

The Royal Hibernian Academy

The front wall of the Royal Hibernian Academy still stands, but that is all.

IRISH BUILDER, 13 MAY 1916, P. 205



Academy House, front elevation by Francis Johnston
IAA RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.301



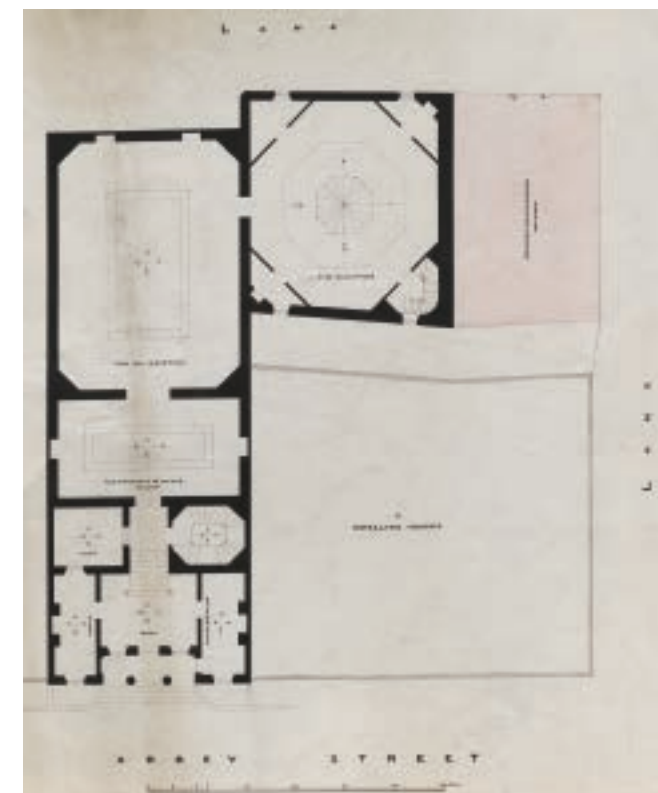
RHA Annual Exhibition in Academy House, 1889
RSAI Glass Negative



RHA Annual Exhibition in Academy House, 1893
RSAI Glass Negative



Academy House, section by Francis Johnston
IAA RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.306



Academy House, plan by William Murray showing sculpture gallery extension, 1829
IAA RIAI Murray Collection, 92/46.324



Academy House, interior, May 1916
IAA Photographic Collections, 40/85Y1



Academy House, exterior, May 1916
Irish Builder, 24 June 1916, p. 274



RHA Gallagher Gallery, Ely Place, exterior perspective of unexecuted scheme, Raymond McGrath, 1970
IAA McGrath Collection, 78/30.471

Academy House was consumed in Easter Week by the fires which spread east from O'Connell Street. The Resident Keeper, Joseph Kennedy, escaped from the building and managed to rescue the Academy's two Royal Charters, the President's chain and badge of office, bank books, insurance policies and one account

book. Everything else was destroyed: the Academy's art collection (including the original models of the keystones of the Custom House by Smyth and four books of etchings by Goya), its library and archives, and its series of portraits of the Academy Presidents, including one of Francis Johnston himself, shown seated with a plan of Academy House on his knee.



No. 15 Ely Place
IAA Photographic Collections, 9/89X1

Also lost were the 500 or so paintings entered into the Academy's 1916 exhibition. Valued at over £10,000, they included works by Edgar Bundy (1862-1922), John Lavery (1856-1941) and William Mark Fisher (1841-1923).

From 1917 the RHA annual exhibitions were hosted by the Dublin Metropolitan School of Art in Kildare Street. In 1939 the Academy moved to 15 Ely Place and in 1972, with financial support from Matthew Gallagher, a new gallery building was begun, designed by Raymond McGrath, architect and President of the Academy (1977). The building was completed in phases from 1987 by Arthur Gibney, architect and President (2002-2005).

The first and second stories of the front wall of the original Academy House still stands on Abbey Street, Lower, adorning a generic block whose ground floor is currently occupied by a shop.

After the General Post Office, the most important building destroyed in 1916 was the Royal Hibernian Academy on Abbey Street, Lower. A gift to the Academy from its second President and the architect of the GPO, Francis Johnston, and built to Johnston's designs, the building hosted the RHA's annual exhibitions from 1826. A sculpture gallery was added in 1829 by William Murray, paid for by Johnston's widow Ann.



Academy House façade, 2016
IAA survey photograph