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*National College of Art and Design*

*Faculty of Design*

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**An evaluation of the DESIGNyard.**

*by*

**Eilis Coleman**

*Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and  
Complementary Studies in partial Candidacy for the Degree  
of Bachelor of Design in Industrial Design 1996.*

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Staff of the Crafts Council

Staff of the Foko Showrooms

Feilim Dunne

Gearoid O'Conchubhair

Henry Pimm

and my tutor Niamh O'Sullivan



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## Introduction

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This thesis concerns itself with the establishment of the Design Yard, a contemporary gallery in the heart of Dublin's Temple Bar. What interested me in Temple Bar was the whole idea of the redevelopment of the area, and in particular the different types of culture that were incorporated into the one area. The Design Yard claimed to be new, innovative and different towards other existing galleries in Ireland, in the idea of its products and its involvement with the designer.

Chapter one outlines the aims and objectives of Temple Bar Properties in the plan for the development of Temple Bar. It will discuss why it was developed as Dublin's cultural sector and how Temple Bar Properties went about developing it. It will discuss the development programme, giving examples of the cultural, residential, retail and architectural developments and how they were accomplished. It then focuses on the architectural programme in more detail, discussing the competition that would redesign Temple Bar, how it was set up and the winning entry. A brief description of the other cultural centres is provided, and the chapter finally focuses the Design Yard, and how it relates to Temple Bar.

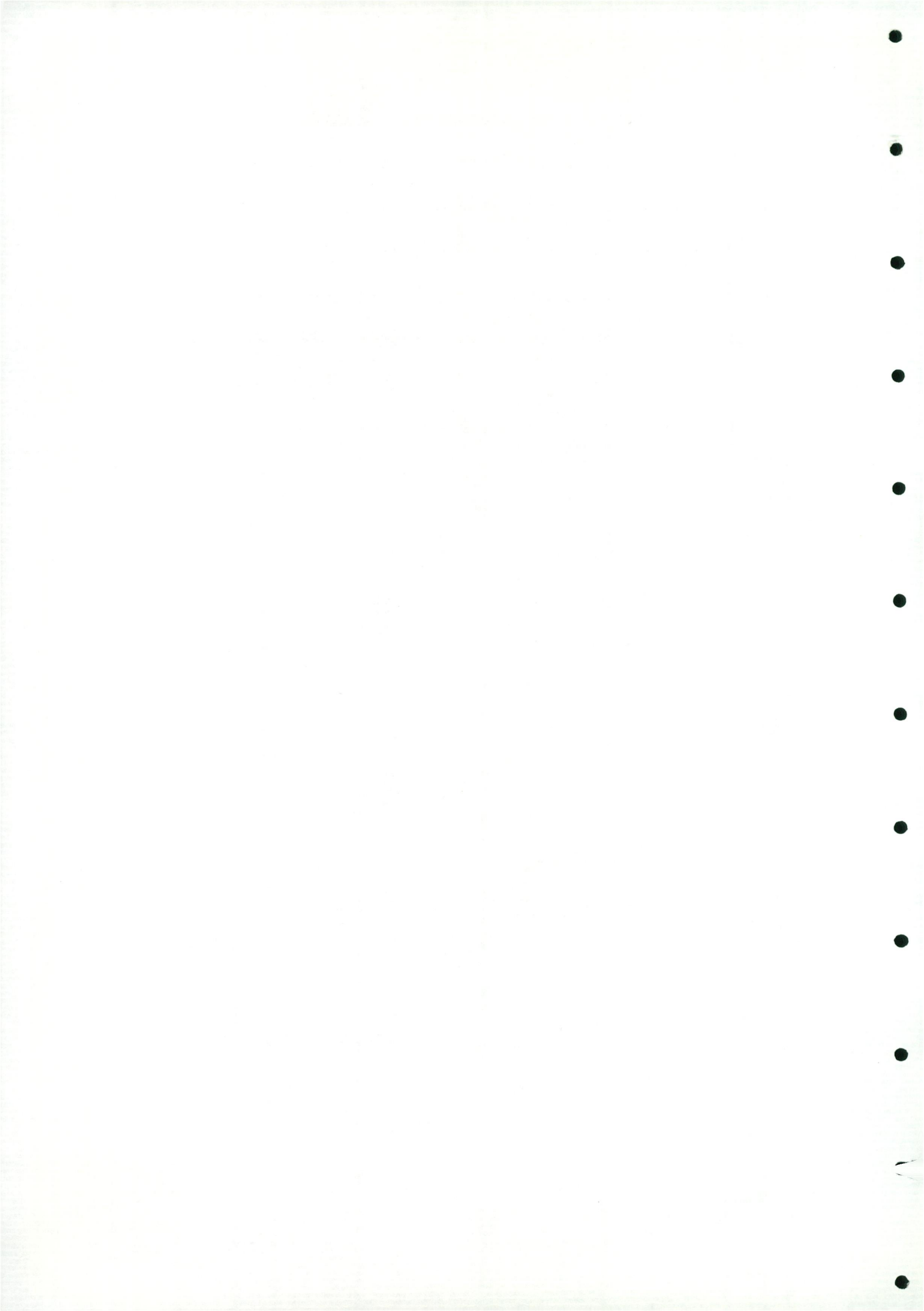
The second chapter will explore the setting up of the Design Yard, elaborating on its aims and objectives. It goes on to discuss the commissioning process and how the architect was chosen for the development of the project. The work of the architect is discussed in the



context of his previous and subsequent work. The building that houses the Design Yard will be analyzed in relation to its structure and restoration. The interior will be discussed in detail, examining each floor and elaborating the features. The jewellery gallery and furniture gallery are discussed and consideration is given to the designers involved, and their designs. The contribution of specific designers, Gearoid O'Conchubhair, and Henry Pimm and the latest jewellery exhibition, Niessing, are assessed. It will also examine the Design Yard in the context of Temple Bar and the other cultural centres in the area.

Chapter three examines the historical view of design in Ireland through The Scandinavian Report and the development of Kilkenny Design. The Design Yard is compared and contrasted with the Crafts Council Gallery and the Foko showrooms. It will evaluate what the Design Yard has done for design in Ireland, and has it fulfilled the needs for design in Ireland.

During the process of research, several articles and books were studied. Many articles, literature and marketing information have been published by the Design Yard itself and many more articles published by newspapers. For chapter one the background information that was studied include; Frank MacDonald's The Destruction of Dublin (1979) and Saving the City (1989); Tom Kennedy's Victorian Dublin (1980); Temple Bar Properties' Development Programme (1992) and Temple Bar Lives (1992) and Pat Liddy's Temple Bar Dublin (1992). Research for chapter two included Mark Gelernter's Sources of Architectural Form (1995); Fraser





Reekie's Design in the Built Environment (1972) and Nikolaus Pevsner's Sources of Modern Architecture (1979). Chapter three is largely based on interviews with Temple Bar Properties, Danae Kindness(Design Yard), Gearoid O'Conchubhair (N.C.A.D.) and Henry Pimm (N.C.A.D.), the Irish Crafts Council and Robert Drennen (Foko Showrooms). Other relevant research were marketing articles and publications by Temple Bar Properties and the Design Yard. And finally, the study of the Scandinavian Report and Kilkenny Design were studied for historical and comparative purposes.





**Plate 1 The Design Yard**



## CHAPTER 1

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As described by the then Taoiseach, Charles J. Haughey, the Temple Bar area

has in recent years acquired a unique character and creative atmosphere of its own where arts and crafts of all kinds have flourished. The preservation and sensitive renewal of Temple Bar and its development as Dublin's cultural quarter will make it a prominent feature of our capital city in the years ahead and give it a special place on the itinerary of visitors

(Development programme for Temple Bar, 1992, preface)

At this time the area of Temple Bar was in danger of being ripped out by CIE (Coras Iompair Eireann) to accommodate a bus station. The saving of Temple Bar was similar to when the Greater London Council was forced to drop plans to redevelop Covent Garden.

The Government's response was to set up a State company, and in 1991, under the Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act, Temple Bar Properties Ltd was established. This was the development company for the Temple Bar area. A sister company was also established, Temple Bar Renewal Ltd, to consider the buildings and premises to be used in the development of Temple Bar.

Temple Bar, in the context of the city, is very important because it lies between two major retail and business areas, Mary Street/ Henry Street and Grafton Street, and because it lies in the heart of the historic original city, between Trinity College and Christchurch Cathedral. It also connects the north-side of the city to the south-side.

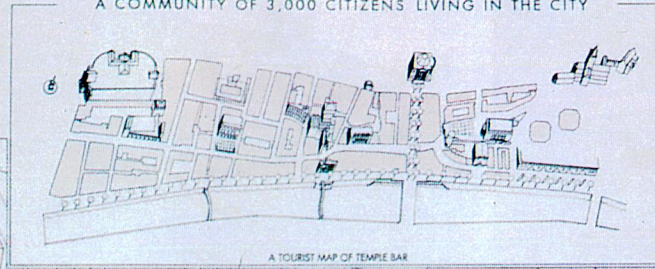


# THE TEMPLE BAR FRAMEWORK PLAN

## PERMEABILITY

1. Fleet Street / Essex Street as primary link between Temple Bar and Christchurch - Existing pattern reinforced.
2. New pedestrian bridge spans potential movement from the north side into Market Square and east near Link Temple Bar towards river city side.
3. Alleys, lanes, passages, not through existing blocks to permeate whole precinct - Variety of alternative routes created.
4. A new street made to facilitate indirect east / west links and Christchurch - Existing pattern reinforced.
5. Footpath Street reinforced on north / south link to City Hall and Dublin Circle - Potential of City Hall to have revised.

A COMMUNITY OF 3,000 CITIZENS LIVING IN THE CITY



## PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

1. Three new public squares opened within the fabric of Temple Bar - Urban spaces created from derelict sites.
2. Framework of new squares reinforced by Fleet Street / Essex Street spaces - An increase of changing interest.
3. Each public square with its own identity - Commercial, performance and market spaces.
4. Footpath Street returned to its original function - Lines of trees and cables reinforce the space.
5. Courtyards formed in block interiors - Providing secure residential spaces.

Plate 2. The Temple Bar Area.



- PRINCIPAL PUBLIC SPACES**
1. Temple Bar Square
  2. Meeting House Square
  3. Market Square
  4. Swan Place
  5. Courtyard Court
  6. Cannon Bank Place
  7. Bank Court
  8. Public Gate
  9. Pedestrian Bridge

- CULTURAL & PERFORMANCE ARTS**
10. Interpretative Centre
  11. Irish Film Centre
  12. Performing Arts Centre
  13. Olympia Theatre
  14. Project Arts Centre
  15. Vision Museum
  16. Recording Studio
  17. Theatre Centre
  18. Exhibition
  19. Handel Museum

- RESIDENTIAL**
20. Establishment of Upper tenures
  21. New Apartments
  22. Student Housing
  23. Family Housing
  24. Artisan Condo/tenure
  25. Homes
  26. Homes

- COMMUNITY FACILITIES**
27. Town Hall - Merchants Arch
  28. Corner Shop
  29. Post Office
  30. Bar
  31. Library
  32. Sports Station
  33. Community Hall
  34. Health Centre
  35. Youth Centre
  36. Women's Centre
  37. Kindergarten
  38. Daycare
  39. Swimming Pool

**REGENERATION**  
 TEMPLE BAR AS A REGENERATED ELEMENT IN THE CITY OF DUBLIN  
 - STRATEGY -  
 REESTABLISHING A VIBANT CITY  
 A community of 3,000 citizens, including 3,000 residents.

**CONSERVATION**  
 HARITAH ESTABLISHED CHARACTER AND DIVERSITY OF USES  
 - STRATEGY -  
 HUMAN DIMENSION  
 Integrate individual, corporate responses to existing opportunities, retaining the potential of derelict sites.

**IMPLEMENTATION**  
 IMPLEMENTATION TO SECURE OBJECTIVES  
 - STRATEGY -  
 SECURITY PROJECTS RANGING PROPOSALS TO REVIEW EACH PART OF TEMPLE BAR  
 1. Temple Bar pedestrian foot link to be developed primarily by regeneration.  
 2. Temple Bar Square - reinforced to raise maximum advantage from existing north / south route.  
 3. Temple Bar Square - new lanes for the pedestrian precinct - 'fragrant' for activity in the centre of Temple Bar.  
 4. Public Gate and the new pedestrian foot bridge - increased present temporary capacity for both the water side.  
 5. The 'Living Museum' - a major social 'center' of the precinct authority, a land building (existing a small lot with the use of Temple Bar.

- STREET LIFE**
30. Pubs & Bars
  31. Cafes & Restaurants
  32. Clubs
  33. Theatres
  34. Student Club
  35. Student Resource Centre
  36. Squares

- SHOPS / STUDIOS**
40. Markets
  41. Specialist Shops
  42. Offices
  43. Auction Rooms
  44. Artisan Studios
  45. Office Space
  46. Workshops
  47. Training Centre
  48. Squares

- PUBLIC BUILDINGS**
49. Base of Ireland
  50. City Hall
  51. Christchurch Cathedral
  52. Civic Offices
  53. Merchants Arch

- FACILITIES**
54. Car Parks - Abandoned
  55. Car Parking - Public
  56. Bus Stops
  57. Cycle Paths
  58. Telephone Kiosks
  59. Cycle Paths
  60. Power Columns





The main aim of Temple Bar Properties was to develop a cultural, residential and small-business area, that would attract visitors in significant numbers. Their mission was to develop Dublin's Cultural Quarter in Temple Bar, building on what was already taking place spontaneously in the area. The project has a five- year implementation period during which certain objectives were set out to be achieved, including the urban renewal of the area; the development of cultural activity in the area; the regeneration of a resident population within Temple Bar; the expansion of interesting retail outlets and service industries; the marketing of Temple Bar with the aim of attracting business, activity and people to the area on a year round basis; the improvement of the Temple Bar environment in co-operation with the appropriate authorities; the setting up of cultural, commercial and service industries resulting in the creation of jobs.

(Development Programme for Temple Bar,1992,pg 7)

Temple Bar Properties then established a Development Programme for Temple Bar. There are various reports that influenced the development of Temple Bar, as it has been part of Dublin since the Viking times and has become what it is through the intervention of many different people. This programme established a plan to develop the architectural, cultural, retail, residential and marketing programmes for the area. In order to achieve these developments, Temple Bar Properties would invest money to the value of £100 million up to 1996. It is estimated that up to £100 million would also be invested by the private sector. The private sector was made up of various businesses in the city, who were interested in the



development of the area. These finances were gathered from the sales and rents of property, European Regional Development Funds and the benefit of tax incentives on the buildings. The loans were financed by the European Investment Bank and the Bank of Ireland. The company's accounts are audited annually and presented in a report to an Taoiseach. These tax incentives are unique to Temple Bar. It offers the opportunity to avail of double rent allowances against trading for ten years. The effect of an investment of this scale in such a small area of Ireland's capital city confirms Temple Bar's palpable economic growth over the last few years.

The Retail Programme was set up to establish and expand the retail industry in Temple Bar, by encouraging small businesses to establish themselves in the area. The company's intention was to continue and encourage the diverse mix of retail use which exists already in the area. Such examples include the designer clothes shops, craft shops, coffee shops and unique restaurants which cannot be found anywhere else in the city.

The regeneration of a residential population in the area was another objective for Temple Bar. It was decided that the area should cater for up to 2,000 residents young and old, students, as well as young couples and families to stimulate a lively social mix. To increase the number of pedestrians in the area, by establishing routes such as the Poddle Bridge which connects Wellington Quay on the South-side to Ormonde Quay on the North-side, and the new Curved Street which connects Temple Lane to Eustace Street, was also considered desirable. For the retailer this means a whole new market in the area. The new Poddle Bridge will allow an



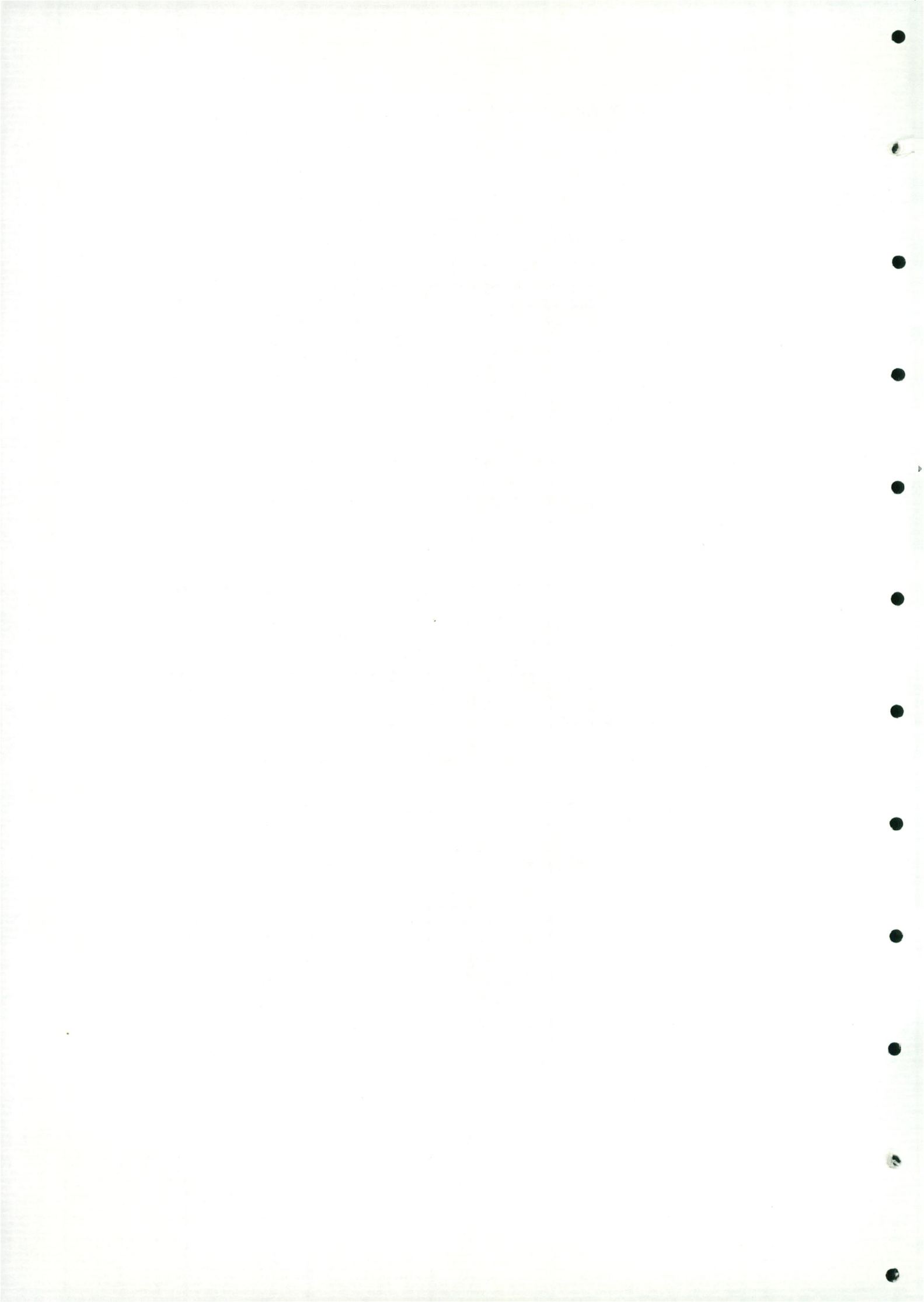
estimated 12,000 additional daily shoppers to the area.

In summary, Temple Bar Properties promote the area as being:

unique in national and international terms and alternative in terms of culture, entertainment, shopping and urban environment. It is a community of artists, small businesses, residents, retailers and restaurateurs and an area of economic growth in terms of increased revenue and job creation potential  
(Development programme Temple Bar, 1992, pg 11)

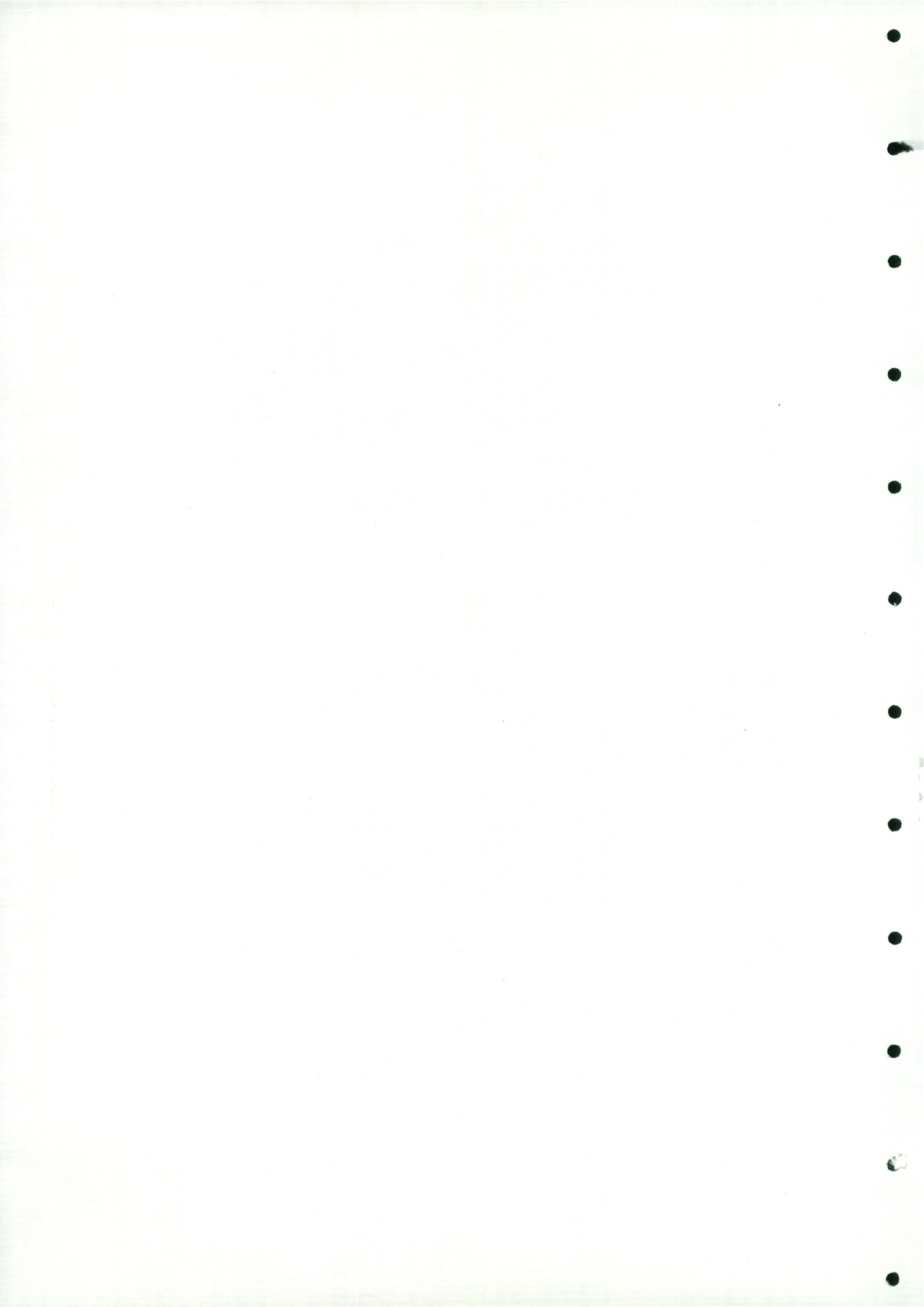
The Marketing Programme was aimed at increasing public access to the area by the above mentioned streets. Temple Bar is promoted in national and international markets in distinctive and alternative ways through a programme of events, the publication of literature and the dissemination of information about the area and its attractions.

The Architectural Programme was the first of the major plans to be developed. A competition was run to design the entire area of Temple Bar. The brief asked the competitors to put forward ideas to convert the objectives of Temple Bar Properties into a plan while incorporating some major elements including the east-west pedestrian route, public open areas, pedestrianisation, traffic movement and parking. On an environmental level Temple Bar Properties intended to develop the architecture sensitively by the conservation of existing buildings, where possible, maintaining the rhythm and scale of existing buildings and by using the dominant materials originally used in Temple Bar - stone, brick and rendered plaster. The overall architecture would be innovative and challenging to release the dynamic potential of Temple Bar, while recognising existing patterns and features. Several city planners did not favour the framework plan. They



would have preferred a more cultural look, but it is hard to choose a period for Temple Bar, given the immense variety of its buildings and its culture.

The winning entry was designed by Group 91 architects. Their entry provided plans in to which other architects could work. The plan also dealt with new streets and public areas, introducing Meeting House Square and Temple Bar Square, as well as residential accommodation, pedestrian routes, traffic management and the upgrading and improvement of the quays. Meeting House Square is the cultural heart of Temple Bar (plate 3). Four new major cultural buildings face on to this square; the Irish Film Centre; a new Gallery of Photography; a School of Photography; and The Ark. It is next to the Design Yard and the Project Arts Centre. Such a concentration of buildings will attract a continual flow of visitors to the area.

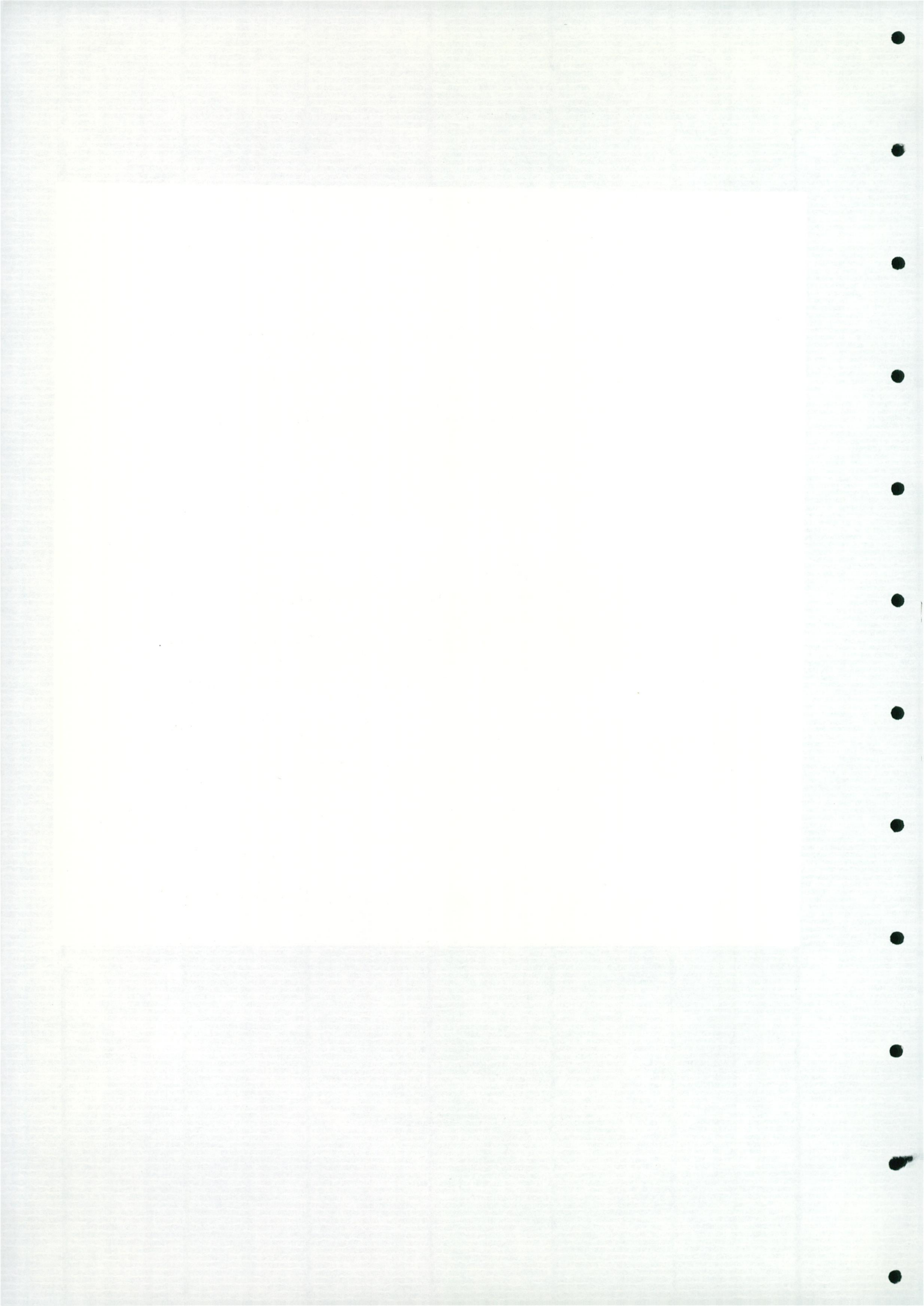






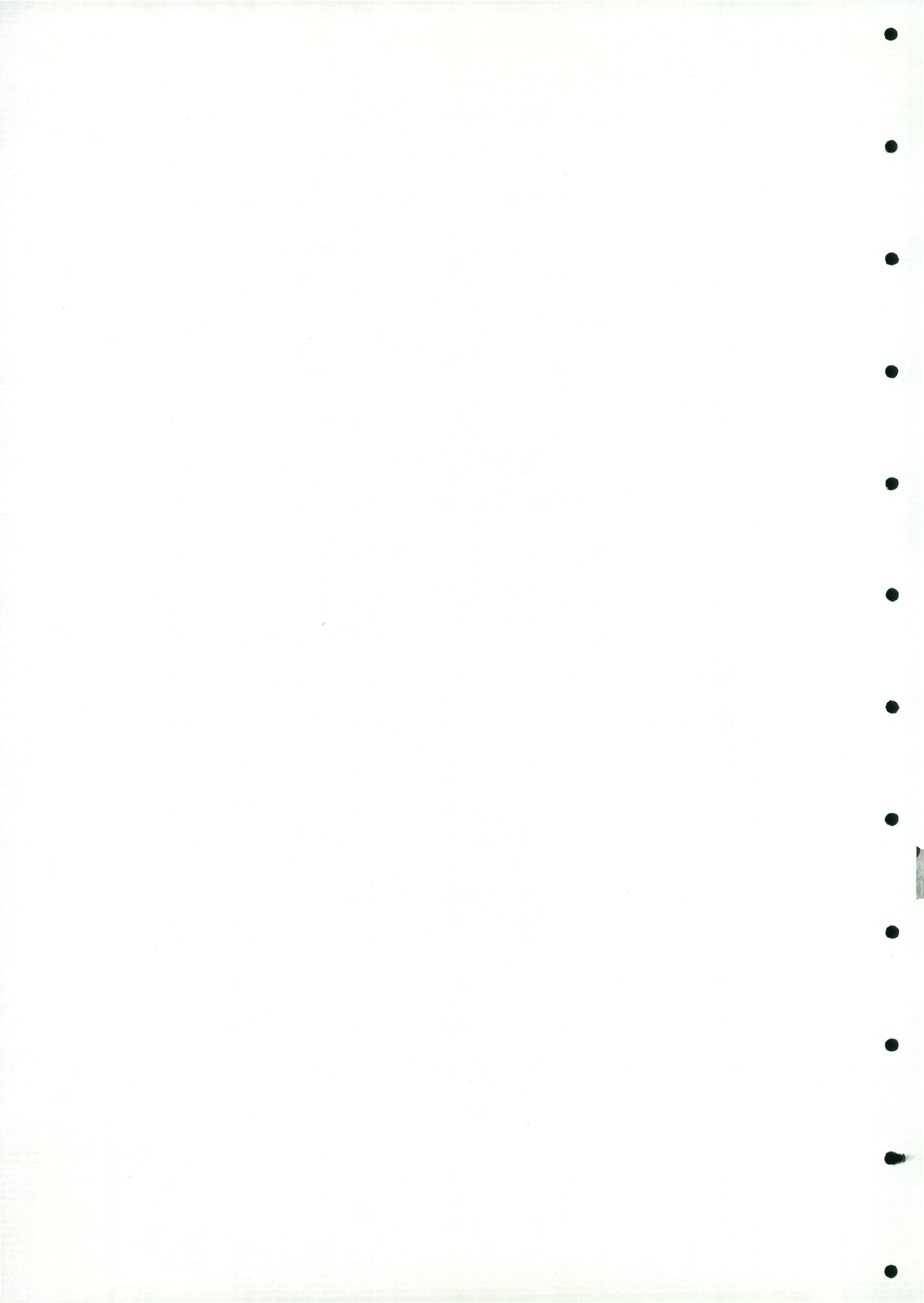
**Plate 3. Meeting House Square**

**-Artists impression.**



The most important area relevant to this thesis is the Cultural Programme, as it is the Cultural Programme that saw the establishment of the Design Yard. Temple Bar is projected as a centre of cultural activity and it is this character that drives the urban renewal development of the area. To promote this, Temple Bar Properties aimed to maintain and develop the existing mix of cultural activities in the area and to develop a number of major cultural centres to promote the development of particular cultural industries. It sought to do this by creating opportunities for small businesses to service a wider cultural community as well as Temple Bar; by creating jobs within the cultural industries with the aid of FAS and EC programmes; by incorporating newly commissioned artworks from artists into the company's developments; by promoting Temple Bar as a unique quarter of cultural diversity, which will enhance the international promotion of Dublin as a visitor destination; to source the capital funding necessary to achieve the company's cultural objectives and to work with the end-users who will benefit from these initiatives. Several cultural centres were introduced to the area including: The Irish Film Centre (1992) The Blackchurch Print Studios (1994); The Original Print Gallery (1994); Project Arts Centre (1994); Temple Bar Gallery and Studios (1994); children's centre The Ark (1995); The gallery of Photography (1995); The Music Warehouse (1996), and Art House (1996). Another of these cultural developments was the establishment of an applied arts centre in East Essex Street known as the Design Yard.

Temple Bar Properties appointed Patricia Quinn as Cultural Director



to deal with the cultural developments of the area. Quinn had been previously involved in the Arts Council. One of her first projects as Cultural Director was to establish an applied arts centre for the area. The project outcome was the establishment of the Design Yard. It was intended that the Design Yard would deal with the different craft activities in the area and would contribute to the promotion of Temple Bar as a cultural environment.

The objectives of the Design Yard broadly coincided with the cultural objectives of Temple Bar Properties. The main objectives of the Design Yard were to create a centre of excellence in the field of functional art; to create a top quality show-case for the work of selected craftworkers with an emphasis on quality in terms of design and manufacture; to act as a facilitator between craft producers and the users and buyers of the functional art products; to provide a meeting place and resource centre for Irish and European designers; and to maximise access to design developments abroad and at home.

As a result, a late Victorian warehouse at 12 East Essex street was purchased to house the design centre, and Temple Bar Properties invited Robinson, Keeffe, Devane Architects to deal with its development. They chose Feilim Dunne, who worked in association with this company, to design the interior structure of the building.

Feilim Dunne was educated at the School of Architecture, University College Dublin and trained at the Jim Stirling offices in London between the years 1983 and 1989. He has been actively involved in

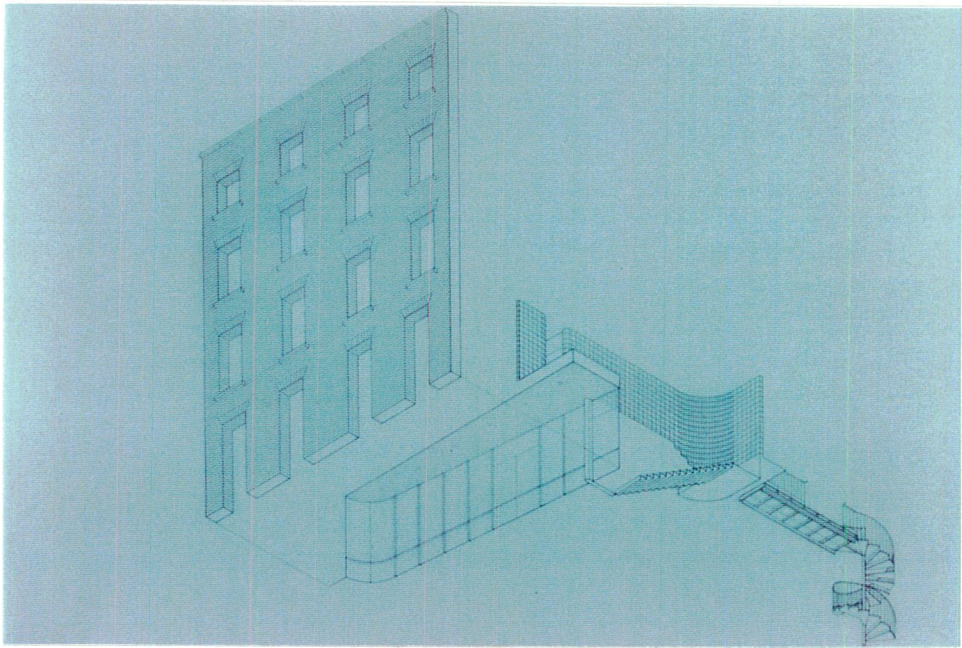
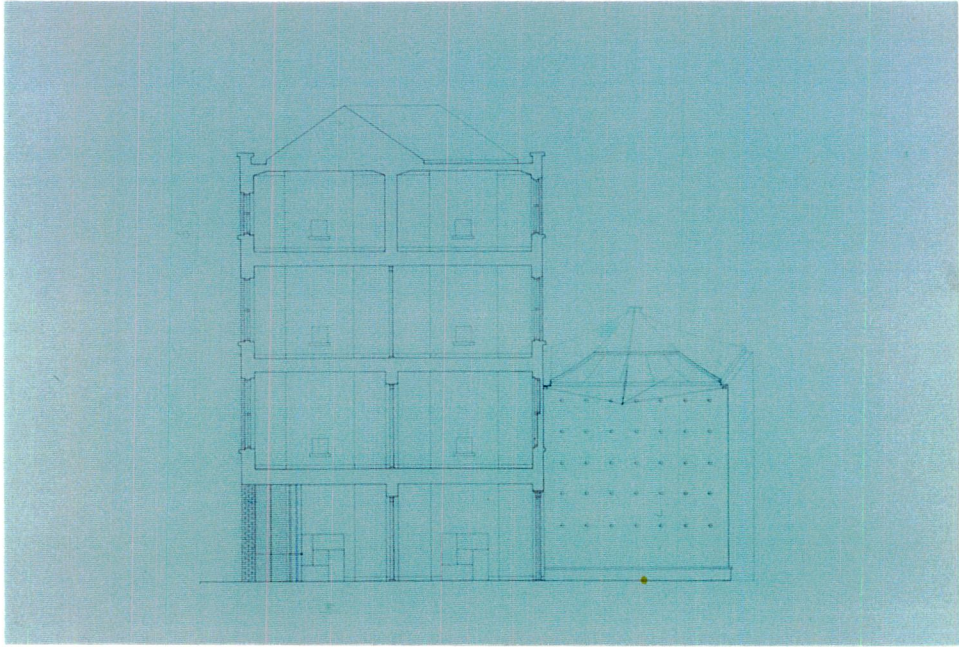


various aspects of architecture in Ireland, such as architectural competitions, urban design projects, education, lecturing, exhibitions and publications.

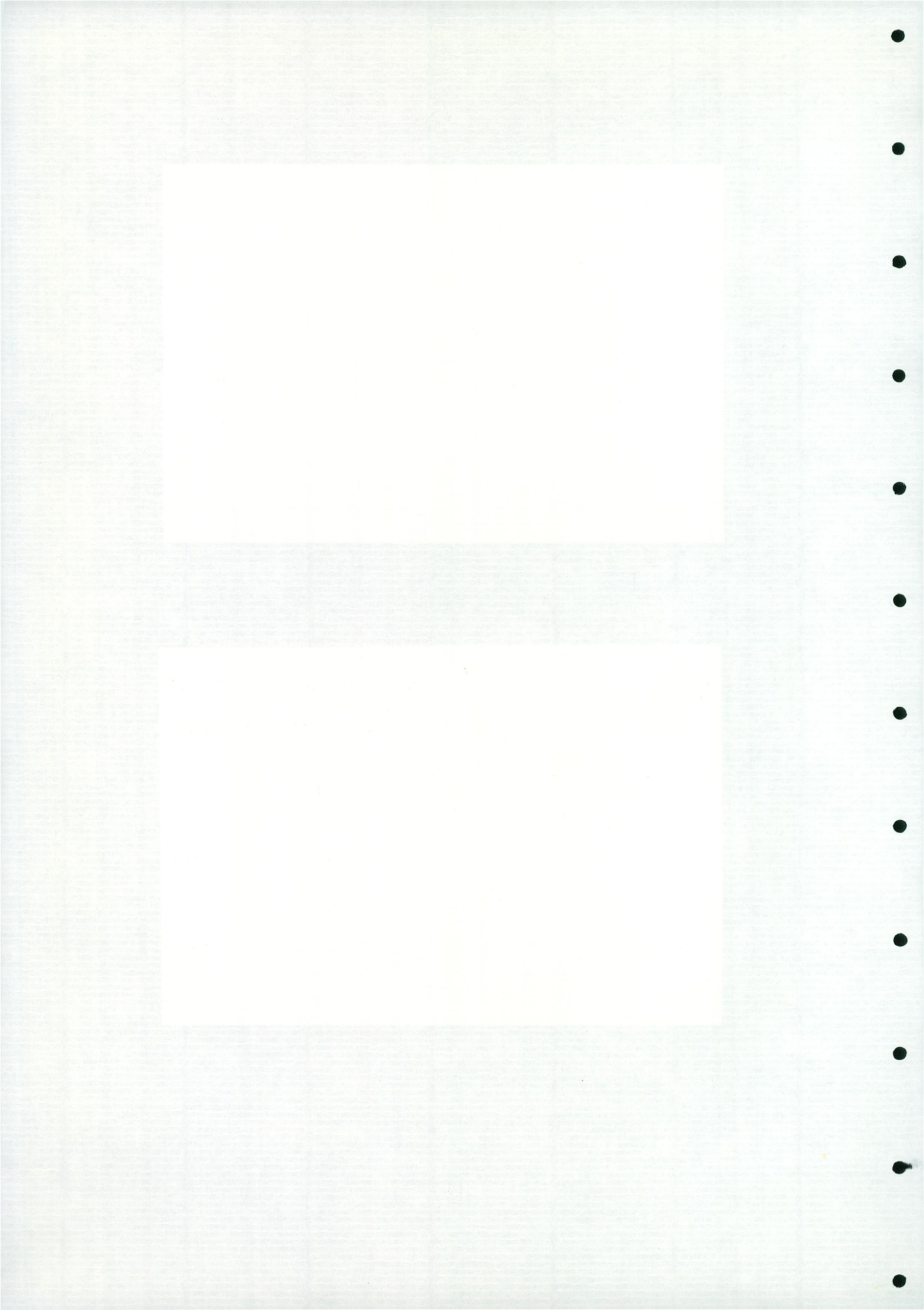
He has been closely associated with some major projects including the new extension to the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square (1985), the Abando Passenger Exchange (1986), and the new Science Library for the University of Los Angeles (1987). On returning to Ireland in 1990, Dunne established his own studio and has been closely associated with the architectural company, Robinson, Keeffe, Devane. Since returning to Ireland, he has designed the offices for the Irish rock group U2, known as the Tropical Fruit Company and the Centre for Applied Arts at Temple Bar, known as the Design Yard (Plate 4). This building was short-listed for the Mies van der Rohe Pavilion Award for European Architecture in 1994. Projects currently in development range from a Music Workshop, an experimental rehearsal project for U2, to Sheltered Accommodation for a private charity trust in Co. Wicklow.







**Plate 4. Architectural Drawings.**



The building on 12 East Essex street seemed to hold the required features that the Design Yard needed. The fact that the building already existed meant that Temple Bar Properties were preserving a building of historic and cultural interest, and even though it would be expensive to refurbish it, it would be less expensive than constructing an entire building and thus made good economical sense (plate 5)

Buildings and structures of any era...which are good examples of important design developments, providing they are reasonably intact or capable of effective, sensitive restoration especially those exhibiting exceptional integrity of design. These building are in the best sense "museum pieces" and should be furnished and maintained accordingly

(REEKIE, 1972, pg 121)

The building had to be renovated and refurbished before any of the interior structure could be positioned. The brickwork on the front facade has been restored by the use of "tuck" pointing (plate 6). This "tuck" pointing originated in the 18th century in an effort to disguise any irregularities in the bricks. It works by first filling in a coloured mortar to match the brickwork and then forming a small horizontal and vertical groove between the bricks to take a 6mm of white lime putty, resulting in a thin even line. The ornamented cast-iron columns (plate 7) and timber beams have been reinstated on each of the lower three floors, as in the original building. Windows, windows linings and sills have been carefully reproduced, retaining the profile and the mouldings of the original. Some of the most important aspects of the building, from an architectural view-point, were its age and history. It was in fact a warehouse used for storage before the docks expanded.





**Plate 5. The original building.**

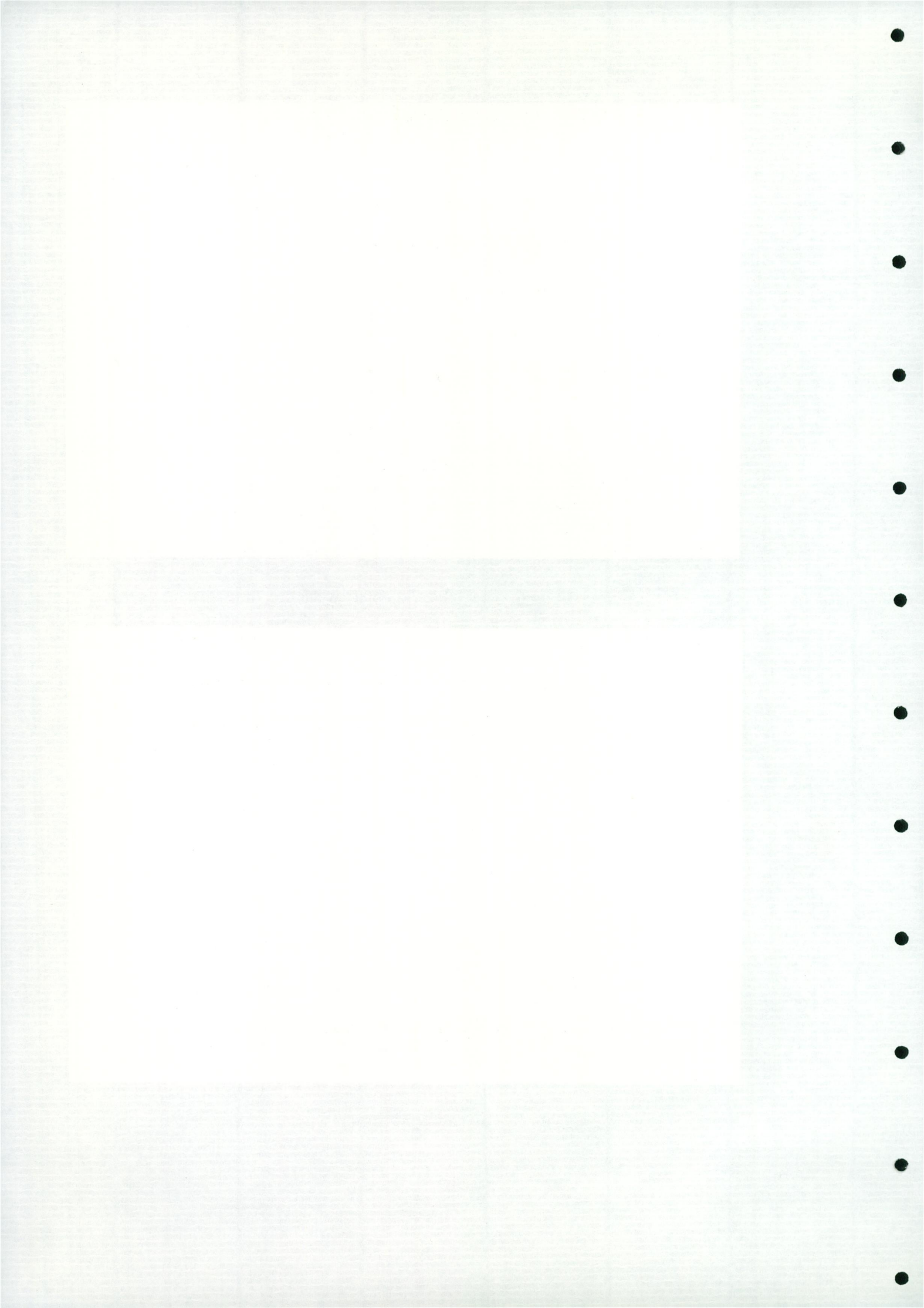




**Plate 6. The "pointed" brickwork.**



**Plate 7. The cast-iron columns.**





The three lower levels were big open halls, and the fourth floor was broken up into little rooms. So the building seemed to suit the project because of its many adaptable qualities. The spacious ground floor was suitable for public functions; the rooms become smaller towards the top, so, as the functions become less public, the building provides smaller spaces for office and staff activities.

While the building was being upgraded for structural stability, the architects, in association with Patricia Quinn, developed the brief. This was very valuable as the ambitions set by the brief were made realistic during this period. While Quinn was engaged with organisations such as the Crafts Council about what was needed in the building, and what funds were required, the architects were coming up with various concepts for the interior of the building. During this period Terry Kelly and Danae Kindness joined the team. Both had much experience in setting up other craft galleries; their experience benefited in particular the setting up of both the Jewellery Gallery and the Commissioning Gallery.

For the purposes of research, an itinerary was agreed with Kelly, Kindness and the architects: Kelly would tour several countries researching other galleries, the architects would visit most of the galleries on the British Crafts Council list in London. Of particular note was the Electrum Gallery in London run by Barbara Cartilge. This connection resulted in Cartilge becoming involved in the setting up of the Jewellery Gallery in the Design Yard.

The building was one of the first projects to be developed in



Temple Bar; it was not, therefore, impacted by the other buildings in the area. It was, as it transpired, the least ambitious in comparison with the other cultural projects, as some of the other buildings were designed and constructed from the ground, while others were multi million pound refurbishments.

The architects set about designing a " simple, stripped modern interior to make it compatible with the exterior" (Dunne, Dublin, Oct 1995). As the stripped and bare exterior facade is so challenging, it was difficult to devise and place an entrance. The architects thought that by putting a modern interior inside the facade it would need to be isolated from the outside.

modernise or reconstruct interiors, promote new developments appropriate in uses and harmonious in character, scale, materials and colour...care is needed to ensure a satisfactory effect from all possible points of view...there must be skilful interlacing of old with new

(REEKIE, 1972 pg 123)

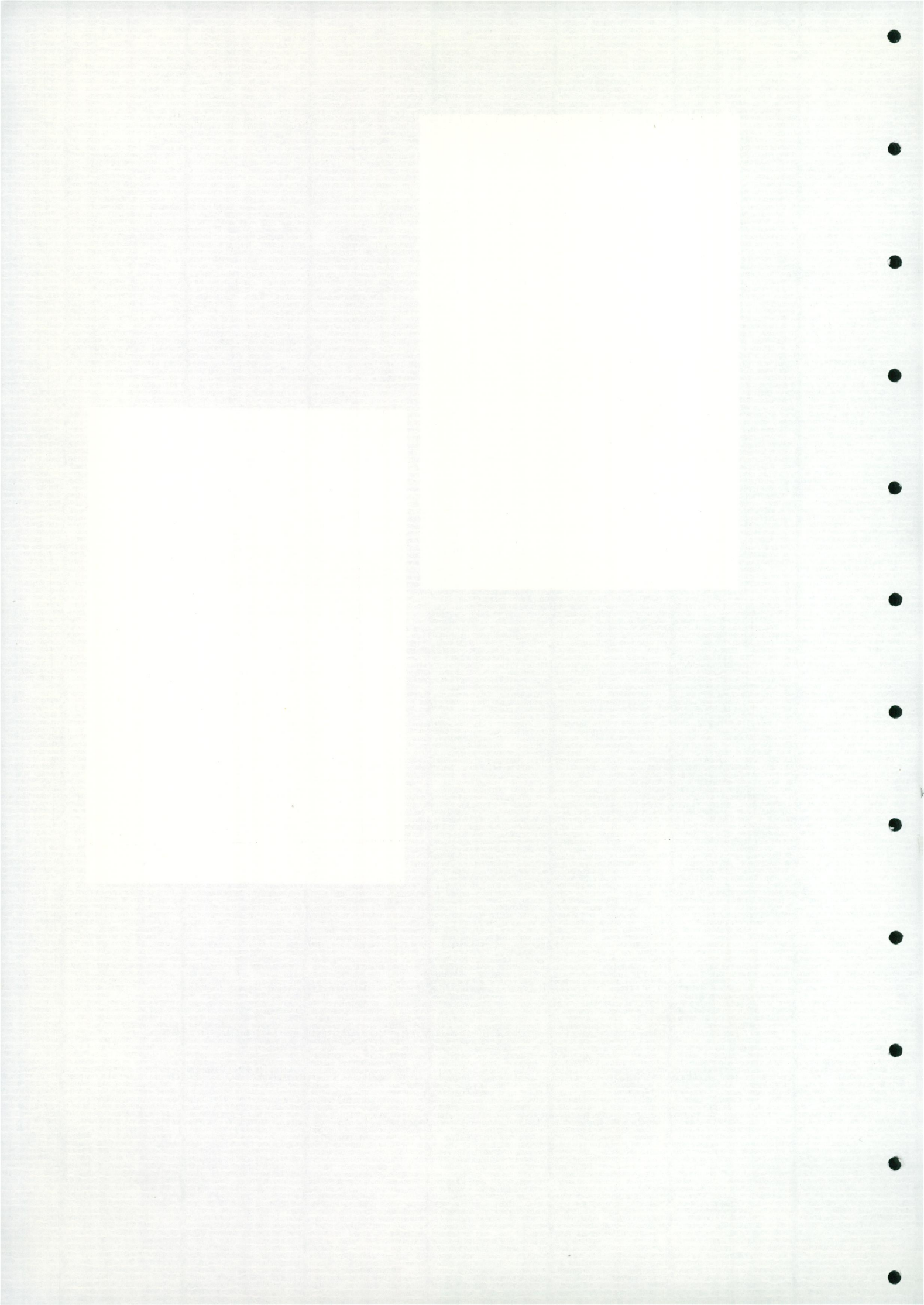
To deal with this they suggested gates that would be placed in between the four large openings, to secure the colonnade at night. Kelly appropriately suggested the involvement of craftworkers to design the gates. She organised interviews to commission their design but the response and standard of design was not very high. At one point it appeared that the architects themselves would end up designing the gates until Kelly suggested Kathy Prendergast. Prendergast came up with various concepts, the final design being based on city centre maps of Madrid, Dublin, New York and Vienna (plate 8). The gates were made of wrought iron and were fabricated by Harry Page, under the supervision of the architects.



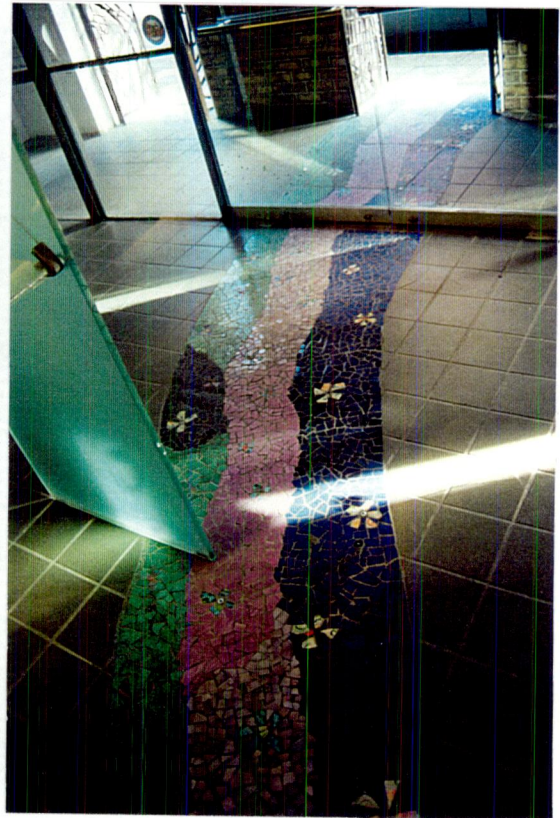
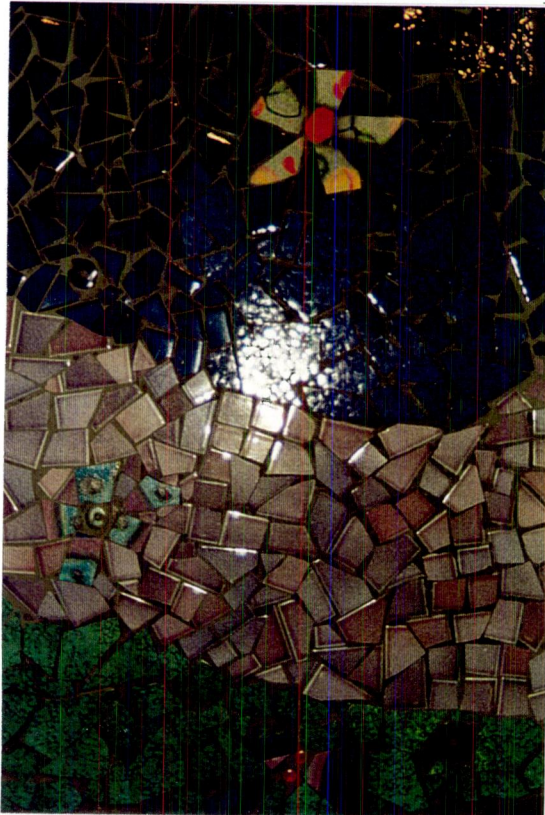


**Plate 8. The Wrought Iron Gates.**

Kelly thought that there would be a problem in attracting people into the building and wanted some feature of the building to spill out on to the street so as to attract visitors. Sara Daly was commissioned to design a feature that would appeal to the passer-by. The final design was a



mosaic tiling feature which runs along the floor, reflecting the Poddle river that runs beneath the building (plate 9) Originally this feature was to extend onto the street, but Dublin Corporation refused permission as it proved unsafe to have tiles on a footpath so a compromise was reached. The mosaic tiling now stops at the entrance.



**Plate 9. The Mosaic Tiling.**

The building consists of four floors, the first three are more openly spacious than the top floor which is converted into offices. Between the four large openings and the Jewellery Gallery, the architects placed a glazed shop-front, which holds the two entrance doors (plate 10). Thus,





the Jewellery Gallery can be seen before it is entered. This is an open hall, with a somewhat external character, reflecting its public function. The front ceiling is high and it then rises to meet the first floor ceiling, thus giving it a very spacious character. The high back walls form a triangular courtyard. Hanging from one of the walls are textiles (plate 11). The courtyard is covered by a canvas canopy that allows light into the room. It is filled with 6 glass display cases which define the space, and give unhindered viewing of the pieces within. The gallery leads directly to a triangular courtyard, which is covered by a canopy but allows light access into the floors above (plate 12).

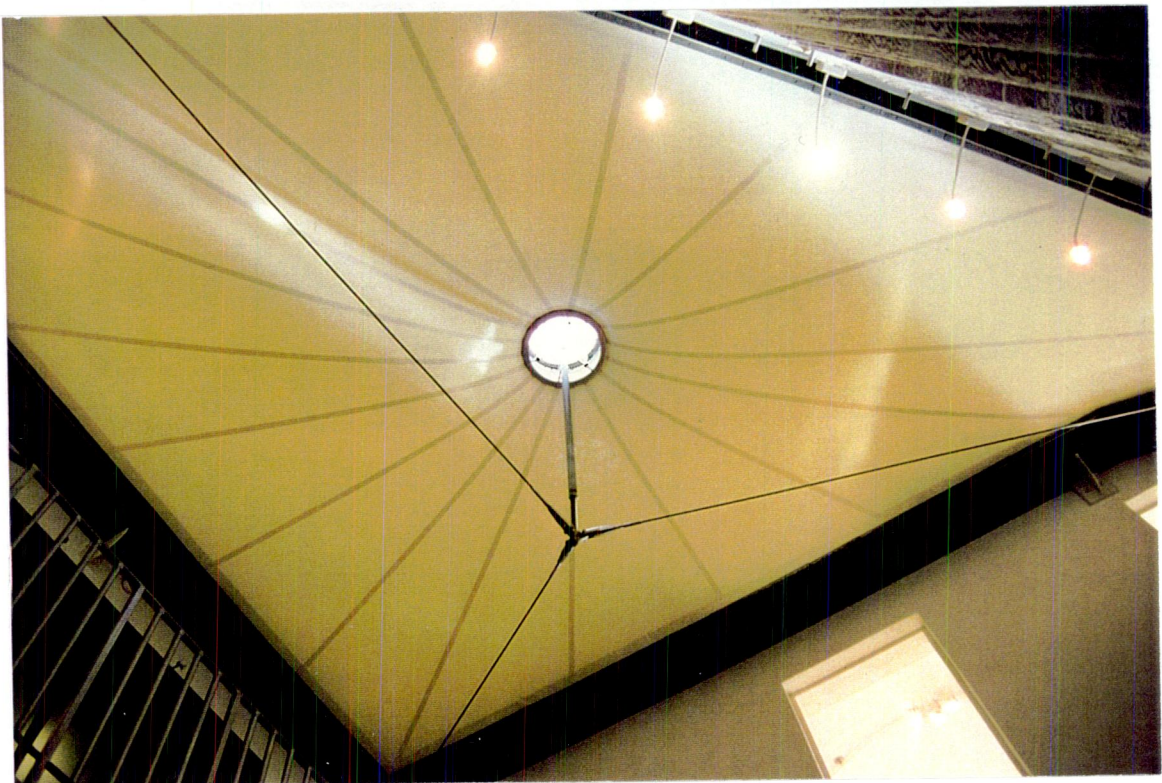


**Plate 10. The glass doorway.**

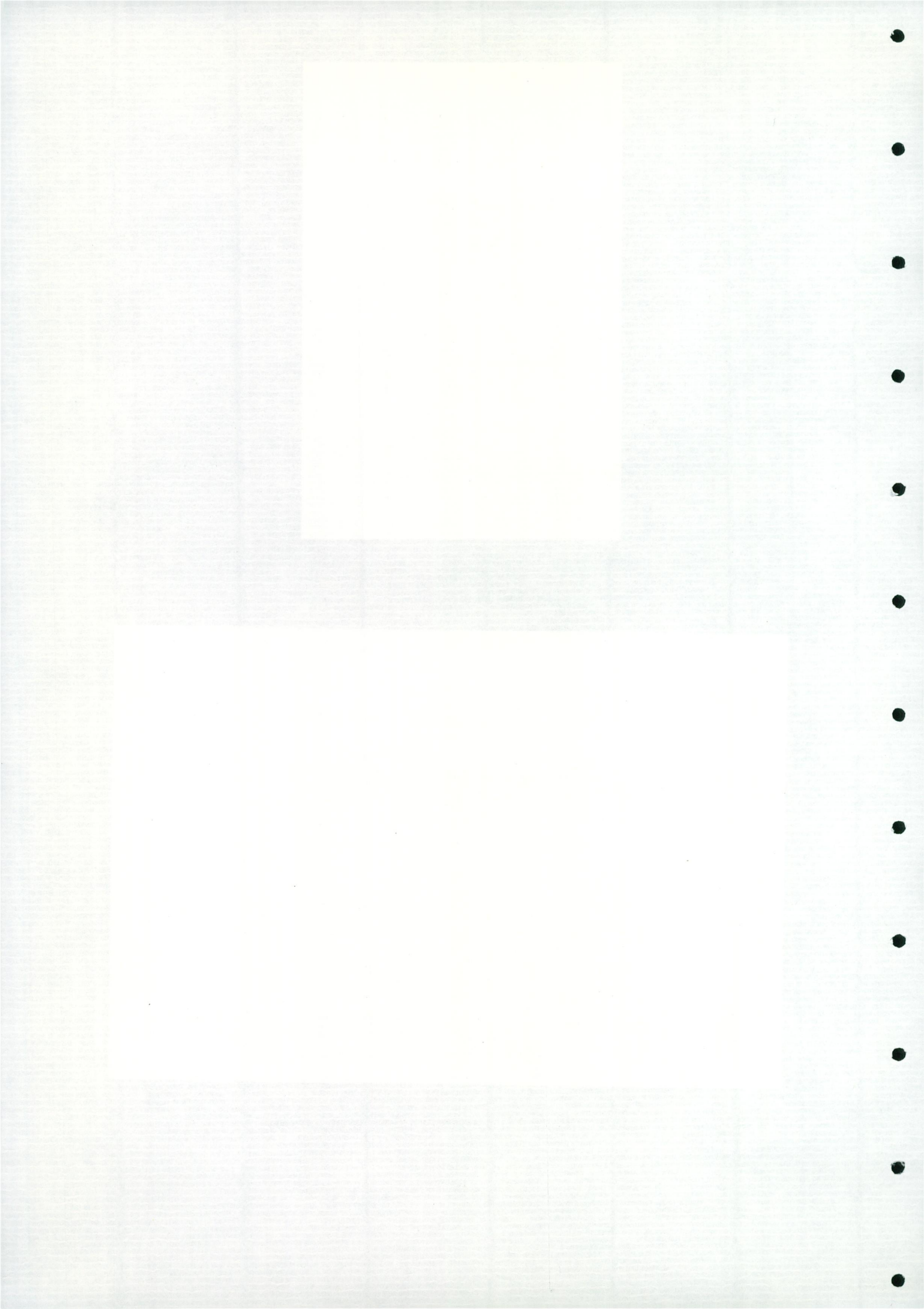




**Plate 11. The textiles.**



**Plate 12. The internal view of canopy.**



Connecting the ground floor to the first floor is a steel spiral staircase which brings one to the Commissioning Gallery (plate 13). The stairs is lit by steel mesh lights which give light to the stairwell and also adds character to the cold steel stairs. This staircase has raised many problems in the building. The first problem concerns location. It seems so far away from the main entrance that one tends not to notice it, giving the impression that there is only one public floor. Secondly, it is a spiral stairs and does not appear very inviting. Perhaps the architects should have designed a staircase that runs along the back wall which would appear more open and encourage people to go up to the next floor. Thirdly, as a spiral staircase it does not allow a lot of "traffic flow" at once. And fourthly, because it is made of steel it appears very cold and as one can see through the holes, it gives an unstable appearance. This is a critical disadvantage in terms of design and layout.



**Plate 13. The steel spiral stairs.**



An existing problem with the layout of the building is that it does not have a lift. Although a shaft was designed for a lift (plate 14), the foundation of the building was not deep enough as the Poddle river runs beneath the ground. This causes various problems: firstly, a lift is required by disabled people and they therefore do not have access to the Commissioning Gallery. This is reprehensible in this age of supposed equality of access. Secondly, the removal and delivery of furniture to the first floor has to be done manually, using the stairs. The lift shaft is now used as a storage room, as there is very little storage space otherwise. Proper storage space should have been incorporated into the building initially.



**Plate 14. Lift shaft and storage space.**

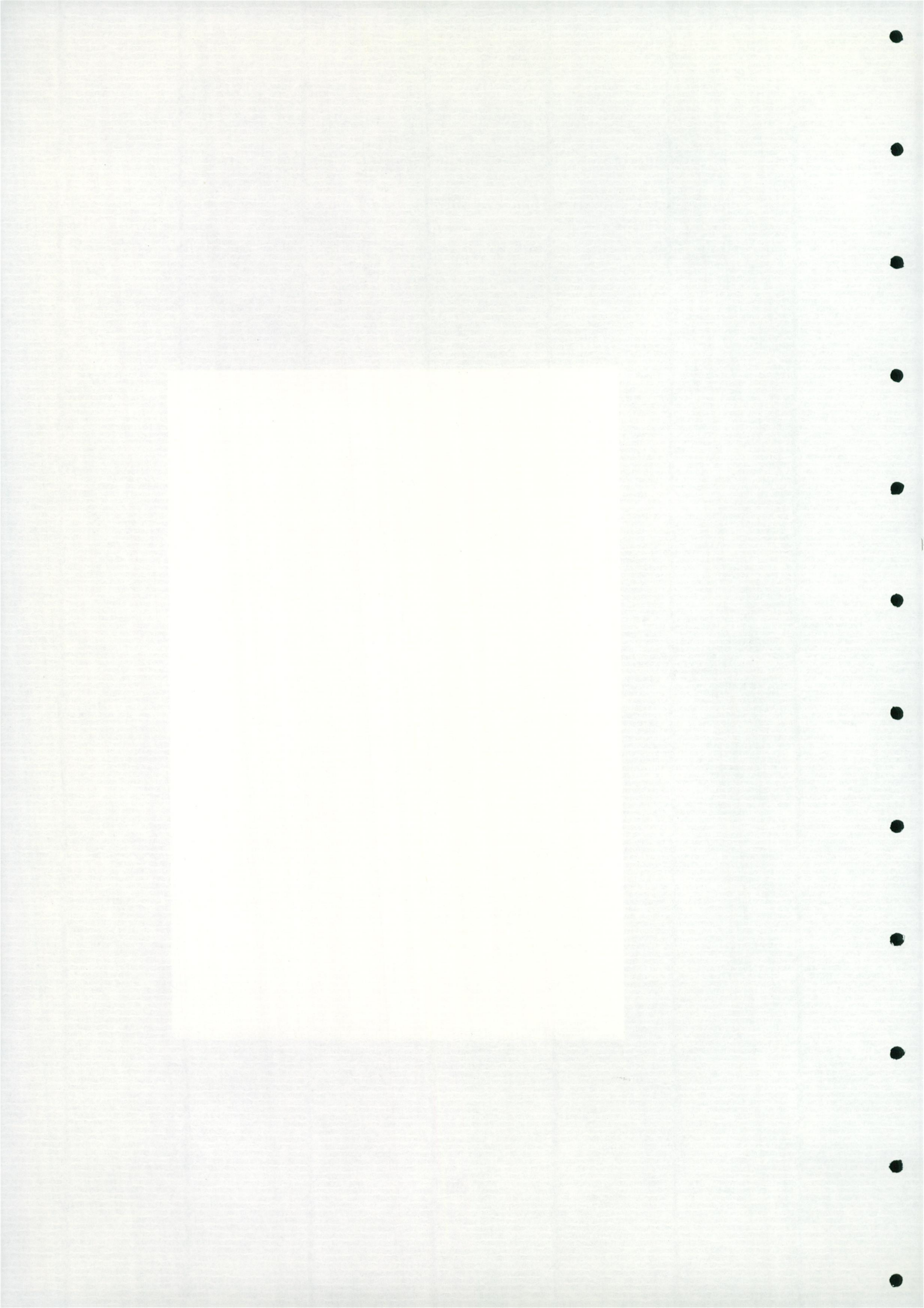




Running from the ground floor to the third floor is a private staircase(plate 15). This stairs has its own private entrance from the colonnade. On the first floor it is surrounded by glass brick walls which allows light into the stairwell (plate 16) This stairs also brings one to the seminar room.



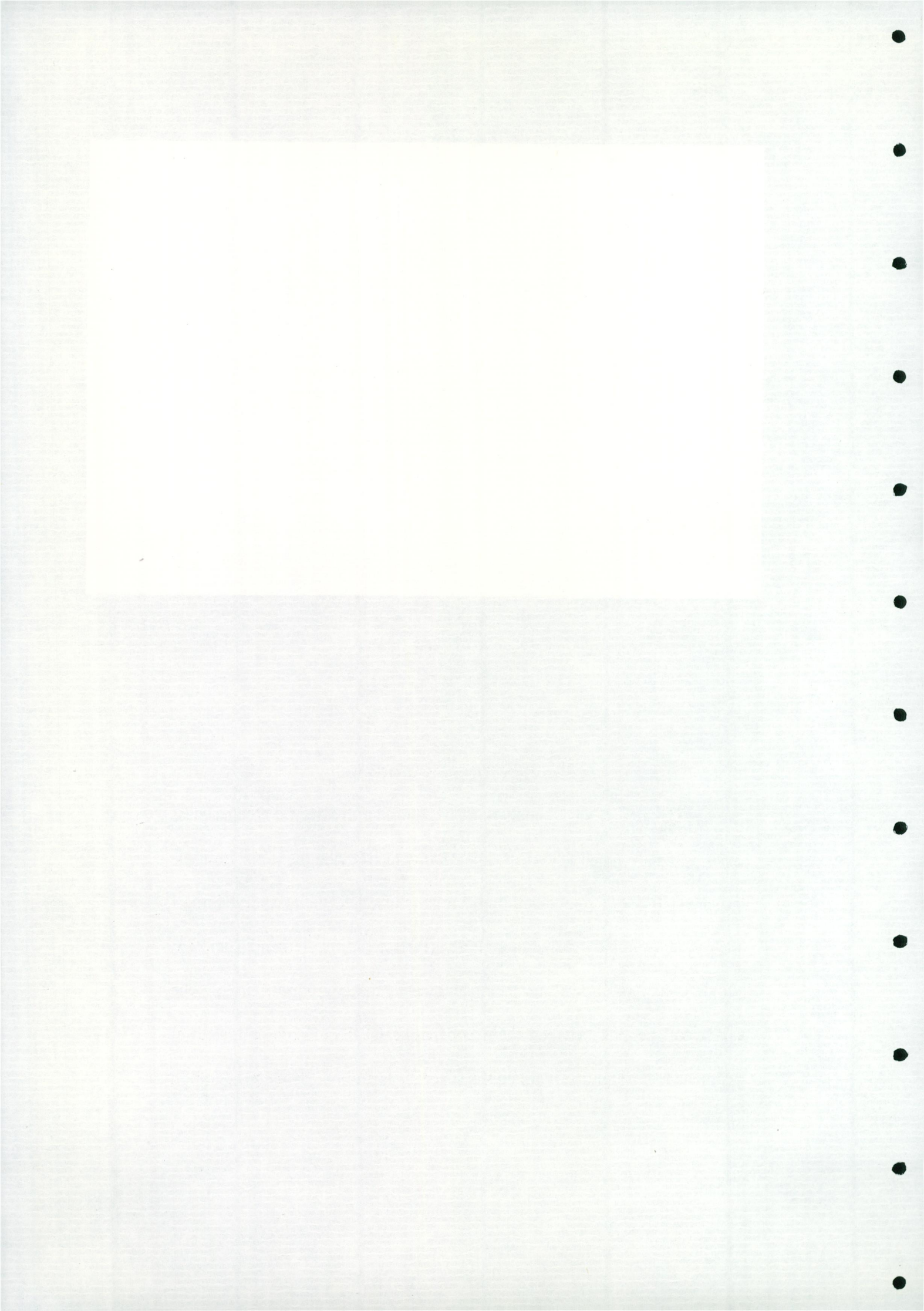
**Plate 15. The Private Staircase.**





**Plate 16. The glass brick walls.**

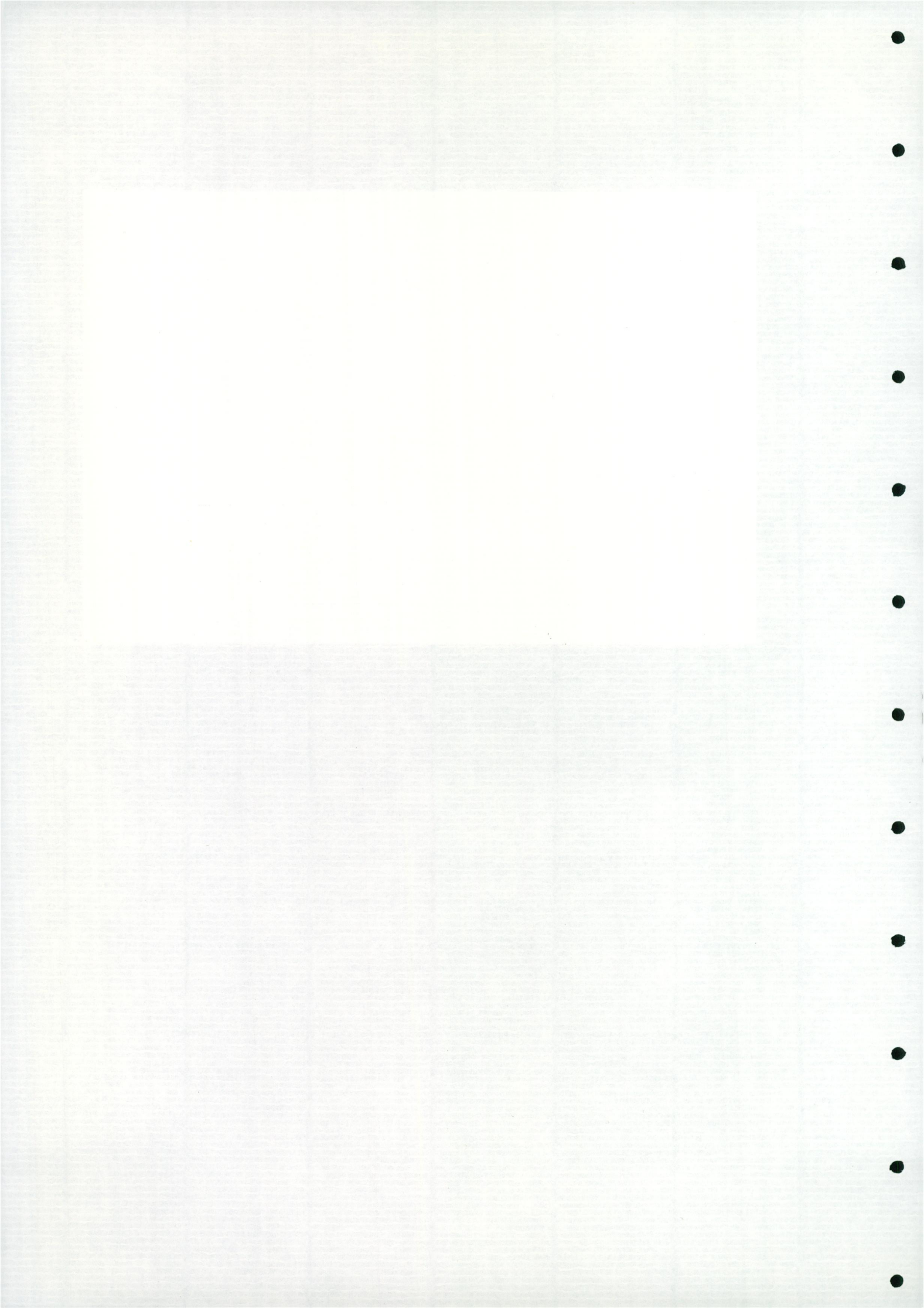
The first floor is smaller in size than the ground floor. The glass brick walls are noted features of the room which divide the room from the private staircase. As the building is relatively small, the glass walls make the rooms seem bigger, and more light is reflected through them. There are window cutouts allows one to look down to the courtyard below. The clarity of the link between these two public levels and the architectural promenade through the main public spaces was an important consideration in the design.

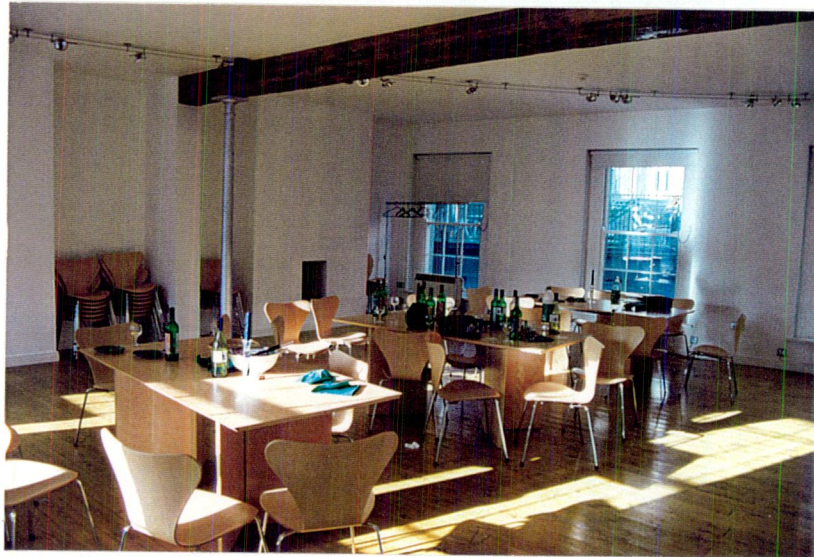




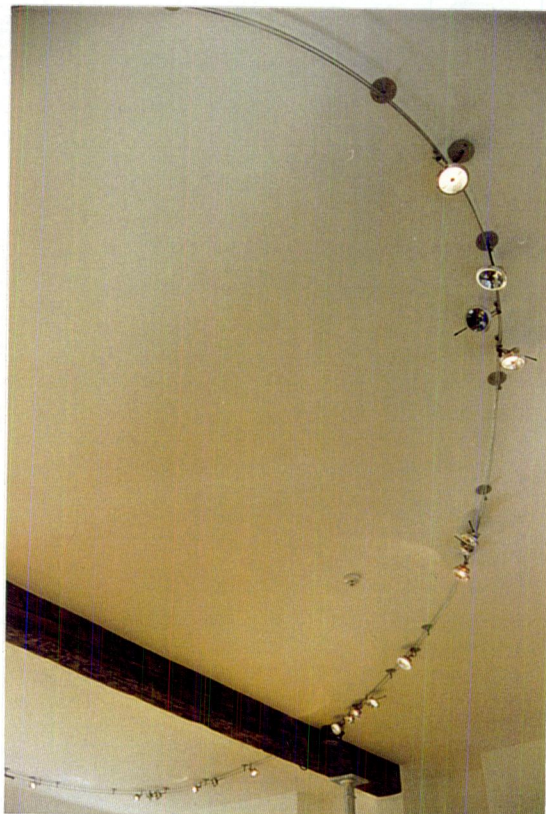
**Plate 17. View of the Commissioning Gallery from stairs.**

The seminar room, which is accessed by the private staircase, can hold up to 60 people (plate 18). This room is used for meetings between designers, exhibitions and also for lectures which members of the public are welcome to attend. The steel pillars and wooden beams which are part of the original building can also be seen in this room. The room is fitted with wooden floors and white walls and six windows allow light into the room. An external view of the canopy can be seen from the back windows. The lighting in this room runs along the ceiling in an oval shaped track (plate 19).





**Plate 18. The Seminar Room.**

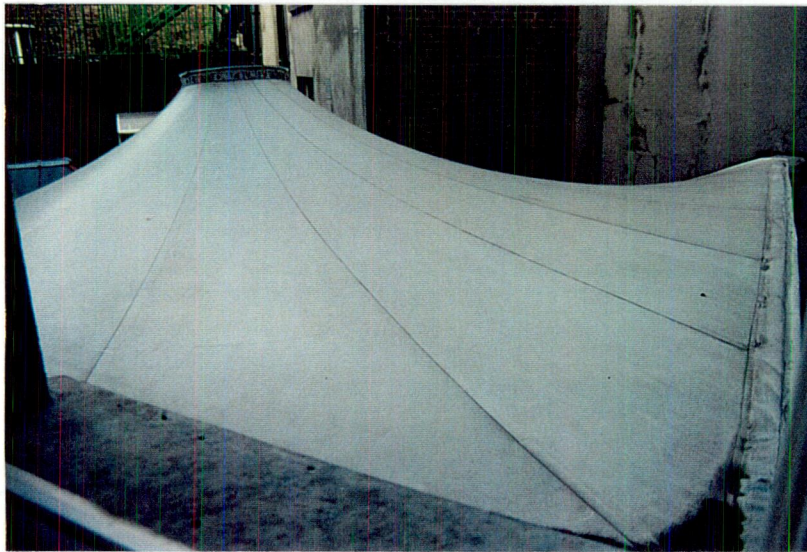


**Plate 19. The Lighting in Seminar Room.**

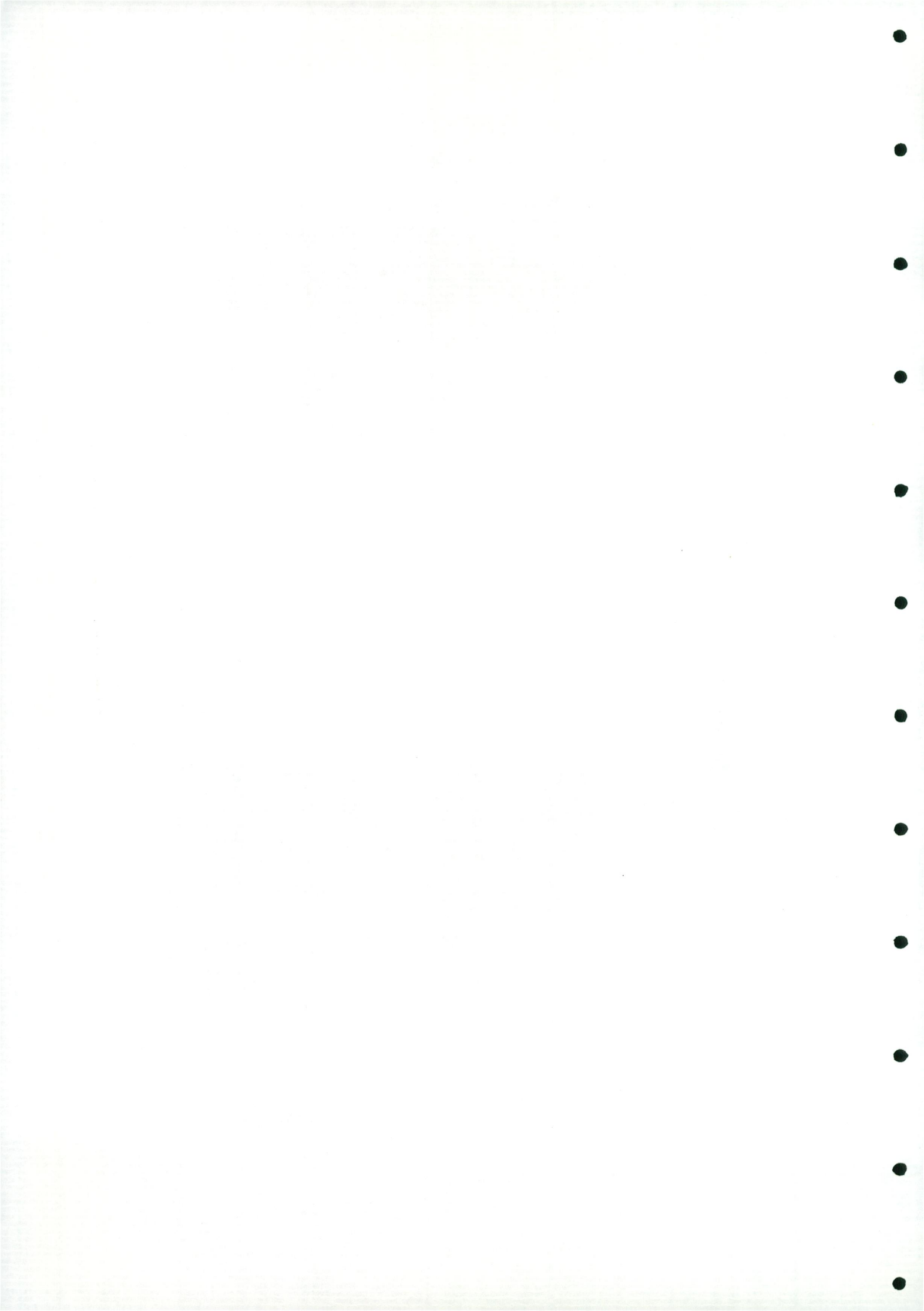




On the third floor, the space is divided into sections: a resource centre, a professional services library and an administrative area for the staff. The rooms are large and the windows show a view on Meeting House Square.



**Plate 20. The view of the canopy from room.**



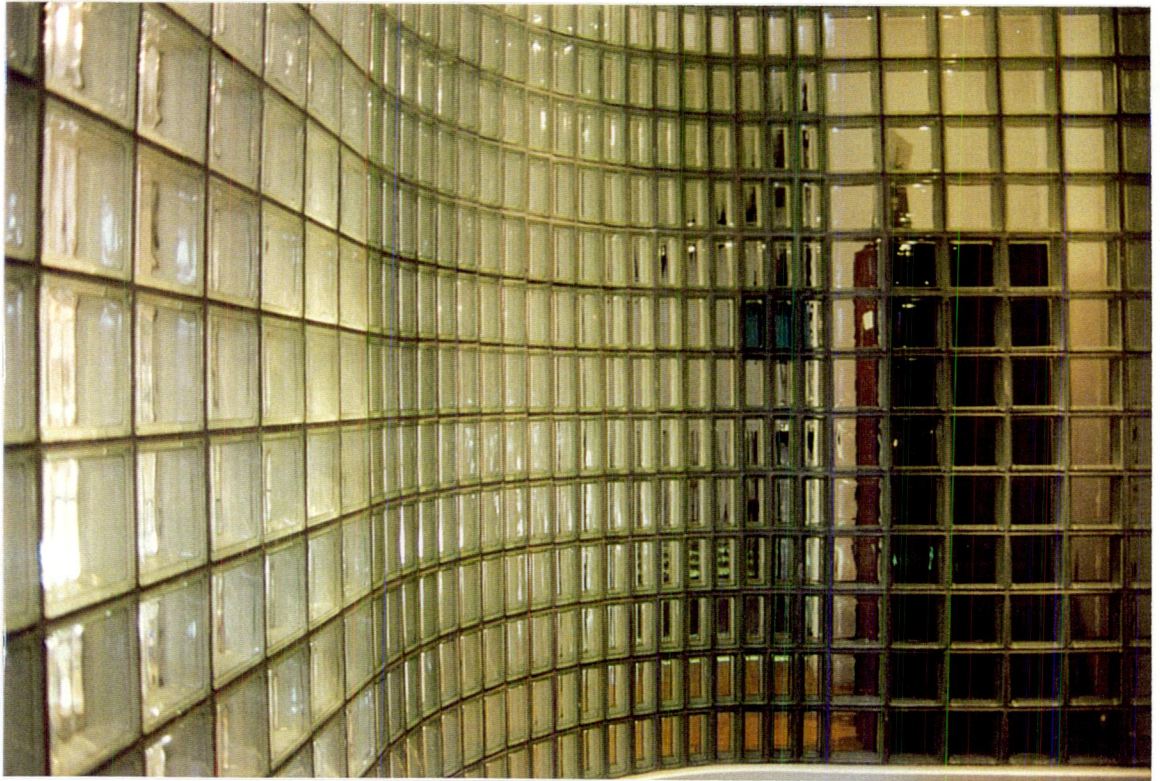


**Plate 21. The office area.**

In summary, the building is a fine architectural display, demonstrating the use of modern design inside a Victorian building. The exterior, completed by the wrought iron gates and the space before one enters the glass doors of modern architecture represents the time between the two periods of architecture.

The construction of the building began in 1991, by Cleary and Doyle contractors of Wexford, in December 1993 the Jewellery Gallery in the Design Yard officially opened to the public.





**Plate 22. The glass brick walls.**



## CHAPTER 2

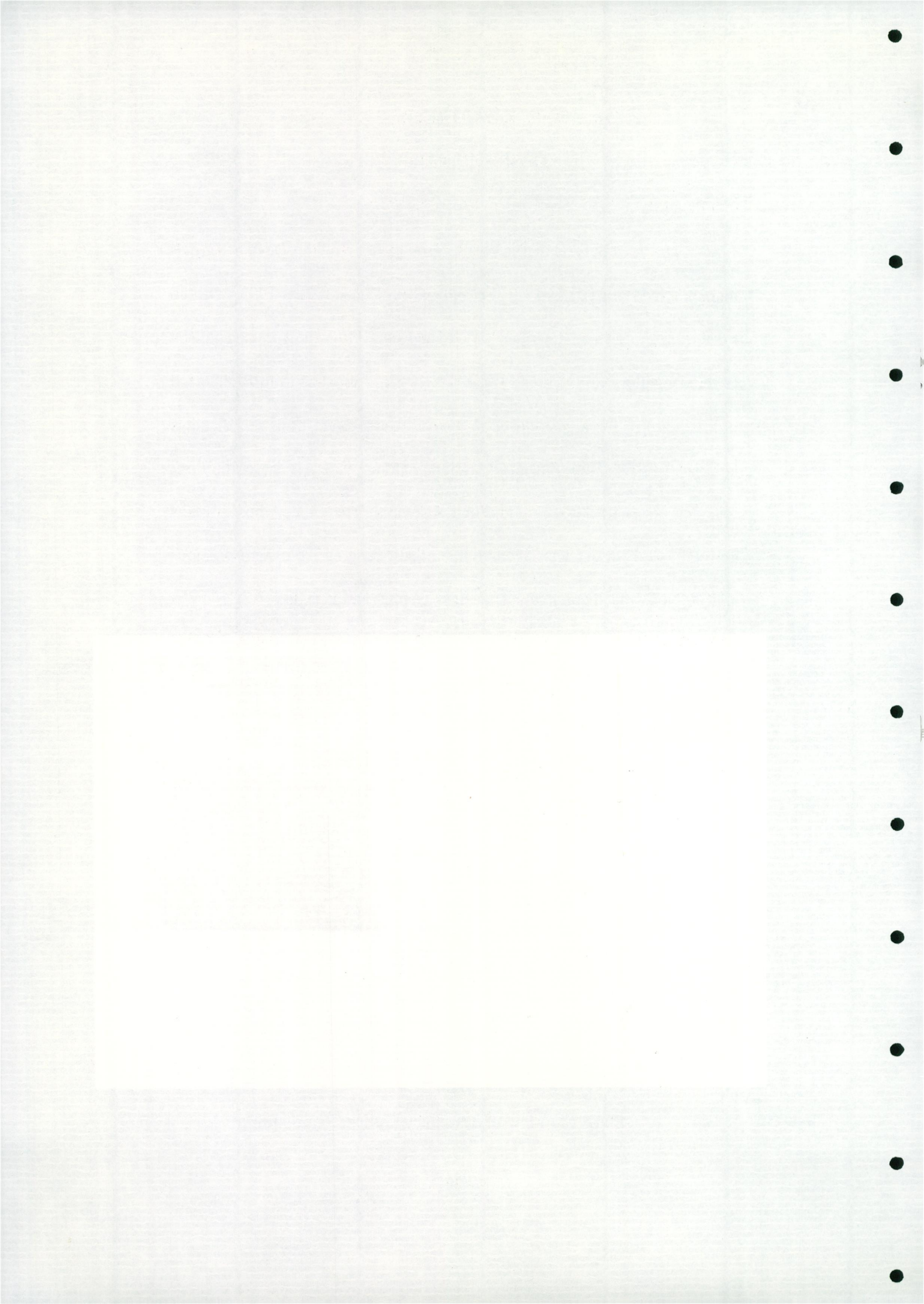
### The Jewellery Gallery

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The Jewellery Gallery, on the ground floor of the Design Yard is managed by Dara O'Leary. It was opened on December 2, 1993, with an exhibition by Barbara Cartilge. It claimed then to be the first specialised jewellery gallery of its kind in Ireland and was established to fulfil the need in this country for a customised space on a year-round basis. It displays a range of Irish and European designs, along with special exhibitions focusing on particular techniques and designers. The gallery thus displays a broad spectrum of materials and techniques, ranging from semi-precious and precious metals and stones to glass enamel and acrylic.



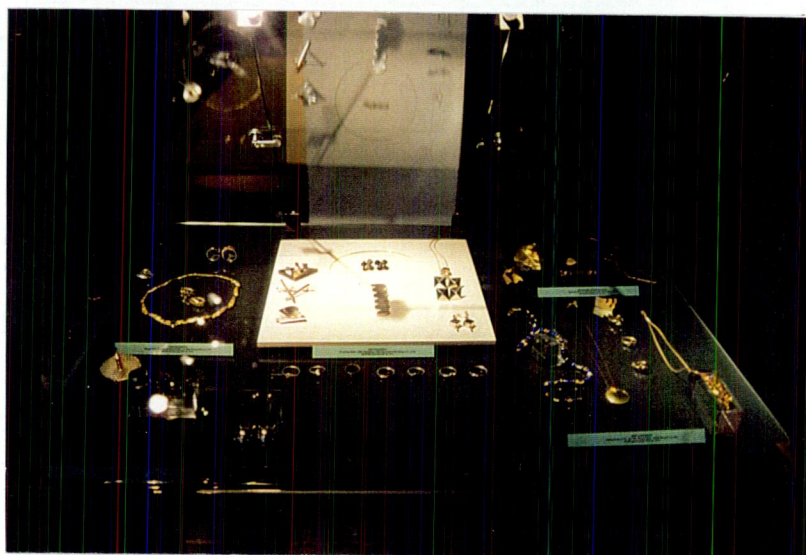
Plate 23. View of Jewellery Gallery from stairs.





Enclosed behind three walls and the glass front entrance, this spacious interior immediately highlights the features of modern architecture. Brilliant white walls contrasting with smooth beige tiles illustrates a clean, simple and spacious room, filled with little furniture, and concentrating on the glass boxes that exhibit the products. Colouring the beige tilework is the multicolored mosaic which runs through to the back of the room. This mosaic illustrates the ripples that run through the river beneath. One can clearly see the original support columns, 6 in total, in this room which have been carefully restored.

The exhibition programme includes approximately five annual exhibitions, in which both individual designers are profiled and international collections are shown. The jewellery exhibitors of which one third are Irish, include Brigitte Turba, Gay O' Doherty (plate 24), Seamus Gill, Derek McGarry, Fiona Mulholland and Sonja Landweer. The remainder are international designers.



**Plate 24. The Gay O'Doherty exhibition.**

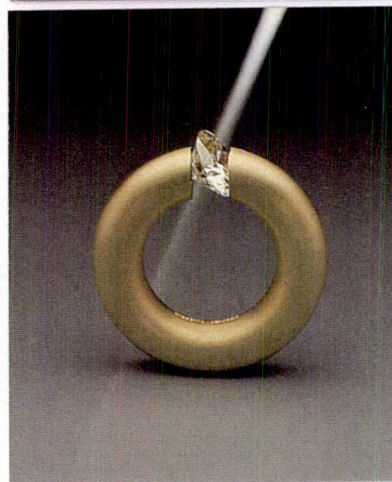
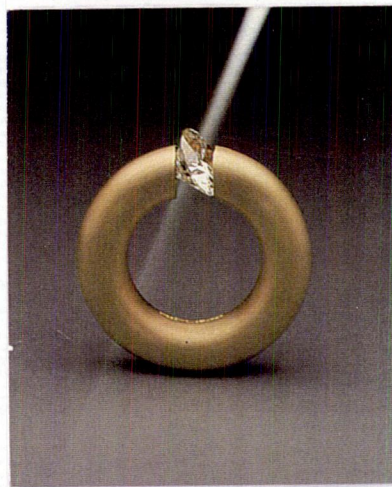
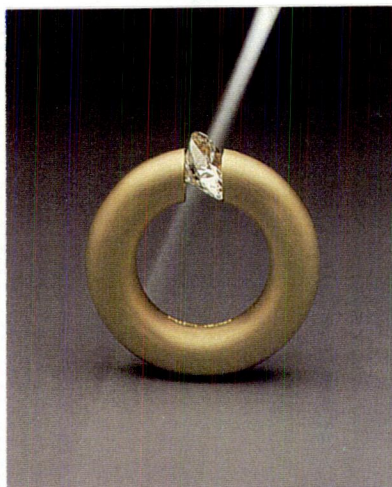


The Design Yard gives foreign designers, such as John Fuller, Rosemary Zeeman and others, a chance to exhibit their work in Ireland and to become known to the Irish market. The Design Yard thereby believes that Irish designers gain important awareness of international design, and in turn, it may create the opportunity for them to exhibit their work abroad. An exhibition that has recently opened in the Design Yard was the Niessing exhibition (plate 25). This German company are highly recognised for the Tension Ring, where the diamond is held securely in place by the tension of the metal ring loop, thus allowing the stone to show off its full form. Niessing who are now one of the leading jewellery manufacturers in the world, were chosen by the Design Yard to exhibit their work as part of the Design Yard's European exhibitors collection. For the Design Yard this is a remarkable achievement and a great publicity boost. Since the exhibition has opened, many of Niessing's products have been purchased by the Irish market.

Such exhibits are chosen by the Design Yard from different exhibitions abroad. The Design Yard also plan to go to Trade fairs to exhibit their work on a world wide basis. To have this link with foreign countries is very important as the Design Yard encourages the display and excellent work of both an Irish and an international nature, at home and abroad.



Plate 25. The Niessing Exhibition.

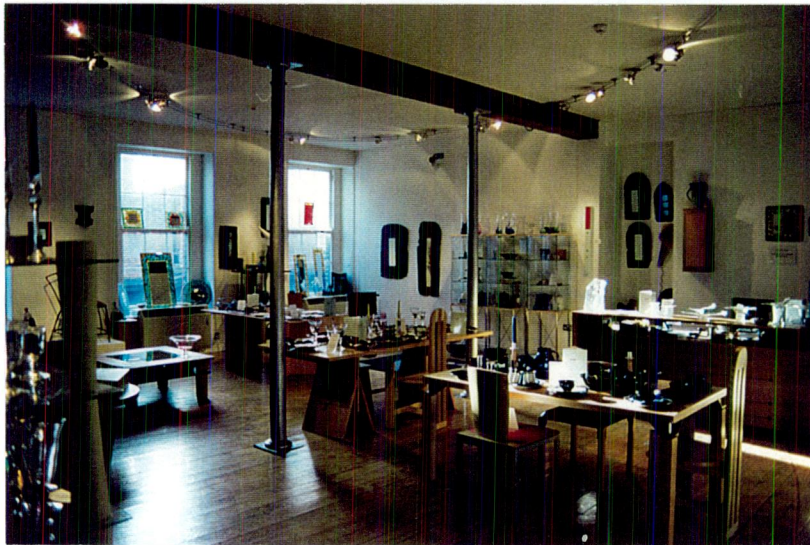




## The Commissioning Gallery

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The Commissioning Gallery, administrated by Kerry McCall, was opened officially in the spring of 1994 (plate 26). It is situated on the first floor and exhibits the work of Irish designers, designers working in Ireland, Irish designers living abroad and occasionally some British designers. This gallery exhibits and sells the best of Irish designed and manufactured contemporary furniture, alongside a collection of ceramic and glass products, lighting and textiles. These designs are diverse and imaginative without being radical enough to alienate those of a more traditional persuasion. Designers that have exhibited include Duff and Tisdall, Douglas Ito, Caroline Irvine and Gearoid O'Conchubhair.



**Plate 26. View of Commissioning Gallery.**







**Plate 26. The Commissioning Gallery.**

The gallery has also run a pilot project based on contemporary Irish furniture products. Siolta was the name given to the project, which was both conceived and managed by the Design Yard, although it was grant-aided by the Department of Agriculture with the support from the E.U., under the operational programme for agriculture and rural development. The aim of this project was to encourage Irish furniture design by providing a means by which new, high quality products can be targeted at specific markets, at realistic prices. These products are designed, manufactured, initially marketed in Ireland and eventually marketed in



Europe. The designers involved in this project, included Gearoid O'Conchubhair, Ken Giles, Robert Tully, Diarmuid Bradley and Jim Smith, each of whom were represented by either chairs or tables (Plate 27).

The proposed products had to be:

functional, have an identified market, be realistically priced, be an appropriate standard of quality, be at a relevant scale of batch production, use native Irish timber where possible, be manufactured in Ireland and be competitive in the single European market (Kindness, Dublin, 1995).

The results of this project proved very positive both for the Design Yard and for the designers. Even though the products were marketed under a single label, the designer were still identified with their own particular product. So, not only did the Design Yard benefit from this project but the designers themselves were promoted to the Irish Market.

The Design Yard is proud of the part it plays in the nurturing of design and manufacturing in Ireland. When a craftworker presents a prototype design, the Design Yard will "test market" the design on the public, if results prove positive, then the feasibility of short run manufacturing can be explored and discussed with the individual designer. The Design Yard also runs a commissioning process for the designer. Either a manufacturer or the public can commission the designer to produce more of his/her products, or to design new products to the customers desire. For this commissioning process the Design Yard receives 10% of the cost. This, in turn benefits the Design Yard as it is one of their few sources of income.



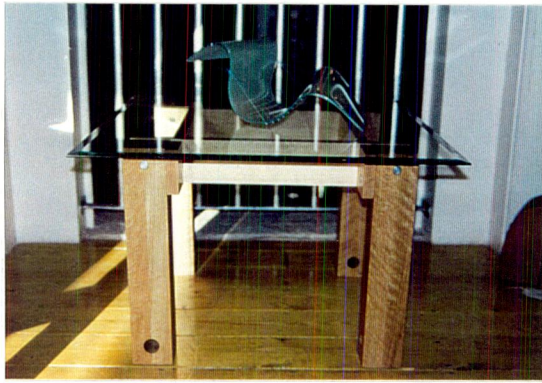


Plate 27. The Siolta Project.



Shortly after the Design Yard opened Gearoid O'Conchubhair, a furniture designer, approached them with the view to exhibiting some of his work there. He needed a location where he could exhibit his work to both the public and manufacturers, with the aim of getting his work into production, while becoming publicly recognised himself. His work was reviewed by Danae Kindness and Cornelia McCarthy and a number of pieces were selected to be exhibited (plate 28)

At this stage his work was in prototype form; O'Conchubhair needed to see whether his work was marketable to the public and would manufacturers be interested in producing his work. "It was only through the Design Yard that I could do this as there was no other place in Ireland that I could test market my work."(O'Conchubhair, Dublin, 1995)

When his work was exhibited all the pieces were on a one-off prototype basis with the intention of going into production. It transpired that not all the pieces could be produced, due to the complexity of their design which would lead to high cost, and would not be appealing to the customer. The result was that two chairs proved marketable and successfully went into production.

In response to the commissioning process, O'Conchubhair asserts that he has been quite successful. In evidence he cites R.T.E.'s commission for him to design a table and four chairs for the arts programme Black Box. The chairs had been on exhibition in the Design Yard and O'Conchubhair was invited to work on a matching table. He worked closely with R.T.E. in conjunction with the Design Yard. The





result proved successful for all three parties. Consequently he received much publicity and gained public recognition.

According to O'Conchubhair the relationship between the Design Yard and the designer was very positive. O'Conchubhair believes that the Siolta project was an important project as it introduced a new group of young designers to the public and it gave them the opportunity to become publicly recognised. Although it is too early to judge whether it has been a success commercially, it has certainly been a good experience for the designers as it has brought them through the whole process of designing and producing work that must be appeal to the public and be cost effective.



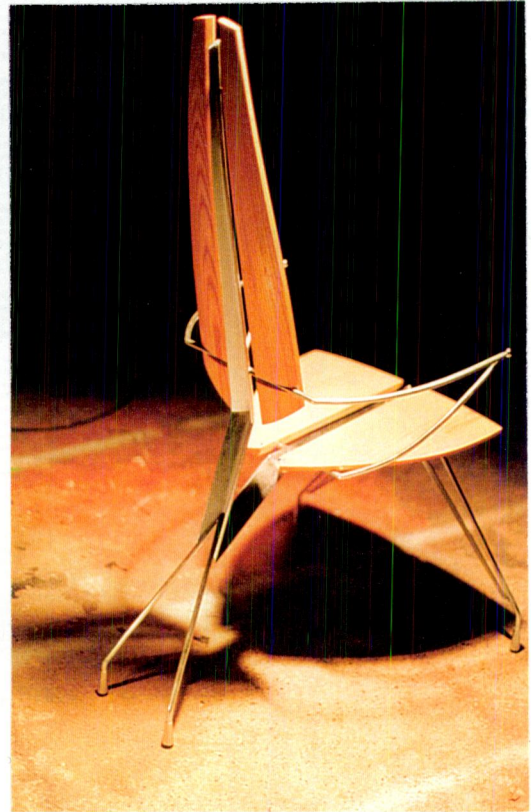
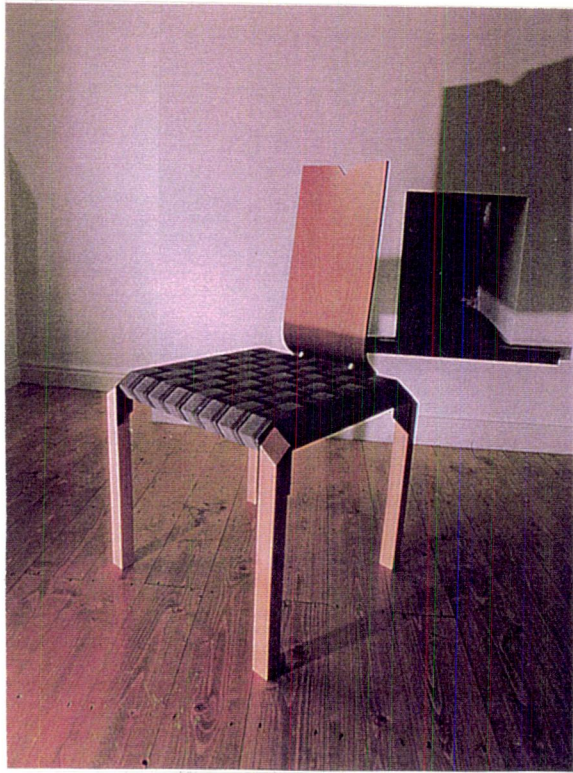
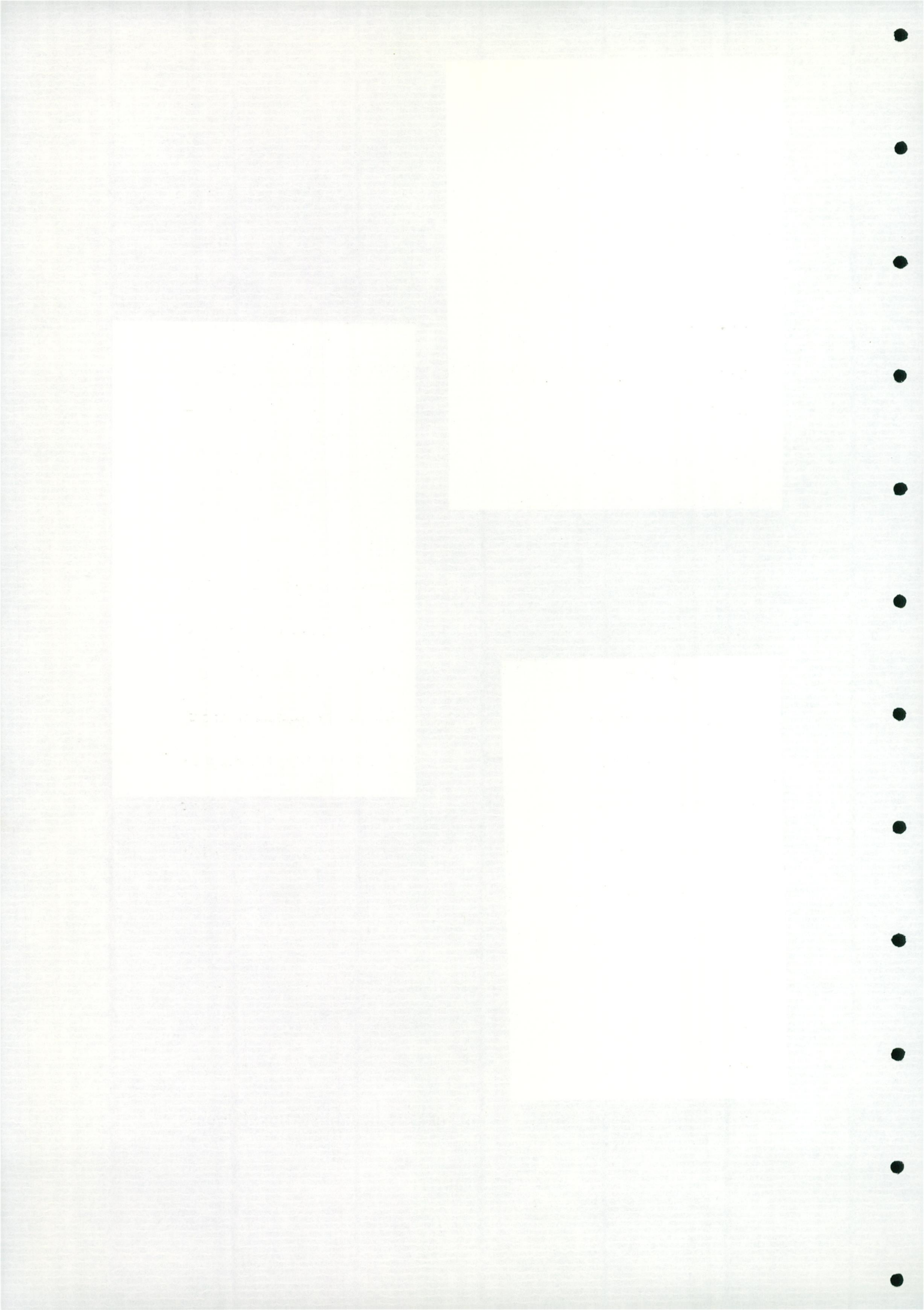


Plate 28. An example of O'Conchubhair's exhibition.



Henry Pimm, a craft lecturer at N.C.A.D., has also exhibited his work in the Design Yard. The exhibition that was shown in the Design Yard was also exhibited in two other galleries one in Limerick and the other in Galway. The Design Yard was chosen by Pimm because it was a relatively new gallery and it would draw a different clientele to his exhibition. For the Design Yard it would draw a new clientele to the gallery. It was a ceramics exhibition and even though the Design Yard do exhibit ceramic work, this exhibition was different in that the objects were non-functional ornamental pieces, as opposed to the functional furniture and jewellery normally exhibited. Three types of products were shown, including cup-shaped objects, wall-mounted sculptures and skulls.

For the exhibition the Design Yard allowed Pimm the use of the seminar room to exhibit his work, as it would separate these non-functional ornaments from the other exhibits in the building. By using this room, Pimm could rearrange it to his own taste, and place the objects wherever he wished. This proved positive as it gave his work a more individualistic character. The room was ideal for the exhibition because of its pure white walls and timber floors. Because the pieces were small, they fitted into every curve and crevice on the walls. It is such a simple room, that it caused one to focus intently on the pieces.

The Design Yard is only one of many cultural centres in Temple Bar. Each centre has specific functions, aims and objectives. Examples of these centres include; Arthouse, an innovative centre for the arts area, using new technology as a means of making, disseminating and promoting

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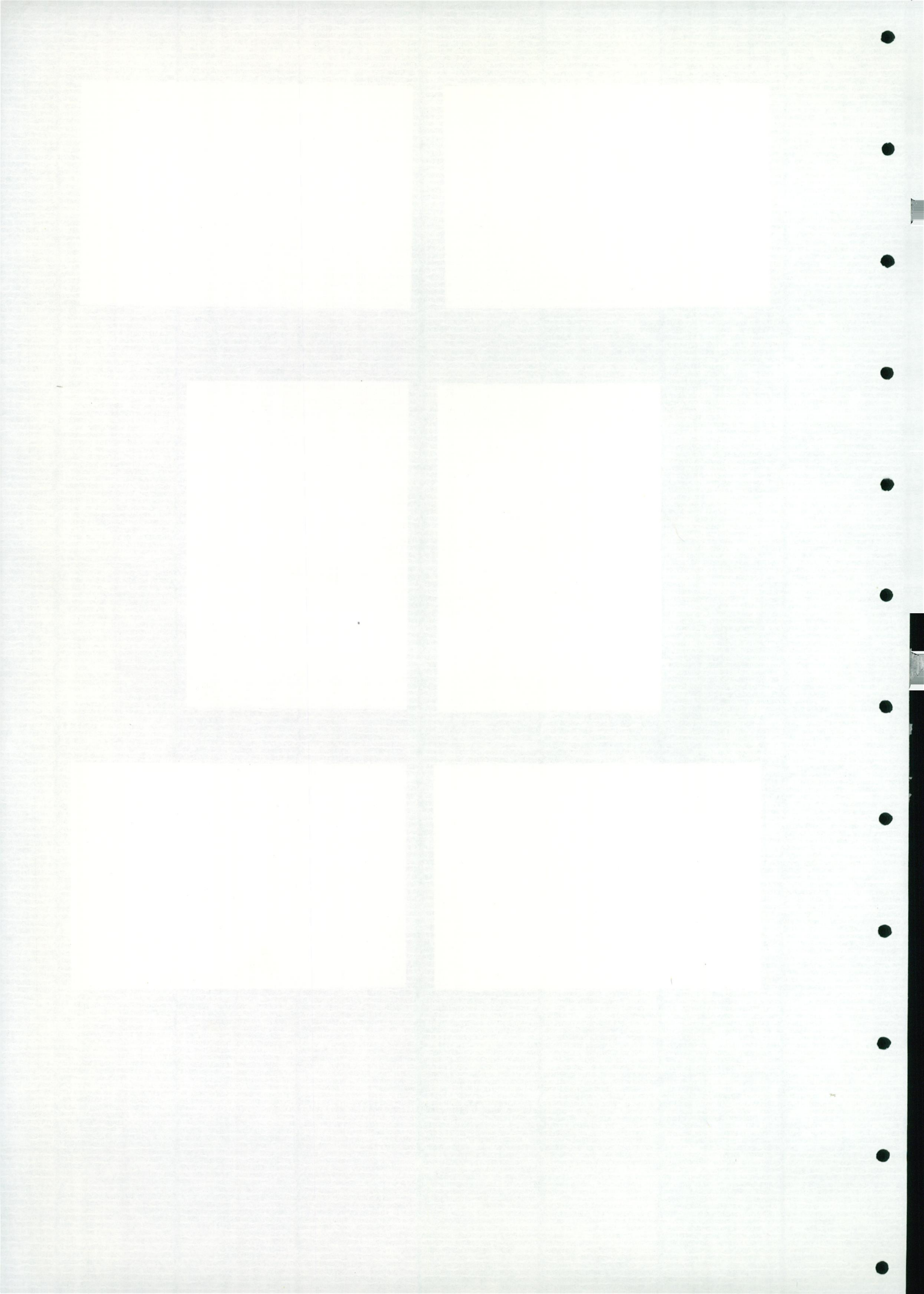
art, in a variety of mediums; The Ark is a children's cultural centre which aims to promote and develop high quality cultural work by and for children. It claims to be the most important initiative ever in Ireland in the area of children's art; The Black Church Studio contains three floors of printmaking facilities, It provides facilities for members working in the area of etching, silk screen printing and photography; Temple Bar Studios and Gallery exhibits collections of both Irish and international artists, It also houses studio space for 30 photographers, sculptors and painters; the Project Arts Centre has been one of the cultural pioneers of the area. Exhibitions include many established artists and it also provides a stage for every branch of the performing arts. Each of the centres aims and objectives add up to the overall aims and objectives of the Cultural Programme. There are presently no formal links between any of the cultural centres but as each centre becomes more established, it is hoped that they will work more collaboratively (plate 29)

SECRET  
BOARD





Plate 29. The other cultural centres.



### Chapter 3

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In 1960, the Irish Government turned to Coras Tractala (C.T.T.) and gave them the responsibility for improving the standard of Irish design. C.T.T. thought that an audit was needed to investigate the existing situation. To do this they consulted their Scandinavian counterparts to give them the advice they needed. The Scandinavians were successful in design and they had a large industry. As a result six designers and teachers of design came to Ireland. Of this six, three came from Denmark, two from Finland and one from Sweden.

It consisted of a two week stay, they visited a cross-section of factories and workshops throughout the country, they examined the range of manufactured goods displayed in our shops, and studied the source material for design which exists in our libraries, art galleries and museums. Visits were made to schools and colleges throughout the country. Their views were summed up in a report called The Scandinavian Report, (1960).

The report analyzed the problems that existed with design in Ireland. The established view was that Irish culture had developed a leaning towards literature, theatre and the spoken word, rather than creation by hand or machine and the visual arts. They detected a fundamental lack of creative and visual activity and they maintained that the school child was exposed in a much lesser degree to drawing and



materials than his Scandinavian peer. They believed that without some reasonably developed form of art education in the various levels of schools in Ireland, Irish design would lose all its existing traditional values.

They advised Ireland against the adoption of Scandinavian design as it would kill what could be saved in Irish culture. The Scandinavians found that the best design in Ireland were those based on traditional crafts. Many products were found to be badly designed, product design was not given the adequate attention it required and designers were not given the substantial importance they require to perform well.

The few existing examples of kitchenware, cutlery, tools and appliances seemed to be without the required understanding of design and materials.

Smaller quantities of metalwork were found but nothing that met the requirements for good design. Furniture design was based on contemporary design with continental influences. This was because of the lack of understanding of indigenous design, materials and techniques.

Despite the range of provisions in Ireland, with its multiplicity of art, architecture and craft schools, not one of them seemed to be satisfying the needs of the country with regards to design. The Scandinavians proposed a coordinating scheme for raising the standards in education and thus improving the industry. One approach was to send craft designers abroad to learn from their foreign counterparts but a better solution was to set up an Irish workshop to deal with Irish design under the direction of foreign designers. Designers should also be given the opportunity to study the functional requirements of various products and must be introduced to the



various different materials.

Government interaction with Irish design was a necessity, and as a result Kilkenny Design Work Shops (KDW) were established by the government in 1965. It was the first Industrial Design practice set up in Ireland. Many of the initial designers were foreign, coming from Scandinavia, England, Scotland, Germany and Switzerland. The design disciplines in which they specialised were those based on the existing crafts industries in Ireland including woven and printed textiles, ceramics, metalwork and wood turning.

KDW made the distinction between craft based industries and handcrafts. The latter, although now acknowledged as important to the economic health of a manufacturing country, was seen to be stopping short where Kilkenny Design wished to begin, namely in the design of things for multiple production. As the distinction was hard to make, Kilkenny Design helped to establish the Crafts Council of Ireland in 1971. They would be responsible for non-industrial handcrafts while Kilkenny Design would be free to concentrate on its main objectives in the search for an "Irish Identity".

The Crafts Council Gallery (plate 30) is now the national design and economic development agency for the craft industry in Ireland. It is funded by the government through Fobairt (Ireland's Industrial Development Authority) and the European Union. It also receives a grant of £1 million annually from the government. There are four major aspects to the organisation: giving business advice to craftworkers; organising craft and





design training programmes; promoting and marketing the products and advising the government and other state agencies on issues affecting the industry.

The Council take particular interest in small manufacturers who use traditional, labour-intensive production techniques requiring high levels of skill. To be registered with The Crafts Council one must be fully dependent on one's craft, in other words not working at hobby level. The Crafts Council provides information to wholesale and retail buyers on the availability of craft products. They also run training programmes for those who are interested in setting up their own businesses and for those interested in improving their design skills.

The Crafts Council promotes new products each year at their national trade fair "Showcase". It exhibits all types of Irish crafts and it also promotes Irish Fashion. The crafts are also promoted in the gallery and exhibition shop, located in Powerscourt Townhouse Centre, Dublin. All the work exhibited there is Irish. The Council also runs a commissioning service, like the Design Yard. The commissioning process of the Council is cheaper than the one in the Design Yard, indeed it is more of a referral service; when the customer is looking for a service, such as a leather maker or a weaver, the Council facilitates the connections.

The Crafts Council does not stand between the "maker" and the client. They believe that it is important to allow the client and the "designer maker" to develop a relationship so they can work well together. There was a gap left which was that there was no consideration for the designer



alone.

When the Design Yard was set up, one of its aims was to "fill the gap that existed in the crafts industry, focusing on the designer alone and linking the designer with the end-user", (Kindness, Dublin,1995). The Design Yard aims to encourage and involve the designer and to make the Irish consumer more aware of the designer. This is one of the main distinctions between The Crafts Council and the Design Yard.

There are many other differences. First, the Crafts Council is funded by the government, so it must service the industry in a positive way, and it also has more finances to invest in new products and to work with a wide range of crafts. The Design Yard, on the other hand, is self-funded so expenses are kept to a minimum and any profits made are invested back into the company. The Crafts Council charge a smaller percentage for commissioning than the Design Yard - the fee is one of the Design Yard's only sources of income.

The Crafts Council Gallery is more of a craft shop, where one can find anything from a handmade leather wallet to a lamp, while the Design Yard focus on two particular products -furniture and jewellery; with a more exclusive standard. So the Design Yard and the Crafts Council have different features and emphases, they were established for different reasons and they are aiming at different markets. In some elements they complement each other (if the Design Yard needs a woodturner to manufacture a product, for example, the Crafts Council will advise them). They also have worked together in running events such as a furniture



design lecture which was organised by the Crafts Council and held in the Design Yard's seminar room. Although they are clearly in competition with each other, the fact that they are aiming at two different markets means that they do not outdo each other.



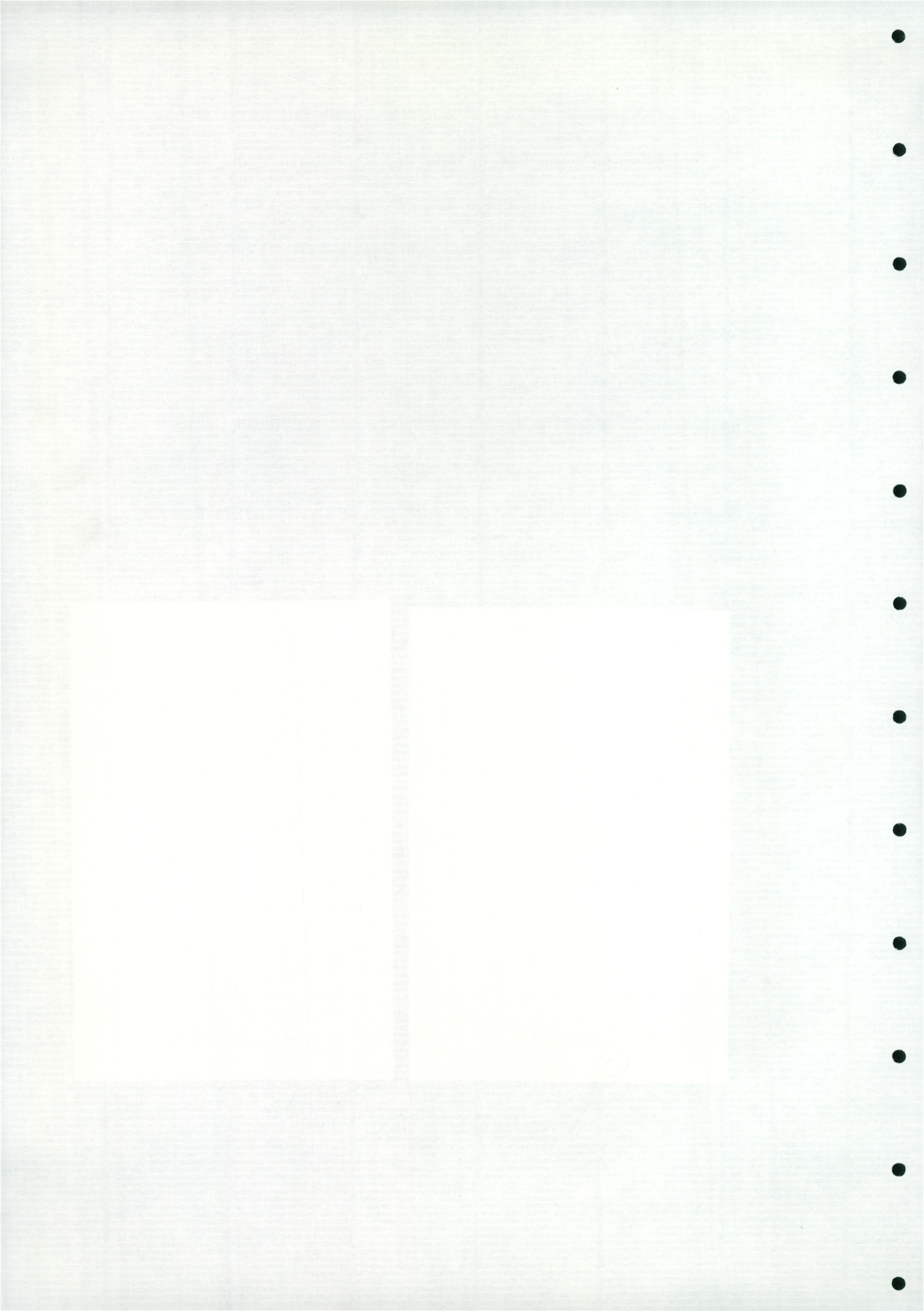
**Plate 30. The Crafts Council Gallery.**



The Foko Showrooms, located off South Great Georges Street, Dublin, was initially set up by the Irish furniture designer Robert Drennen (plate 31). In the beginning it was a showroom for Drennen's work alone but as he became more established, the showroom expanded into a retail outlet. The products range from Drennen's own design work to other Irish designers products and international designs. The Foko Showrooms are purely commercial and its aim is to distribute international and national products to the Irish consumer. The product range is different and the choice is larger than what is offered in the Design Yard. The Foko Showrooms offer the Irish consumer a designer product at a reasonable price whereas the Design Yard is exclusive and at a high price.



**Plate 31. The Foko Showrooms.**





## Conclusion

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The Temple Bar Project has involved a major investment of public funds. With the estimated £100 million the Temple Bar Properties invested in the area, it is obvious that this would "change the Bohemian character of Temple Bar" (McDonald, Irish Times, 1995). As there are so many parts of Dublin still lying derelict, it seems hard to justify spending so much in such a relatively small part of the city centre. But the whole reasoning behind the development of Temple Bar was to extend its unique character and creative atmosphere, and make it a prominent feature of our capital city in the years to come.

To evaluate the Design Yard, one must take into consideration what it has done for design in Ireland. According to The Scandinavian Report, the designer must be given the relevant importance required to design good products that appeal to the Irish market. The Design Yard has achieved this by introducing new designers to the public and taking into consideration the problems designers experience. This in turn has been productive for the Design Yard, as they have become publically recognised, and also for the designers, as they have the opportunity to develop their designing skills and become known to the public. The Design Yard has also tried to encourage and influence Irish designers by including foreign designers in their exhibitions. Because the Design Yard exhibits the best of Irish design, it consequently improves the overall standard of Irish design.



## APPENDIX A

### Design and Construction of the Design Yard

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The company's involved in the design and construction of the Design Yard were;

- Temple Bar Properties Ltd
- Temple Bar Renewal Ltd
- Main contractor: Cleary and Doyle Contracting Ltd;
- Feilim Dunne and Associates, in association with Robinson, Keeffe, Devane Architects;
- Structural Engineers: Thomas Garland and Partners
- Mechanical and Electrical Engineers: J.V. Tierney and Co.
- Quantity Surveyors: D.L. Martin and Partners
- Tented Canopy: Landrell Fabric Ltd
- Lighting: RTI Lighting
- Tiling: Tilestyle Ireland
- Steel and glass screens: Anderson Pearson Ltd
- Ironmongery: Architectural Hardware
- Furniture: O'Hagan Contract Furniture



## APPENDIX B

### Management and Staff of the Design Yard

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The Board of Directors and the Staff of the Design Yard are:

**Management:**

- Jim McNaughton (chairperson)
- Terry Kelly
- Joan O'Connor (President RIAI.)
- Patricia Quinn (Cultural Officer TBP.)
- Adrian Taheny (ESB)

**Staff:**

- Danae Kindness (Chief Executive)
- Cornelia McCarthy (Projects Manager)
- Dara O'Leary (Jewellery Gallery Manager)
- Kerry McCall (Commissioning Gallery Administrator)
- Ann O'Carroll (Communications Officer)
- Gillian Clarke (Commissioning Gallery Assistant)
- Sarjit Verik (Commissioning Gallery Assistant)
- Shevawn Norton (Jewellery Gallery Assistant)
- Daniel Vesque (Jewellery Gallery Assistant)



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