

# 36 WESTLAND ROW

AUTUMN 2015

## *Home of the Royal Irish Academy of Music*



**EXTERIOR OF 36  
WESTLAND ROW**

Located in the Georgian Quarter of Dublin, No 36 Westland Row has been the home of the Royal Irish Academy of Music since 1871.

### **Origins & Ownership**

In 1772, William Phillips of Phillips Green, Co. Wicklow, conveyed to Nicholas Tench of Fassaroe, Co Wicklow, land in Westland Brickfields. The land consisted of a frontage of 140 feet in Westland Row and stretched 212 feet from front to back.

Under the terms of the deed, Tench was to build “four good and substantial dwelling houses.”

Nos. 34, 35 & 36 Westland Row, (originally Nos. 2, 3 & 4) remain. The developer was also responsible for building houses in Ely

Place and Hume Street.

The Academy acquired No 36 in 1870 from Henry de Burgh for the sum of £2,000.

## *Architectural Features*

No 36 is a fine Georgian house with less grand neighbours (also a feature of rows in Merrion Square and Merrion Street). It is a four bay house of four storeys and basement with a granite façade at ground-floor level and red brick above with granite quoins on both corners. The tall windows on the first floor have surrounds of Portland Stone.

Some of the original features which remain

today include: the lamps on the front steps, the brass-bound lock and drop handle on the front door, the mahogany doors (those on the first floor inlaid), some marble chimney-pieces, the chair-rails, skirting boards and the beautiful stone staircase.

An unusual feature of the rooms on the first floor is the pewter decoration on the skirting-boards, chair-rail, door-cases and window-cases. The only

other house in Dublin known to have this is the University Club at 17 St Stephen’s Green.

### **ORIGINAL FEATURES**

- ◆ Stone staircase
- ◆ Lamps on front steps
- ◆ Mahogany doors
- ◆ Chair-rails
- ◆ Skirting boards
- ◆ Pewter decoration



## Designers



The plasterwork on the barrel-vaulted staircase ceiling, in the chief reception rooms and on the relief plaques on the

walls of the entrance hall is believed to be that of Michael Stapleton, one of the chief stuccodores of the time. It closely matches similar work in Clonmell House, Harcourt Street.

The painted murals in the Board Room and the ceiling paintings in the Director's Office are probably by Peter de Grée, a Dutch artist living in London who worked in Ireland from 1785 to 1789. Other examples of his work can be found in 52 St Stephen's Green.

In 1877, the whitewash which was covering the drawing-room ceiling was removed and it was discovered "that the ceiling was of very beautiful workmanship and had been painted in oil colours." It was decided to restore it. One of the RIAM Governors at the time, Sir Thomas Jones, believed the paintings to be the work of François Boucher.

### ALSO OF INTEREST IN WESTLAND ROW:

### ST ANDREW'S CHURCH (1837) PEARSE TRAIN STATION (1834)

## Restoration, Renovation and Expansion

While much of the original character of the building has been retained, there have also been many changes over the years. In 1871, a wall between the front and rear rooms on the first floor was removed to create a large concert room. The Academy's first organ, built by Telford and Telford of 109 St Stephen's Green, was installed here in 1879.

The original windows on the rear wall were replaced by Gothic-style window-cases complemented by an unusual Gothic-style chimney-piece. The paintings on this chimney-piece are possibly the work of Angelica Kauffmann.

1899 saw the installation of a bicycle run from the street to the basement area. A tele-

phone line was installed in 1904 and, after much delay, electricity was finally installed in 1914.

To the rear of the premises was a yard with stables. At various times, new buildings were constructed here to accommodate the growing numbers of students. In 1890, a band room and teaching

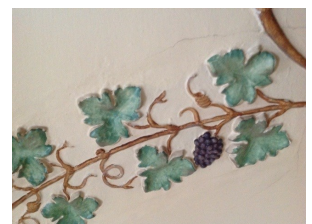
rooms were added at a cost of £310. The band room was later converted into the Dagg Hall, now the Katherine Brennan Hall.

Nos 37 and 38 Westland Row were acquired in 1915 for £250. These buildings date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

Much restoration work was carried out in the 1960s and a

major investment of £300,000 from the government in the 1980s was required in order to satisfy fire and safety regulations and provide extra space. In 1987, the Academy purchased a building at the back of No 39. This was named the Esposito Hall and now houses the RIAM Library. 2001 saw the addition of a new

extension at the back of the premises (Red Carpet Area).





## *The Future*

As the Academy continues to expand, we have once again reached a critical stage with regard to space and facilities. A vital part of the RIAM Strategic Plan 2020 is the redevelopment of the Westland Row premises to create a state-of-the-art music conservatoire which matches international standards.

It is hoped that the chosen architects will produce an innovative and imaginative design which will serve the needs of a modern European conservatoire while preserving

the unique character of this historic Irish building.

If you would like to contribute to this exciting new development, please contact Audrey Phelan to find out more about the RIAM Building Fund: [aphelan@riam.ie](mailto:aphelan@riam.ie)



## *History of the RIAM*

In 1998, as part of the celebrations marking the 150th anniversary of the Academy's foundation, the definitive history of the RIAM appeared. This extensively researched volume, *To talent alone: the Royal Irish Academy of*

*Music, 1848 – 1998*, was edited by Charles Action and Richard Pine.

To order a copy of *To talent alone* (€20 + €5 P&P), please send an email to :

[library@riam.ie](mailto:library@riam.ie)



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## *For more about Georgian Dublin*

Georgian House Museum  
No 29 Fitzwilliam Street Lower.

Irish Georgian Society  
[www.igs.ie](http://www.igs.ie)



## ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC

36-38 Westland Row  
Dublin 2  
Website: [www.riam.ie](http://www.riam.ie)

### Proudly Nurturing the Future of Music

*We are deeply committed, through music education, performance and appreciation, to stimulating and motivating students and examination candidates of all ages, helping them to excel. The Academy has nurtured and developed the talents of many of Ireland's finest musicians who have gone on, not only to enrich Irish musical life in all its forms, but also to act with great success as musical ambassadors abroad.*



THE HOME OF MUSICAL  
EXCELLENCE

### *About Us*



The Royal Irish Academy of Music is a home of musical excellence and dynamism, a place of teaching and learning which consistently achieves its objective of transmitting and maintaining the highest standards of performance and appreciation in all musical disciplines. Founded in 1848, the Academy is Ireland's oldest musical institution.

As a national thirty-two county institution, the Academy embodies and reflects the traditions and heritage of Irish musicianship. The teaching staff includes many international and national prizewin-

ners, members of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and many individuals whose names have become synonymous with music education in Ireland.

With the resources of such talents at its disposal, it is no wonder that the Academy's students have been accepted for further study at the most prestigious music institutions around the world from the Juilliard School in New York to the Royal Academy of Music in London. Today, with recently established higher education courses, the Acade-

my is in turn able to offer the finest Irish musical training to students from all corners of the world.

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Royal Irish  
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