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**PROJECT SIZE**  
360 m<sup>2</sup>  
**VALUE**  
€9.35m<sup>1</sup>  
**DURATION**  
10 months  
**LOCATION**  
Provost's House,  
Stables, Trinity  
College Dublin

# TRINITY IRISH ARTS RESEARCH CENTRE



## O'Donnell + Tuomey Architects' Account "A Conversion of the Provost's Stables"

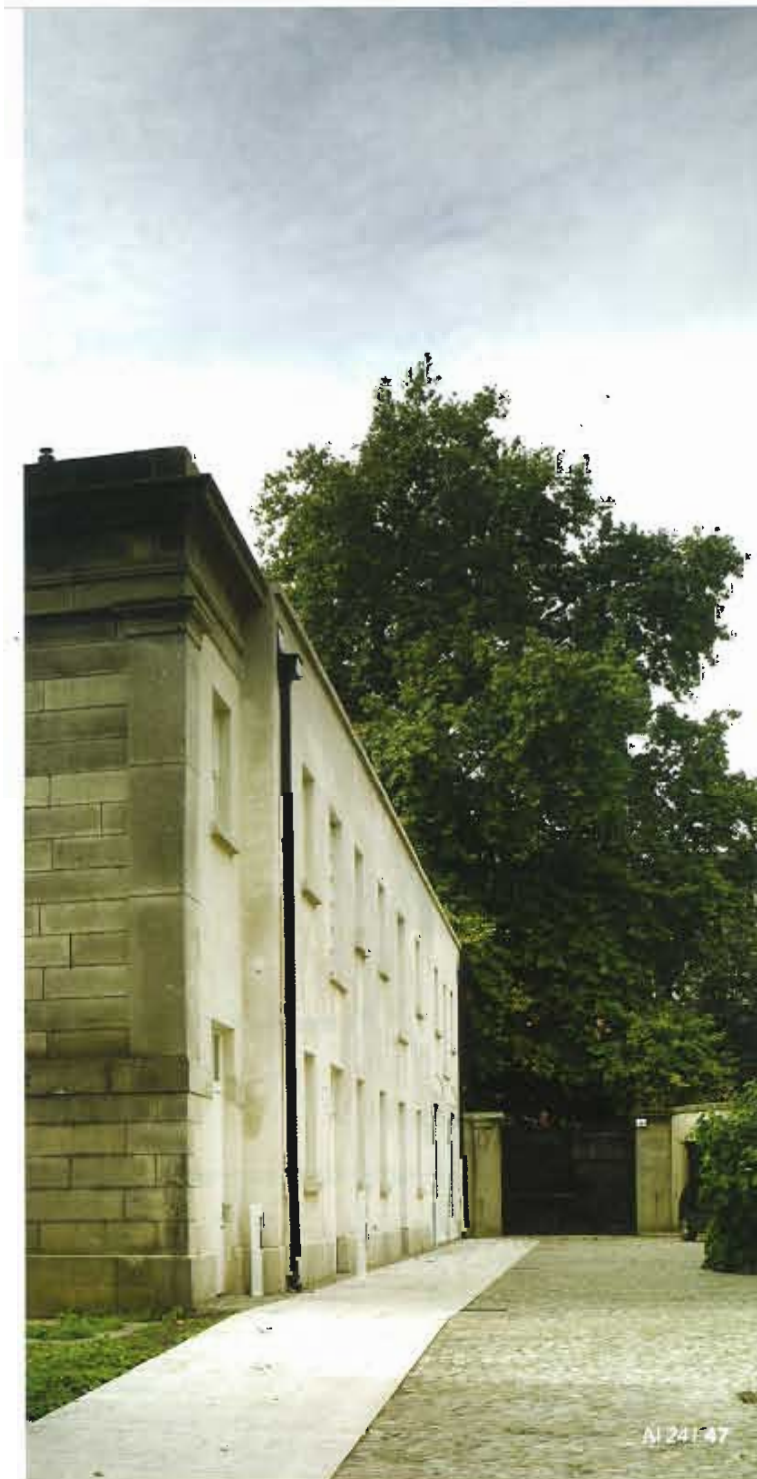
The existing Provost's Stables building was designed by Frederick Darley in 1841, and constructed in 1842-1844 as a stable and carriage building to serve the Provost's House in Trinity College Campus. The 2007 conversion of the stables building and courtyard accommodates a new research centre for Irish Art (TIARC).

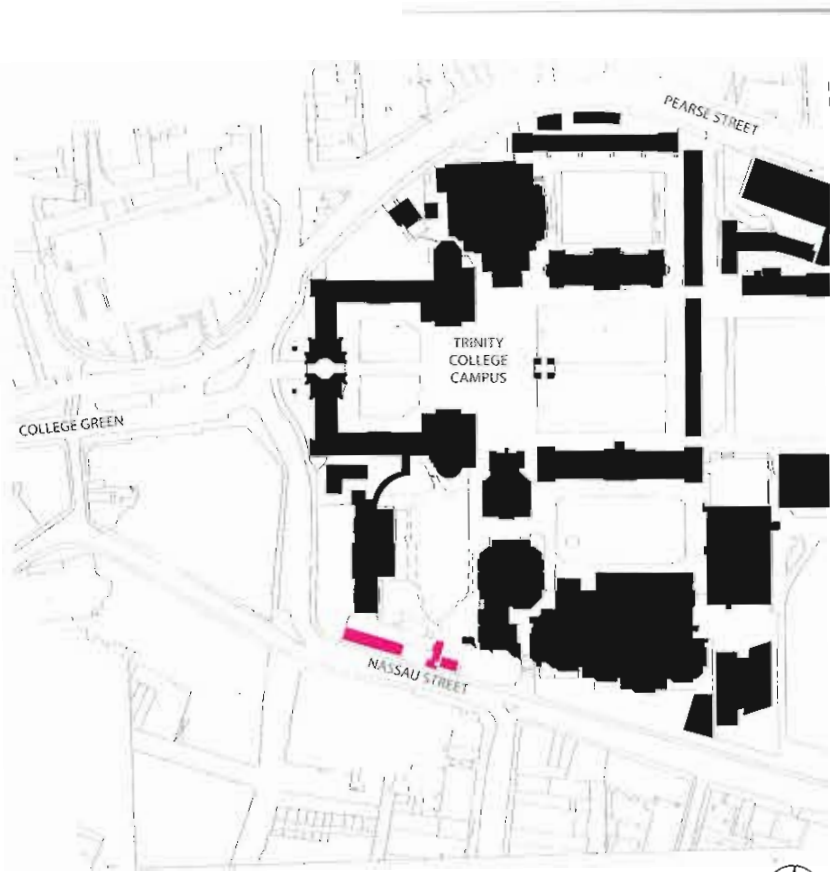
When we first visited the site in April 2005, we noted the inwardness and austerity of the stable yard. Within the building, the difference in function and character between the two levels was clearly legible in their respective flooring materials. Upstairs hay lofts and rooms for grooms and coachmen had unvarnished timber floor boarding throughout. Downstairs a granite flagstone floor ran through the rooms with areas of brick flooring local to the horse stalls. Gulleys carved in the granite provided rills for run-off from the loose boxes and stalls to drains in the cobbled yard. These signs of use and other distinctive details and characteristics of the existing building were surveyed and recorded as evidence for further reference in the detail specifications of the refurbishment and repairs. A redundant chimney shaft gave us the location for the introduction of the required vertical services; the array of five stalls with their timber screens showing scratch marks from years of use provided the requisite fifteen study bays for researchers.

The rooms in the existing building were dark because of the small windows and the provision of windows on the north facing elevation only. In order to increase the daylight to the upper floor reading room and offices, we moved the circulation to the rear, opened up the single blind window and fully glazed two existing hayloft door openings. The north elevation had been resurfaced in cement plaster. This inappropriate material was removed and a stone pigmented lime render was reinstalled.

### Detail

It is the author's effort to put life into language; the translator's role is to find the life within that language. Working on conversion projects such as this, where the setting and theme of the architecture have been so clearly established by another architect in another time, the incoming architect forsakes his usual role as author/designer to become a reader/translator of the given material. We took all our decisions on this project in this spirit; the position of a redundant chimney shaft gave us the location for the introduction of the required vertical services; the array of five stalls with their timber screens provided the fifteen study bays for researchers. Close reading and sensitive translation should prevent the unwitting introduction of extraneous elements or inappropriate interventions that inadvertently undermine the setting. This is not merely a precautionary measure to reduce risk of damage to original material. There is pleasure to be drawn from this reading and translation.

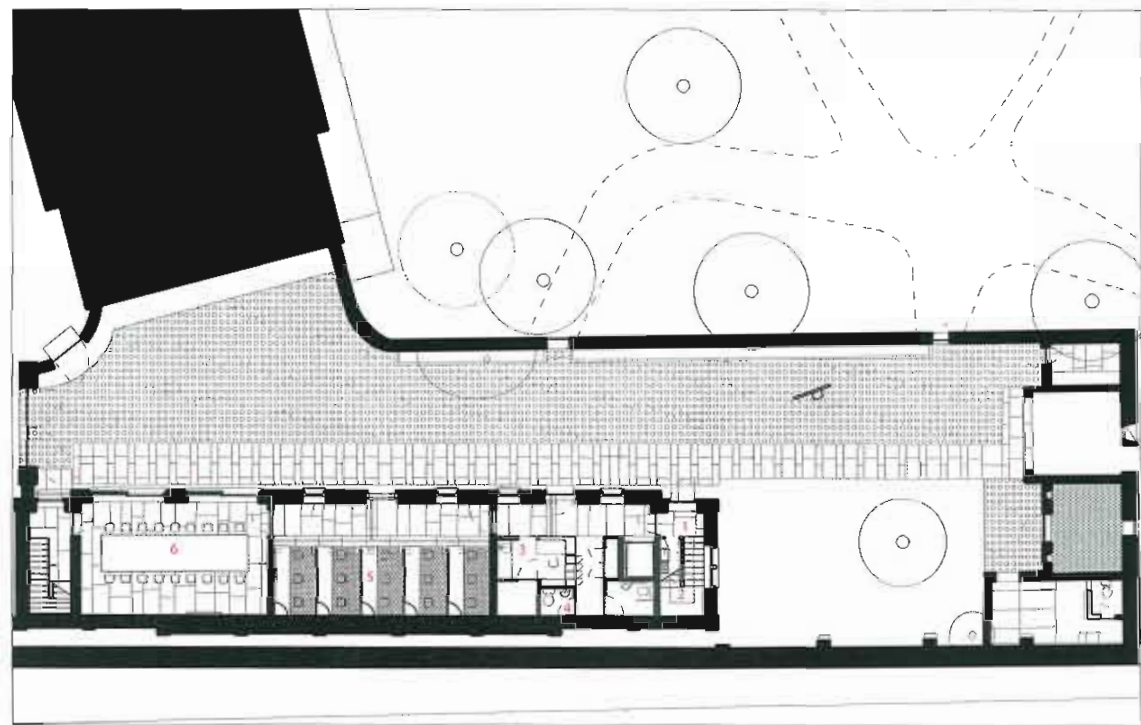




Site Plan

Ground floor plan

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Stairs
- 3 Offices
- 4 Toilets
- 5 Study bays
- 6 Meeting room



- 1 The former horse stalls, with their timber screens showing scratch marks from years of use, have been converted into study bays
- 2 Cement plaster on the exterior, (an inappropriate material) has been replaced with stone pigmented lime render
- 3 Distinctive details such as the gulleys carved in the granite were recorded and restored
- 4 Detail of the study bay
- 5 & 6 Large glazed panels (with shutters) can be opened to create an exterior courtyard

