

COUNTY BOROUGH OF DUBLIN AND NEIGHBOURHOOD TOWN PLANNING REPORT SKETCH DEVELOPMENT PLAN

By

PROFESSOR PATRICK ABERCROMBIE, M.A., P.P.T.P.I., FRIBA.
SYDNEY A. KELLY, M.T.P.L., F.S.I., F.L.A.S.
MANNING ROBERTSON, M.T.P.I., F.R.I.B.A., M.R.I.A.I

Also Report, Comments and Amendments by the Town and Regional Planning Committee and Order of the General Purposes Committee of the Dublin Corporation, together with Preface by the City Manager and Town Clerk

Published by the Corporation of Dublin.
Printed by Hely's Limited, East Wall, Dublin

Price Two Shillings.

CORPORATION OF DUBLIN

TOWN AND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Right Honourable P. S. Doyle, T.D., Lord Mayor, ex officio.
Alderman Ernest E. Benson, B.A., T.D., Chairman.
Councillor Senator Denis D. Healy, P.C., Vice-Chairman.
Alderman Cormac Breathnach, T.D., LL.D.

Councillor John Cahill, P.C.
Councillor Mrs. Mary Cosgrave
Councillor John Coghlan
Councillor Mrs. O'Shea-Leamy, P.C.
Councillor Sean Milroy
Councillor Martin O'Sullivan, P.C.

P. J. Hernon, City Manager and Town Clerk.
Sean Mac Giobfúin, Secretary, Town Planning Committee.
Michael O'Brien, B.E., A.M.T.P.I., Acting Planning Officer.

1941.

CONTENTS

Preface by City Manager

Report of Town Planning Committee

Covering Letter and Introduction by Consultants

LIST OF MAPS

1. Regional diagram of Principal Zones to one inch scale
2. Regional Plan of Principal Zones to three inch scale, Green Belt to Central Area showing Fringe Development (Free Entry) Land, Convertible (Deferred Development) Land, Park System, and Neighbourhood Centres
3. Central Playground System to six inch scale
4. Roads, Central Area, to 12 inch scale
5. Diagram of Principal Roads to three inch scale
6. Zoning, Central, to six inch scale
7. Central Development Plan to 1/2500 scale
8. Axonometric View of Central Area

All references in this Report are to the above-mentioned maps, which are deposited in the Town Planning Department, Dublin Corporation.
A key map illustrating the Report and distinct from the above maps will be published on the termination of the war emergency period.

SKETCH MAPS

The following sketch maps, incorporated in this volume, are distinct from the list of maps on this page, and are inserted for purposes of general illustration only.

Map A: Axonometric View of Central City showing future development.

Map B: Central City Roads Diagram.

Map C: Diagram showing Principal Roads.

Map D: Diagram showing Agricultural Reservation and Urban Areas.

The above sketch maps and the maps deposited in the Town Planning Department are based on the Ordnance Survey by permission of the Minister for Finance of Ireland.

PREFACE

The framework of modern Dublin, within the ambit of the North and South Circular Roads is, in the main, the work of the Wide Streets Commissioners of the 18th century. They were originally appointed under an Act of the old Irish Parliament in 1757 for the making of "a wide and convenient street from Essex Bridge to the Castle of Dublin." This new street is the Parliament Street of our day. Many other streets were subsequently laid out or enlarged and so we have the spacious thoroughfares of Dame Street, Lower Abbey Street, Beresford Place, Lower Sackville (now O'Connell) Street, Westmoreland Street, D'Olier Street, Burgh Quay, Hawkins Street, etc.

Earlier in the century the River Liffey was enclosed with walls, and towards the end of the century the two canals, embracing Dublin on the North and South sides, were constructed. The river was spanned by new bridges, and the construction of the North and South Circular Roads completed the framework of the modern city, giving us, in the words of Professor Abercrombie, "the bones of a fine plan, symmetrical but not mechanical." ("Dublin of the Future," Volume One of the Publications of the Civic Institute of Ireland, 1922.)

The efforts of the legislature were ably seconded by private enterprise. The nobility, the professional, manufacturing and mercantile classes vied with one another to make their city worthy of its place as the country's capital, and stately mansions sprang up along the many wide thoroughfares that were laid down in emulation of the work of the public authority.

This first phase of civic development came to a close after the union of the Parliament with that of Great Britain. The reformed Corporation, which took in hand the control of the City's affairs as the result of the Municipal Corporations (Ireland) Act, 1840, were faced with new problems arising out of the spread of higher standards of public health.

Public funds, now wholly provided by the Municipality had, therefore, to be diverted from the re-planning of the city streets, to the provision of a system of sanitation and other services to take the place of the primitive conditions that existed hitherto. Street and domestic cleansing services had to be organised. An extensive programme of street paving, keeping abreast of the latest developments in street surfacing, was initiated. Public lighting, first by gas, and afterwards by electricity, was installed. The provision of an adequate water supply was the most important of these early projects to be undertaken. The success of the Vartry Waterworks scheme enabled a system of sewage disposal by water carriage to be provided for the whole city. A new Main Drainage Scheme was opened in 1906 and, with the rapid spread of the city outwards, new areas including, by agreement with the local authorities, districts outside the Municipal boundary, were from time to time connected with the main drainage system. Food and cattle markets and a public abattoir were established and an efficient fire-fighting system organised.

Notwithstanding the heavy expenditure incurred on this second phase of civic development, the Corporation, from 1878 to the present time, raised over £10,000,000 on loan to provide dwellings for the working classes. Costly schemes of replanning on the lines of the work of the Wide Streets Commissioners necessarily had to yield place to the more urgent needs of modern sanitation and housing. Nevertheless, the extensive modern municipal housing schemes, undertaken since an Irish Government was once again established in Dublin, have been laid out with due regard to town planning requirements. Simultaneously, as opportunity offered and finances permitted, street improvement schemes in accordance with a broad outline of future developments were carried out from time to time. Legislation providing for the drawing up and enforcing of a planning scheme for the whole area was not passed until 1934. It would be preferable, of course, if the planning scheme had preceded construction. The completion of the first stage of the Town Planning Consultants' work as set out in this volume, puts matters now in the proper order.

As stated in the covering report of the Town Planning Committee, not all the proposals put forward by the Consultants will be included in the Statutory Planning Scheme. Some will have to be omitted on the score of expense, but can, from time to time, as circumstances warrant, be included as

amendments to the scheme, or can be carried out under the powers conferred by other Statutes.

The extent to which the existing city will be re-modelled, under the planning scheme, must needs be moderate. This restriction in scope, however, is not due to lack of vision but to the necessity of avoiding financial commitments which the Municipality, in view of the many other pressing claims on its resources, cannot undertake for some time to come. This applies to the number of the proposals included in the planning scheme rather than to the details of individual proposals. It is deemed preferable to have a limited number of comprehensive proposals rather than partial development over a more extensive area.

The Corporation in selecting Consultants for the planning scheme, were fortunate in being able to secure the services of Professor Patrick Abercrombie, FRIBA, and Mr. Sydney A. Kelly, FSI, who had already made a careful study of the Dublin planning problem and whose plan of "Dublin of the Future" won the prize of £500 offered in connection with the Civics Exhibition of 1913. The present proposals are the joint work of these gentlemen and of Mr. Manning Robertson, MTPI, MRIAI, a well-known Dublin architect and town planner, assisted by the Technical Staff of the Corporation. The proposals with some amendments have been adopted in principle by the Town and Regional Planning Committee and the General Purposes Committee, and the findings of these Committees are embodied in the Report.

REPORT OF THE TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE.

To the Chairman and Members, General Purposes Committee.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The City Council at its meeting on the 6th January, 1936, adopted a resolution to prepare a planning scheme for the whole municipal area. Section 29 of the Town and Regional Planning Act, 1934, prescribes that where a planning authority has decided under this Act to make a planning scheme, such authority shall, "with all convenient speed," give effect to such decision and make a planning scheme in accordance therewith and shall submit such scheme to the Minister for his approval. The making and submission of a planning scheme under this Section of the Act is a reserved

function of the City Council. The services of three Consultants, Professor Abererombie, F.R.I.B.A., Messrs. S. A. Kelly, F.S.I., and Manning Robertson, M.R.I.A.I., were engaged to prepare the plan. These experts, with the co-operation of the appropriate Corporation officials and after various conferences with the Town Planning Committee, have now completed the first stage of their labours and their sketch development plan together with a copy of their report explaining their proposals is herewith submitted for the consideration of the General Purposes Committee.

In their sketch development plan, the Consultants have included in broad outline all their proposals for the replanning and future development of Dublin. When this plan has been considered by the General Purposes Committee, the Consultants will then embody the proposals that have been approved of in detailed form in a draft planning scheme which on ratification by the Council will be submitted to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health.

A sketch development plan such as this, the Consultants point out, would fail in its purpose if it did not include proposals for the future which may to some appear visionary. The Town Planning Committee agrees with the Consultants as to the desirability of these proposals. At the same time it fully realises the fact that the carrying out of these proposals is dependent on the necessary money being available, and that we must "cut our cloth according to our measure." While endorsing in most cases the recommendations of the Consultants, the Town Planning Committee is aware that the heavy expenditure on buildings and compensation involved in some of the proposals, is an obstacle to their being undertaken for years to come. It is, therefore, suggested that the General Purposes Committee should first consider the various proposals in principle, merely. From the proposals that meet with the approval, a selection can be made by the Town Planning Committee, guided by the views of your Committee, of a restricted number of proposals for which, it is hoped, the necessary money will be forthcoming in the near future, and these proposals will be embodied in detail in the draft planning scheme for submission to the Minister. This does not mean that the other proposals will be permanently abandoned. They will, so to speak, be kept in reserve. In the working out of our planning policy there will, therefore, be in effect two schemes first, the statutory planning scheme as approved of by the Minister, which will keep the expenditure in the near future within our resources, and a supplemental scheme consisting of other proposals eminently desirable in themselves, but which considerations of economy prevent us from including in the draft scheme. This supplemental plan will have no statutory effect but will serve a useful purpose in guiding the Corporation as to the policy to be adopted in dealing with future proposals submitted by private parties which will not be covered by the provisions of the statutory planning scheme.

Further, in the supplemental scheme would be included, for example, the proposals suggested by the Consultants which would have to be carried out by outside authorities, namely, the suggested sites of public buildings to be erected by the Government and the site proposed for the new Catholic cathedral. We have no power under the planning scheme to compel outside Authorities to place their buildings on sites selected by us. We may suggest where they should go and these suggestions are embodied in the sketch development plan, but these proposals cannot form part of the draft planning scheme unless with the consent of the authorities concerned. The adoption of these suggestions by the General Purposes Committee will enable the Town Planning Committee to take up with these authorities the proposals put forward for the siting of such buildings.

It should be noted that the Consultants in preparing the sketch development plan did not confine themselves to the existing municipal boundary. As they state in their report, they considered the surrounding County of Dublin "as an integral part of the area which the capital should occupy in order that its dignity should be realised." They furthermore suggest that a limit should be fixed to the extension of the City in the surrounding country and in the section of the report dealing with regional development they suggest that provision be made for an agricultural reservation or a "green belt," which would still keep the countryside within reasonable reach of the city centre. This does not mean that there should be no development in the agricultural reservation, but that such development should be concentrated in a number of small satellite towns. This, of course, is provision for the future, and it is not anticipated that there will be any development of satellite towns except around existing centres of population, but the planning policy should be directed to this end and proposed development in the meantime controlled accordingly.

These proposals for the extra-municipal area will not be included in the draft scheme which is confined to the area of the County Borough, but with the approval of your Committee, they can be submitted to the County Planning Authority. The Town Planning Act, 1934, makes the Corporation the planning authority for the Dublin planning region which includes the whole of Dublin County with the adjoining counties of Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. Before the Corporation can assume regional planning powers, it must first pass a resolution to prepare a plan for the whole or any part of its region. The Town Planning Committee has considered from time to time the advisability of recommending the City Council to pass a planning resolution for that portion of the planning region included in the County Dublin Area, but refrained from taking this action in view of the imminent changes in Local Government administration in Dublin City and County envisaged in the report of the Local Government (Dublin) Tribunal and the County Management Act.

While a local authority is preparing a planning scheme, it is necessary that they should have power meanwhile to prevent private work taking place which might subsequently interfere with any feature of the planning scheme. Obviously, if it is intended that a certain street should be widened or a new street constructed, it would be necessary that we should be able to prevent the erection of any structures, the removal of which would make such a proposal impossible or unduly costly when the scheme would come into operation. The Town Planning Act; therefore, gives power to a planning authority once it has passed a Resolution to prepare a planning scheme, to control all development proposed by private parties in the interval. The making of an interim order of this kind is a Managerial function and the City Manager and the Town Planning Committee, from the beginning, have closely co-operated to secure that interim proposals, which are approved of, do not cut across the proposals under consideration for the planning scheme.

The Town Planning Committee, at a series of meetings from October, 1939, have closely considered the proposals of the Consultants and we set out some modifications which we suggest should be made in the Sketch Development Plan.

(Signed) ERNEST E. BENSON,
Chairman, Town Planning Committee.

Note. For convenience, the Town Planning Committee's further comments and amendments are placed in italics under the relevant sections of the Consultants' Report.

20th October, 1939.

P. J. Heron, Esq., City Manager, Corporation of Dublin.

Sir,

We have the honour of presenting to you, and through you to the Corporation, the Report and maps illustrating our Sketch Development proposals for the County Borough of Dublin and Neighbourhood.

The Report is dated July last and was, therefore, completed before the outbreak of the War. The approach of war conditions does not, however, suggest any modifications in our proposals but rather underlines those which we have put forward with the possibilities of war in mind.

We would stress that the War, however long it may last and no matter who may be involved, will historically take its place as an episode in the development of Dublin. We, therefore, express the hope that it will not be allowed to influence adversely the consistent and organised planning of the City.

We desire to acknowledge our indebtedness, and to render our thanks, to you personally and to the Chairman and Members of the Town Planning Committee for the courtesy and encouragement which at all times have been extended to us in this preliminary stage of our work.

We are, Sir,
Yours faithfully,

(Signed)
Patrick Abercrombie,
Sydney A. Kelly,
Manning Robertson.

CONSULTANTS' REPORT

INTRODUCTION

So much has been written concerning the past history of Dublin and the activities of the Wide Streets Commissioners that we have thought it best, in presenting this Sketch Development Plan, to deal solely with the City as it is to-day.

The advent of Town Planning should make it possible gradually to introduce order into what, at present, is too often chaotic. In proposing how this should best be done we have, perforce, been severely practical in our outlook because we fully realise that suggestions, however excellent in theory, are useless if they are impracticable owing to their excessive cost. At the same time we have attempted not to run into the other extreme and confine ourselves to trivialities on the ground that any ambitious scheme must be

costly. In short, these proposals aim at providing for the replanning and expansion of the City of Dublin on sound Town Planning lines consistent with the ability of the citizens to carry the proposals into effect.

In preparing this Sketch Development Plan we have not confined ourselves to the existing municipal boundary. We have considered the surrounding County of Dublin as an integral part of the area which the Capital should occupy in order that its true dignity should be realised.

We have not graded our proposals into stages of urgency, but we have attempted to keep those proposals which are definitely urgent, such as the two new bridges, on lines which combine sound planning with ease of execution.

A sketch plan such as this would fail in its purpose if it did not at the same time include proposals for the future which may, to some, appear visionary. Such proposals, e.g., the new Governmental centre, should be treated as indications of the shape which future planning should take. There is no reason why, if Dublin is to have great new buildings during the next century, these new buildings should not be sited in accordance with a pre-conceived plan.

Dublin is not, by its nature, a city which lends itself to treatment on the symmetrical lines of Washington. Monumental axial vistas are, however, by no means the only method of obtaining dignity and architectural grandeur. These qualities are obtained in the Oxford High Street, for example, by the gradual unfolding of views along a curve. The Liffey is the backbone of Dublin, and those who visited the Paris Exhibition of 1937 will remember the effects obtained on the Seine where fine buildings unfolded themselves along the curve of the river. The Liffey lends itself admirably to similar treatment. There is no one who does not deplore the loss of the Custom House view from O'Connell Bridge due to the loop line railway bridge. We envisage a similar possibility of view for the new Cathedral up river from the bridge with fine buildings of quiet dignity connecting to the Customs House on the North bank, while the City Hall with a riverside arcade, would dominate the South bank.

Our scheme provides for the opening of Christ Church Cathedral from the river. The grandeur of this structure standing on the hill is at present lost-blotted out by mean buildings. Dublin's architectural beauty depends in the main on the regeneration of the quays.

Where possible - as in the case of the Cathedral view down George's Street - we have taken every opportunity of providing vistas of aesthetic value but these have arisen not as ends in themselves, but as the outcome of some practical solution to the planning of the city.

One of the greatest difficulties with which we are faced concerns the treatment of the central or quasi-central nucleus of Georgian Dublin. Districts on the North side such as the extensive neighbourhood of Gardiner Street and Mountjoy Square contain terraces of magnificent brick houses built with a quiet Georgian dignity which have now fallen into decay. What is to be done with these?

A district similar in architectural character but fortunately in a prosperous condition, exists in the Merrion Square - Fitzwilliam Square neighbourhood. In this case we are agreed that such rebuilding as takes place should be in harmony with the architecture of the neighbourhood. The danger which we foresee is that without some such restriction groups or isolated houses would be rebuilt discordant in design and material, and the unity which we owe to the foresight of our predecessors would then be lost. To take the specific instance of Merrion Square as an example. Holles Street Hospital has, rightly in our opinion, been built in brick with stone dressings and the harmony of the Square has been retained. Had this facade been entirely in stone it would have destroyed the unity of the Square. If, on the other hand, there were a proposal to rebuild the whole block of Merrion Square East, there would be no objection to the whole side of the Square being in stone which would balance the stone buildings on the West side.

It is, therefore, important that any piece-meal rebuilding of Georgian Dublin should be of such height and nature as to harmonise with surrounding work in its general features unless it be in accordance with some pre-arranged scheme to do otherwise. This leads us to emphasise the importance (when any large block is rebuilt) of considering how the architectural treatment of that block could be carried along to complete the street or square as the case may be. We would stress the importance of avoiding, while there is time, the confused jumble of "styles" and materials which have of late made Rathmines Road an object lesson in chaotic building.

We should like to place on record our indebtedness to the officials of the Corporation and those in authority on other public bodies with which we have been concerned. We have always had at our disposal all the help and advice which it was in their power to give.

Our method of procedure has been to report progress and consider the various problems as they arose at meetings of technical officers held periodically. The chair at these meetings was taken by Mr. J. P. FitzGibbon, Higher Executive Officer, Streets Section, and Secretary of the Town Planning Committee, and we owe a great deal to his tact and organising ability. There also attended Mr. N. A. Chance, City Engineer; Air. H. T. O'Rourke, City Architect (or his representative, Mr. E. O'Byrne); Mr. H. G. Simms, Housing Architect; Mr. P. E. Mathews, Housing Engineer; Mr. Jim White, Law Agent's Department; Mr. W. O'Doherty, Streets Section, and Mr. M. O'Brien, Acting Planning Officer. Many of the proposals in this report originated from one or other of the above officials, as for example, the weaving of traffic at the "Metal" Bridge traffic circus which originated from the City Engineer, and the general layout of the Parliament Street Civic Centre, and the position of the Government centre, which were suggested by the City Architect.

At these meetings we also had the opportunity of hearing the views of representatives of the Board of Works, the Garda Siochana, the Great Southern Railway Company, the Dublin Port and Docks Board and many other such bodies. We have also had the fullest co-operation from the County Surveyor, Mr. J. A. Ryan, and his staff, and from the Dun Laoghaire Borough Corporation.

In arriving at our decisions we have thus entered into the fullest consultation with those likely to be affected and with those best fitted to assist us. We would make special mention of our indebtedness to Mr. Michael O'Brien, Acting Town Planning Officer to the Corporation, to Mr. M. F. Costello, and other members of the Town Planning Staff. The staff has been of the greatest assistance in making valuable suggestions, and its labours have resulted in an enormous mass of essential survey work and statistics which have been at our disposal.

Sketch Development Plan of Dublin (1941)

[Index.](#)

[Introduction.](#)

1. Communications

New Roads and Major Widenings, Central.

A glance at the road map of the central city area will show that only the Eastern Area with O'Connell Street-Westmoreland Street as its backbone has been properly developed. We find in this area a sufficiency of radial roads feeding the centre and a network of wide roads to provide for the principal internal needs. The position is different in the central and western areas. There the radial roads are as inadequate as are the internal communications with the result that valuable central situations are in a derelict or semi-derelict condition.

Traffic.

One of the principal traffic problems is how to ease the centralised traffic stream converging on O'Connell Bridge and Butt Bridge. To deal with this, it is proposed to provide alternative through routes from East to West. On the East the new Cardiff Lane route will divert through North-bound traffic from the Dun Laoghaire direction and provide an easier alternative for Dock traffic. It will be seen that this bridge will form the natural link between the existing North and South Circular routes.



A small stretch of new road connecting Macken Street with Herbert Place will complete the ring.

The existing bridge congestion will be further eased by the rebuilding of the "Metal" Bridge and connecting it with Dominick Street and Sth. Gt. George's Street. Further considerations in regard to the new bridges will be discussed later in this report.

Ring Roads.

2. REGIONAL PLANNING

Green Belt and Satellite Towns.

One of the major evils consequent upon indiscriminate development in Great Britain has been the unrestricted growth of the large towns. These have expanded by constantly increasing their circumference, and sending ribbon-like tentacles along the main roads. This means that the country is driven further and further from the inhabitants and a nucleus intended for, and suited to, a reasonably compact city has to serve as a centre for a population far in excess of the capacity of the nucleus and the carrying power of its transport facilities.

It has for long been recognised that a limit should be set to the growth of a town, and the difficulty elsewhere has too often been that the town (e.g., London, Glasgow, Birmingham) was already too large and unwieldy when the problem of limiting its size first came under consideration, and by the time the requisite margin of growth was allowed for, things would become worse. Dublin, as we shall see, is in the fortunate position of being able to limit herself to a much more manageable size than would be possible in the great towns of England.

Forecast of the Population of Metropolitan Area.

The planner is not in a position to state a certain maximum population which should be contained within the area bounded by the green belt and to plan his belt accordingly. He has to take account of factors over which he has no control. Town growth possesses what we may call inertia, comparable with that of a moving train which cannot be stopped suddenly. In its previous unrestricted period of growth the town has sent out at great cost considerable services in drains and water, and any attempt to prohibit building where services are easily available would either inflict undue hardship or bring about compensation payments and other losses too heavy to be faced. We thus find ourselves with a green belt boundary which is virtually imposed upon us by the position of services. The urban area may be larger than it would be if the limit could be arbitrarily determined by the planner, since an increase of only 221 per cent. in the diameter of a circle will add about 50 per cent. to its area.

We cannot assume that at any time a city will grow up to its complete imposed limit all round the periphery, bounded by a green belt. Supposing that the demand is for houses on the South-West, it is no use to build on the North-

3. NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Metropolitan Cathedral.



In the siting of proposed new buildings pride of place is taken by the Metropolitan Cathedral. This building, symbolising as it will the spiritual life of the people, should occupy a dominating position among the buildings of the City. It should lend itself to ceremonial and, at the same time, be situated in a central and easily accessible position.

We would emphasise that in making a decision of such vital importance to the future of the City, it would be unwise to economise unduly upon site acquisition. A building of this nature, which will cost some millions of pounds to erect, is deserving of the expenditure necessary to ensure a proper site. We would suggest that the erection could be carried along in stages, as is happening in Liverpool, and that it would be better to delay the second stage rather than to hurry the building at the expense of placing it upon the wrong site.

We have given careful consideration to the advisability of placing it in Merrion Square, and we are of opinion that this site would not provide the dignity of setting, nor the dominance in the City, which such a building demands.

Having considered the various possibilities we recommend, as the most suitable and practicable site, the rectangle bounded by Lower Ormond Quay, Lower Liffey Street, Capel Street and Upper Abbey Street.

This would give approximately the same area as Merrion Square. The main approach, with a wide flight of steps, would face the river. Thus the Cathedral would continue the Dublin tradition of facing its great buildings along the Quays. The Cathedral would occupy a central position, approximately half way between the Customs House and the Four Courts. Set in a green enclosure and bounded by widened streets, it would be seen to the greatest advantage from across the river and from the neighbourhood of O'Connell Bridge.

The proposed new thoroughfare, continuing South George's Street, and the opening up and widening of the quays opposite the Cathedral would add to the dignity of the building, while the new bridge replacing the "Metal" Bridge would enable processions to approach the Cathedral from either side.

The property involved, while considerable, is of little value, but we suggest that

4. HOUSING AND PLAYGROUNDS IN CENTRAL AREAS

This problem mainly centres round certain dilapidated districts, most of which at present house large numbers of families in insanitary and overcrowded conditions.

In envisaging the future of housing policy generally, we assume that a careful watch will be kept to ensure against any influx from the country which might stultify efforts at effecting permanent improvement.

It has rightly been the policy of the Corporation to include provision for play-space within each scheme of flats re-built in the city area. The importance of adequate play-space, not only within each scheme, but for the ultimate use of the citizens in the planned central area cannot be exaggerated. The following considerations should be borne in mind:-

- (a) Play is essential to the health of the child, and the medical profession shares the view that the call upon the hospitals would be greatly reduced by the proper provision of playground facilities;
- (b) The alarming number of casualties on the road is largely due to children who are now compelled to play in the streets;
- (c) The crowds of children who perforce throng the streets in our overcrowded central areas make it so slow and dangerous for the motorist that many wide streets, such as Gloucester Street and Dominick Street, have virtually been lost as traffic arteries. No proper planning can solve the traffic problem if this is not remedied;
- (d) The vast amount of wanton damage caused by irresponsible children, running the Corporation into continuous and useless expenditure, is due to the absence of organised play time occupation.

The above are only the most obvious arguments in favour of a playground programme which should go hand in hand with the housing programme.

Such a scheme would have the effect of thinning out the population in our

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

In the ordinary course of development certain nuclei for everyday shopping, with possibly a post office, bank, etc., tend to form themselves not always in the most suitable places. They usually occupy the sites of former villages, or are situated at newly developed cross roads. Modern planning includes among its aims guidance as to the situation of such centres. In dealing with the area falling between the built-up city and the green belt, it is proposed that these neighbourhood centres should be so placed that no house shall be more than half-a-mile from a centre. Where an area is at present undeveloped, it is impossible to define the exact situation of such a future centre, but its approximate situation is shown as a diamond on the map. Existing centres working into the pattern are shown to their existing shapes, allowing for increased size. It can be seen, therefore, that the structure of the Dublin plan is not only that formed by the street pattern, but by a series of circles-the city within the circular roads being the larger central nucleus, with the half mile circles surrounding it, each having its focal centre.

It is only by means of a theoretic basis of this sort that a topographically satisfactory social structure can be built up. Dublin, being an ancient city, with not only a well marked historic centre but also, especially on the South, a markedly developed suburban growth, it is clearly impossible to realise an ideal theoretic diagram; but the principle of a city built up out of units of neighbourhood life culminating in the civic centre should be adopted.

The open strips described under "Parkways" in Section 6, have been planned as much for the purpose of breaking up the monotonous continuity of suburban spread and creating neighbourhood units as for the provision of space dedicated to recreation. It will be seen, on the 8-inch map (No.2), that this new form of fringe growth produces a pattern different from that found in the older suburbs.

6. HEALTH AND RECREATION

Hospitals.

The siting of hospitals, as for example whether they should be centrally situated or placed in the outskirts, depends upon such varied considerations, apart from those coming within the purview of planning, that we are in difficulties in making recommendations of a definite kind in all cases. The

7. PROPOSED RECLAMATIONS

The reclamations shown on our proposals include:

- (a) Reclaiming some 780 acres of Merrion Strand;
- (b) An extension of Fairview Park across the railway.

These are put forward as extensions to be put in hand at some future date, by far the more important being that under (a).

The effect of these reclamation works on the currents outside Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Harbours would, of course, have to be fully investigated.

We have had the opportunity of examining some facts and considerations put forward among responsible officials as to the possibilities at Merrion, and our proposals are on a more modest scale than those which appear to have been discussed up to the present.

In regard to (a), we propose that a sea wall be built extending from White Bank (about 800 yards East of the Pigeonhouse Electricity Works) to Merrion. The stretch which would thus be reclaimed is all uncovered at low water and would necessitate a wall 3,700 yards long which would cost at £75 per yard, £277,000. The reclaimed land would cover about 780 acres, i.e., the cost of walling per acre reclaimed would be about £355.

Of the 780 acres reclaimed, a 440 yards strip along the river wall, covering about 200 acres, would be reserved for industrial use, and the remaining 580 acres would form one of the three large Metropolitan Parks. In regard to the walling, it is a matter of investigation as to whether this should be done by pumping through a pipe line over the Pigeon House Wall and/or by the dumping of clean filling from the city. The work would, of course, cover a period (possibly a long period) of years, and it is our view that the total cost per acre would be fully justified by the proximity of the newly-acquired land and its convenience to the centre of the city. Bathing facilities could be provided in substitution for those existing at Sandymount.

As to (b) - the Fairview reclamation - the area shown is tentative, and is green on the map. This does not indicate that the whole of this area need be reserved as a public open space. The user of part of it would, we suggest, be decided later.

9. BOUNDARY OF CITY

In making our proposals we have, since the publication of the Greater Dublin Tribunal's Report, constantly borne that Report in mind.

So soon as it was possible, we discussed our proposals with Mr. T. C. Courtney, one of the Members of that Tribunal, and received his assurance that our proposals did not in any way conflict in principle with the Tribunal findings. We have naturally not entered at all into the complex question of future administration which has been so ably and exhaustively dealt with in that Report and which can be applied equally well to our Scheme.

Briefly, our green belt and the area of County Dublin to the North of that correspond to the North and South Dublin Rural areas of the Tribunal, while our central urban area (with free entry and deferred development land) corresponds with the Tribunal's Metropolitan Area as distinct from the Rural Areas.

The findings of the Tribunal would thus apply as well to our proposals as to those put forward by the Tribunal, the only difference being in the areas shown on the two maps. We have also had the benefit of showing our Report and Maps to the other two members of the Tribunal, Mr. Justice Gavan Duffy and Mr. R. J. Baker. They appeared to concur in the view that the Tribunal findings could be applied in principle as well to our map as to theirs, which was based, so they told us, on less detailed information and data than we had at our disposal.

We are satisfied that the present boundary is utterly inadequate and consider therefore, that the future boundary and, in fact, the whole question of administration, is one which should be considered in the light of the findings of the Tribunal and of our Report jointly.

CONCLUSION

There are many aspects of planning - especially as regards amenity - which will take their place in a Draft Planning Scheme but do not demand attention in this preliminary Report. Such matters as the control of elevations, advertisements, derelict sites, the heights of buildings, the preservation of views, trees, and the like, are subservient to the general outline of the plan

APPENDIX

The Report of the Consultants on the Sketch Development Plan, together with the covering report of the Town Planning Committee of November, 1939, was considered at a special meeting of the General Purposes Committee on the 10th December, 1940. The General Purposes Committee adopted the report and sketch development proposals of the Consultants subject to the amendments embodied in the report of the Town Planning Committee and to the following additional recommendations:

- (a) the exclusion of Government Buildings from the proposed statutory plan;
- (b) the provision of bathing facilities on a larger scale than contemplated in the report considered;
- (c) the use of St. Anne's (Clontarf) to be the subject of further consideration by the Town Planning Committee;
- (d) the possibility of increasing the extent of the reclamation proposed at Merrion to be considered.

It was ordered that the draft scheme be prepared on the basis of the foregoing as a preliminary to the submission to the Municipal Council of the proposed statutory plan.