

Full text of 'Joyce house' letter and signatories

As writers, artists, and scholars of Irish literature and culture, we call upon Josepha Madigan, the Minister for Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, and Owen Keegan, Dublin City Manager, to intervene to save, for the nation and the world, the house at 15 Usher's Island, known to all as Joyce's house of "The Dead", and prevent any deterioration of its fabric. In the decades since Joyce's death, too many of the places that are rendered immortal in his writing have been lost to the city. Let us not repeat this mistake today.

15 Usher's Island is not just another house connected with Joyce. Built in 1775, its upper floors were rented by Joyce's great-aunts in the 1890s and the writer himself often visited them there. Most importantly, it is the setting of "The Dead", widely considered Joyce's and indeed the world's greatest short story. The atmosphere in the house and the way the rooms are configured are mostly untouched since Joyce's time. Turning it into a 56-room hostel would destroy the uniquely valuable interior which still maintains the character of the house so splendidly described in the story.

Usher's Island has the potential to become a worthwhile site of literary pilgrimage, a way to inform and inspire new generations of Joyce readers.

As we approach the centenary of Ulysses in 2022, we believe that saving this unique piece of our national heritage is within the power of the Government and the national institutions and that it should be an urgent priority.

We appeal to you and to the government to act before it is too late,

Joyce signatories

Sally Rooney
Ian McEwan
Cecily Brennan
Julian Barnes
Edmund White
Eithne Jordan
Belinda McKeon
Andrew O'Hagan
Vona Groarke
Fiona Doyle
Peter Fallon
Garry Hynes
Mary Cregan
John Crowley
Paula Meehan
Anne Enright
Nicole Flattery
Michael Ondaatje
Claire Messud
Edna O'Brien
Hugo Hamilton
John Banville
Tessa Hadley
Diana Copperwhite
Salman Rushdie
Mary Morrissey
Patrick McGrath
Enrique Juncosa
Paul Muldoon
Andre Aciman
Damon Galgut

Sinead Gleeson
Ruth Padel
Joseph Hassett
Bill Whelan
Rachel Kushner
Donnacha Dennehy
Richard Ford
Nick Laird
Kevin Barry
Colm Toibin
Maria Simmons-Gooding
Tobias Wolff
Colm Wilkinson
Carlo Gébler
Dermot Bolger
Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin
Eoin McNamee
Michael Longley
Fintan O'Toole
Lenny Abrahamson
Patrick McCabe
William Wall
Sophia Hillan
Iarla O Lionard
Martina Devlin
Celia de Fréine
Lia Mills
Graham Benson
Alice McDermott
Catherine Dunne
Noel O'Grady
Professor John McCourt (University of Macerata)
Professor Lucy McDiammid (Montclair State University)
Catriona Clutterbuck (University College Dublin)
Professor Geert Lernout (President, International James Joyce Foundation)
Professor Geraldine Higgins (Director of Irish Studies, Emory)
Professor James Shapiro (Columbia University)
Professor Katharina Rennhak (European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies (EFACIS))
Professor Ondřej Pilný (Chairperson, International Association for the Study of Irish Literature IASIL)
Professor Kate Costello-Sullivan (President, American Conference for Irish Studies ACIS)
Professor Jane McGaughey (President, Canadian Association for Irish Studies CAIS)
Professor Rónán McDonald (Gerry Higgins Chair of Irish Studies, The University of Melbourne, President, Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand)
Professor Enrico Terrinoni (President, James Joyce Italian Foundation)
Professor Laura Pelaschiar (Director, Trieste Joyce School, Università di Trieste)
Edna Longley (Emeritus Professor, Queen's University Belfast)
Barry McCrea (Donald R. Keough Family Professor of Irish

Studies, University of Notre Dame)
Sean Latham (Walter Endowed Chair of English and
Comparative Literature, University of Tulsa,
Editor, James Joyce Quarterly)
Professor Sam Slote (Trinity College Dublin)
Professor Nicholas Allen (Director of the Willson Center,
Abraham Baldwin Professor in Humanities, University of
Georgia)
Professor Nick Fargnioli (President, James Joyce Society,
New York)
Professor Luca Crispi (University College Dublin)
Anne Fogarty (Professor of Joyce Studies, University
College Dublin)
Roy Foster (Professor of Irish history and literature,
Queen Mary University of London)
Fritz Senn (Zurich James Joyce Foundation)
Christopher Morash (Seamus Heaney Professor of Irish
Writing, Trinity College Dublin)
Caroline Elbay (Champlain College, Dublin)
Claire Connolly (Professor of Modern English, University College
Cork)
Patrick Lonergan (Professor of Drama and Theatre Studies, NUI,
Galway)
Francis O'Gorman (Saintsbury Professor of English Literature,
The University of Edinburgh)
Professor Derek Hand (Dublin City University)
Dr Adrian Paterson (NUI, Galway)
Dr Katy Mullin (University of Leeds)
Margaret Kelleher (Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature and
Drama, University College Dublin)
Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin (Johnson Chair in Québec and Canadian Irish Studies, Concordia University)
Robert D. Newman, Director, National Humanities Center (US)