MARSH'S LIBRARY

ST PATRICK'S CLOSE, DUBLIN 8

CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

MAY 2024

7L
ARCHITECTS

Contents

1.0 Summary 4

2.0 Introduction 6

3.0 Understanding the Library 8

4.0 Fabric Survey 18

5.0 Cultural Significance 45

6.0 Issues & Vulnerability 48

7.0 Policies 54

8.0 Recommendations 58

Select Bibliography & Websites

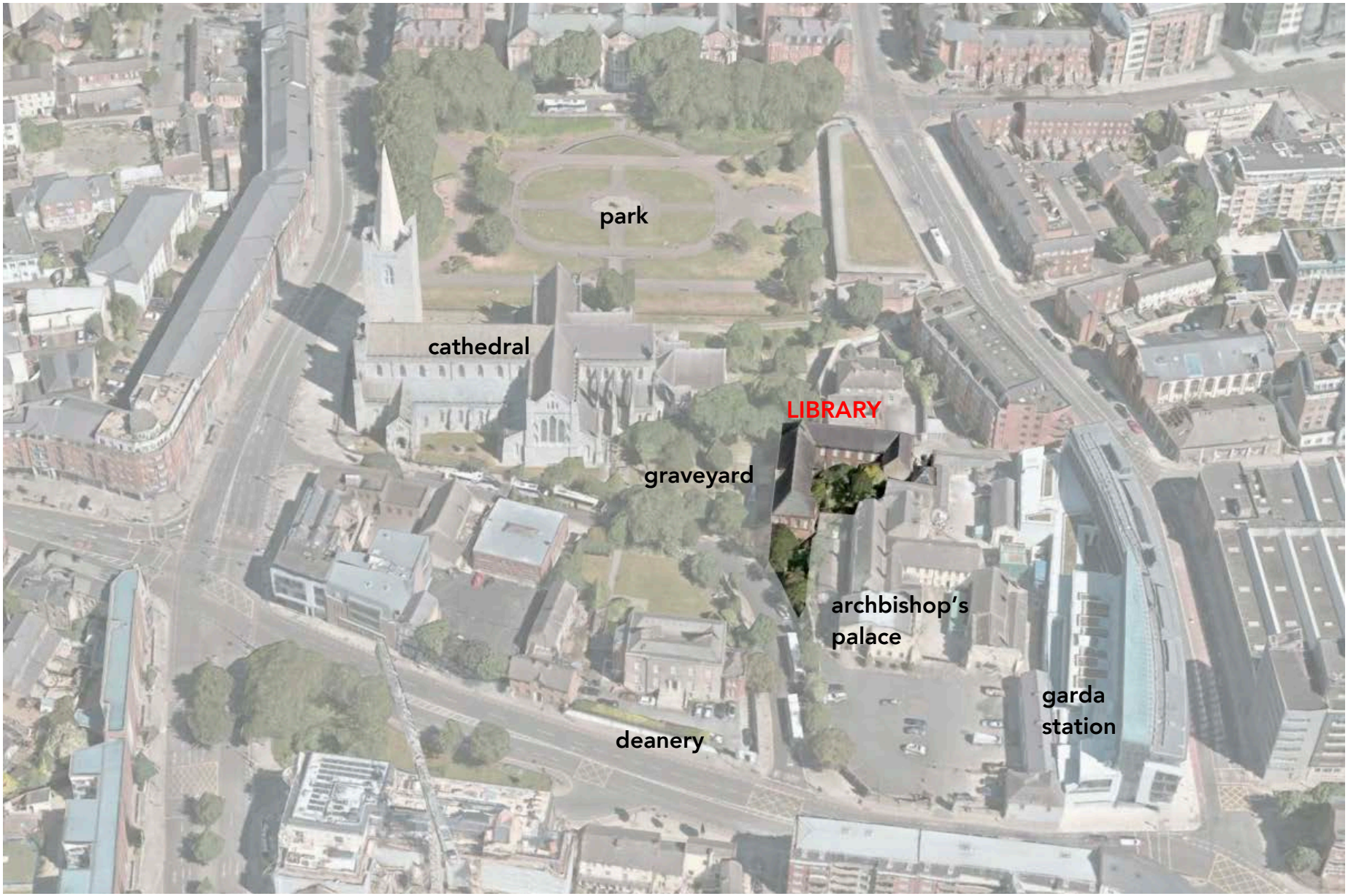
1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 PREAMBLE

This conservation management plan has been commissioned by the Governors & Guardians of Marsh's Library to assess its cultural significance and building conservation requirements. The library contains an important collection of early manuscripts and printed books, made available to the public and scholars. The report includes – a brief history of the building; a statement of significance; an assessment of its current condition together with an outline conservation strategy. It draws on the previous iteration of the CMP prepared by Howley Hayes Architects in 2014. Fabric surveys are ongoing, and are being carried out over a 12-month period at which time the report will be complete. Consultation was carried out with library staff who shared their expertise in the conservation of the collection.

Location	St Patrick's Close, Dublin 8
Grid Coordinates	715170 , 733499
Local Authority	Dublin City Council
Zoning	Z8
Statutory Protection	DU018-020351- RPS ref: 7747; NIAH ref: 50110023
Rating	National
Special Interest	Architectural, Historical, Artistic, Cultural, Social, Technical
Principal Dimensions	745m^2 ; 32m E-W; 31m N-S
Inspection Dates	September 2023 – January 2024
Prepared by	Fergal Mc Namara, Gearóid Carvill
Final Report Issued	May 2024

- Marsh's Library forms part of the wider precinct of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin and was the first publicly accessible library in Ireland when founded at the turn of the eighteenth century.
- It was built to house an extensive collection of 25,000 printed books and manuscripts. Its governance is an example of institutional continuity, while adapting to societal change.
- The library has been little changed; its books displayed on the original oak bookstalls. It retains some of the oldest surviving brickwork and joinery in the city and has been well-looked after by its succession of Keepers.
- Over the last decade, initiatives have enhanced fire protection; universal access; staff and reader facilities while advancing the conservation of historic fabric.
- Recent localised mould outbreaks have emphasized in a time of climate change for the necessity of environmental stability in the galleries to ensure that the collection is preserved into the future.
- Climate change will provide further challenges with more frequent and extreme weather events. All efforts should be made to retain the collection in the library.
- Introducing dehumidification and heating should be explored, especially given the increased visitor numbers. Attic spaces could conceal such installations to minimise their visual impact.
- A programme of replacing cement renders and mortars around the library due to commence in 2024 will make it more resilient to climate change and enhance its historic character.



1. Aerial view of Marsh's Library showing context.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Place

Marsh's Library forms part of the wider precinct of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, and was the first publicly accessible library to be founded in Ireland. It was built in 1703 to house an extensive collection of printed books and manuscripts owned by Narcissus Marsh. This library formed the eastern boundary of the cathedral graveyard, and his residence at the Palace of St Sepulchre during his tenure as Archbishop of Dublin. After its opening in 1707, it was extended to the north in 1709 to form a new courtyard to the northwest of the palace. The archbishop appointed Élie Bouhéreau, a French Huguenot scholar as the first 'keeper', who added his own collection of books. Now governed as a charitable trust with professional staff, the collection numbers over 25,000 items, with a wide cultural impact.

2.2 Aims & Objectives

Essentially, the aim of conservation is to retain the cultural significance of a place. First published by ICOMOS in 1979, the revised Burra Charter (2013) updated the model for the conservation and management of places of cultural significance, setting out standards and guidelines for its guardians. This group might include owners, managers and custodians, consultants, statutory advisers, opinion-formers, decision makers and contractors.

Places of cultural significance can often provide a deep and inspirational sense of connection to the past and to lived experiences. At Marsh's Library this is represented by the extensive font of knowledge represented in its collection, but also the many scholars of a wide range of interests who have studied the texts and have been inspired to create new works or research. A fundamental principle of the Burra Charter is that places of cultural

2. Detail of carrel in gallery.

significance should be conserved for the benefit of both present and future generations. The charter defines conservation as – *all of the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance.*

Also of relevance is the charter adopted by ICOMOS in Zimbabwe in 2003 entitled- *Principles for the Analysis, Conservation & Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage*. Several of the articles are set out below as having particular relevance to Marsh's Library providing guidance on its conservation and management:

Principle 1.3. The value of architectural heritage is not only in its appearance, but also in the integrity of all its components as a unique product of the specific building technology of its time.
Principle 1.6 The peculiarity of heritage structures, with their complex history, requires the organisation of studies and proposals in precise steps that are similar to those used in medicine.
Principle 2.3 A full understanding of the structural and material characteristics is required in conservation practice. Information is essential on the structure in its original and earlier states, on the techniques that were used in the construction, on the alterations and their effects, on the phenomena that have occurred, and, finally, on its present state.
Principle 2.5 Diagnosis is based on historical, qualitative and quantitative approaches;
Principle 3.7 The choice between "traditional" and "innovative" techniques should be weighed up on a case-by-case basis and preference given to those that are least invasive and most compatible with heritage values, bearing in mind safety and durability requirements.

More recently, the updated *Charter for Cultural Heritage Tourism* adopted in 2023 in Bangkok provides guidance for responsible tourism practice at cultural sites.

Principle 1: Place cultural heritage protection and conservation at the centre of responsible cultural tourism planning and management;
Principle 2: Manage tourism at cultural heritage places through management plans informed by monitoring, carrying capacity and other planning instruments.
Principle 3: Enhance public awareness and visitor experience through sensitive interpretation and presentation of cultural heritage;
Principle 7: Integrate climate action and sustainability measures in the management of cultural tourism and cultural heritage.

As such, the aims of this conservation management plan are to:

- provide accurate records through analysis and research;
- understand the significance of its cultural heritage;
- identify any threats to this significance, ensuring that the conservation of the books and manuscripts are a priority given their cultural value and relative fragility, especially due to climate change and increased visitor numbers;
- formulate policies to address the threats, and to inform and guide the future preservation and management of the collection; the library and its associated cultural heritage;
- manage change by proposing a sustainable vision for the future of the historic library and its collection, to act as a guide for future decision-making;
- assess the impacts of proposals to improve access to the library for its continued use as an educational and cultural resource for the entire community, and devising strategies to mitigate any impacts;
- identify priorities for the conservation of the collection and built heritage for capital works and ongoing maintenance;

2.3 LIMITATIONS

The project team undertook several field trips in the preparation of this report in the autumn and winter months of 2023/ 2024. Not all areas were accessible or reachable, with specific limitations noted within the text.

3.0 Understanding the Library

3.1 Early Development

When built, the library founded by Archbishop Marsh was only a short walk from orchards and farmland at the edge of a medieval city that was starting to respond to the Age of Enlightenment after a turbulent century of religious wars and political change. St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Palace of St Sepulchre formed two of several liberties; medieval religious manors situated outside the city walls that retained their own jurisdiction or liberty while enjoying the protection of the city.

To the west of the Liberty of St Sepulchre was the area we call the Liberties today, which was brimming with weaving enterprises founded by Huguenot refugees, descending the hill from Thomas Street in densely populated streets, not dissimilar to the medieval core. To the east was the Augier estate dating from the 1660s, that consisted of modern and well-planned streets. The ancient precinct of St Patrick's Cathedral was packed with dwellings up to its walls. Also dating from the medieval period was the nearby Palace of St Sepulchre which had been the residence of the archbishop of Dublin since its foundation by John Comyn in 1180.

3.2 Narcissus Marsh

Born in Wiltshire, Narcissus Marsh (1638-1713) completed his studies at Magdalen College Oxford in 1658 and was ordained in 1662. Taking posts within the university, he was sponsored by the Duke of Ormond, then chancellor of the university. Through this connection he was appointed provost of Trinity College Dublin in 1679. There he wrote scientific papers and promoted the Irish language, while starting the process of founding a

3. Portrait of Narcissus Marsh on display at Exeter College, Oxford.

new library for the college. He took as his model the Bodleian Library at Oxford, but this ambition was not to be realised for another fifty years. His tenure was short, being appointed bishop of Ferns & Leighlin in 1683, followed by six years in England during the reign of James II. In 1691, he was appointed Archbishop of Cashel, and by 1694 he moved to the Palace of St Sepulchre as the new archbishop of Dublin.

His long-held ambition to establish a public library advanced in 1701 when he commenced his project for a new library attached to the palace. Élie Bouhéreau, a French Huguenot refugee in service to the then Lord Justice, the Earl of Galway, became acquainted with Marsh who had championed their cause in Ireland. Marsh was appointed 'keeper' of the library in 1701. A champion of the Huguenot cause in Ireland, he appointed him 'keeper' of the library in 1701, a post he held until his death in 1719, his son John being the assistant keeper.

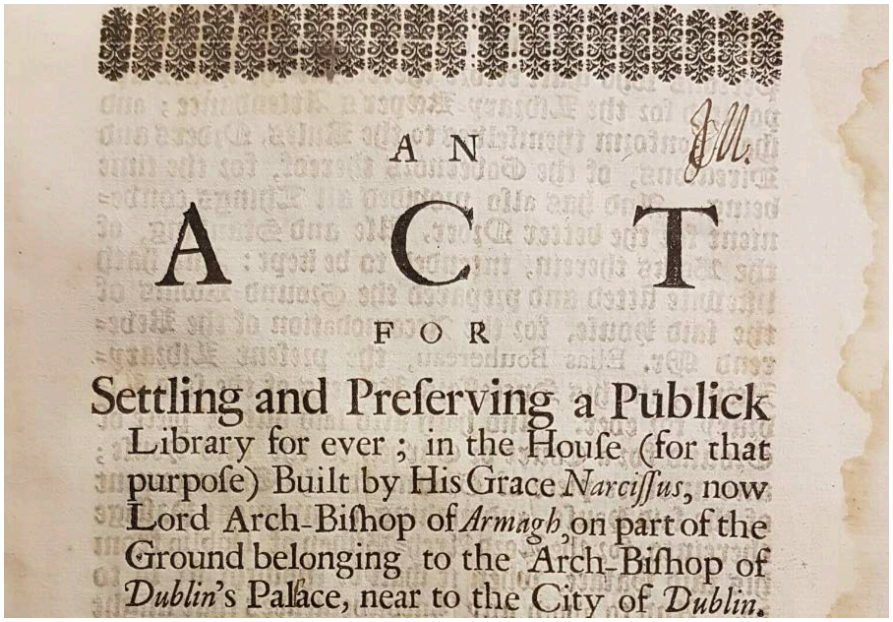
In 1703, with the construction of the first gallery of his library nearly complete, Marsh took up the post of archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, leaving Dublin. An avid collector of books and manuscripts, in 1705, he acquired 10,000 volumes from the library of Bishop Stillingfleet of Worcester. At his death in 1713, Marsh bequeathed manuscripts to the Bodleian Library where he had commenced his career.

3.3 Robinson & Burgh

For the design of his library, Marsh turned to the recently retired Sir William Robinson (1645-1713). Born in Yorkshire, Robinson was Surveyor-General of Ireland from 1671-1700, during a turbulent period of Irish history. Robinson followed European precedents for his Royal Hospital at Kilmainham and Charles Fort at Kinsale, thereby ushering in a new period of architecture on this island. The library he built for Marsh was a more modest building than the Bodleian at Oxford or the library designed by

4. Wren's library in Cambridge, completed in 1695.

Christopher Wren at Trinity College Cambridge. A simple plan, with 3m tall sash windows set close to flush with brickwork facades to both sides. In scale, it was closer to a large residence than some of the public buildings that Robinson had designed. Brickwork had started to be used in Dublin from the middle of the seventeenth century. Gable-fronted brick constructed *Dutch Billies* prevailed in the newer streets of the city. A refinement found at Marsh's Library is the use of wedge-shaped or *rubbed* brick voussoirs to the window head, possibly using imported brick. Sash windows were a new technology in Dublin, in later decades being the standard for domestic and public buildings alike. Books were stored perpendicular to the external walls on an east-west axis, set on the upper (or gallery) level out of the damp ground. The stalls were two-feet taller


AN

ACT

FOR

Settling and Preſerving a Publick Library for ever; in the Houſe (for that purpoſe) Built by His Grace *Narciſſus*, now Lord Arch-Biſhop of *Armagh*, on part of the Ground belonging to the Arch-Biſhop of *Dublin*'s Palace, near to the City of *Dublin*.

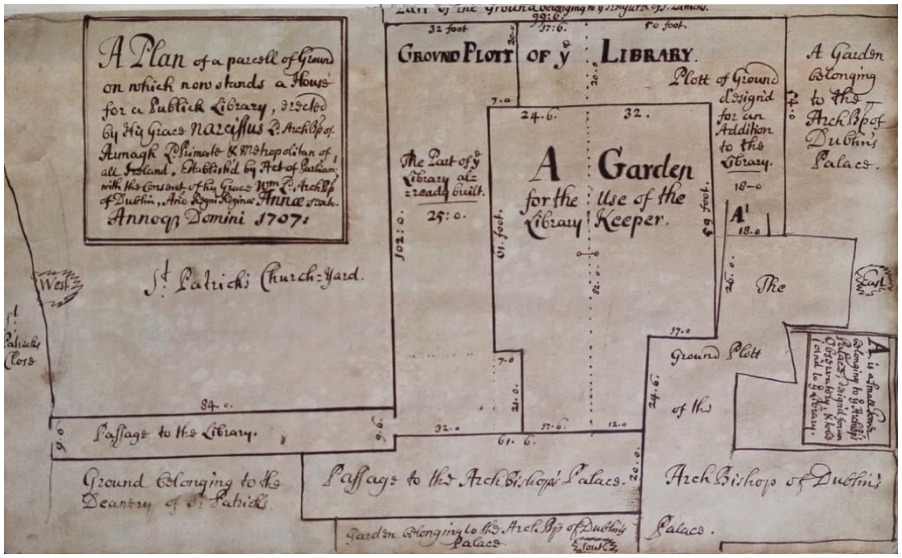
5. Extract from publication of Act of Parliament.

than those at the Bodleian, and the architecture sparer, the beautifully carved bookstalls providing more than enough visual interest. Having a lofty vaulted ceiling up to 6.3m, means that the 4m high bookstalls do not seem oppressive. Assembled using only mortice and tenon joints in darkly stained oak, the stalls are freestanding on 300x300mm floor joists. Their base is left open for readers to sit under a deep ledge, 1.5m long sitting on ash brackets. They sat on a double, high-backed oak bench set between the stacks, forming well-lit carrels with views towards the cathedral or into the garden. Above are six rows of books of varying heights sitting on slender oak shelves; walls and window embrasures are also lined in oak. Panelled ends are fitted with carved pine cartouches in the form of knotted drapery, labelled with gilded stall numbers. Above the cornice topped with a curved pediment are two further rows of books, capped with another cornice and supporting a carved foliate finial with bishop's mitre and stole. A ladder gave access to the higher rows.

Robinson having left Ireland in disgrace, his successor as Surveyor-General Thomas Burgh took over the duties of extending the library with a second gallery. Burgh (1670-1730) was born in Co. Limerick, and over the course of a long career designed the Royal (Collins) Barracks as well as a new library at Trinity College. Burgh did not meddle very much with the arrangement set out by his predecessor. Narrower in plan, it has a lower flat ceiling under which the decorative finials to the bookstalls almost scrape. Carved pine Gothic gates of the cages to the stalls in the eastern wing date to 1750. Burgh may have drawn on lessons learned from his first library commission, but on a far grander scale, when he commenced his library at TCD in 1712.

3.4 Library Governance

Marsh was not only concerned about his collection, or bricks and mortar when planning his library, public use was to be an essential part of his legacy. The governance of the library, with its Keeper and Board of Governors & Guardians, would be independent of the sole control of his successor archbishops despite being a publicly accessible library attached to the palace. This did not meet universal approval from his fellow clergy including such notable figures such as Jonathan Swift. His attention to the politics of the matter was rewarded when in 1707 an act was passed for *…Settling and preserving a Public Library for ever; In the house for that purpose built by his Grace Narcissus, now Lord Arch Bishop of Armagh; on part of the Ground belonging to the Arch-Bishop of Dublin's palace, near to the City of Dublin.*



6. Map held in library dated 1707 showing original library and extension.

While some arrangements have evolved over the centuries, principal roles and procedures have survived, preserving the long association of the library with the Church of Ireland, Trinity College and the legal profession. The board is chaired by the archbishop of Dublin, with other members drawn from important religious, academic, and legal institutions. They are – the archbishop of Armagh, the deans of St. Patrick's Cathedral and Christchurch Cathedral, the Provost of Trinity College Dublin, and the Chief Justice of Ireland.

3.5 Map Evidence

The earliest plan of the Library dates from 1707, showing the West Range as was completed by Robinson. Symmetrical in plan, flanking bays to each side of the gallery addressed a new garden to the east for the *use of the keeper* to the rear of the palace while also addressing St Patrick's Cathedral to the west, with passages linking both to the library at its south end. The plan also indicates an L-shaped *Addition* to the east of the library and attached to the palace that would further enclose the garden into a courtyard. This addition would incorporate an existing observatory tower attached to the north end of the palace. A similar plan from 1709 held in the library shows all the above as being complete.

Dating to 1728, Brooking's map shows the Library as integral with the palace. Kendrick's map of 1754 features a richly detailed figure ground plan of the cathedral, but the library and palace are barely indicated in outline. Interestingly, it indicates a pair of square piers that appear to confirm that the north door in the north range was once accessed directly from a lane off Bride Street. Rocque's map of 1756 confirms the existence of the lanes and shows the library and palace as being fully attached.

By 1840 and shown in more detail in 1847, the OS maps show the library detached from the palace, the observation tower being recorded as being taken down in 1833. On the five-foot map, the figure ground plans of the cathedral and palace are given in detail as for all the public buildings of note, but the library is shown in outline, seeming to emphasize its detachment from the palace proper, which was now a police barracks having been sold for this purpose in 1803. This map also indicates a pair of porches on the south end that may be survivals of the former passages. It is likely that the broad buttress on the east wall was installed following the detachment of the library from the barracks. By this time, the precinct of the cathedral was being cleared of encroaching dwellings thereby extending its graveyard and improving views.

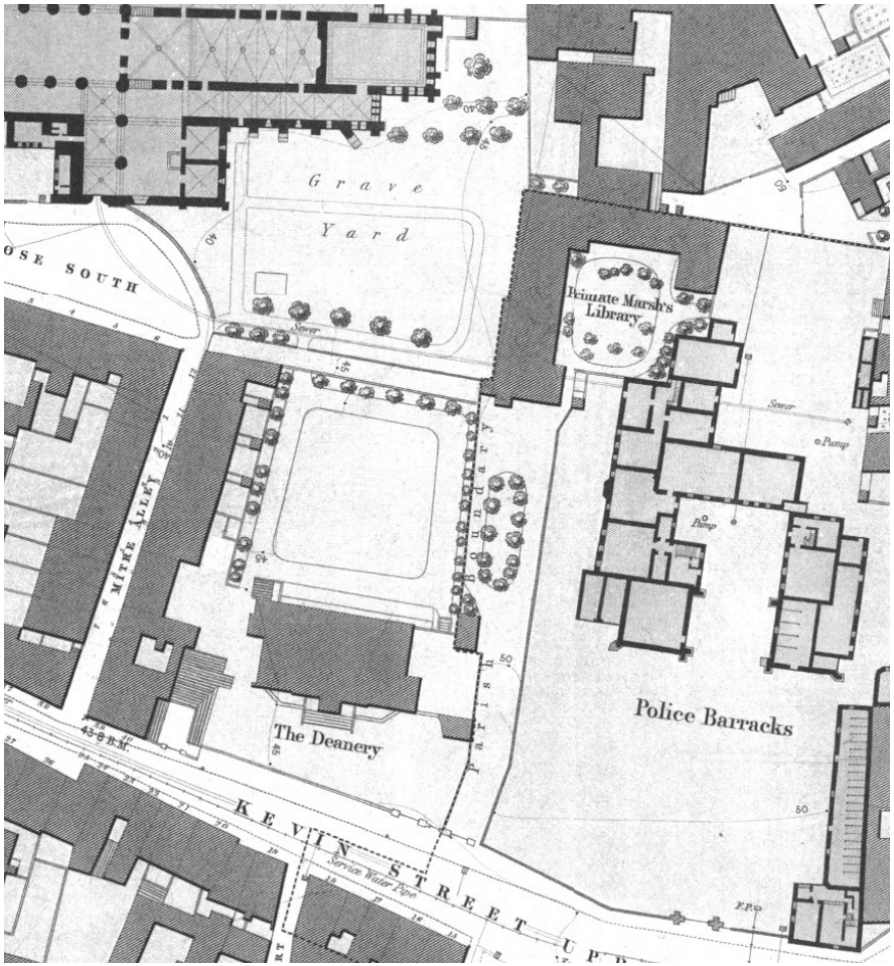
Marsh's Library had retained a spacious forecourt that the mapping appears to indicate was separate from the police barracks and extended for 70m as far as Kevin Street. The gates shown along the street could have been those

procured from Richard Turner in 1845. In 1858, it was proposed that a library was to form part of the new National Gallery at the Royal Dublin Society then housed at Leinster House. It was to be set at the west end of the new wing with its own entrance and filled with the collection at Marsh's Library. By 1865, brewer Benjamin Lee Guinness appointed Sir Thomas Drew to prepare plans for the enhancement of the cathedral and its precinct. The present alignment of Patrick's Close South was laid out at that time, and the curving castellated wall with Gothic arch entrance along the front garden to the library installed and the steps up from the new street level to the library south porch, fitted with a Doric doorcase in finely tooled limestone. The main entrance façade was refaced in brick, and brickwork buttresses were added the east wall in the garden. Along the west side overlooking the cathedral graveyard a new facing of ashlar limestone was installed.

3.6 The Collection

Following the death of Archbishop Marsh in 1713, his books were deposited in the library. While his own collection of oriental manuscripts was bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, Irish-interest manuscripts collected from Dudley Loftus, remained in Dublin. Bouhéreau also donated a collection on medical, French and Huguenot topics that represent his varied career and interests. John Stearne, Bishop of Clogher, bequeathed his extensive collection of Irish material in 1745. By 1941, the bequest of Irish manuscripts by Dean Webster, was of antiquarian interest that complemented the existing collection.

- 10,726 books in the First Gallery first collected by Edward Stillingfleet (1635-99)
- 2,057 books in the Old Reading Room that belonged to Élie Bouhéreau (1643-1719)



7. Extract from 1847 5-foot OS map showing library prior to 1865 works to St Patrick's Cathedral showing the extensive yard to the front of library.

8. Historic photograph of entrance façade ca. 1900.

- 2,811 books in the Second Gallery which belonged to Narcissus Marsh (1638–1713)
- 2,114 books in the Second Gallery of the library collected by Dr John Stearne (1660–1745)
- 1,220 later donations.

The library continues to make acquisitions and receive donations that enhance the collection. In 1999, the State acquired Farmleigh in Phoenix Park, a residence belonging to Benjamin Guinness, the third Earl of Iveagh. Subsequently, his estate bequeathed his important collection of 4.117 books to Marsh's Library. These remain at the house, in their impressive two-tiered library that was installed by Edward Cecil Guinness and inherited by Benjamin and to which he added over his lifetime. It contains some of the best examples of eighteenth-century Irish book binding.

3.7 The Library Today

While there has been little obvious change since the nineteenth century; the library continues to modernise. Its garden remains a welcome respite from the bustle of city centre streets. The library has become a popular visitor attraction, while still welcoming scholars from around the world. Many more people than ever are aware of the library and have enjoyed a visit to its historic interiors.

The former palace is relatively quiet, where the Garda station has been decanted into a new building along Bride Street. St Patrick's is now the national cathedral and has a spacious setting with the laying out of a public park to the north by Edward Cecil Guinness in 1901 and is one of the most visited visitor attractions in the city.

9. 1950s photograph of first gallery.

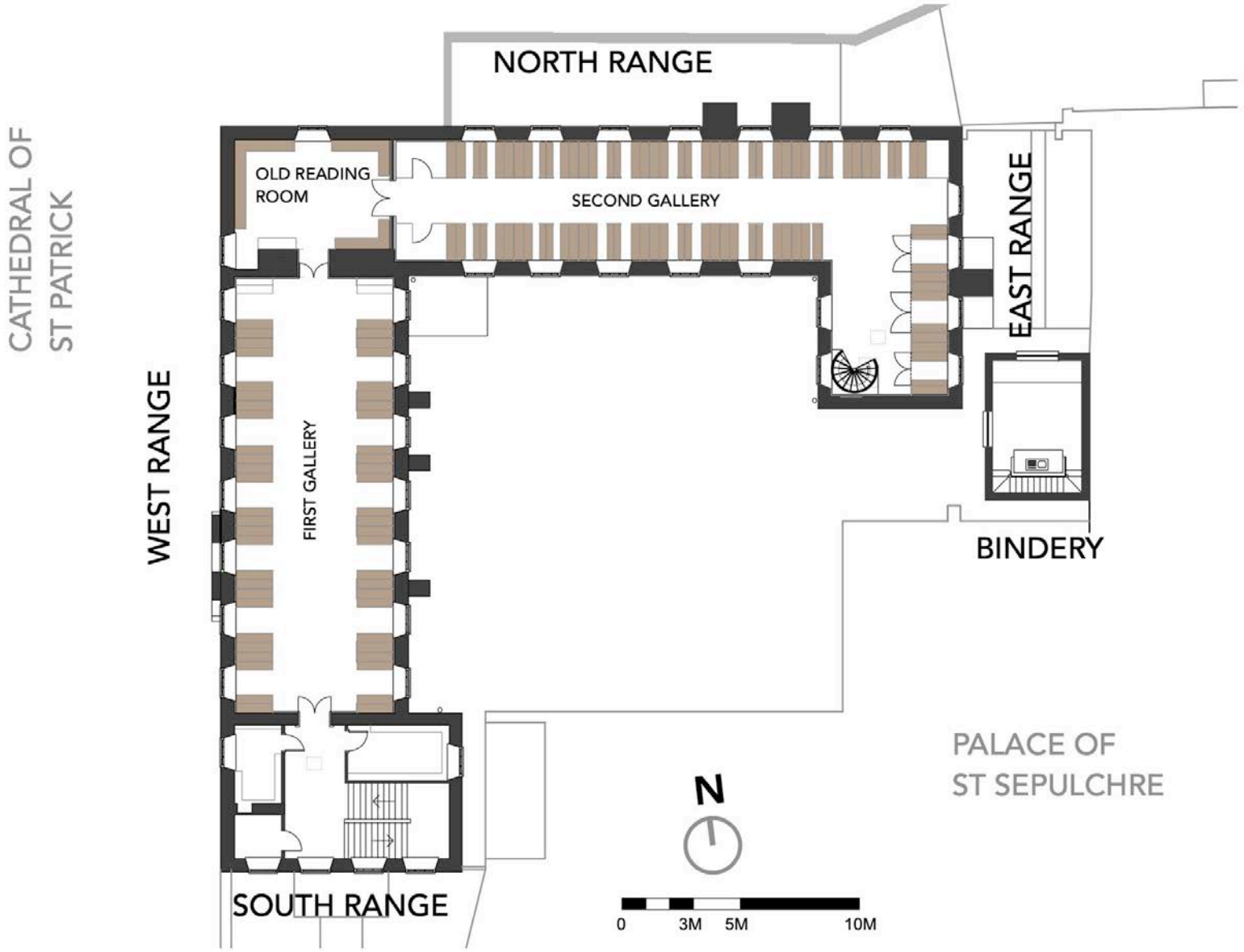
10. Historic photograph along First Gallery showing ceilings prior to their replacement.

In recent decades the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports & Media (and its precursors) has provided funding for the upkeep and staffing of the library.

Another source of funding are private donations. Set into the narrow yard to the east boundary wall of the library is the bindery, designed by Arthur Gibney following a generous bequest by the Delmas family for the conservation of the collection. Changes to governance structures include two ministerial nominees with five-year terms, extendable to ten years.

More recent works include initiatives set out in the previous conservation management plan over the last decade. Repairs have been carried out to the shelving and cages in the galleries by Conservation Letterfrack, and to the windows by Corr Joinery. The Y-Room was upgraded for archive storage.

An access ramp designed by Howley Hayes Architects leads to a gate that opens to the laneway off Bride Street. This is a right-of-way used for access by car to the rear of the library, so is useful for deliveries or partial wheelchair access. In the north yard, plant for mist suppression to the ground level below the galleries has been installed. In the panelled rooms that were long the residence of the Keeper are offices and staff rooms. A set of glass sliding doors were installed inside the main entrance door to cope with draughts. Much of this work was funded by the generosity of government grants, bequests, fundraising and earnings from library tours.



11. Plan of library upper level showing principal rooms

12. Phasing of library

13. View of towards library on St Patrick's Close.

14. View along lane off Bride Street.

15. View from St Patrick's Graveyard (west side).

16. View of north wall from graveyard.

17. View in garden looking south.

18. View of north yard with suppression plant.

19. View of new ramp to east yard.

4.0 Fabric Survey

The descriptions below are based on inspections carried out between October 2023 and January 2024. Areas that were not inspected included those that required special access, were fenced off, locked, buried, or obscured by vegetation. Specific limitations are noted within the text. The main entrance to the library faces south.

4.0.1 Scope of Survey

This survey is intended to provide input for on-going maintenance and repair, which is an essential part of every historic building remaining in use. Such inspections are neither specifications nor schedules of works, but rather analytic and diagnostic reviews through which necessary works are identified and prioritised, and subsequently monitored to ensure that they have been successful. It is important that inspections are regular and on-going, as the need for maintenance and repair never ceases. By persisting with routine maintenance and frequent inspection, the necessity for major capital works is reduced.

4.0.2 General Condition

The library is arranged around a square garden (18m each side), with accommodation to the full extent to the west and north, and incomplete bays to the east and south. It extends to approximately 800m^2 over two principal levels and a four-roomed basement to the southwest corner. First built in a U-shape, the northern bay was extended eastwards to create the north range and a shorter range along the east that once linked through to the Palace of St. Sepulchre, a door survives in the joinery at the end of the second gallery.

20. View of entrance gate off St Patrick's Close.

21. View up steps to main entrance.

Being built in two phases there are some noticeable differences between the west and north ranges. Burgh narrowed the span of the later addition from eight to six metres, perhaps the floor joists in the west range had already started to sag under the weight of the books, or the significant lean in the east wall (100mm at eaves level) had already been detected. The galleries vary in proportion; the first has a barrel-vaulted ceiling, while the second has a lower, flat ceiling with simpler roof trusses. Both have steeply pitched roofs with stepped profile brick chimneystacks. Between the galleries is a small reading room with a window to the north and west. Smaller rooms to the southern end of west range appear to be later insertions around the main staircase over two levels, providing space for book storage (Rooms X,Y,Z) and for cataloguing as the collection expanded. In 2014, Room Z was converted into use a WC for visitors to the galleries.

At ground level to the west range is the former keeper's apartment of panelled rooms with access from a corridor lit by tall windows overlooking the garden. Arthur Gibney notes that there is a reference to extensive alterations and repairs in the Governors' minutes of 1720 including new window sashes to the west side, along with alterations to the Lodgings below stairs that made them much more convenient. It goes on to refer to the wainscoting of one of these rooms, which survives today.

In recent years, the apartment has been used as offices and additional reading space with minimal upgrading carried out to date. The use of a corridor was unusual in this period when most rooms were arranged enfilade. Corridors were invented to provide privacy, perhaps necessary if the keeper's garden was available for readers. Whatever its purpose, it is a brightly lit passage with some of the earliest surviving sash windows in the city with views over into the garden reminiscent of a cloister. The corridor gives access to an external lobby at its north end, from which a passage

22. View of east range & gable of palace.

23. View of windows along garden corridor.

24. View along path to base of north range in garden.

25. View of garden façade to west range.

26. View towards lobby to north range.

27 & 28. Views of cracked ruled ashlar render to east range.

29. View of west range from St Patrick's Close.

gives access to rooms to either side. At the south end, it leads into an internal lobby located at the base of the main stairs, with its own external door into a narrow side passage. While there are panelled doors that give access to the main stairs and the adjacent cataloguing room, these have been kept shut or opened in different configurations over time. This lobby gives access to the basement down narrow timber stairs. This area is largely empty. These four rooms with low ceilings are located at the level of the graveyard, facing out west and have the appearance of a scullery. Rooms interlink under the north range. It has been refurbished in recent decades to provide facilities such as a kitchen, reading room and toilets. A short corridor gives access from the garden to the north yard. Below the east range is a seminar room that has been adapted recently as a 'pop-up' shop that can be dismantled and cleared for special events. It has access to the upper floor via a modern steel spiral stairs.

4.1 Exterior

4.1.1 Roofs

The original roof at Marsh's Library would have only been left undisturbed for a few short years before it was altered to allow its extension to the east. For the second phase, the roof truss design was altered and the ridge was lowered by three feet while the eaves were maintained. In 1833 alterations were necessary with the removal of the connection to the palace with the taking down of the tower; the roof appears to have been comprehensively re-slated at this time. Further adjustments and re-slating followed in 1865 when the south range was remodelled causing a clumsy adjustment to the inner slopes.

The main roof timbers include much that has survived from the original roof construction in the early eighteenth century, and some assembly marks are visible cut into the side of the joists. The present slate covering probably dates to the 1960s, when a comprehensive re-covering was undertaken under McDonnell Dixon Architects, by using salvaged slates. These range from blue, grey and red in colour, perhaps reflecting the many different phases. Slopes are capped with clay ridge tiles, some of which have experienced mortar loss. Outer sloping ridges are also capped with clay tiles, whereas the internal slopes are fitted with copper, with a bright verdigris suggesting that they might date to the nineteenth century.

Slate courses are uneven, due to differential settlement of the roof structure, causing some slates to sit up slightly making them more susceptible to driving rain. Slates inspected during repair works show that they have been holed more than once, and copper nails appear to have been used in the 1960s, where some corners were chamfered to re-condition the untidy edges of the otherwise sound slates for salvage. There

30. Detail of original roof timbers showing adze marks & modern felt.

are numerous copper tingle repairs mainly along the eave gutters where slates have slipped in the past. Slippage along the slopes may indicate some corrosion of fixings which will need to be monitored in anticipation of a further programme of roof works in the future.

Where slates have cracked, some have been repaired with mastic, which will fail in time so is not recommended. Below the eaves course, a sheet metal undercloak has been installed that is dressed into the gutter and which increases the risk of blocking. Both smaller roofs to the entrance lobbies are covered with slates and capped with clay ridges.

31. Detail of modern eaves board and guttering to garden facades.

In the roofspace, the extensive use of breeze felt, a non-permeable bituminous membrane can be seen, in common use in the twentieth century. Short gauge slates (24 x 14 inches) known as Princesses have been used that better cope with the uneven slope. Thicker and longer slates are found behind the west range chimney, possibly undisturbed since the 1860s when this stack was altered. On the other side of the ridge, a green/grey slate is used (possibly from Westmoreland in Cumbria) with some replacement Blue Bangors which might also be the longest surviving slates. A distinctive detail is the bell cast at the eaves. This has been retrofitted with timber sprockets placed on top of the rafters to throw the rainwater off the slope more efficiently.

Being a relatively new technology in seventeenth century Ireland, chimney stacks were often featured prominently while not being structurally resilient. It is doubtful that any of the existing chimneystacks at Marsh's Library have escaped extensive reconstruction. It is known that one at least collapsed into the east range as early as 1765 and never replaced. After 1865, the west façade was refaced with limestone, including the chimney, so it is likely that it was reconstructed at that time. The other chimney above the Old Reading Room has been rebuilt to a lower profile.

Spalling is evident to the red brick of the western stack, caused by frost damage and the bricks have become much more porous as a result. Being dubbed out with hard cement mortar will escalate their decay. Granite is used to cap the stack, with a mixture of plain pots with a single octagonal example. The other chimney has been re-constructed using buff- coloured bricks, which have weathered better than the adjoining stack. Both chimneys are fitted with copper soakers, again having a bright green patina that may date to the nineteenth century. The east range chimneystack has been reduced below the eaves and rendered in hard cement. Its distinctive batter suggests that it was intended to buttress the wall, perhaps following the collapse or as a precautionary measure after the tower was removed.

4.1.2 Rainwater Goods

It is likely that the original gutters and downpipes were formed of lead sheets, rolled and jointed. While none of these downpipes survive at the library, replicas of this technology can be found at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham. Replacement gutters in cast aluminium with ogee profile coupled with square profile downpipes date from 1994. Following an inspection, these have been found to be set too close to the slate leaving them prone to blockages and overspill. It is recommended that these should be replaced as part of the rendering or repointing works. Increased

32. View along ridge showing pointing intact.

33. View of blocked gutter along west wall.

34. Detail of slipped slate showing gap for water ingress.

35-37. Niall McDonagh undertaking recent roof inspection, cleaning and repairs using safe rope access method where installation of scaffolding or hoist hire would be needed.

38. Detail of blocked gutter.

39. Gutter following cleaning.

dampness evident in the Old Reading Room is due to this external gutter blocking up with vegetation despite regular cleaning - twice already in 2024. Persistent blockages are causing rainwater to seep into the wall during incidents of heavy rain, where it is sealed by the cement render and makes it way slowly down the wall below. Some sections are difficult to access safely, and the use of rope access by specialist roofing teams might be cost effective when compared with the hire of hoists or scaffolding.

The fascia boards fitted along the garden elevations are poorly detailed and installed to support conventional eaves gutters. There are significant gaps at the eaves, allowing substantial amounts of ventilation to pass through the roofspaces; these should be blocked to prevent birds nesting.

On the stone western façade, the gutters are supported off paired limestone corbels. These carry along the brick facades of the south range. Along the garden facades, white painted fascia boards have been fitted on timber brackets sitting on brick corbels. It is an incongruous detail that would be unnecessary if a new replacement gutter of larger capacity was installed with brackets fixed directly onto the existing timbers. Insect mesh fitted under the eaves would prevent easy access for vermin such as nesting birds. Ground drains were not tested and should be cleared and surveyed using CCTV to identify any blockages or build up.

4.1.3 Attic Spaces

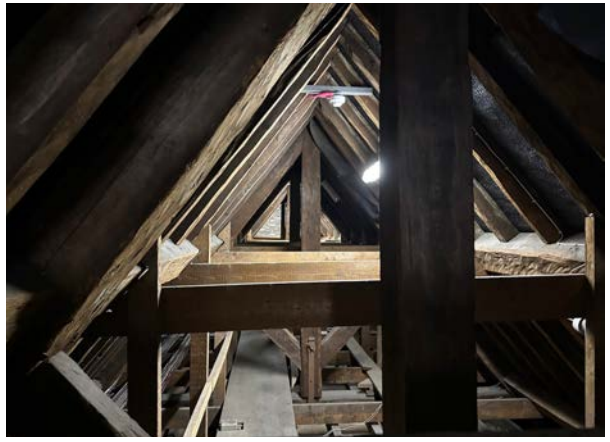
The attic level is accessed from ceiling hatches; one over the upper landing of the main stairs, and another close to the spiral stairs in the east range at the far end of the building. Both hatches require a long ladder and are operated by bolt fasteners. The main attic spaces are linked by a crawl space over the old reading room, although this is too narrow for practical use. Overall roofspaces appear to be dry, with some evidence of intermittent drips. A bell cast has been formed with sprocket fixed to the

40. Detail showing cracked render under downpipe to north wall.

rafter ends, some of which have been braced. Largely clear of debris, the attics are relatively easy to access with railed plywood walkways under the ridges. Service tracks sit neatly on top of the ceiling joists.

A light trap has been placed in the west range to prevent beetle attack. Damp specialists who recommended this installation over the years as they made inspections are unconcerned about beetle attack as the roofspace has dried out sufficiently. The trap should continue to be monitored in case of re-occurrence. Frass left by previous infestations should be removed so that this could also be used to determine whether beetles have returned.

In the west range, the raised tie-beam king post trusses with wrought iron stirrups need to be carefully negotiated. Simpler tie-beam trusses are found to the north and east ranges. Vertical metal tie rods and gusset plates have been installed at the apex to a number of these trusses, along with additional framing. Evidence for alterations is found above the main staircase where a similar tie-beam as above the old reading room is found.



41. View along west range attic with king post trusses.

42. View along north range attic with queen post.

43. Detail of markings to king post.

44. Unfelted slating to south range.

45. Beetle damage & frass (historic).

46. Evidence of drip in south range.

47. Unwrought timber without birdsmouth detail in roofspace.

48. Gypsum treated hessian over reading room for fire proofing.

Sagging purlins have been fitted with additional struts that tie across the ceiling joists to support the hip rafters. Adze marks on timbers indicate that they are original where others are sawn, marks left by the carpenters can also be found. Many of the common rafters across the roof appear to have been replaced over time. Wall plates have been replaced and masonry rebuilt in the northwest of the north range and the southeast of the West range.

Brick cross walls are found to either side of the chimneystack between the west and north ranges, and at the south end of the first gallery. In the south gable of the east range is a bricked-up door which would have led into the observation tower attached to the palace. Being uninsulated, the ceilings can be inspected confirming that modern plasterboards have been used throughout. Above the Old Reading Room a board with a fibrous backing have been used, laid on the old lath and plaster layer below. Fire detector heads have been installed in the space at high level.

4.1.4 External Walls

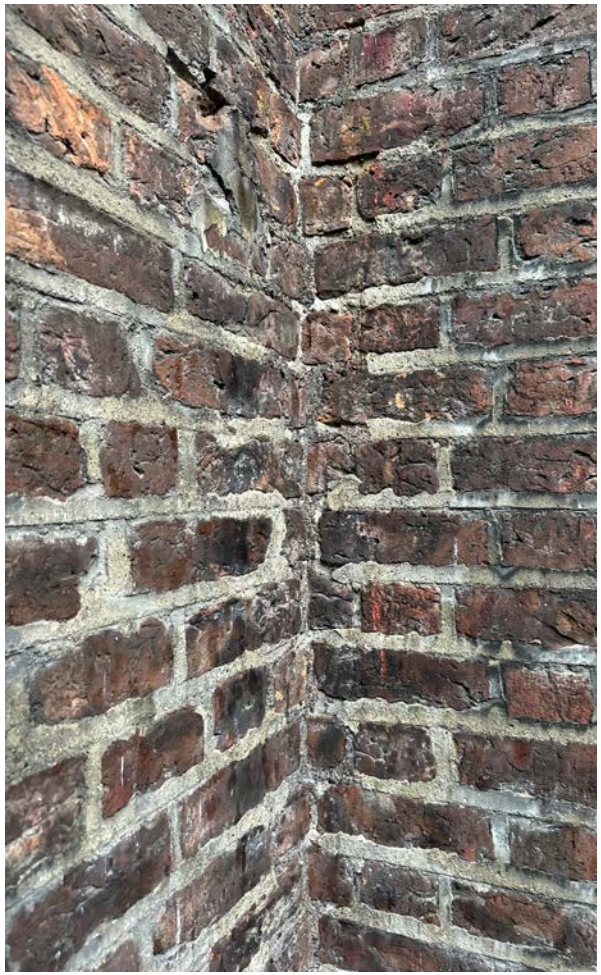
From inspection of the basement, the walls are constructed primarily using calp limestone rubble, combined with brickwork for facings and lining openings. It is likely that all walls were once brick faced, and over time, sections were rendered where the brickwork was in an advanced state of decay. Structural problems, most likely due to the heavy bookcases, have necessitated the placement of buttresses around the perimeter walls. Those to the east facing wall in the garden are brick with limestone dressings, and the broad chimneystack bases might also contribute to the stability of the wall in the graveyard and to the yards to the north and east. As recently as 1988, an arch and buttress were installed to the south end of the east range when the bindery was constructed.

Original brick facings have been left exposed to the garden facades of the west and north ranges. The east range has been given a ruled ashlar finish, perhaps following the removal of the link with the palace. Along the north yard walls have also been rendered, and sections replaced with cement.

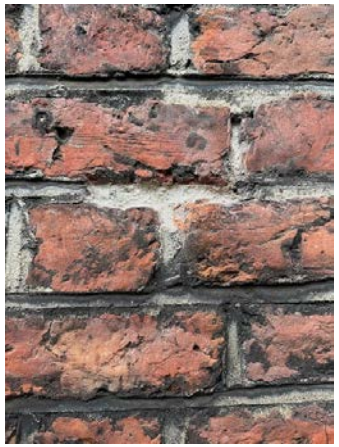
The façade overlooking the graveyard was likely also rendered prior to its refacing with good quality calp limestone ashlar after 1865. Laid to a random pattern with snecks, the stonework is identical to the masonry used in the restoration of the cathedral, with a robust punched finish. Quoins, window jambs and cills are flush with chamfered corners, and are of a higher-grade, light carboniferous limestone finished with neatly tooled margins. Interestingly, the round-headed window in the middle of the chimneystack has retained a granite cill behind the limestone facing, perhaps salvaged but possibly original. Having been crudely re-pointed in hard cement, some areas have cracked and are falling away. In other areas, sections of the stone have eroded where they are friable, a common problem with Calp limestone.

The 1865 refacing work continued around the south façade facing towards Kevin Street along the newly extended Patrick's Close. Limestone quoins were fitted to each side, and a smooth wire-cut orange brick used for the new facing with a limestone sill course. Limestone was used for the new canopied doorway with Doric pilasters. Brickwork has also been re-pointed in cement. Limestone quoins show minor evidence of surface de-lamination that is superficial.

Original brick facings have largely been re-pointed using a hard cement-mortar. While most of the bricks are rough and hand-made using local clay; rubbed bricks used as voussoirs to the flat arch window heads were imported from England. Bricks are generally laid using a Flemish-bond, with some variation in the distribution of headers and stretchers between the courses, to cope with uneven brick sizes around the window openings.



49 & 50. Views of hard cement pointing and missing joints and bricks to corners.



51. Brick condition

52. Ruled joint detail.

53. Detail of 2015 test repointing using lime mortar.

Generally, the brick facings are uneven with many showing signs of their primitive means of production. Harder, machine-made bricks can be seen in spots along the walls, at jambs and at floor joist level where they have been used for repairs. Special bricks were used as corbels to support the sprockets at the eaves of the two main garden facades; these most likely date from the re-roofing that was undertaken in the 1830s but could have been undertaken after 1865 at which time the windows were being replaced and the brickwork repaired below.

To the base of the walls is a brick plinth coated in rough cement that is badly cracked in many places. This detail is a cause of dampness internally, and while some remedial measures have been undertaken using gullies, it has not been fully effective. There are no sills to the ground floor windows, being almost flush, but some of these bricks have been replaced with newer bricks. These might mark where sills have been taken out; a large panel under a window at ground floor level suggests it was once used as a door direct into the garden and was later replaced with a pine replica window. Cast stone or concrete sills have been installed to the replacement sash windows on the gallery level.

Brick buttresses are not built into the older walls, and along with their machined bricks, have black-pigmented mortar and are weathered with sloping limestone copings. Brickwork has 10mm joints on average with some variation, with 3mm joints used for the rubbed brick voussoirs to the window heads. An appraisal by brick expert Gerard Lynch for the Dublin City Council report on the use of brick pointing techniques in the city, noticed an isolated example of ruled jointing that had survived at high level at the junction of the north and east ranges. There is also evidence of ruled pointing in the lime mortar to the bricks that line the passageway just inside the door to the garden.

In places where the hard cement mortar has fallen away, the original lime bedding can be seen behind. Spalling of the brick faces can be found in all areas, along with sulphate crusts that pre-date the cement re-pointing. Frost and atmospheric pollution have left the faces of the brick friable in places and will be especially vulnerable to mechanical damage when the hard cement-rich mortar is eventually removed. Cement-rich mortars can cause serious damage by trapping water in the bed joints and accelerating decay of the brick. This is a significant risk to the conservation of the book collection and the stalls, being susceptible to raised humidity levels leading to mould growth internally.

In 2015, a sample of damaged brickwork under a ground floor window under repair was repointed using softer lime mortars, which suggested that ruled flush jointing would be the most appropriate treatment for the brickwork when the cement mortar is removed. While hard, the cement was removed by hand using a chisel without resort to cutting, and the friable surface of the brick was unaffected by the operation. Bedding mortar was used as a match for the new lime re-pointing, using small pebbles and crushed brick of appropriate size, finished flush to the wide joints.

The north façade of the north range, and the entire east range are rendered. Some test panels were undertaken in February 2015, to determine the original facing material in advance of repair works. By removing patches of render where it was failing it was determined that the east range was originally brick-faced on both sides, and that the north side of the north range has a rough calp facing, suggesting that it always rendered. This would need to be confirmed with further testing.

Softer lime render to the west and south façades of the east range has a 'ruled ashlar' finish created using a brick jointer to give the impression of a

coursed stone wall. There are signs of patch repairs to the render on the south-facing gable, applied crudely at the verges, most likely when it was re-roofed in the 1960s, and these are a possible source of water ingress. The render is cracking very badly, in some areas it has already delaminated from the wall. The east and north facades have smooth hard cement render, which is also cracked.

To either side of the door on the north side of the North Range, the piers are also badly cracked. These are built of calp limestone and are badly eroded with cast concrete cills, and the windows set close to the face of the wall. Render to the nineteenth-century lobby in the garden is also cracking, most noticeably above the entrance door, and there are also signs of rising damp noticeable at low level on the external walls along the North Range. The full extent of the damage being caused by the hard cement pointing and coatings will require thermal imaging or further invasive surveys.

4.1.5 External Joinery

Generally, the windows to the library are double-hung, sliding sash types with small panes set in a range of astragal profiles in patterns of nine over nine, or nine over six. A group of six windows line the garden corridor, five of which are considered amongst the earliest examples of sash windows to survive in Ireland. These were sensitively repaired in 2014 where they had suffered extensive rot and had been fixed shut. Their frames are in pine; the oak sashes in a twelve over twelve pattern have plant-on beads to the glazing bars being curved internally and flat externally. The small panes of glass are handmade crown glass, with coloured tints and bubbles. The central window, found to be in pine, is a later replica window that likely replaced an earlier door.

The Governors' minutes of 1720 refer to new window sashes along the entire west side of the library. It is possible that the first instalment of

54 & 55. Early 18c. (left) and 19c. (right) replacement sash windows.

windows to the First Gallery had to be replaced at this time, aside from the keeper's apartment. An inscription was found scratched onto one of the panes which reads - *Edwin McErlean restored these windows in 1865*. The structural opening to the current entrance door off the narrow passage has been modified, perhaps formerly a window later converted into a door. Another possibility was that it once an internal door part of the wing that stretched closer towards the palace.

The rest of the windows have slender glazing bars with horns at the junction of the stile and meeting rail and none of the glazing patterns correspond to the original shutter panels. As was common prior to the 1730 Building

Act, all the windows have been set close or flush to the front of the wall, with their frames expressed. This means that the original frames might have survived. Unfortunately, the nap plaster reveals and cast sills to the upper level detract from the historic character of the garden elevations.

Perhaps first installed as part of the 1860s refurbishment; the current sashes have a nine over nine pattern to the galleries; nine over six for the ground floor on the west side and eight over eight and six over six sashes to the basement windows directly below. Ground level windows are fitted with steel security bars.

Some of the windows may have been replaced as recently as the 1960s, but many still retain historic glass so this may not have involved widescale replacement. A comprehensive programme of repair was carried out by Corr Joinery in recent years to these windows, under the guidance of HHA, however those completed over five years ago might well require redecoration to avoid more serious defects emerging over time. Windows along the west wall facing into the graveyard need conservation when funding allows.

The six-panel raised and fielded door with curved head to the main entrance is likely to be the original door from the 1865 restoration. Fitted to the front is a Gothic-style wrought iron gate with trefoil finials; like the motifs found to the entrance gate at street level. The door into the garden was replaced in recent years, being beyond repair and important for security. External doors at each end of the north range corridor appear to date from at least the early eighteenth century, with forged ironmongery surviving and with some later alterations. At the garden end is an unusual vertical boarded bi-fold door with an eight-pane light above. The external doors at either end of the keeper's corridor haves six-panels of later date.

56. View of 18c. door into garden from north range.

4.2 Interior Fabric

4.2.1 General

It is the interior of Marsh's Library which visitors find the most special, and where its specific historic character can be best appreciated. Visitors enter through the entrance lobby into a tall stair hall, with steps continuing down a half level to the cataloguing room to one side but are directed up the eighteenth-century stairs to a landing. Former book closets, X,Y,Z are ranged to either side, the latter is now a WC. Under a plaque setting out the names of the *Successions of Librarians* is a solid panel double door that leads into the First Gallery that stretches as far as the Old Reading Room which is set in the corner between the west and north ranges. From this room is accessed the Second Gallery that follows along the north range and turns along the east as far as the gable end, where a spiral staircase was installed in the 1980s.

While this level has seen very little change outside of the stair hall over three centuries, the ground floor has experienced more significant change and alteration away from the bookstalls. Evidence for these alterations can be derived from the governors' minutes which provide context for interpreting the surviving fabric. Below the first gallery are rooms set aside for the use of the keeper, which have recently been opened for use by staff.

Beside the stairs is a cataloguing room, which has a door leading into the entrance hall to the keeper's apartment. It is likely that this room was the original entrance to the library from the passageway leading from St Patrick's Close, which necessitated alterations to the staircase. It is interesting to note that while being connected to the palace, the library once had a more accessible entrance facing towards the cathedral, and a spacious double-height stair hall prior to it being infilled with these rooms.

Along the west side, the apartment consists of three rooms, the first two interlink and share the central chimney breast while also being accessible from the corridor. Historic wall panelling has survived intact to these rooms, presumably used as bedrooms with a window each. A larger room with three windows overlooking the graveyard was subdivided in the later twentieth century to provide a kitchenette and dining area, a bathroom, and a box bedroom. Panelling has survived here also but is partial or concealed in places. Located under the Old Reading Room on the first floor is a spacious reception room, it does not appear to have belonged to the apartment originally, but has a door placed in the wall accessing from the kitchen when it was used as a drawing room. It is now used by scholars as a reading room. Under the Second Gallery the rooms are used by scholars for reading and for staff meetings. Toilets including an accessible toilet were added in recent decades. The Seminar Room under the east range is used daily to host a pop-up shop, which can be easily relocated to allow for events when required.

The basement is currently in a poor state of repair and is unfit for habitation or storage. It is accessed from a steeply pitched staircase leading from a door in the entrance hall of the former apartment. There are four rooms; two located beside the stairs are formed by timber stud walls with lath and plaster linings that are in poor condition. The room to the east side is a dark cellar with a timber post propping the floor joists above and the ceiling is lined with fire-rated plasterboard. Opposite is a slightly larger room with a window overlooking the graveyard, it has recently been fitted with timber propping to the sagging floor joists above. The ceiling in this room has retained some lath and plaster, but large sections have also been lined with fire-rated plasterboard.

57. View along First Gallery.

58. View of Old Reading Room.

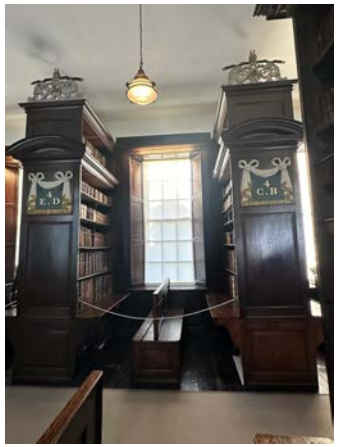
59. View in Second Gallery of cages.

60. Blinds to window and ladder.

61. View of bookstall and store in Second Gallery.

62. Bookstalls in First Gallery.

63. View of cage in Second Gallery.

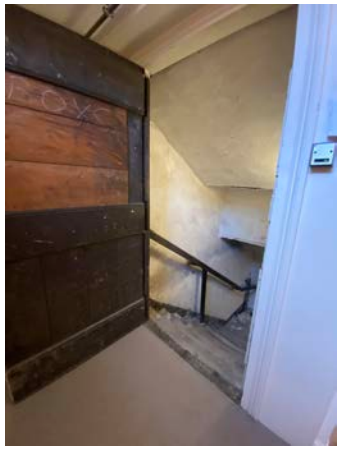


64. Carrels retained in Second Gallery, removed in First Gallery.

65. View of ground to basement from graveyard.

66. View of store room to east side of basement.

67. View of south wall.



68. Entrance door to basement.

69. Detail of damp and rot.

70. View of fireplace.

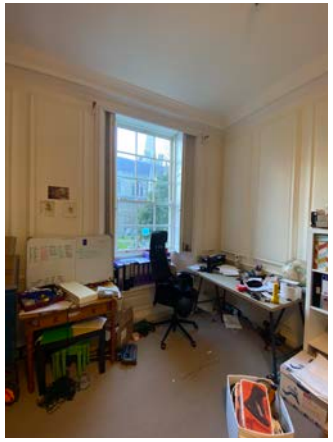
71-72. Views of window & recent & historic propping in basement.

73. View of meeting room in north range ground level.

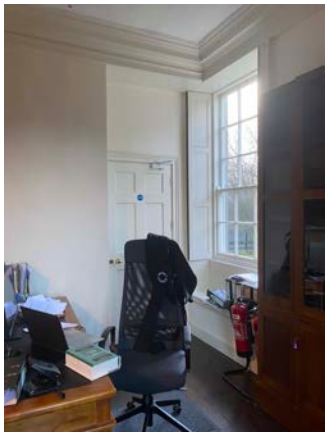
74. View of new reading room in west range.

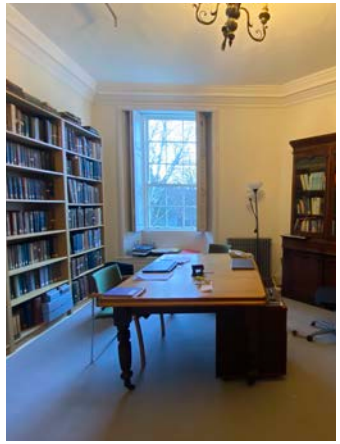
75. View of office in west range in former apartment.

76. Detail of bolection moulding to architrave.



77- 79. Offices in former apartment.





80. Detail of repaired sash window to garden corridor.

81. View of First Gallery entrance.

82. View of south windows in stairhall.

83. Draught door mechanism.

84. Condensation on wall.

85. Stairs showing barley sugar balusters.

The largest room is lit by a generous sash window, it also contains a hearth with a brick fire surround and was the original kitchen of the keeper's apartment. Otherwise, the external and cross walls are built of calp rubble with a limewash finish. A single, chamfered timber post is located to the centre of the space supporting a massive timber floor beam that remains exposed below. In the cross wall is an arch-headed niche and a door with steps leading up to another large windowless room.

This space is ventilated by a small, splayed opening, which is fitted with a cast iron vent. The hearth on this side has been bricked up. The floor joists in this room have also been propped more recently. The spaces have exposed wiring for security and lighting, and water distribution services serving the rooms above. The floor is brick and calp walls have been left unfinished, like the cellar under the stairs. Stone flags are evident at the base of the stairs, but otherwise the floors have been covered with a cement screed. There is evidence of rising damp, with vegetation growing through the floor and of mould growth to the timber door lintels and the stairs. Reference to the structural report of April 2001 prepared by Lisa Edden confirms that rot was found to the floor joist ends prior to them being lined with fire-rated plasterboard.

4.2.2 Ceilings

Modern plasterboard was installed in the galleries in the 1960s. Historic photographs show evidence of damp patches, so they were likely to be in poor condition. In the First Gallery, a coved ceiling is set below kingpost trusses with raised collars. In the Second Gallery the ceiling is flat and lower at around four metres in height. In the library, the sole example of plaster decoration is the simple Rococo ceiling rose found in the Old Reading Room. While there is some evidence of cracking to the vaulted ceiling, it does not appear to be of structural concern.

On the ground floor, a plaster and lath ceiling along the corridor is cracked in places, with some patches showing previous repair and joists protruding. While the plaster and lath ceilings in the apartment have plaster cornices, they are otherwise plain and flat. A deep moulded plaster cornice is found in the staff kitchen, a shallower one in the reading room next door. Both are run in-situ and are most likely original.

4.2.3 Walls & Partitions

On the ground floor, the thick wall along the corridor in the north range appears to mark the shallow bay front that still survives at this level in the south range as its east gable. The wall separating the First Gallery from the Old Reading Room is over a metre thick, as it supports the chimney and includes flues from the keeper's apartment below. Otherwise partitions not associated with flues (or former flues) are stud partitions with plaster and lath linings. Those subdividing rooms in the former keeper's apartment are modern. Generally, the internal walls and partitions are in reasonable condition. Some evidence of structural movement in Room Y was addressed when the floor was upgraded for increased storage in recent years. In the Seminar Room, the walls have plasterboard dry lining, which may conceal dampness which is evidence in locations around the ground floor where external ground levels are higher. Further investigation and a specialist damp survey is recommended for this and other affected areas.

4.2.4 Floors

Floorboards are dark-stained softwood throughout the building, with a high gloss finish used in the main staircase. A carpet runner is fitted to the central passage between the bookcases in both galleries, leaving the boards exposed in the spaces between the bookcases. These boards show

86. Floorboards showing marks of original benches removed in 18c.

evidence of having been lifted many times previously, more noticeable in the First Gallery. In the second gallery the runner is slightly wider and is tucked under the base of the shelving. A runner has also been installed to the main staircase, which had been slippy in wet weather. A non-slip safety floor has been used in the WC in the former Room Z.

Most of the ground floor rooms have fitted carpet so their condition could not be inspected. Red and black terracotta tiles line the corridor and lobby on the ground floor between the apartments. Floorboards are also exposed in the staff kitchen and reading room next door with a slip-resistant floor covering used between the kitchen units. The Seminar Room is covered in deep pile carpet on a new raised floor. Photographs taken before its refurbishment show that the floor was once brick, a similar finish to that found in the basement suggesting that it had a utilitarian use.

4.2.5 Internal Joinery

Marsh's Library contains some of the best-preserved early eighteenth-century interiors in Ireland. This owes much to the exceptional internal joinery, much of which has survived in a good state of preservation. Visitors to Marsh's Library marvel at the tall oak bookstalls that line the galleries - naturally lit by tall windows, the beautiful carved oak coupled with the distinctive smell of the books. External walls are also lined in oak throughout, still framing the blocked-up entrance door in the east gable.

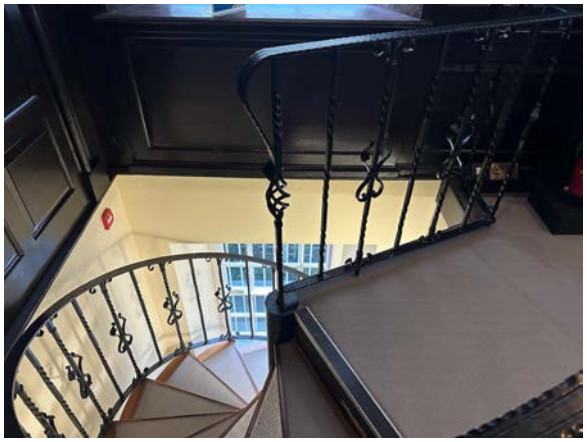
An assessment carried out by Sven Habermann of Conservation Letterfrack reports that the bookshelves are primarily assembled from oak with pine central supports using mortice and tenon joints without fixings. Painted and gilded heraldic shields and other decorative ornamentation is carved in pine, with ash brackets used to support the desks. Evidence of woodborer beetle infestations in the past was found. There are signs of serious distortion and movement to several bookshelves, which is also historic, and have been addressed with the insertion of metal ties. These were anchored back to the external wall to counteract the sagging floors due to the weight of the books. Timber wedges were also installed to keep the shelving square where it had distorted. Conservation Letterfrack undertook remedial work to bookstall G1.2. The thin oak shelves are also sagging extensively, and this can be remedied by adjusting and supplementing the slender fins.

The inspection confirmed that the upper tier to the bookshelves, long considered a later addition, are part of the original design. Use of mechanically sawn timbers, suggest that they were imported already wrought from the Netherlands where this

87. Wrought iron hinges to shutters.

88. View along Second Gallery ceiling.

89. Detail of bench in carrel and rope cordon.

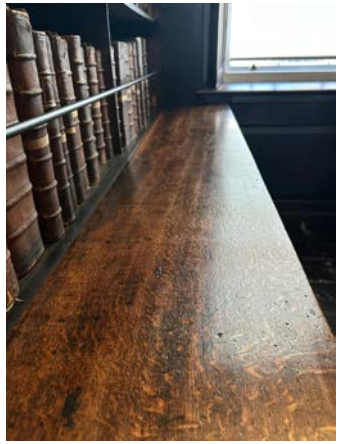


90. View of modern steel stair from Second Gallery.

91. Detail of brass escutcheon & door knob.

92. Skull casting on display taken from Esther Johnson.

93. Historic glass in Old Reading Room door.



94. Oak grain to ledger along bookstall.

95. Detail of cartouches to book stalls.

technology was in use during the seventeenth century. A bookstall beside the door retains parts of a security system of rods and chains that was abandoned due to the damage caused by the metal clasps. Some of the recessed locks survive in the gables of the bookshelves. Modern steel rods have been installed to prevent theft, whose removal or replacement could be considered.

During recent refurbishment work carried out in Room Y, the untidy assortment of mostly pine shelving from the early twentieth century, were removed by Sven Haberman to be re-used in the refurbishment of Kevin Street Library. Some sections of these shelves were salvaged from an earlier bookshelf and possibly from old window shutters and these pieces were carefully set aside by Conservation Letterfrack and not taken off site.

96. View of Old Reading Room doors.

On the ground floor, a simple boarded wainscot lines the corridor in the keeper's apartment and entrance lobby: this is a later insertion. The living room is lined in panelling on all sides up to the cornice, with an arch-headed niche framed by ornate plaster in the form of Corinthian

97. View of bookstalls in Second Gallery from above.

colonnettes and putti located on the partition wall, which includes a linking door. A similar niche is found on the other side in the dining room, this time featuring pilasters. The former kitchen has also retained panelling from its original use as the main reception room.

While much of the main staircase could be original to the building, it has been altered on at least two occasions. The first is recorded in the minutes of the Governors' in 1720, noting that the stairs were changed to make them much more commodious, although it is unclear what this work entailed. It was radically altered when the new entrance was constructed after1865, being shortened and the storerooms inserted at the upper level and cataloguing room and lobby to the keeper's apartment below. It has

98. Detail of ceiling rose & light.

retained much of its original joinery, including the treads and balustrades with barley-sugar turned balusters, square newels, and a broad, moulded handrail. The balustrade lines the wall at the bottom landing, and a section continues behind the timber-boarded partition to the stairwell down to the lower level containing the cataloguing room.

Many original joinery assemblies survive in the form of fine panelled doors, architraves and fanlights; windows shutters, skirtings and wainscoting. Most of this joinery survives in a reasonable condition and should be valued, protected and expertly repaired when damaged. The two-panel doors into Rooms X and Z differ from the four-panel door to Room Y opposite, but all are painted or stained in a matching matt black finish. Many doors have retained their iron lock cases with beautiful, original brass door furniture. The tall, oak double doors leading into the first gallery are divided into eight panels, with a brass lock case and decorative escutcheon featuring a crown motif. Almost all the window shutters have been retained. These are generally in three leaves but have been removed from the windows on the south façade of the west range. Some are stained and others painted white, and most remain operable. When resources allow, the missing shutters should be replaced and all others that are currently not operable should be repaired.

4.2.6 Finishes

Where inspected, wall plaster covered by the bookstalls has been left rough and, in some places, left bare making it more susceptible to moisture ingress. Otherwise the walls have retained painted lime plastered finishes in the galleries.

A study of the historic paint finishes at the library was undertaken by Catherine Hassall in 2002.This report provides evidence for alterations to the main staircase, in the basement and the levels above in the rooms adjacent to the staircase; to the Old Reading Room. It confirms that much of the joinery now painted in strong colours would originally have been varnished or a light grey or stone colour.

Paint analysis suggest that the early sash windows in the west range, may date from the 1720 refurbishment, rather than being original, although this is not certain. Changes in use of colour reflect prevailing taste and fashions. Darker greens and browns for the joinery and panelling first appear in the late- eighteenth century. Later in the nineteenth century the plastered walls were also decorated in strong, dark colours on top of soft white limewashes and distempers.

Interior decorations are maintained to a good standard throughout the library and have been replenished over time. The appearance of the stairhall and the ground floor apartment were much improved in recent years by painting out the bright colours using an off-white colour enhancing its eighteenth-century character. Most recently, the Old Reading Room was repainted, where a more sympathetic colour scheme was used to the Rococco plasterwork. These colour schemes help to enhance the spatial qualities of the rooms while allowing the impressive joinery to be better appreciated.

4.3 Services

4.3.1 Electrical & Mechanical

Space heating is provided to water-filled radiators fired by a gas heating system in the Old Reading Room at first floor level and in the offices and reading room downstairs. Staff members wrap up against the cold in the winter months. While monitoring had been installed along the bookstalls, there remains a risk of elevated moisture levels in the galleries, especially due to the increased visitor numbers. The Seminar Room / shop is heated using an air conditioning unit installed within the new suspended ceiling.

A ceiling mounted mist fire suppression system has been installed on the ground floor. Gas-based suppression for the galleries is under consideration but not yet advanced. The hot and cold water and waste disposal services from the kitchens and toilet areas in the library are of recent date and appear to be functioning adequately, however, the bathroom and kitchen of the keeper's apartment needs to be upgraded.

In the galleries, the power and data points are generally mounted on the floor, on a pedestal with a brass faceplate. This approach is used in OPW properties to minimise impacts on historic flooring. Light switches are wall mounted. Modern fuse boards are found behind fitted cabinet doors off the corridor on the ground floor of the north wing and are of recent installation. Pendant lights with glass bowls hung on brass chains are found in the Second Gallery. In the First Gallery, the ceiling is lit with concealed battens at cornice level over the windows creating indirect up-lighting to

99 & 100. New electric heater and installation in Old Reading Room.

the ceiling. A large brass and glass lantern is hung on a chain over the main staircase, lit with six candle bulbs. Simple pendant lights are used throughout the ground floor, with a range of shades, while luminaires are used in storerooms and the cataloguing room. Flood lights and a range of security measures including CCTV and infrared sensors are found externally. In general, the electrical installation appears to be of high specification and recent design. The same applies to the fire and intruder alarms, neither of which were tested, but both of which are maintained by a specialist contractor.

4.3.2 Disabled Access

While access to the library for wheelchair users remains restricted, several initiatives have been taken in recent years. To access the galleries, visitors cannot avoid using steps from any approach. A limestone ramp has been installed to the external gate from the lane off Bride Street, which gives access as far as the garden, where the steps up to the rooms to the ground floor level need to be negotiated. In Room Z, a new WC has been installed, but this level cannot be reached by wheelchair users. An accessible toilet is available at ground floor level adjacent to the Seminar Room.

Any decisions about improving safety and disabled access to the building will need to consider preservation, conservation, efficient management, and public access. Ideally, full access should be provided to the galleries for people with disabilities. One possibility for the provision of a new lift and staircase complying with Parts K and M of the building regulations, would be to construct a new circulation core attached to the east range in the location of the former observatory tower. This could provide access to the east range through the blocked-up door and allow for the spiral staircase dating from the 1980s to be removed. This approach is not ideal as the laneway approach is private and access would be by appointment. A new circulation tower should be carefully designed and maintain an external route between the bindery and library.

101. View of new accessible ramp to East Yard.

102. Fire extinguishers in First Gallery.

4.3.4 Fire Safety

Placed around the building are fire extinguishers, break glass units, fire alarm detector heads and sounders. These continue to be maintained, and

103. Mist suppression to corridor.

tested on a regular basis, with staff informed as regards the fire safety strategy. The roofspaces do not have adequate fire separation at present, this could be installed quite easily by fitting a curtain to the crawl space in between. In the basement, fire protection measures include lining the ceilings and timber props with fire-rated plasterboard.

There remains inadequate fire separation between the keeper's apartment and the library. This occurs in the two doors between the cataloguing office and the lobby and bedroom of the apartment. While the cessation of use of the apartment for residential use removes a significant fire risk, it is important that the current protections are reviewed.

4.3.5 Curtilage

The courtyard garden is a precious amenity for scholars, visitors, and staff in this busy city centre location. It was laid out using rare varieties by Paul Pollard when assistant keeper in the 1970s and 1980s. Being now mature, one idea would be to seek to reimagine the garden in a more formal eighteenth-century style, while keeping enough specimens for shade.

104. Wrought iron bench with commemorative plaque to Paul Pollard.

The north yard gets very little light situated between two high walls, so rarely dries out. Being filled with the mist suppression tanks means that it is only suitable for utilitarian functions. The bindery garden has been planted out with plants more suited to its shady aspect. It is primarily used now for circulation; a judiciously placed bench would be useful for breaks in this secluded area. The lush planting to the front of the main entrance overshades the steps, which some visitors might enjoy.

5.0 Cultural Significance

The Guidelines to the Burra Charter state that:

Cultural Significance is a concept which helps in estimating the value of places. The places that are likely to be of significance are those which help an understanding of the past or enrich the present, and which will be of value to future generations.

There are a variety of categories used to evaluate the cultural significance of a place: *Historical, Architectural, Artistic, Social* and *Technical* interest categories will be used to assess the public library founded by Marsh.

It is important to note at the outset that the cultural significance of the library is best represented by its collection of books and manuscripts. Additionally, the survival of this purpose-built library and the retention of so much of its early eighteenth-century character is a legacy of wise and foresighted governance over three centuries.

5.1 Historical Interest

- When founded, the library contained books that informed those eager to seek the latest knowledge in a wide range of study. Today it is an invaluable repository of rare volumes most of which retain their original bindings, while serving as a 'working' museum.
- Marsh's Library formed a link between two important sites founded in the early medieval period: St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Archiepiscopal Palace of St. Sepulchre. While the cathedral could be considered one of the foremost monuments of the city, the palace is awaiting a new purpose and conservation.

105. Lithograph from 1826 showing St Patrick's Cathedral precinct.

- The library's patron, Narcissus Marsh was an academic and avid collector of books and manuscripts, and served as Provost of Trinity College Dublin, a Primate of All Ireland and was a founder of the Dublin Philosophical Society.
- Over the centuries many notable figures served on the board of governors including members of the aristocracy, government, clergy, academia, and the professions. Its keepers have included scholars who have dedicated themselves to the preservation and promotion of the collections.

- Successive generations of keepers, with their knowledge of the collection and their own specialist interests, contribute to the cultural and academic life of the city.

5.2 Architectural

- Marsh's Library forms part of the precinct of St Patrick's Cathedral, which along with the archbishop's palace, are among the oldest surviving structures in the city.
- It was constructed in phases during the first decade of the eighteenth century by two of the most eminent architects of the period - Sir William Robinson (1645-1712) and Thomas Burgh (1670-1730) successive Surveyors General of Ireland.
- Robinson, who completed the first phase of the library, was also responsible for the Royal Hospital at Kilmainham as well as Charles Fort at Kinsale. Thomas Burgh was the architect for the Royal (now Collins) Barracks, Dr. Steeven's Hospital.
- A few years after the completion of the works at Marsh's Library, Burgh undertook the design of the much larger library at Trinity College Dublin. Here he followed the concept of first floor galleries lined with bookstalls separated by desks and lit by tall windows.
- Early map evidence showing the library forming an enclosed courtyard to the side of the palace could be confirmed by archaeological investigation using technology such as ground penetrating radar combined with test trenching. These investigations would most likely add to our understanding of the Palace of St. Sepulchre.
- Marsh's Library although modest in scale and decoration, was nonetheless influential in the development of libraries in Ireland. The confined perspective along the array of oak bookstalls gives a sense of the breadth and wealth of knowledge, while the daylit benches are conducive to private study.
- Alongside the impressive bookstalls, the surviving early sash windows are amongst the earliest examples of their type in the city and country. Brick walls facing into the garden are among the oldest to have survived in Dublin.

5.3 Artistic

- Visitor books in the library include the signatures of literary figures such as Bram Stoker and James Joyce, who used the collection in their novels. Jonathan Swift served as a governor, resided at the deanery, and may well have availed of the reading room.
- The collection consists of rare manuscripts and early printed books with decorative bindings, calligraphy, typography and illustrations including many that are of significant artistic merit.

5.4 Social

- Being a purpose-built public library it is also of considerable social significance as an early example of enlightened philanthropy.
- Marsh's Library has retained and added to its collection, has continued under the same governance structure, and public remit, in the same building despite the vicissitudes of three centuries.
- The survival of the galleries in such a good state of preservation attests to the value of the institution and the benefits of continuity within an ever-changing urban setting.

106. Walter Osborne painting of 1898 of the Old Reading Room (HLG).

- Sir Benjamin Lee Guinness, whose philanthropy restored St. Patrick's Cathedral, also funded a major refurbishment of the library. The connection with the family has continued with the donation of the Benjamin Iveagh Library at Farmleigh in 2008.
- Through its various cultural events and engagement with the public and children, Marsh's Library has enhanced its social significance for the citizens of Dublin as well as visitors to the city.

5.5 Statement of Significance

The building and collection and its governance reflect Archbishop Marsh's interests and values, formed during the Age of Enlightenment and surviving for over three centuries. Being in continued use since founded as the first public library in Ireland, it represents the emergence of those ideas in Ireland. The library building and its collection have remained together, surviving a plan to relocate the books to a new national institution in the nineteenth century. Time has caused the collection to attain a more specialist interest, attracting scholars and academics from around the world. It also demonstrates the value of continuity through change, where its collection has increased in rarity over the centuries. The eighteenth-century character of the bookstalls and their galleries attract Dubliners as well as visitors to the city to learn about Ireland's literary; historical; and architectural heritage. Its collection intact, Marsh's Library is a place of international cultural significance.

6.0 Defining Issues & Assessing Vulnerability

6.1 Introduction

Much has been achieved at Marsh's Library since the previous conservation management plan was authored by Howley Hayes Architects in 2014, demonstrating the benefit of this approach to change. Works and initiatives carried out to the library in collaboration with the Office of Public Works previously set new standards for best conservation practice. Since 2014, much of the historic window joinery has been repaired and pilot repair works have been undertaken to the bookstalls. Rooms to the keeper's apartment have been refurbished for use by staff, with more work to follow. Universal access has been further improved, with the installation of an access ramp that gives access to the garden from Bride Street. Mist fire suppression has been installed throughout the ground-floor of the library.

In the 2008 ICOMOS Quebec Declaration, On the Preservation of the Spirit of Place, there is an emphasis on the importance of intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, rituals, values, etc.); being the physical and spiritual elements that give meaning, value, emotion, and mystery to place. The spirit of place at Marsh's Library, as a purpose-built library is derived from its books and oak bookstalls and an atmosphere of discovery and contemplation.

In the preparation of this current plan, a new set of priorities will be identified for implementation over the next ten years. Marsh's Library deserves the highest standards of conservation, both for its collection and the building in which they are stored. For this iteration of the conservation management plan we propose to prioritise the conservation of the collection as the most valuable and vulnerable aspects of the cultural heritage of Marsh's Library. In this we have relied upon the expertise and insights of the staff at the library, as well as the guidance provided in BS 4971:2017 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*.

107. Extract from the most recent zoning map (2022-2028) showing no change in the immediate context of the library, being zoned Z8 *Georgian Conservation*

6.2 Statutory Protection

Historic built fabric and archaeology are given protection under the following legislation:

- Planning & Development Acts 2000-2021
- National Monuments Acts, 1930–2014, and the Record of Monuments & Places, Section 12 of the 1994 Act.

Marsh's Library (ref. 7747) is protected under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010, being listed in the Record of Protected Structures included in the Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028. Marsh's Library was given a National rating under the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (reg. no. 50110023).

Any works that involve material alterations of the interior or exterior of the building, where its historic character is impacted, will require planning approval. Requirements for protected structures require additional detail and documentation to be assessed.

Marsh's Library is also a recorded monument (SMR: DU018-020351-Library). It is one of a cluster of recorded monuments in the wider precinct that includes the cathedral and the archbishop's palace. The site is also included within a Zone of Archaeological Interest associated with the extent of the city pre-1700. Any developments on the site will require consultation with the National Monuments Service and will include an archaeological assessment of the site.

6.3 Governance

The governance of a historic institution such as Marsh's Library is essential to its preservation. Responsible guardians of built heritage take measures to ensure that it is maintained and invest wisely and strategically in human and capital resources where required to avoid damage and loss. Marsh's Library is exemplary in how its governance has led to the maintenance of the collection and its library using the highest standards of care.

On the establishment of the library in 1707, a statute provided for a board of trustees, known as the Governors & Guardians, drawn from the hierarchy of the Church of Ireland and senior office holders in government or their nominees, representing the roles undertaken by its founder. These include the Archbishop of Dublin as chair; Archbishop of Armagh (Primate of All Ireland); Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral; Dean of Christchurch Cathedral; Provost of Trinity College Dublin, and the Chief Justice of Ireland.

The day-to-day governance of the library is headed by the Director who is assisted by a Deputy Director. They manage the library in accordance with a vision statement with the overall objective to cater for both visitors and academics, collaborating with a range of national and international partners.

6.4 Universal Access

Marsh's Library enjoys a location close to the city centre, and adjacent to St Patrick's Cathedral, which has over 600,000 visitors each year, and is one of the most visited sites in the city and country. Over the past decade, visitors to the library have increased to 40,000.

It is acknowledged that not all visitors are able to access the galleries, and measures have been undertaken to improve access where possible. These include

108. View of entrance steps.

new WCs, and an external access ramp. Overall, access to the ground level has been achieved by prior appointment, and some ambulant visitors to the library can avail of WC facilities on the upper level. The provision of universal access to wheelchair users to the upper floor remains a challenge. While there have been several solutions identified, they all require significant capital funding, and alterations to historic fabric to a greater or lesser degree.

6.5 Health & Safety

As a building that contains fabric that is over three hundred years old, consideration of health and safety prior to inspection or repairs is very important. Current legislation, the Safety, Health & Welfare Act (2005), places responsibility on the building owner to ensure that all works to the building, including regular on-going maintenance, are carried out safely and in accordance with best practice. At the outset of a project, the client must appoint a Health and Safety Project Supervisor for the Design Process, who draws up a preliminary health and safety plan, and gives advice on health and safety in relation to the works.

Working at height is unavoidable at the library so that the roofs can be maintained. Ensuring safe access requires careful planning. Eaves gutters and the roofs are difficult to access safely and should be carried out by trained and experienced operatives. Clearance of the gutters should be carried out at least twice yearly.

The improvement of the internal environment of the building for staff and users, needs to be balanced against the specific environment required for the conservation of the collection. Damp walls and sporadic leaks are to be addressed, removing the risk of damp that also make spaces cold, mouldy and uncomfortable. Asbestos and lead-based paint surveys should be carried out in advance of any refurbishment works, to identify areas that are to be remediated under license.

6.6 Security

The library and its approaches are protected using a monitored CCTV system with detectors on doors and windows, and steel security bars fitted on accessible windows. Along the bookstalls, steel bars were installed to prevent theft, which affect their appearance and are somewhat cumbersome. In time, a new security system might allow the steel rods to be removed. In the immediate term, the library management should consider whether so many of the metal bars are necessary, particularly those sitting at the front of difficult to reach high-level bookshelves.

6.7 Fire Protection

Fire safety can be challenging in a historic building, especially where it contains concealed voids and flammable material of irreplaceable cultural value. Most important is that staff and visitors to the building have a safe means of escape in case of fire, and that fire safety protocols are understood and practiced regularly by staff members. Recent improvements to fire safety include the installation of a mist suppression system to the ground floor rooms and fire stopping between compartments. Fire safety has been improved as the apartment is now used as offices.

There is acceptance that bookstalls are not protected in the case of a major fire breaking out in the galleries. This is due to the additional risk of moisture from mist suppression that has the capacity to destroy the collection should it be deployed accidentally or without due consideration.

In time, gas-based technologies may emerge that will provide a reliable and safe solution for the benefit of the collection, library staff and visitors.

6.8 Collection Care

109. Monitor reading.

Early manuscripts and printed books consist of fragile materials such as paper, other natural fibres as cloth or for bindings, leather and parchment, natural wax and resins, inks and pigments. They are vulnerable to fluctuations in temperature and humidity leading to mould growth. If left unprotected, these precious artefacts would quickly deteriorate beyond repair, and preventing this is the principal role of the library and its staff. In this era of climate change and given increased visitor numbers, it is important that the survival of the collection in these rooms is not taken for granted. The conservation objective is to ensure that these risks to the collection are removed or at least mitigated as far as is practicable. The cultural value of the collection would be much diminished if a difficult choice had to be made to remove the books to a more environmentally controlled repository, thereby leaving bookstalls empty.

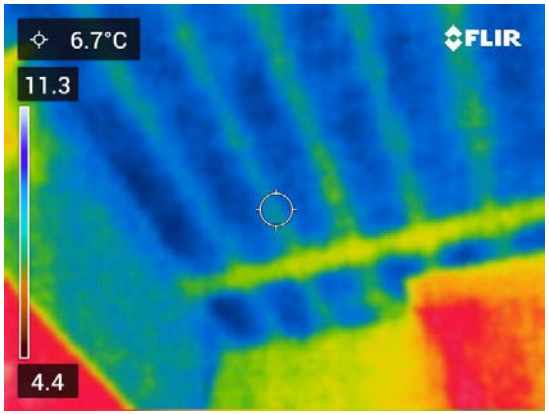
6.9 Environmental Stability

Every opportunity should be taken to seek out sources of renewable energy to provide environmental stability to ensure the safe storage of the collection while minimizing impacts on historic fabric.

While it is appreciated that the library has worked well over three centuries in preserving its collection, it is important to acknowledge that climate change and increased visitor numbers will bring new challenges. At present, there are no environmental controls in the library. Monitors placed on the bookstalls confirm that the interior temperature and relative humidity are susceptible to external conditions throughout the seasons, dipping below acceptable levels in the winter months. Therefore the increased risk of mould growth, unacceptable in a library, arises short-term weather fluctuations, longer-term climate change, and an increased number of visitors to the library.

As set out in BS 4971:2017 –

Buildings and rooms used for the storage of mixed traditional collections that include temperature and RH sensitive materials should be designed to provide an environment that does not expose the materials, at the hottest time of the year, to temperatures above 23 °C as a cautionary maximum, and which will cool off during the colder months to not less than 13 °C. The annual average storage temperature should be less than 18 °C.



110. Extract from thermal imaging camera showing heat loss through uninsulated roofspace.

And in relation to Relative Humidity –

The RH level for storage of traditional mixed archive materials should be not more than 60% and not less than 35%.

Where temperature and RH cannot be controlled –

Repositories with uneven temperature conditions or damp zones should be monitored closely. The causes of any zones of significantly lower temperature or damp penetration should be established and, where practicable, remedied to avoid the risk of high RH and potential mould growth. Where the physical or mechanical deficiencies causing these differences cannot be remedied sufficiently so that the temperature and RH levels conform to [the above], archives should be moved away from the area affected.

6.10 Maintenance

Regular inspection and maintenance are essential for the proper management and conservation of Marsh's library and its collection. Over time, defects that could be rectified quickly and at less expense can cause deterioration that necessitate extensive capital investment. Given improved attitudes to safety, maintaining certain areas of the building has become more complex. Routine maintenance needs to be considered during the design stage, and then implemented upon completion. During the inspections of library when preparing this report, defects were in the main attributable to difficult to access areas, sometimes exacerbated by hard cement mortars specified in the past.

In early 2023, mould was identified on several volumes in the Old Reading Room. An immediate cause for this was not identified, but an improved heating system had recently been installed. While the affected books were taken down for conservation, investigations were undertaken by Sven Haberman of Conservation Letterfrack. He identified elevated moisture levels generally in the wall, the effects of which were exacerbated by the shelves being placed up against the external walls with little air movement to the rear. Mould spores rest on all the books in the library, awaiting the proper environmental conditions of humidity and temperature to activate and grow. As noted above, the bookstalls in the galleries being perpendicular to the walls reduce but do not eliminate this risk. As part of our fabric survey, we identified that the source for the increased moisture in the walls was due to a blocked gutter, which was tipping water back into the wall. This was observable from the ground in heavy rain, the walls under the gutter being thoroughly wet in this location. The cracked hard cement render acts to trap this moisture into the wall, which would sit in the more porous brickwork behind. This gutter is regularly cleaned, and the increased rainfall due to climate change has exacerbated an issue caused by poor detailing of the eaves gutter.

111. Detail of mould damage to book cover.

This is a difficult part of the roof to access, being located above the graveyard of St Patrick's Cathedral, and being almost 10m from existing ground levels. Remote access is being arranged for the clearance of the gutter, but the issue of the dampness remains. There is also a lack of

resilience where this gutter can be blocked again at any time, and the issue re-occur unseen until mould returns or it is identified during routine maintenance, having topped up the damp walls.

6.11 Interpretation

Marsh's Library through its public remit has kept its doors open to visitors where comparable libraries of the period are more restricted. Interpreting the collection for a broader audience has become more important as their contents have become of more specialist interest over time. Library management and staff have embraced the wide range of opportunities to promote and interpret the collection through engaging social media and curated events. This has increased visitors to the library itself, while enhancing its cultural significance.

112. Detail of ongoing repairs to bookstalls.

Interpretation of the wider precinct of St Patrick's Cathedral suffered from the removal of direct connections to the library and on to the Palace of St Sepulchre during the nineteenth century. Now largely vacant with the construction of a new Garda Station along Bride Street, the palace is little known outside of specialist interests, and would benefit from a new use and a reconnection to the cathedral precinct.

6.12 Vulnerabilities & Threats

Further to the issues outlined above, the vulnerability of the cultural heritage at Marsh's Library can be summarised as set out below:

- The galleries remain without mechanical heating or humidity controls that are standard in modern libraries. The design and deployment of such systems needs to ensure that impacts to historic built fabric are minimised. This is especially important where visitor numbers have increased over recent decades and the likely impacts of climate change.
- External walls where they have been coated or repointed with cement will require replacement with softer lime mortars to ensure the continued preservation of the collection.
- The upper floor of the library is not universally accessible, preventing wheelchair users from enjoying these spaces. Access to some funding may be restricted where access cannot be provided.
- Fire suppression should be installed to the galleries when improved technologies allow, and a comprehensive programme of fire stopping should be undertaken in the immediate future.
- Over time, the subdivision of the precinct has separated the library from the cathedral and the palace. Any regeneration of the palace site should involve the library, to the benefit of both sites. It also has the potential to enhance the historic precinct of the cathedral, including the deanery, choir school and St Patrick's Park.

7.0 Policies

7.1 Approach & Objectives

All conservation works are guided by the principle of minimum intervention as set out in the Burra Charter – or *as little as possible, but as much as is necessary*. The conservation objectives for Marsh's Library are as follows:

- to provide guidance on best practice for the maintenance and conservation of the cultural heritage - the library; its collection; historic joinery; its gardens and all associated structures, and archaeology
- to prepare the library for the challenges posed by climate change, and from increased visitor numbers
- to set out an approach as to how to improve access to the library and its full enjoyment as a public institution
- to support and continue to develop the library as a cultural and educational resource
- identify key messages and themes to be communicated to visitors, staff and scholars
- ensure that Marsh's Library is accessible to as many people as possible, but not to the detriment of its cultural heritage
- to maintain the library and its contents, seeking capital funding for enhanced facilities, repairs and book conservation
- promote the library as a national heritage asset, strengthening networks with other historic libraries nationally and abroad

113. View of book inspection underway in First Gallery.

7.2 Conservation Policies

7.2.1 Protection of Collection

The collection of early printed books and manuscripts at Marsh's Library is irreplaceable. While they have survived to the present due to the efforts of staff and governors over many generations, careful decision-making is required to ensure their continued preservation.

7.2.2 Protection of Built Heritage

Ensure the protection of the built heritage through its maintenance and repair and the preservation and improvement of its settings. Repair works are to be prioritised in terms of urgency (water ingress, public safety), and informed by regular inspection and expert advice.

7.2.3 Repair & Maintenance

Conservation should proceed to a strategy for repair and maintenance. Provide regular on-going maintenance as the most effective way to preserve the library and its rich cultural heritage. Repairs to historic fabric should be carried out using conservation methodologies that conform to the guiding principles as set out in the ICOMOS charters.

7.2.4 Urgent Works

Sporadic moisture ingress into the library walls is of most immediate concern, leading to localised mould growth on books. Improved maintenance of the roofs and the removal of hard cement from the walls are a priority. Careful sequencing of urgent specialist repair works will be required to ensure that the risks to the preservation of the historic books, finishes and joinery is addressed.

7.2.5 Intervention

Where interventions are found to be necessary to conserve the library or to improve access, they are to be designed to the highest conservation standards and should not detract from its historic character.

7.2.6 Governance

As the cultural heritage that the library represents has benefitted from continuity in its governance, it is important that these structures are maintained and evolve over time where necessary.

7.2.7 Use

Over time, the library has evolved to be of more specialist interest. To maintain its public remit, it is important that it continues to engage visitors interested in the cultural heritage of Dublin.

Opportunities to improve facilities at the library should continue to be explored, working towards long term goals where necessary.

114. Cleaning mould from books.

7.2.8 Reversibility

As a general principle, interventions should be reversible, so that the built heritage of the library can be returned to its former state where possible.

7.2.9 Expert Advice & Skills

Scholarly research and interpretation should be supported wherever possible to contribute to a fuller understanding of Marsh's Library and its historic development.

The Governor's & Guardians should continue to ensure that all conservation works are carried out under the direction of suitably qualified professionals (specialist conservators, conservation architects and structural engineers) and undertaken only by suitably skilled and experienced operatives.

7.2.10 Consultation

Consultation with the wider group of stakeholders, including state bodies and academics, should also be sought to guide the conservation, management, and interpretation of Marsh's Library. This should include any proposals for the Palace of St Sepulchre.

7.2.11 Settings & Key Views

Continue to protect and enhance the settings of the built heritage including views towards the cathedral and palace as well as along St Patrick's Close, as well as within the garden towards the library itself.

7.2.12 Future Developments

Over time, adjacent sites may be re-developed; potentially impacting on historic boundaries and key views but also providing opportunities to improve existing site constraints.

7.2.13 Climate Change

Climate change will result in more frequent and extreme weather events, along with changes in average temperatures and precipitation. This will require enhanced maintenance regimes, additional intervention to improve the preservation of the collection, its building, gardens and external areas with protection measures for mitigation.

7.2.14 Conservation Plan Review

Review this Plan at agreed intervals to benchmark progress in implementation, re-assess priorities, assimilate new information or changes in legislation or methodologies. This overview reduces the risk of cumulative impacts due to incremental change without an agreed plan.

7.2.16 Monitoring & Inspections

Robust procedures are in place for the on-going monitoring of the condition of the books and manuscripts. Sensors and instruments should collect data in a format that can inform timely diagnosis of fabric defects to provide solutions and mitigation strategies, and to assess the efficacy of measures undertaken.

7.2.17 Depth In Time

Ensure that the conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage of Marsh's Library requires that all the aspects and phases that contribute to its significance be valued.

7.2.18 Research & Knowledge Gaps

Ensure that research into the collection is peer-reviewed and disseminated among stakeholders and to the public whenever appropriate.

7.2.19 Wider Associations

Historic places should not be considered in isolation, but rather as parts of a wider cultural landscape. Marsh's Library has been a part of the precinct of St Patrick's Cathedral since the early eighteenth century and has strong associations with the adjacent medieval Palace of St Sepulchre.

It also has strong associations with the Old Library in Trinity, as well as the Bodleian Library in Oxford, along with other repositories around the world sharing research interests.

7.2.20 Authenticity

Ensure that the importance of continuity and change in the proper understanding of the cultural heritage is communicated to the public. This is particularly important in relation to the early printed books and manuscripts.

7.2.21 Health & Safety

Prioritise safety in relation to the maintenance of remote or difficult to access locations and ensure that risks are identified and minimised even if

115. Pop-up gift shop in Seminar Room.

it is not possible to remove in their entirety. This is particularly relevant to the roof especially on those sides that are accessed from adjacent properties.

7.2.22 Leave No Trace

Visitors to Marsh's Library are to be informed of their shared responsibility for its conservation by avoiding activities or behaviour that put the library and its collection at risk.

7.2.23 Interpretive Strategy

Continue to develop interpretative strategies that engage a wide range of visitors so that they can more meaningfully interpret the cultural heritage of the library as a continuation of its original remit. Installations should continue to be well-designed and located so as not to detract from the authenticity of the galleries.

7.2.24 Formal & Informal Learning

Ensure that the presentation of the cultural heritage of Marsh's Library continues to be aimed at a broad audience.

7.2.25 On-Going Interpretation

As knowledge and understanding of the library and its connections to the cathedral and palace grows through further research and investigations, ensure that interpretation media are updated accordingly.

7.2.26 Sustainability

Ensure that all future developments or events associated with the library are carried out using sustainable practices.

7.2.27 Outreach & Participation

Support and promote initiatives that provide accessible resources for those undertaking the study of early printed books, manuscripts and Irish architecture can research remotely or from abroad.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 General

Being publicly accessible, Marsh's Library should serve as an exemplar of conservation best practice in relation to its books, historic joinery and the building itself. The library has undergone phases of refurbishment and alteration, but much survives in its original condition. It deserves only the highest standards of care, repair and conservation. The recent mould outbreaks have demonstrated the challenge posed by climate change to the collection, and it is imperative that priority is given to improve the resilience of the historic fabric, and to put in place environmental controls.

The conservation strategy for Marsh's Library involves the following:

- Repointing and recoating of its external walls with softer lime mortar. This will improve its resilience to climate change and enhance its historic character.
- Introduction of heating and dehumidification to the galleries, following strategies that reduce impacts on historic fabric. Service installations should be future proofed as far as practicable to minimise incremental losses.
- Continued maintenance and repair of the historic fabric.

8.2 Priority Works

8.2.1 Brickwork & Rendered Walls

Brickwork walls to the garden, while repointed in cement, are of less concern to the rendered walls where moisture is trapped more effectively. Removal of the render may damage some of the brickwork faces which are the most strongly adhered to the cement. However, it is likely that the brickwork was already in poor condition when it was rendered, and it has been already stripped on at least one previous occasion. Our assessment is that the dampness in the Old Reading Room has demonstrated that to protect the books from further mould attack the cement render needs to be removed, and the walls repointed in lime (if found to be cement pointed) and then sheltered with a new coat of lime render.

In 2024, we propose that a programme of conservation repairs be undertaken to the north and east facades of Marsh's Library to remove modern hard cement render from the brickwork walls and replace it with ruled ashlar lime render. This would be like the existing wall finishes to the east range garden facades, where we would follow the established pattern.

Should funding be available, we would propose to continue the works to the garden facades in 2025, followed by the graveyard wall and entrance façade. Access will need to be agreed with St Patrick's Cathedral adjacent, through the existing gates off St Patrick's Close. Scaffolding will need to ensure the protection of adjacent monuments, and within the confines of the North Yard, the shed and water tanks will also need to be avoided.

8.2.2 Environmental Stability

The attics above the galleries would be suitable for the installation of mechanical services for heating, as the original ceilings were replaced with modern plasterboard decades ago. A combination of mechanical and passive strategies may be considered for heating and dehumidification, carefully designed to minimize impacts. Thick masonry walls retain thermal energy, acting to stabilize internal temperatures through the seasons.

The building also has the advantage of thicker walls in the basement, which provide a more stable ambient temperature for potential heat exchangers, improving their efficiency. However, the basement is suffering from raised

humidity levels, most likely groundwater leaching in from the graveyard. The possibility of installing a French drain along the base of the walls should be explored. This will involve archaeological input, being within a graveyard.

Natural ventilation is to be used where possible, overhauled historic windows could be installed so that they can be operated more easily to suit user needs. In time, it is hoped that the relative humidity could be brought to levels that these spaces could be safe to use as storage or other suitable uses.

8.2.3 Sustainability

Installing insulation to the walls, either internally or externally would have a visual impact on the historic interiors and would not be permitted. The attics provide an opportunity to insulate, reducing heat loss and contributing to a more stable internal environment. Should heating be installed it will help to reduce operational costs.

Of most importance is the maintenance of ventilation to the roof timbers and the diffusion of moisture through the roof. For that reason, products such as sheep wool or wood fibreboard should be considered. Installation of insulation between or on top of the rafters require counter battens across the roof, which can impact on its appearance and is not a suitable approach. It would be best to install roof insulation at ceiling joist level only so that the roof timbers can continue to be monitored into the future. When re-slating, a modern vapour permeable membrane can be installed to replace the impermeable bituminous breeze felt.

8.2.4 Fire Safety

Electrical installations should be reviewed and replaced where their condition has risks for fire safety or where they are redundant and impede proper inspection and maintenance. Interfaces between separate fire compartments will need to be assessed for their integrity and any voids or materials of insufficient fire resistance covered or infilled. It is imperative that the historic finishes, joinery and ironwork are carefully conserved when being upgraded to perform to the required fire safety standards. Indiscriminate application of coatings for fire protection purposes can lead to irreversible damage to historic fabric. New sensors, emergency lighting, alarms or fire suppression systems that may be required should be carefully designed to minimize visual and material impacts to the historic interiors.

8.2.5 External Areas

The library garden and the planting area to the steps might benefit from some judicious cutting back and the introduction of new planting to reinvigorate the approach to the library, and to increase the enjoyment and dwell time of the library for staff and visitors. This could be combined with an improved drainage strategy in these areas, especially given the risk of increased rainfall from climate change.

8.2.6 Facilities

Marsh's Library should continue to seek ways of improving facilities for staff and for visitors. Many new initiatives have been undertaken in the last decade, and this important work should be continued on those areas of potential identified. A careful balance needs to be found between the need to provide for scholars and staff while also welcoming visitors and generating income that can be put towards operational or capital costs. It is important that both are accommodated, but not to the detriment of the use or enjoyment of the building. The conservation of the books needs to be the priority, which requires a healthy building as well as a committed and suitably resourced team to continue the work of over three centuries.

Conservation Strategy & Priorities

An outline schedule of works, arranged according to priority, is as follows:

Urgent Works

- Repointing of brickwork walls to garden
- Render to north yard and east range to be replaced
- Fire separation following audit and inspection
- Miscellaneous roof repairs: including gutter & downpipe replacement

Short Term Works

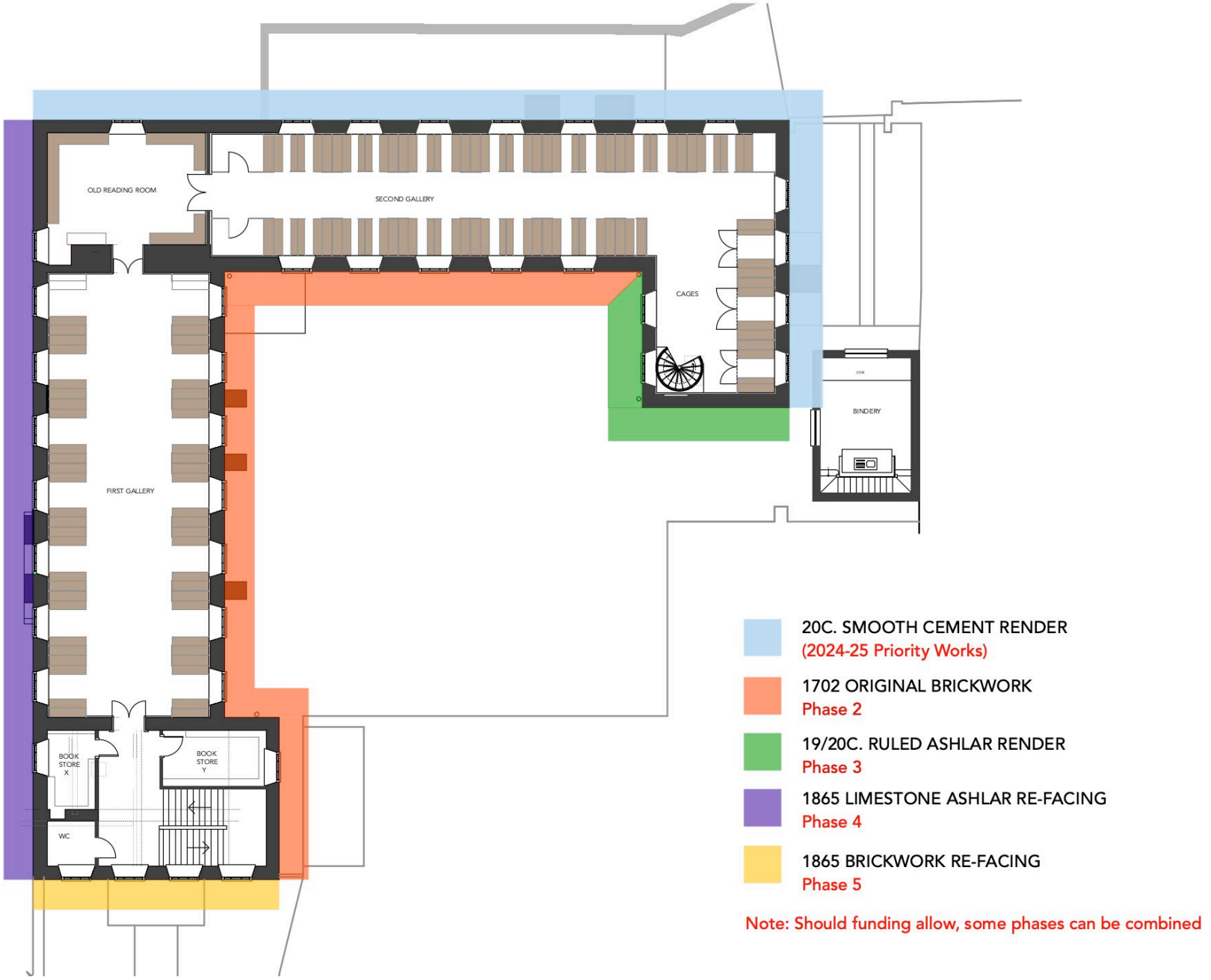
- Consider the installation of mechanical heating and/ or dehumidification for the galleries
- Gallery joinery repair
- Garage door to be replaced
- Install damp-proofing and drainage to base of walls to basement
- Replace light fittings with more energy efficient models to improve light output, minimise UV damage and reduce costs
- Install hook and chains to replace post and ropes in galleries
- Remove subdividing partitions to former apartment
- Continue programme of upgrading interior decorations
- Install walkway and handrails missing in roof space

Medium Term Works

- Window blind upgrade
- Bookcase ladder replacement
- Metal bar replacement to bookcases
- Commission first floor fire suppression system (if technology allows)
- Enhance the garden setting to improve dwell time and an opportunity to further engage the public

Longer Term Works

- Upgrade basement for use as storage or office space
- Install external lift to entrance off St Patrick's Close
- Install staircase and lift core to the end of the east range in location of former observatory tower
- Review use of ground floor rooms to adapt to changing needs of the staff or public engagement


OLD READING ROOM
SECOND GALLERY
CAGES
BINDERY
FIRST GALLERY
BOOK STORE X
BOOK STORE Y
WC
20C. SMOOTH CEMENT RENDER
(2024-25 Priority Works)
1702 ORIGINAL BRICKWORK
Phase 2
19/20C. RULED ASHLAR RENDER
Phase 3
1865 LIMESTONE ASHLAR RE-FACING
Phase 4
1865 BRICKWORK RE-FACING
Phase 5
Note: Should funding allow, some phases can be combined

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

PUBLICATIONS

Casey, C. (2005) *The Buildings of Ireland: Dublin*. Yale University Press

Craig, M. (1952) *Dublin 1660-1860*, Hodges Figgis, Dublin.

Craig, M. (1984) *Georgian Dublin- Twenty Five Colour Aquatints by James Malton*,The Dolmen Press, Dublin.

Cullen, F. (2015) *Dublin 1847: City of the Ordnance Survey*, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Dickson, D. (2014) *Dublin: the making of a capital city*, Profile, London

Foot, M. (2004) *The Decorated Bindings of Marsh's Library, Dublin,* Ashgate, Aldershot

Gibney, A. (2017) *The building site in eighteenth century Ireland*, Four Courts Press, Dublin.

Goodbody, R. (2014) *Dublin Pt. III, 1756 to 1847 (Irish Historic Town Atlas no. 26)*, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Guinness, D. (1979) *Georgian Dublin*, Batsford, London.

Harbison, P. ed. (1998) *Beranger's Antique Buildings of Ireland*, Four Courts Press, Dublin.

Historic England (2014) *Practical Building Conservation: Roofs*. Ashgate Publishing, London.

Historic England (2016) *Energy Efficiency & Historic Buildings* Ashgate Publishing, London.

McCullogh, N. (1989) *Dublin: An Urban History*, Anne Street Press, Dublin.

McCarthy,M. (2003) *Marsh's Library: All Graduates and Gentlemen*, Four Courts Press,Dublin.

McCarthy M. & Simmons, A. eds. (2009) *Marsh's Library- A Mirror on the World*, Four Courts Press, Dublin.

McCarthy M.& Simmons, A.eds. (2004) *The Making of Marsh's Library,* Four Courts Press,Dublin.

Mc Parland, E. (2001) *Public Architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* Yale University Press, London.

Rowan, A.M. *Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940*, Irish Architectural Archive

DATABASES & REPOSITORIES

National library of Ireland: The Lawrence photograph collection.

WEBSITES

http://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/
https://www.dia.ie/
https://www.iarc.ie/
https://www.marshlibrary.ie