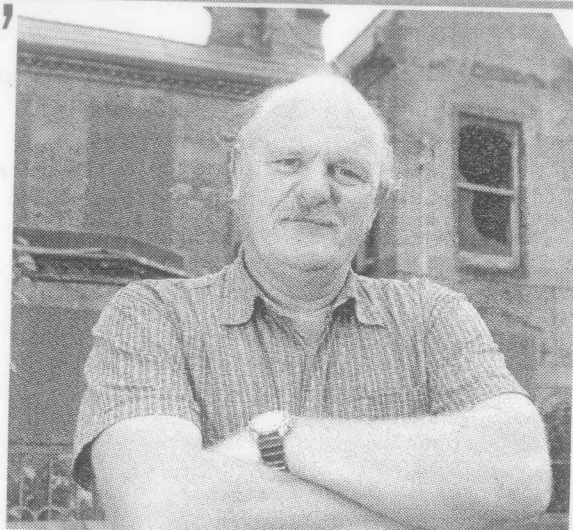


Descendants' interest in reactivating Kate O'Brien family home

by Marie Hobbins



DIRECT descendants of the internationally acclaimed Limerick author, Kate O'Brien, are giving active consideration to the future use of her childhood home on Mulgrave Street.

While various city councillors frequently call on City Hall to acquire the property and redevelop it as a writer's museum that would also host the annual Kate O'Brien Weekend, there has been no positive response to this proposal to-date..

The once handsome townhouse in which the writer was born in 1897, is now largely derelict and neglected looking. .

However, the conservation architect, Tom Quinlan, who has worked on conservation projects all over the world, and is a first cousin of David, Mark and Tom Lloyd, who have inherited Boru House from their late father, Gerard Lloyd, says his cousins have asked him to put forward a concept on how to proceed with Boru House.

A native of Limerick, whose mother Vera last year told the Limerick Post that she was born and has very happy memories of the house, Mr Quinlan said that he is interested in "fresh thinking" on the issue.

"An idea would be to form a Trust, whereby the house could be redeveloped and operated but which would

leave the Lloyd brothers still having a stake in its ownership.

"The death of the author, Frank McCourt in the past few days could be regarded as a catalyst to put new spotlight on Kate O'Brien's former home and to develop it, not just as a museum in her memory but, perhaps as a writers' centre, part museum and maybe a library or genealogy area - it would be an appropriate way of commemorating not just Kate O'Brien, but Frank McCourt and other leading writers. We are identifying parties that would be interested - there is private funding we could go after with a feasibility study".

ClIr Tom Shortt agrees with Mr Quinlan that the project could prove a major asset to the city.

"I believe it would be in the best interest of the council to pursue this and we should be working with the family on this to maybe form a Trust. I think we have enough sculptures and statues in commemoration of people who brought honour to the city".

Boru House, which is a listed building, has approximately two acres to the rear of the property. An adjacent petrol station that once housed the O'Brien family's spacious stables, would provide entrance from Mulgrave Street. At present, entrance to Boru House can only be gained from the rear of the house.

Comments or appropriate recommendations can be forwarded to Mr Quinlan on tq@interpac.net

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