

Our Case Number: ACP-323066-25



An
Coimisiún
Pleanála

Richard Coen
Rockfield House
Gort
Galway

Date: 28 August 2025

Re: Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project, Gort, Co. Galway
In the townlands of Gort, Co. Galway

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Coimisiún Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter.

Please note that the proposed development shall not be carried out unless the Commission has approved it with or without modifications.

If you have any queries in relation to the matter please contact the undersigned officer of the Commission at laps@pleanala.ie

Please quote the above mentioned An Coimisiún Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Commission.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren Griffin
Executive Officer
Direct Line: 01-8737244

AA02

To:

The Secretary
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

25/08/25

AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	_____
ACP-	_____
28 AUG 2025	
Fee: €	_____
Time: 9:30	By: <i>Bot</i>

Re: Submission on the Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project – Opposition to the Lowering of the Christ the King Statue Plinth (Drawing Ref: 3160-BDP-00-XX-SE-L-0007)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing as a member of the Coen family, who commissioned the Christ the King statue in Gort in 1932, to make a submission under Section 177AE of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) in respect of the proposed Gort Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Project.

While we welcome the overall intent to improve the town centre and public spaces, we wish to raise a strong objection to the specific proposal to **lower the plinth of the Christ the King statue**, as detailed in drawing reference 3160-BDP-00-XX-SE-L-0007. This aspect of the proposal is inconsistent with proper planning and sustainable development and presents an unacceptable level of risk to a protected and much-valued cultural asset.

Our reasons are as follows:

1. **Heritage and Artistic Significance**

The Christ the King monument is a protected structure with a Regional rating on the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (Reference: 30341016). The sculpture, crafted by the renowned Irish artist **Albert Power** with a plinth designed by **Thomas Cullen**, was commissioned by local woman Ann Coen in memory of her son. Lowering the plinth would materially alter the original artistic and architectural intent and would diminish the monument's recognised heritage and artistic value.

2. **Risk of Irreversible Damage**

The process of lowering the plinth introduces a substantial risk of damaging this historic and delicate marble statue. Such an intervention could lead to irreversible harm, a risk that far outweighs any perceived aesthetic or functional benefit of the proposed change.

3. **Public Safety and Preservation Concerns**

Reducing the height of the plinth would bring the statue within easy reach of pedestrians, increasing the likelihood of accidental damage, vandalism, or erosion through handling. The current elevated position provides a natural safeguard for this fragile piece of public art.

4. **Community and Sentimental Value**

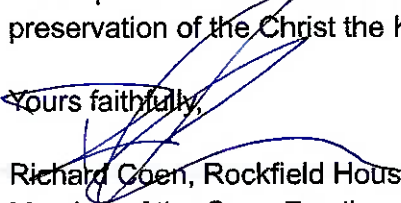
The statue has been part of the identity and collective memory of Gort for over nine

decades. It holds deep sentimental value for the local community, particularly older residents and the families connected to its original commissioning. Altering its presentation risks alienating the very community that treasures it.

In light of the above, we urge the Council and An Bord Pleanála to **preserve the statue in its current form and position**. Any enhancement of the surrounding public realm should respect and protect this significant historical and artistic monument rather than compromise its integrity.

We request that this element of the proposal be omitted or revised to ensure the full preservation of the Christ the King statue and its plinth.

Yours faithfully,


Richard Coen, Rockfield House Gort Co Galway
Member of the Coen Family