

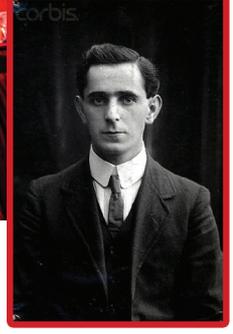
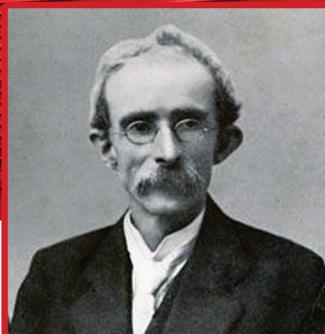
Sinn Féin

**SUBMISSION TO
DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL
MOORE STREET
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

PLUNKET

Just 4 Kids

REMEMBER
1916





INTRODUCTION

Sinn Féin welcomes the opportunity to present our submission to the Dublin City Council Moore Street Advisory Committee.

We note the Committee's terms of reference *"to review, report on, and make recommendations to the City Council in respect of the overall Moore Street Area Development, with particular focus and emphasis on the preservation, use and development of the 1916 GPO Evacuation Route and the Moore Street buildings occupied by the rebels in the final days of the 1916 Easter Rising"*.

We welcome the recognition by Dublin City Council of the importance of the preservation of the entire National Monument 14-17 Moore Street, the evacuation route from the GPO and all the Moore St. buildings occupied by the Republican forces at Easter 1916 and the surrounding streetscape.

The Committee's work provides perhaps one of the last opportunities to ensure the preservation of this unique part of our national heritage.

It has to be acknowledged first of all that the dedication of the relatives of the 1916 leaders and those who have supported them in their campaign over many years has ensured that 14-17 Moore Street has been saved – so far – from the bulldozers. The last Headquarters of the 1916 leaders has come far closer to demolition than their place of execution in Kilmainham Jail.

Kilmainham provides an exact parallel with the National Monument in Moore Street. Kilmainham Jail stands today as one of the best preserved and documented and one of the most visited historical buildings in Europe.

Let it be remembered that only for the dedication of a group of private citizens this sacred place would have fallen into ruin and would have been erased from our capital city. A group of volunteers, many of whom had themselves fought for Irish freedom, banded together and through voluntary work and campaigning they ensured that the Jail was saved and turned into a museum. Only then did the State step in.

Similarly, it was the efforts of private citizens, including relatives of the leaders and participants in the 1916 Rising, that saved 14-17 Moore Street from destruction. They held back developers and secured its designation as a National Monument.

National Monument status has undoubtedly saved 14-17 Moore St. and its environs from destruction.

DEVELOPER SHOULD NOT SET AGENDA

We believe that there are very serious questions yet to be answered regarding the dealings of the management of Dublin City Council with the various developers who have been involved in the site in question in the Moore St./O'Connell St. area. We believe it constitutes a planning scandal and we should have full disclosure from Dublin City Council management about all the details of this debacle and full accountability for actions taken.

It would, in our view, be inconceivable for the proposed giant shopping centre to go ahead against the background of this planning scandal and in the face of massive public support for the full preservation of the national monument and the enhancement of this historic quarter of our city.

That said, the necessary search for answers and for accountability for past actions must not delay or prevent us from addressing, as a matter of urgency, the need to preserve and enhance the National Monument and its environs.

We strongly argue that this question cannot be reduced simply to approval or rejection of the current plan from Chartered Land for a giant shopping centre in the Moore St./O'Connell St. area.

The current plan by Chartered Land involves building upon over half of the site covered by the National Monument. There would be excavations beneath the buildings and most of the street on either side would be demolished. And this would be in the context of a giant shopping centre overlooking and dominating the National Monument.

We understand that Chartered Land in its presentation to the Committee has indicated modifications to the plan as submitted in the planning application. These would of course require further planning applications.

This matter is too important for a developer to be allowed to set the agenda. Still less so when the developer in question is in NAMA, which is, after all, supposed to operate in the public interest.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

This is not a local planning matter; it is of national and international concern.

- » **The Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs should act without further delay to ensure the full preservation of the National Monument as designated and to that end should refuse permission to Chartered Land for its proposed works on and around the National Monument. We urge the Committee to press this point most strongly on the Minister.**
- » **We urge the Committee also to call on the Minister, in partnership with Dublin City Council, to enter direct dialogue with all stakeholders – the 1916 relatives, all property owners in the area and not just Chartered Land, the National Museum, NAMA and other relevant State agencies and n.g.o.s.**
- » **The aim of this dialogue should be to frame a new plan to fully preserve the National Monument and to develop the Historic 1916 Quarter/Battlefield Site in time, if possible, for the Centenary of the 1916 Rising. It is more important to get the plan right and to get it delivered than to reach the 2016 deadline, though that is, of course, desirable.**

We must ensure that the 1916 National Monument at 14-17 Moore St. is fully protected and preserved in its entirety as designated and that the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways are retained in such a manner that the potential to develop this area into a 1916 historic cultural quarter can be fulfilled.

This would greatly enhance our national heritage and tourist potential in our capital city as we approach the centenary of the Easter Rising and beyond.

We need to see this issue in its wider city and national context also.

Just over 90 years ago, at the start of the Civil War, much of O'Connell Street was destroyed for the second time, having been levelled by the British Army bombardment in 1916. Yet within a few years the capital's main thoroughfare was rebuilt. For many years now much of Upper O'Connell St. has been dominated by a huge vacant site, a gaping hole in the nation's main historic street. It has been in this condition for far longer

than it took to rebuild much of the street after its destruction in war.

The preservation of the National Monument and of Moore Street and the surrounding streetscape would allow for the development of an Historic 1916 Quarter encompassing the entire Moore St/O'Connell St. area. This would have ample scope for commercial and retail development, helping to rejuvenate this neglected part of our capital.

Our capital city also needs a new Central Library and a Civic Museum.

Why not enhance our capital and its main street by building a new Central Library and Civic Museum on O'Connell St., as part of the Historic 1916 Quarter?

All kinds of legal, planning and financial difficulties will be cited. But with vision and political will and civic spirit such a project could become a reality.

In conclusion we believe that we should all be at one in ensuring that our people today and future generations have full access to the heritage of the Easter Rising of 1916 – both in the written word and in the physical legacy of the buildings and the streets where our history was made.

In his last letter before his execution in Kilmainham Jail, on 8 May 1916, Eamonn Ceannt wrote: "In the years to come Ireland will honour those who risked all for her honour at Easter in 1916."

We should live up to those words.

APPENDIX

DÁIL DEBATE ON THE MOORE STREET NATIONAL MONUMENT

22 May 2012

The following motion was moved by Deputy Sandra McLellan on Tuesday, 22 May 2012:

That Dáil Éireann:

looks forward to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a landmark in the history of the people of Ireland;

recalls that in January 2007 the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government placed a preservation order on Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, Dublin, under section 8 of the National Monuments Act 1930, on the grounds that the buildings are of national importance by reason of their historical significance as the final headquarters of the 1916 Provisional Government;

acknowledges the hard work of the relatives of the signatories to the 1916 Proclamation of Independence in raising public awareness of the importance of these historic buildings and this historic area of our capital city, and in securing the designation of the national monument;

views with serious concern the deterioration of the national monument which has languished in a vacant and neglected state for many years and the potential threat to the monument under a current planning application;

resolves to ensure that the 1916 National Monument at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street is fully protected and preserved in its entirety as designated and that the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways are retained in such a manner that the potential to develop this area into a 1916 historic-cultural quarter can be fulfilled; and

calls on the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to act without further delay to ensure the full preservation of the national monument and to develop a plan to transform the GPO-Moore Street area into an historic quarter and battlefield site so as to protect and preserve the 1916 National Monument and the associated streetscapes and laneways, thus greatly enhancing our national heritage and tourist potential in our capital city as we approach the centenary of the Easter Rising.

This motion was signed by: *Gerry Adams, Sandra McLellan, Mary Lou McDonald, Peadar Kirby, Pádraig Mac Lochlainn, Aengus Ó Snodaigh, Martin Ferris, Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, Jonathan O'Brien, Dessie Ellis, Michael Colreavy, Brian Stanley, Pearse Doherty, Seán Crowe, Stephen Donnelly, Tom Fleming, Finian McGrath, Catherine Murphy, Maureen O'Sullivan, Thomas Pringle, Mick Wallace, John Halligan, Michael Healy-Rae, Mattie McGrath, Noel Grealish, Luke 'Ming' Flanagan, Dara Calleary, Niall Collins, Barry Cowen, Timmy Dooley, Seán Fleming, Billy Kelleher, Seamus Kirk, Michael P. Kitt, Micheál Martin, Charlie McConalogue, Michael McGrath, John McGuinness, Michael Moynihan, Éamon Ó Cuív, Seán Ó Fearghail, Willie O'Dea, Brendan Smith, Robert Troy, John Browne, Clare Daly, Joan Collins, Seamus Healy, Richard Boyd Barrett, Patrick Nulty.*

Deputy Sandra McLellan: I am honoured to open this debate and formally move the Sinn Féin motion. This is an historic motion as it is the first time the Oireachtas has held a full-scale debate on the national treasure that is Moore Street. I welcome the families, friends and supporters of the heroic men and women of 1916, who are present with us here this evening.

The GPO, Moore Street and the laneways between it and O'Connell Street form the most important battlefield site in modern Irish history. This area must be fully protected, carefully preserved and sensitively developed as a cultural quarter. That is why Sinn Féin has tabled this motion and has sought the support of all Deputies. The motion calls for "the 1916 National Monument at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street [to be] fully protected and preserved in its entirety as designated and that the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways are retained in such a manner that the potential to develop this area into a 1916 historic-cultural quarter can be fulfilled".

This is not about gaining or losing political points. The fact is we all need to

remind ourselves how much we owe those men and women who, almost a hundred years ago, defied a powerful empire and proclaimed the Irish Republic. The motion calls on the Government to ensure an area which is steeped in Irish history is developed as an historic quarter and battlefield site in time for the centenary of the Rising. I would urge all Deputies who have been elected by the citizens of Ireland to support this call from the relatives of the 1916 leaders.

The condition of Nos. 14-17 Moore Street is nothing short of disgraceful and is an insult to the memory of those men and women whom we should honour. We owe it to the men and women of that period not to disregard their reputation and memory by destroying a building so closely associated with their struggle. During a tour of the battlefield site in July 2010, the current Tánaiste, Deputy Eamon Gilmore stated: "Our commemoration of 1916 should not just be a token flag waving commemoration, but it should be real, and I think there is an obligation on the State to respond positively to the relatives of the 1916 leaders to go with this project." I would hope the Tánaiste's views on this issue have not changed since then.

The relatives of the 1916 leaders campaigned diligently for Nos. 14-17 Moore St. to be designated as a national monument. In January 2007 they succeeded when the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government placed a preservation order on Nos. 14-17 and the land and buildings to the rear under section 8 of the National Monuments Act 1930. The order was made on the grounds that the buildings are of national importance by reason of their historic significance as the final headquarters of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic.

I have no doubt that this historic terrace would have been demolished at the height of the Celtic tiger but for the vigilance and the campaigning of the relatives and their supporters in all walks of life in Ireland. This historic terrace, which witnessed the fires of Easter 1916, has seen the Celtic tiger come and go and still survives, yet it is still under threat.

Time does not allow me to go into the complex planning history here. Suffice to say, the proposed plan of the developer would effectively destroy the national monument, leaving only a mere facade which would be engulfed in a large scale edifice. The development would also obliterate the streetscape and built fabric of one of the most historic areas of the city, both in terms of its association with the events of Easter 1916 and its architectural heritage. The developer intends to invade and build on 60% of the area covered by the national monument order. This would see the buildings gutted and excavated and the demolition of the terrace on either side of them. When it was announced in 2006 that national monument status was to be granted, it was generally believed that after a widely supported campaign, the historic buildings would be fully preserved and converted into a centre honouring the men and women of 1916. It came as a shock to many that the go-ahead was given for a development that will effectively destroy these buildings.

The relatives here today are totally opposed to the planned development of Moore Street by developer Joe O'Reilly, who has been seen as a member of the golden circle and who is currently in NAMA. It is important to point out that this developer has only conditional planning permission. The grant of permission is conditional on a number of requirements. Crucially, this includes the consent of the Minister for work to the national monument, the provision of a 1916 element, separate statutory consents and financial contributions to the city council. It is evident that ministerial consent in this application is being sought solely for the purpose of facilitating the commercial interest of a NAMA developer. Clearly, the Minister should refuse this consent. He should not allow the national monument to be encroached on or interfered with in any way. He and his colleagues in government should look to the importance of this site and its great potential.

Moore Street is of extreme importance, not just to the people of Dublin or the people of Ireland, but also internationally. This area has huge educational importance for the people of Ireland. This was the final headquarters of the republican forces during the final hours of the Easter Rising. It was in this building that James Connolly lay wounded as the Provisional Government held its final meetings. Also present were his fellow members of the Provisional Government — Pádraic Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, Thomas Clarke and Seán Mac Diarmada. These five men were amongst the 16 executed leaders of the 1916 Rising.

As Deputies are aware the area of cultural tourism continues to hold huge economic potential. This motion clearly calls on the Government to invest in cultural tourism. The entire Moore Street area is rich in history and would act as a fantastic attraction for visitors from home and abroad. An area of such significance both historically and educationally should be restored and

protected, not only for the people of Ireland but for people all over the world. The question all Deputies must ask is in what state this national monument will be come 2016. Will it be neglected and under threat as it is today? Will it be a shell, engulfed in a shopping mall or will it be preserved and cherished, forming a centre-piece for the centenary of the 1916 Rising and a major cultural asset for our capital city for decades to come?

There are two options facing all Deputies here tonight. Option one is to vote against this motion and vote in favour of the Government amendment and, possibly, allow the destruction of one of the most historic sites in Ireland. In taking that option, we as elected representatives would be turning our backs on our history to favour a NAMA developer. Option two is that we as a country acknowledge the huge sacrifice that those brave men and women made in 1916 and pay tribute to their cause and realise the educational and historical importance of Moore Street and the surrounding lanes. It is that we, as elected representatives, make the right choice. I urge all Deputies to honour and pay tribute to the men and women of 1916 and vote in favour of this motion as it stands.

Deputy Martin Ferris: I welcome the relatives of the men and women of 1916 here tonight. The fact that the buildings at Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street are under renewed threat due to deterioration, despite the 2007 preservation order, is a cause for concern. For that reason, it is important that the broad support in this motion for both the building and the surrounding district to be preserved in a fitting manner is heeded. I hope the Government accepts the motion in the spirit in which it is intended and does not oppose it.

The part of Dublin where the Rising took place ought to have the same status as similarly important historical places in other cities. It is somewhat of an indictment of this State's preservation of the memory of 1916 that there is no physical centre that can be visited in order to absorb some of the atmosphere of the time. Of course, the GPO remains as it was then as the central post office and as a vibrant working centre and those in charge of the building do an excellent job in maintaining some physical connection with Easter 1916, through the paintings inside the building and a small exhibition area. However, while that is commendable, I believe a dedicated centre needs to be built and that the buildings on Moore Street would fulfil that purpose, particularly as they are currently both unused and in disrepair.

There is great potential in the idea of developing the area into an historical and cultural quarter that would not only help to preserve the historical memory of what took place there, but would also attract visitors interested in our history. At present, much of that is left to private individuals who conduct walking tours. While that is most commendable, and I am certain that the tours are both informative and popular, there ought to be solid physical evidence of what took place in those streets. Perhaps Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street could be used to form the centre of that, with a heritage centre built up around them. Such a centre and the creation of such an historical and cultural heritage area would not have to be exclusively devoted to what took place at Easter 1916. That general area of Dublin has been of historical and cultural importance for centuries and the centre could become the focus for all of that. The initial key for that however needs to be positive action to ensure the premises in Moore Street do not fall into further disrepair and that such disrepair is not used as an excuse to pull them down to make way for whatever those behind the latest planning application have in mind.

This brings us to the reason the buildings are under threat in the first instance. It is perhaps ironic that the last headquarters of the leaders of the 1916 Rising should have come under threat from the speculators who have ensured that much of the leaders' vision for the Republic declared in Dublin at Easter 1916 has not been fulfilled. The Proclamation that was posted at the General Post Office on 24 April 1916, referred to the interests of the Irish people being paramount and to the right of the Irish people to the ownership of Ireland. Unfortunately, what we have seen in this State, particularly over the past 30 years, has been a new usurpation of that right, not by a foreign occupier, but by a rapacious native class of parasites.

Much of the reason for the current crisis facing this State was not, as some would like people to believe, the exorbitant wages allegedly paid to nurses, teachers and fire fighters, but the criminal incompetence and greed of a small minority of financial and property speculators. Of course they were not alone and, unfortunately, unlike the men and women inspired by the vision of the Republic, those parasites found only too willing accomplices among the so-called political elite in this State. As the Mahon and Moriarty tribunal reports prove, significant sections of the political class, from local authority councillors right up to the Cabinet, were willing to collaborate with the speculators. Some of the by-products of that were the lunatic ventures, land deals and speculative

plans foisted on the people of Dublin and other parts of the country. Indeed we have not yet been told the full extent of the corruption that went on outside of Dublin.

The plan for Moore Street was one of those lunatic ventures, although it appears to have been halted temporarily by the collapse of the speculative bubble and its banking arm several years ago. The original developers are currently under the auspices of NAMA. However, this makes it even more important to act now to ensure the site is preserved and that the plans for a cultural and historical centre which I believe would have the support of the people and elected representatives of Dublin can proceed.

The danger is that if by some chance the current planning application is approved and the current owners are then enabled to sell their currently encumbered property holdings the plan could be resurrected and the site damaged or even obliterated. The only way to ensure that does not happen is if the Minister acts as called on in our motion and ensures the full preservation of the buildings as a national monument. Once that occurs further steps can be taken to progress the longer term and broader idea of developing Moore Street and the surrounding area as an historical and cultural zone, with all the benefits I referred to earlier in terms of it becoming an historical and educational resource and a major tourism attraction.

Given that the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, is from the same county as me it would be remiss not to mention one of the heroes of 1916. On Friday, 28 April, with the GPO on fire, the O'Rahilly volunteered to lead a small party of men in search of a route out of the GPO to Williams and Woods, a factory on what was then called Great Britain Street and is now Parnell Street. A British machine gun at the intersection of Great Britain Street and Moore Street caught him and most of his party. The O'Rahilly slumped into a doorway on Moore Street, wounded and bleeding badly, but soon made a dash across the road to find shelter in Sackville Lane, now O'Rahilly's Parade. In his attempt to find shelter he again exposed himself to sustained fire from machine gunners.

It is often mooted that 19 hours after receiving his wounds on Friday evening and long after the surrender took place on Saturday afternoon, the O'Rahilly still clung to life. The specific time of his death is difficult to pin down but we can be more precise when it comes to understanding his final thoughts. Despite his obvious pain, he took the time to write a message to his wife on the back of a letter he had received from his son. In this last message to Nancy, which Shane Cullen has etched into a limestone and bronze sculpture, he wrote:

Written after I was shot. Darling Nancy I was shot leading a rush up Moore Street and took refuge in a doorway. While I was there I heard the men pointing out where I was and made a bolt for the laneway I am in now. I got more [than] one bullet I think. Tons and tons of love dearie to you and the boys and to Nell and Anna. It was a good fight anyhow.

The Minister and I should be proud of our fellow Kerryman.

Deputy Jimmy Deenihan: Yes, indeed.

Deputy Martin Ferris: He is a man I commemorate every year along with Eddie Carmody, who was also from Ballylongford. It would be an awful indictment of the Minister and his Government if they failed in their responsibility to protect the great legacy of the men and women of 1916 and their courageous and determined efforts to bring about a real Republic that would do justice of all the people of Ireland, cherish the children of the nation equally and exploit our resources for the common good of our people.

I draw the Minister's attention to a letter he received from the family of Major General Joe Sweeney, who was prominent in the events of Easter week. He fought inside the GPO and was one of those who helped to carry James Connolly on a stretcher through the houses to a makeshift hospital on Moore Street. As the Minister will be aware, the family has expressed disappointment at not being invited to the recent commemoration ceremony at Arbour Hill and I ask the Minister to ensure that the oversight is rectified in following years. The family is very proud of its connection to the momentous events of the time. I urge the Minister to do the right thing by the Irish people and support the motion.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: In his last letter before his execution in Kilmainham Jail on 8 May 1916, Eamonn Ceannt wrote, "In the years to come Ireland will honour those who risked all for her honour at Easter in 1916". How do we honour those who risked and gave all in 1916? We do so primarily by seeking to fulfil in our own time the promise of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, which asserts Irish sovereignty and seeks real equality. As political parties and Independent Deputies with differing political outlooks we frequently disagree

about how the promise of the Proclamation is being fulfilled but we should be at one in ensuring that our people and future generations have full access to the heritage of the Easter Rising of 1916 not only in the written word and the physical legacy of the buildings and the streets where our history was made but also in the realisation of the dream of those who wrote the Proclamation, our charter for freedom.

Kilmainham Gaol stands today as one of the best preserved and most visited historical buildings in Europe. If not for the dedication of a group of citizens this sacred place would have fallen into ruin and been erased from our capital city. A group of volunteers, many of whom had fought for Irish freedom, banded together and through voluntary work and campaigning ensured that the prison was saved and turned into a museum. Only then did the State step in. There is an exact parallel with the national monument on Moore Street. The dedication of the relatives of the 1916 leaders and those who supported them in their campaign over many years has ensured that 14-17 Moore Street has been saved thus far from the bulldozers. Unfortunately, however, the last headquarters of the 1916 leaders has come far closer to demolition than their place of execution in Kilmainham. It should not be necessary to stress the importance of this site. The layout of the streets and lanes around the GPO, Moore Street and Parnell Street which witnessed the events of Easter 1916 remain largely as they were at the time, even though most of the buildings have been demolished in the intervening period.

Remarkably, Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and the terrace of which they form a part remain intact, albeit only just. They have survived the fires and bombardments of the Rising and the Civil War. Ironically, they were under greater threat during the era of the so-called Celtic tiger. What a disgrace it would be now, as we prepare to mark the centenary of the 1916 Rising, if these buildings were to be undermined, encroached on and engulfed in a shopping centre. The motion before the Dail has the support of 50 Deputies. I thank them for their support and urge all Deputies to put aside party differences and support this motion.

The motion has two inextricably linked elements. First, it resolves to ensure that the 1916 national monument at 14-17 Moore Street is fully protected and preserved in its entirety and as designated. Second, it resolves that the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways are retained in such a manner that the potential to develop this area into a 1916 historic and cultural quarter can be fulfilled. The motion is addressed to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Deputy Deenihan. It is up to the Minister and the Government to decide whether the developer can go ahead with his plan because any development affecting the national monument at 14-17 Moore Street requires the Minister's formal consent under the National Monument Acts.

I regret to say that in responding to this motion, and in the amendment tabled in the name of the Minister, the Government has taken a narrow, minimalist approach which gives no real assurance that the national monument will be fully protected and preserved in its entirety and as designated. Our justifiable fear is that the Minister and his Department are inclined to the false view that the developer's proposal would preserve the national monument. In a letter of today's date the Minister's adviser states that the plan would retain what he describes as all structurally viable elements of the existing buildings. The developer intends to build upon 60% of the site covered by the national monument. The buildings as they stand will be gutted, there will be excavations beneath them and the terrace on either side will be demolished, all in the context of a giant shopping mall. So much for the alleged plan of the developer to develop a commemorative centre at the national monument.

Clearly, the first element of the motion, the preservation in full of the national monument cannot be fulfilled if the Minister approves the developer's proposed work on and around the site. Equally clearly, ministerial approval of the plan would be inconsistent with the second part of the motion, the retention of the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways in such a manner that the potential to develop an historic quarter can be fulfilled. For these reasons, we cannot accept the Government amendment. It represents a minimalist approach and a lousy position as we approach the centenary of the Easter Rising 1916.

It may be argued by some voices in Government that refusal to give the go-ahead to the developer risks the State being sued. However, the Planning and Development Act 2000 states that any development that would materially affect a protected structure or proposed protected structure is a development in respect of which a refusal of permission will not attract compensation. The same Act gives as a reason for the refusal of permission, which excludes compensation, "the proposed development would injure or interfere with a historic monument which stands registered in the Register of Historic Monuments under section 5 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act". The developer in question is insolvent and in NAMA, a State agency with a direct

responsibility to the people of this State. Does the Government seriously hold out the prospect of a busted developer on a NAMA life support machine suing the Minister for fully protecting a national monument? I think it most unlikely.

The likelihood is that the current developer may never build the proposed shopping mall but, with full planning permission and ministerial consent to get his way with the national monument, he may — with the approval of NAMA — sell on the site to some other developer who would do so. This would be the worst possible outcome.

The Minister and the Government need to get a grip. They need to take control of the situation. The planning saga has been going on since August 1999. Through that time there has been a massive and unsightly void on the main street of our capital city. One of our most important national monuments has been decaying and under threat and an historic quarter of Dublin, with massive potential to enhance our heritage, has been allowed to deteriorate as it languishes in a planning limbo.

Iarraim ar gach Teachta tacú leis an run seo. Iarraim ar an Rialtas an leasú a aistharraingt. An bhfuilimid chun a rá leis an bPiarsach: "Mo chlann féin do dhiol a máthair"?

The Government should withdraw its amendment. It should support the substantive motion tabled by Sinn Féin, with the support of other political parties and Independent Members. The Minister should refuse his consent. He should enter dialogue with all stakeholders — the 1916 relatives, all property owners in the area and not just the developer, the local authority Dublin City Council, the National Museum and other relevant State agencies. The aim should be to come up with a new plan to fully preserve the national monument and to develop the historic 1916 quarter in time for the centenary of the 1916 Rising. Let us hope we all live to see that achievement and celebrate the tremendous legacy of the brave men and women who fought and asserted the right of the Irish people to their freedom and national rights but who also lit a beacon that many nations the world over have since emulated.

Deputy Robert Troy: Looking at the history of the area, the Easter Rising was an insurrection staged in Ireland during Easter week 1916. The Rising was mounted by Irish republicans with the aims of ending British rule in Ireland. It was the most significant uprising in Ireland since the rebellion of 1798. Organised by the military council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Rising lasted from Easter Monday, 24 April to 30 April 1916. Members of the Irish Volunteers, led by schoolteacher and barrister Pádraig Pearse, were joined by the smaller Irish Citizen Army of James Connolly, along with 200 members of Cumann na mBan. This rising was where our forefathers fought for Irish freedom and an Irish Republic and willingly gave their lives in the name of their country.

That is why we are in the Chamber as we approach the centenary of this most significant event in our relatively young history. It is imperative that we support the motion, which resolves to ensure that the 1916 national monument at 14-17 Moore Street is fully protected and preserved in its entirety as designated and that the surrounding buildings streets and laneways are retained in such a manner that the potential to develop this area into a 1916 historic cultural quarter can be fulfilled. The motion calls on the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to act without further delay to ensure the full preservation of the national monument and to develop a plan to transform the GPO and Moore Street area into an historic quarter and battlefield site to protect and preserve the 1916 national monument.

I compliment Sinn Féin on tabling this Private Members' motion and for seeking the inclusion of signatures from Members of other parties and those of none. It is important that no individual or political party attempts to hijack this issue for political purposes. Our national heritage is too important for party political games. By all Members supporting this motion, Dáil Éireann can show the country it is serious about giving the Easter 1916 centenary the respect and commemoration it deserves.

This issue has been ongoing for many years now and with every passing year this historic location is falling into further neglect. Looking at the chronological sequence of events over the years, it is worrying that such an historic location did not receive the recognition it deserved. Many questions remain unanswered in that regard but that is for another day. We can not change what has happened but we can learn from previous mistakes. We must move forward this project in a positive way without delay. I was pleased to be present at the meeting of the Oireachtas committee when the Save 16 Moore Street campaigners made a presentation outlining the group's realistic proposals for this area. I compliment the group on its longstanding dedication to the cause. The Save 16 Moore Street group is seeking the protection of national monument status of Nos.

14-17 Moore Street against the encroachment of new property development. The group is also calling on the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, to protect and preserve the 1916 Moore Street terrace and buildings, streets and laneways linked to the 1916 Rising and to facilitate a 1916 cultural and historical quarter.

In 2007, the Fianna Fáil Government brought in a preservation order to protect these sites. However, a much wider area needs to be considered. There is a requirement to protect the buildings comprising Nos. 32 and 33 Henry Street. An appeal by An Taisce has been lodged with An Bord Pleanála. One wonders at some of these assessments when the architectural heritage assessment claims no records exist of any historic event associated with the buildings, despite the clear evidence that they were occupied by Volunteers during the 1916 Rising.

This country does not need another shopping centre. We need to protect our culture and our heritage. I ask the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to refrain from making any decision regarding the approval to build on the historic site of Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, pending an independent battlefield assessment as recommended by the director of the National Museum of Ireland. I encourage the Minister to engage with all relevant parties, with NAMA and the various interested parties and to do as the motion calls on him to do. In doing so, the Minister and the Government will have the full support of this House.

The restoration of Kilmainham Gaol was completed in 1971. Apart from the significant cultural benefits this restoration afforded our country, it is also a major tourist attraction, seeing annual visitor numbers rise from 275,000 in 2009 to 285,000 last year. I ask the Minister to retract his amendment to the motion in order that this House can collectively support the motion.

Deputy John Browne: I support the Sinn Féin motion which is supported by Fianna Fáil. The commemoration of the Easter Rising and the importance of Moore Street is an issue of national significance. I hope when the vote is taken tomorrow, the House will not divide on this issue. In 2007, the Fianna Fáil Party in Government introduced a national preservation order to protect the site. All sides have strong views about the need for this important site to be given the recognition and respect it deserves. The centenary of the 1916 Rising is a source of immense pride for this country and it is essential the campaign to preserve and protect the national monument at Moore Street continues to be an entirely cross-party campaign.

I come from Enniscorthy in County Wexford and I grew up on stories of Seamus Rafter, Thomas Weafer, Liam Mellows and all the various people who were involved in 1916. Henry Gough, a local historian, wrote in his book, *Proclamation*, about the significance of Enniscorthy in the 1916 Rebellion. It was one of the few areas outside of Dublin that rose to support the colleagues in Dublin. Pádraig Pearse visited Enniscorthy to address the troops and to rally them to ensure their support. We grew up on the history of 1784, 1798, 1848 and 1867. Henry Gough wrote it was little wonder that the spirit of 1798, nurtured by folk memories and oral tradition and kept alive by the Young Irelanders and the Fenians, should be reawakened at the foot of Vinegar Hill and that the rebellion in Wexford, Enniscorthy in particular, during Easter Week was the most significant event outside of Dublin.

Deputy Ferris in particular will know that every year Enniscorthy Town Council holds its Easter commemoration ceremonies in the morning and Sinn Féin holds its commemoration in the afternoon. The Liam Mellows commemoration is held on the Sunday nearest to 10 December and the Fianna Fáil commemoration is held in the morning while the Sinn Féin commemoration is held in the afternoon. I hope that between now and 2016, we could come together in Enniscorthy to hold one significant commemoration.

Even before the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, Enniscorthy Town Council invited the now Deputy Gerry Adams to come to the celebrations in the morning. He was unable to attend but the now Deputy First Minister, Martin McGuinness came instead. Prior to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, Deputy Adams was invited to a hurling game between Tipperary and Wexford in Belleville in Enniscorthy when I was chairman of the club and prior to him speaking on Vinegar Hill. Enniscorthy has a history of leading the way in the area of peace and harmony and I hope Enniscorthy and Wexford will not be forgotten when the Minister is organising the 1916 celebrations.

We are speaking about the significance of Moore Street and I wish to remind the House of the significance of Enniscorthy. The Government is not up to speed with regard to the commemoration of 1916. County Wexford 1916 Bicentenary Trust Limited was set up in 2006. It is a cross-party committee that is now preparing the way for the 2016 celebrations. From the experience of how the 1798 Rebellion was celebrated, I know the committee will do justice to the

memory of the men of 1916 who fought the good fight. Enniscorthy was to the fore and the *Enniscorthy Echo* is still going strong. It was one of the very few newspapers to support the Rising in 1916. The Minister comes from a strong and proud tradition in County Kerry. I ask him to ensure 1916 is celebrated in the way it should be and also that the Sinn Féin motion supported by Fianna Fáil and other political entities, will be accepted by the Government in the spirit in which it was tabled. I ask him not to divide the House so that we can go forward together as Wexford did when celebrating the 1798 Rebellion and which it will do again with the Wexford 1916 Bicentenary Trust Limited.

Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Jimmy Deenihan): I move amendment No. 1:

To delete all the words after "Dail Eireann" and substitute the following: "looks forward to the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a landmark in the history of the people of Ireland; recalls that in January 2007 the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government placed a preservation order on Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, Dublin, under section 8 of the National Monuments Act 1930, on the grounds that the buildings are of national importance by reason of their historical significance as the final headquarters of the 1916 Provisional Government; acknowledges the hard work of the relatives of the signatories to the 1916 Proclamation of Independence, and all other campaigners, in raising public awareness of the importance of these historic buildings and this historic area of our capital city, and in securing the designation of the national monument; recognising the historical importance of the national monument at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, welcomes the Minister's assurance that the monument is fully protected under the National Monuments Acts and that any development affecting it requires his formal consent under those Acts; and notes that the Minister will take full account of the role of the monument in the 1916 Rising in relation to any such consent application."

I wish to share my time with Deputies Arthur Spring, Patrick O'Donovan and Michelle Mulherin. I welcome the families of the 1916 leaders and I thank Sinn Féin for tabling this motion. I have met representatives of the families, some of whom are in favour of this development and others who are opposed to it. I have met them at a meeting of the joint committee and I have visited the site. I am very familiar with both sides of the argument.

The Government's motion contains much of the substance and spirit of the original motion but better reflects the parameters of my functions under the National Monuments Acts with regard to the national monument at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, and the factors I can take into account in making a final decision on proposed works at the national monument site.

At the outset, I want to state unequivocally that the buildings at Nos. 14-17 Moore Street are robustly and comprehensively protected as a national monument under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts. No change can be made to the buildings, internally or externally, without my express consent. I can assure the House that I am fully committed to the preservation of the national monument and that I would not countenance any works which would impair or harm such an integral part of Ireland's history.

The 1916 Rising was a seminal event and a fundamental turning point in the history of the Irish people — a catalyst to a chain of events that would culminate in the creation of our Republic. The actions and self-sacrifice of the men and women who fought for Irish freedom in Easter Week 1916 laid the foundations for the establishment of the Irish State. It is the reason we are in this House this evening.

The national monument at Moore Street has particular significance in the story of 1916 as the location of the last military actions of the leaders of the Rising: Pearse, Clarke, Connolly, Plunkett and MacDermott. I am acutely aware of my responsibility as the Minister charged with the protection of this monument and I can assure the House that I am deeply committed to that role. Indeed, I feel privileged to bear this responsibility in the run-up to the centenary of the events of 1916, being deeply cognisant of the central role that the national monument at Moore Street played in the events of 1916 and, therefore, its importance in the upcoming centenary celebrations.

Against that background, I want to join in paying special tribute to the relatives of the signatories to the 1916 Proclamation and the other campaigners who have managed to raise public awareness of the historic buildings on Moore Street. Their hard work and commitment has ensured that there is a national monument there today. But for them, what is now a national monument could have been demolished under planning permission granted in 1999 that would have allowed this to happen. It was their efforts that led to the preservation order being placed on Nos. 14-17 Moore Street in January 2007 — a decision

with which I fully concur.

The preservation order means that no works affecting these properties can start without my prior written consent under the National Monuments Acts. However, it is important to note that the national monument is not State-owned; it is privately owned, as is the surrounding development site. The current development proposal for the former Carlton cinema site, which includes the monument buildings on Moore Street, began its journey through the planning process in April 2008, after the preservation order had been put in place.

The development finally received planning permission from An Bord Pleanála in March 2010. An Bord Pleanála's decision in 2010 took full account of the preservation order and the need for ministerial consent to be obtained under the National Monuments Acts before any works on or to the national monument could take place. Indeed, the board went further in also requiring a full archaeological appraisal of the entire development site and the preservation and recording of archaeological materials or historical features within it.

In addition, it requires a detailed project proposal to be prepared for the purpose of featuring and interpreting the historic significance of critical locations along the insurgents' evacuation route from the GPO to Moore Street. These would be issues to be addressed by the developer with Dublin City Council in the context of the overall development of the site.

In June 2011, I received an application on behalf of the developers for consent under the National Monuments Acts relating to Nos. 14-17 Moore Street. I want to categorically re-state that there are no proposals within the application before me either to demolish — or pull down, as Deputy Ferris said — these buildings. Neither is it the case that only the facades will be retained. The fact is that as much as possible of the internal and external structures are being retained.

The proposal is for Nos. 14 and 15 to house the main functions of a commemorative centre, while No. 17 would accommodate a specialist bookshop and other facilities for visitors. Meanwhile, No. 16, the most important and iconic building, would serve as the focal point of the commemorative centre.

There have been calls, echoed here this evening, for the national monument at Moore Street and the surrounding streetscape to be recognised as a historic battlefield and for it to be preserved as a historical or cultural quarter. This is a completely and entirely separate issue to the consent application for Nos. 14-17, that is currently before me under the National Monuments Acts. It is not clear how a battlefield site project could be developed in light of the existence of an extant planning permission. This permission was granted by An Bord Pleanála, the independent body set up by the Oireachtas to adjudicate on planning consents where disputes arise as to whether or how developments should or should not proceed. The permission was granted after comprehensive input from all interested parties to both the City Council and An Bord Pleanála, and in full light of the existence of the preservation order.

Notwithstanding that the wider area is not part of the current consent application, nevertheless, it is worth pointing out that Moore Street and its surrounds have not remained static since 1916. Much of Moore Street itself dates from after 1916. A great deal of alteration to buildings on the street has also taken place in the meantime. For example, in so far as the terrace containing the national monument is concerned, Nos. 1 to 7 were built after 1916. The buildings at Nos. 11, 12, 13, 18, 19 and 22 to 25, inclusive, all also date from after 1916. I think this was pointed out by Deputy Ó Caoláin.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: No.

Deputy Jimmy Deenihan: In fact, Nos. 24 and 25 are a relatively newly built apartment block with a depot for the City Council's refuse collection service to the rear. Within the terrace, the monument buildings themselves, Nos. 14-17, which are protected under the National Monuments Acts, are by far the most intact surviving buildings from the period of the Rising. My immediate remit in this case, and the application currently before me, relates to those buildings. I assure the House that I embrace and acknowledge their unique historical importance and character. I endorse everything that has been said by campaigners about the need to preserve and protect them and I assure the House that I have no intention of allowing them to be put at any risk whatsoever.

I think we can all also agree that the present appearance of the national monument buildings leaves much to be desired. I am acutely aware of the imminent approach of the 1916 centenary celebrations and of the critical need for this massively important historical site to be brought up to a standard befitting the occasion. Time is rapidly running out if this goal is to be realised and

it is my intention to make a decision on the consent application as soon as the necessary deliberations and consultations have been completed. I am currently in contact with the National Museum of Ireland and I will be bringing the matter back to the Oireachtas All-Party Consultation Group on Commemorations as soon as possible to update its members on developments.

I wish to assure the House that in considering and making any decision on the application for consent before me on Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, my first, foremost and prime concern will be to arrive at a determination that will best serve the long-term preservation and protection of the national monument itself, and the commemoration and remembrance of the epic period and personalities associated with it. In that context, I will take on board all the advice and guidance I have received, including during this debate, for which I am extremely grateful.

I wish to remind Deputy Ferris that I am very much aware of the O'Rahilly family and am a personal friend of Prionsias Ó Rathaille, the grandson of The O'Rahilly. In Listowel next Monday evening, I will be introducing a lecture on Alfred O'Rahilly who was The O'Rahilly's first cousin. I am also aware of the Shuldice and Mulvihill families' connection to the 1916 Rising; all of them were from north Kerry. I am therefore very much aware of the historical context.

I have a quasi-judicial function concerning the national monuments site. I cannot accept the Sinn Féin motion because it would prejudice, and be seen to be prejudicial to, the exercise of my statutory function. I want to point out clearly to all parties in this House that there is no issue between us as regards the protection of this national monument.

In response to Deputies Troy and Browne, I would point out that it was unfortunate that when this site was being designated by the then Minister, Dick Roche, that he did not include the battlefield as well. At that time there was no planning on the site and, therefore, no restrictions on him. It was unfortunate that an informed debate such as the one we are having tonight did not happen prior to that because the site could have been designated totally at that time as a national monument. While there is not a current planning application on the site, the fact that there is planning on it is a consideration for the battle site.

I sincerely thank Sinn Féin for raising this matter tonight. It is important that we have a very good discussion on it and I hope it will take place in the proper spirit. At the end of the day I will have to make a decision but I will be informed as much as possible before I make it because I realise how important it is.

Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin: On a point of order, the Minister suggested that I made some reference to the date of other buildings in the Moore Street area. I did not, either tonight or at any time in the past. I do not know what is his source for that.

Deputy Jimmy Deenihan: I thought I picked that up from the Deputy's statement.

Deputy Arthur Spring: It is important to preserve those places and buildings that are vital to our country's heritage. No. 16, Moore Street is one such vital place that could do with being restored. When walking along Moore Street, many could be unaware that they were walking past the site of the final council of war of the leaders of the 1916 Rising. The building is in a dilapidated state and does nothing to commemorate what took place there.

Nos. 14-17 Moore Street are currently on the record of protected structures in the Dublin City Council development plan and are protected as national monuments under the provisions of the National Monuments Acts. The Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is being asked to determine an application for consent which would restore, preserve and enhance these buildings in the form of a commemorative centre. The Minister is only tasked with determining the changes to the national monument and not the surrounding area. The commemorative centre would promote No. 16 as the focal point while Nos. 14, 15 and 17 would be used to house other functions such as a book shop and a cafe. No. 16 would be conserved with minimal alternations made so as to maintain the true character and spirit of the site for those who visit.

Sinn Féin's proposal would acknowledge the importance of the area but it would do little to move forward any project on No. 16, Moore Street before 2016. This is the crux of what we need to achieve tonight, namely, to put the attention and focus on having this restored to a place of heritage and celebration before 2016. The former structural glory of these buildings, which is not of architectural importance, is not what is at issue here. The national monument at Nos. 14-17 must be recognised and celebrated for the role it played in 1916. I do not wish to celebrate the bloodshed and the killing of men and women that took

place; I wish to recognise the principles for which the people of the 1916 Rising stood, and I believe those principles are true for the majority of us in this House tonight.

I came across these buildings when I was a student in Dublin. Many students go to Moore Street to buy fruit and vegetables, and meat in the butchers shops. A good friend of mine, Alan Bradshaw, a historian from Dublin, pointed out that those derelict buildings were of national importance. I could not believe it when I saw them and was informed about them. They are dilapidated, in an appalling condition and do nothing to celebrate the people, the culture or their legacy. I know the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, to be a man who is very passionate about heritage. It is not because he found himself in this role as a Minister at point in time; it is a subject on which I have heard him speak from my early days of watching him as a politician and it is also one in which he has a personal interest. I believe he will do the right thing.

There was some talk of the facade of the building being preserved and the rest of it being demolished. That is not the case. I do not believe that anybody here who would allow that to happen. With no disrespect to Deputy McLellan, the possibility of it being destroyed or demolished is not something any of us would countenance on this side of the House. We need to be as objective about it as we can be. I do not think that any political party should try to grab hold of this issue

The relatives of the 1916 families who are in the Visitors Gallery have played an enormous role in this, on which I commend them. I think that we can celebrate this cross-party and cross-county. It is ironic to note that every Deputy who has spoken on this motion so far comes from the four corners of Ireland and not from Dublin. For those of us who come from 1916 families who were involved in Rising, we look forward to celebrating it, to recognising the roles that people played but also to a brighter future for the country. We need to not only dwell on the past, but on the principles for which the people of 1916 strove and we need to re-evaluate our principles and look forward on that basis.

The GPO is a building of enormous importance. I have brought visitors from all over the world to see it and it does not do justice to what it is. It needs to be more than a general post office that is in operation in that it needs to be celebrated. O'Connell Street also needs to be celebrated. We need to get rid of every chipper on the street and celebrate it as the main street and thoroughfare of the capital of Ireland. If we could get that street upgraded to a level where it is of tourist importance and the heritage site on Moore Street was recognised for what it is, that would only make things better for Dublin — those who are not from here would like to celebrate that. I commend Sinn Féin and the Opposition on recognising what is important tonight.

Deputy Patrick O'Donovan: I welcome the opportunity to speak on this motion. I also welcome the presence of the Minister and the relatives of the leaders of 1916 Rising in the Gallery, whom I was fortunate to meet at a recent meeting of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Heritage, Transport and the Gaeltacht. I will not repeat what has been said but it is important this issue is not politicised because all parties in this Dáil come from the foundation stone that was laid in 1916.

The Minister's commitment to heritage is obvious and I welcome the response he gave to the motion. I come from that part of the world from where Con Colbert, who was associated with the 1916 Rising, came. This is not only a Dublin issue, it is very much a national issue.

While I agree with a great deal of what has been said, there is a bigger context to this, namely, the total destruction of the north side of Dublin city centre from O'Connell Street out. It is not only Moore Street, which is the main part of this motion. What Dublin City Council has allowed to happen to the main thoroughfare of our capital city during the past 20 or 30 years is a scandal. Where were the councillors when decisions were being made to turn the largest and one of the finest boulevards in the world into a monument of neon, plastic and tack and the surrounding three or so blocks around O'Connell Street? Where was the Dublin City development plan in this context? This is the same Dublin city development plan that was adopted recently and we found we had a massive problem with regard to a site for the national children's hospital. Yet the council could allow the destruction of the Georgian and Edwardian Dublin to the scale where the principal locations of where the 1916 Rising was fought has been shrouded by plastic and neon. It is a scandal to think that at no stage did Dublin city councillors, of any party, say that enough was enough when these development plans were being adopted. I found it embarrassing when, along with a colleague, Deputy Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin, I stood facing the GPO during the 1916 commemorations in O'Connell Street a few months ago and noted that to my back there was nothing but plastic and all sorts of rubbish, for

want of a better word, that has no place in the main street of any capital city, let alone a street that is of such historical importance as O'Connell Street.

What has happened in Moore Street is symptomatic of what has been allowed to happen to the entire north side of Dublin. It begs the question that if the 1916 Rising had happened on the southside, would we be even having this argument. We probably would not. That needs to be said. In fairness, the area has been very badly treated. I pull no punches when it comes to An Post either because, as Deputy Ferris said, one has to go rooting around to find the memorabilia that commemorate the 1916 Rising.

When one contrasts what we have in Dublin with sites such as Gettysburg, Antietam, Waterloo and anywhere a struggle for independence or battle took place one can see how successive management teams, council teams and governments have failed Dublin city centre. I am not from Dublin but this is of huge significance to me. What we allowed happen on O'Connell Street permeates outwards. With great aplomb we erected a monument to the Celtic tiger, namely, the Spire. It is a soulless characterless piece of metal dumped in the middle of O'Connell Street. It draws one's eye up to the top of it but what does one get then? One's eye returns to earth fairly rapidly with an anticlimactic "well, what was that about?". It is typical of what the Celtic tiger years did to the country. Perhaps consideration might be given to naming it after a certain politician who served the constituency of Dublin Central with such distinction.

I welcome the Minister's proposed amendment to the motion. I congratulate Sinn Féin. I can be very critical of Sinn Féin when I need to be, but in fairness it is an absolute scandal that we are even discussing in the Dáil what we have allowed happen to Georgian and Edwardian Dublin and to buildings with architectural significance never mind historical significance. Rural Deputies will know that some fellow from the local authority will come out to plank a preservation order on a bunch of rocks and stones with a bit of thatch on top of them. We have allowed the main street in our capital city to be turned into something like the sea front facade of a resort in the south of England. What Dublin City Council has allowed to happen is a scandal. Will the Minister, at the earliest opportunity, arrange for the manager of Dublin City Council to appear before the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht so he can put forward a plan for this national thoroughfare because what the local authority has allowed to happen is an absolute disgrace?

Deputy Michelle Mulherin: I must disagree with Deputy O'Donovan because I really like the Spire and I am not from Dublin. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and I like seeing the rain trickling down it. However, this is not pertinent to this debate as it is art as opposed to what we are discussing.

I welcome passion for remembering and commemorating our history, the people, the decisions they made and the events which epitomise our struggle for the freedom we enjoy to self-determine as a people, not that we must all agree but that we have this freedom. Using bricks and mortar is a limited means to do so but it is the only way we can state what happened mattered to us as a people, that it is significant now and will continue to be significant so long as we are a nation.

To take a slightly different tack, as the Minister stated when he spoke so earnestly, this monument is a protected structure and he does not intend any destruction to it. The condition it is in is not desirable for such an important place but we have a statutory process which we should not sidestep. The Minister has been approached by people who are for and against the proposed development which has planning permission. The statutory process came about through the Parliament, which has its roots in the 1916 Rising which occurred at a time when there was a state of chaos in the country and people wanted a stable society with respect for law and order and rules and to be able to self-determine as a people in a parliament. According to the statutory process the Minister must deliberate, consult and consent or not, and he should be allowed to do so because this is what the law states. We should not sidestep this no matter how much passion we have. I have full confidence in the Minister.

With due respect to Sinn Féin which tabled the motion, in the Seanad it has tabled amendments to the Statute Law Revision Bill to abolish the Offences against the State Act which criminalises activities detrimental to the security of the State. Sinn Féin tells people to break the law by not paying the household charge. This does not fit because we are parliamentarians. We work through the system and democracy is burdensome and requires much work, but it means dialogue and I believe Sinn Féin appreciates dialogue at this point.

I do not want to go over the detail and the real significance of this, which has already been mentioned by other speakers, but I am delighted plans are afoot so we may see something done with this monument by the time we

commemorate 1916. There are ways and means to commemorate. It does not mean having exactly the same as what was there before and I will give an example from a rural area close to where I live. A stone cottage from the townland of Carradoogan near Attymass near Ballina in County Mayo, which was left derelict because of mass emigration, is now part of the Irish Hunger Memorial in Battery Park, Lower Manhattan not far from where the World Trade Center stood. It was taken stone by stone and reconstructed in Battery Park. While it is not in its original place, it is nonetheless a testament to all the people who suffered during the Famine and through emigration, and more people get to see it in its current location.

With regard to the buildings on Moore Street, any development should be done respectfully, taking on board advice from museums, archaeologists and other experts so the buildings have due respect and credence as the national monument we want them to be. I respect the process that must take place. The Minister is aware of the seriousness and sensitivity required for the right decision to be made with regard to having something in place by the time of the commemorations in 2016.

Deputy Michael P. Kitt: I welcome the motion tabled by Sinn Féin. What struck me most about the representations I received in recent weeks was the fact that many people stated many historic buildings and places in this country have not been recognised and many of them are under threat. I found this hard to believe. I read through some previous debates from the Dáil and Seanad, including a debate in which I took part in the Seanad in 2004 when we discussed amending the National Monuments Act. During the debate we discussed the Battle of Aughrim and the battlefield mentioned by the Minister when speaking on this motion. I welcome what Sinn Féin is doing through this motion because these issues are part of our history and heritage and we should have more debates on national monuments.

As has been stated, when in government Fianna Fáil introduced a national preservation order on Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street which declared the buildings were of national importance by reason of their historic significance. Senator Labhrás Ó Murchú made a very strong case in the Seanad with regard to the buildings. No. 16 was the last place of refuge for the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising. They were forced to abandon their GPO headquarters and take refuge there in what were to be the last hours of the insurrection. Leaders including Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, Joseph Plunkett, Seán McDermott and Thomas Clarke took refuge in this house on 29 April, the day before the unconditional surrender by Pearse. Under this preservation order, Nos. 14-17 Moore Street would be afforded the same status and protection as a priceless historical structure. One article I read compared it to Newgrange.

In 2007, the then Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Mr. Dick Roche, said: "In the decade leading up to the centenary celebrations of the 1916 rising it would be unconscionable for the Government not to close any potential legal loophole which might result in the loss or destruction of a national monument such as No. 16 Moore Street to future generations." It is regrettable for this building to have a neglected or vacant appearance. Earlier the Minister spoke in positive terms about his concern. I hope that there will be agreement between all involved — An Bord Pleanála, Dublin City Council and the Save No. 16 Moore Street Committee — on the idea of developing there with a conservation plan for the historic site. The committee, whose members include relatives of the signatories of 1916 and whom I welcome to the debate, has done much to raise public awareness of the importance of this historic address. Members of the committee have made presentations on a number of occasions to the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Environment, Transport, Culture and the Gaeltacht, [101] and they have highlighted their campaign once again. I look forward to exploring with the Save No. 16 Moore Street Committee how this area of Dublin can be developed in a balanced manner that respects the historical significance of the site.

I ask the Minister to act without further delay to ensure the plan to transform this site with the full preservation of the national monument is carried out. The Minister mentioned the battlefield site, which is certainly important. It will greatly enhance our national heritage and the tourist potential in our capital city as we approach the centenary of the Easter Rising. Many of us received representations from a French art historian and museum professional who talked about having this building in its place beside Kilmainham Gaol as a top attraction in the guidebooks, which is something to which we should all look forward.

Deputy Brendan Smith: I am very glad to have the opportunity speak in support of the motion before us tonight urging the Government "to act without further delay to ensure the full preservation of the national monument and to develop a plan to transform the GPO-Moore Street area into an historic quarter

and battlefield site". The motion is signed by some 50 Members of the House. The signatories to this motion come from differing political backgrounds and viewpoints. These are Deputies who might not agree on much — in recent weeks we have been in deep disagreement on some important issues facing the country, notably the stability treaty — but on this issue we are at one.

I have no doubt many Deputies on the Government side of the House feel equally strongly on this issue and would happily sign this motion if they had the opportunity. This need not and should not be a cause or an opportunity for political point scoring across the House. The issue is not whether we believe in preserving and protecting this site. I believe there is near unanimity in this House on that. The issue is about demonstrating the clear and absolute resolve in achieving it.

The clock is ticking on this issue. While some may comfort themselves thinking the 1916 centenary is almost four years away, that time will pass quickly. Deputies should bear in mind it is already more than five years since Mr. Dick Roche as Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government placed a preservation order on Nos. 14-17 Moore Street under section 8 of the National Monuments Act 1930. I suggest we do not have four years, or anything like it, to resolve this matter. It is vital to get this matter resolved positively and speedily as we are entering a decade of important and significant commemorations for communities and traditions both North and South. For republicans and Nationalists the Easter 1916 commemorations will be the high point of that decade of commemorations, but there are other commemorations in that decade that are of considerable importance to our island as a whole. These include the signing of the Ulster Covenant, the 1913 Dublin Lockout, and the formation of the Irish Volunteers.

The Moore Street site is only a short walk from the Rotunda Hospital where the Irish Volunteers held their first meeting in 1913. The former Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen, set the tone for this decade of commemoration in a speech to UCD's Institute for British-Irish Studies in May 2010:

The events of the decade between 1912 and 1922 were momentous and defining ones for all of the people of this island, and indeed for these islands. This was the decade of the covenant and the gun, of blood sacrifice and bloody politics, a time of division and war, not only on this island but across the world. It was the decade that defined relationships on these islands for most of the last century.

The Minister, Deputy Deenihan, chairs the Government committee that is tasked with co-ordinating and choreographing many of these commemorations. That decade has already commenced. Last April saw the anniversaries of the foundation of the Ulster Volunteers and the publication of the third Home Rule Bill. As the year progresses the Minister and his officials will increasingly find themselves engrossed and focused on the range and variety of commemorations. That is why it is vital the issue of Nos. 14-17 Moore Street is resolved and acted upon now. My fear and the fear of many of us in Fianna Fáil is that the longer the protection of the Moore Street site is delayed, the less of the historic site will be left to protect and preserve.

The Government must act now. This is not a matter of questioning or doubting the Minister's commitment to the aim, but rather one of requesting that the Minister and his officials show greater resolve and determination to finalise the issues quickly. We are aware there are complications and differences of opinion. We also realise there are varied interests and the Minister's powers are limited. The Minister's leadership is needed to progress this important issue. The laneways and streets surrounding Moore Street are some of the most historic in the nation. They are among the last remnants of the battlefield that part of Dublin became during the Easter Rising.

The Moore Street buildings we are discussing tonight are where the leaders and defenders of the first Provisional Government retreated from the burning GPO. It is where, on 28 April, the leaders of the rebellion decided to surrender. Moore Lane still contains some buildings and cobblestones from the period. This is where the fight continued as the 300 men of the GPO garrison sought to make it to safety in the Moore Street buildings while under fire from British guns. Many of the original Easter Rising buildings no longer exist. The former Liberty Hall is gone. Having been so heavily shelled and attacked, the GPO is now effectively a reconstruction. The building, where the Proclamation was signed by Tom Clarke, Pádraig Pearse, James Connolly, Seán MacDermott, Joseph Plunkett, Thomas MacDonagh and Eamonn Ceannt, no longer exists. The site is now marked by a tarnished and hard to spot plaque on the outside wall of a store on Henry Street. It is from 16 Moore Street that Pearse sent Cumann na mBan nurse, Elizabeth O'Farrell, under a white flag, with a note for General Lowe stating he wished to surrender. Nurse O'Farrell subsequently carried Pearse's instruction to surrender to Boland's Mills and Jacob's factory.

I am very glad to have had the opportunity to make a short contribution on this important motion.

Deputy Éamon Ó Cuív: Tá áthas orm go bhfuil deis agam cúpla focal a rá faoin ábhar seo agus tacaíocht a thabhairt don rún seo. Tá sé thar a bheith tábhachtach go ndéanfaimis cuimhniú ar na láithreacha a bhí lárnach do Éirí Amach 1916. Mar a dúirt an Teachta Brendan Smith, tá go leor den Stát atá againn anois bunaithe ar aois na ndaoine a chuaigh amach i 1916 ag iarraidh saoirse a bhaint amach don tír seo.

Is minic a smaoiním ar an argóint atá ann scaití idir an féinriail agus an phoblachtánachas a bhí mar chroílár an Éirí Amach. Tá sé tábhachtach a rá gurb é mo bharúil dá mbeadh rogha saor ag pobal na hÉireann ag aon am ó lár na naoiú aoise déag ar aghaidh, dá mbeadh reifreann saorcheart ann, go roghnóidís poblacht seachas féinriail. Is ceart dúinn a aithint freisin, go raibh tionchar nach beag ag an Éirí Amach ar shlánú na Gaeilge agus gur ar éigin go mbeadh an Ghaeilge mar atá sí i láthair na huaire sa tír murach an Éirí Amach. Ní léir domsa go mbeadh aon stát seachas poblacht sásta an Ghaeilge a cur mar chéad teanga oifigiúil ar an Stát agus tús áite a thabhairt di ar an gcaoi sin.

Tá ceantar fíor-stairiúil againn i lár na cathrach, idir Ard Oifig an Phoist agus Sráid Uí Mhórdha agus na lánáí timpeall uirthi, agus is ceart iad a chaomhnú mar aonad. Molaim go mór an obair atá déanta ag daoine go deonach, ag iarraidh an cháis seo a bhrú chun cinn. Tá mé cinnte go bhfuil gach uile taobh den Teach seo ar an tuairim go mba cheart beart a dhéan[103]amh anseo. Tá a fhios agam go bhfuil scéal sách casta ann, ach má chuireann gach aon duine le chéile is féidir éacht a dhéanamh. Níl sé i bhfad ó shin ó rinne éacht maidir le láthair Chath na Bóinne. Má bhíothas in ann é a dhéanamh dó sin is féidir an rud céanna, agus níos mó, a dhéanamh le comóradh a dhéanamh ar an Éirí Amach. Mar sin, tá mé cinnte go mbeadh tacaíocht ag an Rialtas ó gach uile thaobh den Teach má thugann sé faoi séadchomhartha náisiúnta ceart a dhéanamh thart ar an gceantar sin le go mbeadh daoine a thiocfadh anseo ó ar fud an domhain le ceiliúradh agus comóradh a dhéanamh ar an Éirí Amach in ann a fheiceáil cén áit ar tharla na heachtraí móra i stair na hÉireann.

Le fada an lá, tá mise ag tathaint go bhfuil go leor spáis taobh istigh d'Ard Oifig an Phoist chun chuid mhaith den láthair sin a thabhairt ar láimh le haghaidh músaem náisiúnta na saoirse a chur inti. Má thagann cuairteoir, stráinséar nó turasóir go Sráid Uí Chonaill, is aisteach nach ndeirtear leo cad é Ard Oifig an Phoist. Tá beagáinín de thaispeántas ann ach níl aon rud mór ann. Tá go leor taiscí ag Ard Músaem na hÉireann. Le haghaidh 2016, ba cheart músaem náisiúnta na saoirse a lonnú in Ard Oifig an Phoist ionas nuair a thiocfadh cuairteoirí ag iarraidh a fháil amach céard a tharla ann go mbeadh scéal na saoirse ar fáil ansin, ní hamháin scéal an Éirí Amach ach scéal iarracht phobal na hÉireann saoirse a bhaint amach. Tá Ard Músaem na hÉireann anseo i Sráid Chill Dara, tá cuid eile de thíos i gCaisleán an Bharraigh agus cuid eile i mBeairic Uí Choileáin, ach an áit go mba cheart na séadchomharthaí a bhaineann leis an Éirí Amach agus leis an troid ar son na saoirse, ag dul i bhfad siar go 1798, ar fad a gcoinneáil is ea Ard Oifig an Phoist, agus ba cheart cuid den bhfoirgneamh a chur in oiriúint do sin. Molaim go mbeadh sé sin mar chuid de ruid i bhfad níos mó, is é sin an moladh seo maidir leis an láthair i Sráid Uí Mhórdha.

Deputy Maureen O'Sullivan: Ar dtús, ba mhaith liom a rá go bhfuil náire agus díomá orm go bhfuilimid go fóill ag caint faoin ábhar seo. Ba cheart go mbíodh plean gníomhaíochta againn blianta ó shin. Dá mbíodh, bheadh ionad stairiúil againn anois, agus slí stairiúil ó Ard Oifig an Phoist go dtí Sráid Parnell.

It is very disappointing that we are still talking about the historical area from the GPO to Parnell Street and all the places associated with the Easter Rising. Every Government from the foundation of the State has neglected to make a fitting memorial there to the men and women of the Easter Rising. Indeed, it could be said that each Government and the local authority have allowed all of the sites associated with the various battle scenes of the Rising to become derelict and, in some cases, allowed them to be demolished. Kilmainham Gaol could have been knocked down by a developer some years ago only for the actions of a dedicated group of people who worked to preserve it. It is now one of the most visited sites in Dublin, with excellent guides.

One can see the efforts and manoeuvres that have gone into almost bringing about a similar fate for the area of Moore Street. I acknowledge the relatives' group and its trojan work to keep this item on the agenda. I also acknowledge Sinn Féin bringing this debate to the Chamber. At the commemoration committee meeting today there was a proposal from a member for a 1916 Rising walking trail around the area, similar to the Freedom Trail in Boston. It would be mortifying to do that walk now, given the dereliction of the area. However, we are aware of its potential. The Minister and other Ministers have made the tour, as have other people, and I have been on it several times. We know that it

could be a historical walk in a historical quarter with suitable preservation and conservation. There is a story at every step of that walk from the GPO, around to Parnell Street, where the surrender took place, and further up to the Garden of Remembrance and into Mountjoy Square if we wish to develop it.

We visit cities in eastern and western Europe and the places we visit there are the historical quarters. Even in economic terms, they are doing very well for the cities where they are situ[104]ated. I live in East Wall and my journey, as a teenager, was from East Wall, along the GPO, through Moore Street, Moore Lane and O'Rahilly Parade to my secondary school, Mount Carmel in Kings Inn Street. I felt privileged to do that walk. The walk should be preserved for other people. It is a battlefield site, commemorating a momentous historic event in our history which had far-reaching consequences. With regard to designating Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street as a national monument, it is currently a national disgrace. I have stood inside those houses and felt frustration at what was allowed to happen. However, I also felt very positive about what could be achieved, not just with Nos. 14 to 17, which is not enough, but the entire area. It suits some to focus on protecting Nos. 14 to 17. That is all very well, and I am sure it will be protected, but the entire area is a battlefield site.

Dublin City Council has many questions to answer about this, dating back to 1998 when the Carlton Group was given planning permission. Then there was a bizarre agreement between the council and Chartered Land in 2004. There was an issue of compulsory purchase orders and whether the councillors had a vote. They were ruled out of order when they tried to raise the matter as it was considered *sub judice*. There was an *in camera* meeting in November 2006, Supreme Court judgments and various toing and froing to An Bord Pleanála. In December 2010 and October 2011, demolition and alterations were carried out without permission.

The traders are another aspect of Moore Street which should be mentioned as they are part of that history and culture. I acknowledge the work of the late Tony Gregory in trying to preserve that. There is also the matter of Nos. 32 and 33 Henry Street and the preservation of Henry Lane. We have an opportunity to create a historical quarter and historical walkway in time for the centenary. The expression "tír gan teanga, tír gan anam" is well known but respect for and preservation of our heritage sites are also central to the soul of a country. I listened to the Minister talk about Nos. 14 to 17 but is it appropriate that this national monument, all alone, will be dwarfed by apartments, shopping malls, arcades and God knows what else the developer might put there?

I thank Deputy Nash for his concern for the north inner city. I also support Deputy Ó Cuív's proposal for a specific museum based on the Rising.

Debate adjourned.

Wednesday, 23 May 2012.

Deputy Finian McGrath: I propose to share time with Deputies Clare Daly and Mick Wallace. I thank the Ceann Comhairle for allowing me to speak on this important motion on the preservation of Nos. 14-17 Moore Street, Dublin. I thank my colleagues for supporting the motion, which is a glorious opportunity to preserve something from our past, reflect on the aims and aspirations of the men and women of 1916 and use the monument to build and develop the future of this great island of ours. The future should be about equality, inclusion, social justice and an end to the mindset that sadly exists of keeping our people divided. We have much work to do and respecting diversity and difference must be at the heart of any new Ireland. This monument and street are part of that culture. The buildings are of national importance from a historical and cultural point of view but also as a project to raise public awareness and the huge potential of cultural tourism and jobs. The shared history, built on equality and independence, is part of who we are and we should never forget it.

It is also an opportunity to reflect on where we are now. As we look deep into our hearts, we can ask ourselves if the men and women of 1916 would be proud of what is going on in this country today. Sadly, the answer is "No". However, that does not mean we cannot change it and the motion can be used as a game changer to instil political and economic patriotism in our children and future generations on this island.

I am one of the people who do not accept that Ireland ends at Donegal or Dundalk. Sadly, too many in this House live with that mindset, believing that a divided Ireland is okay. We must examine this and we should be proud of who we are and unite to build up this great country.

I acknowledge the hard work of the relatives of the signatories to the 1916 Proclamation of independence in raising public awareness of the importance of these historic buildings and the historic area of our capital city and in securing the designation of the national monument. I view with serious concern the deterioration of the national monument, which has languished in a vacant and neglected state for many years and the potential threat to it under a current planning application.

I urge all Deputies to support this motion, which is about our heritage, history, commonsense, the potential for jobs and, above all, doing something noble and historic for the future of the people of this island.

Deputy Clare Daly: I am glad to support this important motion. The battle to preserve Nos. 14-17 Moore Street as a national monument and retention of the surrounding buildings, streets and laneways to be developed as an important historic and cultural quarter has been ongoing for years. We are only a couple of years away from the centenary of 1916 and it is appropriate for us to try to step in and sort out the situation. Many dedicated campaigners have been fighting on the issue for so long, which is a tribute to them but also an indictment of the system. I was pleased to participate in a tour of the area last year. Being there is a real eye-opener because the state of dereliction is appalling. No other country would allow such a potentially important cultural quarter to become rundown. Being there, one gets a sense of history and of our participation in the monumental events that took place almost 100 years ago. The entire quarter has important historical and cultural buildings. This includes Nos. 32 and 33 Henry Street, which are due to be demolished. The decision is before An Bord Pleanála, which must take into account the fact that we only get one chance at it. If this Parliament cannot sort it out, it does not say much for our abilities. It is scandalous, and has happened far too often, that national monuments have been allowed to deteriorate. It is timely that we discuss it this week, the week in which James Connolly, one of the key participants in 1916, founded the Labour Party.

I support the motion not as a nationalist but as an internationalist. I am conscious of the fact that what happened in 1916 was important. When Connolly talked about raising the flag over the GPO, he said it would not be enough if we were in hock to landlords and bankers. That is very relevant today as we look at a treaty in which our independence and control over these issues is up for debate.

Deputy Mick Wallace: I am also in favour of the scheme to work this area into a cultural quarter but many issues surround it. The only part that is preserved is Nos. 14-17 Moore Street and more must be done. The site has full planning permission with some conditions. The developer in question is in NAMA, which gives the State more power than usual. Aside from the huge influence of NAMA, the State has the option of a compulsory purchase order. In any situation where the common good outweighs private property rights, the State has the right to intervene. Many of the buildings on the street were built after 1916 but the whole street should be preserved as a cultural quarter, with the buildings rebuilt as they were before the Rising. It would be money well spent. A development, in a modified format, should go in tandem with it. The scale of the development is too big for today's economic conditions and was probably over the top at the time. There is room for developing the cultural centre in a proper manner. A modified development could also go ahead and the two could work well together.

In any city in Europe, one sees attempts to restore historical parts of the city. I have Turin in mind, where work has been done to restore old buildings in the old part of Turin. New shops, apartments, residential units, bars and restaurants have been built around the old buildings in a controlled and measured way. Ireland allowed O'Connell Street to go downhill due to a lack of planning and regulation. O'Connell Street leaves much to be desired as one of the most prominent streets in the city but we could develop this heritage area in the proper manner.

I am a great believer in the value of history. History teaches us an awful lot and is the story of how we got to where we are today, why we act as we do and why we think like we do. Looking at politics and history over the past 100 years, people in the decision-making process, especially politicians, failed to learn the lessons of history. In Afghanistan, the Russians were mad to go in and spent ten years there. It was hard to credit that the Americans and British followed them in there but they have been in there for ten years now. One group was as bad as the other and each group has made as little progress as the other.

If this quarter was set up, it would provide greater awareness of history for many people in the country. There will also be a cultural tourism aspect to this. I would like to think the commercial and preservation aspects could go together.

For those Members interested in checking it out I recommend the Italian Quarter along the quay which has worked well. The place was packed today in the sunshine and it has a lovely atmosphere. Preservation and commerce can go together. We preserved the old facade and we worked in co-operation with Dublin City Council.

Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Deputy Joe Costello): I welcome the opportunity to discuss this Private Members' motion. I compliment the various signatories to the motion as it gives us the opportunity to debate and find the best way to celebrate the centenary of the 1916 Rising. We all want to ensure it is commemorated in a respectful and dignified fashion and that the two monuments encompassed by this motion, in particular the national monument in Moore Street, can be dealt with. I commend all those who have campaigned on this issue over the years to ensure this monument and the GPO, the focal points of the 1916 Rising, would be properly preserved and play their part in the commemoration of 1916 in the future in the best form possible. I compliment the relatives of the signatories of the Proclamation of Independence who have been ably led over a number of years by James Connolly Heron, a descendant of James Connolly.

The campaign began in 2002 when the National Graves Association informed me that the commemorative plaque which had been erected in 1966 on No. 16, Moore Street, had been removed. I tabled a motion in Dublin City Council that No. 16 Moore Street should be deemed a preserved structure. The plaque had been removed by a member of a consortium involved in the development and which had certain property rights on a number of houses on Moore Street. Under pressure from Dublin City Council, the plaque was restored but no apology was received from the person who deliberately removed it and had prevented the building from being deemed a preserved structure.

A public meeting was held in the Mansion House hosted by the then Lord Mayor, Dermot Lacey. I refer to a motion agreed by Dublin City Council:

Considering the historical importance of No. 16 Moore Street which was the building where the last meeting of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic Parliament on Easter Monday 1916 was held, with James Connolly, Pádraig Pearse, Willie Pearse, Seán MacDiarmada, Joseph Mary Plunkett and Thomas Clarke attending, and where the decision was taken to surrender on Saturday 29 April. Dublin City Council agrees that No. 16 Moore Street be retained and incorporated into the planned regeneration of the immediate area and further agrees that No. 16 Moore Street become a repository of artefacts and documents relating to the historic events of 1916 and be developed as a public information and education centre.

This motion was passed unanimously by Dublin City Council on 7 May 2003.

Dublin City Council declared the house a protected structure and commissioned the Shaffrey report which is well worth reading and which recommended that Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street should be included in the preservation order. The then Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, and Minister for the Environment, Dick Roche, declared Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street a national monument.

This has been a developing process and there is scope for further development. Dublin City Council gained possession from the Carlton consortium by a compulsory purchase order as a result of terrible behaviour by the private sector. It is now in the possession of the O'Reilly consortium.

The private ownership and the An Bord Pleanála permission pose certain problems. The State has responsibility for national monuments and the Minister and the National Museum of Ireland have specific roles. There is also an all-party consultative group. The relatives of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation are anxious to expand the parameters of the national monument Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and to integrate the two national monuments into a natural geographical area and to ensure that the character of the development is appropriate.

In his contribution to the debate last night, it would seem the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, committed himself to engage in full consultation. He stated his primary concern would be to arrive at a determination that would best serve the long-term preservation and protection of the national monument and the commemoration and remembrance of the epic period and personalities associated with it. There is a window of opportunity for all-party discussions with the Minister. If this motion is put to the House tonight and the Minister's amendment is not accepted, then we will have divided the House and it will be very difficult to move forward in any constructive manner. I ask the proposers of the motion to hold off so that we might agree a certain period of time. I have not spoken to the Minister but he indicated in his remarks last night that he was open to consultation on the matter in an attempt to reach a satisfactory

compromise because otherwise it will be a case that the House is divided in its opinion and that would be unfortunate.

Deputy Jerry Buttimer: This is a very important motion. I pay tribute to the families and those who are campaigning because this is not about partisan politics but rather it is about our people, our heroes, our patriots — those we will always revere. The Minister of State, Deputy Costello, is correct that the Minister's contribution last night was very conciliatory and positive. I echo the comments of the Minister of State that the House should not divide but rather that the Minister's amendment should be accepted to allow a cross-party consultative approach to bring about agreement on how to commemorate and celebrate 1916. This is about our people.

Last week in Arbour Hill, the Bishop of Ferns in a very provocative and challenging homily, set out the significance of 1916 for a new generation of Irish people who perhaps did not understand our history. He spoke about how 1916 allowed us to take a new path. He quoted Garret FitzGerald who had said about the 1916 Rising, "It was planned by men who feared that without a dramatic gesture of this kind, the sense of national identity that has survived all the hazards of the centuries would flicker out ignominiously in their lifetime, leaving Ireland psychologically as well as legally an integral part of the United Kingdom." This is the challenge we face, to commemorate and to reach out. I hope the House will not divide on this motion. All of us as parliamentarians should be at that mass in Arbour Hill every year because it commemorates and celebrates in a formal way our patriots and our heroes.

I was in Gettysburg last summer and I toured the battlefields of the American Civil War. It was a mind-blowing day and experience. We must not allow anything to happen to this ground which is one of our sacred places. It is a disgrace. Dublin City Council and An Bord Pleanála have a lot to answer for. We should never forget our past and should not have got into this position. If we are to take a consensus approach to commemorating the 1916 centenary in four years time, we must do so devoid of party politics. We are all republicans and want to see our country united one day. We all believe in the aspirations of equality in the Proclamation, which is why this motion is important. How we plan to commemorate the centenary is also important. We are all required, as citizens, to be participants. As the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, correctly said last night, the Rising was a seminal event and a fundamental turning point in our history.

I hope we are discussing this matter in a non-adversarial manner because we all want to see the same result at the end of the day. Before the end of this debate, we should reflect on how we can achieve what is best for the men and women of 1916.

Deputy Derek Nolan: I am happy to speak on this motion, whose signatories meant well. It is unfortunate, however, that we are getting two separate motions — one from the proposers and a Government amendment. It is clear that the motion cannot be an agreed one because constitutional rights to property, planning and legislative issues are also involved in this matter. It would, however, be a sensible and conciliatory approach to accept the Minister's offer, which he made yesterday in good faith, to have discussions to facilitate a solution. If we had a unifying motion, rather than a divisive one, it would take the nasty sting out of this question.

The buildings in Moore Street are in an appalling state at the moment. It does not seem right that a country which had so much wealth for so long would disregard a site of such national historic importance and allow it to become run down. It shows that while there may have been wealth here over the past 15 years, values were not upheld.

Up to 2023, we will be marking a decade of centenaries, including the Civil War. There will be a real opportunity for us to discuss our history and Irish politics generally. Ireland has a unique and interesting history, which is detailed, layered and multifaceted, and in which various strands of society collided against one another over a long period.

Based on my own experience of the Irish education system, we have always been quick to take one aspect of a historical moment, while not defining it in any concrete or realistic way. The 1916 Rising was not a popular revolt, it was decried by the average person in the street. We forget that when we teach history, but that tells us something about ourselves and our country. We must be honest about it and not pretend that everyone marched in the streets in 1916. The general public castigated those who participated in the Rising. It was only afterwards, when the executions took place, that public opinion started to turn. Similarly, 1916 cannot be viewed in isolation from the First World War, the British parliamentary system, the home rule movement and the collapse of

Parnell's reputation in the years before.

The Moore Street buildings and the 1916 celebrations generally offer us a wonderful opportunity to have a detailed and educational look at our history. Rather than taking a tokenistic or glossy view of one interesting example, we should examine the period in detail and learn about the real history of this island.

When we are celebrating 1916, we should not forget places outside Dublin which also participated in the Rising. Speaking as a representative of Galway West, I would refer specifically to the uprising that took place in Oranmore where the barracks was attacked. The fighting subsequently continued in Athenry, where the great Liam Mellows was involved. Let us, therefore, have a broad, rich and detailed understanding of our past. We should try to learn from the people of 1916, rather than celebrating some fantasy notion. It would be better to dedicate such an effort to the memories of those who died, rather than seeking some cheap and easy political answer.

Deputy Paschal Donohoe: When I was preparing for this debate, I could not help but think of the words of Diarmaid Ferriter which he wrote at the time of the Mahon tribunal report. In an article in *The Irish Times* he wrote:

"As we edge towards the centenary of the events that comprised the revolution of the early 20th century, we face a stark conclusion. This is a State bereft of meaningful sovereignty due to its bankruptcy, and a State whose governing culture has been exposed as rotten. We may have little to cheer about in 2016."

Regardless of whether one agrees with the entirety of Professor Ferriter's conclusion, one point is very clear. That is, that as we approach 2016, which will mark the centenary of the Rising, it will offer a stark counterpoint to where we stand at the moment. If we examine the views of the people of 1916 and what they were trying to achieve, including the ideas they had of the kind of republic they wanted to create, there can be little doubt that the crisis we are facing would be a huge disappointment to them and not reflective of the sacrifices they made.

As regards Professor Ferriter's last point, there are forces far beyond our decision on the Moore Street site that will determine whether we will be cheering in 2016. The decisions we will make about the site, however, might provide some cheer to people on the centenary regardless of where we stand on other issues.

I echo the comments by the Minister of State, Deputy Costello, Deputy Buttimer and others. I acknowledge the huge work of the relatives and descendants of the 1916 leaders in keeping the flame of their memory alive. They have kept that flame flickering through very difficult times. I also want to acknowledge the intent of Opposition Members in tabling this motion. It would be appropriate if we could find some way of avoiding dividing the House.

I believe the nature of history is to contest it. If we do not have different views on what happened and why, and are not able to discuss them, it is not like history at all — it something that is dead and in our past. The greatest use we can make of history is to debate it and have different views. In that regard, how we discuss our history is inherently a political act, which is both welcome and important. It is not necessarily a party political act, however.

Everybody in the House can trace back what they are doing now to what happened in 1916. In the centenary period we are entering, we should do all we can to ensure that we come together in a political way but not a party political way. We are capable of doing that in so many ways as we commemorate parts of our history. I saw Deputy Adams and other members of his party at Arbour Hill last week.

I hope the points that the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, and the Minister of State, Deputy Costello, have made will be taken on board. In his concluding speech last night, the Minister said he wanted to best serve the long-term preservation and protection of the national monument itself and the commemoration and remembrance of the epic period. It was the period that created our nation that led to this State.

As the debate continues, I hope those proposing this motion will decide not to divide the House and instead take up the Minister's offer so we can reflect on it in a proper political fashion.

Deputy Joe O'Reilly: It merits repeating that there is no question but that 1916 was a seminal event in our history. There is no question that the participants, in the main, were driven by the highest ideals and by heroism and both merit acknowledgement in a debate such as this. There is also no doubt that a number of them had a very romantic view of life but even at that they were driven by

the highest ideals and were very unself-absorbed, sincere good people. That merits repeating.

As we approach the decade of commemorations, it is important to acknowledge the heroism and idealism of those people who led and participated in the Rising but it is also important to acknowledge that they are part of our collective DNA — our memory and admiration of them — and our individual DNA to the extent that people still have a great regard for what they did, and for their relatives and their desire to perpetuate correctly their memory and commemoration.

It is important that the entire period of commemoration, including the centenary of 1916, is done in an mutually respectful and inclusive way, that it is done alongside the other commemorations and that implicit in it is a recognition of the heroism and idealism of people who did not go in particular one way or another. There were some very idealistic people who chose to go to fight in the First World War and there were very idealistic people in 1916. We must recognise all this as a collective and have mutual respect in the way we celebrate it.

There is merit in the view emerging in the debate and that was proposed by the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, last night that we try to proceed by consensus on this in the national Parliament. I appeal to everyone here to do that. It might be the most fitting tribute we could give to the idealism, romanticism, heroism and everything that went with the heroes of 1916 that we would proceed collectively with regard to the commemoration and the buildings.

There is no doubt that Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street are hugely important monuments in that the last council of war was held there and those buildings are hugely central. With regard to all the planning material that has gone through An Bord Pleanála and all the plans that are on the Minister's table for consent, there is no provision within them to take away in any way from the integrity of the buildings. It is not a question that only their facades would be preserved or that they would be demolished or disfigured in any way other than what must be done structurally for health and safety reasons. The integrity of the buildings will be preserved as a monument and it is right that should be the case.

The difficulty with the proposition that we make the entire street a commemorative area is that there are issues around private property, timing and funding. It would be better if we were to take the proposal for the development of Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and put a very good commemorative centre in place there. It is implicit in the planning permission for the other developments that they take cognisance of that and in no way disturb the historical element of the street. It is better that we proceed on that basis. I think that is the view of the original group of relatives.

I congratulate the people who brought forward this important motion. The events of 1916 were hugely significant. They changed the face of Ireland and had enormous implications for our history, for where we are today and for the very building we are in. I appeal to the proposers of the motion, who put it forward in good faith, to consider the Minister's suggestion of working collectively and in a collegial way to arrive at an eventual outcome that will honour the participants, respect the relatives who are in the Visitors Gallery and the people who admirably fought for many years to preserve the buildings.

Deputy Ciarán Lynch: I commend Deputy McLellan on bringing this timely motion before the House. This is the Deputy's first time to bring forward a motion and I say well done to her on her choice of subject.

I commend the family members associated with the motion. I had the opportunity to invite them to attend a meeting of a joint committee to discuss this issue and in my input to this debate I would like to reflect some of the comments they made on that occasion.

I have known the names of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation off by heart since I was a child. That is not because I was a good history student as a child but because I come from the parish of Ballyphelane where the name of every road is called after the signatories of the Proclamation. There is Pearse Road, Clarkes Road, Ceannt Road and, fittingly, I come from Connolly Road. That shows that when we mark significant events in our history in our local neighbourhoods, they have an impact in our formative years.

It is in the context of the parish of Ballyphelane and the names of the signatories to the Proclamation assigned to the roads there that I would like to give some context to the motion. The Sinn Féin motion and the Government's counter amendment to it are very much saying the same thing. They refer to the preservation of Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street. When republican issues are

discussed, the first thing on the agenda is a split but, unusually, there might not necessarily be a split on this issue this evening. I urge both sides of the House to come together on this.

The Sinn Féin motion is limited in its scope. I would like 1916 to be commemorated nationally and far broader than in the context of Nos. 14 to 17, Moore Street. That is the way the commemoration of it should be developed. The events of 1916 had ramifications for the whole of this island. Deputy Nolan mentioned Galway and my great grandfather was involved with Roger Casement in Kerry. He was a Kerry man. That is a hard thing for a Cork man to admit but he has a strong Republican tradition in Rock Street in Tralee.

Dublin City Council has failed time and again to do something with Moore Street. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of 1916 something could have been done, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary there was an opportunity to do something and on the 90th anniversary, only a few years ago, when the dogs were literally eating the cheques in this country and there was plenty of money to do something nothing was done. What we have seen, not only in Moore Street but in all the area north of O'Connell Bridge, has been the development of a type of honky-tonk, pop-up retail concept that has not been in the interests of the capital city. There is usually some ambience or nuance to a capital city that captures people's minds. I am proud to say that if one comes to Cork city, we have the English Market and other events — Dublin does not have that type of concept.

It is on that basis I make a few points that I believe reflect the position of some of the descendants. The planning proposal being considered is flawed and I do not believe it will come to pass. The retail model presented in the planning application is something of the past. We should consider putting in place a different type of retail model in the environs of Moore Street, one with rent controls that would allow indigenous companies and manufacturers to sell their wares in the greater Moore Street area. It would give Dublin City centre a flavour and ambience that the citizens would like to have in their capital city. By extending the commemorative process to the battlefield site and other areas, we would have a different type of 1916 celebration that would not be confined to only four buildings.

What I propose, if all-party agreement could be reached on this, is that we not only consider Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street in this context but that we look at how we want to see Dublin city centre commemorate 1916 not only in terms of the past but in terms of our vision for its future. Having big supermarkets in the middle of the our capital city is not our vision for the development of the city, rather we want to have a more sustainable business and retail model. I saw plans for a proposal to imprint on the street a bronze copy of the proclamation the size of the Chamber so local and Irish citizens and foreign visitors walking up and down could see and feel the proclamation itself. Commemorating 1916 is not only about now, but also about the future and many positive opportunities can be achieved through cross-party co-operation, because 1916 is part of all our heritage and does not belong to an individual party or Member of the House. This is also an opportunity to revitalise this part of Dublin, which should have been done long ago.

Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett: It is not possible to overstate the importance of commemorating the site of the 1916 Rising. It is even more important because of the terrible situation in which the country now finds itself. In many ways it is as significant an historic crossroads as the one at which we found ourselves in 1916. It is tremendously important that we honour and pay proper tribute to the heroes of 1916, their political determination, vision, bravery and heroism and properly commemorate this memory and protect the site of the last stand of the 1916 rebels precisely to remind us of what political vision, bravery and determination look like at a time when we desperately need them.

The 1916 Easter Rising was the first strike in the foundation of the State. It was also the first strike in the international movement against the horrors of the First World War. It was the beginning of the end of the British Empire, and an inspiration to peoples and movements throughout the world who struck out against colonisation and empire. It is a monument of international significance. Even at the time, the 1916 rebellion echoed across the European continent and beyond. It is very important that we do justice to this memory.

I do not understand why, if the Government states it agrees with the general spirit of the motion, it has proposed an amendment. All the motion proposes is that nothing should be done which would compromise this historic site; that any development which takes place in the area should ensure the proper preservation of the historic site; and it should be developed as an historic quarter. There is no reason for the Government to table an amendment. The details can be debated and discussed with the families and other stakeholders

but there does not seem to be anything objectionable in the original motion.

Even in terms of modern economic concerns, it is quite telling how we deal with these matters when we speak about the development of our city centre. Why do people come here? What is it that makes the country attractive to people? Is it building shopping centres and monuments to consumerism or is it precisely our history and our architectural, historical and political heritage? Commemorating this history and heritage properly, sensitively and respectfully will not only pay proper tribute to the rebels of 1916, but it will make Dublin a more attractive place. It will be a boost to tourism at every level. It will be a win for the city and the country. Desecrating this historic site would have the opposite effect.

I appeal to the Government to support the motion. There is no need to amend it. The details can be worked out with all the stakeholders as we move along.

Deputy Catherine Murphy: I thank the proposers of the motion for tabling it. I have been to Moore Street and I did the tour. If one was not familiar with it and went there, one would be appalled that a national monument is in such a deplorable state, and we should all feel a sense of shame about this. The buildings are listed for protection not because of their architectural merit, but because of their significant historical merit. This historical merit is not only with regard to the buildings and their facades, but also their curtilage. It is about the context of the site and it is important we recognise this and preserve it.

The madness of the Celtic tiger era is marked out by the fact that everything was measured in monetary terms. People did not buy homes; they bought property and we had trophy sites. It is very hard to find positives in the crash, but at least it has given us the opportunity to stand back and look at what is important and see where failures occurred since the 1916 Rising and the foundation of the State. If we are to rebuild society in the country we must draw from the idealism of the past. The people of the past seemed to be able to aspire to more than we can in this difficult but more wealthy time.

I am very lucky to be on the commemorative committee. The next ten years will be wonderful with a very inclusive and broad range of events to be commemorated. It is very important that we leave markers from the defining time in which we live, and some of these markers must be physical, such as buildings and places, and they must draw from the past. It is very important that we do this. Very few intact sites remain from the era we are discussing. Bolands Mill was not really one of the buildings involved but it is seen as part of the Rising and its condition is deplorable. The wall of the Mendicity Institution opposite the Four Courts is covered in graffiti. One wonders where is our civic morality and pride and we should aspire to re-engage with them.

Just as 1916 was a defining era, so is this one. We have had failures over the past 100 years and this is an opportunity for us to look forward and have a different set of values and learn from the past. Places and buildings will be important in this as well as heritage, history and idealism.

Deputy Seamus Healy: I welcome the motion and thank Sinn Féin for tabling it and providing us with this opportunity to discuss it. I also compliment the relatives without whose determination and foresight the motion would not be on the clár. I support the motion 100%. We are speaking about the national monument at Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street which is of major significant historic importance. The idea of developing an historic quarter and battlefield site is most appropriate for the area and most appropriate as a way to commemorate and celebrate the 1916 Rising. It is also appropriate this is on the clár in the run-up to the centenary of the Rising, and at a time when our independence and sovereignty are in danger, if they are not already gone, in the run-up to the fiscal treaty referendum.

The commemoration of the 1916 Rising is not only a commemoration of bricks and mortar, as important as this may be. We need to celebrate the ideas, beliefs and policies of the 1916 leaders. The Proclamation was a blueprint for the future Republic as they saw it. We need to ask ourselves how we measure up to that Proclamation. The honest answer must be that we have a long way to go. These leaders wanted to cherish "all the children of the nation equally". What would they think of 100,000 children living in poverty in 2012? What would they think of reductions in child benefit? What would they think of the targeting of children with disabilities with the refusals for domiciliary care allowance doubled in the course of the Government's tenure in office? These are the kinds of questions we need to ask ourselves in the run-up to the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

I fully support the motion and believe it would be an appropriate manner in which to commemorate the leaders of the 1916 Rising.

Deputy Michael Colreavy: Almost 100 years ago, the city of Dublin and the entire island of Ireland were in a state of desperation. There was rampant unemployment, a massive rate of child mortality and swelling slums were rife. The only option for many was to be shipped off to the killing fields of Europe to spill their blood for their imperialist oppressor. Out of all this despair, blackness and destitution arrived the men and women of 1916. They offered the people an alternative vision. They declared that: "The Republic guarantees ... equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally". The hope and vision they offered to Ireland to strike for her freedom is as true today as it was 100 years ago.

Ireland today is searching for hope in these turbulent economic times. Similar to the conditions in which the men and women of 1916 found themselves, we today are again at the whim of foreign rulers and foreign markets. There is no finer example of courage and determination than the example the men and women of 1916 set. For the past 100 years we have drawn inspiration from their heroism. As we are now in these difficult times, I am sure we will draw further inspiration from them into the future. That is one of the reasons it is essential that the buildings at 14-17 Moore Street are protected. These are more than just bricks and mortar; they are a symbol of why we exist as a country and as a people. The buildings on Moore Street make up a very important part of the story of us as a nation. From the small rooms on that terraced block emerged this Parliament. Every Deputy who speaks in this Chamber owes an allegiance to the history of Moore Street.

I believe that every Member of this House believes that these buildings are a national monument and a treasure of the State. Moore Street is also a site of educational wealth and all children in our schools should know the history of their country. There is far more educational value in these buildings being preserved as a national monument than any shopping centre could ever provide. Similarly this country is a major tourism destination with millions of visitors every year. The value of such an important historical site cannot be compared to a high-street brand that can be found in any other city in the Western world. Ireland's deep and rich history is one of the reasons so many tourists are attracted to come here every year. Shopping centres come and go but if these historic buildings are destroyed they will be gone forever.

We should remember with pride the men and women of 1916. I think of Leitrim's Seán Mac Diarmada, who fought and died so that we could sit in this Chamber today. Seán Mac Diarmada suffered from polio but struggled through his disability to play a leading role in the 1916 Easter Rising. He was a brave soldier and an example to future generations. Many people visit his beautifully preserved cottage in Corranmore, Kiltyclogher, which is part of our wonderful history. We must take it upon ourselves not to sully the name of Seán Mac Diarmada or any of the heroes of 1916 and hand over such an important landmark to become a shopping centre.

The Minister has said the Sinn Féin motion is too narrow in its vision but I respectfully suggest otherwise. Moore Street is a central and essential fulcrum for historical tourism in the island of Ireland. If we allow these buildings to be destroyed, that essential part of 1916 tourism will be lost and gone forever.

On my local radio station, Ocean FM, I pointed out that we had tabled this motion and it got a strong reaction most of which was very positive. One person criticised it by saying that I would be better off talking about local issues rather than talking about Moore Street in Dublin. With respect I would say that person was a parochial philistine and I hope there will not be too many philistines if it comes to a vote on the motion.

Deputy Dessie Ellis: The year 1916 was a milestone in our history and 2016 would be an ideal time to showcase not only a new cultural quarter but also the ideals and sacrifices of our ancestors in a meaningful way. The 1916 Rising encapsulates a very important part of my Irishness. This Irishness is not the superficial "wrap the green flag around me" nationalism that has so often been represented by the opportunists who have frequented this House. It is the pursuit of justice and freedom which was a beacon to the people of the world sending the message that no matter where or how downtrodden or outnumbered people are the base desire to say that they are free and equal will never be quenched. It sends the message that their struggle can strike a mighty blow, weakening the chains of imperialism and capitalism around the world for all people. That beacon was not forgotten. The spirit of the men and women of 1916 inspired the people of Vietnam, Russia and Cuba. It inspired black leaders in America and the beaten and brutalised of the Bogside in Derry and the ghettos of Belfast — and it still inspires.

Every year thousands of people commemorate this event. They commemorate

men and women who struck for freedom against the biggest empire on the earth, which cut down its enemies with great indecency and little thought. They were heroes who fought for a better Ireland against their own self-interest — a lesson well remembered today. In particular we must remember the role of the women of 1916 who fought alongside their male comrades as equals. This memory, while strong in many, is in danger. Many people would have a better chance of naming the starting 11 for Manchester United than the seven signatories. Worse still the ideals they held are being betrayed at every turn and the Republic for which they fought can often seem far from our grasp.

I have not given up, but I am lucky in having a very real link to these great people as a grandson of two veterans who fought that noble fight. I will never forget the stories that struck me as a child and remain with me. Young people today do not have this great resource. The last veterans have long since passed away. We must at least do this service for the heroes of [504]Easter 1916 and not demolish all traces of their words, thoughts and deeds. I have toured the battle site with the wonderful people involved in the campaign to save Moore Street. I encourage anyone who has not done that to do so. I have seen their excellent plan for the 1916 quarter, which would be the pride of Dublin and Ireland. I am proud to come from Dublin, a city with a true revolutionary history and home to great men and women, such as Connolly, Pearse, Markievicz and many others. I would be proud to bring people from around the world to this city's centre to show them our history. At present such a place is sorely lacking. We must rectify this, the first step being to save Moore Street. The creation of a cultural quarter, with museums and workshops, would be a mecca for tourists and the people of this country to visit. Molain an rún seo.

Deputy Pádraig Mac Lochlainn: Occasionally I get an opportunity in Donegal to give a talk to American students. It is a brush stroke history of Ireland, and I always enjoy the part about the lead up to the 1916 Rising, its aftermath and what it meant for the Irish people. Juxtapose the slaughter in the Somme not long after the Rising in which Irish Unionists and Nationalists were slaughtered — more than 20,000 people were killed in one day, on 1 July 1916, and over 30,000 were injured in a foolish slaughter driven by king or kaiser — with Connolly's Irish Citizen Army and its famous banner, "We serve neither King nor Kaiser but Ireland." They were visionaries. It was a fusion of radicals, visionaries, cultural revivalists and feminists.

Consider the first words of the Proclamation: "Irishmen and Irishwomen". At a time when women did not even have a vote, that was a radical statement of intent. They were poets, visionaries, trade unionists, suffragettes, cultural revivalists and people who were trying to fight for all that is good. Read the Proclamation. There is no nation on earth that would not be proud of the words in it. There is no hint of sectarianism or hate. It is about unity, fairness, equality and decency. It is a platform not just for Irish humanity but for world humanity. Those leaders inspired people across the world. We know the British Empire was an unjust empire, but the world was an unjust place as could be seen in the World War taking place at that time. It was a disaster in which working class people were slaughtered in fields in their hundreds of thousands and millions.

Our heroes, however, were not acting for popularity. They were visionaries. As they were led away they were jeered, but in a few short years the Irish people would realise what a wonderful legacy they had been given and would endorse in the first Dáil the 1916 Proclamation in their programme for government. That is our inheritance, and it is a wonderful inheritance. In 2012, however, much of that inheritance has been squandered. We have an economic crisis because we abandoned the ideals which they represented and gave to us. Knowing all that we know now about the greed that caused this crisis, are we really going to allow these buildings to be torn asunder?

I, too, had the honour of walking the route of Henry Place, Moore Lane and Moore Street. The hair stood on the back of my neck at the thought of these amazing and unbelievably courageous people being evacuated from the GPO and being led eventually into Moore Street, where they surrendered. Their spirit was defeated and they probably thought their struggle was defeated. If they only knew what they gave birth to. It is a wonderful story to tell, not just to Irish people but also to visitors from throughout the world. People around the world have looked at our history, and anybody who has had the privilege of travelling across the world will recall seeing the glint in people's eyes when they have told them they are Irish. Despite all our economic problems and the damage to our reputation, the stories people around the world think of are those of the 1916 Rising and Bobby Sands. That is what inspires them and gives them hope in their own struggles.

Now, when we have a chance to set this nation and island back in the right direction after the mess caused by greed, let us grasp the opportunity to do all we can to seize those buildings and send a signal that we value our inheritance

and those who gave birth to what we have today, and that we intend to complete their journey. That is the challenge for the Members of this House. Can all Members of the House, of all political colours and creeds, unite on this issue? Then, perhaps, we would deserve the legacy we have been given.

Deputy Pearse Doherty: Mar atá ráite ag cuid mhór dóibh siúd a labhair go dtí seo, ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur roimh theaghligh na laochra móra a sheas an fód i 1916. Guím gach rath ar an bhfeachtas atá amach rompu agus romhainn uilig le cinntiú go mbeidh ionad cultúrtha agus ceathrú stairiúil tógtha ar an suíomh seo i Sráid Uí Mhórdha i mBaile Átha Cliath. Is deas an rud é go bhfuil an díospóireacht seo againn. A mhéid is eol dom, is é seo an chéad uair dúinn plé a dhéanamh ar na foirgnimh a bhaineann le Éirí Amach na Cásca agus an comóradh a bheidh againn amach anseo.

Many of us have spoken tonight about the bravery of the men and women who fought in 1916, and about their honour, passion and dignity as the final moments pressed on them. We know what the goals of those men and women were and how badly they have been let down, not just by our failure as a State to mark and commemorate places such as Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street but by what has been allowed to happen in our society. Rather than establish a nation built on the ideals of the Proclamation and the democratic programme, this State allowed the worst kind of cronyism and corruption to dominate politics and the economy for the last few decades. It is ironic that the man who would show such disregard for the historical significance of the buildings we are discussing is part of the Anglo Irish Bank golden circle and a developer who has been brought into the National Asset Management Agency, NAMA.

I do not wish to dwell on the reputation and history of this developer. We all know how the developers, as a group, influenced bad planning policy and how that contributed, along with the failed policies of the banks and the last Government, to bring this State to its knees. What matters is that even after all the sordid history, a developer still appears to be holding all the cards with regard to a piece of our history which is of monumental significance. Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and its surroundings, the battlefield site, badly need to be restored, protected and respected. The area cannot be left as it is. It must be protected and there must be development. However, what type of development should it be? It is proposed that we build another shopping centre. Do we need another shopping centre in the middle of Dublin city? Have we learned nothing from the mistakes and lessons of the last number of years?

The abject failure to fulfil the vision of the men and women who fought for our freedom can be seen in the terrible state of Nos. 14 to 17 Moore Street and its surroundings. However, it can also be seen in more than bricks and mortar. In the last two weeks two news stories struck a chord with me, and probably with many others. The first was the news that a seven year old child had collapsed in a school in Cork. The child was later diagnosed with severe malnutrition. The second news story was that, once again, the Government has approved salaries above the agreed limits for public servants in the President's offices. How starkly these two news reports contrast with the ideals, hopes and visions of the heroes of 1916. "Cherishing all the children of the nation equally" is a simple yet powerful commitment in the Proclamation that successive Governments have ignored and still ignore.

In 2012, children should not be collapsing from hunger. We know people are suffering; we hear about it every day. It is not a cliché to say that this is not what the men and women of 1916 died for. They did not fight and die so this State could make its people shoulder the burden of failing private banks, so we could watch yet another generation of our young people leave our shores or so the democratically elected representatives of the people could pay themselves handsome salaries while children go to school with nothing in their bellies. It is of paramount importance that 14-17 Moore Street and the battle site area are preserved, protected and acknowledged. Moreover, it should be done in a manner that retains the potential to develop the site as a 1916 historic and cultural quarter. However, that should only be the first step in honouring those who gave so much for what they believed in. They believed in a different type of Ireland. While a cultural and historic quarter must be built, the best tribute Members can give to the men and women of 1916 is to build the lasting legacy, namely, the type of united Ireland for which they fought and died.

I will conclude by noting the Minister has argued the motion tabled by Sinn Féin is similar to his amendment. The difference is the motion would prevent the Minister from encroaching on this historic monument and allowing a shopping mall. The Minister sat in this Chamber while rare snails halted major development in this country. It is not a rare snail under discussion this evening but the council of war's last location. Must one begin to scout around Moore Street to find a rare snail to give the Minister an excuse to preserve this monument? I ask him to do the right thing.

Minister of State at the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (Deputy Dinny McGinley): Tá lúcháir orm deis a bheith agam labhairt ar an ábhar an-tábhachtach seo. Cuirim fáilte roimh an díospóireacht a bhí againn anseo, aréir agus anocht, ar an séadchomhartha náisiúnta seo atá chomh tábhachtach sin do shaol an Stáit seo, agus mar a bunaíodh saol an Stáit. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a thabhairt do na Teachtaí go léir atá an-dáiríre agus an méid a bhí le rá acu, ó gach taobh den Teach.

Sílím gurb é an rud is sonraí a tháinig ón díospóireacht seo ná an tiomántas agus an dílseacht atá léirithe ag gach Ball den Teach seo do chuimhne 1916 agus do gach aon duine a ghlac páirt ins an gcoimhlint náisiúnta. Táimid uilig ar aon ghuth gur chóir go gcaomhnófaí agus go gcosnófaí i gceart an séadchomhartha náisiúnta ag 14-17 Sráid Uí Mhórdha agus go mba cheart go mbeadh cuimhneachán cuí agus oiriúnach ann in am do chomóradh an chéid in 2016, i gcuimhne ar na laochra uile a ghlac páirt sna himeachtaí ansin. Cuirim fáilte chomh maith roimh gaolta lucht sínithe an Fhorógra, atá ins an nGailearaí Poiblí agus a bhí ann aréir chun éisteacht leis an ndíospóireacht seo.

As the Minister noted last night, there is little to separate the two sides in the debate. The Government amendment to the motion is, in part, necessary because of factual inaccuracies in the original wording. It referred to a current planning application whereas none actually exists. Although Sinn Féin was made aware of this last week, the misapprehension was compounded when Deputy Ó Caoláin last night referred to circumstances where planning permission could be refused because of the existence of a national monument. However, full planning permission was granted for the development of the site containing the national monument by An Bord Pleanála in 2010. That permission took full account of the existence of the national monument at 14-17 Moore Street. There is no new application for planning permission and nor is it apparent from where such an application might come at this stage.

It is important to understand that what is being examined at present is an application for consent for proposed works to a national monument under the National Monuments Acts. The impact of the motion as drafted would be potentially to prejudice the application for consent, which is before the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and on which a decision has yet to be made. This is a further reason the motion as presented, with much of which Members on this side of the House can agree, could not be supported this evening.

It also was clear from the references made to the national monument being torn down that there were similar misunderstandings about what is actually being proposed regarding the national monument site. As the Minister pointed out, the Moore Street monument is fully protected under the National Monuments Acts. No works can be undertaken without the Minister's consent under those Acts. The proposals that are the subject of the current consent application to the Minister are for a 1916 commemorative centre at 14-17 Moore Street and the pressing need for such a facility in this area was highlighted by all speakers last night.

I again strongly emphasise the point that the application for consent before the Minister does not include any proposal to demolish the national monument and nor does it envisage only the facades of the buildings being kept. The bulk of the internal and external structures of 14-17 Moore Street would be retained and each of the buildings would be part of the proposed commemorative centre, with No. 16, the location of the final council of war, serving as the focal point. It is this and only this proposal, namely, the provision of the commemorative centre at the national monument at 14-17 Moore Street that now is before the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, for decision.

Ba mhaith liom, i bpáirt le gach aon duine eile a labhairt, mo bhuíochas a chur in iúl do ghaolta lucht sínithe Fhorógra na Poblachta. Táár mbuíochas tuille acu as an méid a rinne siad, i bpáirt le feachtasóirí eile, chun a chinntiú gur mhair an séadchomhartha náisiúnta seo, cé go raibh roinnt mhaith bagairtí air ó am go chéile i stair an Stáit. Is de bharr a gcuid gníomhartha siúd go bhfuil an deis ann anois comóradh an chéid ar na himeachtaí a tharla i Sráid Uí Mhórdha a cheiliúradh sna foirgnimh chéanna inar tharla na himeachtaí suntasacha sin. Sílím go n-aontaíonn muid ar fad leis an bhfís go mbeadh séadchomhartha náisiúnta Shráid Uí Mhórdha caomhnaithe agus curtha i láthair go cuí, mar lárionad do chomóradh an chéid.

Among those to be remembered is Major General Joe Sweeney from Burtonport, then a Lieutenant in E Company of the 4th Battalion, who was at Liberty Hall before making his way to the GPO. He fought on the roof and inside the GPO all week. On Saturday, he helped to carry James Connolly on a stretcher down through the houses to his makeshift hospital bed in No. 16 Moore Street. The Major General's family have been in contact with me regarding invitations to the Arbour Hill commemoration. They are entitled to such invitations and should

attend this commemoration. This is an issue I have raised with the Minister for Defence, Deputy Shatter, who has responsibility for that commemoration.

Bhí cupla rud eile le rá agam ach tuigimid uilig chomh tábhachtach agus atá an séadchomhartha seo. Is páirt d'ár stair agus d'ár muintir í. Nuair a bheidh an tAire ag déanamh aon chinneadh, tá mé cinnte go ndéanfaidh sé an cinneadh ceart ar mhaithe leis na daoine a thug a saol don tír agus don phoblacht seo agus don áras seo ina bhfuilimid anocht.

Deputy Mary Lou McDonald: I am pleased to speak on this motion and it is gratifying to hear the leaders of the 1916 Rising lauded in this Chamber. Their bravery, vision and unquenchable desire for freedom should be fully acknowledged by all present. They took the fight to the imperial master. They had a vision for a republic set out in the Proclamation read at the GPO in Easter week. They fought for a free, united and pluralist republic and undoubtedly, the events of Easter week 1916 were seminal in Irish history. The Republic was proclaimed but sadly, the Republic has yet to be realised. However, it is worth stating during this debate that the vision of the women and men of 1916 lives on and, to coin a phrase, "They haven't gone away, you know".

There appears to be some misunderstanding on the Government benches in respect of this motion. There appears to be an assumption that a party, presumably Sinn Féin, seeks to claim ownership of this episode in our history and of the vision for the Republic. That clearly is not the case. Had the Government Members read our motion correctly, they would have seen this motion is supported not just by Sinn Féin but also by Fianna Fáil and a host of Independent Deputies.

Consequently, it represents a consensus of sorts.

It is both telling and negative that Members are even having this debate in the Chamber this evening. I cannot imagine that in any other country or European democracy there would even be a debate around the necessity to preserve the national monument and to do so in the most fulsome of ways. Rather than limiting preservation to a number of houses on a terrace we should be preserving the entire terrace and looking to preserving the entire battlefield, including the laneways, which is the setting in which the heroic deeds of 1916 were played out.

That the proposal that has gained planning permission is for a shopping mall in an area that should be a national monument is damning. My colleagues have articulated the many reasons this monument must be developed and the gains it would represent in terms of tourism and a proper acknowledgement not alone of our history but of the real political relevance in the here and now of the leaders of 1916.

I represent the constituency in which Moore Street is located. Anybody who has been down that street knows that the entirety of it has been allowed to go to rack and ruin.

The terrace which the Government, and previous Governments, said is a national monument is derelict. That too is damning. The Minister said that there is little to separate the two sides in this debate. It strikes me that there is a gulf between us. The Government has set its compass to do the very minimum while those of us who have signed this motion want it to step up to the plate and do the right thing.

We want, not alone Nos. 14-17 Moore Street preserved and developed but the entire terrace preserved and developed. We then want that collectively we use our imaginations, ingenuity and foresight to develop fully the battle site up to and including the GPO and all the lanes I mentioned earlier. It is fair to say that no individual political party can claim the legacy of 1916 for itself but we can fairly say that it is the responsibility of every party and elected Member of this House to ensure that memory is honoured and that the national monument is truly one which honours the memory of those great heroic women and men.

Deputy Gerry Adams: Tá mé sásta go bhfuil an deis seo faighte againn chun díospóireacht a bheith againn ar an ábhar seo. Tá mé sásta fosta go bhfuil an gaolta anseo linn anocht chun éisteacht leis na tuairimí éagsúla.

William Butler Yeats's poem, September 1913, applies perfectly to the survival of the Moore Street national monument and the clash between two starkly different cultures. On the one hand there is a culture of naked consumerism, which is exemplified by one developer's ambition to create yet another cathedral to the God of profit, another mall in a city of malls. Yeats summed up that mindset:

What need you, being come to sense,

But fumble in a greasy till
And add the halfpence to the pence
And prayer to shivering prayer until
You have dried the marrow from the bone?

The other side of this clash of cultures is located on the GPO battlefield site. This sorry saga, even the need for this debate, is a metaphor for our times. The Taoiseach, Deputy Enda Kenny, described the lanes from Tom Clarke's shop on Parnell Street to the GPO, Henry Street where the Proclamation was signed, Moore Lane and Moore Street where the GPO garrison retreated to the spot where the O'Rahilly died, to the Rotunda where the garrison was held by the British and where the volunteers were founded three years earlier, as the lanes of history, na lánáí stairiúla. These are all places intimately connected to the Rising and to the men and women who participated in it. These modest buildings in the back lanes provide a tangible link with the great idea at the core of the Rising, namely, that we could be free and equal.

Busts of the signatories look down on us from the floor above. Five of those signatories spent their last hours of freedom in Moore Street before being taken from there to their deaths. We know their names and should know their strengths of character. Yeats did. They were of a different kind, the names that stilled out childish play. It is a great honour to this Oireachtas that the relatives of these leaders are with us this evening. Cuirim fáilte mhór rompu uilig. Moore Street and its environs are at the heart and soul of the 1916 Rising. If consumerism and the rush to profit have their way the buildings and lanes around Moore Street will be obliterated.

The Minister is being asked to grant his consent for a change to this national monument. He set out his position in this regard last night and highlighted the difficulties he faces in terms of planning permission already granted. He rightly decried the fact that the surrounding lanes were not in 2007 designated as part of the national monument.

It is almost as if he is confronted by a dilemma. There is no dilemma. There is only one position for a Minister and the Minister, Deputy Deenihan, knows this. There are no circumstances or justification for giving the go-ahead to a development that will demolish any part of a national monument, including buildings within its protected boundary, in the commercial interest of a private property developer. I spoke privately with the Minister on this issue. There is a moral obligation on him and the Government to develop this area as a historic revolutionary quarter. There can be no "if", "buts" or qualifications in this regard. The impact of the Minister giving his consent — other speakers either do not understand this or do not want to understand it — to the construction of this mall would be the destruction of all the outbuildings and yards to the rear of the national monument buildings. The buildings on each side of the four monument buildings would be demolished and the lanes would disappear. Where the O'Rahilly was killed would be under a car park. Thereafter the project for a battlefield site would have to be abandoned. That would be the Minister's legacy, one which I know he does not want.

This is where Pearse, Clarke, MacDiarmada, Plunkett and the wounded Connolly met as leaders for the last time. These are the lanes where Michael Collins and others courageously fought a superior British force. Moore Street and the lanes of history are connected to the six [510] days of fighting and the last hours of the 1916 leaders and the Rising. For most of this to disappear under a mall would be unforgivable. The Government can take action to preserve this historic site and to develop the area as a fitting tribute. Luke Kelly put it well when he said:

To whom do we owe our allegiance today
To those brave men who fought and died that Róisín live again with pride?
Or the faceless men who for Mark and Dollar,
Betray her to the highest bidder,
To whom we do owe our allegiance today?

Can anyone imagine the demolition of Robben Island Prison where political prisoners resisted the Apartheid regime or of Independence Hall in Philadelphia where the Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution were debated and adopted? Other states and people take pride in their history. Did the Americans demolish Paul Revere's house or the Alamo to build a shopping mall? Moore Street and its surrounding lanes are our Alamo. This Government cannot allow it to be destroyed so that another shopping mall can be built. The Government must not allow the destruction of the GPO battlefield site.

The Minister is a proud Kerryman. I acknowledge absolutely he has a grá for our heritage and our history. I also acknowledge and welcome his commitment to full consultation. I welcome in particular his commitment to me that he will meet with the relatives to explore their ideas and wishes.

The Minister knows there is incredible tourism potential associated with

1916 and the Tans war. Many people who come to the city, from across the island and particularly from across the world, come for the revolution, the failed revolution. The Rising of 1916 is the reason they come, for example, to Kilmainham Gaol. There is potential to develop other sites across Ireland, for example, an interpretive centre at Pearse's cottage in Rosmuc or at Connolly's home on the Falls Road in west Belfast. There is an undoubted massive tourism and educational potential in the GPO battlefield site and an opportunity to revive Dublin city centre either with this site on its own or combined with a 1916 trail which could include Arbour Hill and Glasnevin cemeteries, Collins Barracks Museum, Kilmainham Gaol, other battlefield sites throughout the city and a dedicated 1916 museum.

This is both an issue of civic responsibility and an issue of national pride. James Connolly Heron has described the Oireachtas as the custodian of the national monument at Moore Street. It is our responsibility to do what we can to protect and preserve the battlefield site at Moore Street.

For many years, the relatives of the 1916 leaders have campaigned for the protection of this area. Their vision cannot be allowed to lie with O'Leary in the grave. I listened to what other Deputies have said. The majority of citizens in this State and throughout the Thirty-two Counties want to preserve and secure this historic site. Fifty Deputies have signed this motion and the vast majority of speakers have spoken positively. I resent the intervention by two Ministers when I was trying to outline my position but I agree fully with everybody who stated we should go forward in a unified way. I will do all I can to assist the Minister and work with him. I do not blame him for anything. I wish to work and consult and be part of whatever he is doing and I commit Sinn Féin to work with the Minister in this regard. I appeal to Deputies from all parties, in particular the Government parties who claim there is little difference between the two motions, to support the motion that has come from 50 of their colleagues.

Amendment put.

Tá	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bannon, James.	<input type="checkbox"/> Barry, Tom.
<input type="checkbox"/> Breen, Pat.	<input type="checkbox"/> Butler, Ray.
<input type="checkbox"/> Buttimer, Jerry.	<input type="checkbox"/> Byrne, Catherine.
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Níl	
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<input type="checkbox"/> Flanagan, Luke 'Ming'.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fleming, Sean.
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<input type="checkbox"/> Mac Lochlainn, Pádraig.	<input type="checkbox"/> McConalogue, Charlie.
<input type="checkbox"/> McDonald, Mary Lou.	<input type="checkbox"/> McGrath, Finian.
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<input type="checkbox"/> Moynihan, Michael.	<input type="checkbox"/> Murphy, Catherine.
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<input type="checkbox"/> O'Brien, Jonathan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ross, Shane.
<input type="checkbox"/> Smith, Brendan.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stanley, Brian.
<input type="checkbox"/> Troy, Robert.	<input type="checkbox"/> Wallace, Mick.

Amendment declared carried.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.