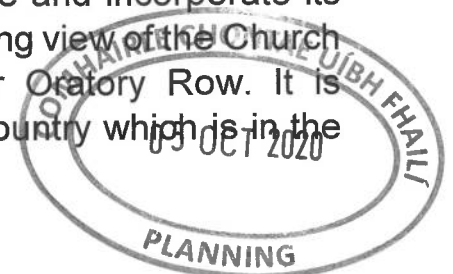


Submission on County Development Plan - CLARA Derelict buildings: The council bought two decaying houses on Church Street in Clara and generated a map for three new houses on the site. This new map referred to the two existing houses as 'derelict houses' and when I put it to the Council that these houses should therefore have already been placed on the Derelict Sites register it replied that: "to be on the Derelict Sites register requires a legislative and consultation process in accordance with the Derelict Sites Act and the annotation of houses as 'derelict' is, although perhaps misleading, a separate issue." The council described the two houses on Church Street in Clara as derelict and yet it was incapable of following its own procedure and ensuring that these houses were placed on the Derelict Sites register. There are at least eleven derelict and vacant houses on Church Street in Clara and some are in a much worse condition. The council's approach to derelict houses and sites in Clara needs to be addressed in this Development Plan, otherwise there is no need to be wasting your time and ours.

Vernacular buildings: When I was several thousand words into the council's plan, I suddenly realised that it does not know what it is talking about. The Draft Plan is well worth examining in some detail, for instance BHP-21 states that it is, 'Council policy to support proposals to refurbish vernacular structures that are in a run down or derelict condition.' Keep this in mind. The authors of this section of the plan do not. It is serendipitous that the council is now in the possession of a very important example of vernacular architecture (it is one of the two derelict buildings recently acquired by the council on Church Street and bounds Church Lane). It had been proposed for preservation in the past as a prime example of a vernacular building and the heritage officer should have the details (registration number (14802054); it is a semi-detached five-bay single-storey vernacular house with a probable date form 18th century c1750. Indeed, a photograph of this house appeared on An Taisce's website a couple of weeks ago. The council proposes to build three houses on the footprint of the two houses. The council should proceed with the new house it proposes to build on the footprint of the semi-detached neighbouring house. However, it should abandon its monotonous design plan (copied from a development elsewhere in the county) for the two other houses and transfer them diagonally across the road on Church Street to other derelict sites. Ideally, this important vernacular building should be preserved and not levelled by a council we are told 'supports proposals to refurbish vernacular structures.' At the very least this important house ought to be adapted sympathetically, keep its five-bay profile and incorporate its vernacular chimney which forms an aesthetically pleasing view of the Church Of Ireland when viewed from Church Street and/or Oratory Row. It is probably the only important vernacular house in the county which is in the



possession of a local authority. Preservation Orders: The house in The Square in Clara which, we are told, is a 'detached four-bay two-storey house, built c.1830, with return to rear,' is not entirely correct. For one thing, it was originally a series of houses. Then it eventually became semi-detached and remained a 'semi-d' until the late 1920s early 1930s. It was a mix-match of houses and while it is an attractive house now, the information is incorrect unless pastiche or a Neo-Georgian facade is in vogue in Aras an Chontae. It is bizarre that a false façade in The Square in Clara (your ref: 12-50) which duped both the NIAH and your heritage office is included on the list of protected structures while a house just up the road, designed by Sir William Orpen's brother, the famous architect, Richard Francis Caulfield Orpen, is not on the list. Furthermore, I alerted the new owners of Grove Cottage in Clara to the fact that John Skipton-Mulvany FRIAI was the architect of their house and I note that they have included some extracts of the information I gave them with their submission on this draft plan; their house ought to be preserved. The time has come to revisit the buildings which lost their preservation orders down through the years due to political lobbying; admittedly, the list is long but the heritage officer should have the relevant information. Clara Bog: Clara Bog and Durrow Abbey need to be adequately signposted and promoted. Offaly Tourism appears to have taken it upon itself to promote a list of attractions in Offaly which does not include Durrow Abbey or Clara Bog. Temporary measures should be put in place to calm traffic at Durrow Abbey before the by-pass comes to fruition. Raheen: This County Development plan is already out of date before it begins. There is no mention of the acres recently purchased by the council (Drayton Villa) which we were told earlier this year is due to house the Fire Station, once mooted for Raheen. The fields of Drayton Villa could incorporate the proposed housing estate planned for the soggy marshes of Bogtown in Raheen with its labyrinth of underground pipes and running sand and the council could provide a much needed roundabout on council-owned lands at Raheen to save lives and prevent accidents.



Further to my submission on October 5, attached find a photograph of the house from circa 1900 before it's a Neo-Georgian facade. Please note that the following line in my submission [under the heading Preservation Orders, concerning 12-50]: For one thing, it was originally a series of houses. Then it eventually became semi-detached and remained a 'semi-d' until the late 1920s early 1930s. should read: For one thing, it was originally a series of houses. These houses eventually became a pair of semi-detached houses and remained 'semi-d' until the 1920s early 1930s [photo attached for your information of the house incorporating a pair of semi-detached houses]

