

State battles to overturn Moore Street protection

THE State has launched an appeal against a High Court decision that the whole of Dublin's Moore Street is a 'battlefield site' comprising a national monument that must be left untouched.

Newly appointed Arts Minister Josepha Madigan's department already faces a legal bill of at least €500,000 after being defeated in March 2016 by a group of relatives of the 1916 leaders who sued to protect the site in the year of the Centenary celebrations.

Now, State lawyers want the Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling. Michael McDowell SC, for Attorney General Séamus Woulfe, yesterday told a packed

By Paul Caffrey

Court of Appeal that the High Court was simply not entitled to declare an 'entire precinct' of a city a national monument.

Mr McDowell claimed that if the verdict given by Judge Max Barrett in March 2016 is allowed to stand, then modern office blocks in Dublin could also end up being declared national monuments.

Houses along Northumberland Road or the Clanwilliam office building could also be declared national monuments because they are in the vicinity of Mount Street bridge, where fighting took place during the 1916 Rising, Mr McDowell told

the court. He added that the original case taken by the relatives was 'a bridge too far'.

Since 2015, relatives led by Dubliner Colm Moore have been fighting to keep parts of Moore Street - where Pádraig Pearse ordered the Volunteers to surrender on April 29, 1916 - from the wrecking ball.

Having personally visited the site, Judge Barrett ruled that the entire Moore Street area was a 'theatre of conflict' that should not be interfered with.

He awarded costs against the State - but granted a stay on that order pending the outcome of the State's appeal. The appeal hearing continues.

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Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

In the bleak midwinter there is that sparkle of joy

IT is the bleak midwinter and we're all on the move. Short days, long nights, so why can't we stop? Running here, running there, running everywhere.

Pantos and plays, they're all the rage. Little angels and elves take to the stage. It's their big day, those who pine and pray for Santa's sleigh.

It is the bleak midwinter and time has begun to turn. It's the eve of the shortest day, then a fresh season is on the way. Just a little more light and spring shall be in sight.

It's cold and then mild, but what does it matter to a little child? For these are days of glad tidings, of a star that brings good news from afar. A stable of shepherds, angels and sheep, a blessed mother who lulls her baby to sleep.

It is the bleak midwinter and the sun barely shines. Are we ever this happy at other times? The world is forlorn, nature has died, but somehow we still get up and glide.

It's their smiling faces, the tears on their cheek, the joy in their heart, that makes us complete. We shop and we shop 'til the shelves are bare. And then we get cooking the great Yuletide fare.

It is the bleak midwinter but the log fires blaze. As you wrap gifts in ribbons and bows, you wander down old memory's maze. And there you see faces both ancient and new, some of which look distinctly like you.

A time to weep, a time to mourn, it's a time to praise a tiny newborn. They sing from the churches, from street corners and shops. They sing out loud 'til the mayhem stops.

And then all is calm as we retreat indoors. We have worked to the end so now we can rest. It's also a time to be at our best.

It is the bleak midwinter and life is on hold. We take time out and let the hours unfold. Movies and games, chocolate and sweet, we love and we laugh, we sleep and we eat.

What does it mean to be at peace, for that is what we are asked to seek? The child in the manger: a symbol of peace. But how many have found it, how many still weep? We look in vain if we look to the

world, for that gift of love which is ours to keep.

We find it in eyes so tender and clear, in hearts that beat with compassion so dear. We find it in kindness that soars to Heaven above. We find it in those we cherish and love.

It is the bleak midwinter but light abounds. It sparkles from trees that glisten so bright. It shines from the night sky whose stars are alight.

It shines from the heavens and from down below. It shines from shop windows, from wherever you go. For that is how we cope with the gloom: we bathe it in light and look to the moon.

And then, if you're lucky, you'll see him dash by - that jolly old man with reindeer that fly. By the light of the stars, he'll travel at speed, giving to children all that they need. Down the chimney he'll jump and then he'll flee, for fear that little ones might wake up and see.

NOTHING can stop this old man in flight. He'll criss-cross the world before it's first light. Then back to the Pole he'll fly with glee, the job it is over and it's time for tea.

It is the bleak midwinter and the moment is nigh. The feast has arrived - yes, it's here, but why is that a reason to fear? For the hour has come when all stress shall subside, and the peace that was promised will be found deep inside.

The angels are hovering, the cooking complete, the larder is stocked with nice things to eat. And when it's time to rest for a while, you'll take a moment to sit and smile.

Bleak though it was, you made it thus far. Winter's half over and the door is ajar.

Outside it's dark and smoke fills the air, but this is not the time to care.

Loved ones make merry as they sit by the tree: it is the miracle of family. Young and old, they gather as one, to pass a day of endless fun.

And then when it's over you'll slip off to sleep, blessed dreams to enjoy, sacred memories to keep.

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