

Councillor Ian Crozier LLB
Castle Electoral Area



My ref

Your refs

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4th January 2006

Mr Dick Mackenzie CBE
 Local Government Boundary Commissioner
 Forestview
 Purdy's Lane
 Belfast
 BT8 7AR

Dear Dick,

DUNCAIRN WARD, BELFAST.

Among your proposals for reform of local government boundaries in Belfast is a proposal to remove the Duncairn ward and effectively replace it with a new ward to be named Alexandra Park.

As a lifelong resident of the Duncairn ward and city councillor for the area, I am dismayed, along with many others, at this proposal. The Duncairn name is deeply reflective of the history and heritage of our area and should be retained.

By way of background, the ward takes its name from the Duncairn estate, which was located in the area as far back as the 1850s. Duncairn was the home of Adam Macrory, a renowned Belfast solicitor, whom the Belfast Newsletter of 1st April 1881 described as "no ordinary man...It had pleased God to endow him with a marvellous constitution, both physically and mentally. He was thus enabled to live a life of intellectual and bodily activity to which but few men are equal."

Macrory had a strong social conscience and was closely associated with the work of the Belfast Royal Hospital and the Belfast Charitable Society. On Sunday evenings Macrory visited the elderly residents of the Charitable Society's House on Clifton Street and read to them from the Bible.

Although Macrory died in 1881, and the estate was developed for housing not long afterwards, many connections live on in the names of streets in the area. The obvious connection is with Duncairn Gardens, but also Hillman Street in the New Lodge (his mother's maiden name); Adam Street (named for Macrory himself); Moyola Street (named for the river that flows through his home town of Castledawson); Eia Street off the Antrim Road (formed from the initials of the Christian names of Macrory's nieces); and Lawther Street (named after Macrory's close friend Samuel Lawther, who was a founder of the White Star Line and lived at Mount Vernon).

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Adam Macrory was also commemorated in the naming of Macrory Memorial Presbyterian Church on the Duncairn Gardens (now closed), which was opened in January 1895.

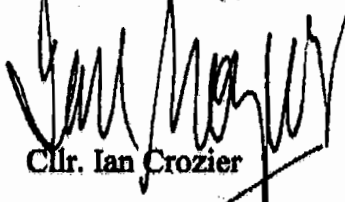
In an era when so much of Belfast's history and heritage is being lost through redevelopment, it is strongly felt that a ward name such as Duncairn, which is so intrinsically linked with the history of the area, must be retained. The name links to an era of prosperity and pride in the city of Belfast and it is that pride that people are now working to restore in communities like those on the Shore Road. How can people seek to restore that pride if the heritage of our districts is gradually being eroded?

I am pleased to say that my call for the name of the Duncairn ward to be retained received unanimous cross-party support at the monthly meeting of Belfast City Council on 4th January and I understand that a separate letter is being sent from the City Council to advise you of this.

Given the unanimous political support for this position and the merits of the Duncairn name, reflecting as it does 150 years of history in our community, I would strongly request that you review your draft proposal and provide for the continued existence of a Duncairn ward.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely, '4



Cllr. Ian Crozier