

Impact case study (REF3b)

<p>Institution: Queen’s University, Belfast</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 16: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning</p>
<p>Title of case study: Heritage as an instrument of change: The impact of Irish architectural history research within a divided society</p>
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Architectural history at Queens has not only critically influenced decision-makers in Northern Ireland over a long period, but also helped to develop a notion of shared ownership of the region within the extant divisions in the contested landscape of Northern Ireland. Architectural Heritage is usually seen as conservative and restricting in its impact, but within the divided communities of Northern Ireland, the discovery and contextualisation of the built environment has created a shared sense of place in a landscape ravaged by civil strife.</p> <p>This is evidenced particularly in respect of impact on practitioners and professional services; public policy, law and services; and the environment particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the statutory listing of historic buildings the designation of conservation areas by government, work with professional bodies eg Royal Society of Ulster Architects work with voluntary/community organisations such as Ulster Architectural Heritage Society. <p>Through the research on the history and development of architecture in Ireland, the University can demonstrate a very significant impact on both Northern Ireland's built environment, and that of the Republic of Ireland. This body of research has provided valuable support to specialist users, including the architectural profession and planning authorities, as well as providing a source of reference for historical societies and amenity groups seeking to shape our environment, and a major source of information for the wider public.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research comprises historical investigation of post-medieval Irish architecture, particularly that of Northern Ireland and mainly of the 19th and 20th centuries. It has sought to place this architectural heritage in both its local and its wider contexts, and evaluate it in relation to historical, political, social, technological and aesthetic developments, both nationally and internationally, with a view to establishing a reliable canon for architectural judgement. It has pointed to an accepted ranking order for a host of historic architects, most previously unknown, as well as identifying exemplars by which other buildings may be assessed. It has been carried out as an academic activity but has helped change public perceptions of the architectural heritage of the island of Ireland.</p> <p>The work has proceeded for almost 40 years, on both sides of the border, ranging from geographically based surveys, such as those of Belfast (Larmour 1988), to thematic studies, such as those on the Modern Movement and on church architecture (Larmour 1997, 2009), as well as studies of individual buildings and individual architects—this last category published in more than 40 articles between 1988 and 2013, principally in the <i>Journal of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects</i>, as well as in the <i>Macmillan Dictionary of Art</i> (London, 1996) and <i>The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004) – see also Larmour and O’Toole (2008).</p> <p>As the field was largely unexplored when the research began, the practical task of determining what was built, when and by who designed has been a prime occupation. This has been a prerequisite of any balanced evaluations and assessments. It has entailed archival and library searches, recording of drawings and documents, and photographic and survey work.</p>

The research is of a pioneering type: investigating subjects in a longitudinal, systematic and detailed manner. The fieldwork has been extensive, involving case study visits throughout Ireland during the late 1980s and 1990s, and the building up of a comprehensive photographic record and personal database, which remains the main starting point for all the publications. This original work is then combined with corroborating data from the examination of archives held around the UK and Ireland including the RIBA. It has yielded a large amount of material on a variety of themes and subjects, both disparate and interrelated.

The many books and articles ensuing from this research have been supplemented by invited public lectures and broadcasts. All of these have contributed to the attested impact. They include nine books, 45 chapters in other books and individual entries in encyclopaedias and such like, 39 articles, two published reports to government, seven broadcasts for radio or television, one public exhibition and 36 public or invited lectures to outside bodies.

Much of the exploratory fieldwork associated with this research was carried out in the 1970's and 1980's during a period of a high level of civil strife, when conservation of historic buildings was not high on the public agenda. Thus it could be said that this work was ground-breaking. It initiated and still underpins the agenda for architectural heritage in Northern Ireland.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Key outputs

1. Larmour, P. (1988), *Belfast: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Friars Bush Press, Belfast.
2. Larmour, P. (1997), , Twentieth Century Church Architecture in Ireland and other contributions, in A. Becker, J. Olley and W. Wang (eds), *20th Century Architecture: Ireland*. Prestel Verlag, Munich and New York, pp 60-65 *et seq.*
3. Larmour, P. et al (2006), *Modern Ulster Architecture*. Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Belfast.
4. Larmour, P. and S, O'Toole (2008), *North by Northwest: The Life and Work of Liam McCormick*. Gandon Editions, Kinsale .
5. Larmour, P. (2009), *Free State Architecture: Modern Movement Architecture in Ireland, 1922-1949*. Gandon Editions, Kinsale.
6. Larmour, P. (2010), *Belfast City Hall: An Architectural History*. Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, Belfast

Evidence of quality of research

(i) Press reviews of the published output, as follows:

Item 3: see *Architects Journal*, 22 Feb 2007, p70 "This is an exemplary publication ...it presents an architectural culture which serves to be far better known and celebrated" [Neil Parkyn].

Item 4: see *C20: The Magazine of the Twentieth Century Society*, spring 2009, p20 "This book, a collaboration between the two leading historians of modern architecture in Ireland, is a magnificent celebration that presents the buildings and the man in their context" [Professor Alan Powers].

Item 6: *Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain Newsletter*, 101, autumn 2010, p16 – "a thoroughly researched and well-illustrated account of the building ... a worthy addition to the literature on Belfast's architectural heritage" [Professor James Stevens Curl].

(ii) Awards:

Item 5: awarded a commendation in the Comité International des Critiques d'Architecture (CICA) international book awards at the Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) Congress in Tokyo in 2011.

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The research has led to significant publications on a subject about which little was previously known and documented. The findings, mainly in the form of geographical surveys, thematic studies and biographical studies of individual architects, have been progressively published, in such quantity and to such a consistently high standard that they form a sizeable body of reference literature which has had multiple impacts on society and the built environment in Northern Ireland.

Specific impacts in 2008-2013 Within this current REF period the impact of this research and its ensuing publications since 1993 has taken the form of:

(a) an intellectual authority underpinning:

- (i) decisions regarding the statutory listing of buildings in Northern Ireland; (see Section 5a, nos. 1 & 3);
- (ii) decisions regarding the designation and maintenance of Conservation Areas in Northern Ireland;
- (iii) decisions regarding applications for Listed Building Consent to demolish;
decisions regarding applications to demolish unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas;
evidence given by Northern Ireland Environment Agency conservation architects in judicial reviews and planning appeal hearings; and
- (iv) presentations given by NIEA conservation Architects in their regular Listed Building Owners' Forum meetings, in which the publications are used as an educational tool in the absence of in-house publications by the agency itself (as, for example, English Heritage produces elsewhere), (see Section 5a, 1 below);

(b) reference tools for:

- (i) the RSUA Certificate in Historic Building Conservation course, based on ICOMOS Guidelines for Training, which has run from 2008 to 2012, (see Section 5a, no. 6).
- (ii) The Irish Architectural Archive Dictionary of Irish Architects 1720-1940 database, funded by the Irish Government, launched online in 2009, (see Section 5a, no. 7).

Context and background Impacts during the defined period should be seen in the context of a continuing effect over many years. In particular:

Listing of Historic Buildings

The Northern Ireland Government's conservation architects have been influenced in their selection of a number of listed buildings throughout Northern Ireland, since the early 1990s, by Dr Larmour's research. This is demonstrated by the citation of his publications, including, in addition to his books, his extensive series of approximately 30 articles on Northern Irish architects published in Perspective (The Journal of the Royal Society of Ulster Architects) from 1994 to 2007, which forms in itself a valuable reference, in their listing schedules as evidence to support their decisions. Belfast, An Illustrated Architectural Guide, (1988) has been used as an authority for the listing of many buildings in the city generally, while his book The Architectural Heritage of Malone and Stranmillis (1991) has been used as the authority for many listings in the Malone and Stranmillis suburb of Belfast (see Section 5, nos. 4 & 5).

Scheduling of Conservation Areas

Similarly, Planning Authorities in Northern Ireland have been clearly influenced in their selection of Conservation areas by the research (with citation in designation booklets) eg , 'Cathedral' in 1990, 'Linen' in 1992, 'Malone Park' in 1993, 'Adelaide Park' in 1993, 'Stranmillis' in 1996, 'Belfast City Centre' in 1998 and 'Malone' in 2000 (see Section 5a, no. 2).

These earlier impacts have had an on-going effect during this REF period where it is evident that those individual listings are being maintained and those Conservation Areas are being kept intact, while there is also clear evidence that the impact is gaining momentum.

Overall value of impact Cumulatively these impacts have led to the identification, conservation, presentation and eventual marketing of the best of the historic built heritage, by those with responsibility for it, as well as the inculcation of a deeper awareness, understanding and appreciation by those who use it. Thus the status and profile of historic architecture in Northern Ireland have been raised by this research and associated publications.

Aside from the direct and measurable benefit of helping to secure for the future the best of our architectural heritage, this research can also claim to have played an important part in the strengthening of the wider cultural base in Northern Ireland. This cultural reconnection is now stimulating urban regeneration and encouraging cultural tourism. Thus the impact of the work, although geographically local, is considerable, and over a long and lasting period, affecting a wide range of stakeholders and groups.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

(a) Published sources

1. Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Second Survey-Contractor's Instruction 9, July 2009 p.39 lists Dr Larmour's Belfast, An Illustrated Architectural Guide (1988) as one of its recommended sources of information; and--lists (p40) *Perspective* journal (which contains approximately 40 articles by Dr Larmour between 1993 and 2007) as a recommended source.
2. DoE (NI) Planning Service, A Design Guide for the Malone Conservation Area, Belfast 2010—cites *The Architectural Heritage of Malone and Stranmillis* (1991) in the bibliography of four key sources.
3. Historic Buildings Council for Northern Ireland 2007–2010, 17th Report, 2010—quotes (pp 41-42) from *Belfast, An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (1987 and 1988) in an article, Examples of Good Working Practice, Creative Conversions and Successful Partnerships.
4. DoE (NI), Northern Ireland Environment Agency Historic Buildings Database (www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/content-databases), a database in the public domain for listed buildings in Northern Ireland a relevant example, amongst others, is HB 18/13/096 Tea House Tollymore Forest Park, listed in 2010, with *Modern Ulster Architecture* (2006) cited as an authority.
5. Listing schedules for historic buildings which will not be placed on the NIEA public database until late 2013 (information available from NIEA conservation architects only at this stage)—a relevant example is HB 25/01/002, St Ignatius Church, Carryduff, confirmed in listing by Second Survey in 2012, citing *Modern Ulster Architecture* (2006).
6. Royal Society of Ulster Architects Certificate in Historic Building Conservation course, 2008-12: the select reading list includes 16 articles and books by Dr Larmour from 1988 to 2008.

(b) Contacts and organisations

1. Senior Conservation Architect, Northern Ireland Environment Agency.
2. Assistant Director and Senior Inspector Historic Monuments Unit, NIEA.
3. Convenor of the Certificate in Historic Building Conservation course, Royal Society of Ulster Architects.
4. Chairman, Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.