

TRINITY IRISH ART RESEARCH CENTRE

Trinity College Dublin

O'DONNELL + TUOMEY ARCHITECTS



The existing Provost's stables building was designed by Frederick Darley in 1841, and constructed in 1842-44 as a stable and carriage building to serve the Provost's House at Trinity College. The 2007 restoration and alteration of the stables building and courtyard accommodates a new research centre for Irish art.

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 made all our decisions on the project in this spirit: the position of a redundant chimney shaft gave us the location for the introduction of the required vertical services, and the array of five stalls with their timber screens showing scratch marks from years of use provided the requisite 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.

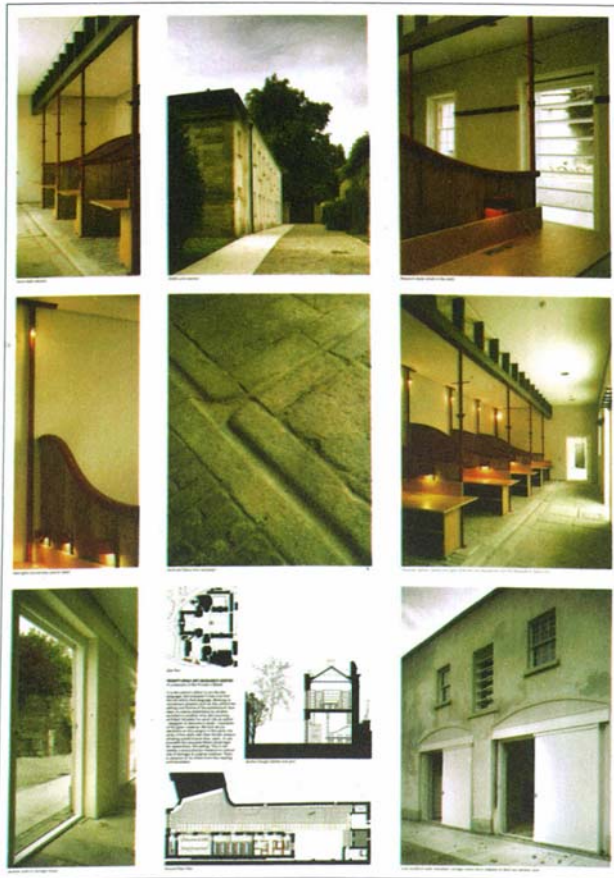
area – 285m²

design to completion – 2005-2007

photography – Ros Kavanagh

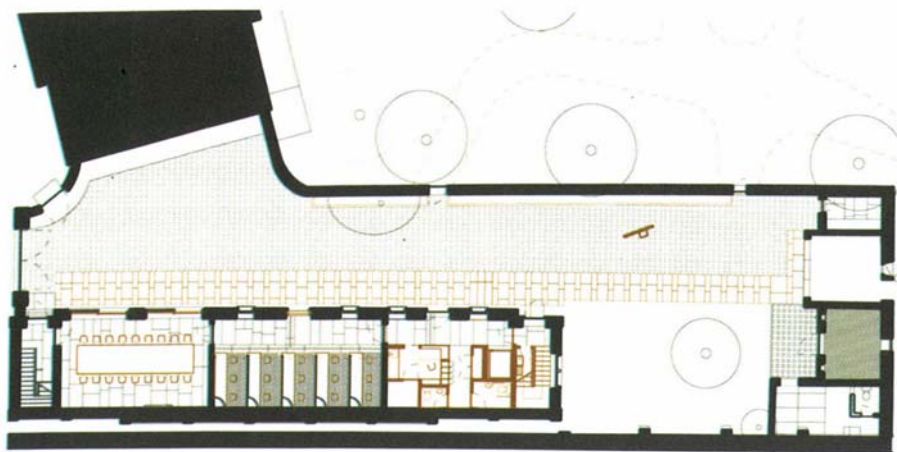
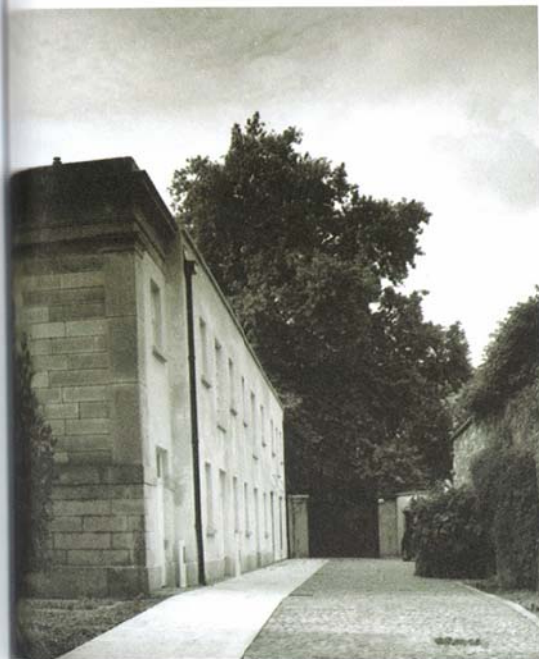
Site plan and section through stables and yard
opposite – Character, pattern, texture and signs of former use
retained for Irish Art Research in Stable Hall





IRISH ART RESEARCH CENTRE

- AAI Awards entry panel*
- opposite (clockwise from top left)*
- Stable yard repaired*
- Horse stalls retained*
- Lime-rendered walls reinstated,*
- carriage house doors adapted*
- to black out seminar room*
- Seminar room in Carriage House*



ASSESSORS' COMMENTS

ROLFE – The reason I'm intrigued by this is I have stables as a current project, so I'm fascinated with this solution. There was a time there was more of this sort of work in the Awards because there was less new building.

HENCHION – But what exactly are we supporting if we do support it?

GERRARD – We are supporting a sensitive reuse of a building, which I think is healthy, and I think should be supported and encouraged. I mean, somebody else could have come in here and ripped all that wood out...

ROLFE – Well, they would have got permission to do that. But to have the idea to reuse it in this way...

HENCHION – I guess it's a perfect fit for study corrals, or for a research library with these sort of stalls.

GERRARD – My only critique is that this upper structure seems a little heavy to me. And I would be concerned about it's a little cold with its stone floors...

ROLFE – It's more art history research than library.

GERRARD – But imagine sitting and reading for hours.

RAMBERT – For me, it's another type of intervention in an existing building. It's more interior design than architecture. It's a conversion, and a very light one, no over-design.

DE SMEDT – What part is design actually?

HENCHION – They are old stables, converted. John's point is a principled point about keeping buildings, not always destroying them.

ROLFE – Well, it's also about finding a good use, a good way to treat it sensitively. Unfortunately, it doesn't actually tell us what's happening upstairs – it looks like a library in the section.

GERRARD – I would be a little critical of the desks. But I really feel that, there's so little of this type of work to be seen in this Awards anyway, this kind of sophisticated reuse, it should be commended.

IRISH ART RESEARCH CENTRE – *Research study corrals in the stalls*

SHEILA O'DONNELL and JOHN TUOMEY established their partnership in 1988. The practice has developed an international reputation for cultural and educational buildings, including the Irish Film Centre, Ranelagh School, the Furniture College in Letterfrack and the Glucksman Gallery at UCC. Their work has been widely published and exhibited, and has received more than 40 national and international awards. The practice has been shortlisted as finalists for major European awards including the Stirling Prize (1999), the Mies van der Rohe Award (1997, 1999, 2003) and the Palladio prize (1993). They have also won the AAI Downes Medal six times.



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