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# **The Culture of Architecture in Dublin 1940 – 1965:** *a study of architectural discourse, key competitions and buildings of health, home and worship*

**Ellen Rowley**
Department of History of Art and Architecture,
School of Histories and Humanities, TCD

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Trinity College Dublin

Supervisor: Dr Edward McParland
Head of School: Professor Brian McGing

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Ellen Rowley



## Summary

The thesis is a history of architecture in Dublin from c.1940 to c.1965.
It is the first in-depth examination of Irish architecture during this period. It explores various relationships around the production and culture of architecture over a twenty-five year period such as patronage (local authority, Catholic Church and semi-state), contemporary architectural discourse, architectural education, international influences, stylistic tendencies, technological development and the flowering of town planning. It is an interpretative history which attempts to sketch a comprehensive picture of architecture in its cultural, social, economic and international contexts, 1940 - 1965.

***Methods***

The thesis focuses on Dublin examples as representative of urban Irish architecture generally. An interpretative history of Irish architecture during this period would be too vast for a PhD study so taking Dublin examples as paradigmatic concentrates the study and constitutes the thesis' first methodological preference. The backdrop to the thesis is the significant demographic shift which occurs during the middle of the twentieth century in Ireland: namely the relentless rural depopulation from the 1930s onwards and the suburbanisation of Ireland's cities' edges.

In order to present the fullest account of architecture of the period, the thesis tackles the various building typologies by breaking down human habitation to a basic pattern of places for living, healing, worshipping, learning and working. This typological breakdown is the thesis' second methodological strategy. It loosely underpins the chapter division and implicitly informs the thesis' scope. Following the introduction and chapter one's cultural overview, chapter two deals with hospitals (and internationalism), chapter three deals with housing (and sub/urbanism), chapter four deals with churches (the parish) and the conclusion discusses the burgeoning of a new architectural type, the office building.

However, the thesis's exploration is focused further by a third methodological approach: that of the architectural competition. The introduction of specific competitions counters the potential danger of generalised commentary coming out of typological trends. The competition examples ground the thesis discussion in particular circumstances thereby exposing the finer grain within this historical account. Each competition enables the typological discussion to zoom in to the particular, introducing rich archival material, and zoom out to the general and contextual, exploring contemporary architectural discourse. As

such, the architectural competition is used as a hook on to which relevant themes are hung; it is a direct route in to the core issues and conditions affecting a specific typology, and Irish architecture more generally, during the period.

***Layout***

Presenting the period (1940 – 1965) as an episode-by-episode narrative (which conveniently forgets the architectural competition), chapter one works hard to provide the thesis with a cultural overview. It introduces the Architectural Association of Ireland lecture series and the Royal Institute of Ireland's general cultural activity from awards to exhibitions. Using the oral history accounts from a selection of Dublin-based architects practising and studying during the 1940s and 1950s, this first chapter tries to convey the condition of architectural education and the extent of international modernist influence. By sketching out the political and economic scene through a host of reliable secondary sources, it paves the way for more in-depth architectural discussions in the following three chapters.

Chapters two, three and four are generated by typology and competition but importantly, the competitions are not of uniform significance. Each competition plays a different role within the thesis framework: each raises different issues surrounding the respective patron, the functionality of the building or the culture of Irish architecture - clearly certain competitions had greater implications and impact on the architectural community. For instance, chapter two's discussion focuses on the architectural competition for a TB sanatorium because this event highlights the contradiction between socio-economic conditions and architectural aspirations. The mechanisms of the competition itself also inform us of typological priorities in terms of hospital technology and planning for adaptability. In this instance, the minutiae of the architectural competition's workings go far in explaining issues of international influence, continuity of culture during the Second World War and developments in hospital design.

Conversely, in chapter three's examination of Dublin housing (from the late 1930s to the mid 1960s), the architectural competition does not lead the discussion. In response to the significance of the state's public housing programme, this chapter only touches on architectural competitions as a peripheral and largely unengaged cultural activity. Chapter three explores the gap between vernacular everyday building from the ground-up, and then the intellectual debate around dwelling and mass housing arising from Dublin's marginalised architectural community. The primary protagonist in this discussion is Dublin Corporation

and the generator of the narrative is slum-clearance. The most compelling architectural commentary emerges around the debate for houses versus flats - interestingly, the urban flat block undergoes significant technological, stylistic and social development in Dublin from 1930 to 1960. Due to the dominance of housing, both culturally and productively, during the mid-century in Dublin, this chapter is significantly larger than the others and is split into three loosely-chronological thematic episodes: the first deals with the slum clearance project, the second deals with the phenomenon of housing estates on the city's edge and the third examines the many concerns of Irish architects around housing.

In chapter four the architectural competition comes to the fore once again, dragging rich debate and polemic with it. This last chapter deals with the large-scale Catholic churches, hewn out of reinforced concrete but clad in Byzantine brick or Romanesque masonry, which were built en-masse in Dublin's new suburbs during the 1950s. The issue of the RC church as the singular defining force of 1950s Irish civic culture, not least in terms of building patronage, is approached and toyed with. By examining the evolution and growth of some new post-war parishes, the chapter attempts to sketch out the extent of the church's role in shaping the mid-century city. An architectural competition to produce a suburban (typically large) church becomes the centrepiece of this chapter – the Clonskeagh competition. This first archival reading of its controversial outcome facilitates a discussion of architectural style and liturgical reform which ultimately reveals the identity of pre-conciliar (i.e. pre Vatican II reform) church architecture in Ireland.

The overwhelming issue to emerge from all of the chapters is the see-sawing of mid-twentieth-century Irish architecture between modernism and traditionalism. Having not engaged in the Second World War to the extent of most of the Western world, Ireland experienced a differentiated post-war programme. The nature of this tamer Irish reconstruction project is best described as "an architecture of modest means"...

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Ellen Rowley
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## Abbreviations and notes to references:

AAI – Architectural Association of Ireland

CRC – Cultural Relations Committee of the Dept. of External Affairs, then the Arts Council

DC – Dublin Corporation

DDA – Dublin Diocesan Archives

DFA – Department of Foreign Affairs (formerly Dept. of External Affairs)

HC – Hospitals Commission

HLTH – Department of Health and Children (formerly part of Department of Local Government and Public Health)

IAA – Irish Architectural Archive

IB – Irish Builder and Engineer journal

ICA – Irish Countrywomen's Association

LA – Local Authority

NAI – National Archives of Ireland

PUS – Public Utility Society

RIAI – Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland

RKD – Robinson Keefe Devane

STW – Scott Tallon Walker

**Reference to oral history accounts:**

From 2006 – 2010, the author interviewed twenty-nine people in relation to their experiences or their families' experiences of architectural practice during the period 1940 to 1970. See bibliography, unpublished sources, for a full list of interviewees. These conversations usually lasted two hours.
Recordings of the other oral accounts which are often cited in references throughout the thesis (and especially in chapter one) are available through the author.
It is the author's ambition to continue with this project, using the model of the Chicago Architects Oral History Project (Art Institute of Chicago, USA).

# Introduction

***Why?***

This thesis' reading of the practice of Irish architecture during the mid-twentieth century is predicated on the reality that buildings are complex narratives which engage us in a reciprocal manner that surpasses all other cultural forms. This unique reciprocity is analogous to language's place in our world and is considered as such by Seamus Heaney:

> Buildings and monuments constitute a system of signs which we read and construe into a system of attachments and relationships...we read them *into* ourselves...They take us in and we take them in, first as imprints on the retina, then as known dwellings, then as remembered forms. They begin to insist themselves into our consciousness as a kind of language which, like any language, embodies certain values and enforces certain ways of knowing reality.[1]

This is architecture's essential embeddedness: a phenomenon which has been reduced in modernity by the terms of the philosopher Hegel's "spirit of the age", or *zeitgeist*. As such, architecture has been read as an expression of *zeitgeist* with buildings arising as physical embodiments of their particular culture.

Certainly, Irish architecture during the period under exploration, c.1940-c.1965 was intimately bound to the mixed fortunes of the State. The construction of Irish architecture's history has been based on reading key buildings as stable signs of economic development and political stance, or as agents of socio-cultural change. And so the *zeitgeist* principle is the first condition governing this architectural history. Not only does this link between architecture and society shape our historical narrative, but it impresses a chronological imprint upon the built environment. In other words, Irish architecture, being broken up into episodes, is understood according to the tyranny of chronology and periodisation, and at the same time we are unable to disconnect our buildings from our collective aspirations at a specific moment.

By referring to the tyranny of chronology and periodisation I am highlighting the fundamental motivation for this thesis; that is, to unpick the received histories of Irish architecture from the 1940s through to the early 1960s and in so doing, to challenge the common perception that "nothing happened" during these so-called "lost decades". The period to be explored is marked firstly by the international crisis of the Second World War, known in neutral Ireland as the "Emergency" (1939 – 1945); secondly by the optimism of the immediate post-war era (1945-47); followed by an unsettled decade

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[1] Seamus Heaney, from lecture presented to the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Annual Conference in Dunadry, Co Down, 1986, "From Maecenas to MacAlpine" in John Graby (ed.), *150 Years of Architecture in Ireland. RIAI 1839 – 1989* (Dublin: RIAI + Eblana Editions, 1989), p.69

from 1948 with successive government changes and unprecedented emigration; and finally by the promise of a new epoch, the 1960s, ushered in by the economic programme of T. K. Whittaker (finance secretary) and Sean Lemass (An Taoiseach – the prime minister). Generally the impression is of an episode in Irish architectural history characterised by extreme need and relative inactivity; a hungry time wherein architecture was a non-event due to the lack of construction arising primarily from material and fuel shortage, accompanied by the mass exodus of skilled labour from the country. Because of this, histories have tended to stop at 1940 and commentaries have been taken up again in 1960: there is a need to fill the gap in our understanding of Ireland's architectural history during the middle of the twentieth century, summarised poetically by a Dublin Corporation official in 1945 as "this dreary night of the Emergency... fading [sic] in the light of the new dawn ahead."[2]

Such a by-now accepted historiography has been developing since the late 1980s and has typically concentrated on the flowering of modernism in the spirit of the new state such as Sean Rothery's pioneering 1991 study *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 – 1940*, followed then by the development of an Americanised modernist architecture facilitated by Lemass-inspired sponsorship. Overview essays by architects and cultural architectural historians have contributed to this reading such as Sean O Laoire's for *Building on the Edge of Europe* (the 1996 exhibition of Irish architecture in Paris), those by John Olley, Hugh Campbell and John Tuomey in Prestel's 1997, *Twentieth Century Architecture, Ireland* and Hugh Campbell's more recent essay (2005) on Irish architecture for *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture*.[3] In this way, the story of twentieth-century architecture in Dublin (up until the contemporary period from 1980 onwards), has been abridged to two episodes, each one marked by a significant *zeitgeist* which necessarily led to the adoption of the universal forms of modernism so as to express that *zeitgeist*. These established histories opportunely highlight the architecture of the 1930s and then leap into a discussion of the architecture which emerges in the 1960s.

The danger of this type of reductive periodisation is made manifest in the 2006 critical analysis, *Postcolonial Dublin* by American Irish Studies scholar Andrew Kincaid. Taking buildings as texts or cultural documents so to as to illuminate a cultural history, Kincaid relies on secondary sources for his architectural history; as expected, he jumps from the 1930s ("Postindependence Ireland") to the 1960s ("Revisionism in Ireland")

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[2] Statement from Councillor Dr J. Hannigan, "Report No 11 of the Tuberculosis Committee" in *Dublin Corporation Reports*, January – December 1945, p.76

[3] See also the essays in John Graby, (ed.), *150 Years of Architecture in Ireland* (Dublin: R.I.A.I., 1989) and then Sean Rothery's PhD research under Dr. Edward McParland, "The Influence of International Design Movements on Irish Architecture in the Early Twentieth Century" (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Dublin, Trinity College, 1989)

with no discussion of the post-war period in-between. Paul Larmour's recent (2009) overview account, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 – 1949* presents a tidy account of the modernist architecture produced during a twenty-seven year period from Irish independence until the establishment of the Republic of Ireland. Larmour's history (photographic and textual) is largely based on reviews from the contemporary architectural press, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* and is the first instance of a glimpse at 1940s Irish architectural endeavour. However, while useful in its collation of so many unexamined seminal and obscure projects alike, it is not meant to be more than an extended essay and it is neither critical nor interpretative in social cultural terms. Also, the periodisation of "Free State" for architectural expression is questionable as Larmour conveniently underplays the significance of the Second World War, and inconveniently stops his overview mid-way through the term of a new government.

On the whole then, the history of mid-century Irish architecture is a pretty barren territory in terms of serious exploration, but there are exceptions: Simon Walker's two essays in *Twentieth Century Architecture, Ireland* provide concise comprehensive and critical impressions of the periods, 1940–75 and 1970-95 which dip into archival material and sketch coherent building analyses.[4] Also, in a patchwork fashion, the ongoing scholarship of Shane O'Toole in collaboration with Gandon Editions has produced fine monographs of important architectural practices from the mid-century period. Within this context, O'Toole has published interviews (in many cases the only extant interviews available) with key practitioners Ronnie Tallon (Scott Tallon Walker), Peter and Mary Doyle and Liam McCormick (Corr and McCormick), and he continues to make these insightful monographs with forthcoming publications due on Andrew Devane (Robinson Keefe Devane) and Noel Moffett.[5] These commentaries, either published or in-the-making, acknowledge the reality of the built environment during this period as a layered and complex mesh of artistic influences, technological tendencies and political conditions – a reality which this present thesis takes as its foundation. Rather than dismissing the architecture and its discourse from the time immediately preceding Sean Lemass's programme of economic expansion (1958-63) as being nothing but a dull prologue which is marked by emigration and depression, such studies begin to uncover lively debate and exemplary moments of architectural experiment during the period.

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[4] Simon Walker, "Irish Architecture 1940-1975" in Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang (eds.), *Ireland: 20th Century Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 1997). Walker does however make the questionable claim that there were no competitions, lectures by outside visitors or site visits in 1954 thus perpetuating the myth of the period as a time of extreme inactivity, see p.27 for this.

[5] See for example Shane O'Toole, *The Architecture of Peter and Mary Doyle: 1970-1990* (Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1990), and with Paul Larmour, *Liam McCormick: North by Northwest* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2008). O'Toole's monographs on Devane and Moffett should be published by 2012

At its basis, the present thesis is the first "in-depth" study of Dublin architecture from 1940 onwards and so, it is an attempt to fill the gap created by Irish twentieth century historiography. Just as Sean Rothery's history undertook the task of dispelling the myth that there was neither awareness nor practice of International Style architectural modernism in Ireland in the first decades of the twentieth century, this present study is largely engaged in dispelling the myth that these two decades, the 1940s and 50s were inactive and introverted in architectural terms. By exploring the various relationships around the production and culture of architecture over this twenty-five year period such as patronage (State, Church and Semi-State), architectural education, international influences, contemporary architectural discourse, stylistic tendencies, technological development and the state of town planning, the thesis aims for an interpretative history. It seeks to situate Irish architecture in its cultural, social, economic and international contexts, 1940 – 1965. And it does so by tackling a range of sources and by breaking down architecture into a series of typologies around the processes of living such as buildings for health, buildings for worship and buildings for dwelling.

In terms of sources (a subject to which this introduction will return), the thesis' research is made up of gleaning from previously unexplored archives, analysing official publications from government departments, looking at extant buildings, referring to the contemporary Irish and British architectural press, examining the activities of the two architectural bodies – the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and the Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI), absorbing firsthand oral accounts from a generation of Dublin-based architects who practiced at the time, and becoming enriched by the other forms of contemporary social and cultural commentary such as the daily newspapers, intellectual discourse in journals and literature.

***What?***

Mostly the low ebb production of architecture during the 1940s and 50s was directed at belated infrastructural development (road and transport networks, waterworks, sewerage systems, electrification and power stations) and so-called "official" architecture such as housing, school and hospital construction. Aside from these infrastructural improvements, the concentration of architectural production on such projects as housing and hospital design signals, in economic terms, non-expansionist development. The large-scale public building projects and grandiose urban planning schemes which make up the canon of mid-twentieth century Western architectural history, while not completely absent, are not a marked feature of Dublin's built environment from 1940 to 1960. Instead preoccupations with slum clearance and the eradication of infectious

diseases best characterise all development, not least architectural, in Dublin at this time. Of course these architectural responses to very local conditions have been, as mentioned, undervalued by successive generations.

And yet we know that Dublin underwent huge demographic changes from the 1930s during the period being discussed: in fact, the population grew by thirty percent from 1935 to 1961 transforming it from city to city-region.[6] This figure related to the relentless "drift from the countryside" (the Irish euphemism for rural depopulation), representing the shift from rural to urban, or significant urbanisation in Ireland. But crucially because this process of urbanisation was so intense (slums), it was coincident with the unravelling of the traditional city fabric and the development at the city edge of masses of public and private housing. As such, the dominating feature of Dublin's built environment during the middle of the twentieth century was the fairly uninhibited growth of suburbia. But unlike equivalent post-war development in Western metropolises, the rash of low-lying suburban residences in Dublin was not accompanied by the erection of iconic structures or plazas or skyscrapers at a regenerating commercial city-centre. No: for a variety of reasons to be explored, Dublin's architectural development was mostly confined to pedantic and modest buildings during the 1940s and 50s. This may be termed the making of a "middle landscape" or the creation of a mid-twentieth-century "suburban vernacular".[7] Certainly the dearth of canonical buildings was matched by an epidemic of "non-architecture" in the form of vernacular housing estates, small-scale commercial terraces and mass-produced edifices of religious authority during the 1950s in Dublin. Where does architectural history fit in this context?
Seemingly it does not fit, until the present study.

As a result of this compelling "middle landscape", the most significant secondary studies upon which I have relied have been in the fields of urban and historical geography, namely those by Ruth McManus, Michael Bannon and Andrew McLaran as well as essays by Arnold Horner and Kevin Nowlan.[8] These various geographies afford stimulating pragmatic ground work, but they do not ask the questions of architectural history. If a reading could be representative of the material of the built environment at this time - that is, at once pragmatic and poetic, dogged and determined, modest and modern - then Ruth McManus' history of Crampton builders, *Crampton Built* is that reading. Providence dropped it into my lap in 2008. This thesis is liberated by the fact

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[6] Arnold Horner, "Dublin from the 1930s to the 1990s" in F.H.A. Aalen and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Dublin City and County: From Prehistory to Present* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1992), p.336

[7] "Making of a middle landscape" is a paraphrase of Peter Rowe, *Making a Middle Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass,: M.I.T. Press, 1991)

[8] The most important studies have been Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 – 1940, Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000); Michael Bannon, *Planning: The Irish Experience, 1920 – 1988* (Dublin: Turoe Press, 1989); Andrew McLaran, *Dublin. The Shaping of a Capital* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993

that *Crampton Built* covers the same territory chronologically and in terms of its architectural content, but it does not ask the same questions. In this way, it almost accompanies my research into Dublin's built environment 1940 – 65, providing rare insights into the workings of the contractor as well as, arguably, the most valuable visual record of the period in the form of professional photographs of mid-construction projects.

In seeking to react intellectually and rationally to a generation of neglected architectural production which seemed to defy architectural history's processes, I turned to Clifford Geertz' dictum that "Ideological change is not an independent stream of thought running alongside social practices and reflecting (or determining) it, it is a dimension of that process itself."[9] Geertz continuously reminded me that the buildings of 1940s and 50s Dublin came out of and were embedded in the broader cultural history of 1940s and 50s Dublin: Heaney's essential reciprocity once more. In this way, within the thesis Dublin's vernacular building at the suburban fringe is considered to be just as much a strand of Irish architectural culture 1940 – 65 as are for instance, the previously unexamined large white sanatoria and the lauded expressive buildings for transport from the period. Indeed, such suburban everyday building seemed to be more enduring and compelling than most of the public buildings. But again, how does the architectural historian respond, understand, unpick and ultimately reconstruct this narrative for the present generation?

By responding with integrity to the evidence provided – to compose a history from the ground-up, as it were - the thesis becomes misshapen. Owing to the dominance of housing in terms of productivity but also in terms of the national imperative and the *zeitgeist*, the study of mid-twentieth century housing in Dublin ranges exhaustively from Georgian slums to mechanised high-rise blocks. Tracing the history of this housing inadvertently illuminates the main issues informing the history of Irish architecture generally during the period: especially the dominant influences of British architectural culture and British patterns of "how we might live". Dublin's mid-century housing question also brought with it the issues of the burgeoning discipline of town planning in Ireland and the importance of architectural technology within the materiality of modern Irish building.

Therefore, chapter three on housing assumes the swollen form and significance of two chapters, contributing to the malformed structure of the thesis. Following this type of enquiry into the true nature and origin of Dublin's mid-twentieth-century "middle landscape" or as some commentators have termed it "Dunroamin", inevitably introduces

[9] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 243 –244

anthropological and sociological questions to the mix.[10] On top of the factual studies on Irish housing sociology by sociologists such as P. J. Meghen, Paul Pfretzschner or more recently, Anne Power, this thesis sought to get to the root of Irish patterns of domesticity – the "how we live" question – at a moment of seismic socio-cultural change, so as to comprehend both the scale of the 1940s/50s fringe housing estates and the architectural make-up of the units thereon.[11] While Dublin Corporation history (the published reports and minutes 1930-55, and archival building files) pointed to the slum clearance project and the influence of British architect-town planner Sir Patrick Abercrombie with his principle of "thinning out" the city centre, the issue seemed to boil down to something more fundamental in the mid-century Irish psyche – Catholicism. The sociological reading was then directed towards understanding the character of Irish Catholicism, as a pro-rural hegemony and such concepts as mid-century Ireland as a Catholic Corporate State.[12] It seemed to the author that the architectural or spatial translation of this was the parish unit. Certainly shortly after the public and private houses appeared, they were supported by monumental structures of ecclesiastic authority, the church and the school complex. And this Catholic social infrastructure of the 1940s and especially of the 1950s seemed intriguingly central to the narrative – could the new (1950s) Dublin suburban parish have been conceived of and subsequently read by the author as a *gesamtkunstwerk*?

Chapter four attempts to broach this subject but falls short and more research is needed. In fact, the architectural discourse is so juicy around mid-century Irish Catholic church design that the narrative of that chapter turns to an analysis of the lectures, debates and exhibitions on an appropriate form for Irish Catholic churches. Pointedly, the central thread of the chapter is provided by the first archival investigation of a famous architectural competition of 1954 for a church in suburban Dublin (Clonskeagh). In this instance, the competition dominates and illuminates a thorny area of twentieth-

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[10] The following readings come from an architectural background and have been very useful in thinking about the nature of Dublin's 1940s/50s suburban environment: Paul Oliver, Ian Davis and Ian Bentley, *Dunroamin. The Suburban Semi and its Enemies* (London: Pimlico/Random House, 1994); the essays in William S. Saunders (ed.), *Sprawl and Suburbia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Harvard Design Magazine Reader, 2005); and Peter Rowe, *Making a Middle Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass,: M.I.T. Press, 1991)

[11] P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963); Paul Pfretzschner, *The Dynamics of Irish Housing* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1965); Anne Power, *Estates on the Edge: The Social Consequences of Mass Housing in Northern Europe* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997) and *Hovels to Highrise. State Housing in Europe since 1850* (London: Routledge, 1993)

[12] Tony Fahey, "Catholicism and Industrial Society in Ireland" in J.H. Goldthorpe and C.T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 241-263 and "The Catholic Church and Social Policy" in S. Healy and B. Reynolds (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland* (Dublin: Oaktree Press, 1998), p.411 – 429; Eugene McLaughlin, "Ireland: Catholic Corporatism" in A. Cochrane and J. Clarke (eds.), *Comparing Welfare States: Britain in International Context* (London: Sage, 1993); Mervyn Horgan, "Anti-Urbanism as a Way of Life: Disdain for Dublin in the Nationalist Imaginary" in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 30, No. 2, "Continuity, Contradiction and Change in Contemporary Dublin", Fall 2004), p.38-47; Eoin Devereux, "Saving Rural Ireland: Muintir na Tire and its Anti-Urbanism, 1931- 1958" in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 17, No. 2, December 1991), p.23–30; Liam O'Dowd, "Town and Country in Irish Ideology" *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 13, No. 2, December 1987)

century Irish architectural history, which brings us to the next methodological matter of this introduction – the role of the architectural competition within the thesis.

***How?***

A problem of proximity confronts the architectural historian of such recent history. This proximity, combined with the dominance of suburban endeavour, jeopardised the present thesis' ability to fix upon a satisfactorily inclusive body of buildings. Coming out of the reality that there is potentially too much to examine, the twentieth-century historian must manage the unwieldy territory and overcome the temptation to generalise or simplify. In the case of mid-twentieth century Irish architectural history, there is the added threat of dualisms: that is, " architecture-as-"culture" versus architecture-as-"building", the canon versus the vernacular, the international modern versus the local traditional, collective production versus individual endeavour or foreign ideas versus native prejudices.

As a result of the dichotomous and prospectively unwieldy nature of the history, it was necessary to turn away from the extant buildings and focus on the central archival source – the unexamined papers of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI). By focusing on the affairs of the RIAI and by going through the proceedings of its various committees (for instance, housing, public relations, competitions, education, professional standing), it became clear that the architectural competition held a singular position within Irish architectural culture of the mid-century. As a means of procuring a building, it was evidently highly considered by the architectural community and though, as we will see in chapter one, the architectural exhibition and the lecture by the foreign visitor/architect were more regular and thus more revealing of trends and interests, the architectural competition spanned the concerns of architectural culture and architectural production. As a process it straddled journal discourse and the pragmatics of site, architectural technology and function. The RIAI would act as the host or custodian of the architectural competition while the body or patron seeking the building would act as the promoter. In terms of archival material then, because of the RIAI's central custodial role, the correspondence signalled an unprecedentedly rich source, presenting the researcher with both the mundane minute but very informative detail and the critical macro-view of the situation.

The RIAI's Competitions Committee files, backed up by a close reading of its Joint Public Relations and Housing Committees (among others) become the thesis' archival foundation. As a research method – or a meaningful route into and then through the vast territory of mid-century Dublin architecture – the architectural competition facilitates a form of management which consequently reveals the history. As each

competition entails the involvement of an external promoter, the question of patronage opens up and in a controlled way, introduces another archival source to follow; for example, the Dublin Diocesan Archives, the Department of Public Health and Local Government at the National Archives of Ireland (NAI), Dublin Corporation building files at the Gilbert Library or the records of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB). The main strength of using competition examples in this thesis is that each one grounds the research in particular circumstances and so, exposes the finer grain of the history. The architectural competition counters the danger of an overly generalised commentary: it enables the research to zoom in to the specific, introducing rich archival material according to the particular promoter or patron, and zoom out to the general and contextual, exploring contemporary architectural discourse. Then the RIAI and AAI yearbooks and the Irish journals (*The Irish Builder and Engineer* and from 1950, *The Irish Architect and Contractor*) provide fertile ground for polemical secondary commentary. In short, the competition becomes a hook or signifier on to which relevant themes are hung; it is a direct route in to the core issues and conditions affecting a specific typology, and Irish architecture more generally, during the period.

In terms of official sources, the author was unable to access the papers of the Department of Local Government or the Department of Education through the NAI or the records of Dublin Port and Docks Board and Irish Shell. To a certain extent, aside from the topical interest of housing, the availability of archival material dictated the subsequent shape of the thesis and the limited typological focus of the chapters. The thesis is divided into four parts: an overview chapter, a chapter on sanatoria, a chapter on housing and a chapter on RC church design. Though chapters two, three and four are generated by typology and competition, the competitions are not of uniform significance. Each one plays a different role within the thesis framework, raising different issues surrounding the respective patron, the functionality of the building and the culture of Irish architecture. And clearly, certain competitions (such as the Clonskeagh church competition, chapter four) had greater implications and impact on the architectural community.

To begin then, chapter one presents an overview of the architectural culture from 1940 – 65. It sketches the political, economic and architectural outlines on to the thesis' backcloth so that the following chapters can fill-in detailed representations. Chapter one moves through the period chronologically and with a somewhat glib lightness of touch of which the following three chapters, getting bogged down as they do in archival evidence of a particular typology and case study, do not have the luxury. It is intended for chapter one to provide the reader with a confident birds' eye view of the territory, a view to be enriched by each subsequent chapter. Using oral history accounts which the author

gathered over a four-year period, this overview chapter concentrates on the theme of import/export through an examination of architects' travel choices and educational experiences. It looks at the buildings which were awarded the RIAI Triennial Medal, embedding these buildings in their cultural contexts through new presentations of the RIAI's exhibitions and the AAI's lecture series. As part of the import/export theme, chapter one sets up the paternalistic relationship between Irish and British architecture at this time, most especially from the post-war period onwards. The chapter argues that though Irish architects were influenced by Scandinavia and America during the 1940s and 50s, these influences ultimately came through a British filter.

If chapter one is interested in import/export, chapter two seeks to present the 1940s anew and especially the Emergency period therein. As is an ongoing tactic of this thesis, chapter two makes up for the mediocre quality of the architecture under examination by concentrating on archival documents and architectural discourse! Providing the central thread through this chapter is a competition for a tuberculosis sanatorium at Ballyowen, West Dublin which was mooted from 1938, was advertised internationally in 1944, was dissolved in 1945 but was built eventually in 1952. The competition's expansive chronology alone is justification for its centrality to this chapter's discussion of an architecture for public health. But also, the TB sanatorium as a typology highlights the contradiction between socio-economic conditions and architectural aspirations. The mechanisms of the competition itself inform us of typological priorities in terms of hospital technology and planning for adaptability. In this instance, the minutiae of the architectural competition's workings go far in explaining issues of international influence, continuity of culture during the Second World War and developments in hospital design.

Chapter three's anomalous nature has been touched upon. Its examination of Dublin housing (from the late-1930s to the mid-1960s) is the equivalent of two chapters, and the architectural competition does not lead the discussion. Instead, in exploring the nature of housing during this period, the particular theme which arises is the modern/traditional dichotomy as represented by the gap between vernacular everyday building from the ground-up, and then the intellectual debate around dwelling and mass housing arising from Dublin's marginalised architectural community. Though the primary protagonist in this discussion is Dublin Corporation and the generator of the narrative is slum-clearance, this chapter facilitates the most in-depth study of British architectural patterns and trends through a reading of post-war official pamphlets and the contemporary British architectural press. Along with the themes of modern/traditional and British influence, this chapter also engages in a discussion of 1950s architectural technology, namely the potential of prefabrication. It also brings in the burgeoning

discipline of town planning in Ireland. The chapter is vast and so, it is split into three loosely-chronological thematic episodes: the first deals with the slum clearance project, the second deals with the phenomenon of housing estates on the city's edge and the third examines the many concerns of Irish architects around housing.

In chapter four the architectural competition comes to the fore once again, dragging rich debate and polemic with it. As mentioned, this last chapter deals with the large-scale Catholic churches, cast in reinforced concrete but clad in Byzantine brick or Romanesque masonry, which were built en-masse in Dublin's new suburbs during the 1950s. The issue of the RC church as the singular defining force of 1950s Irish civic culture, not least in terms of building patronage, is approached and toyed with. By examining the evolution and growth of some new post-war parishes, the chapter attempts to sketch out the extent of the church's role in shaping the mid-century city. An architectural competition to produce a suburban (typically large) church becomes the centrepiece of this chapter – the Clonskeagh competition. This first archival reading of its controversial outcome facilitates a discussion of architectural style and liturgical reform which ultimately reveals the identity of pre-conciliar (i.e. pre Vatican II reform) church architecture in Ireland. Although it was hoped to introduce a discussion of national school architecture, thereby touching on the notion of the Dublin parish as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, the chapter was already extensive. This is among many of the areas which the thesis has opened up for further research.

***Timely themes***

As may be clear, the thesis persistently revisits three key themes:

The push and pull of modernism and traditionalism
The extent and nature of international influence
The flavour of Irish architectural culture

Though the thesis is far from exhaustive in its exploration of Dublin's architecture during the period, 1940 – 65, by trying to address the above three themes again and again, it goes far in creating a sense of the architecture of the period. Because the thesis was asking questions about previously un or ill-considered buildings, the author has drawn from as wide a variety of sources as possible. The thesis then presents an overlay of primary archival material with Irish literature, architectural polemic with international architectural discourse, Irish historical geography with government publications, Irish Studies critical theory with formal architectural description.

The other highly developed disciplinary area not mentioned in this introduction but upon which the author was reliant, was the field of contemporary Irish history and pointedly, the excellent histories by Mary Daly, Louise Fuller and Ruth Barrington therein.[13] Daly's study of the Department of Local Government has been very useful, if not invaluable for the housing discussion, not least because these files have not been released to researchers since. Barrington's overview of health provided the base for much of chapter two and Fuller's analysis of Irish Catholicism from 1950 was extremely important for contextualising chapter four's church design discussion. Also the polemics of historical journalism such as Frank McDonald's seminal *Destruction of Dublin* (1985) and the directives of urban theory such as David Harvey's suburban critiques have provided a critical pot into which the historian can dip.[14] Perhaps this thesis coincides with a coming of age for the architecture of the mid-twentieth century for in its last years (2009 – 2010), a series of contemporary Irish history studies were published which belatedly illuminated the decades for the author: namely, Gary Murphy's economic study of the period *In Search of the Promised Land,* and Bryan Fanning's cultural study of previously neglected journals (*Studies, Christus Rex, The Bell*), *The Quest for Modern Ireland. The Battle of Ideas 1913 – 1986.*[15]

This thesis is not aiming for a repudiation of revisionist readings of the period as Eamon De Valera's "isolated island": rather, it is led by the facts of architectural production and the flavour of the architectural culture. As such, it inadvertently exposes 1940s and 50s Ireland as a contradictory place and time, and in opening up this architectural "can of worms", there emerge as many questions as answers...

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[13] Ruth Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900 – 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, reprinted 2000); Mary Daly,*The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997); Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950. The Ondoing of a Culture* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002)

[14] For example, David Harvey, "The New Urbanism and the Communitarian Trap: On Social Problems and the False Hope of Design" in Williams S. Saunders (ed.), *Sprawl and Suburbia. A Harvard Design Magazine Reader* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota, 2005)

[15] Gary Murphy, *In Search of the Promised Land* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2009); and Bryan Fanning, *The Quest for Modern Ireland. The Battle of Ideas 1913 – 1986* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008).See also Clair Wills' older and excellent cultural history of the Emergency period, discovered belatedly by this author, *That Neutral Island* (London: Faber, 2007; and just this year, Tom Garvin published *News from a New Republic. Ireland in the 1950s* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 2010), which this author has not studied.

# Chapter One

*From Dublin to Chicago and London...and back again:*

*An overview of Irish architectural culture 1940-1965*

On 29th December 1949 Dublin architectural student Desmond Dalton penned his first letter to the by-then iconic American architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. He explained that he and three other students – Sean Kenny, Jack O'Hare and Tony Jacob – were in the process of "fitting out a boat" in which they would sail across the Atlantic to America and potentially study at Wright's architectural school, the Taliesin Fellowship, in Wisconsin. Dalton wrote:

> Our whole purpose in going to America is to study what we consider to be honest architecture, so that in the years that are ahead we may best benefit our country by whatever experience we gain there. It is our honest belief that this end can only be successfully realized if we study the source of good modern American architecture. We believe you to be this source.[1]

Dalton's use of such adjectives as "honest" and "modern" highlight the centrality of North America in the culture of Irish architecture, and suggest the sense of marginality felt by this generation of Irish architects, especially in the face of the general inactivity of the architectural profession following Irish neutrality in the Second World War. Importantly, Dalton's rationale in appealing to Frank Lloyd Wright was wholly optimistic so that in spite of the lack of development in Ireland during this time, an air of expectancy pervaded. Such hopeful anticipation echoed an overall national mood as voiced by say, the editorial of the Royal Institute of Architects' (RIAI) Yearbook of 1946 urging Ireland's architects to respond appropriately to the new post-war world which was unfolding:

> The first post-war year-book feels like an early crocus pushing up its timid petals into a plantation of busy drawing boards. What a delicious smell of Portland cement, wet timber and midnight oil there is in this new world! Architects are putting on their planning caps, and town-planners are tightening their green belts.[2]

A similar rhetoric was apparent in the Institute's Presidential address two years later, 1948: "...the much sought for peace with security will, with God's help, once again be restored to a troubled world, and that Art and Culture, always a Nation's pride, will once

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[1] Desmond Dalton letter to Frank Lloyd Wright, September 1949 (Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin, USA). Sean Rothery has consulted these archives and passed on the material to this author. Dalton and his classmates Jacob, O'Hare and Kenny were recently graduated architects from Bolton Street School of Architecture and together they built a boat called the *I-TUNA* which they sailed across the Atlantic from Dublin to New York via the Bahamas in 1950.

[2] Raymond McGrath, editorial, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1946), p. 3

again be symbolized by a Nation's Architecture."[3] Evidently Dalton's request to pursue study with Frank Lloyd Wright matched the Irish architectural *zeitgeist* in terms of its hopeful, forward- and outward-looking drive(s) at the end of the 1940s and coming into the 1950s. Wright was of course the embodiment of "Americana" in architectural terms, which ostensibly meant progress at this mid-twentieth-century juncture (figure 1.1). The antidote then to the contemporary sloth afflicting Irish architecture logically lay in the foreign example. The incentive to look abroad - to Britain primarily but also inevitably to America and aspirationally to pockets of North and Central Europe – was rooted in the hope for local or national improvement. In his letter to Wright Dalton asserted that he and his colleagues must venture to Taliesin, "...so that in the years that are ahead we may best benefit our country by whatever experience we gain there". Dalton's proposal was wrapped up in the expectation of returning to Ireland with lessons learned and so it was ultimately guided by the desire for native enrichment.[4]

Taking the dialogue between Dalton and Wright as an introductory example, the Irish architectural diaspora of the twentieth century was characterised by the more fluid terms of cultural "migration" rather than the finality evoked by the terms of a cultural "exodus".[5] Certainly the initial motivation in seeking out the American example during this immediate post-war period was rooted in Irish development and enhancement. Therefore, there was a defining element of to-and-fro or import/export at play in the travel experience of the majority of Irish architects; the apprenticeship to be served in America, Britain or further afield was by-and-large to be identified as a return trip. Back-peddling somewhat, this example foregrounds the general issue of international influence within Irish architecture of the mid-twentieth century. The fact that educational exchanges such as this one were being sought, however exceptional and individual the example, point (quite basically) to the presence of international ideas in the Irish architectural psyche. Such experiences become measures of the extent of the international, both theoretically and practically and assist in sketching a truer portrait of Irish architectural culture at this time. And as we will see, Dalton and his young colleagues were not alone but were part of a selection within this generation of architects

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[3] Frank McArdle, Presidential Foreword, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1948)
[4] Dalton and one of his colleagues, Tony Jacob, did indeed honour their initial ambition by working at Taliesin for three months from September until Christmas 1950 (Sean Kenny is reputed to have stayed for three years at Taliesin but I have not followed up on this claim made in an obituary in *The New York Times*, Tuesday June 12th 1973). Due to the threat of American conscription, they cut their apprenticeships short. In a letter of apology and explanation to Wright dating from January 1951, Dalton was able to justify his premature return, again on national terms: "I am going back to Ireland where I will do what I believe is right. I am determined to devote all my energy to working for Ireland – not alone in building houses." Desmond Dalton letter to Frank Lloyd Wright, January 7th 1951 (Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, correspondence courtesy of Sean Rothery)
[5] Here I follow Mary J. Hickman's differentiations between "victim migrants" and "cultural migrants" with the Irish architects at this time generally fitting into the latter category, "Migration and Diaspora" in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.117 – 133

who from the late 1940s through the 1960s journeyed forth and for the most part, carried back the educational benefits that lay beyond Ireland's shores.

This chapter sets out to range over the territory of Dublin's architecture c.1940 – c.1965, highlighting significant architectural events and shifts in political temperament as it goes. Following a chronological path through the period, the aim of the chapter is to establish an overview which serves as the context for the more detailed histories in chapters two (on hospital architecture), three (on housing) and four (on RC church design). The episode-by-episode layout of this overview guides the *zeitgeist*-directed reading as described in the thesis' introduction; that is, that buildings are understood as physical embodiments of political priorities and economic policies and/or as spatial agents of cultural change. The period opens during the Second World War (1940) and with much on hold we cast back to the 1930s building programmes so as to better understand the flavour of Irish architectural modernism. Due then to Irish neutrality during the war, the war years were by no means straightforwardly staid or stagnant but attempts towards continuity necessarily coloured architectural development and introduced, I argue, a Surrealist tint to the wash. Following the war, the impact of mid-war projections and planning encouraged a short-lived development boom, accompanied by a batch of notable infrastructural and industrial projects. But by the 1950s, development had slowed, emigration had grown and the culture of Irish architecture became increasingly zany and difficult to define. With the constant change of government due to the woeful economic situation, this period from 1949 – 57 was the most troubled in architectural terms but also and inadvertently, very interesting. The chapter finishes up with the cultural, economic and built leap into the realm of American modernisation or Americanised modernism from 1958 into the early 1960s. The discussion is centered on the burgeoning relationship between the young American-inspired Irish architect and the young semi-state patron.

By highlighting significant "architectural events" along the way, I refer to important buildings and current debates in Irish architectural culture. In this chapter emphasis is laid on seminal and award-winning buildings that are not studied elsewhere in the thesis because of the typological division of the chapters - key industrial buildings, lacking a chapter to themselves, are picked up for discussion. Importantly, the choice is guided by issues of patronage, reception and contemporary design excellence, as well as inevitably, questions of international influence, contextualism (in Irish culture) and technological innovation. Certainly most of the buildings highlighted, such as the terminal building for Dublin airport, the Aspro factory, the Chassis factory and Dublin's new bus station, either won or were short-listed for, Ireland's only architectural award, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) Triennial Gold Medal. Having only

begun in 1934, the award system was still in its infancy during the 1940s and 1950s but as the title suggests, it was supposed to be awarded every three years to a building completed in the preceding three years and was a reflection of the best of Irish architecture at a given time. In this way, the award is an explicit tool (as yardstick) for the *zeitgeist* approach of this chapter.

Along with providing an element of political and social backdrop and casting certain structures in seminal roles, this chapter introduces instrumental protagonists to the narrative such as the Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI). Up to the present study the AAI's significant contribution has been discounted due to a lack of critical reflection on its activities over its lifetime, but with its considerable lecture programme it is here placed alongside the RIAI as the collective keeper of Irish architectural culture.[6] Along with the RIAI awards, we measure the reception of buildings through AAI visits, AAI lectures and writing in the AAI and RIAI yearbooks as well as reviews in the meagre Irish architectural press. The RIAI/Arts Council architectural exhibitions and the AAI lectures form a central strand of the chapter's discussion. In a community without television and with only sporadic exposure to British and American journals, exhibitions and lectures enjoy key roles in the culture of Irish architecture in terms of education and stimulation. Unfortunately, their influence is hard to map due again to the dearth of contemporary critical debate. Along with institutional protagonists, the chapter seeks to introduce key architects from the period 1940 – 65 – the so-called *dramatis personae* who crop up repeatedly throughout the thesis, such as Desmond FitzGerald, Michael Scott, Alan Hope, Noel Moffett, Kevin Roche, T. P. Kennedy, Robin Walker and others.

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a backcloth for the thesis. Within this remit, possibly the most compelling aspect is the ambition to understand and sketch out the eccentric and contradictory 1950s. As the central chronological episode of the thesis it necessarily dominates the chapter. By looking at what was lauded, what was exhibited and what was lectured about, we are able to sketch a fuller portrait of that curious time and can conclude that British influence dominated. And it was ultimately through a British filter that Irish architecture was drip-fed firstly the Scandinavian (namely Swedish) example through the 1940s and early 1950s and then the American example by the mid-1950s and through the 1960s. Such a discussion of architectural influence enacts a deconstruction of the term 'influence' and an understanding of it as being primarily two-pronged at its source; that is, *individual* influence through educational experience and more potently, *collective* influence through cultural, socio-

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[6] For a assessment of the cultural impact of the AAI, see Ellen Rowley, "Establishing the Culture of Irish Architecture: Post-War History of Architectural Association of Ireland" in *Building Material* (Dublin: A.A.I. Journal, No. 16, Autumn 2006) and Ellen Rowley, "Researching a History of the Architectural Association of Ireland: Part II – Built/Critical/Absent Reactions to the AAI Lectures, 1940 – present" in *Building Material* (Dublin: A.A.I. Journal, Winter 2008)

economic experience and to a less tangible extent, paradigm shifts. In this way we are differentiating between the colliding entities of individual endeavour which is abstract and intellectual, and social patterns and developments in terms of production and consumption.[7] It would seem that, until the political and economic shift (the collective) at the end of the 1950s, the influence of Americanised modernism on Irish architecture was felt at the individual level of the middle-class architectural student venturing abroad for education. On the other hand as the chapter would argue, British influence worked conversely – from the ground up.

## ***The Background:***

*The 1930s and the flavour of Irish architectural modernism*

Due to the historiography of twentieth century Irish architecture (Rothery, 1991; Olley et al., 1997), our narrative starts in 1940 which was a time of disruption because of the Second World War. Ireland, taking a neutral position, referred to the war as the "Emergency" and as we will explore more closely in chapter two, the architectural community considered the international crisis to be at worst an inconvenient interruption and at best, a period for potential consolidation.

So, confusingly, we begin at this "pause": the early 1940s signalled neither a complete halt to, nor a seamless continuity of the earlier development programmes of the late 1920s and '30s. As mentioned in the thesis introduction, Paul Larmour's recent outline of modern movement architecture of the Free State (1922 – 1949) makes little of the Emergency, presenting us instead with a fairly continuous stream of modernist structures as they were erected over the twenty-seven year episode across the fledgling state.[8] While arguably this kind of reading leads to a sense of false periodisation, it is refreshing to be confronted with a different portrayal of the 1930s and 1940s; one which emphasises *continuity* over *schism*. Certainly the established political and economic histories of the period have described the effect of the Second World War on Ireland as that of a general shut-down. Mostly these histories concede that neutrality brought greater ease of living than that experienced by neighbouring belligerent Britain, but that the ease was accompanied by impoverishment and isolation. As *A New History of Ireland 1921-84* summarises, "Life in wartime Ireland was largely free of the danger of Axis bombing raids, which had been visited on the docks of Belfast and Derry. But rationing,

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[7] This idea of creating a dialectical relation out of the individual architect and the social developments that drive the architect so as to simplify the complex nature of constructing space comes out of Manfredo Tafuri's thesis on the historical space of architectural production. See Manfredo Tafuri, *Theories and Histories of Architecture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) and Joan Ockman's interpretation of Tafuri in "Postscript: Critical History and the Labors of Sisyphus" in Ockman (ed.), *Architecture Criticism Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton Architectural Press, 1985), p. 184

[8] Paul Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 – 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009)

wage freezes, and stricter censorship than anything implemented in either neutral Sweden or Switzerland made life in the country dull and difficult."[9] Alternatively the cultural histories, namely those by Terence Brown and Clair Wills, have focused on the period as one of watershed and cultural maturation.[10]

Irish neutrality aside, invariably across the disciplines there emerge differentiated "pre-war" and "post-war" bodies of work – this is also apparent in Larmour's style-based study. These bodies of work are often punctuated by an in-between and muddied assortment which represents the so-called "mid-war" exploits. In short, it is impossible to introduce the history of 1940s Irish architecture without pitching back into the 1930s or "pre-war", and understanding the ambition and flavour of the primarily official (i.e. State-sponsored) architectural programmes. Such programmes were the product of social reform. Inevitably the legislative reforms of one era provide the foundations of the succeeding one and this is especially marked in relation to the influence of the pioneering 1930s upon the reactive 1940s in Ireland. Key reform was introduced by 1932 at the end of the first government following Independence, the Cumann na nGaedhael (later to become Fine Gael) government, such as the establishment of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes (see chapter two) and the 1930 Vocational Education Act (see chapter four). Then in 1932 the Fianna Fáil party, under Eamon de Valera, came to power where it remained until 1948. During this period of sixteen years Fianna Fáil radically built upon the social endeavours of Cumann na nGaedhael, pushing for the support of the urban masses with more reform around housing, social welfare and public health, and establishing itself as a modern democratic political party such as Ireland had never before seen.[11]

Importantly for this account of architectural history, Fianna Fáil's overriding policy was one of economic nationalism and its method was interventionist.[12] Brian Girvin calls the combination of such policy and method the "republicanisation" of Irish politics which in turn lead to a protected economy wherein "policy could be dictated by national concerns and implemented by national policy-makers".[13] In terms of domestic development, this "republicanised" belief in the citizenship of all meant that the poor could no longer be ignored and so, increased taxation for an improved welfare policy was in the nation's best interest. The architectural implications of this are apparent in Girvin's

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[9] Jonathan Bardon and Dermot Keogh, "Introduction" to J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p. 1xxix

[10] Terence Brown, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004) and Claire Wills, *That Neutral Island* (London: Faber, 2007)

[11] For more on the workings of the early Fianna Fáil party, see Richard Dunphy, *The Making of Fianna Fáil power in Ireland 1923 - 1948* (Oxford: OUP, 1995)

[12] As Jonathan Bardon and Dermot Keogh note, "There was a cost – the substitution of economic nationalism for Cumann na nGaedhael internationalism – and this was not really reversed until the 1960s." "Introduction" to J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p. 1xxvii

[13] Brian Girvin, "The Republicanisation of Irish Society, 1932-48" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p. 137

synopsis: that already by 1936, "the number of new companies opened, the number of houses built with government aid, and the panoply of controls and inducements testified to the transformation of public policy and the agencies of power within society and the state."[14] From the 1930s, the Fianna Fáil government juggled inherited structures while trying to radicalise them: in the first instance, the new regime reacted against Cumann na nGaedhael initiatives but at a deeper level, Fianna Fáil sought paradoxically to undermine (yet adopt and improve upon) British patterns and structures. As we will see, architecture occupied a curious place in this (post-colonial) struggle. Certainly the building projects of the new State were imbued on some pre/sub/supra-conscious level with the aspiration to be both national and progressive or modern. This aspiration was at best questionable and at worst delusional and dangerously reductive – how could such opposing ideologies be expressly reconciled in any one built entity?[15]

In the main, this thesis steers away from the intent and prescription which is implicit in a post-colonial reading. As the thesis introduction explains, the study is formed in reaction to the built evidence and available archival material rather than being generated out of themes and critical theories. The buildings of interest are largely, though not wholly, the new architecture at the service of the new State: an architecture which sits between being a tool for nation-building and a structural outcome of social reform. Of course, as chapter three points out, much of the best architectural experimentation of the early to mid-twentieth century happened in the sphere of private house design, most especially in the one-off disencumbered middle-class home. But for the most part the government was central to the development of modernist form and technology and especially so during the 1930s in its commissioning of county and regional hospitals, urban flat blocks and industrial infrastructural projects.

A reconciliation of my approach with that of post-colonial readings of twentieth-century Irish architecture comes out of John Breuilly's *Nationalism and the State* whereby Breuilly describes the phenomenon of "nationalism as development". Where usually development would be labelled "modernisation" because it "requires the partial or complete abandonment of traditional values and practices", the development projects

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[14] Ibid, p.138

[15] Hugh Campbell makes a similar point to this in his analysis of early Free State architecture in Ireland "Irish Identity and the Architecture of the New State" in Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang, *Twentieth Century Architecture: Ireland* (Munich: Prestel, 1997); and specifically in reference to the Shamrock Pavilion for the New York World Fair, 1939 by Michael Scott in "Modern Architecture and National Identity in Ireland" in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.296. As Adrian Forty writes, "while it is one thing to find evidence of a nation's identity in its past architecture, it is another to devise new works of architecture to represent its present identity" see Forty, "'Europe is no more than a nation made up of several others': thoughts on architecture and nationality prompted by the Taylor Institute and the Martyr's Memorial in Oxford" in *AA Files* (32, Autumn 1996), p. 26-37. As mentioned, for Irish architecture the critical structure at this time which attempted to be national and modern at the same time was the Shamrock Pavilion. This pavilion has been discussed repeatedly and does not merit exploration in this context – for excellent summaries of it, see Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991) p.220-227 and Nicholas Sheaff, "The Shamrock Building: Michael Scott's Plans and Drawings for the Irish Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in 1939" in *Irish Arts Review* (Spring 1984, no. 1), p.26-29

of the late 1920s through to the 1950s in Ireland were wrapped up in *national* as much as *modern* garb (to this we can also add *moral*!).[16] Breuilly discusses how "nationalism as development" can happen when development (i.e. modernising) projects are based on "allegedly traditional features of society".[17] In the case of Free State Ireland this translates as the emphasis on rural sites, indigenous building materials and vernacular (low-rise) form. The Hegelian version might be the *zeitgeist* (spirit of the age) in collusion with the *volksgeist* (spirit of the place), while Hugh Campbell draws on the example of anthropologist Clifford Geertz's definition of "essentialism" (shared culture) and "epochalism" (character of the period).[18]

The singular representative architectural instance of "nationalism as development" or *zeitgeist/* epochalism in collusion with *volksgeist/*essentialism was of course the well-known Shannon Electric Scheme at Ardnacrusha (1925-29, figure 1.2).[19] This was the first significant infrastructural project of the newly independent State following the establishment of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) in 1927.[20] It constituted one heroic part of a greater indigenous resources-related industrialisation project which saw the construction of six large industrial alcohol factories spring up between 1935 and 1938 towards the north of the country and the wholesale development of Ireland's bogs in the midlands during the mid-century. These schemes responded to Padraig Pearse's 1915 vision:

> A free Ireland would drain the bogs, would harness the rivers, would plant the wastes, would nationalise the railways and the waterways, would improve agriculture, would protect fisheries, would foster industries, would promote commerce [and] beautify the cities.[21]

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[16] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p.269. This discussion is introduced by Mark Maguire in "The Space of the Nation: History, Culture and a Conflict in Modern Ireland", *Irish Studies Review* (Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998), p.111

[17] Ibid., Breuilly, p.269

[18] See again Hugh Campbell, "Irish Identity and the Architecture of the New State" in Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang, *Twentieth Century Architecture: Ireland* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), p.83; and in more detail Campbell, "Modern Architecture and National Identity in Ireland" in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly, *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.293-294

[19] The Ardnacrusha scheme has excited historians and critics alike. Aside from current postgraduate research into it (2010, Sorcha O'Brien is engaged in a design history PhD of Ardnacrusha (NCAD) while Miriam Dunn is researching it from an infrastructural history point of view (PhD, UL)), Mark Maguire has written on it within the discipline of Irish Studies, Mark Maguire in "The Space of the Nation: History, Culture and a Conflict in Modern Ireland", *Irish Studies Review* (Vol. 6, No. 2, 1998), p.109-119. Other histories and commentaries which have been only obliquely consulted by this author include Paul Duffy, *Ardnacrusha: Birth Place of the ESB* (Dublin: ESB, 1990), D. L. Kelleher, "The Shannon Scheme" in Jim Kemmy (ed.), *The Limerick Anthology* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1996), Cecil O'Riordan, *Development of Ireland's Power System 1927 - 1997* (Dublin: Eirgrid, 2000), Brendan Delaney, Peter Carroll & Judith Doherty, *A Heritage Inventory of ESB Buildings in Ireland* (Dublin: ESB, 2005) and Colin Rynne, *Industrial Ireland 1750-1930: An Archaeology* (Cork: Collins Press, 2006) - not all consulted by this author, Rynne and Maguire have been consulted.

[20] For a history of the ESB see Maurice Manning and Moore McDowell. *Electricity Supply in Ireland: The History of the ESB* (Dublin, 1984)

[21] Padraig Pearse, *From a Hermitage* (Dublin: Irish Freedom Office, 1915), p.180, cited in J.J. Lee, *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848 - 1918* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1973), p.147. I am grateful to Hugh Campbell for first introducing me to this quotation.

Bog development was initiated with the establishment in 1934 of the Turf Development Board (later Bord na Mona from 1946) and brought on many interesting architectural projects, especially during the late 1940s and into the 1950s such as the housing schemes by Frank Gibney (chapter three, figure 3.102) and the three peat briquette factories at Derrinlough, Littleton and Croghan in Co. Offaly. The alcohol factories were built in the Cooley Peninsula, Ballina, Carndonagh, Labbodish, Convoy and Carrickmacross. Together, these factories present us with evidence of a little-known industrial project which used local potatoes to distil industrial alcohol on a significant scale and curiously, the endeavour brought in the Dutch architect Jan Postma to design the six handsome factory buildings, composed of piled up blocks with horizontal and vertical massing seeming to collide (figure 1.3).[22]

Undoubtedly the complex at Ardnacrusha and the six alcohol factories were innovative architectural projects for their time and place(s): Ardnacrusha's reinforced concrete structures combined ingeniously with the topographical context of the River Shannon and its banks, while the alcohol factories were formed out of steel frames clad in steel panels, altogether revolutionary for 1930s Ireland. But more than their tectonic innovation and their standing as mechanistic masterpieces set into quiet rural sites, both Ardnacrusha as the first piece of ESB infrastructure, and the alcohol factories as the first International Style industrial buildings in the countryside had legacies in terms of 1940s and 50s developments. Like the endeavour of the 1930s hospitals and housing programmes which shaped subsequent form and typologies throughout the mid-century (certainly to 1960 but arguably beyond), these 1920s/30s industrial structures influenced successive projects and their accompanying architectures. Significantly both examples signalled the adaptation of foreign forms and technologies to the Irish context. Firstly, Ardnacrusha was designed by Siemens-Schuckert (Berlin), was constructed by German and Irish workers, and the influence of Peter Behrens' AEG factory (Berlin, c.1910) complex has been cited by historians.[23] Secondly, the alcohol factories were a wholesale importation of a Dutch industrial aesthetic and way of making, courtesy of Postma as the architect. The points behind these examples are that the architectural modernism of the early Free State provided the foundation(s) for later projects; that the modernism was wrapped up in "nationalism as development" clothing; and that the technology and forms were international in flavour.

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[22] My reading of the alcohol factory programme is derived from Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 - 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.203-204 and from conversations with Shane O'Toole (2009-2010). O'Toole is researching these buildings (2010) and is trying to establish the link between Postma and the Department of Industry and Commerce (under Minister Sean Lemass) which commissioned the buildings.

[23] For example, Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 - 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.143

This last issue is interesting: though constructed for national improvement, and in a sense to encourage greater industrial and social independence away from Britain, the material of Irish architecture was different from many fundamental aspects of 1930s to 1960s Irish civic culture. If, as it has been posited, Irish civic culture was pushed away from England, then architecture was ultimately distinctive as a cultural medium. In fact, it was at odds with the general move towards de-anglicisation and the filtering out of the foreign in Irish civic culture.[24] As we will see throughout this thesis, Irish architecture grew out of its close relationship with Britain and its constant flirtation with foreign sources. Indeed there were moments of xenophobia in Irish architectural discourse such as Thomas P. Kennedy's message in his presidential address to the AAI in 1939:

> During the last five or ten years, a great number of non-nationals have invaded this country and many have become permanently established. In many areas these architects have come at the invitation of Dublin architects in practice, owing to an unprecedented boom in building...What I want to prevent is the permanent establishment of any more foreigners in Eire at the expense of Irishmen.[25]

However this xenophobia aside, in general, Irish architecture from the 1920s onwards adopted the universal methods of its counterparts elsewhere in the Western world and was never as recognisable or formally definable as its heroically idiosyncratic literary counterpart(s). Along with the industrial examples of the German-made peat briquette factory at Lullymore (Co. Kildare, 1935), Ardnacrusha, Postma's alcohol factories or indeed, chapter two's hospitals and chapter three's urban blocks, we should remember that during the 1920s Dublin's first suburban housing estate, Marino was part constructed (its third phase) by the German building firm Kossel of Bremen; that the *Societe Auxiliare de Service Municipaux de Paris* had gained the commission for a privatised street cleaning service in Dublin which never happened and that a Danish firm designed a meat-packing plant in Dublin![26] It would seem that the foreign example in theory and practice was pervasive within the Irish building industry. In aesthetic terms, it has been argued that the austerity of architectural modernism suited De Valera's programme of puritanical anti-materialism. Hugh Campbell argues this point in relation to the 1930s county and regional hospitals whose "plain surfaces and organisational

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[24] This is a paraphrase of Jonathan Bardon and Dermot Keogh who claim that De Valera followed a policy of "de-anglicisation" and filtering of the foreign out of Irish culture – see their "Introduction" to J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p. 1xxviii

[25] Thomas P. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1939-40), p.30-31. We will encounter Kennedy in detail in Chapter Two – he was a central figure in Irish architectural culture during the 1940s and 50s.

[26] These examples of foreign endeavour in Dublin are cited by Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.89

clarity... helped to stabilise De Valera's balancing of a sternly anti-materialist philosophy with the need for material progress."[27] Perhaps this reciprocity between political philosophy and architectural aesthetics encouraged the more internationalist flavouring of Irish architecture during the 1930s and onwards?

In the interest of discerning the flavour of early Free State (modernist) architecture in Ireland, I would superficially venture to source its aspirations in those systems coming out of Britain and Sweden. For Swedish influence, before the stylistic authority of 1940s Swedish modernism, we note the similarity (in theory) between the first manifesto of Swedish modernism, *acceptera*, which sought modernism as a continuity of, or means of re-connection with, traditional values and then Irish iterations of early modernism.[28] In similar intellectual terms, Britain announced its modernist credentials through the Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group in 1933. And in 1938, the Irish architect and critic for the *The Irish Builder and Engineer* John O'Gorman (1908 – 1994, he wrote under the pseudonym of 'Wisbech') reviewed MARS' first group exhibition in glowing terms. Again the connection to an Irish translation of modernism was through Breuilly's "allegedly traditional" evocations: as O'Gorman wrote, the MARS group were the "representatives of true traditionalism in England... the legitimate descendants of the architects of the Middle Ages."[29] Backing up these tenuous intellectual links was the connection between the welfare states of 1930s Sweden and of post-war Britain and the Fianna Fail regime's reformist tendencies. The point of commonality, architecturally speaking, was the production of an architecture of social reform. Later through the 1950s, as Britain's point of reference shifted towards America, so too did Ireland's. As we will see for Ireland, and as suggested by Dalton's correspondence with Frank Lloyd Wright, the lure of educational opportunities in America (and the cult-heroes of European modernism therein) was far greater than either the new American technologies of production (Fordist techniques) or the post-war American typologies of shopping mall and highway.

From the outset, Irish architectural modernism was mixed-up and grey in hue. Modernism was encouraged for certain building types while others were consistently revivalist in style until the early-mid 1960s. As such, the modernism of Irish schools, hospitals and factories was embraced while the traditionalism of houses and churches was maintained. This introduces a leading protagonist to this overview account of the culture of Dublin's architecture 1940-60, the Irish Roman Catholic (RC) Church.

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[27] Hugh Campbell, "Irish Identity and the Architecture of the New State" in Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang, *Twentieth Century Architecture: Ireland* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), p.86

[28] See Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, "Introduction" to *Swedish Modernism. Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State* (London: Black Dog, 2010), p.9

[29] Wisbech (John O'Gorman), "The New Architecture Explained, the Mars Group Exhibition in London" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (22nd January, 1938), p.50 – first cited in Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 – 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.205

Considering the importance of the RC Church as patron during the mid-twentieth century and the concentration of chapter four on this matter, it suffices to emphasise here the Church's influence on all aspects of Irish society during this period, not least upon architecture. Many sociologists have established that independent Ireland was a Catholic Corporatist State whereby Catholic teaching governed most elements of State and social policy.[30] This influence (which was more like an omnipresence), along with the paternalism of Britain in the architectural terms of technology, materials and idioms, shaped much of Ireland's built environment – namely the form and direction of Ireland's mass housing and most explicitly, Dublin's suburban development during the 1940s and 1950s.

### ***The Emergency years:***

*Surrealist Ireland, a pause for planning and a building for flight*

In international terms, it can be argued that Irish architects were generally quiet participants or spectators, rather than leading proponents of both the early modernist revolution and the post-war adaptation of that utopian revolution or doctrine. It is interesting then to briefly flirt with a realignment of this contention. Through a Surrealist lens entitled the "Surrealist Map of the World" we witness the reconfiguration of world geography so that Ireland looms large alongside a speck denoting Britain in the Irish Sea (figure 1.4). This 1929 visual document presented a collision of the avant-garde and politics which was at best problematical. Along with Britain's virtual disappearance, there is no America; Europe consists primarily of Germany while only two cities, Paris and Constantinople, merit inclusion. Of interest to us is the gigantism endowed upon such fringe territories (in early twentieth-century terms) as Easter Island, Labrador, Tierra del Fuego and Ireland. Evidently the Surrealists were engaged in a revision of fringe and centre according to alternative values. Political struggles aside – though one imagines that the Irish fight for independence captured the avant-garde's "romantic" imagination – Ireland's cultural relevance, as represented by its writers, contributed to this 1929 imagined geographical realignment.

What appears to have captured the Surrealist imagination is the "what" and "how" of such icons of modernism (say, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett) emerging again and again out of a seemingly un-modernist society.[31] How was it that a culture

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[30] See for example Tony Fahey, "Catholicism and Industrial Society in Ireland" in J.H. Goldthorpe and C.T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 241-263; Maura Adshead and Michelle Millar, *Ireland as Catholic Corporatist State: A Historical Institutional Analysis of Healthcare in Ireland* (No. 5, Papers in Politics and Public Administration, University of Limerick, 2003) and Eugene McLaughlin, "Ireland: Catholic Corporatism" in A. Cochrane and J. Clarke (eds.), *Comparing Welfare States: Britain in International Context* (London: The Open University, Sage, 1993)

[31] This discussion of the "Surrealist Map of the World" (1929) was introduced to me in a lecture by Professor Luke Gibbons, "Peripheral Visions: Rethinking Modernism", Irish Museum of Modern Art, 19th October 2010

that was not modern in itself could produce such crucibles of modernism? This traditional/modernist see-sawing is certainly the underlying curiosity of the present thesis of Irish (with a focus on Dublin) architecture during the middle of the twentieth century; by and large it is presented as a contradiction running through chapters three and four most explicitly. One character, who carries us from Irish architect-as-observer to Irish architect-as-initiator, while being embedded in the equivalent of Irish Surrealism (the White Stag Group) during the 1940s, was Cork-born architect Noel Moffett (1912-1994). Moffett's wife Margot was secretary of the White Stag Group which was a hotchpotch collective of predominantly foreign artists who seem to have sought refuge in Ireland during the war.[32] Their interest was in non-representational "modernist" art; more specifically a form of Surrealism which they referred to as "Subjective art", coming out of an interest in automatic art practice and the unconscious. Through Margot, Moffett appears to have been their notional architectural spokesman. In a lecture entitled "Modern Architecture" in their Baggot Street premises in 1941, Moffett introduced his audience to Arts and Crafts' principles, the Deutsche Werkbund, key buildings by Peter Behrens, Walter Gropius, Wright, Berthold Lubetkin and Le Corbusier, as well as highlighting the new Dublin airport (1937-41, Desmond FitzGerald), Michael Scott's Shamrock Pavilion (1939, New York World Fair) and Our Lady of Lourdes chapel in Drogheda, Co. Louth (1939, J.V. Downes who became professor of architecture at UCD from 1945) as exemplars of domestic modernism.[33]

As we will see in chapter three, Moffett's main focus was on experimental housing for the masses. His enthusiasm was brought on by a combination of his more international education (at Liverpool University under Charles Reilly followed by a brief stint working for Serge Chermayeff), which had engendered his interest in international architectural developments, and his curiosity for the architectural traditions and constitutional workings of his native country of Ireland.[34] Having returned to Ireland just before the war, he superficially investigated the ideological and logistic roots of the contemporary Irish housing crisis in his quest for a viable working-class housing model. For a young internationally-rooted idealist, Moffett displayed a keen knowledge of local conditions and sought to remedy Ireland's housing ills through avant-garde experiment. The extent of his influence within the Irish architectural community is unclear as he left for London in 1949, just as he was gaining commissions here. Evidently, he mixed with Michael Scott (the reputed doyen of Irish architectural modernism) as well as with the hierarchy of the RIAI and the AAI, and he ran a short-lived and informal design studio

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[32] For more on the make-up of the White Stag Group, see Roisin Kennedy, "Experimentalism or Mere Chaos? The White Stag Group and the Reception of Subjective Art in Ireland" in Carol Taffe and Edwina Keown (eds.), *Irish Modernism. Origins, Contexts, Publics* (London: Re-imagining Ireland series, 2009), p. 180-183

[33] See unpublished lecture, Noel Moffett "Modern Architecture" delivered to the White Stag Group, June 1941 (lecture available through author)

[34] See Shane O'Toole, "Pioneer of Modern Style" (Noel Moffett's obituary), *Irish Times*, 26th May 1994

which seemed to have attracted the best of the UCD students.[35] His main professional occupation in the early 1940s was the designing of public exhibitions, usually in Dublin's Mansion House, such as the important Irish Red Cross' "Anti-Tuberculosis Exhibition" of 1945 and as we will discuss, the "National Planning Exhibition" of 1943.

One might say that Moffett was ubiquitous within Irish architectural culture during the 1940s. I would argue that he, his exhibition designs and his utterly bizarre and wonderful amphitheatre project on Achill Island, Co. Mayo, 1941, are intangibly expressive of the spirit of wartime Irish architecture. The amphitheatre, Ireland's first open-air theatre, was commissioned by Major Dermot Freyer (a rather eccentric enthusiast of folk dance) and was designed and built by Moffett during the winter of 1940-41 spent on Achill Island whilst staying at Freyer's guest house, Corrymore House (figures 1.5-1.8).[36] Built on an adjoining mountainside site to Corrymore and enjoying incredible views of Clew Bay and the Minaun Cliffs, it was based on the Ancient Greek conception but was not so rigidly semi-circular in this instance and was possibly more directly rooted in Palladian theatre architecture. According to Moffett's account, having gotten stuck in Achill (while there on a painting jaunt with the White Stag Group) due to a car puncture and troublesome weather, he designed and self-built the theatre without any drawings – as such, it was conceived as "automatic architecture".[37] Hewn out of mountainside sod, bog turf and local quartzite, the structure could not have been more materially indigenous. Every part of its make-up came from the site and then the site itself, a fantastical natural construct, was a bog moor which formed a natural amphitheatre so that little excavation work was needed.[38]

Set into the sheltering bulk of the Croghaun Mountain, the theatre could seat five hundred spectators and its stage, extending to a total length of eighty feet so as to accommodate certain folk dances, was framed by a 5 ft. 6 in. turf briquette wall. Behind this the spectator's eye, in the true meaning of Greek theatre, could range over his west of Ireland domain. Interestingly, and contrary to contemporary accounts, Freyer's

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[35] Anecdotal evidence of this design studio comes from author's interview with Kevin Roche (New Haven, April 2009, see author for interview). Robin Walker was also part of Moffett's studio. Apparently, Moffett taught them about different materials, such as Bakelite and plywood, and usually got the students to do the manual work for his exhibition designs.

[36] Though this amphitheatre was built in Achill, west of Ireland and it is therefore outside of this thesis' concentration on Dublin projects, I deem it significant enough as a seminal wartime project to include it in this study.

[37] Noel Moffett, interview account with Shane O'Toole, 1991: "When Major Freyer, owner of Corrymore House, a guest house on Achill Island, wanted to establish a centre for Irish folklore there he commissioned us to design an open-air theatre for him. The site was a natural hollow on the western slope of Mount Croaghaun, facing the Atlantic ocean. Having just read Frank Lloyd Wright's autobiography, we decided to apply his principle of organic design and built the theatre without drawings of any kind, turning the hollow into an amphitheatre with a plan resembling the Greek theatres and with the ocean as a backdrop. When the Architectural Review wanted to publish our design we had to do a measured drawing of the completed theatre. We used only two materials - local stone for gangways and grass sods for the semi-circular tiers of seats. Over the years both the Abbey and Gate players performed there, with occasional ceilidhs and Irish folk dancing. Eventually natural growth took charge and it became hard to believe that the theatre was in fact manmade."

[38] "Ireland's First Open-Air Theatre. Enterprise in the West" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (21st June 1941), p.303 and Eamon V. Briscoe, "Ireland's First Open-Air Theatre", *Irish Press*, 1st May 1941

theatre was rarely used by local people for performances of native art forms but more commonly, the Gate and Abbey Theatre players from Dublin were to be seen, as well as displays of Morris dancing, throughout the 1940s and sporadically into the 1950s.[39] In material and intention, this Achill amphitheatre works like an architectural allegory of wartime Ireland – in its response to wartime material shortage alone it is a telling study - linking us to the realignment of fringe/centre at play in the 1929 Surrealist world map. Its far-flung isolated setting and use of ancient form, materials and technologies should ensure an anti-modern identity. Yet the integrity of the theatre was at the core of the White Stag *mythos*; evidently this *mythos* was the centre of early 1940s modernism in Ireland while the White Stag's chosen centre were the peripheral islands of the West - Achill and Aran. This example of centre/periphery subversion and the general introduction to the White Stag Group are provocative in terms of turning understandings of Irish wartime cultural isolation on their heads. We are reminded of Terence Brown's reading of the period as a "cultural watershed" wherein he surmises that Ireland actually matured during the Second World War:

> The period 1939 – 45 had given Irish men and women to understand that it was possible for the twenty-six counties of Ireland to be a nation-state without the distinguishing marks of language and a hermetically sealed national culture.[40]

In illustrating his thesis of Irish cultural development which reached a critical point or watershed during the Emergency, Brown points to the growth in amateur dramatics, public libraries and operatic/symphonic music audiences during the early 1940s.[41] He also presents the Irish Exhibition of Living Art (IELA) series which brought traditional academic painting and the most progressive of Irish modernist art together for the first time at the National College of Art, Dublin from September 1943.[42] Riann Coulter's research on this subject informs us that from 1944 the IELA also included work from foreign artists living in Ireland and examples of international art.[43]

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[39] Oral history account with two local men, Michael McNamara (88 years old) and Martin McNamara (91 years old), who were aware of the original construction project. Michael was involved in some of the construction and Martin witnessed a performance in the theatre while he was working on the mountain above, Achill Island, July 2009

[40] Terence Brown, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History 1922 – 2002* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. 204

[41] For Brown's discussion of libraries and amateur dramatics, see ibid, p. 166-167. For his discussion of the growth of symphonic music, see ibid, p.196 - 197

[42] Brown discusses this show, primarily from its reviews in *Bell*, stating, "Following the inauguration of the Living Art Exhibition it was no longer possible to pretend that Irish art and Modernism were entirely antithetical." Ibid, p.195
For more historical detail on the Irish Exhibition of Living Art, see chapter 1 of Riann Coulter's thesis, "The Irish Exhibition of Living Art 1943 – 1960", Riann Coulter, "Nationalism, Regionalism, Internationalism: Cultural Identity in Irish Art,1943-1960" (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, 2006), p.37 - 45

[43] Riann Coulter, ibid, p.38

Though, while Brown's narrative of the period may be peppered with examples of cultural enlightenment, oft international in temperament, it is set to a bleak 'score' of emigration, censorship and unrelenting rural depopulation. On the one hand he furnishes us with accounts which push mid-Emergency Dublin towards bohemia, such as Peter Kavanagh's comment that the city exuded "a certain international atmosphere".[44] Yet, this same bohemian international flavour and exceptionalness arose from isolation and neutrality; isolation and neutrality which encouraged the maintenance of pre-war conditions. As Brown asserts:

> For many, the years of the war were simply a continuation of pre-war experience, in economically straitened circumstances, with the language, national sovereignty, religion, and protection of Irish distinctiveness as the dominant topics of intellectual and cultural concern in a society still moulded by its essential conservatism...[45]

A few years into the war, certainly by 1943, Irish architectural culture and official policy alike called for a post-war surge in building activity. According to the real evidence of mid-war material shortage (which we will analyse through a case-study in chapter three), and then the reconstructive polemic of the AAI, the RIAI and various government departments by 1945, it is apparent that the war had led to inactivity which was inevitably picked up as "arrears of building" following the war. In a seminal publication of 1945, *When Ireland Builds Again*, the AAI makes the architectural intelligentsia's position explicit:

> Deeply grateful though all must be for freedom from the horrors of war, it is with a tinge of envy that we watch other peoples forging for themselves a new and spacious environment.[46]

This wistful tone is matched by the somewhat erroneous optimism of the RIAI Yearbook editorial of 1946:

> It is a time of preparation, specification, expectation. In our mind's eyes we are hard at work making skylines into metropolis, projecting grand avenues into the future...[47]

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[44] Peter Kavanagh was the poet Patrick Kavanagh's brother. This is cited in Terence Brown, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History 1922 – 2002* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p. 165
[45] Ibid, p.168
[46] Architectural Association of Ireland, *When Ireland Builds Again,* (Dublin: AAI, 1945), p.12
[47] Raymond McGrath, editorial, *RIAI Yearbook*, (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1946), p. 3

Such hopeful projection surely had its basis in the culture of planning which, while simmering since the 1910s had begun to bubble during the Emergency period. The Department of Local Government and Public Health had set up various planning schemes such as the Construction Corps of 1941 to employ young males on relief works and from 1942 the Minister, Sean MacEntee, moved unsuccessfully to establish a Planning Board which would among other things devise "a rational and well-considered housing programme".[48] As Mary Daly points out in her history of the Department of Local Government, the consideration of planning at this juncture was dualistically motivated by the need to provide mid-Emergency employment on the one hand and on the other hand, by the aspiration to have development programmes in place, ready to be kick-started in the immediate post-war years.[49] Overall the short to medium-term provision of both employment and housing informed most planning discourse, at least as it related to Dublin. As we will see in chapter three all plans, including the notable *Sketch Development Plan for Dublin* of 1941 by Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, coming out of Dublin Corporation from the 1930s until mid-1950s were disproportionately preoccupied with housing. And the stasis induced by the war only served to exacerbate this situation while also highlighting the demoralising danger of unemployment.

Meanwhile the wartime Department of Supplies with Sean Lemass at its helm was in essence a planning department and alongside it a cabinet committee on economic planning was established in 1942.[50] With MacEntee's Planning Board not being realised, this committee on economic planning instead spawned a specific post-war planning division of the Department of Industry and Commerce which attempted to coordinate the planning of building activities above all. The division was committed to drawing up "...a detailed scheme of priorities having regard to the relative social, economic and cultural importance of the various projects and to financial and other relevant considerations."[51] And in January 1944 it issued an urgent request to all departments to prioritise contemplated building plans:

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[48] Cited by Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.287

[49] "Plato's Cave? The Emergency Years" in ibid, p. 249 - 296

[50] Michael Bannon discusses Lemass as the Minister most interested in planning in "Irish Planning from 1921 to 1945", Michael Bannon (ed.), *Planning: The Irish Experience 1920 - 1988* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1989). Robert McNamara discusses the pro (Lemass) and 'anti' (Sean MacEntee) planning divide within Fianna Fail during the war years in "Blueprints from Britain: Irish Responses to Post-War Plans" in Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll, *Ireland in World War Two. Neutrality and Survival* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004)

[51] Letter from Department of Industry and Commerce (R.C. Ferguson) to Department of Local Government and Public Health, 24th January 1944, in N.A.I., HLTH/ D112/38 "Post-War Planning, Provision of TB Institution, (1944)"

> I am directed by the Minister for Industry and Commerce to emphasise the great importance which the Government attaches to the subject of planning for the Building Industry in the difficult conditions that may arise on the conclusion of the war... You will appreciate the advantage, both from the national point of view and from the point of view of your own Department, of having in readiness a certain volume of carefully selected building work which can then be undertaken immediately on the conclusion of the war, either in full or to the extent that is feasible with the materials and labour that can then be procured.[52]

The intellectual complement of such official post-war planning during the Emergency was the National Planning Conference which was set up in 1942. The Conference presented a little-known informal social milieu called the Tomorrow Club wherein public representatives mixed with engineers and such key members of the architectural community as Alan Hope, Dermot O'Toole, Vincent Kelly, Gerald McNicholl, Moffett and Desmond FitzGerald, to discuss planning matters. Nomad (*Irish Builder and Engineer*) reviewed the Tomorrow Club's inaugural meeting of December 1943:

> Recognising that the roots of the intractable slum diseases that infect Dublin and other cities lie far afield in the farmer's failure to make adequate use of Nature's gifts, the Club – like the Conference – would address its proceedings and energies to the discovery of new and healthier economic balances between rural and urban communities. When national thought and effort had effectively been directed to the brightening and all-round betterment of rural life, solutions of urban problems would begin to appear.[53]

Pledging to overcome "ignorance" (as the dark "blot" on Dublin's "good name"[54]), the Conference organised a significant exhibition, the National Planning Exhibition held in the Mansion House in April/May 1944 (figure 1.9). Having been drafted in to install the exhibit panels, the younger generation of architects became exposed, arguably for the first time in such an explicit manner, to the potentials and exigencies of a national plan for Ireland, and through the involvement of more culturally-conscious and internationalist architects such as Dermot O'Toole (1910-1970, president of the AAI in 1942/43, architectural inspector with the Department of Local Government from 1940 and member of Town Planning Institute, winning first prize in their examination in 1940)

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[52] Ibid.
[53] Nomad, "The Tomorrow Club" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (January 1st 1944, no 1, vol. LXXXVI), p.8
[54] I am paraphrasing the Tomorrow Club chairman (Dockerell) in his speech, as cited in ibid.

and Moffett, the exhibition was highly thought of within architectural circles. [55] It was also reviewed in considerable detail by Moffett and fellow RIBA architect, Reginald Malcolmson in the *Architects' Journal* thereby giving the exhibition, and indeed the concept of Irish planning, a profile abroad.[56] The exhibition's architectural relevance was apparent in the typological and infrastructural categorisation, broken down into the broad concerns of village, country town, city, public services, power and fuel, industry, transport, sea fisheries, education, leisure, inland fisheries, health, veterinary services, the land, and timber. Panels illustrating each category were arranged in the Round Room of the Mansion House (figures 1.10 and 1.11). Also of architectural significance was the smaller exhibition space off the Round Room which displayed actual and projected examples of Irish planning such as Abercrombie's plan for Dublin of 1941.

According to reports in the daily newspapers, the exhibition was heavily attended by the public. From the outset, as Moffett and Malcolmson report, emphasis was laid on presenting a clear visual language to the public and as they describe, the final message lay with the "plain man":

> The spectator leaving the main display in the Round Room was confronted by a large mirror on which, painted in red letters, was the caption: "AND HERE IS THE MAN TO DO IT", designed to impress on the layman that planning is impossible in a democracy without the co-operation of the people.[57]

By speaking to both the professionals and the public, the National Planning Exhibition was a uniquely inclusive architectural gesture which popularised the notion of a more systematically organised (i.e. planned) built environment for Ireland. While too didactic and national/ introverted to be termed the architectural equivalent of the first Irish Exhibition of Living Art (1943), the planning exhibition placed (albeit fleetingly) Ireland's built environment under a national spotlight.

Significantly, the exhibition was staged during the Emergency; as chapter two's enquiry into hospital architecture of this period asks, perhaps this was the only time when such a reflective event could happen. Indeed the AAI propaganda, *When Ireland*

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[55] Kevin Roche, oral history account, April 2007: "But what I do remember is Noel Moffett. Noel was a big inspiration–Noel and Margot. He was out there explaining the New World to us, and prefabrication. And this was about 1943 or so when he surfaced. He was largely instrumental in having the show at the Mansion House called *Post-War Planning*, this must have been in 1946 I would guess. We were all helping Noel set it up, volunteering. And when Noel was away for a bit during the day, some guy came in and said, "No I don't want that there, I want it over here. I want that moved back," and so we changed all the exhibits around... But it turned out he was just somebody who'd walked in off the street!!!! Noel came back and he was absolutely livid! But Noel was very good... He was doing some master planning at *Silver Strands* in Portmarnock. I remember we were working on a model of that and I had painted the strands silver with silver paint, and he said, "You idiot, it isn't silver - it's not the colour, it's just called *Silver Strands*!!!" see author for interview

[56] Noel Moffett and Reginald Malcolmson, "Irish Planning Exhibition" in *Architects' Journal* (22nd March, 1945), p.223- 225

[57] Ibid., p. 225

*Builds Again* asserted in 1945, "When we build again, let us take advantage of this pause for thought which circumstances have imposed upon us..."[58] The exhibition infers that this period - "this pause for thought" - was one of crystallisation whereby adventurous ideas could transcend the anxiety of realisation. The more negative aspect of the visionary blueprint was what the Taoiseach highlighted in his opening speech at the exhibition when he declared that, "It is easy to plan if you have not to carry out your plans. I have done a certain amount of imaginary planning in my time..."[59] But de Valera's comments were generally dismissed as defeatist by the architectural intelligentsia and housing reform circles and overall, the exhibition was met with approval signalling widespread ideological acceptance of post-war planning; as the *Irish Times* exulted:

> The future is inherent in the very name of the National Planning Conference. Its task is to plan – not to achieve; to prepare – not to accomplish; to point the way – not to create El Dorado... Our country has been charged with an over-disposition to dwell upon the past; here is evidence of a new orientation – upon the present and upon the future. We commend this Exhibition to every citizen.[60]

The most iconic Irish building of this period was undoubtedly the civic airport at Collinstown, on the site of a former RAF base in north Dublin. It was designed in 1937 by a team of young architects in the Office of Public Works, under Desmond FitzGerald (1911 – 1987, later to become professor of architecture at UCD) and was built from late 1938 to the spring of 1941 but was not published in the architectural press until July 1945, due to Emergency censorship restrictions.[61] As such, it was conceived of in the "pre-war" 1930s period, was produced during the war but was not complete until after the war, thereby making it the seminal "straddling" project within the early 1940s section of this overview chapter. In relation to the mid and post-war penchant for planning, the new airport was a physical embodiment of such projection and hope. Built out of reinforced concrete with a structure comprising some ninety columns, its architectural form of gleaming white render and expansive bands of glazing was as expressive in terms of the *zeitgeist* as were Ardnacrusha's bare concrete walls and steeply pitched roofs set into the River Shannon landscape a decade before. Arguably, in symbolic form and function, the new airport even surpassed Ardnacrusha – ultimately its

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[58] Architectural Association of Ireland (editor unknown – Noel Moffett?), *When Ireland Builds Again* (Dublin: AAI, 1945), p.12

[59] Eamon de Valera, Taoiseach, opening speech of National Planning Exhibition cited in "Present and Future" in *Irish Times*, Wednesday 26th April 1944

[60] Ibid.

[61] "Dublin Airport and its Buildings", seven-page supplement review in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (28th July 1945), unpaginated supplement and description p.374-377

agenda of flight (i.e. internationalism and connectivity) signalled progressiveness beyond "nationalism as development" (figures 1.12 – 1.16).

In massing the airport was a single flat-roofed curved form – its oft-lauded concave landward side appeared to welcome the traveller into the stylish interiors while the convex air-bound side fanned out so as to accommodate as many aircraft as possible. Rising to five-floors at its highest point, the facades were articulated by terraced and cantilevered viewing balconies and their predominantly horizontal dispositions were interrupted at the central bay with vertical abutments marking the entrance into a grand light-filled atrium space. Inside then, the furnishings were mostly built-in and everything from menu cards to carpets was considered as part of the total design.[62] This was possibly Ireland's first secular *gesamtkunstwerk* and the result presented Emergency-stricken Dublin with a singular glamorous and international architectural environment. For the architectural community, the building was a triumph of international modernism for Ireland. Along with the excitement around the potential of planning as a discipline and the promise of electrification and other infrastructural developments, the AAI hosted three lectures on the subject of air travel during the late 1930s into the early 1940s. In October 1941, Dublin City Architect Horace O'Rourke lectured on "Airport Planning".[63] Meanwhile the Association organised two visits to the site in 1939 and in 1942, and the latter visit attracted sixty-one members which was more than had ever attended any other building visit.[64] Unsurprisingly, Dublin's new airport was awarded the RIAI's Triennial Gold Medal in 1943 (figure 1.14).[65]

*The Irish Builder and Engineer* criticism announced that the terminal building was "a very striking structure and generally regarded as being one of the finest of its kind, if not actually the finest, in Europe."[66] And indeed since this earliest critique, the airport has repeatedly attracted such praise, all of which has pointed to its pioneering aspect as one of the earliest airports to express the functional logic of flight through a small plan which can accommodate a significant amount of aircraft.[67] Some historians have noted the visit of Eric Mendelsohn to the AAI to lecture on "Rebuilding the World" in November

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[62] For descriptions of the terminal building's interior spaces, circulation and decoration, see review, ibid., p.374 + 376

[63] See *Green Book* (Dublin: Architectural Association of Ireland, 1941/42), p.20

[64] See AAI annual reports 1939-40 and 1941-42 for account of site visits in respective years' *Green Books* (Dublin: Architectural Association of Ireland, 1940/41 and 1942/43) – the figure of 61 is on latter, p.40

[65] See the citation and short review of the 1943 Triennial Gold Medal in *RIAI Yearbook*, 1945 (Dublin: RIAI, 1945), p.7-9

[66] "Dublin Airport and its Buildings", seven-page supplement review in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (28th July 1945), unpaginated supplement – first page after p.372

[67] See the following critiques from 1999 and 1997 respectively: "It is Ireland's most significant exercise in the contemporary international style, a unique and pioneering design inspired by the trends then prevalent in European architecture." From Office of Public Works (introduction by Terence Brown, edited by Caroline Pegum), *Building For Government. The Architecture of State Buildings OPW: Ireland 1900 – 2000* (Dublin: Town House and Country House, 1999); and "This stylish building represented the arrival in Ireland of that spirit of expression and experiment liberated in Britain by the presence there of Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff" from Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang, *Twentieth Century Architecture: Ireland* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), p.111

1937 as a potential source for the expressive aesthetic of FitzGerald and team's terminal building. Sean Rothery's excellent history of early modernist architecture in Ireland (1900 – 1940) lists all of the potential sources for the building from the Templehof airport in Berlin (1930) to unexecuted designs by Wells Coates from 1932. While he maintains that FitzGerald was not the building's main author, Rothery points to a special issue on airports in 1936 of the French journal, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* which was in FitzGerald's library.[68] Most recently, Frederick O'Dwyer's as yet unpublished research posits that the plan-type of Dublin airport was actually established by the late 1930s due to well-known designs by French aeronautic architects from 1921, and that similar British airport designs from 1935 were known to Desmond FitzGerald.[69] O'Dwyer's newfound assertion that Dublin airport was neither a stroke of indigenous genius nor an act of pioneering design but was instead a formulaic French and British-derived prototype, rooted in a burgeoning official system for British airports, further enforces this thesis' contention that British influence was primary on Irish architecture of the mid-twentieth century.

***Post-Emergency 1946–49:***

*Optimistic discourse, educational and travel opportunities, semi-state patronage and a new government*

Whatever its origins, Dublin's new airport complex was consistently added to through the late 1940s and into the 1950s, and it continued to loom large in the Irish architectural imagination becoming the byword for architectural sophistication until, as we will discuss, it was eclipsed by the Dublin Bus Station. Importantly, more than any national pavilion for a Great Exhibition or World's Fair, the terminal building was a diplomatic statement and representative of the image of a "progressive Ireland" that the country sought to project abroad. For instance it was published extensively in the British architectural press - as a feature in *Country Life, The Architects' Journal* and *Architectural Review* in 1947[70] - and in 1946, with Ireland enjoying unprecedented numbers of foreign visitors, especially from Britain, the airport was the first and last Irish architectural environment that these post-war tourists experienced.[71] Unfortunately (as was lamented by the Irish architects in later 1950s discourse as well as, more notably, by the invited commission of Scandinavian industrial designers in 1961), following the initial "design high" presented by the airport building most of what awaited the visitor to

[68] Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 – 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p. 216-219
[69] Frederick O'Dwyer, research which is to be published in 2011 through the Royal Irish Academy and DoCoMoMo Ireland, in conversation with author, 2010
[70] See "Building for Air Transport" in *Architectural Review* (January 1947), p.7-8; "Dublin Airport" in *Country Life* (7th March 1947), p. 420-421; and Dublin Airport feature, *The Architects' Journal* (12th June 1947), p. 492, 497-499
[71] J. H. Whyte informs us of the boom in Irish tourism in 1946, due primarily to British visitors being deterred from holidaying on the European continent: see Whyte "Declaration of the Republic and the Ireland act, 1945-9" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p.264

Ireland was sure to disappoint in modern design-terms.[72] This fact had the effect of lending the airport building an element of "Potemkin Village". However, it was a point of pride in 1940s architectural culture and unsurprisingly, it was the first illustrated building within the important issue on recent Irish architecture, entitled "Ireland", for *Architectural Design* (AD) in July 1947.

This issue of AD was guest-edited and mostly written by Noel Moffett, who had been invited to do so by his friend and AD editor, Monica Pidgeon. In light of the dearth of critical material relating to 1940s Irish architecture, as well as the fact that many important architectural examples from this time have been drastically altered, demolished or were not built, the AD issue becomes a central document for the architectural historian.[73] Reading it as a reflection of how the Irish architectural intelligentsia both saw itself and wanted the British to see it, the layout of the issue is interesting. Following introductory essays, one of which was by Dermot O'Toole on town and country planning in Ireland, Moffett opened the issue with "Air Transport" (Dublin and Shannon airport terminals and a hotel for Foynes airport); next came the dominant subject of housing (split into architects' own houses, low-cost urban housing and prefabricated housing) which we will discuss in chapter three; then a section on industry comprising reviews of unbuilt and unfinished structures such as the bus station, a hydro-electric power station, three factories, a built residence for staff of the alcohol factories and a short essay on peat exploitation; followed in order by bars, shops, restaurants, hospitals, schools, cinemas and lastly, religious buildings (figures 1.17 -1.18). In general the overview was optimistic, pitching the visionary alongside the built through a smattering of photographs and drawings, and indeed, barely differentiating between built and unbuilt in the textual description.

The issue's general leaning was towards Ireland's "exceptionalness" due to the lack of mechanisation, industrialisation and mineral wealth which, the introduction maintained, enabled an atmosphere of rural relaxation:

> The dominance of the countryman is easily felt in Ireland and his mentality is persistent. People have an air of leisure. They seem willing to take time off to talk even when they are business people...One result of talk is that very little happens

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[72] The report of the Scandinavian group was published in 1962 as *Design in Ireland*. It was commissioned by the design section of An Coras Trachtala who later established the Kilkenny Design Workshops between 1963-66 on the basis of the Scandinavian report.

[73] For instance, the AD July 1947 issue is the main source along with the RIAI and AAI yearbooks for Simon Walker's excellent essay, "Architecture in Ireland, 1940-75" in Annette Becker, John Olley and Wilfred Wang, *Twentieth Century Architecture: Ireland* (Munich: Prestel, 1997); and along with *The Irish Builder and Engineer* reviews, for Paul Larmour's *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 - 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009)

> unknown to others, news spreads in mysterious byways, ideas and plots are talked out instead of being written in creative form. [74]

The introduction went on to assert that the material isolation induced by the war lead to greater self-sufficiency which "evolved a new assurance which has repercussions, from an increased interest in painting to a fashionable use of the once scorned home-spun material and fabrics."[75] As such, the socio-cultural account backing up the architectural content set the issue's affirmative optimistic tone, albeit the prose was romanticised and less outward-looking than the illustrated architecture. The issue also happened to coincide with the Royal Institute of British Architect's (RIBA) first post-war annual conference which was held in Dublin that year. Naturally the AD critic Archivolt reviewed events for the issue and he presented neutral Dublin as a differentiated and ultimately positive place compared to desecrated post-war Britain:

> There was the simple fact that for a few days we could have plenty to eat and drink without feeling too guilty about it, and we could gaze with a kind of childish wonder into shop windows stocked with hundreds of lovely or useful things made in Britain.[76]

Archivolt recorded the joint RIAI and RIBA banquet and the Minister of Local Government Sean MacEntee's speech, whose gushing confidence overlaid layers of post-colonial angst and post-Emergency uncertainty. In reality, the surface positivity was very fragile at this post-war juncture:

> The British and Irish peoples have a great deal in common...Both peoples sent their sons and daughters to found and build the great democratic states of the world. We may claim to be jointly the progenitors of the great nations... In the past the association between Great Britain and Ireland in its political aspects, at least, was for us Irish a forced and painful one. To-day it has become a free and voluntary one, and because it is in simple truth a free and voluntary association, I believe it will become ever closer and more enduring.[77]

Archivolt described 1947 Dublin as a "city of fearful contrasts" where "behind the bold front of O'Connell Street there is decay and poverty and slums, bedraggled people and

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[74] Earnan O' Malley, "Ireland" in *Architectural Design* (Ireland issue, July 1947), p. 172-3
[75] Ibid, p.172
[76] Archivolt, "The Dublin Conference, 1947" in Ibid, p.175
[77] Sean MacEntee, unpublished speech June 1947, RIAI/RIBA annual conference, Gresham Hotel, Dublin, quoted by Archivolt, ibid., p.176

hundreds of poorly-clad children – but not entirely: there is no consistency even here, because the well-kept or well-designed house or shop will suddenly appear incongruously with its neighbours."[78] It would seem that Archivolt had inadvertently captured the reality of post-war culture in Ireland which was hopeful and plentiful yet tinged with poverty – was this a dawn of false hope?

As we know, a year before the AD issue the RIAI published its first post-war yearbook (1946) and therein, alongside the aforementioned reconstructive polemic of the editorial, were notes to Irish architects from the icons of European and American modernism, Frank Lloyd Wright, J. J. P. Oud and Walter Gropius (figure 1.1). The message was clear: despite the material evidence of neutral Ireland's isolation, Irish architects were not to be exempt from international post-war discourse on reconstruction. And indeed, in the immediate months after the end of the war, the forecast was hopeful. In terms of international dialogue, the architects took the RIAI messages to heart and small-scale travel as well as educational stints abroad tentatively began. Though these experiences were for the privileged few, they signalled the desire of Irish architects to project beyond Ireland's shores and to witness international developments; invariably the "findings" of such ventures were communicated to the rest of the Irish architectural community through for example, AAI lectures.

In reality, the odds were stacked against such educational (or leisurely) travel as it was illegal to bring sufficient funds out of the country. Kevin Roche (1922-) recounts his experiences with colleagues Kevin Fox, Wilfred Cantwell and Fred Hilton (all having graduated from UCD and about to embark on work placements with Michael Scott) in 1946 whence they embarked on a journey through France, Switzerland and North Italy:

> But part of the problem was trying to get money – you couldn't transfer money out of Ireland...The same thing was true in 1946. Kevin Fox and Fred Hilton and, I think it was Wilfrid [Cantwell], and I went to Switzerland and my father had arranged – because he had some connections in Switzerland – for us to be able to get the money to do that. And we flew on one of the very first flights after the war to Paris, and then got a train to Zurich, then got a bus down to Milan, and in Milan they still had a sign of where Mussolini had been hanged...So, then we went to Geneva and we saw...the Corbu stuff...in Geneva. Paris was devastated. There were still rocks in the street you know, they hadn't cleaned it up. And Milan was in frightful shape, absolutely frightful! Everybody was out on the street begging – it was horrible...We went to Zurich; we went to Lausanne and southern Switzerland. So we saw some things in Switzerland. And Kevin [Fox] was very good; he had researched it so he knew where everything was. Then, in Milan

[78] Ibid.

> there was of course the railroad station [*Milano Centrale*, 1864-1931]. And then Paris: Well, all the obvious things in Paris, but there wasn't anything new.[79]

At the same time, two other intrepid young Irish architects journeyed to America for post-graduate education: Andy Devane (1917-2000) to Wright's Taliesin colony (Wisconsin and Arizona) and Luan Cuffe (1917-1980) to Harvard with Walter Gropius followed by work with the Finnish-American architect, Eero Saarinen. Years later, in 1998, Devane recounted the difficulty in funding his travel, highlighting the very real protectionism that underpinned the Irish economy at the time:

> At that time one could only bring out £50 cash. My father, bless him, against all his better judgement – arranged with a doctor friend of his in St. Louis to let me have some money to pay Frank Lloyd Wright my "apprentice" fees, but this was small and sporadic...So, in fact, Frank Lloyd Wright "kept" me and my father paid my fare – or most of it – to Phoenix, Arizona.[80] (Devane, 1998)

In terms of their educational experiences both Cuffe and Devane reported back in the 1946 RIAI yearbook, with Devane's florid account dominating:

> This is the real root of art – the root of natural and sincere life that grows from God - not from the Industrial Revolution!...perhaps you will understand what I say with sincerity that I feel I have gained – in these last three Taliesin months – more real knowledge of architecture than I had learned in all my study years... Mr. Wright is there – he has been there all day – since 7.30 this morning – still fresh and still planning, planning, planning... And here he sits with the light shining on his white hair, as eager and fresh as a youth designing his first building. Here is a real man, whose mind is full of the beauty of life. Here, there is no pseudo aestheticism, no culled eclecticism, no sophistry – just a simplicity and honesty and a great love for Nature and Creation. [81]

Cuffe reported:

> Having had a few weeks' vacation I moved to New York where I found the Gropius-Harvard influence is strong... I then moved out here and signed on with Saarinen, Swanson and Saarinen... Eero's approach is much more romantic than

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[79] Kevin Roche, oral history account with author, April 2008, New Haven, USA, see author for interview
[80] Andrew Devane, interview with Jennifer Coyle, "The Influence of Frank Lloyd Wright on the Work of Andrew Devane" (Unpublished B.A. Dissertation, History of Art, Trinity College Dublin, 1998)
[81] Andrew Devane, "Letter from Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin, August 1946" in "Letters from America", *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1946), p. 34 -35

> that of Gropius, but even if one does not agree all along the line the spectacular results are exhilarating.[82]

Within Cuffe's short report he mentioned Marcel Breuer, Serge Chermayeff, the Saarinens and Gropius, so that aside from the obviously differing tone of his more pragmatic account, it is similar to Devane's in terms of the potency of the iconic architect in the culture of Irish architecture. Clearly the dynamic force of foreign influence on Irish architecture was mostly personality-driven during this immediate post-war period; that is, personality-driven in terms of the source of the influence and always at this point individually-led in terms of the manifestation of the influence.

Migration is a significant theme in international architectural modernism and migratory patterns were established in Ireland in these post-war examples which then ran through Irish architectural culture for the rest of the twentieth century. Much recent scholarship in architectural history has turned its attention to such a migration from, in symbolic terms, the north European socialist worker pitched between factory and cellular mass-housing to the American white-collar clerk who commutes between downtown-office and bungalow-bliss.[83] This shift is of course wrapped up in the socio-economic changes wrought by the Second World War and American unambiguous victory therein, leading in turn to the culture of consumerism which defined post-war societal priorities in the West thereafter. Combined then with America's translation of European modernism as an architectural *style*,[84] modernist architecture became the signature tool of post-war American consumerism with the endless spread of suburbia and the rapid sprouting of high-rise corporations arriving at, as Lawrence Alloway famously termed it in 1959, the "*aesthetics of plenty*".[85] It is interesting to establish that while the user-protagonist and architectural typologies changed in the primary transfer of architectural modernism from Europe to America, the architect-protagonist remained stable. The canonical figures of the Bauhaus – Europe's most important design school and disseminator of architectural

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[82] Luan Cuffe, "Letter from Harvard, Birmingham, Michigan, August 1946" in ibid., p. 32 - 3

[83] See for instance Joan Ockman, "Technology, Consumption, and Gender since World War II" in Keith Eggener (ed.), *American Architectural History. A Contemporary Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2004), especially p. 344 – 348. Note also recent conferences sponsored by Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) and the European Architectural History Network (EAHN) on the subject of transatlantic translations of modern architecture, e.g.: Joan Ockman and Hilde Heynen's session "Modern Architecture's Mutations in Crossing the Ocean from Europe to the United States" at SAH Symposium of 2006; and Reto Geiser's session "Uncle Sam's Traces: American Models and their Cultural Transformation" at SAH 2007; and again the "Transfer and Metamorphosis" SAH/EAHN conference in Zurich, June 2008.

[84] Philip Johnson and Henry Russell Hitchcock's "International Style" exhibition for the Museum of Modern Art New York in 1932 is centrally responsible for introducing the buildings and projects of Mies, Oud, Gropius, Mart Stam, Le Corbusier et al. to the American audience. This exhibition has also been charged with presenting this collection of projects as an internationalist collective style – focussing on its formal attributes of flat roof, white exterior, horizontal bands of fenestration, asymmetrical free plans - and thereby emptying it of its socialist utopian meaning.

[85] Lawrence Alloway of the Independent Group (post-war off-shoot of the Institute of Contemporary Art), coined the term, "aesthetics of plenty". A similar point is made by Joan Ockman's "Introduction" to her excellent anthology of critical writings and manifestoes, *Architecture Culture 1943 – 1968. A Documentary Anthology* (New York: Columbia Book of Architecture, 1996), p.16

functionalism before the Second World War - namely Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (Mies) and Marcel Breuer, emigrated and took their places alongside Frank Lloyd Wright in the canon of American architectural practice and education from the late 1930s onwards. This continuity of personality was significant because when taken together with the imperialist thrust of American consumerist culture, it made for a climate of "cult heroes" dominating mid-twentieth century architecture. And it was this cult - more so than say American architectural technology - that primarily encouraged a small number of young Irish architects to travel to the USA from the late 1940s onwards for postgraduate study and apprenticeships.

These post-Emergency expeditions set off a process of cultural migration that coloured Irish architecture; a type of architectural diaspora which as we will see, grew during the 1950s through postgraduate experiences. As the introductory example of Dalton/Wright correspondence highlighted, these were usually return trips. There were other such optimistic aspects of post-Emergency culture which had long legacies through twentieth-century Irish society, and were ultimately linked to mid-war planning. Economically speaking, Ireland had built up large sterling balances during the war and so embarked on a £5 million development programme once the war ended.[86] Along with this, while Ireland was not in receipt of the fruits of the European Recovery Plan (ERP or Marshall Plan) to the extent of neighbouring Britain, the government did receive grants and loans from 1947/48.[87] As such there was ambition in the immediate post-Emergency plans which entailed, as we will see in chapter two, key architectural projects such as the construction of three vast tuberculosis sanatoria and myriad local health and welfare centres. This drive towards greater public health and social infrastructure, coming out of the establishment of separate Departments of Social Welfare and Health in 1947, was matched by the ambitious plans for industrial infrastructure.

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[86] J. H. Whyte "Declaration of the Republic and the Ireland act, 1945-9" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p.263-264

[87] Henry Patterson claims that Ireland received £6 million in grants and £46 million in loans, see Patterson, *Ireland Since 1939* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p.91; Sean Cronin outlines that the Irish received a meagre $10 million loan and no grant, see Cronin, *Washington's Irish Policy 1916 - 1986: Independence, Partition, Neutrality* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1987), p.197. Bernadette Whelan's extensive study of the participation of the Irish in the European Recovery Programme from 1947 - 57 delivers a more complex image of the situation with Ireland getting an injection of $146.2 million in loan and grant funds. She, like Cronin, presents the dissatisfaction of the Irish in relation to the treatment of the British by the ERP. A letter from J. J. Brennan to Leo McCauley in August 1949 is revealing of Irish-American relations at this time: "It is really quite extraordinary the amount of prejudice which exists against us. I do not think that they have ever forgiven us for our attitude during the late war, but they are not now considering the last war; they are contemplating the next one, and they seem to be quite sure that it will come eventually. For that reason, they are going to support the United Kingdom by every possible means, because they are the only people on whom they feel they can rely for a holding operation in Western Europe...This is not a question of being pro-British. It is a question of what they consider American interests...governed entirely by strategic considerations at the present time, whatever lip service may be paid to the ideals of democracy and to high moral issues." Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan 1947 - 1957* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p.17- 18, Brennan letter cited on p.288-289

Mass, and especially *rural,* electrification and the development of the bogs lead to heroic examples of industrial architecture, the seeds of which had been planted during earlier phases with the establishment of the ESB (1927) and the Turf Board (1934). Many ESB "fruits" sprouted in the 1940s such as the large scale thermal power plant hewn out of exposed steel frame and brick infill at North Wall, Dublin Port (1947) and the hydroelectric schemes on the River Liffey, Co. Dublin at Poulaphuca, Golden Falls and Leixlip from 1937–49. With the establishment of Bord na Mona in 1946, the campaign to exploit the bog-lands was renewed, sprouting a series of peat-fired power stations (with their reinforced concrete cooling towers) at Portarlington (1944-45), Allenwood (1947-48) and Ferbane (1949-50).[88] Probably the most engaging of these projects for the architectural community was the hydro-electric scheme on the River Erne, particularly the Cathleen's Falls power station and ancillary buildings. These were designed by Desmond FitzGerald and illustrated in Moffett's AD issue, in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* and later in *Architectural Survey*.[89] The elegant complex of steel and reinforced concrete was dominated by a large turbine hall and was a study in balancing the vertical rhythm of the structural bays with the horizontal roof (figures 1.19 + 1.20). This power station is the instance where architecture and engineering were most radically integrated for the first time in Ireland.[90]

Along with the semi-state energy bodies of the ESB and Bord na Mona who were key architectural patrons during the mid-century, there was a new transport body Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE), formed in 1945 through a long process of amalgamating private transport companies. Like the ESB and other semi-state structures such as the Tourist Board (Bord Failte, est. 1955), Irish Sugar (Suicre Eireann, est. 1933) and Aer Lingus Teoranta (national airline, est. 1936), CIE channelled resources into its physical representation, especially during the 1940s and early 1950s. Its chairman, A.P. Reynolds evidently sought to project an image of speed and reliability for CIE and commissioned the by-then most vocal force of Irish architectural modernism, Michael Scott (1906 - 1989)[91] to design a series of important structures.[92] Scott had worked on notable Free

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[88] "Ireland's Electricity Supply" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer1859 – 1959 Centenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.18 -19

[89] All of the ESB and Bord na Mona projects at this time were published extensively by the Engineers Society (est. 1928, later to become the Institution of Engineers of Ireland, IEI in 1969) and were considered to be the domain of the engineering community. With Cathleen's Falls the aesthetic of industry emerged in the high quality of the design and materials employed by FitzGerald and this excited the architects who published it in "The River Erne Hydro-Electric Development" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (5th March 1949), p. 198-200 and in *Architectural Survey* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1954), p.14. I am grateful to Miriam Dunn for this insight, in conversation with author, 2010 (Dunn, "Groundwork: Structures and Drawing in Education and Design Process" (ongoing PhD research, School of Architecture, University of Limerick, 2008 -))

[90] Ibid, author in conversation with Dunn (2010)

[91] Michael Scott is widely considered to be the father of architectural modernism in Ireland. Not only was he at the forefront of architectural culture from the 1930s until the 1970s and arguably until his death, it might be said that Scott actually established that culture in international terms. In 1937/38 he was the President of the Architectural Association of Ireland and was largely responsible for the visits of Erich Mendelsohn (1937) and Walter Gropius (1936). He brought the Danish structural engineer Ove Arup to Dublin in 1945 to initially assist

State hospital buildings such as regional hospitals at Tullamore and Portlaoise during the 1930s when in partnership with Norman Good, as well as several private houses such as one for Arthur Shields (1934), two in Killiney (1935), Reenavanna (1937) and Scott's own family home, Geragh (1937/8). In 1938, Scott established his own firm and worked on such projects as the Shamrock Building (Irish Pavilion) for the New York World's Fair and a series of cinemas at Athlone, Carlow and Clonmel. He began to build up an interesting practice, continuing until his death, whereby he encouraged younger talented and modernist-inclined designers into his office while he himself gained and then project-managed commissions. From the late-1930s to the mid-1950s such talented architects who worked with Scott included Bill O'Dwyer, James Brennan, Dermot O'Toole, Patrick Scott, Kevin Roche, Wilfred Cantwell, Kevin Fox, Patrick Hamilton, Patrick Haughey and others.

Undoubtedly the CIE commissions copper-fastened Scott's standing, further enriching the internationalist *atelier* presented by his practice to the most talented of Ireland's young architects. The Donnybrook Garage (1946-51, figure 1.21) was set to be a prototype of how to house one hundred buses in a single structure and there were plans to build eight or more such garages around Dublin and other urban centres, but political shifts altered these plans.[93] According to Kevin Roche, the Danish engineer who subsequently set up practice in Dublin, Ove Arup, first collaborated with Scott on this project.[94] After all, it signalled a feat of structural engineering in that the vaulted space was formed by ten shell roofs which, markedly, were lit from end to end for the first time. With this project and its contemporary, the CIE Chassis Factory at Inchicore (1946-48, figures 1.22-1.25), Scott demonstrated his practice's ability to pioneer and to push structural or design boundaries; in a general sense, his ambition was like that of Irish post-war plans – unafraid and outward-looking.

The Chassis Factory was a majestic industrial building designed to manufacture bus and lorry parts and as such it behaved like a machine: its mechanistic qualities were reflected in its steel frame, extensive patent glazing system (part aluminium/part steel), its ability to be extended (to the west) and its east-end crane bay.[95] In external massing it was simply a massive elegant warehouse but inside, the quality of the light and the extent of the uninterrupted space transcended the warehouse model. As the

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in the design of Busaras and Donnybrook Garage and thereafter, is reputed to have encouraged Arup and Jorgen Varming to open an office in Dublin.

[92] Scott maintained that Reynolds wanted to employ him as the in-house CIE architect following Scott's successful work on Reynold's house, Abbeville (North Dublin, by James Gandon) but Scott refused, saying that he would do CIE "works of importance myself, and I would get younger architects who were in practice to do other works." *Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.119

[93] Scott recounted this in ibid., p. 124

[94] Kevin Roche, oral history account with author, April 2008, New Haven, USA, see author for interview

[95] For contemporary reviews/descriptions of the Chassis Factory, see "Factory at Inchicore, Dublin, designed by Michael Scott" in *The Architects' Journal* (17th August 1950), p.165-169 and Alan Hope, "Architecture in Ireland: a Review of Some Current Examples" in *The Builder* (11th December 1953), p.925-926

photography by the contractors (Crampton Ltd) attests (figures 1.24 + 1.25), the interior space was impressive, almost sublime. Divided only by a single row of widely-spaced columns, the scale of this state-sponsored factory spoke a new language which was determined in its industrial aspiration. Here was the State embarking on heavy engineering manufacturing for the first time and Scott's building responded accordingly. However and disappointingly, the factory was never used for its intended purpose; due to CIE's financial problems, the company was unable to begin producing vehicles and so the building was given to the Board of Works for storage.[96] Years later, Scott called it an "interesting" and successful building, citing the judges of the RIAI Gold Medal award 1947/49's (Brendan O'Connor and Raymond McGrath) comments:

> Brendan O'Connor told me that it was the outstanding building of those under consideration, and that they were going to give it the Gold Medal, but that Raymond McGrath had said, "He's bound to get it for Busáras. Why give it to him for this? He can't have two Gold Medals!" They gave it to an inferior building designed by Alan Hope...the Aspro Factory.[97]

Scott's derogatory comments aside, it is interesting that the two most promising post-war buildings in RIAI Gold-Medal terms were factories - the Chassis and the Aspro, and both were situated in West Dublin's growing suburb. According to some commentary, this Gold Medal covered the two periods of 1944-46 and 1947-49 due to the dearth of public architecture produced during the Emergency;[98] emerging then as the shining lights of the new post-war world were two factory structures.

Alan Hope (1907-1965) was the architect of the lauded Aspro Factory. Having studied in Liverpool, Hope came to Dublin in 1932, joining the firm of Frederick Hicks which he later took over and in 1939, he married fellow- architect Mairin Cuffe (Luan Cuffe's sister).[99] Together they designed and built their family home Meander, on a wooded site in South Dublin. Meander was a study in Scandinavian modernism, built

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[96] See http://two.archiseek.com/2009/michael-scott-1905-1989/. According to Paul Clerkin's research, the Chassis factory is now (2010) run by an engineering firm as a machine workshop.

[97] *Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.123

[98] See Paul Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 - 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009), p.92. I believe that Larmour makes this assertion due to the editorial polemic of *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (July 1950): I can find no evidence of the RIAI establishing this as a fact and I would point rather to the reality that the RIAI Gold Medal award was only in its third "outing" and was still an unsteady and erratic process, see http://www.irisharchitectureawards.ie/index.php/gold-medal/winner/aspro_factory/

[99] For Hope's biography, see "Alan Hodgson Hope, 1909 - 1965", Ann Marta Rowan/Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Irish Architects: http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2652 Here it is stated that Hope worked for Vincent Kelly before Frederick Hicks. I have conflicting dates for Hope's birth date - 1907 (Irish Times) and 1909 (DIA).

almost by hand on a straightened Irish budget.[100] Totally at one with its site, this two-storey asymmetrical flat-roofed house was most unusually clad in cedar panels externally and lined with plywood internally. In terms of Hope's *oeuvre* Meander contrasted with his most celebrated public building, the Aspro factory (1946 -49) which was an example of International Style modernism in every sense of the definition: from its external aesthetic of white render, bands of glazing, flat roof and rectilinear massing emphasised by curved "climaxes" (the entrance hall and stairway), to its standing as a roadway building to be viewed by passing automobiles (figures 1.26 +1.27). The Aspro was a factory first and foremost and importantly, it was situated on the new Naas Road which was a mid-twentieth century carriage-way from the West and out of which the burgeoning industrial quarter of suburban Dublin was to grow. So, in many respects the building encapsulated the modernist industrial and mechanical dream.

It was possibly down to the Aspro's success beyond its factory function that won it the RIAI Gold Medal. Hope was proud of its tripartite standing having divided it physically and functionally into a space for working (factory), a recreational area (comprising a canteen and stage so that it could be used as a dance hall) and the more decorative and formal zones of the administration quarter.[101] Within the administration area, Hope was able to celebrate the glamour of the post-war workplace and did so through a well-lit luxuriously clad entrance hall containing the dramatic spiralling staircase (figure 1.28). Interestingly, the *zeitgeist* element of glamour was compounded by this post-war institution's social welfare and public health remit as the building accommodated a nurse's area so that workers could undergo radiography screening every six months, among other health benefits. Complementing the building's functional division were the three systems of construction: the administration office block was built out of a reinforced concrete frame; the recreation hall was walled with solid concrete block and steel, and surmounted by a pitched roof of steel trusses and slate; while the large chemical factory space was roofed very dramatically in half barrel-vaults of shell concrete supported by reinforced concrete columns (figures 1.30 + 1.31).[102] In 1949 the *Irish Builder* reviewed it as "undoubtedly one of the most striking commercial buildings, both in appearance and construction, to be seen around Dublin."[103]

Arguably the success of the factory typology within Irish architectural culture at this juncture was representative of post-war industrial policy which was evolving within its nationalist economics principle of protectionism to embrace more manufacturing – the

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[100] This account of Meander is based on a tour of the house with architect and daughter of Alan and Mairin Hope, Gabrielle O'Herlihy in 2006, and again with daughter Caroline Hope in 2008. I am grateful to Caroline Hope for facilitating my visits to Mairin Hope before her death in 2009.

[101] For detailed description by Hope of the factory, see Alan Hope, "Architecture in Ireland: a Review of Some Current Examples" in *The Builder* (11th December 1953), p.916-917

[102] "A Dublin Chemical Factory" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (6th August 1949), p.720-722

[103] Ibid., p.720

Industrial Development Authority was set up in 1949 to investigate proposals for new industry and so on. From the 1930s, economic protectionism sought to support Irish industries against the competition of foreign imports and also, the policy was to disperse manufacturing and industry throughout the State so as to avoid industrial concentration at Dublin. The reality was different however. Firstly, as Henry Patterson and many economic historians have pointed out, foreign firms formed Irish companies so that they could gain a foothold in the Irish market. So, the foreign infiltrated regardless - for example, Aspros Ireland was really an English company. Secondly, as sociologist James Wickham asserts "one inadvertent result of protectionism was to concentrate industry even more in Dublin and the East Coast, since firms needed to be near to Britain from where they were importing their supplies."[104] Importantly, an overview of Irish industrial development informs us that manufacturing employment doubled between 1931 and 1951.[105] Eoin O'Malley explains that this considerable industrial growth during the international depression of the 1930s was similar to other developing countries and resulted from protectionism which at its basis, facilitated import-substitution industrialisation. Certainly protection policy seemed to work at first but as we will see, it started to come apart by the end of the 1940s.

Though this thesis only makes oblique reference to industrial development through its examination of the buildings of suburbia, the continuation of protectionism until the end of 1950s was a significant influence on architectural production. The key issue was the growth of Dublin during the 1940s and '50s. Ostensibly, this physical and cultural growth forms the setting for the thesis. And accompanying such growth was the expansion of the state's bureaucratic machinery which attracted an officious type of individual from the regional centres of Ireland, up to Dublin in search of civil service employment; as wittily portrayed by Oliver St John Gogarty as "a country boy with hair in his ears and hair in his nose and a briefcase in his hand."[106] Mervyn Wall's early 1950s satire, *Leaves for the Burning* describes a converse process with the bureaucratic machine stretching its tentacles across the twenty-six local authorities, leading the educated urbanite (Lucian Burke) to be pitched into the introverted pettiness and gloomy boredom of a regional County Council office. Interestingly, the backdrop to Wall's depiction was the impossibly slow road-building programme which was being managed by an increasingly impatient County Engineer (Bob McMunn, a Dubliner) and constantly

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[104] James Wickham, "Industrialisation, Work and Unemployment" in Patrick Clancy, Sheelagh Drudy, Kathleen Lynch and Liam O'Dowd (eds.), *Ireland: A Sociological Profile* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration and Sociological Association of Ireland, 1986), p.77. This point is also made by Desmond Gillmor, "Land and People, c.1983" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p.440

[105] Eoin O'Malley, "Problems of Industrialisation" in J.H. Goldthorpe + C.T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland* (Proceedings of the Third Joint Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy) (Oxford: OUP, 1994). Though as O'Malley footnotes, this figure (coming out of the Census of Industrial Production) may be an exaggeration of the rate of growth, p.32

[106] Cited by Richard Killen, *Short History of Dublin* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 2010), p.103

obstructed by the superstitious labourers (local rural men). The contemporary conflict between urban efficiency and rural traditionalism was encapsulated in this sketch:

> Kelly, the foreman from Kilsuddery eight miles away, the farthest townland which the new road had reached, was getting off his bicycle..."What's wrong, Kelly? Why aren't you at Kilsuddery supervising?"
> "I've just ridden in on the bike from there, Mr McMunn...Work stopped there an hour ago."
> Bob mouthed a blasphemy. "What's wrong?"
> "There's a fairy tree in the path of the road, and the men refuse to cut it down."
> ...There was a solitary whitethorn tree a full three yards in from the line of pegged cord which marked the new edge of the road. It was obvious that it would have to come down. The earth was broken and cleared to within a few paces of the tree.
> ..."It's a fairy tree, sir," said an elderly man at last. "It's unlucky to meddle with them things. No one ever cuts a fairy tree."
> "I've never heard such superstitious nonsense...the work on this road is five weeks behind schedule, and I won't have it held up in this crazy fashion."
> "There's no reason," put in a younger man, "why the road shouldn't make a curve at this point, and curve round the tree."
> Several of the workmen nodded in agreement.
> "The road can't have a bend," snarled Bob. "Who's building this road, you or me?" [107]

While hilarious, the sketch was profoundly serious in its message of rural/urban tension and modern/traditional jumble in 1940s and '50s Irish culture. Wall insinuates that the post-war *aspiration* for an efficient infrastructure of twentieth-century motorways could never be matched by *actual* technological ability or financial reality. In the end, Wall's middle-class urban professionals descend into a chaotic drinking binge with immoral consequences, emerging eventually in a grey hangover. John Montague's 1953 poem, "The Sheltered Edge" expresses a similarly desolate after-the-party scene of unrealised post-war building projects:

> Standing at the window, I watch the wild green leaves
> Lurch back against the wall, all the branches of the apple tree
> Stretch tight before the wind, the rain lash
> The evening long against the stubborn buildings

[107] Mervyn Wall, *Leaves for the Burning* (London: Methuen, 1952), p.49-51

> Raised by man, the blackened rubbish dumps,
> The half-built flats, the oozing grey cement
> Of hasty walls, the white-faced children
> Deprived of sun, scurrying with sharp laughter
> From point to point of shelter,
> And arched over all, the indifferent deadening rain.[108]

Indeed by the end of the 1940s, architectural discourse was also cynical about Ireland's "Brave New World" dreams and capabilities. The RIAI Yearbook of 1949 reminded us of the initial euphoria and crocus metaphor of its 1946 editorial, before wryly summarising,

> Those were the days when the pleasure of liberation from uncreative years of war were expressed in a fine flurry of architectural projects – parliament buildings, city hall, university, national theatre, concert hall, conservatorium, swimming pools, hotels, restaurants, bridges, railway and bus stations. We can almost hear the fanfare fade away as we approach the harder realities of housing, schools and sanatoria.[109]

It would seem that following the initial commissioning of the Chassis and Aspro factories in 1946, factors began to work against the post-war (re)construction dream. Continual rains led to a bad harvest for 1946 and by January 1947, bread rationing – which had never been necessary during the Emergency - was introduced. This was the coldest winter in living memory and by February, the British coal supply could not meet Irish demands.[110] In March of that year, the *Irish Builder and Engineer* announced a crisis in terms of fuel, repeating the Minister of Industry and Commerce's dictate that 1947 would be harder than any mid-war year.[111] As James Whyte recounts, trains were cancelled, factories were closed down and power stations worked at half-capacity and this continued until the Anglo-Irish trade agreement of November 1947 which promised Ireland a greater coal supply. At the same time, there was a severe rise in the cost of living, thereby exacerbating the public's widespread discontent. The Fianna Fáil government was coming under attack and a general election was called in February 1948. Unsurprisingly, Fianna Fáil was defeated. The new Government, known as the First Inter-Party Government was a motley coalition made up primarily of Fine Gael, Labour

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[108] John Montague, *Poisoned Lands and Other Poems* (London: McGibbon and Kee, 1961), p.32 as cited by Terence Brown, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p.201
[109] Raymond McGrath, editorial, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1949), p. 2
[110] James Whyte "Declaration of the Republic and the Ireland act, 1945-9" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p.264
[111] Editorial, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th March 1947), p.198

and a new party, Clann na Poblachta and was in power from 1948 to 1951.[112] The architectural fruits of this governmental shift are examined in chapter two, with the arrival of the young idealistic Dr. Noel Browne as Minister of Health and in chapter three, with the Labour stalwart T. J. Murphy taking over as the new Minister of Local Government.

### ***The 1950s' mixed fortunes:***

*Woeful economics, emigration, the RIAI and its exhibitions*

Protectionism continued through the 1950s and there was almost no increase in manufacturing employment between 1951 and 1958. Protected industries were overly-reliant on the home market. Along with this there was virtually no progress in the development of more skilled or technologically demanding types of industry. So, as the rest of the western world competed and flourished, Ireland appeared to stagnate economically due mostly to the exhaustion of the import-substitution policy and the ongoing failure to achieve growth of exports.[113] Hand in hand with these economic circumstances was the unstable political situation. In fact, the 1950s was the most unstable political episode since Irish Independence. There were four consecutive changes in government: the first Inter-Party government from 1948 – 51; then a Fianna Fáil government from 1951 - 54; followed by the second Inter-Party government from 1954 - 57; until Fianna Fáil regained power in 1957 where the party remained until 1973 (firstly with Sean Lemass replacing Eamon De Valera as Taoiseach from 1959 and then, in 1966 with Jack Lynch taking over from Lemass). Ultimately, this constant change in government from 1948 – 57 was linked to economics – the sterling balances from the end of the war were largely gone, leaving the country with virtually no savings so that cuts had to be made. As a result, each 1950s government made itself so unpopular with budgetary measures that it lost, then won, alternate elections. The annual growth rate of Ireland from 1949 - 57 was only one per cent, i.e. the lowest in Western Europe.[114]

Emigration was perhaps the most tangible effect of the straitened conditions of 1950s Irish life. As Whyte informs us, "In 1957, net emigration almost equalled the total number of births for the year. If this continued, there would be no country left."[115] In the same year, the RIAI commissioned architect Wilfred Cantwell to report on emigration within the architectural profession and Cantwell calculated that in 1956, while twenty-

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[112] The coalition was also made up of the little known parties and off-shoots of the other partners, Clann na Talmhan, National Labour Party and an independent from Fine Gael, James Dillon

[113] This economic commentary comes from Eoin O'Malley, "Problems of Industrialisation" in J.H. Goldthorpe + C.T. Whelan (eds.), *The Development of Industrial Society in Ireland* (Proceedings of the Third Joint Meeting of the Royal Irish Academy and the British Academy) (Oxford: OUP, 1994), p.32-33

[114] James Whyte, "Economic Progress and Political Pragmatism, 1957-63" in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, VII, 1921-84* (Oxford: OUP, paperback version, 2010), p.295

[115] James Whyte, "Economic Crisis and the Political Cold War, 1949-57", in ibid., p.283

three architects graduated, twenty-seven emigrated![116] Emigration had been a constant feature of twentieth-century Irish social and cultural life but was heightened during the Second World War with about 47,000 Irish people volunteering for the British forces and a further 120,000 going to work in Britain and Northern Ireland.[117] This fact and then the ongoing stream of rural Irish out of the country following the war prompted the first Inter-Party government to initiate the Commission on Emigration, 1948. The Report was not published until six years later, during which time the Commission had met 115 times and conducted significant research. The primary motivator, though obvious now, was the lure of the urban, the foreign and the material, for these young rural people to whom "rural areas appear dull, drab, monotonous, backward and lonely."[118] The Report was unambiguous in its finding that the root of the problem was the lack of social and economic investment in rural Ireland, recommending the State to invest in social infrastructure such as community centres and better transport, postal and social services.[119] Importantly, as Tracey Connolly summarises, the Report was radical in that it pointed to tangible and contemporary reasons for the emigration epidemic *within* Irish society.[120] It no longer employed the usual post-colonial tactic of blaming Britain for the high-rate of emigration: the problem resided within Ireland's own structures.

This finding, while negative and incriminating in itself was significant in showing an emerging side to Irish culture that was less about finger-pointing to the colonial past and more about rationalising contemporary society so as to create better material conditions. At least, it certainly represented a *theoretical* shift that would begin to be made manifest in *practice* by the end of the decade through the economic principles of the young Finance Secretary, T. K. Whittaker. In the meantime, there was plenty of cultural observation and discourse that celebrated this shift in thinking. As architect-critic John O'Gorman wrote in the first of a series of architectural articles for the *Sunday Independent* in January 1953:

> It appears that the political fervour of twenty-five years ago is now sublimated in cultural activity. Indeed, it may well be that the youthful revolutionaries, who once treated our public buildings with such scant respect, can now in middle age

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[116] Wilfred Cantwell, "Table E", "Report on the present difficulties in Building Industry with special reference to the position of Architects" (prepared for the RIAI, March 1957)
[117] Henry Patterson, *Ireland Since 1939* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p.57
[118] Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems", (CEOP) 1948-54, p.136, cited by Tracey Connolly, "The Commission on Emigration, 1948-54" in Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O'Shea and Carmel Quinlan (eds.), *The Lost Decade. Ireland in the 1950s* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), p.91
[119] CEOP, p.155 and p.176, cited in Connolly, ibid., p.101
[120] Ibid., p.103

> contemplate the Royal Arms with equanimity, provided the carving has been executed with sufficient skill.[121]

O'Gorman observed that where once "inherited" culture (such as the Georgian built environment) was cast aside by politics, by then (1952) the political establishment sought a more "cultural" image for itself and was using culture accordingly. For instance, probably referencing recent CIE and ESB architectural projects, O'Gorman commented that "Much of our best architecture is now created under the patronage of the State."[122]

Another curiously positive aspect, albeit wholly ironic, of the post-Emergency/1950s emigration epidemic was the fact that emigration meant more cultural contact with the foreign world. Few historians acknowledged this, beyond analysing Ireland's burgeoning international profile and foreign policy, until Terence Brown's cultural study of 1981, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History*.[123] Brown argues that among several contributory features, the mass-employment and economic absorption of the uneducated Irish in Britain amounted to an intertwining of the two economies, whereby Ireland and especially Dublin was a "social province of the United Kingdom" absorbing "the values of the capitalist mixed economy on the neighbouring island."[124] He points to the popularisation of British habits and tastes in 1950s Ireland from BBC radio and English First Division football, to British home furnishings and styles of dress. Beyond Britain, Ireland tried to join the United Nations in 1946 (but was prevented by the Soviet Union veto until 1956), then refused to join NATO in 1949 due to partition and in the same year, under the Inter-Party government, became a Republic outside the British Commonwealth of Nations. So, there was an element of political push away from Britain but the pull of British popular culture ensured that a distinctively Irish way of life, from the bottom up, was not to be.

Contact with the foreign world was a natural inclination for the Irish architectural community, not least in the post-war period. As we will examine in chapter three, it was from 1946 onwards that a select few Irish architects joined the centrally important *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* or CIAM. That same year the Paris-based *Reunions Internationales d'Architectes* invited the AAI to become its affiliated Irish body;[125] the AAI passed the invitation to the more professional body, the RIAI and from

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[121] John O'Gorman, "Better Building - Introducing a Series of Articles on the Irish Architecture of Today" in *Sunday Independent,* January 1953, initiated by the RIAI and AAI, Joint Public Relations Committee

[122] Ibid.

[123] This is a rather glib and sweeping statement by me. The historian JJ Lee was always cognisant of the link between Irish and British structures post-Independence. For example, in relation to the post-war economies and the development of the welfare states of Britain and Ireland he wrote: "Developments towards a welfare state after the war would owe more to English example than to indigenous impulse." J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912 - 1985: Politics and Society* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), p. 262

[124] Terence Brown, *Ireland. A Social and Cultural History* (London: Harper Perennial, 2004), p.205

[125] See "Annual Report of Session 1945/46" in *Green Book* (Dublin: Architectural Association of Ireland, 1946/47), p.29

1947 there was sporadic correspondence with the international organisation. While the mostly education-oriented AAI continued with its lecture programme, the RIAI became host to a curious assortment of exhibitions, international and otherwise, throughout the 1950s. Two factors contributed to this: firstly, the Inter-Party government set up an arts' advisory body within the Department of External Affairs, the Cultural Relations Committee (CRC) in 1949 which soon morphed into a new autonomous Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon), established in 1951. Both the CRC and the Arts Council thereafter kept firm links with the RIAI (probably through the membership of Michael Scott on the Arts Council) , assuming the Institute to be its architectural representative and thereby thrusting the RIAI into a new role of architectural diplomat for Ireland. The second factor was that the RIAI and AAI, under the influence of the post-war RIBA, decided to strengthen its public relations "machine" through a Joint Public Relations (PR) Committee.[126] The RIBA's "Public Relation Officer's Bulletins" recommended that the architectural community must engage with the public through the media and exhibitions, and accordingly the newly invigorated RIAI/AAI PR committee began to concentrate on such processes of public relations for the first time; a survey of the committee's meetings of 1951 show the genesis of a two-pronged PR approach in the form of exhibitions and journalism.[127]

The journalism ambition was quite notional: compared to the RIBA's campaign through BBC radio, the Irish attempt was negligible.[128] In a sense, the media aspect of the RIAI/AAI PR campaign was perceived as a back-up for exhibitions: as recorded in the committee minutes, "It is suggested that in future no exhibition organised by this committee be complete without articles appearing in the daily papers and a talk on the

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[126] It is unclear when this Joint PR Committee was originally founded as there is correspondence in the RIAI archives dating to 1938. However this is scant and the file shows that while the committee was running during the 1940s, it was sluggish: see "File #2, Joint Public Relations Committee 1938-47" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45

[127] Extracts from minutes, 5/3/51: "Memorandum on Exhibitions Generally: it is felt that exhibitions have greater impact if they are tied to a particular theme such as transport or decorative arts, hotel design, architect-designed furniture and churches, old and new." From minutes, 7/11/51: "the need to cultivate relationship with the press through writing letters to them; There should be permanent architectural display boards set up in libraries and art galleries... Competitions awards and medals create interest outside the profession, but the awards should not become cheap." From minutes, 13/12/51: "The President said that he felt that the Public Relations Committee should take greater interest in topical matters referred to in the press and should avail of every opportunity to write to the press on matters relating to architecture..." see "File #3, Joint Public Relations Committee 1939-51" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45

[128] For instance, a bulletin from the RIBA to the RIAI in April 1955 issued that the RIBA set up a subcommittee "to consider ways and means of increasing the number of programmes devoted to architectural subjects on both sound and television services of the BBC." The following programmes occurred from January 1955:Leslie Martin, "The Language of Architecture" January 24th; Maxwell Fry, "The Architect's Dilemma I and II" February; Richard Sheppard, "Some thoughts on German Architecture", February; Rev. H L Short, "Nonconformist Architecture" March; "German Architecture today"; Prof Robert Mathew ,"Science in Architecture", March; Dennis Bardens, "On the frontiers of Knowledge. The relationship of architecture to research, practice and teaching", March; David Jenkin, "This is the house that I built" on Women's Hour (light programme) April; Basil Spence, "The building of Coventry Cathedral", April; eye-witness, Basil Taylor on Mexican architecture exhibition, April; editor of *Architects Journal*, Daca Boyne on the "respective merits of the three schemes prepared for the Barbican site in the City" (this is part of PROSPECT series: monthly series of talks, "deals with architecture and planning under the general title "Prospect". These talks generally are given by architects and the series is to continue for the present." See "Public Relations Officers' Bulletin, No. 2", RIBA, in RIAI/AAI Joint PR Committee correspondence, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45

radio to publicise them."[129] The most significant journalistic contribution was the series of articles written for the *Sunday Independent* at the end of 1952, and published week-by-week in January 1953: "Better Buildings" by John O'Gorman; "The Impact of Town Planning" by Patrick M. Delaney; "Commercial Architecture" by Luan Cuffe; "Dublin" by John O'Gorman; "Church Building – A community Responsibility" by Michael Halton. The series had been initiated by a Mr. Legge, the paper's editor who sought "to educate public taste in architecture, particularly as it affects Dublin... [and]... to provide informed criticism of buildings".[130] The PR committee's aspiration was "the education of Public Taste and publicising of Architecture as such with a view to raising the standard of Design."[131] Interestingly, the controversy-shy RIAI did not want to attach its name to the series but only sought to instigate public debate through the articles. Throughout the later 1940s and into the 1950s, both the AAI and the RIAI were very concerned with the issue of public engagement. In a complex way, this was probably due to the fact that the modernist idiom (albeit a regional version) was by then the chosen aesthetic of the Irish architectural community – a choice not matched by the general public. The RIAI/AAI PR committee submitted in May 1953, "That this Conference notes with regret the failure of Architecture to make headway with the public at large."[132]

Returning to the exhibition medium as the primary cultural tool throughout the 1950s, the PR committee sought to engage with the public on Irish architecture while the Arts Council brought international material to the Irish audience and indeed, tried to push Irish architecture abroad. For the most part, the Arts Council was the driving force and often foisted exhibitions on the RIAI to host, for example an Indian exhibition combining "The Arts of India" with "Child-Art from India" in September 1954. In financially sponsoring such exhibitions, it wielded authority and introduced otherwise unseen international material to the RIAI through its connections with foreign embassies. Up to this, the RIAI had solely relied on its relationship with the RIBA, i.e. if the RIBA had an interesting exhibition and it was travelling from London to Northern Ireland, then the RIAI requested it for exhibit in Dublin. In February 1954, the RIAI requested the RIBA's exhibition on Danish Architecture but it had been sent back to Denmark the year before (!);[133] then in May 1955 the RIAI requested the RIBA's exhibition on Mexican Architecture, only to be told by the Arts Council that it would be too expensive to bring to Ireland. Instead, through its connections with the Italian Cultural Institute, the Arts

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[129] Meeting 5/3/51, ibid., "File #3, Joint Public Relations Committee 1939-51" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45

[130] Minutes of meeting 30/6/1952, Mr. Legge and RIAI/AAI Joint PR Committee, part of newspaper clippings folder, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/46

[131] Ibid. (capitalisation as part of original minutes)

[132] Minutes of meeting, 23rd May 1953, correspondence and minutes of the Joint Public Relations Committee 1939-51" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45 (capitalisation as part of original minutes)

[133] Letter 5th February 1954 from RIAI to Frank Yerbury RIBA, "Exhibitions Miscellaneous 1938 – 1954"in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/82

Council encouraged the RIAI to host an exhibition on "Photographs of Siena" which might run in conjunction with an exhibition on sacred art from Bologna.[134] As we will see in chapter four, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s displays of religious art and architecture were hugely popular both within and beyond the architectural community in Ireland. In the same way, the Arts Council engineered an exhibition on German architecture in May 1953 which was reviewed in gushing terms by the *Irish Builder and Engineer*'s critic Oriel. Again, the content of particular interest to the architects was the ecclesiastical work, both RC and Protestant, which as Oriel noted, tended "away from historical influences".[135]

The other little-discussed domain for architectural exhibits during the 1950s which extended beyond the hermetic context of the RIAI's offices on Merrion Square was the Dublin Municipal Gallery, Hugh Lane (referred to as the Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Parnell Square).[136] Exhibitions on sculpture ("Annual Exhibition of Sculpture" organised by The Institute of Sculptors of Ireland), ecclesiastic art and Dublin's archaeological history involved the architectural community, but the two Hugh Lane shows which were of serious interest to Irish architects of the 1950s were firstly the "Exhibition of Contemporary Swiss Architecture" in October 1955 (sponsored by the Arts Council and Swiss Legation) and then, "Built in the USA – Post-War Architecture" which was held for a week in December 1957.[137] With the AAI and the Municipal Gallery as co-hosts and organisers of an accompanying lecture programme, the real promoters of this latter event were the Americans; the exhibition had come over from the Museum of Modern Art in New York, through the American Information Service and the American Ambassador, William H. Taft III was there to open the proceedings.[138] Generally these exhibitions excited the architects but one wonders about their reception outside the art

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[134] In May 1955 the RIAI wrote to the RIBA about the exhibition of Mexican architecture and was told that the RIAI would have to pay for the exhibition's transport from the Hague to Dublin. In consultation with the Arts Council thereafter it was decided to forget the Mexican exhibition and on 14th October 1955 the Arts Council wrote to the RIAI: "Mr. Richardson reported that the Exhibition could be obtained at a cost not exceeding £10 to the Institute. It was DECIDED not to obtain the Exhibition, but that the Exhibition of Photographs of Sienna should be obtained from the Italian Cultural Institute, and that the possibility of obtaining the Exhibition of Sacred Architecture at Bologna should be investigated." See "Exhibitions – Miscellaneous and Proposed, from 1955", in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47
The following correspondence shows how the Arts Council thrust the Siennese exhibition on the RIAI: letter from Dr. Liam O'Sullivan (Arts Council) to Wilfred Cantwell, 3rd May 1955, "The Italian Cultural Institute is merely providing the exhibition, and asked us to help in organising it. I was thinking that it should be sponsored directly by An Chomhairle Ealaíon and we could ask Mr. Curtin to mount it and I would give him a hand. IF the Inst of arch wishes to take over and do the mounting it does not make very much difference. In any case, we will pay all reasonable costs for advertising, transport of photographs etc. to and from your premises." See Joint PR Committee correspondence, 1955 in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/45

[135] "Oriel's Log", *Irish Builder and Engineer* (23rd May, 1953), p.520

[136] The connection between the gallery, the Arts Council and architectural interests appears to have been the Hugh Lane director, James White and Arts Council member Michael Scott.

[137] There is little archival material pertaining to exhibitions at the Hugh Lane Gallery. This author found small exhibition catalogues from the 1940s-1960s in the Hugh Lane Library, file "Exhibition Catalogues held in the Hugh Lane" which included several of the "Annual Exhibition of Sculpture" but nothing on either the Swiss or American architecture exhibitions. Interestingly, the sculpture catalogues included foreword by architect Daithi Hanly (catalogue 1955-59) and a lecture by Luan Cuffe (1959).

[138] See exhibition details (i.e. announcement) in *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1957), p.42

and architectural community. There was scant or no coverage in the daily newspapers,[139] but it is suggestive from the gallery's opening hours (until 9pm three nights per week!) that there was an audience for exhibitions.[140] After all in the absence of widespread television the exhibition was an essential mechanism for visual communication on issues of social interest (for instance, the planning or anti-tuberculosis exhibitions at the Mansion House) and indeed on architectural matters (as we will see in chapter three, there were two exhibitions related to municipal housing during the 1930s in the Mansion House).

Arguably the most significant exhibition during this period, because it was curated by the RIAI and was both a tool for Arts Council propaganda abroad and a means of describing recent Irish architecture to the Irish public, was the "Better Buildings"/"Exhibition of Irish architecture"/"Focus" exhibition of 1950 – 53. It began its life as a short-term exhibition of contemporary Irish architecture called "Better Buildings" which was to accompany the annual meeting of the Town Planning Institute, and elicited the RIAI members' inclusion and involvement in a most democratic way: in February 1950 RIAI members were circularised, asking that they suggest suitable works for exhibition which would "have a popular appeal and will be restricted to models, perspectives and axonometric drawings etc. of proposed schemes and photographs of completed buildings. Examples of housing lay-outs, civic design and village planning will be of special interest."[141] The RIAI seemed intent to include state work, inviting the Department of Health's architect Norman White to submit schemes and Sean McBride, Minister of External Affairs to open the exhibition in May 1950. It was published in the RIAI Yearbook 1950/51 (figures 1.32 - 1.34), where the Institute claimed, "It is hoped that the Better Buildings Exhibition will be forerunner of many similar exhibitions of equal interest to the layman as well as the architect".[142]

Indeed, it was a forerunner. Soon, with the push of the Cultural Relations Committee (CRC), this show was to become the basis of the "Exhibition of Irish Architecture", part of a Belgian-Irish exchange, which would bring the so-called "Antwerp Exhibition of architectural photography" to the RIAI in 1952 while sending the Irish display to Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Paris, an architectural centre in Switzerland and the

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[139] For example, this author found short advertisements for "Building in Germany", May 1953 in the *Irish Times, Irish Independent* and *The Irish Press* but found no record of the American or Swiss exhibitions in the daily newspapers, Proquest search, October 2010

[140] See Municipal Gallery opening hours: Wednesday/Friday/Saturday 10am – 9pm; Monday/Tuesday 10am – 6pm; Thursday 10am – 12.30 pm; Sunday 11am – 6pm , as laid out on cover of "Third Annual Exhibition of Sculpture", 1953, Hugh Lane Library, file "Exhibition Catalogues held in the Hugh Lane", Charlemont House, Parnell Square. I am grateful to Logan Sisley, curator at the Hugh Lane for verifying these opening dates for me, November 2010.

[141] See File "Exhibition of Architectural Models etc, 19th – 30th May, Better Building", no. 7, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/61

[142] "The Better Buildings Exhibition, 19th-27th May 1950" in *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1950/51), p.26

RIBA, London.[143] Rather than being imposed on the RIAI by the CRC, this exhibition came out of the RIAI membership thereby reflecting both the profession's view of its recent endeavour and the burgeoning historiography of Irish architecture. The array of contemporary projects was added to by invited curator and historian, Maurice Craig who made a selection of Irish "Renaissance" (rather than the more restrictive "Georgian" label) architecture. As such there were six screens displaying architecture from 1660-1860 and eight screens dedicated to post-1940 examples (figure 1.35). In Craig's introductory essay, he justified the exclusion of Early Christian and Medieval architecture, stating that the "classic phase from 1660 until 1840...is the only phase which variety of purpose, conscious urban siting and planning, and general scale, may be considered comparable to the building of our own day."[144] Though beyond the scope of this thesis' intent and discussion, it is interesting to note the historiography emerging from the exhibition: in creating an intellectual and aesthetic symbiosis between the contemporary and the Georgian (or so-called Irish Renaissance), Craig was inadvertently setting up the basis of the later 1970s conservation movement.[145] Along with the marked alignment of the two periods, the exhibition signalled another progressive stage in the appreciation of Irish Georgian architecture which as chapter three explores, had just undergone some kind of championing through Dublin Corporation's reconditioning programme of the 1940s. In a letter to the RIAI, the young Irish architect Brian Hogan (later to form Tyndall Hogan Hurley architects) described the reception of the exhibition at the RIBA: "The exhibition of Irish Architecture at RIBA seems to have been well attended. Very neatly and tastefully presented, it was revelation I think, to some London Architects of the amount of good Renaissance in Ireland."[146]

The exhibition returned to Ireland and in early 1953 it morphed once again as it was appropriated as the architectural exhibit for the inaugural An Tostal (meaning "at home"), an annual festival celebrating Irish culture which was designed to attract emigrant-tourists to Ireland.[147] In this context it was entitled "Focus" and travelled around the country. The content was similar to that of the "Better Buildings" show but

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[143] The earliest correspondence on the Antwerp exchange was in November 1951, see file "Antwerp Photographs" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/61. The list of venues comes from "Irish Architecture. The Antwerp Exhibition" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (15th March, 1952), p.269

[144] Maurice Craig, exhibition introduction, unpublished typescript from catalogue "Exhibition of Irish Architecture" or "Irish Architecture, Renaissance and Modern", 1952, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/61. According to one note, the Georgian buildings were photographed by Father Francis Browne.

[145] As current research shows, Dublin's conservation debacles from c.1960-c.85 are deserving of a separate PhD study, see Erica Hanna's recently-complete thesis "Planning, Preservation and Heritage in Dublin, 1950 – 1980", Oxford University, 2010 (supervised, Professor Roy Foster). In mentioning the 1970s movement rather than the earliest 1960s debates, I am pointing out how the architectural community had become reconciled to the traditional city, citing the footprint and skyline of the Georgian squares as an influence by the 1970s; see thesis conclusion and reference to Robin Walker and Stephen Woulfe Flanagan, "Street Infill" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Dublin. A City in Crisis* (Dublin: R.I.A.I., 1975)

[146] Letter 8th November 1952, from Brian Hogan living in Bexley Kent to the RIAI, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/46

[147] For Oireachtas debates on An Tostal, see http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0139/D.0139.195306160034.html.For a scathing architectural critique of the festivities, see "Oriel's Log", *Irish Builder and Engineer* (25th April 1953), p.421

was limited to photography and was somewhat more extensive typologically so that it contained photographs of industrial, religious, domestic and recreational buildings as well as miscellaneous monuments, park features and civic furniture. Maurice Craig praised the structures on display stating, "...the best modern Irish architecture shows both an awareness of modern trends in Europe and America, and some relationship towards the great building eras of the past."[148] Housing had the biggest presence (taking three screens) but as chapter three discusses, it was represented by an unsatisfactory hotchpotch of schemes. The most meaningful selection was inarguably the industrial buildings, comprising FitzGerald's Cathleen's Falls project and airport terminal, the mid-erection bus station in Dublin (two photographs), three factories (the Harvester Factory by Nolan and Quinlan, Santry, the Aspro and the Chassis) and the Institute for Industrial Research Standards (see chapter three). Bizarrely, as they constituted the biggest official building programmes after housing, hospitals and schools were drawn together in one screen while a screen was dedicated to an assortment of badly-lit shop and pub interiors/renovations. Possibly the most revealing sections of the exhibition in terms of both the limitation and aspirations of early 1950s Irish architecture, were the panels displaying churches and building miscellanea; firstly because they evidenced the extent of recent religious architecture and secondly, because the miscellanea from park shelters to anonymous pedestrian bridges acknowledged the reality of the tiny-scale of many Irish commissions. Luan Cuffe noted that "Of the churches and presbyteries...we can but say that the standard is high, but the effect rather dull."[149] And then he singled out Daithi Hanly's kiosk (figure 1.36) and Vincent Kelly's bus shelter (figure 1.37) for praise, calling them "attractive civic furniture."[150]

This almost humorous juxtaposition of large and small projects seems to have been a harsh factor of the culture of 1950s Irish architecture. Alan Hope's 1953 exposé of modern Irish architecture for the UK journal *The Builder* expressed a similar shift in scale in, for example his illustration of Vincent Kelly's *oeuvre* by placing an image of Kelly's five-storey monolithic nurses' home (Grangegorman psychiatric hospital, 1947) above an image of his bus shelter (Lucan, late 1940s) (figure 1.37).[151] The reality was that large-scale projects were confined to a handful of official or semi-state schemes, namely the TB sanatoria (chapter two), the Dublin bus station and the ESB and Bord na Mona infrastructural projects. There was little else occurring in public building; school building in Ireland was domestic in scale and factory building, for the most part, happened outside the realm of architecture. The various architectural competitions from

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[148] Maurice Craig, exhibition introduction, unpublished typescript from catalogue "Exhibition of Irish Architecture" or "Irish Architecture, Renaissance and Modern", 1952, in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/61
[149] Luan Cuffe, "Exhibition for Export" in *Irish Engineering Journal* (January 1952), p.26
[150] Ibid.
[151] Alan Hope, "Architecture in Ireland: a Review of Some Current Examples" in *The Builder* (11th December 1953), p.914-930; the projects by Vincent Kelly are illustrated on p.920

the 1950s are significant to this narrative in emphasising the baseline of lowly projects that was contemporary Irish architecture, such as competitions for the design of high altar candlesticks (1949, promoted by metal work firm J. McGloughlin), of a petrol station (1952, for Irish Shell), of a full-scale model house (1953, promoted by the British Ideal Homes fair, see chapter three), of an outdoor grotto (1954, promoted by Carrickmacross Urban District Council, Co. Monaghan) and of a lamp standard for Ireland's urban streets (1958, promoted by Dublin Corporation). However, distractingly, this baseline was occasionally lifted out of its "humility" by certain larger public building competitions such as those for Coventry Cathedral (Coventry, 1950) or the South Bank development (London, 1951) to which Irish architects were invited to contribute, and closer to home, a headquarters building for the Dublin Port and Docks Board (1953), a RC parish church for South Dublin (Clonskeagh, 1954, see chapter four) and a set of VEC schools for Co. Donegal (1954).[152]

### ***The 1950s' mixed fortunes:***

*Surreal writing, New Empiricism and the endurance of British influence, AAI lectures and a bus station for Dublin*

The listing of architectural exhibitions and competitions helps to describe the variety, or rather *eccentricity* in breath, scale and intention of Irish architectural culture during the 1950s. Similarly, much of the writing in the architectural "press", especially in the yearbooks of the AAI and RIAI, was eccentric and surreal in tone, belying a defensive cynicism directed towards Ireland's ever-growing bureaucratic structures and ever-restrictive moral codes. As the anonymous pen of "Rebel Masonry" in 1950 wrote:

> It is not true that the post-Treaty generation has not seen fine building: has it, perhaps, Sinn Fein building? Is there a hierarchitect in the audience?
> Great buildings now are offices, schools, lazar-houses; the Magnifico is an Assistant Principled Administrative Clerk, unfee-simple he, and it remains to be said that he is not directly blameworthy for the new horizon... Who is responsible for the architecture? Other petty bourgeois communities build decently and with dignity. That could be done in Ireland even without the establishment of an educational system. The machinery is there - a Board of Censors, a Legion of Decency could be set up readily. Its composition would most usefully be limited to an enlightened, intolerant parson (stet), who would, of course, be.[153]

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[152] This list of competitions comes from author's analysis of competitions correspondence in RIAI archive, boxes 42, 62 and 104,: I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/42; Box 93/136/62 and Box 93/136/104

[153] Anonymous, "Rebel Masonry" in *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1950/51), p.23-24

It was not coincidental that one of the most vocal architects of the time, Niall Montgomery (1915-1987 - on the RIAI Council from 1952-82), was a close friend of the civil servant/surrealist novelist/sardonic journalist, Brian O'Nolan also known by his pennames Flann O'Brien and Myles na Gopaleen, and that according to anecdotal sources, Montgomery would often (anonymously) write O'Nolan's "Cruiskeen Lawn" column in the *Irish Times*.[154] Critic Joseph Brooker suggests that a group of writers (friends) and a type of humorous writing emerged around O'Nolan from the 1930s through the 1950s, which should be read as "a satirical cadre, developing a collective style and deliberately submerging individual identities behind textual facades."[155] I would suggest that Montgomery, writing either anonymously or pseudonymously, was behind much of the whimsical discourse to be found in the architecture yearbooks during the 1950s. Another example, "Away with Leinster House" by Arquebus from 1952, set up a mock architectural competition for the redesign of the Irish parliamentary building, with the RIAI writing to the increasingly pervasive (and in the writer's mind the increasingly xenophobic and nationalist), Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA):

> Our first letter to the GAA was returned marked "unread" as it had, through inadvertence, been typed on paper not bearing an Irish watermark. Our second letter elicited a prompt and courteous reply intimating that it would be most unwise to entrust this important work to any Irish architect...A prominent Dublin architect expressed similar views. "This class of building is not our cupatee at all", he said, "Sure we are only plastherers in the true sense of the word."[156]

According to Arquebus, it was decided following this rebuff, to set up a committee to solve the problem. Arquebus referenced the contemporary political penchant for commissions and committees, whilst trivialising the new discipline of sociology and satirising typical post-war modernist architectural discourse:

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[154] My anecdotal sources on Niall Montgomery come out of informal conversations with Dr. Sean Rothery and Dr. Eddie McParland. See Lawrence William White's entry on Montgomery in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge: CUP, Royal Irish Academy, 2009). Montgomery was defined as "architect, poet, Joyce scholar, well-known Dublin wit and close friend of Brian O'Nolan" in Margaret Heckard, John Stanislaus Joyce. "The Literary Reverberations of a Fake Interview with John Stanislaus Joyce" in *James Joyce Quarterly* (Vol. 13, No. 4, Summer 1976), p.468, available through www.jstor.org. For a history of Montgomery's relationship with O'Nolan see Joseph Brooker, "Children of Destiny: Brian O'Nolan and the Irish Ready-made School", available at http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/172/1/brooker4.pdf. According to Brooker, Montgomery and O'Nolan had a journal in UCD together, *Comhthrom Feinne* (Fair Play) from 1931. Brooker states that Montgomery and others (O'Nolan's brother Ciaran, Niall Sheridan and Donagh McDonagh) often wrote "Cruiskeen Lawn" articles and resultantly, it is unclear who the author is of any of the columns.

[155] Ibid., Joseph Brooker, "Children of Destiny: Brian O'Nolan and the Irish Ready-made School", p.2

[156] Arquebus, "Away with Leinster House" in *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1951/52), p.42-45

> The committee, after forty-seven sittings, decided unanimously to set up a Study Group to prepare the design. The Study Group... included two sociologists, three psychiatrists, a mass observationist, an educationalist, a saxophonist, a taxidermist, and a student of juvenile delinquency. An architect was employed to draw up the blueprints... [study group's findings:] We have conceived our problem not as one of providing accommodation inside the walls of a building- the methods of our ancestors and we fear, of too many of our contemporaries – but as one of *enclosing* three-dimensional space within an integrated physical envelope. We have not concerned ourselves with "requirements," floor areas, circulation – the banalities of so-called planning – but with harmonious synthesis in technological terms of the needs of Man as a social animal in symbiotic relation to his visual environment... In the treatment of the site, special consideration has been given to the most modern interpretation of spatial relationships. Not only is the exterior, through the medium of a plate glass screen wall, designed to flow into the interior, but, and this we regard as a significant advance, the interior is designed to flow into the exterior.[157]

Beneath this 1950s whimsy, born we might say out of a self-protective scepticism around the undervaluing of architecture within Irish society, was a very firm and stable knowledge of and respect for the British example. And this grew following the war as indeed British architectural culture itself developed and became more dominant internationally through journals (*Architectural Review* (AR), *Architectural Design* (AD)and to a lesser extent *The Architects' Journal* (AJ)) and the Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group, as the British wing of the CIAM. Notably, as chapter three explores, the first post-war CIAM meeting happened in Britain in 1947. Undoubtedly the most visible urban reconstruction celebration in Europe following the war was London's Festival of Britain from 1951 (figure 1.38). The Festival was erected out of temporary exhibition pavilions on a bombed-out site on London's South Bank. There was a concourse stretching along the river bank from Waterloo Station to the Festival's apotheosis, an aluminium and steel "floating" obelisk entitled the Skylon (1951, designed by Philip Powell, Hidalgo Moya and engineer Felix Samuely). Bringing the event from ephemeral municipal theatrics to actual post-war architectural and urban concerns were two structures: the Royal Festival Hall (South Bank, 1947-51, by London County Council (LCC) architects, Leslie Martin, Robert Mathew and Peter Moro) and the Lansbury Estate (East London, 1951, Frederick Gibberd). The Hall was a white-washed curvy modernist monument to post-war optimism which was mostly admired for the fact that it was built at all (in as short a time as three years) considering material constraints. The Lansbury

[157] Ibid., p.45-49

Estate however was more contentious in what it said about urban development, housing and "how we might live" in a post-war world. During the Festival, the estate hosted a "Live Architecture Exhibition" comprising a series of pavilions which espoused various aspects of post-war planning and construction. But it was the urban core of the Estate which was the real "live" exhibit as Gibberd and the LCC architects had shaped a New Town in terms of visually-grouped neighbourhoods of houses, flats, shops and so on, all linked by means of walkways. It was dominated by the Chrisp Street Market, made up of two pedestrian streets and a tower and its aesthetic of pitched roofs and facades of yellow London stock brick, articulated by small windows, tried to evoke some kind of futuristic-past to which we will come shortly (figure 1.39).[158]

Rather inevitably, the Irish architects were enchanted by the event. James Fehily (an architecture student at UCD from 1949-54 and later Professor of Planning, UCD) recalls how UCD organised a study tour to the Festival in 1951 for the students. Describing the trip he says, "We were agog at the sheer scale of everything: the new buildings going up, office blocks! And it was so "multi-racial". We couldn't believe our eyes. It all made a massive impression."[159] The new journal (founded in 1950) *Irish Architect and Contractor* covered some aspect of the Festival nearly every month throughout 1951. And the AAI hosted two lectures on it in 1951 (by the Festival's Director of Architecture, Hugh Casson and by the Skylon architect, Philip Moya) and one post-Festival appraisal lecture in 1952 (by the *Architectural Review* editor, J. M. Richards).[160] But the influence went deeper than lectures and articles. In February 1952 as the RIAI organised its latest architectural competition for a garage/petrol station on behalf of Irish Shell, Gerald McNicholl of the competition committee wrote to the art editor of The Architectural Press (publisher of *AR* and *AJ*) asking if the Irish contingent could adopt a different alphabet to that being advocated by British Shell (Gill Bold): "but we (influenced perhaps by the *Review*) favour the fine alphabets used for external display at the Festival."[161] The RIAI hoped to include a copy of the "Festival" alphabet in the competition conditions and the designer, a Mr. Hasler responded to give permission and instructed the RIAI to follow up with the Belfast office of the Festival.[162]

The RIAI had hit the nail on the head – the art editor with whom McNicholl corresponded was the famous graphic genius, Gordon Cullen and as McNicholl's query

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[158] My account of the Festival of Britain (architecture and its reception) comes from Mary Banham and Bevis Hillier (eds.), *A Tonic to the Nation. The Festival of Britain 1951* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976); Alan Powers, *Britain. Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), p.83-83 and Lionel Esher, *The Rebuilding of England 1940 – 1980. A Broken Wave* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), p.105. For more on the Lansbury Estate, see http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46490

[159] James Fehily, oral history account with author, July 2010, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

[160] The Skylon's engineer, Felix Samuely also lectured to the AAI in 1950 on "New Developments in Structural Form"; see annual report 1950/51 in *Green Book* joint 1949/51 (Dublin: AAI, 1949-51), p.30-31

[161] Letter 27th February 1952 from Gerald McNicholl to Gordon Cullen, The Architectural Press, in "Miscellaneous competitions" in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/62

[162] Letter 11th March 1952 from Cullen to McNicholl, ibid.

inferred, the *Architectural Review* was behind the overall design (from graphic to urban) of the Festival of Britain. In motivation, the Festival of Britain was an apolitical and aesthetic event designed (according to the catchphrase) to be a "tonic to the nation" at a time of post-war austerity. Its physiognomy had emanated from the design philosophy of the *Architectural Review* through the increasingly influential collaboration of J. M. Richards (who we meet later in our discussion of suburbs) and Cullen, bringing about the idea and graphic approach of "Townscape". In the main, Townscape was an alternative reaction to the growing systemisation of architecture which, as chapter three discusses, was of great relevance to the European and American housing shortage whereby prefabrication and modular systems were considered the solution. *Architectural Design* became the cultural vehicle for system building in Britain, promoting modular design with its inclusion of "Modular Design Information Sheets" – charts on gridded paper designed to explain, step-by-step, the modular design process, which could be torn out and filed in office records (figure 1.40).[163] Unlike the universalism at play with modularisation, Townscape was an English phenomenon coming out of the picturesque tradition. As such it was a highly visual school of thought, expressed through a series of case-books which described a more psychologically and emotionally attuned built environment, wherein all elements from road surface to railing to sign were relevant and interrelated. Like *Architectural Design*'s modular sheets, the Townscape architects peddled their approach through a journal (*AR*) by means of easy-to-follow detailed drawings (figure 1.41).

Emmett Scanlon's study of architectural discourse in 1950s Britain pitches the "Modular architects" (for example, the Modular Society founded in 1953) and the Townscape school or movement at opposing poles. Where the Modular proponents made scientific links between the human body and building components, in pursuit of an increasingly homogenised, mass-produced and machine-made environment, Scanlon describes Townscape as: "a practice, fundamentally and totally dependent on the recognition of existing phenomena in the built world as the triggers or guides for the construction of the new world."[164] Townscape consciously relied on the existing, the traditional and the vernacular so as to generate a new post-war environment. Similarly, Lionel Esher breaks down 1950s British architectural culture and production into "hard" and "soft" movements. This has particular relevance for our discussion on mass housing in chapter three as Esher uses the architects of LCC as his case-study to show how the so-called "soft" architecture was a continuation of pre-war tendencies (mid to high rise mixed-housing typologies with pitched roofs and dominated by brick). In describing the emerging "hard" school, Esher explains that they were "...weaned on Le Corbusier's

[163] Emmet Scanlon, "Assembling a Collective. Townscape and Modular Design in England", *Tracings* (UCD School of Architecture journal, Volume 2, Autumn 2002),p.96
[164] Emmett Scanlon, ibid., p.92

recourse to the sculptural use of concrete, in close touch with the Smithsons' New Brutalism, their concern was less with the assumed desires of consumers, whether they were councillors or residents, than with the totality of London."[165] Other labels for the same territory were New Empiricism ("soft") - derived from a Swedish form of 'mild' modernism with shallow pitched roof, overhang and brick - versus New Brutalism ("hard") – derived from a rawer mixture of materials (concrete and steel) and form, as well as an exaggeration of function.[166]

As they affected the Irish context, these supposed dichotomies running through post-war British architectural modernism were different sides of the same coin. In a way it was about taking artistic control of the built environment in a realigned modernist world. After all, builders and engineers were more often than not leading the way. In Ireland, the influence of large contractors on building technology, and subsequently architectural form, was increasing. For example, G. + T. Crampton began to host demonstrations for architects at their workshops such as a pre-stressed concrete demonstration in December 1954 or a tour for architects to view new concrete products at their sister business, Clondalkin Concrete in December 1950.[167] Out of these concerns, the dominant influence on Irish architectural culture throughout the 1950s, only to be toppled by the Miesian approach (after Mies van der Rohe) by the mid-1960s, was that of the *Architectural Review*'s Townscape, or Esher's "soft" LCC modernism. Gibberd's Lansbury Estate, in its nostalgic evocation of a European market town which was at once *situated* in a tradition while hewn out of concrete frame and founded on the idea of modernist urban control, worked like an architectural metaphor for what could be done. The controlling aspect of the Lansbury or Townscape approach was more digestible than earlier utopian urban visions of the 1920s and 30s as it was disguised by fake informality. For example, as opposed to stringing the mass housing out in terraces or through repetitive blocks of flats (both approaches being orthogonal), the housing in Lansbury was grouped around small open spaces, varied in size and shape, to give an impression of informality. Importantly, the Townscape approach seemed to emphasise human experience and movement and placed as much significance on detail or urban minutiae as it did on the overall streetscape. This was in keeping with the oft-tiny scale

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[165] Lionel Esher, *The Rebuilding of England 1940 – 1980. A Broken Wave* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), p.107

[166] This dichotomy represents the historiography of mid-century British architecture. It is discussed in all twentieth-century British architectural histories, see Alan Powers, *Britain. Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), p.81-85 and p.98-100

[167] "Precision Built House on view to architects at Clondalkin" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (January 1951), p.45-46 and "Editorial" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (1st January 1955), p.10. The plant was also visited by the AAI during its 1949/50 session.
According to the *Irish Builder* and to Ruth McManus's research into Crampton builders (*Crampton Built* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 2008), many Irish construction companies sent their employees to the Olympia exhibition of building techniques and materials in London, throughout the 1950s: for accounts of these visits see *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (14th March 1953), p. 261 and *Irish* Builder (18th July 1953), p.745. According to one account in *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, Crampton employees were also sent to England on courses run by the Cement and Concrete Association, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (June 1958), p.465

of urban commissions confronting Irish architects during the 1950s: from a folly in the Custom House lawn, to a bus shelter in a Dublin suburb or an ESB substation in a regional town. We recall that two of the most engaging design quests of the period, the ideas-based competitions for the Irish Shell garage and the Dublin Corporation lamp standard, were about the design of architectural accessories or civic furniture rather than civic space.

In embracing this softer side of post-war modernism, Irish mid-century modern architecture opted for an aesthetic of shallow or mono-pitch roof, mixed almost patchy materials for cladding and elevations and a smaller more domestic scale for public and residential architecture alike. A good example of such (in)formalism can be seen in Desmond Martin's Ballsbridge College of Domestic Economy (1949) which was displayed in the schools/hospitals section of the "Better Buildings"/"Focus" exhibition (figures 1.33 – 1.34). Occupying a difficult site which dropped down to the River Dodder at the rear and was fronted by a busy street, Martin's education building was an essay in variation and texture: externally on the street front, three blocks of varying height(s) from one to three storeys appear to slide, rather than collide, into and behind each other forming screen walls. One was clad in tiles, another in brick, another in render. A deep cut into these sliding planes revealed the informally-placed main entrance under a concrete canopy. The combined effect of these shifting planes, levels and materials, all carved out of straight lines, amounted to a dynamic building which importantly was small and unimposing in relation to its block. The ultimate source for this Townscape approach was 1940s Swedish architecture. In an article entitled "The New Empiricism. Sweden's Latest Style", J. M. Richards defined a new style for the disillusioned post-war architectural community who, disillusioned by some of the technological implications of the Second World War, were at once suspicious of technology yet keen to harness it and afraid to jettison hard-won functionalism:

> In countries like Sweden which were able through the war to go on developing a modern architectural philosophy, new theories are beginning to take shape and new forms are giving them substance. So far no strong reaction is evident against the principles upon which functionalism was founded... The tendency is rather, both to humanise the theory on its aesthetic side and to get back to the earlier rationalism on the technical side... it is an attempt to be more objective than the functionalists and to bring back another science, that of psychology, into the picture.[168]

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[168] J. M. Richards, "The New Empiricism. Sweden's Latest Style" in *Architectural Review* (September 1948), p.199

Illustrating his thesis with three examples of recent domestic architecture, all of which were low-rise prefabricated structures embedded in stunning vegetal surrounds (see figures 3.154-3.156), Richards pointed out the newfound relationship between practical planning and spiritual experience as embodied in this Swedish idiom. Immediately evident in Richards' examples was the lack of streamlining, the variety of materials and the sense that each project was responding to a particular brief and context (figures 1.42 + 1.43).

This ideological deference to Sweden certainly tallied with Ireland's adoption of the softer side of modernism. One might refer to the photograph of Raymond McGrath's park shelter for the Phoenix Park (1956, Office of Public Works, figure 1.44) alongside that of Sven Markelius' house as it was published in *AR* (1946, figure 3.154), to find a moment of explicit emulation – the image of the fair-haired child at play in front of the contemporary structure was a potent symbol of mid-century potential and situated modernism. From the earliest days of the Free State, Ireland had upheld the Scandinavian example and with the common experience of neutrality during the war, the upstanding welfare state of Sweden had risen to the top of educated middle-class Ireland's "aspiration pile". By the early 1950s, according to oral history accounts, young Irish architects were transfixed with the Swedish state and its efficiency, its gentleness and what they perceived as its respect for both technology and nature.[169] Of course, it was anti-Catholic but that could be excused. James Fehily recounts how he and fellow architectural students worked in a farm garden ten miles outside Stockholm in 1953.[170] Being regular readers of *AR* at UCD, their minds' eyes were full of the Scandinavian ideal while the *Irish Builder and Engineer* regularly published short reviews of Swedish buildings and technological development in the early 1950s, most notably a long review of the paradigmatic Swedish New Town of Vallinby in February 1955.[171] Sweden (and indeed other pockets of Northern and Central Europe) was the cultural yardstick - as Gerald McNicholl, President of the RIAI in 1956/7 stated in reaction to the recent development of social housing in the Dublin suburb of Ballyfermot, "Yet there are architects here in Ireland as able and as sensitive as those of Switzerland or Sweden."[172] More generally, in terms of the ongoing and general influence of Scandinavian design principles, there were AAI lectures in 1938 (February 14th, "Recent Developments in

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[169] James Fehily, oral history account with author, July 2010, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath and Jack O'Keefe, oral history account with author, April 2008, Dundrum, Dublin

[170] "We went to Stockholm in the summer of 1953 to work in gardens. I loved the landscape –the design of the streets and the extent of the open space and the preservation of trees...Scandinavian influence was more digestible for Irish society. It was very civilised." James Fehily, oral history account with author, July 2010, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath

[171] Vallingby review, *Irish Builder and Engineer* (12th February 1955), p.145. It is interesting to note that for every AAI lecture on a Scandinavian subject during the 1940s and 50s, there were four articles on specifically Swedish architectural phenomena in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* during the early 1950s. For example, an overview of the journal in 1952 reveals articles on Swedish nuclear bunkers, banking architecture at Malmo, hotel architecture in Stockhom and at least two pieces on system building for Swedish housing.

[172] Gerald McNicholl, address, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1956 -7), p.10

Swedish Architecture and Decoration" by Frank Yerbury); in 1946 (January 8th, an updated "Recent Developments in Swedish Architecture and Decoration" by Frank Yerbury); in 1948 ("Trends in Swedish Architecture and Town Planning" by T.W. Olsson); in 1949 ("Danish Architecture" by Mogens Didriksen); and in 1950 ("Tour through Denmark, Sweden and Holland" by Frank Toni).

As an aside, it is important to note that for the twentieth-century architectural historian, the AAI lecture series becomes a reflection of the Irish architectural community's aspirations and/or influences at a given time. In origin the lectures were about augmenting architectural apprentices' technical education and so, the lectures from the earliest point in the 1870s read like any architectural technology curriculum with lessons in "Fireproof Construction" delivered by Mr. James H. Owen, or "The Application of Wires to Correct Acoustic Defects in Buildings" instructed by Thomas Drew.[173] Following a lapse of two years in activity, the Association was reformed in 1896 and again lectures were positioned as a central activity with the President of the RIAI, Thomas Drew congratulating the action as "a co-operative movement on the part of younger members of the architectural fraternity to establish an Improvement Society of their own",[174] and affirming the centrality of lectures by suggesting that, "lectures might be delivered under the auspices of the Association on special subjects."[175] From the outset then, lectures were the AAI's primary communicative tool and by continuing uninterrupted through two world wars, they present us with an unbroken horizon which frames the Association through its history. The steadfastness of the programme was highlighted by a note in the Association's minute books from 31st May 1944 that, "Mr Butler brought forward a short preliminary list of feasible speakers, pointing out that as it was not feasible to foresee any change in the present prevailing conditions of cross-Channel travel restrictions, it appeared advisable to make plans on the assumption that only speakers from Ireland would be available."[176]

Although the lecture programme was continuous, this does not infer consistency upon lectures' quality, direction or indeed their consumption over time. While they were established to meet the educational needs of the younger members of the architectural community, already by the 1930s with the growing success of the two formal schools of architecture at the National University and Bolton Street, they were being realigned away from their initial didactic direction. [177] An overview of lectures from the late 1940s

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[173] "The Artistic, Literary, and Scientific Institutions of Ireland: Part V – The AAI", *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (3rd July, 1915)
[174] Ibid.
[175] *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (14th November 1896), p. 233
[176] Architectural Association of Ireland Minute Books in I.A.A., AAI collection, A 01226 (1940 – 1949)
[177] For a concise well-written history of the AAI see: Brian O'Connell, "A History of the Architectural Association of Ireland" in *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI yearbook for 1971-75). For more on the inception of the Association see: "The Proposed Dublin Architectural Association" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (1st November 1896, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 885), p. 223; "The Architectural Association of Ireland" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer*

through the 1950s reveals a dominance of technical lessons and foreign experiences. As such, education in matters of architectural technology persisted as a priority but significantly, the audience for these lectures had shifted from the hungry architectural apprentice to the early-mid career architect in search of, one imagines, exotic distraction and/or incidental information. Proof of this demographic shift comes from the Association's minute books of 5th January 1955 which recorded that, "some Bolton Street students were wondering if our lecturers could lecture to them also. It was decided to tell them to join the Association".[178] The entry goes on to reveal the actual distance between the AAI and the student body by suggesting that the Association should feed information (i.e.: send notices) about lectures to the two schools.[179]

The difficulty of using the lectures as a tool for historical research is that they were never discussed in a public forum and rarely appraised by the architectural press in a critical manner. They fall into a critical void after-the-event, being reviewed only erratically by the *Irish Builder* and occasionally being reprinted within the *Green Book*.[180] While we can be sure that foreign architects were invited and certain technical or typological subjects were lectured on because they reflected contemporary interests, the actual influence of a lecture becomes hard to gauge without critical analysis to augment the event. If, as we know (and I am jumping ahead here) Buckminster Fuller came to Dublin to lecture in July 1964, where were the geodesic domes and Dymaxion house prototypes after his departure? The post-lecture silence is problematical – our only evidence of Fuller's visit is a single photograph in the *Green Book* 1965 (figure 1.58). We must instead focus on the invitation rather than on the consumption (or reception) so as to glean motivation and aspiration. Then for example, the lectures through the 1940s and into the early 1950s reveal the twin aspirations of Scandinavia and the more picturesque aspect of British modernism. A glimpse at the British lectures (either by British practitioners and/or on a British subject) shows a tendency towards the

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(15th November 1896, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 886), p.233; "The Artistic, Literary, and Scientific Institutions of Dublin. Part V – The Architectural Association of Ireland" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (3rd July 1915), p.298-300. For the earlier C20th role and history of AAI, and the emergence of Third Level architectural education, see Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.60-2, p.103, p.131-137

[178] Architectural Association of Ireland Minute Books in I.A.A., AAI collection, A 01227 (1949 – 1959)

[179] Oral history accounts from Kevin Roche, Cathal O'Neill and Sean Rothery (see author for interviews ) all attest to the fact that as students during the 1940s, they did not attend the lectures or other events of the AAI

[180] The *Green Book* preferred to provide relatively empty statistics to do with lecture attendance rather than any critical analysis of lecture subjects. For example, in the annual of 1949 – 1951 the average lecture attendance is reported as being forty-one members in 1948/1949, which decreases to twenty-seven members in 1949/1950 and then rises to thirty-six in 1950/1951, and so on. The subject matter of lectures during these particular years varies from "Danish Architecture" by Mr. Mogens Didriksen in 1949 to "Some Factors in Dublin Development" by Dr. Maurice Craig in 1950 to "Housing and Town-planning Congress, Amsterdam, 1950" by Daithi Hanly or "Architecture in the Festival of Britain" by Hugh Casson. From these lectures, only one lecture was reprinted in the *Green Book* "Post-War Schools in Britain" which was delivered by Mr. C. G. Stillman in 1950. Considering the potential relevance of all the listed lectures, with the Dublin Corporation embarking on its urban maisonette-block housing campaign shortly after Hanly's lecture on Dutch housing and with the potent effect felt by the triumphant brave-new-world Festival of Britain in the imaginations and consequent travel and working plans of many Irish architects during the mostly arid decade, the choice to reprint Stillman's address on schools seems decidedly random.

*Architectural Review* or "soft" camp such as John Betjeman's lectures on Francis Johnston in 1942 and Victorian architecture in 1950 (Betjeman was a regular contributor to *AR*); Elizabeth Denby's lecture, "Is Housing an Architectural Problem?" of 1943 (Denby was a housing reformer in London and worked with Maxwell Fry on the social housing complex of Kensal House, 1937, London); Nicholas Pevsner's "Contemporary Architecture" in 1946 (Pevsner was the *AR*'s historian and theorist of the Picturesque in twentieth century English architecture); and "English Building Technique" by A.M. Chitty in 1948 – not forgetting the aforementioned Festival of Britain lectures by Hugh Casson, J.M. Richards and Philip Powell from 1951-52. In fact, until regular visits to the AAI by James Stirling in the 1960s, the only so-called hardliner of British modernism to grace the Irish stage was Maxwell Fry (he lectured to the AAI twice, 1938 and 1946).[181]

Moving from architectural culture and the AAI to architectural design and production, the singular building of the 1950s was undoubtedly the Dublin bus station (named Aras Mhic Dhiarmiada but known as Busáras), by Michael Scott and Associates, 1946-53 (figures 1.45 + 1.46). Because it was such a large public building, expressing an up-to-the-minute modernist language and sitting unencumbered on an island site, Busáras has often been viewed as an alien object, differentiated from its context (1950s Dublin) both physically and emotionally. Critically it was always well received: from Moffett already previewing it at foundation-level in *AD* 1947 as "one of the masterpieces of modern architecture judging by the ideas, sketches and descriptions to date"[182], to being awarded the RIAI Triennial Gold Medal in 1955. Indeed, the AAI visited it five times (!) from 1948 to 1953 and it was published extensively by the international architectural press.[183] However, the fact that this beautifully detailed, multi-functional and large-scale public building, arguably the earliest post-war office building in Europe, should be designed and built in Dublin was considered anomalous and it was (and continues to be) commonly understood to be *sui generis*.[184]

I would argue that Busáras was not created in a vacuum: rather it was very much a product of the pervading contradictory culture. On the one hand it was a proudly

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[181] All dates and information on AAI lectures are taken from an overview analysis of the AAI annual, *Green Book* from 1938 – 1957. While there is a dominance of British material as well as an obvious popularity in terms of Scandinavian material, there were also lectures on many other foreign subjects during the highlighted period such as three lectures on Dutch architecture, one on French architecture, six on American subjects, two on Switzerland, two on Italy, one on northern Africa and one on Istanbul.

[182] Noel Moffett, "Bus Terminus" (paragraph description with perspective sketch by Kevin Fox (presumably), in *Architectural Design* (Ireland issue, July 1947), p. 192

[183] AAI visits recorded in *Green Book* 1952-54 (Dublin: AAI, 1952-53-54), p.31 and p.36. The bus station was published in *Architects' Journal* (April 1954), *Architectural Review* (April 1954), *Architectural Forum* (June 1955), and *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (February 1955), while the controversy around its genesis was commented on in *Architecture: Journal of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects* (January – March 1951)

[184] Scott made the assertion that Busáras was the "first major building, I think, in Europe after the War" in *Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.157. *The Architects' Journal* claimed Busáras was the first completed office block "before London had even started to build on" in *AJ* (20th January 1955), p.68-69

internationalist building, reflecting the ambition of the mid-century Irish architectural intelligentsia - having been designed by a team of hungry young Irish architects, it was made manifest by Danish engineering (reputedly, Scott had encouraged the Dane Ove Arup to set up a Dublin base for the structural engineering side of Busáras, as well as engaging the Danish mechanical engineer, Jorgen Varming for the project) and perfected by British stone, Danish bronze and Italian mosaic. On the other hand, it was shrouded in controversy from the outset; controversy which ultimately mirrored the political instability of 1950s Ireland and was dogged by financial strife and cultural conservatism. Having been commissioned in 1944, it was mostly worked out by Scott's young team by 1946 and foundations and site works began in August of that year.[185] Thereafter its development was hampered by a series of events: firstly, CIE had to be nationalised due to the company's economic woes thus forfeiting the building's initial clear-headed patronage; then the government changed, with the new powers deciding that the planned structure was too grandiose for transport and should be appropriated as government offices. Work halted on site for almost two years while the fate of the magnificent reinforced concrete carcass was debated (figure 1.47). In 1951 construction resumed and a compromise around the building's function was met – one part was to be a bus station as planned, while the other was to house the newly formed Department of Social Welfare.[186]

If its troublesome genesis and ambitious standing encapsulated much of 1950s Irish culture, what of Busáras' physiognomy? The most obvious sources for its facade articulation, the rooftop detailing and aspects of the ground floor treatment were the early 1930s public buildings of the by-then iconic Swiss architect, Le Corbusier. The two likeliest sources were the *Pavillon Suisse* (student housing, Paris, 1932) and the *Cité de Refuge* (Salvation Army headquarters, Paris, 1933): like Dublin's bus station, both structures were articulated by at least one facade of continuous glazed curtain walling, embedded into a concrete frame and in general disposition, both buildings were flat-roofed rectilinear slabs which appeared to float above ground (figures 1.53 + 1.54). Despite popular belief that Robin Walker was the only architect of the design team to have encountered Le Corbusier's buildings "in the flesh" - Walker went to work at Le Corbusier's atelier in Rue de Sevres, Paris during the first construction phase of Busáras, 1947- 48 – we now know that Kevin Roche, Kevin Fox and Wilfrid Cantwell all travelled to Paris and Geneva in 1946 where they visited the *Pavillon Suisse*, the *Cité de Refuge*

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[185] "Dublin's Newest Building. The Store Street CIE Bus Station and Government Offices" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (7th November 1953), p.1152. G + T Crampton undertook the initial demolition (of the bonded warehouses on the site) and foundation works but John Sisks got the main contract for the structural concrete work. According to Scott, the cladding and finishes were carried out by direct labour due to the comparative cheapness of that approach, see *Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.143

[186] For a comprehensive account of the commissioning, building and troubles of Busáras' early days (1944-53), see Paul Clerkin, "Fifty years of Busaras" in *History Ireland* (Vol.11, No. 2, Summer 2003), p.38-42

and Le Corbusier's *Maison Clarté* (apartment slab, Geneva, 1932).[187] According to several oral accounts, Fox and Cantwell were the central driving forces behind Busáras' realisation; interestingly, the most memorable presentation drawing of the station was the perspective by Fox in the Gordon Cullen-Townscape idiom (figure 1.49).

Like the two Parisian buildings, Busáras had a complex accommodation programme which it sought to root in a hard-working subterranean basement, acting like a services podium. Out of this podium rose the two main (primarily office) blocks, placed at a right angle to form an 'L' with the larger seven-storey block facing south to the river and the three-storey slab facing east to the docks (figure 1.50). Joining the two slabs at ground level was the two-storey bus station: acting like a wheel of sorts, it contained a double-height internal space which was a pillared concourse and mezzanine (figure 1.51), around which an open-air yard turned with accommodation for seventeen buses at any one time. The plan of this wheel was reminiscent of the ground-floor of Le Corbusier's *Villa Savoye*, which as was claimed, was generated from one complete turn of an automobile's steering wheel so that the inhabitants could drive up, into and park below the living space (figure 1.55). Facing south-east, this bus park constituted Busáras' most public facade and it sported an idiosyncratic wavy, almost corrugated concrete canopy which sheltered passengers as they moved from parked bus to interior concourse. The canopy was a first for Ireland and Britain: cantilevered at twenty feet, it was made out of three inch thick reinforced concrete and as the engineer Ove Arup hailed from Denmark, the source of this technology may have been the rooftop of Copenhagen airport (1939, Vilhelm Lauritzen, figures 1.47 + 1.48).

Above the canopy, the south-facing facade of the seven-storey block was the liveliest, being broken up by a series of colourful balconies at fourth-level (a type of *piano nobile* articulation) and then surmounted by a glorious rooftop terrace which housed the main restaurant space, a viewing platform with mosaic canopies and the faïence-clad service stacks (figure 1.52). These busy volumes of colliding horizontals and boxy verticals hovered over Dublin, in a sense pre-empting Le Corbusier's *Unite d'Habitation* at Marseilles (1950 -53), but perhaps the most explicit source for Busáras from Le Corbusier's *oeuvre* was the Tsentrosoyuz building, Moscow (1930 – 36, with Nicolai Kolli). Sean O Laoire posits this as Busáras' key source due to its double-block massing.[188] Originally the Moscow building also had an open ground floor, above which the smooth glazed curtain walls (formed out of two layers of glazing like in Busáras) were framed in a volcanic red stone block so that the formal similarities between it and

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[187] Kevin Roche, oral history account with author, April 2008, see author for intterview. It has been stated that Walker was the only team-member to have visited Le Corbusier's architecture, see Christine Casey, "Busaras" in *Dublin. The City within the Grand and Royal Canals and the Circular Road with the Phoenix Park* (New Haven + London: Yale University Press, 2005), p.169

[188] Sean Ó Laoire, Sean et al., *Building on the Edge of Europe: A Survey of Contemporary Architecture in Ireland Embracing History, Town and Country* (Dublin: R.I.A.I., 1996), p.155

the later Dublin building were clear (figure 1.56). In Dublin, the Caucasian volcanic stone was replaced with Portland stone cladding in acknowledgement of the neighbouring Custom House (Gandon, c.1790); at ground level, the stone turned to more everyday brickwork, but as the brick was applied in near-Roman proportions it was finer than typical Dublin brick facades.

Clearly the enduring influence on Busáras and within Scott's practice generally by the end of the 1940s was that of Le Corbusier and seemingly, this was to grow with Walker's return from Rue de Sevres. In fact, if the historian scratches around, Le Corbusier's presence was felt beyond Scott's office: there was the message from Le Corbusier to Irish architects in the RIAI Yearbook on the occasion of his stopping off at Shannon airport in 1946 wherein he proclaimed to have been enchanted by the airport and our legends of Cuchulain (figure 1.57);[189] Kevin Roche recounts that his fifth year thesis project (of 1946) was a copy of the Pavillion Suisse while Sean Rothery recalls cycling from Dublin to Rome in 1950 and taking a detour to Marseilles so as to see the *Unite d'Habitation*, mid-construction;[190] the *Unite* then was reviewed in the *Irish Architect and Contractor* in 1953 and in 1957, the short-lived Building Centre on Baggot Street hosted the first exhibition on Le Corbusier in Ireland.[191] However, as inferred with the reference to Fox's Cullen-esque graphic representation and the colourful mosaic decorative programme by Pat Scott, the bus station's Corbusian bombast was mediated and softened. It was neither a gleaming white nor a bare concrete structure but rather a textured and asymmetrical building of brick, stone, concrete, bronze, copper, glass, terrazzo and mosaic.

There were many aspects to Busáras' making which further coloured the backcloth that was 1950s Dublin. In terms of the urban setting, Busáras was a determinedly modernist structure set in between the industrial eyesore of temporary warehouses and the eighteenth century splendour of Gandon's riverside palace. Had modernism finally come to town? The sophistication of its technology and the internationalism of its materials and design ideas showed that Irish architects could be at the forefront of international architectural culture. Did Busáras signal the death of the load-bearing wall for big public buildings in Ireland? If not quite, it certainly established the engineering of structures and mechanics as fundamental to successful mid-century

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[189] "Le Corbusier", in *RIAI Yearbook* 1946: on route to America as the President of the French Mission for Urbanism, Architecture and Cultural Relations, Le Corbusier reputedly passed by Shannon for half hour and said: "...je dois dire combine j'ai ete enchante de votre petit aeroport, modeste mais impeccable...J'ajoute encore que, ayant lu autrefois les aventures de "Koulouhan, fils de chien", qui appartient a votre legende heroique, je ne puis faire autrement que d'etre plein de sympathie pour tout ce pays-la. Je connaissais James Joyce d'ailleurs, dont j'admire l'Ulysse, mais je prefere Koulouhan..." *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin : RIAI, 1946), p.24-26

[190] Kevin Roche and Sean Rothery, oral accounts with author

[191] Review of Unite d'Habitation by Dorothy Cole, *Irish Architect and Contractor* (August 1953). See exhibition catalogue of Le Corbusier, Building Centre, Dublin 2, 1957 – I am grateful to Logan Sisley (curator at the Hugh Lane) for access to this catalogue which is in the Hugh Lane Gallery library

building and that was a revolution in itself. Post-Busáras, AAI President James Green was able to claim as much in his 1958 inaugural address:

> As long as the traditional methods of building prevailed, the Architect could keep abreast of his problems, but with the development of the science of the strength of materials and the application of mathematics to design he was rapidly outdistanced by the engineer. This development cannot be ignored as structure is an integral part of Architecture: therefore collaboration is necessary.[192]

The 1950s presented mixed fortunes to Irish architects and in many respects, Busáras embodied that. On the one hand the building was lauded both at home and abroad. On the other hand, as the decade progressed, it continuously appeared as a mirage-like moment of excellence - as late as 1958, it was again comprehensively illustrated in the RIAI annual. According to the President of the RIAI in 1956, the Institute must "elevate from its unmerited depression the science of Architecture in Ireland." He went on to bemoan the state of contemporary affairs stating that aside from (as usual) Busáras, the airport and a handful of factories, "There are a few more bright spots...but what a tiny proportion they amount to of the total of architect-designed buildings".[193]

### ***From the 1950s into the 1960s:***

*The triumph of modernism, travel and study in America and the dawn of Miesian influence*

There may be no doubt that at this time, like all culturally-conscious Irish people, the younger architects were acutely aware of their island condition. And as Richard Kearney points out, such self-understanding can have contradictory effects: "Being surrounded by water has always been viewed in one of two ways: as an insulating device against alien influence or as an open exchange with other peoples and places."[194] For the most part, by the mid-twentieth century, Irish architects were reacting against Kearney's "insulating device" in the hope for an "open exchange"; the discourse around Irish architecture was coming into line with the universalising nature and international tendencies of twentieth-century architecture generally. Certainly in America and Britain, the two practical sources for Ireland at this time, post-war modernist architecture's patterns of technology and social meaning defied a pre-war type of national agenda - nationalism was only to be evoked by the terms of progress and development. As Kevin Roche recalls in

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[192] James Green, inaugural address 1958, *Green Book 1958-59* (Dublin: AAI, 1958-59), p.49
[193] Gerard McNicholl, "Inaugural Address", *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1956-7), p.7-11
[194] Richard Kearney, *Postnationalist Ireland. Politics, Culture, Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 100

reference to his 'escape' from Irish architecture in 1948 and his subsequent desire to be part of the architectural make-up of the United Nations in New York,

> I wanted very much to work at the United Nations which was just starting up and I really believed in the idea of you know, 'get rid of nationalism'! The thing that used to drive me nuts in Ireland was when you went to the movies and you had to stand up at the end for the national anthem. And the whole war was about nationalism. I was inspired by the idea of an international thing, the whole of humanity getting together and those strident hopes that existed in those days.[195]

Mostly the message in the Irish architectural press expressed an aspiration towards a progressive state - albeit less international than that after which Roche sought - which would be foreign in terms of its example. In 1951 the President of the AAI exclaimed that, "the dangers of apathy and conservatism need to be met by more foreign travel, and exchange of views."[196] And in this statement he was echoing the general intellectual climate of Irish architecture whereby travelling scholarships, promoted jointly by the RIAI and the two schools of architecture at Bolton Street and UCD, were resurrected. Also in the space of one decade from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, there was an obvious shift within the architectural schools in terms of the projects designed by students from a more classical and beaux-arts basis, to one that was founded in European and American modernism.[197] The change-over of the Professor of Architecture at UCD from J.V. Downes to Desmond FitzGerald in the early 1950s signalled the growth of the architecture library which significantly, exposed Irish architecture students to more and more post-war reconstruction abroad via British and Continental European architectural journals.[198]

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[195] Kevin Roche, oral history account with author, April 2008, New Haven, USA

[196] Charles Aliaga Kelly, "President's Address" in *Greenbook* (Dublin: AAI, 1951-2), p.25. See also the call for travel by the President of the RIAI a year earlier, "I believe the time has come to revive the annual architectural excursion. The last one was in 1939 when we went to Rouen and Paris." J. M. Fairweather, "Presidential Address", *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1950), p.12

[197] In Sean Rothery's history of the School of Architecture at UCD, he claims that the shift from classical to modern occurred in 1943 with J.V. Downes' succession to R.M. Butler as professor whereby Downes' "enthusiasm for modern architecture ensured that the school now completely abandoned Beaux Arts Classical principles." - Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture, 1900 - 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.66. However, the classical model was still pervasive into the 1950s as the first, second and third years carried out repeated drawing exercises on the elevations of Irish neo-Palladian and Neo-Classical structures, (oral history accounts from Jack O'Keefe, Kevin Roche, Cathal O'Neill and Sean Rothery). It would seem that as the degree progressed, students looked increasingly to contemporary developments abroad for inspiration. There appears to have been increasing knowledge and interest in the projects of Le Corbusier or the Bauhaus and this seems to have been generated by the students themselves rather than something taught. In relation to his knowledge of Mies van der Rohe, Ronnie Tallon says, "Even as a student I was passionately interested in Mies...through the library in college and study and discussions with people...in magazines and journals. In those days travel wasn't as easy as it is now. But I was aware of it. In college, there were debates in college about the masters of the time - Corbusier or Mies." (Dr Ronald Tallon, oral history account with author, March 2006, Dublin)

[198] Kevin Roche, Cathal O'Neill and Sean Rothery all recount how there was virtually no library when they began their degrees in the mid to late 1940s although the records of the UCD architecture library imply that the British journals, *Architectural Review* and the *Architects' Journal* were subscribed to from the mid 1930s. Rothery, who began his degree in 1946, claims that foreign journals were available through the AAI library on

Kevin Roche's motivation was characteristic of many of the itinerant Irish architects later in the 1950s in that it began quite unambiguously with the desire for something beyond Ireland and an Irish way of working, something that could not be experienced through the black + white images of the British architectural press. In this way, he travelled somewhat blindly to the 'promised land' of post-war development that was America, in search of meaningful architectural training and education. That Roche was accepted into the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago which was under the directorship of the mystical Mies Van der Rohe appears to have been more accidental than anything else. In this case, Mies' purist approach to building and his ethereal Bauhaus-based methodologies of architectural pedagogy were not for Roche and by 1949, yearning for action rather than ideology the young Cork-man was on the construction site of the United Nations building in Manhattan.[199]

Surprisingly the oral histories of several Irish architects reveal a similarly accidental or chance-based process which saw them, during the 1950s, arriving into the studio of Mies in Chicago or that of Louis Kahn in Philadelphia. For instance, Cathal O'Neill - who later became the Professor of Architecture at UCD from 1973 to 1995 - initially applied for and accepted a postgraduate place at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1957, only then to change his mind and move to study with Mies at IIT, Chicago wherein he enjoyed a highly fruitful experience. O'Neill did not explicitly seek out an encounter with Mies and yet this educational episode was profoundly influential on the later curriculum of Dublin's foremost architectural school.[200] He recounts how his only source of information was the short-lived American Information Office in Dublin's city-centre which had an American telephone book and sporadic architectural magazines.[201] Patrick Quinn similarly describes how his choice to study at

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Merrion Square or else through individual architects' offices, see author for interviews. O'Neill, who began his degree in UCD in 1949, explains, "The library was one room in the early days...There was a glass-fronted bookcase which was locked. There was a librarian two days a week, for mornings only. There were fifty books in their library...The library in 1952 or 1953, there was a big change, it might have been to do with FitzGerald. FitzGerald came in my second year...The library then developed. We subscribed to a lot of continental magazines..." (Cathal O'Neill oral history account with author, August 2006, Dublin)

[199] Roche explained that following a road-trip to Los Angeles after one semester at IIT with Mies van der Rohe, he returned to Chicago and swiftly left for New York: "I packed my bags and I got on a bus to come to New York and I had two twenty-dollar bills, that was it, and I arrived in New York. I'd had enough of Mies - I said, "I got the message and I don't want to waste anymore time."" Roche goes on to explain his restlessness, "Well you know you were anxious...you want to do something, you want to get out." (Kevin Roche oral history account with author, April 2008, New Haven, USA)

[200] Cathal O'Neill recalls the very informal and in a sense haphazard move from MIT which brought him to Mies at IIT: "In any case I wasn't very impressed with MIT. Straight away, I just didn't like the feel of it ... so anyway, I phoned the school in Chicago and Professor Hilberseimer answered the phone - it was a very small school...I said, "I'm in Boston and I'd like to come by"...So he said, "Come on out and talk to us, you'll be fine". And I said, "I can't just come out to talk to you". And he said, "Come out, come out, you're in the school, you'll be ok, come out, you're from UCD, you'll be alright, you're from the Dublin school." He would have known Robin Walker and he would have known Kevin Roche." (Cathal O'Neill, oral history account with author, August 2006, Dublin)

[201] As Cathal O'Neill recounts: "But the journals really came from an American Information Office on College Green. It was a biggish room and it took all the American magazines and books and it was filled with Architectural Forum ... (the office) was quite culturally orientated ... all Frank Lloyd Wright's biographies ... You could take out the magazines and read them in the fifties." Ibid.

the School of Architecture in the University of Pennsylvania under Kahn was unintentional, and that in fact, Quinn knew little about the emerging brilliance of Kahn until he was ensconced in that particular postgraduate programme at Philadelphia from 1958.[202] This chance-element may unravel our preconceptions regarding the pull of a very specific master-architect, European or American. However we must remember that this was a particular era in Ireland defined by economic protectionism and cultural introversion; as the oral histories recall, it was firstly very difficult to source information about educational possibilities in far-flung America and secondly, almost impossible to release enough funding so as to undertake such considerable travel.

Certainly this is all evidence of the genuinely extrovert interests of Ireland's architectural intelligentsia of the 1950s. However, these interests become more like 'lofty aspirations' when juxtaposed with the reality of Ireland's general building inertia due to economic recession. Successive editorials of the new Irish annual (founded in 1953), *Architectural Survey* complained about the dearth of building excellence and lack of opportunity for architects:

> The architecture of recreation appears to be non-existent in this country... Commerce and Industry produce many projects each year but where are the factories and shops of architectural merit?[203] (1955)

> Let's frankly admit it. The building industry is not too healthy. Work in hand is still fairly extensive, but new work has diminished to a trickle... Many of our trained and experienced people have been forced to emigrate to provide a livelihood for their dependents but many others are now going because they see no future in this country... The present position where the old game of 'This year, next year, some year, never', appears to be the only source of information for many large projects at present on the drawing board...[204] (1957)

While a sense of bleakness was indeed widely felt, significantly, this was a time when the dichotomy between the modern and the traditional, which had dictated the tone of earlier twentieth-century Irish architecture, was being overcome. Perhaps as a collective reaction to the dire economic situation, Irish architects were emerging as a unified force in pursuit of progressive modernist expression. By 1959 the President of the RIAI

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[202] Patrick Quinn went on to teach at University of California, Berkeley and then Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, New York. He is well known for his Catholic Church design in America. Quinn, oral history account with author, April 2008, Troy, USA (Patrick Quinn, oral account with author, April 2008, Albany, New York)
[203] Luan Cuffe, editorial, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin: The Parkside Press Ltd., 1955), p.3
[204] Luan Cuffe, editorial, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin: The Parkside Press Ltd., 1957), p.3

employed the terms of a military metaphor, with Ireland's architects virtually licking their war-wounds in tired victory, when he stated,

> The major battles have been substantially won; except in the fields of Church and Bank building, where the defences of the old order are noticeably crumbling. The modern movement in Architecture is everywhere accepted.[205]

This is compounded then by the *Architectural Survey* of the same year which also implicated an enlightened public in the 'flowering' process of contemporary modernism:

> ...the bad old days of the "battle of the styles" are virtually at an end. The demands for rigorous economy on the one hand, and of the increasingly educated public taste on the other, have led to a situation where, with few exceptions, the architect is free to devise solutions to his clients (sic) problems in truly contemporary terms...[206]

The reasons for the overwhelming acceptance of modern architecture by the end of the 1950s were multifaceted and rooted in long-term and ongoing processes to do with, for instance, foreign exposure. Interestingly, the acceptance ran hand in hand with the ascendancy of American influence upon Irish architecture. It was as if the first steps towards the Americanisation of architecture were inadvertently being taken through the widespread championing of modernism, but that the eventual wholesale American-flavoured modernisation could never occur while the economic infrastructure lagged so far behind the cultural leaning. Obviously Britain continued to be the closest source for Irish architects and with this, it became the key route towards America-inspired modernisation.

As the well-worn analyses of contemporary Irish historiography have established, the central event for the modernisation of Ireland was when Sean Lemass replaced Eamon de Valera as leader of the Fianna Fáil party and Taoiseach of the country in 1959 and when, in this capacity, Lemass drove Irish foreign policy in a different direction; together with the young secretary of the Department of Finance, T. K. Whitaker, that direction was towards economic growth through free trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) initiatives. The modernising processes had been simmering away during Lemass' time as Tanaiste from 1945 and such proclamations as that made by Lemass in 1953 that, "The Irish people feel a more intimate relationship with the United States than with any other country" show how he was clearly a champion of the American model early on,

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[205] Wilfred Cantwell, "Inaugural Address", *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1959-60), p.11-13

[206] Patrick Delaney, editorial, *Architectural Survey* (Dublin: The Parkside Press Ltd., 1959), p.3

seeking to tether Ireland to this emerging superpower.[207] But it was really through the Lemass/Whitaker First and Second Programmes for Economic Expansion (1958 – 1963) that the modernising processes were officially instigated.[208] These programmes have been recognised in socio-economic and cultural terms as signalling the shift from an agricultural rural Ireland to an industrial urbanised State which, for our purposes in discussing the development of Dublin's architecture, had obvious implications in relation to the shape and contents of the city-scape. As an aside it must be stated that in using architecture as a cultural document, the revisionist narrative with its Manichean polarisation of pre-Lemass (mediocrity) and post-Lemass (meritocracy) national development negates the continuum of Irish architectural modernism that flowed, albeit at a varying-ebb, from the 1920s through to the 1960s. However, it is clear from the subsequent streamlining of architectural culture in Ireland, namely the introduction of urban and architectural policy, that the Lemass/Whitaker programmes accelerated the modern 'flow' of Dublin's architecture.

The architectural distillation of this curious moment – still stunted but at the same time promising - was Robin Walker's Tourist Board (Bord Fáilte) Headquarters (1959 – 61) on the Grand Canal in Dublin. This free-standing building was Walker's earliest complete project following his return from Chicago.[209] Having spent the decade after his graduation from UCD between Michael Scott's office and significant stints abroad – including an episode with the Danish architect Erhardt Lawrence in Rhodesia and postgraduate study from 1956 -7 at IIT under Ludwig Hilberseimer's (Professor of Planning) supervision followed finally by work experience at Skidmore Owings Merrill (SOM) in Chicago - Walker had become I would argue, *the* seminal figure of Irish architecture, certainly in theoretical and intellectual terms. His pursuit of modernist architecture, as appropriate to the native situation, through the foreign example matched that discussed earlier (Roche, Devane, Cuffe, Dalton et al.) in terms of its individual motivation but he may be singled out because of his crusading nature due in part to his association and standing within Michael Scott's office. Within this nurturing

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[207] Cited in Maurice FitzGerald, "The 'Mainstreaming' of Irish Foreign Policy" in Brian Girvin and Gary Murphy (eds.), *The Lemass Era.*, p. 88. Sean Cronin outlines the warm response to Lemass from President Kennedy's administration and the meeting between Kennedy and Lemass during the Kennedy visit of 1963, see, Sean Cronin, *Washington's Irish Policy 1916 – 1986: Independence, Partition, Neutrality* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1987).

[208] For a detailed account of the first economic programme see John F. McCarthy, "Ireland's Turnaround: Whitaker and the 1958 Plan for Economic Development", in John F. McCarthy (ed.), *Planning Ireland's Future: The Legacy of T. K. Whitaker* (Dublin: Glendale Press, 1990). For excellent overviews of Sean Lemass' ethos and partnership with T.K. Whitaker see J.J. Lee, "Sean Lemass" in J.J. Lee (ed.), *Ireland 1945 – 1970* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979); Brian Girvin and Gary Murphy, "Whose Ireland? The Lemass Era" in Brian Girvin and Gary Murphy (eds.), *The Lemass Era. Politics and Society in the Ireland of Sean Lemass* (Dublin: University College Press, 2005); and Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, *Sean Lemass and the Making of Modern Ireland 1945 -1966* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982)

[209] Walker worked with Ronnie Tallon on the Abbey Theatre when he first returned to Michael Scott's office after his study at IIT and work at Mies' office, Chicago. The Tourist Board headquarters signal the first Dublin project headed up by Walker from start to finish following America (oral history accounts from Ronnie Tallon (March 2006/ December 2007) and Simon Walker (January 2006)). See John O'Regan (ed.), *Scott Tallon Walker Architects. 100 Buildings and Projects 1960 – 2005* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2006)

context, Robin Walker thrived. He worked closely with Ronald Tallon who, like Walker at the end of the 1950s, had become a committed disciple of the Miesian principle of 'building-as-structure'.[210]

The Bord Fáilte building represented the first most complete manifestation of Mies' influence on the landscape of Dublin (figures 1.59, 1.60, 1.63). Rectangular in plan, the building was organised around a central service core, visible at roof level and reputed to be the first of its kind in Ireland. It was box-like with its flat roof and facades of repetitive fenestration articulated by five bays on the principle façade and three bays on the shorter sides. It became more interesting than its myriad of (infill) off-spring when we recognise how Walker was pushing the boundaries in terms of introducing the central core inside and raising the entrance, to be reached by means of a Miesian low-floating staircase (figure 1.59). By elevating the entrance Walker provided clerestory glazing into the basement level and while making a feature of the junction between pavement and the building's paved forecourt, the building appears to burst through the ground. In massing and general disposition, the building was close to Mies' concrete student housing buildings on the IIT campus such as the Carman Hall (figure 1.64). The Tourist Board Headquarters' critical significance lay in its stunted nature and consequent unpopularity - as Walker himself highlights years later, it has been "so commonly considered...an arid building".[211] This unpopularity arose primarily from the lack of external adornment, however in this Walker was not only responding to a typically tight '1950s' budget but he was celebrating it;[212] the building's external embellishment was its structural language so that the concrete frame was left exposed and was even accentuated through the infill panels of concrete brick, and windows were predictably the much maligned W20 steel variation.

The building was commissioned by a government body which was seeking a wholly modernist image for itself in the guise of a rectilinear structure and indeed the form of the building came directly out of the architect's experience with an American-based icon of modernist architecture, Mies van der Rohe. Yet, the government body had little money to pay for this capitalist/ internationalist corporate reflection. As a result,

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[210] By 1961 Walker and Tallon were made partners of Scott's firm which in the early 1970s became Scott Tallon Walker. From 1960 – 1975 Tallon and Walker between them were responsible for a huge body of very successful modernist buildings such as the RTE campus, Carrolls Factory, Wesley College, Knocknanure RC Parish Church, the O'Flaherty and Goulding Houses, PMPA Headquarters, Bank of Ireland Headquarters and so on. Ronnie Tallon's recollection of the period and partnership is as follows: "I joined Michael (Scott) in 1956 and I think it was 1957 then that Robin Walker went to Chicago. He went to study town-planning under Hilberseimer... Hilberseimer was working in IIT with Mies. Mies was head of the school and Robin came under the influence of Mies while he was over there and all the theories of Mies van der Rohe. He came back from Chicago in 1959 as a devoted Miesian, so we had a very happy relationship then, Robin and myself! For 25 years we worked together, sharing the same philosophy. Every scheme, we discussed every detail of it and we got great enjoyment out of it." (Dr Ronald Tallon, oral history account with author, March 2006)

[211] Robin Walker 1924 - 1991, "Philosophy of Architectural Design", Lecture to RIAI Conference 1976, reprinted in John O'Regan (ed.), *Portfolio 1*, (Dublin: Gandon Editions, 1991), p.85

[212] The Bord Failte Headquarters cost £93, 350 – "The main building, which cost about £76, 550 was begun in January 1959 and occupied in October 1961. The annexe cost an additional £16, 800." See "Tourist Board Headquarters" Scott Tallon Walker promotional pamphlet on individual buildings, (publisher and date unknown)

the streamlined modernist aesthetic of (collegiate) Chicago was adapted by Walker to the native conditions of five storeys rather than eight, and fairfaced concrete rather than steel. The Miesian prototype to be tailored by Walker for this city-centre Tourist Board Headquarters in Dublin was not Mies' downtown corporate model or indeed his steel and glass temple of education but rather his more modest student housing block. In this, Walker was satisfying the restrained nature of his commission whereby Bord Fáilte's desire to be 'modern' did not correspond with its means. As a result, the adjective 'stunted' may be applied to the project but by this I do not mean that the scheme was compromised or underdeveloped rather that it was restrained in its candid minimalism. And in keeping with Walker's intentions for an Irish modernism by modest means, it was reticent. In truth, the 'stunted' condition had as much to do with Walker's desire to reinterpret the vernacular of Georgian Dublin in the somewhat taciturn language of the building's facades, as it had to do with the grim economic realities of the time.[213]

This example draws the patron/architect relationship to the fore while simultaneously reminding us of the role of architecture as agent of social change. With the Tourist Board Headquarters – and other key pioneering buildings such as Ronald Tallon's Kire Factory (1959-60) in Kinsale and Desmond Rea O'Kelly's Liberty Hall (1955 -63) in Dublin[214] – we witness a specific type of spatial practice assisting in the production of a modern state. In theory architectural modernism had been promoted in Ireland by the architectural community for decades but in reality, geographical and economic isolation had led to material shortages and infrastructural diffidence. However by appropriating an Americanised modernist aesthetic at this transitional ebb, the partnership of the patron (a state-body) and the architect (a committed Irish Miesian) was infusing the space of Dublin with new meaning and experience, thereby kick-starting the transformation of the state itself (figures 1.61 + 1.62). In this we return to traditional architectural history and the centrality of the enlightened patron; here, towards the mid to late 1950s, is evidence of an emergent generation of energetic public servants such as Dr Tim O'Driscoll of the Tourist Board and indeed John Irvine of the

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[213] I am grateful for architect Simon Walker's insightful comments about this building for the Tourist Board (by his father Robin): "A lot of people don't rate this building. Robin was very proud of that building - it was his version of Georgian Dublin. There was no extraneous embellishment on the front; the proportions of the bays/ the window sizes were in keeping with their own *raison-d'etre*... everything was chosen as being the most recessive, the most relaxed and the most invisible, therefore it was the corollary of Georgian architecture in the modern idiom." (Simon Walker, oral history account with author, January 2006)

[214] A full account of these two projects is not within the scope of this chapter but both constitute important architectural introductions of American ideas (a Miesian factory and a Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired skyscraper) to the Irish landscape. Kire clothing company was one of the earliest state-sponsored American corporations in Ireland and it was suitably housed in Tallon's first exposed-steel structure in Kinsale, County Cork, (Dr Ronald Tallon, oral history account with author, March 2006). Liberty Hall had been on the drawing boards from 1957 and was finally finished in 1963 becoming Dublin's first skyscraper and housing, appropriately the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union, SIPTU. Engineer/ architect of Liberty Hall, Desmond Rea O'Kelly cites Wright's Johnson Wax Factory (1936 – 1944) in Racine, Wisconsin as the Dublin building's prototype (Desmond Rea O'Kelly, oral history account with author, July 2006). For more on Liberty Hall, see Paddy Cahill's documentary monograph (2007/2008), www.paddycahill.com

national broadcasting agency, Radio Éireann.[215] Tallon cites their significance as architectural patrons along with others:

> All of them were supreme public servants; they all had a confidence in Ireland and the future of Ireland and the ability of Ireland...This was coming out of a terrible recession, into the fifties when things started to look up and this confidence was growing.[216]

Through the colliding agencies of architect and patron, or space and state, in the form of Bord Fáilte/ O'Driscoll/ Walker we are introducing the era of state-sponsored modernisation. Taking this a step further, we see how the form of the building uncannily echoed and prefaced the evolving function of the institution which was housed therein. Here was a state-body intent upon the promotion of Ireland as a tourist destination which could be both quaint (traditional) and comfortable (progressive) enough for the post-war American consumer.[217] As such, the institution was charged with attracting American-Irish tourism and does so from a base, and indeed a by-product, of Americanised modern architecture adapted to the Irish context.

## ***Conclusion:***

*American signposts to the 1970s*

Arguably the most tangible manifestation of wholesale societal modernisation was to be found in the new function for Dublin's crumbling Georgian houses as white-collar office

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[215] In relation to the changing face (increasingly corporate) of Irish public service in the late 1950s, Gary Murphy writes, "While it is true that many decision makers in the civil service were happy to take a back seat and perform their tasks as they had always done, there was a vigorous band within administrative circles who believed that it was not just the job of the senior civil servant to advise, but it was also imperative that they do some independent thinking which could then be presented to their political masters...once Fianna Fail regained power in 1957 the civil service, or more correctly some sections of it, should be seen as an acknowledged part of any tripartite arrangement between Lemass and the various economic partner." Gary Murphy, *Towards a Corporate State? Sean Lemass and the Realignment of Interest Groups in the Policy Process 1948 - 1964* (Research Papers 1996 - 1997, Dublin City University Business School, 1997), p. 6

[216] Dr Ronald Tallon, oral history account with author, March 2006. Tallon also mentions T. K. Whittaker, Todd Andrews and Bill Walsh as being exceptional public servants at this time (late 1950s/early 1960s); This point is emphasised by Tallon in his interview with Shane O'Toole in O'Regan, *Scott Tallon Walker Architects*, p. 31

[217] A good example of this marketing of Ireland as both traditional and progressive is Bord Failte's film of 1966 (directed by Robert Monks), *Ireland: The New Convention Country* (available to view at the Irish Film Institute Archives). Also, an analysis Bord Failte's journal, *Ireland of the Welcomes* from 1950 - 1970, reveals a similar ('mutually exclusive') marketing technique of rural idyll on the one hand and urban sophistication on the other. An interesting point in terms of the relationship between architecture and tourism is the establishment in 1953 by the RIAI of the Hotel Committee, which basically meant that hoteliers could avail of architectural services for free via Bord Failte (see annual report of 1955 in *RIAI Yearbook* (1956-57), p. 53 ). For a contextual and accessible history of the Tourist Board's ethos and activities from post-war to today, see Michael Cronin and Barbara O'Connor, "From Gombeen to Gubeen: Tourism, Identity and Class in Ireland, 1949 - 99" in Ray Ryan (ed.), *Writing in the Irish Republic. Literature, Culture, Politics 1949 - 1999* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000). For an explicitly American slant on Irish tourism see Chapter 3, "Heritage and Consumption: Irish-American Tourism and Material Culture" of Stephanie Rains' excellent history *The Irish-American in Popular Culture, 1945 - 2000* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), p.99 - 143

buildings. Michael Bannon's research informs us that between 1946 and 1972 Dublin's office population doubled from 45,000 to 90,000 and that, under a national lens, this represented increasing centralisation whereby in 1975 over half the office jobs in Ireland were based in central Dublin.[218] The newfound significance of the city centre office building as an architectural typology was reflected in a sole publication by the RIAI of contemporary Dublin architecture in 1978 wherein almost half of the one hundred or so buildings published were recent office structures.[219] With the uncontrolled take-over of Dublin's city centre by the office building, arrived a new architecture speaking the generic mean-spirited language of speculative development and this was in turn accompanied by sociological crises and conservation debacles. In a general way these crises and debacles, too complex and historically-loaded to discuss in detail here, were reactions to the wanton destruction of Dublin as a predominantly eighteenth-century city, a 'traditional' city.

A definition of the 'modern' in this mid-twentieth-century Dublin context is an urban situation which is emancipated from the traditional and historic city.[220] And so, as the decrepit tenement houses of *traditional* Dublin were defined by some as "Camden town on the Arno" (in response to the deaths of four people due to the collapse of two houses in the city centre in June 1963), it became clear that the "City Fathers" had to look to *modern* late twentieth-century architectural methods for quick solutions.[221] Amidst this climate developments such as the edge-city mass-housing estates of Ballymun (1969) and Darndale (1974) in North Dublin were born and over a ten-year period from 1958 until 1967, a series of policies to rapidly streamline and 'modernise' architecture and urbanism were established and enacted, all of which I argue are emblematic of the increasing influence of the Americanised modernist process: firstly, in response to the unwieldy development of office spaces being 'patch-worked' out of substandard Georgian structures with no regard for working conditions, the Offices Premises Act was passed which essentially sanctioned significant structural renovations within the eighteenth-century buildings (figure 1.65).[222] Secondly, the first and largely

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[218] Michael Bannon, *Office Location in Ireland. The Role of Central Dublin* (Dublin: Foras Forbatha, 1972)

[219] 44 out of the 109 new buildings published are office buildings, see Tomas O Beirne, *A Guide to Modern Architecture in Dublin* (Dublin: Architecture in Ireland/ RIAI, 1978)

[220] I am grateful to Dalibor Vesely for this definition of the modern in relation to the emancipation from tradition in lectures as part of M.Phil in History and Philosophy of Architecture, Cambridge University, 2000 – 2001

[221] "Camden town on the Arno" is a quotation taken from Sam Stephenson, who writing in a letter to the *Irish Times*, 4th June 1963 says that the Georgian houses were "never intended to last more than a lifetime", cited in Frank McDonald, *The Destruction of Dublin*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), p. 23-24. McDonald discusses the well-known tragedy when two houses on Bolton and Fenian Streets collapsed, becoming the catalyst event of the housing crisis leading to the famous street demonstrations in Dublin of 1963; this event in turn caused Neil Blaney, then Minister of Local Government to panic and initiate the planning/construction of the controversial Ballymun Estate. As McDonald explains 900 houses in Dublin were condemned following the Bolton/Fenian Street collapses and by 1965 1,200 houses were demolished: *"Some surgery was undoubtedly needed on the city's building stock, but this was architectural euthanasia."* (p. 24)

[222] For an example of the harmful imposition of modern ideas on the C18 buildings, in the form here of mechanised systems, see clause 11: "Ventilation: Effective and suitable provision shall be made for securing

ineffectual version of the Local Government Planning and Development Act was introduced in 1963; hot on its heals was the significant establishment of a national planning body, An Foras Forbatha, with the sponsorship and assistance of United Nations aid, in 1964; and fourthly, the seminal *Dublin Region: Advisory Plan* by English consultant Professor Myles Wright was issued, but not immediately acted upon, in 1967.

Over time, financial imperatives and urban theories dictated that the decaying city centre should be a mostly corporate and commercial zone and so as chapter three explores, on a dramatic level from the 1940s onwards, trans-generational residential communities were shipped out to newly-built suburban housing estates while by the 1950s, historically-significant Georgian interiors were gutted to make way for the stud-wall partitions and false ceilings of a 'Brave New World' of white-collar endeavour.[223] Dublin's infrastructure was being developed at great speed and was soon defined by the schizoid character of suburban domesticity and city-centre professionalism which was, of course, an urban pattern transplanted from post-war America. As Sean O Faolain put it in 1962,

> Now everybody in these islands may have a villa, meaning a detached or semidetached suburban dwelling of no pretensions at all, more-or-less mass-produced...In the same way, skyscrapers can now be produced, and many obviously are, out of any architect's bottom-drawer, at the turn of a wrist. [224]

Myles Wright's highly influential advisory plan (1967) for the development of Dublin within a regional context proposed among other things the formation of four new linear towns to the west of the city - Tallaght, Clondalkin, Lucan and Blanchardstown – but it did so through the championing of the automobile.[225] Having lectured to the AAI in November 1957 on the subject of "The Effect of Motor Vehicles on the Form of Cities",

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and maintaining by the circulation of fresh air in each room the adequate ventilation of the room and for preventing harmful draughts." (Office Premises Act 1958), available online at http://acts.oireachtas.ie/zza3y1958.2.html (accessed February 2008)

[223] Criticism against the desecration of Dublin's central city architectural heritage and social community has been ongoing since the late 1930s right up to the present-day. Some examples of this polemic over the decades are: Citizens' Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin, 1938*, (Dublin: Citizens' Housing Council, 1938); Niall Montgomery, "That'll All have to Come Down" in *Green Book* (1956); Brian Hogan, "Building in the Desert",*Green Book* (1961); Elizabeth Beazley and Sam Lambert, "An Irish Appetiser" in *The Architects' Journal* (1 September 1966, Vol. 144, No. 10), p. 565 - 594; Kevin Boland, "Ireland: The Planning Scene" in *Christus Rex* (Vol. 22, 1968), p. 173 - 205; Maurice Craft, "The Development of Dublin: Background to the Housing Problem" in *Studies* (59, 1970), p. 301 -313; Diana Rowntree, "Dublin's Future" in part of "Ireland" in *RIBA Journal* (September, 1966), p 420-3; Patrick Delany (ed.); *Dublin, A City in Crisis: Dublin Urban Study* (Dublin: R.I.A.I., Dublin, 1975); Deirdre Kelly, *Hands off Dublin* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press Ltd., 1976); Frank McDonald, *The Destruction of Dublin*, and Frank McDonald, *The Construction of Dublin* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2000); Shane O'Toole, *SubUrban to SuperRural* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Irish Architecture Foundation, 2006)

[224] Sean O Faolain, "Is Architecture a Was?" in *Forgnan* (Building Centre Journal, Dublin, Vol. 1, No. 5, May 1962), p. 10

[225] See Myles Wright, *The Dublin Region: Advisory Plan and Final Report* (Dublin: Government Publications, 1967), p. 17

Wright had stated that the motorcar must be accepted as, in the terms of a true post-war consumerist, it gave so much pleasure for comparatively little cost and as such, was preferable to a good house or a good meal![226] His thesis must have been well-received because soon afterwards in 1964 he was commissioned by the Minister of Local Government to conduct the aforementioned advisory plan and as his lecture content would predict, Wright drew from the American paradigm by being wholly convinced of the liberating potential of the motorcar, "Throughout the free world urban populations are 'voting with their wheels', and there is every sign that as prosperity grows Dubliners will do likewise."[227]

While Wright's plan was never officially adopted, its notable tenets to do with the westward development of new towns and the imposition of an extensive road network did infiltrate the 1971 Dublin County Development Plan.[228] As a result, the culture of Dublin's architecture by the mid 1970s was characterised by the redefinition of the city-centre as a downtown zone with sprawling fragmented low-density housing everywhere at the city's edge. But placing the car at the centre of this new (sub) urbanised world was disingenuous; unlike the American model that Dublin was emulating, Dubliners did not have access to the motorcars that were being promoted by the spatial structures (figure 1.66). As urban geographer Brendan McGrath points out,

> Whereas, in 1971, in an American suburb (Levittown, Philadelphia) every household owned two cars, there were less than two cars for every three households in the Dublin suburb of Tallaght.[229]

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[226] Here I am paraphrasing the reviewer of Wright's 1957 lecture in "Oriel's Log", *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (December 14, 1957), p. 1002

[227] See Myles Wright, *The Dublin Region: Advisory Plan and Final Report* (Dublin: Government Publications, 1967), p. 17

[228] I am using the Wright plan as emblematic but the developments in the 1970s also reflect Karl Schaechterle's *Dublin Traffic Planning: General Traffic Planning* (Ireland: Ulm Donau, Dublin Corporation, 1965) which advocates large roads running through the new towns (this plan also proposed filling in the Royal and Grand canals but this was blocked by citizen protests, see Deirdre Kelly, *Hands Off Dublin*). There were many transportation plans during the 1970s, in a sense spawned by Wright's proposals, such as An Foras Forbatha, *Transportation in Dublin* (Dublin: Government Publications, 1971); An Foras Forbatha, *Dublin Transportation Study* (Dublin: Government Publications, 1971); Travers Morgan et al., *Central Dublin Traffic Plan* (Dublin: 1973); and Voorhees et al., *Dublin Rail Rapid Transit Study* (London: 1975). For outlines of Dublin planning developments during the 1950s – 1970s see Andrew MacLaran, *Dublin. The Shaping of a Capital* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993) and Michael Bannon, *Planning: The Irish Experience, 1920 – 1988* (Dublin: Turoe Press, 1989)

[229] McGrath positions Dublin car ownership in European, British and American contexts: "Car ownership is essential to enjoy the full benefit of a suburban lifestyle. Ireland has low car ownership by West European and North American standards... By 1983 Ireland's car ownership level stood at only 226 cars per thousand, 30% less than levels in France and West Germany. Car ownership in Ireland is not expected to reach the 1983 UK level until the end of the century." See B McGrath, "Suburban Development in Ireland, 1960 – 80" in *Planning Perspectives* (7, 1992), P. 39-40 (McGrath cites D. Popenoe, *The Suburban Environment: Sweden and the United States* (London: Chicago University Press, 1977); Central Statistics Office, 1971 Census of Population; Tallaght DED sheets; Department of the Environment, *Policy and Planning Framework for Roads* (Dublin: 1985))

In a society which did not in reality have the means, the influence of Americanised modernism displaced and dislocated, so that the vast swathes of open land - made ready for highway development - around the housing estates of western Dublin became direct spatial translations of such dislocation. This symbolism of the unfulfilled motorcar-dream reminds us of the flaws of American imperialist influence in the regional Dublin context or more generally as Luke Gibbons terms it, the "myth" of Irish modernization. In Gibbons' reflection on the problem of the imperialist modernising process he writes:

> With the emergence of transnational corporations and a new international division of labour in the aftermath of World War II, it became clear that modernization, in this sense, had less to do with development than with underdevelopment, i.e. with systematically increasing the dependency of peripheral countries on the economic power of the metropolitan centre.[230]

Gibbons refers here to the sociological and economic phenomenon of "dependent industrialisation", defined by the duality of core and margin whereby the industrial modern core (USA) uses the developing margin (Dublin region) as a rudimentary and inexpensive 'workshop'; due to cheap labour and prime location in terms of access to the evolving European Community, American firms opened factories in the east of Ireland which engaged in the last phase of relatively unskilled manufacturing.[231] The 'dependent' aspect of belated Irish industrialisation arose because the more skilled activities of the multi-national corporation mostly stayed within the core or 'home' country, leaving the marginal state with a majority of semi-skilled operatives.[232]

Gibbons' centre /America and periphery /Ireland metaphor can be transposed all-too literally into the physical spaces of Dublin as they evolved during the 1960s and 70s: shiny corporate headquarters defiantly announced the metropolitan image of the city-centre while breeze-block terraced houses with their pocket-sized front and back gardens shaped the city-periphery. In these terms of urban heritage-desecration and greenfield suburban-sprawl, Sean O Faolain's observations on the state of Dublin's built environment in the early 1960s, following his trip to America and engagement with post-war American architecture, are enlightening:

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[230] Luke Gibbons, "The Myth of Modernization in Irish Culture" in *Transformations of Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press in association with Field Day, 1996), p. 90 - 91

[231] James Wickham, "Industrialisation, Work and Unemployment" in Patrick Clancy et al. (eds.), *Ireland: A Sociological Profile* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1986), p. 74 - 75

[232] Ibid. p. 77: Wickham uses the example of the electronics industry in Ireland where "...over half of those working in the Irish electronics industry are semi-skilled assemblers and operatives, as against only 32 per cent of those in the US industry. This is hardly surprising, because US companies locate plants in the Republic of Ireland to carry out the final (and less skilled) stages of production here in order that their products can be sold on the European market. The growth of an industry like electronics does not necessarily mean that the Republic of Ireland is 'catching up' with more developed countries."
Liam Kennedy discusses the 'dependency' theory in *The Modern Industrialisation of Ireland 1940 - 1988* (Dublin: Dundalgan Press/ The Economic and Social History Society of Ireland, 1989), p. 48- 53

To come back from all that to Dublin is to come back to a delightful featherbed of wasness, until one shuffles over the edge of its beautiful centre and falls plonk on one's behind on the cold, cold linoleum of our "modern" age. Then to preserve Georgian Architecture at the price of preferring Crumlin Constructionism seems a high price to pay for wasness.[233]

[233] Sean O Faolain, "Is Architecture a Was?" in *Forgnan* (Building Centre Journal, Dublin, Vol. 1, No. 5, May 1962), p.11

# Chapter Two

*Continuity and Internationalism: hospital architecture 1940-1955 and the case of the Ballyowen Tuberculosis Sanatorium*

Chapter Two *Continuity and Internationalism: hospital architecture 1940 – 1955 and the case of the Ballyowen tuberculosis sanatorium*

This chapter aims to put the Emergency and post-Emergency periods into sharper focus through its consideration of a single architectural event, a little-known international competition for a tuberculosis (TB) sanatorium in Ballyowen, west Dublin (1944 – 1952). When explored, the competition and its outcome reveal much about the tendencies informing architectural production in Ireland generally. The TB sanatorium as the chapter's central building type is particularly interesting because it presents us with a unique site where the cultural concerns of the architectural community and the base workings or pressing needs of the war-time state collide. Curiously, the sanatorium has all the connotations of disease, poverty and under-nourishment mixed together with gleaming-white modernist accommodation. While the urgent need for TB sanatoria was by no means confined to Ireland at this time, it is certainly a building programme which poignantly reflected 1940s and 1950s Irish life and is therefore an enlightening architectural allegory.

The Ballyowen project is also of singular interest among public health building projects at this time because of its expansive chronology, beginning in the late 1930s and faltering along until the project's completion in 1952. As we will see, the tentative pace of the original Ballyowen competition project (1936-44), followed by the jerks and jolts of the competition results (1945-46), then the erratic acceleration of a reworked design (1948-51) and the eventual low-budget finale (1952), all resonate with the rhythms of the infant state, especially its budding health policy and, to a lesser degree, its concern with external affairs. Broadly-speaking the difference between the optimism of the mid-war winning design (1944) and then the lowly standardised nature of the post-war realised project (1952) is marked, throwing light on the real impact of the Second World War on Ireland through the lens of official building projects. In this way, the chapter's discussion deliberately zooms in on the specifics of this architectural commission from which it can draw broad lessons on Irish architectural culture.

Central to the original conception of the Ballyowen project (and our consequent reading of it) was the fact that by the time of its official launch as an international competition, it had become the tuberculosis campaign's singular mid-war token for Dublin. Certainly the architectural and medical communities seem to have fixated on the power and possibility of architecture as the heal-all solution to a municipal crisis and national emergency in public health. The chapter opens with "The architecture of tuberculosis" which charts the project's genesis, discussing how the architecture of the modern hospital held such promise. The discussion positions the Ballyowen commission in its historical context(s) of the Free State hospitalisation programme (from 1933) and of the contemporary debates

and actions taken in response to the acute problem of tuberculosis in Ireland and Dublin particularly.

Along with the Ballyowen's emblematic tendency in terms of an evolving health policy from 1940 - 1952, there are two centrally important aspects to the original architectural competition to be examined: the project points to the continuity of Irish architecture from the pre-war to the post-war periods; and importantly, it signals Ireland's readiness to look beyond its borders for the most fully-developed and advanced architectural outcomes. The next section - "In search of an Irish Paimio" - questions the motivation of the patron in initiating an architectural competition. This develops into a discussion of the international inclinations of Irish architectural culture generally. It inevitably unpicks the particularities of hospital architecture, concluding that the hospital may be considered the most modernist and universal of architectural typologies.

It is only through a close reading of the competition itself that we move from the abstract notions of continuity and internationalism to a more concrete understanding of the culture of Irish architecture during the 1940s. "Terms and conditions" uncovers the archival material around the original architectural competition from 1938 – 1946. This presentation enlightens us in terms of the processes of the Ballyowen competition; firstly and in an ideological way, the competition seemed to enforce the faith in a statement-building's redemptive possibilities. Thereafter the competition mechanics reveal its drawn-out nature, pointing to wartime conditions and the difficulties for Irish architecture to maintain continuity with pre-war production. This reading is then challenged by the ambitious spirit of the competition as it became an international endeavour. In light of the particularly severe need for tubercular accommodation in Dublin City and County during the early 1940s, we cannot but question the purpose of the Ballyowen venture. The theoretical labels - and the chapter's underlying enquiry- of continuity and internationalism white-wash over the practical conditions of material shortage, bureaucratic entanglement and rampant infectious disease. Although very specific to the events of Ballyowen, the discussion exposes the workings of this competition because, I would argue, these workings communicate much about the competition as a process and builds on the thesis' introduction to the competition-as-methodology.

In historic terms, this chapter is concerned with Irish architecture's reaction to the Emergency. The next section "Watershed or Plato's Cave" breaks the architectural response to WWII down into three broad effects: that of a call for continuity with pre-war conditions; that of the culturally rich absorption of international influences; and that of a penchant for post-war planning. These aspects feed out of an analysis of the Ballyowen competition's

winning design which is situated in a tradition of late 1930s expressionist architecture. With the demise of the competition followed by its subsequent reworking in the context of a regional sanatoria building programme, the chapter discusses the ongoing championing of the sanatorium as the central solution to the TB epidemic, up until 1960 at least. Lastly, the chapter analyses Ballyowen-as-built in relation to three case study campus hospitals of the 1950s. The architecture of these hospitals has not been interpreted or contextualised before this present study and it is argued that in many respects, these hospitals represent an apotheosis of state/modernist architecture collaboration in mid-century Ireland.

## ***Architecture of tuberculosis:***

*Tuberculosis, the Hospitals' Commission and the faith in hospital architecture*

> *Hospitals are the central agency of cure and the axis around which the whole range of medical care must revolve.*[1] **- Dr John Dignan (Bishop of Clonfert, 1945)**

The Ballyowen competition was publicly presented on the eve of the Second World War when the Department of Local Government and Public Health issued a lengthy statement to the Irish daily newspapers on 12th August 1938 that it had appointed an architectural jury in Dublin, "to conduct competitions for the planning of three tuberculosis hospitals in the city, at a total cost of more than £600,000".[2] According to the report, the conditions of the competition had been completed and were under consideration by the Minister.[3] However, owing to the onset of the war, this proposed ambitious scheme for three hospitals - "A large chest hospital (to be erected in the city) and two new tuberculosis hospitals replacing Crooksling and the Pigeon House"[4] - was, in 1940, reduced to one 320-bed sanatorium scheme to be constructed at a green-field site in Ballyowen near Lucan in West Dublin. Also the promised "early date" of the competition's official announcement was delayed by almost six years when finally, in January 1944 the competition was formally declared with a deadline for design-submissions by June 1945.

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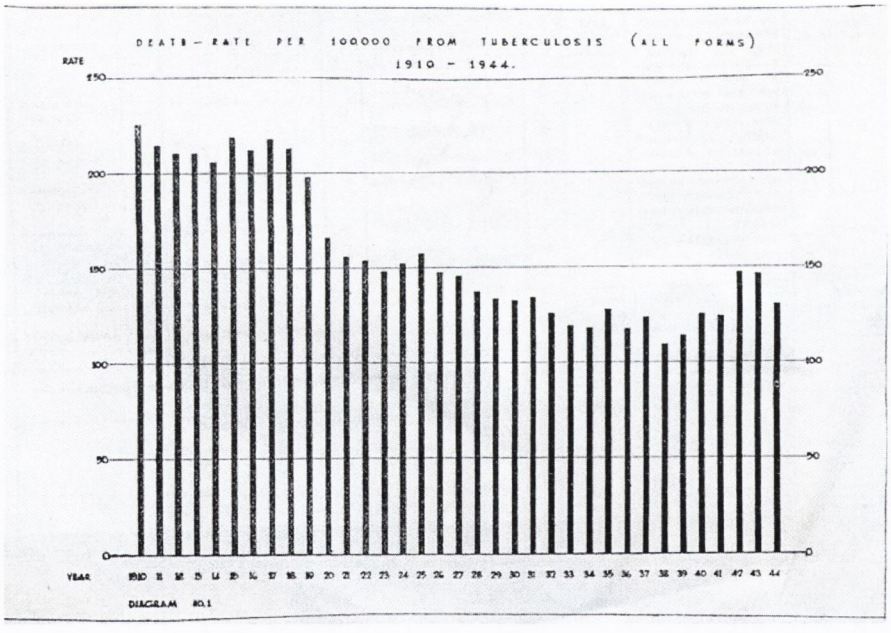
[1] Dr John Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert, *Social Security: Outlines of a Scheme of National Health Insurance* (Sligo, 1945), p.20. Cited in Ruth Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900 - 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000), p.150

[2] "New Hospital Plan Competition. Architect-Jury to Choose" in *The Irish Press*, Friday 12th August, 1938. This is not the first published notice of the proposed competition as there was also an announcement made at the beginning of 1937: see letter from Cork architect John Tuomey to RIAI on 9th March 1937, referring to plans for a new T.B. hospital at Ballyfermot, Co. Dublin, "It was announced in the Daily Press some months ago that a board of Assessors had been appointed and that the conditions would shortly be available but since this no other notice has appeared." In I.A.A., R.I.A.I. Collection, Box 93/136/47

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

The decision to commission a shiny-new sanatorium through the complex processes of a competition came out of the ever-deepening faith in architecture as evidenced by the perceived success of the contemporary hospitalisation programme from 1933. We must add to this 'faith' the external complication of an international war which struck just at the project's inception, coupled then with the internal dilemma presented by the highly emotive and desperate reality of a worsening tuberculosis epidemic. These three layers situate the Ballyowen competition more fully as they assumed positions on a tug-of-war mechanism, pulling the proposed scheme this way and that. The first layer of this history must describe the tuberculosis epidemic in Ireland as it undoubtedly dominated the social backdrop by the early 1940s. Attempts to contain, let alone eradicate the disease were not working and seemed piecemeal and limited in scope. It became clear due to a serious increase in the number of tuberculosis-related deaths in 1942 that a consolidated campaign against TB was necessary.[5]




Death rate per 100,000 of population from TB, 1910 – 1944, table taken from White Paper, *Tuberculosis,* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1946), p.5

At all levels – political, medical and architectural - the connection between the disease and the sufferer's architectural environment was emphasised. As Dr McWeeney, the tuberculosis

[5] Department of Local Government and Public Health (White Paper) *Tuberculosis* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1946), p.12

adviser to the Department of Local Government and Public Health, recorded in a memo of 1944,

> The most urgent tuberculosis problem for solution in Ireland is that of Dublin City because of its concentration of infectivity and the adverse environmental effect created by urban conditions. That problem should therefore be attacked first.[6]

A number of bodies devised proposals to combat the disease. A vigilante Dublin-based group called the Post-Sanatoria League was formed in response to the lack of medical and financial support available to sufferers, following stints in sanatoria such as the purpose-built institutions of Peamount (1912) and Crooksling (1914) or the adapted workhouse hospitals at Rialto and Pigeon House. The League, along with the Tuberculosis Committee of Dublin Corporation, was primarily concerned with food allowances and improved housing.[7] Both it and the Corporation repeatedly reported on the links between the disease and the underdeveloped living conditions of many sufferers; the connection between tuberculosis propagation and slum dwelling was recognised as being a typically Irish problem and the Corporation polemic on the subject reveals a keen awareness of, and frustration at, Irish backwardness as a strand of our (post) colonial inheritance.[8]

Of particular interest in terms of an architectural response to the TB crisis were the recommendations of the Irish Red Cross Society (IRC) and the Hospitals' Commission. Both bodies focused on the issue of bed shortages - in 1943 there were only 2,200 sanatorium beds in the country, about one bed for every two deaths per year from tuberculosis[9] - and issued reports in 1943 and 1942 respectively to do with sanatorium accommodation. The IRC had high jacked, rather dramatically, the newly formed National Anti-Tuberculosis League which was a group of highly placed medical professionals intent upon popularising

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[6] Dr McWeeney, "Institutional Planning for Tuberculosis (Pulmonary)", 17th July 1944 in N.A.I., HLTH.D112/38 "Post-War Planning, Provision of TB Institutions (1944)"

[7] For more on the Post-Sanatoria League, see Charles O'Connor, *The Fight Against TB in Ireland in the 1940s* (Cape Town: OZPRINT, 1994). The Tuberculosis Committee of Dublin Corporation was in part representative of the Department of Local Government and Public Health. By January 1944 it had "...approved of proposals for the provision in their own homes and in sanatoria of beds and bedding, milk, butter and eggs, clothing and footwear, where necessary, to improve the health of the patients." Item 13, 3rd January 1944, *Dublin Corporation Minute Books*, 1944

[8] For example, in a plea to pasteurise milk in 1945 Dublin Corporation Councillor Dr Hannigan pointed out that, "London did it and is still doing it even in the teeth of aerial bombardment - states and cities in USA and Australia tackled this problem. Why should we always lag behind 20 or 30 or 40 years? I venture to say that all milk for big cities and urban districts in enlightened parts of the civilised world is pasteurised". See "Report No. 11 of the Tuberculosis Committee" in *Dublin Corporation Reports*, January - Dec 1945, p.77

[9] *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 - 1949* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1950), p.41

the TB issue from the top down as such, thereby removing social stigma and gaining the widespread support necessary for tackling the problem.[10] This League promised to be influential and so the mostly Catholic IRC commandeered it, presenting an outline of a long-term tuberculosis scheme which became the central document of the TB campaign during the 1940s and early 1950s. It suggested the highest provision thus far of two sanatorium beds for each death occurring from tuberculosis.[11]

The Hospitals' Commission's report advised that one bed per death for all forms of the disease be provided. While less influential than the IRC in terms of TB eradication, this Commission was a central cog within the mechanism which produced markedly modernist buildings of health throughout the twenty-six counties of the Free State. In the first instance it was responsible for the most comprehensive analysis of existing hospital services and the prospective hospital needs of the state heretofore; these findings were published in a report of 1936 which broke hospital size and focus down into the three long-abiding categories of district, county and region. I would argue that the Commission's seven reports from 1936 – 1947 had direct implications for subsequent architectural projects, and in short, its ongoing research provided the baseline for a thesis of architectural *continuity* from the pre- to the post-war periods in respect of the architecture for health.[12]

In our reading of hospital architecture during the Emergency and post-war periods, a broad understanding of patronage (the Hospitals' Commission acting on behalf of the Department of Local Government/ Public Health) and funding (the Hospital Sweepstakes) is fundamental. The Commission was not a wholly new advisory board by the time of the Ballyowen project but rather an empowered and more effective version of the earlier

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[10] The Anti-Tuberculosis League developed out of the Royal Irish Academy of Medicine's plan for early detection, cure and prevention of pulmonary tuberculosis of 1942. (This *Report on Tuberculosis*, 1942, Royal Irish Academy of Medicine, is discussed in Department of Local Government and Public Health (White Paper), *Tuberculosis* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1946), p. 12). John Cooney's biography of Archbishop McQuaid recounts the high-jacking of the League in *John Charles McQuaid. Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999), p. 163 – 165. Just at the opening of its inaugural public meeting n the Hibernian Hotel, Dublin, a representative of the Archbishop's, Monsignor Daniel Moloney, stood up and read a message from McQuaid: "It is my definite opinion that such a campaign can be carried through in Eire only by the Red Cross Society." This account is based on an account from Owen Sheehy Skeffington who was at the meeting, see Andree Sheehy Skeffington, *Skeff, A Life of Owen Sheehy Skeffington, 1909 – 1970* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.119- 120. As Cooney includes, a letter from Archbishop Walsh of Tuam to McQuaid explained the latter's motivation, "This work will be a God-send for the Red Cross. When the Emergency is over the Red Cross would have no occupation and this fine organisation, which is almost entirely in Catholic hand...would fade away." See Cooney, p. 165, Walsh to McQuaid, 26th February 1942, Dublin Diocesan Archives, AB8/B/XV/a

[11] The reports of the Hospitals Commission and the Red Cross were outlined in the Department of Local Government and Public Health, *Annual Report*, 1945 – 1946, p. 45 and also Department of Local Government and Public Health (White Paper), *Tuberculosis* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1946), p.13

[12] See Department of Local Government and Public Health, Hospitals' Commission, *Reports 1- 7*, 1936 – 1947. These are available at N.A.I., HLTH. A108/1 "Hospitals Commission Reports 1935- 1948"
A brief distillation of the findings, surveys and proposals of the Commission is available in J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra, (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 – 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956), p. 20 – 23

Committee of Reference which had been set up through the Public Charitable Hospitals Act of 1931 to advise the Minister of Justice on how to spend Hospital Sweepstakes' surpluses.[13] The 1931 Act was then extended into the Public Hospitals Act of 1933 which largely instigated the Free State hospitalisation programme and replaced the Committee of Reference with the Hospitals' Commission as advisor to and manager of this seminal building programme.[14] The 1933 Act also consolidated the role of the Hospitals' Sweepstakes as the primary source of funding for all hospital building in the country while streamlining the administration of surpluses through a single Hospitals' Trust Fund.

The significance of these Sweepstakes funds to the development of hospital architecture in Ireland from c.1930 to c.1980 was huge.[15] As a system of "charitable gambling" it provided immense funds for hospital building which were largely independent of government finances. In this way, the system facilitated a remarkably productive hospital building programme in Ireland, setting the country apart from developments in the UK for instance. While the war undoubtedly curbed the growth of the Sweepstakes fund, primarily through the cancellation of race meetings in the UK, there remained a constant drip of finances when arguably there might have been complete drought.[16] Certainly post-war building programmes in Britain asserted that hospital development was something of a 'necessary luxury', being secondary to house and school building.[17] In Ireland however, the most significant hospital building programme of the state was mooted during the war and

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[13] Before the Public Charitable Hospitals Act of 1931, the Sweepstakes (established in 1930) funded voluntary hospitals only. Thereafter, the surpluses of the Sweepstakes were also shared out to the Department of Local Government and Public Health thus including all hospitals in the somewhat unorthodox scheme. The 1931 Act ordered that the newly set-up Hospitals Sweepstakes (1930) surpluses be divided between the voluntary hospitals (two-thirds) and the Department of Local Government and Public Health (one-third). The Committee of Reference consulted the Department on how to administer the fund. According to the 1931 Act, the Committee was to "report to the Minister as to the proportions in which the said two-thirds of such available surplus should be divided." Cited in J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra, (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 - 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956), p. 18

[14] As O'Sheehan and De Barra elucidate, "It can be seen that the Public Hospitals Act, 1933, provided for investigations into the country's hospital affairs on a far more extensive scale and in a more detailed form than had been contemplated in the previous Acts. Whereas the Committee of Reference was confined to examining and reporting on the claims of the participating voluntary hospitals for shares in the distribution of the proceeds of the Sweepstakes, the Hospitals' Commission was empowered to conduct an inquiry into the entire hospital needs of the community." Ibid., p. 21

[15] See Marie Coleman's research into the origins and workings of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes in Ireland, UK and USA: Marie Coleman, "The Origins of the Irish Hospitals' Sweepstakes" in *Irish Economic and Social History*, XXIX, 2002, p. 49; Marie Coleman, "'A Terrible Danger to the Moral of the Country': The Irish Hospitals' Sweepstakes in Great Britain, 1930 - 1987" in *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* vol. 105C, No. 5, 2005, p. 197 -220; Coleman, "The Irish hospitals' sweepstake in the United States of America, 1930–39" in *Irish Historical Studies*, cxxxviii (2006); Coleman, "The Irish hospitals' sweepstake in America in 1930s", conference paper *Ireland in America*, Clinton Institute, UCD, March 2007

[16] J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 - 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956), p. 24 - 25

[17] See foreword to Report of National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis (NAPT) Architectural Committee, *Design for Sanatoria* (London: NAPT, 1951), p.7: "For some years to come, at least in Britain, we fear that little new sanatorium construction can be achieved. Other building which has an important relationship to health - houses and schools - will no doubt be given priority."

launched a few short years later in 1949 thereby differentiating the Irish example from its neighbour.

The hospitalisation project was also differentiated within Ireland itself because again the Sweepstakes were a self-regulating source of finance and crucially the Minister of Health did not need government approval to spend the funds. In architectural quarters the Sweepstakes were lauded and considered something of a cash cow; as a stream of large structures for health, begun (or often recommenced) during the late 1940s, were completed in the mid-1950s, architectural commentators asserted the fund's centrality to the ongoing success of hospital design.[18] These liberating conditions (i.e. the Hospitals' Sweepstakes) set Irish hospital development apart during the middle of the twentieth century, enabling fiscal independence in terms of building production and relative sophistication in terms of architectural design and technology. The seeming abundance of funding in an otherwise depressed situation encouraged the ever-growing belief in a building's potential – in this case, the hospital - a belief that appears to have driven the 1940s tuberculosis campaign.

Central to the championing of the twentieth-century hospital typology in Ireland during the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s was the presence of an architectural adviser on the Hospitals' Commission, which most certainly introduced a high level of design awareness to the hospitalisation programme. Initially Vincent Kelly (1892 – 1975) held the position but from 1940, Tom P. Kennedy (1906-1991) was the Commission's architect. Throughout their distinguished careers both Kelly and Kennedy were centrally placed on the Council of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) and in their earlier years, both had been presidents of the Architectural Association of Ireland (AAI);[19] as such, they were confirmed members of Ireland's modernist architectural intelligentsia and this bias was transmitted in their guidance of the design of Irish hospitals during the period. The combination of the architectural authority of the Hospitals' Commission with the relative freedom granted to hospital design through the Sweepstakes, led to an acceptance of the "modern" and the "foreign" for Irish hospital architecture from 1930 onwards. As one commentator proclaimed in 1955, "Ultra-modern design and the finances to carry it out are giving Ireland hospitals

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[18] As John Dolin reports in "Irish Hospitalisation – Aided by Sweepstakes" in a pamphlet *Ireland Rebuilding* (Dublin: Harpers, 1955 Edition), p. 15: "A most important part in Ireland's immense hospital-erection plan is played by the Irish Hospitals Sweepstakes...In grants, since it started operations, the Hospitals Trust has paid out well over thirty one and a quarter million pounds to hospitals...". While T. P. Kennedy's report, "The Hospital and its Architect" in The *Irish Builder and Engineer Centenary Issue 1859 – 1959*, p. 34, affirms the positive view of the Sweepstakes: "It is difficult to realize what would have been the position today had this very successful and extraordinarily well-organized machinery [the Hospitals' Sweepstakes Fund] not been providing the funds that have been devoted to our hospitals over the last twenty years."

[19] See Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Architects' Biography, 1720 - 1940 www.dia.ie; for Vincent Kelly, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2963; For T. P. Kennedy, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2987 (accessed January 2009)

equal to the best in the world, and better than many!"[20] And as Kelly proclaimed in a lecture to the RIAI on the occasion of its centenary, 1939:

> The success of the Sweepstakes, yielding each year since their inception in 1931 an annual sum of approximately one and a half millions for the benefit of the hospitals, has placed Ireland in a unique position in the hospital field, compared with any other country in the world.[21]

This hospital building programme initiated by the 1933 Act was tremendous. According to one Departmental source, from 1936 to 1941 some twelve new county hospitals, thirty smaller district hospitals and two new mental hospitals were built, while major reconstructive work was carried out on older institutions.[22] In historiographic terms, it should not be isolated from later developments in hospital architecture during the post-war years; in fact, I would argue that the Ballyowen project, straddling the 1933 and 1949 building programmes, illustrates the close association of the 1930s hospitals to their 1950s counterparts but until now, the two programmes have been understood as differentiated campaigns producing very different architecture.

Sean Rothery's critique of the 1930s hospitals at Tullamore, Kilkenny and Portlaoise for example, establishes a decisive pre-war school of hospital design which was highly influenced by the contemporary developments of International-Style Continental architecture.[23] Rothery explains that in a short decade from 1933, a series of variously clad flat-roofed two and three-storey blocks, bearing balconies and punctuated by repetitive patterns of fenestration were sprouting up on the Irish landscape; understandably, these provincial buildings have been charged with introducing an adapted vocabulary of architectural modernism for the hospital architecture of the burgeoning Free State. Indeed the establishment of a progressive architectural language for the typology of hospital was Vincent Kelly's most explicit legacy. Along with his peers - the most notable being Michael

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[20] John Dolin, "Irish Hospitalisation - Aided by Sweepstakes" in *Ireland Rebuilding* (1955), p.18

[21] Vincent Kelly, "Rehospitalisation in Eire" in RIAI Centenary Conference Handbook, *Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Centenary Celebrations 1839 - 1939* (Dublin: RIAI, 1939), p. 59

[22] This statistic is presented by the Hospitals' Trust publication, J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 - 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956), p. 24. However, Frederick O'Dwyer counters the quantity suggesting that such a figure was an exaggeration, instead proffering the following county hospitals as being realised: Ennis (1933-40, Patrick Sheahan), Kilkenny (1936-42, Downes and Meehan), Portlaoise (1933-40, Scott and Good), Tullamore (1934-42, Scott and Good), Roscommon (1933-39, phase 1, Boyd Barrett), Castlebar (1932-40, R.M. Butler), see Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p.19

[23] Using the term International Style at this period is a little premature as it had only just been coined in 1932 in New York, see footnote #84, chapter one. For Rothery's discussion of hospitals, see *Ireland and the New Architecture, 1900 - 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.144-148

Scott and Norman Good, J.V. Downes and Bernard Meehan and T.J. Cullen - Kelly asserted the European modernist example as primary in the design of Irish hospitals; as we will see in our overview of these 1930s hospitals, their modernist dispositions were compromised but, considering the ongoing battle-of-the-styles raging beneath the surface of Irish architecture during the first half of the twentieth century, this assertion was significant. Mostly, these hospitals were important because in intention, as well as design, they signalled a move away from the workhouse public health system predating the Irish Free State and so, they became symbols of a progressive state liberated from workhouse stigma.

Interestingly the ideological tendency towards the typology of the modernist hospital also gained practical momentum in the specific area of tuberculosis treatment by virtue of the TB epidemic's acute nature in the early 1940s. Because the problem was so extreme (a national epidemic essentially), suggestions towards its eradication could remain largely outside of the strictures of Catholic social teaching - albeit the Church did ensure its centrality to the TB campaign by manoeuvring the IRC and its Anti-Tuberculosis Section into a focal policy-making position. These strictures were thwarting reform measures elsewhere within the health services. During the Emergency years there were many proposals to reorganise the health system, along the lines of Sir William Beveridge's report *Social Insurance and Allied Services* (1942) for Britain, with the end goal of providing a free and ultimately inclusive service to all Irish citizens.[24] However Catholic social morality opposed the imposition of the state upon the individual and the family, instead championing voluntarism and Vocationalism.[25] These principles were held most dear in relation to medical matters mostly because within Catholic social thinking, the medical profession was the ideal vocational group. The example of the controversy over Dr Noel Browne's mother-and-child scheme of the later 1940s/early 1950s demonstrates the potential potency and influence of the Catholic Hierarchy on the workings of Ireland's health services.[26] However, in relation to

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[24] For an outline of the influence of the Beveridge report on Irish health reform, see chapter 7 "Towards a National Health Service, 1942 - 45" of Ruth Barrington's excellent history of the health services in Ireland, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900 - 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000). See also Robert McNamara, "Blueprints from Britain: Irish Responses to Post-War Plans" in Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll, *Ireland in World War Two. Neutrality and Survival* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004)

[25] A brief definition of Vocationalism is that it was central tenet of Catholic social teaching and a system of organisation based on co-operation rather than competition. Comprising employers and workers, this system would consolidate democracy by lessening the powers of the state and by promoting parish councils as its central element. In 1939 the Taoiseach Eamon de Valera conceded to the Vocationalist lobby by establishing a Commission on Vocational Organisation which published its report in 1943. See Don O'Leary, "Vocationalism in Emergency Ireland" in Dermot Keogh and Mervyn O'Driscoll, *Ireland in World War Two. Neutrality and Survival* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004)

[26] In 1950, Browne proposed a non means-tested scheme which would provide free maternity care for all mothers and free healthcare for all children up to the age of sixteen but it was fiercely opposed by the medical profession (who feared loss of income) and by the Catholic Hierarchy (who feared moral degradation through the undermining of the family unit). In short, Browne did not have the support of his colleagues in the Clann na Poblachta

tuberculosis in the early 1940s, owing to the seriousness of the situation, nobody could justifiably protest against an interventionist plan of action.

The mother-and-child affair represents an extreme case of conflict between Church and State and highlights the inherent difficulties around the reformation of the Irish health services during the mid-twentieth century. In such an exacting environment, where the Department's proposals for reform and reorganisation were consistently blocked (from within as well as without), and the expansion of eligibility to health services was under constant scrutiny, it is not surprising that successful reform came in the somewhat tokenistic guise of an increase in hospital beds: the provision of beds was certainly more straightforward and tangible than the widening of other services. As county hospitals were built, the accessibility to health services was expanded (the infrastructure) before the services themselves could be developed or made available; beds were not ideological threats to family welfare and autonomy. In practical terms, these new beds were paid for through the Hospitals Trust Fund and upon completion, the hospitals were managed and administered by the respective local authority – thus, the process was wholly justifiable and faith in 'new' architecture for matters of health continued to deepen.

As far as the tuberculosis campaign was concerned during the Emergency years, the various aforementioned reports were put before the government in 1942 – 43. While Dublin Corporation talked milk, shoes and rent allowances and the Medical Academy mooted antibiotics and surgery, the predominant solution proposed at this mid-war point through both the IRC and the Hospitals' Commission was the provision of sanatorium treatment via an increase in purpose-built accommodation. In fact, the IRC's statistics of two beds for each death (2:1) occurring from tuberculosis were the most frequently cited within Department of Local Government and Public Health meetings and memos.[27] Was this coincident with the IRC's predominantly Catholic leanings?

Significantly, a regional sanatoria building programme was advocated by the Hospitals' Commission but due to war-time conditions such ambitions had to be tethered, and so energies were focused on smaller, more plausible and immediate-term projects. The earlier 1936 – 1938 proposals for new sanatoria in West Dublin were upheld as attainable

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Parliamentary Party or his fellow-cabinet members in the coalition Inter-Party Government, and he was forced to resign in April 1951 after which a general election was called. The debacle has been generally oversimplified and considered to be the key moment when the state was undermined by the Catholic Church. For a detailed objective account of the affair, see Barrington, "The Sport of Politics, 1948 – 1951" *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900 – 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000), p.195 - 221

[27] See for instance the letter from Department of Local Government and Public Health to various local authorities, entitled "Emergency and Post-Emergency Needs" of 21st November 1942 or the table of post-war needs from 17th January 1944 in which the Red Cross statistic (2:1) is repeatedly cited, in N.A.I., HLTH. D112/38 "Post-War Planning, Provision of TB Institutions (1944)"

and energies were channelled accordingly. By 1940, owing to pressures on the Hospitals Trust Fund, the idea shifted from three hospitals to two sanatoria in Ballyfermot and Ballyowen, to then just one at Ballyowen.[28] It could be argued that the Ballyowen project was a stop-gap until the government took the various tuberculosis reports seriously through the intervention in 1945 of the newly appointed Chief Medical Adviser, Dr James Deeny.

At the same time the dictum of architecture-as-prescriptive was taking hold more fully, serving to belatedly enforce the promise of progressive architecture as the heal-all solution to society's ills. In this instance the ills (TB) and the prescription (modern building) were quite literal: the theorem was straightforward so that, when it came to tackling the vile disease of tuberculosis in Ireland, the state as patron was fully convinced of the power of the iconic structure. In short, from 1940 to 1945 the Ballyowen scheme with its convoluted competition process (promising a shiny new building) and its guarantee of 320 beds for Dublin's ever-growing tubercular, was the most complete resolution to the TB problem in the capital at a compromised time.

## ***In search of an Irish Paimio:***

*Universalism of hospital design and the promise of an architectural competition*

In many respects the Ballyowen competition became the quest for an "Irish Paimio", that is an Irish version of Alvar Aalto's lauded tuberculosis sanatorium at Paimio, near Helsinki, Finland (1929-1933). Generally, the competition process was upheld as culturally richer than an ordinary commission and was considered to be the most likely means of yielding such a building. Certainly the discourse around the Ballyowen competition is suggestive of this notion. The push for a competition for TB sanatoria illuminates the contemporary situation of State patronage and enlightens us in terms of the relationship of the architectural community (RIAI) to Dublin Corporation, the Department of Local Government and Public Health and the Hospitals' Commission. In the first instance, the competition seems to have become the architectural *raison-d'être* of the Corporation's Tuberculosis Committee; the Department was necessarily implicated in the project because of its management of the Sweepstakes funding allocation and while choosing to remain largely outside of the Ballyowen project once the competition mechanism was set in motion, the

[28] See letter from Department of Local Government and Public Health to the City Manager of 5th November 1940 5/11/40 wherein it is outlined that there will not be a hospital in excess of 300 beds and that "I am to add that having regard to the present commitments of the Hospitals Trust Fund it will be necessary to defer for the present the proposed Tuberculosis Institution at Ballyfermot, Clondalkin." in file HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948" (N.A.I.)

Department maintained a "Big Brother" presence that was often heavy-handed in its interventions.

Initially in 1933 Dublin Corporation sent its architects on a study tour of sanatoria in the UK but the Department allegedly found the resultant designs by the Corporation to be "fundamentally defective". [29] Reports of these findings and criticism initiated the involvement of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland (RIAI) in the very live issue of sanatorium design. The RIAI, with the onset of the war by 1939 and the increasingly barren outlook for the architectural profession, responded vulture-like to the possibility of a mid-war hospital building programme. During their prolonged and irregular communication with both the Corporation and the Department of Local Government and Public Health, the Institute crafted the sanatorium discussion into a debate on the need for architectural competitions. As the RIAI president, Eoghan Buckley wrote in October 1940 to the Department,

> That, in view of the increasing unemployment in the architectural profession and bearing in mind that the funds of the Hospitals' Sweepstake have been in existence for many years and so far have not provided an opportunity for the design by competition of hospital buildings, you be requested to expedite the promotion of the architectural competitions for the designs of hospitals already under consideration by your Department.[30]

The competition initiative was not new however. The Department of Public Health's negative reaction to Dublin Corporation's in-house designs for sanatoria from 1934 - 1936 most likely hatched the idea of an architectural competition, one imagines through the influence of Vincent Kelly on the Hospitals' Commission. The Commission's second *Annual Report 1935-36* was critical of much recent hospital design, blaming both the breakdown in client/architect relations for the ever-shifting goal-posts of a particular commission and the lack of hospital design specialists employed on such projects, which inevitably thwarted

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[29] According to correspondence between a Corporation architect, Conor McGinley (who later became City Architect in 1947) and the RIAI from November 1936 to April 1937, the Department of Local Government architectural staff rejected McGinley's designs for sanatoria following his study tour to Britain and Northern Ireland. McGinley felt "injured" professionally and sought to redeem the Department's "gross discourtesy" with the RIAI's aid. By early 1937, the RIAI's lobbying on behalf of McGinley had morphed into their push for a sanatoria competition, I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

[30] Eoghan Buckley to Minister of Local Government and Public Health, 22nd October 1940 (Buckley was quoted from an earlier letter to the RIAI from J.V. Downes on 12th October 1940), I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

efficient hospital planning and innovative design.[31] The Commission was forthright in its recommendation of the competition process as a means of transcending such problematic relations:

> In other countries, such important hospital units are the subject of Architectural Competition or are the work of architectural specialists in hospital design. The Commission considers that, where circumstances permit, the principle of architectural competition should be adopted for the large hospital units contemplated in this country. Further, it is strongly of the opinion that the Assessing Bodies in such competitions should include a recognised expert in hospital design selected from one of the many countries where considerable hospital development has recently taken place.[32]

By 1939, on the occasion of the RIAI centenary, Kelly wrote about the state of contemporary hospital architecture and the architectural competition was a focus,

> Several competitions are being promoted for some of the larger hospitals. There is therefore none of our profession who will not be given the opportunity of translating the result of his researches and study into the production of model hospitals for all purposes.[33]

Whatever its precise origin, the competition idea was thrust upon the Corporation as being the most positive process, predicated on the notion that an architectural competition enabled design excellence, democratic opportunity and administrative transparency. As we have seen (in thesis introduction), the RIAI established a Competitions Committee in May 1938 and in the writing of its regulations the resolution was passed that,

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[31] Hospitals' Commission, *Annual Report 1935 – 1936:* "...many of the schemes have obvious indications of ineffectual efforts on the part of harassed architects to reconcile efficient professional views on planning with the less well informed outlooks of clients. In few cases did the preliminary plans harmonise the ideal with the practical and give evidence of close co-operation between Architect, Hospital management and Medical staff in the search for an efficient and economical layout. As a result of the lack of appreciation of the importance of team-work planning, schemes were altered during the construction period to meet individual idiosyncrasies and with a complete disregard for the extra cost involved in altering plans after the contract stage." N.A.I., HLTH. A108/1,"Hospitals' Commission Annual Reports"

[32] Ibid. (Hospitals' Commission, *Annual Report 1935 – 1936*, N.A.I., HLTH. A108/1,"Hospitals' Commission Annual Reports")

[33] Vincent Kelly, "Rehospitalisation in Eire" in RIAI Centenary Conference Handbook, *Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Centenary Celebrations 1839 – 1939* (Dublin: RIAI, 1939), p. 64

> The system of architectural competitions has been recognised for many years as the best method of obtaining designs for, and architects to supervise the erection of, all buildings of public importance, particularly where the expenditure of public funds is involved.[34]

Another reason for the Institute to push the architectural competition as the preferred process was that it was a necessarily slower procedure; with a longer period of time lapsing between competition and building it was an appropriate course of action to follow, considering the stalemate occurring in neutral Ireland, which according to the RIAI would result in a "higher standard of design".[35] As the RIAI explained to the Corporation in 1941,

> Owing to war conditions private enterprise has almost ceased... It is, therefore, certain that a large number of Architects would be in a position to devote themselves almost exclusively to the preparation of their designs and could give more calm consideration to the problems than would be possible if normal practice had to be attended to at the same time.[36]

So, as the tuberculosis problem worsened, the officials of public health in Dublin appeared for the most part to be indirectly in the grip of the RIAI with its unwavering propaganda that a good building, achieved through an architectural competition, could solve any problem. On the announcement of the competition in January 1944, the editorial of *The Irish Builder and Engineer* revealed such a typically prescriptive belief:

> That virulent and escapable disease tuberculosis has, as a very wicked demon, come under the spotlight of publicity...rightful demands for better modern scientific treatment and additional hospital accommodation for sufferers are being voiced through the media of platform and Press. It is, therefore, gratifying to note that in one desired direction progress may be reported. Elsewhere in our columns will be found the advertisement of a competition, open to all architects possessing certain

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[34] Synopsis of establishment of Competition Committee, RIAI, May - November 1938, "along the same lines as the RIBA", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47
[35] Letter from RIAI to City Manager, Dublin Corporation, 29th April 1941, in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"
[36] Ibid.

> qualification, for the design of a new TB sanatorium of 320 beds, to be erected on a fine site between Chapelizod and Lucan.[37]

The editorial goes on to endorse the benefits of a competition for the architectural community and importantly, for the greater good of society; essentially, a good building will heal and by casting the net out, a better building will be sourced:

> ...the conception of an institution of this important character, with its purpose of combating a dread human enemy, deserves the attention of the best professional brains available... The Department of Local Government and Public Health and the Dublin Corporation are jointly to be congratulated on giving the younger generation of architects this opportunity of displaying their practical ability fittingly to provide the accommodation.[38]

As preparations for the Ballyowen competition stumbled on during the early 1940s, they were subject to conflicting influences: on the one hand, external conditions (namely, World War II) were quite reasonably imposing limitations on the project yet on the other hand, internal circumstances (namely, the dire TB epidemic) were driving the project forwards. And there was another contextual layer: increasingly throughout the twentieth-century Irish architecture looked outwards - a fact which was evidenced less by the built environment than by the cultural biases and activities of the RIAI and the AAI, (see chapter one for overview discussion). And the welling tide of the international example was not to be stemmed by the events of the war, especially not in relation to the most international and universal of architectural typologies by 1940, the sanatorium. These contradictory forces amounted to the irrational conclusion whereby Dublin Corporation promoted a not insignificant international architectural competition at the height of the Second World War; as if the more culturally attractive international competition process could compensate for the by-then stunted state of the national hospital building programme.

In trying to understand the 'why' of this mid-war international competition for a sanatorium at Ballyowen, I believe that the relationship between medical science and its architectural counterpart, the hospital building is central. In fact, the reciprocity of hospital/ architecture to medicine/ health inadvertently traces the technological and aesthetic development of early modernist architecture: out of the late nineteenth-century cure for

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[37] "Editorial" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (15th January, 1944, no. 2), p.19
[38] Ibid.

infectious disease developed the sanatorium as both regime and building type and with it came the architectural elements (as modernist signatures) of balcony, flat roof, extensive glazing, terrace, anaesthetised surfaces of white-painted concrete or render.[39] The most obvious cross-over feature was the desire to bring healthful light and air into the interior through glazed walls and ambiguous inside/outside spaces such as balconies or roof terraces. Less obvious but perhaps more influential was the sanatorium's tendency to segregate while simultaneously encourage mobility of ambulant patients - this is a fundamental aspect which underpinned sanatorium planning, and is analogous to the controlled *plan-libre* or prescriptive universal space of the first generation of European modernists, such as Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe respectively. Indeed on a primary level, Le Corbusier's urban plans of the 1920s and 30s (*Ville Contemporaine*, *Vers Une Architecture, Plan Voisin, La Ville Radieuse*) were generated out of the desire to improve the physical health, and consequently the mental well-being, of the urbanized masses. Their proposals were predicated to varying degrees on order (control), zoning (segregation), circulation (mobility) and nature (fresh-air) thereby mirroring the purpose and functionality of the sanatorium. White anaesthetised cellular homes inserted into a controlled orthogonal landscape of separated routes are surely the wards and corridors of the sanatorium on an exaggerated scale. And evidently, early modernist urbanism and the sanatorium regime shared a common goal of obsessively fending off disease.

It is clear that aesthetically speaking, modernist design and healthful hygiene were intimately bound up. But architectural modernism was always about more than formalism in its pronouncement of a cultural critique; it was of course, about integrating the abstracted radical forms with radical social purpose. In the Irish example, the socio-cultural thesis of modernism lagged behind the stylistic tendency but from a formalist viewpoint, aside from Ralph Byrne's neo-Georgian National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street in Dublin (1931- 37), hospital architecture in the Free State was the site where the language of international modernism could be most purely and blatantly spoken. Generally the county hospital buildings at Kilkenny (Downes and Meehan, 1936 - 42), Portlaoise (Scott and Good, 1933-36) and Cashel (Kelly, 1934-40) for example have been lauded for their modernist characters due primarily to their flat roof construction and asymmetric external massing (figures 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.12, 2.13, 2.14, 2.15), but Hugh Campbell has argued that they were actually informed by an "impoverished functionalism" and were as such founded on the formal principles of minimalist design. Campbell maintains that their plans were

[39] Margaret Campbell, "What Tuberculosis did for Modernism: The Influence of a Curative Environment on Modernist Design and Architecture" in *Medical History* (No. 49, 2005), p.463- 488

generally rooted in utilitarianism, while contemporary reviews of them "were content to dwell exclusively on the programme and construction of the buildings".[40] Certainly these county hospital buildings of the 1930s do not diverge in massing and overall architectural disposition from *Seidlung*-type residential blocks, and could just as easily be International-Style factory complexes in their curious mixing of *beaux-arts* ground plans and asymmetrically-placed stairwells or secondary entrance halls.

A closer analysis from 2005 of the county hospitals by Brendan McEvoy examines their materials and technologies while situating them in both their socio-cultural Irish framework and their international (hospital) architecture context. From this study, McEvoy concludes that the hospitals could be deemed "impoverished", if they were compared with the most innovative in contemporary developments in international architecture.[41] He concedes that there were moments of technological sophistication through the examples of the curtain walling systems of the stair tower and semi-circular glazing of the solariums at Tullamore Hospital (by Scott and Good), as well as the glass-blocked vertical stair windows set into precast concrete frameworks at Nenagh and Cashel Hospitals (by Kelly), but that generally, construction methods were not innovative or even conversant with European standards (figures 2.3, 2.7 for example).

However, McEvoy's reading does concur with the evidence of the Hospitals' Commission's ambitious discourse, led as it was by Vincent Kelly's conscientious approach and formidable knowledge of international developments in hospital design. Having examined the ward-design and arrangement of operating theatres in the individual hospitals, McEvoy maintains that the best of the Irish county hospitals were organised and planned with reference to the most up-to-date European hospitals: "The buildings are, in the main, evidence of the evolution of hospital design, rather than examples of innovative or radical design."[42] In general, regarding ward-design, the hospitals adopted parallel-planning and provided wards of varying size thus facilitating greater segregation and classification of patients.[43] In Kelly's hospital at Cashel for instance, we see the use of semi-

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[40] As Campbell asserts, "These hospital buildings might be read as a testament to enduring values, as surely as they were symbols of progress. They helped to stabilise de Valera's balancing of a sternly anti-materialist philosophy with the need for material progress..." He goes on to state that, "Social change and the new architecture were inextricably linked. Without this emancipator aspiration, however, the new architecture was all too easily reducible either to a set of aesthetic motifs or to an impoverished functionalism... The latter tendency is revealed in the utilitarian nature of the hospital plans..." See Campbell, "Irish Identity and the Architecture of the New State", in John Olley et al, *Ireland. Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), p.86

[41] Brendan McEvoy, "County Hospitals, Irish Free State, 1930s" (M111, Unpublished Masters Urban Building Conservation Thesis: UCD School of Architecture, 2005), p.22. McEvoy's thesis studied the county hospitals at Mullingar, Castlebar, Ennis, Monaghan, Mallow, Roscommon, Nenagh, Cashel, Portlaoise, Tullamore, Kilkenny

[42] Ibid, p.54

[43] Parallel-planning is a system of placing beds parallel to walls rather than facing windows, within sub-divided wards so that patients could be segregated. This system was developed at Rigs Hospital in Copenhagen, Denmark

glazed partitions within the wards which seems to be a transplant of the system at the Children's Hospital at Basle (figures 2.8, 2.9). There is a general attempt to privilege south-facing wards, fed by central corridors and McEvoy tells us that the architect of Roscommon hospital, J.R. Boyd Barrett, had originally opted for pavilion wards (open-plan with beds placed as to face windows, after the Florence Nightingale model) which the Department made him change to parallel-planned wards.[44] Such adherence to European developments in terms of medical planning (operating theatres, surface treatments of interiors, ward access and sanitary equipment) was critical and is too complex to detail within this present study (figures 2.10, 2.11). For the moment, the adherence points to the sophistication of the Irish Free State hospitals in relation to international hospital design.

Returning to the formal qualities of the county hospitals' exteriors, it is interesting to note that they were in tune with the blurring of medical treatment and modern architectural aesthetics, in that to a varying degree they provided sun terraces and loggia through flat roofs, canopies and balconies. Also Vincent Kelly's hospitals at Cashel and Nenagh, with their symmetrical facades articulated through the rhythms of projecting and receding bays, display the architect's admiration for both Josef Hoffman's Purkersdorf Sanatorium (1904-06) outside Vienna and Willem Dudok's lauded Town Hall at Hilversum, Holland (1928-31) (figures 2.16, 2.17). Prior to the war in 1934, Kelly had undertaken two study tours to France, Germany, Holland, Czechoslovakia and Switzerland in order to examine "the latest schemes of planning and equipment" and to place "the results garnered at the disposal of the Committee";[45] observations were recorded for the national architectural community in two articles published in *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, as well as delivered to the AAI through a slide show on 20th February 1934.[46] Aside from technical details relayed from observations of Lory-Spital Hospital and the De Quervain's Clinic in Bern, Switzerland, the Children's Clinic at Basle in Switzerland and St. Antonius Hospital in Berlin, Kelly

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from 1910 and was much praised and discussed in the well-known hospital issue of *The Architects' Journal* (28 October 1925, Vol. LXII, no. 1608) p. 948. (Cited by McEvoy, ibid, but consulted independently by this writer and also discussed in John Thompson and Grace Goldin, *The Hospital: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1975))

[44]Brendan McEvoy, "County Hospitals, Irish Free State, 1930s", p.42. McEvoy also points out that Kelly was an innovator in terms of services and their placement. For example at Nenagh hospital, Kelly used the European example of a basement level corridor beneath the main corridor for services distribution; here a large "sub-floor services distribution ducts with access covers were incorporated, with vertical risers at stairs and lifts." p.46

[45] *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (vol. 75, 25th March, 1933), p.221

[46] The AAI lecture, "A Tour of Continental Hospitals" was delivered on 20th February 1934 and was printed as Vincent Kelly, "A Tour of Continental Hospitals" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 7th April, 1934), p. 266 – 269. See also Vincent Kelly, "Hospital Planning for the Future" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 23rd July, 1934), p. 33 – 36

For more on Kelly's work with hospital architecture see unpublished B.A. thesis, Sheila Corballis, "Vincent Kelly and his Contribution to Hospital Building in Ireland" (History of Art and Architecture Department, TCD, 2008). Corballis outlines the influence of Dudok and Hoffman on Kelly in chapter 3 "Vincent Kelly's Hospitals" which she researched under joint supervision with this author and Dr. Edward McParland.

consistently enforced the universal aspect of hospital design;[47] that all hospitals had the same objective (man's health) and that regional differences were limited, in reference only to materials and climatic tendencies.[48]

In this way, Kelly and the Hospitals' Commission were submerged in contemporary developments in European hospital architecture. It would seem that the Commission acted as a conduit to/for international activities and that aside from Kelly's well-documented travel and international interests there were lesser-known connections made and studies undertaken before the onset of the war. One such instance was a postgraduate course and study tour under the auspices of the International Hospitals Association in August – September 1936 which enabled five Irish men, medical professionals and civil servants alike, to engage with recent hospital design and medical development in Czechoslovakia.[49] Undoubtedly the international example was upheld at this time and as Diarmaid Ferriter asserts, in relation to officials being sent to Yugoslavia in 1934 as part of the National Health Insurance Society, "...the repeated reference to the experiences of other countries by senior Irish civil servants would suggest that Ireland's intellectual insularity during this period has been exaggerated."[50] The workings of both the Hospitals' Commission and the Department of Local Government and Public Health during the 1940s and 1950s reveal a continuum with these pre-war years in terms of the extrovert nature of their aspirations, with regular study tours and correspondence with international medical bodies constituting ongoing and central activities. For example, Dr McWeeney, as tuberculosis adviser to the Department throughout the 1940s, made repeated trips to the UK and Switzerland to study sanatoria design, to attend the annual conference of the British Tuberculosis Association and to examine occupational therapeutic facilities. In a report of a study trip to Wales in 1948 McWeeney outlined that a visit to the Cheshire Joint Sanatorium was useful from the

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[47] As Corballis rightly points out, the listed hospitals above are the ones to which Kelly refers in the reproduction of his AAI lecture and so they are the only ones which we can be sure that he visited: see Kelly, "A Tour of Continental Hospitals" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 7th April, 1934), p. 266 – 269

[48] Vincent Kelly, "Hospital Planning for the Future" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 23rd July, 1934), p. 33 – 36

[49] This trip was the third such international postgraduate course and study tour of the International Hospitals Association but I was unable to find evidence of the Irish contribution to the first two. The Irish delegates on this trip of 1936 to Czechoslovakia were Dr J. A. Madden, Mr. D. Allen (TD), Secretary of the Hospitals' Commission Dr. A. F. Cooney, Dr. Lysaght, Medical Inspector for the Department of Local Government and Public Health and Mr Mc Ardle. A detailed outline of the lectures and hospital visits is recorded in "Report on post-graduate course and hospital study tour in Czechoslovakia conducted under the auspices of the International Hospitals Association", N.A.I. HLTH, A108/1, "Hospitals Commissions Annual Reports."

[50] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900 - 2000* (London: Profile Books, 2004), p. 402 – 403. The example of the Institute of International Affairs is also illustrative of the interest in international matters, though this organisation seems to have been quite a fringe and small base during the mid twentieth century (the only architect who was a member was Alan Hope, architect of Cherry Orchard Fever Hospital). For a recent history of this little-known fascinating organisation see, Mick McCarthy, *International Affairs at Home* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2006)

'bigger-picture' lessons of occupational therapy to such minutiae as, "details of equipment of wards and special departments were studied, in particular, interesting types of bed lockers and cross bed tables were seen."[51]

Clearly the groundwork had been laid by Vincent Kelly and his peers for the referencing of international practices for Irish hospital architecture, so that T. P. Kennedy's role within the Hospitals' Commission from 1940 seems largely to have been one of maintenance or ideological status-quo, especially when confronted with the relative stasis induced by the Second World War. Kennedy continued the Irish membership of the International Hospital Federation and indeed strengthened that relationship throughout the second half of the twentieth century.[52] Following the war an Irish architect participated in each annual hospital study tour and as early as 1956, the International Hospital Federation made its study trip to Ireland (figure 2.18), which is sure evidence of the significance of the Republic's hospital building programme from the 1940s into the 1950s.[53] In his capacity as the first wartime president of the AAI from 1939/1940, Kennedy's message to the Association was laden with forceful internationalist polemic as he insisted "that our forms of design may be restricted by lack of materials but they must be 1940 forms and must fulfil 1940 requirements."[54] He championed the maintenance, at a low-ebb, of architectural production during the war by flying the modernist and industrialist flag alongside the national one:

> The establishment of a National Government in Ireland has been followed by the introduction of a new industrial era. This policy has had a far-reaching influence on the building trade, as new factories have been established and existing ones encouraged to develop. The result has been that in less than ten years all the major requirements of the building trade, with few exceptions are now manufactured in Ireland... The revolutionary stage accomplished, the next important step is a check-up or what might be called a general stocktaking.[55]

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[51] Report on Sanatoria in Wales and UK: 21-22 October 1948, Cheshire Joint Sanatorium. See N.A.I., HLTH. D112/313 "Report By Dr McWeeney on Sanatoria in Wales and UK, 1948- 49"
[52] C. V. O'Donnell "Thomas P. Kennedy: Obituary", reprinted from *Irish Times*, 27 June 1991, in *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1992), p.63-64. The obituary informs us that Kennedy, "...inspected European and American hospitals and discussed developments in those countries. He joined the International Hospitals Federation, and became a member of the study group on hospital design and construction, formed by the Swedish hospital architect, the late Hedymer Cederstrom."
[53] *Manual for Hospital Visits. Study Tour of Hospitals in Ireland* (Irish Hospitals' Commission under the auspices of the International Hospital Federation, 1956). This two-volume manual was made available to me by Frank Jackman, (former architectural advisor to Department of Health), private collection
[54] Thomas P. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1939-40), p.24
[55] Ibid, p.25

This penchant for industrial modernism and the tendency towards continuity in the face of an international crisis defined Ireland's architectural intelligentsia during the 1940s. Kennedy opened his 1939 inaugural AAI address with an apology to his fellow-architects that the lecture programme for 1939/40 did "not include the usual quota of foreign lecturers...which under present conditions is not feasible."[56] The 1938/39 programme had delivered lectures by Dublin-based architects on modern church architecture (by J.V. Downes) and American architecture (by Harry Robson), as well as presentations from significant proponents of British modernism such as Maxwell Fry ("In search of architecture"), Amyas Connell ("I don't know much about art but I know what I like") and Frank Yerbury ("Recent developments in Swedish architecture and decoration"). The following year then, under Kennedy's wartime watch, the internationalist *avant-garde* direction of the lectures may have been considerably diluted and localised, but the lecture-programme had nonetheless been sustained by the AAI committee with presentations on air-raid precautions (Saville Hicks), security under Vocational organisation (Emmet Humphreys), the hydro-electric scheme on at Poulaphouca, the River Liffey (Vernon Harty) along with travelogues of America (J.V. Downes and J. A. Douglas at the New York World Fair). In 1938 the AAI even managed to make a study tour to Germany, although the trip "proved too ambitious and the number taking part in it could hardly have been regarded as representing the usual enthusiasm displayed in previous years."[57] While astonishingly, in August of 1939, the Association, comprising eighteen of its membership, managed to journey to Rouen, "before the crisis became acute"![58]

In 1936, Kennedy and fellow-architect Gerald McNicholl had famously undertaken a bicycle trip from "Stockholm to Venice" and their photographs of the fruits of early twentieth-century European modernism in the form of Scandinavian town halls, Italian railway stations and French swimming pools were illustrated repeatedly from 1939 until 1946 by the AAI in their various publications (figures 2.20, 2.102 - 2.104).[59] Along with the ever-growing slide collection of the important architect and later Professor of Architecture at University College Dublin (UCD), J.V. Downes, these study-tour images were extremely

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[56] Ibid, p.23
[57] Editorial comment for "Annual Report 1938/39" in ibid, p.31
[58] Editorial comment, ibid, p.23
[59] In the first instance, McNicholl and Kennedy's photographs variously won them awards in the AAI photography competitions of 1940/41 (Kennedy) and 1942/43 (McNicholl). Aside from this, a photo-story which appears to be a record of the trip appears in *Green Books* 1939 - 1941, and many of their photographs became the basis of the AAI post-war polemic, *When Ireland Builds Again* (editor, Noel Moffett?) (Dublin: AAI, 1945)

relevant to a generation of Irish architects.[60] As we have noted, the barriers to travel during the Second World War limited (still further) Irish architects' exposure to architectural developments abroad and foreign influence generally so that McNicholl and Kennedy's amateur photographs and Downes' slides assumed disproportionate significance in the early 1940s.

The most enduring image from Kennedy's photographic account of this formative trip must be his award-winning portrait of Alvar Aalto's tuberculosis sanatorium at Paimio (figure 2.19).[61] Kennedy's oblique view which was taken from the top (seventh) floor of the treatment block and dramatically portrays clean curvilinear white terraces, sheltered by thin eaves-canopies and pitched above surrounding deciduous forest into a crisp Scandinavian sky, had begun to entrench itself in the impressionable imagination of modernist Irish architecture. Already by 1933, just as Aalto was overseeing Paimio's completion, the Irish Minister for Local Government and Public Health, Sean T. O'Kelly identified the Paimio Sanatorium as a possible paradigm for Irish architects. In an address to the RIAI, O'Kelly sought to encourage the next generation by referring to Aalto's achievements:

> ...some of the striking architectural triumphs of modern times have been achieved by the smaller nations. Alvar Aalto, the Finn, who won the competition for the Paimio Sanatorium a few years ago with a design of startling originality and has since achieved European fame, first set up on his own account in a town of 6,000 people...[62]

O'Kelly's championing of Aalto and the contemporary Finnish sanatorium - so as to "help us build in a manner that will reflect credit on our country and generation"[63] - is oft-cited as an example of the consciously modernist ethos and *zeitgeist* principles underpinning official architectural programmes during the infancy of the Irish Free State (1920s and 1930s).[64] The combination of O'Kelly's evocation of the Paimio structure with the building's ongoing

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[60] J.V. Downes' slide collection is at the Irish Architectural Archive and shows the architect's determined appreciation of the European and American avant-garde, captured through excellent photography. He showed these images on numerous occasions to the AAI such as on 25th February 1941, "Slides and cine films of architectural and photographic interest".

[61] See announcement of winner of photography competition, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1940-41), p.48

[62] Sean T. O'Kelly, address on the occasion of launching a photographic exhibition of the RIAI, *Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1934)

[63] Ibid.

[64] Rothery cites O'Kelly's address in *Ireland and the New Irish Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p. 144 - 146; O'Dwyer cites the address in *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p. 18; see also Hugh Campbell, "Irish Identity and the Architecture of the New State" in Olley, Wang, Becker et al., *Ireland. Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Munich, New York: Prestel, 1997), p. 86

publication by the British architectural press and its illustration in the AAI yearbooks of the early war-years meant that Aalto's sanatorium had become *the* modernist emblem of hospital architecture threading its way through Irish history from 1933. Aalto's sanatorium presented the architectural community with a tangible form for the modernist institution for health. It was indeed the ultimate icon of healthful architecture within a European lineage begun by Richard Docker's Waiblingen Sanatorium at Stuttgart in 1926 and continued in Jan Duiker's Zonnestraal Sanatorium at Hilversum, 1928 (figures 2.21, 2.22, 2.23). In reality Aalto borrowed heavily from Duiker's design yet architectural history remembers the Paimio Sanatorium as the singular statement of modernist hospital design:[65] as Henry Russell-Hitchcock asserted, the Paimio Sanatorium was a "demonstration of the special applicability of the new architecture to hospitals."[66] While William Curtis explained that Aalto's sanatorium, "was one of those cases where the aims of the client and the 'sanitary' philosophical and visual aspects of the new style were in accord from the beginning."[67]

By the time of the Ballyowen commission, the image of Paimio was fully assimilated into the Irish architectural psyche so that in the first instance its emulation by Irish sanatorium design had become inevitable and more pervasively, it presented hospital design with an unambiguous symbol of modernist architecture at the service of the sick; a symbol that was fuelled by the metaphysical as much as by the physical.[68] Reinforcing this Paimio symbol was its coincidence with the increasingly desperate situation of TB in Ireland during the early 1940s - certainly both the international bent of the Ballyowen competition and then the aesthetics of the winning design strongly enforce this supposition.

## ***Terms and Conditions:***

*An international competition and the winning design*

Having considered the sanatorium typology to be the most universal in a genealogy of architectural modernism and established that overall, there was a growing appetite on the part of Irish architects for international experience, we move to consider the events of the

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[65] For details on the influence of Duiker's Zonnestraal Sanatorium on Aalto's famous building at Paimio, see Paul David Pearson, *Alvar Aalto and the International Style* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978), p. 84 - 92

[66] Henry Russell-Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1978 edition), p. 514

[67] William Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, Third Edition, 1997), p.343

[68] The influence of Aalto's sanatorium, along with Zonnestraal by Jan Duiker, was not confined to Ireland and most likely, had a greater impact on Irish architects precisely because these buildings were upheld in Britain. An example of their popularity and pervasiveness is that along with Burgerspital hospital in Basel, Switzerland they were the only non-British sanatoria illustrated in the important publication of the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis Architectural Committee (NAPT), *Design for Sanatoria* (London: NAPT, 1951), p. ii of photographs (figures 2.23, 2.24)

Ballyowen competition. The internationalisation of this mid-war competition proposes that the lure of the iconic encounter was stronger than the realities of tubercular deaths and wartime building-material shortages; the event certainly points to the far-reaching ambitions and youthful confidence of the Irish authorities as counselled in this instance by the medical profession and the architectural intelligentsia. However, a study of the competition's actual workings reveals that it had taken six long years to materialise and its progression had been painfully bureaucratic and arduous.

As continues to be practice in Irish architecture, the RIAI was the consulting body which hosted the competition and was charged with appointing the architectural assessors, two of whom were acknowledged specialists in hospital design, Vincent Kelly and Ralph Byrne (1877 – 1946).[69] The Chairman of the Board was a third Dublin-based architect, Harry Allberry (1872 – 1952) who had been an architect with the Office of Public Works until his retirement in 1935 whence he was in private practice until 1940 (and designed the TB sanatorium at Bagnelstown, County Carlow (1936)), and was well-known as editor of *The Irish Builder and Engineer*.[70] And the medical representative on the Board was Dr. Michael Walsh, the Resident Medical Superintendent (RMS) of Crooksling Sanatorium in Blanchardstown, County Dublin.[71] The final assessor, from London, was not appointed until 1943. This Board (appointed in 1937) acted on behalf of the competition's promoters, Dublin Corporation - more specifically the Tuberculosis Committee of the Corporation's Public Health Division - which was, as we know with all hospital planning, reliant on the Hospitals Trust Fund via the Minister of Local Government.

From the outset the competition machinery was complex and multi-pronged and was more prone than usual to obstruction and delay. In a series of letters throughout 1940 the Corporation urged the Department to progress with the sanatorium project and to provide as many beds as possible, communicating varyingly that "The matter has become very

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[69] Ralph Byrne's practise was involved in the design/alteration of eleven or so hospital buildings including the significant National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin 1931 – 1937, Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Irish Architects, 1720 – 1940, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/858#tab_works (accessed January 2009) Vincent Kelly was involved in the planning/design (often not built) of ten hospitals by 1940, Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Irish Architects, 1720 – 1940, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/2963#tab_works (accessed January 2009)

[70] For more on Allberry, see Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.103-108 and the Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Irish Architects, 1720 – 1940, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/23#tab_biography (accessed January 2009)

[71] At the time of the assessors' appointment in 1938, the blueprints in the Corporation proposed the replacement of Crooksling and Pigeon House sanatoria with two new sanatoria, at Ballyfermot and Ballyowen, so Crooksling Sanatorium had a very specific bearing on the prospective new buildings. Crooksling Sanatorium was built in 1901 – 1914 and treated 133 men and 86 women - a figure which was used in the initial planning of Ballyowen and its gender distribution. See letter from Dr Russell, Medical Officer of Health at Dublin Corporation to J Hurson, Secretary of Department of Local Government and Public Health, 26th October 1940 in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

urgent... anything that would prevent the early start of the work of construction should be avoided."[72] And Alfred Byrne of the Corporation wrote in November 1940, "To ask the Minister for Local Government and Public Health if his attention has been drawn to the report of the meeting of the Dublin Corporation at which it was stated that sixty-nine persons suffering from Tuberculosis were without sanatorium accommodation."[73] The Departmental response to these calls was consistent in its determination that due to the war, the funds were not available and local ambitions for new sanatoria had to be curtailed: "The receipts from Sweepstakes have diminished so greatly that no further demands upon the Hospitals Trust Fund can at present be admitted."[74] But the Corporation needed beds, urgently and was pressurising the Board of Assessors to incorporate more and more accommodation into the competition conditions.

Assessors' roles are usually discussed in the terms of adjudication but in reality, their part begins much earlier - firstly in the definition of the commission and then in the planning of needs. Both aspects form the competition conditions which entail the balancing of accommodation needs, competition ethics, site constraints and financial limitations. The initial capacity of the sanatorium was to be 300 beds, at a cost of £350,000 but such figures had been calculated in 1939 and so were based on pre-war circumstances when materials were available and when the Ballyowen project represented one part of a tripartite scheme of tuberculosis institutions for Dublin City and County. As the effects of the war set in and the deaths from tuberculosis increased, the Department continued to abide by these figures. Meanwhile the Corporation reacted to the situation, insisting on an increase in capacity (to 350) now that Ballyowen was the only TB project surviving on the mid-war drawing board.[75] The Board of Assessors was in the unenviable position of working and reworking the competition's conditions according to conflicting instruction from the Corporation as promoter but by June 1941, the capacity of the sanatorium was at last fixed at the

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[72] Letter from City Manager to J. Hurson, Secretary to Department of Local Government and Public Health, 16th October 1940, in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

[73] Letter from Alfred Byrne to Department of Local Government and Public Health, 5th November 1940, in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

[74] Letter from the Department of Local Government and Public Health, 22nd October 1942, in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

[75] Letter from Dr Russell (Medical Officer of Health, Dublin Corporation) to Department, 20th April 1940, outlining current shortage of beds citing report of Dr Walsh (RMS of Crooksling) that "patients cannot reasonably expect any degree of permanent improvement unless they stay in the institution for six months." He goes on to explain that originally it was thought that 300 more beds was enough but now patients are more open to treatment and are staying longer in sanatoria. In terms of the conditions for the competition, Russell is asking to increase capacity to 350 patients and to split it as evenly as possible between the genders.
Dr Russell writes again and again to the Department - on 28th June 1940, 9th August 1940, 26th August 1940 until at last on 7th October 1940 the Minister responds to Russell (via the City Manager) that the Department cannot sanction a bigger hospital "in view of the present commitments in connection with the Hospitals Trust Fund". See N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

compromised figure of 320 beds.[76] Months skipped on and by late 1942, the conditions were still not set because of insufficient funds. The Department justified its refusal to augment the original estimate of £350,000 by stating that, "...it should not be assumed that the present high cost of building work will continue after the passing of the present emergency conditions."[77]

The two solutions that the Board arrived at were firstly to instruct competitors to cost their schemes at pre-war prices and secondly, and most importantly, to insist that buildings be designed as to be potentially extended at a later date. While extendibility meant inherent flexibility within the overall scheme, the conditions for this competition (in keeping with contemporary trends in hospital planning universally) were heavily detailed in relation to accommodation requirements. The assessors' planning task included the naming of all rooms, the labelling of functions and even the square footage required per room; the resultant document comprised seventeen pages, twelve sections and forty-seven clauses detailing such obscure requirements as administration sewing room (400 sq. ft.) or sick staff-bay linen room (60 sq. ft.).[78]

In short, the infectious disease complex was underpinned by a combination of needs whereby it was necessarily an isolated and controlling environment which must at the same time be flexible and open to growth. As evidenced by the draft conditions, alongside lists of prescriptive functionality, the assessors state that they do not, "wish to hamper the competitors by laying down mandatory conditions governing the relationship between any one Department and another."[79] They then explain that it is "...considered desirable that the Institution should be so planned as to permit of a possible extension to provide for 80 additional patients."[80] This desire for potential expansion defined the Ballyowen project and is key to our discussion later in the chapter in that it came to define much Irish hospital architecture from 1949 generally; it is a curious mix - born out of mid-twentieth-century development throughout the West - of economic exigencies and the fluidity of social reform (in this instance of the health services).

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[76] A meeting held on 27th June 1941 in Department of Local Government dealt with the question of numbers. It was asked, "Is there any way out of this TB crisis?" Agreement was reached as regards the number of 320 beds. See p. 5 of minutes, "Proposed sanatorium at Ballyowen, Lucan" 27/6/41, See N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

[77] Letter from Department to City Manager, 27th August 1942, which goes on to say "The original estimate of £350, 000 should not be exceeded. This is the utmost allocation which could be made towards the provision of the Sanatorium." See N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

[78] See Corporation of Dublin, "Competition for Designs for Proposed New Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Ballyowen, Co. Dublin" (draft May 31st 1943), N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

[79] Ibid, Clause 28, p. 6

[80] Ibid, Clause 30, p. 6

As the project correspondence from 1940 until 1944 reveals, the competition process was by no means smooth or straightforward. Such evidence makes us question the validity of an architectural competition in the first place, especially considering the urgent need for TB accommodation. This point is reinforced by the project's ever-shifting goal-posts, posing a serious challenge to the assessors as they drew up the competition conditions; so much so that by November 1942, their collective frustration was voiced by Harry Allberry in a scathing letter to the Department of Local Government and Public Health:

> ...after five years of changing sites and accommodation requirements, entailing frequent redrafting of the Conditions, it is even now impracticable to determine the final terms of the Conditions until:- (1) The estimated cost has been decided in relation to the accommodation to be included in the Competitors' schemes.
> (2) The name of the fourth Assessor is available.
> (3) A decision has been reached as to limitations to be imposed – if any – on the nationality or residential qualifications of the Competitors.[81]

Allberry's queries point to the competition's scope. The upshot was that despite the mid-war complications of restricted travel between Ireland and the UK, the renowned hospital architect John Murray Easton of London practice, Murray Easton and Robertson became the fourth assessor from March 1943 and that the radical decision was taken to extend the competition to American and British architects, thereby initiating a little-known international architectural competition.[82]

The decision to open this competition to the international community, then at war, appears to have emanated from the Corporation. Certainly by June 1943, most likely owing to ongoing obstacles to the competition's progress, the Board of Assessors stated their opposition to the internationalisation of the competition; while the eligibility of British architects was one thing, being a fairly common practice due to the close ties between the RIAI and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), anything wider in scope was considered to be overly-ambitious. As Allberry wrote in a letter to the Corporation, "My Board consider that under present conditions a competition of an international character is

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[81] Letter from Harry Allberry to the Department, 11th November 1942, in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"
[82] Letter from the Corporation to the Department on 7th January 1943 detailing that the RIBA have given them 3 names: J M Fairweather, Lionel G Pearson, J Murray Easton. The City Manager recommended Murray Easton. N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

entirely impracticable".[83] One would tend to agree with Allberry's Board, especially considering the added cost of administering an international competition in the context of a cash-strapped Hospitals Trust Fund. The Board had already been instructed that their amended calculated costs of £475,000 for a 320-bed sanatorium and accompanying staff quarters on the assigned site were inadmissible and yet, here was the Department of Local Government and Public Health sanctioning the expensive advertisement of the competition in various American specialist journals.[84]

This task accomplished, the following ad appeared (in January 1944) in the *Architectural Record, Architectural Forum, Pencil Points, San Francisco Architect and Engineer* and the *California Arts and Architecture*, at an approximate cost of $500, all of which was paid through the Department of External Affairs (figure 2.26).[85] Aside from the added cost, the international bias inevitably slowed the process down further. In fact, the American Institute of Architects immediately moved to extend the first deadline of the initial application for competition conditions for American participants from 13th March 1944 to 31st May 1944.[86] The *Irish Builder* editorial highlighted this slower (thereby negative) aspect of an international competition, "Under existing circumstances, an open competition obviously entails the disadvantage of delay, owing to difficulties of intercommunication between countries, and the date for the receipt of the designs – 30th June, 1945 – seems almost humorously remote."[87] But the editorial concluded that the wider the eligibility, the greater the possibility: "...time immediately lost may prove of less value than the ultimate results obtained."[88] So that, despite the deceleration of the whole process due to the American inclusion, the internationalisation of the competition was well-received in architectural circles - that is, beyond the Board of Assessors.

The assessors' job was also made more difficult by the international aspect of the competition because it presented fresh problems in terms of the conditions' provision of site plans. As Clause 17 of the competition conditions points out, while a basic contour plan was

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[83] Letter from Allberry to E. O Nolan of the Public Health Department, Dublin Corporation on 2nd June 1943 in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"
[84] This advertising process alone was considerably complex, entailing in the first instance that the City Manager send a telegram to the Consulate General of New York instructing them to contact "...the American Institute of Architects (AIA) with a view to ascertaining what would be suitable papers for advertising and approximately what would be the cost." See telegram in N.A.I., Department of External Affairs, DFA.238/297 "Advertisement of Architectural Competition in American Journals and Dailies, 1943"
[85] See letter from Department of Local Government and Public Health to Department of External Affairs, 17th November 1943 and from American Institute of Architects to DEA December 1943, N.A.I., DFA.238/297 "Advertisement of Architectural Competition in American Journals and Dailies, 1943"
[86] See document outlining the competition advertisement in N.A.I., DFA. 238/297 "Advertisement of Architectural Competition in American Journals and Dailies, 1943"
[87] "Editorial" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (15th January, 1944, no. 2), p.19
[88] Ibid.

to be supplied "it is desirable that competitors should visit and personally examine the site."[89] The site was an undeveloped green-field one (of over seventy acres) purchased by the Corporation due to its suitability in terms of both its proximity to urban services and its rural attributes of open space and fresh-air. The reality was that it was a *terrain vague* in respect of services and that the promoter could not better represent it graphically beyond its bare contours. As the conditions instruct,

> Competitors may assume that a public sewer will be available at the point marked "A" on the plan; that the electrical cables crossing the site will be diverted from the site, and that the necessary electrical service will be available at the main distribution and switch panel.[90]

The foreign competitors were obviously aware of their disadvantage by not being able to make a visit to the site at Lucan and so requested that a more detailed site plan to be issued; the assessors responded in September 1944 (through the "Answers to Questions" document) that neither site photographs nor improved contour maps could be provided "under present conditions".[91] Here we witness the increased security of wartime being scapegoated for local authority incompetence. As a letter from the City Manager to the Secretary of the Department of Local Government and Public Health of September 1943 reveals, despite the Corporation's ownership of the site since 1937 Dublin County Council had never received the Department's sanction to go ahead with a sewage extension and as a result, the Corporation was unable to send a decent map with the competition conditions because, "definite information is not available as to the proposed public sewer in the Ballyowen area."[92]

In short, the internationalisation of the Ballyowen sanatorium competition increased costs, reduced speed and complicated the accessibility of the site. On top of these

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[89] See Clause 17, Corporation of Dublin, "Competition for Designs for Proposed New Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Ballyowen, Co. Dublin", p.4 N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

[90] Ibid.

[91] The Board of Assessors file which contains the workings of the actual competition 1944-1945 has not been found by this writer either in the RIAI archives, the Department of Health and Children archives, the Health Service Executive archives, the Dublin City archives or records of the winning practice, Peppard and Duffy; nor have interviews with Frank Jackman, Mary Peppard, Ronald Tallon and Frederick O'Dwyer helped in tracing this file. Therefore, the crucial "Answers to Questions" document, issued to all competitors in response to their questions about the competition to the assessors, has been unavailable to me. The quotation from that document is cited by Frederick O'Dwyer who, it seems, has seen it: Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p.21

[92] Letter from City Manager to Secretary of the Department, 30th September 1943 in N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

considerable factors, the Department of Local Government and Public Health appeared to be wholly unconvinced by the international direction of the competition; in commenting on the final draft of the competition conditions in May 1943, the Departmental Secretary's annotated remarks agree with the Board of Assessors' inclination to confine the competition to Ireland and Great Britain:

> The Board's clause is practical in as much as it implies the unlikelihood if not the impossibility of an Architect not resident in this island owing to war conditions (1) Competing (2) Supervising the work if successful.[93]

It would seem that the assessors' caution and the Department's scepticism of the competition's international ambition were prophetic as, despite its extensive scope and the generous premiums (£500, £350, £250, £150), the response by the international architectural community was surprisingly tepid with only twenty-seven submissions of which over one-third came from Dublin-based architects, one from an Irish architect outside Dublin, and the remainder from Belfast, England, Scotland and the United States.[94] Somewhat ironically the first premium was won by two young Dublin architects, recently graduated from University College Dublin, Louis Peppard and Jack Managhan, who according to *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, produced a seemingly workable and "unusual and ingenious" design (figures 2.27, 2.28, 2.29).[95] It is worthy of note that the second, third and fourth premiums went to British architects while two designs by Dublin-based practices, Messrs O'Connor and Aylward and Dermot O'Toole were commended.[96]

The winning design was published during the summer of 1945 in the Irish and British architectural press in conjunction with a small exhibition of all the entries held at the Supper Rooms of the Mansion House in Dublin.[97] Most clearly this scheme (scheme no. 10) by Peppard and Managhan displays an adherence to Aalto's Paimio sanatorium in terms of the

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[93] See last draft of the conditions before their publication, 29th June 1943, wherein the Board of Assessors proposes that, "Competition to be open to Architects in Gt. Britain and Ireland..." rather than previous clause 2, "Competition to be open to all Architects who may desire to compete..." James Hurson, the Departmental Secretary annotated the above comment in relation to this change. See N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

[94] "Ballyowen Sanatorium Competition. Some Particulars of the Winning Design" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (No. 16, 11th August, 1945), p. 395 – 397; and "Competition for T.B. Sanatorium, Ballyowen, Dublin" in *The Builder*, 3rd August 1945, p. 91

[95] "Unusual and ingenious" are adjectives from the Assessors' Report which were cited in "Ballyowen Sanatorium Competition. Some Particulars of the Winning Design" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (No. 16, 11th August, 1945), p. 395 -397

[96] Premiated: Second place, Nichol, Nichol and Thomas, RIBA in assoc. with D. G. Walton, RIBA, Birmingham; third place, D. D. Harrison + Penelope Whiting, London; fourth place Grenfell Baines Group of Architects, Preston. Commended: Messrs O'Connor + Aylward, Dublin and Mr Dermot O'Toole, Dublin: listed in Ibid.

[97] Ibid.

overall disposition of blocks and their interrelationship. Peppard and Managhan have taken Aalto's plan of a dominating nursing block which controls both site and complex in its longitudinal east-west orientation and as in the building by Aalto, the southern side of this main rectangular block was glazed and was therefore the most explicitly articulated façade. Radiating from behind it were shorter angled wings housing the administration block, the chapel, the laundry and other services such as boiler and recreation hall. The two principal functional areas of nursing and administration were joined by an entrance hall and stairway lobby (figures 2.28, 2.29), which the architects describe in their written report as a "hub".[98]

The planning of this connecting element containing the entrance and the vertical circulation, together with the hierarchical separation of 'serving' (administration, kitchen, boiler etc.) and 'served' (wards), faithfully acknowledges the sanatorium at Paimio. Along with these aspects, Peppard and Managhan's proposal of differentiated blocks for nursing, maid, porter and Resident Medical Superintendent (RMS) accommodations which were organised at splayed angles also acknowledges the layout of Paimio. In its plan, the Paimio sanatorium was itself an adaptation of the three-part nursing units making up the Zonnestraal sanatorium complex by Jan Duiker (figure 2.25). Where Duiker opted for a campus of five one and two-storey buildings arranged at splayed angles over a wooded site, Aalto centralised his sanatorium by combining two lengths of Duiker's patients' wings into one slab-block and then by increasing the height of this block to seven storeys.[99] Peppard and Managhan similarly centralised their design by placing all the nursing units into a single structure which was to be divided equally into male (west) and female (east) wings and then vertically according to the categorisation of the patients from ambulant patients at ground-level, semi-ambulant on the first floor and then the most serious bedfast cases were housed on the second floor. This lucid segregation dictates the plan of the prize-winning design and was the deciding element for the assessors. As the assessors' report stated,

> It is an excellent piece of logical and ingenious planning with a very satisfactory balance and relationship of parts. Ambulant and semi-ambulant patients have easy access to the grounds, to the common room and to the dining room which is very

[98] The hub is described as follows: "As a main principle, this hub alone serves as a general circulation space, and each of the "spokes" radiating from the hub is a self-contained block distinctly isolated from every other block, and, therefore, free from through traffic to other units." The design's accompanying written report was summarised in a student review of the winning design in UCD's *The National Student*, reprinted in "How the Ballyowen Sanatorium was planned" in *Irish Times*, 31 December 1945, p. 4

[99] Paul David Pearson, *Alvar Aalto and the International Style* (New York: Whitney Library of Design, 1978), p. 84. See also William Curtis, *Modern Architecture Since 1900* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, Third Edition, 1997), p.345

> pleasantly placed. Nurses' and maids' homes are conveniently located, being separate and apart from the hospital, but with ease of access.[100]

In keeping with contemporary economic stringency, the successful planning of this scheme was enforced by the assessors' judgement that it would also be "economical in construction and should be so in operation..."[101] The buildings' relation to their site seemed satisfactory although the assessors were concerned that the wards would be overly-exposed to the weather. Overall the judges seemed to find Peppard and Managhan's glazed wards preferable to perceived under-utilisation of the site, as in their criticism of the second premiated design (scheme no. 21) - "The institutional character of the design lacks the homeliness of some of the more freely planned solutions submitted; and this would be more justified on an urban than on this rural site..." - and the fourth (scheme no. 23) which they report "has shown great ingenuity in arrangement of the wards, failing, however, to take advantage of the natural amenities of the site."[102] These judgements reveal the importance placed by the assessors on the rural aspect of the site thereby implying how the Ballyowen commission was founded on the theory of TB treatment from the 1920s that isolation from the urban environment along with rest and occupation therapy, could effect a cure for the patient - theories that ultimately informed the physical planning and emotional aesthetics of Zonnestraal and Paimio alike.[103] As the Ballyowen competition conditions instruct:

> The main desideratum in the case of all wards is to secure an ample supply of pure air and light to each bed and, at the same time to provide shelter and comfort under varying climatic changes...[104]

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[100] "Assessors' Report", p.1 in N.A.I., HLTH.H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"
[101] Ibid.
[102] Ibid, p.1- 2
[103] This treatment generated a series of sanatoria all over Switzerland (such as Davos) and other parts of Central and Northern Europe through the 1920s and 1930s, which then climaxed in Zonnestraal (Holland) and Paimio (Finland). In terms of the assessors' exposure and preference, we know that Vincent Kelly had visited many such structures in 1934 and we know that Dr. Walsh, in his capacity as RMS of Crooksling, was intimately aware of the benefits of the fresh-air treatment. Along with this, various structures would have been known to Irish architects through publications in the RIAI library such as Latham and West, *On the Erection of a Sanatorium* (prize essay) and Schaerer, *Hospitals, Modern: Their Construction and Equipment* (Berne: 1935) - for details of RIAI library see card catalogue, Irish Architectural Archive and *RIAI Yearbook 1939 - 1941*. There was a copy in the UCD architecture library of the NAPT publications, *Design for Sanatoria* (London: 1951), and *Design of a Chest Clinic* (London: 1954). One supposes that the assessors were familiar with Thomas S. Carrington, *Tuberculosis Hospital and Sanatorium Construction* (New York: New York Association for Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, 1911)
[104] Conditions, clause 26. "Competition for Designs for Proposed New Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Ballyowen, Co. Dublin", p. 6, N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

It is evident from the ground and first-floor plans of Peppard and Managhan's design that the young architects had researched the various room/balcony/terrace layouts being promoted for this 'fresh-air' form of treatment before (and picking up again, after) the war in Britain and Europe, because they have incorporated the most up-to-date system of the *liege halle* or "reclining rooms" inset into the patients' blocks (figures 2.28, 2.29, 2.30).[105] The architects' accompanying written report reveals their ambition for a designed environment which would be conducive to rest and to the improved health of the patients; priority was given within the interior to soft colour, the manipulation of natural light and the elimination of noise pollution.[106] In this way, the premiated design proposed *liege-halle* rather than sun balconies because, according to the architects' research, balcony-additions to the main south-facing elevation would "block out the sun and restrict bedfast patients' view of the sky".[107] The design proposed certain acoustic measures in terms of floor and wall covering, automatically silent doors and coloured lights for call signals and significantly, wards were planned away from the main road and site-access routes which were in turn, to be screened by planting and trees. All of these elements show awareness of the latest in sanatorium practices and architectural directives for sanatoria-design – for example the ongoing manuals issued by the architectural committee of the British National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, NAPT.[108] As such Peppard and Managhan's design was firmly rooted in the practicalities of patient care and the tradition of the sanatorium regime.

The containment of infection was an underlying premise of sanatorium architecture but this was common to all hospital architecture and a consistent pronouncement of Vincent Kelly's from the 1930s. When broken down, the only features which might characterise the sanatorium were the elements of long-stay, occupational therapy, fresh-air and rest, all of which were inevitably responded to in Peppard and Managhan's design. One presumes that in preparation for the Ballyowen competition, the young architects familiarised themselves with the purpose-built sanatoria of Peamount (1912, the later pavilions by Beckett and

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[105] As the NAPT architectural report defines the *liege halle*, clause 47: "Another method of giving patients opportunities for open air lying is what are known in German sanatoria as *liege halle* – or "reclining rooms". These can be arranged at the end of sanatorium wing, or inset into a main south wall, the latter being preferable. *Liege halle* at the end of a sanatorium wing involve much transport of beds, a great disadvantage." *Design for Sanatoria*, p.32

[106] I am paraphrasing Peppard and Managhan's written report as it was summarised in the UCD review, the *National Student*, 1945, reprinted as: "How the Ballyowen Sanatorium was planned" in *Irish Times*, 31st December 1945, p. 4

[107] Ibid.

[108] Two of these NAPT manuals were formally published in 1951 and 1954 as respectively, *Design for Sanatoria* and *Chest Clinic Design* and were in the library of the School of Architecture, UCD. There may be no doubt that the TB epidemic spurred on a veritable 'industry' of treatment recommendations and manuals to which references are made in the Hospitals' Commission's annual reports and by Timothy Healy in T.M. Healy, *From Sanatorium to Hospital. A Social and Medical Account of Peamount 1912 – 1997* (Dublin: A & A Farmar, 2002)

Harrington, 1932 -39, figure 2.31) and Crooksling (1908 – 1914, by George Moore). But arguably their most important study tour was taken so as to examine the freshly-completed TB sanatorium at Lisdarn, Co. Cavan by Donald Tyndall (1940 – 42, figures 2.34 – 2.40). This sanatorium, being the only other surviving mid-Emergency tuberculosis hospital project, had much in common with the Ballyowen commission; it was located on a similarly inclined site, two miles outside of an urban centre (Cavan town). However the Lisdarn sanatorium was a much smaller commission (for 100 patients) and Tyndall seems to have taken the single-storey and veranda 'domestic' form of the County Wicklow sanatoria at Rathdrum (1932-35, by R.M. Butler) and Newcastle (1893 – 1904, by Thomas Deane) as his guiding model (figures 2.32 and 2.33). Tyndall then applied a Wrightian aesthetic to this model, as evidenced by the heavy overhang of the complex's pitched roofing, the interplay of brick wall with limestone detailing and the fenestration pattern of the administration block's wing (figures 2.36, 2.37).

In terms of planning, Peppard and Managhan appear to have learned much from the Lisdarn sanatorium which in turn had looked to Paimio for elements of its plan: at Lisdarn, like in Aalto's Paimio sanatorium, the wards are centralised into a single nursing-block which is made up of two angled and south-facing wings, within which beds were arranged in a system of parallel-planning. Behind this nursing-block, Lisdarn's ancillary services of administration, dining area, chapel, laundry and store were housed in a separate structure which unlike Ballyowen, was not linked by means of a Paimio-esque circulation hub. Instead, Tyndall evoked the medieval cloister as the connecting mechanism between nursing and administration (figures 2.40, 2.41). So that while the Lisdarn sanatorium is similarly planned to Paimio (and Ballyowen thereafter) in a loose interpretation of the inverted T-shape, it is ultimately a more intimate domestically-scaled project.[109] The Ballyowen commission on the other hand, permitted the grander European/Aalto gesture and as we have argued, the competition was conceived with Paimio as its end goal.

In the perspective sketch of the winning scheme for Ballyowen prepared by Louis Peppard following the announcement of the results in July 1945 (figure 2.29), we gain a bird's-eye view from the south and so, a great impression of the scheme in its topographical setting. The wings of the nursing blocks seem to spread endlessly, defining the landscaped site as it slopes to the south; the three-storey administration and adherent serving blocks stretch behind in a denser, perhaps more muddled, layout. The overall impression is of a vast glazed and flat-roofed complex which reaches out over the rolling fields and hedgerows

[109] The inverted T-shape plan was also popularised for the Irish hospital in a description by W. A. Dixon, in his plan for a small infectious disease hospital for New Ross, *Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 5 May 1934), p. 337

of County Dublin. As an architectural action in the landscape the scheme is uncannily evocative of Le Corbusier's slightly earlier urban plans for Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires and Algiers; essentially linear projects which respond to the contours of their respective topographies (figures 2.44 and 2.45).

Although less expressionist and plastic than its local contemporaries, the Aspro Factory by Alan Hope (Naas Road, Dublin, 1947 – 49, figure 2.42, figures 1.26 - 1.31 chapter one) and Dublin Airport by Desmond FitzGerald and team, (1937-41, Collinstown, figure 2.43, figures 1.12 – 1.16 chapter one), Peppard and Managhan's scheme for Ballyowen feels like a similar *grand projet*. In detail, the most sculptural moment occurs in the *liege-halle* pavilions which mark the junction of the three-storey nursing block with the single-storey wings for the ambulant patients. A whole plethora of sources may be cited from Eric Mendelsohn/Serge Chermayeff's De La Warr Pavilion at Bexhill (1933-35) and Aalto's solarium spaces at Paimio, to more local references such as Michael Scott's own house at Sandycove (Geragh, 1937) or the extruded elements on the main facades of certain 1930s hospitals, for instance, the 1938/9 design for Cavan County Hospital, Nicky Winters and Donald Tyndall, figures 2.46 - 2.48).

Overall the winning design combined the most suitable elements, from an Irish viewpoint, of Zonnestraal and Paimio. Although the assessors claimed that they afforded the competitors "full freedom" and were resultantly presented with hugely varying designs, "in particular, they should range from horizontal to vertical", one proposes that Peppard and Managhan's design was successful precisely because of its low-lying ground-scraping nature;[110] in this "horizontal" aspect, the Ballyowen design was closer to Duiker's example than Aalto's. Indeed it signalled the beginning of the proliferation of low-rise campus-style hospital complexes in Ireland from the late 1940s which were then capable of extension but which announced themselves through at least one dominant multi-storey (three or more storeys) block, in turn articulated by a principal serialised and expressionist façade.

[110] "Assessors' Report", p.1 in N.A.I.,HLTH.H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen – competition for designs etc., 1940 – 1948"

## ***Watershed or Plato's Cave:***

*The Emergency, planning and a tentatively Irish form of architecture*

> *Deeply grateful though all must be for freedom from the horrors of war, it is with a tinge of envy that we watch other peoples forging for themselves a new and spacious environment.* [111]
> **AAI, *When Ireland Builds Again*, 1945**

The romantic evocations of both Le Corbusier's linear cities and the expressionism at play in the Free State's *grand projets* are certainly uppermost in one contemporary review of Louis Peppard and Jack Managhan's Ballyowen design which proclaimed:

> This is the plan, new, ingenious yet simple. And who created it? An American Wright? A French Corbusier?[112]

The review goes on to describe the winning plan as being "so perfect that it was unprecedented in the history of designing"![113] It is interesting to propose that this winning scheme represented a moment of digestion of the various modernist influences that had been bombarding the younger generation prior to the war through the British architectural press (at the RIAI library) and certain AAI lectures. Neither Peppard nor Managhan was old enough to have encountered (firsthand) such significant visiting lecturers to the Association, Walter Gropius and Eric Mendelsohn in 1936 and 1937 respectively but they were surely familiar with modernist developments in Britain.[114] As we have noted, while the international crisis presented barriers to travel, Irish architectural culture continued to harbour international aspirations. In the easy and confident assimilation of sources so apparent in Peppard and Managhan's design we might suggest that, as Earnan O'Malley records in 1947 in relation to Irish artists, the younger architects in Ireland benefited from

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[111] Architectural Association of Ireland (editor unknown - Noel Moffett?), *When Ireland Builds Again* (Dublin: AAI, 1945), p.12

[112] "How the Ballyowen Sanatorium was planned" in *Irish Times*, 31 December 1945, p. 4

[113] Ibid.

[114] With Britain ever-present as the immediate source and primary filter of modernist ideals for Ireland, the hospital typology had particularly captured the Irish imagination. There had been a series of AAI lectures on hospitals by British architects such as "Modern Hospital Planning" by Lionel G Pearson in 1933 of which the *Irish Builder* composed a précis, "Hospital Construction and Planning" by C. Elcock in 1935 and "Hospitals" by E Lionel Crosby in 1937. Of course as discussed in chapter one, the printed press had a greater legacy than the ephemeral nature of AAI lectures, so it is interesting to note that the *Architects' Journal* (subscribed to by the RIAI/AAI and UCD) issued a special volume on hospital design in 1937. For later hospital design, there was an especially bound volume of 5 French journals on the subject from 1945 - 1948 in UCD architecture library (*L'Architecture Frangaise* (51-52, 55-56, November 1945, February/March 1946), *Oeuvres et Maîtres d'Oeuvres* (February 1946) and *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* (No. 17, April 1948))

the wartime isolation as they had to rely on their own resources and "revalue influences".[115] Having described the winning plan for Ballyowen as a masterpiece of international standing, our same enthusiastic reviewer moves to elucidate the design process for its readership, in the terms of careful consideration by two young Dublin architects:

> Mornings were spent demonstrating in college; afternoons in a city office; evenings found them in a cafe discussing the various problems as they arose; and then each went to his home for further work and study. A year later their work was complete. World-wide competition could not meet the standard these two men had set. This is a half-told story: the future will unfold new glories well deserved.[116]

This 1945 description of the unhurried and measured design process, together with O'Malley's 1947 suggestion of the Emergency as a pause-for-thought encouraging greater cultural absorption, conspires with Terence Brown's social and cultural reading of the historic period as outlined in chapter one's overview. Such activity in the visual arts as the foundation of the White Stag Group or the Irish Exhibition of Living Art was coincident with the launch of the international competition for the Ballyowen sanatorium and supports an argument for the Emergency period as a time of cultural wealth and international ambition. In this respect, the Ballyowen project may be read as the singular mid-war architectural project for Ireland not only because of its function or its timing and slovenly pace, but because of the breadth of the design references at play in the winning scheme.

We know that while the cultural histories recount a period of cultural enlightenment or bohemia, the backdrop was one of rural depopulation and relentless emigration. In fact Dublin's bohemian nature and the isolated condition of neutral Ireland occur as a chicken-and-egg formation, as two sides of the same coin and the upshot was a tendency towards continuity with "pre-war experience". This contradictory experience (out of which continuity was sought) seems to underpin the architectural community's reaction to the war. Certainly Kevin Roche's oral account of his formative years at UCD from 1940, followed by a stint working with Michael Scott from 1945 encapsulates such contradiction. Roche inadvertently sketches a shifting portrait of a bohemian Dublin laced with rich artistic opportunity - as in his comment about Scott's office, "It was one of the best experiences I think one could possibly have" - but which was ultimately frustrated by Irish detachment:

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[115] Earnan O' Malley, "Ireland" in *Architectural Design* (Ireland issue, July 1947), p. 174
[116] "How the Ballyowen Sanatorium was planned" in *Irish Times*, 31st December 1945, p. 4

> Because of the war, it was very disturbing, we were very isolated - and the sense of complete isolation was awful. We had no idea what was going on in Europe. On the 6th of June 1944, we heard about D-Day as we were going into an engineering exam. You feel a lot of things, you feel you're out of it...the rest of the world is wrapped up in this madness and you're just here doing a stupid engineering exam.[117]

Through the Ballyowen example we gain further insight into the contradictory nature of 1940s Ireland - the international element of the competition presents us, at first glance, with the polarised terms of extreme naivety or tremendous sophistication. Here we have an otherwise local architectural event - the commissioning of a small sanatorium on the fringes of the capital city of a marginalised neutral country - thrust into the international arena at a laughably inappropriate time. I would argue that the action should be read symbolically with the protagonist, Ballyowen, acting as neutral (TB-infested) Ireland's statement of defiant maintenance. And that the extreme naivety-Versus-tremendous sophistication 'effect' is not in reality dichotomous but rather, another product of our chicken-egg/two-sides-same-coin occurrence. In many respects, the Ballyowen competition points to the mixed up and disaffected position of Ireland during the Second World War; a position of real and unavoidable marginalisation and isolation which was tinted by denial as to the realities of the international crisis.

In terms of the official stance, this mix of optimism and denial is highlighted by the example of a report from Eamon de Valera's (the Taoiseach or Prime Minister) economic adviser, Professor Timothy Smiddy at the start of the war, September 1939, which proposed the maintenance of building programmes so as to counteract the demoralising effect of dole queues. Smiddy advocated "better economics and more prudent statesmanship to maintain as far as possible our present economic activities, even at the cost of unbalancing the budget."[118] Almost as if the building industry could overcome the shortage of fuel and metals as the war was to progress and conditions worsen, elaborate building programmes (for the mid and post-war periods) for housing and other necessities were devised, (which included building timber houses without any metal components such as piping[119]).

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[117] Kevin Roche, oral history account with author, New Haven, USA, April 2008

[118] Cited by Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.272, report from Smiddy to De Valera, in N.A.I., Department of An Taoiseach, Supplies Series files, S11466, "European War. Economic Policy of the Government"
For interesting debate on the position of building during the war, see N.A.I., Department of An Taoiseach, S11478, Supplies series, "Building Industry. Position during the European War 1939 - 1940"

[119] Mary Daly, *The Buffer State, The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p. 276

The cessation of the import of many essential raw materials by the early 1940s had undoubtedly the greatest impact and led to the establishment of the Department of Supplies which issued bleak forecasts on a regular basis thereby preparing everybody for the worst.[120] But aside from Supplies and then the sixty or so air-raid shelters which sprang up all over Dublin City, the Second World War presented an unknown quantity - or rather Ireland's neutrality for which there was no Irish precedent, presented the unknowable.[121]

Simon Leonard's inaugural presidential address for the Architectural Association of Ireland of 1940 echoed such a level of awareness on the part of the largely middle-class architectural community. As he lamented the ongoing destruction of great European architecture due to the war, he assured us that in Dublin we were "sheltered from the full effects", except perhaps for the presence of the air-raid shelters on our streets. Leonard winced, "I trust that some steps will be taken to mellow their appearance by transforming their roofs into rock gardens or covering the walls with ever-green creepers."[122] The other point of contention along with the unsightly shelters was of course the shortage of materials, which Leonard urged must not overly-handicap contemporary practice: "There is an old saying that 'necessity is the mother of invention', and now is the time to prove to the world that we are equal to the task."[123] And he concluded his address with a congratulatory note to the Corporation, "on the courageous way they are proceeding with the construction of housing schemes and flats."[124]

The 'chin-up: we're all in this together!' message underpinning Leonard's address is typical of Irish architecture's reaction and approach to the Emergency. It would seem that the continuity and maintenance of architectural production, however low-key that may be, was the preferred procedure. The laudatory tone of Frank McArdle's post-war inaugural address as RIAI president in 1948 once more bolsters this championing of continuity, albeit with the comfort of hindsight:

> Whilst the war years were lean years, nevertheless they were years of great activity within the profession, perhaps greater than at any other period in its history... In

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Dublin Corporation's report on housing of 1941 outlined the need to build houses despite material shortages so as to make them habitable without the luxury of running water! See "Report of the Housing Committee", *Dublin Corporation Reports,* January - December 1941

[120] The Department of Supplies was headed by Sean Lemass and together with its secretary, John Leydon, it introduced and oversaw rationing. For more see James Meehan, "The Irish Economy during the War" in Kevin Nowlan, T. Desmond Williams (eds.), *Ireland in the War Years and After, 1939 - 1951* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1969), p.31

[121] Ibid, p.30

[122] Simon Leonard, Inaugural Address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1940-41), p.23

[123] Ibid, p.24

[124] Ibid, p.25

> Eire, where the ravages of war and the restrictions consequent upon direct war, were absent building operations continued, if not in full, on a fairly large scale, so that the profession, to all intent and purposes, continued throughout the war period without interruption...[125]

But was this celebration of continuity with pre-war experience retrogressive isolationism or progressive pragmatism?

From Irish architectural discourse generally (Leonard's 1940 air-raid lament and Kennedy's 1939 *volksgeist* polemic to the AAI and indeed the Ballyowen competition all being prime examples), we glean a sense of the war as an inconvenience, to be overcome if at all possible. There may be no doubt that World War II ushered in a period of material hardship and physical isolation for the Irish and accordingly, it could not be ignored by anyone, architect or otherwise. In reality, the list of materials that were unavailable by early 1940 was significant and ranged from basic timber (normally imported from the Baltic region) to asbestos to copper shells for piping.[126] However, as stated, there was no precedent for Ireland's position of independence and neutrality in the shadow of one of the war's key players, and so the 'chin-up and carry-on' ethos was an understandable default response to a precarious position. It follows that the Irish architectural intelligentsia continued to uphold the international model as a supposedly superior frame of reference throughout the international crisis of WWII; it was not a case of belittling the crisis but rather a semi-conscious reluctance to adapt to its terms. Mary Daly borrows the metaphor of Plato's Cave (from F.S. Lyons) to better describe this situation, in particular the actions of Local Government during the war:

> The inhabitants of Plato's Cave may have been blind, or short-sighted, but they were not able to escape entirely from the changes taking place in a wider world, though they did not fully grasp their implications.[127]

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[125] Frank McArdle, Presidential Address, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 1948), p. 27

[126] Minutes of meeting, John Leydon's address to committee on economic planning, see N.A.I., Department of An Taoiseach, Supplies Series, S11478A, "Building Industry. Position during European War"
As the Department of Industry and Commerce's White Paper, *The Post-War Building Programme* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1945) tells us: "Foundries were affected by the shortage of fuel and the scarcity of pig metal and scrap. There were difficulties even in the case of a commodity such as cement which, in normal times, could be supplied in ample quantity from the Irish factories." p.3

[127] Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.320

This metaphor is provocative for Irish architecture whereby its call for continuity from pre to mid-war conditions is at best a blinkered approach; at worst, so-called blindness or delusion. Daly's "blind/short-sighted" reference points not to introverted lack of interest in the foreign on the part of the Irish authorities but perhaps to an inability to comprehend the extent of the war or to anticipate the fall-out. In this way, the Ballyowen competition synopsises the Plato's Cave condition: tuberculosis was rampant as material shortages became more acute yet the solution was sought by the most extrovert means of the most experimental forum - an international architectural competition!

In many respects the insistence upon maintaining some form of hospital (and indeed housing) building campaign during the war when building costs were necessarily exorbitant, produced a tentatively *Irish* type of hospital. As was inevitable with the universalising tendency of the hospital typology, the Irish model would always be adapted from the European modernist master but with emphasis being laid on affordability through extendibility and on speed through 'occupation in stages', the ground-scraping complex emerged in Ireland as the most practical and cost-effective architectural solution.[128] Indeed, the two public hospitals that were started during the war and were as such contemporary with the Ballyowen sanatorium competition, Vergemount Isolation Hospital (Clonskeagh, Co. Dublin, 1943 - 44) by City Architects' Department and Lisdarn Sanatorium, were low-rise campus-style complexes.[129] Such layouts were mostly in keeping with the sanatorium/isolation hospital typology from the 1920s but arguably, the low-rise aspect is one, among several features which defines mid-twentieth-century Irish hospital design. As we will see in our analysis of the built version of the Ballyowen sanatorium of 1952, there seems to be an innate tendency in Irish architecture generally to sprawl and claw to the earth because quite basically, in relation to Ireland's twentieth-century geography, there has always been plenty of land for the scant population.

Beyond Ireland, the horizontal-versus-vertical debate raged throughout the period. Michael Scott's article in the *Irish Hospital Yearbook* of 1940 contributed to this debate, recounting the ultimately ambiguous mid-war guidelines issued by the British Ministry of Health on hospital location and layout:

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[128] I am paraphrasing Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p. 23

[129] O'Dwyer claims that a third public hospital was begun during the war: the 40-bed maternity block of Galway Regional Hospital by T.J. Cullen, 1941 – 44. Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p. 19. This unit can remain outside of my argument above as it was part of a greater pre-war complex. Another account of this maternity unit states that it and the nurse's home "were provided for first before World War II." See "Galway Regional General Hospital" in *Manual for Hospital Visits. Study tour of Hospitals in Ireland* (Irish Hospitals' Commission under the auspices of the International Hospital Federation, 1956), no page numbers.

> A compact multi-storied building covering a small area offers a smaller target than a low, spread-out building, and the lower storeys are protected from incendiary bombs by those above. On the other hand, a direct hit does more extensive damage to a compact building than to a spread-out building, and the danger from fire in the former type is much more serious. Since it is doubtful on which side the balance of advantage lies, air raid precautions need not be a determining factor in the choice between the two forms of planning.[130]

Scott was in favour of the "vertical plan" because of improved "traffic control inside the hospital and the simplicity of installation and maintenance of the mechanical equipment."[131] The debate continued in the UK after the security stringencies of World War II as John Murray Easton's lecture/article, "Recent Trends in Hospital Design" to the joint RIAI/ RIBA conference in Dublin, 1947, attests. Herein Murray Easton discusses in particular the problem of the very big hospital – "should it go up into the air or spread itself out on the ground" and how then to avoid the dehumanising of such a vast institution.[132]

Obviously the horizontal/vertical architectural choices of neutral Ireland related to security measures in a more limited and reticent manner than that of war-torn Britain; in reality the Irish choices were linked to Emergency economics rather than to Emergency security.[133] Certainly the 'horizontal' dispositions of the winning design for the Ballyowen sanatorium and its contemporaries at Lisdarn and Vergemount would have enabled greater speed of construction and more potential for extension once wartime restrictions on materials ceased. In this way, as state commissions of the mid-war period, these three hospitals were predicated on pragmatic principles of post-war potential. Looking again at the competition conditions of Ballyowen, pragmatic planning is at the commission's basis with the assessors emphasising, "the importance they will attach to a planning arrangement

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[130] UK Ministry of Health memorandum cited in Michael Scott, "Hospital Architecture" in *Irish Hospital Yearbook and Medical Directory* (Dublin: Parkgate, Fourth Edition, 1940), p.41

[131] Scott, ibid, p. 41

[132] John Murray Easton, "Recent Trends in Hospital Design", lecture reprinted in *Architect and Building News* (June 27, 1947, v. 190), p. 254-258. My wording is a paraphrase of Archivolt's critique of the lecture in "The Dublin Conference, 1947" *Architectural Design* (July, 1947), p.176

[133] Oral history accounts of security measures in the everyday life of the neutral Irish recount a generally relaxed and unsystematic approach. See oral histories of the emergency in Donal McCarron, *Step Together!: the Story of Ireland's Emergency Army as told by its Veterans* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999). Dr. Timothy Healy discusses this in his history of Peamount Sanatorium: "The blackout was a problem as there were an estimated 1,300 windows in the sanatorium...A hopeful letter was written to the Minister for Defence suggesting that a pilot from Baldonnel should report from his plane the results of such blackout measure; there is no record of any reply. Anyone living in Dublin during those times of war will remember how half-hearted were the blackout measures compared to those in the UK." T.M.Healy, *From Sanatorium to Hospital. A Social and Medical Account of Peamount 1912 – 1997* (Dublin: A & A Farmar, 2002), p. 102

which reflects a study of hospital procedures and economic operation."[134] Significantly, there is no aesthetic or stylistic prescription to be found in the Ballyowen competition conditions - though the conditions do instruct that the design should be "attractive...comfortable as well as hygienic" - and the assessors' only deviation from planning requirements was as follows: "Irish materials should be used as far as possible, and the buildings should be expressive of their purpose and be without unnecessary elaboration."[135]

Clearly there occurred a shift, part continuous/part developmental, in Irish hospital architecture from the 1930s buildings to those conceived during the war years. This shift underpins this chapter and I would argue that it stemmed from the combined forces of firstly the increasing and subliminal absorption of the Paimio example (architecture as prescriptive), secondly the increasing need for beds (slum living with TB and other infectious disease epidemics), thirdly, the increasing cost of materials (neutrality and isolation) and fourthly and most provocatively, the increasing tendency towards planning (health service reform and potential for architectural adaptability). The third and fourth aspects foreground a critical element of Irish architecture's reaction to the Emergency, as another by-product of the Emergency: that of the promise of planning.

As we have seen in chapter one's discussion of the National Planning Exhibition of 1944, the culture of planning in Ireland took off during the Emergency. Alongside the somewhat abstract planning concerns of cultural bodies, there emerged official planning strategies on the part of the government. These planning strategies were dualistically motivated by the need to provide mid-Emergency employment on the one hand and on the other hand, by the aspiration to have development programmes in place, ready to be started in the immediate post-war years.[136] The profession, the local authorities and the public were in the grip of planning fever; upon reflection, what else was there to do but to project forwards? Inevitably the tuberculosis problem and slum living were identified as the greatest obstacles to achieving a modern (forward-looking) post-war state and so, housing

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[134] Conditions, clause 28, "Competition for Designs for Proposed New Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Ballyowen, Co. Dublin", p.6, N.A.I., HLTH. H10/20/1 "Plans etc. re. TB institution at Ballyowen - competition for designs etc., 1940 - 1948"

[135] Conditions, clause 18, ibid, p.4

[136] Mary Daly discusses the planning strategies of the Department of Local Government as being a reaction to the general fear of a repeat of the mass emigration and hardship endured following the end of the First World War. See "Plato's Cave? The Emergency Years" in *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p. 249 - 296
The message from the post-war building white paper enforces this: "Unless there is an effective start, opportunities may be lost which can never be recovered. Skilled craftsmen, now in Great Britain, are more likely to return if work is found from them immediately. If they drift into regular employment abroad, they may be lost to the country...Every effort will have to be made to avoid the peaks and depressions that have been so detrimental to the Industry in the past." Department of Industry and Commerce (White Paper), *The Post-War Building Programme* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1945), p.9

and hospitals became the typological foci of this planning fever. As the war approached its finish, it brought with it a glut of post-war rhetoric and an architectural vocabulary full of modernist metaphors of health, imbued with utopian ideals of community. The ambitious mood was encapsulated in the AAI's 1945 pamphlet, *When Ireland Builds Again* (figures 2.49, 2.102 - 2.104):

> Our achievement will be shaped by our aim - our aim directed by the demands of the people. The people demand that their environment shall be spacious, healthy and graceful; that new buildings shall be both efficient and beautiful.[137]

In such a climate of hopeful projection it is not surprising that the Ballyowen project would be superseded by a consolidated sanatorium-building campaign from 1945 on. We know that the winning scheme was highly thought of within architectural circles: along with reviews in the Irish media, the design was published in Britain by *The Builder* (August 1945) and in the special issue on Ireland of *Architectural Design* two years later in 1947. Inclusion in the latter was especially significant considering firstly that it was one of only four hospital projects published therein (Tullamore and Portlaoise County Hospitals by Scott + Good, and Kilkenny County Hospital by Downes + Meehan), and secondly that by 1947 the Ballyowen project had actually been discarded. As the *Architectural Design* caption informed us:

> This design for Ballyowen Sanatorium, Co. Dublin, was the winning one in a recent competition. But shortly afterwards the complete control of Sanatoria was taken over by the Government, so this scheme had to be abandoned.[138]

Three months after the publication of the competition results in July 1945, the Department of Local Government and Public Health informed the Corporation that the proposed scheme at Ballyowen was no longer viable due to the development of plans for three large regional sanatoria at Dublin, Cork and Galway as part of the Tuberculosis (Establishment of Sanatoria) Act, 1945. Despite architectural and medical professionals and the local authority dedicating almost a decade of work on the Ballyowen project, it was considered superfluous to a *post-war* national programme for tuberculosis treatment and its eradication, and as

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[137] Architectural Association of Ireland (editor unknown - Noel Moffett?), *When Ireland Builds Again* (Dublin: AAI, 1945), p.12

[138] "Proposed Tuberculosis Sanatorium", *Architectural* Design (Ireland Issue, July 1947), p.204

such, the project was to be cast aside. Hence it was precisely the Emergency penchant for planning which undid the mid-Emergency triumphalist plans for Ballyowen!

***The Remaking of Ballyowen:***

*Post-war health reform, continued faith in the sanatorium and Ballyowen-as-built*

> *Sanatoria were places of hope deferred... medically supervised refuges from bad air, crowded households and the wear of industrial life... Their contribution to the solution of the tuberculosis problem was minimal.* **- Francis Smith, *The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850 – 1950*** [139]

The war ended too soon for Ballyowen and it was swallowed up by the seductive rhetoric of post-war reconstruction and overtaken by the belated consolidation of a national tuberculosis campaign from 1945. As the Parliamentary Secretary, Dr Ward explained by letter to the City Manager on 18th October 1945:

> I am to state that pending the provision of the proposed sanatorium at Santry Court and the improvement of finances in the Hospitals Trust Fund it is not proposed to encourage the Corporation to proceed with the building at Ballyowen.[140]

But Dublin Corporation did not take the news quietly. It described the announcement in the daily newspapers as a 'bombshell'. Already £3,679 had been spent on the project between assessors' fees, premiums, exhibition space, advertising and so on, and a further £2,250 had been committed to the winning architects according to the competition regulations.[141] The Corporation publicly accused the Department of "discourtesy" in not consulting its medical officers about the changes in sanatoria plans and the City Manager demanded clearer information about these plans in a letter in November 1945 and again in February 1946.[142] Dr Ward's pedantic response made it apparent that national plans were being

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[139] Francis Smith, The Retreat of Tuberculosis 1850 – 1950 (London: Croom Helm, 1988) as cited by T.M.Healy, *From Sanatorium to Hospital. A Social and Medical Account of Peamount 1912 – 1997* (Dublin: A & A Farmar, 2002), p. 35

[140] Letter from Ward to City Manager, 18th October 1945 in N.A.I., HLTH.H10/20/1 "1940-48: Plans Re TB Institution at Ballyowen"

[141] See newspaper articles: 3rd November 1945, "'Bombshell' for Corporation" in *Irish Independent* and "Santry Court to be 1,000-bed Sanatorium" in *Irish Times.* For a break-down of competition costs by 1946 see "Statement of Dublin Corporation's recoupment claims in respect of its expenditure on Sanatoria projects at Ballyfermot, Ballyowen and Santry and of the amounts paid from Hospitals Trust Fund in respect thereof" in N.A.I., HLTH.H10/20/1 "1940-48: Plans Re TB Institution at Ballyowen"

[142] Letter from City Manager to Department, 8th November 1945: "Having regard to the very considerable time which has been devoted to the Corporation's project for the erection of the proposed sanatorium at Ballyowen, and

hatched in parallel with the Ballyowen scheme for some time and that relatively speaking Ballyowen was peripheral "small-fry":

> [It is clear that]...the large scale building programme involved in the completion of the country's hospital needs will involve very heavy commitments on the Hospitals Trust Fund, and that only the most urgent works can be proceeded with at present. While, therefore, the provision of a Chest Hospital at Ballyowen may be regarded as a desirable ultimate aim there is no prospect of funds being available for the financing of such a proposal in the near future.[143]

Beyond what were deemed to be parochial plans for Ballyowen, the health service (and tubercular treatment as one element) was engaged in whole-scale planning and was beginning a process of transformation.[144] Interestingly the architectural solution of hospital/sanatorium remained central to this process. In the first instance there was the passing of the aforementioned Tuberculosis (Establishment of Sanatoria) Act in 1945 which granted the Minister near autonomy in relation to the erection of a sanatorium and sped up the process of land-acquisition or transfer.[145] This was followed closely by the publication of a White Paper on tuberculosis in 1946 which tied the research strands of the Red Cross, the Hospitals' Commission and the Medical Academy together and importantly, it asserted a state policy of building three major regional sanatoria and introducing preventive medical measures.[146] And then in 1947, although brewing for many years, the Health Act was passed which established separate departments of health and social welfare, as well as a greatly expanded health service and a better defined approach to infectious disease.[147] As

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the extent to which it had advanced with the holding of the architectural competition for designs, the Committee made the following Order: - "The Minister be requested to state whether Santry Court will meet the needs of the City, and ask his views on Ballyowen site as to the future: we are of the opinion that our own Medical Officers should have been consulted." And see letter 5th February 1946, N.A.I., HLTH.H10/20/1 "1940-48: Plans Re TB Institution at Ballyowen"

[143] Letter from Ward to City Manager, 8th February 1946, N.A.I., HLTH.H10/20/1 "1940-48: Plans Re TB Institution at Ballyowen"

[144] A tangible beginning point for this post-war process of transformation was the arrival of the young inexperienced yet academically-impressive Dr James Deeny as Chief Medical Adviser in 1945. Deeny tackled the TB problem and paved the way for Noel Browne two years later by firstly re-presenting the early 1940s' tuberculosis reports to government. Thereafter, a consolidated TB campaign truly began. For more on Deeny's career, see Dr James Deeny, *To Cure and to Care. Memories of a Chief Medical Officer* (Dublin: Glendale Press, 1989)

[145] See section 1 - 17 for further details of the Tuberculosis (Establishment of Sanatoria) Act at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1945/en/act/pub/0004/sec0006.html (accessed January/February 2009)

[146] Department of Local Government and Public Health, *White Paper on Tuberculosis*, (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1946)

[147] See Health Act 1947 (section 31 - infectious persons) at: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1947/en/act/pub/0028/sec0031.html#zza28y1947s31 (accessed January/February 2009)

Andrew McCarthy summarises, the 1947 Act "mapped out a new role in local public health with a distinctly preventive focus."[148] Tuberculosis was to be attacked from both curative and preventive fronts but with the development of drug therapy still at an early stage, sanatorium treatment continued to lead the confrontation with mobile x-ray and BCG vaccination coming up the flanks as secondary weapons. In reality, improved nutrition and pharmaceutical research were considered to be less tangible solutions and were thus secondary to those wrought by shiny new buildings; the fresh-air sanatorium treatment continued to be upheld as the most relevant. As the architectural committee of the British National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, (NAPT) issued in 1951:

> After the Second World War, a remarkable drug named streptomycin, and other medicaments, of which para-aminosalycilic acid is an example, came into use... We hold the belief that the fundamental requirements of the tuberculosis patient – rest under open-air conditions – will always be the same, whatever additional improvements in drug treatment may be introduced.[149]

As such the sanatorium persisted as the central solution to TB until circa 1960, so it is not surprising that the building programme was re-emphasised through the establishment of an architectural section within the Department (from 1945), specifically charged with the planning and building of new sanatoria. Naturally then, the 320-bed institution at Ballyowen was discarded in light of the Department's plans for a 1,000-bed sanatorium in North Dublin, as well as a 700-bed sanatorium for Cork, a 400-bed sanatorium for Galway and then extensions to Rialto and Peamount sanatoria, Co. Dublin by 164 beds collectively.[150]

With the immediate aim of doubling the sanatorium beds - there were still only 2,200 sanatorium beds in the country, (i.e. one bed for every two deaths per year from TB) at this time - the section was founded on the principle that thus far the sanatorium building campaign had been about "makeshift, half-hearted building projects; of patchwork repairs

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Barrington discusses the origins of this Act in "Drawing the Battle Lines, 1945 – 1948", chapter 8, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland, 1900 – 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000)

[148] Andrew McCarthy, "Aspects of Local Health in Ireland in the 1950s", Dermot Keogh, Finbarr O'Shea, Carmel Quinlan, *The Lost Decade. Ireland in the 1950s* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), p.118

[149] National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis (architecture committee), *Design for Sanatoria* (London: NAPT, 1951), p.14. As Ruth Barrington summarises in relation to the TB hospital building programme during the 1940s, "chemotherapy would soon make prolonged institutional care for most forms of tuberculosis unnecessary. At the time these plans were made, however, it was not known that drugs would soon revolutionise the treatment of the disease." See Barrington, *Health, Medicine and Politics in Ireland 1900 – 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000), p. 164

[150] These are the earliest building plans of the new architectural division from 1946, White Paper, *Tuberculosis*, table: "Additional Bed Accommodation under construction, planned or projected for cases of tuberculosis", p.23. Such plans soon changed as they progressed and included for instance, a new sanatorium at Waterford.

and alterations".[151] The called-for "clearer vision" came in the form of Norman White (1903 - 1977), an architect from New Zealand - educated at the Architectural Association, London - who was introduced to Irish hospital design through his work under Ralph Byrne (William J. Byrne and son) on the National Maternity Hospital from 1931, and who joined the Department in 1936, becoming the senior architectural inspector therein from 1944.[152] In 1956, once the regional sanatoria were handed over to the relevant local authorities, White's division was shut down. This sanatoria scheme constituted a decisive building programme not witnessed since the county hospital programme of the 1930s. White's team produced three sanatorium-complexes of varying capacity which were filled with flat-roofed and white-rendered individual structures from boiler houses to pulmonary wards, administration blocks to treatment ranges. The quality of these buildings was exemplary (indeed all three continue as adapted hospitals today (2009)), though formulaic in plan and elevation and we will come to discuss the Dublin regional sanatorium at Blanchardstown in more detail in relation to sibling complexes at St. Luke's, Cherry Orchard and Ballyowen.

It is interesting to note that alongside the Ballyowen competition and just as the Departmental design team was being set up, alternative architectural solutions to the tuberculosis problem were sought in the form of converting disused country houses. An initial survey of the viability of these properties as potential sanatorium- complexes was carried out between September 1943 and May 1944 and the findings, as well as an invitation to owners of prospective properties to come forward, were published in the *Irish Press* in August 1944. The Department concluded at this stage, in relation to Dublin County that,

> The general impression gained was that if the mansions and the surrounding gardens were cleaned up their most promising possibilities were as centres for convalescence or where delicate or run down city dwellers could have a few weeks rest and recreation.[153]

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[151] *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 - 1949* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1950), p.13. Also, the statistic of 2,200 sanatorium beds is cited in this report, p.41

[152] I am grateful to Frank Jackman and Freddie O'Dwyer for all information pertaining to Norman White as there is no biographical information on White at the Irish Architectural Archive (www.dia.ie) (O'Dwyer and Jackman in conversation with author, November 2008). White's son, Alexander White is a practising architect in Cork who seems to have White's archive. Shane O'Toole conducted a short interview with Alex White about this father and we now have more chronological information (O'Toole interview, April 2010). See O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p.24 - 28

[153] See a summary of the findings for Dublin as outlined in a Department of Local Government and Public Health memo 21st February 1944, "Disused Country Mansions - Dublin County" by R. Hogan which stated: "In every case the plumbing both as regards extent and quality was of the mid-Victorian standard and a great extension of sanitary and washing accommodation would be necessary...In general, however, the essential structure (walls, roof, woodwork, etc.) was surprisingly sound, even after many years of neglect. The general impression gained

Further inspections of country houses throughout the twenty-six counties were made until 1948 when Dr Noel Browne, as the new Minister of Health prescribed a change of direction by "not favouring the acquisition by local authorities of country residences for use as tuberculosis hospitals".[154] However the mid-war survey was instrumental in introducing the key sites for regional sanatoria in Waterford (at Ardkeen), Cork (at Sarsfieldcourt) and Galway (at Merlin Park).[155]

Despite this diversion into the post-colonial realm of adapting Georgian and Victorian mansions for the democratic housing of Ireland's sick masses, the message of a purpose-built sanatorium hewn out of modernist architecture was what the Free State wanted to communicate during these war years. Underlying all histories of Ireland from this period until 1970 is the post-colonial critique of Irish *difference*; certainly this portrayal of Ireland's fundamental *exceptionalness* is substantiated through the example of the supposed continuity of Ireland's architectural production during WWII and indeed, through the breath and ambition of that architectural production. The Ballyowen competition becomes the emblem of this continuity because in essence, it was the official mid-war project and the anti-tuberculosis campaign's architectural resolution of the early 1940s. So, on the one hand the Ballyowen project enforces the post-colonial reading, and yet its dismissal by 1946 in favour of a more holistic regional hospitalisation programme coincided with the end of the war thereby presenting us with a distinctive post-war programme. As such, the otherness and exceptionalness of Ireland is undermined once Ballyowen-as-emblem is overtaken by the regional sanatoria programme.

Construction work began on the three sanatoria in 1949 by which time Dr Noel Browne had been the new Minister of Health for over a year. As tuberculosis eradication was a foremost concern of Browne's and was the issue upon which he had based his election

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was that if the mansions and the surrounding gardens were cleaned up their most promising possibilities were as centres for convalescence or where delicate or run down city dwellers could have a few weeks rest and recreation." See N.A.I., HLTH. D 112/92 "Offers By Owners Of Country Mansions As Sanatoria, 1943 - 48". See also "TB Mansions Survey" in *Irish Press*, August 31st 1944.
See also memo, 24th May 1944 in N.A.I., HLTH. D 112/91 "Report on Survey of Mansions and Castles as Sanatoria, 1944-48": "On the 30th September last the Government directed that a survey be made by this Department of disused country mansions and that the question of their utilisation be examined in conjunction with any other Departments concerned. Inspections have been made and reports received from our Housing Inspectors in 314 cases. Suitable for demolition only - 30; Unsuitable for any public purpose or occupied - 143; Suitable for hospitals and sanatoria - 68; Suitable for evacuees - 37; for food depots - 11; for hostels - 16; for military posts - 9."

[154] Letter 16th March 1948 from Minister of Health to Dr Deeny, N.A.I., HLTH. D 112/92 "Offers by Owners of Country Mansions as Sanatoria, 1943- 48"

[155] See file N.A.I., HLTH. D 112/91 "Report on Survey of Mansions and Castles as Sanatoria, 1944-48" for details of the correspondence with various owners including those at Ardkeen: Letter 24th January 1947 from E. de Bromhead, Ardkeen Sanatorium, Waterford: "We have a large house and some lands here for sale now. Are you interested in inspecting it as a possible sanatorium?"

campaign, the provision of beds in new and existing hospitals for tubercular patients, along with the introduction of mass x-ray and BCG vaccination programmes became the departmental priority as never before.[156] Browne had inherited blueprints for one hundred and thirty five hospital projects at a proposed cost of £27 million, all of which constituted the original post-war hospitalisation project (to be broken down into the erection of thirty-seven new hospitals along with the reconstruction and/or extension of some one hundred or more existing buildings).[157] However, due to the pressures of ongoing material shortages and resultant rising inflation during the period immediately after the war, the Department had to reassess its original programme; in 1949 it launched a curtailed short-term seven-year building programme during which, as the *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 - 1949* proudly stated, some £15 million was to be spent on architectural endeavours, mostly coming from the Hospitals Sweepstakes.[158]

While Browne's arrival to the scene did not signal a significant change in direction for the "architecture of tuberculosis", it did introduce unprecedented momentum in terms of that architecture's production. Coinciding as we will see with the Department of Local Government's great drive to clear Dublin's slums, Browne's largely inherited hospitalisation programme became part of the Inter-Party Government's two-pronged propagandist machine as synopsised in the 1950 publication, *Ireland is Building* (figures 2.50 - 2.54). Therein, under a photograph of the young Minister who is poised in front of an axonometric view of the Dublin sanatorium was emblazoned: "My promise holds that we will have here in Ireland the finest hospitals in Europe at the end of the six or seven years from now. (Dr. Browne speaking at Cashel in October, 1949)"[159] Certainly Browne pursued this promise with vigour and as the first Departmental report extolled, by the end of 1949 there were 1,200 more tubercular beds available as well as over 27,000 people having been x-rayed at the mass radiography clinic in Dublin.[160]

Probably the most discernible change under Browne occurred in the Dublin region where the proposed regional sanatorium was halved from 1,000 to 500 beds - on the

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[156] Browne's parents and two sisters had died from tuberculosis while he and two other siblings suffered from tubercular infection. See Dr Noel Browne, *Against the Tide* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986)
Regarding Browne's drive against TB, Barrington informs us that, "As Minister, he would brook no delay in the planning of a hospital or the provision of a service...A large planning chart on his wall kept a record of the stage of every sanatorium, hospital and clinic under construction." See Ruth Barrington, *Health, Medicine, Politics in Ireland 1900 - 1970* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2000), p.197

[157] "Hospitalisation Programme" in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (March, 1953), p. 51. See Dail Debates, 6th July 1948: http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/en.toc.D.112.html

[158] *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 - 1949*, p.22

[159] *Ireland is Building* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1953), unpaginated

[160] *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 - 1949*, p.45

grounds that "one so large was undesirable from the medical and clinical points"[161] - thus making room for alternative accommodations such as the conversion of the former Hibernian Military School (Phoenix Park, Dublin, 1769) to a chest hospital (St. Mary's). In this context, Browne re-assessed the viability of the Ballyowen sanatorium.[162] And on advice from Archbishop McQuaid, the Minister proposed that the scheme be adapted as a smaller TB hospital (250 beds), specifically for the treatment of children. Browne hurriedly appointed a voluntary board which would become a private company, the Hospitals Association Ltd. in January 1949, so as to realise the project.[163] The original competition-winning architects (Peppard, with his then partner Hugo Duffy on board instead of Managhan) were reinstated and responded appropriately to the altered brief for a TB hospital for juveniles.[164]

The project had transformed from pre-war kernel to mid-war competition to post-war promise and was a victim (or product) of the vagaries of a reactive, tentatively reforming health service. Urgency (rather than romanticised notions of post-war consolidation) was once again fuelling the Ballyowen sanatorium as it reappeared on the drawing board. The 1948-52 revision of the Ballyowen project was quite simply a practical response to the short-term need for more TB accommodation.[165] In this it reflected the shift in popular attitude towards tuberculosis whereby much of the stigma and shame of the disease had been dissipated through the campaigning from the mid-1940s of the Post-Sanatoria League and then the propagandist machinery of Browne during his three-year tenure from 1948. By the beginning of the 1950s there was an increase in the amount of tubercular patients willing to undergo sanatorium treatment, and alongside the large regional sanatoria being designed simultaneously by the Department's elected team, the speedy construction of the Ballyowen sanatorium enabled supply to meet this new demand.

But even in its latest incarnation, as it happily progressed and was indeed under construction, there was another significant change in the Ballyowen brief: in September 1950 the Department of Health directed that the children's sanatorium was to be adapted

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[161] Ibid, p.41

[162] See memo from Minister, Department of Health in March 1948 in N.A.I, HLTH. H10/20/1 "1940-48: Plans Re TB Institution at Ballyowen"

[163] See inactive file [not available at N.A.I.], Department of Health and Children, H10/20/4 "Formation of Company for Erection of Children's Sanatorium at Ballyowen"

[164] Mrs Mary Peppard [widow of Louis] recalls Louis Peppard meeting Minister Noel Browne at this juncture and persuading him, despite Peppard and Duffy's lack of professional experience, to reinstate them as the architects of Ballyowen (Mrs Peppard in conversation with author, November 2008)

[165] According to the Hospitals Trust's statistics around tuberculosis services, "In 1948 the number of deaths, 3,103, was back to the pre-war level, but there were still only about 2,900 beds and there were over one thousand patients on the waiting list for sanatorium accommodation." J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 – 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956), p.33

for the treatment of adult patients. It would seem that the heal-all solution for tuberculosis in the form of the Dublin regional sanatorium at Blanchardstown was not nearly ready and so, on the eve of Ballyowen's completion, the design morphed once again, becoming a temporary adult sanatorium for 236 tubercular patients. [166] Finally, on 28th April 1952, almost fourteen years after being publicly mooted in *The Irish Press*, the new sanatorium at Ballyowen, Co. Dublin, was formally handed over by the Hospitals Association Ltd. to Dublin Corporation. Government had changed once again so that Browne had exited the stage and Dr. James Ryan, having re-entered as the latest Minister for Health, oversaw the official conferral.[167]

The finished hospital at Ballyowen was a formal departure from the original prize-winning design (compare site plans, figure 2.27 to figure 2.55), primarily due to the removal of the original design's rather vast expressionist ward block. The new paediatric brief prescribed an intensified functionality which arguably, the more intimate and low-lying scale of the completed hospital befitted. In response to consistencies of the site (the southern slope and the bounding Dublin-Lucan road to the north), the situation of many of the ancillary buildings such as mortuary, R.M.S. lodgings, maids' home, porter's lodge and services (namely boiler house and laundry), and the external orientation route persisted from the 1944 plan through to the realised project of 1952. But overall the final complex spoke a meaner language of uniform single-storey pavilions generated by a north/south spine as compared with the three-storied and topographically-responsive centralised structure of the competition entry (compare figure 2.29 to figure 2.56).

Paimio was no longer to be found in Ballyowen-as-built, except predictably in the southern aspect of the treatment wards. The most remarkable feature of the new hospital's plan was the covered walkway which linked the various blocks in a linear manner and from which the ward blocks were served; the covered walkway as a spinal element meant that ward blocks were free from through-traffic on the hospital's north/south axis. Within the long rectilinear ward blocks, feeding off either side of the spine on the east/west axis, visual control was privileged with glazed internal walls running between bedroom and corridor (figure 2.57). Overall, utility or pragmatic planning was favoured over aesthetic excitement and technological adventure. Architectural monumentality was reserved for the sanatorium's

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[166] Memo from Department of Health, 25th March 1952 outlining events since 1948, "It was then decided, in September, 1950, that the sanatorium should be adapted so as to render it suitable as a temporary measure pending the completion of the proposed new Dublin Regional Sanatorium, for the treatment of adult tuberculosis patients...it would be possible, without any major change to buildings already partly constructed or to buildings plans and operations, to change over to accommodate approximately 236 adult patients." See N.A.I., HLTH. D112/535 "Minister's Speech on Transfer of Ballyowen Sanatorium from The Hospitals Association"

[167] Ibid. See also N.A.I., HLTH. D110B/1 "Ballyowen Admission of Patients, 1951 -1955"

chapel with its pared-back bell tower and hall interior articulated by double-height rectilinear windows running along the nave's length (figures 2.56, 2.60).

In reality, Peppard and Duffy's finished scheme was an exercise in post-war standardisation and tentative prefabrication, expressed through an International Style aesthetic of flat roof and white render. In this way, it was one of the earliest expressions of the mid-twentieth-century Irish architectural zeitgeist – that is, the pursuit of an architectural modernism by modest means. In a Departmental memo from 1948 the Minister revealed that the resurrection of Ballyowen was motivated by the idea of erecting "temporary huts to accommodate children suffering from tuberculosis".[168] So from the outset, a programme of architectural impermanence seems to have underpinned the restoration of the Ballyowen commission; in keeping with contemporary developments in both medical science and medical reform, the children's sanatorium was to be not only open to adaptation but was to be inherently dispensable. As the *Irish Contractor* review (February 1953) of the completed complex explained,

> It was decided that the administrative buildings only would be of a permanent character and that the wards and homes would be of a temporary character, designed for an efficient life of about 20 years.[169]

The link between Peppard and Duffy's design principle for Ballyowen and the planning ethos of mid-twentieth-century Irish hospital architecture generally is further enforced by the review's emphasis on "maximum flexibility in the future":

> It is considered that in the event of the present wards, etc., being superseded the administrative buildings could still form the nucleus of another hospital planned on different lines.[170]

While the possibility for extension had informed the troubled commission from the earliest days of the competition conditions (1940 – 1944), the planning ethos of the "temporary hut" as laid out in Ballyowen's final incarnation approached architectural nihilism in its determined quest for in-determinability. That the majority of the hospital's structures should exist for a maximum projected period of twenty years signalled a radicalisation of hospital

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[168] Recorded in memo from Department of Health, 25th March 1952, See N.A.I., HLTH/ D112/535 "Minister's Speech on Transfer of Ballyowen Sanatorium from The Hospitals Association, 1952"
[169] "Ballyowen Hospital" in *The Irish Contractor and Engineer* (February 1953), p. 21
[170] Ibid.

design which emanated from the post-war prescription of economic exigency, rapid production and utopian ambition. Aside from its reflection of public health priorities, the Ballyowen sanatorium of 1952 was significant in post-war architectural terms precisely because it was the cheapest (£455,000) and most speedily erected institution of its kind and scale in the country. Construction works began in May 1950 and as we know, by April 1952 the Minister was officially opening it, acclaiming its accelerated process. The speed of the project was partly due to continuity in terms of the architect, the site and one supposes much of the brief (i.e. the framework remained from the 1944 competition process); speed of completion was also due to the efficiency of the Hospitals Association Ltd. as the commissioning body with T.P. Kennedy as architectural advisor, Dr Browne as background force and Cramptons as the building contractor.[171] But it would seem that the key to the project's rapid realisation was the method of constructing its eighty wards and 16,000 square yards, through standardised components.

According to contemporary reports and photographs of the site-works, the ward units were constructed of timber-frame on the site while the concrete foundations were being prepared (figures 2.61, 2.62).[172] A journalist's report described the process in the fashionable language of "prefabrication" - "Pre-fabrication allowed the units to be made on the site while the foundations were being prepared, and then placed in position"[173] – thereby highlighting a common mix-up between *standardisation* and *prefabrication*. As we will see in chapter three, in reality, Ireland's building industry in 1951 was a long way from embracing the mid-century craze for prefabrication and instead, was taking tentative steps towards this method of construction by introducing an increasing amount of standardised elements to the build. The Ballyowen sanatorium presents us with a prime example of this: as the concrete floor was completed and the timber-frame constructed on-site (on-site precludes prefabrication), the standardised timber wall panels and windows (prefabricated off-site) were fixed in position so that the flat roof construction could begin immediately.[174]

The standardised nature of Ballyowen's wards and staff homes – allowing for speed of erection so that these structures would be finished at the same time as the administrative

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[171] Preparatory notes for the Minister of Health's speech at the opening of Ballyowen reveal the significance of Cramptons to the efficiency of the project: "Tenders were invited for the erection of the sanatorium and Messrs. Cramptons' tender of £333,738 was accepted by the Hospital Association, Ltd., with the concurrence of the Minister. This was the lowest of 19 tenders and the time of completion of 18 months given was also the shortest time quoted by any of the other firms". See notes for drafting of Minister's speech, 25 March 1952, N.A.I., HLTH/ D112/535, "Minister's Speech on transfer of Ballyowen Hospital from the Hospitals Association, 1952"

[172] For photographic account of the site works, see Ruth McManus, *Crampton Built* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2008), p. 216 – 218
For contemporary newspaper report, see "New County Dublin Sanatorium" in *Weekly Independent*, 3rd April 1952

[173] "New County Dublin Sanatorium" in *Weekly Independent*, 3rd April 1952

[174] "Ballyowen Hospital" in *The Irish Contractor and Engineer* (February 1953), p. 23

block and the chapel – contributed to the temporary status and limited life-span of this public architecture, surely a radical departure for architectural culture and production at this time. In effect, this meant that Ireland's medical architecture was not only acknowledging but was aping medical scientific development, with the architectural community advocating the overlap of medical functionalism with architectural functionalism. That the buildings were founded on their ability to be re-used and reinvented (according to developments in medical science) proclaimed the fullest statement of architectural modernism in Ireland up to that point; Peppard and Duffy were clearly wedded to Le Corbusier's (blank-canvas) dictum that "*tout doit commencer a zero*" and indeed to European modernism's pre-war tendency towards anti-monumental expendable architecture at the service of the masses.

Along with Ballyowen-as-built's representative nature in terms of flexible hospital planning and expendable design, the project's siting also points to another crucial aspect of mid-century Irish architecture; in this instance, an idiosyncrasy of Irish hospital design generally (but particularly sanatorium planning), which is the proximity of the hospital site to an urban centre. This topographical distinction differentiated the Irish sanatorium from its European counterpart and was a consistent tendency, threading its way from the earlier 1930s hospitals through to their 1950s counterparts. The Irish preference to situate specialist hospitals close to centres of population stemmed from the realities of Ireland's early-mid twentieth-century human geography whereby small urban communities and lack of infrastructure beyond the urban core ensured that suburban fringe development would be most practical; anything more remote would be prohibitive in terms of costs. Many of the sites that were developed for hospitals in the 1940s had been parklands of former country houses so that bare services were in place which the state then, upon purchase, went on to update with necessary roadways and more complex drainage systems.

Coupled with Ireland's belated and stunted urbanism (as compared with its European exemplars) was the ongoing, though ever-decreasing stigma associated with hospitals (workhouses) and tuberculosis (isolation). As we have noted it had become a central tenet of Browne's reign and indeed of public health policy generally at this juncture, to definitively overturn stigmatic associations and to encourage sanatorium treatment; so that the institution's proximity to the town enabled greater exchange with the community (patients' families) and removed much of the fear of isolation. Of course such exchange and conditional isolation brought disadvantages for the authorities. As a memo from a conference held in November 1951 at City Hall to discuss who should be accommodated in the new Ballyowen sanatorium and who should stay at Crooksling, told us:

> The Corporation representatives were of opinion that Ballyowen should house females and Crooksling males. They felt that if males were put into Ballyowen disciplinary difficulties would ensue by reason of the proximity of public houses and the attraction of the greyhound racing track at Chapelizod. We pointed out that the same factors obtained in the case of St Mary's but did not appear to interfere much with the control of patients.[175]

Once more, the Ballyowen project serves as emblem in this history of hospital architecture from 1940 to 1955. This low-rise adaptive structure, constructed largely from standardised parts and set in a non-remote green-field site, expressed contemporary social priorities, material conditions and tentative technologies of prefabrication. The impoverished sibling within a family of 1950s campus hospitals, Ballyowen sanatorium was conceived as a stop-gap solution. And having situated it in terms of its origins (late 1930s) and its eventual realisation (early 1950s), we have paved the way for greater understanding of mid-century hospital architecture in Ireland as a key building programme of the state during this period.

***Utopia is here:***

*1950s campus hospitals – historiography and adaptation*

Almost as if the Ballyowen project had been acting as a metaphorical dam in the nation's heroic post-war hospital building-programme, its opening in 1952 activated a deluge of hospital openings. St Luke's Cancer Hospital in Rathgar, South Dublin by T. P. Kennedy opened in stages between 1952 and 1955; the immense campus Fever Hospital in Cherry Orchard, Co. Dublin designed by Alan Hope opened in 1955; the Dublin Regional Sanatorium at Blanchardstown, Co. Dublin by Norman White's design team opened in 1955-56; and Our Lady's Children's Hospital in Crumlin, South Dublin by Robinson Keefe Devane opened in 1956. Such a barrage of imposing buildings for health begun (or often re-commenced) during the late 1940s and completed by the mid-1950s was not confined to Ireland's ever-growing capital. Notable examples of contemporary hospitals and sanatoria throughout the twenty-six counties include Cork Fever Hospital (1950 -52) and Galway Regional Hospital (1949 – 55) by T. J. Cullen, Regional Tuberculosis Sanatoria at Sarsfieldcourt, Cork (1949 - 55) and Merlin Park, Galway (1948-54) by White's team, Ardkeen Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Co. Waterford (1949 - 1952), by Nolan and Quinlan and

[175] Memo 9th November 1951 of conference in City Hall, N.A.I., HLTH/D110B/1 "Ballyowen Admission of Patients, 1951 – 1955"

Limerick Regional Hospital (1949 - 55) by Patrick Sheahan and Stanley Hall + Easton and Robertson of London.[176]

The triumphalist Hospitals Trust publication, *Oispideil na hEireann (Ireland's Hospitals) 1930 - 1955*, elucidated the processes and products of the Sweepstakes' hospitalisation programme over the twenty-five year period and therein, it illustrated some eighty-five hospital projects.[177] While many constituted the reconditioning of nineteenth-century structures (such as the Home for Epileptic Women, Moore Abbey, Co. Kildare) or domestically-scaled buildings of provincial County Clinics (such as those at Tralee, Tullamore and Portlaoise, figures 2.62 - 2.64), the sheer volume of projects and the extent of development of the sector is dizzying for the reader. Except for a couple of cattle, the odd lone figure and a bustle of processing clergy, the publication presents us with frozen un-peopled stills of hospital building after hospital building (figures 2.66 - 2.68 for sample selection of photography). Many of the images are aerial views - the point being to impress us with scale, quantity and variety; while the issue of architectural *quality* seems to be disregarded and there are no architectural drawings or explanatory floor-plans included.

By the publication's date, the Hospitals' Trust fund was already "over-committed" and had to be assisted by subventions from the state to the tune of £7¼ million.[178] As such, the volume may be read as a glossy justification of the financial investment in national hospitalisation. Along with the Department of Local Government's 1950 pamphlet *Ireland is Building* and the annual survey *Building Construction and Engineering* (1954 - 1957), *Oispideil na hEireann* was a propagandist mechanism which broadcast statistics. Collectively these three publications bombarded the nation with figures on accommodation increases and government spending and they served to categorise contemporary hospital development as being a distinct attainable building programme from 1949 and yet,

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[176] Sources for hospital dates: Most of the dates for this list of hospitals are taken from *Manual for Hospital Visits. Study tour of Hospitals in Ireland* (Irish Hospitals' Commission under the auspices of the International Hospital Federation, 1956).The start date of hospital construction is easily gleaned from the 1950 government publication, Department of Local Government and Public Health, *Ireland is Building. Houses and Hospitals* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1950), wherein it supplies an extensive list of new buildings and extensions/conversions which are underway at the time of printing, that is by spring 1950. The useful publication issued by the Hospitals Trust in 1956, J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 - 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956) does not include exact dates of hospitals in its appendix, p. 63-67. Joseph A. Robins, "Recent Hospital Developments in Ireland" in *Irish Hospitals 1956 - 1971* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1972), p. 21, provides superficial contextual information on the subject of post-war hospitals but again, is not an exact source for hospital dates.
All of this chapter's listed dates are backed up by Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p.18 - 24

[177] See 81-page photographic supplement of J. O' Sheehan and E. De Barra (eds.), *Oispideil na hEireann: Ireland's Hospitals 1930 - 1955* (Dublin: Hospitals Trust Ltd., 1956)

[178] £6 million by 1956 and an estimated £1¼ million of grant-in-aid for the year 1956/57, ibid, p.32

something of a continuity of the 1933 hospitalisation scheme. The 1954 annual *Building Construction and Engineering* extolled:

> Since the initiation of the Hospital Sweepstakes in 1930 a keen public interest has been awakened in the improvement of the hospital system in Ireland which had in earlier years been seriously inadequate...War and post-war shortages of materials drastically reduced hospital building...The hospital building programme begun in 1949 is expected to be completed in 1959. Total cost of the scheme is estimated at £35.5m and the programme, when completed, will have provided 11,000 beds in new or reconstructed accommodation.[179]

As chapter three will discuss more fully (in relation to housing), *Ireland is Building*, with Browne as its protagonist, was primarily directed towards attracting Irish workers back from England and so it became (excuse the mixed metaphor) a one-dimensional exercise in trumpeting (figures 2.50 - 2.54):

> Already the work is being expedited with the utmost energy. In 1949, a sum of roughly £1,000,000 was spent on hospital construction. In the early months of 1950, expenditure will reach the rate of £2,500, 000 per annum. Early in the year, the foundations will be laid, and the walls rising, of about one-third of the vast range of the programme, representing contracts to the value of about £6,500,000.[180]

Statistically laden, these catalogues of hospital achievement made a very clear statement about contemporary hospital development: while we were repeatedly told that the projects then under construction and/or near completion comprised the most urgent and necessary services, the portrait presented was of a "boom-nation" with high rates of new building productivity. Here was a 1950s Ireland, overwhelmed with construction to the extent that it must woo its young men home: as an *Irish Times* by-line announced in February 1950, "Money is there, but workers are needed". And yet history, most pointedly *architectural* history, has overlooked such endeavour.

Taking a portion of these 1940s/1950s hospitals as case studies relating to this central study of Ballyowen (Cherry Orchard Fever Hospital, James Connolly Dublin Regional

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[179] Frank S. Drechsler (ed.), *Building Construction and Engineering* (annual survey of Irish engineering, building and construction, Dublin: Parkside Press, 1954), p. 49

[180] Department of Local Government and Public Health, *Ireland is Building. Houses and Hospitals* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1950), unpaginated

Sanatorium and St. Luke's Cancer Hospital), it emerges that the majority of buildings from this 1949 hospitalisation programme were low-rise campus institutions; only the main hospital building for Galway Regional Hospital (T.J. Cullen, 1949-1955), the County Hospital at Limerick (Patrick Sheahan, 1949-55) and a proposed general hospital for Dublin, St. Laurence's (Navan Road, Alan Hope, 1952-57, unexecuted) were designed according to contemporary vertical-planning practices and exceeded a height of three or four-storeys. In our object-driven appreciation of architectural legacies (the discipline of architectural history), a collection of low-rise structures blurs too easily with vernacular development, and so perhaps this low-rise aspect has lead to the subsequent negation of these 1950s buildings? Importantly the buildings in question made an impact on architectural culture at the time and were on the whole, lauded as significant contemporary architecture: both St. Luke's and Cherry Orchard were visited by the AAI during the 1952/53 session;[181] T.P. Kennedy was awarded the RIAI Triennial medal in 1952 for the out-patient's department at St. Luke's and the scheme was published frequently from 1952 - 1954 (figures 2.85 - 2.91); [182] while Alan Hope's Cherry Orchard Fever Hospital was never a recipient of a formal award, it attracted much media attention and its water-tower became iconic when a photograph of it was used from 1953 to advertise steel windows for the well-known firm, Smith + Pearson (figures 2.92 - 2.101).[183]

The James Connolly regional sanatorium in Dublin was published extensively outside of the architectural press, as part of a three-pronged official building campaign. [184] Along

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[181] For records of these architectural site visits, see *Green Book*, 1952-54, p.36. St Luke's was visited again by the AAI during the 1953/54 session, see *Green Book* 1955, p.29

[182] St Luke's was published in *Architectural Survey,* 1953 (p.8-9) and 1954 (p.24-26). It was reviewed in the *Irish Architect and Contractor* throughout 1953.

[183] Cherry Orchard was published *Architectural Survey,* 1953 (p.13) and 1954 (p.22, 27-29) and the *Irish Architect and Contractor* (February, March, June 1953).
There were numerous accounts of the fever hospital's opening in daily papers such as, "Building was planned seventeen years ago" in *Irish Times,* 16th December 1953

[184] The coverage of the regional sanatoria is less straightforward and the complexes seem to be linked more with official propaganda than architectural discourse: 13 images of the three sanatoria (out of 165 images illustrating 85 projects) are in *Oispideil na hEireann* alone; three out of the five pages on hospital development from *Ireland is Building* are devoted to the regional sanatoria; and the summaries of hospital building in the 1955 and 1956 annuals of *Building Construction and Engineering* (p.31-33) are entirely devoted to the sanatoria, for example: "The Dublin regional sanatorium at Blanchardstown has been completed. With 500 beds, it cost £1,750,000 to build. A 400-bed sanatorium is also ready for Cork. This has cost £1.5m. The opening of these sanatoria in Dublin and Cork will have an effect on accommodation of other hospitals. In Dublin, it is proposed to transfer patients from Rialto tuberculosis hospital to Blanchardstown, making it possible to use the Rialto as an acute medical and surgical hospital for nearly 300 - a notable increase in the general hospital accommodation." (1955 annual, p.31). T.P. Kennedy illustrates his essay with a photograph of the Dublin (James Connolly) sanatorium in "The Hospital and its Architect" in *Irish Builder and Engineer. Centenary Issue 1859 - 1959, Looking Back on a Hundred Years and Surveying the Present Scene,* p.35. Daily newspaper coverage includes articles: on site controversy from Santry Court to Abbotstown, "Work Started on Site of Co. Dublin Sanatorium" in *Irish* Times, 3rd January 1947, p. 7 and "Site for New Dublin Sanatorium" in *Irish Times,* 2nd August 1947, p. 14; on opening of the Dublin sanatorium, "Minister opens 520-bed sanatorium at Abbotstown" in *Irish Times,* 22nd April 1955; opening of Cork sanatorium, "Opening of Cork Sanatorium should give complete provision for T.B. patients" in *Irish Times,* 19th May 1955. p. 3. Interestingly, there is no coverage of the regional sanatoria in *Architectural Survey*, 1953-59 but this author has

with its peers at Galway and Cork, its white flat-roofed largely-glazed structures became the logo for State progress during the latter half of the 1950s (figures 2.73, 2.76, 2.78) and while under construction, a reassuringly 'technological' axonometric of its administrative centre was posted as sure evidence that "Ireland was building".[185] Before long the regional sanatoria, with Dublin being the last to come on stream, provided the central image for all propaganda to do with national development. As such the sanatoria may be read as the apotheosis of the State (patron)/ modernist architecture relationship; not only were these modernist structures at the service of the State, but they were modernist structures *championed* by the State. They complied with all the aesthetic and technological standards of the most universal and modernist typologies, the twentieth-century hospital. As the construction industry polemic, *Ireland Rebuilding* pointed out in 1955:

> The regional sanatoria...are good examples of the modern urge of our builders today. Up-to-date methods have been used throughout from the actual construction to the application of the last touches of paint to the doors. New-type window frames, block floors, sun-verandas and extensive use of glass to allow for the maximum infiltration of the sun, these are only a very few of the many 20th-century features of the sanatoria.[186]

The public structures within these regional sanatorium campuses, namely the treatment blocks at Galway and Dublin, came closer to the emotional aesthetics and expressionist architecture of Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium than had any Irish hospital building at the time (figures 2.72, 2.73, 2.81). And not alone did the sanatoria evoke Paimio, the icon of modernist hospital architecture, but the placement of vertical blocks as if feeding out of, and colliding with horizontal ranges of the sanatoria's boiler-houses and administration wings, conformed to an industrial aesthetic of German and Dutch early modernism (figures 2.79, 2.82). These hovering volumes were articulated through variations in fenestration patterns and massing which corresponded to the differing functions of the blocks (figures 2.73, 2.76, 2.78, 2.82 for example). In this, Norman White recalled the rhythmic and varied lay-out of Duiker's low-lying Zonnestraal Sanatorium.

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been unable to locate (or consult) a copy of this journal of 1956 (which is the most likely year to publish at least one of the three sanatoria) either in TCD, UCD, QUB, DIT libraries or in the holdings of the IAA. There appears to be no coverage of these buildings in the UK press (Avery index search January – May 2009).

[185] The axonometric of the Dublin regional sanatorium was the main image published under "Hospital Building" in *First Report of the Department of Health 1945 – 1949*, p. 67; it was also published in *Ireland is Building* (1950 – unpaginated, figures 2.50, 2.53) and by the *Irish Times*, 12th November 1949, p. 9 as a standalone image.

[186] John Dolin, "Irish Hospitalisation – Aided by Sweepstakes" in *Ireland Rebuilding* (Dublin: Harpers Publication, 1955), p.17

As stated, in 1956 the International Hospitals Federation undertook their annual study tour to Ireland. The fact of this event alone highlights the international recognition of Ireland's post-war hospitalisation programme. Central to the study tour were visits to the three regional sanatoria which were described in the accompanying catalogue in nostalgic (historic and picturesque sites) and progressive (medically-advanced accommodation) language. For example, the manual describes the Cork sanatorium as follows:

> It is situated on a beautifully elevated site overlooking the Glanmire valley, about 7 miles from Cork city...The hospital or surgical block, which is a four storied building, is equipped and furnished on the most modern lines. The ground floor is entirely taken up with operating theatres, X-ray, radiology, physiotherapy, eye, ear, nose and throat, dental and endoscopy departments. The pavilion blocks are one storied, self-contained units.[187]

Clearly the regional sanatoria constituted the most significant official public-building programme of the late 1940s – mid-1950s and yet architectural history has forgotten them. Regarding this subsequent indifference towards the regional sanatoria, (and towards the 1950s hospitals generally), Frederick O'Dwyer writes, "While it is generally known that the state inaugurated a major programme of sanatorium building in the 1940s, little has been published about their design..."[188] Mostly, this dearth of criticism has its origins in the historiography of twentieth-century Irish architecture generally and particularly, the latter half (see thesis introduction). But the critical/historical indifference shown to these hospital buildings also stems from the difficulty in situating or intellectualising them. Unlike the county hospitals which, being determinedly pre-war and Free State, form a decisive category in terms of date/ patronage/ function/ scale/ influence, the collective example of the regional sanatoria, St. Luke's, Cherry Orchard and Ballyowen is not so credible. Undoubtedly there are many points of commonality uniting these 1950s projects. However, they are resistant to historical categorisation: they are neither post-war nor pre-war and they defy such definitive labels as indigenous, internationalist, innovative, traditional.

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[187] International Hospitals Federation, *Study Tour of Hospitals in Ireland. Manual of Hospital Visits*, vol. I and II, 1956 (unpaginated). The Galway sanatorium is described in a similar mix of pragmatic and romantic: "It is administered by a joint body representing counties Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo. The grounds, comprising some 400 acres, are beautifully wooded, and the site overlooks Galway Bay with views of the Aran Islands and the Clare Hills. On the site is the old Merlin Castle – a Norman Castle, built for the defence of Galway, a former walled town."

[188] Frederick O'Dwyer, *Irish Hospital Architecture. A Pictorial History* (Dublin: Department of Health and Children, 1997), p.24

The 1950s hospitals should be understood as continuous with earlier developments in hospitalisation. Critically, these hospitals reference the past as well as signalling progress by projecting forwards and I propose that they are not *imitations* of pre-war architecture, but rather *extensions* of that architecture. Such extension is less about form and more about organisation principles and planning. Of course Norman White's sanatoria bear a formal resemblance to International Style early modernism in terms of asymmetrical massing, ribbon windows and white volumes, but the regional structures were on the whole less planar than both their European exemplars and their Irish county hospital precedents. Kennedy's specialist cancer hospital, St. Luke's was embedded in an Aalto-esque tradition of new modernist objects set harmoniously into existing old tissue (the eighteenth-century estate of Oaklands). As we know, Aalto had been cited by Irish architectural culture since the late 1930s but at St Luke's the experiential qualities of Aalto's domestic projects were invoked for a public building; firstly in the preservation of shrubs and trees and then in the conception of the hospital stay and visit alike as a "journey", "pleasantly introduced" by means of a spacious waiting hall, furnished with Kennedy's designed seating which he explained as being, "The cosy circles of seats are conducive to friendliness and prevent anyone from feeling alone" (figures 2.88, 2.89).[189]

The formal or experiential influences at play on Alan Hope's campus at Cherry Orchard were not so explicit. The complex of eight ward units, three cubicle blocks and fourteen other separate structures housing staff, chapel and administration presented a mishmash of forms and materials which were neither markedly retrogressive nor particularly progressive in flavour (figures 2.96 – 2.99 for example). This variation may reflect the longevity of the project as, like Ballyowen, it was commissioned in 1936, designed and planned during the war (1941 - 42) but construction did not begin until 1950.[190] As such the chapel and ward blocks were capped with pitched roofs of slate, were intimately-scaled and planned symmetrically; while the nurse's home and administration block break with this vernacular massing and were three-storied, flat-roofed with thin overhanging eaves and accommodation blocks placed at angles. Pebble-dash clad most walls and concrete ribs were reserved for public structures of administration and the nine-storey iconic water tower **(**figures 2.100, 2.101). The overwhelming effect of both St. Luke's and Cherry Orchard was modernist. At St. Luke's the wards were asymmetrically-planned with blocks positioned at right angles to each other. Flat and occasional elliptically-curved

[189] T.P. Kennedy, *Saint Luke's Hospital, Dublin. To Commemorate the Opening of the Hospital 1954* (Dublin: Comhlachas Ailse na H-Eireann, 1954), p.11
[190] "Building was planned seventeen years ago", in *Irish Times,* 16th December 1953, p.4

roofing surmounted rendered walls which in turn enclosed a series of fluid spaces and glazed partitions. But like Hope's fever hospital, Kennedy's specialist cancer hospital comprised low-lying structures of one or two-storeys and the fenestration patterns, though varied from unit to unit, were more traditional and vernacular than modernist and ribbon-like.

One may propose that these two complexes (and to a lesser extent Ballyowen Sanatorium and the regional sanatoria) were early examples of regional modernism – that is, mid-century architecture which was technologically modernist yet cognisant of its locale and intent upon referencing that locale's vernacular. Or arguably their mixed-up aesthetic and technology came out of the limits of their designs? After all, hospitals were being increasingly generated by programme. We are reminded of the burgeoning appeal of the more situated modernism as practiced by the post-war Swedish modernists and called New Empiricism by J. M. Richards through the *Architectural Review* in 1948. As the architect Sven Backström explained in relation to his and other (mostly Swedish) architects' rejection of badly functioning "objective" architecture of the 1930s, "Man and his habits, reactions and needs are the focus of interest as never before."[191] Backström's thesis, that buildings should respond rather than prescribe, was evident in the mixed nature of the Swedish houses which Richards used to illustrate the new style (figures 1.42 + 1.43, 3.154-3.156). As chapter one discusses, the low rise and modestly-scaled tendencies of these 1940s Swedish buildings suited the Irish temperament and indeed, budget. Alan Powers goes so far as to suggest that the penchant for mixed materials, such as we see at Hope's Cherry Orchard and in myriad other public buildings in Ireland during the early 1950s, "suited the patchwork effects demanded by the erratic supplies of materials."[192] Considering Cherry Orchard's extended history and gestational period, Powers' point may be very accurate.

Beyond formal qualities, the meaning of these 1950s hospitals resided in their adaptability, according to Backström's call for buildings to react to man's habits and needs. Unsurprisingly, the most stable point of commonality between them and indeed, Ballyowen Sanatorium was their campus character. Looking at the site plans for all four (figures 2.55, 2.60 - 2.71, 2.86, 2.92) it is clear that the one-storey free-standing pavilion or spinal ward block constituted the basic unit upon which the complex was guided and organised. As discussed with Ballyowen, such an organising principle privileged the potential for architectural extension, architectural subtraction and architectural adaptation. There was a

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[191] Backström quoted in J. M. Richards, "The New Empiricism. Sweden's Latest Style" in *Architectural Review* (September 1948), p.200

[192] Alan Powers, *Britain. Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), p.82

rational shift occurring whereby hospital design was becoming less about the architectural object and more about countering the situation of architectural obsolescence. In 1953 T. P Kennedy reflected on this ever-shifting approach to contemporary hospital design:

> The hospital designer thinks rather along the lines of the factory planner, keeping in mind at the same time that his building is catering for human material - people who are suffering from disease and often under considerable mental stress.[193]

By 1959, this thinking had shifted further so that Kennedy reduced hospital design to be about the "intelligent anticipation of future requirement".[194] It would seem that this method of 'pre-emptive' design was already underpinning Vincent Kelly's ethos, theoretically rather than practically, in the mid 1930s. In the face of the radical development of Irish hospitals following the Hospitals Act of 1933, Kelly was urging Irish architects that,

> Hospitals should be planned not merely for the use for which they are originally intended, but so that changes in medical methods and requirements which may occur in the future will not make them obsolete in a short time.[195]

The proceedings of the Hospitals' Commission's fourth and fifth general reports also push for flexible planning, citing international examples of hospitals and advances in medical science:

> For a considerable number of years now, front rank medical scientists...say that in the designing of new institutions as those for tuberculosis and acute infectious disease, serious consideration should be given to the possibility that long before their lives are ended they will be converted for use to altogether different purposes, and a new fever hospital in Glasgow has recently been planned and erected with this end in view. (Hospitals' Commission, *Fourth Annual Report*, 1938)

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[193] T.P. Kennedy, *Saint Luke's Hospital, Dublin. To Commemorate the Opening of the Hospital 1954* (Dublin: Comhlachas Ailse na H-Eireann, 1954), p.5

[194] By 1959, Kennedy emphasised the technology of medical treatment as the driving force behind hospital planning: "The advance in medical treatment is speeding up...The building requirements in many departments change with great rapidity. Constant vigilance by the architectural designer is essential to ensure intelligent anticipation of future requirements..." See T. P. Kennedy, "The Hospital and its Architect", in *Irish Builder and Engineer. Centenary Issue 1859 - 1959, Looking Back on a Hundred Years and Surveying the Present Scene,* p.34

[195] Vincent Kelly, "Hospital Planning for the Future" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (Vol. 76, 23rd July, 1934), p. 35

> Ideas and methods in connection with nursing and the running of hospitals are constantly changing and the success or failure of a plan is to be gauged only by its adaptability in relation to the progressive development of medical science. (Hospitals' Commission, *Fifth Annual Report*, 1939 - 1941)[196]

In the immediate post-war context of Cherry Orchard, St. Luke's, the regional sanatoria and the remaking of the Ballyowen project, the tendency towards impermanence for Irish hospital architecture was explicitly mooted by John Murray Easton in his influential address to the RIBA in Dublin in 1947,

> Some of our medical colleagues have hinted that if only architects would reduce the expectation of life of their buildings from 100 to 25 years, a corresponding saving in structural costs could be effected, thus enabling bigger and better hospitals to be built sooner and cheaper, and rebuilt oftener.[197]

This theory of architectural expendability was combined with the by-then entrenchment of the 'fresh-air' sanatorium regime and the growing tendency towards standardisation of design, to arrive at the campus hospital for infectious disease as something of a distinct 1950s Irish building typology. A seeming integration of the universal aspects of nineteenth-century medicine (namely long-stay, low-density and fresh air) and mid-twentieth-century architectural technologies of prefabrication with the idiosyncrasies of Irish urban geography and socio-medical preferences brought forth a new breed of specialist hospitals, whereby medical specialism seemed to infer greater need for architectural adaptability. Here, the single or two-storey pavilion was the favoured standard unit and so, the pedestrian pathway/ vehicular route through an expansive site replaced the hub of vertical circulation as the primary orientation mechanism. As with the Ballyowen example, architectural monumentality was confined to the singular and most public structures of the campus such as the chapel and the administration block; or the water tower (as at Cherry Orchard Fever Hospital, figures 2.100, 2.101) and the outpatients' department (as at St Luke's Cancer hospital, figure 2.89).

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[196] Hospitals' Commission, *Fourth Annual Report*, 1938, p.34 and *Fifth Annual Report,* 1939, 1940, 194, p.32 in N.A.I., HLTH. A108/1 "Hospitals' Commissions Annual reports"

[197] John Murray Easton/ S. E. T. Cusdin, "Recent Trends in Hospital Design" (lecture at RIBA Conference, Dublin, 1947) reprinted in *The Architect and Building News* (June 27th, 1947), p.254 - 258

Otherwise, the bulk of the 1950s buildings presented a new (hospital) 'institutional vernacular' taking the form of throwaway chalets which were scattered at a low-density about a typically undulating landscape with southerly aspect. Interestingly, as we will see in chapter three, these hospital projects coincided with the development (speculatively and by the state) of vast ground-scraping housing estates which were similarly far-flung at the city's edge, similarly standardised in their design components and similarly nostalgic for nineteenth-century patterns of planning, be it garden city urbanism or sanatorium treatment.

***Conclusion:***

In many respects, the campus hospitals and chapter three's housing estates (private and social alike) of suburban Dublin jointly capture *the* image of 1950s Ireland. Their colonisation of green-field sites, as depicted through low-rise forms and broad horizons of mountain backdrops, recounts a narrative of rapid urbanisation that defined Ireland's twentieth-century history and inevitably, the architectural endeavour therein. But where the standardised architecture of these housing estates spoke a language of pitched roof, pebbledash and hackneyed fenestration, the hospital pavilions usually expressed their modernist pretensions through flat roofs and more extensive glazing.

Of course there were exceptions to the rule such as the ten-storied Altnagevin Hospital, (1960, Derry), the eighteen-storied Belfast City Hospital (1972-85, Belfast), the ten-storied unexecuted St Laurence's Hospital, Dublin (Alan Hope, 1952-57) and the thirteen-storied nurses' housing tower at St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin (Downes Meehan Robson, 1947-70). But generally, the innate tendency in Irish architecture to sprawl and claw to the earth was combined with the insistence upon maintaining a hospitalisation programme during the mid to late-twentieth century, despite increased building costs, so that the low-rise campus hospital was repeatedly produced during the latter half of the twentieth century and arguably became a tentatively *Irish* form of hospital design.

Increasingly throughout the twentieth century, medical developments and reactive organisation principles have overtaken modernist aesthetics. As such, Irish hospitals from the late 1950s onwards were to be expendable structures at the service of the masses and at the same time, the advent of the community clinic or health centre introduced a new architectural type which was to be small-scale and more cognisant of local building traditions. Such county clinics at Portlaoise, Tralee and Tullamore provided an architectural framework for the ideological move away from long-stay hospital accommodation to

community-based treatment, sweeping through public health policy in Ireland throughout the 1960s and 70s.

The development of Ballyowen traces many of these trends. Ostensibly, the example foregrounds the universal issue guiding twentieth-century hospital architecture which is how *programme* generates design. In more local terms, the narrative of Ballyowen, as it unfolds from genesis to realisation, reveals the defining yet largely overlooked aspects of Irish architecture during the 1940s as being both continuous and internationalist in aspiration.

# Chapter Three

*Dublin is Building: public housing, architects' endeavours and the edge condition, 1940 – 1965*

## ***Introduction***

*Three Grounds of housing – good houses, worthy houses and flats*

In 1950 the Irish government issued a colourful pamphlet, *Ireland is Building. Houses and Hospitals* informing us that during 1949, Dublin Corporation was building 3,219 dwellings and that a further 15,000 houses were planned by the local authority as the first part of a ten-year programme. As already mentioned in chapter two, this publication was a joint initiative of the Departments of Local Government and Health, designed to coax Irish labourers back from Britain so as to realise this extensive building programme; as such, it was replete with triumphalism and reconstructive rhetoric (figure 2.50). The opening page greets the reader with before/after images of Dublin housing: an idealised juxtaposition of "the past" in the form of ramshackle tenement back-lands with "the present and future", represented by gleaming white repetitive terraced houses (figure 3.1). Inevitably the contrast is striking - almost cartoon-like in its evocation of extremes - which was by this mid-century juncture a familiar tool of Corporation propaganda considering the substantial Municipal slum-clearance project during the 1930s and 1940s.

But familiar dogma and triumphant propaganda aside, *Ireland is Building* is an important historical document which presents us with a little-acknowledged portrait of the Republic's ambitious building activities and aspirations in the post-war world. While the goal of repatriation informs its tone and the significant nationwide advances in the field of hospital architecture may lay claim to the greater portion of its pages, arguably its enduring message is that of the capital city as a rising suburb of *identikit* residences. In this way, *Ireland is Building*'s most potent and residual illustrations and accompanying commentary express the ongoing transformation of 'virgin' sites on the city's fringes into "pleasant new residential areas" (figures 3.2 + 3.3):

> Within the extended boundaries of Greater Dublin handsome new suburbs have been built or are in the course of construction. In the Kimmage-Crumlin suburb, built in the decade before the War, a population equal to that of the City of Limerick has been re-housed in modern comfort. Redoubled efforts are being made to provide abundant and worthy housing for the citizens.[1]

Above all, the reader comes away from this government brochure with an unambiguous image of both the *extent* of contemporary Dublin's housing development and then the *suburban* nature or geography of that development. We are told that in 1949, 30,000

[1] "Dublin: 'Splendid Among Cities'" in Department of Local Government/ Department of Health, *Ireland is Building. Houses and Hospitals* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1951), unpaginated

local authority dwellings were needed to meet Dublin's working-class housing demand and that while 4,623 sites were being prepared for construction, the acquisition of a further 9,928 sites was in progress at that time. Significantly, all of the referenced sites were green-field fringe sites which hitherto were rural and needed extensive development for such services as waterworks, roadways, sewer drainage and electricity.

Clearly statistics dominate the publication and notably, there is no commentary on the houses' aesthetic or technological make-up. In reality, *Ireland is Building* was never meant to be a record of formalist detail but rather, a trumpeting document of the housing programme's salient socio-economic features. Importantly, the Dublin programme was presented as continuous with the Corporation's 1930s earlier housing drive and throughout, its good moral health was emphasised. This unwavering moral tone was undoubtedly rooted in the complex post-colonial condition of 1940s/early 1950s Ireland, intent as the newly established Republic was to bind its modernising processes to a national imperative. Underpinning this exposé of Ireland's (most particularly Dublin's) great house-building drive of the mid-century was the rhetoric of reinvention:

> Freedom in the Twenty-Six Counties allowed Irishmen to set about the rebuilding of the city. Already, under successive Administrations, immense progress has been made. Strangers, who visit Dublin with ideas derived from the past, are astonished at the spaciousness, cleanliness, grace and efficiency of the great fabric that has been built or rebuilt. A large part of the decaying tenements has been removed, or reconstructed as comfortable flats with modern amenities: extensive new blocks of workers' flats have been built on the best modern pattern [...] the visitor beholds the tokens of progress and of national pride. He admires the broad, tree-lined new highways; the shining works of modern architecture; the civic dignity, the pleasant new residential areas...[2]

To rebuild or to construct anew was to reinvent. And where better to concretise this metaphor of modern national reinvention than in the realm of mass housing for the nation's citizenry - "Roofless ruins, old eyesores, have been cleared away, and clean, comfortable dwellings have been built"?[3] Indeed, the housing 'question' (i.e. the problem and proposed solutions) in Ireland had occupied *the* key emotive site for political revolution since the late nineteenth century. As Murray Fraser explores in his history of Irish housing from 1883 to 1922 and as Eddie Conroy's research into the first De Valera Government's housing programme of the 1930s shows, working-class housing was a

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[2] Ibid.
[3] "Towns and Parishes. More People: More Houses: More Work" in Ibid.

highly politicised issue during the first half of the twentieth century.[4] Unsurprisingly the power of housing-as-political-instrument was sustained by the newly founded post-Emergency Republic, with the provision of local authority housing becoming a fundamental state policy. In 1950, Taoiseach John Costello's address to the Master Builders' Association affirmed housing's central position within the nation's sense of itself, and more pointedly, within its sense of a pragmatic and progressive self:

> The best way we can insure [*sic*] that each person is a good citizen is to give everyone a stake in the country and the way in which we can do that is to give him his own home. No matter what it costs, that is good business nationally and socially.[5]

In its portrait of mid-twentieth century Ireland as a suburban building site, *Ireland is Building* was not alone. This Departmental publication was buoyed up by at least two similar contemporary portrayals, *Building Construction Engineering* (Department of Local Government journal, 1954 – 57) and *Ireland Rebuilding* (a commercial building industry annual, 1953 – 55). Both depicted 1950s Ireland furiously remaking itself in concrete and brick wherein, once again, hospitalisation was presented at the forefront of building sophistication with small-scale industrialisation - at the level of new factories and electrification advances (namely the significant Poulaphouca hydro-electric scheme (1944) on the River Liffey, Co. Wicklow) – dotted about in the background. And again, the most compelling image was that of Dublin's mushrooming suburbia. Regaling the reader with audacious headlines such as "IRELAND'S GREAT HOUSING DRIVE: 100,000 NEW HOUSES", *Ireland Rebuilding* lauded the speed of construction of thousands of suburban houses, and evidently interpreted the whole process in the idealised terms of the 'dawning of a new era' for Irish domestic life:

> Successive Irish Governments with the cooperation of all political parties, together with the work of all local public authorities, have changed the material face of Ireland in the past twenty-five years. City slums are being wiped out with commendable speed, the thatched cabin has practically disappeared and modern homes made possible by the greatest housing drive ever undertaken by a small

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[4] See Murray Fraser, *John Bull's Other Homes. State Housing and British Policy in Ireland, 1883 – 1922* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996) and Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997)

[5] Costello speech (1950) cited in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.348

> nation has been one of the most outstanding benefits of our regained national freedom.[6]

The visual presentation of these new (post-colonial and post-Emergency) patterns for "how we might live" primarily took the form of aerial photographs of burgeoning suburban communities (figure 3.4); alongside which occasional glimpses of the houses' interiors reveal modern in-built kitchens, embellished by polemical captions: "Keeping pace with the march of progress are [sic] banishing drudgery from the Irish kitchen" or "The modern Irish kitchen of to-day, made possible by Rural Electrification" (figures 3.7 + 3.8).[7] From these publications we are shown great wheels of new roadways, punctuated by green spaces, which provide the low-density frameworks for terraced and semi-detached residential boxes surmounted by pitched roofs, while front and back gardens and canopied front doors complete the image of Dublin's new 'toy towns' (see especially figure 3.4). Significantly, as will be discussed in chapter four, the masses of houses are seen to be supported by the equally new but vast public structures of ecclesiastical authority, namely the RC church and accompanying schools. *Ireland Rebuilding* is explicit in its presentation of the symbiosis of modern home to ecclesiastic institution to successful nation state:

> For the children of any family, the importance of living in a home kept clean and bright by the use of modern gadgets cannot be too strongly emphasised. Happy children at home are happy and industrious children at school. And, to continue the line of reasoning, happy children at school will assimilate more knowledge and will, therefore, be able to get better jobs and earn more when they grow up.[8]

In short, taking these examples of 1950s State and building industry propaganda as a starting point, we are confronted by a mass-housing building boom which was concentrated at Dublin's fringes. This chapter asks what was behind such 'tremendous' endeavour? And what was the position of the architectural community in this evidently frenzied provision of housing for the citizenry?

The immediate political background points to the post-Emergency change in government in 1948 with the new Inter-Party Government reviving the earlier Free State house building drive of the 1930s; as such, in justification of its increase in rates so as to finance all of this development, the Inter-Party Department of Local Government sought to champion its own initiative by pamphleteering. But I would argue that the housing

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[6] "Ireland's Great Housing Drive" in (editor unnamed) *Ireland Rebuilding* (Dublin: Harpers and Parkside Press, 1955), p.22
[7] Kathy Jones, "Gadgets" in ibid., p.37
[8] Ibid.

situation at this mid-century juncture raises more questions than immediate political and economic explanations can provide. On an international level, there may be no doubt that the influence of the post-war reconstruction programmes in Britain was keenly felt in the suburbanising Ireland of the late 1940s. On an ideological level, as already suggested, there was the symbolic role of the modern dwelling within the formation of the modern nation; an issue further engrained by the importance of dwelling to the architectural avant-garde, in formal and philosophical terms.

However informative these issues were, ultimately such an intensity of (house) production was rooted in the extreme need and shortage which had preceded it. As such, in trying to understand the why and how of Dublin's great housing drive of the mid-century, we must turn to the dreadful housing conditions increasingly blighting the city during the 1940s. The efforts to clear the tenement slums during the 1930s climaxed in 1938 following the controversial findings of the 1936 census which had stirred up public opinion and led to the State investigation into the actualities of Dublin's working-class housing situation in 1939. With the onset of the Second World War, the slum clearance enterprise waned for the most part and the enquiry's hugely important report – *Report of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes of the City of Dublin* - was not published until 1943. As we will see, the report was damning and enlightening, and in short, played a central role in all Dublin housing developments for the succeeding two decades. This urban slum problem extended into rural regions (dilapidated cottages) so that the White Paper on post-war planning from 1944/45 placed emphasis on housing improvement as a national priority – in fact, projected development in this field was to take over 56% of the total estimated cost of post-war building activities. Clearly housing was the dominant issue; arguably it had to be, as the problem was constantly added to in Dublin by the realities of extreme rural depopulation and in-migration to the capital city throughout the 1940s. Along with the ever-increasing number of individuals and families living in insanitary conditions at Dublin's centre (representing the *need* for the later housing drive), was the ideological thesis of suburban development (representing the *where* of the later housing drive). In 1941, this town-planning ideology got its first significant public airing when Sir Patrick Abercrombie (with Manning Robertson and Sydney Kelly) published his latest version of a town plan for Dublin. Through Dublin Corporation's championing of this *Sketch Plan for Dublin* over the next generation, Abercrombie's explicit policy to "thin out" the city centre and develop Dublin's outskirts was established.

These issues collectively gave rise to the immense house-building programme as outlined from the late 1940s until the late 1950s, which roughly lay out three 'grounds' for this chapter to interrogate. In the foreground, vast housing estates of repetitive pitched-roof boxes (known as cottages) loomed large: they were a mix of local authority

endeavour and private speculation which, at first glance, appeared outside of architectural discourse; though on further examination they inevitably occupied a position – albeit strained - within contemporary Irish architectural culture. In the middle-ground squatted the urban blocks of flats and maisonettes which were continuously developed during the period by the Corporation's Housing Architect (Herbert Simms and from 1949 until 1955, his successor, Charlie McNamara), with a persistent eye on developments in Britain and to a lesser extent, on aesthetic preferences in the centres of European avant-garde architecture such as Amsterdam, Dessau, Vienna and Paris.

In the background then, there was the architectural discourse around housing. The academic question of "how we might live", along with theoretical explorations into progressive architectural technologies such as prefabrication, dominated the Irish architectural press (and were subjects of the AAI's lecture series and the RIAI's infrequent exhibitions) throughout the 1940s and 1950s. As we might expect, Dublin's architectural community concerned itself with the burgeoning science of town-planning and through the agency of the RIAI, pushed for greater influence on the design of local authority mass-housing. For the most part though, the architects' attempt to lead Dublin's housing drive was frustrated and considering the high volume of house construction, they played a marginal role in the process and production. The design competition, something of a symbol for architectural culture, was almost excluded from Dublin's mid-century housing development; aside from a small competition for a village hall and cottage promoted by the Irish Countrywomen's Association in 1944 and two ideas-based competitions for the Ideal Homes Exhibition (1953) and Asbestos Cement Ltd (1958), the architectural competition barely impacted upon the housing programme.

This chapter juxtaposes these three layers or 'grounds': it highlights the urban flat/suburban cottage debate (typological as well as geographical) and considers the relationship between the *actual* development of Dublin's housing stock and the *aspirations*, or theoretical position, of the Irish architectural community for the design of that stock. This push/pull relationship underpins the chapter and provides the most enlightening platform for discussing the hitherto unexamined territory of Dublin's mid-century housing architecture. In trying to capture the extent of the housing programme in Dublin during the period 1940 - 60 and consequently the architectural, social and cultural implications of this programme, the chapter concentrates on the design and production of public housing. While the chapter explores the aforementioned minor design competitions (which drag the housing issue into the cultural realm), it does so along with an examination of potential house design technology, of the influence of British housing policy and design and of the role of the emergent town plan for Dublin. Because the house design competitions were largely ideas-based, they were mostly of theoretical significance rather than having very practical or real implications. As such,

the position of the architectural competition within this chapter's discussion is peripheral compared to those at the core(s) of chapters two and four.

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes": architectural endeavours in Dublin's housing reforms, 1931 – 45***

> *There are tenements today with paneless fanlights and mouldy portals whose walls still show traces of Angelica Kauffmann's handiwork [...] Here cobblestones which once echoed to the tread of Jonathan Swift now swarm with children who crawl into the toppling tenements only when hunger or sleep drives them off the streets.*[9]
>
> **Arthur and Mary Bromage (USA), "Housing Program in Ireland", 1942**

> *The serious overcrowding is aggravated when there are more than two adults of both sexes in each room. This occurs in fifty-seven rooms, in some of which can be found as many as five adults, apart from the rest of the family. In number 63C, a family of eleven live in one room, measuring 18 feet by 15 feet; apart from the father and mother, there are nine children, whose ages range from 21 years to a 1 year old. In number 21B, there is a family of nine; here the children consist of four boys, aged 27, 24, 16 and 5 years old respectively, and two girls aged 22 and 12 years old respectively; there are also three other adults in the room."*[10] **Dublin University Fabian Society, Survey of block of tenements, 1943**

"Municipal shame...fetid tenements"... "Foul blot on the social life of Dublin"... "Insanitary", "evil"... "Unfit for human habitation".[11] This is some of the typical language employed by contemporary commentators during the late 1930s and 1940s to describe the living conditions of Dublin's working classes in the tenement houses at the city's centre. There was general consensus that Dublin's slums were the site of national shame and that despite the complexity of the problem in financial and social terms, they had to be cleared (figure 3.9). As such, anti-slum polemics emanated from all quarters and suggestions as how best to eradicate the slum problem abounded in the daily

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[9] Arthur and Mary Bromage, "The Housing Program in Ireland" in *The Social Service Review* (Vol. 16, No. 3, September, 1942), p. 499

[10] This observation is cited by Noel Moffett, "Low-cost Housing in Eire", *Architectural Design and Construction* (November 1946), p.301. It refers to a survey undertaken by the Dublin University Fabian Society in 1943 of a block of tenements housing 370 families which was reputedly situated within 500 yards of Nelson's Column on O'Connell Street, Dublin.

[11] These examples are taken from Professor T. W. T Dillon, "Slum Clearance: Past and Future" in *Studies* (No. 34, March 1945), p.13 - 20; Senator Joseph Brennan, speech at inaugural lunch of the Tomorrow Club as reported in "'Looking Ahead' Luncheon", *Irish Times,* 25th December 1943, p.10; and M. P. Colivet, Chairman of Inquiry, Preface to Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 2

newspapers, dominated Dublin Corporation proceedings and determined town planning ideology throughout the 1930s and 40s. As architect and writer John O'Gorman reported in an architectural supplement to the *Irish Times* of 1939:

> The political problems of Ireland are of little consequence when compared with the social problems, and few of the social problems seem so insoluble as that of providing housing accommodation for all the inhabitants of Dublin. The question is linked up with the removal of the slum population to decent homes and the fact that a substantial part of the people living in the city cannot afford to pay the rent of decent homes, no matter how small.[12]

Just as O'Gorman was commissioned to compile this architectural overview for the *Irish Times*, the Department of Local Government and Public Health launched its in-depth Inquiry into Dublin's housing situation which culminated in 1943 in the *Report of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes of the City of Dublin* (referred to from now as *Report of Inquiry*). From 19th April 1939 until 8th February 1940, the Inquiry took place in City Hall as a public tribunal during which time oral testimonies from Corporation officials and housing-related philanthropists, tradesmen and professionals were collected, and some 143 private sessions were held.[13] This was a major research and administrative operation with a substantial legacy in terms of future housing development. The Report's forty three appendices traced the mounting cost of construction in Dublin (through material and labour trends), charted the demographics of Dublin's working classes between 1926 and 1936, assessed the rent-paying capacities of Corporation tenants in 1938, analysed allocations practices, examined the ever-contrasting costs of building cottages and flats, presented unemployment statistics in the building trades and compared Dublin's working class housing endeavour to that of London, Glasgow, Cardiff, Liverpool and Sheffield (among others); importantly, most of the figures upon which Dublin's later 1948 housing drive was based, emanated from this pre to mid-Emergency *Report of Inquiry*.

The most tangible of the Inquiry's legacies was the revelation that still by 1943, 22,172 families in Dublin were living in overcrowded tenement houses.[14] This statistic confirmed O'Gorman's assertion of the slum problem's *insolubleness* because the figure

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[12] John O'Gorman, "Slums and other problems" in *Irish Times*, Architecture Supplement, 21st June 1939, p.34

[13] M. P. Colivet, Chairman of Inquiry, Preface to Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 2-3. "Nomad" reported on the tribunal from May 1939 in *Irish Builder and Engineer*; see for example "Dublin's Housing Conundrums. City Manager's Submissions to Inquiry" in *Irish Builder and Engineer*, 27th May 1939, p.435

[14] The figure of 22,172 families found to be living in overcrowded conditions is from the 1938 Corporation Survey as outlined in Section I "The extent of the housing accommodation required to meet the reasonable requirements of the working classes of the City of Dublin" and Appendix 9, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry*(Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.36 and p.240

emerged on the eve of World War II when, notably, the municipality of Dublin had been engaged in its most extensive housing drive ever. In fact, from 1932 until the start of the Inquiry in 1939, some 7,638 dwellings had been built by Dublin Corporation. This is startlingly productive when put in its historical context: that is, that in the forty-four years between 1887 (the start of the Corporation's house and flat building activities), and 1931 the Corporation had built only 7,246 dwellings.[15] As such, the Inquiry was initiated at the peak of Corporation housing activity, arguably because this unprecedented house/flat building programme had pitched slum clearance into the forefront of public consciousness and had invariably raised expectations around standards of living.

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*Working-class housing in 1930s Dublin*

This 1930s building programme was largely instigated and enabled by the 1931 and 1932 Housing Acts which rather belatedly enacted recommendations of the 1913/14 Cowan Report (an earlier commission of inquiry on slum clearance) by providing greater financial assistance to local authorities and strengthening their compulsory purchase (and demolition) powers.[16] This legislation confronted urban slums head-on for the first time and set up the administrative and financial frameworks which continue to shape Irish housing today, pointedly the position of local authorities as the main provider of social housing with the Minister of Local Government forever at the helm.[17] Significantly in architectural terms, the 1931/32 legislation introduced the new position of Housing Architect to Dublin Corporation which was taken up by the English architect Herbert Simms until his untimely death in 1948. Under Simms' direction and to his designs, Dublin Corporation began building city-centre flat schemes to an extent never before undertaken, as well as accelerating the production of garden-suburb type cottages at Cabra (North West Dublin) and starting a similarly designed massive housing development in the Crumlin-Drimnagh district (South West Dublin).

Both the flat and the cottage of the 1930s became standard typologies (in terms of designs, layouts and sites) which wound their way in varying forms through Dublin's

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[15] See Appendix 1, Ibid, p.231. Maurice Craft outlines such figures very concisely in his two articles, "The Development of Dublin. Background to the Housing Problem" in *Studies* (no.59, Autumn 1970), p.301 - 313 and "The Development of Dublin. The Southern Suburbs" in *Studies* (no. 69, Spring 1971), p.68 - 80

[16] For more on specifics of these two Acts, see P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.38-44

[17] Mary Daly discusses this in *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.240 - 248. I have leaned on Eddie Conroy's excellent analysis of the implications of the 1931/1932 Housing Act which is based on J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985. Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); see Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.132. Conroy emphasises that the two factors which still dominate Ireland's housing development today (funding mechanism and role of the Department of Local Government) were established by these 1931/32 Acts

architectural and urban history thereafter, and constituted Simms' direct response to the slum problem. By this I mean that Simms enacted a strategy or process of "decanting" the tenements by these two aforementioned architectural means: the four-storey block of flats to reinstate derelict or disused industrial urban sites, and the estate of two-storey cottages to occupy undeveloped sites on the suburban fringe.[18] These two dwelling types and geographies had been evolving, often in conflict, since the debates on housing and town-planning from c.1910. And as we will see, the argument between centre/ periphery, multi-unit block/ single-family dwelling underpinned housing improvement proposals and development throughout the mid-late twentieth century. As a contextual overview it is interesting to note that this argument began in earnest with the revelations of the 1911 census: that some 87,000 people were living in Dublin tenements and that the city's population had grown by 20,000 since 1891 while only 2,600 dwellings had been built during the same period.[19] These findings, together with the collapse of two inner-city tenement houses in 1913, triggered a Local Government housing inquiry and the establishment of a Housing Committee within Dublin Corporation. The former was published as the Cowan Report (1914-18) and recommended that new housing be built in green-fields at the urban fringe, thereby officially introducing English Garden Suburb ideals to Dublin's slum clearance project.

The proposal to accommodate Dublin's working classes at low density in more "natural" surrounds was opposed by the Corporation's Housing Committee as it inevitably privileged the wealthier tenant due to higher rent and public transport costs. This Committee was of central importance to housing development from its inception until the establishment of the Housing Consultative Council in 1948; by the early 1940s, it was made up of thirty five members making it as large as the General Purposes Committee and four times the size of the Planning Committee for instance.[20] From the off, its chairperson (Alderman Tom Kelly and then Alderman James Larkin) was an established socialist and as such, the Committee was renowned for favouring working-class and slum city-centre neighbourhoods in development plans. As an aside, it is interesting to note that Sean MacEntee attempted to undermine the Committee's influence during the Emergency through his proposal to establish a planning board which, as a statutory body would look after public housing.[21] Returning to the earliest

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[18] The term "decanting" was used by Herbert Simms in his essay, "Municipal Housing Activities in Dublin" in *Centenary Conference Handbook Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland*, (Dublin: RIAI, 1939), p.51

[19] This statistic is taken from Diarmuid Ferriter, *The Transformation of Ireland 1900 - 2000*, (London: Profile Books, 2004), p.51

[20] For outline of Corporation Committees, see *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1942)

[21] Mary Daly describes MacEntee's proposal for his planning board which would "draw up statistical projections for the number and size of houses required; oversee technical, architectural and physical planning; allocate responsibility for housing development among the various local authorities and recommend the best machinery for planning and executing the work." See Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of*

proposals for suburban public housing, the issue had been hotly debated in the Council chambers during the 1910s but all housing plans were cut short by political conflict, at home (1916 Rising, War of Independence, Civil War) and abroad (World War I).[22] As Sheila Carden discusses, the urban/suburban argument was taken up again from the mid-1920s with the development of the Marino social housing estate (1923-27, c.1,400 houses), by which time the City Architect, Horace O'Rourke was wed to the Garden Suburb model.[23] Contentiously however, stalwarts in Dublin Corporation's Housing Committee maintained that fringe housing could never suit the poorest of slum dwellers, positing that slum clearance (necessity) and suburban planning (luxury) were mutually exclusive.

Simms inherited these opposing planning ideologies, the ongoing financial woes, the labour obstacles and material shortages which ultimately defined Dublin's slum clearance venture. Pointedly at this early 1930s juncture, new inner-city blocks were considered essential architectural ingredients for slum eradication; according to the Corporation Reports, the first action taken following the 1931 Act was to acquire forty acres of land around the Gloucester and Gardiner Streets area which was possibly the worst slum quarter in the country.[24] Indeed, from 1932 to 1939, 1,002 inner-city flats were completed under Simms' watch. But at the same time, the Corporation was busy acquiring 1,160 acres for suburban cottage schemes and increasingly through the 1930s the comparative cheapness of these repetitive models was leading to their favour.[25] In this way, the dualistic approach of urban block and suburban cottage was played out on the 1930s slum clearance "stage" as never before.

As Conroy, Sean Rothery and Ruth McManus have collectively shown, Simms' urban blocks are of great interest architecturally because of their establishment of an internationally-derived but locally-relevant aesthetic for multi-storey dwelling in the

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*the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.286. Interestingly, this type of board was established in 1960 as the National Building Agency, see chapter conclusion.

[22] This overview history of the urban/suburban housing argument from 1910, and specifically the battle for Marino housing estate, is based on Sheila Carden "The Legacy of the Alderman" (unpublished paper delivered as Alderman Tom Kelly commemoration lecture, Old Dublin Society, 14th October 2009 – since published in *Dublin Historical Record 2010, copy in RIA library*). I also draw on Maurice Craft's analysis of the 1900 – 1920 period in "The Development of Dublin. Background to the Housing Problem" in *Studies* (no.59, Autumn 1970), p.310 – 313; Jacinta Prunty's discussion of the slums of the early twentieth century in *Managing the Dublin Slums, 1850* – 1922 (Dublin: Gilbert Memorial Lecture, Dublin City Library, 2004), p.24-29; and Mark Crinson's interpretation of the Cowan report in "Georgianism and the Tenements, Dublin 1908- 1926" in *Art History* (vol. 29, no. 4, September 2006), p.642-651; for a visual account of the slums during this period, see the Cowan Report's accompanying photographs – Royal Society of Antiquaries, published recently in Christiaan Corlett, *Darkest Dublin. The Story of the Church Street Disaster and a Pictorial Account of the Slums of Dublin in 1913* (Dublin: Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, Wordwell Press, 2008)

[23] Carden, Ibid, p.9-10. We will examine this "Garden City/Suburb" ideology more closely when we come to discuss the town planning proposals of Sir Patrick Abercrombie.

[24] See for example the "Monthly Report of the City Manager and Town Clerk, no.17", 31st January to 19th February 1931, clause 170, *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin* 1931, p. 70; see also August 1931 report, p.320 and September – October 1931 report, p.360

[25] These figures of 1,002 flats and 1,160 acres of acquired land are cited by Herbert Simms, "Municipal Housing Activities in Dublin" in *Centenary Conference Handbook Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland*, (Dublin: RIAI, 1939), p.53

urban setting. Rothery maintains that Simms' flats at Chancery Place or Townsend Street for instance (figures 3.10 – 3.16) were ultimately rooted in the Amsterdam School's brand of Dutch Expressionism with their varied corners, playful entrances, and brick-faced public elevations forming street facades with details picked out in cement or concrete render thereon.[26] Indeed we know from the Dublin Corporation Reports that a study tour was undertaken by a collective of Dublin officials to Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 1925 so as to examine recent housing development - namely the blocks designed by Michel de Klerk and Piet Kramer (figures 3.17 – 3.19) – and certainly the later 1930s Dublin blocks display similar formal qualities in relation to building heights, horizontal articulation, street alignment and expressionist detailing.[27] But beyond the fact that the Dublin and Amsterdam blocks shared common dispositions as *perimeter* block housing (that is, having two or more ranges which run along the street to form the perimeter of a city block externally and enclose a courtyard internally), the points of commonality were on the level of somewhat superficial formalism. Instead, as Conroy contends, Simms' Dublin schemes - of which there were twenty one begun from 1931, scattered throughout the north and south sides of the city centre - with their largely symmetrical massing and access strategies by means of open galleries or decks were explicitly influenced by multi-storey types and arrangements favoured by London County Council and other English municipalities (figures 3.20 – 3.23).[28]

We know that block dwellings were the traditional means of housing the poor in London during the second half of the nineteenth century. Philanthropic housing evolved through such bodies as the Peabody Donation Trust Fund and the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company and influenced similar developments in Dublin with the Iveagh Trust

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[26] Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.150-153: Rothery's thesis of Dutch influence has been so established that it has persuaded subsequent histories of Irish housing such as Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 – 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, The Making of Dublin City series, 2002), p. 178 and Andrew Kincaid, *Postcolonial Dublin. Imperial Legacies and the Built Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p.93 – 98. McManus questions Rothery's assertion by revisiting the Corporation Reports and as well as pointing to Amsterdam School Expressionism, she cites the Dutch International Style example and importantly, she includes the British example as important. However, Kincaid automatically accepts Rothery's Dutch thesis without examining this stylistic hypothesis. Paul Larmour's recent short history of Free State architecture simply points to the Dutch example in reference to Simms' Dublin blocks of the 1930s also; see Paul Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 – 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009), p. 32 – 33

[27] Horace O'Rourke (City Architect), W. C. Dwyer (Commissioner of the County Borough of Dublin) and T. J. Byrne (Chief Architect, OPW, formerly the Chief Technical Officer of the Irish Local Government Board) "At the request of President Cosgrave...visited Slough, Rotterdam and Amsterdam... for the purpose of inspecting the different systems of house construction there." See "Report of Housing, Workshops and Supplies Section, no.184" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1925 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.280. See also the citation of a Dutch form of entrance canopy for Simms' Hanover Street housing scheme (1933 – 39) in "Housing Committee Report 57" *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1935 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers)

[28] See "Development of the flat as public housing in the United Kingdom" in Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.142 - 158

(the Guinness family).[29] This Trust provided Dublin with multi-storey housing from the 1880s which in turn encouraged the Corporation's provision, and meant that Dublin was reasonably accustomed to block dwellings by the time Herbert Simms began his campaign in 1932. Along with the typology of four or five-storey housing block, the British prototype introduced a form of social behaviour through strict monitoring of tenants which was adopted into the Dublin schemes. Though the majority of the earlier London schemes were barrack-like with their stark three ranged (around a leftover courtyard space) five-storey buildings, the Peabody Fund was responsible for introducing some design consciousness in their early twentieth-century models.[30] Through the talents of the Fund's architect Victor Wilkins, there was improved elevational treatment so that the street fronts were articulated like four or five-storey facades with attic floors and defined entrances. But importantly, Wilkins experimented with different circulation systems and in the early 1920s moved away from the multi stairwell serving two to four flats per floor, to the more economical model of one stairwell serving continuous access decks on each level. Meanwhile, Simms (in his position as temporary architect within the Dublin Corporation) was sent on a study tour to London, Liverpool and Manchester in 1926.[31] One assumes that Simms visited such flat projects as the Peabody Fund's Horseferry Road (Westminster, London) scheme in mid-construction which was the first instance of the deck access circulation system. Though this system presented problems of privacy and of day light for the flats, the economic advantages in providing only one staircase per range were more seductive. Also, while tenants' privacy was compromised by continuous decks, the system facilitated concierge-monitoring.

Clearly, Simms' Dublin schemes departed quite drastically from the 1920s and 30s London blocks with their Neo-Georgian stylistic tendencies of cartouches and broken pediments. But this departure was only formal. In reality the attractively modern street frontages of the Dublin blocks distract from the fact that they all proposed a different form of access and circulation to the tenement systems of both their Georgian Dublin predecessors and their Amsterdam forerunners. While the Amsterdam models were all entered from the street by internalised shared stairways, from which two apartments per floor were served, the Dublin flats were always accessed by decks from the buildings' courtyards (compare plans 3.15 and 3.17). This issue of circulation and access pushed

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[29] See Linda King, "Progressive Housing: the Role of Two Industrial Families in the Development of Philanthropic Architecture in Dublin" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, The National College of Art and Design, Dublin, 1994)

[30] See John Nelson Tarn, "The Peabody Donation Fund" in *Architectural Association Quarterly* (Winter 1968/69), p.32-47

[31] According to the Corporation report, "Mr H. B. Simms, City Architect's Department, was authorised to visit London, Liverpool and Manchester, for the purpose of inspecting the latest types of building on the flat system in those municipalities, having in view the provision of a similar type of accommodation on the Crabbe Lane Area. The expenses of the visit amounted to £18 17s 3d." See "Breviate Housing, Workshops and Supplies Section No. 137", in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1926 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.381

Simms' urban schemes away from the public spaces (or sites of questionable morality!) of tenement housing and introduced a wholly different flat layout - wide in plan and shallow in depth - and urban behaviour to the established approach of the Georgian predecessor or the Dutch model. With no front doors to the street, the Dublin urban block internalised and even subverted its public activities to the empty courtyard; the courtyard in turn worked as a surveillance mechanism and was enclosed by plain concrete facades rather than the decorative brick and render on the street fronts. This element of surveillance through the deck access mechanism was fundamental to the reintroduction of multi-unit block living to Dublin in the Free State.

Turning to cottages, while Irish twentieth-century architectural history has made much of Irish architecture's persistent acknowledgement of Continental European stylistic tendencies and technological advances during this early modernist period, it would seem that for housing patterns the British example was primary. This aspect (of British influence) was established prior to Independence but interestingly, was maintained from the earliest days of the Free State with the new Irish Ministry of Local Government's first publication in 1925 on native housing, *House Designs prescribed by the Minister for Local Government under the Housing Act, 1924* (figures 3.24 + 3.25). The five-volume manual prescribed house types and specifications which were consistent with earlier post World War I types being built by London County Council (at Becontree for example, figures 3.26 + 3.27), and as we will see in Part II's analysis of the Crumlin estate, the house types proliferating under Simms from the 1930s through the Emergency and into the 1950s development at Crumlin were rooted in these turn-of-the-century/early twentieth-century British prototypes.[32] In fact, British influence remained steadfast throughout the State's housing projects of the twentieth century. As chapter one argues, all the European ideas that fed into Irish architecture during this period did so through a British filter: this trend applies most truly to the typology of housing. Almost in the spirit of J.J. Lee's thesis that "automatic imitation of the British model [was] Ireland's traditional substitute for thought", I would argue that twentieth-century housing in Ireland was a wholesale reflection of British technological experimentation, British materials, and British patterns of domesticity, British aesthetics and British town planning.[33]

In discussing Simms' achievements and housing endeavour of the 1930s, we are sketching the immediate background to this chapter's history of Dublin housing during

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[32] It is an interesting exercise to compare the UK manual (*National Housing Manual*) from 1923 to the Irish Local Government publication, *House Designs prescribed by the Minister for Local Government under the Housing Act, 1924* (Dublin, 1925) (figures 3.24 + 3.25 and figures 3.26 + 3.27). Ruth McManus sketches the inter-relatedness of British and Dublin suburban cottage estates during the 1920s in her chapter "Dublin Corporation housing schemes to 1940" in *Dublin 1910 - 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, The Making of Dublin City series, 2002), p.170-175

[33] J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912 - 1985. Politics and Society* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1989), p.192

the middle of the twentieth century. What emerges is the same aspect of *continuity* as that which coloured the hospitalisation programme, i.e. continuity between the earliest programmes of the De Valera Government from 1931 and then the huge post-war building drive of the Inter-Party Government from 1948. In the instance of housing, as touched upon, British influence was a steadfast factor which informed Irish housing at all levels from funding structures, geography, type, aesthetic and technology. But more tangible than questions of influence was the all-too real issue of the slums, akin to the looming presence of tuberculosis in relation to hospital architecture as discussed in chapter two; with housing, slum clearance initiatives provide the most definite thread of continuity. In fact, an overview history of the slum clearance project inadvertently traces a history of Dublin's housing development, as undoubtedly the need for slum eradication continuously prejudiced housing policy throughout the century. In 1930s and 1940s Dublin, *what* domestic architecture was built, *where* it was situated and *how* that building was carried out were primary issues which were defined by the perceived crisis of slum living.

Despite the best efforts of the Corporation since the instrumental housing legislation of 1931/32, the 1936 census revealed that as a result of the ongoing population increase (due to rural depopulation), there were approximately 81,000 people in Dublin living in one-room unfit dwellings.[34] These revelations led in turn to a series of widely-distributed articles comprising photographs and commentary on the state of the slums in the *Irish Press* throughout October 1936, and to the establishment of the activist Citizens Housing Council (CHC). From the outset the CHC was dynamic and forceful in its efforts to shake up the slum clearance activities of the Corporation: it issued an interim report of 1937 followed closely by its full report, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938* (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937) in 1938. While interesting reports in their own right - in that among other things, they are evidence of a certain culture of concern and activism pervading Dublin's educated middle-classes at this time[35] – the CHC's recommendations are noteworthy in the context of this chapter because they were uncannily prophetic, having a legacy in terms of the post-Emergency housing drive of the late 1940s.[36] The reports were compiled by a

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[34] Appendix 13, "Census of Population, 1936" in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.244

[35] There was a close relationship between the CHC and the Civics Institute with many of the members of this new housing pressure group remaining central to the Civics Institute. See this list of CHC members: Robert Collis Hon Sec; Rev J. E. Canavan Chairman, G. F. Beckett (RIAI), L. Bennett, Donald Chance, Robert Childers, Ruth Childers, M. Cosgrave Cr., Mark Dally, T. Dillon, Frank Gibney (RIAI), Sir Joseph Glynn, Most Rev Dr Gregg Archbishop of Dublin, Rev Canon D. Hall, Kathleen Lynn, John J McCann, Owen Mulholland, M. O'Buachalla, Rev Fr Senan, J. H. D. W. Waller, S. Barton (Secretary).
A copy of this report is available in the Irish Architectural Archive, see Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938*, (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937)

[36] From studying the later changes in housing and town planning policy within the Corporation from 1948, it would seem to me that the CHC reports had an explicit influence in terms of later emphases on services (playgrounds, youth clubs, shopping centres etc.), differential rent systems, and increasingly varied allocations

group of concerned professionals with impressive qualifications (rather than a self-interested pressure group), and were based on empirical research into the building trades (labour and materials), the Corporation's allocations practices, key architectural issues of technology and design, funding problems from taxation and site valuations to rent systems, and profound sociological issues to do with community and adolescent recreation.

The most provocative recommendations (in architectural and urban terms) proposed by the *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938* included the establishment of an Industrial Council to oversee direct labour initiatives which would counter much unemployment within the building trades, would reduce labour costs and would enable a staggering of building activities so that work was spread over a manageable period; the introduction of more staff within Simms' department so that architects could be engaged in experimentation around new materials and construction methods; the inclusion in flat schemes of pram stores, bicycle sheds, drying rooms and laundries as well as differentiated open spaces for the elderly and playing areas for children; and the provision of trained female supervisors to carry out family liaison work in the community and to oversee a new rent differential system.[37]

The presence of several architects on the CHC - Frank Gibney, George Beckett and J. H. de Warenne Waller (engineer/designer) - pushed the reports in an untypically architectural direction. As such the materials employed by Simms on the new flat schemes came under scrutiny and the CHC concluded that while brick facing was "nice when new, [it] quickly became discoloured and dingy looking" and not being an indigenous material since for example the decline of the Crumlin Brickfields, it was very expensive; that reinforced concrete floors should be replaced by wooden floors; that the concrete-asphalt or tiled roof should be replaced by flat roofs covered in felt and tar macadam; and that structures should be of frame construction which would lead to lighter (cheaper) foundations.[38]

Ultimately, amidst all such recommendations, the CHC sought to identify the cause of the ever-growing crisis of slum conditions and the Council pointed to the fact that the majority of inhabitants of these slum tenements were disenfranchised by the Corporation's current building programme; for the first time, the fact that Dublin's poorest could not afford Corporation rents was being officially recognised. In this way, the CHC reports sought a means to overcome this economic obstacle and so proposed alternative architectural solutions such as the wooden dwelling. According to their

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practices which would consider family units other than large young families such as newly-married couples and elderly people, and so on

[37] Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938*, (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.36 - 41

[38] Ibid, these recommendations are made from p. 42 – 46

research, the wooden house was less expensive and warmer than its concrete counterpart and having a life of at least fifty years its only perceivable disadvantage was that it had to be regularly painted. In justification, the CHC exclaimed, "Is it right to condemn people to slum life in order that future generations should be spared a certain expenditure in paint and upkeep?"[39] Clearly the CHC's battle with the slum problem led it to challenge the Corporation's existing architectural typologies and burgeoning sub/urban patterns. With such a robust intention as eradicating Dublin's slums through financial and design means, it is not surprising that the CHC's proposals were radical:

> It should be constantly remembered that *the prime object of our endeavour is to get people out of slums into homes*, where health, comfort and decency are first considerations; that in order to accomplish this it will be necessary to put up with some sacrifices of certain physical properties, such as durability.[40]

As we will see, the evocation of the prefabricated wooden hut was echoed in later Corporation experiments at Crumlin estate from 1949. It is interesting that such cries for crisis remedies over durable resolutions were heard already, at this pre-Emergency juncture. On the other hand, it would seem that everyone in Dublin had an opinion on "the housing question" by the late 1930s and in such a climate of public interest and unprecedented local authority building activity, the radical proposal was inevitable.

An explicit example of the high-level of public awareness, aside of course from the coverage in the daily newspapers, was the housing exhibition organised between the Civics Institute, the CHC and Dublin Corporation at Dublin's Mansion House in 1937, wherein the Corporation played two films charting its recent developments and staged a vast display of plans, drawings and photographs of both present and future housing projects.[41] Though this exhibition offered the Corporation a platform to defend its approach to the slums, it was also the moment for the CHC to launch its interim report (1937). As such, the Corporation was under attack and the final layer of pressure, pushing the Department of Local Government and Public Health to launch its seminal housing inquiry of 1939 upon which most of the later 1940s housing operations were based, was the publication of the *Report of the Commission on Banking, Currency and Credit* (Banking Commission) in 1938.[42] This banking report presented the financial

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[39] Ibid, p. 46
[40] CHC's own emphasis, ibid, p. 45
[41] Review of housing exhibition in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (29th May 1937)
[42] The chronological order of events, culminating in the *Report of Inquiry* was as follows: the initial catalyst (after the 1936 census results) was the CHC interim report of 1937, which elicited a small inquiry as a reply from Dublin Corporation's Housing Committee in 1938, "Report no.6 of the Housing Committee, 1938", *Dublin Corporation Reports*, January - Dec 1939 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers). Due then to growing financial woes of the Corporation's housing programme, the Housing Committee urged the Department of Local

workings behind the significant housing drive of the 1930s and described a situation whereby Dublin Corporation was in spiralling debt totalling £10.9million, of which 80.5% was due to its housing activities; under the 1931/32 Housing Acts, the Corporation had borrowed £7.59m to finance its housing expenditure.[43]

Mary Daly outlines the strained relationship between the Departments of Finance and Local Government/Public Health throughout the 1930s and into the Emergency years – a strain based for the most part on Dublin and Cork Corporations' drive to clear their slums through borrowing from the Exchequer and in turn, financing loans through the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act (SDAA).[44] It would seem that Finance viewed the re-housing of the urban poor as a process of accumulating dead-weight debt (rather than an employment outlet) and so, continuously restricted Cork and Dublin Corporations' access to the Local Loans Fund. Housing was inevitably exerting tremendous pressure on the Irish Capital Market because, according to the evidence of the Banking Commission, the majority of Corporation tenants could not afford to pay their rent.[45] This fact was combined with the rising cost of construction in Dublin so that, while subsidies for slum-clearance housing were granted as a result of the 1931/32 legislation, most new cottages and flats in Dublin cost more to build than the maximum price on which subsidies were calculated.[46]

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*The Report of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes of the City of Dublin*

By 1939 Dublin was undoubtedly Ireland's housing black-spot and slum clearance was a crisis project, ruthlessly constrained by economics. It is not surprising that the Corporation pleaded with the Department of Local Government to launch an official inquiry at this time and in turn, that that inquiry devoted considerable attention to economic matters. In its attempt to leave no "working-class housing stone" unturned, the *Report of Inquiry* was finally published in 1943 and its 669 points of information

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Government and Public Health to launch an official governmental inquiry into housing – as we know, this inquiry was begun through public tribunals in 1939

[43] Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.239

[44] For a full discussion of the financial workings of the Department of Local Government/Public Health housing programmes and the implications of the Banking Commission Report (1938) see Daly, ibid, p.238 – 248. See also J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1985. Politics and Society* (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), p.212: as Lee asserts "Finance was mounting a vigorous assault on housing policy on the grounds that 'there is no parallel in any other country to the assistance afforded by the government of the *Saorstat* in the matter of housing. The Department of Finance strongly maintains that the time has arrived when the burden on the Exchequer should be eased...'" (from Finance Memo, 11th November 1937, S10341, N.A.I.)

[45] Evidence from the *Report of the Commission on Banking, Currency and Credit* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1938), p.852 -853

[46] The subsidies were calculated on these costs: £400 per unit for slum clearance, £450 for other houses and £500 for flats and as the *Report of Inquiry* was soon to point out, the average cost of a cottage in Dublin was £616 and a flat was £800. See Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.243

(mostly recommendations) and forty three appendices were based on months of evidence, extended into years of research. Its pursuit of exact figures in the midst of an international crisis, albeit admirable, may have led to dubious results upon which the post-war housing drive was based. Though the report became the site for the Corporation to propose a shiny new (short-lived) ten-year housing programme which would entail the projected construction of 2,300 new dwellings annually, the report did acknowledge the questionable nature of analysing and forecasting during war:[47] it stated that the Corporation's wartime building activities have "to be tempered by the important considerations that the houses have been erected in a war atmosphere and under the influence of war-time costs. We must not assume that the work of these four years will be continued in the future without a change in the attendant conditions."[48]

In financial terms the report revealed that by March 1943, the City Loan Debt was £12.5 million of which £9.4 million was due to working class housing operations.[49] The combination of this debt figure and the calculations around the rising cost of constructing dwellings in Dublin throughout the 1930s and especially into the early 1940s, fed the report's salient recommendations. Notably the report addressed the discrepancies in rent payment ability and mooted the possibility of introducing a differential rent system such as that in Cork and Leeds (UK); it proposed a form of direct labour (out of the reorganisation of the building industry) because the ongoing process of tendering for contractors was deemed too costly; it recommended new systems of allocation of tenancies; and it called for increased standardisation in dwelling designs and materials.

Clearly discernible in the (few) *Report of Inquiry's* recommendations which I have chosen to highlight was the influence of the CHC's reports of 1937/38. The general sense of urgency and the overall economic approach taken to confront the slum problem within the Local Government inquiry certainly implicates the Citizens Housing Council (and indeed, the Banking Commission), while the finer grain content of the report's "Section II" to do with specific social and architectural improvements from playground provision and the appointment of qualified "Women Housing Managers" to prefabricated dwellings, suggests the CHC's direct involvement in the inquiry; in fact eight of the twenty members of the CHC had given evidence at the inquiry's tribunal.[50] Pointedly the *Report of Inquiry* tackled the simmering accusations against Dublin Corporation's allocations

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[47] The Corporation's ten-year housing plan was outlined in "Ten Year Programme", points 161 - 170 in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.62 -64. This plan was sketched out by the Corporation's Housing Committee in its 1938 inquiry which responded to the CHC's report on slum clearance. This 1938 Housing Committee inquiry formed much of the basis of the 1939-1943 *Report of Inquiry.* See "Housing Committee Report No. 6" in *Dublin Corporation Reports*, January - Dec 1939 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers)

[48] "Post-1939 Activities", point 640 in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.217

[49] "Future Line of Progress", point 663 (Loan Debt: Existing Commitments) in ibid, p.226

[50] Appendix no. 43, "List of Bodies and Persons who gave Evidence or Submitted Memoranda" in ibid, p. 277-279

policy, that it preferred the wealthier tenant and used rent-paying capacity as the primary consideration governing allocations.[51] As such, one of the key issues to emerge from the Dublin housing report was the need to change this primary consideration and to move away from such 1930s pre-war allocation practices which championed rent-paying capacity, large overcrowded families and then family units/persons affected by tuberculosis. The report acknowledged the existence of a vast underclass in Dublin who simply could not pay sufficient rent:

> Without the foundation of a working class in receipt of an adequate regular income, the framing of a housing policy that will stand involves many complicated issues... [It is clear] That for a very large percentage of such [unemployed] classes it is impossible under the present renting system for the Corporation to house them, and that the financial consequences to the Corporation of an attempt to house only the remainder are such as to render the task impracticable.[52]

Unarguably the most durable and long-term of the *Report of Inquiry*'s salient recommendations, which again was a direct response to economic exigencies, was the favouring of the suburban cottage over the urban flat. The report's preference for the suburban cottage seemed to boil down to its comparative cheapness: "Above all is the matter of cost, for flats are dearer than cottages" and, as was asserted, the average cost during the period 1937-39 for a four-room cottage was £565 as opposed to £992 for a four-room flat.[53] But alongside the economic issues (city centre land was more expensive than virgin sites for example) and material obstacles (more metal and extensive foundations were needed in flat construction) discouraging urban flat development, what emerges from the *Report of Inquiry* was a decidedly anti-urban attitude, which is both intriguing and informative to any narrative of Dublin's architectural and town planning history.

What had been bubbling away since the earlier debates around Marino Estate in the 1910s and 20s, essentially came to the surface through the report and, following the Emergency, was established as the unquestioned housing choice and standard: that is, the preference sociologically (morally), economically and typologically (architecturally) for the two-storey cottage at the urban fringe. While the cottage/flat or suburban/urban battle seems to have been subdued by the optimism (for an attainable architectural alternative) of Simms' flat schemes and indeed, while the Corporation's Housing Committee continued to uphold that its policy was pro-urban throughout the 1930s, the

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[51] "Effects of Rent Paying Incapacity" and "True Rent Paying Capacity", points 141 – 160 in ibid, p. 58 - 62
[52] "True Rent-Paying Capacity" points 149 – 150, in ibid, p.58-59
[53] "Altered Policy Regarding the Classes of Accommodation to be Provided: Flats or Cottages", quotation is from point 333 (p.118) and the statistic is from point 338 in ibid, p.120

construction facts published by that Committee in 1938 revealed that of the schemes then being designed 6,987 were cottages and only 1,641 were flats.[54] So that, though Alderman Tom Kelly and his colleagues in the Housing Committee stated their anti-suburban stance, the reality was quite different and was never admitted until the *Report of Inquiry* publication.[55] In the first instance, the city centre dwelling was presented as too small for healthy family living. As the report emphasised, the high price of land led to multi-storey development which meant a density per acre of three to four times that at suburban sites and made it "impossible to provide open spaces in the way of gardens or yards for the individual family".[56] In terms of public health, the level of "cramping and confinement", "the drudgery of stair-climbing", the lack of privacy and attendant space for coal storage and laundry facilities were all "undesirable" factors of the new urban flat schemes[57] - the language employed around the new flats was unambiguously disdainful. And in contradiction to the evidence of the Corporation's Allocations Officer, Thomas Bourke, the report asserted that Dublin's working-class families needed the suburban cottage so as to achieve a beneficial lifestyle:[58]

> Much has been said of the tenant's personal preferences, of the reluctance to be rehoused in suburban cottages, and of the families who have returned to the city after being housed in the suburbs [...] But we regard these examples as being either exceptional, or transient features, aggravated by the knowledge in the tenant's mind that the rent and charges attaching to a flat would be lower than

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[54] These statistics are taken from "Housing Committee Report No. 6" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1938 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers). In 1938, there were 1,959 cottages and 1,358 flats in contract (total 3,317 units). In total, there were 11,945 units in the construction programme and 8,946 of these units were cottages. As such, the overwhelming push for suburban estates in the 1950s had already begun in the mid 1930s.

[55] Tom Kelly, as Chairman of the Housing Committee, was pro-urban over suburban development from the 1920s. In a report to the Corporation Council of 1934 he stated, "while we generally agree with the desirability of providing suburban dwellings, we are convinced that the extremely small means of the person we are called upon to provide accommodation for, in conjunction with the heavy cost of transport and the vital necessity of such persons being housed close to the source of employment, especially where work is of a casual nature, preclude the successful carrying out of a programme of general housing for such classes in suburban areas." See "Housing Committee Report, no. 28" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1934 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.172. Sheila Carden's biography of Kelly is full of statements in evidence of his support of city centre over suburban housing such as a statement to P.C. Cowan of the Department of Local Gov/Public Health: "The policy of the Housing Committee is to build inside and outside the city. I am personally in favour of building entirely inside, that is inside the old City before its boundaries were extended...I would allow no building outside until the slums were gone. I do believe that if suitable sites in the suburbs were acquired, convenient to the City, and where tramway services could be got near them, you might build there, but I object, as a Dublin man, to the centre of the City being allowed to go into a complete ruin. There has never been any definite or practical definition as to what is to be done with the slum areas." See Carden, "The Legacy of the Alderman" (unpublished paper delivered as Alderman Tom Kelly commemoration lecture, Old Dublin Society, 14th October 2009

[56] Point 331, "Altered Policy Regarding the Classes of Accommodation to be Provided", Section II, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 118

[57] Point 331-332, ibid.

[58] We will be analysing the oft-quoted evidence of Corporation's Allocations Officer, Bourke in relation to Crumlin housing estate in Part II of this chapter. In brief, Bourke presented statistics and anecdotal evidence of newly housed families in Crumlin looking to move back to city centre. See note #218, summary of evidence by Thomas Bourke, Allocations Officer, "Dublin Housing Inquiry 1939, Box 3 - Verbatim Report of Proceedings BF" Box File R1/01/05 in Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library

> that of a cottage. The average family prefers a separate dwelling, with a garden if possible [...] A recent investigation carried out in England by *Mass Observation,* a scientific fact-finding body, has reported that the majority of people there still prefer to live in a small house or bungalow, with a garden, rather than in a flat.[59]

Within this remarkable "we know best" statement - backed up by British scientific research - lurk two core issues enforcing the negativity towards urban flats. Firstly, the rent for flats was lower, despite the fact that they were more costly to construct, and as such, housing officials, professionals and reformers alike were becoming resentful of them. The report uncovered that Corporation practice rehoused the families with the lowest rent-paying capacity (and those with the greatest dependence on casual work) in city centre flats. And as rents were fixed, even those occupants whose circumstances over time improved, having the means to pay more rent, were unable to do so; thus inciting Simms to state in his evidence, "Dublin is the only city I know that lets its flats at a lesser rent than that of cottages."[60] The affect of this policy was that it undermined the flat schemes and their city centre context as valid architectural models/urban settings and also, it further contributed to the two-tiered approach towards housing Dublin's working classes. In reality, this approach emphasised the tiers on socio-psychological as well as socio-geographical levels; that flats were somehow inferior architectural typologies, reserved for the poorest of the poor and that the urban setting was the site of continuity with slum dwelling.

This last point foregrounds the second source of negativity towards the urban schemes, less tangible than the reality of rent anomalies but arguably more forceful: that of the city centre as palimpsest and repository of memory, unable to break with the stigmatism of tenement slums as opposed to the *tabula rasa*-style opportunity for reinvention that Dublin's fringes presented. While this viewpoint may have influenced the working classes, it would seem from studying the discourse around the slum problem throughout the 1930s and 40s – and indeed working class evidence in the *Report of Inquiry* via the Allocation's Officer - that it was rooted in the largely middle-class reformers' utter disgust and in turn, *fear* of slum squalor. After all, the middle classes had fled Dublin city centre two generations prior to this era of slum reform and as such, the reformers (architects, philanthropists, engineers, economists and so on) were the products of suburban fresh air![61]

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[59] Point 334 – 335, "Altered Policy Regarding the Classes of Accommodation to be Provided", Section II, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 118 - 119

[60] Point 338 in ibid, p. 122

[61] For a concise outline of Dublin's housing development in terms of the suburbanisation of the middle classes during the nineteenth century, as background to this chapter's discussion, see Maurice Craft, in "The Development of Dublin. Background to the Housing Problem" in *Studies* (no.59, Autumn 1970)

In fairness, the report did present three justifications for urban flat development: firstly, workers should live in the centre of the city; secondly, brownfield sites following demolition needed to be built upon; and thirdly, the facilities and public services already in place in the city centre should be tapped into. However, it moved quickly to dismiss each justification on the grounds that the new discipline of town planning could find alternate uses for unsightly gaps in the urban fabric which might exploit existing services more fully than housing would. Also, the report was unyielding in its insistence that memory and tradition in the context of housing and the workplace were actually nostalgia and sentimentality, and should be overcome in the interest of better living conditions:

> It is quite conceivable that in the first reaction of a change from old surroundings, no matter how unhealthy, a certain amount of nostalgia would arise [...] What is merely a well-established custom – the growth of generations preceding modern methods of locomotion – has undoubtedly the appearance of necessity; but the further improvement and cheapening of transport facilities would go a long way towards removing this particular reason for building flats. Decentralisation of city industries would also tend in the same direction.[62]

Informing this shift in housing policy away from the central flat, was the growing enthusiasm for a town planning tactic of "thinning out" the centre of Dublin. It is interesting to point out that the first designs for Cabra Estate (by Horace O'Rourke as City Architect and Simms, before he was Housing Architect) and the initial development of Crumlin Estate were part of Corporation Housing Committee policy whereby suburban cottages were to *augment* urban housing schemes. Ironically, as we have seen, in less than a decade this suburban development had *supplanted* its city centre counterparts. The comparative ease with which large numbers of slum dwellers could be rehoused in residential units on vast swathes of virgin territory ensured that the Corporation's "decanting" theory was a practicable process. Notwithstanding the financial implications and the symbolic connotations of central-versus-peripheral housing, "thinning out" was of course rooted in the extreme over-population of city centre tenement buildings (i.e. the need to move thousands of inhabitants out of unsafe and insanitary dwellings as quickly as possible) so once again, slum clearance was at the heart of later housing form, type and geography. The *Report of the Inquiry*, with its statistics and economic priorities, served to confirm the success of the 1930s suburban strategy so that when

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[62] "Altered Policy Regarding the Classes of Accommodation to be Provided", Point 334 and point 339, Section II, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 118 - 119, p.123 - 124

housing development was taken up in earnest again, following the relatively staid Emergency years, suburbanisation took precedence.

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*A Miracle of Planning: the reconditioning programme*

We must not forget in all of this that the *Report of Inquiry* was in part a wartime study and document. Therefore, the material and financial conditions working against the city centre flat typology were exacerbated from 1940 onwards. And the burgeoning policy of "thinning out" the city centre of its inhabitants had a security motivation which, following the bombings of the north inner city in May 1941 seemed justified.[63] The event of the North Strand Bombings (30th-31st May 1941) was important in architectural terms. Aside from the human, military and political implications of German airplanes bombing the capital city of a neutral country and killing forty people and wounding countless other civilians, the bombs damaged 2,250 properties primarily in the area of Dublin's worst tenement slums.[64] In fact, thirty two hours after the most serious bomb fell, it was recorded that three tenement houses on Old Bride Street (in the west inner city) collapsed having been destabilised by the bombs' quake.[65] As such, the bombs served to displace thousands of already disenfranchised slum dwellers and the crisis project that had been Dublin's working class housing programme became catastrophic. In this predicament, the Corporation had to look beyond its two architectural means of flat and cottage, for a third solution: the "reconditioning" of tenement buildings. And so, from 1943 (with the North Strand Bombing as catalyst), the significant but little-known project of reconditioning "Georgian" terraces was launched, with an architect from the Corporation's Housing Maintenance Department, A. W. N. Ternan (RIBA) at the helm.[66]

Hailed "a miracle of planning", Ternan's programme of reconditioning entailed the identification and acquisition (compulsorily) of appropriately "fit" houses within terraces at key slum sites (figure 3.28), followed then by the relocation of the respective tenants and the transformation through refurbishment of the individual houses, so that ten

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[63] As Abercrombie laid out in his explanation of the *Sketch Town Plan* (1941) in *Studies*, June 1942, p.157: "Not only is this prevention of overcrowding essential for the public health, but it is also called for as the most elementary and surest form of "passive defence" in wartime." In the published report (1941) Abercrombie mentions New Turkish Civil Defence Law, as a form of passive defence, which was passed in Britain in May 1940: "The general effect of the Turkish regulations would be to stress still further the "thinning out" process contemplated in our Report. It would rule out further schemes for central flats, and leave much more of the centre open." Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941), p.56-58

[64] According to the *Lord Mayor's Annual* 1944 "The magnitude of the effort will only be realised when it is considered that of almost 4,000 premises injured in the North City area alone, repairs were effected by the Corporation to some 2,500. More than 100 others were subsequently demolished." *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.55. For an excellent account of the bombings, see the recent social history by Kevin Kearns, *The Bombing of Dublin's North Strand* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 2009)

[65] Kearns, ibid, p.8

[66] I am taking the lead of contemporary (1940s) commentary by using the catch-all descriptor of "Georgian" to infer any terraced tenement house dating from the eighteenth century up to the mid nineteenth century.

tenement rooms therein became four or five self-contained fully-serviced flats.[67] With a team of bricklayers, carpenters, plumbers and so on, on a system of relentless rotation from house to house, Ternan stripped back the eighteenth-century buildings and inserted new concrete cores. Having surmised that the Georgian buildings were simple in plan with their one room to the front/one room to the back and fireplaces in the party wall, the Corporation devised a standard conversion plan which could be used and adapted if necessary in each reconditioned project (figures 3.29 – 3.32). This generally meant the retention (and cleaning up) of the four-storied brick front elevation behind which a concrete and timber framework, generally rising to five storeys, was slotted (figures 3.33 – 3.35). All of the annexe returns were removed and the reconditioned buildings were re-roofed with sheets of corrugated asbestos (figures 3.37 + 3.38). Naturally the reconditioned interiors bore little resemblance to their predecessors as they were drastically reshaped around new light wells which punctured the new tenement houses from roof to basement (figures 3.39 - 3.42). These light wells were used to house the services of water and soil pipes (so as to keep drain pipes off the front façade) and were centrally placed so that kitchenettes, storage and bathrooms could be grouped around them, freeing up the best spaces (in terms of light and ventilation) at the front and back of the houses for living areas and bedrooms.

The light well reconfiguration enabled the Corporation architects to maximise accommodation without "interfering" with the Georgian elevation. It would seem that maintenance and in fact, *reinstatement* of the Georgian elevation had become one of two contradictory motivations behind Ternan's programme: on the one hand, the Corporation intended to present an image of Georgian urban continuity and on the other, it sought to modernise and rationalise that same Georgian built fabric. As the Lord Mayor's Annual proudly asserted in 1944: "Reconstruction has been carried out almost house by house, families being evacuated temporarily while interiors were entirely renovated. A notable feature of this work was the preservation of the Georgian frontages to tone in with the remainder of the thoroughfare".[68] With an eye always on the façade, the Corporation reconditioning programme saw fit to remove annexes (the site of stair landing returns and garden walls) so as to exploit daylight at the building's rear; and behind the façade of four storeys, the conversion plans generally carved out a fifth or sixth storey at the rear due to the generous floor-to-ceiling heights of the original building. In many

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[67] This term is taken from 1946 Government publication of the reconditioning work at Sean McDermott Street, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *A Miracle of Planning. Sean McDermott Street Reconstruction* (Dublin: Corrigan + Wilson, 1946), unpaginated (available in pamphlet store, Richview Library, UCD).
The categorisation of "unfit", "fit 1" and "fit 2" slum dwellings is outlined in "Corporation Survey, 1938" in *Report of Inquiry*, point 78, p.37 as follows: ""Unfit" means incurably unfit for human habitation according to the standards laid down in Section 2 and other relevant portions of the Housing Act of 1931. These standards take into consideration structural condition, water supply, sanitation, dampness, ventilation, lighting, bad arrangements, etc. [...] "Fit 1" represents dwellings which are fit for human habitation. "Fit 2" represents dwellings capable at reasonable expense of being made fit, but presently below the standard."
[68] *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.46

respects, the reinstatement of the façade was a brutal process entailing the replacement and repointing of damaged brick (complete with re-colouring the new brick according to the older tones), the alignment of fenestration (between neighbouring houses in a terrace which were often very different, figure 3.33 + 3.44), the remaking of doorways with reconstituted stone architraves and the substitution of ironwork, especially damaged railings, with concrete block and rendered walls (figure 3.35). In keeping with the *zeitgeist* of extreme need and material shortage, extant railings were remade into grates for bedroom fire-places and into escape ladders, while window shutters were remade into cupboard doors.

And so, it was with this misfit combination of the exigency of war and lofty "Georgianism" ideals that the reconditioning programme came to pass and continued for about a decade.[69] Due to its comparative cheapness, the programme was deemed a great success and it was published in the UK in 1946 by *The Architects' Journal* while the Department of Local Government/Public Health issued an extensive pamphlet that same year concentrating on reconditioning approaches at Sean McDermott Street (formerly Gloucester Street/Diamond), and Lower Gardiner Street in the north inner city.[70] As this latter document espoused in its introductory remarks, theoretically the project was restorative rather than destructive; by rehabilitating existing structures and urban fabric, it notionally sought to avoid massive slum demolition works and this was, as the Government argued, the antithesis of wartime architectural events elsewhere:

> ...A goodly portion of mankind's material achievements had been laid waste and reduced to rubble [...] But here and there, in odd corners of the world, things of a constructive nature were still being done. Necessity was driving people to devise means whereby their progress, though slowed down, would not be halted.[71]

In this way, the reconditioning programme was championed and became the Corporation's by-line for mid-war housing activity. For, as we will see, house building continued (haltingly) during the early 1940s in the growing estate at Crumlin for instance, but Simms' urban and suburban flat schemes, namely those at Newfoundland Street (later Sheriff Street), Railway Street, Donore Avenue and Rialto (Fatima

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[69] The term "Georgianism" is taken from Mark Crinson's analysis of the relationship between Dublin's Georgian architecture (the extremes of its origins- formerly grand, language of colonialism – and its subsequent life - largely crumbling and dilapidated) and Dublin's collective consciousness (officials, preservationists, artistic representation, middle-class citizens, slum dwellers) around the earlier housing inquiry (Cowan) of 1913-14, see Mark Crinson, "Georgianism and the Tenements, Dublin 1908- 1926" in *Art History* (vol. 29, no. 4, September 2006), p.625-659

[70] "Conversion of Dublin's Georgian Houses" in *The Architects' Journal* (26 December 1946, No. 2709, Vol. 104), p.470- 474

[71] Department of Local Government/Public Health, *A Miracle of Planning. Sean McDermott Street Reconstruction* (Dublin: Corrigan + Wilson, 1946), unpaginated (pamphlet available on request at the School of Architecture Library, Richview, UCD)

Mansions) were limited to foundation laying (figure 3.48). Though foundation-laying was by no means insignificant in that it signalled continuity and some level of commitment to multi-storey housing during the war period, the reconditioning programme was more tangible. After all it comprised the superstructure reconstruction of individual houses but also, the redefinition - and in many instances the *salvation* - of considerable eighteenth-century streets and as such, it was the most engaging architectural programme during the Emergency years in Dublin.[72]

Was it coincidental that the prime site of reconditioning activity was at Sean McDermott Street, which was of course freshly visible from the newly reconstructed Upper O'Connell Street (the nation's High Street) due to the cutting through from Findlater Place of the new Cathal Brugha Street? For a number of years, the slums of Gloucester Diamond had lain exposed like a gaping wound to visitors and citizens using the nation's widest boulevard. And now, with reconditioning, the area was being plastered over and the Georgian street restored, albeit to a crude and streamlined aesthetic. Without doubt, reconditioning overtook all other city centre housing plans during the war: it enabled a lower density of unit per acre while simultaneously maintaining communities; it provided the slum dweller with a bigger unit than the modern flat could offer but with gas, electricity and built-in modern amenities; and it promoted the recycling of materials and urban fabric thereby ensuring its comparative cost-effectiveness. As the 1946 Local Government pamphlet summarised:

> Hence it is, that as you turn from O'Connell into Sean McDermott Street, you see this grand array of "new" housing which has at once served the threefold purpose of accommodating people who were desperately in need of proper shelter, of preserving intact the beauty and character of this historic locality and of thinning the density of population in the area.[73]

The reconditioning project captured a moment in Dublin's urban history. In becoming the prime agent for urban housing, it responded as an alternative to the growing animosity towards Simms' housing blocks (and to the urban context as inappropriate for working class housing). Interestingly, its quasi-conservationist brief indicated a shift in attitude on the part of Irish and municipal officials whereby the Georgian architecture of the city could be somewhat embraced through rationalisation.

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[72] Another key reason for the general favouring of the reconditioning project was that the individual units were bigger than new urban units- the small size of flats was considered a problem, contributing to the negative feeling against them. Generally speaking, following the analysis in the *Report of Inquiry* dwelling size increased.

[73] Department of Local Government/Public Health, *A Miracle of Planning. Sean McDermott Street Reconstruction* (Dublin: Corrigan + Wilson, 1946), unpaginated

Though the reconditioning of Georgian terraces for working-class housing represented a compromised "embrace", on the level of "façadism", of Dublin's lauded colonial space it was progressive; it represented official recognition, by the 1940s, of both the grand Georgian past and the shameful squalid present - as Mark Crinson terms it, in relation to 1920s Dublin, "between the most refined forms of a vanished society and the most abject effects of contemporary deprivation".[74] Crinson's thesis draws on various artistic representations of Dublin's Georgian architecture (from Sean O'Casey trilogy plays, 1920s to William Orpen's *The Knacker's Yard*, 1909) and is most provocative for our study in its interrogation of "Georgianism" as the interface between politics and conservationist aesthetics: "how the attempt to recognize the tenements as heritage was part of a struggle for identity."[75] Generally, Crinson's many examples illustrate the massive gap between the eighteenth-century original and the early twentieth-century appropriation of the original. What is interesting for us is the merging of these extremes as evidenced through the wartime reconditioning programme. Pointedly, the anxiety of the Emergency period coupled with the championing of modernising architectural agendas lead to the "façadist" reinstatement of these grand sites for *working-class housing* purposes. That the Georgian buildings would be chopped up and given a "new life of usefulness" was not so unpredictable, but that they should continue to be useful to the slum masses was a sign of the age of pragmatics.[76]

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*Town Planning and Housing: Abercrombie's influence*

I would argue that the reconditioning project's approach to landscaping and exterior spaces was most revealing in terms of the project belonging within an overall sub/urban strategy. As explained in *The Architects' Journal*:

> The original long gardens behind the house, usually containing a mass of decayed out-buildings, annexes, coach-houses and sheds are completely cleared, an enclosed paved yard to each house formed and the balance of the ground planned for children's playgrounds, public open space and other town planning requirements.[77]

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[74] Mark Crinson, "Georgianism and the Tenements, Dublin 1908- 1926" in *Art History* (vol. 29, no. 4, September 2006), p.625
[75] Ibid, p.626
[76] The term, "new life of usefulness" is from *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.56
[77] "Conversion of Dublin's Georgian Houses" in *The Architects' Journal*, (26 December 1946, No. 2709, Vol. 104), p.471

The town planning polemics inherent in the call for playgrounds and public open space through the systematic erasure of historic urban back-lands are undeniable and reflect the increasing influence of that discipline on all aspects of municipal affairs (figures 3.45 – 3.47). As chapter one outlined and chapter two explored, the Emergency presented Ireland with the opportunity to project and plan so that in 1944, the Lord Mayor's Annual proclaimed, "If we can discover the art and science of planning, we shall be in possession of a master-key which will open many locks."[78] Nowhere was the contemporary penchant for planning, especially town planning, more active than in the field of Dublin's working-class housing; and particularly in the example of the reconditioning programme with its incitement to reorder and rationalise, in glib acknowledgment of Georgian urban patterns. As such the systematic approach that this programme took to the urban fabric and to the working-class housing problem was more retrogressive than contextualist in flavour and was primarily motivated by the desire to "thin out" the densely populated slums.

Altogether this approach, and the anti-urban block sentiments expressed in the *Report of Inquiry*, point to the influence of Sir Patrick Abercrombie's *Sketch Plan for Dublin* (1939) - composed with Manning Robertson and Sydney Kelly - which had been published in 1941 by the Corporation. In fact the term "thinning out" originated in Abercrombie's earliest competition-winning town plan for Dublin from 1914, published in 1922 as *Dublin of the Future –The New Town Plan*.[79] Though the plan had morphed considerably between its 1913 and 1939 iterations with the earlier plan proposing a monumental Hausmann-style transformation of Dublin's centre, and the latter more modest plan focusing on housing, transport and social planning, the emphasis on tackling the dereliction and overpopulation at the core of the city through edge development was constant. This became more explicit in the 1939/41 plan with the authors' repeated references to "thinning out" and the benefits of the self-contained working-class family home at the city's fringe. Again at the heart of the *Sketch Plan for Dublin* lay Abercrombie et al's primary interest in rehabilitating the city centre by means of monumental urban scenography (figure 3.49); this meant disembowelling it of its fetid life-blood (slum dwelling) and pitching the population to the edge. Dublin would work then as a dualistic city with its monuments of civic, religious, commercial and academic authority at the centre and its lowly population commuting via new transport networks and modernist roads from the edge (figures 3.50 + 3.51).

As we will see throughout this chapter, Abercrombie's projection was hugely influential on the evolving shape of mid-century Dublin. Indeed Michael Bannon, Arnold

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[78] *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.22
[79] Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922)

Horner and Andrew McLaran have asserted in their overview histories of Irish planning that the general development of Dublin during the 1940s and 1950s loosely followed Abercrombie's proposals.[80] Horner explains the reticence to officially adopt the town plan in an era of "caution" and "uncertainties" but he makes clear that the plan did gain widespread approval and support.[81] Its non-adoption though had the negative effect of diluting many of its intrinsic principles and ideals: for instance, the *Sketch Plan for Dublin* proposed a green belt to ring the city centre and fringes, in which satellite towns would exist in relative self-sufficiency, but the Corporation authorities preferred to develop an urban fringe in a piecemeal fashion (figure 3.50). As such, Abercrombie's vision of countering ribbon development (such as that from the city centre to Rathmines) in Dublin was literally subverted through incessant development works at the city's fringe sites from the 1930s onwards. But otherwise, the Beaux-Arts centre/Garden Suburb combination pursued by Abercrombie, Robertson and Kelly was championed in Dublin, most notably through the advocacy of the City Architect, Horace O'Rourke who had published a continuation of *Dublin of the Future* in his 1925 *Dublin Civic Survey*. It would seem that the Government were intent upon promoting the plan also with Maurice Moynihan asking the Department of Local Gov/Public Health in August 1942 as to "what further steps remain to be taken with a view to final approval of the town plan for Dublin."[82]

In relation to urban housing we can look to the *Sketch Plan* to source both the reconditioning programme and the negativity towards Simms' new blocks:

> In spite of our admiration for the excellent work of your Housing Architect [Simms], we would not like to see these whole street frontages destroyed and blocks of flats substituted, possibly for reasons of orientation, with their narrow ends only facing on to the streets [...] In brief, we recommend that the present inhabitants could be rehoused more satisfactorily to themselves and more economically to the Corporation on new sites further out, yet easily accessible to the centre; and that the 18th century houses, whose structure is sound, should be reconditioned and remodelled to be let at economic rents [...] Thus these Georgian streets and squares of Dublin might run through three grades of social

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[80] See Michael Bannon, "Irish Planning from 1921 to 1945" in Bannon (ed.), *Planning. The Irish Experience 1920 – 1988* (Dublin: Wolfhound Press, 1989), p.51-56; Arnold Horner, "Dublin from the 1930s to the 1990s" in F.H. Aalen and Kevin Whelan (eds.) *Dublin City and County: From Prehistory to Present* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1992), p.334-336; and to a lesser extent see Andrew McLaran, *Dublin. The Shaping of a Capital* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), p.86-87

[81] As Horner puts it: "Abercrombie's ideas can perhaps be regarded as representative of a broad, unofficial (but widely-supported) concept for the development of Dublin during the 1940s and 1950s [...] The caution and hesitancy which frequently mark the political reaction to far-reaching proposals were in this instance reinforced by the uncertainties associated with the 'emergency' of the Second World War." Horner, ibid, p. 335

[82] Moynihan cited in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.285

> occupation: originally built for a wealthy and aristocratic country population requiring a town house in the capital of society; they were next inhabited with scant alteration by the poorest of the poor, squatting in noble apartments and suffering from inadequate sanitary conveniences. Finally, they should be remodelled scientifically for a prosperous bourgeoisie, or perhaps more exactly the necessary "black-coat" population of a centre of Government.[83]

Clearly this vision of a renewed middle-class Georgian inner city did not tally with the actualities of Ternan's reconditioning programme which maintained existing communities at a lower density; owing, as suggested, to the pragmatics of the war period but also to the insistence by both Simms and the Housing Committee upon the value of the urban setting for working-class domestic life. But generally-speaking the Abercrombie plans pervaded Dublin's built environment on fundamental levels.[84] Certainly the *Sketch Town Plan* provided the template to which local authority policy either conformed or reacted and it became the backdrop for the architectural community's interaction with town planning throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

In many respects, the omnipresence of architect Abercrombie (with his up-to-the-minute contemporary British thinking) within Dublin's burgeoning culture of town planning facilitated a common "housing" ground between the local authority (Dublin Corporation) and the architectural community (the RIAI). Town planning per se had caught Irish architecture's collective imagination: its promise of rationalisation was perceived as the only means of clearing the slums and fixing the working-class housing problem once and for all. For the architects, as expressed by the *Irish Builder* and within the profession's year book proceedings throughout the 1930s and 40s, town planning and working-class housing were increasingly embedded in one another. During the 1939 housing tribunal at Dublin Castle, 'Nomad' (the *Irish Builder*'s critical voice) delightedly reported on the increasing dialogue between the Corporation's Housing and Planning Committees.[85] In fact, it was via this tribunal that Dublin's Town Planning Officer Michael O'Brien issued his first public statement, asserting the reciprocity between town planning and housing by outlining the Planning Committee's twofold goal:

> Firstly that workers may be housed in healthy conditions without the economic burden of having too great a distance between their place of work and their place

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[83] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941), p.43-44

[84] Abercrombie, Kelly and Robertson were employed as the official Town Planning Consultants to Dublin Corporation from 1936

[85] Nomad, "A New Housing Outlook. Converging Lines of Attack on Dublin's Slums" in *Irish Builder and Engineer*, 24th June 1939, p.582

> of residence; and secondly, that the cost of housing them shall not be too heavy a burthen on State and local finances.[86]

In parallel with the establishment of the Corporation's Town Planning Committee (1934, following the Town and Regional Planning Act), the RIAI Council set up a similar committee and in 1940, in anticipation of Abercrombie's report, it tellingly wrote to the City Manager:

> The Institute offers its co-operation in matters pertaining to Town Planning and in particular offers its services to the Corporation in determining the architectural suitability of buildings.[87]

Interestingly, the RIAI's committee included Herbert Simms (who had been excluded from the Corporation's version) and Manning Robertson - as well as RIAI regulars Dermot O'Toole, Desmond FitzGerald, Louis Giron and Tom Inglis - which suggests the Institute's desire to situate the architectural community at the heart of contemporary Corporation affairs. It would seem that in the main the architects championed Abercrombie's policy to "thin out" the city - certainly, there is little evidence of theoretical or practical opposition to the Abercrombie-dominated field. For example, in August 1941 the *Irish Builder* called on the Corporation to promote the *Sketch Plan for Dublin* through lectures and exhibitions, warning that the public must be educated "even in days of distress and preoccupation".[88] Apparently the architectural journal was gripped with planning fever which seemed to climax around the North Strand Bombing. After its many columns outlining planning procedures in the increasingly bombed-out neighbour cities of Britain, the *Irish Builder* gushed forth on how best to rebuild North Strand according to a national plan: that the whole area should be acquired and cleared so that a *grand projet* such as public baths, faced with playground and park, could occupy the ravaged site.[89] The journal later bowed to Corporation activity, congratulating the authorities on their speedy reaction to the tragedy and publishing the official Corporation plan (unexecuted) for perimeter block housing enclosing a playground on the North Strand site (figure 3.53).[90]

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[86] "Town-Planning" point 420, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.147

[87] Correspondence from RIAI Town Planning Committee to the City Manager, December 1940, "Town Planning Files", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/73

[88] "Sketch Development Plan" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (16th August 1941) p.384

[89] See for example editorial "Current Topics" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (7th June 1941), p.277-278; "Current Topics" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (5th July 1941), p.323; "Current Topics" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (13th September 1941), p.424

[90] Nomad, "Dublin's Destroyed and Decaying Areas. Proposed Clearance of Eighteen Acres" in ibid, p.385. This unexecuted plan was also published in *The Irish Times* (18th August 1941) where the architectural commentator CIVIS lamented that the proposed plan (figure 3.36) could not be executed due to cost and that

Only two significant figures from within the Irish architectural "fold" proposed alternative urban and regional plans to Abercrombie's in the early 1940s, and neither of these was officially endorsed (by Local Government) nor considered as more than idiosyncratic or intellectual private studies. The first, and more serious, was the "Framework for a National Plan" by Frank Gibney (1943) which entailed the decentralisation of Ireland around a new capital city north of Athlone, to be known as the "virgin city" (figure 3.54). This diagrammatic proposal was carved out of the ideological example of Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker and upon citing articles 6, 41 and 45 of the Constitution, Gibney urged that Ireland should become a "politico-economic democracy" which would enable "national production, distribution and consumption; community outlook, equality of opportunity" and above all "national well-being".[91] Gibney was motivated by the need to generate public discourse around planning and at the same time, apparently encouraged by de Valera, he undertook "An Irish National Survey" which was an atlas volume of 338 maps detailing the physical, cultural and economic life of Ireland.[92]

The second planning discourse of note was by Noel Moffett who was more of a visionary polemicist than a conscientious planner; he regularly delivered lectures to the AAI or the White Stag Group on the subject of modern architecture which he then wrote up for the *Irish Builder*. One such lecture from 1943 pitched his audience into a futurist utopian Dublin of 2093, full of Le Corbusier-like megalomaniacal certainties, where all citizens would travel by "autogyre" (a boat-cum-plane-cum-car) and the city centre would be made up of a grid of wide streets punctuated by six 100-storey office buildings, each accommodating nine thousand workers; "so that the density in the centre of the city is higher than it was in the bad old congested slum days of 1943, and at the same time the centre has gradually been thinned out until now it is a huge park, gay with colour and brightness, for the walls of the buildings are of plastics, transparent or brightly coloured." [93] Though superficially outlandish and zany, Moffett's vision owed much to Abercrombie: his 2093 city centre was similarly reserved for monumental structures – "The old Renaissance Four Courts and Customs House have been preserved as museums. The metropolitan cathedral forms the nucleus of an ecclesiastical centre" – and was to be ringed by a proletarian residential zone beyond which sat a sizeable green belt:

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the prescribed sum of £500,000 would more than likely be used to rehouse the bomb victims and families in 1,000 cottages in the new suburbs

[91] Frank Gibney, *Framework for a National Plan* (Dublin, 1943) – pamphlet available in Early Printed Books, Trinity College Dublin Library

[92] I am grateful to Fergal McCabe for introducing me to Gibney's "Irish National Survey" which is now in School of Architecture Library, Richview, UCD. See Fergal McCabe, "Frank Gibney – an Irish Architect and Planner 1905 – 1978" (unpublished article, Fergal McCabe, 2008)

[93] Noel Moffett, "A Vision of a Nation Planned. Ireland in 2093 AD" A memorandum based on two lectures given in December 1943 to the Dublin Literary Society and the Cork Literary and Scientific Society (unpublished pamphlet, Moffett's Collection, passed to author by Dr Sean Rothery, 2009)

> Surrounding the centre, in a wide circle, are long residential blocks, five to twenty storeys high, designed on the cellular principle... Surrounding these residential quarters is a three-mile wide green belt, a protected zone of woods and fields and market gardens. Here all building is forbidden except that directly connected with agriculture and horticulture, recreation and sport. Thus the city is assured of a fresh supply of meat, fruit, vegetables and dairy produce every morning. And here, right beside his home, every citizen spends a very great part of his time – his leisure hours, playing games, swimming, boating, fishing, making love, or just strolling about in a rural environment.[94]

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*Architects' endeavours: philanthropic alternatives*

Underlying this utopian part-Le Corbusier/part-Abercrombie vision was Noel Moffett's early 1940s interest in planning as a means to overcome slums and war. It also outlined the architect's quasi-scientific study of modern materials such as plywood and plastic (namely Bakelite) which Moffett relentlessly peddled as the means to construct cheap prefabricated working-class housing.

Almost inevitably, considering the dire reality of Dublin's slums, Moffett channelled his energies into different housing proposals and in June 1941, just after the North Strand Bombings when the young architect was reputedly working in the Corporation's Town Planning Department, he delivered a fund-raising lecture for the Charlemont Public Utility Society (PUS).[95] The lecture, "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes" attracted much media attention primarily because the event was part of a philanthropic body's (the Charlemont PUS) attack on the slums; also, it predated the publication of the *Report of Inquiry* so there was public hunger for some form of intellectualisation and debate around Dublin's slum problem.[96] The lecture was directed

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[94] Moffett, ibid

[95] It would seem that Moffett worked in the Town Planning Committee from one of his annotations to an article on the North Strand Bombing: "I worked for a year in the City of Dublin Town Planning Department" (material from Moffett's collection, passed to author by Dr. Sean Rothery, 2009). The lecture delivered on behalf of the Charlemont Street Public Utility Society was entitled, "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes", June 1941 (unpublished lecture delivered at 45 Grafton Street in connection with Charlemont PUS's appeal for funds, Moffett's collection, ibid)

[96] A Public Utility Society was a society or trade union, acting like a developer and working in co-operation with the local authority. They were semi-private and often based as charitable organisations in order to alleviate housing shortages. The *Report of Inquiry* lists some fifteen PUSs which from 1933 to 1938 were responsible for constructing 1,878 working-class dwellings in Dublin. The PUS was recognised by the 1932 Act. The St.Ultan's PUS, out of which the Charlemont PUS grew, was a charitable organisation formed around the St. Ultan's Children Hospital so as to house tenants on the Charlemont Street site. See McManus Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 – 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, The Making of Dublin City series, 2002), p.297 and Iseult Kirwan, "Social Housing Architecture by Scott's Firm: International Tendencies", (Unpublished BA Thesis, History of Art Department, Trinity College Dublin, 2007), p.6-7
For newspaper reviews of the lecture see "The Problem of Better Housing" in *The Irish Times* 8th June 1941; "Moving Slum Clearance" in *Sunday Independent* 8th (?) June 1941 and "Dublin Slums World's Worst" in *The Irish Press* 8th June 1941

by financial necessities so that the PUS could complete a massive housing scheme at Charlemont Street to re-house local tenement dwellers in the event of its construction of St Ultan's Hospital and consequent demolition of tenement houses. The scheme comprised three blocks and phases by the young architect Michael Scott: the earlier unremarkable St Ultan's ranges (1935, dem. 2007); the second four-storey ffrench-Mullen House block (1941) which was almost finished at the time of Moffett's lecture; and the proposed vast eight-storey three-armed range which would have stretched from Charlemont to Richmond Streets, addressing and partially enclosing a south-facing garden (figure 3.55).

For his own part, Moffett's lecture polemics were at first commonplace in that he outlined two architectural approaches to any slum-cleared site of either the inner-city dwelling (at high cost) or the suburban cottage (and convert the former slum site into an open park). But then he presented his audience with the controversial third choice of a tall building of flats set into parkland which he described as "a green oasis in a sea of grey and black desolation – and rising up from among the trees a tall clean modern building, block of flats".[97] In this Moffett was pointing to Scott's design for the most ambitious eight-storey range which proposed a hitherto unseen scale and height for Dublin working-class housing. Obviously the PUS and Scott envisaged opposition to the scale of their plan and owing to their lack of funds, called on Moffett to inspire Dublin's bourgeoisie and to justify the proposal as being an innovative design strategy. Moffett cited the international example of "England and the Continent" and, employing euphemistic and fluffy description, he stated, "In France many flats are provided with hanging gardens, which bring trees and flowers right into the flats and ensure privacy, shelter, fresh-air and sunshine for everyone."[98]

Interestingly, Scott's design (and Moffett's endorsement thereof) was the first example of a tall housing block in the Dublin context. At the same time as Scott was sketching this plan, he provided the housing tribunal with evidence as Charlemont PUS's architect and so, the only reference to tall buildings in the *Report of Inquiry* may be due to Scott's role as witness:

> It has been suggested that the cost could be reduced by building higher than three or four storeys – up to eight storeys. It is not at all accepted that the cost would in fact be reduced, owing to the necessity for providing stronger supporting

[97] Noel Moffett, "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes", June 1941 (unpublished lecture delivered at 45 Grafton Street in connection with Charlemont PUS's appeal for funds, Moffett's collection, passed to author by Dr Sean Rothery, 2009)
[98] Ibid.

> lower storeys, the increased cost of raising building materials to such heights, and the necessity of installing lifts.[99]

Judging from such official opinion, it is not surprising that Scott and the PUS were unable to raise the capital for the final phase of the scheme and so it was never executed. Even though the taller building was to be mediated by the earlier four-storey blocks on the site, Dublin was not ready for such bombastic socialist modernism. Here was a planned housing structure that truly aped the Viennese 'hof' model as exemplified in Karl Ehn's Karl Marx Hof, Vienna of 1927; just as Ehn's legendary eight-storey housing superstructure stretched for over half a mile, Scott's third phase for the Charlemont scheme was to be eight storeys and similarly colossal in relation to its respective city-scape. And considering the local endemic animosity towards urban housing blocks and specifically towards the Viennese 'hofs' which the *Irish Builder* had cited in 1932 as being the worst ("Red" "Foreign") of possible bad examples of working-class housing prototypes for Dublin, Scott's plans were firmly avant-garde.[100] Evidently, the young architect sought to bring his increasing contact with international sources and influences to bear on the Charlemont project. After all, this was his first public housing scheme at a time when public housing and the meaning of dwelling, especially for the potential of enriching working-class experience, was eulogised by the European avant-garde as the ultimate architectural preoccupation. Also, through his involvement in the AAI (becoming President of the AAI during 1937/38) Scott had co-hosted Walter Gropius' visit to Dublin (1936), at which time he reputedly showed Gropius examples of contemporary Corporation housing; according to Scott, the latter was "horrified at the recent buildings, particularly the flats Dublin Corporation was building. He couldn't believe his eyes; he thought they were the world's worst... They were quite terrible those Corporation flats – I couldn't agree more with Gropius."[101]

Arguably, by the time of the second phase of the Charlemont commission, Scott was explicitly responding to Gropius' influence. Looking at ffrench-Mullen House (the executed portion of the second phase of the Charlemont scheme) we can assume it to be something of a reaction to or against Simms' flat schemes.[102] The four-storey block of

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[99] "Flats or Cottages" point 338, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.120

[100] Sean Rothery discusses the *Irish Builder's* animosity towards Simms' new blocks throughout the 1930s and most particularly, the citing by the journal and other commentators of Ehn's Karl Marx Hof in September 1931 (vol. 73, p. 843 – 844) and September 1932 (vol. 74, p.845 – 846). See Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture 1900 – 1940* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p. 151 - 152

[101] *Michael Scott Architect in casual conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.73

[102] For this reason (albeit academic) and because it was one of the very few non-Corporation multi-unit blocks at the time, ffrench-Mullen House is an important counterpoint to local authority urban housing initiatives which deserves to be explored in this chapter's context. For a fuller critical analysis and appraisal of ffrench-Mullen House, in terms of Michael Scott's oeuvre, its local impact and international debts, see Ellen Rowley "ffrench Mullen House Conservation Report" (Unpublished report on behalf of Paul Arnold Architects for Dublin City Council, 2007) and Ellen Rowley "ffrench-Mullen House" (Application for inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures, Dublin City Council, 2010) – both are available from Dublin City Council Conservation

thirteen flats occupied the east side of Charlemont Street, forming the street line: with its flat roof, emphasised by an overhanging eaves cornice and its vertical bands of glazing extending the height of the building from the entrance canopies, this tidy structure expressed a language of European modernism (figures 3.56, 3.57, 3.59, 3.60). But ffrench-Mullen House's disposition as a modernist slab block, accessed directly from the street by two internalised stairways, was more expressive than any of its modernist tropes or details. By adopting the slab block and (re)presenting the tenement access strategy anew, Scott's small ffrench-Mullen block proposed a design alternative to Simms' contemporary deck-accessed perimeter blocks that was closer to certain iconic multi-dwelling workers' housing blocks from 1920s/30s Germany. At first glance, Scott's 1941 block echoed (in massing and disposition) the earth-bound self-contained building of flats designed by Mies van der Rohe at the *Weissenhofsiedlung* in Stuttgart of 1927 (figure 3.65); or indeed (in terms of vertical bands of glazing articulating stairways in a predominantly horizontal structure), Gropius' slab block at the *Siemensstadt* Housing Estate in Berlin of 1929/30.

As discussed in chapter one, such projects would have been known to Scott and his peers through the British architectural press, but it was undoubtedly the experience of Gropius and Eric Mendelsohn's lecture visits to the AAI in 1936 and 1937 respectively which had the deepest legacy. Though as Paul Larmour's recent summary of Free State architecture outlines, there were many private or one-off house projects which illustrated the aesthetic and technological legacies of Mendelsohn and Gropius (among others), I would argue that the legacy was made most concrete in the example of ffrench-Mullen House due in no small part to the latter's socialist intent.[103] The original function of the Public Utility Societies in both Britain and Ireland was to serve as a surrogate for the local authority in providing more attainable housing for the working classes, through cheaper rents or more affordable purchase prices.[104] As such, notionally the housing to be supplied by the PUS would be more co-operative than municipal infrastructure allowed and was founded on the need for low rents. However, Scott's Charlemont project was differentiated from its European forerunners in that, like its Dublin Corporation

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Department. For an excellent overview of Scott's practice and social housing see Iseult Kirwan, "Social Housing Architecture by Scott's Firm: International Tendencies", (Unpublished BA Thesis, History of Art Department, Trinity College Dublin, 2007)

[103] Paul Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 - 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009), p. 26 -32, p. 44 -56. This is primarily a photographic account of modernist domestic architecture in Ireland from 1920s to 1940s which illustrates the extent of modernist influence on this typology.

[104] As Ruth McManus describes in her overview of Public Utility Societies in Dublin 1910 - 1940, the original philanthropic principles behind the societies were diluted by their growing tendency to act as developers for Dublin Corporation and to build houses more cheaply for interest groups such as the Civil Servants, thereby acting more like private speculative groups than non-profit charitable organisations. See McManus, "Not so Private! Public Utility Societies and Semi-Private Developers" in Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 - 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, The Making of Dublin City series, 2002), p. 235-304. For a history of the original philanthropic PUS of St. Barnabas in East Wall, Dublin, see Ruth McManus, "The Building Parson - the role of Reverend David Hall in the Solution of Ireland's early Twentieth Century Housing Problems" in *Irish Geography* (Vo. 32, No. 2, 1999), p. 87-98

counterparts, this housing scheme did not prioritise ancillary service buildings for mother/child welfare, shopping or workshops.

In fact, when we scratch beneath the surface of ffrench-Mullen House, we reveal that the debt to Gropius et al was quite superficial. Unlike much contemporary European architecture, the building's external disposition - albeit modernist slab - was as one constant block without adjoining one-storey or higher rise blocks, i.e. its roofline remained constant; ffrench-Mullen House's individual rear balconies did not break from the building's materials, sitting snugly in relation to the façade (figures 3.60 + 3.57). In terms of plan, the Dublin building was decidedly dull and unsophisticated alongside the adventurous nature of its international equivalents: the layout of each flat was traditional and compartmentalised with no internal space espousing open-plan living which was of course a basic tenet of International Style ideals (figure 3.58). The salute to contemporary developments in housing might lie in the inclusion of a private outdoor space in the form of a balcony but in reality, this was something that Herbert Simms was already doing in his complexes (though for reasons of control rather than for healthful lifestyle possibilities). There was no notion of raising the building off the ground on pilotis or creating a communal garden on the roof.

Perhaps the most fundamentally modern, rather than modernist, aspect of ffrench-Mullen House was its use of reinforced concrete load bearing walls as the principal structural means, but again Simms' schemes adhered to similar structural technology and this aspect had been criticised by both the CHC report and the *Report of the Inquiry* as being more costly than frame technology.[105] The original design proposed three ranges which would have enclosed a courtyard so that much of the unique standing of the executed ffrench-Mullen House - namely its intimate scale and the direct relationship between the slab block and the street – would have been lost. The most idiosyncratic aspect of ffrench-Mullen House was the cladding on its street elevation of brick-red pre-cast concrete tiles (figure 3.56). On the one hand the tile cladding was completely different for Dublin architecture and may have been influenced by Max Taut's family house at the Stuttgart *Weissenhofsiedlung* (figure 3.62).[106] But conversely, the

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[105] The CHC report criticised the load-bearing wall structure of the Corporation housing blocks and this method of construction continued into the 1970s for Dublin's multi-storey blocks. The CHC report (and consequently the *Report of Inquiry*) proposed frame building with panels filled in with "light cavilty walling consisting of light concrete blocks, or cement asbestos, both of which are produced in quantity in this country, or hollow tiles which might be produced here"; rather than "the modern expensive fire-resisting, tediously constructed reinforced concrete floors and roofs". The report went into great detail about the potential cavity wall systems and the bracing potential of reinforced concrete framed buildings. See Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938*, (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.44

[106] This comparison with Taut's polychromatic tiles was outlined by Iseult Kirwan in supervision with the author. Kirwan also points out that the Taut house has similar entrance articulation to those on ffrench-Mullen's street elevation – the concrete canopy supported on steel pilotis: see Iseult Kirwan "Social Housing Architecture by Scott's Firm: International Tendencies", (Unpublished BA Thesis, History of Art Department, Trinity College Dublin, 2007), p.22. Another reasonable reference point for the tile-cladding on ffrench-Mullen House was Berthold Lubetkin's 1930s flat complexes Highpoint One and Highpoint Two in London – the foyer of this building is tile-clad (figures 3.63+3.64). Through Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff's Bexhill-on-Sea Pavilion

rich colour and texture might be read as a modernist abstraction of the typical (though not indigenous) red brick used in Dublin from the Georgian terraces through to Simms' blocks. Furthermore, it is interesting to posit that Scott's block with its emblazoned textured street front and its mute stuccoed-effect (painted cement plaster) rear elevation was an equally two-sided exercise as that public/private (decorative yet inactive street elevation/plain yet active court façade) schism which Simms' blocks continuously presented.

What is most provocative, in architectural history terms, about ffrench-Mullen House is that it introduced the slab block to Dublin which as we will see, was to be taken up by Simms and the Corporation Housing Department in the post-Emergency schemes.[107] Overall the Charlemont scheme is intellectually satisfying and historically intriguing because it is emblematic of a so-called 'avant-garde' alternative to local authority endeavour in early 1940s Dublin. The unrealised ranges of its initial plan (i.e. the massive eight-storey complex) are the most intriguing, highlighting how closely many of the Irish architects must have followed developments in Britain: namely, the impressive Quarry Hill scheme in Leeds (completed 1938, Maxwell Fry). Like the ffrench-Mullen scheme and its proposed eight-storey wings, Quarry Hill contained waste chutes, a communal laundry and other amenities which were wrapped within an enclosing eight-storey wall. Constructed out of the Mopin System though, Quarry Hill embodied the most up-to-date architectural technology to which the Dublin project could never aspire in early 1940s Ireland.

In many respects philanthropic organisations provided a platform for the architectural intelligentsia to meaningfully engage with working-class housing. In this instance the Charlemont Public Utility Society was one of the few PUS's which was actively charitable in intent and process: it was founded out of the St. Ultan's PUS so that, as its mission statement of 1937 declared,

> ...an individual effort to tackle a certain circumscribed area by private enterprise and initiative might do much to show what should and can be done, and how not only the actual housing problem itself may be solved but also the social problems

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of the mid-1930s Scott was likely to have encountered the architecture of the newly formed practice, Tecton, spearheaded by Lubetkin. Sean Rothery maintains that Scott was deeply influenced by Lubetkin and also came into contact with a younger practice of New Zealand architects based in London, Connell, Ward and Lucas - Conversation with Sean Rothery, February 2007.

[107] Along with this pioneering aspect, Scott moved away from the deck access strategy and reintroduced the internalised tenement stairway from which two or three flats were fed per floor. This strategy and the slab block disposition were developed and varied in the early 1950s in certain Dublin schemes, namely: Leo FitzGerald House, Hogan Place and James Larkin House, North Strand – two idiosyncratic schemes designed most probably by Charlie McNamara, Acting Housing Architect 1948 – 55 (figures 3.183-3.185).

> bound up with it. With this in view one of the worst areas in Dublin has been chosen for clearance and reconstruction.[108]

The statement from the Charlemont Street reformers echoed that of the London City Council pronouncements that slum clearance through shiny new houses and flats would heal society's ills:

> Mental health and physical health go hand in hand, and the psychological effect of living in mean surroundings [...] cannot be neglected in any attempt to assess the effect of faulty environment on the mental, moral and physical fibre of the occupants.[109]

Indeed this message of the link between nineteenth-century public health concerns and twentieth-century architectural and planning means was prevalent within Dublin Corporation discourse from the 1920s through to the late 1950s. The assertion was reflective of a futurist vision and assumption that middle-class social, moral and aesthetic values were desirable for all.[110] Such thinking certainly underpinned Abercrombie's plan and the burgeoning suburbanisation of Dublin during this time, but in relation to urban housing it was more complex. It is interesting to propose that within the philanthropic framework, certain architects were facilitated as and alongside reformers in their quest to crystallize the inner meanings of working-class existence. While in practice, the architecture community's approach was not differentiated from Simms's *modus operandi*, the architects could be critical of Corporation design or propose alternatives from within the reform platform. Many of the housing reform protagonists during this period, working in such societies as the Civics Institute, the Citizens Housing Council, the St Barnabus PUS, the Association for the Housing of the Very Poor and Industrial Workers and so on, were architects (such as George Beckett, Frederick Hicks, Mairin Hope, Scott, Gibney and Moffett) or related professionals (such as Major Waller, an esteemed engineer-designer). When they had the opportunity to counter Corporation design for working-class housing, as in Vincent Kelly's Temple Lane flat scheme for the Holy Child Housing Society (1937) or Michael Scott at Charlemont

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[108] "Mission Statement of the Charlemont Public Utility Society, Ltd" in *Records of the Charlemont Public Utility Society*, Registrar of Friendly Societies, National Library. See note #104 for reference to non-charitable bias of the majority of Dublin's Public Utility Societies and note #96 for brief explanation of origin of Charlemont PUS

[109] Housing and Public Health Committee, *London Housing* (London: King and Staples Ltd, 1937), p.13

[110] This point is made most forcefully by Mark Swenarton, *Homes for Heroes* (London: Heinemann, 1980). It is also discussed by Anthony King in chapter five "Bungaloid Growth – Britain 1918 – 1980", *The Bungalow. The Production of a Global Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 188-192. Ruth McManus touches upon the issue in "Dublin Corporation Housing Schemes to 1940" in *Dublin 1910 – 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, The Making of Dublin City series, 2002), p. 228 - 231

Street, the executed buildings never ventured too far from Simms' prototypes (figures 3.67 + 3.68).[111]

## ***Part I "Clearing Hovels and Building Homes"***

*Architects' endeavours: the RIAI and architectural competitions*

From archival sources it is clear that the RIAI were involved in debates and policy implementation for working-class housing improvement at this time. As early as 1934 the Institute had called for a conference with Corporation officials and the building trades on the matter of "housing for the very poor" during which its representatives called for a town plan to be enforced, for non-Corporation or local authority architects to contribute to housing design, for new methods of construction and for a programme of reconditioning tenement houses.[112] There followed a series of such meetings dealing with the design practices of the Corporation and material shortages affecting the building trades, which culminated around the bombings and destruction of 1941 when the RIAI called for an emergency meeting with the Corporation and various housing societies.[113]

The subsequent conference, evolving by 1942 into the "Emergency Housing Committee", outlined general criticisms of Corporation working-class housing practice from charges of not catering for the very poor to the need to build temporary dwellings.[114] An RIAI member, a Mr. Webb presented the Corporation with draft designs for a three-roomed dwelling that would cost only £250 including development work on roads, sewerage and fencing. Simms responded that the Corporation had a scheme in hand for five hundred two and three-roomed one-storey dwellings which, unlike Webb's

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[111] We will examine this issue in greater detail in relation to architect-designed housing estates from late 1940s. The similarity between Corporation and non-Corporation schemes is most likely down to the Department of Local Government/Public Health specifications and standards, and the Dublin Building Bye-Laws which had to be strictly adhered to in terms of dimensions and (native) materials.

[112] See "Report to Council in reference to Conference with the Lord Mayor and City Manager on the subject of housing" February 1934, "Housing of the Poor 1933 - 1948" I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/99. A series of meetings came out of this conference between the Corporation, the Dublin and District House Builders' Association and the Master Builders' Association. The RIAI representative was George Beckett who was also a member of the Civics Institute and later the CHC; he reported that "The question of the re-conditioning of tenement houses which are still structurally sound needs further consideration in view of the so far almost complete failure of the provisions of the recent Housing Acts in this connexion...the Corporation should have powers to compulsorily take over suitable houses to be so treated, and in sufficiently large blocks to allow of the appointment of resident caretakers and the formation of proper open spaces at the back by removal of yards walls, etc., and doing some planting where possible. It is not desired that this suggestion should be considered other than as an emergency measure pending the provision of more suitable dwellings but as this will manifestly take many years to accomplish, it is put forward as offering considerable possibility of improving existing tenement house under present conditions."

[113] The meeting was called by John O'Gorman of the RIAI and he wrote to the Civics Institute of Ireland, Iveagh Trust, St Barnabas PUS, The Holy Child Housing Association, Clongowes Housing Society, Association of the Housing for Very Poor, Charlemont PUS, the Citizens Housing Council and Simms and Russell from the Corporation. See correspondence 9th Sep 1941, RIAI file "Housing of the Poor 1933 - 1948", ibid.

[114] Minutes of meeting, 17th October 1941 between four officials of Dublin Corporation; Association for the Housing of the Very Poor and Industrial Workers (J T Lennon); Civics Institute of Ireland (G F Beckett); Citizen's Housing Council (Dr Collis); the Iveagh Trust (James A Bonner); Alexandra Guild Tenement Co. (Berry and Bigger); Charlemont PUS (Sighle Dowling, Madeline ffrench Mullen, Kathleen Murphy); and the RIAI (Webb, John O'Gorman): RIAI file "Housing of the Poor 1933 - 1948", ibid.

design, incorporated individual washing facilities. He was defensive in all such correspondence with the RIAI stating "that we are doing all that is humanly and practically possible under present circumstances..."; and he refused to push his architectural experimentation beyond the aforementioned smaller dwellings and into the realm of temporary or prefabricated housing: "With the present scarcity of building materials it behoves us to place what is available to the best possible use and not to waste the materials on erecting temporary dwellings."[115]

Like Moffett's lecture for the Charlemont PUS, this interdisciplinary housing conference attracted media attention with the *Irish Press* summarising its proceedings in November 1941.[116] Through this medium, the RIAI acted as an advocate for the architectural community, primarily seeking design input for non-official (i.e. non-Corporation or local authority) architects into working-class mass housing. Along with Webb's design, the RIAI proposed different materials and technologies for Corporation schemes such as the substitution of fine-faced concrete blocks for brickwork in walls and corrugated asbestos sheets for pan tiles as a roof covering, and the omission of iron tie bars to roofs.[117] But mostly the Institute pushed for the Corporation to promote architectural competitions so as to generate ideas. Writing numerous letters to the Department of Local Government/Public Health throughout 1940 and 1941, the RIAI urged the consideration of competitions:

> I am directed to inform you that it is the opinion of the Council that Local Authorities concerned with housing should promote Competitions for the layout and design of houses in their particular localities. This proposal is made in an endeavour to raise the standard of housing design and layout in Ireland, and to have such work entrusted to those properly qualified to carry it out.[118]

In many respects a design competition was thought (within and without the architectural community) to be frivolous and uncooperative in such an urgent climate but the RIAI continued to uphold its merit as a process, with leading architects Alan Hope and J. P. Alcock suggesting in 1942 that "a competition should be drawn up which need not

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[115] Letter from Simms to RIAI and City Manager, 18th March 1942, p.2, RIAI file "Housing of the Poor 1933 – 1948", ibid.

[116] See "Housing of Poor Reviewed" *The Irish Press,* 1st November 1941: "Speakers advocated that old houses in the centre of the city must be pulled down, that suburban schemes should include free transport, that co-operative stores should be established in the new suburbs, that three-room dwellings, though not ideal, would be better than one-room tenements which served at present and that there should be a planned future guaranteeing a steady programme of work in order to encourage labour to admit more men to the trades."

[117] See correspondence from RIAI to City Manager, 3rd December 1941, "Housing of the Poor 1933 – 1948" I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/99

[118] Letter from John O'Gorman (Secretary RIAI) to J. Hurson (Dept. Local Government/Public Health), 31st December 1940, "Local Authority Housing Schemes 1940-1941", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

involve premiums."[119] At the inaugural meeting of the Emergency Housing Committee in December 1942, it would seem that a compromise was found and the Corporation asked the RIAI to canvas its members for ideas on the housing problem generally from which proposals would be forwarded to the Department and exhibited at the forthcoming National Planning Exhibition in the Mansion House (see chapter one).

The only housing competition that came to fruition during the early 1940s was that promoted by the Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) for a rural cottage and village hall. Though ideas-based, rural and more concerned with the village hall than the cottage, this competition is of note as a mid-war housing initiative which sought to engage the architectural community in developing an alternative to local authority design. As the ICA laid out in relation to the competition conditions in November 1943, "For the cottage, it is to be the kind of home a countrywoman wants, not the kind of erection a County Council imposes."[120] From the outset the ICA was interested in the competition mechanism as a means of potentially setting a new rural housing standard. It was acknowledged that the infrastructure of 1940s rural Ireland in terms of public utilities (electricity, waterworks) was far behind that at urban centres or fringes, and so the competition was understood as a process of highlighting such deficits hindering the provision of modern rural dwellings. Following the competition event, in conjunction with an exhibition of the competition designs held at the Country Shop, Dublin in June 1944, the RIAI issued such a statement of intent:

> It was not therefore the object of this competition to secure designs in which even minimum standards would be reached, but rather to seek evidence to support the view that by good design the low standards of pre-war State-aided rural houses could be materially raised, at a comparatively small increase in cost.[121]

The RIAI was wholly supportive of the ICA competition in that it must have presented the first tangible opportunity for the architectural community to infiltrate local authority housing endeavour and as such, the Institute supplemented the prize monies so as to

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[119] In a letter from Alan Hope to the RIAI, 6th February 1942, Hope asked the Council if they still favoured a design competition as he had heard that Webb (eager to push his own designs) said that cooperation was needed in such an urgent situation rather than competitions. Hope and Alcock "stressed the point that a competition does not mean lack of cooperation and suggested that a competition should be drawn up which need not involve premiums." RIAI file "Housing of the Poor 1933 - 1948", Ibid.

[120] From Muriel Gahan (ICA) to the RIAI, "Conditions of Competition", 25th November 1943, "Ideal Country Cottage and Parish Hall" I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

[121] Correspondence from RIAI to ICA, 10th July 1944, "Ideal Country Cottage and Parish Hall", ibid. The Country Shop was the urban headquarters of the ICA and Muintir na Tire. In the 1940s it was situated on St. Stephen's Green, Dublin centre. For more on the history of the ICA, their archives are semi-accessible in Ballsbridge though this author found no records of the country cottage competition in either the ICA or the NAI.

elicit greater participation from its members.[122] In its choice of architectural assessors, Vincent Kelly (as RIAI President) and Dermot O'Toole (as AAI President), both leading members of the intelligentsia and proponents of architectural modernism, the RIAI demonstrated its commitment to the hypothetical competition. Such intervention might also be read as another example of the RIAI's desperate attempts to engage or occupy the architectural community and promote the profession's usefulness during these staid war years. After all, the Institute had joined forces with other construction industry bodies to form the "National Building Industries Council" in 1939 (and then the "Temporary Dublin Area Joint Council for the Building Industry" in 1941), in order to lobby the Government: "One object of the formation of this Council is to urge upon the Government, and Public Bodies generally, the necessity for proceeding with Building Schemes, so as to ensure maximum employment during the present crisis."[123] Along with its ongoing call for architectural competitions throughout the early 1940s, the RIAI recommended that the Department should employ architects rather than civil engineers or quantity surveyors to examine house plans for its working-class housing schemes.[124] After several prompts, the Department responded that it did not see the need for architects to oversee its schemes and it also established that,

> While it is recognised that architectural competitions serve a useful purpose they could not be adopted for a continuous housing programme throughout the State. Already Local Authorities have provided since the passing of the Housing (Financial and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1932, over 43,000 dwellings.[125]

As such, the dialogue around house design initiatives between the officials and the architectural community was not very beneficial, for the latter group. The Institute however continued to lobby the Department and by 1947, the question of an architectural competition for local authority housing was taken up again; as ever, the process was drawn-out and seems to have collapsed by early 1951 due to disagreement

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[122] Letter from The Country Shop, Country Workers Ltd (Muriel Gahan) to the RIAI, 15th July 1944:"We thank your Council most sincerely for your support of these Competitions and for your generous donation of £50 to increase the prize money. There is no doubt that the larger amount available for prizes made a difference in the standard of entries received." Ideal Country Cottage and Parish Hall", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

[123] (Capitalisation used in original quotation) See RIAI circular to members 22nd February 1941 and letter 27th November 1939, National building Industries Council will represent all interests in building, so Civil Engineers of Ireland, Chartered Surveyors' Institution, Federation of Builders, Contractors and Allied Employers of Ireland - I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

[124] See for example the correspondence from RIAI to Secretary of Dept of Local Government/ Public Health, 31st Dec 1940: "I am directed to inform you that it is the opinion of the Council that qualified Architects should examine such plans. It is appreciated t hat certain work involved in housing is proper to Civil Engineers, and it is not intended that any changes in this respect should be made". And again on 20th Feb 1941: "I am directed by my Council to ask whether your Department agrees that the examination of plans submitted for housing schemes should be examined by professional men qualified to do so, namely, Architects." "Local Authority Housing Schemes 1940-1941", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/47

[125] Letter from Department Local Government/Public Health responding to RIAI, 14th May 1941, "Local Authority Housing Schemes 1940-1941", I.A.A., ibid

around architects' fees and the eligibility of official architects to participate in the proposed competition.[126] In this context whereby the house design competition was generally perceived as superfluous to necessity, the ICA competition becomes more relevant. Surprisingly, considering the potential of the typology, this "ideal cottage" competition only prompted twenty-one submissions. The RIAI apologised to the ICA that the standard was not as high as they had hoped blaming the economic limitations of the brief (the conditions stipulated that the three-bedroomed cottage should cost only £400 to construct). However the two winning designs – first prize by Patrick Sheahan; second prize by Eoghan Buckley - were celebrated by the architectural community and published beyond Ireland by Noel Moffett in a 1946 article for *Architectural Design* on low-cost rural housing (figures 3.69 - 3.72). Both designs expressed a traditional vernacular language of steeply-pitched roof and primary living space around a hearth. But as Moffett described, in the premiated schemes' incorporation of better washing facilities, boilers and bigger window openings for instance, "they have attempted to stick fairly closely to the traditional plan but at the same time to adapt it to changed social conditions, and to take advantage of new building methods and materials [...] Their elevational treatment is in direct line of descent from the old thatched cottage."[127]

Moffett was the architectural community's most astute and lively spokesmen on housing and architectural modernism in Ireland throughout the 1940s. He not only wrote, designed exhibitions and lectured extensively on various aspects of these contemporary issues both in Ireland and Britain during that decade, but as we will see in our discussion of prefabrication and architect-designed suburban housing, he extended his theoretical research and commentary into the realm of cognitive practice. Similarly Frank Gibney and his fellow housing activist Major James Hardress de Warenne Waller (1884 – 1968) moved between philanthropic endeavour and building experimentation in

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[126] See folder "Proposed Housing Competitions – Urban, Village and Rural Cottage" in RIAI archive, I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/62. This correspondence runs from February 1947 to June 1951 and seems to have come to a halt due to inability of the Department and the RIAI to agree on a suitable new (post-Emergency) scale of fees. The competition (for three dwelling types) was advertised in *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, 10th January 1948, p. 12 and outlined there as such: "These competitions were not intended to yield standard house plans that would be copied everywhere; but the designs of each prize winner and commended competitor would be published in a booklet and circulated among housing authorities for their guidance. The Minister said that steps were being taken to encourage interest in local authority housing work amongst architects in private practice; and a reasonable scale of remuneration was being determined for such work. Prizes: £500 first, £300 second, £200 third. Committee: Mr H S Moylan (Chairman); Mrs A M Curtis (Bagnelstown); Prof J V Downes, Mr D FitzGerald and Mr J T O'Byrne (County Surveyor Wicklow)".
There is also a record of another architectural competition being mooted for the Raheny area in Dublin Corporation Reports of 1950. However, I have been unable to track down any evidence of this competition and according to DCC archivist Dr Mary Clark, the competition never happened: "In connection with the proposal of the Department of Local Government to hold an Architectural Competition in respect of the portion of St Anne's Estate to be used for housing purposes the Committee decided to recommend that the proposal be confined to the lay-out plan for the whole area and designs for 150 houses, subject to the proviso that the Corporation will have the option of accepting or rejecting the scheme submitted by the winning competitor. The Committee considers it essential to retain full authority over both site lay-out, development and design of houses to be erected." (see "Breviate for quarter ending 31st December 1949", in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1950, (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.13

[127] Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Housing in Eire: Part 2, Rural Housing" in *Architectural Design* (February 1947), p.42-43

the quest to liberate the masses from slum squalor. Both sought to devise cheap prototype dwellings through visionary or alternative technologies: Gibney devised the modern clay cottage using materials from the site which he developed further in concrete, based on segmental arch construction; and Waller invented two systems of lightweight concrete construction - the "Nofrango" system in the late 1920s followed by the "Ctesiphon" system in the 1940s - which he adapted for the working-class house typology (figure 3.125 + 3.128).[128]

Aside from these few but significant proponents of architectural experimentation at the service of Ireland's poor, architectural involvement in working-class house design in the early 1940s was mostly relegated to ideas-based forums. The extreme need and age of pragmatics kept the architects on the housing periphery, occasionally engaged in private speculative housing schemes or by a PUS, and in some cases, occupied with the design of their own homes or other privileged one-off houses. In concluding his exploration of Irish rural housing for the British audience, Moffett pinpointed the principal problem afflicting Irish society, urban and rural, which would continue to marginalise architectural culture and hinder research into modern Irish working-class housing: "The flight from the land to the city continues, and constitutes the biggest single problem of rural Ireland."[129]

### *Part II Building on the Edge: Dublin's suburban housing drive of the 1940s*

> *To the farm-hand who has tired of the farm, the football match and the cinema, the noise and the bustle of the city are infinitely better than the quiet country land and the smouldering turf fire. To the farmer's daughter with a spark of ambition, electric light and water on tap, silk stockings and city pavements, are more attractive than paraffin lamps and muddy farmyards. These Irish émigrés will weep homesick tears for the thatched cottage where they spent their childhood, but they pass the best years of their life in a Dublin office or a Manchester factory.*[130] **Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Housing in Eire", 1947**

> *The desire to exchange country life for city life is a natural trend which could not at present be reversed save by dictator's methods, direction of labour and the*

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[128] I will discuss the Moffett and Waller projects in more detail in our discussion of prefabrication (part III). For more on Waller, see Jeremy Williams, "An Irish Genius: J. H. de W. Waller 1884 – 1968" in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, (Vol. 12, 1996), p. 143-146. Waller's amazing scrapbook of photographs entitled the "Ctesiphon Album (compiled 1955)" is in the Irish Architectural Archive. See also Irish Architectural Archive (Ann Martha Rowan), Waller Biography, *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720 – 1940*, http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/5490 (accessed March 2010)

[129] Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Housing in Eire: Part 2, Rural Housing" in *Architectural Design* (February 1947), p.43

[130] Ibid, p.38

> *like. Besides which it might be argued that perhaps there are already far too many people "on the land" in Ireland, wringing a doubtful livelihood from subsistence farming [...] But wherever else they go, let it not be to Dublin, already passing the reasonable limits of congestion and spread. One-fifth of the population is more than enough.*[131] **Patrick Delaney, "Impact of Town-Planning", 1953**

The causes of Irish rural depopulation during the mid-twentieth century were manifold and were rooted as much in international change as in national limitation. The quotations above highlight the two primary and related reasons for the incessant rural to urban migration within Ireland and of course, beyond its borders to England: firstly, as outlined by Moffett, the lure of urban consumer culture; and secondly, as suggested by architect and journalist/editor Patrick Delaney, the physical poverty and hardship induced by subsistence farming. This "drift from the countryside" is significant for our study of Dublin housing because it led to the continuous swelling of Dublin's population during the period under discussion, which necessarily put extreme pressure on the city's housing stock. In turn, the swollen city spilled out into the fringes due mostly to spatial and cost exigencies but also to a vaguely official and piecemeal yet persistent policy of local decentralisation.

Judging from contemporary discourse on housing, it is apparent that the constant augmentation of Dublin's population by rural in-migration was a major concern. Abercrombie's *Sketch Plan* was littered with references to and warnings about the unsustainable nature of the city's ongoing population growth, such as: "In envisaging the future of housing policy generally, we assume that a careful watch will be kept to ensure against any influx from the country which might stultify efforts at effecting permanent improvement."[132] Similarly, as chapter one outlined, the Tomorrow Club's stated purpose of 1943 was to "check the inflow of the thousands of immigrants who fill our cellar dwellings and tenement rooms more rapidly than the Corporation can provide accommodation for their present occupants."[133] And it was asserted in the *Report of Inquiry* that "the Dublin Housing problem has been seriously aggravated in recent years by abnormal immigration."[134] This seems to be a paraphrase of Herbert Simms' evidence to the tribunal; on the occasion of the RIAI centenary in 1939, Simms wrote that the

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[131] Patrick Delaney, "The Impact of Town-Planning" Architecture Series, *Sunday Independent*, January 1953. Delaney was the editor of both the AAI *Greenbook* and *Architectural Survey* jointly with Luan Cuffe during the early 1950s but then on his own from the late 1950s onwards

[132] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941), p.39. As a respondent to the Abercrombie plan in *Studies* in 1942, George Gavan Duffy espoused, "The Consultants are alarmed by the continuous influx into Dublin from the country and refer three times to the need for controlling this immigration." Hon. Mr. Justice George Gavan Duffy, "Response to The Dublin Town Plan", *Studies* (June 1942), p.161-162

[133] Senator Joseph Brennan, speech at inaugural lunch of the Tomorrow Club as reported in "'Looking Ahead' Luncheon", *Irish Times,* 25th December 1943, p.10

[134] "Increase in the Number of Families (Family Growth)", point 98, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p. 44

then shortage of housing in Dublin "is being aggravated by the influx into the city from the provincial towns and rural areas of Ireland."[135]

In fact, the rural immigration issue was deemed so influential on Dublin's worsening housing situation that the *Report of Inquiry* prioritised it in its section on "Increase in the number of families", and devoted three statistical tables to its examination via decadal census analysis from 1841 to 1936.[136] The study attempted to measure the extent of population increase through in-migration by comparing quantities of persons born within the County of Residence to those born outside: between 1926 and 1936 it measured an immigration-related increase in Dublin of 21, 262 persons. The report was quick to acknowledge that such analysis was contingent on the changing boundary of Dublin County Borough: importantly, Dublin was extended in 1930 to incorporate the townships of Rathmines-Rathgar and Pembroke, and then again in 1940.[137] Alexander Humphreys, an American social anthropologist and Jesuit priest, conducted an incredibly rich study of Dublin's social make-up from 1949 to 1951 with particular focus on the generation of Dubliners who were born of rural migrants. Entitled *New Dubliners* Humphreys' study was not published until 1966 and revealed (through census analysis) that after the British left Dublin – i.e. British administrative staff and military presence - over one-fourth of Dublin's population was made up of people born in Ireland outside of Dublin.[138] Humphreys summarised that between 1926 and 1951, "migration within Ireland continued apace and significantly changed the internal structure of Irish society."[139] It was clear from Humphreys' research – largely based on then unpublished data from the Central Statistics Office - that Dublin was the primary urban recipient of or target for this migration. By 1951, the capital city contained almost one-fifth of the Republic's total population, at 569,000 persons, while the combined populations of the regional urban centres of Cork, Limerick and Waterford was 154,000 persons.[140]

It would seem that Dublin's draw was due to its role as the country's industrial centre. As Humphreys asserted and was touched upon in chapter one, while a policy of industrial decentralisation was peddled by the government since 1932, the reality was that Dublin's centralized economy was too embedded or stuck and, as Dr J. P. Beddy of the Irish Industrial Authority told Humphreys, "a great many of our industrialists are

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[135] Herbert Simms, "Municipal Housing Activities in Dublin" in *Centenary Conference Handbook Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland*, (Dublin: RIAI, 1939) p.48

[136] See note#138, p.44-46 and Appendix no. 11, tables A, B and C, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.242-243

[137] Though too considerable to discuss, it is important to note the ongoing extension of Dublin City and its boundary as a geographical backdrop to this chapter. The boundary shift was one of the main points of discussion within the Town Planning Committee proceedings from 1934 through the 1950s; see printed volumes of minutes and reports of Town Planning Committee, 1934 – 1960, Dublin City Archive, Gilbert Library

[138] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p.60

[139] Ibid, p.59

[140] Ibid.

Englishmen who think the west of Ireland is as uncivilized as your Wild West".[141] In any case, the effect of rural depopulation and the consequent swelling of Dublin were straining the city's housing stock, leading to slums which had to be cleared as quickly and cheaply as possible: ergo Dublin's extensive suburbanisation from the 1930s through the 1950s.

## ***Part II Building on the Edge: Dublin's suburban housing drive of the 1940s***

*From rural depopulation to suburban housing proliferation: Garden Suburbs and Catholic social teaching*

Beneath the two primary causes of suburban housing proliferation (i.e. extreme need and a half-baked decentralisation policy) lies a more complex ideological web of Catholic social thinking, traditional Irish urban reticence, a degenerate version of British Garden City theory and ever-rising standards of living internationally. In terms of the last of these issues, standards were inevitably improving and housing conditions were a direct reflection of this improvement. Again, Humphreys' study found a "steady general improvement in the standard of living...Where in 1926, 'families' of four or more persons living in one-room tenements comprised 16.9% of the city's population, such families were only 9.1% of that population in 1946."[142] While Humphreys was alive to the still notable slum problem at the end of the 1940s, he noted that "progress has been remarkable and has resulted in the development of large new residential areas along the outer reaches of the city such as Drimnagh, Crumlin, Whitehall, West Cabra and Inchicore".[143] Conversely, T.W. Dillon's 1945 polemical article on Dublin slums in *Studies* - based on the findings of the CHC report and the recently published *Report of Inquiry* - focused on the increasingly bad housing conditions in the city centre: "There is in Dublin a growing population of Christians who have not succeeded in resisting the horrible pressure of rats, filth and overcrowding, and who are losing, generation by generation, their traditional standards of human decency."[144]

While Dillon's admonitions (based largely on mid-war evidence) and Humphreys' slightly later reading may seem opposing, Simms brings them together in his evidence to the housing tribunal and overview account of Dublin housing for the RIAI in 1939:

> When the housing conditions current in Dublin are judged by this present-day "measuring-stick" of a "self-contained sanitary home for each family", the shortage appears to be probably greater than ever before in the history of the

[141] Dr. J. P. Beddy in conversation with Humphreys, cited in ibid, p.60
[142] Ibid, p.62
[143] Ibid.
[144] T. W. Dillon informed us that 25,822 families were found to be living in "fetid tenements" in 1913 but alarmingly, 28,210 families were similarly placed in 1938, "Slum Clearance: Past and Future" in *Studies* (No. 34, March 1945), p.13

> city [...] It is this higher living standard that is the real reason and cause for the greater effort in the direction of a larger provision of houses today, and not because the present actual shortage is more pronounced than that of any previous period.[145]

Simms maintained that Dublin's working classes were no longer content with "mere protection from the elements by four walls and a roof of some kind" and that this "awakening of the public conscience" to the facts of overcrowding or the need for sex segregation in the home had been slowly growing since the start of the twentieth century.[146] Clearly, according to Simms, the rather intangible tendency towards better living standards, compounded by the steady influx of country people into the city, were the root causes of Dublin's 1930s and 1940s housing problem. The seminal 1930s American anthropological study of rural Ireland by C.M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball concluded in view of the 1936 census and the emigration (out of Ireland) situation:

> One could hazard that the census figures represent not an 'economic problem' in the sense of a flight from poverty or a flight against its restrictions but the movements of a population seizing upon new opportunities and new prosperity without relinquishing at any point the already existing organisation of their social sentiments and habits. In such a view the problems of population decline in Ireland are results not of poverty but of prosperity.[147]

As such, behind this huge demographic shift in Irish culture - which kick-started unprecedented development at the capital's urban-rural fringe and changed the Irish landscape forever - was the issue of the logical and evolutionary rise in living standards, or more immeasurably, growing individualism. As Humphreys surmised, the greatest modernising force – which he termed "rationalistic secularism" - in Dublin at this mid-century point was the "individualistic variety which has grown out of classical liberalism of nineteenth-century England rather than the socialism which stems largely from Marx".[148] While the labour union movement had not been invisible in Dublin, Humphreys claimed that "generally speaking conservative liberal forces have made greater headway

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[145] Herbert Simms, "Municipal Housing Activities in Dublin" in *Centenary Conference Handbook Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland* (Dublin: RIAI, 1939) p.48. Simms echoed this point about increasing standards of living in his evidence to the tribunal which is paraphrased by the Irish Builder: Nomad, "A New Housing Outlook. Converging Lines of Attack on Dublin's Slums" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th June 1939), p.582

[146] Herbert Simms, "Municipal Housing Activities in Dublin" in *Centenary Conference Handbook Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland* (Dublin: RIAI, 1939) p.48

[147] C. M. Arensberg and S. T. Kimball, *Family and Community in Ireland* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1940), cited in a review by P. Browne in *The Dublin Magazine* (January – March 1942), p.74-76

[148] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p.29

than socialistic movements in the Irish capital"; consequently, the human group was subordinate to the human individual.[149]

The architectural translation of individualism was of course the individual house prefaced by the individual front garden. Like the modernising force fuelling it, this house type and setting was derived from nineteenth-century middle-class British patterns. And by the mid twentieth century, following the expanded development of suburban housing between the wars in Britain, the housing estate in varying degrees of leafiness had become the singular symbol of British-ness.[150] Though suburbia was spurned by the architectural community in Britain and beyond on the grounds of its nostalgic tropes and avowal to colonise the rural environment, the architectural modernist and critic J. M. Richards recognised its potent position in the British consciousness and composed a homage to the British Garden Suburb, which was published in 1946 as *The Castles on the Ground. The Anatomy of Suburbia*.[151] Therein Richards celebrated the British suburb as the site where the inhabitant could enwomb himself in a most private self-made world: "He is not only master in his own house but creator of his own world."[152] According to Richards' romanticised mid-war account, the British suburb championed *individual* above *collective* endeavour:

> The town and the countryside are man-made too, but they are the impersonal product of a collective effort, whereas in the suburb each man can see his own handiwork. It may be only a rockery he has built or a tree of his own planting which he can see over-topping the hedge as he turns the corner of the road on his return from the city in the evening, but to some extent he can feel responsible for his environment and thus get a sense of controlling his destiny.[153]

This alternate domestic realm was at a remove from the urban and more compliant than the rural. And importantly, it was "the suburban dweller's own making".[154] The tendency to craft a world from scratch was at the ideological core of Dublin's suburban development during the 1940s and 1950s – albeit for financial rather than haven-creating motivations. Certainly the *Report of Inquiry*, following the initial economic

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[149] Ibid.
[150] For an interpretation of the imperialist power and post-colonial symbolism inherent in the individual house and garden set-piece (though not in relation to Ireland), see Anthony King, chapter five "Bungaloid Growth – Britain 1918 – 1980", *The Bungalow. The Production of a Global Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
[151] For a rich account of the architectural response (contemporary and later) to suburban housing estates of 1930s Britain, see Ian Davis, "One of the Greatest Evils. Dunroamin and the Modern Movement" in Paul Oliver, Ian Davis and Ian Bentley (eds.), *Dunroamin. The Suburban Semi and its Enemies* (London: Pimlico, 1981)
[152] J. M. Richards, *The Castles on the Ground. The Anatomy of Suburbia* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), p.27 – Richards wrote this romanticised study of the British suburb during military duty in the Middle East in the Second World War, which explains its nostalgic tones.
[153] Ibid, p.27-28
[154] Ibid, p.27

justifications, supported the individual cottage/garden for its participatory nature and pride-inducing potential: "The average family prefers a separate dwelling, with a garden if possible, and the extent to which the tenants of the new suburban Corporation housing estates have tilled and developed their gardens supports this view."[155]

As intimated, the overall site planning of Dublin's new working-class houses emanated in the main from Abercrombie et al. In the *Sketch Plan for Dublin*, the consultants were unambiguous about their direction as British Garden City theorists. Indeed the original competition-winning plan for the city and region from 1914 which had introduced Patrick Abercrombie to Dublin, was co-adjudicated by Patrick Geddes (1854–1932) who was a leading proponent of British Garden City + Suburb planning within his general interest in urban sociology.[156] And while this early plan had morphed by the time of the *Sketch Plan*'s publication in 1941, the ideology at the plans' baseline(s) was consistent. In an overview article defending aspects of the *Sketch Plan* to the *Studies* readership in 1942, Abercrombie cited Raymond Unwin (1863-1940, a key originator of Garden City planning along with housing reformer Ebeneezer Howard (1850–1928), and layout designer of the famous Garden City estates of Letchworth (1904), Hampstead (1906) and part of Wavertree (1910), and pointed to the problem of high density at Dublin's city centre:

> Sir Raymond Unwin has put it that we have grown up with a wrong conception of what a town should be. We think of a town as a dense agglomeration of buildings with a few spots of green, whereas a town should be an urban pattern set on a background of green. It is not too late to remedy the excessive density of central Dublin building.[157]

Abercrombie was deliberately invoking Unwin in a bid to place his proposal for Dublin in a British Garden City lineage. Furthermore, his policy of "thinning out" was founded in the individualism of this nineteenth-century ideology. In reference to slum replacement, the *Sketch Plan* promoted suburban houses over urban flats:

> Admittedly, a certain number of central flats are necessary for those who have to live near their work but this is everywhere regarded as a necessary expedient rather than the most desirable way of providing shelter. We believe that the

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[155] "Flats or Cottages", point 334 in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.119

[156] For more on Patrick Geddes' urban sociology and philosophy, and its impact on Dublin, see Michael Bannon, "The Making of Irish Geography III: Patrick Geddes and the Emergence of Modern Town Planning in Dublin" in *Irish Geography* (Volume 11, Issue 1, 1978), p.141 - 148

[157] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, "The Dublin Town Plan" in *Studies* (June 1942), p.157. This is a paraphrase of the same point in Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941), p.56

> average Irish family would much prefer the privacy and individuality possible in a self-contained house with a small garden.[158]

Again, the family house and garden was promoted as most "desirable" due to its privileging of a private individualised and self-contained world.

In apparent conflict with this growing individualism comes another tangential feeder of the Dublin suburb epidemic from the 1930s through the 1950s: the Irish Catholic Church and its pro-rural communalism. Firstly, due to their lower densities, the new suburban housing estates were favoured from a moral stance. And secondly, as will be discussed in greater detail in chapter four, the *tabula-rasa* nature of the estates allowed the Church to assume unparalleled control in terms of pastoral services. In reality the suburban areas were devoid of community ethos and facilities for two generations, but they presented the Church and its rural migrant 'flock' with a midway environment – neither rural nor urban - which satisfied Catholic anti-urbanism on a theoretical level. It would seem that the "virgin territory" of the fringe sites at Cabra, Crumlin/Drimnagh, Larkhill, Ballyfermot and later Finglas and Raheny/Coolock had more in common with rural experience, physically, than the city centre. Interestingly, these conditions of lower density and the promise of the *tabula rasa* were also favoured by the Garden Suburb lobby dominating Dublin's town planning *milieu* at this time. In defining the British suburb as the ideal domestic environment, J. M. Richards pointed to its *tabula-rasa* tendencies which differentiate the suburb from the ever-evolving town and the adaptation of the countryside to human purposes:

> But the suburb is not primarily a mechanism, nor is it in any sense a modification of something previously existing; it is a world peculiar to itself and – as with a theatre's drop scene – before and behind it there is nothing.[159]

While the Garden City movement was motivated on *aesthetic* grounds of universal human experience (the emotional advantages of the readymade yet natural environment), the Irish RC Church aspired towards moral *control* of a growing and potentially unwieldy urban flock. Only brand new communities could enable such control. The rhetoric of control (and morality) through new communities was made explicit through discussions of density and while the Church did not appear to issue dictates on the matter of housing during the 1940s and 50s, its influence was felt upon Corporation town-planning policy. As such, in the joint Town Planning and Housing Committees'

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[158] Ibid, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin*, p.40

[159] J. M. Richards, *The Castles on the Ground. The Anatomy of Suburbia* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), p.18

report of 1947, the Corporation emphasised that lower densities improved the "spiritual as well as physical health" of its working-class citizens:

> Viewed from the broad aspect, increase in concentration of population calls for a corresponding increase in regimentation and in curtailment of personal liberties. We do not believe, however, that such tendencies are necessarily conducive to the best interests of humanity as viewed from the Christian ideal, and this is one of our main reasons for favouring low densities generally.[160]

Though pro-rural (or conversely anti-urban) sentiments during the early twentieth century were strongly associated with De Valera's national philosophy and as Mervyn Horgan puts it, "in the Irish example we find the conflation of rurality and anti-urbanism with Irish nationalism", the loudest objections to urbanisation and rural depopulation during this period emanated from the Catholic Church.[161] Patrick Commins summarises that the "Irish strain of rural fundamentalism also found some of its basis in Catholic ethico-social thought..."[162] He cites the example of Bishop Lucey's *Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems, 1948 – 1954* wherein it was recommended that the growth of Dublin should be halted and that the rural home would always be the best place for Irish family life.[163] Liam O'Dowd's excellent analysis of "Town and Country in Irish Ideology" describes the pro-rural creed of the Irish Catholic Church in the mid-century:

> The Irish version of the Catholic social movement was preoccupied with reconstructing a viable rural community [...] by extolling the moral and cultural superiority of rural society, it linked nationalist nostalgia with Catholic social principles [...] An examination of the ideology of the movement between the 1920s and the 1960s reveals an unrelieved anti-urbanism, i.e. the belief that urban life symbolized all that was essentially non-Irish and threatening to the ideal Catholic social order [...] The propagation of this rural versus urban

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[160] Report No. 8, Housing and Town Planning Committees joint report (signed off by Norman Chance and Michael O'Brien), *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1947 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.70

[161] Mervyn Horgan, "Anti-Urbanism as a Way of Life: Disdain for Dublin in the Nationalist Imaginary" in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 30, No. 2, "Continuity, Contradiction and Change in Contemporary Dublin", Fall 2004), p.38

[162] Patrick Commins, "Rural Social Change" in Patrick Clancy, Sheelagh Drudy, Kathleen Lynch and Liam O'Dowd (eds.), *Ireland: A Sociological Profile* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration and Sociological Association of Ireland, 1986), p.53

[163] This is a paraphrase of Commins' analysis of Bishop Lucey, chair, *Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948 – 1954* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1955), p. 335-363, cited in ibid, "Rural Social Change"

> imagery reached a crescendo in the early 1950s in the midst of the largest emigrant exodus from rural Ireland in the twentieth century.[164]

O'Dowd and other Irish sociologists (such as Eoin Devereux) and literary critics (such as Declan Kiberd or Brian Fanning) have demonstrated how the Church used Muintir na Tire and the intellectual platforms of *Studies* and the Catholic sociological journal *Christus Rex* to preach about the moral danger of rural to urban migration.[165] There was a general perception that rural communalism was central to Irish identity and Kiberd and Maurice Goldring (among other Irish Studies scholars) go so far as to claim a sense of guilt and loss of Irish-ness on the part of rural migrants to Dublin.[166] But Alexander Humphreys' less 'subjective' and more useful account of the migration experience assured us that the shift was more to do with continuity, albeit "radical continuity", than disjunction: his research revealed that the countryman's religious values survive the transition to the city and that the "New Dubliner entertains the same supernatural view of the universe as the countryman and like him considers that activities that merit and preserve supernatural grace are paramount in life."[167] Similarly, one *Studies* commentator, Rev. John Kelleher asserted in 1947, that as rural Catholics migrated to urban centres, their innate piety brought "a fresh accession of strength to the Church in the cities."[168] Then, to put it crudely, if the Catholic hierarchy "managed" the demographic crisis, the cities could become prime Catholic breeding grounds in 1950s and 60s Ireland - or more particularly, the new housing estates fringing the cities.

According to Humphreys, the primary difference between the rural and urban experience in late 1940s Ireland was that the family in the city ceased to be a collective unit of production. No longer concerned about land and family continuity on a homestead, the New Dubliners sought social standing through occupational endeavour and were not content to accept previously "acquired status".[169] This aspect is provoking when we consider the potential for home ownership and a self-sufficient productive lifestyle that the suburban cottage/garden set piece might present the migrant tenant, in

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[164] Liam O'Dowd, "Town and Country in Irish Ideology" in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 13, No. 2, December 1987), p.48

[165] For a useful analysis of the impact of journal discourse in Ireland (*The Bell, Studies, Christus Rex, The Crane Bag, Administration*), see Bryan Fanning, *The Quest for Modern Ireland. The Battle of Ideas 1913 - 1986* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008). For an examination of the role of Muintir an Tire and the position of Catholic clergy therein, see Eoin Devereux, "Saving Rural Ireland: Muintir na Tire and its Anti-Urbanism, 1931-1958" in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (Vol. 17, No. 2, December 1991), p.23 - 30. Declan Kiberd explores the theme of anti-urbanism and the exile experience of rural migrants in Dublin during the early to mid-twentieth century in Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland. The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage, 1996), p.492

[166] Kiberd, ibid, p.492. See also Maurice Goldring, *Pleasant the Scholar's Life: Irish Intellectuals and the Construction of the Nation State* (London: Serif, 1993), p.65

[167] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p.37-38

[168] Rev. John Kelleher, "Catholic Rural Action" in *Studies* (No. 4, 1947), p. 421

[169] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 29 and p.36

the future.[170] Again it points to the individualist appetite for material and social self-aggrandisement but interestingly, it also points to that by-now forgotten aspect of the suburban fringes as quasi-rural productive land. Suburban theorists such as Robert Fishman have pointed to suburbia's traditional symbol as refuge from urban corruption, and indeed in 1925 City Architect Horace O'Rourke described the Dublin suburb in such terms: "The artisan of to-day desires to bring up his family in a fresher atmosphere, and amid more attractive surroundings than are to be found in the heart of a city."[171] Furthermore, the possibility for suburban living to be productive was very important during this period and especially in the outskirts of Dublin throughout the Emergency. Corporation correspondence described the postponement of house construction at certain fringe areas due to the need to maintain allotments and garden-farming productivity through the early 1940s.[172] The problem of food shortages was such that cultivation at the rural-urban fringe was needed. There was also a little-known philanthropic movement, the Mount Street Club, which sought to overcome urban deprivation and unemployment, by sponsoring allotment maintenance in fringe neighbourhoods throughout the 1930s and 40s.[173] And in its description of extra-urban housing quarters, Abercrombie's *Dublin of the Future* (1914-22), true to its Garden

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[170] As Ruth McManus (and other economic historians and geographers) discusses, Dublin Corporation's housing schemes up until the 1931/32 legislation, were designed for the "wealthier" working classes to be purchased. As shown through the CHC report and the *Report of Inquiry*, this was one of the main criticisms levelled at the Corporation which lead to the 1930s and 40s slum clearance project's shifted emphasis towards the rental market and cheaper rent therein. See Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 - 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p.148-151.
Though the 1930s housing drive instigated a shift from Corporation provision of tenant purchase housing to rental housing, the continuation of SDAA and other programmes ensured that the potential to purchase underlined all Corporation housing schemes, certainly from the post-Emergency period onwards. As Paul Pfretzschner wrote in 1965, "a policy bias favouring private ownership of the home runs through virtually all the legislation from grants to the individual home builder to the vesting provisions for labourers' cottages." He points to several reasons for this ownership push: "it is apparently an operative Constitutional principle, it is consistent with the social instruction of the Papal Encyclicals, and it is a means of encouraging private saving for housing." Pfretzschner, *The Dynamics of Irish Housing* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1965), p.38
Notwithstanding this potential, tenants were first offered to buy their houses in Cabra, Crumlin, Ballyfermot and elsewhere in 1968 (see oral history account, http://www.dublin.ie/forums/showthread.php?8820-crumlin-houses-in-1940s (accessed April 2010)

[171] Horace O'Rourke (compiler), *Dublin Civic Survey* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1925), p.69
Robert Fishman discusses how suburbia is founded on "the capacity of suburban design to express a complex and compelling vision of the modern family freed from the corruption of the city, restored to harmony with nature, endowed with wealth and independence, yet protected by a close-knit, stable community." Robert Fishman, *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), x. See also the collection of essays, William S. Saunders (ed.), *Sprawl and Suburbia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Harvard Design Magazine Reader, 2005)

[172] See the account of the St. Anne's Estate, Raheny which was purchased by CPO in 1940 but due to its importance as garden land, housing development was put on stand-by, "these farming operations were carried on without loss to the citizens, and, in view of the fact that the crop produce enabled the Corporation to make a substantial contribution to the relief of the food situation." "Report no.28" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1946, (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.124

[173] This organisation was founded and run (for the most part) by Waller (the engineer) and was known as the Mount Street Club. Its allotments were in Santry, North Dublin and it was outlined in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (13th May 1939), p.13, and later as part of the activities and aspirations of the Tomorrow Club's Planning Conference, 1944, see Manning Robertson (ed.), *The Handbook of National Planning and Reconstruction* (Dublin: 1944)

Suburb ethos, concentrated more on allotments and garden size than it did on built components and inherent architectural questions.[174]

Altogether Dublin's burgeoning suburbia of the 1930s through the 1950s and beyond was a mixed-up and in-between territory in terms of geography, socio-cultural intention and architectural form. This is hardly surprising for any such inchoate environment. But I would argue that suburbia's indeterminate identity was more explicit in the Dublin example of the mid-twentieth century, due primarily to the contradictory factors of Catholic communalism and liberal Garden Suburb individualism. These factors, mixed with extreme need and economic exigency, lead to an ultimately disorientating and liminal setting which was considered to be the best solution for both rural migrants (due to familiarity of landscape) and impoverished urbanites (due to its promise of middle-class arcadia) alike. Writing a review of Dublin architecture in 1966, Dermot O'Connell described the "wave after wave of migrants from rural areas, who now constitute in this generation, or at one remove, the major part of the city's population", and suggested that this predominately rural identity had shaped the urban form: "The effect has been to perpetuate in urban conditions the countryman's characteristic desire to see and to touch the land".[175]

## ***Part II Building on the Edge: Dublin's suburban housing drive of the 1940s***

*Crumlin housing estate: an architectural account*

What of the built components and design elements making up these so-called liminal residential environments? Beyond socio-cultural and economic factors, how and why did they take shape as they did? Taking Ireland's largest urban-fringe housing colony at this time, Crumlin/Drimnagh in South East Dublin, as an exemplar due to its continuous development from the 1920s through to the early 1950s, the examination can move from the general cultural enquiry to the architectural survey.

The Crumlin estate's architectural make-up and site layout was typical of the 1930s fringe housing endeavour, while the concentration of building activity during the Emergency years and after, as well as the introduction of prefabricated methods of house-design in 1949, ensures its central relevance to the history of public housing in Dublin. Arguably because of its unprecedented scale, the estate was cited in all housing reports and official analyses because of either its perceived failures (the concentration of one class or the infamous lack of community services) or supposed achievements (the provision of modern hygienic housing to thousands of former slum-dwellers). And

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[174] See Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.31

[175] Dermot O'Connell, "The Irish Architectural Scene" in *Building* (9th September 1966). P.115

unusually for such a recent and somewhat vernacular setting, Crumlin has been captured in literary representations. Through the medium of memoir, we encounter the estate in its earliest days at the end of the 1930s as the formidable Behan clan (writer Brendan Behan's family) moved from the city centre to a recently completed house on Kildare Road, Crumlin in 1937. Dominic Behan's colourful biography of his brother Brendan, describes the family's first journey to their new home:

> We cut across a canal bridge and along the main Crumlin Road, which was very dimly lit. The houses on either side could have been part of a ghost-town set, for all the life that was in them ... In a stream of his own invective Brendan fell into a hole and muttered, "... They could've built flats in the centre of the town for us and kept reservations like this for them that come in from the country. Home from home, it would have been. But us! And the only grass we ever saw we were asked to keep off it. Is that a light?" I saw a row of paraffin lamps flickering some two hundred yards away. And as we made for their red glow the moon forced her way through the blanket of cloud and lit up the strangest scene. We were in the middle of skeletoned houses, untiled roofs, unplastered walls, unglazed windows.[176]

Then journalist/critic Fintan O'Toole's account of growing up in Crumlin in the 1960s presents us with a portrait of the place a generation on:

> I did not think it consciously as we trailed through the estate, through the winding, treeless monotonous roads flanked by rows of identical little houses in blocks of four or eight, dodging children playing Beds with shoe polish boxes for piggies, and dogs that might dart out of occluded gateways, but we were children of a new wilderness. We were city kids but our games were different from those of our parents who grew up nearer to the city centre. We could play football on the roads [...] We had a game specifically invented for the narrow roads of the estate [...] By growing up where we did we were different from them, though we shared something of their sense of loss. Like us that day, our parents had been explorers, though for the most part involuntary ones, cast adrift without map or compass, deprived of familiar co-ordinates, thrust, as Jim Larkin put it in 1939 "into areas to which they are not acclimatised."[177]

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[176] Dominic Behan, *My Brother Brendan* (London, Four Square Books, 1966), p.21-22
[177] Fintan O'Toole, "Kick the Can" in Dermot Bolger (ed.), *Invisible Dublin. A Journey through Dublin's Suburbs* (Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1991), p.101

Notably, both accounts describe the uncanny effect of the place's liminality. Only the more pragmatic female narrative of moving from slum to suburb reflected the practical improvement in household conditions which inevitably occurred - as Kathleen Behan recalled in her memoir, *Mother of all Behans*:

> I thought we were going to Siberia. Crumlin, you know, is right out of the city, on the slopes of the Dublin Mountains. It would put your heart crossways, just looking at miles and miles of new roads. No lights. It was like the Wild West. Da cursed and swore about leaving his dirty old pub and being miles away from his work but I didn't care. *He* didn't have to put up with one lavatory used by seven families [...] At last we reached Kildare Road. The little house was lovely [...] Is there anything better than the smell of fresh paint? I was delighted. Tiny it was, with a little front parlour and two little bedrooms, but that was still better than all of us stuck in two rooms.[178]

Within these mixed reactions, we are reminded of the sheer relief that the Crumlin housing estate must have presented many slum dwellers and that against a backdrop of culture shock, monotony, class segregation or ghettoisation and exile, the estate's provision of thousands of single modern units was a phenomenal municipal achievement.

Large-scale development in this area was first mooted by Abercrombie et al's prize-winning town plan of 1914 and published in their *Dublin of the Future* in 1922. Therein the authors described it as an "extra-urban area" and proposed that 430 acres should be developed there for housing, along with 400 acres at Cabra and 166 acres at Drumcondra; all of this proposed extra-urban development was to house 59,750 people on fringe sites totalling almost 1,000 acres.[179] As such, the Crumlin scheme was in gestation and then under formation for many years: its sewerage system was laid down as early as 1925-29;[180] the first 247.5 acres (at Crumlin South - the area east of the old village of Crumlin) were purchased by CPO for £55,158 in 1934;[181] house construction began in 1934 and by 1939, 3,353 houses were complete in the growing areas of North and South Crumlin Estates;[182] and this persisted throughout the Emergency years so

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[178] Kathleen Behan/ Brian Behan, *Mother of All Behans. The Autobiography of Kathleen Behan as told to Brian Behan* (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1994), p.91

[179] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.22-23. Taking the figures from the 1913/1914 Housing Inquiry, the authors estimated that 64,500 people needed to be housed. They assigned 4,450 of these to urban areas and the rest, 59,750 were to be housed in extra-urban areas of Drumcondra, Cabra and Crumlin.

[180] Maurice Craft, "The Development of Dublin: the Southern Suburbs" in *Studies* (No.60, Spring 1971), p.68

[181] P.A. Pfretzschner, *The Dynamics of Irish Housing* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1965), p.88

[182] The categorisation of *North* and *South* Crumlin runs through contemporary reports and defined the areas as they grew. Craft takes North Crumlin to mean the area north of Kildare Road; this was begun in the late 1930s and largely built during and just after the Emergency. Ruth McManus charts Crampton builders' involvement on the first part of Crumlin South's development, see McManus *Crampton Built* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2008)

that by 1950, c.5,500 houses were finished (figures 3.77 + 3.78). The estate continued to grow through additional infill housing and the final adjacent Captain's Road area scheme which was constructed into the mid-1950s. Altogether the Crumlin estates amounted to some 6,000 houses and the State propaganda pamphlet *Ireland is building* proclaimed in 1950 that the suburb's population was "equal to that of the City of Limerick".[183] In fact, over half of the Corporation's housing output from the 1931/32 legislation, was concentrated in the Crumlin area during the 1930s and 40s.[184]

Crumlin estate's primary architectural ingredients of the two-storey house composed in terraces from two up to eight units, set onto road ways which curved around open unplanted green spaces or ran straight to create axes of communication, were the common features of Ireland's mid-century vernacular housing. Vernacular architecture and housing might be defined as an architecture evolving out of regional customs, climate and materials or as Bernard Rudofsky termed it in 1964, "architecture without architects".[185] It is an understanding of dwelling as situated or embedded unpretentiously in its particular culture and as such, in my reading of it, the term does not contradict Dublin Corporation's "expediency first" housing approach from the 1930s through the 1950s. I would argue that the vernacular label is useful in guiding our understanding of this unprecedented production of homes at a certain point in Irish urban history: it enables us to situate the houses' design and fabric according to architectural origins, social intent and local conditions when otherwise, these suburban environments are dismissed as being devoid of architectural interest.

In terms of architectural analysis, it is important to note this aforementioned "sameness" of the housing estates so that Crumlin becomes representative of architectural type and layout pattern, albeit on an enlarged scale. The Crumlin houses and setting belong in a Dublin lineage which began in earnest with the 1920s designs for the Marino (by F. G. Hicks with Horace O'Rourke, 1925-9) and Drumcondra (O'Rourke, 1928) schemes (figures 3.73 + 3.74), among others. One might argue that the terraced one-family house, in its Irish or specifically Dublin working-class version, began to characterise whole city centre neighbourhoods through the efforts of the Dublin Artisans' Dwelling Company (DADco) from the 1890s onwards - as at the Oxmantown Scheme

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p.112-117. For an outline of Dublin house building and statistics of Crumlin activity therein, see *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), appendix 1 "Number of Dwellings Completed by Dublin Corporation to 31st March 1939", p.231-232 and appendix 28, part I "Average All-in Costs of Dublin Corporation Dwellings Erected Between 1922 and 1940", p.260

[183] Departments of Local Government and Health, *Ireland is Building* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1951), unpaginated. For the same point, see also *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1942), p.36

[184] Craft sums this up in his article and cites the Dublin Corporation Housing Department document, *Accommodation Provided by Dublin Corporation to 31st March 1969* (unpublished, not consulted by this author): Maurice Craft, "The Development of Dublin: the Southern Suburbs" in *Studies* (No.60, Spring 1971), p.69

[185] Bernard Rudofsky, *Architecture without Architects. A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture* (New York, Doublelday/MoMa, eigth edition, 2003)

(1891-1908, Charles Ashworth) or the Coombe Scheme (1881, Thomas Drew) - and the suburban type of the 1920s was rooted in DADco models.[186] As Ruth McManus asserts, the 1920s schemes overseen by O'Rourke sported house types and road layouts which had been advocated by Raymond Unwin in the British Tudor Walters Report of 1918 such as cul-de-sacs and terraces of two-storey cottages.[187] This British report set out minimum standards for house design in terms of dimensions and variation in elevation treatment, and it proposed a density of twelve houses per acre for suburban areas (most of the Crumlin estate was based on a density of fourteen houses per acre). In matters of density and elevational treatment, the influence of the Tudor Walters Report was significant on Irish housing standards as evidenced by the Department of Local Government's housing manual of 1925 which laid out five different house types from four-roomed labourers' cottages to three, four and five-roomed suburban types with and without parlours (figure 3.24).[188] These types appear to have been revisited annually in terms of materials (to encourage indigenous materials and Irish industry) and dimensions (ever-shrinking, in response to slum clearance needs) and evolved into standard types to be deployed by the local authorities from the 1930s onwards. In this way, when confronted with the 1930s housing drive, Simms as Dublin's Housing Architect inherited design guidelines and strictures from which he could only adapt rather than design anew. Then, house form at Crumlin was continuous with earlier forms but in many respects, due to the primary motivation of slum clearance, these units were streamlined and reduced in size and as such, represented a greater amount of standardisation in design.

The vernacular that emerged was a seemingly naive or child-like cliché of "home" on a mind-boggling scale, consisting as it did of rectilinear terraces of cubic houses surmounted by pitched roofs of slate. The elevations were articulated by fenestration patterns of a single rectangular window on both levels, vertically aligned with each other, and a simple door opening capped with its concrete canopy, to mark the off-centre entrance at ground level (figure 3.81-3.85). According to the particular terrace, facades were either clad in pebbledash with details such as lintels and architraves picked out in brick or render, or they were brick-clad with details emphasised in render (figure 3.83-

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[186] For an excellent overview of the DADco, see Colum O'Riordan, "The Dublin Artisans' Dwellings Company" in *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies* (Vol. VII, 2004), p.156-183

[187] Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 - 1940. Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p.170-175. The Tudor Walters Report (1918) came out of a commission under Sir John Tudor Walters and is entitled *Report of the Committee Appointed by the President of the Local Government Board and the Secretary for Scotland to Consider Questions of Building Construction in Connection with the Provision of Dwellings for the Working Classes in England and Wales, and Scotland, and Report Upon Methods of Securing Economy and Despatch in the Provision of Such Dwellings*. There is no copy available in Ireland so this author has been unable to consult it and is reliant on McManus' interpretation of it.

[188] The Irish Ministry of Local Government, *House Designs, Books A -E* (Dublin: Prescribed by the Minister for Local Government under The Housing (Building Facilities) Act, 1924) has been consulted and is available in Trinity College Library, Early Printed Books Department. The most prolific type seems to be from Book B (four-roomed parlour houses) and Book C (four-roomed kitchen houses) which are used in the Marino scheme.

3.85). Most typically, the division between the two floors was marked by a stringcourse, and in order to introduce an element of Tudor Walters-like variation, Simms played with the terraces' planarity and rooflines: pushing the two end-of-terrace units or the terrace's central unit forwards from the building line and then surmounting those differentiated units with a pedimented gable (figures 3.87).[189] In terms of Simms' contribution to design issues, there are at least two recordings of his direct input to the external aesthetic of the houses: firstly in the Housing Committee report of 1934, Simms insisted on greater elevation variety and suggested that partial brick construction be introduced at key junctions of the scheme, namely for corner house pairs (figure 3.83 + 3.92);[190] and secondly, in the correspondence around the Captain's Lane extension in 1948, it was noted that the houses were to sport double rather than single gateposts "to the Housing Architect's design".[191]

Certainly both these corner units, consisting of either a simple cubic block of two houses or a splayed block of three houses (figure 3.91-3.94), and the boundary structures being made up of low-lying dashed and rendered walls which curve upwards at edges to contain simply sculpted iron gates (figures 3.95 + 3.96), signified a synthesis of architecture and planning which implied the hand of Simms and his architectural team. Where the corner dwellings were *differentiated* through more elaborate materials and their disencumbered dispositions, the boundary walls and gates were *consistent* throughout, introducing a significant unifying and continuous element to the scheme as it developed over a twenty-year period. The horizontality of these dwarf walls was mirrored in the horizontal emphasis of each house's stringcourse, while their curvilinear edges and the gates' sculpted detailing flirted with *art-nouveau* sources. Such design elements challenge (rather than overturn) the common perception that Crumlin and its contemporaries were the impoverished younger siblings of the pioneering, more elaborately designed and more truly Garden Suburb estate of Marino. Undeniably Marino displayed greater variation in house type, was more sensitive in its layout to the site's topography and was as Eddie Conroy asserts, for the "aristocracy of the working classes".[192] However, the later estates of the mid-century were similarly considered and

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[189] I use the label "Tudor Walters" to denote the general or really aesthetic influence of British Garden City ideas as pushed by Unwin – greater variation of elevation treatment was a key aspect.

**[190]** According to the 1934 report, "The Housing Architect reported that in a scheme of such magnitude as the Crumlin Scheme, it was desirable to introduce some variety of elevational treatment, and he submitted plans for the practical introduction of brick construction for this purpose. The erection of about 125 dwellings so embellished, at an estimated extra cost of £1,800, was accordingly approved, subject to sanction of the Minister of Local Government and Public Health." "Monthly Report of the City Manager and Town Clerk, no.41" clause 436, See *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1949 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.251

[191] According to instructions from 21st December 1948 marked "Gates for Captains Lane": "gates to the Housing Architects' design, 7'6" double gate with 3'9" leaves. Standard gate costs c. £3 while double gate costs £7 from Mr J Tunstead, rere 35 Marlborough Street." See File # 4, "Church and School Sites" 1947 – 1954. Crumlin South, Captains Lane extension, Box 34, B1/03/105, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library

[192] Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.77

designed as total schemes. Importantly, they inherited a somewhat degenerate version of the British Garden Suburb as it was filtered through F.G. Hicks' geometrical pattern making (as in Marino) so that Crumlin and other Dublin examples, was best understood through aerial views and maps (Figures 3.75 + 3.76).

Looking at the O.S. Maps (1936 and 1943) and a contemporary aerial photograph (figures 3.77 – 3.80), we are struck by the immense wheels of roadways from which spread a well-organised web of arteries, occasionally culminating in cul-de-sacs but mostly forming crescents and arcs or bifurcating stems. Clearly the road system was a geometrical frame onto which the architecture sat and in which open green spaces were enclosed. It is so dominating that these radial and bisecting axes become the suburban leitmotif: everything was subordinate to these channels, to the extent that the architectural statements of paired houses or splayed units at corners are read as junction markers. Of course the origin of this roadway supremacy lay in Abercrombie's dictates coming out of a Garden Suburb narrative of travelling to-and-fro the urban workplace. In both the 1922 and 1941 town plans the layout and role of roads dominated the discourse, with the extra-urban estates' success depending on their correct manifestation. In terms reminiscent of Le Corbusier's "orthogonal state of mind" versus the meandering pack-donkey way, the 1941 *Sketch Plan* urged the replacement of the then "maze of inadequate obsolete [...] mean narrow and tortuous streets" representing the route from Crumlin to Christchurch with "thoroughfares of generous dimensions" (figure 3.51).[193] And one of the few drawings describing the potential design of new suburbs in the 1922 *Dublin of the Future* showed a public trapezoidal plaza for Cabra, from which sprang three symmetrical axes that would have been the envy of Baroque Rome at Piazza del Popolo (figure 3.52)! Along with this perspectival (sub) urban design strategy, the report proposed the experience of residential arteries as "tree-planted footwalks" which "would form recreation and promenade areas; and by coming in direct from the country to practically the centre of the city, would act as fresh air ducts and modify the smoke laden atmosphere of the interior."[194]

Much of the earlier experimentation with varying road widths and cul-de-sacs as methods of separating heavier vehicular from pedestrian traffic – such as that at Marino which was influenced by the Tudor Walters Report - was to be found in the 1930s and later Corporation estates. It can be asserted though, that in Crumlin the guiding rationale of the central "Celtic cross" formation at Clonmacnoise Road was reductively geometric and completely unresponsive to the site's topography (figure 3.79). In this

[193] This is a paraphrase of Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly and Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941) from *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.25-26

[194] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.26

way, denied both topographical responsiveness and necessary planting, the Crumlin estate lay windswept; the megalomaniacal superimposition of such national iconography as the Celtic cross together with the glib naming of its new roads after monastic sites and westerly mountain ranges, amounted to a kitsch superficial nationalism made manifest through an oft soulless environment.[195] J. M. Richards' criticism of the newly constructed suburbs of 1940s Britain has resonance with the Crumlin example: "... instead of our well-groomed landscape, so cunningly contrived so that all other worlds shall be excluded, we find a barren acreage of bricks and mortar within which the chilly atmosphere of the outside world circulates all too freely."[196] Conroy describes the Dublin phenomenon as placeless, "where the language of the utopian, individual Garden Suburb is supplanted by the replicable, non-specific language of Mass Housing. Abstract architectural considerations have severed the connections to the specific *genius loci* of the site."[197]

In terms of Conroy's charge of mass housing, the architectural elements of Crumlin from the 1930s through the 1950s were indeed replicable and non-specific but they were well-designed buildings comprising hand-crafted, albeit standardised components; in reality, this process played out Abercrombie's 1922 warning about not "putting a valuable jewel into an ill-designed setting"![198] There were many house types which varied in terms of external treatment but there were only three house plans.[199] These plan forms were primarily two-bedroomed up until the Emergency period. Following analyses of allocations policy and family size in the *Report of Inquiry*, the majority of houses constructed were three-bedroomed. Because of this limited palette, houses could be produced swiftly with working drawings being reproduced rather than

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[195] The estate's road names and the Celtic cross layout at its centre have given rise to at least one questionable post-colonial critique of Crumlin; see Andrew Kincaid, *Postcolonial Dublin. Imperial Legacies and the Built Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), chapter 2 "Postindependence Ireland: Beyond Tradition"

[196] J. M. Richards, *The Castles on the Ground. The Anatomy of Suburbia* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), p.26

[197] Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.88

[198] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.27

[199] There were three plan forms MK1 (one-bedroomed terrace), MK2 (two-bedroomed terrace) and MK3 (three-bedroomed end of terrace): original working drawings on request from Dr. Mary Clarke, Archivist, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library.
To these plan forms there were more types, referred to in later Corporation working files, which denoted the various external treatments such as "mid-terrace pedimented gable" or "end of terrace with brick facing" and so on. In the Crumlin North Correspondence, DCC Housing Development files 20, box 20 file #1 "General Administration file, 1940 - 1950" see document on house types which describes eleven extra houses (in-fill) to be added to the scheme: type 14A = intermediate houses, roofed with interlocking tiles and finished with cream dashing; type 14B =end houses roofed as above and finished with white dashing; same as above but finished with buff and grey dashing; type 4B = intermediate houses, white dashing; type 17A = end houses finished with brick facing and white dashing (2 of them) - most expensive at £446 per house; type 15A = end houses roofed with pantiles and finished with brick dressings and white dashings, also expensive at £434 per house; second most expensive = centre projecting houses type 17C, roofed with interlocking tiles and finished with brick facings and white dashing, £440. There was also one more very expensive house at £460 per house which was the end projecting house type 15D = roofed with pantiles and finished with brick dressings and white dashing.

individually reworked, while the *tabula rasa* nature of the settings and the geometrical simplicity of the estates' layout structures enabled smaller terraces and infill pairs to be inserted without much planning throughout the later 1940s and into the 1950s. In this way, considering the economic and material obstacles, the mid-century suburban estates multiplied themselves relatively quickly.

Fundamentally, the house designs were guided by Abercrombie's early advice that Dublin's suburban houses, in differing from urban models, should be wide and dominated by a through-lit living room.[200] As such, the Corporation cottages as at Crumlin, which were necessarily economical in size, prioritised the bright living room: this main space was positioned to the front and was accessed via a small entrance and stairway hall; it was the centre piece of the house, lit by the portrait window and containing the primary fireplace. Behind it was the working area of the house in the form of a scullery (or kitchen) and bathroom with separate toilet, off which lead the rectangular plot of individual back garden (figure 3.81). The marked aspect of the (otherwise unremarkable) Crumlin house plan follows from our reading of the Estate as the built product of economic exigency and slum clearance. In this vein then, we note the lack of parlour in the ground floor plan of all the Crumlin types. Interestingly, many critics and inhabitants have overlooked the parlour's omission in Crumlin: for instance, Noel Moffett delivered the blanket criticism of the parlour in his overview essay of Irish urban housing in 1947: "It is interesting to note that our psychological necessity for luxury expresses itself, in low-cost housing, in the provision of a best-parlour or holy-of-holies – a small sitting-room used only on Sunday evenings or for entertaining special guests."[201] Similarly, Fintan O'Toole chastises the pretentions of the parlour space as it was included in the Crumlin houses:

> On moving in, they [the first Crumlin tenants of late 1930s] found that other Victorian visions had come into play: houses specifically designed for very large families had just two small bedrooms, and yet the designers had seen fit to take up precious space with that most Victorian of bourgeois domestic ideals – a parlour. ("Somewhere" an old lady told me "to bring the insurance man for a chat when somebody died".) Nor could the planners bring themselves to see the houses as places of work: the kitchens were combined with the main living area, leaving the working women with no space of their own and large families under their feet.[202]

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[200] Dublin's town houses and urban cottages were traditionally narrow in width and deep in plan. Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.31

[201] Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Urban Housing" in *Architectural Design* (July, 1947, Ireland issue), p.188

[202] Fintan O'Toole, "Kick the Can" in Dermot Bolger (ed.), *Invisible Dublin* (Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1991), p.102-103

However, unlike the Marino houses and most of the model types in the British and Irish housing manuals of 1923-25, the Crumlin house departed from the "best-parlour" plan in, as O'Toole critically points out, its provision of one larger living space, supported by a hard-working kitchen/bathroom quarter behind. In this respect, the Crumlin house approached the traditional Irish rural house plan of which Moffett was particularly fond. Moffett likened the local traditional plan to the international modernist penchant for open-plan living; as he wrote in 1946:

> One of the basic ideas in modern architecture – the desire to create a sense of space – is already traditionally Irish. An architect no longer designs a house with a breakfast room, a sitting room and a dining room. Instead we give people living space, which divides into different zones or areas for different purposes...The modern tendency is to provide space for all these activities in one big room. This gives to a small house a very definite sense of space. It is easy to carry out this in Ireland because the ordinary plan of the Irish cottage consists of the kitchen – which is also the living room and which you enter directly from outside the house – and a number of bedrooms opening off the kitchen.[203]

Following this rationale, we might argue that the Crumlin house was decidedly modernist in plan!

The upper storey was organised around a small landing which fed two or three bedrooms. The largest bedroom was to the front which, over the living room, contained the second fireplace. All of the houses were finished with high quality joinery for skirting boards, doors, architraves, floor boards, stairs and handrails (figure 3.97). Analysis of the contractors' activities, such as G. + T. Crampton who were responsible for much of the construction of Crumlin South and North from 1937 until the early 1950s, reveals how the joinery for the scheme was hand crafted in their respective workshops.[204] So while standardised, the origin of the houses' components was either the workshop (rather than the factory), or crafted on site; the hand of the skilled worker was evidenced throughout the Crumlin houses. And arguably, so too was the hand of Simms in evidence through the coordination of and attention to detail: the dimensions and formal qualities of the joinery and each house's pair of fireplaces coordinated with the

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[203] Moffett in interview (by Marie O'Dwyer), "Prefabricated Houses for Eire", context unknown to this author – perhaps women's magazine (September 1946), p.4

[204] Ruth McManus' history of Crampton builders, based on oral history and archival material, recounts how during the 1930s and 40s the joinery workshops made windows, doors and stairs for two or three housing schemes at a time: "Junior Magowan recalls Alfie Thomas making stairs – a small man, when he was ready to build the stairs he would lift and put props under it. Eventually, he would walk the stairs in on his back." See McManus, *Crampton Built* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, G + T Crampton, 2008), p.124

external features of the gates and boundary walls. An overall aesthetic emerged from the bold rectilinear structure of the terraces which was made up of clean lines, enforced by the render or brick band running across the middle of each house. Almost no decoration distracted from these streamlined buildings except for the idiosyncratic curving boundary walls and gateways which were mirrored in the suggested curvilinear joinery mouldings.

## ***Part II Building on the Edge: Dublin's suburban housing drive of the 1940s***

*Crumlin housing estate: social and architectural criticism*

Many commentators on this mid-century suburban vernacular have affixed the "neo Georgian" stylistic label as a means of reconciling the modern process and function of mass-housing to the traditional aesthetic of brick and pitched roof.[205] Certainly the architecture's mute orderliness and repetitive elements, along with its nostalgic profile of pitched roof with chimney stack and brick cladding belonged to the Georgian spirit. Abercrombie had lauded Dublin's tenement buildings as being "the most architectural in Europe" and implored Irish architects to take the Georgian features of "spacious rooms, dignified doorways, ample sash windows", and "to carry the same spirit into the new suburban growth, avoiding the machine-made monotony and harshness of the bye-law suburb, on the one hand, and the fussy picturesqueness of the early garden suburb, on the other".[206] Could Crumlin estate and those schemes at Cabra and Ballyfermot be read as Simms' and O'Rourke's translation of Abercrombie's Georgianism? But equally the estate spoke a language of modernism with its streamlined aesthetic and standardised (albeit hand-crafted) parts. While the early modernist tropes of flat roof and white render were missing, the architecture was constructed out of mass concrete until Crampton contractors evolved their concrete block factory from 1947.[207] And the earliest photographs of the estate present an image of colourless replicated units, ultimately reminiscent of the European workers' housing estates in its socialist provision of housing for the masses (figures 3.88-3.90).

In such a reading, the subordination of the well-designed simple dwelling to the overall order of the estate was a physical manifestation of the individual's subordinated

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[205] See for example Roger Bowdler, "Between the Wars: 1914 – 1940" in English Heritage, *London Suburbs* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999); Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.77-78, p.88; Paul Oliver, Ian Davis, Ian Bentley, *Dunroamin. The Suburban Semi and its Enemies* (London: Pimlico, 1981)

[206] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Arthur Kelly, *Dublin of the Future. The New Town Plan* (Liverpool/London: University Press of Liverpool/ Hodder + Stoughton with the Civics Institute of Ireland, 1922), p.39

[207] Ruth McManus describes the beginning of the off-shoot Crampton company of Clondalkin Concrete in 1947. She outlines how Cecil Crampton, ever the innovator and interested in all building technology, decided in 1944 to design a "self-contained facility which would deal with all facets of concrete production, including washing and grading of aggregates, a ready-mix concrete plant, a concrete-block plant and a pre-cast concrete parts unit." This happened in 1945 with the purchase of a 28-acre site in Clondalkin (west Dublin) and opened in January 1948. See McManus, *Crampton Built* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, G + T Crampton, 2008), p.141

relationship to the greater community.[208] Reverting to the question of individualism and community as discussed on pages 50-55, we can assert that underpinning all suburban development was the pursuit of community; American urban sociologist William Whyte's seminal study of a suburb (Levittown) in Illinois, *The Organisation Man* (1955) depicted an orderly and civil environment where doors were unlocked due to the communality and solidarity between neighbours.[209] This communalism vying with individualism was and continues to be suburbia's signature paradox. This paradox is not conflicting in the universal middle-class iterations of the suburban estate. However, in Crumlin, there was an underlying demographic imbalance brought about by the Corporation's allocation practices of prioritising large families, families with tuberculosis and overcrowded families. What was occurring, according to the CHC's 1937/38 research, was that an unnatural amount of big families with young children were placed in the new suburban estate: the Council's analysis of 144 newly-housed families found that there were 614 children (under fifteen years old) and 159 young adults (fifteen to twenty one years old) so that in only seven years from then, the number of young adults would have increased greatly. In this way, not only were the new estates to cater for one class group but they were being filled with one demographic type. The CHC asserted that "Unless leisure occupation of a healthy and normal kind is provided for them the results may be extremely unpleasant for them and for others."[210] This report and the later *Report of Inquiry* called for a greater mix of family type allocation in Crumlin and elsewhere, in the form of elderly couples or individuals and newly married units. Housing reformers maintained that without generational variety, the suburban idyll would be unattainable.

In his oft-cited critique of the ongoing slum clearance project in 1945, T. W. Dillon took the CHC analysis and described a dystopian future for the children of Dublin's new suburban estates (with particular focus on Crumlin/Drimnagh) where there was no supporting community infrastructure in the form of technical or secondary schools, factories or football grounds; instead, as Dillon sardonically pointed out, "A fine police barracks has been provided to control the unruly crowds of workless adolescents."[211] Dillon outlined how tubercular families also got allocation priority which, he surmised, amounted to a sprinkling of infection within the burgeoning community and yet, there was neither dispensary nor hospital, and for the first few years, there was no district nurse.[212] The lack of services in the new estates, particularly at Crumlin, was brought up throughout the *Report of Inquiry* and as we will see, dominated the post-war discourse

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[208] This is a paraphrase of Eddie Conroy's reading of suburban estates from the 1920s in "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.77

[209] William Whyte, *The Organisation Man* (New York: Simon + Schuster, 1956)

[210] Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938*, (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.31

[211] T. W. Dillon, "Slum Clearance: Past and Future" in *Studies* (No. 34, March 1945), p.19

[212] Ibid, p.19-20

of the Corporation's Housing Committee. One of the recommendations which passed from the CHC's report and was taken up by the Corporation in 1949 was the appointment of female welfare workers within the housing estates so as to mediate on rent issues but also, to engage in pastoral work with the families.[213] The *Report of Inquiry*, based on the evidence and advice of the Civics Institute, dedicated considerable analysis to "social welfare" issues and to the potential for female welfare assistants. The report acknowledged that "there is need for a service specially directed towards the solution of difficulties encountered by families suddenly removed from surroundings, which, however defective in many essential respects, had some compensatory advantages the loss of which often causes serious upset in the tenant's way of life."[214] It pointed out that the newly-housed family had to cope with change on many levels from transport, school and recreational issues, to new household mechanisms, new neighbours and importantly, new budgetary demands. In such an alien environment, the reformers emphasised the need for social rehabilitation and as per usual, the British model (of women housing managers) was invoked.[215] Interestingly, community services and social infrastructural projects were slower to be delivered because of their splintered sources. As the mid-war *Lord Mayor's Annual* of 1944 described, schools and churches would be provided by the ecclesiastical and educational authorities while libraries, fire stations, dispensaries, welfare clinics and social centres were Corporation (or rather Local Government) commitments.[216]

In the main, social support was sought so as to counter the 1939 testimony of the Corporation's Allocations Officer, Thomas Bourke who claimed that the majority of the tenants of the new suburban cottages wanted to return to the city centre.[217] As Bourke admitted "A lot of people declare that the air is so strong that the children eat them out of house and home. They cannot afford to keep the children in food. They would prefer to go back to any place out of it."[218] Maurice Craft's research outlined the

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[213] It is recorded in the "Breviate for Quarter ending 31st March 1949" that two "Women Housing Visitors" are to be appointed, one for the North city area and one for the South, and that the salary should be increased so as to attract the best candidates. See *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1949 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.125

[214] "Social Welfare" point 387, Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.138

[215] Point 403 Ibid., p.42-143, outlines the example of Miss Octavia Hill and the recently founded "Society of Women Housing Managers" in Britain in 1929

[216] See *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.18

[217] Bourke admitted that 400 of the 2,000 families placed in Crumlin by 1938, had applied to be transferred back to the city centre: "If we were to circularise the Crumlin tenants, and ask them how many would like to get back to the city, we would get a thousand applications [...] They feel out of their element, and the sooner they get back, they think, the better[...] we will eventually have to reach a point where we will have to force these people into these houses." Summary of evidence by Thomas Bourke, Allocations Officer, "Dublin Housing Inquiry 1939, Box 3 - Verbatim Report of Proceedings BF" Box File R1/01/05 in Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library. This evidence is NOT in the Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943)

[218] James Larkin, as Chairman of the Housing Committee, claimed that the new tenants were put "into areas to which they are not acclimatised. They are simply dumped down there; they don't understand their surrounds. No one ever goes near them except to collect the rent." Ibid. "Dublin Housing Inquiry 1939, Box 3 - Verbatim Report of Proceedings BF" Box File R1/01/05

evidence of a Corporation Health Inspector who in 1941, was charged with canvassing families on the housing list to accept a Crumlin house on the grounds of the houses' modern facilities and opportunities for children; the Inspector recounted the difficulties and stated that "at one stage it seemed that the Corporation might be left with unoccupied houses there."[219] Clearly the estates were unpopular throughout the 1930s and into the 1940s. The causes for this unpopularity were manifold but the lack of affordable transport into the city centre along with the paucity of community services were the primary source of the new tenants' perceived sense of marginalisation. Unlike the suburbia of William Whyte, Alexander Humphreys' 1949 study of Dublin's new neighbourhoods as he called them, revealed that "solidarity between families in the new neighbourhoods is far less than in the old neighbourhoods."[220] While the estates, and particularly Crumlin, were composed of a single demographic and class type, the tenants were a mix of rural migrants and urban slum dwellers; as one of Humphreys' interviewees elucidated, "But this is a new housing scheme [...] people have come in here from the four quarters of the globe."[221] Humphreys explained that this difference in origin overrode the similarities in circumstance and amounted to a population of strangers: where children's peer groups flourished in these new neighbourhoods, parents kept to themselves and there was virtually no informal visiting.[222]

Along with the divergent origins of the tenants of the housing estates, Humphreys' subjects blamed the neighbourhoods' newness and size. Of course the connection between social malaise and its framing structures of architecture and town planning runs through twentieth-century social anthropology – a sort of anthropology of architecture. Already by 1942 Gavan Duffy associates the two in his reflection on Crumlin, when he questions the "wisdom of the new colonies" as they seemed "so sharply cut off from the more prosperous neighbourhoods as to give an air, by their size and by their contours, of deliberated segregation and isolation".[223] As we have noted, Eddie Conroy's later criticism of the estates' placelessness is directed at their geometrical planning which he blames on the championing of pattern-making processes over experiential responses to the rural sites.[224] Maurice Craft too identified the source of the tenants' consequent sense of alienation with perceived defects of the physical make-up of the estates:

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[219] Maurice Craft, "The Development of Dublin: the Southern Suburbs" in *Studies* (No.60, Spring 1971), p.69
[220] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p.187
[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid, p.186
[223] Hon. Mr. Justice George Gavan Duffy, "Response to The Dublin Town Plan", *Studies* (June 1942), p.162
[224] Eddie Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.88

> The much lower density of population and lack of street-corner shops to facilitate relationships; the sheer quietness of an environment without industry, heavy traffic, and centres of entertainment to residents who may rarely have travelled beyond their birthplace...may all add up, for a conservative social group, to culture-shock on a substantial scale.[225]

Evidently Abercrombie pre-empted or indeed observed the "culture-shock" reaction in the late 1930s when he called for greater compactness of dwellings in these Corporation estates. In a theoretical merging of middle-class Garden Suburb aspiration and working-class conservatism, the 1941 *Sketch Plan* suggested a revision of earlier edicts on low density:

> We would suggest that the present inhabitants of these houses, being used to highly urbanised conditions, might be provided with something more reminiscent of these surroundings in their new homes. Instead of being in Garden Suburb conditions, they might be housed in terraces with ample play and park space, with little or no gardens attached directly to the houses, but with allotment space adjacent, and communal hot water supply and other amenities.[226]

In general though, as O'Toole's and the Behans' memoirs attest, it was the built fabric of the estates that was the target of criticism. And the main charge was against the monotony of that fabric. Finola Watchorn's local history of Crumlin provides us with a rare account of the "old Crumliners" perception of the new scheme and pointedly, their reaction to the seemingly unrelenting repetition of new houses:

> The first time we villagers crossed the 'border' to explore the new terrain of Derry and Clonmacnoise Road, we were struck dumb. So this was the New Crumlin they were all talking about – the new world. We had never seen so many houses – all the same shape and size, and wondered how the new kids could find their own. All our village houses, cottages, shops, walls, gates and roads were unique in themselves, and very seldom resembled those of our neighbours. These 'scheme kids' were certainly not short of pals. Here there were hundreds of them – all playing skipping at the same time, and with the one rope – and still more waiting in the queue.[227]

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[225] Maurice Craft, "The Development of Dublin: the Southern Suburbs" in *Studies* (No.60, Spring 1971), p.75
[226] Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Sydney Kelly, Manning Robertson, *Town Planning Report. Sketch Plan for Dublin* (Dublin: Hely's Ltd, 1941), p.44
[227] Finola Watchorn, *Crumlin and the Way it was* (Dublin: O'Donoghue Print, 1985), p.143

The CHC report criticised the estates' repetitive architecture: "There is a sameness, amounting in large schemes to dullness, if not actual dreariness."[228] The report congratulated the Corporation architects for their hard work but cited staff shortage; such shortage, it claimed "leads to the over-repetition of individual designs, resulting in mass-production effects, and missed opportunities for getting the best result from each site."[229] While applauding the layouts of houses with "their excellent little gardens", the report suggested that the imaginations of the authorities were exhausted in relation to green spaces.[230] It also pointed to the homogeneity of materials as a cause for repetition in terrace aesthetic because change in materials would logically bring "change in form". It decreed that the Dublin houses compared favourably to their British counterparts but it suggested "the maximum variety of external appearances should be aimed at."[231] And, as was picked up in the late 1940s housing drive, the CHC report urged the inclusion of three and five-roomed cottages alongside the ubiquitous four-roomed house. Former City Commissioner W. C. Dwyer was more scathing in his evaluation of the Corporation cottages of the 1930s and 40s which he referred to as "Box Houses" due to the "ruthless reduction of the specifications" coming from the Marino and Drumcondra prototypes. However, like the CHC, he did commend the architects and called for a halt in further money-saving devices, believing it to be "quite unfair to ask the Corporation or Local Government architects to risk their personal reputations by recommending such experiments."[232] As engineer R. N. Hogan's lucid address to the Institute of Civil Engineers of 1941 explained, "In the case of working-class housing everything must be cheapened to the limit in order to keep rents and rates as low as possible, and frequently what is technically the correct method must be discarded in favour of one more expedient."[233]

Perhaps the most provocative view of suburban housing from outside the architectural community in early 1940s Dublin was that of the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Sean MacEntee who, having trained as an engineer, had a predilection for planning and architecture. By the end of 1940 MacEntee was frustrated at the delay with the *Report of the Inquiry* and wrote a letter to De Valera claiming that contemporary local authority housing was designed "generally on stereotyped lines." He surmised:

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[228] Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938* (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.45
[229] Ibid, p.41
[230] Ibid, p.32-33
[231] Ibid, p.32
[232] W. C. Dwyer, evidence to the Housing Tribunal, 1939, cited in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.244
[233] R. N. Hogan, "Some Aspects of Housing in Ireland", lecture to the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland, January 1941, cited by P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.45

> On the one hand they represent the architectural evolution of the residential mansions in old Dublin through its various stages of decay as a hotel, lodging house, tenement, until it has emerged as a new type of Corporation flat; or on the other hand they represent the development of the artisan's dwelling from the early hovels around industrial centres up to the suburban working-class housing colonies with which Dublin is studded [crossed out and 'being surrounded' inserted]. The common thing, however, about them all is that they belong to the pre-war age, and the men who have been engaged in planning them have been thinking, and are still thinking upon, pre-war lines.[234]

J. M. Richards described British suburban architecture as "a kind of oasis in which every tree and every brick can be accounted for, to exclude the unpredictable as far as possible from everyday life."[235] This reading had resonance with the Dublin housing estates in so far as Richards portrayed a predictable or heavily controlled built environment which emanated from standardised units. As such, though reductively standardised and lacking in the crucial and inherent landscaping aspect, Crumlin and the Dublin Corporation housing estates of the 1940s and 1950s still bore the mark of Garden Suburb theory. The building campaign was understood as continuous with the 1930s or "pre-war" types as MacEntee put it, and was really the outcome of an acceleration of this earlier production. Such acceleration and rapid growth was not conducive to careful design planning and became the object of later housing reform discourse.

## ***Part II Building on the Edge: Dublin's suburban housing drive of the 1940s***

*Chronology of events: overview of suburban house building, 1940 – 1948*

Again and again, the oral histories evoked an alienating and liminal environment; officials' testimonies recorded tenants' reticence or inability to settle in the new estates; while key Corporation and Government figures often damned the staid approaches of the suburban solution. By the mid-1940s, the unpopularity of suburban housing was common knowledge and yet the *Report of Inquiry* and housing reform generally glossed over this reality. Improvements in transport networks, subsidies for travel and differential rent systems were called for, but in the meantime, the local authority pursued its cottage-building campaign unabated. In fact, the onset of the Emergency put

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[234] Sean MacEntee, letter to An Taoiseach, 30th November 1940 in "Housing, post-war development" S13059A Local Government files, NAI, unavailable to this author 2009-2010, cited in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.287

[235] J. M. Richards, *The Castles on the Ground. The Anatomy of Suburbia* (London: Architectural Press, 1946), p.30

so many material and economic demands on the housing programme that the suburban option was increasingly upheld as the only viable option.

Emergency conditions brought forth the same mix of heady planning and forced continuity that informed chapter two's hospital development. However, the housing programme was more widespread than hospital construction projects: for instance in 1939, 6,932 units were built by Local Authorities and 10,085 houses were built by private persons or PUSs across Ireland.[236] The blow struck by the Emergency was more harshly felt in the housing sector than elsewhere. In this context, it is interesting to note the push to continue the housing programme in Dublin. The Lord Mayor, Martin O'Sullivan proudly explained in 1944 that construction (in the name of slum clearance) was being maintained albeit at a restricted scale and so, "the Dublin Corporation may claim that it is the only municipality either in this country or elsewhere which, under similar circumstances, has managed to continue its housing progress."[237] This push for continuity, the very real shortage of materials and the tendency to plan for a post-war nation were the three related issues which underpinned housing development during the 1940s.

The example of a terrace of six houses in Crumlin North, section IB (numbers 45 – 50 Dolphin Road, figures 3.99-3.100), which was planned from late 1940 and begun by Cramptons builders in February 1941 but not completed until April 1944, throws light on both the extent of material shortages and the desire to continue construction projects. Having started the process of tendering for the contract, Simms realised that the cost of each house's superstructure (above foundation level) had increased by £35 in less than two years. Simms calculated that this increase was "due to the rise in price of timber, steel and cement, as reflected in the cost of carpentry and joinery and concrete and plastering work" and compiled a table of rising costs for the City Manager:[238]

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[236] These figures are taken from P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.44

[237] Martin O'Sullivan, Address in *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.5

[238] Correspondence between Simms and Sherwin (Assistant City Manager), 12th December 1940 in Crumlin North Correspondence, DCC Housing Development files, Box 20, File #1 "General Administration file, 1940 - 1950" in Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library. I have chosen to highlight this terrace on Dolphin Road for identification purposes, but the following account of material shortages refers to the development of a wider area, Section IB of Crumlin North which incorporated the Dolphin Road terrace.

| ***Date*** | ***Housing Site*** | ***Builder*** | ***Cost*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| April 1934 | Crumlin South, sections 2 + 4 | Fearon Builders | £291.8s.4d. |
| October 1935 | Crumlin South, sections 5 + 7 | Fearon Builders | £302.2s.9d. |
| October 1937 | Crumlin North, section 4 | Crampton Builders | £345.9s.3d. |
| December 1938 | Crumlin North, section 2 | Crampton Builders | £345.9s.3d. |
| June 1939 | Crumlin North, section 3 | Fearon Builders | £314.7s.8d. |
| November 1940 | Crumlin North, section 1B | Crampton Builders | £418.13s.10d. |

Table of Comparative Costs 1934 - 1940 of TYPE 14A house (4-roomed), cost of superstructure of house (source: Crumlin North Correspondence, Dublin City Council Housing Development Files, Box 20, File #1, "General Administration File 1940 – 1950", Dublin City Archives)

From July 1941 until the terrace's completion, Simms and the builders jostled heroically with the lack of materials. The jostle began with the trimming of timber use so that ceiling joists were spaced at 15" from the centre rather than 14"; timber sheeting was replaced by plaster board; 1 ½" internal doors were used instead of 2" ones and most notably, timber flooring was replaced with stained-brown linoleum on screeded concrete.[239] Having reported these changes to the Department of Local Government/Public Health, the City Manager returned to Simms with a call to omit skirting from all wartime houses but Simms refused.[240] Soon however, Simms wrote to the Assistant City Manager, Sherwin to state that there was no electrical cable and, determined to continue he stated, "With a view to providing against a hold up of the building work, which would result in the disemployment [sic] of skilled workers, I am having traps left in the floors that will enable the wiring to be put in after the houses are completed."[241] Simms then minimised electrical points to three in each four-roomed house. Sean Moylan of the Department encouraged Simms' improvisations and lobbied on behalf of the Corporation for materials. But the crisis was worsening and before long, the strict limit on British imports meant that there were no electrical accessories such as switches or holders. By February 1942, Cramptons reported being unable to obtain sheet lead from the British Lead Mining Company and that, needing two tons of it to complete the scheme at Crumlin North, they would have to use *Ruberoid* felt as an alternative. Hesitant to use such an inferior material for flashings to chimneys and so on, Simms,

[239] "New specifications", from Simms to Sherwin, 9th July 1941 in Ibid.
[240] Correspondence from Hernon (City Manager) to Housing Department, 18th July 1941 in Ibid.
[241] Correspondence from Simms to Sherwin, 25th September 1941 in Ibid.

ever the conscientious pragmatist, called on the Department to help the Mining Company of Ireland to obtain pig lead from England.[242]

The final obstacle to the construction of this section of housing was reported in May 1942 when Simms outlined that due to the lack of petrol, they were unable to use the normal 2½ ton roller to make footpaths and so were, "obliged to consolidate the ground with a mechanical rammer which, of course, will not consolidate the ground to the same extent, and cracks may possibly occur in the footpaths at a later stage."[243] He then announced that the contract had to be extended into 1943 but in reality, the first houses (the terrace at Dolphin Road) were not ready for occupation until April 1944. Simms summarised the terrace's state of (in)completion as follows:

> All public services are complete, with the exception of gas branch supply pipe from main to houses. [There are] no pokers, rakers, or flue brushes to ranges. Single or twin single or triple revolving coat hooks for presses no longer obtainable. Wood stops fixed at skirting for hall doors in lieu of rubber stops, which are now unobtainable. There is a single wire and angle iron dividing fence in rere gardens in lieu of two–bar fencing. No picture hangers. No curtain rail fixed in living room between door to hall and rere porch.[244]

This case-study illustrates the material adversity which the Corporation's Housing Department sought to overcome during the Emergency period. In such extreme conditions then, it is hardly surprising that the design of the houses remained constant - albeit with survival-tactic changes to the fit-out of the units – from the pre-war 1930s to the late 1940s. And so MacEntee's 1942 accusation of "stereotyped" backwardness in local authority house design was founded. From this time until early 1943, MacEntee tried to set up a Planning Board which he envisaged to be shaped like the ESB and dedicated to the provision of housing in Dublin. He primarily looked to replace the roles of Local Government and the Corporation so as to initiate "a radical departure from the principles on which we have hitherto proceeded."[245] The language and the intent were rooted in the optimistic culture and potential of post-war planning. As Daly outlines, while MacEntee as newly appointed Minister of Local Government (from 1941) looked to radicalise the housing programme on all levels for the post-war nation, in 1944 his counterpart in Industry and Commerce Sean Lemass was charged with the task of

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[242] "Lead v *Ruberoid*", from Simms to Sherwin, 4th March 1942 in Ibid: the City Manager then reported this to the Department who in turn responded on 12th March 1942, "that they are looking into it"
[243] "No petrol", from Simms to Sherwin, 8th May 1942 in Ibid.
[244] Correspondence from Simms to Sherwin, 3rd April 1944 in Ibid.
[245] Sean MacEntee, letter to An Taoiseach, 30th November 1940 in "Housing, post-war development" S13059A Local Government files, NAI, unavailable to this author 2009-2010, cited in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.287

compiling the white paper, *The Post-War Building Programme*. Published in 1945, the white paper was based on building schemes and projections gleaned from local authorities and other bodies nationally. It was a light-weight document which predicted, unsurprisingly, that housing would constitute the nation's biggest building and economic project – with a projected spend of £41,205,630 or 56% of the total estimated cost of post-war building activities:[246] "So large a demand for housing may cause surprise but the policy of providing better houses for the people will not be questioned."[247]

Accordingly in 1944 Dublin Corporation revised its post-war housing plans from those projected in the *Report of Inquiry* to a five-year programme comprising some 7,502 dwellings at a cost of approximately £7 million, i.e. the cost to construct a house, was approximately £1,000 at this mid-war junction and so it was about twice that of the pre-Emergency cost.[248] Importantly, at this point, there was no discourse around a post-war change in architectural type or geography but rather, because the need was so severe, the 1930s cottage model was maintained. In this respect, Dublin's later 1940s housing diverged from its British example. As the plans were being hatched for an extensive post-war reconstruction and rehousing project in Britain's urban centres and their fringes, the influence of the European avant-garde was being felt through the research and cultural activities of the Modern Architectural Research group (MARS, the British wing of CIAM): most notably the possibility for quasi collective living in multi-storey blocks.[249] As a result, one of Britain's most significant post-war local authority housing projects at Woodberry Downs, which was largely designed during the war, comprised a series of multi-storey blocks placed into the suburban green-field landscape and was to set the example for post-war housing throughout Britain (figures 3.20 – 3.22).[250] Though suburban cottages and to a lesser extent the reconditioning programme dominated post-war plans for Dublin housing, Simms appeared to be acknowledging this shift in working class habitation in his ongoing design for flat blocks for which

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[246] Department Industry/Commerce, *The Post-War Building Programme* - White Paper (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1945), p.6

[247] Ibid, p.8

[248] "Report of the Housing Committee, Report no. 10", *Dublin Corporation Reports*, January – Dec 1944 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.70. See *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1944), p.18 which outlined the details of this housing programme, year by year: the first year, group a, work to be put in hand entailed 2,461 houses including 403 dwellings in Cabra West and 874 in Donnycarney; then for second and third years, group b, work entailed 3,355 houses including Crumlin South to be extended by 787 houses, Sarsfield Road at 1,596 houses and Crumlin North balance of 74 houses. Then group c (4th and 5th year of the 5 year programme) include projects at Cabra West of 108 houses, Crumlin South extension of 178 houses and Captain's Lane of 610 houses with a total of 1,686 houses. It also outlined that this programme did not include ancillary structures in the suburban estates "provision for which will have to be made by the ecclesiastical and educational authorities" though libraries, fire stations, dispensaries, welfare clinics and social centres are Local Authority commitments." P.18

[249] MARS were the Modern Architectural Research group and were supposed to be involved in technological research but more social survey work. The group was directly involved in CIAM from the 1933 meeting "The Functional City" which Wells Coates and Erno Goldfinger attended.

[250] For more on post-war suburban housing and blocks, see Ministry of Health, *Housing Manual 1949* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949), p. 82-92; Elain Harwood "The Road to Subtopia" in English Heritage, *London Suburbs* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p.134 -142; and Lionel Esher, *The Rebuilding of England 1940 – 1980. A Broken Wave* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), p.104-110

foundations were laid during the war; significantly, as we will see, these complexes such as the Rialto and Donore Avenue schemes had moved out of the urban centre and were to be arranged in *array* rather than *perimeter* patterns at fringe sites (see figure 3.177 for example).

Though projections were made, the experience of post-war building activity in Ireland by 1946 was harsh and continued to be handicapped by material shortages. The Department of Local Government Annual Report of 1947/48 recounted a bleak tale: "The termination of hostilities in 1945 did not however effect any material changes in the position. The aftermath of the war is reflected in the acute shortages of labour, materials and equipment."[251] The report's overview of the quantity of houses built showed the slow-down:

| ***Financial Year*** | ***Built by Local Authorities*** | ***Built by private persons or PUSs*** | ***Total number of dwellings built*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1939/1940 | 5,383 | 6,845 | 12,228 |
| 1940/1941 | 3,432 | 4,992 | 8,424 |
| 1941/1942 | 3,447 | 2,895 | 6,342 |
| 1942/1943 | 1,771 | 1,894 | 3,665 |
| 1943/1944 | 1,686 | 794 | 2,480 |
| 1944/1945 | 1,084 | 567 | 1,651 |
| 1945/1946 | 697 | 616 | 1,313 |
| 1946/1947 | 619 | 1,146 | 1,765 |

Table from Department of Local Government, *Annual Report 1947-1948* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1948)

The editorials of the *Irish Builder* were increasingly pessimistic throughout 1947, beginning with its January account of the housing situation wherein it described how suburban dwellings cost double the pre-war price. It discussed how the Minister of Local Government suggested that rents should be fixed at 15% higher than pre-war rates which the editorial in turn dismissed, "Had the Minister suggested 50, instead of 15, per cent, and left local authorities to deal with exceptional cases of hardship, he would, we believe, have displayed a truer sense of realities."[252] It moved on to welcome the newly established Department of Social Welfare and emphasised the social need of housing in post-Emergency Ireland: "We say that shelter ought to be provided on the same financial basis as food and clothing and other "social" services."[253] As discussed in chapter one, there was a serious fuel shortage by March 1947 on which the *Irish Builder*

[251] Department of Local Government, *Annual Report 1947-1948* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1948)
[252] Editorial, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (11th January 1947), p.9
[253] Ibid.

reported, and in the same breath the journal's editorial juxtaposed the 1946-47 house-building figures for Britain and Ireland which inevitably fore-grounded Irish stagnation.[254]

By 1948, Dublin Corporation's Town Planning and Housing Committees had issued two post-war joint reports, the second of which, like the *Irish Builder* and the Department's Annual Report, presented the grim figures of house-building decline: the Corporation completed 705 dwellings in 1944, but only 422 in 1947 and 476 units in 1948. The earlier 1946-47 report was a moralistic commentary composed primarily by the Town Planning Officer Michael O'Brien which among other things, called for the enclosure and completion of the many playing fields and community services which had been delayed due to wartime restrictions. It urged that suburban neighbourhoods be injected with a "civic sense" and targeted the mono-class tendency of the new housing estates as the source of problems. The report pointed out that there must be better distribution of "different strata of society, so as to avoid recurrence in the future of the troubles that have been found to result from lack of attention to this sociological aspect."[255] Almost on a point-by-point basis, this lengthy 1947 report addressed the recommendations of both the CHC report (1937-38) and the *Report of Inquiry* (1939-43). However contrary to these earlier reports, it merely offered commentary and rather fluffy observations on important subjects such as alternative methods of constructing dwellings, new allocations and rent practices or the future boundary extension of Dublin City and County.[256] Perhaps the most pointed aspect of this 1947 report was its call for new legislation, citing the model of the British Commission of Inquiry under Lord Justice Uthwatt (1942) to do with land use, so as "to develop our new housing areas on proper community lines" in terms of synchronicity of development.[257] While this report of 1947 was generally superficial and lacking serious research, it did represent the first official post-war digestion of earlier housing reform recommendations. It was at least a signal towards serious change on a theoretical level which was taken up in earnest by the next joint Housing and Town Planning Committee report of 1948.

In the first instance, the 1948 report was signed by a new figure, T. C. O'Mahony in a new role of "Housing Director". From the start, the report was composed of

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[254] Editorial, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th March 1947), p.198

[255] Report No. 8, Housing and Town Planning Committees joint report (signed off by Norman Chance and Michael O'Brien), *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1947 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.68

[256] For example, the report issues this statement in relation to the flats v cottages debate: "the proportion in which these respective types of accommodation are to be provided should be determined as the Corporation's building activities proceed." Then, in terms of alternative building techniques and materials, it states that a Building Research Committee has been set up to look at alternative methods of building and materials, there as there are no results, this report will not comment on the "desirability or otherwise of departing from the recognised materials of concrete and brick building." See ibid, p.45

[257] Report No. 8, Housing and Town Planning Committees joint report (signed off by Norman Chance and Michael O'Brien), *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1947 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.81. For more on the facts and planning significance of this Uthwatt report, see Austin Robinson, "The Scott and Uthwatt Reports on Land Utilisation" in *The Economic Journal* (Vol. 53, No. 209, April 1943), p.28-38

pragmatic courses of action rather than the theories or polemic so evident in the 1946 - 1947 discourse. It acknowledged the ongoing failure to meet the post-war housing targets set in 1944, pointing not to material shortage (which was improving) but to a disorganised and undernourished workforce; it described a conference with the building trades from February 1948 wherein the following figures charted the comparative number of tradesmen employed on Corporation contracts from August 1938 and April 1944:[258]

| **Year** | **1938** | **1944** |
|---|---|---|
| Number of contracts in hand | 17 | 9 |
| Bricklayers | 163 | 69 |
| Carpenters | 562 | 205 |
| Plumbers | 60 | 13 |
| Plasterers | 323 | 73 |

Chart of Dublin Corporation workforce comparative 1938/1944: from "Present Position of Post-War Building Programme" Report 55, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 p.182

The difference in numbers was striking. Clearly the war had taken its toll in terms of the mass-exodus of labourers to Britain and recognition of this fact lead in turn to a Departmental campaign of repatriation which resulted in our aforementioned shiny propaganda pamphlet, *Ireland is Building. Hospitals and Houses* (1950, figure 3.1-3.3). Along with this analysis of workforce practices, the report analysed all aspects of contemporary housing development revealing that the approximate construction cost in 1948 per cottage was by then £1,200 and per flat was £1,800. The analysis summarised what type of dwelling was being developed, where and at what cost. It presented information about Compulsory Purchase Orders in preparation and as such, the report provided an overview of the prospective shape of the city and its fringes according to housing – most notably the shift towards developing the northern fringes of the city.[259]

The political background to this newfound rigour and shift from the 1947 'chatter' to the 1948 'action' was unsurprisingly dramatic. Due in many respects to the Government's inability to enact the long-awaited and promised social and material

[258] "Present Position of Post-War Building Programme" Report 55, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.182

[259] For instance, we learn that 1,513 dwellings were near completion in the newly developed estates at Donnycarney (North Dublin) and Ballyfermot (West Dublin); that only 150 houses were to be built on the former St. Anne's Estate (North Dublin) until the Howth Main Drainage outfall was completed; that flats were under construction at Donore Avenue (250 units), Newfoundland Street (196) and Whitefriar Street (100); that CPOs were being initiated for sites in Finglas, Darndale, Coolock/Raheny, Howth, Sutton in North Dublin, and at Ringsend, Digges Lane, Dolphin's Barn and Milltown in South Dublin. See Ibid, p.183-184

change after the Emergency, an election was called and the longstanding Fianna Fail government was ousted (for the first time in sixteen years). Specifically in respect of housing, this change was hugely significant: the new Government, known as we know from chapter one as the Inter-Party Government, 1948-51) was largely elected on the improved housing and public health cards and as Daly informs us, a few months after the election the new Labour Minister T. J. Murphy had "transformed Local Government into a virtual Department of Housing."[260] Though this emphatic concentration on housing was set to occur under Sean MacEntee and a continuing Fianna Fail Government once the post-war slump shifted, the mechanisms which Murphy put in place ensured that housing remained the principal preoccupation of the Department of Local Government until the late 1950s.[261]

A review of housing was issued in the form of a White Paper in January 1948, *Housing. A Review of Past Operations and Immediate Requirements*; this had been written under the previous Government but was made manifest through a critically important Housing (Amendment) Act (13th January 1948) which supplemented the existing legislation so as to meet the needs of the post-war situation.[262] This Act might be considered as the starting point for accelerated suburbanisation in Ireland, and most particularly in Dublin. Along with Murphy's personal mission to kick-start the post-war housing programme through meetings with unions so as to introduce more and more direct labour, the Act brought about more favourable economic conditions such as the extension of local housing loan charges from thirty five to fifty years and raising the advances of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act to £2,000.[263] More substantial house grants were issued for private dwellings and the Act increased the Minister's powers in terms of managing and letting local authority housing. Better allocations policies (to help newly married couples for instance) and the introduction of strict licensing of building work, along with direct labour to supplement the contract system, were just some of the Act's improvements which were directly influenced by the CHC report ten years before.

The optimistic mood was encapsulated by the Department of Local Government's *Ireland is Building* pamphlet which, as we know, promised 100,000 houses for Ireland in ten years; already by 1949/50, local authorities built 5,299 dwellings as compared with 619 in 1946/47.[264] The economic principle underpinning this programme was that public investment would fuel employment and in turn stem the tide of emigration. Murphy

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[260] Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.333
[261] Ibid.
[262] See P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.57 - 59. The terms of the act are viewable on http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1948/en/act/pub/0001/print.html (accessed Jan/June 2010). Daly also synopsises the act in *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.337 - 340
[263] http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1948/en/act/pub/0001/print.html
[264] P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.58

appointed a new Housing Consultative Council (HCC) with T.C. O'Mahony at the helm as the Housing Director and this more scientific body undermined the Corporation's increasingly ineffectual Housing Committee. The architectural and planning significance of these rationalised processes and favourable economic conditions was that more fringe sites were developed and the cottage typology proliferated. Design issues were largely unconsidered in such a climate of mass production, except that house size increased: the ubiquitous four-room Type 14A was joined by a five-room plan type, so that 15.8% of houses built in Dublin between 1947 and 1957 were five-roomed as opposed to only 1.5% of those built during the 1930s and early 1940s.

Two key architectural events coming out of this 1948 housing acceleration were firstly, that prefabricated methods of house construction were interrogated in earnest by the Corporation and secondly and deeply tragically, that the Corporation's Housing Architect, Herbert Simms took his own life. Considering Simms' conscientious objection to temporary dwelling throughout his career, this coincidence was uncanny. What would happen to the aesthetics and consciousness of Dublin's public housing now? The question of prefabrication, both within an avant-garde frame of investigation and a pragmatic local authority consideration, opens up the final episode of this history of mid-century housing in Dublin.

## ***Part III "How we might live": the architecture of 'ordinary' housing from late 1940s- 1950s Dublin***

> *Building operations ahead: semi-detached, semi-detached, on and on in ribbon fashion. Speculative to judge by appearances. Road getting wider. Fields both sides: suburbs approaching, devouring the green fields. Village being slowly throttled by 'suburbonic' plague. Woodland torn up, evident numerous tree stumps. Why? There's the answer not far away, incomplete housing schemes. Rear elevations visible: soil pipes, concrete garden walls, laundry flapping in the wind. Hope the scheme is not brought too close to the road. Space still left for some form of 'city entrance'; that is if this is the limit of city extension. Community centre or other public buildings in landscaped open spaces would be an idea.*[265] **Dermot O'Toole, "Runway to Pillar", RIAI Yearbook, 1949** (figure 3.101)

> *Visit, as I did recently, the new suburb of Ballyfermot. Not all the buildings are bad by any means but the total effect is one of grim and anonymous desolation. This could be the approaches to Huddersfield or Wigan, the way being posted by*

[265] Dermot O'Toole, "Runway to Pillar" photo-story and commentary (figure 3.101), in *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1949), p.14

> *the same appalling concrete lamp standards. Yet there are architects here in Ireland as able and as sensitive as those of Switzerland or Sweden.*[266]
> **Gerald McNicholl, President's Address, RIAI Yearbook, 1956/57**

Following Herbert Simms' death, the post of Dublin Corporation Housing Architect lay open until 1955. Interestingly, the position was managed and advertised through the RIAI in 1950 and it was shrouded in controversy from the outset.[267] The RIAI argued that the remuneration offered - £1,050 rising to £1,350 per annum - was insufficient considering the extent of the Housing Architect's tasks and responsibility: "The position of Housing Architect to Dublin Corporation is one of the largest, single architectural responsibilities in the country. The Architect appointed would be responsible for spending over £3million a year on housing work and the design of housing schemes surrounding Dublin would affect the appearance of the city to an appreciable extent."[268] After all, it had become anecdotal knowledge that Simms' suicide stemmed in a large part from overwork. For instance, an overview of Simms' activities from 1944 until his death on only a single project - the Captain's Lane extension to the Crumlin estate – exposes the extent of his responsibility and the reality of his workload. This correspondence began in October 1944 with Simms requesting that the City Manger pursue a CPO so that the Corporation might develop a site for a playground which Simms had himself designed, "to be carried out as a Relief Labour Scheme".[269] At the same time, he laid out Section 1 of the scheme, entailing 802 houses alongside which he set aside five acres for a convent and schools and over one acre for eight shops and a cinema.[270] By February 1945 Simms was laying out the scheme's second section comprising 589 houses on forty-three acres and the remainder seventy acres which he planned for two parks including a community centre, an alternative site for the Gaelic Athletic Association, a reshaped site for Carlisle Athletic Club, a Church site, two schools (boys and girls/infants), a dispensary, a library and an industrial site.

Clearly the designing and supervision of 1,391 houses, mostly four-roomed and at a density of fourteen per acre, was only one part of Simms' brief as Corporation Housing Architect. And it would seem that despite all the mid-war criticism levelled at the Crumlin and other public housing estates, the architecture department were

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[266] Gerald McNicholl, President's Address, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1956 -57), p.10-11
[267] An ad placed in the *Irish Times* on 6th March 1950 shows how central the RIAI were placed in relation to Dublin Corporation's architecture department: "Vacancy for Housing Architect. Dublin Corporation. Any Member of this Institute who intends to make application for the above position is requested to communicate with the Hon Sec RIAI, 8 Merrion Square, North, Dublin." See file "Vacancy for Housing architect 1950 – 55", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/73
[268] Memo from RIAI to its members, 1950, "Vacancy for Housing architect 1950 – 55", Ibid
[269] Correspondence from Simms to Sherwin, October 1944 in Crumlin South Correspondence, Dublin Housing Development Files, Captain's Lane extension 34, B1/03/105, "File #5. Revised Lay-out Plans", Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library
[270] Memo, 16th February 1945 in "File #5. Revised Lay-out Plans", ibid.

attempting to create autonomous and fully-serviced neighbourhoods; in justification of his Captain's Lane plan, Simms described his intention to design a total environment: "The whole scheme has been planned as a self-contained neighbourhood unit, and not as a housing extension of the two previous Crumlin Schemes, though of course, the demarcation of one scheme with another cannot be made too hard and fast."[271] As we will see in chapter four's discussion of parish development, the ecclesiastical authorities and the Corporation's Town Planning Department began to obstruct Simms' design layout from 1947, and from this time until Simms' death in May 1948, the latter was forced to continuously revise his plans for the area.

To what extent this incessant badgering effected Simms may never be known; indeed, one imagines that the proposed acceleration of housing development under the new Government contributed to Simms' sense of desperation. Either way, the RIAI appear to have been alive to the challenges confronting Simms as municipal Housing Architect. Following his death and the subsequent subordination of the Housing Architect position to the City Architect, the RIAI complained to the Department of Local Government that "the salary offered is inadequate in view of the great responsibility of the position and the extent of the building work controlled by this officer, and that the conditions under which he is to work particularly in relation to the City Architect are not satisfactory."[272] The Institute objected to the fact that the role was being undervalued "when the number of houses being constructed is increasing and with the complexity of materials and methods of construction now available".[273] And it emphasised the Housing Architect's legacy in urban terms: "My Council desire to point out that the architectural character of our Capital City for generations to come will be largely determined by these great housing schemes..."[274] By April 1950, the issue had spilled over into the daily newspapers but the Department remained steadfast in the conditions of the appointment.[275] The RIAI, having instructed its membership to boycott the appointment, asked the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to similarly circularise and incite its membership to boycott the job. Pragmatically, the RIBA responded that it was impossible to circularise its 11,500 members (as opposed to the RIAI's 300 members!) but it did concede in making a passing warning to "difficult working conditions abroad" in its journal in July 1950.[276]

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[271] Ibid.
[272] Correspondence from A. P. Meldon (Hon. Sec. RIAI) to Mr Keyes (Minister of Local Government), 15th ]March 1950, "Vacancy for Housing Architect 1950 – 55", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/73
[273] Memo from RIAI to its members, 1950, "Vacancy for Housing Architect 1950 – 55", ibid.
[274] Correspondence from A. P. Meldon (Hon. Sec. RIAI) to Mr Keyes (Minister of Local Government), 15th March 1950 in ibid.
[275] See for example, "Dispute over Post of City Architect" in the *Irish Times*, 1st May 1950
[276] Correspondence between Meldon (RIAI) and Mr. Spragg (RIBA), June 1950 in "Vacancy for Housing Architect 1950 – 55", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/73. For the note concerning working conditions abroad, see "News" in *RIBA Journal* (July 1950), p.353

The Housing Architect position was never filled as, in 1955, it was officially subsumed into the role of City Architect to which former Dun Laoghaire County Council architect, Daithi Hanly was appointed. But the debacle is significant in highlighting the position of the architectural community in relation to Dublin's public housing towards the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s. Firstly, it points to the architects' informed interest in and aspirations for developments in local authority housing; secondly, it points to the ongoing malaise between the architects and the Department of Local Government in relation to housing; thirdly, it points to the interconnectedness of the British and Irish architectural communities, and particularly the omniscient and paternalistic role played by Britain in terms of Irish housing.

In general Irish architects felt disenfranchised by the Government, especially in the provision of mass housing, since the 1930s; and the restoration of a Housing Architect, who would be valued as a specialist professional in that realm became a symbolic pursuit for the community in the early 1950s. The architects argued that they had cut their fees in the mid 1930s – through the Housing (Architects for Schemes) Rules 1935 – so as to assist in the slum clearance endeavour. And still, as T. P. Kennedy argued in his presidential address of 1939 to the AAI, architects were being passed over for cheaper surveyors and/or engineers in local authority housing projects: "...a really determined effort should now be made to prevent non-architects from undertaking work which is essentially that of architects. I refer in particular to housing schemes, especially in the country."[277] By 1945, the Honorary Secretary of the RIAI, Gerald McNicholl wrote to the Department urging that architects be engaged in housing schemes as they were qualified to "design houses which would not only be more graceful and comfortable homes worthy of our people, economically planned, but also add to the national prestige."[278] And as usual he invoked Scandinavian inspiration and cited the contemporary British example:

> The great contributions to housing which have been made in many other countries, European and Scandinavian, have been solely due the employment of expert architects, and recent reports of Scottish and English Commissions on the subject emphasise the importance of only architects being employed. The British Minister of Health, in a recent circular, has requested local authorities to employ architects in the construction of permanent housing, this being the first time that

[277] Thomas P. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1939-40), p.27. It is interesting to note that architects were really only establishing themselves during the 1930s through professional consolidation
[278] Letter from Gerald McNicholl (Hon Sec, RIAI) to the Secretary, Department of Local Government and Public Health, 26th February 1945, "Housing Work and Various Matters", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/104

> the Ministry thought it possible and necessary to place the housing programme in the hands of the architectural profession.[279]

In reality, the ongoing malaise between the architects and the Department was due to disagreement around architects' fees. The Department had gestured to the architects in January 1948 when it established a Housing Competitions' Committee so as to oversee competitions for three representative (rural, urban, village) housing schemes; but the subsequent obstruction of these competitions arose from fees discrepancy. As the press release in the *Irish Builder* attested, the Government even went so far as to adopt architectural polemic on the potential national improvement which the architects' design input could exercise:

> The Minister...stressed the importance of raising standards of design, lay-out and planning in local authorities housing schemes, which would become a very prominent feature of our towns and countryside, and should be brought into harmony with their surroundings... The Minister said that steps were being taken to encourage interest in local authority housing work amongst architects in private practice; and a reasonable scale of remuneration was being determined for such work.[280]

Despite the Department's efforts, the competitions never materialised. According to the archival evidence, the RIAI was pushing for a new scale of fees during the post-war period (culminating in 1947-48) and by June 1951, there seemed to be no agreement on the matter so that the competitions were set aside amidst a climate of accelerated house-production.[281]

Inevitably, the acceleration of production was felt by the architects. J. M. Fairweather introduced an optimistic twist in his presidential address to the RIAI in 1950: "Hitherto, architects have not had many opportunities of designing the small houses for the lower income groups. Now that Local Authorities are pressing for rapid housing in great quantities, a fresh field is opening out which is a real challenge."[282] But as the preface quotations from Dermot O' Toole ("From Runway to Pillar", 1949, figure

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[279] Ibid.
[280] "Housing Competitions Committee" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (10th January 1948), p.12
[281] Correspondence between Department of Local Government and the RIAI, 24th February 1947 to 9th June 1951, "Proposed Housing Competitions – urban, village and rural cottage", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/62. See also correspondence on architects' fees for housing schemes between the RIAI and the Dublin + District House Builders' Association throughout 1946 and 1947, I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/99. The RIAI set up a "Scale of Charges Committee" which specifically dealt with discrepancies in fees due in part to the Emergency and subsequent post-war rise in prices which was not reflected in architects' fees; due also to the issue of repetition in design and construction of housing schemes which meant that contractors and local authorities were quick to dismiss architectural input.
Fees agreement between the Department and the RIAI was finally reached in March 1952; see editorial of *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (12th April 1952), p.366
[282] J.M. Fairweather, President's Address, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1950), p.10

3.101) and McNicholl (RIAI Address, 1956) indicate, there was widespread disapproval of Corporation housing among the architectural intelligentsia. The disapproval was grounded in aesthetic preferences as in McNicholl's comment on Ballyfermot's bleak landscape; or in the perceived planning errors resulting in what O'Toole referred to as "'suburbonic' plague", throttling villages and tearing up woodland. Certain Irish architects also proposed taller buildings for housing as in Moffett's bizarre "Vision of a Nation Planned" (1943) or John O'Gorman's 1953 account of Dublin Corporation's architectural enterprise for the *Sunday Independent*. Here O'Gorman maintained that the four-storey flat blocks with their concreted yards were "unsuccessful" and he warned, "Unless they are built twice as high, are widely spaced and are planned in simple standard units, there seems to be little possibility of making them efficient or economical."[283] As we will see, while the architects consistently criticised Corporation housing models on social, typological or aesthetic grounds, they did not present 1950s Dublin with an alternative.

Not surprisingly considering the acute shortage in Britain, housing dominated the British architectural press in the post-war period. In the same way, when two Irish architectural journals were launched in the early 1950s – *Architectural Survey* (photographic annual, from 1953) and *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (monthly cultural and commercial journal, from 1950) - housing was the most dominant issue for the first few years. In fact, it was in the inaugural edition of *Architectural Survey* that the architectural community learned of the most significant mid-century example of collective housing in rural Ireland: that of the Bord na Mona (the Turf Board) villages by Frank Gibney.[284] Having housed the turf or peat workers in hut structures and hostels from the late 1930s, and toyed with the possibility of introducing prefabricated housing systems in the early 1940s, Bord na Mona commissioned seven new housing schemes in the midland counties of Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Kildare in the late 1940s, to coincide with the acceleration of the development of the bogs. Gibney was the appointed architect and as a planner who was embedded in the teachings of Geddes and Unwin, he applied a Garden City strategy in the creation of these new neighbourhoods (figure 3.102). They varied in size from 160 units to c.60 units and related to their respective contexts whether it be as an extension of an established village as in Lanesboro, Co. Longford or as a self-contained new village as in Coill Dubh, Co. Kildare. All of Gibney's villages shared the common visual language of rendered or pebble-dashed terraces surmounted by pitched tiled roof. And the terraces were, without

[283] John O'Gorman, "Dublin - Some Comments on its Development" in *Sunday Independent* (January 1953)
[284] The five schemes were listed and photographed: Blackwood, Co Kildare; Mount Dillon, Co Roscommon; Lanesborough, Co Longford; Bracnagh, Co Offaly; and Derraghan, Co Longford in Luan Cuffe (ed.), *Architectural Survey* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1953), p.28-29

exception, thoughtfully laid out as they curved around and enclosed green spaces, forming private residential crescents or new public fronts to the existing villages.[285]

Some interesting one-off Modernist houses were also continuously published in the *Survey* such as Jack O'Hare's house in Killiney, 1953, Louis Peppard's Foxrock house in 1954, the Lynch House in Tramore by Jacob + Morrisey in 1957 or a house in Tallaght by Robinson Keefe Devane in 1959 (figures 3.103-3.105). Aside from these expected instances of domestic modernism, and the Bord na Mona projects and exemplary schemes from the Northern Ireland Housing Trust such as White City (Holywood, Bangor, 1953), the two new journals were full of architect-designed similarly pitched-roof terraced or semi-detached houses (in a suburban setting with front/back gardens) as we had been seeing since the 1930s and before. As such, the suburban mid-century vernacular was flourishing for public and private schemes alike. And yet at the same time, as chapter one outlines, during the 1950s Irish architects were more familiar with developments abroad than ever before. Certainly the new *Irish Architect and Contractor* was full of informed editorial commentary; it ran short articles on the latest technology and urban debate from Britain, and was widely accessible. We must remember too the ongoing cultural campaigns by the AAI (in the form of lectures) and the RIAI (through occasional exhibitions).

Does this signal an ever-growing gap in 1950s Irish housing between imported theories and discourse on the one hand, and actual practice and design on the other?

## ***Part III "How we might live":***

*Preoccupied by Prefabrication and Experimentation: Moffett and Waller*

An appropriate starting point in answering this question is the "Low Cost Urban Housing" essay in the Ireland issue of *Architectural Design* of 1947. As discussed in chapter one, the issue was compiled by Noel Moffett who, as we know, was preoccupied with working-class housing as a typology. He opened the 1947 essay with typically derisive commentary on local authority housing: "The vast majority of slum-clearance and rehousing schemes in the past have been badly planned, badly sited and ugly in appearance."[286] He then moved to describe the reasons for this "ugly" "bad" housing, pointing to the absence of a national plan for housing and the conservative tastes of the Irish. But, it went further than conservatism and lack of planning: as Moffett explained, the "biggest single stumbling-block to the advent of new ideas in house-building and the

[285] For more on the Bord na Mona housing schemes, see Fergal McCabe, "Urbanity and Rurality: the Bord na Mona Villages of Frank Gibney" in *Irish Architect* (October 1995, No.111), p.41-45

[286] Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Urban Housing" in *Architectural Design* (July, 1947, Ireland issue), p.185. Though embedded in the Ireland issue, this article was part three of a series on Irish housing by Moffett in *Architectural Design* which was running from November 1946 ("Low-Cost housing in Eire") to February 1947 with "Rural Housing" article, to this concluding article in July 1947.

use of new materials is the building bye-laws".[287] He laid out how the Dublin bye-laws prescribed the minimal thickness (9") and materials (stone, brick or concrete) of all housing's external walls. This meant that timber construction or cavity walling of less than 9inch thickness were prohibited. Many new experimental technologies were thus precluded from Irish house production, inevitably maintaining traditionalism in house design and arguably, pitching Ireland into a 'backward' territory. Moffett summarised that "there is no sign that the use of many new methods and materials, now generally accepted in many countries, will be allowed here. To erect a prefabricated house in Dublin at present needs a special order from the City Manager or the Corporation Housing Committee over-ruling the operation of the bye-laws."[288]

Clearly Moffett believed that prefabrication offered the solution to the Irish housing crisis. He and many of his contemporaries from the Citizen's Housing Council onwards maintained that "more up-to-date and more rapid building methods" could overcome the rising cost of labour, the enormous demand for houses and the post-war shortage of materials.[289] That was certainly the first message of this 1947 article. As chapter one outlined, this emphasis was not surprising considering the context of *Architectural Design* with its post-war obsession with system building in Britain. As a regular contributor to *AD* through the late 1940s and 1950s, Moffett was in touch with and deeply influenced by contemporary developments in Britain generally, but especially in modular design; in many respects, his exhibition endeavours, his discourse and his design teaching throughout the 1940s were all means of instilling a similar culture of post-war preparedness and planning in Ireland as he perceived in Britain. In fact, reading Moffett's letters to the editor (*Irish Times*), lecture addresses and articles throughout the 1940s, I would argue that he was an evangelist: his flock was the Irish public and architectural community alike, his inspiration was British post-war reconstruction and his message was that different methods of house design and construction had to be deployed. Again and again he pointed to the antiquated bye-laws which needed a drastic overhaul rather than a revision and in one letter, he called on the Corporation to facilitate the building of "experimental houses, designed by Irish architects for Irish needs and conditions, employing various combinations of materials and building techniques."[290] In this instance, Moffett cited the example of recent housing at Northolt, Middlesex which was a reference to the famous steel-framed houses promoted by the British Iron and Steel Federation, known as BISF houses, and designed by Frederick Gibberd (figures 3.130 + 3.131). The BISF house presented a plausible

[287] Ibid, p.186
[288] Ibid.
[289] Ibid.
[290] Noel Moffett, "Building Costs" Letter to the Editor, *Irish Times* (6th January 1947)

image to the conservative Irish market with its pitched roof and semi-brick façade, which may be why Moffett referred to it.

But Moffett's writings never described the technicalities of such prototypes, preferring to remain polemical and general in tone. In one 1948 essay for *The Irish Tobacco Workers' Review* he did however differentiate between prefabricated and temporary houses stating his opposition to the latter: "We must build good, sound, beautiful, cheap, permanent houses."[291] In this respect, Moffett was in agreement with Simms whose prime objection to prefabrication and system building was those methods' association with temporary housing. For Moffett, prefabricated housing was about revolutionary materials, open-plans, speed (he maintained a prefabricated house took just three days to construct) and flexibility; but never about impermanence. Earlier, in a 1946 interview, Moffett asserted that the prime usefulness of the prefabricated house was the possibility of adding or subtracting units according to the family's stage in life (figure 3.106).[292] As ever, he was adamant to push an inherently foreign technology via nationalist sentiment by emphasising the Irishness of the prefabrication process, from workers, to architects and materials: "Prefabricated houses are especially suited to Ireland because it is possible to build them in native materials. Concrete, which plays an important part in some of these houses, is composed of water, sand, gravel and cement, all of which are available in Ireland."[293] This strange mix of the abstract and the practical which ran through Moffett's discourse found its way into his experimentation around materials and house plans. He maintained that plastics (namely Bakelite) and plywood were the materials of the future while he pushed the traditional rural cottage open-plan as the exemplar for contemporary working-class house plans.

Moffett moved from theory to practice by 1946 in his design of a semi-detached pair of three-bedroomed houses in Sutton, North Dublin which he illustrated in the 1947 article. The architect's point of pride around this modernist, somewhat idiosyncratic pair was their cheapness (£1,200 each, though this was the average price for a Corporation cottage in 1948) which he attributed to their shallow pitched roof of corrugated asbestos sheets and their open ground-floor plan (figures 3.113 + 3.114). Still, Moffett did not achieve his dream of designing and overseeing the construction of a truly prefabricated house until late 1948. He then managed to complete three such houses which were written up in *The Architects' Journal* in April 1949: a two-bedroomed Greacen house clad in corrugated asbestos (constructed in Dublin but then moved to Bantry, West Cork, extant 2010, figures 3.107 + 3.108); a substantial three-bedroomed Hegarty house

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[291] Noel Moffett, "Prefabricated Houses" in *The Irish Tobacco Workers' Review* (Vol.1, No.2, September 1948), p.21

[292] Moffett in interview (by Marie O'Dwyer), "Prefabricated Houses for Eire", context unknown to this author – perhaps women's magazine (September 1946), p.4

[293] Ibid, p.10

(location unknown, figures 3.109 + 3.110); and a small one-bedroomed weekend house (location unknown, figures 3.111 + 3.112).[294] All three were single storey, flat-roofed rural houses which were constructed by means of steel stanchions bolted to concrete foundations. An upper storey could be constructed if required meeting Moffett's notions of flexibility, while the wall panels of light steel or timber were delivered to the site complete. For the external finish, Moffett was open, almost fluffy, in his lack of preference – "Outer lining of varying materials as they become available, such as coloured plastic slabs, waterproof plywood, patent hardboards or sheet steel."[295] On examination, he was not a purist nor was he scientific or rational in his guidelines for prefabricated housing. Moffett was however on a Don Quixote-type of crusade for prefabrication in Ireland and considered himself to be the expert and only proponent of the method in the county. He pointed to the first instance of prefabrication in Ireland as being his own prototype house which he designed for the Tomorrow Club exhibition of 1943. This model was later shown at the national Horse Show (as the *Irish Times* stand) and attracted much public attention so that by early 1946 the Corporation became involved, setting up a Prefabrication Committee to study the question and promising to lease the Tomorrow Club a site in Terenure (South County Dublin) on which to build full-size prototypes.[296] Writing "Where are our Prefabs?" in a 1947 issue of *The Irish Housewife*, Moffett explained how the process had disappointingly collapsed:

> In June [of 1947] the Corporation disbanded their Prefabrication Committee, announced that they were no longer interested in the subject, and withdrew the Terenure site. So now we have a beautiful model, sheets of carefully detailed drawings, but we are no nearer getting even one house built in Dublin for our people to see.[297]

In reality however, the Corporation was not finished considering system-building as a means of accelerating its house production. In 1948 with the change in government, its new Housing Consultative Council undertook study tours to London and Glasgow, to examine "non-traditional methods of housing construction".[298] These trips ultimately lead to the first significant (but unrecognised) mass-housing project using prefabricated technology in the Free State: the Orlit houses on Captain's Avenue which were part of

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[294] Paul Larmour claims that the Hegarty and Weekend Houses are also in Co. Cork though this author has been unable to locate them - see Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1933-1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2009), p.80

[295] Architectural description, "Prefabricated Houses designed by Noel Moffett" in *The Architects' Journal* (21st April 1949), p.365

[296] This account comes from Noel Moffett, "Where are our Prefabs?" in *The Irish Housewife* (1947), p.39-40

[297] Ibid, p.40

[298] "Proposals for Expediting the Construction of Houses", Report 92, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.286

the Crumlin South post-war extension from 1949-51. The Crumlin Orlit project, which we'll examine shortly, is particularly interesting in its reflection of two aspects of prefabrication at this time; firstly, that prefabrication, universally, signals the blurring of architectural and "non-architectural" (i.e. building or vernacular) concerns, though historians, architects and commentators consistently separate those concerns.[299] And secondly, that the question of prefabrication highlighted the hegemony of British influence on Irish building practices, especially in the sphere of house building. The Orlit project demonstrated the wholesale absorption of British practice. Here was a British (albeit Scottish) system being imported just as the Irish Free State became a Republic in 1949. All the commentary within Irish architectural culture on British reconstruction and architectural developments were brought to practical resolution in this example; after all, whenever prefabrication or system building was raised in the Irish architectural or daily press, the British example was cited before the American or Scandinavian. As J.M. Fairweather proclaimed to the RIAI in his presidential address of 1950, "We have all studied with interest the many experiments in rapid and economical small house construction carried out in Great Britain and the Continent. Our industrial conditions make most of them unsuitable here for one reason of another."[300]

From the 1920s onwards, the Irish construction industry watched Britain closely: it watched as the British government constructed 10,000 prefabricated "Dorlonco" houses following the First World War, as part of the "Homes for Heros" campaign. But the rolled steel parts making up this steel frame prototype, which was lined internally with concrete block work and rendered externally with cement, could never have worked for Ireland with its shortage of steel throughout the 1940s. In fact, the Dorlonco house was a fairly hapless combination of modernist frame building, block lining and traditional neo-Georgian cladding (figure 3.129).[301] Instead, the Irish industry stuck with on-site mass concrete construction for its thousands of mid-war two-up/two-down houses. There were Irish experiments during the 1930s, linked to housing philanthropy as suggested in part I of this chapter, with Frank Gibney's earthen houses and Waller's "Nofrango" method. Of these, the Nofrango method might have evolved like the British Dorlonco or the American AIROH (aluminium) types but as Dermot O'Connell pointed out in 1966, the Irish market was not big enough to sustain the necessary development of the prototype: "the case for departing from traditional techniques of building is hard to make as long as most schemes are small, contractual procedures limited to open

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[299] For instance, in his informative and otherwise very competent history of prefabrication, Colin Davies separates his opening chapters, charting the history of prefabricated housing into "An Architectural History" and "A Non-Architectural History", Colin Davies, *The Prefabricated Home* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005). My argument is that the two spheres overlap through the method/medium of prefabrication.
[300] J.M. Fairweather, President's Address, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1950), p.10
[301] Colin Davies, *The Prefabricated Home* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p.60

tendering, and the architect kept at arm's length."[302] Instead, Waller's Nofrango method, which was a system of jute or Hessian fabric sprayed in stages with concrete, was used in a piecemeal fashion; for instance, it was adopted by the architect (and fellow housing reformer) George Beckett with his builder brother Walter on their private houses.[303] Manning Robertson also adopted Waller's system for a series of one-off houses in Dublin, as well as for two local authority housing estates in Carlow and Wexford.[304]

Waller was something of an avant-garde engineer and being primarily motivated by the crisis in accommodation which he witnessed in Dublin and elsewhere in Ireland, he did manage in one instance to peddle his technology to the Corporation for working-class housing purposes. In 1928, he designed a terrace of local authority houses in Rialto, West Dublin constructed according to this Nofrango lightweight concrete method and notably, the terrace was flat-roofed (figure 3.125). Despite the apparent success of this scheme (the terrace is still extant, 2010), there does not appear to have been further collaboration between Waller and the Corporation. At the start of the Second World War, Waller, becoming conscious of the materials-plight once more, issued articles in the UK *Builder*, *The Architects' Journal* and *The Irish Builder* during 1940 and 1941 demonstrating how the Nofrango method could be used most economically for octagonal plans with bell tent-like umbrella roofs (figures 3.127 + 3.128), for temporary rural-based housing. Due to its employment of cement and aggregate over timber and steel, it was to be considered "to develop temporary, or permanent, camps in connection with the production of peat fuel."[305] But as we know, that commission was gained some years later by Frank Gibney with his five Bord na Mona villages, supplying permanent housing to the new peat-exploiting communities in the midlands. Bizarrely, according to a 1930s advertisement in *The Irish Builder*, between the Rialto (1928) and the round hut (1941) iterations of Waller's Nofrango, the system made its way into the hands of Dublin speculative builders (figure 3.126). The term "prefabrication" was not used in this instance, but rather Nofrango was advertised here for its cheapness (30% cheaper to construct), its waterproof qualities and its flexibility in that it was suitable for suburban bungalows, lift shafts, water tanks, silos and bathing pools.

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[302] Dermot O'Connell, "The Irish Architectural Scene" in *Building* (9th September 1966), p.115
[303] I am reliant on Jeremy Williams' history of Waller for this information. Williams' account does not contain any references so I have not followed up on Waller's connections with Robertson or the Becketts. See Jeremy Williams, "An Irish Genius: J. H. de W. Waller 1884 – 1968" in *Irish Arts Review Yearbook* (Vol. 12, 1996), p. 143-146.
[304] Ibid, p.145
[305] *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (27th September 1941), p.446

## ***Part III "How we might live":***

*Preoccupied by Prefabrication: the RIAI Report and the Orlit example*

Despite Waller's and Moffett's ongoing promotion of alternative and prefabricated methods of constructing mass housing through the 1930s and 40s, no system was experimented with by the Irish local authorities or pushed by the Irish architectural community at this time. While recommendations floated about such as the 1937-38 CHC report's proposal that the Corporation use frame building with panels filled in with cavity walling consisting of light concrete blocks, nothing came to fruition.[306] Not surprisingly, as many of the CHC recommendations were fed into the 1939 housing tribunal, the question of prefabrication and alternative methods of construction was managed at length in the *Report of Inquiry* and its conclusions point to the lack of readiness to take on alternative systems. While it was generally positive and in favour of prefabrication, due to its potential for under-cover construction and uniformity of standards, it maintained that it was expensive. The report also avoided technical details but supported the increased employment of prefabricated parts such as windows, doors, stairs and cupboards.[307] The apparent hesitancy was partly a hangover of that shown towards new private houses built during the building boom of the 1920s and 1930s. As Ruth McManus explains, standards of building appeared to have fallen during this boom, amounting to a distrust of new materials like concrete and more lightweight forms: "'All-brick construction' became an important selling point, as was the assurance of 'pre-war standards'. In the rush to build, many houses of the period were of poor quality with leaking roofs, damp and structural defects..."[308] Another source of negativity was to be found within the architects who, though supportive of prefabrication in principle, were not encouraged by the Neo-Georgian or Garden City cottage aesthetic that clad the various prototypes. In the definitive critical (rather than scientific) text on the subject by the British architectural community of 1945/46, *Tomorrow's Houses*, D. Dex Harrison wrote about the post-WWI prototypes such as Dorlonco:

> No attempt had been made to evolve designs which suited, and took advantage of, the new structural concepts. So utterly bankrupt was the movement in this respect that the new constructions were laboriously worked to the same niggling plans which were in common use for brick houses at the time.[309]

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[306] Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938* (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.44

[307] "Improved Methods of Construction: Pre-Fabrication", points 296 – 301 in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.105-107

[308] Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 – 1940, Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p.332

[309] D. Dex Harrison "Prefabrication – an outline history" in John Madge (ed.) *Tomorrow's Houses. New Methods, Structures and Materials* (London: Pilot Press, 1946), p.118 (available in Early Printed Books, TCD). Noel

The architects' dissatisfaction stemmed from aesthetic principles as opposed to the traditionally-biased distrust of radical form and processes. As such, it would seem that architectural and non-architectural negative *responses* to prefabrication were polarised: the architects wanted mass-produced, light-weight and flat-roofed machines for living, the public wanted pitched-roofed solid suburban homes. Either way, as the Second World War raged, Britain was unable to ignore the growing relevance of alternative and industrialised systems of constructing houses, schools and its general social infrastructure. As Britain turned its attention to American industrial processes and Swedish timber traditions, Ireland watched and learned. As a few examples show, it seemed like every page of the *Irish Builder* was charting the development of some system-building scheme or other in Britain: from a review of the RIBA publication, *Industrial Housing in Wartime* in June 1941; to September 1941's editorial describing Ove Arup's advice for housing bombed-out families based on his text, *Safe Housing in Wartime.* In June 1945, there was a special supplement on the American "Terran" and "Seco" temporary prefabricated houses which had just arrived in Britain; while in July 1945, we learned that the British Government had ordered 2,500 permanent prefabricated timber houses from Sweden. In the same issue, the Irish journal informed us that "an all-aluminium specimen dwelling" would be on view in Dublin and that "responsible housing authorities in Eire are now engaged in examining proposals and plans for the supply of some hundreds of timber dwellings."[310] These predictions of timber and aluminium prototypes and official experimentation programmes never materialised, but the journal did correctly echo British sentiments in promoting prefabrication as an emergency measure:

> Whatever may be their limitations of durability, convenience or architectural amenity, they would furnish an immediate means of escape from some of the worst cellar dwellings and pestiferous slum tenements of Dublin and other cities. Introduced as an emergency expedient, and as a supplement to the speediest possible progress with "normal" housing schemes, such structure ought, we think, to be obtained without undue regard to their purely "economic" values.[311]

Like in Britain, prefabricated methods were being considered in Ireland as a necessary evil. The policy would always be to revert to regular building practices once the situation

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Moffett reviewed the collection for *The Bell* in May 1946, praising its compilation of photographs and plans illustrating recent prefabricated houses in England.

[310] "Aluminium Houses" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (14th July 1945), p.330

[311] Ibid.

stabilised.[312] While in Britain the war pushed this consideration into action, the neutral stagnant Dublin slums were seemingly not impetus enough for such a drastic shift in architectural and building practice. As we know, official involvement in prefabrication did not happen until the Inter-party Government radicalisation of Irish housing from 1948. In the meantime, the British Government set up an Interdepartmental Committee on House Construction, while the RIBA established its Reconstruction and Prefabrication Committees. Soon, the RIAI was to follow suit, establishing its own Prefabrication Committee in January 1944.[313] The RIAI issued its report some months later which was based on the study of "a large number of articles, reports, illustrations and drawings from the USA, Great Britain, the Scandinavian Countries and other sources".[314] The Committee differentiated between "Total Prefabrication" wherein the whole structure was factory-made, and more mainstream prefabrication which it defined as "the application to building construction of factory or workshop made units forming part or the whole of a complete structure, the units being designed and manufactured for easy incorporation or assembly on a prepared site."[315]

The report set out the claims for prefabrication in terms of speed, cheapness and quality, and then confronted each claim in the Irish context. Underlying the investigation was the "exceptionalness" of Ireland, due to its neutrality and its lack of industrial infrastructure which the Committee referred to as "the special circumstances existing in Ireland."[316] Its first conclusion was that total prefabrication was not viable for Ireland as "its success in large industrial countries is not by any means established; in a small non-industrial country conditions are much less favourable."[317] The report argued that the importation of prefabricated houses was too expensive though it proposed advantages to having prefabricated and standardised parts in housing such as doors, windows, staircases, bathroom services, kitchen equipment and built-in furniture. Its last conclusion revealed the overwhelming opinion that total prefabrication was not and could never be for Ireland: "Finally, this Committee believe that as far as Ireland is concerned, research and experiment can be more profitably directed to improving normal building methods and to the design and production of prefabricated equipment than to an attempt to produce totally prefabricated buildings."[318] In comparison with the British Building Industries National Council (BINC) report on prefabrication, the RIAI version

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[312] Colin Davies makes this point (via R.B. White, *Prefabrication: A History of its Development in Great* Britain (1965), part 3) in *The Prefabricated Home* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), p.63. This history of common British policy during the two Wars is also made by Brenda Vale in *Prefabs: A History of the UK Temporary Housing Programme* (London: Spon, 1995), p. 106-110

[313] The announcement of the establishment of a "Prefabrication Committee" in the "Post-War Planning" editorial of *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (No.1, 1st January 1944), p.4, must be a reference to the RIAI's initiative

[314] RIAI, *Prefabrication. Report of a Committee Appointed by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland* (Dublin: RIAI, 1944), p.4

[315] Ibid.

[316] Ibid., p.5

[317] Ibid., p.18

[318] Ibid., p.19

was generalised and superficial. The BINC report broke prefabrication down into four categories: *structural* prefabrication where the structural parts are prefabricated such as large factory-produced sections of walls and floors, as in Swedish building; *partial structural* prefabrication such as a steel-framed house with panels of brick; then *special standardised normal building* where normal building materials and methods are standardised; and lastly, other forms of construction like site-cast concrete construction.[319] This more forensic and analytical approach shows a deeper practical understanding of the processes which was absent in the Irish report.

The RIAI Committee's constant reference to Ireland as "non-industrial" might be read as defeatism from the outset. Furthermore, its methodology was questionable in that its analysis was based on secondary material such as a letter to the RIBA journal and the British "Post-War Building Studies" series.[320] Conversely, the approach of the Committee to the prefabrication question may be read as realism, understanding as it did that the Irish construction industry was based on comparatively small contracts monopolised by certain family-based contractors. Not that the building industry in Ireland was a cottage one, nor was it so heavily unionised compared with its UK counterparts (though it had been dogged with labour problems and strikes throughout the 1930s and early 1940s), but things were small-scale: even in the State's largest housing schemes such as Crumlin/Drimnagh, contracts were usually split into quantities ranging from twenty to two hundred and fifty houses. The architects were also aware that their place was peripheral in the actual development of local authority housing; it was well-known that the limited variety of house plans meant that working drawings could be trotted out very easily and then could be copied, thus rendering the architect useless. In that sense, the argument could be made that the repetition and standardisation of house-form at play in the local authority schemes from the 1930s onwards, was Ireland's answer to system-building!

In such a climate it is not surprising that total prefabrication was considered to be an avant-garde whimsy, even within the architectural intelligentsia. But there was a steadily growing interest in alternative methods and materials, for housing or otherwise, as a glimpse at the AAI lecture series of 1946 attests: "Recent Developments in Swedish Architecture" by Frank Yerbury; "Timber in Architecture" by Oliver Roberts; a film night showing the "Seco" prefabrication method entitled "A City Rises Overnight"; and "Modern Trends in Reinforced Concrete" by Ove Arup.[321] The question of industrialising methods must have been deemed relevant enough for the establishment of a semi-state research

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[319] Building Industries National Council, *Report on "Prefabrication"* (London: Building Industries National Council, 1944), p.2

[320] RIAI, *Prefabrication. Report of a Committee Appointed by the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland* (Dublin: RIAI, 1944), p.9: See footnotes on page 9 for example of the sources

[321] See "Annual Report 1945-46, lectures" in *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1946-47), p.30

group, the Institute of Industrial Research and Standards (IIRS) in 1946. Housing reformers and members of the architectural community had been calling for an official research and standards body, along the lines of the British Building Research Station, from the mid 1930s.[322] The IIRS was provided with purpose-built modernist premises in Glasnevin, North Dublin (by Eoghan Buckley and John O'Gorman, 1947, figures 3.146 + 3.147), and was charged with issuing the first Irish Standards Specifications for building materials in 1947.[323] At the same time, Cecil Crampton of G. + T. Crampton contractors was evolving ready-mix concrete and also, a high quality concrete block in his off-shoot firm, Clondalkin Concrete.[324]

As stated, the change in the local authorities' approach to the housing problem occurred from the 1948 change in Government, which initiated a renewed and more sincere interest in the prefabrication question. This fuller investigation began with a series of trips to London and Glasgow, reminiscent of the zealous study tours of the 1920s. The new Housing Consultative Council, accompanied by the Minister of Local Government viewed factories, housing estates, unfinished houses and sites during a week-long visit in September 1948, with the immediate aim of "examin[ing] on the spot the extent to which non-traditional methods of building are helping in the solution of the housing problem, and the extent to which these methods of construction might be employed in the Dublin programme."[325] It found "remarkable similarity" between the housing problems in Dublin and those faced by the London and Glasgow authorities.[326] And clearly, looking at the London County Council (LCC) catalogue of its post-war housing work of 1949, prefabricated types abounded London's new suburban estates (figures 3.130, 3.133 – 3.137); as LCC Housing Director, Cyril Walker explained, "while traditional methods have not been neglected, the need for speed of erection has led to an emphasis upon prefabricated types of buildings on cottage estates."[327]

The Corporation's exploration into prefabricated methods was undoubtedly spurred on by LCC's post-war embrace of certain prototypes and also, due to the estimation by Dublin's new Housing Consultative Council (HCC) that the city region needed 20,000 houses over a ten year period, plus another 10,000 units to counter

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[322] See recommendations for an "Industrial Council" in Citizens Housing Council, *Report on Slum Clearance in Dublin 1938* (Dublin: Citizens Housing Council, Interim Report 1937), p.40-41; see recommendations in *Report of Inquiry*, "Improved Methods of Construction: Building Research", points 302 – 306 in Department of Local Government/Public Health, *Report of Inquiry* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1943), p.107-108; see also Gerald McNicholl's forceful presidential address to the AAI in October 1941, wherein he called for the establishment of an Irish "Building Research Organisation", President's inaugural address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1941-42), p.24-27

[323] According to Luan Cuffe's commentary on the building, the IIRS sported Ireland's first butterfly roof: Luan Cuffe, "Exhibition for Export" in *Irish Engineering Journal* (January 1952), p.25

[324] See footnote #207

[325] "Proposals for Expediting the Construction of Houses", Report 92, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.282

[326] Ibid., however, while Dublin needed some 30,000 dwellings, London needed 200,000!

[327] Cyril Walker, "Foreword" to London County Council, *London Housing. A Comprehensive Survey by "Building" of the Post-War Work of London County Council* (London: St Margaret's Technical Press Ltd, 1949), p.1

obsolescence. Furthermore, the HCC analysed the Corporation's productivity since 1890 as follows:

| **Period** | **Total of houses** | **Average total per year** |
|---|---|---|
| 1890 - 1932/33 | 9,289 dwellings | 216 dwellings per year |
| 1933/34 – 1942/43 | 11,608 dwellings | 1,160 dwellings per year |
| March - December 1948 | 2,778 dwellings | 555 dwellings per year |

Figures taken from "Proposals for Expediting the Construction of Houses", Report 92, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.282

The HCC concluded that the continuation of traditional methods of house construction, "even if stepped up to produce 2,000 houses per year, would still offer no real amelioration within a reasonable time of the serious shortage now existing. This is the experience of large housing authorities in other countries too, and the reason why alternative methods of production have been sought."[328] While it stated its preference for traditional methods, these methods were producing fewer than 1,000 dwellings per year and a radicalisation of approach was needed so that available materials, rather than traditional unavailable materials, could be used. Very radically, the HCC proposed to "substitute machinery and mass production methods for individual craftsmanship since craftsmen are not available in anything like the numbers required."[329] The Council announced that its immediate housing plans were to develop areas in Finglas (North Dublin), Sarsfield Road (Ballyfermot) and Dundrum (South Dublin) amounting to 9,000 houses of which 6,000 would be traditional and 3,000 would be of alternative construction.[330] But what this "alternative" would be was not made clear. Certainly, the HCC stated that it favoured the more hybrid systems coming out of concrete and brick that it had witnessed during the study tour, rather than the total prefabricated systems of aluminium, steel or timber. It was especially interested in a form of cement slab construction, similar to traditional house construction and not as expensive as total prefabrication systems. It would seem that the HCC perceived only one advantage to prefabricated houses and that was speed. In reality, though it seemed to espouse alternative methods, it and the Irish housing market generally was inherently conservative. As it concluded, following the UK study tours:

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[328] "Proposals for Expediting the Construction of Houses", Report 92, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1948 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.282

[329] Ibid.

[330] Ibid., p.286. At the same time, the Corporation was working hard on developing areas in North Dublin through the Howth Main Drainage works. It estimated that this would be ready by 1953 (five years later) and development of sites at Raheny and Kilbarrack could begin so as to accommodate a further 3,500 houses.

> Since the houses are mass produced, and since some of them are flat-roofed, or single storied they are not as attractive-looking from the outside as the best forms of traditional houses. This could be remedied if there was less urgency in that production...It is considered that the forms of construction in concrete normally used in our Dublin housing schemes are, at least, as durable as the best of the alternative concrete slab methods and as cheap, if not cheaper. They are superior to the completely prefabricated forms of construction in emergency materials.[331]

There was only a tentative willingness to explore this Brave New World of alternative housing; for one, the association of flat roofs and prefabrication had to be overcome! As a wholly foreign method, prefabrication went against everything that the Government had been promoting in terms of Irish materials and techniques. So that, when the HCC moved to seriously consider an alternative method, it stated that the "extent to which a proposer [sic] could bring back Irish craftsmen would be an important feature of the proposition."[332] The solution came in the form of the "Orlit" house method which had been adopted by the LCC at the Chingford Estate, Northeast London (figure 3.137), and was being used on two estates in Glasgow; one, the Balornock Estate (295 houses, figure 3.138), which the Corporation had visited and another, mid-construction in 1948, the Priesthill scheme comprising 204 houses. Notably, Dublin Corporation followed up with Glasgow Scottish Orlit Company: the Scottish Orlit was a type RC/4 of 950 sq. ft. based on solid concrete raft floor and timber pitched roof. The English type was only 834 sq. ft. which seemed more appropriate for the Dublin model considering the latter was to be 756 sq. ft. Nevertheless, perhaps the combination of ease of correspondence with the Glasgow authorities, the newness of the prefabrication project within Scotland and also the fact that the English Orlit type tended to be flat-roofed, encouraged the Corporation to work with the Scottish model.

In March 1949, the Corporation's Quantity Surveyor (a Mr Taylor) began corresponding with the Glasgow officials in earnest. They explained how the Orlit model was constructed: that foundations entailed the significant on-site work; that the cladding, which came in after the reinforced concrete frame was erected, contained the external cavity wall, door and window surrounds and the party wall slabs; following this, partition walls were built, then two fireplaces and lastly, terrazzo window sills were set (figure 3.141). A Mr Crabbe of the Scottish Department of Health reported to Taylor that there was not much difference in speed between the Orlit and traditional building as, "generally speaking, both have been subject to the same practical difficulties (site and

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[331] Ibid, p.284
[332] Ibid, p.285

labour troubles, shortage of materials, bad weather conditions etc.)." [333] The system did enable the replacement of wet plaster (due to the shortage of plasterers) with dry wall linings; all told, the Scottish report was not very positive but it was hopeful for the system "in the future". Following an investigation around timescales and man-hours with Glasgow Corporation, Dublin Corporation commissioned Messrs. David Courtney builders to construct fifty-eight houses in twenty-eight weeks as part of the Crumlin South post-war extension at Captain's Lane – the new square of houses was to be known as Captain's Avenue.[334] The contract was pushed by the Town Planning Officer, Michael O'Brien who maintained that "speed is regarded as the essence of any contract which will be placed by the Corporation for housing at present", despite the fact that as he conceded, the "'Orlit' Company have not been regarded as having the most efficient organisation for the speedy output of houses on a large scale."[335] However, the Corporation, intent upon experimentation, pursued the Orlit contract with Courtney thereby launching the first significant (yet historically unacknowledged) system-built mass-housing project in Ireland, predating the infamous Ballymun scheme by fifteen years.

Courtney employed Dublin architect Donald Tyndall to draught working drawings for a local iteration of Orlit; its elevation appeared narrower and contained two windows on the upper storey as compared with the traditional 1920s-1940s Corporation terraced house (figure 3.140). In June of 1949 the acting Housing Architect, T. McNamara approved Courtney and Tyndall's basic plan but demanded key alterations be made, including the inclusion of a hallway and a linen cupboard, and the shifting of the kitchen and master bedroom to the rear of the plan. Courtney became "Orlit Ireland Ltd", proposed that a factory be built where Orlit slabs could be cast and promised the Irish Trade Unions that "acceptable working conditions" would be preserved as all labour would be from Dublin; if more was needed, Courtney would draw from Irishmen in Britain "by transferring Irish skilled operatives from these sources".[336] Also, on analysis, the system was proving to be considerably cheaper in terms of site-work than contemporaneous traditionally-built schemes:

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[333] Report on Orlit from Mr Crabbe (Department of Health, Scotland) to Mr Taylor (Dublin Corporation Quantity Surveyor), April 1949, Crumlin South Correspondence, Dublin Housing Development Files, Captain's Lane extension 34, B1/03/105, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library

[334] Messrs David Courtney builders came up with the lowest figure of man-hours of 1,580 hours, totalling twenty months to build 296 houses with 110 men. The nearest figure to this was from Walls Construction at 1,656 man hours which would take 36 months: Letter from Mr. Robb (Assistant Housing Director, Glasgow Corporation) and Mr Taylor, 2nd May 1949, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.

[335] Letter from Michael O'Brien to P. O'Byrne and T.C. O'Mahony (HCC), 19th May 1949, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.

[336] Letter from D. Courtney to T. C. O'Mahony, 3rd June 1949, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.

| Location | Quantity of houses | Cost of site-work | Total cost per house |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cabra West | 52 houses | £236 | £1,151 |
| Crumlin North | 70 houses | £287 | £1,160 |
| Sarsfield Rd. | 220 houses | £227 | £1,009 |
| Captain's Lane | 41 houses | £281 | £1,210 |
| Orlit houses | 58 houses | £219 | £1,150 |

Figures taken from Crumlin South Correspondence, Dublin Housing Development Files, Captain's Lane extension 34, B1/03/105, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951", Dublin City Archives

Cracks in the Orlit system began to show by July of 1949 when the Department of Local Government warned the HCC that Orlit would have to be revised for bigger schemes as "only one house plan is being used, which, being a south aspect type, is suitable for only half the houses in the scheme. In the remaining houses, the living-room and best bedroom will have a north aspect."[337] Then in August, McNamara complained about Orlit Ireland's use of foreign products, highlighting the protectionism as well as the insularity underpinning all Irish infrastructures during the mid century:

> It was further intimated to me by Mr. Tyndall that you propose to use "Vitraflex" gutters and downpipes of imported manufacture. Clause 57 of the *Corporation General Conditions of Contract* stipulates that "All the articles, goods and materials supplied under this Contract shall be of the manufacture of Eire except where such articles, goods or materials are not manufactured in Eire or such materials cannot be obtained in Eire." Rainwater goods manufactured locally are available and these articles must accordingly be used on your contract."[338]

After much to-do about contracts and the payment of precast work that was not yet on site, construction finally began in November 1949. By February 1950 the slow pace of work pushed the Department to seek reports on Orlit and found a report in March, from Forehill in Ayr, where twenty-four of the fifty-two tenants refused to pay rent as their houses were neither wind nor water tight; according to this report, the problems arose from construction and workmanship rather than from design defects. At the same time, the City Architect Conor McGinley inspected the Crumlin Orlit houses mid-construction and found myriad problems from the thinness of external and party walls to the lack of protection of steel, from the shoddy external plastering to the non-provision of flue liners

[337] Letter from Department to T.C. O'Mahony, 30th July 1949, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.
[338] Letter from McNamara to Orlit Ireland Ltd, 5th August 1949, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.

and the lack of ventilation space under the ground floor.[339] This damning inspection was backed up by McNamara's report of April 1950, just as the first eighteen houses were ready for occupation, seven months behind schedule; McNamara concluded that "the "Orlit" system of construction has no advantage over traditional methods of building on the score of economy or speed in erection, but the system has the disadvantage of being more complicated and less adaptable than the ordinary methods of building."[340]

By the end of June 1950, all fifty-eight of the Captain's Avenue Orlit houses were occupied. Arranged primarily around a rectangular green, the houses formed terraces of four to six and differed from their traditional counterparts in that they were narrower, their elevations were articulated by two rather than one upper window(s) and they were surmounted by more steeply-pitched roofs with curiously tall chimney stacks (figure 3.142 + 3.144). Their profile was more lightweight than the rectilinear bulky profile of O'Rourke and Simms' Corporation terraces. In external detail, the Orlit houses were not clad in pebbledash or brick but rather, their cavity block-cladding was merely painted; window surrounds were meek bands of render and the doorways were marked by enlarged canopies, almost porch-like, sitting on thin piers of concrete (figure 3.143, 3.145).[341] The dwarf walls bounding the gardens of the earlier Crumlin Estate houses were also absent. Altogether, these houses appeared like the impoverished relatives of their traditionally-built neighbours although, with their pitched slate roofs and two-up/two-down aesthetic there was no notion that they were factory-made! In October 1950, the first official post-occupation inspection of the houses revealed a litany of structural and material defects and the extent of the shoddy workmanship: the pine and deal treads of the stairs were split from end to end; internal plaster had cracked; fireplaces had come away from the wall; smoke was issuing from between the concrete surround and the wall; window boards were not properly secured; window sashes of steel appeared inadequate (the maintenance inspector noted that tenants had inserted paper between the frame and sash); bathrooms' hand basin taps were loose; and gutters were not properly fitted.[342] The maintenance inspector told tenants not to wallpaper rooms so as to cover defects and he concluded his report as follows:

> As we were leaving some eight or ten tenants surrounded us and threatened rent-strike if the defects are not put in hand at once. From this deputation the

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[339] Report by McGinley (City Architect), 7th March 1950, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.
[340] Report by McNamara, 27th April 1950, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.
[341] I have been unable to find the working plans of these houses but have seen Tyndall's first presentation drawings (much changed later) to the Corporation of 1949 (File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951"). My analysis of the houses then, comes primarily from external viewing of them as they are extant (2010) and are situated at Captain's Avenue, near to St. Agnes Road, Crumlin
[342] Author's paraphrase of the Inspector's notes, made on examining Captain's Avenue, Orlit houses, October 1950, File #9, "Site plans: Orlit, Section 2C, 1949 - 1951" in ibid.

> principal complaint was rain percolating from the heads of the ground-floor windows. See especially chimney breast of 102 Captain's Avenue. Since this, a fireplace has fallen out in 24 Captain's Avenue.[343]

So much for prefabricated housing in early 1950s Dublin: it would seem that the gesture towards experimentation was made, that the experiment failed and so, the authorities could return to the standardised "sameness" of the 1930s model. In this instance, prefabrication was not used as a research tool, to get to the true nature of housing needs in the burgeoning suburbia of mid-century Ireland. The system adopted was simply a "hard-up" version of traditional models. It maintained the hegemony of the three-bedroomed dwelling, which as Paul Pfretzschner pointed out in 1965 made up three-quarters of Irish houses despite the fact that the type only suited one-third of the population.[344] Post-war prefabrication in Ireland did not introduce new housing typologies or building regulations, nor did it open up the question of dwelling in a post-war world as it did in Britain. Instead as Pfretzschner summarised, Irish housing was "like army issued clothing", having little regard for architectural variation.[345]

## ***Part III "How we might live":***

*Architects and 1950s suburbia – between tradition and system*

It was precisely this coming together of an avant-garde industrial process (in many respects, contemporary international architectural ideals) with the pitched-roof mid-century vernacular of new suburbia (local authority priorities) which led to a reaction against prefabrication by many architects in Ireland and Britain during the 1950s. Though "conservative prefabrication" continued to proliferate in the new cottage estates of London and elsewhere in Britain, especially with the BISF house by Frederick Gibberd with its semi-brick/semi-profiled steel elevation, the expense of some types (the AIROH aluminium house cost £1,600, figure 3.132), the unworkable ugliness of others (the Portal house), or indeed the structural weakness of the Orlit house, set off a backlash and a wave of anti-prefabrication in certain architectural circles. The 1946/47 AAI president, Donal O'Dwyer expressed this element of post-war 'technophobia':

> Plastics and prefabrication we are told mean revolution in architecture. But through how many revolutions has Architecture emerged essentially unchanged! Plastics and prefabrication are nearly as old as Architecture itself and Cinderella anticipated the modern vogue for plastic slippers. As an antidote to extravagant

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[343] Ibid.
[344] Paul Pfretzschner, *The Dynamics of Irish Housing* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1965), p.6-7
[345] Ibid., p.6

> enthusiasm for new materials on the score of novelty alone I would like to quote a member of the Architectural Science Board addressing a meeting of the RIBA. Speaking of the adaptability of timber in building construction he said that if we were making a new material and could make one as good as timber he thought that the chemical engineers would be quite pleased. This generous tribute to the Creator is worth considering. We might add that if Science were making a new breakfast food it could produce nothing better than bacon and eggs. And it couldn't produce bacon and eggs. With this reflection radar and atomic fission recede into a truer perspective.[346]

Was it technophobia or more a realisation of the limitation of technology? Certainly the need to acknowledge tradition re-emerged at this time, as the editorial to *Architectural Survey* of 1954 attested:

> Tradition to us is a live thing. It is a reservoir of knowledge acquired from generations of experience. It includes every building that man has ever built. Only a fool would ignore such knowledge. The proper use of such knowledge is, however the selection of that which is relevant to to-day's building techniques, not the imitation of surface appearance.[347]

The basis of this quasi-traditionalism was still anti-historicism, but it was now mixed with a suspicion of technology and "system". This was in keeping with British discourse, reminding us of chapter one's description of the influence of J.M. Richards and the *Architectural Review* in Irish architectural culture. In Britain- which was becoming increasingly "central" as opposed to marginal in terms of contemporary architectural thinking – a quasi traditionalism was emerging, stemming from a fear that the ready-made in building could preclude the architectural profession from housing and other typologies. This threat posed by "system" was already voiced by the RIBA in a 1943 memo to Government that it "would regard with regret the creation of a body of labour unskilled in any craft but the assembly of ready made houses with a spanner."[348] As in the example of Moffett and the *Architectural Design* readership, many architects chose to champion the breakdown of design and the built environment through modularisation and "system", thereby safeguarding the architect's directional role in future methods of space-making. For Moffett and so many others, prefabrication or system-building would further social justice by housing the masses. But it faced ideological opposition: as

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[346] Donal O'Dwyer, President's Address, *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI, 1946-47), p.25
[347] Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Architectural Survey 1954* (editorial) (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1955), p.3
[348] Cited by Emmett Scanlon, "Assembling a Collective. Townscape and Modular Design in England" in *Tracings* (UCD School of Architecture journal, Vol. 2, Autumn 2002), p.99

mentioned in chapter one, Townscape was possibly the strongest reaction to the mounting systemisation of architecture and Townscape's most tangible built manifestation, the 1951 Festival of Britain compound, was very influential in Ireland. Not surprisingly, Townscape's call to acknowledge tradition so as to make a new world, found its ally in contemporary Irish architectural commentary. Again the 1954 *Architectural Survey* editorial expressed this anti-historicist traditionalism:

> The eclectic, who steals without understanding from his contemporaries or his forebears, adds nothing to the knowledge of architecture. The creative artist will select that which is relevant to the solution of his problem and by the merit of his personal solution add something great or small to the live tradition of architecture.[349]

Perhaps the most relevant symbol for Irish housing architecture, at the end of the 1940s and into the 1950s was the cavity concrete block. In a sense, working as a metaphor, it bridged the gap between the imported theories of post-war modernism and the actual practice of Irish architects in their designs for housing schemes. In its first three years, the *Irish Architect and Contractor* was quite literally full of commentary on the technological and aesthetic properties of the cavity block (figure 3.148). Accordingly, the block was described as the heal-all solution to the country's building, and especially housing, woes. It ticked all the boxes for Irish architectural practice: it was at once recognisable (i.e. aping traditional methods) and radical (lighter, better insulator). Not only did it reference developments in Scandinavia, Switzerland and the USA, but it could be developed and manufactured in Ireland without dependence on foreign materials.[350] And so, with this mix of the progressive and the traditional, the local and the international, the concrete cavity block was upheld as the saviour of Irish construction in the early 1950s - though it took the Dublin Building Bye-laws a further five years to permit its use beyond simple one and two-storey buildings![351]

Returning to the presentation of recent Irish housing in the Ireland issue of *Architectural Design* 1947, it is interesting to note this mixture of traditional and new housing forms in Moffett's chosen miscellany. Moffett described the inherent conservatism at play stating, "The advent of the flat roof has been sternly and persistently opposed". But while he chastised the Irish public for clinging on to the

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[349] Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Architectural Survey1954* (editorial) (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1955), p.3
[350] "Cavity Concrete Blocks" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (March 1951), p.43
[351] According to two records in the *Irish Architect and Contractor* (January 1951, p.21 and March 1951, p.43-44), there were no restrictions to the use of concrete cavity blocks in Ireland except in Dublin City and County. One account concluded that "it is an undoubted fact that much of the disease and general ill-health so prevalent in this country is due to the damp cold solid concrete or defective cavity walls in our buildings – and the proved opportunity of eliminating these defects by the use of Cavity Concrete Blocks should be availed of to the maximum extent possible." Ibid, p.43

whitewashed cottage image, it would appear that the modern and the traditional were bizarrely, not in conflict. In fact, as in our discussion about the parlour space for the Crumlin houses, Moffett pointed out a relevant, albeit accidental, link between the traditional Irish house plan and the most up-to-date open plan of international tendencies, such as the *plan libre* or universal plan:

> In the plans of rural cottages, we noticed that the modern tendency to design all the living accommodation as one large room – subdivided according to use by movable screens or low fittings – is in direct line of descent from the ancient Irish kitchen-cum-dining-cum-sitting-room...In the best modern examples, the advantage of the old plan (a fine sense of spaciousness combined with an atmosphere of cosiness and hospitality) has been retained.[352]

In its exposé of recent Irish urban housing (for one-off examples and public and private schemes alike), Moffett's miscellany inadvertently highlighted this uncertain juxtaposition. The article posited the apparently progressive example of one-storey labourers' cottages by Manning Robertson but which were wholly in the model of DADco types (1941, Blackrock, figure 3.149), alongside two-storey labourers' cottages which represented a regression of Simms' plans (1939, Ballinteer, figure 3.150). Most notable, was the example of terrace housing in Co. Offaly by Michael Scott Architects (1946, Banagher, figure 3.151). Surprisingly for an established avant-garde practice which was at the same time designing Ireland's first Corbusian office block, the Bus Station at Store Street (1944-53), the plan for this Offaly County Council housing scheme was hardly a departure from local authority vernacular: rather, the layout expressed a compartmentalised structure of separated spaces which even incorporated the synonymous "best parlour". Though Scott's house sported a through-lit living room which Moffett tried to explain as "traditional kitchen-cum-living room retained", it contained a separate scullery/kitchen just as in the Simms/O'Rourke prototype. If anything, Scott's model was more compartmentalised than the standard local authority type while externally, it maintained the streamlined vernacular aesthetic of rendered wall, generous windows, concrete canopied doorway and pitched slate roof. In relation to private housing schemes then, Moffett illustrated a project by confirmed modernist Brendan O'Connor (1947, location unknown, figure 3.152) and like in the Scott example, the house-plans were modelled on established layouts as too were the elevations with their pitched roofs and front gardens. Moffett called O'Connor's scheme "A very great improvement on the speculative builder's usual suburban house";[353] sure enough, both

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[352] Noel Moffett, "Low-Cost Urban Housing" in *Architectural Design* (July, 1947, Ireland issue), p.186
[353] Ibid, p.188

plan and perspective sketch described a seemingly more spacious model for suburban living. But in reality the plan was again highly compartmentalised and upon examination, it was a wall-for-wall copy of the "urban semi-detached five-person house, south or west aspect" from the British Ministry of Health's *Housing Manual*, 1944 (figure 3.153).

In continuing the theme of uncertain juxtaposition, Moffett did illustrate examples of alternative urban housing: firstly, his own aforementioned pair of houses in Baldoyle (figure 3.113, 3.114) and then, an interesting (presumably unbuilt) project by Patrick Hamilton for a terrace in County Dublin. In terms of multi-storey multi-unit dwelling, Moffett showed an early scheme by Simms (Marrowbone Lane, 1937) and predictably, Michael Scott's ffrench-Mullen House (1941, figure 3.56). Indeed, the article arose too early to publish either Simms' later array block schemes or Moffett's own housing scheme at Dundalk (1949-51, now Pearse Park, figures 3.119 – 3.121). This latter scheme, published in *Architectural Design* by 1950, was perhaps the most innovative example of local authority mass-cottages at this time as it incorporated five plan types, all of which presented radically different layouts at ground-floor level; skewed planes allowed living to flow into dining to abut hallway, and so on (figure 3.122). At first glance, the estate appeared like many others with its replicated pitched roofed terraces, but closer analysis revealed such idiosyncrasies as brightly coloured facades (purple, yellow, red and white), tripartite window patterns and more interesting boundary walls and gates (figures 3.119, 3.124). The scheme of one hundred and twenty units presented Moffett with his biggest commission to date and the resulting houses signalled a compromise between the inherited layout of roads and sewers (constructed before Moffett was appointed), local authority specifications or building bye-laws and the architect's ongoing study and design experimentation.[354] In this way, the abiding memory of the site was the typically windswept placelessness of the mid-century cottage estate combined with Moffett's colourful aspirations, internalised:

> The plan attempts a modern interpretation of the traditional Irish cottage plan, where the living-room-kitchen was big enough to permit dancing and all cooking was done on the open fire...A curtain or partition can of course be provided, if the tenant so wishes, to separate living and dining areas.[355]

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[354] According to the unpublished interview between Moffett and Shane O'Toole, Moffett oversaw the construction of this scheme while living in London: "We had designed a big housing scheme in Dundalk ... Every weekend, for a number of months, I caught a plane at Heathrow and landed at Dublin Airport and a friend met me and drove me straight to the building site and I stayed overnight and flew back to London. I did that for several months and then Patrick Delany or Liam Carlin offered to compete [this] job, to prevent me coming over every weekend, and they acted as project architects and saw [it] through. That was how we managed to finish off the work we had in Ireland. Because the Dundalk scheme was quite a large scheme." (interview excerpt provided to author by Shane O'Toole, July 2010)

[355] Architectural description, "Housing Scheme at Dundalk, Ireland" in *Architectural Design* (exact date unknown, 1950-51), p.55

Outside of Moffett, the folding of the traditional into the contemporary in housing schemes, through the common feature of the open plan, was neither acknowledged nor tried. It brings us back to that which is intangible about this grey history. Like the metaphor of the cavity concrete block, an advertisement by Smith and Pearson for a modernised half-door in steel rather than timber could be the leitmotif for the curious position of housing within Irish architects' practice in the mid-century; again, an uncertain juxtaposition of old and new rather than a collision or a dichotomy. The modern half-door and the concrete cavity block served to shun modernism while at the same time embrace modernity. Both objects maintained a traditional architectural language visually but they were inherently or materially radical.

Another architectural context from this time throws more light on the situation of housing for the Irish architectural community: the "Better Buildings"/"Focus" Exhibition (1950-53). As chapter one outlined, exhibitions were the main P.R. medium (through the RIAI and AAI Joint Public Relations Committee) for the architectural community during the 1950s and considering the centrality of housing in the public's "built environment" consciousness, it is not surprising that the house was a subject for exhibition. For example, in February 1949, the RIAI held an exhibition on "Housing Layouts". Borrowed from the RIBA, the exhibition consisted of plywood panels onto which photographs and plans of fifty-five different rural, village, urban (at high and low-densities) housing schemes from Britain were pasted.[356] Most of the schemes dated from the inter-war and post-war periods and the display was designed as a "visual aid" accompaniment to an RIBA conference on housing from 1948. The exhibition represented the latest in public housing endeavour in Britain and was recommended for local authorities rather than for the general public. Despite the RIBA's advice to run a lecture series with the exhibition, the RIAI only managed to host one lecture, "HOUSEBEAUTYMADE" by Daithi Hanly (then the Town Planning Officer for Dun Laoghaire) on 15th February 1949. This lecture was about the relationship between housing and planning, and was based on Hanly's recent trip to the International Housing Conference at Zurich and the Experimental City of Prefabricated Houses at Paris.[357] In an apparent effort to influence and introduce local authorities to British (i.e. international) housing innovations, the RIAI invited all of the County Managers to the opening of the exhibition.[358] Without knowing the exact content of the exhibition, it is difficult for the historian to measure its real effect on the Irish environment – was the Orlit house on display for example? To what extent were recent

[356] All information on this exhibition is from "Exhibition on Housing Layout, October 1948 – February 1949", I.A.A., RIAI Collection, Box 93/136/61 (there is also information on the exhibition in the Joint Public Relations Committee files in Box 93/136/45)
[357] Ibid.
[358] Due presumably to her gender and the link between women and housing, the RIAI asked architect and senator Eleanor Butler to launch the show but she was unable to do so at the last minute, due to illness; Minutes from meeting 28th February 1948, "Exhibition on Housing Layout, October 1948 – February 1949", ibid.

multi-storey blocks illustrated? But we do know that only seventy-five people (including forty who attended the opening) visited the exhibition during its week-long stint in Merrion Square and that neither the Corporation's Housing Director nor the Secretary of the Department of Local Government were able to attend.[359] In its letter of thanks to the RIBA, the RIAI summarised the reception and effect of the exhibition locally: "The ordinary newspapers here did not give any account of the exhibition although they were invited to attend the opening, but then in Ireland architecture has no news value and is only noticed by the press when an opportunity for hostile criticism is afforded."[360]

The architects, due to general inactivity outside of social infrastructure projects (i.e. housing, schools and hospitals), were not to be deterred and were adamant to both educate the public about contemporary architecture and dazzle local government with successful housing schemes. The "Better Buildings" exhibition was, as we know from chapter one, designed as a didactic display for the foreign audience but it did return to Ireland, touring the country, and became the centre piece for the RIAI's contribution to An Tostal in 1953. Interestingly, out of the eight screens of photographs depicting "recent" (i.e. post 1940) architecture, three screens illustrated residential projects (figure 1.35, chapter one). And of the three residential screens, two were dedicated to one-off houses while one showed examples of housing schemes. For more than a decade, the one-off house (along with the factory and the hospital) had presented the Irish architect with the opportunity to express a modernist language most blatantly. As such, those illustrated in the Better Buildings exhibition such as the house at Carrickmines by Brendan O'Connor (1949, figure 3.158) and the Downes' House in Foxrock by Downes and Meehan (1940, figure 3.157) were strikingly modernist, aesthetically. While one-off houses from the 1930s, like their hospital counterparts, spoke an international language of white render, porthole fenestration and curved bays sporting metal balconies, the 1940s and 1950s houses were more varyingly clad in coloured plaster or brick with exposed concrete details. Curved components were replaced by overlapping planes of dominating screen walls and exaggeratedly overhanging roofs while the flat roof was joined by the mono-pitch roof: J.M. Richards' New Empiricism had surely arrived to replace the 1930s semi-*Weissenhof*/semi-Expressionist aesthetic in the domestic forms of 1940s/ 50s avant-garde Ireland (figures 3.154-3.156).

Of course this shift in aesthetic from pre-Emergency to post-Emergency was more subtle and harder to categorise than the critic would have us believe. It is also difficult to confirm Paul Larmour's charge of the 1940s architect's increased interest in spacious

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[359] Ibid.

[360] Correspondence between W. De Clerc (RIAI) and C. D. Spragg (RIBA), 25th March 1949, "Exhibition on Housing Layout, October 1948 – February 1949", ibid. There was only a one line advertisement of the exhibition in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (5th March 1949)

interiors through open-planning at ground level because often plans were not published in the architectural press, and when they were I would argue that most Irish (one-off and otherwise) houses' layouts tended towards compartmentalised space.[361] In the Better Buildings exhibition, no plans were displayed and in relation to residential architecture, there were no models and only one image of an interior - the rest of the domestic projects were illustrated by external photographs.[362] That all of the thirteen one-off houses were modernist stylistically and that eleven were in Dublin was not remarkable. After all, according to George Bernard Shaw (in a letter to the RIAI Yearbook of 1950 in response to seeing the 1949 yearbook's photographs of O'Connor's house and the Ballybride House (J. Arthur Douglas, both in Shankill)), Dublin's recent one-off houses were quite revolutionary:

> In my travels round the world I have studied the groups of modern villas with verandas and balconies that have grown up in the suburbs of all the considerable towns and cities. They are all pretty, but not architecturally original: all Palladian or Baroque. Therefore I am greatly struck by the Irish villas depicted in the Year Book you have sent me. I have never seen anything like them before, and find them both original and attractive; and if the pictures could be circulated abroad I should not be surprised if they produced a very desirable break away in suburban domestic practice everywhere and kept us in the in the newest architecture as we have always been in the old.[363]

Whether or not Shaw's acclamation was grounded in actual architectural knowledge did not matter to the RIAI who proudly published the letter shortly before the great writer's death. And why not acknowledge the lesser-known local modernist innovations?

Unlike the one-off houses, innovative design or even a modernist aesthetic in Irish housing schemes of the mid-century was not common. Editor of the *RIAI Yearbook* Raymond McGrath said as much in 1949: "it must be admitted that our housing schemes do not begin to bear comparison with achievements abroad... Planned housing, with a few notable exceptions, has been little better. Its monotony and lack of inspiration are a

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[361] The *Irish Builder* often published plans, it more regularly illustrated a building by photograph or perspective sketch. Certainly, the *Architectural Survey* contented itself with exterior photography only. Larmour's point about the open plan ("attempts to create more spaciousness inside by use of open ground-floor plans") growing in popularity is really only proven and made in reference to Moffett's endeavour at Baldoyle and later, his pair of houses in Portmarnock (figures 3.115-3.118) - Paul Larmour, *Free State Architecture. Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922 – 1949* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, Ideas on Art + Architecture Series, No. 4, 2009), p. 75

[362] The decision to show the majority of projects through exterior photography came from fact that the exhibition was promoted and funded by the External Relations Committee of the Department of External Affairs. The RIAI were the curators and organisers of the show, but the primary medium of photography and secondary of models were pushed for the general public audience.

[363] Letter from George Bernard Shaw to Raymond McGrath (editor), 23rd June 1950, published in *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1950), p.18. The 1949 yearbook illustrated, pre-emptively, many buildings from the forthcoming Focus Better Buildings exhibition and McGrath must have sent it to Shaw with a note indicating as much.

warning for the future."[364] As a result of this fact, three of the illustrated housing schemes in the exhibition were from Northern Ireland: Donaghadee, Co. Down (Northern Ireland Housing Trust NIHT); Finaghy, Belfast (Gibsen and Taylor); Armagh housing (Bell and Malcolmson). Indeed, from the early 1950s onwards, the Irish architectural press generally championed the work of the NIHT, thereby differentiating it from local authority housing endeavour in the Republic.[365] Of the other illustrated schemes, two were housing projects by Frank Gibney at Waterford and Drogheda and the last three were schemes, public and private in South County Dublin: at Mount Merrion by Uinseann MacEoin; at Farmhill by Niall Montgomery (figure 3.160) and at Sallynoggin by Daithi Hanly and Luan Cuffe. Again, as in Moffett's miscellany for *Architectural Design* 1947, we are struck by the mixed nature of the housing examples on exhibit; and especially striking is the seemingly traditional or vernacular nature of these Dublin schemes. For example Montgomery's private Farmhill scheme consisted of approximately seventy pebble-dashed pitched roof units, all semi-detached and forming an unremarkable T-shaped landscape of suburban road and grassy verge (figure 3.161); the three-up/ three-down room structure was served by generous circulation spaces, again unremarkable (figure 3.159). At closer glance however, "unremarkable" became strained and confusing, as the main entrance was positioned to the side of the houses and a curious fenestration pattern pervaded giving rise to ambiguity between front and rear. Overall, one wonders why such an ordinary scheme (with unsuccessfully worked-out house plans) was included in the exhibition; just as one wonders why *Architectural Survey* published three similarly glib suburban houses in its 1965 edition (figure 3.165). While Farmhill's architect, Montgomery, wrote in the AAI's journal shortly after in 1956:

> Replan for what we have, but build up high, wide and handsome, noble dwellings shining in the light and air of city parks, balance them with terraces, churches, schools. Make the city, between the canals, inaccessible to private motor cars and... don't exile decent Dublin men to the far foreign fields of Dundrum and Ballygall.[366]

Such contradiction between theory and practice presents a conundrum for the architectural historian: we can only conclude that Irish collective housing during 1940s-1960s was a product of restrictive building specifications and inherent traditionalism in terms of patterns of living. An article from the Irish Countrywomen's Association's 1956 annual sums up the mix, which underpinned the mid-century house building boom, of

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[364] Editorial, *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1949), p.4
[365] For examples of this "championing", see the Architectural Survey of 1954. Comment is made in favour of the NIHT in the editorial of the RIAI Yearbook of 1949, p.4
[366] Niall Montgomery "That'll All have to come down" in *Green Book* (Dublin: AAI Annual, 1956), p.81

hope for modernisation on the one hand and of reticence to jettison tradition on the other:

> Our modern kitchens betoken the end of an era or rather the beginning of a new one. The danger is that these centres of Irish family life will become replicas of their counterparts in America and England with their glistening gadgets and clinical air. It is up to us women to stamp our Irish individuality on them, to preserve the warm and living atmosphere of the past, to link the old with the new. All honour to the Irish Countrywomen's Association, which strives to preserve our Gaelic heritage while endeavouring to banish drudgery from the rural kitchen. We have our cookers, cleaners, heaters and "fridges", but let us have also our St. Brigid Crosses, our hand-looms and the lingering traditions of our past.[367]

Notably, Moffett's Dundalk scheme and his pair of houses at Baldoyle were absent from the Better Buildings exhibition. In fact, nothing by Moffett was on display and having just completed what were arguably the most interesting one-off houses of the period in Dublin – the East and West Houses, Portmarnock, 1949-50 (figures 3.115-3.118)[368] – one must assume that Moffett was simply out of the RIAI "loop". Considering how the exhibition's content had been generated by a RIAI circular to its members requesting they propose their own work for inclusion and that Moffett had left Ireland by that stage, the absence of his practice is logical. The truly interesting Dublin housing scheme to be included in the exhibition, though seemingly traditional at first glance, was the Dun Laoghaire Council scheme at Sallynoggin (1948-51, figure 3.162) by Daithi Hanly and Luan Cuffe. In the first instance, this scheme was repeatedly lauded during 1951 by the architectural community for the design merits of its multi-various housing types and layouts, as well as its planning merits as Dublin's equivalent of a British New Town.[369] One assumes that the New Town comparison arose due to Sallynoggin's physical dislocation from its contemporary ever-growing fringe communities at the South West and North East of the city, rather than because a new town centre was generating Sallynoggin's development. One reviewer described how within two years the area had gone from the grassy 400-acre Belton Estate to the "homeland of what is gradually developing into a great new community; for the Sallynoggin scheme of 550 dwellings

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[367] Ellen Casey, "Farm-house Kitchens" in *Our Book* Irish Countrywomen's Association Yearbook (Dublin: ICA, 1956), p.39

[368] East and West Houses were published in a building review "Two Houses at Portmarnock, County Dublin: Noel Moffett" in *Architectural Design* (September 1950, vol. 20, no. 9), p.235-236

[369] The scheme was visited by the AAI during the 1948/49 session. At the opening of the scheme in January 1951, the contractor Mr Rooney said that the "plans of the houses were amongst the best he had seen", see "Minister Warns against Complacency. Sallynoggin Housing Scheme Opening" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (January 1951), p.19

only forms part of the Dun Laoghaire Borough Corporation's full building programme which is being carried out in this area."[370]

The primary source of critical acclaim for Sallynoggin was the estate's attempt to counter monotony.[371] Rather than providing the usual single house type but with slightly varied elevations, Hanly designed four types from three-roomed flats (within two-storey houses) to four and five-roomed houses (figures 3.163 + 3.164) which were mixed and staggered throughout the scheme, thereby enabling different family sizes and a more diverse population for the estate. Aesthetically, the houses sported contrastingly coloured timber windows, and some facades were punctured with porthole windows while others were clad with laths for creepers. *The Irish Contractor* reviewer was particularly enthused by the new trees which were not planted on the pavement as was usual local authority practice but rather, "they have been planted inside the front garden railings, so that they will belong to somebody who will care for them and not to anybody who may tend to leave their care to everybody else."[372] The reviewer concluded:

> ...something more than an ordinary building scheme has been created. It is what is being created, as a result of the architectural and sociological forethought which has been invested in the scheme that stirs the imagination. In Ireland too many working-class people merely exist. At Sallynoggin it will be their privilege to live.[373]

## ***Part III "How we might live":***

*The Ideal Home in early 1950s Dublin: A competition, New Empiricism and CIAM as influences*

An important event for Irish architects was Dublin's Ideal Home competition and exhibition of 1953. The opportunity which the competition presented brought an architectural element to the question of mass-housing, while the subsequent exhibition introduced a public element to the otherwise private issue of the one-off house. Borrowed from the British Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition which had been held almost annually in London since 1908, this appears to have been the first Ideal Homes event in

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[370] "In Quest of Houses and a New Civic Spirit - at Sallynoggin" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (March 1951), p.12

[371] The editorial of the *RIAI Yearbook* 1949 stated that the typical monotony has been relieved by Dun Laoghaire in the Sallynoggin scheme where Hanly had "...made a determined effort to break down the hide-bound traditions of Corporation housing. It is an intelligent layout...Existing trees have been preserved..." See *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1949), p.4. Gerald McNicholl made a similar comment in his presidential address to the RIAI in 1956/57; see *RIAI Yearbook* (Dublin: RIAI, 1956 -57), p.10. At the opening of the scheme in January 1951, the contractor Mr Rooney said that the "plans of the houses were amongst the best he had seen", see "Minister Warns against Complacency. Sallynoggin Housing Scheme Opening" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (January 1951), p.19

[372] "In Quest of Houses and a New Civic Spirit - at Sallynoggin" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (March 1951), p.12

[373] Ibid.

Ireland.[374] Its success in Britain was due to the public's love of spectacle and exhibition, fostered since the nineteenth-century Great Exhibitions, which was joined in the post-war world by the obsession with housing and the consequent development of domestic technologies; all of which had rather inevitably spilled over the Irish Sea. The original conception of the event as a commercial forum for the building industry was maintained in its 1950s iterations – and probably increasingly so as it developed throughout the twentieth century. In fact, the competition aspect of the exhibition was a distraction for the architectural community who, in the earlier twentieth century in Britain had enjoyed a monopoly in terms of recommending building products to clients; with the advent of the Ideal Home Exhibition, the process was democratised and commercialised with product firms no longer relying on architects' recommendations. And with the architect's central role in jeopardy, the exhibition organisers (*Daily Mail* management) appeased the community with a competition (for which it awarded generous prizes), to design an ideal home to be built as the exhibition's central display (figures 3.166 + 3.167).[375]

As we know, architects universally and consistently championed competitions as the most thoroughly cultural means of evolving new buildings. In Ireland, at the beginning of the 1950s, the Ideal Home competition was no different and signalled an important opportunity to impress the architect's worth upon the consumer-public. As the winning design was to be built as a full-scale model in the grounds of Dublin's Mansion House, with no reference to actual site or structural constrictions, the architects could be more daring in terms of technology. Indeed, the competition conditions specifically stated that architects should be liberated from, rather than limited by, the prospective model and as such, the impermanence of the task.[376] The event was sponsored by Irish Exhibitions Ltd. who committed prizes of £75 for the first premium and £25 for the second, and as ever the competition was managed by the RIAI who appointed modernist house "specialist" Brendan O'Connor as the assessor. Fifty one submissions were received in drawing form (no models, perspective sketches or photographs were allowed), accompanied by a short written report.[377] Aside from the £2,500 budget (so that the house would qualify for the Government Housing Grant) and the specification that the design be "constructed and planned to suit the Irish climate, and built of Irish

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[374] The British exhibition was not held during either the First World War (starting up again in 1920) and Second World War (starting up again in 1947), see Deborah Ryan, *The Ideal Home through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar Publishing, 2007).
This author has not found evidence of an Ideal Home Exhibition in Dublin prior to 1953.

[375] Deborah Ryan records this evolution of the Ideal Home Competition in her book, *The Ideal Home through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar Publishing, 2007), p.11-12

[376] As the competition conditions state, in relation to the fact that the winning design would be built as a model: "The competitors, however, need not allow this factor to influence to too great an extent their systems of construction or choice of materials. As far as possible the full-scale model will represent the permanent materials decided upon by the winning competitor." See "Two Competitions – Design of House sponsored by Irish Exhibitions Ltd." in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (May 1953), p.56

[377] These reports are available to read in "Ideal Home Competition" file in I.A.A., RIAI Collection, 93/136/62. Without reference to the submitted drawings though, these reports are of limited interest.

materials as far as possible", the conditions laid out that the design must consist of living and dining spaces of 265 sq. ft., a kitchen, three bedrooms (from 155 sq. ft. to 80 sq. ft.), a utility area, a bathroom with separate W.C. and a number of small ancillary spaces such as cloakroom, fuel store, shed and garage.[378] As such, the competition asked for a typical three-bedroomed dwelling, neither pushing for experimental design nor traditional composition. Perhaps the strongest message, reinforced through the conditions' specification for a heating system that would burn "native fuels, turf or anthracite", was the design's potential to be an outstanding example of *Irish* design hewn out of *Irish* materials; this is almost laughable considering the wholly British nature of the Ideal Home initiative but it serves as a reminder of the social and political climate of early 1950s Dublin, and the central position of the housing question therein.

The winning house was designed by Fred Rogerson who, having studied in Liverpool University, worked with well-known commercial architects Kahn and Jacobs in New York in 1946 and was, by the time of the competition, setting up on his own in Dublin following stints in Michael Scott's practice and in Dublin Corporation's Town Planning Department. The design incorporated 1,300 sq. ft. over two storeys with all the sleeping accommodation (and bathroom/W.C.) pitched upstairs, and notably a semi open plan comprising hall, toilet, kitchen with utility space/ fuel cupboard, and dining and living areas occupying the ground floor (figures 3.169). The assessor's report noted the design's inclusion of the most modern American-inspired gadgets such as the cooker's extractor hood, the fuel store's "garbage chute" and the living room's fireside seat under which a small log store was concealed. The report mostly celebrated the open plan nature of the ground floor arrangement, which it maintained gave the housewife "more space, ease of running and greater facility for combining washing and cooking and watching the children".[379] Though the assessor emphasised this open layout, stating bizarrely that "each room opens directly onto its neighbour", it is clear that Rogerson's design represented a compromise of sorts: spaces were more bounded and segregated than in the common contemporary interpretation of an open plan interior. In fact, so as to play it "safe", Rogerson cleverly asserted the possibility for more internal screens/partitions while he placed the staircase wall between hall, living room and dining areas and the servery between kitchen and dining area so as to "restrict direct vision but create a feeling of greater space than normally obtained in a small house."[380]

Again we encounter this curious blurring of traditionalism with modernist aspirations. Rogerson's perspective sketch was an especially interesting reflection of this

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[378] Competition conditions, "Two Competitions – Design of House sponsored by Irish Exhibitions Ltd." in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (May 1953), p.55-56
[379] "Open Planning in Exhibition House" (review incorporating assessor's report) in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (July 1953), p.19
[380] Ibid.

in that it was both naive and streamlined, in the Townscape aesthetic of Gordon Cullen which had become popular by the early 1950s (figure 3.168). The drawing depicted the small house's exterior: clad in rustic brick and coloured plaster and surmounted by an asymmetrically pitched roof, it seemed at once ancient in disposition and modern in detail. Underlying the cultural mask of the competition, the Ideal Home Exhibition was decidedly anti-architectural, being much more about female public consumption than architectural fashions. Perhaps the fairest view of the event would be of a compromise between commercialism and innovative design, or as Deborah Ryan defines it in her history of the original British event: "The Ideal Home Exhibition has told a different history of the domestic interior...It has presented a design history that has largely rejected the Arts and Crafts movement and Modernism, but still embraced modernity."[381] Ryan makes a key point, roundly applicable to all mid-century Irish housing and indeed much contemporary British housing – that this housing architecture was consistently about modernising the domestic while ultimately shunning modernism. Rogerson's winning design for the Dublin competition of 1953 certainly expressed such a tendency. But as it articulated a form of open-planning through the representational techniques of Townscape, its traditionalism was not explicit. The example however does highlight the type of post-war modernism that influenced Irish architecture for at least two generations which we saw with the hospital campuses at Cherry Orchard and St. Luke's in chapter two: that of Lionel Esher's "soft" British modernism coming out of New Empiricist Swedish modernism.

We recall Esher's break-down of late 1940s to 1950s British architectural culture, and especially the LCC, into "hard" and "soft" movements whereby the "soft" preferred and developed along the lines of inter-war LCC typologies of maisonettes and mixed-development estates at a density of 100 p.p.a.; while they adopted high-rise models (i.e. eight storey), they were in mixed materials of brick and concrete and were generally accessed by means of balcony decks. The "hard" school derived their housing choices from Gropius' *Zeilenbau* and Le Corbusier's *Ville Radieuse.*[382] Importantly, Irish architecture took the "soft" or "humanist" side of post-war modernism. But the choice was not purely aesthetic - it influenced at the level of typology, such as the preference for single-family dwellings over multi-dwelling blocks. By the early 1950s, with the ongoing proliferation of the low-rise individual cottage, the question re-emerged around Dublin's collective housing. Knowing how the Corporation was the dominant force and supplier of housing up to this point, we may suspect that this issue was guarded as a local authority one; generally keeping architecture's discourse at bay. But, what of the contemporary importance of the *Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne* or CIAM

[381] Deborah Ryan, *The Ideal Home through the 20th Century* (London: Hazar Publishing, 2007), p.19
[382] Lionel Esher, *The Rebuilding of England 1940 – 1980. A Broken Wave* (London: Penguin Books, 1981), p.107

meetings within the culture of international architecture from 1928 onwards? Did this milieu - with its focus on collective housing and urbanism - even penetrate Irish architecture's consciousness?

There may be no doubt that pre-war CIAM edicts had an impact on even the softest of British post-war development, especially anything happening within LCC as that body concentrated on planning and constructing whole new suburban worlds. For instance, the CIAM principles (Athens Charter, 1933) of housing populations in high widely-spaced apartment blocks impinged upon the celebrated mid-war mixed-development estate of Woodberry Downs (1940 – 1954, London, figures 3.20 – 3.22) with its four eight-storey blocks at a density of 178 p.a.a.[383] Similarly, such post-war estates as Ackroydon (1950-54, figure 3.172) at Wimbledon and the Alton estates at Roehampton (1954-60, figures 3.170, 3.171) were well-known for their humanist modernism (i.e. picturesque landscaping and mixed accommodation types) and yet, in both instances tall "point blocks", set in parallel or alone, were the key architectural monuments.[384] One could argue that the Athens Charter breakdown of urban conditions into Dwelling, Recreation, Work, Transportation and Historic Buildings was a more universal and rational version of the Garden City; certainly these categories tally with Abercrombie's approach to both the London and Dublin plans of the 1940s.[385] Similarly, the most situated and anti-technocratic modernism, that of Swedish New Empiricism which was emerging during Sweden's neutral experience of World War II, had not been immune to CIAM. The leading forces of Swedish post-war socio-architectural programmes (such as new village-like communities with day care facilities and so on) – Sven Margelius, Eskil Sundahl and Uno Ahren – were in fact the Swedish CIAM group of the 1930s.[386]

Eric Mumford's history of CIAM (1928-1960) recounts the Congress' post-war meetings and the general shift in guiding principle from Cartesian urbanism to emotional community-building; at the same time, CIAM moved from the avant-garde into the mainstream as many of its key members gained professional positions in official agencies (i.e. local authority or state planning and housing departments). It would seem that the Congress followed the impetus of its largest member, the British MARS group in focusing on the design and experience of new town centres in the late 1940s and early 1950s. With two of the post-war meetings happening in England (1947 at Bridgewater and 1951 at Hoddesdon), it is not surprising that J. M. Richards wielded significant influence within

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[383] Elain Harwood, "The Road to Subtopia: 1940 to the Present" in English Heritage, *London Suburbs* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p.138

[384] "Point block" is the term used at the time to discuss a high apartment building with accommodation organised around a central service core.

[385] The connection between Garden City and CIAM ideals is discussed by Eric Mumford in *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge/London: M.I.T. Press, 2000), p.159-166

[386] Ibid., p.164. Mumford discusses the influence of "Swedish modern" on post-war British architecture, p.164-168

this international forum. And despite the increasingly loud protestations of the younger post-war Architectural Association (AA)-educated generation against Richards' hegemony – or more specifically, against what they perceived to be Richards' peddling of Scandinavian-inspired effete modernism across Britain - the Richards' school of thought reigned supreme and unchallenged within Irish architectural culture. In this respect, the culture of post-war CIAM seeped into Irish architecture through the proverbial back-door. Otherwise direct engagement with CIAM was limited as there is scant evidence of Irish architects' involvement or even awareness of the forum. An obvious exception was Noel Moffett's attendance at the Bridgewater congress (CIAM 6) in 1947 (figure 3.176) which seemed to have been Ireland's first dalliance with CIAM.[387] Interestingly, it was also recorded that a "McGrath [Raymond] and Fitzgerald [Desmond], Ireland" were accepted as delegates at this meeting (CIAM 6) while later, at CIAM 8 (1951) at Hoddesdon, "Michael Scott from Ireland" was listed as a new member in attendance.[388] But neither the direction of the AAI lectures nor the substance of the Irish architectural press can convince the architectural historian that this Irish engagement with what Siegfried Giedion called "a revolutionary political society or perhaps nearer still to a religious brotherhood" had much of an impact on the Irish built environment at this time.[389] While it may have dented Irish architectural culture with the odd AAI lecture such as "C.I.A.M." by Jacqueline Tyrwhitt in January 1950, one questions its presence in the architectural make-up of Irish housing.[390]

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[387] A group photograph taken after a visit to the Bristol airplane factory which was manufacturing aluminium houses, shows Moffett as on second row, fifth from the left. This photo was published in *Architectural Design* (October 1947), p.258 – a copy of which was in Moffett's personal collection. Mumford asserts that the Bridgewater meeting was the first instance of Irish involvement in CIAM (along with India's and Cuba's) in *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge/London: M.I.T. Press, 2000), p.171. This author has been unable to find a single article, address or lecture which recounts the Irish experience of this first post-war CIAM meeting (having referred to the *Irish Builder*, the *Green Book* and the *RIAI Yearbook* from 1947-40). The event was written up in the English architectural press but there is no mention of Irish attendance or potential Irish contribution, see for example M. Hartland Thomas, "CIAM 6" in *Architectural Design* (October 1947), p.269-271 or J.M. Richards, "Architectural Expression, CIAM 6" in *The Architects' Journal* (September 25th, 1947), p.277-278

[388] For the 1947 delegate list, Mumford cites "Documents of the Sixth Congress, 37", see footnote #200, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960*, p.316 – Moffett is not listed here, rather McGrath and Fitzgerald who this author presumes to be Raymond McGrath and Desmond FitzGerald. Mumford lists Michael Scott as a new member to the 1951 congress, CIAM 8, ibid, p.204. Scott records/recounts in his autobiographical conversation that he attended the 1949 CIAM where he met Berlage (*Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.176). But as critic Ray Ryan pointed out, Berlage was already dead some fifteen years at this point – conversation with author, September 2009. It is proposed by this author and Shane O'Toole that while the Bergamo CIAM 7 (1949) with its theme of "Art and Architecture" would have attracted Scott, he is more likely to have made it to Hoddesdon through his contact with Ove Arup and due to the fact that he would have had something to show the world by then (1951) with the near completion of Busaras.

[389] See Siegfried Giedion, *Decade of New Architecture* (New York: Wittenborn, 1951), p.10 cited by Mumford, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge/London: M.I.T. Press, 2000), p.172

[390] Rightly we might assume that the generally mixed-up and transitional flavour of CIAM's teachings from these post-war meetings was not conducive to guiding new designs for the built environment in an emphatic and direct way.
Jacqueline Tyrwhitt who lectured to the AAI in 1949 was a landscape architect, based in London during the 1940s where she was Director of Studies at the School of Planning and Research for Regional Development at London University – she was a central member of CIAM during the post-war years, an assistant director of MARS from 1949, an assistant to Giedion from 1948 and in 1950, she formed partnership with Wells Coates to

Reiterating this was the fact of the young Dorothy Cole's review of the Aix-en-Provence CIAM 9 in 1953 for *The Irish Architect and Contractor*. Firstly and once again, this engagement with CIAM represented an isolated endeavour within the privileged abstract realm of Irish architectural culture rather than within the productive world of Irish social housing.[391] Secondly, while Cole's review reflected the serious interrogation with housing that CIAM was about, it was apparent by her tone and message that such interrogation was not relevant for Ireland. After all, as she described, almost all of the forty projects (or grids) within the Congress' theme of "The Dwelling" presented examples of large-scale collective housing blocks: already, Ireland seemed precluded from the conversation. Cole reported:

> It is more suitable, in a large city, to have thousands of people living separately in one large, fine building of combined dwellings, than to have thousands of people living separately in thousands of tiny identical dwellings spread for miles over a large area of land. Furthermore, apart from the purely intellectual satisfaction of the ideal relationship of scale, it is becoming increasingly urgent, on the strictly practical side, to stop the devouring of land by cities, as populations increase and new networks of small dwellings spread over the countryside in a most uneconomical manner.[392]

Aside from Robert Geddes' analysis of the suburban low-rise development at Levittown in Illinois, the housing typologies illustrated by all generations of architects at CIAM 9 were largely derived from Le Corbusier's *Unite d'Habitation* (Marseilles, 1946-52). As Cole rightly described, even the reactionary schemes by radical younger architects such as Alison and Peter Smithson's "Urban Reidentification" were based on Corbusian prototypes:[393]

> It must be admitted that CIAM 9 was dominated by the spirit of Le Corbusier. All the projects have been influenced by the Marseilles building. He is still so far ahead of everyone else that even the young architects and students of whom there were a

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prepare the Town Planning Exhibition of the Festival of Britain, see Mumford, ibid, p.202 and footnote #192, p.315.

[391] For instance, Cole was to be become the leading critic of modernist art in Ireland and already, by the early 1950s she was something of a cultural figure: working in Paris for the New York Times and then, through her friendship with the young architect-artist Patrick Scott, she became Michael Scott's secretary on her return to Ireland from Paris in 1953 (I am grateful to Simon Walker for this biographical information on his mother). According to Michael Scott's autobiographical account, he too attended CIAM 9 at Aix-en-Provence, see *Michael Scott Architect. In (casual) Conversation with Dorothy Walker* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 1995), p.176 - 178

[392] Dorothy Cole, "Review of CIAM 9, Aix-en-Provence" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (July 1953), p.31

[393] Eric Mumford runs through the main projects/grids at CIAM 9, *The CIAM Discourse on Urbanism, 1928-1960* (Cambridge/London: M.I.T. Press, 2000), p.228-237

> great number at the Congress and who fought with all the other elderly architects, had nothing but admiration for him.[394]

The British built projects on display were generally vast urban mid to high-rise schemes such as Golden Lane (c.1952-, London, Chamberlain, Powell and Bon), Churchill Gardens (c.1946-, Pimlico, Philip Powell and Moya), Alton Estate (Roehampton, L.C.C. (including Leslie Martin)) and Hallfield Estate (c.1951-, Paddington, Drake and Lasdun after Tecton). Cole singled out the Hallfield example as epitomising CIAM's concern for the social and the architectural aspects of collective housing, but what was striking was that all of these examples were complexes predominated by multi-storey slab blocks and as such, the discussion was ultimately dislocated from developments in Irish housing. Only Cole's observation on the folly of "thousands of people living separately in thousands of tiny identical dwellings spread for miles" rather than following CIAM 9's general dictum to incorporate the individual "into large units of dwellings such as the *Unite d'Habitation* at Marseilles", made a direct reference to the contemporary situation in Dublin.[395] And it served to highlight the absence of Ireland's collective housing stock.

If Ireland was to take the Swedish example in earnest, as it was filtered through the L.C.C. particularly and the British reconstruction housing programme generally, then by the early 1950s Irish local authorities should have been designing housing estates of mixed typologies at varying heights set within wooded or at least landscaped settings. But clearly, as hinted by Cole's omission, that was not happening in Ireland. In fact, it was not until Scott's firm completed a public housing scheme for the Corporation at Bridgefoot Street in central Dublin in 1964 that Ireland witnessed the application of Corbusian principles to its collective housing - more than a decade after the first Corbusian blocks appeared in Britain. This fact foregrounds the difference between Ireland and Britain at this post-war juncture: namely that Britain had experienced the brutalities of the war, including a vicious bombing campaign which had left urban life irreversibly scarred and changed. Consequently, British approaches to urban development and housing provision were coloured by post-war trauma and crisis, leaning towards a radicalism that Ireland could not emulate.

At the fundamental levels of policy and economics, the British were in receipt of considerable sums of Marshall Aid funding and introduced extensive legislation to enable the New Town programme such as the 1947 Town and County Planning Act and the New Towns Development Act. These factors in turn influenced the evolution of local authority bodies so that from 1949 the L.C.C. for instance harboured a vibrant architectural culture and presented the architectural graduate with rich experience; according to

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[394] Dorothy Cole, "Review of CIAM 9, Aix-en-Provence" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (July 1953), p.36
[395] Cole, ibid., p.31-36

Reyner Banham, "L.C.C architects were free to leap on every passing stylistic bandwagon and even roll a few of their own."[396] Ironically, just as the L.C.C. was cultivating this thriving architects' department, Dublin Corporation lost its Housing Architect and most dynamic design force, Herbert Simms - the Dublin housing authority was in a contrary state (in architectural terms) to that of its London counterpart! In a review of the Irish Better Buildings exhibition for *The Architects' Journal* while in London, Astragal (the reviewer) noted that much of the work on display was "well considered in a somewhat conservative way; some of it pretty undistinguished – especially the housing."[397] Maintaining that the private work excelled over the official buildings, Astragal stated:

> This is, in my opinion, Irish architecture's particular handicap, as it was England's until a few years ago. In fact, if Astragal were asked to sum up in one sentence the progress that architecture has made in England since the war, he would say that it lies in the fact that official architecture in many places is now setting a lead instead of always lagging behind.[398]

Astragal's point is critical: the British infrastructure had been so shaken up that by 1950 it could facilitate serious architectural innovation and intensive social experiment for state building programmes (for example, the Hertfordshire school programme to be mentioned in chapter four). On the other hand, the comparative stability of Irish society from 1930 through to 1950 was mirrored in the staidness of its public housing form. While Dublin's slum problem and the subsequent clearance project presented an extreme housing dilemma throughout the war years, it was not comparable to the crisis of bombed-out cities across England. As such, another key difference between Dublin and London was the *scale* of the rehousing project: as outlined, where Dublin needed 30,000 units, London needed 200,000. Interestingly, the same trauma amounted to a difference in attitudes towards suburbanisation. Dublin slum-dwellers were not on the whole enthusiastic about moving to the new fringe housing colonies (Report of Inquiry, 1943), but according to a study by the Hackney and Stoke Newington Social Workers' Group of 1944 their London counterparts were largely eager to "move to somewhere "more open"."[399] This enquiry found that as a result of the "evacuation experiences, a great

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[396] Reyner Banham, "Corbolatry at County Hall" in *New Society* (4th November 1965), p.26, cited in Alan Powers, *Britain. Modern Architectures in History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2007), p.110

[397] Astragal's review for *The Architects' Journal* quoted in "Exhibition of Irish Architecture " in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (8th November 1952), p.1063

[398] Ibid.

[399] 60% of those surveyed "would like to move to an outer suburb or right out of London if the opportunity came their way", see Hackney and Stoke Newington Social Workers' Group, *What Kind of Houses? An Enquiry in a London Borough* (London: Hackney and Stoke Newington Social Workers' Group, 1944) (available in TCD Early Printed Books), p.10

many mothers have realised that it is a good thing for children to live in the country... The fact that so many Londoners have during the war seen something of England outside London has perhaps helped to break down the old conservatism."[400]

The willingness to move out of England's bombed and dense cities was also linked to the promise of industry in the new towns and estates. As a description in *The Irish Builder* of the development of the new town of Harlow (25,000 houses were proposed, at a construction rate of 2,000 per year), in Essex outlined: "It is essential that these new towns should have industries so as to provide employment... About forty factories are already in production, these being let to well-known established firms, and eventually it is hoped that factory employment will be found for 18,000 people."[401] Such an industrialisation process, twinned at it was with the planning of housing, was not replicated in the Irish example. Though many new factories were built in and around the fringes of Dublin during the early 1950s, the majority of *employed* working-class Dubliners had a long (by bicycle) or expensive (by public transport) commute from home to work.[402] In reality from 1940 to c.1970, Dublin's new suburban neighbourhoods struggled to supply community basics such as public libraries and enough shops, so that the provision of local mass-employment through industrial infrastructure was a pipe dream. In short, the relative continuity of Ireland's cultural and socio-economic experience from pre- to post-Emergency meant that the "old conservatism" was not overcome as it was in the English example. More importantly, the continuity amounted to the maintenance of the suburban cottage campaign at the Capital's edge and the consequent dearth of experiment around public housing typologies until the end of the 1950s in Ireland.

## ***Part III "How we might live":***

*Housing the collective: flats for 1950s Dublin and Corbusian influence*

Certain questions remain for this chapter to address: namely, what was the position of collective multi-storey housing in Dublin by the late 1940s and more loosely, in what guise were the urban flat blocks reintroduced to the city by the early 1960s? Firstly, we might ask what had happened to Simms' flat building programme of the 1930s? As the table below illustrates, flat construction in Dublin had ceased by 1944:

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[400] Ibid., *What Kind of Houses? An Enquiry in a London Borough,* unpaginated
[401] "Satellite Towns" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th October 1953), p.1091
[402] Unfortunately it is beyond the remit of this chapter and thesis to examine the architecture of factories and industrial development during this period of Irish history. However, factory design constituted an important preoccupation for young architects in the mid-century (in terms of technology) and the architectural press regularly published such industrial buildings in the early 1950s: for example, the Chivers and Smurfits factories in Clonskeagh, the Sheet Metal Engineering factory in Howth, Blackwater Cottons at Youghal (Co. Cork) and the Harvester Factory in Santry, Dublin.

| Dates | Flats erected | Cottages erected | Total erected |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1938/39 | 678 | 1,657 | 2,335 |
| 1939/40 | 186 | 1,156 | 1,342 |
| 1940/41 | 284 | 482 | 766 |
| 1941/42 | 32 | 1,210 | 1,242 |
| 1942/43 | 214 | 554 | 768 |
| 1943/44 | 24 | 681 | 705 |
| 1944/45 | ---- | 618 | 618 |
| 1945/46 | ---- | 557 | 557 |
| 1946/47 | ---- | 422 | 422 |
| 1947/48 | ---- | 476 | 476 |

Statistics taken from "Dwellings provided by Dublin Corporation to 31st March 1948": from "Present Position of Post-War Building Programme" Report 55, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1948, p.289

This mid-Emergency downturn in flat building was coincident with the beginning of Ternan's reconditioning programme. From 1943 until 1948, 352 reconditioned units within "Georgian" terraces were created and as we know, this programme was deemed a triumph of urban rehabilitation and modern housing.[403] It is not surprising then that the more labour and material-intensive (thus expensive) project of constructing new four-storey flat complexes became disregarded. Symbolically as well as practically, the reconditioning programme was favoured as the Corporation's urban housing action throughout the 1940s: the traditionalists approved of its Georgian profile; the town planners recognised its Abercrombie credentials; the housing reformers celebrated its modern amenities at lower densities; the leftists (namely the Corporation's Housing Committee) admired its maintenance of community. Even the architects seemed positive about reconditioning - perhaps because it presented an alternative to Simms' blocks? In general, architectural commentary on the 1930s blocks was scant, though *The Irish Builder* was usually encouraging. By the 1940s the more internationally-attuned architects and critics such as Moffett, Scott, John O'Gorman and others criticized Simms' designs, primarily on the grounds that they were low-rise, spoke only a language of compromised modernism in materials and were more deeply rooted in local Victorian traditions than contemporary international ventures. So, largely because of the reconditioning programme and its immediate "plaster-over" rehabilitative tendencies, nobody lamented the cessation of new flat block construction at Dublin's centre during the 1940s. After all, the city centre had been hideously over-populated for generations and it needed to be cleared rather than added to at that juncture. Emergency conditions

[403] These figures are taken from Statistics taken from "Reconditioned Dwellings provided by Dublin Corporation to 31st March 1948" from "Present Position of Post-War Building Programme" Report 55, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1948, p.289

served to accelerate the increasingly popular policy of "thinning out" – both economic imperatives and physical ease dictated that cottage-building at the rural edge was the best solution. Essentially the flat programme was temporarily cast aside in an attempt to overcome the slum densities.

Looking at it another way we could argue that Simms' flat programme never went away - encouraged as it consistently was by certain Housing Committee members such as Tom Kelly (d.1942), Jim Larkin and Alfie Byrne - but had been silenced by wartime material shortages. While no new flats were completed between 1944 and 1948, some work occurred at foundation level. Importantly, the three large post-war flat schemes which turned out to be Simms' last blocks, were all begun during the Emergency but works were postponed: Newfoundland Street (Sherriff Street, 256 units) was begun in 1940 and finished in stages from 1942 to 1948; Rialto (Fatima Mansions, 389 units) was begun in 1940 and finished from 1947 to 1950; and Donore Avenue (St Teresa's Gardens, 556 units) was begun in 1942 and finished from late 1947 to 1951.[404] As such, these schemes were only coming into the urban consciousness, through their occupation, at the beginning of the 1950s. Material shortages had dogged their progress, as evidenced in the details of the Rialto scheme where the usual brick-clad elevations were replaced by pebbledash; brick was limited to the ground floor of the blocks and to the brick towers book-ending each block. As with the earlier 1930s buildings, Simms' design unit for each of these schemes was the four-storey flat-roofed block, characterised by its two sides: the public front articulated by fenestration and richer materials, and the private, cement render front which was lined on each floor with a continuous access gallery. However, the point of interest with these schemes is not the continuity with their 1930s precedents but rather the changes in design and site strategy which contributed towards a new housing typology for Dublin – from these schemes, different forms of flat block appeared sporadically through the 1950s only to emerge emphatically (from 1960 onwards) as idiosyncratic maisonette housing blocks. Instead of the flat blocks interacting with the existing urban grain and as perimeters, forming new street fronts, the post-war schemes were made up primarily of slab blocks arranged in *zeilenbau* or array formation – that is, in parallel rows. Enforcing this new formation was the issue of scale because each of the post-war complexes was vast, being made up of at least fourteen blocks and on sites of ten acres or more: Fatima Mansions comprised fifteen

[404] It is difficult to date these schemes and chart their development as construction was started and stalled repeatedly from 1942 onwards due to material shortages. While Eddie Conroy's scholarship (1996/1997) is undoubtedly the most sophisticated and in-depth study of Simms and Dublin Corporation housing during the 1930s and 1940s to date, Conroy relied heavily on printed Corporation Reports for his research rather than archival material such as building files. As such some of his dates may be inaccurate (Conroy, "No Rest for Twenty Years. H.G. Simms and the problem of slum clearance in Dublin" (Unpublished M.Arch.Sc. thesis, School of Architecture UCD, 1997), p.250-257). Ruth McManus' close reading of Crampton's building activity (signing of contracts and so on) from 2007/2008 reveals a fourth post-war scheme, that of the extension of the Ringsend-Irishtown scheme in 1950 by four blocks (figure 3.182)

blocks on an eleven-acre site; Donore Avenue was made up of fourteen blocks as well as ancillary structures of pram and bicycle sheds; while Newfoundland Street complex was particularly immense, consisting of eighteen blocks by 1952.

Although each complex had its own organisational strategy – the Newfoundland blocks were slip-stepped in nine courtyard formations (figure 3.179) while Fatima Mansions was asymmetrically laid out in part courtyard, part *zeilenbau* and part perimeter patterns according to the site boundaries of canal and Edwardian neighbourhoods (figures 3.177, 3.178) – these post-war schemes shared a new (for Dublin) common feature of being highly differentiated public housing precincts. While some of Simms' earlier schemes such as Poplar Row or Mary Aikenhead House were formed from three or more blocks, hinged together to create an immense street front, ultimately all the perimeter block schemes engaged with the immediate urban context. As Conroy has pointed out, the 1930s blocks had no doors to the street, thus deadening the flat-to-street relationship. Through the occupation, in the main, of narrow urban sites Simms' earlier schemes were somewhat duplicitous with their public and mute street elevations versus their private and active courtyard elevations. In the case of the post-war complexes however, the relationships between public and private or urban and residential space were further confused and blurred as they occupied deep sites, which soon became vast back-land territories. One supposes that in an attempt to negotiate contemporary L.C.C. patterns of urbanism and residential design, Simms moved to create huge, self-contained urban communities through the repetition of slab blocks. Setting these blocks in a defined landscape of open public space, he sought to overcome the defects of his earlier buildings – surely a self-contained estate of disencumbered blocks rising out of more generous public space would encourage greater community activity, leisure potential and safer children's play?

Essentially, Simms was following Walter Gropius' lead (after the *Neue Sachlichkeit* formula as laid out in 1920s Germany) to place workers' housing slab blocks in rows at an optimum distance apart for orientation (sun and ventilation) purposes. Gropius advocated this *zeilenbau* method at CIAM 3 in 1933 and again in his widely-read 1935 treatise *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*.[405] The underlying principle of this and Le Corbusier's contemporary planning ideas was that the individual block (a frame building of reinforced concrete and glass) would not occupy much ground thus floating in an urban wonderland of greenery, separated from automobile traffic and industrial activity. In Britain by the early 1940s, perimeter blocks and their courtyards were becoming synonymous with Victorian Peabody-type tenement buildings while slab blocks appeared to permit infinite arrangements, being liberated from traditional urban

[405] Walter Gropius, *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935, trans. Morton Shand), p.68-75

patterns. As such, when placed in parallel lines according to scientific calculations around orientation, the slab block ignored the historic streetscape and communicated on the level of the universal and rational (i.e. modernism). It is tempting to cite Michael Scott's ffrench-Mullen block as the immediate source for Simms' shift from perimeter to slab units in his 1940s flat schemes. Certainly Moffett was doing his utmost to peddle Scott's initiative at Charlemont Street and in a lecture to the AAI in 1941, Moffett compared the *zeilenbau* formation at Gropius' *Siemens Stadt* housing to local schemes: "the residential areas consisted of big blocks of flats well spaced apart and carefully oriented to make the most of the sunlight; in strong contrast to the dark enclosed courtyards to which official housing in England and here still conform."[406] As an aside, Simms employed porthole fenestration at the Donore Avenue scheme for the first time – again, was this after ffrench-Mullen House?

Interestingly where Scott proposed four to eight-storey walk-up blocks, Simms would never forgo his low-rise deck-access approach. Deck access was a fundamental feature which affected both the micro design of the flats (as wide and shallow spaces) and the overall orientation of the buildings within their surroundings. With the Donore Avenue scheme, Simms employed a *zeilenbau* arrangement most purely and regularly. The complex sets off with a clear announcement to the street via an entrance range of four aligned blocks containing shops and marked by curved towers, followed through with a clear route into the site by a central street flanked by ten identical four-storey blocks (figures 3.180, 3.181) - so far: so legible. The problem arises with the space in-between the handsome redbrick blocks: because of the access galleries running along the backside of each block, it is unclear whether the public space around them becomes a courtyard, a public garden or simply a no-man's land. Ironically in light of Scott and Moffett's criticism, Simms' tactic of deck-access was more *avant-garde* than these architects realised in the early 1940s. A decade later, the Smithson's scheme for the Golden Lane housing competition (London, 1951) proposed "streets in the sky" for the first time in the British context, as something of a mix of Le Corbusier's *Unité* internal streets and evocations of the traditional British working-class street. Though their design was not realised, the concept was introduced to post-war British housing as a means of "communalising" forbidding housing structures such as Sheffield's famous Park Hill estate (1957-61, figure 3.173); and the typology of the mid-rise deck-access housing block remained popular in Britain (and consequently in Ireland) throughout the 1960s. In reality, these "streets in the sky" were really a logical continuation of the Peabody access galleries, introduced in London at the end of the nineteenth century and in the Dublin context through Simms, as a control or surveillance mechanism.

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[406] Noel Moffett, AAI lecture, reviewed by Nomad in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (30th August, 1941), p.411

Perhaps it was the scale of Simms' post-war schemes that led to their social failure (Newfoundland Street campus was demolished from 1998; Fatima Mansions was demolished from 2004); arguably, it was the lack of variation in the schemes' architecture and the absence of social amenities. There may be no doubt that scale and design contributed to their collective dispositions as cut-off ghettoes, differentiated from the traditional city in which they were placed. Simms did not live to see them finished and Dublin Corporation did not take on projects of that scale until the similarly ill-fated housing project at Bridgefoot Street (143 units, 1957-64) by Michael Scott and Associates (demolished 2004). Curiously the development of multi-storey collective housing in the 1950s was book-ended by these two experiences. In between, while two-storey public and private housing flourished in the suburbs, there was a shift in attitude towards the city centre whereby the Corporation began to address the potential of the urban context once more. The few flat schemes which were completed during the decade were interestingly tentative in their modernism, such as James Larkin House on the North Strand. Finally in 1951, ten years after the bombings, the Corporation moved to redevelop this troubled site with a small but well-designed and thoughtful set of three four-storey flat buildings comprising thirty-six units (figure 3.183, 3.184).[407] Set back and down a level from the sloping street, the scheme was made up of walk-up slab blocks which sported porthole fenestration articulating the stairwells, all of which was reminiscent of Scott's ffrench-Mullen House. Its trio of flat-roofed slab blocks was organised so that the largest range was set furthest back and faced the street with the two shorter ranges running perpendicular. The ranges thus defined a secure forecourt for children's play and altogether presented an unprecedentedly successful scheme to the city which both contributed to the urban grain and provided something of a private residential world for the inhabitants.

In many respects the North Strand scheme points to a transitional phase, moving away from Simms' influence, wherein the Corporation architects were trying different iterations of the low-rise multi-storey urban block. It appears that this scheme and another equally idiosyncratic one at Hogan Place (Leo Fitzgerald House, c.1957, figure 3.185) in the south inner city were designed by Charlie McNamara when he was Acting Housing Architect.[408] During this time and coinciding with Daithi Hanly's appointment as

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[407] This author has been unable to access the original drawings of the flat scheme and DCC Housing Architects Department have conflicting dates for the scheme. However, according to announcements in the May 1951 issues of *The Irish Architect and Contractor* and *The Irish Builder and Engineer*, a decision was made to redevelop the North Strand bombing site which provides us with a starting date for the scheme and points to the scheme's architect as T. McNamara (the Acting Housing Architect after Simms' death): "The Housing Committee of the Dublin Corporation decided to press forward the proposal for the erection of 36 flats at the North Strand, adjoining Newcomen Bridge. The site is portion of the bombed area. *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (10th May 1951), p.494

[408] Undoubtedly there were many other schemes executed during this transitional phase and into the early part of Hanly's rein as City Architect such as: Ballygall Road (1953, 32 units), Bluebell Road (1953, 36 units), Collins Place (1953, 24 units), Huband Road (1953, 20 units), O'Devaney Gardens (North Circular Road, (1955,

City Architect in 1955, Corporation policy was changing: there was interest in the regenerative role of the new modern flat building for pockets of the city centre. Maybe Dublin's officials and architects were influenced by the loud younger generation of architects in Britain who sought to debate the nature of the urban grain? This is unlikely as there is no evidence from AAI activity, journal discourse or official study tours that Irish architects or officials were conscious of the burgeoning theories of Team 10. P.J. Meghen's reading of the situation is more realistic: that, by the mid-1950s Abercrombie's "thinning-out" policy had been successful in lowering densities at Dublin's centre and from 1947 to 1957, the Corporation had completed 15,822 dwellings of which 11,816 were houses and 4,006 were flats. As Meghen summarised, "By the end of 1956-57, the position was being reached, however, when clearance and re-development of some important sites in central areas was becoming practicable."[409] This process was clear in the sentiments expressed by the Housing Director, T.C. O'Mahony (by then also City Assistant Manager) to the Council in 1954:

> Of the 12,413 houses to which I have referred as being recently completed or in progress in the City, 9,795 are single houses, most of them around the perimeter of the City. The process therefore, has largely been a matter of *thinning out* the Central City as a preliminary process to *large scale clearance and redevelopment*. It is therefore of imperative urgency that no further delay should occur in surveying and replanning [sic] the Central City.[410]

Lord Mayor Alfie Byrne announced, in a toast to the Master Builders' Association in January 1955, that the Corporation was pushing forward a programme for flats in central city sites which included nearly 1,000 flats either in progress or for which tenders had been invited.[411] He reported that from 1956 the proportion of flats would be substantially increased and this tallied with Corporation projections made during 1953 which estimated the prospective growth in flat construction: "the target for 1954 is 1,648 suburban and 853 central city dwellings; for 1955, 1,898 suburban and 588 central city; and for 1956, 1,350 suburban and 1,045 central city."[412] Along with these polemics and statistics, the Department of Local Government undertook a survey of Dublin's central

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272 units)), O'Rahilly House (1955, 112 units), Davitt House (1957, 64 units), Dermot O'Dwyer House (1957, 77 units), Rory O'Connor House (1957, 133 units), Dolphin House (1957, 392 units), McDonagh House (1957, 32 units), Whitefriar Gardens (1957, 64 units) and more, see "Dublin City Council Flat Schemes, 1850-1977, BF" in R1/01/03 Box G-H, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library.

[409] P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.64

[410] T.C. O'Mahony, "Housing Report no.41" in *Minutes of the Corporation of Dublin,* 1954 ((Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.20

[411] Editorial review of Master Builders' Association annual dinner, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (29th January 1955), p.100

[412] "South of Ireland Notes" (figures from Dublin Corporation H.C.C.) in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th October 1953), p.1101

city area in 1953. In reference to the slum neighbourhoods of Marrowbone Lane and Pimlico, the survey's director (a Mr. Hogan, Department of Local Government) and Dublin Corporation's Planning Officer, Michael O'Brien stated that as the area had "outlived its economic usefulness", seventy-six houses of "eighteenth-century type, Hugenot or pseudo-Georgian" were to be condemned.[413] Alfie Byrne's synopsis of the process for redeveloping central areas revealed a similarly unsympathetic attitude to the traditional grain and life of the city. He listed the "difficulty of obtaining complete clearance; the extraordinary number of small industries that were found "burrowed" in amongst the slums; and the difficulty of securing complete legal titles to such complicated areas and opposition to compulsory acquisition of tenements."[414]

The plan or urban "reform" as it was called, for the two areas of Marrowbone Lane and Pimlico was a £500,000 scheme to widen the roads, to erect 250 four-storey flats (which would include ground floor flats for the elderly) in replacement of the insanitary slum houses and to build shops.[415] It would seem from this plan and from Byrne's comments around central redevelopment that the perceived planning wisdom emerging in the mid-1950s was to raze the historic city to the ground, providing mixed (i.e. family and single) housing in sparkling new low-rise flat blocks and obliterating the traditional footprint through a project of road widening in the process. Certainly it was out of this culture that both the Bridgefoot Street scheme (1957-64) and Daithi Hanly's programme of "maisonette" blocks (1957 onwards – consisting of two-storey duplex units called "maisonettes") arose. In their own ways, both were Corbusian progeny and both sought to negate the existing urban fabric through their site strategies. For itself, Bridgefoot Street was the most explicitly Corbusian housing project in Ireland at this time as the Corporation commissioned Michael Scott's office in 1957 which was highly influenced by the aesthetic and quasi-mathematical practice of Le Corbusier.[416] The architects - namely Robin Walker who had returned from working in Le Corbusier's Rue

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[413] "14,000 Working Houses Needed" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (29th January 1955), p.113. See also Dr. M. Crowe's (Medical Officer) evidence in Housing Committee Report no.69, in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1953 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.197

[414] Review of Alfie Byrne's toast to the Master Builders' Association, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (29th January 1955), p.100

[415] As part of the *zeitgeist* (i.e. post-war increased consciousness of community services and mixed development for collective housing), it is interesting to note that in 1953 the Department of Local Government agreed to substitute their usual density figure of thirty flats per acre with the provision of one hundred habitable rooms per acre – this shift ensured that new flat schemes could contain smaller units, suitable for elderly people or small families, thus enabling a more balanced demography for flat complexes from the late 1950s onwards – see short report, "South of Ireland Notes" (figures from Dublin Corporation H.C.C.) in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (24th October 1953), p.1101

[416] Concerning the influence of Le Corbusier on Scott's office from the late 1940s onwards (though chapter one discusses this in the review of Busaras), firstly in terms of aesthetics we can see the combination of bright primary colours with raw concrete in the example of the terrace mosaics of Busaras and the colour scheme of grey and yellow at Donnybrook Garage – both designed by Patrick Scott; and according to Dr. Sean Rothery, the mathematics of Le Corbusier's Modulor system were studied by the young architects working in Scott's office. Rothery recounts how an illustration of the Modulor was on the wall of the office – interview with Sean Rothery by this author, 2007.

de Sevres atelier on the Marseilles *Unité*[417] - devised a scheme of five four-storey blocks comprising 143 units from maisonettes to one to four-bedroomed flats. Three of the blocks, Blocks A, B, C, were larger and ran perpendicular to Bridgefoot Street and were joined by the two smaller blocks (D and E) at right angles; from the aerial view, the blocks created two H-forms, zigzagging through the sloping site and around which four variously large yards emerged (figures 3.186, 3.187). The circulation system was generated by public internal staircases (placed at the junctions of blocks A/D and C/E) and access decks running the width of the blocks on three storeys and linking block to block (figure 3.190). Was this Ireland's first attempt to openly adopt post-war "streets in the sky"?

As Iseult Kirwan's study of the Bridgefoot scheme established, its elevations derived from an impoverished version of Le Corbusier's "panel exercise", sculpted out of the building's concrete frame and enlivened by the red and yellow painting of the decks' slatted balustrades (figures 3.193-3.195).[418] Aesthetically, the building might be called Ireland's first Brutalist housing exercise – certainly the blank concrete gables of its two shorter blocks spoke that emergent language (figure 3.192). Technologically, the system of concrete structure and poured concrete elements was advanced by native standards and attested to the international engineer, Ove Arup's involvement. Kirwan points to the cross-wall construction technique here as being the same as that first used by Arup for Berthold Lubetkin's Spa Green Estate in Finsbury, London (1938-49), rooting it in two of Le Corbusier's *Cinq Points*: *ossature independente* and *plan libre* (figure 3.192).[419] In general disposition, the Bridgefoot Street scheme was decidedly "post-war" modernist and international: it read like a concrete jigsaw puzzle that moved through its formerly marshy site, providing glimpses of primary colour and largely ignoring the widened street on which it sat. But while its Marseilles precedent rose high, floating aloofly above the city, this Dublin building sprawled (similarly aloof) across the ground (figures 3.196, 3.197).

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[417] It is generally thought that Robin Walker was the project's design director as the original drawings date from 1957 when Walker was in Scott's (see author's interview with Dr. Sean Rothery, 2007). However, Walker went to I.I.T. in 1958 and the design of the project continued with the original drawings dating up to 1959 and being signed "R.T." (Ronnie Tallon?). Rothery states that Tallon was merely finishing off Walker's work. The original drawings are in the Housing Architects Department, Dublin City Council. They are referenced in Shaffreys Associates, "Bridgefoot Street Flats: An Architectural, Historical and Social Record", unpublished building study, Dublin City Council, 2006 (copy available in the Irish Architectural Archive) and Iseult Kirwan, "Social Housing in Dublin by Scott's Firm: International Tendencies" (Unpublished BA Dissertation, Dept. History of Art + Architecture, TCD, 2007)

[418] Kirwan writes, "Even the pattern of the window frames seems to follow the idea of a Modulor system. Each element was divided up by the emphatic display of the concrete frame of the structure. However, the 'infinity of combinations' possible with the Modulor was not exploited and the symmetrical grid patterns are repeated throughout the complex, resulting in a rather monotonous elevation." Kirwan, "Social Housing in Dublin by Scott's Firm: International Tendencies" (Unpublished BA Dissertation, Dept. History of Art + Architecture, TCD, 2007), p.31

[419] Ibid, p.33. Kirwan cites John Allan's history of Lubetkin, *Berthold Lubetkin and the Tradition of Progress* (London: R.I.B.A. Publications, 1992) for this analysis

Undoubtedly, the Bridgefoot scheme's negation of its setting in order to present a new domestic order was in keeping with the *zeitgeist*, but its curious occupation of its site as neither perimeter ranges nor free-standing slab blocks was unlike any multi-storey housing project in urban Dublin up to or succeeding it for a generation. There seemed to be an undercurrent in the Corporation which was pushing for international practice in collective housing, firstly commissioning Scott's office (i.e. Ireland's most avant-garde firm) to undertake the Bridgefoot scheme and then seeking to introduce high-rise or tower buildings for housing the masses in the city's crumbling centre. The most public 'outing' of this idea seems to have been Housing Committee Chair, John J. Phelan's comments during a discussion entitled "Flats or Houses" for the regular Radio Eireann programme *Talking it Out* in February 1955. Here he stated the Corporation's intention to concentrate on flat building "in the future" and then, referring to schemes of multi-storey communal dwellings in cities abroad, he stated that he (on behalf of the Corporation) favoured the erection of eight and nine-storey blocks in Dublin.[420] According to Corporation reports around the redevelopment of Dominick Street in the north inner city in 1958/59, the Housing Committee appointed Desmond FitzGerald as a consultant architect so as to draft proposals for a nine-storey tower, comprising thirty-five dwellings from one to three-room. When it became clear that it would be "much more expensive" in Dublin than in Britain to construct such a building, the Committee continued to encourage it, issuing the motion: "That Committee recommend to Council that development of the nine storey block proceed in view of the high cost of acquisition of the central city areas and the necessity for intensive development in these areas."[421]

The Housing Director, O'Mahony fought the tower proposal claiming to "know of no good reason for the introduction into the building programme at this stage of an unnecessarily expensive form of construction." He cited the agreed density figures for central accommodation (c. 100 p.p.a.), stating that any proposal to house more than the "specified maxima" in a tower dwelling or otherwise was unfounded and impossible. With the force of economics on his side, O'Mahony's argument and his alternative bid for a series of five-storey blocks won out. The extent of O'Mahony's influence on the Corporation's Architecture Department, and specifically on the new City Architect Daithi Hanly is unknown, but it was from this time that a new multi-storey flat block emerged in Dublin and proliferated for the next decade: that was, the five-storey maisonette block surmounted by curious butterfly-roof and entered by free-standing circular stair tower

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[420] See the review of *Talking it Out* in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (15th February 1955), p.143. Desmond FitzGerald and Dermot O'Toole were the invited architects on the programme but according to the reviewer, only J. J. Phelan had anything "stimulating" to contribute on the subject of flats or houses for housing Dublin's working-class population.

[421] Motion issued on 31st July 1959 despite consultant architect's advice, see "Report of the Assistant City Manager and Town Clerk, no.69" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1959 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.317

which bridged the blocks on two levels (figure 3.200). We can assume that Hanly was the designer in that he signed all of the drawings though a "J. McDaid" and a "W. Delaney" seem to have been the project architects on the first of these schemes.[422] Aesthetically, the new Dublin block was reminiscent of the Woodberry Downs' eight-storey model; its silhouette certainly recalled the rectilinear pitched-roof blocks of that London inter-war suburban estate (figures 3.22). Each Dublin block was a disencumbered slab, ten to twelve bays wide and rising to five storeys capped with a distinctively steep pitched roof. As such, the blocks were larger than any precedent in the city but somehow their rectangular massing countered their bulk, endowing them with an elegant solidity and idiosyncratic profile in the cityscape. Arguably the blocks were products of international housing trends in that firstly, they were arranged in slipped-slab *zeilenbau* formation (i.e. parallel arrangement which slipped past each other rather than organised in strict rows) and usually aligned from north to south for maximum light and ventilation, irrespective of the street pattern onto which they were placed. In this aspect, the blocks have been criticised for ignoring and at worst, interrupting their urban setting which has contributed to the ghettoisation of them and their communities.[423]

In their essence as maisonette blocks though, the new type was right "on trend". Two-storey flats or maisonettes, containing tiny internal stairways, were becoming increasingly popular in Britain from 1948. Essentially such blocks consisted of stacked two-storey small houses. Indeed, while such a prototype may have originally derived from Le Corbusier's *villa-immeubles* with their two-storey living rooms (made manifest in built form at the iconic Marseilles *Unité*), the Dublin maisonettes of the late 1950s were, as Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius term it "cottages looking like flats."[424] Arguably, the maisonette type offered a compromise between the cottage and flat which satisfied the Dublin official and tenant alike. The direct precursor for the Dublin maisonette was most likely Chamberlain, Powell and Bon's four and six-storey gallery slabs of maisonettes and flats for the Golden Lane scheme (1951-54); the architects published a detailed perspective sketch of the six-storey type in the mid-1950s describing private entrances with kitchens and galleries on the bottom level of each maisonette with bedrooms extending over the galleries on the upper level (figure 3.174,

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[422] This author has consulted the original drawings for the Bishop Street/Kevin Street scheme (1957-61) in "H.A. 158/01RE: Kevin St/Bishop St" files, Box B1/05/01 (Housing Architects' Section, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library), as well as copies of drawings for schemes at Chamber Street, Gardiner Street and Constitution Hill via the City Architects, Dublin City Council, Civic Offices, Woodquay

[423] Eddie Conroy comments that the maisonette blocks "fail to define public and private territory and disrupt their urban context", see "Centre and Periphery. Housing in Ireland" in John Olley et al, *Ireland. Twentieth Century Architecture* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1997), p.62. For a recent filmic portrait of these maisonette blocks (namely the Basin Street scheme, Dublin 8), see *Pyjama Girls* directed by Maya Derrington (2009/2010)

[424] Miles Glendinning and Stefan Muthesius, *Tower Block. Modern Public Housing in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p.27

3.175).[425] This vertical articulation was echoed within the maisonette units in the Dublin blocks: the blocks' ground floor housed one-storey small flats and the four upper floors contained two maisonettes on top of each other, thereby ensuring that entrance access was only needed on three out of the five floors. Architecturally this amounted to fewer access decks: economically, these blocks became cheaper to build.[426] Their circulation systems were in reality, quite rudimentary with the circular stairwells, clad in pebbledash, bridging the block at the first and third floors. Each block contained fifty-eight habitable rooms and usually schemes were made up of three blocks on a one and half acre site, thus providing a density of just over 100 p.p.a. in most such schemes.[427]

Further encouraging the reading of these new maisonette blocks as 'stacked cottages' were their pitched roofs, comprising concrete slab, timber frame and concrete tiling. Such a system was neither cost-effective nor wholly practical when we consider the storage of water-tanks on housing blocks from the 1950s onwards, and one must assume that the roof design was largely an aesthetic choice. Certainly in the mid-1960s, the butterfly roof was replaced by the cheaper and more practical flat roof as by then, internal washing facilities dictated larger collective water-tanks to be stored at roof level.[428] It would be fair to state that these blocks did not heed Simms' concerns for corner conditions, street dialogues or the ambivalence between public/private. Most usually, Hanly placed their over-burned brick gable ends rather than their principal elevations to the street, while their south-facing balcony elevations were often detailed with mosaic panels, naively referencing local landmarks such as railways or boats (figure 3.202-3.203). This maintenance-free yet handsome detailing combined with the composition of stair tower and butterfly roof, provided Dublin with a unique housing type throughout the 1960s that was once again part-traditional and part-innovative.[429] There were approximately thirty-five of these maisonette schemes built in Dublin from 1959 to 1974, and as such, they became a colourful if ubiquitous and problematical feature of the cityscape (3.202-3.204).[430]

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[425] *Architects Journal*, June 20, 1957, pp. 911-915 and *Architectural Review*, June, 1957, pp. 414-425. See http://www.housingprototypes.org/project?File_No=GB008 (accessed January - August 2010)

[426] According to the report by the Department of Local Government, "Programme and Other Information for Study Tour of Housing Committee Economic Commission for Europe to Ireland, 7-12 June 1962" (unpublished pamphlet, available in Irish Architectural Archive), the cost of a maisonette unit in 1961 was from £2,000 to £2,500 including all site costs (slum clearance, water and sewer services)

[427] At the Kevin St/Bishop St scheme, there were three blocks amounting to 174 habitable rooms on a 1.6 acre site, thus providing a density of 108 p.p.a.: see "H.A. 158/01RE: Kevin St/Bishop St, Revised Layout Plans, 1962" files, Box B1/05/01 (Housing Architects' Section, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library)

[428] Though for example, both the early 1950s North Strand and Hogan Place schemes housed their collective water-tanks on their flat roofs. I am grateful to Susan Roundtree, Conservation Architect, DCC who pointed out the shift in water-tank position, October 2009.

[429] Much of this analysis of the butterfly roof maisonette blocks has been generated through discussions with Eddie Conroy (2009) - I am grateful for his astute reading.

[430] "Dublin City Council Flat Schemes, 1850-1977, BF" in R1/01/03 Box G-H, Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library

Did the proliferation of Hanly's robust blocks signal the wholesale acceptance and popularisation of flat-dwelling in early 1960s Dublin? Statistics reveal that of the public housing schemes in progress on the 31st December 1961, 208 were houses while 577 were flats.[431] During the 1950s there was mounting excitement around flats. One commentator, Len Shepard, extolled Simms' post-war schemes as "vast warren of flats, capable of accommodating up to hundreds of people... providing well-lit, healthy and properly designed homes to people whose families for generations have lived in tenements."[432] Patrick Delaney's reading of the 1950s flats for *The Irish Builder* in 1959 was also positive though he, like many in the architectural community, was ready for taller buildings: "some of the more recent examples are highly successful within their chosen limitations of scale and height."[433] Both Delaney and Shepard pointed to a new type of dwelling – the apartment- which Shepard excitedly called "that modern phenomenon, the super luxury flat."[434] He continued: "Blocks of these expensive abodes have been built in recent months at Wilton Terrace, Mespil Road... They boast of all the trimmings of modern life, including refrigerators, lifts, laundry service and central heating."[435] Delaney was unimpressed, calling the Mespil Road blocks "gaunt and forbidding, and not likely to gain converts to the notion of living in flats on the strength of their appearance alone."[436]

The Mespil complex of twelve four to six-storey flat-roofed brick blocks was begun in the early 1950s with the first block opening in 1954 (figures 3.205 + 3.206).[437] It was developed by Irish Estates (later Irish Life) near the Grand Canal in the South city centre in, I would propose, direct emulation of London's inner suburban apartment blocks of the inter-war period. The London examples were conceived as *pieds-a-terre*, close to the urban centre for young professionals so that the units were to be highly serviced commanding appropriate rents with bright streamlined interiors designed in the modernist idiom.[438] The later Dublin model at Mespil was peddled for a similarly discerning aspirant – the apartments were at once modern yet embedded in Victorian surrounds. The pamphlets described the blocks' steel frame and twin-cavity hollow blocks from Clondalkin Concrete construction, each unit's press-button fuse-boxes, built-

[431] Ibid., "H.A. 158/01RE: Kevin St/Bishop St, Revised Layout Plans, 1962", p.47
[432] Len Shepard, "Big Flat-Building Programme Proceeds" in *Ireland Rebuilding* (Dublin: Harpers Publication, 1955 Edition), p.26
[433] Patrick Delaney, "One Hundred Years of Dublin Architecture 1859 -1959" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Irish Builder and Engineer 1859 – 1959 Centenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.6
[434] Len Shepard, "Big Flat-Building Programme Proceeds" in *Ireland Rebuilding* (Dublin: Harpers Publication, 1955 Edition), p.26
[435] Ibid.
[436] Patrick Delaney, "One Hundred Years of Dublin Architecture 1859 -1959" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Irish Builder and Engineer 1859 – 1959 Centenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.7
[437] Promotional pamphlets, Irish Estates, "Cherry House. Mespil Flats, Sussex Road, Dublin" (Dublin, 1954) – the architect was W. J. Convery (chief architect with R. Wallace as assistant architect), pamphlets available in the I.A.A.
[438] Roger Bowdler cites Vernon Court, Hendon Way in Cricklewood, c.1930 and Nevilles Court, Dollis Hill Lane in Brent, 1935 as exemplar of the inter-war bourgeois apartment block, see Bowdler, "Between the Wars: 1914-1940" in *London Suburbs* (London: English Heritage/Merrell Holberton, 1999), p.124-125

in radio and television aerial and the complex's hard lawn tennis court. The developers concluded that the units "have no equal in Ireland, and compare favourably with the best European flats of their type."[439] However, our architectural commentator (Delaney) predicted correctly: private multi-storey living remained elusive to the land-proud Dubliners, new and old alike, and the Mespil complex was not imitated for a decade.

***Conclusion:***

> *In Ireland as in many other countries the halcyon days of "post-war reconstruction" were devoted above all else to the business of housing, both speculative and subsidized, and a tremendous amount was achieved, at least quantitively* [sic], *in this field. More recent times, however, have brought with them a realization that housing is not of itself a long-term investment whereby a country is helped to earn its living, and that a more balanced policy would be, to concentrate a higher proportion of our building potential on other forms of construction, especially in the industrial field.*[440]
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> **Patrick Delaney, Architectural Survey 1958**

Delaney's account of the concentration by the State on house building since 1948 was not an exaggeration. As Meghen's statistics inform us, between March 1950 and March 1953 local authorities were building at the rate of over seven thousand houses per year.[441] By the mid-1950s, there was grumbling within Dublin Corporation. Speaking on behalf of the Housing Committee on Radio Eireann, J.J. Phelan stated that the emphasis on municipal building was "not a good thing" and that approximately 170,000 people were by then Corporation tenants, with the number ever-increasing.[442] By 1959, T. C. O'Mahony estimated in his report that forty per cent of the population was housed in Corporation's 42,112 dwellings.[443] He stated:

> These operations have been heavily subsidised by the State and by the Rates and they have entailed capital borrowing which amounted at 31st March last to £38,296,086 under the Housing of the Working Classes Acts, and £11,979,012 under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts...I would point out that the magnitude of housing operations in recent years has been such that the greater part of the

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[439] Promotional pamphlets, Irish Estates, "Cherry House. Mespil Flats, Sussex Road, Dublin" (Dublin, 1954)
[440] Patrick Delaney, Editorial to *Architectural Survey* 1958, p.3
[441] P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.61
[442] Review of *Talking it Out* in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (15th February 1955), p.143
[443] T.C. O'Mahony, "Report of the Assistant City Manager and Town Clerk, no.69" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1959 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.317

> housing requirement has now been provided. I have noted from the existing waiting list, which totals 6,736 applications, that more than half these applications are from single persons, childless couples, or families of three persons.[444]

At the same time, O'Mahony and the Housing Committee called for the establishment of a new statutory body which would look after public housing.[445] Intent upon reinstating functional residential life into the urban centre, the Housing Committee had encountered so many obstacles in acquiring sites, then detenanting and demolishing areas that they demanded a separate set of "technical officials" be appointed.

There were two outcomes which effectively redirected the nature of public housing development in Dublin: firstly, the National Building Agency (NBA) was established in 1960 which provided housing "on request" for local authorities; and secondly, State spending changed direction from social to productive spending. As chapter one overviewed, the economic shift from 1958 due to the Whittaker and Lemass economic programmes had huge implications for architectural development in Ireland, not least for housing. With guidance from the new Capital Investment Advisory Committee, spending turned from Local Government endeavours (such as housing) to industrial expansion, something which Sean MacEntee as Minister of Finance had been trying to do since 1951. In fact, in 1953 MacEntee decried what he perceived as the *excessive* housing development: "in recent years new dwellings in this country have accounted for a much higher proportion of domestic capital outlay than in most European countries, even those which have suffered devastation from war".[446] This shift in government economic policy coincided with the realisation that housing estates were not being filled with tenants, so that there occurred a general slow-down in house construction by 1955. According to Meghen, "In the case of Dublin Corporation... the number of dwellings which fell vacant and available for re-letting during 1957-58 appreciably exceeded the number of new houses and flats completed by the Corporation during the same period."[447] Indeed, the number of new houses erected by the State did not surpass the 1954 figure until 1968. As J.J. Lee points out, "The relative stagnation on the housing front meant that the number of over-crowded households, defined as 'two or more persons per room', fell only slowly, from 63,000 in 1961 to 59,000 in 1966 and 54,000 in 1971."[448]

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[444] Ibid., p.317-318
[445] Housing Committee Report, no. 41, in *Minutes of the Corporation of Dublin*, January - December, 1954 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.18-20
[446] Quoted in Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.336
[447] P. J. Meghen, *Housing in Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1963), p.65
[448] J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912 - 1985. Politics and Society* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1989), p.364

This early 1960s stagnation in housing led, inevitably, to another housing crisis in 1963 when two tenement buildings in Dublin's centre collapsed, killing four people. The Local Government response was to charge the NBA with its first comprehensive task which ultimately brought about the Ballymun Estate of industrialised mixed and mass-housing in North Dublin (1965-69, 3,021 units). Once again, the project of slum clearance was underpinning subsequent housing form and geography. Clearly this need for slum eradication prejudiced Dublin's housing architecture throughout the twentieth century, from the first housing inquiry in 1879 to the expansion of mass housing complexes at the city's edges over a century later. Uniquely, Dublin's slums were never a product of industrialisation but rather the combined result of constant rural in-migration and non-maintenance of existing housing stock. Perhaps this unique origin was at the heart of the problem's persistence?

The fact that standards of living and technology had risen immeasurably was fundamentally linked to housing provision during this period, 1930 – 1960. Taking Dublin Corporation's pre- and post-war urban blocks as an example, we note that Simms' flats from the 1930s through to the early Emergency period were designed and built without bathrooms – baths were stowed under a folding kitchen worktop. Then, in the later units completed from the early 1950s onwards, washing facilities were incorporated to the extent that new collective water tanks had to be stored on the blocks' flat roofs. Along with bathrooms and improved washing facilities, children's play areas became fixed features of the urban flat books by the end of the 1950s, into the 1960s. Conversely, the provision of open fields was deemed sufficient for the children of the new suburban housing colonies and the dearth of recreation facilities remained a problem in these estates. Paul Pfretzschner's summary of public housing development in Ireland during the mid-century emphasises this point:

> Neighbourhood appearance is but one aspect of neighbourhood quality, although an important one. In Ireland, by and large, the struggle has not been to create neighbourhoods but merely to build houses. This is roughly parallel to producing automobiles without building hard surface roads. The automobile may be useful, but its efficiency is not maximised in such circumstances.[449]

While Pfretzschner's overview presents a negative portrait, it does highlight the significance of the housing programme in terms of quantity and productivity. And this productivity, above all else (momentarily casting design issues aside), is the underpinning narrative of this thesis' chapter on mid-century housing in Dublin. Even Daly's somewhat unforgiving history of the Department of Local Government concedes

[449] Paul Pfretzschner, *The Dynamics of Irish Housing* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1965), p. 115

that during this period, the "enormous housing programme... brought long-term advances in the quality and supply of Irish housing and did so without evidence of major administrative difficulties."[450]

So, the dominance of housing in building activity from c.1930 to c.1960 should be the first message of this study. Certainly it dominated local government endeavour, was a central preoccupation of government policy, and throughout the 1930s and again in the early 1950s, it was the primary subject within the Irish architectural press. Interestingly, as the chapter explores, just as housing was a topic of great interest for Irish architects, the actual design and construction of public housing during the mid-century occurred outside of the architectural community. In fact, as this conclusion draws the threads of the chapter together, the point of the *alienation* of architects from the housing question must be stressed. While certain (architectural) cultural media such as the exhibition, the ideas-based competition, the foreign lecturer and the journal editorial pulled the architects in to consider housing's many design and social issues, the provision of housing in Ireland at this time was the charge of local authorities. In some instances architects were employed by these authorities (Dublin Corporation); in others, architects gained commissions to design schemes (e.g. Scott for Banagher, Co. Offaly and Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan, or Moffett for Dundalk, Co. Louth).

But for the most part, architects were marginalised and the decisions around housing form and geography were taken by economically-minded officials. As we have noted, the RIAI continuously lobbied the government but curiously, the most fruitful opportunities for architectural involvement in housing came in the form of Public Utility Societies and more culturally-informed housing/social reform bodies. Within these forums, certain architects emerged who we can now identify as the protagonists of the history of housing the masses in Dublin: George Beckett, Manning Robertson, Frank Gibney, Noel Moffett, Michael Scott, Vincent Kelly, Dermot O'Toole, Fred Rogerson, Luan Cuffe, Daithi Hanly and Robin Walker; not forgetting an influential non-architect, Major Waller.

Throughout this chapter, these protagonists appear. Much of their collective concern and endeavour stemmed from the need to revolutionise the Dublin Building Bye-Laws so as to definitively tackle the slum problem through new architectural technologies and housing prototypes. To varying degrees they proposed experimental methods from frame-building to light-weight concrete construction (Nofrango) to wholesale prefabrication. However, the association of temporary housing with ghettoisation and the notion that Ireland was not industrial enough to justify experimental housing meant that these methods were sidelined in favour of traditional

[450] Mary Daly, *The Buffer State. The Historical Roots of the Department of the Environment*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1997), p.379

systems. The only experimental method to be adopted and in a sense officially sanctioned at this time was the ORLIT concrete frame house, though as we know, the Nofrango method seemed to turn up unexpectedly during the 1930s and 1940s. Dublin Corporation's employment of ORLIT at one part of its vast Crumlin estate in the early 1950s signalled its half-hearted embrace of contemporary British housing technology. As a case-study, the scheme of fifty-eight ORLIT houses exposed the endurance of the suburban vernacular aesthetic despite the design potential of such experimentation. As the most significant example of experimental housing in mid-century Ireland, it recounted a pitiful tale of shoddy architecture and highlighted how post-war prefabrication in Ireland did not introduce new housing typologies or building regulations, nor did it open up the question of dwelling in a post-war world as it did in Britain.

In terms of official stance, the protagonists to emerge were Horace O'Rourke (Dublin City Architect), T. C. O'Mahony (Corporation Housing Director), Charlie McNamara, James Larkin (Housing Committee Chairman) and Michael O'Brien (Corporation Town Planning Officer); while the ideology informing Dublin's official housing development was rooted in the town planning theories and sketches of Sir Patrick Abercrombie. Without doubt, the hero of the piece was the dogged and determined Herbert Simms. Eddie Conroy surmises that Simms was personally responsible for some 17,000 dwelling units during his tenure as Dublin Housing Architect, 1931 – 48. Indeed, statistics aside, a closer look at the Corporation archives reveal the extent of Simms' labour on behalf of Dublin's working classes: not only did he design the enduring four-storey perimeter flat blocks and the most interesting aspects of the suburban cottage estates during the 1930s, but he organised vast tracts of virgin territory into quasi-communities as well as overseeing compulsory purchase orders, while keeping the architectural and housing reform intelligentsia at bay with their radical proposals throughout the 1940s. In short, where Abercrombie was the central theorist and Horace O'Rourke was the central strategist in this housing game, Simms was the central practitioner. By the 1930s, the suburban cottage might have become the sole solution to the slum problem but Simms (with the support of the Housing Committee) ensured that the urban flat was reintroduced to the city. Clearly both the flat and the cottage of the 1930s became standard typologies which wound their way in varying forms through Dublin's architectural and urban history thereafter, and constituted Simms' direct response to the slum problem.

Such dualism of typology constituted the first of a series of dualities running through this history of public housing, 1930 – 1960. The next layer presenting itself was the emergence of a distinct anti-urban sentiment emanating from middle-class quarters (officials, professionals and reformers alike). The initial anti-urbanism, presenting itself

through the 1939-43 *Report of Inquiry*, was rooted in the unsustainably high densities in city-centre slum quarters; this then developed due to the increasingly high cost of flat construction which was bizarrely countered by the cheaper rent collected for flats. Soon Simms' urban flats became anathema, a force which grew throughout the Emergency, being further encouraged by the 1941 bombings and the need to "thin out" Dublin's centre for security purposes. The combination of economic and war exigencies amounted to the championing of suburban development for housing purposes in Dublin and indeed throughout Ireland's urban centres from 1940 onwards.

For Dublin at this time the centre became the set-piece for an uncertain "Georgianism" whereby squalid eighteenth-century slum houses were acquired by the Corporation and whole terraces transformed, through concrete and asbestos, into streamlined crude versions of their classical selves. This reconditioning programme provided a curious interlude within an otherwise desolate urban drama. Later, from the mid-1950s, the anti-urbanism had morphed into a contemporary interest in the economic potential of the by-then "thinned-out" city centre: instead of "Georgianism", the urge was to modernise the historical grain through systematic demolition of terraces and the widening of streets. Within this context, the urban block was reintroduced, as slab rather than perimeter range, into Dublin's centre where it proliferated until 1974.

All of the decade-by-decade shifting demonstrates how susceptible housing development was to political priorities and social mores. However and conversely, as the final thought of this chapter, I would propose that housing in Dublin 1930 – 1960 ultimately transcended the fluctuations of Ireland's politics in that it had become a national imperative and a symbol of mid-twentieth-century Irish morals and civilisation.

# Chapter Four

*The Quest for Authenticity: RC Church design 1950 – 1960 and the example of the Clonskeagh Church competition*

*"...an age of stark contradiction and contrasting styles"* [1] **– Richard Hurley**

Catholic church design in Dublin during the 1950s presented an exciting and often contentious platform for architectural debate. Certainly the discourse surrounding the contemporary problems and the subsequent future of church architecture was rich and seemed to have preoccupied the younger and older generations of architects alike. An overview analysis of the architectural annuals and journals coming out of Dublin from 1940 to 1960 revealed a keen interest in the issue of sacred architecture; editorials regularly comment on the subject while many articles were solely dedicated to particular aspects of it.[2] While church design did not dominate architectural discussion and debate from the period per se, it did occur on an equal footing with more obviously central issues to architectural discourse such as urban preservation or new materials and technological evolution in building. As such, it may be read as a marked concern of the architectural profession at this time.

This chapter sketches the picture of Catholic church design in Dublin during the period for a number of reasons but primarily because the proliferation of a certain type of RC church at this mid-century juncture foregrounds the massive demographic shifts which were occurring from 1930 to 1960 in Ireland; that is, the growth of the population by about thirty percent and as described in chapter three, the rapid development of Dublin's suburban fringe. Within this seminal shift in Irish cultural geography, Catholic church buildings arose as the singular monumental structures which Arnold Horner describes as, "the contemporary ziggurats of an era of public piety".[3] Because these churches were intimidatingly large and decked out in revivalist clothing (usually Hiberno-Romanesque or hybrid classicism), they became hateful symbols of entrenched conservatism for the majority of the Irish architectural community and especially the younger generation. Two other interesting reasons to look at them are that they represented the ongoing reticence on the part of the patron (the Catholic Church), still by the mid-twentieth century, to embrace modernism in aspects of Dublin architecture; and secondly, Catholic church design was a

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[1] Richard Hurley, *Irish Architecture in the Era of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001), p.30

[2] Discussion and debate on the contemporary situation of church design in Ireland occurred in the following issues and/or lecture series of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland Yearbook (1945-60), the Architectural Association of Ireland annual *Green Book* (1945-60) and the annual *Architectural* Survey (1953 - 1960): "President's Address" by Charles Aliaga Kelly, p.28-29 in *Green Book* 1951; Report on Clonskeagh Church Competition p. 46-47 and "Architecture and Sculpture" by Garry Trimble, p. 49 in *Green Book* 1955; "Inaugural Address" by James Green, p. 41 and lectures on 10th December 1957, "Painting and Sculpture in the Modern Church" by Donal Murphy A.N.C.A. and 4th November 1958 "Art in the Service of the Church" (lecture reprinted in this *Green Book*) by Rev Austin Flannery, *Green Book* 1958-9; Architectural Association of Ireland, *When Ireland Builds Again*, (Dublin: A.A.I., 1945); "The Prescription of Society" by Michael Halton, *RIAI Yearbook*, 1948; "An Approach to the Design of Catholic Church Interiors", by Dominic O'Connor, p.5-10, *RIAI Yearbook*, 1949; Illustration only of Church at Limerick, Corr and McCormick, 1949-50, *RIAI Yearbook*, 1951; Report on Clonskeagh Church Competition p13 and full proceedings of Symposium on Church Architecture, 25th April 1954, *RIAI Yearbook*, 1955; Report and Comment on "Eglises De France Reconstruites" p.27 -31, *RIAI Yearbook* 1958; inclusion of particular contemporary churches in *Architectural Survey*, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957, 1958, 1959. This presence as a central issue in conversations about contemporary Irish architecture within the arena of architectural discourse is compounded then by an ongoing discussion of church form and decoration in influential religious journals during the 1950s such as *The Furrow* and to a lesser extent, *Doctrine and Life.*

[3] Arnold Horner, "Dublin from the 1930s to the 1990s" in F.H.A. Aalen and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Dublin City and County: From Prehistory to Present* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1992), p.336

very tangible example of the divide between discourse and practice which colours any history of twentieth-century Dublin architecture

The chapter is interested in understanding the character of this typology in the 1950s pre-conciliar period, directly preceding the meetings and subsequent directives of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Importantly, the first official call for liturgical change occurred in 1963 and liturgical reform from this time in turn encouraged the move away from the traditional church plan. The fact that this landmark and transnational event in Catholic Church history corresponded with national programmes of modernisation in other spheres of Irish society and culture has further enforced the image of the 1950s as an introverted and staid period in architectural terms, which is then reacted against in the 1960s. As such the efforts of Irish architects to develop church design in correlation with liturgical developments produced many lauded examples of Modernist sacred buildings on the Dublin horizon from the early 1960s onwards.[4] But what happened in the pre-conciliar period in Dublin's many parishes? And can the interesting modernist churches from this post Vatican Council II period take all the credit for architectural innovation?

An oft-quoted but as yet unexamined affair which occurred in 1954 best summarises the climate of church design in Dublin during the 1950s. This affair, the Clonskeagh Church competition, caused a furore within the architectural profession; when the Dublin Diocese opened a high-profile architectural competition only then to undermine the assessors' choice of prize-winning designs so as to commission another design as the final building.[5] The resultant building was the colossal red-brick Church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal on Bird Avenue, Dublin 14, and the implications of this competition were very enlightening in terms of our understanding of pre-conciliar church architecture in Dublin. Using the church competition as a central case study, we lead into it with a discussion of Dublin's suburban development from 1940 and the growth and expansion of Archbishop's John Charles McQuaid's parishes therein. The relationship between McQuaid and Dublin Corporation's Planning Department is observed through previously unexamined archival material; and the remarkable process of subdividing Dublin's greenfield sites into new densely populated parishes is presented through letters and maps.

Coming out of the competition, we discuss the fall-out in terms of the architectural community's and the public's reactions and then we move to contextualise the competition in a discussion and brief analysis of some key pre-conciliar churches in Dublin and beyond.

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[4] Excellent overview accounts of the church architecture from this time have been published, see Richard Hurley, Wilfred Cantwell, Fr Austin Flannery, *Contemporary Irish Church Architecture* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1985); Richard Hurley, *Irish Church Architecture in the Era of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001). More recently (2008) a monograph on Liam McCormick by Shane O'Toole and Paul Larmour has thrown light on questions of 1950s-60s Catholic church patronage and the position of Irish craft in relation to church architecture, see Shane O'Toole and Paul Larmour, *Liam McCormick: North by Northwest* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2008); and for a review of the McCormick book, see Ellen Rowley, Admitting the Light", book review in *The Furrow* (Vol. 60, No.9, September 2009)

[5] Based on the research for this chapter, the author published a short chapter on the Clonskeagh church competition in an Irish Studies publication: Ellen Rowley, "Transitional Modernism: Post-war Dublin Churches and the Example of the Clonskeagh Church Competition, 1954" in Carol Taffe and Edwina Keown (editors), *Irish Modernism: Origins, Contexts, Publics* (London: Peter Lang, Imagining Ireland Series, 2009)

Underpinning this chapter, and arising persistently throughout, is the issue of authenticity or appropriateness for the expression of a church, a sacred space, in the slowly modernising environment of 1950s Dublin. The influence of European Catholic reformers resounded through every lecture and exhibition organised by the architectural community while the clergy, the majority of the laity and the Catholic hierarchy seemed adamant to maintain a form of nineteenth-century representation and visualisation of their Catholic culture. This debate and joined quest for authenticity informs the shape and development of Catholic church design in Dublin during the 1950s.

Rather than concluding, the chapter ends by opening up the era of great Irish modernist religious architecture from the early to mid 1960s onwards, as led by Donegal architect Liam McCormick. It would seem that the heroic attempts at indigenous modernism for Catholic church design of the 1950s paid off in providing the groundwork for McCormick, Andy Devane and others to shape and sculpt amazing churches over the following decade and more.

## ***Theocratic Dublin:***

*Dublin's religious fervour during the 1940s and 1950s and the traditional leanings of 1940s Catholic Church design*

> *Devotion... the centre of our national life, can have a new and inspiring background in the churches yet to be built...*
> *...a background of beauty and dignity...*
> *...which can dominate our environment as it should our thoughts...*
> *...new and vital yet sprung from a lasting tradition*[6] **- When Ireland Builds Again, 1946**

It is not an exaggeration to state that Dublin of the 1940s and 1950s was a potently Catholic city. The mass popular commitment to Catholicism ensured that the space of the city was infused with religiosity. While the various urban history and material culture critiques of the 1932 Eucharistic Congress have portrayed and discussed 1930s Dublin in the terms of Catholic spectacle, there has been little or no such contemplation of the 1940s and 50s city.[7] Undoubtedly, the ephemeral revivalist architecture designed by John J. Robinson for the congress, along with the religious memorabilia, the cinematic recordings and the facts of the mass takeover of the city spaces all amounted to a climax in the visualisation (or "spatialisation") of the wholesale populism of

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[6] Architectural Association of Ireland, *When Ireland Builds Again* (Dublin: AAI, 1946), p. 17 - 19

[7] Lisa Godson, "Ceremonial Culture in the Irish Free State 1922-1939", unpublished PhD, R.C.A. London, 2009 and see paper, "When Things Die: Memory, Materiality and the High Altar of the 31st International Eucharistic Congress" unpublished conference paper, NIVAL, NCAD, 2006 (supplied to this author by Godson); John Turpin, "Visual Culture and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922 – 1949" in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (Vol. 57, No. 1, January 2006), p.55 – 77; Rory O'Dwyer, *The Eucharistic Congress, Dublin 1932* (Dublin: Nonsuch, 2009); Gary Boyd, "Supernatural Catholicity: Dublin and the 1932 Eucharistic Congress" in Justin Carville (ed.), *Popular Visual Culture in Ireland* (Humanities and Social Sciences Online) (November 2007) and Gary Boyd, "Dublin, the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and the Politics of Religion", unpublished conference paper, "Catholicism and Public Cultures", IADT Dun Laoghaire, Dublin (Dr. Paula Gilligan, Prof. Jim Donnelly), June 2009

Catholicism in Ireland. As such, historically-speaking, anything coming thereafter paled by comparison and might be overlooked.

But beyond the municipal theatricals of the 1932 congress, Irish Catholic devotion continued to thrive throughout the 1940s and 50s. If anything, the fervour increased and was made manifest physically through the proliferation of new outdoor grottoes and large-scale churches. As the *Lord Mayor's Annual* reported in 1942, "The people of Dublin...are deeply religious too, and the large numbers who throng the city churches for daily Mass are a constant source of interest and edification to visitors."[8] One such visitor, Heinrich Boll, to Dublin in the mid-1950s described his impressions of a Sunday morning in the city centre thoroughfare of Westland Row:

> The Thunder continued, became articulate, the powerful opening bars of the *Tantum ergo* beginning with *Sacramentum – veneremur cernui* became distinguishable, and sung clear and true to the last syllable it pealed out over Westland Row from St. Andrew's Church opposite, and just as the first cups of tea were as good as all the others I would drink – in desolation, dirty little hamlets in hotels and by firesides – so I was left with the impression of an overwhelming piety as it flooded Westland Row after *Tantum Ergo*; in Germany you would only see that many people coming out of church after Easter Mass or at Christmas.[9]

Boll's observation was that of the anonymous foreign layperson's and tallied with other descriptions of contemporary Irish society by outsiders such as French researcher Jean Blanchard in his pointed study *The Church in Contemporary Ireland* (researched in the mid 1950s, published in 1963). Like Boll, Blanchard was struck by the volumes of people attending masses and stated, in regard to the new suburb of Cabra (North Dublin), that "practically the whole of the Catholic population frequent the church. The entire congregation – with a few exceptions – attend Mass every Sunday."[10] Mass attendance was seemingly so much a part of weekly and often daily life in 1950s Ireland that one commentator wrote in the Dominican journal *Doctrine and Life* (founded in 1951 and edited by Fr. Austin Flannery) in 1954 that "On Sundays and Holy Days, especially in the cities, there may be as many as ten or twelve masses to cope with the crowds."[11] This collective activity of mass attendance was the most explicit of many Catholic "acts" which ensured that when New Zealand Archbishop P. J. B. McKeefrey came to visit in 1950, he claimed that Dublin's streets were "impregnated with faith".[12] Writing in the newly-founded journal *The Furrow* (founded in Maynooth College and seminary in 1950 and edited by Dr. J.G. McGarry), McKeefrey

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[8] "Administration of Dublin" in *Lord Mayor's Annual. Dublin Municipal Annual* (Dublin: Dublin Corporation, 1942), p.13
[9] Heinrich Boll, *Irish Journal* (London: Minerva, 1995), p.9-10. Boll came to Ireland in the mid-1950s and his journal was first published in 1957.
[10] Jean Blanchard, *The Church in Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: Clonmore + Reynolds, 1963), p.27 (copy available on open shelves, TCD library)
[11] Ambrose Crofts OP, "The Irish Way" in *Doctrine and Life* (June-July, 1954), p.258. I am grateful to Gemma and Frank Rowley for the late Fr. Fergal O'Connor's collection of *Doctrine and Life*, 1950s and 60s
[12] Archbishop P. J. B. McKeefrey, "Farewell to Shannon" in *The Furrow* (March 1950), p. 5-8

and many other commentators observed the general religious fervour which led 1950s Ireland to be considered the most Catholic country in Europe.

James Whyte's seminal study *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1970* provides historical analysis of the phenomenon of Catholic hegemony in the Irish Free State and beyond. Whyte describes how an integral Catholic nation-state was constructed following independence;[13] the Church was waiting by, as the moral guardian of constitutional nationalism, to ensure that post-colonial Ireland made the transition to Catholic nationhood.[14] Louise Fuller (after Whyte) calls this process the "legitimisation of the Catholic ethos by the Free State and subsequent Irish governments."[15] Social thinkers such as Tony Fahey and Eugene McLaughlin have sought to trace the social welfare implications of Catholic hegemony. McLaughlin calls Ireland of the mid-twentieth century a Catholic Corporatist State, basing his claim on the fact that the teachings of the Church governed most aspects of state and social policy.[16] Fahey sources the ongoing strength of the Church (arguably until the 1980s) in the position of the religious orders as providers of social services, especially those related to health, charity and education.[17] And as Whyte explains, because of shared social and educational experiences between Irish statesmen and churchmen the language of public discourse was conditioned, especially around "the danger of excessive state control".[18] As such, Catholic social teaching grew into a powerful and dominant ideology at all levels of Irish society. Tom Inglis ventures to call this a "Catholic collective consciousness" - a definition to which he lends the weight of Pierre Bourdieu's theorising by referring to Bourdieu's *habitus*, meaning the significance of collective consciousness. As Inglis explains,

> The religious *habitus* is based upon an inherited disposition to being spiritual and moral which is embodied through socialisation... the embodiment of this Catholic *habitus* became central to the operation of civil society, institutions, interest groups, and debate and discussion in the public sphere... [as well as]... a central element of cultural capital, central to survival and achievement within the educational system, to obtaining employment...to attaining the honour and respect of people... This is what made Ireland an example not so much of a theocratic state, but rather of a theocratic society.[19]

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[13] See James Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1979* (2nd Edition, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p. 15 and conclusion p.362-376
[14] Paraphrase of Eugene McLaughlin, "Ireland: Catholic Corporatism" in Allan Cochrane and John Clarke (eds.), *Comparing Welfare States. Britain in International Context* (London: Open University, 1993), p.205
[15] Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950. The Ondoing of a Culture* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002)
[16] Eugene McLaughlin, "Ireland: Catholic Corporatism" in Allan Cochrane and John Clarke (eds.), *Comparing Welfare States. Britain in International Context* (London: Open University, 1993), p.205
[17] Tony Fahey, "The Catholic Church and Social Policy" in Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland. Principles, Practice and Problems* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1998), p.413-414
[18] James Whyte, *Church and State in Modern Ireland 1923-1979* (2nd Edition, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1980), p.163
[19] Tom Inglis, "Religion, Identity, State and Society" in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Irish Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.62-69

Importantly, this sense of shared meaning in 1940s and 50s Dublin – how Catholicism pervaded the air – had a physical manifestation which is of interest to this study. Symbols and rituals maintained and strengthened the collective consciousness and for Dublin, this included mass-going as a public display of community solidarity as well as, as Louise Fuller points out, processions for certain religious festivities and the erection of crosses and statues both within and outside of the home.[20] The celebration of the Marian Year in 1954 initiated an informal programme of outdoor grotto and indoor shrine building across the country. The Marian Year was marked in Dublin by a vast urban procession in May which, as the *Irish Catholic Directory* described, transformed the city into a sacred domain:

> The procession which started from the Pro-Cathedral, passed through O'Connell Street, where all traffic was suspended for more than two hours as crowds twenty-deep packed the processional route... A hush fell over the streets and the great throng knelt on the roadways. The heart of the city for that brief moment was silent in prayer.[21]

The temporary transformation of the so-called profane spaces of the city into a sacred realm, through the evocation of Catholic ritual was, unsurprisingly, current in all aspects of Dublin life at this time. For example, Dublin Corporation reports reveal the considered debate around the naming of new housing complexes such as those post-Emergency flat blocks by Herbert Simms. In 1949, it was decided to name Simms' Rialto scheme Fatima Mansions, followed by the endorsement a year later of an application from a Reverend Canon Turley "for permission to have a statue of Our Lady of Fatima" erected in the new complex.[22] In 1950, it was voted to name another scheme St. Teresa's Gardens while the large scheme at Sherrif Street was to be named St. Brigid's Gardens.[23] Though it had been agreed to name the scheme at North Circular Road O'Devaney Gardens there was a motion brought forward at a Council meeting of 1954 to change this to "Marian House in honour of the Marian Year."[24]

Seemingly the City Fathers were in the grip of Marian mania and in August 1955 they commissioned the young modernist-inclined architect, Patrick Quinn (then working for Michael Scott) to design a colossal statue of Our Lady of Lourdes for a site on Dublin's high street, O'Connell Street. Quinn undertook a four-week study tour to Germany to research recent Catholic

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[20] See Louise Fuller's excellent overview of the proliferation of crosses, processions and pilgrimages, as well as the growing popularity of the rosary in Irish Catholicism during the 1950s in Louise Fuller, *Irish Catholicism since 1950. The Ondoing of a Culture* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2002), p.21-25

[21] Description of procession on 16th May 1954 in *Irish Catholic Directory*, 1955, p.632 (copy available at Dublin Diocesan Archives, Bishop's Palace, Clonliffe, Dublin)

[22] For the naming of Fatima Mansions see "Breviate for quarter ending 31st March 1949" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1950, p.124. For the application to erect statue see "Breviate for quarter ending 31 June 1950" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1951, p.203

[23] See "Breviate for quarter ending 31 June 1950" in *Reports and Printed Documents of the Corporation of Dublin*, January – December, 1951, p.203

[24] See "Motion 44" in *Minutes of the Corporation of Dublin,* 1954 (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers and Walker Printers), p.22

art and based his Dublin design on Trier's "great statue to the Immaculate Conception, 1866", sitting atop an eighty foot reinforced concrete base.[25] As we will examine, the Corporation Town Planning Officer Michael O'Brien cultivated a close relationship with Dublin's Archbishop John Charles McQuaid and assured the Archbishop that the statue would be of Irish limestone and would cost the Corporation c.£15,000.[26] When Quinn sought approval of his design many months after submitting it, the Archbishop sharply responded that "the traditional statue of Our Lady of Lourdes is unchanging" and therefore, the only matter that should concern Quinn was to do with the "proportion and base".[27] Finally, O'Brien advised the Archbishop that the chosen site of Upper O'Connell Street was inappropriate because firstly, the statue would be subordinate dimensionally to both Nelson's Pillar and the Parnell Monument and secondly, its modern design was not suitable for the "classical" context of the refurbished street: the statue should "not have other statues or architectural features which would clash with it in either design, appearance, dominance and so forth."[28]

Almost inevitably, Quinn's design was rejected and the project was cast aside. But the circumstances of the commission disclose much about the flavour of the expression of Irish, and especially Dublin Catholicism during this period. Aside from the striking deference of both the city official and the design professional to the Church, and indeed the close advisory relationship between the Corporation and the Church, there was the defining instruction from the Archbishop for a "traditional...unchanging" image or artwork that was most striking. Ranging back so as to glance at the new RC churches from the 1930s such as Cavan and Mullingar Cathedrals, Robinson's temporary structures for the Ecclesiastical Congress or the Dublin suburban churches at Killester, Cabra and Mourne Road, Crumlin, it is clear that a "traditional...unchanging" image was sought and achieved. Just as the state was commissioning flat-roofed concrete structures for its regional hospitals and urban housing blocks, the church was maintaining its nineteenth-century appearance through the revivalist forms it adopted for new churches.

Both Cavan (1939 – 47, figure 4.1) and Mullingar (1930-36) Cathedrals were designed by the established church firm, W.H. Byrne (Ralph Byrne at this point) and both were defined by their roofscapes of dome and spire so that they dominated their locale in traditional cathedral fashion.[29] Their huge bulk (Cavan cathedral's nave was 106 feet, Mullingar Cathedral's nave was 150 feet) was managed through the competence and experience of Byrne's Classicism; elements were borrowed from Christopher Wren, James Gandon and Francis Johnston, all of which was deemed

[25] See Quinn's report on his preliminary design in file on "Our Lady of Lourdes statue", in DDA, McQuaid Papers, Dublin Corporation/Government Box, AB8/B
[26] Correspondence between O'Brien and the Archbishop, October 1955, ibid.
[27] Correspondence between Quinn and the Archbishop, 25th March – 11th April 1956, ibid.
[28] Letter from O'Brien to the Archbishop, discouraging the commission, 16th March 1956, ibid.
[29] For more on the Byrne practice, see http://www.dia.ie/architects/view/862, Ann Martha Rowan/Irish Architectural Archive, Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940

appropriate for the form of a regional cathedral, albeit one from the 1930s.[30] At the same time, John J. Robinson (of Robinson Keefe) began to establish himself as a favourite architect of the Irish bishops with his bizarre Neo-Gothic ephemeral architecture for the Eucharistic Congress and then, his Christ the King church in Dublin's new north-west suburb of Cabra (1931-33). For the latter he provided a huge Italian Romanesque structure, replete with squat tower and clad in Courtown brick.[31] Internally, the reality of the church's modernist structure of reinforced concrete and steel truss roof was disguised by plaster boarded walls and a fibrous plaster coffered ceiling. This tendency to use modern means to achieve a traditional aesthetic became a defining feature of mid-century Irish RC church design. At a sibling development in the new Crumlin/Drimnagh suburb of Mourne Road, the great early twentieth-century church architecture practice Ashlin and Coleman designed the Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel (1942, figures 4.2 and 3.4) and unsurprisingly, they adopted a basilica form with a astylar western front (articulated by three round-headed openings at ground and first floors) and dominated by a pitch-roofed nave.[32]

These buildings provided the visual and spatial context out of which Archbishop McQuaid and his Bishop peers emerged in the 1940s and 50s, and it would seem that they were adamant to be instruments of continuity in their roles as patrons of revivalist architectural design. When McQuaid was ordained Archbishop in 1940, the liveliest architectural commission that he inherited was the proposal to build a Catholic cathedral in Dublin's city centre. From the earliest competition-winning scheme for a new city plan by Patrick Abercrombie et al. of 1914 – 1922, the projected cathedral was superimposed on to a riverside site (Ormond Quay), and in this, its monumental form and scale enabled it to vie for attention alongside Gandon's Four Courts (1795-1815). McQuaid's predecessor Edward Byrne seems to have engaged in the commissioning of the cathedral and W. H. Byrne was brought in to draft designs.[33] However, for the most part the controversy around the cathedral and the ensuing battle was to do with its site. Certainly in the 1910s and 20s, the City Architect C. J. McCarthy and the Corporation's Housing Committee under Tom Kelly were adamant that the area around Ormond Quay should be occupied by working class housing, as indeed happened. At some point then, the plan shifted so that the colossal cathedral was to occupy the park at the centre of the Georgian Merrion Square.[34] And yet, when Abercrombie came to draft his final *Sketch Plan for Dublin*, published in 1941, the cathedral had reverted to its riverside site and the outlandish scale of its proposed west front spire and nave promised to dwarf all neighbouring structures (figure 3.49).

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[30] For a review of Cavan Kilmore Cathedral, see "Kilmore Cathedral. A Classic Exemplar with a Spire" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (12th November 1938), p.935

[31] For a review of Christ the King in Cabra, see *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (7th October 1933), p. 845-846

[32] Ashlin and Coleman were responsible for two other churches in the Crumlin area – St. Teresa's, Donore Avenue (1924-26) and St Agnes', Crumlin (1933-35, 1942-45 extension). For a short review of the Church of Good Counsel, Mourne Road see *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (3rd January 1942), p.14

[33] See File "Walsh Collection, Ormond Quay for New Cathedral" in DDA, Bishop's Palace, Dublin (consulted August 2010) – this file is filled with correspondence from 1915. Ormond Quay seems to have been impossible by Februrary 1915 and the Merrion Square site was mooted from this time.

[34] See note #31

Naturally the architectural community involved itself in the cathedral proposal. From 1933 the RIAI lobbied Archbishop Byrne in the hope that he might open up an international competition.[35] After six years of seemingly futile correspondence, the architects turned their attention to the mooted site of Merrion Square and began to object to the Corporation on the grounds that it was not prominent enough within the cityscape. With the appointment of Archbishop McQuaid, the RIAI began again to lobby, only to be cut short by the Archbishop in early 1942:

> Dear Mr. O'Gorman...You are free to state [at the Council meeting of the RIAI] that the site for the proposed Cathedral of Dublin is a matter which concerns the Archbishop of Dublin, who will undertake the task of building a Cathedral, and those whom he will choose to consult.[36]

While the prospects for a Catholic cathedral for Dublin hung in the air as McQuaid concerned himself, as we will see, with development in the suburbs, they never went away. In a defence of the Archbishop many years later (1965), Roland Burke Savage raised the cathedral issue in relation to McQuaid's perceived anti-Protestantism:

> Would it be asking too much to suggest that the authorities of the Church of Ireland would consider offering Christ Church Cathedral to the Catholic majority in the city? Does the relatively small number of members of the Church of Ireland in Dublin really have need of two Cathedrals?[37]

The response to the RIAI in 1942 and this later notion of usurping Christ Church Cathedral quite basically highlight the steadfastness and in a sense, the arrogance of the Archbishop in matters to do with church accommodation. Certainly the former correspondence sets the tone for the calamitous architectural competition at the heart of 1950s Irish Catholic church architecture with which this study is concerned. In general though, the cathedral question points to the unyielding nature of the Church hierarchy in relation to artistic discourse, and like Quinn's statue, it begins to throw light on the flavour of Dublin Catholicism during the mid-century. Again, Heinrich Boll's account of his arrival to Dublin in the early 1950s provides us with an enlightening, albeit stark view. Boll depicts a poignant scene on the ferry whereby the author is listening to a conversation between an Irish woman, returning on a trip from England and a priest. The young woman's sense of disillusion and dehumanisation at being pitched abroad from all she knows is targeted at the

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[35] Correspondence 1933 – 1936, "Proposed Metropolitan RC Cathedral" in "Miscellaneous Competitions", I.A.A., RIAI collection, Box 93/136/62
[36] Letter from McQuaid to John O'Gorman, 11th February 1942 in ibid.
[37] Roland Burke-Savage, "The Church in Dublin: 1940 - 1965", in *Studies* (No. 216, Winter 1965), p.325

Church; she is lost, unbelieving and utterly disgusted with herself and Ireland. As the priest attempts to comfort her, she says to him:

> "No, Father, no, no... it hurts too much to think of Ireland. Once a year I have to go there to visit my parents, and my grandmother is still alive. Do you know County Galway?"
> "No," murmured the priest...
> "You should go there, and don't forget on your way back in the port of Dublin to notice what's exported from Ireland: children and priests, nuns and biscuits, whisky and horses, beer and dogs..."[38]

Her synopsis of Ireland amounts to an overabundance of religious orders, children, gambling and nineteenth-century manufactured goods, all amounting to vibrant missionary and emigration "industries". Here was not a place of nurturing or development, due, in the woman's mind, to Catholic monopoly. She spits, "I don't believe in *Kathleen ni Houlihan* either, that fairy-tale Ireland... how many loose women *Kathleen ni Houlihan* has sent to London, the isle of the saints."[39]

In many respects this chapter seeks to understand this heartfelt accusation by unpicking the Church's architectural, or rather building project during the mid-century in Dublin. Regarding the visualisation of Catholicism during the Free State years, there was clearly an appetite for Marian imagery from plaster statues of Our Lady of Lourdes and other objects of popular devotion such as rosary beads, the Infant of Prague models and pious medals: the influence of mass-production was evident then in the proliferation and subsequent consumption of these objects so that as John Turpin explains, "The negative effect of this body of imagery was that it depressed taste. It predisposed the public against any influence of Modernism in religious art."[40] In keeping with Boll's heroine's impression, Irish Catholicism's popular visual culture was retarded, dulled and manufactured. Perhaps as a reaction to this populist depression of national taste, and in an attempt to promote informed interest in the artistic and architectural expression of Irish Catholicism by sectors of the clergy and laity, the Academy of Christian Art was established in 1929. It was run out of the Central Catholic Library (Merrion Square, Dublin) until the Academy's dissolution in 1946 and according to the three historic accounts of its workings by Sighle Breathnach-Lynch, Turpin and Sean Rothery, it was a mixed-up cultural organisation which sought to educate via lectures on traditional art and architectural styles, while calling for an honest and

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[38] Heinrich Boll, *Irish Journal* (London: Minerva, 1995), p.4
[39] Ibid.
[40] John Turpin, "Visual Culture and Catholicism in the Irish Free State, 1922 – 1949" in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (Vol. 57, No. 1, January 2006), p.58

national form of visual expression.[41] There were four architects at the Academy's inaugural meeting (Robinson, T. J. Cullen, J. V. Downes and T. J. Byrne) and as Rothery's reading of the Academy's annual reports points out, there were various attempts to set up architectural courses.[42] But despite the best efforts of say Downes and the architect-critic John O'Gorman, the undercurrent sway towards Catholic modernist architectural representation did not take off during the 1930s. Writing in an architectural supplement to the *Irish Press* in June 1939, O'Gorman famously bemoaned the state of contemporary Irish church design and as we will see, his hand-ringing polemic anticipates the post-war discourse on the subject:

> 'Pseudo-Romanesque' churches are built to-day which would make any mediaeval craftsman weep in heaven. 'Renaissance' churches are erected which must surely cause poor Sir Christopher Wren positively to spin in his grave. If scholarship in architecture indicates a knowledge and appreciation of the buildings of the past, where is scholarship among all these architectural travesties? Is it not clear that 'the sincerest form of flattery' has degenerated into a game of caricaturing our betters?[43]

In December of that year the Academy hosted a debate on "Irish Ecclesiastical Architecture and the Question of a National Style" whence Robinson represented the traditionalists and Downes, T. P. Kennedy and O'Gorman formed the pro-modernist team. The object(s) of the modernists' scorn were the two contemporary cathedrals at Cavan and Mullingar, while the source of their admiration was the wholly anomalous Church of Christ the King, Turner's Cross, Co. Cork by American-Irish architect Barry Byrne (1927-31, figures 4.3 – 4.5). Again basing this short aside on Rothery's excellent primary account of Turner's Cross Christ the King, it would seem that this revolutionary (for Ireland) reinforced concrete church, enclosing a wide unobstructed nave, came about due to the enlightened patronage of the Bishop of Cork, Dr. Colohan.[44] The original impetus for commissioning Byrne was to do with Colohan's links with the influential diocese of Chicago and then, Byrne's reputation for economic efficiency therein – Colohan wanted a church that would cost £20,000. The finished church (costing £30,000) was viewed with great interest and bemusement by the architectural community: the AAI visited it in 1932, dedicating a large passage to the church's description in its annual study tour report; the *Irish Builder and Engineer*

[41] See John Turpin, ibid.; Sighle Breathnach-Lynch, "The Academy of Christian Art, 1929 -40: an Aspect of Catholic Cultural Life in Newly Independent Ireland" in *Eire-Ireland* (Fall/Winter, 1996), p.102-116; Sean Rothery, "Patronage: the State and the Church" in *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.171-176

[42] Sean Rothery, ibid, p.171-172

[43] John O'Gorman, "Church Architecture - The Skeleton at the Feast" in *Irish Press,* 22nd June 1939 (architectural supplement to the newspaper which marked the centenary of the R.I.A.I., 1839 – 1939)

[44] Rothery describes how Dr. Colohan visited Barry Byrne's churches in Chicago while the Cork church was mid-construction. It would seem though, that as soon as Turner's Cross was finished, Colohan had to curtail his enthusiasm for modernism in church design as it was not shared by Ireland's other bishops, Sean Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.166-167. See also the parish's historic account of the church based on the history of Barry Byrne by Sally Chappell, "Barry Byrne: Architecture and Writings" (unpublished dissertation, North western University, USA, 1968), http://www.turnerscross.com/church/sources.php

reviewed it in glowing terms while John O'Gorman celebrated it in *Irish Art Handbook* (1943).[45] Its elongated octagonal form presented an unseen nave space in Irish church design. The lack of internal structural element was shocking and both the form of the narrow windows (lancet, west front and punctuating the east end behind the altar) and the quality of light they produced were unprecedented.

While Turner's Cross was undoubtedly the jewel in the modernist crown for Irish Catholic church design during the first half of the century, and indeed it was consistently upheld and cited by the architects into the 1960s, it was so completely atypical that it could not have borne practical influence for a generation or more. Its serrated profile and expressionist west front led it to be likened to a cinema by theatre critic John Dowling in his review for *Ireland Today* in 1937[46] – indeed aesthetically its main entrance could have been a set piece in a film by Fritz Lang or Hans Poelzig! Then, in a French study of contemporary international church design of 1938, Turner's Cross was singled out and praised for its daring structure and clear plan, but, asked the author "Are these qualities sufficient for the construction of a church adapted to Europe, to Ireland, and to Cork which is not a new Chicago?"[47] As such, Byrne's church was exciting but even the informed and pro-modernist camp questioned its suitability as a parish church in 1930s rural (or indeed urban) Ireland. As the 1931/32 AAI president said, "Even in our own country – in Cork – a church has been built to the design of an American Architect which is so far apart from anything that has yet been attempted in this country that it has almost taken our breath away."[48] It was almost as if a wonderful accident (Turner's Cross) had happened within Irish architectural history! Later, in a critical essay of 1959 on Irish Catholic church architecture, architect Wilfrid Cantwell labelled it "symbolist" by which he meant that the building was conceived as "hieroglyphs which, in a secret code understood only by the initiated, express some particular religious subject... The theatrical altar "backdrop" and the violently-exaggerated figure of Christ on the entrance elevation are clear evidence of the extremes to which this approach can lead."[49]

Cantwell's scorn was not reserved for Ireland's first modernist church alone. Within his critique he formulated four tendencies of twentieth-century Irish church design: along with the "symbolic", he identified the "functionalist", the "simple/direct" and the "transitional". With regard to the transitional or "too timid approach", Cantwell pointed to what I would argue was the most

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[45] Harold Leask led an outing from Dublin to Cork for the AAI and described the events, *Green Book* 1932-33, p.37-42. Turner's Cross received mixed reviews from Leask: at once "unfunctional" in the nave roof beams and "antagonistic" decoration, but the overall form was effective for its context of new suburban housing, see p.39-40, *Green Book* 1932-33. For review in the *Irish Builder and Engineer*, see 21st November 1931, p.1018. See also, John O'Gorman, "Architecture", *Irish Art Handbook* (Dublin: Cahill, 1943), available in Early Printed Books, TCD

[46] John Dowling, *Ireland To-day* (August 1937), p.62 (available in Early Printed Books, TCD)

[47] Dom E. Roulin, *Nos Eglises* (Paris, 1938), p.165-169 cited in Rothery, *Ireland and the New Architecture* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.166

[48] C. A. Harrington, president's inaugural address in *Green Book* 1931-32 (Dublin: AAI, 1831/32), p.32

[49] Wilfrid Cantwell, "Irish Churches: A Critical Survey" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Irish Builder and Engineer 1859 – 1959 Centenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.27

significant RC church of the early 1940s, the Church of Corpus Christi in Drumcondra (Griffith Avenue), North Dublin (Robinson Keefe, 1938-41, figures 4.6+ 4.7).

The fund-raising brochure issued in 1937 called Corpus Christi a "new 'modernised Romanesque' church to accommodate nearly 1,600" and indeed, as the description would imply, Robinson's church was a recognisably Romanesque bulk whose articulation (windows, profiles and so on) was pared-down to a near Art Deco expression.[50] Cantwell called it "emasculated" and commented that "the exterior follows the broad highway of historicism, treated in a more romantic and less heavy manner than usual, but it is interesting to note that the public has concentrated its admiration on the interiors which are, for their time and place, of comparatively advanced design."[51] What Cantwell and the church's fundraising propaganda touched upon was the hybrid nature of Robinson's church both aesthetically and technically. And importantly, the acceptance of this hybrid nature, with leanings more towards the modern than the traditional, set the tone for RC church design during the 1950s pre-conciliar period. Corpus Christi's mass-concrete bulk was clad in a thin facing of granite externally and internally lined in cork while its immense dome, visible for miles, was structured out of steel trussing.[52] The external appreciation of the church was dominated by ultra plain (almost bravely so) wall surfaces which were punctuated by thin round-headed windows – the impression was of a dramatically stripped-back church while internally, the truncated transept arms and vast height lent an air of centralised rather than longitudinal space.

Though this commission predated John Charles McQuaid's ordination as Archbishop, Corpus Christi was "modern" enough as to be provocative for the historian and with it we can begin to introduce a grey tint to the black and white/ modern v traditional wash of 1940s Dublin church design. It was visited by the AAI in 1940 and in 1942/43 the RIAI yearbook published photographs of it.[53] *The Irish Builder* described it as "a striking and well-conceived building, cathedral-like in its proportions that may perhaps best be described as Modernised Romanesque... this new church is a worthy addition to Dublin's architectural features."[54] We can assume from the contemporary reception to it that Corpus Christi was well thought of by the architectural community and was even considered to be somewhat radical and at the vanguard of church

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[50] Fundraising programme for Corpus Christi, May 1937, available at the Irish Architectural Archive along with a set of drawings of the church (1939) from Robinson Keefe Devane

[51] Wilfrid Cantwell, "Irish Churches: A Critical Survey" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Irish Builder and Engineer 1859 – 1959 Centenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.26

[52] See Corpus Christi review "New Dublin Church. Impressive Building at Glasnevin" in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (5th July 1941), p.325

[53] See "Visits to Buildings" in *Green Book* 1940-41 (Dublin: AAI, 1940-41), p.52. According to the report, 20 members visited Corpus Christi but an AAI visit does not necessarily signal the modernism of the site as the Association also organised (but postponed) a visit to Kilmore Cathedral, Cavan that same year. The *RIAI Yearbook* (joint 1943 and 1944) published a small photo-essay of "Selection of Buildings Recently Completed", p.18-20 which included Dublin airport, the chapel at Kilkenny Hospital, Cashel Hospital, Tullamore Hospital, Excise Officer Houses and Corpus Christi.

[54] Corpus Christi review "New Dublin Church. Impressive Building at Glasnevin" in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (5th July 1941), p.325

design by the parishioners.[55] As this background to the 1950s shows, the overwhelming tendency for church design was conservative but importantly, the dialogue was open with the younger generation becoming increasingly vocal in their intent to push the typology towards a modernist idiom. Following the ecclesiastic architecture debate at the Academy of Christian Art in 1939, the Academy's librarian (and pro-traditional debater with Robinson) Fr Stephen Brown, was invited to lecture to the AAI in January 1941;[56] again, I would argue that this represents openness, certainly on the level of intellectual discourse. We must not forget also, though outside of Catholic Church patronage, St. Mary's Church of Ireland church in Crumlin by O'Donnell Dixon from 1941/42 which must have seemed remarkable at the time. Designed by Lionel O'Donnell, it presented an unyielding form, at once modern and ancient: modern in its massing of plain over-burnt brick walls and in its details of skinny lancet windows with art deco metal work; and ancient in its robust chunky disposition, blank west front and squat Romanesque bell tower (figures 4.8 – 4.10).[57]

As a church of Ireland building, St Mary's is not central to this chapter's discussion but arguably, as a parish building it had a role within the wider Catholic social infrastructure.[58] In the same way we could exclude the ecumenical (but ostensibly Catholic) chapels in the new hospitals discussed in chapter two. In reality these chapels seemed to sit outside of architectural discourse on church design, making up instead the monumental spaces within their respective hospital campuses. And yet *because* of their hospital contexts, they constituted the most explicitly modernist forays of Irish church architecture from the 1930s through the 1950s. Returning to St. Mary's, it was visited by the AAI in 1942 and more pointedly, it was included in the religious buildings section of the 1951-53 Better Buildings/Antwerp/Focus exhibitions (see chapters one and three for fuller discussion of this exhibition series). Like Busaras, it was represented by two photographs in this exhibition context, thereby showing the value which the architects put on the project.[59] For the younger architects, the religious star of the exhibition was, as we will discuss, the timber and steel Church of the Holy Rosary in Limerick by Frank Corr and Liam McCormick (1951), but in the interest of a fair view of the situation, the exhibition also included R.M. Butler's traditional Hiberno-Romanesque church at Newport, Co. Mayo, as well as three smaller structures which had been singled out by Noel Moffett as significant in his 1947 "Ireland issue" for *Architectural Design*: a presbytery in Rathcoole, Co. Kildare (Brendan O'Connor), a presbytery at

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[55] Anecdotal evidence, Frank Rowley and Joan Collins, former parishioners of Corpus Christi, 1940s/1950s
[56] See lecture listings, "In what style shall I build my church" by Rev. Stephen Brown S. J. – 14th January 1941, in *Green Book* 1940-41, p.41
[57] For a contemporary review see "New Crumlin Church" in *Irish Builder and Engineer* (1st August 1942), p. 273-274. For more on its brick work and the fact that it was the last building to use the bricks from the Crumlin brickworks, see Susan Roundtree, "Church of St Mary's, Crumlin, Dublin" in *Irish Architect* (October 2002, no.18), p.70-71
[58] According to Peter Costello, St Mary's was the last "Anglican" church to be erected in Dublin – see Peter Costello, *Dublin Churches* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1989), p.132
[59] Though, as we saw in chapter one, Luan Cuffe summarised that the religious portion of the exhibition was "dull" and so, the two photographs for St. Mary's may be a recognition of the paucity of suitable projects to illustrate post-1940 religious Irish architecture, see Luan Cuffe, "Exhibition for Export" in *Irish Engineering Journal* (January 1952), p.26

Bray, Co. Wicklow (Ellis and Scally) and the chapel in Kilkenny Hospital (Downes and Meehan). Moffett's selection of 1940s religious projects for his overview of modernist endeavour in Ireland is of interest. As we noted in chapter one, the religious work was last in Moffett's order of events but he did devote three pages to the subject and like with other typologies, built and unbuilt projects sat side by side (figures 4.11 + 4.12). Of note was J. V. Downes's white minimalist Our Lady of Lourdes Chapel in Drogheda (Figure 4.13) and the concrete and glazed cloister by Brendan O'Connor for the convent of the Holy Rosary, Kerdiffstown, Co. Kildare.[60] But the most exciting project was the unbuilt "church experiment" by J. M. Brennan which was fan-shaped and apparently based on a built church in Germany, though its unobstructed nave space and dynamic roof form was reminiscent of Byrne's Christ the King interior (figure 4.12).

The plan of Brennan's experiment seems extraordinarily visionary in a 1940s Irish context; certainly it anticipated a slew of post Vatican II churches from the 1960s-80s but critically, Brennan's plan proposal showed the extent of German influence, theoretically, on Irish church design by this time. Again, the grey hue comes to the fore. Also, already in the 1940s the majority of favoured Catholic Church designers such as Byrne and Robinson were utilising modern technologies so as to build their large structures. Though decked out in revivalist clothing, the modern materiality of the buildings was significant. Arising throughout this chapter is the rather intangible issue of authenticity which ironically defined both the Church as patron's ambition and the modernist architects' gripe. The jarring effect of a reinforced concrete structure being shaped into a medieval evocation motivated the younger modernist architects to preach about authenticity and at the same time, the Church sought to root its new communities in traditional-looking spaces in the hope for authentic Catholic experience. As we will see, the key to understanding the whole curious period for church design lies within this quest for supposed authenticity.

## ***Archbishop McQuaid: Property Developer?***

*The meaning and development of parishes in 1940s-50s Dublin and the Archbishop's architectural uniform*

*Let the round tower stand aloof in a world of bursting mortar*[61] **– Louis MacNeice**

Having touched upon the extent of religious (Catholic) fervour in 1940s-50s Dublin and established that its visual and spatial expression was conservative but not straightforwardly so, it is interesting to turn to the infrastructural mechanisms controlling that fervour and expression. Specifically from 1940 until c.1965, Archbishop McQuaid was at the helm of all processes - social,

[60] Moffett also included Downes Drogheda chapel in his lecture on Modern Architecture to the White Stag group in 1941, see chapter one. This author is unsure whether the Downes' chapel was part of a hospital complex – certainly Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital by Desmond Martin (famous drawing in IAA collection) was not built until the end of 1950s.
[61] Cited in Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland. The Literature of the Modern Nation* (London: Vintage Books, 1996), p. 473

educational and cultural – in what was the most significant archbishopric in Ireland, the Dublin Diocese. As his biographer John Cooney asserts, McQuaid "ruled" over his domain and beyond, exerting his influence with oft-inflexible determination from 1940 until 1971.[62] I would argue that a revision of Cooney's reading is by now timely considering the Archbishop's very real and overlooked legacy: that is, the tremendous building programme of social and religious infrastructure during the middle of the twentieth century. Though an exhaustive revision is beyond the scope of the present study, this chapter begins to situate the physical development of Dublin's suburbs in the 1950s within McQuaid's Catholic social framework, and to make links between the Corporation's planning policies and the Church's provision of parish public buildings.

An important homage to McQuaid was written by the editor of *Studies*, Fr. Roland Burke Savage on the occasion of the Archbishop's twenty-fifth year in office (1965).[63] Therein Burke Savage moved through the Archbishop's career highlighting his charity work and his role as educator, while specifically addressing certain charges as "meddler in politics" or McQuaid's perceived aloof and anti-liturgical stance(s). Reflecting on his position as "church builder" Burke Savage informed us that over a twenty-five year period (1940-65) the Archbishop had overseen the erection of thirty-four churches and the formation of twenty-six new parishes, in response to the Catholic population growth of the archdiocese from 630,000 to 725,058.[64] Burke Savage continued, "Still looking to the future, he plans to build four churches in the immediate future and has thought out the siting of another seventeen churches to serve what he foresees as the future population development in his diocese."[65] According to the annual figures in the *Irish Catholic Directory*, the Dublin diocese grew accordingly from 1941 - 1972:

| Number of parishes | **1941** | **1946** | **1951** | **1957** | **1961** | **1966** | **1972** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| City | 31 | 38 | 38 | 42 | 42 | 46 | 54 |
| Suburban + rural | 50 | 51 | 52 | 56 | 56 | 61 | 61 |
| Parish priests | 77 | 84 | 87 | 95 | 95 | * | * |
| Curates/administrators | 241 | 367 | 355 | 380 | 421 | *546 | *567 |
| Regular clergy | 423 | 523 | 569 | 721 | 737 | 850 | 1,002 |
| Schools | | | | | | | |
| Primary | ** | 386 | 481 | 491 | 485 | 500 | 518 |
| Secondary | ** | 62 | 69 | 80 | 109 | 129 | 150 |
| Vocational | ** | 21 | 21 | 27 | 34 | 34 | 47 |

Figures taken from *Irish Catholic Directory (ICD)*, 1941-72, see Deirdre McMahon[66] ** not published in 1941 *ICD* * the *ICD* made no distinction between parish priests and curates

[62] John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid. Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999)
[63] Roland Burke Savage, "The Church in Dublin: 1940 - 1965", in *Studies* (No. 216, Winter 1965), p.297-341
[64] Ibid., p.306
[65] Ibid.
[66] This table is based on figures collated by Deirdre McMahon from the *Irish Catholic Directory* 1941-72 in her essay, "John Charles McQuaid, Archbishop of Dublin, 1940-72" in James Kelly and Daire Keogh (eds.), *History of the Catholic Diocese of*

Clearly as the statistics show, this is a history of *expansion*: expansion in the population of Dublin-based Catholics, expansion of suburban neighbourhoods and then the expansion of Catholic structures to service these neighbourhoods. The spatial unit at the basis of this expansion was the parish, in a sense providing the physical boundary and structure for the collusion of the Irish state and Catholic Church during the period. Many historical and cultural geographers have mapped the genealogy of the Irish parish structure through time, concluding that the Catholic parish has evolved over two centuries (or more - since post-reformation seventeenth century) into the organisational base for communities.[67] Conchubhair O Fearghail informs us that the Greek root (etymologically) of the word "parish" is "neighbourhood" and that the parish was the most fundamental unit in the territorial hierarchy of the Catholic Church, overwhelming the townland in Dublin to become the strongest administrative boundary.[68] He synopsised that by the start of the twentieth century, the parish system in Dublin was "a framework within which a complex mesh of Catholic institutions had been and would continue to be built, institutions whose influence permeated the very fabric of society."[69] Within this mesh, the social and spiritual were integrated: sports organisations, devotional societies, schools and clubs all grew around the parish identity. According to O Fearghail, "The parish therefore as an entity in Dublin transcended its original religious function and became, due to the relative religious homogeneity of the populace, the spatial unit in its own right, satisfying in one more way the territorial nature of man."[70]

On Archbishop McQuaid's watch, this process of territorial consolidation was not only continued but due to the demographic shifts of rural depopulation and rapid suburbanisation from the late 1940s on, it was accelerated. Our French observer, Jean Blanchard noted how the parishes were "unusually large, and also the recent trend in urban areas, where the population is increasing annually, [was] to sub-divide them. Thus, a new geographical organization of the Church is developing, due to the pressure of a shifting population."[71] Though, as Blanchard continued, this physical splitting of parishes was just another product of Catholic hegemony: "The territorial partitioning in the Irish Church contrasts with the coherent clerical education which is given by the national seminary situated at Maynooth."[72] It would seem that Dublin's growth was such that it had to be dealt with rationally through expansionist planning and the systematic

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*Dublin* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p.380. McMahon's essay was written contemporaneously with Cooney's book but she presented little new material, basing most of her conclusions on Burke Savage's 1965 homage.

[67] See for example Conchubhair O Fearghail, "The Evolution of Catholic Parishes in Dublin City from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries" in Aalen, F.H.A. and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Dublin City and County: From Prehistory to Present* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1992); and William Nolan, "Some Civil and Ecclesiastical Territorial Divisions and their Geographical Significance" in William Nolan (ed.), *The Shaping of Ireland. The Geographical Perspective* (Cork/Dublin: the Mercier Press for Thomas Davis Lecture series, RTE, 1986); and Kevin Whelan, "The Catholic Parish, the Catholic Chapel and Village Development in Ireland" in *Irish Geography* (Vol. XVI, 1983), p.1-15

[68] O Fearghail, ibid, p.229

[69] Ibid., p.245

[70] Ibid.

[71] Jean Blanchard, *The Church in Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: Clonmore + Reynolds, 1963), p.86-87

[72] Ibid., p.87

chopping up of territories, and from the outset McQuaid was ready to do so, appointing advisors to assist him in this process (as we will see, Canon Joseph McArdle during the 1940s, Canon William Fitzpatrick during the 1950s and Fr. Cecil Barrett during the 1960s). Of note, among the many examples in McQuaid's correspondence, are these two cases illustrating the reasoned and remote approach to parish (aka spiritual and social community) apportionment: firstly, in 1953 in relation to the parishes of Walkinstown, Inchicore and Ballyfermot (west Dublin), one of the Archbishop's advisors, Fr. Thomas O'Reilly outlined four plans ("a" to "d") and explained, "'D" provides a solution for that small triangular piece of Clondalkin district, which could be conveniently annexed to Ballyfermot parish."[73] Secondly, and jumping ahead to 1968, the correspondence from Fr. Cecil Barrett regarding the subdivision of the parish of Blackrock (south Dublin) seems alarmingly systematic:

> I have seen the PP. [parish priest] Canon Redmond, and he is perfectly willing to part with the portion of his parish which I suggest should be allocated to the new parish of Newtown Park. Unfortunately, the PP of Foxrock, Fr. Anthony Camac, is absent and will not be available until 30th June. I understand, however, from Canon Redmond and others that the PP of Foxrock would be willing to cede a portion of his parish to the new parish. On his return, I shall ask him for the Ardagh estate and Ardlui Park, consisting of about 220 houses, situated just south of the present boundary between Blackrock and Foxrock parishes. I expect he will be agreeable. The question arises as to whether the new parish should stretch southwards even beyond Ardlui Park – as far as the bray Road to include Belmont, the Oblates' House, and the village of Galloping Green.[74]

From both examples we begin to form an image of the Archbishop as a medieval "God with compass figure", carving out the former greenfields of Dublin's urban/rural edge and divvying up "small triangular piece[s]" of land between parishes with extraordinary ease and calculated detachment.

Another foreign cleric (who we met in chapter three), American Jesuit sociologist Alexander Humphreys is of interest to us in our representation of 1940s-60s parish development in Dublin and his research brings us from the aloof and abstract to the experiential. In his usual poetic manner, Humphreys summarised the meaning of the parish in both the lived and metaphysical experience of Dublin's working classes (whom he labelled "artisan" so as to be more inclusive for his study):

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[73] See report, November 1953 from Fr. Thomas O'Reilly to Archbishop McQuaid, DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)
[74] Letter from Fr. Cecil Barrett to Archbishop, 24th June 1968, in ibid.

> The parish...stands as the liturgical and sacramental centre that effects a strong, over-arching unity among the artisan practitioners in the realm of ideas and ideals. It is the most immediate and articulate source of many of the major values that impregnate its parishioners' lives. From it, the artisans imbibe most of their great definitions of the world, and of their place and meaning in the cosmos.[75]

Of the many oral accounts (which Humphreys collected) attesting to the dearth of recreational and pastoral services in the new Dublin parishes, one most poignantly revealed the alienating effects of the swollen and ever-swelling parish which defined the suburban neighbourhoods in the late 1940s and on:

> When we first moved out here, there were only a few families and the parish was much smaller... they used to have all sorts of functions in the little school house... The priests were much closer to the people...Then in a short time, people just poured in here by the thousands and we had to build a new church. Now everybody here is practically a stranger... With the church debt, they haven't been able to build a social hall.[76]

If this account and indeed the overview of Crumlin Estate in chapter three sketch the somewhat desolate nature and experience of the new parishes, we must venture to ask (rhetorically) whether the Church influenced the suburban direction of Dublin's development at this time. As chapter three suggested, the low-density development of the suburban fringe suited the Irish Catholic hierarchy with its generally anti-urban stance. That chapter's inference was that the lower the density of the housing, the higher the moral behaviour pervading that housing. Also, that the nature of suburbia was closer to rural experience so that suburban living was preferable to urban living in terms of the integrity of the Irish Catholic family. After all, the key to Catholic social teaching was the sanctity of the family unit and importantly, the family was given this formal recognition in the 1937 redrafting of the Irish Constitution.[77] Catholic teaching in Ireland generally favoured a moral and social order of small-scale capitalism and family property, which would have been most appropriately met in the small farm infrastructure of nineteenth-century Ireland. As to whether the Irish Catholic Church, specifically the Dublin hierarchy, pushed for

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[75] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners. Urbanization and the Irish Family* (London: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1966), p.190

[76] Oral account, Humphreys, ibid.

[77] According to Cathal Condon's research into McQuaid's role in the redrafting of the Constitution in 1937, McQuaid sent the following wording to Eamon de Valera: "The State guarantees the constitution and protection of the family as the basis of moral education and social discipline and harmony, and the sure foundation of ordered society." See Cathal Condon, "An analysis of the contribution by Dr McQuaid to the drafting of the Constitution of Ireland" (unpublished MA thesis, UCC, 1995), p.93-94, cited by Dermot Keogh "The Role of the Catholic Church in the Republic of Ireland 1922 - 1995" in *Building Trust in Ireland* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press for the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Ireland, chairperson Judge Catherine McGuinness, 1996), p.126

more development in the suburbs from the 1930s onwards, we cannot be sure as no such policy was committed to paper.[78] Chapter three posited that ultimately it was Abercrombie's thesis of thinning-out the city centre, as a solution to slum overcrowding, which was the defining influence on Dublin's rapid and homogenous suburbanisation programme. Arguably however, the Church was in a position to stem the tide of suburban development. Correspondence in 1952 to the Archbishop from a by-then thinned-out inner city community (St. Audeon's, High Street by Christ Church Cathedral) is enlightening. The headmaster of St. Audeon's national school wrote:

> The PP of High Street (V. Rev T. Barry) is most anxious to have certain parts of his area rebuilt... His once very populous parish has dwindled through the operations of the Housing Department, and although it gives him the greatest pleasure to see people properly housed ... the amount of constructional work done in the parish by the Housing Department is quite small. The district, at present, looks more like a bombed-out area than a part of Dublin. He feels that the Corporation ought to compensate for this drain from the parish over the years by erecting flats and cottages on appropriate sites.[79]

The Archbishop must have passed on these grievances to the Corporation as a few months later Michael O'Brien (the Corporation Town Planning Officer) responded to St. Audeon's stating that the official policy (of state and city alike) was to decrease density in the urban centre, to move children from preying urban traffic to suburban playing fields and playgrounds, and to replan the centre according to its most economical use as a commercial zone.[80] Despite the community's protestations that their school was now lying empty and that new suburban schools had to be constructed at great cost, the Corporation remained steadfast and the Archbishop, silent.[81]

It would seem that the relationship between 1940s-60s Corporation planning policy and Catholic ideology was chicken-and-egg. Adding to the complication of identifying "who/what influenced who/what" was the fact that, to a great extent, the Church enjoyed financial autonomy from the state. This contributed to the Irish Church's idiosyncrasy. As Blanchard pointed out,

> The Catholic Church in Ireland does not experience the same difficulties as it does in France, when financing her building programme, and in procuring suitable lands. Solidly supported by the faithful, she faces the future with confidence...She chooses to be above

[78] As we will see, an extensive trawl through McQuaid's papers including his correspondence with his advisors and with the Corporation and a reading of the Corporation reports, minutes and certain archival material reveals a remarkably close relationship between the Church and the Corporation officials but there is an absence of written policy from the Church concerning art, architecture and parish development.
[79] Letter from Sean Daly to the Archbishop, 19th February 1952 in "High Street Area" file, DDA, AB8/B/ Government Box, Dublin Corporation
[80] Letter from Michael O'Brien to Sean Daly and the Archbishop, 9th April 1952, ibid.
[81] Letter from Fr. Barry (pp, St. Audeon's) to Sherwin (City Manager) and the Archbishop, 21st April 1952, in ibid. A weakness of the McQuaid papers is that most of the correspondence sent by the Archbishop is not copied so the researcher is reading one-way correspondence for the most part – albeit McQuaid made extensive marginalia to received letters.

> political struggles, and at the same time to make her authority felt in public affairs... Though she [the Irish Church] has relatively little real property, she is well provided for. It would seem that the faithful by their extraordinary generosity wish to revise the lesson of history and to overcome the poverty of the past.[82]

The three salient points of Blanchard's observation are firstly and most obviously, that the finance necessary for the expansion (primarily the erection of churches and schools) was gleaned from the local population; secondly and critically, that the officials put no obstacles in the way of the Church's expansion of its infrastructure; and thirdly, that the Irish Church was in the enviable position of being formally outside of official policy yet in reality, it wielded tremendous influence and was (informally) intimately involved in official affairs. From Blanchard's account, the Irish Church of the mid-twentieth century had it all its own way! He also congratulated its maintenance of traditional rituals while responding to contemporary needs through modern expansion.[83] However, the Church's expansion campaign and its fundamental and ever-growing role within Irish society was the result of the Irish Archbishops' hard work, relentless fund-raising and ultimately, their construction of a mid-century network of clerical bureaucracy. In a letter responding to the Apostolic Nuncio's (Albert Levame) request for funds to build a hostel for working class pilgrims to Rome in 1956, Archbishop McQuaid was forced to refuse, stating, "Your Excellency knows what a programme of Schools and Churches I must yet face, before I can feel that my Diocese is adequately equipped. And, at the moment, I must find £124,000 to put my major seminary in proper repair."[84] Also, Tony Fahey's critical overview of Catholic social policy in Ireland reminds us that the church filled in for state gaps in spending on social services, especially around primary and post-primary education. In fact, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Ireland enjoyed higher participation in post-primary education than Britain or Northern Ireland, despite the lower level of public funding for education in Ireland - the Catholic Church, as education provider, was the main factor for this.[85] As such, the state gained considerably from the Church's social infrastructure, thus emphasising the chicken-and-egg nature and the mutually beneficial experience of the relationship.

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[82] Jean Blanchard, *The Church in Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: Clonmore + Reynolds, 1963), p.88-90

[83] Ibid., p.88

[84] Letter from McQuaid to Albert Levame, 1st February 1956 in DDA, Apostolic Nuncio Correspondence AB8/b/XVII, XVII/650/1 and 2. Cooney cites a similar correspondence between from McQuaid in 1950 which presents us with a snapshot of the prolific church building programme: "'At the same time, I am faced with the building of 11 churches in the city and suburbs not to mention a cathedral which is waiting some 21 years for someone to start'" (Letter from Archbishop McQuaid to Grand Archbishop Lucas, Delegate Apostolic for South Africa, January 8th, 1950, Dublin Diocese Archives, AB8/B/XV/d), John *Cooney, John Charles McQuaid. Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999), p.235 and footnote 3, but neither this researcher or the archivist of DDA were able to locate any of Cooney's references, summer 2010

[85] Tony Fahey cites A. D. Tussing, *Irish Educational Expenditures: Past, Present and Future* (Dublin: ESRI, 1978) for this point, see Fahey "The Catholic Church and Social Policy" in Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds, *Social Policy in Ireland. Principles, Practice and Problems* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1998), p.414

Regarding the specific question of the suburban direction of Dublin's development during the 1950s, it appears from the contemporary discourse and correspondence that in the main but not exclusively, the Church was *reacting* to Corporation plans. Burke Savage made no secret of the close relationship between the Corporation and the Archbishop in his statement that, "Thanks to the generous co-operation of the planning and housing authorities of the Dublin Corporation sites were early ear-marked for churches and schools in the newly developing areas in the south-west, the west, and the north-west..."[86] The McQuaid papers reveal that the Archbishop had detailed Corporation documents sent to him by the City Manager on a regular basis, such as a large folder on public lighting from 1941, the City Manager's remarks and reactions to the *Report of Inquiry into the Housing of the Working Classes of the City of Dublin 1939 – 1943*, a report on vandalism of tenement properties from 1943, the extensive housing report from 1947, a report detailing the decision by the ESB to buy a site in Dublin's dockland area (Pigeon House) "for the purpose of erecting a new Power Station" in 1949, and a file on the proposed lighting of key Dublin churches for An Tostal from 1953.[87]

The Archbishop was also lobbied by Catholic vigilante groups around the subject of the Dublin slums, almost as if he could represent them on behalf of the Corporation: for example, the Joint Tenants' Emergency Committee wrote in 1941; the House and Room Dwellers' Protection Society wrote from 1947-49; and Homes for Irishmen League wrote in 1948, mostly condemning the treatment of families with young children by slum landlords stating that "Many of our members expressed their concern at the continued silence of the Church towards the vital problem of housing, with its attendant social evils and the cynical outlook of flat owners toward the young man and those commencing family life."[88] The Archbishop remained resolutely silent, marking the correspondence with "no answer". But he was quick to involve himself in the Corporation Public Health Committee's 1954 debate on whether to introduce "home-helps" to houses where mothers were sick. McQuaid decreed: "I note the suggestion by the Public Health Committee of the employment of trained Home Helps. Before the Corporation of Dublin undertakes to follow still another British form of Social Services, I would urge that the members of the Corporation most earnestly consider the dangers to family life inherent in such a proposal. I have every confidence that the great majority of the Corporation will at once understand the seriousness of my recommendation."[89]

Evidently, the Archbishop was aware of the plans of the Corporation's various committees; in fact, he was astonishingly well informed of official developments. But aside from human rights (slum and public health) issues, the direct relevance of much of the Corporation material for the

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[86] Roland Burke Savage, "The Church in Dublin: 1940 - 1965", in *Studies* (No. 216, Winter 1965), p. 306
[87] All of these documents and files are to be found in DDA, McQuaid Papers, Dublin Corporation/Government Box, AB8/B (also numbered on its lid, 555)
[88] See "Housing" in DDA, McQuaid Papers, Dublin Corporation/Government Box, AB8/B
[89] Letter from Archbishop to Public Health Committee, 24th June 1954, DDA, McQuaid Papers, Dublin Corporation/Government Box, AB8/B (also numbered on its lid, 555)

Archbishop was not clear. The key relationship was between himself and the Planning Officer, Michael O'Brien, a relationship mentioned in relation to Patrick Quinn's statue and eluded to by Burke Savage's so-called "early ear marking" of sites. This relationship was guided by O'Brien's weekly meetings with McQuaid, thus assuring the Archbishop an uncannily central position in the mapping out of Dublin's growing built environment.[90] Generally, as the case-study of Crumlin South (1947-48, chapter three) attested, the weekly conferences entailed O'Brien updating McQuaid on the latest land acquisition for housing development by the Corporation, so that McQuaid could plot out the provision and position of the two structures of ecclesiastic authority – the church building and nearby school complex. According to Corporation reports and McQuaid's correspondence, this pattern was repeated over and over, especially from the late 1940s through to the early 1960s.[91]

With the Crumlin South extension from 1947, we witness the incessant deferral of development over a two-year period due primarily to the Church's dissatisfaction around a suitable church site. As we know, the Housing Architect Herbert Simms was at the helm of this scheme and shockingly, he committed suicide in the middle of the process. Again and again his proposals were undermined, beginning in October 1947 with the City Manager writing to him: "Kindly let me have a plan showing location of the church site... so that same may be submitted for the formal approval of His Grace, The Archbishop of Dublin."[92] Thereafter, a public inquiry was launched with the Department of Local Government becoming involved: Simms was trying to reconcile the positions of the church, the schools as well as the cinema and shopping terrace ensemble, in relation to new and existing housing and infrastructure (namely the area around St. Agnes' Church, Crumlin), and O'Brien appeared to repeatedly thwart Simms' efforts.[93] Simms

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[90] Anecdotal evidence of O'Brien's weekly meeting with McQuaid from Michael Corcoran, working in Corporation planning department and from planner Fergal McCabe, August 2010

[91] For example, letter from Michael O'Brien to Archbishop, 12th November 1951, informing the Archbishop that the Corporation are to buy Bushy Park Estate (South Dublin) and will be the fee simple owners, then "the terms of the lease could be reviewed by the Corporation." O'Brien continued, "It occurred to me that the Ecclesiastical Authorities might be interested in the acquisition of these lands, which amount to approximately 7 ¾ acres. They have a frontage to Templeogue road". He finished by explaining that there will be a future ring road and that he will assist in any way with the acquisition. See DDA, McQuaid Papers, Dublin Corporation/Government Box, AB8/B (also numbered on its lid, 555). Another example, illustrated by figure 4.14 is the plan for a church at Finglas (North Dublin) instigated by O'Brien from 23rd March 1953 and writing to Dr. M. O'Connell, a secretary to the Archbishop: "Some time ago His Grace mentioned to me that he would like to have a church site provided in this area, which would serve the Ballygall Road area and possibly a portion of the Wadelai Estate which has recently been developed. Plans were recently received for the development of an estate known as Johnstown House on the Ballygall Road and, in recommending approval, I reserved a site for the attached plan. This site is the property of Mr. Johnston... and I believe that they would be inclined to dispose of the site to the Ecclesiastical Authorities if they wished to erect a new church on the site. I have also shown coloured blued another parcel of land, which fronts on to the main road leading to the Finglas East Housing scheme, which is the property of the Corp. I am sure the Housing Director would be favourably disposed to reserve this latter site for use in connection with the proposed new church if it is also needed." See DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)

[92] Correspondence from City Manager to Herbert Simms, 25th October 1947, Crumlin South Correspondence, Dublin Housing Development Files, Captain's Lane extension 34, B1/03/105, "File #5. Revised Lay-out Plans", Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library

[93] Simms then revised his layout, reporting to Patrick O'Byrne, Chief Housing Officer on 20th Feb 1948: "Consequent upon an interview I had recently with Canon Hickie PP, St Agnes, Crumlin, this proposed Church site has been removed to the extreme South-East corner of the area, so as to be more or less equidistant between St Agnes' Church and St Joseph's Church, Terenure. The new 2 ¼ acre site is shown on the corner formed by the junction of Kimmage Rd Lower with the re-

complained that inter-department revisions of his plans were futile and having previously met with the parish priest of St. Agnes' (Canon Hickie), Simms called for a meeting with Canon McArdle, then the Archbishop's advisor who as Simms said was "one of the Archbishop's "Commission of Three" dealing with new Church and School sites and the re-arranging of Parish boundaries".[94] This meeting seems to have collided with Simms' death and the whole matter was sorted by August 1948 with the Archbishop belatedly addressing the issue, and O'Brien proudly reporting that "I had the opportunity, recently, of discussing this matter with His Grace, the Archbishop, Most Rev. Dr. McQuaid, who suggested that it would be preferable to have a site for the Church and School buildings at Kimmage Road West, near Kimmage Crossroads." [95] Local Government then approved but as the land chosen by the Church was private (i.e. non Corporation) O'Brien further intervened revealing the extent of the chicken-and-egg relationship between the Church and the officials:

> To my mind, an error was made some 15 years ago in the choice of a site for the present church of St. Agnes at Crumlin Village. You may recall that the Church Authorities declined to accept the site originally selected for Church and schools in the Crumlin South area on the plea that the Corporation were seeking an excessive price. In the light of this experience it was subsequently agreed, with the Minister's approval, that in future the Corporation would only charge the Church Authorities the actual cost of the land being acquired for churches and schools and not its value as a developed building site. Since this rule was established there has been little difficulty with the Church Authorities as regards sites.[96]

Just as Blanchard suggested, the Church was indeed privy to special treatment in terms of developing land – how better to facilitate the growth of its social and spiritual infrastructure than to allow it to purchase land at "cost price"?

Possibly the most interesting example of Catholic expansionism underpinning this period of Dublin's social history was the speedy development of the suburbs at the North East - Raheny, Donnycarney, Coolock, Killester, Artane – and the deftness with which the Archbishop's advisor and parish priest of Raheny, Fr. Fitzpatrick managed the project throughout the 1950s, culminating in the erection of the bizarre proto or transitionally modernist church at Raheny (by

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constructed Captain's Lane...The Archbishop's approval will, of course, be required to this change." He also laid out two sites of total 7 ¼ acres for boys and girls primary schools, adjoining the church site, fronting the reconstructed Captain's Lane which he felt answered the Department of Local Government and the Church's complaint. O'Brien then found further fault with Simms' plans, see correspondence from Michael O'Brien to Patrick O'Byrne, Chief Housing Officer, 19th March 1948 and 14th May 1948, in Crumlin South Correspondence, Dublin Housing Development Files, Captain's Lane extension 34, B1/03/105, "File #5. Revised Lay-out Plans", Dublin City Archives, Gilbert Library)

[94] Correspondence from Simms to Patrick O'Byrne, 12th May 1948, in ibid.

[95] Correspondence from O'Brien to O'Byrne, 20th August 1948, in ibid.

[96] Correspondence from O'Brien to Department of Local Government via Patrick O'Byrne, 23rd March 1949, in ibid.

Louis Peppard/Hugo Duffy) (figures 4.42 – 4.44). Fitzpatrick's four hand-drawn maps of 1949, 1954, 1959 and post 1960 show a priest arranging parish boundaries with the liberty and power of a colonising emperor (figures 4.15-4.18). While the intentions were worthy in that for themselves both Fitzpatrick and McQuaid were great educators and were stimulated by the provision of social and educational services within these blank canvas contexts, the process is striking. Here we have an almost implausible mix of straightforward naiveté (naive drawing) with rational and modernising geographical/cultural engineering. It seems extraordinary that such subjective methods ultimately shaped Dublin's periphery during the mid-twentieth century. It should be noted that, as the drawings express, Fitzpatrick's exercise was not about building more and more churches – there remained four parish churches between 1954 and post-1960. Again, it was the process or exchange between Corporation and officials which intrigues - it began with the forwarding of the 1950s Corporation planning report to McQuaid from McArdle in 1950:

> I enclose very fine report by Mr O'Brien to Mr O'Byrne, on plans for the years to come. Your Grace will note paragraph (g) referring to development on the North side, depending on the new Howth drainage scheme. They expect now that building will begin there about 1952 or 1953. This whole area is very large. It is to be laid out for private building and large areas of Corporation houses... I have discussed this matter with the City Engineer and he is of the opinion that it will be possible to get between the two sites, drainage facilities for approximately 4,000 dwellings.[97]

Quite simply we are struck by the directness and immediacy of the communications, considering always the immense implications. By January 1953, Fr. Fitzpatrick had been activated into responding to the Corporation plans by notionally subdividing the lands in question:

> I am attempting to comply with your Grace's request of November 11th [1952?] that I should indicate what I considered would be the ultimate position with regard to the three areas of my parish. I have the difficult task, and in submitting the enclosed forecast I am conscious that it is based on a Corporation housing programme which may be fulfilled, modified or abandoned. The Housing Department has kindly given me their latest lay-outs and indicated their long term proposals for further developments in these areas.[98]

Fitzpatrick reported that the neighbourhood of Killester could be an autonomous parish already and that he had "drawn in green ink a line to indicate tentatively the area it might claim. As your

[97] Corporation report outlining 1950s development plans, forwarded to Archbishop from Canon McArdle on 21st November 1950, DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)
[98] Report from Fr. Fitzpatrick to the Archbishop, 12th January 1953, in ibid.

grace will see this area might include some of the St. Anne's housing estate."[99] Fitzpatrick's account then illuminated the extent of the expansion project, the mundane realities of parish formation and the difficulties posed by the 1950s Irish economy (see chapter one):

> Raheny presents great difficulties. Raheny has no money, and even with the new parishioners in St Anne's they will not provide sufficient resources to pay even the interest on the cost of a Church – until the area north of the railway has a population. I was fortunate in getting money from outside sources to pay the debt existing when I came here and to purchase the school and church sites. These sources have now dried up. Yet the population in 1955 will already be too big for the tiny St Assam's Church and it would be a pity to put a temporary church on the fine site chosen by Fr. Gregory Byrne as far back as 1942. With the development of the Edenmore-Kilbarrack area another church and more schools will be needed in the Howth Junction district. Between it and the sea, private building has already laid the foundation of such a need. But this is in another parish.[100]

These documents provide remarkable firsthand accounts of Dublin's suburbs as a mass of inchoate territories to be manipulated. The means were modest but the ambition was not curbed. Schools had to be built and though the Archbishop was guided more by quantity than quality, he did specify the form of the structures. For instance, in relation to the design of primary schools in the area of Finglas West (North Dublin) in 1951, he made notes decreeing that it has been "agreed for Boys' and Girl's on 2 storey schools. Department does not want single storey schools."[101] In the same context it is interesting to note the presence of the British post-war design manual on schools, *Standard Construction for Schools* (Post-war Building Studies, No.2, London 1944) in McQuaid's files on primary school buildings.[102] Churches had to be built and in this, McQuaid seemed to take the example of his predecessors, namely Archbishops Cullen (1852-1877), Walsh (1885-1921) and Byrne (1920-40): build them high and build them big! As the patron of the Church of St. Columba, Iona Road (Glasnevin, North Dublin) Fr. John Byrne said in response to the largeness of his church (considering the Protestant nature of the neighbourhood) in 1905, "The day will come when it will not be large enough."[103] This early twentieth-century Hiberno-Romanesque church (by Ashlin and Coleman, 1906), accommodating 1,250 people and situated on high ground provided a pattern which McQuaid sought to emulate. Almost with Counter-

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] File on "School design, Finglas West, August 1951", notes by Archbishop McQuaid, DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)
[102] Board of Education, *Standard Construction for Schools* (Post-war Building Studies, No.2) – London 1944, Ministry of Works, His Majesty's Stationery Office in file #3," Building analyses reports, 1944 – 1967", DDA, McQuaid papers, AB8/B/XX1V/ BOX 1 (1-6) primary education, school building
[103] M. J. Egan, *The Parish of St. Columba, Iona Road* (Dublin: 1961), cited by Ruth McManus, *Dublin 1910 – 1940, Shaping the City and Suburbs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000), p.353

Reformation fervour, the ever-increasing flock had to be accommodated and aside from basic accommodation needs, the symbolic capabilities of architectural expression were not lost on the Archbishop. The notion that architecture can foster faith is age-old and so, the recipe was straight-forward: the ingredients were to be a mixture of historical forms and the method was to be quantity-over-quality.

Two suburban Dublin churches built within months of each other (and the launch of the Clonskeagh church competition) in 1953 were typical of McQuaid's endeavour. Merrion Road Church, Our Lady Queen of Peace (by Simon Leonard for W. H. Byrne) was bombastic in scale and massing as it hulked like a monolith of grey granite, surmounted by copper roof, set back from a busy road and prefaced by a car-parking forecourt area (figure 4.19). Its west front was Leonard's evocation of Hiberno-Romanesque - a single gabled and predominately blank stone façade, punctured by mostly round-headed openings. The central bay housed the main entrance which was marked by a chevron-clad portal of sorts, over which sat an undersized rose window and all of the external detailing was picked out in local limestone. Announcing the church at its south-east end was an almost freestanding four-storey round tower, complete with statue niche, copper dome and bell. We are under no allusions as to the historical reference to an indigenous early medieval culture, superimposing itself on a burgeoning suburb of the capital. Inside the church was blandly basilican in layout and lit by a series of round-headed lancet windows over which runs a continuous barrel vault springing from the ribs of suggested side aisles (i.e. it is Romanesque in section but without the fundamental nave arcade, figure 4.20). Plaster-cast *putti* connect us to Baroque Rome while built-in confessionals alternating with niches housing repository statuary remind us of the Church's mid-twentieth-century origins. The only respite from this hotchpotch of forms lay in the stained glass, most notably in the rose window's depiction of Our Lady Queen of Peace by the Earley Brothers from 1952.[104]

Alongside the Merrion Road example, similar churches in terms of scale and revivalist inclination were being constructed in the growing suburbs of Ballyfermot and Mount Merrion. The foundation stone of the former, which was to accommodate a congregation of 2,000 people, was also laid in April 1952 while the example at Mount Merrion, a Church for 1,600 people, was blessed by the Archbishop in June of the following year.[105] The Church of St Therese in Mount Merrion was opened in February 1956 and designed by Robinson. Again, the building was

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[104] "The rose window with its exquisite colouring was designed in 1952 for the new church by Leo Earley and painted by John Earley", Colin Conroy, *Historic Merrion* (Dublin: Maidenswell Research, 1997), p. 19

[105] Details on the new church at Ballyfermot, blessed and laying of foundation stone on 4th April 1952 from, *Irish Catholic Directory*, 1953, p. 639; details on the new church at Mount Merrion, blessed and laying of foundation stone on 28th June 1953 from *Irish Catholic Directory*, 1954, p. 721. The blessing of this latter church, the Church of St Therese in Mount Merrion, was recorded in *The Standard*, Saturday 28th June 1953 as follows: "The church site presented a festive appearance, with streamers entwined on the scaffolding and on the new German electric crane which arrived during the week. Here, amid a very large attendance of parishioners and public representatives, his Grace was received by Very Rev. Joseph Deery, PP, MA...Having blessed the Foundation stone, which was inscribed in Latin, His Grace was presented with a silver trowel by the architect, Mr J. Robinson, and a silver mallet by building contractor John Du Moulin. His Grace then blessed the site as he walked round with the assisting clergy on specially laid platforms."

constructed of concrete and faced with Dublin granite and limestone and again, it was a monumental structure enclosing a rather massive and draughty hall-like nave space, sporting built-in confessionals and lit by a series of six narrow double-height windows running along its length (figure 4.21). An elliptical vault here replaced the barrel version at Merrion Road and the west front of Robinson's building was expressed by means of a weak *Gesú* derivative of pared-down giant pilasters supporting a pediment. This façade composition was enlivened with a rose window floating in the wall above a weak factory-made portico which housed three round-headed doorways framed by a sequence of pairs of and single Composite columns. The church's east end was emphasised by transept arms, internally marked by a shallow dome over the crossing, and again, this church sought to announce itself by means of a bell tower situated at its south-east crossing. In this instance, the tower was square and topped by a Wren-like cupola.

These 1950s Dublin churches, rising like ashes of the phoenix from mostly greenfield sites amidst two-storey housing, were to be above-all large and numerous. Their scale and grey colour - the predominant external material being granite-facing - combined to at best *impress*, and at worst *intimidate* the church-goer. Their similarities in terms of massing and nostalgic tone meant that they quickly became McQuaid's architectural uniform. And the only reprieve from the churches' formulaic nature, were the brief but bright glimpses of indigenous art and craft in the form of mosaic, stained glass, furniture and occasional painting which adorned the interiors. As Burke Savage conceded in his 1965 homage, "not all of the churches built have been distinguished in their architecture... it is enough to record here that as a practical administrator and as an understanding father, Dr. McQuaid's decisions in many instances were influenced by his desire to provide adequate churches without unnecessarily putting too grave a financial burden on his people."[106] And yet from McQuaid's private correspondence and as we will explore shortly, we know that the Archbishop was concerned with the formal aspects of his new churches. Regarding the plans for Mount Merrion, he wrote to the parish priest Fr. Ryan in 1951:

> I am not at all clear that your architect is giving you what I want: a permanent church. Even the shell of a permanent church will satisfy me. Will you not agree that it would be hard to have a more pedestrian façade? And the tower! Or rather the aborted tower. Surely for the price, a more distinguished face looking on the main Bray-Dublin road is possible of construction.[107]

[106] Roland Burke-Savage, "The Church in Dublin, 1940 - 1965" in *Studies* (LIV/216, Winter 1965), p.306
[107] Correspondence from the Archbishop to Fr. Ryan (Mount Merrion), 18th September 1951 in DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 - 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)

When describing these new Dublin churches of the 1950s, Sean Rothery refers to them sweepingly as being "...monstrous sheds with only superficial historical references."[108] Richard Hurley concurs with this opinion, albeit more subtly, when he comments, "It was indeed evident that the meaning of church architecture had become lost with deceitful and artificial effects achieved by means of extrinsic elements all of which were conveyed with a lack of authenticity."[109] The fact that the architects engaged in designing and overseeing the construction of these Dublin churches were happy to employ contemporary materials, yet dressed the structures in revivalist clothing was the main target of criticism. By the mid-1950s, as modernism was gaining ground in all other sectors of Irish architecture, the younger architects were increasingly focusing on the question of contemporary church design. In terms of the Clonskeagh church competition of 1954 then, it had become a crusade in the name of appropriate "authentic" design for contemporary Irish church building...

## ***Clonskeagh Church competition:***

*Competition events and analysis of winning designs*

> *To build any one of these designs would have been not a mere experiment but a constructive act of faith. To have passed all of them over is one of the minor tragedies of our time.*[110] ***– Green Book, 1955***

In September 1953, the parish priest of Donnybrook in Dublin, Fr. Timothy Condon, wrote to the RIAI stating that a new church in Clonskeagh, within the Donnybrook parish, was to be built. Therein he outlined his intentions to launch a design competition for this proposed church:

> In regard to the Design of this project I am concerned in securing the best architectural concept having regard to the worthiness of the subject, accommodational [sic] requirements and intended financial outlay. In this respect, and subject to the approval of His Grace the Archbishop, I am considering the idea of promoting a competition open to all Architects and carrying monetary prizes for suitable designs adjudicated first, second and third.[111]

This initial enquiry was met with apparent eagerness within the Institute and the correspondence between the then President, Eoghan Buckley and Fr. Condon continued over the following months

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[108] Sean Rothery, "Book Review of Richard Hurley, Wilfred Cantwell, Fr Austin Flannery, *Contemporary Irish Church Architecture*", in *Sunday Tribune*, March 1986
[109] Richard Hurley, *Irish Church Architecture in the Era of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001), p. 26
[110] Editorial, *Green Book* (Dublin: Architectural Association of Ireland Year Book, 1955), p.47
[111] Letter from Fr Condon PP to the President of the R.I.A.I., 24th September 1953, I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

until the idea became a reality. By 12th March 1954, the Institute was advertising the competition in a number of national newspapers and in certain weekly architectural journals in Ireland and England.[112] As there had been no such architectural competition in Ireland since the Ennistymon Church competition of 1948 the response from the architectural community was naturally enthusiastic; one hundred and thirty two individual architects and firms requested the competition regulations and conditions and significantly, the competition aroused the interest of younger and more established practices alike with such older firms as R. M. Butler and Jones & Kelly applying for the conditions alongside newly qualified architects such as Ronald Tallon and Sean Rothery.[113] As such it ignited national interest and, according to contemporary reports, it was the most popular and heavily subscribed-to architectural competition in the history of R.I.A.I.[114] By the mid-June deadline, the Institute had received 101 design submissions.[115]

The design submissions took the form of plan/elevation/section graphic representations only. While written reports further outlining the details of each design were permitted, no models or perspective drawings were allowed. The assessors were chosen by both the promoter and the R.I.A.I (as host of the competition) and included three architects and one member of the clergy – Gerald McNicholl (architect), Niall Montgomery (architect), Frank Gibney (architect) and the Archbishop's "architectural advisor", Fr. Fitzpatrick. At this stage the competition appeared to facilitate a happy alliance between the Church and the architectural community, as represented by the Institute. Certainly the adjudication of the designs took place in the headquarters of the archdiocese on Clonliffe Road while the assessors' final report was quick to acknowledge both this provision of space by the Church and the input of the non-architect assessor.[116]

There were generous prize monies for the winning designs and the assessors were suitably impressed so that four designs were premiated while a further six were commended (figure

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[112] The Competition advertisement read as follows: "The very Reverend Timothy B Condon, PP Donnybrook, invites architects resident in Ireland to submit designs in competition for the new Church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal at Clonskeagh, Co Dublin. Conditions may be obtained from Miss B Doyle, c/o The Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, 8 Merrion Square, Dublin. Deposit £2. Date for questions, April 14; date for final submission of designs, July 14th, 1954." *Irish Builder and Engineer* (27th March 1954), p.320. The competition ad. was also placed in *The Architects' Journal*, and the *Irish Times, Irish Press, Irish Independent, The Cork Examiner, The Northern Whig* and *Belfast Post*. See advertisement receipts and requests dating from 11th March 1954 from the R.I.A.I. archival material, ibid.

[113] See the list compiled by the administrative secretary to the R.I.A.I., Miss B. Doyle, entitled, "Applications for Conditions of Competitions for Church at Clonskeagh." I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

[114] Ailtire's comments in "As I See It..." are as follows: "...maestros of departments and office bigwigs could be seen competing with the most callow student to work out a scheme which would be answerable in spirit and function to the special nature of the subject." See *Irish Architect and Contractor* (Volume 5, No. 3, September, 1954), p. 18

[115] The assessors' report outlines the adjudication of 102 submissions and all contemporary published matter concerning the competition such as that in *Irish Builder and Engineer*, *The Furrow*, *Green Book* 1955 and *RIAI Yearbook* 1955 discuss 102 submissions. However, in the archival material from the RIAI there appears to be 101 submissions. See "List of Declared Submissions" and "Full List of Competitors" in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

[116] "We express our great appreciation of the assistance given by Very Reverend Doctor Fitzpatrick and of his special understanding of the problems involved in the assessment. We acknowledge our gratitude to His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin for putting the Assembly Hall of Holy Cross College, Clonliffe at our disposal for the examination of the drawings." See "Assessors' Award and Report on Designs Submitted in Competition. 5th August, 1954" in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

.22).[117] All of the premiated designs were modernist in terms of their main elevations, their ıaterials and construction methods and offered a very tangible reflection of the contemporary ıterest, as propounded by architectural discourse, in developing church design along the lines of lodernist technologies. Importantly, all of the designs that were mentioned by the assessors in ıeir report responded to the brief as it was laid out by the promoter; each one could ccommodate 1,700 people as well as the necessary shrines, confessionals, vestry spaces, ıortuary and of course, each one was compliant with the proposed financial limit of £150,000.[118] owever, between the announcement of the competition results and the exhibition of the rawings some six weeks later – from the 28th September until the 9th October 1954 an exhibition f all submitted designs was held in the Great Hall in University College, Earlsfort Terrace - the romoter overlooked the prize-winning designs, deciding instead that the final building would be a on-commended design by the firm of Jones & Kelly (figure 4.23). What was chosen for ɔnstruction by the archdiocese was in fact Jones & Kelly's mid-twentieth-century salute to a yzantine form and aesthetic, and thereby belonged to the category of traditionally-biased evivalist architecture (figures 4.24). As stated, the premiated designs in the competition were, on ıe other hand, decidedly modern in concept and signalled a commitment on the part of both the ɔmpetitors and the assessors to contemporary design at the service of all building types, not ast religious (figures 4.25 -4.28). Therefore the aesthetic gulf dividing the final chosen design ıd the prize-winning designs could not have been wider; a fact which undoubtedly exacerbated ıe effects of the apparent negation of the competition by the promoter. This served to reinforce a ıodern v traditional dichotomy still quietly underpinning Irish architecture at the time and which ɔtably had long since played itself out in America and in the rest of Western Europe.

It is clear from the "Answers to Questions" document issued to all the competitors by May 954 that to a certain degree some of the competing architects, through their questions, were -e-empting the decision taken by the promoter which in turn made the resultant controversy most inevitable. Questions eight and nine explicitly illustrated this point:

8. Should the design be in keeping with tradition?
- So far as style is concerned, left to competitors, but liturgical requirements must be observed.
9. Will the Assessor be influenced in their decision if the design we present is in no way traditional or would it be prejudicial for us to work on a design that is contemporary?

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The details of prize monies are outlined in "Conditions for the Competition of the Design of New Church of the ımaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal at Clonskeagh, Co Dublin". The results of the competition are outlined in ssessors' Award and Report on Designs Submitted in Competition. 5th August, 1954": "It is regretted that a unanimous cision was impossible and that the award was made on a majority vote as follows: first = number 23, second = no 5, ird = no 34, fourth = no 39. The Assessors commend the designs numbered 22, 48, 58, 63, 64 and 90." See I.A.A., I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

"Conditions for the Competition of the Design of New Church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal at ɔnskeagh, Co Dublin", ibid.

- See Question 8.[119]

A more specific question relating to construction methods and materials posited whether there would be any objection to either parabolic arches or shell concrete being incorporated in the church design;[120] the competitors were directed back to Clause 23 of the competition conditions which stated that, "Materials, style and treatment are left to the discretion of competitors, but it suggested that the finish should be of stone or brick."[121] Probably the most telling question in terms of the competitors' local expectations and concerns, and indeed their international influences, was number twelve:

Any comments on: i) Church in Brasil (sic) by Oscar Niemayer (sic)
ii) Church for General Motors by Mies van der Rohe
iii) New Church at Merrion?

- No comments.[122]

The new church at Merrion Road had much in common with the proposed Clonskeagh commissi in terms of size (1,800 people), cost and patron. In disposition it stood in stark contrast to the two other churches mentioned in the "Questions and Answers" document, both of which must have represented, in general terms, all that was innovative and internationalist in contemporary architecture from abroad. It was to this revivalist tendency of the local example that the majorit of competing architects in 1954 were reacting in both their design visions for the Clonskeagh Church and then in their subsequent responses to the competition outcome.
Looking at the four premiated designs, there is commonality in relation to structure such as the use of reinforced concrete. In all cases, and unsurprisingly, reinforced concrete has replaced loa bearing walls of masonry but notably, the designs then advocate an honest expression of such contemporary technology by spanning the internal spaces wall to wall. In this, they were acknowledging the structural ability of those walls, made up of industrial units and pre-cast elements. All four designs were of relatively low-rising and long buildings and in the examples o the first three premiated projects they sought to differentiate themselves from neighbouring buildings primarily by means of a modernist bell-tower or fleche. In this respect, there appeare to be consideration given to the site and to the new suburban context of the commission. The fourth premiated design (figures 4.28) by Messrs. O'Brien, Morris and McCullough, began its accompanying report with, "The aim in this design has been to design a church whose intimate

[119] See "Competition – Answers to Questionsi", ibid.
[120] Question 10, ibid.
[121] See "Conditions for the Competition of the Design of New Church of the Immaculate Virgin Mary of the Miraculous Medal at Clonskeagh, Co Dublin", ibid.
[122] Question 12, See "Competition – Answers to Questions", ibid.

ale is in keeping with the strictly suburban surrounding development, where few buildings ceed two storeys in height."[123] The architect of the third prize-winning design (figures 4.27) ed Rogerson, similarly cited the context in terms of his design's overall low-rising disposition:

> In the opinion of the author of this scheme the main problem set by the programme for the Church design and the nature of this particular site was to evolve a dominant structural form, religious in association, repeating internally and externally in a constant rhythm, reaching a climax only at the High Altar. The site being small and the view of the church being restricted to the west by suburban housing and to the east by a row of fully-grown trees.[124]

e south elevations, as they related to their respective ground plans, were the primary means of alysing the four premiated designs. In the instances of the first, third and fourth prize-winning nemes, this main elevation was not treated as a flat surface as in the majority of churches being ilt contemporaneously; rather they were dynamic surfaces - curved, serrated or angled around trances - which would have generated a great sense of plasticity to the exterior of the buildings gures 4.25, 4.27, 4.28). This sculpting of the external wall presents something new and quite pressionist to the field of Irish church architecture. In fact, we are reminded of the exceptional ample of Christ the King Church in Turner's Cross (figures 4.3-4.7). Another shared element of e main front of these three premiated designs and their predecessor in Cork was the dominance an abstracted figurative sculpture. Combined then with the movement of the wall surface, the uth elevations of these designs suggest a sculptural architecture which was enlivened by the stracted forms of statuary, pared-down columns and/or strips of vertical glazing. Francis Barry's cond prize-winning scheme was differentiated from its more expressionist peers in that its main ade was minimalist in detail and rectilinear in disposition (figure 4.26). However, a sense of ulpted space was certainly at play with the expressionist geometries of the hexagonal nave and tagonal baptistery.

In relation to the designs' proposed technologies and materials, there was of course riety. The adoption of low-pressure hot water heating in the floor was a constant; as was an herence to reinforced concrete as the structural material for foundations and walls, and steel meworks for roofing. Flooring proposals varied from oiled hardwood to mosaic to marble, and aterials for walls ranged from different types of brick to mosaic lining. Francis Barry's design econd prize) was to include an apse of amber glass mosaic and a carved sculpture of Our Lady cherry-wood; O'Brien et al. proposed a baldaccino of tubular metal covered in mosaic; gerson incorporated vertical bands of stained-glass; and a signatory element of Thomas J.

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Report of Design numbered 39, by Messrs. G. P. O'Brien, B. Morris, T. P. McCullough in ibid.
Report of Design numbered 34, by Frederick Rogerson, in ibid.

Ryan's first prize design was the proposed fleche made up of gilded anodized aluminium alloy tubular sections.[125] In short, the designs recommended an integration of traditional attributes of church adornment such as statuary, mosaic and stained glass with contemporary advancements in architectural technology. An important feature of Modernist architecture in general terms is a asymmetrical approach to enclosing space; while there was no evidence of asymmetrical planni in the premiated designs, they all dealt with the accommodation needs and required large scale the commission through low-rising structures. The naves then would have enclosed *horizontal* space in all cases and this represents a significant move towards modernist spatial practises.

Importantly, there was a duality at play in the premiated and commended designs which was reinforced by the judges' commentary; the language of the assessors' report variously communicated a tension and a duality, as opposed to a dichotomy, which defined the "transitional" nature of this architecture. Discussing the first premium by Thomas Ryan of the Office of Public Works, they stated:

> The plan follows traditional lines and is particularly good in the arrangement of the altars...The general form of the fleche is interesting and it might be beautiful but we suggest that the structure and finish are of an experimental nature and may not perhaps have the enduring character appropriate to a church.[126]

In similar terms, the judgement of Barry's scheme was outlined as follows:

> In this fine drawing, the architect develops his original conception – octagonal church, baptistery echoing its form, triangular campanile – simply and elegantly...This could be a famous Irish church in the classical tradition.[127]

When summing up the third and fourth premiated designs, the assessors concentrated less on issues to do with "tradition" and/or "experiment" and more so on appropriateness in terms of building function. For example, in relation to Rogerson's third-placed design they commented, "This design has a fascinating roof structure beautifully related to a simple and very practical plan... The side altars unless subdued would take from the High Altar."[128] And in respect of the fourth premium they stated, "In planning, construction, choice of materials and general massing

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[125] See reports of designs numbered 23, 5, 34, 39 in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54
[126] See "Assessors' Award and Report on Designs Submitted in Competition". 5th August, 1954, p.1, in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54
[127] ibid.
[128] ibid.

sign number 39 is a satisfying composition in producing an imaginative rendering of a simple chitectural theme with devotional qualities."[129]

All four designs chosen by the Assessors proposed longitudinal spaces which housed large interrupted naves with seating and main altars/ sanctuary areas positioned at the far end (at urgical east but actual north). Ryan's first prize-winning design did deviate slightly from the thodox rectangular plan of a hall or basilica-type church through the introduction of a subtle rve to the nave walls, thereby suggesting an oval (figure 4.25). His design further broke up the ll-effect through the perforation of the nave walls by recessing the confessionals, in the manner side-chapels, which externally created six separately-roofed sub spaces. Francis Barry, author the second premiated scheme, appeared to move most fully away from the traditional church an in his evocation of a hexagon for the main nave space (figure 4.26). But markedly, there ere no elliptical, triangular or fan-shaped plans in sight within the premiated projects. Nor was ere a major flat roof or cantilevered wavy canopy to be found. Yet, we know from both the sessors' report and from contemporary accounts of the subsequent exhibition of submitted signs held in the Great Hall of U.C.D., Earlsfort Terrace, that many 'adventurous' proposals, in odernist terms, were submitted to the competition.[130] And of course, we know from chapter one at the lauded bus station on Store Street had opened to the public in 1953, only months before e competition was launched, and was considered by the architectural profession to be Dublin chitecture's modernist *tour-de-force* (figures 1.45-1.52). Alongside such a home-grown novation, this generation had been increasingly exposed to developments abroad and ecifically to ecclesiastical architecture in Germany, Switzerland and France; through lectures ganised by the A.A.I. and exhibitions initiated by the R.I.A.I., as well as illustrated articles in the onthly and annual Irish and English architectural publications. Furthermore, the aforementioned estion twelve of the competition's "Questions to Answers" document presents us with another ngible illustration of the profession's general awareness of an architectural *avant-garde* abroad.

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ibid.

Here are some comments from contemporary press reviews, architectural journals and the Assessors' own report, all of ich highlight the *avant-garde* (but neither positive nor negative) nature of the majority of submissions to the nskeagh Church Competition: *The Furrow* comment - "What variety there is, what a ringing of the changes on the dead les and on Store Street! This exhibition is so provocative that it must raise questions even in the minds of men long ed by architectural sameness" Rynne, "Designs for a Church", p.716; *Irish Times* review of exhibition: "The ground n of one design has the shape of a Celtic cross, and the frontal elevation of another was dominated by three great abola shapes in reinforced concrete, which is the basic material used by most of the architects. Another common ture was a frontal elevation in the shape of a wide, low isosceles triangle. Most of the designers have made few cessions to popular prejudices against truly modern design for church architecture, and as a result these designs make ery stimulating exhibition", from "Church Designs on Exhibition" in *Irish Times*, 29th September 1954, p. 5; assessors' nments – "Many of the unpremiated schemes are imaginative, ingenious and have great architectural quality, but a ge number of competitors failed to reduce the design problem to its simplest terms and instead of solving it created nning and constructional difficulties. Many simple ground plans were developed in complicated and unworkable tions" from "Assessors' Award and Report on Designs Submitted in Competition. 5th August, 1954", I.A.A., R.I.A.I. ection, Box 93/136/54; AAI comment - "Many of the designs were highly inappropriate, but few were conventional or or downright bad; while at least half-a-dozen showed great ability and a high sense of responsibility for the solemn k on which they were engaged", *Green Book*, 1955, p.47

The commendation of designs numbered forty-eight and ninety, by Messrs. Robinson, Keefe, Devane and Messrs. Peppard and Duffy respectively, both of which were longitudinal hall-and-transept plans and traditional, albeit equivocally so, in disposition, suggested relative conservatism on the part of the assessors (figures 4.29 and 4.30).[131] One can assume then, that the premiated designs, and indeed the commended ones, represented a compromise and something of a midway point between the *reality* of the hulking hall-plan churches of McQuaid's building programme and the *aspirational* nature of the more experimental design submissions which sported parabolic arches and/or central plans.

The fact that the assessors appeared to err on the side of caution is revealing in terms of a new understanding of this period as being transitional in character. Rather than collectively reading the premiated designs as being just a prologue to post-conciliar developments in the 1960s- 1970s, I propose that they be read, again collectively, as an architectural transposition of what Brian Fallon terms as, "a collision between two generations".[132] The two generations being on the one hand those who were informed by developments in both non-religious architecture at home, such as Busáras, and ecclesiastical building abroad, such as new churches in Germany, and on the other hand, those who were rooted in a nineteenth-century understanding of architectural representation; again, in Fallon's words, "one of them ageing and reactionary, the other essentially modernising and libertarian."[133] But rather than reduce the situation to the terms of a simple polarisation, which had certainly been defining Irish architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, the premiated designs signal a *collision* of the so-called modern and the traditional. The two had existed on a parallel path in relation to church design until this mid-century event. What is so interesting about these premiated designs is that they communicate a logical and cautious evolution into the realm of modernism at the service of the new suburban Dublin Catholic church. In this way, I believe that the premiated designs have their own aesthetic identity, independent of future developments of Vatican II. This identity reflected a desire to move away from pastiche symbolism and historicism but at the same time, to maintain an inherent sense of Irish Catholicism through the continuity of enduring church forms such as the longitudinal plan.

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[131] The traditional bias of these designs is made literal by the architects' written statements of intent: Peppard and Duffy - "It is our opinion that in church architecture a more conservative approach to the problem of design should be adopted than in the case of secular design and the scheme shown is really a modern version of the traditional Early Christian plan. While it is only right that modern design should follow modern construction, we did not feel that this calls for an unreasonably radical attitude towards forms of plan that served very well in the past." Robinson, Keefe, Devane - "This design is an attempt to plan a modern church using, as far as possible, traditional lay-out and materials in a simple and direct manner. It relies on integrity of materials and construction used, and on a high standard of native craftsmanship an artistry." Report of Design numbered 90, by Messrs. Louis Peppard and Hugo Duffy and Design numbered 48, by Messrs. Robinson, Keefe, Devane in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

[132] Brian Fallon, "Reflecting on Ireland in the 1950s" in Dermot Keogh et al (ed.), *Ireland in the 1950s. The Lost Decade* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2004), p. 33

[133] ibid.

## Competition fall-out:

*Archbishop McQuaid's artistic licence and Irish architects' outcry*

> *If there are sore heads and broken hearts as a result of this famous competition, it is well. The hurt feelings will count little against the great grain of creating sound public architectural appreciation.*[134] – **Stephen Rynne, *The Furrow*, 1954**

The decision to overturn the Clonskeagh competition results seems to have been taken at the highest level.[135] John Cooney's biography of McQuaid tells us that by the end of the Emergency the Archbishop had "established a hand-picked diocesan committee to purge designs for ultra-modern church architecture and art."[136] According to Cooney, the Archbishop, writing to Rome in 1955, stated that, "No statue or picture is erected in any church or public Oratory, no plan of a church is accepted, without my personal censorship."[137] I have been unable to find evidence of Cooney's diocesan committee other than Simms' reference to the "commission of three" of which Canon McArdle was a member. But as outlined it is clear that the Archbishop corresponded closely with advisors on his many building projects throughout the diocese, making sure that he was kept abreast of technical minutiae and bigger design issues alike. The extent of the Archbishop's involvement, detached yet omnipresent, is startling. For example, in August 1945, as the nave and transepts of Fairview Church (1847-55, Byrne, North Dublin) were being re-floored, the architect Ralph Byrne sent the tenders from the contractors to McQuaid for his approval. At the same time, McQuaid personally approved small alterations to the Pro-Cathedral (1814-25, John Sweetman), writing "I have pleasure in approving of the suggestion made by Mr. Byrne that you accept the tenders of Messrs. Harrison of the erection of the shrine-altar and removal of Archbishop Troy Memorial and of Messrs. Murray and Clarke for tiling and painting."[138] In a letter of 1956, Fitzpatrick backs up the Archbishop's opinion of a design for a new church at Templeogue (new suburb in South Dublin), "Your Grace is quite right about the mortuary. There is too much seating and too narrow a passage for bringing in a coffin."[139]

This statement points jointly to the scope of McQuaid's participation in building projects and his reliance on his advisors' technical knowledge. In terms of the latter, it is surprising to

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[34] Stephen Rynne, "Designs for a Church" in "Chronicle" in *The Furrow* (November 1954, Vol. 5, No. 11), p. 716
[35] I have been unable to find explicit evidence in the Dublin Diocesan Archives of the Archbishop's involvement in the final decision of the competition other than official statement by Fr. Condon and then anecdotal evidence from both Sean Rothery and Richard Hurley as to the input that the Archbishop had in the Clonskeagh and other commissions. Rothery discussed the Archbishop sketching a cruciform plan himself. Hurley suggested that the Archbishop would probably not have committed his decision to paper but pointed out the example of McQuaid personally removing four pieces, one by Rouault, from the exhibition of sacred French art that was held in Maynooth College in 1957, interviews summer 2007.
[36] John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid. Ruler of Catholic Ireland* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999), p. 290
[37] This letter is cited in Cooney, ibid., (Letter from McQuaid to Levame, July 26, 1955, DDA, AB8/B/XVII/6), but again this researcher and the archivist of the DDA were unable to locate the letter in the McQuaid papers, summer 2010
[38] Correspondence from Archbishop to Fr. T. B. Condon, 21st June 1945, Pro-Cathedral, DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)
[39] Correspondence from Fitzpatrick to Archbishop, 14th Dec ember1956, Templeogue plans, ibid.

learn how cultivated the advisors' architectural sense was. McArdle, writing to McQuaid in 1951, assured the Archbishop that he had advised the architect J.J. Robinson that bigger churches were needed at Mount Merrion and Clogher Road, Crumlin: "I also told him [Robinson] that he might design these churches in re-inforced concrete, which would give greater permanency, and would give greater scope in design. In present circumstances the shell of a permanent church would be better than the designs presented."[140] In 1955, Fitzpatrick wrote to the Archbishop about examined plans for a new church by Ralph Byrne Architects (successor of William Henry Byrne), and again, the advisor's technical awareness is striking:

> The parabolic arch, and a design conditioned by it, was bound to appear sooner or later, but it was a surprise to see it come from the office of W. H. Byrne. It is however good to see some newness of life there. The terrific scenery apart, the external appearance of the church is pleasing and picturesque. It is modern in design, but traditional in feeling. My only criticism would be that maintenance of the relatively larger and steeply pitched roof could become troublesome and costly... There is just one point which an examination of Section A-A did not make clear to me. It is whether or not the initial curve of these parabolic ribs will impede freedom of movement along the side passages.[141]

In relation to a new church for the neighbourhood of Donnycarney, McQuaid assigned a Fr. James Robinson to liaise with the architect T. P. Kennedy in 1955 and to report back on bare facts of cost, size and materials.[142] It appears that Kennedy submitted several designs – according to his daughter, Kennedy's designs were repeatedly rejected[143] – and in 1957, the Archbishop sought an appraisal from a Fr. John Doyle. In Doyle's extensive report, which was mostly scathing, the priest/critic responded to two of Kennedy's designs, the "Gothic cloister" (which he rejected as "bitty" and "secular") and the "fan-shaped plan" (whose flat roof he dismissed as "giving too much of the idea of a commercial building"), summing up:

> I am impatient with architects and artists who try to modernise the classical modes in a cheap way, or who, without proper thought, attempt to materialise the spiritual in what grew out of ages of faith...The Church [Kennedy's designs] as a whole would seem out of

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[140] Correspondence from McArdle to Archbishop, 6th July 1951, Robinson's designs for Mt Merrion and Clogher Road, ibid.
[141] Correspondence from Fitzpatrick to Archbishop to do with a design by W. H. Byrne, 12th April 1955, ibid. I am unsure what church this refers to. Judging from the firm's religious work at this time, it may pertain to the church (attached to the school and convent) at St. Louis, Rathmines (1962)
[142] Report on Donnycarney church from Fr. James Robinson to Archbishop, 1st September 1955, with some points such as "The proposed church is to seat 1,700" and "it is suggested that the Church be built in a warm rustic brick, with some stone on the entrance porch." Ibid.
[143] Author's correspondence with T. P. Kennedy's daughter, architect Pamela Kennedy, September 2010: "I was a child when this project was being designed. Donnycarney Church took a long time to get on site Dad did a number of designs which John Charles [McQuaid] didn't agree with. There were balsa wood models and perspectives to explain design options to the Archbishop. These designs were smaller scale, some more modern and more appropriate to the site, but not what the Archbishop wanted"

> tune to the characteristic approach to God which one would expect from a simple unsophisticated work-a-day people in a built-up area. It would serve more as a curiosity than an aid to devotion... The elaborate searching for novelty in the units of design for the pavement of the side aisles is indicative of the modern thirst for vain diversion, and in the case would succeed very well as a frightful distraction from the main purpose and focus of attention in the Church. Their garish brilliance and disjointedness show a complete lack of unity, sobriety, and restraint. They are out of harmony with the main aisle patterns. The design of these latter would seem to be "modern Celtic", and whether this could be said to mix well with "modern Gothic" is very doubtful...Such so-called art is the monstrous abortion of thought that has lost its true fertility and growth, because it has forgotten how to relate all things to God who is One, who is Beauty and Harmony. [144]

This vehemently anti-modernist standpoint on the part of the patron has coloured our view of this period of church design; Cooney's reading of McQuaid and the results of the Clonskeagh competition do not repudiate such an inherited view. Writing to the Apostolic Nuncio Gerald O'Hara in 1952, in response to a Holy See directive on sacred art to which we will return, McQuaid announced:

> It is apposite, for, for some years, I have refused completely to sanction the erection of a monument to Christ the King by the Sculptor – an excellent sculptor – O'Connor, on the grounds that it is contrary to the traditional concept and treatment of Christ in Christian Art. In civil law, of course, I have no standing, but the public authority so far has respected my wishes, with great inconvenience to itself. I will gladly see to it that the prescriptions of the Holy See are carried out. Hitherto, we have avoided the unusual and the ultra-modern in both art and architecture – not, however, without struggle in this Diocese.[145]

This is the closest that we get to a 1950s anti-modernism decree from McQuaid. He maintains his vigilance and expresses his tastes more than he pushes his awareness of contemporary trends. But we know that he was very well-informed and did not necessarily reject all modern tendencies. Certainly, for economic reasons and choices of scale he embraced concrete technologies and at the end of the Emergency due to continued material shortages, he advised that the growing parishes of Lucan and Donore Avenue should construct "American war-hut" churches, that is,

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[144] Report on T. P. Kennedy's Donnycarney church plans by Fr John Doyle, Dalymount to Archbishop, 29th August 1957 in DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)

[145] Correspondence from Archbishop McQuaid to Gerald O'Hara, Apostolic Nuncio , 20th July 1952 in DDA, McQuaid papers, Apostolic Nuncio Correspondence AB8/b/XVII, XVII/457

prefabricated structures![146] We know that he had a copy of the famous Scandinavian report *Design in Ireland* (Report of the Scandinavian Design Group in Ireland, April 1961) in his papers, which in itself was a modernist document thus showing McQuaid's consciousness of design discourse, if nothing more.[147] Also, as we will discuss in respect of "muddied waters", the Archbishop knew and sponsored the modern stained-glass artist Evie Hone.

So, if the Archbishop maintained such a hands-on relationship with church commissions a well as such control in terms of stylistic issues therein, one must question the motivation of Fr Condon in launching the Clonskeagh church competition in the first place. From the earliest correspondence between Condon as Promoter and the President of the RIAI Eoghan Buckley, as host of the competition, there were problems to do with the Institute's competition regulations; clauses D and E were troublesome to Condon, and Buckley explained them as follows:

> Clause D is framed to ensure "fair play" in the promotion of competitions and to ensure particularly that, if the work is proceeded with, the author of the winning design will be employed to carry out the work. It is on this condition that Clause E, is framed. It ensure that the winner – who, if the work is proceeded with receives no monetary prize as such, his prize being the work – shall receive an appropriate monetary reward if the work is not proceeded with.[148]

Condon responded to this with something of an ultimatum from the Church authorities, and in light of the dearth of architectural competitions at the time, it would seem that the Institute amended their regulations accordingly:[149]

> As your Institute will be aware any design chosen for a project of this nature must be subject to the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority. Hence it is imperative that a condition of the competition would be to the effect that any design selected would be subject to the approval of His Grace the Archbishop, such approval being considered as confirming and rendering valid the award of the Assessor. It occurs to me that this question could properly be dealt with in the following manner: - So soon as the Assessors

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[146] Correspondence from June 1944, in DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)

[147] Kaj Franck, Erik Herlow, Ake Huldt, Gunnar Biilmann Petersen, Erik Chr. Sorensen; *Design in Ireland* (Report of the Scandinavian Design Group in Ireland, April 1961) was in file #3," Building analyses reports, 1944 – 1967", DDA, McQua papers, AB8/B/XX1V/ BOX 1 (1-6) primary education, school building

[148] Letter from Buckley to Condon, 2nd October 1953, in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

[149] From the war period, the Institute were adamant to encourage competitions. For example this correspondence with t ESB from 1st April 1941, urging them to hold a competition for the design of their new headquarters, reveals the RIAI's almost blind desire for competitions: "Owing to war conditions private enterprise has almost ceased with the result that very many Architects are in the unhappy position of having little or nothing to do. It is, therefore, certain that a large number of Architects would be in a position to devote themselves almost exclusively to the preparation of their designs and could give more calm consideration to the problem than would be possible if normal practice had to be attended to the same time." See I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

complete their adjudication the Ecclesiastical Authority would then be consulted. This would be done before the authorship of the submitted designs were identified and before any announcements are made so that the awards when finally made would carry the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority.[150]

an we assume then that the promoter had little intention of following through with the ›mpetition? This seems flippant considering the expense involved when launching such an event nd awarding prize-monies; certainly, in the midst of the furore which followed McQuaid's ecision, the press reported that the Church authorities had spent anything from two to three ıousand pounds on the competition.[151] As well as the aspect of financial loss, we should :member that the highly respected Fr. Fitzpatrick was the Archbishop's representative on the ssessing panel so that if the competition was just a ruse, then McQuaid was dangling Fitzpatrick :e a pawn – not forgetting also that Fitzpatrick appeared to have been relatively positive about odernist architecture therefore, quite possibly, he made a significant contribution to the ssessing process and results. The sole document from McQuaid's archive which mentioned the onskeagh affair, a pre-competition advisory note from the Archbishop to Condon, further ›nfounds the issue as, first and foremost it prescribed a get-out clause:

I have read the draft conditions of the Clonskeagh Competition. There is one serious objection: the document makes it mandatory on you to employ the winner of the competition, unless the Assessors shall be satisfied that there is some valid objection to his employment. Now, to prove a valid objection is very hard. Further, I was of the opinion that the original document put no obligation on you other than to pay the prize money as awarded by the assessors. You, the promoter, were not obliged to accept any architect or any design, after the prize money had been awarded. I should like to see you protected on this score. [152]

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Letter from Buckley to Condon, 28th October 1953, in I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/54

See the only record of the competition in the Clonskeagh Parish file - a slip of paper outlining rough accounts, ompetition expenses = £2905.00" DDA, McQuaid papers, Parish Files – Clonskeagh. For estimated cost, see "Absence of ›dern Designs in Churches" in *Irish Times*, 25th September 1954, p. 9. In terms of the financial aspect of the post-war urch building programme in Dublin, Cooney - and indeed many other critics of McQuaid - are quick to point out that all the building projects carried out under the Archbishop, were paid by the parishioners through fund-raising and llections thereby implying that the diocesan finances had little to loose. As Cooney puts it: "Although the people were pected to pay for the churches, they were given no say in their design." In Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid. Ruler of tholic Ireland* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1999), p. 290. It is also widely known that when Archbishop Ryan was ordained, inherited a diocese that was ridden with debt.

This correspondence from Archbishop to Condon, 16th February 1954, was not in the Clonskeagh Parish files but rather the Killiney collection of private letters, in DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 ıcatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin). As mentioned, in the parish file, the only record of e competition was a slip of paper outlining rough accounts, "Competition expenses = £2905.00 "

McQuaid then referred to the generosity of four prizes rather than three and wrote, "The Port and Dock Board similarly had four prizes, of which only second, third, and fourth were awarded.[153] His citing of the recent (January 1953) and very contentious competition for a new Dublin Port and Docks headquarters building to be pitched opposite the new bus station is interesting. Controversially, the assessors of that competition chose not to award a first prize as they claimed to be unable to appoint a suitable design.[154] The second prize winner, Alan Hope objected and there continues to be a cloud of mystery around that competition's demise ever since. But clearly the outcome of the Port/Docks competition was noted by the Archbishop who considered then, as did many others, that the competition process could be strategic in terms of architectural ideas rather than architectural product.

The purpose of the Clonskeagh competition from McQuaid's stance remains unknown: whatever the promoter's intention, in the aftermath there was a lot of hot air. In the first instance, the uproar that ensued over the final decision spilled-over into the daily newspapers, bringing with it an upsurge in both public interest in and public knowledge of contemporary architecture. The nature of opinion varied from protest about the outcome, such as that expresse in a letter to the *Irish Times* from artist Louis Le Brocquy, "Ireland has gained considerable architectural interest and prestige abroad through such public buildings as the airport at Collinstown, and, more recently, her great new bus station in Store Street. It seems appropriate that she, of all countries, might make an act of faith in producing important instances of a living church architecture";[155] to sympathy with architects' cause generally such as that expressed by the *Sunday Independent*, "...the fact that the prize-winning entries in the competition were not acceptable to the church authorities should bring home to the public that the architects are not always to blame when new buildings, whether they be churches, schools, public buildings or private houses, are criticised";[156] and then, to scepticism of architects' perceived elitism such as that expressed by the "Irishman's Diary",

> ...after absorbing 20% of what could be seen, I wondered whether the controversy which has grown up centres on whether a church should look like a church, or like a factory, or an exhibition hall. The remark is not intended to be as facetious as it looks. Because architects maintain a dignified silence until they feel that public taste might cheat them of a prize-worthy design, we find it difficult to judge the designs as laymen. New ideas and new materials at the disposal of those who build for the future will undoubtedly influence the work we hope to see from them. Why will they only venture to correct our erring and

[153] Ibid., in DDA, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, South Co. Dublin)
[154] See "A Competition Impasse?" in *The Architect and Building News* (18th February 1954), p.187 and "Port and Docks Board" in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (February 1954), p.19
[155] Letter to the Editor from Louis Le Brocquy, in *Irish Times*, 25th September 1954, p. 5
[156] "Architects and Churches and People Pay" in *Sunday Independent*, 10th October 1954

ill-formed notions of modern buildings when a single church becomes the subject of public controversy?[157]

he majority of the architectural community felt cheated, undermined and alienated with many of he younger generation refusing to engage in Church affairs, architectural or otherwise, hereafter.[158] The Architects' Graduate Association (A.G.A) mounted a protest during the week-ong exhibition of submission drawings whereby they objected to the pre-eminent placing of the ones & Kelly design which was the only design to be exhibited through coloured photographs and model. They wrote to McNicholl demanding that this non-commended display be removed as its redominant position was, according to the A.G.A., a breach of the competition regulations.[159] ollowing the removal of the Jones & Kelly display, the A.G.A. held an informal symposium at niversity College to discuss the future of open competitions in Ireland.[160]

The combined effect of the Port/Docks and the Clonskeagh competitions was that it nduced great unease within the RIAI, to the extent that the Institute decided to revisit its ompetition regulations. Accordingly, a note in the annual report (1954) from the Year Book of 955 outlined the Competition Committee's proposal:

> The Regulations Governing the Promotion and Conduct of Architectural Competitions have been under consideration. Preliminary to preparing a draft of these new Regulations copies of the Rules Governing Competitions were obtained from the Royal Institute of Architects of Canada, the Institute of Architects of Sweden and the Institute of Architects of Switzerland.[161]

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[7] "Irish Man's Diary", *Irish Times,* 30th September 1954, p.5

[8] Anecdotal evidence of the disillusionment and alienation felt by the younger architects following the Clonskeagh Church ompetition from Ronnie Tallon (interview August 2006), Richard Hurley (interview nuary 2006)

[9] This action taken by the A.G.A. was reported in "Model Design Taken out of Exhibition" in *Irish Times,* 30th September 954, p. 4

[0] Editorial of the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (9th October 1954), p.981. The editorial criticised the public nature of the utcry by the AGA and others and recommended that the situation be brought to the RIAI to push for competition reform. his subsequently happened – see next note.

[1] The note about amending competition regulations goes on to include assessors: "The Committee recommended to ouncil that a clause be included in the new regulations to allow for the appointment of Assessors other than Architects, r Competitions not specifically for buildings, provided the majority of Assessors are Architects of acknowledged standing. he Committee also recommended that in the future Assessors be asked to report on Competitions." *RIAI Year Book,* 955, p.19. The changing nature of open competitions is an important aspect of the research for this thesis and will be xamined through continued reference to the RIAI archive. It is interesting to note the examples of Canada, Sweden and witzerland as mentors and not the RIBA. See also minutes of Competition Committee Minutes 5th May 1954 and 7th ebruary 1955 detailing the need to revise the regulations, "Competition Committee Minutes", IAA, RIAI collection, Box 3/136/104

And as if to make amends for the situation, the annual report (1955) from the Year Book of 1956 rather disingenuously stated that, "the Competition for the design of a Church at Clonskeagh has resulted in the winner of the Competition receiving commissions to design other Churches."[162]

The negative response was not confined to the architectural intelligentsia or indeed to the laity, bohemian or otherwise. Upon seeing the model of the chosen design on display in September 1954 in Donnybrook Church, the critic of the forward-thinking Catholic affairs magazine *The Furrow* proclaimed, "...the belfry is handsome, but the body of the building lacks poise. The accepted design would perhaps brighten a drab city block, but in Clonskeagh it will look as if it were dropped out of the sky."[163] In contrast to the low-rise dispositions of the prize-winning designs, the adopted design for the church at Bird Avenue, Clonskeagh presented itself as a massive red-brick monolith, even if its main south elevation was broken up by a portico, large rose-window and detailed bell tower (figure 4.24). It is interesting to note similar complaints about the scale of other contemporaneous churches from within McQuaid's loyal clergy and congregation such as Burke-Savage's comment in 1965 that some of the new churches "are over-large..."; and the account of parishioners from the Mount Merrion church, "The new church is quite big. But everyone knew everyone else in the old church and actually, the older people in Mount Merrion didn't like the new church at all because they didn't have the same contact or closeness."[164]

Interestingly amongst McQuaid's Auxiliary Bishops' correspondence, a letter from the advisor Bishop Dunne to the Archbishop about reducing the proposed size of the new church for Gloucester Street (Sean MacDermott Street) from 1,000-1,200 to 800-1,000 capacity, asked, "One is puzzled why architects nowadays give so much interior height to their buildings, even to churches. By giving such height they increase the cubic space to an extent which in building involves extra cost and, thereafter, makes the cost of upkeep and heating all the bigger."[165] McQuaid's annotated response a week later was, "Too late to change. Have very carefully checked and reduced size. Area is not dwindling."[166] One suspects that the overly-generous height of these 1950s churches was less to do with architectural taste and more to do with clerical prescription. In the case of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sean MacDermott Street, it contained the shrine of Dublin martyr/saint Matt Talbot so the Archbishop's intention for the church to be cultivated into a pilgrimage site was behind the excessive scale.[167] After all in terms of church buildings, the Archbishop recognised the tone and mood of his congregation which he translated as the need,

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[162] See *RIAI Year Book*, 1956, p. 45. This must be in reference to the Office of Public Works Church of St Brigid at Curragh Camp, County Kildare of 1955 (for which Gerald McNicholl had taken the credit with little mention of Thomas Ryan)
[163] Stephen Rynne, "Designs for a Church" *The Furrow* (November 1954, Vol. 5, No. 11), p.714
[164] Roland Burke-Savage, "The Church in Dublin, 1940 – 1965" in *Studies* (LIV/216, Winter 1965), p.306; Mount Merrion oral history account is from May Treacy, Joan and Rita Byrne, *Mount Merrion. The Early Years* (Dublin: Contact, 2007) p. 25
[165] Correspondence from Dunne to McQuaid, 10th June 1957 in DDA, McQuaid papers, Auxiliary Bishops Correspondence AB8/XV/D, letter XV/D/57
[166] McQuaid's annotated response to Dunne, 19th June 1957 in ibid.
[167] Peter Costello, *Dublin Churches* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1989), p.102

above all else, for accommodation and basic but regular rituals such as local pilgrimage and Marian devotion. This touches on an important aspect of the character of Irish twentieth-century Catholicism which has been broached by Fr. Vincent Twomey (in light of twenty-first century problems) and also by Tony Fahey:[168] that is, the lack of intellectual reflection within the Irish Church. Fahey points out that by the mid-1960s, there were 16,000 nuns and 14,000 male religious and clergy in Ireland, making the Irish Church the most heavily staffed of any Catholic Church in the world.[169] But he observes,

> Out of the thousands of capable men and women who flooded into these congregations over the last century and a half, there were remarkably few who expressed a thought of any lasting intellectual significance about the work they did or the social conditions they confronted. At the level of thought and understanding, therefore, their heritage is strangely empty and this drains their achievement of a progressive, creative dimension, which its sheer scale and practical effectiveness would seem to have warranted.[170]

According to Fahey, because of the Catholic dominance of education and social services, the Irish church was "overwhelmingly pragmatic" and consequently lacked a theoretical or intellectual base. This pragmatism necessarily translated itself into architecture. As Luan Cuffe wrote in *The Architects' Journal* in 1957, the process began with the extreme need for a church to seat up to 2,000 people and the problem fell on an addled parish priest:

> His problem was to find an architect who would ease his burden rather than add to his problems. He wanted a design which would readily be approved by higher ecclesiastical authority and would not cause misgivings in the hearts of the parish bank manager or the parishioners.[171]

And so, the quantity over quality issue emerges – build them high and build them big: but most basically, build them and they will come! It would seem that a population of unquestioning foot soldiers, serviced by an unquestioning clergy, was there so that the main concern of the 1950s Dublin Church was to provide sufficient unquestioning space for congregation.

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[168] Vincent Twomey, *The End of Irish Catholicism?* (Dublin: Veritas, 2003), p.49-60
[169] Tony Fahey, "The Catholic Church and Social Policy" in Sean Healy and Brigid Reynolds (eds.), *Social Policy in Ireland. Principles, Practice and Problems* (Dublin: Oak Tree Press, 1998), p.414
[170] Ibid., p.416-417
[171] Luan Cuffe, "The Church in Ireland – No more Mosaics or Marble" in *The Architects' Journal* (3rd October 1957), p.522

## ***Muddying the Waters:***

*Contemporary debates on Modernist RC architecture, a symposium and two curious churches*

> *The temperature of intellectual excitement in this country is freezingly low and anyone rising superior to it, is considered too hairy to be nice...So away with youth and all dreams of youth! Let's all go Byzantine!* [172] – **Fergus Ryan, letter to the *Irish Times*, 1954**

As we sketch out the Clonskeagh church competition, its significance in the construction of the cultural history of mid-twentieth-century Dublin, indeed in Ireland, begins to materialise. At this point there arise both *zeitgeist*-related concerns as well as those to do with propriety in building-type and function. In the same way as the well-worn examples of 1950s censorship-versus-*The Bell* and the Mother-and-Child scheme have been discussed, I would argue that the competition was a singular event which fore grounded the contradictory nature of post-war Irish church architecture as a key vehicle of post-war Irish culture. Through a comprehensive examination of the competition, I am advocating a revision of the accepted opinion that the 1950s was a bleak time in architectural terms. Alongside the experimentation in evidence through this competition, a discussion of the architectural discourse surrounding church building reveals how in Louise Fuller's terms, "...Irish Catholic culture was being challenged and changed from within in the 1950s." From articles, lectures, exhibitions and letters to the press, it was evident that this period was marked by an urgent search for meaningful expression for church architecture. And this meaningful expression was sought on three levels – that of the spirit of the *age*, that of the spirit of the *place*, and that of the spirit of the *Church*. As such, it is not about denying a history wherein Archbishop McQuaid makes black-and-white decisions and dismisses modernist forms for his flock, but rather it is about trying to understand the "greyness" of the time, or the effects of the generational "collision"; as Liam Kennedy puts it, "The 1950s are etched in popular imagination as the decade of crisis and stagnation in the Republic. Yet...it was during the 1950s that the foundation for a decisive break with a mediocre past were laid."[173]

As we know, debates about a suitably expressive form for the twentieth-century Catholic Church in Ireland had been happening in architectural circles for at least twenty years prior to the Clonskeagh church competition. John O'Gorman's 1930s quarrel centred on the nature of church architecture-as-caricature-of-historical-idioms: that the mimicry at play had produced a body of inauthentic buildings serving what was believed to be the most authentic of functions. As we have seen, the same revivalist tendencies continued to define the realised church buildings of the 1940s and 1950s and therefore continued to be the primary motivation for criticism. Echoing O'Gorman in 1951, Charles Aliaga Kelly's presidential address to the A.A.I. complained that,

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[172] Letter to the Editor from Fergus Ryan, *Irish Times*, 29th September 1954, p. 9
[173] Liam Kennedy, *The Modern Industrialisation of Ireland, 1940 – 1988* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1989), p.13

> There are many pseudo-Hiberno-modern-Romanesque buildings, some even complete with Round Tower; there are the new classic ones, carried out in concrete with an odd pilaster (perhaps even a Corinthian Capital) thrown in to give the classical touch, put up rapidly and soundly built, but both types wholly devoid of any serious contribution to Architecture.[174]

There was the sense however, that by the aftermath of the Clonskeagh competition, the situation had reached crisis-point. James Green, in the same context as president of the Association in 1958, similarly complained about the historical 'copyism' generating contemporary church architecture in the city:

> Thus all churches must be Romanesque or Byzantine or be built in one of the splendidly emetic pseudo historical styles which proliferate around Dublin. It is impossible to justify them on any grounds whatsoever. The masons of Salisbury did not dream of going back to the Romanesque manner when building the Cathedral – they built in the manner of their own time – just as we should. It is a fairly widely held view that modern design and devotional feeling are incompatible.[175]

Green focused his complaint on the public's expectations and understanding of modernism in architecture generally; he accused the population of sentimentalism so that while it was beginning to be acceptable to apply a modernist aesthetic and contemporary architectural technologies to industrial and certain public buildings, it was still seen as inappropriate to adopt and expose such forms for sacred architecture. In this way, Hurley pointed out that by the mid-century, "...the battle for modern secular architecture had largely been won and inevitably church architecture became the Cinderella of the profession."[176] This point highlights the particular place and role of the Church within a society which was changing drastically. Somehow, be it because of mass emigration and rapid urbanisation, the Church represented social continuity and tradition, and so its most explicit manifestation on the city-scape, the church building, must be expressed accordingly. Collective memory, as it was manipulated by the Church Hierarchy, had a greater hold on church-form than had the perceived fads and foibles of the architectural intelligentsia. And in terms of contemporary needs, the new Dublin churches had to, above all else, evoke a sense of place and encapsulate memory. The architects argued that this complex layering of memory and place could not occur through revivalist buildings, bursting with factory-made statuary; that surely

[174] Charles Aliaga Kelly, "President's Address" in *Green Book*, 1951-2, p.29
[175] James Green, "President's Address" in *Green Book*, 1958-9, p.41
[176] Richard Hurley, "Irish Church Architecture 1839 – 1989" in John Graby (ed.), *150 Years of Architecture in Ireland. R.I.A.I. 1839 – 1989* (Dublin: R.I.A.I. and Eblana Editions, 1989), p. 80

the columns of ancient and far-off civilizations and the chevrons of bygone eras representing the new parishes of Cabra and Crumlin for example were falsehoods and negated any sense of place flourishing therein? As Michael Halton put it in an article for the *R.I.A.I. Yearbook* of 1948,

> The flight from reason must be nearly complete when intelligent men can believe that a collection of Italian Romanesque, Byzantine, and Classical-gothic churches can have any real meaning for the vast majority of the people of Dublin or that the dead generations of middle and eastern Europe have any connection with the people of modern Connaught.[177]

This call for church design to be somehow more national through modern-means fell on deaf ears as eight years later Archbishop McQuaid decided to adopt a design that was a chunk of re-imagined Ravenna for a new suburban parish of Clonskeagh in south county Dublin.

One can hypothesise that the success of the only other open church competition for a church at Ennistymon, County Clare in 1947 may have been a source of inspiration for Fr Condon.[178] The Ennistymon competition seemed to please everyone: the premiated design by the young firm of Messrs. Corr and McCormick was not started until 1954 but the competition process otherwise was purposeful in that it yielded a big church - traditional in layout but overwhelmingly contemporary in terms of the expression and exposure of materials - which was exceedingly economical (figures 4.31-4.32).[179] Not insignificantly it launched the legendary church-building career of Frank Corr and Liam McCormick, with the practice designing the steel-frame Church of Our Lady of the Rosary (1951) in Limerick immediately afterwards (figure 4.33). The Church authorities praised the Church at Ennistymon for its economy of means while the architectural intelligentsia believed it to signal both a new indigenous building type and an acceptance of contemporary technologies - we will revisit this church in the last section of this chapter. In the mind of the architectural community, the Ennistymon competition was understood as a forerunne to the Clonskeagh event. As the *Irish Architect and Contractor* outlined in September 1954, the ongoing church building programmes in Dublin and Cork and the Ennistymon and Clonskeagh competitions were intimately bound up:

> New churches ran the gamut of the styles from Romanesque to Byzantine. The announcement, in 1947, of a competition for the proposed new church at Ennistymon brought new hope to all those who were concerned about the future of ecclesiastical

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[177] Michael Halton, "The Prescription of Society" in *R.I.A.I. Year Book*, 1948, p.8

[178] This competition was held between 1947 and 1948 and was illustrated in the *Irish Builder and Engineer* (4th Septembe 1948), p.708-710 and in the *R.I.A.I Year Book*, 1948, p 14- 16

[179] This church was illustrated in *Architectural Survey* of 1955 with the caption: "Religious architecture was hard to find bu in this issue we show three buildings which may mark the turn of the tide" Luan Cuffe, editor. It was shown alongside the Church at Rosguill, Co. Donegal by Brendan O'Connor and the Mortuary Chapel at Naas, Co. Kildare by Robinson, Keefe, Devane

> architecture in Ireland, and the results were gratifying. They proved that, if given a chance, Irish architects could make a worthy contribution to church design...Great relief was felt when another church design competition was announced this year – this time for a Dublin parish church...Fifteen years ago, the recent church architecture in Ireland gave little cause for satisfaction, but there were high hopes for the future.[180]

Possibly exacerbating the frustration and disillusionment which followed the Clonskeagh competition was the palpable excitement leading up to it. The competition had come to represent the moment for (r)evolutionising Irish church architecture once and for all, and this aspiration was reinforced most tangibly by a barrage of outside influences. As chapter one outlined, Irish architects were invited in July 1950 to submit to the Coventry Cathedral reconstruction competition and in 1953, Basil Spence, author of the Cathedral, lectured on "Designing a Modern Cathedral" to the AAI.[181] Significantly, the two competitions for Coventry (1950) and Liverpool (1959) Cathedrals signalled the only occasions when the Irish architects focused on Britain in terms of church design. With the Liverpool example, the experience amounted to a small debacle as Irish architects were excluded from entering the competition, causing the RIAI to officially complain to the Archbishop of Liverpool that it was "...a Competition which is of very great interest to an Institute of Architects, the majority of whose members are Catholics, whose compatriots in exile form a great proportion of your Grace's flock, and whose compatriots here at home have so generously subscribed to the erection of your proposed Cathedral."[182] Two days later, the Archbishop John Heenan hand-wrote a note, "We have drawn up conditions which specifically include qualified architects from Ireland. It would give great pleasure to the Liverpool Irish if one of our members were to be the successful contender!"[183]

Other than these examples, Irish architects looked beyond Britain for church design – the solitary moment in the practice of mid-twentieth-century Irish architecture when the British example was not at the helm. Like Ireland, the British Church had not established a "liturgical movement" before the war and so, by the 1950s it was also looking to Catholic pockets of Europe for inspiration, most notably Germany, France and Switzerland. As we know, while Britain's reconstruction programme was more aggressive than Ireland's, its social rather than religious agenda dominated and the curiously rich conditions (in Catholic terms) pervading Dublin's suburban parish development particularly, were not matched across the Irish Sea. By the late 1950s, there were exemplary forces in British Catholic church design such as the Scottish practice

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[180] Aodhagan Brioscu; "Anti-Climax" in *Irish Architect and Contractor* (Volume 5, No. 3, September 1954), p. 17

[181] For information on the Coventry Cathedral reconstruction competition, see correspondence 2nd August 1950 – 15th November 1950, IAA, RIAI collection, Box 93/136/62. Of the 557 architects who submitted designs to this competition, 27 were from "overseas" – I do not know how many were Irish but only British, Commonwealth and "Eire"-based architects were eligible to compete.

[182] Correspondence from the RIAI (Oscar Richardson) to the Archbishop of Liverpool, 4th June 1959, "Cathedral in Liverpool", IAA, RIAI collection, Box 93/136/42

[183] From Archbishop Heenan (Liverpool) to the RIAI, 6th June 1959, ibid.

Gillespie, Kidd and Coia but they were contemporary with similar advances in Irish architecture.[18] Arguably the British Hierarchy was not as conservative as its Irish counterpart because it was embedded in a rapidly modernising post-war society, and undoubtedly the Coventry commission presented an opportunity for modernism within the Catholic Church which was not known in Ireland. However, the influence of the recent design endeavour (from the late 1920s onwards) from the Church in Germany, France and Switzerland must be emphasised for the younger generation in Ireland and Britain alike.

Though it is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore the nature of liturgical reform on the European Continent and its relationship with experimental church buildings, it is important to note an awareness of these reforming endeavours on the part of a section of Irish architects and clergy.[185] In May 1953, as mentioned in chapter one, an exhibition comprising 150 photographs o recent German architecture was exhibited at the RIAI. Of most interest, according to the *Irish Builder* review, was the religious work of both Otto Bartning and Domenikus Bohm.[186] Then in April 1954, Herman Mackler lectured on the subject of "Contemporary Ecclesiastical Architecture in Germany", and unusually a selection of images from Mackler's lecture was reprinted in the *Iris Builder and Engineer* in September of that year (figure 4.35).[187] The Irish architects noted the Germans' use of centralised plans, elliptical and fan in form so as to create open unobstructed nave spaces and also the innovative and expressive use of concrete technology. Monumentality and decoration were replaced with structural honesty and new experiences of interior light. These churches were sculptural and expressive externally and then became simple and quiet congregation spaces internally. Michael Halton and others called on Irish architects to follow the honesty of the German example. In 1953 Halton accused twentieth-century Irish churches of being "functional failures...filled with deliberate lies":

> Misplaced columns and arches, impeding vision and hearing, turberculous statues and pictures, insolent marble and vulgar plasterwork; these things do not lead our eyes to the tabernacle, nor our minds to God...arches and columns that pretend to thrust and support like circus clowns playing with hollow weight. These shams have stifled the expressivenes

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[184] For an outline of the church practice of Gillespie, Kidd and Coia, see the Glasgow School of Art exhibition in Glasgow (2007-2008), http://www.gillespiekiddandcoia.com/index.php?page=major and chapter by Johnny Rodger, "Towards the Macmillan and Metzstein Years" in Rodger (ed.), *Gillespie, Kidd and Coia 1956-1987* (Glasgow: The Lighthouse, 2007)

[185] This author acknowledges both the pioneering work by Richard Hurley in his book, *Irish Architecture in the Era of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001 – see especially his essay on European developments, p.16-21) and the need for more archival, critical and field-work to be done in terms of late 1950s Catholic church and school architecture i Ireland.

[186] Oriel's Log, "German Exhibition" in *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (23rd May 1953), p.519-525

[187] See "Oriel's Log" for details of Mackler's lecture, *The Irish Builder and Engineer* (April 24th 1954) and "German Ecclesiastical Architecture" in ibid. (September 25th 1954), p. 933. The RIAI also brought over an important exhibition, "Modern Churches in Germany" in 1962 which was based on a 1960 exhibition held in Munich for the Eucharistic Congre

of the flexible modern structural systems that lie behind them holding them together, and thereby the cost of our churches has been doubled.[188]

gain, underlying both the criticism and the evoked exemplar was the issue of authenticity. Luan uffe described how this European reform movement was "in its infancy in Ireland but [was] a hild of promise. It promises a return to the essentials which architects had overlooked in their ursuit of historic distractions. It must at least bring with it architectural sincerity."[189] Buoyed up y the potential of this German example but also that of Switzerland, (the architecture of Karl loser was oft-cited) and France, (there were "rumblings" of Le Corbusier's new church of Notre ame du Haut at Ronchamp and Matisse's Dominican chapel at Vence), the Institute and the Arts ouncil co-organised a symposium on church architecture, "Church Architecture Today", in ewman House on the 25th April 1954. That the event happened at all is a decent enough mark of eneral interest in the subject of contemporary church art and architecture, but that pproximately three hundred people attended the symposium illustrates the full extent of its ppeal.[190] Alongside a lengthy account of Church Law and its architectural requirements by Fr erard Montague and a whimsical proposal from *The Furrow*'s Stephen Rynne, two architects ere pitted against one another. The favoured church architect of the day, John J. Robinson resented a short lecture entitled, "The Case for Tradition", while the young author of the two elatively innovative churches, Ennistymon and the pre-fabricated church at Limerick, Liam cCormick lectured on, "The Case for the Contemporary". In this way, the event may be read as continuation of the Academy of Christian Art debate of 1939.

At first glance the tradition/contemporary dichotomy could be emphasised. Robinson pened his talk with a history of architecture, "Tradition in church buildings derives from the deep ntiquity of paganism through the basilicas of the early Church to a culmination in Rheims...the enius of Bramante, Michelangelo, Bernini adapted and arranged classical features into the form f a Christian Church...They did not invent a new style, but they did shape and adapt forms which ad been found acceptable."[191] Then McCormick began his presentation with a *zeitgeist* reference, ..I mean using the most suitable methods and materials of time or place and using them with all ıe intensity of effort and sincerity of feeling that one can bring to bear on the problem to be olved."[192] The older architect was severe and brief. The younger man was polemical and assionate. But on closer examination their messages did not present a Manichean elucidation of

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Michael Halton, "Church Building – a Community Responsibility" in *Sunday Independent* (architecture series, January 953)

Luan Cuffe, "The Church in Ireland – No more Mosaics or Marble" in *The Architects' Journal* (3rd October 1957), p.522

The proceedings of this symposium were reprinted in the *R.I.A.I. Year Book* of 1955 as well as in the June issue of *The ırrow*, 1955. The Institute reported that 300 people attended while *The Furrow* reported that 500 people attended the mposium. See *R.I.A.I. Year Book*, 1955, p. 33 and *The Furrow* (June, 1955)

John J. Robinson, "The Case for Tradition", Symposium proceedings, April 1954, reprinted in *R.I.A.I. Year Book* (Dublin: AI, 1955), p. 40

Liam McCormick, "The Case for the Contemporary", ibid., p. 42

mid-twentieth-century church architecture in Ireland. Rather both architects warned against invention-for-its-own-sake and both advocated the timeless standards of proportion, harmony, and truth above-all. Importantly, and in line with architectural culture elsewhere in this post-wa world, they both spoke about the historicist dangers of functionalist modernism. Robinson urged the modernist to gain "a deeper knowledge of and sympathy with" the past and claimed that,

> It is true that from nothing nothing can be made and there is a feeling that art and architecture is trying to move from the past so quickly and so absolutely that anything that is merely different is accepted as better...Traditionalists have no quarrel with the modern approach to church design, except perhaps, that there is an eagerness to do too much too quickly...[193]

McCormick expressed the need for a revision of earlier technocratic Modernism when he stated,

> We are now far enough advanced to objectively observe the advantages and failings of th earlier strivings of the modern movement. We note the overrating of science and techniques, and the complacent uncritical faith in progress, and we see that we had dedicated ourselves too exclusively to the principles of utility and function.[194]

There is no doubt that McCormick objected to revivalism in that he perceived it as a pattern-boo for church architecture. Conversely, Robinson made no apology for relying on past styles to evol a building's function and essence. In this respect we might polarise the two architects. However, this is more about a *collision* than a *polarisation*. When we apply the discourse to the practice - i relation to a brief comparison of two of their churches, McCormick's Our Lady of the Rosary in Limerick (1951) and Robinson's, Our Lady of the Assumption in Ballyfermot (1953) (figure 4.34) the perceived black-and-white merges into grey; as with McCormick's insight, that, "The liturgic movement demands of the worshippers a more active part in the divine service. More emphasis, therefore, than ever before is laid on maximum visibility, and today with steel and reinforced concrete, we can dispense entirely with the columns which were so necessary in earlier times"[19 Both churches were unsurprisingly traditional in plan with long naves and sanctuaries positioned far-off at their east ends. The Limerick church was an acknowledged innovator in that the body the church was constructed with a steel frame which was clad with weatherboarding and its roof was one piece of steel-framed lattice girder, welded on the ground and spanning from gable-end

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[193] J. J. Robinson, "The Case for Tradition", ibid., p. 41
[194] Liam McCormick, "The Case for the Contemporary", ibid., p. 43
[195] ibid., p. 44

gable-end rather than between the side-walls.[196] The mode of construction was fundamental to ur reading of the building as it was constructed with typical post-war urgency arising from rapid burbanisation – the population of Ennis Road had grown from sixty to six hundred households in venty-five years![197] As a result of this, the building had to be constructed quickly and it had to e ultimately flexible: that is, capable of deconstruction and re-erected as the population grew xtant and in original position, 2010).

Similarly, the contemporaneous church at Ballyfermot by Robinson was needed in a hurry by 1951 the parish had grown to two thousand five hundred households. With residents paying r its concrete cavity blocks at £1 a-piece, it was on a tight budget of £68,000 and yet it had to commodate a larger congregation (two thousand) than that of Clonskeagh (one thousand seven ndred).[198] The resultant building must be read as a functionalist structure with emphasis put on e transept crossing which houses the sanctuary and to the sourcing of natural light through the ncet windows and significantly, through the west front whose surface is broken into bands of azing. This last aspect is unexpected. The West Front is in many ways a traditional composition ith a triangular pediment surmounting a portico at ground level. However, this composition is pressed through the modernist means of concrete block and strut, and pared-down geometrical rms. Columns and pilasters have become minimalist pilotis, and the blank wall of the Hiberno-manesque is here replaced by glass, marked out by Mondrian-esque tracery. Hurley describes is church as displaying "leanings towards modernity" but I would be more emphatic as to its id-twentieth-century modernist categorisation, especially in terms of the exposed steel rafters nd trusses of its roof.[199]

Both McCormick's and Robinson's churches at Ennis Road and Ballyfermot were driven by nctional requirements. The facts of Our Lady of the Rosary's prefabrication, its external wood adding, its life-size teak sculpture of the Madonna by Oisin Kelly and significantly, its symmetrically positioned entrance all guaranteed its modernist-bias. Robinson's church at allyfermot then represented a transitional or evolving modernist style where the west front lated to the expressionist influences so pronounced when looking at the elevations of the onskeagh competition's premiated schemes. Furthermore, as we know Robinson had been perimenting with construction methods already with the earlier Church of Corpus Christi at iffith Avenue, (1938 – 1941) whereby that church's walls are made up of poured concrete and rk slab insulation with the usual stone-facing applied to the exterior.[200] And in Ballyfermot milar structural innovation was at play whereby the cavity walls were bound halfway up their

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For contemporary descriptions of this building, see *R.I.A.I. Year Book*, 1951-2 (Dublin: RIAI, 1951-2) and Alan Hope, ish Architectural Trends" in *The Builder* (11th December 1953), p.919

Richard Hurley, Wilfrid Cantwell and Austin Flannery, *Contemporary Irish Church Architecture* (Dublin: Dominican blications, 2001), p. 35

Fr Donal O'Scannaill, "Memories of One of Our First Priests" in *The Assumption Parish. Celebrating 50 Years of mmunity in Ballyfermot* (Dublin: Ballyfermot Jubilee Book Committee, 2003), p. 2-3

Richard Hurley, *Irish Church Architecture in the Era of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001), p.30

*Irish Builder and Engineer*, (July 5th 1941), p. 325

height by a string course of steel set in a concrete band. Our Lady of the Assumption, as a fully sanctioned example of McQuaid's building programme and a contemporary of the noted churches at Mount Merrion and Merrion Road, was an essay in concrete and exposed steel. This suggests that the stylistic politics of Dublin's churches of the 1950s were not so straight-forward. Was it that the pared-down aesthetic of Ballyfermot's west front was acceptable because of the financial constraints of an unwieldy and ever-growing working class community?

In respect of this muddying-of-the-water, some points are of note. Firstly, the contemporary (architecturally-relevant) liturgical discourse of Pope Pius XII revealed a mind-set which was by no means against modernist representation. In *Mediator Dei*, Pius XII's Papal Encyclical written in 1947 and published in English as *Christian Worship*, the Pope explained that such art and architecture was welcome as long as it had integrity in relation to Church teaching and philosophy; contemporary ecclesiastic art was embraced in that it presented a "...correct balance between excessive realism on the one hand and exaggerated symbolism on the other...In this way modern art will be enabled to add its voice also to the magnificent hymn of praise which the greatest artists throughout the centuries have sung in honour of the Catholic faith."[201] Furthermore, the language of the instruction issued by the Holy Office later in 1952 might be mistaken for modernist architectural polemics, "Let new churches be remarkable for the simple beauty of their lines and strictly exclude all deceitful ornament"[202] Such messages from the Catholic Hierarchy outside of Ireland pre-empted the tone and direction of the liturgical reform as it was laid out by the Vatican II Council of 1963; reform which was to initiate huge change in church design in Ireland. But for the moment, it is important to acknowledge this openness to an toleration of contemporary artistic representation on the part of the Church. The question as to how Archbishop McQuaid - and his peers in Cork and Galway – reacted to such tolerance remains unanswered but other directives from this encyclical show how flexible the local interpretation could be. For example, the encyclical warns against associating ecclesiastical buildings with secular aesthetics (see Fr. Doyle's comment about Donnycarney's proposed flat roof) and at the same time, in true Vatican II style, emphasised the *community* aspect of the congregation and th need for simple uninterrupted interiors: "Sacred architecture, although it may adopt new styles, cannot in any way be equated with profane building,.... In addition, in building churches care should be had of the convenience of the faithful, so that they can take part in the divine offices

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[201] This Encyclical deals with worship and the liturgy and discusses music most fully and architecture, sculpture and painting briefly. Gerard Montague, in the symposium at Newman House 1954, outlines the implications for architecture o such recent Papal manifestations, see "Requirements of Church Law" as reprinted in *RIAI Year* Book, 1955, p. 33 – 39. The *RIAI Year Book* of 1949 published an article on the Papal Encyclicals which is intended to "help students who have no been trained in designing churches. See Dominic O'Connor, "An Approach to the Design of Catholic Church Interiors" in *RIAI Year Book*, 1949, p.5 - 10

[202] Instruction of the Holy Office, *De Arte Sacra,* June 1952. Cited in Montague, ibid., p. 35-6. Archbishop McQuaid received this directive in 1952 and as we have seen, he responded with the statement about the banning of a Christ the King sculpture, see "Instruction to Ordinaries on "Sacred Art"", XVII/456, 19th July 1952 in DDA, McQuaid papers, Aposto Nuncio Correspondence AB8/b/XVII

ith a better view and better attention."[203] Then in defence of McQuaid's hard-line traditionalism, canon 1164-1 of this document, it was explicitly advised that "in the construction and emodelling of Churches traditional Christian styles of architecture and the laws of sacred art be bserved."[204]

Another point to make is that, according to Burke Savage, Archbishop McQuaid was a upporter and friend of non-representational artists such as Mainie Jellet and Evie Hone. In efending the so-called "anti-artistic" charge, Burke Savage asked, "many architects and artists egard him [McQuaid] as their natural enemy. Why is this?" and moved to show that McQuaid ncouraged Hone to design windows in Eaton Chapel. Burke Savage also explained that the appropriate scale of the new Dublin churches was down to necessity: "that many of the older arish churches were too small and had to be added to...he [McQuaid] did not wish his successor be faced with the problems he had."[205] And Burke Savage mentioned that the Archbishop had tudied church architecture while abroad, having "frequently visited Vence, Ronchamp , the post- ar churches of Paris and modern Swiss churches."![206] We have to take Burke Savage's word for .

The third point to muddy the waters relates to that all-important "Answers to Questions" ocument generated between the Institute and the competitors as part of the Clonskeagh ompetition in April 1954. The contents of question twelve asking for comments on, "i) Church in rasil [sic] by Oscar Niemayer [sic]...ii) Church for General Motors by Mies van der Rohe" revealed level of ignorance on the part of the questioners: spelling mistakes aside, Mies van der Rohe as never involved in the design of the technical campus of General Motors in Detroit, Michigan; he complex was designed from 1949 by Eero Saarinen but the buildings therein were in fact nfluenced by the emerging Miesian aesthetic and theories of building-as-structure. Actually, there as no church in the General Motors Technical Centre! It would seem that the Dublin-based rchitects had gotten confused between this iconic American corporate modernist scheme and nother seminal project by Mies for the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. Here, Mies esigned a chapel, the Chapel of Saint Saviour, which was to be his only religious building and hich was finished in 1952. A single-storey pavilion, it was constructed of load-bearing brick alls, a flat roof of steel and its main elevation was a floor-to-ceiling glass wall set into a steel amework (figure 4.37). This project would have been known to the interested architectural ommunity in Ireland through the much sought-after American periodical, *Architectural Forum* hich was sporadically available via the American Information Office on College Green (see apter one). The error suggests that while there was undoubted enthusiasm for such innovations America, this was matched by equal amounts of naiveté and one supposes, frustration.

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Ibid., "Instruction to Ordinaries on "Sacred Art""
Ibid., "Instruction to Ordinaries on "Sacred Art""
Roland Burke-Savage, "The Church in Dublin: 1940 - 1965", in *Studies* (No. 216, Winter 1965), p.328-329
Ibid., p.328

Importantly, such an example highlights the real distance between the Dublin-based architect emerging from the Emergency and the post-war restorative climate informing the canonical international community.

## ***Preparing for Reform:***

*Towards Vatican II and authentic expression for Irish church architecture*

In 1956, the RIAI set up the "Church Exhibitions Committee" which was made up of five archite - Wilfrid Cantwell, Richard Hurley, Gerald McNicoll, Brendan Ellis, Oscar Richardson and Thom Ryan - and two priests, Fr J G McGarry, editor of *The Furrow* and Fr Austin Flannery, editor *Doctrine and Life*. This highly significant action represented something of a sealing of a cultu partnership between the architectural and clerical intelligentsias. While discussions about a suggestions for liturgical reform, primarily using *The Furrow*, *Doctrine and Life* and the series liturgical congresses held at Glenstal as a collective platform, began to gather momentum by t end of the 1950s, the Exhibitions Committee worked hard to bring examples of contempora sacred art and architecture to an Irish audience.[207] In May 1957, the Committee succeeded mounting *Eglises De France Reconstruites*, the first major exhibition of modern sacred art fr France to be held in Ireland (figure 4.36). It was held in Maynooth and it attracted large amou of visitors and significant coverage by the press. Mostly the discourse around the event reiterat the tired tale of Irish conservatism, especially in light of the *avant-garde* nature of this forei visual culture on display. The President of Maynooth, Edward Kissane, opened the exhibiti stating, "In Ireland, we tend to be more attached to the traditional forms, and may regard so of the modern style churches as too "daring.""[208] *The Furrow's* response to the exhibition was urge clergy and laypeople alike to visit, as the contents would surely shake up "...the onlooker i the realisation that a whole nation, only three hours away from us today, is building a decorating churches in a contemporary style and that a church in the year 1957 need r resemble either a Roman basilica or a Greek temple."[209]

Here we had a small but key group of reformers within the Church, collaborating with the architectural community so as to educate the masses, who likewise were intrigued by the material. The fact of this public interest, happening amidst perceived and as it were, accepted "backwardness" (that unquestioning tendency pervading Dublin's mid-century Catholicism) seen contradictory. The tension at play was dismissed by the Church hierarchy as being an aesthetic quarrel, a "battle of the styles" which had nothing to do with the essentials of the new Dubliners

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[207] See correspondence of 1956 – 1958 from the Committee to the Arts' Council and to Fr Cloud Meinberg OSB, Head of at St John's University, Minnesota. I.A.A., R.I.A.I. collection, Box 93/136/78

[208] Edward Kissane, opening words, "Eglises de France Reconstruites", 16th May 1957, printed in *RIAI Year Book*, 1958, p.27

[209] Fr Donal O'Sullivan, "Chronicle" in *The Furrow* (July 1957), p.465

piritуality. According to anecdote, Archbishop McQuaid responded to the French show by moving four pieces from the exhibition, one of which was by Rouault![210] Such brazen dismissal ppeared to stem from fear, both of change and of external influence; that cultural isolation rough the avocation of rehashed idioms might create a greater sense of place.

Ironically, the twin calls for liturgical and architectural reform were wrapped up in the me search for authenticity. For the reformers, the revivalist forms were by-now exotic to the id-twentieth-century suburban Dublin parishioner - a greater sense of place could only be made rough contemporary idioms. As Fr. Flannery elucidated to the AAI in 1958, "that we can do tter things for God in the twentieth century than build reproductions of what other centuries uilt; that modern architecture is better able to meet the needs of the new liturgical spirit than e styles which were products both of a less-simple liturgical vision and of less pliable aterials."[211] For Flannery and others interested in future liturgical reform, contemporary visual id spatial forms were the only means. However, for the majority of the clergy and the laity, ntemporary visual form was novel and in this way, was not rooted in an age-old Catholic nsibility. As Fr. Doyle, discussing Kennedy's (1957) designs for Our Lady of Consolation, nnycarney stated, "The use of the...so called contemporary, as a revolt or impatient jump from e tradition and canons of good taste and well tried technique, is out of place in church chitecture. As such contemporary in its philosophy is nothing more than the product of unrest, patience, disillusionment and despair."[212] Doyle, and many others' extreme distrust of chitectural novelty came from the associational force of architecture generally but specifically of rtain typologies. In this way, "house" in mid-century Dublin was embedded in a Victorian or lwardian terraced sense of itself; "bank" was to be an Italianate palazzo; "church" was medieval hereas "cathedral" was classical; and "factory" was an undecorated shed. While Luan Cuffe and any architects blamed the uneducated public for their at best, associational naiveté and at rst, total ignorance – "The general public have little interest in architect, good, bad or Hiberno-manesque. Here the problem is not conversion but illiteracy"[213] – the attitude was rife amongst e supposedly learned too. For instance, in Cyril Ashlin Harrington's presidential address to the AI in 1931 he said that foreign churches looked like factories – "In Germany, Austria and France pecially, churches have been built which are so far removed from the general principles which e have been accustomed to that it is almost difficult sometimes to visualise their sacred rpose." [214] While over twenty years later and in reference to the Clonskeagh competition

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Anecdotal evidence from Richard Hurley, oral history account, summer 2007.

Fr Austin Flannery, "Art in the Service of the Churches", Lecture delivered to the AAI, 4th Nov 1958, reprinted in *Green ok* 1958 -1959, p.69 -71

Report on T. P. Kennedy's Donnycarney church plans by Fr John Doyle, Dalymount to Archbishop, 29th August 1957 in A, McQuaid Correspondence 1949 – 1971, Killiney collection 6 (uncatalogued letters to McQuaid's house in Killiney, uth Co. Dublin)

Luan Cuffe, "The Church in Ireland – No more Mosaics or Marble" in *The Architects' Journal* (3rd October 1957), p.522

President's address, *Green Book* 1931-32 (Dublin: AAI, 1931-32), p.31

exhibition, the *Irish Times* critic Pro-Quidunc wrote"...after absorbing 20% of what could be seen wondered whether the controversy which has grown up centres on whether a church should look like a church, or like a factory, or an exhibition hall."[215]

Fundamentally, the conflict stemmed from the differentiated nature of the church as a sacred consecrated space. The traditional treatment of such a space was to emphasise the differentiation through adornment and scale. But as the modernist principles of honesty and functionalism, combined with the discipline of psychology, increasingly took hold of Irish architecture, this emphasis seemed misguided and artificial. Differentiation could only occur through a return to spiritual first principles, liturgical essentials and to a vernacular modern practice of building. John O'Gorman, in an essay on Catholicism and architecture of 1939, proposed a return to the fundamentals, "the Blessed Eucharist enthroned, the altar, the priest, t communion rail with the congregation gathered about. Here the ceremonies can be seen, the preacher heard."[216] Some ten years later, Michael Halton echoed this, referring to the church as unique – "it is centred around the Blessed Sacrament and being of primary liturgical importance is not merely a shelter but also a devotional object."[217] Halton then showed how this spiritual essence should be transposed architecturally:

> An architect works with space and structures, but his aim is to raise them up to a plane higher than that of mere mechanical function. He must work for the decorative, emotiona and spiritual use of all the parts as against their mere ornamentation... Each part must have meaning, not in the sense of an arbitrary and often unliturgical symbolism, but afte the manner of an aeroplane which seems to personify its properties. Put another way we might say that he ideal nature of a column being "steadfast support", the designer must give visible expression to this abstract idea.[218]

Halton and O'Gorman were just two of the many architects who believed that architectural modernism and Irish Catholicism were not mutually exclusive. The key examples for all the pro-reform architects during the 1950s were Corr and McCormick's two churches, Ennistymon (1948 54) and Ennis Road (1951), Rossguill Church (1954, Co. Donegal, by Brendan O'Connor), Naas Mortuary Chapel (1955, Co. Kildare by Andrew Devane, RKD), Curragh Camp Church (Co. Kilda 1955, Gerald McNicholl and Thomas Ryan, OPW) and Killyon Church (1956, Co. Westmeath, by James Fehily) (figures 4.31, 4.38, 4.39, 4.40. 4.41). In relation to the Ennistymon competition, Halton pointed to the submissions "which showed an appreciation of the normal methods of

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[215] Pro-Quidnunc's comment from "Irish Man's Diary", *Irish Times,* 30th September 1954, p.5
[216] John O'Gorman, "Catholicism and Architecture" in *Capuchin Annual*, 1939, p.90
[217] Michael Halton, "Church Building – a Community Responsibility" in *Sunday Independent* (architecture series, Januar 1953)
[218] Ibid.

nstruction used in the country districts; rubble walls, slated roofs, simple concrete slabs and lumns, and low even-proportioned openings. These designs also showed a remarkable straint..."[219] Taking Halton's celebration of these submissions together with a quick look at the ove churches and his proposal that we "leave aside our exotic ideas, and return to the ordinary ople from whom we sprang", there emerges a potential non-revivalist vernacular model for the d-century Irish church. Interestingly, its occurrence was more hopeful in the "integrity" of the ral context.

In Ennistymon and say, Killyon we have the mono-pitch or low pitched roof surmounting ngitudinal nave spaces, asymmetrical planning and dominant but pared-down belfries nouncing the churches' west fronts. Fehily's Killyon Church also markedly pre-empted Dublin's st truly post-conciliar church, Our Lady Queen of Heaven (1964, Dublin Airport by Andrew vane, RKD), by being planned around a courtyard area "to facilitate gossip before and after ass on Sundays" (figures 4.42 and figure 4.41).[220] Its exposed concrete piers, tactile pebbledash nder, red brick walls and extensive glazing owed much to Fehily's interest in contemporary vedish architecture and yet, in terms of how it behaved and its general disposition in the Irish dlands landscape the church was of its place.[221] Cantwell critiqued Killyon and Ennistymon as nctional" churches which "make a genuine attempt to express their purpose in terms that are elligible and related to the conditions of our civilization."[222] His true praise was reserved for the urches at Ennis Road and Rossguill because of their "simplicity and directness" due to the fact at they were both small scale buildings and very inexpensive – "consequently these buildings ve ...a humility of character, that appeals to the religious spirit of all men and is a powerful ducement to prayer. It is possible to feel at home and at ease here as should always be the case God's House."[223]

The equivalence of the *domestic* and *humble* to the *authentic* appears to come out of ntemporary German theology with which Cantwell was familiar; namely, Romano Guardini and architect collaborator, Rudolf Schwarz. In his book of 1938, Schwarz broke the sacred space of e church, as host of the mass, down to "a moderately large well-proportioned room is needed, its centre a table, and on the table a bowl of bread and a cup of wine. The table may be corated with candles and surrounded by seats for the congregation. That is all. Table, space and lls make up the simplest church."[224] This understanding of the mass in the terms of a mmuning family-like experience was the basis of mid-century liturgical reform, culminating in

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Michael Halton, "The Prescription of Society" in *R.I.A.I. Year Book*, 1948 (Dublin: RIAI, 1948), p.8
Review of Church at Killyon, Co. Meath in *The Architects' Journal* (3rd October 1957), p.525
Fehily was in his third year at UCD when he designed the church, having gained the commission through his family's ndship with the local bishop: oral history account, interview with author, summer 2010
Wilfrid Cantwell, "Irish Churches: A Critical Survey" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Irish Builder and Engineer 1859 – 1959 tenary Issue* (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1959), p.26
Ibid., p.27
Rudolf Schwarz, *The Church Incarnate*, 1938 – English version, 1958, cited by Richard Hurley, *Irish Architecture in the of Vatican II* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001), p. 19

the dictates of the Second Vatican Council's *Council of the Scared Liturgy* (1963) which in short, changed the mass and its disclosing space dramatically. From this time, increasingly, the mass i Dublin was said in the vernacular, with the priests facing the congregation. As Austin Flannery explained, the main change was that emphasis was placed on the congregation or assembly and their ability to participate in the mass; the directive was, "The atmosphere within the Church should be welcoming, and it should offer the minimum of physical or psychological barriers to participation in the liturgy."[225] And above all, the monumentality of former church design was jettisoned in favour of modesty.

Back-peddling slightly, while the Irish architects proposed that the means to achieve such simple and honest buildings was through modern (appropriately exposed) technologies, much of the rationale behind this pre-conciliar discourse was nostalgic. Importantly, the nostalgia was derived in part from medieval and early Christian ecclesiastical forms but in the main from the "real" "authentic" architecture of Ireland's vernacular built environment – recalling Halton's celebration of the rubble walls and slated roofs of the Ennistymon competition submissions. In th way by the end of the 1950s, the church as a building type enabled a fruitful forum for debates o how contemporary Irish architecture might be both modern and national. Somehow through the avocation of small-scale vernacular spaces, ancient places and traditional craft over revivalist ha and repository statuary, an authentic church architecture at once modern and Irish, could occur. Of course, as discussed in chapter one, to circumscribe modernism and nationalism in a single structure was a questionable and arguably futile venture. However, in light of the formal change afoot, the Irish clergy needed something to hold on to, and the potential symbolism of national iconography was undoubtedly seductive for the Irish architects.

The most explicit example of this in Dublin was Our Lady Mother of Divine Grace, Raheny Church by Peppard and Duffy (1962, figures 4.42, 4.43) - a vast concrete church with a dramati west front inspired by the door of Clonfert Cathedral. This facade and the adjoining belfry were clad in green limestone, fronting a basilica with shallow pitched roof. Flanking the dramatic entrance were two ground level arcades bringing one to an almost free-standing octagonal baptistery. This semi-detached baptistery, the symbolism of the gigantic pediment doorway and the position of the tower (to represent Our Lady, always standing by the church) were all, according to the architects, traditional elements to show that the church was "at the end of the long series of Catholic churches of the last 2,000 years...In that long series there have been ma different sorts of buildings of many different styles, each suited to the age it was built."[226] The church was strikingly abstract for the time so the architects were intent upon associating its remarkable west front with seasoned Catholic tropes. They had finished the Church of St. Gabrie

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[225] Fr. Austin Flannery in Richard Hurley, Wilfrid Cantwell and Fr Austin Flannery, *Contemporary Irish Church Architectur* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), p.27-28

[226] Louis Peppard and Hugo Duffy, "Architectural Tour of Our New Church" in Raheny parish publication, c.1963, p.9: pamphlet supplied to author by Mrs. Mary Peppard

earby at Dollymount a few years before (1957) but it was a more palatable stripped-back version
Hiberno-Romanesque, such as Dubliners had been seeing since Robinson's Corpus Christi
hurch of 1941. Raheny Church on the other hand was aesthetically original and probably very
hocking. Notably, its patron was the Archbishop's advisor Fr. Fitzpatrick who we suspect had a
enchant for abstract expressionism!

Indeed, if one was to affix a label to the idiosyncratic Raheny Church, it might be called an
bstract expressionist late 1950s church – full of references to its indigenous culture yet
xpressed through contemporary materials and technology. As we move inside we understand
hat this was a "Clondalkin Concrete" experience (figures 4.44 – 4.43). Lancet windows of
einforced concrete tracery breached vast walls of patterned concrete block; the hall space was
ntered under the choir gallery and divided traditionally into nave and side aisles by slender
oncrete columns which the architects claimed, enabled perspectival focus on the altar. Structural
omponents have become decorative features: the aisle walls fold in and out while the nave walls
ouse the confessionals, marked by reinforced concrete hoods which were cantilevers to support
e side walls doubling up as evocations of flat Gothic arches.[227] For the most part, Raheny church
as criticised, with one commentator stating that it oozed "the kind of specious "Celtic" reference
hich irritates more than it could ever have pleased"[228] As an aside, we are reminded of the
inning scheme of Clonskeagh and Burke Savage's assurance that the "prize-winning design
eemed too modern, too likely to date and go out of fashion as quickly as it had come in." [229] The
ory of Raheny for the historian is that in being so much of its time it reveals something of that
me.

One wonders where else the suburban Dublin church could go by the end of the 1950s
ithout being utterly non-representational? Like Peppard and Duffy with Raheny, Ronnie Tallon
as designing his first church for a rural parish in Co. Kerry, Knockanure from the late 1950s but
e project was not constructed until the early 1960s. Tallon's solution (after a parish community
ote!) was to present a Miesian box sitting atop a temple plinth, made up of two concrete brick
ave walls and two totally glazed shorter sides (east and west fronts) surmounted by a flat roof of
st in-situ concrete T-beams (figure 4.46). According to Tallon, when he sent the model to the
iest, the priest responded to say how agreeable the design seemed but that Tallon had forgotten
send down the roof![230] In a sense, while Knockanure provides a poignant image retrospectively,
was very reliant on the representational work that the Oisin Kelly sculpted screen provided.
hen by 1967, Liam McCormick had built the Church of St. Aengus at Burt, Co. Donegal and the
nsion between modernism, Catholic representation and Irish visual culture was finally reconciled

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Ibid., p.13. It is interesting to note also the Stations of the Cross in bronze designed by Richard King which show the
ginning of the relationship between commissioned Irish art for modernist Irish churches from the early 1960s onwards.
Peter Costello, *Dublin Churches* (Dublin: Gill + Macmillan, 1989), p.112
Roland Burke-Savage, "The Church in Dublin: 1940 - 1965", in *Studies* (No. 216, Winter 1965), p.328
Dr. Ronnie Tallon, oral account with author, March 2007

for twentieth-century Irish church design. This circular church with its expressionist vortex roof was formed from two tangentially placed circles – the outer one hewn out of rubble stone and the inner of concrete block (figure 4.47). Its form too gave it its sense of place in that it was at once an evocation of the local topography with its ancient monument of An Grianan, and a beautiful modernist space for congregation and communion. Could such poetry ever be transposed to the *tabula rasa* setting of the Dublin suburb?

McCormick's representation came at the right time. Michael Halton's exasperated question had been ringing in the architects' heads for thirty years, "from where did our churches get their Romanesque-cum-classical-gothic fancy dress? Certainly not from the lives and thoughts of the people of modern Ireland. These things do not belong to us." And by the end of the 1950s, the younger generation were becoming restless with universal functionalism, which as Arthur Gibney wrote in his prize-winning student essay "Towards a National Architecture" in 1956, signalled a "sameness" that was becoming unsatisfactory in this post-war period. As Gibney wrote,"The introduction of a national awareness in Ireland is essential. It is particularly necessary at the moment when the initial fervour of our introduction to the modern idiom has nearly died and when our shops and cafes have succumbed to a rash of black glass, chromium plating and all the glittering necessities of the pseudo-contemporary face."[231] In Gibney's view, the church building presented the platform for contemporary Irish architecture to express a more emotional or nationally-aware architectural modernism.

> Modern churches are not international in character, no matter how universal they are in liturgical concept. Nor can it be said that the modern movement has as yet developed a mature and satisfactory style of church architecture. The development of such requires the forming power of a great religious tradition and sufficient vitality to ensure the adaption of that tradition to current interests. Without such adaption the tradition grows obsolete and archaic...Ireland, more than any other place in the world today has that responsibility and sincerity of Religious Tradition necessary for such development. We are notably lacking in the other factor, the vitality to ensure the adaption of this tradition to our contemporary culture. Yet this is a logical outcome of our troubled history and its relief is only a matter of time and education. Ireland seems admirably fitted for the development of a moving and significant church architecture. It should be remembered too, that what claims we have to artistic greatness in the past came through our early Christian Art and it was the fervour of our belief which produced such brilliance as the *Book of Kells*, the Ardagh Chalice and the great crosses. In the development of a new church form, we would also have a great opportunity for our national genius of decoration, and in the unity of fusion of all our

[231] Arthur Gibney, "Towards a National Architecture" student thesis, published in *RIAI Yearbook 1956 – 57* (Dublin: RIAI, 1957)

> talents of all our talents we would have the promise of a significant and valuable contribution to the culture of our time.[232]

Gibney's words were uncannily prophetic in light of what was lurking around the corner in the form of McCormick's oeuvre or corpus of religious buildings for Ireland: these expressionist modern Irish Catholic churches, designed from 1948 (Church of Our Lady + St. Michael, Ennistymon, Co. Clare) to 1988 (St. Joseph's, Surrey, UK) were both pre-emptive and reactive instruments of the huge liturgical shift occurring around the Second Vatican Council (within the Irish landscape) and their spiritual tendencies were very significant. Shane O'Toole directs us to the instances of water, the church interiors as "steeped in Catholic mysticism", the presence of towers taken from the contemporary Swiss example and reminiscent of Romanesque structures, and the plan-forms as evocations of ancient forts and objects.[233] They were a long way off the lauded pendentives of Jones and Kelly's design for the Clonskeagh church. [234]

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[232] Ibid.

[233] Shane O'Toole and Paul Larmour, *Liam McCormick: North by Northwest* (Kinsale: Gandon Editions, 2008), p.259

[234] The *Catholic Standard* published an article entitled, "Byzantine Style Will Be Dublin Landmark" in which it was stated that "many modern features in design chosen". The language adopted was decidedly architectural in tone and focused on technical aspects of Jones & Kelly's design such as the explication of the pendentive: "... the method of covering a square with a dome by means of pendentives is a wonderful feat of skill notable of the Byzantine period and this discovery opened up new fields in the construction and design of basilica churches." The editorial of the *Irish Architect and Contractor* were quick to retort that the readership of the paper "were not told, however, when the discovery was made." "Byzantine Style Will Be Dublin Landmark" in *Catholic Standard*, 1st October 1954 and Aodhagan Brioscu, *The Irish Architect and Contractor* ( Volume 5, No. 4, October 1954),p.18

# Conclusion

*Lessons learned and signposts to the 1970s*

## ***Part I: learned lessons***

As Raymond McGrath and Sean O Faolain walked around Dublin one morning in 1941, the writer O Faolain asked the architect McGrath what he liked most amongst the brick and stone of his adopted city:

> "Perhaps," said Sean O Faolain, "there will rise out of that great waste a city such as we have only dreamed of!"
> I [McGrath] wondered. I thought of prophets all over the old and new worlds – Aalto, Oud, Gropius, Corbusier, Wright. I thought of townplanners burning their midnight oil on the top floors of Baggot Street. I thought of architectural schools bursting with students and ideas. Yes, like its phoenix, Dublin would reappear, new and perfect and beautiful, planned with vision, rebuilt with knowledge. Not quite the same thing of course as Dublin, 1941, in all its magnificent and shoddy detail.[1]

McGrath's hopeful projection for the architecture and urbanism of Dublin corresponded with the optimism of much Irish architectural discourse during the 1940s. Despite the Second World War and its imposition on the architectural community, the brave new world ethos had taken hold. By the end of the decade and in light of the collapse of the post-war dream due to deteriorating material conditions, the Irish architectural community was more pragmatic but still optimistic. The President of the AAI, J. Morgan stated in 1949 that architecture, through the Association's cultural activity, "in a very limited way could help in the long arduous task of contributing towards a more cultured people. It will not occur in our lifetime but, somehow, future generations must be imbued with these instincts."[2] This polemic - emerging at the same time as Thomas Bodkin's pessimistic report that "it may be said without much fear of contradiction, that no civilized nation of modern times has neglected art to the extent that we have done in the past fifty years"[3] - points to the prescriptive tendencies of early to mid-twentieth-century architecture generally: that architecture could cure society's ills and in the Irish situation, that architecture could be the salvation not of the Irishman's body or soul but rather of his cultural self.

The typological chapters in this thesis have offered details of different aspects of Irish architectural production c.1940 – c.1960 from case-study analyses of buildings for

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[1] Raymond McGrath, "Dublin Panorama. An Architectural Review" in *The Bell* (August 1941, Vol. 2, No. 6) p.48
[2] J. Morgan, "Inaugural Address" in *Green Book* 1949-50 (Dublin: AAI, 1949-50), p.27
[3] Thomas Bodkin, *Report on the Arts in Ireland* (Dublin: 1949), cited by Aodhagan Brioscu, "Emphasis on Design" in *The Irish Architect and Contractor* (April 1954), p.17

health, buildings for dwelling and buildings for worship. In chapter two, taking a close look at the situation of hospital architecture during the Emergency in Dublin revealed its contradictions whereby the wartime stasis was countered by notionally continuous architectural production, albeit at a low ebb at first, and interestingly, the architectural culture of the period was consistently imbued with reconstructive rhetoric. In chapter three we examined the intense productivity of public housing - especially during the early 1950s when Irish history otherwise recounts a bleak tale of austere economics and mass emigration – as well as the persistent yet marginalised architectural discourse around housing reform and experimentation. In chapter four we sought to understand the Dublin Diocesan church-building campaign of the 1950s and uncovered rich critical debate around modernism for religious architecture and certain built attempts at modern Catholic church design. In all of this the underlying tendency or condition was the presence of a lively architectural culture in Ireland, 1940 – 65, which as McGrath's introductory excerpt inferred, was markedly outward-looking in aspiration.

In opening up such a neglected field as Irish architecture of the mid-twentieth century, the thesis research necessarily followed all the available evidence in an effort to situate the extant buildings. This thesis then has been formed to a large extent by a close reading of the architectural culture which, in the absence of a body of foreign journals and with restricted travel, amounted to regular lectures, sporadic exhibitions and lots of polemical writing. For polemics, the constant yet uneven source was the "annual" (the RIAI and AAI yearbooks) and to a lesser degree, the pedantic "monthly" *The Irish Builder and Engineer,* joined from 1950 by the more critical *Irish Architect and Contractor.* Chapter one set up the thesis' use of all this contemporary writing as a tool towards understanding the contemporary building. Underpinning this approach was the issue that, while the architectural culture communicated one thing (international modernism) the architectural production communicated quite a different thing (local means). What was the architectural historian, setting about to illuminate an ignored generation of building, to do? This thesis has been about embracing the contradiction, primarily through celebrating the architectural writing from c.1940 to c.1960.

Two examples best summarise the contradictory nature of the thesis subject. The first, a writing sample, was a critical appraisal of an AAI lecture by Ove Arup from 1959 by the *Green Book* editor:

> Those who were present at Ove Arup's discourse on Structure can well appreciate the impossibility of rendering an account of the Great Man's wisdom. Having listened in respectful wonderment to the endless stream of fascinating profundities on the philosophy of structure and its fulfilment your Editor could

> only echo Meehawl MacMurrachu's reverent rejoinder to the Philosopher in the "Crock of Gold". "I give you my word Sir that I don't know what you are talking about at all."[4]

The editor's wit and irreverence appear to undermine the seriousness of the subject matter which was about the vanguard of structural engineering. By the end of the 1950s the Danish engineer Ove Arup was attaining international status – indeed, he had completed Busáras and the Donnybrook bus garage (chapter one), arguably Dublin's two most innovative buildings of the period and had set up an office in Dublin, in semi collaboration with Michael Scott. His practice was not to be sneered at. Following this the editor explained that he missed Kevin Fox's lecture on "Life Down Under" on 26th January 1960 and Robin Walker's "Plan for Ireland" two weeks later due to "prior engagement and attack of the plague".[5] The cynicism is uncomfortable and jarring, considering Arup's standing and that Walker was delivering an aspect of his planning thesis part-developed while studying urbanism under Ludwig Hilberseimer in IIT, Chicago. Do we suppose that the Irish architectural community was a local critical void into which these important internationalist endeavours simply fell, never to be retrieved?

Certainly this case is representative of the contradiction running through this thesis' narrative of mid-twentieth-century Irish architecture. Another account presents the state of Irish architecture from a French point of view, *Le Figaro*, in 1961 which was told to the AAI by the then President, Niall Meagher:

> ...the melancholy air of (Irish) villages with houses and churches where Architecture reaches the quintessence of banality, of mediocrity and a lack of feeling... It's a mystery how the Irishman who is so gay and communicative, so likeable and friendly, (can) live amid such ugly surroundings.[6]

Meagher cited the *Le Figaro* report because, in his view, it signalled impartial evidence as to the impoverished nature of Irish architecture at that time. In this instance the contradiction is between the *actual* built environment as the Frenchman found it, termed by the author in the case of 1940s and 50s Dublin as "suburban vernacular", and then the *aspirations* of the architectural community as gleaned primarily from the British architectural press. This contradiction is recurring throug the thesis, particularly

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[4] Editor (James Greene), "Lecture Notes" describing "Structure" by Ove Arup on 14th December 1959 in *Green Book 1959-60* (Dublin: AAI, 1959-1960), p.45
[5] Ibid.
[6] Cited by Niall Meagher, "Beyond the Pale", Presidential Address, *Green Book* 1961-62 (Dublin: AAI, 1961-62), p. 16-17

underpinning chapter three's study of housing from 1930 to 1960 and chapter four's analysis of Catholic church design during the 1950s.

As it is this conclusion's task to draw the many strands of the thesis together, this strand to do with the gap between "aspiration" and "actual" has been the most residual and enduring. It is the third strand, after summing up that the whole tone of mid-century Irish architecture was contradictory and that reading architectural discourse has contributed as much if not more than looking at extant buildings, to this thesis' findings. Initially this strand presented itself as another duality. However, upon closer examination - especially through the research and case-studies of the third and fourth chapters, but already present in chapter one's discussion of the 1950s and chapter two's discussion of the campus hospitals of St. Luke's and Cherry Orchard – the duality was more like an uncertain juxtaposition: the push and pull of modernism and traditionalism within Irish mid-century architecture. In relation to housing, I have argued that the concrete cavity block and the modern half-steel door become metaphors or leitmotifs of this to-fro between modernism and traditionalism. Certainly, the concrete cavity block was inherently and materially radical and yet, it aped a traditional brick-based method of making. As such, it satisfied the need for modern and progressive technology which the Irish housing question and hospital development inevitably presented while at the same time, it shunned modernism and such modernist whimsies as frame construction or open plan living.

Bizarrely, in the main, Irish architects designed aesthetically and technologically modernist one-off houses but when it came to collective housing schemes, they invariably trotted out pitched roofs and compartmentalised floor plans. This pull of a traditional and perhaps evocative aesthetic did not only apply to public and private housing schemes but as chapter four explored, it was also the official preference for Catholic Church design during the 1950s. While chapter four presented the polarised choices of the majority of architects (seeking to evolve an appropriately modernist form for churches) and the church hierarchy/clergy and laity (seeking to maintain a nineteenth-century aesthetic for churches), there also emerged a grey area where the modern/traditional dichotomy was not explicit. The cases of Ballyfermot Church and later the Raheny Church for instance suggested that the stylistic politics of Dublin church design of the 1950s were not so straight-forward. In the field of housing, the historian can blame the strictures of official specifications and the outmoded Dublin Building Bye-Laws but, as with church architecture, there was an undeniable element of nostalgia and a need for Arcadian reference in the creation of brand-new communities. The association of pitched roof with domestic Arcadia, or at least Victorian and Edwardian respectability,

was matched by an initial fear on the part of the patron (local authority) of the modernist language of flat roof and concrete.

By the end of the period under exploration (early 1960s), this fear within housing seems to have been overcome by officials, as the Bridgefoot Street scheme and then the later Ballymun Estate attested. However, the cottage housing schemes that continued to appear around Dublin's edges throughout the 1960s, at Finglas or Dundrum for instance, maintained the suburban vernacular standard. Apparently this standard had become so entrenched during the mid-century house-building boom that it was the dominant housing model for Ireland thereafter and the architects could do nothing about it! The push and pull of modernism and traditionalism in mid-century Irish architecture was also bringing church and hospital design, among other types, on an idiosyncratic journey by the mid 1950s: for churches, though the technology was to be modernist and exposed accordingly, there was a nostalgic call for Irish church form to look in part at medieval and early Christian ecclesiastical forms but in the main at the "real" "authentic" architecture of Ireland's vernacular built environment – recalling Michael Halton's celebration of the rubble walls and slated roofs of the Ennistymon church competition submissions of 1948. Along came a group of churches, albeit rurally-based, during the mid to late 1950s which presented Irish architecture with a modernist way of making yet a distinctively Irish aesthetic and sense of place. Similarly, with the hospitals of the 1950s we observed campus groups of one to three-storey buildings, composed of standardised parts and sporting modernist tropes. They derived their meaning from their adaptability and I have argued, presented a distinctively Irish 1950s building typology.

Taking these observed types together, we arrive at possibly the singular or definitive finding of the thesis in architectural terms: an aesthetic and process that might define 1940s and 50s Irish building which I have called, after Noel Dowley, a "modernism by modest means". The low rise and domestically-scaled hospital buildings of chapter two, clad in mixed materials and roofed by gentle sloping mono-pitches or quirky butterfly concrete structures, suited the Irish temperament and indeed, budget. As set out in chapter one, the primary influence to be pinpointed was that of 1940s Swedish modernism, dubbed "New Empiricism" by the *Architectural Review*. It was softer and more situated in its context than the pre-war functionalism and International Style that had been adopted for hospitals and certain industrial buildings in 1930s and early 40s Ireland, and was evident in certain other public buildings discussed in chapter one and indeed, in some early 1950s urban blocks discussed towards the end of chapter three. Interestingly, as laid out by this thesis, this form of making and subsequent aesthetic contributed to a type of native modernism of the 1950s which would soon be overwhelmed by the wholesale modernisation processes of the 1960s. As such, the

1950s "modernism by modest means" churches were replaced by the radical centralised plans of the conciliar era; the 1950s "modernism by modest means" five-storey walk-up flat blocks were replaced by high-density edge-city mixed housing estates; and the 1950s "modernism by modest means" hospitals were replaced by vertically-planned high rise hospitals.[7]

The fourth strand to pull in brings us back to Niall Meagher's *Le Figaro* observation which presumed that the foreign voice equated to at least impartiality and at most greater wisdom or deeper insight; a presupposition, I have argued, which defined the direction of most Irish architectural culture but particularly the AAI's important lecture programme during the period. If as I have asserted, particularly in chapters one and two, foreign influence was a major contributory factor of twentieth-century Irish architecture then we must now insist upon summarily defining the nature of that foreign influence. We know that on an individual-basis certain protagonists sought out the foreign experience and this thesis presented the details of many of those trips for the first time. During the 1940s and 50s, the pull of Frank Lloyd Wright and the American example was strong, the imperious post-colonial internship in Africa was pursued in a stop-gap fashion and study tours were undertaken to Scandinavia and Central Europe. Theoretically, the examples of Sweden (for housing, town planning and civic culture) and Switzerland (for churches) were compelling to the Irish community. But ultimately, and this assertion constitutes another definitive finding of the thesis, the dominating force of international influence was Britain.

Certainly, underlying all of the developments in housing and suburban planning, to a greater or lesser extent was British influence. The paternalism of British architectural ideas, planning theories and patterns of domestic life were apparent throughout this mid-century period: from Garden City derivatives to the Ideal House forum; from LCC planning and prefabricated units to the manifestoes of the MARS Group; and from the RIBA's general support to the aesthetics of the Festival of Britain, the influence of British architecture and building technology was evidenced in both the aspirations of the Irish architectural community and the vernacular architecture constructed by the Irish local authorities -in fact the only building type which escaped British modelling was the Catholic church. But within this assertion there is a caveat: the Irish example always erred on the side of caution and was the more conservative younger sibling of the British paradigm. It was not until the practice of Robin Walker from the late 1950s that Dublin even tasted the hard Brutalist experience which marked

[7] To be able to confidently ascribe a new label or a category is probably traditional art history's greatest triumph and very distracting – because of this, I tentatively called the tendency "transitional modernism" until very recently.

the vanguard of post-war British housing and public building. Instead, as presented in chapter one and analysed in chapter three, Dublin Corporation and Irish architects opted for the situated and soft modernism coming from the Swedish example as it was presented through the British architectural press. So, while America was also notionally omnipresent in terms of popular culture and its increasing cultural power during the 1950s, I would assert that like the importance of Sweden, American influence was sifted through the British filter.

Whether or not this adherence to British ideas in Irish architectural culture and production posits an alternative history of mid-century Ireland has not been established by this thesis and more work is needed on the "special relationship". Arguably, with architecture as our guide, we can compose quite a different sketch of mid-century Irish civic culture than historical revisionism has presented. Along with needing more work in terms of the character and extent of both British and American influence, this thesis has touched upon but does not explore in a satisfactory manner, the consequences of Catholic hegemony in the shaping of the built environment. While the thesis broached the question of Catholic distinctiveness in a modernising twentieth-century world as fostering a sense of Irish difference during the period, it did not follow this through with an interrogation of education spaces and environments. Yes, clearly in the collapse of the Gaelic tradition, the Catholic Church became a substitute badge of identity, linking Catholicism with nationalism and ultimately sustaining the Church's conservative architectural uniform, but what of the Church's role in the modern expansion of Dublin's suburbs?[8] Again, the thesis works to open this area up but there is more work to do in the Dublin Diocesan Archives as well as, in relation to education buildings, through the unavailable (2008-2010) records of the Department of Education and the Office of Public Works.

As the thesis' introduction laid out, any study of Irish architecture during the twentieth century succumbs to what the author calls the "*zeitgeist* approach": that is, that buildings are physical embodiments of the spirit of the age and as such, they are representations of political shifts and cultural aspirations. In this way, this thesis has never been about moving from one glorious "Seagram" to the next "Unité" to the next "Falling Water". This is an attempt to clarify the relationship of architecture to the broader cultural history and in the course of this clarification it has interrogated architecture in relation to Catholic power, the effect of neutrality and the economic woes of the 1950s, the interest in planning, British culture and international post-war architecture and urbanism. This socio-cultural approach detracted from formal enquiries

[8] Tony Fahey, "Catholicism and Industrial Society in Ireland" in J.H. Goldthorpe and C.T. Whelan (eds.), *The Deveopment of Industrial Society in Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.254

into buildings' make-up, their structure and technology. As the enquiry into housing deepened and hospitals widened, the need to understand the architectural technology and to describe the experimental systems and techniques that were rapidly coming on stream during the 1950s became ever-greater. Clearly, the materiality of the buildings was extremely important and increasingly so, as new investigations in structural engineering (around Busáras for example) began to take hold of Irish architectural culture. While the Institute of Engineers of Ireland has charted that discipline's history in Ireland, the relationship at this crucial mid-twentieth-century juncture between architecture, its discourse, its materiality and the art/science of structure remains to be explored. For instance, an investigation into concrete as a *cultural* material in Ireland must be pursued, with this present study providing something of the socio-cultural groundwork.

***Part II: the next phase – signposts to the 1970s***

As discussed with each typological study, by the end of the period under examination (the early – mid 1960s) a drastically evolved form of the type appeared. That is, the horizontally-planned campus hospital became the vertically-planned high rise hospital, supported by domestically-scaled local welfare and health centres; the longitudinally-planned hall church (either revivalist and huge or stripped back and small) became the centrally-planned (fan or elliptical primarily) expressionist and modernist church; and new modes of housing from high-density suburban cottage complexes to edge-city mixed estates of mechanised systems replaced the 1930s-50s cottage colonies and the four to five-storey urban deck-access flat blocks. These evolutions of our 1940s-50s types were part of the modernising processes touched upon at the end of chapter one. From the mid-1950s, policy was being framed by young technocratic civil servants who were conversant in international economics – these would become a generation of architectural patrons through the 1960s and 70s. A series of structures and policies from the Offices Premises Act (1958) to the Planning Act (1963) and the establishment of a planning agency, An Foras Forbatha in 1964 (see chapter one for details) changed the processes of building. All of these structures were motivated by the need to rationalise, and in a sense intellectualise Dublin city along the determinist and reductive path towards zoning. They constituted the hungry quest for knowledge which as historian J. J.

Lee asserts, "... assumed unprecedented importance during the 1960s. Serious research into the nature of Irish society began for the first time on a sustained basis".[9]

As chapter one discussed, this episode signalled the wholesale Americanisation of Irish architecture, again taking the immediate lead from Britain. The mass housing, shopping centres and factory buildings that came to occupy the edges of modernised Dublin during the 1960s and 70s were for the most part developed outside of "architecture" and its complicit design agendas and critical theories. So that while these spaces derived from American-flavoured industrial and urban modernisation, Dublin's exemplary modernist architects had in fact little to do with them; such spaces were to become the ubiquitous *non-places* of the post-war world whereas architects designed the new skins and technologies of public buildings concentrated around the city's core.[10] The radicalisation of the urban experience then was extreme in the disjointed and low-density development of Dublin's periphery but was mild in terms of the city centre wherein there was a notional attempt to maintain continuity of skyline and footprint (scale and typology). The 1963 Planning Act imposed height restrictions on new buildings so that although dispassionate citizens and passionate preservationists alike decried the wanton destruction of the city's eighteenth-century fabric, the architect-designed replacements claimed to address existing street-front patterns and terrace relationships with their infill projects.

A seminal publication, *Dublin: A City in Crisis* of 1975 is revealing of this generation of architects' preoccupations, most especially the issue of imposing the new upon the old within the context of Dublin's rapid modernist development. In essays on infill architecture there emerges a definite empathy with the historic grain of the city alongside a confident promotion of modernist forms and technologies; the past and the future were not held as mutually exclusive but rather, interdependent. In this way, the architect-authors called for new infill buildings to recognise existing street configurations (figure 5.1) and in so doing, new architecture would preserve the integrity of the city, with reproduction-Georgian being dismissed as pastiche and fraudulent. As evidenced by the buildings and the contemporary polemic - the *Crisis* essays, the AAI/RIAI presidential addresses, *Plan Magazine* editorials and more - this was an ambivalent juncture for Dublin architecture whereby the exotic and innovative sheen of modernist buildings had been dulled by the realities of the oil crisis of the early 1970s and growing public preservationist agitation, and then Irish ascension into the European Economic

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[9] J. J. Lee, "Continuity and Change in Ireland, 1945 - 70" in J.J. Lee (ed.), *Ireland 1945 - 1970* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1979, p. 171

[10] Ellen Dunham-Jones discusses the global phenomenon that architects tend to shun the built content of urban sprawl despite the fact that it makes up for approx. 75% of all new construction since WWII. Ellen Dunham-Jones, "Seventy-five Percent: The Next Big Architectural Project" (2000) in William Saunders (ed.), *Sprawl and Suburbia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Harvard Design Magazine Reader, 2005), p. 1 - 20

Community in 1973 meant that an uncertain air of economic optimism and cultural scepticism pervaded. The confirmed Miesian architect Robin Walker called for reflection and greater deliberation in his *Crisis* essay "Street Infill"; as he pointed out, the hurried transformation of the character of important streets in the city centre such as O'Connell Street from "residential with small shops to a honky-tonk mix of large banks, department stores, seedy cafes..." was unwelcome and ultimately alienating.

> Perhaps the historical lesson to be learned is that change must be gradual to be unnoticeable. And that for it to be unnoticeable is what people, living in this period of traumatic change, seem to desire.[11]

Could it be that this reflective mood signalled a coming-of-age for American-inspired modernist architecture in Dublin? Or was it more likely that Dublin architects needed to come-up-for-air? The flat-roofed multi-storey structures with their serialised fenestration were by-now all over Dublin so that they had become the architectural canon for this new corporate State; at worst bombastic and substandard speculations and at best sophisticated and disciplined architectural studies, they seemed monotonous and generic. This is the paradox of belated modernism and what some have called its "self-destruct mechanism" in the Dublin context.[12] Because the underlying tenets of modern architecture are technocracy and universalism, which of course means mass-production and replication, post-industrial Dublin and its sprawl became awash with inexpensive commercial versions of iconic American buildings; so much so that the public seemed unable to differentiate between a paradigmatic structure and its mediocre spawn. As Gwendoline Wright explains, this was the "critical dilemma" for late modernism as leading architects and their corporate clients in the developing western world sought solace in the exemplar of Mies Van der Rohe and his post-war prismatic towers, namely Manhattan's Seagram building of 1958:

> The quality of Mies's building encouraged architects to believe that singular artworks allowed them to operate within a commercialized world, uncontaminated by commercial influences.[13]

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[11] Robin Walker and Stephen Woulfe Flanagan, "Street Infill: The Centre" in Patrick Delaney (ed.), *Dublin. A City in Crisis* (Dublin: RIAI, 1975), p. 39

[12] Simon Walker, "From Concrete to Contexturalism. Irish Architecture 1970 – 1995" in John Olley et al., *Ireland. Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Munich: Prestel, 1997), p. 31

[13] Gwendoline Wright, *USA. Modern Architectures in History*, p.161. Wright cites Colin Rowe's essay, "Chicago Frame" from 1956 which distinguishes master architecture such as the Seagram Building from the commercial standardised off-spring.

One Dublin building that encapsulates the *zeitgeist* in terms of its historic site, its Miesian aesthetic, its Irish-made technology and its corporate function was the Bank of Ireland Headquarters (1968 – 1975) by Ronald Tallon of Scott Tallon Walker. It was a signature reaction to and product of the economic priorities and stylistic tendencies of 1970s Dublin. The Headquarters occupied a large site on Dublin's predominantly Georgian Baggot Street and was made up of three free-standing curtain-walled structures which sat atop a raised platform and relate to one-another around a public courtyard (figure 5.2). In disposition and massing Tallon's complex echoed Mies's Federal Centre in Chicago of 1959 - 1973 but departed very markedly from that model in two ways: firstly the Dublin blocks were drastically shorter than their Chicago counterparts with the tallest structure being only eight storeys high and the other two being four and five storeys;[14] and secondly, the two smaller blocks explicitly formed the street-façade in an attempt to continue the important Dublin dialogue between the Georgian terrace and the street (figure 5.3).

Tallon's design gave way to sibling plazas in the city such as the colossal Central Bank and plaza on Dame Street (1978) by Stephenson Gibney Architects and then the ground-scraping Irish Life complex on Abbey Street (c.1980) by Andy Devane (RKD) (figures 5.4 and 5.5). Both projects were corporate-like headquarters, speaking alternative versions of the language of American late-modernism; the Brutalist and expressive technocracy of the Central Bank suggested the highway object-buildings of Kevin Roche (Roche Dinkeloo) while the Irish Life and its conglomerate of multi-functional landscaped spaces tried to evoke the later public architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright. Taken together, this trio of 1970s *grands projets* presented Dublin with a sequence of disencumbered monoliths, fore-courted by fairly anti-social and/or windswept open spaces that represented their *zeitgeist* moving towards the end of the twentieth century.

As in our first encounters with the cultural migration of Irish architects during the 1940s, it would seem that America still represented the Promised-Land within the creative imagination of Irish architects. Probably the most enlightening and certainly the most romantic example of the to-fro engagement on the part of Dublin architects with North American architectural ideals is the tale of Desmond Dalton, Tony Jacob, Jack O'Hare and Sean Kenny. From the small developing island-nation that was Eamon De Valera's Ireland, our four protagonists sailed over the Atlantic Ocean in a self-built boat called the *I-TUNA* during the summer of 1950. Their goal was to encounter honest

[14] The two Federal Centre office buildings are thirty-storeys and forty three-storeys while the third building is the single-storey post office; the three structures are situated around interlinked plazas in Chicago's "Loop" Business district.

modern American architecture through the awesome experience of Frank Lloyd Wright. The journey becomes a metaphor for the paternalistic attitude of the international icon of modernism to the young Irish architect and enforces the modern reality of the marginal culture braving 'all-weather' so as to get to that centre that was its destiny. For his part, Frank Lloyd Wright responded fondly and according to the prescribed pattern of modernity/paternity:

> Dear Dalton: So far as Taliesin is concerned the Irish Odyssey is complete. You are welcome here and suggest you get here without delay. If necessary will advance necessary funds and give you opportunity to work off obligation.[15]
>
> (Frank Lloyd Wright, September 25th 1950)

[15] Frank Lloyd Wright letter to Desmond Dalton, February 17th 1950 (Frank Lloyd Wright Archives, Taliesin, Spring Green, Wisconsin, USA)

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18. Richard Hurley (architect-historian, former partner Tyndall Hogan Hurley)
19. Jim Murphy (architect and former dean at UCD)
20. Dr. Sean Rothery (architect-historian, former lecturer at DIT)
21. Noel Dowley (architect, former tutor at UCD)
22. Desmond Rae O'Kelly (engineer-architect)
23. Sean Mulcahy (engineer, partner of Varming Mulcahy)
24. Brian Hogan (architect, former partner Tyndall Hogan Hurley)
25. Vincent Delaney (architect, partner in Robinson Keefe Devane)
26. Simon Walker (architect, son of Robin Walker)
27. Eddie Conroy ( Head Architect, South County Dublin Council and historian)
28. Susan Roundtree and Patricia Wrafter (Conservation architects, Dublin City Council)
29. Michael Corcoran (civil servant, formerly in Dublin Corporation Planning Dept, 1948-60s)

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- *Building Construction and Engineering*, 1954 – 1957 (edited by Frank S. Drechsler, annual survey of Irish engineering, building and construction, it seems to have been a Department of Local Government initiative)
- *Building Survey*, 1960 – 1972 (edited by Aodhagan Brioscu)
- *Green Book* (Architectural Association of Ireland Year Book), 1930 - 1975
- *Irish Architect and Contractor* 1950 - 64; continues as *Build* 1964 – 1969; continues as *Plan*, 1969 - (commentary and editorial by Uinseann MacEoin)
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