



**Earlsfort Terrace  
Real Tennis Court  
Business Plan: March 2012**

The IRTA is now (May 2016) publishing this 2012 document, which up to now has had limited circulation, on its website, to give background and context to the work it was doing at an earlier stage of discussions with the OPW. As the document itself notes (§3, p.6), some parts are no longer current. Nonetheless we hope it will be of interest.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]



EARLSFORT TERRACE  
**Real Tennis Court**

Business Plan: March 2012

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### Recognition and Thanks

This Business Plan has been produced by the Irish Real Tennis Association.

The Irish Real Tennis Association exists to promote, encourage, facilitate, and provide for the playing of the game of Real Tennis in Ireland and by Irish people. As part of its programme, the Irish Real Tennis Association is working towards the restoration of the Dublin Real Tennis court.

The IRTA wishes to thank the Real Tennis clubs in other parts of the world which have provided support and guidance through the development of this Business Plan.

We are indebted to the architects who have patiently met us and transferred our vision for the court to paper.

Many thanks to Adept Advertising for their design work on this document.

Action photographs and front cover by Frederika Adam.

To all those who have supported this process, we say a heartfelt thank you.

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[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

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## 1. Executive Summary

### The Plan

This Business Plan has been prepared in an effort to demonstrate that the restoration of the Dublin Real Tennis court to playing condition would add an invaluable sporting venue for the nation and attract international visitors. No State funding is being requested.

### The Court

The Real Tennis court at Earlsfort Terrace forms a unique piece of Irish sporting, cultural, and architectural history. It was constructed in 1885 by Sir Edward Guinness (later 1st Earl of Iveagh), at his city residence. The court is famous as one of only six existing venues to have hosted the Real Tennis World Championship in the 150 years leading up to 2000, having done so in late May 1890. The court was generously presented to the Irish government by the 2nd Earl, Rupert Guinness, in 1939, but has not been played on since then. It is the only Real Tennis court on the island of Ireland. Situated in the centre of the country's capital city, it is an ideal venue for sport with easy access to public transport. A more detailed history can be found in Section 4.1.

### The Game

Real Tennis is a game in which subtlety and thought are at least as much rewarded as power and fitness. It is played in an asymmetrical court which contains many distinctive features: sloping roofs (penthouses), openings (galleries) in the walls, and a main wall which has a kink in it (tambour) so the ball, on hitting the sloping face, moves across the court instead of continuing

down the line of the main wall. The scoring is intricate but not complicated, set by the markings on the court. Service is from a particular end of the court only, and players switch ends even during games. The game is played with rackets made of wood, and hand-made balls. There are 47 active courts around the world in the UK, France, the United States and Australia, with an estimated 10,000 active players. The IRTA is a thriving contribution to this pool of players in a sport that continues to grow and gain popularity as players of other racket sports realise the reason why it has been enjoyed for centuries. There is an international resurgence of the game, and Ireland should be part of this. Over the last 25 years several Real Tennis courts in the UK have been built from scratch or refurbished, including Bristol, Radley, The Hyde, Newmarket, The Oratory, Cambridge University, Middlesex University, and two courts at Prested Hall; in the USA, a new court was built just outside Washington DC in the 1990s, and a court in Chicago is currently being restored and is to reopen later in 2012. Section 4.2 includes further details on the game.

### Ireland's Sporting Heritage

Ireland is a sporting nation, and was presented with a rare and remarkable sports facility. Ireland now has an opportunity to return to the group of countries privileged to enjoy real tennis, and the IRTA hopes to work with the State to restore the Real Tennis court to playing condition.

Sport is encouraged and facilitated through the Irish education system. The Real Tennis court at Earlsfort Terrace is surrounded by a large number of schools and colleges.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

## Our Proposal

This Business Plan proposes that a company limited by guarantee be set up to operate the court: The Dublin Real Tennis Club Ltd (see Section 5.3). The IRTA will remain as the national governing body for the sport.

The company will raise funds to restore the court. Architects have been engaged to provide drawings for the restoration of the court and costings have been provided by a quantity surveyor. The restoration of the court itself would cost €450k and take 6 months. To have a club house with shower facilities, a social area, Professional's workspace, etc., would cost another €770k and take another 6-9 months. The company would hold all funds in trust until such time as sufficient funds had been raised either to restore the court or to restore the court and club house. If, after a fixed period, sufficient funds had not been secured, then the funds collected would be

returned to their donors and the project abandoned. The fundraising plan is detailed in Section 6.1.

The main person involved in the daily operation of the court is the Professional, who is trained in the various aspects of the management of a Real Tennis court, including liaison with players, day to day maintenance of the court and equipment, coaching, scoring games, attracting new members and organising matches and tournaments (refer to Section 5.5).

The table below sets out a forecast of receipts and payments for the court during its first 5 years of operations (set out in detail in Section 6.2). The forecast is based on analysis of accounts provided by comparable clubs in the UK, while taking Irish-specific considerations into the equation, e.g., rates, electricity costs, etc.

Receipts	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Receipts</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>
Membership Fee	38	46	54	61	72
Court Fees	18	19	25	27	35
Revenue from lessons	5	3	3	3	3
Revenue from marking	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5
Revenue from sale of merchandise	2	0.8	0.5	0.5	0.5
Tournaments	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Donations	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Sponsorship/ Advertising Revenue	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>113</b>

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Payments	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Payments</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>	<b>€'000</b>
Staff Costs	32	32	49	55	58
Building Operational Costs	17	18	19	20	22
Administration Costs	5	5	5	5	5
Miscellaneous Costs	6	4	4	4	4
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>NET PROFIT/LOSS</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>23</b>

(Figures may not add, owing to rounding.)

This document provides detail on each element of the above summary, and supports the proposal

that the court at Earlsfort Terrace should be returned to play.



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## 2. Responsibilities

This document has been prepared by the Irish Real Tennis Association. Information provided by third parties has not been investigated and has been taken as accurate and reliable.

The Business Plan contains certain forward-looking statements (quantitative and qualitative) which are based on current expectations and projections about future events and are subject to, among other things, risks, uncertainties, and assumptions. The IRTA has made every effort to draw on the experiences of others and to make realistic, but conservative, judgements and forecasts in preparing this Plan. However, actual events and results could differ materially due to factors such as, but not limited to, general economic and market factors, interest rate fluctuations, business competition, changes in government regulations, and other factors.

The IRTA therefore intends regularly to review the assumptions underlying its present forecasts and to update them accordingly.



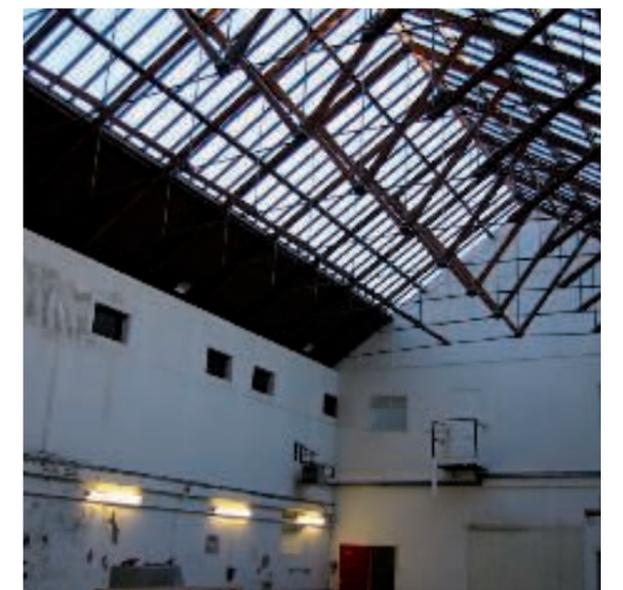
Original 'chase' markings still visible on the floor of the Earlsfort Terrace Real Tennis court.

## 3. Use and Distribution

This report has been prepared for the review of the Office of Public Works ('OPW') only, in connection with their assessment of the IRTA proposal.

It should not be circulated to any other parties without the consent of the IRTA, nor should it be used for any other purpose whatsoever, and no liability is accepted to any other party or in connection with any other use whatsoever.

The information contained in this document is current at the time of issue of this report. It is intended to be time specific and should not be relied upon in respect of any time frame other than that covered in the document nor at any time later than six months from the date of issue of the document.



Interior of Earlsfort Terrace Real Tennis court, showing glass roof and full-height partition.



[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

## 4. Introduction

### 4.1 Earlsfort Terrace

The Real Tennis court at Earlsfort Terrace forms a unique piece of Irish sporting, cultural, and architectural history. There is reference to the construction of a Real Tennis court at Dublin Castle in 1361, so Real Tennis seems to have been played in Ireland as early as the fourteenth century. However, the Earlsfort Terrace court is the best-known Irish Real Tennis court, and is the court which was most recently in regular use.

Turning off the south-east corner of St. Stephen's Green, one can see the court's red-brick facade nestling between an old ash tree and the National Concert Hall building. The court was built in 1885 by Sir Edward Guinness (later 1st Earl of Iveagh) at his city residence. The Real Tennis court, together with Iveagh House on St. Stephen's Green, and what are now the Iveagh Gardens, were generously presented to the Irish State by the 2nd Earl, Rupert Guinness, in 1939.

The court was commissioned in 1884, and responsibility for the project was given to Wesley William Wilson, who was Chief Engineer for Guinness. The cost is estimated to have been £1,810. The court was built to specifications similar to those used for the court at Canford (in Dorset, UK), which had been completed just a few years earlier, but the materials used were Irish. The glazed and slate roof is supported by metal trusses and a timber structure. The large glazed section brings natural light into the court, the floor and interior walls of which are clad in large slabs of deep black limestone from Galway. The

Galway limestone is a unique feature that has distinguished the court throughout the Real Tennis world. The white balls would have stood out against the polished dark surface and play off the walls was apparently fast. Most of the essential features of the court remain, having survived the transformations that the building has seen over the years as it awaited restoration to its former glory.

As well as its architectural distinction, the court is famous as one of only six existing venues in the world to have hosted the Real Tennis World Championship in the 150 years leading up to 2000; since then the Championship has been held in Australia, France, the UK, and the USA. The World Championship was held at Earlsfort Terrace in May 1890. Dublin had the honour of being selected as the neutral venue for the challenge by Englishman Charles Saunders of the reigning champion, the American Tom Pettitt. The event generated substantial local interest and spectators filled the viewing areas on all three days of play. Pettitt successfully defended his title in an exciting and widely-reported contest. In this regard, the court on Earlsfort Terrace houses a wonderful bit of Irish and international sporting history.

Real Tennis was played at Earlsfort Terrace from 1885 until 1939, when the court was presented to the people of Ireland. The donor intended that the court should continue in use, and observed in a letter to Taoiseach Eamon de Valera that "it is unique in its way and might be appreciated by players in Dublin". The court was eventually used for many years by University College Dublin ('UCD'), as a gymnasium and later as an

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

engineering laboratory, but it has lain largely dormant for the last few years. It is the only Real Tennis court on the island of Ireland.

In October 2011, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht Jimmy Deenihan launched the book "Places We Play – Irish Sporting Heritage" on the Earlsfort Terrace court. The book provides a pictorial and historical record of significant Irish sports arenas, covering a range of sporting locations including the court in Earlsfort Terrace. The authors, Mike Cronin and Roisin Higgins, chose Dublin's Real Tennis court as the venue for the launch. This is another indication of the significance of the site in Ireland's sporting history.

The restoration of the Earlsfort Terrace court to use would provide a distinctive addition to the spectrum of the nation's sports. Situated in the centre of the country's capital city, it is an ideal venue for sport with easy public transport access. It is one of only three Real Tennis courts owned by national governments, with the other two, at Hampton Court Palace in London and at Fontainebleau in France, both being major playing and tourist venues. The Fontainebleau court was returned to play in 1990 after a long lapse, and hosted the World Championship in 2008. The game is thriving worldwide, and the Earlsfort Terrace court should be part of this growth. It has the potential to attract a great many players from home and abroad and could become a centrepiece of Dublin sporting and cultural life.

### 4.2 Real Tennis

Real Tennis, the precursor of all familiar modern

racket sports (such as tennis, badminton and squash), has an extremely rich history across Europe. It evolved from a ball game played in the 12th century, and in 1598 it was estimated that there were two tennis courts for every church in France. It is a game in which subtlety and thought are at least as much rewarded as power and fitness. It is played on an asymmetrical court with a number of distinctive features: sloping roofs (penthouses), openings (galleries) in the walls, and a main wall which has a kink in it (tambour) so that the ball, on hitting the sloping face, moves across the court instead of continuing down the line of the main wall. The game can be viewed at [www.realtennis.tv](http://www.realtennis.tv)

The game is played with wooden rackets and hand-made balls. Players of other racket sports generally take to Real Tennis quickly and it often becomes their preferred game. Some hand-eye coordination and physical mobility is important, but players do not require the level of fitness and agility needed for squash (for example) in order to participate. The game can be enjoyed at many skill levels, and a system of handicapping (similar to that for golf) is used, so that players of different standards can compete against each other at either singles or doubles. Real tennis is very much a sport played by people of all ages, throughout their lives.

There are about 45 courts currently in use around the world in the UK, France, United States, and Australia with an estimated 10,000 active players. Over the last 25 years several Real Tennis courts in the UK have been built from scratch or refurbished, including Bristol, Radley, The Hyde, Newmarket, The Oratory, Cambridge University,

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Middlesex University, and two courts at Prested Hall; in the USA, a new court was built just outside Washington DC in the 1990s, and a court in Chicago is currently being restored and is to reopen later in 2012. The IRTA is a thriving part of the playing community internationally in a sport that continues to grow and gain popularity as players of other racket sports realise the reason that Real Tennis has been enjoyed for centuries.

#### 4.3 Irish Real Tennis Association

The Irish Real Tennis Association was founded in 1999, and looks forward to the return of the game to Ireland. The IRTA is active on two main fronts: it works towards the restoration of the court on Earlsfort Terrace to its intended use, as desired by its donor; and it encourages Irish people to play Real Tennis, by organising introductory sessions for newcomers as well as fixtures and tournaments for existing enthusiasts. It also responds to inquiries from Ireland and overseas regarding the Dublin Real Tennis court.

The IRTA is keen to seize the opportunity presented by the vacating of the court, and hopes that this Business Plan will be the start of the restoration process.

Our playing activities have gradually increased since 1999. Trips to courts overseas have to date been necessary to provide IRTA members with a chance to play the game, and have also inevitably been the only means of introducing newcomers to the sport. Almost everyone who tries Real Tennis becomes an enthusiast. 2012 will see the 10th annual IRTA Open and Closed championships, with this year's tournaments to

be held at Radley in early June, and at The Oratory in September. By necessity these annual events have been held abroad, and over the years we have enjoyed the hospitality, cooperation, and encouragement of a number of different clubs. In addition to the annual championships, the IRTA has played occasional fixtures against other clubs, and has been represented by Irish players at other tournaments.

The IRTA currently has nearly 300 members, with the majority being from Ireland or the UK. Our wider international support base is reflected by our significant membership in the USA. In this regard, our President, Sile Reilly, who lives in the USA, often handles enquiries from US citizens regarding our situation. Sile is very active in Real Tennis circles in the USA, and has been particularly involved in the preservation and promotion of historically-important courts there.

The international Real Tennis community is keenly aware of our situation here in Ireland, and whenever IRTA members visit other clubs there is always a high level of interest in the possible restoration of the Dublin court. Indeed, in 2008 our Chairman was invited to give a presentation during a tournament at the Tuxedo Club in New York and support there was, as ever, very high.

Statements backing the restoration of the Earlsfort Terrace court have been received from the national governing bodies for Real Tennis in Australia, the USA, France, the UK, and the Netherlands, as well as from numerous clubs, players, and other supporters.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]



*Exterior view of the Earlsfort Terrace Real Tennis court building.*

## 5. Earlsfort Terrace Real Tennis Court: Business Plan

### 5.1 Introduction

Outlines of the court's history, and of how the game is played, have already been provided. We now present what is being asked of the OPW in allowing the court to be restored. This Business Plan sets out the IRTA proposal to set up a company, The Dublin Real Tennis Club Ltd, which would return the Real Tennis court at Earlsfort Terrace to playing condition, and then operate the facility. The plan sets out the structure of the company; the work required, and how it might be funded; and forecasted finances for the operation of the court. The court building is currently all-but dormant and unused, though it saw temporary use during the 'Dublin Contemporary' art exhibition in late 2011.

### 5.2 Request of the OPW

We would suggest the following arrangement between the OPW, as agents for the owners of the Real Tennis court, and the Real Tennis court operator, The Dublin Real Tennis Court Ltd:

- A 99 year lease, with nominal rent of €1 per annum and no rent increases during the term of the lease
- A mutually agreed arrangement regarding responsibility for maintenance and insurance of the building and its surroundings
- Access across the car park and into the Real Tennis court building
- Car parking for the Professional
- Access to all sides of the building for maintenance purposes
- A review of the arrangements after 5 years
- A clause within the agreement to allow

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

termination of the arrangements by the tenant in the event of the non-viability of the venture

### 5.3 Organisational Structure

The operating company would be structured in such a manner as to have maximum efficiency, and to take account of any tax reliefs available for sporting bodies.

#### 5.3.1 The Dublin Real Tennis Club Limited: Organisational Structure

We propose that a company limited by guarantee be set up to operate the court, The Dublin Real Tennis Club Limited. The IRTA would remain as the separate governing body for Real Tennis in Ireland. The Dublin Real Tennis Club Ltd will be a not-for-profit, member-controlled, and member-owned organisation. It will be legally established in the State and have its centre of management and control in Dublin. The majority of its directors will be resident within the State.

### 5.4 Restoration Work

The Earlsfort Terrace court has not been used for Real Tennis, so far as we are able to tell, since 1939. Over the intervening years, several alterations have been made to the building but, despite these, the structure remains relatively intact.

The Galway limestone floor has suffered damage in places, but appears for the most part to be in reasonable condition, with some original markings still evident. A number of slabs are missing and the resulting spaces have been filled with

concrete. Other slabs have been damaged, perhaps through use of engineering machinery during the UCD occupancy. Work to the floor might involve either the restoration of a surface approximating to the original, through repair and replacement of the slabs, or the laying of a resin layer over the surviving floor.

At The Hyde, in the south west of England, a court which was refurbished in the late 1990s, damaged and missing slabs were repaired or replaced and the resulting base was covered with a resin finish, which provided a satisfactory playing surface at a relatively low cost (£11,918 in total). Refurbishment of the original limestone would perhaps be the most desirable long-term option, especially from a heritage and architectural conservation point of view. However, a resin covering would leave the surviving elements of the original floor intact, allowing for further restoration at a later date, if desired.

A partition wall was erected across the court during the use of the building by UCD, with office accommodation installed on an upper level (supported by one or more upright girders set into the floor) to which access is obtained by a staircase running beside the tambour. The penthouses were all removed. Entrance doors have been pierced in the main (south / NCH) wall. The limestone cladding on the walls has been painted white, and various electrical fittings have been attached to the walls. Besides the internal alterations mentioned above, the structure of the court appears largely intact. A beam survives along the service (north / St Stephen's Green) wall which may have supported the upper edge of the service penthouse and, as mentioned

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above, some markings survive on the floor. Work to return the court to play would include the removal of the partition wall and office structures, the construction of penthouse walls and restoration of penthouses, and the repair and refurbishment of the walls and floor.

Fortunately, an investment was made in the 1990s on the renovation of the roof, which appears in good condition. Artificial lighting would be required, as well as protective netting below the glass panels.

Architectural plans have been drafted, and are appended to this document. The plans have been considered by a quantity surveyor, who has provided a preliminary estimate of the likely refurbishment costs. Demolition work involving removal of the office area as well as the partition wall, and clearance of the floor, have together been estimated to cost €110,000. Installation of penthouse walls and penthouses, and work to the floor of the court come to a further €115,000. Lights and roof work work out at €20,000. Mechanical and electrical services have been costed at €100,000. Together these figures give an estimated cost for the return of the court to play at around €450,000 when VAT and fees are included.

As can be seen from the architectural plans, the development of the court itself is only a part of the process. The experience of existing real tennis courts around the world is that certain other facilities will contribute to the success of the court. The plans make provision for areas from which spectators can watch play on court, and in

which they can gather, discuss the game, and socialise. Changing rooms are essential, as also is a room or area from which the Professional can greet players, arrange court bookings, string rackets, make balls, etc. The plans propose a layout for the establishment of a successful club. The works envisaged would ideally be carried out together, but it is possible that, for financial or other reasons, the process might have to be taken in stages. The work to the court itself would have to be done in a single phase, and the work required for the outer rooms would also largely need to be done in one phase as a result of the proposed alterations to floor levels.

The cost for the additional (off-court) works has been estimated by the quantity surveyor at €770,000. This includes floor, wall, and ceiling finishes, general fittings, sanitary fittings, mechanical services, electrical services, lift installation, and external works. If these works were to proceed as a separate phase from the works on the court itself, it is hoped that interruption to the use of the court would be kept to a minimum.

The following table summarises the restoration costs:

Restoration Work*	€'000
Demolition and clearing	110
Penthouses and Floors	115
Lights and Roof	20
Mechanical & Electrical work	100
Club House	770
<b>Total Costs (inc VAT)</b>	<b>1,220</b>

\*Note that other costings are being sought.

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The plans provide for the possibility of public access for those interested in viewing the court, and the game, an arrangement appreciated by tourists visiting The Royal Tennis Court in the course of tours of Hampton Court Palace.

#### 5.4.1 About the Architects

Andy Richardson is an architect with de Blacam and Meagher Architects, a practice with accreditation from the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland ('RIAI') as Grade One Conservation Architects.

Stephen Parker is an architect in private practice, with over fifteen years' experience of older buildings. He is accredited in the Conservation of Older Buildings by the RIAI and is also a member of the RIAI Practice Committee. He has prior experience working for Gilroy McMahon Architects and de Blacam and Meagher Architects, as well as practices in London and India.

The costs have been provided by Bruce Shaw, an internationally-acclaimed Group of construction professionals providing the highest standards of quantity surveying, project management and consultancy services to the global construction industry.

#### 5.5 Professional

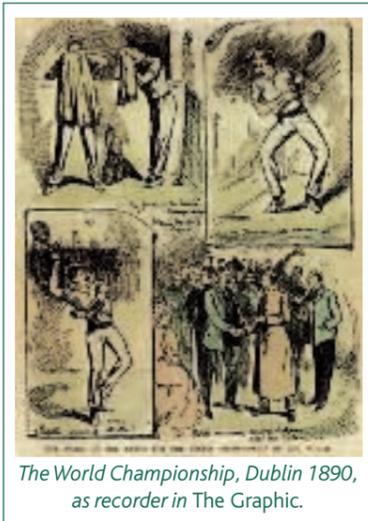
The role of the Professional is central to the operation of a Real Tennis club. The Professional

takes care of the day to day running of the court through arranging matches, making balls, repairing rackets, coaching, scoring games and ensuring the court is kept in optimal playing condition. A unique feature of the role of the Real Tennis Professional is in the arrangement of games between compatible players. This feature is vital in maximising court usage, and also means that new players are smoothly assimilated into the sport.

A Real Tennis Professional may be remunerated in a number of ways, but the favoured model would link the remuneration package to the Professional's performance.

The Professional would be paid a flat "base" salary, together with an additional amount calculated according to the level of court usage, and according to the number of lessons provided over each particular period. This arrangement would give the Professional an incentive to ensure the court is in use for as much time as possible, and should help to improve the standard of play among those using the court.

The Professional would be present at the court for a minimum 40 hours per week, with this weighted towards evenings and weekends when demand for play is likely to be greatest. It is anticipated, given structure of the proposed remuneration package, that the Professional would in fact spend more time than the minimum at the court. In due course an Assistant Professional might be appointed. The Professional(s) would be



The World Championship, Dublin 1890, as recorder in The Graphic.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

contracted to the Dublin Real Tennis Club Ltd. The IRTA has received informal expressions of interest from a number of Professionals, in anticipation of the possibility that a position might become available in Dublin.

#### 5.6 Demand

Real Tennis has enjoyed a particularly vigorous period of growth over recent decades. Courts have been refurbished or built from scratch in various locations, and there are currently projects in progress or planning in Chicago (USA), Haarlem (Netherlands), and Berkshire (UK).

Comparison with Real Tennis courts elsewhere helps to give us an idea of the likely demand for court usage. We have considered the construction in 1997 of the court at Bristol Real Tennis Club. Parallels can be drawn between that club and the proposed Dublin court. For example, it is also in a region with no other court within a 50-mile radius. The Bristol experience reveals encouraging statistics on court usage and membership numbers. We have further advantages in Dublin. Earlsfort Terrace is in the centre of Dublin, whereas the Bristol court is located a short distance outside the city. Access to the Dublin court would be very easy for those working in the city. Trinity College is only a short walk from Earlsfort Terrace, and a number of squash players from Trinity have already been introduced to Real Tennis while playing matches against colleges in the UK. A Trinity College Real Tennis Club could

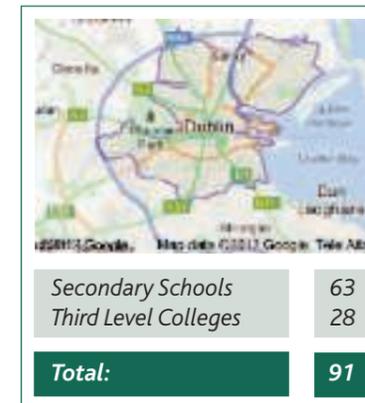
be established to maximise usage throughout the day. Equally, University College Dublin's historic link to the building might encourage their involvement. There are numerous schools in the immediate vicinity of the court, and Real Tennis might easily become part of the Physical Exercise programme, with the cooperation of the Professional.

In addition to this, there are numerous squash, lawn tennis, badminton, and handball clubs in the city and surrounding areas. It is anticipated that there would be significant interest in Real Tennis among those already playing racket and handball sports.

If necessary, while membership builds, the facility could be made available for use as a badminton hall, or to host business hospitality events or exhibition matches or on-court social events, etc., to generate revenue. The Dublin Institute of Technology campus, for example, is spread around the city centre, and currently includes no space for badminton. Time could be offered to the DIT badminton club to raise revenue for the promotion of Real Tennis.

#### 5.7 International support

Reflecting the level of international interest in a Dublin Real Tennis court, we have received expressions of support from the governing bodies of Real Tennis in the UK, the Netherlands, Australia, the USA, and France.



[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

## 6. Financial Considerations

### 6.1 Financing the restoration work

Following a review of the architect's plans by the Quantity Surveyor, it would appear that the total cost of restoring the court to playing condition and providing associated facilities would be in the region of €1.2m, as detailed in Section 5.4.

The IRTA is not looking for State investment in this project. The IRTA is confident, on the basis of informal contacts over recent years, that the required sum can be raised through a number of avenues over a five-year period. The full fund-raising plan would involve the launching of a

Capital Campaign, which would focus on major donors and grant-awarding bodies initially, and move on to seeking smaller contributions from individual players as the campaign progresses.

### 6.2 Forecast for the first 5 years of operations

#### 6.2.1 Income

The following table shows the revenue forecast for the first 5 years of operations. The forecast is based on a detailed analysis of accounts provided by comparable clubs in the UK, while taking Ireland-specific considerations into the equation, e.g., rates, electricity costs, etc. These figures are a conservative estimate. They are based on a

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Receipts</b>					
Membership Subscriptions	€38,250	€45,790	€54,400	€60,750	€72,360
Court Fees	€18,104	€19,114	€24,519	€26,651	€35,014
Revenue from lessons	€4,500	€3,000	€3,000	€3,300	€3,300
Revenue from marking	€300	€375	€450	€525	€525
Revenue from sale of merchandise	€2,000	€800	€500	€500	€500
Tournaments	€500	€500	€500	€500	€500
Donations	€500	€500	€500	€500	€500
Sponsorship/ Advertising Revenue	€500	€500	€500	€500	€500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>€64,654</b>	<b>€70,579</b>	<b>€84,369</b>	<b>€93,226</b>	<b>€113,119</b>
<b>Membership Numbers</b>					
OAP (Persons aged ≥ 65yrs)	20	25	30	35	40
Senior (Persons aged 31 - 64)	80	90	100	110	120
Junior (Persons aged 25 - 30)	20	25	30	35	40
Student (Persons aged ≤ 24)	60	80	100	110	120
Family (Parent in above category: child pays)	15	17	20	25	27
International	80	100	120	130	150
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>497</b>

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

number of assumptions and variables and may not reflect the actual income.

#### 6.2.1.1 Membership subscriptions

The membership projection has been split between various age ranges. (See chart page 15)

There are 97 members of the IRTA living in Ireland and awaiting the opening of a court in Ireland. 20% are aged 65 years or over and the majority of the remainder are in the Senior group. It is thus considered that achieving 100 members in these two age categories should be easily achievable in the first year. Over the 5 years, the aim will be at least to double this membership; however for the purpose of prudence we have estimated that by year 5 we will have a total of 160 members in these categories.

The Junior category represents members who have finished third-level studies and are starting their first jobs, travelling, etc., and hence there is a drop in the figures compared to the number of students. We expect to be able to retain a third of graduates as post-college members.

Through cooperation with third-level institutions we expect to attract students from Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin City University, the Dublin Institute of Technology, Griffith College, and the Dublin Business School, and from secondary schools in the area. Those from each institution might form a Real Tennis

club through which use of the court (particularly at off-peak times) might be arranged. Intervarsity and inter-school competitions are envisaged. The membership numbers for racket sports clubs at each college have grown over the last 10 years and there is room for a new racket sport to be made available. Membership numbers are conservative. As affiliations are created and developed, these numbers should double in the first five years.

Real Tennis is a game for all generations and we wish to encourage families to share the court. As such we will encourage people in the OAP, Senior, and Junior Categories to enrol their children as members and we will offer a discounted membership subscription for this category. Initial uptake is expected to be low with steady growth over the 5 years.

There are now 183 non-Irish members of the IRTA who await the opening of a court in Ireland. Many of these members would travel to play in Dublin, and would become members of the club. IRTA members based in Ireland have joined clubs outside the country so as to provide themselves with more opportunities to play. An estimate of 80 of the 183 non-Irish IRTA members to join in year 1 is conservative.

The following table (next page) shows the annual membership subscription structure which is comparable to the subscriptions charged by the various UK clubs.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

Membership Subscription	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
OAP (Persons aged ≥ 65yrs)	€200	€200	€200	€200	€210
Seniors (Persons aged 31 - 64)	€240	€240	€250	€250	€260
Juniors (Persons aged 25 - 30)	€200	€200	€200	€200	€210
Student (Persons aged ≤ 24)	€100	€100	€100	€100	€110
Family (Child of above member pays)	€70	€70	€70	€70	€80
International	€50	€50	€50	€50	€60

Court Players	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Number of peak time singles games	528	581	639	703	773
Number of peak time doubles games	132	145	160	176	193
Number of off-peak time singles games	792	871	958	1,054	1,160
Number of off-peak time doubles games	198	218	240	264	290
Number of guest players	100	70	60	50	50
<b>Total games played per year</b>	<b>1,750</b>	<b>1,885</b>	<b>2,057</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>2,466</b>

### 6.2.1.2 Court Fees

The table above presents estimated court usage over the first 5 years.

The court will be available for play during peak and off-peak times. Peak time is considered to be from 7am to 9am, 12pm to 2pm and 5pm to 8pm. All other times are considered to be off-peak. The court is expected to be open from 7am to 10pm.

A game requires 1 hour of court time. In an effort to be conservative we have estimated that during peak hours there will be 2 games played every day for 330 of the 365 days in the year. Of these 80% will be singles games, and 20% will be doubles. A 10% growth rate is expected each year for the first 5 years and usage will then probably stabilise at the level attained.

The off-peak hours will most likely be filled by students and OAPs and we expect that 3 games a day will be played on the court during off-peak hours for 330 out of the 365 days of the year and again 80% will be singles and 20% will be doubles. A 10% growth rate is expected each year for the first 5 years and usage will then probably stabilise at the level attained.

As people will want to try the sport before they commit themselves to membership, this will be facilitated by allowing people to play as a guest at a higher court fee on up to 3 occasions. The availability of the Professional to arrange suitable opponents is of huge benefit to guest players.

Each player will pay a fee per game for use of the court and facilities. (See chart page 18)

The court fees are in line with the fees paid in

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

Court fee per player per game	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Singles Peak	€7.00	€7.00	€8.00	€8.00	€9.00
Doubles Peak	€5.00	€5.00	€5.50	€5.50	€6.00
Singles Off-Peak	€4.00	€4.00	€5.00	€5.00	€6.00
Doubles Off-Peak	€3.00	€3.00	€3.00	€3.00	€4.00
Day rate for Guest players	€10.00	€10.00	€10.00	€10.00	€10.00

Lessons	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Lessons	150	100	100	100	100
Cost per lesson	€30	€30	€30	€30	€30
<b>Revenue from lessons</b>	<b>€4,500</b>	<b>€3,000</b>	<b>€3,000</b>	<b>€3,000</b>	<b>€3,000</b>

Marking	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Games marked	20	25	30	35	35
Cost for marking	€15	€15	€15	€15	€15
<b>Revenue from marking</b>	<b>€300</b>	<b>€375</b>	<b>€450</b>	<b>€525</b>	<b>€525</b>

similar clubs in the UK. When compared with the cost per player per game for squash or lawn tennis, it is slightly higher, but Real Tennis is unique in its design, there are more squash and lawn tennis courts available, Real Tennis balls are provided, and the court is larger and indoors and thus requires more heating and lighting. The higher rate is thus justified.

### 6.2.1.3 Lessons

A Real Tennis Professional is qualified to provide lessons. The majority of lesson fees (c.70%) will go to the Professional. We estimate that the Professional will give around 150 lessons in the first year and 100-110 in the course of each year after that, at a rate of c.€30 per lesson. (See chart above)

### 6.2.1.4 Marking

In Real Tennis, the task of umpiring and scoring games is referred to as 'marking'.

During tournaments and at various events throughout the year, the Professional will mark matches. Revenue from this source is expected to be relatively low, but may grow as club matches and tournaments increase in numbers. The Professional will take 100% of marking fees.

### 6.2.1.5 Other

Merchandise in the form of sweaters, shorts, t-shirts, etc., will be made available for sale at the court. The revenue is expected to be high initially when the court opens and to taper off after that to a steady level.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

Tournaments held at the court are expected to generate enough revenue to cover their costs.

As there is a tax incentive to make donations to charities and registered sports bodies, we anticipate that 2 people a year will make the minimum donation of €250.

It may be possible to generate some advertising revenue through the web site, through sponsorship of events, and perhaps also through installation of on-court banners. It is difficult at this stage to assess the scale of such potential income, so none has been included in our forecasts. A positive contribution at some level seems likely.

### 6.2.2 Expenditure

The expenditure of the club is forecast for the first 5 years of trading as per the chart opposite:

#### 6.2.2.1 Salaries

Salary costs will equate to c.50% of the revenue generated each year and c.54% of the total costs. The salary cost is the highest cost for the court. The role of the Professional and the importance of the Professional to the club is detailed in Section 5.5. The club will rely on members to assist with the running of the club during lunch breaks for the Professional and during days off, etc. There is a team of experienced Real Tennis enthusiasts who are committed to making the club a success and are willing to commit their time to assisting the club.

The Professional's basic salary is low when compared to the UK average, and especially given that the role will require some general managerial tasks, but, through the assistance of members, the administrative burden on the Professional will be reduced.

As detailed in Section 5.5, there will be a performance-based incentive scheme attached to the salary of the Professional, which will include a percentage of certain revenues. In year 1 the percentage of the new membership fee paid to the Professional will be capped at €1,000 as it is likely that a significant proportion of recruitment will be through the IRTA members involved in the court restoration. After year 1, the Professional will earn 25% of this revenue.

#### 6.2.2.2 Operating Costs

The calculation of Light & Heat costs is based on the level of KWh usage by a similar club in the UK, with application of Irish charges to this usage. There is an allowance for this cost to increase by 6% p.a. with increases in both energy prices and court activity.

The current Rateable Value ascribed to the building is €88.88. In 2011, this gave a Rates charge of €5,533; we have estimated that this will be the cost in Year 1, and assumed that it will increase by 1.5% p.a.

5% of the total revenue each year is assigned to cover the costs of repairs and maintenance of the club and any unused balance at the end of a year will be held in a sinking fund.

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

Income	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Salaries and other staffing costs</b>					
Professional - Retainer	25,000	26,000	27,000	28,000	29,000
Assistant Professional - Retainer	-	-	15,000	20,000	20,000
Commission on court fees - 10%	1,810	1,911	2,452	2,665	3,510
Commission on new m'ship fees - 25%	1,000	1,885	2,153	1,588	2,903
Commission on lesson fees - 70%	3,150	2,100	2,100	2,310	2,310
Commission on marking fees - 100%	300	375	450	525	525
Commission on sale of merchandise - 20%	400	160	100	100	100
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>31,660</b>	<b>32,431</b>	<b>49,254</b>	<b>55,188</b>	<b>58,339</b>
<b>Building operational Costs</b>					
Heat & Light	4,047	4,289	4,547	4,819	5,109
Council Rates	5,533	5,616	5,700	5,786	5,873
Water Rates	931	1,007	1,105	1,215	1,341
Waste collection	624	655	688	722	758
Repairs and Maintenance/ Sinking Fund	3,233	3,529	4,218	4,661	5,660
Insurances	2,000	2,200	2,420	2,662	2,928
Cleaning (done by the Professionals)	600	600	600	600	600
<b>Total Building Operational Costs</b>	<b>16,967</b>	<b>17,896</b>	<b>19,278</b>	<b>20,466</b>	<b>22,269</b>
<b>Administration Costs</b>					
Telephone/Internet/IT	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,400
Postage, stationery, printing & photocopying	2,000	2,060	2,122	2,185	2,251
Banking fees	100	100	100	100	100
<b>Total Administration Costs</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>4,560</b>	<b>4,622</b>	<b>4,685</b>	<b>4,751</b>
<b>Miscellaneous and Other Costs</b>					
Balls, rackets, felt, etc.	2,500	2,625	2,756	2,894	3,039
Merchandise	1,000	400	250	250	250
Advertising, Marketing and Promotional	1,500	100	100	100	100
Tournament expenses	500	515	530	546	563
Sundry Expenses	500	500	500	500	500
<b>Total Miscellaneous &amp; Other Costs</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>4,140</b>	<b>4,137</b>	<b>4,290</b>	<b>4,452</b>
<b>TOTAL COSTS</b>	<b>59,127</b>	<b>59,028</b>	<b>77,291</b>	<b>84,629</b>	<b>89,810</b>

[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

In 2011, Water Rates were €1.81 per 1,000L. The majority of the water used will be in the showers and toilets. We have estimated that every player will have a shower and use 100L of water per shower. The toilets will be flushed approximately 50 times a day using 9L per flush. These two calculations are the basis for the estimated water rates cost.

**6.2.2.3 Other**

The remainder of the costs have been calculated based on the experience of clubs in the UK.



[ Note: This document was written in 2012. ]

**7. Appendix: Architects' Drawings**

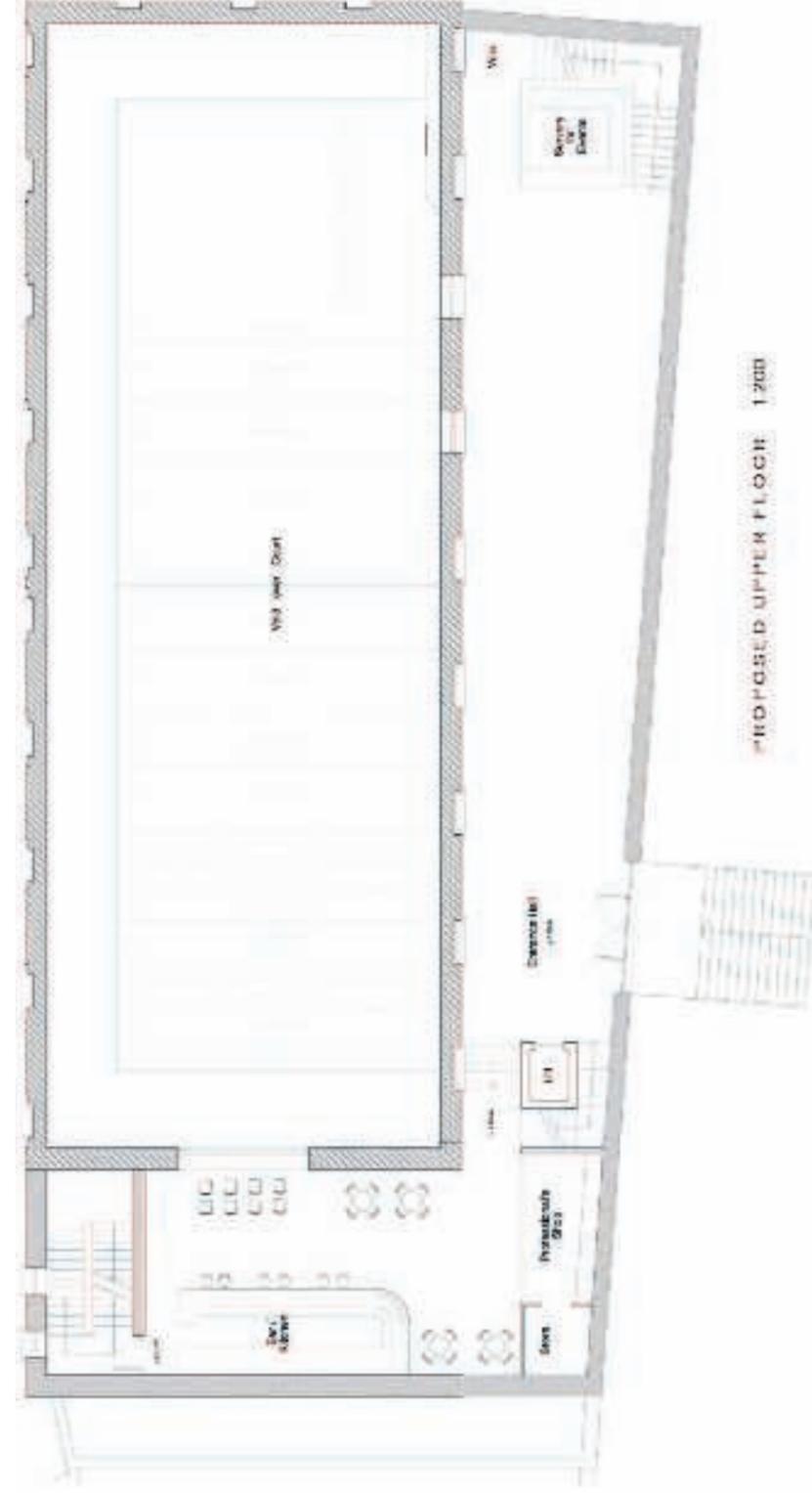
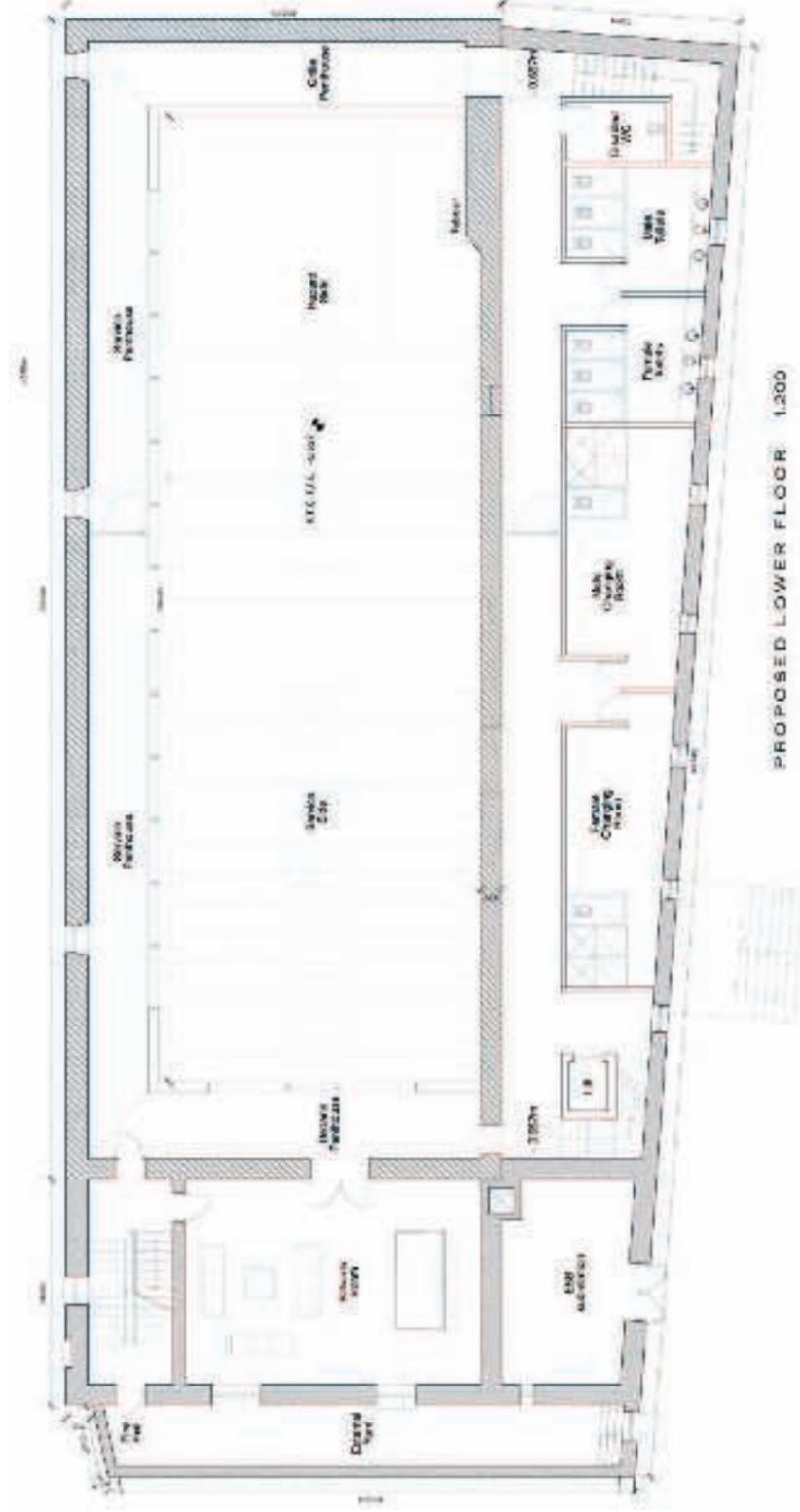


PROPOSED EARLSFORT TERRACE ELEVATION 1:200



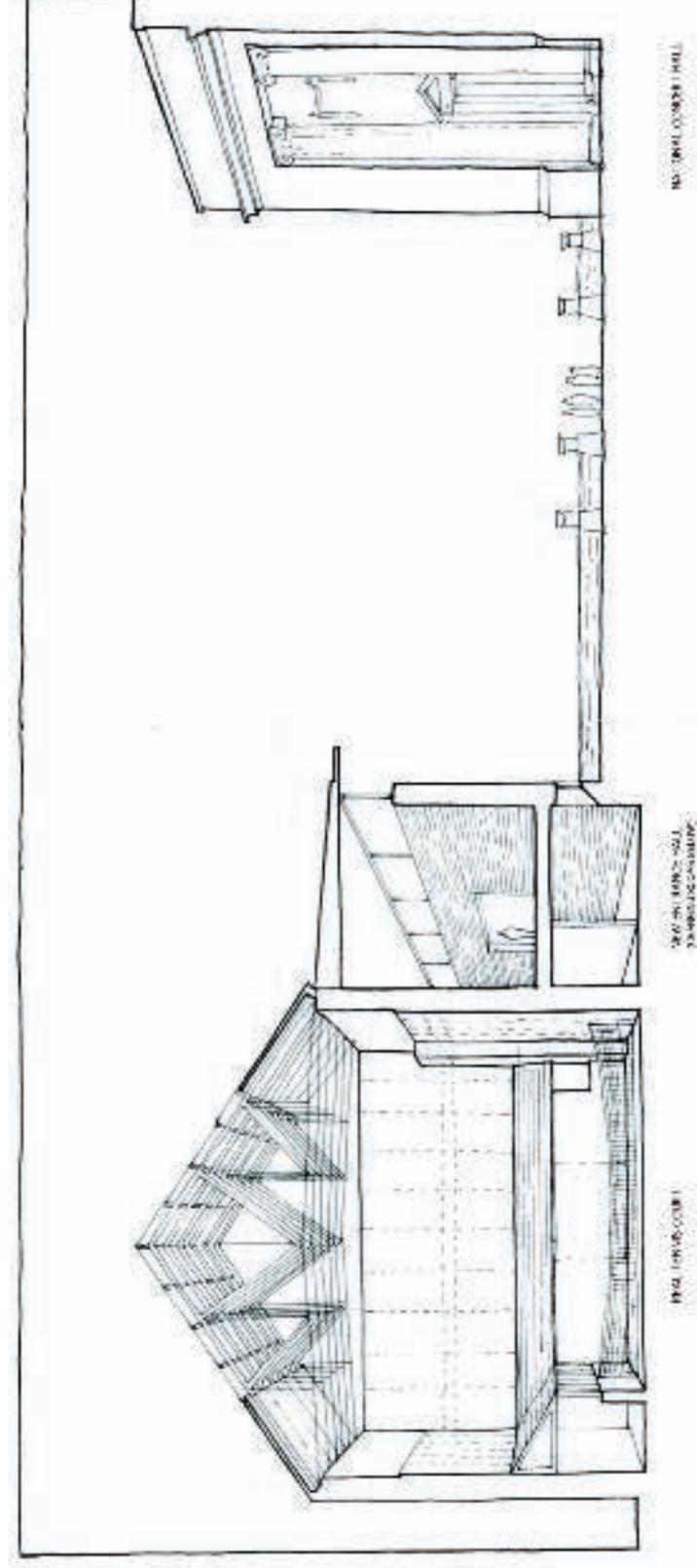
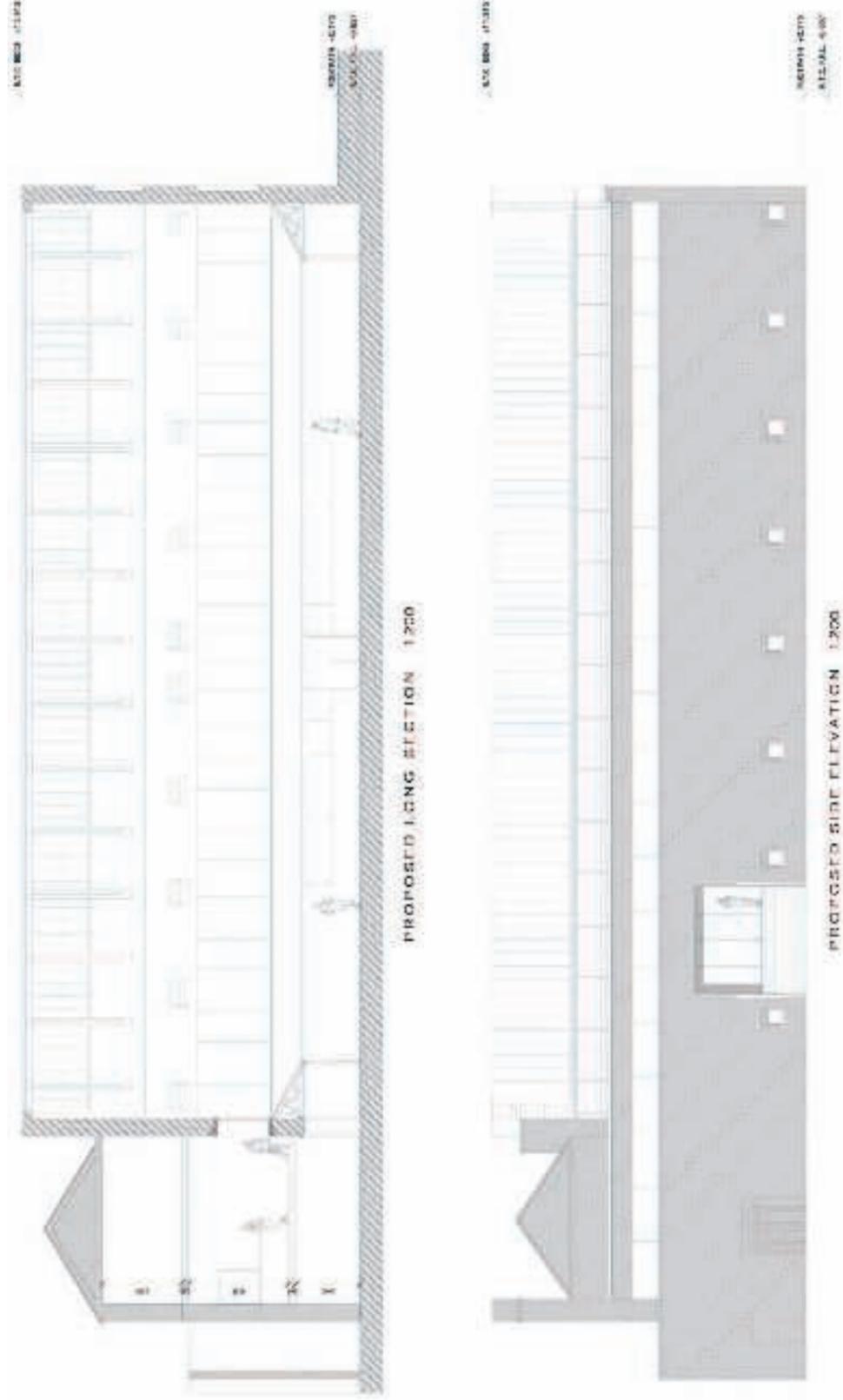
PROPOSED CROSS SECTION 1:200

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