



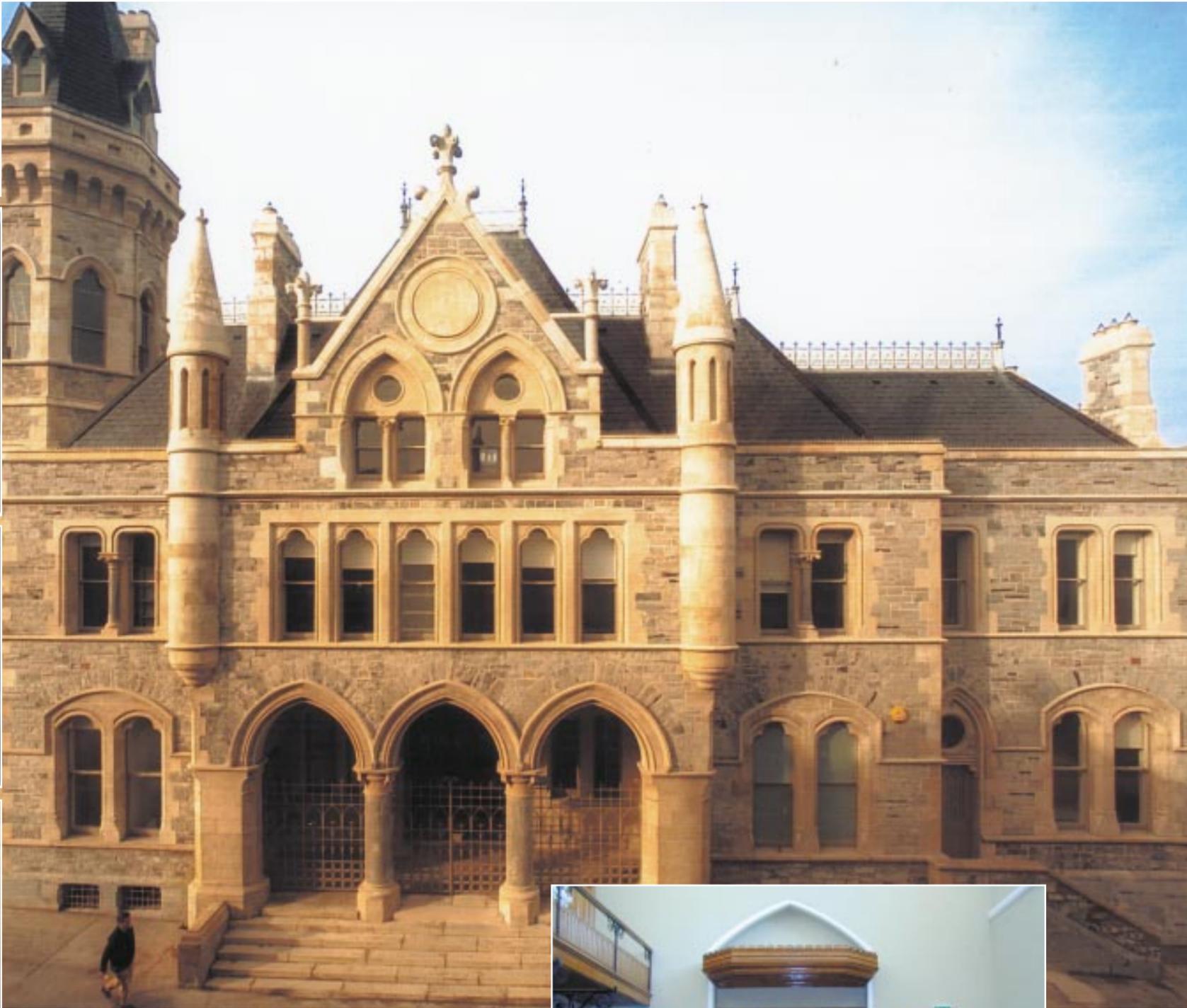
COURTS SERVICE
An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna



Sligo Courthouse



The refurbishment of Sligo Courthouse.



Sligo Courthouse

The refurbishment project for Sligo courthouse started in late 1998 and reached a conclusion in the last days of 2001 - over 1,000 days of joint effort by the Courts Service, Sligo County Council, the design team and the contractor to return a major national architectural monument to health and a renewed useful life serving the people of Sligo. The courthouse in Sligo presents a united and successful stone Gothic-Revival elevation to Teeling Street, its dramatic corner tower forming part of the well-known outline of the town against Ben Bulbin. In fact, the building is a complex structure of many dates including an eighteenth century gaol and parts of an earlier courthouse on the site: these disparate elements - which can be seen on old Ordnance Survey maps of the town - were transformed by the architect Rawson Carroll after 1874.

When the refurbishment project commenced in late 1998, the building was a warren of spaces: the advantage of the extended building period was a picturesque and always surprising profile of public and private rooms: the juxtaposition of buildings of different dates in the same plan had, however, engendered a certain 'closed' character where the circulation around the building was difficult and circuitous. There were several external spaces formed between the building and its tight external perimeter, a North courtyard used for parking and a long narrow space behind a high wall to the rear. There was also an unused courtyard to the south overgrown and covered in rubble. This was accessed from Teeling Street and had served as the entrance for the Grand Jury: there was a doorway at the opposite end which led to a beautiful staircase and on to the Grand Jury Room on the first floor.

Renovation and refurbishment works

The brief for the refurbishment of Sligo courthouse was substantial and based on Courts Service requirements following consultation with all court users. It called for the full upgrading of the building to provide state of the art facilities for court staff in their own offices and in the public office function for Circuit and District Courts, for two new courtrooms, family law facilities, extended consultation facilities, refurbished judges' chambers, secure holding cell accommodation for prisoners with separate access, jury rooms and accommodation for the legal profession. Many rooms were to have additional kitchen and WC facilities. As a consequence, the courthouse was to be completely re-serviced with new computer, fire and security facilities and new heating and ventilation systems: the building was to be completely accessible from a disabled perspective. In the overall sense, the building had to work for all of those using it without destroying the fabric or its own unusual internal rhythm.

The stated aim of the project was to retain as much as possible of all of the existing building elements from walls and windows to doors, skirtings and fittings in the refurbishment but to make modern interventions of character where necessary designed to stand against the older fabric, much as the Victorian architects had worked confidently on the earlier building.

The fabric of the building was conserved: there was much discussion with the contractor about careful protection of the existing surfaces during the works and the sequence in which work would be carried out. A new staircase, clad in limestone, was installed to connect Court 3 to the main entrance hall. A public lift was installed behind the main hall with secondary disabled lifts and discreetly positioned around other changes of level to provide disabled access to every room. Using these innovative changes, new circulation routes were threaded through the building: old staircases gained new uses and the South courtyard was revitalised with trees and seats for public use. The whole building was repainted using heritage paints.

The work which has been undertaken will ensure that the building can continue to function as a courthouse for many decades to come.

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COURTS SERVICE
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Building Team

Architects:
Mc Cullough Mulvin.

Quantity Surveyors:
A J Mc Caul.

Structural Engineers:
Kavanagh Mansfield.

Services Engineers:
Homan O'Brien.

Contractors:
Purcell Construction.

Stone Consultants:
David Slattery Architects.

Judges

His Honour Judge Anthony Kennedy
(Judge of the Circuit Court),
His Honour Judge Carroll Moran
(Judge of the Circuit Court),
Judge Oliver Mc Guinness
(Judge of the District Court).

Court Officials:

County Registrar:
Mr. Kieran Mc Dermott.
Tel: 071 42228
Fax: 071 62915

Chief Clerk:
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