



Portrait of T. J. Byrne by Sean Dixon, 1938

TJ BYRNE

(1876 – 1939)

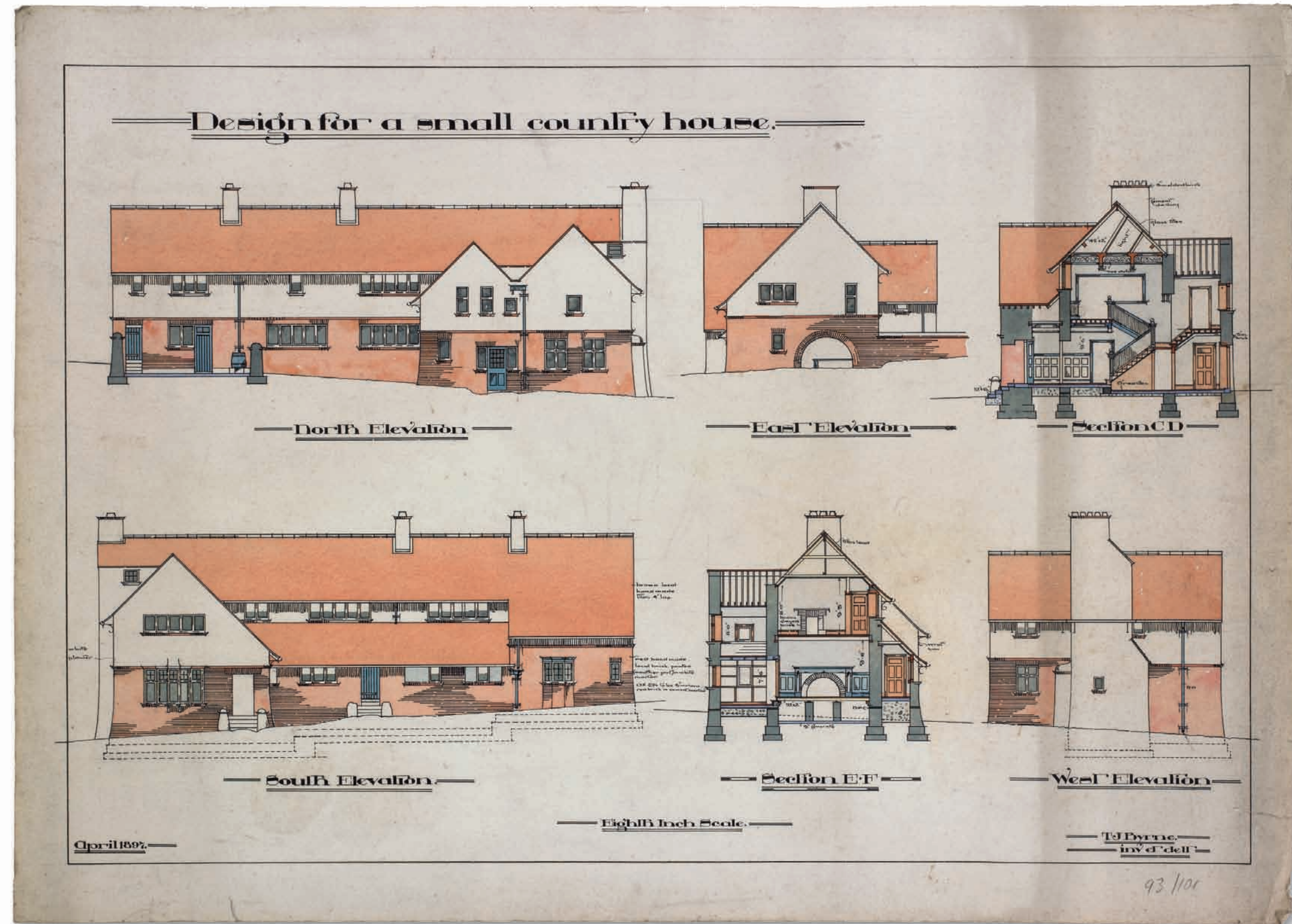
Thomas Joseph Byrne FRIAI ARIBA

T. J. Byrne (1876 – 1939) played a significant part in the building of modern Ireland. As Clerk and Architect to the South Dublin District Rural Council his powers of persuasion and his innovative ideas led to considerable advances in the standard of local authority housing and schemes he was responsible for still stand out today one hundred years later. As Principal Architect of the Office of Public Works, he was responsible for the re-building of the major buildings of central Dublin which had been destroyed between 1916 and 1922, Ireland's first radio transmission building in Athlone and had considerable influence in the development of Ireland's first airport at Collinstown. Perhaps his most recognisable works are the Carnegie Libraries at Clondalkin and Whitechurch, fine but modest public buildings in the Arts and Crafts tradition.

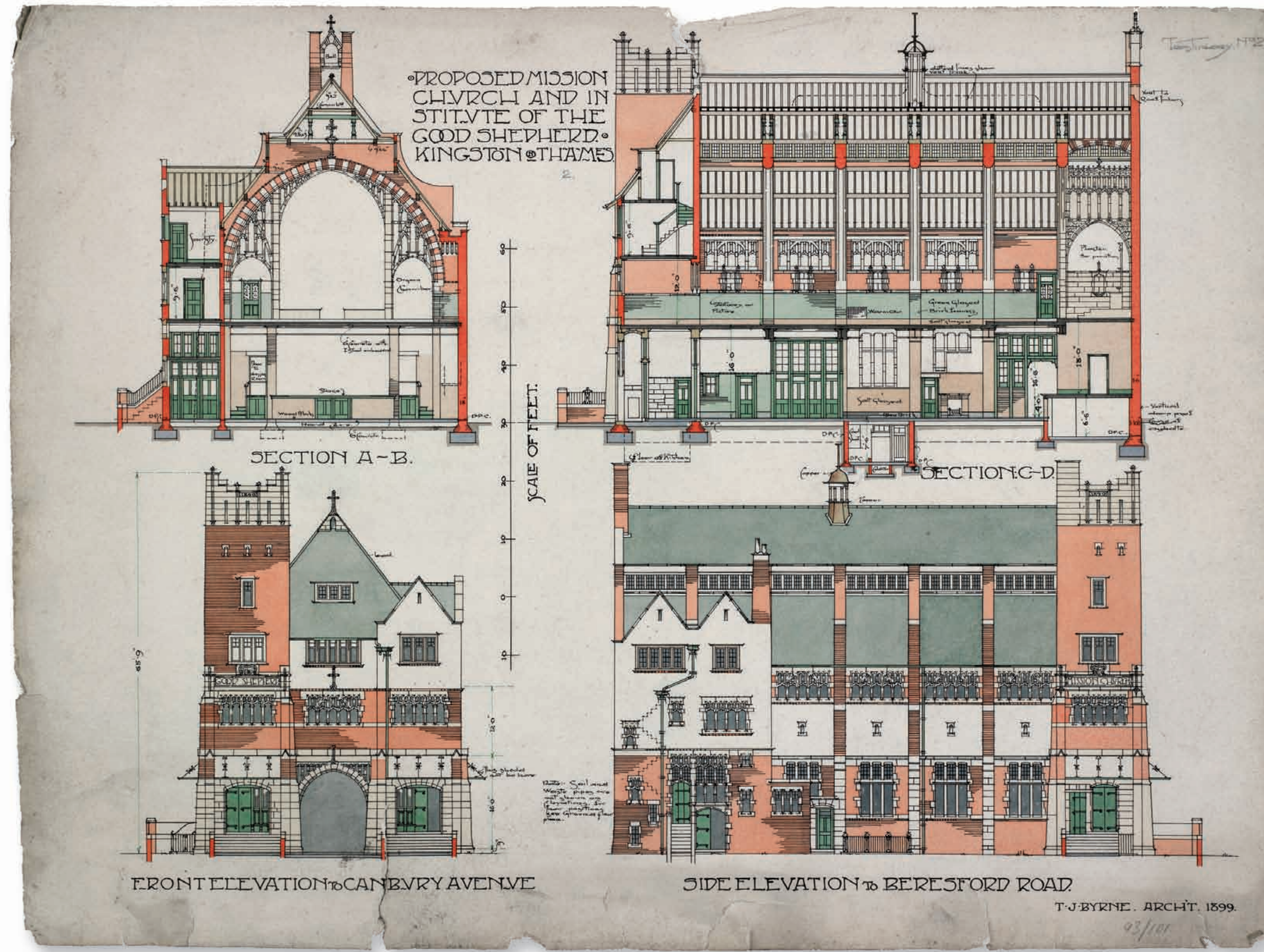




T. J. Byrne and the Scott Family c1898



Student work – A Small Country House 1898



Student work – A Mission Church 1899



May Scott as a young woman



Anthony Scott's Drogheda Office

Family and Early Career

Thomas Joseph Byrne was born in Kingston upon Thames on 15th November 1876 to an English mother, Harriet (nee Knight) and an Irish father, Richard Byrne of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who had been born in Bagnelstown, County Carlow. At the age of fifteen he began his training for architecture, articulated to Edward Carter ARIBA of London, where he worked for four years. He then came to Ireland to work in Drogheda in the office of Anthony Scott, whose daughter, May, he subsequently married in 1901. In 1898, at the age of twenty two, he went back to England to work with London County Council as an assistant architect. While there he completed his studies with the Royal Institute of British Architects. In the group photograph to the left, taken about 1898, T. J. Byrne is the man with the top hat.

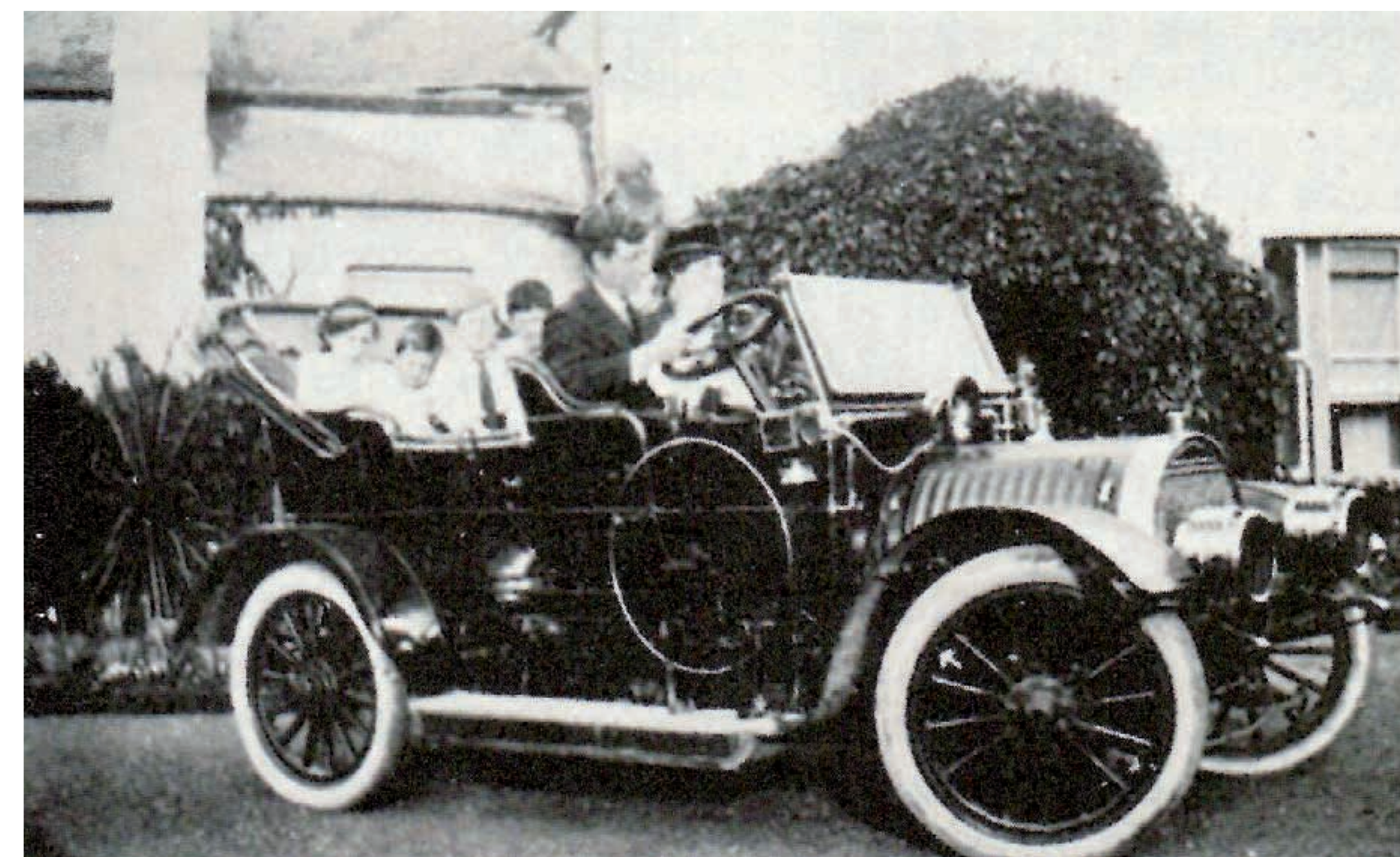
TJ BYRNE
(1876 – 1939)



T. J. Byrne as a young man



Student work - Madelaine, Paris, Detail



T. J. Byrne and Family, Ballyboden c1917



The Byrne and Williams Family c1935

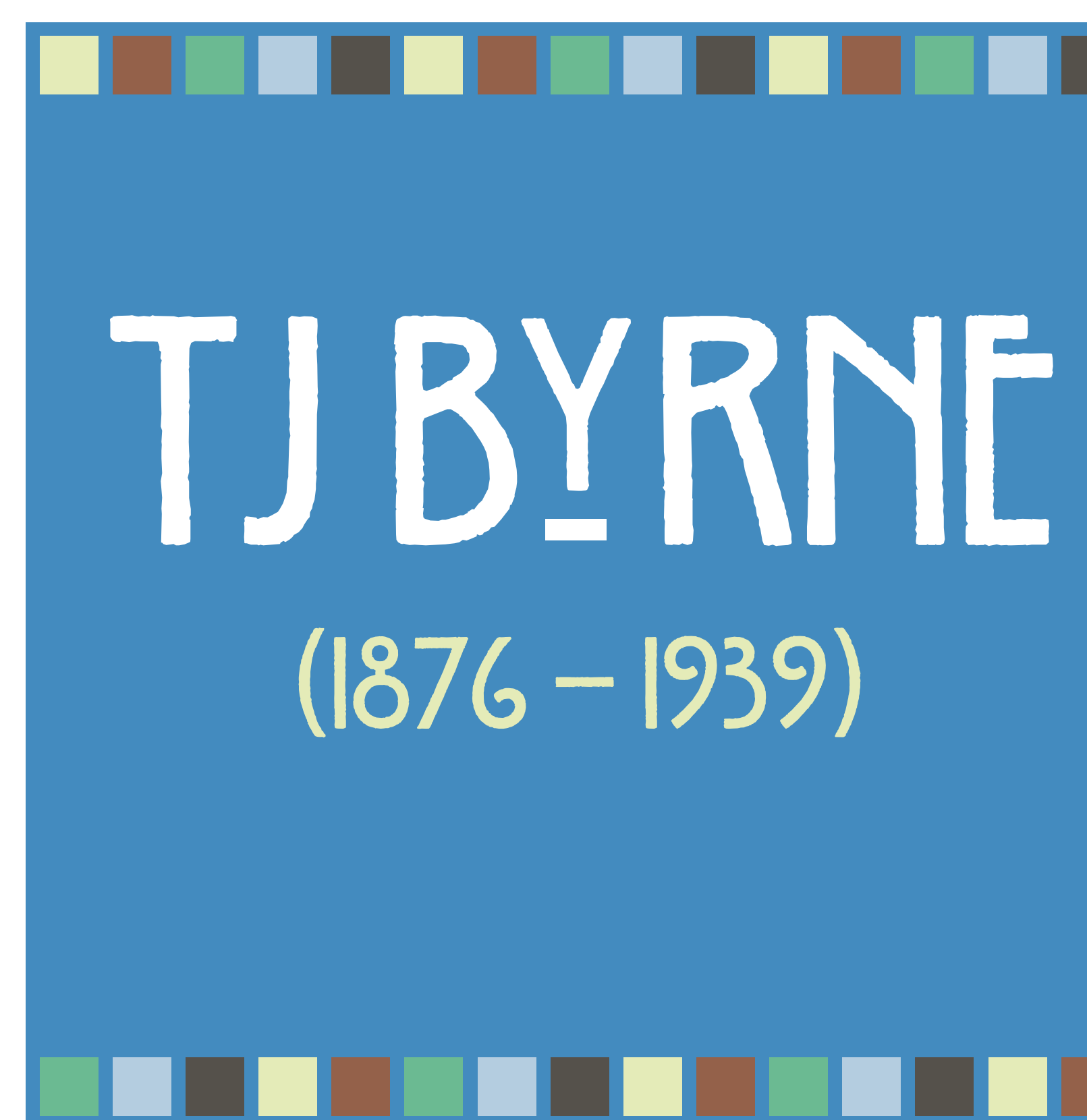
Family and Early Career

T. J. Byrne moved with his wife and family into Kingston Lodge, close to the Whitechurch Carnegie Library, before 1911. His daughter, Ethna, wrote of life at the Lodge during that period in her memoir, *Ethna Mary Twice*, published in 1989. In the group photograph taken about 1935 the following family members are included:

Back row: Ethna Byrne Costigan (daughter of T. J.), Doreen Byrne (daughter-in-law of T. J.), Niall and Brendan Byrne (sons of T. J.), Gerard Scott Williams.

Middle row: May Byrne (nee Scott, wife of T. J.), T. J. Byrne, Isabel Williams (nee Scott, sister of May), Arthur Williams.

Front row: Joan Byrne (daughter of T. J.), Norman Williams, John Byrne (grandson of T. J.).





Chapelizod Housing in 1916



Corner of Whitechurch Road in 1915



Whitechurch Road in 1915



Chapelizod Housing in 2011



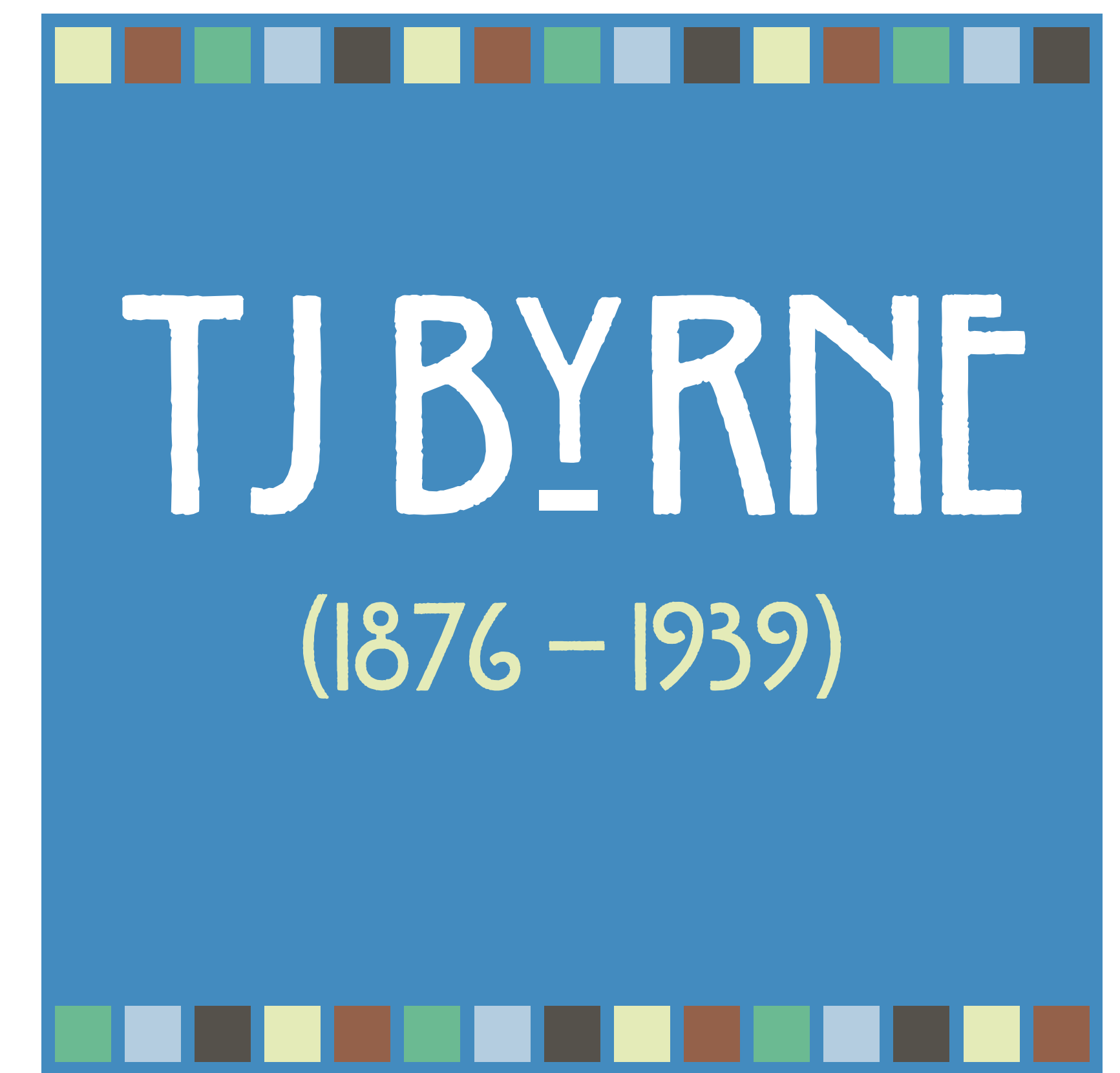
Corner Whitechurch Road in 2011

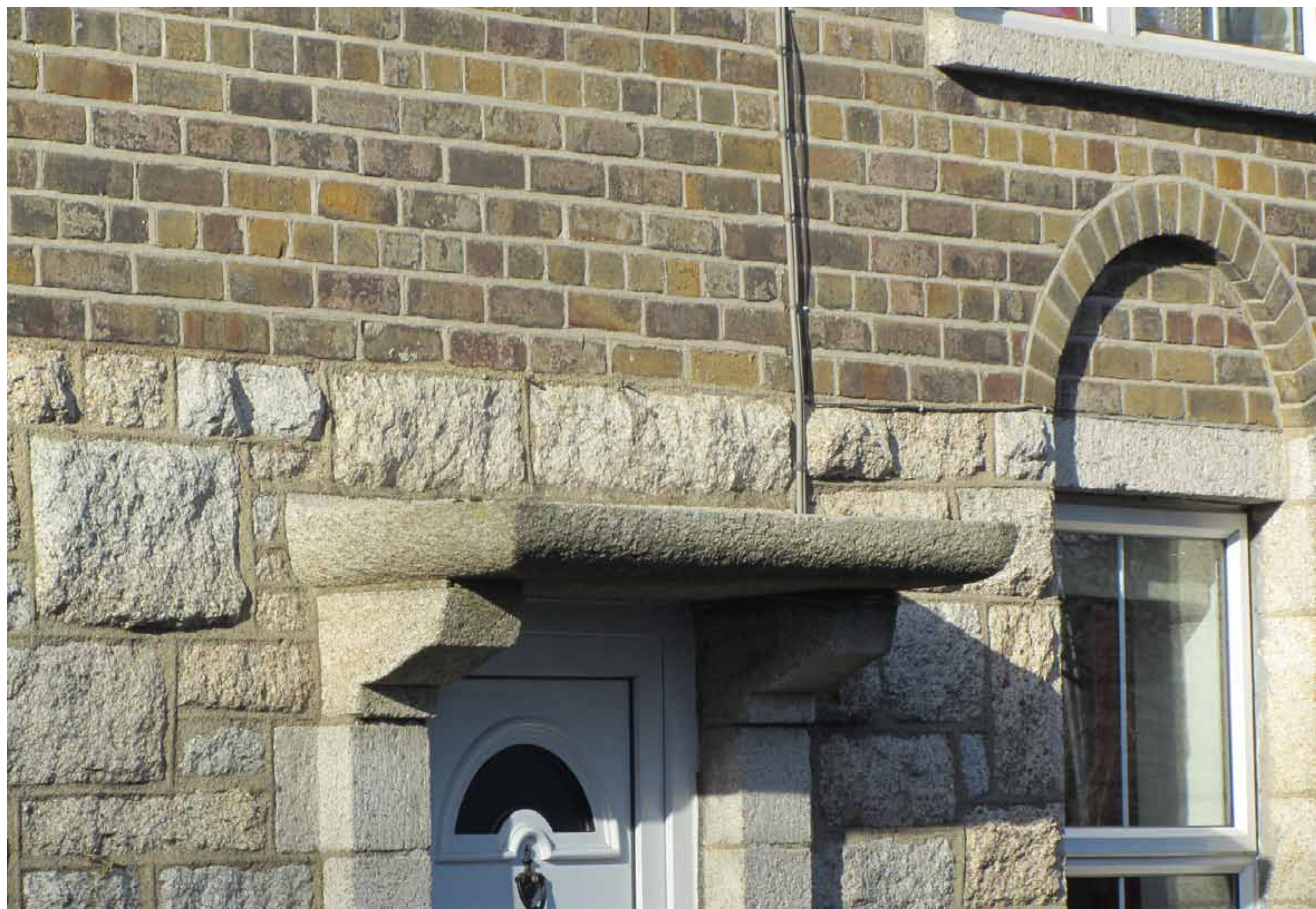


Whitechurch Road in 2011

South Dublin Rural District Council

T. J. Byrne returned to Dublin in 1901 to marry May Scott and take up a post as Architect and Clerk with the South Dublin Rural District Council. His experience dealing with housing in London inspired his advocacy for improved public housing in the Dublin county area, involving in particular concern for orientation and improved accommodation. He was responsible for many fine housing schemes, and particularly good examples of his work can be found in Rathfarnham, Tallaght, Chapelizod and Mount Brown. During this time he also designed the Carnegie Libraries at Clondalkin and Whitechurch and was elected in 1915 a Member of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland. In the same year Byrne was brought in by Dublin Corporation to design what was a radically innovative housing scheme at Mount Brown, in which the architect's layout and handling of the spaces between the houses, together with the application of an Arts and Crafts style resulted in an exceptionally fine neighbourhood, still much sought-after today. In 1917 he was elected a Member of the Institute of Civil Engineers of Ireland, evidence of the broad reach of the career path he had chosen.





Whitechurch Road Detail



St Patrick's Cottages, Rathfarnham



Cottages at Templeogue



A Detached Two Storey 1915



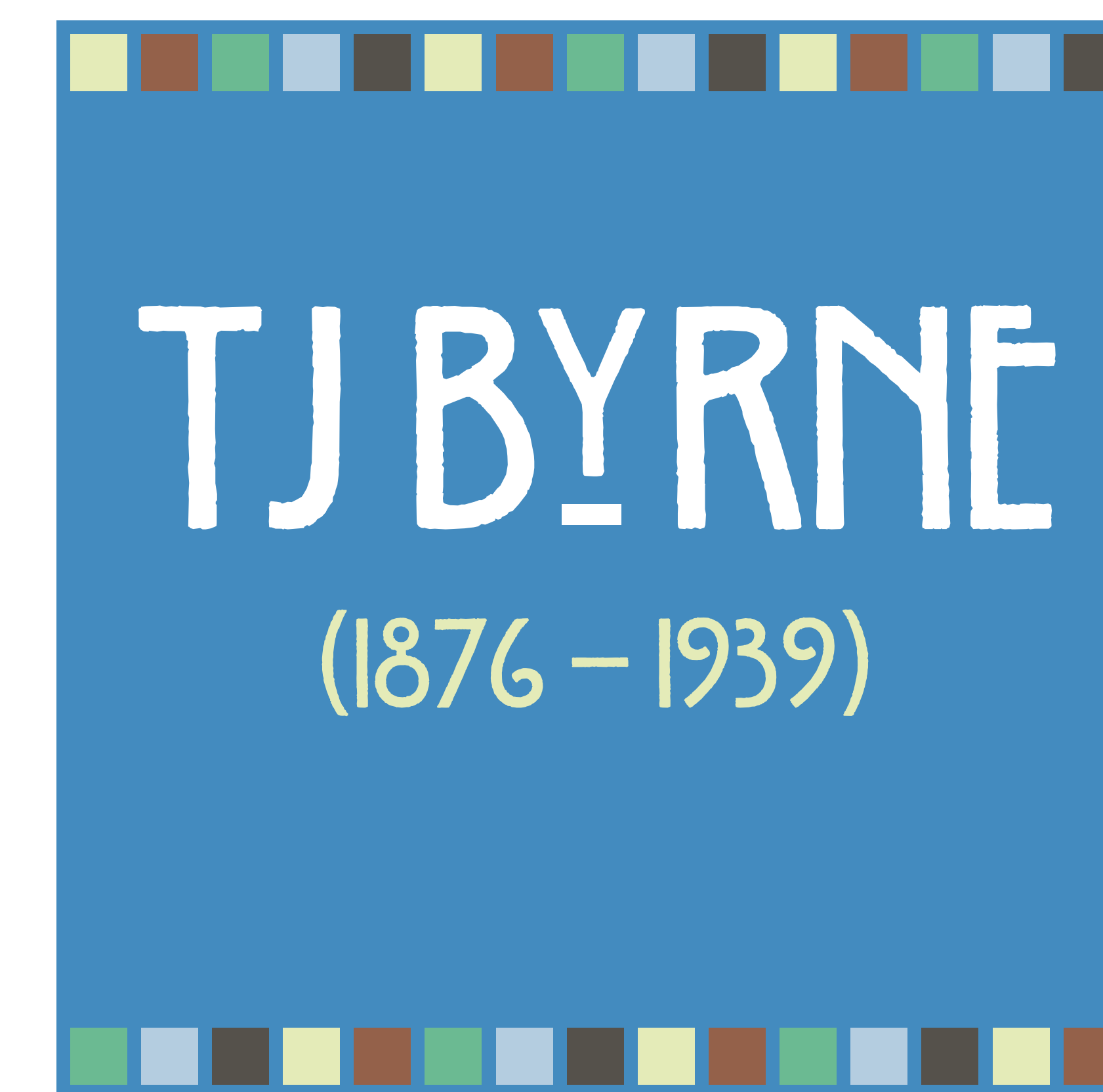
Whitechurch Road Detail



A house at St Patrick's Cottages Rathfarnham with original gate manufactured by Tonge

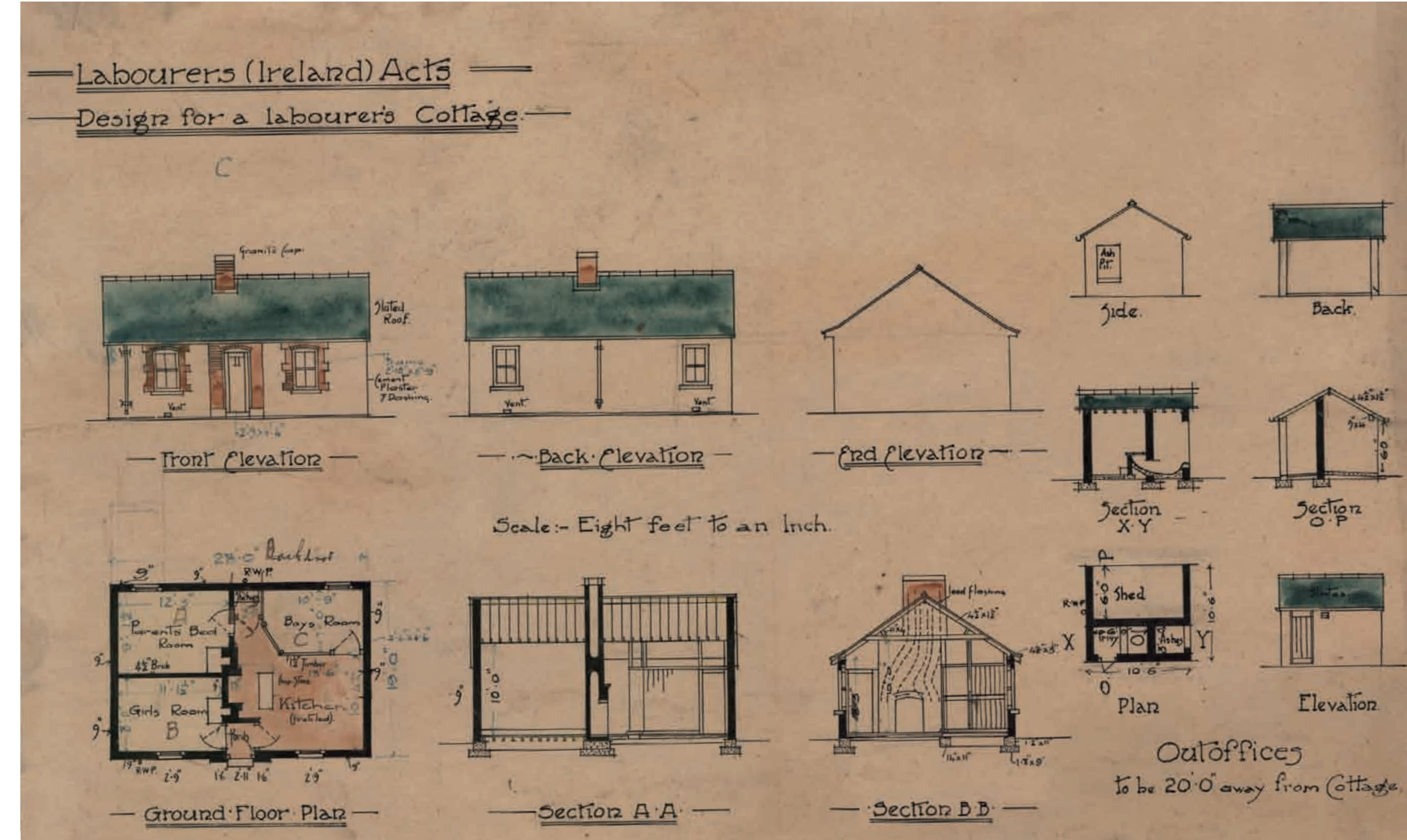


Riverside Cottages, Templeogue

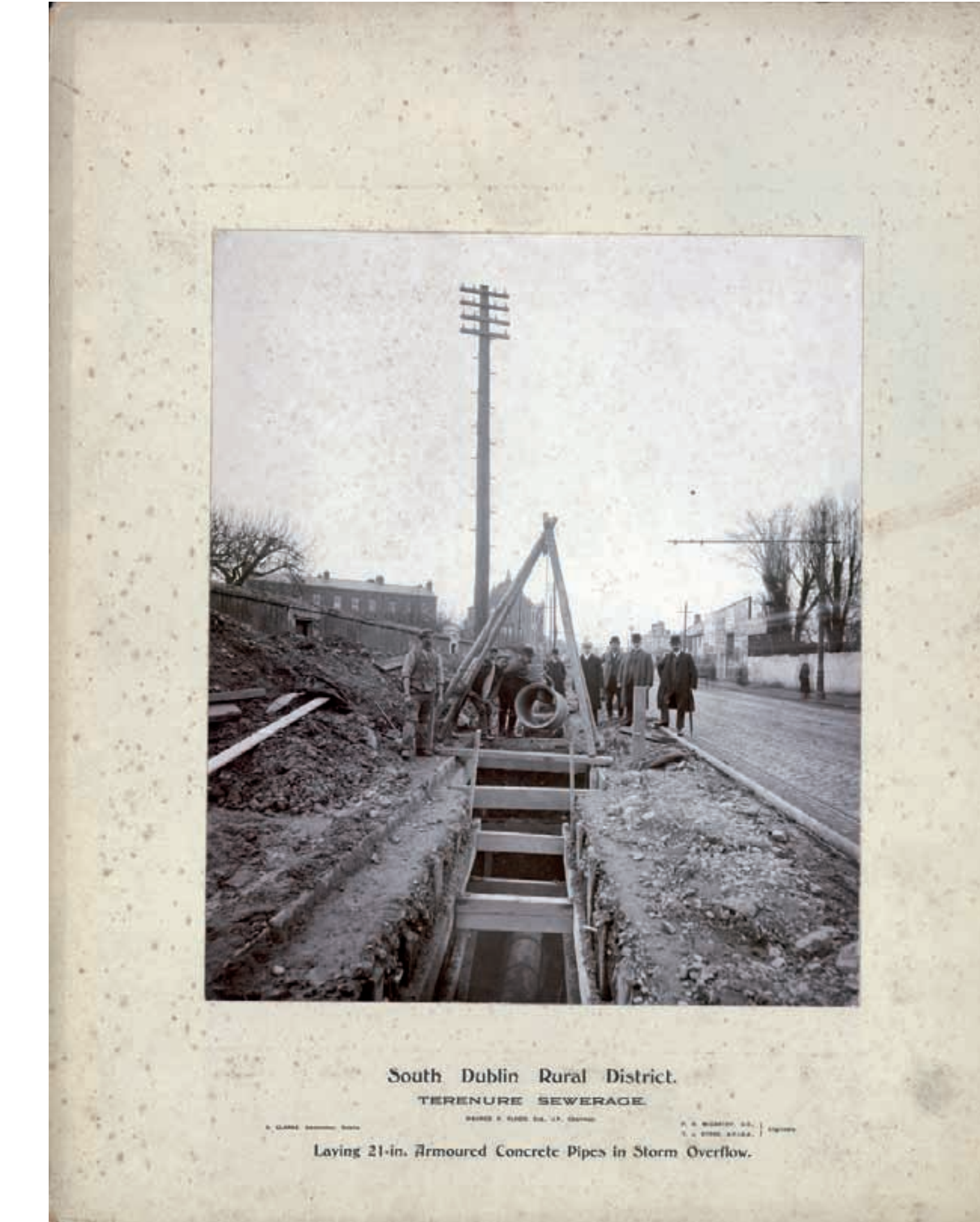




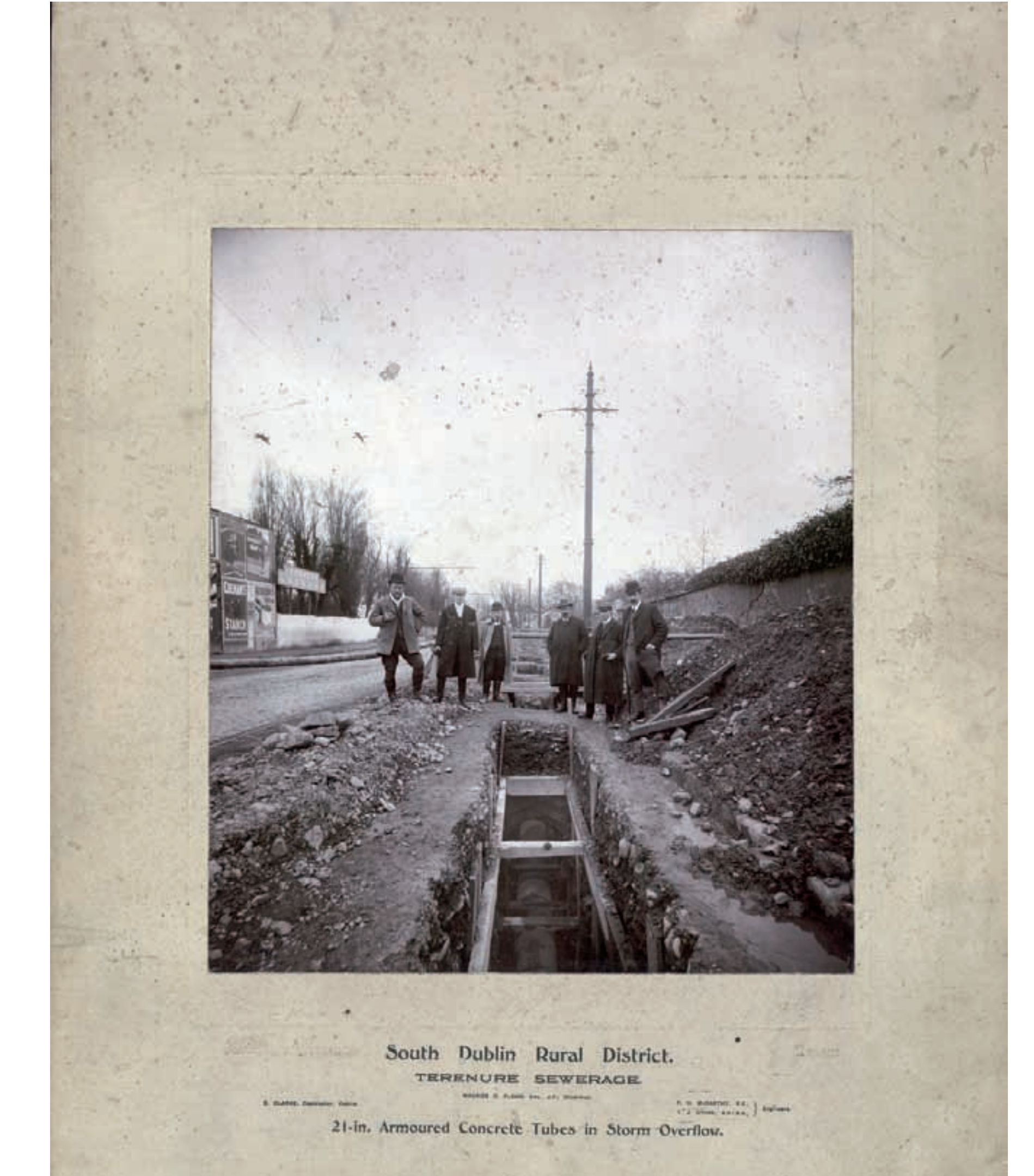
Chapelized Houses built 1913



Design for Labourer's cottage



Terenure mains sewage installation, 1906



Terenure mains sewage installation, 1906



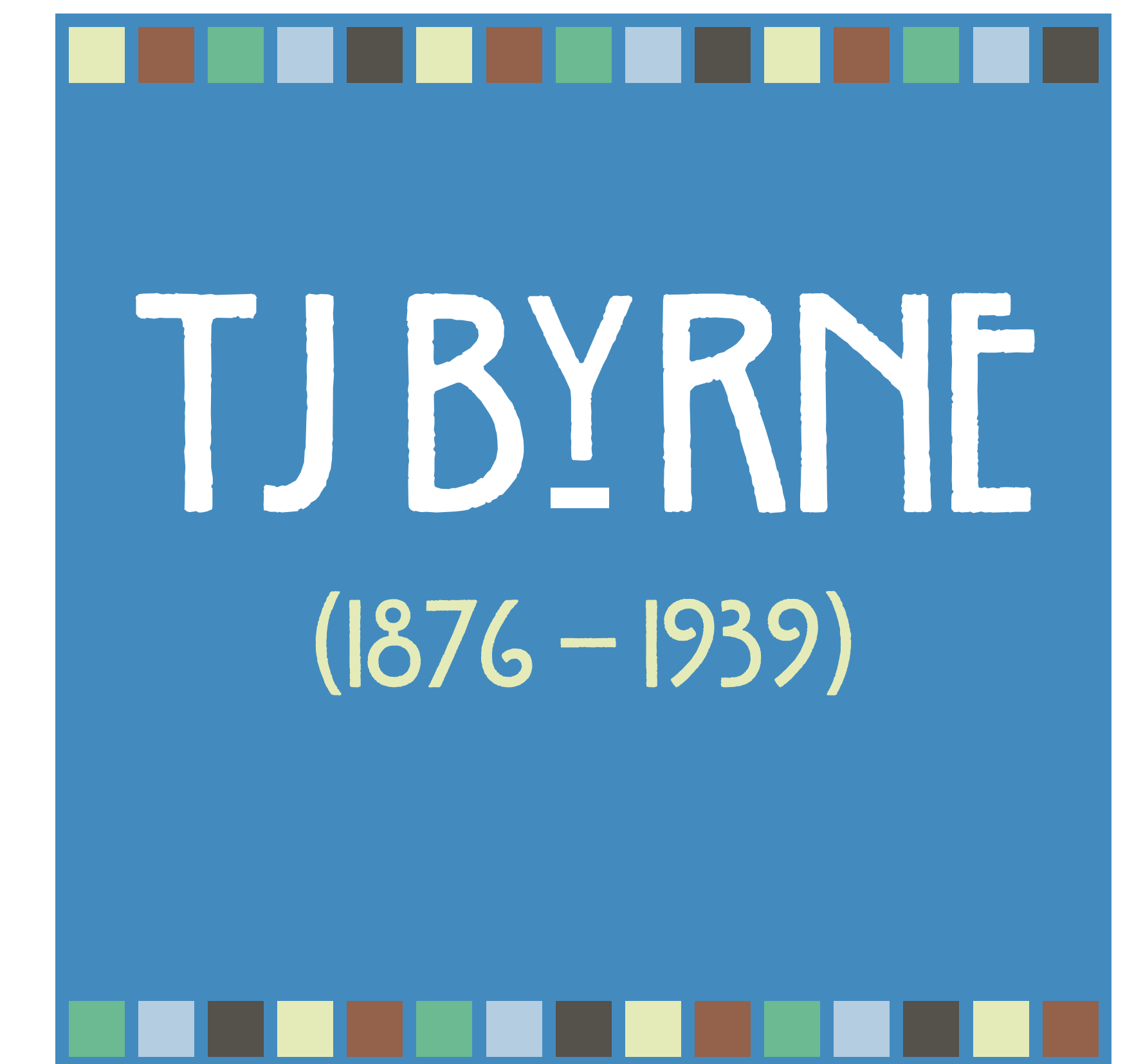
Chapelized House built 1916

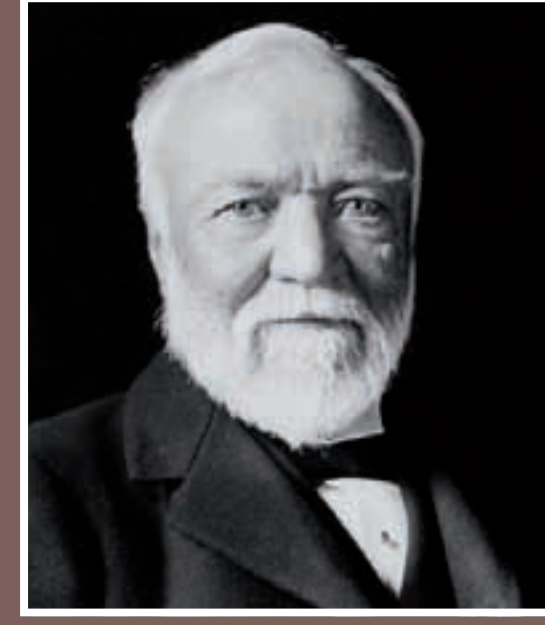


Chapelized House built 1916



Main Street, Tallaght





Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie (1835 – 1919) was born in Scotland and moved with his parents to the United States as a child. From modest beginnings as a factory worker, he went on to work for a telegraph company and a railway company, during which time he educated himself and learned about management and through wise investment gradually accumulated capital. His eventually amassed a great fortune in the railroads and the oil and steel industries and is thought to have been the second richest man in history, after John D Rockefeller. From the late 19th century he began to devote himself to a wide range of philanthropic projects. He established the world-famous Carnegie Hall in New York in 1891, and funded over 7,000 church organs, but his main contributions were towards charities that related to social and educational advancement. By the time of his death, Andrew Carnegie had provided over 350 million dollars, which would translate to nearly four billion euros in today's money, to deserving projects, world wide.



Swords Carnegie Library by A. Scott



Skerries Carnegie Library by A. Scott



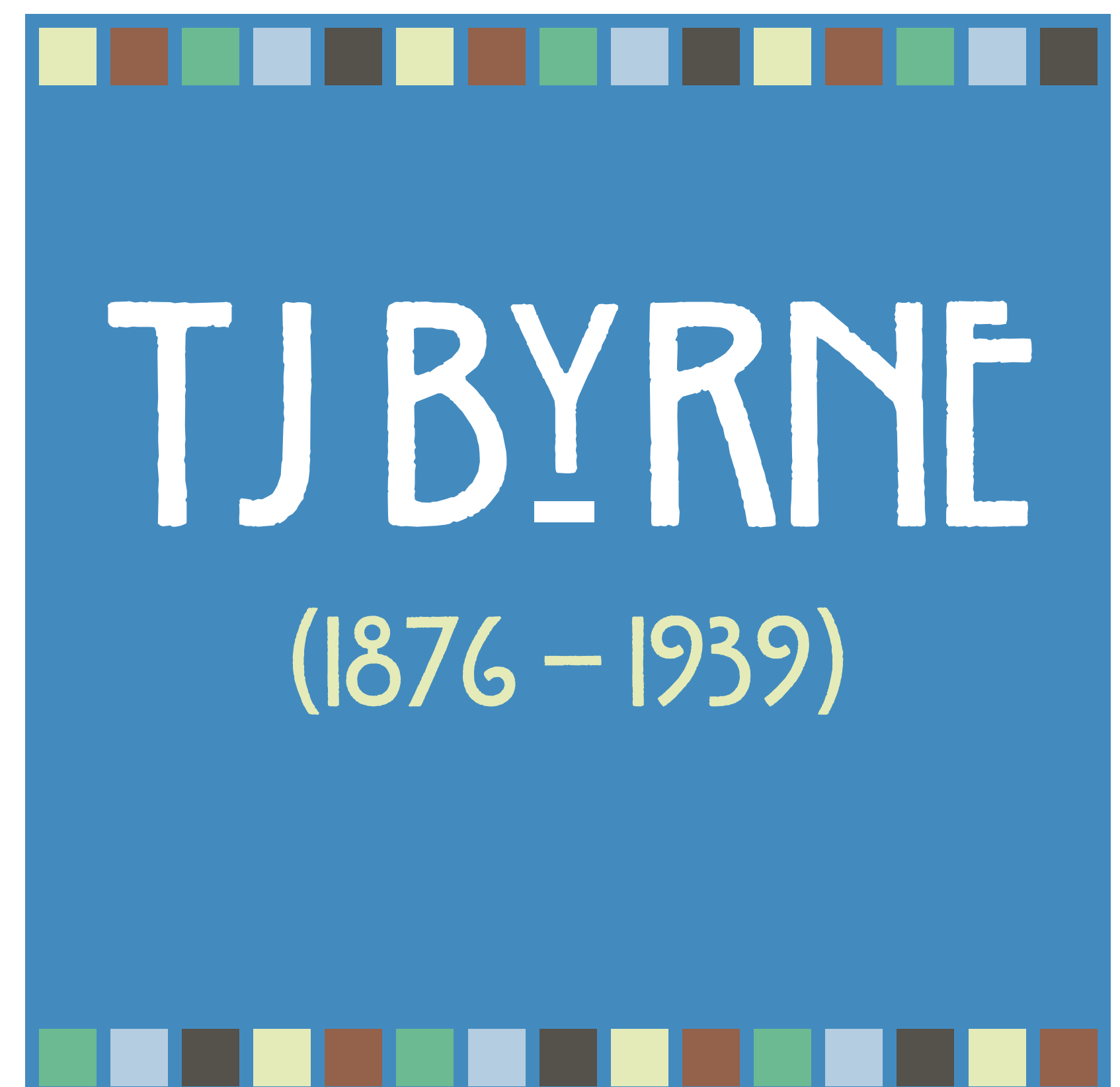
Malahide Library by A. Scott



Carnegie Roofscape

Carnegie Libraries in Ireland

As a self-educated man, books were an important part of Andrew Carnegie's life, and one of his major charitable projects was the establishment of Carnegie Libraries throughout the English-speaking world. These libraries, of which over 2,500 were built, were to provide ordinary working people with the opportunity to access books. Grants were made available to communities that could demonstrate their need of a library, could provide a building site, and could provide for the running costs for the library, which should be free for all. Ireland benefited greatly from the Carnegie Library Trust, and about eighty libraries were built here with the assistance of the trust. Carnegie himself laid the foundation stone for the Carnegie Library in Waterford. There are still sixty-two of these libraries in Ireland, including those at Whitechurch and Clondalkin, designed by T. J. Byrne, and Swords, Skerries and Malahide, designed by his father-in-law, Anthony Scott.





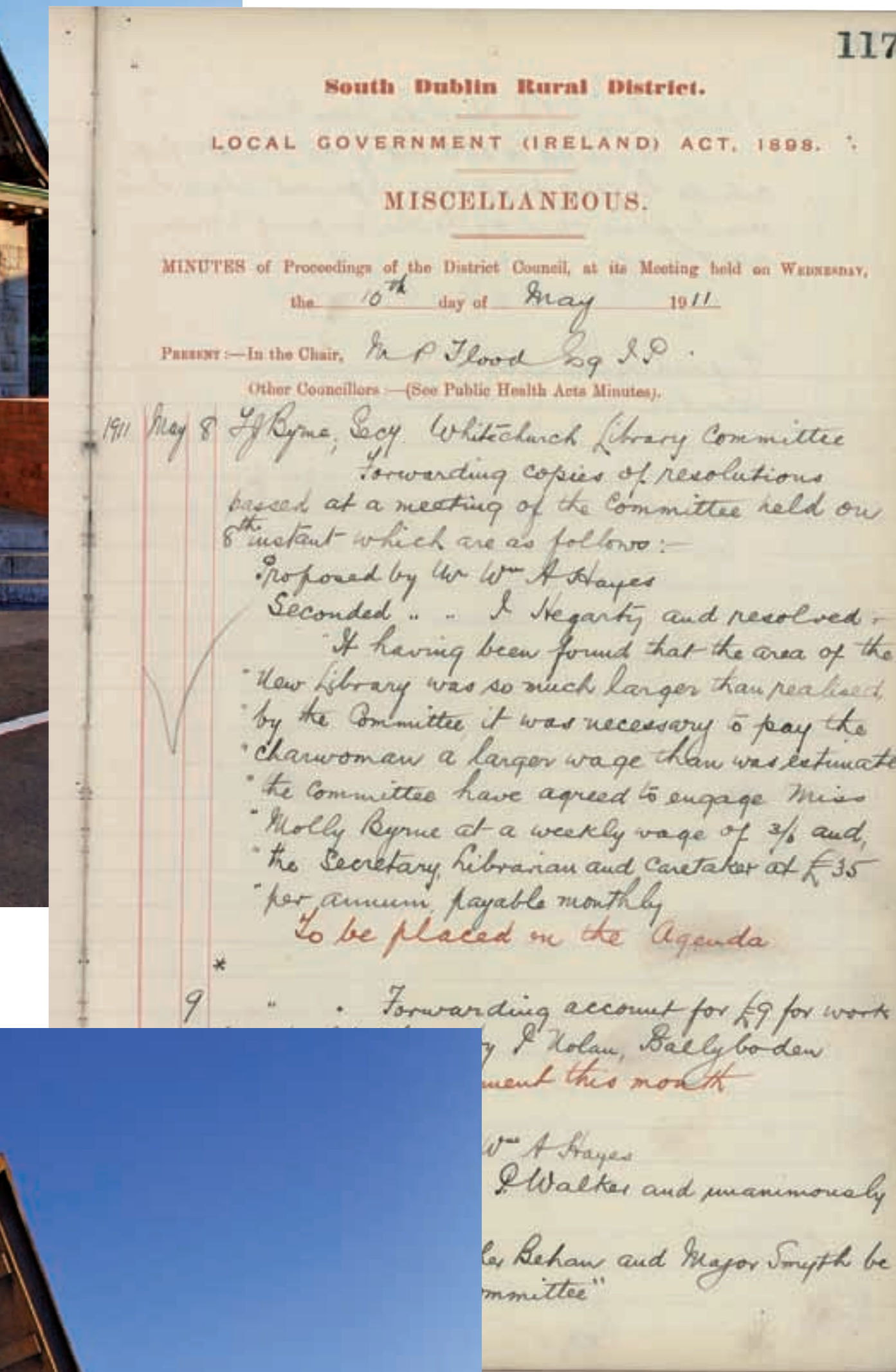
Clondalkin Carnegie Library, opened January 1911



Clondalkin Library Roof



Whitechurch Library, opened March 1911



Library Charlady

Clondalkin and Whitechurch Carnegie Libraries

Many of the Irish Carnegie Libraries were designed by distinguished architects, and it is evidence of the reputation that T. J. Byrne had established by the age of 33 that he was commissioned to design the library for Clondalkin, which opened in January 1911. He also designed the Carnegie Library at Whitechurch, which was completed in March 1911. These two projects, in which Byrne made excellent use of materials and forms that belong to the Arts and Crafts tradition, allowed him to freely exercise his considerable design abilities, and the two buildings stand today as evidence of his excellence as an architect.



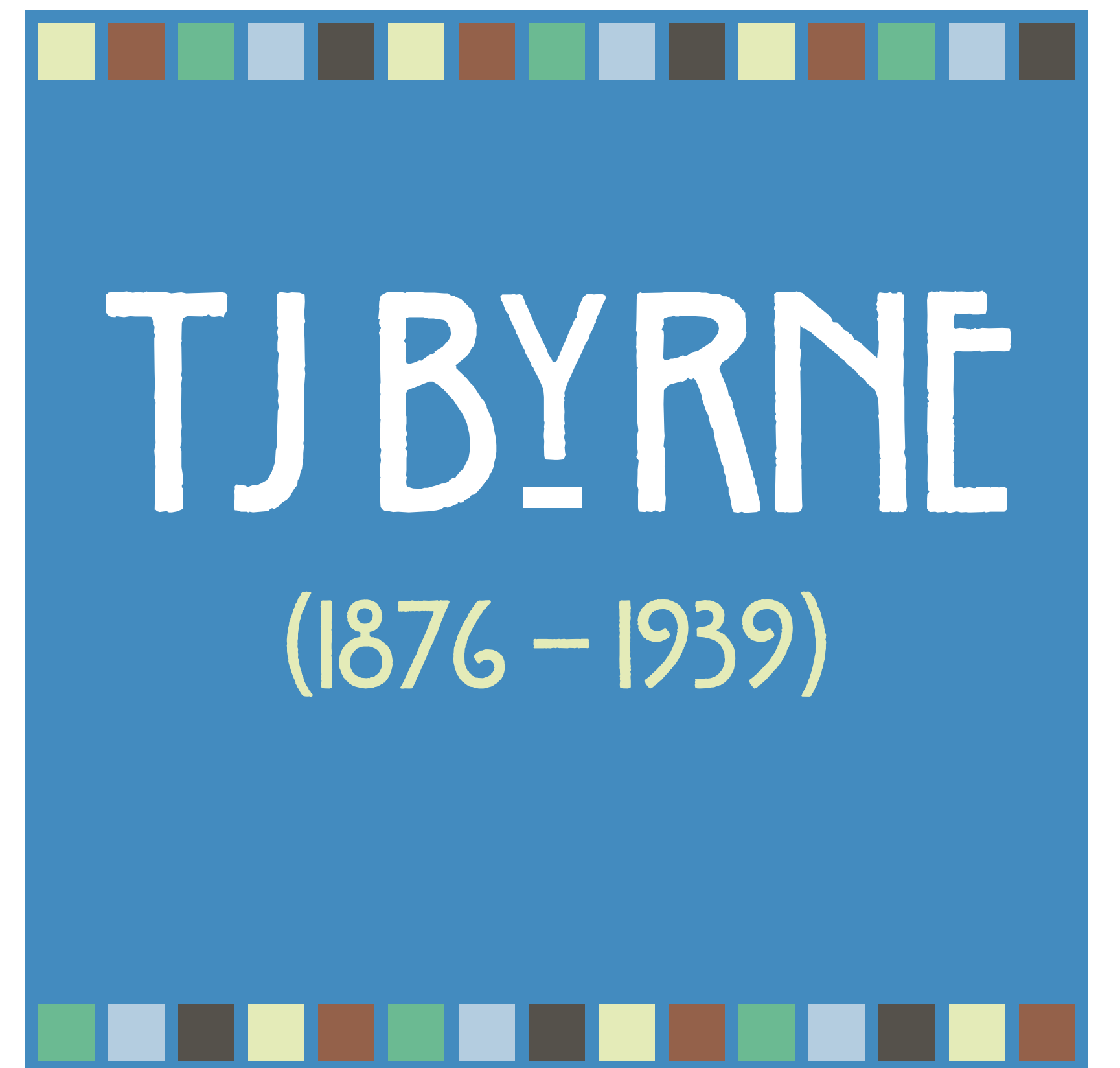
Clondalkin Carnegie Library, opened January 1911



Whitechurch Library, opened March 1911



Whitechurch Library, opened March 1911





Yewland Terrace, Terenure



Palmerstown Housing



The McCaffrey Estate, Mount Brown, Kilmainham



The McCaffrey Estate, Mount Brown, Kilmainham



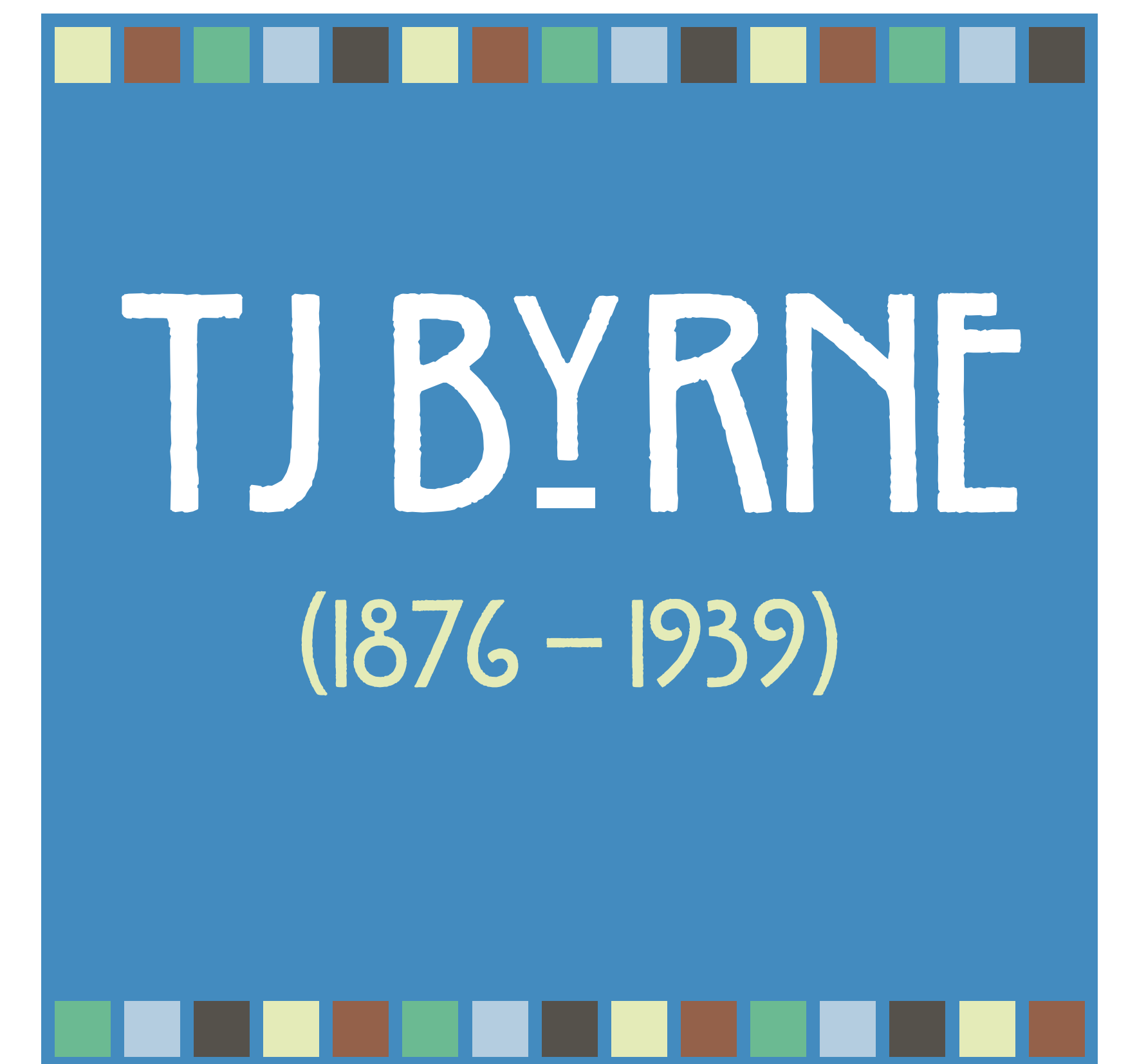
Palmerstown Housing



Palmerstown Housing



The McCaffrey Estate, Mount Brown, Kilmainham

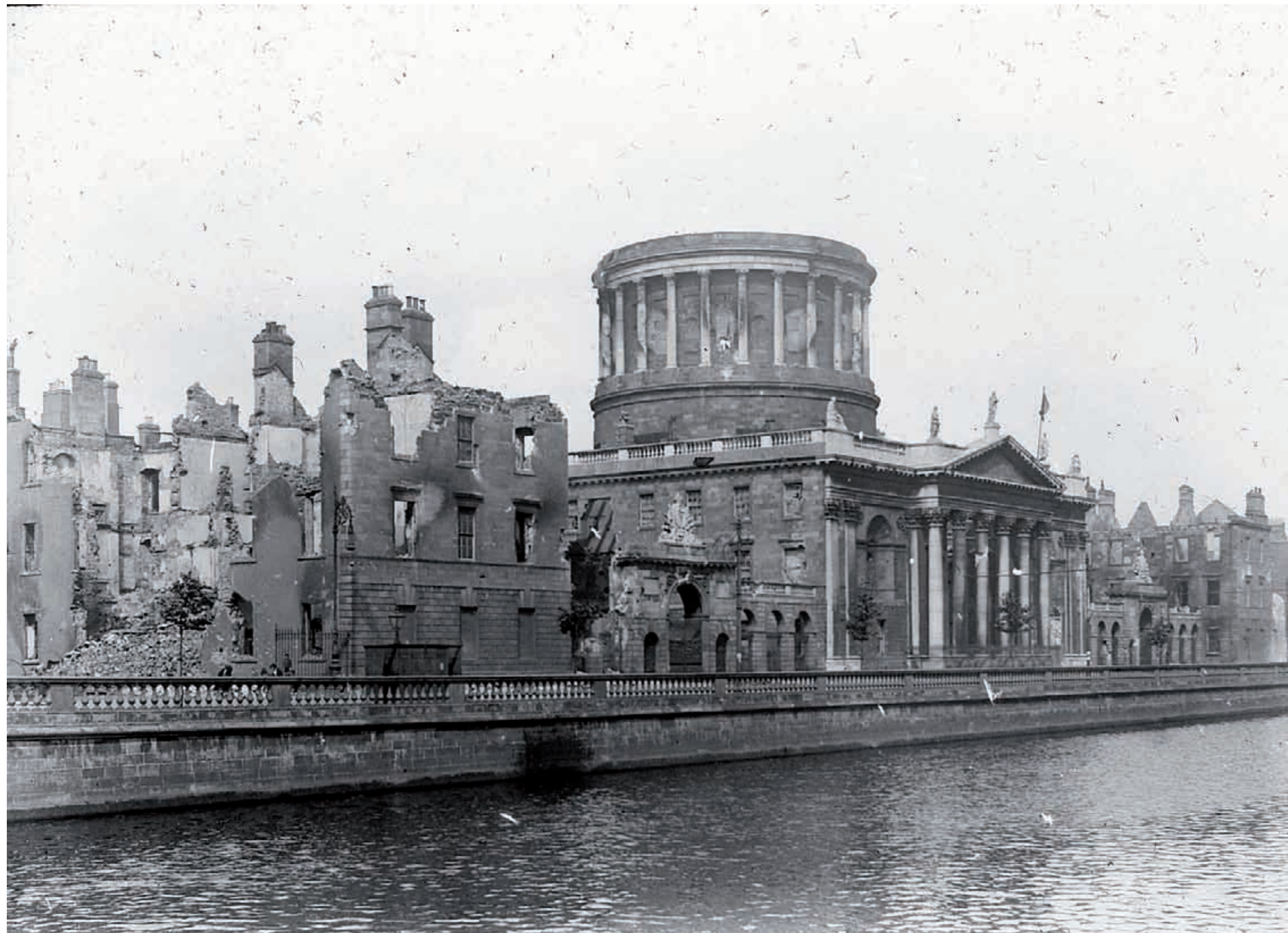




Four Courts explosion June 1922



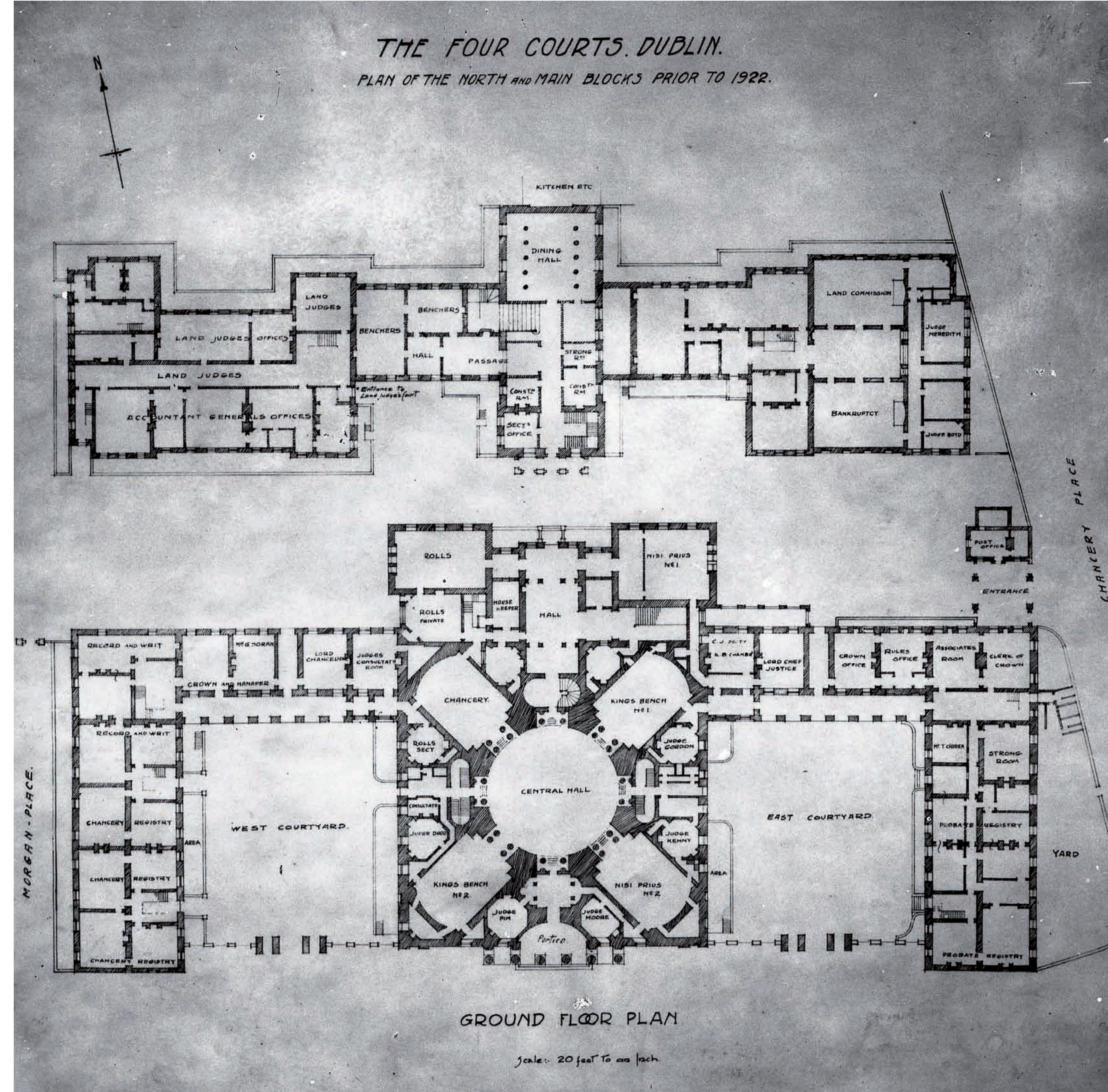
Four Courts without Dome



Four Courts aftermath July 1922



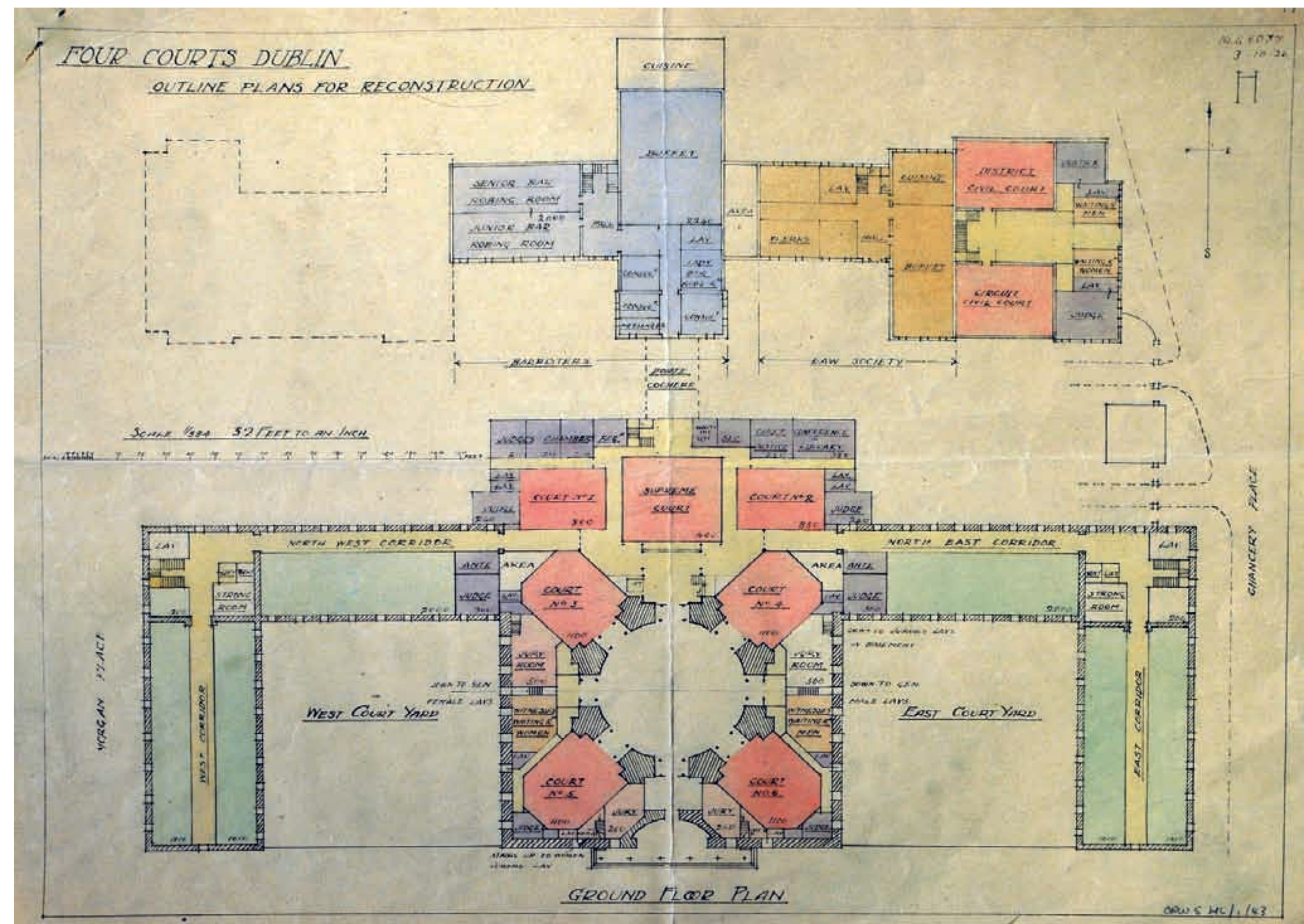
Four Courts scaffolding c 1926



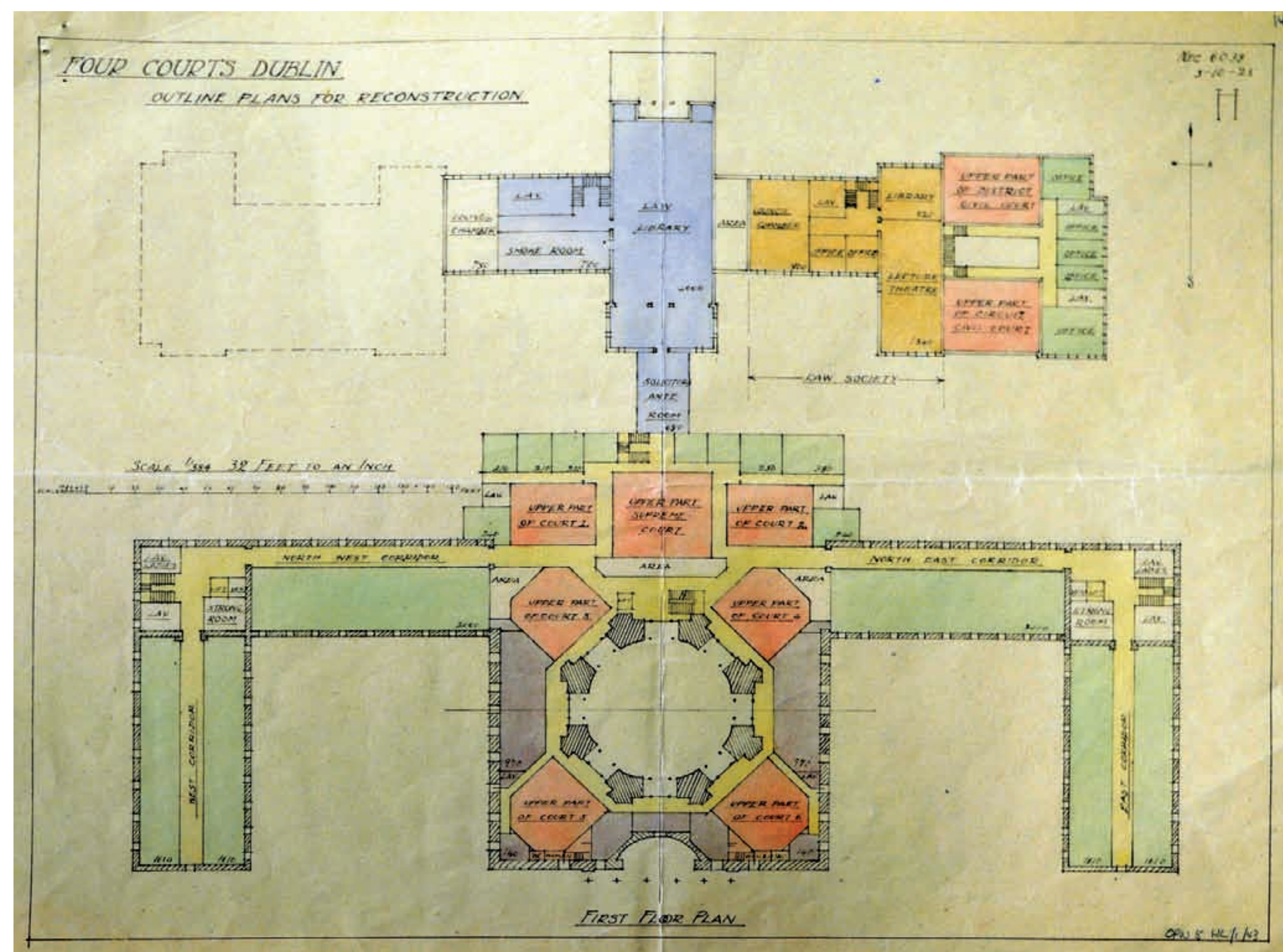
Four Courts - the original plan, National Archives of Ireland, OPW 5HC/1/43

Local Government Board and Office of Public Works

In 1919 T. J. Byrne was appointed Housing Inspector to the Local Government Board. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects in 1921. His work-rate was prodigious, evidenced by his remaining on as acting Chief of the Housing Department when he was appointed in 1923 as Principal Architect of the Office of Public Works. Major works Mr Byrne was responsible for in the twenties and early thirties included the reconstruction of buildings destroyed during the War of Independence and the subsequent civil war, including the Four Courts, the Custom House and the GPO. In the Four Courts in particular, he was responsible for the radical use, for its time, of shell concrete to replace the dome. He was also responsible for buildings that were very much of the 20th century, such as the new Athlone Radio Transmission Station.



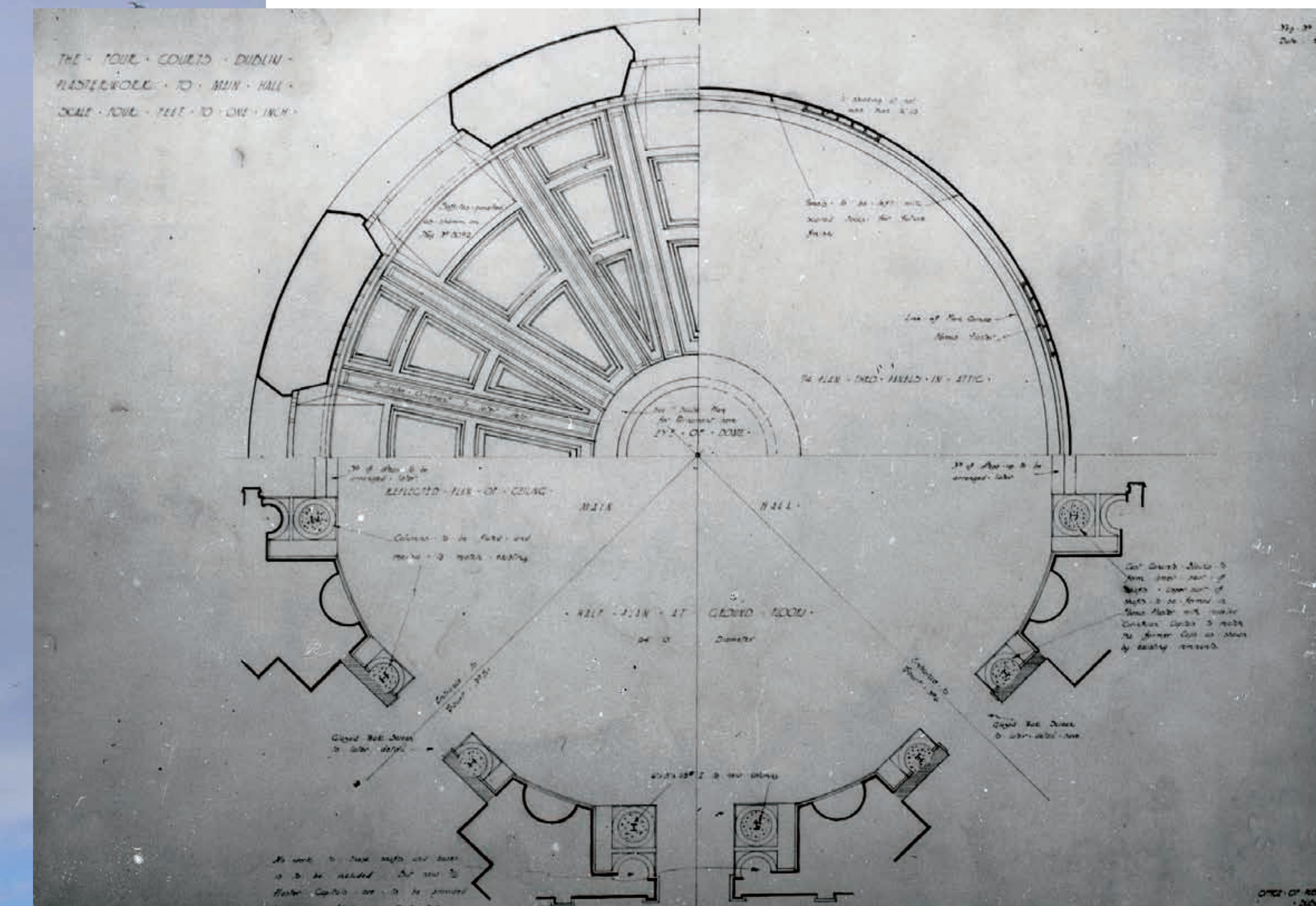
Four Courts sketch plan, National Archives of Ireland, OPW 5HC/1/43



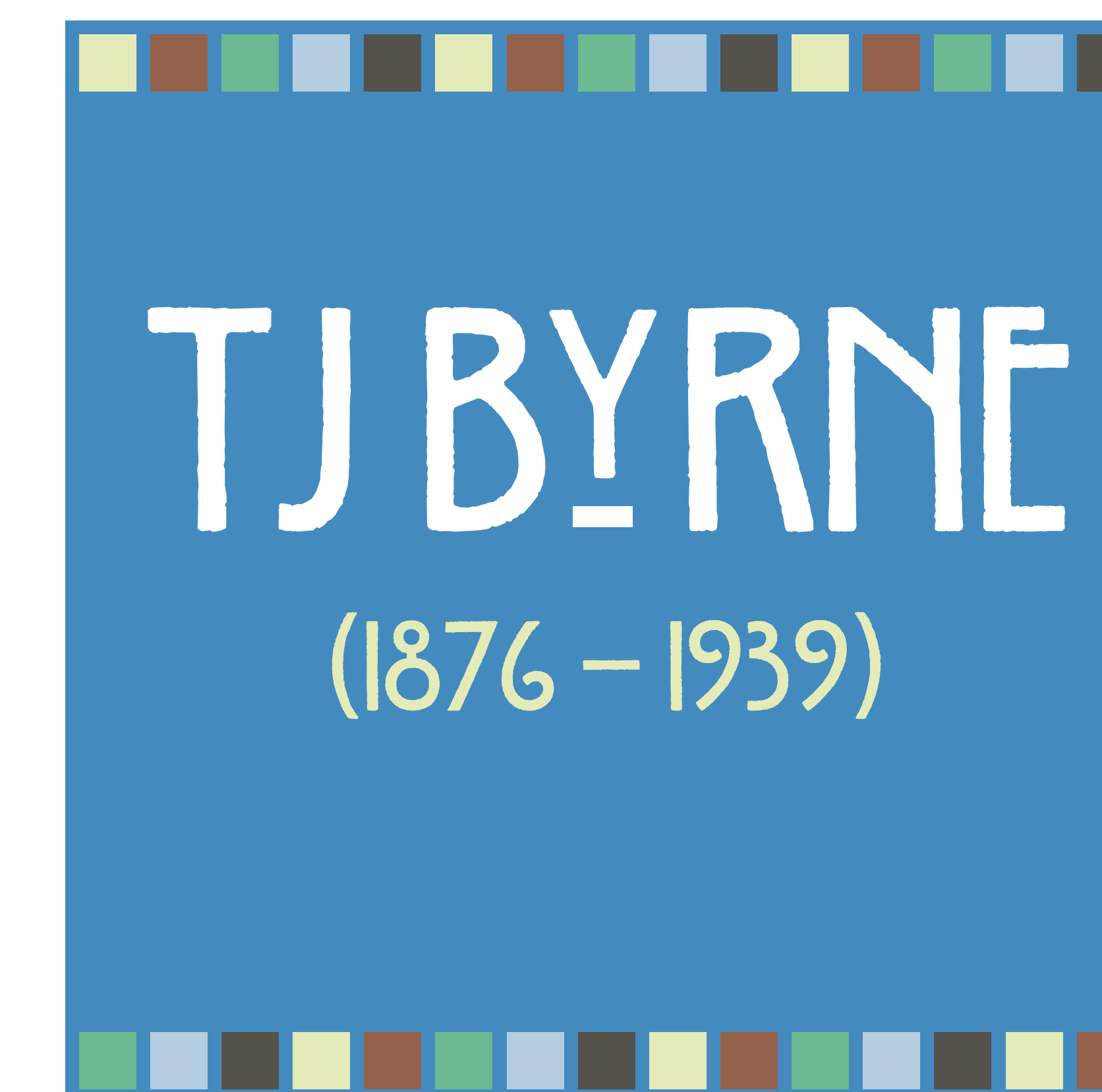
Four Courts sketch plan 2, National Archives of Ireland, OPW 5HC/1/43



The Four Courts today

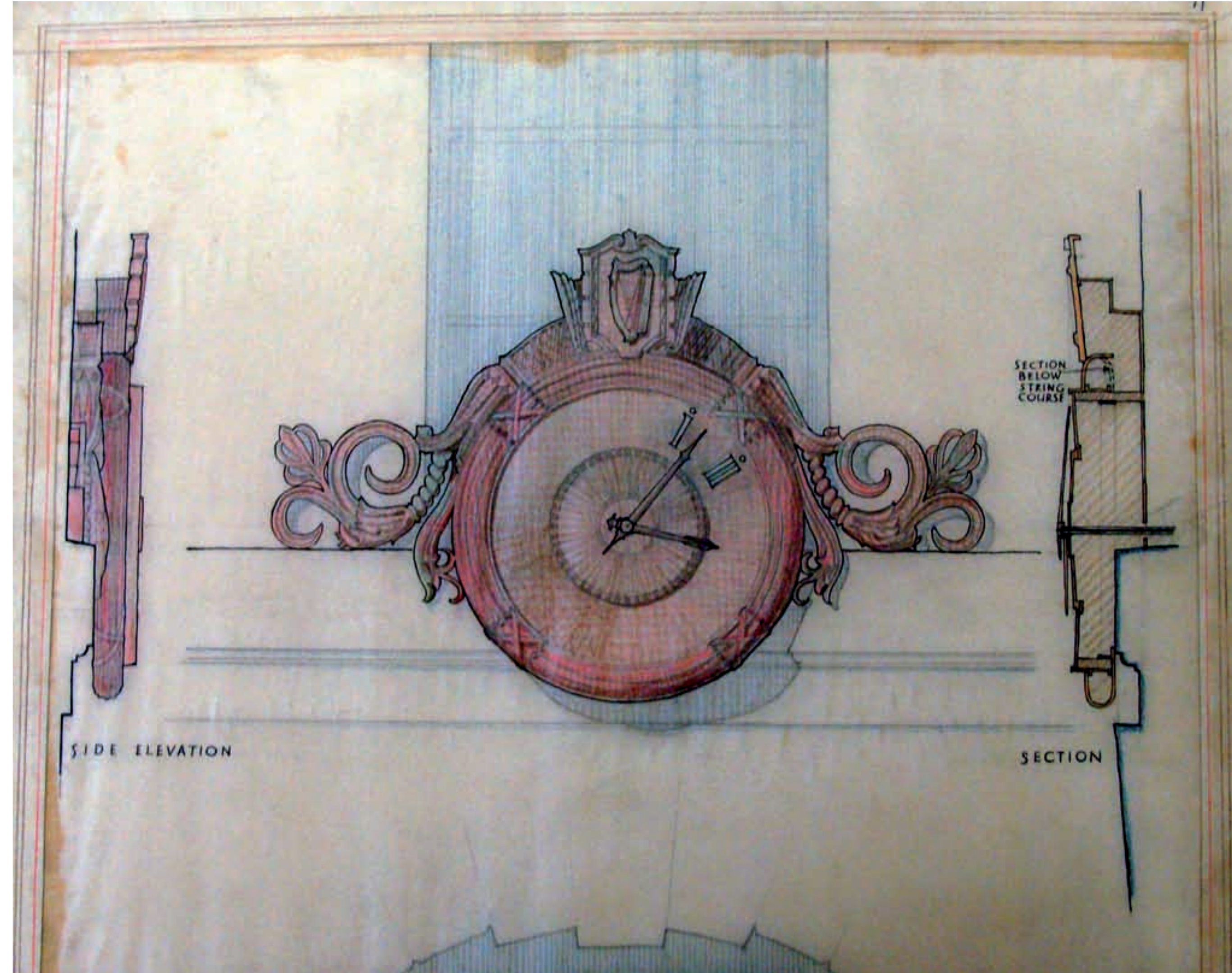


Four Courts Dome, internal detail, National Archives of Ireland, OPW 5HC/1/43





The GPO after the Rebellion



Original design for GPO Clock c1925 – National Archives of Ireland, OPW 5HC/1/43



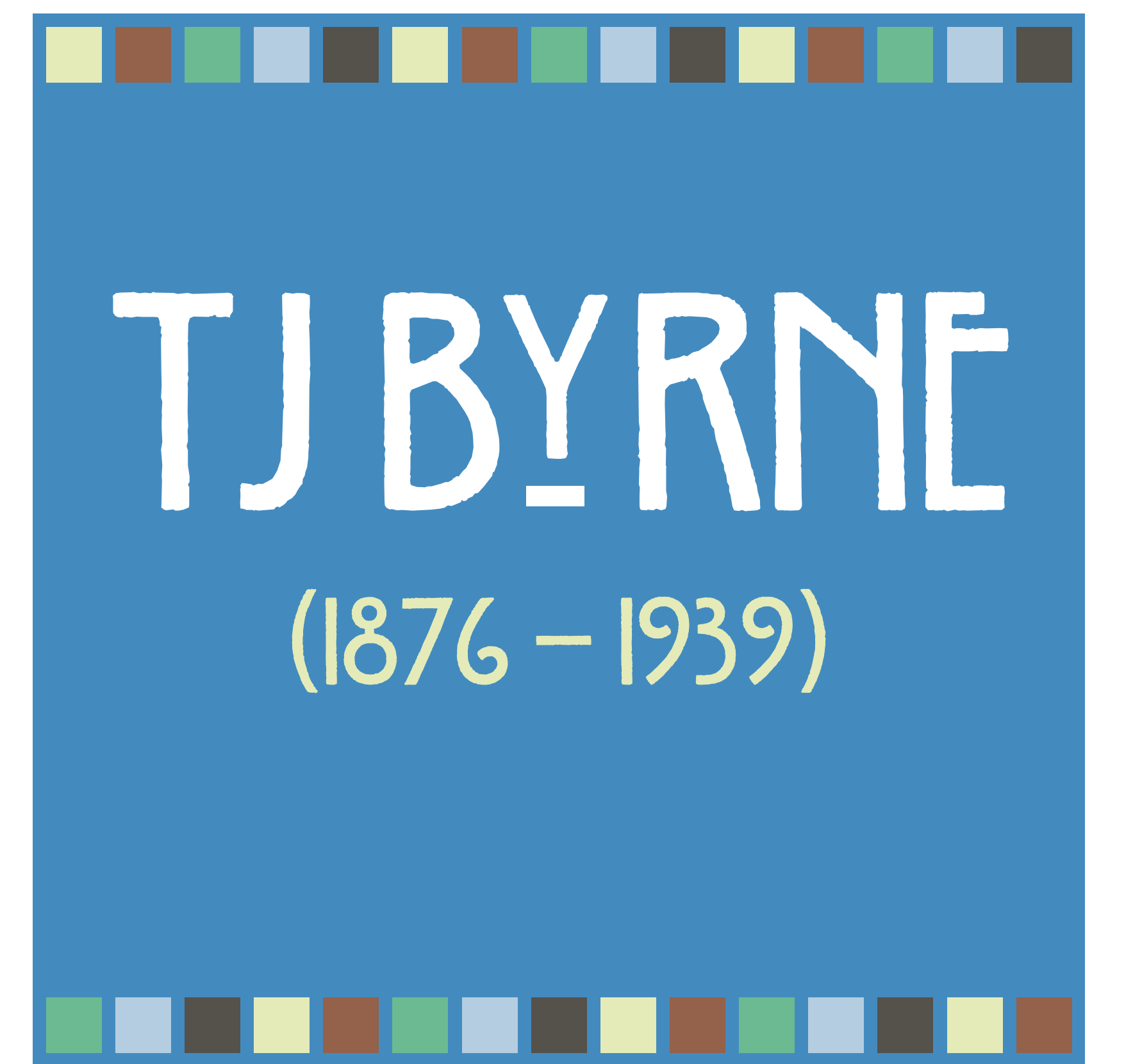
The GPO today



GPO Clock today



GPO interior after Rebellion

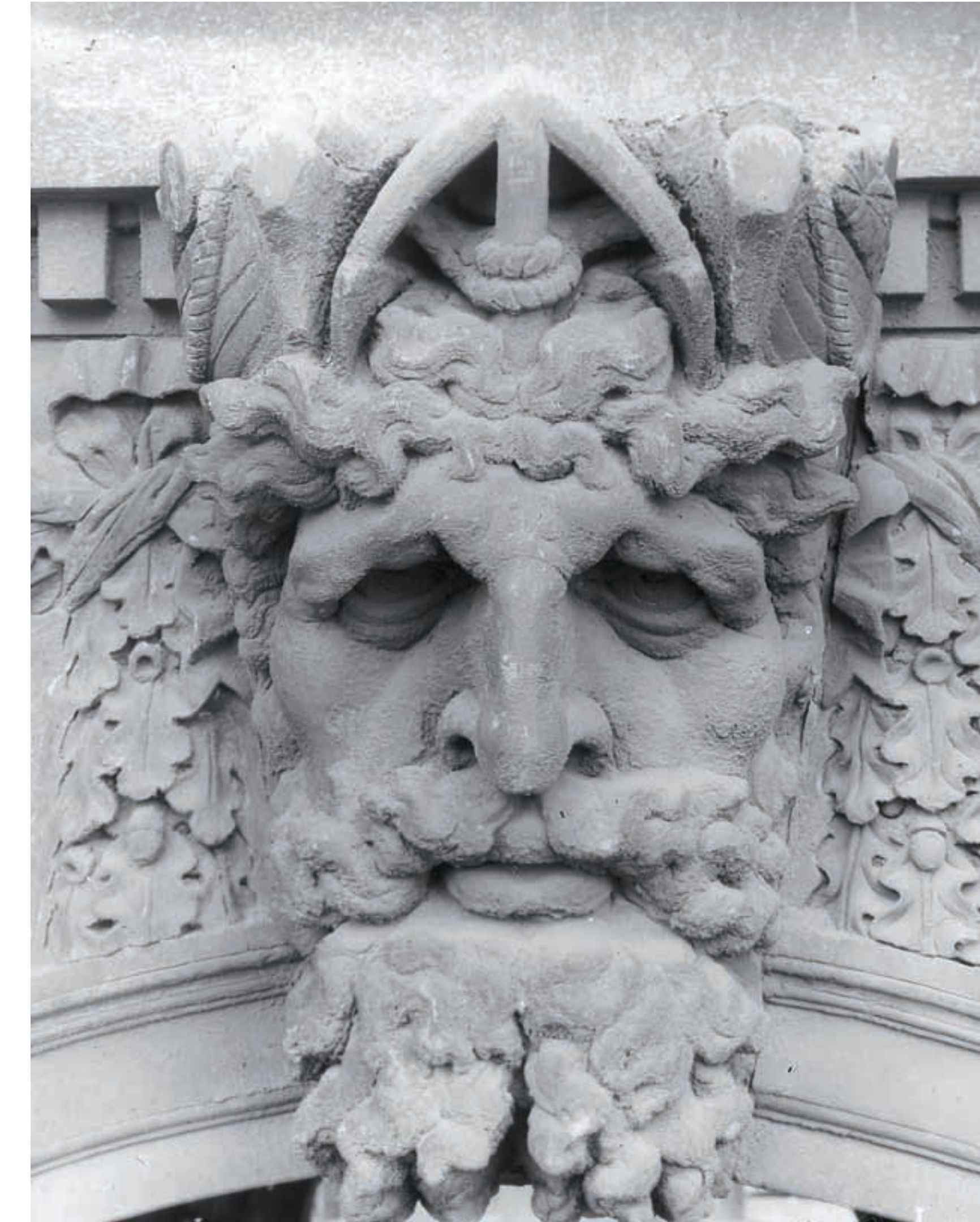




Custom House after fire May 1920



Custom House after fire May 1920



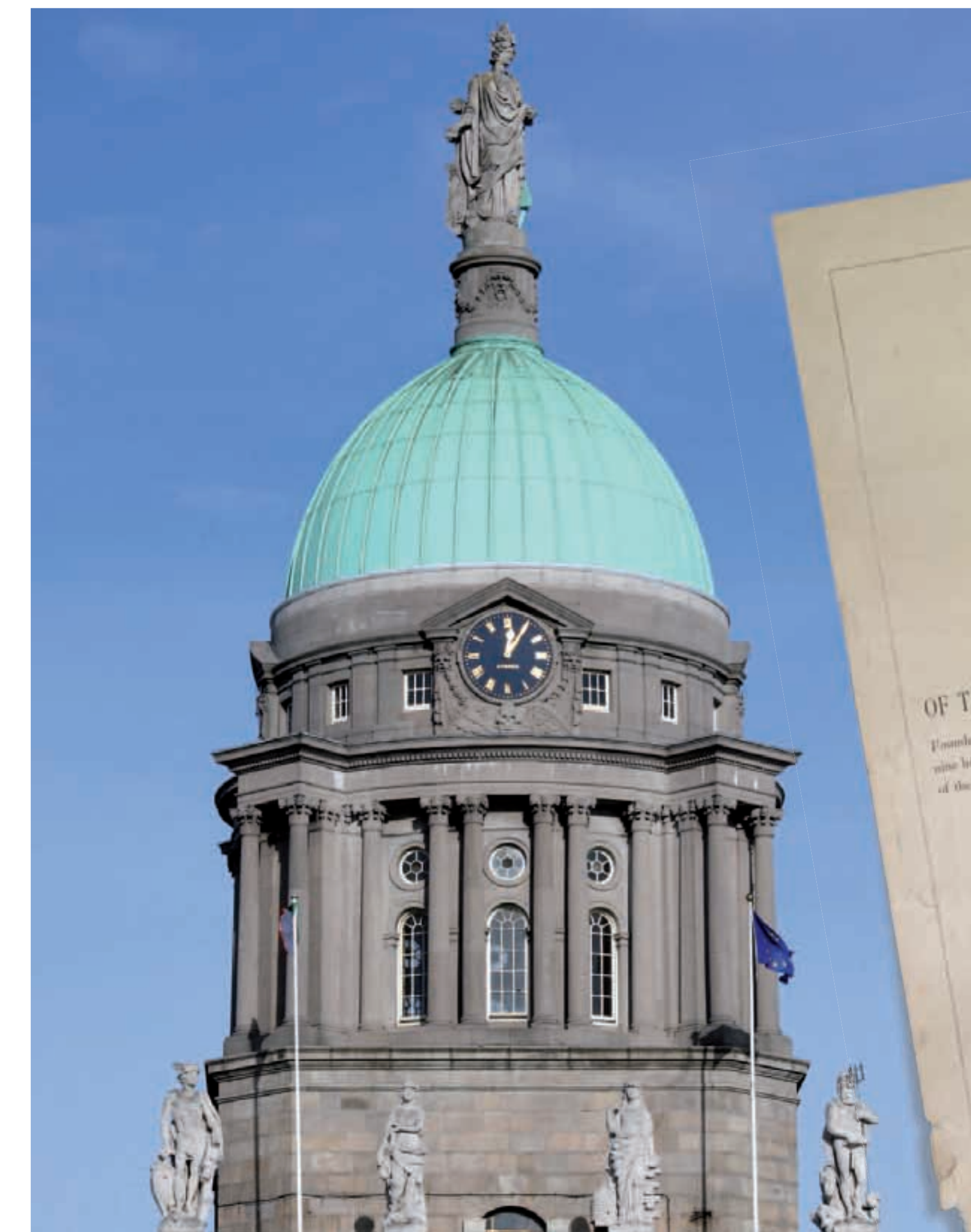
Custom House keystone



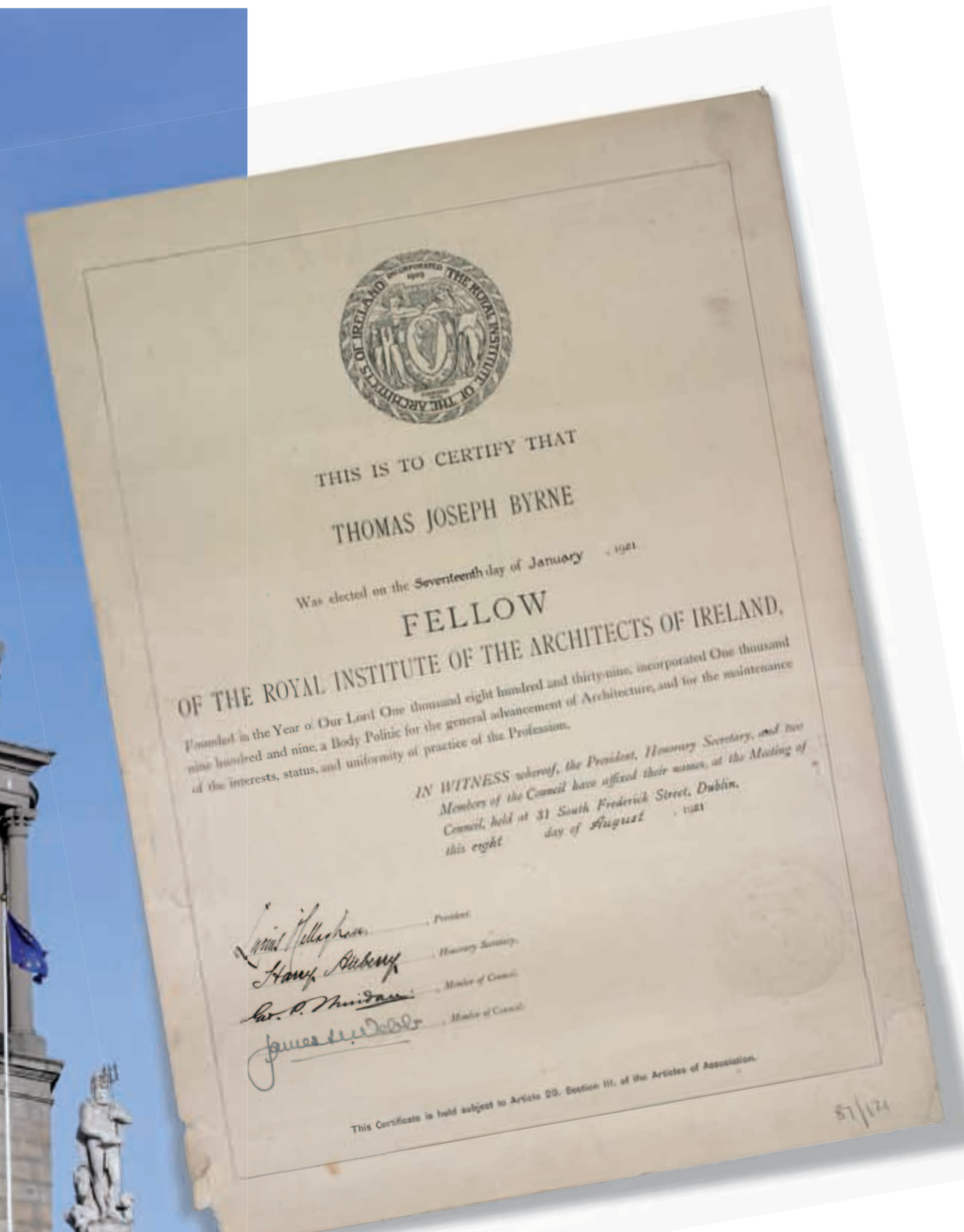
Athlone Radio Transmission Station 1932.



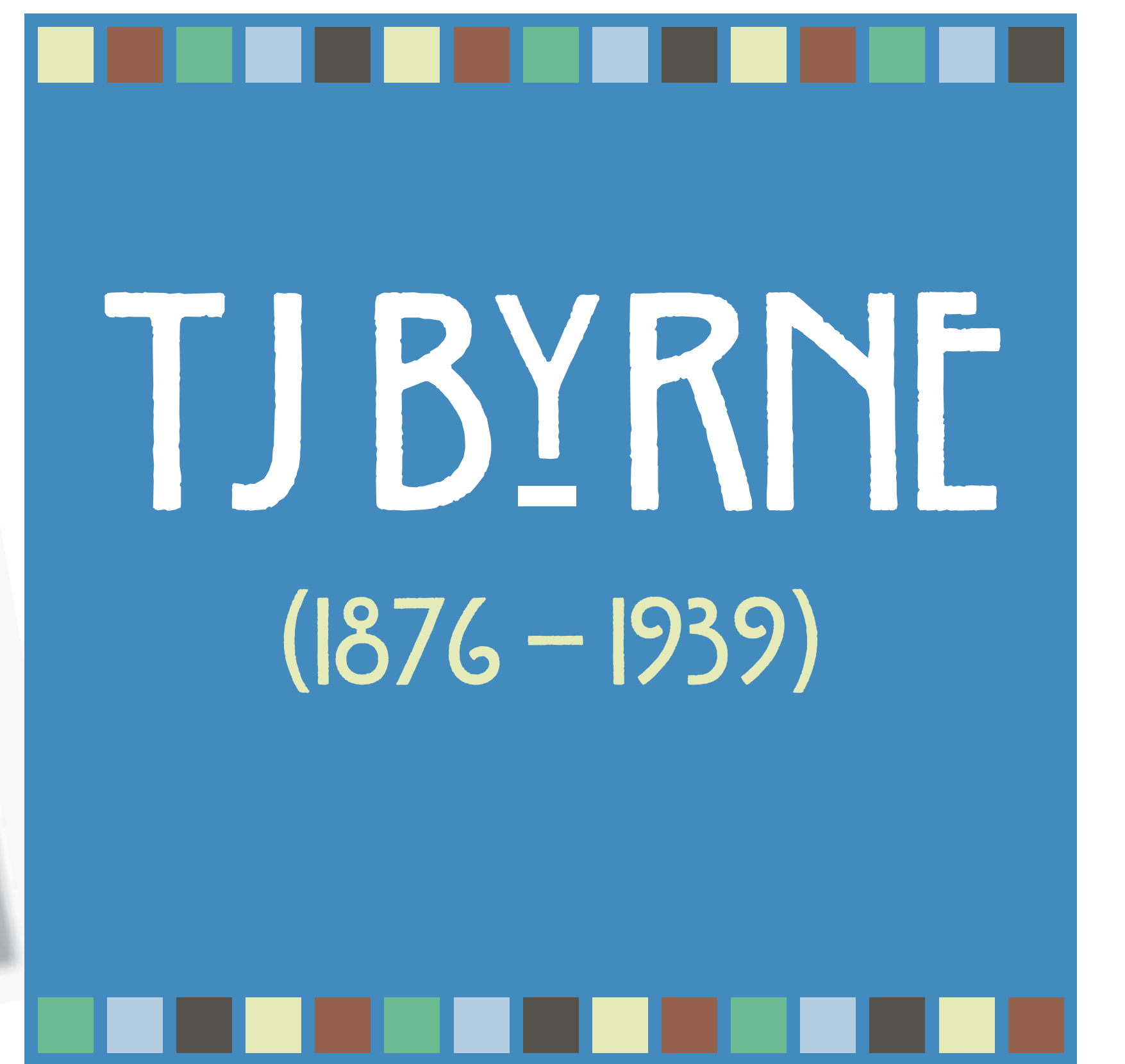
The Custom House today

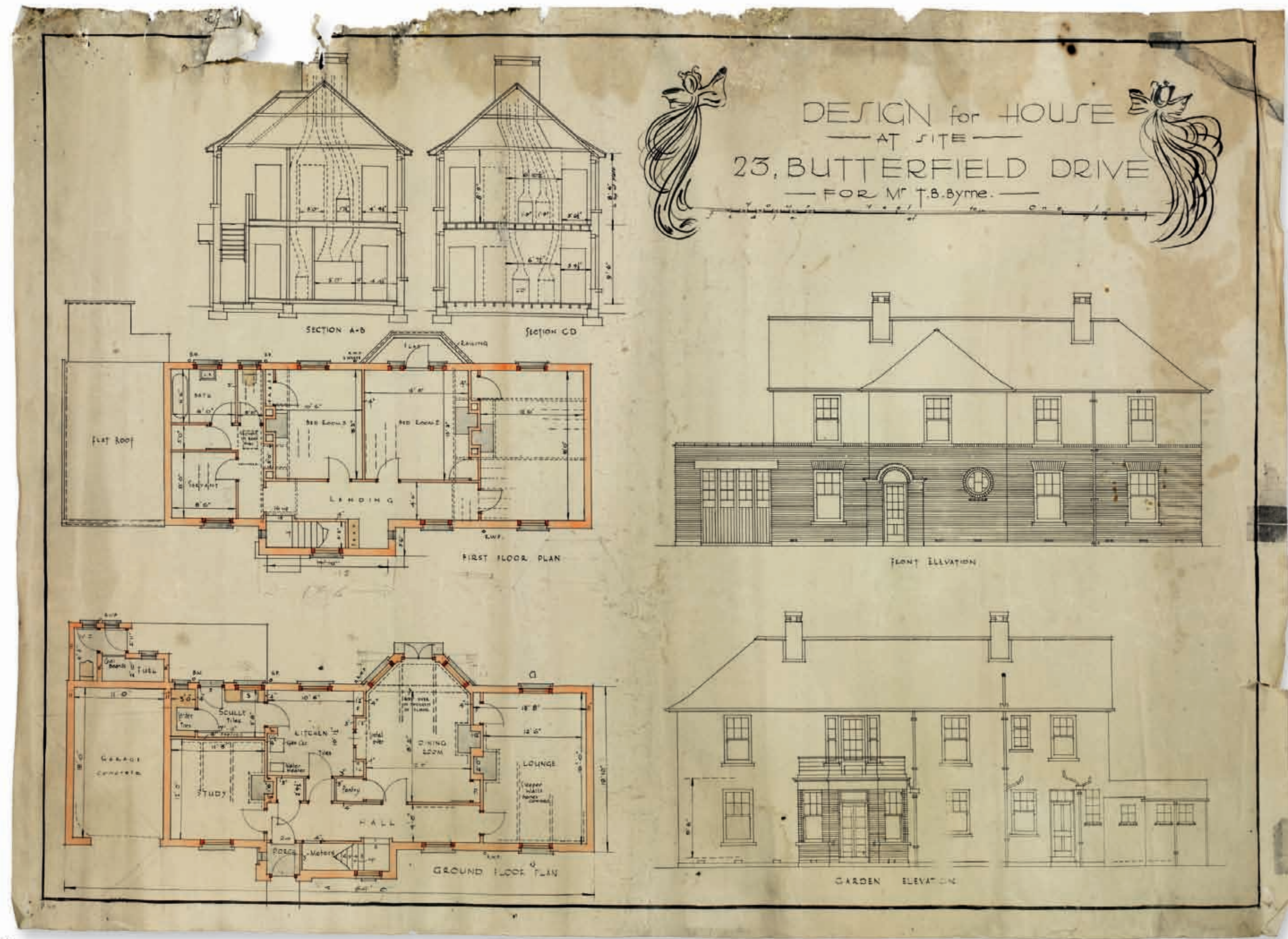


Custom House dome today



Byrne FRIAI fellowship Certificate





23 Butterfield Drive



23 Butterfield Drive today



Private Houses at Taylors Lane



The Bridge Inn Chapelizod 1913

Other Work

T. J. Byrne was an inspiring external examiner in Architecture for the National University of Ireland, and a founder member of the Institute of Christian Art. He played an important part in the development of Dublin Airport, and also had an involvement in the airports at Baldonnel and Rineanna. Byrne carried out a number of private commissions over the years, including a house for his son, T. B. Byrne, in Rathfarnham and the Bridge House public house in Chapelizod. Among his other works, he was associated with Sir Edwin Lutyens when he served as executive architect in the design of the Irish National War Memorial at Islandbridge and in 1938 he designed Hanger No. 1 at Dublin Airport with Richards Dawbarn.

TJ BYRNE
(1876 – 1939)



The Arts and Crafts Movement

The Age of Industry

The Victorian era is renowned for what has become known as the Industrial Revolution. In England, the age became synonymous with huge steel railway bridges, enormous factories belching out plumes of grey-black smoke, and row upon row of cottages and houses built to accommodate factory workers. New and fantastic inventions in machinery enabled the production of mass-produced architectural elements, decorative artefacts and clothing that had been previously made by hand. At the same time, the surge towards modernity contributed to a greater class divide; great wealth for some, but low wages, lack of work, bad living conditions and poverty for the working classes.

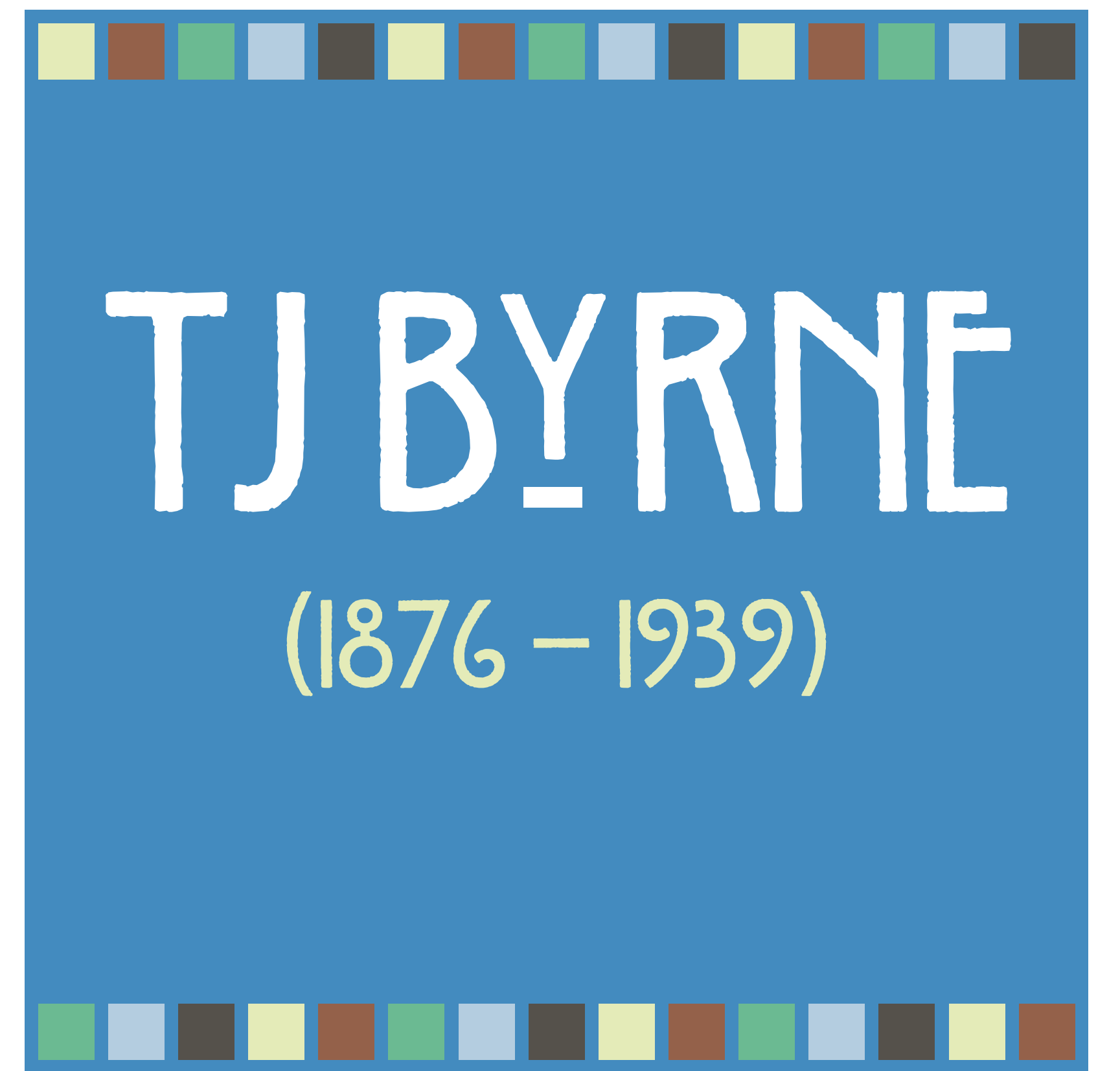
A Return to Tradition

The Arts and Crafts Movement was essentially about a return to the older traditions of design and hand-craft in the face of burgeoning industrialization. While it had many manifestations across Europe, all of which became associated with national identity, the movement began in England with poet, artist and social reformer William Morris (1834-1896). He was interested in a return to community values, craftsmanship and traditional

design in an attempt to correct what he considered to be the dehumanising effects of the Industrial Revolution. Morris was inspired by the work of art critic, writer and social reformer John Ruskin (1819-1900) who proposed a link between art and its production and the creation and sustenance of spiritual and moral values. In terms of architecture, the Arts and Crafts style was a return to simplicity of exterior and interior, with all fittings and fixtures designed to create a whole environment in what became known as a *gesamtkunstwerk*, or a total work of art.

The Arts and Crafts in Ireland

Ireland did not have an Industrial Revolution as such, but the Arts and Crafts Movement was closely associated with the Celtic Revival and national identity and was very much evident in the visual arts. Conversely, much of Ireland's Arts and Crafts architecture came about through the philanthropy of wealthy industrialists. Perhaps the most important of these was Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919), Scottish-born, American-based industrialist who between 1897 and 1913 promised over £170,000 to build public libraries in Ireland. Of the sixty-two libraries built with Carnegie's funds, two were built in the Arts and Crafts Style; Clondalkin (1911) and Whitechurch (1911).



Acknowledgments

The Carnegie Libraries of Clondalkin and Whitechurch celebrate the centenary of their openings in 2011. Both were funded by the Carnegie Library Trust and were designed by T. J. Byrne, Clerk and Architect of the South Dublin Rural District Council, a forerunner of South Dublin County Council. South Dublin County Council and South Dublin Libraries are grateful to many people who assisted in putting together this exhibition celebrating the life, work and influence of T. J. Byrne.

Two individuals in particular contributed enormously to the informative exhibition and deserve great praise and thanks for their efforts: Michael Fewer, architect and author compiled the exhibition and accompanying leaflet while John Byrne, grandson of T. J. Byrne was always most helpful and informative in providing details of his grandfather's life and works and supplied many of the images used in the exhibition.

Eddie Conroy, South Dublin County Architect freely advised on and supported the project. Breda Bollard, current Branch Librarian at Whitechurch Library contributed much to the exhibition. The Arts and Crafts movement featured strongly in the work of T. J. Byrne and thanks are due to Dr. Eimear O'Connor for her clear and informative exposition of the movement. Additional images were supplied by Dr. Brendan Grimes, Dr. Eimear O'Connor, Fingal Archives and The Irish Architectural Archive. The National Archives kindly permitted photographing of plans in their care. The exhibition and accompanying leaflet were designed by Noel Smyth of Silverbark Creative.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh go léir.

