverpool, Bordeaux and Nancy.*

### ***The principal differences with Dublin:***

Dublin is unique in that its status dramatically changes from its importance as a secondary imperial capital to its 19<sup>th</sup> century decline, directly reflecting its colonial relationship with London. The cities listed as comparisons all retain their original status; Edinburgh and St Petersburg as capitals, Liverpool and Bordeaux as mercantile cities and Bath as a spa town. Nancy is perhaps the exception, but it still retains its significance as a regional capital.

The patronage of the building works is significantly different - Dublin being built as a city of the Aristocracy / Ascendancy with each estate the work of competing aristocratic landowners, but with coordination and urban interventions by the Wide Streets Commissioners. St Petersburg and Nancy were the result of a single royal patron and Edinburgh, Liverpool and Bordeaux the work of a new emerging merchant or professional middle class – a class for whom Bath was a fashionable spa.

Dublin is a city of grand civic buildings and public spaces; and residences with plain brick exteriors and private, almost secret, interiors of high quality, perhaps a reflection of the social tensions of the city. Much of the Dublin fabric, although laid out to a master pattern was the incremental work of artisan builders / developers. Edinburgh in contrast was architect planned and designed, with unified classical facades over entire terraces but generally with relatively plain interiors.

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The Tentative List submission format is available from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>

- Further guidance on the preparation of Tentative Lists can be found in Paragraphs 62-67 of the *Operational Guidelines*.
- An example of a completed Tentative List submission format can be found at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>
- All Tentative Lists submitted by States Parties are available at the following Web address: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists>

- The original signed version of the completed Tentative List submission format should be sent in English or French to: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France
- States Parties are encouraged to also submit this information in electronic format (diskette or CD-Rom) or by e-mail to [wh-tentativelists@unesco.org](mailto:wh-tentativelists@unesco.org)