

16 August 2016

Dublin City Council
The Mansion House,
Dawson Street,
Dublin 2

Re. *Daniel O'Connell* by Joseph Gubbins, c.1815 (DCPC 3/13)

Dear Dublin City Council,

We hope this letter finds you well. Following recent communication with Patricia Wrafter we are contacting you with a view to seeking the loan of the painting referred to above for display in a temporary exhibition at Dublin Castle in 2017.

For over 700 years Dublin Castle served as the headquarters of the English and later British administration in Ireland. Its eighteenth-century State Apartments provided a residence for the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (Viceroy) and a venue for royal and viceregal ceremony before the transition to Irish independence in 1922. The Castle is now a major tourist attraction in the centre of Dublin City and is under the management of the Office of Public Works (OPW). While the historic reception rooms of the State Apartments have been preserved in accordance with their original function, the former viceregal quarters have been adapted to house modern gallery spaces for temporary exhibitions. It is in these spaces that the exhibition to which this loan request pertains will take place. The working title of the exhibition is *Making Majesty: Royals, Republicans and the Throne Room at Dublin Castle*. The exhibition will open on 25 September 2017 and will close on 28 April 2018.

The research for this exhibition is part of a major project to comprehensively investigate the history of the State Apartments both in terms of their form and function. As part of this ongoing research it has been possible for the first time to form a clear picture of the evolution of the Throne Room as a ceremonial space that sits at the centre of the State Apartments.

The 'original' room was constructed following a fire in 1684 to plans provided by the surveyor general, Sir William Robinson, and approved by the Duke of Ormonde as viceroy. In 1750 the Presence Chamber was entirely remodelled on the orders of the Earl of Harrington, new evidence for which we have recently uncovered, and in 1788 the chamber was moved to an adjoining, larger room on the orders of the Marquess of Buckingham, where it remains located today. The next major reordering of the space was done in 1839, when new chandeliers, paintings and other embellishments were added. From that time, it remained relatively unaltered until the dawn of the twentieth century when it was used successively as a part of a Red Cross Hospital, 1915–1919, and then as a temporary courtroom from 1923 to 1931, when Dublin Castle played home to the nation's courts as the Four Courts were being rebuilt. Following damage caused by a fire in adjoining rooms in 1941, major structural work was carried out throughout the 1950s and 60s. These works reconfigured the space, moving the throne off axis, but keeping it in the room, where it remains today.

The primary purpose of our exhibition is to examine the construction, decoration and use of the Throne Room at Dublin Castle as well as using the room as a lens through which to probe changing Irish society and its attitudes.

One of the things we hope to do is to explore the Throne Room as an interface between the Viceregal Court and the disenfranchised Roman Catholic majority of the population, and it is with this in mind that we'd hope to borrow the portrait of Daniel O'Connell painted by John Gubbins, c.1815, which today hangs over the fireplace of the Mansion House entrance hall.

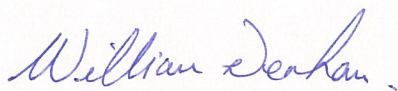
O'Connell was invited to a reception at the Castle to meet King George IV in 1821, and he became the first Roman Catholic Lord Mayor of Dublin since the time of the Williamite Wars to be received officially in that role. In 1841 he was invited to the first levée of the new Viceroy, the Earl de Grey, held in the Throne Room of the Castle.

The exhibition will be displayed across four interconnecting rooms. It is proposed to display the portrait of Daniel O'Connell in the King's Bedroom, which is the second room in this sequence. This room would be dedicated specifically to exploring the ceremonial use of the room by the viceroy and by visiting monarchs, as well as considering it as the physical nexus where politics and symbolism came together – and sometimes collided.

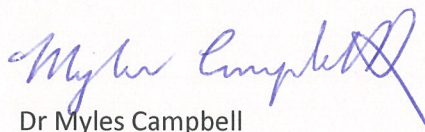
It is anticipated that the standards of presentation and dissemination in this exhibition will be similar to those of the exhibition we produced last year to mark the bicentenary of the Chapel Royal at Dublin Castle. Were you kind enough to facilitate our loan request we can assure you that the safety, handling and insurance of the painting would be carefully managed by the Office of Public Works. Our State Apartments gallery spaces are closely monitored by our on-site, twenty-four-hour security staff and are fitted with CCTV. Transportation can be organized by the Dublin Castle Collections Department, which would select a suitable handler, subject to your approval and in consultation with OPW Art Management.

We hope that this application addresses all preliminary issues pertaining to our request but we are very happy to provide any additional information that may be required, and to work with Dublin City Council in meeting fully its conditions. We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,



Mr William Derham



Dr Myles Campbell

Joint Curators

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