

# Friends of the Hunt Museum

**T U E S D A Y   1 2   S E P T E M B E R   2 0 2 3**

# THE CUSTOM HOUSE

BUILDING, LIVING, WORKING

1763-1997







William Laurence, view from Thomondgate, c. 1890, National Library of Ireland

*' ... The custom house and its site has been altered many times in the years since its opening in 1770. It's being transformed again and it is hoped that this talk will contribute to the debate about its future ... '.*







*‘ ... planning, speculating, consulting ... ’*

*‘ . . . the collection of customs or taxes is an enduring symbol of statehood and our citizenship, the custom house its most vivid symbol ... ’*

**1281**    earliest record of a custom house in Limerick

**1683**    custom house & collector's house, Merchants' Quay

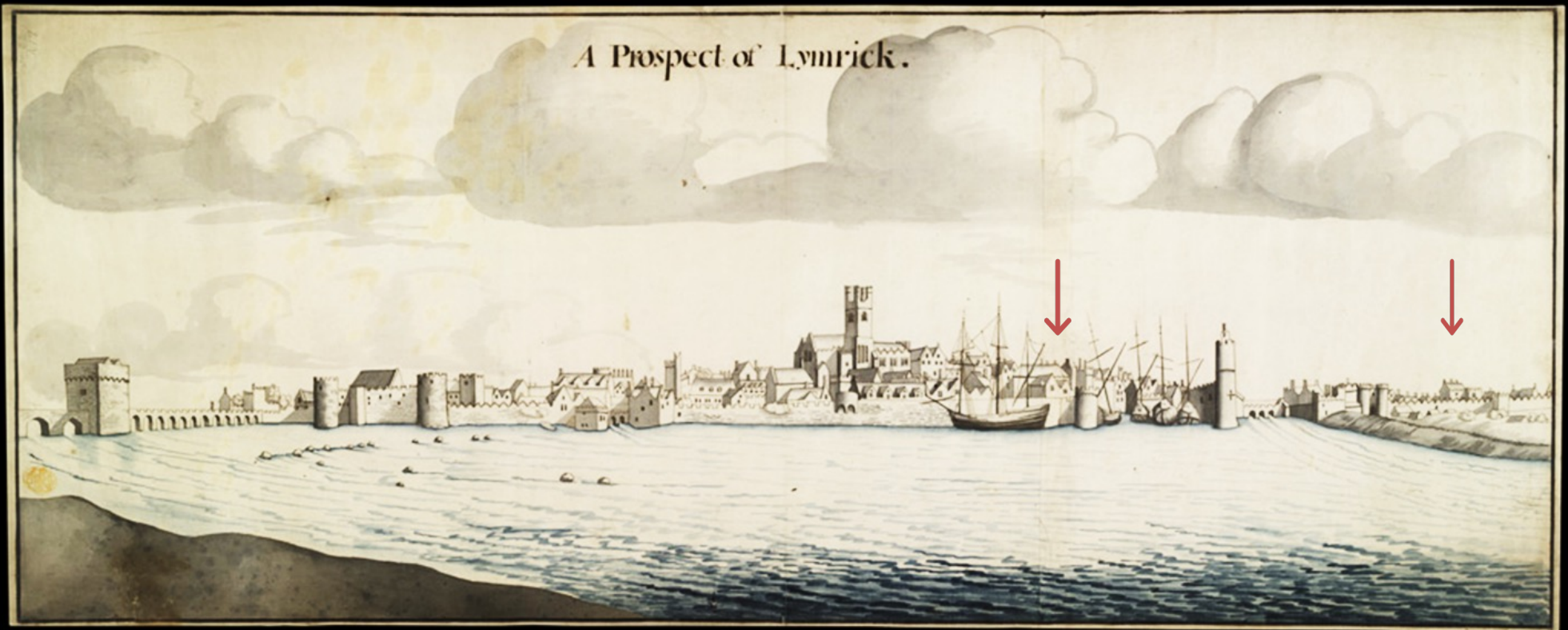
**1763**    new custom house and residence approved, Mardyke

**1764**    site changed to South Prior's Land



*'... the Custom House on  
Merchants' Quay, beneath the  
Cathedral, and overlooking  
the dock of Limerick  
until it moved  
to Rutland Street in 1770 ...'*





Thomas Phillips, A prospect of Limerick, 1685 (National Library of Ireland)

*' ... Merchants' Quay to the left,  
South Prior's Land to the extreme left ... '*

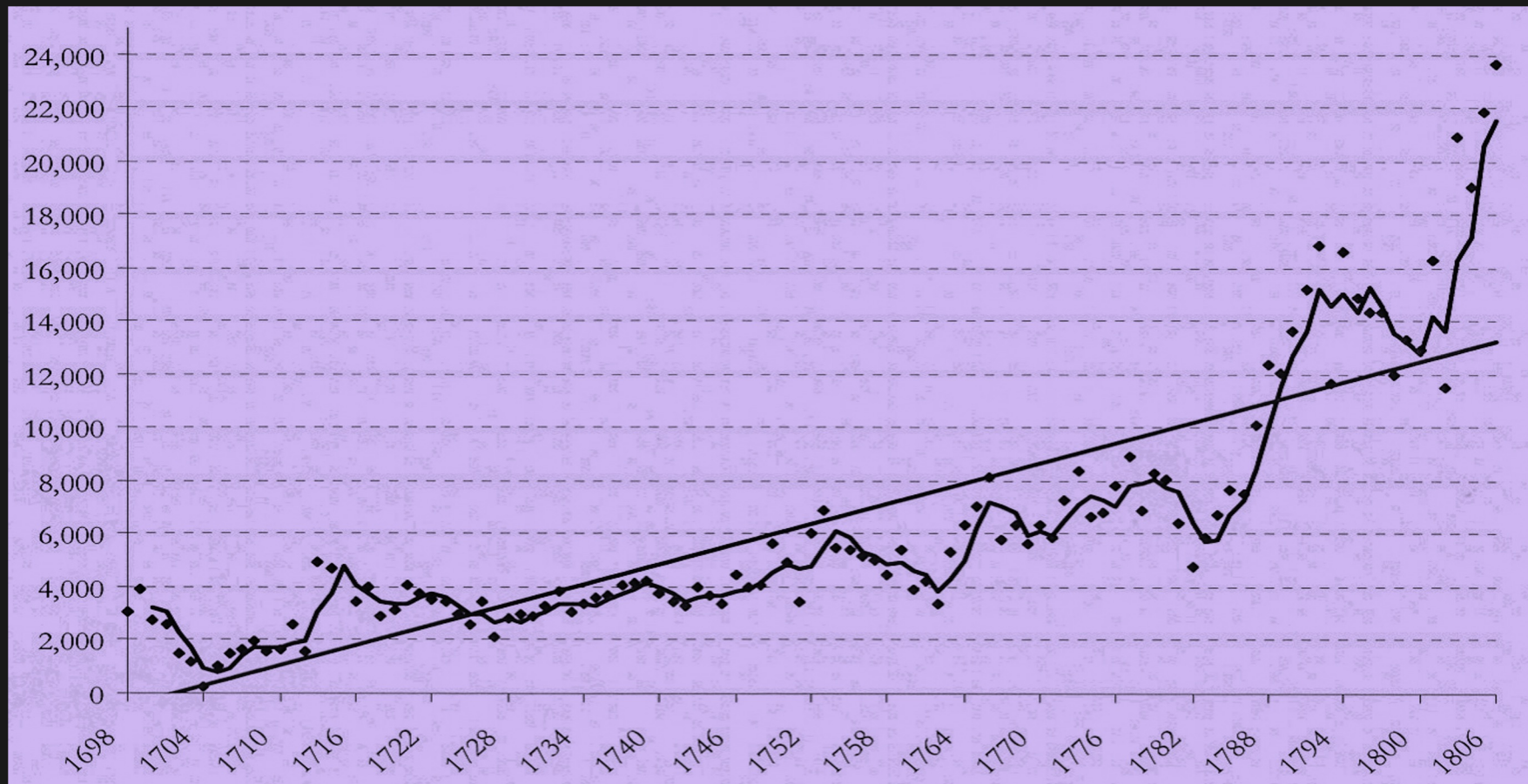




*' ... possibly the great stone house referred to in 1704 ...'*

'great stone house, wherein is the custom house' (1704)

'plain brick building, supported in the front by four rusticated pillars and ornamented with the king's arms' (1767)



‘ ... it’s the economy ... and a thriving city, its trade rising rapidly, gets an appropriately splendid new custom house ...’

## Tonnage of exports from Limerick, 1698-1806

(The National Archives, London, David Fleming)





Hugh Douglas Hamilton, Edmond Sexten Pery (1719-1806)

*'... and the city's ambitious member of parliament,  
Edmund Sexten Pery, will deliver ...'*







Detail from Christopher Colles' 1768 plan for the New Town Pery showing the new Custom House just across the Abbey River from the old Custom House

# Limerick Custom House: schedule

*architect*

*executant architect*

*overseer*

*mason*

December 1763 John Smyth

January 1764 Edward Uzuld

March 1765 Davis Dukart

May 1765 Davis Dukart Will Byrum

May 1766 Captain Conley  
1767 Christopher Colles

Walter St Laurence  
Mr Walsh  
Mr Coughlan

1770 Caleb Powell, the Collector, and his family move into the House

# Documented complete works of Davis Dukart

**Daviso de Arcort** arrived Cork 1759  
died Dungannon 1780

**Davis Dukart** Ducart, Duckart, Ducarte

<i>complete buildings</i>	Mayoralty House, Cork	1764-70
	Custom House, Limerick	1765-70
	Castletown, Kilkenny	1766-74
	Kilshannig, Cork	1766-

<i>civil engineering</i>	Cork waterworks	1761
	Blackwater canal	1761
	Boyne canal	1766
	Dundalk harbour	1767
	Coalisland Canal	1767-
	Tyrone Coalfield	1770-

*‘... attributions based on style-resemblance abound but without the documentation that might enable verification ... ‘*



*‘ ... variations on an a Piedmontese theme ... ’*



MAYORALTY HOUSE CORK 1764



CUSTOM HOUSE LIMERICK 1765



KILSHANNIG CORK 1766



CASTLETOWN KILKENNY 1766

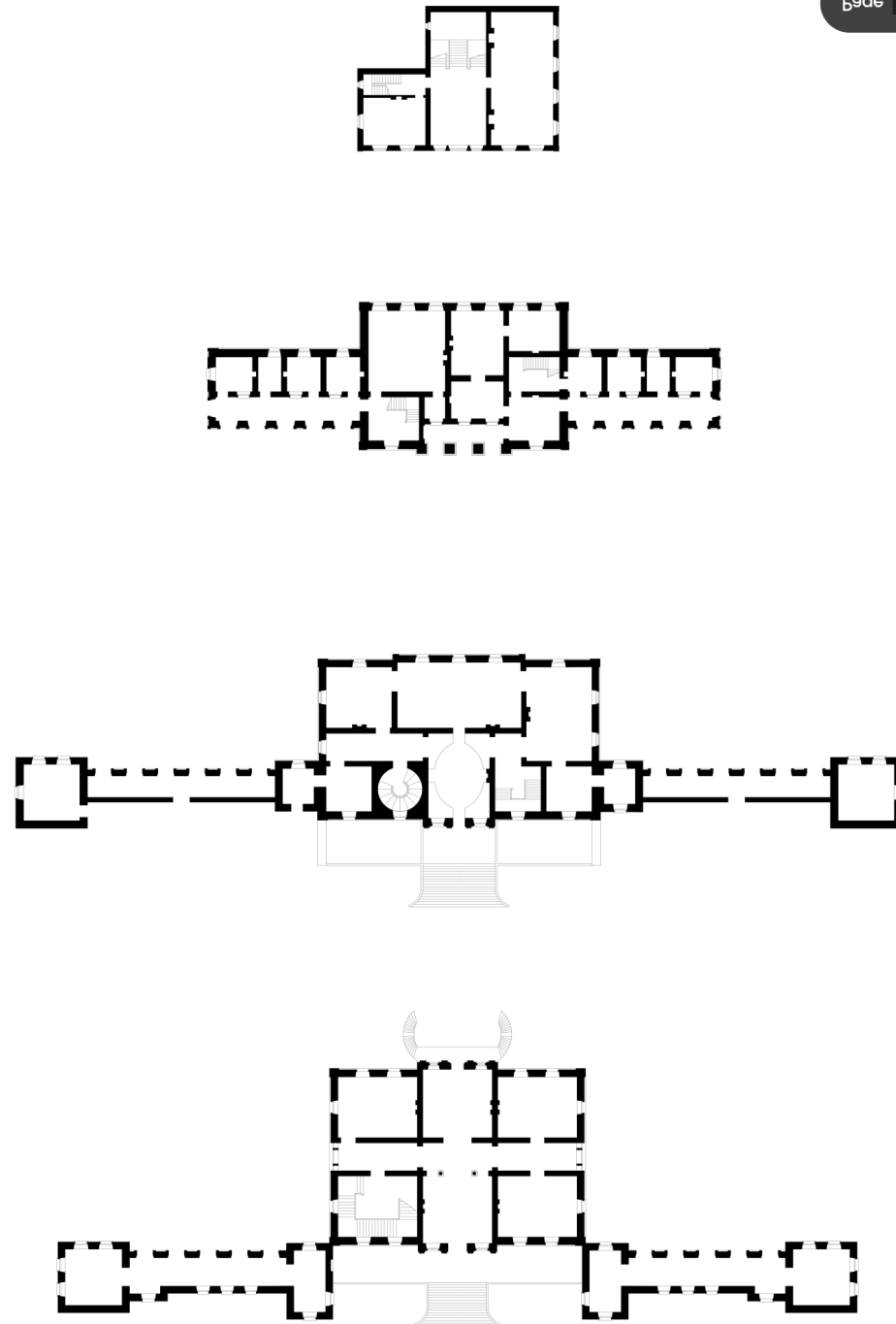
the four plans,

... Cork

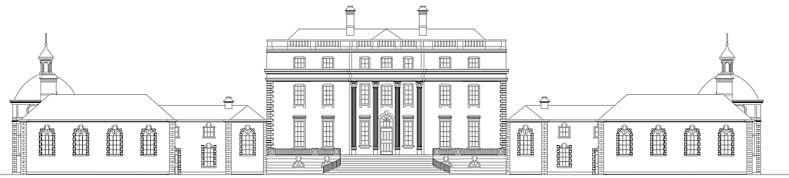
... Limerick

... Kilshannig

... Castletown



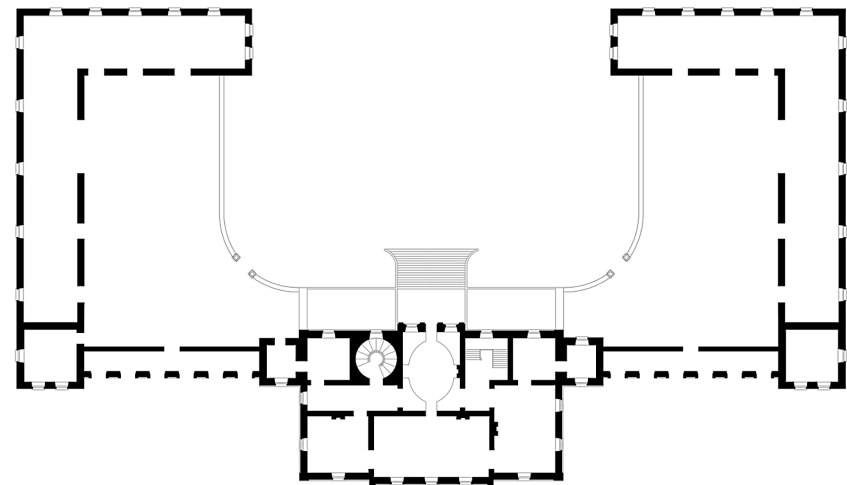
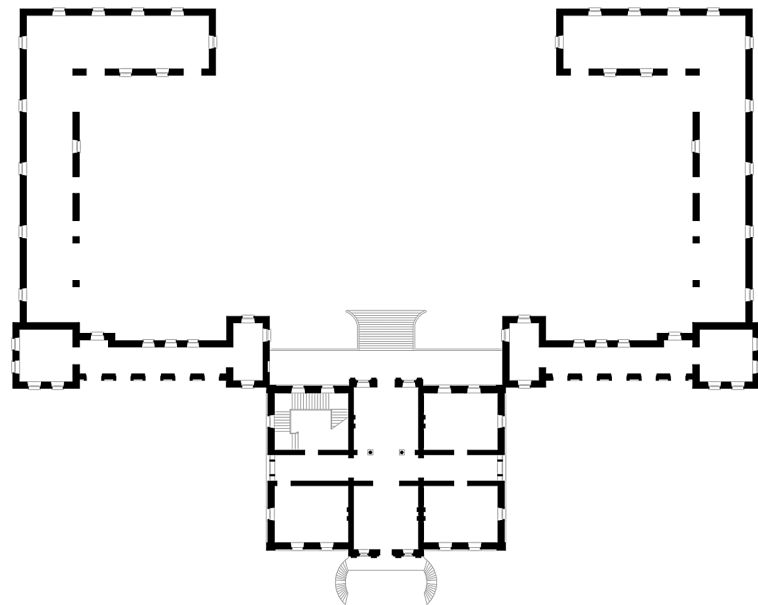




Castletown  
Kilkenny



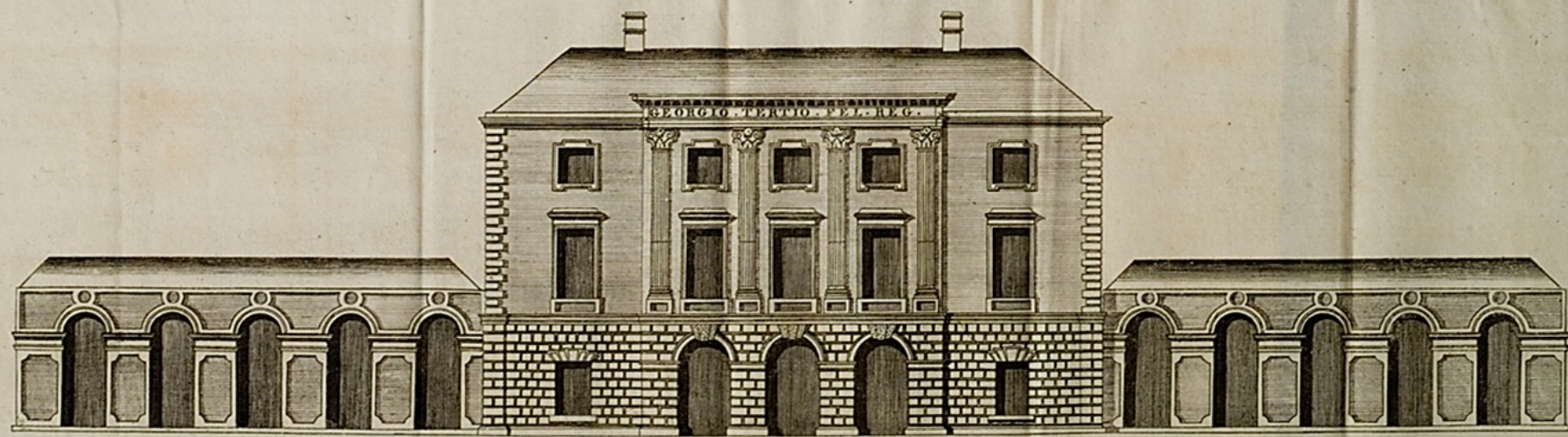
Kilshannig  
Cork



... forecourts and wings at  
Castletown and Kilshannig ...



*'...fighting with the builders...'*



*ELEVATION of the Front of the Custom-House now building in LIMERICK (MDCCLXVI) Extent 175 FEET*

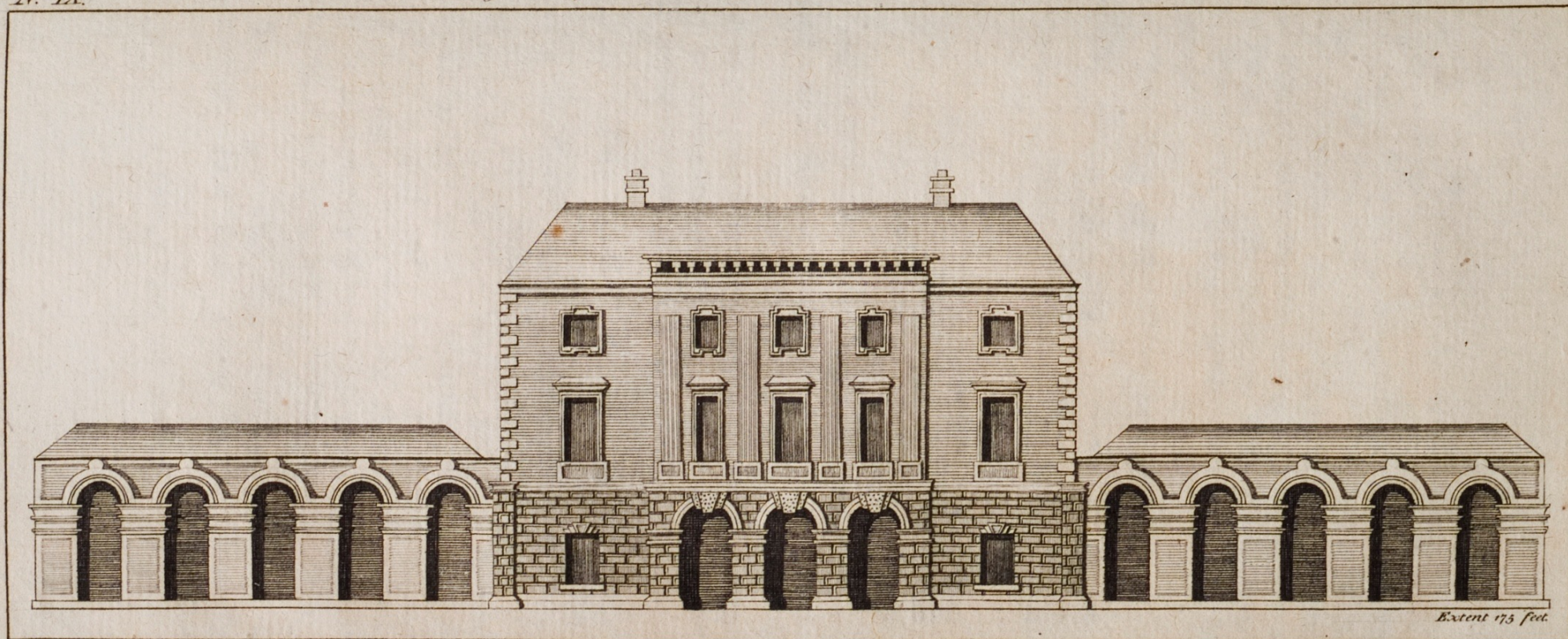






N.<sup>o</sup> IX.

Engraved for Ferrar's History of Limerick. 1786.



N. Bath del.

Extent 173 feet.

J. Duff sculp.

View of the Custom House, LIMERICK. N.B. There are no Capitals to the Pilasters.



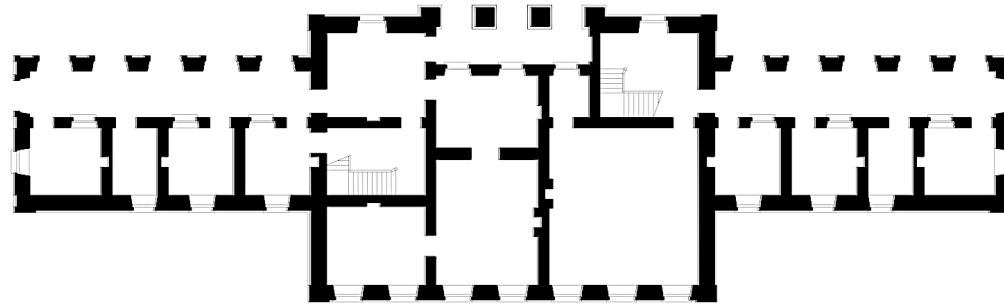




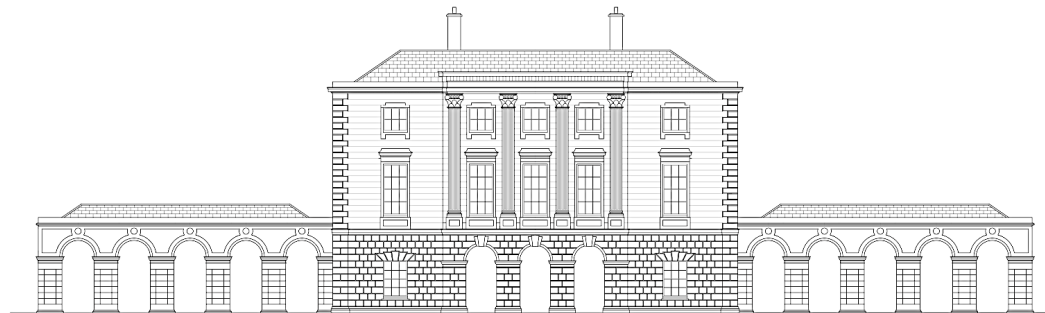
... modern Limerick's  
first purpose-built office  
block ...



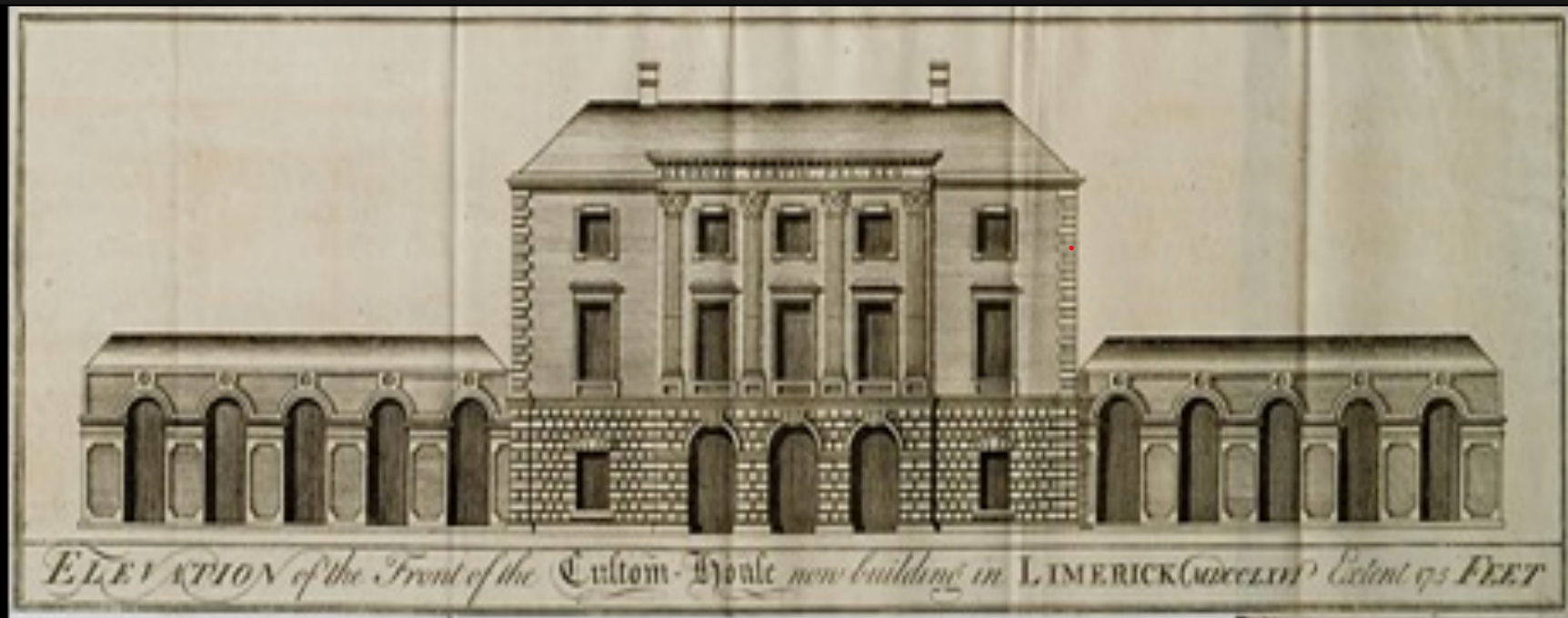
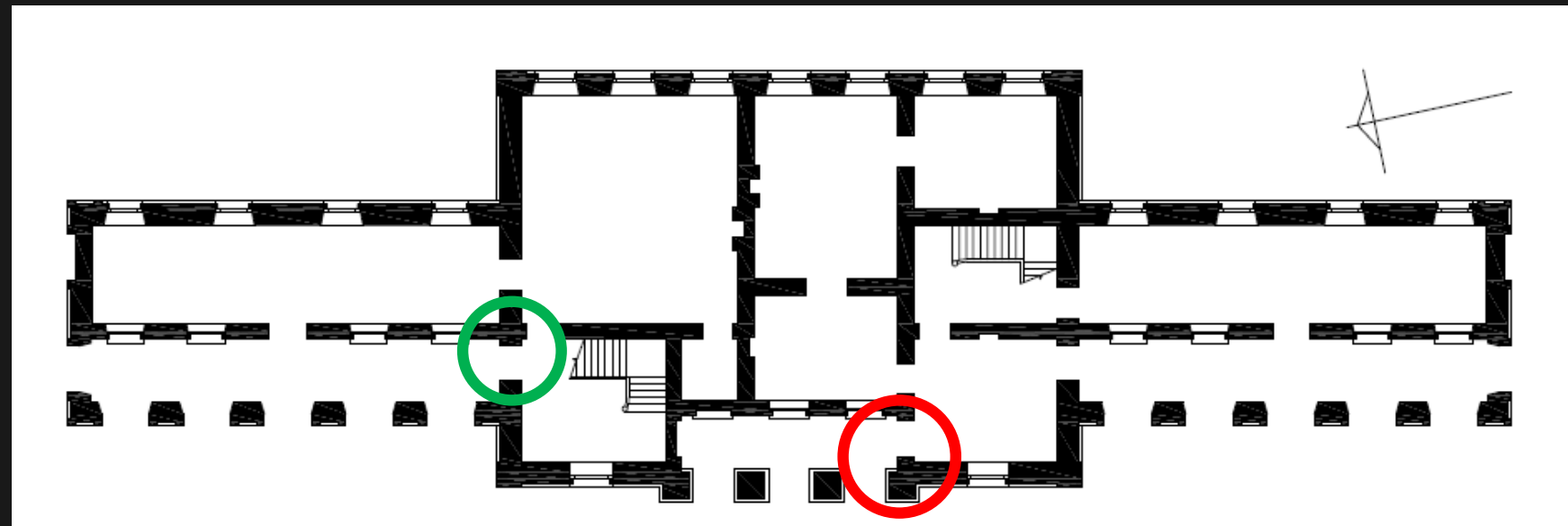
Original Eastern Elevation



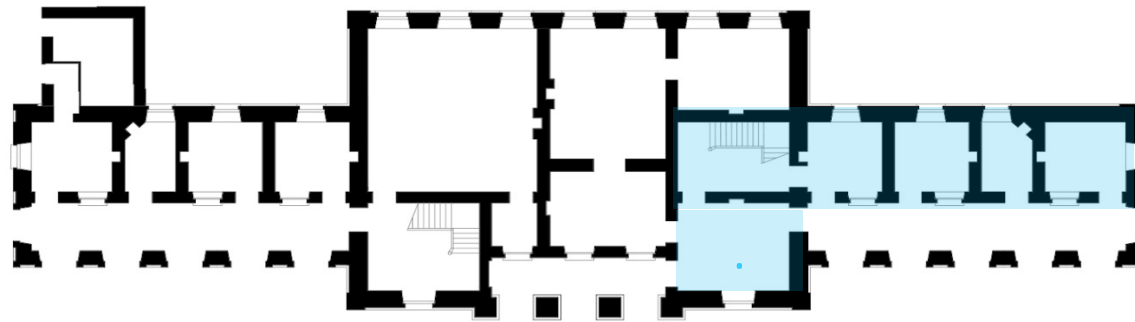
Original Plan



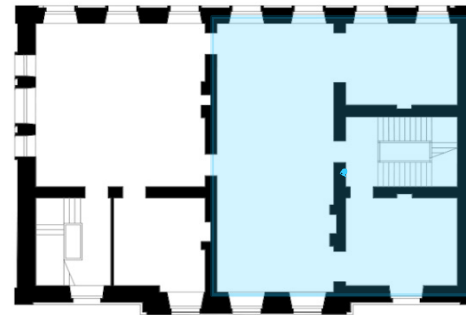
Original Western Facade



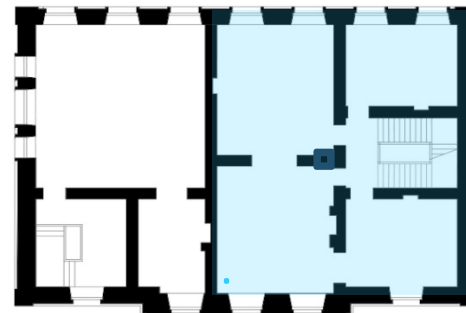
Public office and private house ... separate entrances



ground floor



first floor



second floor



*' ... some of the uses to which the building has been put ...'*

**1822**    **customs office, excise offices, collector's residence**

**1843**    **customs office, excise office, post office**

**1850**    **(new custom house by proposed for Mount Kenneth)**

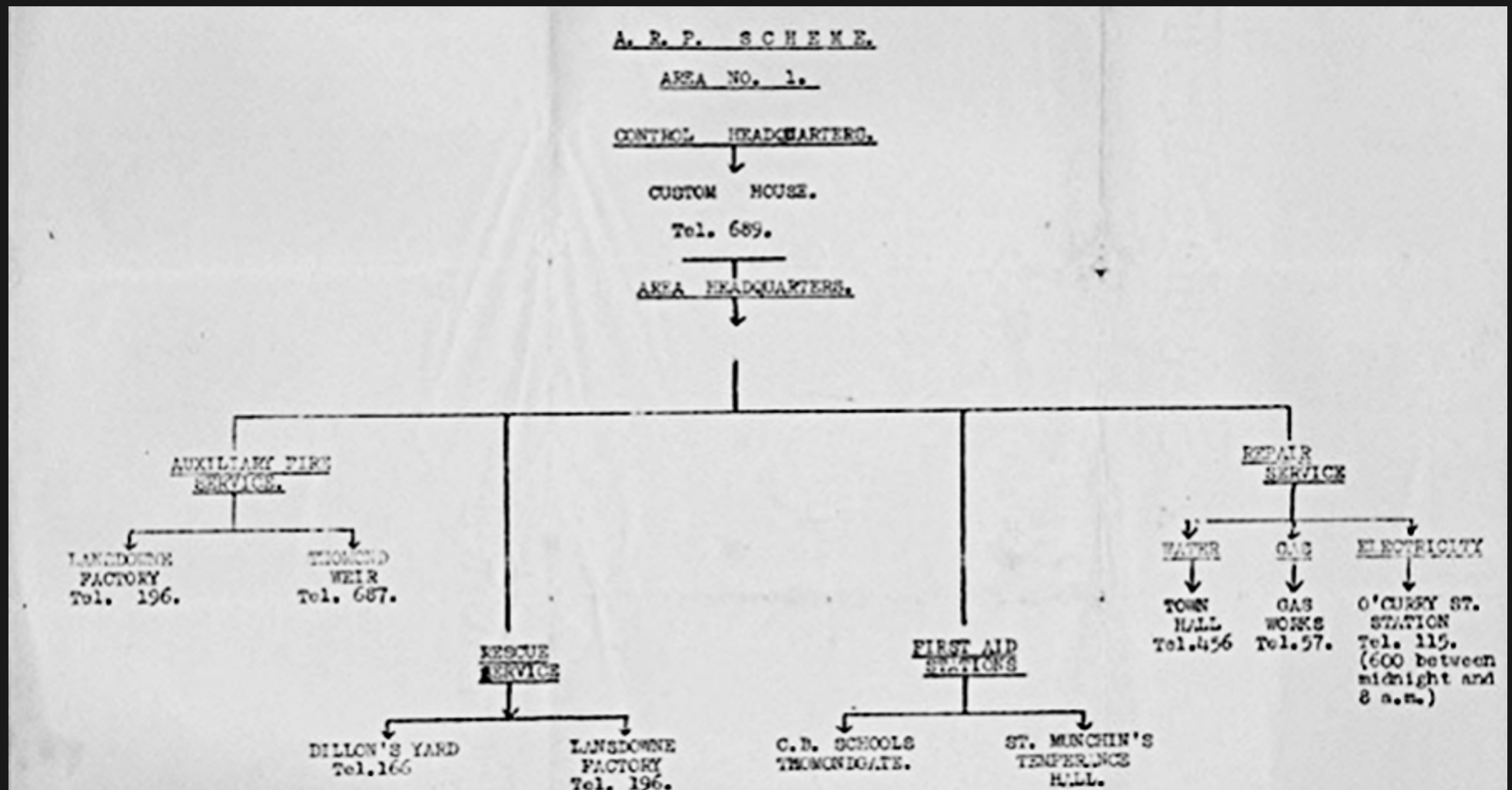
**1860**    **customs office, excise office, probate court**

**1939**    **headquarters, air raid precautions**

**1970**    **probation service**

**1997**    **Hunt Museum**





1939, Control Headquarters, air raid precautions  
(Kemmy Museum)



CURTUIM AZUR MÁL: SEOMPIA FADA

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE LONG ROOM

OIFIS NA MUIN-CHINACHTALA

MERCANTILE MARINE OFFICE

FACH-CHUAMRÍCI NA LONG

SHIPS REPORTS

CLANACHT LOINGÍR

REGISTRY OF SHIPPING

SLACADÓIR EADALA

RECEIVER OF WRECK

CURTUIM AZUR MÁL: OIFIS AN AINISID

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE CASH OFFICE

Ceadóinairí (MÁL)

LICENCES (EXCISE)

CURTUIM AZUR MÁL (DIUITETHE)

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE (DUTIES)

OSCAILTE DON POIBLIÓCHT

(OPEN TO THE PUBLIC)

Láethé Seachtaine. (WEEKDAYS) 9:30AM-3:04PM

De Sat hAin. (SATURDAY) 9:30AM-3:01PM

Curium azur māl: Seomna. Fada  
CUSTOMS AND EXCISE. LONG ROOM.

with thanks to

Ryan de Bree

Nico Bieleici

Merritt Buckolz

David Fleming

