

Friends of St Colman's Cathedral, Cobh

Leeview,
Rushbrooke,
Cobh.

Planning Authority,
Cobh Town Council,
Carrig House,
Cobh.

16th August 2005

Re:- **Planning Application for St. Colman's Cathedral.**

Planning Notice No. **05/52040**

We are objecting to planning permission being granted re the above on the following basis:-

1. Protected Building.

St. Colman's Cathedral is a listed building, a protected structure, of special religious, architectural, historical, cultural and social interest. It is a protected structure under the Local Government Planning and Development Act 1999-2000 and under Cobh Town Development Plan 2005-2011, and as such the occupier/caretaker is obliged to preserve all fixtures and fittings forming part of the interior. Therefore to move, remove or extend any fixtures or fittings, as proposed in the above Planning Application, would be in breach of the aforementioned Planning Act and Town Development Plan and would ruin the overall character, beauty and architectural heritage of this unique structure. It is the duty of this generation to protect and maintain what we have inherited in order that we may pass it on intact to future generations

2. Architecture.

St. Colman's Cathedral is the major work of the architect E.W. Pugin (1834-75) in Ireland. It is a building of outstanding architectural merit, a significant aspect of which is the interior. To change it in the manner proposed would severely compromise the architectural importance of the building. In its gothic grace the Cathedral, noble in proportions and elaborate in ornamentation, is the pride of the Diocese of Cloyne and an object of universal admiration. The gothic grandeur of the interior, the transcendent beauty and graceful proportions of the Sanctuary will be utterly lost if the proposed changes are allowed. These proposals a) extending the Sanctuary area into the nave; b) the removing and partially relocating the existing altar rails; or c) creating a permanent altar on the extended Sanctuary will destroy the glorious symmetry created by Pugin

3. Historical.

The greater part of the cost of the building of the Cathedral was contributed by the faithful of the parish of Cobh and those of the Diocese, these are our forebears. Many of the people of that time also worked, some in a voluntary capacity, on the construction of St. Colman's. They maintained the highest standards of workmanship which can still be seen today. To destroy any part of that workmanship is vandalism, not only of bricks and mortar but also of our heritage and is an insult to their memory. Their craftsmanship can not easily be recreated today. Therefore 'lifting and relaying portions of the mosaic to the nave and Sanctuary and providing additional mosaic to match the existing as required' as is proposed, unnecessarily endangers great art at great expense. Also, the mosaic, if added to in this way, will no longer be an original work of art. We hold 24,124 signatures of the people of Cobh and of the Diocese (97% of those we met), descendents of those who contributed their hard earned money and their work to creating this wonderful place of worship, who strongly object to this proposed restructuring on their Cathedral.

4. Cultural.

This proposal would deface, destroy and distort this nationally and internationally renowned Cathedral and its non-renewable resources. It would severely diminish the sacredness and interest for its parishioners and its many visitors from home and abroad.

5. Financial.

Monies collected in Cobh Parish and around the Diocese under the guise of the *restoration* of St. Colman's Cathedral are now being used for the *restructuring* of the interior. We object to this money being used against the wishes of the people.

6. Social

The Mortuary Chapel was designed for a specific purpose and it is completely inappropriate to fill this space with a vesting sacristy thereby denying people access

7. Liturgical.

The proposed liturgical alterations to St. Colman's Cathedral, are nowhere specifically mandated, necessitated or obligated for the adequate celebration of the liturgical rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church in the following normative legislative texts which presently govern and moderate the said liturgical celebrations:

- The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Oecumenical Council *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the subsequent legislation enacted for its implementation by the *Concilium ad Exsequendum*, the Sacred Congregation for Rites, the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship, and the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments as published in the official gazette of the Apostolic See, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, and in the *Responsiones* published in the official publication of the above mentioned Sacred Congregations, *Notitiae*;
- the Code of Canon Law (for the Latin Rite), *Codex Iuris Canonici* of 1983;
- the *Institutio Generalis Romani Missalis* (2000) governing the celebration of the Mass;
- the interdicasterial Instruction *Ecclesiae de Mysterio* (1997);
- the instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam* (2001);
- the encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (2002);
- the disciplinary instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (2004).

That it is possible adequately to celebrate the liturgical rites and ceremonies of the Catholic Church without the kind of spatial dispositions contained in the planning application is evident from the fact that such or similar such spatial or architectural dispositions are not to be found in many (if not all) of the most important European Cathedral churches e.g. San Giovanni in Laterno (Rome), Santa Maria del Carmen (Florence), San Marco (Venice), Sant' Ambrogio (Milan), the Stephansdom (Vienna), the Fraunkirchen (Munich), the Vitudom (Prague), the Wavel (Crackow), the Basilica of St. Stephen (Estergom), the Cathedral of St. Peter (Cologne), Notre Dame (Paris), St. Stephen (Toulouse), the Se (Lisbon), and the Cathedrals of Seville and Madrid.

The same can also be said of many smaller parochial, collegial, or monastic churches in EU countries which are protected buildings or designated heritage buildings.

In this case, the liturgy can be celebrated adequately and in accordance with liturgical norm in Cobh Cathedral as it is.

It can also be demonstrated that the proposals for the alterations to the interior of St. Colman's Cathedral are derived from a particular current of liturgical thinking, in itself a merely private position, and not from the official public position of the Catholic Church as outlined in the legislative corpus mentioned above.

The position elaborated in this objection to the planning application for alterations to the interior of St. Colman, Cathedral, Cobh, can be further elaborated and documented, if necessary, by recourse to reputed international experts in the area of liturgical law such as the Rev. Professor Jan Mateja, Professor of Sacred Liturgy in the Caroline University of Prague (Czech Republic); Rev. Professor Neil Roy, Dean of the Theological Faculty, Ave Maria University, Ypsilante (USA); Rev. Professor Jahannes Hermanns, Theological Seminary, Roermond (Netherlands), Rev. Professor Inor Biffi, University of Lugano (Switzerland), Rev. Professor Markus Walser, Professor of Canon Law, University of Zurich (Switzerland).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Terry Pender, Secretary
On behalf of The Friends of St. Colman's Cathedral, Cobh.