

Dublin's Strand of revival

A home which stood empty for so long that a tree grew through it, has been reborn at a cost of €200k, writes **Mark Keenan**

**142 North Strand Road
North Strand,
Dublin 3**

ASKING PRICE: €285,000
AGENT: Gallagher Quigley (01) 8183000



The rear of No 142 North Strand Road

THE house at 142 North Strand Road had a narrow escape in World War II when the Luftwaffe dropped an enormous bomb on the central Dublin neighbourhood in 1941. The dwellings located between numbers 153 and 164 were all but wiped out. In all, 17 homes were destroyed and 50 more were damaged.

Germany later paid compensation for what it claimed was a navigational error on behalf of its pilots, although others asserted it was revenge for De Valera sending Dublin City's fire brigades up North to aid Belfast during the Blitz of that year.

But after what is believed to have been a 20 year vacancy, the 1860s built home was once again in danger of oblivion when project manager Michael Flood stepped into it for the first time in 2012.

"It was essentially two rooms and a kitchen and it was in a sorry state," he said. "The house was so bad that it had actually been the centre of a Derelict Sites Order which, in the end, was never implemented. An indication of just how long it had been empty was a tree, which we presume had seeded in the gutter of the back lean-to, but over the years had grown so big that its roots had worked their way right through the external wall and into the house."

In 2012 when the Dublin property market was on its knees, the derelict house was bought by a couple with a young child who really wanted to live in the city centre. With property prices on the floor and banks refusing to lend for mortgages, never mind projects like this, the current owners got the property at a snip — just €55,000 according to the Property Price Register.

"I think they had the idea when they bought it in May 2012 that they'd conduct a restoration and they'd be in by Christmas," said Flood.

But in the end it was two more years and €200,000 spent before number 142 was ready to move into.

The rear part of the house was raised above garden level — two rooms were at street level and steps went down to the old "lean-to" kitchen, which was a metre lower at garden level behind.

"It was decided to make use of this false floor space to lodge plans for two storeys

at the rear. This would allow additional bedroom space upstairs and add greatly to the living space."

Because the house is mid Victorian, planners were ultra careful on its fate while a shortage of planners at the time meant it took a full year to get planning permission.

"As we progressed through the project, new problems were revealed. For example, it was originally intended to keep the internal walls. But these turned out to be unstable. So in the end they had to be replaced," said Flood. "The roof, which linked to the adjoining property would now also require a big investment because it was being altered in height but would still have to blend seamlessly with its neighbour when the work had been done."

New roof beams and fresh slates were put in along with steel beams to ensure the house was self supporting and no longer reliant on its neighbours to stay standing.

"So essentially it got everything — new floors, new walls, new roof, electrics, plumbing and so on," added Flood.

"We even had the original chimney stack shared with the neighbouring property taken down brick by brick, cleaned and repointed and rebuilt exactly how it was."

"What made life more difficult was the fact that there is no rear or side access so absolutely everything required had to be brought in through the front door and right through the house."

The vendors finally moved in two years after purchasing the house but since then, they have been blessed with two more children and are selling up to find a property which better suits a large family.

The extent of the refurb meant that the couple could also invest in optimising insulation and the finished house has a B3 rating which is extremely high for a property of its age — Victorians are normally found with lowly cash-eating 'G' energy efficiency ratings.



Clockwise from above: The tree that grew up through the house before the refurbishment; the house before work was carried out; and after the renovations were complete two years later; one of the bedrooms; the bathroom; the living room; and the open-plan living area which is part of the large extension leading to the rear of the property and a patio



Now the house is being offered for sale seeking offers in excess of €285,000 through the Gallagher Quigley agency.

The accommodation, now thoroughly modern and full of natural light, spans 1,140 sq ft compared with 600 sq ft previously.



There is a large living room/kitchen and two double bedrooms with the master chamber coming with its own ensuite.

There is also a lounge which can double over to make a third bedroom if required.

One of the big attractions was the original garden size which not only facilitated



the substantial garden level extension but also left the owners with a 250 sq ft patio garden.

Thanks to their gumption and patience, the owners have not only saved a historic home in this central Dublin location, but they've also made themselves a bit of profit



to enable them to better their position in their hunt for a more suitable property.

Thanks to one of the most comprehensive refurbishment and modernisation jobs in the area, the house at 142 North Strand Road is ready to go another 150 years.

Children's stories can lead to a jackpot

"IF YOU hold a four-leaf shamrock in your left hand at dawn on Saint Patrick's Day, you get what you want very much — but haven't wished for," wrote children's author Patricia Lynch.

In that case, it might be worth not wishing for a first edition of *The Turf Cutter's Donkey* (1934), the most collectible of all Lynch's children's books. Complete with illustrations by Jack B Yeats, it's a cracking tale, with a moody leprechaun and an aeronaut, as well as the donkey.

A first edition of *The Turf Cutter's Donkey* might cost about €200, although Eamonn de Búrca (deburcararebooks.com) has recently sold a copy of Lynch's *The Cobbler's Apprentice* (1931) for €575. "The fact it was signed by the author made all the difference," de Búrca explains. "I could have sold four of them."

For any book collector, condition is everything. The trouble with children's books is they take a pounding. Torn pages, coloured-in pictures, or missing pages all devalue a book. Underlining or notes

Treasures

IRELAND'S FINE ARTS, ANTIQUES AND COLLECTABLES COLUMN BY ELEANOR FLEGG

in the margin make a book worth less, unless they are by someone very famous, in which case they make it worth more.

If a book is signed by the author it is worth more, likewise if it has been owned by a very famous person. James Joyce took his inspiration from *The Adventures of Ulysses*, a retelling of Homer's *The Odyssey* for children by Charles Lamb. The book was originally published in 1808 but Joyce, at Clongowes College, would have studied the 1892 version edited by James Cooke. Now those Inter Cert notes would be worth a pretty penny!

A first edition is generally the most valuable, although it

can be hard to tell if a book is a first edition or not. Beatrix Potter, of *Peter Rabbit* fame, is one of the trickiest authors to date as many of her books are dated 1902, irrespective of when they were published. Not all books had dust jackets but, if they did, a book with a dust jacket is worth much more with one than without.

"A book that is worth €25 with a dust jacket would be worth €5 without it. If it cost €500 with a dust jacket, it would cost €100 without it," says Roger Grimes (vannessaparkerrarebooks.com). "If the dust jacket is worn at the edges, the book will be worth a little less than if it were perfect."

It might also be worth not wishing for a copy of *The Story of the Discontented Little Elephant* (1912) by Edith Somerville, co-author of *Some Experiences of An Irish RM* (1899) — the basis of the famous paddywacking TV series *The Irish RM* — who also wrote a number of children's books. The cover of this one, which shows the elephant weeping into a coconut, is potentially worth around €1,000. "It's exceptionally rare," says de Búrca. "There were only around

1,500 printed. I haven't seen a copy since 1997."

Other collectible Irish children's authors include S Rosmund Praeger — sister of the naturalist Robert Lloyd Praeger — better known for her work as a sculptor. Don't be misled by the title *The Adventures of The Three Bold Babes* (1897). The author meant bold as in adventurous, and babes as in babies. In 2015, you might look for bold babes in quite a different section of the bookshop! Praeger's book is an hilarious romp of dragons and knights and worth about €150 in good condition.

When Barack Obama came to Ireland, Enda Kenny presented him with a first edition of *At The Gateway Of The Day* (1924), volume one of Colum's *Tales and Legends of Hawaii*. You can find out more about myth and children's books in the exhibition, *Upon The Wild Waves: A Journey Through Myth In Children's Books* currently on display at Trinity College Library, with an online version at tcd.ie/library/about/exhibitions/wild-waves.

Collecting children's books

You'll notice the girls join in the fighting — Praeger illustrated her own books but she also created postcards for the suffragette movement.

Padraic Colum, founder of the Abbey, also wrote children's books that are now highly collectible. Originally written to make the Irish myths accessible to children, Colum's books were so successful that, in the 1920s, the Hawaiian government asked him to re-write their own mythology.

When Barack Obama came to Ireland, Enda Kenny presented him with a first edition of *At The Gateway Of The Day* (1924), volume one of Colum's *Tales and Legends of Hawaii*. You can find out more about myth and children's books in the exhibition, *Upon The Wild Waves: A Journey Through Myth In Children's Books* currently on display at Trinity College Library, with an online version at tcd.ie/library/about/exhibitions/wild-waves.

Collecting children's books

isn't always about the quality of the literature. Between the 1930s and the 1950s, the BBC refused to broadcast books by Enid Blyton because they were perceived as lacking literary merit. Her work has also been accused of being racist with some later editions edited to remove terms like 'golliwog'.

"It's very rare to get a high price for a book by Enid Blyton," says Grimes. "We've got lots of them in the shop ranging from €20 to €400, but a first edition with a dust jacket and signed by the author might fetch up to €5,000." The 21 *Famous Five* books (1942-1963) are more collectible than the *Secret Seven* series (1949-63).

And the last thing that I'm not going to wish for is a first edition of *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone* (1997). Only 500 copies were printed, of which 300 went to libraries and were rebound, devaluing them as collectibles. The remaining 200 are hot property.

On February 5, 2015, a complete set of first edition *Harry Potter* books sold at auction in Edinburgh for £11,250 (€15,000) but this is by no means the highest price paid for work by JK Rowling. In May 2013, a first edition of *Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone* sold in Sotheby's of London for £175,000 (then around €175,000). The high price was because the copy was annotated by the author.

It's ok to scribble on your books if you're famous. Otherwise, the less they're handled the more they're worth.



A Jack B Yeats illustration for *The Turf Cutter's Donkey*

IN THE SALEROOMS

WHYTE'S
Whyte's auction of Irish and International Art takes place on Monday, February 23 at the RDS, Anglesea Road Entrance, with viewing Saturday, February 21 to Sunday 22 from 10am – 6pm daily (www.whytes.ie).

Among the usual ripe crop of old Irish masters by Paul Henry, William Leech and Daniel O'Neill, some more unusual pieces include *Still Life With Lobster*, a screen print from the New York Pop artist, Roy Lichtenstein. It's part of his mid-1970s *Six Still Life Series* and is expected to make between €12,000 and €15,000. There are also two prints by Banksy, the British artist best known for street art (est €2,000 - €3,000 each).

One of these, *Grannies*, shows a pair of nice little old ladies knitting jumpers with slogans "Punks not dead" and "Thug for life". There will also be two pieces by the Irish street artist Will St Leger (est €300 - €500 each). The top lot, though, is a 1940s view of the west of Ireland by Paul Henry (est €80,000 - €70,000).

WELDON'S
Weldon's of Clarendon street (weldons.ie) is one of the companies preparing to exhibit at Dublin's Irish

Spring Antique & Fine Art Fair in the Ballsbridge Hotel on March 20-22, 2015.

Among items of interest are a rare Ceylon sapphire and diamond ring from around 1905, weighing 6.9 carats (€37,500), and a fine 2.3ct cushion cut yellow diamond flanked by a pear-shaped diamond to each shoulder (€22,500), and an extremely rare Irish silver soup ladle with eagle head terminal and shell bowl.

It is a little over 14 inches long and hallmarked Dublin 1769 by Christopher Skinner (€3,500). The dealer will also show a sapphire and diamond bracelet by Raymond

Yard of New York, a pair of Burmese ruby and diamond earrings from around 1890 (€7,500), and a rare Irish silver loving cup (€3,500) Dublin 1712 by Anthony Stanley, with the unusual engraving "Temple Patrick".

ADAM'S
The top lots at the recent auction Adam's Attic, which took place at Adam's, Dublin on February 3, included a Victorian style extendable mahogany dining table which sold for €1,200 (the guide price was €500 - €800). A French kingwood and parquetry bombé commode with a marble top also sold well, reaching the top guide price of €1,150.

REILLY'S AUCTION

Of Antique Furniture, Fine Art & Collectables

To include the contents of
"Ad Cacin House", Tipper Road, Naas
& Private Residence Mynooch, Co Kildare

& other Important Clients Removed to our premises for convenience

Monday 9th February at 6.30pm sharp 430 lots approx

To include: Mid 19th Century Serpentine Rosewood Davenport by John Clarke Dublin, Pair Victorian Bedside Cabinets, Victorian Empire Console Table, William IV Centre Table, Regency Grandfather Clocks, Impressive Bronze Gilt French Parrot Clock, Paintings by Don Pracht (Original Painting "For Erin and Glory"), Liam Tracey and various other artists, Rare Books, Clocks, Mirrors, Persian Rugs, Bedroom, Dining room, Drawing room and Living room furniture etc, etc.

Well worth viewing
Viewing Fri 6th & Sat 7th 10am-6pm • Sun 8th February 1-6pm and day of Sale

Telephone: 045-868650/ 087-2226814
www.reillysantiques.ie • E-mail: info@reillysantiques.ie

Bid online at our auctions through the-saleroom.com

View our catalogue online Bid online at www.the-saleroom.com