

Crumbling Georgian guesthouse steeped in Dublin history

Work under way to stabilise building once visited by James Joyce and Michael Collins



The rear of 30 North Great Frederick Street which is in danger of falling down. Photograph: Cyril Byrne/The Irish Times

[Olivia Kelly Sat, Apr 4, 2015, 01:00](#)

A historic Georgian guesthouse and social club in Dublin city centre, frequented by Michael Collins, James Joyce and other political and cultural figures of the early 20th century, has begun to collapse following decades of dereliction.

[Dublin City Council](#) is undertaking work to attempt to stabilise the four-storey late 18th century house at 30 North Frederick Street after large sections of its back wall fell away in recent days. Gardaí on Friday closed the northbound side of the street from its junction with Parnell Square North to facilitate the emergency works.

The house is a protected structure and is one of just 43 buildings in the city on the council's derelict sites register, which empowers the council to fine owners who allow their building to fall into a dangerous or dilapidated state.

Dereliction

The building was placed on the register in 2011, but has been sliding into dereliction since the late 20th century. _

All the windows in the house are broken, the front door had been sealed with a metal panel, but this has been removed by the council to gain access. The roof is no longer water-tight, and it is believed that water damage has caused the partial collapse of the curved rear of the house.

The house was bought in the late 19th century by Cathal McGarvey, who wrote the ballad *Star of*

the County Down. He ran the building as a guesthouse and social club, An Stad, and it was a popular meeting place for the Irish nationalist and cultural movements, with James Joyce, Major John MacBride, Oliver St John Gogarty, GAA founder Michael Cusack and Michael Collins recorded among its visitors. The An Stad sign was later moved to another building.

Action

Local business and cultural organisation DubhLinn said it had been seeking action from the council in relation to the building for several years. “We have warned the city council about the lack of investment in this historical part of Dublin, in particular about abandoned buildings,” said DubhLinn director Jonathan MacCumhaill.

[Dublin Civic Trust](#) said the council had powers under the planning acts to repair the building and recoup their losses through compulsory acquisition and sale of the house.

“The owner has obligations to keep the protected structure safe, but clearly this was a case where the planning authority should have intervened much earlier given its high profile status,” said trust spokesman [Graham Hickey](#).

A spokesman for the council said a building inspector would be compiling a report on the condition of the house in the coming days.