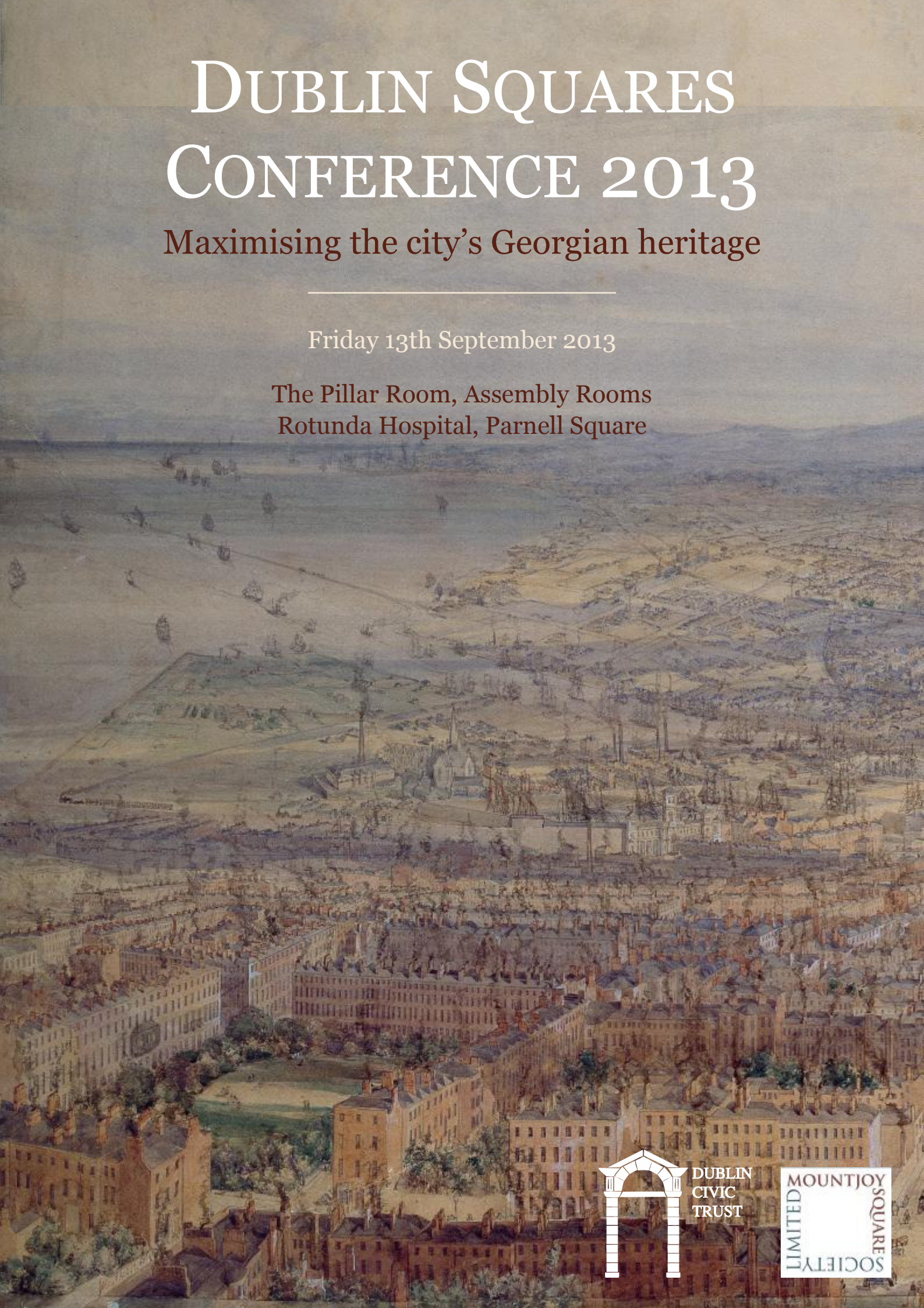
Dublin Squares Conference 2013

Maximising the city's Georgian heritage

Friday 13th September 2013

The Pillar Room, Assembly Rooms
Rotunda Hospital, Parnell Square



DUBLIN CIVIC TRUST

MOUNTJOY SQUARE SOCIETY LIMITED

Programme

09.10	Welcome & Introduction Geraldine Walsh, Chief Executive Officer, Dublin Civic Trust
09.20	Opening Address Phil Hogan T.D., Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government

SESSION 1	Chaired by Elizabeth Morgan, Landscape Conservation Architect, Office of Public Works
09.30	Changing the Rules: The Social Construction of the European City Square, 1500-1900 Desmond McCabe, Historian and Author
10.00	Grand Ambitions - Development of the Gardiner Estate Merlo Kelly, Architect and Conservation Consultant
10.25	The Square in the Town Plan Todd Longstaffe-Gowan, Landscape Architect and Historian
10.50	Discussion
11.00	Tea/Coffee Break

SESSION 2	Chaired by Ali Grehan, City Architect, Dublin City Council
11.30	The Design and Redesign of Urban Squares – A Scottish Perspective Christopher Dingwall, Landscape Historian and Heritage Consultant, Scotland
11.55	Dublin's Forgotten Pleasure Grounds - Parnell Square James Kelly, Conservation Architect and Chairman, Dublin Civic Trust
12.20	Can the Past Serve the Present? Artists as a Source for Depicting Dublin's Squares Adrian Le Harivel, Senior Curator, National Gallery of Ireland
12.45	Discussion
12.55	Lunch

SESSION 3	Chaired by Ciaran O'Connor, State Architect, Office of Public Works
13.50	An Outsider's Perspective - Appraising Dublin's Squares Chris Sumner, Chair of Planning and Conservation, London Parks and Gardens Trust
14.10	Challenges and Opportunities - The Squares as an Urban Resource Nicki Matthews, Conservation Officer and Conservation Architect, Dublin City Council
14.30	Maximising the North Georgian Core Karin O'Flanagan, Secretary, Mountjoy Square Society and Resident

14.50	The Future of the South Georgian Core Paul Kearns, Senior Planner, Dublin City Council
15.10	A Strategy for Dublin City Parks and Garden Squares Leslie Moore, City Parks Superintendent, Dublin City Council
15.30	Discussion
15.40	Tea/Coffee Break

SESSION 4	Chaired by Aidan Pender, Director of Strategic Development, Fáilte Ireland
16.05	Financing Regeneration - The Case for Renewal Garrett Fennell, Chairperson, Mountjoy Square Society
16.25	The Campaign for London's Squares: A Tale of Two Funders Drew Bennellick, Head of Landscape and Natural Heritage, Heritage Lottery Fund
16.45	The Lanes and Approaching Streets of Mountjoy Square: A Contemporary View Mary Laheen, Architect and Lecturer, School of Architecture and Landscape, UCD
17.05	Debate & Discussion Chaired by Aidan Pender, Director of Strategic Development, Fáilte Ireland
17.20	Concluding Address Frank McDonald, Author, Journalist and Environment Editor of *The Irish Times*

Background: Ink and watercolour view of north Georgian Dublin from the spire of St. George's Church, by James Mahony, 1854
Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland

Speakers

Desmond McCabe is a graduate of University College Dublin and currently works as a curator in the Public Record Office Northern Ireland (Belfast). Having worked on the official history of the Office of Public Works (Ireland) for a number of years, he completed and published the recent study *St. Stephen's Green, Dublin: 1660-1875* (Dublin, 2011), treating the development of a Dublin square from medieval commonage to inner-city Victorian park. He has worked on aspects of Irish urban history in the Centre for Urban History, University of Leicester; researched and lectured in the Irish Famine Project (based in Trinity College Dublin) and served on the Dictionary of Irish Biography (RIA). He and his wife, Anita Gallagher, lately examined the Irish-speaking oral culture of Omeath, County Louth in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of his published work has been in the field of 19th century social history but he has strayed when he could get away with it.

Merlo Kelly is a practicing architect, design studio tutor and occasional lecturer at the School of Architecture, UCD. In 2011 she completed a Masters in Urban and Building Conservation at UCD and was the recipient of the ICOMOS Rachel MacRory Memorial Award for her thesis entitled *Luke Gardiner and the Gardiner Estate – Conserving an Urban Morphology*, a study of today's north inner city Dublin against the backdrop of Gardiner's late eighteenth-century urban developments. Recent collaborative research projects include a survey of twentieth-century architecture in Dublin commissioned by Dublin City Council, and an inventory of Dublin city commissioned by the NIAH.

Todd Longstaffe-Gowan is a landscape architect and historian with an international practice based in London. His work reflects his interest in the dramatic and sculptural potential of landscape, and is imbued with whimsical, historical eclecticism. He is the author of several books including *The London Town Garden 1700-1840* (Yale, 2001) and *The London Square: Gardens in the Midst of Town* (Yale, 2012). He is Gardens Adviser to Historic Royal Palaces (including Hampton Court, Kew and Kensington Palaces and the Tower of London) and Landscape Adviser to the Crown Estate Paving Commission at Regent's Park.

Christopher Dingwall studied for his MA in Conservation Studies at the University of York's Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, following fifteen years' involvement in environmental education. Since graduating in 1989, he has practised as a landscape historian with a particular focus on historic gardens and designed landscapes. For twelve years from 1992 to 2004, Christopher served part-time as Conservation Officer with the Garden History Society in Scotland. Since then, his time has been divided between archival research, regional garden surveys, writing of reports and conservation plans, together with lecturing on different aspects of garden history, planning and heritage conservation.

James Kelly graduated from DIT School of Architecture with a Bachelor's Degree in Architectural Science and a Diploma in Architecture in 1988. After graduation he worked in England with Wintersgill & Faulkner where he was an Associate responsible for the design and construction of a variety of projects. He returned to Ireland in 1993 and formed James Kelly Architects in 1994, continuing in private practice until 1999 when he formed Kelly & Cogan Architects with Denis Cogan, a practice specialising in conservation, housing and urban design. Having a particular interest in domestic architecture and urban landscape of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, James has sat as an invited member on the National Council of An Taisce and is now Chairman of Dublin Civic Trust. He is a member of the RIBA and the RIAI.

Adrian Le Harivel is a Senior Curator at the National Gallery of Ireland and currently manages the Gallery's British, Italian and early French paintings. He set up the Prints and Drawings department and has a great interest in topographical art, especially views and maps of Dublin. He has contributed to many Gallery catalogues and exhibitions, with a particular focus on Georgian architecture and social life. He has also guided the NGI Friends and members of the American National Trust to historic buildings and collections across Ireland and Britain.

Chris Sumner is an architect and garden historian and chairs the Planning and Conservation working group of the London Parks and Gardens Trust, of which he is a founder member and former Chairman. From 1986 until 2007 he worked in the London Region of English Heritage as an historic buildings inspector and parks and gardens adviser, and prior to that was employed in the Historic Buildings Division of the former Greater London Council. He studied the conservation of historic landscapes at the Architectural Association School and is a member of various advisory panels including Chiswick House and Strawberry Hill.

Karin O'Flanagan is a long-standing resident and active promoter of Mountjoy Square, having purchased a town house there in 1978 and effected its complete restoration. She holds a keen interest in historic building conservation and decorative interiors, with a particular emphasis on the history and development of Mountjoy Square since its late Georgian inception to its twentieth-century decline and subsequent reassembly in the 1990s. With a background in catering and hospitality, and currently operating a successful 'Airbnb' in her 1790s town house, Karin holds a unique insight into visitors' perceptions of Dublin and the north Georgian area of the city. She is also a founding member and Secretary of The Mountjoy Square Society.

Nicki Matthews is Conservation Officer in Dublin City Council. She qualified as an architect from DIT Bolton Street in 1986, and having practiced for a number of years in several Dublin offices, completed a Masters in Urban and Building Conservation in UCD in 1997. Her specialist topic was the construction and evolution of late eighteenth-century to early nineteenth-century Dublin, focusing on the chronological development of Merrion Square. Her primary research was published as part of the *Georgian Squares of Dublin* publication by Dublin City Council. Nicki is part of the Grade I Accredited Conservation Team within DCC City Architects Division, responsible for the conservation remit within Dublin, and is a Grade I Conservation Architect in her own right. She is a member of the RIAI Historic Building Committee and has lectured extensively on behalf of the Irish Georgian Society, RIAI Accreditation, Trinity College Diploma Course in Conservation, Dublin Civic Trust CPD Courses, ICOMOS (Ireland), The Building Limes Forum, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Heritage, and the Heritage Council. Publications include *Reusing Farm Buildings - A Kildare Perspective* and the *Advice Series* guide *Roofs - A Guide to the Repair of Historic Roofs*.

Paul Kearns is a Senior Planner with Dublin City Council. He has over a decade of development management experience in the city centre of Dublin and currently chairs the City Council Working Group on *The Future of the South Georgian Core*. Paul is co-author (along with Motti Ruimy) of the book *Redrawing Dublin* (Gandon Editions 2010), a recipient of the Government *Engaging with Architecture Scheme* award. He has contributed to a number of different publications including *Architecture Ireland* (RIAI Journal) and the recently published book *Patterns of Thought* (2012). He is currently researching a new book *The Seamless Neighbourhood – Redrawing the City of Israel* (between 2002 and 2004 Paul worked in Jerusalem as the Israeli-Palestinian correspondent for *The Sunday Tribune*). He is a graduate of University College Dublin (BA in Economics and Geography and a Masters in Urban Planning).

Leslie Moore joined Dublin City Council as City Parks Superintendent at the end of February 2012. A graduate of UCD, where he studied Landscape Horticulture (B.Agr. Sc), Leslie also has a Masters in Local Government Management from the Institute of Public Administration. He previously worked with the former Dublin County Council and South Dublin County Council, and most recently worked in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council, where he led the planning, design and development of a number of significant improvements to parks, heritage and visitor facilities, notably in Killiney Hill Park, Cabinteely Park and Marlay Park. The tearooms and Japanese Courtyard Garden in Cabinteely Park is a project of which he is particularly proud. Leslie led the first Open Space Strategy of any local authority in Ireland which was published in 2012 and he is now taking a strategic look at the parks and open spaces in Dublin to assess the current 'health' of the Parks Service given the diverse needs of citizens and visitors to a capital city. This study will help to inform priorities and future spending within Dublin City Council. Leslie believes strongly in partnership and welcomes the opportunity to work with other stakeholders who wish to conserve and enhance the built and natural heritage of the city.

Garrett Fennell is Chairperson of The Mountjoy Square Society, a company limited by guarantee aimed at improving Mountjoy Square as a place to live, work and visit. A solicitor by profession, Garrett is also director of GFC Consulting Limited, a public affairs consultancy and Public Affairs Ireland, an education and training company. Garrett is the chair of the RIAI Admissions Board and has recently completed an independent review for the Minister of the Environment on the registration of architects in Ireland. Garrett operates his businesses from 25 Mountjoy Square, an original Frederick Darley built house on the east side of the Square.

Drew Bennellick joined the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in April 2009 and sits within the Strategic and Business Development Department alongside similar posts relating to museums/archives, the built environment, and participation and learning. Drew is Programme Director for the Parks for People and Landscape Partnerships targeted grant programmes, and is responsible for providing expert advice to HLF Board and regional/country teams on designed landscape and the natural heritage sectors. Drew studied at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh and is a chartered landscape architect with experience of both private and public sectors. Before HLF, Drew was Deputy Director of English Heritage's London Region dealing with regional policy development and building partnerships with key organisations.

Mary Laheen is an architect and lecturer in Architectural Design at UCD. She has lived in Mountjoy Square since 1987 and has practiced architecture there since 1995. The practice engages with architecture through design of contemporary buildings, conservation of existing buildings and landscapes of cultural and historical interest, and through writing and teaching. The practice's contemporary building design has an emphasis on constructional and spatial legibility and the integration of buildings with their site context and with the natural world. Mary completed a Masters in Urban Building Conservation in 2005 and holds a particular interest in landscape conservation, being the author of *Drystone Walls of the Aran Islands: Exploring the Cultural Landscape* (Collins Press, Cork 2010).

Frank McDonald is Environment Editor of *The Irish Times* and author of several books, including *The Destruction of Dublin* (1985), *Saving the City* (1989), *The Construction of Dublin* (2000) and joint author, with James Nix, of *Chaos at the Crossroads* (2005) and, with Kathy Sheridan, of *The Builders* (2008). He was awarded an honorary DPhil by DIT in 2006 and is also an honorary member of the RIAI and an honorary fellow of the RIBA.

The Pleasure Gardens, Assembly Rooms and Rutland Square

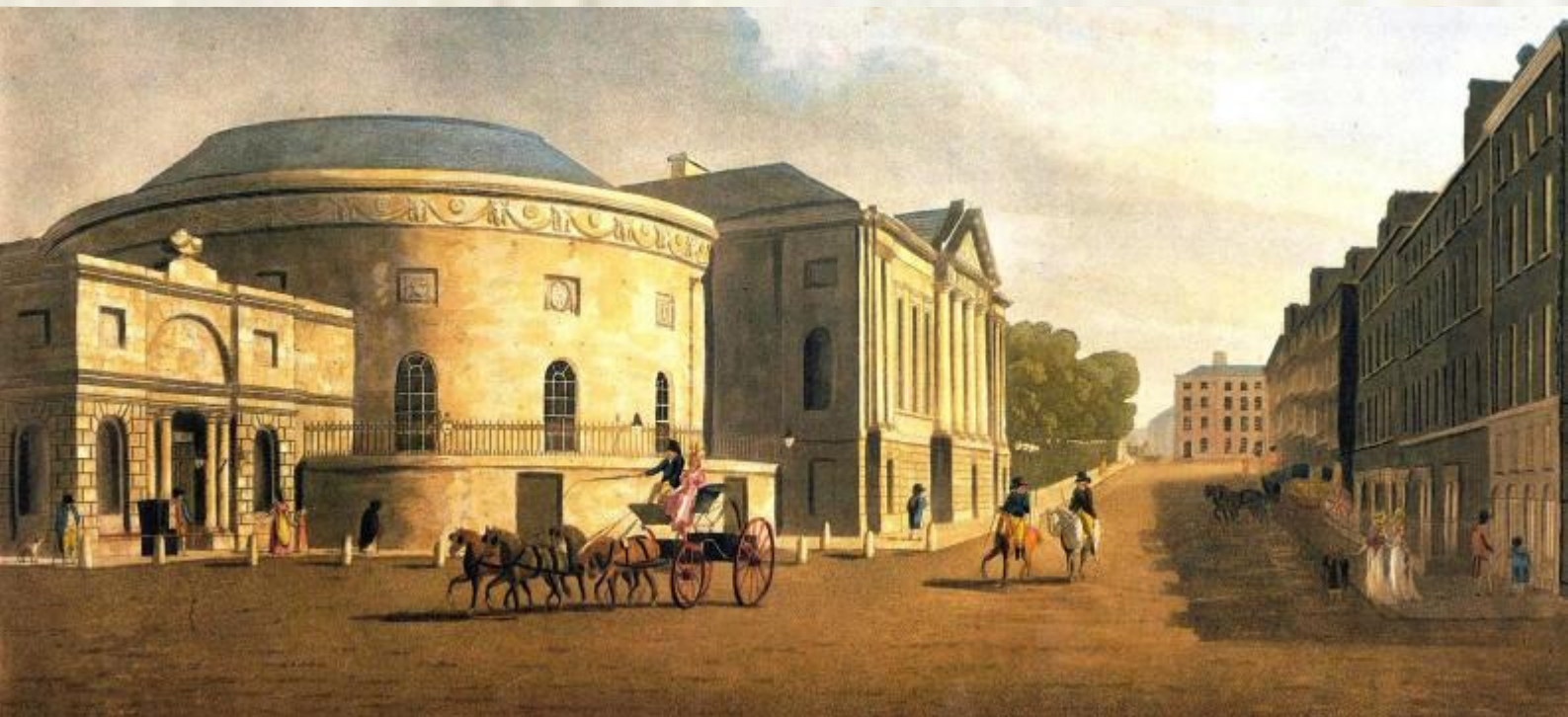
THE CONFERENCE takes place in the magnificent surroundings of The Pillar Room, the great Ball Room of the former Assembly Rooms of the Rotunda Hospital on what was once named Rutland Square. Begun in 1784 to the designs of architect Richard Johnston and the plans of amateur architect Frederick Trench, the Assembly Rooms is one of the forgotten civic complexes of Georgian Dublin: a largely intact, architecturally significant series of public entertaining rooms that originally addressed the Pleasure Gardens of the Lying-In Hospital, comparable to the Assembly Rooms of the cities of York and Bath.

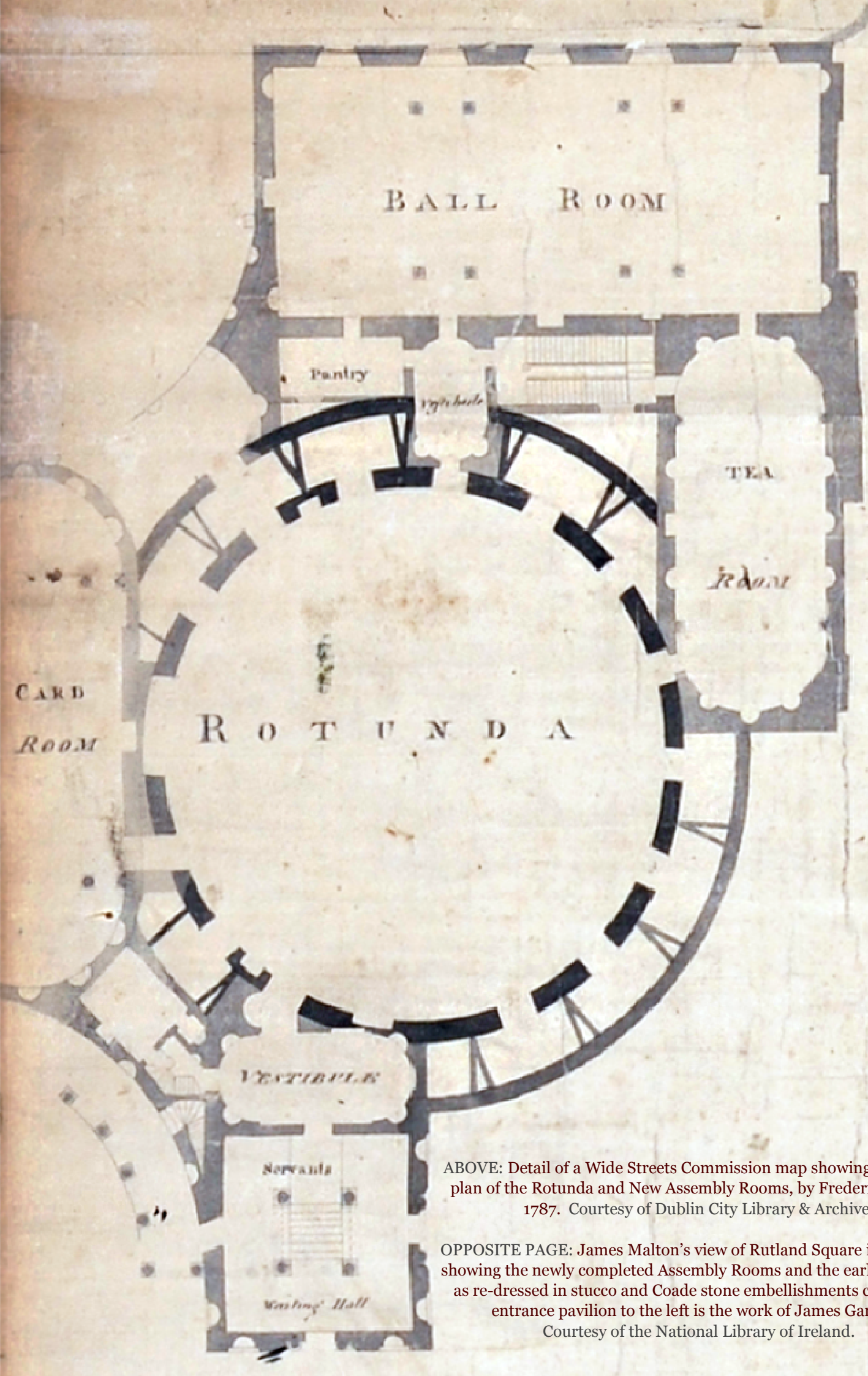
The Dublin Assembly Rooms were an extension to the earlier great round room or Rotunda erected by John Ensor in 1764-67, modelled on the Rotunda of London's Ranelagh Gardens as a grandiose entertaining space, playing host to balls, musical events and fashionable society gatherings. It served as an important revenue-raising enterprise for the adjacent hospital in the same vein as the Pleasure Gardens it flanked, laid out by the founder and Master of the Lying-In Hospital, Bartholomew Mosse, in 1748-50 as a theatrical planted landscape of leisure and amusement for a fee-paying public.

By the 1780s, the Rotunda was growing increasingly inadequate for the scale of events demanded of the burgeoning social scene in Dublin, prompting a major fundraising campaign, a money petition to Parliament, and the commissioning of plans for a substantial extension to the complex. Following construction delays due to financial problems, the New Assembly Rooms were opened in various stages, finally being completed in early 1792 to widespread public acclaim. Cloaked behind the new granite façade to Cavendish Row was a ball room to the ground floor opening onto the gardens (The Pillar Room), a grand supper room on the first floor (now the auditorium of The Gate Theatre), and a tea room at ground floor level (part of which has been subsumed into the entrance of The Gate). The decorative plasterwork of the rooms is typical of Robert Adam's patterns and indicates a desire to update the entertainment facilities in line with the latest taste and fashion, consolidated by the decision to closely align the complex with the newly established Illustrious Order of St. Patrick, whose insignia can be seen in the plasterwork of The Pillar Room and in the pediment facing Cavendish Row.

Our choice of location reflects the need to refocus public policy towards the latent resources of the city, such as the unique heritage asset of Parnell Square with its combination of former public buildings, pleasure grounds and splendid array of mid-Georgian town houses. We hope the conference and its venue will reshape perceptions about the value of the north Georgian core of Dublin and showcase its potential to the wider public.

The provision of conference facilities has been generously assisted by the Friends of the Rotunda Hospital.





ABOVE: Detail of a Wide Streets Commission map showing the ground plan of the Rotunda and New Assembly Rooms, by Frederick Trench, 1787. Courtesy of Dublin City Library & Archive.

OPPOSITE PAGE: James Malton's view of Rutland Square in the 1790s, showing the newly completed Assembly Rooms and the earlier Rotunda as re-dressed in stucco and Coade stone embellishments c.1786. The entrance pavilion to the left is the work of James Gandon. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Purpose of the Conference

DUBLIN'S five major historic squares are emblematic of the city's internationally renowned eighteenth-century heritage, synonymous with Enlightenment principles of urban planning, ordered street architecture and classically inspired park and garden design. The square has ancient roots in Greek and Roman civilisations, and later in the Renaissance civic planning of continental Europe, however it is the local, vernacular interpretation of the urban square in the Dublin context, and the social and economic dynamics that forged it, that lend these surviving built and natural landscapes a unique interest in the modern world. It is the aim of this conference to showcase this significance and to propose how it can be maximised for the benefit of the social, economic and cultural life of the city.

Content & Speakers

FOR the first time in a public forum, the conference aims to stimulate public discussion about the conservation of the built and natural environments of Dublin's squares through exploring new uses for buildings, reinventing the public realm and promoting new perspectives on the role and design of their public gardens and parks. It also seeks to explore how the economic and social vitality of the city can be enhanced through changing perceptions about the squares and their attendant streets, reshaping predominately commercial uses on the south side and often inadequate residential standards on the north side, into world-class community and commercial centres that embrace this heritage asset.

Organisers

DUBLIN CIVIC TRUST is an independent charitable organisation that works to recognise, promote and protect the city's architectural heritage. As an educational trust, it is dedicated to the principles of building identification, best conservation practice and appropriate use and reuse of the city's historic building stock. The Board of Dublin Civic Trust, and its executive staff that have organised this conference - Chief Executive Officer, Geraldine Walsh and Conservation Research Officer, Graham Hickey - hope that the event will stimulate public debate, policy formation and meaningful change in the preservation, presentation and active use of Dublin's squares and the city's wider built heritage.
W: www.dublincivictrust.ie **T:** (01) 475 6911 **E:** info@dublincivictrust.ie @dubcivictrust

THE MOUNTJOY SQUARE SOCIETY is a company limited by guarantee that promotes Mountjoy Square as a unique and special place to live, work and visit. Comprised of local residents and stakeholders that engage at a policy level and organise public awareness events, it is committed to the revitalisation of the square and the wider north Georgian area of Dublin.
W: www.mountjoysquaresociety.com **E:** info@mountjoysquaresociety.com

The conference is generously sponsored by:

Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

LYONS DERMODY
SOLICITORS

DUBLIN GARDEN SQUARES DAY
on Saturday 14th September is kindly supported by INTO Comhar Linn Credit Union, CRH, ESB and the Railway Procurement Agency