

In Focus: The Campshires

The Campshire project is the most significant public realm development in Dublin for many years and will eventually provide over 2 miles of riverside park for the citizens of Dublin. Campshires are the areas of land between the quay walls and the roads, traditionally where cranes travelled up and down the quays to load and discharge vessels moored alongside. With the switch to containerisation over the last twenty years, bulk loads have become less and less frequent on the River Liffey, to a stage where now no dedicated riverside cranes operate. The decline in the use of the Campshires gave the DDDA an opportunity to develop the sites as public amenities.

The Authority purchased the Campshires on both the North and South Quays from the Dublin Port Company and set about refurbishing the area from Matt Talbot Bridge to the Authority's headquarters on Custom House Quay in 1997. This site features the striking "Famine" sculptures by Rowan Gillespie which were presented to the Irish people by Norma Smurfit as a memorial to the hundreds of thousands of Irish emigrants who fled the country during the Great Famine.

The Authority went on to complete the Campshires on the south side of the river from the Matt Talbot Bridge to the BJ Marine sheds in April 1999. The Authority also completed the North Wall campshires from the Authority's offices to Scotch Berth.

A popular feature of all these Campshires is the provision of cycle paths that will run the full length of the quays when the Campshires are fully complete as well the attractive benches, paving and street lighting complimenting the views of the river. The cycle paths will link up with the paths from Clontarf and Sandymount providing dedicated and safer routes for bicycle users to north and south city. The Campshires from Scotch Berth to Point Depot is now underway and will be complete in July 2002.

Sometimes it isn't easy to find the right balance between commercial and public interests, but the Dublin Docklands Development Authority has achieved this with impressive results along the quayside of the Liffey. The campshires arguably encapsulate what the DDDA is trying to achieve in creating a business and a community-based environment that appeals and includes everyone. The DDDA is extremely conscious about developing a world-class living quarter.

One of the most successful initiatives recently was the opening of new riverside cafes in Dublin Docklands, known as The Campshire Cafes. Located at the edge of the River Liffey and in the foreground of the IFSC extension, "D.One" and "Gloria Jean's Coffee Shop" have a glazed curtain wall offering panoramic views of the river and city surrounds, taking full advantage of their location. They were designed in-house by the DDDA's Director of Planning, Terry Durney