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2:1 The Paper Tube Project

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Book Review

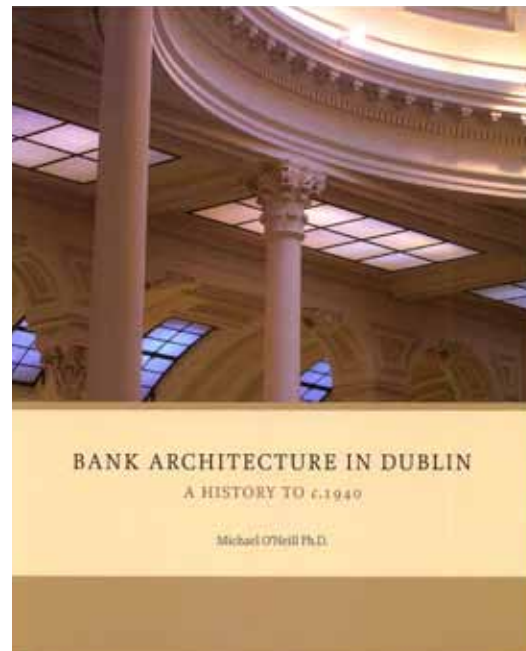
By Frederick O'Dwyer

Michael O'Neill, Bank Architecture in Dublin: A History to c.1940

This is a welcome study of a building type that encapsulates something of a dichotomy; while the streetscape contribution of Dublin's rich heritage of bank architecture is well known, their less easily viewed interiors are not. The author argues with justification that the Golden Age of Dublin banking was in the Victorian/Edwardian era, when great city centre buildings by masters like W.G. Murray, Thomas Drew and W.H. Lynn were built. Their banking halls, typically lined with marble and mahogany beneath a rich canopy of decorative plasterwork, are the commercial equivalents of the great Catholic churches of J.J. McCarthy, Pugin and Ashlin. However while the curious can study internal ecclesiastical detail at leisure, the bank dawdler is unlikely to be left unattended for very long. In the many colour plates and drawings of this book, these interiors can now be studied and compared. There are large exterior views too, as well as 35mm size prints of the 78 buildings in the inventory at the back. Unfortunately, many of the plates appear to have been taken on dull days which are unforgiving to architectural stonework. For many Dublin buildings, the 7am sunny Sunday morning shot may be the only answer, as the view of the banking palaces of College Green/Dame Street on page 28 implies.

Many of Dublin's Victorian banks were designed in a hybrid style combining Gothic and classical elements and O'Neill points to Deane and Woodward's TCD Museum Building of the 1850s as being influential in this regard. Curiously its most notable clone, the former Munster and Leinster (now AIB) bank on Dame Street, is not entirely Victorian, as the façade was successfully doubled in length in 1957-60. The section on documentary sources, taken from the IAA on-line dictionary, could have done with more editing (a number of sculptors are listed under 'architects').

Michael O'Neill, Bank Architecture in Dublin: A History to c.1940, published by The Heritage Office, Dublin City Council, €17.50. Available from the RIAI Bookshop.

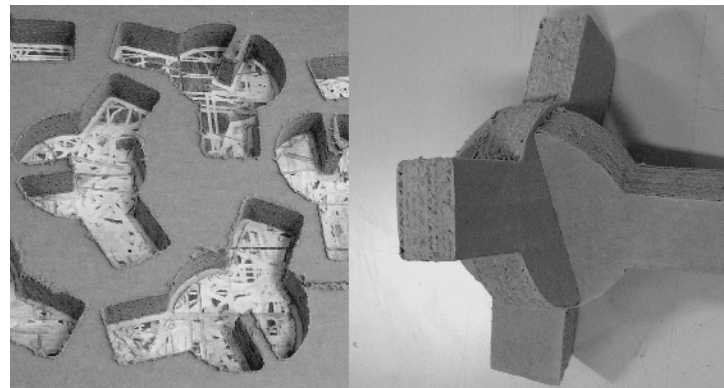


Exhibition Review By Noel Brady

2:1 The Paper Tube Project @ Darc Space

The latest exhibition of the Paper Tube Project at darc space architecture gallery would suggest that the future of architecture is in danger of evaporating altogether. The resulting structure was designed to fit the space becoming a portal from entrance to the rear seminar room where the data is held. For darc space the installation has been attracting passing members of the public, an engagement greater than that of drawings or photographs, this even for an exhibition that could even be described at meagre. Perhaps it is because of its potential or maybe its playful characteristic, part climbing frame, part yurt. One should

not mistake this playfulness, its ordinariness (paper tubes) as lacking seriousness. This is a measure of work that commenced over two years ago as an applied research project at the School of Architecture DIT, led by Marcin Wojcik, lecturer in Architectural Design Computation. Using parametric modelling software, Marcin and a group of students devised a set of algorithms to determine the optimum use of a set of fixed elements (tubes) to form a 3-dimensional structure (roof or shelter). The key to the utilisation and deployment was the making of a simple connector which could be formed from two interlocking 2-dimensional shapes.



The power of the algorithm is in transforming a flat sheet into a pattern of nodes to connect the tubes. By linking high tech computer processes to low tech production, it offers potential solutions to emergency shelter provision in particular to non-standard situations. By utilising the computer in this way, more can be made of less. It took 28 hours of cutting and 14 hours assembling (2:1) to extract 522 pieces, making 261 joints, connecting 466 tubes to form 220 linear metres covering about 20m² in a complex polygonal tunnel space. This portal offers one route to the future, providing the potential for a personalised self-defined

and self-build architecture. Marcin has examined the potential of applying this technique to emergency shelter provision in disaster zones applying the principles to diverse materials from Bamboo to Scaffolding Poles. If properly harnessed, the techniques and methodologies on display could see the project develop into a game-changing piece of applied technology.

The Paper Tube Project is led by Marcin Wojcik assisted by architectural design students, Kevin Coffey and Alan O'Farrell. www.darc.space.ie

