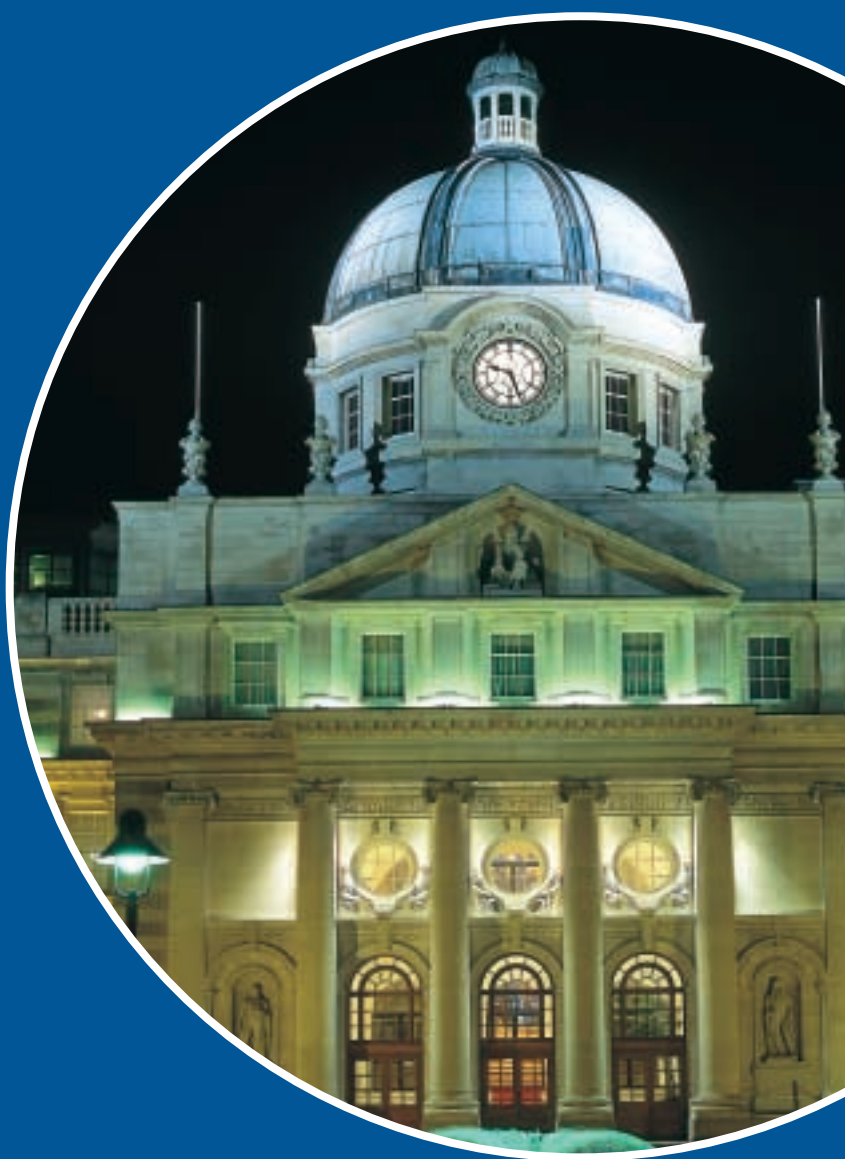


Treoir do
THITHE AN RIALTAIS

A Guide To
GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS



WELCOME TO GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

I would like to extend a warm welcome to you to Government Buildings, a landmark feature of Dublin City and the seat of Irish Government. The building is a striking example of public architecture of the early 20th Century, which was beautifully adapted by the Office of Public Works as the home for my Department.



Bertie Ahern, TD
Taoiseach

I hope that this short guide will enhance your visit, particularly by highlighting the work of Irish craft workers.

Bertie Ahern
Taoiseach

Government Buildings houses the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister), the Council Chamber (where Government Meetings take place), the Department of Finance and the Office of the Attorney General.

The building was constructed between 1904 and 1922 as a combination of Government Offices and a Royal College of Science, which occupied the magnificent centre block. Its function is reflected in the statues of Mathematician William Rowan Hamilton and Scientist Richard Boyle which flank the entrance. The Architects were Sir Aston Webb of London (who also designed Admiralty Arch in London's Trafalgar Square) and a member of a great Irish Architectural family Sir Thomas Manley Dean who was a Cork man.

The style of the building is grandiose Edwardian Baroque. The façade is of rough granite and smooth pale Portland stone. The Granite came from Ballyknocken Quarries near Blessington, Co. Wicklow and the Portland Stone from Southern England.

Internally the building was one of the most modern of its day. The floors were made of concrete and all the corridors were paved with marble tiles.

The College was incorporated in University College Dublin in 1926. In 1989 U.C.D. vacated the premises. Between January and December 1991 the building was renovated by architects of the Office of Public Works to house the Department of the Taoiseach which had previously occupied a side wing.

A SPECTACULAR CEREMONIAL STAIRCASE

was created as a centrepiece of the restored building on the site of a former lecture theatre. A magnificent stained glass window is the focal point of the entrance. The staircase is a new beech-wood stairs, surrounded by beech panelling. The stained glass window is by Evie Hone exhibited as part of the Irish Pavilion at the 1939 World Trade Fair in New York. It is entitled “My Four Green Fields”. It represents the four provinces of Ireland, the Three Crowns of Munster, the Red Hand of Ulster, the Harp of Leinster and the half spread eagle and the Sword representing Connaught. A complementary carpet was designed by Irish artist Mary Fitzgerald and handmade by V’Soske – Joyce of Galway.

ART WORKS

Contemporary Irish art is displayed throughout the building.





SYCAMORE CONFERENCE ROOM

One of four conference rooms throughout the building, the room takes its name from table and side units which are made of Sycamore with Yew wood inlay – designed and manufactured by Eric Pierse of Cork. The handles on the side units are of Bog Oak.

THE OFFICE OF THE TAOISEACH (PRIME MINISTER)

The wall panelling in the Taoiseach's Office is very distinct as it is Irish oak. Its curved end, or apse also in solid oak panelling is a particular tribute to the craftsmanship of the carpenters and joiners, Gem Joinery, Co. Longford.

The fireplace is by the Italian, Bossi who worked in Ireland in the 18th century. It is marble marquetry a process where marble was crushed into powder, coloured and inlaid into the cut marble to a special design.

TAOISEACH'S CORRIDOR

Centre piece sculpture by Oisín Kelly,
The Children of Lir.

CONFERENCE ROOM (308)

This room was the former library. The Office of Public Works designed the beech tables.

CONFERENCE ROOM (301)

Beech Panelling has been introduced on the walls. The form of the table, which is made of ash, is reflected in the ceiling. A brass harp, the symbol of the Irish State, copied from the correct form as issued by the Chief Heralds Office, has been inlaid into the centre of the table. This is the work of Eric Pearse. The side-units are also of ash, en-suite with the table. The whole area is wired to hear the Dáil Bell. It rings for seven minutes to allow all Deputies to get to the Dáil as the doors of the chamber are then closed to members of Parliament (T.D.'s of the Dail) before a vote takes place.





THE ITALIAN ROOM

A conference/dining room in Italian style. Here, in both the room and corridor leading to it, the contrast with the décor and the rest of the building is startling and effective. Vivid colours take over from the muted tones of the rest of the building.

An ornate tile table was made in Dublin by Tileworks, a small Dublin firm.

CABINET ROOM

This is the room in which, since 1922, the Government has made all important decisions. It is often known as the Council Chamber as the Government, prior to the 1937 Constitution, was known as the Executive Council. The Portraits on the walls are some of our greatest leaders and architects of our Nation. Also on display in cabinets are some important artefacts, including an 18th century set of Irish Statutes with remarkable red leather and gold-tooled bindings.

CABINET FURNITURE

New cabinet room furniture was commissioned by the Office of Public Works in 2004 to incorporate the latest technology for e-cabinet.

TABLE

The new Cabinet table was designed by Michael Bell Design (Co. Laois) and made by Fitzgerald Furniture of Kells. It is made of Irish burr walnut (centre panel and dark band around edge), European walnut (the lighter wood) with ebony stringing, brass inlay with a patinated bronze track discretely housing the technology outlets. The innovative shape of the table is designed to maximise sight lines and seating capacity within the room.

CHAIRS

The Chairs are designed by Michael Bell Design and hand made by craftsman Michael Smith of Fitzgerald Furniture. The design is a unique & particularly complex one incorporating virtually no straight lines - making them a significant challenge for the craftsman. Each chair incorporates 88 pieces of individually hand worked walnut. The chairs are high backed, with a burr walnut back panel and upholstered in black hide leather.

LECTERN

The lectern - used for making presentations to Cabinet - was designed by Michael Bell design. It was crafted by Verena Meyer of Michael Bell design and is finished in rubbed lacquered Irish burr walnut.

SIDE CABINETS

The side cabinets were designed by Michael Bell Design and crafted by Fitzgerald Furniture of Kells.

TOURS

Tours take place on most Saturdays and free timed tickets may be collected from the National Gallery on Merrion Square from 10am.

Tours may, however, be cancelled at short notice due to government business. For up to date information see the Department Web site where there is a virtual tour available.

www.gov.ie/taoiseach

