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A move that completes a historic legacy

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The Irish Times

As UCD prepares to leave Earlsfort Terrace in Dublin city centre, Prof Donal McCartney recalls many of the historic events that shaped it.

Right: a statue in the Iveagh Gardens. The sweet corned Beefsteak, which is later swapped with the Irish volunteers to counteract the UPR in the North, 1914.

EARLSFORT TERRACE: notable events

1803 Earlsfort Terrace comes into use.

1808 The Royal University of Ireland is dissolved and the National University of Ireland, comprising a College of Medicine and Surgery and a College of Law, is established.

1809 Denis Coffey is appointed the first president of UCD as the college opens its doors.

1911 Lord de Lavey commits suicide.

1916 Stephen’s Green is dedicated by the university and Earlsfort Terrace is opened.

1919 British College of Medicine, founded 1873, becomes part of the National University of Ireland.

1920 The first president of UCD, Sir Alfred Edward Guinness, is inaugurated.

1924 The university is formally established.

1927 The National Concert Hall is opened.

1939 Lord Iveagh offers his house and gardens as a gift to the government.

1949 The government decides to use the site of the National Gallery of Ireland, and Earlsfort Terrace is handed over to the Department of Public Works.

1973 The new UCD campus is opened.

1977 After a period of vacillation, the Department of Public Works finally accepts the offer of the Earlsfort Terrace property.

1979 The Earlsfort Terrace campus is formally inaugurated.

1981 The first sod is turned at Belfield, UCD’s new campus.

1984 UCD celebrates centenary.

1994 The university buys the Mespil House and property in Peter’s Lane, opposite the Earlsfort Terrace campus.

1998 The first president of UCD, Sir Alfred Edward Guinness, is inaugurated.

2004 Dr Hugh Brady is appointed President, succeeding Dr M Carty.

2007 UCD finally vacates Earlsfort Terrace.

Meanwhile, the number of students attending UCD’s women’s college was expanding beyond every expectation. If this gradual expansion at Earlsfort Terrace had been completed, it was intended to accommodate UCD’s core faculty. The new building was also to accommodate administration and maintenance staff.

As UCD prepares to leave Earlsfort Terrace in Dublin city centre, Prof Donal McCartney recalls many of the historic events that shaped it.

The most serious problem was the effect of the 1956 war, which greatly inflated prices and affected the parliamentary price for the site.

It was the last major building project of the British administration in Dublin, and like the cattle market, it was handed over to the Irish government in 1909.

And it is not without its own peculiarities. There is a story that the original site of the UCD president’s house was planned to be 0.5 mile south of the site of the new building.

The construction began in 1902 but encountered several difficulties. The most serious problem was the effect of the 1956 war, which greatly inflated prices and affected the parliamentary price for the site.

The Hatch Street scheme project was approved in 1821, after the design was revised in 1819 for a resplendent future as the University of Dublin.

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