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A STUDY OF DUBLIN CITY QUAYS AND DOCKS, 1660-1991

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All photographs are the writers own work (March '91) with the exception of figs. 2.2, 2.3, attributable to Mr. John Teehan (December '90) and the front cover photograph, attributable to Mr. Daniel Black (March '55).

INTRODUCTION

Ptomlemy's map of the ancient world shows Elbana on the island at its outermost edge, called Hibernia by the Romans. This port, known to the Phoenicians, was re-discovered by the Vikings in the ninth century and they called it Dyflinn, after the dark pool, at the confluence of the Poddle and the Liffey, that provided a safe anchorage. The human need for settlement and trade, was the spur that led to its founding and the development of quays and bridges, towards the end of the 17c, saw it expand from a medieval walled town to an open, well planned city and the seat of Government. The greater part of its expansion continued in the 18c and it is commemorated to this day in the quays named after the statesmen and merchants involved - Ormonde, Ellis, Rogerson. While the functional services provided by the quays have been superseded by changing needs of shipping and commerce, they form, nevertheless a unique inheritance, They are the spine in the skeleton of the city's road network; they are a source of inspiration to artists and writers with their backdrop of buildings and everchanging light; they encapsulate the frontier between the mythical lands of "northside" and "southside" that nurture the humour and prejudices of its inhabitants - they are in essence Dublin.

CHAPTER ONE

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

OF THE QUAYS AND PORT

Dublin's urban development was influenced by its immediate geography, especially the estuary of the Liffey running to the sea, joined by streams and rivulets from the land to the north - the Tolka and the Bradogue - and to the south - the Dodder, the Swan, the Stein, the Poddle, and the Camac. Parallel to the river ran a ridge of higher land and on this ridge was sited the earliest settlements. It was surrounded on three sides by water and it had a natural harbour in the Pool, a sheltered basin formed where the Poddle flowed into the Liffey, (fig. 1.1).

There were two or three possible fords across the tidal Liffey, the best known was "the Ford of the Hurdles", Ath Cliath, the crossing place of the great road from the north. It was roughly located near the present Father Matthew Bridge, upstream of a line connecting Bridge Street to Church Street. Another ford was probably sited at Swift's Row, near the mouth of the Poddle where it would have utilised the ridge of Standfast Dick, a reef that was to remain a hazard to navigation up to the end of the 18c. While ferry boats were available for crossing, the tidal difficulties of the fords dictated the necessity of a bridge.

The Vikings established the city and, in outline, the suburbs and the Normans reinforced this layout, adding a port between the city proper and the river. As the Poddle Pool was incorporated into the moat around the castle a new series of quays was established along the Liffey channel (fig. 1.2).

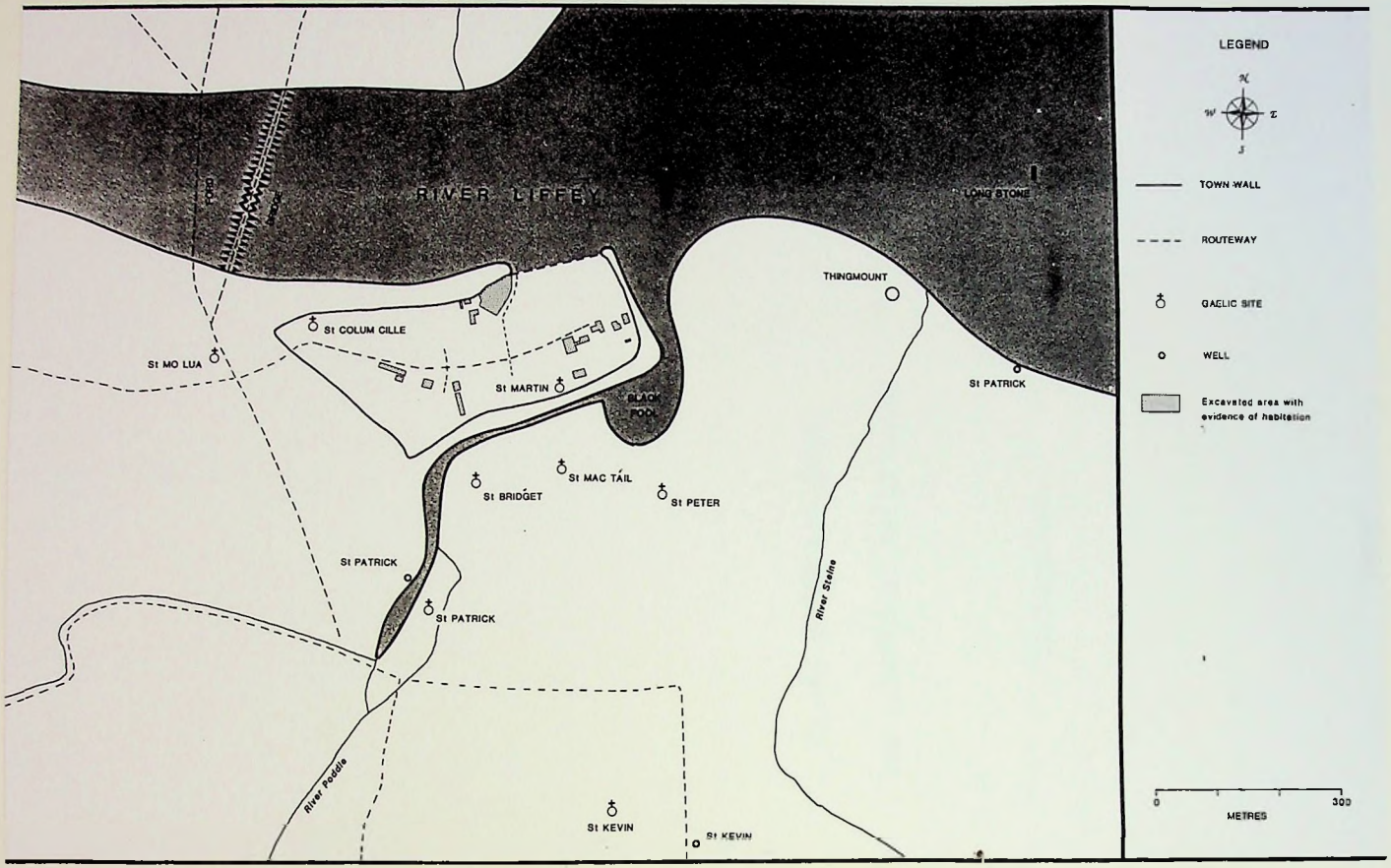


Fig. 1.1 Site of medieval Dublin, the Black Pool.

This development brought about the establishment of Wood Quay, Merchants Quay and the beginnings of Ushers Island. The new port area was enclosed by an extension of the city wall, following the Bruce invasion in 1314. Thus making the city an irregular rectangle, incorporating access to the quays via gates and subterranean passages.

Across the river from Ushers Island, on the north side, stood St. Saviours Priory (later the site of the Four Courts), while downstream, stood St. Mary's Abbey, with its own quay for sea-going vessels (later the site of the Jervis estate and Ormonde Quay). Further upstream, lay the young suburb of Ostman (Oxmantown) with its own green and parish church, (fig. 1.3), Speede's Map 1610. It appears that there was little further development on the north bank, the estuary shoreline swerved quickly away downstream to St. Marys Abbey.

On the south bank, downstream of Wood Quay in 1300 the bank veered south near the mouth of the Poddle and merged with the fortifications of Dublin Castle. East of the City Wall, Hoggen Green extended to the river bank across what is now Dame Street and College Green, with common land stretching beyond. A narrow, gravelly ridge ran west to east along the south bank, to the south of which was slob land, this was later to be the site of College Park. This ridge ended at Sandwith Street, known as Lazars Hills (later Lazy or Lowsy Hill).

While they were undoubtedly Dublin's greater commercial asset during the early-modern era, there was little change in the Quays from 1300-1600. Though man-made quays had been

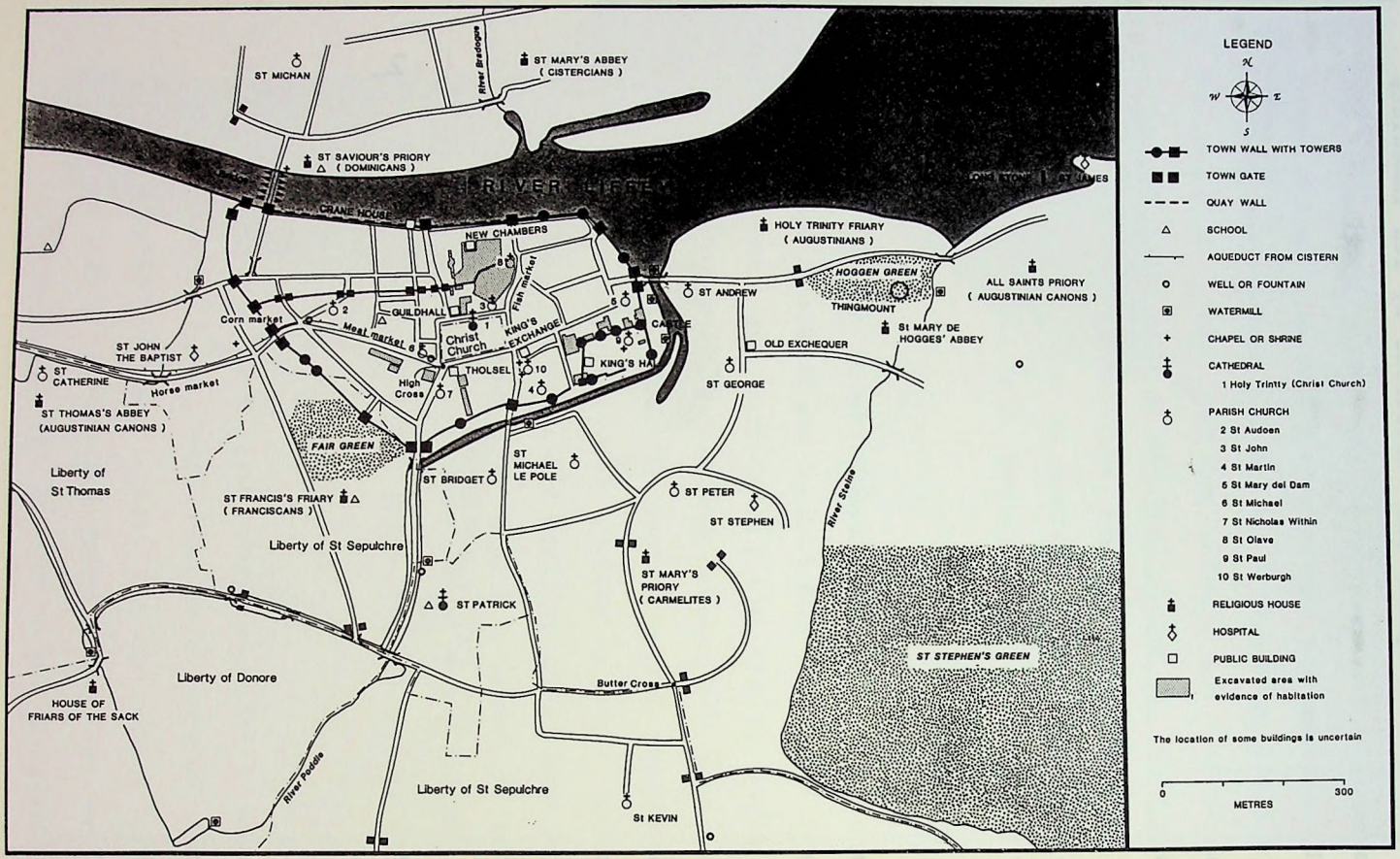
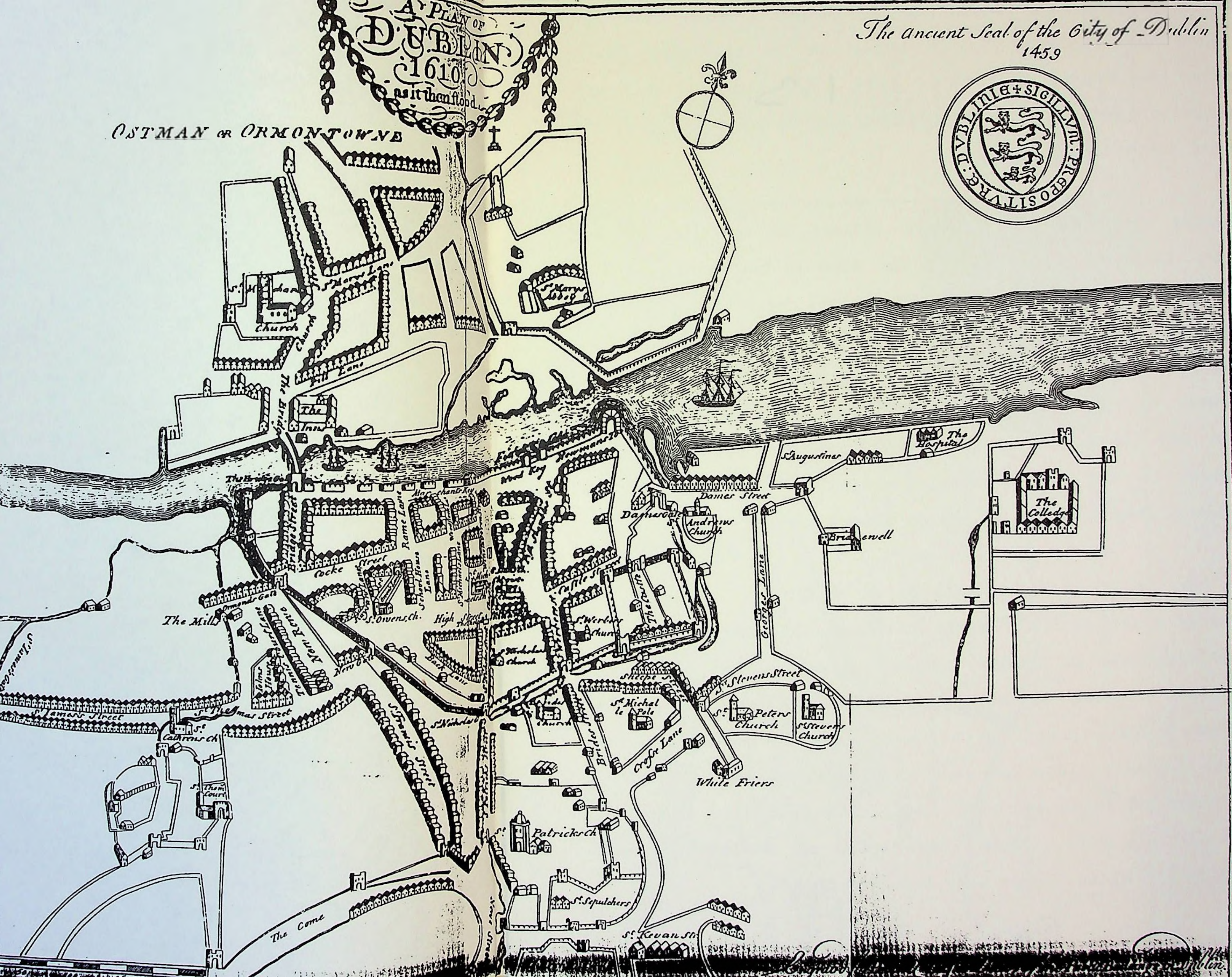


Fig. 1.2 Medieval Dublin, 1170-c.1540.


A PLAN OF DUBLIN 1610 as it then stood.
The Ancient Seal of the City of Dublin 1459
SIGILLVM: PRAEPOSITVRE: DVBLINIE
OSTMAN or ORMONTOWNE
St. Marys Abbey
The Inns
The Bridge
Church
The Bridge Gate
Wood Key
Merchants Key
St. Augustines
The Hospital
The Colledge
Dames Street
Dames Gate
St. Andrews Church
Bridewell
Georges Lane
Bridge Street
Cocke Street
Rame Lane
School House Lane
St. Owens Ch.
High Street
St. Michaels Lane
Castle Street
The Castle
St. Werbers Church
St. Nicholas Church
The Mills
Ormonde Gate
Tennis Court Lane
New Rowe
New Gate
Back Lane
St. Thomas Street
St. James Street
St. Catherins Ch.
St. Thomas Court
St. Francis Street
St. Nicholas Street
Bridee Street
St. Michal le Pole
Crosse Lane
St. Stevens Street
St. Peters Church
St. Stevens Church
White Friers
St. Patricks Ch.
St. Sepulchers
St. Kevans St.
The Come

a feature of Dublin since the middle-ages, they now became the principal source of commercial development.

A most important factor in the urban development of the city, which would relate eventually to the Quays, was the expansion of the city eastwards. Signs of change to the east can be seen in 1591 with the defunct monastery of All Saints (Speedes Map 1610), being recommissioned as Trinity College. This shift was also reinforced by the construction of Carys Hospital in 1595, which was quickly renamed Chichester House and became the seat of Parliament in the 17c, thus completing Green's role as the second pole of civic life in Dublin. The property areas between the Green and the old city became fashionable locations for Stuart housebuilders. Many of these houses with gardens stretching down on the river were to be important in the growth of the Temple Bar area. Unlike today, some of the quays in this area were not open along the river bank. The river vista consisted in some parts of the backs of houses rising from the water, shipping access was between the houses or through archways and slipways.

The original shoreline in this area was roughly delineated by the present Fleet Street, Temple Bar and Essex Street. The area beyond was below water at high tide and belonged to the Corporation under riparian rights. Soon after 1610 part of it was leased from the city and enclosed by a stone wall and the Poddle outflow was canalised. In 1620 due to increased shipping trade, the Crown leased a site for a new Customs House and quay to supplement Wood and Merchants Quays (fig. 1.4), a mid 18c engraving by Joseph Tudor, illustrating the original

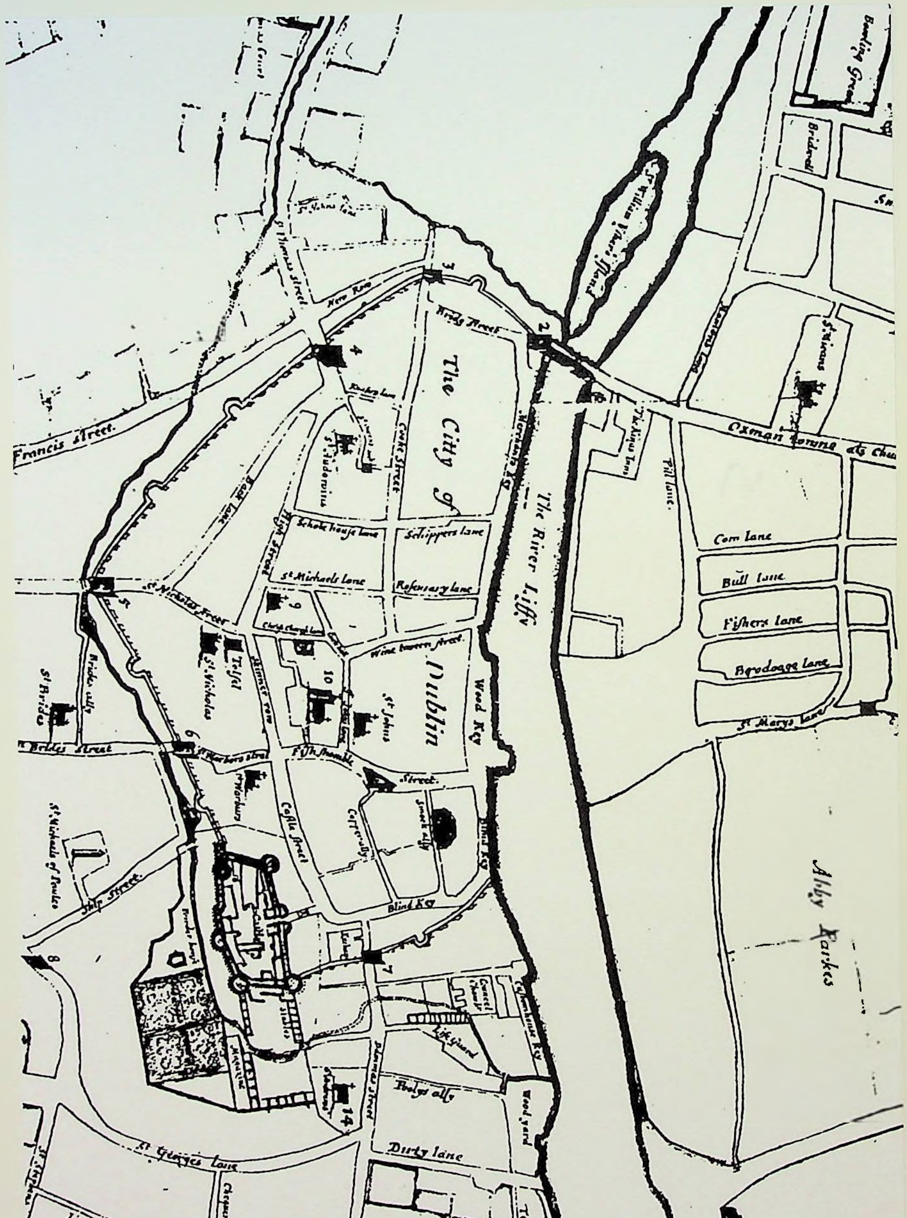


Fig. 1.5 Gomme's Map, 1673.

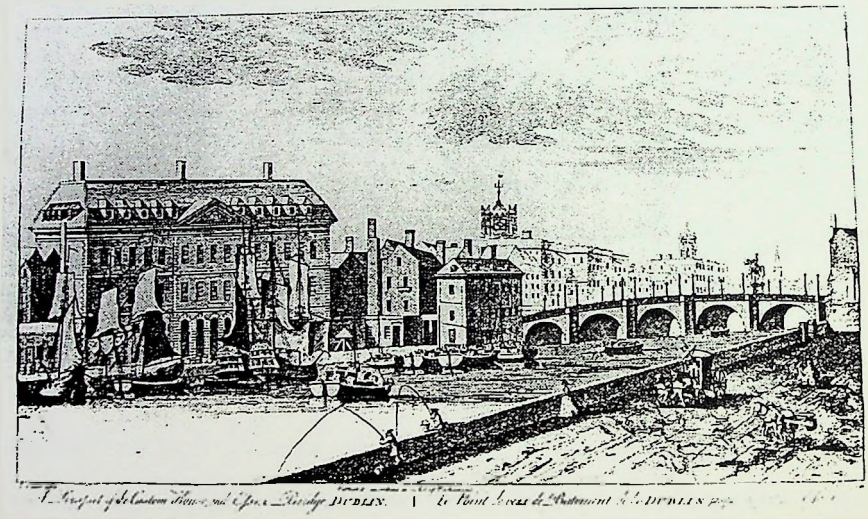


Fig. 1.4 Joseph Tudor's view of the old Custom House Quay.

Fig. 1.6 Brooking's Map, 1728.

Custom House Quay. This new quay was linked to Dame Street along the Poddle bank via Crane Lane though for sometime a moving span was provided to give access to the old Poddle quays. The Custom House stood on the south bank of the river east of the present Gratten Bridge.

The accession of James, Duke of Ormonde, as Viceroy in 1672, marked the turning point in the development of Dublin from a medieval walled town to an open city, with additions to the quays on both banks of the Liffey and the construction of four extra bridges to complement the existing bridge which was built five hundred years before, (see Gomme's Map 1673 fig. 1.5 and Brooking's Map 1728 fig. 1.6). The construction of Essex Bridge in 1678, and the laying out of the Poddle Quay area, from land reclaimed in the early 17c, provided a link between the north quays, the Customs House and the old town. The momentum for change generated in this period, was to continue unabated into the 20c.

Prince George of Denmark, in 1707 initiated a plan for the development of the port of Dublin and with the setting up of the Ballast Office, by the City authorities, the enclosure of the port, by the North and East Walls, was undertaken in an effort to solve the perennial silting problem. Also during this period the South Wall breakwater, and the Poolbeg Lighthouse were completed, while a further twenty years elapsed before the roadway from Bachelors Walk to the site of the present East Link was finished, and the area bounded by the North and East Walls was to remain tidal for several generations to come.

While the Ballast Office committee was working on the north bank of the river, Sir John Rogerson had acquired 133 acres of land in 1713 in the south bank area. He set about reclaiming from the sea, an area bounded by the present City Quay church, Landsdowne Road railway station and Ringsend village. The new wall of Sir John Rogersons Quay, was completed before 1728 (see detail fig. 1.7, Brooking's Map), and like the North Wall development, the area behind was subject to flooding for many years. City Quay was completed in 1718 and in the 18c was the terminal for Holyhead. In 1785 the first passenger vessel arrived there from America.

There were interesting parallels in the development of the North and South Lotts - they were both planned to a regular pattern, bounded by the curving coast road, cut off from the city and both developed in comparative isolation. The south side was generally developed commercially while the north side was partially so - the sites adjacent to the river were leased commercially as far as the present East Link Bridge and sites further from the river were used for allotments and isolated houses. In 1782, Gandon built the Custom House on the site at the city end of the North Wall, the curving coast road, forming the arc of what is Beresford Place on the northern boundary.
After 1800 the adjacent site was developed as the Custom House Dock. It is only now, in the present time, with the decline of traditional shipping and warehousing, that the full commercial potential of the North Wall is being realised.

The most profound influence on the development of the quays

Fig. 1.7 Detail of Brooking's Map, 1728, showing the new Wall of Sir John Rogerson's Quay.

at the centre of the city was the work of the Wide Streets Commissioners. The Commissioners were set up in 1757 for the specific purpose under Act of Parliament, - "for making a wide and convenient way or street from Essex Bridge to the Castle of Dublin", and this directive was extended in 1759, - "to make one or more ways". Their work had been preceded by individual sporadic developments elsewhere in the city since the later years of the 17c. Notably, the urban schemes carried out under the patronage of Sir Humphrey Jervis and the development of the Gardiner and Fitzwilliam estates. The Gardiner estate consisted of a large area of land to the northeast of the city and was steadily developed between 1720 and 1820. The Fitzwilliam estate was on the south side of the city and developed at a later period, between 1750 and 1850. As both estates straddled main routes across the city, their development had a profound influence on the urban planning of the city, involving bridge construction to connect cross city thoroughfares and quay development, most notably in the construction of the Customs House in 1782.

Although they were set up to carry out a specific task, - the opening up of Parliament Street - the Wide Streets Commissioners, after 1759, gradually assumed the role of deciding, and implementing, the urban planning of the city. As befitted men of wealth, education and taste, the most important asset the Commissioners possessed was their sense of scale and their consistency of vision in relation to the urban fabric of Dublin. As members of Parliament, they wielded effective political power and were able to acquire land, demolish property, finance and carry out comprehensive schemes in the

furtherance of their aims. Later in the century, the Commissioners were noted also for their interest in the Arts as well as political power, and men like John Beresford, William Burton Conyngham, Lord Carlow and John Foster were all important individual architectural patrons in their own right. 5a

The first scheme completed by the Commissioners created an important link between Capel Street and the Castle, to plans drawn up by George Semple, and terminated in an open space in front of the Castle. In an attempt to stem the development of the City to the eastward, the Merchants of the old city built a new exchange on this site, to the plans of Thomas Cooley. The eastward development was inexorable, and was underlined by the scheme to widen Dame Street in order to link the Castle to College Green, work commencing in 1782. At the same time, plans were developed to move the old Customs House eastward and build a new bridge, Carlisle Bridge, creating a new avenue from this bridge to College Green and the Parliament House.

The situation at the old Customs House Quay was chaotic, as sea trace had grown rapidly and berthing conditions were very unsatisfactory. Ships were subject to tidal delays and berthing was difficult, often involving a fleet of perhaps 70 ships, massed in lines along the quays. The new Carlisle Bridge linked the Gardiner and Fitzwilliam estates, much to the satisfaction of Luke Gardiner on the board of the Wide Streets Commissioners, and the proposed site for the Customs House was on his estate. Plans were approved by the House of Commons in 1774 and building started in 1781 to the designs prepared by James Gandon. There was much opposition to the move eastwards

by the merchants and property owners to the west of Essex quay, but their opposition was appeased in 1782 when plans were revealed for the construction of public offices on Inns Quay and a Hall of Justice for the King's Court. These were also built to the design of James Gandon in 1786, who incorporated Thomas Cooley's earlier design for the Records Office into his overall scheme. Thus, "The two poles of James Gandon's neo-classical city were fixed" 5b, to the perpetual glory of the architecture of the Quays.

While the Commissioners were developing major street schemes and river crossings they did not neglect the actual development of the quays. Where previously they had been developed as separate terraces, the Commissioners treated them as a unified circulation zone running from the Customs House to the Phoenix Park. The placing of the Wellington Monument at the end of axis reinforced the idea of the city contained between the Park and the sea, with the quays linking one to the other. The quays were embanked with stone for the first time, and though retaining the name quays, were more like London embankments. The Commissioners did not alter radically the general elevation of buildings lining the quays, but selected certain quays for building development. This approach has importance in relation to the proposed redevelopment of the present depressed areas of the quays. The area of the old Customs House, with adjoining riverside housing, was developed into Wellington Quay and Burgh Quay was developed from the site of a waterside brewery in 1806. The Commissioners developed the Corn Exchange (Burgh quay), Merchant's Arch (Wellington Quay) and the Ha'penny Bridge through

a process judicious acquisition, surveying and financing. Just as conservation and demolition of existing buildings are important and contentious aspects of planning and re-development, the Wide Streets Commissioners made some controversial decisions, - the demolition of medieval housing at Wood Quay (Pudding Row 1816), foreshadowing the modern controversy on the same site, and also at Arran Quay. In 1806 Eden Quay, planned in 1791, was laid out and both this and Wellington quay still retain several of the arcaded shop fronts designed to the requirements of the Wide Streets Commissioners.

In addition to particular projects, the Commissioners exercised wide powers in general planning but their powers declined after the Act of Union (1800) and they were abolished in the municipal reforms of 1841. The contribution of the Wide Streets Commissioners to the development of Dublin was incalculable, and it is only now in the last decade on the 20c that the infrastructure they planned and completed, mainly between 1757 and 1820, is being overloaded by the growth of modern traffic and the greatest memorial to their foresight and vision was the quay and bridge system they developed.

Since 1800, the development of the quays gradually came to be dictated by the needs of road transport - still a controversial matter - rather than by the needs of river traffic. In the mid 19c the quays on both banks were completed and, until 1950, the only upstream quay to remain in commercial use, was Victoria Quay. This was used by Guinness to load stout onto barges for transfer to sea-going vessels moored at Customs House Quay (fig.1.8). To the east of this the main shipping port

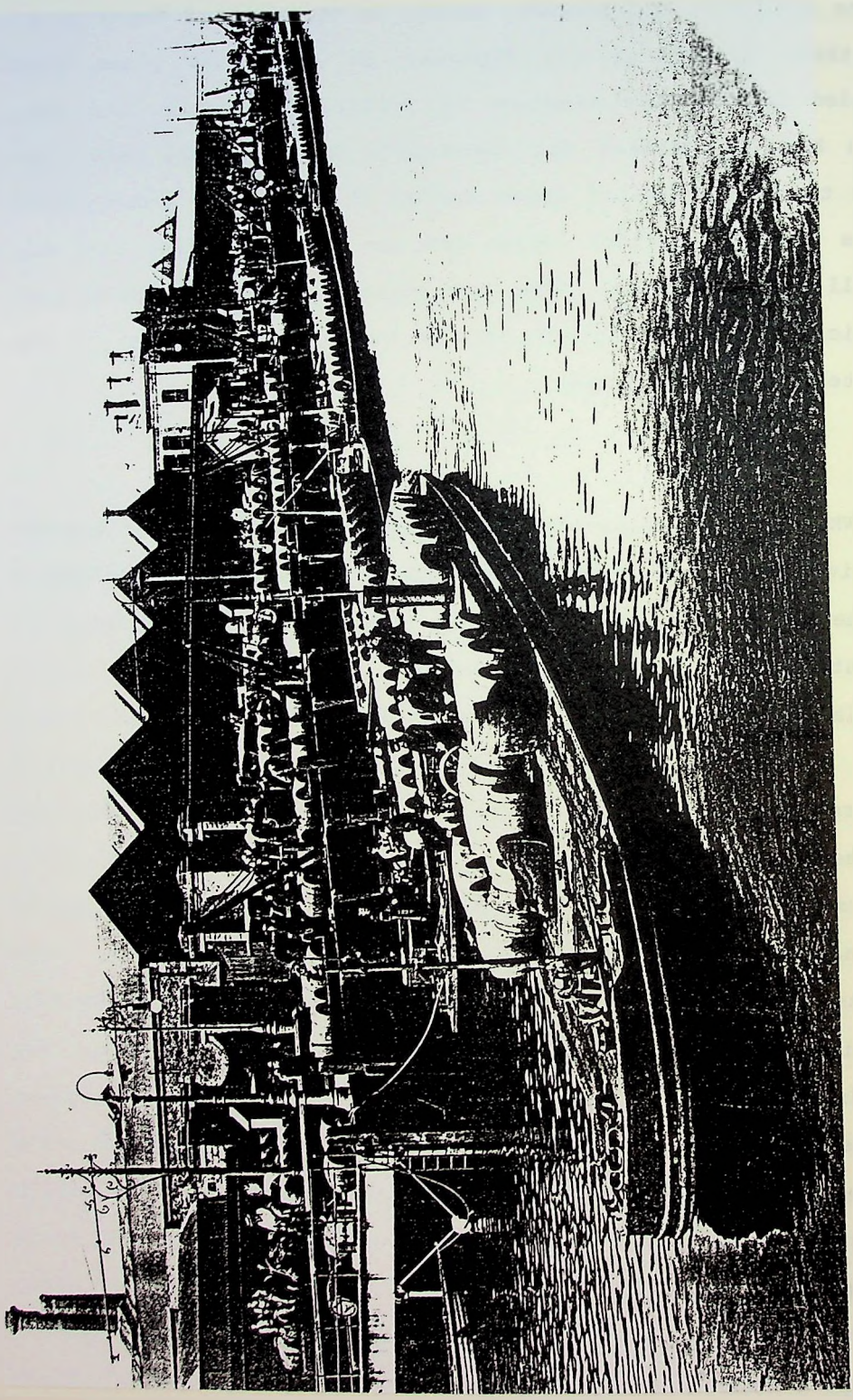


Fig. 1.8 Victoria Quay, stout being loaded on to Guinness barges.

developed with the demand for deeper and wider berths. Port development was enhanced by the construction of the south wall and the laying down of the Bull Wall breakwater in the early part of the 19c, as a result of the survey and recommendations of Capt. Bligh R.N., solving the silting problems that bedevilled the approaches to the harbour from time immemorial.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE QUAYS

Fig. 2.1

a. Heuston Station from Sarsfield Quay.

b. Collins Barracks, Sarsfield Quay.

c. Blue Coats School and cupola, behind Ellis Quay.

d. St. Pauls, Arran Quay (The Four Courts, Central Bank, Civic Offices behind).

e. The Four Courts, Inns Quay, (Central Bank, Civic Offices behind).

f. Looking west from Ha'penny Bridge, domes of Adam and Eves church and the Four Courts.

g. Civic Offices and Christ Church, Wood Quay (dome of City Hall behind).

In 1974, the Architectural Review published its special supplement on Dublin, commenting on the state of decay into which the quays had fallen. While picturesque, decayed buildings may be an attractive subject for paintings, to allow buildings to rot in this manner was disastrous, since these buildings are part of the essential Dublin. The report commented as follows on these buildings:

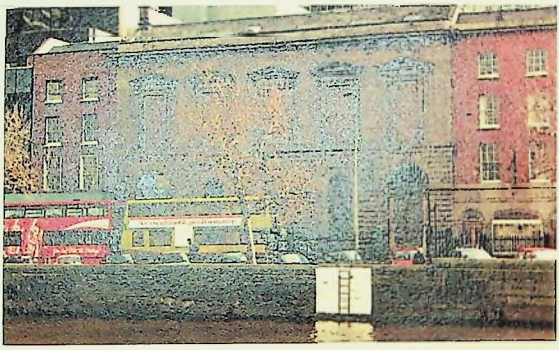
> "Individually unremarkable as works of architecture, collectively they are superb and form a perfect foil to the special buildings such as the Four Courts and the Custom House."

This statement aptly sums up the uniqueness of the quays and the essential relationship between the classic and lesser, surrounding buildings. For Dublin to retain its uniqueness, it is essential that the quays should be restored and revitalised. It is in the intervening period, since the government brought in tax incentives for designated inner city areas, that a start has been made on restoration. Where previously there was despair in the decay of the quays, there is now a feeling that something worthwhile may be done. Part of this decay was attributed to the acquisition of property by the Corporation for road widening purposes and happily these plans have been postponed. Perhaps this will not result in irremediable damage.

h. View of City Hall and Sunlight Chambers from Capel Street.

i. Ha'penny Bridge,Merchant's Arch with the Central Bank behind.

j. O'Connell Bridge House and Liberty Hall (with the Customs House and A.I.B. Financial Services Centre behind).



k. The Corn Exchange Building, Burgh Quay.

l. View from City Quay of A.I.B. Financial Services Centre,the Custom House and Liberty Hall.

m. The Gasometer on Sir John Rogersons Quay.

n. The Point Depot, North Wall Quay.

Fig. 2.4 View from the Ha'penny Bridge, looking west.

Fig. 2.5 View from the Ha'penny Bridge, looking east.

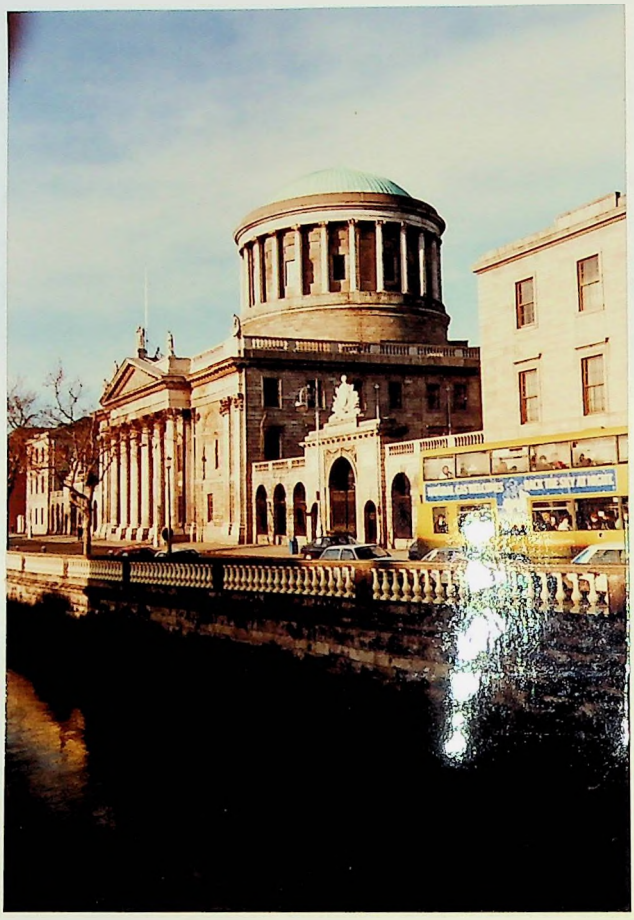


Fig. 2.2 The Four Courts, from O'Donovan Rossa Bridge.

Fig. 2.3 The Custom House from Georges Quay.

Fig. 2.8 Heuston Station, east elevation.

Fig. 2.9 Collins Barracks, Sarsfield Quay.

While both buildings suffered heavily in the troubles of the 1920's, they were largely, faithfully restored. However, in recent years, the Custom House required further extensive restoration due to deterioration with age and will be officially re-opened, following extensive replacement of the surface stone cladding and statuary, in May '91, to coincide with Dublin's year as Cultural Capital of Europe. It has been suggested that the Custom House would be well suited as a centre for the arts, like the Quai D'Orsay Centre in Paris and this imaginative idea would enhance the role of the quays, as a permanent cultural amenity in the life of Dublin. Apart from Gandon's masterpieces, the quays are also endowed with Heuston Station (fig. 2.8) and Collins Barracks (fig. 2.9), further up-river to the west. Heuston (Kingsbridge) (1845 - 1846) was designed originally for the Great Southern and Western Railways, by Sancton Wood. It is a significant 19th century classical building. Designed in the renaissance palazzo mode, its richly ornate facade is clearly articulated, with banded rusticated, Corinthian columns, fruity swags and small domed towers on the wings. As well as being a fine building, Heuston Station marks the end of the quays and the edge of the city. Down from Heuston Station, on Sarsfield Quay, is Collins Barracks (Royal Barracks, 1701), designed by Thomas Burgh, then Surveyor General of Ireland (who also designed the great Library at T.C.D. as well as Dr. Steeven's Hospital on the south side of the river.) A significant early 18th century building, it is also the oldest continuously occupied barracks in the world. It has, like a lot of historical Irish buildings, suffered with the passage

of time, through lack of funds and foresight. It originally consisted of three grand squares, symmetrically planned, addressing the river, (fig.2.9) shows what remains of one of these grand squares. The Four Courts, the Custom House, Heuston Station and Collins Barracks were specially commissioned buildings and still contribute to the fabric of the quays in an unique manner, reflecting the enlightened attitude and good taste of their 18th century and 19th century patrons.

Unfortunately, some of the prominent buildings commissioned in the present century, do not reflect the foresight of Georgian and Victorian builders. These are Liberty Hall (1961 -'65) (fig. 2.10), the Civic Offices on Wood Quay (1973 - '83) (fig.2.11) and the Central Bank (1972 - '79) on Dame Street (fig. 2.12), which overshadows Wellington Quay. Liberty Hall was designed by Desmond Rea O'Reilly, as a reinforced concrete building with glass curtain walling. The original design had a light transparant quality which has been lost because the original glass has been replaced by a dull reflecting type. In its relatively short life, the building has deteriorated due to the peeling of the mosaic cladding on the edge beams of each floor, giving the building a shoddy appearance. The scale of this 17 storey building is completely out of keeping with the surrounding buildings, especially the adjacent Custom House, and is a sad reminder of the mimicking of the tower blocks, fashionable in the decade of the 60's.

The Civic Offices, designed by Sam Stephenson and situated on Wood Quay, caused wide controversy in conservation circles, due to their siting in an area of rich archaeological interest. The buildings are fortress like in their construction and not only mar the architectural vista along the river, but also obstruct the view of Christ Church. One positive outcome of this lamentable development was the increased awareness of Dubliners of the importance of their archaeological heritage, especially in relation to the Viking settlement of the quay area. The Central Bank, also designed by this architect, is a further example of a building that is completely inappropriate and out of character in a city such as Dublin and highlights the lack of vision on the part of the individuals involved in the planning process, in sad contrast to their forebears, the 18th century Wide Streets Commissioners.

A further example of intrusive, unsympathetic architecture, bestriding the quays, is O'Connell Bridge House, (fig. 2.13), designed by Desmond Fitzgerald (1960). This was the forerunner of many speculative office blocks of the period, which did little to enhance the city. It is a steel framed building, clad in glass and Portland stone and its unimaginative design and detailing is exemplified by the arbitrary treatment of its roofline, and its obtrusive scale in relation to neighbouring buildings.

In contrast to these buildings, the recently commissioned A.I.B. Financial Services Centre, adjacent to the Custom House, is visually more sympathetic to the surrounding quay area (fig.2.14). The test of time has not been applied to the building, but at present, its green and grey colour masses are visually impressive, when viewed from the City Quay, enhanced by the reflective quality of the river.

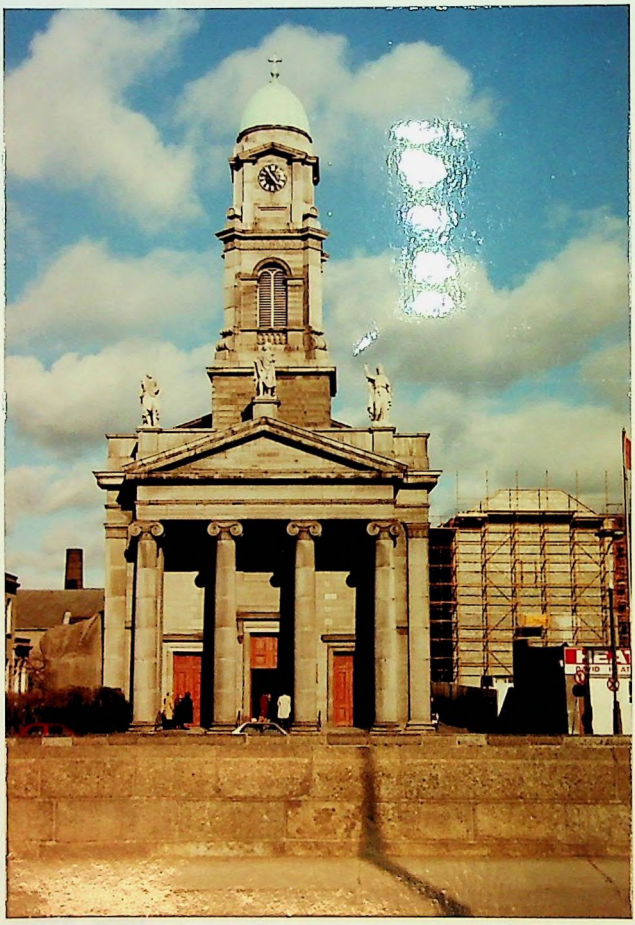


Fig. 2.16 Elevation of St. Pauls, Arran Quay.

Fig. 2.14 A.I.B. Financial Services Centre, from City Quay.

Fig. 2.15 View from Rory O'More Bridge, looking east.

Fig. 2.12 Central Bank, Dame Street, behind Wellington Quay.

Fig. 2.13 O'Connell Bridge House, from Bachelors Walk.

Fig. 2.17 Dublin Corporation model of a feasibility study for Essex Quay.

Fig. 2.18 Merchant's Arch, from the Ha'penny Bridge.

The vistas of the quays are enhanced by the spires and domes of the churches along its route, when viewed with the classical buildings. Looking west from the Ha'penny Bridge, the great dome of the Four Courts and that of Adam and Eve's Church form a balanced relationship (fig. 2.4). Also, when entering the city from the west, the lesser cupola of St. Paul's on the immediate quay's edge, taken with these, form a memorable composition (fig. 2.15). Both Adam and Eve's (1830) and St. Paul's (1835 - 1837) were designed by Patrick Byrne, a local Dublin architect, who benefited from the opportunity, after the 1829 Act of Emancipation, to design these churches - he also designed St. Audeons.

These examples of quay churches form a vital link in the classical traditions of Dublin church architecture and bridge the gap between 18th century traditions and the start of the Gothic revival. Their architectural merit lies in the treatment of facades - fronts composed of a portico of classical columns, surmounted by a small bell-tower with a cupola on top. Viewed from the front (fig. 2.16) or as seen from a distance, they form dignified compositions, carefully proportioned and effectively detailed. These churches, with the exception of Adam and Eves, have deteriorated over the years with the decline of the inner city parishes. St. Pauls in particular has suffered from the increase in traffic along the quays which has accelerated this inner city decline.

In contrast Adam and Eve's church, a Franciscan Church, flourished, being rebuilt in 1923 and 1959, in a classically inspired Romanesque style. Closer to Adam and Eves, the church

of Michael and Johns forms an interesting part of the historic fabric of the quays. It was the site of the 18th century Smock Alley Playhouse, and it too has suffered as a result of the decaying population numbers of the inner city. A recent encouraging trend in conservation is the Corporation's study of the Essex Quay area (fig.2.17), with a view to redevelopment in an integrated and creative manner, rather than to random speculative forces.

The quays developed by the Wide Streets Commissioners are essentially intact,but their associated buildings of this period, have suffered from general decay and neglect. Merchant Arch, designed by Frederick Dorley(1821), as a south bank pedestrian link has suffered from this general malaise and presently for sale (fig. 2.18), it faces an uncertain future. The Corn Exchange, (1816 - 1821), designed by G. Halpin, has suffered a worse fate. The facade is all that remains of this palazzo style building (fig. 2.19). This deterioration from its original condition is clearly shown in figure 2.20. A recurring motif on the buildings of the lower quays, associated with the Wide Streets Commissioners, is the arched or arcaded treatment of the ground floor elevations. This may still be seen in the facade of the Corn Exchange and adjacent buildings (figs. 2.19 and 2.21). Shaw's Pictorial Directory of 1850 (fig. 2.22) shows this feature in its original condition. The offices now owned by N.E.C. on Eden Quay, (fig.2.23), are a good example of the conservation of this feature in a modern office building.

Fig. 2.23 Elevation of N.E.C., Eden Quay, (the old British and Irish Steam Packet Offices.)

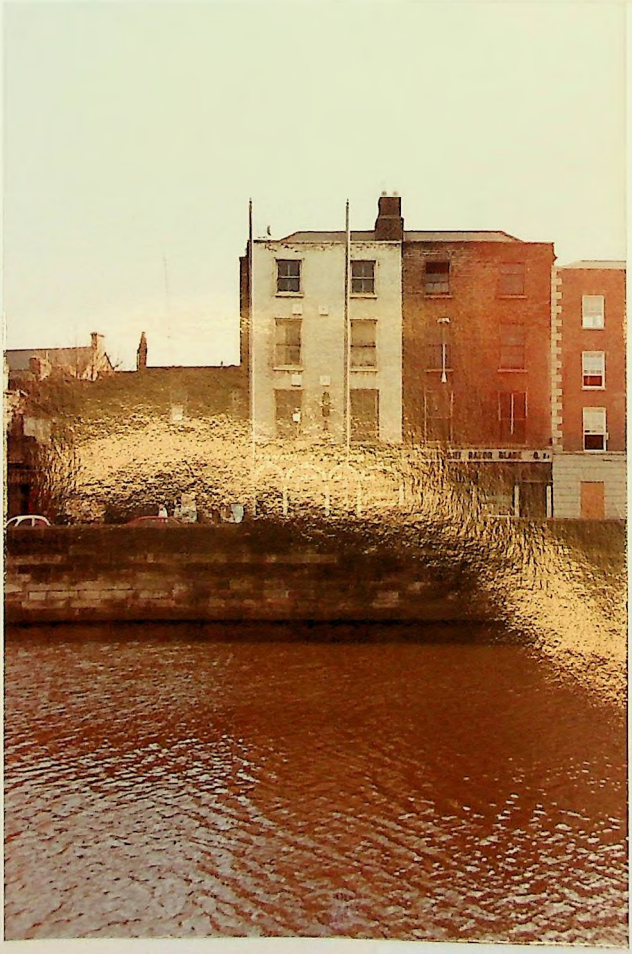


Fig. 2.24 Wellington Quay.

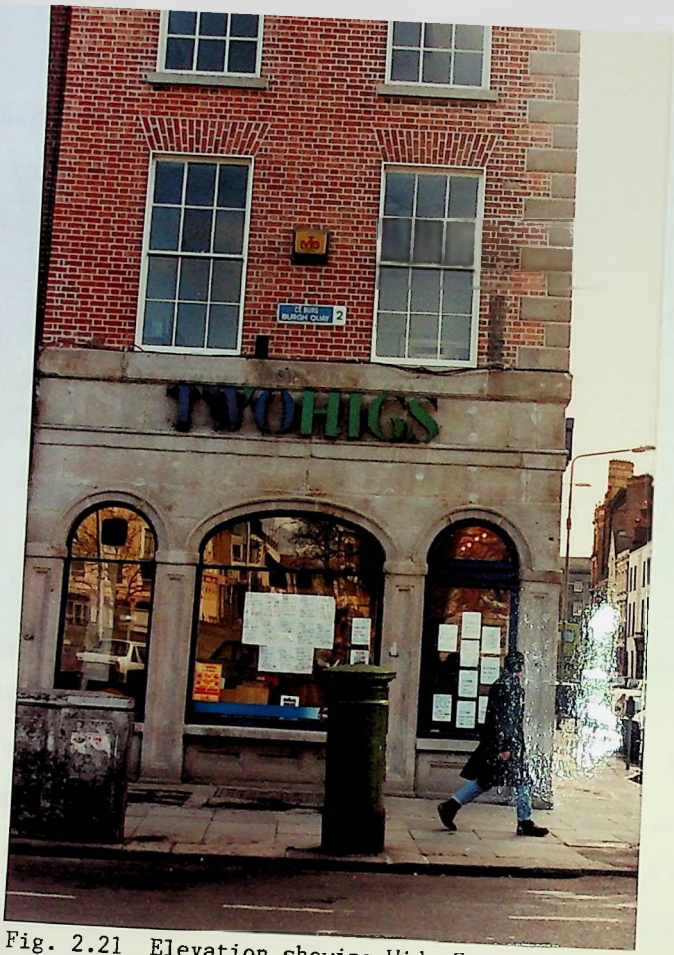


Fig. 2.21 Elevation showing Wide Streets Commissioners arcade motif Burgh Quay.

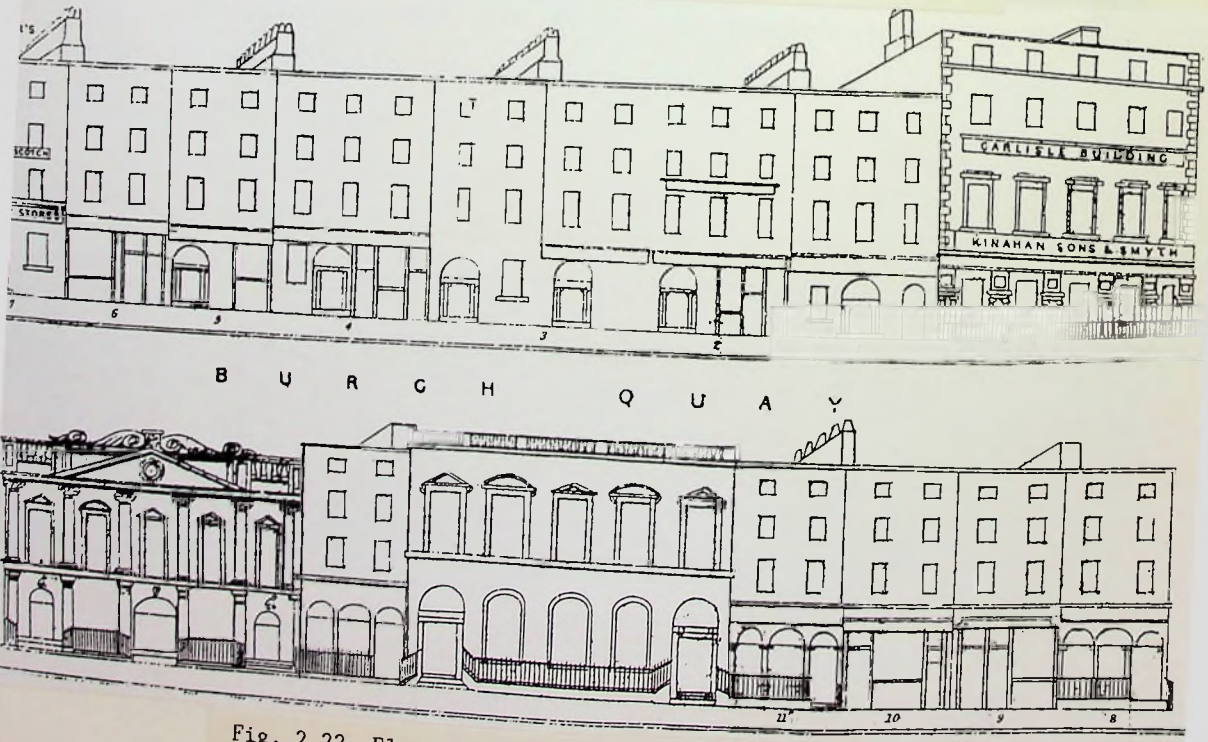


Fig. 2.22 Elevation, Shaw's Pictorial Directory of 1850.

Fig. 2.19 The Corn Exchange, from Eden Quay.

Fig. 2.20 19th century view of the Corn Exchange, Burgh Quay and Custom House.

Fig. 2.25 The Point Depot.

Fig. 2.26 Panorama, Ellis Quay, Rory O'More Bridge and Liam Mellowes Bridge.

Fig. 2,29 Elevations of nos. 28,29, Lower Ormond Quay.

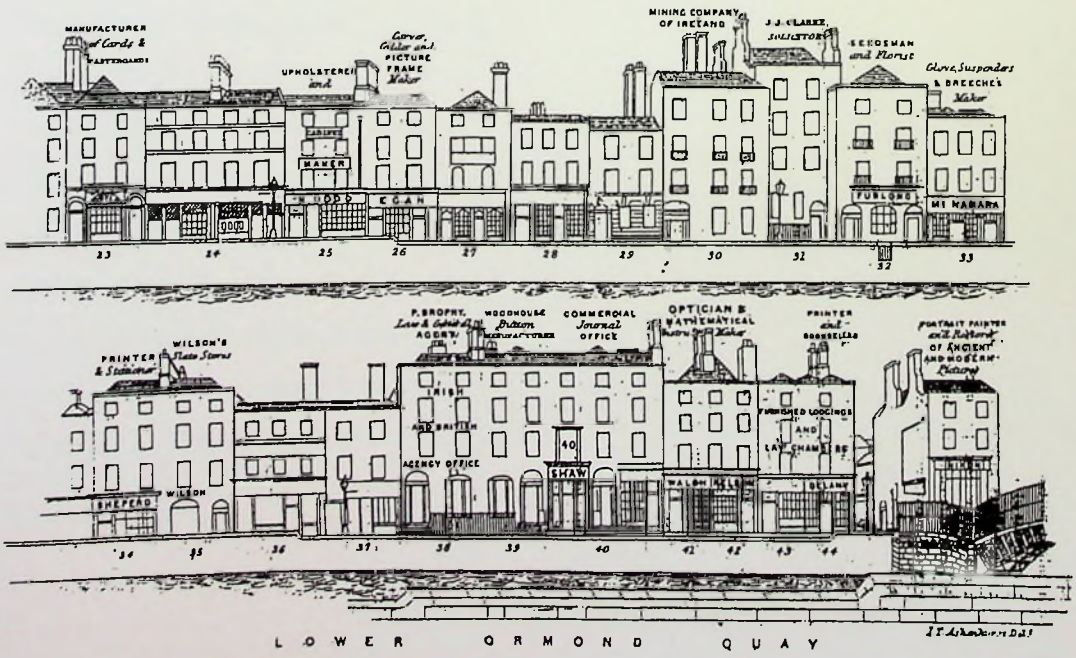


Fig. 2.30 Elevation, Shaw's Pictorial Directory of 1850.

Fig. 2.27 Elevation of nos. 9 and 10, Lower Ormond Quay.

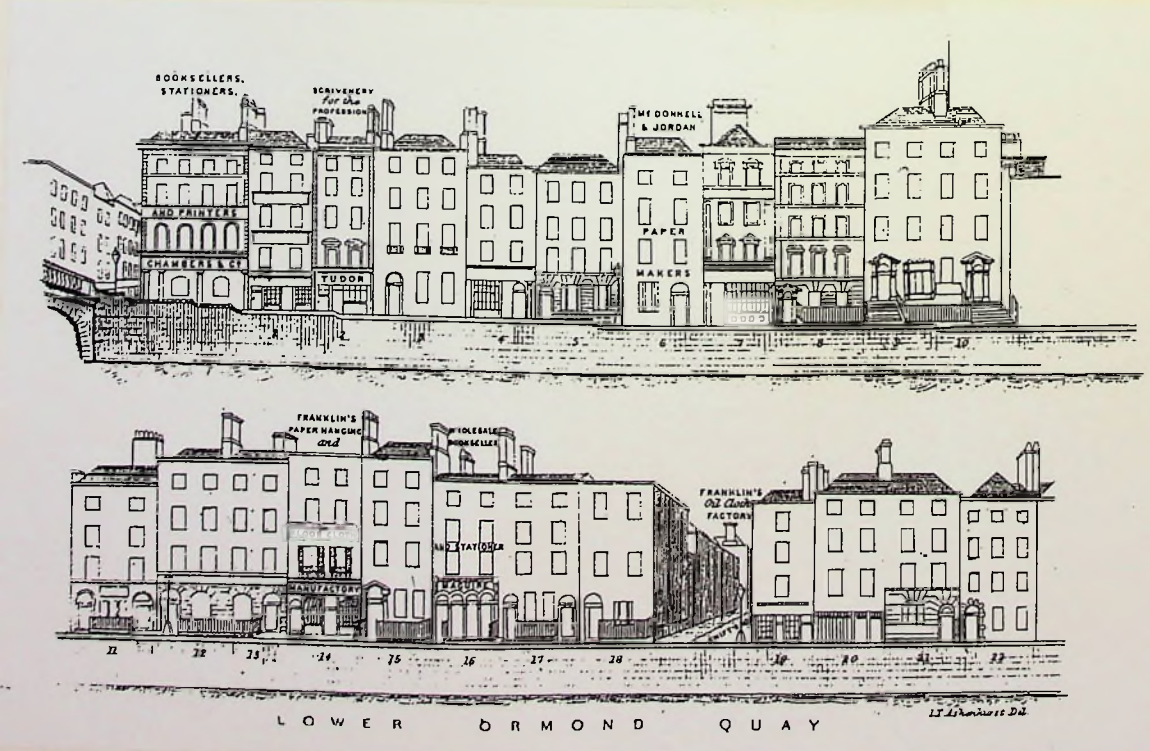


Fig. 2.28 Elevation, Shaw's Pictorial Directory of 1850.

Fig. 2.31, Details of River God heads on the old Tropical
and 2.32 Fruit Company warehouse, Sir John Rogersons Quay.

Further down river, on Wellington Quay, are two more examples (fig. 2.24) of the retention of this particular feature, but both buildings are in a serious state of dilapidation. The facades of the Ha'penny Bridge Inn, (fig. 2.12), echoes this motif and is maintained in good condition and nicely detailed. This unifying motif of the lower quay buildings, is shown at its best in the arcaded front of the Custom House building and influenced the elevation of the Point Depot building, (fig.2.25). The conservation and maintenance of an original feature such as this, is preferable to pastiche and imitation.

While the lower quays are in a far from satisfactory condition in relation to their maintenance and conservation, the upper quays have almost been totally devastated. In particular, Ellis Quay and the area stretching back to the Bluecoat School and Smithfield are a prime example of this seemingly wanton destruction and badly blighted, with disfiguring advertising hoardings, (fig. 2.26). The present sad state of Lr. Ormond Quay (figs. 2.27 and 2.29), is contrasted by reference to its condition as shown in Shaw's Directory, (figs. 2.28 and 2.30). Ironically, the destruction of No. 28, has opened up a view of an interesting cupola, on the present Penney's building on Henry Street, (fig.2.29).

Despite these many images of decay and destruction, there are a few examples of modern schemes which show intelligence and imagination in their execution; and hopefully set a trend

which will enable the essential fabric of the quays to be maintained. The conversion of the Point Depot, (1988) is a prime example of this. Originally, constructed in 1878, as a railway goods depot and having lain idle for many years, due to the general dock decline, it has been successfully converted into a conference and exhibition centre.

A further example of this lower dockside development is the conversion of the Tropical Fruit Company (1858) warehouse to use as a tapes and records stores. The original facade was refurbished in 1988 (fig. 2.31, 2.32) highlighting the original river god heads of Edward Smyth, Gandon's sculptor, salvaged from the old Carlisle Bridge and incorporated in the elevation. On the site of former presbyterian church, Upper Ormond Quay, an excellent example of the blending of part of the existing structure with modern additions is seen in (fig. 2.33). This infill design relates harmoniously to its surrounding buildings and cleverly incorporates the original gothic ground floor elevation into a successfully modern quayside facade, detail (fig. 2.34).

There are a number of contrasting modern developments on Arran, Merchant and Sarsfield Quays, which indicate the pattern of future growth and renewal. Beside St. Paul's Church the Arran Court complex (fig. 2.35) has bland uncontroversial

Fig. 2.33 Elevation from Essex Quay.

Fig. 2.34 Detail view of elevation,Upper Ormond Quaay.

Fig. 2.35 Arran Court complex, from Liam Mellowes Bridge.

Fig. 2.36 Merchants House development from Inns Quay.

Fig. 2.39 View of residential square, Crampton Buildings.

Fig. 2.40 Corporation housing scheme at City Quay.

Fig. 2.37 Sarsfield Quay development.

Fig. 2,38 Crampton Buildings, from Bachelors Walk.

elevations, with echoes of the Wide Streets Commissioners arcading on the ground floor and a red brick georgian facade. With better planning and foresight the existing buildings on this site could have been incorporated into a satisfactory commercial development and retained the variety and texture of the original facade. Across the river on Merchants Quay (fig. 2.36) there is a good example of existing and new development, repeating the original plot ratio which adds variety and colour to the quayside. The overall planning of these schemes include a token residential element, whereas the new development on Sarsfield Quay has a substantial residential requirement. This represents a very desirable trend of inner city renewal. The riverside facade combines old and new motifs successfully with georgian and postmodern fenestration combined. An earlier example of successful mixed commercial and residential development still survives on Crampton Quay (fig. 2.38) and has been well maintained. This Victorian development contains an interesting residential square (fig. 2.39) of private working class apartments, which are unique in their proximity to the city centre. A further example of desirable inner city renewal is the Corporation housing development on city quay (fig. 2.40) proving that well designed housing schemes are commercially viable in what would appear to be unpromising locations. Developments on the quays, to retain their historic and unique character should have integrated social and commercial building mixes, which will help to bring back to the inner city the much needed vitality that it has lost over the last decades.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE DOCKS -

DEVELOPMENTS

The Custom House Docks, dating from the late 18c, are situated close to the inner city and are 27 acres in extent, 7 acres comprising the two interlinked dock basins,(fig. 3.1). This area has lain idle for a number of years, due to changes in traditional shipping and warehousing, the advent of container cargo handling and roll-on roll-off ferries. This area's potential for development was recognised by Government, who set up the Custom House Docks Authority under the Urban Renewal Act of 1986. Development proposals were invited from a number of consortia, and the scheme put forward by the Hardwick/McInerney Properties/British Land Company group,as designed by architects Benjamin Thompson Associates/Burke-Kennedy Doyle and Partners, was adopted. A range of financial incentives, and tax reliefs, were granted by the Government to promote this development.

The establishment of this Authority was significant, since it was the first formal, comprehensive development partnership between the public and the private sectors, in Ireland and it was also the largest area of land for development, in Dublin, this century. As a site of historical interest, it contains mid-18c and early 19c buildings. This important area of architectural heritage, was developed as a result of the expansion of the city eastwards, in the quest for better port facilities. While the site plan acknowledges this importance, it remains to be seen if these special elements will be incorporated successfully, in the final development. Nonetheless, a unique opportunity has been provided to highlight Dublin's urban heritage and to take the first step in a major refurbishment of the quays, and dock area,

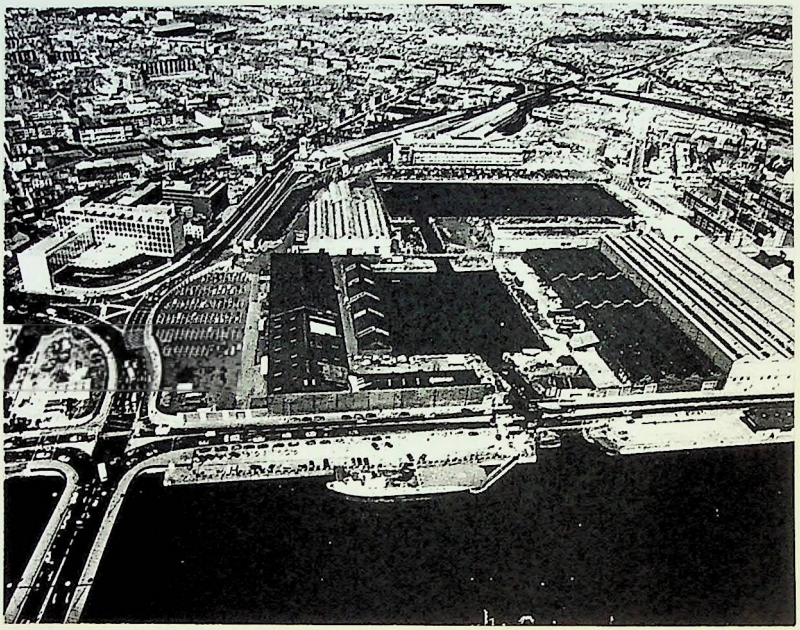


Fig. 3.1 View of Custom House Docks before development.

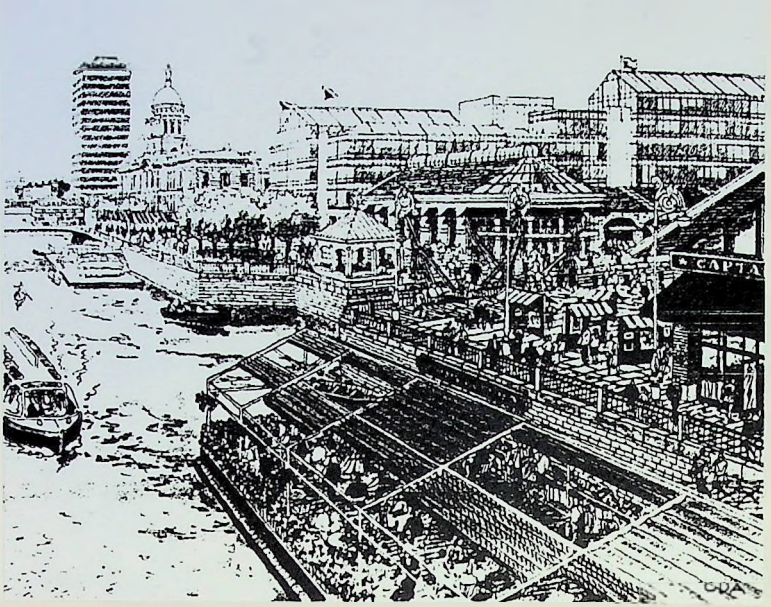


Fig. 3.2 Perspective sketch of proposed Custom House Docks development.

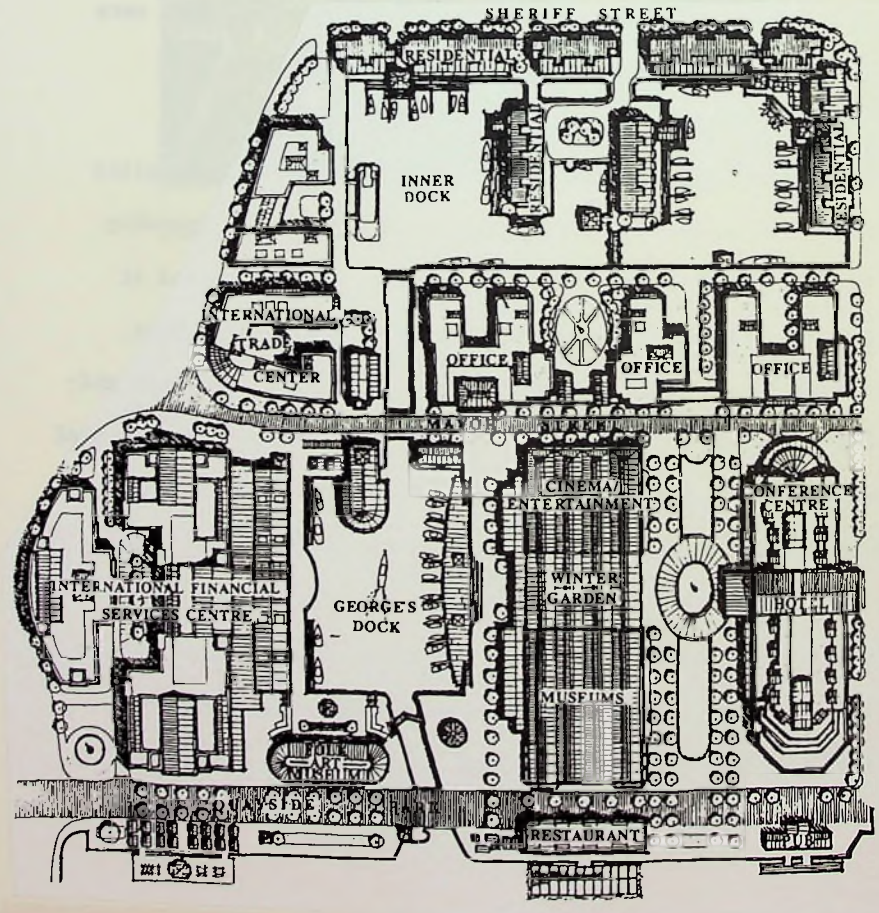


Fig. 3.3 Proposed plan of Custom House Docks development.

and positively promote, the future of the inner city. In this type of revitalising, the social, residential, and cultural elements of the scheme are of utmost importance. Due to market forces, these elements are often shelved or deleted in large scale developments such as this, and judgement may have to be suspended, until completion in 1993, as to how successful the scheme was, in this regard. A major factor in the award of the development was the provision of a balanced scheme, blending social and commercial elements.

The future look of the Docks, is illustrated in (fig. 3.2), showing a perspective view of the scheme, in relation to the Custom House and Liberty Hall. The elevations of the Financial Services Centre appear bland and underdeveloped. However, these elevations were subsequently refined and more clearly articulated, as is evident from figs. (3.6),(3.7), which show the present state. The scheme shows, in (fig. 3.3) that the International Financial Services Centre consists of three separate and distinct buildings, and on the edge of the site, two hundred apartments are located around the Inner Dock. To integrate this new community with local residents, there is provision for a community leisure and training centre, in the vaults beneath Connolly Station, adjoining the site and the planning caters reasonably for the social element contained in the brief. The scheme respects existing building lines and the emphasis is on low-rise development, (fig. 3.4). The most difficult design problem, was to resolve the scheme's relationship to the Custom House. A view of the development, March '90, in (fig.3.5), shows this relationship and the extent, and sensitivity, of the problem. It was Gandon's original intention, to provide

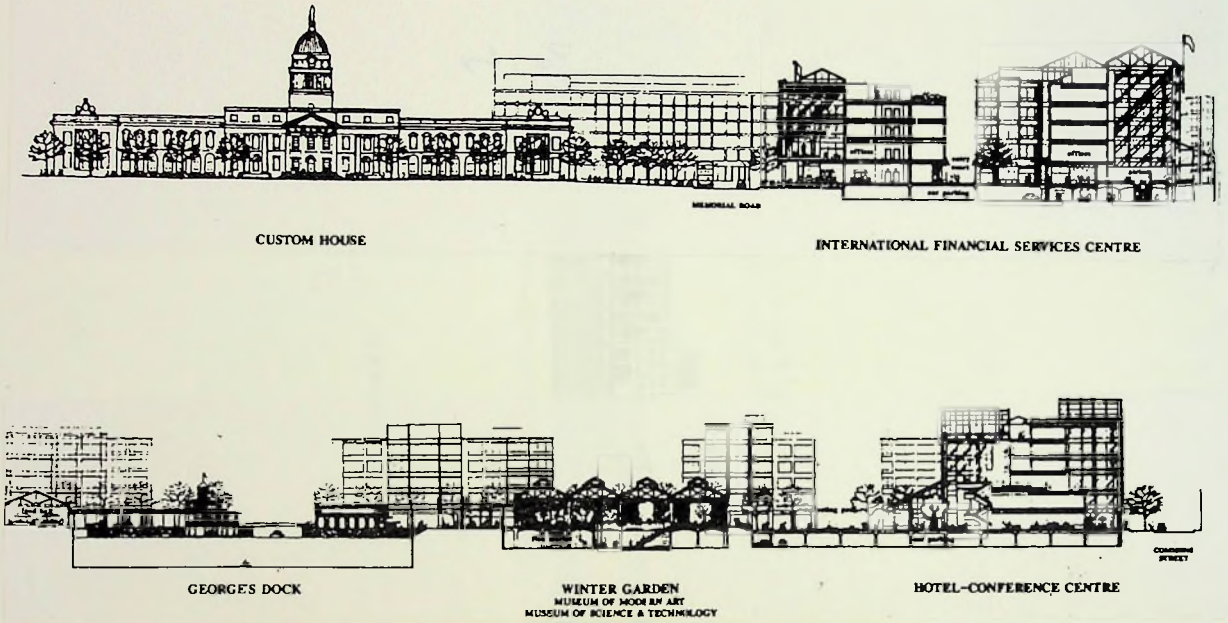


Fig. 3.4. View of Custom House Docks under development, March 1990.

Fig. 3.5 View of Custom House Docks under development, March 1990.

Fig. 3.6 View from Georges Quay of A.I.B. Financial Services Centre, with Matt Talbot Bridge in foreground.

Fig. 3.7 Custom House elevation, A.I.B. Financial Services Centre, from City Quay.

Fig. 3.8 Georges Quay.

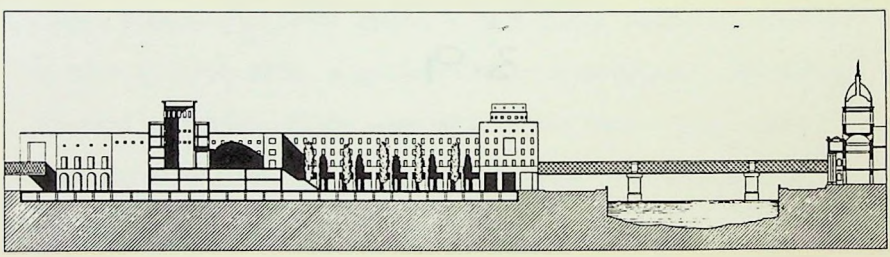


Fig. 3.9 The Square opposite the Custom House, (U.C.D. proposal)..

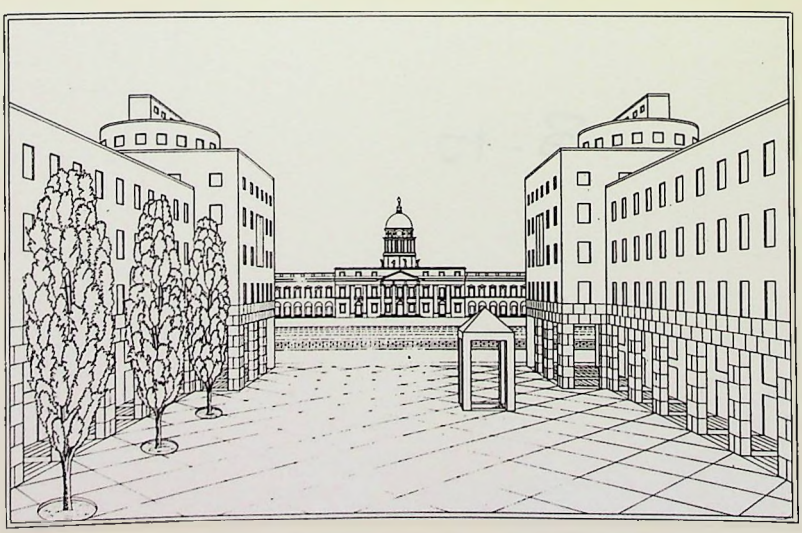


Fig. 3.10 View from the station, (U.C.D. proposal).

a residential crescent, pierced by triumphal approaches, facing the northern portico. Up to 1950, this grand design could have been realised, but the siting of Busaras did not take account of the adjoining Custom House, and the construction of Liberty Hall completed the marring of this classic setting, which started in late 19c with the construction of the Loop Line. The Financial Services Centre's west, curved facade, counterbalances the curve of Beresford Place and gives the building a pivotal role, in linking the Docks to the City. On Georges Quay (fig. 3.8), opposite the Custom House, is the site for Irish Life's proposed development. This scheme, properly developed, could help to redress the visual balance, in favour of the Custom House. In 1985, a U.C.D. design study, figs.(3.9),(3.10) showed a development proposal, similar to that of Irish Life, a massive office development. The U.C.D. proposal acknowledged the proximity of the Custom House and Gandon's unrealised grand design, a belated but, nonetheless, welcome recognition.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FUTURE OF THE QUAYS

The city has been described as one of civilised man's greatest achievements, consisting as it does of a multiplicity of elements of structural form and human organisations. It conditions the mind and leaves an unmistakeable stamp on the culture of its citizens, and on their attitude to daily living. A recent E.C. study recognised this influence of Dublin's historic core, on the lives of it's inhabitents -

"The physical form and conditions of central Dublin, visually express the cultural, political and economic history of the city" - the Quays are the heart of this historic core, an unique example of 18th century town planning and urban development.

Historically cities developed through a large number of small, individual schemes and this is true, especially in regard to the Quays and it was fortunate that at the period of their greatest expansion, in the 18th century, the Wide Streets Commissioners, encouraged this type of development to an overall plan and vision - this over-view is sadly lacking today. The run-down condition and deterioration of the Quays is a sad reflection on the body charged with their preservation and conservation, the Dublin Corporation. It consists of a number of different departments - roads, housing, planning among them - each with it's own priorities and plans, which often conflict with each other. While the need for action is widely acknowledged and recognised, there is a systematic weakness in local government, where initiative and leadership are stifled and inhibited due to the political control exercised in funding. Thus the Corporation is goaded into action by conservation groups, rather than taking the lead in the commissioning of worthy schemes.

It also suffers from a lack of input to its planning by the appropriate professionals - architects, engineers, town planners - the administrative officials take the important decisions - the professionals are truly "on tap". The planning of new developments, tends to mimic and re-use historic forms; instead of preserving the best of existing buildings and constructing modern buildings which would be compatible with their surroundings - the challenge is to blend organically without marring the integrity of a site. Architects have a special responsibility to design new buildings to blend with, and compliment, a streetscape and to conserve what is worthwhile from the past.

Since the retirement of Daithi Hanly in 1965, Dublin has been without a city architect but, under increasing pressure from the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland, there is a possibility that the position may be restored. There is a great need for this as the city architect, not only has responsibility for building developments but also for overall planning, to harmonise them. The successful re-building carried out in the 1920's was a tribute to the abilities and professional competence of the then city architect, Mr. H. T. O'Rourke, especially the restoration of O'Connell Street. There is a special need for a conservation officer to advise on all details of construction - window details, lintels, mortars etc. - particularly when the restoration of listed buildings is involved. Due to lack of nerve, the Corporation favours pastiche restoration rather than allowing good modern schemes to juxtapose existing historic buildings.

During the brief period in office of the Metropolitan Streets Commission, 1986-87, a start was made in controlling shop fronts and plastic signs under the planning laws. In addition a draft plan of the city was drawn up, including the development of the Custom House Dock and Grand Canal Harbour. The former scheme was undertaken by a development authority under the control of a single chief executive, Mr. Frank Benson, under whom the scheme progressed very rapidly. This highlighted the need for a similar body, such as an Inner City Renewal Authority, to operate outside the restraints of the local government structure, to oversee and implement the renewal of the Quays. The Corporation, set up to deal with a large number of diverse services, was incapable of implementing a conservation and renewal strategy, extending over a number of years. Due to the independent attitude of the Custom House Dock authority, political backing was not given to the setting up of an Inner City Renewal Authority. Influential developers often by-passed the Corporation planning authority, by appealing directly to Government. Five Georgian houses were demolished in the Arran Quay scheme, apparently without Corporation planning permission, and despite An Taisce's protests, no legal action was taken against the developers. At present, the Corporation has not got a clear plan for the development of the Quays. Their accommodating attitude to development, any development, reflects the Government desire to maintain building activity and jobs. While these objectives are laudable in their own right, they undermine the Corporation's efforts to maintain and enforce proper planning procedures, especially in re-development schemes.

In contrast to Dublin, Berlin and Glasgow have been in the forefront of urban renewal in recent years. Berlin suffered under the ravages of war and at the hands of post-war planners who ruthlessly demolished and re-developed large areas, leaving behind a legacy of "high-rise" housing, office blocks, shopping centres and vast areas of dereliction. To rectify this, the West Berlin city council set up an International Building Exhibition. The emphasis in this plan, was on urban planning, rather than individual architectural projects, taking into account the city's individual character and needs. Shelving plans for motorway development, they freed large areas for mainly residential development, bringing back life to the inner city. The plan also embraced the rehabilitation of 19th century tenement blocks, planned in consultation with local residents and businesses. Far from the accepted wisdom, that local consultation delays the planning process, the opposite was the case. With leadership, vision and a sense of local commitment, lasting and satisfactory results were achieved.

Nearer home, imaginative processes of urban renewal are administered in Cork, Limerick and Galway and, while the scale of their problems are much smaller than Dublin's, the principles involved are relevant to the solution of the capital's problems in general and renewal of the Quays in particular - consultation with local interests and active public involvement. Generally, in Ireland, public participation in the planning process is minimal. This results usually in a reaction to a "fait accompli" of the planners with unnecessary controversy and subsequent loss of good will.

This ignoring of local community and environmental interests is very evident in the political manipulation of the consultative process, necessary to secure E.C. structural funds. Once aid is obtained, for whatever particular project, it is allocated as funding for central, political programmes. For local involvement in schemes to be meaningful and effective, it should be based on relatively small sections of the population. The Quays provide the basis for such a scheme and provide a unique opportunity to develop a model, pilot programme of urban renewal and planning control. This is based on the need to conserve a major national inheritence and to serve the needs of the local inner city community. As a minimum, a district office should be set up to provide information on plans for a particular area, to both intending developers and community interests, particularly to involve local groups and secure their agreement. There is a need to reduce the power of planning boards to over-ride local authority development plans and also to ensure that political interference is eliminated - to retain public confidence, decisions must be seen to be handed down in an impartial and independent manner,

A significant opportunity arises in 1991, with the designation of Dublin as European Cultural Capital, to achieve worthwhile goals, in justifying this title, especially in the area of urban renewal in relation to the Quays. While a year may be a comparatively short period in which to make significant progress in this area, the important thing is to make a beginning, to take positive and irrevocable steps, "to do" rather than to talk about "doing"; to give priority to public transport

and help to relieve the Quays of the destructive burden of modern traffic.

The decisions made in the near future, will make, or break, the Quays as a restorable entity - the turning point is fast approaching, at which they will either be saved or destroyed, and, if the latter, an irreplaceable part of Dublin's spirit and uniqueness, will be lost forever.

CONCLUSION

Finally, the question must be asked - Are the Quays worth saving ? and as there can be no doubt about the answer, a further question must be posed - Can the Quays be saved ? Is it too late to restore them to their unique position in the life of the City ?

To do so, will require the setting up of a body, like the 18c Wide Streets Commissioners, an Inner City Renewal Authority, with the necessary funding and legal power to save a priceless heritage.

The commissioning of a pilot scheme of Quay renewal would be a suitable way to celebrate the designation of Dublin as European Capital of Culture - the need is there, all that is lacking is the resolve.

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