

book one

**decorative
stone carving
in dublin**

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

"DECORATIVE STONE CARVING IN DUBLIN"

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO:
THE FACULTY OF HISTORY OF ART AND DESIGN AND
COMPLEMENTARY STUDIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DIPLOMA

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by

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1758	Casino Marino
1769	City Hall
1773	Kings Hospital
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1781	Custom House
1795	Kings Inns
1802	St. Georges Church
1806	Royal College of Surgeons
1814	The General Post Office
1830	St. Pauls, Arran Quay
1853	Trinity College Museum Building
1860	Kildare Street Club
1867	Hibernian Bank
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Introduction

Introduction

A growing awareness and consciousness of people towards their environment has become apparant in recent times. In all the large cities of Western Europe the preservation of old buildings has become a real issue within local communities. Functionally most of these old buildings have become obsolete, but yet there is an enormous demand for their continuous presence. They may be functionally useless but they are in most cases attractive. The visual and aesthetic qualities of these buildings are very obvious, and decoration is very important in this sence.

The architecture of the past fifty years has rejected these values, for simplicity of form and this is the main characteristic of Modern Architecture. Buildings are clean stripped of ornament with their lines and forms derived from the possibilities of mass production.

However, these buildings have never been liked as the vast majority of them are bleak and unimaginative in design, which makes the environment a less visually exciting place to explore. The Modern Architectural view point has dominated building in our recent past and this tradition is followed unquestioningly. The line of development of this type of architecture can be traced through the 19th century, and which led directly to the founders of Modern Architecture, Gropius, Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe.

A redefinition of architectural theory occured before the First World War and this was the final move into the machine age. There occured a rejection of superficiality or ornamintation and the assumption of aesthetic principles based on the simplicity of pure form.

One of the prophets of this new revolution was Adolf Loos - essay Ornament a Crime published in 1908. Loos wrote, "the evolution of culture marches with the elimination of ornament from useful objects". Loos analysed ornament and decoration as an expression of primitive urges (like body painting and graffiti).

Another strong factor in the creation of modern architecture was the assumption that if a building was designed purely on functional lines then its form would follow of its own accord and since the structure evolved logically then it would carry its own kind of beauty. Catch phrases followed, 'form follows function', 'a functionally aesthetic'. The beauty of modern architecture was to be found in the simplicity and economy of design and this meant certain death for decorative architecture.

The precursors of the modern movement were men involved in industrial building in the Victorian days. Men like Telford, Brunel and Paxton, and the engineers responsible for Victorian warehouses, bridges and iron frame buildings. Their architecture was based on reason and logic. The structure of the material became the totality of the aesthetic expression. Simple forms were simply beautiful. What became apparent now was that architecture was concerned with a combination of functional design and building technology - this left little room for imagination or visual interest.

The modern movement reacted against the emotional indulgence and over decoration of the Victorians. The original tradition was that painting and sculpture combined in architecture.

The architect of today finds himself concerned with a system of design that will use standardised units to their best advantage. This applies considerable restraints to the architects creativity and the design of a building simply becomes the result of juggling the ready made compoments until they are functionally satisfactory. This is machine architecture and it denies freedom of expression to the individual. So there exists the functional tradition and the decorative tradition.

Functional architecture saw only buildings in terms of space. The decorative tradition, on the other hand, placed great emphasis on the visual aspects of the building. As Ruskin said, "All architecture proposes an effect upon the human mind, not merely a service to the human frame".¹ The Victorians believed that architecture was not simply servicable but that it was also beautiful.

The Industrial Revolution had a major role in developing an extremely effecient approach to building and the engineer and scientist rather than the artist flourished. William Emerson who was involved with the advancement of art and its application to industry wrote: "Sculpture is the very soul and life of architecture: without it ancient buildings would not speak to us in the eloquent way they do. The seperation of the soul from the body means death: and architecture divorced from sculpture is deprived of the light of the sun of intellectuality, and cannot rise to the idea or suggest a higher life, it is debased and dead".²

Adolf Loos : Observed

Where the Greeks were attentive to ornamental details, the Romans concentrated on engineering structures : in the same where Baroque architecture was extravagant the Neo-Classicism of the 18th century was restrained. In principle there has always been this alternating cycle between what may be called the rational and the emotional sides of architecture.

Thus the Victorians reacted against the oppressive uniformity of the Georgians and their controlled facades with perfect and regular proportions. Therefore the 20th century reacted against the emotional extravagance and picturesque irregularity of the Victorians.

And so we must see the decorative traditions as a clear and tested alternative and one which will probably flourish again.

Reasons for Decoration

Decoration could be used for a distinct and definite reason apart from its aesthetic quality. Modern Architecture is extremely plain and it may reflect uniformity in our society. A society that is geared towards mass production would not wish to develop a taste for extremes of individual taste. The buildings are therefore reflecting our established 'norms' and way of life.

Decoration gives the architect the power to make his creation different although structurally it may be similar to many other buildings of a similar nature. It allows him scope and individuality. Symbolism may be used also and this can be seen in many public buildings. Reflecting the established values of society. The use of certain forms of decoration can infer upon it the status that it requires.

Gothic architecture and Medieval culture of the Christian eras with their great Cathedrals and churches can be carried through to more recent decoration etc.

Classical style could symbolise the state and the associations of cultures and ideas re-inforced using decorations. Monumental sculpture, Classical pediments and Friezes spoke of grandeur of the Empire, (the British in the Irish case), and compared it with the Roman empire. Government buildings, Law court etc.

Commercial buildings, banks etc. could latch on to this grandeur by their building style and thus receive status by association. Decoration however, could be used purely for originality and individuality as seen in the Kildare St., Club or the Museum Building in Trinity College.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study of Language

Language is one of the most important of human capabilities. It is a complex system, the study of which is the province of linguistics. The study of language is not only a scientific endeavor, but also a humanistic one. It is a study of the human mind and of the human condition. It is a study of the way in which we communicate with one another and of the way in which we use language to express our thoughts and feelings.

Language is a system of symbols that we use to communicate with one another. It is a system of symbols that is learned by us as we grow up. It is a system of symbols that is shared by all members of a community. It is a system of symbols that is used to express our thoughts and feelings and to convey information from one person to another. It is a system of symbols that is used to create a shared world of meaning.

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History of Stone : Building and Decoration in Ireland

Decoration can be of artificial or natural materials, if natural is used, it generally requires the skills of the craftsman which is always limited and expensive. The availability of skilled persons is a problem. Stone falls into this category. Man made materials can be used readily and this is seen in many areas of Dublin, notably the use of iron.

Regional styles can develop in accordance with the availability of the local stone, although in Dublin many of the carvings are in Portland stone as granite is extremely hard and difficult to carve finely. Pressed stone was usually preserved for prestigious buildings like churches, town halls, courts etc. where money was not the prime consideration. Masons and sculptors would then have to be employed to work the stone and this was a slow process.

Sometimes a combination of stone and another material were used and this was often a cheap way of getting an interesting building. One problem with stone is its capacity for becoming stained with dust, thus making sometimes fine carvings practically invisible when viewed from street level. Stone has always been considered as the most luxurious building material, and architects of today delight in using stone to give the building a sense of elegance and luxury.

However stone buildings were not always popular in Ireland and it is worth while looking at the historical development of decoration in stone and the artists and craftsman involved.

When we look at Dublin today we are immediately conscious of the Georgian architecture which dominates and pulls together the entire city giving Dublin its character. During the 18th century there was undertaken enormous building in the Dublin area, and this resulted in practically the entire city being rebuilt. Very little of the ancient Medieval city remained as this was demolished during the building. Other centuries have also seen change, as for example, the enormous change in style which occurred during the 12th century.

Prior to the 12th century buildings were generally constructed in wood and architecture did not receive the attention of the artist's eye. In the early Christian period in Ireland the arts took the form of metalwork and the painting of manuscript. Many fine pieces of metalwork remain from this period by way of crosses and shrines etc.

From the beginning of Irish Christianity in the 6th century it may have been imagined that stone edifices or churches would have been constructed but it appears that the early churches were small wooden constructions. For a considerable length of time churches remained small rectangular chambers. The earliest existing stone church which we can identify is the church at Tuamgraney Co. Clare which was begun around 964 A.D. These churches were simple and small. Their doorways were flat headed : their side walls were sloped inwards as they rose, and they were often built of a few large and carefully dressed stones. The stones were generally smaller towards the top of the building.

The earliest reliable historical reference to a stone church in Ireland is in the year 788 A. D. and there

are other references to stone churches at other ecclesiastical sites such as Armagh and Kells in the 9th century. These stone churches seem to be a copy of the earlier wooden churches. A commentary on the old Brehen laws which professor Binchy assigns to a date after 1000 A.D. suggests a ground plan of (19½ ft. x 13 ft.).⁴ As a normal size of a wooden church. The advent of stone building did not therefore radically change the concepts in building and design. However churches were the first constructions to be made of stone. At Glendaluogh eight small churches were built along the valley.

Pre Romanesque churches in Ireland were largely devoid of ornamentation unless they were adorned with frescos but sculptural decoration did not appear. In a few cases a cross is sculpted in low relief over the doorway as seen at Fore Co. Westmeath, or inserted in the underside of the lintel as seen at St Marys Church Glendalough. No architectural figure sculpture survives from this period with one exception, White Island Co Fermanagh. Where seven strange and unusual figures were discovered in the wall of a church dating from around 1200 A.D. These possibly came from an earlier church on the same site.

The figures are squat with large faces the entire figure retaining a rectangular shape. One figure holds a crozier and bell. Another figure holds a shield and sword. The third figure holds two small animals by the neck. On one of the figures a warrior - he has on his breast a penannular brooch of a kind which seems to have gone out of production shortly after the 900's and which appears on Muiredachs Cross Monasterboice thus suggesting a date for these figures

of not later than the second half of the 9th century. It is difficult to know where these statues would have been placed in a small church but they may have formed part of an altar or pulpet.

The existance of these figures may point to some kind of monumental architectural sculpture associated with stone building in Pre Romanesque Ireland. High crosses and towers also began to develop in these early times. Outside Ireland on the continent Basilicas based on the Roman designs became the norm in church building. This consisted of the cruciform plan with the Roman arch having dominance in the overall architectural pattern.

By the early 11th century portal capitals and other parts of the church began to be decorated with carvings. This was Romanesque architecture and it was brought by the Normans to England and by the end of the 11th century England was building large scale Romanesque cathedrals such as seen at Durham.

It was not until the 12th century that this European design crept slowly into Ireland. A man who was dominant in the instigation of this revolutionary form of architecture into Ireland was St. Malachy of Armagh who had travelled considerably in Europe and was greatly impressed by their architecture. He decided on his return to construct a Romanesque church and in 1140 he organised the building of a new church at Bangor which no longer remains.

Another strong influence came with the introduction of the Cistercians into Ireland in 1142 and with the rapid spread of the order so also their approach

to building. Their first Irish foundation was at Mellifont in 1142 and this was the first of many Cistercian churches to use the basilica large scale plan. Native Irish monasteries still continued in the 12th century between 1150 - 1200 but they felt the influence of the Romanesque Basilicas.

Although they remained small they were embellished with sculpture and decoration. This was the Irish Romanesque : Nuns Church Clonmacnoise, finished in 1167 chancel and arch lavishly carved with a wide range of ornamental motifs - origin part Irish, part English. One of the most common motifs used was the chevron which was adopted long before the Norman invasions. Irish sculptors were borrowing ideas and designs from abroad and it is unfortunate that these sculptors did not have the advantage of working on large scale projects such as was on the continent.

The Irish sculptors work was confined generally to the doorways and chancels and many of these were decorated lavishly. The shallowness of Irish Romanesque carving is one of its notable features and these craftsmen show a lack of feeling for the stone.

Now from the early beginnings in stone buildings and ornamentation which was largely associated with the Christian movement changes also took place in ordinary architecture. This coincided with the Norman invasion of 1169. Prior to this date houses would have been built of either timber or wattle and daub.

The Irish princes also built their dwellings in wattle work and a palace was built for King Henry II outside the walls of Dublin in 1171 in a similar fashion. During the early times of the Anglo-Norman

invasion very little time was spent on building stone structures as troubled times existed so it was the 13th century that saw the influx of stone dwellings in preference to the previous wooden structures.

The Normans were responsible for this rapid change and they brought with them the type of architecture practiced in Wales and the west of England. They brought with them a new type of architecture : the Gothic type. In Dublin this new Norman architecture becomes strongly evident and established itself in the two cathedrals, Christ Church and St. Patricks. (This is some of the best Gothic architecture in Ireland of the early style known as 'Early English').

Christ Church cathedral was begun not long after Henry II had handed over the city of Dublin to the men of Bristol for colonization in 1172. It is from this point on that we can now see and trace the building style and its decoration in Dublin.

In other parts of the country in the 13th century similar building constructions occurred with the wide spread use of stone. Stone houses, castles such as at Trim and Roscommon and stone bridges were built. In Dublin many of the ancient buildings did not survive one of these being St Marys the Cistercian monastery. Another great loss was St Thomas Abbey Dublin 1177, which was a large Augustinian house in the western suburbs of the Medieval city.

CHAPTER 2

As we are looking at the history of the United States, we must first look at the history of the United States. The United States is a country of many different people and many different ideas. It is a country of many different people and many different ideas. It is a country of many different people and many different ideas.

After the American Revolution, a new country was born. It was a country of many different people and many different ideas. It was a country of many different people and many different ideas. It was a country of many different people and many different ideas. It was a country of many different people and many different ideas. It was a country of many different people and many different ideas.

This new country was born in a small town in Massachusetts. It was a town of many different people and many different ideas. It was a town of many different people and many different ideas. It was a town of many different people and many different ideas.

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin

As we are looking at decorative stone carving in Dublin Christ Church offers an opportunity to examine the earliest work in Dublin. Most of the existing work, however, is interior sculpture and this thesis is concerned with exterior work but it may throw some light on the state of craftsmanship existing in early Dublin.

After the Anglo-Norman invasion a considerable number of craftsmen came from England to work in Dublin. In the first half of the 13th century, for example there was a certain Nicholas of Coventry and there were reportedly others, for example the master mason who designed the nave of Christ Church. Some research on this carver was done and it was discovered that he was employed in Worcestershire when he was involved in church work. Between 1190-1200 he worked on North transept of St. Andrews, Droitwich and here he carved capitals similar to those found in Christ Church, consisting of heads projecting from a background of foliage. Their style is similar enough to link them both together. The Droitwich is, however, earlier and the style is not as evolved as at Dublin.⁵

This same sculptor worked at a church in Worcestershire (Village of Ovenbury) and characteristics between details of carving in both churches can be seen. Certain details are identical to the ones found in Christ Church. These craftsmen came to Christ Church around 1213.

Christ Church was, unfortunately, viciously treated by the 19th century restorers thus destroying some of the detail from earlier times. The original Cathedral was begun in the Romanesque style but in about 1213 work resumed in the Gothic and the Cathedral was completed around 1240.

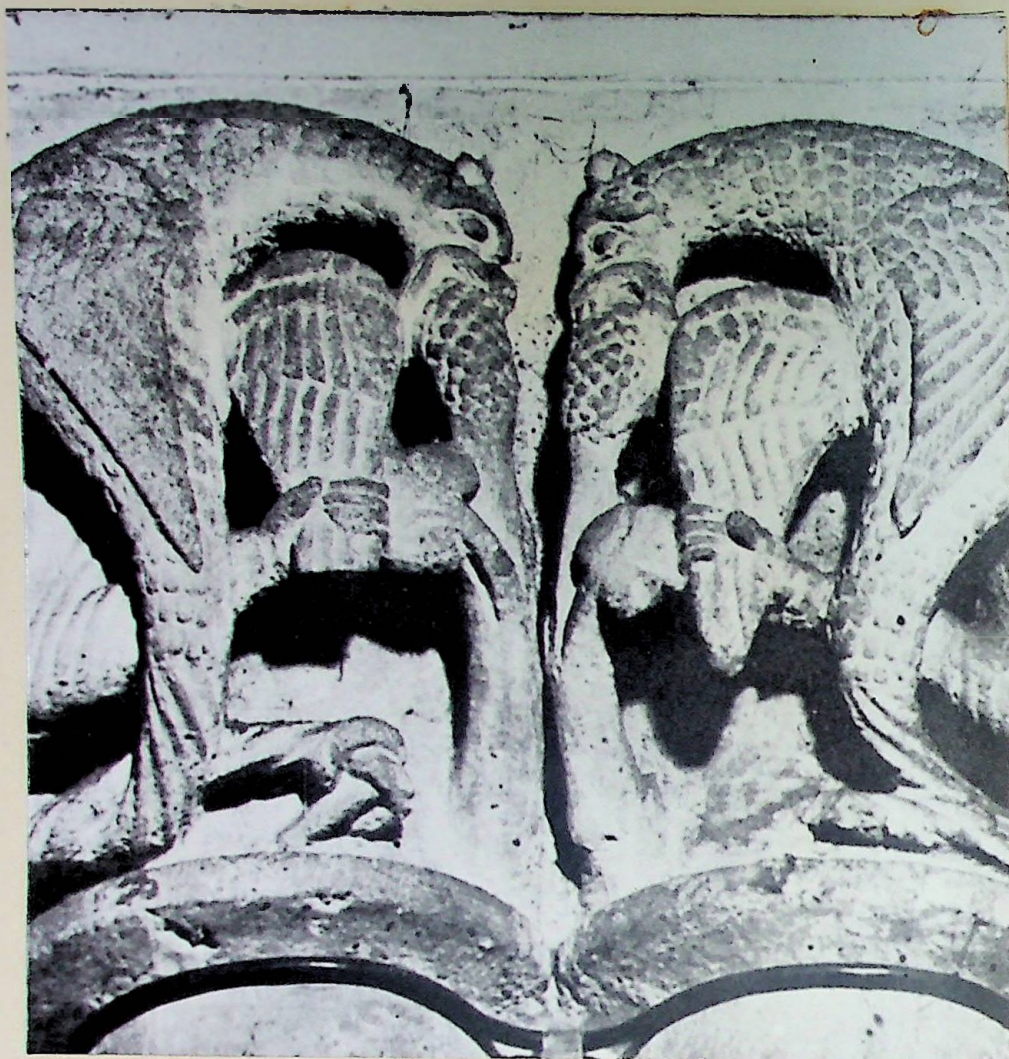
The sculptures in Christ Church are definitely of the Medieval style and it is interesting to see them in relation to the designs which evolved in Dublin in later centuries, when more Roman and Classical designs were used. At this point in time in Ireland the Irish craftsman did not cut as vigorously into the stone and his designs came from a Celtic tradition as seen in the Nuns Chapel, Clonmacnoise. Both of these traditions would not stand the test of time.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL DUBLIN
CARVED FRAGMENT IN CRYPT C. 1190

1. Grotesque Head

Well carved with a notable absence of symmetry therefore making it quite easy for the sculptor to execute this head. Absence of discipline in design. Some good features are the lines under the eye where a nice ridge is maintained. Some damage to the nose but otherwise it is in remarkable original condition. It is imaginative but is not a great piece of work, although it does have a certain strength of character and presence.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
CAPITAL IN NORTH TRANSEPT C. 1190

Again this is an imaginative piece of carving with a good deal of work involved particularly in the texturing of the surfaces of the creatures portrayed. There is a good degree of symmetry although not accurately adhered to. Carving of the hand is well observed and natural in its pose.

Some of the lines are not held and somehow this makes the carving weak although the various depths are well observed.

The background surface is poor in treatment and this takes away from the force that these figures could have had if a cleaner cut had been employed on the background surface.



CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL
CAPITAL PRESERVED IN CRYPT C. 1190

3. Carving somewhat damaged but yet enough there to see it in its original condition. Grotesque head with bulging eyes. This head in no way tries to be natural and it is carved very freely with out any refinement. As a piece of grotesque carving this seems to work very well with the eyes playing a dominant role in the overall design. Some more work could have been done in the hair line and the mouth and lower face region but the sculptors only concern seems to be with the eyes, the pupils of which are deeply drilled producing the staring effect. This is a nice piece of medieval carving.



St. Faiths Overbury - Capital in Chancel c.1200.

The head is not badly carved with a very restful expression. It has a natural expression and the eyes nose and mouth regions are well balanced and well carved.

The lines of the nostrils and lips are clearly held and although not deeply cut the carving is quite successful. This is a very fine head, but the foliage in comparison is weak and heavy, with somewhat a lack of interest and conviction.



Christ Church Cathedral - Capital in Nave c.1220.

Head and Foliage.

The head here is badly carved pertaining to be natural but not succeeding. The structure is weak and this head lacks force and conviction of design.

It has an over-all flatness and disregard for the different levels inherent in the structure of the face and head. These levels could have been explored but they were not.

What is interesting here is the foliage and this is a fairly competent piece of work, well carved and clearly cut.

The Baroque : Royal Hospital

Between the building of Christ Church Cathedral with its decorations, it is difficult to find any building existing between this date and the 17th century. The arrival of the Duke of Ormond as Viceroy marked the beginning of a new tradition of building in Ireland. The last decade of the 17th century saw the rise of buildings in Dublin which were in the Classical style, and this heralded an interest in decorative carving. It was only since there existed relative peace, the aesthetic aspect of building could be explored. Beaulieu House in County Louth is a fine example of the new architecture which was built around 1660. Red brick is used as a building material and wood was also used. There exists a sculpture in the segmented pediment over the door which is Dutch inspired.

In Dublin a massive new building was constructed in 1680 and the architect was Sir William Robinson, who was Surveyor General to Ireland. The building was the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham which still stands. Built as a home for retired soldiers, this building has several classical features. Corinthian pilasters and symmetry of its elevation make this building the first classical type of building in Dublin or indeed in Ireland.

Very little carving was done on the Royal Hospital exterior but after this date a host of decorative carving became evident particularly in the 18th century. This was a particularly rich period and this was reflected in the building styles. The Dublin Society played an important part in training artists and

sculptors in Dublin and their influence was felt on the city. It was founded in 1746 for the improvement of Husbandry, Manufacturers and other useful arts.

Sculpture was taught in the R.D.S. school from 1809 and as practically every town and village in Ireland was rebuilt in the 18th century, there was a good living in decorative sculpture. Many of the pupils went into the building trade as carvers when they had completed their training in R.D.S. school.

Although there is little carving on the exterior of the Royal Hospital, there is a considerable quantity of wood carving in the interior of a very high quality.

CHAPTER 3

During the first half of the century, the United States was a country of immigrants. The majority of the population was made up of people who had come from other countries. The most common sources of immigration were Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The United States was a country of immigrants because it was a country that was open to people from other countries. The United States was a country that was open to people from other countries because it was a country that was open to people from other countries.

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Palladian Era

Palladian style of architecture became popular in the 18th century. Prior to this period the architecture of Renaissance Italy had been used throughout Europe and many of the original fine qualities of design had been lost in loose interpretation. The 18th century saw a new move towards the purer interpretations of the Classical style. The new style in England and Ireland was Palladianism.

Andrea Palladio (Vincenza, North Italy) middle 16th century, studied and measured remains of antique buildings. Inigo Jones also played his role in Palladianism with his work in examining the antique.

Sir Edward Lovett Pearce (1699 - 1733) descended on his mother's side from an Irish family settled in Ireland in 1726. He became the most important architect of the Palladian style in his day.

BANK OF IRELAND

This building was originally built as the Parliament house of Ireland, in 1729. The building was unusual in so far as its decorations were scarce having neither statues, vases, base reliefs, tablets sculptured keystones or panels, to enrich the overall building. The then House of Lords decided they needed more room so they added a new wing in 1785. This Eastern Front was designed by James Gandon, and it differed in some small detail from the original - front. The Eastern Front now had a portico of six corinthian columns with a handsome pediment, whereas the columns of the South Front were of the Ionic order.

The original building was said to have been designed by the German architect, Richard Cassells, who arrived in Dublin around 1720. Harris, in his history of Dublin however says that this building was executed under Sir Edward Lovell and Arthur Dobbs. 6

The building was again extended, this time westwards, by the House of Commons in 1787 and the designer was Robert Panke. The new Western Front had an entrance under the portico of four Ionic columns and a circular wall attached the old portico to the new.

These buildings remained practically unchanged until after the Act of Union when the Irish Parliament was disbanded. 7 The building was then purchased by the Bank of Ireland in 1802, but with the secret stipulation that certain alterations must be made. The aim being to prevent the building from being used again as a meeting place for debate and secondly to so alter the front so as to reconcile the populace to the loss of their Parliament. Johnson was given the job of tidying up the exterior and he did the very minimum to Pearce's colonnade, walling up the windows and crowning the central pediment with statues. There were three statues in all, over the Main Front and they were carved by Edward Smyth. These statues were designed originally by Flaxman but the drawings were worked up on by an admirer of Smyth's work before being carved. This admirer was the Irish artist T.J. Mulvany and very little remained of J. Flaxman's style when he had finished with the original drawings. Recent renovation has taken place on these statues by Smyth as having been executed in Portland stone, they were subject to rapid erosion. Another three statues grace the East Front but these were positioned during the building of the House of Lords and were originally the only statues on the entire complex of buildings. These are also by Smyth.

Other decorations and carvings on the building include the original Royal Arms on the central pediment which was carved by John Houghton (1741 - 1775). This is on the Main Front and it was he who also carved the Capitals on the colonnade. 8 Houghton was probably the next talented of the minor Dublin sculptors, having quite a successful career. He also worked at Carton House in seventeen hundred and thirty nine and it was he who carved the family arms in the pediment along with other decorations. In 1742 - 174 he won the premiums at the Dublin Society Schools for carving panels of Orpheus and St. Paul preaching at Athens. Houghton also worked at Dublin Castle with David Sheehan and with John Kelly at Carton. It is believed that Houghton may be responsible for some of the splendid chimney pieces dating from this period. 9 He may also be responsible for some fine interior carving at Carraghmore, House of Lords, and Rathkeale. Although his style is evident here there is no documented proof to

back this up. He is particularly famous for his wood carvings and he resided in Duke St., from 1761 until his death in 1775.

Johnson also designed Court of Requests and the Commons Vestibule by the Fine Cash Office where all the carvings are by Thomas Kirk. He also added the monumental Guardhouse Gateway in Foster Place, crowned by a superb trophy also by Thomas Kirk, (1781 - 1845). 10

Thomas Kirk was also one of Dublin's finest sculptors. He was son of William Kirk, a native of Edenborough who settled in Newry. After marriage he moved to Cork and it was here that his son Thomas was born in 1781. After working in Dublin Society Schools where he won medals in 1797, and 1800, he obtained employment with Henry Darley, stone cutter and builder, for whom he did carvings for chimney pieces. He started as a sculptor, for himself, at 21, Jervis Street and quickly gained recognition after he had executed a statue of Nelson for the monumental column in Sackville Street. This statue was executed in Portland stone and stood thirteen feet high. Kirk received many commissions after this but his work was not solely confined to public works. He did many portrait busts which received considerable appraisal. On formation of R.H.A. in 182, Kirk was chosen as one of the original members. Some of his work was for England and he commissioned by the government to execute a statue of Sir Sidney Smyth. He died in 1845.



1.

STATUE HOUSE OF LORDS: ED SMYTH

This figure is exceptionally well carved and it is unfortunate that it is so high up that it is difficult to appreciate from ground level. A good deal of erosion has taken place but it is still possible to imagine how it looked in its original state. The figure has its roots in the classical tradition with great attention being paid to the drapery.

The arms are close to the body and this is important in stone carving as it is not good policy to leave limbs protruding from the main bulk of stone, as weak points are therefore created.



Statue - House of Lords. Ed Smyth.

Again this figure in a natural pose is interpreted in the classical style. The drapery is delicately handled and the bulk of the figure is tight and close. The forms of the body are well balanced and modelled, and it is a very fine piece of carving having regard for all the aspects.



Statue - House of Lords Ed Smyth.

Some undercutting on this statue but the overall structure is tight and compact. Drapery again perfect.



Parliament Building - Statue Ed. Smyth.

Less successful figure, both from design and carving. A great deal of corrosion has taken place and this has somewhat dulled the original strength of the chiseled lines. The arm sticking out does not make for good design when the material is considered. Perhaps Smyth would not have executed such a figure if he had complete control over the design and if it had been his creation. The drapery here is also weaker in style and execution in comparison to the statues on the House of Lords.



Carved Capital - House of Parliament

The carved capital is some of Haughtons work and although not extremely imaginative it shows his skill in carving and the standard of workmanship in Ireland at that time.



Guardhouse Gate - Foster Place.

This sculpture by Kirk has a military theme and is unusual in this respect as most of the architectural sculptures in Dublin have a classical theme.

The carving is extremely fine with some very difficult undercutting as for example the spokes of the wheel.

It is an excellent piece of work, and was hidden from view by the foliage of the trees in this cul-de-sac.

Recently, however, these trees have been cut back and now there is a fine view of the Guardhouse Gate and this sculpture from Church Lane and Dame Street.

Rotunda Hospital

Another example of Palladian architecture is the Rotunda Hospital, which still remains in extremely good condition. Built as a lying in hospital in the North West of the city in the fashionable Sackville Street area (now O'Connell Street). The South Front of the hospital has a much admired colonnade which has no structural function and is there purely for decoration and effect. Building was started in 1751 and completed in 1757 and was designed by Cassells. The building was faced with Irish granite giving it its distinctive grey colour. There is some fine plasterwork with ornate figures in relief in the hospital chapel. ¹¹

The Rotunda the circular room built in 1757 was for public entertainment and this is perhaps the most notable feature of the entire building. In 1785 an extension in the form of an elegant set of rooms was begun and was added to the Rotunda and the Rotunda itself was to be beautified in external appearance. Work was undertaken by Richard Johnson the architect assisted by Frederick Trench. These new rooms are now occupied by the Gate Theatre and there is some fine carving in the tympan of the pediment ; consisting of the arms of the Duke of Rutland inscribed by the collar of the garter and other ornaments.

The area with the most decorative stone carving is the Rotunda itself and all the work was executed by Edward Smyth. There is a series of Ox heads with draperies and also a series of plaques, all

excellently carved and designed. These carvings have their origins in ancient Rome.

Edward Smyth (1749 - 1812) was a native Irish sculptor. Born in Co. Meath he became one of Ireland's finest sculptors. Smyth was employed by Gardon and executed many fine sculpures in Dublin. His work however, was not solely concerned with architectural decorations and he did execute some other fine art pieces. One such piece can be seen in the National Gallery of Ireland and it is a very fine bust of George III. Another such piece is that of Charles Lucas in the City Hall, Dublin. This work combines a great sense of balance and counter-balance which gives the statues a great sense of the dramatic.¹²

Edward Smyth started out as a pupil of Simon Vierpyl, and in later years John Smyth, son of Edward, became his assistant creating a family tradition. (John Smyth 1773 - 1840). Other sculptors would also have been employed by Edward Smyth in his workshop and it is likely to have executed a number of the late 18th century chimney pieces of the Adams type. This form of carving is very delicate and requires great control and expertise.¹³

Edward Smyth also executed church monuments and they are considered to be poor in design. There are examples in ;

Lisburn, Co. Antrim

Gowran, Co. Kilkenny

Athlone, Co. Westmeath

A notable feature of the carvings on the rotunda is that although the building is Palladian in style

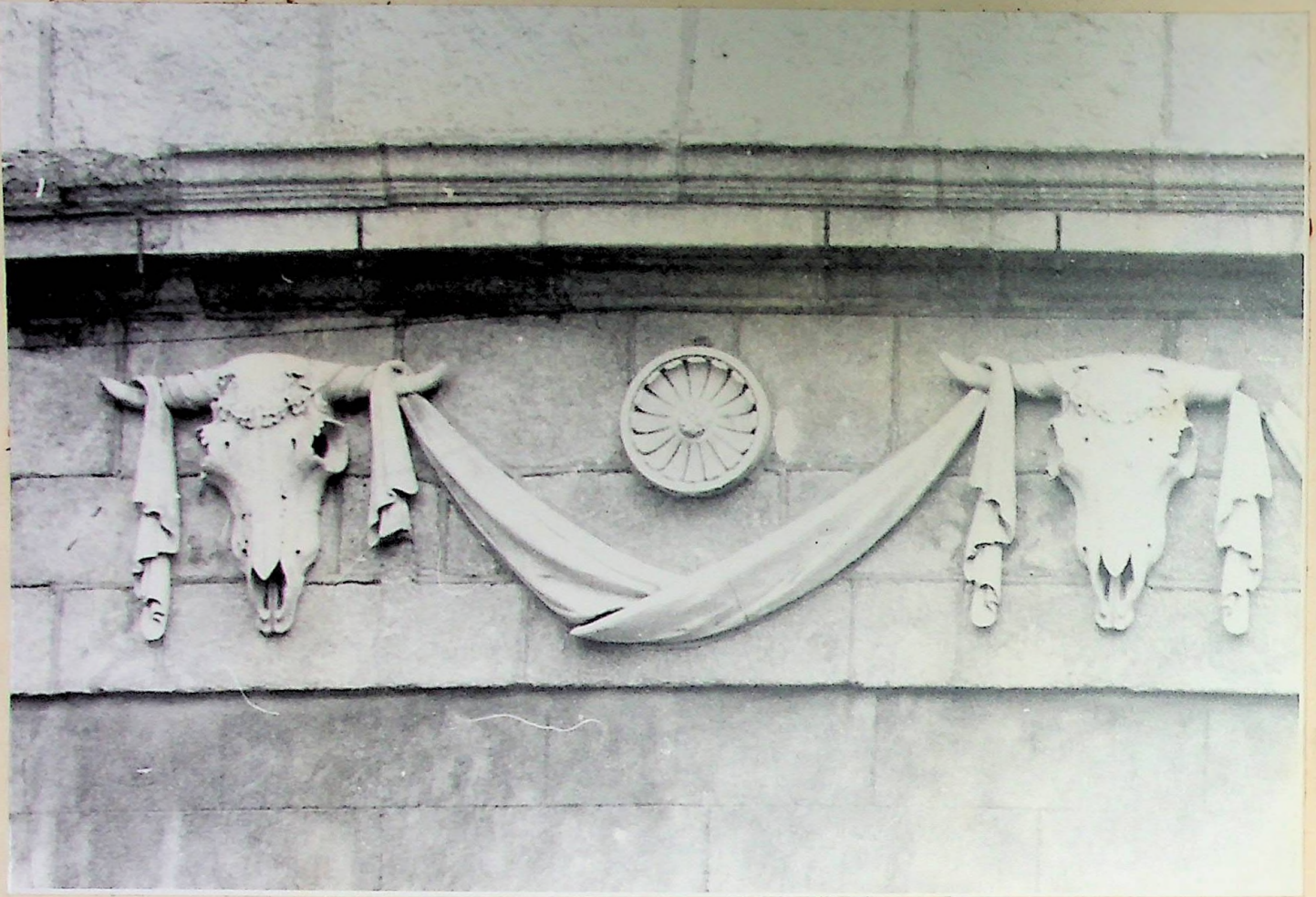
the carving having been added in at a later time are Neo-Classical. This Ox head frieze is mirrored in other buildings in O'Connell St. but are not as excellently carved as the Rotunda examples.



Panel Rotunda - by Ed Smyth.

There is a series of these panels around the Rotunda with varying designs.

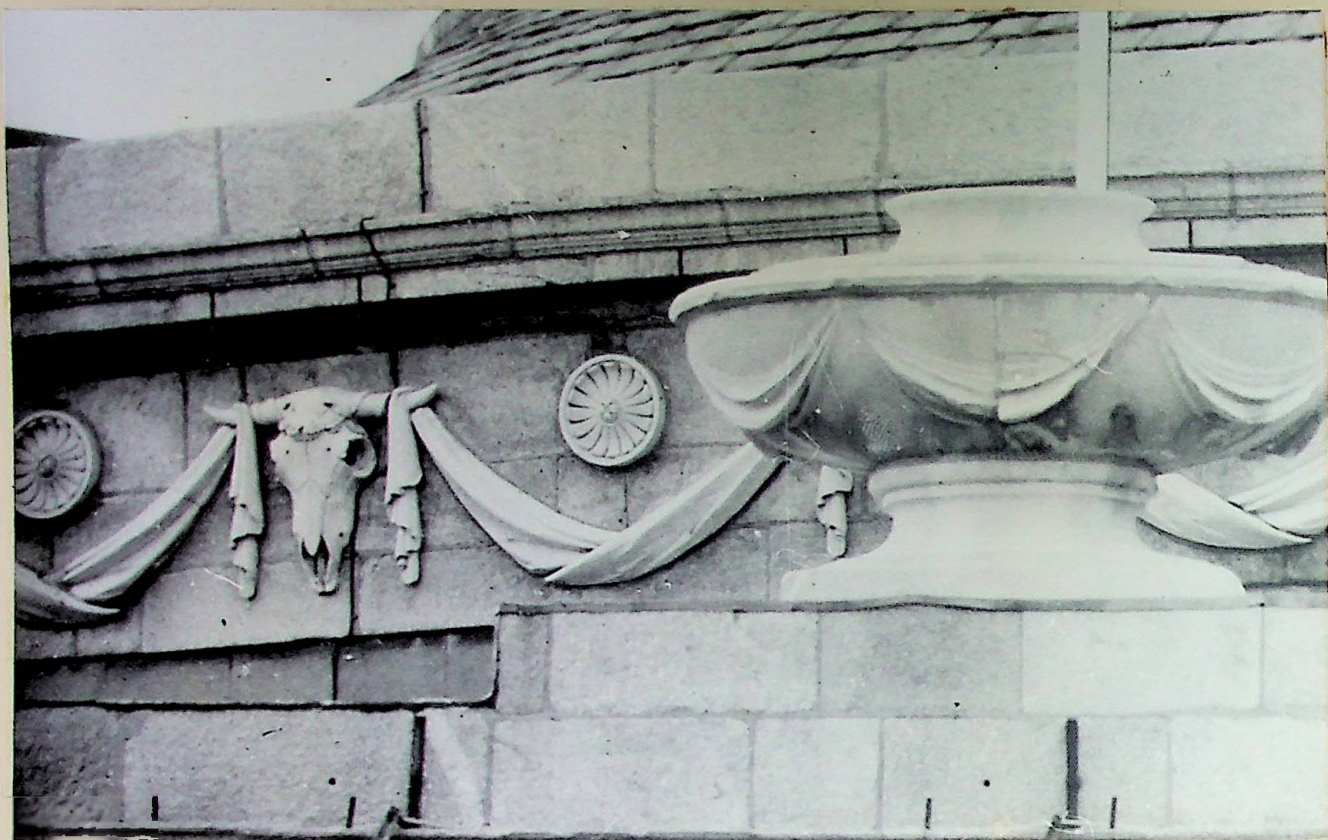
The design of this panel is not particularly good and in many ways it looks amateurish. The cutting is good but basic as the motif is not very intricate. The horn gives the impression of being cut in two, as the line is not clearly followed through and this is what makes this design look awkward, destroying the overall panel.



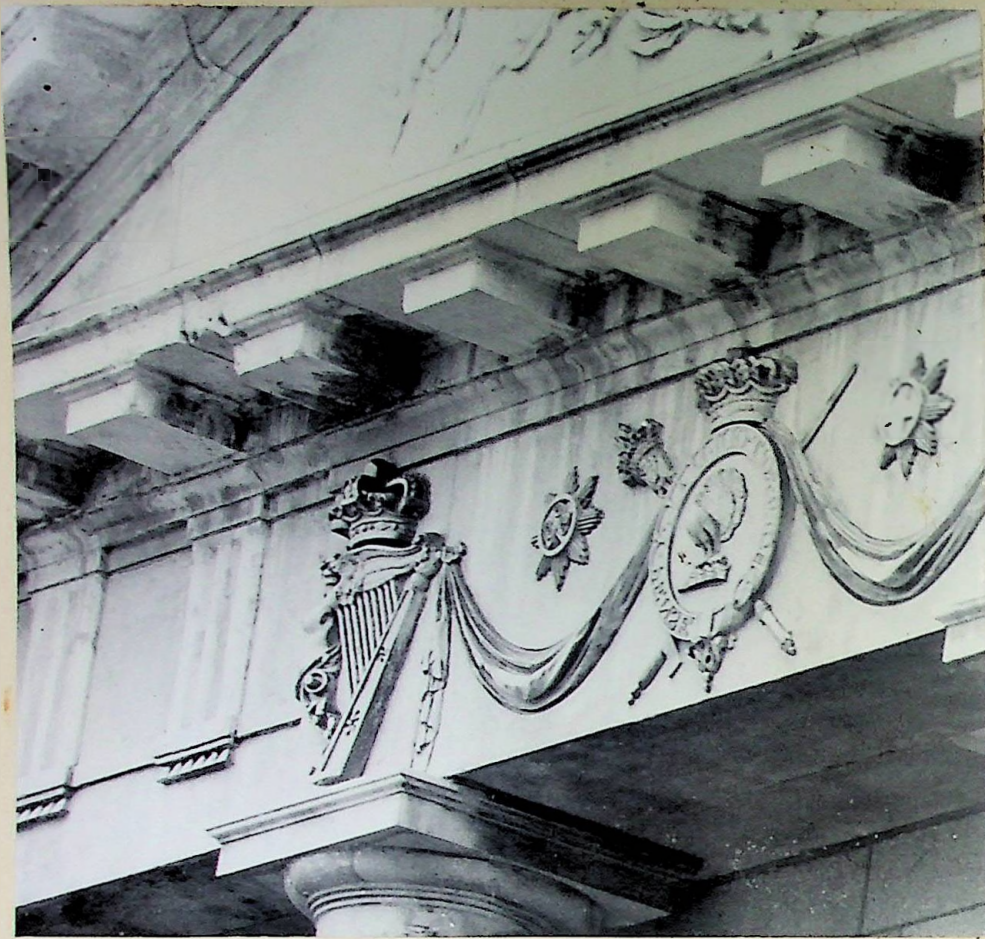
Ox Frieze Rotunda by Edward Smyth.

Popular Motif, well carved and observed.

A good demonstration of this skill in cutting stone with some delicate undercutting in the eyes of the ox and the nasal areas producing deep pools of shadow. The drapery hanging from the ox's head is well cut but could have been a little more elegant in design. These carvings were not cut in relief panels but were dowled on to the original wall, which must have made these heads very difficult to carve.



Rotunda - Decorative Urn by Smyth.



Arms of Duke of Rutland - Gate Theatre by Ed Smyth

This is extremely well executed having a wealth of detail and intricacies.

The drapery is very similar in design to that seen on the ox-head freize on the Rotunda itself. It is a difficult piece of cutting, well balanced and conceived.

The Book of the Dead

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The Book of the Dead is a collection of texts which are used by the Egyptians to guide the deceased in the afterlife.

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Chapter V

The Book of the Dead is a collection of texts which are used by the Egyptians to guide the deceased in the afterlife.

The Neo-classical Era

Casino Marino

The Casino Marino was built in 1762 and indeed it is unlike any other building previously built in Ireland.

It proved to be expensive and it was built purely as an aesthetic piece of architecture rather than something functional.

The style of this building was not, however, Palladian and something new was occurring. This new style was neo-classicism.

Palladian architects had looked to Palladio's interpretations of antiquity and to the architecture of sixteenth century Italy. Now the neo-classical architects looked directly to Rome.

The Casino in plan consists of a Greek cross inscribed in a Doric colonnade. Columns support a heavy entablature which is pedimented on two sides. Rusticated walls and some extremely fine carvings by Vierpyl in the neo-classical style.

By late eighteenth century many antique sculptures had been excavated in Rome and now the sculptors could imitate these directly rather than working on sixteenth century interpretations.

Vierpyl had come from Rome and although English-born he was to execute the decorations, urns etc. for Charlemont.

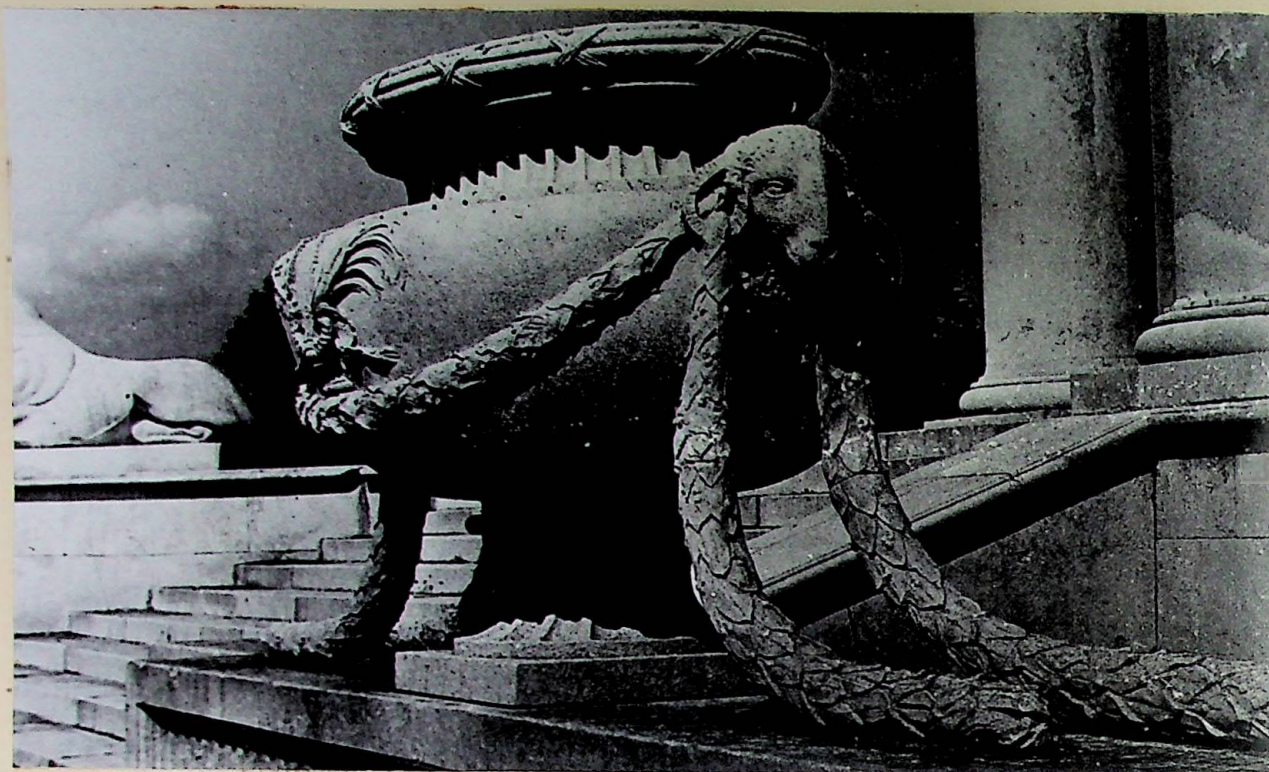
Vierpyl was well versed in Roman antiquities. Charlemont¹⁴ had employed him in Rome to copy no less than 78 antique busts and 22 statues which he later imported into Ireland. (Now in Royal Irish Academy).

Vierpyl also did the decorative carvings on Royal Exchange, but they are nothing to equal the Casino.

Neo-classical architects placed enormous importance on decoration - much more so than the Palladians - and all the decoration was derived from the antique sources.

Sculptural frieze around Rotunda¹⁵ (1786) by Edward Smyth, bears close resemblance to that on the tomb of Cecilia Metalla outside Rome - it is the favourite neo-classical motif, an oxhead frieze, linked with swags of drapery, and within the loops of the drapery carved roundels with lion heads in the centre.

On the Casino, which incidentally was built as a seaside retreat for the Earl of Charlemont there appears the neo-classical oxhead but without the swags. The design for the Casino was by Sir William Chambers and Vierpyl acted as builder and sculptor, receiving instructions from London¹⁶. Edward Smyth was at this time appointed to Vierpyl and it is thought that he had a hand in the work. The sculpture consists of some fine antique figures, decorative urns and, of course, the relief frieze. There are also some lions but these were sculpted by the English sculptor, Joseph Wilton.



Urn Casino Marino - by Simon Vierpyl.

Urn which is very classical in design having two rams heads at each side. The rope like drapery has a great deal of detailed work and it is free standing away from the actual urn which is a difficult carving exercise. They are excellent in every way and could not be faulted in any aspect.

Royal Exchange, 1769: Designed by Thomas Cooley 1740-84 of London.

Principal feature: Noble domed and colonnaded Rotunda designed as a meeting place for Dublin merchants. In 1867 the decorations of the portico were remodelled, and later on the windows were spoiled by turning them into great plate glass voids.

Ponderous balustrade in front of original steps is an 1814 replacement of the original iron railings.

Although there is not a great deal of carving on this building it was all done by Simon Vierpyl and it is well worth looking at the carved capitals which demonstrate his craftsmanship. Thomas Cooley won a commission for this building in a competition and he remained in Dublin for the remainder of his life. This building is also neo-classical.

Blue Coat Schools (King's Hospital)

This building in the Stoneybatter area of Dublin was built in 1773¹⁷ and was designed by Thomas Ivory. The building is elegant, 300 ft. in length and is faced with Portland stone. The plan was never really completed as Parliament failed to give the necessary funds.

The Palladian front of the building is similar in many ways to Cassells Rotunda Hospital of some 20 years earlier.

The wings of the building contain unfamiliar and new designs in detail. Blank niches on the principal floor and decorative niches with carved swags. Also some carved swags on the central tower.

Simon Vierpyl was in charge of the stonework and all the carving is attributed to him. The decoration is not complex and the building in general is plain compared to other buildings of a later date. It shows how slow new ideas penetrate the traditional norms and the few sample carvings are relatively uninteresting. This was unfortunate because Vierpyl's talent was untapped in this case.

Neo-classical architecture continued in Dublin and one architect who designed some of the major buildings in the city is, of course, James Gandon. He was born in London (1743-1823) but he came to Dublin to build the Customs House.



Decorative Drapery Blue Coat Schools.

This is an example of Vierpyl's work and although the design is simple the folds of the cloth are well observed. There are a few of these panels on this building but unfortunately the match of this panel is badly damaged and the other work is too high up to be examined in detail.

Four Courts Dublin

One of Dublin's finest buildings built alongside the river.

The whole edifice of the Law Courts form an oblong rectangle 440 ft. in length and 170 ft. deep.

The centre section 140 ft. sq. divides off two sections of offices creating two court yards, one on the east side and the other on the west. The court yards are shut off from the street by a screened wall of arches.

On the pediment over the portico stands the statue of Moses, on one side Justice and on the other side Mercy.

On the corners of the building over the coupled pilasters are statues of Wisdom and Authority.

There are some fine panels inside the building within the circular main hall. They are bas-reliefs representing great events in British history.

All the sculptures both internal and external are in the pure style of the antique and they were executed by Edward Smyth.¹⁸

Building first begun by Thomas Cooley in 1776. He died, however, having completed the western wing and the completion of the building was executed by James Gandon.

A great deal of damage was done to the sculptural work of Edward Smyth in June 1922.

This building is also of neo-classical design, with some innovations borrowed from other architecture.

Part of the facade is derived from Wren's designs and closely resembles the lower part of the West Front of St. Pauls Cathedral, London.



Statue Four Courts

Badly eroded but still possible to see the fine workmanship that has gone into this figure. The drapery is again a speciality and the figure is tightly held within the block. The lines are clear and distinct. The expression of the face has been eroded away, but of what remains they look impassive, proud and calm. The torso is upright from the main volume of stone. There is a kind of classic conformity evident in these works and little personal expression shows through. There is nice movement where the drapery collapses below the level of the knee, and there are some very nice folds deeply undercut below the right hand.



Statue - Four Courts.

Statue is standing pose with the drapery hugging the body closely. It is in a bad state of erosion as with all those soft portland statues. The drapery is light and practically disappears on the abdomen region. There is a high waste band which stresses the female form and again the manner and composition is very much neo-classical. The work of Antonio Canova is similar to these statues and he was the master in the treatment of flowing drapery in similar poses. Drapery is of great advantage to the sculptor as it reduces the amount of cutting that would be necessary if the legs were exposed. There is some deep cutting below the hands stressing the contours of the body.



Statue Four Courts.

This statue is similar in pose to the one already spoken about and it is in fact its match on the front facade. It is very much a statue to be viewed from the front and as with all these statues their silhouette is important. The drapery is not quiet as complex but it does flow nicely over the body.

The head is particularly well related to the volume of the body and looks well balanced.



Column - Forecourts.

Little areas showing columns and some other decorative carving on the front of the building. They are nicely carved with some fine detail.