

National Archives of Ireland

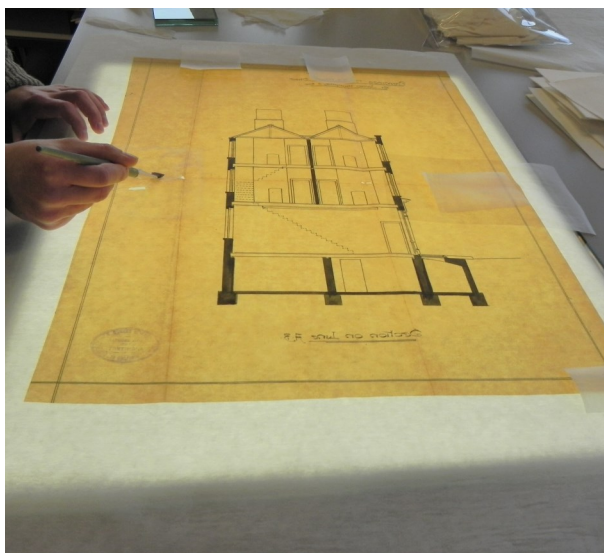


How we unfolded and conserved tracing paper buildings plans in the PLIC files



Within the compensation files there were only a handful of claimants who had submitted architectural elevations and building plans to support their claims.

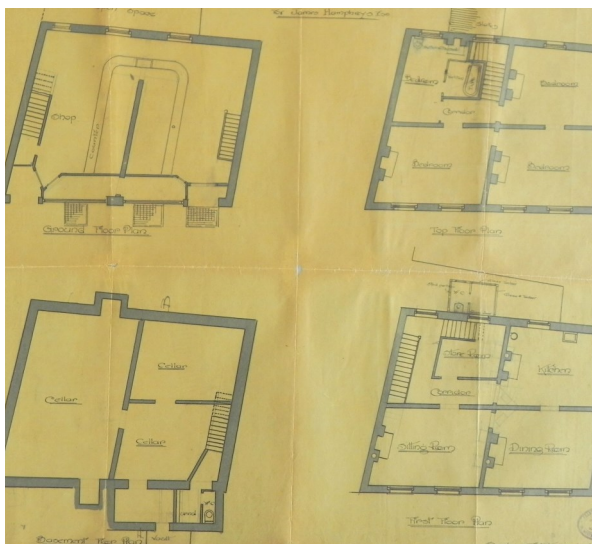
These plans were on tracing paper, which is a thin paper used by architects and engineers to make copies of drawings. During the paper manufacture, the paper fibres (cellulose) are highly beamed so that the sheet has had virtually all the air removed from the internal structure.



This method produces a very transparent and even sheet. The paper is then made even more transparent by adding oils and resins such as Canada balsam, dammar and linseed oil.

When dry and exposed to air, the paper allows light to pass through. As it ages, the paper tends to become yellow and very brittle, however.

One plan was particularly badly damaged and had broken into pieces where it had been folded.



To enable the brittle tracing paper plan to be opened it was gently humidified using the ultra-sonic humidifier on a very low setting for between 30-40 minutes. This allowed the plan to be carefully manipulated and unfolded without causing any more damage.

Depending on the size of small tears and the weight of the tracing paper, a range of tissues were used to close tears and support areas of loss or damage. These included Berlin tissue (4 gsm) Spider tissue (9 gsm) OK tissue (12 gsm).