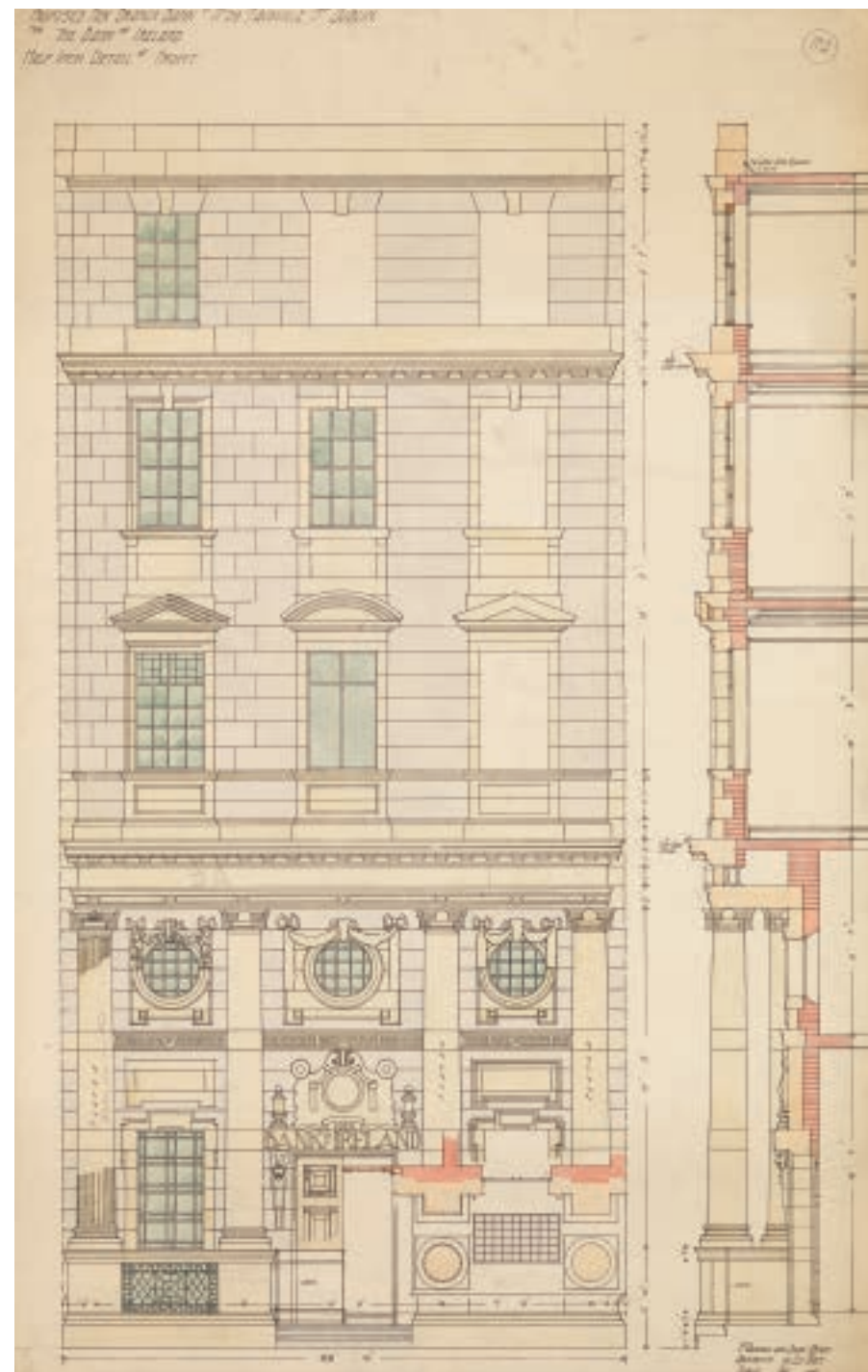


Rebuilding 2

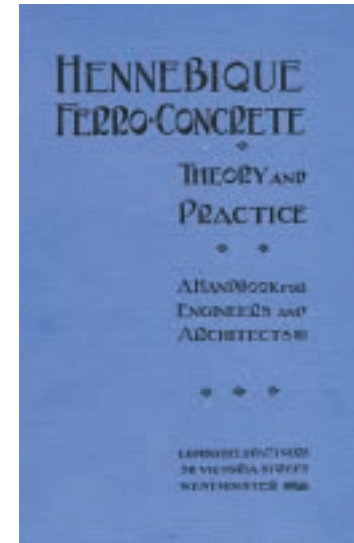
[The destruction of Dublin] might be turned to a great opportunity, but the middle of a European war seems a disastrous time to embark on so important an undertaking, and I fear the opportunity is in danger of being lost.

R. CAULFIELD ORPEN, PRESIDENT OF THE RIAI, JULY 1916

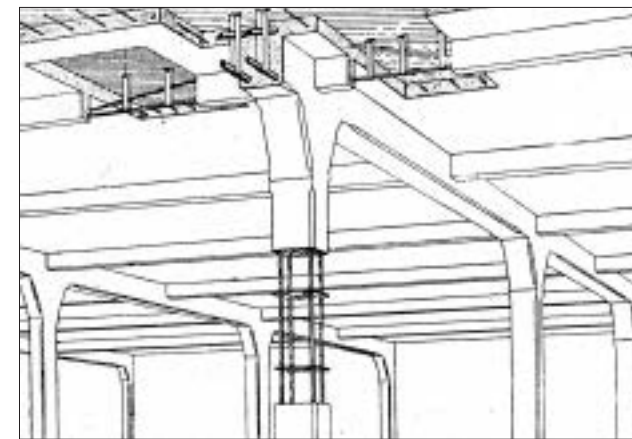


Bank of Ireland, O'Connell Street, Lower, McDonnell & Dixon Architects, November 1919
IAA Bank of Ireland Collection, 2006/65

Amongst the most ornamented of the replacement buildings, the Bank of Ireland at 28 O'Connell Street, Lower, was constructed from 1919. Designed by McDonnell & Dixon, architects, with carving by C.W. Harrison & Sons of Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street), the elaborate façade still stands.



Hennebique Ferro Concrete Theory and Practice: A Handbook for Engineers and Architects, L.G. Mouchel & Partners, London, 1909



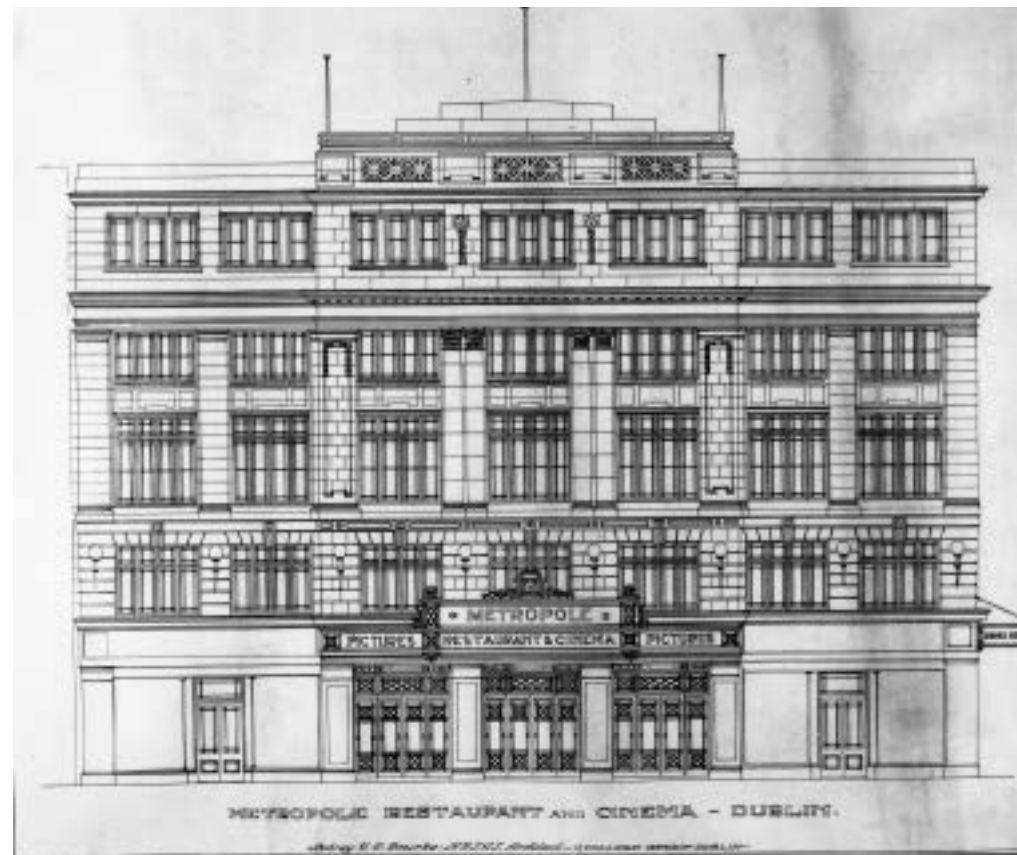
Typical Hennebique floor with main beams, secondary beams and slab
Hennebique Ferro Concrete Theory and Practice: A Handbook for Engineers and Architects, L.G. Mouchel & Partners, London, 1909, Fig. 15, p. 31

The London based engineering firm of L.G. Mouchel & Partners were primarily responsible for introducing the Hennebique system of ferro-concrete to the UK and Ireland in 1909. Using steel in conjunction with concrete was not new, but what made the Hennebique system (or the Mouchel-Hennebique system as it came to be called in Britain and Ireland) unique was 'the insertion of thin bars or rods and strips of steel in just those places, and in those places alone, where the stress diagram of any given structure shows that the resistance of the concrete requires to be supplemented'. In this way, 'concrete and steel are applied in such a manner that the mechanical and physical properties of the two materials are utilised to the greatest possible advantage'.



Eason's, O'Connell Street, Lower
Irish Builder, 29 Jan 1921, p. 60

The first recorded use of Mouchel-Hennebique ferro-concrete in the rebuilding after 1916 was in Bewley's on Henry Street. Eason's too were proud to announce that their new premises, designed by John A.C. Ruthven, was constructed using the Mouchel-Hennebique method. The building also conformed to the demand for Irish stone in its façade – the Sackville Street front was faced in granite and Irish limestone from Aughamaddock Quarries, Stradbally, Co. Laois, while the Abbey Street front was clad in Ballyknockan granite.



Metropole Restaurant and Cinema, front elevation, Aubrey V. O'Rourke, 1919
IAA OPW Copies, 86/17

The robust contemporary classicism of Aubrey O'Rourke's new Metropole Cinema, a replacement for the gutted Metropole Hotel, stood as something of a contrast to the more constrained, old-fashioned, classical façades being erected on the opposite side of the street. Demolished in the 1970s, the site is now occupied by Penny's.



Clery's, O'Connell Street, Lower, exterior
Irish Builder, 11 May 1918, Supplement



Clery's, O'Connell Street, Lower, interior
Irish Builder, 11 May 1918, Supplement

In late 1917 City Architect Charles J. McCarthy bemoaned the fact that no redevelopment had yet taken place on the largest site on O'Connell Street, the three-quarters of an acre formerly occupied by Clery's Department Store and the Imperial Hotel. By 1920 an enlarged department store was finally under construction. Designed by English architect Frank Atkinson who was working for Ashlin & Coleman Architects at the time, and effectively a reduced version of his earlier design for Selfridge's in London, the building was constructed using the Mouchel-Hennebique method primarily for 'reasons of economy'. The Irish Builder was impressed: 'only a visit to Clery's will enable one to appreciate the extent to which reinforced concrete lends itself to efficient handling by an up-to-date firm'.



O'Connell Street Lower, c. 1930
IAA Photographic Collections, 12/29V30

This block between Abbey Street and Prince's Street was regarded by the Irish Builder as the most satisfactory sequence of new buildings on O'Connell Street, Lower.



Nos 6-7 O'Connell Street, Lower
IAA Photographic Collections, 12/28V09

In June 1919, the Irish Builder reported somewhat jaundicedly that on the site of the demolished DBC would be built 'yet another Cinema Theatre'. Gutted by fire in 1949, the Grand Central Cinema was rebuilt as a bank.