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NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

**Faculty of Fashion and Textiles
Department of Printed Textiles**

**"A Study Of The Restoration And The Transformation Of
The Royal Hospital Kilmainham"**

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	Page 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	Page 2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	Page 3
INTRODUCTION	Page 4-5
CHAPTER ONE -	The Restoration of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin and it's use during the 1980's Page 6-24
CHAPTER TWO -	The Planning, Development and Managing of the Irish Museum of Modern Art Page 25-46
CHAPTER THREE -	A Past and Present Overview of a Museum's Uses Meanings and Possibilities Page 47-62
CHAPTER FOUR -	The Opening and Principle Strategy of the Irish Museum of Modern Art Page 63-70
CHAPTER FIVE -	The Environs of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham Page 71-85
CONCLUSION	Page 86-88
BIBLIOGRAPHY -	Books Page 89-90 Newspaper and magazine articles Page 91-98 Government Documents Page 99 Public Relations Pamphlets Page 100

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I propose to give an account of the restoration of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and its subsequent transformation into the Irish Museum of Modern Art. In its long history the building has seen many changes but it has never gone through a period of such rapid and dramatic metamorphosis as that of recent decades.

I have looked at the past two decades which despite being a time of immense transformation have not been fully documented. I have not included the earlier history of the Royal Hospital as it has been recorded in detail elsewhere. This thesis looks at an era which is at the moment only recorded in disparate accounts in newspapers, articles and government documents. In doing this thesis I aim to assemble the various elements that go together, tell the story of a new chapter in Kilmainham's history.

I believe that such developments are of interest and should be considered and I also wish to question the merits of the developments during this era. I look at whether the changes have been for the good or ill, the building itself. Also I question the success or failure of the venture of the Museum of Modern Art which is so important and is, or at least should be, such an essential element of the lifeblood of the Irish art world.

To the end of achieving these aims I have given an account of the stages of restoration from the point of view of the specifics of the building's repair. Also documented is the planning and development of the Museum and the context in which the Museum must function in the modern world of art and culture. The stages of development of the exhibition strategy are noted. An examination of the area that surrounds the Museum and the reciprocal effect that is to be seen between the area and the Museum, as placed in the Royal

Hospital Building, is discussed given it's effect on the success or otherwise of the venture in it's Kilmainham setting.

Given the nature of my aims, my research techniques involved the cataloguing of various newspaper clippings and magazines articles from various sources. I also found that there were many barriers to my uncovering of information given that so little has been published on the topic because the events are so recent.

CHAPTER ONE

CHAPTER ONE - The restoration of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham Dublin and it's use during the 1980's

This first Chapter is a discussion and an introduction to the largest restoration contract ever undertaken for the preservation of a state building in Ireland. The Chapter focuses on a description of the Royal Hospital's award winning restoration and portrays a brief account of the alterations that took place between 1980 and 1984. During the Royal Hospital's 300 year existence, the building has had many purposes, including it's use as a Hospital storage facility. This first Chapter concentrates upon the Royal Hospital's use during the 1980's after the completion of the restoration work of 1984. This Chapter also analyses the Government's decision on the use of the Royal Hospital and discusses the people involved in the restoration and the forming of the National Centre for Culture and Arts therein. The exhibitions and the functions of the Royal Hospital during the period between 1984 and 1989 are also considered briefly.

The Royal Hospital Kilmainham was established as a retirement centre for old soldiers in the year 1684. The founder was James Butler of Kilkenny Castle, the Great Duke of Ormonde. Today the building possesses a character full of memories from the past and has been restored many times during it's three hundred year existence.

In our own time, in the early 1960's major structural work became essential. The principal architect was MD Burke who worked in collaboration with the Office of Public Works. The restoration involved the reconstruction of the Gate Tower (1) that can be seen at the West Avenue, the entrance opposite the Kilmainham Jail and the reconstruction of the walls of the Clock Tower that had rotted.

In 1974 the architects Costello, Murray and Beaumont were requested by the Office of Public Works to study the structural problems related to this abandoned building. In 1978 in Dail Eireann the Fianna Fail Government announced a major

reconstruction programme of the Royal Hospital in order for it to be used as an international conference centre. The original building was to be faithfully restored and a modern conference centre was to be built alongside. It was envisaged that the 300 year old soldiers rooms, encircling the courtyard, would serve as offices and ancillary facilities, with the Chapel and the Great Hall, to be used to accommodate banquets and fromal occasions such as meetings involving the European Community. There was however much debate about these plans, as the building was seen to be too small, too remote, inaccessible, and most important of all there were too few hotels in the vicinity. In an article written to the editor of the Irish Times, Edward Cassidy stated that "Ireland needs a purpose built convention centre capable of accommodating one thousand to two thousand people with full ancillary services.... " (Cassidy, Irish Times, 10-5-93) and he also conveyed the negative aspects such as the remoteness and the size of the building which he saw as being insufficient.

In 1980, a contract worth almost 12 million pounds was awarded to the builders John Sisk Limited with the proviso that the building be completed in time to host Ireland's presidency to the European Community in 1984. But the restoration was complex and took longer than was expected. After much debate the plan to construct a conference hall facility was disregarded. Also the cost of the restoration was far higher than the original calculations. The final cost of the restoration coming to 20 million pounds; although this estimate fluctuates from 15 to 21 million pounds.

John Costello, the principal architect of the restoration scheme quoted that the restoration cost 15 million pounds. (Costello, Restoration of a Historic Building: pp 3). Whereas, Frank Mc Donald, a journalist with the Irish Times, estimated that the restoration cost 21 million pounds (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 25-5-1991). The scheme for the European Community conference centre in the Royal Hospital was abandoned and Dublin Castle was chosen as the venue instead and in the end cost 20 million pounds. This can be referred to in Frank Mc Donald's coverage in May 1989, when he reported on Kilmainham that the "... scheme was abandoned in favour of

adapting Dublin Castle and the building was later designated as National Centre for Culture and the Arts"
(Mc Donald, Irish Times, 5-9-1989)

In the meantime Ted Nealon, the then Minister of State for Culture and the Arts set up an interdepartmental committee to decide the future of the Royal Hospital. The committee was still sitting when the restoration was finally completed in the Autumn of 1984. This is indicative of the confusion and indecision among many Government officials regarding the plans for Kilmainham.

The four year contract for the restoration of the Royal Hospital, was the most extensive restoration of a public building ever undertaken in this country. The Office of Public Works were assigned by the Government to overview the project and they employed the architects Costello, Murray and Beaumont for the project. The consultants involved in the scheme were Leonard and Williams and Joseph Mc Cullough and Partners were the structural engineers. Dr Maurice Craig was appointed historical adviser and the general contractors were the local, John Sisk and Son.

The task of this restoration was extensive. The work lasted for four years and at any given time, a workforce of about 250 people were on the site. The nature of the work involved repairs rather than construction work, as virtually all materials structural or decorative were recycled. The architects overall intention was that the building would be put back into "good health", and that it would look neither older nor younger than it was originally. The restoration centred on preserving, it's 17th Century spirit and essence, but quite equally proposed to retain the subtle changes that had evolved during the 3 subsequent centuries.

A broad range of crafts and skills were required and employed, for example in the repairing of masonry, slatework, plaster, woodwork and stained glass. During the restoration that took place various techniques were used to ensure that the restoration was subtle and did not clash with the overall architecture. The modern components that are used in buildings today were combined with the original

fabrics. Much study and observation of the original components was done in order to achieve a look that appeared not to be drastically changed. For example to achieve the appearance of the old masonry the plaster had to be carefully applied, as it would have been, because the way in which plaster is applied to today is very different from the rough plastering techniques originally applied to the building.

The Royal Hospital Kilmainham required internal and external restoration, repairs including the restoration of the columns, Tower, Chapel tracery, parapets, sills and rainwater pipes. The building required re-roofing and also the renewal of the glass windows. (See Figures 1-9)

The internal work of the fabric of the building took two years to complete and was quite extensive. Under the guidance of Joseph McCullough and Partners, walls and floors were repaired, plasterwork was carefully restored and severe damp problems cured. The *ornamentation* of the Chapel ceiling which was originally replaced in 1905, by use of papier mache, required vast cleaning and the fireplaces of which there were fifty in all were also repaired. An in-depth account of the restoration that took place between 1980 and 1984 is to be found in John Costello's report in the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland and in Plan magazine, published in 1985.

John Olley has also written about the restoration in the Irish Arts Review (pp 65-70).

Many difficulties came to light as the project progressed and much effort and study was required to finalise the reconstruction. The effects of weathering had caused much decay and many structural problems, had to be resolved. A primary example of the badly deteriorated state of the building was the discovery of a heavy percolation of water from the drains of the surrounding fields into the basement. ^{This} was removed and new drains were laid and a programme of draining was instigated to resolve the problem. Elsewhere, problems were encountered, all of which varied in complexity and demanded a high degree of skill and careful

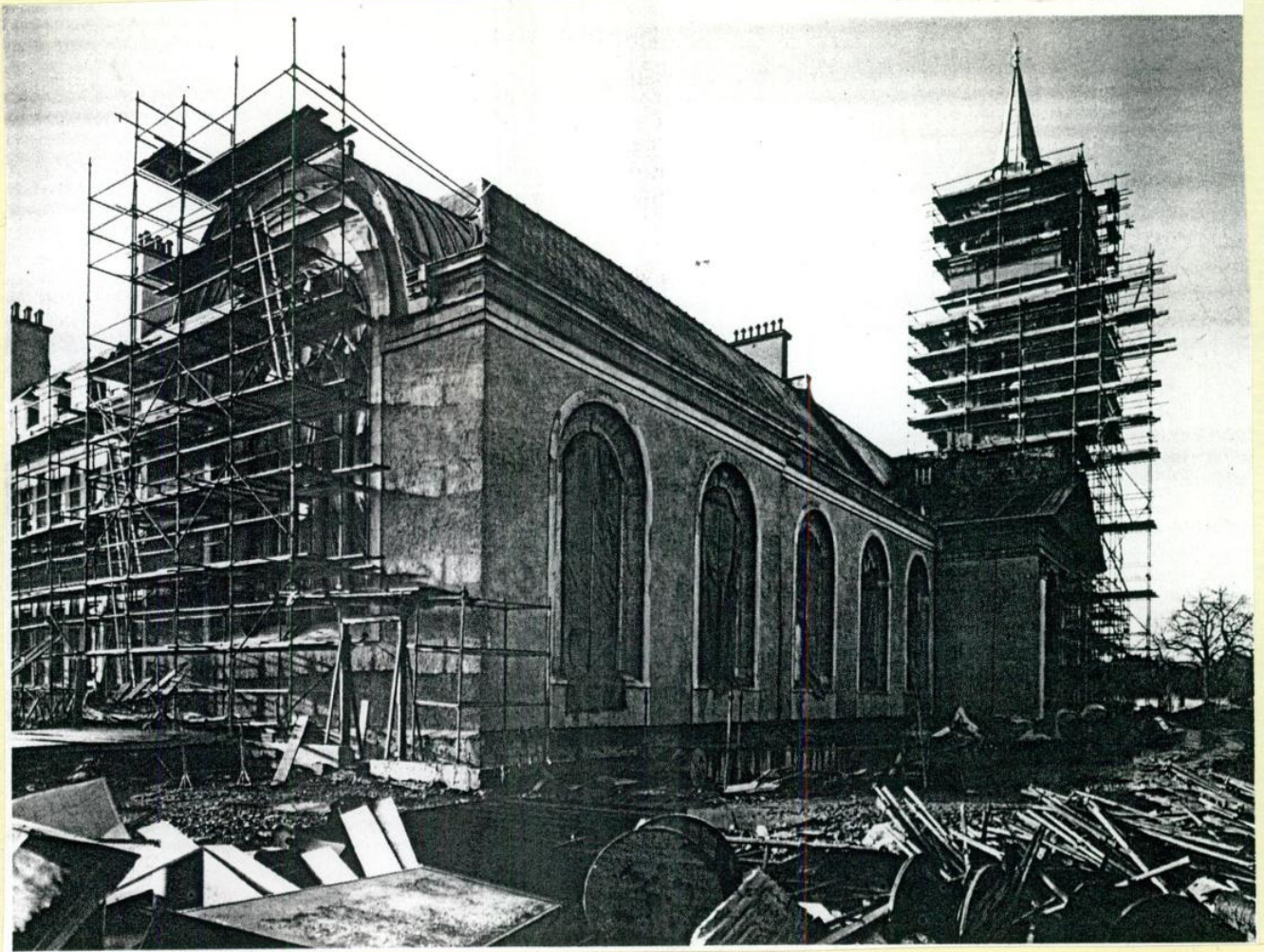


Figure 1 - Repairs to Chapel and Chapel Tracery

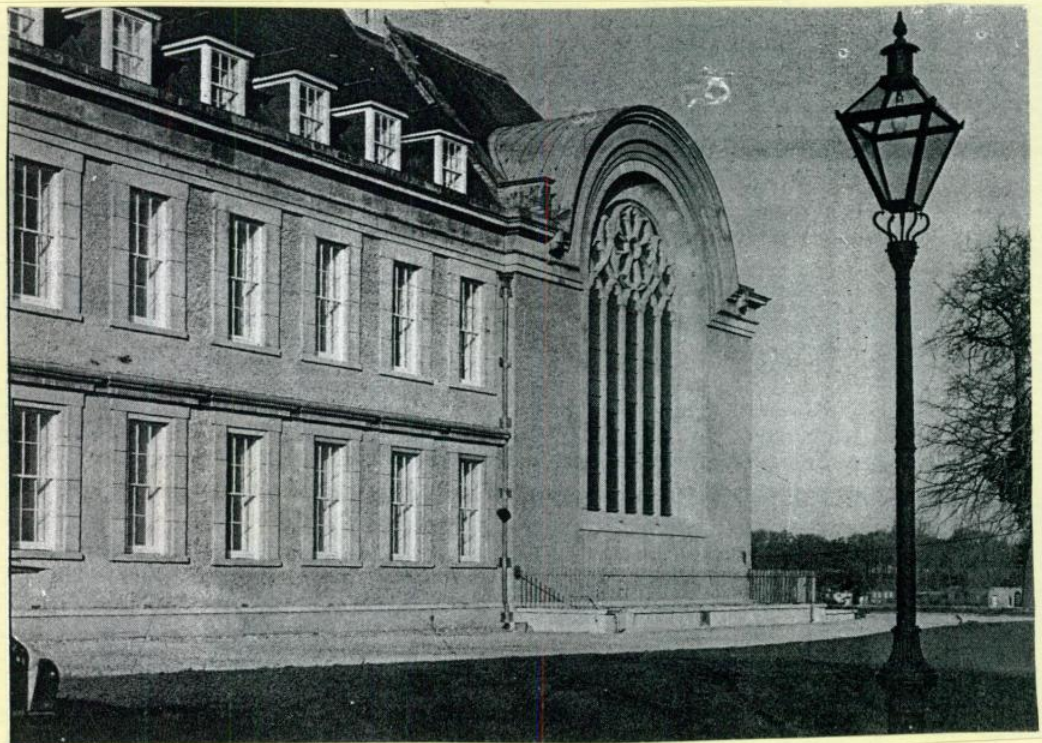


Figure 2 - The Chapel after restoration was finished

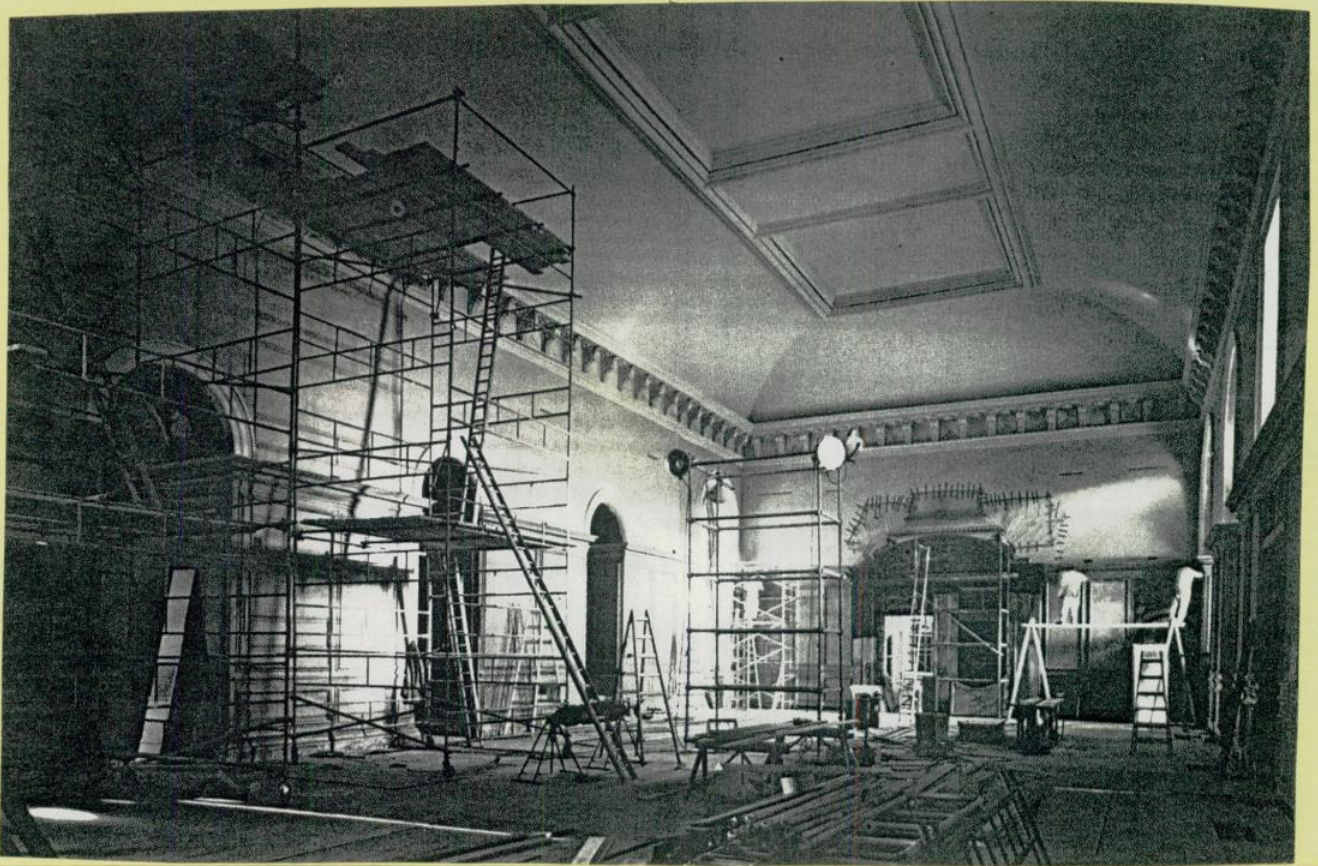


Figure 3 - Replacement of original panelling in the Great Hall or Dining Hall



Figure 4 - Dining Hall today

Grant Hall
replacement

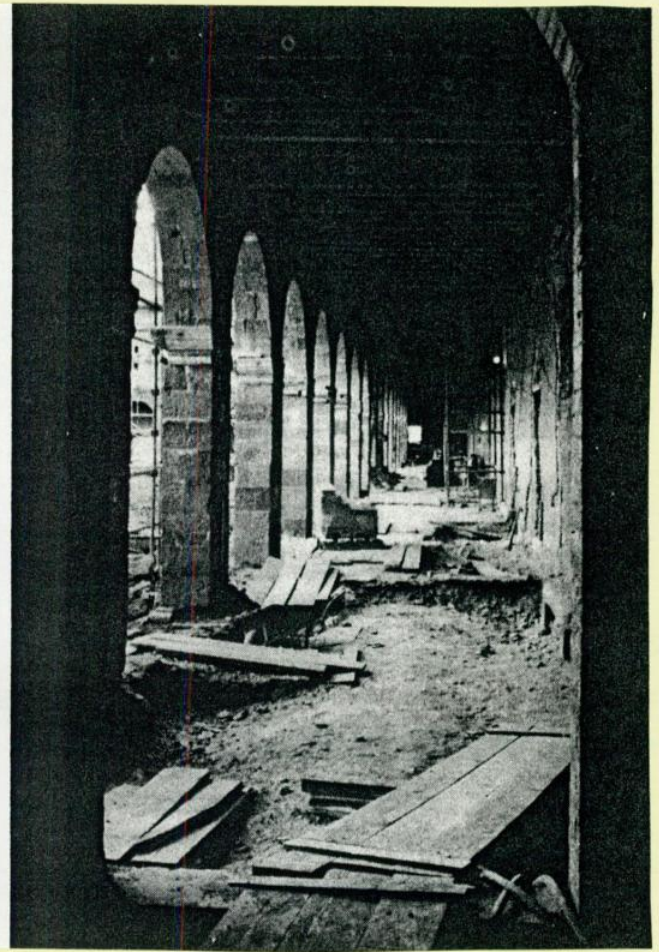
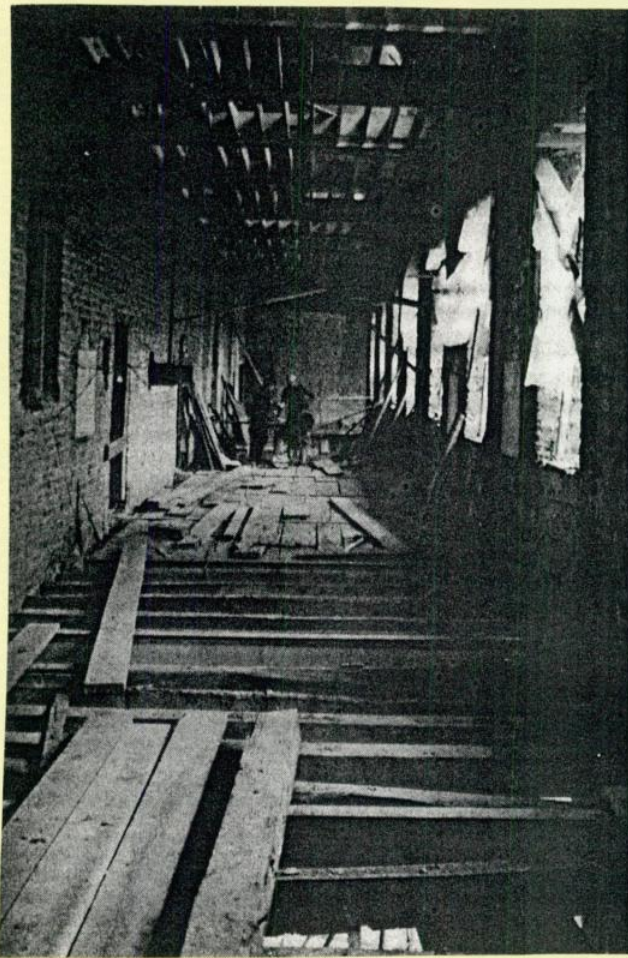


Figure 5 - First floor corridor showing restoration of oak floor structure

Figure 6 - Arcade showing removal of stone for rendering

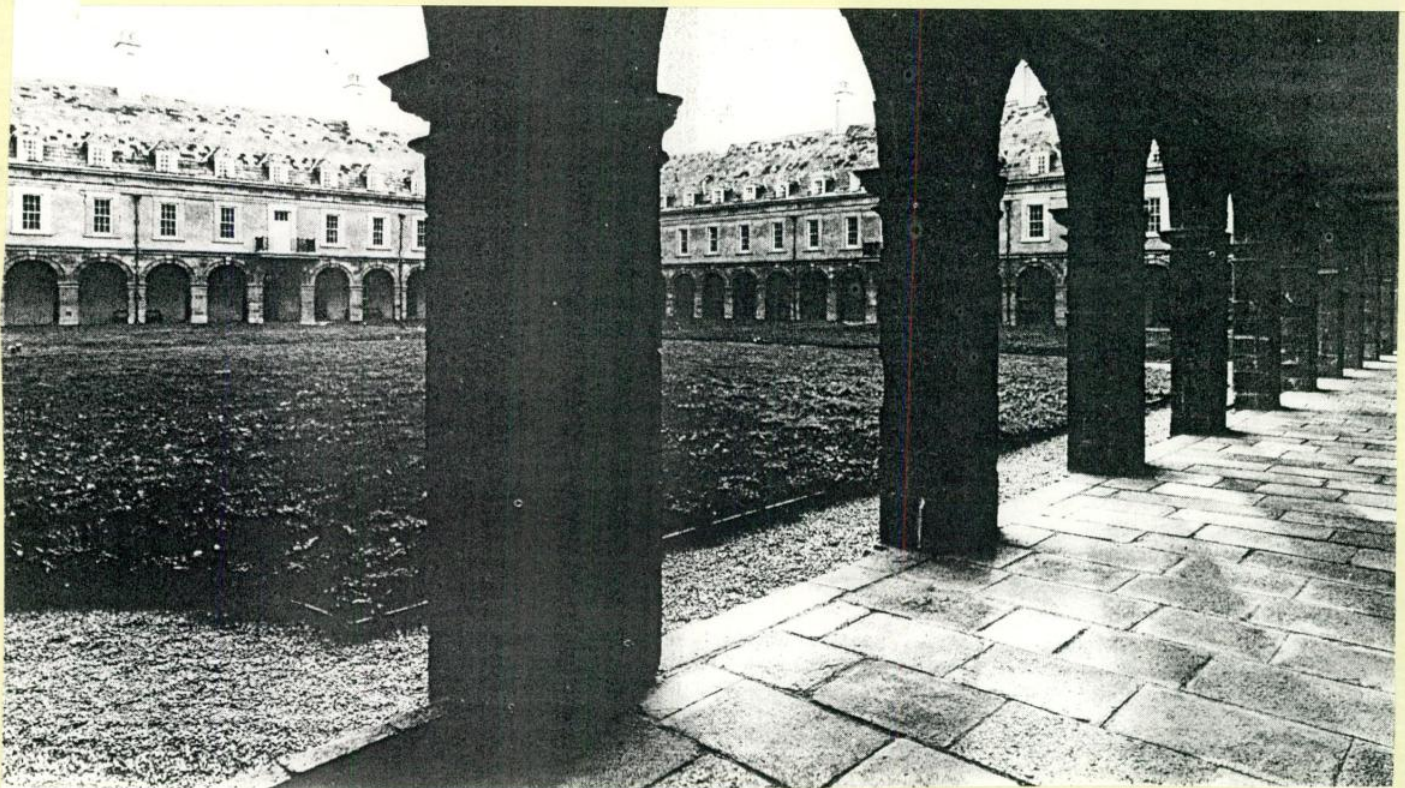
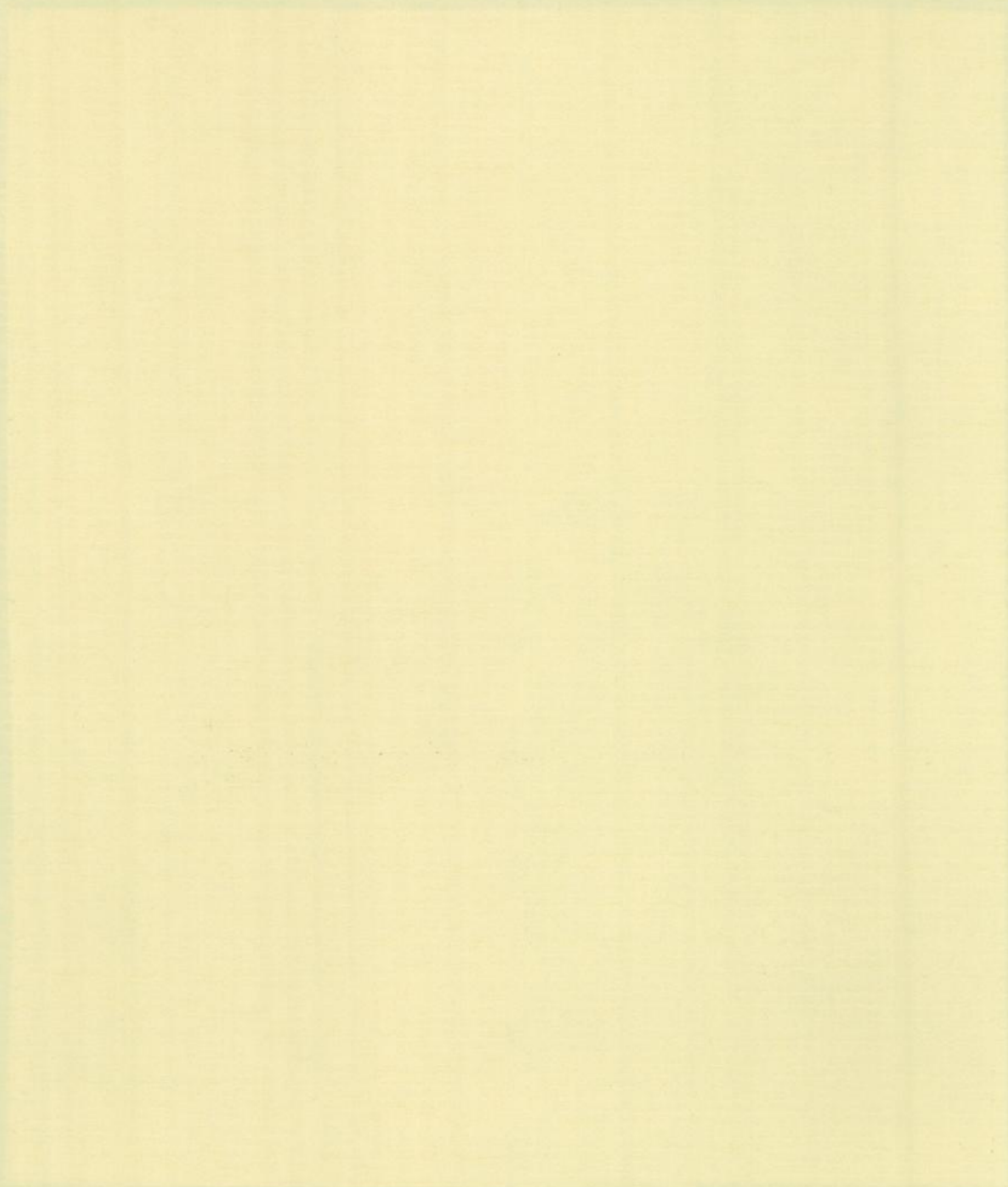


Figure 6 - After restoration



Figure 7 - The Chapel ceiling portraying papier mache ornamentation



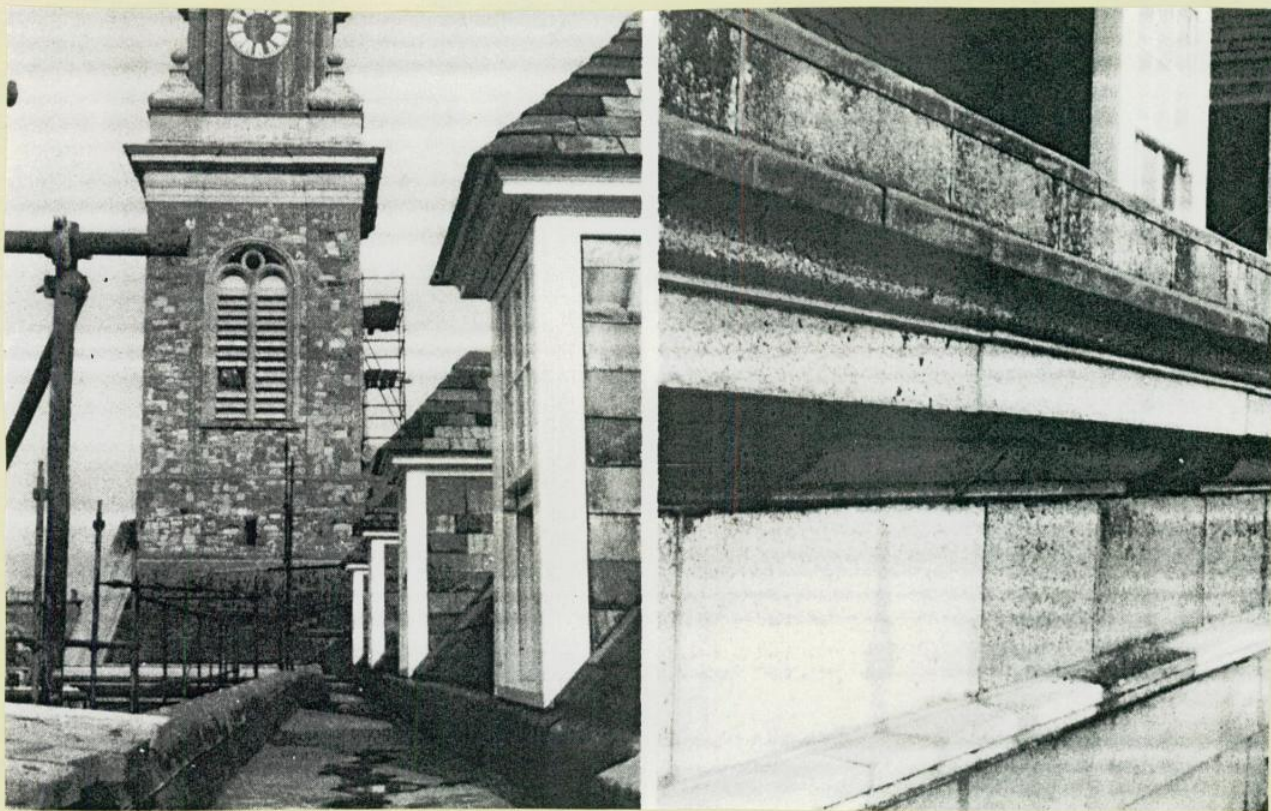


Figure 8 - Restoration in progress 1980

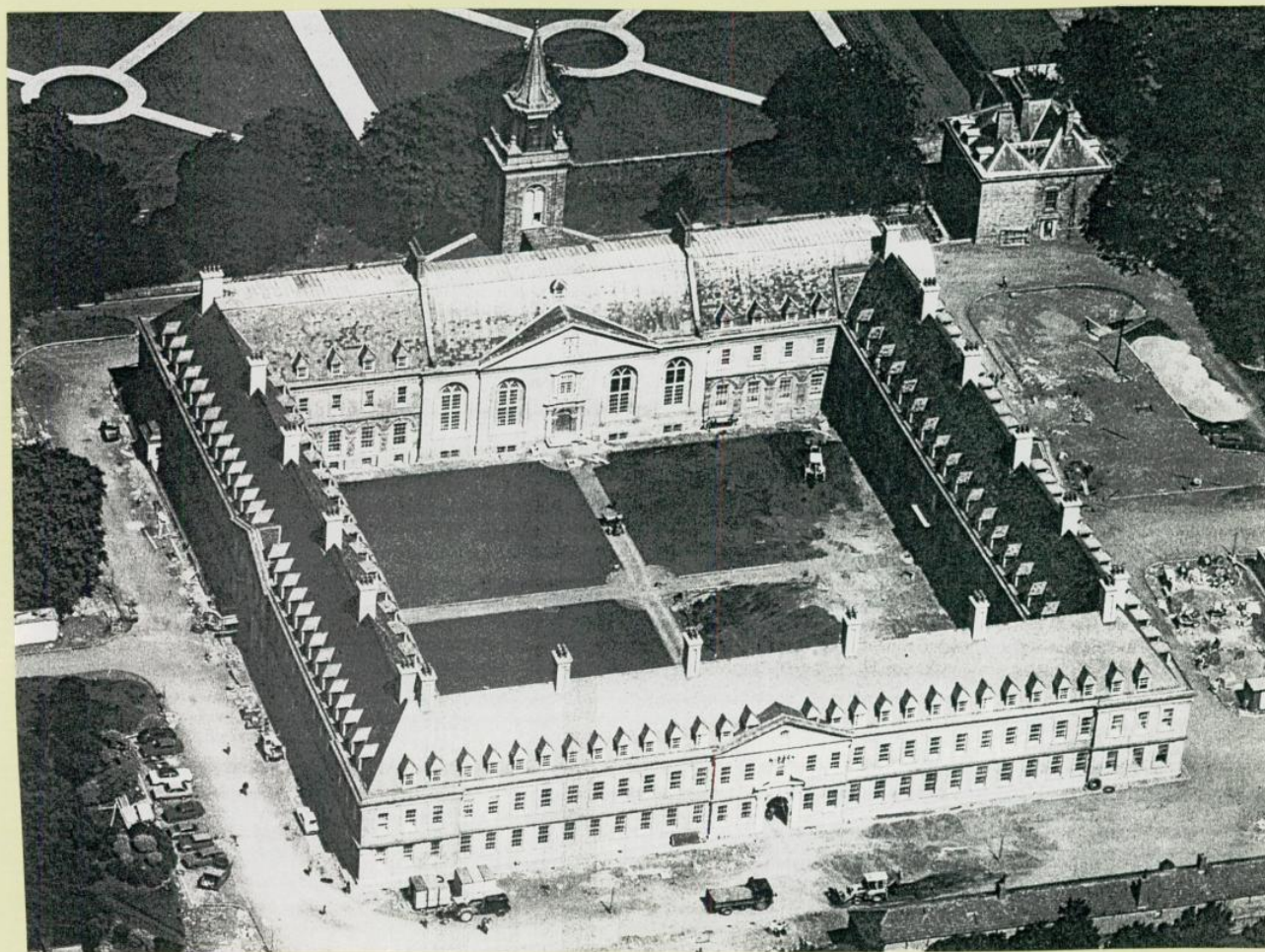


Figure 9 - Overview of restoration in 1983

management. All the accounts of the repair work can be read in John Costello's in depth account of the restoration. (See: Costello 1985, Page 11-16).

In 1986, a Europa Nostra Medal (3), one of the only 5 awarded for architectural conservation projects in Western Europe, was awarded to Ireland for the "dramatic" restoration of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. The award is granted by the International Federation of Association for the Protection of Europe Cultural and National Heritage. The merit of this award can be gauged by other high standard of previous winners. Another Irish project, that involved the restoration of the Granary in Limerick, also won a Europa Nostra Diploma of Merit. This scheme involved the adaptation of a derelict 18th Century grain warehouse for multi-purpose use. Among the other medal winners was the New Concordia Wharf situated in London's Docklands, which was originally a large 19th Century site that was restored and converted to residential and commercial use and the Royal Rope Factory in Rochefort in France, which was rehabilitated as a permanent rope making Museum.

In the Autumn of 1984 the restoration was completed and a new use for the building had then to be decided. (See Figures 10-12). The building had previously in the 1920's and 1930's been used as an old soldiers home and hospice and doubled as the army headquarters from the 19th Century onwards. The building was handed over to the Free State in the 1930's and subsequently for a short period the building remained abandoned and in a virtually collapsed condition, it's sole use was to house artefacts and objects for the National Folklore Collection. During these years the Royal Hospital accumulated many monuments such as the statue of Queen Victoria which was removed from the precincts of Leinster House. In 1986 the statue of Queen Victoria was donated to Australia on permanent loan, on behalf of the Irish nation.

In 1984, the Royal Hospital Kilmainham was designated the title of the National Centre for Culture and Arts. A Board of Directors was appointed by the Government in February 1985. The Board consisted of fifteen people including John Kerry Keane as

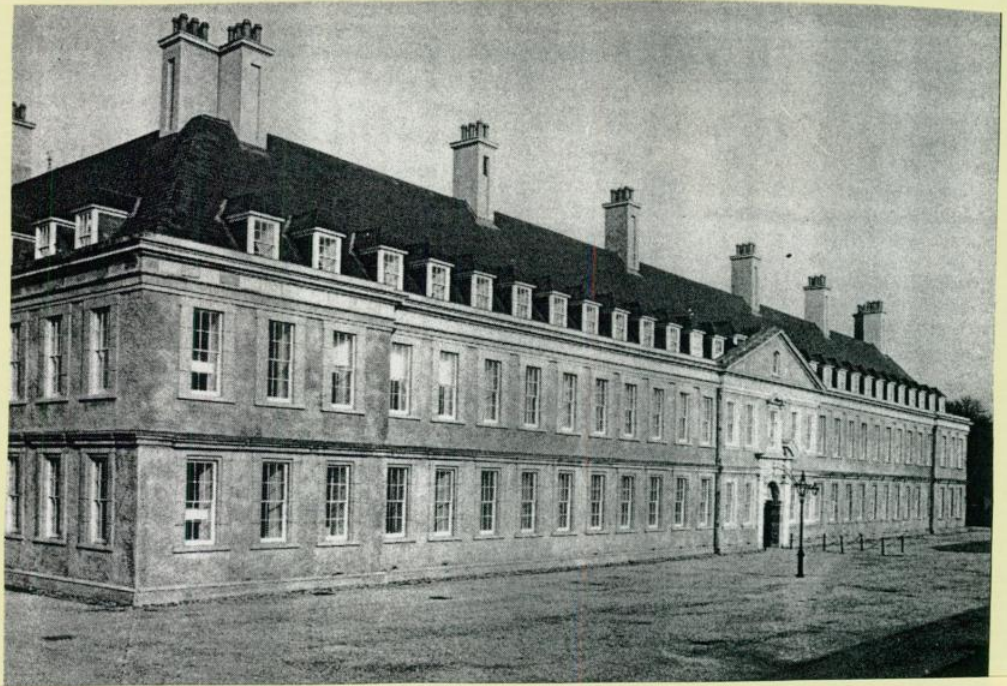


figure 10 - South facing facade after restoration was completed



Figure 11 - Arches surrounding a courtyard after restoration

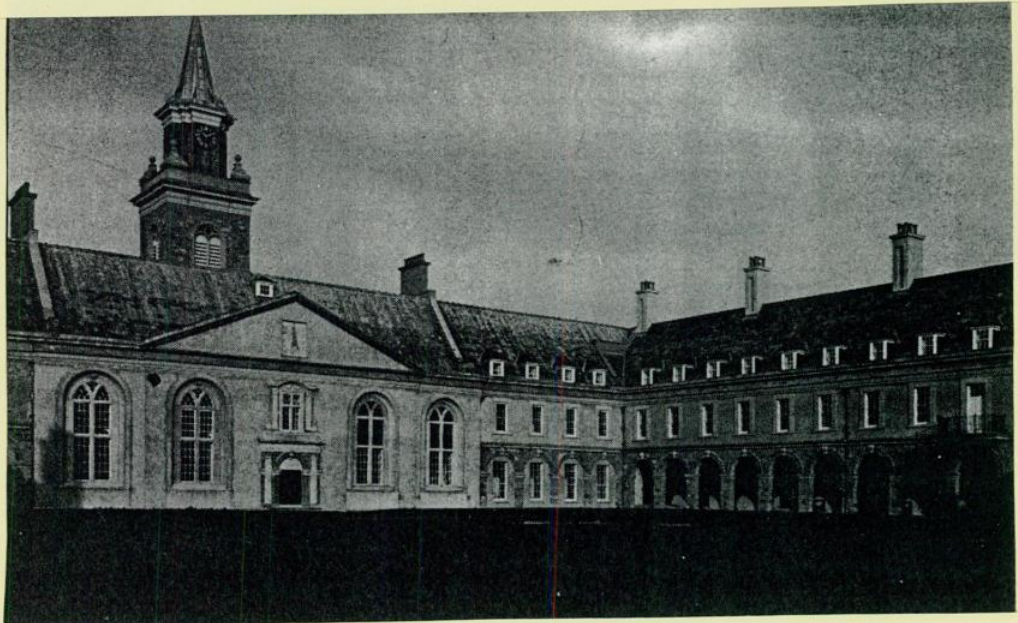


Figure 12 - Courtyard and facade of Great Hall after restoration

chairperson. The Board members implemented the Government's plans for the building. One of their functions was to exploit the potential of the Chapel area and the Great Hall for a variety of events including important banquets, launches, and National Lottery draws. The Board of Directors also appointed Tony O' Dalaigh as a Director for the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Tony O' Dalaigh, a civil servant had been private secretary to Ministers George Colley, Donagh O'Malley and Brian Lenihan. He has had many positive influences on the development of the arts and culture in Ireland. He has been on the Board of many other institutions, such as the Gate Theatre, Kilmainham Gaol and on the Interim Board of the National Theatre and also is a shareholder of the National Museum. Perhaps the most significant contributions he has made are his sensitivity in initiating various art projects and collaborating with youth schemes such as the Dublin City Workshop. On appointment to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham Tony O'Dalaigh was given the task of creating a calendar of events such as concerts, exhibitions and various receptions.

In November 1984, a proposal was passed by the cultural committee of Dublin Corporation. The committee decided to acquire permission to exhibit a show of artworks from the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art which was closed at the time for renovations. The permission was granted and the first exhibitions were held in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. The exhibitions were varied and included shows such as the Islamic calligraphy exhibition held in 1988 and showing of Sonia Delauney's lithographs in 1989 and an unusual exhibition based on the Irish Boglands which was held in 1987. The main exhibition to catch the much needed public attention was the Chinese Warriors exhibition that was held in 1985.

The Chinese Warriors exhibition contained a representation of one of the greatest finds of all time. The Royal Hospital exhibition contained only a small selection of the overall find. The collection of Chinese Warriors was discovered in 1974 and the main excavation took place in 1977. The find consisted of seven thousand five

hundred life-size men and horses, fashioned in terra-cotta guarding the tomb of China's first emperor Qun Sihuang, the builder of the Great Wall of China.

The exhibition contained photographs and a descriptive catalogue of the excavated site and gave a breathtaking picture of the find. Falling scaffolding however led to the damage of two figures and even though this created much controversy the exhibition was deemed a success as thousands of people flocked to the Museum to view the show.

While exhibitions such as the show entitled the Kilkenny Nine and other activities such as cabarets, luncheons and recitals were taking place in the Royal Hospital, the Office of Public Works continued the restoration. In 1987, the Great Hall and the basement of the North Wing was fitted out with a restaurant facility. The hall was originally the soldiers dining and recreational area and now is used to accommodate conferences and dining. The Chapel now known as the Baroque room is also used for conferences. The Baroque Chapel has hosted launches of new technology, commercial products, displays, trade shows, award ceremonies, lunches, banquets dinners and concerts. The Chapel is a magnificent setting for banquets and has been very successful. (See Figures 13-14). The basements consist of vaulted cellars and are an informal setting where lunches and snacks are served to the general public, tourists and other visitors to the Museum.

In 1988, the Office of Public Works carried out the first segment of the establishment of a venue for modern art in Kilmainham by the fitting of accommodation for the Gordon Lambert Collection in the West Wing on the ground floor. The Gordon Lambert Collection contains a varied representation of modern and contemporary foreign art such as Beuys, Braque, Caulfield, Gottlieb, Picasso, Reinhardt, Vaughan and many others. While Gordon Lambert has fruitfully collected many works by foreign artists, he also has accumulated a collection of Irish artists work by the likes of Robert Ballagh, Eilis O'Connell and Colin Middleton all of which chosen by himself personally. The collection is a comprehensive one of Irish

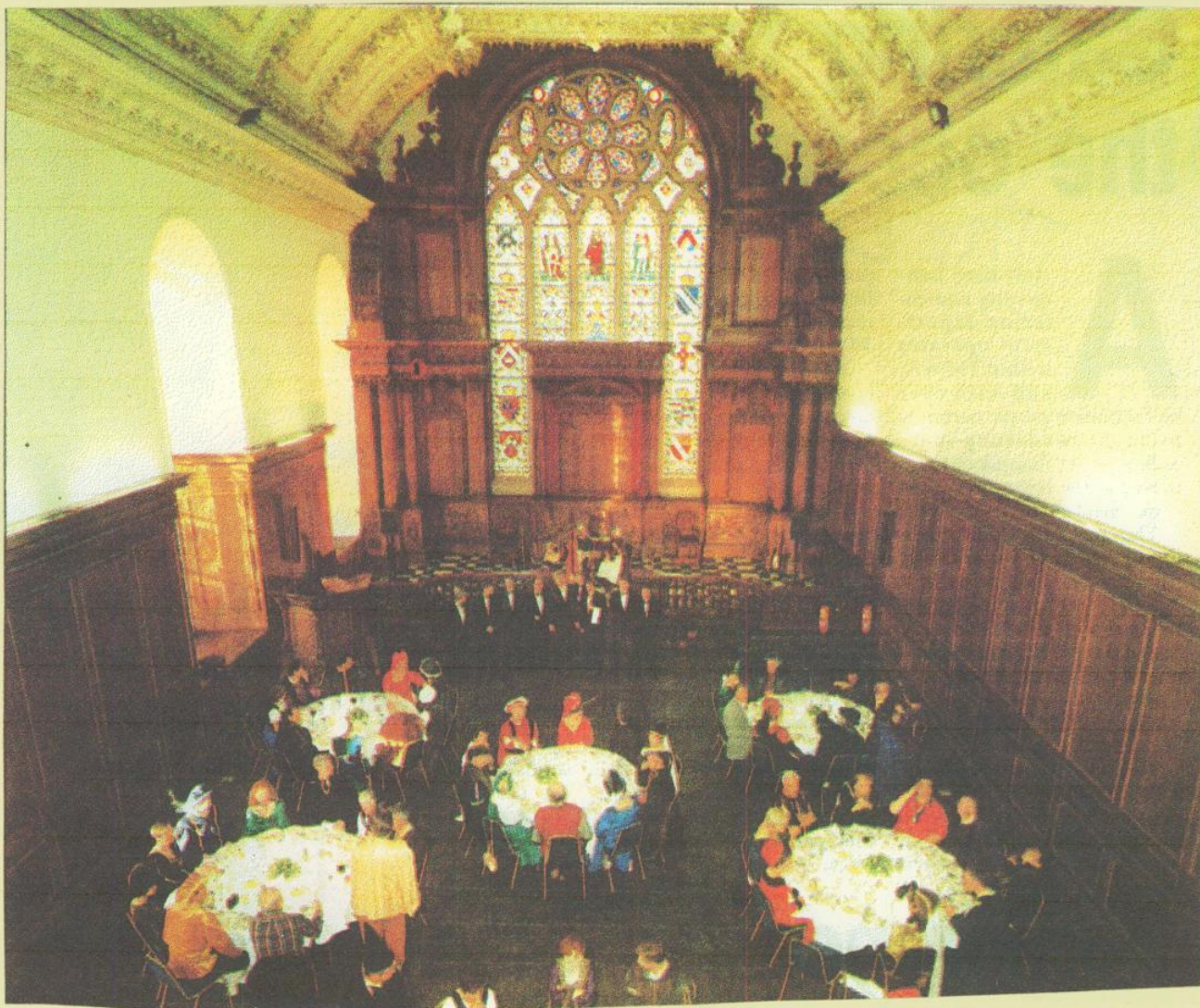


Figure 13 - Baroque Room used for functions

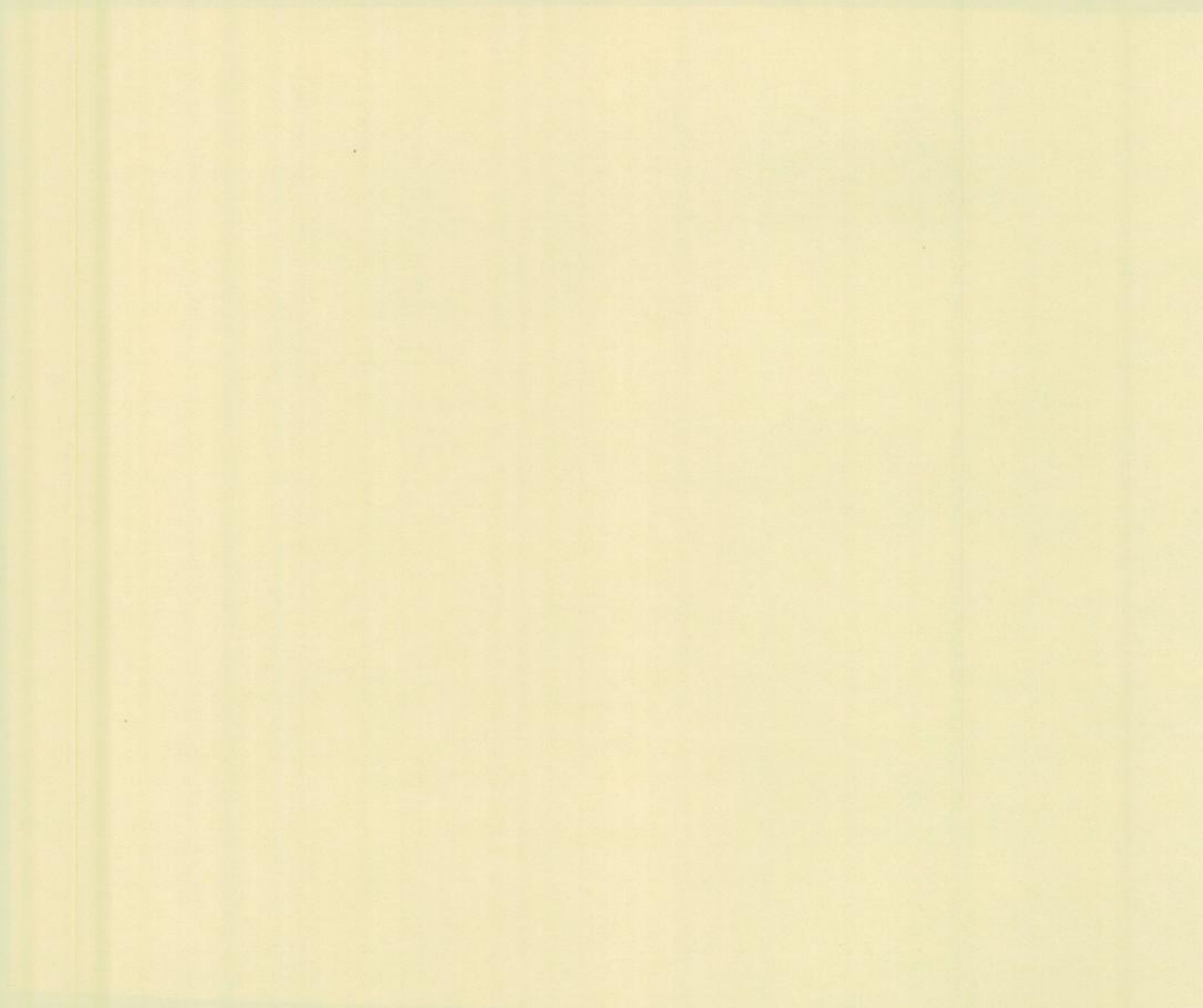
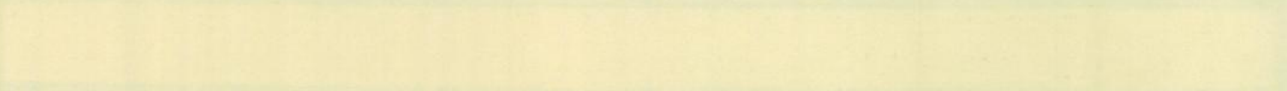
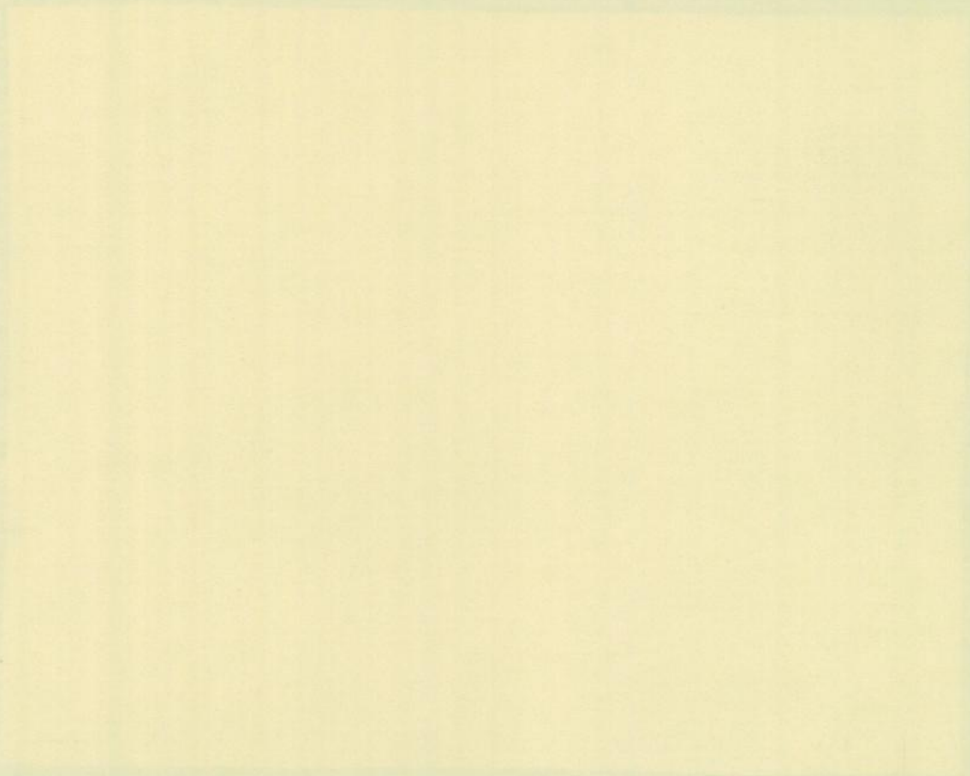




Figure 14 - Great Hall used for banquets and functions



contemporary art. As far as I am concerned, Gordon Lambert has definitely done Dublin and Ireland a service by enabling the public to view such a collection.

During the decade of the 1980's the Royal Hospital was transformed and altered in a variety of ways. The building was magnificently restored to its former glory, for this the Irish were awarded with a Nostra Medal of outstanding achievement. Also the nation acquired a wonderful building and surrounds that are immersed in history.

After the restoration was completed in 1984, the public were impressed by the conservation work that took place and, also, were inquisitive as to what the future of the building would be. The decision to use part of the building as the Centre for Culture and the Arts was no doubt an exciting initiative but in reviewing the exhibitions such as, the The Bog Exhibition I would have to comment that they were not successful. As the Centre for Culture and the Arts, infrequent music events and occasional exhibitions were staged in the building. But these activities were haphazard and varied in their aims, they were unsure of what exactly they were trying to achieve. Thus these various activities failed to bring the Royal Hospital "back to life" with the intensity that it demanded and warranted.

In concluding this Chapter it is my belief that there was not enough thought and study put into the actual use of this magnificent building. There was a lack of appreciation and knowledge of the actual history of the building's fabric. There was also a lack in the appreciation of the cost of restoration and the transformation of the building. For the project plans to be fully realised the layout of the exhibition area of the Royal Hospital should have been better planned and more appropriately designed. Its use as a sub-department of the National Museum or a Museum to pay homage to the original military Hospital were amongst the proposals for the Royal Hospital's use. I believe that the building is more suited to the display of artefacts such as found in the National Museum and don't think that the Centre for Arts and Culture was a success in stimulating awareness of culture and the arts.

In itself the restoration between 1980 and 1984 was a resounding and truly successful achievement. The locating of the Centre of Culture and the Arts within the Royal Hospital diminished and restricted the use of the building. The building required a more definite role, in order to acquire a more important meaning and status. In John Olley's analysis of the Royal Hospital he states that the Museum

"has a role to play in the capital and society, one that will promote and stimulate Irish life and culture. A building of such high status has to live, to breathe, to grow, to acquire layers of meaning and importance for the nation otherwise it is clinically dead without heart, soul or mind. "

(Olley, 1991: pp 70)

I believe John Olley summarises in a few sentences the role the Royal Hospital has to maintain and how important it was in deciding the use of the building in the future.

The next Chapter deals with the transition of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham into the Irish Museum of Modern Art and how this decision was negotiated and finally instigated.

footnote (1)

The West Gate Tower at Kilmainham was designed by Francis Johnston and originally stood on the quays, but when Kingsbridge station (Hueston Station) was built the Great Southern and Western railway moved it, at their own expense, due to the increases in the flow of traffic.

footnote(2)

Sisk and Son Ltd are local contractors and builders and were given the task of restoring the fabric of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham

footnote (3)

Europa Nostra Medal is awarded by the International Federation of Associations for the Protection of Europe's Cultural and National Heritage.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPTER TWO - The Planning, Development and Managing of the Irish Museum of Modern Art

This Chapter discusses the transformation of the newly restored Royal Hospital Kilmainham into The Irish Museum of Modern Art. The focus of the Chapter is concerned with the quick decision and the lack of public involvement, when the then Taoiseach, Mr Charles Haughey announced that the Museum of Modern Art was to be placed in the Royal Hospital.

With this impetuous decision, there was a re-election of the Board of Directors, and a new overall Director was sought to continue the programme of concerts, banquets, recitals and exhibitions. In instigating Charles Haughey's quest to create a new Museum of Modern Art, much disruption to the original restored fabric was involved. These alterations and the funding that was involved to organise the scheme are discussed. Also the architect, Shay Cleary's scheme for the transition of the Royal Hospital are discussed. This Chapter will also analyse the cost of the transition and problems involved in gaining funding to acquire artworks for the Museum.

The cost of restoring the Royal Hospital Kilmainham was estimated at 21 million pounds, courtesy of the Irish tax payer. Since 1978, when the plans for the building's restoration were first put forward, Government's thinking has been muddled as to what precisely the uses of the site should be.

Before the general public knew of the new Museums existence an advisory committee had assembled to negotiate the possible location of the Irish Museum of Modern Art in the newly refurbished Royal Hospital Kilmainham. The members of the committee were under the chairmanship of Padraig O' h Uiginn, the then secretary of Department of the Taoiseach. The committee included the Taoiseach's art adviser Anthony Cronin and Noel Le Chenu, the principal architect of the Office of Public Works. The committee also included Raymond Keavey deputy Director of the National Gallery, Patrick Murphy the chairperson of ROSC, art critic Dorothy Walker and Gordon Lambert whose collection of modern

and contemporary art fromed the nucleus of the new Gallery's Collection.

In 1985, the original interdepartmental committee envisaged that the Royal Hospital Kilmainham was suitable for the display of "silver, glass, jewellery and other such decorative objects from the National Museum"(Irish Times, 27-7-1989). It was discussed that the rooms of the Royal Hospital were of a correct scale for the displaying of such artefacts (Irish Times, 27-7-1989).

The scheme to alter the Royal Hospital into a Museum of Modern Art was announced, out of the blue, by the then Taoiseach, Charles Haughey's Department in October 1987. A sum of £500,000 was also reserved from the National Lottery early in 1988. Under the original plans of the government the Modern Art Museum was to be located in "Stack A", a surviving early 19th Century warehouse on the Custom House docks site. "Stack A" had several advantages. It was in a central location, it could be readily converted into a flexible Gallery space and it also would have been located in an ideal position to attract sponsorship from international business located in the area. The docklands in which "Stack A" is located are part of a structural development project which already has incorporated the restoration of the Point Depot. The Point Depot is now a venue for concerts and perfromances. A new financial centre has also been erected on the same location. It would have been ideal therefore. — ?

The decision to locate the Museum in the Royal Hospital fell upon Charles Haughey, Anthony Cronin and Padraig O' h Uiginn who was powerful secretary to the Taoiseach's Department. All of whom decided that the Gallery should be located in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 27-6-1989).

An advisory committee was fromed under the chairmanship of Padraig O' h Uiginn to advise what changes were required and how the building was to be adapted to accommodate modern art. However the committee was not asked to examine the relative

merits of "Stack A" and the Royal Hospital as a potential Modern Art Museum. It just had to accept Kilmainham as the new site. The report that was produced on the creation of the new Museum of Modern Art has never been published and this perhaps helps to explain the lack of public debate about the proposal. One of the primary functions of the Government Department and the advisory committee was to elect a representative Board to investigate how the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and the future Irish Museum of Modern Art was to be run.

The Board elected consisted of fourteen people. The chairperson of the Board being the "travel guru", Gillian Bowler. The Board consisted of some of the original advisory committee such as the art critic Dorothy Walker, the writer and arts adviser Anthony Cronin, as well as new members such as Micheal Murphy, the broadcaster with RTE and the artist Louis Le Broquy. The Board also had two architects as members, these being Shelley Mc Namara and John Meagher. The Board members meet every six weeks, to discuss and set the policies for the staff and also to report to the Government about the progress of the Museum.

On commencing, the function of the Board was to elect a Director of the "new" Irish Musuem of Modern Art. The Taoiseach's Office announced that the Museum was to open during Dublin's inauguration as European Cultural Capital, in 1991. The Board members hastened to elect a Director for the new Museum. The Museum's Directors tasks, also involved being the Chief Executive of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. This prompted the Sunday Times press release that stated that the Director

"Will continue it's successful programme of concerts, banquets and other entertainments. It will, therefore, require a Museum Director of more than usually competent administrative abilities, together with real standing in the Irish and international art world.... "

(Dunne, Sunday Times, 11-5-1990)



Figure 15 - Identity for museum



Figure 16 - Identity for museum

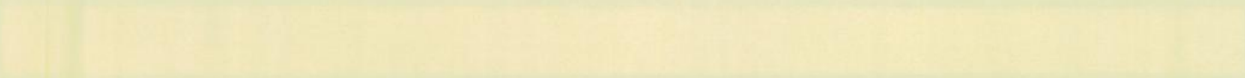
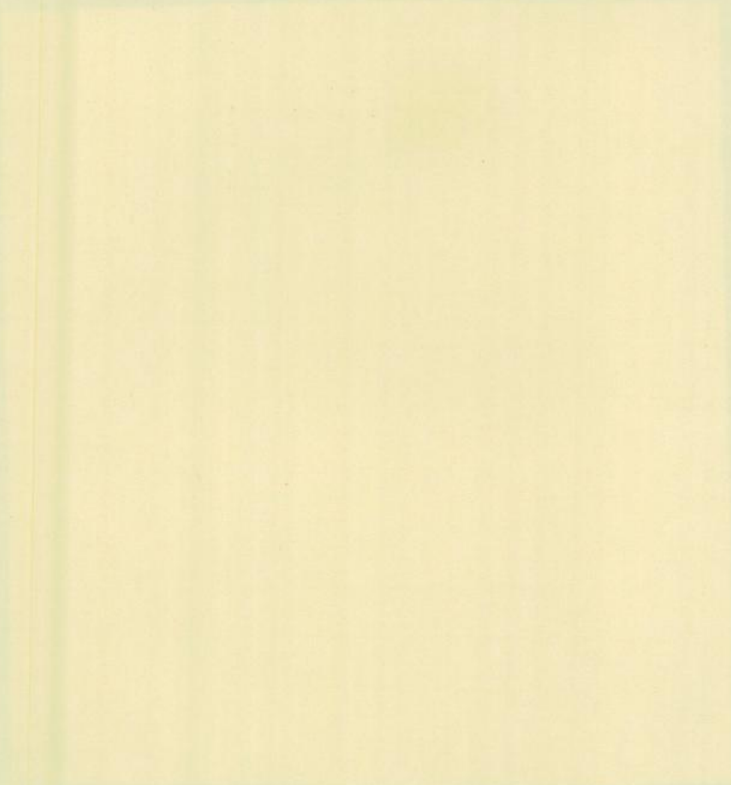
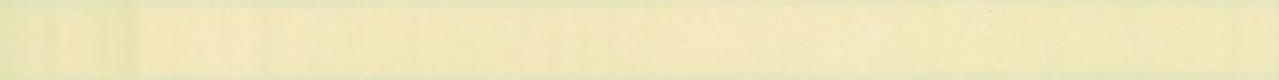
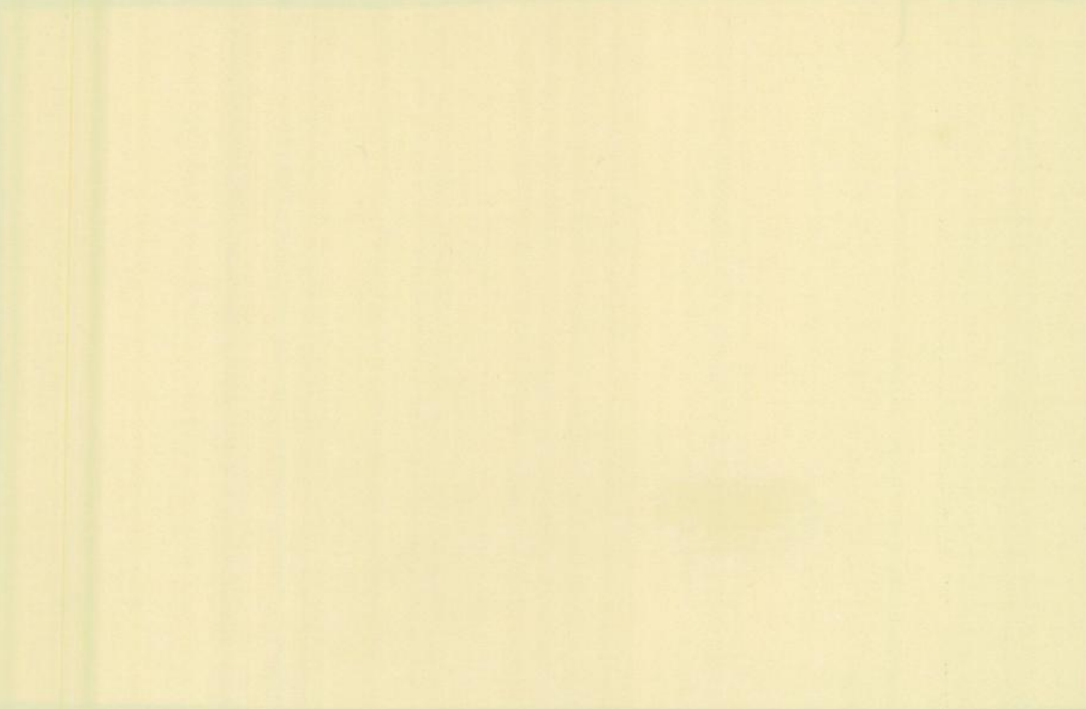


Figure 17 - Identity for museum

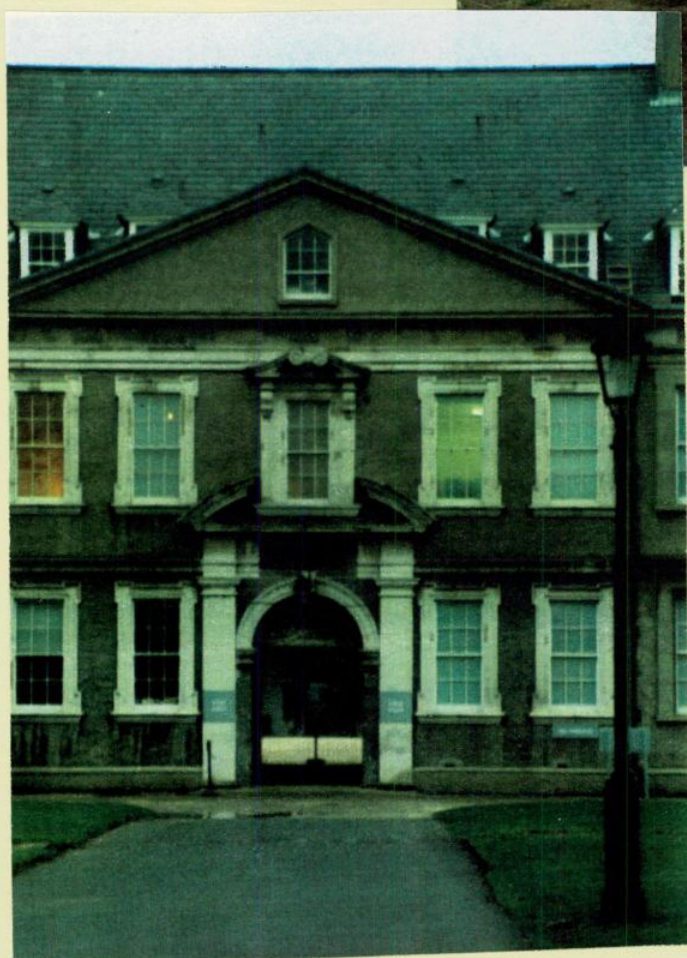


Figure 18 - Identity for museum

Ironically, the Museum's search for a Director came at a time when Dublin's main contemporary arts venue, the Douglas Hyde Gallery was also searching for a Director. Pat Murphy the previous Director had taken up a position as Director of Philadelphia's Institute of the contemporary arts.

Various ideal candidates were considered and nominated for the position. Among them, the Director of the National College of Art and Design, Mr Noel Sheridan. He possessed the essential qualifications and extensive experience of the Irish and International art world, administrative skills and a diversity of talents. However he was out of the country on a sabbatical. Other possibilities included Dorothy Walker, Paul O'Reilly and Siobhan Barry. Peter Murray the curator at Corks Crawford Gallery also had suitable qualifications. He was rejected as he was and is an ardent critic of the Royal Hospital 's suitability to house a Gallery of Modern Art (Dunne, Sunday Times, 11-5-1990).

Eventually after much debate and discussion, Declan Mc Gonagle of Derry's Orchard Gallery was elected to become Director. He was the founder of the Orchard Gallery, which rapidly established itself as a venue with international credibility. He was also the Director of London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, during the early 1980's but returned to Derry in 1986.

Declan Mc Gonagle took on the very difficult task of administering and planning the Museum. The proposal to establish an Irish Museum of Modern Art, had not exactly been greeted with universal acclaim. Arguments arose because the Museum's outline and role initially seemed vague.

Upon appointing Declan Mc Gonagle as the new Director, Curators were then selected along with a number of staff. Brenda Mc Parland was appointed curator and Ruth Ferguson as the assistant curator. A Public Relations team was set in motion. It was this team who created the title "The Museum of Modern Art" and fromulated the graphic design package which aimed to create a cohesive identity for the new Museum. (See Figures 15-18). This identity strategy

included the placement of grey name plates to direct visitors around the Museum. The plates are made from grey stone, with plain, unornate white graphics which, in my opinion, do not fit in with the overall aesthetics of the building and in particular clash with the successful restoration work of the early 1980's.

In 1988 the brief for a scheme relating to the architectural changes, was drawn up by the building subcommittee of the Museum Board in consultation with the Office of Public Works. The Board members elected the award winning architect Shay Cleary to execute plans for the necessary alterations to the fabric.

The Office of Public Works had a varied role in relation to the development and the transformation of Kilmainham Hospital into the Irish Museum of Modern Art. They were appointed as contract managers for the scheme. The Board members who appointed the contractors, gave advice on administration of the project. They also advised on the budget and the time span in which the project had to be completed. The scheme involved the adaptation of the East, West and South ranges of the building. The North range which houses the Chapel, the Great Hall and the Masters Quarters were not part of the project. The scheme also involved the change to the South entrance of the building to create the foyer of the Museum. The Office of Public Works, as the Representative of the Minister for Finance, monitored the design of the scheme to ensure it took account of the historical and architectural character of the building.

"The main emphasis of the scheme was to strike a balance between the essential characteristics of the building and the requirements of use, which would open up almost all of the building to the public on a permanent basis and to attract people and encourage them to visit it"

(Public Relations, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1991)

In October 1990, work commenced on the fitting out of the accommodation for the Irish Museum of Modern Art. It is hard to believe that after the meticulous restoration of the early 1980's, the

Royal Hospital underwent a further transformation. The placement of the Museum within the 17th Century building became a subject of much controversy with many views being expressed by eminent critics both for and against the changes that took place.

Mr Peter Murray, the Director of the Crawford Gallery in Cork was one of the few detractors prepared to be quoted in the papers. In a newspaper article he stated that,

"The building has tremendous historic character and to interfere with this in any way - as they've done by taking down walls in five rooms to house part of Gordon Lambert's collection - would be unjustifiable. It's much better fitted, with its sequence of rooms along broad corridors, to showing a whole range of items from the National Museum".

(See Figures 19-21). He went on to state in the article that if

"The Royal Hospital had been intended to be an Art Gallery it might have been possible while the restoration for the 1980's was under way to create larger spaces by not restoring two or three ranges of soldier's rooms"

(Irish Times, 27-7-1989)

It is clear from Peter Murray's recommendations that he prefers a Gallery that is not cordoned off into small individual rooms, but one with an overall view. I am inclined to agree with Peter Murray's views. The new Museum possesses small rooms that are haphazardly positioned. The layout is confusing to the viewer, and the small entrances to the rooms do not help in creating an overall look or feel to the exhibits.

In comparison, the layout of the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Parnell Square is less haphazard. The Gallery consists of large individual rooms that are wide and divided by a mainstream corridor.

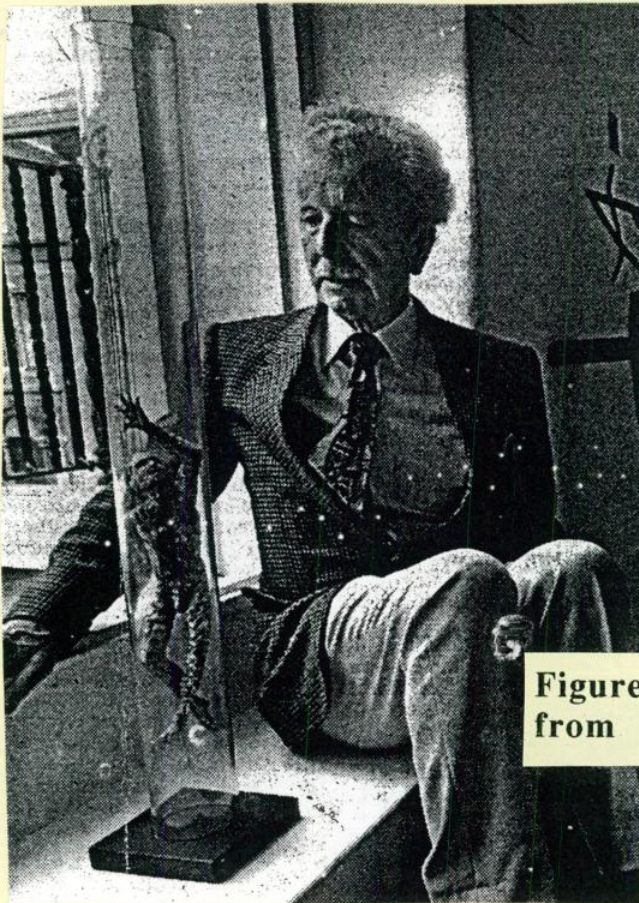
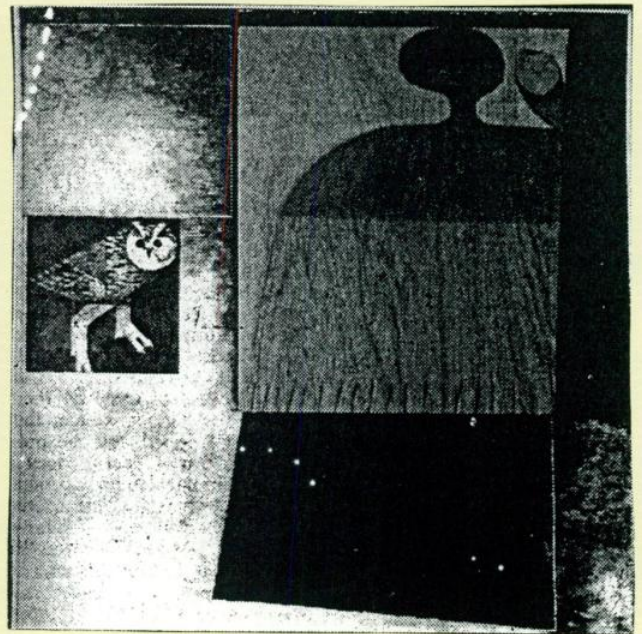


Figure 19 - Gordon Lambert



**Figure 20 - Painting by Colin Middleton
from the Gordon Lambert Collection**



Figure 21 - Layout for Gordon Lambert Collection

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Handwritten text, possibly a name or title, in cursive script.

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The layout of the Irish Museum of Modern Art imbues a feeling of barrenness, as if the Museum lacks something. The long corridors are naked looking and are definitely not wide enough for gaining a good overall observation of the exhibition space. (See Figures 22-24). I also agree with Peter Murray's statement that it would have been more beneficial if the alterations had taken place alongside the restoration work of the 1980's. I believe that scheme was unjustifiable in removing the fireplaces in the original soldier rooms as they would have enhanced the exhibition layout. They would have acted as a connection to the exterior of the Museum and would have retained a link with the Museum's heritage. It would have also been far more beneficial if the individual rooms had been enlarged by connecting two or three rooms and by removing the partitioning walls. This would have created a large exhibiting space, like the rooms to be found in the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art. The layout of the Municipal Gallery, is seen as being pleasant and easier to view though this way of creating a larger space may have caused many problems with conservationists.

On the other hand, Mr Theo Mc Nab the head of the Fine Art Department in the National College of Art and Design, believes that the placing of ^{the} Irish Museum of Modern Art in the Royal Hospital was essential as Ireland needed such an institution. He fully praised the restoration work of the early 1980's and the further transformation work that was involved in creating the Museum. It is his belief that the Royal Hospital could have been left disregarded and possibly could have been demolished. He referred to similar Modern Art Museums and galleries in Europe, where they also have been placed into similar buildings from previous centuries noting how successful these galleries and Museums had been. In referring to the layout, Theo Mc Nab seemed quite enthusiastic about placing art works in small room spaces as he felt that they created an ideal setting where it is easier to focus on an individual art work.(Mc Nab, January 1994).



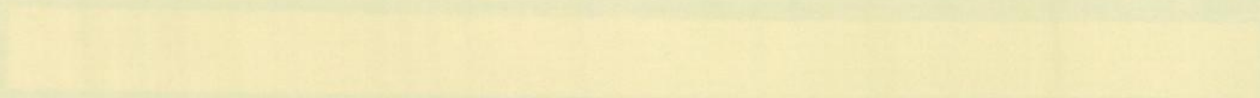
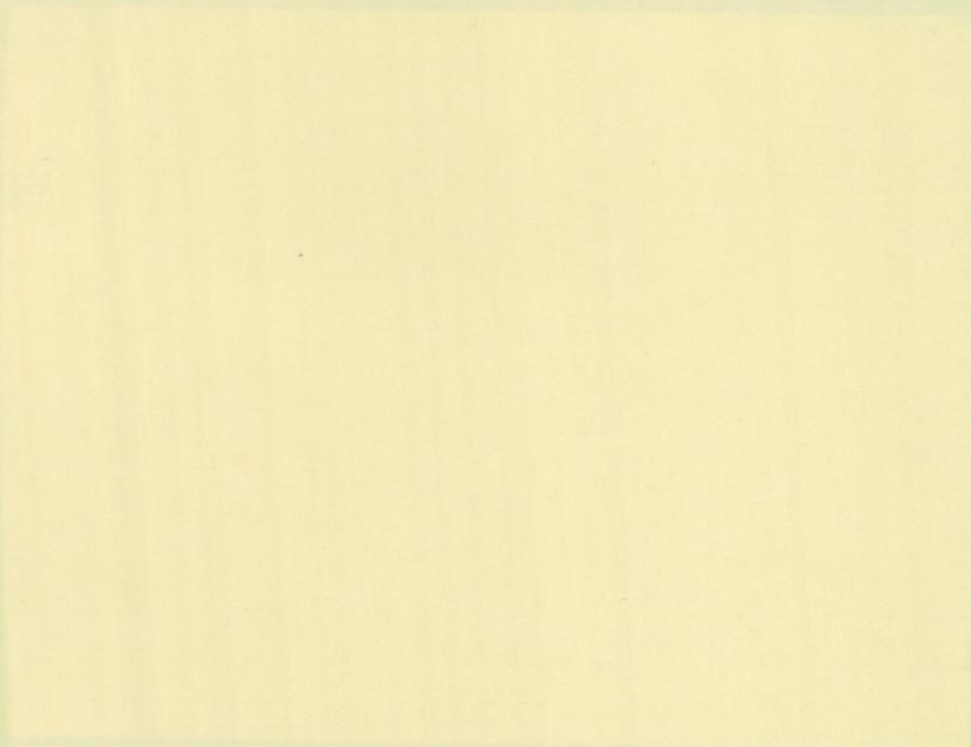
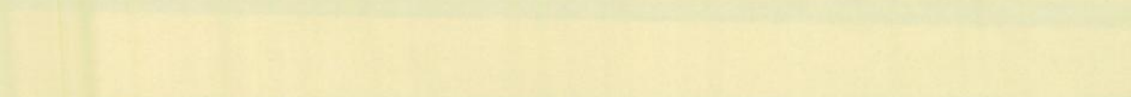
Figure 22 - Layout of corridor



Figure 23 - Layout of passages connecting rooms



Figure 24 - Narrow passages sub-dividing the rooms



After the interview that took place, with Theo Mc Nab, I reviewed my initial ideas and thoughts about the layout and the structure. I also started to question what a Museum of Modern Art requires. The restoration of the 1980's was truly magnificent but I became very sceptical about the transition and the alterations that occurred to the building in 1990. It is my belief that the surrounding area of Kilmainham and the grounds of the Royal Hospital are so steeped in history that the placement of a historical exhibit would have suited the area more than the placement there of such a modern collection. I believe something less contemporary would fit in better with the general historical ambience of the area. For example the collection from the National Museum would have intensified the feeling of history both inside the building and out. The small sized rooms would have been enhanced by glass displays and the rooms are of correct size for the displaying of artefacts such as silver, glass, jewellery and other objects from the National Museums collection.

In 1990, the conversion from stately almshouse to suites of white walled, grey floored spaces was rapidly accomplished. The alterations involved were a challenge and the Board envisaged that this would be done with as little interference to the original fabric as possible.

The scheme set up by the architect Shay Cleary and the Office of Public Works involved the adaptations of the East, West, and South ranges. The South range was where the new entrance to the Museum was to be positioned. The new entrance or foyer was built to act as a focus point, for the new Museum. The scheme also incorporated the three ranges that were originally the soldiers bedrooms. These repetitive rooms consisted of large 17th Century doors and fireplaces. The rooms forming the galleries on the first floor were a central determinant of Shay Cleary's plans. As stated, the original rooms had a chimney stack and a fireplace that were removed in the renovation to create adjacent wall spaces for the exhibiting of canvases and relevant art works. The removal of the fireplaces was the cause of much alarm ^{to conservationists} as "fireplaces - some fifty in

all, were removed and chimney stacks and breasts were blocked "(Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990).

Amongst the worst fears of conservationists was the removal of original 17th Century doors which were originally positioned onto the the corridors. (See Figure 25). In all three ranges of the soldiers quarters, the doors were removed and the doorways were blocked up and concealed. Also internal windows which looked onto the corridors were removed and the brickwork underneath was demolished to create new doorways.

In my view there was not enough study and in depth knowledge accumulated about the importance of the structural layout of a Museum. In blocking the original doorways new passages were formed to link each room. The problem relating to the new passages, is that one cannot get an overall view of the exhibition. The passages linking the small rooms are also too narrow and seem never ending. As Brigid Mc Laughlin has stated,

"There is a major absence of open spaces within the Irish Museum of Modern Art and artists have grown accustomed to cavernous spaces and often the hanging space of a particular work is as important as the work itself. Large wall spaces do not occur in the Royal Hospital. "

(Mc Laughlin "Jellet to Jetelov - It's All Here":Irish Independent, 25-2-1991)

Today, the exhibiting galleries are situated on the first floor and extend around the three sides of the courtyard. The grey linoleum covered corridors are airy but there is always a stark, cold feeling when manoeuvring from the rooms.

The most radical and permanent alteration, was the creation of a new double height foyer. The foyer is positioned in the south Range and consists of a cascaded steel and glass staircase that links the ground an) the first floors (See Figures 26 and 27). In initiating this, five bays of the arcade were glazed in to provide a more public



Figure 25 - Original corridors before transformation: with the original doors and the internal windows in place, the

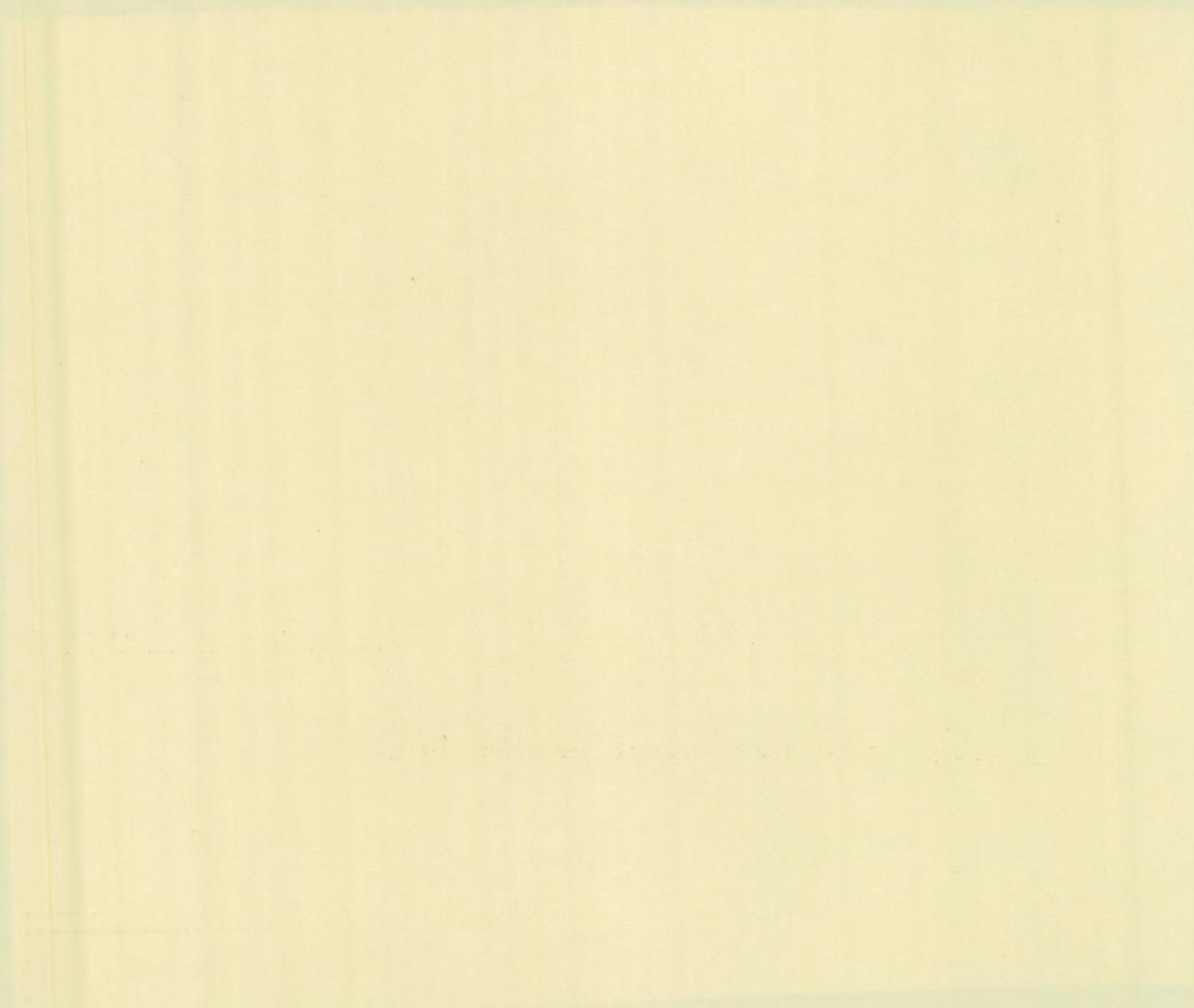
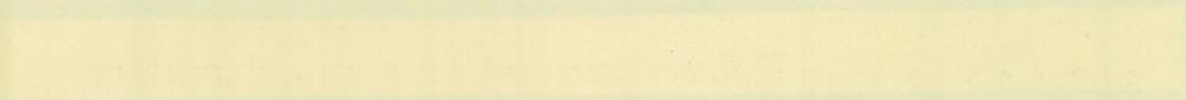
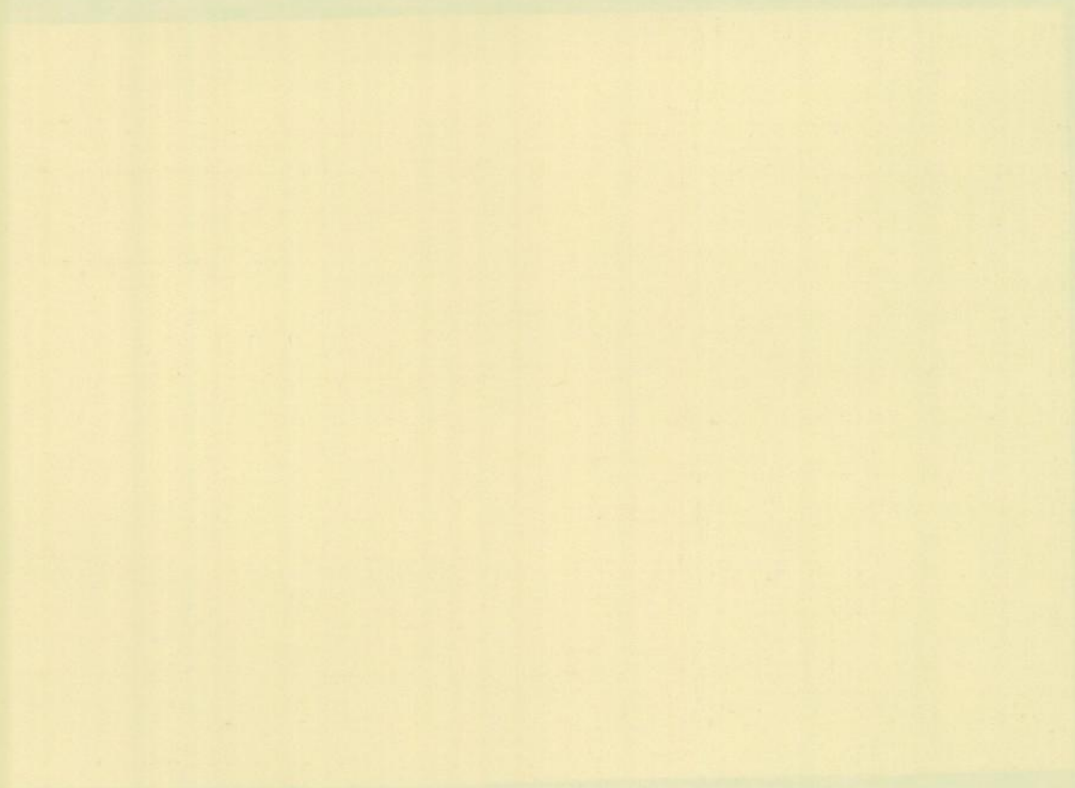
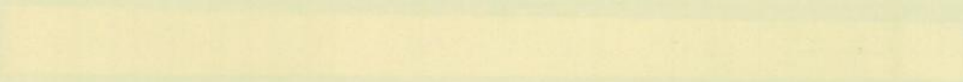
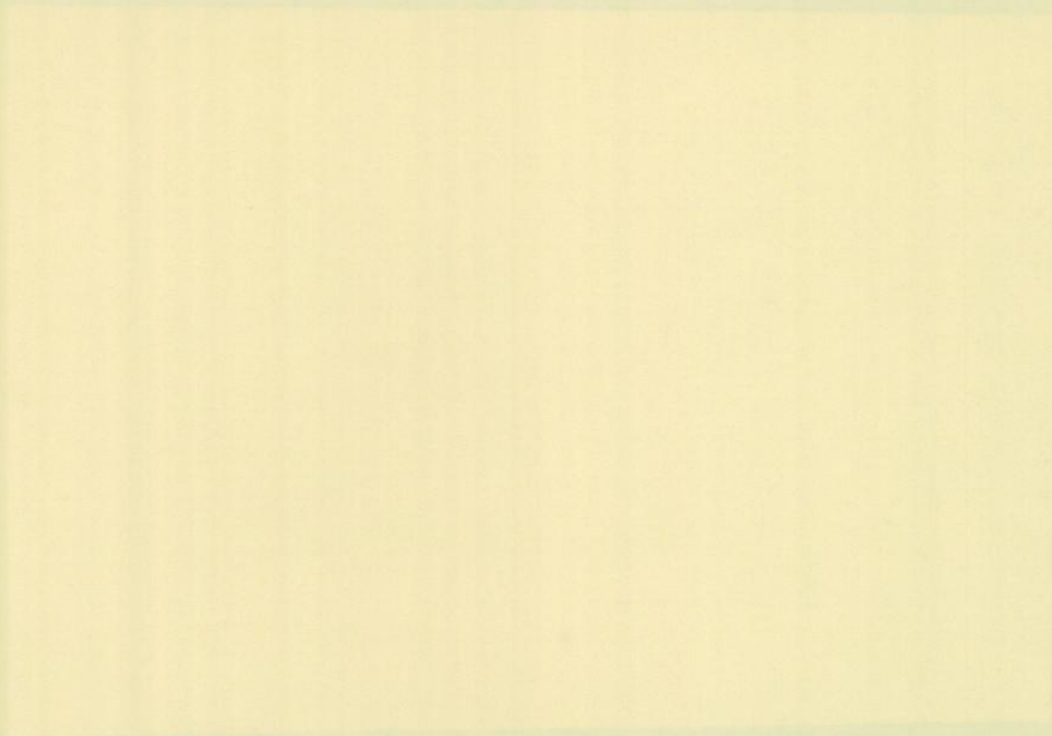




Figure 26 - The layout of the foyer



Figure 27 - Staircase in foyer



prestigious entrance to the new Museum. The glazing of the foyer consists of a pronounced grid of the charcoal grey aluminium frame which causes a glum and austere, numbing feeling as you enter the Museum.

The main argument I would have against the foyer, is the stark contrast between the architecture of the 17th Century building and it's ultra modern look. Also upon entering the Museum courtyard from the East or West entrance, it is noticeable that the glazed foyer has ruined the strong sense of perspective that was originally to be found on entering the courtyard. It has created an imbalance to the character and domestic scale and acts as an interruption to the overall view of the courtyard. The entrance hall, clashes with the original historical fabric, which does not reflect Shay Cleary's plans for the foyer as stated in his proposal for the Public Relations literature. He wished that " a new entrance hall is located in the South Range which is to be axially related to the Great Hall. By it's position it maintains the inherent balance of the overall architectural composition. (Public Relations Literature, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1991)

The creation of the foyer involved the demolishing of three of the soldiers rooms on the first level, as well as two rooms either side of the original entrance on the ground floor. The foyer also necessitated the glazing in of five bays of the open arcade around the courtyard. (See Figure 28). But Shay Cleary in his plan and scheme is quoted as stating, "the change of entry seems entirely natural and effortless because of it's deference to the existing structural circumstance" (Public Relations Literature, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1991) He furthers this quote by stating that the glazing in and the simplicity of the foyer emphasised the striking repetition of the windows opposite. In addition to the foyer the entrance was to be externally emphasised by a row of mast - like steel poles on which pennants would be mounted. The portico was to reinforce the buildings principle axis and to act as a signal to both the entrance and the contemporary nature of the Museum content. The National Heritage Council opposed this alteration and the plans were dropped from the scheme. The portico would have

caused a contrast to the carved tympanum that presides over the entrance^{of} the South Range and the Modern rooms beneath.

The courtyard also was transformed from a grass covered to a paved courtyard (See Figure 29). A delegation of people regarded the paving in with compacted gravel as a radical alteration. It is my view that the courtyard would originally have been a parade ground. Now it is a large space suitable for exhibiting, which can be viewed from the windows of the above galleries. According to Shay Cleary "the courtyard had been changed to a rolled surface, with some markings indicating the entrance hall. It will be the first room of the Gallery to be used for sculpture and installation" (Public Relations, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1991)

On entering the interior of the Museum foyer from the courtyard there are grey sleek desks that look like they have been placed in the haphazard fashion (See Figure 26). There is also a large sign depicting the current exhibitions layout. The floor is covered in concrete of a dark grey diamond pattern which adds to the already austere grey image. In assessing and analysing the changes in the establishment of the Museum it is my belief that the first floor space is too narrow. As already stated earlier the Museum is subdivided in a way which does not portray Modern art effectively. The lack of continuity between the rooms also creates a fragmented view. The individual rooms are white in colour and have white roller blinds on the windows. In assessing the lighting of the individual rooms and the effect of the white walls and blinds, I believe they combine to cause a hazed effect. The effect causes a distortion to the viewers perception of the artwork.

It has been argued that the Royal Hospital itself was originally a work of art which has been damaged in order to house other works of art. According to one architect the Royal Hospital " is worth much more than all the "art" they can pack into it" (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990). Conversely, Shay Cleary maintains that the Irish Museum of Modern Art project "takes all its values from the Royal Hospital itself, with the approach, the adaptation pays due deference to the existing building both formally and structurally"



Figure 28 - Glazed in foyer and gravel courtyard



Figure 29 - The Great Hall, clock and gravel courtyard

(Public Relations, Irish Museum of Modern Art, 1991). Shay Cleary also believed that the restoration "aesthetically balances the relationship between the old and the new" and he sees this as a positive visual advantage.

However in summarizing these two views, Shay Cleary's is one that the old and the new compliment each other. He fails to mention that by removing the fireplaces, doors and much of the original internal structure, one is left with almost an entirely new structure. It is only by looking at the outside of the building that we are aware of it's age. Once inside, our senses are dramatically pointed towards the modern look of the interior. Why then does he postulate the dramatic effects of the old and new complimenting each other, when he has removed the classical interior, to be replaced with a fashionable concept of a modern art Gallery? Luke Dodd shares these views by stating that

"The alteration of a large section of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham for a Museum is a disgrace as it unnecessarily radically altered the specific character of the most important 17th Century building in the country"

(Luke Dodd, Circa no. 59, Sept;/Oct 1991)

It will be left to history to decide whether the decision to locate the Museum of Modern Art in the Royal Hospital was a fortuitous one. The alterations to the exterior of this building which had been listed for preservation caused much controversy. Dublin Corporation's planners were not consulted about the scheme, as they should have been under the section 84 of the 1963 Planning Act. (See Dublin Corporation Planning Act, 1963). This Act states that before undertaking the construction or expansion of any building a state authority has to consult the planning authority, to such extent as may be determined by the Minister. If any objections that may be raised by the planning authority are not resolved, the Minister should be consulted. The state authority being "any authority, member of the Government, a member of the Office of Public Works or the Irish Land Commission". The Office of Public Works

attributed that there was no need to inform the Corporation and that it was not necessary for them to consult the planning authority. (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990)

The Office of Public Works also were confronted by the National Heritage Council about the alterations. The Office of Public Works and the Museum Board insisted that the Council was "fully consulted" and that they had only objected to the portico and that they supported the scheme. But the drawings shown to the National Heritage Council, only related the the South range and they had assumed that the East and West ranges were unaffected. In reply to this the Council stated that "the meeting we had with the Office of Public Works and the architect was not a structured meeting. Various drawings were put up on the walls and people said whether they liked this bit and whether they didn't like that bit. " (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990)

The National Heritage Council declared that a series of recommendations were made and that they were disgusted that these were not followed through. Ms Gillian Bowler the Chairperson for the Museum Board explained that the reason for the lack of public consultation or even the Press Launch of the plans, was due to a lack of time, because the work had to be completed by the end of March 1991. (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990)

Mr Mc Gonagle defended the project and stated that it was commonplace within Europe for palaces and stately homes to be converted into Museums and that the Royal Hospital had been

" Continually changing as a building. He denied that there was any deliberate intention to conceal plans. Referring to the doors, windows and fireplaces, which were removed, he stated that they had been placed in storage. His belief being that they wouldn't have served the purpose they were intended for if they had remained in place. "

(Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990)

A spokesman for the Office of Public Works stated that in 1984 a full scale Press Conference unveiled that a £20 million restoration scheme for Dublin Castle was planned. The scheme involved major demolition and construction. He further stated that the Office of Public Works observation was that the alteration of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham involved only minor adaptations. He stated that a "Government decision was taken on a particular use of the building and it was our job to implement that effectively". (Mc Donald, Irish Times, 10-12-1990). The money that was used to fund the new Museum of Modern Art was provided by the National Lottery by the Department of An Taoiseach. The balance was provided by the Office of Public Works.

The then chairperson Mr Ciaran Mc Gonagle of the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art was one of the chief critics of the plan to site the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Kilmainham. In a statement he declared that, given the financial problems of public institutions such as the National Library and the National Museum, it was difficult to see where the required funding for the Kilmainham Gallery was to be found (Nesbitt, Irish Times, 16-11-1989). There was an initial allocation of £250,000 for acquisitions but this is not a large enough amount of money to invest into the purchasing of modern art. Francise Cunningham shares this view and stated that "it is a figure that could only purchase a few inches of a Picasso and with a budget like this a Museum can scarcely hope to offer any kind of perspective on art from the 20th Century onwards" (Cunningham, Sunday Business Post, 19-5-1991).

The National Lottery money amounting to £500,000 was solely allocated as a capital grant to convert the Royal Hospital, into the Irish Museum of Modern Art. The scheme which covered the conversion and the necessary instalment of lights and temperature gauging facilities eventually amounted to over £1 million pounds. The then secretary of the Taoiseach's Department, Mr Padraig O'hUiginn also recommended an annual budget of one £160,000. The National Lottery funded the Gallery's conversion and tax concessions were given to those individuals and companies who donated works of art.

In 1989 the primary purpose for the Gallery was to acquire and to exhibit a permanent collection of modern and international art. But the allocation of £250, 000 to make a purchases of quality international modern art was out of the question. In truth, works of art appear in the collection due to donations by for example the Australian artist Sir Sidney Nolan. His' donation of works to the Gallery and Gordon Lambert's Collection and also Brian O' Doherty the distinguished artist/critic who lives in America helped give substance to the Museum. Without a truly massive bequest, Ireland does not have the finances to create a really good National Collection. Though most of the acquisitions for the past 3 years have been Irish given the small annual budget of £100, 000 which would not stretch to the purchase of internationally renowned works. The collection now numbers 400 works amongst which 300 are from the Lambert Collection. Whereas the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, in Charlemont House has an Irish and international representation of over 2000 artworks.

The collection of 400 artworks includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints, photographs, photoworks, and installation video works. The collection also includes contemporary pieces by some of the most interesting artists working in Ireland and the world today. Other works are drawn from earlier periods in the 20th Century through long term loans, such as works from the Lafrenz Collection in Germany, from the Carrols Company and donations from individual collectors. such as Helen O'Malley, Roelefs, and the Irish American Cultural Institute (1). Today, the Museum has a rapidly growing library of thousands of catalogues and publications which are accessible to students, artists and the general public.

This Chapter has dealt with the transformation of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham into the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the discussion has involved a wide range of topics such as the layout, the architects scheme, the restoration funding and the acquisitions that the Museum has received.

It is my belief that the Royal Hospital definitely has a role to play in the Irish art but not under the title the Irish Museum Of Modern Art. It was an over ambitious idea which could not possibly be envisaged. Apart from the badly designed layout, Ireland is not in a financial state to acquire a high standard Collection as seen in foreign Museums. Ireland does not have a large enough population to contribute to the Museum whereas countries such as France have a large population and the money to give such institutions. I believe that the Royal Hospital Kilmainham should have been entitled "Institute for Art and Culture" as this would emphasise the public centred programmes and community based exhibitions to date.

When the Irish Museum of Modern Art opened it was clear that the world of art was also changing. These changes would have to be taken into account as the Museum itself developed. The development of the concept of what a Museum is and should do are dealt with in a more detailed account in the next Chapter. The Douglas Hyde Gallery and the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art are also described and considered particularly in comparison to the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

footnote (1)

During the period from 1935 to 1950 American born Helen O'Malley and her Irish husband, the late writer Eugene O'Malley, assembled a collection of contemporary Irish Art along with examples of distinguished European artists. These are currently on a permanent loan from the Irish cultural Institute on the generous behalf of Mrs O'Malley Roelefs.

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER THREE - A Past and Present Overview of a Museums Uses, Meanings and Possibilities

This Chapter introduces and discusses the importance of the layout and the meaning of the word "Museum". The significance of the communication between a Museum or Gallery with the general public is examined. The discussion concerns itself with funding, sponsorship and considers the financial demands of a Museum. It also analyses the people who visit Museums and the important work of a curator and of a Museum Director.

To further my analysis I also studied two other Museums located in central Dublin. In doing so I distinguished the inherent aims and structure of the two galleries. In relation to this I compared the two galleries with the Irish Museum of Modern Art, examining the layout, policies and the structure of each institution. In initiating this discussion, a brief history of the Museum and genre of Museum is discussed.

Originally during the 17th and 18th centuries there was a period of collecting artworks and artefacts by the ruling classes for their personal ownership. During the 19th Century many of these collections were transferred into public ownership and were made available and classified and this is how Museum came into being. Today the word Museum does not necessarily have to denote the collection of important and priceless possessions but now Museums are more varied and contain items such as "wax dummies" portraying famous celebrities or collections of war memorabilia. The type or genre of a Museum can vary from an art Museum to a cultural history Museum. All Museums have different justification for their activities and radically different conceptions of how to use and present their collections to the general public. The Museum also is conditioned with regard to factors such as public and private ownership and funding.

" The mode of installation the subtle messages that design or art works portray rely on the assembly and layout of a Museum. The layout can either aid or impede the

appreciation and understanding of a visual, cultural, social and political interest in the objects and stories exhibited in Museums"

(Wright, 1989, Page 129)

Up to twenty years ago, the National Museum in Dublin had remained relatively unchanged since its establishment in 1877. The layout of its artefacts reflected the traditional representation of the pieces that took place in the 19th Century Museum format. Despite the extension of subject matter, Museums are still being viewed in the traditional way. Although chronic underfunding in our country is probably the contributory factor, it shall be interesting how the National Museum shall be transformed when it is placed in Collins Barracks.

In January 1994, Mr Higgins the Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht administered the share out of the European structural funds to Ireland. The emphasis of the share out concentrated on specific projects with a tourism generative potential. The National Gallery, the National Museum and the National Library are the main institutions for the allocation of the money, this category also extends to the National Concert Hall, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the National Archives and the Chester Beatty Library. The National Concert Hall and the Irish Museum of Modern Art are to come under the Arts Council's advisory brief but funding for both of these and the Abbey Theatre will be set by the Minister on the Council's advice. The relocation of the National Museum to Collins Barracks is estimated to cost in the region of £64 to £65 million pounds (Fallon, Irish Times, 1-5-1994). If it is moved there shall be very little, if any, of the money left to fund the remaining institutions. This proves that financially Ireland cannot afford to administer all the required renovations funding and relocating.

In America the main duty of many Directors and of Curators in a Museum is to fund raise. This is increasingly becoming part of the economic reality of Modern life. On the other hand, European institutions are slower to accept and come to terms with this

method of funding. Resources such as sponsorship were, until recently regarded with distaste and suspicion. It was seen as part of the vulgar, commercial world of advertising, hype, publicity and Public Relations. Financial demands have grown where most European Governments proved unwilling and incapable of keeping up with demands. Galleries and Museums are now driven more and more to find alternative means of funding. Museums and galleries have been forced to come to terms with selling themselves, though publicity. This I believe helps the Museum financially and also creates an awareness of the Museum.

Financially most Irish galleries cannot possibly purchase a representative collection. The Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art is supported and sponsored by "ABN AMRO" bank in Ireland. The bank not only financially supports the Gallery but also provides an opportunity in assisting the promotion world-wide of the Hugh Lane Gallery and its magnificent collection of Irish and International art. The "ABN AMRO" Bank ascertains that it is important to develop close links both economically and culturally with the countries where the Bank has branches.

The question of private or public funding of an institution is critical. The policies of publicly financed institutions are as already stated in the 1994 share out, subject to the supervising Government agency. In turn, privately funded institutions such as the Hugh Lane Gallery reflect the predilections and interests of their supporters.

Apart from the financial aspects, the layout of a Museum is extremely important. As Daniel Soutif has observed

" As long as it shows things, the Museum must show itself showing... from the work outward, the Museum forms a multi-dimensional syntagm that begins at the frame of the painting or the base of the sculpture and continues with the wall and all its labels and decorations, the floor, the roof and so on up to and including the entire building"

(Hutchinson, 1991, pp 9)

The messages communicated through a Musuem do not necessarily have a predetermined content. In general Museums and their exhibits are morally neutral in principal but always make moral statements. In our society, Museums are involved in the task of bringing artistic events closer to the public. They carry out the social communicative activity of informing the public. One of the main problems encountered in Museums and galleries exhibiting artwork, is that the public is told little about the collections of work of art. Apart from better communications a Museum has to facilitate contact between the spectator by good organisation of the exhibiting material. There needs to be better communication between the Museum and the public. Art Museums such as the Irish Musuem of Modern Art tend to show an unconnected sequence of rooms of works with no explanation added. Apart from the artists name and title of the work, there is no explanation of what the artwork depicts or how the artist assembled the piece. For the general public and those who lead busy lives outside the confines of full time art history, It must at times seem as if there is an attempt to deliberately conceal meanings by offering hardly any clues and by not explaining the piece.

I believe that Irish Museum of Modern Art was established for the use of the general public. In following a policy of obscurity the Museum fails to communicate as much as they could or indeed should to the public. It could possibly be argued that by making things more obvious and supplying more information on artists and their motives that the Museum would then be "spoonfeeding" the public and by not handing things to people on a plate it means that the viewer has to solve and find out the reasons for themselves. In opposing this statement, I believe it is necessary to indicate what an artist is portraying and how the work was approached. As I believe people without an in-depth knowledge of Modern art, generally would see the work as a painting, without knowing what the works are trying to depict.

"It is no doubt if any but the most knowledgeable visitors to an art Museum grasp the thought and the several possible

meanings of a Gallery "hang" other than the most obvious such as the assemblage of painting by Rembrandt or the impressionists"

(Wright, 1985⁹, pp 125)

It would be far more beneficial if galleries and Museums focused more on the awareness of the history of art and contemporary art. As many visitors do not know why they are being shown a certain work or exhibits and many would not know the difference between different techniques the artists use. Declan Mc Gonagle is aware of the problems of communicating and has set in motion programmes such as the "artist in residence programme" and community projects to try to combat these problems.

The standard of communicating with the public is a source of anxious debate. In a Museum or Gallery the language of an "apparently haphazard" assemblage of whatever works a Gallery may own at the time with minimal labels has a purpose, "it is deliberately meant to intrigue and challenge" (Gallagher, Irish Times 28-3-1993). It is hard to comprehend that this presentational language of Museum Curators and Directors is also appropriate and used in a Gallery or a public service. This language and from of communication still seems to be prevalent in our Museums today. Patrick Gallagher believes this view to be true in the Irish Museum of Modern Art. He made a statement saying " the unwillingness or the incapacity by the Irish Museum of Modern Art to talk the plain English of its real rather than perceived public - that is the language of the people rather than the polysyllabic babble of a self regarding international art administration and exhibition community" (Gallagher, Sunday Times, 28-3-1993).

This means that potential visitors to a Museum are confused and don't know what they are looking at. It is [^]until they have raised themselves to a higher level of education, they will not obtain as much out of Museums as an art historian would. This approach is certainly not the right one to take if one wished to entice the public to visit a Museum. It also does not help in acknowledging the

patterns of learning, social behaviour and media practices of the late 20th Century.

Many Museum Curators and Directors have left the task of educating people on the subject to the education sector, schools, universities and the like. In doing so this does not cater for the lives or the social habits of potential Museum visitors. This distribution glosses over the important fact that while the Museum is a place of work for its staff it is also viewed by the public as a recreational facility, a place to spend some time. It is my belief that educational resources must be made available, attractive and easier to absorb in brief concentrated messages.

Film, television, video and popular access photography have irretrievably altered the image that a Museum used to portray. Television, film and video display also provide an image that can act as an explanatory aid. Declan McGonagle is concerned with the importance of forming a better Relationship between the public and the artist. He stated that "our primary concern is to close the gap between the artist and the non-artist. All plans feed into that - the artists on site, the educational and community programmes. The Museums shouldn't be a terminus for ideas. It should be a moment in the process a crystallisation of ideas in a certain forum" (Mick Moroney, Irish Times 1-14-1993)

In my survey of Museums that was issued to forty people in my local area it became obvious that the majority of visitors to art Museums are predominantly middle class and well educated. The people who most often visited Museums, also tended to have received a third level education. Museum visitors also were predominantly students or employed. The people who rarely or never visited Museums, were ^{the} elderly and housewives. There also tends to be a higher regard for art and Museums among the middle class, maybe as it is seen as a important part of a social status.

The reasons for visiting or going to a Museum created different responses. It suggested that the largest group of Museum visitors

visit because of a specific interest in a subject or an interest in an exhibition. Visiting a Museum also has important social aspects in that certain people view as sight-seeing. There are also casual reasons for visiting a Museum. "to shelter from the rain, to use the toilet or basically to pass the time"(Merriman, The new Museology, 1989).

The Douglas Hyde was very popular among the people surveyed as it is centrally located. It is in proximity to the main shopping areas of Dublin. The Gallery is also situated within the campus of Trinity College so it is very accessible to students of Trinity College and nearby colleges in town. Many people socialise and work in the City so the Gallery is also easily accessible to these people.

Most people have the opportunity to visit Museums but not all of these people take advantage of this by actually visiting. Individual tastes and interests, the competing attraction of other activities combine in hindering the amount of people visiting Museums. Structural factors such as health, mobility, time and other commitments also contribute to the negative aspects, against visiting a Museum.

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is relatively inaccessible and as it is not centrally located in Dublin. In 1991, 210,000 people visited the Museum and in 1992 the attendance dropped to 160,000 people. The primary event or exhibition of the Kremlin Gold in 1991 was visited by 110,000. This probably accounts for the higher numbers visiting in 1991.

It is my view that the future for the Irish Museum of Modern Art is not just in the function of being a viewing Gallery. I hope the Museum will become and institute - a social and educational centre. I see the goal for Irish Museum of Modern Art as being an Institute for education and the arts. The Museum has a task to fill the gaps of art education. To alleviate the space between the scholars who collect and exhibit art and those of the individual visitors who come to the Museum to look at and perhaps learn about art. The sharing of knowledge should be a primary concern of a Museum. A Museum should display a range of works of varying subjects, and tackle and

tell the relevant stories in a manner that is both attractive and comprehensible to a range of audiences.

Dublin possesses numerous art galleries and Museums all of which must attempt to fulfill the above mentioned aims of exhibiting artworks but also, if possible, educating their public. In compiling facts and notes in doing this thesis I also studied two other notable galleries, the Douglas Hyde Gallery and the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art and have noted the specific ways in which they, like the Irish Museum of Modern Art, have tried to tackle the problems and challenges that face all Museums nowadays.

The Hugh Lane Gallery is located in Parnell Street on the northside of the City. The Douglas Hyde is situated on Nassau street. Both Galleries are centrally located and easily accessible. The Hugh Lane Municipal gallery of Modern Art is a relatively small Gallery. It only displays about fifteen per cent of it's collection. Like the Irish Museum of Modern Art it is also placed within a restored building - in this case a renovated Georgian Mansion, Charlemont house. The Douglas Hyde Gallery on the other hand is a purpose built space (See Figure 30).

The Irish Museum of Modern Art and the Hugh Lane Gallery bear similar layout as both consist of individual rooms for display of art works. Both buildings have individual rooms, that are linked by passageways. Whereas the Douglas Hyde Gallery consists of an open plan space to exhibit Modern and contemporary works

The layout of the Hugh Lane Gallery is far more advantageous for the display of works in comparison to the Royal Hospital 's layout despite the small size of the Gallery. The rooms are large and can contain many more works on the walls than the rooms of the Irish Museum of Modern Art. The Gallery is pleasant to walk through and has a warm feel to it. I find the Gallery very appealing as the layout is simple and there are large benches located in each room where one can sit and view the works at ease. (See Figure 31). The Municipal Gallery, also has wooden floors, cream walls and wide rooms which add to the warm feeling. In stark contrast to the grey

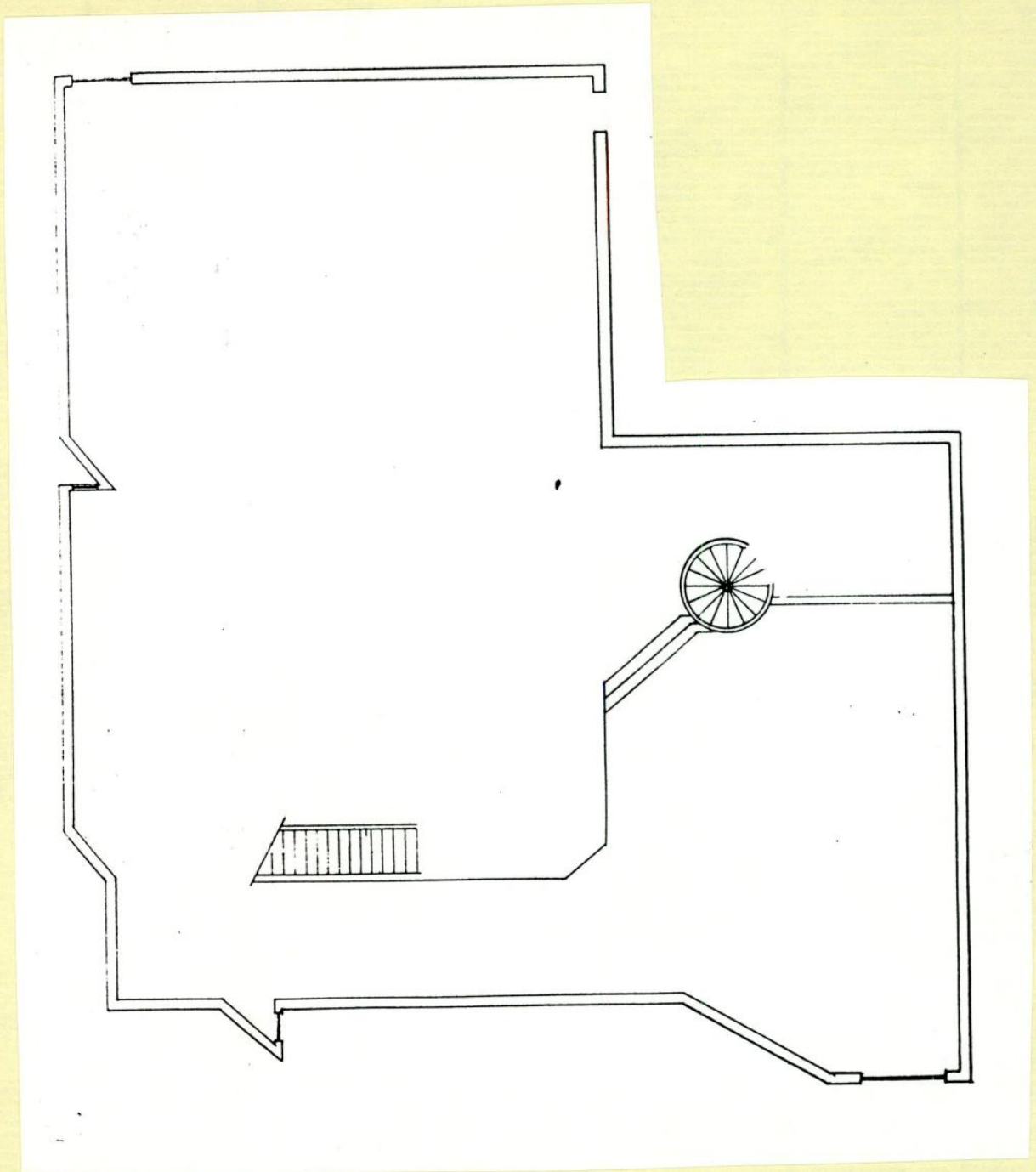


Figure 30 - Layout of Douglas Hyde Gallery

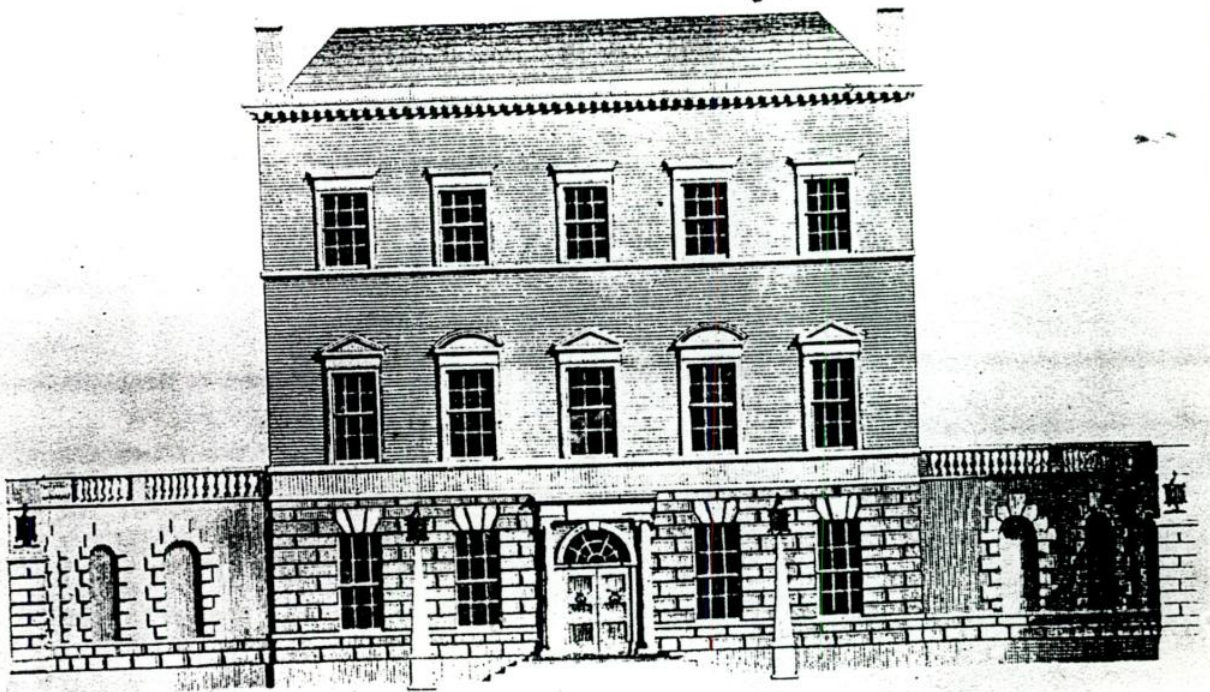
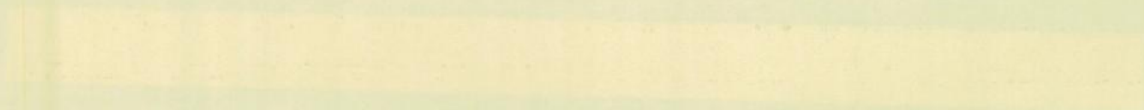
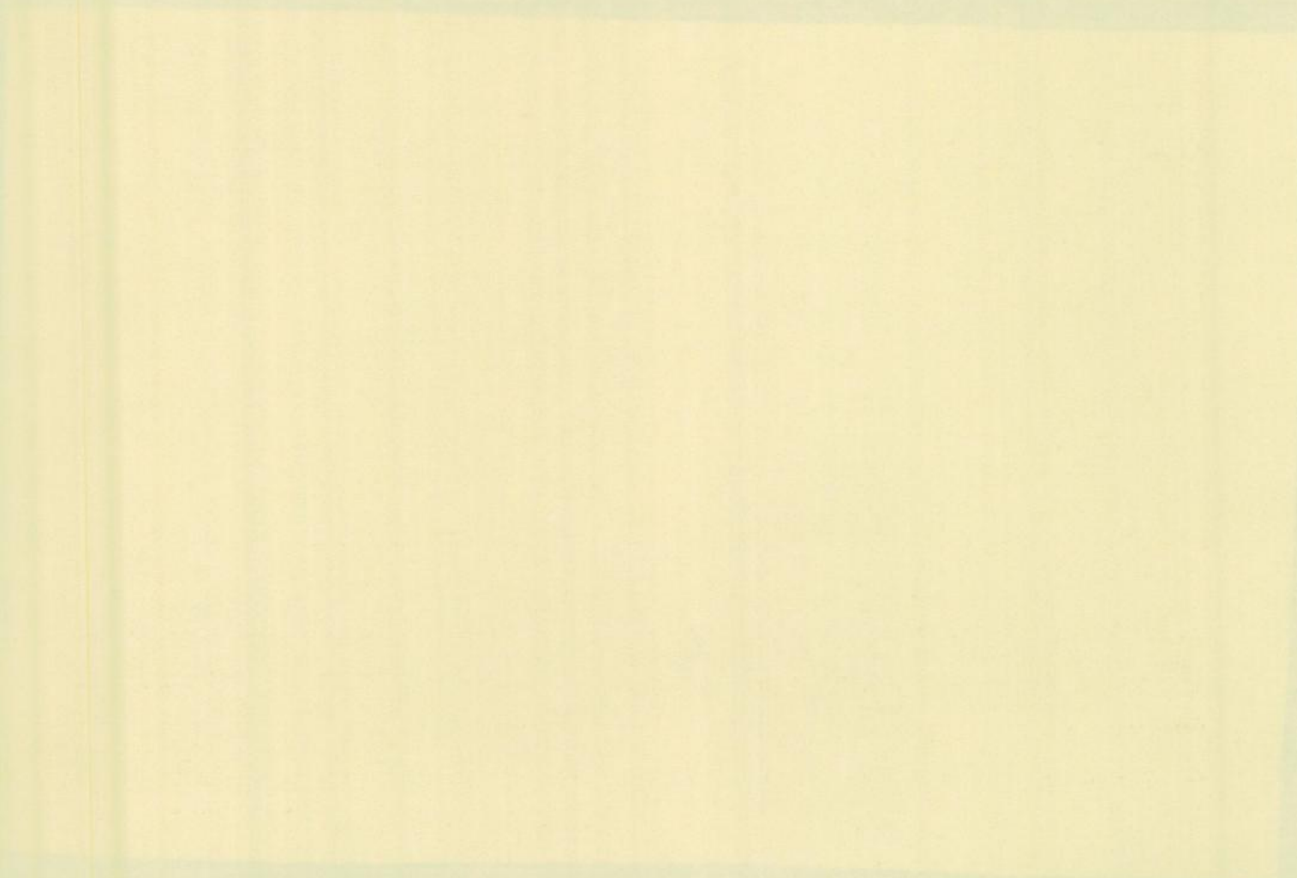


Figure 31 - Municipal Gallery of Modern Art



coolness and narrow partitioned rooms of Irish Museum of Modern Art.

The Douglas Hyde is open plan and thus gives the visitor an overall view of an exhibition. It was specifically built for the purpose of displaying works of art. It comprises of a brown covered floor and white brick walls. It is split into two levels, from the upper one of which visitors can view the lower.

The Municipal Gallery, is under the control of Dublin Corporation and "ABN AMRO" Bank. The Irish Museum of Modern Art is financed by the Department of the Taoiseach. The Douglas Hyde Gallery which was opened in 1978 is funded by the Arts Council and is further supported by Trinity College. Until the opening of the Irish Museum of Modern Art in 1991, the Douglas Hyde Gallery was regarded widely as the major contemporary art venue in Ireland. The most striking aspect of the Gallery's development is that its role as a contemporary arts venue did not develop until 6 years after it opened. Its current exhibition policy was implemented in 1984 and prior to this, the Gallery had a different role and exhibition policy. In 1984 Pat Murphy was appointed the Director of the Gallery. He abandoned the policy of catching up on the backlog of 20th Century art which he regarded as a "red herring and which in any case the Douglas Hyde had neither the cash nor the clout to deliver" (Circa, Walsh, no 59. July/August 1991).

The Douglas Hyde's policy of 1984 was to concentrate on documenting younger Irish artists, greater access to education as well as trying to renew confidence in the Irish arts scene. The Douglas Hyde Gallery's aim is to promote artists by giving them a major one person show with all the trappings necessary for advancement. Secondly the aim is to give the exhibitions a wider context by placing them alongside carefully selected exhibits of international contemporary art. Further accounts of the Douglas Hyde Gallery are written in an in-depth format in Kieran Walsh's article in Circa magazine. (Walsh, Circa no 59. July/August 1991).

The Hugh Lane Gallery has a collection due to the ingenuity and persistence of Mr Hugh Percy Lane. The Gallery first opened in 1908 on the 20th of January. 300 exhibits were on show at the opening. This collection included works such as Renoir's "Le ParaPluies", Monet's "Snow at Lavacourt", Pissaro's "Printemps", "Vue de Louviciennes" and many more. All accounts of which are in the recently published catalogue "Image and Insights".

The Contemporary Irish Art Society founded in 1969 has been a strong supporter of the Municipal Gallery's collection and over the years has added impressively to it's collection of Modern Irish art. Dublin Corporation itself, first supplied funding towards the acquisition of works of art in 1969, when it contributed a sum towards the purchase of "Homage to the A Square" by Joseph Albers. It has since continued to provide a purchasing fund for the gallery. Today the gallery continues to pursue a policy of collecting Irish and International representational art. The gallery's collection of 20th Century art has increased to a collection of over 2000 art works over the last 80 years. The exhibition "Images and Insights" includes just 107 of these artworks from the collection. This forms an indication of the wealth and range of the Municipal Gallery's Modern art collection. While many of the works remain classics the collection continues to develop maintaining a distinguished tradition.

The Irish Museum of Modern Art started collecting in 1991. In the face of underfunding Declan Mc Gonagle is characteristically resourceful as he stated

" my view is that we are collecting for the future and we should start now. We are not trying to represent early 20th Century art which the Municipal Gallery already does well. Our job is to maximise our money by commissioning new work from artists and putting it on contemporary exhibition"

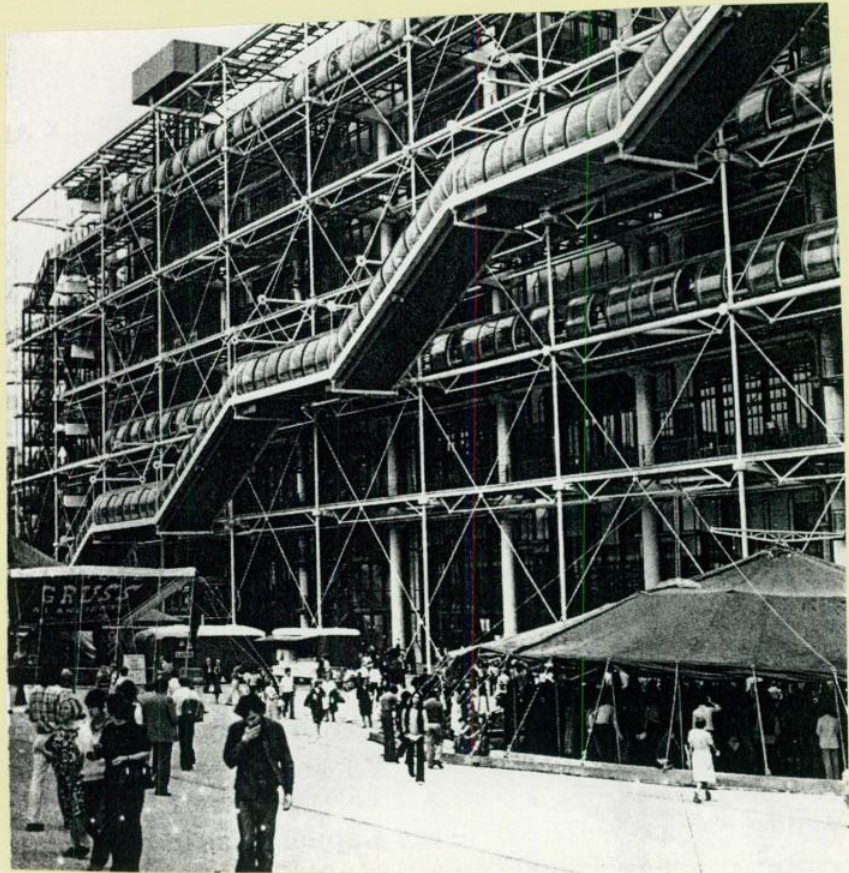
(Cunnigham, Sunday Buisness Post, 19-5-1991).

The structure and the layout of each gallery is inherently different. Each, have a different aim, though I believe that the title of Irish Museum of Modern Art is misleading in that it is today going beyond merely collecting modern works. It is my opinion that it should be renamed as an "Institute of Irish Art". Otherwise it is important that the Museum alters it's structure and it's layout, to form a Museum that actually creates a more enjoyable productive and enhanced opportunity for learning. The primary concern should be to make the general public more comfortable entering the Museum.

It is my belief that an Institution consisting of re-organised or re-designed buildings for non-art historian visitors is necessary. The institute could function by addressing the nature and quality of the experience that a visitor may expect. This would call for close attention to the information needs and the differing levels of thinking skills of visitors.

I think an Institution in line with the George Pompidou Centre in Paris (See Figure 32 and 33) would be far more beneficial for the Irish Public. It would act as a focus point for the young population to interact with art and design. Students and a young age group are currently quite interested in art and design. This has been proven by the success of the Temple Bar area in Dublin. It is my belief that an institute such as in Paris would activate a further awareness of the importance of art and design today. Art could be made more exciting. It is not the architecture of the George Pompidou Centre but the enthusiasm and excitement of the mixing of art works with the video shows, lectures guided tours etc. which would be far more appealing.

The National Gallery and the Hugh Lane Gallery do offer regular musical recitals but this is not what interests many young people today. Adventurous continental and American museums go as far as holding pop and Jazz music events, readings and small scale theatre productions, discussions and personal appearances by leading artists. I believe it is essential that, Directors and Curators, play a



**Figure 32 - George Pompidou Centre National of Art and Culture
Paris: West facade**

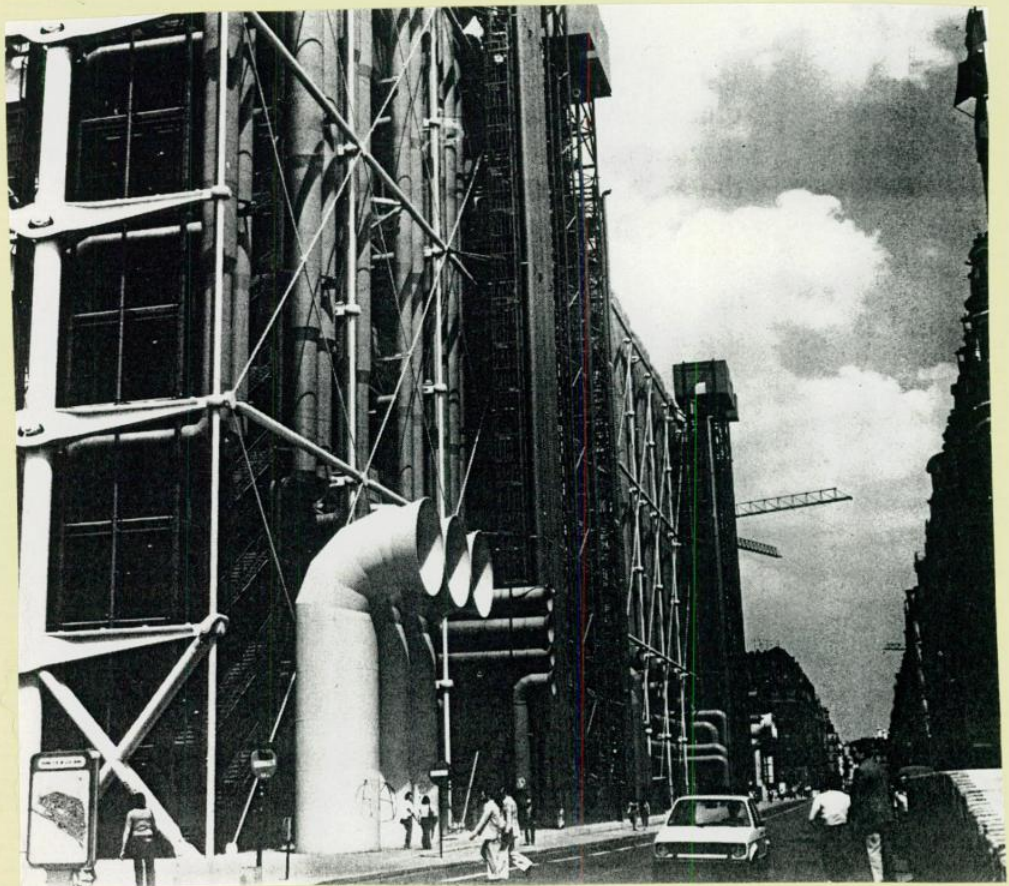
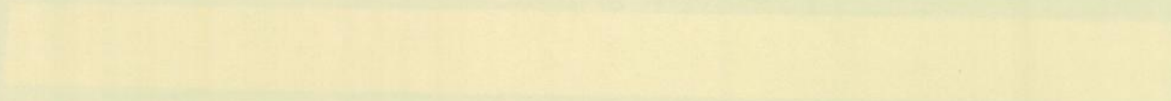
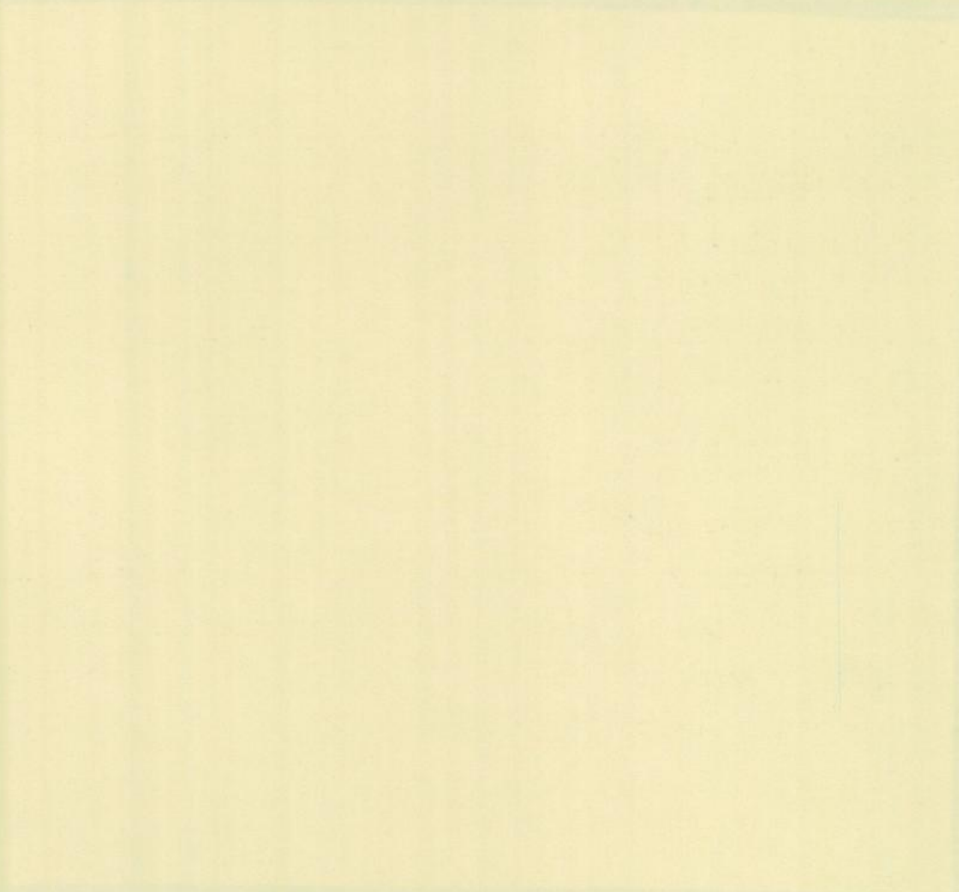
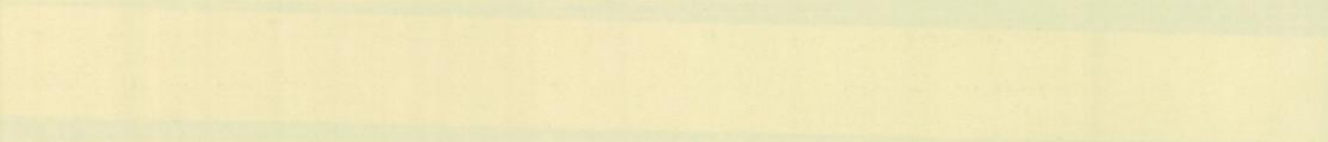


Figure 33 - George Pompidou Centre: East facade



more enthusiastic role and change their approach. A role that is more competitive and alert. As Brian Fallon states in his article.

" popularisation takes a flair and which today's mass public may often be naive it is rarely stupid. It can, of sheer good faith, be made to swallow a lot of jargon, and it can rarely distinguish between the genuine expert or enthusiast and the phoney. But as more and more members of it begin to think and judge for themselves it becomes essential not to underrate it"

(Fallon, Irish Times, 30-12-91)

This overall discussion has developed an acute awareness of the importance of the communication between the institutions and the general public. It has explored the necessity of the financial aspects relating, to funding and sponsorship. In writing, I have begun to question whether Dublin actually needed another art venue when it already had numerous other galleries that exhibit modern and contemporary art.

In compiling this Chapter, I discussed the Douglas Hyde Gallery and the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art. In doing so I have found many positive aspects relating to both of these institutions which are not to be found in Irish Museum of Modern Art. The most positive contribution that the Museum can make is to education and the community programmes both of which are dealt with in the final Chapter.

The next Chapter deals with the actual opening of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the opening exhibition and account of some of the exhibitions that have been held from May 1990. The function of the Irish Museum of Modern Art and Declan Mc Gonagle's policies are also discussed and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHAPTER FOUR - The Opening and the Principal Strategy of the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

This Chapter describes the impetuous opening of the Irish Museum of Modern Art., the opening exhibition and its functions are considered, as are Declan McGonagle's policies and concepts, for the future of the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

The doors of the new Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham opened on the 26th of May 1991. The event took place during the celebration of Dublin's inauguration as the European City of Culture. The opening event was a glittering affair with a vast number of international artists and critics travelling to Dublin for the occasion. The event created much publicity in Ireland and abroad. This evoked an air of confidence and enhanced the profile of Irish art and Ireland's artists. It attracted attention and identified Ireland as making progress internationally in the area of art and design.

The opening of the Museum was quite an accomplishment as the transformation of the Royal Hospital into the Irish Museum of Modern Art had taken little over a year. The scheme to transform the classical building into a Museum involved the formation of a new entrance hall and altering of the original soldiers bedrooms into an exhibition area for art work. The scheme was achieved with quite modest resources and was accomplished in a very short time. An account of the transformation is studied in this Chapter.

The new Museum had limited funding for the buying of artworks. It had an initial allocation of £250, 000 pounds, with an annual budget of £100, 000 pounds for the purchasing of acquisitions was recommended by the advisory committee which was established by Charles Haughey in January 1989. The Gordon Lambert Collection and the O'Malley Collection, which is on permanent loan from the Irish American Cultural Foundation, instigated the development of a collection. However this doesn't alter the fact that the gallery is as yet without a solid, representative collection of modern art. As Brian Fallon stated:

"Even if the funding were five or six times that amount it would still be an outsider in the international arena. Prices in the art market have come down from the often crazy limits they reached in the 1980's, but remain out of reach of all except the really wealthy, well endowed galleries of Europe and America. As for the Old Masters of the 20th Century, most of them now run into millions on the market. "

(Fallon, Irish Times, 1991)

The exhibition which ceremonially and officially opened the Museum was titled the 'Inheritance and Transformation'. This theme intended to convey the idea of the Museum being situated in a building which, in itself, carried a tradition and inheritance that was there to be rediscovered. The Museum opened with a series of exhibitions, artist's projects and site specific commissions. In terms of types of objects used, material content and meaning, these were all underpinned by this theme, reflecting the metamorphosis the building itself had gone through.

The exhibition portrayed many artists work of numerous different styles and from many disparate eras of the 20th Century. The exhibition made apparent Declan Mc Gonagle's extensive connections and knowledge of the art world.

Artists represented in the exhibition ranged from such key figures as Picasso, Miro, Mondrian, Le Witt, Judd Serras, Mullican and Haake. Irish artists such as Jack B Yeats, Willie Doherty, and Dorothy Cross, were commissioned for the exhibition also. The show included a site specific work by Magdalena Jetelova, which filled a corner of a room. The work involved a red sand pyramid which extended across a window frame. On the ground level work by an Inchicore painting group was displayed. A Pauline Cummin's installation video was showing and a selection of Gordon Lambert's Collection were also on display on the ground level. In the courtyard work by the sculptor Eilis O' Connell and Brian Maguire were exhibited. The first floor situated in the East wing consisted of

early Modernist and Minimalist works by artists such as Pablo Picasso, Juan Miro and Jean Dubuffet. This gives an indication of how wide ranging the works were. (See Figure 34).

Two months on from this a new exhibit was added this being the presentation of the Great Book of Ireland. This set forth on the venture of presenting Irish art and poetry through the medium of a single work on vellum which was compiled of more than 250 pages. The aim of the project was to bring together the work of 120 artists and 140 poets. The contributions of these people were made directly onto the huge pages and were unified by the calligraphy of Dennis Brown.

The contributors included names such as Louis Le Broquy, Patrick Collin's, Tony O'Malley, Robert Ballagh and among the poets there were names like Samuel Beckett, Maire Mac an tSaoi, Thomas Kinsella and Anthony Cronin. The Book was exhibited from the end of June 1991 along with the Inheritance and Transformation exhibitions. It served a worthy social purpose by raising money for the disabled and their families. Apart from being a source to raise funds the book did not, however, create much enthusiasm. As Bruce Arnold described:

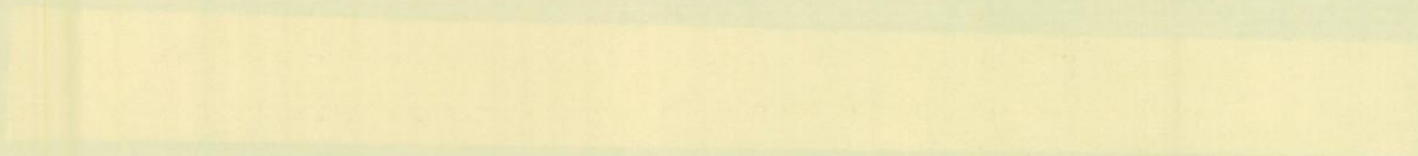
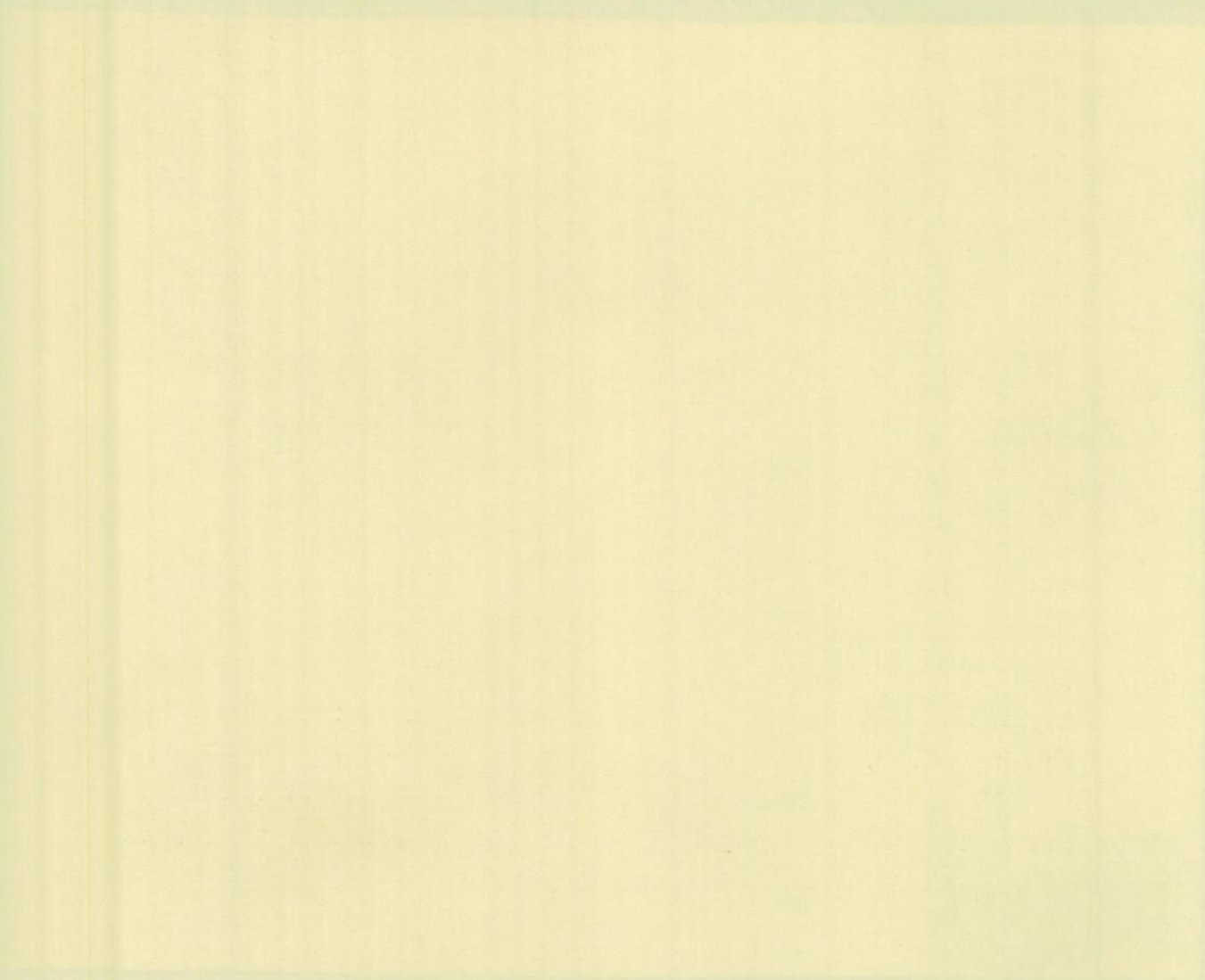
" The Great Book is a 'jeu d'esprit', a nice idea not to be taken too seriously. Reports of it's greatness as a work of art have been exaggerated. What it does for art in Ireland is hard to define but what it does for charity is more to the point. "

(Arnold, Irish Independent, 25-6-1991)

Overall the inaugural exhibition lost it's sense of direction. It was erratic in it's layout and was too concerned with attracting attention to the famous name artists that were on show such as Picasso and Mondrian. Francis Ruane in her review of the exhibition stated that "although the exhibition has gathered an impressive variety of pieces, many of tremendous international importance, the overall effect is haphazard. " (Ruane, Irish Times, 27-5-1991)



Figure 34 - East Wing Gallery during opening exhibition, May 1991



Prior to the official opening of the Museum Declan Mc Gonagle made a statement outlining his intentions for the exhibition.

"Rather than one single, large scale exhibition, I want the opening to map out all the territory I think the Museum should inhabit on a small scale - work with Irish artists, site specific work and borrowings from other Museums and collections"

(Fowler, Circa, Sep/Oct 1991:pp 32)

It is my belief that Declan Mc Gonagle proved his ability to gather a wide range of artwork with limited funding. He also proved that he is an ambitious person and enthusiastic in putting into operation the plans for the future. His policies and broad strategies were reflected throughout the opening period of the Museum in May 1991. He summarised his ambitions for the Museum in a written article, "The Necessary Museum". In this he stated that his future plans for the Museum were to

"Envisage the rotating of both temporary exhibitions and semi-permanent installations within the Museum's programme, before any clear distinction is made between the permanent collections and temporary programmes. This will allow us to signal a series of ways of working, as well as laying the foundations for future practice..... "

(Mc Gonagle, Irish Arts Review, 1991-1992)

Declan Mc Gonagle supported the argument, that Ireland didn't have the financial resources to purchase an extensive collection of art works. He was positive however about the consequences of this disadvantage and "believes in making a virtue of necessity and turning a disadvantage into opportunity by making it a subject of ones work" (Brett, Circa, Nov/Dec 1991). In regard to this disadvantage Mc Gonagle believed that the identity of the Museum of Modern Art would rely on the "Relationship with artists, not on

the classic, 19th Century collection of treasures" (Brett, Circa, Nov/Dec 1991). He regarded that a small amount of money militated against visiting auction houses to purchase artworks but instead of this a relationship with artists would have to develop as a part of a programme and strategy for the Museum. He has stated in his conversation with David Brett, that "I reckon it is a great advantage not to have 20 million pounds...." and he put forth plans to acquire loans of works from other Museums such as the Van Abbe Museum and the Germeenter Museum in Holland. He believes that acquiring these loans, signals the Irish Museum of Modern Art's ability to handle logistically and conceptually early 20th Century works. It also indicates the Museums ability to negotiate long term loans and to represent an era of works.

Starting from scratch at the end of the 20th Century, the Irish Museum of Modern Art has to be a Museum for the present and the future. In initiating this plan Declan Mc Gonagle "Believes in exploring the past, through contemporary eyes. He also envisages showing 19th Century works, where relevant, to create particular historical reference points" (Mc Gonagle, Irish Arts Review, 1991-1992).

The exhibition programme for the Irish Museum of Modern Art is exceptionally wide ranging. The strategy involves the forming of a relationship with younger, lesser known artists in Ireland. As Declan Mc Gonagle has stated it is important to forge relationships with younger, lesser known artists in Ireland and elsewhere. The pursuit of this policy overlaps however with the policy of the Douglas Hyde Gallery, which involves concentrating on documenting younger Irish artists, and creating greater access to education as well as attempting the renewal of confidence in the Irish art scene.

There are many other ongoing developments that are an essential part of Declan Mc Gonagle's plan. The Museum has instigated a programme involving artists working in the community. The Museum is currently developing the external grounds surrounding the Museum which will be used for the exhibiting of artworks. The

development of artists in residence workshops is in progress. The workshops are located at the East entrance of the Museum.

This overall discussion in this Chapter has developed and considered the opening exhibition of the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Declan Mc Gonagle's plans and strategies for the future of the Museum have been discussed. The schemes overall emphasis seems to be on forming a link between the artist in residence and the Museum and also instigating a relationship between the Irish Museum of Modern Art and other art institutes in the country. I believe that such policies will aid the Museum in becoming more than merely an exhibition space but rather will help create an "Art Institution" offering education and support for artists and the public alike. This is, in my opinion, the best route that could be taken for the future.

One of the great successes to date, is the development of the Education and Community Programme. These programmes enable wide range of people access to art and artists.

The next and final Chapter deals with the education and community programmes and also examines the surrounding area of the Museum.

CHAPTER FIVE

CHAPTER FIVE - The Environs of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham

This Chapter outlines a brief history of the area of Kilmainham of its general topography and some of the social problems that are to be found in the area. The discussion concerns itself with the development project that is currently in progress in the Kilmainham/Inchicore area and Dublin Corporations future plans. The successful development of the Education and Community Programmes are considered. As are the artist in residence programme and what the future might hold in store for the Museum.

The area originated at the confluence of two rivers, the Camac and the Liffey. The areas of Inchicore and Kilmainham are unique in the fact that every era of development that the City of Dublin has gone through is reflected here, in the buildings and various features. In no other part of the City, with the exception of Wood Quay and Christchurch, is the diversity of Dublin's history so clearly delineated.

Nowhere is the City's industrial archaeology so deeply marked out, as it is in Kilmainham and its periphery. The area, in earlier periods was extensively harnessed for a variety of production processes such as mills, wheels, weirs, sluices and much more, of which traces still can be found. The area is also, of course inextricably linked in the public mind with the fight for Independence. This connections is dramatically symbolised in Kilmainham Jail opposite the Royal Hospital West entrance.

In the vicinity of the Royal Hospital is St Stevans Hospital, dating from the 18th Century and situated directly opposite Heuston station. Today this building has been restored magnificently and now is the home for the Eastern Health Board offices. Also in the Royal Hospital/s locality is St Patricks Hospital, Kilmainham Mill, Kilmainham Courthouse, Richmond Barracks and the list continues.

Inchicore and Kilmainham are essentially two villages of totally different character. Kilmainham contains most of the historical and architecturally important buildings including the Royal Hospital and the other above listed buildings. Kilmainham has a limited amount of housing, shops and local industry.

Inchicore on the other hand has a recognisable centre with a shopping area, pubs, banks and the main industrial employer of the area, Inchicore Railway works are also based here. Inchicore therefore offers a potential area which could service the tourists that could be attracted by the sites of interest in the Kilmainham area.

In 1991, an Inchicore and Kilmainham development project was set up to try and make the most of the areas advantages and the abundance of riches that the area possesses. The group focused on the involvement of the community in any plans and what the public could do to help. A scheme was created with regard to the maintenance of the properties and amenities of the area by, for example, keeping the area litter free and generally aiming to improve the environment.

A local development plan was set up to incorporate an overall unified policy for the future of Kilmainham and Inchicore. The aims clearly defined a framework for the preservation and the conservation of the local heritage. A formula was set in action to deal with the problems faced by the area as well as a longer term plan for future development of tourism and employment in the area. These schemes are on-going and are receiving the help from Dublin Corporation and Bord Failte.

Inchicore and Kilmainham lie due west of Dublin City and are situated approximately 3 miles from O'Connell Street. The area is bounded by the River Liffey, Phoenix Park to the north and the Grand Canal to the south. The River Camac winds its way up through the centre to join the Liffey at Hueston Station and forms the backbone of the physical shape of the area (See Figure 35 and 36).

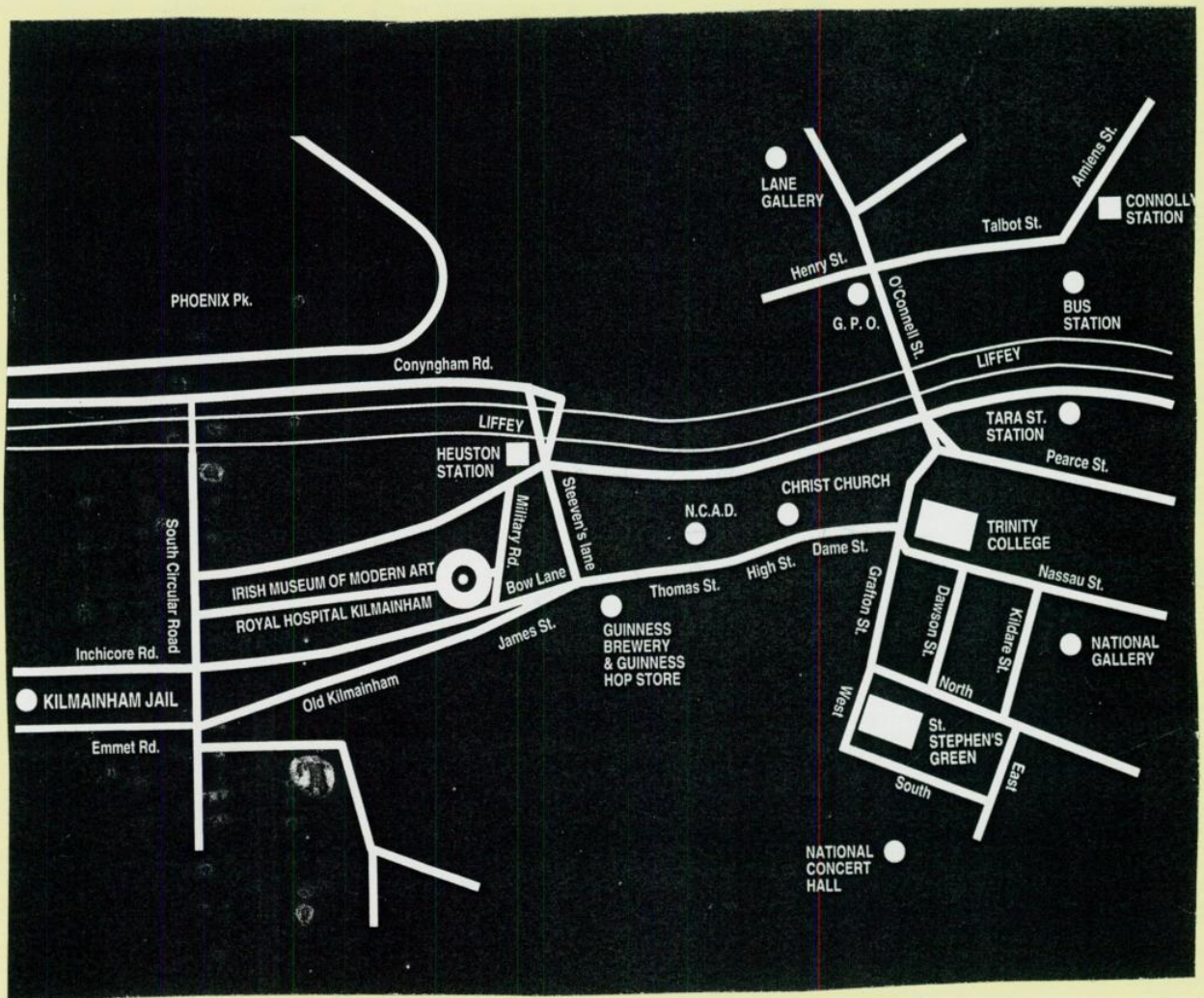
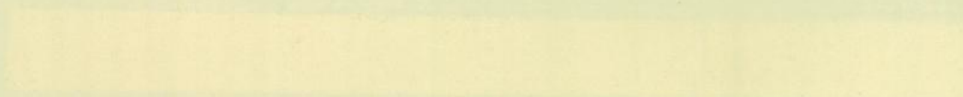
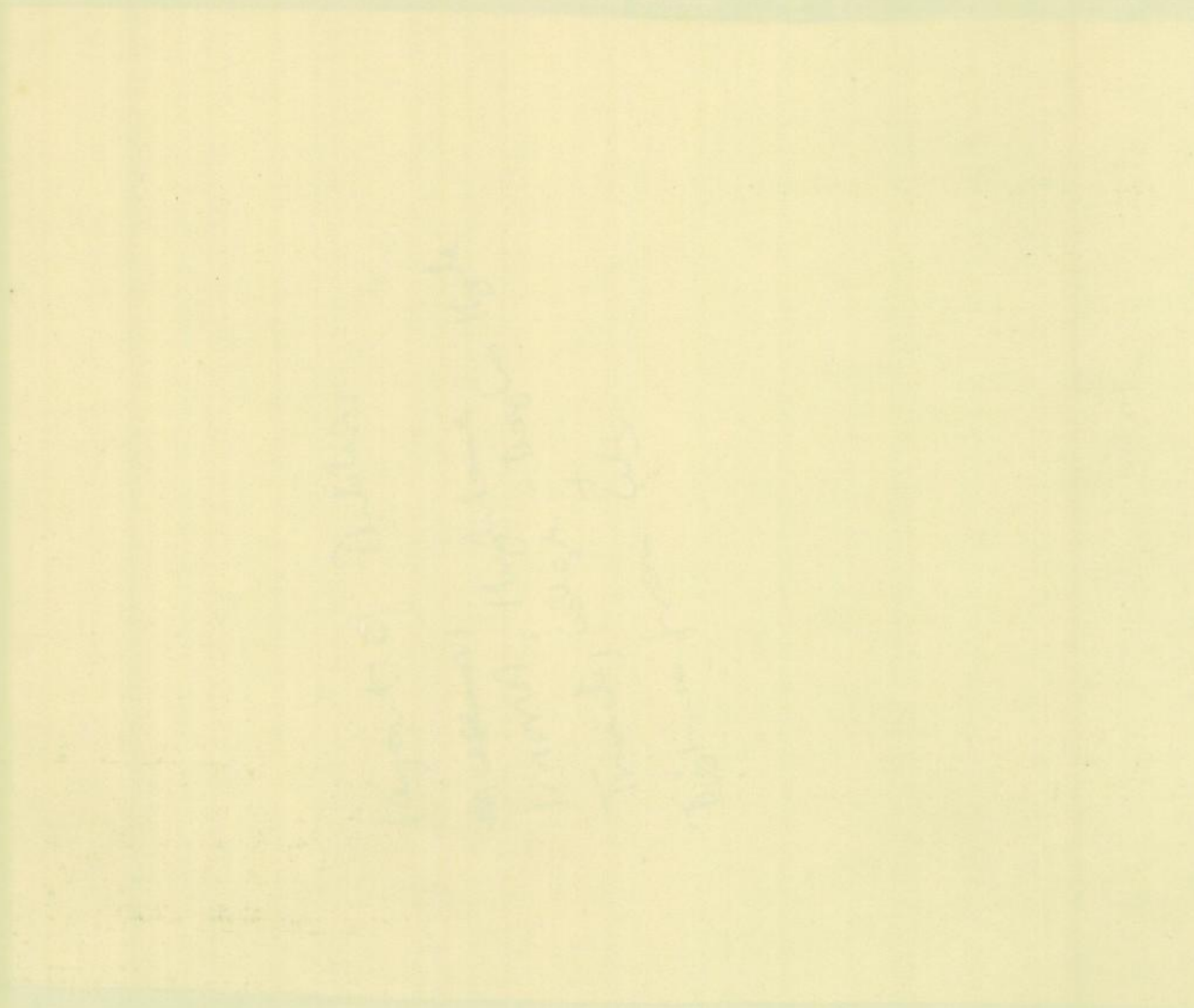


Figure 35 - Map of layout of Dublin



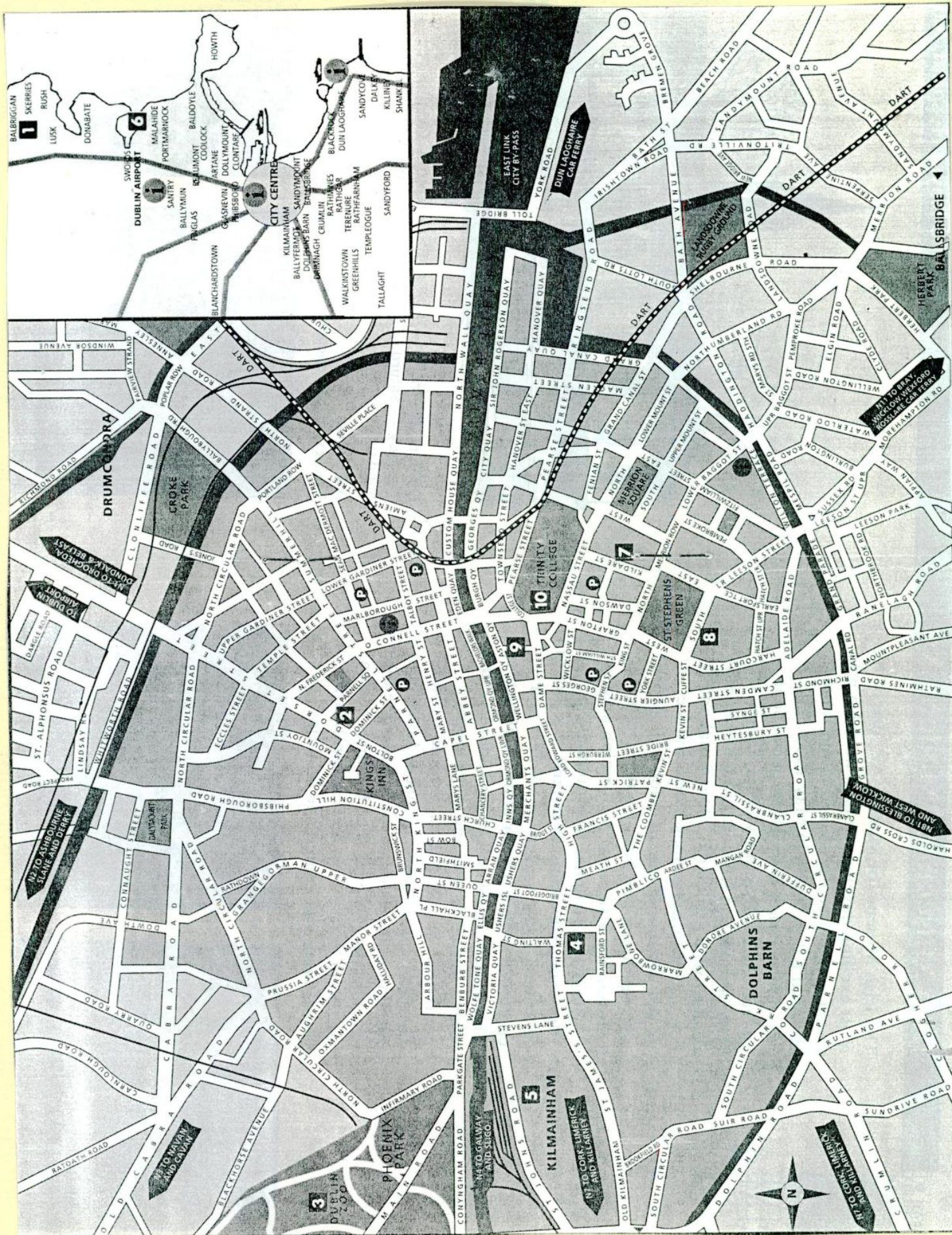


Figure 36 - Detailed map of Dublin

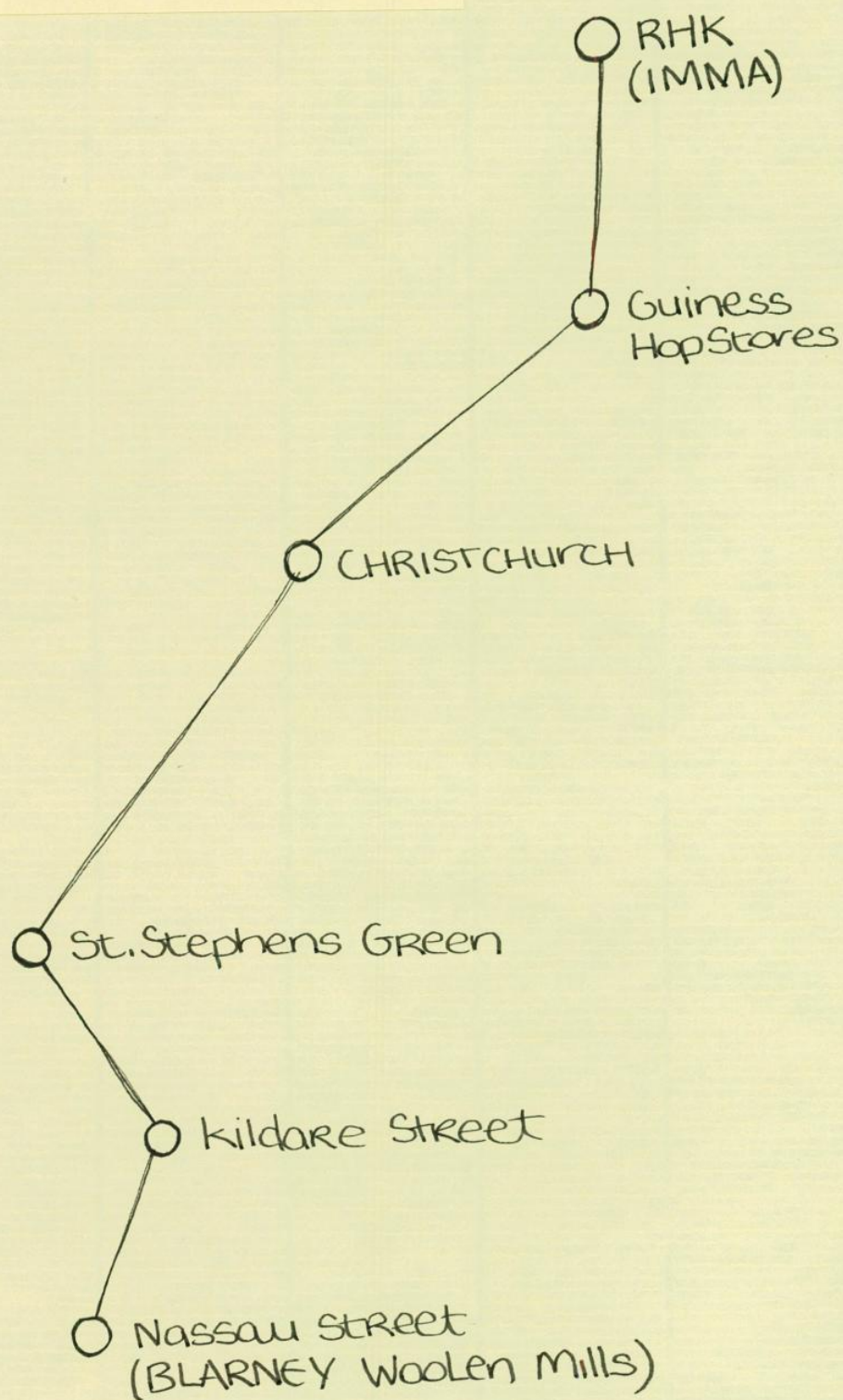
The Irish Museum of Modern Art, one of the most exciting developments in the Irish art scene in many years, opened at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham in May 1991. The museum presents through its permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, international and Irish art of the twentieth century with a particular emphasis on contemporary Irish art. The museum's programming, exhibitions, events and talks are supported in its work with particular emphasis on the relationship between the visual and performance arts.

The Royal Hospital Kilmainham, the finest 17th century building in Ireland, was built in 1664 as a refuge for retired soldiers and continued in that use for almost 250 years. The site is based on Lee Road, Dublin 8, with a fountain, terrace and large sloped courtyard. The RIMM was opened by the Government in 1986 and provided state-of-the-art facilities to accommodate the work of the museum. The building has an excellent coffee bar and comprehensive banquet facilities and can cater for parties

ALIVE
ALIVE 2

Opening Hours
Tuesday - Saturday 10.00 - 5.00
Sunday 12.00 - 5.00
Admission
Free except for certain exhibitions

Figure 37 - Discontinued bus route



The location of the Museum of Modern Art within the Royal Hospital posed certain problems. The area is not at the heart of the City and is relatively inaccessible, especially for people without cars. It is not positioned well to attract spontaneous drop-in visitors that usually form the bulk of a gallery's attendance. In the words of A Merriman; "there are also casual reasons for visiting a Museum, to shelter from the rain or basically to pass the time of day" (Merriman, *The New Museology*, 1989).

A special minibus service was instigated in 1991 to transport visitors to the Museum from the City Centre. As the Sunday Independent stated "The management of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, in Kilmainham at last seem to have taken on Board the fact that the Royal Hospital is not the most accessible of Dublin locations." (Sunday Independent, 4-8-1991). The bus system however ceased to operate due to lack of funds and varying economic reasons (See Figure 37).

The area in which the Museum is located is a relatively deprived one in which architecture much of which is dreary, run down and dismal is to be found. The area is badly laid out and many people would be wary of entering especially in twilight hours or on darker winter evenings. The need for more direct and safer means of transport to the Museum is important and has been hammered home through the numerous attacks on tourists travelling to the nearby Heuston Station.

There are many social problems in the area. In one particular nearby estate, St Micheals, the unemployment rate is 90%. In the 1986 Census the average unemployment rate in the Kilmainham area is quoted as being only 25%. I would not hesitate in saying that this percentage has probably risen since then. The figures for the 1991 Census were unfortunately not available to me. (Refer The Central Statistics Office, Census 1986, 1990). An attendant crime problem in the area is to be noted.



Figure 38 - Derelict site

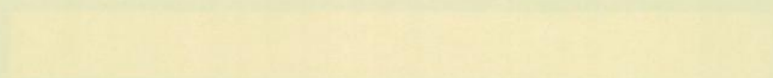
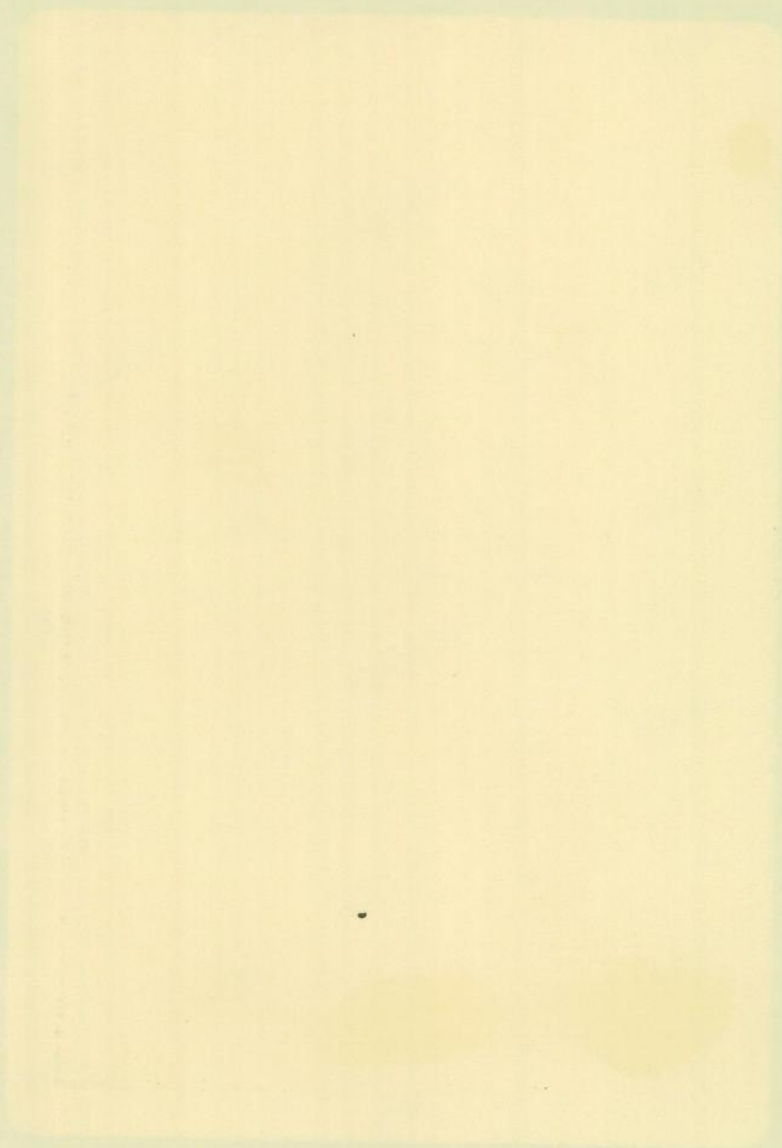


The Museum is surrounded by derelict buildings and sites that are clogged with weeds rubbish and refuse sacks. (See Figure 38 and 39). The area desperately is need of redevelopment. In 1985, the then Minister of State for the Arts, Mr Ted Nealon requested that the Dublin Corporation address the need to redevelop and to do something about the approach to Kilmainham and stated that the Minister for Communications Mr Ted Mitchall, a TD for the area, had taken members of the Corporation on a walkabout to show them how bad things are and to press for redevelopment (Irish Times, 1985). To date Kilmainham is an area that still accumulates numbers of squatters and boarded windows and empty, delapidated flats abound. The signs enroute to the Museum are also scarce, with one small sign denoting the route to the Museum.

Kilmainham is now part of a redevelopment scheme that Dublin City is currently undergoing. Within the next 12 to 24 months the Dublin Corporation have plans to restore the Obelisk monument that is situated on a traffic island which separates the main road and the side road to the Museum. (See Figure 40). This side route to Kilmainham also passes by Cromwell's Quarters. These are steps that connect the side road and the main road. The Camac River has been zoned as an archaeological area and a historical heritage trail is proposed for the area. There are site planning applications for the building of townhouses and apartments where at this moment in time there is a mural depicting the East entrance to the Museum. (See Figure 41). What effect such construction will have on the area is uncertain as it is not known yet what style the apartments will be while they may improve the site it is worrying that they may be of a design that would create further eyesores, even if they are of modern variety! The Dublin Corporation also informed me that the office of Public works has plans to demolish the Gate Lodge at the East entrance of the Museum though the plans for this and the area were not available for my viewing. (Reference Mc Loughlin, Dublin Corporation spokesperson, January 1994).



Figure 39 - Run down site



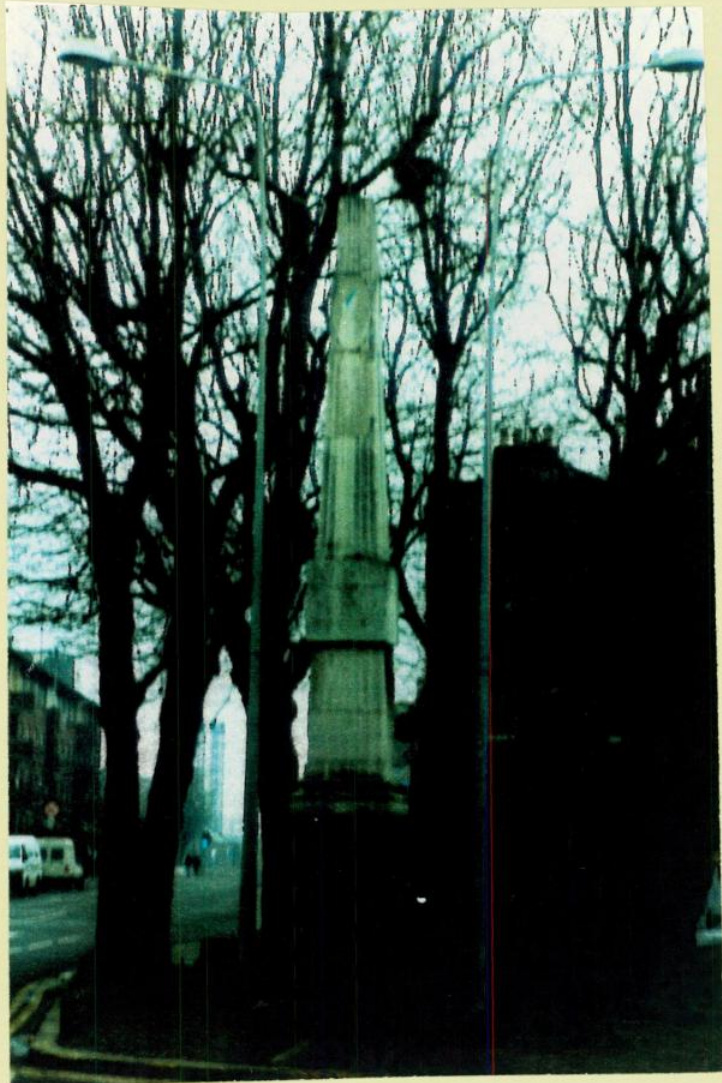


Figure 40 - Obelisk Monument

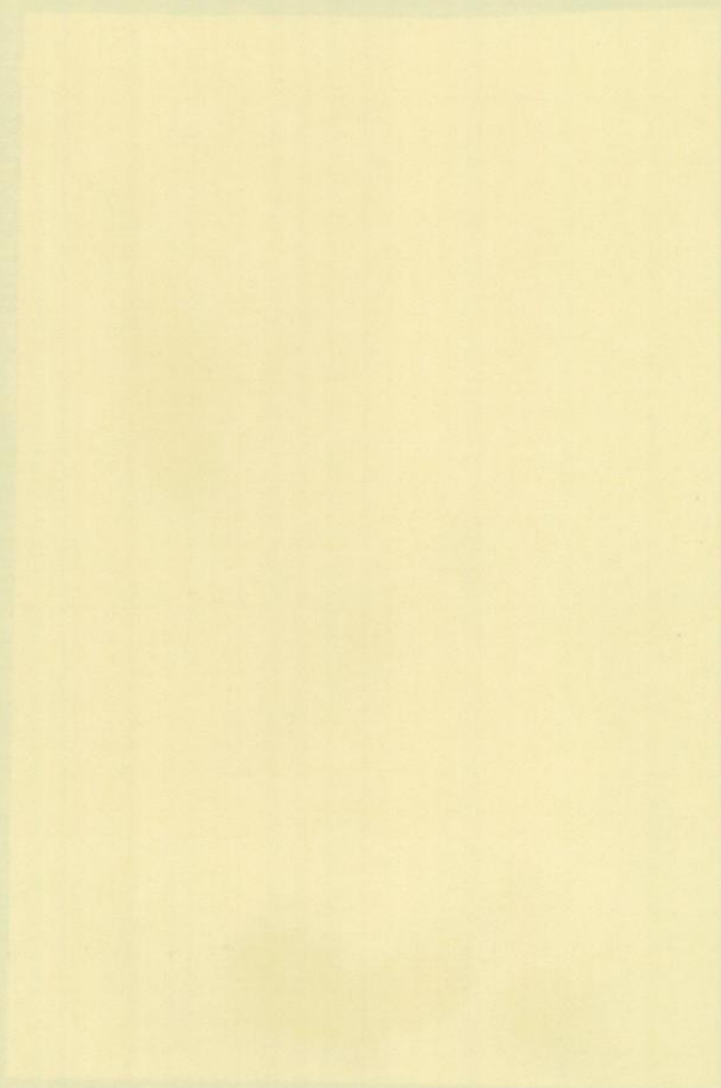
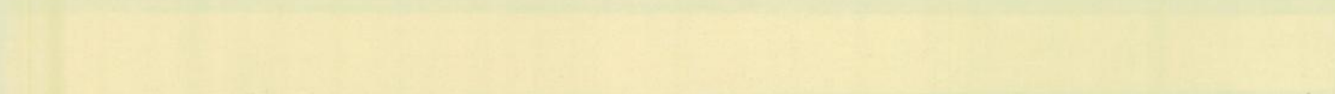
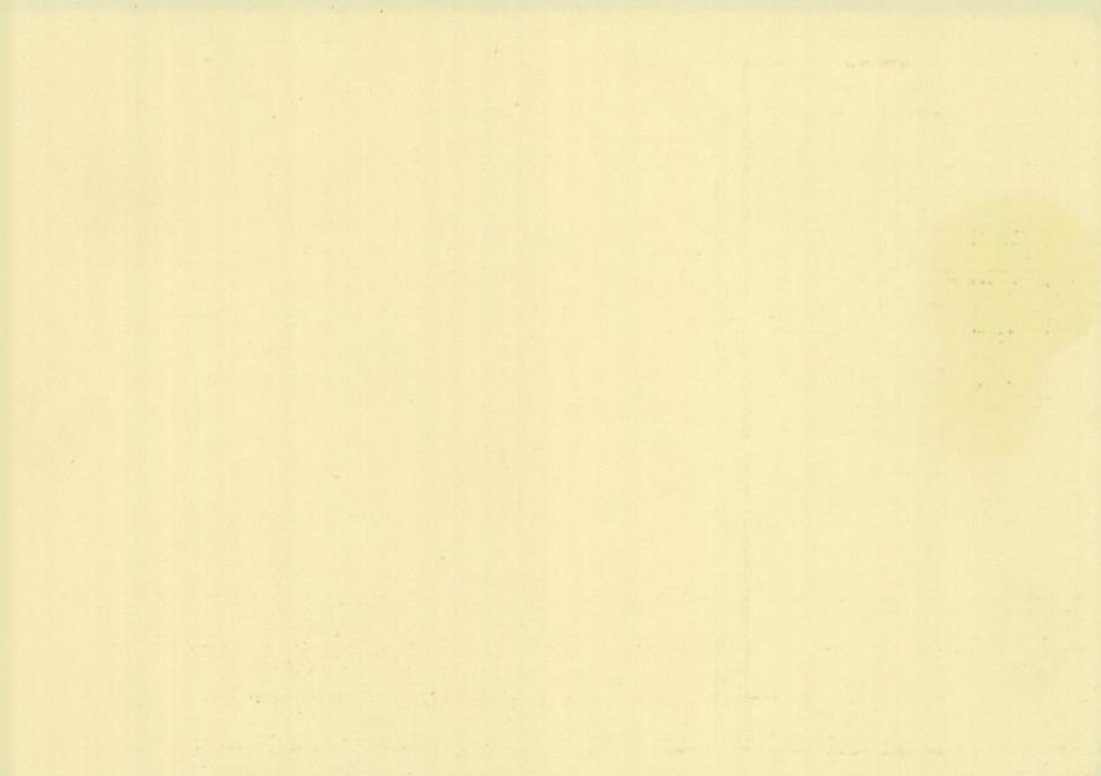




Figure 41 - Planned site for apartments and townhouses



As stated in the previous Chapter, Declan Mc Gonagle has planned and so far initiated a community spirit by compiling a scheme that forms a bond between the Museum and the community. Declan believes in making problems into opportunities and that the location in Kilmainham is a bonus as he has said,

"Precisely because we are in a neighbourhood and not in the City Centre our first task will be to develop a relationship with the neighbourhood, then with the City of Dublin, then with the whole country and then the world"

(Mc Gonagle, Irish Times, 16-4-1990)

This bond has been formed by the development of an Education and Community Department, that is involved with creating projects for schools and the local people. The Education and Community Programme is situated within the Museum building and has developed a two strand programme for second level schools.

The first programme is a broad scheme involving tours of the exhibitions in the Museum, supervised by mediator staff during the school year. Talks by artists and specialists about key points of exhibition programmes are held. The Museum is also involved in formulating a publication of an exhibition guide-book for second level students.

The second strand is to develop a working Relationship with schools in the community. In 1992 the Museum choose three Dublin schools and set up a 5 year plan involving the pupils, teachers and school management. The aims of the project are to develop ways of working with particular class groups over a period of time, to explore the impact of this contact with the schools, the pupils and the teachers. The Museum also seeks to explore the possibilities of applying this scheme to other schools and also in creating closer links with the Department of Education.

In March 1992, a project entitled the Chairs Project was exhibited as a first result of the school collaboration. Pupils from Collinstown Park Community College, St Vincents School and St James School created mixed media work using a chair as a starting point. Other projects also were to be seen such those entitled Responses, Bog Projects, and Beach Project.

The Chair Project was exhibited in February 1992. The objective was for the pupils to use chairs as a starting point to explore aspects of their environment and other subject areas. The programme lasted 4 months and consisted of a introductory workshop with talks from artists who focused on the use of the chair in 20th Century art, painting, sculpture, installation and perfromance. The pupils worked with their teacher and focused on materials that normally are not associated with a chairs function. When the exhibition opened in the Museum the original chairs that had been the property of the Office of Public Works had taken on new and exciting froms such as that of aeroplane, film and pop stars, trees and even Chairman Mao!

The Museum ^{is} also are involved in an artist in the community scheme. Amongst the most notable was the project entitled 'Unspoken Truths' that were all created by 32 women who were members of the local community groups such as the Family Resource Centre, Lourdes Youth and Community Services. The process of the project provided a context for women to communicate some some of the Unspoken Truths of their past lives and present, through art in a multitude of mediums.

The Irish Museum of Modern Art's Education and Community Programme was formed to become the integral part of the Museums overall structure. The aims of the scheme is to encourage and develop active participation in the Museum's activities. The Relationship between the Community Groups and the Education Department of the Museum demonstrate, what is possible when valuable resources are made available to the community to encourage art education and to enable local groups to highlight and

raise social and political issues in a creative and challenging manner.

A series of new developments as part of the Museums broadening strategy was launched in 1993. The Board of Directors approved a 5 year development plan with the Office of Public Works, to provide new exhibition spaces in the Deputy Masters House and living space for artists in the Coach Houses. The Board also plans opportunities for artists, perfromer and the public to interact in the open areas of the surrounding grounds, refurbishments and access to the heritage content of the site such as the gardens and the burial grounds. The Museum is also forming a documentation of every show, on video, slide and audio format. A video room is planned in order to make the show available for public viewing. The Museum is also building an in-depth archive of material that will also be available to visitors. There have also been discussions with television companies about the possibility of commanding air-time and the possible setting up of in-house production facilities. This would be highly beneficial for the public and the Museum, in that it would enable the Museum to reach a wider audience and would also create a greater awareness of art and design.

CONCLUSION

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is now moving towards the 21st Century. From a stationary start it now contains a collection of over 350 works which include paintings, drawings, photographs installations and video works. However in looking forward one must also look back and learn from what has gone before.

On recollection I see the restoration of the building as having been a success. They brought the building from a state of disrepair to a condition that approximated it's former glory, an achievement that was recognised with the conferring of international prizes.

Following such an accomplishment I question whether or not the Royal Hospital was put to it's best possible usage. The placement of the Museum of Modern Art in this location was a controversial one and having reviewed the evidence I tend to side with those who were in the dissenting camp at the time. In giving us the new Museum of Modern Art Charles Haughey may have given himself a fitting legacy but was it perhaps not the most appropriate action as a means to the aiding of the development of the art world. I feel the Museum's placement here was misguided given the fact that it is relatively inaccessible. Also the area is not conducive for visitors.

The building is of such an historical nature it is perhaps contradictory to have put something so modern in a place of antiquarian importance. I believe that the decision to site the Museum here was poorly and hastily planned. Further problems ensued when the authorities set about instigating their plans. Those who were responsible for the transformations failed to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, who had carried the restoration work in the early 1980's. The changes to the building in fact detracted from the successful restoration that had already previously been completed. Ironically I believe it was also not beneficial to the showing of modern art works because the layout even in it's revised format was not suitable.

The gallery also suffered from the problems of underfunding and this meant that the exhibition programmes were somewhat lacking in direction further militating against the gaining of the large audience they needed to succeed.

However despite all these obstacles the Museum has achieved much and indeed the merits of what it has done increase in the light of all the Museum has had to overcome. Declan Mc Gonagle has succeeded in looking towards a more modern concept of what a Museum could or indeed should be. He has looked away from the goal of aiming to get acquire a huge collection. This is not alone out of financial necessity but because his focus is more so towards a more community based and wide ranging concept of what art is or should be. He has looked to supporting new artists and formats for example in the case of video and performance art. He moves towards the notion of an Institution where all people are involved not merely the elite. However the very placement of Kilmainham in such an out of the way position may militate against this. I agree with such a shift of focus and believe that there should be much more of an opening up of the art world to, for example, the younger members of the community. If the new Museum of Modern Art had been placed in a more central location it might have succeeded, following along the routes taken by, for example, the Irish Film Centre.

However given the as yet still hypothetical plans for the development of the Kilmainham/ Inchicore area it will perhaps become an area of similar nature to that of Temple Bar. As I see it in Dublin the spread of the development of newer cultural institution for example towards Ormonde Quay brings us even closer to the Kilmainham area. Therefore the Royal Hospital will become part of a more cohesive cultural agenda.

I believe that the Museum is moving forward with new concepts such as a video archive which the public can access and I agree that it must move with the times. In the changing world of leisure activities it must offer much if it is to compete with the proliferation of new technology and media. The most compelling concept to date

is the possible broadcast of the events that are staged in the Museum Thereby publicising the Museum and educating an even wider audience. Bringing art to the masses.

The Irish Museum of Modern Art has recognised that the era of the traditional Museum of the 19th Century is gone. It has overcome many obstacles and hopefully will learn from the successes as well as the mistakes of the past. In the words of Declan Mc Gonagle

"The 19th Century model of the Museum still exists because it is a very powerful mechanism. It's all about the idea of the meaning residing in the object and the Museums role as unlocking that meaning but we want to flip this around, because the meaning ultimately resides in the people"

(Mc Gonagle, Irish Times, 14-1-1993)

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