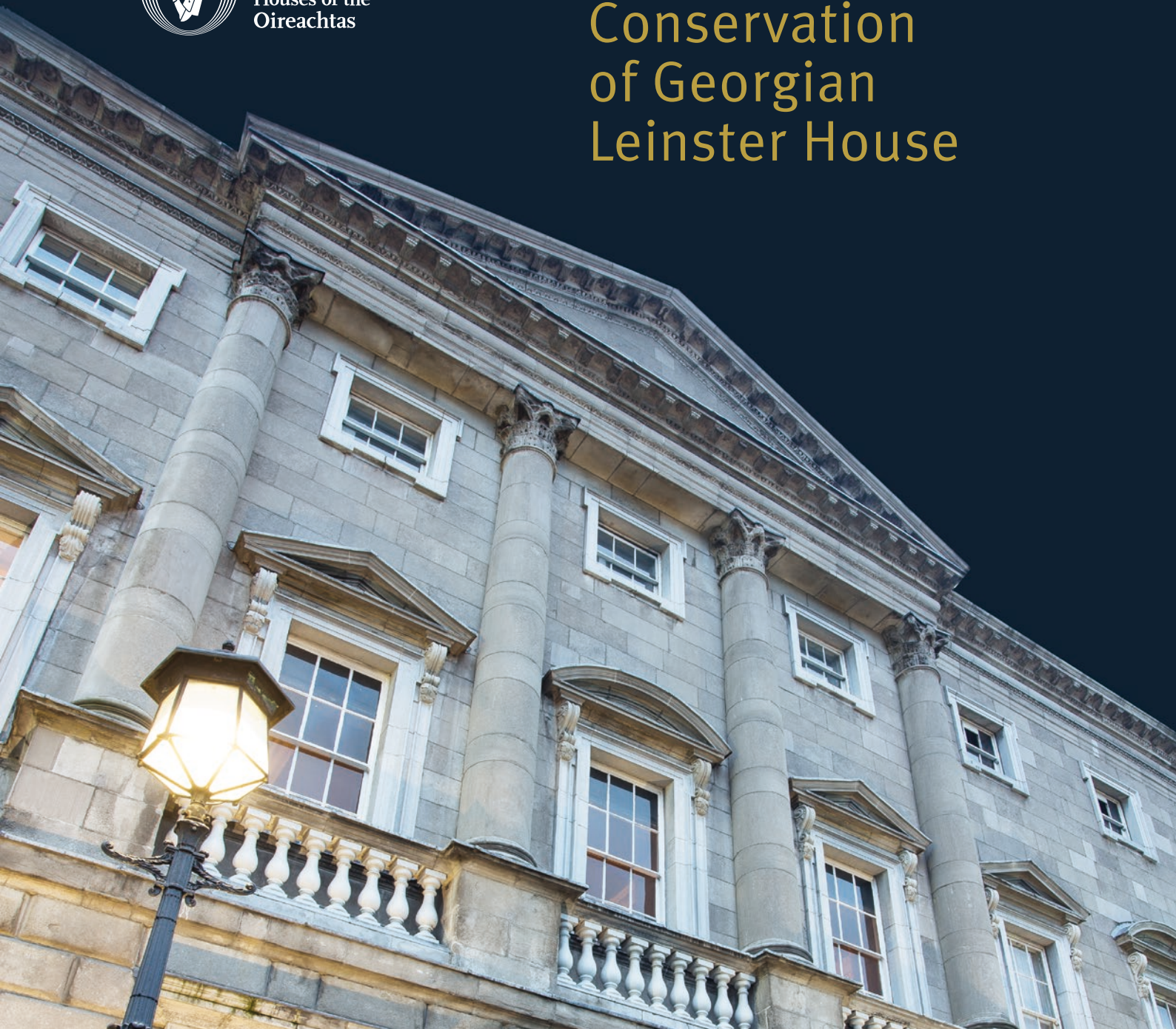




Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
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Restoration and Conservation of Georgian Leinster House



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Images courtesy of the Office of Public Works.



OPW

Oifig na
nOibreacht Poiblí
Office of Public Works

A brief history of Leinster House

Construction on Leinster House began in 1745. It was designed by Richard Cassels, also known as Richard Castle, as the town house of James FitzGerald, 20th Earl of Kildare and later 1st Duke of Leinster.

Over the years it has been extended and adapted to meet the needs of its various occupants; the FitzGeralds (1745-1815), the Royal Dublin Society (1815-1924) and the Houses of the Oireachtas since the early 1920s. It was bought by the State in 1924 and though the immediate environs of the house have changed significantly, the house itself remained relatively unaltered.

The house had been carefully maintained over the years but intensive use and a continuous upgrading of services over time, had an impact on the fabric of the building.

A 2008, Office of Public Works (OPW) report confirmed major structural instabilities and fire safety concerns. The need to address these concerns, was becoming more and more apparent in recent years. Floors had sagged due to overloading and important plasterwork ceilings in the 274-year-old house were at risk of damage.

Work on restoring and conserving Georgian Leinster House for future generations began in December 2017 and concluded in August 2019. The footprint of the original house was the focus of the restoration works which incorporated the Seanad Chamber, the Reading Room, the main lobby hall and corridor towards the Dáil Atrium, the Ceann Comhairle's Office, the Cathaoirleach's Office, the General Office and the Enquiries Office.

Every aspect of the house from the basement to the attic and roof has been carefully restored and conserved, breathing new life back into the building.

While it was known that extensive work was required on wooden doors and windows and on delicate plasterwork, hidden structural issues were revealed as the building was opened up. Significant cracking was found in internal brick walls over door heads; the cleaning of the outer stone revealed additional stone repairs were needed; behind the parapet of the outer roof, oak gutter supports had decayed, and the inner roof timbers needed extensive strengthening; significant chimney repair works were also required.

Getting started

Extensive scaffolding on each side of the building and over the roof was constructed to facilitate the work. A covered walkway was constructed between the entrance to LH 2000 – which houses Oireachtas Committee Rooms – and the temporary Enquiries

Office at Leinster House, to link areas of the campus during the works. To get additional value, this walkway was also used to display a temporary exhibition in 2019 marking 100 years of Dáil Éireann.



- 1 Scaffolding around the building and over roof, clearly visible as new cornice stone is craned into place. The scaffolding and over roof was designed to stand independently, without touching the walls, so it did not place any load or pressure on the structure of the house or adjacent vaulted basement areas.

Facts about the work

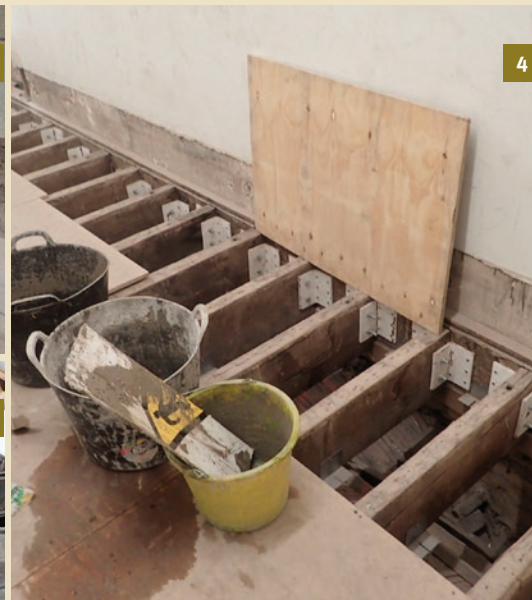
The richly detailed, Kildare Street facade of Leinster House was built using Ardbraccan limestone from a County Meath quarry, no longer in use. Instead, Ross limestone from a nearby quarry was used in the restoration works. A shelter coat has been used on the Kildare Street limestone facade to protect the stone, to slow down erosion and to tone down the colour of replacement stone used in earlier repair works.

The granite used on the Merrion Street side of Leinster House is from the Golden Hill quarry in the Wicklow Hills which was exhausted by 1850. A similar granite from Ballyknockan, Co Wicklow was used in repair work.

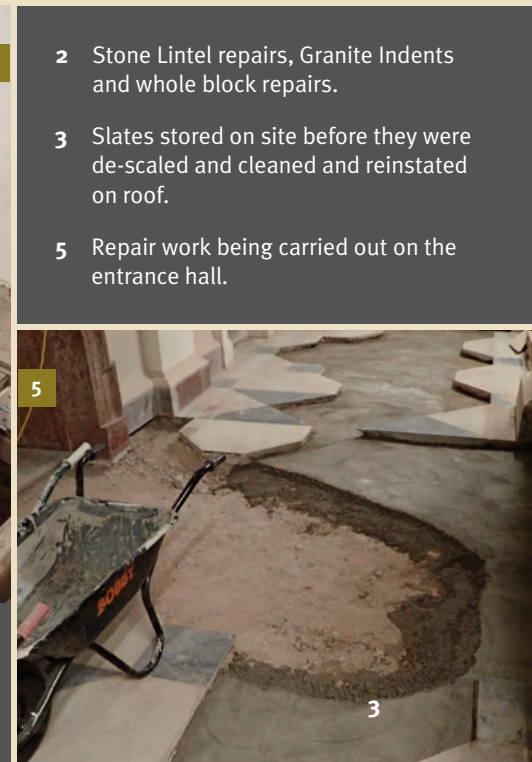
Every floor board in the 60-roomed-house was lifted to facilitate cleaning, the removal of redundant services, the repair and strengthening of the existing joists, retention works to the ceiling below, the installation of fireproofing between joists and laying of new service routes. All of the historic boards were numbered so that they could be re-laid in their original position.

All 80 window frames were repaired or replaced and draught proofed. The sliding sash windows were rehung and now open easily.

All 27 fireplaces were conserved and repaired, and all chimney flues inspected. The top of each fire place chamber has been fire-stopped and vented.



4 Floor strengthening works on the second-floor corridor, every joist has been mechanically fixed to the structural wall.

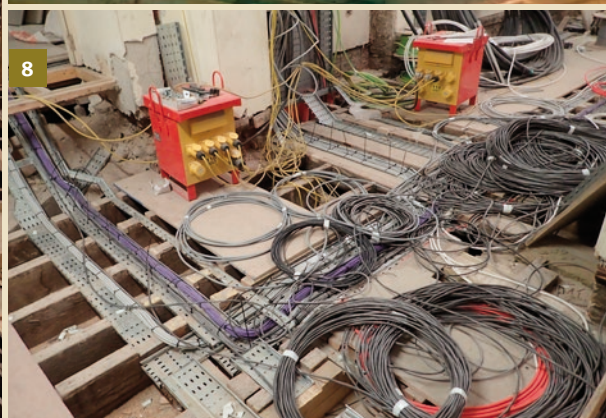


- 2 Stone Lintel repairs, Granite Indents and whole block repairs.
- 3 Slates stored on site before they were de-scaled and cleaned and reinstated on roof.
- 5 Repair work being carried out on the entrance hall.

6 Image of works to the inner roof.

7 Catch netting on ceiling of the ground floor Garden Hall, also known as the Blue Hall, Leinster House during the restoration works.

8 An example of electrical installation on second floor level.



All slates on the out-side roof were removed, numbered, cleaned and checked for soundness before being returned to the roof or replaced. Internal doors have been repaired and had fire resistance upgrades.

Internally, 32 services have been replaced including water, heating and ventilation services, all power and data cabling, lighting, emergency and security systems. A new lift has also been installed to assist visitors who have mobility issues.

Externally, all cornice stones have been replaced, a number of carved, stone window lintels have been replaced and stone repairs have been carried out on all four elevations of the house. On the roof, all lead work has been replaced and the asbestos tiles on the inner roof were replaced with salvaged slates.

Catch netting was placed under all of the lath and lime plaster ceilings, to catch any historical plaster work if

it was damaged while works were being carried out on the floors above. All of the ceilings remained intact throughout the project. Stainless steel ties were used to restrain any section of the plasterwork that had the potential to come loose or laminate.

Heavily painted, textured lining paper was removed from most of the walls. Some of this paper had traces of lead paint which required specialist removal. Removal of the lining paper confirmed areas of lime plaster in need of repair or replacement.

Cleaning of the stone floor in the arcade of the entrance hall, revealed some sections of the floor had been replaced, during previous works, with coloured and lined concrete to imitate Portland stone.

This concrete has been removed and replaced with new Portland stone to compliment the repaired, historic Portland stone in the entrance hall.

The Hidden Issues

As work progressed, serious unforeseen structural issues were uncovered, for example, significant cracking was uncovered above the door into Seanad office on the first floor. (The oak timber supports, of the concealed gutters in the outer roof – which had once been infested by death-watch beetles – had rotted completely.)

Cleaning of the outer building revealed stone in some areas was more eroded than had been anticipated. Two stone chimney stacks were so structurally unsound that they had to be completely rebuilt.

There were some welcome discoveries too. For example, intricate hand carved details on windows and doors was uncovered after decades of paint was removed.



- 9 Limestone chimney found in extremely poor condition on south east stack with hole making it structurally unstable.
- 10 Shattered and snapped bricks were removed and stainless-steel bars grouted into the walls to tie them together. New brickwork was inserted before the wall was lime plastered again.

11 Significant cracking uncovered above door from the Cathaoirleach office to the Office of the Clerk of the Seanad. The crack ran from the basement to the roof.

12 Significant additional strengthening was required to the narrower roof timbers at the centre and flat roof.

13 A carved frieze and cornice over a Seanad office door with acorns and individual leaf stems clear to see. When first decorated it was painted green and richly gilded.

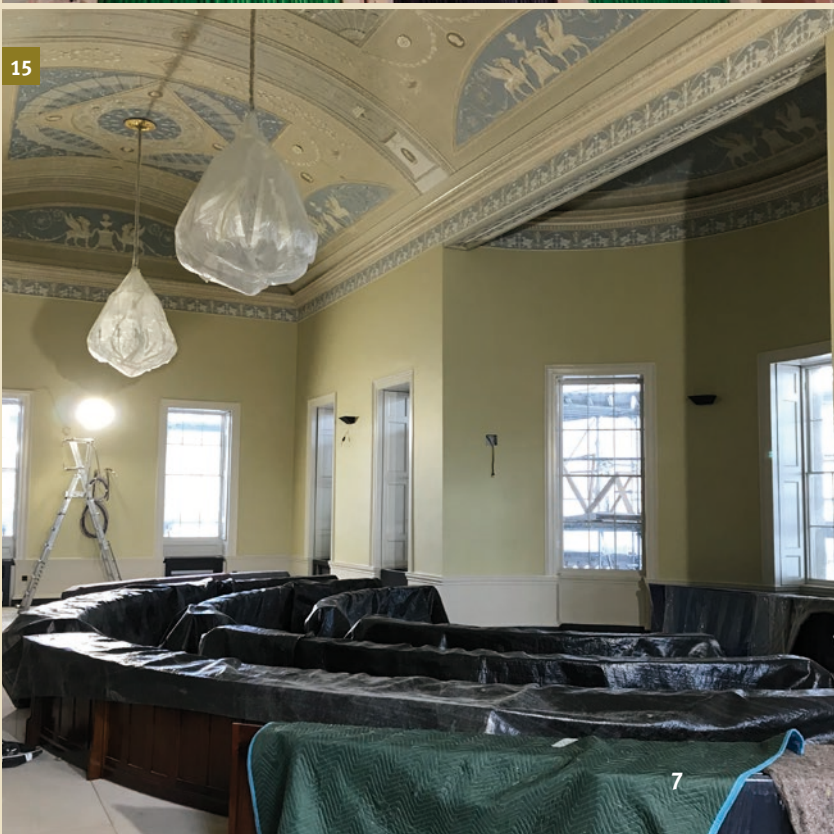
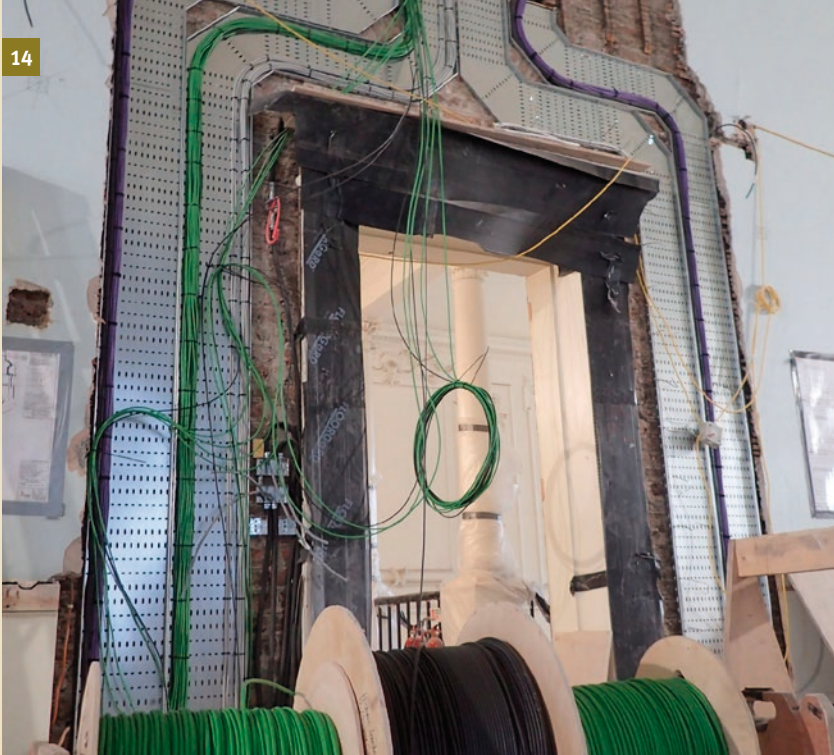


The Seanad Chamber in Focus

The Seanad Chamber was temporarily relocated to the Ceramics Room of the adjoining National Museum of Ireland during the works.

Fireproofing the floor of the Seanad presented significant challenges. Major structural work was carried out in the room in 1989 including the restoration of the ceiling and insertion of steel beams between joists and steel plates to strengthen the floor. All of the gaps between these different structural elements had to be filled with fireproofing material without disturbing the ceiling of the historical Library Reading Room below.

- 14** Cables for the Seanad delegate system and the broadcast cameras. The opening in the wall was created in 1815 when the Royal Dublin Society used the Seanad as their library.
- 15** OPW Furniture Division carried out repair and restoration of the original Seanad Chamber furniture. It also adapted the furniture to incorporate the new delegate system and power and USB points for members.



16 Work on the Seanad Chamber nearing completion, with chandeliers, complete with LED lights, back in place and secondary glazing for sound installation in windows.

17 Installation of cable trays commenced in the Seanad on completion of fireproofing works on the floor.



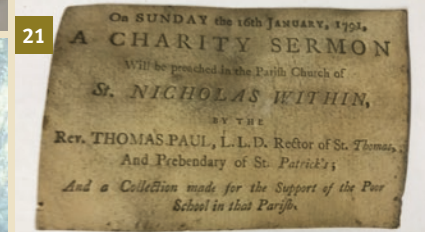
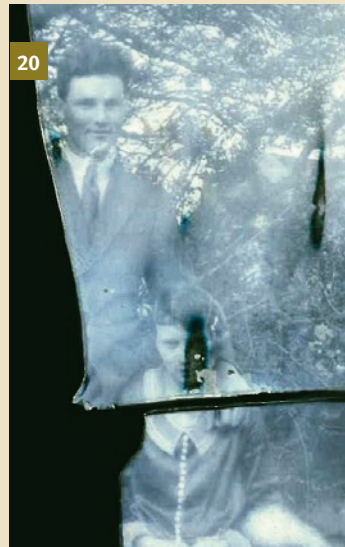
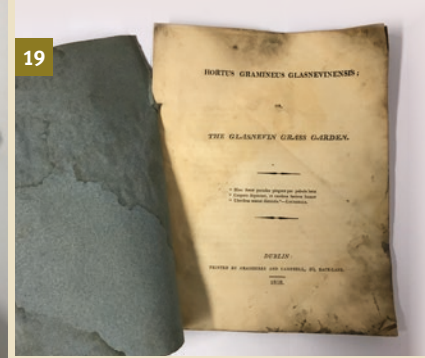
The Discoveries

A number of historical artefacts were discovered by builders during the work:

- 18** Wooden children's toys from the 19th century including a whistle, solid ball, a toy soldier and a spinning top.
- 19** A pamphlet, entitled "The Glasnevin Grass Garden" dated 1818.
- 20** A glass photographic negative of an unknown couple in 1920's dress.
- 21** A credit-card size notice of a charity sermon, dated January 1791.
- 22** A pair of leather shoes.
- 23** Boxes of shells, between floorboards joists, used as soundproofing material.
- 24** Wall paper fragments were also discovered on the second floor.

Shells were found lodged between joists on the second floor, possibly as an early form of noise or heat insulation.

With this extensive restoration work carefully managed by the Office of Public Works and the Houses of the Oireachtas, Georgian Leinster House has been preserved for future generations of Members as the home of Parliamentary democracy and for our many thousands of welcome visitors each year.









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Athchóiriú agus Caomhnú Theach Laighean Seoirseach



Clár

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- 5-6** Constaicí faoi Cheilt
- 7-8** Ag díriú ar Sheomra an tSeanaid
- 9** An Méid a Fuarthas



Stair Theach Laighean go hachomair

Cuireadh tús le foirgniú Theach Laighean sa bhliain 1745. Ba é Richard Cassels, nó Richard Castle mar a tugadh air freisin, a rinne Teach Laighean a dhearadh mar theach cathrach Shéamuis Mhic Gearailt, an 20ú Iarla Chill Dara agus an 1ú Diúc ar Chúige Laighean ina dhiaidh sin.

Cuireadh síntí leis an teach le himeacht na mblianta agus cuireadh in oiriúint é do riachtanais a áititheoirí éagsúla, lena n-áirítear muintir Mhic Gearailt (1745-1815), Cumann Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath (1815-1924) agus Tithe an Oireachtais ó na 1920idí i leith. Cheannaigh an Stát é sa bhliain 1924 agus cé go bhfuil athrú suntasach tagtha ar na ceantair díreach máguaird, níor tháinig mórán athruithe ar an teach féin.

Rinneadh cothabháil chúramach ar an teach le himeacht na mblianta ach d'fhág an dianúsáid agus an t-uasghrádú leanúnach a rinneadh ar na seirbhísí a lorg ar chreatlach an fhoirgnimh le himeacht aimsire.

I dtuarascáil a d'eisigh Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí (OOP) sa bhliain 2008, dearbhaíodh go raibh móréagobhsaíocht struchtúrtha ann chomh maith le hábhar imní maidir le sábháilteacht dóiteáin. Ba léir le blianta beaga anuas go gcaithfí aghaidh a thabhairt ar an ábhar imní sin ar bhonn níos práinní. Bhí na hurláir ag tabhairt uathu faoin ualach iomarcach agus bhí baol ann go ndéanfaí damáiste do na síléálacha tábhachtacha pláistéireachta i dteach a bhí 274 bliana ar an bhfód.

Tosaíodh ar an obair chun Teach Laighean Seoirseach a athchóiriú agus a chaomhnú do na glúnta atá le teacht mí na Nollag 2017 agus críochnaíodh í i mí Lúnasa 2019. Dhírigh an obair athchóirithe ar lorg an tí bunaidh lenar áiríodh Seomra an tSeanaid, an Seomra Léitheoireachta, an príomh-halla agus an dorchla i dtreo Aitriam na Dála, Oifig an Cheann Comhairle, Oifig an Chathaoirligh, an Oifig Ghinearálta agus Oifig an bhFiosrúcháin.

Tá athchóiriú agus caomhnú cúramach déanta ar gach gné den teach ón íoslach suas go dtí an t-áiléar, rud a chuir beocht as an nua san fhoirgneamh.

Cé gur tuigeadh go gcaithfí obair mhór a dhéanamh ar na doirse agus na fuinneoga adhmaid agus ar an bpláistéireacht fhíneálta, tháinig cúraimí foirgníochta folaithe chun solais de réir mar a nochtadh an foirgneamh. Aimsíodh scoilteadh suntasach os cionn doirse i mballaí bríce inmheánacha; nuair a glanadh an chloch sheachtrach ba léir go raibh gá le deisiúcháin bhreise a dhéanamh uirthi; taobh thiar d'uchtbhalla an dín sheachtraigh, bhí tacaí darach na ngáitéar tar éis lobhadh, agus ba ghá daingniú forleathan a dhéanamh ar adhmaid inmheánach an dín; bhí gá le hoibreacha deisiúcháin suntasacha ar na simléir freisin.

Ag tosú ar an obair

Ardaíodh go leor scaflála ar gach taobh den fhoirgneamh agus os cionn an dín chun an obair a éascú. Tógadh cosán clúdaithe idir an bealach isteach go dtí TL 2000 – mar a bhfuil Seomraí Coiste an Oireachtais – agus an áit inar lonnóidh Oifig na bhFiosrúcháin go sealadach i dTeach Laighean,

chun go nascaí limistéir dhifriúla den champas le linn na n-oibreacha. Chun tuilleadh tairbhe a bhaint as an gcosán, cuireadh taispeántas sealadach ar siúl ann sa bhliain 2019 chun comóradh a dhéanamh ar 100 bliain de Dháil Éireann.



- 1 Scafall thart timpeall ar an bhfoirgneamh agus os cionn an dín, atá le feiceáil go soiléir agus cloch choirnise nua á cur isteach le crann tógála. Dearadh an scafall os cionn an dín le go seasfadh sé go neamhspleách, gan teagmháil leis na ballaí, ionas nach gcuirfeadh sé aon ualach ná brú ar struchtúr an tí ná ar limistéir bhogtacha an íoslaigh atá buailte leis.

Fíricí maidir leis an obair

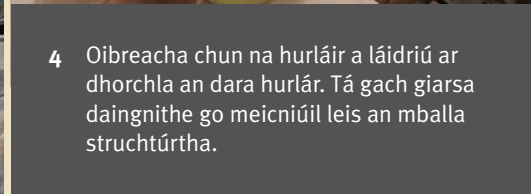
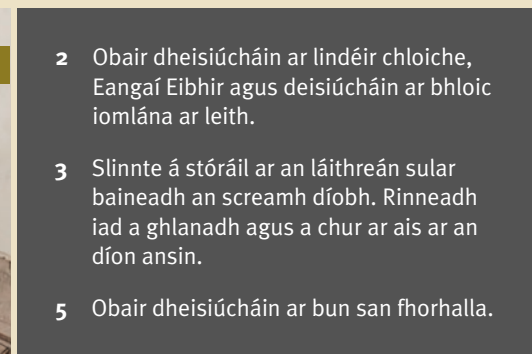
Tógadh aghaidh mhionsonraithe Theach Laighean ar Shraid Chill Dara le haolchloch Ard Breacáin as cairéal i gContae na Mí nach bhfuil in úsáid a thuilleadh. Ina háit, úsáideadh aolchloch an Rois as cairéal in aice láithreach sna hoibreacha caomhnaithe. Cuireadh brat foscaidh ar aghaidh aolchloiche Shráid Chill Dara chun an chloch a chosaint, chun moill a bhaint as an gcreimeadh agus chun dath na cloiche a úsáideadh in ionad na cloiche bunaidh in oibreacha deisiúcháin ní ba luaithe a mhaolú.

Baineadh an t-eibhear a úsáideadh ar thaobh Shráid Mhuirfean de Theach Laighean as cairéal na Gualann i sléibhte Chill Mhantáin, a raibh na hacmhainní go léir ann ídithe faoin mbliain 1850. Úsáideadh eibhear dá shamhail as Buaile an Chnocáin, Co. Chill Mhantáin san obair dheisiúcháin.

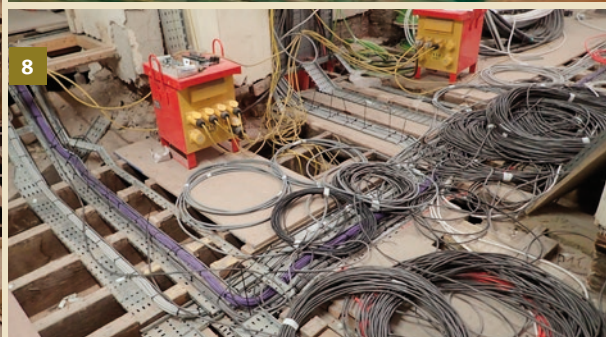
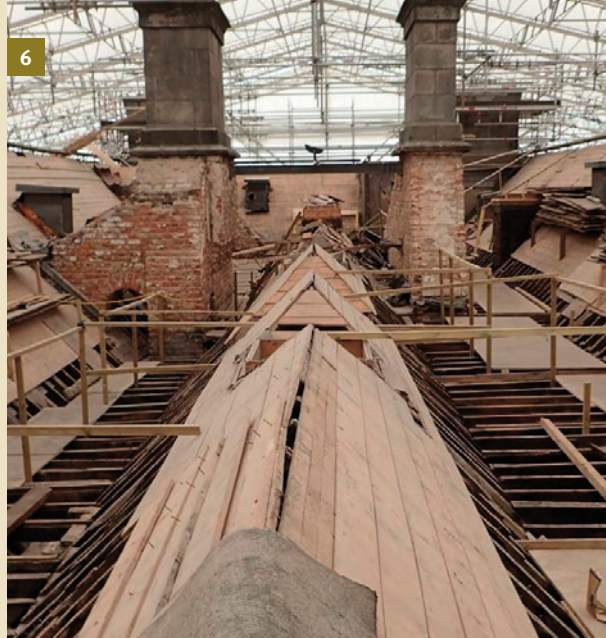
Ardaíodh gach clár urláir sa teach 6o seomra le go bhféadfaí obair ghlantacháin a dhéanamh, seirbhísí nach bhfuil feidhm leo níos mó a bhaint amach, na giarsaí a bhí ann cheana a dheisiú agus a láidriú, oibreacha coinneála a dhéanamh ar an tsíleáil faoina mbun, ábhar dódhíonta a chur isteach idir na giarsaí, agus bealaí nua seirbhíse a leagan. Rinneadh na cláir urláir stairiúla go léir a uimhriú le gurbh fhéidir iad a athleagan ina n-áit bhunaidh.

Deisíodh an 8o fráma fuinneoige nó cuireadh cinn nua ina n-áit agus rinneadh iad a dhíonadh ar shéideáin. Athchrochadh na fuinneoga saise sleamhnáin agus is feidir iad a oscailt go héasca anois.

Caomhnaíodh agus deisíodh na 27 dtinteán go léir, agus rinneadh na múcháin uile a scrúdú. Cuireadh



- 6 Radharc ar oibreacha ar an díon inmheánach.
- 7 Eangach chosanta ar shíleáil Halla an Ghairdín ar urlár na talún, Teach Laighean, a dtugtar an Halla Gorm air chomh maith, le linn na n-oibreacha caomhnaithe.
- 8 Sampla de shuiteáil leictreachais ar leibhéal an dara hurlár.



bac dóiteáin ar bharr gach seoimrín tinteáin agus cuireadh gaothairí iontu freisin.

Baineadh na slinnnte go léir den díon seachtrach, rinneadh iad a uimhriú agus a ghlanadh agus cinntíodh go raibh siad slán sular cuireadh ar ais ar an díon iad nó sular cuireadh cinn nua ina n-áit. Deisíodh na doirse inmheánacha agus rinneadh dódhíonta iad.

Ar an taobh istigh, tá 32 sheirbhís nua curtha in áit na seirbhísí a bhí ann cheana lena n-áirítear seirbhísí uisce, teasa agus aerála, an cháblaíocht chumhachta agus sonraí uile, agus córais soilsithe, éigeandála agus slándála. Cuireadh ardaitheoir nua isteach freisin chun cuidiú le cuairteoirí a bhfuil deacrachtaí siúil acu.

Taobh amuigh, cuireadh clocha coirnise nua in áit na gceann go léir a bhí ann cheana, cuireadh roinnt lindéar fuinneoige cloiche snoite nua in áit na gceann a bhí ann agus rinneadh obair dheisiúcháin ar an gcloch ar cheithre aghaidh an tí. Ar an díon, cuireadh luaidhe nua in áit na luaidhe ar fad a bhí ann agus cuireadh slinnnte tarrtháilte in áit na dtíleanna aispeiste ar an díon inmheánach.

Cuireadh eangach chosanta faoi gach síleáil lata agus plástair aoil, chun aon obair phlástair stairiúil a cheapadh dá ndéanfaí dochar di fad a bhí oibreacha ar siúl ar na hurláir os a cionn. Coinníodh gach síleáil slán i rith an tionscadail. Úsáideadh ceangail chruaiche dosmálta chun srian a chur le haon chuid den obair phlástair a d'fhéadfadh lannú nó éirí scaoilte.

Baineadh páipéar líneála uigeach, a bhí péinteáilte go trom, d'fhormhór na mballaí. Bhí rianta de phéint luaidhe ar chuid den pháipéar seo agus bhí gá le speisialtóirí chun é a bhaint. Nuair a baineadh an páipéar líneála bhíothas ábalta a dheimhniú cé na háiteanna ina raibh gá anplástar aoil a dheisiú nó plástar aoil nua a chur ina ionad.

Nuair a bhíothas ag glanadh an urláir cloiche i stuara an fhorhalla, tháinig sé chun solais gur cuireadh coincreit dhaite, líneáilte isteach san urlár anseo is ansiúd le linn oibreacha roimhe seo, ag féachaint le cuma chloch Portland a chur uirthi.

Baineadh amach an choincréit seo agus cuireadh cloch Portland nua ina háit a oireann don chloch Portland dheisithe stairiúil san fhorhalla.

Constaicí faoi Cheilt

Dé réir mar a bhí an obair ag dul chun cinn, nochtadh constaicí tromchúiseacha struchtúracha nach raibh súil leo, mar shampla, nochtadh scoilteadh suntasach os cionn dhoras oifig an tSeanaid ar an gcéad urlár. (Bhí tacaí adhmaid darach na ngáitéar ceilte sa díon amuigh – a bhí foirgte le cioróga oíche, tráth – tar éis lobhadh go hiomlán.)

Nuair a bhíodhas ag glanadh an fhoirgnimh amuigh nochtadh gur creimeadh an chloch in áiteanna éagsúla ní ba mhó ná mar a bhíodhas ag súil leis. Bhí dhá stoc simléir nach raibh slán go struchtúrach a ndóthain agus ba ghá iad a atógáil ó bhun.

Thángthas ar rudaí ní ba dheise chomh maith. Nuair a baineadh péint na mblianta, mar shampla, nochtadh mionghnéithe mionsonraithe a snoíodh de láimh ar fhuinneoga agus doirse.

9 Fuarthas go raibh an-drochbhail ar an stoc den simléar aolchloiche seo a bhfuil a aghaidh soir ó dheas. Bhí poll ann, rud a d'fhág míshocair go struchtúrach é.

10 Baineadh amach brící a bhí briste agus caite agus grútáladh barraí cruach dosmálta isteach sna ballaí le hiad a cheangal le chéile. Ionsádh brícobair nua sular cuireadh plástar aoil ar an mballa arís.



11 Scoilteadh suntasach a nochtadh os cionn an dorais ó oifig an Chathaoirligh go hOifig Chléireach an tSeanaid. Shín an scoilt ón íoslach go dtí an dón.

12 Bhí gá le láidriú breise suntasach a dhéanamh ar an adhmaid dín sin a bhí níos caoile, sa dón cothrom, i lár baill.

13 Fríos agus coirnis shnoite os cionn dhoras oifig an tSeanaid le dearcáin agus gais duillí ar leith le feiceáil go soiléir. Péinteáladh uaine agus óraíodh go galánta é nuair a maisíodh ar dtús é.

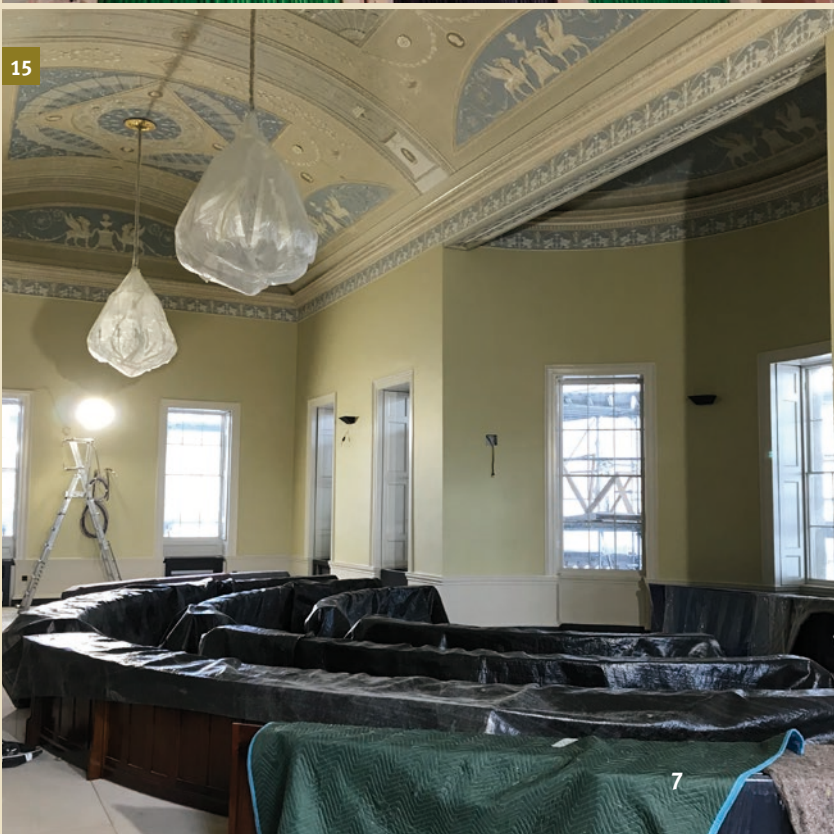
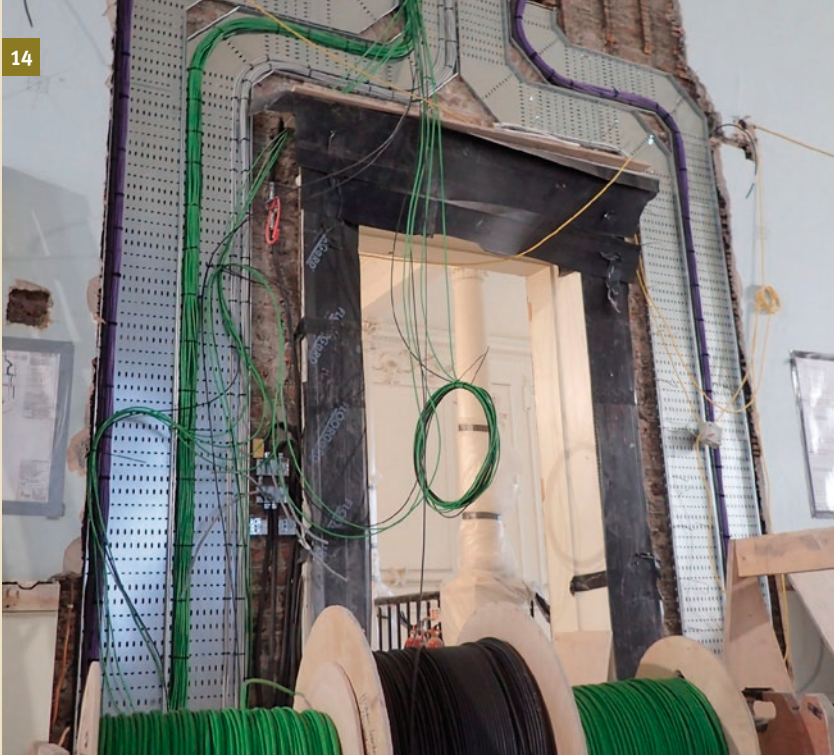


Ag díriú ar Sheomra an tSeanaid

Aistríodh Seomra an tSeanaid go sealadach go Seomra na Criadóireachta in Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann atá taobh leis an bhfoirgneamh i rith na n-oibreacha.

Tháinig dúshláin shuntasacha chun cinn nuair a bhíodas ag dódhíonadh urlár an tSeanaid. Rinneadh mórobair struchtúrach ar an seomra sa bhliain 1989, lenar áiríodh caomhnú na síleála agus bíomáí cruach a ionsá idir na giarsaí agus plátaí cruach chun an t-urlár a láidirú. Ba ghá na bearnaí go léir idir na heilimintí struchtúrtha éagsúla seo a líonadh le hábhar dódhíonach gan cur isteach ar shíleáil an tseomra stairiúil thíos fúthu, Seomra Léitheoireachta na Leabharlainne.

- 14 Cáblaí le haghaidh chóras toscaire an tSeanaid agus na gceamaraí craolacháin. Cruthaíodh an oscailt sa bhalla sa bhliain 1815 nuair a d'úsáid Cumann Ríoga Bhaile Átha Cliath an Seanad mar leabharlann.
- 15 Rinne Rannán an Troscáin in OOP troscán bunaidh Sheomra an tSeanaid a dheisiú agus a athchóiriú. Chomh maith leis sin chuir an Brainse an troscán in oiriúint don chóras toscaire nua agus chun pointí cumhachta agus USB le haghaidh na gcomhaltaí a chuimsiú.



16 Obair ar Sheomra an tSeanaid ag druidim chun críche, agus crainn solais, a bhfuil soilse LED iontu, ar ais ina n-ionad féin, chomh maith le gloiniú tánaisteach sna fuinneoga le haghaidh fuaiminslithe.

17 Tosaíodh ar thráidirí cábla a shuiteáil sa Seanad nuair a críochnaíodh na hoibreacha dódhíonta ar an urlár.



An Méid a Fuarthas

D'aimsigh tógálaithe líon déantán stairiúil le linn na hoibre:

- 18 Bréagáin adhmaid páistí ón 19ú haois lena n-áirítear feadóg, liathróid sholadach, saighdiúir bréagáin, agus caiseal.
- 19 Paimfléad dar teideal “The Glasnevin Grass Garden” dar dháta 1818.
- 20 Claonchló grianghrafach gloine de lánúin anaithnid in éadaí na 1920idí.
- 21 Fógra, atá ar mhéid cárta creidmheasa, do sheanmóir charthanachta, dar dháta Eanáir 1791.
- 22 Péire bróg leathair.
- 23 Boscaí sceall, idir giarsaí na gclár urláir, a úsáideadh mar ábhar fuaimdhíonta.
- 24 Aimsíodh blúiríní de pháipéar balla ar an dara hurlár chomh maith.

Fuarthas scealla i bhfostú idir giarsaí ar an dara hurlár; mar insliú ar thorann nó ar théas, seans.

De thoradh na móroibre caomhnaithe seo, a rinne Oifig na nOibreacha Poiblí agus Tithe an Oireachtais a bhainistiú go cúramach, rinneadh Teach Laighean Seoirseach a bhuanchoimeád le haghaidh na nglúnta Comhaltaí atá romhainn mar chroílár an daonlathais Pharlaimintigh agus le haghaidh na mílte cuairteoirí a gcuirimid fáilte rompu gach bliain.

