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Gloucester St.

A Case Study of the
Destruction of Neo-Classical
Dublin

by Paddy Cullivan
Visual Communication 1995

The National College of Art and Design

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Visual Communication

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Finally I would like to thank my parents for instilling me with a love of Neo-Classical architecture, through their efforts at preservation and education in our home.

INTRODUCTION

It is my intention to take Gloucester St., a Georgian street of 18th century Dublin, and in tracing its history from a wealthy neo-classical thoroughfare to the dilapidated and poverty stricken place it is now, to try to raise some questions about the particularly Irish circumstances and that led to its demise. I am going to treat the street in two ways. One will be a historical study, giving a picture of the street's development, which involves my having to recreate the street in its entirety from a very small amount of existing documentation. Then there will be a design study, comparing the street's present aspect to its 18th century design. These treatments overlap throughout the thesis, but I have tried to put a kind of order to the information I have accumulated.

Gloucester St. is situated North-east of the river Liffey, and runs perpendicular from O'Connell St. at the heart of North Georgian Dublin, to Portland Row, a section of the great North Circular Road, which with its southern counterpart effectively formed the extent of Dublin's Georgian development. (Fig. 1)

The street itself dates from 1770, during the most feverish period of development in the city's history, and was part of property developer Luke Gardiner II's eastward expansion of the city to house the social, political and administrative nobility of Henry Grattan's newly formed Irish Parliament. Gloucester St. is architecturally interesting in that, with the collapse of Dublin's fortunes in 1800 (which we will study later), it was never fully completed as a Georgian terrace, and thus featured some Victorian infill and one of Dublin's two Regency terraces.

As a purely architectural study, Gloucester St. would be worthy—if any of it were still in existence. But, at the time of writing, all Gloucester St.'s Georgian houses have been demolished; the Regency terrace has been replaced by an electricity generator, and only a handful of Victorian buildings remain, in very poor

condition. A neo-classical street, over half a mile long, in the heart of 18th century Dublin, has become an ugly mismatch of modernist housing blocks, social service buildings and new apartment blocks for the young middle class city dweller. None of these recent developments have any aesthetic relationship with each other or their historic predecessors, and as an ensemble present a confused, shanty-like streetscape lacking any of the sensitivity of the street's original layout.

There are numerous reasons why I am writing this thesis. My interest in neo-classical architecture in Dublin, particularly townhouses, stems from my having lived in one for the past 13 years. My parents purchased a semi-derelict house in North Great Georges St. in 1982 (Fig. 2) and have rescued it from certain demolition, turning it into a spacious and comfortable family home. A stone's throw from Gloucester St., North Great Georges St. had a very different history, only because of the efforts of a few preservation-minded residents. The street was only partially destroyed in the mid 'eighties, and the infill completed this year had to replicate the houses exactly as they were. (Not necessarily a good thing, but as Senator David Norris, a neighbour of mine once said—"You don't repair a Van Gogh with a Matisse copyist".)

Dublin was still an almost complete Georgian city, if shambolic, well into the 1950s. The office boom of the '60s, combined with the over-zealous desire to modernise, clear and rehouse the "slum of Europe" as Dublin (particularly her Northside) became known, resulted in the destruction of thousands of houses and public buildings. Dublin became an ugly amalgamation of derelict sites, economy driven modernist office buildings, and "temporary" housing blocks (Fig. 3). Most importantly, the rehousing of thousands of people in suburban estates emptied Dublin of its social lifeblood, destroying communities and ushering in the social problems that characterise most alienated and dispersed inner city populations.

In 1989, with the help of Economic Union handouts, the Government declared the Inner City a tax incentive zone, to encourage prospective developers

to build middle class apartments in derelict and deprived areas to improve the look and social balance of the city. With a conscience developed from years of brutal neglect and demolition of the city, the Corporation ruled that any new architecture must incorporate the materials and basic height of Georgian street levels. In the last five years Dublin has indeed been rebuilt, but in a ridiculous way—the buildings are clad in red brick, but they have P.V.C. window frames; they maintain the height of ancient streets, but cram eight or nine floors into this relatively small space (Fig. 4). Frank McDonald of The Irish Times used the term "Legoland" to describe what Dublin has become—a city of confused styles that fall somewhere between functionalist and twee. (Irish Times Tues 13 Dec 1994 p7)

It is these developments of the last five years that convinced me of the approach to my thesis. It is obvious that the City Fathers, property developers and the new generation of architects have no interest in making Dublin a beautiful city again, or even stylistically trying to recreate some of our finest streets and squares. Even when replication is indulged in, cost-cutting takes over and important authentic features are left out, as in North Great Georges St., where the new houses don't even have basements (an important feature of Georgian houses.)

My approach is inspired by two events. In 1850, Henry Shaw, a Dublin publisher, put together a pictorial guide to Dublin's commercial streets. In the series of wood carved illustrations (Fig. 5), shop-owners were asked to pay a small fee to have an advertisement placed over the elevation of their building. A modest success at the time, the book is now a valuable document for both social and architectural historians, particularly the latter in the light of recent destructive events. I want to use this pictorial approach to illustrate the changes in Gloucester St.

The second historical event that inspired me was the story of Gomolka's government in Poland just after the war. During the Russian advance into Poland

in late 1944, the retreating German forces adopted a scorched-earth policy, destroying everything in their wake. Warsaw suffered heavily; over 85% of the city's buildings were raised to the ground. A proud and patriotic people, the Poles realised that this was a deliberate attempt to destroy the historic proof of Poland's right to her territory, the only proof of any nation's existence, her people's creative emissions. This, of course, included architecture. Rather than build a "new" Warsaw out of the ashes of the old, and thus succumb to the pressures of a harsh modern world that the Nazis had imposed on them, the country's newly-formed communist government scoured the libraries of Europe for any kind of records (Fig.6) of the city's historic avenues and squares. Between 1945 and 1955 the city's medieval core (the Old Town) and its 18th century development (the New Town) were faithfully rebuilt both internally and externally with all the benefits of modern building techniques. When this was done, modern works developed concentrically, returning the city to its pre-war eminence. (Council of Europe 1975 pp234-235)

Though Dublin was never attacked during the war (except by accident), it might as well have been. And even though it will never return to its former beauty, the research work of Gomolka's "regime" needs to be done, if only as a reference point for more enlightened times. I chose Gloucester St. as an example, because it is barely mentioned in any textbooks except as a "fine row of Georgian houses, now demolished." (Craig 1952 p237) I had to recreate the entire street exactly as it looked at the height of its classical development, a difficult task, since there is no complete record of the structures that comprised it, only scattered photos and reports of the few buildings of interest. It is my belief, however, that no one building makes a street. Because the naked eye sees panoramically, without framing certain views as photography does, so should architectural studies take the entire streetscape into consideration. The glorification of the same few exceptional buildings in all of Dublin's "academic" studies has meant that so-called inferior houses are easily exposed to demolition.

They are also in danger of being lost in history. Every year bookshops are filled with the same coffee table books with the same views of Dublin, our glorious capital, by the same so-called academics. Even Frank McDonald, the architectural watchdog of The Irish Times, concentrated on the destruction of Dublin south of the river, as if the questions about the Northside were too difficult to ask. On the south side of Dublin the people destroying Georgian architecture were rich businessmen building offices, a straightforward enemy to target. Because the north side's destruction was due to the needs of housing for the poor, it was a ambiguous issue to tackle. This doesn't make the destruction any less heinous, but it should have been exposed by our academics in the same way as that on the south side. The Northside Heritage Group is equally guilty of overlooking the area's architectural heritage by concentrating on social history.

The Civic and Architectural Archives have excellent collections of photos of the street, but these photos were taken randomly and selectively, in the same manner as the coffee table books are written and, as a result, I had to do a great deal of new research using interviews, maps and sometimes plain guesswork. Of the 131 separate buildings on Gloucester St. before destruction, I had to recreate 50 of them from totally fresh research. A gap like this is far too large to have in our records and shows a lack of lateral thinking on the part of our institutions. Enough has been written on Dublin the city, now the real work must be done—that of Henry Shaw and Post-War Warsaw.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: Chapter 1 is a purely a background to make the reader familiar with 18th century Dublin and the people who built Gloucester St. Chapters 2 to 4 give a social, historical and aesthetic description of Gloucester St.'s development to the point of destruction. Chapter 5 will document the destruction of the street; Chapter 6 will compare the neo-classical and modern streetscapes, and my conclusion will talk about what it all means.

CHAPTER 1: THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

To fully understand the economic and social conditions that led to 18th century Georgian Dublin, a short colonial history is necessary.

After the Anglo-Saxon invasion of 1169, which really only affected the already Viking Dublin, Gaelic culture and land ownership still thrived in the rest of Ireland. However, in 1541, under the reign of Henry VIII, Irish chieftains were forced to surrender their land and have it regranted to them under English law. This made them nobles under the feudal law of succession (the eldest son inherits the land as opposed to the Irish Brehon law of the most suitable person inheriting) and thus created a Catholic ascendancy who begrudgingly accepted this new system until the right opportunity.

The Plantations of Ulster and Munster in 1607–9 involved the seizure of lands from Catholics by colonial Protestants, resulting in Owen Roe O'Neill's rebellion of 1642–52. The Anglicisation of Ireland was almost completed with the rebellion's defeat by Cromwell, ushering in the first holocaust suffered by the Irish people—"to Hell or to Connaught". All Catholic land was seized and its occupants deported to the barren West.

The end came with the Jacobite wars of 1689–91, when James II, the new Catholic King of England was deposed by William of Orange. For their support of James, Irish Catholics suffered a harsh Penal Code, whereby they could not vote, own property or receive college education. Use of the Irish language was outlawed, as were the cultural representatives of the indigenous people, the poets, harpers and priests. Dublin received its parliament and became capital of the Protestant ascendancy. As with all colonies, economic exploitation provided unimaginable wealth for the noble landowners, all of whom automatically became Members of Parliament.

With the House of Lords located in Dublin just opposite Trinity College, M.P.'s from everywhere in Ireland were required to be in Dublin for some part of the year. Thus in the post-Jacobite tranquillity of 18th century Dublin did a building boom occur. The M.P.'s needed to have city residences, as did political and social administrators, legal servants, builders and architects. Dublin became known as the "Second City of the British Empire" and its civic development reflected this. (MacManus 1923 pp319–526)

Dublin in the early 1700s was a relatively small town north and south of the River Liffey, surrounded by large estates of green fields. These estates were snapped up by developers and streets laid out during the influx to the capital. The most famous developers of the Northside were the Gardiner dynasty, who first came to prominence at the same time as that other illustrious family who gave that era its stylistic title, the Georges. (N.C.E.A. 1991 p23)

Luke Gardiner I (Fig. 1) has obscure origins. It is said that he was the footman of a rich banker who, through eavesdropping, picked up sound financial tips, and soon accumulated a small fortune. In 1711 he married into the family of Viscount Mountjoy, who owned parts of Co. Tyrone. In 1714 Gardiner bought the estate of Henry Moore, Earl of Drogheda and through a series of purchases became owner of the largest estate north of the river. His most famous developments are Henrietta St. (Fig. 2) and Sackville St (now O'Connell St.) Henrietta St. has the largest urban townhouses in Ireland, and No. 10 was home to the Gardiner family until 1854. His widening of Sackville St. (Fig. 3) to 150 ft. was unprecedented in European terms, and until the work of Baron Hausmann in 19th century Paris was unequalled in scale. It is now Dublin's principle thoroughfare (though drastically altered).(N.C.E.A. 1991 p26)

Gardiner's son Charles did not take much interest in property. His son, Luke Gardiner II was a different story, however, and it is his estate, including

Gloucester St., with which we are primarily concerned.

The Georgian Period began with the ascension of George I to the throne in 1714, and this coincided with the revival of Classicism in the arts. This neo-classical movement looked to Greece and Rome as inspiration for its contemporary work, and for a hundred years this movement swept Europe. Any Irish noble worth his salt would undertake the "Grand Circuit of Europe", a tour that taught the principles of Classicism to the gentry first-hand. Upon returning to their respective countries these people became patrons of the arts (with an idea to building a city full of streets named after them.)

The Wide Street Commissioners was set up in 1757 under Thomas Sherrard to apply these new ideas to Dublin's medieval structure. It was stipulated that new streets would have to have a regulated height and width, and houses were to be built according to spacious classical proportions. Existing streets were widened to fit the new order and new vistas were opened, making Dublin a capital on a par with anything on the continent. (McCullough 1989 pp127)

Luke Gardiner II (Fig. 4) would have had to apply to the Wide Street Commission for planning permission for his new development. He completed Rutland Square, north of his grandfather's Drogheda St. in 1766, and promptly turned his attention to the Eccles estate, east of the line that these streets created. Gardiner, obviously a man of taste, sought to create an urban complex that incorporated all the design traits inherent to classical planning. In the years that followed Gardiner laid out over thirty streets comprising over 2000 of the finest Georgian houses ever constructed. As it was built on fields, Gardiner's Dublin, as it is now referred to, was the quintessential New Town, planned without reference to structures already in existence, and this lack of restriction gave it a cohesion and unity that its southside counterpart the Fitzwilliam estate lacks. Also, the lands of the Eccles estate featured steep rises that gave dramatic sweeps to many

of Gardiner's streets, particularly Summerhill, Mountjoy Square, North Great Georges St. and Gardiner St. itself. (Fig.5) (N.C.E.A. 1991 pp28)

These streets were very popular with the gentry—"prosperity prefers to dwell on an eminence" (O' Donovan 1986 pp142) and the Northside quickly became the most fashionable part of the city.

In 1795 Luke Gardiner II was made Viscount Mountjoy. He had for many years been the Under-Treasurer for Ireland in Parliament. It is rumoured that his access to these considerable funds may have helped him in his speculative activities. He was a brilliant legislator, and his Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1781 showed his humanitarian attitude towards the suffering of Catholics under the harsh Penal Laws. However, he was not a radical nor a republican, and his passion for part-time soldiering brought him to New Ross, Wexford in 1798 to help suppress the rebellion of the United Irishmen. It is here that he was "picked off by a baker's boy sniping from a window". (O'Donovan 1986 pp146) Luke Gardiner was dead, his plans incomplete. It was now up to his son Charles to pick up where he left off. We shall come back to him later, as his story coincides with the fortunes of Gloucester St. Luke Gardiner II was buried in the vaults of St. Thomas church on Marlborough St, off of which Gloucester St. was projected, as we are about to see.

CHAPTER 2: THE GEORGIAN DEVELOPMENT OF GLOUCESTER ST.

Gardiner was not the only developer on the Northside, just the biggest, and sometimes we find that different developments seem to overlap. Marlborough St. is a case in point, having been laid out as far back as 1717 by the Beresfords (who also commissioned the Customs House from James Gandon.) (Wren 1993 p6) Marlborough St. is parallel to the present-day O'Connell St. and retained its rare vintage until the late 1960s. In 1750 it still formed the extent of Georgian development and was surrounded by market gardens and fields. In the same year a new Protestant parish, St. Thomas's, was created to cope with the influx of new residents, and a temporary church was opened in a house on Marlborough St. In 1757 Charles Gardiner donated a site on the lower end of the street for a church to be built. Building work began the following year to the designs of John Smyth, architect of St. Catherine's Church in Thomas St. (just opposite the N.C.A.D., Fig. 1). The facade of the new St. Thomas's Church was modelled on Palladio's Redentore in Venice, but the steeple was never completed. Thus the gable of the nave protruded awkwardly, giving the overall building an off-kilter look. (Fig. 2) (Refausse 1994 p8)

However, when Luke Gardiner II came to develop the area, he gave St. Thomas's a central role in the proceedings. In 1770 he purchased a large, roughly square-shaped orchard behind Summerhill (an ancient road to the North which he subsequently developed) that also lay in front of St. Thomas's, and laid out street plots in a cruciform pattern from the church. Gloucester St. formed the central axis of this development and was intersected by Cumberland St., Gardiner St., Rutland St., Buckingham St. and on to the North Strand, then the banks of Dublin Bay (later reclaimed.) Of course, being a speculator, Gardiner couldn't plan too far ahead, and had to develop in stages. (McCullough 1989 p 64)

The first stage was the area between Marlborough St. and North

Cumberland St., which became Nos. 1–11 on the north side and Nos. 33–45 on the south side. In all, according to J.P. Stephenson, this took nine years to complete (Stephenson 1948 p88), while the next section, Nos. 12–21 and Nos. 22–32 was completed in 1789. These 45 houses then formed Upper Gloucester St., a classic Georgian street in terms of what I call its unified individuality. (Fig.3)

What I mean by this term is what differentiates Dublin Georgian from that of London, Bath or Edinburgh. In those towns whole terraces were constructed to be exactly alike and present a uniform facade to the street. Perhaps due to the infantile competitive nature of the new gentry, or the individuality of Irish builders and stuccoworkers, a "keeping up with the Jones" mentality in reverse crept into Irish architecture, resulting in no one Georgian house being alike.

Gardiner surely intended his Dublin to be a London, Edinburgh or Bath, as one can see from his plans for a unified terrace on Mountjoy Square. (Fig.4) (N.C.E.A. 1991 p30) However, Gardiner's business was the selling of plots of land and building leases, and the Irish tradition of purchasing leases in batches of two to five made the uniform approach impossible.

The process of building Upper Gloucester St. was this. Gardiner divided the former orchard into 45 roughly even plots. (all things being symmetrical, Gardiner would have preferred 44, but Marlborough St. ran in such a way that an extra plot was necessary.) Gardiner then drew up identical leases stipulating the conditions of design and construction. These leases were very strict, as one from Mountjoy Square demonstrates:

(the architect/builder is to erect)... "substantial buildings, the front of which should range the line marked in said map, and that no projections beyond the window stools or doorcases should be made in the said front, and that the areas should be ten feet wide, and inclosed with a stone kerb,

and iron palisades ranging uniformly, and that said building should be in height from top to base to coping on the parapet fifty-four feet and in range with adjoining buildings..." (N.C.E.A. 1991 p43)

Gardiner went so far as to define exactly who could not purchase a home from him:

"...no person inhabiting said premises should there use or follow the trade or business of a Tallow Chandler, Melter of Tallow, Soap-boiler, Tobacco-pipe maker, Sugar-boiler, Baker, Cork-burner, Distiller, Butcher, Slaughter-man, Founder, Tanner, Tinworker, etc..." (N.C.E.A. 1991 p43)

Gardiner even stipulated that if the building wasn't roofed in and finished within four years of the lease being signed, it automatically became his property!

That Upper Gloucester St. took 19 years to complete shows that all the plots weren't snapped up immediately. Indeed, if one could stroll through Dublin at the time, one would have seen many freestanding houses and incomplete terraces.

The lease from Mountjoy Square is interesting in that it strictly adheres to the design principle which accepts the Classical townhouse as building block of the Classical terrace. The mention of adjoining buildings shows an enlightened consideration for the street as an overall design rather than as a combination of different structures. For a man who should have been primarily interested in money, Gardiner showed a sensitivity and a respect for unity that made the Georgian terrace a cohesive and collaborative effort from speculator to stuccodore.

The classic Dublin Georgian house is a three bay (three windows across) house of four storeys over basement. The facade is of red-brick taken from the

ballast of ships or, more commonly, the local brickyards. The arched doorcase is made of limestone with engaged ionic columns either side of the door. These columns support a decorated lintel and fanlight. The fanlight features radial bands of interwoven lead tracery and the door surround features Classical motifs such as leaves or repeated patterns. The oak doors are panelled and painted in deep, rich colours. They feature the famous brass doorknobs, knockers and postboxes, loved by tourists. Ironwork consisted of railings on the surrounding wall and balconies set into the 1st floor windows to provide a point of interest on the facade above the door. The surrounding wall, doorsteps, window sills and parapet are in Wicklow granite, as are the exterior basement walls of many houses. The window sizes are graduated to give an illusion of height and are panel-framed. (McCullough 1989 p99) (Fig.5)

Only 10 houses on Upper Gloucester St. were representative of this style, Nos. 1,16,19–24, 26 and 27. (Main Ill. 1) They all featured the classic semi-circular arched doorway and the three-bay facade. No. 10 was the tallest houses on the street similar to this type but for its huge elliptical fanlight and neighbour-spotting sidelights.(Fig.6) Nos. 15, 28, 29 and 31 were also three-bay houses but feature triplanum on the door lintels, as opposed to the semi-circular shape. (Main Ill.) These doorways relied on bulk as their outstanding feature and had little frivolous decoration attached to them. No. 31 was notable for the single arched sidelight to the left of its doorway—a curious asymmetrical device probably commissioned by a cautious client. (Main Ill. 1)

Upper Gloucester St. also possessed many two-bay houses, a smaller but no less gracious variation on the model. Nos. 2, 5, 12, 17, 18, 25, 28, 30 and 33 were of this kind, generally built for stylistic reasons as the plot sizes differed only slightly from that of three-bay houses. (Main Ill. 1) Nos. 17 and 18 were notable for their large single ground floor windows of five panels across as opposed to the usual three.

Not all the builders of houses were equally skilled in design. It is a common misconception that the townhouses of Dublin were all built by great architects. The truth is that in most cases it was small teams of builders who assembled their structures from the basic guidelines set out in the great Pattern-books of the day. The Pattern-books were compilations of drawings of ancient classical structures and designs, and builders literally copied them in the construction of houses. (Kearns 1983 p31) I consider certain houses such as Nos. 3, 4, 6–9, 42 and 43 (Main Ill. 1) as being inferior because of the squeezing of two windows into the space beside the door on the ground floor. This awkward design variation must have been suggested by a client or misinterpreted by the builders because the assymetry this caused was very un-classical. Another argument, however, is that in doing this the builders were applying a vernacular style to a classical structure and creating something unique. In the event, the unity of the terrace was unimpaired, by virtue of the building and window heights and materials used.

Nos. 42–45 were interesting in that they were the shortest houses on the street, and featured door surrounds more in keeping with 17th century Dutch Gable houses than high Georgian. (Main Ill. 1) I had thought the houses may have stood there before Gardiner began to develop, but it is more likely that they were built in that way because the client's tastes lay in that direction.

No. 11 was an interesting house, in that it was four-bay in the style of the early Henrietta St., yet crudely squeezed in four windows on to the ground floor. It is possible that the Corporation's renovations of 1950 had changed the positioning of the windows, making it difficult for me to find out what the houses were originally like. In these renovations doors had been removed, as in the case of Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7, 12, 25, 27 and 28. Nos. 44 and 45 had been demolished in the late 1960s. The photos I saw from the Civic and Architectural Archives dated from

the late 1970s and thus presented a confusing picture. Only with the help of an Ordnance Survey map of 1937 and the memories of Con Murray, a long time resident, could I figure out where the doors were placed and what they looked like. As regards windows, most were kept in their original positions, and to date I have no information to prove otherwise.

Nos. 13 and 14 were the most striking buildings on the street. Built as a pair around 1780 they followed the form of the classic three-bay house, but had been richly embellished by the architect James Ensor, who designed the west front of Trinity College (Con Murray). Each window had a carved surround in Portland stone and quoins (large edging blocks) lining the sides of the houses. The surrounds of the central 1st-floor windows had balustrades (small rows of pillars) running underneath them and a triplanum overhead. The houses were mirror-images of each other, and stood out from the terrace in terms of decoration, yet conformed to Gardiner's strict rules of proportion. (Fig. 7 and Main Ill. 1)

The last batch of houses on Upper Gloucester St., No. 34–41, were the finest houses on the street in terms of their unity of design, and in the variety of interesting doorways. (Main Ill. 1) The feature that united them all was a granite wall on the ground floor as opposed to the usual brick. The result was that the doorways were more sparing in terms of decoration. Of special note were the comparative merits of the doorways of Nos. 34 and 35. No. 34 had a semi-circular doorway and the bricks of the facing wall were carved, while No. 35 had a triplanum doorway with sidelights and a rough, uncut facing wall. (Fig. 8)

The 45 houses that comprised Upper Gloucester St. were a perfect example of the individuality within the unity of Georgian design, a clever, humanising expression of Classical principles.

The discussion of a Georgian street is never complete without a word of

what was situated behind it. The Georgian plot was on average 200ft. in length from the street, and held the house proper, a substantial garden and a Mews house where Coach and Coachman were kept. With the completion of a Georgian terrace the combined Mews houses formed an access lane to be reached from an archway or gap in the terrace. The tree-covered gardens and the two-storey Mews lane had a rural feeling, making the Georgian block a harmonious mixture of urban and rural that has never been bettered in residential design. It also appealed to the residents, most of whom were from the country. (Fig.9)

(McCullough 1989 p98)

The interiors of Georgian houses have been well documented elsewhere, and there is no information on any of Gloucester St.'s plasterwork due to its being "renovated" in the 1950s (Irish Architectural Archives) The interior layouts of the houses were as formulaic as the exteriors, and generally followed the same pattern.

Basements were storerooms and kitchens, and sometimes servant's sleeping quarters. The ground floor had a stone flagged hallway and two large rooms, usually a reception area in the front and dining room in the back. The ceilings were roughly 18 ft. high here and on the 1st-floor which had another two large rooms—the drawing or ballroom at the front and the study at the back. The 2nd-floor had three master-bedrooms and a ceiling height of 12 ft. The 3rd-floor had four rooms which were storerooms and servants quarters. The stairs from ground to second floor involved four flights lit by huge arched windows at the back of the house. They were wide and shallow, easing the steepness with landings in between floors. The floors in each room were of boards of Baltic pine and the principal rooms had pine skirting-boards and chair-rails. The four main rooms and main staircase had ornate cornices and stuccowork on the ceilings, done by the great craftsmen of the day. (Fig.10)

Lower Gloucester St.

Upper Gloucester St. was completed in 1789. Thomas Sherrard's map of 1791 shows Gardiner's plan for the next section of the street, now called Lower Gloucester St., running from the new Gardiner St. to the as yet unbuilt Buckingham St. (Fig.11) (Civic Archives) In between these two streets came Gardiner's inspired idea for a classical focal point on what was going to be a very long street—the Gloucester Diamond.

Gardiner proposed to build two terraces of houses as far as the older Mabbot St., and by slicing off the corners of the resulting intersection, would create a Diamond-shaped junction. Other records that were unavailable to me, but were related orally, prove that he also proposed to erect a fountain and horse rest in the centre of the street, as a focal point and meeting place. (Con Murray) Each side of the Diamond was to feature two three-bay houses, a total of eight. After this Gardiner proposed a continuing of terraces on towards Buckingham St. and the sea.

Over the next seven years development continued as always. Whereas No. 1 Upper Gloucester St had been on the south side of the street, No. 1 Lower was on the north side. The terrace that sprang from here contained 11 houses, four of which, Nos. 5–8, had ground-floor granite facing-walls. (Fig.12 and Main Ill. 2) The terrace was almost completely uniform in height and featured only the classic arched-door surrounds. No. 11, a Diamond house, had its entrance on to the street instead of the Diamond and so was included in the numbering system. On the southern side of the street ran what would now be known as Nos. 89–99. No. 89 was also a Diamond house but was divided in two during the 19th century, raising questions as to whether the doorway was on the Diamond or street side. (Ordnance Survey Map 1880) I have included both doorways in the main illustration as an example of the two ways the Diamond houses could be interpreted. Another confusing issue regarding this row of houses was Henry Shaw's

directory of 1850 stating that Nos. 91–94 were unbuilt. (Shaw 1850) A few eye-witness' told me they can remember these houses having been there and a complete terrace existing. The maps of 1880 state this space as a printing factory and they were probably built in the Georgian style some time after 1850. As I found no photographic proof, I have included them anyway.

By 1798 the terraces up to the west side of the Diamond were complete. The only independent development undertaken in the area in Luke Gardiner's lifetime took place in the same year. A 1/4 mile away from the growing street the Earl of Aldborough had completed his townhouse, the last ever built in Dublin. Though it faced onto Portland Row on Dublin's North Circular Road, its massive gardens stretched back along Gloucester St. to Buckingham St. This three-storey mansion was built in brick with granite facade, and a large triplanum capped the pillar-lined front. Seven bays wide, it had two wings, one built as a private theatre. (Fig.13) The architect is unknown, but it was much admired and its ceilings were the height of fashion at the time. With its view of what was then the sea, it again combined the urban and rural to great effect. (Wren 1993 p2)

Meanwhile the impetus was going out of Gardiner's push to the east. A map of 1798 drawn up for the property solicitors Burton, Beatty and Cash, shows only four plots as having been sold east of the Diamond, all on the southern side of the street. (Civic Archives) It is difficult to say how far Gardiner's Georgian development got. J.P. Stephenson says that only 40 houses are shown on Lower Gloucester St. in the 1830s. (Stephenson 1948 p88) I first thought that all of these could have been Georgian, but realised that Post-Georgian developments had taken place by then. Stephenson's assertion that the southern side was developed beyond the Diamond was proved with the discovery of a slide photograph from 1936 showing Nos.85 and 86. (Fig.14) (Civic Archives) From this photo and an Ordnance Survey Map of 1880, I reconstructed the row of houses that comprised Nos. 78–88. The Diamond on this side was never completed, and my main illus-

tration shows the awkward gap at the intersection with Mabbot St.

This leads me to believe that a figure of 78 houses is correct for the proven extent of Gardiner's Gloucester St. (as we shall see later, there were a few free-standing houses further up the street that were demolished to make way for a convent) on both Upper and Lower. Why did the momentum run out of this particular development? Gardiner's foolish death during the '98 rebellion could have contributed, but the estate was building itself at this stage and, indeed, some developments of his were completed in the Georgian style well into the 1800s, such as Mountjoy Square. (N.C.E.A. 1991 p36) The Duke of Leinster's move to the south side in 1745 and his claim that Dublin's socialites would "follow me wherever I go" had been proven wrong by Gardiner's success. (McCullough 1989 p) There were two reasons why Gloucester St. failed to be completed—the Act of Union, and a simple question of taste.

The Act of Union of 1800 was the result of the '98 rebellion and its continuing ramifications (which included a failed invasion by the French). The British decided that Ireland could not safely govern herself and both parliaments were converged and re-seated in Westminster. Dublin Society fell apart as M.P.'s, nobles, administrators and advisers sold their stately homes and moved en masse to London. If any new houses were to be built, they would be on the south side near the Dublin Castle and the major Institutions, as Dublin quickly became a provincial town within the British Empire. (McManus 1923 p551–602)

In terms of the matter of taste, if any of Gardiner's projects were to be completed, it would be those that were more dramatic in their position, like Summerhill and Mountjoy Square. Gloucester St. was a flat, low-lying street at the foot of a hill, and was running sideways to the sun, making it quite dark for much of the day. This was its death knell, as location was everything. As James Gandon, who had been given houses on the street as payment for his Customs

House, observed in 1813:

"...the street shows many vacant building lots, with some houses abandoned half-finished, and half the complete ones uninhabited..."(Gandon 1986 p121)

During this time after the Act of Union almost all residential building ceased, as Protestants eased into a siege mentality and the Catholic poor grew in numbers. What those who came next did was no less considered than Gardiner's vision, but it had to fit into the poverty-stricken and unstable colony 19th century Dublin had become.

CHAPTER 3: POST-GEORGIAN, REGENCY AND VICTORIAN DEVELOPMENT OF LOWER GLOUCESTER ST.

Even though many great public buildings were constructed during the early 1800s, such as Nelson's Pillar and the G.P.O., residential building virtually ceased. However, with the rise of the middle classes in the 1820s and '30s a more modest housing scheme was required. Northside developers were faced with the problem of completing Gardiner's empire in this modest way while maintaining a sense of grandeur.

This they achieved with the construction of Nos. 12 to 40 Lower Gloucester St., a relatively uniform terrace of two-bay, three-storey houses. (Main Ill. 2) Like Gardiner's houses, they too featured panelled windows, fanlights, balconies and railings. These, however, were not the homes of noblemen, but of the merchant and legal classes.

Neo-Classicism had evolved from the Romanesque chunkiness of Georgian to the "Greek Revival", a simplification of classical design, that was expressed in the new terrace through elliptical fanlights and spare decoration. (McDermott 1986 p7) At three storeys, these houses did not dramatically reduce the level of the street, except for the two houses (not included in the numbering system.) that completed the North-East side of the Diamond which were out of context with Gardiner's vision.

In 1832 Frederick Darley the Younger (whose father had worked for Gardiner) purchased Nos.35 and 36 and joined them together, creating with plaster a unified semi-regency facade (Fig. 1) (Main Ill. 2), reminiscent of No. 13 and 14 Upper Gloucester St. (Main Ill. 1) Limestone framed all the windows and triplanums capped those on the first floor. Low relief pillars ran up either side of the houses and the roof was raised. This building became the "Aged and Infirm

Carpenters Asylum" to give relief to destitute tradesmen. These houses were changed to just No. 35 and thus the numbers of the next four houses changed to Nos. 36–39.

Also in 1832 the architect George Papworth (designer of Kings Bridge and the Carmelite's Chapel in Whitefriar St.) built one of Dublin's only unified Regency Terraces at Nos. 45–50 Lower Gloucester St. (Craig 1953 p) This building, named Gloucester Terrace, was one of the most clever pieces of residential building in the city. From a distance it looked like a public building, its triplanum supported by six pillars suggesting a grand entrance to a great hall. (Fig. 2) (Main Ill. 2) In fact it was six three-storey over basement, three-bay homes with cleverly modest doorways. Clad in white plaster, it was set back from the line of the street so as not to dominate the canyon of red brick leading up to it. The green space to the front of the building was landscaped and trees were planted, echoing the gardens of Aldborough House 20 yards away. Just as inspired was the separate construction of five red-brick Victorian homes either side of it ten years later, giving it a cohesion and principality Gardiner himself would have envied. These Victorian houses, Nos. 40–44 and Nos. 51–55, were two-storeys over basement and two bays wide. This brought the level of the street down even further, but worked well within the overall design as the street now seemed to taper off to the sea at Aldborough House. (Main Ill. 2)

With this done the north side of the street was complete. At this time the south side of Lower Gloucester St. was wasteland except for a few freestanding houses which Henry Shaw described as tenements in 1850. These houses were undoubtedly of Gardiner vintage, but as I could find no proof of what they looked like or their location, I had to ignore them in my reconstruction.

In 1845, on a site directly opposite the Regency Terrace, a Presbyterian Church was built, to the design of D.C. Ferguson. (Fig. 3) This building

epitomises the "Greek Revival" style of the first half of the 19th century. Four fluted columns support a triplanum, on top of which sit three outsized granite leaves that lend an almost Egyptian feel to the design. This is also true of the angular doorways at the centre and either side of the church. As a design in itself it is faultless. As part of the bigger picture it shows a genius for considering the aesthetic environment already in place. At two storeys it was level with the other buildings opposite and its four granite columns beautifully echoed Papworth's Terrace. It is not luck that put these buildings directly opposite each other but careful, considered design. The gardens and cemetery of the church ran east and west of the building and again the Victorians rounded off the south-east intersection with a terrace of two-storey homes at Nos. 56–59. (Main Ill. 2)

If we consider the Presbyterian Church to be Nos. 60–62, then we come to a space between its gardens and the furthest extension of Gardiner's four-storey development, Nos. 78–88. In the 1860's Nos. 73–77 were again built in the Victorian two-storey style—not the best solution considering the tall houses they stood beside—but times were getting harder at this stage. (Main Ill. 2)

In 1872, the length of Lower Gloucester St, was completed with the Convent of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge at Nos. 63–72. (Fig. 4) (Main Ill. 2) It was a large Victorian red-brick building that bore little relation to anything around it. However, its three storeys in some way emulated the terrace opposite, and couldn't be seen as the worst thing the Victorians ever built. It was built on the site of the free-standing houses I mentioned earlier.

The strip from Buckingham St. to Portland Row opposite the Gardens of Aldborough House was filled in during the early years of the twentieth century. This development coincided with that stretch of street being renamed Killarney St. and so does not come into consideration here.

Gloucester St. Upper and Lower had been completed. The upper end and part of the lower end had the best in Georgian architecture. The Post-Georgians, Regency builders and Victorians had done well within Gardiner's design concept, their only omission being the incompleteness of the Diamond. However, the 45 houses on the upper end and the 99 houses on the lower end formed a unified and richly decorated urban streetscape. The circumstances of its occupants, however, was a different story.

CHAPTER 4: THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF GLOUCESTER ST. IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The fortunes of Gloucester St. were inextricably linked with its developers, the Gardiner family, throughout the nineteenth century. Upon Luke Gardiner's death in 1798, his son Charles John inherited the estate which was comprised of over fifty streets and thousands of dwellings, as well as land in Cos. Dublin and Tyrone. His annual rental income from this was £25,000, big money by today's standards.

However, once again the Gardiner developing genius had skipped a generation (which probably accounts in part for the loose mix of styles on Gloucester St.) and Charles John was more interested in living it up in Paris and London. He spent £200,000 in modern values on his first wife's funeral, showing his romantic but wreckless attitude towards money. In 1816 he was made Earl of Blessington and married Margaret Farmer two years later. They blew their fortune happily together until their nine-year-old son Luke Gardiner III died from ill health. He was buried in St. Thomas' beside his grandfather, leaving Gardiner's Dublin without an heir.

As a result, Charles John married off his 14-year-old daughter Harriet to the Count D'Orsay, with whom both he and his wife had been having relations, and left the Gardiner estate to him in his will. After Charles John's death, Harriet fled her husband and mother and sued for control of the estate. She was successful in this, but her financial affairs were in tatters. Through the Encumbered estates court, which had been set up to deal with the crumbling fortunes of Irish nobles, Harriet Gardiner sold off huge chunks of the estate in 1848. Gloucester St. was included in this, and the houses were instantly snapped up by slum landlords. These Georgian houses, which had been worth £8000 in 1791, were worth £500 in 1848. With Harriet's death in 1869 the Gardiner line ended as swiftly as

the family's involvement with property. (O'Donovan 1986 p151)

Dublin in 1848 was a poor Catholic city. The Anglo-Irish Protestants had built their own clusters of paradise in the South suburbs or had fled to London, afraid the tide of ill-fortune cloaking the country would swallow them up as well. Though Catholic Emancipation had become a reality in 1826, Ireland was still a slave-economy, exporting over 80% of its net produce to Britain without any return. The famine of 1846 was a catastrophe for the indigenous people as potatoes were the only food they were allowed to eat. Over two million people died and a further two million people emigrated, instantly halving the population. Dublin became a huge refugee camp for the next three years, as its population exploded from 200,000 to 300,000. The North City suffered most heavily from the mass rural migrations, and housing was desperately needed. (MacManus 1923 pp551-602)

The Landlords who had bought Harriet Gardiner's estate quickly converted the Georgian houses into tenements. This involved the partitioning of the great spaces of the houses to cram as many people as possible into them. It was not unusual to find houses with up to 70 people in them, or ten to twelve families. Of the 160,000 people on the Northside, 40,000 of them lived in just 3000 Georgian houses. Gloucester St. became one of the most heavily tenemented streets, going from only 5 tenements in 1850 to over 80 in 1900. In a street of 130 residential dwellings there lived over 6000 people. With such a dense population living in squalid conditions with neither the money nor interest to keep their homes, the houses, like the people, suffered greatly. (Harvey 1949 p160)

Usually the first thing to suffer in the house was the main staircase, which was ripped out to provide more rooms. Rooms were partitioned, destroying plasterwork and special features. If a window pane broke, it invariably stayed that way.

Gardens were built over, Mews houses were also converted to cram in as many people as possible.

One of the main causes of deterioration was pollution. As much of Gardiner's Dublin was built on reclaimed tidal flats, the soil didn't drain well, and the flooding of sewers by the ebbs and flows of the tide gave rise to countless infectious diseases. The canyon-like structure of Georgian streets trapped these and the sulphuric emissions of coal-fires in the immediate atmosphere, producing a deadly cocktail that corroded the brick, slate and stone of houses, as well as spreading deadly bronchial illnesses that gave Dublin the highest infant mortality rate in Europe. (Kearns 1983 p43)

Only wealthy or conscientious landlords attempted to stop the deterioration with constant upkeep. Streets on an eminence fared better, but Gloucester St. suffered from its low-lying position, the effects being so bad that one house, No. 20 Upper Gloucester St. simply collapsed in the early 1900s. (Con Murray) Dublin Corporation's response to this and other instances was to order the top floors of every house in the city to be demolished as a precaution against further accidents. (Had the Corporation spent the same energy trying to renovate the houses we might have a far larger Georgian stock in our city today.) The majority of these orders were never carried out, although some houses in Nos. 78-88 Lower Gloucester St were diminished, as can be seen in the house in the photo from 1936 in (Fig.1) The reason for this lack of conformity was a combination of greed, as there would be a loss of rents, or genuine outrage by some owners at the ruin of graceful, if shambolic residences.

The rent for a room in many houses was on average 6d (sixpence). This seems small, but wages were minimal, and the standard of living was medieval. Houses were rat-infested, carpetless, and had no heating or running water. I can remember moving into our house in North Great Georges in 1983 and using a

bucket to get only cold water from a tap in the basement, and using the toilet the previous owner had installed in the back garden, before we renovated the house! The over-crowding of Gloucester St., however, gave rise to a vibrant community that developed a closeness through the common workplace and new social meeting points, such as No. 13 Upper Gloucester St. which became a pub and grocery, as well as a Working-man's Club. Pubs opened on the Diamond, which also became a popular meeting-place. The community were unified politically as well as socially, and the area became a hotbed of Socialist Republicanism, part of the great re-awakening of the National spirit in the early years of the 20th century. Maud Gonne, the unrequited love of W.B. Yeats, gave many inflammatory speeches at the Diamond, and both James Larkin and James Connolly recruited many followers from the street. In 1913 Nos. 90 and 91 Lower Gloucester St. were the scene of a clash between workers and police during the great strike of the time, as they were the printing factory for Easons, who distributed the anti-nationalist Irish Independent newspapers. Gloucester St. was barricaded during the Rebellion of 1916, in which many residents fought. The large houses provided cover for the Dublin Brigade of the I.R.A. during the War of Independence, and No. 36 Lower Gloucester St. was the headquarters of the Brigade under Commanding Officer Dick McKee, who was later shot by the British while "trying to escape." (Wren 1993 p 69)

Another element that played an important role in defining the street's development in the twentieth century was the rise of prostitution in the mid-nineteenth century. The constant influx of sailors, servicemen and dockers in the area, as well as masses of sex-starved students like James Joyce and Oliver St. John Gogarty, turned the streets around Gloucester St into the largest red-light district in Europe, going under the name of "Monto." (Sheehan/Walsh 1988 pp61-63)

The name "Monto" came from Montgomery St., which lay parallel to Gloucester St., and derives from Elizabeth Montgomery, Luke Gardiner's wife.

By 1900 there were 300 brothels operating, some of them on Gloucester St. This moral decline, combined with the politics of the area, was a major headache for the right-wing Catholic Free State that took power in 1923 following the Civil War. Under British rule, a red-light district was acceptable to ease the stress of soldiers, and the standard of living for the thousands of people in Gloucester St. was not a consideration. With the British gone, both became barometers of the new state's intention to fix Ireland morally and socially. How the Government dealt with this provided the backdrop to Gloucester St.'s eventual destruction.

CHAPTER 5: MODERN INTERVENTION AND THE DESTRUCTION OF GLOUCESTER ST

Many would argue that because of Gloucester St.'s variety of styles, that it should not be considered in its entirety, and that modern interventions were the natural process on a street that had continually been changing shape. However, because of all the different developers continual adherence to classical principles, that argument falls apart, because even though the street was changing, it's built material followed one aesthetic line. For instance, the conversion of certain buildings into shops and pubs did alter the panorama slightly. But the general harmony of relative terrace heights and structures was not changed.

The first sign of destruction was the collapse of No. 20 Upper Gloucester St. in the early 1900s signalling that the Georgian stock of the area would need upkeep to survive properly. The Corporation's demolition of two storeys of Nos. 82–85 Lower Gloucester St. (Civic Archives) was another gloomy precedent, the first sign of the fallibility of Gardiner's work in the eyes of the City Fathers.

In 1916 the first piece of mass vandalism was perpetrated in the name of Catholicism when Nos. 12–24 Lower Gloucester St. were demolished to make way for a temporary "tin" church (of galvanised iron) to accommodate the over-spill from the Pro-Cathedral nearby. (Wren 1993 p65) It was true that people needed room to worship, but this destruction was unnecessary. In 1896 the Presbyterian church at Nos. 60–62 had been vacated when a larger church had been built on the outskirts of the city. It was then occupied by the Salvation Army and would have been perfect as the new Catholic Church. This was not to be, though, and it instead became a corn store. (Wren 1993 p67)

The erection of the "tin" church had been responsible for the North-East side of the Diamond being demolished, forever sealing the fate of this unfortu-

nate setpiece. In the 1900s a large Victorian urinal was placed in the middle of the Diamond, as Gardiner's fountain had never been built. (Con Murray)

In 1922 during the Civil War, Republican forces occupied the Gresham and Hammam hotels at the rear of St. Thomas' church. The Free State duly brought in the heavy guns the British had left behind and reduced the east side of O'Connell St. and St. Thomas' to rubble. Irretrievably damaged, St. Thomas' was cleared away and Gloucester St. was pushed through to O'Connell St. The caskets containing the remains of the Gardiner family miraculously survived and were removed to the vaults of the nearby St. George's church. (N.C.E.A. 1991 p29)

This new stretch between Gloucester St. and O'Connell St. was called Cathal Brugha St. in honour of the Republican leader who died in the battle. The new St. Thomas' was built in 1931 and ran tangentially to the new street. It remains a fine red-brick neo-romanesque building, cleverly designed by Frederick Hicks to fit in with the surrounding Georgiana. (Wren 1993 p 8) (Fig. 1)

In 1932 Gloucester St. became Sean MacDermott St., after the signatory of the Proclamation of Independence who was executed by the British following the 1916 Rising. (Stephenson 1948 p114) However, I will continue to use the name Gloucester St. to avoid confusion.

The Free State government made Dublin Corporation responsible for dealing with the housing crisis still affecting Dublin after the Civil War. On the North side alone there were 60,000 people in need of proper accommodation. (Harvey 1949 pp95-96) In 1939 two major housing schemes were undertaken on Lower Gloucester St. St. Joseph's Mansions were built on the former gardens of Aldborough House and were a self-contained flats complex with common access

stairways and interior balconies. The flats were entered from one main entrance on Gloucester St. and the whole block was surrounded by railings and a small green area. (Fig.2) (Main Ill. 2) The facade itself was a mixture of yellow brick and red ceramic roof-tiles, and was level in height with a terrace of Georgian houses. Although quite acceptable in its own right, the complex fell down on a number of issues. Firstly, the destruction of the gardens of Aldborough House removed the wall of green which made the house so dramatic in its position. The gardens could have also become a much needed amenity area, like the Iveagh Gardens on the South side. Secondly, the gentle lowering of roof-levels on the street was altered with this four-storey development. Window sizes were not graduated like everything else on the street and were horizontally shaped, thus breaking completely with the classical vertical aesthetic that the previous developers had put in place.

The second flats complex opened in Gloucester St. in 1939 was St. Mary's Mansions, built on the site of Nos. 78-88. These flats were built in the Amsterdam style of the mid-30's, a stripped-down version of Art-Deco in dark-brown brick but without the flourishes or decoration of the period. (Fig.3) (Main Ill. 2) (Rothery 1991 p151) In the context of Gloucester St. this style was a complete break from Gardiner's intentions. A large green area ran down from the Diamond to the two flat buildings, again devoid of separate entrances or graduated window sizes. One of the most idiotic design features was the flat roofs, which in a country of 70% rainfall per annum and a city of spires and pitched roofs seemed ill conceived. (This was realised in 1994 when complaints of residents about constant leakages led to renovations in a more traditional manner.) The "greening" of the Diamond was also a complete misinterpretation of Gardiner's concept of an imposing, built up meeting-point.

In 1948 the Municipal Housing Authority took over the Georgian houses of Upper and Lower Gloucester St. (Stephenson 1948 p114) The houses were reno-

vated in the same style as the flats. This involved the ripping out of all railings, balconies and surrounding walls and the raising of parapet levels to a ridiculous height. Many doorways were ripped out to fit more rooms in what was now a common-access complex. Interior walls were knocked out and all remaining plasterwork was destroyed. New surrounding walls were then made from pre-cast concrete and brickwork was renovated (in different coloured brick). These once great mansions became stripped-down shadows of their former selves. Only No. 13 Upper Gloucester St. escaped due to private ownership.

1954 brought the removal of the "tin" church on Lower Gloucester St. and in its place was built the oversized Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, opposite St. Mary's Mansions. It was neo-romanesque in the style of the new St. Thomas' but lay 100 ft. behind the traditional line of the street, plonked in the middle of a tarmacadam desert. (Fig. 4) (Main Ill. 2)

The '60s brought further demolition with Nos. 44 and 45 coming down during the construction of a massive office block on Marlborough St. Nos. 89-95 and Nos. 97-99 Lower Gloucester St. were demolished by the Corporation to make way for a projected housing block on Gardiner St. This was built in black brick and pebbledash, with a separate circular common-access staircase in pebbledash that was particularly repulsive when viewed from Gloucester St. (Fig.5) (Main Ill.) Easons wholesaler's then erected a blank-walled factory at the site of Nos. 89-95, incorporating No. 96 into this. No. 96 had its top storey and door removed, then the facade was plastered, pebbledashed and painted blue. (Fig.6) (Main Ill. 2) In completion this factory building looked more like a concentration camp in its brutal lack of involvement with the pedestrian. The blank wall offers no decoration except the weeds that grow at its base.

The houses that ran from No. 24 to 34 Lower Gloucester St. were demolished to make way for a public swimming pool in the late 1960s. This building

was devoid of decoration, being made up of large blocks of brown brick on a windowless wall. (Fig.7) (Main Ill. 2) For an area with such housing problems, Gloucester St. was fast losing its houses.

This was, of course, due to the mass construction of suburban housing estates on the outskirts of the city. As these houses went up in their thousands and the housing stock of the inner city was ripped down, whole communities were transplanted from their traditional homes to the new estates. The issue never seemed to come up that with less people in the area perhaps the destruction could stop and people could now be distributed into renovated older houses. (Sheehan/Walsh 1988 p70)

The breakdown of Gloucester St.'s urban fabric and community continued into the late '70s and '80s. In 1978 the renovated Georgian houses of Upper and Lower Gloucester St. had again fallen into disrepair for reasons we shall explore later. In 1981 almost all of the 54 remaining Georgian houses were demolished. (Con Murray) (Fig.8) Now most of Gloucester St.'s Georgian houses were gone except for the mutilated No. 96 Lower Gloucester St. and Con Murray's pub at No.13 Upper Gloucester St. In the same year George Papworth's brilliant Regency terrace at Nos. 45–50 Lower Gloucester St. was also demolished and quickly replaced by a single brick block that covered an electricity generator. (Civic Archives) (Fig.9) (Main Ill. 2)

The surrounding houses fared little better. Nos. 42–44 were demolished a few years later as were the top floors of No. 55. Nos. 37–39 were removed at the same time. Across the road stood the shell of the Presbyterian Church, which had been burnt down in the 1970s.

By 1985 Upper and Lower Gloucester St. had lost up to 82.25% of its original housing stock. Only 13 derelict Victorian houses remained along with the

Convent and the Carpenter's Hall at No. 35 Lower Gloucester St.

By the late 1980s the street was being rebuilt again. At the southern junction of Gloucester St. and Marlborough St. was constructed one of the worst examples of multi-storey car park building in Dublin. (Fig.10) (Main Ill. 1) It was simply a heap of pre-cast concrete and neon signs. On what had been a Georgian street of residential houses this building was a sign of how far civilisation had progressed, when cars had taken precedence over houses.

The Corporation initiated a new housing project further down the street on the site of Nos. 12–21 Upper Gloucester St.. These new houses were devoid of any reference to the past, with windows seemingly stuck on at random and the red-brick facade lacking any kind of decoration. (Fig.11) (Main Ill. 1) This kind of housing was constructed at the northeast corner of the Diamond and beside the Carpenter's Hall, without taking any lead from the structures around them. Of course new homes were welcomed by residents, but in terms of aesthetics they were a million light-years from what builders 200 years before had achieved.

The space formed by the derelict site of Nos. 1–11 Lower Gloucester St. was transformed into a park. (Fig.12) (Main Ill. 2) Again, in its own right this was a very fine enterprise, but in an urban context it destroyed the built harmony of the street, “greening” yet another corner of the Diamond.

The most recent developments on Gloucester St. have been as a result of European money and the Tax-designated opportunities for private developers. The site at the southern corner of Gardiner St. and Gloucester St. (Nos. 19–21) forms the end-piece of a massive development along Gardiner St. to that point, the Custom Hall Apartments. Because of the overhaul in planning permission directives, stipulating an adherence to Georgian street heights and materials, this building is like a pastiche of Georgian terrace building. (Fig.13) (Main Ill.) There

is only one entrance on this nine-bay block, and it squashes five storeys into the space Gardiner would have stipulated four. The facade is in brick and plaster, with an overdose of quoins (edging blocks), and features a childish out-of-proportion triplanum in brick. (Triplanums were only ever built in stone as befitted their importance in Georgian times.) All the windows are the same size and have P.V.C. frames. When one approaches the basement it becomes apparent that instead of a basement storey there is an open car-park, making the whole structure look like it is on stilts.

Across the road the Corporation has begun building another flat complex in brick which, when viewed from behind shows a roof made of galvanised metal (a tenement for the future?) (Fig. 14) (Main Ill. 1). To date the only other development in the area is a private apartment block completed in 1994 on the site of Nos. 33-45. This four-storey red-brick building shows just how openly the new pseudo-stringent planning stipulations can be interpreted. (Fig. 15) (Main Ill. 1) The large P.V.C. window frames sit assymmetrically into unproportioned slots of shiny red-brick and cheaply-joined metal railings. There is no roof to speak of except for a small twee pyramid of metal covering the entrances. It, too, refers to nothing in the surrounding area, but this is probably because there is nothing there.

The destruction of Gloucester street is almost complete. What remains are the questions that this fact raises.

CHAPTER 6: THE COMPARATIVE STREETSCAPES OF GLOUCESTER ST.

In earlier Chapters we saw how the neo-classical design of Gloucester St., though constructed in fits and starts, had a loosely unified streetscape. Each new development considered the design environment already in place, and used that environment as the key element in any new structures. This harmony, begun by Gardiner in 1770, was maintained until the erection of the modernist flats complexes in 1939.

The reason why St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Mansions destroyed the balance of the street is not through any serious fault in their individual designs—they are fine examples of flat-complex building. It is instead their placement in a completely classical streetscape that makes their presence offensive. Though built in brick, they are completely the wrong colour. Though four-storeys high, the window sizes are not graduated, and both windows and frames are horizontally shaped. The lack of doorways and exterior decoration makes them look monolithic, and there is no reference whatever to what has come before. These buildings would look well in the countryside, if they were landscaped and maintained, but within the urban fabric of Gloucester St. they looked out of sync.

The building of these flats and similar ones around Dublin, constitute in my mind the first of a constant stream of errors that Dublin Corporation made over the next fifty years. But it had not always been so. In 1925, under the direction of architect Horace T. O'Rourke, O'Connell St. had been rebuilt in a modernist style, yet the use of Portland stone, slate and granite, as well as the adherence to Georgian building heights, resulted in excellent examples of how architecture in Dublin could have progressed. The Gresham Hotel, The Savoy Cinema and the Hammam buildings formed a proportional triptych, supported at intervals by solid granite apartment buildings. The development turned the corner into the

new Cathal Brugha St., where the street level was lowered to match up with Upper Gloucester St.'s Georgian houses. Frederick Hicks' new St. Thomas's Church was another good design, although it was neo-Romanesque, because he made sure it fitted with the old houses around it. In the same year the Customs House and the Four Courts were restored to their former glory, having been gutted during the Civil War.

This example of enlightened restoration and considered design did not make its way onto Gloucester St. or the rest of the unfortunate north side. The renovation of Gloucester St.'s houses in 1948 was disastrous, removing pitched roofs, ironwork, fanlights and some doorways. The Georgian terrace is a bulky thing, and needs these important features to break the monotony of the combined facade. This "renovation" made the house's destruction inevitable—in a city where many fine houses were being demolished, those stripped of both interior and exterior features hadn't much of a chance.

Following the destruction of 1981, the street was like a desert of rubble. This in itself was a bad thing, but the fact that it stayed that way for almost ten years was even worse. The modern buildings on the street, such as the swimming pool, the E.S.B. station and Eason's Wholesalers, were some of the worst examples of modern architecture in Dublin, and were similar only in that they featured nothing but a solid brick facade. The Diamond, one of only two classical set-pieces on the north side, has been "greened", eliminating both its shape and its intention.

Gloucester St's modern streetscape, taken panoramically, has no aesthetic value whatsoever, because nothing on the street has any relationship with anything else. A modernist viewpoint would suggest that it was a classic representation of all the styles of architectural history to the present day. The answer to this is simple. That which incorporates everything means nothing. Gloucester St.

could be anywhere in the world in its present form—as it was, it was a classic Dublin Georgian street.

What was so special about the neo-Classical panorama of Gloucester St.? How does one judge what is better or worse? Is what pleases the visual senses relative to one's education, or is it purely a gut feeling? Georgian architecture is appreciated as being beautiful by all strands of society, and the sheer volume of books written about it give it the academic stamp of approval. Why is it then, that 200 years ago people with far less technology or education than we possess today, could make something aesthetically superior to what we have achieved?

One simple answer would be the wealth of that time. When Gardiner developed his Dublin he owned over 25% of what is today the city between the canals, thus he had the ability to design entire streets and vistas. Today buildings are constructed separately, and their aesthetic is primarily based on how much money is available. In Ireland very little money is spent on modern buildings, and Gloucester St. reflects this in terms of the shoddy materials used. Also, because of the social nature of much of Gloucester St.'s modern buildings, the minimum amount of money was spent on their construction. The new middle-class apartment blocks were erected hastily because of the deadline for tax-designated benefits (1994), thus making any new construction money-orientated rather than aesthetically conscious. Yet this is what planning applications and stipulations should do—ensure that essential rules will not be broken in terms of height, materials or history. If Gardiner could stipulate how he wanted things done, surely Dublin Corporation could do the same? As we have seen with the new “stringent” planning rules, both Custom Hall and Gresham Hall can be built as they stand—supposedly following the same order yet totally uninvolved with each other. Far more needs to be done before the design of today can even match Gardiner's efforts.

The reason neo-classical architecture in Dublin worked so well was the art form's concern with human dimensions. The key measurement in any Georgian house is six feet, the average human height. This is why the average house was 54 ft. in height, and why ceiling heights of 18 and 12 ft. were always divisible by six. The reason windows were vertically shaped was that they corresponded with the human figure. Decoration and plasterwork adorned the interiors and exteriors of houses because it appealed to people. Even more interesting was the relationship between private terrace houses and public buildings. Aldborough House, because it was situated on a rise, was made a three-storey building to accommodate the planned Georgian terrace that was projected to run up to Buckingham St. This was similar to the Customs house and its relationship with Gardiner St. Both private and public buildings shared the same dimensions, and the window sizes of Gardiner St.'s houses were adjusted to fit Gandon's design.

This concern for human dimensions, combined with considered planning and respect for the relationships between structures, was the strength and the success of Gloucester St., and indeed, Gardiner's Dublin as a whole. Why this careful approach which was dutifully taken up by Gardiner's successors, was not continued after 1939, has more to do with times we are living in and the aesthetic and philosophical changes in the minds of "experts", particularly young architects.

Gardiner was a product of the Age of Reason, a time when there was great concern for order, unity, and in particular harmony in the arts. His Dublin was neither a product of his money or his genius—he simply applied common sense to a development in the stylistic mode of the day. His stipulations showed an understanding of the importance of proportion, materials and decoration, and the neo-classical policy of using the human figure as a reference point was, without question, the most logical way of doing things.

The modern streetscape of Gloucester St., on the other hand, illustrates perfectly how modernism cannot fit into an ancient streetscape, except when that street is completely obliterated through war, such as Horace T. O'Rourke's section of O'Connell St. The trouble in Dublin, though, is that this trend of preservation and adaptation did not continue, resulting in the city failing to develop concentrically like Prague where each historical style is represented without imposition on another. Instead, mass destruction took place in the city centre., leading to urban blight in the suburbs. This is not unique in European cities. Le Harve, Bratislava and Aberdeen were destroyed in this manner. Yet they were secondary cities in their respective countries. Paris, Prague and Edinburgh would never have been let go in the fashion Dublin has been. The reasons behind that destruction are many and varied, and deserve another thesis in themselves.

Gloucester St. today is a sad, sorry mess. It is also beyond hope, because the attitude inherent in modernism, that of functionalism before reference, finance before beauty, is still Dublin Corporation policy. Dublin is changing, and there is a more considered attitude towards preserving surviving Georgiana, but that which is gone, is gone forever.

CONCLUSION

I have succeeded in one aim—to completely recreate Gloucester St. visually and historically. When I began this task I was worried about the amount of information that would be available, but as I progressed it became clear that what is required to achieve a complete picture of a Georgian street is already there. However, this information is spread out among hundreds of publications, maps and photos, each offering a tiny morsel that puts another piece of the puzzle into place.

The most striking thing about my research was the lack of accessibility in most of the archival institutions. Like banks, the archives close at weekends, and only open at a time when most people would be working. Photography is not allowed, and to get a reproduction of a single photo takes up to two weeks, costing £10.00. While I accept the value of the documents in storage and the security measures around this, I find the exclusivity of these institutions unfortunate, as it means that much of the information is beyond the reach or means of the layman.

I think it is important, not only to have information organised properly, but to make it as accessible as possible, to put it in context, and make it educate the browser as well as the academic. I hope this is what I have done, and I would like to see the archives and future publications take this approach as well. That said, the archives are only in their infancy, and as time goes on, with the help of government funding, they should become major educators.

The story of Gloucester St. is one that surprises many people. Those that only know the street as a “no-go area” fail to understand where it came from and how it became that way. Gardiner’s Dublin, like Baron Hausmann’s Paris, represented the best in civic planning, so much so that it came to define the “look” of Dublin as Hausmann defined the “look” of Paris. The difference is that

Gardiner's Dublin was let go, and its modern aspect is as ill-conceived as it is ugly. The roots of the design problem are both modernism's incongruous approach and the specifically Irish situation of having to spend as little as possible on modern structures. The roots of the social problem are another thing again, no less interesting but far more complex.

The crux of the matter is knowledge. It was lack of knowledge that destroyed Gloucester St. in the first place, and lack of knowledge that informed its present aspect. Only when the Georgian street is respected, not as a slice of real estate or as a tourist haunt, but as a work of art, will there be any hope for Dublin's architectural future. This involves education, and a willingness on the part of the people responsible for our city to educate.

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