

# THE SITRIC POCKET PARK RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The Sitric Compost Garden Community (SCGC) has proposed a community based action research project to develop a proposal for local area regeneration: A feasibility study to explore the benefits of pedestrianising a section of Sitric Road (at the Arbour Hill end between Lilliput Press and Arbour Hill) to create a 'Pocket Park.'

A petition suggesting the conversion of this area (which has no house frontage), into productive green space for the local community, has already been circulated in our area and has gathered over four hundred signatures in support of the project. After a preliminary literature search of the evidence we believe the redevelopment of this semi-derelict area of our neighborhood would lead to increased levels of social capital (improved health, increased quality of life, and higher levels of social engagement) in our community by providing the following amenities:

- Space for and to encourage communal activities on the street
- Increased spatial mobility and play area for our children
- An incidental meeting/resting place for our local elderly residents who have become increasingly isolated by the change in neighborhood demographics over recent years.
- Potential for an extension our local urban food-growing endeavors.
- Potential to further explore the productive use of organic waste locally, extending the activities of our award winning Sitric Compost Garden Community across the road.
- An educational resource for local schools to promote environmental awareness by clarifying the relationships between food, waste, climate change, and health. This was an aspect of our project supported by Tony Gregory during recent years.
- A traffic-calming measure that will increase road safety for our children - the traffic will go round to Arbour Hill from Ard Righ Road (three of the four existing access points to Sitric Road will remain).
- Support for the aims of the Dublin City Development Plan to provide more green open space in the city (see below).
- Cultivation of plants that will improve air quality, absorb some carbon dioxide emissions and increase local biodiversity (bees, birds, butterflies).
- A temporary case study which, if successful, could lead to the permanent conversion of this area. By demonstrating its value this could act as a working model providing research to support the conversion of other spaces in the city.

The feasibility study exercise will take a systematic approach, collecting and collating evidence to support or refute the claims detailed above: The provision of an intimate green space, 'pocket park,' within a tight community will support healthy active lifestyles and enhance levels of social inclusion and community engagement.

The study process will conduct and document a range of local activities designed to explore the links between social inclusion, food, waste, climate change, health and education. Members of the community, local experts and students (the full range: primary, secondary, to third level and post graduate students from Dublin Institute of Technology, through their 'Community Links: Students Learning with Communities' program) will be engaged to conduct the following pieces of research:

1. An action research project with local school children: Inspired by the UNESCO 'Growing Up in Cities' Summer Project. This project will use local school children to conduct an investigation and mapping of their neighborhood and develop a regeneration proposal. Advisor: Jackie Bourke PHD student at Dublin Institute of Technology and consultant from Playtime: promoting children's play (<http://www.playtime.ie/>)

2. A local case study: Establishing and documenting the community's reactions to a temporary 'Pocket Park' taking advantage of resources available within the SCGC. Advisor: Bridget Farrell, Coordinator: Irish Environmental Network (<http://www.ien.ie/>)
3. A Health Impact Assessment: guided by a strategic committee of local stake holders and a member of the Irish Institute of Public Health, this assessment will commission a literature review of the evidence and a piece of community based research to explore the potential health impacts of the proposal. Based on the evidence from this review and action based research carried out in the community the strategic committee will provide a range of recommendations to guide the project. Research Consultant and project coordinator: Kaethe Burt-O'Dea MSC Arch AEES, Advisor: Dr. Austin O'Carroll MICGP, Mountjoy Family Practice, local General Practitioner and PhD student studying social inclusion and access to healthcare

## **DESIRED OUTCOME**

### **A community lead design proposal and illustrated publication**

A print ready publication will document the creative research exercise generated by this project providing locally based evidence relevant to other communities and decision-makers during the development of inner city initiatives of any scale, and applicable to the Dublin City Development Plan revision (currently in progress). Local stories, illustrations, photography and design will be used to visualize the range of obstacles met by our community during the participative development of a community initiative that strives to implement the vision and aspirations laid out by Dublin City Council:

**'Imagination, energy and resources ... being applied to the provision and reclamation of public space in Dublin city...following decades of dominance by traffic and uncontrolled car parking which has eroded the quality of public space.'**

(Dublin City Development Plan 2005 - 2011  
Chapter 2, Expanding Dublin's Horizons to meet the Critical Challenges)

Please see attached:

**Dublin City Development Plan 2005 - 2011**

**Chapter 11 – Recreational Amenity and Open Space**



Left: Location of proposed temporary park: The southern end of Stitic Road facing Arbour Hill, Dublin 7 (taken from Lilliput Press)  
Right: Existing Pocket Park inserted into a similar location in Kentish Town, London, UK

## Dublin City Development Plan 2005 - 2011 Chapter 11 – Recreational Amenity and Open Space

### Introduction

'Modern society places increasing emphasis on the availability of good quality recreational amenities, which are seen as beneficial to the physical and mental health and quality of life of the population. The provision of recreational facilities is also believed to contribute to a reduction in crime and vandalism and to the development of stable communities. Recreational amenities include indoor and outdoor sporting and leisure facilities, children's play areas publicly provided, although there is a growing trend towards the private provision of indoor facilities. The development control process provides opportunities to create new public open spaces, which in many cases include active recreational facilities, such as sports pitches, in addition to areas for passive recreation and children's play. In addition to providing for recreation, open spaces provide visual breaks between and within residential areas and, in addition, can contribute to the development of green chains or networks which allow for walking and cycling and facilitate biodiversity. Private sports grounds and institutional lands can also contribute to the city's open space network....

With increasing population and housing densities, particularly in the city centre, it is necessary to ensure optimal provision of public open space. Where space is limited, quality and usability must be a priority. In existing built-up areas, pocket parks may be created as a result of regeneration projects, while the street and the public domain also play a role as public space. Vibrant new spaces, which enhance the public domain, can be developed in the city centre by utilising existing features, such as the quays in the case of the Liffey Boardwalk and the Campshires. Public open space should be dispersed in a coherent fashion according to a defined hierarchy, to include regional, district, neighbourhood and local parks, pocket parks and incidental open spaces. Ideally, all households should have access to each level of open space within the hierarchy at an acceptable distance. New public space should contribute to the development of a public domain, which, through the provision of improved opportunities for social interaction and children's play, is conducive to the development of vibrant communities.'