



Workmen demolishing Allenton House, Old Court, Tallaght, Co Dublin, and (below) before the demolition. — (Photograph: Paddy Whelan)

Historic mansion razed to rubble

By Mary Maher

ALLENTON House, the early 18th century country mansion which escaped total demolition earlier this year following legal action by the Dublin County Council, was yesterday razed to rubble on an order from the council's dangerous buildings section. The order was made after architects inspected damage to the premises caused by an outbreak of fire on the night of August 28th.

All that remained at 4 p.m. yesterday was Killinilly Tower, said to date to the middle ages, and some outhouses. Four tipper lorries were in constant motion delivering debris to the Blessington tip, and the day marked a helpless defeat for the county council, Tallaght Historical Society and the local branch of An Taisce.

Allenton House, at Old Bawn, Tallaght, was built between 1720 and 1730 and as one of the oldest houses in the Dublin area was officially listed for protection by the county council. In the mid-18th century it was the home of Sir Timothy Allen, Lord Mayor of Dublin, and it was described by Dr Maurice Craig in his book, "Classic Irish Houses," as an attractive example of the country mansions which are rapidly disappearing in Ireland.

The present owner, Mr Kevin Kirby, inherited the property from his uncle, the late Mr Thomas Muldoon, last November. On New Year's Eve last, demolition work was begun on the house, and the front facade was destroyed and upper portion collapsed before work was suspended due to protests.

The county council secured an injunction restraining Mr Kirby from further demolition, and subsequently sought a High Court order requiring Mr Kirby to rebuild the facade and re-instate the house to its original condition. This was ruled out by Mr Justice Gannon on May 10th, on the grounds that Section 27 of the 1976 Planning Act could only be used to halt an unauthorised development, but not to restore what had been taken away.

Mr Kirby undertook in a consent order not to demolish the house without planning permission or an order from the dangerous buildings section, and the council agreed not to pursue reinstatement until the application for permission to demolish had been determined.

A spokesman for the planning department said that Mr Kirby's application for demolition had been refused several weeks ago and that Mr Kirby had initiated steps to appeal that decision when the August 28th fire occurred.

