



NUI MAYNOOTH

Ólascail na nÉireann Má Nuad

THE CORPORATION OF DUBLIN AND  
THE BOMBING OF THE NORTH STRAND, 31 MAY 1941

by

JENNIFER CANNON DUFFY

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF M.A  
DEPARTMENT OF MODERN HISTORY  
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND  
MAYNOOTH.

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Professor R.V Comerford  
Supervisor of Research: Dr. Jackie Hill

July 2002

# CONTENTS

## FIGURES

List of Maps, tables and plates i  
Acknowledgements ii

Page

1.1	<i>Exact survey of the City and Suburbs of Dublin, John Rocque, 1756</i>	9
Introduction	<i>Civic Survey, housing map, 1925, showing decayed housing areas (shaded), third class tenements (black) and houses condemned as dangerous (X)</i>	1
Chapter One: History of the North Strand and its people	<i>forward by residents of the North Strand area</i>	8
Chapter Two: The Bombing of the North Strand	<i>marked for acquisition and redevelopment, North Strand, 1941</i>	17
Chapter Three: Moving On	<i>Survey map, 1949 showing development of the North Strand</i>	28
Conclusion		43

## TABLES

Appendixes		45
2.1	<i>Repairs carried out by corporation on bombed premises within the North Strand area by February 1942</i>	23
Bibliography		51
3.1	<i>Bombed area re-housing</i>	36

## PLATES

1.1	<i>Wind's cottages, Church Street 1913</i>	13
1.2	<i>People from St. Lawrence O'Toole's CBS, 1941</i>	13
2.1	<i>Bomb damage on the North Strand</i>	18
2.2	<i>Lecturer Eamon De Valera viewing bombed North Strand, 1941</i>	18
2.3	<i>Bomb damage on the North Strand</i>	18
3.1	<i>North Strand Flats</i>	42
3.2	<i>North Strand Flats</i>	42



## List of maps, tables, and plates

### FIGURES

		Page
1.1	<i>Exact survey of the City and Suburbs of Dublin</i> , John Rocque, 1756	9
1.2	<i>Dublin Civic Survey</i> , housing map, 1925, showing decayed housing areas (shaded), third class tenements (black), and houses condemned as dangerous (X)	11
3.1	Copy of claims for drawn up by the corporation to standardise claims put forward by residents of the North Strand area.	33
3.2	Irreparably and badly damaged property marked for acquisition and redevelopment, North Strand, 1941	35
3.3	<i>Dublin City Ordinance Survey map</i> , 1948 showing development of the North Strand	41

### TABLES

2.1	Repairs carried out by corporation on bombed premises within the North Strand area by February 1942.	23
3.1	Bombed area re-housing	36

### PLATES

1.1	Ward's cottages, Church Street 1913	13
1.2	Pupils from St. Lawrence O'Toole's CBS, 1941	13
2.1	Bomb damage on the North Strand	18
2.2	Taoiseach Eamon De Valera viewing bombed North Strand, 1941	18
2.3	Bomb damage on the North Strand	18
3.1	North Strand Flats	42
3.2	North Strand Flats	42

## Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank Dr. Raymond Gillespie for initially giving me the idea to look into researching the North Strand bombings, without which needless to say this study would not have been carried out. Many thanks also to Dr. Jackie Hill who was my very patient thesis supervisor this year for all her help and suggestions. I would like show my immense gratitude to Mary Clarke, the chief archivist in the Dublin city archives and her staff for all their assistance during my many visits throughout the year and many thanks to Seamus Herferty at the UCD archives and all the staff at the library in Maynooth for their assistance.

I would also like to thank my family, especially my mother, for all their support and encouragement when needed, and for offering their opinions when reading over early drafts. I would like to thank Eimeir Johnston for her much needed help regarding the intricacies of computer scanning! And finally I would like to express my thanks to the history department in Maynooth for giving me the opportunity to study this course and my fellow class mates for providing an enjoyable and supportive working environment throughout the year.



## Summary

This thesis looks at the bombing of the North Strand, Dublin 31 May 1941, and how successful the Corporation of Dublin was in dealing with the largest bombing incident that the country had to cope with during the Second World War.

It begins by taking a short look at the background to the event, the defensive problems which faced a country in its infancy, and the way in which it went about dealing with these problems. We then move on to looking at the plausible reasons for the attack and the speculation that surrounded the event subsequently and even today. Once we have established the possible causes behind the attack, we move on to look at the North Strand area itself, as this is an essential factor when one tries to understand the tremendous impact that the bombing itself had, by not only destroying hundreds of homes and buildings, but because it also succeeded in tearing apart an entire community which had been woven together for more than a century.

Once we have a basic understanding of the community itself, we can then move on to looking at what happened the night of the bombing itself and in its aftermath. It is here that we begin to see the role of the corporation emerging. Immediately following the bombing of the North Strand, the corporation took responsibility for the entire 'cleaning-up' process, and this thesis takes a look at all the major difficulties which faced the corporation in completing that role. In conclusion it is determined that the corporation of Dublin did indeed play an indispensable part in the aftermath of the bombing, and they did so most successfully.



## Introduction

On the night of 31 May 1941, four high explosive bombs were dropped by the Luftwaffe on Dublin city. Although this was not the only bombing of the country during the Second World War, or the only one to result in fatalities; it did inflict the greatest amount of devastation.

On the night the bombing occurred, as had been the case over Belfast only three weeks before (4-6 May 1941) there had been intense belligerent aircraft activity all along the east coast. The search lights of Dublin city's defences were switched on at 12.04am and were on and off intermittently until after 2am. Although aircraft could be spotted in the beams, and anti-aircraft guns opened fire, the planes were difficult to identify, even though it was a fairly clear night over the city. Thus the question remains, who carried out such an attack and what were their motives?

The bombing of the North Strand has never been the subject of much historical research; surprisingly it seems that very little, if any academic focus has been given solely to this aspect of Dublin's history. There is a vast amount of information available for the period relating to Ireland's policy of neutrality, also more recently to the temporary emigration of large numbers of Irish men and women to Britain in search of wartime employment, and the immense volume of Irish men who volunteered to fight in the war.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore an opening has been left to enable research to be presented on this very interesting area of Irish history, helped in no small way by the consummation of the 60 years seal placed on the records of the Dublin Corporation relating to the incident in 2001. These documents are held in the Dublin city archives on South William Street in Dublin, and because there is very little secondary source material available, these documents form the bases of this research. Also most useful in this study were the national newspapers of the time, namely the Irish Times, which allowed for a more human aspect to the events which followed the bombing itself. When this project began I had hoped to look in more detail at the background to the bombings, Ireland's defence preparations and German activity in Ireland before the bombing took place. However this was to be far too great a task for the boundaries

---

<sup>1</sup> See Doherty, Richard, *Irish men and women in the second world war* (Dublin, 1999) and also Doherty, Richard, *Irish volunteers in the second world war* (Dublin, 2001)



allowable in a minor thesis, so I have taken a quick look at them here in the introduction.

With the decision to relinquish control of the treaty ports of Berehaven, Cobh and Lough Swilly within the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 26 April 1938, the British removed a serious obstacle to the favoured Irish policy of neutrality. But why did Ireland wish to remain neutral? Because Ireland was still a very young state, De Valera's constitution had only come into effect on 29 December 1937, and the country had basically no means of defending herself from attack. An attack at this important stage in the country's history may very well have succeeded in destroying all the work that had come before to allow the country to stand alone in her new independence. Without neutrality, which was itself an important symbol of Ireland's new independence, the chances of Ireland being invaded were far greater. This neutral position is interesting as it helped DeValera to manoeuvre politically between the British and German sides, and thus avoid being invaded.

It certainly wasn't the case that the Irish defensive weaknesses were unknown to the government. As early as February 1939 the opposition in the Dáil, Fine Gael, pointed out to the then minister for defence Frank Aiken that the government had failed to provide a sufficient defence plan in the event of an outbreak of war, and most especially a valid form of defence against an attack from the air, an issue which had not been of importance during the previous wars. Items essential for defence, such as anti-aircraft guns and anti-armour weapons were basically non-existent. Search lights were also in very short supply and were generally concentrated in the Dublin area and with the coastal defence artillery positions<sup>2</sup>.

Mr Aiken's response soon after was that 'the state had complete and internationally recognised sovereignty over all parts of the island outside the six counties of northern Ireland; that only our elected representatives could commit us to a war; that we had no existing commitments which could involve us in a war; [and] that it was not the policy of the government to attack any nation.'<sup>3</sup> Seemingly a rather naive outlook, however with the announcement of the outbreak of war, the governments' first action was to announce a state of emergency, through the Emergency Powers Act, and by the

---

<sup>2</sup> Figures taken from, Dublin Military Archives, *The nation is profoundly grateful: the Irish defence forces 1939-1946* (Dublin, 1996) p.16

<sup>3</sup> Hayes-McCoy G.A., 'Irish defence policy 1939-5', in Kevin. B Nowlan and T.D Williams (eds), *Ireland in the war years and after 1939-51* (Dublin, 1969) p.42



fall of France in 1940, a new defence forces bill was passed through the Dáil, which allowed Ireland to increase her air force and establish a small marine service.

De Valera had always stated that Ireland would never freely permit her self to be used in an attack on Great Britain. However it was acknowledged by him that at a time when it was practically impossible for a small country to remain entirely neutral, especially one such as Ireland which has such close ties to Britain in relation to economics’.

‘As far as international relations where concerned, De Valera’s principle problem was to maintain the status quo’<sup>4</sup>, and to preserve the position of neutrality the best way possible. This task proved easy enough and in Ireland things pretty much went on as they had before the war. This began to change after the fall of France in June 1940. It now ‘looked as if England might shortly be invaded and the Germans [may] seek to land troops in Ireland as part of a general invasion of Britain, and it was no less possible that the British, in their desperation, might attempt to anticipate the Germans by seizing the southern part of Ireland, on account of its being insufficiently protected against an occupying Wehrmacht or Luftwaffe.’<sup>5</sup>

This is a vital opinion when one looks at the reasons behind the bombing of North Strand. Was it an attempt by the British to force Ireland to join sides against the German threat, as some writers of the time believed, or simply a case of mistaken identity on the part of the Germans? It was believed by some authors at the time that the bombing was planned by the British to make the Irish believe that they had been attacked by the powerful Luftwaffe, in the hope that they would turn to them for protection, thus providing Britain with access to Ireland, benefiting them defensively also.

Relations between Britain and Ireland were certainly not at their best. ‘In the months between July and October, 245 British vessels were lost and in November – the worst month of the year a further 73 merchant ships...were sunk, most of them in the Atlantic.’<sup>6</sup> In a speech to the Commons as early as 5 November 1940, Churchill who

---

<sup>4</sup> Williams T.D, ‘Ireland and the war’, in Kevin B. Nowlan and T.D Williams, (eds), *Ireland in the war years and after 1939-51*(Dublin, 1969) p.16

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Fisk, Robert, *In time of war: Ireland, Ulster, and the price of neutrality 1939-45* (London, 1983) p.287



had openly disagreed with Chamberlains decision to return the treaty ports blamed Irish neutrality as part of the reason behind such a disaster saying; 'the fact that we cannot use the south and west coasts of Ireland to refuel our flotillas and aircraft, and thus protect trade by which Ireland as well as Great Britain lives, is a most heavy and grievous burden and one which never should have been placed on our shoulders, broad though they be.'<sup>7</sup>

The invasion of Ireland by the British was a very potential and realistic threat. From the outset of the war the British made it quite clear that they disagreed with Irish neutrality and made no real attempts to hide the possibility of interference with that policy. Churchill said further, that 'if the U-boat campaign became more dangerous to we should coerce southern Ireland both about coast watching and the use of Berehaven, etc.'<sup>8</sup> Fisk says of this statement that it was 'the first indication that Churchill was considering some kind of military action against Éire... [and it] betrayed an unhealthy fixation with the idea that strong-arm tactics might be used against the Irish.'<sup>9</sup> However the relationship that De Valera had with both Maffey and Gray (British and American envoys to Ireland) is also an important factor, especially in regards to the Irish situation during the war. Maffey never left De Valera under any misunderstanding that, when it became vitally necessary for British interests his country would take the required steps to invade and occupy southern Ireland. Maffey also believed de Valera when he said that the Irish would oppose any attempt by the British to interfere with their neutrality.

However the government was plagued by one issue, which kept the alive the possible threat of invasion, that issue related to the numbers of German spies which were attempting to infiltrate Ireland via the IRA. 'Germany was alert to the possibility of infiltrating Ireland and using it as a base for espionage, but G2 was equally alert to this'.<sup>10</sup> Hempel the German envoy to Ireland had spoken out to the SS against using the IRA, as he felt that Ireland was far more useful to the Germans as a neutral state, and he realised also that the British would not hesitate to invade Ireland should they believe that there was any German threat to Britain from there. Twelve spies in all

---

<sup>7</sup> Fisk, Robert, *In time of war: Ireland, Ulster, and the price of neutrality 1939-45* (London, 1983) p.287

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p.116

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p.116

<sup>10</sup> Litton, Helen, *The World War II years: an illustrated history* (Dublin, 2001) p.45



arrived, and all during the early part of the war from 1939 to 1943. Herman Goertz managed to elude the police for the longest, nineteen months; however 'none of the German agents in Ireland achieved anything substantial in intelligence terms.'<sup>11</sup> Despite the unlikelihood of a German invasion, German aircraft frequently flew over the Irish coast photographing possible landing points. To ease tensions, in early 1940 secret meetings took place between G2<sup>12</sup> and MI5 in London in order to discuss cooperation in the event of an invasion, this was called the W plan, and throughout the war they continued to work in close connection, sharing valuable information regarding axis movements.<sup>13</sup> It was the constant threat of invasion, up until about 1943 that confused the issue as to who in fact bombed neutral Ireland in 1941. So what *did* happen? How was Ireland bombed? Was it simply a case of mistaken identity or was there something more sinister beneath it? In the rubble surrounding the destruction of the North Strand and elsewhere, remnants of the bombs were clearly stamped with German insignia and German instructions. Even this however was to be contested by Hempel, who in the immediate aftermath of the bombing called De Valera saying he felt that it 'had been done by the British with captured German planes ...to upset Irish neutrality and get Ireland into the war'.<sup>14</sup> 12 days later the Germans, although initially denying that they were responsible, now accepted it, blaming 'high winds' and issued a statement of condolence with the promise of compensation, together with a promise that they would take every step to prevent the possibility of a reoccurrence of such incidents.

But this still does not explain how it happened. There are two main explanations for the bombing the first being the more conceivable, and the second an interesting and more contemporary take on events. The first relates to the possibility of the British having a hand in events, an idea put forward by none other than Winston Churchill who explained how the British had been interfering with German radios.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> O'Halpin, Eunan, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (New York, 1999) p.243

<sup>12</sup> For more on defence and co-operation see Colonel Dan Bryan papers held at UCD archives (P71)

<sup>13</sup> See O'Halpin, Eunan, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (New York, 1999) p. 200-253 for information regarding cooperation.

<sup>14</sup> Sunday Press newspaper, 8 December 1963, Hempel memoirs

<sup>15</sup> For more on this see Carroll, Joseph T., *Ireland in the war Years, 1939-1945* (New York, 1975) p.109



The Germans were using an array of signal beams for their bombing accuracy – it was a simple radio transmission system which, when received by the bomber, enabled him to fly along a predetermined track marked by those radio signals; the target was marked by the interception of similar signals but on a different frequency. The British found a way of tapping in on these frequencies; they would then bombard the signals in such a way that the aircraft would be forced to wander the skies looking for genuine signals.

As a result, although there was no intentional attempt by the British to send the German aircraft over Dublin, they did so inadvertently. The consequence being the high number of German aircraft recorded over the city on the night of 31 May.

A second reason put forward in more recent times is that the bombing of the city was in fact not a mistake, but rather a warning on the part of the Germans for the aid which Ireland gave to Belfast in the aftermath of the bombings there. Leo Sheridan, an aviation investigator claims to have discovered evidence while researching archive material in Munich that the bombing ‘was aimed at intimidating the government after a number of neutrality breaches.’<sup>16</sup> He puts forward the idea that the bombing was in response to De Valera’s aid to Belfast in April 1941. The worst attack that Belfast saw during the war occurred on 15-16 April, when 745 people were killed and 430 were seriously injured. De Valera, following an appeal from Belfast’s security minister, John Mac Dermott, sent fire brigades from Dublin, Drogheda and Dundalk to help extinguish the fires that blazed through the city.

Because of this aid Sheridan believes that the subsequent ‘bombing was directed primarily at the Dublin fire stations’<sup>17</sup>. The fault in this explanation of events however is that Berlin never complained about the aid and Hempel said of it, to an Irish journalist long afterwards ‘strictly speaking, I think we could have protested. But it would have been cruel...I know the Irish government felt a bit uneasy that the German government might protest, but it was a deed of sympathy for your people, your Irish people, and we fully understood what you felt.’<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Irish Times newspaper, 19 June 1997

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Fisk, Robert, *In time of war: Ireland, Ulster and the price of neutrality 1939-1945* (London, 1983) p.498

Now that we have looked at the background to the bombing of the North Strand in some detail, and have also discussed possible reasons behind the attack. We can now move on to looking at the history of the North Strand itself.

In dealing with the North Strand bombings on the night of 31 May 1941, it is important to first look at the river itself, its history and development, the history of this north inner city area and its people. Was the neighbourhood a closely knit community? In what areas were the population primarily employed, and what kind of lives did they lead?

Until about 1717 with the beginning of the embankment of the Liffey, which was completed in 1729 with the building of the North Wall, the Liffey had been practically unconfined and water covered the areas where the Customs House now stands and beyond, Armines Street, Connolly station (or the Northern Railway terminus as it was called then) and all the streets lying between the quays as they are today and the sea at Clontarf were all submerged at high tide. When the project to wall the Liffey was planned, the area was given the name the North Lotts because Dublin Corporation in 1717 drew lots for the distribution amongst themselves of the land to be acquired here by the construction of the North Wall. The corporation also bestowed itself by conferring on the new streets the names Mayor Street, Sheriff Street, Guild Street and Common's Street, the guilds of each trade of which the Corporation was then composed and the Commons who elected them.

The Wall was necessary as there was a need for a port; ships could not travel far up the Liffey into the city as sand banks at the river's mouth had rendered the approach to the city extremely dangerous and difficult, even for small vessels it was too shallow. It was only in 1612 that a petition was made to the city assembly for a port and even with the walling of the river at this early stage, the building of the North and South Walls had not been considered. Still with the building of the quays, the problem was not entirely solved, and in the early part of the twentieth century, people would still talk about their homes being flooded "they used to flood in the winter time when there were heavy tides. The kitchen was at least six feet below sea level. We used to have to turn the table upside down and sit on it". The river continued to overflow at high tide covering the flats of North Strand with a relatively shallow depth of water. In John Rocque's Map of 1756 (Figure 1.1) we can see how this flat area to the



## Chapter One

### History of the North Strand and its people

In dealing with the North Strand bombings on the night of 31 May 1941, it is important to first look at the area itself, its history and development, the history of this north inner city area and its people. Was the neighbourhood a closely knit community? In what areas were the population primarily employed, and what kind of lives did they lead?

Until about 1717 with the beginning of the embankment of the Liffey, which was completed in 1729 with the building of the North Wall, the Liffey had been practically unconfined and water covered the areas where the Customs House now stands and beyond. Amiens Street, Connolly station (or the Northern Railway terminus as it was called then) and all the streets lying between the quays as they are today and the sea at Clontarf were all submerged at high tide. When the project to wall the Liffey was planned, the area was given the name the North Lotts because Dublin Corporation in 1717 drew lots for the distribution amongst themselves of the land to be acquired here by the construction of the North Wall. The corporation also honoured itself by conferring on the new streets the names Mayor Street, Sheriff Street, Guild Street and Commons Street, the guilds of each trade of which the Corporation was then composed and the Commons who elected them.

The Wall was necessary as there was a need for a port; ships could not travel far up the Liffey into the city as sand banks at the river's mouth had rendered the approach to the city extremely dangerous and difficult, even for small vessels it was far too shallow. It was only in 1612 that a petition was made to the city assembly for a port and even with the walling of the river at this early stage, the building of the North and South Walls had not been considered. Still with the building of the quays, the problem was not entirely solved, and in the early part of the twentieth century, people would still talk about their homes being flooded 'they used to flood in the winter time when there were heavy tides. The kitchen was at least six feet below sea level. We used to have to turn the table upside down and sit on it'<sup>1</sup>. The river continued to overflow at high tide covering the flats of North Strand with a relatively shallow depth of water. In John Rocque's Map of 1756 (figure. 1.1) we can see how this flat area to the

---

<sup>1</sup> North inner city folklore project, *North of the Liffey* (Dublin, 1992) p.15







North of the Liffey could easily become submerged under water, but at this time the surrounding area was relatively undeveloped.

The area which we now know as North Strand and its surrounding locale, even after the building of the quays, remained quite rural until about the middle of the eighteenth century when the building of houses and their intersecting streets began. Until the building of Annesley Bridge in 1797, the North Strand area was almost entirely cut off from Clontarf. The only bridge, the Ballybough Bridge which, built originally in 1308, was swept away by high tides and rebuilt in 1488, making it one of the oldest bridges in Dublin. Before the Ballybough bridge was built the only way of crossing the Tolka river was by 'the fishing-weir of Clontarf' which played a prominent role in the battle of Clontarf, as legend tells us that many of Brian Boru's enemies were drowned at the battle as they didn't know how to cross the river.

Once the area had been reclaimed, many prominent Irishmen of the time lived in grand homes built in the area, on Gloucester Street, Gardiner Street and Old Bride Street. At the beginning of the 1800s Gardiner estate included some of the most desirable and exclusive houses on the north of the city, many members of the Irish parliament lived in the area in the early eighteenth century as did Lord Mountjoy. By 1925 the civic survey (see figure 1.2) recorded the same as containing 'row after row of condemned dwellings, third class tenements and expanses of dereliction.'

The North Strand, used to simply be called 'the strand', it was not referred to as the North Strand until about 1803 when it superseded Summer Hill and Ballybough road as the main road to the sea. Newcomen Bridge where the North Strand crosses the Royal Canal is named after one of the directors of the canal company Sir William Gleadowe Newcomen. In 1875 the Great Northern railway Station was built in the area, close to the Customs house which also would have an important economic effect on the community. All the great Irish railway companies had stations at the North Wall, as almost all the passenger traffic and much of the goods traffic of the port of Dublin was passed through there. The North Wall extension dating from 1875 could hold all the old docks and the prosperous ship-building yard of the Dublin Dockyard Company which was established by Walter Scott and Smillie. The building of the port, the quays and the Great Northern railway station were all key to the development of North Strand and its surrounding communities.





Dublin Civic Survey, housing map, 1925, showing decayed housing areas (shaded), third class tenements (black), and housing condemned as dangerous. (x)



It was here that saw the growth of shipping and of industry which were vital to the general growth of Dublin as a metropolitan city.

The community of North Strand in the early part of the twentieth century was much like any inner city area of Dublin. The majority of fine architectural buildings discussed earlier in the chapter were now run-down tenement buildings, over crowded and basically unfit for human habitation, and it was 'the tenement house which was to dominate the slum debate in Dublin well into the mid-twentieth century.'<sup>2</sup> A royal commission, which was appointed to examine further aspects of the tenement situation in the city, reported that tenement houses were the main culprit of the high death rate in the city, 'that they are dilapidated, dirty, ill-ventilated, much overcrowded', is an understatement, 'and its consequences – drunkenness and extreme poverty...until the condition of these houses shall have been improved the general health of the city will continue to be injuriously affected.'<sup>3</sup> It was a hard life and although close many describe the community in some parts as being 'like a little village...there were all cottage type houses with a big communal pump in the middle of the square...[but] decent people were living in terrible conditions, there was no toilets at all'<sup>4</sup>. Housing in the area was a mix between the tenement houses discussed above and the new cottage type dwellings as the one shown in plate 1.1.

'The tenement housing system was at the heart of social relations between the poorest persons...information networks concerning availability of employment, food and other necessities, better or cheaper accommodation, medical assistance, schooling opportunities, poor relief...were all linked up through this housing system'.<sup>5</sup>

Colbert Moore grew up in the area and talks of school days; he describes his first day at school, saying how the teachers knew the parents and any other siblings of each of them. When they arrived into class they all had to line up, and the teacher would move down the line saying each child's surname and where they were from. Another man James O' Toole says that there was an old saying in the community 'you could throw a stone over the wall and hit your granny'<sup>6</sup> because the neighbourhood was so close knit and families remained together.

---

<sup>2</sup> Prunty, Jacinta, *Dublin slums, 1800-1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1999) p.111 (hereafter known as *Dublin Slums*)

<sup>3</sup> Report of the Royal Commission 1879, quoted in Prunty, *Dublin Slums* p.111

<sup>4</sup> North inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* interview with Mick O' Brien, resident (Dublin, 1994) p. 34

<sup>5</sup> Prunty, Jacinta, *Dublin slums* p.113-114

<sup>6</sup> North inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* (Dublin, 1994) p.34



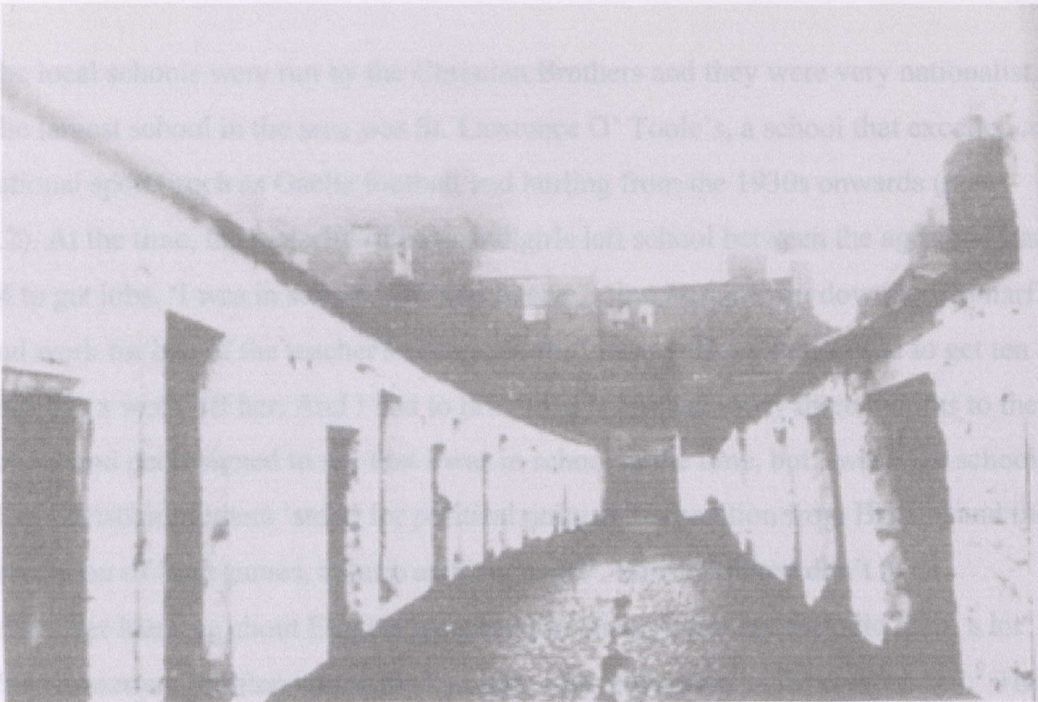


Plate 1.1 Ward's cottages, Church Street, Dublin 1913



Plate 1.2 Pupils from St. Laurence O'Toole's display all the sporting trophies they won in 1941



The local schools were run by the Christian Brothers and they were very nationalist. The largest school in the area was St. Lawrence O' Toole's, a school that excelled at national sports such as Gaelic football and hurling from the 1930s onwards (plate 1.2). At the time, the majority of boys and girls left school between the ages of 11 and 14 to get jobs. 'I was in school till I was twelve... but I used to go down to Clontarf and work for one of the teacher's sisters, do the housework for her. I used to get ten shillings a week off her. And I had to bring in a form then every three months to the school and get it signed to say that I was in school at the time, but I wasn't in school.'<sup>7</sup>

The Christian brothers 'stood for political unity and separation from Britain, and the promotion of Irish games, culture and language'<sup>8</sup>. Some children don't even remember learning about English geography or history, but say they did learn a lot about America, 'it often struck me that they were educating us for emigration'.<sup>9</sup> There was never much money available but everyone was as poor as each other, no doubt the teachers were aware of the opportunities which their students had available to them, and maybe they *were* being schooled for emigration.

After they left school, the women mainly worked in factories in and around the area. Many worked in Bishops' sack factory, in Jacobs, in Holloways jam factory, and many other packing or sewing factories. They also worked in the hotel and domestic industries as cleaning ladies or on family fruit and vegetable stalls. Also evident amongst the women is that a large number had to leave school in order to take over from their mothers who had died or were sick. Families were, generally speaking large and therefore the children had to work in order to support and care for each other. Women would have anything from five, being a small family to fourteen or fifteen children and even with that they still had to do all the domestic work often as well as working outside the home. Once married, women rarely socialised, and they never really left the house except to work.

Also they didn't tend to stay in any one job for too long, some did of course, but most seemed to move after a couple of years to something else along the same lines. The situation at the time allowed for this, and as the community was close, whenever someone changed jobs, as mentioned above, the news would be spread around the area and the vacant job was filled fairly quickly. The factories were packed with

---

<sup>7</sup> Kearns, Kevin C., *Dublin voices: an oral folk history* (Dublin, 1998) p.45

<sup>8</sup> North inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* (Dublin, 1994) p.26

<sup>9</sup> North inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* (Dublin, 1994) p.18



people from the area so the fact that they worked as well as lived together enhanced the feelings of community.

The vast majority of men worked in the other main industry, as dockers on the quays. This was hard work without any benefits, and only a minority of the men were actually full time employees, these were called 'buttonmen' as they had a pin on their jackets. The buttonmen had to be employed first, the rest just turned up every morning lining out on the docks in the hope they would be selected for a day's work. They were not entitled to pensions or sick pay; if a man was seriously injured or was killed the other workers would make a collection for them or the family they left behind. However with the help of Jim Larkin the dockers were more organised and campaigned for greater rights. He also added to the sense of community, giving the people a purpose and holding community events such as political speeches and garden parties 'not like the nobilities used to give, but we'd have a day out'<sup>10</sup>.

As for recreation attending dances was the most popular pastime, which would probably have been the case in any area, regardless of economic background. There were a number of local dance halls, for example the Macushla (which was only demolished last year), the Ballerina in Parnell Square, the National and the Metropole, to name but a few and they charged a penny in on a Saturday night. Going to the cinema was also very popular at the 'Alex' on Talbot Street or 'Strand pictures' on North Strand. These activities however mostly stopped once people got married and had families to rear, they simply didn't have the time or the extra money. The men did continue to socialise with each other in the many public houses in the area, publican John O'Dwyer recalls the importance of stout in the lives of the poorest tenement dwellers in Dublin, 'they had nothing. They lived for pints. Drink was the main diet. It was food... they used to call the pint the 'liquid food'.'<sup>11</sup> A women going to a public house was practically unheard of in those days, they socialised by calling into each others houses when they had some free time, which also underpinned the closeness of the community.

As can be seen here, the area in and around North Strand, the north inner city, was a very close community. 'These people who have lived [here] all their lives, they have

---

<sup>10</sup> North inner city folklore project, *North of the Liffey* (Dublin, 1992) interview with Tom Byrne p.13

<sup>11</sup> Kearns, Kevin C., *Dublin tenement life: an oral history* (Dublin, 1996) p.67



no fault to find with their neighbourhood. All their friends live around. They would not live at the other side of the city if they were paid to do so.’<sup>12</sup>

Families remained in the same area for decades. They lived in the same houses as their grandparents, and parents, generation after generation. Whole families lived in small rooms and there could be three or four families in a house. They went to school together, played together, worked together, married and socialised with each other. When the North Strand was bombed in 1941 this community was torn apart, the bombings damaged the whole area from the Five Lamps to Newcomen Bridge, all that remained was rubble and a huge crater in the road. Hundreds of houses were either damaged or destroyed and over five hundred people were rendered homeless. Although many of the houses had previously been deemed uninhabitable and needed to be demolished anyway, the bombing meant that this had to be done more quickly and harshly than may have been necessary. The families suffered more because they had not only lost their homes but also the sense of belonging that had been established in the locality for decades, they were now scattered around the city. In the following chapter we will see that the corporation, who had to deal with the aftermath of the bombing, did their best to keep as many of them together as possible, but of course this could not always be the case. Those who could remain, whose homes could be repaired, talk of people knocking on their door for years expecting to find the families that once lived in the neighbourhood. The whole appearance of the North Strand as it once stood was changed forever.

---

<sup>12</sup> Irish Press newspaper, 7 September, 1936 (National library of Ireland)



## Chapter Two

### The bombing of the North Strand

Now that we have looked a little at the history of the North Strand, we can move on to looking at the night of the bombing itself and at the effect which it had on the people of the area. How did the bombing affect their lives and what steps were taken on their behalf by the corporation?

Ireland suffered a number of bombing incidents, which took place mainly during the early part of the war, the two most important took place in Dublin, at Dunore and on the North Strand. The first of these was the Dunore area bombing which occurred in January 1941, when four bombs were dropped, two at Rathdown Park, Terenure, and two on the South Circular Road, injuring about 20 people, and damaging quite a lot of property, including a Jewish synagogue. The second and by far the largest bombing in the country occurred on 31 May 1941, on Dublin's North Strand.

Four bombs were dropped in the early hours of Saturday morning, and almost half an hour had passed between the dropping of the first bomb on the North Circular Road, to the dropping of the second. This was the single largest bomb, which fell at 2.05am (as evidenced from the clock at Corcoran's dairy on the North Strand which stopped when the bomb hit). It fell on the tramlines at the junction of North William Street and the North Strand, severing gas mains and creating a huge crater on the road, houses in the vicinity were completely destroyed (see plate 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3). The third bomb also fell on the North Strand and the final one hit Summerhill Parade. The Dublin fire brigade were on the scene almost immediately and the majority of fires were extinguished soon after, allowing the rescue operation to get underway. There were a large number of groups in the area almost as quickly as the bombing had begun, from members of the local defence and security forces, to air raid precaution (A.R.P) workers, and demolition squads, the Irish Red Cross and the St. Johns' ambulance brigade. Also on the scene were doctors, nurses and members of the clergy.

When the people of the area talk about the attack, the thing they remember the most is noise of the planes. Eileen Pugh said that the planes sounded as if it was 'coming down on the house' as she came down her stairs she remembers 'passing the landing window, the banisters and everything shook. It was as if the sun burst, a huge big orange blast.' Another resident, Agnes Daly says 'when I opened my eyes, the





Plate 2.1 Bomb damage on Dublin's North Strand 31 May 1941



Plate 2.2 Irish ARP workers salute a dead body emerging from the rubble after the Luftwaffe air raid on Dublin.



Plate 2.3 DeValera (second from left) and Frank Aiken (hands clasped) examine a crater made by the German bomb on the North Strand.



window was just facing me and I saw all these lights passing the window. To me as a child, I thought they were fairy-lights. In fact they were searchlights and flares.’ Many of the workers who arrived on the scene that night remember how the people of North Strand seemed very calm under the circumstances and also how friendly they were to everyone. One man Alec King, chief air warden No.6 district who was one of the first there, said ‘the North Strand people were absolutely out of this world. They didn’t mind who you were, whether you were rich or poor. They were absolutely brilliant...there was always tea going... [and] they had sandwiches, all kinds of sandwiches which they kept handing out.’

On such an occasion it was the closeness of the community that was so important to the people, but it also made everything so much more difficult. Dick Eyres A.R.P for area No.3 said ‘every blessed person that lived in that area was known to me. I was standing there looking at them taking out the bodies, and the children that I knew, the mother and the grandmother...I was asked to go around the local hospitals and assist in identifying some of the people that were known to have been killed.’<sup>1</sup>

The papers on Monday 2 June 1941 ran the headline ‘German bombs were dropped on Dublin; government protest to be made in Berlin’, with an official statement which had been released from the government stating ‘the government regrets to announce that as a result of the bombs dropped on Dublin during the early hours of Saturday morning, at least 27 people lost their lives and about 80 received injuries... investigations having shown that the bombs dropped were of German origin, the Charge d’Affaires in Berlin is being directed to protest, in the strongest terms to the German government against the violation of Irish territory, and to claim compensation and reparation for the loss of life, the injuries suffered and the damage to property. He is being further directed to ask for definite assurances that the strictest instructions will be given to prevent the flight of aircraft over Irish territory and territorial waters.’<sup>2</sup> In reality this was all that the Irish government could do about the situation having no real defence capabilities, and also Ireland still intended to remain outside the war. Therefore it was necessary to seem firm on the matter, but also to keep the lines of communication open between the country and the other powers. Throughout

---

<sup>1</sup> All quotations used here taken from North Inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* (Dublin, 1994) p. 41-47

<sup>2</sup> Irish Times newspaper, Monday 2 June 1941 (National library of Ireland)



the war DeValera had made a point of ensuring any power who would see fit an attempt to invade Ireland, that they would be met by extreme resistance, thus why did DeValera not proclaim that any further attack like that of 31 May 1941 would face an armed confrontation? One possibility could have been that DeValera was too astute to take the defence bluff one step too far, fearing that it might become too transparent, thus opening up the opportunity for Ireland to indeed be attacked.

With rescue workers on site almost immediately the first victim had reached the Mater hospital a mere 7 minutes after the attack. Casualties were taken to the hospital and any bodies found were brought to the city morgue. The Evening Herald reported on the morning after the bombing that 'after a night of terror and devastation A.R.P. demolition squads are still busy searching the ruins of many homes for the bodies of victims'.<sup>3</sup> Initially of course it was difficult to know the total number of deaths, as bodies were continuously being removed from the ruins, the search was progressing and the lists of missing people were being altered as people were turning up safe and sound. The corporation was on scene almost immediately, with H.S Simms of the housing department organising and leading rescue parties. The details of what exactly happened were beginning to be pieced together as time went on and more casualties had been interviewed. The Irish Red Cross and the St. Johns' ambulance workers were doing all that they could to ease the burden and help those who had been left homeless by the bombing. In the Irish Times on 3 June 1941, each made appeals for clothes, money and anything else that could be given to help all those affected, they had never dealt with such an incident and their resources were limited.

But how did people react to the fact that such an event had occurred in the city in the first place? It is difficult to know the answer to this question. It seems that people more or less accepted it without much question. On Wednesday 4 June 1941, a formal inquest into the bombing and an identification parade was held at the city morgue. It was stated here 'that the persons died as the result of injuries received when their houses collapsed due to aerial bombing'.<sup>4</sup> The victims' families made statements saying that they felt a 'deep sense of horror and resentment'.<sup>5</sup> It seems that some of the people who attended this inquest were still somewhat unsure as to who

---

<sup>3</sup> Evening Herald newspaper, Saturday 31 May 1941 (NLI)

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



exactly had carried out the bombing (although it had been printed in the Irish Times on 2 June 1941 that it was in fact the Germans), and they commented that their 'complete support will be given to any steps that the government may, in its wisdom, deem wise to take to ensure that such a thing will never happen again, and that compensation will be made insofar as it can be made, to the relatives.'<sup>6</sup> The corporation was also praised for their good work, helping those rendered homeless in shelters setup at the Mansion house and Baggothall.

Thus it seems that those involved simply accepted the bombing as an unfortunate accident where no one was to blame, however in the editors' letter of the Irish Times on 3 June 1941 a slightly different opinion is put forward. It was acknowledged in the coroners' report that the majority of casualties were due to collapsed buildings, as a result of the bombing, but not directly due to the bombing. The Irish Times writes 'the houses collapsed because they were so old that they ought to have been demolished long ago; and the same thing holds true of dozens of tenement houses in this city'<sup>7</sup> (the author is specifically referring to the tenement houses on Old Bride Street, two of which, numbers 46 and 47 collapsed the Sunday after the bombing killing three and injuring fifteen.) The author then goes on to argue that this problem is an ongoing one, which the paper and 'all enlightened citizens' have been pointing out for the best part of a century. He argues that although these houses have been in slum condition for over 40 years, he's in no doubt that the landlords of such properties would feel that they are good for many more years to come, and he says that although they may not be ready to be condemned by the corporation, they are condemned by the 'opinion of decent people, and in most cases by that of the unhappy families who must inhabit them because they have nowhere else to go.'<sup>8</sup>

It is also pointed out that if the bombs had hit elsewhere, in fact a few kilometres down the road in the Gloucester Street region, where the majority of houses are the large Georgian tenements the same as those found on Old Bride Street, it is horrifying to envisage the extent of damage and loss of life which would have been the result. In conclusion the sense of anger and disgust felt by the author is apparent as he says it is hard to believe that 'the shortage of materials is so acute that the worst of the tenements cannot be pulled down at once, and their occupants provided with new

---

<sup>6</sup> Irish Times newspaper, Wednesday 4 June 1941 (NLI)

<sup>7</sup> Irish Times newspaper, Tuesday 3 June 1941 (NLI)

<sup>8</sup> Irish Times newspaper, 3 June 1941(NLI)



dwelling, however hastily constructed. Such incidents as the collapse of those two houses are an outrage upon Dublin's civic sense and a challenge to our profession of Christianity.'<sup>9</sup> So although those mostly affected by the bombing seem to accept the idea that it was part and parcel of war, many in society seem to be of the opinion that although this is the case, it could have been on a much smaller scale, and it was the corporation or the governments' role to ensure this.

In making the argument the author did touch on a point that in the aftermath can be seen to be quite valid. The corporation were finding it difficult to get many people to move from the shelters setup to help them, back into their own homes after the repairs had been completed, a point that we will look at further below.

So what steps did the corporation take in the immediate aftermath of the bombing? One of the first things that they did do was organise a public funeral at which the corporation and the government would be represented, for the victims of the bombing, which was held on 5 June 1941, in Glasnevin cemetery, after mass in St. Lawrence O'Toole's Church on the North Strand. The corporation interviewed the families of the victims to discover whether this idea would appeal to them, and also informed them that it would not affect any private funerals which they may also have planned.

The next and main issue which the corporation had to deal with was the vast number of people that were rendered homeless due to the bombing, as although thirty four people were killed in the incident, the destruction of property was the longer lasting affect. By the 4 February 1942 the corporation had issued a number of figures which one is presuming contains a more or less complete list of the property that was damaged. From this list, which is shown in table 2.1 it can be seen that just over 3,750 houses were reported to have been damaged in some way or another by the bombing. Only three hundred and sixty-nine of these were within the area purchased by the corporation for demolition. Out of this figure only two owners or occupiers opted to carry out the repair work themselves, which is hardly surprising. A possible explanation for them choosing to do so could be that the cost of their necessary repairs far exceeded the grant of £130 allowed for repairs put forward by the government. Outside the acquisition area the figure remained just as small and only one hundred and twenty-eight of the 3,386 houses damaged were repaired by the owner or occupier, which is only 3.8 %.

---

<sup>9</sup> Irish Times newspaper, 3 June 1941(NLI)



Once the worst affected areas had been recognised, the corporation began to demolish or partly demolished a total of one hundred and twenty-three houses, one hundred and twelve with the acquisition area and only eleven outside it. Out of all the claims put forward to the corporation, only forty-eight houses were investigated and found not acceptable as bomb damaged, which was a small number in comparison to the total figure.

Table: 2.1 Repairs carried out by the corporation on bombed premises within the North Strand area by 4 February 1942

	With Acquisition Area	Outside Acquisition Area
1. Number of premises where damage was reported to the corporation or is known to have occurred	369	3,386
2. Number of cases where owners or occupiers are known to have carried out their own repairs	2	128
3. Number of cases where repairs have been carried out by corporation		
(1) First Aid	234	1,164
(2) Permanent	226	2,262
4. Number of cases where repairs have not been carried out by the corporation (including those carried out in 2)	141	996

With such a large number of houses needing repair or demolition, what was the corporation to do with so many families left with nowhere to live? By 11 June 1941, almost two weeks after the bombing, five hundred and thirty people had registered themselves in the library at Charleville Mall having been rendered homeless. The first thing the government had to do was to ensure that their claims were valid, they did this by issuing forms to be filled out which were later verified with the addresses given, they had then to wait for the architects report to come back confirming that these homes were indeed unsuitable for living. Some were declared habitable and the families involved had to move back in, this didn't mean that the houses had not been



damaged, but they were regarded as not significantly damaged enough to mean that they could not be lived in while repairs were waiting to be carried out. Because of this many families lived in deplorable conditions, with missing windows, gapping holes in roofs, no running water or sanitary facilities and so on.

In a meeting held between the general purposes committee of the Red Cross and the city manager of the corporation, on 2 July 1941 it was agreed what exactly the corporation would take responsibility for in the aftermath of the bombing. It was concluded that the corporation would 'provide accommodation for all people from bombed areas'<sup>10</sup>, (the word 'temporary' was later pencilled in before accommodation). It was also noted that the corporation would take on this responsibility whether or not these people could afford to pay for this new temporary accommodation. Once the people were housed the corporation would then begin the task of clearing and repairing the damaged buildings and once this was complete they would issue certificates to the Red Cross informing them which houses were ready to be re-inhabited.

It was decided that a price of up to £50 would be paid out by the corporation as compensation for lost furniture and personal belongings, after an investigation into claims for such was carried out. Two officials were to be appointed to carry out all issues relating to those rendered homeless, one on behalf of the corporation, and one on the behalf of the Red Cross. By 2 July, two hundred and thirty people were being taken care of, one hundred and seventy in the Mansion house and sixty at Baggotrath Hall. Food was being provided for all those rendered homeless at Mespil Road and the convent of the sisters of charity on North William Street.

All houses which the furniture and other effects had been salvaged safely were marked with a large white 'S', so that when the people returned from the shelters they knew where they could collect their belongings. For those that had nothing which could be salvaged, the staff at Charleville mall were also available to assess people for furniture needs, and to contact the Red Cross to see what could be done regarding clothing etc. The corporation felt that it was best not to give anyone money, but rather to allow them to select items from the air raid precaution departments existing stores. Here items such as bedding, furniture and utensils were available in short supply, and

---

<sup>10</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 2 Housing of persons rendered homeless 8-7-41 letter from the Irish Red Cross to the city manager.(Dublin city archives)



once items were received, a note was made of what was provided to prevent any person from obtaining more than they were entitled to.

However along with this there were other related issues which also had to be looked at. The fact that so many people were all being housed together in one small area meant that diseases were able to spread easily throughout the environment with no real means to prevent them. Doctor Darley, the acting medical officer, was responsible for the health of the homeless and he stated that measles, chicken-pox etc had broken out among the victims, due to lack of proper isolated accommodation, even some of the voluntary workers had been struck. He felt that the voluntary workers should not be expected to look after such issues and that beds should be sought in hospitals or realistically proper care-workers, such as nurses should be brought in to deal with the situation.

A further issue was that because the fact that the bombs had struck at night many simple things that people needed for everyday life had been lost, such as glasses or dentures for example and these needed to be replaced, so the Red Cross also looked into this.

They were also as discussed earlier finding it difficult to get many of those involved to move back into their homes once the work had been completed on them. This is understandable to a point as many of these houses were very old and were in need of renovations even before the bombing incident. After the bombing they could hardly have gotten any better and the corporation were refusing to become involved in any decoration work but rather they were resolute that they would only repair premises to the extent that they were habitable.

Thus many of the locals involved maybe saw this as an opportunity to better their lot, the majority would have been renting property and their present situation meant that they were not paying any rent and also getting their meals for free, so its not surprising that there wasn't any big rush to return to the North Strand. A further reason could have been that they were genuinely worried about the possibility of another attack, as has been shown above the main cause of death and injury was due to old buildings collapsing and not in fact from the actual bombing, so their reluctance to return is understandable in this light. The corporation were aware of this difficulty, which is also part of the reason why they decided to appoint the two officials.



Originally the Red Cross were to pay the first weeks rent of those involved, however due to the large numbers it was decided that vouchers would be issued for rents, which would then be deducted from the individuals' compensation when it was received. A further rent related issue was that tenants were refusing to pay their rents under the circumstances, as many properties that were deemed inhabitable were still badly damaged, and they may not have been able to use certain rooms in the house and so on, so they were contesting their payments with their landlords, who were in turn looking to the corporation demanding to know how long it was going to take until work was complete and also stating their own right to compensation for loss of rent. The corporation however were refusing to compensate owners for loss of rent, saying that the owners would have to go through the proper channels, by filling out claim forms for compensation and submitting these to the government.

Another important issue was that, although many people lost their homes in the bombing, another small, though significant number also lost their livelihoods, and this could not simply be rectified by moving them elsewhere. One such example was a woman who had lived in her house for 51 years, with her mother. When her mother died in 1928 she began renting out the rooms of her home to tenants. After the bombing she was forced to move to a convalescent home in Stillorgan, where she had now to pay for her own up-keep. She had therefore not only lost her home but also her income. The government had been re-housing people in the Cabra and Crumlin areas, but this would not provide her with an income, so what was she to do in this matter? The corporation was aware that she was entitled to compensation with regard to the loss of her home, which she could use in part to pay for her stay at the convalescent home, however they could do nothing about the fact that she had lost her livelihood and told her simply to fill out the relevant compensation forms and apply to the department of finance. Other instances relate to shops that were destroyed in the bombing, but this was a more straight forward matter as the shops would either be repaired or compensation would be paid if they were to be demolished. The corporation was however expected to pay for the re-provision of stock that was lost or damaged, and cover the purchasing costs of any machinery which had to be replaced, such as the case with the shoe repair shop on the North Strand.



In the aftermath of the bombing, when the victims had been removed and buried by their families and once people had begun to be re-housed, the corporation could then move on to dealing with the issue of acquiring all the property that had been damaged, demolishing it, and drawing up plans for re-development of the area. This is what we shall look at in the next chapter.

comparisons to the devastation suffered by those further involved in the war, most especially London and Belfast. We shall now look at how the corporation of Dublin dealt with the bombing of the North Strand, in respect to the process of 'cleaning up' after the bombing, demolition, re-development, the purchase of dangerous buildings, and claims put forward by locals. They had already had the experience of dealing with the destruction which followed the Dunore area bombing, discussed briefly in the last chapter, so would they learn from the mistakes that they had made here?

Under the Neutrality (war damage to property) Act of 1941<sup>1</sup>, the obligation was placed upon the local authority to 'render all buildings previously used for human habitation fit for such purposes after damage, if practicable, provided that the owners are unable or unwilling to carry out reconditioning'<sup>2</sup>. This was the position taken by the corporation following the Dunore bombing of 3 January 1941, and in the aftermath of the North Strand bombing, the corporation had the experience of a previous disaster to speed up the process of recuperation.

On the immediate morning after the attack, a conference was held in the city managers office in order to discuss what should be done to ease the situation. The city manager was anxious to begin work in the area as soon as possible, and requested that all those involved should report the damage themselves in order to speed the process up, rather than the corporation trying to find them. The main goal was to simply make the houses suitable for occupation, not to restore them to their previous condition, as had been the case in the Dunore bombing, where proper guidelines had not been established. In Dunore the corporation had made the mistake of getting involved in the tedious process of attempting to completely restore homes, including aspects of re-decoration work, wallpapering and so on. It had proved more than difficult to satisfy everyone involved, therefore in the case of the North Strand bombing, it was essential to the corporation not to get bogged down on these issues, most especially

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

<sup>2</sup> Records of the Dunore area bombing, January 1941, File No. 1 Air-raid precaution reports (October 1940-February 1941, held in Dublin city archives)



### Chapter Three

#### Moving On

The bombing of the North strand on 31 May 1941 was the largest event which Ireland suffered during the Second World War, and although devastating was minuscule in comparison to the desolation suffered by those further involved in the war, most especially London and Belfast. We shall now look at how the corporation of Dublin dealt with the bombing of the North Strand, in respect to the process of ‘cleaning up’ after the bombing, demolition, re-development, the purchase of dangerous buildings, and claims put forward by locals. They had already had the experience of dealing with the destruction which followed the Dunore area bombing, discussed briefly in the last chapter, so would they learn from the mistakes that they had made here?

Under the Neutrality (war damage to property) Act of 1941<sup>1</sup>, the obligation was placed upon the local authority to ‘render all buildings previously used for human habitation fit for such purposes after damage, if practicable, provided that the owners are unable or unwilling to carry out reconditioning<sup>2</sup>’. This was the position taken by the corporation following the Dunore bombing of 3 January 1941, and in the aftermath of the North Strand bombing, the corporation had the experience of a previous disaster to speed up the process of recuperation.

On the immediate morning after the attack, a conference was held in the city managers office in order to discuss what should be done to ease the situation. The city manager was anxious to begin work in the area as soon as possible, and requested that all those involved should report the damage themselves in order to speed the process up, rather than the corporation trying to find them. The main goal was to simply make the homes suitable for occupation, not to restore them to their previous condition, as had been the case in the Dunore bombing, where proper guidelines had not been established. In Dunore the corporation had made the mistake of getting involved in the tedious process of attempting to completely restore homes, including aspects of re-decoration work, wallpapering and so on. It had proved more than difficult to satisfy everyone involved, therefore in the case of the North Strand bombing, it was essential to the corporation not to get bogged down on these issues, most especially

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>2</sup> Records of the Dunore area bombing, January 1941, File No. 1 Air raid precaution reports (October 1940-February 1941, held in Dublin city archives)



because the damaged caused here was far greater, and the costs of re-decoration could run into hundreds of thousands. However although aware of it from the outset, this issue was to prove to be a continuous problem for corporation officials.

A further issue which needed addressing was, after the Dunore bombing only a small number of contractors were brought in to complete the repairs and the process took much longer than had been expected, it was decided at the meeting that because the bombing was on a larger scale, more contractors would be necessary than had been needed at Dunore, and a greater effort would have to be made to watch over the contractors in order to ensure that work was being carried out in as fast a time as possible. The corporation was of the opinion that many of those employed 'sat down on the work, and by no means put their best foot forward to finish the work quickly',<sup>3</sup> so it was their intention to ensure that this would certainly not be the case in the North Strand. It was also generally agreed that only 'structural first aid' was to be completed by the corporation on the damaged homes, to save time as well as money.

Dangerous buildings inspectors were to be sent out to the area immediately to survey the damage and advise people. The corporation also agreed that the work would be priced and agreed upon before it got underway in order to establish the best price. This was a lesson that had been learned from the Dunore bombing, where work had started and astronomical fees were then arriving in from the contractors. In some cases people were hiring family members to complete the work at half the price but still sending the corporation large bills! The corporation wanted to ensure that this was not going to be the case the second time around, and issued a list of official contractors; therefore any owner or occupier who wished to hire someone else had to do so at the risk of the work not being paid for by the corporation. It was also agreed that a head quarters ought to be established as a central point to run operations from within the area and the library at Charleville mall in North Strand was opted for. They issued a statement informing residents of the area that all issues relating to claims etc. would be dealt with from here by the corporation and the library staff.

Beginning work in the area was made all the more difficult because of course it was occurring during a time of national emergency and therefore even to go ahead with

---

<sup>3</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Memorandum of conference held in the city managers office 31-5-41



something simple like the assessment of war damage to houses, letters had to be drawn up and sent between the corporation and the government regarding petrol needs for the dangerous buildings inspector to travel around the site, as petrol was in short supply and was being rationed. Tram passes had also to be made available from the city treasurers' office for workers to be able to reach the area.

The work that was to be carried out was divided into two areas;

- 1) Structural repairs to prevent consequential damage and deterioration by weather. (This would include such work as placing tarpaulins on damaged roofs and the boarding up of doors and windows)
- 2) Repairs necessary to enable the premises to be occupied (i.e. Re-roofing, taking down and rebuilding of damaged walls, new doors, windows, gutters, down pipes, re-glazing, re-plastering, re-installation of heating, lighting, cooking, sanitary and washing facilities and so on)

As the repair work that was carried out on the Dunore area far exceed what the corporation had planned on spending, it was decided by the corporation (in the hope that repair costs could be kept to a minimum), that each individual house was not to surpass £130 and that painting and any re-decoration work would not be included in the repairs carried out by them, this would be left up to the owners themselves to deal with.

It was here that the corporation ran into its first difficulty, it is quite obvious that if the kind of repair work noted above was to be carried out, a figure of £130 would be hopelessly inadequate in many cases, so how could this issue be resolved? Should they repair these houses regardless of the costs which they might face or should they allow the premises be left derelict and exposed to the weather and thus subject to further deterioration?

A conference was held at the department of finance on 6 June 1941, almost one week after the bombing, in order to discuss the details of the repair costs, as the corporation was extremely concerned about what expenses they could face on the matter.

H.T O'Rourke the city architect, felt that it was simply impossible to estimate the costs until the work had actually begun, so with this in mind the corporation decided the best route forward would be to make available to the public their plans for the repair of the area.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix II



They also wanted to ensure that all reports of damage should be completed before the work was commenced, so that spurious claims could be avoided. This would mean a far greater work load on the part of the corporation staff and those employed to deal with the destruction, however from the governments' point of view it was of vital necessity.

In the meantime, while all the necessary meetings were going ahead, things were moving very slowly on site. P.J Hernon the city manager at the corporation received a letter from H.S Moylan at the department of local government and health, as he was quite concerned at the speed at which the repairs were being carried out. Mr. Moylan had spoken to the chief warden and air raid precaution (ARP) officer R.S Lawrie on 2 June 1941, two days after the incident and had made him aware that the government were quite anxious for the work to be carried out as quickly as possible, however when he revisited the site on 12 June 1941 he 'was amazed and shocked at the lack of progress is to put it lightly, public morale demands that this matter should be dealt with swiftly and efficiently.'<sup>5</sup> In an attempt to respond to this letter the corporation replaced the city architect, H.T O'Rourke with R.S Lawrie in the hope that the work could be moved along at a faster pace, or at least to be seen as doing something in response. The corporation did acknowledge however, that contractors over the past two weeks had been allowed to work without adequate supervision, and they were adamant not to repeat the mistakes that had been made at Dunore.

Work was also further delayed because it was proving almost impossible to get enough tradesmen as were needed to work in the area. Out of the one hundred and twenty slaters on the Union books only fifty-five were available to work in the bombing area. The others were either permanently employed by large firms in the city, or were migrant workers in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, delaying the work further.

As the new head on site, Lawrie faced more difficulties in North Strand than just the tardiness of the hired contractors, there were many issues that need to be resolved between himself and the corporation regarding clarification of exactly what work could be undertaken, before any could actually go ahead. Lawrie was aware that the

---

<sup>5</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 13-6-1941 Memorandum of conference held in city managers office

<sup>6</sup> Figure 3.1 taken from records of the North Strand bombing File no. 5 Survey of dangerous buildings



corporation was anxious to ensure the costs of repairs did not exceed £130, but even in cases where this would not be a problem, what may be carried out to render a premises habitable? In instances where the aforementioned work may have been proven necessary and structural repairs were finished, under what circumstances could painting and redecoration to be undertaken?

Also in cases where the repairs might exceed the figure, although Lawrie understood that the figure given need not be rigidly adhere to, it must not be over looked that there will be many cases in which rehabilitation will greatly exceed this figure, for example the replacement of a wall and a roof will obviously well exceed this amount, and assuming of course that the property's condition can justify the repairs, should this work be carried out? Furthermore what should be done in cases where the pre-bombing condition of the property would not have justified the expenditure, but had been habitable previous to the bombing, should any repairs go ahead on this property or should it be destroyed?

Lawrie also enquired about damage which became apparent after the bombing, which would have to now be repaired along side the actual damaged caused by the bombing itself, otherwise the latter would prove pointless. Should this be the case without any question as to the liability of the owners or if their costs are to be included what method does the corporation intend to use in order to collect this amount? This path may also lead to the refusal of the owners to pay, and the abandonment of the property entirely.

A further important issue which Lawrie brought forward was the need to standardise the claims that the corporation were receiving in order to hopefully prevent people claiming twice. He had a very basic and straight forward form drawn up in an attempt to curb this practice and it was essential in cutting the costs that the corporation faced. This form is shown overleaf. (Figure 3.1)<sup>6</sup>

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>6</sup> Figure 3.1 taken from records of the North Strand bombing File no. 5 Survey of dangerous buildings



Figure 3.1 Copy of claims form drawn up by the corporation to standardise claims put forward by residents of the North Strand area.

CORPORATION OF DUBLIN

Report of premises stated to be damaged as a result of bombing of 31.5.41

Situation of premises

Present address of occupier

Name of occupier

Name of landlord (or agent)

Address of landlord (or agent)

Description and situation of damage

Roof

Ceilings

External walls

Internal walls

Window and glass

Chimney stacks

Doors

Other Damage

Signed

Date



In response to all these queries, Lawrie received a letter from Mr Moylan stating that re-decoration could be provided for in certain circumstances, however once again it must be kept in mind that the 'primary function of the corporation is simply to carry out such repairs as are necessary to enable injured houses to be occupied and to avoid consequential damage or deterioration by the weather, and that the corporation are not concerned, as a rule to see that injured premises are returned to there former state.'<sup>7</sup> In some cases it was agreed that this maybe taken further, however this was not the general rule it would only come about by exception and was generally unnecessary, he also states that when in doubt, Mr Lawrie should instruct the person involved to make a claim through the correct channels as certified under the Neutrality (war damage to property) Act. It was also decided that repairs needing to be made to property due to want of maintenance and decay, which was not the responsibility of the corporation, would be taken on by them regardless. This was because it was generally agreed that the amount of time that would pass waiting for people to get these repairs underway would delay the 'cleaning up' process even further.

Once it was agreed upon what repair work would be sufficient, the next step was to decide upon which areas suffered damage too great to warrant repair, and take the relevant steps to acquire such properties for demolition and re-development. The medical officer for health had previously in 1939 reported that houses in North Clarence Street, numbers 12a, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 were unfit for habitation and should be demolished. These premises obviously suffered further in the bombing as they were already quite dilapidated. Added to these were numbers 8, 9, 10, 11, which had been rendered unfit as a result of bomb damage, but it was decided that they, including 15 and 16 could be repaired at reasonable expense. All the above houses were in a very dangerous condition, and notices had been placed on them all by the dangerous buildings inspector, with the exception of number 10 (ground floor), 12, and 18 (shop) they had all been completely evacuated.

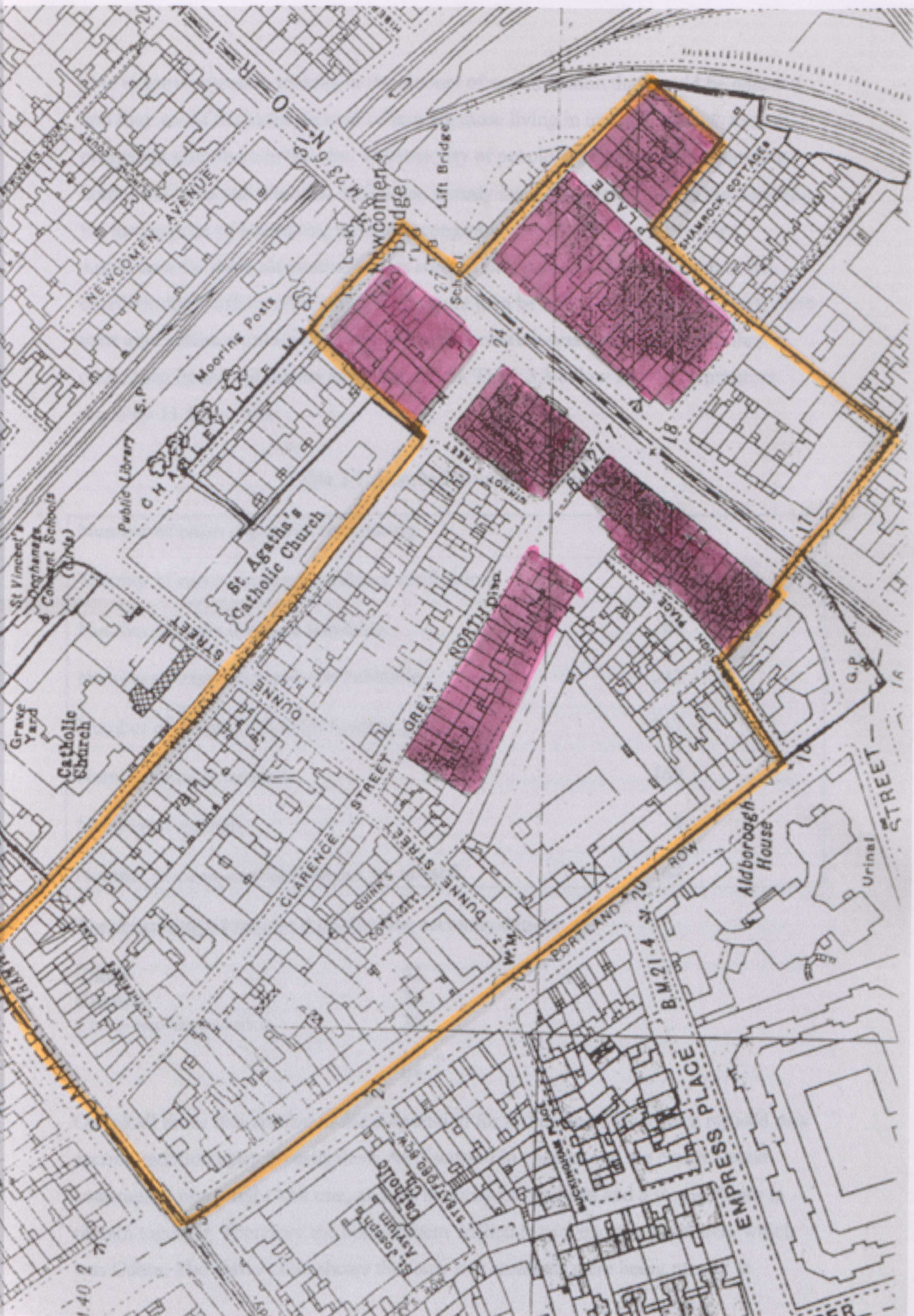
A survey was drawn up alongside the map of the area (figure 3.2)<sup>8</sup> on which it was marked out the properties that were to be acquired. The corporation were then

---

<sup>7</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 11-11-1941 Letter from Mr. Moylan, department of local government and health, to R.S Lawrie chief ARP officer.

<sup>8</sup>Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 7 Compulsory purchase, (table 3.2) North Strand property irreparably and badly damaged (orange) and also area suggested for acquisition (pink)





Irreparable (pink) and badly damaged property marked for acquisition and redevelopment, North Strand, 1941.



able to move ahead to looking at the amount of compensation that would be paid out and they could begin the process of moving those living in unsafe buildings to new properties elsewhere in the city. The majority of people were moved to corporation homes in Cabra and Crumlin, which had already been developed prior to the bombing for the purpose of attempting to reduce congested areas within the inner city. Applicants for these alternative homes were to first report for identification to the chief warden's office, after which they would then be sent to Mr. Sherwin's staff where their application would be investigated to make sure it was a genuine claim, they could then be moved to new accommodation. Table 3.1 below shows the progress made by 11 June 1941:

Table 3.1: Bombed Area – Re-housing

Number of cases registered for housing	530
Number of cases awaiting architects verification	220
Number of cases declared habitable	68
Number of cases declared non habitable	242
Number of cases notified for housing allotments	217
Number of cases housed	169
Number of refusals	9
Number of cases certified but not yet housed	64

The remaining 64 require the following accommodation:-

Cabra	42
Crumlin	2
Cheap accommodation	20
	<hr/>
	64

Out of all those that applied to the corporation for re-housing only 9 were refused new accommodation upon investigation. As discussed in chapter one the North Strand community was a tight knit one, and the majority of residents had a strong desire to remain together. Therefore the bulk of them wished to move to the same area, which was Cabra. The above table shows that only two residents were being moved to



Crumlin; however the corporation files note that this was only a temporary arrangement until housing became available for them in Cabra.<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to know what exactly 'cheap accommodation' refers to; it could possibly be that people were being housed here until accommodation became available elsewhere, or until repairs had been completed on their own homes.

By 17 June 1941 the corporation had housed two hundred families and by 10 July 1941 many more families, especially those from Buckingham Street, were able to return to their homes. However as mentioned already in the previous chapter, not all families wished to return to their previous homes at all, indeed many were very reluctant due to the condition of the houses. In an unprecedented move, the corporation undertook to provide those who did not wish to return, with flats in the Railway Street when they became available. This was a very sympathetic and accommodating move on the part of the corporation, and when the premises were ultimately evacuated by the transfer of families to the railway street flats, the corporation could acquire these houses for re-conditioning. Flats were beginning to be seen as the solution to the city's slum problems. In the Irish Times on 6 June 1941, it discusses how flats were the ideal resolution to the 'wretched, unhealthy hovels'<sup>10</sup> that plague the inner city. This move would probably prove cost effective in the long term as the buildings on Buckingham Street were hardly worth repairing and now the space could be used in a more practical manner.

Also included in the plans for demolition were the cottages at Newcomen Court, the medical officer for health was satisfied to add these houses to the planned clearance area if he was satisfied that alternative accommodation was available for the families. Lawrie was aware that more houses would become available in the next month in the Crumlin and Cabra areas, so this went ahead.

The corporation then went about deciding how to acquire the areas using article 20 of the Neutrality (war damage to property) Act, which deals with 'acquisition of land comprising injured buildings by district planning authority.'<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> Records of the North Strand Bombing, File no. 2 Housing of persons rendered homeless: report sent from staff at Charleville Mall library to Mr. Sherwin's office, 12-6-1941

<sup>10</sup> Irish Times newspaper, Friday 6 June 1941(NLI)

<sup>11</sup> Article 20, Neutrality (war damage to property) Act, 1941



It was decided on 31 July 1941 that a report should be prepared outlining the proposals for acquisition, which should also consist of, if possible the estimated cost of acquisition and a map should be included showing clearly the property to be acquired.<sup>12</sup> (The area should run, roughly from Newcomen Bridge along the North Strand to Seville Place and back to Summerhill). Dangerous buildings notices were served on approximately 50 houses, all of which are included in the acquisitions area.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the large number of houses that were actually in some way damaged, the supply of corporation housing ran very low and was not adequate for what was needed. Therefore every attempt was to be made to return people to their homes as quickly as possible. The scale of damages obviously varied, properties in the terrace between Charleville Mall library and Newcomen Bridge were in good condition, whereas some houses, such as the one storey houses on William Street were badly damaged and remained unfit for habitation.

Finally, once demolition was complete, and acquisition was moving ahead, the corporation had to look at the issue of re-development. What was the future of the area? Michael O'Brien of the town planning department had a very positive and perceptive viewpoint which he put forward to the corporation. He pointed out that the chief medical officer for health, prior to submitting evidence to the housing enquiry in 1939, had drawn up a review which included all the unsanitary property in the city, and he had discovered that between North Strand and Summerhill Parade there was quite a large volume of this unsanitary property, O'Brien was also aware that 'the housing committee had in contemplation as late as February last, proposals for a clearance area in North Clarence Street which lies within the area'<sup>14</sup> so re-development of the area had already been discussed prior to the bombing.

A further point was that O'Brien did not feel that all this previously gathered information was being properly utilised, but instead first-aid work was going ahead. He felt that due to the details of the medical officer's report, these condemned houses

---

<sup>12</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 31-7-1941 Memorandum of conference held in city managers office

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix III for copy of letter; taken from North Strand File no. 6 Demolitions: 12-11-1941

<sup>14</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 12-6-1941 Survey submitted by Michael O'Brien of town planning department



should not even receive first-aid, but rather should be demolished, and the area should be re-developed instead. He went on by saying 'it is hardly necessary to stress the desirability of redevelopment in this most congested area, which contains for the most part numerous dwellings, structurally poor, and placed back to back, with very narrow approaches, practically no open space, and definitely no amenity. Unless the corporation are prepared to take a long view in matters such as this I think we shall only have a perpetuation of the slum problem in the city for many decades to come.'<sup>15</sup> O'Brien seemed to have a good grasp of the development needs of the community and what steps should be taken for the future best interests of the area. He realised that the bombing had provided the corporation with an excellent opportunity to break the cycle of congested poverty, which would not have previously been possible. However was the corporation going to listen to him, or would they choose the quick fix option to deal with the problem?

O'Brien argued that this redevelopment could be paid for with public funds, shop and home frontages could be standardised alongside new playgrounds and other general amenities, uplifting the entire appearance of the area, which would not only benefit the local community but the city as well. O'Brien's ideas were discussed as early a June by the corporation at a conference held at the city managers office, however it was felt by the city manager and town clerk P.J Hernon, that it was impossible to move on them as the 'suggestions had only been put to him that very morning'<sup>16</sup> and the city architect at the time H.T O'Rourke argued that the suggestions should have been made the day after the bombing in order for something to have been done. Was this the case or was this simply a further attempt to save money on the part of the corporation? Although they argued that O'Brien's idea were received too late to be made useful, the corporation was of course aware that a considerable amount of unsanitary property had been damaged in the bombing and the city manager did not want this to be reconditioned as it would simply serve to further squander money.

---

<sup>15</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 12-6-1941 Survey submitted by Michael O'Brien of town planning department

<sup>16</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 1 Damage Reports: 13-6-1941. Letter sent to city manager P.J Hernon from Mr. Moylan at the department of local government and health.



So what did the corporation decide to do? To discuss the complete re-development of the north strand in its entirety would fall outside the allowable boundaries for this minor thesis; however it is necessary to mention briefly what path the corporation decided to take in the rebuilding of the area. After demolition, there was an attempt made to change the face of the area. As already mentioned, by the mid twentieth century flats were seen as the new solution to the cities slum problems.

So within the area now available for re-development, the corporation felt that the best move would be to build new self-contained flats. (See plates 3.1, 3.2<sup>17</sup>) This would mean that they could still fit a large number of people into the one area as was the case with tenement housing, but the new flats would be much more sanitary. Unlike tenement houses, where each family usually lived in one room, the new flats would contain two or three rooms, and each with its own bathroom and washing facilities.

We can also see on the map (figure 3.3.<sup>18</sup>) how far the development of the city and the North Strand area had come by as early as 1948.

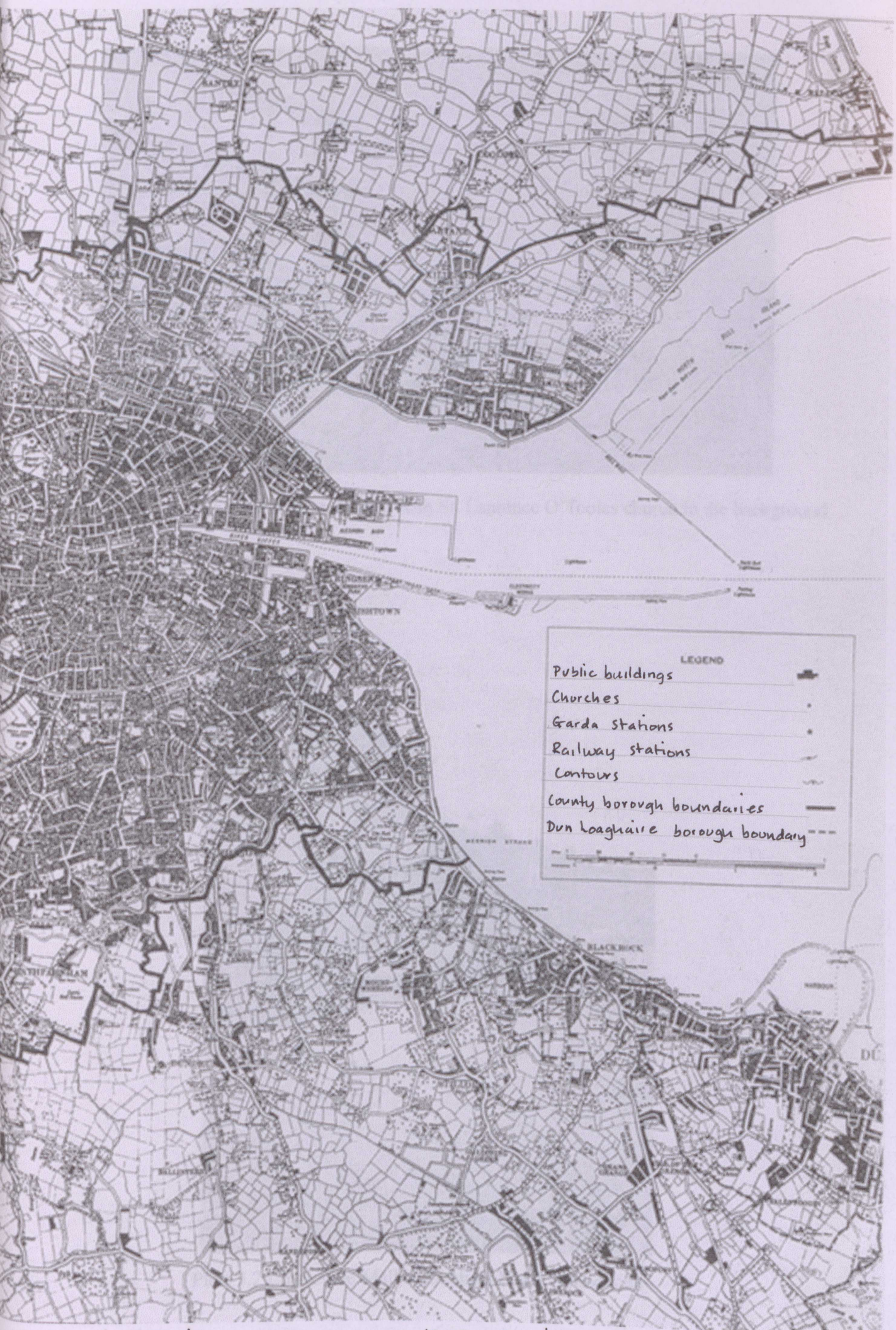
Some of the old Georgian houses however did remain in the area, as they were in better condition and were suitable for repair; these were mainly situated in the upper North Strand area, closer to the city, but even these were demolished by the early 1970s. Nothing was done about O'Brien's idea for a children's playground and the North Strand really contained no green space at all, continuing to maintain the dismal and gloomy appearance of the area. It is only in more recent times that a memorial park has been built in the area between the five lamps and Newcomen Bridge in memory of the bombing. The site used for the park contains some of the foundations and walls of numbers 166 to 170 North Strand, the only existing remainder, apart from shrapnel of the night.

---

<sup>17</sup> Photographs of the North Strand flats today, taken by the author.

<sup>18</sup> Dublin City Ordinance Survey map 1948, showing the development of the North Strand after the bombing.





Dublin City Ordnance Survey map, 1948, showing development of the city





Plate 3.1 Flats on the North Strand today, with St. Laurence O'Tooles church in the background



Plate 3.2 Charleville Mall in Dublin's North Strand today



## Conclusion

In conclusion, it was the approach of the Corporation of Dublin in the aftermath of the North Strand bombing that was one of the most important factors that enabled people to forget and move on with their lives.

They sheltered and fed the homeless, they rebuilt damaged property, they re-housed hundreds of families, they organised a public funeral for the victims in an attempt to support the families left behind, basically they took responsibility for the whole cleaning-up process. One may take the attitude that it was their place to do so, however when one looks at the situation which faced the Belfast corporation, granted they had to cope with disaster on a much larger scale, they still failed to take control of the situation regardless, through this we can see how the corporation of Dublin dealt with the bombing of the North Strand very successfully. Bad government policy meant that Northern Ireland was almost completely unprepared for an attack of any kind.<sup>1</sup> Barton says of the attacks on Belfast during April and May 1941, that 'due mainly to earlier ministerial neglect and prevarication, Northern Ireland's active and passive defences were hopelessly inadequate and the public psychologically unprepared for the severe aerial bombardment'... 'the blitz exacerbated the governments' problems and confirmed its directionless, hesitant posture'.<sup>2</sup> The Belfast Corporation was in disarray and suffered from ineffective leadership, in the aftermath of the bombings as many as 220,000 people fled the city and Belfast's security minister John MacDermott predicted 'attacks on the parliamentary buildings at Stormont by an irate and frightened populace.'<sup>3</sup>

This was in marked contrast to the situation in Dublin a few months afterwards, although the government was still in its infancy it managed to handle the situation with noticeable efficiency. They had learnt from their experiences at Dunore on the south side of the city three months previous, and they managed to make practical decisions while at the same time remain aware of the emotions involved. Regardless of the fact that the country was not directly involved in the war, the Irish people did not blame the government for the attacks and realised that it was part and parcel of being indirectly involved in a war situation. The corporation did everything

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on this see Barton, Brain, 'Northern Ireland: the impact of war, 1939-1945', in Brian Girvin and Geoffrey Roberts (eds), *Ireland and the Second World War: politics, society and remembrance*

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.52

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.52



in its power to endeavour to keep the people of the North Strand, who wished to remain together, together as best they could by re-housing the majority of homeless in the Cabra area. They also understood that many families did not wish to return to the older tenement houses and in some situations compromised with tenants, promising flats to those who wanted them when they were built.

Germany, who had initially denied responsibility for the bombing, later paid compensation to the Irish government of £327,000, over fifteen years later in 1958. This figure would have barely been sufficient in regards to property destroyed, by 8 September 1941 the government had already spent £31,000 as regards contractors' fees alone<sup>4</sup>, they also had to pay compensation in relation to houses which could not be repaired, furniture and personal belongings which had been destroyed, compensation to the families of the 34 victims who lost their lives in the bombing, and they also had to deal the re-building costs of the new flats that were erected on the clearance site.

Over all, the corporation played an essential role in the aftermath of the bombing of the North Strand; they managed to embody the government on the ground, while also representing the people of the area, a role which they oversaw most successfully at a difficult time for the country.

---

<sup>4</sup> Records of the North Strand bombing File no. 3 Damage claims: Letter from P.J Herson, city manager and town clerk to J. Hurson, department secretary, Department of local government and health.



## Appendix I

### NEUTRALITY(WAR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY) ACT, 1941

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION OUT OF PUBLIC MONEYS TO PERSONS WHO, ON OR AFTER THE 26TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1940, SUFFER INJURY TO THEIR PROPERTY IN THE STATE OR THE TERRITORIAL WATERS THEREOF AS A CONSEQUENCE OF AN ACT OF THE ARMED FORCES OF AN EXTERNAL GOVERNMENT OR AUTHORITY ENGAGED IN A WAR IN RESPECT OF WHICH THE STATE IS NEUTRAL OR AS A CONSEQUENCE OF AN ACCIDENTAL OCCURRENCE ARISING FROM SOMETHING DONE OUTSIDE THE STATE BY ANY SUCH ARMED FORCE, AND TO MAKE PROVISION FOR MATTERS CONNECTED WITH SUCH INJURIES TO PROPERTY OR THE PAYMENT OF COMPENSATION THEREFOR.

[23rd September, 1941.]

BE IT ENACTED BY THE OIREACHTAS AS FOLLOWS:—

1941 26 2

Injuries to which this Act applies.

2.—(1) This Act applies to injuries to property which occurred or shall occur (whether before or after the passing of this Act) within the State or the territorial waters thereof on or after the 26th day of August, 1940, and were or are caused—

( a ) by any projectile, bomb, or other object or any substance propelled or dropped from a foreign aircraft, or by any projectile, bomb, or other object propelled from a foreign ship, or

( b ) by explosion, blast, fire, gas, or other destructive or injurious agency arising out of that propelling or dropping of any such object or substance as aforesaid from a foreign aircraft or the propelling of any such object as aforesaid from a foreign ship, or arising in the course of the removal, dismantling, destruction, or dispersal of, or by reason of any other interference with, any such object or substance, or

( c ) by the landing (whether voluntary or involuntary) or falling of any foreign aircraft or the falling of portions of or articles or persons from any such aircraft, or by any explosion, blast, fire, gas, or other destructive or injurious agency brought into operation by or in connection with any such landing or falling, or

( d ) by the explosion (whether in the sea or in inland water or on land) of a mine placed in the sea by any foreign ship or any foreign aircraft;



( e ) by any explosion or fire arising in the course of the removal, dismantling, or destruction of, or by reason of any other interference with, any mine so placed as aforesaid, or

( f ) by a balloon emanating from outside the State or by a mooring rope or other article attached to any such balloon, or

( g ) by any thing done to or in relation to any such balloon as aforesaid or any attachment thereto for the purpose of the removal, deflation, release, or destruction of such balloon, or by any other interference with any such balloon or attachment, or by any explosion or fire arising from such balloon in the course of the removal, deflation, release, or destruction thereof or in consequence of any such interference therewith.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing sub-section of the section, this Act shall only apply to injuries to property which occur while the State is not engaged in any war.

1941 26 3

Persons entitled to compensation under this Act.

3.—(1) Subject to the exceptions made by and the other provisions contained in this Act, every of the following persons shall, on applying therefore in accordance with this Act, be entitled to compensation under this Act in respect of the injury or loss hereinafter mentioned, that is to say:—

( a ) every person who has suffered or shall suffer loss by an injury to which this Act applies to his property;

( b ) every person who, being the personal representative of a deceased person or a trustee or otherwise in a fiduciary capacity, has suffered or shall suffer loss in his said fiduciary capacity by an injury to which this Act applies to property vested in him in his said fiduciary capacity;

( c ) the personal representative of an individual who suffered loss by an injury to which this Act applies to his property during his lifetime;

( d ) every person who has suffered or shall suffer loss by reason of an injury to which this Act applies to property charged (otherwise than with a rent) in his favour in any manner or to property on which he has a lien;

( e ) every person who, by reason of an injury to which this Act applies to a building, has suffered or shall suffer loss (other than loss by an injury to his property) in respect of which compensation may be awarded under this Act.



(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing sub-section of this section, no compensation under this Act shall be payable to or recoverable by any local authority in respect of injury to any street, road, bridge, viaduct, sub-way, water-main, water-pipe, sewer, drain, or culvert which such local authority is required by law to provide, maintain, or repair.

(3) Where the personal representative of a deceased person is awarded compensation under this Act in respect of an injury to which this Act applies which occurred to property of such deceased person in his lifetime, the following provisions shall apply and have effect, that is to say:—

( a ) such compensation shall be deemed to have formed part of the estate of such deceased person at his death;  
( b ) if the said property is real estate, the said personal representative shall hold such compensation upon trust for the person who became entitled to the said property under the will or on the intestacy of such deceased person.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, a person who has (whether before or after the passing of this Act) received from a government or authority outside the State compensation in respect of an injury to which this Act applies shall not be awarded or paid any compensation under this Act in respect of that injury.

Acquisition of land comprising injured building by district planning authority.

**20.—**(1) Where a building has been injured by an injury to which this Act applies and the relevant district planning authority considers that the acquisition of the land consisting of such building and its site is expedient for the purposes of a planning scheme for their district (whether already made or in contemplation), such planning authority may take steps to acquire in accordance with the Schedule to this Act such land.

(2) Where a district planning authority has acquired in accordance with the Schedule to this Act any land, the following provisions shall have effect, that is to say:—

( a ) if, immediately before the making of the order under the said Schedule by which such land was acquired, any person had any estate or interest in or right in respect of such land, such person may apply to such

Source: Irish Statute Book



authority not later than three months after the making of such order for compensation in respect of such estate, interest, or right, and such authority shall pay to such person by way of compensation an amount equal to the value (if any) of such estate, interest, or right,

( b ) the said amount shall, in default of agreement, be determined by arbitration under and in accordance with the Acquisition of Land (Assessment of Compensation) Act, 1919, as amended by the Acquisition of Land (Reference Committee) Act, 1925 (No. 22 of 1925),

( c ) for the purposes of the determination of the said amount, the value of such land shall be deemed to be the same as if the relevant building which sustained an injury to which this Act applies were still in the condition in which it was immediately before such injury occurred,

( d ) no compensation shall be payable under this Act in respect of such injury,

( e ) the Minister shall out of moneys provided by the Oireachtas pay to such district planning authority the difference between the value of such land immediately before such injury occurred and the value thereof immediately after such injury occurred, and

( f ) the difference mentioned in the immediately preceding paragraph shall, in default of agreement, be determined by arbitration under the Acquisition of Land (Assessment of Compensation) Act 1919, as amended by the Acquisition of Land (Reference Committee) Act, 1925 (No. 22 of 1925), in like manner as if such difference were compensation for land compulsorily acquired.

(3) The expenses incurred by a district planning authority under this section shall be raised and defrayed in like manner as the expenses incurred by such authority in the execution of the Town and Regional Planning Acts, 1934 and 1939, are raised and defrayed.

(4) A district planning authority may, for the purpose of defraying expenses incurred by them under this section, borrow under the Town and Regional Planning Acts, 1934 and 1939, as if such purpose were a purpose for which such authority is authorised to borrow under those Acts.

(5) In this section, the word "site," when used in relation to a building, includes any yard, garden, or other land attached to such building and forming one enclosure with it.



## Appendix II

### Corporation of Dublin

#### Repairs of Bomb Damage

In the case of damage affecting housing accommodation, the responsibility for the arranging for the carrying out of the repairs necessary to enable the premises to be occupied and to avoid the consequential damage or deterioration by the weather, etc., will rest upon the Dublin Corporation, unless an owner or occupier desires to make his own arrangements. The expenditure by the Corporation will not exceed £100 a house, but at their discretion the Dublin Corporation may authorise expenditure not exceeding £130 where their technical advisors are satisfied that the repairs can not be carried out for £100. In applying these limits any expenditure necessarily incurred on the temporary repairs to prevent consequential damage or deterioration by weather will be excluded.

Where an owner or occupier elects to make his own arrangements the same ordinary and discretionary limits will apply; but the amount to be recouped in any such cases will not exceed the cost (including fees) which the Dublin Corporations technical advisors certify would have been incurred if the work had been carried out by one of the Corporations own contractors. Before the work is commenced the owners or occupied must submit to the city architect, 1-3 Parliament Street, Dublin, a detailed estimate of the cost of the proposed work for his approval. Any expense which is necessary in addition to the £100 (or £130) for which the Dublin Corporation take primary responsibility must be arranged for by the owner or occupier concerned and may form the subject of a claim for the compensation as soon as the necessary legislation has been enacted.

The above regulations apply to housing accommodation only. Owners or occupiers of institutions, factories, shops, etc. can make their own arrangements for repair after a survey of the damage to their buildings has been made by the Dublin Corporation. The cost of such repairs may form the subject of a claim for compensation as soon as the necessary legislation has been enacted.

City Hall,  
Dublin, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1941.

P.J Hernon  
City Manager and Town Clerk



## Appendix III

### Corporation of Dublin

Office of the City Manager and Town Clerk, City Hall, Dublin

Re : (relevant address and damage to property)

Dear Sir or Madam,

(Date)

You will have already received notification on the corporations' intentioned to acquire the above premises under the provisions of the Neutrality (war damage to property) Act, 1941.

The condition of the part of the building referred to above is such that it is not considered practicable or economically justifiable to repair it, and in the interests of public safety, it is desirable that it should be demolished.

Accordingly I have to inform you that it is the intention of the corporation to put the demolition work in the hands of the official contractor one week from the date of this letter, and I presume you will avail of the intervening period to obtain any records, which you will deem necessary, of the present condition of the structure.

I might add that any expenses which occur for watching or securing these premises after the date mentioned in the preceding paragraph will have to be charged on the present owner in the event of the demolition work not be allowed to proceed.

Yours Faithfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager and Town Clerk



## Bibliography

### Primary

#### (a) Official Records

Dublin city archives, Dublin

Records of the North Strand bombings

Records of the Dunore Area bombings

#### (b) Private Papers

University College Dublin, Department of Archives

Colonel Dan Bryan papers

#### (c) Newspapers

Irish Times

Evening Herald

Irish Press

#### (d) Electronic Sources

Dáil debates

<http://www.oireachtas-debates.gov.ie> [12 January 2002]

Irish Statute Database 1922-1998

<http://www.irlgov.ie/oireachtas/frame.htm> [13 April 2002]



## Secondary

### (e) Books

Carroll, Joseph T., *Ireland in the war Years, 1939-1945* (New York, 1975)

Doherty, Richard, *Irish men and women in the second world war* (Dublin, 1999)

Doherty, Richard, *Irish volunteers in the second world war* (Dublin, 2001)

Dublin Military Archives, *The nation is profoundly grateful: the Irish defence forces 1939-1946* (Dublin, 1996)

Fisk, Robert, *In time of war: Ireland, Ulster, and the price of neutrality 1939-45* (London, 1983)

Girvin, Brian and Roberts, Geoffrey (eds), *Ireland and the Second World War: politics, society and remembrance*

Kearns, Kevin C., *Dublin voices: an oral folk history* (Dublin, 1998)

Kearns, Kevin C., *Dublin tenement life: an oral history* (Dublin, 1996)

Litton, Helen, *The World War II years: an illustrated history* (Dublin, 2001)

North inner city folklore project, *Living in the city* (Dublin, 1994)

North inner city folklore project, *North of the Liffey* (Dublin, 1992)

Nowlan K.B and Williams T.D (eds), *Ireland in the war years and after 1939-51* (Dublin, 1969)

O'Halpin, Eunan, *Defending Ireland: the Irish state and its enemies since 1922* (New York, 1999) p.105-254

Prunty, Jacinta, *Dublin Slums: 1800-1925: A study in urban geography* (Dublin, 1999)