

great-uncle and Rita Duffy her grandfather, both of who died at the Somme in 1916, and Gale Scanlan recalls her husband's grandfather who died in Giessen Prisoner of War Camp in 1918. These are moving reflections and reveal well how the gardens serve as a perfect location for quiet contemplation. Duffy, who has visited her grandfather's story in her own art work, has used the gardens to reflect on the wider story of her own family and notably that of her father, who was six in 1920 when he ran with his mother and siblings from their burning home in Belfast.

The memorial has been and still is a contentious site in the eyes of those who have been averse to Ireland's role in the First World War. This has inevitably meant that the gardens have been vandalised over time and neglected for long periods. President Michael D. Higgins, the only male author among the women, addresses this and other issues in his introductory essay to the volume. He supports in his text the decision that the book represent the perspectives of women, noting how their role in the different wars was 'for too long suppressed, concealed and ignored by the dominant historiographical narrative'.

In 2020 the Memorial Gardens became a haven for locals. Poet Maeve O'Sullivan, whose great-uncle, a chaplain, was killed in 1916 giving the last rites to a soldier, made use of the site as a place of refuge during the Covid pandemic. Setting off after her working day, like so many of the writers, she describes her own journey there – across the football pitch, across the pedestrian bridge and down the incline to the park's entrance. It feels, she writes, like this place is becoming a close friend.

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R.A. Somerville

## THE EARLY RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS OF TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN: ARCHITECTURE, FINANCING, PEOPLE

(Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2021) isbn 978-1-846829680, 404 pages, 25x17cm, 117 illus., €50 hb

review by John Logan



AT ITS FOUNDATION IN 1592, TRINITY COLLEGE WAS given the site of the dissolved Augustinian priory of All Hallows in a secluded eastern suburb of Dublin. As the city spread, it gradually encircled the site, so that Trinity now stands more or less at Dublin's heart. Thirty years after its founding, the College had eighty-four in residence, forty-four of them undergraduates, and for another century its annual intake probably never exceeded one hundred. Enrolment increased in the century between 1730 and 1830 and then went into decline, recovering and levelling off only in the 1930s. A rapidly expanding intake, particularly in the period from 1970, brought enrolment to over 20,000 by 2023. In its early days, Trinity was able to

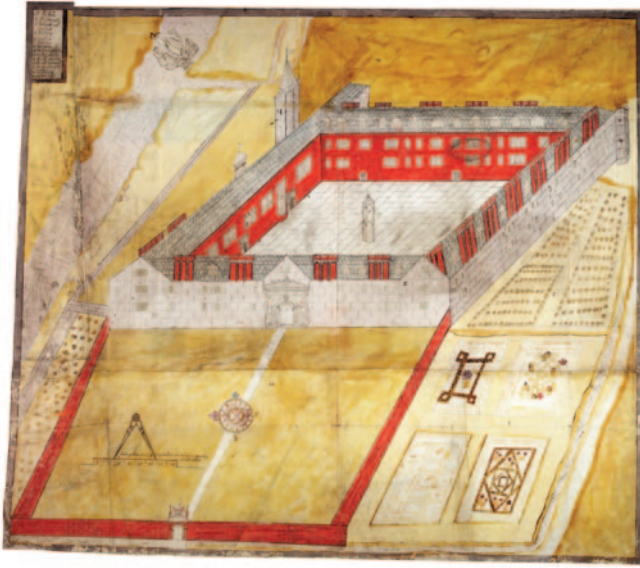
build well on its generous site but as its numbers rose, and with that the need for additional buildings, it struggled to keep its ancient quadrangles and playing fields clear; students,

teachers and staff now contend with a swelling stream of visitors, any semblance of donish calm long gone. Notwithstanding the clamour, many who pass daily through the great front gate will be stirred by what is accurately described as the country's best assemblage of Georgian buildings, its principal façade to the city as grand as any.

Trinity has been well served by its historians, many of them members of the College. The prospect of constitutional reform and the urge to remember and commemorate have all stimulated historical research, and some – among them, John William Stubbs, Constantia Maxwell and John Pentland Mahaffy, a founder of the earlier Irish Georgian Society in 1908 – have made place for matters architectural. But it is only in recent times that Trinity's buildings, particularly the great formal spaces of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, have benefited from the meticulous research and clear-sighted judgments of scholars such as Edward McParland and, latterly, Christine Casey. To them may be added Andrew Somerville, fellow emeritus and lecturer in economics who turns from the public buildings to focus instead on the College's residential spaces. He shows how, unlike some Oxford or Cambridge counterparts, Trinity never pursued a goal of being wholly residential. From the start, many students lived at home or took lodgings in the town, and for lengthy periods, when attendance was not required, some visited only for administrative formalities and to sit examinations. Nonetheless, the College has always aimed to house a high proportion of its students and fellows, considering a resident community of scholars essential to its ethos. In this carefully researched study, Somerville limits his focus to the residential buildings completed before 1730, most of which were taken down and replaced between 1750 and 1900, making this in large part a history of vanished buildings. Time and again we are reminded of the ease with which the College built and demolished, having sometimes maintained its building stock poorly or being governed by individuals whose ambition demanded something more attractive – traits, Dr McParland suggests in an engaging foreword, that bordered on the improvident.

The earliest surviving image of the College, a pen-and-coloured wash on vellum prepared in 1592 for the University's chancellor, Lord Burghley, shows four ranges forming a relatively small 120ft quadrangle. The north range housed chapel, hall and kitchen; the other three ranges accommodated students, fellows and provost. Over the course of the seventeenth century, a second, larger quadrangle, the Great Court, took shape to the west on what had probably been the forecourt of All Hallows. It was built in stages: a range to the north in the 1630s, another to the west in the 1640s, and two ranges southward to form the west front of the College, complete with the principal gatehouse, in the 1670s and '80s, respectively. Another range, closing the Court, was in place by the 1690s. The College's third quadrangle, larger still, was formed to the east of the Old Quadrangle between 1699 and 1732 by three red-brick residential ranges and the great stone-built library. When completed in 1732, Thomas Burgh's library would give a name to the square, and its majestic scale provided a datum for the tall, classical buildings that would eventually characterise the western end of the College. Of the many residential ranges in use between 1592 and 1732, that now referred to as the Rubrics, is the sole survivor. Completed in 1705, and still largely in residential use, it takes prime place here.

Somerville digs deep into the College's rich archive of financial and building records to reimagine how these early buildings came about, how they were used and man-



*The Hatfield view of Trinity College, Dublin, c.1592  
(courtesy Marquess of Salisbury)*

*opposite*

*Derek Hill (1916-2000),  
PROFESSOR R.B. MCDOWELL  
LEAVING THE RUBRICS, TRINITY  
COLLEGE, DUBLIN  
c.1985, oil on canvas, 41 x 46 cm*

aged, and how they eventually disappeared. Benefactors were sought and cultivated amongst alumni, the philanthropic and, increasingly, Parliament. The most generous were honoured in the name of a building; others, more farsighted perhaps, advanced the cost of a set of rooms and were assured of its use in perpetuity, a Trinity peculiarity that continued to benefit at least one family until the 1990s. Schemes to gather in funds were carefully executed. When £8,000 was needed to complete the buildings of Library Square in the early 1720s, appeals were issued according to rank: an archbishop or bishop might be asked for five guineas, peers and ladies 'not more than two guineas', others of either sex or any denomination, a guinea each. When subscriptions fell short, those with deeper pockets, including former fellows now elevated as bishops or country rectors, stepped in, one giving as much as a hundred guineas. The balance was found in 1722 when the newly elected junior fellows and the head porter, Nathaniel Hall, agreed a guinea each. When completed, the best sets of rooms went to the well placed, though at times of pressure some fellows might have to share, as students usually did. Whether for instruction or private study, the individual set was the College's principal pedagogic space throughout its early history.

Little is known of how much of the fabric of All Hallows was absorbed in the Old Quadrangle, though archaeological investigations are beginning to provide some clues. When the College began to build anew in the seventeenth century, it becomes possible to establish how contracts were drawn up and how the practicalities of procuring materials and finding good craftsmen and women were managed. Somerville is at pains to establish how a building was divided into individual sets of rooms, how their spatial arrangements were determined, and even how they were furnished. The College kept pace with developments in the building trades, employing only the competent and the reputable such as John Allen, practised in the ways of Dutch bricklaying and with 'great skill in architecture', and James Brown, a member of the city's corporation of carpenters who contracted

to build the provost's lodgings in 1640. It employed architects – individuals who increasingly saw themselves as part of a distinct profession – for their ability to design and give clear instructions to the craftsmen builders. Among the first was Thomas Lucas, contracted in 1671 to prepare a design for the west front that would be executed by Richard Mills, 'mason and bricklayer'. Distinguished practitioners such as William Robinson and Thomas Burgh followed, but the extent to which they or another architect might have had a role in the residential spaces remains largely unknown. Somerville notes a significant shift in practice in the 1720s when the College employed Charles Brooking, 'master carpenter and builder', along with the financially adept William Maple to jointly manage building projects, thereby avoiding the need to treat with craftsmen directly. As building schemes grew in complexity, the client – usually the board of seven senior fellows and provost – became more knowledgeable. Some equipped themselves with practical manuals as well as architecture treatises, and if a proposal was motivated by vanity, there was usually sufficient discernment and common sense to provide a counterbalance.

In the concluding chapters, Somerville turns to examine the College as a 'social organism'. The youngest students noticed are the brothers Lorenzo and Lucius Cary, aged nine and thirteen respectively, resident in the 1620s. Their ages made them stand out, though fifteen- and sixteen-year-olds were not uncommon through this period. A close analysis of Trinity's extensive registers builds on the work of R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, adding substantially to what is known of the schooling, social ranking, religious adherence and geographical origins of the student body. Unfortunately, much less is known of the generations of bedmakers, cleaners, messengers, porters, gardeners, cooks and waiters without whom the College could not have functioned. College lore and carefully chosen illustrations of fellows, students and servants prompt reflection on the complexities of *genius loci* and ethos: few academic portraits are as evocative of time and place as Derek Hill's depiction of Prof. McDowell hurrying from his rooms in the Rubrics circa 1985. John McGahern, his neighbour there for six months, remembered being perpetually cold, though his sparsely furnished room provided seclusion and a necessary calm: 'The whole sense of space was very beautiful.'

Since 1592 innumerable members of the College, junior and senior, have lived in those beautiful rooms, and the reader may wonder how the experience might have marked them or whether their secure and well-tended lodgings helped shape a particular view of themselves and of the world beyond. While this book does not venture to answer such questions, it is, nonetheless, a significant and accomplished addition to the architectural and building history of an important Irish institution, and to the history of building in Ireland more generally.

