

€1.5m US house

Vincent Murphy
in Greenwich, Connecticut

GAYLE Dunne, wife of heavily indebted builder Sean Dunne, has made a last-ditch bid to save her controversial plan to redevelop a €1.5m home in the US.

A lawyer representing Mrs Dunne, a former gossip columnist, has extended an olive branch to residents opposed to the redevelopment of the property in the exclusive Belle Haven enclave of Greenwich, Connecticut.

The residents, whose objections led to work being halted last October, were invited to enter negotiations just hours before the project was due to be discussed at a public planning hearing on Wednesday night.

Mrs Dunne's lawyer

Thomas Heagney, who acts as a trustee for the property, 38 Bush Avenue, succeeded in an application to have the hearing postponed.

He told members of the Greenwich planning and zoning appeals board that he had discussed the matter with the neighbours' attorney.

"My client is looking at a number of options. We think that might bear fruit," he said.

The Dunes moved to the upmarket area - home to singer Diana Ross and a number of hedge-fund billionaires - last year and have been renting a mansion while the Bush Avenue property is being redeveloped.

Mr Dunne has been regularly commuting between the US and Ireland, where he retains substantial business interests.



Mrs Dunne's house in Belle Haven, Greenwich, and (right) her lawyer, Thomas Heagney.

The developer, who is dealing with NAMA and also has large debts with non-NAMA banks, has denied being the owner of the Bush Avenue property.

Objections

However, his wife, who has refused to comment on her links to the property, has listed it as her home address in filings for two real-estate companies that she now runs.

Neither Gayle Dunne (36) nor Sean Dunne (56) were present at the brief hearing.

Plans to remodel the Victorian-era property have been in limbo for the past four months after local planning inspectors ordered work to stop.

They intervened after locals complained that

demolition exceeded what had been permitted.

A number of residents who turned up for the hearing had also intended to voice their objections that the house being planned was too big for the site.

Speaking after he left the meeting, Mr Heagney said it was "premature" to talk about what kind of deal he was seeking to reach with the residents.

"We encourage the discussions and we'll be talking to their representatives," he said.

"It's a relatively small neighbourhood and it's a small number of people we're talking to," he added, admitting that the hope is to proceed with the work "in some shape or form".

Reviews

At-Swim-Two-Birds
The Project Space

IF any theatre company can capture the tone of sprightly irreverence that characterises Flann O'Brien's novels it is Sligo-based Blue Raincoat, with a successful repertoire of absurdist classics, including other Flanns, under their belt.

O'Brien himself dismissed *At-Swim*, his first novel, as mere juvenilia, but it's juvenilia that dazzles with its unfettered savaging of novelistic convention, and must be the hardest of his novels to adapt for the stage. Jocelyn Clarke's adaptation does an excellent job of clarifying the three separate but increasingly entangled storylines created by a porter-loving student in his bedroom.

Flann is perverse, one of the student's characters, Dermot Trellis, is himself a writer, whose characters want to free themselves from his control, preferably by foul means. Then there's the adaptations of legendary Irish characters such as Finn MacCool and Pooka MacPhellime.

Clarity is aided by Jamie Vartan's set design of a vaudevillian stage, reminding us that all these bizarre characters are cavorting on the stage of the student's mind, but despite this, and Sandra O'Malley's crisply succinct narration, the head gets quite hot trying to keep up with what's going on. However, it is perhaps advisable not to try and keep up but simply ride along on the sustained gothic-comic atmosphere of the show. And there is plenty to enjoy in this way.

The mock-heroic descriptions of Finn MacCool (Ciaran McCauley), Trellis' characters (Fiona McGeown, Kellie Hughes, Bob Kelly) discussing the physical afflictions they'd like inflicted on their author, "a boil at the back of the neck is worse," or the simple delight of watching Kellie Hughes dancing in a sparkling ballroom dress.

Though Niall Henry's production does seem to struggle increasingly with the wealth of material, and even feels like it could do with an extra actor to play Orlick (O'Malley again), it offers a uniquely rewarding experience.

JOHN MCKEOWN

X Factor Live
The O2, Dublin

ASIDE from lining the already handsomely stuffed pockets of Simon Cowell, it's hard to see what purpose the annual X Factor tour is intended to serve. If it is meant as a career

springboard for the former dinner ladies/PE teachers/pub singers that the Lord Voldemort of Saturday night entertainment has raised from obscurity, then it is surely a crushing failure.

With the exception of Brylcreem-lathered boy-band One Direction, it is difficult to

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