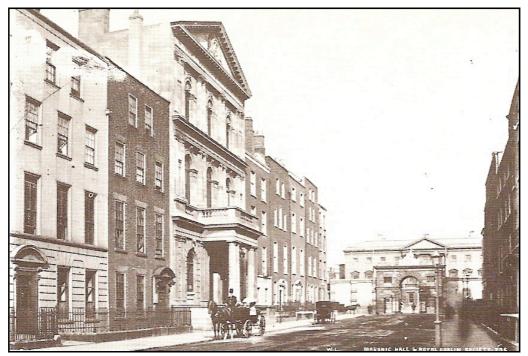






### Introduction

For Postgraduate Students studying for a Masters of Urban Building Conservation, part of the course is an assignment where each student chooses a suitable historic building and carries out a Building Study, adhering as closely as possible to the criteria laid down for the assignment.



The Masonic Hall at Molesworth Street in the late 1890's

There were four principle elements to the Building Study:

The first was research into the building's history through the use of documentary sources. This was to include an investigation of its designer and patron, through which an understanding of the building's historical and architectural significance could be reached.

The second was an examination of the building involving an accurate survey and record of the building in its present state along with an investigation of the buildings fabric. This was to include a record of the building's evolution, alterations carried out, deviations from the original design, and any deterioration of the building's fabric.

The third was to identify issues raised by the conservation and re-use of the building in terms of function and fabric.

The fourth was a proposition for intervention to maintain, restore and conserve the building's original fabric.

With this in mind, the building that I immediately thought of was the Masonic Hall at 17 & 18 Molesworth Street. Initially the main impetus for considering the Hall, and focussing on it without giving much consideration to any other building, was that I had learned from a previous assignment that trying to carry out an investigation of a building you cannot get access to all parts of will inevitably be a fruitless exercise. I have been a member of the Masonic Order for fourteen years and was confident that, not only would I get access to all parts of the building, but I could also count on the assistance of people employed within, whom I had come to know reasonably well over the years. This turned out to be very much the case and it was my good fortune to have the cheerful and willing assistance and advice of those involved.

As I began the study it came as a surprise to find that no-one before now has carried out an investigation of this type into the building's history and evolution over its one hundred and forty years of existence. There are two large libraries containing thousands of books, pamphlets and other documents full of in-depth investigations into the history and evolution of Freemasonry and other associated movements worldwide, but there is no book on the Masonic Hall at Molesworth Street. From this one could be forgiven for thinking that there was a lack of interest in, and appreciation of, a building which is, in itself, a potent symbol of an institution which played an important social role for the elite of Irish society for over two hundred years. Why?

The answer to this lies with the previous membership of the Order. Consideration must be given to the fact that for many of the people who entered and exited the Hall for much of its existence to date, the sumptuous and elaborate decoration and the scale of some of the rooms, was nothing particularly out of the ordinary. The Hall reflected a style and scale that these men would have been accustomed to in their places of work, such as banks, insurance companies and Georgian houses converted to office use, their places of worship and, in a great many cases, their own homes. While it has always been a building the membership have been proud of, there was, nevertheless an assumption verging on casual as to the buildings architectural and historic significance, emanating from the self confidence of a privileged elite who held the reigns of power.

However, times have changed and Freemasonry in Ireland today is very different reflecting a changed society from the one which saw the construction of the Hall and the first eighty years of its existence. As time moves on the Hall is becoming more and more significant as a visible symbol of an era in the Country's history. Architecturally, its significance is also increasing with an ever growing interest in things Victorian combined with the fact that the building itself is quite unique, being a rare example of 19<sup>th</sup> century Classical revival in Dublin and one of only two buildings in the city to have been faced with Ancaster limestone from Lincolnshire (some refer to it as Bath limestone).

While there is much information readily available from the Orders Archives held at Molesworth Street, there is also a great deal that is not. Many key plans and documents, including the Deeds to the building, cannot be found. All documentation regarding the two largest interventions, the extensions of 1901/2 and the demolition of same in 1973, have yet to come to light. There are boxes of hand written correspondence on matters specifically relating to the building which have been put to one side in the expectant hope

that they will, one day, be sorted, deciphered and transcribed. At this point it is unknown precisely what this written correspondence contains but it can be assumed that its contents will make a significant contribution to filling the gaps in this document.

It is most important that the reader understands that, at the time of writing, this document's attempt to fully chart the history of the Hall's evolution, from mere concept at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, is far from complete and, for the time being, must be seen in that context. Time constraints on the assignment and the absence of key documentation mean that there is a great deal yet to be done to "dot the i's and cross the t's " in order to bring it up to the status of *Secondary Source*.

Nevertheless, it is hoped that this document will serve as more than a Postgraduate assignment in that it will promote a greater interest in, and understanding of, the architectural and historic significance of the building, both within the Masonic Order and within the architectural conservation community of Dublin. With the realisation that there is still much to be added it is hoped that it will provide a framework which can be added to and revised over time, not only by me, but by anyone who has something to contribute.

The building does not fulfil the third principle element of the assignment in that the building is not in a state of re-use, although a potential re-use is discussed towards the end of the assignment, should the Masonic Order at any time in the future decide to quit the building. From a conservation stance, the building is in good order and, while some inappropriate interventions have been made in the past, these are relatively minor and in areas that are not immediately visible. However, a significant conservation issue is developing in the area of the front roof which is aired in the chapter, "Conservation Issues for the Future".

There are a number of people to be acknowledged without whose help, in terms of advice, information and assistance, this Study would not have been possible:

Right Worshipful Brother Barry Lyons, Grand Secretary

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Keith Cochrane

Neil Sholdice, Dip.Arch, MUBC, FRIAI

Ms. Marion Gaule, History of Art Department, UCD

Ms. Geraldine Walsh, Dublin Civic Trust

Mr. Gerry Hayden, Faculty Photographer, Architecture Faculty, UCD

Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

All photographs, drawings and plans which are not the work of the author are from the following sources ("T" denotes the top of the page; "M" denotes the middle; "B" denotes the bottom; "L" and "R" denote left and right respectively):

Grand Lodge of Ireland Archives – 4TR, 12L, 12R, 14L, 14R, 22T, 22BL, 22BR, 24T, 24M, 24BL, 24BR, 51T, 59B, 64T, 64BL, 64BM, 64BR, 65TL, 65TR, 65ML, 65MR, 65B, 68, 71, 72T, 72B, 73, 75BL, 90, 91, 92T, 92B, 93, 94T, 94B, 96, 97

Hamilton Young Architects – 78L, 78M, 78R, 79L, 79R, 80TL, 80TR, 80BL, 80BR, 81TL, 81TR, 81ML, 81MR, 81BL, 81BR, 82T, 82B, 83T, 83B,

Foster, Andy, Author of Pevsners Architectural Guide to Birmingham – 30TR, 30MM, 30MR, 30BL, 30BR

The (London) Builder, 16<sup>th</sup> January, Volume XXVII – 31T, 31B

The (London) Builder, 28th Sept. 1867, Volume XXV - 19T, 19BL, 19BR

Adrian Farmer, Co-ordinator of the Derwent Valley Mills Heritage Site – 29L, 29R

O'Dwyer, Frederick (1981), "Lost Dublin". Gill and Macmillan, Dublin – i, 10

Brown, Katie, DAC Secretary, Lichfield Diocese - 30TL, 30ML, 32TL, 32TR

Sunday Business Post – 8

#### ATTACHED PLAN DRAWINGS AND DOCUMENTS:

Elevation Drawing of the North Side of Molesworth Street prior to the demolition of No.s 10-14 and 21-23, Irish Architectural Archive, between Pages 6 and 7

1732 Act of Enablement, Royal Irish Academy, between Pages 7 and 8

Document compiled by Philip R. Patman in 1864 supplying information regarding occupants and rents of 17 & 18 Molesworth Street and 6, 7 & 8 Frederick Lane, GLI Archives, between Pages 12 and 13

Survey drawing of the Façade, Scale: 1:50, between Pages 38 and 39

Survey drawing of the Façade indicating Holmes's use of the "Wren Proportion", between Pages 40 and 41

Plan drawings of the Four Floors, between Pages 43 and 44

Survey drawing indicating dilapidations to the façade prior to the 2001 restoration, between Pages 79 and 80

# Chapters

1.	The History of the Site.	1
2.	The Search for a new Hall.	8
3.	The Competition.	.17
4.	The Architect, Edward Holmes.	28
5.	The Façade	39
6.	The Hallway and Stairwell.	44
7.	The Grand Lodge Room.	.49
8.	The Royal Arch Chapter Room.	55
9.	The Knights Templar Preceptory Room.	61
10.	The Prince Masons Chapter Room.	.69
11.	The Restoration of the Façade	.78
12.	Building Conservation Issues	.85
13.	Alterations in the Past.	90
14	Conservation Issues for the Future	99



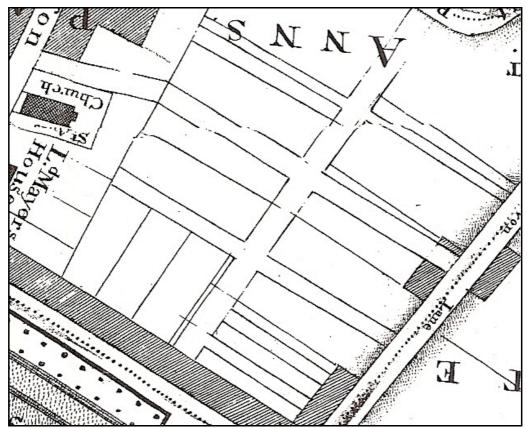
### The History of the Site

The origins of the development of the area around the site at 17 & 18 Molesworth Street began in 1705 with purchase of the freehold to the marshy lands encircled by St. Stephen's Green, Grafton Street and the gardens of Trinity College (then known as Flinty's Croft, underlining its humble origins) by Joshua Dawson from Henry Temple (1). Dawson soon set about developing a street through the acquired land, naming the street for himself and laying it out to exploit a vista running from the statue of George II in St, Stephen's Green down to the gardens of Trinity College (2). In a clever move he approached the then archbishop of Dublin, William King, offering a site for a church dedicated to St. Anne, as a means of promoting the new street as an attractive neighbourhood for the elite of Dublin Society (3). The church was duly completed in 1720 by Thomas Burgh making for a magnificent centrepiece for Dawson Street (4). The status of the street as a desirable neighbourhood soon rose as a result with the appearance of gentry and aristocracy as residents (5). Evidently, it was the prospect of high class neighbours which quickly attracted the *milordi* (6).

The scene was now set for Dawson's easterly neighbour, Robert Coote (later Viscount Lord Molesworth) to capitalise on the success of Dawson's speculative ventures with Dawson Street. Coote owned an area known then as Mensen's Fields (to the north) and St. Patrick's Well to the south (subsequently collectively known as Molesworth Fields) which covered what is now Molesworth Street, Frederick Street, a small stretch of what is now Nassau Street running as far as what is now Kildare Street. Coote was a Whig political activist who rose steadily through the world of Anglo-Irish politics sitting in both English and Irish parliaments. He was ennobled in 1716 for his service as a government supporter. Coote had told his wife, Leticia, in 1709 that he would "allow his tenants on St. Patrick's Well Lane (modern day Nassau Street) to stay longer than their leases permitted" allowing Joshua Dawson "to go a little further with his own improvements which in one year would much advance the value of ours" (7).

He was encouraged to offer lives-renewable leases rather than short ones to encourage building (8) but it was left to his heirs, John, Richard and William Molesworth, to take the plans further. Robert died in 1725, leaving a will with instructions restricting the term of leases on the estate to a maximum of eighty years (9).

In the Will the land was divided between John and Richard, with the most easterly part being left to Thomas Coote, Roberts "beloved brother" (the area that briefly became Coote Street before being renamed Kildare Street).



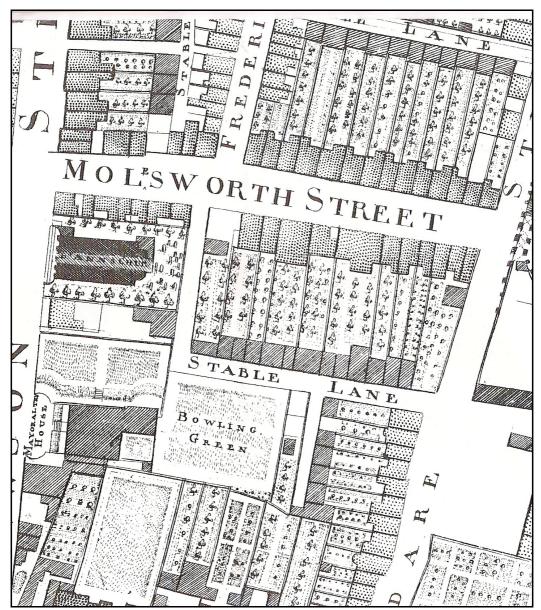
Charles Brookings map of 1728 showing Molesworth Street with only one house built, that of John Vanhewin at the east end of the street

It took the Molesworth brothers almost seven years to get an Act of Enablement through the Irish Parliament to change the instructions of the Will which passed in 1732. By this point John had died leaving the Title and lands to Richard.

Richard, a professional soldier, set about disposing of the land immediately. He had already been busy, capitalising on an old deal done between his father and Joshua Dawson in early 1725, creating a thoroughfare through from Dawson Street, necessitating the razing of four houses on Dawson Street, to Coote Street, the boundary of the pasture estate of Lord Fitzwilliam of Merrion (10). The building of Leinster House in 1744 created one of Dublin's finest vistas down Molesworth Street, greatly elevating its status.

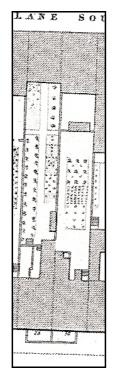
In the meantime Richard Molesworth was selling leases and the first report of a dwelling house on a plot of land measuring 26 feet wide by 211 feet long, whish was part of a larger plot sold to John Vanhewin, a medical doctor in 1728 (11), was when the house and lands were sold in 1732. The selling off of plots attracted the interest of speculative builders such as William Wilde, Thomas Quin and Benjamin Rudd. Rudd was a carpenter with a large property portfolio (12). He purchased four plots from Molesworth on the north side of the street, two in 1739 and another two in 1742 (13). These four plots measuring 25 feet wide and 211 feet long each were to become 15, 16, 17 and 18 Molesworth Street. On each of these plots Rudd built a terraced house in the "Dutch Billy"style, as is evidenced by the survival of 15 and 16 to this day. No evidence of the elevations of 17 and 18 survive but it should be safe to assume that they were of the same style as 15 and 16 as their plans from the O.S. map of 1847 all appear very similar. 15 and 16 were built first, the land having been purchased for the sum of £5 12s each, with

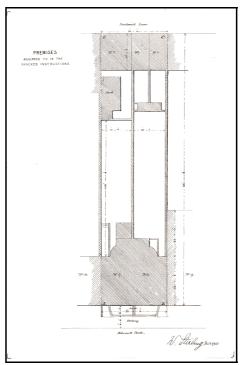
17 and 18 being built on the land Rudd purchased from Molesworth in 1742 at £5 12s 6d each. Number 15 was subsequently set to Edward Deane and Thomas Cuffe (amount of rent not disclosed), containing a dwelling house, and a coach house and stable backing onto Frederick Lane, on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1740 (14), and Number 16, containing similarly described buildings was sold to William Martin for the sum of £550 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1742 (15)



Rocques map of 1756 showing Molesworth Street to be completely built up. While the plot sizes vary on the north side of the street, 15, 16, 17, and 18 are shown to be a uniform width. Rocque has incorrectly drawn the returns of the houses, which were not uniform

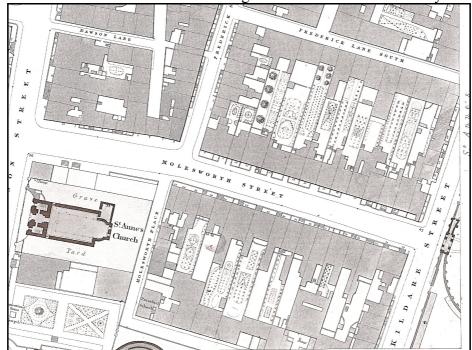
Rudd then set about building on the two plots he had acquired in 1742. In 1744 on the 7thand 8<sup>th</sup> June he sold both of them to John Hartstonge, an Attorney at Law, for the sum of £550 each. Again both properties contained a dwelling house, with a coach house and stable backing onto Frederick Lane (16), (17).



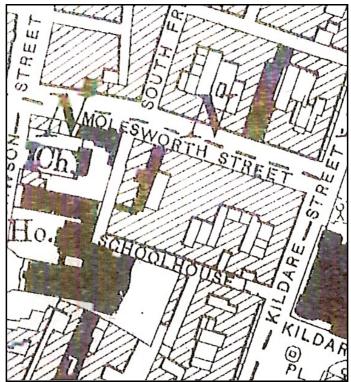


17 & 18 Molesworth Street as they appear on the O.S. map of 1843 (left) and the plan drawing of same carried out by W. Stirling in February 1864 (right).

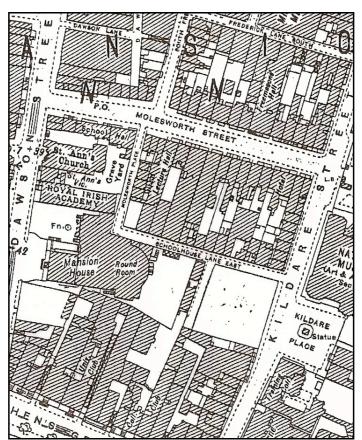
The two properties, which were to become 17 & 18 Molesworth Street, remained in the possession of the Hartstonge family until their sale by Lorenzo Weld Hartstonge, through the Landed Estates Court, to the Masonic Order. The only logical explanation for this manner of sale was that Weld Hartstonge was bankrupt. There is a reference to him having financial difficulties in the Grand Lodge minutes of the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1865.



The O.S. map of 1843 showing the plan of 17 & 18 Molesworth Street as they had been built 100 years before. The houses have been incorrectly numbered.



The O.S. map of 1907 showing the Hall in place. The extension to the west side of the Hall is indicated in correctly and not as part of the main building



The O.S. map of 1937. The rear of No. 16 is incorrectly indicated as being completely filled in with buildings

Xiii



The revised O.S. map of 2005 giving the most accurate depiction of the Hall layout and those of the buildings around it

An interesting discovery arose during the course of the investigation into the history of this site. It has, for a long time been quoted as fact, both by the Masonic Order and the most esteemed authorities on the history of Dublin that the first recorded Grand Master of the Order, Richard Parsons, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rosse, had a townhouse on the site which is now occupied by the Masonic Hall. But, in the course of examining all of the memorials in the Townland and Name Registries for Molesworth Street from 1708 -1778, no trace of the name Richard Parsons, Rosse, or any other name acting by proxy, has been found. The only reference to the Earl in relation to Molesworth Street appeared in Pue's Occurrences (a Dublin City monthly gossip journal) in 1741 (18), stating the following:

"Saturday last, died, at his house in Molesworth St. the Right Honourable. Richard Parsons, Earl of Ross and Baron of Oxmanton in the County of Dublin. He is succeeded in the Honours and Estates by his son the Lord Oxmanton, now Earl of Ross".

Combining the fact that the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Rosse was a well known drunkard, philanderer, and was thought to have died from syphilis, and the fact that there is no documentary evidence to support the claim in Pue's Occurrences, it is more likely that Rosse may have died at "a" house in Molesworth Street, and not "His" house in Molesworth Street.

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- (7) Robert Molesworth to Leticia Molesworth, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1709, NLI, Positive Microfilm 3752
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- (13) Leases, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1739, Molesworth to Rudd, Registry of Deeds, Memorials 97-298-68402, 97-299-68403 and 109-319-76054, 109-320-76055
- (14) Lease, 24<sup>th</sup> march 1740, Rudd to Deane & Cuffe, Registry of Deeds, Memorial 101-250-70943
- (15) Lease, 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1742, Rudd to Martin, Registry of Deeds, Memorial 109-191-75493
- (16) Lease, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> June 1744, Rudd to Hartstonge, Registry of Deeds, Memorial

110-537-79170

- (17) Lease, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> June 1744, Rudd to Hartstonge, Registry of Deeds, Memorial 115-27-79169
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Ex Info:

Ms. Geraldine Walsh, Dublin Civic Trust



## The Search for a New Hall

The first recorded mention of the Freemasons desire to have a Masonic Hall of their own occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1803 in an address to Grand Lodge by the then Grand Secretary, William Semple, following a bitter verbal row over the appointment of the incoming Deputy Grand Treasurer, W. H. Graham. He stated, "... If ever we shall be honoured with a Masonic Hall, I will recommend a niche be placed in the wall for his bust, over which I would have this inscription: 'The only Treasurer in the world, that in the short space of two years and a half, wantonly and unnecessarily deprived the (Masonic Orphan School) fund of £219. 4s. 2d.!'"

Prior to this Grand Lodge had been meeting sporadically in rooms at the White Lion Public House on Werburgh Street at the time of the founding of the Grand Lodge of Ireland as a formal body in 1725. At some point, thereafter, Grand Lodge took rooms at Tailor's Hall in Back Lane where it met regularly on the first Thursday of every month. This was to remain the case for the rest of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



The entrance to Tailor's Hall off Back Lane, much as it would have appeared to the Masons entering it in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries

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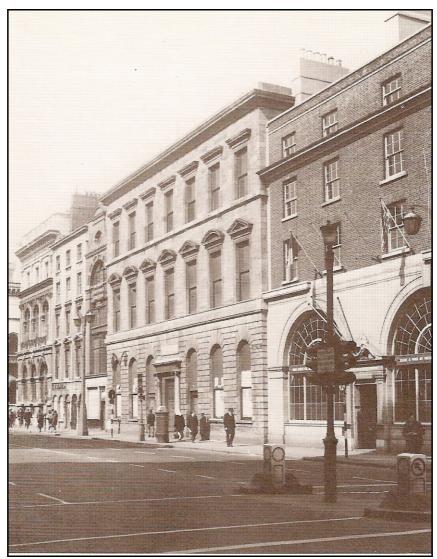
The first indication of an interest in procuring a building for the exclusive use of the Grand Lodge of Ireland is to be found in a short minute of a meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1816 when the reports of a series of Masonic Hall Committee's meetings on the 20<sup>th</sup> February, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March and 7<sup>th</sup> May were recorded. Nothing further occurred until 4<sup>th</sup> November when the minutes of a meeting of Grand Lodge, held that day, reveal the gathering of subscriptions towards the purchase or building of a Masonic Hall. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March 1820 a committee of seven was appointed to inspect a house in Leinster Street as a suitable building, but nothing obviously came of it. Another committee was appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1821. This time they were looking at the viability of occupying all floors above the celebrated "Daly's Club House" on Dame Street, notorious for the debaucherous behaviour and sword and pistol duels which took place there. This was not proceeded with and instead, a Leasehold was taken out on 19 Dawson Street, owned by a John Adrien Esq., on 21st September 1822, for £1000 at £200 a year with an annual rent following this of £6. 5s. per annum. This was paid with monies accumulating since 1816. The building was formally dedicated as "The Freemasons Hall" on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1822.



19 Dawson Street, now the Royal Irish Academy, occupied by the Order from 1822 to 1833

However, 19 Dawson Street was not to remain the Freemasons Hall for long. At a meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1826 it was revealed that the Freeholder, John Adrien, was selling the said freehold and, for reasons not revealed in the minutes, it seemed that Grand Lodge was not happy to remain in residence there. The search for an appropriate building began again with an attempt in February 1829 to procure a newly built hotel on Sackville Street

which went on to become the Gresham. This proved fruitless and it was not until 19<sup>th</sup> December 1833 that the Masonic Order was able to secure appropriate accommodation in the Commercial Buildings on Dame Street as tenants of an undisclosed number of rooms on the first floor.



The Commercial Buildings in Dame Street, occupied by the Order from 1833 to 1869 (demolished in 1970)

But by March 1840 the Order had become restless again for a Hall of its own and, on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1843, yet another committee was appointed to search for a suitable premises. But in the meantime, successful negotiations with the Commercial Building Company resulted in the Order taking possession of the entire building for sole Masonic use and the building was dedicated on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1847. An Organ for ceremonial use in the Grand Lodge room was ordered and purchased from Telford & Telford of St. Stephens Green (J. Telford was a member of the order). Here the Order was to remain before its move to Molesworth Street in 1869, but by 1855 there were problems: the minutes of 6<sup>th</sup> November of that year reveal that there was a dispute over the Commercial Buildings refusal to reduce the rent.

A new and serious determination to, once and for all, purchase or build a Hall was sparked by the building of a Masonic Hall in Edinburgh for the Grand Lodge of Scotland, by the famous Scottish architect, David Bryce, and was ignited into a burning flame by the building of the second Masonic Hall in Great Queen Street, London, for the United Grand Lodge of England, by the architect Frederick Pepys Cockerill. The Grand Lodge of Ireland was not going to be outdone by its two Sister Constitutions!

The Order briefly looked at the Hall of the Ancient Council Society in Brunswick Street but, after protracted negotiations with the Society throughout the year of 1862, decided not to proceed. The matter was subsequently placed in the hands of Grand Lodges Board of General Purposes who met to discuss a plan of action on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 1863 and reported to Grand Lodge on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December with a resolution that a sub-committee of the Board of General Purposes be appointed for the purpose of carrying out the resolution of the Grand Lodge related to the purchase for erection of a Masonic Hall, the committee to consist of Brothers Cottle, McSorley, Hepburn, Maryland Thorpe, Sir Edward Borough and E. LeTouche in addition to the Senior Grand Warden and the Deputy Grand Master, The Right Worshipful Grand Treasurer, Brother Mostyn, and the Right Worshipful Grand Secretary, Brother LaTouche to act as Secretary to the Committee.

The newly formed sub-committee placed advertisements in newspapers such as the Irish Times, the Daily Express, and the Freeman's Journal on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 1864 as follows: "Required by a Public Body in the central situation in the city of Dublin a spacious and commodious house and premises capable of being converted into a public building or a large plot of ground upon which such public building could be erected."

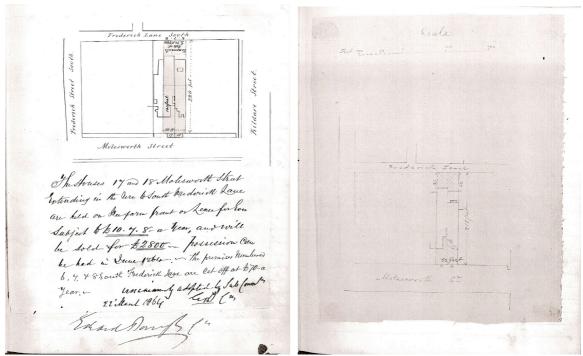
There was a good response with enquiries form the owners of ten properties which were:

Charlemont House, Charlemont Street
17 & 18 Molesworth Street
The Gresham Hotel, Sackville Street
6 Westland Row
103 Middle Abbey Street
A premises between Frederick Street and Frederick Lane fronting onto Nassau Street
136, 137 & 138 Stephens Green West
120 Stephens Green West
24 & 25 Sackville Street
34 Molesworth Street

On the 18<sup>th</sup> February 1864 the sub-committee met an appointed Brother Philip R. Patman, Auctioneer of 23 South Frederick Street, a member of the Order, to carry out a survey of each of the above premises with regard to suitability.

Patman reported back at a meeting of the sub-committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March. He recommended a number of the premises, the names of which were not recorded, but 17 & 18 Molesworth Street had emerged as the front runner. The sub-committee duly reported to the Board of General Purposes who met on the 12<sup>th</sup> April and it was resolved to appoint Brother Henry Augustus Dillon of Dame Street, solicitor to the Grand Lodge, in the matter of the purchase of the premises at 17 & 18 Molesworth Street.

There appears, at this point to have been a considerable delay in the transaction with no further mention of progress in the purchase of the two buildings on Molesworth Street until almost a year later. The minutes for the 22<sup>nd</sup> March contain diagrams pasted into the book of the premises at 17 & 18 and the three converted houses at 6, 7 & 8 Frederick Lane with a note that the two houses would be purchased for £2,800 with the three at the back "let off" for £70 per annum. The sale was due to take place in June 1864 but this did not happen. Instead, the sale went through the Landed Estates Court causing a delay in the transaction. Weld Hartstonge, it seems, was in financial difficulties which would explain his decision to sell the two properties which had been in the hands of his family for 120 years.



Diagrams supplied by Philip .R Patman of the proposed premises at 17 & 18 Molesworth Street

On the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1865 the Grand Treasurer read out a letter from Mr. Lorenzo Weld Hartstonge, the vendor of 17 & 18 Molesworth Street. The two houses had been in the Hartstonge family since 1744 when John Hartstonge purchased the two houses built by Benjamin Rudd, who had purchased land from Lord Richard Molesworth in 1742.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1865 the sub-committee met to discuss the creation of a limited liability Company (The Masonic Hall Building Company Ltd.) for the purpose of raising funds. Brother McSorley suggested that the Masonic Hall should contain the following accommodation: a Grand Lodge Room capable of holding 350 with preparation and reception rooms; two smaller Lodge Rooms for the Royal Arch and Knights Templar (with reception rooms) capable of holding 100 each; a room fitted with wardrobes for each of the Dublin Lodges; a lavatory and water closets; a large banqueting hall to dine 150 and arrangements to be made to divide it to two rooms one holding a 100 the other

holding 50, a cloakroom adjacent; a secretary's office; a smaller ditto; a committee room and library together with a reading room accommodating 50; a kitchen and apprentices; two pantries wine and beer vault; coal ditto; an apartment for house secretary. The subcommittee was of the opinion that the building should consist of the above apartments and that advertisements for designs should be put in the different papers, the architects to be members of the Masonic Order. The sub-committee likewise suggested that two prizes be given for the second and third best designs, and also decided that the Grand Lodge should appoint a building committee under the umbrella of a Limited Liability Company consisting of nine, seven to form a quorum, one to represent the Royal Grand Arch Chapter and another the Grand Conclave, the remaining seven to be selected by and represent the Grand Lodge of Ireland for the purpose of adjudicating over the competition and overseeing the building of the Hall to its completion. The Company was to have 40 Directors/Trustees with shares and the said committee was to be composed of the following:

Brothers Sir Edward Borough; Mostyn, LeTouche, McSorley, Deering, Goddard, Huband, Brunker, Astley, and that the Deputy Grand Master and the Grand Secretary be members of all committees.

The members of the newly formed Masonic Hall Building Company Ltd. met for the first time on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1865 and the Masonic Hall Building Committee were as follows:

Right Worshipful Brother J F Townsend, Deputy Grand Master, 30 Upper Fitzwilliam Street.

Right Worshipful Brother E Borough Senior Grand Warden, Chairman, 4 Nassau Street.

Right Worshipful Brother T. Mostyn, Grand Treasurer, 19 Merrion Square South.

Right Worshipful Brother E.R.D. LaTouche, Grand Secretary, Kildare Street Club.

Very Worshipful Brother Rev J.J. McSorley G, General Chaplain, 95 Ranelagh Road;

Worshipful Brother Lucius H Deering, 52 Dame Street;

Worshipful Brother J.H. Goddard, 15 Nelson Street,

Brother Captain G. Huband, 7 Herbert Street,

Brother T. Brunker, 111 Grafton Street;

Brother C.D. Astley, Office of Board of Works.

A quorum was to be made up of a minimum of five.

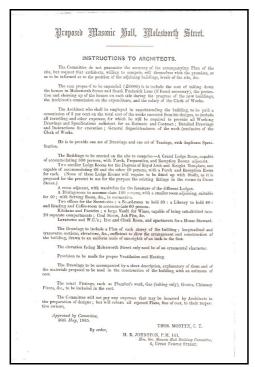
The Masonic Hall Building Company Ltd. was formally appointed by Grand Lodge on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1865 and Brother Astley was charged with the task employing a competent person to make an accurate map of the premises in Molesworth Street giving exact measurements for the guidance of architects in preparing designs for the Masonic Hall and also, forms of advertisements for the same.

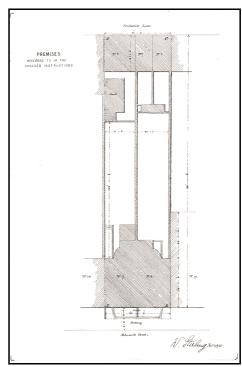
At its second meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> May 1865 the Company formulated and approved a copy of the advertisement for designs to be placed in Saunders, the Irish Times, the Daily Express, the Dublin Builder, the Belfast Newsletter, the Cork Constitution, the Derry Standard, and the Limerick Chronicle. A copy of the Instructions to Architects was also

approved, describing the particulars of the accommodation proposed. The advertisement read:

"The Masonic advertise for designs from architects, members of the Order, for a new hall, lodge rooms, and offices on the site of their premises in Molesworth-street. Total cost not to exceed £8,000. Premiums of £60, £50, and £30 respectively are offered. The  $22^{nd}$  July is fixed as the last day for receipt of plans". (1st June 1865)

On the 29<sup>th</sup> May at the Company's third meeting, Astley submitted the plans, which were made by W. Sterling, along with the directions and guidance for architects, and certain suggested modifications as to room size (instructions and survey plans: see Appendix A and B).





The original document containing the Instructions to Architects and the plan drawing of 17 & 18 Molesworth Street carried out by W. Sterling.

On the  $19^{th}$  June at its fourth meeting the Company decided to extend the deadline to the  $22^{nd}$  August. It may be worth mentioning at this point, bearing in mind the final outcome, that the project was not advertised in mainland Britain. Also reported at the meeting was the willingness of the Lessee of 16 Molesworth Street "to dispose of the right to sidelights from that house for a sum of £50". This refers to the east facing windows of the return.

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Ex Info:

Right Worshipful Brother Barry Lyons, Grand Secretary

Worshipful Brother Keith Cochrane

Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Ms. Marion Gaule



## The Competition

The first meeting of the Masonic Hall building Committee took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1865 and a resolution was reached to place all of the entries on six trestles measuring seven foot high by nine foot wide from which the architect's plans would hang, Brothers Astley and Brunker being given the task of procuring them. Not included in the Instructions to Architects document, but obviously communicated at some point prior to submission, was the requirement that each entrant submit their work under a codename or motto so as to ensure against prejudice on the part of any member of the Committee. It is not recorded who possessed the knowledge of the real names of the entrants but it has to be presumed that it was Astley as he was the one charged with the task of setting up the exhibition. The names of the entrants and their codenames or mottos are as follows:

- **Quis Separabit** Charles Tarrant Three mounted plans. Specifications
- 2. **GML** (in circle) James Bell
  Two mounted and one framed elevation. No specifications
- **44** (with the second 4 inverted) John Lanyon Two mounted and one framed elevation. No specifications
- **Ecce Quam Bonum** William G. Murray
  Two mounted hinge drawings, one framed elevation. Specifications and estimate.
- **Experiar** John. McCurdy
  Three mounted drawings and two framed. Printed instructions
- **Décor cum Fortitudine** D. C. Ferguson Three designs on drawing boards and perspective view.
- **We'll See** William J Barre Five sheets of drawings. Estimate and description
- **St Patrick** Thomas Turner Two mounted drawings. Descriptive particulars

xxvi

- 9 **Lux** (in triangle) Thomas Newenham Deane Four mounted drawings. Descriptive particulars
- 10 **3 circles** (within each other) Fitzgibbon Louche Six drawings in a roll and one elevation on board. Descriptive particulars
- **Peace Love and Harmony, (**star within the circle) Edward H. Carson Two large framed designs, two mounted. No papers.
- 12 **Palmam Qui Meruit Ferat** Edward Holmes, Birmingham. Three framed designs, four mounted. Particulars

On the 31<sup>st</sup> August the Committee decided that Astley should make an inventory of the documents submitted by each architect and that the Secretary request the presence of the Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master for a viewing on Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> September at 3pm.

The Committee met on the 5<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the method of selecting the winning design but this proved unsuccessful. There then followed the first concerted examination of the plans submitted.

At the meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September the plans were viewed and discussed and, for the first time the properties on Frederick Lane were discussed for possible inclusion in the scheme. At this point no votes had been cast to secure a winner.

The Committee met again on the 15<sup>th</sup> September and decided on the colour scheme for the Grand Lodge Room which was to be predominantly in "St. Patrick's Blue". It then proceeded to select the three best designs and eliminate the others. The votes were cast as follows:

Marked: "Palmam Qui Meruit Ferat": 6 votes
Marked: "Lux": 4 votes
Marked: "Décor Cum Firmitudine": 3 votes
Marked: "We'll See": 3 votes

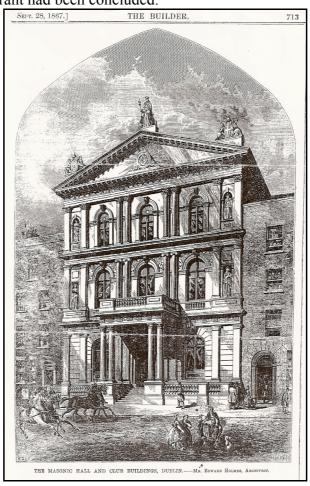
A special ballot was taken to separate the two in joint third with the result:

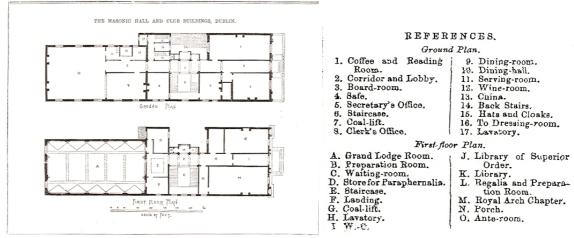
Marked: "Décor Cum Fortitudine": 3 votes Marked: "We'll See": 4 votes

"Décor Cum Firmitudine" was then eliminated and the remaining three were left in place to be voted upon at the next meeting.

22<sup>nd</sup> September and the Committee met for the sixth time to select the winner and place the other two. However, Right Worshipful Brother Thomas Mostyn, Grand Secretary, brought to the Committees attention that it had acted irregularly in failing to comply with Article 92 of the Articles of Association, which call upon the Chairman of any committee to cast his vote in the event of a deadlock. The second ballot was, therefore, invalid. At this point the Chairman cast his vote in favour of "Décor Cum Firmitudine". The

Committee then cast its votes to select the winning entry and "Palmam Qui Meruit Ferat" was unanimously selected. The winning entry was then approved by the Board of Directors of the Masonic Hall Building Company Ltd. subject to the alterations which the Committee may suggest being effected and the entire project not exceeding the stated sum of £8,000. The decision on second and third place was postponed until negotiations with the winning entrant had been concluded.





The only known surviving record of Edward Holmes's original submission which appeared in "The Builder", 28<sup>th</sup> September 1867

XXVIII

The Committee then met on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1865 where a copy of a letter to the architect Edward Holmes was read out, in which he had been summonsed to meet with the Committee on the Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> October, and bring with him sufficient proof that he was a mason. The Committee then set about recording the following alterations to be submitted to the architect:

- 1. That the organ in the Grand Lodge Room be moved from the east to the west.
- 2. Consult with architect as to having no lower sidelights in the Grand Lodge room but that there should be two windows in the east as in the present Grand Lodge room.
- 3. That in other respects the architects plans (marked 1 in the coloured designs: the one without the skylights) be adopted. That the alteration of the porch to the Grand Lodge and the reception rooms amended as shown by Captain Huband's plan marked A be adopted.
- 4. That there should be only one W.C. on each floor and the space for the second as at present planning by architect be adapted as a coal lift.
- 5. The mode of heating Grand Lodge Room, etc., be discussed with architect.
- 6. It was suggested that the Royal Arch and Knights Templar Lodge Rooms be placed on the top floor next one another, and also that Captain Huband's plan B be submitted.
- 7. The library may be placed where it is at present provided the same cannot be placed on the floor beneath, and to be capable of subdivision so as to make two libraries.

After some further discussions as to improvements and alterations the meeting was adjourned, but the Committee met again the next day to finalise the alterations and specifications as they were due to meet with Holmes the next day. Holmes was apparently already in town because he is recorded in the minutes of the meeting as having called to the Commercial Buildings while the meeting was in progress to know if the Committee was ready to meet with him. But it was decided that the Committee were not ready and that the planned meeting the next day should be kept to. The remaining alterations and specifications were as follows:

- 1. No changes suggested in Board Room or Secretary's Offices
- 2. No change suggested in large dining room.
- 3. Consult the architect as to how the small dining room can be enlarged.
- 4. Consult the architect as to changes suggested by Captain Huband as regard pantries, bar, wine room.
- 5. Consult about alterations to the front wine cellar basement to accommodate servants sleeping rooms.
- 6. Consult as to having a small kitchen under the coffee room or in the immediate vicinity without extra expense.
- 7. Consult as to a place for a china closet, a room for cleaning knives etc, a lumbar room for empty bottles, and hamper and coal vaults for Grand Lodge.
- 8. The facade to be, if possible, of a purely classical character (the Grand Master had suggested that everything connected with the building should be of a plain, chaste character. Only in the Grand Lodge Room should there be anything of a decorative nature, and that the seats in it should rise one row behind the other with a passage at the back as in the Houses of Parliament).

xxix

A query as to whether or not Dublin Corporation had a legal right to prevent the insertion of bow fronted windows where they do not extend beyond the property line. It is interesting that, over 140 years ago, the city's Authority would have taken an interest in such a detail.

The following day, the 20<sup>th</sup> October, the Committee met for the eighth time along with the Grand Master and the Directors of the Company. Holmes was introduced and informed of the alterations required to his plans, all of which had to be implemented within the budget of £8,000. He was asked if his plans could be amended without exceeding the budget and he stated his belief that it could be done but no accurate estimate could be arrived at before new altered plans were drawn up and a careful assessment made of the total works to be carried out. This was agreed to by the Committee and the plans were returned to Holmes asking him to carry out the revisions as speedily as possible. He was also asked to give a guarantee, as an architect, that the work carried out would not exceed the stated budget.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1866 Holmes` report on the amended plans was read out to the tenth meeting of the Committee and was approved and the Committee resolved to meet at one of the houses on Molesworth Street to decide upon the winners of the second and third prizes.

The meeting at Molesworth Street took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> January and a ballot for the winner of the second prize of £50 resulted in the following placements:

Marked: "Lux": 3 votes Marked: "Décor Cum Firmitudine": 2 votes Marked: "44": 1 vote

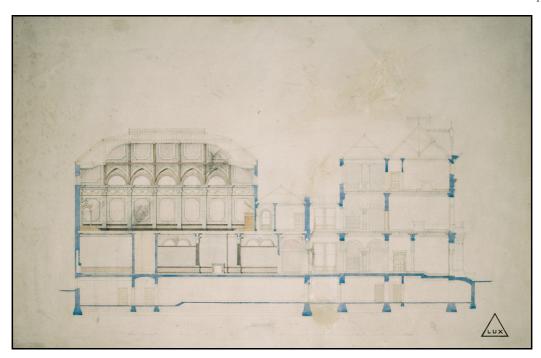
For the third prize of £30 the ballot was as follows:

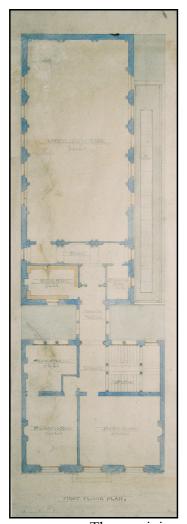
Marked: "We'll See": 2 votes Marked: "Décor Cum Firmitudine": 2 votes Marked: "Ecce Quam Bonum": 1 vote

The tie between "We'll See" and "Décor Cum Firmitudine" resulted in a further ballot:

Marked: "Décor Cum Firmitudine": 5 votes Marked: "We'll See": 2 votes Marked: "Ecce Quam Bonum": 1 vote

"Lux" (Thomas Newenham Dean) and "Décor Cum Firmitudine" (Duncan C. Ferguson) were accordingly awarded second and third prize respectively. A condition of acceptance of the prize money must have been that the Order retain the plans, although no documentary evidence has, as yet, come to light about such a condition, but the plans have fortunately survived in the possession of the order.







The surviving plans by Thomas Newenham Deane, 1865

xxxi

There is quite a disparity in the number of votes cast. This may have due to members abstaining, although this is not recorded in the minutes. Also interesting is Brother Mostyn's failure to invoke Article 92: on the occasion of the second deadlock on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, between "We'll See" and "Décor Cum Firmitudine", the Chairman was not called upon to cast his vote as Mostyn insisted had to be the case on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, on the occasion of the deadlock between the same two entries. Also unexplained is the reintroduction of "44" and "Ecce Quam Bonum" after having been eliminated four months previously.

The Committees twelfth meeting on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 1866 concerned a general discussion regarding the purchase of a third house (16 Molesworth Street). Also discussed were further alterations to the revised façade to be communicated to Holmes.

At the thirteenth meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1866, it was reported that negotiations were under way with Mrs Beeby, the owner of 16 Molesworth Street, to purchase the building. The Committee, acting under the authority given to them by the Board of Directors of the Company on the 20<sup>th</sup> January decided to inform Holmes that: "the Directors have approved his designs as amended for the Masonic Hall subject to the modifications hereinafter instructed and provided that the building be erected as first designed with a stone front not cement for £8000 which sum is to include the architects commission of 5%, travelling and other expenses, working drawings and specifications, detailed drawings and instructions for execution and general superintendence of the work, exclusive of the salary of the Clerk of Works, pursuant to the printed Instructions to Architects dated 30th May 1865."

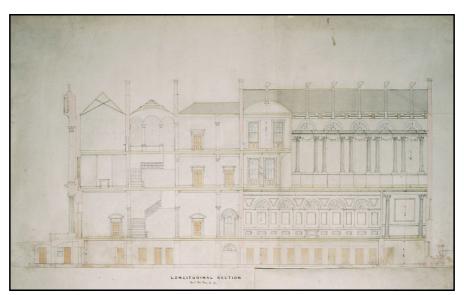
Holmes was also asked to prepare drawings, working plans and specifications for the Committee to allow them to put the work out to tender. He was further instructed to leave out the seven statues and four niches from the façade elevation and any other "mere ornamental details which will not interfere with the general design so as to keep the expense within the above mentioned limits." Holmes was also asked to reduce the detail of the Prince Masons Chapter and the Grand Encampment which the Committee considered would be too expensive. A decision was then made to retain the drawings of the second and third prize winners and to pack up and return all the eliminated entries. What is interesting here is that the Committee decided to return all of Holmes's drawings to him also. This will explain the presence of the drawings of Deane and Ferguson in the Masonic Hall today and the absence of either of Holmes's original or altered schemes.

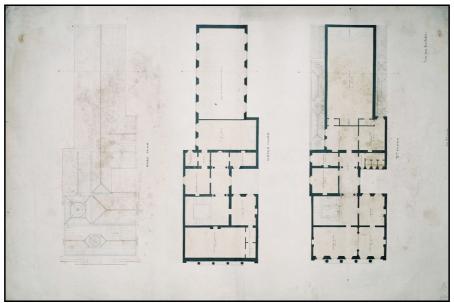
An interesting detail which emerges at this point is that, when the drawings of John Lanyon (44) were sent to the entrants stated address, they were returned undelivered. It emerged then that the drawings had been submitted by a William Henry Lynn who was not a member or the Masonic Order.

xxxii









The surviving plans by Duncan C. Ferguson (Décor Cum Firmitudine), 1865

The Committee met for the last time on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, before construction began, to compile a list of suggested competing contractors to carry out the work (at the time of writing this assignment no documentary evidence of the Contract Competition details or any details of the subsequent negotiations with the successful contractor have been found). The list of names of suitable contractors drawn up is as follows:

Mr. L.H. Bolton, 38 Richmond Street;

Mr. J. Butler, 15 Wellington Place;

Mr. G. Cockburne, 179 Great Brunswick Street;

Mr. D. Crow and Son, 53 Brunswick Street;

Mr. J. Hall, 62 Harcourt Street;

Mr, George Moyers, 53 Richmond Street;

Mr. T. Milllard, 58 Harcourt Street;

Mr. J. Nolan, 3 Meredith Place;

Mr. M. Meade, 52 Great Brunswick Street

Messrs Briggs & Sons, Bradford Street, Birmingham

Messrs Hardwick & Son, Bradford Street, Birmingham

Messrs Wilson & son, Soho Hill, Handsworth, Birmingham

The contract was awarded to Mr. Michael Meade of 52 Great Brunswick Street. The minutes of the meeting of Grand Lodge on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1866 contains a lengthy report regarding the ceremonial arrangements being made for the laying of the first stone of the new building.

The first stone was layed on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1866 in the northeast corner.

Thereafter, the construction and completion of the Hall, including interior decorations took, what appears from the minutes of Grand Lodge and the minutes of the Board of General Purposes, close to five years. The building itself was certainly completed by 1869: the minutes of a special meeting of the Board of General Purposes form the 11<sup>th</sup> June 1869 reveal preparations being considered for the Orders "removal to the new Hall".

There is an account in the Newry Telegraph of the 4<sup>th</sup> November 1869 (Vol: 12, p. 330-1 of a meeting which took place in the Hall to make a presentation. But more significant is a lengthy report from the same paper on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1869 (Vol: 12, p. 331-8) of a special meeting of Grand Lodge in the new Hall at which an estimated 600 people attended to proclaim the then Prince of Wales as Patron of the Order. Clearly from this it can be assumed that the building was in a complete enough state, at this point, to cater to the requirements of a very large number of people

But a letter, dated the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1870, from the Secretary of Lodge 131, Mullingar stating the Lodges intention to "give ten pounds towards the completion of the new Masonic Hall" indicates that there was still some work to do before the building was fully completed. It seems likely that the move into all parts of the building was gradual

with each of the branches of the Order moving to Molesworth Street separately as their respective rooms and offices were completed.

The Dedication of the new Masonic Hall by the Grand Master took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1877

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#### Ex Info:

Right Worshipful Brother Barry Lyons, Grand Secretary

Worshipful Brother Keith Cochrane

Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Ms. Marion Gaule, History of Art Department, UCD

Ms. Geraldine Walsh, Dublin Civic Trust



## The Architect Edward Holmes (1832-1909)

Surprisingly little has, so far, come to light about the life and work of Edward Holmes. He was born in 1832 in Birmingham and served his architectural apprenticeship under John Jones Bateman (1817-1903), also from Birmingham. The Directory of British Architects 1834-1914 describes Holmes as an architect practising in Birmingham and London in the 1860's. It says he designed a number of churches in or near Birmingham and Burton-on-Trent. In the same period he designed the Exchange Buildings in Birmingham and the Birmingham & Midland Bank, and the Masonic Hall in Dublin.

"Victorian Architectural Competitions" by Roger H. Harper lists a number of competitions Holmes won:

Foleshill, Workhouse*	
Alcester, Corn Exchange*	1857
West Bromwich, Cemetery*	1857
Warwick, Cemetery*	1857
Medway (Chatham, Kent?), Workhouse*	1857
Belper, Cemetery, [B] Vol: XV, P.683, 689	1857
King's Heath, Church*	
Woodcock Street, Birmingham, Baths*	1858
Selly Oak, Birmingham, Church	1858
Moseley Road, Birmingham, Congregational Chapel*	
Birmingham, Police Station*	1859
Witton, Birmingham, Cemetery*	1860
Horninglow, Burton-upon-Trent, Church	1861
Birmingham, Exchange Buildings*, [B] Vol: XX, P.440, 474, 549-551	1862
Dublin, Masonic Hall, [B] Vol: XXV, P.712, 713	1865
Birkenhead, Baths*	1867
Burton-on-Trent, Infirmary*	1868
Selly Oak, Birmingham (King's Norton), Workhouse	1869

#### Not mentioned by Harper:

New Street, Birmingham, Masonic Lodge	1865
New Street, Birmingham, Birmingham & Midland Bank, [B] Vol. XXVII, P.40, 47	1869

<sup>\*</sup>No visual image as yet found

Many of these buildings, such as the Workhouse at Foleshill, the Corn Exchange at Alcester, Medway Workhouse, Woodcock Street Baths, the Police Station in central Birmingham, the Exchange Buildings, the Baths at Birkenhead, and the Infirmary in Burton-on-Trent no longer exist, having been long since demolished to make way for new development or major road schemes through Birmingham City. Only part of the façade of the Masonic Hall at New Street, Birmingham remains.

Other buildings designed by Holmes which have come to light and were not apparently the result of competitions are:

1858\* All Saints church, King's Heath, [B] Vol: XVI, P.135

1860\* Saint Mary's church, Selly Oak. Commissioned by the Elkington Family (George Richards Elkington was Deputy Provincial Grand Master for Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwicks in 1864/5)

St. Marks, Winshill, Established church, Derbys. Commissioned by John Gretton (brewer) of Bladon House (d. 1867). Staffordshire Advertiser, 18 Sept 1869; Derbys Records Office (D. 2140 A/Pl 11/1/1); (D. 2140 A/Pl 9/1/12)

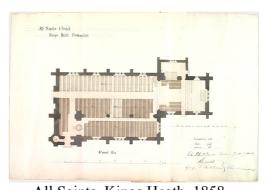
1874\* Seven storey Brewery for George Wilkinson and Co., Ashsted Steam Brewery, Ashsted Row, [B] August 1874, P.279. Demolished.

No date 37 Bennett's Hill, Birmingham, from Andy Foster [2005] (2007) "The Commercial Centre", Pevsner Architectural Guides. Yale University Press. P.84, 85

\*No visual image as yet found.

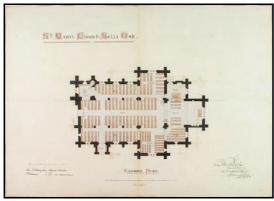


Belper Cemetery 1857



All Saints, Kings Heath, 1858

## xxxviii



Plan of St. Mary's, Selly Oak, 1860



Birmingham & Midland Bank, 1869



St. Mary's, 1860



Masonic Hall, 1865



Kings Norton Workhouse, 1869

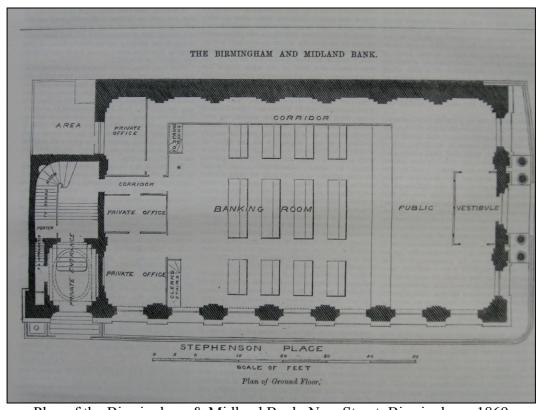




Other views of the Workhouse at Kings Norton, 1869



An artist's impression of the Birmingham & Midland Bank, 1869, from the "Builder" Vol: XXVII, P. 47. It demonstrates Holmes's understanding of Classical Proportion. Elements of the façade, including the portico, have clearly been taken from his earlier design for the Masonic Hall at Molesworth Street



Plan of the Birmingham & Midland Bank, New Street, Birmingham, 1869





St. John's, Horninglow, Burton-on – Trent, 1864-7, with a view of the nave

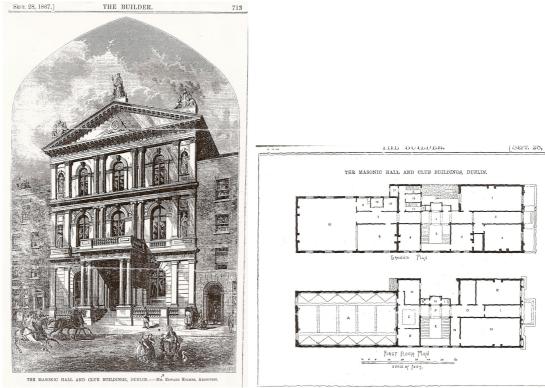
That Holmes was a productive and successful architect, there is no doubt, but what remains a mystery about the man is that there is no evidence of any buildings created by him after the design for the seven storey brewery at Ashsted in 1874. He was at this point, forty two years old. He is recorded in the Directory of British Architects as having three addresses in 1868: 1 Salisbury Street, London WC, 4 Waterloo Street, Birmingham, and 105 Station Street, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire. His larger scale buildings, such as the Birmingham & Midland Bank, the Exchange, the Workhouse at Kings Norton and the Hall at Molesworth Street itself, are proof that he was a very capable designer with a firm grasp of the principles of Classical and Gothic proportion and, therefore, he would have had no difficulty finding projects.

There are possible explanations for this, such as ill health or incapacity but, according to Professor Peter Leather, lecturer in Birmingham Studies at the University of Birmingham, there is a more likely explanation: Britain at this point of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was awash with money thanks to the Industrial Revolution and the growth of its Empire across the globe. As a result there was a dramatic increase in large scale building projects across the whole country and an industrial city like Birmingham was no exception, approaching its peak in terms of wealth in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Architects, particularly good ones, benefited greatly as a result, a great many of them, according to Professor Leather, amassing huge fortunes. So much so that many of them retired at an early age, and this could well be the answer to Holmes's apparent disappearance from the architectural scene. When one considers that his commission for the Hall at Molesworth Street was 5% of the £8,000 budget (£400) plus all expenses, in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, this was a great deal of money. It is very possible when taking into account the number of his known works, and assuming there were a great many private commissions not recorded, that Holmes, by the mid 1870's had accrued enough wealth to retire early.

But why is there so little recorded about him? He was clearly a very capable and competent architect, producing buildings which demonstrate his knowledge of "Just Proportion", but in a time of enormous architectural ingenuity, creativity and achievement in Britain, especially in the area of public building architecture, he was not

exceptional. Holmes does not rate compared to the greats of that period such as Thomsom, Pugin, Barry, Paxton and Gilbert Scott. It came as a surprise that when contacting authorities on Birmingham Architecture, such as Professor Peter Leather (above), Andy Foster, author of Pevsners Architectural Guide to Birmingham, Adrian Farmer, Co-ordinator of the Derwent Valley Mills Heritage Site, and Barbara Shackley of the Birmingham and West Midlands Victorian Society, that I was asked to pass on any information that I found about him.

One interesting scrap of information is that F. P. Cockerell (1833-78), architect and son of the more celebrated architect, Charles Robert Cockerell, was a member of the adjudicating committee for the Birmingham Masonic Hall competition which Holmes won just before the competition for Molesworth Street. Cockerell built a number of big houses and follies for the aristocracy across the north of Ireland (Pevsner's Architectural Guide to Ulster). Most of the aristocracy in Ireland at this time were members of the Irish Masonic Order, Is it possible that Cockerell had a word in someone's ear?



The only known surviving record of Holmes's original scheme for the Hall competition, from The Builder, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1867, p 712, 713

Far from being complimentary, the article in The Builder journal of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1866, p 43, criticizes a number of aspects of the elevation and dismisses the plan drawings as being no different from, or better than some of the other entries. It comments on the poor lighting at ground floor to the proposed coffee and reading room, and the board room, declaring it to be "unquestionably inferior". The Committee obviously agreed as this was one of the major alterations to Holmes's original façade proposal. The article described the façade elevation as one of quiet Classicism, divided into three stages presenting a Doric porch with coupled columns of no extraordinary character.

Commenting on the notice attached to the drawing that the design was "to be much modified in execution", the article points out that the strict guidelines set forth in the original Instructions to Architects were not being enforced. Holmes had obviously produced a perspective drawing of the interior of the Grand Lodge Room as the article comments that, while pleasing in design, it was not of a strikingly original character. Describing the room as it appears today it criticizes the free standing columns as a device which supports nothing.

#### Sir Thomas Newenham Deane (LUX)

The architect who came second in the competition was the better known Irish architect, Sir Thomas Newenham Deane (1827 – 1899). Deane, the oldest son of Sir Thomas Deane and Eliza Newenham, was educated at Rugby Public School in England and at Trinity College, Dublin (1845 – 49). He became an apprentice at his father's architectural practice in Cork following his graduation from Trinity and in 1851, he and his father's assistant, Benjamin Woodward became partners in the firm, the name changing to Sir Thomas Deane, Kt, Son & Woodward. In 1854 they set up a practice at No. 3 Upper Merrion Street. Woodward died in 1860 and Sir Thomas died in 1871, although the older Deane had virtually ceased to be involved in the firm since the 1850's. In 1878 Newenham Deane's oldest son, Thomas Manly Deane, became his partner in the firm, thereafter named Thomas Deane & Son until the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1890 when, after Newenham Deane was knighted at the opening of National Library and Museum, the firm again became Sir Thomas Deane & Son.

In 1875, after the passing of the Act for the Preservation of National Monuments, Newenham Deane was appointed the first Superintendent of National Monuments. At the time doubts were raised as to his qualifications for the post but he subsequently proved himself worthy through the conscientiousness he demonstrated in the discharge of his duties.

From an early age, Deane had demonstrated an interest and talent in painting and, between 1863 and 1898, he was a regular exhibitor at the RHA. At first his submissions were mainly of architectural designs but, over time these became outnumbered by sketches of Irish and Continental views.

He was a member of the Fine Arts & Manufacture Committee of the Royal Dublin Society and, in 1878, the Society appointed him as its representative on a panel for awarding the Taylor Art Scholarships.

He died at his office in Upper Merrion Street on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November 1899, one of the most widely known men in Irish Society, leaving an estate valued at just over £13,000. Throughout his career, Newenham Deane produced a great many designs for private houses, banks (many for the Munster bank across the Country), and public and ecclestiastic buildings. He also carried out a large number of works in Britain, in particular to buildings associated with various colleges at Oxford. Some of his better known works are: the Cathedral of St. Mary, Tuam, Co. Galway (1861 – 78); Richview House, Clonskeagh, Dublin 14 (1867); The Munster Bank, Naas, Co. Kildare (1876); and the enlargement of Westland Row railway station (1878 – 81).

The Dublin Builder's article of the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1866 described his entry for the Hall competition as Classical in style: "an unwanted field for him", staring that his elevation was a bold one, displaying "some of that contempt for Classical niceties of detail which

might be expected from so pronounced a Goth". It described the elevation as having a certain character of picturesque massiveness carried to extreme limits, and declared it to be reminiscent of Sir John Vanbrugh's amateur flights of fancy at Blenheim Palace.



Sir Thomas Newenham Deane's façade proposal for the Masonic Hall at Molesworth Street, 1865

#### **Duncan C. Ferguson (Décor Cum Firmitudine)**

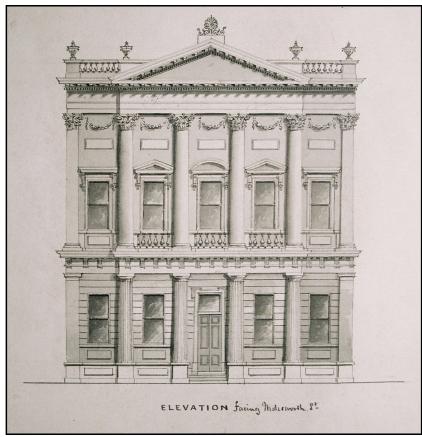
Born in 1818, Ferguson was a Dublin architect who entered the Royal Dublin Society's School of Figure Drawing in 1826 and was awarded prizes for his achievements there in 1828, 1829 and 1830. In 1842 he was appointed master of the Society's School of Architectural Drawing and in the same year he designed a new range of glasshouses for the Society's gardens at Glasnevin. In 1848 he exhibited watercolours at the RHA exhibition. In 1854 he lost his position as Master of the School of Architectural Drawing when control of the R.D.S.'s four schools' academic programmes passed to the Department of Science and Art in London.

Upon leaving the R.D.S. Ferguson continued to practice as an architect and in 1863 he was commissioned to report on the Coombe Lying-In Hospital, with a view to making improvements. The "Irish Builder" contains no works by him after 1870 and by 1873 his name disappeared from the directories.

Throughout his career Ferguson designed a considerable number of private houses in Rathgar and Terenure and also at the increasingly fashionable seaside resort of Bray. His best known work is the Natural History Museum at Kildare Street for the R.D.S. in 1853. Other better known works include: Martello Terrace, Bray Co. Wicklow (1860); the stables and coach house at Powerscourt, Enniskerry, Co. Wicklow (1864); The Presbyterian Church, Naas, Co. Kildare (1866 – 7).

Ferguson's design for the Hall was severely attacked in the February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1866 edition of the Dublin Builder (page 43 - 44). The article claimed to be the voice of "expressions of opinion....so, numerous, so emphatic, and so unanimous...". It declared that the selection of the design by Ferguson for a place of honour was nothing more or less than an insult to the other competitors and did not reflect well on the selection committee. The plan was described as straggling and ill-considered, and did not agree, in details, with the elevation. The design, the article went on to say, was, from an architectural point of view, utterly contemptible, describing the elevation as a mismatch of Grecian, Egyptian and Roman styles more in line with shop front fashions. This was stinging criticism indeed, and one could imagine the potential damage that such a publicly stated opinion from an architectural journal could have done to Ferguson's reputation. This may explain the absence of any work by him in the Dublin Builder after 1870 and his disappearance from the directories after 1873.

However this does not seem to have deterred the Masonic Order from awarding him with the contract to design and oversee the decoration of the Royal Arch Chapter Room, with which they were very pleased. This could well have been his last recorded work.



Duncan C. Ferguson's façade proposal for the Masonic Hall at Molesworth Street, 1865

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Ex Info:

Professor Peter Leather, Department of Birmingham Studies, University of Birmingham

Andy Foster, Author of Pevsners Architectural Guide to Birmingham

Adrian Farmer, Co-ordinator of the Derwent Valley Mills Heritage Site

Barbara Shackley, Birmingham and West Midlands Victorian Society

Marian Gaule, History of Art Department, UCD



## The Façade

The façade of the building is 21.8 metres high (73 feet) and 15 metres (50 feet) wide and is treated with a rigid use of Classical elements, the composition heavily scored by great protruding entablatures which separate the storeys and a high relief pediment. Although the three classical orders are represented in ascending order and finely worked ornamental detail is very much in evidence, there is nothing light or frivolous about the façade and its appearance is weighty and somewhat sombre. The balcony creates the impression of a solid block of masonry, emphasised by the presence of the four sturdy supporting columns.

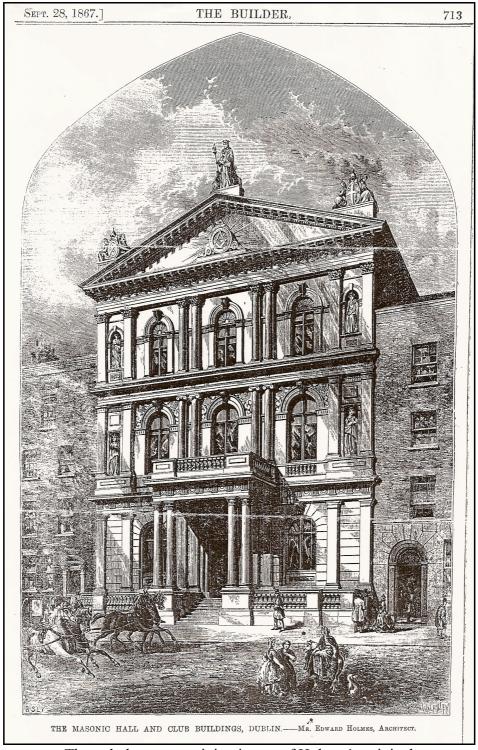
The finished façade that we see today, while containing some Masonic symbols, such as the three orders of classical column (Doric the representation of strength, Ionic the representation of beauty and Corinthian the representation of wisdom), and the set of compasses superimposed on the set square enclosing the All Seeing Eye, does not contain any secret message. There is no hint of any secret knowledge contained within the design or decoration, no cryptic clue to answer the great mysteries that have fascinated and occupied the human mind for millennia, and which many believe the Freemasons to possess. In the original design by Holmes there was the presence of five statues, one on top of the pediment, two of which were heraldic, and four contained in niches to either side of the façade at the second and third floors. These were clearly intended to be representations of allegorical figures from classical history, and may well have been representations of the five Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude and Justice, the hinges upon which the door of Morality swings. However no documentation has, as yet, surfaced to verify this. In any case, these were left out of the eventual design due to cost constraints.

The Masonic emblem contained in the Tympanum is the all important representation of the very heart of Freemasonry, the square a symbolic representation of Morality, the system of principles upon which each action of human life is judged, and the compasses a symbolic representation of Virtue, the true standard of rectitude. Enclosed within is the All Seeing Eye, a symbolic representation of the Great Architect, the Supreme Being, Creator of the Universe.

But these Masonic elements aside, the façade of the Hall was more about making a public statement of the presence of an institution, important in the lives of the rulers of the land, and ever growing in prestige since the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, where hitherto it had been a covert organisation keeping alive the traditions of the Ancients (the liberal arts, in particular) in the face of the suspicions and hostility of the established religions. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century membership of the Freemasons was both a matter of pride and a matter necessity for those who wished to "get on" in Victorian Britain.

The method of proportion that Holmes used to lay the edifice which was a Classical method of just proportion known today as "Wren's Proportion". Christopher Wren,

himself a Freemason, used a system of proportion many times in the rebuilding of London in the 1660's and 1670's where the facades and internal plans were laid out using an angle measuring 54 degrees 45 minutes.



The only known surviving image of Holmes's original design for the façade of the Hall



A relief Panel under one of the ground floor windows



A detail of the mullions of the windows at ground floor



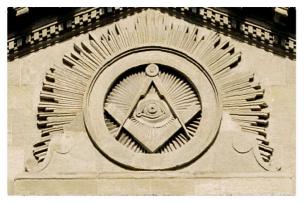
The portico viewed from the west side



The entrance steps with the stair rods eyes



One of the balustrades at street level



The Masonic emblem in the pediment



The ornate brass door handles of the main entrance doors



The entrance to the Hall



The scalloped arch over a window at the second storey

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Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Neil Sholdice, Dip.Arch, MUBC, FRIAI



# The Hallway and Stairwell

On passing through the entrance, one is presented with a long high ceilinged, tunnel-like view of the hallway which runs for most of the length of the building. The floor has been lavishly dressed with a mosaic of geometrically patterned tiles while the Porters Office displays carved relief ornamental decoration.

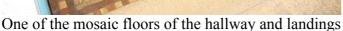






The Hallway viewed from both ends and the stairwell looking down from the first floor







The Porters Office

Half way along its course the hallway opens out to an area denoted by four Ionic columns. To the left of this is the stairwell with steps of cantilevered Portland stone fitted with a mahogany banister rail and highly ornate cast iron balusters. The carpet is red by tradition. From the time of the buildings completion, Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, had been Patron of the Irish Masonic Order. A red carpet was ritually rolled out to the street every time he and his royal successors visited. While the red carpet to the street was a temporary measure by necessity, the staircase has always been permanently carpeted in red.



The ornate staircase



The eyes for brass rods still in place on the main entrance steps

On the first landing of the stairs one encounters three stained glass windows. Not an original feature, the centre window is a WWI war memorial erected by the members of Shakespeare Lodge 143 and Royal Arch Chapter 143 to the memory of their members who died. The windows to either side represent "Charity" to the left and "Patience" to the right. Matching stained glass windows representing "Faith" and "Hope" occupy the external wall on the next landing up. Executed by P.J. Clark & Sons, the Dublin firm of church outfitters, the windows were originally made for the assembly hall of the Masonic Female Orphan School in Ballsbridge (now Bewley's Hotel), but were removed to Molesworth Street following its closure in 1971.



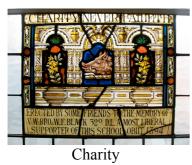


The two landings on the stairwell containing the five stained glass windows







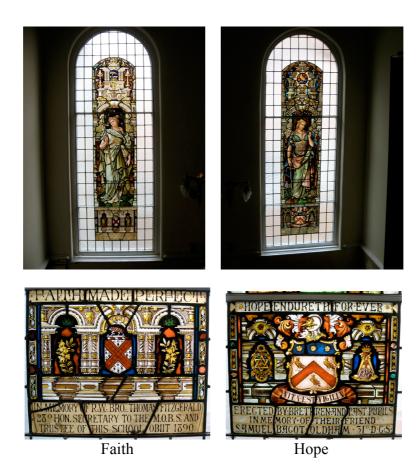






Shakespeare Memorial

Patience



At the first floor there is a landing denoted by four columns, this time Corinthian, in the same manner as the hallway below. To the left of this landing lies the Grand Lodge Room with its associated smaller rooms, while to the right a high ceilinged corridor leads to the Mark Mason's Chapter Room on its left and the Royal Arch Chapter Room on its right. H. James Gibson & Sons, Decorating Contractors of Mary Street carried out the decoration of the hallway and stairs. Thomas Drew designed the stucco work throughout.







The first floor landing with the entrance to the Grand Lodge room to the left



A view of the windows from the first floor landing and the ornate brass pendant light, also at the first floor landing

## Bibliography:

Freemasons' Magazine & Masonic Mirror, No, 632, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1871, London. P. 121/2

### Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland



## The Grand Lodge Room

The Grand Lodge Room is entered through an ante-chamber off of which to the left is the Tyler's Office to the left and two connecting rooms to the right used for the storage of the Craft Lodges'regalia and Lodge furnishings. These are all basic unadorned rooms. There are two very large doors into the Grand Lodge Room, both with ornate architraves and pediments. One of these is accessed via the Tyler's Office and is called the Candidates Door and it is through this that candidates for the various Masonic Degrees are led. The other door is to the right of the buildings centre line of axis. The other door is the main entrance to the room and when entering the viewer is immediately struck by the vast size of the chamber. It is 21.6 metres long, 11.7 metres wide, and 9.6 metres high. It is decorated in a Neo-Classical style with large freestanding Corinthian columns lining the walls. The ceiling is adorned with gold stars to represent the canopy of heaven while important Masonic symbols such as celestial and terrestrial globes and groupings of the working tools, made of plasterwork and gilded, are placed on a heavily ornate entablature supported by the columns. Above this is a relief at either end, the square and compasses over the throne enclosed by a laurel wreath, cornucopiae and floral swags while, at the other end, the All Seeing Eye is given the same treatment, positioned at this point in the room to remind those in attendance, the occupant of the chair in particular of the presence of the ever observant Great Architect.





The Grand Lodge Room. The main entrance is the door to the left.

In the original scheme the lengthy benches, the officers' chairs, and the throne were covered in blue velvet. The furniture, with the exception of the earlier made throne, was made by Digges & Co. of Lincoln Place. Digges also made a chair for the Prince of Wales, surmounted by his plume with the motto, "*Ich Dien*", and covered in matching blue satin. This chair stood at the left hand side of the throne, but was removed after Independence.



The star-studded ceiling of the Grand Lodge Room representing the Celestial Canopy of the Heavens. Large "sunburner"s, each composed of seven stars hung from the two gilt round roses prior to the building's electrification on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1893



Also above the entablature, running the length of the room on both sides are total of ten sepia drawings of scenes taken from the Old Testament depicting verses of the Bible relating to the building of Solomon's Temple, the central theme of Craft Masonry's moral

doctrine and used in an allegorical manner in Masonic ritual. These, along with the overall decorative scheme for the room, were designed by Henry Gibson of H. James Gibson & Sons, Decorating Contractors of Mary Street. Gibson was, at the time, a Past Master of Lodge 232. The execution of the work was carried out by his son, Edward who returned temporarily from London where he was employed as a portrait painter to carry out the work. The stucco work was carried out under the direction of Sir Thomas Drew.



The drawing submitted by Henry Gibson for the north wall



The north wall decorative scheme as it is today



The south wall decoration as it is today

The portraits were mostly executed specifically for the room and depict Grand Masters, Deputy Grand Masters and other Grand Lodge officers from the period 1864 – 1920. The oldest portrait in the collection is of the Earl of Charleville, Grand Master in 1761 and hangs behind the Grand Masters chair.



The portrait of the Earl of Charleville, Grand Master in 1761

Other significant items in the Grand Lodge Room are the highly elaborate and ornate brass candlesticks on the altar. Such is their significance in Masonic ritual that no Lodge may meet and conduct any business without their presence. They were executed by Brother Thomas Kirk, the Past Master of Lodge 171, more famously known for the creation of Nelson's Pillar. The Grand Master's Throne was made by the Dublin cabinet and furniture making firm, William and Gibton in 1833 for the Grand Lodge Room in the Commercial Buildings, the Order's residence prior to its move to Molesworth Street. It is heavily carved of mahogany and contains a number of Masonic symbols.





The three great lights and the altar

The Grand Masters Throne





The gilt plasterwork groupings of the working tools. Included are: the Square, symbolising Morality; the Compasses, symbolising virtue; the Twenty Four Inch Gauge, symbolising Time Well Spent; the Common Gavel, symbolising a Clear Conscience; the Level, symbolising the Equality of All Men; the Plume Rule, symbolising Rectitude of Conduct; the Pencil, symbolising Personal Accountability; the Skirret, symbolic of Personal Integrity

The most spectacular piece of furniture in the Grand Lodge Room is the Organ. It was built specifically at the request of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Leinster, Grand Master at the time of the building of Molesworth Street, by the eminent organ making firm Telford & Telford of St. Stephen's Green. Telford, a member of the order, had previously produced an organ for the Order's Grand Lodge Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1847. The Duke was so impressed with that one, he insisted that Telford & Telford be the firm to make a suitable organ for the new chamber, "generously" contributing £100 towards the cost. The organ Telford made is impressive in its ornate detail with its forty one brass pipes scored, etched and painted with gold and St. Patrick's blue, the workings housed in a finely worked mahogany frame. Originally the organ's bellows were manually driven but it has been, in recent times, converted to electrically driven bellows with a modern keyboard.



The Grand Lodge Room Organ, made by Telford & Telford in 1869

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12<sup>th</sup> Minute Book of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1855 – 27<sup>th</sup> December 1865.

13<sup>th</sup> Minute Book of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1866 – 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1879

Freemasons` Magazine & Masonic Mirror, No, 632, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1871, London. P. 121/2

#### Ex Info:

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Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland



## The Royal Arch Chapter Room

The Royal Arch Chapter Room, like all the other main meeting chambers in the Masonic Hall is absolutely unique in terms of the decoration and symbolism within. The brief to the designer, Duncan Campbell Ferguson, was to create a room reminiscent of the Old Testament, and the unusual mixture of Egyptian and Middle Eastern style was thought by the Masonic Hall Building Committee to convey this atmosphere rather well. The enormous popularity of Egyptology during the entire course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was an obvious influence in the decoration of the room, but the religious and scientific beliefs of the Ancient Egyptians also play a part in the ritual of this branch of the Order. The Egyptian theme of the room is the flora of the Nile: lotus flowers, papyrus leaves and water lilies.



The Dais of the Royal Arch Chapter Room

While the room is certainly the most bizarre and most Victorian in the building, it may also be a product of the Masonic conviction that the tenets and beliefs of Freemasonry extend as far back to, and beyond, the building of the Pyramids.

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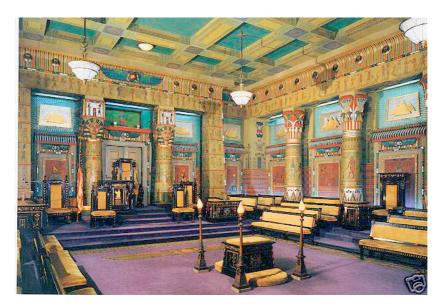
The capitols of the Royal Arch Chapter Room columns decorated with flora of the Nile





The Sphinxes adorning either side of the Dais, somewhat Judaic in some of their attributes

While the room is fairly unique in the Masonic Halls of Ireland, England and Scotland, several American Masonic Halls of the same era incorporated Egyptian rooms, most notably the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania building in Philadelphia (below).





The Royal Arch Chapter Room viewed from the Dais

The description of the Royal Arch Chapter, which appeared in the Dublin Morning Mail on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August, a matter of weeks after it was finished, announced that it had been completed under the skilful superintendence of Duncan Campbell Ferguson of Harcourt Street, the third prize winner of the building competition.

The style was apparently adopted by the Committee for its great antique character, and was supposed, at the time, to be the nearest style of architecture approaching the Temple of Solomon. The room was described as representing all that could be desired in elegance and beauty, combined with a truthfulness and brilliancy of colouring peculiar to the Egyptian style of architecture. The dimensions of the room are: 15 metres long, 5.4 metres wide and 4.5 metres high, divided into five chambers by richly coloured curtains or veils of fine cloth.

The recesses, into which the veils are drawn, are formed between the shafts of Egyptian columns which are set in pairs on both sides of the room opposite each other. These columns support massive beams which stretch across the full width of the room, and are beautifully enriched with lotus leaves and flowers, coloured and gilded. The shafts of the columns were made with fine Parian cement, fluted and coloured in various tints of red, yellow, green and delicate neutral tints. The capitals of these columns, so totally different from any other order or style of architecture, are composed of large bell shaped water-lily leaves, highly decorated on their surfaces with smaller foliage of lilies and leaves of various aquatic plants peculiar to the Nile.

Inserted into the walls between each pair of columns is an Egyptian style head carved in stone, (as were the sphinxes) each one supporting a highly ornate brass Menorah

decorated with the blossoms and fruit of the olive tree alternately set one above the other. These Menorahs were executed by Curtis & Co. of Abbey Street.

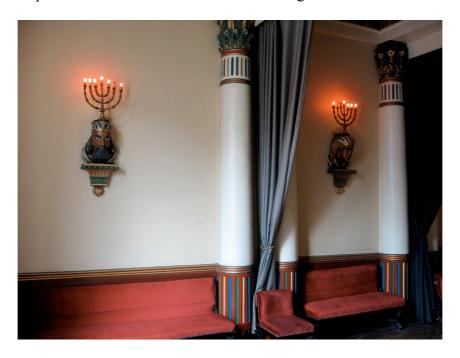


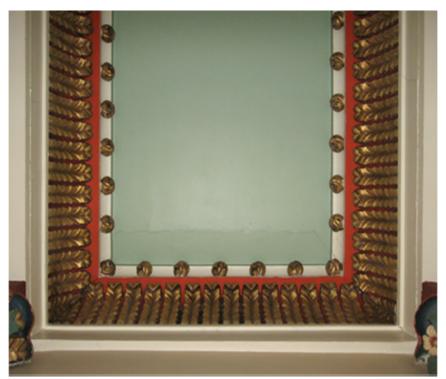


Plasterwork heads of various Egyptian and Middle Eastern historical figures supporting Menorahs which adorn the walls of the Royal Arch Chapter Room

The columns, capitals, winged globe and entablature were all carved of wood, and highly enriched with colour and gilt, in harmony with all the other architectural features that form the body of the room.

The couches, chairs and the front paws of the pair of sphinxes are of black ebony with gilded detail and were from the outset covered with crimson velvet. They were created by the furniture makers McDowell & Co. of Mary Street. The gilding, decorations and cut stone work were carried out by Messrs. Early & Powell of Camden Street, all under the direction and specifications of the architect Duncan Ferguson and the Committee.





A detail of one of the ceiling panels



The Royal Arch Chapter Room Photographed in 1900

Bibliography:

Freemasons' Magazine & Masonic Mirror, No, 632, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1871, London. P. 121/2

Minutes from the years 1868-1871 in the  $13^{th}$  Minute Book of the Grand Lodge of Ireland,  $4^{th}$  January  $1866-27^{th}$  June 1879, GLI Archive

Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland

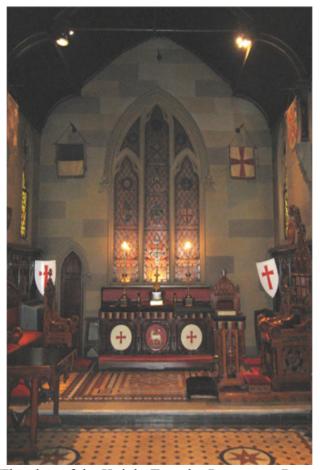
Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland



# The Knight Templar Preceptory Room

It is widely held that modern day Freemasonry is the descendant of Lodges of stonemasons who accompanied their Templar Knight masters to Scotland during the flight from La Rochelle just prior to the morning of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1307, the date that Philip VI of France moved against the Templars, bringing to an end the most powerful international military and banking organisation in history, hence the prevailing superstition, "unlucky for some".



The altar of the Knight Templar Preceptory Room

The Christian and Chivalric traditions of the medieval Orders of Knighthood are very much a part of the ritual of this branch of the Masonic Order and are reflected in the style of the decoration of this room. It is an attempt to recreate the appearance and atmosphere of a medieval church or chapel and, of all the rooms in the Hall, it is architecturally the

most ambitious as it has been constructed with false walls to accommodate the stained glass windows which are artificially lit from behind.



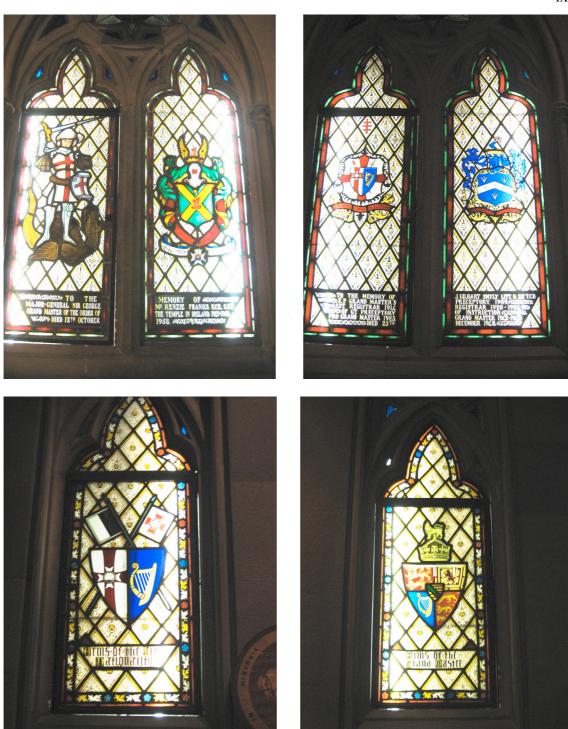
The east side of the Knight Templar Preceptory Room



The west side of the Knight Templar Preceptory Room



Details of the fine plasterwork of the windows and their surrounds

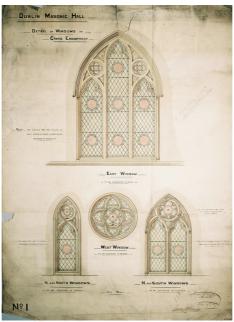


The four most elaborate side windows in the Knight Templar Preceptory Room

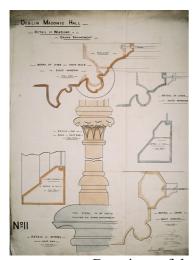
The decoration of the room was completed in 1873. The original design for the room was by Samuel Robinson under the direction of Edward Holmes. The original series of nine drawings for the room which have survived, are signed by both Robinson and Holmes and are dated the 9<sup>th</sup> April 1870. Holmes was clearly still involved with the buildings completion at that time.

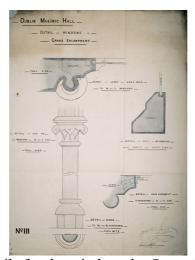
The walls are lined with mahogany panelling and the seated are upholstered with maroon coloured leather above which runs a series of the coats of arms of past members of the branch

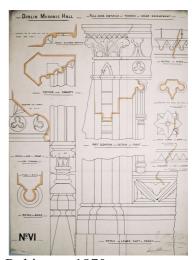
The only major changes to the room since then are replacements of the original stained glass in the main window, for the arrival of the Prince of Wales in 1873, with depictions the coats of arms of the most senior officers of the Great Priory after the room's creation. The stained glass of the lesser windows are memorials to subsequent Grand Master Knights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, being added at later stages.



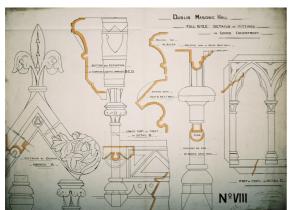
Drawings for the windows by Samuel Robinson, 1870

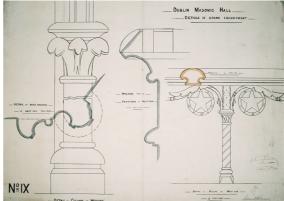




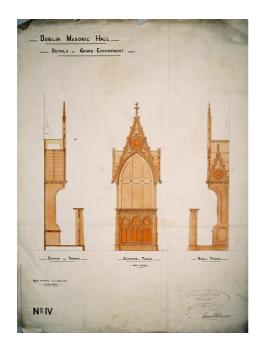


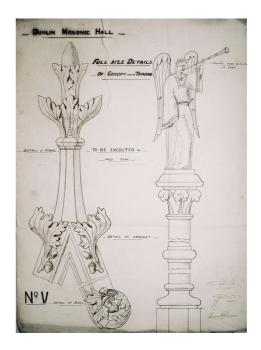
Drawings of details for the windows by Samuel Robinson, 1870

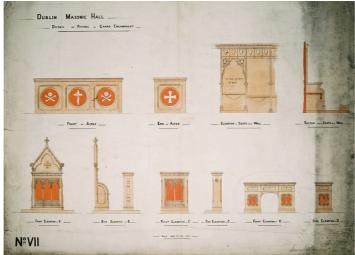




Drawings of details for the windows by Samuel Robinson, 1870







A set of drawings for the designs of the furniture of the room by Robinson, none of which were executed

lxxiv



The Back of the Knight Templar Preceptory Room



The Preceptor's Chair

The ornate Preceptors chair, carved of mahogany with intricate detail featuring two crusading figures was made, along with the rest of the chamber's furniture, was made by the firm Joseph Digges & Co.



The Knight Grand Cross and Seneschal's chairs



The Chancellor's and Treasurers chairs



The Knight Templar Preceptory Room in 1900

### Bibliography:

Freemasons' Magazine & Masonic Mirror, No, 632, 12<sup>th</sup> August 1871, London. P. 121/2

#### Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland



## The Prince Masons Chapter Room



The Prince Masons Chapter Room is the last of the highly decorated rooms in the main body of the building and, of all of them, it has been tampered with the most. The original intention had been to create a mock gothic Knights chamber, with individual stalls, rather reminiscent of gothic cathedral choir stalls such as the stalls of the Knights of St. Patrick in St. Patrick's Cathedral, or those in the chapel at Windsor Castle. Originally the room was lit by a corona of gaslights, 36 in number and three standards, each containing eleven lights, each burner in the shape of a five pointed star. The gilding and other decorative work was done by Messrs. Early and Powell of Camden Street, and the wall panelling and furniture was made by Digges & Co. of Lincoln Place



The stalls on the north wall of the Prince Masons Chapter Room



The stalls on the south wall of the Prince Masons Chapter Room

The designs for the furnishings were created by Edward Gibson, the son of Henry Gibson, who designed the Grand Lodge Room. The room was finished in 1869.



The Prince Mason's Chapter Room viewed from the south

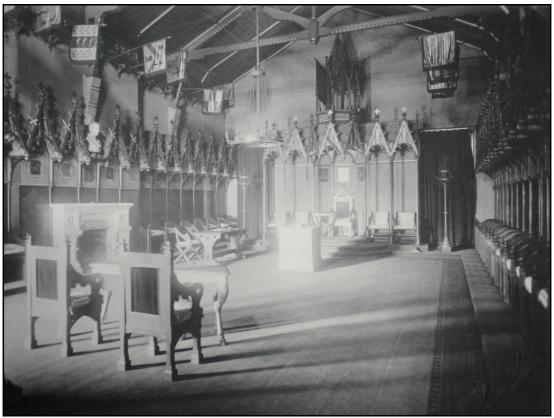
lxxix



The design for the central dais of the Prince Masons Chapter Room, signed by Edward Gibson (not dated)

The walls were originally painted with a design very similar to the backdrop on the central dais, with crosses, crowns and roses, all very gothic and reflecting the branch of Freemasonry that meets here, the Ancient and Accepted Rite. This Order of Freemasonry, rather like the Templars was intended as a chivalric Order, hence the gothic and chivalric style of the room. In 1902 a large extension was added to the north side of the building in the former back garden of No. 16 at ground and basement floor and most of the furnishings and décor of the room was removed and re-erected in the new ground floor room

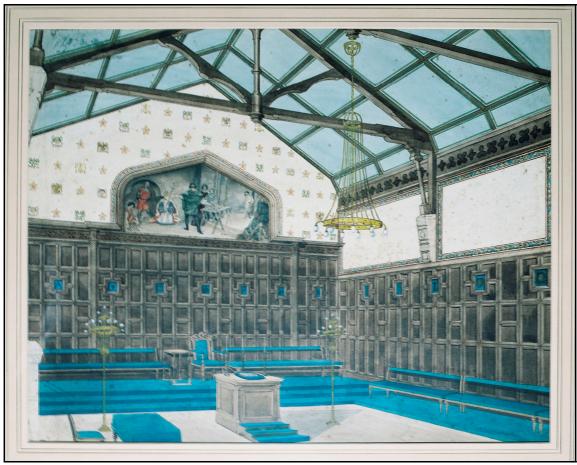
The room was then redecorated in a mock Tudor style with false panelling around the walls with craft symbols picked out in gold on blue squares.



The Prince Mason's Chapter Room on the second floor in 1900



The room after reconstruction as a small Lodge room in 1902



An artist's impression of the new Tudor style decorative scheme for the Prince Masons Chapter Room on the second floor which lasted from 1902 to 1967

In the late 1960s the original mock gothic canopies and central dais were brought back to this room and reinstalled. Originally there had been a helmet to accompany each sword hanging over the stalls, but these were not reintroduced. Neither was an original feature which contributed in a major way to the overall richness of the room's décor: the carpet, before the first move had been of a Royal purple laced with small, gold pattern work with a border of a series of shamrock wreaths. It was made by Messrs. Millar & Beatty of Grafton Street. The present result is a slightly bizarre mixture of gothic style furnishings combined with a mock Tudor ceiling treatment.

The one original feature to have remained throughout the changes to the room is the ornately carved marble fireplace, the central relief of which contains a band of roses, an important symbol for the Ancient and Accepted Rite. The piece is thought to have been carved by the sculptor, Charles Harrison, but this has not been confirmed.



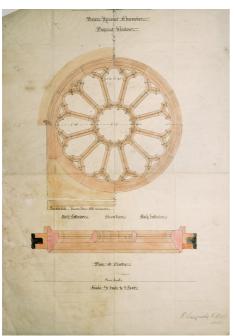








The marble fireplace thought to have been carved by Charles Harrison





The rose window designed for the Prince Masons Chapter Room by the architect, R. Langrishe. This was also removed from the room in 1902 but was not reinstated in 1967, it position now occupied by the decorated roundel placed there as part of the Tudor scheme.



A detail of the canopies



The Heraldic Crests of former members



Heraldic flags of former members



A detail of the mock Tudor ceiling, 1902

All drawings and old photographs from the GLI Archive

Ex Info:

Right Worshipful Brother Barry Lyons, Grand Secretary

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Master

Worshipful Brother Jack Daly, Head Tyler to the Grand Lodge of Ireland



## The Restoration of the Façade

The restoration of the façade of Freemasons Hall was carried out from January to April of 2001. The architect in charge of the project was David Young of Hamilton, Young, Lawlor, and Ellison Architects. A Condition Survey and Schedule of Recommendations were carried out by Carrig Building Fabric Consultants, and the contractor was Fleeton Watson Ltd.

The total cost of the work came to £IR 75,159.00 (E95, 471.60.) with a grant from Dublin Corporation of £IR15, 000.00.

The façade, made entirely of Ancaster Limestone (a Jurassic creamy-buff coloured limestone from Lincolnshire, had become seriously discoloured with isolated areas of corrosion as a result of urban pollution and natural weathering. The works carried out were done with the aim of arresting these processes and making good the damage caused. The work involved addressing defects in pointing and protective flashings, spalling and bursting due to the corrosion of iron cramps.

With the reduction in air pollution levels over the city it is hoped that as a result of the cleaning works the natural colour of the limestone will be retained for many years.







Before, during and after the restoration

There was a considerable amount of carboniferous staining due to the build up of atmospheric pollutants on all areas of the façade, the most affected areas being those sheltered from washing such as the inner faces of the portico columns and the dentils in

the pediment. This had been the result of decades of burning coal and diesel combustion, both aggressive pollutants.

Washing by acidic rainwater had led to erosion to the tops of the Corinthian capitals on the second floor, the tops of the window arch keystones on the second floor, and to the upper surface of unflashed ledges.

The failure of the flashing on the ledge between the second and third floors, and at the east corner of the first floor balcony had led to breakthrough washing patterns.

Biological growth was also detected on the pediment as a result of flashing failure and at the base of the balustrade on the balcony due to poor drainage.

Structural cracks due to settlement were found over the right window at ground floor.

The entire façade was cleaned using a cleaning agent called "Prosoco 766" and a Limestone Afterwash manufactured by Prosoco. All of the failed flashing was replaced with new heavy gauge lead flashing as lead will not stain the stonework.

Cracks in the stonework were made good using a non-cementicious mortar to prevent water ingress.

Where re-pointing was necessary, the raking out was done by hand using a narrow gauge chisel and the pointing was done using a mortar with a low salt content matching the colour and texture of the original.

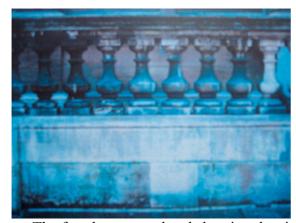
Where the reproduction of the stone was required to replace lacunae, Remers mortar was used matching the texture and colour of the stone. This was also used to replace previous mortar repairs which had been mixed to the colour of the uncleaned stone.

Vegetation and biological growth was removed using a biocide.

The area of structural cracking was cleaned out, allowed to dry and then injected with an epoxy resin. Ground stone was then used to affect an acceptable finish.

The entire balustrade was treated with a water repellent called "Prosoco STMP".

All of the products used in the cleaning and treating of the façade were supplied by Renofors of Rathgar





The façade at street level showing the signs of serious staining and caused by urban pollution, and washing with acid rain

### lxxxviii



The portico pillars before cleaning



The portico pillars after cleaning





The portico pillars showing the repairs made after the building was damaged by gun fire when it taken over by anti-treaty forces in March 1922 to provide accommodation for refugees fleeing from sectarian attacks in Belfast

### lxxxix



The west chimney. Both chimneys required Stabilising and re-pointing works



Repairs being carried out to the window frames

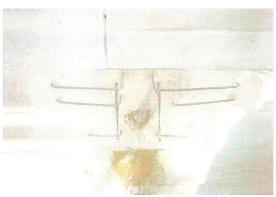




Bursting caused to the decorative masonry at the base of the pediment and just below it due to the rusting of iron cramps



Before repair the stone is cleaned and raked out



Stainless steel rods are inserted to create a framework to anchor the Remers mortar



The Remers mortar is applied matching the colour and texture of the stone



Detail of a third floor window and carved scalloped surround before cleaning and repairs to the timber window frame



Cleaning in progress at the top of the second storey. The stones original colour has been revealed



The flashing between the second and third storey was completely replaced

### Bibliography:

Young, David (2001), "Report on the Conservation and Cleaning of the Front Façade of the Masonic Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2". Hamilton Young Architects

#### Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland



# **Building Conservation Issues**

The only other detectable restorations to the building's exterior are a significant area of rebuilding to the rear of the east and west parapets on the front roof and the obviously newer rendering to the west façade following the demolition of the 1901 two storey extension in 1973 to make way for the modern building to the rear of the Hall which faces onto Setanta Place.



The rebuilt parapet at the rear of the front roof. The intervention is denoted by the use of machined yellow brick

No one, currently involved with the management of the building, can give a date for the rebuilding of the parapets or exactly why the work was carried out, but the reason for it is clearly due to a serious ingress of water as a result of poor drainage or complete blockage of the valley. This would have been the result of a case of "out of sight, out of mind". The biggest problem with this particular roof area is that it is extremely difficult to get at without the use of scaffolding. Such a measure would not be viable for the sole purpose

of carrying out a regular inspection. It is unclear if the roofing timbers behind the east parapet were affected though, with such an obviously large repair, there must surely have been at least some damage to the timber. However, there is no detectable evidence on the ceiling of the Prince Mason's Chapter Room. This may, in part, be due to the fact that the room, like the Knight Templar Preceptory Room next door has a false roof and this part of the false roof is inaccessible from within. On the other hand, it is likely that the problem was first detected from within the room: the extent of the intervention down the back wall would suggest a major spread of damp or wet or dry rot which would have travelled through to the inside of the wall discolouring the paint and plasterwork. When the work was done, best conservation practice was obviously not considered, the materials having been chosen in a pragmatic way. The work appears, on the closest inspection possible, to have been well done and still in a very good state of repair.





The rear of the west parapet showing the older reconstruction and, viewed from inside, the roof timbers showing the effects of a significant ingress of water a long time ago

The rear of the west parapet is a different case in that it can be viewed form within the attic space due to the smaller scale of the false roof over the Knights Chapel. The reconstruction intervention here is much older judging by the materials used and their apparent weathering and carbonaceous staining, and probably dates to the first half of the  $20^{th}$  century. No evidence of a past infestation of wet or dry rot appears and the roofing timbers seem to be the originals. This is, no doubt, due to the very fortunate presence of a roundel opening which once contained a grille. The roundel served two purposes: to provide light to illuminate the stained glass roundel high on the back wall of the Knights Templar Preceptory Room; and to provide ventilation between the main roof structure and most of the two false roofs. No documentation has been found regarding these two interventions. In any case, these problems arose because of the "out of sight, out of mind" scenario and it is this that raises a conservation issue. The inaccessibility of this part of the building means that it is not possible to inspect it as often as should be necessary.



The two false roofs of the Prince Mason's Chapter Room and the Knight Templar Preceptory Room

The other past intervention is the visibly newer rendering to the west façade of the rear of the building. This was applied when a two storey extension, built in 1901 to provide accommodation for the Prince Masons at ground floor and a dining room at basement level, was demolished. The rest of the façade was rendered, most likely, during the 1901 building phase on the basis of its good preservation. Why it was done remains unclear, but two possible explanations are that this side, the lower portion nearest to No. 16 in particular, is deprived of sunlight and, therefore, is slow to dry out: constant dampness seems to be a feature of the back yard of No. 16. The other reason may possibly have been a decision to cover up a mismatch of materials between the old brickwork of the main building and whatever was used in the construction of the extension. But since no record has, as yet, come to light disclosing what materials were used in the 1901 construction, one can only speculate. In the meantime, the condition of the west façade is generally satisfactory. The rendering has suffered in sheltered areas, such as under the window sills, from the carbonaceous staining of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but has, otherwise weathered well. A few structural cracks are evident at the very top of the façade, but with the benefit of the steel gangway these have been attended to. At the bottom of the wall the rendering has crumbled in places due to isolated outbreaks of rising damp and will need to be attended to. From the limited inspection it was possible to do, two dislodged slates were spotted and a ventilation cowl over the Grand Lodge Room is missing.



The roof over the Grand Lodge Room. The missing ventilation cowl is at the far end



The base of the west façade wall showing crumbling of the rendering

xcvii

#### Bibliography:

Young David (2001), "Report on the Conservation and Cleaning of the Front Façade of the Masonic Hall, 17 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2". Hamilton Young Architects

Ex Info:

Very Worshipful Brother David Young, Grand Superintendent of Works, Grand Lodge of Ireland & Hamilton Young Architects

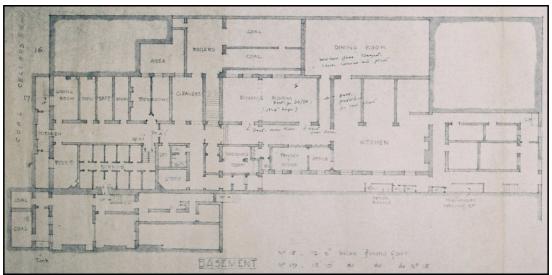
Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Ireland



### Alterations in the Past

There have been many minor alterations carried out to the internal layout of the building since its completion in 1869 but these have been of no great consequence as they would not have been considered structural alterations. There were, however, two major alterations to the buildings structure and layout, the first taking place in 1901 and the second taking place in 1973.

With regard to the 1901 alterations, regrettably no plans or documentation have, so far come to light, other than references to the need for them, and that they had taken place, in the Grand Lodge and Board of General Purposes Minutes in the lead up to and during that time. All that exists currently are drawings from a survey carried out by W. H. Howard Cooke, architect, in November 1953 and a photograph of the Prince Masons Chapter Room, taken in 1902 just after it was built.

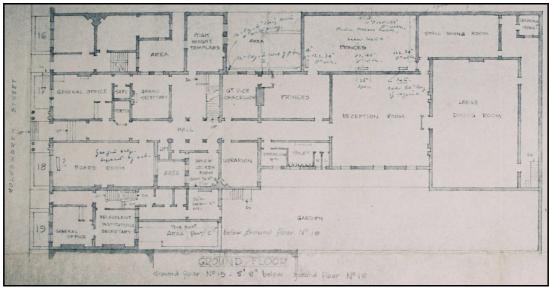


A detail of Survey Plans drawn up by W. H. Howard Cooke in 1953 showing the extensions made in 1901 to the Basement on the west facade

These drawings show that the extensions were considerable, taking up almost the entire available space of the back garden of No. 16. At basement level provision was made for a new boiler room with two large coal bunkers adjacent. From this it can be deduced that the alterations included a coal fired central heating system for the entire building complex. Also included was a large dining room spanning the width of the garden (7.46 metres/25 feet). To the rear of the original structure was a very large rectangular area which has not been given a title by Howard Cooke. Nor has a group of four rooms at the rear which are surrounded by a corridor. These could have been stores or offices

xcix

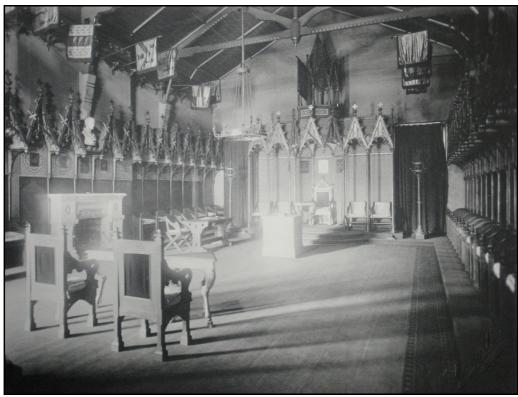
associated with the in-house domestic or catering arrangements. With regard to the rest of the basement, regrettably, Holmes's plans, original and amended, are not available for scrutiny so it is impossible to say if any other significant alterations took place at this level.



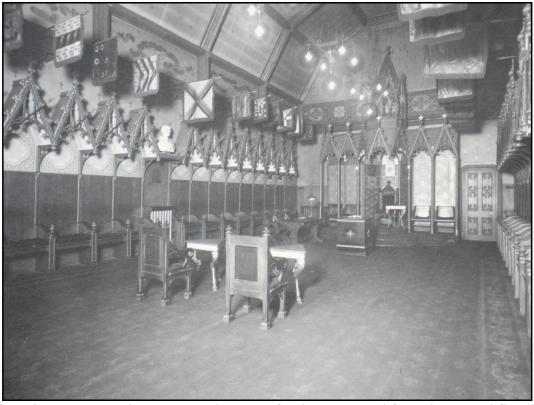
A detail of Survey Plans drawn up by W. H. Howard Cooke in 1953 showing the extensions made in 1901 to the Ground Floor on the west façade

At ground floor Howard Cooke has recorded that the Knight Templars Preceptory Room and Prince Masons Chapter Room were established as two separate extensions, the Prince Masons Chapter Room directly over the Dining room and the Knight Templar Preceptory Room directly over the boiler room, making it a very small narrow chamber. The first of these rooms apparently did not have any windows while the second had three windows at irregular positions. Whereas the furnishings of the Prince Masons Chapter Room were removed from their original location on the second floor to the new accommodation and reassembled, the chapel decoration of the Knights Templar Preceptory Room were left in place due to the much diminished size of their new accommodation. The reason for this move of the two Masonic branches was simply a matter of convenience: The number of members of both these higher Orders is limited. In the case of the Prince Masons Chapter, membership is normally for life and it is, therefore, necessary for an existing member to pass away before a membership can be offered to someone new. Accordingly, the membership is dominated by elderly men and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was acknowledged that is was an onerous task for many of them to climb the stairs to the second floor. This was, of course, before the introduction of the lift in the early 1920's.

There are a number of internal alterations to the internal layout of spaces in the front and middle sections of the building between Howard Cooke's survey drawings and Holmes's ground floor plan but it must be remembered that the Holmes plan is the original prior to the subsequent alterations required of him before construction began.



The Prince Masons Chapter Room in 1900 before it was moved form the second floor to the new ground floor accommodation



The Prince Masons Chapter Room in 1902 after it was moved form the second floor to the new ground floor accommodation



The only known visual record of the large dining room created in 1901

To the rear of Holmes's old dining room was created the new large dining room. Behind it ran a corridor, with a stairs from the kitchens below, which serviced both the new small and large dining rooms. At the northwest corner of this was sited a catering manager's office with only an internal window and no apparent natural light. From the photograph of 1902 the dining room appears as a very grand chamber, sumptuously decorated with detailed hardwood wall panelling over which were linked pairs of plasterwork Ionic columns between which were mock alcoves containing low relief stuccowork swags of ribbons and floral motifs. The room was completed with an ornate ceiling made up of fifteen coffered recesses. Holmes's dining room was, at this point converted to a reception room which, from 1916, housed the Chetwode Crawley Library.

These structures would have necessitated the demolition of No's. 6, 7 & 8 Frederick Lane, the former coach houses and stables of 16, 17 & 18 Molesworth Street. No visual or documentary record of these buildings has been found to date.



The original dining room designed by Holmes photographed in 1900



The same room photographed after 1916

In the mid 1960's a decision was made by the Order to demolish the large dining room and corridor behind it, and all of the structures in the back garden of No. 16, returning the buildings north and west building line to the Holmes's original layout of 1869 and build a new office block on the former site of 6, 7 & 8 Frederick Lane. The design for the office block and the complete restructuring of the basement was done by Derek Ryan of Ryan O'Brien Architects and Surveyors in 1973. Again, regrettably, no record of the designs, plans or associated documentation for this work has come to light. All that is currently possible is a comparison between Howard Cooke's survey drawings of 1953 and the survey drawings attached to this document.



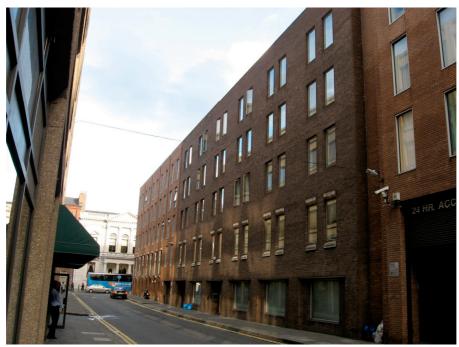




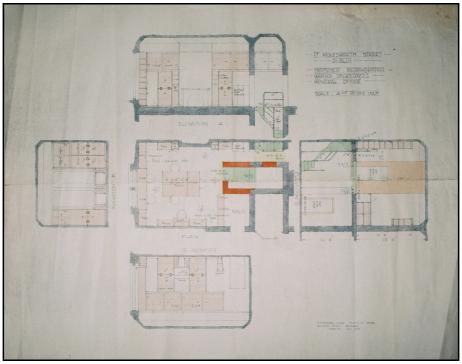
The two front dining rooms and the main dining room today

The main alterations visible today are the creation of four main dining rooms. Two small dining rooms at the front of the building replaced an assortment of staff living accommodation and storerooms laid out to either side of a central axis corridor mirroring the position of the Hallway above. Two larger adjacent dining rooms were created from an existing dining room and the kitchens to the rear of the building with a concertina partition between the two to create an even larger dining area for Grand Lodge functions. The kitchens were moved from their central position to the east side of the basement. This major restructuring of the building's accommodation to facilitate the new office block on what is now Setanta Lane was the direct result of the need to invest the money from the sale of the Masonic Girls School at Ballsbridge. The large Dining Room was, by now poorly utilised, due in part to decreasing membership, so the Grand Lodge of Ireland

donated the site and the proceeds of the Ballsbridge sale built what is now 1 Setanta Place. The rent from the building goes mainly to the Masonic Girls Orphan Fund with some monies funding other Masonic charities. At the same time, the demolition of all but No.'s 15, 16, 17/18, 19 & 20 on the north side of Molesworth Street was under way and the prospect of seizing the opportunity to gain from the increasing demand for purpose built office space in the city seemed, at that time, to make financial sense.



1 Setanta Place

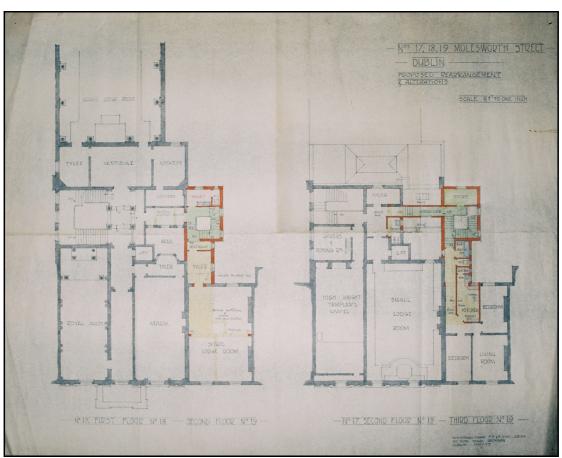


The plan by W. H. Howard Cooke, 1953, for alterations to the Grand Secretary's General Office (in red)

The other alteration phase in the building's history was designed and carried out by Howard Cooke in 1954. Accompanying his survey plans were proposals to rearrange the layout of the Grand Secretary's General Office at the front of the building on the ground floor and to establish connecting doors on each floor with a new extension to No. 19 next door to the east side.

The plan to alter the General Office centred on the creation of a fire proof document store (indicated in red) and a design for new office furnishings to take account of the reduced space.

The new connecting doors to the new extension to No. 19 were positioned off the central pillared space of the Hallway and the landing above passing through a narrow space to the south of an old disused chimney breast. At the second floor a new corridor was built on top of the existing structure.



Howard Cooke's plan drawing of 1953 indicating the alterations to the party wall with No. 19 in red and the new corridor at the second floor (top right)

A very interesting proposal was drawn up by the eminent architects firm, Kaye, Parry & Ross in 1920 for a lavish extension comprising three floors to accommodate a new Lodge room and two dining rooms. This extension was to be sited in the rear garden of No. 19

and attached to the main building. At this point the Order must have been in a much healthier state financially and in terms of numbers. The proposal may have been accepted although no documentation has come to light as yet to confirm or deny this, but doubtless the winds of political change occurring in the country at that time would have played a hand in the postponement or total abandonment of the project.

Ex Info:

Right Worshipful Brother Barry Lyons, Grand Secretary

Ms. Rebecca Hayes, Archivist to the Grand Lodge of Ireland

Worshipful Brother Morgan McCreadie, Assistant to the Grand Master

Denis Handy, Ryan O'Brien Handy, Architects and Surveyors