

"DUBLIN, A CITY OF
TALK, NOT A CITY OF
VISION"

A THESIS ON THE ARCHITECTURAL
DEVELOPMENT OF DUBLIN SINCE THE 1930's

SINEAD CRISTIAN

HISTORY OF ART AND
COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES

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**"DUBLIN, A CITY OF
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**A THESIS ON THE ARCHITECTURAL
DEVELOPMENT OF DUBLIN SINCE THE 1950's**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND
COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES**

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SINEAD CHRISTIAN

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"DUBLIN, A CITY OF TALK, NOT A CITY OF VISION"

(Frank McDonald, Saving the City 1989 p. 166)

The above statement sums up the approach to the development of Dublin since the 1950's. Plans are made about the city but there is little evidence of co-ordinated policies in relation to a vision for the future of the fabric of the city. Although there are some groups and individual architects with a vision for the city the structures do not exist for good approaches to become statutory. Frank McDonald, the environment correspondent for the Irish Times who originally made the above statement, has been committed to increasing to public awareness issues on all aspects of the evolution of Dublin. He has also written two books on the subject, The Destruction of Dublin 1985 and Saving the City 1989.

In many social arenas in Dublin City we still hear about the Dublin of the 'rare owl times'. Dublin, our capital, survived architecturally until the twentieth century. Proper working class developments rectified the appalling slums inherited from the vanished wealth of the British empire. They improved living conditions for the poor in the inner city, while the residential and commercial activities of the middle and upper classes maintained the Medieval and Georgian areas in the city. The eighteenth and nineteenth century Dublin of architects like Luke Gardiner, James Gandon and the Wide Streets Commissioners gave Dublin the essence of a vision equal to other great European cities like Florence, Paris and Rome. Although a city's development is too complex to be examined in detail here, this paper outlines some aspects of the development of Dublin since the post war 1950's. Dublin, unlike London, Berlin and Amsterdam, was not affected by the war,

in fact, the original fabric of the city remained in tact until after the 1950's. However the combination of a lack of vision and historical, political and economic forces has caused the decay and destruction of a once beautiful city. My paper will show how weak, even ignorant government policies and the mindless policies of Dublin Corporation have played a role in this destruction. The economic, environmental and historic implications of the decay and destruction must be major factors in the introduction of urban renewal schemes within the city. The paper will also examine, in particular, the roles and results of the actions of the centre city, Temple Bar urban renewal scheme.

CHAPTER 1

The City

All cities are undergoing some sort of crisis situation this century. Not counting wars and sieges, a lack of conscience and conscious decision making during the century has destroyed many areas in old cities of particular importance, in terms of history, heritage, design and the environment.

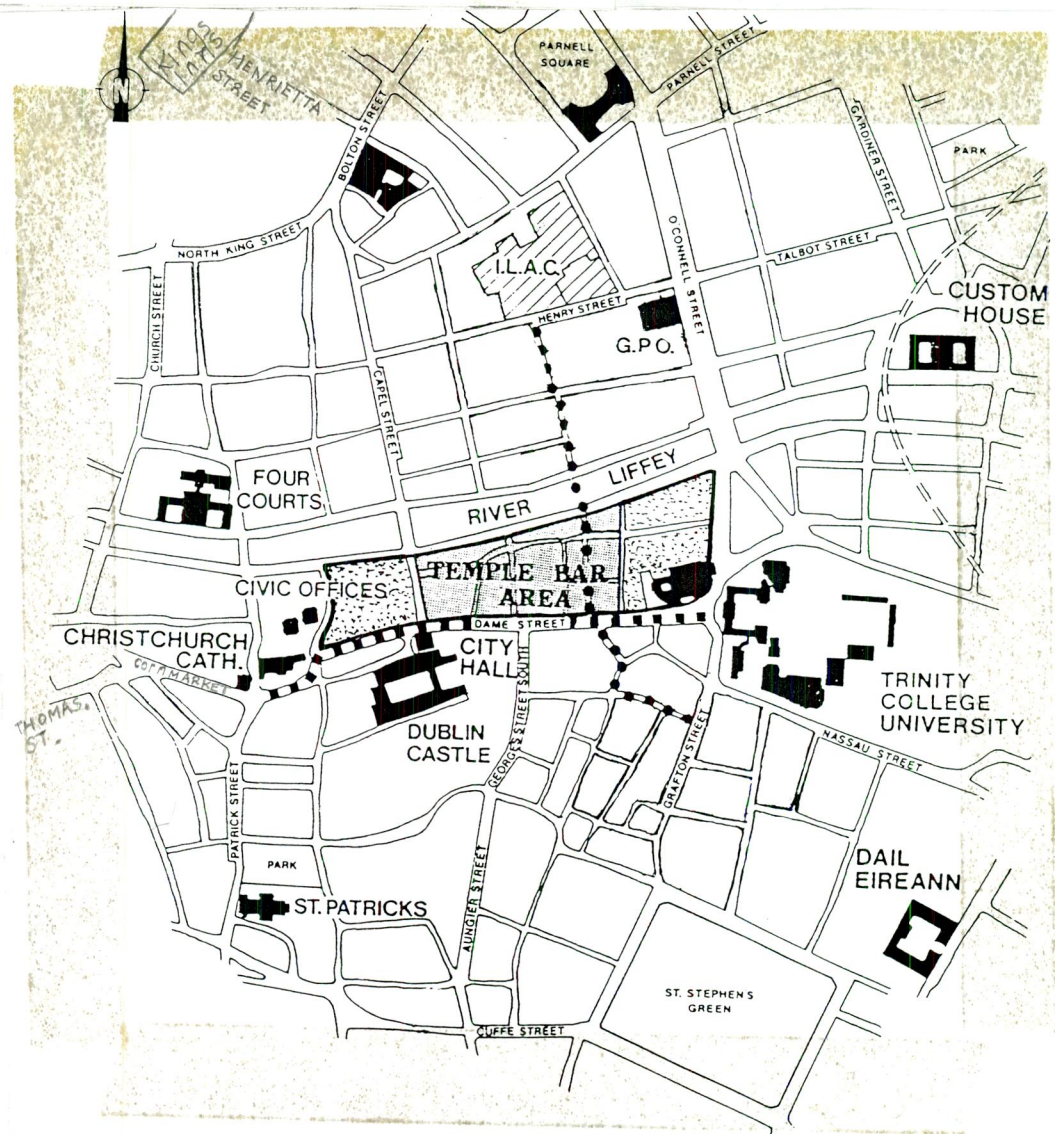
A universal definition of a city has emerged since the second world war, with mass communication, an idea, that, in theory, is progressive: the development of the city as a concentrated environment where social, economic, and cultural activities can thrive. This idea has always been fundamental to the structure of towns and cities; however the crisis is that in the twentieth century we are dealing with a mass population that lives in cities due to dense corporate and industrial development. On a massive scale in the latter half of this century, large companies are eliminating smaller, less efficient companies, thereby replacing, for example, the corner shop in the city with the shopping mall. In the past, people lived at or near their workplaces but this has changed because in many respects people have been forced to move out to the suburbs as it is so expensive to live in the city centre. There is a large demand for houses in the suburbs due to increases in urban populations and the relocation of the city centre dwellers into the suburbs in many cases requires services like hospitals, schools, shops and transport in nearby or surrounding areas. Infrastructure and preplanning is required for such areas. Taking people out of the city and into the suburbs affects conditions in the city centre, as the streets are empty after a working day, so there is a tendency for crime to exist, environmental problems occur

due to concentrated industrial and transportation emissions, and the consequences of lack of upkeep to certain areas can be serious. There is often a lack of consideration of design aesthetics and planning in city centres as well as in the suburbs.

Dublin is an old city and goes back in history over one thousand years. The industrial revolution, except for the brewing and distilling industry, did not affect Dublin until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Like many other cities, Dublin has reached a crisis point in the second half of this century mainly because of a massive urban population and industrial growth. The attention to quality design and detail in relation to new developments and buildings used in the past, like that of the Georgian and Medieval areas in the city and the approach of the 18th century Wide Street Commissioners, has been compromised since the 1950's.

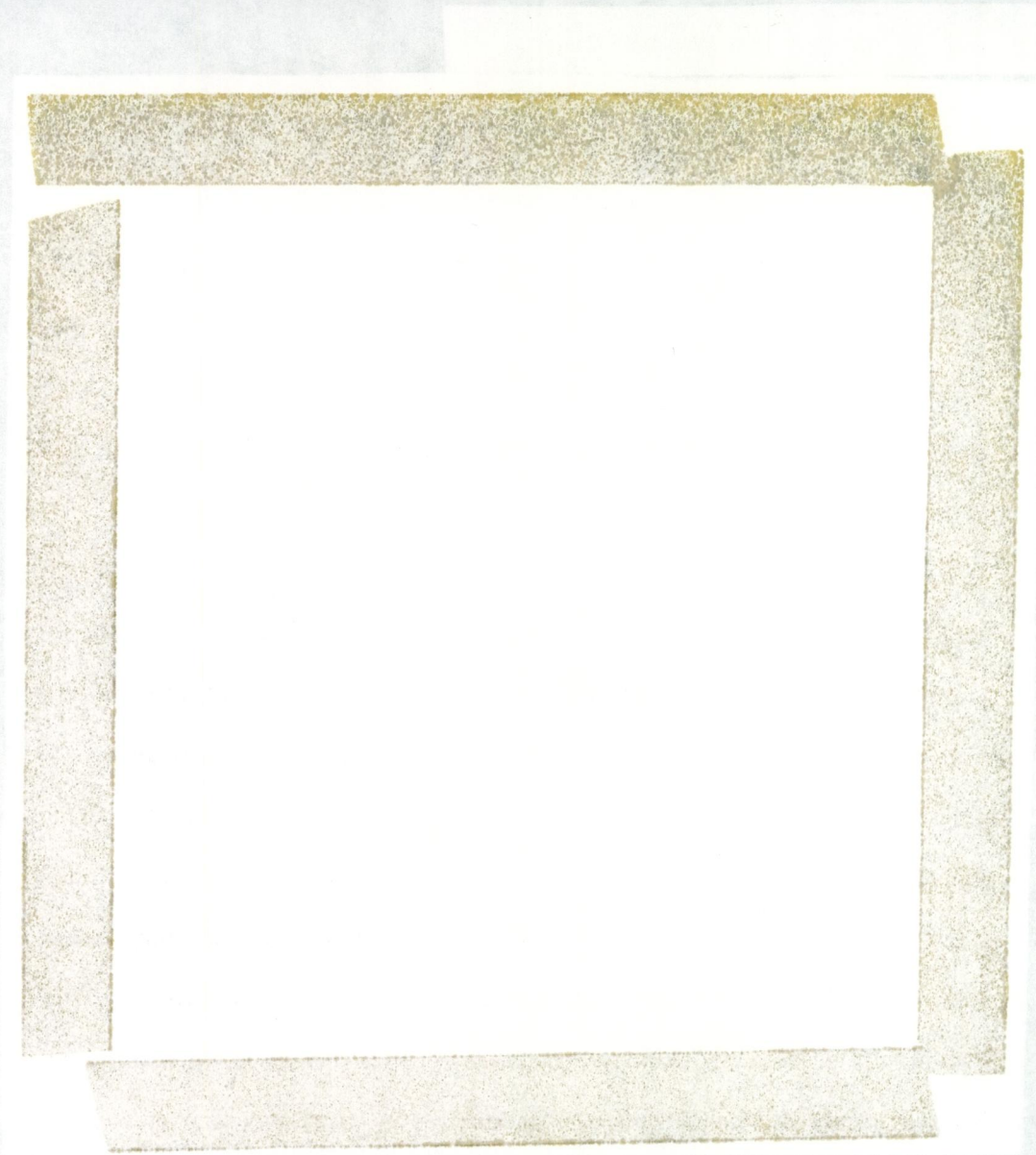
The Georgian architecture of, for example James Gandon's Customs House 1781, the Four Courts of 1786 (Fig. 1) survived until the Civil War of the 1920's in Dublin, but even rebuilt their grandeur reflects a highly successful style and approach to building that transcends time. The attention to detail in both the interior and exterior show thorough craftsmanship and the Wicklow granite used in the buildings give them a quality incomparable with contemporary buildings. They remain some of the most interesting government buildings in the city. Georgian terraces along the quays and in areas on both the North and South sides of the inner city have lasted for two hundred years.

Fig. 1 Map of inner Metropolitan area.



Since the 1950's, within these areas of Dublin, a lot of irrevocable damage has been done; for example streets have been wiped out, partially demolished or just left to decay. In the planning of the infrastructure for new areas around and in the city little has been done to provide a good infrastructure to enhance the environment and improve each community's lifestyle. From the Sixties to the present day, buildings in the city centre have been allowed to fall into disrepair and little has been done about preserving existing structures or about urban renewal. Dublin has been seen as a

"City of talk and not a city of vision and as it is slowly disappearing, many Dubliners remain oblivious, singing pub ballads and those with some concern for the city's future seem to think that somebody else - An Taisce, The Living City Group. The Dublin Crisis conference is minding the store and there is no real need for them to get involved." (McDonald, 1989, p. 166).



In Frank McDonalds opinion the reason for this is due to a loss of idealism as the majority of public opinion has proved to fail against the Corporation he gives the example of their Civic Offices on Wood Quay, a Viking Area, built as their headquarters even though the public rejected this decision and protested against the buildings on this site.

Since the 1950's, much of the Georgian fabric of Dublin has come into the ownership of Dublin Corporation, for example the public library and St. Catherines church on Thomas Street, Georgian terraced houses along the quays and Parnell Street. The Corporation has ignored and abandoned the buildings and allowed them to go into a serious state of disrepair. Eventually their Dangerous Building Section will close them down as they await demolition; it has been known that the Corporation will remove the top floors of the buildings, for example in the case of the Public Library on Thomas Street this has happened. Following this, overtime rain water rusts the metal and affects the internal structure of the building making the building worse.

Not only is the Corporation responsible for a lack of imagination in terms of finding new uses for these buildings, often their road plans find routes through areas of historic importance, and little sensitivity is shown to this. The Corporation-owned Georgian houses on North King Street are to be sold to use the money to build their own box houses (Will Hanafin, The Big Issue, Issue 11, February 1993, p.4) also according to Hanafin in this article entitled 'Dereliction of Duty' which is in a magazine sold by the homeless of Dublin; North King Street (Fig. 1) was to be included in a road scheme called the Inner Tangent. The road has yet to be built. He suggests that a cynic might say that

"roads hold more of a fascination for the city fathers (meaning planners) than people. In the 60's the prevailing planning philosophy was simple : urban congestion could be solved by constructing more and bigger roads". (Hanafin No. 11 p. 4-5)

Roads are important to any city and it was the Wide Street Commissioners established in 1767 who brought wide streets to the city centre of Dublin. It was this that gave O'Connell Street, for example, its Georgian grandeur. However the impact the large quantities of cars has on the streets has now distorted their vision for the city. The invention of the car in the late 19th century seemed a symbolic achievement of mans' progress. The irony of the car is that since the industrial boom in the Fifties and Sixties so much priority has been given to it in terms of roads, in this city as in many others, without a notion of consideration of responsibility to the environment and its effects on the historic fabric of the city.

The road planners and engineers of Dublin Corporation and the Department of the Environment are sustained by powerful lobbies including the Confederation of Irish Industry (C.I.I.) (McDonald, 1989, p. 38). C.I.I. in their newsletter of 1987 said "Car Transport is here to stay" and said that private transport accounts for 95% of total household spending on transport. This statistic shows a total lack of priority as to public transport. Dr. Martin Mogridge, a transport specialist at University College, London has proved that

"the more road space provided in a city, the more it will fill up with cars, particularly commuter cars and the only effective way of easing traffic congestion is to provide a rail based public transport alternative so that the commuters will leave their cars at home. Cities which have tried to do otherwise, by providing bigger and wider roads, now recognise they made a mistake" (McDonald, 1989, p. 49)

However there is no evidence of strategic planning shown by the Dublin Corporation and the Irish Government in relation to an inner city rail system that would service all parts of the city (particularly highly populated areas like Tallaghts' 70,000+), although the D.A.R.T. system, a rapid ground level rail service along the existing railway lines from Bray to Balbriggan has successfully been in demand by commuters.

Out of ignorance of the facts, the Government and Dublin Corporation have consistently demonstrated a seeming commitment to cater for private transport, planning new road schemes of which many examples occur. Not only are these actions resulting in historic Georgian terraces, like those on North King St. (Fig 1) being allowed to rot in the wait for the materialisation of their plans, this also affects the life of those who live in the city centre. Patrick Street, (Fig. 1) for example, the site of the gothic St. Patricks Cathedral and Christchurch Cathedral which sandwich the remarkable early twentieth century working class housing development, the Iveagh Trust Buildings (a resolution of the inner city slums of the late 19th century) saw a widening of the street for a dual carriageway in the late 1980's, taking away from the original attractiveness of the area. The road is now a noise polluted zone causing environmental problems; it is also a danger to inhabitants whose homes are now directly on a dual carriageway. This shows the ignorance of city planners' fundamental aims to tackle the needs of the people in the city; this road, like many others, benefits the commuters but is of no benefit to the quality of life of those living along it. There are many further examples of this in the inner city, which affirms the governments' lack of commitment to preserving and maintaining the fabric of the city. Parnell Street, (Fig. 2, 3) an area of Georgian terraces, the area of Cornmarket and High Street (Fig. 4,5) have in parts been demolished for roads. The question of the role of the planners in relation to government policy and the question

Fig. 2 Parnell Street - 1975.



Fig. 3 Parnell Street same section - 1989.

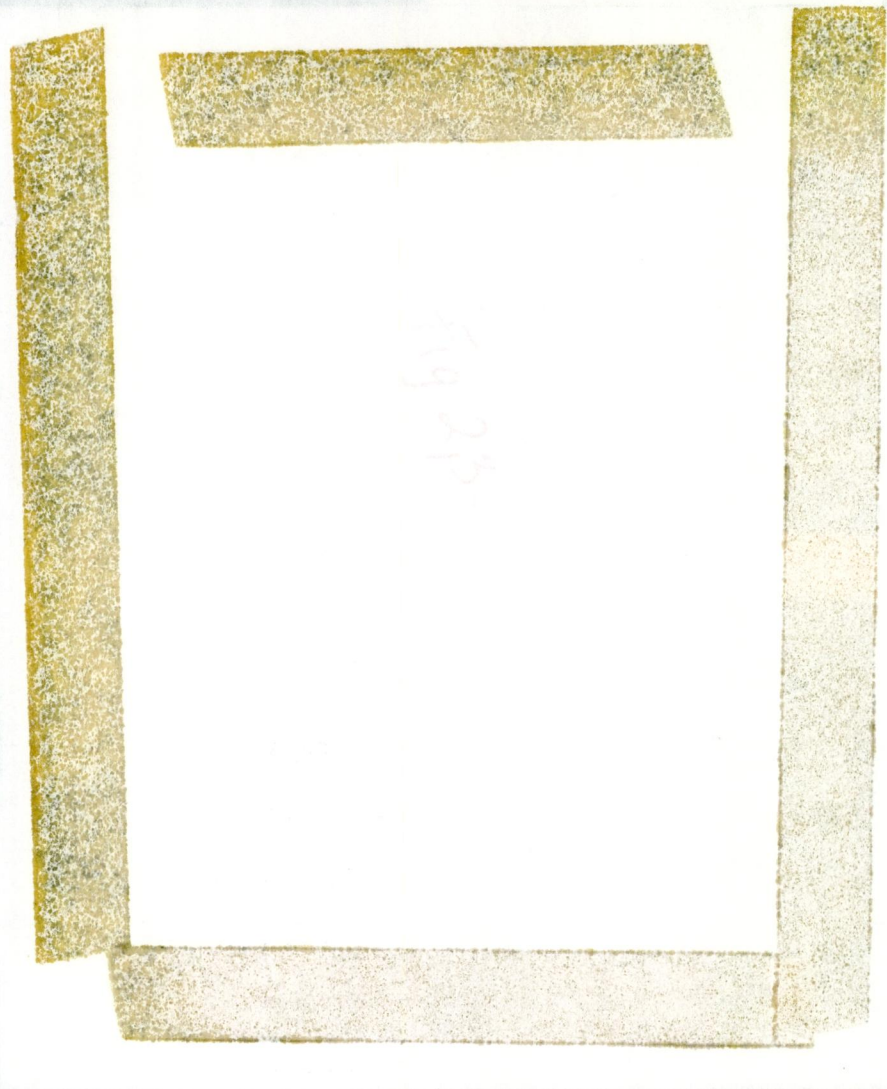


Fig. 4 Cornmarket - early 1900's.



Fig. 5 Cornmarket same section - 1989.





Residential Housing - The Suburbs 1960 Onwards

In the 1970's Dublin was "the fastest growing capital in Europe" in terms of population (McDonald, 1989, p. 73) this was due to the fact that a vast percentage were under 25. The expansion of the suburbs was the only way to cater for such a large concentration of Ireland's population. New housing schemes were implemented to cater for this problem, but often not properly developed to cater for all aspects of community life.

An early government scheme in the 1960's, for example, was the Ballymun Towers on the Northside of the city. This low density high-rise type of building was very popular in Britain at this time. The Dublin Corporation planners, as is their custom, followed the trend which proved to be a failure in the U.K. In 1974 the British Labour government announced there would be no more high rise flats due to the many problems that emanated due to bad design and lack of social services. Ballymun has few services and local amenities which would serve the inhabitants; because of this there has been a continued growth in crime, drugs and unemployment in the area. Dublin Corporation abandoned repeating another Ballymun and since then, without much consideration, did the direct opposite by implementing working class housing schemes of low rise, high density estates. These estates are notoriously featureless, for example the low-cost flat-roofed boxes of Cherry Orchard and South Finglas, are crammed and featureless and not designed in any formal way. The areas in which they are sited contain no historical reference points or sense of place and they show no evidence of planning in relation to nearby social services. The result of this approach has led to boring, dispiriting, repetitive and bland housing estates in Tallaght (Fig. 6) e.g. Jobstown and Coolock on the Northside. The contrast between 19th century housing in the inner city and terraced suburban houses in the 1980's

can be seen in the photograph opposite (Fig. 7, 8). In terms of quality of materials, an over use of concrete can be seen in the twentieth century buildings and an obvious over-provision for cars. Even the 10% Open Space law was not used to enhance the environment (McDonald, 1989, p. 76) Dublin Corporation used it "in quantitative rather than qualitative terms" (ipid). The result of this was that green areas are used for undesirable social activities, causing a deterrent to the activities originally intended for them.

Fig. 6 Aerial view of typical suburban estate, Tallaght.





Fig. 7 19th century terraced housing.

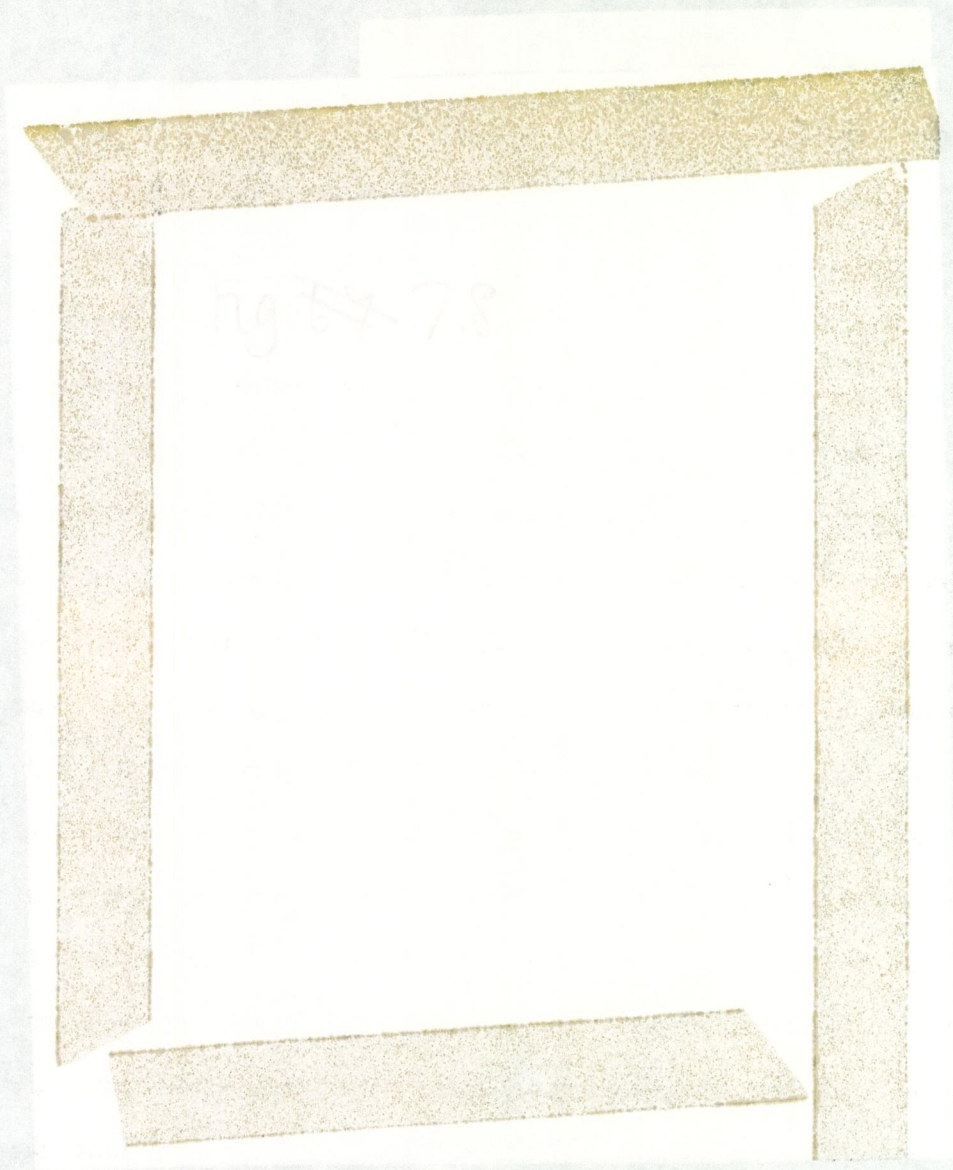


Fig. 8 20th century suburban housing, note the obvious provision for private cars.



In London the concept of urban green or open space as an integrated part of a planned environment is used. The Abercrombie plans for the county of London and for greater London decentralisation after the world war postulated a vision for London in which the environment would be transformed by low density housing and an improved enhanced open space. This approach contrasts with the "never mind the quality feel the width" approach of the Irish Government.

The suburb of Tallaght, for example, has been described as an area that came about "autonomously" without any strategic planning. Because of this, during the 1970's, huge housing estates were built out of reach of shopping centres, schools, hospitals and entertainment services nearby, large areas



were also left without proper access to public transport a necessity for many of the 70,000 mainly working class and largely unemployed population. In the past ten years there have been a number of moves to attempt to tackle some of the problems in Tallaght, although these new developments also have implications on the environment . The town centre in the village has been abandoned and is now an eyesore and has been redeveloped on a new site by the dual carriageway outside the village. The Square, a large shopping mall and a Regional Technical College have also opened in the past five years and a hospital is being built at the moment. The South Dublin County Council has a new headquarters in the area of the Square and many new factories have emerged to join the others already existing. All of this development has happened in one concentrated area and is not integrated into the residential community. It still means that many people must use public transport to go to the shops, work, school or college. At least the introduction of feeder buses within the area has meant there is a more frequent service. But the lack of integration between residential and corporate activities, and the large scale of these corporate operations takes financial power away from the people. Arenas, cinemas, bowling alleys, pubs, clubs, and shopping malls, all large corporate ventures in Tallaght give little opportunity for the sole trader and entrepreneur with this large competition. Many of these companies that employ people in the area can get away with paying minimum wages keeping the area on low income. Tallaght is beginning to emerge as a self sustaining city outside the inner city, with commercial and cultural activities occurring but on a large, unintimate scale. It is questionable whether the "planners" have been successful in maintaining Dublin's inner city as the commercial and cultural centre in the county, when Tallaght on the outskirts has emerged as a commercial and cultural centre apart from the inner city.

Design Planning of the Suburbs

Myles Wright, British town planner, proposed a strategy for the development of the suburbs in the 1969 Advisory Plan (McDonald, 1989, p. 79). He suggested that residential development of the suburbs should be concentrated along the coastal railway line from North Dublin to Wicklow which would at least have meant there was an existing transport system. He also suggested a strategy to create a four finger residential area stretching westwards from the city centre (ipid). However until 1972, when the County Development plan was introduced, Dublin still had no co-ordinated policy on the location of housing estates, resulting in housing estates mushrooming all over the county, ending up with a situation like in Tallaght. Even with these "plans" in operation there is little evidence that they are being carried out strategically when so much autonomous sprawl is apparent.

The County Development Plan document (1972, reviewed in 1979) was drawn up by Dublin Corporation. This immediately raises the eyebrows of critics, when theoretically it should be Dublin County Council that deals with planning for areas outside the perimeters of the metropolitan area.

The main recommendations were

- to encourage an emphasis on narrower road widths and cul de sac development.
- to separate pedestrian and motor traffic as far as possible.
- as far as possible a loosening of standard lengths of front and back gardens; giving variety and potential individuality in suburban homes.

However these suggestions are contradicted in the actions of the very body that proposed them. They continued to build more flats and box-type, low rise high density houses in areas with no distinguishing features (Fig. 8). The money that could have been used to improve the design of these types of buildings in many cases is used in the buying up of land for more that its

worth, due to landowners claiming compensation. This land in many cases has been used for building new roads. This misspent money could also have been used to maintain, develop and bring up to contemporary standards existing houses and flats owned by the Corporation which has a stock of 11,608 flats (McDonald, 1989, p. 117). Many of these buildings are left unmaintained while new buildings are very quickly being erected, without considering the potential sustainability of older buildings if reconditioned. In contrast to planning in Ireland, British planning authorities, in theory, have approached the building of any new town scheme in a more effective way. An area for new settlement is designated by an Act of Parliament, land is put into public ownership by the act and it is then sold to the public at more or less the same cost as agricultural land (McDonald, 1989, p. 79). The process is overseen by a commission set up to give planners control on design layout and scheduling. This approach has an essential ingredient for a consistent vision as it is a legal act which means there is a definite policy. It is not a flimsy framework plan that can be changed and avoided by the planners and developers.

Urban Renewal of Old Buildings

With the many new apartment developments in the inner city there is a very obvious imbalance of investment and incentive put into many existing buildings that are visibly being allowed to rot and decay. Urban renewal is the only way if what is left of the long-term fabric of the city is to be maintained. Much of this new type of development in the city has already demonstrated a lack of regard for the long-term impact on the surrounding communities or indeed the fabric of the city.

The most obvious original areas of good urban design principles in Dublin are the Dockland Quay area, dating from Viking times to the 18th century, the Temple Bar area dating from the 1600's and Georgian Dublin from the 1700's.

The docklands and quays, before the twentieth century developments of high rise offices that have intermittently marred them now, was a harmonious civic setting, where the buildings were informal, human in scale and there was lots of urban activity due to the busy port and shipping industry. Now traffic volumes are high due to buses, cargo trucks and private cars using the quays as a main road in and out of the city. Although the quays have been chosen as an area of high priority for urban renewal, most of the new buildings are too large in scale, for example the Financial Services Centre, Liberty Hall and the Civic Offices, all of which break the original pattern and often do not complement the older settlements. Little is being done to preserve and renovate some of the vacated Corporation owned Georgian buildings on the quays that are boarded up. Worse again are the apartment block projects that are by no means as well designed as the original buildings they replace. These apartments are small and poky inside, and not suitable for families with children. They are a mish-mash of styles and show little

design concern for quality materials used in the past like either the granite used in Gandons' Four Courts and Customs House or even the brickwork of Georgian Buildings. Instead there is an over use of concrete and lack of interest shown in texture. In an article in The Irish Times on Thursday 26 May, 1994, on urban renewal along the quays, the Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, Mr. Emmett Stagg saw "the filling in of so many of the gaps on the Liffey Quays with those apartments as a much needed urban dentistry" a phrase he proudly claimed to have invented. When asked in the same article by Frank McDonald about the many blocks of "single aspect flats laid out on long corridors with few, if any, amenities" he said "It is up to the planners, they have the powers". In certain cases it seems that some property developers are building these apartments to make a quick buck, as there are incentives for them to build them, they then quickly move on to other projects. There is a seeming lack of quality time spent on their design and building. These ill-considered approaches taken without any real policy show a lack of vision for the long-term future fabric of the area.

In terms of the historic fabric of the quays, abominable things have been done in the name of urban renewal. The most obvious example of this are the notorious Civic Offices of Dublin Corporation behind Christchurch Cathedral. It has been said that they are fine modern buildings but the point is that they should never have been built in the first place on the archaeologically important site of Wood Quay, where the first settlers landed in Dublin. These three "bunker" buildings by Architect Sam Stephenson built in the 1980's show a total lack of consideration for the fabric of the environment.

- the previously harmonious skyline along the quays has been interrupted.
- a lack of consideration for the style of the surrounding buildings has been shown

- the huge scale is brutal and the over-use of bland concrete is uncomplimentary to the scale and materials of existing buildings in the area.
- a total lack of sensitivity was demonstrated to the Viking Medieval settlement which forms its foundation; this was not fully excavated.

These offices are the headquarters for Dublin Corporation who said, in their Draft City Development Plan dated 1987, that it is the "single most important objective in planning terms to reinforce the core of Dublin as the commercial, cultural and social centre of the metropolitan area" (McDonald, 1989, p. 98). These buildings certainly do not "reinforce in planning" terms preserve or at least investigate past cultures in terms of archaeology. The second phase of the offices is now complete; the new adjacent building faces directly onto the quays, somewhat block the view of the bunkers behind.

From the opposite side of the quays these buildings have themselves become a landmark, as they block the original landmark of Christchurch Cathedral. If the site for these buildings had been excavated and a considerable investment made in its redevelopment as a large scale cultural/heritage area, it would be a very viable venture which would generate tourist, educational and sociological interest. The brutal attack made by these buildings has created the dispiritment and anger of many social and professional communities about the Corporations approach to the city. Small parts of the remaining land in the area have been saved and put into the ownership of the Office of Public Works for archaeological work and excavation.

Lewis Mumford, the American researcher of urban planning, said in 1960 "The city is an integrated social relationship, it is the seal of the temple, the market, the hall of justice and the academy of learning" (McDonald, 1989, p.

125). If justice is done to the people of Dublin and the city is to survive as a capital, city planners, developers and architects have to use their knowledge to learn from the mistakes of the past, and integrate it with new ideas and lasting technologies. They must consider all the implications of buildings in a particular environment/site. A halt must come to the system where capitalist developers and speculators quickly build apartments and office blocks for quick turnover, as has happened for example along the quays. Fr. Paul Freeney, a Catholic priest involved in the development of the Leixlip area in Co. Kildare, said at the Dublin Crisis Conference in 1986 about the developers

"I hope that they will listen to those who live in the suburbs and their opinions will be respected - not because they are people who must live in those little boxes we all call houses (and apartments) if they are to form vigorous communities, they must not feel that those who designed their homes and their environment have no interest in whether they can live there happily" (McDonald, 1989, p. 97).

It seems all very well when these apartments are new but it is feared that the effects of this cardboard development in the city will result in future dereliction because they will not stand as long as the earlier buildings in Dublin.

Community participation in the development of the environment is favoured by the Council of Europe. Denmark has been a country where this is particularly successful. In Dublin resident associations, community groups and "umbrella" organisations representing affiliated groups lobby for better approaches and propose alternative programmes for the city's planning for example the Citizens Alternative Programme of 1989¹. Often when action is taken to halt the developers and the Corporations plans it is legally too late.

¹See McDonald, Saving The City, 1989 Pg. 178 - 184.

The Corporation are well known for their bureaucracy, badly managed funds, insensitivity to historic fabric, lack of vision, lack of co-operation with the public. They are also notorious for their lack of action in relation to their stated policies and plans about the city so there is little confidence in their ability from community groups.

The original fabric of Temple Bar has an informal street pattern which is intimate in scale and in harmony with surrounding area's. It has a low traffic volume due to the narrow size of the streets. The areas social commercial and residential activities keep it alive day and night.

In contrast to Temple Bar, the Georgian fabric, for example, of Merrion Square, Fitzwilliam Square and the city quays is one of grandeur in terms of controlled design layout, planning and building. The terraces of Merrion Square and Fitzwilliam Square revolve around squares and parks and lead off, from and into wide streets; the fabric of these areas remained in tact until the 1950's. Although this area is recognised to be of great importance historically in terms of its architecture, one of the most proclaimed unbroken Georgian terraces on Fitzwilliam Square was demolished in 1961 to build the ESB Headquarters (Fig. 9, 10). Areas, like Henrietta Street, on the Northside particularly have been allowed to deteriorate. The Georgian Society, a group that was founded in 1909 to preserve and restore Georgian Architecture, agree that in terms of the Georgian fabric of Dublin a lack of vision is held by those who make decisions as this can be seen in the ESB's seemingly ruthless aims to modernise Fitzwilliam Street.

Because the subject is too broad to go into depth fully all the important areas in the city, the next chapter goes specifically into the development of the Inner City Temple Bar area and sites further examples of what is continually

happening in the name of so called urban renewal. The subsequent chapter looks at new architecture in Temple Bar, the vision of the architects for their buildings and the role they play in a vision for the area.

Fig. 9 Fitzwilliam Street before the ESB got their hands on it.



Fig. 10 Fitzwilliam Street after 1961.





CHAPTER 2

Temple Bar, A Cultural And Urban Renaissance or Upheaval

The Temple Bar area in the centre of Dublin was originally laid down in the 1660's. The area developed a lively urban agenda, in the eighteenth century: taverns, cafes along with hatmakers, shoemakers, a cooper, a ship broker, a watchmaker, a glazier, an oil colour and dyeseller all conducted business in the area. This century due to the low rents, because of the poor conditions and lack of maintenance the area evolved a concentrated artistic and cultural agenda. The character of the buildings and cheap rent suited the creative activities of studio artists. Along with some shops, pubs, offices and galleries, the main artistic and cultural enterprises are now comprised of independent artists' studios, The Project Arts Centre, The Olympia Theatre, The Wyvern Gallery and Temple Bar Gallery and studios.

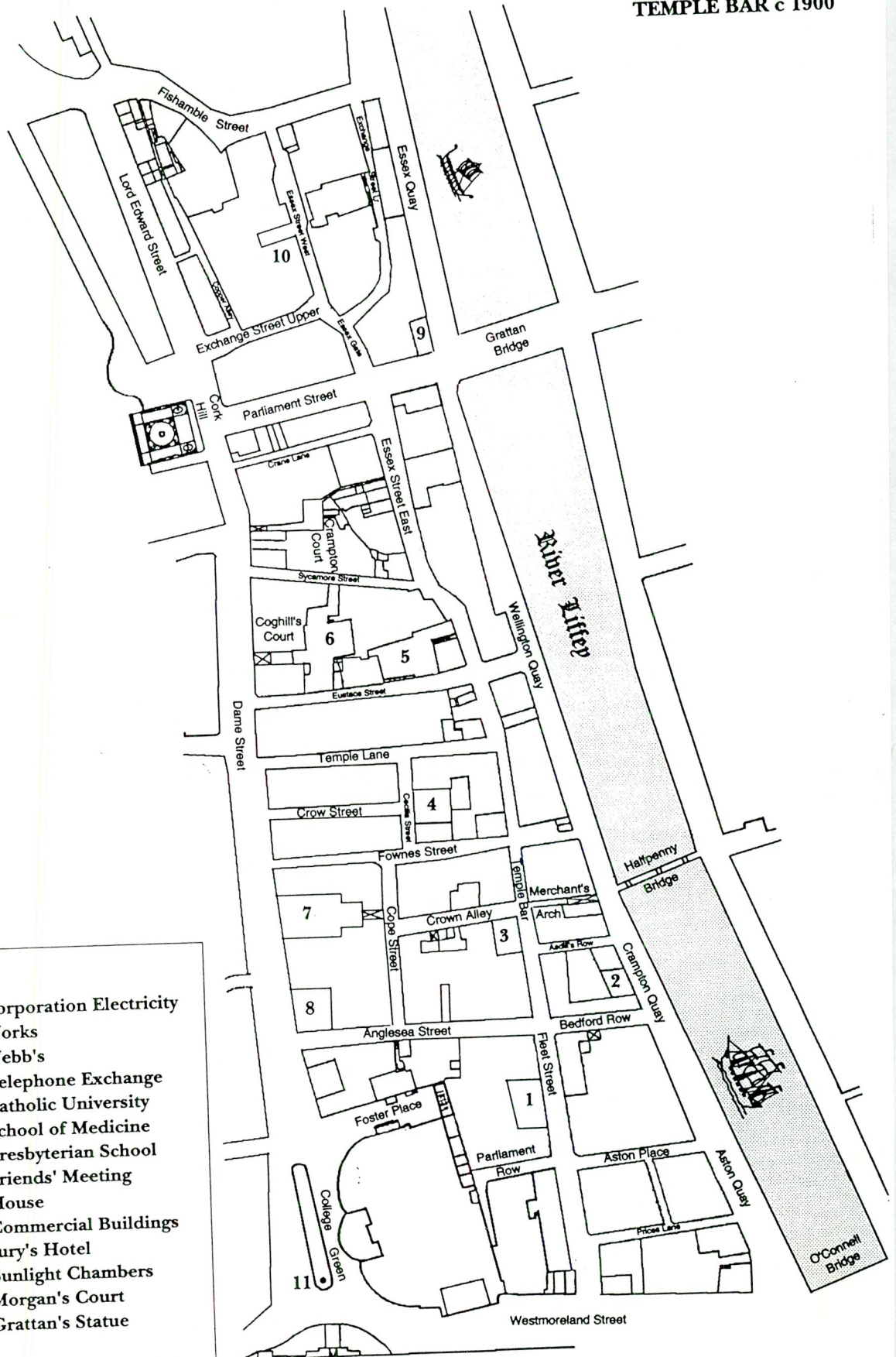
A number of properties in the area bought by Coras Iompair Eireann, Irelands public transport company, between Eustace Street and Fownes Street (Fig. 11) were to become part of a planned site for a new central bus station. The implications of a large busy bus station requiring new roads, service areas, waiting rooms, terminals would have threatened the character of the chosen site, and the livelihoods of the inhabitants. The original civic design and the areas lively human inhabited streets would have been dramatically changed by the masses and a need for wider roads and related service industries. The Catholic University (Fig. 12) school of medicine on Cecilia Street dating pre-1900 is on the site along with Eustace Street with the Friends Meeting House - Quaker buildings (Fig. 12), now in parts the site for the Irish Film Centre would have been effected by this proposed development. This project would have driven out many of the inhabitants in the area. However the plans were not realised and the development of the Temple Bar area has taken a different direction.

Fig. 11 Map of Temple Bar Area.

TEMPLE BAR c 1900

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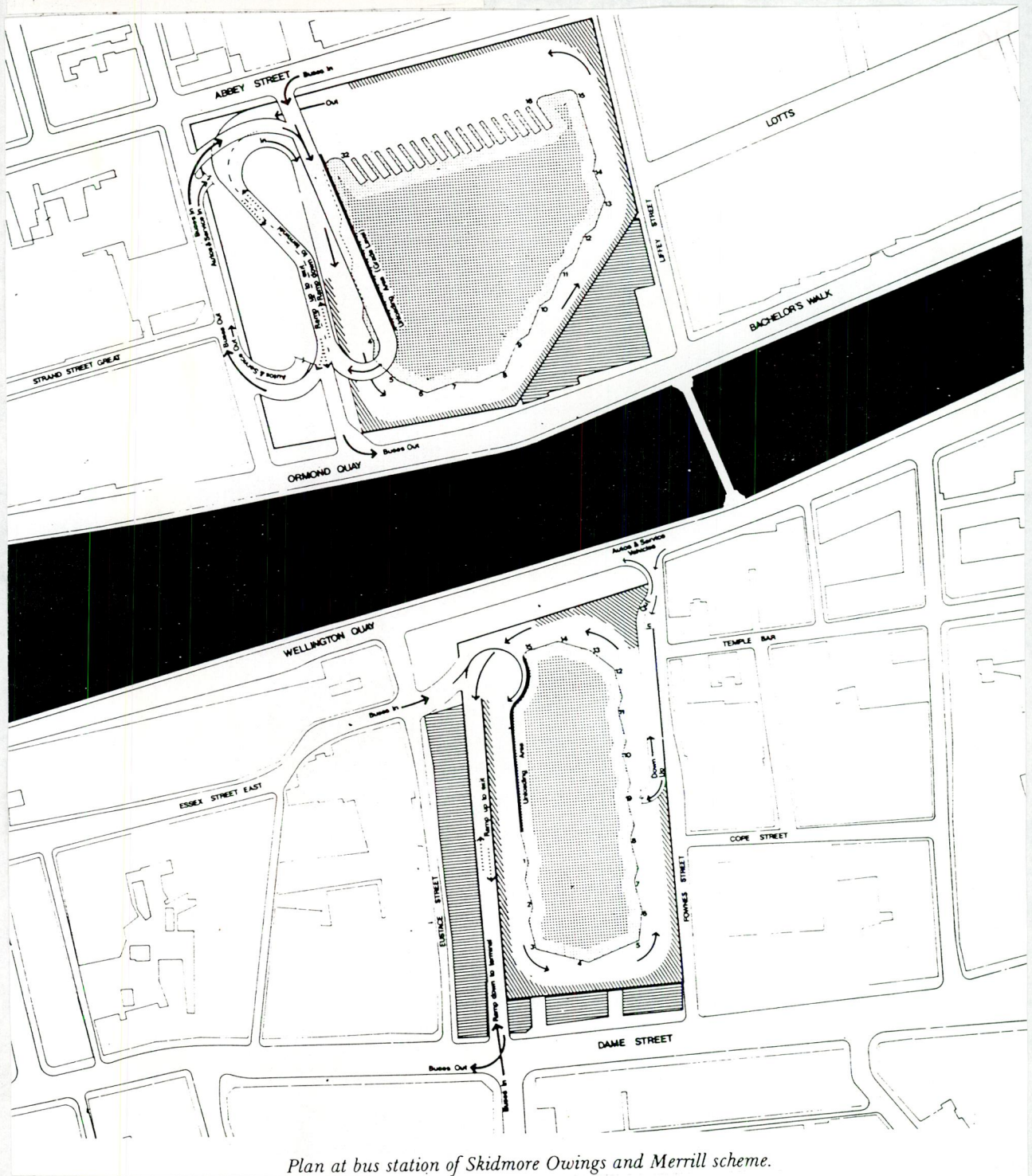
- 1 Corporation Electricity Works
- 2 Webb's
- 3 Telephone Exchange
- 4 Catholic University School of Medicine
- 5 Presbyterian School
- 6 Friends' Meeting House
- 7 Commercial Buildings
- 8 Jury's Hotel
- 9 Sunlight Chambers
- 10 Morgan's Court
- 11 Grattan's Statue



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Fig. 12 Map of proposed C.I.E. station.



Plan at bus station of Skidmore Owings and Merrill scheme.

Temple Bar Properties is a government established company set up in 1991 to oversee a five year programme for the intense redevelopment of the area into a cultural quarter. The approach they advocated initially was patient, invisible mending as opposed to brute cauterisation of the existing urban fabric (Catherine Slessor, Architectural Review, Autumn 1992, p. 47). This approach shows welcome vision for the development and renewal of any space. Temple Bar Properties funding strategy was founded on the principle that revenue from injected commercial developments would cross-subsidise the cultural projects in the area. For example, offices/shops would carry out business on the ground floor and their commercial rent would subsidise lower rents on artists' studios. But the principle has failed; in effect, Temple Bar Properties have become like any other property developers, using bank borrowings to develop commercial properties and E.U. structural funds and Department of Environment grants to subsidise cultural development. Initiatives of the Temple Bar Properties include :

- Design Yard - an applied arts centre, jewellery and commissioning gallery.
- The Ark - a children's cultural centre.
- The New Gallery of Photography and Photographic Centre.
- Art House - a multimedia centre for the visual arts, including a slide and reference archive.
- The Viking Museum - being built on the site of St. John and Michaels Church.
- Temple Bar Studios - a redevelopment of an existing enterprise.
- Black Church Print Studios.

The Temple Bar Properties development concept has the potential to be an advantageous project as it is quite unique, with specific aims to promote and

develop the fabric and culture of the area. It relieves some of the burden of the Arts Council for developments in those areas but it is questionable whether it is being successful as projects like the Irish Film Centre have already applied for Arts Council grants, the expense of running these projects needs extra support, funds in this economic climate, and there is no body as yet established to oversee the future maintenance and upkeep of the area, not demonstrating much of a long term vision.

The management of Temple Bar Studios on the other hand are happy about their newly completed redevelopment, due to Temple Bar Properties. The original building they occupied was in a run down and dangerous state so £28,000 was fed into its upkeep over just three years. Ruairi O'Cuiv, its Director, says

"When I took over three years ago I had mushrooms growing over my head in my office and I wasn't on the top floor. In the storms of last January an eight foot glass window blew in missing an artist by twenty seconds - Temple Bar Properties have managed to get us a safe building" (Cleary, Circa No. 68, Summer 1994).

They believe that running costs will also be reduced as the building is custom built and they have a fair rent agreement and forty year license. The issue arising from these redevelopments is that little is being done about creating more spaces with reasonable rent for new artists coming into the area. The studio has a permanent residence of artists (mostly established), and for them rents have already gone up per square foot since they moved back into the new building in 1994.

Not all organisations or individuals see the benefits of the Temple Bar Properties development, the Project Arts Centre is undergoing negotiations on a proposed shared foyer with the Olympia Theatre, which itself is long

overdue an overhaul. The Project are worried that their individual identity as a theatre space will be effected as it is used more for visual artists performances as opposed to the more commercial entertainment of the Olympia Theatre. Amalgamating the two would put a different agenda on the buildings' uses.

Individual artists in Temple Bar are cynical about the changes in the character of the area due to the property development. The independent studio of Grace Weir, an established sculptor, was in the area of the former Coras Iompair Eireann owned site for their bus station. Now Temple Bar Properties have plans to make a cultural resource centre out of their building and didn't allow the tenants to subsidise their rent with a commercial letting on the ground floor. Grace Weir voiced her concerns about the original character and future identity of Temple Bar.

"There are bad jokes going around, like artists in the area are being employed to sit in restaurants and have loud arguments about art. Its a bit like a version of The Viking Experience where live actors performed to tourists. Its the Art Experience except we aren't being paid..... There is a danger of feeling like merchandise like a part of a package, a statistical requirement for culture " (Cleary, Circa, No. 68, pg. 20).

In the same article Grace Weir says that she believes that it is

"important to respect and maintain the culture here.... and unless the day to day mundane aspects of culture are sustained the area will be dead and phoney".

It appears that the ideal of "creating" a cultural quarter by Temple Bar Properties raises many questions and problems/since cultures evolve, they cannot be created they aren't fake and contrived.

The subject of the conservation of what is left of Temple Bar's architectural heritage is an important consideration as the area is over five hundred years old. Temple Bar Properties recognised as early as 1991 the importance of the history of the area in a foreword on a historic study of "Temple Bar - Dublin" published by them in 1992 written by Pat Liddy. After all, if the area is to be a cultural quarter what is more viable than looking to past cultures and preserving their architectural heritage. But Temple Bar Properties are not keeping their promises, in fact, like the Corporation in relation to the Draft City Development Plan of 1967, they have done the direct opposite.



Fig. 13 St. Michael and John's Church - facade.



St. Michael and John's Church (Fig. 13), is becoming a notorious example of Temple Bar Properties ignorance. It is a building, nearly two hundred years old, and was the first church to sound its Mass bell in 1829 when the Catholic Emancipation Bill was passed after years of Catholic oppression. The ringing of the bell was still illegal and Daniel O'Connell intervened to prevent the prosecution of the parish priest. The church also houses the remains of the founder of the famous Irish Jesuit schools. Not only is the church historically important, it also has many features architecturally namely its gothic plaster ceiling and timber work (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14 St. Michael and John's Church - interior.



Temple Bar Properties and Dublin Tourism are revamping the building into a Viking Dublin Experience, instead of the genuine Wood Quay, mostly for the tourists. Not only are they spending £5.7 million of public funds, but the future of this historic church is also at stake because they are not fulfilling their conservation promise. In a letter to The Irish Times on Wednesday January 11, 1995 John O'Sullivan, National Planning Officer with An Taisce reported that

"the original plasterwork and joinery features of the church interiors except some of the window surrounds are being removed and most of the burial vaults removed to the lower floor" that "the scheme has been characterised by a repeated refusal by the promoters to seek recognised professional advice in relation to the removal of large portions of the ceiling" (Fig. 15).

He urged Temple Bar Properties to maintain all the original features of the church, which looks unlikely now (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6 show the comparison of new and old). This project looks like another disastrous waste of public money and proves that Dublin is a city of talk about unfulfilled promises and not a city of vision.

Frank McDonald in Saving The City (p. 76) says "every town has its own idiosyncrasies, its own history and its own conventions; wherever this is ignored, urban culture and the city as a place to live can only deteriorate". St. John and Michael's Church is a living monument of the past, ignored for a new commercial venture. The irony of this redevelopment was in the fact that an existing historic church is being replaced by a fake Viking conversion and much of the real remains of Viking life lies buried under the nine stories of the Civic Offices further up the quays. The controversy over this issue continues and people are getting more and more disillusioned about the vision for their city which is their habitat, not the ignorant tourists.

Fig. 15 St. Michael and John's Church - January 1995.



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CHAPTER 3

Temple Bar And New Architecture In The Inner City

Architects have an awesome responsibility not only to design worthwhile buildings which will add to rather than detract from the city's streets, but also to conserve and recycle the best of what we have inherited from the past. (McDonald, 1989, p. 164)

The Temple Bar initiative could provide the perfect forum for contemporary debate on art, design and architecture in Irish circles. A good number of buildings in this and in the Dockland area have been remodelled or newly built which show a fresh approach to replacing or complementing the architectural fabric of the city. The Green Building on Crow Street in Temple Bar by architects Murray O'Laoire is, in its execution, an attempt at a cross fertilisation between artists, designers, environmentalists and architects. Its proposed function of mixed commercial retail and residential use is a welcome approach to rebuilding the fabric of the city. The Irish Film Centre on Eustace Street, Temple Bar by award winning architects O'Donnell & Tuomey is a remodelled interior of 18th century buildings for cinema, archive and commercial use. It has been cited as a fertile symbiosis between old and new architecture, distinguished features like the brickwork and the central courtyard are emphasised while less inviting areas have been used as spaces for new elements necessary to the successful functioning of the building.

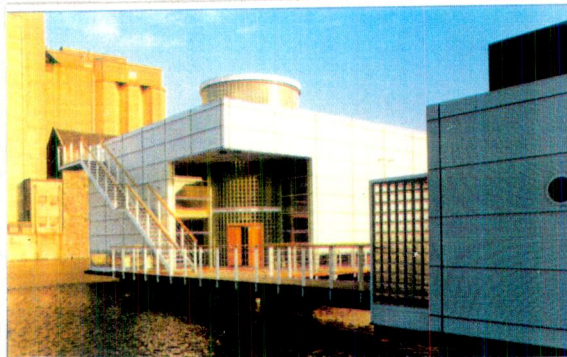


Fig. 16 Waterways Visitor Centre.

The Waterways Visitors Centre (Fig. 16) by architects Ciaran O'Connor and Ger O'Sullivan of the Office of Public Works is a creative response to designing a building on the Canal Basin. The OPW have ownership of the waterways, so instead of having to buy a land site they built on the water. The building complements in form and scale the surrounding buildings, while the white metal cladding material contrasts with the surrounding environment. The reaction by the public to this building is interesting. People seem to enjoy its distance from the land which gives an enjoyable sense of travelling and "leaving the city behind for new horizons" (O'Faolain, The Irish Times, 17 August 1994) an interesting comment as the building is uplifting and draws us from the glum of the built up city.

It may be said that to continue this discussion of Dublin architecture by focusing on some of the more positive aspects of the new architecture of Dublin is naive when there is so much physical destruction and natural dilapidation due to lack of maintenance of the original fabric of the city. Although this destruction is occurring without justification, it is also important at least to have some vision for the future of architecture. There is a small and gradually growing number of architects, designers and critics who are using their initiative and expertise to do what little they can to enhance city life. It remains that often corrupted, uncoordinated and corporate bodies like Dublin Corporation over the past forty or so years, Temple Bar Properties over the past four years and many of the up and coming apartment developers have made many irrevocable mistakes in the design, planning and fabric of Dublin city. The individual approaches by the above mentioned architects may at least be able to provide a glimpse of a collective vision and considered approach to the city fabric if in the future, apartment developers and other property developers assimilate some of their ideas there .

The Green Building

This building is located in a space vacated by two demolishing buildings between Crow Street and Temple Lane South in Temple Bar. The architects are Murray O'Laoire, a well established group who have won architectural prizes for a new science lab in Leo Laboratories, Crumlin and they also are the architects of the Sligo Regional Technical College. The reason for discussing this building is because its approach is daring and interesting to assess in terms of its relationship to the approach of apartment developers who put no research into their buildings. This however is not to say that the green building has all the answers in terms of environmentally friendliness.

In July/August 1994 edition of Blueprint architectural magazine, Raymond Ryan a Dublin architect who lectures in architecture at University College Dublin says "the wearing of the green takes on a new meaning of the Green Building by Murray O'Laoire."

To explain his statement in context; the Green Building is thankfully not another showcase of shamrocks, shillelaghs and leprechauns among other Irish pseudo-cultural idiosyncrasies. The building intends to carry a green message for architecture with design that strive to protect the environment. The building has six levels, there is a basement for office use, the ground level is intended for retail commercial use. The first floor is an office space and the remaining three floors are apartments. There is a central courtyard, containing a lift (Fig. 17) which gives access to all floors, there is also a staircase doing the same. A glass roof allows the central courtyard to have a maximum amount of natural light, which diffuses through the bedrooms of the apartments facing the inner courtyard down through a number of levels depending on the strength of the light. The promoters, Temple Bar Properties, say in their literature (handed out at the exhibition of the building

to the public in October 1994) that it is the most innovative structure ever to be built in Dublin; it also claims to be a beautifully designed, highly energy efficient home in the heart of the city that utilised proven environmentally friendly techniques and construction principles at the cutting edge of technologies of the future. Although the promoters of the building claim to have so much confidence in the environmentally friendly techniques of construction and design which give the building its quality of innovation, on further investigation, it is not as green as it may seem. Some of the elements are compromised, mainly due to safety/fire regulations, lack of time, and misleading information on the labelling of building products. But the building attempts to carry a message it is a courageous attempt at "stimulating provoking and directing building with designs on protecting the

Fig. 17 The Green Building - courtyard.



environment" (Cooper, The Irish Times, September 16 1994, p. 8). Whether it does protect the environment is questionable but it has opened an ongoing debate that is further developing the knowledge required for this type of building.

fig 7

Figure 7 shows the results of the experiment. The data is presented in a table with 4 columns: Time (min), Distance (m), Speed (m/s), and Acceleration (m/s²). The data is as follows:

Time (min)	Distance (m)	Speed (m/s)	Acceleration (m/s ²)
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.5	0.5	1.0	2.0
1.0	1.0	2.0	4.0
1.5	1.5	3.0	6.0
2.0	2.0	4.0	8.0
2.5	2.5	5.0	10.0
3.0	3.0	6.0	12.0
3.5	3.5	7.0	14.0
4.0	4.0	8.0	16.0
4.5	4.5	9.0	18.0
5.0	5.0	10.0	20.0
5.5	5.5	11.0	22.0
6.0	6.0	12.0	24.0
6.5	6.5	13.0	26.0
7.0	7.0	14.0	28.0
7.5	7.5	15.0	30.0
8.0	8.0	16.0	32.0
8.5	8.5	17.0	34.0
9.0	9.0	18.0	36.0
9.5	9.5	19.0	38.0
10.0	10.0	20.0	40.0

Compromises on materials and their Greenness.

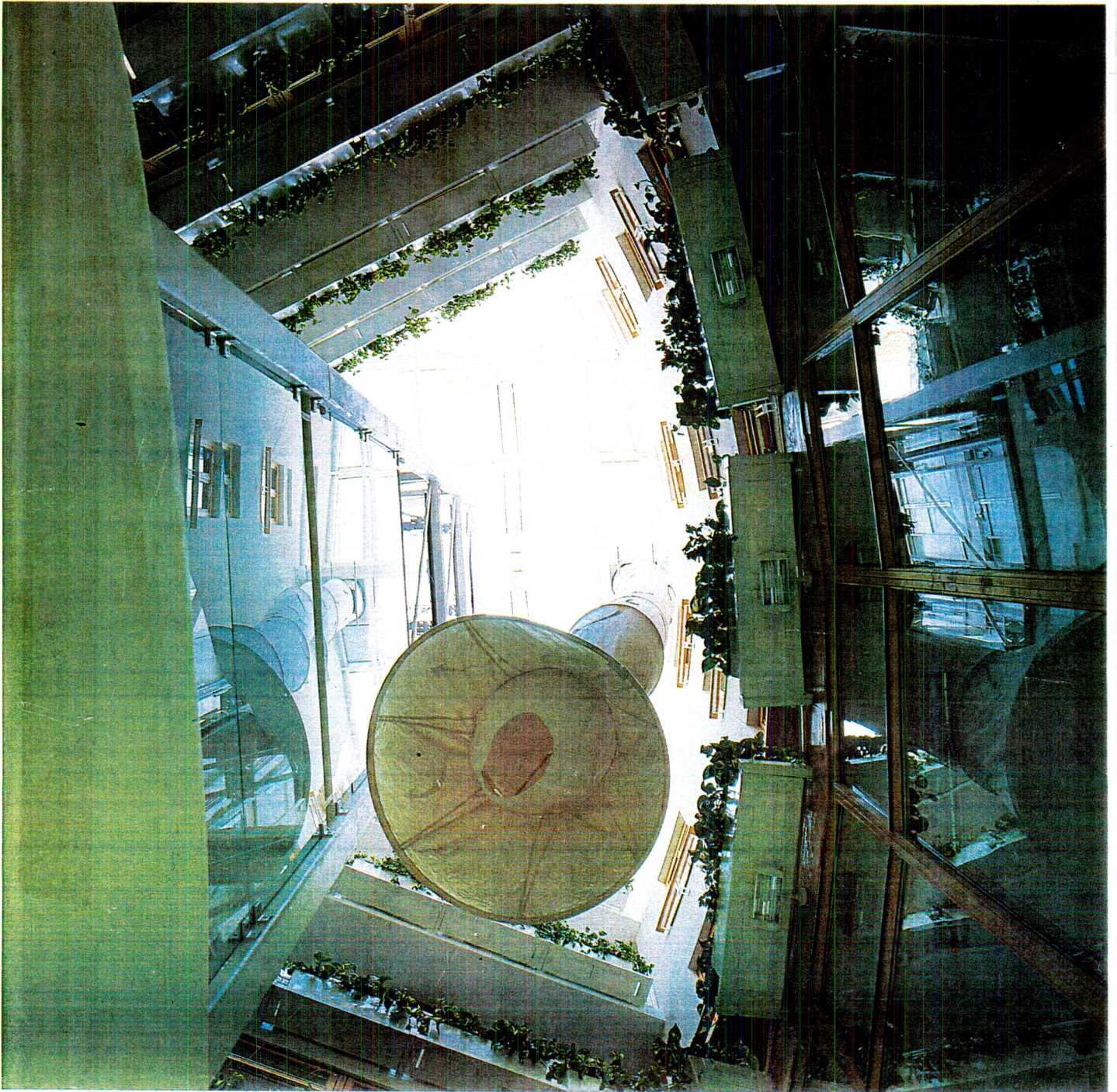
No attempt was made to recycle and incorporate the architectural salvage from the pre-existing building on the site where the Green Building now stands. Some of the materials in the building were also compromised when the use of recycled materials were reduced form the original design intention of the architects, for example, recycled copper and lead intended for the roof were replaced by a cheaper petrochemical man-made covering with a thin copper foil coating. Because of the money issue, the new compromised route taken means the roof won't last as long, as thin copper foil doesn't withstand the elements as long as copper sheet. This compromise is less environmentally friendly, also, because of the fact that there is a lot of pollution caused in the processes used to make petrochemicals.

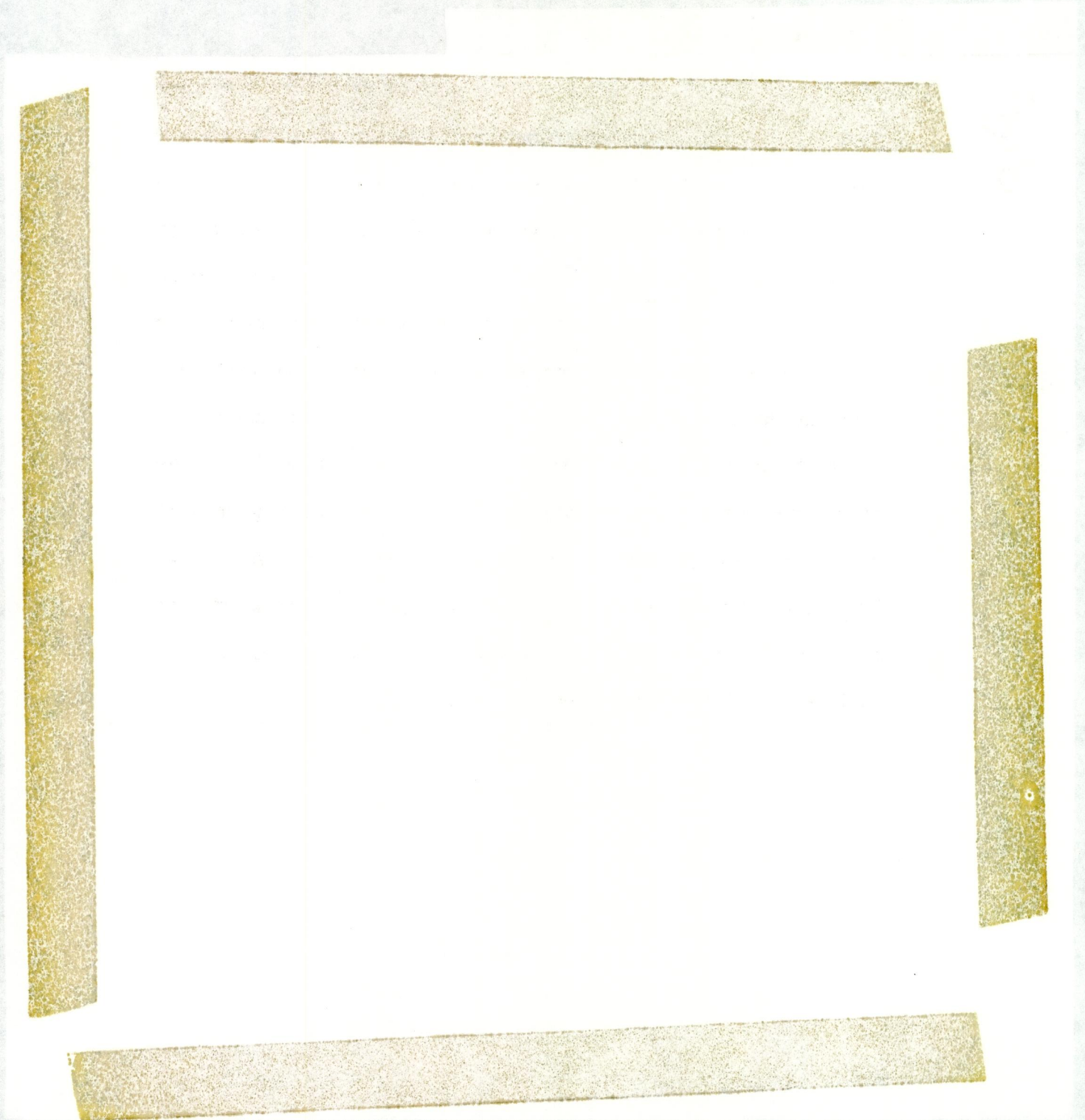
Due to a lack of information on the labelling of products for the architectural and building industry, truly environmentally friendly products were not used (Leech, October 1994, p. 32). Water based "solvent free" paint was used in a bland white colour. It has been reported (by Paul Leech in a critique on the building in Irish Architect the Journal of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, No. 103, September/October 1994) that the chemical additives replacing solvents in water based paints are reported to have many more chemicals of a toxic nature which are used to adhere the pigment. There are a number of Irish paint companies that produce non-toxic paints some of whose ingredients are less given that the paints used to compromising risks on the environment. These paints were not used in the Green Building. It is questionable whether the wood used in the construction of the building, for example the central courtyard (Fig. 18), is environmentally friendly. Frank Cooney, the project architect, said at a site visit on the completion of the building that the wood was imported from the U.S (October 1994 at the

3

Green Building). The travel/energy costs for importing this wood are surely higher than if native wood from sustainable forests were used.

Fig. 18 The Green Building - courtyard showing woodwork.





In the same critique as mentioned above by Paul Leech, 2nd Vice President of the R.I.A.I. in 1992, he criticises the building and discusses alternative things that could be used for other architects intending to design similar types of buildings to the Green Building. He doesn't ignore the "considerable achievements" in the building but uses and extends the information on them to develop the knowledge on this building. This type of article which is based on knowledge rather than assumptions is useful particularly if it is successful at provoking more developments in the field. In terms of design, Leech says a number of things in the building are compromised. The lift (Fig. 17) is a cheap, large mechanical concoction and doesn't look well in conjunction with the other architecturally strong features like the central courtyard that goes from the basement to the roof, allowing natural light to diffuse through the building. The plan to re-use an old Guinness lift was not realised due to fire officer and insurance requirements. At this point Leech suggests a greener approach that would have included using a water balance lift, visibly interconnected with other water systems, "as successfully recently employed externally at the Centre for Technology in Wales" (Leech, Irish Architect 103, September/October 1994 p. 32).

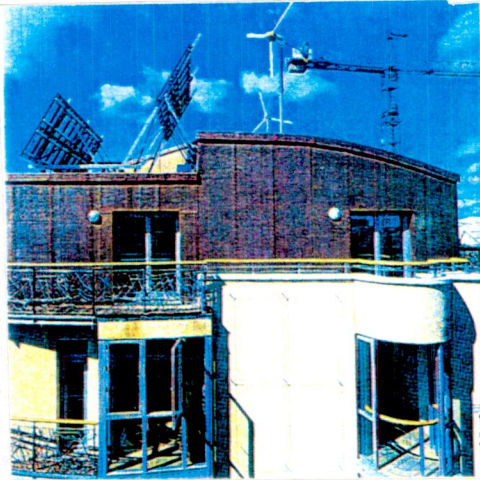
The Green Building as an "Intelligent Building".

The term "intelligent building" has been around since the early 1980's. Early definitions focused on technology related to communications and office automation? (Andrew Harrison, D.E.G.W. Architects London, 'Intelligence Quotient' Architecture Today, March 1994, p. 37), Harrison says that in a study carried out by D.E.G.W. Architects London that these buildings showed little consideration for those using the building. He concludes by redefining an intelligent building as "any building which provides a responsive supportive environment within which an organisation can achieve its business objectives. Technology can help or hinder the occupant but it is not the reason for the buildings existence" (Harrison, Architecture Today, March 1994, p. 37). There are some systems which, when unravelled in the Green Building, show that its design philosophy and technology could have provided more of a definitively "intelligent" as well as green approach.

The architects of the Green Building, Murray O'Laoire (in an account in the September/October 1994 issue of the Irish Architect) say that central to the proposal for EU funding was the aim "to produce a building that would be commercially viable and whose design philosophy and performance would therefore be transferable throughout the EU." Preselling the space however would have allowed for more direct consultation with the client/users needs for the building. The building would be more viable and "intelligent" if it were designed for the specific as opposed to the hypothetical needs of a client. For example at the time of the exhibition to the public of the building in September 1994 the retail space on the ground level showed no consideration for stock rooms or storage space, an obvious necessity for a retail outlet. There are also rumours going around that the wind turbines on the roof (Fig. 19) have to be turned off at night because of the disturbing noise. As a result of this hypothetical approach to the building, there is an

obvious blandness and internally still mood in the building even when filled with the many visitors that had come to see the exhibition of the building.

Fig. 19 The Green Building - wind turbine.



Is technology part of the reason for the existence of the Green Building and does it help or hinder the occupant? The high tech "ventilation system" is not a usual electricity powered air conditioning system, in this case air comes into the building from the roof and from the basement through the central atrium. The use of a "complex heat exchanger" and air-mixing, fan unit with a fabric funnel keeps the air moving properly when natural conditions do not, and the sensors pick up this information. The fabric funnel (Fig. 20) by Vivienne Roche, sculptor, like the lift does nothing for the wonderful form and structure of the atrium, the materials seem too flimsy and the arrows printed on them for decoration do not blend with the minimal decoration type space of the atrium. It remains to be seen through the monitoring of this system whether it is successful, but Paul Leech again suggests that a grass roof garden as well as providing an amenity would have provided more oxygenated air to enter the building through the roof. With the use of such a system one must question whether the false air environment it creates is a healthy one, for example, for people to be sleeping under, (as most of the bedroom windows face the interior atrium and not the exterior natural air).

Does this technological advancement in the air system provide a supportive environment for the people using the building or is it diminishing the body's natural mechanisms to defend itself in conditions of minimal fresh air. Surely the people subject to the system should be monitored as well as the system?

Fig. 20 The Green Building - lift and fabric funnel.

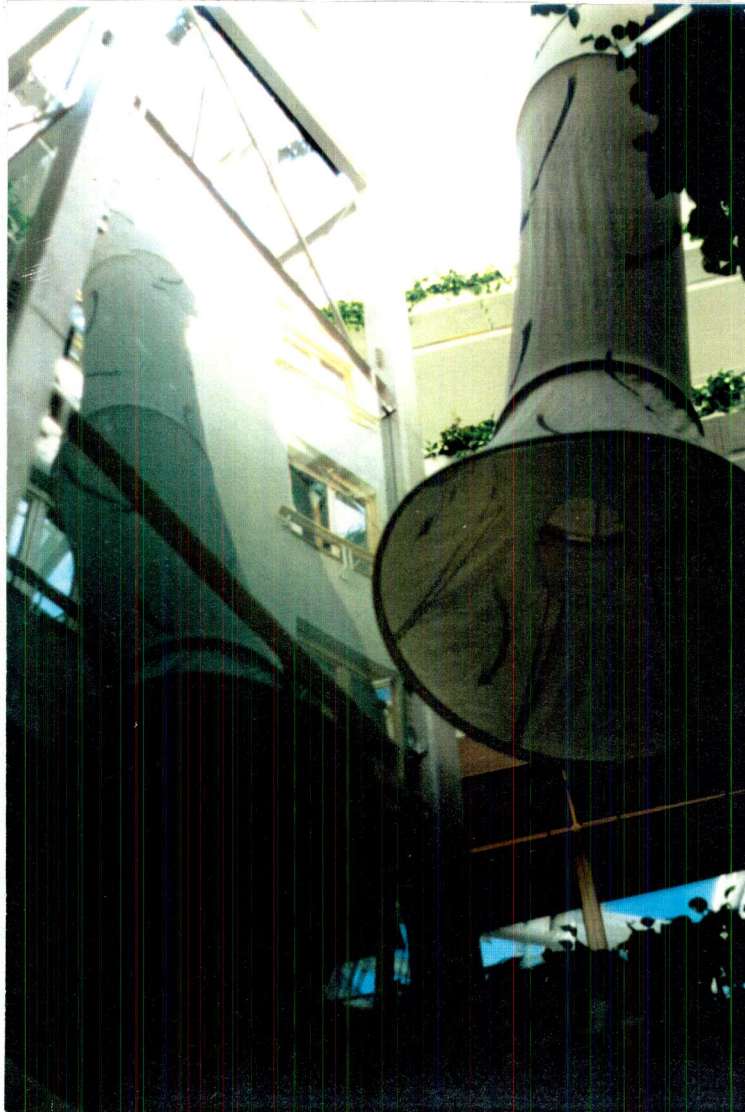


fig 20

Art, Craft Design and the Green Building.

The most exciting part of the building's design for most people is its visual expression : the use of light, the open roof allowing for a very large percentage of the building to survive throughout the day just on natural light : the "television" lights (Fig. 21, 22) that come on in the corridors are an interesting use of recycled materials. The imported French bay windows (Fig. 23) allowing plenty of light in from the street, revolve on rails that section off the area around the window into a conservatory type feature and partition the window area off from the room. The central courtyard without its grotesque lift is a wonderfully articulated space; a strong feature of the design success of the building, it gives a sense (because it maximises the use of light) of an exterior/interior world.

In the integration of art and craft elements in the building, it was the concern of the architects to go beyond "tokenism", which is a welcome idea in the fabric of any new building (The Green Building, Irish Architect, September, October, 1994). It is what gives a building its unique identity. Whether the synthesis of contemporary art and thorough craftsmanship is successful in the building is as questionable as is its environmental aspect. However, it is obvious that a serious attempt has been made and it is not just for show, particularly in relation to the stronger elements, namely the two facades; the Temple Lane door by Maud Cotter and the Crow Street door by Remco de Fouw, the balustrades by James Garner and the handpainted tileworks by "Tileworks". Some smaller scale elements of art and craft design throughout the building, although well designed, show a lack of attention to craftsmanship and a bad choice of materials for example the lights by James Garner (Fig. 24) appear like rushed, add-on tokens and are not as successfully integrated as the facades.

Fig. 21 The Green Building - TV lights.



Fig. 22 The Green Building - TV lights.

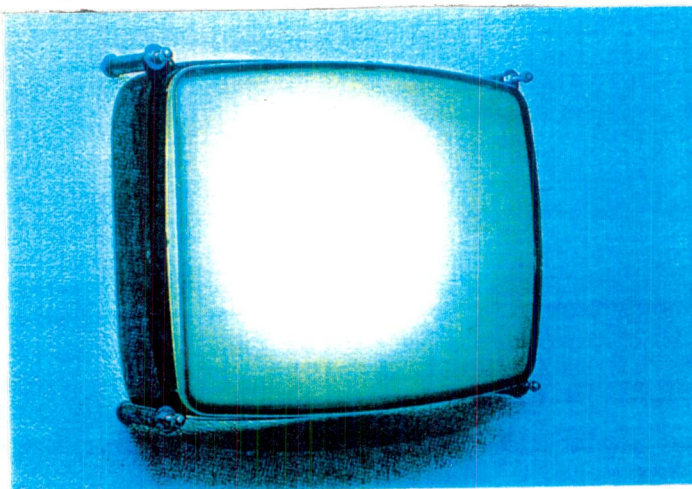




Fig. 23 The Green Building - french bay windows.

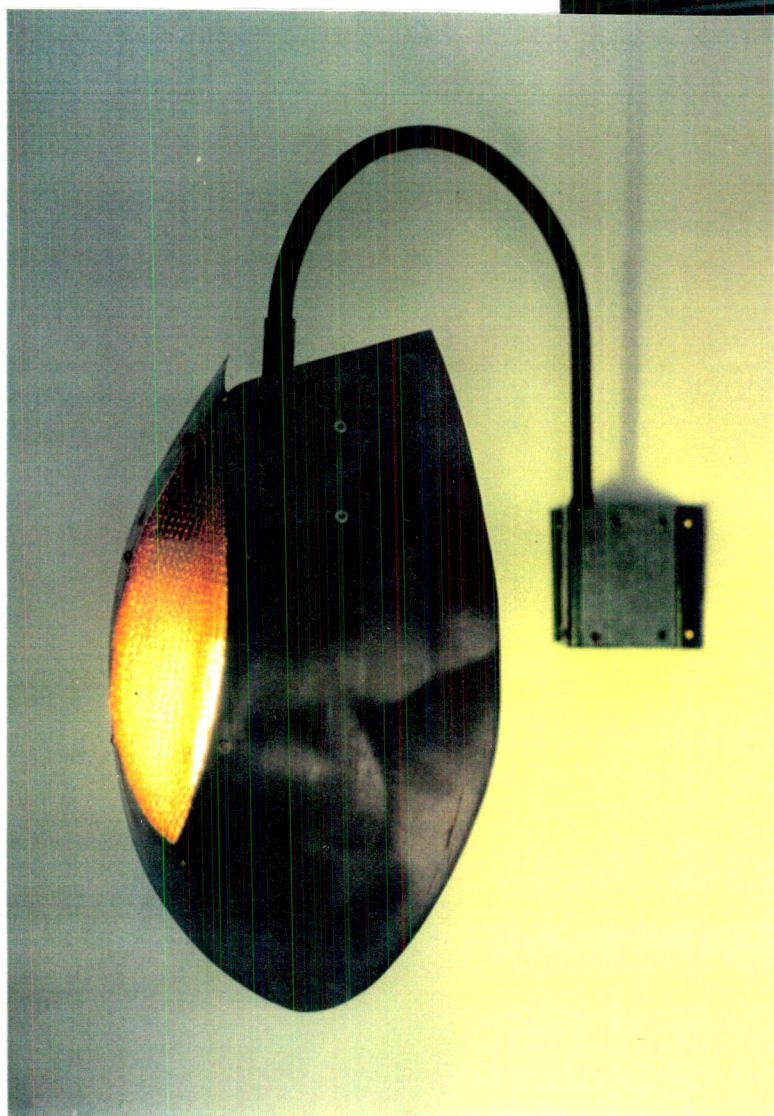


Fig. 24 The Green Building - James Garner lampshade.

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1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the war. It is a very interesting and informative account of the events of the year.

2. The second part of the report deals with the economic situation of the country. It is a very detailed and accurate account of the economic conditions of the year.

3. The third part of the report deals with the social situation of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the social conditions of the year.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the political situation of the country. It is a very clear and concise account of the political conditions of the year.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the military situation of the country. It is a very comprehensive and detailed account of the military conditions of the year.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the cultural situation of the country. It is a very interesting and informative account of the cultural conditions of the year.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the scientific situation of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the scientific conditions of the year.

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9. The ninth part of the report deals with the administrative situation of the country. It is a very detailed and accurate account of the administrative conditions of the year.

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11. The eleventh part of the report deals with the health situation of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the health conditions of the year.

12. The twelfth part of the report deals with the education situation of the country. It is a very clear and concise account of the educational conditions of the year.

13. The thirteenth part of the report deals with the labor situation of the country. It is a very detailed and accurate account of the labor conditions of the year.

14. The fourteenth part of the report deals with the housing situation of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the housing conditions of the year.

15. The fifteenth part of the report deals with the transportation situation of the country. It is a very clear and concise account of the transportation conditions of the year.

16. The sixteenth part of the report deals with the communication situation of the country. It is a very detailed and accurate account of the communication conditions of the year.

17. The seventeenth part of the report deals with the energy situation of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the energy conditions of the year.

18. The eighteenth part of the report deals with the environment situation of the country. It is a very clear and concise account of the environmental conditions of the year.

19. The nineteenth part of the report deals with the population situation of the country. It is a very detailed and accurate account of the population conditions of the year.

20. The twentieth part of the report deals with the future of the country. It is a very thorough and complete account of the future of the country.

21. The twenty-first part of the report deals with the conclusion of the report. It is a very clear and concise account of the conclusion of the report.

The facades on both Crow Street and Temple Lane reflect the nature of the activities inside the building. The Crow Street entrance door by Remco de Fouw (Fig. 25) is a wonderful expression and synthesis of the components and activities of the Green Building. It is appropriately a patinated green copper surface which is embossed with arrows that, on one side of the door, go in an upwards direction and move around an arch shape to go in a downward direction. This seems to reflect the nature of the air system inside. From the centre of the panel emerges a relief tree-like symbol whose branches are pipe-ends with taps. This seems to reflect the water system of the building as hot water is drawn from under the ground while rain water is used for the showers and toilets in the building. The composition, concepts and use of materials in this entrance door are a successfully integrated part of the building and its function. It also appears that the door serves as a very strong security blanket for the building.

The door on the other side on Temple Lane by Maud Cotter (Fig. 26) is a visual storyboard of recycled materials composed in a colourful and didactic fashion. Recycled telephone wire, broken glass, paper, tins, metal are among the materials used. The work is different in scale to that of the other side, after all it is the back entrance. It demands an investigation where as de Fouws door makes a direct visual impact. Both entrance doors successfully exploit the relationship between art craft and architecture.

Fig. 26 The Green Building - Maud Cotter, section of Temple Lane entrance panel.



Fig. 25 The Green Building - Remco de Fouw Crow Street entrance.

[Redacted]



[Redacted]

Further to his entrance panel, Remco de Fouw has some pieces of sculpture on display in the building that did not have the same integrated quality (Fig. 27, 28). The concepts of his pieces had green-inspired messages but were displayed against sterile backdrops in the apartments. They seem as if they were for show as they were for sale as take away pieces after the exhibition of the building. They were token pieces of added on art contradicting the architects principal aim.

Fig. 27 The Green Building - Remco de Fouw - picture.

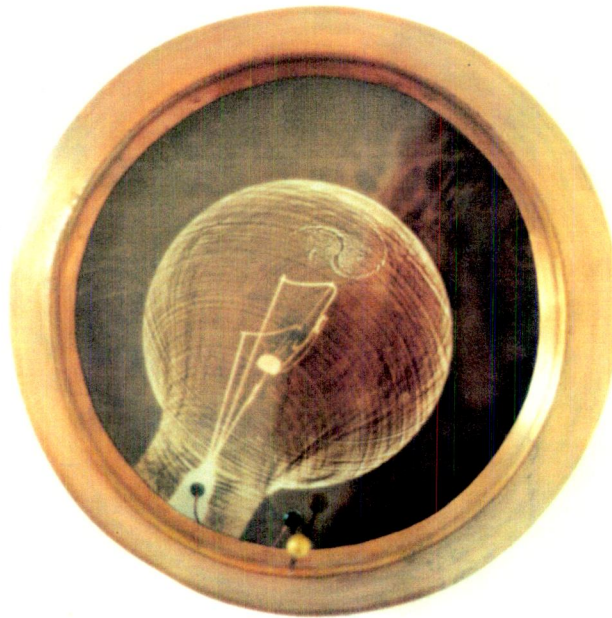
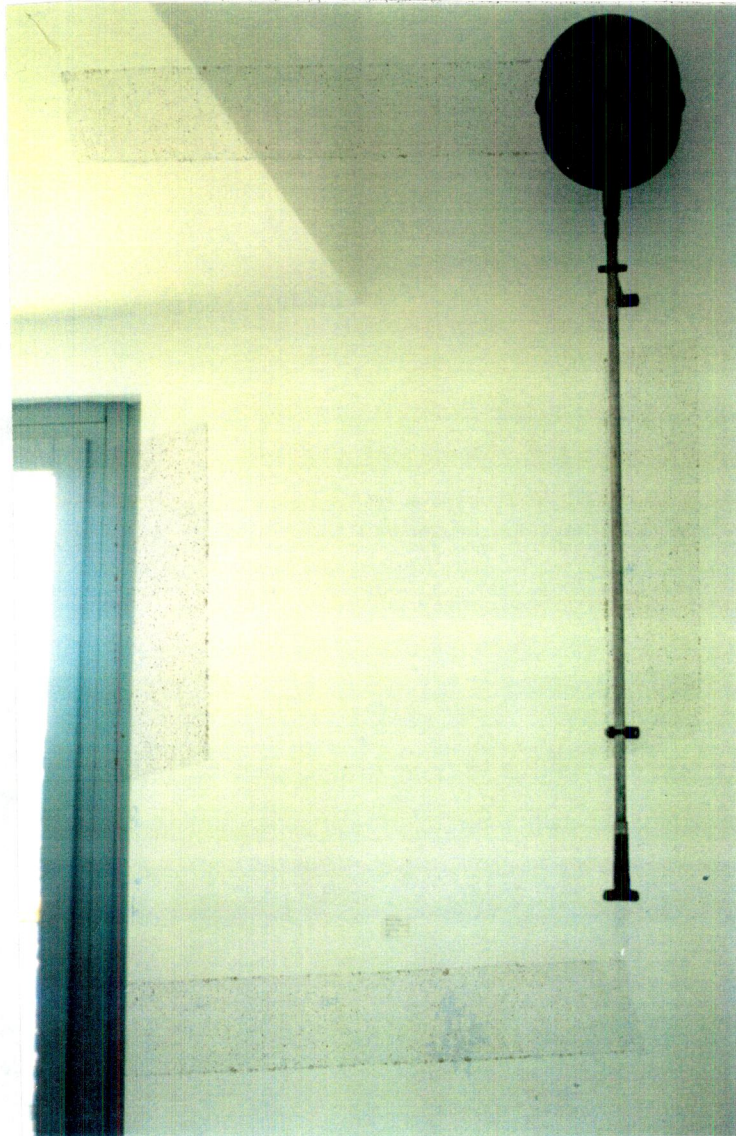


Fig 21

Fig. 28 The Green Building - Remco de Fouw - sculpture.



The filigree metal bicycle balustrade and bicycle stands by James Garner metal worker are a witty and clever use of recycled materials. The Green Building's promotional literature says "there is one extra thing that can be yours at the Green Building, you very own parking place in the city" (The Green Building T.B.P., 1994) but the space is for a bicycle not a car. However, in relation to the balustrades (Fig. 29) even at as early a stage as the exhibition (October, 1994), rusting can be seen. A lack of consideration of materials is shown here as the steel should have been galvanised and given



extra coats of weather resistant paint, so the work might be sustained into the future. James Garners light fittings (Fig. 24) in the interior apartments also deserve critical attention; they are well designed, although a lack of thorough craftsmanship shows bad finish, dints in the metal and raw unfinished edges. It is questionable whether copper, a conductor of electricity, and heat is a safe material for light fittings.

Fig. 29 The Green Building - James Garner bicycle balustrades.



1969

1969

1969

1969

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1969

The hand painted tiles in the bathrooms and kitchens by 'Tileworks', a company of two ceramic design graduates, can only merit the description of pretty. They do not attempt to exploit any design parameter that relates to the building, although their hand painted floor (Fig 30, 31 in the penthouse apartment is superbly rendered. Laura O'Hagan of Tileworks said in a conversation (at NCAD, 6 February, 1994) that they were not given a lot of time or money for the job, just measurements of the rooms. This seems to show that the architects seem to falter in their commitment to exploit the crafts in terms of this aspect of the building.

In conclusion, the Green Building has a number of shortcomings. It must be affirmed that through its use of developing technologies, its attempt at a consideration for the environment, its integration of art and craft, there is realised and long overdue approach to building here in Dublin. The Green Building by "sticking its tubers out for snipping" (Leech, Irish Architect, September/October 1994, p. 27) by letting the public and critics in has also shown the catalytic effect such a building may have. Much has been written on the Green Building and in a wider context, more considered approaches to architecture could develop from additional lessons learned from a realised building such as this. The lessons from the Green Building should particularly be put into practice by the apartment developers in the city as, due to the fast rate at which new apartments are going up, it is obvious that little time is going into their design, little research is going into their building methods and materials which ultimately will affect how long they last and their impact on the fabric of the city.

Fig. 30 The Green Building - Tileworks, painted mosaic.

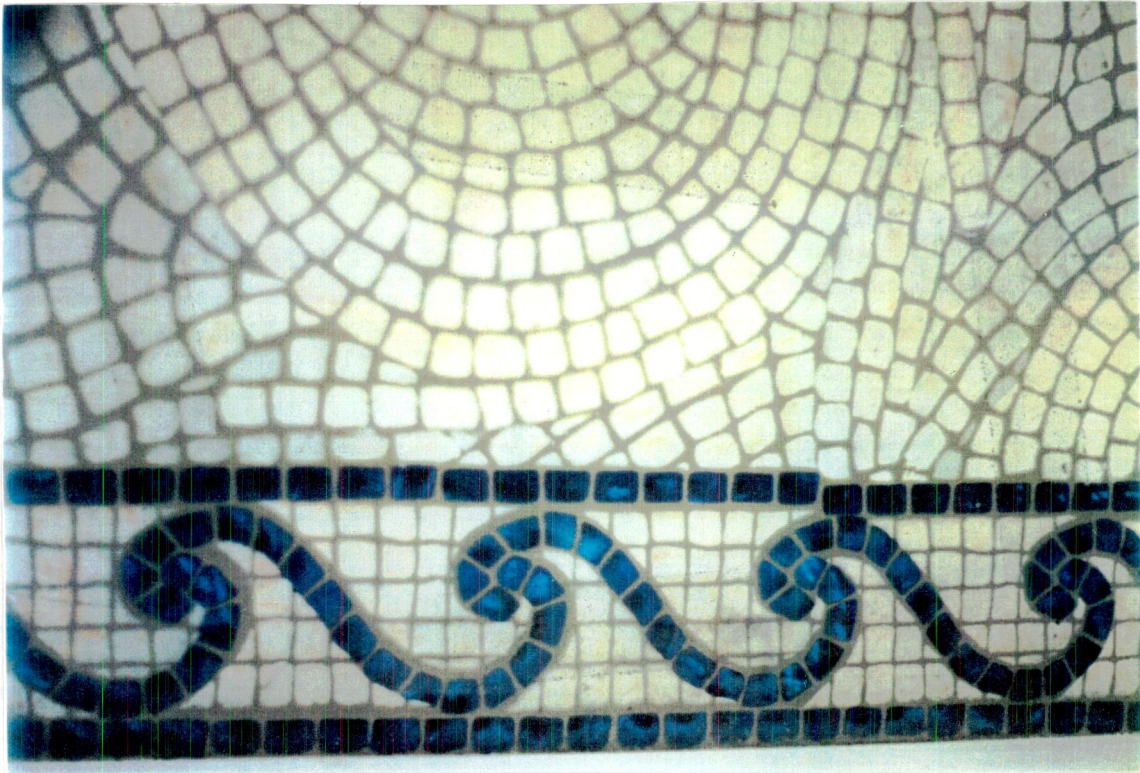
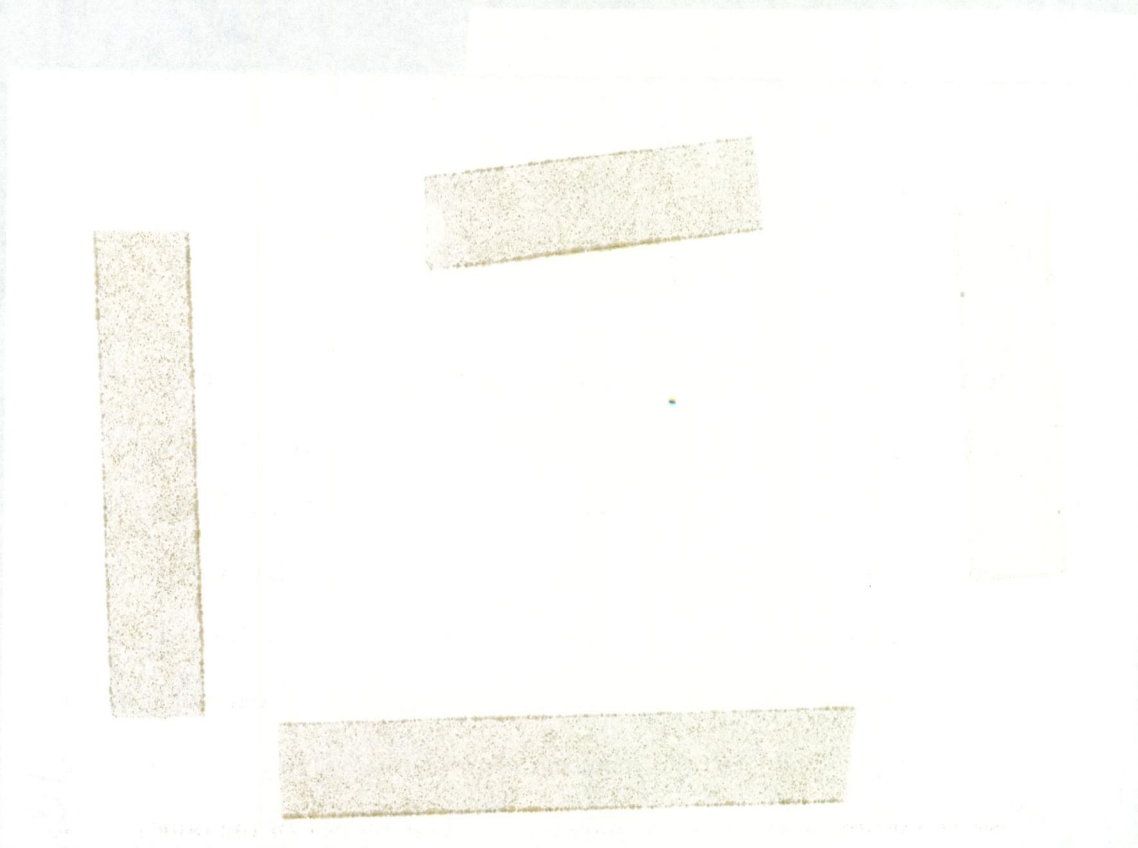


Fig. 31 The Green Building - Tileworks, same.





The Box on the Docks

The Waterways Visitors Centre (Fig. 32) by Architects Ciaran O'Connor and Ger O'Sullivan of the Office of Public Works (OPW) in the Grand Canal Basin on the docks is a gleaming white building that provides a contrast to the urban decay of the area. Surrounding the building are a number of abandoned warehouses like the Bolands Flour Mill (19th century) and others of simple dramatic geometry like the Circular Gas Works (1871) (Fig. 33). There are three simple geometric elements in the Waterways Centre: the cube, the cylinder and the triangle. The building is clad in white metal and appears to float on the water; in fact is borne on concrete piles that are 22 metres into the bedrock. As the OPW owns the waterbody, it was a free site for them to use. The design draws inspiration from a nautical theme and the surrounding built environment. The function of the building is to present an exhibition centre on the environment and history of the Irish Canal System and on the commerce of the eighteenth century. The main architect, Ciaran O'Connor has since led a project to conserve and rebuild the famous eighteenth century Turner glasshouse in the National Botanic Gardens, Dublin.

The Waterways building is a box, indented in the corner to form a recessed porch. A glass cylinder pierces the box, which both functions as an entrance to the building and houses a staircase that gives access to the roof deck. There is also an external staircase (Fig. 34) giving the option of an unprescribed route through the building. The entrance is a framed pavilion (Fig. 35) with a ticket office and toilets, from this there extends a timber deck walkway leading to the main entrance of the building. This entrance gives the visitor a sense of boarding a ship. The interior of the building also carries a nautical theme of boat and lighthouse architecture and reflects marine and water life.

Fig. 32 Waterways Visitor Centre.

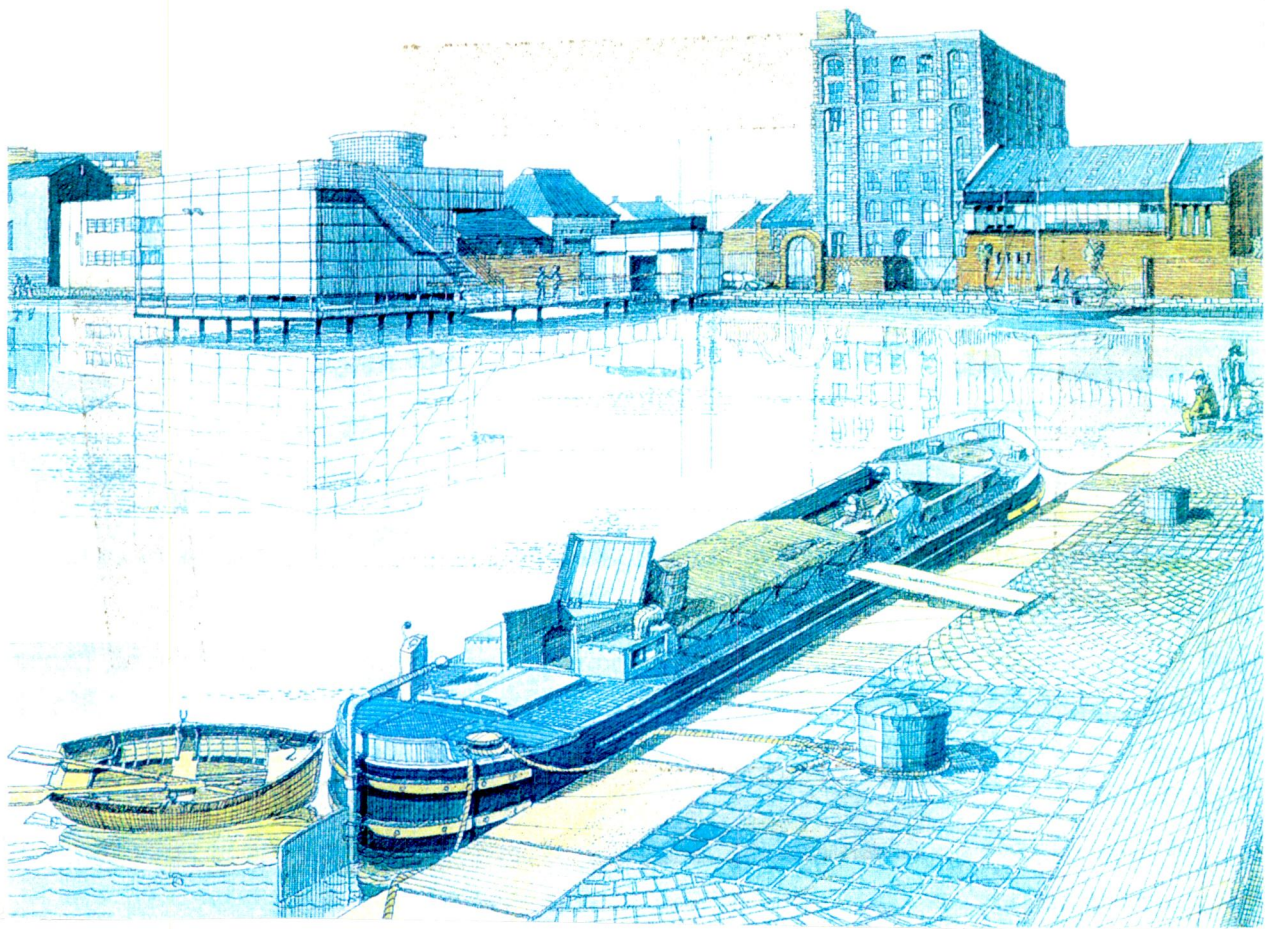


Fig. 33 Circular Gas Works.



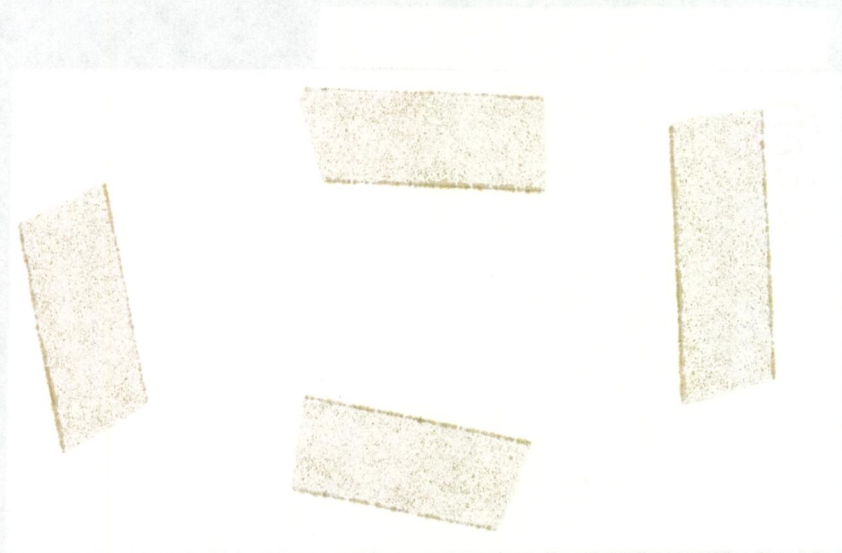
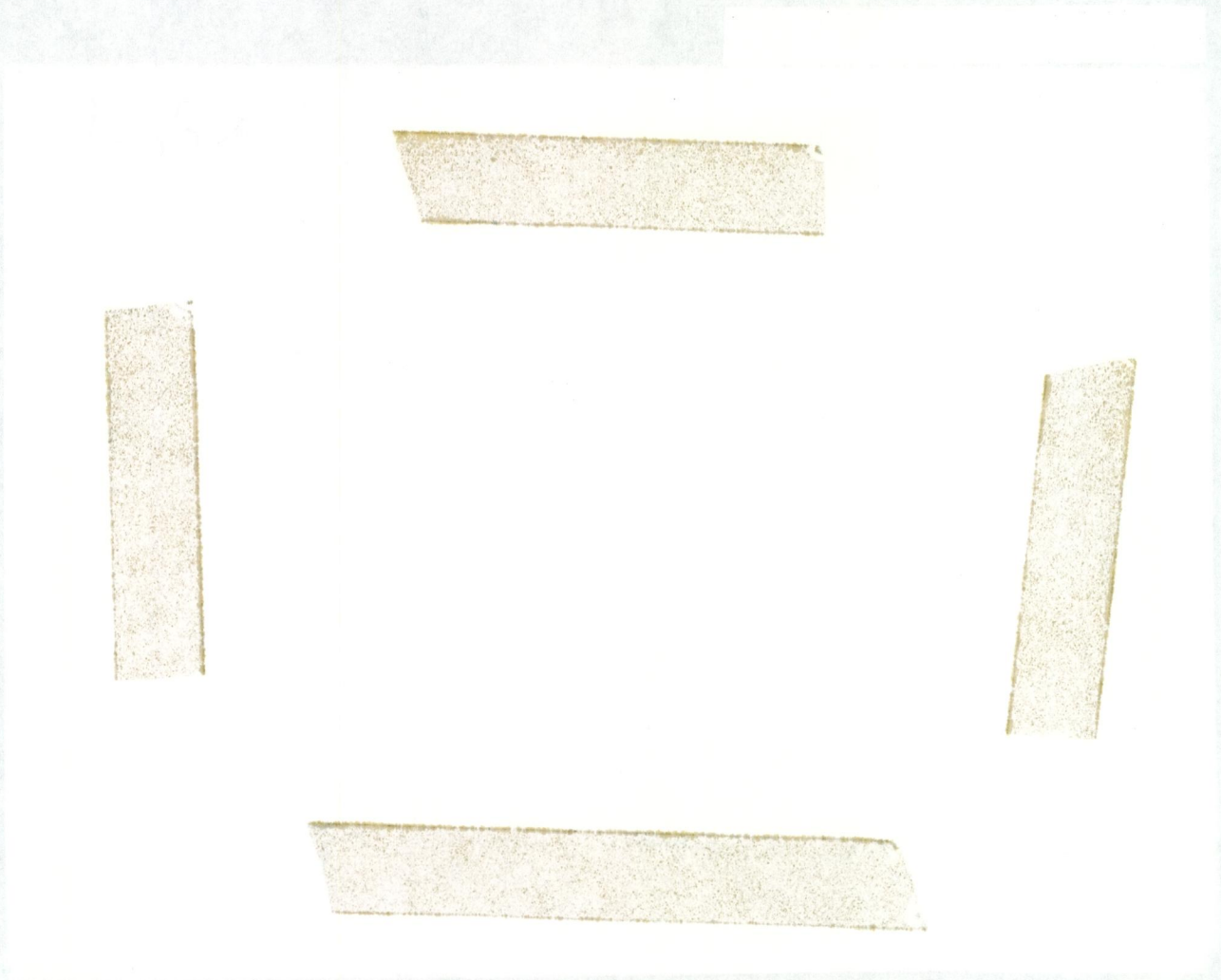


Fig. 34 Waterways Visitor Centre - External Staircase.



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Fig. 35 Waterways Visitor Centre - Entrance Pavillion.



The glass block cylinder allows light refraction inside the space, like light passing through water (Fig. 36). When inside, this gives a glorious sense of being underwater. The spiral staircase within this cylinder, in contrast to the blockiness of the form, is light and skeletal, drawing similarities with ship interiors. The main interior space is a single volume with a timber cladding and a suspended mezzanine (Fig. 37) a space for audio-visual presentations. The most interesting aspect of the main space is the positioning of the glazing (Fig. 38), horizontal strip glazing at floor level enhances the sense of floating as dappled light on the water is reflected into the building. The mezzanine is cleverly in shade, therefore the audio-visual activities can function successfully. A tall window in the south east corner of the main



floor gives a good view of the basin. The main interior space is qualitative, no unnecessary services clutter the space as they are confined to the entrance pavilion.

Fig. 36 Waterways Visitor Centre - Interior of the Glass Cylinder.

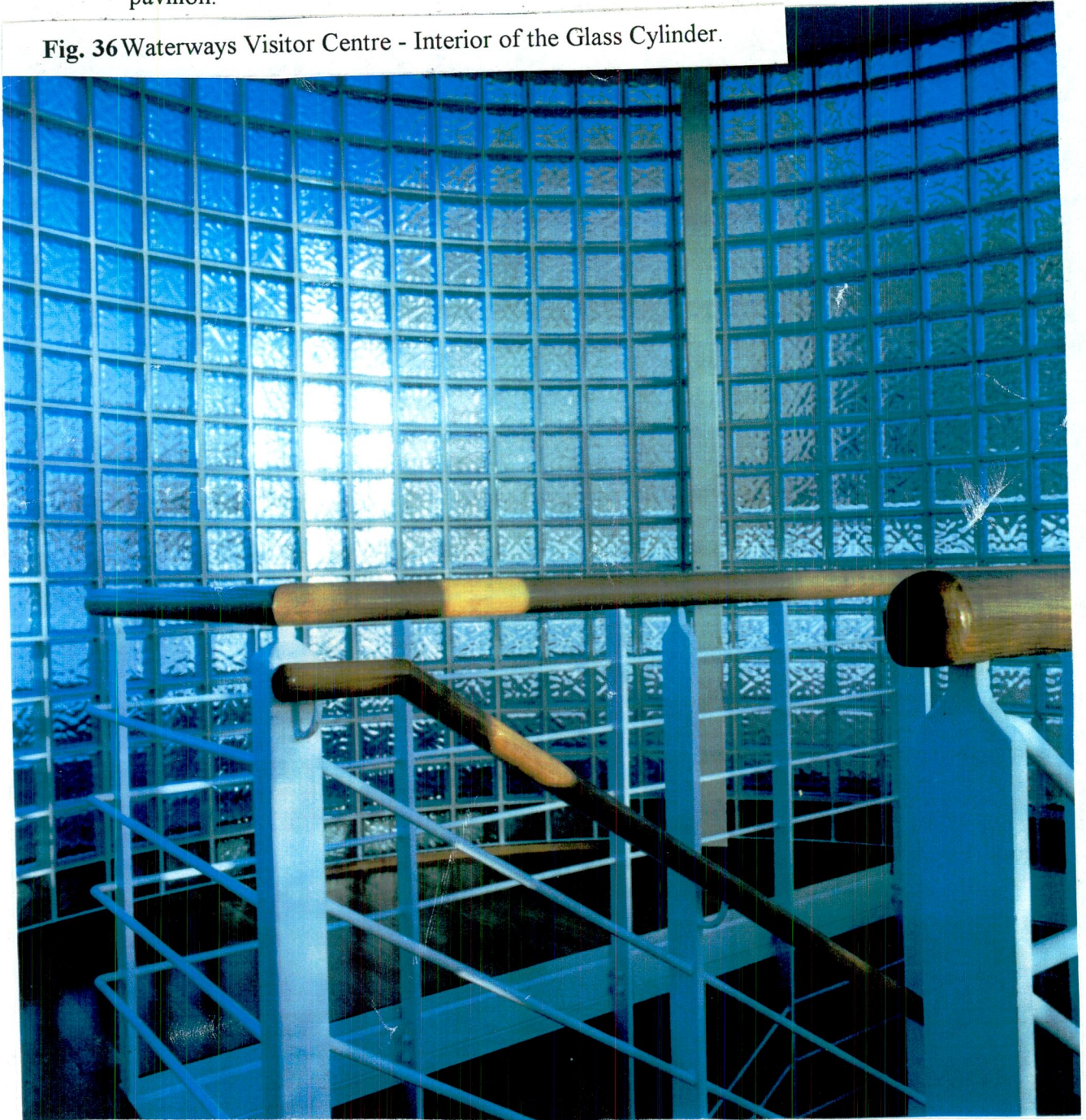
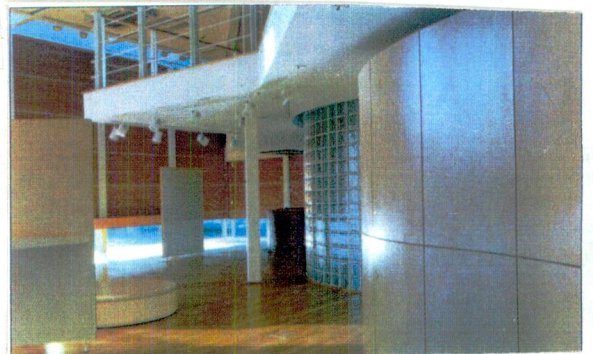
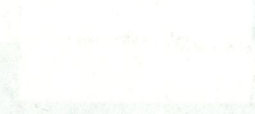
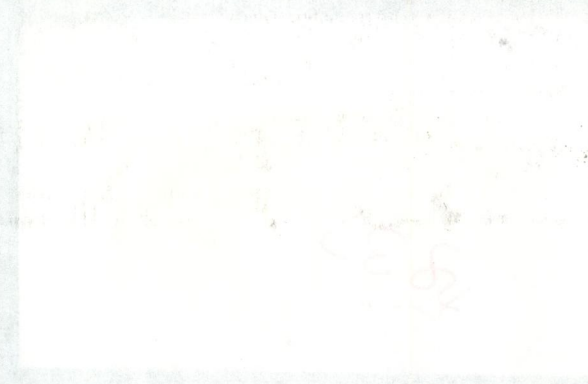


Fig. 37 Waterways Visitor Centre - Interior showing mezzanine, wood panels and strip floor level glazing.



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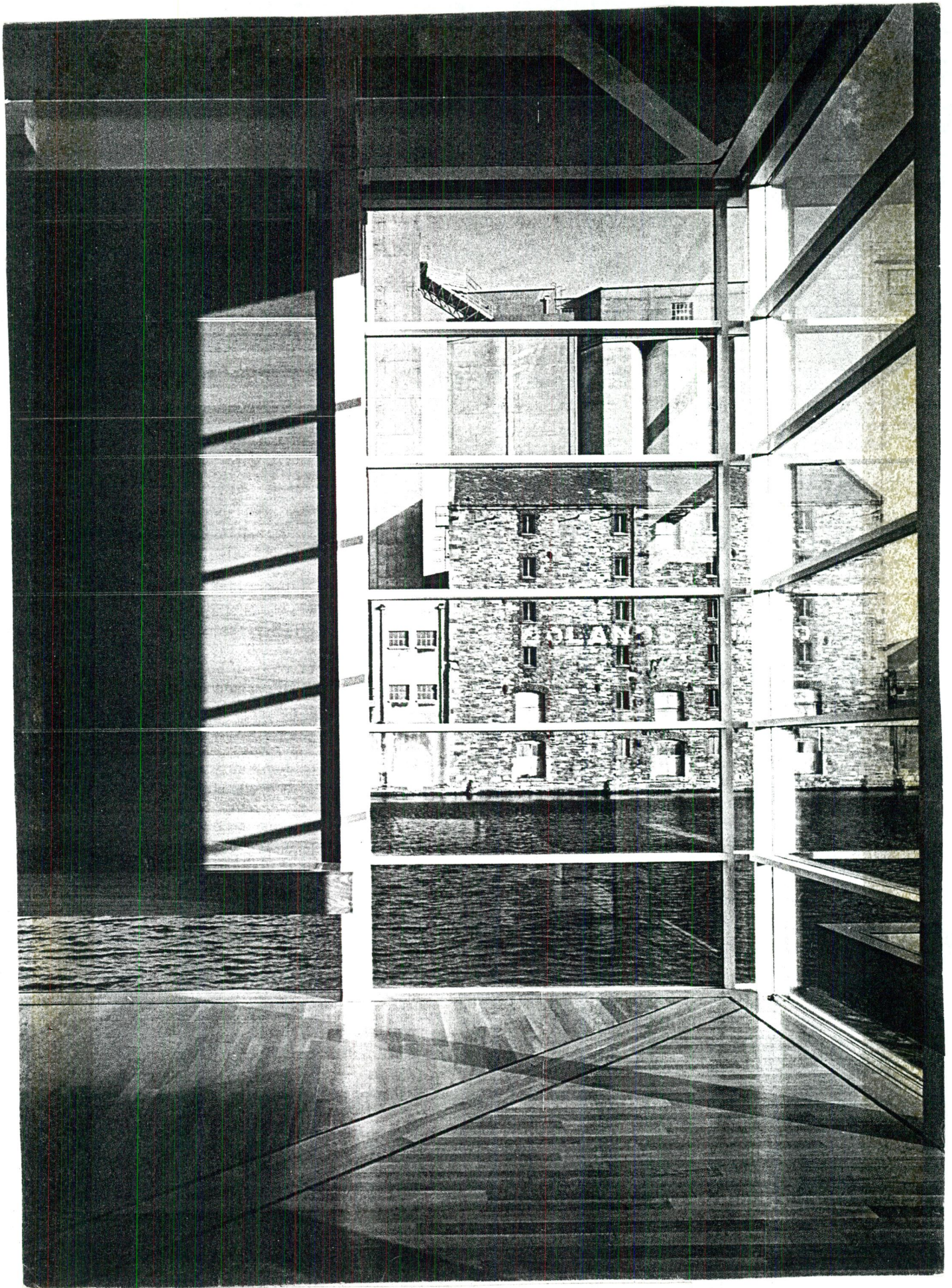
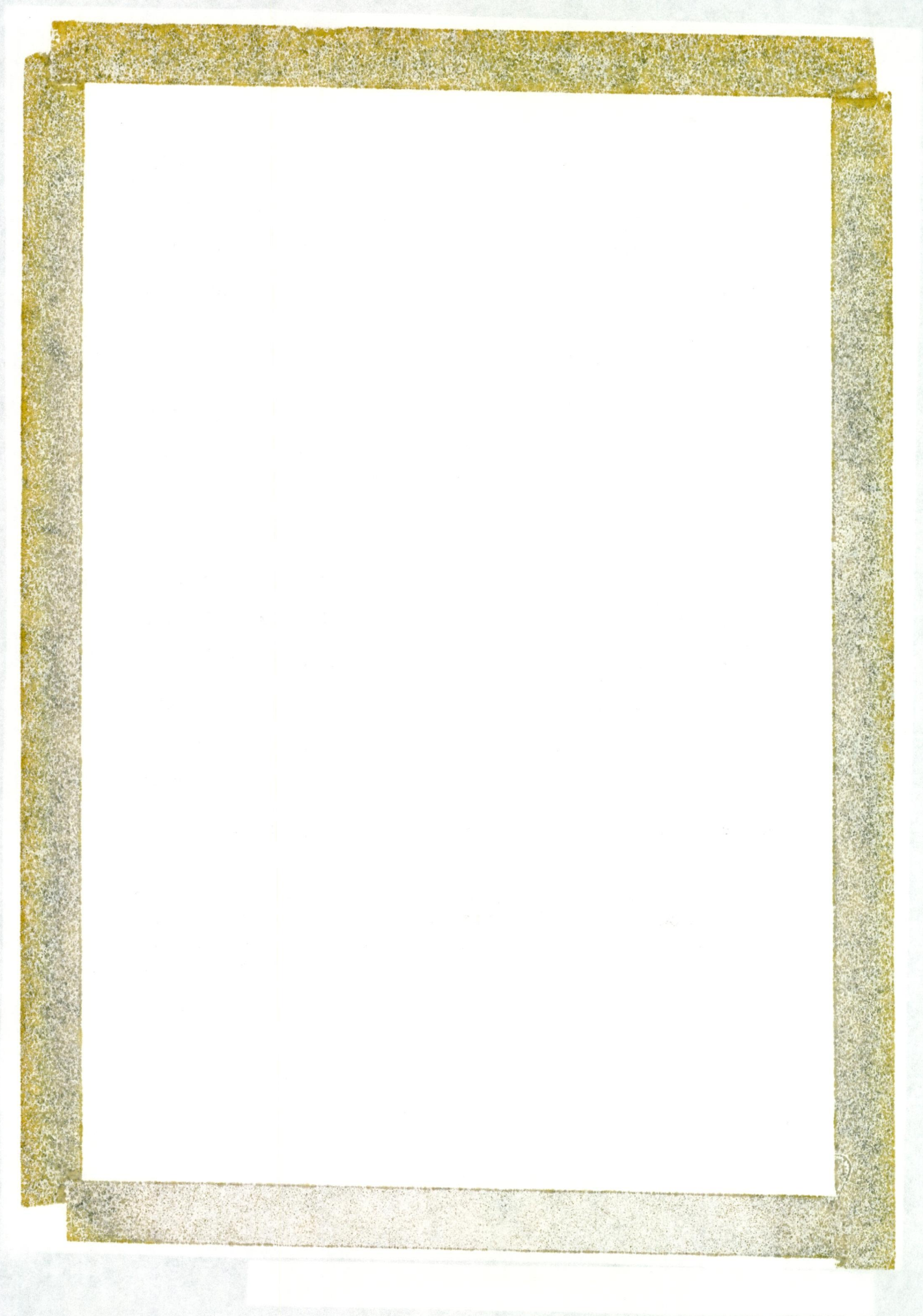


Fig. 38 Waterways Visitor Centre - Window and floor level glazing.



The ventilation (Fig. 39) is provided by grilles at low and high levels of the building allowing air to move in its most natural way through the building. Unlike the hi-tech system in the Green Building, this simple, modest system works effectively and is ecological as it does not require an unnecessary waste of energy.

The nautical theme prevalent in the building is calculated and integrated into its function, for example, a round glass panel in the roof (Fig. 40) is supported with metal rods that radiate from the centre like a compass.

The roof deck is like that of a boat, it reminded Nuala O'Faolain in her article on the Waterways Visitor Centre in The Irish Times of 17 August 1994 of "dry martinis, and dancing to a moonlit orchestra and Fred Astaire in a white suit", she obviously liked it although her lay persons perception is formed by various mental associations as opposed to informed thought. This "Fred Astaire" factor type of appreciation is criticised in an article by David Keane in the September/October 1994 issue of The Irish Architect.

"Unfortunately the lay persons perception is formed by various factors, some of which the architects can control and some of which he cannot. The distinction is rarely made. One never hears 'the restaurant was really nicely designed but the food was poisonous' instead the whole establishment is condemned" (ibid).

Fig. 39 Waterways Visitor Centre - Air system.

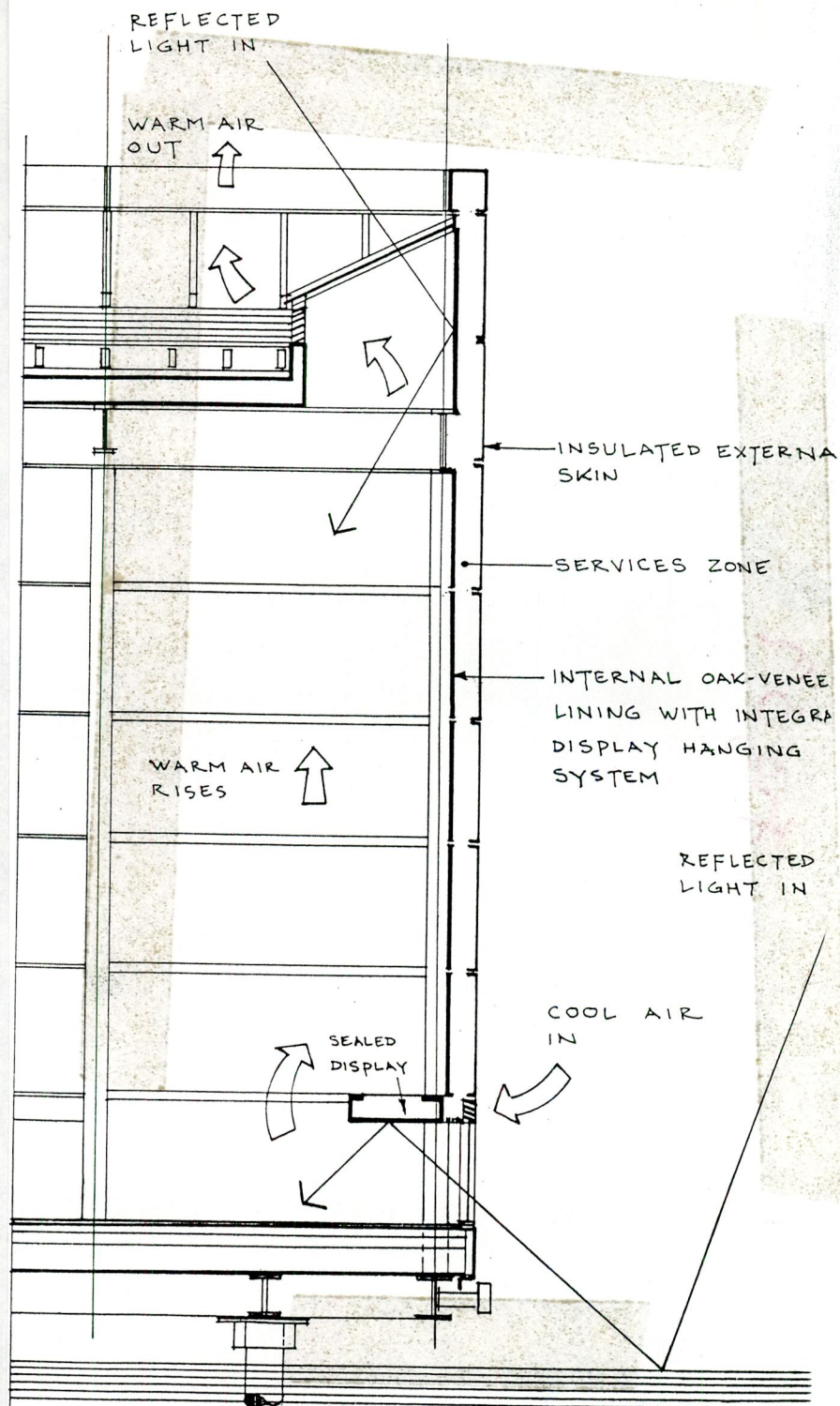
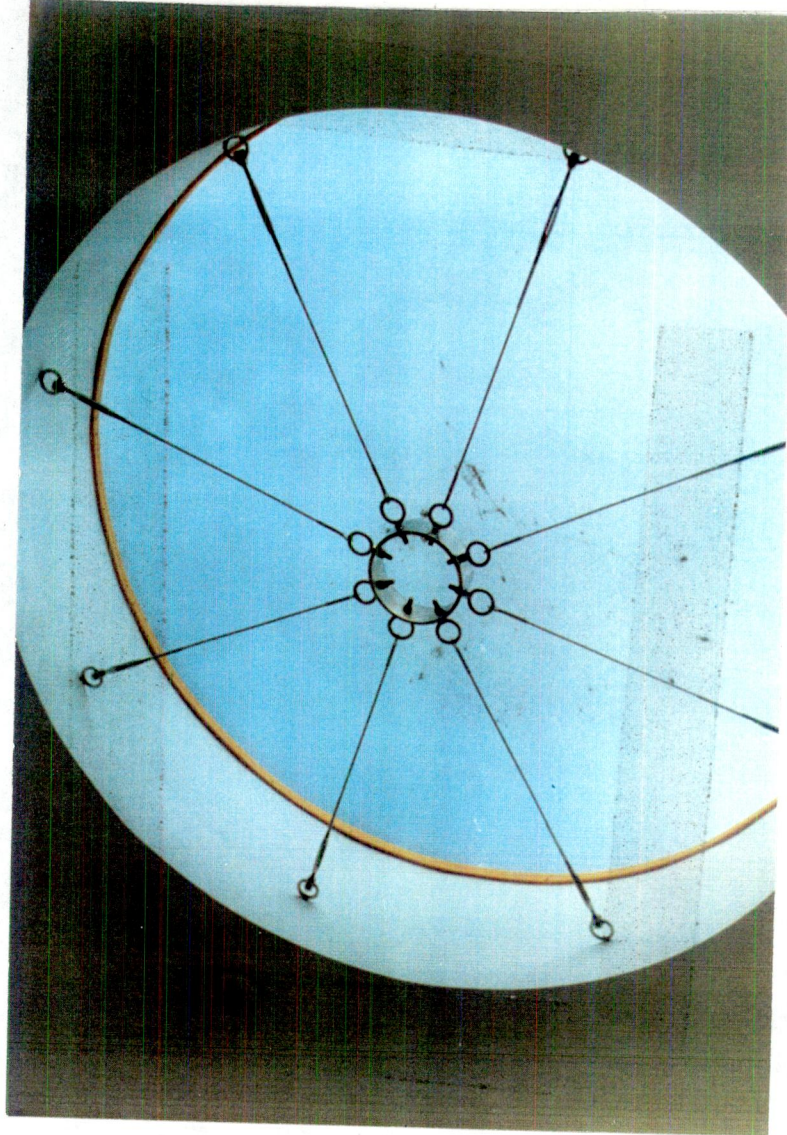
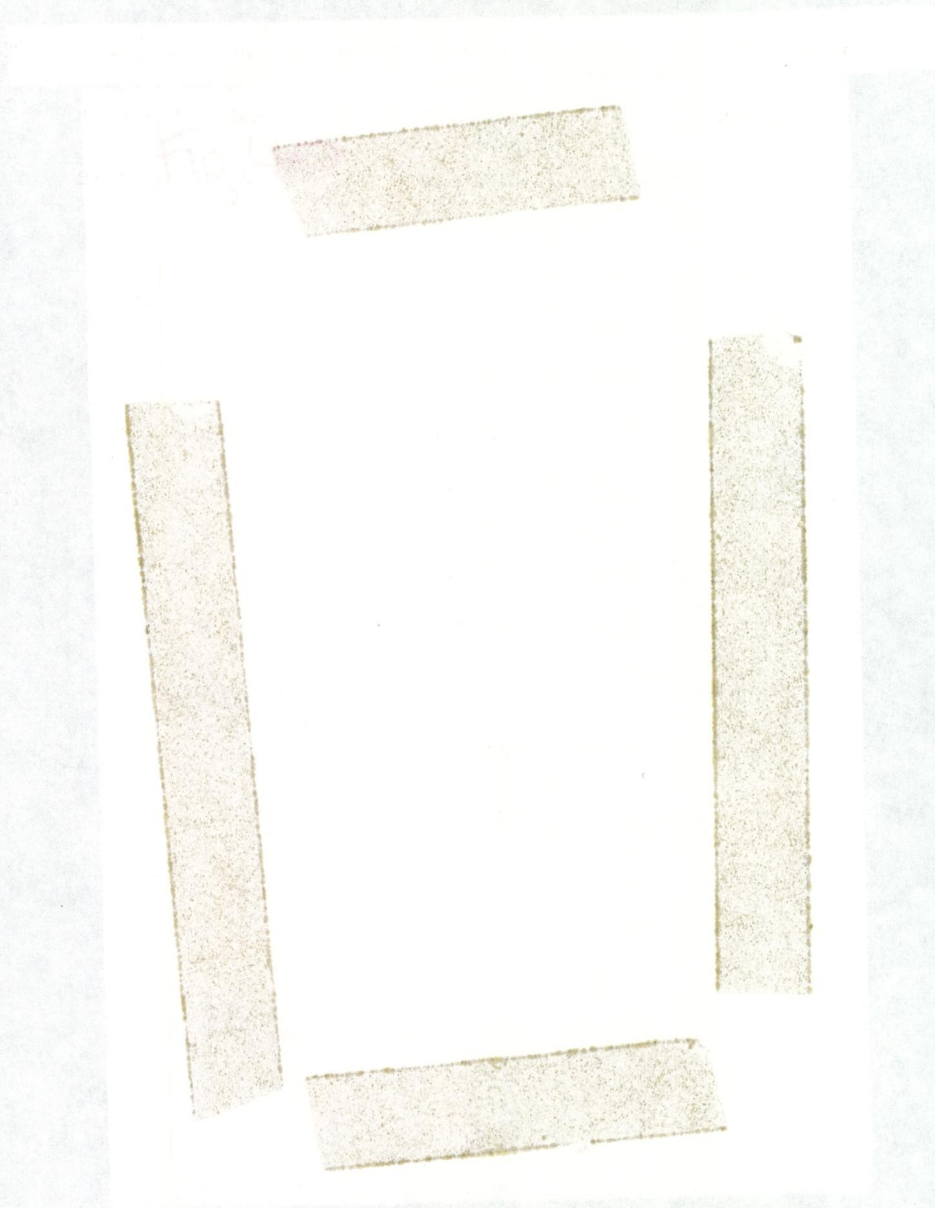




Fig. 40 Waterways Visitor Centre - Nautical theme window/roof.





The Irish Film Centre.

The Irish Film Centre by Architects O'Donnell and Tuomey, who are an award winning Dublin based firm is housed in a 17th century Quaker meeting place. It has been remodelled by the architects from a number of old connected Quaker buildings dating from 1690 into the Film Centre that now provides restaurant, bar, cinemas, archive and retail spaces. The building has been cited as a "fertile symbiosis between old and new" (Catherine Slessor, Architectural Review, Autumn 1992, p. 47) this is achieved by the design team, Sheila O'Donnell, John Tuomey and Sean Mahon by preserving existing features of the building that are interesting, and sensitively developing new features to disguise elements of less importance for example the brickwork in the central courtyard is a part of the original building's fabric, which gives the space a richness that would be difficult to achieve in a new building and on the entrance from Eustace street a neon corona marks the building and lights on the corridor floor pave the way into the foyer (Fig. 41) like landing lights on a runway.

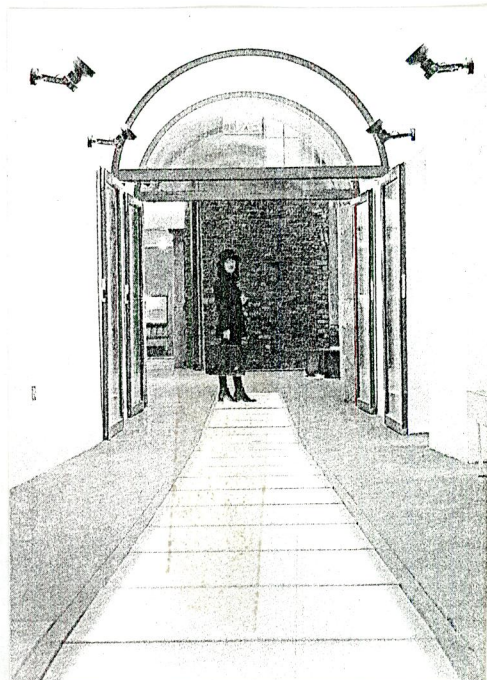


Fig. 41 Irish Film Centre - Neon Corridor.

The new building revolves around a skylit, central courtyard protected with a sawtooth glazed roof. The buildings entrance corridor from Eustace Street is the main entrance, and is one of more dramatic elements in the building in terms of scale. Onto Sycamore Street parallel to Eustace Street a new element, of crisp chiselled frontage imbeds itself into the existing rectilinear redbrick (Fig. 42). The space beneath the courtyard is used for archive storage. The courtyard itself has been enlarged, to give ample space for the different activities for example the restaurant, shop and ticket office. The light from above the courtyard as in the Green Building gives a sense of an external space (Fig. 43).

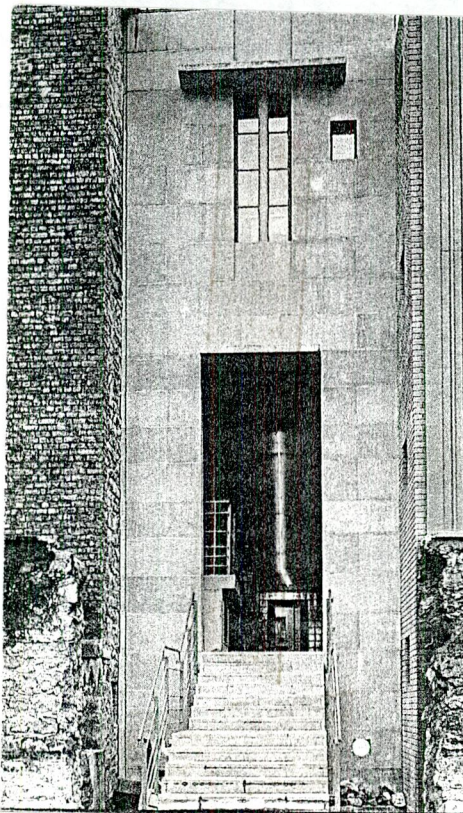


Fig. 42 Irish Film Centre - Entrance.

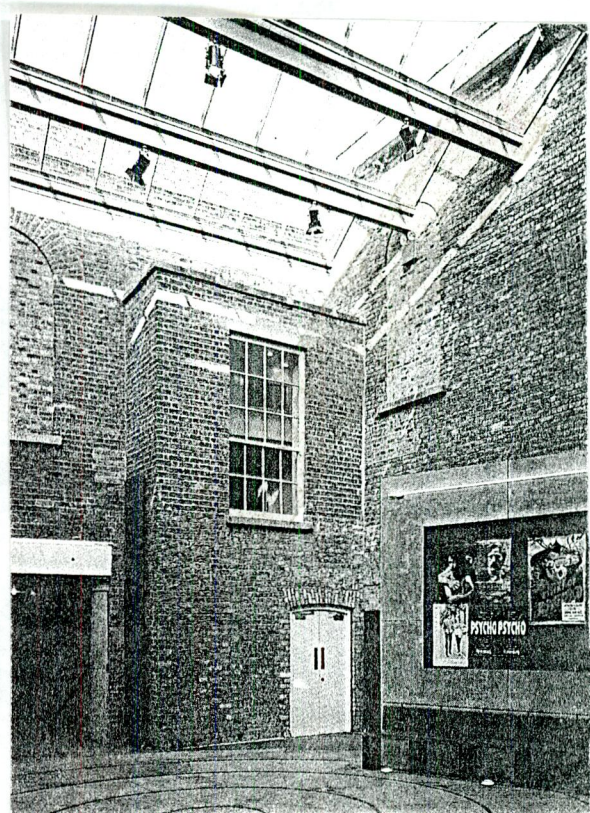


Fig. 43 Irish Film Centre - Internal courtyard.



The architects held most of the control over the designing of the building even down to the chairs and tables in the restaurant and lighting all around. The use of light, both natural in the courtyards and unnatural for example, the neon corridor, is obviously well considered and seems to reflect on the nature of the function of the building i.e. light being fundamental to the cinema process. The actual cinema's interiors like the rest of the building are integrated into the original fabric, giving them a unique character (Fig. 44). The raw materials, brick, limestone, naturally pigmented plaster and steel are used particularly in the central courtyard area. Catherine Slessor says that "From the deck of the restaurant the radiating limestone segments inlaid with strips of steel suggest an abstract film can (Fig. 45) (Catherine Slessor, Architectural Review, Autumn 1992, p.49). This shows how the architects have, through their use of materials and spaces, and have successfully integrated the original fabric of the building with new elements that reflect the nature of the cinematic function of the building.

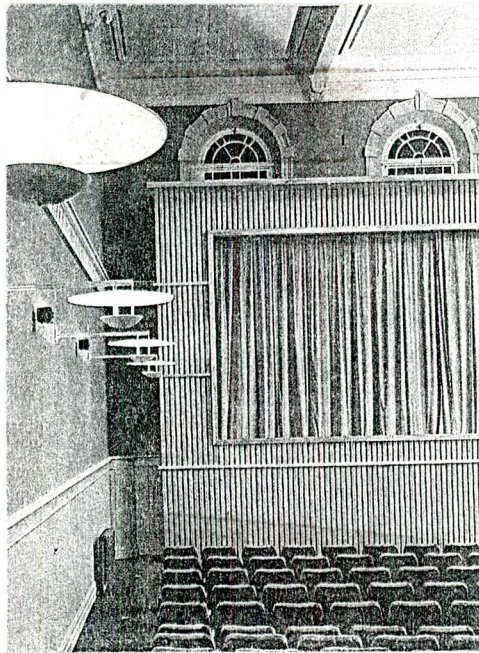


Fig. 44 Irish Film Centre - Cinema

Interior.

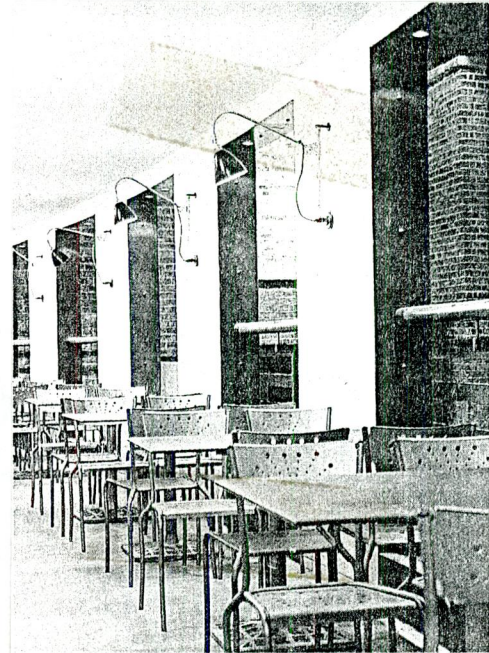
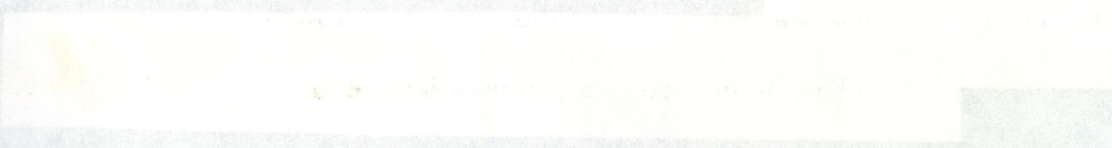


Fig. 45 Irish Film Centre - Restaurant dock with abstract empty film cannister idea.



The I.F.C. was completed in 1991 before the Temple Bar Property development emerged. The sensitive realisation of this building had a catalytic effect on the approach to some of the other buildings in the area since then, for example the Green Building obviously shares a similar light filled central courtyard feature, however the I.F.C. has had to rely on Arts Council grants, which appears to suggest they may be undergoing financial difficulty. Although the I.F.C. is a busy little cinema and restaurant, this application for grants shows a definite need for extra support systems in the area for the new cultural enterprises that are vulnerable to more commercial and competitive alternatives.

The concentrated cultural development in the Temple Bar area means there will be extra demands put on the Arts Council for grants as all cultural enterprises in the country must apply for grants. The extra 14% the Arts Council received bringing their funds up to £13,194,000 in 1994 (Catherine Cleary, Circa, Summer 1994, p. 19) is not a substantial enough increase to cover the needs of every cultural enterprise and the concentrated cultural developments in Temple Bar. It remains to be seen whether a structure will be set up to support the cultural enterprises in Temple Bar when Temple Bar Properties finished after its five year plan. The systems operated in the past in maintaining our architectural heritage have been pitiful. Temple Bar presents an opportunity where it will become necessary because of the economic climate for there to be a change in approach from the past.

There remains a number of very important changes occurring in terms of any vision for our city in the Temple Bar area by the approaches of these architects in the Green Building and The Irish Film Centre. Temple Bar Properties have made some mistakes that are very grave but their vision in certain cases has been applaudable by promoting and supporting the Green

Building for example. With Temple Bar Properties set up only for a five year programme, it is not yet known whether a long term structure will be introduced to support the areas activities.

Conclusion

Frank McDonald concluded his book Saving The City with this statement

"The crisis of the city is now understood as a human crisis, rather than just a serious technical problem. The deterioration of the fabric, and environment of the city is not a 'failure' as such; it is the result of the system we operate - a part inherited, part created system of values, perceptions and procedures, built up in culpable ignorance" (McDonald, 1989, p. 171).

The system run by the Corporation has had serious effects on the fabric of the City. A lack of co-ordinated policies has enabled this to happen. Temple Bar Properties initially attempted to pursue a vision to develop and preserve the city centre area; however their vision appears to have become distorted. Things they've said they would do they have not, for example, developing more retailing outlets to subsidise artists rent, and preserving the historic fabric of the area was not done in relation to St. Michael and Johns Church. There are now a number of architects in the city who do show a vision for the city as a better place, while on the other hand property developers and road planners brutally destroy many areas. There needs to be a consensus of interests if the city is no longer to be called "A city of talk and not a city of vision".

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