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14th January, 2017.

RE: Consultation on draft Ballincollig-Carrigaline Municipal District Local Area Plan

Dear Sir,

The Ringaskiddy Martello Tower is one of two structures entered on the Record of Protected Structures in Shanbally/Ringaskiddy. It forms an intrinsic part of the network of Cork Harbour fortifications. Situated as it is in the middle of the Ringskiddy industrial zone, it runs the risk of being lost. This would damage forever the functioning of the network of fortifications, the national monument that is Spike Island and the tourism potential of Cork Harbour. I believe specific provisions for protection of the structure, character and function of the Martello Tower are urgently required and I should be obliged if the following would be considered for inclusion in the Local Area Plan.

- **Buffer zone around the Martello Tower**

Page 143 of the draft Local Area Plan describes the specific development objectives for the site on which the Martello Tower is located (RY-I-15). It reads as follows:

“Suitable for large stand alone industry with suitable provision for appropriate landscaping and access points and provision for open space buffer to the Martello Tower and its associated pedestrian access”.

As a comparison, Ballincollig Castle is entered on the Record of Protected Structures, lies in the middle of land zoned for extensive housing development and is afforded a defined buffer zone of 100 metres in the draft Local Area Plan. As an equally respected entry on the Record of Protected Structures, the Martello Tower should expect an equally defined buffer zone of 100 metres. That buffer zone should start not from the tower itself but from the external wall at the base of the sloping ground around the tower. This needs to be included in the specific development objective for RY-I-15, the site on which the tower is located.

- **Acknowledging the right of way from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower**

At present, the zoning map of Ringaskiddy does not even show the historic right of way from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower. It shows only the more recently constructed path from the west. So when the specific development objective mentions “provision for open space buffer to the Martello Tower and its associated pedestrian access”, it is actually referring to the more recently constructed path from the west.

The historic path is critical.

- Firstly, it is marked by ordnance stones. This indicates that it is clearly part of the Martello Tower structure. The more recent path has no such associations with the tower.
- Secondly, it is this path which cements the tower’s intrinsic association with Fort Westmoreland on Spike Island.
- Thirdly, evidence of the path is still clearly visible in the field to the east of the Martello Tower.

For all these reasons, it is critical that the path from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower would be acknowledged and marked clearly on the zoning map for Ringaskiddy in the same way as the path from the west is.

- **Buffer zone around the age-old right of way from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower**

Because the historical right of way is part of the curtilage of the Martello Tower, it is equally important that it too is afforded the same buffer zone of protection as is afforded to the tower itself. That is, as is required in the case of Ballincollig Castle, 100 metres either side. This needs to be clearly defined in the specific development objective for RY-I-15, the site on which the tower is located.

- **Maintenance of the line of sight between the Martello Tower and Fort Westmoreland**

The five of the military structures in Cork’s Lower Harbour (Forts Camden, Carlisle, Westmoreland, Ringaskiddy Martello Tower and Haulbowline Island Martello Tower) are all connected with respect to function. They were constructed such that their fields of fire were interlinked. A direct line of sight between each of the fortifications was critical.

At present, that line of sight is preserved between all of the structures. Into the future, it is likely to remain undisturbed between the three forts. That which is most at risk is preservation of the line of sight between the Ringaskiddy Martello Tower and Fort Westmoreland. Yet ironically, these two fortifications had more direct connections between them than did any of the others. This is clearly indicated by the presence of the path from Gobby Beach to the Ringaskiddy tower which was designed to facilitate passage of soldiers from Fort Westmoreland to the Martello Tower.

Development to the southeast of the Martello Tower has the potential to disrupt that line of sight. If the line of sight is disrupted in any way, it affects the character and special interest of the Martello Tower. The special development objectives for the site of the tower do not mention this consideration at all. It doesn’t matter how big the buffer zone around the tower is if the special interest of the tower is lost.

So the special development objectives for RY-I-15 need to have a particular aim for any development on that site to protect the line of sight between the Martello Tower and the

other fortifications of Cork Harbour, that line of sight being intrinsic to the character and special interest of the Martello tower.

- **Maintenance of the setting of the Martello Tower**

Objective HE 4-1 of the Cork County Development Plan 2014 has a particular aim that development proposals would not be detrimental to the special character and integrity of any protected structure and its setting. What is critical here is the setting of the Martello Tower. It is very difficult to see how development of any kind anywhere between the Martello Tower and the sea would not affect the setting of the tower. Yet this objective of the County Development Plan is not mentioned at all in the special development objectives for the RY-I-15 site. It is essential that it is taken into consideration.

- **Summary**

To summarise, my specific requests for inclusion in the Local Area Plan to protect the integrity of the critical aspects of the Ringaskiddy Martello Tower protected structure are as follows:

A buffer zone of at least 100 metres beginning from the external wall at the base of the sloping ground around the tower to be clearly defined in the specific development objective for RY-I-15.

The historic right of way from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower is to be acknowledged and marked clearly on the zoning map for Ringaskiddy in the same way as the path from the west is.

A buffer zone of at least 100 metres to be maintained on either side of the historic right of way from Gobby Beach to the Martello Tower and clearly defined in the specific development objective for RY-I-15.

The specific development objectives for RY-I-15 to have a particular aim that any development would protect the line of sight between the Martello Tower and the other fortifications of Cork Harbour.

The specific development objectives for RY-I-15 to have a particular aim that any development would protect the special character and integrity of the setting of the Martello Tower.

Yours faithfully,



Marcia D'Alton
Independent Member, Cork County Council