

Rathmines derives its name from the stronghold of the deMeones family, who first arrived in Dublin in 1279. The main thoroughfares cutting through the region are Rathmines Road Upper and Lower. These formed part of an ancient highway linking Tallaght with Dublin city.



Rathmines

History

The history and development of Rathmines may be traced back to around 800AD, when Rathmines, along with neighbouring Ranelagh, formed part of the “Lands of Cualu”. The immediate area was known as “The Rath”, after a historic fort in the locality.

In the early 14th century, the Rath came into the possession of a family called the de Meones, hence the name Meones’ Rath, which became Rathmines. In addition to the Rath, the de Meones family were tenants for other lands, known as the Stoneway and the Pass. The former, Stoneway, is now Mount Argus and the latter is now the road through Harold’s Cross.

In the 13th century, most of this land was originally part of the demesne of the early Christian St. Kevin’s Church, owned by the Archbishop of Dublin. The remains of St. Kevin’s Church are located on Camden Row, off present-day Wexford Street.

The Battle of Rathmines

Two early battles are associated with Rathmines. In the “Bloody Fields” occurred the slaughter of many early English colonists of Dublin by the Irish of Wicklow, which gave its name to Black Monday.

In 1649, Parliamentarians under Colonel Jones attacked and defeated an army led by James Butler, the Marquis of Ormond, a Royalist. They killed 4,000 of Ormond’s men and took 3,000 prisoner. This ferocious encounter stretched from Rathmines and “The Bloody Fields” adjoining the Dodder River, eastwards towards the Baggotrath, close to present-day Baggot Street.

The Village

During the 17th century the lands of Rathmines came into the possession of Sir George Radcliffe. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Temple family, ennobled under the title of Palmerston, took possession of the lands, thus accounting for the use of the name Palmerston in many of the street-names of the area.

Up until the early 19th century Rathmines village was a small hamlet on the banks of The Swan River. Although the river is now culverted beneath ground, its original course ran behind the houses on the western



side of the Rathmines Road Lower. From 1825 onwards Rathmines underwent a rapid development. Lewis’ *Topographical Directory of Ireland*, 1837 describes it as being :

“a substantial village and suburb of Dublin... containing 1,600 inhabitants. ...It now forms a fine suburb, commencing at Portobello Bridge and continuing a line of handsome houses, with some pretty detached villas, about one mile and a half”.

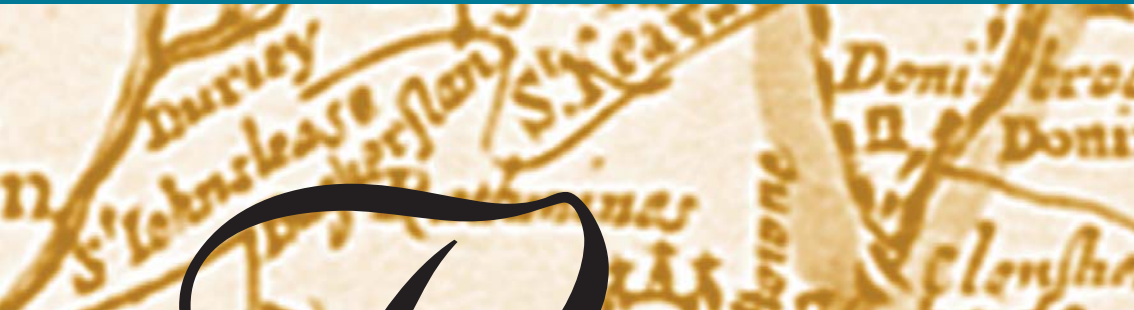
Although traditionally within the jurisdiction of Dublin Corporation, in 1840 the area became part of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council. The Rathmines Township was formed in 1847, which gave the town substantial freedom in looking after its own affairs. The township expanded in 1862 to include Sandymount and again in 1866 and finally in 1880, when Milltown was brought under its control.



1. Bessborough Parade, a 19th-century street, at the back of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners Church in Rathmines.
2. A late-19th century photograph looking south along Rathmines Road Lower. (Lawrence Collection, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland).
3. Prince Edward Tce in Rathmines. This is an elegant early 19th century terrace, similar to many other such terraces in the area.
4. Slattery’s Public House, retaining its fine 19th century shopfront and many of its other original features.

Ráth Maonaí

From its position as a small hamlet to the south of Dublin, Rathmines has grown to be a popular and vibrant area. Although technically a suburb, Rathmines retains its own distinct character, a reminder of a time when Rathmines was a town in its own right.



Past & present

Growth

Under the Rathmines & Rathgar Urban District Council, the area underwent a period of rapid development in the late 19th-century, in tandem with developments underway in the adjoining Pembroke District to the east. Much of the 19th-century development was carried out by speculative builders, in the form of homogeneous terraces, aimed at wealthy businessmen, successful traders, clerks and civil servants. As part of the conditions for development laid down by the Rathmines Town Commissioners, each builder had to contribute to the coffers of the Council or provide amenities such as paving. This helped free the Commissioners to provide key social services such as the Vartry Water Scheme. By the time Rathmines was amalgamated back into the Dublin Metropolitan area in the early 20th century, Rathmines was a thriving and prosperous community.



Housing

The first part of Rathmines to be developed was along Rathmines Road in the early-19th century. These houses were marketed towards the well-off merchant and professional classes who wished to escape the congestion and pollution of the city. The Rathmines houses had the advantage of front and rear gardens. As the century progressed, so too did the urbanisation of Rathmines, Rathgar and Ranelagh.



Until the 1860s, family houses in the area were smaller versions of the Georgian type. Then the designs became freer with large bay windows illuminating the interior, and basements raised above ground level, creating impressive flights of stone staircases leading to the front door such as those in Belgrave Sq. A number of houses, such as those on Leinster Square and Bessborough Parade were rendered, with decorative surrounds framing the doors and windows.

Later in the 19th century, builders became increasingly influenced by the emerging Revivalist styles of the period, such as the Gothic Revival. Houses on Frankfort Avenue, for example, pay homage to the Baronial style, with deep gabled fronts and decorative timber detailing. The other housing style of this period prevalent in the area is the "villa-style" house. These are detached homes with high basements and central doorcases. While the bulk of development was carried out in the Victorian period, small developments carried on into the 20th century. Again these were mainly family homes, although by the end of the century apartment complexes built by private individuals and the then Dublin Corporation became commonplace.

Public Architecture

Rathmines boasts a wealth of attractive public architecture, from fine historical shopfronts to religious institutions. The two most famous examples of public architecture in the area is of course the town-hall with its landmark clock tower, designed by Sir Thomas Drew in 1895 and the Carnegie Library and Technical Schools opposite, by F.G. Hicks and completed in 1913. The design of both buildings contrast markedly with one another. The Library is constructed in mellow



red brick with stone details such as the fine Classical entrance. The Town Hall on the other hand is constructed in the neo-Elizabethan style in vibrant red brick with crisp terracotta detailing.

Commercial Buildings

Many of the commercial buildings in Rathmines began life as residential houses. As the population of the area increased, so too did commercial pressure on the village. Many of the houses built retail units over their front gardens. Some of the buildings, including Slattery's public house and Doran's barber shop retain their historic shopfronts. In some cases two-storey commercial buildings were built on the front sites of the earlier houses behind. The Bank of Ireland and Atlanco buildings on the Lower Rathmines Road are two fine examples of late-Victorian commercial architecture, again designed with the historical Classical and Scottish Baronial styles in mind. The ornamental approach to architecture continued into the opening decades of the 20th century. Pared-down modernism eventually came into vogue as can be seen from the façade of the Stella Cinema.

Religious Structures

The most famous church in Rathmines is, of course, the Church of Mary Immaculate Refuge of Sinners on the Lower Rathmines Road. The Greek Revival church has an enormous green copper dome, which is readily seen from vantage points throughout south county Dublin. The Gothic Revival style became the overriding influence of the late 19th century. It was a natural choice for ecclesiastical architecture, and the Church of the Holy Trinity on Church Avenue is one of the best examples in the area. The Gothic influence may also be seen in the charming red brick Methodist Chapel and the present home of the Rathmines and Ranelagh Musical Society, a venerable Dublin institution.

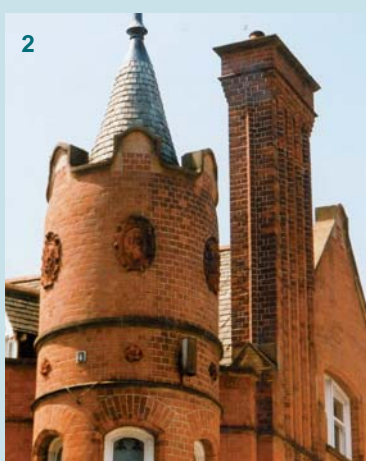
1. View of Rathmines with the Town Hall and Clock Tower visible to the right.
2. Doran's barber shop.
3. One of the fine, late-19th century houses from Belgrave Square.
4. The Carnegie Library, built in 1913.
5. Church of the Holy Trinity, Church Avenue.

Inné & Inníu

Can you identify or locate the following buildings and architectural features in and around your area?



What & where



1. Terracotta doorcase with carved oak doors of the Bank of Ireland on Lower Rathmines Road.
2. Detail of the ornate brick spires and chimney-breast of the Atlanco building dating from the 1890s.
3. Detail of a blind arch on the facade of the Holy Trinity Church, Church Avenue.
4. Finely carved timber oriel window in Belgrave Square.

5. Section of ornamental brickwork on the facade of the Methodist Church on Rathmines Road Upper dating from the second half of the 19th century.
6. The elaborate Art Deco fanlight and date stone from the Post Office building on Rathmines Road Upper.
7. The exuberant terracotta gable panels and datestone from the top floor of the Town Hall.
8. Fine example of a well-maintained early-20th century end-of-terrace house with original windows and slate roof.

9. Carved, turn-of-the-century limestone pier featuring angels and crest on Grove Park.
10. Art Deco facade of the former Kodak building on Lower Rathmines Road.
11. Attractive early victorian doorcase with leaded fanlight and side-lights. The original door is intact. (Leinster Square).
12. Section of unusual fanlight and doorcase from Doran's barbers on Castlewood Avenue.

Cad & céard

Cabra or Cabragh derives its name from the Irish, Cabhrach, which can mean “ a thicket”. This name is possibly a reminder of an ancient wood in the area, which stretched from present-day Dalymount to Rathoath Road. The area was formerly divided into Much (Greater) and Little Cabra.



Cabra

The Middle Ages



In medieval times, the lands in the Cabra area were owned by a number of individuals and monasteries. The most important of these was the Cistercian Priory of St. Mary, which was originally located off Capel Street. Before the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, St. Mary's was reputed to be one of the three richest monasteries in Britain or Ireland, owning lands around Dublin and in the west of the country. The lands were mainly farmed by tenant farmers. A number of tower houses and castles were built in the area, the most notable being King James's Castle or Finglaswood House, demolished in the early 20th century. After the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII, St. Mary's was dissolved and its lands and wealth distributed.

After the Reformation

Like Britain, Ireland and the “Pale” region surrounding Dublin was thrown into turmoil in the 16th and 17th centuries by the great religious schism. The Catholic Church's powerbase amongst the wealthy was reduced as many followed King Henry VIII's example and converted to Protestantism. The monasteries in particular suffered the brunt of Henry's wrath. He dissolved the monasteries and sold or donated their lands to his allies. Due to this new abundance of land, many local families acquired greater wealth and status and built grand houses to reflect their position.

Cabra's architecture

Cabra House

This was once the most imposing of all of the grand houses in the Cabra area, and was sited at the junction of Fassauga Avenue and Nephin Road. It was originally built around 1592 by the Seagrave family and was surrounded by gardens, parks and orchards. Its outbuildings even included a malt-house and brewery. The interior was reported to be richly decorated with fine furniture and tapestries. During the turbulent 17th century, when these islands were rocked by rebellion and civil war, control of the house and its lands went from being royalist Catholic to Parliamentary and back again.



The house appears to have been rebuilt in the early 18th century in the style of the time. One of its residents was the infamous Lord Norbury, who was known as the “Hanging Judge”, as he sentenced people to death for the lightest of reasons. He was a presiding judge at the trial of Robert Emmet, and it was he who sentenced him to death. It remained occupied by the extended Seagrave family until the beginning of the 20th century, when alas, it was demolished in 1939, to make way for the new estates of Cabra West.

Cabra Villa

Cabra Villa, which no longer stands, is noteworthy in that it was once home of the Rathborne family, the renowned candlemakers. It was located close to Cabra House, at the junction of Fassauga Avenue and Rathoath Road. The house was demolished around the same time as Cabra House.

Beggsboro House

Beggsboro House at the Dalymount end of Fassauga Road is one of the few larger pre-1940s houses still standing in the Cabra area. It was built by the Begg family who first appear in Ireland in the early 15th century. Due to their allegiance to the Catholic faith and the Crown, the Beggs were banished to Connaught by Oliver Cromwell in the 17th century.

The red brick house dates to 1873 and originally had a sizeable portion of land attached. This was farmed as a market garden and at one stage, grapes were even grown in a glasshouse here.



1. Church of Christ the King, New Cabra Road.
2. John Speed's map of 1610, showing the Cistercian Priory of St. Mary.
3. New Cabra Road looking towards Phibsboro.
4. Beggsboro House, one of the few remaining historic houses in the Cabra region.

An Chabhrach

[illegible]

The schools in the area include the Dominican Convent school and the adjoining St. Catherine's school on Rathoath Road. The Dominican School is based around a former residence of the Seagrave family. One of the most attractive modern schools in the area is the red brick St. Declan's School on Nephin Road. One of the longest-established educational building is St. Joseph's School for the Deaf at Cabra Cross. This fine Victorian limestone building was designed by Charles Geoghegan in 1864.



- Inné & Inníu*

As recently as 300 years ago, the area surrounding present-day Pearse Street was a marshy strand, fed by the confluence of the River Steine with the tidal River Liffey. As the Liffey was much wider at that time, the area appears to have regularly been underwater.



Pearse Street

The roadway that is now Pearse Street was laid out after 1791. At that time it was called Great Brunswick Street, after King George I of Great Britain. It was renamed Pearse Street in 1920, after the educationalist and leader of the 1916 Rising, Pádraic Pearse and his brother Willie, who were born in No. 27.

Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages, the area was dominated by two institutions. The first was the Priory of All Hallows, which became Trinity College Dublin in 1592, to the south of the current street. To the north on Townsend Street was the St. James' Hostel, which housed pilgrims making their way to the pilgrimage centre of Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain. As some of the pilgrims were seeking a cure for leprosy the hostel eventually became a lepers hospital and the hill on which it stood became known as Lazer's Hill.



19th & 20th Centuries

The acquisition of land for the new street progressed in spurts, being reliant on the success of the renegotiation of favourable terms with the landowners, with the street extending ever eastward to line up with the new Grand Canal Docks.

The north side of Pearse Street appears to have developed first with the south side following after 1818. The street was quite fashionable due to its proximity to Trinity College. The western end in particular was a vibrant commercial centre until the late 19th century. Its desirability increased after the opening of the Westland Row train station in 1847. Shipping remained an important aspect of life in the area as boats moored as far inland as the Customs House until the mid 20th century. The Port lent an industrial character to the eastern part of the street in particular, with the attractive 19th century gas holder being a dominant feature in Barrow Street until quite recently.

The character of Pearse Street gradually changed in the 20th century. The residential community is still a strong facet of the area, although modern apartment blocks have replaced some of the 19th century building stock. The western end has become dominated by Trinity College, and plans are afoot to integrate the university more into the street, thus restoring life to this important thoroughfare.

Early History

The western end of Pearse Street partly cuts through what was originally a strand between the now culverted River Steine and the River Liffey. The eastern half of the street was largely underwater until the late 17th century when land reclamation was carried out. For many centuries an important feature of the region was a tall boulder called the Long Stone, or Steine in Norse. A sculpture, similar in design to the original, was erected on its site in 1986. The Steine was the location of the rise of the Viking rule in Dublin as the stone marked the original Norse landing place. It was also the site of their swansong where they were defeated by the Anglo-Norman forces in 1171.

17th & 18th Centuries

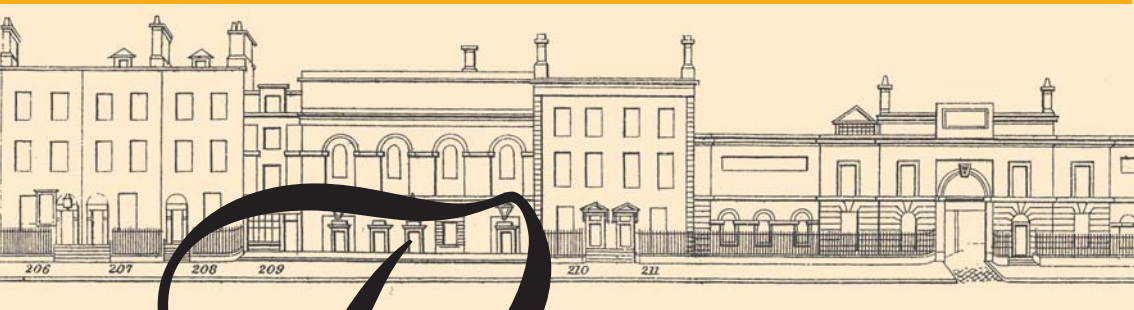
Alderman Hawkins was the first to reclaim the land on which Pearse Street stands from the River Liffey in c.1662. The lands here would still have been quite marshy until the River Steine was culverted in the late 17th century, allowing the grounds around Townsend Street to be built upon. This development continued apace, as 18th century maps show the area to the north of Trinity College was densely urbanised less than 100 years later. Pearse Street as we know it today was planned by the Wide Street Commissioners in 1791 as part of a redevelopment scheme in the region. The Wide Street Commissioners were a planning body set up in 1757 to initially develop a new street from Essex Bridge to Dublin Castle (Parliament Street). Based on the success on this street, their brief was extended to build or widen streets in the then largely Medieval city.



1. View of O'Neill's Public House on Pearse Street as viewed through a cylinder glass pane.
2. From Roque, Plan of the city of Dublin, 1756 showing the site of Pearse St. just to the south of Lazer's Hill (Townsend Street).
3. Contemporary drawing of the first train crossing Cumberland Street, from what is now Pearse Street Station.
4. Excerpt from View of Dublin, 1846, showing the Liffey and New Brunswick St. running parallel.
5. Engraving from 1824 of the Dublin Oil Gas Station, which is now the disused Academy Cinema.

Sráid Phíarsach

Pearse Street has an almost unique place in Dublin as regards the sheer diversity in the form and functions of its buildings. Ornate buildings and shopfronts sit side by side with modern designs.



Past & present

Introduction



The buildings on Pearse Street may be grouped in three distinct types: commercial, educational and residential. A number of the historic buildings have been adapted for use either as commercial premises and offices, breathing new life into the old buildings. St. Mark's Family Worship Centre, opening onto Mark Street is a good example of this. This former Church of Ireland church was built between 1730 and 1755, and fell into disuse due to a dwindling congregation. In 1988 it was renovated and adapted to its current use.



Commercial

The northern side of the street in particular has a concentration of business premises. Many of these are 19th century houses with shopfronts at ground floor level. An example of this is No. 27, the former home of Padraic and Willie Pearse (fig. 1). The building also housed a monumental sculptors workshop in the basement, opened by the Pearse's father in the late-19th century. In the 20th century it underwent a number of alterations, but was returned to its 19th century format c.2000 by the Ireland Institute.



Classical style punctured by large windows allowing as much natural daylight to flood the interior as possible. The library recently underwent an extensive refurbishment programme and now houses the headquarters of the Dublin City Libraries and Archive.



At the western end is the large IDA Enterprise Centre complex, with its limestone IDA tower designed by Alfred Derbyshire in 1862 (fig. 3). Close by is St. Andrew's Resource Centre, which is an inventive example of how a problematic historic structure may be reused. The ornate Victorian building was originally designed as a school, which fell out of use in the late 20th century. It was then converted into the resource centre.

Another interesting building is the former Academy Cinema (fig. 5). Originally the Dublin Oil Gas Co., the building was designed in 1824 by J. Cooke in Classical style. The former factory was converted for use as a theatre in the 1840s. In 1921 the concert rooms shut and it became the Palace Cinema. The building was altered in 1956, and again in the 1960s when it became the Academy Cinema. It was closed in the 1980s and has fallen into disrepair since.



One of Pearse Street's landmark buildings is the Garda Station at the western end of the street. Designed by M.J. Burke and the remarkable H.G. Leask in 1912, this striking structure was inspired by Ireland's medieval and Elizabethan architecture, a particular interest of Leask who went on to become Ireland's Inspector of National Monuments. On closer inspection, the medieval inspiration follows through into the details with a number of drip-stones terminating in figurative stops in the form of officers and constables of the period (fig. 7). This directly follows from the medieval tradition of church benefactors, abbots and workmen having their likenesses carved into corbels.

Residential

The main form of residential accommodation on Pearse Street are the terraces of early-mid 19th century brick houses on both sides of the street and on Pearse Square (fig. 6). Many of these houses retain their railed front sites and ornate doorcases. These properties are becoming increasingly desirable homes as public interest in period houses grows. As such, every effort should be made to maintain them and retain as many of their original features as possible.

Throughout the 20th century, increasing residential demands on the area has forced people to live in higher densities. This has been achieved in two ways. The first is the provision of terraced houses in concentrated groups by the then Dublin Corporation in the 1980s. These buildings between the Resource Centre and the Widow Scallan's public house are narrower and slightly taller than the average modern house, but are complimentary to the 19th century building stock. The other solution is the construction of apartment blocks. These range from the attractive Goldsmith Hall complex used as student accommodation for Trinity College and the private Westland Square apartment/ office complex across the street.

Public Buildings

Trinity College Dublin is synonymous with Pearse Street. The university occupies many of the buildings on the southern side of the street, including Nos. 183-187 with their ornate early-20th century terracotta shopfronts. Currently, plans are afoot to integrate the campus more with the street, thus creating a new vibrancy at the east end of Trinity College and on Pearse Street itself.

Another important component in the educational life of the Pearse Street region is the Gilbert Library (fig. 4). This attractive building was designed by the prolific architect J.J. McCarthy in c.1907. The design is in a

- 1. No. 27 Pearse Street, the former home of Padraic and Willie Pearse.
- 2. The railway bridge at St. Mark's.
- 3. The IDA Enterprise Centre.
- 4. The Gilbert Library, now extensively renovated.
- 5. Pearse Square.
- 6. The Academy Cinema.
- 7. A figurative stop in the form of an officer from one of the doorways of Pearse Street Garda Station.

Inné & Inníu



Reachtaíocht

Can you identify or locate the following buildings and architectural features in and around your area?



What & where



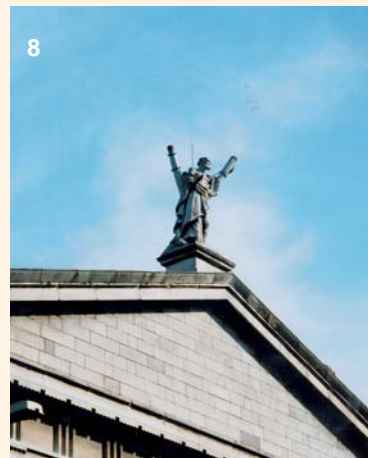
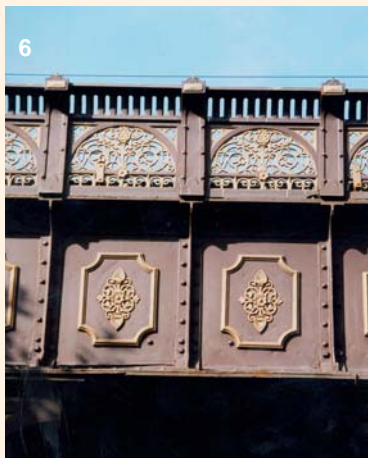
1. Victorian cast-iron post box on the corner of the New Cabra and Imaal Road.
2. Rock-faced granite wall and pier from Quarry Road.
3. Detail from the doorcase of the 19th-century Bessborough House on Fassaugh Road.
4. Example of houses built on Quarry Road by The Irish Sailors and Soldiers Land Trust in the 1930s.
5. Statue of the Virgin Mary at the junction of Quarry Road and Fassaugh Road.
6. The Art Deco Cabra Hall on Quarry Road.
7. Detail of the carved limestone entrance gates to the Dominican Convent, Rathoath Road.
8. More Art Deco – this time an attractive wrought iron gate on the New Cabra Road.
9. One of the few remaining samples of 19th century architecture in Cabra, this stone cottage stands on Annamoe Terrace, close to the former Cattle Mart.
10. Well-maintained, c. 1940s semi-detached house, on New Cabra Road with original windows, door, garage and railings.
11. Typical early 20th century timber window in Old Cabra.
12. Section of the tracery rose window from the Church of Christ the King.

Cad & céard

Can you identify or locate the following buildings and architectural features in and around your area?



What & where



1. Plaque on No. 27 Pearse St., the childhood home of Willie and Padraic Pearse.
2. Door of Fire Station which was erected between 1904-1907.
3. Windows of Gilbert Library (now headquarters for Dublin City Library), the biggest of the Carnegie libraries in Ireland. The windows are in the grand Palladian tradition of buildings like Leinster House and Powerscourt House on Sth. William Street.
4. Detail from O'Neill's Public House showing the Doyle crest in gold leafed mosaic and decorative tiles.
5. Detail of early 20th-century doors and doorcases of Nos. 184-185 Pearse St. The doors are framed by Doric columns set on pedestals.
6. Railway bridge at Westland Row (Pearse St.) Station which was opened in 1834.
7. Ornamental wrought iron corner pier with lamp.
8. Statue on pediment of St. Andrew's Church, Westland Row, which was completed in 1841. The church included a house on either side and a national school to the rear which later became CBS Westland Row.
9. Decorative wrought iron railing at St. Mark's Church.
10. A reinstated section of carved stonework from No. 27 Pearse St. This design was originally carved by Willie and Padraic Pearse's father.
11. Bank of Ireland on the junction of Lombard Street and Pearse Street. The original building dates from 1855 with later additions.
12. Reasonably intact shopfront dating from the late-1800s, showing its carved consol brackets and fascia.

Gad & céard