

A bi-annual newsletter from the Office of Public Works

# OBAIR



Issue 8 December 2002





New Immigration Centre, Burgh Quay



Waterford North Quays Competition



New Look Furniture Division, Mountshannon Road

Welcome to issue 8 of Obair



I am delighted with the selection of articles that various people around the organisation have contributed to this issue of *Obair*. The selection chosen appropriately represents the vast array of projects carried out by the very professional and dedicated workforce in the Office of Public Works. It is a clear demonstration of our ability to deliver quality services in line with Government policies.

This issue of *Obair* highlights the OPW's continuing commitment to the principle of Universal Access, through the programme of training access auditors and the 'Design for All' exhibition. The very successful and innovative Waterford North Quays Architectural and Urban Design competition is also featured. Employees in the OPW have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the strategic direction in which the OPW is going in the next three years through the feature on the Statement of Strategy prepared by Frank Shalvey.

Congratulations go to Mr Seán Benton on his appointment as Chairman of the OPW, announced in November.

I wish to thank John Bergin and Denis Murphy for all their assistance in bringing this issue together and also thank all those who have sent in articles for the magazine. I'd like to remind everyone that I accept articles at any time of the year, not just in June and December.

Happy reading!

Lynda Hendley  
Editor

*I appreciate all your feedback on the last issue and again would welcome any comments anyone wishes to make about this one. Please e-mail me at: lynda.hendley@opw.ie*

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# REGENE

Waterford North Quays





International Architectural and Urban Design Competition

# ERATION

Waterford North Quays are an assembly of man-made wharves, which stretch along the northern bank of the River Suir between Rice Bridge and the Abbey Church. They consist mainly of open spaces in which lifting cranes, temporary storage sheds, large mill buildings and silos sit as reminders of Waterford's industrial and maritime history. The development of the new port of Waterford at Belview has resulted in the migration of the port and shipping uses to the new site.



## ...the creation of a “new, mixed use socially inclusive and sustainable riverside community...”

In April 2002 the Office of Public Works, in consultation with the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland (RIAI), launched an International Architectural and Urban Design Competition for the North Quays site in Waterford. The competition stemmed from a development vision for the North Quays produced by the OPW in 1999 and a comprehensive feasibility study, of the site completed in June 2001.

Following receipt and consideration of this feasibility study it was decided to organise an international competition to produce a master plan for the regeneration of the 7 hectare semi-derelict site, together with the design of an important cultural building for the city of Waterford, to be known as the Venue Building. Such a development would bring economic and social benefits to the south-east of Ireland.

The overall vision for the competition was the creation of a ‘new, mixed use socially inclusive and sustainable riverside community’ and the comprehensive regeneration of the North Quays. The regeneration would seek to maximise the benefits of property development for social inclusion and equality of opportunity. A variety of uses including residential, commercial and leisure, was

envisaged. New housing would be a key component in the creation of a new and sustainable riverside community. The regeneration would open up more choices for city living and more opportunities for access to new jobs, training, new facilities and enjoyment of the waterfront via a network of new open spaces and a riverside promenade.

The vision for the redevelopment of the site proposed a number of elements:

- a Venue Building, a major civic building providing a wide range of activities
- a hotel and marina, a mixed development of residential, office and retail buildings
- a cruise liner docking station. public spaces throughout the development
- a passenger ferry providing access to the South Quays
- pedestrian links throughout the site and particularly along the river frontage
- a spine road running along the back of the site servicing all the major buildings.

The competition was unique as registration for it could only be effected on the World Wide Web. A specific website was set up for this purpose. The OPW also arranged for all documentation for the competition to be circulated by means of CD-ROM rather than by the more traditional paper method. Such a move towards the electronic dissemination and transmission of information was fully in line with the Government’s commitment to move forward rapidly in the area of e-Commerce and this Office was delighted to participate in that initiative.

This innovative approach to the competition while very successful overall, was not without its headaches for those involved in its organisation and a number of valuable lessons have been learned throughout the process. Nevertheless, the electronic method of transmitting information proved most efficient and effective, given the constraints imposed by the competition deadlines and given the world-wide interest in the competition. Indeed, the OPW’s innovative and professional approach invoked much praise from competitors many of whom had not previously participated in a competition electronically organised. Competitors cited the



...OPW's innovative and professional approach invoked much praise from competitors...

comprehensive brief supplied, the rapid responses to their queries and swift notification of all information and updates, relating to the competition as among the reasons for their satisfaction with the OPW's organisation.

The competition attracted huge interest and by the final date for registration 313 firms had signified their interest in competing. The final date for receipt of submissions was 13 September 2002 and, by that date, 99 entries had been received – the majority from Ireland but also from Japan, Canada, Italy, Switzerland and Argentina among other countries. The organisers unanimously agreed this was a tremendous response.

The entries received were assessed, during the week commencing 16 September 2002, by a competition Jury comprising:

**Mr Seán Benton** (Chair), then Commissioner, now Chairman, OPW

**Mr Michael O'Doherty**, Principal Architect and Director of Architectural Services, OPW

**Mr David O'Connor**, County Architect, Fingal County Council, RIAI Nominee

**Mr Klaus Unger**, Assistant Principal Architect, OPW

**Mr Rupert Maddock**, Acting Senior Architect, Waterford City Council

**Mr John Clancy**, Port of Waterford Company

**Mr Christer Larsson**, City Architect, Malmo, Sweden

**Mr David Mackay**, MBM Arquitectes, Barcelona, Spain

**Mr John Worthington**, DEGW Architects, London, UK

**Mr. Kevin Connolly**, Director of Special Projects Unit acted as Secretary to the Jury.

The winning entries were announced at a ceremony held in Waterford Institute of Technology on Friday 11 October 2002, attended by Minister of State Tom Parlon, Minister Martin Cullen, Mayor of Waterford, Oliver Cleary, and presided over by Commissioner Seán Benton.

Minister Cullen said that, as a son of Waterford, he was delighted to be back in his home city to announce the winners of the competition only six months after he himself had launched it. In commending the OPW for its running of the competition he referred to the Office as "a jewel in the State's crown" for its management and delivery of the many and varied projects entrusted to it by Government.

Minister Parlon thanked Chairman Barry Murphy, Commissioner Seán Benton, Principal Architect Michael O'Doherty and their staff for the excellence of their work in bringing the competition to completion. He also extended congratulations to the many bodies, both public and private, including the Port of Waterford Company and IAWS, which assisted greatly, in numerous ways, with the successful running of the competition.

Seán Benton commended Kevin Connolly and his staff in Special Projects Unit – particularly Bernie Mannion in her role as Registrar of the competition – and Angela Rolfe, Senior Architect New Works 1, for their major contributions to the successful outcome of the



...following prolonged consideration and debate four entries were selected by the Jury to receive prizes...

competition. As Chairman of the competition jury, he and his fellow jurors had been faced with an extremely difficult task, given the overall quality of entries received. Eventually, following prolonged consideration and debate, four entries were selected by the jury to receive prizes. The total prize fund established for the competition was €500,000.

First prize of €250,000 went to IDOM UK Ltd., a subsidiary of IDOM which was founded in Bilbao in Spain in 1957, who have been involved in projects such as swimming pools, office buildings, municipal sports centres, civic centres and town planning, for an entry which the competition jury unanimously recommended should be awarded the first prize for 'a deliberate, calm and refined piece of work of urban structure. The planning layout and uses are very well considered. It is a plan that can adapt, be phased and even grow beyond its boundaries should the circumstances to the rear change'.

Second prize of €125,000 went to Benson & Forsyth Architects of London (known most recently in this country for their work on the National Gallery Millenium Wing, in Clare Street) 'for a very diligent, strongly

and thoroughly executed architectural solution and a highly controlled strong form'.

Third prize of €75,000 went to PLH Arkitekter based in Copenhagen, Denmark 'for a clear solution derived from enlightened analysis which deals with scale very effectively by making strong buildings at right angles to the quay line and running above and beyond it over the water'.

Fourth prize of €50,000 went to BDP Dublin Ltd. 'for a well developed proposal with a strong structure giving evidence of a clear concept for the site'.

The four prizewinners and a selection of 41 other entries went on display in Waterford Institute of Technology, initially for a period of one week, but due to overwhelming local interest the display was extended for an extra week. Special Projects Unit had two representatives on hand at the display to give information on the individual competitors and explain about the competition and how the outcome was reached. Public response to the winning design was very positive with everyone expressing the view that they were looking forward to the redevelopment of the Quays.

A vehicle for moving the proposals forward is to be discussed between the relevant Government Departments.

**WILLIE McINTOSH**  
Special Projects Unit

*Garda District Headquarters at Kilrush, Co. Clare, is an entirely new facility designed exclusively by the OPW, under the direction of Senior Architect Fred McElwee. At €2.9 million, this project forms a very significant part of the ongoing Garda Building Programme. The design team have given extensive consideration to both the functional and aesthetic requirements of this building. And as is OPW policy, the principles of 'design for all' have been very effectively applied to it. The following is an account of the project by Fred McElwee.*

The new complex replaces the existing station at Kilrush which no longer fulfils modern Garda spatial and operational requirements. The chosen site on the Ennis Road controls the main arterial route into Kilrush and is well suited for Garda operational purposes.

Facilities include:

- Impressive double height reception area
- Public office and reception counter
- Cells
- Juvenile detention rooms
- Interview rooms with facilities for audio/visual recording of interviews
- Parade room
- Offices
- Recreation, fitness, lockers, toilets/showers, drying room, rest room
- Kitchen/dining facilities
- Radio room with state-of-the-art telecommunications facilities
- Doctor's room

External walls are rendered white, banded with black anodised double

glazing and slated pitched roof with parapet. At the entrance, a roundel with an inset mosaic of the distinctive Garda insignia together with an entrance column in the blue Garda livery colour, provide building identification. Ample car parking, and a stolen car compound, are provided on site while a separate block to the rear accommodates a garage and external stores.

A number of artworks by local artists under the Per Cent for Art Scheme are featured in this building. Noteworthy is a large and impressive triptych by John Shinnors on the subject of the nearby estuary. This hangs in the double-height reception area. Also included are pieces by Mick O'Dea and Lorraine Wall.



# Kilrush Garda District Headquarters

FRED McELWEE  
Architectural Services

# OPW STATEMENT OF STRATEGY 2003–2005

The new OPW Statement of Strategy for 2003-2005 comes into effect on 1 January 2003. This is the document that sets out the plan for the Office over the period ahead up to the end of 2005. It details how the OPW hopes to develop in a variety of areas and outlines the various plans that management and staff hope to put in place to ensure that the organisation remains vibrant and strong.

## **Why do we have to produce a Statement of Strategy?**

During the mid 1990s, the Civil Service embarked on the Strategic Management Initiative. This was a modernisation programme for the Civil Service, a movement to help it become more relevant and in touch with the public and more efficient in its work.

Under the terms of the Public Service Management Act 1997, which was one of the pieces of legislation that emerged directly from this modernisation process, all Departments and Offices of State, including the OPW, are required to prepare Statements of Strategy on a three-yearly basis. New Statements are also legally required after every change of Government. These Statements set out the broad plan of action in the period ahead and outline how the major issues relating to the organisation will be tackled.

The OPW has produced two Statements of Strategy to date – the first in 1996 and again in 1998. The latest Statement, from 1998, is still available on the Intranet. Following the recent change of Government, the OPW's latest Statement of Strategy was drafted to take effect from 1 January 2003.

## **How are Statements of Strategy prepared?**

The core characteristic of the Statement of Strategy process is the fact that it is prepared in cooperation with both management and staff interests and therefore represents a joint view of how the Office is to proceed in the years ahead. The Partnership Committee takes the most active part in this process, discussing ideas and draft texts directly with the Chairman and representing the views of the staff right throughout the organisation. Direct consultation with other groups and interests in the Office is also undertaken outside the Partnership forum; this includes Principals, Assistant Principal Architects, Assistant Chief Engineers and unions and associations. Anyone who wants to contribute to the debate about the future of the organisation can therefore do so.

The Minister of State with responsibility for the Office of Public Works also has a major role to play in the formation of the Strategy Statement. The current Minister, Mr Tom Parlon TD, has had an opportunity to see the OPW in operation since his arrival in June 2002. He has expressed clear views about the future role of the Office and how it should develop in the years immediately ahead. The Minister has, through the role he plays in Government, a keen interest in seeing the OPW perform to the best of its ability and is committed to ensuring that the Office is positioned to perform to its fullest extent.

## **What does the Strategy say?**

The most important theme which emerges from the Statement of Strategy 2003–2005 is that, while the OPW has made a substantial start on

the change programme and has, in the period since 1996, achieved a considerable amount of restructuring and reorganisation, a significant programme of work remains to be done. This will ensure that the work already done is not lost and that the structures already established and the new ways of working now in place are sustained as suitable vehicles for the delivery of services to Government and our customers in the future.

The Statement makes a number of key points about the OPW, its present position and plans for future progress. It concludes that the path chosen in the first Strategy Statement in 1996 is still the correct one. This means that the OPW are still committed to the Business Unit structure, and to ISO accreditation, benchmarking and Quality Customer Service among other systems. It is also necessary however, to improve the essential supports to core Business Units ensuring that they are better equipped to meet their new demands.

In the future more time and effort must be spent on making sure that the Corporate Services functions in particular act quickly and positively in support of Line Divisions and that any barriers, legal, resource or organisational, which may inhibit efficient operations are eliminated or at least reduced to such an extent that they are more easily overcome.

These aims can best be achieved by a broad mixture of measures which ensure that the OPW is better positioned to continue to deliver its work in the best possible manner. Performance will be measured to check that offering good value for money, an efficient service is provided

# CUSTOMER SERVICE ACTION PLAN 2003–2005

and that customers are satisfied. Key supports provided to Line Divisions, such as Human Resources Management, Legal Services and ICT will be maintained to the highest standards.

In summary, the key elements of the OPW Statement of Strategy are:

- A re-statement of the value of the core tools such as ISO accreditation, benchmarking, which will continue to be applied at Business Unit level over the period immediately ahead
- A more finely-focused approach to the delivery of crucial supports to Business Units through the Corporate Services structure assisting them in the delivery of their change agenda and their key business objectives
- An analysis of organisational constraints and other inhibitors to progress towards mission objectives and the setting of broad strategies to overcome them in the medium term

The Statement will be published in full, together with a short guide for easier reference, early in 2003, following consultations between the Minister of State and the Taoiseach and other Government colleagues.

FRANK SHALVEY  
**Corporate Services**

The new Customer Service Action Plan for the OPW will come into effect early in 2003. The Plan sets out the OPW's promise of superior service to its customers, outlines the ways in which it will meet their needs and sets targets for practical application. This Plan was prepared and co-ordinated by the Partnership Committee, acting in co-operation with Management and is fully endorsed by both parties.

## **Why do we need a Customer Service Action Plan?**

As part of the modernisation process of the Civil Service, particular attention is being paid to the whole area of better Customer Service. Constant references to improving quality of service in 'Delivering Better Government,' the original 1996 document that heralded the start of the modernisation process. Departments and Offices have had to think more deeply about the quality of their work and the services they deliver and have had to plan actively to improve their ways of working.

One of the most visible aspects of this new thinking is the publication of Customer Service Action Plans, which show exactly how Departments and Offices propose to deliver a better service and what precisely is being promised to customers.

## **Who are our customers?**

Before any plan to improve Customer Service, it most important to understand exactly who the customers of the OPW are.

It is often that Customer Service only applies to those who deal directly with the public; receptionists in public offices, enquiry staff in Tax Offices,

Social Welfare Offices and so on. This is wrong. Yes, your Customer can be that member of the public, but they can also be any one who depends on you to provide them with any of the outputs from your work, even if they are a close work colleague, your boss, or a Civil Servant in another Department. So, for example, a Service Officer has customers all over the building to whom he or she delivers post. An Executive Officer in the Property Management Service has customers both externally in other Departments and Offices and internally in OPW in the form of their own Line Manager and colleagues in other Business Units who depend on Property Management Services.

If we all examine our immediate environment, we will find a web of Customers we perhaps never knew we had and that means that we may have to begin to rethink the way we work and interact with them.

## **Why should we bother with improving Customer Service?**

As mentioned earlier, the Government is committed to improving the quality of the services it offers to the public. This is fairly easily appreciated since all staff are both taxpayers and consumers of public services.

The problem many of us have is that, because our customer might not actually be paying us for our service in the same way that you pay at the supermarket checkout or in a restaurant, it's a bit hard to make the connection between what we do every day and the notion of providing a service – we do not have the profit motive that the private sector business has. If that connection was made it should then be clear that, as Civil Servants, all staff have a part to

play in the public life by providing the kind of services that, as private citizens, we ourselves would like to have. Even if we have only stood in the queue in the Motor Tax Office or in a hospital waiting room, we can all appreciate that it is the smaller things that make the experience a bit more comfortable. The more comfortable waiting chair, the coffee machine or the display board that tells us how long we have to wait are all things that we would miss if they weren't there. Equally, the efficient and friendly personal service we get when we actually get to the counter is vitally important.

There is another reason why we might like to pay attention to this whole area. There exists within all of us a desire to do things well. Nobody sets out, as a matter of principle, to do a shoddy job. Shoddy work generally happens by accident and it might just take a small bit of care and attention to change that careless piece of work into a good thing, something to be proud of. This might just mean giving service with a smile or taking a bit of extra trouble for someone. In the OPW, we are used to the tradition we have of doing good work in buildings and sites all over the country. That should become a personal tradition as well for the individuals who work here.

It might be useful for us at this point to remember the OPW Mission Statement- **To deliver in support of Government policies, high quality services in property, design, construction and procurement on time and on budget.** and make it a personal goal as well as a business one.

### **What does the Customer Service Action Plan actually say?**

The Customer Service Action Plan is the OPW's promise of superior services to its customers and to those with whom it does business.

The OPW endorses fully the idea of delivering better services to its customers, both internal and external, and that commits itself in this Plan to consistently reaching the highest possible standards of service.

The OPW is committed to delivering an efficient, courteous and quality service to all its customers, treating all of them equally and fairly and making every effort to provide a service that, is accessible to them, is consistent with all relevant legislation, and accommodates needs

which are specific to particular groups of customers covered under equality legislation.

### **Where has OPW's Customer Service Action Plan come from?**

The Customer Service Action Plan springs from the "Delivering Better Government" document. In drawing up the actual Plan we have had regard to some guiding principles that have been developed within both the Civil Service and in the OPW itself over the past few years. These are:

- The Civil Service Principles of Quality Customer Service. (See Appendix 1 of the Plan)
- The Ombudsman Guide to Standards of Best Practice for Public Servants (See Appendix 2 of the Plan).
- The OPW's own principles of consistent excellent service which are guaranteed through the various ISO 9002 systems.

### **What is the format of the Plan?**

The Customer Service Action Plan is divided into a number of sections, which follow the same general format set out in the Civil Service Principles of Quality Customer Service:

- Quality Customer Service.
- Equality / Diversity
- Physical access
- Information
- Punctuality and Courtesy
- Complaints
- Appeals
- Consultation and Evaluation
- Choice
- Official Languages Equality
- Better Coordination
- Internal Customer

The Plan concludes with a timetable for delivery of the actions set out and a programme for the evaluation of progress made under the Plan.

### **What should I do?**

Improved service to customers is the instinctive desire of all OPW staff. The will to achieve this is already there. First decide who your main customers are. After that, it's a question of "self-checking" ourselves to make sure that we are all the things that the Plan says that we should be:

- Are we as efficient as we could be?
- Are we courteous to our customers?
- Are we clear and accurate in the information we provide?
- If we are corresponding with someone, have we put our contact details on the letter, email or fax?

- Have we got unanswered queries or unacknowledged correspondence lying on our desks?

These are only a few ideas to get you started. Others will suggest themselves to you as you go along and as you read the Plan more closely.

### **Is help available?**

Relevant training initiatives will be organised around the Office over the period covered by the Plan – this is referred to in the targets we have set. This will be particularly relevant to staff with a high degree of external customer contact.

However, you may not need formal training to become better at Customer Service. The Performance Management and Development System is a perfect forum where you can discuss what you need to do and get help from your Line Manager. Talking to the colleagues around you will help too.

The Plan also provides for the setting up of a Customer Service Officer Network, drawn from all the Business Units around the Office. If you have a query that cannot be solved in your own Section, you will be able to contact your local Network Officer and if they cannot help directly, they will discuss it with the Network to find a solution.

Once finalised, the Plan will be available on the Intranet and in printed format, including an easy-to-read summary.

FRANK SHALVEY  
**Corporate Services**



# Christmas at Farmleigh 2002



Farmleigh hosted open days on the three weekends before Christmas. It was beautifully decorated in festive grandeur and enjoyed by thousands of visitors.

Tours of the house were available on the six open days and the gardens were open and many people wandered through, keeping the chill at bay with cups of hot chocolate which, with tea and coffee, as well as mulled wine and mince pies was on sale in the Court Yard Tearooms.

Many admired the new herd of Kerry Blacks, the Farmleigh horses and donkeys, and the ducks and geese on the lake.

The Dairy was fabulously decorated with themed scenes of 'The Night before Christmas' and 'Christmas Day'.

Choirs performed in the Conservatory and Court Yard areas between 2 and 4 pm and Christmas music was played throughout each of the open days.

The Anna Livia Opera Company brought the open days to a magical close with four performances by Ms Bernadette Greevy and guests on 21 and 22 December.

The staff in Farmleigh kept the festive theme as they went about their business in period costume.

Farmleigh was visited by more than 10,000 people over the Christmas period.

**Well done to everyone in Farmleigh!**

# LEINSTER HOUSE

The OPW has recently completed an extensive programme of refurbishment in Leinster House. The extension, LH 2000, has proved to be a great success with the Members and staff of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

The following three articles, provided by John Mc Mahon, describe some of the most recent developments designed to enhance the effectiveness of the Oireachtas and improve the facilities in these 21st century parliament buildings.



The introduction of electronic voting in Dáil Éireann considerably reduces the length of time it takes to complete a vote. The traditional method of voting in Dáil Éireann, used since 1922, was very time consuming as it meant that every Dáil Member present had to leave his seat, go to the rear of the Dáil Chamber, and walk through either the Tá or Níl lobbies. These are, in effect, two small gates, where it was recorded in writing by 'tellers' how each Member had voted. The process was antiquated and considered by the Standing Committee on Dáil Reform to be a waste of valuable Oireachtas time. This was particularly obvious on days when a lot of votes were taken as each vote required the same process. It was decided to introduce a system of electronic voting in the Chamber to speed up the whole process.

The OPW was asked to design and install the system. The brief from the Government Chief Whip, Seamus Brennan, TD, who was Chairman of the Committee, was very specific. It was required to install the system which would be inconspicuous when not in use. This set particular challenges for the project team. A vital component of the voting system is the electronic synoptic display panel which shows the position of each seat in the Chamber and how (by either a green or a red light) the occupant of each seat has voted. This display panel is one of the largest, if not the largest, such panels of any parliament in the world.

# Electronic Voting in Dáil Éireann

Installing the panel in a listed building, and particularly in Leinster House, was a difficult architectural and engineering feat which required the erection of a substantial scaffold. It was achieved successfully and the panel is hidden behind motorised curtains which were an exact replacement of existing curtains in the Chamber.

The system also required the installation of voting boxes at each seat. For most of the seats this was not too difficult as there was already a convenient shelf in place to take the voting boxes. However due to the seating arrangements of the Chamber, it was necessary also to use the front row seats which have no shelf. The OPW Building Maintenance Service designed an ingenious solution to conceal the voting box in the armrest of the front row seats similar to the fold away table on some aircraft seats.

There was also a problem with restricted vision of the display panel from certain Members' seats and from the journalists' seats in the gallery which face away from the panel. This was solved by designing a miniaturised display panel which fits neatly on a sliding tray in front of those whose view would otherwise be affected.

The Oireachtas opted for a designated seating arrangement for voting in the first instance. This means that a Member must sit in a particular seat to vote. The system installed by the

OPW allows a Member to vote from any seat by use of a swipe card. This will allow a greater degree of flexibility in seating arrangements in the future.

Any major work such as this is usually undertaken during the Dáil summer recess and the electronic voting project was no different. Proper programming of such work is an essential element but one must always be prepared to deal with the unexpected. In the middle of the project, the Dáil was recalled on 18 September to debate the events of 11 September 2001. This necessitated the dismantling and removal of all scaffolding and the restoring of the Dáil Chamber to its original pristine state to allow the debate to take place. Following the debate, the scaffold was re-erected and work recommenced.

The project had a huge IT element involving interface with existing Oireachtas systems. There was also a need for rigorous testing and numerous presentations to Members and staff of the Oireachtas. It was crucial that the system worked properly when the Members voted, or all confidence in the system would be at risk. The decision was taken by the Government to use the system for the first time in a trial vote on 27 February 2002. The system worked perfectly and has continued to do so.

JOHN McMAHON  
Project Management Services



The OPW team:

**Project Management:** Una Redmond.

**Architectural Services:** Stephen Kane, Ean Moylan, Bobby Carty.

**M and E Services:** Larry McGettrick, Tom Glynn, Brendan Dillon.

**Building Maintenance Services:** Paddy Geraghty, Paddy Trappe.

# Audio Visual Centre Leinster House



An audio visual centre has been provided for the Oireachtas in part of the former National College of Art and Design. The room was originally designed in 1827 by Henry Aaron Baker as the entrance hall to the Royal Dublin Society bust gallery and drawing schools. Following construction of the Leinster House 2000 office development by the Office of Public Works, this area was incorporated in the Leinster House complex of buildings.

The project involved the creation of a two tier space in a very confined area.

This objective has been successfully achieved through clever design. The upper area forms an auditorium of 45 seats where the Oireachtas hold a variety of events, ranging from hosting lectures and playing video film to school parties, to the broadcasting of major events from the Dáil Chamber on days when the public and journalist galleries are filled to capacity, for example, on Budget Day.

The lower area houses a broadcast room where Oireachtas Members can conduct televised interviews in a specially designed space. Such

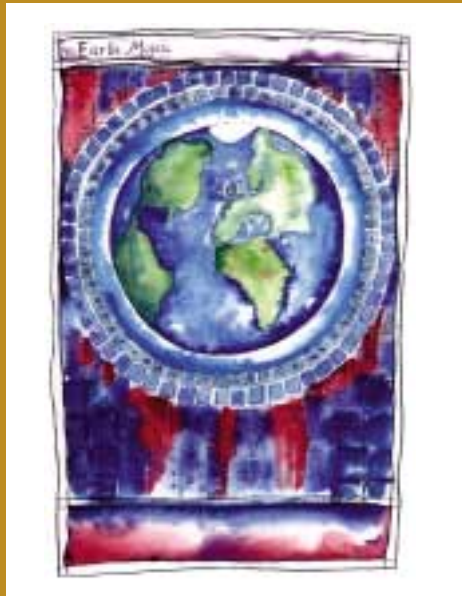
interviews have normally been held outdoors on an area known as the plinth in front of Leinster House. This works well when the weather is fine which unfortunately is frequently not the case. The new facility, which allows such interviews to be held in a comfortable and quiet environment, is linked by fibre optic cable to the Oireachtas broadcasting system. The audio visual centre adds significantly to the facilities of the Houses of the Oireachtas.

**JOHN McMAHON**  
**Project Management Services**

# Per Cent for Art Scheme Leinster House

During the Dáil summer recess 2002 the OPW refurbished an existing toilet facility in Leinster House. The toilets were extended and wheelchair accessible facilities were put in place.

A novel approach to the Per Cent for Art Scheme led to an artistic initiative on this project. Artist Beverly Ranger was commissioned to design a mosaic piece for each of the toilets. The theme she adopted was that of elevation, represented by images of *Earth* in the male facilities and *Heaven* in the female facilities. The *Earth* element is depicted as an elevated view of the globe. *Heaven* is depicted as an angel inspired by the tapestry of Flora from the National Museum of Ireland



## Appointment of Seán Benton as Chairman of The Office of Public Works

Mr Seán Benton was appointed Chairman of the Office of Public Works in November, succeeding Mr Barry Murphy, who completed his seven year term in office.

Mr Benton is a graduate of TCD and holds an MSc in Strategic Management.

Mr Benton had previously been Commissioner in the Office of Public Works with responsibility for Project Management throughout the OPW's full range of projects.

Prior to his appointment as Commissioner Mr Benton was Director of Finance with the Department of Health.





# New Immigration Centre

13–14 Burgh Quay, Dublin



The Departments of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Immigration and Citizenship Division) and Foreign Affairs (Visa Section) with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) decided to administer the expanding numbers of immigrants to Ireland at a shared public facility in the city centre. At time of writing over 100,000 non-European Economic Area nationals are registered on the GNIB computer system. The former Irish Press building and an adjoining Georgian house on Burgh Quay, which were under redevelopment, were purchased and fitted out to the Departments' requirements by the Office of Public Works. The building comprises a gross floor area of 6500 square metres over a basement car park.

The fitting-out brief required accommodation for a 'one-stop shop' immigration facility. The GNIB has up to 1000 people per day presenting themselves for registration while the visa office has about 350 visitors per day. The main public entrance to the building is through the restored Georgian building, providing a transition between old and new. The public office at street level accommodates 21

interview booths, public waiting areas, toilets with baby changing facilities and private interview rooms.

A unique feature of the office layout on the upper floors is that the fully glazed cellular offices are located away from external walls, allowing all occupants the benefit of daylight and external views. Thus the natural light for the cellular offices passes through the open-plan areas first. It would have been more usual in the past to locate cellular offices along the external walls. The novel lighting solution at the centre is very successful.

This was a high priority project as proper facilities were not in place to meet the unexpected influx of immigrant applications in recent times. Rigid time-frames were imposed on the client Departments by Project Management Services of the OPW, to ensure early agreement on internal layouts, and on the design team and contractors so that the building was ready to serve the public at the earliest possible date.

In keeping with the Per Cent for Art policy in public buildings, the artist

Grace Weir and sculptor Andrew Clancy were commissioned to design works that would reflect the multicultural theme of the offices. Grace Weir's design for the public office floor and internal glass walls depict inland seas and rivers of the world. Andrew Clancy's wall sculpture at the entrance is made of 194 etched blue glass panels of equal size, depicting the countries of the world.

**JOHN McMAHON**  
**Project Management Services**



# Restored



# Castletown House, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

When William Conolly became Speaker of the Irish House of Commons in 1715 he needed a suitable residence close to Dublin which reflected his power and wealth. An attorney and son of a Donegal publican, he had amassed his fortune through land deals, dividing forfeited estates into smaller units. He planned an extensive Palladian house, engaging the Italian architect Alessandro Galilei to design the central block as an Italian palace. This is now Castletown House.



Silk wall hangings in the Green and Red Rooms were also sheeted with Tyveck giving a ghostly air to the house.



Galilei returned to Italy in 1718 before work commenced and the colonnades and wings were added by Sir Edward Lovett Pearce. The house bears a completion date of 1725 on a lead hopper, though many accounts indicate that all the interiors were not finished even after the death of William Conolly in 1729. The principal interiors, as seen today, date from the latter half of the 18th century. Tom Conolly, grandnephew of William, inherited the house and married Lady Louisa Lennox, daughter of the second Duke of Richmond, in 1758. Her sister Emily married the Duke of Leinster, who commissioned the 18th century architect, Richard Caste, to build Leinster House and remodel Carton, his country house. Thus the style and development of three great Irish Houses: Carton, Leinster House and Castletown House were linked.

The house continued in private ownership until 1965 when it was sold for development. Lands adjacent to Celbridge village were built on, including the extensive walled gardens. Castletown House itself and its setting fronting on to the River Liffey were

subsequently bought by Desmond Guinness. The Irish Georgian Society, and later the Castletown Foundation, began work to restore and furnish the principal rooms.

In the early 1990s it became clear that extensive repair to the fabric of the house was necessary and that this would be beyond the fund-raising capacity of a voluntary organisation. The house and approximately 14 acres were transferred to the State in 1994 and urgent works commenced. The first contract, with John Sisk & Son Ltd as main contractor, addressed the roof, parapet and cornice of the main block. The parapet, a mixture of stone facing and brick core, had moved, stonework of the cornice needed attention and years of water ingress had decayed a large number of truss ends. The parapet was removed and the cornice repaired with stainless steel linking loose stone. The original quarry at Edenderry was re-opened to provide replacement stone, hand-tooled to match the originals. Roof coverings were removed, structural repairs undertaken and new slate and lead installed under cover of an over roof



which both protected the fabric and contents and allowed for working in all weather.

While this work was on site, the next stage of work was in preparation. This was to concentrate on the interior structure and services, so investigation works including full load testing, radiography and other non-destructive testing were undertaken at the initial stage. The Long Gallery, a frequent venue for concerts, was required to meet crowd loading so its 8-metre long timber beams were incrementally loaded with bricks while ornate ceilings below were monitored. The Baltic Pine beams passed easily, with deflections far below the best of modern structural timbers. Castletown Estate produced its own gas for lighting in the 19th century and, while none of the equipment remained, the site was decontaminated and the gas house, with its flue, restored to serve as boiler house,

Once these investigations were completed, a second contract was placed with Rohcon Ltd. as main contractor, which involved delicate work finding routes and installing

elements within the lavish interiors. While the contents, property of the Castletown Foundation and associated loan items, could be removed to secure, temperature and humidity-controlled stores, much remained which required protection. Water, dust and impact protection was extensive, while management of hot works was strictly controlled. The Long Gallery, with its painted decoration from the 1770s was veiled in white Tyveck, its late 18th century Venetian glass chandeliers dust-proofed and encased in timber protection. Silk wall hangings in the Green and Red Rooms were also sheeted with Tyveck, giving a ghostly air to the house. In the Print Room, which Lady Louisa personally designed in the 1760s, where any dust would have had a detrimental impact, a tent with its own dust extraction system, was created around the area where work was required. Mirrors, fireplaces and any remaining furniture were given individual boxed protection.

The slow work of excavating routes and undertaking structural repairs began. Heating, power, emergency lighting and smoke detection were installed and a lift added. To stabilise

humidity levels, the rooms were pressurised with clean air, utilising the existing flues, suitably lined, which rise through the house to two enormous central chimneys. To get a sense of the complexity and scale of the work involved, it might help to think that the volume of the central block of Castletown House would contain over 60 standard three-bedroom houses and, as if each house was a one-off design, each room of Castletown varies in structure, wall finish and support, cornice, skirting and architrave. Even to lift some floor boards required considerable planning, as the existing boards are not planed smooth on the underside but worked over each floor joist so that they needed to be surveyed and marked on removal to ensure that they could be relaid in the original pattern.

When these works were complete, staff began addressing finishes within the building and installing modern facilities. Again with Rohcon Ltd as main contractor, full reheat kitchen facilities, coffee shop and security room were installed at basement level. Floor finishes were conserved or renewed and extensive re-decoration



OPW Team:

**Project Management:**

Clare McGrath, Dominic McNevin,  
Anne Moran, Georgina Keeley,  
Martina Colville, Deirdre Butler,  
Stephen Monks

**Architectural Conservation:**

Klaus Unger, David Wall,  
John Cahill, Greg Hastings,  
Jack McDonald

**Specialist Structural Engineering Advice:**

John Gallagher, Kieran Walsh

**Specialist Mechanical Systems:**

Larry McGettrick, Jim O'Sullivan

undertaken. Where plaster defects had been identified both in the Long Gallery and Entrance Hall, these were addressed by specialist firms. The contents were returned to the house, paintings re-hung and the house again opened to the public.

Attention then switched to the wings and curved colonnades. The vaulted plaster ceilings of the latter were dangerous as their support structure - in effect a curved upturned boat structure - was severely decayed. A fourth contract, with John Sisk & Son Ltd again returning to Castletown, restored east and west colonnades and the roof of the west wing. Both the entrance flight of granite steps and rear steps were removed, repaired and re-laid. Various other site works, including restoration of an interesting ha-ha wall (i.e. a wall set in a ditch so as not to interrupt the landscape) to the rear were also undertaken.

The OPW has worked with the historic Properties Section of Dúchas, and the Castletown Foundation on conservation issues within the house. These included the care of the prints in the Print Room, the presentation of

Lady Louisa's boudoir and bedroom and the treatment of the mid-19th century crimson damask in the Red Room. Since the initial handover to the State in 1994, Dúchas has worked to ensure the preservation of the setting of the house by acquiring lands to the front and commissioning a study of landscape features in conjunction with advisors in University College Dublin. The recent purchase of the farm buildings adjacent to the west (kitchen) wing is particularly significant, as they are an important group of buildings in themselves. They also form a strong link to the village of Celbridge and have an educational role in illustrating the importance of the Great House as an economic and social force in the community. It is this wider community however, which now has the greatest impact on the Castletown Estate. The original idea of a rural retreat is now completely eroded and Castletown and its sister estate of Carton are seen as planning buffers whose lands ensure that the villages of Maynooth, Leixlip and Celbridge maintain a separation. The OPW and Dúchas are working closely with Kildare County Council and the local communities to protect and enhance this role.

Many conservation issues both in the house itself and the wider parkland remain to be addressed. It is proposed that future phases of work will deal not only with the farm buildings, but also improve visitor facilities utilising the east (stable) wing and west (kitchen) wing. Detailed conservation issues, such as the structural repair of the elegant main staircase (1760) and the conservation of the Red Room, are part of on-going research. These decisions are informed by specialist detective work such as paint analysis and by historical research. The latter has been greatly aided by the Irish Architectural Archive and in particular its director, David Griffin. The contribution of the Castletown Foundation who act as advisors, is invaluable. Together these strands contribute to the conservation of Castletown Demesne as an architectural treasure – an example of the finest Irish and international craftsmanship – and as an educational and historical resource.

JOHN CAHILL  
**Architectural Services**

# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) GROUP

**The CPD group celebrated the success of the 2002 CPD Programme of Training for Professional and Technical staff in the OPW on Friday 22 November 2002.**

The CPD group was established at the end of 2001 at the request of Mr Michael O'Doherty, Principal Architect and Director of Architectural Services, to meet the professional requirements of OPW Professional and Technical staff and also in accordance with ISO requirements for Architectural Services. The group operates under the Chairmanship of Mr Allen Smith, Senior Architect and Information and

Development Officer, and the CPD Training Programme is coordinated by Ms Patricia Ward.

Some of the events organised as part of the 2002 Programme of Training included:

- a lecture on OPW Abroad
- site visit to Fingal County Council Offices and lecture by Tom Grey of Paris-based RFR
- a lecture on GDLA contracts
- a seminar on Public/Private Partnerships
- lecture on recent changes to the Planning Regulations

PATRICIA WARD  
**Architectural Practice**

All of the above training events were well attended with an average of 60 people attending each event. Although the CPD programme was designed for OPW Professional and Technical staff some of the events had a broad relevance and attracted an attendance from Administrative staff also.



## THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Partnership Committee met several times during 2002 and dealt with a range of issues.

These included:

- approving the payment of the final 4% of the Programme for Prosperity & Fairness on 1st October 2002
- extensive consultations in relation to the preparation of the Statement of Strategy 2003-2005
- approving the allocation of the Merit Pay fund
- ongoing review of the operation of the Civil Service Staff Suggestion Scheme, INPUT, within the Office
- staff were circulated with a

questionnaire to assess the level of interest in a Health & Fitness Scheme and to suggestions on what should be included in a proposed scheme. There were 223 replies received and these are currently being evaluated by the Committee.

The following sub-groups of the Committee continue work as appropriate:

- Sport Sponsorship Group
- Artistic Sponsorship Group
- Merit Pay Group

Training of the Partnership Committee continues where necessary and appropriate and the Committee proposes to hold a review of its

functionality in the past and how it will move forward into the future.

At the last meeting of the year held on 10 December, the new Chairman Mr Seán Benton, expressed his view that the Partnership Committee is a valuable forum for discussing issues of concern in the Office and one which he intends to develop in the future.

Finally, all the members of the Partnership Committee would like to extend congratulations to Denis Murphy (outgoing Secretary) on his recent promotion and wish him good luck in his new position.

MARY McDONNELL  
Secretary to the Partnership Committee

# Northside Civic Centre Coolock



Works on developing the Coolock Civic Centre began in August 2001. This €13.8 million project is hugely significant as a 'one-stop shop' for a range of community related services for the community of Coolock and its environs.

The Northside Civic Centre contains a mixture of state and community bodies, with office space for approximately 120 people, including the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs (DSCFA); FAS; Northern Area Health Board (NAHB); Dublin City Council; Northside Partnership; Northside Citizens Information Centre; Local Employment Services; Money Advice and Budgeting Services; Coolock Community Law Centre; Family Mediation Services and the local radio station Near FM.

There are two buildings on the 4500 square metre site: the main building of two and three storeys in height with an area of 4000 square metres approximately, forms the office accommodation, while the single storey building housing a creche has a floor area of 500 square metres, and an outdoor play area of 325 square metres.

The building is oriented to address the Bunratty Road and the green space beyond; this predominantly glazed south façade and angled dark blue mosaic tiled wall leads into the main entrance and café. It sits on a

landscaped podium of 600 mm in height which has a concrete/gravel finish, a row of trees shading the café, steps and a disabled access ramp. The edge of the podium will be faced with dark grey engineering brick, which continues along the west façade and forms an outdoor play space to the front of the creche. On the east side of the building, the podium becomes a grass ramp sloping down to the rear of the building.

The car-park, with spaces for 110 cars, to the north of the site is sunken into the ground and bounded on both west and east sides by a fence, a sloping grass verge and a line of trees. Its entrance is from Adare Green, with exit from Bunratty Drive. From the car-park there is a route through a triangle of trees in a gravel courtyard to the entrance in the main building. There is an outdoor play area for the creche dug into the ground and enclosed by the gray brick wall which extends from the podium at the south of the site. Internally it is proposed to have a public café opening onto the podium, seating approximately 100 people, with Internet desks for public use. The main circulation space, which is enclosed by



the tiled wall, contains the main stairs to both first and second floor level, and can be used as an exhibition/display space for the tenants of the building and the community. It leads into the waiting areas of the state sector accommodation, the DSCFA, FAS and NAHB and into the double-height multi-media conference room available for public use. The state sector accommodation is planned to facilitate further open-plan integration between the three tenants at a later stage. The Coolock Community Law Centre and Family Mediation Services have a separate entrance on the west façade, with a link maintained to the rest of the building through the cafe. The DSCFA and Near FM will have a separate entrance off the rear courtyard which will also act as a fire escape from the first floor.

The east façade of the building is stepped back on this level to reduce the mass of the building to Bunratty Drive and it creates two roof terraces, one of which steps down into an east-facing courtyard shared by DSCFA, FAS and NAHB. The main entrance hall and café spaces are double-height and are overlooked from the first floor

level. The space is roof-lit over the stairwell and from the roof terrace on the second floor.

The building will have a concrete slab and column structure with rendered walls internally and externally on all facades apart from a single-storey leaf of grey brick. This runs from the south façade glazed curtain-walling around the creche while the angled brick walls form windows and the rendered-concrete inclined slab on the south façade scoops light into the Law Centre and Family Mediation Services reception area. The roof will be lightweight on steel trusses and all windows, shutters and louvres are to be aluminium with a black Powdercoat finish.

The creche is single storey with a mezzanine to the west façade for staff accommodation. It will cater for 45 children, divided into two units catering for 15 sessional and full time 3-6 year olds and 10 babies and toddlers together with a drop-in centre for 20 babies and toddlers for use by both staff and customers of the centre. It is a steel-framed building with a lightweight metal deck roof, a concrete

slab mezzanine level, internal block work and stud partitioning and clad on all sides with pale blue Tegral Pelicolor fibre cement panels. All windows and glazed curtain walling will match the main building.

Internally the reception area forms a roof-lit ramp downwards to each play area and the dining area, dividing the play areas from the kitchen and dining and staff accommodation. The glazed east façade opens the playrooms out to the stepped play area, which is enclosed from the car-park by the brick wall curling around the building.

CATHERINE KENNEDY  
**Project Management Services**





# design for all exhibition

On 14 October 2002, Minister of State Mr Tom Parlon, TD, launched the 'Design for All' exhibition in the Atrium, 51 St Stephens Green, Dublin 2. The exhibition is presented by the Office of Public Works in conjunction with the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and the Institute for Design and Disability.

The theme of the exhibition is Universal Access and it shows the exhibition is an indication of the commitment of both the Office of Public Works and the Government to improve the built environment in terms of accessibility. Its aim is to highlight the difficulties experienced by people with varying degrees of ability and to demonstrate how consultation and design solutions can achieve inclusive accessibility.

The exhibition, designed by Scroope Design, is assembled around the Seven Principles of Universal Design as compiled by the Centre for Universal Design, North Carolina State University. The exhibition itself is an example of Design for All. Type and fonts are for varying levels of vision, as is the use of

3-D lettering and colour for contrast and lighting. Text is so positioned on panels to be easily read by people of varying heights, either standing or sitting.

The choice of flooring is based on sound reflection, change of texture and colour contrast, promoting the exchange of and ease of wheelchair movement. The interactive displays and audio-visual displays provide variety to the overall communications and add deeper levels of information. Also included is audio commentary behind each panel, describing the text, and visual messages are accessible through a button-activated handset mounted on tactile plates on the panels.

In recent correspondence, Mr Paul Hogan, Irish Board Member of the European Institute for Design and Disability, stated 'I have been promoting the design for all idea in various guises for the past fifteen years and can safely say that the exhibition is the best evocation of these concepts which has been seen in Ireland'.

Throughout 2003, which has been designated the European Year of People with Disabilities, the exhibition will travel to various venues countrywide as part of OPW's contribution to this project. Venues will include Limerick, Cavan, Ennis, Longford, Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Kilkenny.

It is hoped that the exhibition will assist some of the EU's objectives for 2003 in

- Encouraging reflection and discussion
- Promoting the exchange of experience of good practice and effective strategies
- Reinforcing cooperation amongst interested parties
- Promoting a positive image, and
- Making people aware of the individuality of people regardless of ability.

JACK BRENNAN  
Project Management Services

# Universal Accessibility Auditing Training



The following were presented with certificates:

**Angela Rolfe,**  
Senior Architect, New Works I

**Jack McDonald,**  
Assistant Architect, New Works I

**Brendan Cormican,**  
Architect, New Works II

**Gerard Bourke,**  
Architect, New Works II

**Fred McElwee,**  
Senior Architect, New Works III

**Ian Kelly,**  
Senior Architect, New Works IV

**Kevin Wolahan,**  
Senior Architect, New Works IV

**Maeve Magennis,**  
Assistant Architect,  
North East Districts Office

**Michael Hoey,**  
Assistant Architect,  
Dublin South Regional Office

**Bill Lonergan,**  
Assistant Architect,  
Waterford District Office

**Hugh Conlon,**  
Senior Architect,  
Galway District Office

**Leonard Whyte,**  
Assistant Architect,  
Sligo District Office

**Michael Brennan,**  
Assistant Architect,  
Cork District Office

The Universal Accessibility Audit (UAA) Programme is central to the overall strategy for introducing access audits into the Practice Procedures for OPW Architectural Services and Property Maintenance Services Regional Offices. The training of access auditors was in the 2002 Work Programme of the Sustainable Design and Universal Access Work Group. The Work Group comprised: Klaus Unger, Chair; Angela Rolfe; Roeland Van Elsen; Kevin McKenna; Aisling Ni Bhriain; Keith Milsom and Conor Clarke.

More than four years ago Kevin McKenna and Aisling Ni Bhriain of Architectural Services attended the UAA Course at the Centre for Universal Accessibility in the Built Environment in the School of the Built Environment at the University of Ulster. They qualified as the first OPW access auditors.

Since then the number of requests for access audits has grown steadily. Recently, it became clear that additional auditors were required to ensure standardised best-practice service throughout the OPW. The intention is that each New Works Section will have two access auditors and each Regional Office will have an auditor.

The manager of the OPW Access Programme and the Architectural Services CPD Group together invited Kenneth Ewart and Billy McAlister of the Centre for Universal Accessibility in the Built Environment to bring their course to the OPW last May. Special thanks are due to Patricia Ward, administrator to the OPW CPD Group, for her very pro-active and efficient administration of this course.

The course consisted of five days of lectures, seminars and case studies covering all the issues relating to Universal Access. The course participants then had to produce a case study audit.

**The buildings selected for audit included:**

- Government Offices in Letterkenny and Mullingar
- Offices of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs at Furbo, Co. Galway
- Probation and Welfare Office in Crumlin
- Social Welfare Offices in Dun Laoghaire and Bishops Court, Dublin
- External Areas of Dublin Zoo
- Emo Court, Co. Laois

- Garda Stations in Blackrock, Dungarvan, and Cahirciveen
- The Millennium Wing, National Gallery of Ireland

During the final module of the course students presented reports which were then critiqued by Kenneth Ewart and Billy McAlister. According to both assessors, the quality and standard of the reports submitted by the OPW participants exceeded that of anything they had received in the past.

These case studies offer a unique insight into a wide range of buildings for which the OPW is responsible. The contents of these case studies will be prioritised, together with the existing Access Programme, to form a coherent programme of Universal Access.

The Chairman, Mr Seán Benton, presented certificates to the thirteen students who had successfully completed the course. To mark the occasion, a short reception followed in the Boardroom on Friday 22 November.

ANGELA ROLFE  
**Architectural Services**

# Turning Japanese



## The Problem

At end of May 2001 an urgent case request to relocate Gaelscoil Chill Dara was received from the Department of Education and Science. This followed a refusal by An Bord Pleanála to grant planning permission to the Department on a previously selected development site in Newbridge, County Kildare.

An initial consideration of site proposals failed to yield any promising options. However, local contacts alerted the OPW to the possibility of the nearby Sundai Japanese School being interested in disposing of some of its facility. The school had been established some ten years earlier in the grounds of the former country residence of the McGrath family at Curragh Grange, to cater for the children of Japanese nationals working in Ireland. As the Japanese post-war boom ground to a halt through the 1990s, the numbers of Japanese workers and their children in Ireland fell off dramatically and the school's client base began to evaporate. The corresponding growth in attendance at Gaelscoil Chill Dara provided an opportunity for a unique linguistic substitution of accommodation requirements.

## The Background

In early 1999 the Minister for Education & Science had decided that the majority of all new school buildings would be constructed on state-owned land. Following approaches to the OPW an agreement was drawn up which engaged the OPW as procurement agent for such new development sites. The arrangement echoed to some extent the former Schools Division of the OPW which had been responsible for primary school building up to 1985. A dedicated section was established in Property Management in 2000 to develop the new programme. Since then the section has expanded its portfolio to almost 70 cases and a corresponding programme at post-primary level. Further expansion of the OPW's property management service to the Department has been explored for development in 2003. Spending commitments in 2002 may reach €15m.

## The Solution

In 2002 the Schools Section of the Property Management Division purchased this €6.3m school facility for the Department of Education & Science which provided a rapid turn-key solution to the chronic

accommodation problem of a school temporarily located on the bleak stretches of the Curragh of Kildare. Based on prevailing build costs at the time, the OPW estimated that a new build of similar extent could cost over €7m. The actual purchase cost of site and buildings at €6.3m represented a significant saving to the State as well as a much foreshortened delivery timescale for an operational facility. The acquisition was a notable success for one of the Office's newer sections and a significant milestone in the OPW's procurement delivery to one of its largest clients.

Following first sight of the Sundai facility (designed by Burke Kennedy Doyle Architects), Schools Section was immediately enthused by the high quality turn-key accommodation solution it promised. The client Department was encouraged to visit the facility early on to provide the necessary commitment to what would be a major acquisition for any accommodation programme. The enthusiastic technical opinion of Allen Smith, Senior Architect, underlined the calibre of the facility and helped to copper-fasten agreement that the facility would be a major asset to the State.

# Sa chaoi Seapánaigh



Swift and detailed technical assessment allowed the OPW to engage in negotiations within eight weeks of the first view of the facility. The OPW and the client Department were conscious that the relatively favourable funding position of the 2001 programme would not continue and that a single purchase of this magnitude would only happen in 2001/02. Following hard negotiations with the vendors, agent and several lengthy calls to Japan, the OPW had secured agreement on the property by the end of September 2001. Final client-approval was received in November and a formal offer to purchase was issued on 22 November – less than six months since the Department's initial case request. Final handover took place in May 2002 after the Japanese pupils had vacated the school facilities.

## The Package

Not only did the OPW manage a rapid turnaround on this acquisition case but the final product far exceeded the client's original expectation. The final purchase package comprised:

- 2.97 hectares of landscaped sylvan grounds

- 4200 square metres of high quality purpose-built educational accommodation
- 400 square metres of ancillary outbuildings.

The main buildings illustrated with this article include a single storey dining hall, a two-storey dormitory block and a two-storey school block. The school block features seven large classrooms with additional accommodation for a conference room, library, science laboratory, music room, art room, counselling room and staff rooms. The extent of accommodation sets a new standard in the Irish primary school sector. The surrounding landscaped grounds equally raise the bar on the type of enriching settings provided for our young school population.

Clearly the campus provides far more accommodation than required for the Gaelscoil alone and the Department intends to meet other educational accommodation needs of the Kildare area on this campus in the future.

## The Client

As end-user, Gaelscoil Cill Dara in its new location commenced the new

school year on 2 September 2002. Príomhoide Seán dePaor has stated that the school's 273 pupils and 11 staff 'feel privileged every day to be part of this building and campus'. The Department of Education & Science was particularly pleased at the rapidity of resolution of the situation where its own development solution had reached a total impasse, coming with the bonus of a new educational campus which will provide additional accommodation options into the future.

## The Credits

The successful conclusion to this case could not have been possible without the invaluable contribution of the following:

Allen Smith, Senior Architect; Brian Boyle, District Inspector; Tom Guy, Senior Clerk of Works from North-East Districts; Allen Morgan, Valuers Section; Helen O'Neill, Senior Architect; Bill Kavanagh of the Department of Education & Science and Rhona Henry, CSSO.

MARTIN O'GORMAN  
Project Management Service

RUE DU  
CHEVAL VERT  
17



# Opening of the CENTRE CULTUREL IRLANDAIS PARIS

CCI Library



CCI Mediathek



Friday, 18 October 2002 the start of a week of celebrations to mark the opening of the Irish College in Paris. The official opening was performed by the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, Mr John O'Donoghue, TD, who praised everyone involved in the restoration and transformation of the building.

The opening marked the culmination of two years' work which had been inaugurated by Martin Cullen TD, then Minister of State at the Office of Public Works, on 3 May 2000. The week long programme of concerts, exhibitions, recitals and readings came to an end on Thursday, 24 October.

The €10.5m refurbishment and conservation of this historic building was grant-aided by the Irish Government. The grant was administered by the Office of Public Works who also provided project management and

professional services for the project. Praise was received from the Director of the Centre Culturel Irlandais Helen Carey; *The OPW took the bit between their teeth and have executed the most detailed restoration, according to the highest standards of the Ville de Paris and Batiments de France, with finishes exactly in line with the period and the original architecture.*

Some of the many examples of the painstaking restoration work can be found in the Chapel, which had to be fully scaffolded so that a specialist firm could put in hundreds of hours restoring the gilt and stencil work. Above the Chapel, the Library floor was dipping, due to the weight of the 10,000 leather bound volumes on the shelves. Here, damaged tiles were replaced to match the originals.

The refurbished building houses over 40 en-suite rooms which will be made

available for artists and students with an artistic or educational connection to Ireland and France. These students will follow in the footsteps of many famous names who studied here over the centuries.

The new Irish Cultural Centre – the Centre Culturel Irlandais – will also serve as a research facility and provide a first class database on Ireland. It will highlight what is happening in Ireland on the cultural front by arranging lectures, recitals and exhibitions. In addition, it will provide teaching facilities to enlighten Irish people about France and vice-versa as well as retraining facilities for language teachers. The Irish community in Paris will also benefit through the greatly improved facilities for hosting events and State and semi-State functions of Irish significance.

CATHY WALSH  
Project Management Services



Belfast



Wexford



Dublin



Wexford

Sculpture First marks a new venture in the twelve-year history of the OPW's annual Art of the State exhibition, as it is the first exhibition to focus on the three-dimensional object rather than painting and graphic work. Since 1997 the OPW has presented this exhibition in partnership with the Department of Finance & Personnel of Northern Ireland and it has proved to be a very successful venture for both.

The 2002/03 Art of the State exhibition opened in Queen's University, Belfast in September, travelled to Wexford for the Opera Festival in October and on to the State Apartments, Dublin Castle in December and will finish its tour in the new Offaly County Council Offices in Tullamore in January 2003.

This exhibition incorporates well-known twentieth century bronzes as well as figurative and abstract contemporary pieces. An impressive number of works from Irish sculptors, north and south, are exhibited. Also included are models for major public commissions such

as John Behan's 'Arrival - A New Dawn' and Ross Wilson's 'Digory Kirk'.

The exhibition also features works from the collections of the National Gallery of Ireland and the Ulster Museum. Such works include Oisín Kelly's model of 'The Fate of the Children of Lir' from the National Gallery of Ireland and Rosamund Praeger's charming 'Philosopher' from the Ulster Museum. In addition, for the Dublin Castle venue, five superb bronze busts by renowned sculptor Albert Power were also kindly lent by the National Gallery of Ireland.

The nature of the sculptural works provided the opportunity for creativity in the display of this year's exhibition, and an outdoor sculpture trail was devised for the Belfast and Dublin venues. This interactive aspect of the display was particularly popular with both young and old.

An illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition.



Pyramid by Michael Warren

# SCULPTURE FIRST

ART OF THE STATE 2002/03  
Jacquie Moore  
ART MANAGEMENT



*Serpent Water Feature* by Killian Schurmann

Sculpture First marks a new venture in the twelve-year history of the OPW's annual Art of the State exhibition, as it is the first exhibition to focus on the three-dimensional object rather than painting and graphic work.



# New Look

Office Accommodation  
and Showrooms at OPW's  
Furniture Division



The Furniture Division of the Office of Public Works moved to a customised complex in Mountshannon Road in the early 1980s. As part of the overall programme of upgrading office accommodation throughout the OPW, approval was given in 1999 by Mr Paul Molloy, then Director of the Government Supplies Agency, to refurbish the offices in Furniture Division.

Elliott Maguire Landers Architects, Limerick, were appointed Consultant Architects, with Mr Paul Sherwin as the OPW Monitoring Architect. Work commenced in January 2000. During the period of refurbishment staff were relocated to two areas within the furniture warehouse. While this arrangement resulted in significant inconvenience and overcrowding, all staff co-operated in the knowledge that the end result would be worth waiting for. They are to be thanked for their patience.

The design brief called for the complete redesigning and refurbishment of the offices that were located on the first floor of an existing warehouse building. While the existing

external walls, roof and stairwell were retained, the internal layout of cellular offices was completely redesigned. A design that would simultaneously introduce light into the centre of the block while providing an improved working environment and a stimulating showroom for display of furniture was agreed. Offices were provided along the northern face, with the showroom to the south, partitioned from a central open plan office. This central wedge-shaped space was lit through a rooflight spanning a curved opening in the ceiling. Strong colours in the showroom define the space, with softer hues providing a more subdued environment in the offices.

While working closely with the staff in Furniture Division, architects designed the office layout and chose furniture and floorcovering from a number of suppliers. This enables the entire building to be used as a showcase for various Departments as it showed the different types of furniture and floor-coverings available.

The result of the refurbishment is a transformation from a mid 70's design to state-of-the-art showrooms and

offices. Staff now proudly welcome visitors. Among the many visitors who have signed the visitors' book are staff from the Cuban Embassy, the Chairman of the National Gallery of Ireland, staff from various Government Departments and contractors.

Under the direction of Mr Des Thorpe, Director of Property Maintenance, improvements are continuing, with the upgrading of the workshop to incorporate a new dust extraction system and a new spray booth. By the end of 2002 a state-of-the-art security system and new traffic control measures will be installed.

**ROBERT GUIHEN**  
**Director of Furniture Services**

OPW  
ARCHITECTURAL  
TOURS 2002



*The OPW Architectural Tours, an initiative which commenced in 2000, are managed by a sub-group of the OPW Partnership Committee under the direction of Denis Carr. The purpose of the tours is to give the OPW staff opportunities to experience at first-hand the quality and scope of the work that the OPW carries out. It is also an excellent opportunity for staff from across the country to meet with their colleagues that they may otherwise never meet. This has proved to be an excellent method of breaking down communication barriers in an organisation as large and with such a geographical spread as the OPW.*

The following tours took place in 2002:

March: Millennium Wing, National Gallery of Ireland

April: War Memorial Gardens; St. Enda's;  
Kilmainham Gaol

June: Sceilig Interpretive Centre;  
Derrynane House and the Rock of Cashel

September: Chester Beatty Library

October: Irish College, Paris

November: Fota House; Charles Fort;  
Desmond Castle; Barryscourt Castle;  
Ormond Castle; Carrick on Suir.

Another year of tours is now behind us and we would like to thank the Chairman and the Partnership Committee for their sponsorship and all the help they have given to make these tours possible. This year 476 staff participated in the tours and helped make them a great success.

I am delighted to confirm that the new Chairman Seán Benton has indicated that funding will continue to be made available for the Architectural Tours in 2003.

The following are a number of personal accounts by some of the participants on the various tours and I'd like to thank them for making the effort to bring a little of the tours back to share with everyone else.

DENIS CARR  
**Architectural Tours Committee**



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS LASTING MEMORIES

There was phenomenal interest in the first exhibition to be held at the National Gallery's New Millennium Wing in Clare Street. The exhibition featured the work of artists responsible for the Impressionist Movement, which began in the late 1860s. On view were paintings by Claude Monet, Auguste Renoir, Camille Pissarro and Alfred Sisley, the four artists who were at the core of Impressionism. Works by Van Gogh, Cezanne, and Gauguin also featured.

A late evening viewing was arranged for up to 300 OPW staff. It was an informal event with the option of joining a tour or wandering casually through the exhibition. There were 69 paintings on view, all from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Armed with an audio handset one could listen to the detail of each artist's work.

The driving force behind Impressionism was Monet and several of his paintings were on view, notably the famous *Haystacks* and *Water Lilies*. Art, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder and I'm sure everyone had a particular liking for one or other painting. My own favourite was *Morning Sunlight on the Snow* by Pissarro.

Impressionism did not always enjoy such popularity. In fact one critic, having just seen the first exhibition in 1874, wrote:

'Five or six lunatics have joined together to exhibit their works allegedly called paintings. People are rocking with laughter in front of these pictures. These would-be artists call themselves Revolutionaries 'Impressionists'

The name was actually derived from a picture by Monet, *Impressionism, Sunrise*. Attitudes have certainly changed since then and the reaction from those who attended this exhibition was very favourable indeed.

The merits of colour, light and shade were the subject of further discussions over refreshments later that night among those who now know their Manets from their Monets.

A big thank you must go to the very courteous staff at the National Gallery of Ireland.

NIGEL O'MAHONY  
**Building Maintenance Services**



# VISITING THE KINGDOM COUNTY OF KERRY

On Friday 7 June we headed off south for the Kingdom county. A very pleasant journey with entertainment provided by the aspiring stars of the OPW brought us to the Gleneagle Hotel in Killarney. After settling in and partaking of some refreshments we joined the locals for some good old ceili dancing, no trouble sleeping that night.

Saturday morning after a good Irish breakfast we set out for Sceilig Michael. We had the good fortune of a very knowledgeable guide being one of the crew, namely Michael Brennan from the Cork office. Michael is a Kerry man and there was no stone left unturned on the journey from Killarney to Portmagee. The sun was shining, the scenery breathtaking and with Michael's sweet drawl talking us through the local history of Killorglin, Glenbeigh, Kells and Cahirciveen one wonders why anyone is left in Dublin. But you cannot live on the scenery alone – can you?

The Skelligs are remote rocks in the Atlantic Ocean and access is difficult even in summer. This early Christian monastic settlement attracts a lot of visitors each year and is famous for its numerous breeding seabirds. Unfortunately we were unable to travel out to Sceilig Michael due to high swell at sea, instead we enjoyed a visit to the Sceilig Interpretive Centre on Valentia Island and a look from dry land at the huge rock rising 715 feet above the Atlantic.

As Denis rounded everybody up it was back on the bus again and southward bound to Derrynane House, the ancestral home of Daniel O'Connell. Michael again guided us through the hills and valleys of this enchanting part of the county. Derrynane House is situated on 120 hectares of

parklands on the scenic Kerry coast, the house displays many relics of O'Connell's life and career. Derrynane greeted us in glorious sunshine; after our tour of this fine house and some refreshments we had time for a stroll on the white sandy beach close by. It was easy to understand why Daniel O'Connell used this retreat for his country residence.

Time for roll-call again and settled comfortably back on the bus after a truly lovely day, it was back to Killarney to prepare for the evening festivities which included dinner and an evening's entertainment at the Gleneagle Hotel.

Unfortunately Sunday morning arrived with grey skies and heavy rain but it was impossible to dampen the spirits of our happy bunch. We departed the Gleneagle Hotel after breakfast for Cashel, to visit the Rock of Cashel, a group of medieval buildings set on an outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale. The rain continued throughout our visit to this historic abbey and with hunger pangs setting in we did not delay. When Denis, our tour operator, was happy that nobody was left behind it was off again for the last port of call before Dublin - Monasterevin for dinner.

We arrived back in Dublin a little tired but exhilarated after a wonderful weekend.

ANNE GOFF  
**Receptionist, Head Office**



# REBELS VISIT TO THE REBEL COUNTY OF CORK

The final Architectural Tour of the year took place on the first weekend in November. A group of almost 50 set off for Cork to view some of the county's historical sights. Typical Friday traffic meant that we did not arrive at the Imperial Hotel until 9 pm. Just in time then for a meal and a few drinks before hitting the cot for an early night as a hectic schedule was promised for Saturday.

A visit to Fota House and Gardens was first on the list. The house, which has only recently been opened to the public, was sparsely furnished although items in keeping with the period are being acquired. The audiovisual touch-screens added some life. This was particularly so in the kitchen where the style of open range cooking was shown. The pulley-operated spit was an ingenious piece of work. In spite of the weather some took the opportunity for a brief visit to the Wildlife Park.

The next stop was Charles Fort in Kinsale. In dismal weather, we were treated to a most interesting tour of this classic 17th century star shaped fort. The fort was built to prevent attacking naval forces from entering the then strategic Kinsale harbour. With winds reaching the higher points of the Beaufort Scale, the bridge scene from 'Titanic' was acted out by some at the spot known as Devil's Bastion. The enthusiasm of our guide fully captured the attention of all as he recalled the extraordinary history of the fort, from the time of King Charles II to the British withdrawal in 1921. The fort had housed as many as 500 soldiers in its day.

Desmond Castle in the heart of Kinsale was the next place we visited. Despite its plain outer appearance this was a fascinating place. It was built originally in the 16th century as the Kinsale Customs House to cater for the volume of business coming through Kinsale port. During the 17th and 18th centuries it served as a prison holding French and Spanish prisoners of war. Some 54 perished in a fire in 1747. For most, it was a merciful death as the conditions were horrific. The reconstruction of a common cell gave a very clear and chilling impression of this. During the Great Famine of 1847 the castle was turned into a workhouse housing some 200 people.

The influence of the Irish in the international wine trade can be traced from an exhibition in the upper rooms of the Castle. Sadly, there were no samples to be had. To show that this gave no offence, we headed straight to the nearest pub to try the local beverage. Just a word about the two guides whose level of knowledge was quite astounding and in no small way contributed to a wonderful tour.

A game of cards took place on the bus as we returned to Cork City. It must be said here that the charge of cheating against a player was unproven!

Staff from the local OPW offices joined us for dinner back at the hotel and a very enjoyable evening was had by all. Well done to Denis and all concerned.

NIGEL O'MAHONY  
**Building Maintenance Services**

# MANSIONS, MUSEUMS AND COMMISSIONERS

*Mansions, Museums and Commissioners* an Architectural History of the Office of Public Works on St Stephen's Green was launched by Minister of State Tom Parlon, TD on Thursday 3 October 2002 in the Atrium, 51 St Stephen's Green.

This book represents a collaboration between the Office of Public Works and the Irish Architectural Archive. The book, written by Simon Lincoln of the Irish Architectural Archive, was commissioned by the outgoing OPW Chairman, Barry Murphy.

*Mansions, Museums and Commissioners* brings the reader through the history of No 51 St Stephen's Green from the mid-seventeenth century to its current splendour.



This is the second publication produced jointly by the OPW and the IAA: in 2000 an architectural history of *Leinster House* by David Griffin, Director of the IAA, and Caroline Pegum of the OPW, was published.

Both *Mansions, Museums and Commissioners* and *Leinster House* are available for purchase at the Government Publications Sales Office in Molesworth Street at a cost of €23 each.

## BRIGHTSIDE – THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS EMPLOYEES' BENEVOLENT FUND



At the recent AGM, members of Brightside decided to make several changes to the constitution. A proposal to change the name to 'Brightside – The Office of Public Works Employees' Benevolent Fund' was adopted unanimously.

During the year ended 30 September 2002, Brightside raised almost €17,500 through staff salary deductions, the annual Christmas raffle and various other fundraising activities. A total of €9,800 was used to assist staff members and €7,100 was donated to 20 charitable groups.

The annual quiz was held in The Gingerman pub on 21 November with 20 teams competing. The winners were a team managed by John Drohan (Property



Management) and included Dara Fitzpatrick, Barry O'Connor, David Drohan and Paul Porter. Donations totaling €4,000 were made to various charities as part of the quiz night. Staff members had nominated the charities receiving donations.

The Brightside Christmas Raffle and Coffee Morning was held on Monday 23 December in the Atrium – last year over €2,800 was raised through this raffle and this year's event raised in excess of €3,500.

Staff can support Brightside in a number of ways: (1) by becoming a member (details on the Intranet), (2) by donating any Dublin Bus tickets with change on them, (3) by contributing to any of the raffles held every year at Christmas and Easter.

DONAL WICKHAM  
Treasurer

## Fundraising Gala



Monica Bonnie, famous Xylophone player, performed at the Gráine Hope Fundraising Gala in the Atrium, Office of Public Works, 51 St. Stephen's Green, Saturday 21 December.

# Farmleigh Receives 'Ireland's Best' Service Excellence Award from CERT

Farmleigh has won 'Ireland's Best' Service Excellence Award. The presentation was made by Derek Davis in October 2002.

The award, which is operated by CERT and audited independently, is designed to promote and recognise establishments which have demonstrated a high level of service excellence and a strong commitment to the customer. The audit looks at each company's service delivery and back-up systems, based on specific criteria set out in 'Ireland's Best' Service Excellence Programme.

Staff at Farmleigh underwent training in communications, team building, empowerment and customer service delivery, and an overall action plan was agreed. This enabled them to apply for the award and undergo the audit.

Farmleigh is the first facility within the Civil Service to achieve this award.

CERT is the national body responsible for training and development in the Irish tourism and hospitality industry, whose mission is to foster the attainment of world class service through the industry.



## OPW Awards 2002

PROJECT	AWARDS SCHEME	AWARD TITLE	CLIENT(S)	ARCHITECT/ENGINEER
Grange EU Food & Veterinary Office	RIAI Regional Award	Award	Office of Public Works on behalf of the European Commission	Office of Public Works
Grange EU Food & Veterinary Office	An Taisce	Sustainability Award	Office of Public Works on behalf of the European Commission	Office of Public Works
National Museum of Country Life, Co. Mayo	AAI Annual Awards for Excellence in Architectural Design	Award	Office of Public Works on behalf of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Islands	Office of Public Works
National Gallery of Ireland Millennium Wing	RIAI Regional Award	Best Public Building	Office of Public Works on behalf of the National Gallery of Ireland	Benson & Forsyth commissioned by the Office of Public Works
National Gallery of Ireland Millennium Wing	RIBA Regional Awards 2002	European Union Award	Office of Public Works on behalf of the National Gallery of Ireland	Benson & Forsyth commissioned by the Office of Public Works
National Gallery of Ireland Millennium Wing	Stirling Prize Award	Shortlisted	Office of Public Works on behalf of the National Gallery of Ireland	Benson & Forsyth commissioned by the Office of Public Works
Legal Aid Board Headquarters, Caherciveen	RIAI Regional Award	Award	Office of Public Works on behalf of the Legal Aid Board	McCarthy Lynch Partnership commissioned by the Office of Public Works
National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks	RIAI Medal for Conservation 1993/94/95	Medal for Conservation	Office of Public Works on behalf of the Department of Arts, Heritage & the Islands	Office of Public Works in conjunction with Gilroy McMahon
ISO Accreditation	Certificate of Registration of Quality System	IS EN ISO 9001:2000	Office of Public Works, Arterial Drainage Maintenance Services, Dublin	Office of Public Works



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