



## City 'ugly list' is powerful tool for change, says urban planner

Luke Byrne

THE author of a study ranking areas of Dublin city from the most beautiful to the ugliest has denied his report was unfair to working-class communities.

Paul Kearns said his work was, in fact, "a powerful tool in the hands of people in disadvantaged areas" to demand their right to beauty in the public space.

Mr Kearns said the study was based entirely on objective criteria and was simply a statement of facts.

It was completed for the Royal **Institute of the Architects** of Ireland (RIAI) by urban planner Mr Kearns and his colleague, architect Motti Ruimy.

"Socially and economically-disadvantaged areas are more dependent on the quality of their streets than rich people with big gardens," Mr Kearns told the *Herald*.

Among the areas on the most-ugly list were Usher's Island-Bridgefoot Street, Dolphin's Barn, The Coombe, Christ Church and Cork Street.

However, this angered coun-

cillor Daithi De Roiste, who claimed it was unfair to the people who lived there.

"What he says just doesn't add up. He doesn't take into account the community spirit and the good, salt-of-the-earth Dubliners who live there," the Fianna Fail politician said.

### ATTRACTION

Mr De Roiste said that the Guinness site, which is a massive tourist attraction, was located in an area that has been branded ugly.

However, Mr Kearns said this had been taken into account and, in fact, was a positive for the area.

"I think the Guinness site is extraordinarily beautiful and as a series of listed buildings it would have bumped up the area," he said.

He also pointed out that he was from Ballyfermot, which is part of the area that the councillor represents, and said he had seen first-hand how proper regeneration works.

"When I looked out the window, as far as I could see was tarmac and the playground

with a slide that would cut you in half," he said.

He added that regeneration in Ballyfermot had meant it now had some playgrounds and public spaces.

"We all have a right to public beauty, and people in disadvantaged areas in particular have a right to investment," he said.

The research took into account traffic in the area, the percentage of land zoned as open space, the number of vacant and derelict properties, protected structures and number of trees.



Urban planner Paul Kearns