



Ghost signs of city's changing times unveiled

Catherine Sanz, Ireland Reporter

July 4 2017, 12:01am, The Times



Doran's shop sign from 1898 was unearthed by accident in Dublin
DUBLIN GHOST SIGNS

Share



Save



A shop owner has joined a group of ghost sign hunters after he uncovered century-old signage on the building housing his laptop repair business.

Colin Baker, owner of Back From The Future on South Great George's Street in Dublin, accidentally unveiled a sign by a former tenant, Doran's tobacconist, which was located in the building around 1900 during construction work

PREVIOUS ARTICLE

< Northern parties given more time to reach a deal

NEXT ARTICLE

Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer >



hidden under wooden panelling. Along with the gold leaf lettering on the shop front, granite pillars, sash windows and the original floorboards — which had been preserved by the flooring on top — were also discovered.

“I felt like I uncovered buried treasure,” Mr Baker said. “Tobacconists in the city centre were very popular and this one would have likely supplied the gentry at Dublin Castle.” Mr Baker said that he planned to preserve and restore all the original fixtures even if they did not quite fit with his business. “I am honoured to let this beautiful ghost sign breathe again and to respectfully blend the old world in with our high-tech shop,” he said.

Emma Clarke, who runs a blog called Dublin Ghost Signs on rediscovered shop signs, made another find at Mr Baker’s building when she last week. She noticed a brass plate on the doorway for MacGrath Bros, which she matched to a 1921 newspaper advertisement for a company of the same name that made blinds. “The MacGrath shop was only a few doors down on Aungier Street, which shows that these independent businesses really shopped local and were often connected to each other,” she said.

Through her Twitter and Instagram accounts dedicated to Dublin’s forgotten signs, Ms Clarke has been able to receive tip-offs from members of the public and business owners alerting her to the often fleeting re-emergence of the city’s old

[PREVIOUS ARTICLE](#)[Northern parties given more time to reach a deal](#)[NEXT ARTICLE](#)[Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer](#)



more money is being spent on construction, it seems like nearly every week there is a ghost sign appearing.”



Emma Clarke catalogues ghost signs in Dublin
BRYAN MEADE/THE TIMES

After moving from Cork in 2008, Ms Clarke began to notice that the city was full of ghost signs and she hoped that photographing the buildings as a digital archive would provide background to a rapidly changing landscape. One of the first signs that Ms Clarke photographed was The Georgian Restaurant on South Richmond Street, which has been covered up since she noticed it in 2009.

“It’s instances like that which remind you that recording these places is important because when they’re gone, they’re really gone,” she said.

Ms Clarke’s digital archive for Dublin’s ghost signs has been complimented by Antonia Hart, who published *Ghost Signs of Dublin* in 2014 after nearly ten years of research into the businesses behind the signs.

Ms Hart said she wrote the book to capture a snapshot of the city because it was constantly advancing. “I love when people want to preserve the signs, but I would be of the view that you can’t go around preserving everything,” she said. “Many Dubliners want to know the stories behind the layers of paint they pass by everyday, and that’s why the work of

[PREVIOUS ARTICLE](#)

← Northern parties given more time to reach a deal

[NEXT ARTICLE](#)

Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer >



sign on a building on South Leinster Street.

“We had initially thought it was a pharmacy company, and then we realised that behind it was a sign that read ‘house furnishings’. That kind of layering reminds us of a children’s archaeology book, where you can peel away one thing and find another thing behind it,” she said. “It proves that there is still so much to learn about this city.”

Share    Save 

Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

2 comments

Newest | Oldest | Most Recommended

Zak 38 minutes ago

I love this type of thing! Preserve it!

Recommend Reply

EITel 57 minutes ago

All of The UKs cities could do with this initiative. What a great idea.

Recommend Reply



You are logged in as a registered user

Ready for

PREVIOUS ARTICLE

< Northern parties given more time to reach a deal

NEXT ARTICLE

Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer >



access to the stories behind the headlines by subscribing for less than £1 a week.

FIND OUT MORE

BACK TO TOP



GET IN TOUCH

Contact us

Help

The Times Editorial
Complaints

The Sunday Times Editorial
Complaints

Place an announcement

Classified advertising

Display advertising

The Times corrections

The Sunday Times
corrections

[PREVIOUS ARTICLE](#)

Northern parties given more time to reach a deal

[NEXT ARTICLE](#)

Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer



[The Times e-paper](#)

[The Sunday Times e-paper](#)

[Times Currency Services](#)

[The Sunday Times Wine Club](#)

[Encounters Dating](#)

[Times Print Gallery](#)

[Times Crossword Club](#)

[Sunday Times Driving](#)

[Times+](#)

[The Sunday Times Rich List](#)

[Insider City Guides](#)

[Good University Guide](#)

[Parent Power](#)

[The Brief](#)

© Times Newspapers Limited 2017. Registered in England No. 894646.

Registered office: 1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF.

[Privacy & cookie policy](#)

[Syndication](#)

[Commissioning Terms](#)

[Terms and conditions](#)

[PREVIOUS ARTICLE](#)

[Northern parties given more time to reach a deal](#)

[NEXT ARTICLE](#)

[Watchdog seeks court files on garda killer](#)